

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

Winter 2023



Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway

Liverpool, NY 13088 Phone: 315-457-0325

Email: info@ocswcd.org



Photo Courtesy of Alyssa Derr, Conservation Field Technician

"Promoting excellence in the wise use of our urban, suburban, and rural natural resources."



2022 Ash Tree Summary

By Teresa Link Conservation District Technician

In response to the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), Onondaga County has partnered with the District to implement the Onondaga County Ash Tree Management Strategy. In 2022, the District removed 2,642 ash trees from County rights of-ways, parks, and other properties and 91 stumps have been ground. These cut locations included the Town of Fabius, Town of Pompey, Carpenter's Brook Fish Hatchery, Highland Forest, Pratt's Falls and Onondaga Lake Park. To date, a total of 21,556 ash trees have been removed that were a risk to public safety.

High-function and high-value ash trees throughout the County are treated with systemic insecticides for Onondaga County and the Town of DeWitt. Trees are on a 2-3 year treatment cycle with a total of 655 trees (7,043 inches) treated in total. 189 County trees and 15 trees for Chenango County SWCD were treated in 2022.

The District replants non-ash, non-host trees in County parks to replace ash trees removed due to EAB. With assistance from state and federal grants, the District has planted 2,685 trees to date under the County's ash tree program. This year, trees were planted by volunteers, Onondaga Earth Corps, and District staff at Onondaga Lake Park. A total of 107 1-2" caliper trees were planted utilizing a USDA Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant titled "Mitigating the Impacts of Emerald Ash Borer in Onondaga County". A community tree planting event was held in October where 32 volunteers planted a total of 60 trees at Onondaga Lake Park. Through the same grant, the Towns of Cicero, Clay, and Marcellus planted 33 trees.

Another funding source for tree planting was secured from the Arbor Day Foundation to plant 11.5 acres of seedlings across the county to mitigate the impacts of urbanization and invasive species. In 2022, 2,610 seedlings were planted utilizing the Arbor Day Foundation funding. Lastly, the District fielded 13 technical assistance requests relating to trees and tree care in 2022.

Please See Photos on Page 3

DISTRICT NEWS



2022 Ash Tree Summary Continued...



Above: Picture of newly planted tree at OLP.



Above: Contractor works at Highland Forest.



Left: Contractor at work at Longbranch Park

DISTRICT NEWS

2022 Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Summary

By Teresa Link Conservation District Technician

In 2022, OCSWCD treated 1,517 trees across Cayuga, Onondaga, and Oswego counties. In total, 17,176 diameter at breast height inches of trees were treated with a basal bark spray treatment to protect the trees from hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA). Most sites were treated with both dinotefuran and imidacloprid by spraying the bark from 4.5' off the ground to just above the soil line.

Majority of the treatment was paid for by a USDA Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to treat and scout in the Skaneateles and Otisco Lake watersheds. 9,570" (868 trees) were treated in the Skaneateles Lake watershed and 695" (73 trees) in the Otisco Lake watershed. OCSWCD treated 1,443" at Beaver Lake Nature Center (Seneca River Watershed) using Part C funding to offset the cost to the nature center. OCSWCD also treated 2,552" for Oswego County in the Lake Ontario watershed and 2,916" for the Town of Skaneateles in the Onondaga Lake watershed.

Please See Photos On Page 5

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.

DISTRICT NEWS

2022 Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Summary Continued...



Left: Steep slopes that hemlocks grow on.

Right: Hemlock Sample



Below: Chris and Teresa stand by newly installed sign at High Hickory. Photo credits to Paul Porter, CNYLT.



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SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Willow Brook Streambank Stabilization

By Chris Travis Conservation District Technician

Streambank stabilization is a reoccurring theme here at Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Most recently we focused our efforts on erosion occurring along Willow Brook, in the Otisco Lake watershed.

Twenty years ago, in 2002, OCSWCD installed grade control weirs along a stretch of Willow Brook. These weirs placed approximately 100' apart, functioned well for the better part of two decades.

After several years of intense storms in the late 2010's district staff were alerted that significant erosion was occurring at one of the grade control structures. Assessment of the erosion revealed that water had, as usual, taken the path of least resistance, which in this case meant carving a thirty-foot wide hole around the grade control structure.

This summer District Technicians visited the site with Potomologist Dave Derrick to assess management of this eroded bank. Dave's advice was succinct, but profound. "Don't reinvent the wheel", these grade-control structures have been working well for nearly twenty years, re-establish the grade-control structures, but ensure they are correctly anchored into the streambank with a key. To "anchor" a stream stabilization practice, commonly referred to as a "key" in the world of riparian management, appropriately sized riprap is placed adjacent to the lateral end of the instream structure or streambank structure and embedded into the streambank at a length equivalent to the height of the streambank erosion, in this case 10 feet.

This December, during what proved to be a short but warm week before Christmas, the District successfully rehabilitated this conservation practice and effectively returned the stream to the channel, stopped the headcut migrating upstream, filled the 30-foot hole, created a small floodplain bench for relief during high-water events and planted red-osier dogwood stakes and fascines.

This project will also protect farmers using this land from overturning equipment into the ravine.



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.

SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Waste Ag Tire Recycling Project 2022

By Eric Jensen, Resource Conservation Specialist

Piles of waste ag tires provide an environment for mosquitoes to breed in the stagnant water that collects inside. These mosquitos pose a health concern since they can carry West Nile Virus, EEE, and other diseases. By removing the tires, the risk of disease is reduced. Large tire piles also pose a hazard in the instance they catch fire, significant amounts of toxic chemicals can be released into the environment via burning and/or extinguishing efforts. Farms have a tough time finding safe options to dispose of worn-out ag tires to comply with new NYS DEC waste tire regulations because most landfills and tire recyclers do not accept ag tires due to the size. NYS DEC regulations prohibit burial or burning of tires. The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Ag Program (SLWAP), partnered with the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District has been able to contract a facility in Niagara Falls, New York that processes large ag tires.

This past year with cooperation of several local farms, the Conservation District was able to load and ship a total of fourteen semi-trailer loads of waste ag tires totaling 254 tons. That is equivalent to over 17,500 auto and pickup truck tires! Six major watersheds participated in the conservation program: Seneca River had three loads, Oneida Lake had two loads, Upper Tioughnioga River had three loads, Onondaga Lake had one load, Otisco Lake had one load, Skaneateles Lake had four loads. Semi-trailers require extra high lift equipment to load the tires over the 13.5-foot-high sidewalls. Large ag tires are usually loaded first, then smaller ag tires are loaded to fill in the void spaces to complete the trailer loads. Waste tires are then trucked to the facility to be shredded into chips of assorted sizes and used for energy or other uses. We believe the extra effort to remove these ag tires and comply with NYS DEC regulations will provide reduced risk to human health and have lasting environmental benefits to the watershed and community.

For more information on waste ag tire recycling, contact the SLWAP & Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District office location at 6680 Onondaga Lake Parkway, Liverpool at (315) 457-0325.



Topping off the Tire Trailer



Loading Waste Ag Tires

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DISTRICT NEWS

Snow Brook Stream Sediment Mitigation Project

By Kim Clark Conservation District Technician

We are using root wads to fill in a ravine in the Skaneateles Watershed that is creating large amounts of sediment flowing into Snow Brook. The root wads will help to slow down the water, dissipate energy, and catch the sediment before reaching Snow Brook. This project will ultimately keep sediment from reaching Skaneateles Lake and help to reduce turbidity near one of the drinking water intake pipes.



Left: Ravine Prior to Root Wads



Right: Ravine Partially Filled With Root Wads

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DISTRICT NEWS

Stormwater Summary for 2022

By Conor Larkin, Conservation District Technician

Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District has carried out another year of implementing effective stormwater management practices. Stormwater outfall inspections, construction site SWPPP inspections, and conservation technical assistance visits are provided to municipalities and homeowners on a regular basis. In doing so, these efforts help to promote safe, healthy water quality and a stable ecological environment.

The District has assisted with stormwater outfall inspections through the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination Program for several years, and this past year over 400 inspections have been completed throughout Onondaga County. In addition to tracking discharges within a drainage system, the District has monitored the physical condition of each outfall and contacted responsible parties to ensure proper maintenance of these structures. Records of each outfall were kept, and code enforcement or municipal engineers were notified if the structure needed improvement.

A well maintained, reinforced concrete pipe. Inspected: 1/5/22



Catch basin after partial project completion. Inspected: 9/1/22



“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.”

DISTRICT NEWS



2022 Winter Hydroseeding

By Alyssa Derr Conservation District Technician

Revegetation improves water quality by reducing erosion and sedimentation in various water bodies within and around the County. Bare ditches lose thousands of tons of soil each year. A permanent vegetative cover can reduce that soil loss by 50-90%. It is also a way to assist in the prevention of invasive species spreading, as many of the invasives thrive on disturbed and bare earth sites.

Throughout 2022 sites across Onondaga County were revegetated using best management practices (BMPs); these sites include farms, town parks, retention ponds, streambanks, stormwater ditched, other municipal properties and DOT roadside ditches.

A total of 40 acres of bare earth was revegetated across Onondaga County, and 28.34 miles of roadside ditches were hydroseeded.

The District has a grant from the NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Program to cost share 70% of project costs on public benefit/public properties. If you are a municipality, and not already participating in this program, please call us for more information to see if this program is a grant fit for your municipality. Thank you!

Please See Photos on Page 9



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DISTRICT NEWS

2022 Winter Hydroseeding continued...



Hydroseeded Road Ditch



Onondaga County SWCD - Truck and Hydroseeder

Mid Hydroseeding of Retention Pond (Manlius)



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SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

SWCD MUNICIPAL PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION TO THE TOWN OF SKANEATELES

On Monday, January 30th, the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District's 2022 Municipal Partner of the Year Award was presented to the Town of Skaneateles. Janet Aaron, Town of Skaneateles Supervisor, and Tim Dobrovosky, Highway Dept Supervisor, were present for the Town of Skaneateles at the Town office building to receive the honor. SWCD Board of Directors, Julie Abbott and Ken Bush, and Mark Burger, Executive Director were on hand to congratulate the Town of Skaneateles for their conservation partnership efforts.

The 'Municipal Partner of the Year' award recognizes the Town of Skaneateles' significant and ongoing support of the Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District work by assisting the implementation of essential streambank stabilization projects. Partnerships like this are essential for water quality improvement projects and soil conservation efforts to happen in our communities all around the county.



Left: Janet Aaron, Town of Skaneateles Supervisor and Tim Dobrovosky, Highway Department Supervisor

Right: SWCD Board Members, Julie Abbott and Ken Bush, Executive Director, Mark Burger, WAPRC Board Members Mike McMahon, Jim Greenfield, Doug Kierst, and Rich Abbott, SWCD District Conservation Technician, Eric Jensen, and award recipients Janet Aaron and Tim Dobrovosky.



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DISTRICT NEWS

The 2022 Water Chestnut season started on June 21, 2022 with the hand pulling crew and ended on September 16, 2022 with the mechanical harvest crews. 2022 was no doubt the longest and most challenging season since Onondaga County SWCD became involved in the project seven years ago.

On Thursday, September 1, 2022, a summer storm with strong north winds dislodged a massive amount of water chestnuts (~ 50 acres) in South Bay of Cross Lake. That mat entangled docks, coves, and navigational aids from the lake all the way through the locks in Baldwinsville. Multiple contractors (CNY Aquatic Harvesting, Enviro-Aquatics and Cayuga County SWCD) all worked tirelessly to round up the dislodged chestnuts and get them to shore. **Special THANKS to the TOWN OF ELBRIDGE** for providing multiple dump trucks and operators to haul the chestnuts from the Cross Lake region to the farm fields!

The hand-pulling crew accumulated 43,435 pounds of chestnuts in 2022! They did an outstanding job thanks to the tireless efforts of crew leader Libby Hammerschmidt.

Oswego County SWCD chemically controlled 12.8 acres of chestnuts from the 3-Rivers confluence to Phoenix as part of the management efforts on the Oswego River system. Oswego also provided their electric cutting bar to us which we demonstrated to local landowners.

All total, 4,990,565 pounds of water chestnuts (approximately 87 acres) were removed from the Seneca River system. All harvested and hand pulled chestnuts were beneficially reused on agricultural lands provided by **Emmi Farms** of Baldwinsville and **Hourigan's Gemini Farms** of Jack's Reef. **We are extremely grateful to our farmers for accepting this organic material to increase soil health** (boost soil organic matter concentrations and nutrient status).

THANK YOU to every funding source, resident, municipality, business, contractor and friend that helped and supported the project in 2022! We could not have undertaken this effort without you!



Left Above and Below: Demonstration of electric cutter bar

Above Right: Water chestnuts spread across farm field to enhance soil health

DISTRICT NEWS

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

Leo Buscaglia

In Syracuse, half of the city’s children live in poverty, nearly one-third of households have no vehicle available, and 31% of households rely on SNAP benefits according to the 2017 Onondaga Health County Department report on the city’s food environment.

Food insecurity refers to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) measure of lack of access to enough nutritionally adequate foods for an active, healthy lifestyle for all household members. “Food insecurity is not exclusively a trait of the poverty stricken. Hunger and poverty often go hand in hand but poverty is not the ultimate determinant of food insecurity. Food insecurity may reflect a working households need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.”

Onondaga County Soil and Water invites you to join our efforts in supporting urban agriculture and our local food pantries in an effort to mitigate food insecurity in our community.

Below: Non-perishable items collected for St. Lucy’s Food Pantry December, 2022, donated by OCSWCD staff and Board members.



“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.”

SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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IN CASE ASSISTANCE IS
NEEDED AT AN AG SPILL
EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL

MARK BURGER

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SKANEATELES LAKE WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM

Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee (WAPRC)

Mike McMahon, *Chair, Cortland Co.*
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Dale Kehoe, *Counsel member, non-voting*

Staff

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

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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.



**ONONDAGA COUNTY SOIL &
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50th Anniversary

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