

SPRING NEWSLETTER

Ontario County SWCD
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Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter



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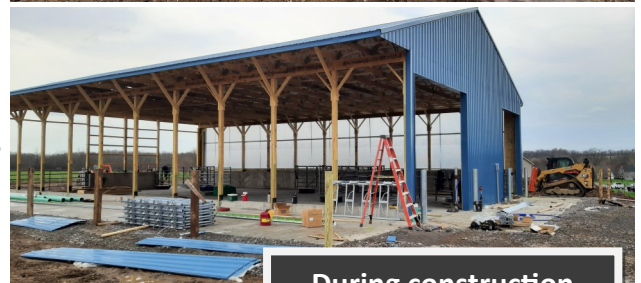
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NY Grown & Certified Covered Barnyard Project

As part of Round 3 of the New York Grown & Certified Implementation grant program, Ontario County SWCD partnered with a local beef farm in the Town of Farmington to construct a bedded pack covered barnyard system. This covered barnyard eliminates 2 acres of exposed manure-laden heavy-use area in the lower Mud Creek watershed. This will allow the farm to collect and store all of the manure in a layered solid pack bedding system where it can then be applied in the growing season per the guidelines of the farm's nutrient management plan.



BEFORE



During construction



AFTER: completed barn with bedded pack area for cows

Erosion Control in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed

Over the winter and spring months, Ontario County SWCD worked with two local farms to install two structural erosion control systems in the Town of Canandaigua. Both projects consisted of a combination of terraced in-field basins with built-in stormwater retention and a heavy-duty underground outlet system. These projects are intended to help treat severe gully erosion and will prevent **over 120 tons of soil** loss per year in the Sucker Brook sub-watershed to Canandaigua Lake. The projects were carefully designed and constructed by the District to be 100% farmable in-field structures, while still allowing for over 500,000 gallons of combined upland water retention capacity in large storm events. These projects were supported by Great Lakes Commission funding that was matched with Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance Funding. The technical time through the District was covered through NYS Ag and Market's Agricultural Environmental Management program.

Project #1: BEFORE



Project #1: AFTER



Project #2:
BEFORE



During construction



Project #2:
AFTER



Town of Geneva Retention Basins

Last fall the Ontario County SWCD completed several upland water retention systems in the Seneca Lake watershed. While we often focus on bigger projects, these are great examples of smaller projects that work well to protect the watershed. These two Seneca Lake watershed projects were completed over the fall and winter months. Together these basins have the ability to store well over **100,000 gallons** of stormwater in every storm event and release it through a controlled outlet system. These projects were both completed using a combination of Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance funds, Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association's Sediment Reduction Program funds, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation watershed protection funding.



Project after completion



Water storage during large storm event



After construction was completed on the second project site



The basin working hard after a recent storm event

2025 Soil Health Workshop: Featuring the Manure Roadshow

We held a Soil Health & Nutrient Management Workshop on March 28, 2025 at the Ontario Produce Auction in Stanley, NY which featured the Manure Roadshow. We partnered with Cornell PRO-DAIRY and Yates County SWCD on this event. We had over 70 attendees! Speakers discussed the value of manure, tile drainage, manure safety, and much more. Thank you to all of our local businesses that sponsored the event, the amazing speakers, local partner agencies for attending with an informational table, and the Ontario Produce Auction for hosting and catering the workshop.



2025 State FFA Convention

On Thursday, May 9 we attended the Future Farmers of America (FFA) Convention at the NYS Fairgrounds in Syracuse, NY. This was the 100th State Convention which is amazing! We were invited to present in the morning about what we do at Soil & Water Conservation Districts. Students learned about soil, the importance of healthy soils, how farmers are preventing erosion and managing nutrients, and technology we use at the District, such as our survey equipment and drone. It was a really fun event even in the rain and cold. Thank you to NYS Ag in the Classroom for inviting us to be a part of this event.



What is Considered a Pollinator?

It's not just bees and butterflies! Pollinators also include moths, wasps, flies, beetles, birds, and bats. When pollinators are out searching for food, pollen grains get stuck to their bodies and rub off when they visit the next bloom. A single female bee while foraging may visit hundreds of flowers, transferring pollen the whole time.

Pollinators are a keystone group of animals in natural areas where they are necessary for the production of many tree, shrub, and wildflower species.

Pollinators are feeling the impacts and pressure from habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants which have led to the decline of many of their species locally and worldwide.



What can we do to help? Planting a mixture of native and heirloom varieties that will bloom in the spring, summer and fall that have different colors, shapes, and scents will attract different species of pollinators. Providing habitat for pollinators will not only help gardeners but local farms and natural areas as well.

To help develop pollinator habitat, leave areas wild and un-mowed. You can also raise your mower's deck height to let low-growing flowers have a better chance of reaching blooming height. Field edges, fence lines, hedgerows, banks of drainage ditches, and road edges offer both nesting and forage sites for various pollinator species. Long continuous strips of permanent vegetation link fragmented habitats providing

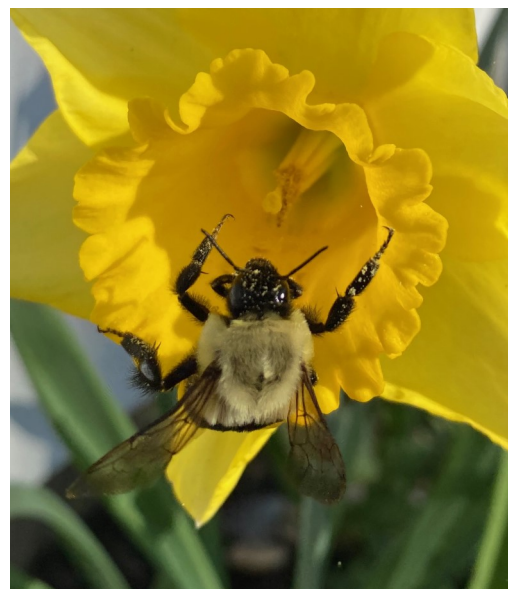
benefits to migrating song birds, game birds, and improving water quality.

Some of the areas that can incorporate pollinator habitat with plantings are community gardens, flower beds, riparian buffer zones, roadsides, landscaped areas at schools or office buildings, parks and golf courses, farm field edges, and orchards.

For a pollinator seed mix, have the site prepped to kill the weed bed. This can be done with the use of pesticides to kill the weeds and grass before tilling the soil under to prep for planting. For a more organic method, use garden plastic sheeting or a tarp to cover the site to kill the current cover; in the following spring the filled can be tilled up for planting. This method can take as long as 1-2 years to get the site properly prepped. This is important and will help get the pollinator seeds established and minimize the battle with noxious weeds later on. Weed pressure can choke out the pollinator species planted before they can get established. Once established, a staggered mowing schedule can be created for maintenance by cutting 1/3 of the pollinator area each year (rotating the mowed section over a 3 year period).

If pesticides are going to be used, select the least toxic product for the targeted species, follow the labels directions, apply at night when the pollinators are sleeping, and monitor the wind to avoid drift to habitat areas or neighbors.

For more resources or to find out about pollinator programs in your area, reach out to your local Cornell Cooperative Extension, SWCD, or USDA. There are variety of resources online through Pollinator Partnership and the Xerces Society.



Western Finger Lakes Regional Envirothon

The 2025 Western Finger Lakes Regional Envirothon was held on April 29, 2025 at Finger Lakes Community College. We had 8 teams competing this year from Ontario, Seneca and Yates Counties. The Envirothon is a competition for high school students designed to test students' understanding of natural resource issues and to cultivate students' desire to learn more about natural resources and environmental issues. Teams consist of five students and an alternate. Winning teams from each county are eligible to



participate in the NYS Envirothon at SUNY Cortland

on May 28-May 29, 2025. The winner of the State competition will then be eligible for participation in the International 2025 NCF Envirothon in Calgary, Alberta, Canada! The five test topics are Soils & Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Wildlife, and the Current Issue. The 2025 current issue topic is "Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change." The overall winner was a team from Marcus Whitman. Thank you to FLCC for hosting the event and for providing amazing staff to help with

coordination, test creation, FLCC tours, Woodsmen's team demos, and much more. Thank you to the all of the amazing partners, test creators, and proctors from FLCC, NYS DEC, Ontario County SWCD, and Finger Lakes Institute (pictured in top left). We could not pull off this event without all of these outstanding experts! Wegmans sponsored the healthy snacks for the students and the lunches for the volunteers. Wildlife Rockstars arrived after the tests were complete and did an amazing presentation with live animals for all of the students!! Their time was so appreciated!



New Employee!

Jeremy Paris started with Ontario County SWCD in March as a Senior Conservation District Technician. Jeremy comes to the District with lots of conservation implementation experience. Prior to joining the District, Jeremy was a Civil Engineer Technician with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service; implementing design and installation of best management practices on farms. Past experiences include a tenure as the Soil & Water Planning Technician with the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District. There he led the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program, participated in streambank remediation & design, wetland delineation, Ag BMP design, as well as implementing the UAV/Drone program to evaluate soil erosion along Lake Ontario and Irondequoit Bay. Before joining the Conservation District in Monroe, Jeremy was an Ag Engineer Technician with Agricultural Consulting Service, Inc. for 8 years doing GIS/Mapping, geophysical electro-conductivity soil mapping, yield data acquisition, Ag BMP design and inspection, soil sampling, and surveying. Jeremy is originally from Henrietta, NY. After graduating from Rush-Henrietta Senior High School, he attended SUNY Morrisville for 2 years majoring in wood products technology. He then transferred to SUNY Environmental Science & Forestry, majoring in Wood Products Engineering and minoring in Forestry. Jeremy has been a Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) for over 12 years and is a member of the Farmland Protection Committee with the Genesee Land Trust. Jeremy enjoys playing ice hockey, fishing, and making maple syrup. We are excited to have Jeremy as part of our team!



2025 Tree & Shrub Sale is a Wrap

We had an awesome 2025 Tree and Shrub Sale! We sold over 7,000 trees and shrubs. Thank you to the Ontario County Fair Board for the use of the Dairy Barn for preparing all of the orders, and the Carriage Barn where all of the customers came to pick up their plants. Stay tuned in January 2026 for our next Tree & Shrub Sale Order Form! Here is the link to our [Tree & Shrub Seedling Planting Guide](#) for reference.



Tire Recycling



The Ontario County SWCD helps with the tire recycling program funded by Ontario County's Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management. The registration is all on-line and we help on the day of the event checking people in and making sure the proper tires are recycled. On Saturday, May 3 the Town of Canandaigua Highway Department hosted the tire recycling event. They also provided us with Town of Canandaigua Highway Department employees to unload tires from vehicles/trailers and load the tires into the roll off containers. They were an amazing help, especially in such rainy conditions. We could not have done this event without them! We recycled around 635 tires and filled almost 4 containers. If you missed this event and still have tires you would like to recycle, the next opportunity will be in the Town of South Bristol on July 19, and the Town of Hopewell on September 6, both from 8am-11am. Pre-registration is required. We can only accept car/light truck tires from Ontario County residents (10 tires per household) that are whole, clean, and off of the rim. For more info, go to: ontariocountyrecycles.org.



Catch Us Out in the Field





Rain Barrel Workshop



at Eastside Grill and Pub
Thursday, May 15th, 2025 at 6:30 PM

**East Side Grill and Pub, 4520 NY- 364,
Canandaigua, NY 14424**

\$30 per barrel



Come out early and support Eastside Grill and Pub to have dinner and/or a drink prior to the workshop. Restaurant opens at 4 PM.

Join us for a Rain Barrel Workshop to learn about the importance of managing stormwater and the benefits of using rain barrels at home. Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to protect our environment and save money. They collect and store rainwater from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to storm drains or streams. The water from your barrel can then be used for watering gardens and lawns, cleaning outdoor furniture, and the list goes on. Cost for the workshop is \$30 for your 55 gallon rain barrel. Space is limited so register today!

[Click here for the registration link on the Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association website.](#)



Backyard Conservation Conversation



Knowing the American Goldfinch

An American goldfinch (*Spinus tristis*) is a common yet brilliant native little songbird. Almost fluorescent yellow, the breeding male goldfinch is extremely easy to identify. Black wings with white stripes and a black forehead help with the identification too. Both males and females have cone-shaped bills and short tails that are noticeably notched. A twist with this species is that the female goldfinch, the juvenile goldfinch, and the winter adult male goldfinch are not fabulously chartreuse. They are all olive drab in color...and for good reason.

Is the intense gold color ideal for attracting a mate in the goldfinch world? Yes it is, but not for being inconspicuous while on a nest of eggs, in a snow-covered bush, or if trying to avoid being eaten by a hawk or cat. Therefore, the greenish-tan female goldfinch is most ideal. The female goldfinch is consistently camouflaged in life to protect her and increase her odds of survival.

Perfection is hard to come by in nature but by molting not once, but *twice* a year, the goldfinch is definitely unique. Molting is when a bird loses one set of feathers for another newer set of feathers. While the female goldfinch is protected during all seasons with her uniformly lowkey coloration, the male sheds his over-the-top bright yellow feathers in the fall to emerge with a genuine imitation of the female with matching plumage. This transformation lasts until spring when he does it all over again with another molt to their true namesake, gold feathers. The time frame before full molt usually leaves the male looking a bit motley. So whether flying or on the ground, be sure to keep a lookout today for the American goldfinch!





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State University of New York College of
 Environmental Science and Forestry

Tad Gerace
 Conservation Technician
 Ontario County Soil & Water
 Conservation District

I'm speaking. Hope to see you there.

*Session 3A: Public Problem, Private Property: Advancing
 Local Septic System Management in New York State*

May 20-22, 2025
 SUNY ESF Gateway Center
 Syracuse, New York

healthywaters.org



ONTARIO COUNTY
Agriculture Enhancement Board

MINI-GRANT OPPORTUNITY



APPLICATION DEADLINE: JUNE 16, 2025

MINI-GRANT APPLICATIONS NOW BEING ACCEPTED FOR PROJECTS THAT PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, VIABILITY, AND PROTECTION

The Ontario County Board of Supervisors makes available funds for small projects that implement the strategies included in the Ontario County Agricultural Enhancement Plan (AEP).

Applications are being accepted through June 16, 2025 at 4 PM. Eligible applicants include Ontario County agencies, their program partners, schools, and related organizations. Project review and selection will be completed by the Ontario County Agriculture Enhancement Board. It is anticipated that awards will be made during the fourth quarter of 2025 with project activities and reimbursement in 2026.

The mini-grant application, guidelines, and AEP strategies can be found here:

<https://ontariocountyny.gov/1784/Agricultural-Enhancement-Plan>.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 585-396-4455
OR EMAIL AEB@ONTARIOCOUNTYNY.GOV.**



2025 SPECIAL COLLECTION EVENTS SCHEDULE



*For Details on Preregistration,
Visit the Events Page at: OntarioCountyRecycles.org
Click "Notify Me" at the bottom to sign up to receive
registration information via email.



Household Hazardous Waste 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	4/26	Landfill Site / Casella Recycling Facility	7am to 3pm	3/31-4/24
	9/20	T. Farmington Highway Facility	7am to 3pm	8/25-9/18
Electronic Waste 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	6/7	Geneva City School District Bus Garage	8am to 12pm	5/19-6/4
	10/11	T. Bristol Highway Facility	8am to 12pm	9/22-10/8
Tires 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	5/3	T. Canandaigua Highway Facility	8am to 11am	4/14-4/30
	7/19	T. South Bristol Highway Facility	8am to 11am	6/25-7/16
	9/6	T. Hopewell Highway Facility	8am to 11am	8/18-9/3
Paper Shredding 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	4/25	County Transportation Center	11am to 1:30pm	4/7-4/22
	5/16	T. Richmond Town Hall	11am to 1:30pm	4/28-5/13
	6/14	T. Seneca Highway Facility	8am to 10:30am	5/27-6/11
Mattress 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	5/17	T. Geneva Highway Facility	8am to 11am	4/28-5/14
	8/23	T. Victor Highway Department	8am to 11am	8/4-8/20
Rigid Plastic 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	9/13	Landfill Site / Casella Recycling Facility	8am to 11am	8/18-9/10
Freon Appliances 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	10/4	T. Manchester Highway Facility	8am to 11am	9/8-10/1
Pumpkin 	Event Date	Location	Time	Registration
	11/1	Canandaigua, Geneva, Victor	8am to 11am	N/A
	11/8	Canandaigua, Geneva, Victor	8am to 11am	N/A



ONTARIO COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

www.ontariocountyswcd.gov

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- District Manager: **Megan Webster**
- Secretary-Treasurer to the Board: **Diana Thorn**
- Senior Conservation District Technician: **Tucker Kautz**
- Conservation District Technician: **Tad Gerace**
- Conservation District Technician: **Jenny May**
- Conservation District Educator: **Alaina Robarge**
- Senior Conservation District Technician: **Jeremy Paris**
- Canandaigua Lake Watershed Inspector: **Tyler Ohle**
- Canandaigua Lake Watershed Administrative Assistant: **Jamie Noga**

Ontario County SWCD Board of Directors:

- Samuel Casella**, Chairman, Practical Farmer
- Jim Malyj**, Vice-Chairman, NYS Farm Bureau
- Kenneth Livermore**, NYS Grange
- Dale Stell**, Ontario County Supervisor
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- Edward Jackson**, Member At Large
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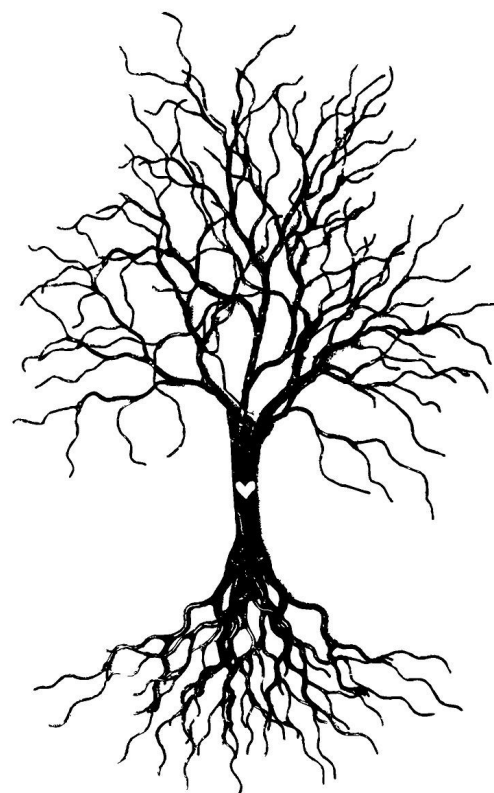
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