

Ontario County SWCD  
480 North Main Street  
Canandaigua, NY 14424  
(585)396-1450  
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## Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter



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## District Receives Over \$3 Million in Climate Resilient Farming Grant Funding

The Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Grant Program funds projects aimed to help New York's farmers reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect water, ensure soil health, and increase on-farm resiliency to the effects of a changing climate. This year, New York State has committed more than \$33 million in funding to support the farming community and increase sustainability efforts and resiliency to extreme weather events. Funding for the program was included in the New York State FY 2025 Enacted Budget as part of the State's aggressive climate agenda and is supported by additional federal funds through a United States Department of Agriculture Climate Smart Commodities grant. Through CRF Round 8, Ontario County was awarded funding for the following projects:

### Waste Storage & Transfer

3 Cover & Flared Manure Storage Systems on 2 Farms – Awarded \$3,169,388

### Canandaigua Lake Upland Water Management

Structural Erosion Control Practices on 3 Farms – Awarded \$109,320

### Northern Watersheds Upland Water Management

Structural Erosion Control Practices on 3 Farms – Awarded \$233,290

### Seneca Lake Watershed Afforestation Project

Tree & Shrub Establishment on 5 acres – Awarded \$31,505





# Managing Stormwater & Creating Resiliency

We know storms are intensifying and we are seeing larger volumes of precipitation over shorter periods of time in the Finger Lakes region. You might get a ½ inch of rainfall while a mile down the road receives three inches. This has definite impacts on our infrastructure as roads, drainageways, and culverts are all put to the test. One thing we can do to manage stormwater and improve resiliency to flooding is to store water and increase infiltration where possible. We all play a part in this, from homeowners catching rainfall with rain barrels and rain gardens, new construction reducing the amount of impervious surface of their building footprint and using green technologies, and farms adopting the use of cover crops and other best management practices to improve soil health and store water.

At Ontario County SWCD, we have been very busy working with landowners, municipalities, and other partners to identify locations to manage stormwater and reduce erosion. It can be a long process to identify locations and work with landowners to design and install these water control structures across our landscape. Funding, engineering, permitting and reporting all take time so it is exciting when we finally see projects completed and functioning. The next few projects highlight recent work the District accomplished with the help of many partners and supportive landowners. Know that we have many more in the works so stay tuned for future progress!



Constructing an upland  
water retention basin in the  
Seneca Lake Watershed



# Upland Water Management Project in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed



**Before Picture (Air View): Severe Gully Erosion at Project Site**

A farm in the Canandaigua Lake Watershed was experiencing severe gully erosion from stormwater runoff that was affecting 8 acres of downslope cropland. For this site, Ontario County SWCD recently installed an upland water management project that consisted of a diversion ditch with built-in water retention and an underground outlet system. This project will capture and store the damaging upland water volume and then convey it off the cropland in a non-erosive manner. The project will reduce soil loss on the site by up to 20 tons per acre per year, and cut down the peak flow volumes by up to 50% during large storm events. The project also installed a buffer strip on the new diversion for enhanced watershed protections. This project was supported by Round 27 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control funding.



**Mulching completed basin**



**Completed diversion has almost 250,000 gallons of storage built into it**



# Structural Erosion Control System in the Town of Manchester

A farm in the Town of Manchester has been experiencing sheet and gully erosion from stormwater runoff after severe weather events. For this site, Ontario County SWCD recently installed 3 farmable water and sediment control basins (WASCOBs) with underground outlets that total 4,000 ft. The goal is to slow the water moving off the field in a manageable volume over time while limiting how much land is taken out of production. The basins will temporarily retain up to 500,000 gallons of stormwater runoff, allowing the outlets to slowly release the water while trapping the sediment in the basin and keeping the top soil in the field. The project will reduce soil loss on the site by over 100 tons per year. These basins were supported by Round 18 of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Base program Tier 4 cost-share implementation funds.





# Water & Sediment Control Basins in the Castle Creek Watershed



Before photo;  
Red outline is the  
project site

The Town and City of Geneva have experienced extensive flooding and stormwater damage in recent years. In addition, reducing erosion and providing sediment control are major concerns in the Seneca Lake Watershed. Managing stormwater through upland water retention helps us provide resiliency to storm events and improve water quality. A great deal of planning and coordination has gone into locating sites for water retention. Identifying landowners willing to donate land for water control structures has been a critical step in this process. Utilizing a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Finger Lakes Watershed grant, funding from Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, and funding from Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, the District was able to work with landowners to construct two edge of field water and sediment control basins near Carter Road in the Castle Creek watershed that combined, will store over 1.5 million gallons of water per storm event and lead to preventing an estimated soil loss of 150 tons per year. This project is one of many the District is working on to manage stormwater in our County and increase resiliency to impactful weather.



District staff surveying for  
as-built elevations on the  
completed project



# Structural Erosion Control System in the Town of East Bloomfield

A farm in the Town of East Bloomfield has been experiencing erosion from stormwater runoff. For this site, Ontario County SWCD recently installed 1 water and sediment control basin (WASCOB) with an 800ft underground outlet. The basin will temporarily retain stormwater runoff, allowing the outlets to slowly



This basin can manage up to 50,000 gal. of water per storm event and release it slowly to adjacent drainage ditch

release the water off the cropland while trapping the sediment into the basin. This project was supported by Round 18 of the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Base program Tier 4 cost-share implementation funds.



## Vernal Pools

The District recently partnered with the Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) to install several vernal pools at the Canandaigua Vista Property in the Town of Canandaigua. This project was made possible by utilizing Part B funding available to the District through the New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee as well as funds from the FLLT.

Vernal pools are a type of seasonal, depressional wetland which provides water quality and habitat values. These structures collect water during the spring from melting snow and rain, then dry up during late summer or early fall. They help to create water storage, mitigate flooding, promote groundwater infiltration, enrich public opportunities to view wildlife, and provide essential habitat for species such as frogs, toads, turtles and salamanders. These aquatic egg laying species take advantage of the seasonal water levels within the vernal pools to find safe havens to lay their eggs and allow their offspring to develop.

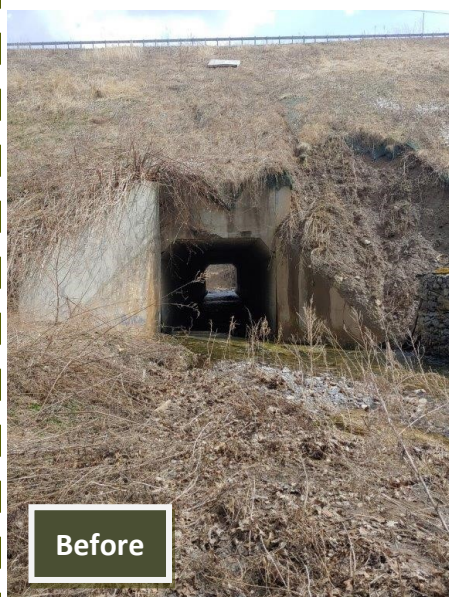
The project at the Canandaigua Vista Property includes the installation of 4 vernal pools in succession along an existing hedgerow. The next time you are in the area be sure to stop for a quick hike and take a look to see what species are using the pools!





# Erosion Stabilization & Culvert Repair Project on County Road 6

The Ontario County Department of Public Work's Highway Department recently completed work on an erosion stabilization and culvert repair project on County Road 6 in the Town of Geneva. Funding for this project was secured by the District through the Water Quality Improvement Project, Round 19 with the County providing the local match. The project site is located on Wilson Creek, a direct tributary to Seneca Lake and was identified as a priority project in the Seneca-Keuka Watershed Nine Element Plan for Phosphorus.



The creek and culvert are located in a deep ravine-like setting nearly 70 feet below the road grade with difficult access. A large retaining wall connected directly to the culvert (also known as a wing wall), had collapsed into the creek and the three remaining wingwalls were beginning to tilt away from the embankment towards the creek. In addition, heavy erosion was occurring along the embankment slopes allowing soil to enter the creek. Repairs to the site involved stabilizing the existing wing walls with a technique called "soil nailing". This technique involves drilling long threaded steel bars through the wingwalls and into the embankment soil. Upon installation, the bars are then tightened to stabilize the wing walls and embankment material. Additional repairs included the construction of stone lined ditches at locations where the embankment slopes and stream banks intercept. A huge thank you to the Ontario County Department of Public Works for partnering on this project and providing their expertise!





# Successful Agricultural Best Management Practices Training for District Employees

Ontario, Seneca, and Yates Counties Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) teamed up to host a 2-day training for Conservation District Employees. This field-based training event was led by senior level SWCD technicians and was specifically focused on the design and implementation of structural erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs) on agricultural lands. We toured 5 different farm project sites and worked through many real-life project implementation scenarios. A big thank you to the New York State Conservation District Employees' Association for providing funding support and to the Town of Geneva for letting us use their meeting room space for this great event!





## Agricultural Assessment- It's that time of year again!

This is the time of year when Town Assessor offices may be sending out letters stating they will be re-evaluating agricultural assessments, requiring new soil group worksheets. While the soils have not changed, the classification and land uses may have and the Assessor determines when updates are required. Sale of a parcel, splitting of a parcel, rental changes or changes in land use practices all require a new soil group worksheet. New York adopted Agricultural Districts Law in 1971 to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes, and allows reduced property tax bills for land in agricultural production by limiting the property tax assessment of the land to its prescribed agricultural assessment value.

Soil & Water Conservation Districts are tasked with creating the required soil group worksheets that help Assessors during the determination process. The worksheets created are based on conversations with the landowners, aerial photos, and GIS tools to delineate the different land use types and soil groups. Town Assessors have the final say and the completion of a soil group worksheet does not guarantee an agricultural assessment or a reduction in property tax bills. If you have any questions regarding eligibility or the need for an updated soil group worksheet, please contact your Town Assessor's office.

Agricultural lands category includes cropland, pasture, orchards, vineyards, managed tree plantations, sugarbush, aquaculture, and support land. Delineations are dependent on if the land is rented or farmed. For rented land, the woodland and support land acres are counted as non-agricultural land. Eligibility requirements for an agricultural assessment resulting in a tax reduction are as follows:

- ◆ 7 acres or more, Gross income \$10,000 a year
- ◆ Or Less than 7 acres, Gross income \$50,000 a year
- ◆ Land needs a 2-year cropping history
- ◆ Rental agreement needs to match parcel acreage on soil group worksheets
- ◆ Rented land woodland will not be included
- ◆ Land switched from being farmed by the owner to being rented will change their eligibility
- ◆ Personal "pet" horses do not count towards the agricultural assessment

Every parcel as identified on the assessment roll must have its own worksheet prepared. Agricultural landowners, click [here](#) to check out the information required. Completed worksheets are due March 1, 2025 to the Town Assessor.





# Fun on the Farm: “Bringing Agriculture and the community together”

First, we want to say THANK YOU for all of the hard work that the volunteers, organizers, and the farm host did to make this year's Fun on the Farm such a success! This event was held on September 27 and 28 at Hemdale Farms & Greenhouses. If you missed it, look for the date announcement for the 2026 Fun on the Farm since this event is held every 2 years. On the Friday of the event, over 1,500 students from all over Ontario County are bused to the farm for a tour of the dairy farm, free ice cream, and a plethora of educational stations to learn more about how a farm operates. Ontario County SWCD was honored to conduct the soil station and we absolutely loved working with all of the amazing students, helping them learn about the importance of soil. The next day, the event is open to the public and thousands of people from all over the community got to learn about agriculture. We had a table set-up throughout the day with information on stormwater, ag programs, erosion, and much more. Thank you to all who came out!







# Ontario County Board of Supervisors Tour

On October 3, members of the Ontario County Board of Supervisors joined Ontario County SWCD staff to tour several recent projects focused on nutrient management. A huge thank you to RTS Ontario, who provided transportation for the group. J. Minns Farm, Will-O-Crest Farms and El-VI Farms hosted stops that highlighted manure storages, transfer systems, and a manure cover & flare system that is combined with a methane digester. Agricultural operations are a vital economic driver for our community and provide the locally grown food we depend on. Supervisors were able to see first-hand how dairy and livestock operations are handling manure and utilizing Best Management Practices to protect our soil health and water quality through intensive management. The District was excited to showcase these recently completed agricultural projects and highlight the ongoing work of Ontario County SWCD.







# 2024 Conservation Field Days

Conservation Field Days was held on September 24, 25, and 26 at 4-H Camp Bristol Hills for 6th grade students across Ontario County. Each day was filled with educational stations including topics on invasive species, wildlife, birds, aquatic macroinvertebrates, agriculture, trees, composting, plant ID, first-aid, recycling, ticks, and more! Ontario County SWCD coordinates the event in partnership with Ontario County Cornell Cooperative Extension. This year we hosted St. Francis and St. Stephens School, Naples Central School, Marcus Whitman Middle School, Midlakes Elementary School, St. Mary's School, Moodie's Children's Hours School, Honeoye Central School, Bloomfield Middle School, and Victor Intermediate School. The teachers and students had a lot of fun and we were so happy to have over 684 kids attend the event. Thank you to all of the schools for attending, to all of the volunteer instructors for teaching a station, and to 4-H Camp Bristol Hills for allowing us to use your facility to host Conservation Field Days. **We can't wait for next year!**







# 1st Part of Advanced Soil Health Training held in Ontario County

On August 27 and 28, the American Farmland Trust hosted the first part of their Advanced Soil Health Training series here in Ontario County! We had the opportunity to help with this training and promote the amazing agriculture here in our county. Thank you so much to Hemdale Farms & Greenhouses for all of their hard work hosting the in-field training part of the course, being on the panel during the training, and for all of their amazing soil health efforts on their farm. A fun, information-packed workshop was enjoyed by all.







## 27.7 Tons of Tires Recycled in 2024

- ◆ Town of Seneca Event: 11.2 tons of tires recycled
- ◆ Town of Richmond Event: 9.1 tons of tires recycled
- ◆ Town of Farmington Event: 7.6 tons of tires recycled

Ontario County SWCD helps administer the tire recycling program funded by Ontario County's Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste Management. We helped with three tire recycling events this year in the Towns of Seneca, Richmond, and Farmington. This year, **27.7 tons** of clean car and light truck tires were collected for recycling. Thank you to the Towns and their employees for hosting the events and for helping on the day of the event. Highway Department employees help unload tires from vehicles/trailers and load the tires into the roll-off containers. We could not have these events without their support! If you missed these events, make sure to check out the events calendar and sign-up for updates at [www.ontariocountyrecycles.org](http://www.ontariocountyrecycles.org).





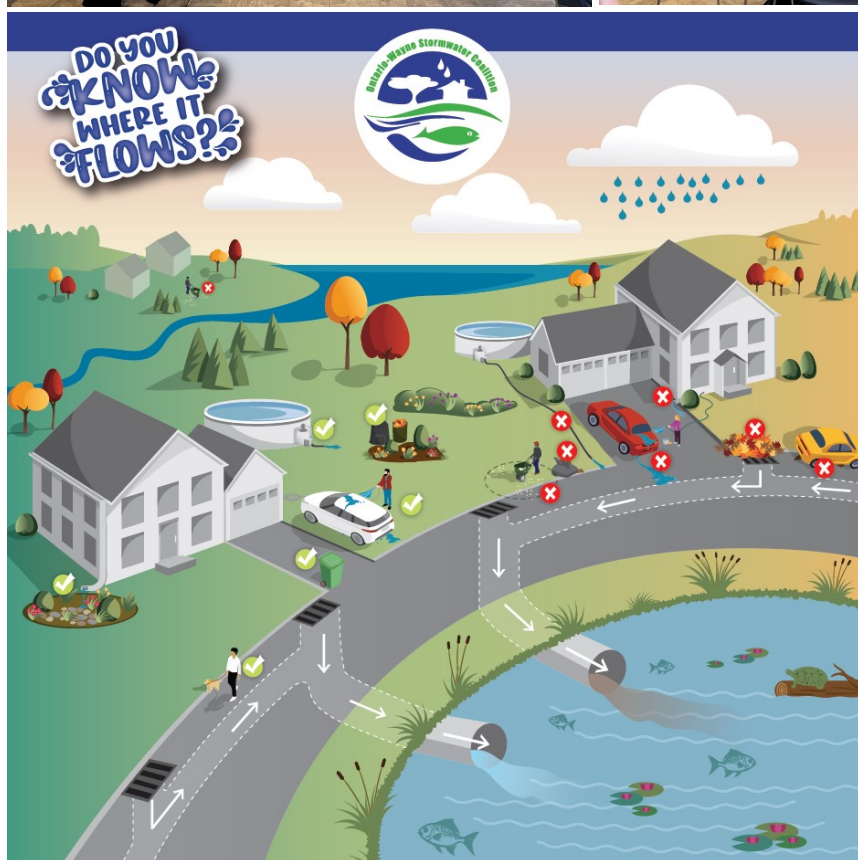


## Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition Updates

### Stormwater Training

On October 22 the District helped to host a stormwater training sponsored by the Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition. Speakers for this training included professionals from Barton & Loguidice who presented on low-impact design, and designing and preparing for extreme weather events. We also had professionals from SkyOp who presented on the many ways drone technology can be utilized in stormwater management. Those in attendance included staff from

local highway departments, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and town code officials. Thank you again to the Coalition for sponsoring this event!



### New Outreach Materials

Recently, the Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition worked with Andrew from Soucier Design to create new graphics for outreach materials to increase community engagement with stormwater education. We are so excited about how the artwork came out! Make sure to keep an eye out for these new materials and information at local towns, villages, county buildings, classrooms, outreach events, and much more.

# KNOW THE FLOW





# Backyard Conservation Conversation



## Knowing the Black-capped Chickadee



The black-capped chickadee, *Poecile atricapillus*, is quite possibly the most friendly bird around. Super common and far from shy, the black-capped chickadee or chickadee is likely the first species of bird to investigate your new bird feeder. Offer black oil sunflower seed and/or peanuts (out of the shell) and you are just about guaranteed to have this fun-sized, grey, white and black ball of cuteness stop by for a visit.

If you love wild birds or just tolerate them, the chickadee is usually able to transcend nature and our busy human lives like no other creature. These very vocal birds are very curious by all accounts and seem to appear out of nowhere once a bird feeder is introduced to the mix. Unlike finches or cardinals, chickadees only make a brief pitstop at the feeder for one seed at a time. After the perfect morsel is selected, they fly off into the bush to cleverly crack the seed open with their little black beak while holding it with their tiny foot. As quickly as they fly off, they seem to return to repeat the process all within your view.

Of all thirty million or so reasons to seek out the chickadee, their apparent lack of fear of us is certainly top tier. If you have the patience to

sit still in nature, it is very possible to lure a chickadee or even a small flock of chickadees to actually take seed right out of your hand.

My experience is that the best time to try this bucket list adventure is just as the weather starts to turn. Chickadees, like most other birds, appear to sense oncoming poor weather conditions and hit the food sources hard. If you stay still long enough with a handful of sunflower seeds, it is inevitable a chickadee or three will give you a fabulous thrill by landing on your finger.

Life can be full of surprises and if you are lucky, you too will enjoy the company of the black-capped chickadee. The chickadee song is not complicated to remember since they sing their name "chick-a-dee-dee-dee"! Their easily imitated call fills the air on any given day in the woods. "Dee Dee" "Dee Dee"...





FREE

November 21, 2024



# WATER WORKSHOP

For Real Estate Professionals, this course offers 5.5 Continuing Education Unit Credits approved by NYS Department of State Division of Licensing Services

*Credits Pending for Building Standards and Codes CEU's*

**Location:** Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District  
480 N Main St  
Canandaigua, NY 14424

**Cost:** FREE! Pre-registration is required. Please email [info@ontswcd.com](mailto:info@ontswcd.com) or call (585)396-1450 by November 18, 2024.

*Light refreshments & lunch will be provided*

**Schedule:** November 21, 2024 from 8:30am to 3:00pm

Presentation Topics:

- Groundwater/Surface Water Basics
- Wells for Drinking Water - Installation & Maintenance
- Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems
- Wetlands/Floodplains & Protected Areas
- Drainage & Stormwater Management

**Target Audience:** Real Estate Professionals, Municipal Officials, and Planning & Zoning Board Members



**ONTARIO COUNTY**  
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
[www.ontswcd.com](http://www.ontswcd.com)

480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, New York 14424  
Telephone (585) 396-1450 Fax (585) 396-1305





# ONTARIO COUNTY

## SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

[www.ontswcd.com](http://www.ontswcd.com)

480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, New York 14424  
Telephone (585) 396-1450 Fax (585) 396-1305

### **NYS DEC Endorsed 4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Required Training Tuesday, November 26, 2024, 8am to 12pm**

Under the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Stormwater Permit GP-0-20-001, all developers, contractors and subcontractors must identify at least one *trained individual* from their company that will be responsible for implementation of the SWPPP, and have at least one *trained individual* on site on a daily basis when soil disturbance activities are being performed. Also, developers must have a *qualified inspector* conduct regular site inspections in accordance with the General Permit.

*\*Qualified inspectors and trained individuals* must have 4 hours of training in the principles and practices of erosion and sediment control endorsed by NYS DEC, SWCD, or CPESC, Inc. Training is good for 3 years. Upon completion of the course, each participant will receive a NYS DEC Stormwater Training Number on a wallet card valid for 3 years.

**LOCATION:** 480 North Main Street  
Canandaigua, NY 14424

**COST:** \$100 per person, *non-refundable*

Pre-payment required; checks must be received by November 22, 2024. Please make checks payable to **Ontario County SWCD**. We do not accept credit cards.

Please arrive at 7:45am to sign-in. Presentation will begin at 8:00am. Anyone arriving after 8:15am will not be allowed to attend. Please bring a driver's license or photo ID to the event.

To register, go to: <https://forms.gle/FVQvQoNL5wa5gvC66>

Space is limited and PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED by November 22, 2024.

*Class filled on 1<sup>st</sup> come, 1<sup>st</sup> served basis. Due to assigned training numbers, no substitutions or transfers are allowed after registration date!*

**PRESENTED BY:** Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District

Megan Webster, CPESC

Katie Lafler, NYS E&SCC

Tyler Ohle, NYS E&SCC

**\*\*More Training Will Be Available\*\***

For scheduled trainings please check the NYS DEC  
(<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8699.html>)





## ONTARIO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Thomas P. Harvey AICP, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Linda Phillips, Senior Planner, Ontario County Planning Department  
585-396-4050

**Canandaigua, NY October 16, 2023** The open enrollment period for Ontario County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 1 will be November 1 to November 30, 2023.

Landowners may propose adding land to the Ontario County Consolidated Agricultural District No. 1 by filing such request on the enrollment form available from the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors or on-line at <https://www.ontariocountyny.gov/1608/Annual-Ontario-County-Agricultural-Distr> during the open enrollment period between November 1 and November 30, 2024,

Inclusion in a county administered, state certified agricultural district provides limitations on eminent domain, imposition of certain types of taxes or fees in certain improvement districts or benefit areas, and nuisance lawsuits for exercise of sound agricultural practices. These limits are all intended to protect the viability of agricultural land.

A request for inclusion must include tax map identification number(s) and a description of the commercial agricultural operation and/or other activities conducted on each parcel of land proposed for inclusion. In the case of a start-up operation, a description of the operation, and a business plan if available, should be submitted.

Completed enrollment forms should be submitted to:

Kristin Voss, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors:

Address for mail and hand delivered submissions:

20 Ontario Street  
Canandaigua, NY 14424

Address for digital submissions: [BOS@ontariocountyny.gov](mailto:BOS@ontariocountyny.gov)

Requests must be received or postmarked by November 30, 2024.

At the termination of the thirty (30) day open enrollment period, the tax parcels proposed for inclusion will be submitted to the Ontario County Agricultural Enhancement Board for review and subsequent recommendations to the Ontario County Board of Supervisors. The Board of Supervisors will make the final recommendation regarding inclusion of viable agricultural land to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets.



# Pumpkin (and more!) Composting Event

**Now accepting: Pumpkins, Gourds, Flowers, Hay  
and Corn Stalks**

**NO plastic or metal accepted**

**NOVEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup> • 8:00<sup>AM</sup> to 11:00<sup>AM</sup>**

**NOVEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> • 8:00<sup>AM</sup> to 11:00<sup>AM</sup>**



**Ontario County  
Parking Lot**

Corner of Ontario Street  
and Pleasant Street,  
Canandaigua

**Town of Geneva  
Transfer Station**

32 White Springs Road,  
Geneva

**Town of Victor  
Transfer Station**

60 Rawson Road, Victor

Registration is NOT required for this event.  
All locations are open and free to Ontario  
County residents.

For more information visit  
[OntarioCountyRecycles.org](http://OntarioCountyRecycles.org)

**Ontario  
County**   
Department of  
Sustainability and  
Solid Waste Management





# ONTARIO COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

[www.ontswcd.com](http://www.ontswcd.com)

480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, New York 14424

Telephone (585) 396-1450 Fax (585) 396-1305

## Ontario County SWCD Staff:

District Manager: **Megan Webster**

Secretary-Treasurer to the Board: **Diana Thorn**

Senior Conservation District Technician: **Tucker Kautz**

Water Resource Technician: **Katie Lafler**

Conservation District Technician: **Tad Gerace**

Conservation District Technician: **Jenny May**

Conservation District Educator: **Alaina Robarge**

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Inspector: **Tyler Ohle**

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Administrative Assistant: **Jamie Noga**

## Board of Directors:

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**Jim Malyj**, Vice-Chairman, NYS Farm Bureau

**Kenneth Livermore**, NYS Grange

**Dale Stell**, Ontario County Supervisor

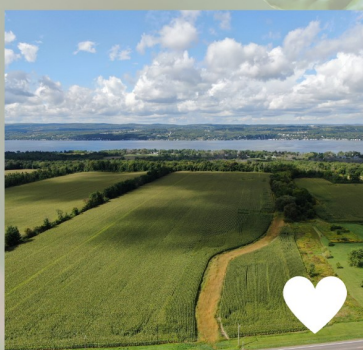
**Mark Venuti**, Ontario County Supervisor

**Edward Jackson**, Member At Large

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