



CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Conservation in Action

2021 Annual Report

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Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District to enhance and protect the natural resources of Cayuga County through “hands-on” implementation of best management practices.

Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District**STAFF**

Doug Kierst, CPESC, CPSWQ	<i>Executive Director</i>
Brian Hall, CPESC, CCA, CNMP	<i>Nutrient Management Specialist</i>
Jason Cuddeback, CCA	<i>Grazing Specialist</i>
Valerie Horning	<i>Conservation District Technician</i>
Tyler Knapp, CCA	<i>Watershed Conservation Specialist</i>
Timothy Schneider, NYSECCP	<i>Watershed Conservation Specialist</i>
Wanda Jakaub	<i>Principal Account Clerk</i>
Eva Champion	<i>Senior Account Clerk Typist</i>
Lisa Miller	<i>Senior Typist</i>
Mike Riley	<i>Working Foreman</i>
Mike Warren	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Tim Lozier	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Sean McCarthy	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Al Noga	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Denise Dixon	<i>Cleaner</i>

2021 Board of Directors

Ray Lockwood	<i>Chairman, Farm Bureau</i>
James Young	<i>Vice Chairman, Member at Large</i>
Tricia Kerr	<i>County Legislator</i>
Paul Pinckney	<i>County Legislator</i>
Roger Conner	<i>Member, Grange</i>
Terry Baxter	<i>Member at Large</i>
Slade Cox	<i>Member at Large</i>

“This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live in.”

- Theodore Roosevelt

A message from the Executive Director

We can all agree that we need water to survive, but when it comes down in the frequency and volume that it did in 2021, it can (and did) generate a lot of concerns throughout the County watersheds.

Heavy rains in July, August & October created significant runoff events that, in normal years, may not have had the same extreme results. Frequent rainfall also occurred between the larger events and did not allow for the adequate drying out of the soils, therefore reducing its’ moisture holding capacity, further compounding the runoff effects. Cayuga SWCD Staff quickly responded to the recurring calls and completed site visits to assist Municipalities and private landowners address the flooding and drainage concerns that developed. Site planning to address potential remediation to the issues is still ongoing.

The Cayuga SWCD is fortunate to work with an incredible agricultural community. Despite the heavy rains, the farms that have been implementing and managing Best Management Practices designed to protect water quality, saw minimal field erosion impacts from the storms. Some Agricultural BMPs are designed to “slow water down”, some to “spread it out” and others to “soak it in”, which is *THE* recipe for success.

About Cayuga County SWCD

As the result of petitions and resolutions submitted to the Cayuga County Board of Supervisors (today the County Legislature) by the Farm Bureau, Grange, Dairymen's League, and other farm organizations, the Cayuga County Soil Conservation District was formed on August 8, 1944. Cayuga County is well known for its abundance of productive farmland and high quality water. The foresight of the governing body to protect the natural resource needs located within the County proved to be a good investment. Agriculture is the predominant economic engine of the County.

Over the past 75 years, we have expanded to include Wastewater Management, Nutrient Management, Stormwater Management, and Erosion and Sediment Control Programs.

Today, we are the local agency that many community members, landowners and government agencies “go to first” with their natural resource related problems and concerns. We take a hands on approach to evaluating a concern by providing technical assistance to identify potential solutions and coordinate the implementation of the corrective measures that may be needed utilizing our trained staff and our network of partners.

The Value of the SWCD in Cayuga County

Since it was established by the County Board of Supervisors in August of 1944, the Cayuga SWCD has been actively involved with the protection of natural resources throughout the County. The benefits that come with having a local, technical program dedicated to resource concerns includes the immediate availability to provide important technical assistance, local knowledge of the landowners and the environmental resources, an extensive network of partner agencies at the State and Federal levels and the ability to look at the broad picture of the landscape.

Agricultural Assistance:

The role that agriculture plays in the economy of Cayuga County is substantial. As a result, farms and farm businesses need to remain viable and sustainable to provide healthy, local food, maintain a diversity of open space and continue to provide needed jobs. According to the most recent Census of Agriculture (2017), Cayuga County ranked #2 in NYS in the total market value of agricultural products sold with \$287,853,000. When our favorable agricultural environment is combined with statistics that indicate the County has the most freshwater shoreline in NYS, a healthy balance must be obtained. The Cayuga SWCD has the opportunity to have a significant impact throughout our community as a result of its capability to work directly with private landowners as well as local municipalities.

The programs provided by the Cayuga SWCD to assist agricultural operations in remaining sustainable and viable include the Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM), assistance with nutrient management planning, the promotion of soil health practices, oversight of water quality protecting best management practice (BMP) implementation, and conservation mowing and seeding. In 2021, the Cayuga SWCD assisted with the implementation of on farm agricultural BMPs totaling \$1,385,165. The landowners contributed \$403,165 towards the costs, while State funding was leveraged to cover the additional \$982,754. In the future contracted NYS Grants there are 67 participating farms that will be contributing \$4,636,632 towards the BMP's for a total of \$13,908,798 of new projects. The funding is focused directly on agricultural BMP implementation for water quality improvements. This is in addition to the on-going conservation work that farms complete utilizing their own resources. The Cayuga SWCD works closely with our Federal partners, including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to promote additional conservation programs, many of which are available to assist with BMP implementation projects.

Non-Agricultural Residential and Municipal Assistance:

The Cayuga SWCD also works closely with the non-agricultural landowners and municipalities throughout the County. We further our efforts on protecting water quality through programs that focus on stormwater management, wastewater management, aquatic vegetation control, streambank and shoreline stabilization, proper site drainage, critical area stabilization/seeding, roadside stabilization measures and the proper recycling of yard waste.

Cayuga County is home to a very diverse collection of water bodies. Lake Ontario defines the northern boundary of the County which also includes all or parts of three Finger Lakes - Cayuga, Owasco, and Skaneateles. In addition there are several smaller water bodies including Cross Lake, Duck Lake, Lake Como, and Otter Lake. The Cayuga SWCD's Aquatic Vegetation Control Program's objectives are to increase the accessibility and usability of the County's water bodies, while seeking to leave the lakes in the most ecologically intact manner possible. Over the past 5 years, we have removed an average of 1,790 cubic yards the equivalent to 149 large dump truck loads per year of vegetation from the waterbodies that we harvest.

We continue to collaborate with our local Highway Department Superintendents to identify locations in need of assistance. The stabilization of exposed and eroding critical areas continues to be an important area of focus for the Cayuga SWCD. We have worked alongside the Highway Department personnel to address their local concerns including culvert replacements, rock lining of road ditches and installing streambank stabilization measures to protect important infrastructure. Utilizing the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) protocol, the Cayuga SWCD was also able to evaluate 195 culvert crossings in Cayuga County.

Being located in the Finger Lakes Region has many benefits, primarily an abundance of clean, fresh water. Farming operations and many others benefit from the availability of clean water. For instance, the tourism industry including recreational boating, hiking and fishing opportunities thrive throughout the County.

***“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap,
but by the seeds that you plant”***

- Robert Louis Stevenson

District Services

A fawn hiding at one of the District's wildlife seeding sites



No-Till Conservation Seeding

The Cayuga SWCD uses a tractor with a Truax no-till drill to seed for various projects, including: pasture, hay fields, wildlife and pollinator habitat, and cover crops. The Truax drill is capable of handling the wide variety of seed sizes and textures necessary for all of these projects. The seedings provide a variety of benefits to landowners, including reduced erosion, better soil health, and improved habitat. If you are interested in seeding, you should contact Jason Cuddeback.

Conservation Mowing

The Cayuga SWCD owns two mowers that are used in our conservation mowing program. The boom mower has a floating brush-hog style head on an arm that gives it a reach of over 15 feet. It is best for trimming back overgrown hedgerows, ditches and roadsides. The "bat-wing" deck mower can mow a 15 foot width in one pass, making it ideal for overgrown pastures and field conservation programs. Over the last few years, the Cayuga SWCD has been increasing the number of acres mowed and trimmed. **In 2021, the Cayuga SWCD mowed 15 acres of wildlife habitat and approximately 181 miles of conservation ditches, field edges and roadsides.**



Bat Wing Deck can cut 15 feet in one pass

Critical Area Seeding

Soil erosion and sedimentation are leading causes of water quality degradation. The Cayuga SWCD uses many tools to establish grass cover on bare soils, from road-side drainage ditches to erosion control on slopes and even establishing athletic fields. Our technicians work with local seed distributors to create formulas that work for any type of situation. Using our 1,000 gallon hydroseeder, the Cayuga SWCD can quickly respond to requests for assistance. The Cayuga SWCD provides hydroseeding for county, town and village governmental departments. **In 2021, the Cayuga SWCD completed critical area seeding on 6 miles of eroding roadbanks and disturbed areas.**



Cayuga SWCD Staff hydroseeding a grass waterway



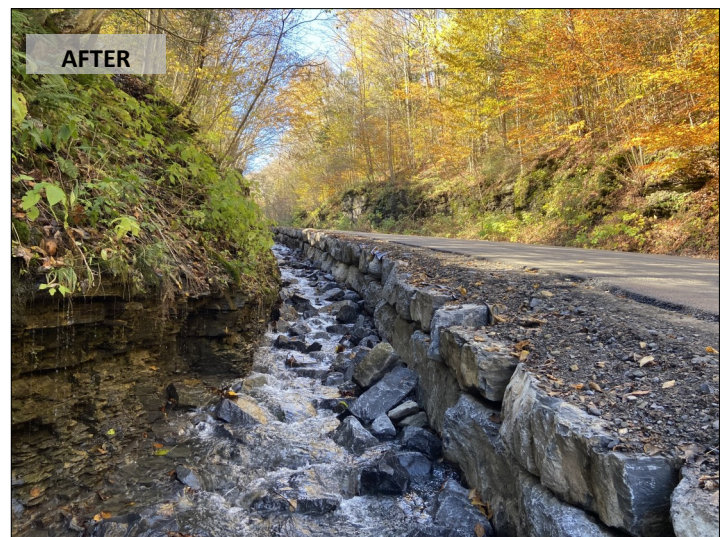
Calibrating a manure spreader for a CNMP involves weighing the spreader when it's full and when it's empty in order to determine the application rate

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning

Nutrient management plans help farmers balance their nutrient applications (manure and fertilizer) with the needs of the crops. Soil samples are taken on all of the fields to help determine this balance. The nutrient management plan also prescribes crop rotations that will keep soil erosion rates below a defined "tolerable" level. By following this plan, a farm can reduce erosion and nutrient losses from their fields, thereby helping to improve water quality and reduce fertilizer costs. A nutrient management planner must also look at the farmstead facilities. Barnyards, feed storage areas, and milking centers are all potential sources of nutrients that need to be addressed. A plan that covers both the agronomic (field) practices, as well as the farmstead, is called a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). CNMP's must be updated annually.

Scott Gulf Road Stream Stabilization Project

The Cayuga SWCD in partnership with the Cayuga County Highway Department was able to stabilize 2,100 feet of a tributary to Grout Brook in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed, as well as provide road shoulder stability to Scott Gulf Road. Recent severe storms have resulted in significant flooding and damage to the tributary and road shoulder, making the road unsafe to travel as well as causing severe erosion and sedimentation to Grout Brook. The District installed stacked limestone in areas where a shale wall was pinching the stream and road to provide road stability while improving the flow conditions. Similarly, the District installed grade control structures along the stream reach to reduce the slope of the stream to reduce stream velocity, promote aquatic habitat, and build the stream bed back to its natural state after years of incision. This project was partially funded by a New York State Water Quality Improvement Project.



Assistance to Municipalities & Organizations

The Cayuga SWCD was able to close out an Owasco Lake Watershed Road Ditch Stabilization grant in 2021 which stabilized over 25 miles of road side ditches where many BMPs were utilized such as rock lined channel, check dams, sediment traps, hydroseeding, outlet protection, and road shoulder stabilization. The District worked with local Town and County Highway Departments and utilized their operators and equipment as in-kind cost, which allowed the grant funding to be stretched further so more projects were able to be completed. This project was partially funded by a New York State Water Quality Improvement Project.



Owasco Lake Watershed Road/Stream Crossing Assessments

The Cayuga SWCD received funds through the NYS DEC WQIP to assess the approximately 250 road/stream crossings in the Owasco Lake Watershed, in a multi-year grant. Using protocols and training provided by the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC), the District assessed approximately 195 crossings in 2021. The NAACC provides protocols for road-stream crossings (culverts and bridges) to assess and score crossings for fish and wildlife passability, as well as culvert condition and other data useful for evaluating risk of failure.



2021 Storm Damage Assessment

In 2021, Cayuga County received three major storm events that caused severe damage to the southern half of the County. Many landowners reached out to the District for technical support, permitting assistance, and coordinating clean up efforts for restoration. District staff conducted over 75 site assessments as a result of these three storms and provided information to their local municipality for flood relief funding while also seeking additional funding opportunities for the future.



Aquatic Vegetation Control (AVC) Program

The AVC program provides relief to the County's waterbodies that have become impaired by dense vegetative growth. Due to nutrient inputs and sunlight, aquatic vegetation is an unavoidable reality in lake ecosystems. From hindering navigation and swimming, to creating water and air quality issues during mass die off events, aquatic vegetation can dramatically interfere with people's use of the lakes. The Cayuga County Aquatic Vegetation Control Program's objective is to increase the accessibility and usability of the County's waterbodies, while seeking to leave the lakes as ecologically intact as possible.

The District's AVC program consists of two boats, an on-shore conveyor, and a small dump truck. The largest boat is a paddlewheel type boat that is designed to access heavy vegetation in shallow water. This boat cuts and picks up the weeds. The second boat is a transport boat, used on the larger lakes to cut down transport time from the cutting area to the truck, increasing the efficiency of the program. The weeds are off-loaded onto the dump truck using the conveyor, and taken to nearby farms where the vegetation is used as compost to enrich the soil.

The water bodies that our program covers are Owasco Lake, Cayuga Lake, Otter Lake, Lake Como and Fair Haven Bay. Some of the common weeds found in our lakes include: Common Elodea, Starry Stonewort, Nitella, Eel Grass, Milfoil, and European Frogbit.

In 2021, the Aquatic Vegetation Control Program removed from Cayuga County waterbodies: • 2,353 cubic yards (Yd³) Aquatic Vegetation (equivalent to 196 large dump truck loads) • 305,890 dry pounds Aquatic Vegetation • 6,420 pounds of Nitrogen • 544 pounds of Phosphorus • 3,408 pounds of Potassium



Harvester Boat operated by Tim Lozier



Sean McCarthy using the conveyor to empty a full boat of weeds.

Volume (Yd ³)	Owasco Lake	Cayuga Lake	Fair-Haven Bay	Lake Como
2021	566	596	871	68
2020	451	673	382	114
2019	489	756	252	138
2018	474	496	780	38
2017	872	627	91	214

Road Ditch and Critical Area Hydroseeding Program

District Staff assisted towns in Cayuga County to hydroseed road side ditches that are cleaned of accumulated sediment to reestablish vegetation and prevent future erosion. The District was able to hydroseed 6 miles of road ditch in 2021. This was considerably lower than normal due to the abnormally wet growing season and limited amount of ditch stabilization work that was completed due to work schedules affected by COVID precautions.





Agricultural Environmental Management Program

The County's **Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)** Program is a voluntary, watershed based, locally-led effort to protect and enhance the environment while maintaining the viability of agriculture in Cayuga County.

The AEM Program in Cayuga County is administered through the Cayuga SWCD and it is designed to assist farmers in protecting the natural resources that they depend on. Through AEM participation our farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to our community, food systems, the economy, and the environment. Local AEM resource professionals assist farms through assessment, planning and implementation needs, while targeting local, State, and Federal technical and financial resources that may be available for eligible farms. Farms and/or landowners interested in participating in the AEM Program are encouraged to reach out the Cayuga SWCD or visit www.cayugaswcd.org for additional information.



Benefits of AEM Participation:

- Potential funding for planning and implementation of on farm Best Management Practices
- Documentation of current environmental stewardship activities on farms
- Science-based, farmer-driven, decision-making and goal-setting
- Increased awareness of how farm practices affect the surrounding environment both on and off the farm

Examples of BMPs that have been implemented on Cayuga County farms through the AEM Program:

- Manure Management Systems, including waste storages and transfer systems
- Silage Leachate Management
- Erosion Control Systems, including Cover Crop, Water & Sediment Control Basins and grassed or lined waterways
- Prescribed Grazing Systems, including Laneways, Water Source Development and Fencing

Program Development and Management

The District had a successful year full of programmatic updates. As part of a phased approach, the Cayuga SWCD plans to reinvigorate the vision of the AEM Program to better meet the needs of the District staff, the watershed, and its farmers. As part of the process, the Cayuga SWCD has continued to implement a centralized database that will better enable staff to prioritize workloads and improve customer service. Additionally, the Cayuga SWCD has developed and utilized standardized planning templates to accommodate increased demands for nutrient management planning across the County. Moving forward, the Cayuga SWCD will adaptively manage the AEM Program to continuously meet the needs of an ever changing industry and environmental concerns across the County's watersheds.

2021 AEM Outreach & Education



The foundation of the Cayuga SWCD's AEM Program revolves around providing education and outreach to not only producers but our partner agencies, watershed groups, and the community. Through this education we can effectively and efficiently work together to ensure Cayuga County's watersheds are a healthy and productive landscape for all residents.

The Cayuga SWCD utilizes fact sheets, brochures, social media and in person meetings (farm visits, presentations, and workshops) to facilitate program outreach. For more information about the Cayuga SWCD's outreach and education initiatives, follow us on Facebook or subscribe to our YouTube channel. The Cayuga SWCD regularly posts educational videos about ongoing watershed efforts and stewardship activities happening across the County!



Agricultural Environmental Management Program - Partnership Activities -

As part of the AEM Program and Cayuga County's Strategic AEM Plan, the District spent a significant amount of time working with local, State and Federal partners to promote natural resource conservation and the promotion of agriculture across the County's watersheds.

Some of the AEM Round 16 Partnership Activities included:

Owasco Lake 9 Element Plan

The District, in partnership with State officials, Ecologic, and Tompkins County SWCD, worked collectively to provide aggregate data for modeling purposes. Additionally, the partnership produced recommended -target- best management practices, realistic goals for implementation and estimated costs associated to meet the goals.



"...a type of clean water plan that details a community's water quality concerns and a strategy to address these concerns." https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/9efaq17.pdf

Our Owasco Project

Farmer-led | Facts driven | Flexible

The Our Owasco project is working to promote a better understanding of farmers and to recognize, value and accelerate their efforts to adopt farming practices that help protect the land, and subsequently improve water quality running into the Owasco Lake.

Over the coming months, in support of the long-running AEM work by farmers, SWCDs, and partners, the project will be working with farmers, the Owasco Lake watershed community and local ag professionals to demonstrate, and accelerate, this positive response to farming practice change. The project will be featuring stories of change from the farming community and hosting farmer-focused sessions to share ideas and learn more about soil health topics.



Our Owasco Team - (Left to Right)

Jason Cuddeback - Cayuga SWCD, Tyler Knapp - Cayuga SWCD, John Pickering - Evidn, Steve Cuddeback - Cuddeback Farms, Camille Bouvet-Boisclair - Evidn and Bryson Cochran - Evidn

"Farmers look after the land because we know that what we are working with now is all we are going to have to work with in the future." - Steve Cuddeback

Conservation Kick - 'Conservation through partnerships'

In partnership, the Cayuga SWCD, the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council, and the City of Auburn are leveraging an innovative Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program called 'Conservation Kick,' intended to advance the sale of water quality credits by upstream producers to downstream utilities. Program funding will help cover the costs of installing a water and sediment control basin on a local farm within the Owasco Lake watershed. The City of Auburn invested the required cost share for the grant award to be administered through the OLWMC, demonstrating the city's commitment towards supporting conservation advancements for local agriculture.

"I am encouraged by my experience working with the Cayuga SWCD, the Great Lake Commission, and the City of Auburn to facilitate this project for a local farmer. Everyone has brought a great deal to the table, and this project is an important example of the value of collaboration among local and regional partners to best advance mutual goals towards resource conservation through community service."

- Adam J.P. Effler, PhD



AEM TIER 4 — Round 16 — BMP Implementation

The AEM Tier 4 Implementation Program is a new funding source to the District as of Round 16 (2020-2021). This funding source is used to implement 'shovel-ready' projects that are identified in a producer's plan. The following practices were implemented in 2021:

This District implemented 9 systems under the Rd. 16 AEM Tier 4 project 2020-2021, projects included cover crops, rock lined waterway, prescribed grazing system and two Tier 3 nutrient management plans. Tier 3 nutrient management plans were developed on smaller farms to promote recommended nutrient applications, improve soil health, increase nutrient availability for the crops, improve crop rotations and address soil erosion concerns.



A mix of barley, radish and wheat was planted for cover crops.



3A Nutrient Management Plan



FLEMING, NY

3B Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan

Tier 4 projects designed around implementation of Cayuga SWCD developed Tier 3 nutrient management plans on small farms.



Prescribed Grazing System installed with perimeter fence, water system and pasture seeding for grazing sheep.



- 30.7 ac. Grazing System
- 10 ac. forage/biomass seeding
- 7,000 ft perimeter fence
- 1,768 ft livestock pipeline



BEFORE



AFTER

1,300 ft. rock lined waterway installed in the Owasco Lake Watershed.

AEM 2021 — SOIL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS



Cayuga SWCD assisted with the implementation of 8,100 acres of cover crops.



Cayuga SWCD assisted with the implementation of 2,000 acres of residue/reduced tillage management.



Record number of biological life surveyed



Biological study on Cayuga County Farms



Increased interest in testing alternative farming practices



Increased adoption of No-till & Reduced Tillage Practices

NYS Agricultural Non-Point Source Abatement and Control Program **NYS Climate Resilient Farming Program** **NYS CAFO Waste Storage & Transfer System Program**

These Agricultural Grant Programs are coordinated by the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee through NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets. They are competitive grant programs that award cost-share funding to farmers to address water quality challenges facing farms across NYS. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) play an integral role in the administration of grant funds and provide planning, design, and implementation assistance.

2021 Ag Active Grants "ON THE BOOKS"

- 24 Grants Encompassing 67 Farms
- \$14,082,115 Contracted with NYS and Landowners
- Decreased \$931,583 from 2020

2021 AgNPS BMPs "ON THE GROUND"

- 25 Farms Completed BMPs
- 31+ BMP Systems
- \$982,754 State Share
- \$403,165 Landowner Share
- \$1,385,165 Total Project Costs
- Decreased \$140,897 from 2020



Installed Best Management Practice (BMP) Systems

Structural BMPs

- Erosion Control Basins
- Livestock Exclusion
- Access Road Stabilization
- Waste Storage Facilities
- Waste Transfer
- Runoff Control and Treatment
- Heavy Use Area Stabilization
- Lined Waterway



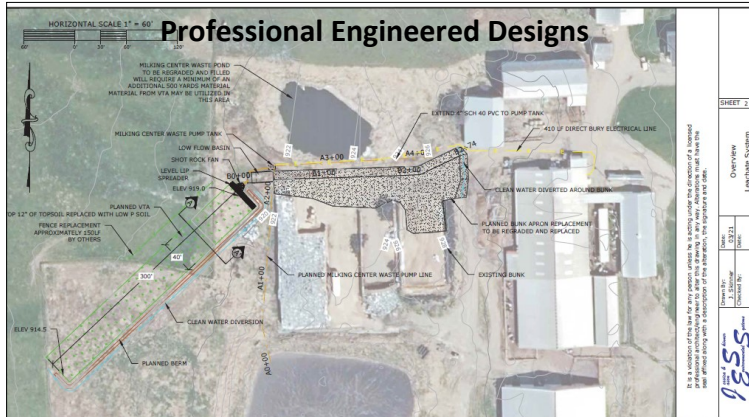
Management BMPs

- Nutrient Management
- Soil Management
- Crop Rotations
- Cover Crops
- Soil Testing and Analysis
- Soil Amendments
- Rotational Grazing



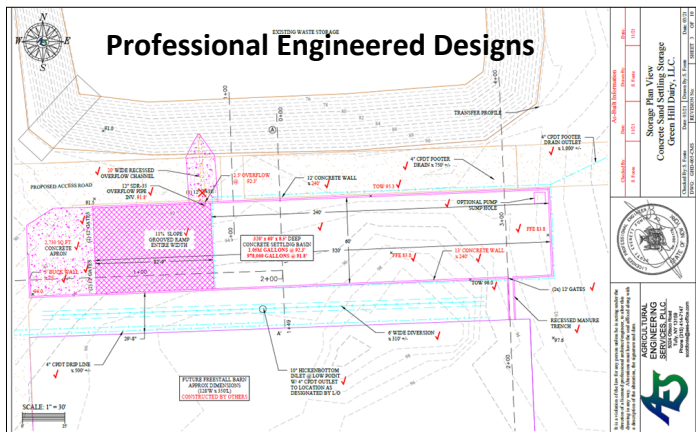
NYS Ag NPS 2021 Installed Best Management Systems Cont.

225 Cow Dairy Farm Milkhouse Waste Pond Decommissioned Milkhouse Waste Transfer Bunk Silo Leachate Collection and Treatment

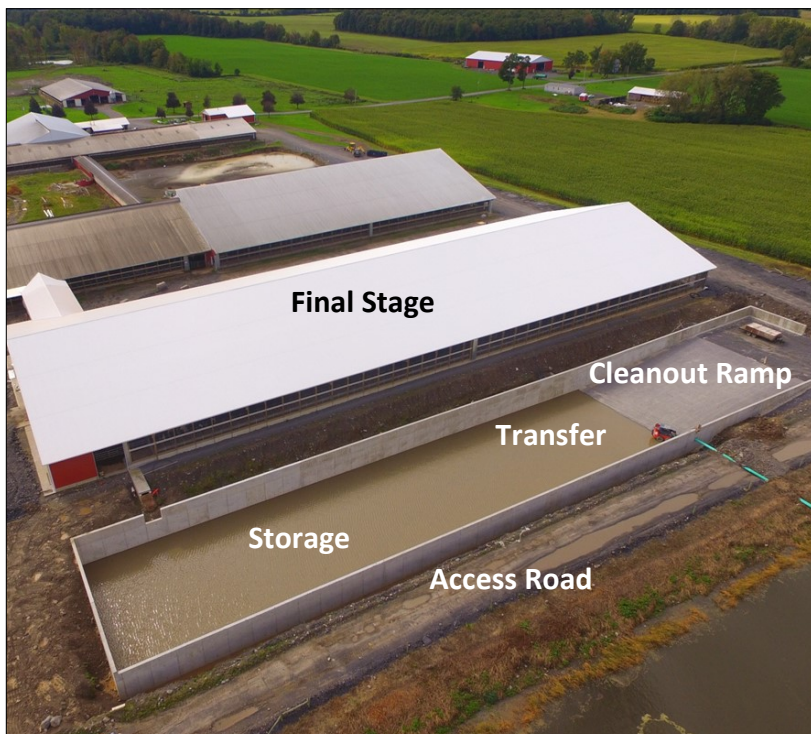


NYS Ag NPS 2021 Installed Best Management Systems Cont.

1500 Cow Dairy Farm 1 Million Gallon Concrete Waste Storage and Transfer System



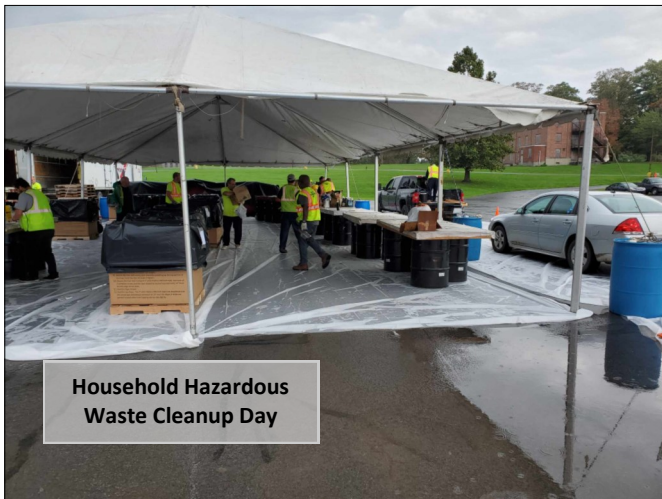
Pre-Construction Meeting
Farm, Engineer , Contractors , SWCD



Community Recycling Events

The Cayuga SWCD partners with the Cayuga County Planning Department and Cornell Cooperative Extension, who act as coordinators for the Tire Roundup. The Cayuga SWCD assists by making facilities, equipment and staff available.

TIRE ROUNDUP— Old tires can be brought in by county residents for a small fee. Lead weights are removed and most of the tires go to NUCOR to supply carbon for steel production. Others are shredded to be reused as road, building and drainage materials. **This year participants recycled approximately 5,000 tires which is equivalent to 83 tons during the event which was held on June 12, 2021**



Household Hazardous
Waste Cleanup Day



Tire Roundup

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEANUP DAY—

Is an opportunity for county residents to responsibly dispose of substances that do not belong in normal garbage, such as pesticides, oil-based paints, and household chemicals that was held at the Natural Resource Center on **October 16, 2021**.

TRADE-A-TREE— County residents have the chance to drop off Christmas trees from the holiday season in exchange for a voucher granting them a free tree seedling. The trees are chipped and used as mulch. **Over 150 trees were traded and recycled in the winter of 2021.**

Be on the lookout for dates of the upcoming 2022 recycling events.

- 2022 Dates -

Spring Electronics—April 9, 2022

(500 vehicles registered)

Tire Roundup—June 25, 2022

(Held at Soil & Water)

Fall Electronics - September 1, 2022

(Details to Follow)

Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Day—October 29, 2022

(Held at Soil & Water)

EDUCATION

Conservation Field Days

Conservation Field Days is an exciting way to give sixth grade students from around Cayuga County the opportunity to become better acquainted with natural resources and the environment. Professionals from various fields conduct short educational programs, enabling the students to learn not only about the subject matter discussed, but also see nature and conservation occupations in action.



John Graham, NYS DEC Forester, teaching on the "Trees of Emerson Park"

In 2021, Conservation Field Days was cancelled due to COVID 19. We look forward to holding the event next year and will re-evaluate the program .



Niles Brown, Retired from Cornell Cooperative Extension, presenting on "You Can Make a Difference" (Birds)

Regional Envirothon

The Envirothon is a fun, outdoor, team-based program designed to help high school students better understand their environment through exploration of ecology, natural resource management, and current environmental issues. The Envirothon combines classroom learning with hands-on field experience focused around five major topics:

•Soil and Land Use •Aquatic Ecology •Forestry •Wildlife •Environmental Issues

The 2021 Regional Envirothon was held virtually due to COVID 19. Weedsport participated virtually and represented Cayuga County.

District Training Sessions

Throughout 2021, the Cayuga SWCD held fewer erosion and sediment control workshops for construction site contractors and operators due to COVID 19. Seventeen trainees attended these workshops, which New York State requires for contractors working on construction sites which disturb at least one acre of soil. The four hour workshops covered permit regulations, contractor responsibilities, construction site inspections, and erosion and sediment control best management practices.



Doug Kierst, CPESC, Executive Director, teaching a Stormwater Training Workshop

Conservation Programs offered at the District

Cayuga SWCD Staff provides technical assistance directly to the residents of Cayuga County by discussing the concern with the individual, conducting site visits and then, if needed, working with the individual to rectify the concern. Services we provide include site planning, technical guidelines and literature, and permitting assistance. When applicable, the Cayuga SWCD seeks grant funding to assist with project implementation.

Barley Rolls- Traditional and chemical methods of controlling the algae in ponds are not always effective or economical. The use of barley straw has been found to be a successful method of algae control. When applied correctly, barley rolls do not kill existing algae, but inhibits the growth of new algae. Our barley rolls float near the surface of the water allowing water to flow through the straw, effectively reducing algae levels.



Annual Fish Stocking Sale

Annual Fish Stocking Sale- The Cayuga SWCD held Fish Stocking Sales in May and September of 2020 to serve landowners in the county. A variety of fish for ponds were available for sale including rainbow trout, largemouth bass, minnows, channel catfish and grass carp. **In 2021, the Cayuga SWCD sold over 750 fish including 48 grass carp during the fish stocking sales.**

Tree, Shrub & Groundcover Sale- The Cayuga SWCD held their 49th Annual Spring Tree and Groundcover Sale in May 2020. As in the past, the Cayuga SWCD offered a variety of conifers, hardwoods, shrubs, groundcovers and perennial plants, fruit trees, and native flowering plants. These seedlings and other plants are a very low-cost way to prevent erosion and to promote wildlife in your area, create noise and visual buffers, and are perfect for creating natural snow and wind breaks. **In 2021, the Cayuga SWCD sold over 12,000 Trees, Shrubs and Groundcovers in our Annual Tree Sale.**

Bird & Bat Houses- Wooden nesting boxes help promote backyard conservation and increase the population of local birds and bats. Locally-made wooden nesting boxes that provide safe habitat for bluebirds, screech owls, kestrels, wood ducks, and bats are offered for sale at the Cayuga SWCD office.

Septic System Inspections & Dye Testing- The Cayuga SWCD provides services to county landowners for septic system inspections (dye tests) that are mandated by the Cayuga County Health Department. The Cayuga SWCD also provides percolation tests, septic system designs and inspections of newly installed septic systems in compliance with Cayuga County and NY State Health Codes.

Agricultural Land Assessment- **129 Soil Group Worksheets were completed for landowners in Cayuga County in 2021.** The Agricultural Land Assessment Program is a state-wide program that provides the opportunity for farmland owners to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development value. Eligibility requirements are outlined by the State Office of Real Property and Department of Ag and Markets, and determined by local assessors.



Cedar and Pine Blue Bird Boxes provide safe habitat

Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District

7413 County House Rd, Auburn, NY 13021

Phone: (315) 252-4171 Ext. 4

Email: cayugaswcd@cayugaswcd.org

Website: www.cayugaswcd.org

Follow us on facebook: www.facebook.com/cayugaswcd