

MINUTES  
ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
5 PARK LANE  
HIGHLAND, NY 12528  
FEBRUARY 21, 2023

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Chairman L. Tantillo at 9:05 AM. Directors present; B. Davenport, S. VanNostrand, F. Wilklow, and Legislator H. Litts. District staff in attendance T. Ferry – District Technician, B. Taylor – CSBI Program Coordinator and J. Wedemeyer – Exec. Director.

**1. STAFF REPORTS**

Written staff reports were mailed and emailed to Board Members and B. Luskin prior to the meeting for review (attached to the filed minutes).

Work Reports

a) SWCD – J. Wedemeyer

- AEM updates – soil sampling, nutrient management, barnyard survey, updating plans, field visits, and evaluating practices.
- Inventory and Evaluations – working with county a lot.
- NYC DEP CAT 494 – meetings with DEP over reconciliations, annual partners meeting
- Climate Resilient Farming Grant Round 6 – working with T. Ferry to get updated quotes for no-till drill.
- Annual State Reporting – submitted annual reports and met all our performance measures for 2022.
- Ag Assessment – Working on some so T. Ferry doesn't have to do all of them.
- Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse – J. Wedemeyer, T. Ferry, and M. Tollefson are attending in March. Discussion of the importance state meetings and networking ensued.
- Working with the County Planning Department/Ag & Farmland Protection Board for Ag District #2.
- Working with CCE for interviews of their new Livestock/Natural Resources Educator.
- Climate Resilient Farming Grant Round 7 – plans are done for four farms including cost estimates, ready for RFP to be released from State Committee.
- Updated Part C Cover Crop Program and shared with the county.
- Updated personnel manual.

b) SWCD – T. Ferry

- AEM updates.
- Inventory and Evaluations - helping Rockland County with Ag Assessment questions.
- Ag Assessments – 15 requests.
- Updating quotes for no-till drills.
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c) AWSMP – B. Taylor

- Introduced himself and the CSBI program - worked with AWSMP since 2009. Runs Catskill Stream Buffer Initiative, lots of landowner site visits for streambank issues, provides technical assistance and planting plans to address instability. Riparian plantings – planning, installation, and monitoring.
- 120 projects since 2009, lots of smaller parcels than Delaware/Greene County programs.
- Robust annual monitoring program both visual and monitoring plots.
- L. Tantillo asked about landowner maintenance, specifically watering. B. Taylor mentioned most landowners are second homeowners, so he does a lot of the watering and maintenance when needed. Occasionally, projects fall through the cracks and will need replanting. B. Davenport asked about work in the Lower Esopus. Discussion ensued over who would do similar work below the reservoir.
- Took time off in Dec. due to arrival of new baby.
- Catching up on projects
- Repaired fence at the Emerson.
- Checked on fall plantings and deer browse, discussion about deer browse and projection ensued.
- Worked on mugwort issue at Woodland Valley Restoration Site – mugwort was imported in topsoil that was used. Working with licensed herbicide applicator to get a proposal that will be presented to the landowners. A lot of time has been spent after that project inspecting topsoil stockpiles to ensure they are free of invasives.
- Working on a live staking video with CCE to go along with new guide that was presented at the board meeting and that is now available. ID guide will follow as well.
- Working with Emerson Resort on educational signage for their outdoor classroom/buffer project.
- Management plans for streamside landowners.
- Planning for spring planting season. Discussion about pollinator mix planting.

d) AWSMP – M. Tollefson: J. Wedemeyer reviewed M. Tollefson's report.

- Worked on getting information on a drone for AWSMP program; including licensing and software needed for program needs.
- Building project binders for Warner Creek restoration sites.
- Researched new computers and accompanying items.

e) NRCS – Adam Kudlo – clerk joined the meeting at 9:55 AM and explained his role in the office.

f) NRCS – O. Velez-Juarbe: J. Wedemeyer went over O. Velez-Juarbe's work report.

- 3 EQIP applications approved for Ulster County, 1 contract completed for 2023, 12 more applications submitted awaiting pre-approvals from the state office, 4 applications for conservation assistance program.

**S. VanNostrand left the meeting at 10:01 AM.**

**2. NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Insurance Update – received a notice insurance will be canceled effective April 18<sup>th</sup>. J. Wedemeyer has been in contact with our insurance agent, Mark, there is a claim against us due to an accident on restoration job. The District was never sued, but the District may have to find a new insurance carrier, our insurance agent said this shouldn't affect our rates. Discussion ensued.
- b) Personnel Policy Annual Updates – changes were made to the personnel policy – retirement benefits, personal protective equipment, holidays, and hours of duty. H. Litts made the **MOTION**, seconded by B. Davenport to approve changes to the personnel policy. All ayes.
- c) Cover Crop Program – Forms were updated with 2023 dates and shared with the county. Discussion of reimbursement rates was held.
- d) No-Till Rental Rates/Update – rental rate of \$10/ac, drill will only be used for Ulster County residents. Discussion of rates, time limit, rental agreement, insurance requirements, repairs, breakdowns, and maintenance. Discussion of having a signable maintenance checklist. Reviewed written quotes for no-till drills, discussed delivery timeframe and using Part C money to purchase drill and getting reimbursed by CRF6. Discussion turned to purchasing an Esch 5607 drill depending on updated pricing and delivery cost. H. Litts made the **MOTION**, seconded by F. Wilklow to approve the purchase of an Esch 5607 no-till drill provided the delivery freight isn't too high. All ayes.
- e) Climate Resilient Farming Program Round 7 Grant Application – Discussed that four farms have been selected; we are currently waiting on the RFP to be released. There will need to be a resolution once the RFP comes out.
- f) District Board Member Meeting Attendance for 2023 Performance Measures – Now that covid restrictions are lifted, Performance Measures are going back to their original requirements. Board members must attend three state meetings. Water quality coordinating committee, state committee meetings, conservation district employee's association meeting, Empire Farm Days can all count towards this performance measure requirement.
- g) NYC DEP Contract Reconciliation – Expenditure tracking doesn't match our bank statements due to comingling of funds in the past. As of last year, direct deposits from the City of NY to the CAT 494 account were set up by J. Wedemeyer and M. Wagner to eliminate comingling of NYCDEP funds in District accounts. J. Wedemeyer had an upper level management meeting with NYCDEP, all funds must be accounted for. Current contract funds, deposits and expenditures have been thoroughly reviewed, concluding former core district personnel used current contract money to pay back the prior contract balance to NYCDEP without reviewing bank statements and reconciling the accounts. This

has created a significant workload for M. Wagner and J. Wedemeyer the last 3 months. The past comingling of funds has created a lot of work for our office in 2022.

### **3. Minutes Approval**

H. Litts made a **MOTION** to approve the January minutes, seconded by B. Davenport. All ayes

### **H. Litts left the meeting at 10:46am**

### **4. Old Business**

- a) Proposed District Law Changes – a letter was drafted about the proposed district law changes using Onondaga County’s as a template, discussion ensued and L. Tantilto signed the draft letter.
- b) AWSMP Engineer Position – position has been reposted, will have an internal interview, would like to have the board help with a second interview/hiring committee of at least three members. H. Litts requested the job description be sent out for members to review prior to interviewing candidates.
- c) Black Dirt Drainage Issues – H. Litts asked about the status of the stream debris maintenance issue with Scenic Hudson. J. Wedemeyer apprised Mike Latham at Ag and Markets of this issue and it is being reviewed since Scenic Hudson has not been responsive to the agricultural producer or to the District to work out a maintenance agreement with the producer. J. Wedemeyer will follow up with M. Latham. Discussion ensued. The producer sent a letter to Scenic Hudson, J. Wedemeyer has contacted Scenic Hudson five times with no response and a meeting was attended by T. Ferry and J. Wedemeyer with the producer and Scenic Hudson in July 2022 and nothing has been done.

### **5. Next Meeting**

Scheduled for March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 at 9:00 AM

### **6. Adjournment**

B. Davenport made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 10:54 AM, seconded by F. Wilklow. All ayes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Travis Ferry  
District Technician

## JLW Activities January 17 through February 2023

**AEM:** AEM Tier 5B- Lime and fertilizer recommendations for corn and soybean operation, T/O Wawarsing. AEM Tier 4- Completed barnyard survey, preliminary design, submitted to JESS engineering, T/O Marbletown. AEM Outreach – Climate Resilient Farming Series Webinars, two virtual presentations: Climate Resilient Farming and Biochar. AEM Tier 5B BMP evaluation- completed barnyard, waste storage facility and filter area evaluation as well as Tier 2 update and summary report, T/O Rochester. Assistance with soil erosion predictions and cost estimates with T. Ferry. AEM Partnership – Assistance with enrollment in NRCS ALE program, T/O New Paltz. AEM Tier 5B – Surface drainage and pasture management, T/O Saugerties. AEM Tier 5B – lime and fertilizer recommendations for pasture and hayfields, T/O Olive. AEM Tier 3A Cover Crop Plans- assistance with cover crop plan, organic vegetable operation, T/O Marlborough. AEM Tier 4 – Bid package for fencing for rotational grazing system, T/O Rochester.

**Inventory and Evaluations:** Ulster County Department of the Environment-assistance with site disturbance and winter site operations for storm water permit. Joe Baker T/O Marlborough- pond site enhancement assistance. HV Farm Hub, T/O Ulster-assistance with lot line revisions maps. Mary Heyer, T/O New Paltz-riparian buffer planning. Michael Antonelli, Orange Co. Farmer- Ag District enrollment assistance. Marybeth Wehrung, T/O Rochester-assistance and success finding farmland to rent. Thomas Spinard, T/O New Paltz – wetlands mapping and calculated acreage for usable pasture.

**NYC DEP CAT 494:** Working on reconciliation for Capital account. Completed Expense quarterly report with MRW. Reviewed, approved and paid invoices for Stantec, SLR, Kingston Equipment and Hubbell, Inc. Attended partners meetings, 2 in-person and 1 virtual. Presented Panther Kill Project at partners meeting. Financial meeting with DEP regarding bank balance discrepancy from CAT 446 (prior) contract. Working with Bobby Taylor and Adam Doan with mugwort removal assessment on Woodland Valley stream restoration project. Re-posted engineer position.

**Climate Resilient Farming Round 6:** Working with Travis to obtain updated no-till drill quotes.

### **District Updates/Other Projects:**

- State Annual Reporting, which includes financial reporting is completed and submitted to NYS.
- Soils Group Worksheets: 4.
- T. Ferry, M. Tollefson and myself are attending the annual Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse, NY.
- Assistance to UC Planning Board with Agricultural District Report.
- Travis and I have conservation plans completed and farms selected for Climate Resilient Farming Round 7.
- Updated Part C Cover Crop Program application, share with County.
- Updated Personnel Manual.

### **TRF Activities January 19, 2023 – February 14, 2023**

**AEM:** Tier 1 – T/O Wawarsing – filled out a tier 1 assessment form with a new producer in Wawarsing, conducted a site visit of his property. Tier 5B – Gardiner – finished a Tier 5B Conservation Plan update for producer in Gardiner looking to apply for irrigation funding in the next round of CRF. Tier 2 – Marlborough – finished up an outstanding tier 2 summary for a fruit producer. Tier 4 – Marbletown – finished up a survey for covered barnyard project. Tier 5B/3A – Marlborough – worked on a Tier 5B/3A cover crop plan for a vegetable producer in Marlborough that we will be applying for cover crop funds in the next CRF round.

**Inventory and Evaluations:** C/O Rockland – Brianna Rosamilia – helped RCSWCD technician with ag assessment information. T/O Wawarsing – Alex Blum – met with Keith Duarte (Damn Good Honey) to look at feasibility of Chestnut production on Alex Blum’s property. T/O Rosendale – Kenneth Moss – pond stocking/mosquito control questions. T/O Rochester – Bill Brooks – had questions on pond stocking and our fish sale for the Rondout Valley Lions Club fishing derby they host in September.

**CRF Round 6:** No activity.

**NYC DEP CAT 494:** No activity.

**Round 27:** No activity.

**Ag Assessment:** Continue to receive ag assessments requests. 15 ag assessment requests received and completed.

**Misc:** Listening to our climate resilience webinar series with Cornell.

Working on getting updated no-till drill prices.

- Drone Research Project:
  - Identified the needs of a drone within AWSMP's scope
    - Rapid response to bankfull flood events
    - Before/After images and survey data
    - Models used for further analysis and educational outreach
    - Quickly map large stretches of streams
  - Found mapping software that can turn images into 3D models
    - Pix4D mapper
  - Found the best drone to accomplish the needs of the AWSMP
    - DJI Mavic 3 Enterprise
      - Has the specs needed to complete our tasks
      - Cheapest with the highest quality on the market
    - Created an initial plan to become certified drone pilots with the FAA
      - 3<sup>rd</sup> party learning programs and trainings
        - Drone Launch Academy
- Other Projects:
  - Producing a project binder for Warner Creek site 1 and 2
    - Will act as the physical storage of the site
      - Field data sheets
      - Maps with cross sections, long pro extents, invasives, photo points, and other survey monument locations
      - Transferring GPS data points from field equipment into the server
  - Researching prices on new office equipment, includes:
    - Laptops/desktop
    - Monitors
    - Standing Desks
    - Docking Stations
  - Looking at updating the file structure of the AWSMP server
  - Continue to input summer 2022 survey data into RIVERMorph for future analysis and monitoring of restoration projects.

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee  
Region 5 Report – February 2023  
Submitted by: Ben Luskin – Region 5 Associate Environmental Analyst

### **NYS SWCC News**

**2022 State Aid to Districts – DUE 2/15:** All 2022 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, 2023**. Please contact [ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov) or your Regional AEA with any questions.

**Payments and Blackout Period:** We are fast approaching the annual blackout period during which time EPF funds are not available to process payments. Claim for Payments need to be submitted by **Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023** to meet the cut-off date. Any Claim for Payment received during the Blackout period will be included on the next fiscal year EPF list with payments processed the following month. If projects will begin this Spring/Summer and you still have not submitted a CFP for necessary advance or implementation payments, it is advisable that you submit these vouchers with applicable supporting documentation ASAP. If you have any questions, please contact Maureen Irish ([Maureen.irish@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Maureen.irish@agriculture.ny.gov)) or your Regional AEA.

**February SWCC Meeting:** The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on February 28<sup>th</sup>**. 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.

**AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2023:** 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. The deadline for applications is **May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. More information can be found at <https://www.sandcountyfoundation.org/uploads/NY-CFN-23.pdf>

**Tools and References Wiki Update:** The Tools and References Wiki has just been updated for 2023. 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/>

### **Other Events**

**Soil Health & Nutrient Management Workshop:** Ontario County SWCD is hosting a Soil Health & Nutrient Management Workshop on **Wednesday, March 1, 2023** from 8:00am to 3:00pm. Focal topics will include weather impacts, soil testing, tackling tough weeds, erosion control, manure management and much more. Pre-registration is \$15 and walk-ins will be \$20. This fee also includes refreshments, lunch, raffle prizes, and exhibits. DEC Pesticide Applicator and CCA credits available. For more information and to register: <https://www.canandaigualakeassoc.org/2023-soil-health-workshop/>

### **Other Funding**

**SOGL 2023 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 \$18.7 million in grants in 2023 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 14, 2023**. Additional application information is available at [www.nfwf.org/greatlakes](http://www.nfwf.org/greatlakes).

**Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program:** New York Sea Grant, in partnership with DEC, has announced that funding is now available for projects that apply an ecosystem-based management approach to address local watershed challenges. A total of \$460,000, with up to \$50,000 per project, in New York Great Lakes Basin Small Grants will be awarded. Applications are due by **4:30 p.m. on March 1, 2023**. For more information, contact New York Sea Grant at 716-645-3611. <https://small-grants-program-ccegeomaps.hub.arcgis.com/>