

Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

Minutes of Regular Meeting - January 9, 2024

Attending:

John Dickinson, Director
Sherri Slater, Director
Jay Skellie, Director
Cassie Fedler, Director

Corrina Aldrich, District Manager
Lori Sheehan, Office Manager
Amber Luke, District Technician
Bob Kalbfliesh, District Technician
Korey Evarts, District Intern

Others:

Tina Williams, Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Call to order at 10:00 a.m. by Director Dickinson.

Welcome to new board member Sherri Slater (Member-At-Large)

At 10:05 a.m. Director Dickinson turned the meeting over to Aldrich to call for election of the Chairman of the Board.

Organizational Business:

Aldrich called for nominations from the Board for Chairman.

Motion by Skellie/Fedler to elect John Dickinson Chairman of the SWCD Board of Directors. **Unanimously carried.**

At 10:07 a.m. after election of Board Chairman, Aldrich turned the meeting over to Chairman Dickinson to chair the remainder of the meeting and election of officers.

Motion by Fedler/Slater to elect Jay Skellie as Vice-Chairman of the SWCD Board of Directors. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Skellie/Fedler to elect Catherine Ziehm as Treasurer of the SWCD Board of Directors. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to appoint Lori Sheehan as Secretary/Assistant Treasurer of the SWCD Board of Directors. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Skellie/Fedler to appoint the following representatives:

- Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC): Jacob Fetterman / Sherri Slater (alternate)
- Farmland Protection Board: Corrina Aldrich / Sherri Slater (alternate)
- Upper Hudson River Coalition: Amber Luke / Corrina Aldrich (alternate)
- Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York: Corrina Aldrich – SWCD; Jacob Fetterman – WQCC; Amber Luke – SWCD alternate; Sherri Slater – WQCC alternate.

Unanimously carried.

Motion by Skellie/Slater authorizing payment of certain bills prior to Board approval, including payroll & payroll liabilities, health/dental insurance, office/field supplies, employee travel, County pool car (fuel), and reimbursement of petty cash. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Skellie to appoint bank signatories: Catherine Ziehm (Treasurer), Lori Sheehan (Assistant Treasurer), and Catherine Fedler (Director). **Unanimously carried.**

Minutes: **Motion** by Fedler/Skellie to approve the minutes of the last meeting. **Unanimously carried.**

Treasurer's Report: After review and approval of the finances, **Motion** by Slater/Skellie to approve the Treasurer's Report for December and to pay bills as presented. **Unanimously carried.** (Attachment)

Agency & Staff Reports:

Farm Service Agency: Verbal report by Williams

Cornell Cooperative Extension: No Report

District Manager: Verbal report by Aldrich

District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Kalbfliesh

District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Luke

NYS-SWCC Report: Attachment, submitted by Cunningham

Motion by Skellie/Fedler to dispose of certain 2016 financial records according to Records Retention and Disposal Schedule LGS-1. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Skellie to approve participation in the Regional Envirothon (including cost of event expenses, est. \$1,000 Part C Funds). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to approve Aldrich to participate in CDEA business/activities as Division VI representative and to use district credit card as necessary. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Fedler/Slater to approve disbursing Part C Funds for: Renewal of Storage Container 12-month lease rental (\$70 per month), Drone Pilot Test Fee for Evarts (\$175), Washington County Highway Association Dues (\$100). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to approve time extension request Amendment for CAFO Round 3 Contract #C012096 – Woody Hill Farm. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Skellie/Fedler to set the Equipment Reserve Fund Amount to \$23,000. **Unanimously carried.**

Upon review of District Policies, **Motion** by Fedler/Skellie to approve the following policies with no changes: Personnel Policy, Credit Card Policy, Director Attendance & Replacement Policy, Dispute Resolution, Drainage Assistance, Freedom of Information Law, Information Technology Resources, Internal Controls, Investment, No-Till Seeder Rental, Pond Site Evaluation, Procurement Policy, Discrimination & Harassment Policy, Personal Vehicle Use Policy, Electronic Payments & Procedures – Grant Contracts, Public Employer Health Emergency Plan, Agricultural Assessment Policy, Drone Service Policy. **Unanimously carried.**

The next Board meeting will be held on February 13, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Motion by Slater/Fedler to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 a.m. **Unanimously carried.**

Lori Sheehan, Secretary

Director

Reports Attached: *Treasurer Report, District Reports, NYS-SWCC Report*

District Technician Report – Bob Kalbfliesh – January 2024

AEM

- AEM Tier IV Implementation – Cover Crops Burchdale and Rollin Hills farms have been paid.
- Rollin Hills Farm – I will be meeting with Darren Tyler to assist him in resolving the manure spill complaint he received.

Cover Crops

CWICNY: All participating farms have been paid.

Ag Assessments

Ag assessments have been very busy; I have completed 44 soil group worksheets.

Meetings Attended & Planned

King's AgriSeed Winter Meeting, 2/1 – Auburn
Whitman's Winter Meeting, 2/14 – Greenwich
NY Farm Show, 2/22 – 24, Syracuse

Technician's Report-Amber Luke- January 9, 2024

Ag Non-Point Source-

- Round 28-
 - Kenyon Hill- Keeping in touch with the farm. I will be checking in on how the bid process is coming after the first of the year. The farm plans on starting construction in the spring.
- Round 25-
 - Lundy's- No new updates. Just waiting for the farm to begin the bid process and construction.

Climate Resilient Farming (CRF)-

- Round 6-
 - Met with Morrow's in the office (1/3/2024) to go over certain details of the grant process. The landowner had some questions regarding engineering that we went over. I discussed the importance of having finalized designs for the bid process to make sure consistency in the bids. Landowner said they had final designs, so I asked for a copy to have on record. The farm signed their landowner/soil and water contract with us and are working on getting their insurance.
 - Met with John Beavers via zoom call on Friday (1/5/2024). We went over the landowner/SWCD contract and insurance requirements. I told him I would scan the documents to him for review. John Beavers was worried about this original quote for engineering as the dollar figure was rather high, so I told him I would send him a list of engineers we have worked with in the past. We went over the plan of construction and the plan for this year is to get the roadway completed and the phase 1 one of the swales/diversions/terraces.
- Round 7-
 - Working on getting started on the Plan of Work documents for our 2 funded grants as time permits. Plan of work is due February 1st 2024.

AEM-

- REPORTING: Sent out an email requesting all time sheets to be completed by the end of the month so that I can work on the final spread sheet for AEM YR 17 closeout.
- Mapleland had efficiently completed their fuel storage project. We have been in discussion with the engineer and our Regional AEA (Ryan Cunningham) to go over what is needed for closeout. We are waiting for as-builts, but we do have a stamped letter saying that a site visit was done and approved by the engineer prior to the end of 2023.
- I am working on pulling up information on completed tier work over the past 2 years to start working on the AEM YR 17 closeout. Due February 29, 2024.
- Had a meeting with Fred Burch to go over changes in his future goals and potential funding opportunities and timelines.
- Conducted a site visit to Paul and Sandy Arnold's to learn more about how a soil steamer works and the pros and cons that come with using a soil steamer. I talked with them about working through the AEM process and updating their old Tier 1. So, I will be reaching out again to complete a Tier 2.
- Ongoing: Chipping away at a variety of 3A and 3B plans for landowners that are interested in going further with the AEM process.

Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition (UHRWC):

- Next meeting is scheduled to be a potluck on January 11, 2024, at 10 am at Warren County SWCD. This meeting was originally scheduled for December but had to be rescheduled.
- We will be discussing the creation of a website for the UHRWC, fundraising opportunities along with grant opportunities for 2024 and beyond.

Trainings/Meetings Attending or Attended-

- Attended the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee State Program Advisory Committee meeting on December 15, 2023. Where we discussed the details surrounding how the Round 8 CRF grant program is going to work with federal funding being added. The NEW Round 4 CAFO funding was briefly discussed as well. There is still 21 million available, but they are unsure of how the program will run and what requirements it will have.
- CWICNY meeting attended on December 21, 2023.
- NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting attended on December 19, 2023.

Miscellaneous:

- My class submission to Mud U in Cambridge was accepted. I will be working on putting together a presentation to present a class focused on being an "Introduction of Conservation Planning on Small Farms." This will take place on February 27 @ 5:00 PM. My plan is for it to be a discussion with farmers on what tools and resources SWCD can provide, how to identify resource concerns and how to go about planning solutions and implementation.
- Bank Reconciliations

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 4 Report – January 2024
Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

2023 State Aid to Districts – DUE 2/15/24: All 2023 annual reporting documents (State Aid, Treasurers Report, Annual Report, etc.) are now available on the SWCC SharePoint <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>, under Resources for Districts – State Aid to Districts. All reports are due to the State Committee by **February 15, 2024**. Please contact ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

AEM Base Program: Round 17 of the AEM Base Program ended on December 31, 2023, and the Final Report/Close Out package is due the State Committee by **February 29, 2024** (please upload files to your District's AEM17 folder on SharePoint and email your Regional AEA and Greg Albrecht once uploaded). Round 18 of AEM Base is now underway, starting on January 1, 2023, and running through December 31, 2025. See the AEM Base Program Materials folder on the SWCC SharePoint site (<https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/AEM.aspx>) for program/contract policy instructions and materials to close out AEM17 and operate AEM18. Please contact greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

Round 29 AGNPS and Round 7 CRF Plans of Work: Please submit plans of work for projects awarded through Round 29 AGNPS and Round 7 CRF to your Regional AEA for review and approval when they are ready. Submitting this information as soon as possible can help to expedite the contracting process.

January SWCC Meeting: The January SWCC meeting will be postponed. The next SWCC meeting will take place in February. Further details and an agenda for the February meeting will be sent out at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. Each meeting agenda provides an opportunity for Conservation Districts to provide reports, updates, or feedback to the SWCC.

Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.

New State Programs Advisory Committee: A folder has been created on SharePoint for the NYS SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee. The folder is located within the Resources for Districts page, under the Programs category, <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>. Information from the December 2023 meeting has been uploaded to this folder. Please reach out to the SWCC staff if you have additional thoughts or ideas for future meeting topics.

Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act Update: Since the Bond Act was passed in November 2022, State agencies have been actively working to develop a data tracking/reporting protocol, eligibility criteria, define eligible projects and identify existing programs that could benefit from Bond Act funding. NYS SWCC staff will be sure to provide more updates as new information becomes available.

Other Events

2024 Water Quality Symposium: The New York State Conservation District Employees' Association and Soil and Water Conservation Committee are thrilled to announce the 2024 Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse, NY. **March 12th – 15th, 2024**. Registration is due no later than **January 26th, 2024**. Please note that this year, **each County Soil and Water District will receive 2 free admission coupons for staff to attend the full week**. Registration packet available here:

<https://www.nyscdea.com/training-sessions/> Online registration form here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvGzoAQQ9jkNC-LS091twNOeyjRx5yYlzc32sNifmvHcPWw/viewform>

NACD 2024 Annual Meeting: Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 78th Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the California Association of Conservation Districts, the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from **February 10th – 14th, 2024**. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>

Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

Minutes of Regular Meeting – February 13, 2024

Attending:

Board Members

John Dickinson, Chairman

Jay Skellie, Director

Sherri Slater, Director

Kate Ziehm, Director

Cassie Fedler, Director

Others:

Tina Williams, Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Staff Members

Corrina Aldrich, District Manager

Lori Sheehan, Office Manager

Amber Luke, District Technician

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1. Call to order at 10:05 a.m. by Chairman Dickinson.
 2. Minutes: **Motion** by Fedler seconded by Skellie to approve the minutes of the last meeting. **Unanimously carried.**
 3. Treasurer's Report: After review and approval of the finances, **Motion** by Slater seconded by Fedler to approve the Treasurer's Report (as a whole) for January and to pay bills as presented. **Unanimously carried.** (Attachment)
 4. Agency & Staff Reports:
 - A. Farm Service Agency: Verbal report by Williams
 - B. Cornell Cooperative Extension: No Report
 - C. District Manager: Attachment, reviewed by Aldrich
 - D. District Technician: Attachment, submitted by Kalbfliesh
 - E. District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Luke
 - F. NYS-SWCC Report: Attachment, submitted by Cunningham
 5. New Business:
 - A. **Motion** by Slater/Fedler to approve Round 24 Kingsbury CAFO Improvement grant payments to Albert Marns (\$40,000), Walker Farms (\$34,000). **Unanimously carried.**
 - B. **Motion** by Ziehm/Fedler to approve disbursing Part C funds for: NY Association of Conservation Districts Assessment (\$1,500), WQS Silent Auction Donation (\$20), Kingsbury Printing – SWCD Newsletter (\$929.45). **Unanimously carried.**
 - C. **Motion** by Skellie/Ziehm to approve Part B funds of \$1,096.50 to the Town of Salem for the Rexleigh Bridge Public Fishing Access Improvement Project. **Unanimously carried.**
 - D. **Motion** by Ziehm/Slater to approve AEM Round 17 tier-4 project payment to Mapleland Farms (\$10,000) and closeout 2-year contract #C012399. **Unanimously carried.**
 - E. **Motion** by Ziehm/Fedler to approve Time Extension Amendment Request for AgNPS Round 26 Contract #C701443 Foote NMP. **Unanimously carried.**
 - F. **Motion** by Fedler/Ziehm to approve Time Extension Amendment Request for CRF Round 5 Contract #C012311 Interseeder Green Cover. **Unanimously carried.**

- G. **Motion** by Slater/Ziehm to approve County Resolution No. 14 (01/19/2024), which states: *Resolved, that pursuant to New York State law, the per diem rate for members of the governing body of the Soil and Water Conservation District for performing services as directors of the District be set at a per diem rate of \$50.00. Unanimously carried.*
- H. **Motion** by Ziehm/Slater to approve mileage reimbursement to a director who submits a request for mileage reimbursement and be reimbursed at the county mileage rate at the time of request. **Unanimously carried.**
- I. **Motion** by Skellie/Slater to approve purchase of a Square Reader for credit card purchases (\$105). **Unanimously carried.**
- J. **Motion** by Ziehm/Fedler to approve obtaining quotes for a payroll service. **Unanimously carried.**

RESOLUTION

Motion by Ziehm, Seconded by Fedler to Approve

Authorizing participation by the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District in the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program created pursuant to section 11-b of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law.

WHEREAS, the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee has issued a Request for Proposals inviting Soil and Water Conservation Districts or groups of Districts acting jointly to submit proposals for funding under Round 30 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program; and

WHEREAS, funds are available for projects that consist of activities that will reduce, abate, control, or prevent nonpoint source pollution originating from agricultural sources; and

WHEREAS, the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District has determined that certain work, as described in its application and attachments, (the “Project”) is in the public interest and consists of activities that will reduce and/or prevent nonpoint source pollution from agricultural sources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District Board

- 1) That **Corrina Aldrich**, District Manager, or such person’s successor in office, is the representative to act on behalf of the District’s governing body in all matters related to State Assistance under Round 30 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program. The representative is authorized to make application, execute the contract for State Assistance, submit project documentation, and otherwise act for the District governing body in all matters related to the Project;
- 2) That the District agrees to fund its portion of the cost of the Project as provided in the application;
- 3) That one (1) certified copy of this Resolution be prepared and attached to the application for funding under Round 30 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program;
- 4) That this resolution take effect immediately.

RESOLUTION

Motion by Fedler, Seconded by Ziehm to Approve

Authorizing participation by the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District in the Climate Resilient Farming Program created pursuant to section 11-b of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law.

WHEREAS, the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee has issued a Request for Proposals inviting Soil and Water Conservation Districts or groups of Districts acting jointly to submit proposals for funding under Round 8 of the Climate Resilient Farming Program; and

WHEREAS, funds are available for projects that consist of activities that will reduce, abate, control, or prevent nonpoint source pollution originating from agricultural sources; and

WHEREAS, the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District has determined that certain work, as described in its application and attachments, (the “Project”) is in the public interest and consists of activities that will reduce and/or prevent nonpoint source pollution from agricultural sources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District Board

- 1) That **Corrina Aldrich**, District Manager, or such person's successor in office, is the representative to act on behalf of the District's governing body in all matters related to State Assistance under Round 8 of the Climate Resilient Farming Program. The representative is authorized to make application, execute the contract for State Assistance, submit project documentation, and otherwise act for the District governing body in all matters related to the Project;
- 2) That the District agrees to fund its portion of the cost of the Project as provided in the application;
- 3) That one (1) certified copy of this Resolution be prepared and attached to the application for funding under Round 8 Climate Resilient Farming Program;
- 4) That this resolution take effect immediately.

6. The next Board meeting will be held on March 21, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

7. **Motion** by Ziehm/Fedler to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m. **Unanimously carried.**

Lori Sheehan, Secretary

Director

Reports Attached: *Treasurer Report, District Reports, NYS-SWCC Report*

District Mangers Report 2-12-2024

State Reports and work on Creating an Annual Report

AEM-dialogue with Hunter Sutherland on his Bridge project and permit-timesheets for Round 17 funding handed into Amber.

LAP-Landowner Assistance Program-several site visits with Korey, forestry, ponds, and stream questions - have one scheduled for next week in Lake George for a bridge/culvert problem on a private road that serves 25 residents for Camp Andrew's Way on Lake George-I have called Lake George Park Conservancy and Lake George Association to help combine expertise on problem solving with this. It will require a Park Commission Permit as well as DEC and ARMY Corps. Told them an engineer would need to be involved as well.

MAP Municipal Assistance Program-site visits to Putnam Recreational Park one with Korey and then again with Army Corp Biologist, Town DPW Supervisor and engineer to discuss bank sloughing issue, it has dropped away at least 2 feet. Bank is on the shore of Lake Champlain and basically failing at the bottom very similar to Mattison Road and Farley Roads in Town of Hartford. Vergennes clay soils that are not faring well with the amount of rain we have received this summer. The Pavilion that was built on site is very close to the top of the failing bank (within 15') and they are looking into possibility of tearing down and reconstruction farther away from the edge of the bank to save it. Looking for remediation suggestions and what would be needed for permits.

Part B Rexleigh project was completed, and report submitted to the State along with the Water Quality Monitoring project, invoice for materials submitted by the Town for reimbursement for a portion of the funds.

Grants

AGNPS Round 24 Walkers and Marns-closeout in progress-preliminary payments made.

AGNPS Round 25 Ideal Dairy-closeout in progress.

Round 26-Footes are ready to move ahead, we need updated engineering details from Aaron Weiss to be able to bid project out.

CAFO Round 1 Marns - they have received 2 bids and one refusal and have been working with their lending institution to acquire financing to get started with his project, unfortunately their loan officer died unexpectedly, and they have new loan officer that now needs to understand the project and finances.

CAFO Round 3 Woody Hill-have hired a contractor for excavation (Fane), they now need to find a concrete contractor to work with, suggested they ask Fanes who they liked to work with and also that they had worked with Lancaster Poured Walls on the Chambers project. Time extension request submitted to Rayn and Bethany.

CRF Round 8- planning and discussion stages with farms that have potential for applying.

Miscellaneous-

Newsletter articles

Linc-pass update, Korey has his and will be able to jump right in when he returns.

Fielded calls about Ag assessments and tree sale ordering.

Updating Watershed and Wetlands PowerPoint to be applicable to the Cambridge area for MUD U presentation on Sunday evening Feb 18, 2024

Job Announcement sent out to various venues and got signed into Handshake an online job platform utilized by many colleges and universities, including Paul Smiths and SUNY ESF

SWCC led Ag Assessment Zoom meeting.

Upper Hudson Zoom meeting.

CDEA special Zoom meeting.

CDEA planning for symposium and fertilizer tablets.

DEC zooms regarding public comments on stream permits and proposed updates to wetland classification.

NYS Forest Owners Meeting.

Drought Survey with Lake Champlain Sea Grant.

Upcoming

HOOWRA-annual meeting via zoom.

CWICNY Zoom meeting.

Mud U Watersheds presentation.

State Committee State Program Committee Zoom.

Water Quality Symposium 3-12 to 3-15.

District Technician Report – Bob Kalbfliesh – February 2024

AEM

- Rollin Hills Farm – I assisted Darren Tyler with some NRCS wetland determination questions he had.

Landowner Assistance: Helped at the counter with soil sampling questions.

Ag Assessments

Ag assessments have been very busy.

I have notified all the town assessors that NRCS will be changing from our current GIS program to a cloud-based Arc-GIS – Pro Program. There will be a learning curve. This will happen March 1st. I cannot guarantee after March 1st that any soil group worksheets will be completed for this year's assessment.

Meetings Attended & Planned

Whitman's Winter Meeting, 2/14 – Greenwich

NY Farm Show, 2/22 – 24, Syracuse

Technician's Report-Amber Luke- February 13, 2024

Ag Non-Point Source-

- Round 28-
 - Kenyon Hill- The farm requested a site visit to go over grant logistics and details (1/12/24). Korey and I went out to the farm and went over money, contract dates, and timeline of funding with the farm. We discussed getting finalized engineering designs and bids in the near future. The farm would like to start construction this summer, but they are waiting on a large family decision of building another barn as this may change some of the transfer lines and where they go. In the meantime, they are figuring out logistics of getting their storage pumped out as it is getting full.

Climate Resilient Farming (CRF)-

- Round 6-
 - Conducted a site visit to show Korey the site and go over the plan with him. We walked the site and checked on the tree plantings that were done in Spring of 2023. There is still some substantial erosion on site and a lot of water being channelized down the current access road. The farm would like to start construction of the grassed waterways in May. We discussed engineering requirements for BMP's as they are still working on securing an engineer for portions of the project.
 - I did get an email from Schoharie County regarding CrannMor the company that John Beavers was consulting with regarding a strange bid packet she received from CrannMor and I told her we had not received anything like that to date.
- Round 7-
 - Met with Hunter Southerland on 2/1/2024 to discuss logistics of the grant with him and answer questions that he had. The plan of work was submitted to Ryan on time. He is reviewing them now. Logistics of the grant were discussed including state cost share, bids, engineering, and time keeping. The farm is excited to get going with the grant as soon as we get a finalized contract in place.
 - Plan of Work for Luncrest's (Alternative Manure Management) project was submitted before the February 1st deadline. Ryan is reviewing.
- Round 8-
 - Met with Jan King to go over which different funding options. Jan and Mike Contessa agree that going after CRF Funds in March and really driving home the alternative manure management of the satellite storage allowing them to better manage the manure with conservation and GHG in mind. Mike Contessa is going to work on pulling some numbers together for me in the meantime.

AEM-

- REPORTING: Closeout is being worked on. I will be submitting an interim report year 1 of the 2-year period so that we can make sure we get half of our money before the sate blackout period.
- Tier 4 Closeout- We received the invoices from Mapleland and the as-builts from the engineer. The project came in a little above what we had budgeted but we did have some money left over from the farms that implemented Tier 4 cover crop projects. I asked Ryan if this would be ok to move to Mapleland regardless of BMP's installed and he said yes that would be ok. The only requirement is that the farms had to be already enrolled in the AEM tier 4 cost share program.
- Conducted a site visit with Faith Parker and Sarah Parker. They are interested in learning more about ways that they can get the most out of their land while protecting their natural resources. I have set up a tier 2 visit with them for March 22nd as they are most readily available on Fridays.
- Ongoing: Working on a variety of 3A and 3B plans for landowners that are interested in going further with the AEM process.

Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition (UHRWC):

- Meeting attended via zoom on February 8, 2023
- This was a short meeting just to touch base on grants, potential legislative tour, and website projects.
- Completed the minutes from the January meeting as a part of my secretary duties.

2024 Tree Sale:

- We are waiting to activate the online site until after we send out the order forms in our newsletter. We are working to get the Newsletter out ASAP. Last year we had a lot of loyal customers not able to order due to the online site getting activated early!
- We were getting a lot of phone calls due to the Tree site saying that it was starting February 1st. I have since gone in and changed the site to say that it is coming soon. I also went into the site and changed the pickup site on the order page (used to say 2530 route 40) to the correct location.
- The card reader that Lyndsy bought was for an apple phone. Unfortunately, none of the current staff has an apple phone. I believe this external card reader will work with the iPad that we bought for the Drone but I think last year we had issues connecting to the internet at the fairgrounds.
 - We can purchase an Android card reader for \$10.00 but the android one uses a headset jack and on the newer phones they may not have a headset jack)
 - OR we can purchase a Square Reader that works with chip cards and tap (contactless) forms of payment for \$59.00. This would be able to connect to any device via Bluetooth and using any phone internet data or Wi-Fi to process payments. You can get a docking station for an extra \$39.00. This just keeps it in place and makes it a larger stand-alone item that holds the card reader.
 - Or there are square terminals that can be purchased for \$300.00 with a hub (extra \$49.00) to access the internet.

Trainings/Meetings Attending or Attended-

- Attended a SWCD Agriculture Assessment Review webinar on 2/6/23.
- The next SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled to be held on 2/20/2023.

Miscellaneous:

- State Aid Reporting - Annual Report Review and Part B Report Review and edits
- Two newsletter articles were submitted to Lori for the Newsletter, (AEM Tier 4 Cost Share & Envirothon)
- Envirothon Outreach – Sent basic emails letting schools know the date for the 2024 regional Envirothon Event. (Greenwich, Cambridge, Whitehall, Hudson Falls and Granville).
- Working on my Mud U presentation. I shared the event on out Facebook and I sent an email to Kate about the event to post to Ag Clips.

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 4 Report – February 2024
Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

2023 State Aid to Districts – DUE 2/15: All 2023 annual reporting documents (State Aid, Treasurers Report, Annual Report, etc.) are now available on the SWCC SharePoint <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>, under Resources for Districts – State Aid to Districts. All reports are due to the State Committee by **February 15, 2024**. Please contact ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

Payments and Blackout Period: We are approaching the Blackout Period for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. To have payments processed in a timely manner this winter/early spring, please email Claims for Payment (CFPs), the State Committee Coversheet, and any other required program reports by **Friday, February 23rd, 2024**, to the appropriate State Committee program manager and Maureen Irish (Maureen.irish@agriculture.ny.gov). Once the claim is approved by the program manager, they'll send an email with instructions for submittal to the Business Service Center. Please remember to only submit claims for payment for contracts that have been fully executed. Additionally, please note that this does not apply to State Aid to Districts/Performance Measure payments as those are processed separately. If you have any questions, please contact Maureen Irish or your Regional AEA.

AEM Base Program - Options for AEM Base Round 17 Payments: A reminder that the Final Report/Close Out package for Round 17 of the AEM Base Program is due to the State Committee by **February 29th, 2024**, (please upload files to your District's AEM17 folder on SharePoint and email your Regional AEA and Greg Albrecht once uploaded). AEM17 close out packages and their CFPs won't likely be paid until after the Blackout Period if sent after February 23rd (depending on the number of Districts submitting and needs for report updates). While it varies, that could mean delays in payments until July 2024.

Any District that would prefer a portion of their reimbursements made this winter/early spring could submit an AEM17 interim report and CFP to reimburse for technical assistance hours and testing services and/or a CFP for a 90% project payment (unless they've already been sent to us for all Tier 4 projects) for work performed during the AEM17 contract period (January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023). Both are simpler reporting efforts/packages than the entire close out and can be reviewed, updated if needed, and approved for payment if sent by February 23rd.

Districts choosing this approach would then submit their AEM17 final report / close out package by February 29th with a final CFP that reflects all the prior amounts requested (including any interim report or project payment CFPs described, above). Please contact greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

State Programs Advisory Committee Meeting: Please save the morning of **February 20th, 2024**, for the next meeting of the State Programs Advisory Committee (SPAC). This meeting will take place via Webex from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. Questions can be directed to Bethany Bzduch (Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov) or your Regional AEA.

February SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on February 27th**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. **Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.**

District Operations Sub-Committee: The SWCC will be re-establishing the District Operations Sub-Committee to engage with SWCD partners on all matters relating to District Operations. We are tentatively planning to hold a meeting in April 2024 to start working on updating the District Operations Manual. As we prepare for an April meeting, we first need to develop a list of SWCD representatives. Ideally, we are hoping to find at least two SWCD representatives per CDEA Division that are willing to participate on this committee, so all regions of the State can be represented. Any interested candidate can reach out to Victor DiGiacomo (victor.digiacomio@agriculture.ny.gov) and Ben Luskin (ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov) by **March 1, 2024**.

AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2024: NYSAGM is partnering once again with the Sand County Foundation to present the AEM Leopold Conservation Award to recognize landowners who inspire others with their dedication to ethical land, water, and wildlife habitat management on agricultural land. New York's award recipient will be presented with the \$10,000 award provided by the Sand County Foundation, in partnership with the Department, American Farmland Trust, and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Formal announcements and application materials will be emailed to Districts the first week of February 2024. The deadline for applications is **May 15th, 2024**.

Tools and References Wiki Update: The Tools and References Wiki has just been updated for 2024. This is a useful resource for new employees to learn about resources used in New York State conservation planning and design and related fields. Check it out! <https://www.nyscdea.com/useful-resources/>

Statewide E-mail Distribution: The SWCC maintains separate e-mail distribution lists that are used to distribute information and notices to SWCCs, NYS SWCC Voting and Advisory Members, and other SWCC partners. If you would like an e-mail to be distributed, please send your request to Melissa Gordon (melissa.gordon@agriculture.ny.gov). In your request, please be sure to specify who the intended audience should be, and we will get it sent out to the correct distribution list.

New York State Grants Management Transition: New York State (NYS) has transitioned grants management activities that were previously performed in the Grants Gateway to the Statewide Financial System (SFS). SFS is NYS government's accounting and financial management system used to manage contracts and payments. Beginning January 2024, Grants Gateway will cease operations and entities with grant agreements must use the SFS Vendor Portal to perform business functions for grant programs. Grantees doing business with NYS will access SFS through the SFS Vendor Portal, <https://www.sfs.ny.gov/>. Training materials, including videos and step-by-step instructions for various topics on grants management-related tasks in SFS, are available within the SFS Vendor Portal. For questions or assistance using SFS, contact the SFS Help Desk at helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

2024 NCDEA Don Aron Scholarship Announcement: If you're thinking about expanding your knowledge and professional growth with college/university classes, here's a great opportunity for you. The NCDEA Don Aron Scholarship Award application is open to any conservation district employee or their immediate family member, along with a few other eligibility requirements. Applicants may request up to \$1,000 in assistance. Applications must submit all required documents to be eligible for review along with active/accessible contact information. Deadline to apply is **March 15th, 2024**. <https://www.ncdea.us/dascholarship>

Other Events

Webinar: Effectiveness of Nutrient Management for Reducing Nutrient Losses from Agricultural Fields: The US EPA Water Research Webinar Series will host a webinar to discuss two investigations focused on nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) and emphasizes the need for government agencies to work together to address potential economic losses due to implementation of lower fertilizer rates for water quality improvement. **February 28th, 2024 02:00 PM**
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_u_pA8zrgTPihqh7T-FWWpw#/registration

Other Funding

SOGL 2024 Funding Opportunity: The Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program is soliciting proposals to benefit fish, wildlife, habitat, and water quality in the Great Lakes basin. The program will award up to \$10.6 million in grants in 2024 to improve and enhance: 1) stream, riparian and coastal habitats to benefit species; 2) water quality in the Great Lakes and its tributaries. Details about this funding opportunity are provided in the Request for Proposals. The submission deadline for **pre-proposals** is **February 14th, 2024**. <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/sustain-our-great-lakes-program/sustain-our-great-lakes-request-proposals-2024>