

MINUTES
ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
5 PARK LANE
HIGHLAND, NY 12528
January 24, 2024

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Chairman L. Tantillo at 9:00 AM. Directors Present: F. Wilklow, H. Litts, S. VanNostrand and J. DeLaune. SWCD Staff in attendance: J. Wedemeyer - Exec. Director, T. Ferry - District Technician, Christine DeGroot - Program Assistant, A. Doan (A.W.S.M.P. Project Manager) and O. Velez-Juarbe (NRCS).

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).

a) Work Reports

SWCD - J. Wedemeyer (see attached staff report)

b) SWCD – C. DeGroot (see attached staff report)

c) SWCD – T.Ferry (see attached staff report). Ferry passed out a 2023 Part C Cover Crop Program Summary. Two producers that hit the \$5,000.00 cap that was set for the program requested funding to cover additional acres. One farm could be reimbursed for an additional 17.3 acres totaling ~\$1,400.00 and the other has an additional 5 acres they could be reimbursed for, approximately \$360.00. There is a third farm that hit the \$5,000.00 cap that did not request additional funding, but it is included in the Summary in case the Board wanted to approve all three farms. The total for all three is ~\$3,759.00. Discussion followed. **2024-1-1 Delaune made the Motion, seconded by VanNostrand, to reimburse the three farms for additional 2023 cover cropping totaling \$3,759.40. All in favor.**

d) AWSMP – A. Doan - Stream Project Manager (see attached staff report).

e) O. Velez-Juarbe (NRCS) – NRCS has received ~90 applications between three offices. Out of the 90, they have 12 pre-approvals for Ulster County and 12 for the other two offices.

A new employee in the Orange County office is in training. A second employee will be starting in Orange in June. Velez-Juarbe mentioned that Sam, stationed in the Ulster office, is doing a fantastic job.

2. NEW BUSINESS

a) Wedemeyer started off by thanking everyone for their hard work to help the District meet the 2023 Performance Measures, which brings a significant amount of money to the District. A portion of which, will help us pay down the NYS Retirement bill. Wedemeyer hopes to have it paid off in a 3-5 year timespan and wants to pay ~\$225,000 this year. He mentioned that more will be required of the Board Members in order for the District to meet the 2024 Performance Measures.

- b) Annual Organizational Meeting
- c) Election of Officers: **2024-1-2 Delaune made the Motion, seconded by Litts, to retain Leonard Tantillo as District Chairman. All in favor.**

2024-1-3 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Wilklow, to nominate Delaune as District Vice-Chairman. All in favor.

2024-1-4 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Wilklow, to retain VanNostrand as Secretary to the Board. All in favor.

2024-1-5 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Delaune, to amend prior Motion 2024-1-4 and add that VanNostrand is also retained as the District Treasurer. All in favor.

Wedemeyer mentioned that he completed 2023 employee evaluations on Doan, Ferry and DeGrootd and that Doan completed them on Taylor, Lent and Tollefson. Wedemeyer feels that employees that obtained professional certifications should have it noted and considered for merit raises, as was discussed at November's Board meeting. Wedemeyer asked the Board if they'd like to enter into Executive Session to discuss evaluations. No action taken at this point in the meeting.

The following was addressed: Official Banks – **2024-1-6 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Delaune, to retain M&T Bank as the District's official bank. All in favor.**

Official Newspapers – **2024-1-7 Delaune made the Motion, seconded by Litts, to retain The Kingston Freeman, the New Paltz News and the Middletown Times Herald Record as the District's Official Newspapers. All in favor.**

Schedule of Monthly Meetings – **2024-1-8 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Delaune, to maintain meeting days as the fourth Wednesday of each month, subject to change when necessary. All in favor.**

- d) Schedule of Internal Annual District Audit – **2024-1-9 Delaune made the Motion, Litts seconded, to schedule the Internal Annual District Audit in February. All in favor.**
The subcommittee is made up of Tantillo, VanNostrand and Delaune.

Schedule review and adoption of District's Annual Plan of Operations – 2024 was previously approved. Will review year 2025 in October 2024.

Schedule and review of all District Policies and Training Plans – In order to remain eligible for State reimbursement, the District needs to maintain the following policies by December 31, 2024: 1) Director Attendance–January, 2) Human Resources-March, 3) Procurement-March, 4) Investment/Financial-May, 5) Director Training-June and 6) FOIL-May.

- e) Farm Bureau Dues - **2024-1-10 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Wilklow, to pay the Farm Bureau Annual Dues in the amount of \$110.00, for Tantillo. All in favor.**
- f) 2024 Winter Newsletter and Website Update (see staff reports)

- g) Junior Technician Position/Job Posting – The Junior Tech job description was passed out to the Board. Between the various programs that Ulster offers (cover crop, AEM, no-till, ag assessments, T&S, etc.), it would be helpful to hire a Junior Tech to assist. Wedemeyer is hoping to hire someone by May/June. Litts feels that the salary range is not within the range that Civil Service would typically pay for a similar position. He feels it should be lower since the District offers a good benefit package. Litts requested that the District contact Civil Service to see what their Junior Tech Series offers salary-wise. Wedemeyer stated he contacted Civil Service in November 2023 and it was determined that the Board determines the salaries, not Civil Service. Discussion followed. It was decided that Wedemeyer will contact U.C. Civil Service and let them know about the position and email the Board the average technician rates from our State Committee. The Board tabled the Junior Tech position until February.
- h) 2024 Envirothon Donation Letter from Suffolk County SWCD – **2024-1-11 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Delaune, to donate \$500.00 to the 2024 Envirothon. All in favor.**
- i) Computer Upgrade for DeGroot – **2024-1-12 Delaune made the Motion, Litts seconded, to spend up to \$1,700.00 for a new laptop for DeGroot. All in favor.**

Director Attendance – **2024-1-13 Delaune made the Motion, seconded by Litts, to follow the guidelines for Director Attendance which states if a Director misses more than four meetings, they can be removed from the Board.** Litts requested records of the Legislators' attendance at District Board Meetings for the past year.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- a) 2024 County Appropriation (discussed prior)
- b) New Truck Purchase Status (see Ferry staff report)
- c) NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certification (discussed earlier in the meeting)

4. MINUTES APPROVAL

2024-1-14 A Motion was made by Delaune to approve the November 2023 Minutes, seconded by Litts. All in favor.

5. FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ABSTRACTS – NOVEMBER 2023 AND DECEMBER 2023

2023-1-15 Delaune made the Motion, Litts seconded, to accept the book balances and Abstracts for November 2023 and December 2023. All in favor.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 9:00 AM.

(S. VanNostrand left the meeting at 10:52 AM)

2024-1-16 Litts made the Motion, Wilklow seconded, to go into Executive Session at 10:52 AM to discuss a particular employee. All in favor.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 11:24 AM.

No Motions were adopted, passed, or agreed to in Executive Session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

2024-1-17 A Motion was made by Litts to Adjourn the meeting at 11:32 AM, seconded by Tantillo. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Program Assistant

JLW Activities November 14, 2023 through January 16, 2024

AEM: AEM Tier 4 – Completed covered barnyard project, as-built and engineering certification, T/O Marbletown. AEM Tier 4 – Worked with Travis completing fence for rotational grazing system, T/O Rochester. AEM Tier 5B – working with farm on rotational grazing plan, T/O Rochester. AEM Tier 3A – Working with farmer on conservation plan and rotational grazing plan, T/O Rochester. AEM Round 17 closeout report. AEM Tier 4 – Cover crop certification and reimbursement to various farms. AEM Outreach to two farms.

Inventory and Evaluations: Paul Egruidu, T/O Plattekill – wetlands mapping assistance. Harley Davis, T/O Rochester – soil mapping assistance for clay export. Donal Sutton, T/O Shawangunk – Agricultural feasibility for hay and beef production. Francis O'Donnell, T/O Marbletown – Site visit for stream stabilization and riparian plantings. Glen Street, City of Kingston – continued discussions regarding flooding issues. Mia Dargen, T/O Saugerties – site visit to address flooding issues, bridge constriction. Amy Hepworth, T/O Marlborough – erosion control on farm road. U.C. Emergency Management – assistance with spreader plates for excavator for sewer line repair. Jim Boice, T/O Ulster – provided information regarding District programs and cost share assistance for fencing. T/O Wawarsing – assistance with stream bank stabilization and hillslope runoff. Hudson Valley Farm Hub – Assistance with agri-chemical mixing facility design. T/O Marlborough CAC – Provided ag district and right to farm information. Thomas Fitzpatrick, T/O Esopus – ag feasibility for beef, vegetables and hay. David Gutteridge, T/O Marbletown – site visit for ag feasibility for sheep, donkeys, vegetables and orchard production.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Contract administration and reviewed and approved timesheets, payroll delivery, Bi-Weekly meetings with AWSMP staff. Reviewed and approved SLR and Stantec invoices, as well as requested additional documentation. Elk Bush Kill payment application review and storm water inspection and report. Completed FY24 Q1 Capital recon and advance requests for funding. Successor contract negotiations with DEP. Budget modification negotiations for projects and the successor contract. Assistance with tree removal at Warner Creek site 5. Reviewed and assistance with computer purchases. Working with Allison and Adam to progress Hollow Tree Brook design development with SLR. AWSMP staff meeting with all District staff. Working with Adam and Bobby with Boiceville riparian projects and Adam with Streamside Acquisition Program and Land Acquisition Program.

CRF Round 6: Cash analysis on participating farms and assisted with vouchers and reimbursing farmers for cover crops.

Ag Assessments: 1

District Updates/Other Projects:

- Worked with other state certified instructors and taught the NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program in November 2023.
- Completed the 2023 Arbor Day Initiative with the UC Dept of Environment for the Towns of Olive and Ulster.
- Working with CCE of Ulster County with the Town of New Paltz Riparian Corridor Assessment and planting projects.
- Travis and I taught a 4 hour Erosion and Sediment Control Course with UC DOE for December 5, 2023. Free of charge to all County employees. \$935.00 in revenue generated.
- Completed annual newsletter
- Worked on Tree and Shrub Program, tree orders are submitted to the nurseries. Wildlife boxes are ordered from Brustman Farms.
- Completed Performance Evaluations.
- Working on State Reports.
- Partnering with CCE of Ulster County for a Beginning Farmer Workshop in March 2024
- Helping coordinate the 2024 Envirothon Event, Mount Academy will be competing.

Christine DeGroot

Activities November 18 – January 17, 2024

Requested and received additional credit cards for staff.

Completed and mailed out W-2s and 1099s.

Mailed out quarterly/final tax reports for NYS and FIT.

Mailed, emailed and posted the District's 2024 Tree & Shrub flyer on website. Started spreadsheet with emails for next year.

Set up direct deposit for payroll. Seems to be working fine.

New website is up and running. People can now order seedlings online and pay us through Square.

Payments sent out to cover crop participants. Spreadsheet started for next year's 1099 recipients.

Enter payments into PIP website.

Switched admins on District domain site and EZPass.

Ongoing- mail, bank deposits, bill payments/receipts, tree & shrub assistance, bank transfers, QB bank account reconciliations, supply orders, etc.

TRF Activities - November 14, 2023 – January 16, 2024

AEM: Tier 4 – T/O Rochester – certified cover crop for 2 producers. Tier 4 – T/O Rochester – construction inspection on rotational grazing fencing project, certify completed project. Tier 4 – T/O Hurley – cover crop certification. Tier 4 – T/O Ulster – certify cover crop. T/O Saugerties – certify cover crop. Tier 4 – T/O Marbletown – barnyard construction inspection. Tier 4 – T/O Marlborough – certify cover crop. Tier 4 – T/O Plattekill – certify cover crop. Tier 5B – T/O Plattekill, Wawarsing – work on soil sampling reimbursements. Reporting – enter hours into timelog, work on final reporting for AEM 17 closeout.

Part C Cover Crop Program: See summary, and producer request.

Inventory and Evaluations: Stone Dock Golf Course – T/O Marbletown – erosion issues on golf course, stream banks. T/O Wawarsing – look at road/streambank failure on Beerkill.

CRF Round 6: Took soil samples for grant, mailed them to Cornell Soil Health lab. Certified cover crop for 3 landowners and reimbursed them.

CRF Round 7: Awarded irrigation grant, worked on Plan of Work documents and landowner/district contracts, submitted POW to state for review.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Conducted 2 stormwater inspections for Elk Bushkill project. Staff meeting in Shokan. Did quarterly reporting of hours and mileage/tolls for vehicles.

Round 27: No activity.

No-Till Program: No activity. 2023 Summary: 134.7ac put on the drill, bringing in \$1,253.00. Acreage ranged from 2ac to a little over 20ac. A total of 2 CRF participants use the drill. Biggest request was a larger drill, looking into CRF Round 8 for that.

Misc: Took NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program review course in Auburn. Took the test as well, passed with a 90.

Picked up trees and delivered them to Town of Olive and Town of Ulster for Part B Arbor Day.

Worked on soil group worksheets, 5 completed.

Hosted bimonthly NYS CDEA meeting with a tour of the Hudson Valley Farm Hub.

Helped teach 4-hour erosion and sediment control course at Ulster Co. Community College.

Total station needed a software update and a calibration, coordinated that with Joe from Admar.

1 ton truck, awaiting a build date, should be sometime this spring.

Completed annual newsletter article.

Worked on updating square site to get entire tree and shrub order form online, allows for online payments.

A. Doan – Stream Project Manager

- Administration
 - Completed FY24 Q3 Capital and Expense requests for funding and associated documentation
 - Responded to DEP requests for additional information related to Stantec invoicing
 - Completed FY24, Q1 summary of activities for DEP
 - Held kickoff meeting for Lanesville Flood Analysis with flood committee
 - Participated in SWP-101 development with DEP
 - Drafted budget modification for CAT494 agreement for funds transferring to SWP-101 agreement
 - Completed 2023 staff evaluations and meet with each staff member individually to review/discuss 2024 goals
 - Provided DEP with 2023 project summary and reporting
 - Reviewed DEP land acquisition report
 - Completed newsletter article for inclusion in UCSWCD annual newsletter

- Stream Management Implementation Program support- SMIP
 - Assisted Town of Olive with grant application for funding at the Bostock Road stream crossing
 - Review/comments to CCE on Bonnie View Ave. LFA design/engineering RFP
 - Bridge Street Bridge – multiple meetings with UCDPW and DEP/SLR to advance project and revise hydrology
 - Reviewed McKenley Hollow report and provided comments to SLR Meetings/discussions to evaluate errors in FEMA data and impact on Mt. Tremper bridge LOMR

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Completed post-flood site inspections at multiple sites throughout watershed
 - Participated in planning meeting with USGS for fisheries study and 2024 planning
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Allison and Mark
 - Reviewed NOAA predictive flood tool for application to program

- Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - Completed post-storm site visits
 - Woodland Creek SRP
 - No recent activities
 - Panther Kill SRP
 - Completed post-storm site visits
 - Elk Bushkill
 - Completed post-storm site visits
 - Received pay application #1 from Hubbell – reviewing quantities and coordinating with A. Lent
 - Provided DEP with reporting
 - Hollow Tree Brook

- Received and reviewed 30% design plans
 - Reviewed plans with landowner
 - Warner Creek Site 5
 - Completed 3 site visits to receive quotes from arborist for tree removal
 - Coordinated with landowners for access for tree removal
 - Worked with arborist to meet DEP insurance requirements and approvals
 - Completed tree removal
- CSBI
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Bobby
 - Coordinated approval of DEP soil testing for Oliverea site
 - Boiceville Riparian project planning field meeting with Town of Olive
 - Assisted with Town of Olive Arbor Day tree plantings

Meetings/Site Visits

- Completed CPR training
- TA to M. Resnick regarding Woodstock aquifers and contamination
- Multiple meetings with CCE for development of 2024 technical training
- Reviewing and participating in development of future flow modeling methodologies for consultants
- UCSWCD staff meeting
- Stream Ecosystem Working Group
- Multiple meetings for LAP/SAP discussions with watershed partners and regulators
- Participated in SAP stewardship working group meeting
- Site Visit: Burgher, Matt (Town of Olive) for land use, stormwater and stream management
- Project Managers meeting
- Multiple environmental planner meetings with CCE and UC DOE
- Participated in SUNY ESF job shadow with 2 students
- Completed sexual harassment prevention training
- Weekly check-in call w/ Jake (multiple over period)

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program

- Administration
 - Continued development of SWP-101 successor contract from DEP
 - Provided DEP with responses to reconciliation questions from DEP auditor
 - Completed FY24 Q3 Expense request for funding
 - Completed FY24 Q3 Capital request for funding
 - Completed FY24, Q1 summary of activities for DEP
 - CPR and wilderness first aid training
 - Staff participating in development of 2024 technical field training
 - Participating in watershed partner discussion over DEP LAP and SAP programs
 - Participating in SAP working group focused on stewardship options for properties acquired under new program
 - Participating in discussions w/DEP to develop future flow modeling recommendations for stream projects
 - Provided annual reporting to DEP
 - 2023 staff evaluations

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Mark T. assisted Bobby with CSBI monitoring
 - Met with USGS to evaluate status of research project and plan for 2024 season
 - Continued data processing of 2023 field data
 - Participated in Stream Ecosystem Working Group meeting
 - Post-storm site visits to multiple sites
 - Working on annual reporting for DEP and UCSWCD

- Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - Completed post-flood site inspections

 - Warner Creek SRP
 - Completed post-flood site inspection

 - Panther Kill SRP
 - Completed post-flood site inspection

 - Elk Bushkill
 - Stormwater inspections on-going
 - Contractor has demobilized from the project site
 - Received pay application #1

 - Woodland SRP
 - No recent activities with invasive treatment planned for 2024

- Hollow Tree Brook SRP
 - Received/reviewed 30% design submission
 - Meet with primary landowner to review plans

- SMIP Projects Supported by UCSWCD
 - McKenley Hollow – coordinated with CCE and SLR on next steps
 - Bridge Street Bridge – multiple meetings to review revised hydrologic modeling and advance project
 - Bostock Rd/Red Maple Culverts – assisted Town of Olive with grant application for Bostock Road crossing
 - Review/comment on Bonnie View Avenue LFA design/engineering RFP
 - Review/comment on McKenley Hollow report from SLR
 - Review/coordination on Mt. Tremper LOMR and issues with FEMA data

- CSBI
 - Meet w/Town of Olive to review/plan for Boiceville CSBI sites
 - Developing agreement and scope of work
 - Completed soil testing and approval form DEP for CSBI planting site in Olivera
 - Planning for 2024 planting
 - Working annual reporting for DEP and UCSWCD

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
January 2024

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.

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/>

Other Funding

NOAA 2024 Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training Grant Funding Available: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) 2024 Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) federal funding opportunity is now open. This competitive funding opportunity supports projects that provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for youth and related professional development for teachers, while advancing regional Great Lakes watershed education priorities. For more information, please visit www.grants.gov and search **NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2024-2008201**. Applications are due by **11:59 pm EST on February 29, 2024**.