



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

EPA NEW LAWS OVERVIEW

Maggie Connelly, Secretary

Two environmental laws, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), require reporting releases of a hazardous substance that exceeds a reportable quantity within a 24-hour period. The purpose of the notification is for federal, state, and local officials to evaluate the need for an emergency response to mitigate the effects of the release to the community.

Previously, EPA exempted farms from reporting hazardous substance air releases from animal waste under CERCLA, and only large concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) were subject to EPCRA reporting, which is a separate but related law.

For a complete list of CERCLA hazardous substances, please see the Resources link at: www.epa.gov/animalwaste

On February 1, 2018, the DC Circuit Court of Appeals granted EPA's motion to further stay issuance of the mandate until May 1, 2018. No reporting is required until the Court issues its order, or mandate, enforcing its decision to eliminate the reporting exemptions for farms on May 1, 2018.

[Guidance is available](https://www.epa.gov/epcra/cercla-and-epcra-reporting-requirements-air-releases-hazardous-substances-animal-waste-farms) on the CERCLA and EPCRA reporting requirements for air releases of hazardous substances from animal waste at farms

<https://www.epa.gov/epcra/cercla-and-epcra-reporting-requirements-air-releases-hazardous-substances-animal-waste-farms>



20 YEAR SPONSORSHIP

CNY Regional Envirothon Committee

Heartfelt thanks to Covanta for 20 years of sponsorship and support to the Central New York Regional Envirothon!

What began in 1998 as a five-year sponsorship commitment by Covanta, then Ogden-Martin, continued for the next 15 years with \$5,000 sponsorship each year. Through the years a strong partnership with the Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Onondaga, Cayuga, Chenango and Madison counties was built. Covanta has always recognized the importance of a program such as Envirothon, as stated by Business Manager Kathleen Carroll, "Covanta is proud to announce its 20th year of providing the major funding for the CNY Envirothon. This environmental competition is put together by an outstanding variety of professionals from the CNY Soil and Water Districts and an excellent group of students".

On behalf of the CNY Regional Envirothon committee, Thank you!



(l-r) Paul Abt, Environmental Engineer from Covanta, Kathleen Carroll, Business Manager, and Luisa Rotella, Covanta's Administrative Assistant present the traditional "Big Check" to the CNY Regional Envirothon committee's four-county Soil & Water Conservation Districts - Valerie Horning, Cayuga, Maggie Connelly, Onondaga; Jessica Heim, Madison, and Jennifer Kelly, Chenango. Also on the committee is Chenango County SWCD Manager Lance Lockwood, not shown here.

"Promoting excellence in the wise use of our urban/suburban natural resources."

DISTRICT NEWS



NYS GROWN AND CERTIFIED PARTNERS WITH AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IT'S GOOD BUSINESS

NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets

The New York State Grown and Certified program launched in 2016 to help meet the growing consumer demand for high quality foods grown or produced to a higher standard within New York State. To be a part of the of New York State Grown and Certified program, participating farmers and processors, must meet food safety standards that pertain to specific commodities, such as GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), while also meeting the required environmental standard by participating in an AEM (Agricultural Environmental Management) assessment. Commodities that are currently accepted into the NYS Grown and Certified Program include produce, dairy, eggs, beef, poultry, pork, oysters, Christmas trees and maple products.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) lead in the implementation of the AEM program. AEM is a voluntary, confidential, locally-led, and comprehensive approach that further advances environmental management on New York's farms, across all sizes and commodities. This program delivers technical support and financial incentives needed to help farmers to implement conservation practices critical to the protection of water quality and other natural resources. AEM helps to ensure that New York's farms remain viable and continue to meet their business objectives in an everchanging market place. Over the last two decades, over 12,000 farms across New York State have participated in AEM by working with local SWCDs and partnering with resource professionals, to develop and implement comprehensive, farm-specific plans using AEM's 5-Tier approach.

The New York State Grown & Certified program requires an AEM Tier 2 assessment. Completing this step provides farms the opportunity to become more engaged with the AEM program, often leading to further work through the Tiers to address farm and natural resource needs. Advancing through the AEM Tiers, opens doors for farms to apply for cost-share funding to implement priority practices, by advancing to the Tier 3 planning process. AEM takes a whole farm view to address not only nutrient management, but also addresses farmstead water supplies; pasture management; pesticide mixing, loading and storage; erosion control; stream and floodplain management; irrigation water management; and soil health to name a few. AEM can also address farm-to-neighbor relations and agriculture in the community. In today's climate of environmental awareness, AEM's technical and financial resources are valuable to assist farmers in maintaining their commitment to conservation. Proactively advancing conservation practices is central to economic viability on today's farms. All farms that are in enrolled in the NYS Grown and Certified Program are encouraged to partner with their local SWCD to work further through the AEM Tiers, if they've not already done so. Any farm can participate in AEM, without necessarily participating in the New York State Grown and Certified program.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts continue their long record of leading and implementing AEM with farmers at the county level, supported

- Tier 1:** Inventory current activities, and future plans of the farm business.
- Tier 2:** Assess current environmental stewardship and opportunities for improvement.
- Tier 3:** Develop conservation plans addressing concerns and opportunities tailored to farm goals.
- Tier 4:** Implement plans utilizing available financial, educational, and technical assistance.
- Tier 5:** Evaluate practices and plans to ensure the protection of farm viability and the environment.

by statewide leadership from the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. To learn more about AEM, contact your local SWCD, or visit www.nys-soilandwater.org. For more information about the NYS Grown and Certified program, visit <https://certified.ny.gov>.

SPECIAL PROJECT *By Eric Renfer, Resource Conservation Specialist*

The project was off Feder Street in the Village of Fayetteville. The village has a section of Limestone Creek that at one time had a feeder dam across it. The dam was used to supply water to the Erie Canal. A few years back the dam fell into disrepair and the NYS DEC ordered it to be removed. The dam was removed, and since that time, a large gravel bar was created, along with stream bank erosion. The creek essentially spit into two streams requiring the 170 ft. X 25 ft. wide bar to be removed. The bar sits 2 feet to 4 feet above the surface of the creek. Approximately 1,000 cubic yards of material was removed. The NYS DEC and the US Army Corps of Engineers approved this project. The District paid 60% of the cost of the equipment rented by the village; the village provided 40% cost-share by paying the balance of outstanding invoices and labor to operate the equipment on the project.



Limestone Creek - before



Limestone Creek - after

TOWN OF LYSANDER AWARD

By Doug Fisher, Program Manager

On Thursday December 21, 2017, Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District Program Manager presented the District's Municipal Partner of the Year Plaque to Gene Dinsmore, Superintendent and Cindy Rahrle, Clerk at the Town of Lysander Highway Garage. This award is an annual recognition that the District Board of Directors selects during their November monthly meeting. The presentation usually is made during the Onondaga County Highwaymen's Association December meeting, however this years event was postponed due to very snowy conditions that had the highway men and women clearing roadways and protecting their communities. Onondaga County SWCD is proud of the partnership that we have had with the Town of Lysander, and all of the municipalities that we have worked with in 2017. Thank you all for your patronage.



Gene Dinsmore and Cindy Rahrle receive the award on behalf of the Town of Lysander.

2018 CNY REGIONAL ENVIROTHON IS BACK IN CHENANGO COUNTY

By Maggie Connelly, Secretary



Winter scene at Rogers

Friends of Rogers Environmental Center in Sherburne is the setting for this year's Central New York Regional Envirothon. The facility has a long history of partnering with Soil and Water Conservation Districts to host the event and we're excited to be back on Wednesday, April 18th!

The CNY Regional Envirothon is organized by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Cayuga, Chenango, Madison and Onondaga Counties. Its mission is to cultivate the desire of young adults to learn more about our natural environment through a competitive event, providing them with experience in environmentally oriented activities.

In recognition of all the sponsors that generously support Envirothon, along with the 40 plus volunteers who give their time, share their expertise as test writers/administrators, judges, or station guides, the collaborative effort of many, thank you - we couldn't do it without you!

The Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

MANURE STACKING PAD

By Ron May, Conservation District Technician

For a CAFO like Co-Vale Holsteins, LLC to comply with CAFO permits, they need to have the ability to store manure during conditions when manure spreading is banned. A manure stacking pad is a viable solution for doing that. Storing manure on a stacking pad during times of high runoff potential instead of spreading it results in cleaner runoff leaving the farm. This is obviously beneficial to our local water quality and provides a healthier home for aquatic life and cleaner water resources for human drinking and recreation purposes. By building this manure stacking pad, Co-Vale Holsteins, LLC is setting a precedent for being environmental stewards while producing high-quality, healthy dairy products and should be recognized as a good example of a reputable and responsible farm operation in CNY.



BARNYARD & VEGETATED TREATMENT AREA

By Ron May, Conservation District Technician

The approximately 4,500 square foot concrete barnyard has been completed at Pe-Car Farms, LLC in Skaneateles. The use of a concrete barnyard offers many benefits for the farmer, their cattle, and the environment. For the farmer, the herd is easier to manage and having the cattle on a concrete pad instead of constantly knee-deep in mud results in healthier cattle, as they are not prone to nearly as much wear and disease on their hooves. Also, farmers can choose to add headlocks to a barnyard, which provides an efficient feeding system and an overall increase in the beneficial use of the barnyard.

There are several benefits for environmental health that result from the implementation of a concrete barnyard. Predominately, the runoff leaving the site is drastically cleaner from a concrete barnyard and VTA system because all the water that hits the barnyard is treated naturally by the vegetation and soil of the VTA before it leaves the farm. This removes most, if not all, the turbidity and bacteria commonly found in runoff from a barnyard that is not concrete. Cleaner runoff leaving farms will result in cleaner lakes and rivers for ourselves and generations to come, as well as an overall increase in environmental health in Central New York. By building this barnyard, Pe-Car Farms is setting a precedent for being environmental stewards while producing high-quality, healthy beef products and should be recognized as a good example of a reputable and responsible farm operation in CNY.



“It is our vision to live in a society in which future generations will have natural resources necessary to sustain and enrich their quality of life.”

2017 ASH TREE SUMMARY

By Eva Brown, Resource Conservation Specialist

In 2017, the District continued to implement the Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Strategy in response to the presence of Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive insect that kills ash trees. Over the course of the year, the District oversaw the removal of 4,176 ash trees from County property. Trees were removed from County highway right-of-ways in the Towns of Clay, Salina, Geddes, and Onondaga as well as in Hopkins Road and Oneida Shores County Parks. As of the end of 2017, a total of 6,913 trees have been removed since the project began in 2014.

While planning out the ash tree removals at Oneida Shores County Park, the District identified a stand of ash in the park that held many potential saw logs and was in an area of the park that does not see a lot of patron traffic. The District is pleased to report having successfully sold 187 County ash trees totaling approximately 32,250 Board Feet for timber.

Utilizing a systemic insecticide to protect trees from the effects of Emerald Ash Borer, the District treated a total of 207 ash trees (5,101 diameter inches) for Onondaga County. Trees were located in Onondaga Lake Park, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo, and NBT Stadium. In addition to trees that were treated for Onondaga County, the District also treated 34 ash trees (850 diameter inches) for the Town of Marcellus in an ongoing partnership. All trees are on a two-year treatment cycle and most of the trees treated in 2017 had been previously treated in 2015.

In the spring and fall of 2017, the District oversaw the planting of 726 trees. Most of these trees were planted at Oneida Shores County Park through a partnership with Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC), a non-profit working to provide job readiness training to at-risk youth and young adults, and with grant funding from the United States Forest Service. In step with OEC's mission, two community tree planting events were also hosted at Oneida Shores County Park, including one on Earth Day. The remaining trees were planted in Onondaga Lake Park with grant funds from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

In addition to these projects, the District has an ISA Certified Arborist on staff who has provided technical assistance and tree health/risk assessments to the County Parks Department and two County residents.

ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Eric Renfer, *Resource Conservation Specialist*
Eva Brown, *Resource Conservation Specialist*
Ron May, *District Conservation Technician*
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Website: www.ocswcd.org



Ash logs cut by Tomaino Logging and marked and loaded onto a log truck for the District's first timber sale as part of the County's Ash Tree Management Strategy.

IN CASE OF AN AG SPILL EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL MARK BURGER AT 315-415-5057

SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation specialist

The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program hosted its 22nd annual meeting. The day's program included topics such as "The How To's of a 1099 Income Tax form, by Dave Hatch, Farm Credit; "Drone Technology" by NYS DEC Inspector Neil Stevens showed how UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) drone technology is being used in training and emergency situations, as well as in crop scouting and mapping field runoff on agricultural lands. Jim Carraba followed with a Farm Safety talk describing the various occupational health programs available to farmers from NYC-AMH.

Our keynote speaker for the afternoon was Dave Eichorn, a renowned meteorologist with over 30 years of experience in forecasting for television audiences all over the United States, most recently with WSYR TV in Syracuse; he retired from TV in 2016. Dave presented "Changing Weather in a Changing Climate". He showed how the recent increases to the temperature in the arctic polar region directly impacts the jet stream wind patterns which impact our local weather patterns. These rapid changes in arctic temperatures effectively push the weather patterns into our northeast region of the United States generating extremes and variability in our weather. Dave noted that weather is always changing but the rate of change in recent years has been dramatic!

Following a hot lunch catered by Vernak Farms, the event concluded with a special presentation. Jim Greenfield received a **Distinguished Service Award** for 25 years of dedication to the SLWAP. Mike McMahon, Chair of the program's review committee presented the award with these words, "He [Jim] is a man of conviction in his care and concern for the quality of our lake. His concern for the environment is evident in his agricultural practices as well as his involvement on the many boards he has served on." Jim and his brothers own and operate the family crop farm on the west side of Skaneateles Lake. In 1992, Jim, one of the founding members of the Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee, helped promote a new partnership between the City of Syracuse and farmers in the watershed. It was a grassroots effort - some of those early farmer meetings were held at Jim's farm and together the program was launched, offering sound environmental practices onto farms, voluntary and 100% City funded. Fast-forward 25 years, 95% of farms are signed onto the program. Thank you Jim for your service, vision, support and dedication!



(l-r) Jim Greenfield and Mike McMahon share a moment as Mike presents Jim with a "Distinguished Service Award". Photos by Roland Ivers, volunteer.



Jim Greenfield accepts his award.



Local farmers win raffle prizes: back row - Craig Dennis, Bill Burns, Adam Weisse, Craig Richards, Dick Hartford. Front row - Chris Fesko, and Kirk Tucker. Congratulations!



Our vision - The Skaneateles Lake watershed will be an environmentally sound region, where a viable agricultural industry and others benefiting from the lake work together harmoniously to improve and maintain a high standard of water quality.

Our mission - To carry out a cost-effective, innovative program for the farming community that upholds the high drinking water quality standards of Skaneateles Lake.

NOTES FROM THE WAPRC CHAIRMAN

By Mike McMahon, Chair - Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee

Mike McMahon shared some valuable points with the Annual Meeting group from a meeting he had with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand:

I was asked to serve on the Senator's Ag Advisory Committee, so I'll be looking for input from the local community to bring to Washington, D.C. The Senator sits on the Senate Ag Committee that writes the Farm Bill:

- **Immigration:** I presented a 17-point framework on how to go about addressing agriculture's need for a legal and reliable labor force.
- **EQIP:** the need to fund and increase the level of funding for BMPs and structures as the regulatory agencies continue to demand more compliance from animal agriculture in investments that have a limited payback to the producer.
- **Trade:** Try to curb current alienation with our trading partners. It is a fact that the best and most profitable years in the dairy and crop industry are those that see increased exports.
- **MPP:** The current Margin Protection Program designed to protect dairy farmers during extreme low price cycles needs to be regionalized to address the differences in price and expense structure in the different dairy areas of the country.

CONSERVATION RESOURCE FAIR & LUNCHEON CORTLAND COUNTY

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation Specialist

On January 30th, the Cortland County Conservation Resource Fair and Luncheon was held from 11 - 2 at the NYS Grange Building in Cortland, NY. 15 conservation related organizations in Cortland County had displays with 93 interested people attending the event coordinated by Cortland Co SWCD. The casual atmosphere allowed the local Ag producers and rural landowners to ask questions and learn about current conservation services, priorities, and opportunities in the county. The SLWAP participated with its table display, program handouts, and technician on hand to answer any questions.

RENTAL EQUIPMENT The new 12' Esch 5512 no-till drill will be available for qualified farmers. Rates are the same as last year: \$11.00/acre. A 100 HP tractor is required for this model. Please call Eric Jensen for more information at (315) 457-0325.



Esch 5512 model



Eric Jensen representing the SLWAP.

SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee (WAPRC)

Mike McMahon, *Chair, Cortland Co.*
Steve Nemece, *Vice Chair, Cayuga Co.*
Craig Richards, *Onondaga Co.*
Ed Tidd, *Onondaga Co.*
Eric Brayman, *Onondaga Co.*
David Perry, *Cortland Co.*
Gaelen Head, *Cayuga Co.*
Rich Abbott, *City of Syracuse*
Dale Kehoe, *Counsel member*
Jim Greenfield, *Counsel member*

Staff

Mark Burger, *Program Manager*
Kim Clark, *Conservation District Technician*
Eric Jensen, *Farm & Nutrient Mgmt Planner*

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The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program is a cooperative effort between the Soil & Water Conservation Districts and Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Onondaga, Cortland and Cayuga Counties, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the City of Syracuse, and Skaneateles Lake watershed farmers. Principal funding provided by the City of Syracuse.



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