

MINUTES
ULSTER COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
5 PARK LANE
HIGHLAND, NY 12528
October 18, 2023

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by Chairman L. Tantillo at 7:00 PM. Directors Present: S. Van Nostrand, F. Wilklow and J. Delaune. Staff in attendance: J. Wedemeyer - Exec. Director, T. Ferry - District Technician, C. DeGroot - Program Assistant and A. Doan - A.W.S.M.P. Project Manager.

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)

- **AEM updates:** AEM Tier 4: A concrete floor, curbs and walls were completed on a covered barnyard project in the Town of Marletown (photos of project were passed around). The concrete was certified last week, and a partial payment was issued.

The bid opening for a grazing system was on Friday, October 20th at the District office. The lowest bidder, Tim Brooks, was selected for fence construction and a rotational grazing system.

- **No-Till Program Update:** Wedemeyer assisted with delivering and picking up the no-till drill at two farms and has been assisting Ferry with the AEM Action Plan.
- **NYC DEP CAT 494:** Wedemeyer worked on the fourth quarter expense account and advance request for funding.

Wedemeyer mentioned at last month's board meeting that the Elk Bush Kill Construction Stream Restoration Project has been one of the most difficult stream restoration jobs that he has been involved with due to the high water table, a lot of rain and dealing with difficult landowners. He has been training Lent and Ferry in construction inspection on this site, collecting documentation, etc. and is hoping to have both of them receive their NYS Erosion & Sediment Control certification. Currently, Wedemeyer is the only one certified to complete the weekly Stormwater Inspection Reports. Wedemeyer is offering a NYS E&SC review course two days in November in Syracuse. Both Lent and Ferry are planning on taking the course and the exam at the end to become certified.

Wedemeyer has been assisting with the CSBI equipment and supply purchases

Wedemeyer reviewed, edited and approved the Hollow Tree Brook nomination memo, which was written by Doan. This will be another stream restoration project for next year.

Legislator H. Litts joined the Meeting at 7:05 PM)

District Updates/Other Projects:

- Wedemeyer brought the District's no-till drill to the 2023 NOFA Farm Festival. It was great outreach and approximately 200 people attended.
- The District is still accepting applications for cover crop.

- Wedemeyer assisted the Ulster County Cornell Cooperative Extension on a riparian corridor assessment. They may use Part B money to plant approximately 600'-800' linear feet of riparian plantings next year in New Paltz.
- Both Wedemeyer and Ferry are working with CCE of Ulster County on their "Meat th Farmer" event being held on Sunday, October 22, 2023.

(R. Davenport joined the Meeting at 7:08 PM)

- Ulster County SWCD hosted a New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC) meeting and project tour on October 12th. Various local farm projects were visited. Director Van Nostrand attended. Doan presented at the Stony Clove Project and Lent presented at the Panther Kill Restoration Project.
- Wedemeyer continues to work with the Ulster County Planning Department with updating the County Farmland Protection Plan.
- Staff are working with the auditor on the District's annual audit. The audit should be completed by November 15th and the auditor plans on attending the November board meeting to discuss his findings.
- Wedemeyer and Ferry are teaching a 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control course on December 5th. It is offered free to County employees, otherwise the cost is \$85/per person.
- There was a brief discussion regarding Program Assistant Wagner continuing to work part-time at the office after she officially retires.
- Wedemeyer has been spending time working with DeGroot.

b) SWCD – T.Ferry (see attached staff report)

- **AEM:** Ferry has spent a fair amount of time the past few months working on the AEM program. This includes moving the no-till drill and working on the cover crop program. There have been several producers interested in the Grown and Certified Program.

Ferry is working on the AEM Annual Action Plan and the final report.

- **Inventory and Evaluations:** Site visits are on-going.
- **NYC DEP CAT 494:** Ferry is doing the Elk Bushkill site construction inspections twice a week.
- **Round 27:** No activity.
- **No-Till Program:** The no-till drill has approximately 120 acres on it. Frank Tantill from Tantillo Farms, LLC submitted a letter of appreciation for the use of the drill. Wedemeyer read the letter aloud.

- One of the producers, Brett Fox, who was a stop at the SWCC tour last week, posted a nice article on their farm's facebook page about the District. Ferry read the article aloud. Brief discussion followed.
- **Misc:** The Chevy dealer told Ferry that they are unsure when the truck will be available to the District. They are suggesting we buy a crew cab instead of a double cab, since it is unlikely that the double cab 3500's will be allocated for 2024 models. Ferry is researching the price difference. Discussion followed regarding the possibility of purchasing a Dodge or a Ford off of DOT Spec 1 or OGS.

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

- The CAT-494 successor contract is called SWP-101. It has a similar scope of service as the original contract. They want the District to indemnify them and for the District to cover any of their legal fees. There is mutual indemnification with the current contract. Jake mentioned that the District may need to get legal council. The possibility of the District using DEP professional service funds to pay for an attorney was mentioned. Litts asked if the Department of Ag would consider reviewing this for the District. Wedemeyer said possibly through their own legal team. Discussion followed.
- Working with CCE staff on coordinating Travor Hollow stream walk. Doan will be one of the speakers. No date has been set yet.
- M.Tollefson returned from Rosgen 1 and 2 training in Montana.
- Doan worked on an Emergency Stream Intervention training with the State Committee which targeted highway managers and crews. Doan passed around materials to the Board. Cornell organized it and Doan presented it with some other speakers. Approximately 12-15 operators attended. Approximately 35-40 people attended on day one and 30-35 on day two. Day two was geared towards the administrative staff/highway offices, and where they might go for additional funding.
- Received DEP legal approval for the purchase of a drone.
- The DEP is re-evaluating their Land Acquisition Program. They are considering a new program called Streamside Acquisition Program.
- Completed herbicide treatments at Stony Clove, Woodland Creek and one of Taylors CSBI projects sites. Effects of the treatment will be monitored.
- Doan mentioned that Taylor has started fall planting plans and working on project monitoring. CCE staff may assist with plantings.

d) USDA NRCS – O. Velez-Juarbe

Velez-Juarbe did not attend the meeting. Wedemeyer read his work report to the Directors. There are 20 EQIP applications for 2024. He has been doing a lot of site visits, high tunnels, wetland determinations, etc.

A new Soil Conservationist will be starting sometime in November in the Ulster office.

e) NYS SWCC

Region 5 Report – Ben Luskin, Region 5 Associate Environmental Analyst, submitted the Region 5 report. The report was included for review in the Directors package.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a) AEM Action Plan and Board Resolution - Discussion on the AEM Action Plan. Ferry mentioned that the District is using Option A for the two-year contract, which is up to \$200,000 for implementation projects. **2023-10-1 Delaune made the Motion, Van Nostrand seconded, to approve the AEM Action Plan and Resolution 2023-1. All in favor.**
- b) Part B 2024 Conservation Project – Two riparian plantings on agricultural land in the Town of New Paltz in partnership with CCE. **2023-10-2 Litts made the Motion, Davenport seconded, to approve the Part B 2024 Conservation Project in the amount of \$6,000.00 for two riparian plantings on agricultural land in the Town of New Paltz. All in favor.**
- c) The District's 2024 Annual Plan of Work (APOW) was emailed to Directors for review prior to the Board Meeting. Discussion followed. Wedemeyer will revise the APOW to include a new District Technician position and a special Board Meeting will be held to approve it, since it's due to the State by November 1st.

3. OLD BUSINESS

- a) External District Audit – CAT 494 contract and core District finances –The auditor is planning on attending the District's November Board Meeting to discuss his findings.

4. Minutes Approval

2023-10-3 A Motion was made by Litts to approve the September 2023 Minutes, seconded by Wilflow. All in favor.

5. Financial Reports and Abstracts – July and August

2023-10-4 Litts made the Motion, Davenport seconded, to accept the book balance and Abstract for July 2023. All in favor.

2023-10-5 Litts made the Motion, Delaune seconded, to accept the book balance and Abstract for August 2023. All in favor.

Litts asked why the WEX gas bill was so high for the month of September. Doan explained that there has been a lot of construction/use of vehicles and Ferry mentioned that he has been moving the seeder. There was also a request to check on the health insurance payments as it's low one month, and high the next. DeGroot will look into it and report back.

6. Next Meeting

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 20, 2023 at 9:00 AM.

7. Adjournment

2023-10-6 A Motion was made by Litts to Adjourn the meeting at 8:30 PM, seconded by Delaune. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,



Christine DeGroot
Program Assistant

JLW Activities September 20 – October 11, 2023

AEM: AEM Tier 4 – Concrete floor, curbs and walls completed for the covered barnyard, T/O Marbletown. Bid opening and lowest bidder selected for fence construction, rotational grazing system, T/O Rochester. Worked with T. Ferry completing AEM Round 18 action plan. AEM Outreach and Education – Attended the NOFA 2023 Farm Fest with AEM and CRF materials and the no-till drill. AEM Tier 4 – cover crop application and delivered the no-till drill, T/O Ulster. AEM Tier 5B – Sorghum planting and nutrient management recommendations, T/O Saugerties. AEM Outreach – assistance with NY G&C Program, T/O Shawangunk. AEM Tier 4, preliminary barnyard design/planning, T/O Gardiner.

Inventory and Evaluations: Elizabeth Stretch, T/O Rochester – ag feasibility and cover crop recommendations. Bonnie Brae, T/O Ulster- ag feasibility and pasture renovation for horses. Frank Tantillo, T/O Gardiner – no till drill delivery and calibration for barley. T/O New Paltz – riparian assessment workshop with CCE of Ulster County. Participation and collaboration with Lower Esopus stream management plan.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Contract administration and reviewed and approved timesheets, payroll delivery, Bi-Weekly meetings with AWSMP staff. Elk Bush Kill construction inspection and weekly storm water inspections and reports, reviewed and approved change orders. Worked on forth quarter expense account and advance request for funding. Assistance with CSBI equipment and supplies purchases. Reviewed and approved engineering invoices. Reviewed, made minor edits and approved Hollow Tree Brook nomination memo.

No Till Program – Assistance with deliveries and pick up of drill for 2 farms.

District Updates/Other Projects:

- Continue to work with CCE of Ulster County to do another “Meat the Farmer” event in October 2023.
- Working with Chris DeGroodt with the Program Assistant transition, we are still correcting the mistakes made by the former Program Assistant.
- Ulster County SWCD will be hosting the next State Committee meeting and project tour on October 12, 2023, Board members are encouraged to attend.
- Continue to work with UC Planning with updating the County Farmland Protection Plan.
- Margarete, Chris and myself are still working with the external auditor with the core District accounts.
- Completed Annual Plan of Work
- Completed Part B Project Request Form.
- Working with the UC Department of the Environment to co-sponsor and teach a 4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Course at Ulster County Community College.
- Working with other state certified instructors to teach the NYS Erosion and Sediment Control Certificate Program in November 2023.

TRF Activities - September 20, 2023 to October 11, 2023

AEM: Tier 4 – T/O Shawangunk – drill delivery and setup. Tier 4 – T/O Marbletown – barnyard implementation construction inspection. Tier 4 – T/O New Paltz – deliver and go over drill setup. Tier 5A – T/O Plattekill – site visit to update Tier 1 and 2 with small vegetable producer seeking Grown & Certified assistance. Tier 4 – T/O Rochester – Rotational grazing implementation project bid opening. Tier 4 – T/O Ulster – look at and certify cover crop for Part C program. Tier 4 – Various towns – Cover crop program applications. Program Evaluation – working on next AEM Round Annual Action Plan. Reporting – working on filling in final report to inform our Annual Action Plan for next round.

Inventory and Evaluations: Terra Ridge/Wiley – T/O New Paltz – soil testing and recommendations for sheep pasture. Misc no-till work.

CRF Round 6: Delivered no-till drill to 1 cover crop participant.

CRF Round 7: Awaiting approval of ranked list from NYS SWCC.

NYC DEP CAT 494: Elk Bushkill construction inspection approximately 2 days a week.

Round 27: No activity.

No-Till Program: No-till drill is seeing increased interest with fall cover crops.

Misc: Contacted Joe Basil Chevy about truck order, unlikely that Double Cab 3500's will be allocated for 2024 models, dealer suggested we move into a crew cab if possible.

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

NYS SWCC News

AGNPS Round 29 Awards: Congratulations to those Districts who will be receiving funds to help farms via the Agricultural Non-Point Source Program! \$13.8 million will be divided between 21 Districts to implement projects on 80 farms. The funding will help protect and preserve NY's natural resources by enhancing water quality in priority watersheds. Information about Plan of Work development will be available shortly. More info about the Round 29 awards can be found here: https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/09/agnpsround29projectdescriptions_0.pdf

2023 (AEM)-Leopold Conservation Award: Congratulations to Dygert Farms of Palatine Bridge and the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District for taking top honor for the 2023 AEM Leopold Conservation Award! The Dygert family and the SWCD were honored at a ceremony which convened on the farm in September. Thank you to all the SWCDs who nominated a farm this year.

October SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on October 17th**. 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.

SWCC November 1st Reminders:

- **2024 Annual Plan of Work (APOW):** It's time to start updating your APOW for 2022. The deadline for submittal to your AEA is **November 1, 2023**. This will allow time to review, provide feedback, and recommend to the SWCC for approval by the end of the calendar year. Please don't hesitate to discuss with your Regional AEA if there are any questions or concerns.
- **AEM 18 Action Plan Submittal:** The two-year AEM Action Plan is due **November 1, 2023**, for a program which runs from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. Action Plans and other documents should be uploaded to your SWCD AEM Sharepoint folder, with confirmation emails sent to the Program Manager and your Regional AEA.
- **2024 Part B Conservation Project Financial Assistance:** Part B proposals are Due **November 1, 2023**. Projects are to be completed by December 31, 2024. Part B requests and claim for payments should be submitted via email to ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov.
- **Interim Reporting:** Interim reports for AGNPS Contracts (Round 21-Round 23), CAFO WSTSP (Round 1 and Round 2), CRF (Round 1 – Round 4) are due **November 1st**. Reports should be sent to Maureen.Irish@nyagriculture.ny.gov, as well as the appropriate program manager and your Regional AEA.

SWCC Operations Sub-Committee: The SWCC is preparing to re-establish the Operations Sub-Committee SWCC is currently looking for interested SWCD staff to help serve. A major component of the sub-committee's focus is directed at the upkeep of the SWCD Office/Operations Manual. We anticipate the first meeting to occur in the Winter of 2023. If you are interested in serving on the sub-committee, please contact your Regional AEA.

Other Events

2023 Upper Susquehanna Watershed Forum: USC is thrilled to return to an in-person watershed forum for 2023, and to be returning to the beautiful Binghamton University Center of Excellence. **October 18th, 2023**, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. All information regarding the forum can be found at <http://u-s-c.org/uscforum> including registration and opportunities for posters and displays.

2023 Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting: The annual meeting of the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society will be held **November 9th, 2023**, 9:00AM to 4:00PM at the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District. The meeting will be held in person with a virtual option for those interested. **Please save the date.** An agenda and registration link will be available shortly.

2023 Northeast Region Agribusiness & CCA Conference: Including the Basic Training track for those preparing to take the CCA exams as well as the Advanced Training track for current CCAs. An in-person track will commence at the Doubletree

Hotel, East Syracuse, NY on **November 28th-29th, 2023**, followed by a virtual track will commence on **December 12th-13th, 2023**, when additional programming will be offered. More information and a registration link can be found here, <https://www.nysaba.com/educational-meetings>

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

Restoring Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants: Nearly \$175 million in funding is available for fish passage projects under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Proposals must be received through www.grants.gov by **11:59 PM Eastern time on October 16, 2023**. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/restoring-fish-passage-through-barrier-removal-grants>

DEC Invasive Species Grant Program Funding Available: DEC recently announced that \$3 million is available in the third round of the State's Invasive Species Grant Program (ISGP). DEC is accepting applications for these grants through **Nov. 1st, 2023**. For more information and to apply, visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/115742.html>

NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grant: NOAA recently announced that they will provide nearly \$240M to prioritized high-value, high-impact habitat restoration projects that advance resilience. The competition closes **November 17th**. For more information and to apply, visit, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/240-million-available-transformational-habitat-restoration-and-coastal-resilience>