

MINUTES
ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
5 PARK LANE
HIGHLAND, NY 12528
March 27, 2024

1. **OPENING MEETING** - The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Chairman L. Tantillo at 9:00 AM. Directors Present: H. Litts, S. VanNostrand, J. DeLaune, K. Nolan, R. Davenport and F. Wilklow. SWCD Staff in attendance: J. Wedemeyer - Exec. Director, T. Ferry - District Technician, Christine DeGroot - Program Assistant, B. Taylor - CSBI Program Coordinator and S. Roberts -NRCS.

2. **WORK 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) **SWCD**

J. Wedemeyer (see attached staff report)

AEM – Wedemeyer assisted Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County with their Beginning Farmer Series on March 16th. He has been busy working on conservation plan updates that include designing Fuel Storage and Grazing System plans.

Inventory and Evaluations – Since it's been such a mild winter, Wedemeyer and Ferry have been able to do site visits at several locations for practices ranging from drainage, access roads to pond site evaluations (see report).

NYC DEP CAT 494 – The Fiscal Year 2025 annual budget and Plan of Work are complete and the Successor Contract was reviewed. The Bureau of Water Supply worked with the District to retain the Mutual Indemnification language in the Contract. The dollar amount in the contract increased from \$12 million to \$17 million.

(Deborah DeWan joined the Meeting at 9:02 AM)

AG NPS Round 27 – Wedemeyer has been working with JESS Engineering on two designs. NRCS is assisting with a third design. Preliminary designs will be reviewed within the next few weeks.

District Updates/Other Projects – The Tree and Shrub Seedling sale is underway and is digital this year. Approximately \$3,000.00 was saved because flyers did not have to be printed and mailed out.

The District will be receiving approximately \$187,000.00 in state reimbursement for Part C. Wedemeyer added that District Law Training will need to be completed by all of the Directors this year.

Wedemeyer is working with the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee to hold a Hudson Valley Carbon Farming event in the spring.

Wedemeyer and Ferry attended this year's Water Quality Symposium where they obtained Certified Crop Advisor credits.

Ulster SWCD is working with the Department of the Environment on the Catskill Mountain Railroad Herbicide Application waiver. Discussion followed. Wedemeyer mentioned he has been involved with this since 2022 and said that he recognized the herbicide damage.

Ulster SWCD has a 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control course planned on May 21st with the City of White Plains.

C. DeGroodt – The Internal 2023 Audit, overseen by VanNostrand, Delaune and Tantillo, was completed last month.

DeGroodt has begun working on the 1st Quarter 2024 County Financial Report.

T. Ferry – Ferry has been working on Soil Group Worksheets as they come in and helping the Ashokan Stream Management Program by completing stormwater inspections.

Inventory and Evaluations – Visits to inspect streambank erosion, answering soil and wetland farming questions, a property that had drainage issues, etc. (see report).

The District's new truck has been built and is in transit.

District's Cover Crop Program – Since the state cover crop rates increased, should the District increase their local program rates. The single species rate went up to \$83/acre, up from \$70/acre and the multi-species rate went up to \$102/acre up from \$82/acre. They also have a special rate for one acre or less, which is \$607.00. Ferry stated that they may also want to consider raising the cap to \$6,000.00 per farm, up from \$5,000.00. Discussion followed.

b) **AWSMP**

B. Taylor - CSBI Program Coordinator - **Elk Bush Kill** (restoration project that was started last year) – The contractors are back on-site this week to install an additional 1,200 willow live stakes. This should wrap up all of the work on this project with the exception of some additional seeding.

CSBI Spring Projects – Taylor has been busy with spring projects and is working on three landowner projects. Taylor passed around copies of interpretive panels of a large native riparian buffer display being installed at the Emerson Resort. These panels are intended to inform the public about some of the problematic invasive species and the benefits to the ecosystem of maintaining native riparian buffers. Taylor said the panels vary in size from 25" x 25" up to 50" x 60" (at a kiosk). The cost was just under \$20,000.00 but have a 10-year warranty. Discussion followed.

Through the Local Flood Analysis Program, there were seven parcels that were identified in the flood buyout program. Three of those parcels have been bought out and are now owned by the Town of Olive. The Town of Olive decided that they would like to create a linear native riparian park. They asked the Stream Program for assistance installing. The Stream Program would like to enter into an Agreement with the Town of Olive so they can provide financial and technical assistance to help Town of Olive progress these three parcels. Discussion followed. The Agreement was passed out to the Directors. The total cost of the Agreement is not to exceed \$50,000.00 and it's broken out into 4 components, each requiring a different contractor.

2024-3-1 Nolan made the Motion, Litts seconded, for the Ulster County SWCD CSBI program to enter into an Agreement with the Town of Olive, not to exceed a total of

\$50,000.00, to assist the Town of Olive in creating a linear native riparian park on three parcels. All in favor.

c) **NRCS**

S. Roberts – NRCS is obligating 13 high tunnels to applicants and there are twelve regular EQIP applications that are waiting for pre-approval.

They are taking applications for Fiscal Year 2025 now and so far, 7 producers have signed up.

3. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Procurement Policy – 2024-3-2 Nolan made the Motion, Delaune seconded, to adopt the District’s 2022 Procurement Policy for 2024. All in favor.**
- b) **Successor Contract – There was a brief discussion. 2024-3-3 Nolan made the Motion, Litts seconded, for the Chairman to sign the Agreement between the City of New York and The Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District for the Administration and Implementation of the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program Contract. All in favor.**
- c) Wedemeyer commended Ferry and DeGroodt on their job digitalizing the District’s seedling sale this year. He also mentioned that DeGroodt’s job responsibilities are increasing with the Successor Contract and it’s a lot of extra work for one person.
- d) DeGroodt currently does not take medical or dental insurance with the District, but asked the Board if they would begin covering her dental insurance. **2024-3-4 Nolan made the Motion, Delaune seconded, to cover DeGroodt’s dental insurance effective immediately. All in favor.**
- e) **District Fish Sale** – The District lost their fish supplier. Since we only had a few sales last fall, we had to cancel the sale and refund the customers. The Board decided to suspend the spring fish sale and revisit it in the fall.
- f) **Cover Crop Rates for 2024** – Rates were previously discussed. **2024-3-5 Litts made the Motion, seconded by Davenport, to raise the cover crop rates for single species from \$70/acre to \$83/acre and for multi-species from \$82/acre to \$102/acre, to add \$607/acre for farms with under 1 acre, and to add the CAP from \$5,000.00 per farm to \$6,000.00 per farm. All in favor.**
- g) **D. DeWan – ARPA Program** - Wedemeyer gave the Board an update the ARPA funding. Last Sunday, Wedemeyer held a farmer meeting at the office to get their input on ways they could utilize the funding.

DeWan said that Wedemeyer has been an amazing collaborator. One of the things she has been doing as the Agricultural Services Program Director for Economic Development is reaching out to farmers and other agencies to find out what their needs are. She is looking at ways to utilize the \$1.8 million dollars in ARPA funding within the next few weeks. There is a possibility of using some of the money to support existing District programs. DeWan’s position is part of the Ulster County Agricultural Crisis Relief Program, created by the Ulster County Legislature to provide support to farmers facing economic and climate-related changes. Legislator Nolan spearheaded the effort in the Legislature and Legislator Litts co-sponsored the resolution.

DeWan thanked both J. Delaune and H. Litts for all of their assistance. Nolan stated that there is a time limit on ARPA funding. If the money labeled for ag is not used in time it may go towards

something else, but then it may be possible for the County to use other funds to support ag. Discussion followed.

- h) **Intern** – Someone interested in interning with the District on Tuesdays contacted Wedemeyer. She has an associates degree and is interested in the field of agriculture. Litts mentioned the possibility of paying her through the County’s Youth Program. Discussion followed. **2024-3-6 Nolan made the Motion, Litts seconded, to hire the intern, non-paid but subsidized through Workforce Development if possible, otherwise paid only if we have funding for her from another source. All in favor.**
4. **OLD BUSINESS** – See below.
5. **MINUTES APPROVAL** – **2024-3-7 Litts made the Motion, Davenport seconded, to approve January and February 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. All in favor.**
6. **FINANCIAL REPORTS AND ABSTRACTS** – **2024-3-8 Litts made the Motion, Davenport seconded, to approve Financial Reports and Abstracts for January and February 2024. All in favor.**

NEW BUSINESS CONTINUED –

- i) **Farmland Preservation Training - District is a Sponsor** – The District acquired a meeting space for free at SUNY New Paltz and would like to donate \$500.00 for a light breakfast and lunch. This is for Town Supervisors to learn about farmland preservation. **2024-3-9 Litts made the Motion, Nolan seconded, to allow the District to donate \$500.00 for the Farmland Preservation Training towards breakfast and lunch. All in favor.**

(H. Litts left the Meeting at 9:45)

OLD BUSINESS – Junior Tech Applicants – The District has not received many applications. The ones they have received do not meet the minimum requirements. The salary was discussed. Wedemeyer mentioned that salary memos have gone out to Directors via emails in the past which explained how Ulster County District staff are some of the lowest paid staff out of all the SWCDs in the Hudson Valley. Nolan would like to revisit current staff salaries at April’s Board Meeting because if the Junior Tech’s salary is increased in order to find a suitable applicant, then current staff salaries should be looked at as well considering the workload they have.

(B. Davenport left the Meeting at 9:55 AM)

7. NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at 7 PM.

8. ADJOURNMENT

2024-3-10 A Motion was made by Nolan to Adjourn the meeting at 10:00 AM, seconded by Wilklow. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Program Assistant

JLW Activities February 21 through March 20, 2024

AEM: AEM Outreach – Presentations for CCE of Ulster County Beginning Farmer Series on March 16th. AEM Outreach – working with UC Economic Development with ARPA funding. AEM Tier 5B – Completed conservation plan update, T/O Wawarsing. AEM Tier 5B – Completed grazing plan, T/O Rochester. AEM Round 17 closeout and claim for payment, \$59,568 in billable hours earned. AEM Outreach – Sheep farm, discussed technical assistance and cost share programs, T/O Gardiner. AEM Reporting – AEM Round 18 contract signed and sent to NYS. AEM Tier 4 – Covered barnyard preliminary meetings on two separate farms, T/O Olive. AEM Outreach – Met with horse operation and technical assistance for manure management and drainage, T/O Esopus.

Inventory and Evaluations: Brent Wasser, T/O Gardiner – drainage recommendations. T/O Woodstock Highway Dept – culvert pipe sizing. Jon Sczerba, T/O Lloyd – drainage recommendations. T/O Hurley – 4 hour erosion and sediment control course assistance. Cynthia Niklin, T/O Lloyd – wildlife box assistance. John Gali, T/O Saugerties – pond site and spillway assistance. Jason Hutchison, T/O Rochester – access road recommendations. Don Bader, Federated Sportsman’s Club – fish hatchery assistance. Francis O’Donnell, T/O Marbletown – storm water and surface drainage recommendations.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Assistance with laptop orders. Completed FY25 annual budget and staffing plan. Reviewed successor contract, coordinated with County Attorney for review. Weekly check ins and in person meetings with A. Doan. Chris and I attended partners contract meeting. Worked with AWSMP staff with second stream project selection for 2025. Answered FY24 Q1 recon questions and provided supporting documentation. Reviewed and approved SLR and Stantec invoices.

Round 27: Working with JESS engineering to have designs done by early April to review with farmers.

District Updates/Other Projects:

- Working with Chris on the annual tree and shrub sale.
- Submitted Part C Claim for Payment for \$186,532.85 for District meeting most of the performance measures.
- Working with NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee to have a Hudson Valley Carbon Farming event in the spring.
- Attended the annual Water Quality Symposium, took two classes, CCA credits, classes and accommodations paid for by NYS.
- Attended Economic Development Legislative Committee meeting.
- Working with UC Department of Environment with Catskill Mountain Railroad Herbicide Application Waiver.
- Working with Economic Development with ARPA funding, coordinated farmer input meeting on March 24th.
- Coordinating 4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Course with Westchester Co. SWCD and the City of White Plains.

TRF Activities – February 21, 2024 – March 20, 2024

AEM: Tier 2 – T/O Rochester – working on finishing up tier 2, Tier 2 & 3 – T/O Marlborough – working on finishing up tier 2, starting tier 3 grazing plan, Tier 1 – T/O Esopus – filled out tier 1 questionnaire, Tier 1 & 2 – T/O Shawangunk – site visit for tier 1 and 2 for producer to apply for NYS Grown & Certified.

Part C Cover Crop Program: State cover crop rates have increased, should we increase our local program rates as well? Single species rate = \$83/ac (old rate \$70/ac) and multi-species rate = \$102/ac (old rate \$82/ac). State Committee has also adopted a special rate for 1 ac of cover crop or less, at a rate of \$607/ac. If we increase the rates, should we increase the reimbursement cap as well? \$6,000 per farm would allow a farmer planting single species to get reimbursed for 72ac (previously the cap was 71ac).

Inventory and Evaluations: Mia Copham – soil descriptions for farm parcel. Michael Zareno – T/O New Paltz – soils/wetlands farming questions. Met with Debra DeWan with Jake. Nancy Rosen – T/O Esopus – Jake & I met at property to look at drainage issues, Scott Daunt – in office to discuss ag district, ag building exemptions, Jason Hutchins – T/O Rochester – call about right of way issues with adjacent landowner. Francis O'Donnell – T/O Marbletown – drainage site visit.

CRF Round 6: No activity.

CRF Round 7: No activity.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Met with Jake, Adam, Allison, & DEP to look at future stream restoration projects.

Did monthly SWPPP stormwater inspection for Elk Bushkill.

Round 27: No activity.

No-Till Program: No activity.

Misc: Finished up ag assessments, still have a few coming in, 11 completed.

Attended Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse, as NYSCDEA Division rep, our employee's association Division oversees preparing and conducting the annual awards ceremony at the banquet, some of my time has been dedicated to getting that done. I was able to grab 15 CCA credits during the symposium as well.

Our new truck has been built and is "in-transit" but was showing as delayed as of 3/6/24. Our dealer contact said they will contact us as soon as they receive it, as they do not want it on their lot any longer than necessary.

Listened to a few webinars for CCA credits, listened to the State Soil & Water Conservation Committee meeting.

Christine DeGroot

Activities February 22, 2024 – March 20, 2024

District's 2024 Tree & Shrub Program - 61 orders received. Order form can be viewed on our website and orders can be paid via credit card now. Due date for orders is March 22, but we will still accept orders as long as we have the seedlings in-stock.

NYS Retirement – Finished sending in Monthly Salary and Service Certifications for all staff to NYS Retirement.

CAT-494 Contracts – Started working on the next quarter reports for Expense and Capital accounts.

Paid bills/entered bills into PIP website.

Attended the DEP Annual Partner's Contract Meeting with Wedemeyer.

Internal Audit – Internal Audit completed on February 28th with Wedemeyer, Van Nostrand, Tantillo and Delaune.

County Reports – Reformatted the County Quarterly Reports. Started working on the 1st Quarter 2024 report.

Trainings – NRCS Equity Training completed.

Other – Contacted insurance companies to obtain Proof of Insurance for Worker's Comp and Disability for the AEM Round 18 contract.

The Junior District Technician position has been listed on the District's website.

Submitted the 2023/24 NYS Sales Tax Report.

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

Updates March 2024

A. Doan – Stream Project Manager

- Administration
 - SWP-101 final review and coordination w/Jake
 - FY25 submittal development w/Jake: budget, staffing plan, annual plan of work and deliverable table
 - DEP contract partners meeting re: contracting challenges
 - Response to DEP RFI for previous reconciliation
 - Two-year Action Plan updates and coordination w/CCE and staff
 - Participated in SWP-101 development with DEP
 - Coordinated status and next steps for CAT494 budget modification and revised budget
 - Participated in SAP valuation working group and co-developed with CCE valuation criteria

- Stream Management Implementation Program support- SMIP
 - Hunter-Lanesville Flood Remediation Committee prep and coordination
 - McKenley Hollow SRP review meeting with primary landowners
 - Mink Hollow Bridge meeting w/Woodstock and design engineer – guidance provided on as-built documentation and additional survey needs
 - Technical assistance re: flood hazards for potential property purchase in Oliverea

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Bedload and Design meeting w/USGS, DEP and Stantec
 - Site selection meeting with UCSWD and DEP
 - Site selection field visits w/DEP and UCSWCD
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Allison and Mark

- Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - No recent activities
 - Woodland Creek SRP
 - No recent activities
 - Panther Kill SRP
 - No recent activities
 - Elk Bushkill
 - Coordination w/Hubbell and staff on additional live staking and seeding
 - Field visit at Coldbrook willow fields during Hubbell harvest
 - Landowner notification
 - Hollow Tree Brook
 - Meeting w/SLR regarding engineered log jam structures and appropriate material sourcing
 - Landowner outreach
 - Call and communication w/N. Dobronravov regarding parcel access – landowner agreement received
 - Revised revetment review/comments to SLR

Continued on back

- Warner Creek Site 5
 - No recent activities

- CSBI
 - Site visit and next steps discussion w/Bobby for Oliverea DEP parcel
 - Contract development for Boiceville FBO CSBI project
 - Weekly to daily check-ins with Bobby
 - Coordination w/Bobby on Emerson interpretive panels

Meetings/Site Visits

- Site visit – Lilly, Maya: stormwater, flood hazard mitigation and land-use
- Site visit – Welton, Vivian: culvert outfall protection and channel condition
- Site visit – Town of Hurley: culvert evaluation and potential SMIP application info
- Site visit – STRP site visits w/DEP and UCSWCD: Ox Clove, Warner Creek, Woodland
- Meeting w/USGS, Stantec and DEP re: bedload monitoring and restoration design
- Presentation to Olive Town Board – SAP program development and AWSMP technical services
- Call w/Nat Gillespie re: proposed STRP in Woodland Creek
- Project Managers meeting
- Boiceville CSBI planning meeting w/Town of Olive
- Highway Managers Working Group meeting
- Stream Technical Training development meeting
- Stream Technical Training – site visit to evaluate venue and outdoor programming activities
- Meeting w/Allison to prep for RAMS review and Stream Ecosystem Working Group meeting
- AWSMP Program Coordination meeting w/all AWSMP staff
- STRP site selection meetings w/DEP
- Stream technical training development meetings (multiple)
- Progress meeting w/JW (multiple)
- Stream Ecosystem Working Group
- SAP valuation Working Group meeting
- SAP/LAP meeting w/ watershed partners and DEP
- Multiple check ins w/Bobby, Allison and Mark
- Coordination meeting with Bobby for Boiceville CSBI project
- Environmental Planner check in w/Heidi and Leslie
- Project Managers meeting
- Weekly check-in call w/ Jake (multiple over period)

Updates March 2024

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program

- Administration
 - Completed review of SWP-101 successor contract
 - Advancing CAT494 budget modification to allow unspent funds to roll into SWP-101 agreement
 - Advancing 2024 technical field training: will be a two-day event to introduce attendees to fluvial geomorphology concepts and improve river observation skills
 - 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
 - Completed computer upgrades purchase

- Assessment & Monitoring
 - Completed UCSWCD and DEP site selection field visits to several potential stream restoration sites
 - 2023 field data has been processed and entered and moving to analysis and reporting phase
 - Participated in Stream Ecosystem Working Group meeting to updated Research Assessment and Monitoring strategy and review two-year action plan
 - Planning for 2024 field seasons
 - Currently have our first site selected for use of the UAV: located in Big Indian and along the main stem of the Esopus Creek near Birch Creek. This area has been an active turbidity producer with a high likelihood for continued adjustment

- Projects
 - Stony Clove SRP
 - No recent action

 - Warner Creek SRP
 - No recent action

 - Panther Kill SRP
 - No recent action

 - Elk Bushkill
 - Stormwater inspections on-going: alternating monthly between Allison and Travis
 - Contractor is working on finalizing live willow stake install
 - Assisted contractor at the Coldbrook willow fields to start harvest
 - Site will likely need some additional seeding to close out stormwater permit. This is being tracked via the monthly inspections and has been discussed with contractor

 - Woodland SRP
 - Invasive treatment planned for 2024

Continued on back

- Hollow Tree Brook SRP
 - Coordinating with landowners on access
 - Identifying and evaluating options for tree import
 - Waiting on 60% design

- SMIP Projects Supported by UCSWCD
 - McKenley Hollow – conducted alternatives review meeting with primary landowners
 - Bridge Street Bridge – reviewing Shandaken application for evaluation of Stony Clove and Main Street Bridge
 - Bostock Rd/Red Maple Culverts – waiting on response on grant application
 - Met with FEMA to evaluate issues with Esopus hydrology

- CSBI
 - Bobby to provide in person updates as AWSMP attending representative
 - Continuing to advance Town of Olive plan for FBO properties in Boiceville
 - Advanced Emerson interpretive walk sign panels
 - Planning for 2024 planting season
 - 3 spring projects advancing

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 5 Report – March 2024
Submitted by: Ben Luskin – Region 5 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

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

March SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on March 19th**. 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.

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

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

2024 NYS Envirothon Call for Volunteers: The NYS Envirothon Committee is pleased to host the 2024 NYS Envirothon at State University of New York in Cortland, NY, on May 22nd and 23rd. The Envirothon Committee is putting out a call for all volunteers. Volunteer position description can be found on the Envirothon website, <https://nysenvirothon.org/contact>. Please let the Committee know if you are willing to volunteer by completing the online volunteer registration at, <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScMFLrYPXZkYXm7qMQABYrUCCb7jYr5nzi7Mx9Mu-6MKSzqg/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1&flr=0>

Other Events

Training Opportunity - Social Media & Outreach Best Practices for Conservation Districts: The NCDEA's 2024 Virtual Training Series has begun. All conservation district employees and partners are welcome to join monthly virtual trainings focused on a range of topics addressing most pressing district needs. Please join NCDEA for their first virtual training of 2024, scheduled for **Friday, March 15th at 12PM EST**. The first topic will feature presentations and Q/A on social media and outreach best management practices. More info and registration link available at <https://www.ncdea.us/>.

New York State Drought Summit to be Held in Ithaca, NY: The Northeast Regional Climate Center at Cornell University, in partnership with the NYS Water Resources Institute and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, will host the New York Drought Summit on **April 16th and 17th in Ithaca, New York**. Discussions at this free event will cover the current state of drought monitoring in New York and ways to improve drought impact reporting and communication across the state. The summit will feature virtual and in-person options. The registration deadline is **March 20, 2024**. In-person space is limited.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc1h2YbTDL8MTjh5KP1XcyDMkerQ3jIU5kb95HYf6k3QIMAw/viewform>

Manure Storage Cover and Flare Farm Tours: See different covered storage designs, speak with experienced farm operators, discuss design options, performance and maintenance questions. This farm tour, presented by Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY and Cornell Cooperative Extension, will be offered on two dates at two locations. No registration is required.

- **1 to 3 PM | March 27th, 2024 Stein Farms, 8343 Gull Road, LeRoy, NY**
- **1 to 3 PM | March 28th, 2024 Fessenden Dairy, King Ferry, NY**

2024 NYS Wetlands Forum Annual Conference: Save the Date. The New York State Wetlands Forum 2024 Annual Conference and Business Meeting will take place on **April 16th and 17th, in Saratoga Springs, NY.** To register, please visit:

<http://www.wetlandsforum.org/registration.html>

Other Funding

Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program: The Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP) Request for Proposals was recently announced, for projects that reduce nutrients and sediments entering the Great Lakes. This year's program will focus on helping nonfederal units of government, tribes, or incorporated nonprofit organizations reduce phosphorus contributions to waters within the Great Lakes basin. Applicants are invited to submit proposals for sediment and nutrient reduction activities associated with one of two project types: 1) agricultural non-point; and 2) shoreline or streambanks. The due date for applications is **April 29th, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. EST.**

<https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/apply-2024>