

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District

2041 US Route 20, Suite 2

Seneca Falls, NY 13148

www.senecacountyswcd.org

Phone: 315-568-4366 Ext. 4

December 2021 Newsletter

SWCD Board of Directors:

- Michael Reynolds, County Rep & Chairperson
- Ronald McGreevy, County Rep
- Elisabeth Freier, Farm Bureau Member & Treasurer
- John Hunt, Grange Member & Vice Chairperson
- Charles Sumner, Member At Large

Board of Directors meet the fourth Monday of every month at 9:30 AM

District Staff:

- Erin Peruzzini, District Manager
- Anne Havelin, Bookkeeper & Secretary to the Board
- Christopher Creelman, District Technician
- Alex McGraw, District Technician

USDA/NRCS Staff:

Dan Tighe, Resource Conservationist

Office Hours:

M-F 8:00AM—4:30PM

By Appointment Only

NOTICE

AGRICULTURAL VALUE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM - SOIL GROUP WORKSHEETS -

will be prepared from

January 3, 2022 through February 28, 2022

By Appointment Only

There is a \$30 fee for each Soil Group Worksheet prepared.

Please call the office **315-568-4366** to schedule an appointment.

2022 Tree & Shrub Sale

Order forms will be available at the SWCD office or online at our website www.senecacountyswcd.org late January 2022.

Pre-Orders only—No Overstock Sale

Orders will be filled on a first come first serve basis.



2021 Year in Review

Project Spotlight

Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System



After

A concrete barnyard with curbing and push wall was installed for animals to be fed on during the winter and spring months. Runoff from the barnyard drains to vegetated treatment area. Roof gutters exclude clean water from the barnyard.



Before

Rotational Grazing System — Stream Crossing, Stream Exclusion & Watering System



High tensile fence was installed to create a prescribed grazing system. Over 2000 feet of stream was excluded from the animals.



Hydrants were connected to an existing system and installed to provide water to each paddock. A crossing was reinforced with rock to facilitate animal and vehicle movement.

Manure Compost Facility



Before



After

Before installation of a Manure Compost Facility, manure was pushed into the barnyard area with surface water flow. The Manure Compost Facility now collects and stages manure in a safe, dry location where it can be actively turned, land applied and utilized for soil nutrient amendments. Surface water was diverted around the facility.

Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System & Roof Water Collection System



Collecting roof water helps keep clean water from entering barnyard areas and eliminates nutrient rich runoff from entering Cayuga Lake.

During the winter and spring, one of the prescribed grazing paddocks was sacrificed as a feeding area. A concrete barnyard was installed where manure can be collected and applied to cropland. Runoff from the pad drains to a vegetated treatment area.



Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System

After



Previously animals were housed and fed near a stream floodplain. A concrete barnyard was installed away from the stream. The relocated barnyard allows the farm to collect manure from the site while runoff from the pad drains to a vegetated treatment area.



Before

Stormwater Pond and Underground Outlet



A stormwater pond was constructed to alleviate flooding on lakeside residential properties and a state highway. The pond temporarily stores runoff and releases it at a controlled rate.



Manure Compost Facility



Before installation of a Manure Compost Facility, manure was piled in various locations around the farm. Now the manure and bedding can be actively and efficiently turned, and the finished product can be safely land applied on the farm pastures and utilized for soil nutrient amendments.

Water and Sediment Control Basin (WASCoB)



After



Before

To help eliminate severe erosion in cropland, a WASCoB was installed to break slope length, capture runoff before entering the cropland and outlet in a safe location.

Streambank Stabilization



A severely eroded stream channel was stabilized with rock rip-rap to help prevent erosion and associated sediments from entering Cayuga Lake.

Hydroseeding



Seneca County Soil & Water Hydroseeded and straw mulched bare soils in critical areas.



Seeding and mulching these critical areas will keep soil in place by establishing vegetative cover and prevent erosion, keeping sediments and nutrients from entering Cayuga & Seneca Lakes.

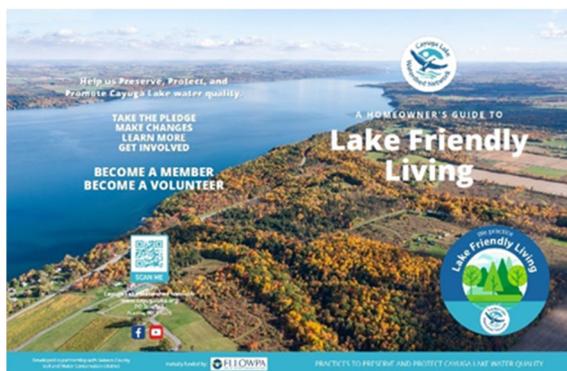
Aquatic Plant Harvesting



Seneca County Soil & Water’s Aquatic Plant Harvesting summer operation focusses on removing excessive aquatic weeds and invasives on Cayuga Lake & the Cayuga-Seneca Canal. Harvested weeds are collected and transported to an off-site location and allowed to compost and later land applied by farmers as a soil amendment. In recent years the Seneca County SWCD has mechanically harvested a small patch of Water Chestnut in Cayuga Lake. To prevent future growth and spread we follow with hand pulling events in partnership with the FL PRISM.



Public Outreach



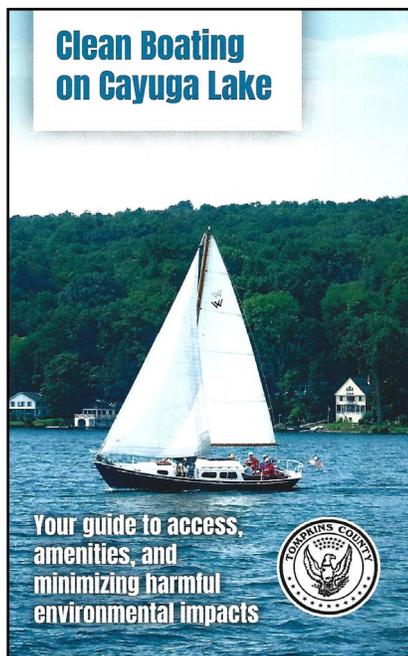
Seneca County SWCD partnered with the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network to join the Lake Friendly Living movement and produced 1,000 copies of the Cayuga Lake Friendly Living Guide.

Seneca County Soil & Water participates in various Seneca County educational events including Frank Knight Environmental Night, Outdoor Education Field Day & Envirothon.

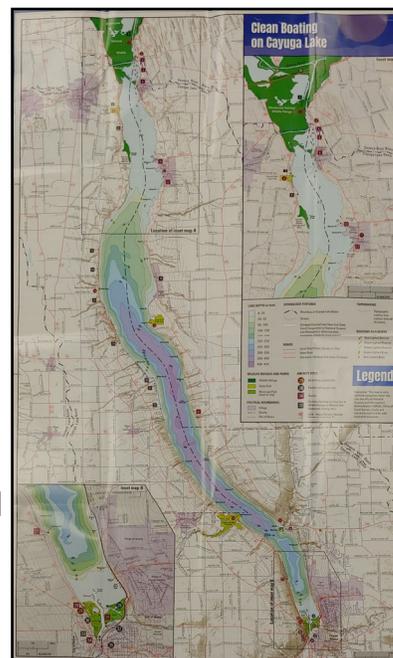


Public Outreach

Cayuga Lake Clean Boating Map



Through a Tri-County partnership with Tompkins, Cayuga & Seneca Counties, Clean Boating Maps will be distributed to boat access locations around Cayuga Lake and will also be available at our office. Cayuga Lake Clean Boating maps will help identify available resources around Cayuga Lake as well as clean boating practices and ways to prevent the spread of invasive species.



Lake Friendly Living

Lake Friendly Living provides steps you can take right now, at home, to make a difference in watershed health! The program encourages watershed residents to first evaluate their properties in three major areas :

- ◆ Reduce / Eliminate Pollutants
- ◆ Minimize Runoff
- ◆ Capturing and Infiltrate

Both Seneca and Cayuga Lakes have initiated Lake Friendly Living programs. Visit these weblinks to learn more.



SENECA LAKE

<http://senecalake.org/lakefriendlyliving>



CAYUGA LAKE

<https://www.cayugalake.org/lake-friendly-living/>

TAKE
THE
PLEDGE!

Permit Assistance

If you're planning on working in the lake, canal, a stream or an area that might be a wetland; you may need to apply for a permit through the Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and/or the NYS Canal Corporation. There are a couple of preliminary resources to help determine whether a permit is required; the first being the NYSDEC Resource Mapper (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/38801.html>). This interface can show you stream classifications and a rough estimate of wetland status as well as, required buffer areas. The other is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Wetlands Mapper (<https://fwsprimary.wim.usgs.gov/wetlands/apps/wetlands-mapper/>). Keep in mind, just because you're not in a wetland on one of these maps; doesn't mean you're not in a wetland! Only a wetland delineation, performed by a professional, can determine the true wetland status. Most environmental engineering firms can do the wetland delineation and NYSDEC is able to do them as well, depending on workload and availability.

When a permit is required you can find the joint application and instructions at:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/permits/6222.html>

When working on the lake or canal, the jurisdictional agencies will require a Mean High-Water Level (MHWL) mark indicated on your permit application plans. MHWL is the location on your waterfront at which those agencies have jurisdiction.

Seneca County SWCD can mark MHWL and offers that service for a fee of \$25. You can submit the joint application yourself or some contractors will do it for you. Seneca County SWCD is also available to assist with the permit application process for a fee of \$150 (including MHWL). However, there are no guarantees that the permit will be granted by either jurisdictional agency.

For permit application assistance or to get MHWL marked, please contact the Soil & Water office at (315) 568-4366.



FEE SCHEDULE

Assistance with permit application (includes marking MHWL)	\$150.00
Marking Mean High Water Level (permit not included)	\$25.00

Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District Receives Funding for Climate Resilient Farming

Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District was awarded a Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Grant for the Seneca Lake Watershed. Launched by the Governor in 2015, the CRF program helps farms reduce their operational impact on the environment and address the impacts of extreme weather events resulting from climate change.

County Soil and Water Conservation Districts were awarded grants on behalf of farmers in one of the following three project tract categories: agricultural waste storage cover and flare for methane reduction, on-farm water management, and soil health systems. These Best Management Practices (BMP's) reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance soil health, promote energy savings and emphasize water management to mitigate the effects of periods of drought on crops and livestock, as well as heavy rainfall and flooding.

Seneca County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded funding to complete work on a farm within the Seneca Lake Watershed consisting of various water management systems that will bolster resiliency to flooding and help eliminate erosion. Currently in the planning phase, the District will be working with an engineer during the winter months to formulate a design for a retention basin, diversions and a grassed waterway. Implementation is planned for the 2022 construction season.

Seneca County SWCDs District Manager, Erin Peruzzini, says "Seneca County is all too familiar with the increasing frequency of extreme storm events and the subsequent erosion and flooding impacts it has on our natural resources. Not only will this funding help farmers continue to support productive and environmentally sustainable agriculture, but it will also aid in protecting Seneca Lake, an invaluable resource."

In order to participate in the CRF Grant Program, farmers must participate in the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources. By participating in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, our food systems, the economy, and the environment.

If you have any questions about the Climate Resilient Farming grant or how to participate in the AEM program please call the Seneca County SWCD District Manager, Erin Peruzzini at (315) 568-4366.



Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District Receives Funding for Cover Cropping

Through partnerships with Cayuga SWCD, Yates SWCD & SWIO the Seneca SWCD has been able to secure grant funding for cover cropping in both the Cayuga & Seneca Lake Watersheds. Two funding sources will provide reimbursement for 12,000 acres of cover cropping for 15-20 producers over 3 years.

The protective canopy formed by a cover crop reduces the impact of rain drops on the soil surface thereby decreasing the breakdown of soils aggregates. This greatly reduces soil erosion and runoff, and increases infiltration. Decreased soil loss and runoff translates to reduced transport of valuable nutrients, pesticides, herbicides, and pathogens.

A cover crop slows the velocity of runoff from rainfall and snow-melt, reducing soil loss due to sheet and rill erosion.

Over time, a cover crop regimen will increase soil organic matter, leading to improvements in soil structure, stability, and increased moisture and nutrient holding capacity for plant growth.

These properties will reduce runoff through improved infiltration (movement of water through the soil surface) and percolation (movement of water through the soil profile).

A cover crop will increase soil quality by improving the biological, chemical, and physical soil properties.



Call SWCD if interested!

Slots limited (315) 568-4366



As a “trap crop”, a cover crop will store nutrients from manure, mineralized organic nitrogen or underutilized fertilizer until the following years’ crop can utilize them, reducing nutrient runoff and leaching.

When a cover crop is managed for its contribution to soil nitrogen, the application of a nitrogen fertilizer for the subsequent crop may be less, thereby lowering costs of production, reduced nitrogen losses to the environment and reducing the use of purchased nitrogen fertilizer that is produced using fossil fuels.

Cover crops will reduce or mitigate soil compaction. Deep tap roots of some cover crops grown in the fall and spring when compacted layers are relatively soft and can penetrate these layers.

Cover crops will reduce soil moisture deeper into soil profile by evapotranspiration resulting in better tillage and traffic conditions. Improved soil structure and stability can improve the soil’s capacity to withstand heavy farm equipment, resulting in less subsurface compaction.

A cover crop provides a natural means of suppressing soil diseases, pests. It can also serve as a mulch or cover to assist in suppressing weed growth.

A cover crop can provide high-quality material for grazing livestock or haying and can provide food and habitat for wildlife, beneficial insects, and pollinators.

Article taken from https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ny/technical/?cid=nrcs144p2_027252

Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District Receives Funding for Irrigation

In 2021 the SWCD was awarded a grant through the Environmental Protection Fund to support the implementation of a High Efficiency Agricultural Irrigation Water Management System on a Seneca County farm in the Cayuga Lake Watershed. The farm will transition from an overhead sprinkler system to a drip irrigation system. The new system will reduce water loss to evaporation and runoff, and minimize runoff from applied water. Moisture sensors, a soil probe meter and a flow meter will further assist in the system efficiency.



Seneca County Soil & Water Conservation District Receives Funding for Two Farms in the Seneca Lake Watershed

Seneca SWCD partnered with the Yates County SWCD and was awarded a grant through the Environmental Protection Fund to address environmental concerns on a beef operation and vineyard in Seneca County in the Seneca Lake Watershed. Currently the beef operation has a barnyard adjacent to a stream. The planned system will include additional concrete and curbing that will facilitate manure cleanup and direct runoff to a treatment area away from the stream. High tensile fencing will permanently exclude animals from the newly created herbaceous buffer along the stream. There are multiple concentrated flow areas (draws) in the vineyard. Surface inlets with underground outlets installed in these draws throughout the vineyard will collect surface water before it gets a chance to cause erosion, and direct it to a safe outlet.

NEW SWCD EMPLOYEES



NEW SWCD BOOKKEEPER / SECRETARY

Anne Havelin

Hi Seneca County, my name is Anne Havelin and started as the Bookkeeper and Secretary to the Board in 2021. I have lived in Seneca County all of my life and welcome the opportunity to assist all of you and the District as a whole. I am grateful to experience and share the copious bounties Seneca County has to offer all year long, such as the savory farm fresh produce and cheese, local beef and various beverages and the considerable opportunities to fish, bird-watch, and explore nature. I look forward to assisting the District and in turn each of you with nurturing this amazing corner of the world!

NEW SWCD TECHNICIAN

Alex McGraw

My name is Alex McGraw, and I am thrilled to start my journey as a District Technician in Seneca County! After graduating from SUNY ESF, I began my career working with the NYSDEC for almost 5 years fighting



invasive species around the state, from Long Island to the Adirondacks. I then moved to a private firm in Rochester, working as an Environmental Scientist to help identify and protect local wetlands and streams from construction activities. I am an avid outdoorsman and take every opportunity that I can get to escape to the outdoors, whether it is to hunt, backpack or tend to the garden. I am very grateful for this opportunity and I look forward to applying my experience and skillset to help protect the beautiful watersheds and natural resources of Seneca County.

NEW NRCS EMPLOYEE

Hello Seneca County! My name is Dan Tighe and I've been with NRCS for 6 years. I started as a Student Intern in the West Yarmouth, MA office serving Cape Cod and the Islands. After a year-long internship, I moved to the Pittsfield, MA office serving Berkshire County for the last five years. My experience with the agency ranges from large dairy operations to small diversified vegetable farms. I grew up south of Boston in Franklin, MA and have a degree from SUNY-ESF in Natural Resources Management. I love to grow food and cook it! I'm thrilled to be back in New York and look forward to working with Seneca County producers!



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Daniel Tighe

(315)481-4382



NRCS Announces Conservation Funding Opportunities for 2022

USDA has several fiscal year 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#), [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) and [Agricultural Management Assistance \(AMA\)](#) program.

Through conservation programs, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation's broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.

Applying for Assistance

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. State Technical Committees, composed of representatives from conservation and agricultural-related organizations, work with NRCS to set state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding. These dates account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunity to apply. Producers should apply by their state's ranking dates to be considered for funding in the current cycle.

Funding is provided through a competitive process. [State-specific, ranking dates](#) for all programs are available. Applications received after ranking dates will be automatically deferred to the next funding period. **Next application cut-off date is for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) on March 11, 2022.**

Program Options

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. Within EQIP, Conservation Incentive Contracts allow producers to further target priority resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection. Additionally, through RCPP, producers and landowners can work with partners who are co-investing with NRCS on targeted projects.



USDA Farm Service Agency would like to remind farmers and landowners that [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#) signup and [Continuous CRP](#) signup is on-going. If you have a [conservation practice](#) that you would like to install on your property, please reach out to John at the Seneca County FSA Office. For farmers, the deadline to sign up for 2022 [ARC/PLC](#) is March 15, 2022, please reach out to Wendy to make sure that you have completed all of your

contracts. Finally, organic producers are eligible to sign up for 2020 & 2021 [Organic Certification Cost-Share Program \(OCCSP\)](#) and 2020 & 2021 [Organic & Transitional Education and Certification Program \(OTECP\)](#) until February 4, 2022. For more information on any programs that FSA offers, contact the Seneca County FSA Office at 315-568-6346 ext. 2.

Draft Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Plan Released

Waterloo, NY – The Seneca County Agricultural Enhancement Board (AEB) and its Steering Committee have completed work to develop a county-wide plan designed to enhance agriculture in the County. The public is invited to review the draft and attend one of two public presentations to learn more about the plan. The first presentation will be on Wednesday, January 12, 2022 in the Lecture Hall at the Seneca County Health and Senior Services Building (the old BonaDent Building) in Waterloo. The second opportunity will be on **Tuesday, January 18th**, at the South Seneca Middle/High School Auditorium on Main Street in Ovid. Both presentations will begin at **7 pm**.

Given the concerns about increasing COVID rates, appropriate protocols including masks and social distancing will be implemented, and the presentation on the 12th will be **available via Zoom**. It will also be recorded and posted for future viewing. **Please contact Judy Wright of CCE of Seneca County at jlw24@cornell.edu or 315-539-9251 ext 109 by 12 noon on 1/12/22 to register and receive the Zoom link.** The draft plan and its maps are available to download at <https://we.tl/t-ROuKdYIde5> and will also be available on the Seneca County Government website: www.co.seneca.ny.us

Agriculture has been and continues to be a mainstay of the Seneca County economy. It is the dominant land use, covering nearly 119,000 acres – about 57% of the County's total land area. The 516 farms identified in the Census of Agriculture generate \$90.8 million per year in sales, a figure that increased 47%, adjusted for inflation, between 2002 and 2017.

For the past year, with grant support from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Seneca County, the County's Agricultural Enhancement Board, with the assistance of Cornell Cooperative Extension, County Planning, Soil and Water Conservation District staff and consultants conducted research, mapping, interviews, focus groups, and a farmer survey to solicit feedback on challenges and opportunities to support the County's agricultural businesses. The plan evaluates the current condition of farming in the county, identifies long-range goals to improve the agricultural industry, and offers specific projects and actions that can be taken to promote and enhance agriculture here. It is a comprehensive guidance document designed to support and enhance the local farming economy.

The study found that although agriculture in Seneca County remains strong, some challenges do exist and these are identified and addressed in the plan. While some challenges facing the County are grounded in state and national agricultural policy and will be difficult for one county alone to overcome, many others are local issues that can be addressed by programs, projects, and policies at the county-level. The draft Agricultural and Farmland Enhancement Plan establishes a vision for Seneca County agriculture as an industry that will continue to play a critical role as the predominant economic driver and land use contributing to Seneca's rural character and quality of life. The agricultural enhancement 'toolbox' included in the plan for Seneca County contains over 40 different strategies identified through the planning process outlining specific actions the County and farm-related agencies can take to preserve and enhance the County's agriculture, with a focus on ag-economic development strategies.



The public is encouraged to read the plan and provide any feedback to the AEB through Judy Wright of CCE of Seneca County at jlw24@cornell.edu or 315-539-9251 ext 109. Written comments can be mailed to Judy Wright, Seneca County CCE, 308 Main Street Shop Centre, Waterloo, NY 13165. The draft Plan can be viewed and downloaded from Seneca County's website at www.co.seneca.ny.us. After the AEB submits the plan to the County, the Board of Supervisors will be holding a public hearing to gain other feedback prior to formal County adoption.