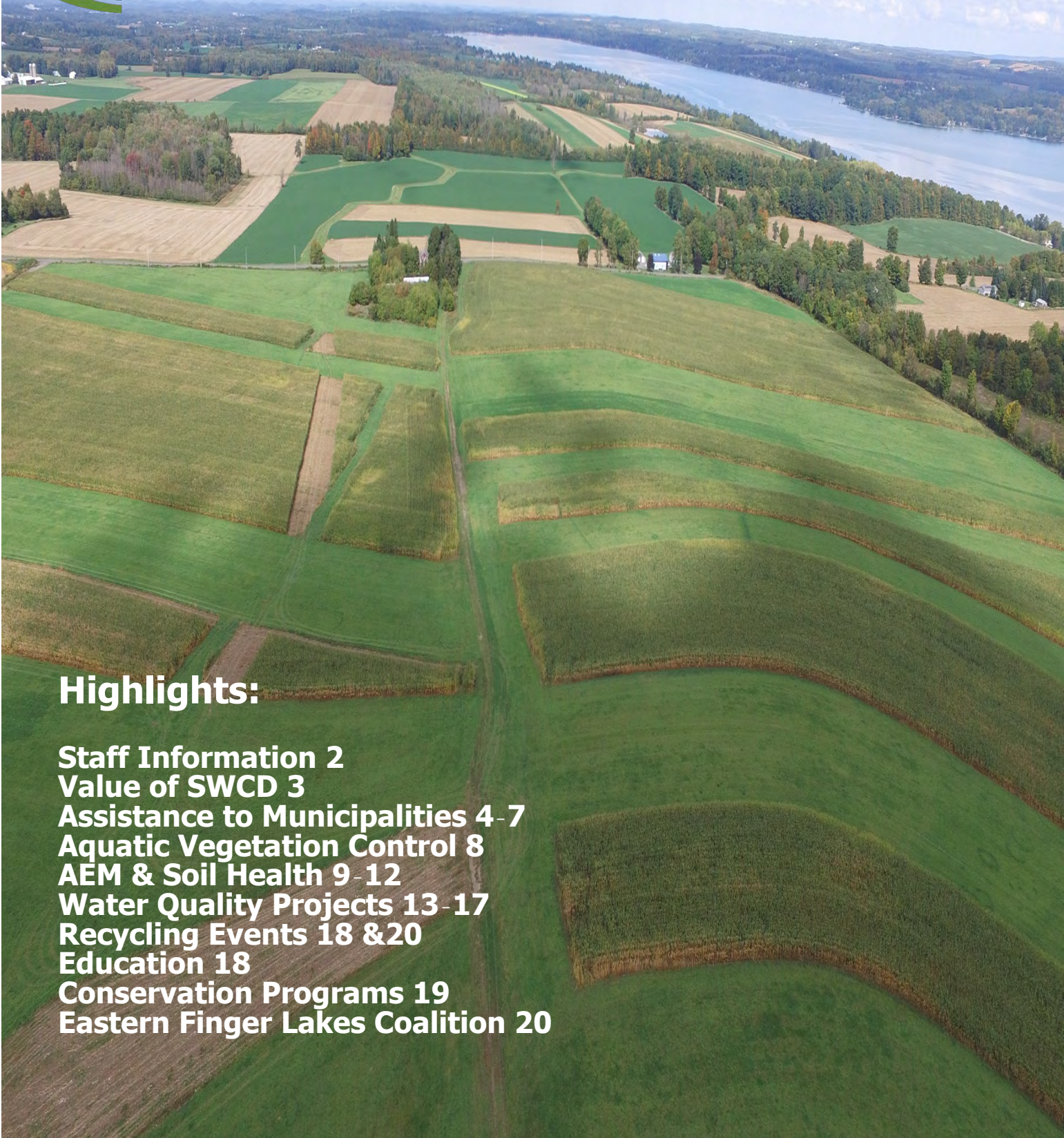




CAYUGA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Conservation in Action



Highlights:

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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>
Jason Cuddeback, CCA	<i>Grazing Specialist</i>
Valerie Horning	<i>Conservation District Technician</i>
Angelina VanCamp	<i>Watershed Conservation Specialist</i>
Tehya Kloster	<i>Watershed Conservation Specialist</i>
Abigail Hai	<i>Watershed Conservation Specialist</i>
Timothy Schneider, NYSESCCP	<i>District Field Manager</i>
Beth Smith	<i>Principal Account Clerk</i>
Lisa Miller	<i>Senior Typist</i>
Mike Warren	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Sean McCarthy	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Bruce Nodine	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Jim Sanders	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Devin Sherman	<i>Motor Equipment Operator</i>
Denise Dixon	<i>Cleaner</i>
Sage Crawford	<i>Laborer</i>
Kerry McElroy	<i>EFLC Watershed Coordinator</i>

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 81 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 by utilizing our trained staff and our network of partners.

2025 Board of Directors

Ray Lockwood	<i>Chairman, Farm Bureau</i>
James Young	<i>Vice Chairman, Member at Large</i>
Mark Strong	<i>County Legislator</i>
Tom Winslow	<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

Cayuga County is blessed with productive farmland and high-quality water resources. Cayuga County is the top agriculture producing county in NYS while also being a leading tourist destination. It is important that we are able to sustain both of these valuable assets. At the Cayuga SWCD, we recognize the significant role that we play in finding a balance between the two.

Our efforts are led by a Board of Directors that supports our mission and goals, and the professional Staff that works as a team to complete an incredible amount of work throughout the community. As you will see in this report, the assistance that we were able to provide and the projects that we were able to complete, are diverse and reached every segment of the community including agricultural landowners, non-farm private landowners, municipalities and other SWCDs.

Congratulations to Cayuga SWCD Field Manager, Tim Schneider who was awarded the NYS Conservation District Employees Association Division 2 Merit Award. With over 10 years of experience working for the District, he does a great job and has excelled at finding common ground with municipal representatives, including Highway Superintendents and Town Supervisors, lake associations, watershed organizations, private landowners and engineers.

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 include 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 (2022), the total market value of agricultural products sold was **\$461,927,000**. 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 2025, the Cayuga SWCD had 20 NYS grants "On the Books" totaling **\$18,719,572**.⁰⁹ There are 72 participating farms in Cayuga County that will be utilizing the grant funding to install 82 BMP systems. The funding is focused directly on agricultural BMP implementation for water quality and climate resiliency 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 five years, we have removed an average of 1,055 cubic yards of nuisance aquatic vegetation. The equivalent to 88 ten-wheel 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 streambank stabilization measures to protect important infrastructure.

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. 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

Assistance to Municipalities & Organizations

Town of Brutus Town Hall Stormwater Management Project

The District assisted the Town of Brutus with site work for stormwater management at the new Town Hall location, where new practices will manage runoff through a stormwater pond, bioswale, and upgraded culvert drainage to reduce flooding, improve water quality, and control peak flows.



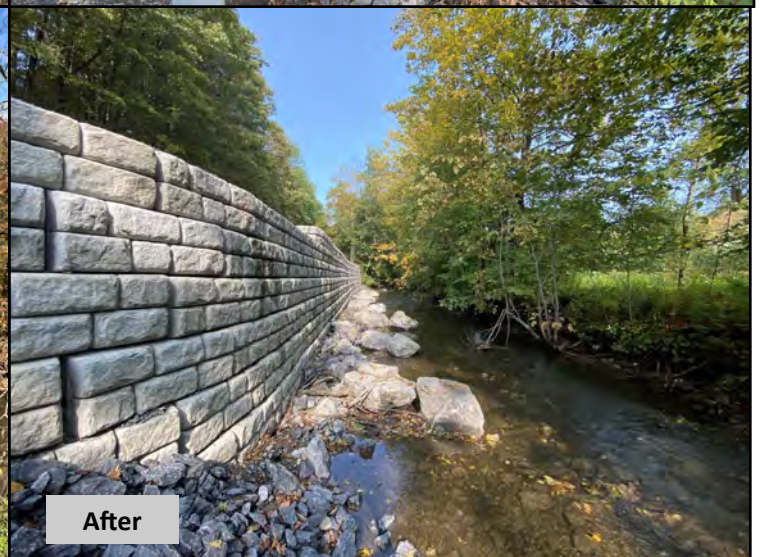
Blakely Road Ditch Stabilization Project

The District completed 450 feet of rock-lined channel on Blakely Road in the Town of Genoa using angular limestone to stabilize the drainage corridor. The project reduces erosion, improves flow conveyance, and protects adjacent roadway infrastructure.



Dresserville Creek Stream Stabilization

With the help of Cayuga County Highway Department, bank stabilization along a section of Dresserville Creek was completed. The streambank, with a combination of steep slope and erosion, was creating safety concerns for the adjacent road. The streambank and road shoulder was stabilized utilizing Redi-rock concrete blocks with toe protection, coupled with stream training structures to redirect the flow towards the middle of the stream and away from the bank.



Cream Hollow Road Ditch Stabilization Project

The District completed 600 feet of rock-lined channel on Cream Hollow Road in the Town of Niles using angular limestone to stabilize the drainage corridor. The project reduces erosion, improves flow conveyance, and protects adjacent roadway infrastructure.



Owasco Lake Firelane Drainage Improvement Project

Stormwater management projects were implemented along fire lanes in the Owasco Lake watershed to reduce erosion, improve drainage, and protect downstream water quality. These projects included stabilizing road ditches with riprap, installing water bars to redirect and slow runoff, stabilizing road shoulders to prevent sediment loss, and replacing undersized culverts with larger structures to improve flow capacity. The projects were completed on firelanes 18E, 21E and 31E through a NYS WQIP grant in 2025.



Dresserville Culvert Replacement and Outlet Protection Project

An aged and undersized culvert was replaced on a small tributary to Dresserville Creek in the Town of Sempronius with a larger, smooth HDPE culvert. In addition, the outlet was stabilized with heavy stone fill which reduced the vertical drop and eliminated the perched classification. This ultimately reduce the amount of erosion occurring along the stream bed and banks while improving roadway safety.



FUN FACT

Between 2021 and 2025, the District has completed 96 Stormwater and Municipal Projects totaling \$3,100,914.94 !

Emerson Park Stormwater Pond Retrofit

The District completed a stormwater pond retrofit in the Town of Owasco by dredging approximately 150 cubic yards of deposited material that had accumulated over a 10-year period. The stormwater pond was design to capture runoff and sediment laden water that drains from a housing development and slowly release the stormwater into a drainage ditch that drains to Owasco Lake while acting as a settling basin.



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 also seeking to leave the lakes as ecologically intact as possible.

The Cayuga SWCD’s AVC program consists of two weed cutting boats, one transport barge, 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 which is used on the larger lakes to cut down transport time from the cutting area to the truck by increasing the efficiency of the program. The weeds are off-loaded onto the dump truck using the conveyor and then 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 2025, the AVC Program removed the following from Cayuga County waterbodies: • 692 cubic yards (Yd³) Aquatic Vegetation (equivalent to 58 large dump truck loads) • 90,065 dry pounds Aquatic Vegetation • 1,891 pounds of Nitrogen • 161 pounds of Phosphorus • 1,005 pounds of Potassium.



Cayuga SWCD Harvesting Crew



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

Volume (Yd ³)	Owasco Lake	Cayuga Lake	Fair Haven Bay	Lake Como
2025	345	164	167	16
2024	165	188	76	78
2023	371	141	58	136
2022	286	193	233	36
2021	566	596	871	68

District Programs

Road Ditch and Critical Area Hydroseeding Program

Cayuga SWCD 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 Cayuga SWCD was able to hydroseed 11 miles of road ditch in 2025.



The bat wing deck can cut 15 feet in one pass

Mowing Program

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 hedge-rows, 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. In 2025, the Cayuga SWCD mowed 5 acres of wildlife habitat and approximately 85 miles of conservation ditches, field edges, and roadsides.



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 and 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 to 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



Soil Sampling in Pasture Systems

2025 Cayuga County AEM Farm Awards

On August 14 of 2025, Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District recognized 5 local farms for their efforts in conservation implementations. The 2025 award winners were (From left to right) Sierzenga Farms LLC., Minturn Farms, Kyle Farms, Scipio Springs Dairy, and the Finger Lakes Nut Farm. The awarded farms represented beef, dairy, cash crops and specialty crops across Cayuga County. "This year's award recipients demonstrate that environmental stewardship is not a one-time project, but an ongoing way of farming," said SWCD Executive Director Doug Kierst. "By combining AEM-supported projects with self-driven conservation efforts, they're helping to protect our land and water for future generations while keeping agriculture strong in Cayuga County."



2025 AEM Outreach & Education



Soil Health Workshops and Field Training

The foundation of the Cayuga SWCD's AEM Program revolves around providing education and outreach to not only producers, but also 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. Education and outreach spans from local partnering agencies, trainings with multiple District's staff and technicians, to local growers, community members and hands on activities with students in classrooms.



Agricultural Environmental Management Program - Outreach, Education and Partnership Activities -



District Employees at the New York State Fair



Cayuga SWCD Staff Winning the Croney and Merit Awards



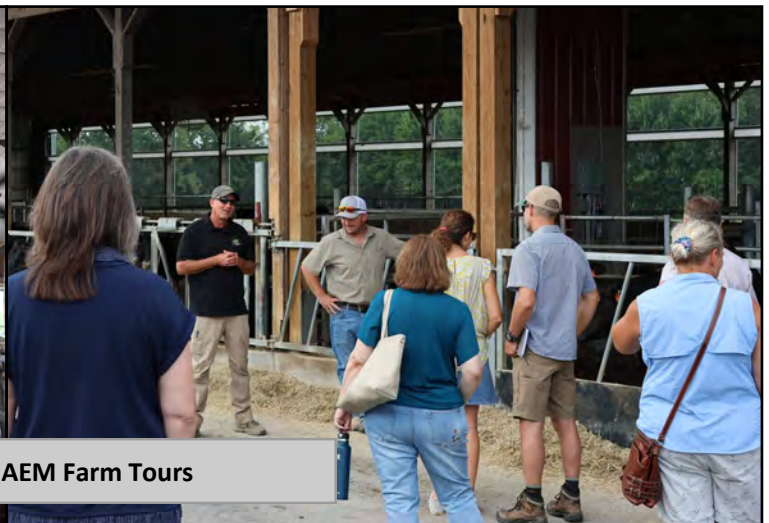
Partner Agencies Collaborating on Emergency Response



The Mobile Dairy Experience and Farmer Panels



Cayuga County AEM Farm Tours





AEM TIER 4 — Round 18 — BMP Implementation

This funding source is used to implement 'shovel-ready' projects that are identified in a producer's plan. The AEM Tier 4 funding helped Dennis Montross reduce animal stress and eliminate clean water from entering his barn yard area. Beef cows had noticeable foot issues with standing water, mud, and rocks found in this area. Area drains into a nearby field ditch ~350 ft to the west of the barn.



Before



Before

Animal trail & walkway with no clean water exclusion at a farm in Weedsport NY. Many of the animals had foot issues as the beef herd traveled to and from the barn from the pasture.



After

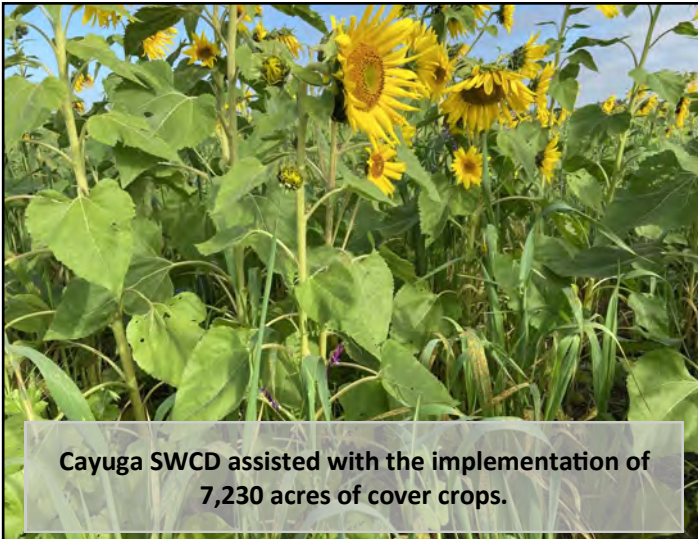


After

The project included the installation of 800 ft of stone trail and walkway to move animals from the main barn to the pasture. Geotextile fabric was placed under the walkway and it was compacted with a dozer to ensure the footing for the beef herd was stable. In addition, a 200 ft gutter system was installed to reduce the amount of clean water entering the area near the barn and trail & walkway.



AEM 2025— SOIL HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS



Cayuga SWCD assisted with the implementation of 7,230 acres of cover crops.



Cayuga SWCD assisted with the implementation of 3,674 acres of residue/reduced tillage management.



Record number of biological life surveyed



Compaction Trials on Cayuga County Farms



Education and Outreach



Increased adoption of No-till & Reduced Tillage Practices

NYS Ag Non-Point Source Abatement & Control Program (NYS AgNPS) NYS Climate Resilient Farming Program (CRF) 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 New York State. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) play an integral role in the administration of grant funds and provide planning, design, and implementation assistance.



Cayuga SWCD— 2025 Active Ag. Grants “ON THE BOOKS”

\$18,719,572.⁰⁹ Contracted with NYS and Landowners

- 20 Grant Contracts
- 72 Cayuga County Farms
- 82 Total BMP Systems

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

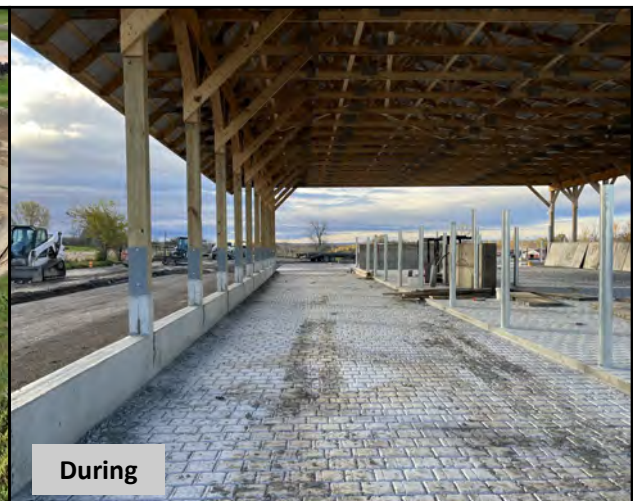
- Nutrient Management
- Soil Management and Health Systems
- Crop Rotations
- Cover Crops
- Soil Testing and Analysis
- Soil Amendments
- Rotational Grazing



NYS AgNPS Round 31— 2023—2026 Installed System

CAFO Beef Farm **Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System**

- Bunk Silo
- Waste Storage & Transfer System
- Livestock Barnyard



NYS AgNPS Round 29 - 2026 Installed System

CAFO Cow Dairy Farm
Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System

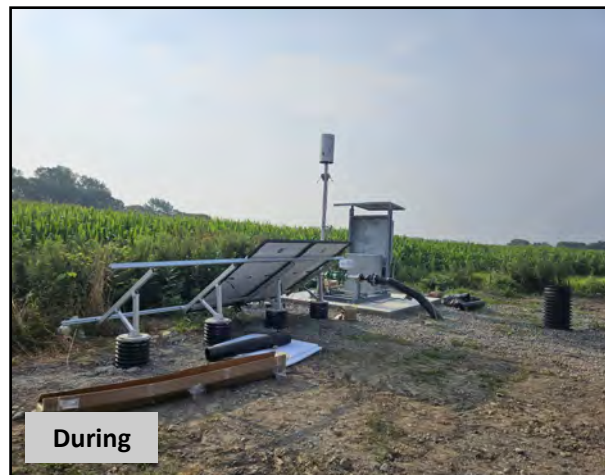
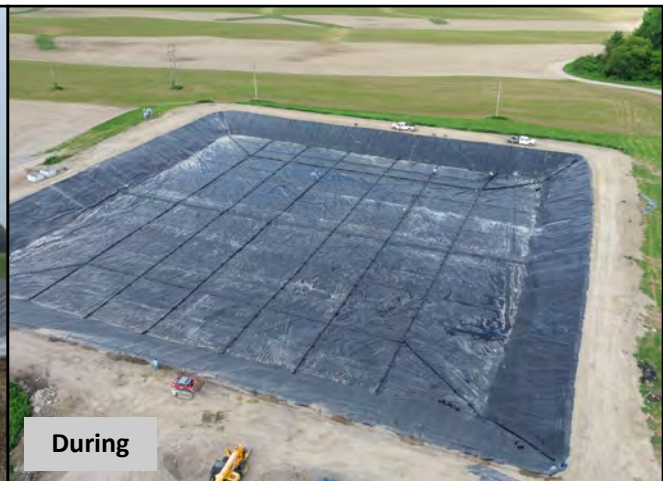
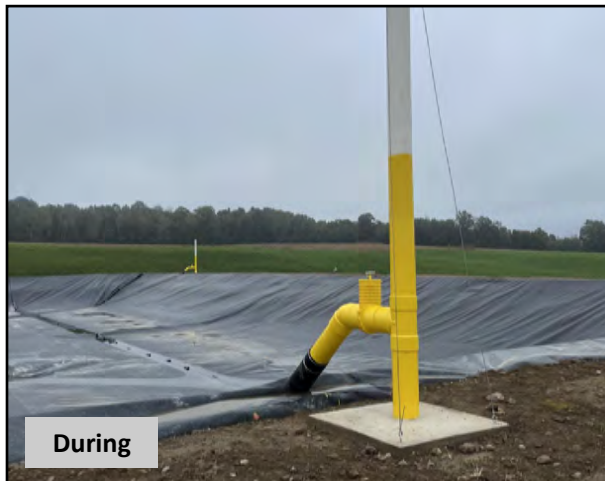
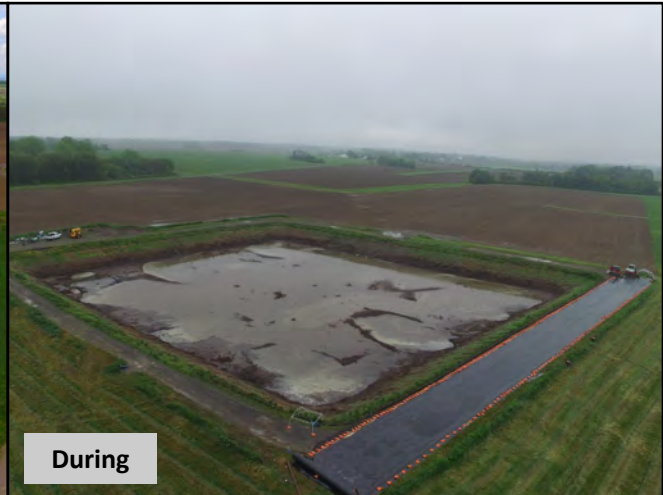
- Waste Storage & Transfer System



NYS Climate Resilient Farming Round 5 **2024-2025 Installed System**

Manure Storage Cover and Flare, Geiger

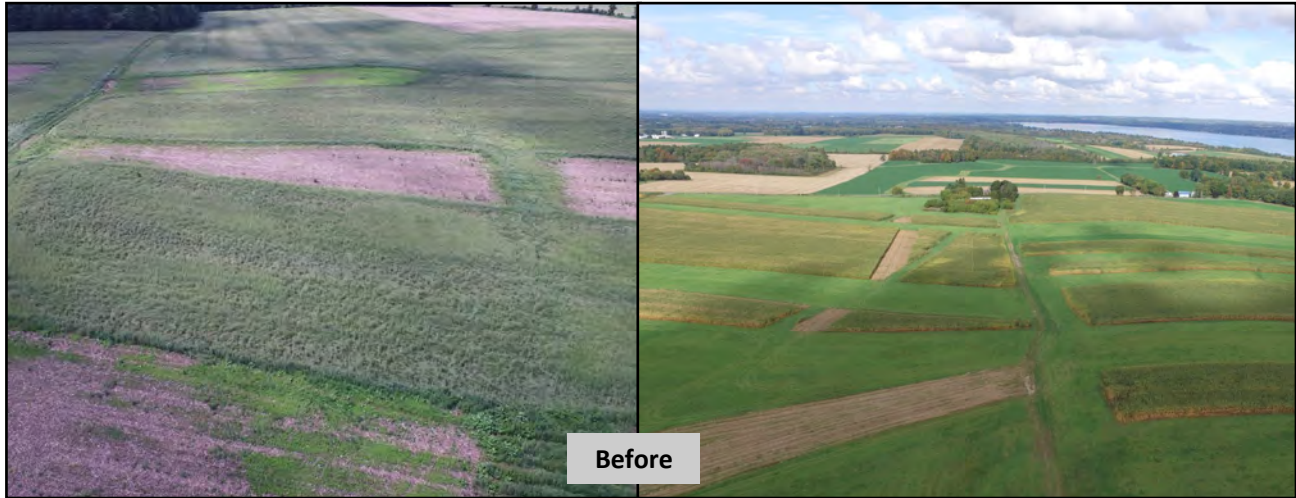
- Roofs & Covers
- Waste Treatment and Transfer
 - Pumping Plant



Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program 2024-2025 Installed System

Water and Sediment Control Basins, Post Project)

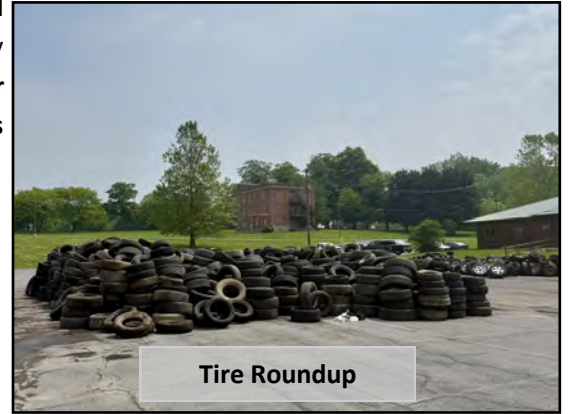
- Water and Sediment Control Basin
 - Underground Outlet
 - Subsurface Drainage
- Access Road and Critical Area Seeding



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 were delivered by county residents for a small fee. Lead weights were removed and most of the tires go to NUCOR to supply carbon for steel production. Others are recycled at a local business. **This year participants recycled approximately 4,021 tires which is equivalent to 64 tons during the event which was held on June 7, 2025 .**



Tire Roundup



Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Day

HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE CLEANUP DAY– Was 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 25, 2025.

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 210 trees were traded and recycled in the winter of 2025.

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.

In 2025, Conservation Field Days in Cayuga County was held on September 16 & 17, with great attendance from our county schools! We had 13 schools (including all 6th grades in Cayuga County) in attendance, with approximately 770 students and teachers participating. We wish to give special thanks to our amazing station instructors, hosting 21 stations.



NYS DEC Officers presenting on Environmental Conservation.

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

Weedsport High School represented Cayuga County at the 2025 New York State Envirothon at SUNY Cortland in Cortland, NY. Weedsport attended the Wayne/Cayuga County Regional Envirothon in 2025, and won the right to represent Cayuga County at the State event.



Conservation Programs Offered At The Cayuga SWCD

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 instead 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.

Tree, Shrub & Groundcover Sale- The Cayuga SWCD held their 54th Annual Spring Tree and Groundcover Sale in May 2025. 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 2025, the Cayuga SWCD sold approximately 11,880 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- 159 Soil Group Worksheets were completed for landowners in Cayuga County in 2025. 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 are determined by local assessors.



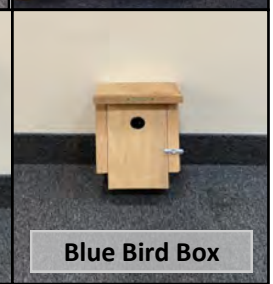
Screech Owl



Wood Duck Box



Bat Box



Blue Bird Box

District ESC Training Workshops

Throughout 2025, the Cayuga SWCD held seven erosion and sediment control workshops for construction site contractors and operators. Approximately 118 trainees attended these workshops. New York State requires contractors working on construction sites which disturb at least one acre of soil to take these workshops. The four hour workshops covered permit regulations, contractor responsibilities, construction site inspections, and erosion and sediment control best management practices.





Meet the Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition (EFLC) is a partnership among 11 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) working to protect and improve water quality in the Finger Lakes region. The Eastern Finger Lakes area includes the watersheds of Canandaigua, Keuka, Seneca, Cayuga, Skaneateles, Otisco, and Onondaga Lakes, plus the Seneca River and Erie Canal. The area comprises 30 percent of the Lake Ontario watershed and is a critical resource for drinking water, fish and wildlife habitat, agricultural production, and recreation and tourism.

Together, SWCDs in Yates, Wayne, Tompkins, Steuben, Seneca, Schuyler, Onondaga, Ontario, Cortland, Chemung, and Cayuga counties are implementing locally led conservation practices to address evolving environmental challenges associated with a changing climate. These priority efforts are supported by New York State with \$50 million dollars from the Clean Water, Clean Air and Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act and other capital resources. Cayuga County SWCD is proud to serve as the EFLC grant contract administrator.

In cooperation with the New York State Departments of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and Agriculture and Markets (AGM), the EFLC districts are expanding professional capacity while accelerating implementation of proven practices, on- and off-farm, to prevent nutrient and soil loss watershed wide. These collective efforts align with federal and state-approved clean water and pollution prevention plans by helping to mitigate the prevalence of harmful algal blooms.

In 2025, the EFLC achieved many program administration goals, including signing grant funding contracts with DEC and AGM, hiring a full-time watershed coordinator, supporting other EFLC staff, and developing an immersive professional capacity-building program for staff. EFLC districts also worked directly with public and private landowners to support surveying, design, engineering, and implementation of best management practices including rightsized culverts, stabilized road ditches, municipal and farm stormwater management, erosion mitigation to protect public infrastructure, and agricultural waste management.

This winter season, as the EFLC eagerly awaits the start of the 2026 construction season, the SWCDs are busy continuing project identification and planning; applying for other grant opportunities in the watershed; providing grant reporting to DEC and AGM; and participating in project assessment, design, and implementation training. And, we are just getting started. As 2026 progresses, be on the lookout for our ongoing updates to partners, upcoming website which will eventually include a project map, and a public watershed forum.

Be on the lookout for dates of the upcoming 2026 recycling events.

- 2026 Dates -

Spring Electronics—March 21, 2026

Tire Roundup—June 6, 2026 (Held at Cayuga SWCD)

Fall Electronics - October 17, 2026

Household Hazardous Waste Cleanup Day—September 12, 2026

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