



www.slcswcd.org

St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District

1942 Old DeKalb Rd. Canton, NY 13617

Phone: 315-386-3582

Email: conservation@slcswcd.org

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2024 Annual Newsletter

MANAGER UPDATES

From the Desk of Cayce

2023 Brought the departure of two SWCDs employees – McKenzie Church and Raeanne Dulanski.

McKenzie had a difficult job, replacing our previous secretary and treasurer of over a decade who retired in 2022. While only here for a year, she tackled the challenges with a positive attitude and helped keep the ship afloat.

Raeanne was a member of the St. Lawrence County SWCD for 16 years, serving the last six as District Manager. There are plenty of accolades I could use to describe her time with SWCD, but they cannot fully capture her contributions to the district. Her leadership helped establish strong partnerships and form the solid foundation that is SWCD today. Before her departure, she was recognized by the SWCD Board of Directors for her time and dedication.

We thank them both and wish them well in their new endeavors.



I, Cayce Salvino, took over as District Manager in June of 2023. My career has taken me all over the US studying soil, plants, and the occasional small mammal. I am passionate about environmental education and making conservation attainable for the residents of St. Lawrence County. I am lucky enough to join a team that is incredibly knowledgeable and talented. For those unfamiliar with your local SWCD staff we have:

Aaron Barrigar – A Forester and Certified Arborist with an extensive knowledge of trees and tree diseases. He manages the county forests, creates forest management plans for landowners, works with local governments on urban forest management, and helps with most tree related questions.

Jevonnah Foster – A Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) and nutrient management specialist. She regularly assists farmers and landowners in trouble-shooting resource concerns, developing plans, and helping to obtain funding through state and federal cost-share programs.

Heidi Knafelc – Our in-house pro at creating soil maps for Agricultural Assessments. She assists residents in completing applications for Agricultural Assessments and will be heading up new outreach opportunities.

And **Melissa Woods** – Our expert switchboard technician (Secretary/Treasurer). For all the calls we receive that we cannot answer – she aids in directing a question to where it needs to go.

What I am trying to say is – the St. Lawrence County SWCD has a lot to offer! I am grateful to be a part of this team.

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

AGRICULTURE

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. Once a farm has a plan, they can become eligible to apply for cost-share funding through a state and/or government cost-share programs such as the AEM program (state), the Climate Resilient Farming Program (state), the Agricultural Non-Point Source and Abatement Program (state) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP-government) just to name a few!

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

Common conservation plans and best management practices planned to address resource concerns include but are not limited to: Nutrient Management, Waste Storage Systems, Prescribed Grazing, Cover Crops, and Erosion Control Systems. Contact Jevonnah Foster for more information on planning and cost-share funding opportunities! Email: jevonnah@sleswcd.org

Erosion Control System—Trail & Walkways

Below: erosion evident on laneways.

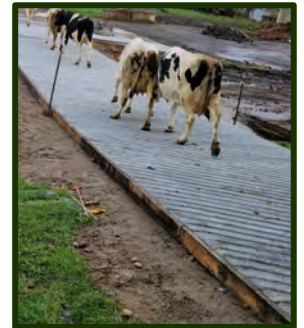


The St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District (SLC SWCD) was able to secure funding through the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management Base Program Technical Assistance Track to help cost share the implementation of an animal walkway. The successful construction of the walkway facilitates the movement of dairy cattle to and from the barn and pastures. The plan was designed in the spring of 2023 after the farms Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) recommended this best management practice to address the resource concerns of soil erosion and water quality degradation.



Right: new concrete laneway exiting barn followed by gravel laneway. Old eroded laneways were seeded and will have vegetation come spring.

Cows using new laneway.



Cover Crop Program

The SLC SWCD was able to secure funding from two different sources to help cost-share the implementation of approximately 413.5 acres. Funds were secured through the NYS Part-C funds and the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management Base Program Technical Assistance Track.

Planting cover crops is an important practice for soil health and crop productivity. There are many benefits to planting them such as improving crop diversity, reducing wind and water erosion, building stable soil aggregates, improving soil organic matter, supporting beneficial insects and breaking pest-insect cycles, nutrient cycling, nitrogen fixating, adjusting carbon/nitrogen ratios, integrating livestock, and can also be beneficial to wildlife in winter.

After trying cover crops through cost-share funding opportunities, producers realize the benefits firsthand and they continue to implement this best management practice on their fields when rotations and weather allow.

Three different corn silage fields with winter rye establishment 2023.



FORESTRY

Emerald Ash Borer Mitigation Along County Roadways

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an insect that infests and kills ash trees, has been found throughout St. Lawrence County. There is no cost-effective treatment that will save our ash trees stands from this insect. While the inevitable death of these trees is a sadness for our region, the EAB infestation is already creating a hazardous situation for travelers, road crews, and homeowners, and it will only get worse as the infestation spreads. New York State estimates that approximately 8% of the trees in St. Lawrence County are ash trees. The removal of ash trees within County highway bounds began in the fall of 2022 under the supervision of the St. Lawrence County Soil & Water Conservation District.



EAB attacks all species of ash trees and feeds on the living parts of the trees, just under the bark. This damages the trees nutrient-conducting tissues, causing it to starve and inevitably die, typically within 2-7 years. Dead and dying ash trees are susceptible to branch and trunk failure, causing them to become a hazard. Tree removal must be managed proactively prior to or just after infestation to reduce risks to the public and hired tree removal contractors. For more information about EAB and how and why it is killing ash trees across the County, go to the US Forest Service's EAB website: www.emeraldashborer.info. Local agencies and the St. Lawrence County EAB Task Force - a group of experts, regulators, educators, municipalities, utility company representatives, and others - have been monitoring the movement of EAB and now recommend that efforts be taken to reduce the impacts of EAB. An inventory of ash trees along approximately 574 miles of County highway bounds has been conducted and has identified ash trees within these rights-of-way. The options available to the County to protect the safety of those using County Routes from dead and dying ash trees is to either remove the trees before they die and become a hazard or treat them with pesticides every few years indefinitely. Based on the number of ash trees and the cost of treatments, it is not feasible to implement such treatments on such a large scale. St. Lawrence County is following the recommendations to remove ash trees within its highway bounds, with a goal of doing so before they die and become a hazard to the traveling public. The SLC SWCD will follow the progression of EAB and target ash trees that are infested, dying, or already dead. These trees are likely to become a safety hazard sooner than other ash trees in the County.



Trail & Wildlife Habitat Project

Hiking Trail Map

St. Lawrence County
Reforestation Land



Throughout the 2023 field season, the SLC SWCD enhanced wildlife habitat and added to the recreational trail to Reforestation Parcel 33. This parcel, located in Parishville on the Lenny Rd., runs along the Raquette River and is a part of the Stone Valley Mountain Biking Trail System.

The trail addition is about 0.1 miles long and connects the original trail from East to West creating a loop.

At each log landing of the parcel, 2 bat boxes were added (4 total), and along the trail brush piles were created as small mammal habitat. The bat boxes were added on the woodland edge, near water, and an open flyway to hopefully attract threatened local bat species (such as the Northern long-eared bat, the tri-colored bat, and the little brown bat).

Brush piles were added along trails to provide hideaways for small mammals along the fragmented parcel, making effective use of edge habitat.

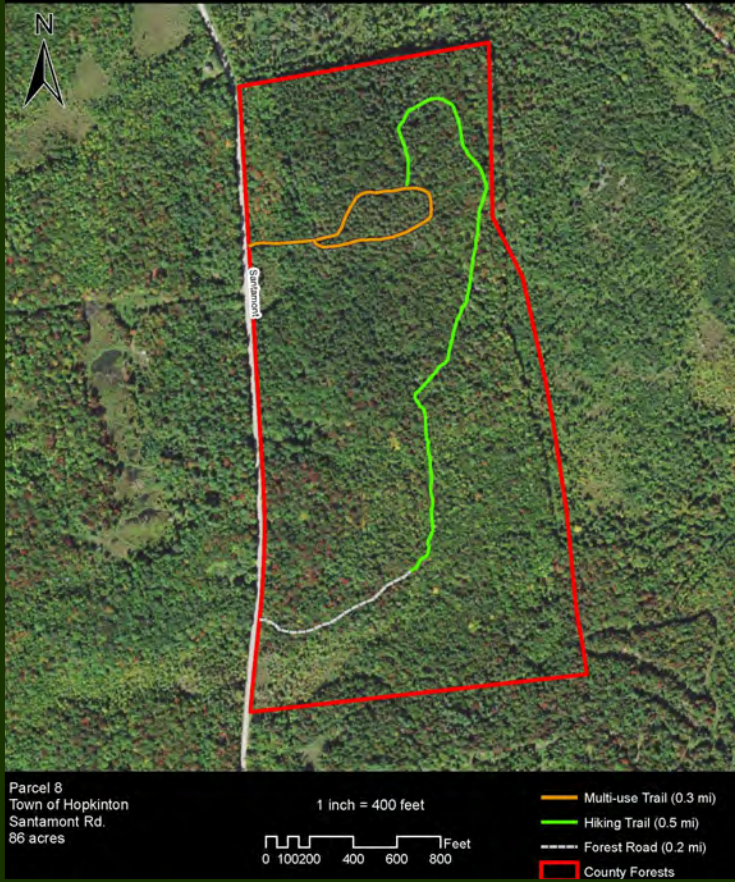
COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Trail Work Event

Parcel 8 Trail Map



St. Lawrence County
Reforestation Land



This past September, the Christian Fellowship Church youth group helped create a new hiking trail on county parcel 8, on the Santamont Road in Hopkinton. Twelve participants cleared brush and marked 0.5 miles of new connector hiking trail. They also helped clean up trash and debris along the multi-use trail. The new trail connects a section of the multi-use trail and an existing forest road, creating a loop across the parcel. The SWCD would like to thank everyone for all their hard work and for creating more recreational opportunities for the residents of St. Lawrence County!



Annual Tree & Shrub Sale

The 2023 tree sale was a success, with many trees of varying species sold to residents throughout the county. Many of the trees and shrubs sold were utilized for various conservation efforts such as reforestation, creating windbreaks, reducing soil erosion, and creating or enhancing wildlife habitat. Proceeds from this program are used to support conservation activities here in St. Lawrence County.

The 2024 tree sale is currently under way and ends March 1, 2024, so get your order in soon! You can call our office, 315-386-3582, or go to our website at www.sleswcd.org to browse the available trees species, seeds, tree care products, and place your order online.



Photo by Nick Hunter

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

North Adirondack Regional Envirothon

St. Lawrence, Franklin, Essex and Clinton Counties make up the North Adirondack Regional Envirothon (NARE). High school students from these counties come together at the beginning of May to compete in the event focusing on Wildlife, Aquatics, Soils, Forestry, and Current Environmental Issues.

The top team from each county goes on to compete against other teams in the NYS Envirothon.

Pictured to the right is the 2023 winning team from St. Lawrence County!



Conservation Field Days

In June 2023, SWCD participated in the annual Conservation Field Days event at Indian Creek Nature Center with approximately 82 middle school students from Canton Central School. They presented a hands-on activity on soil texturing. Students used a soil texturing flow chart to determine the texture of two different soils- comparing a loamy soil and a sandy soil (from Taylor Park). The event coincided with our very smoky day due to the Canadian wildfires, which led the discussion to the impacts of climate change on the soil and organisms living in or depending on the soil.



Day at the Farm

The 2023 Day at the Farm event put on by our partners at the St. Lawrence County Farm Bureau, was at the Stauffer Dairy Farm in North Lawrence, NY. Soil and water hosted a table of information coupled with an erosion demonstration. The set-up illustrated the importance of ground cover by mimicking rain on three different fields: one with no ground cover, one with a grass ground cover, and one with no cover, but a buffer strip of cover. Adults and children alike came by to guess the outcome and discuss the display.



We are working to build our educational outreach Calander for 2024. Is there an event you would like to see the SWCD at?

Let us know! conservation@slcswcd.org

AWARDS

Annual Awards Banquet

Each year at the NYS Conservation District Employee Association Annual Awards Banquet highlights accomplishments and provides recognition of outstanding contributions made in advancing natural resource protections and supporting local communities throughout the year.

District Director Award—Robert Andrews

This award is presented to a current District Director who has shown leadership, supervision and total dedication to the District through support of its image, activities and personnel.



Division III Merit Award—Aaron Barrigar

This award recognizes current District employees who have shown outstanding effort in promoting their District and its activities



USDA-NRCS

Do you currently manage a garden? Do you sell vegetables at a local farmers market, or operate a small farm stand? Would like to extend the growing season? The NRCS High Tunnel initiative may be a fit for you.

A high tunnel, also commonly called a “hoop house,” protects plants from severe weather and allows farmers to extend their growing seasons – growing earlier into the spring, later into the fall, and some-times, year-round. And because high tunnels prevent direct rainfall from reaching plants, farmers can use precise tools like drip irrigation to efficiently deliver water and nutrients to plants. High tunnels also offer farmers a greater ability to control pests and can even protect plants from pollen and pesticide drift.

If you’d like more information or to discuss the ways NRCS may be of service to you please, check out our website or contact me directly by email or phone.



CONTACT

Website: www.nrcs.usda.gov
Email: Allycia.Foote@usda.gov
Call: 315-386-2401 ext 6318