



# St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District

2022 Annual Newsletter



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**Kent Frary**  
District Conservationist

**Cayce Salvino**  
Soil Conservationist

## OFFICE UPDATE

The St. Lawrence County SWCD Office is only open by appointment only. Staff is doing their best to make accommodations and are monitoring voicemails and emails as quickly as possible to continue to meet our mission and help serve the local community. Please note that staff is only at 50% capacity in the building and may be in the field at times so there may not be someone readily available for phone calls. We will continue to post updates on our website, Facebook, and voicemail to keep everyone informed about the office status when changes occur. Stay Safe and Enjoy the New Year!

## AGRICULTURE

### **Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement & Control Grant Program**

This is a competitive program that assists farmers in abating and preventing water pollution from agricultural activities by providing technical assistance and financial incentives. The implementation grant provides cost-share funds to construct and apply Best Management Practice (BMP) Systems on farms. Farmers who have progressed through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program Tiers 1 & 2 and have a qualified Tier 3 plan may be eligible to apply for funding to assist in implementing those plans.

In 2021, two Waste Storage and Transfer Systems were installed on two different farms in the Grass River watershed. Waste storage systems improve the farms ability to apply nutrients from the right source with the right rate, right time, and right place.



Funded by Round 26 Funds



Funded by Round 24 Funds

## Cover Crops

In 2021, the St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District was able to secure funding to help cost-share the implementation of around 260 acres of cover crops in fields that were currently in row crops and will be in row crops in 2022. The fields were successfully planted in September and October with winter rye and showed signs of growth by November.

Planting cover crops is a very beneficial practice for soil health and productivity. Cover Crops help to: improve crop diversity, reduce wind and water erosion, build stable soil aggregates, build or improve organic matter, support beneficial insects and break pest insect cycles, nutrient cycling, nitrogen fixation, adjust carbon/nitrogen ratios, livestock integration, and can also be beneficial to wildlife in winter.

There is potential for funding in 2022 but it's not guaranteed. If you are interested in participating call or email our office and we will call you if funding becomes available. Priority will be given to producers that have not previously participated in the cover crop program with us before. Participation in our Agriculture Environmental Program (AEM) is required.



Fall 2021 Cover Crop



Fall 2021 Cover Crop



Spring 2021 showing growth of cover crop planted in fall of 2020!

## Agricultural Environmental Management

AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make environmentally sound and economically viable decisions. The primary goal is to protect and enhance the environment while maintaining the viability of agriculture in New York. The program coordinates agricultural and environmental conservation agencies and programs as well as consultants to provide the most up to date information and create site-specific plans. AEM uses a 5-tiered approach to develop and implement comprehensive, site-specific plans.

All information collected for this program is confidential, state law protects the confidentiality of AEM plans, on-farm surveys, and assessments.

Common conservation and best management practices planned to address resource concerns include but are not limited to: Barnyard Water Management Systems, Nutrient Management Planning, Waste Storage Facilities, Prescribed Grazing, Soil Management and Erosion Control

Most recent plans from our office include prescribed grazing plans, nutrient management plans and nutrient management plan updates. Contact our office for more information and start planning!



# COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

## Agricultural Value Assessments - Possible Tax Reductions!

The St. Lawrence County SWCD continues to assist landowners interested in the Ag Value Assessment Program by preparing the soil group worksheets required for the applications. If you own or rent land that is used for agricultural purposes, you may qualify for an agricultural assessment. This program generates a report based on the productivity of the soil types on your property. This report is just part of the full application that will be handed in to your assessor. Your tax assessor then uses the information to determine whether you qualify for a reduction in property taxes. It's suggested to talk to your assessor first to determine whether you qualify for an assessment. More information can be found by going to [tax.ny.gov](http://tax.ny.gov) click on 'Property owners' and then on 'Agricultural assessments'.

Applications for the program are due to your assessor by March 1st. It may take the Soil and Water Conservation District some time to do the necessary paperwork and with the office being closed to the public additional time may be needed to work out the logistics of getting the required information to complete and return the worksheets, so please start the process early. There is a fee of \$30 for each tax parcel and a late fee of an additional \$10 for each parcel submitted after February 15th.

If you are already enrolled in the program, make sure to fill out your annual renewal form if nothing has changed. You can find the renewal form online at [tax.ny.gov](http://tax.ny.gov)

### Virtual Regional Envirothon

In 2021 Herkimer and St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation Districts partnered to offer a Regional Envirothon on May 11th online via Google Classroom. Six teams from four different schools between the two Counties participated in the virtual event. Herkimer County's Overall Winners were: Central Valley Academy Team B. St. Lawrence County's Overall Winners were: Canton Central School's Grasse River Otters: Grace Magurk, Matt Barrick, Lianna Pront & Nate Lyndaker

### Annual Fall Fish Sale

Our annual fall fish sale is held for area residents and includes the following species: largemouth bass, brook trout, rainbow trout, catfish and fathead minnows.

Final order dates are usually in late September with a pick-up date in early October.

Be sure to call our office or check out our website in late summer and early fall for the order dates and forms!



# FORESTRY

## Ash Tree Replacement Assistance Program

This year the SWCD assisted the Presbyterian Church of Canton with tree replacement at the village green. This replacement planting event arose from concerns that the ash trees within the park would be lost to the invasive beetle, the Emerald Ash Borer, along with other hazard trees in need of removal.

Eleven new trees were planted to replace some of the ash and hazard trees that were preemptively removed throughout the park. A variety of native tree species were selected as replacements including Kentucky Coffeetree, Swamp White Oak, Hop-hornbeam, Northern Catalpa, and Hackberry. These species were selected for this planting location because of their high tolerance to harsh urban environments, such as high pH soils, salt spray from roadways, and drought.

These new trees will aid in diversifying the parks tree population, increase local stormwater runoff capacity, provide shade to the farmers market patrons, and help beautify the widely used park.



# FORESTRY

## Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Biological Control Program

The SLC SWCD has joined the efforts of the U.S. Forest Service and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) through the EAB Biological Control Program. This program involves the release of natural insect enemies or "parasitoids" of EAB, to help reduce EAB populations. There are currently three different species of parasitoids that have been approved for release in the United States since 2007. Release of parasitoids has begun in many infested areas throughout the U.S. and are now establishing and spreading. These parasitoids, along with woodpeckers and native parasitoids, will help protect the regenerating ash saplings and young trees of the next generations forests.

If you or someone you know would be interested in participating in the program go to [www.mapbiocontrol.org](http://www.mapbiocontrol.org) for more information.



## Forestry Internship

Each year the District hires a summer intern to assist the staff with fieldwork relating to our programs. In 2021, the District hired Heidi Knafelc who was a graduate from Paul Smith's College. Summer interns learn the principles and practices of natural resource conservation on private and public lands while assisting the staff and working with a variety of people from the agricultural community, schools, local government and private landowners.

This summer, Heidi's internship focused on updating the County's Reforestation lands forest inventory and management plans. She spent many hot, buggy, rainy days trekking through the woods identifying, measuring, and plotting all the different tree species throughout the woods. She also assisted with some emerald ash borer management and research projects, tree planting, soil sampling, and education and outreach.

Keep an eye out this spring for announcements of internships available in 2022.

## Invasive Species Inventory Program

This spring the SWCD will be looking for help from volunteers and master naturalists with an invasive species inventory on county reforestation lands.

The goal of the inventory will be to collect information on the location and density of invasive's on county lands, with a special focus on buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*, *Frangula alnus*) and honeysuckle (*L. japonica*, *L. tatarica*, *L. maackii*). In a forested setting, these two particular invasives have the potential to diminish natural forest processes, health, biodiversity, resiliency, and can hinder the regeneration of other desirable, native trees species. This inventory will provide valuable information for future planning efforts and management tactics for the control of invasives species on county properties.

For any master naturalists or volunteers interested in participating in the program, please reach out to the office at 315-386-3582 or by email at [conservation@slcswcd.org](mailto:conservation@slcswcd.org).

