

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee**  
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 -- 518 457-3738

**State Committee Meeting Videoconference - WebEx**  
**March 21, 2022**  
**10:00 am**

**At a Glance**

- CRF and AgNPS amendments were put forward for State Committee review and approval.
- \$14.5 million distributed to Districts through 2022 State Aid to Districts
- Reports from staff and CDEA on the annual Water Quality Symposium. Over 330 attendees participated in 34 course offerings through the 4 day event. 54 new District employees were hired across the State in the last year.
- Next Meeting – April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Present**

**Voting Members:** Dale Stein, Chair; Erica Goodman; Darin Hickling; Scott Ryan; David Brass.

**SWCC Staff:** Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director; Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director; Greg Albrecht, PJ Emerick, Ryan Cunningham, Jennifer Clifford, Ben Luskin, Ron Bush, Brendan Jordan, Tim Clark, Scott Fickbohm, Abigail Edwards, Melissa Gordon.

**Advisory Members:**

Dustin Lewis (Former President/Saratoga SWCD), Caitlin Stewart, President/Hamilton SWCD, NYCDEA; Paul Kaczmarczyk, DOH; Steve Shaw, SUNY ESF; Dan Welch, CCE; Katherine Black, NYS DOS; Jeffrey Kehoe, Jason Mulford, AGM.

**SWCDs:** Amber Luke, Washington SWCD; Daniel Berheide, Essex SWCD; Shawn Rooney, Nassau SWCD; Jim Sullivan, Rensselaer SWCD; Brian Hall, Cayuga SWCD; Bob Stryker, Livingston SWCD; Pete Hagar, Clinton SWCD; Jake Wedemeyer, Jim Delaune, Travis Ferry, Ulster SWCD; Joe Slezak, Montgomery SWCD; Corrina Aldrich, Washington SWCD; Corey Humphrey, Suffolk SWCD; Broome County SWCD; Peter Nichols, Schoharie SWCD; Lindsey Gerstenslager, Wayne SWCD; Devin Cox, Andy Stadler, Tompkins SWCD.

**Partners and Other Attendees:**

Nicole Angelo, USDA FSA; George Proios, Former Chairman NYS SWCC; Luke Morello.  
2 other phone in only participants (names and affiliations unidentifiable).

D. Stein welcomed Bethany Bzduch in her new role as Executive Director of the State Committee and thanked Brian Steinmuller for his work at the State Committee over the years.

**Review/Approval of Minutes**

**D. Brass made a motion to approve the March 1, 2023 draft minutes; seconded by D. Hickling. Motion passed; carried.**

**Correspondence** – Bethany Bzduch

No official correspondence. District annual reports and newsletters have been circulating by both digital format and mail, everyone is encouraged to read the reports and newsletters that highlight District work.

**Ag Non-Point Source Program** – Bethany Bzduch and Tyler Knapp

## Program Status

T. Knapp presented program statistics. Please see the recording and attachments for a complete version of the presentation and following discussion.

Completed Contracts: 170  
Active Contracts: 159  
Completed Contract Amount: \$48,880,480.67  
Active Contract Amount: \$57,180,234.30

B. Bzduch provided an update on the Round 29 RFP release. Announcement of the program is targeted for the end of March. If this deadline is met, proposals will be due at the end of June with the goal of bringing a ranked list to the State Committee in early fall.

## Amendments

### Region 1

Allegany County SWCD – C012156 – Black Creek Manure Storages

Contract Start: 11/19/2019  
Contract End: 2/20/2023  
Request: Time Extension to 2/20/2024  
Reason: The COVID-19 pandemic and the financial uncertainties following the pandemic have caused implementation delays. One participating farm is nearly half way through the implementation of their proposed Waste Storage and Transfer System. Construction will wrap up in the spring/early summer of 2023. The second participant is no longer located within the County and will not be moving forward with the project.

*Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee*  
*Previous Amendments: None*

**D. Brass motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by D. Hickling. Motion passed; carried.**

### Region 2

Cortland County SWCD – C012167 – Round 25: Chesapeake Watershed Implementation - Cortland

Contract Start: 11/19/2019  
Contract End: 2/20/2023  
Request: **Time Extension to 2/20/2025**  
Reason: The Cortland County SWCD is requesting a two year time extension for this contract. One of the participating landowners will be withdrawing from the project due to financial reasons. The second landowner has had to go through the process of obtaining sole ownership of the farm property which has resulted in delayed implementation of the proposed Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System. Design work is underway.

*Note: PJ Emerick, Region 2 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee*  
*Previous Amendments: None*

**E. Goodman motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by D. Brass. Motion passed; carried.**

Onondaga County SWCD – C012186 – Round 25: CoVale Holsteins Enhanced Nutrient Management

Contract Start: 11/19/2019

Contract End: 2/20/2023

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2023

Reason: Final location and design of the project was delayed. Currently, a design has been completed. The landowner would like to put the project out to bid for 2023 implementation, therefore we are requesting a time extension through December 31, 2023 to allow for implementation and contract closeout.

*Note: PJ Emerick, Region 2 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee*

*Previous Amendments: None*

**D. Brass motioned to approve the amendment, seconded by D. Hickling. Motion passed; carried.**

### **Climate Resilient Farming Program** – Jennifer Clifford and Tyler Knapp

#### **Program Status**

T. Knapp presented program statistics. Please see the recording and attachments for a complete version of the presentation and following discussion.

Completed Contracts: 33

Active Contracts: 60

Completed Contract Amount: \$2,541,359.67

Active Contract Amount: \$6,278,88.60

J. Clifford reported that Round 7 RFP may be released by the end of March, with the goal of releasing both CRF and AgNPS together but with staggered due dates. The new proposal due date would be in the beginning of August with the goal of submitting a ranked list to the State Committee in October.

Abigail Edwards and Scott Fickbohm presented at the Water Quality Symposium as part of a larger day long course on carbon sequestration through forestry and agroforestry. They discussed agroforestry and silvopasture practices that are supported through CRF. Through this outreach, we hope to increase forestry related practices funded through CRF.

### **Climate Smart Commodities Grant** – Jennifer Clifford

The Department of Ag and Markets and NYS SWCC are working closely with DEC Division of Lands and Forests among other partners including Cornell, SUNY ESF and Syracuse University.. Some of these funds will be added as cost share assistance through CRF Round 8, Track 1 and Track 3, to support alternative manure management and soil health systems. It has also been proposed to support adaptive management tools, data collection, and methane monitoring. A plan of work is currently being developed with USDA. The contract may be finalized sometime next month which would allow for implementation as soon as possible.

Part of the funding will go through Regenerate NY which is a program through DEC's Division of Land and Water. Reforestation will be supported through CRF.

### **State Aid Program Update** – Ben Luskin

For Fiscal Year 2023, \$14.5 million was available for State Aid through Parts A, B, and C. This is a \$3.5 million increase from last year. All Districts submitted their reports by the deadline. All Part A reports have been processed and sent to fiscal, payments were made around March 2<sup>nd</sup>. All Districts with the exception of three Districts earned the full Part A amount. Funds not earned by those three Districts then funnel down to Part C. \$10.4 million was allocated to Part C funding and this year, 57 Districts qualified for the full amount of \$181,746.76 per District. For the first time, the New York City District will be participating in Part C and they were able to earn half of that amount. State Aid payments totaled just

over \$245,000 per District with Parts A,B,C combined. A State Aid Summit, smaller regional meetings, or a virtual webinar will be held later this year. A more detailed report will be given to the State Committee in April. B. Steinmuller, on behalf of the Department, thanked Ben for his work on this massive undertaking.

### **NYS SWCC Strategic Plan 2024-2029** – Bethany Bzduch

B. Bzduch gave a presentation on the upcoming Strategic Plan. Please see the recording and attachments for a complete version of the presentation and following discussion.

Timeline:

April 2023 – Survey to Districts

June 2023 – Regional meetings with Districts

September/October 2023 – SWCC Advisory Member Meetings

November 2023 – NYS SWCC Discussion

December 2023 – NYS SWCC Approval

### **Voting / Staff/ Advisory Reports / Conservation Districts / Public Comments** – All

#### **Voting Member Reports**

**Erica Goodman** – nothing to report.

**David Brass** – nothing to report.

**Dale Stein** – nothing to report.

**Scott Ryan** – nothing to report.

**Darin Hickling** – nothing to report.

#### **Advisory Member Reports**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)** – nothing to report.

**Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Science (CAL S)** – not present, no report provided.

**NYS Department of State (DOS)** – K. Black mentioned that the Skaneateles and Oneida 9 Element Plans are under development but are making good progress. Canandaigua 9 Element Plan will be having its third public meeting. The next round of Waterfront Revitalization Funding will be included in the Consolidated Funding Agreement and is under development. Looking to include more information on resiliency into the scoring.

**NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)** –not present, no report provided.

**NYS Conservation District Employees' Association (CDEA)** – C. Stewart extended gratitude to everyone at the State Committee who worked to assist with facilitating and instructing classes for our Water Quality Symposium. The four-day event offered 34 classes this year in tracks including agriculture, non-agriculture, education, clerk administration, and forestry. This year we had record attendance of 330 attendees.

D. Lewis added that the administrative conference will be held this fall and there may be an opportunity to hold a State Aid meeting during that time.

B. Bzduch thanked Dustin Lewis for his service as President of the CDEA and congratulated all the incoming CDEA appointees, and Caitlin Stewart on her new position as CDEA President.

**NYS Department of Health (DOH)** – nothing to report.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** – not present, no report provided.

**NYS Agriculture and Markets (AGM)** – B. Steinmuller reported that the Division of Land and Water Resources has taken on the responsibilities to provide staff support to the Wood Products Development Council. Jeff Kehoe and Brian Steinmuller have been working on the appointment of members and processing reports on current projects. We will provide more updates as the Council progresses.

**SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF)** – nothing to report.

### **SWCC Staff Reports**

**PJ Emerick** – Board meetings and trainings in Region 2. The Finger Lakes Round 2 contracts have been progressing in the background and all MOUs have been sent to partners. Yates SWCD will be the administrating District for the program. An interim report will be submitted by March 31<sup>st</sup>. We have \$351,500 spread across 11 districts which will work out to about 400-500 acres of cover crops.

**Ryan Cunningham** – PJ and Ryan held a Municipal Assistant Subcommittee Meeting and had multiple DEC partners speak to bring us up to speed on partner collaboration and some of the work that Districts, municipalities, and Departments are up to. Speakers presented funding and collaboration opportunities, solar and stormwater impacts on agriculture, and more.

**Ron Bush** – Last year, the State Committee approved the Short-Term Waste Collection and Transfer System. As part of this approval, we organized a course at the Water Quality Symposium where we introduced it and provided training for the system. The course was well attended with nearly 60 participants. The system was also included in the recently updated NYS Ag BMP catalogue. We are prepping for the CNMP training in April, so far we have 30 participants signed up and encourage people to continue registering.

**Brendan Jordan** – Was involved in multiple Water Quality Symposium courses which were all well organized and well attended. Looking forward to the CNMP training.

**Greg Albrecht** – nothing to report.

**Ben Luskin** – If Districts know they need trainings, please let your regional staff know. We will sort through and make sure that we are aware of who needs District trainings to ensure that Districts are able to qualify for State Aid.

**Jennifer Clifford** – nothing to report.

**Bethany Bzduch** – Thanked the CDEA for putting on the WQS and all of their work to put on such a large event. PJ Emerick was awarded the Partnership award which is awarded to a non-District employee for their outstanding partnership and work with Districts.. At the Annual Banquet, the CDEA and

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Commissioner Ball announced that there are 54 new District employees across the state. Thanked Commissioner Ball for his attendance and speech at the Annual Banquet.

**Scott Fickbohm** – Congratulations to our very own PJ Emerick for being awarded the Partnership award from the CDEA. The WQS course on forest carbon sequestration was well attended with very knowledgeable presenters. A common thread that gained a lot of attention are the new carbon market opportunities. Districts are asking about their role and involvement opportunities.

**Tim Clark** – Working on a refresh on the online courses for entry level District technicians. Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wFSLnb3InI&list=PL7R0tOxZLuMSPpblf0ufEO5kCvO6bETo4>

**Abigail Edwards** –The SWCC Annual Report is under development, the first draft has been reviewed internally and is currently with our front office PIOs for initial review. Following their review and feedback, a draft will be finalized and submitted for front office and chambers review and approval.

**Melissa Gordon** – nothing to report.

**Tyler Knapp** – Will be working on the storyboard on the AGM website and plan to reach out to Districts to get updated projects and information.

**Conservation District Reports Comments** – nothing to report.

### **Public Comments** –

**George Proios** – Commended the State Committee on building capacity and increases in funding and scope of work. He mentioned concerns about PFOA and PFAS in the food system, especially in light of recent events involving animal agriculture in the state of Maine.

D. Stein and B. Steinmuller shared that updates on these issues will be provided as appropriate.

### **Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am**

Please contact Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, if you have questions or would like to propose agenda items for the Committee to address.

[bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov)  
518 457-2713

**Next Meeting:** April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023 in person and remote WebEx options. Meeting start at 10:00 am.

**Complete Recording of the meeting can be viewed at the following**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0yjoAMAlps&list=PL7R0tOxZLuMRdcstuxlysVPLXAejGkUcW>

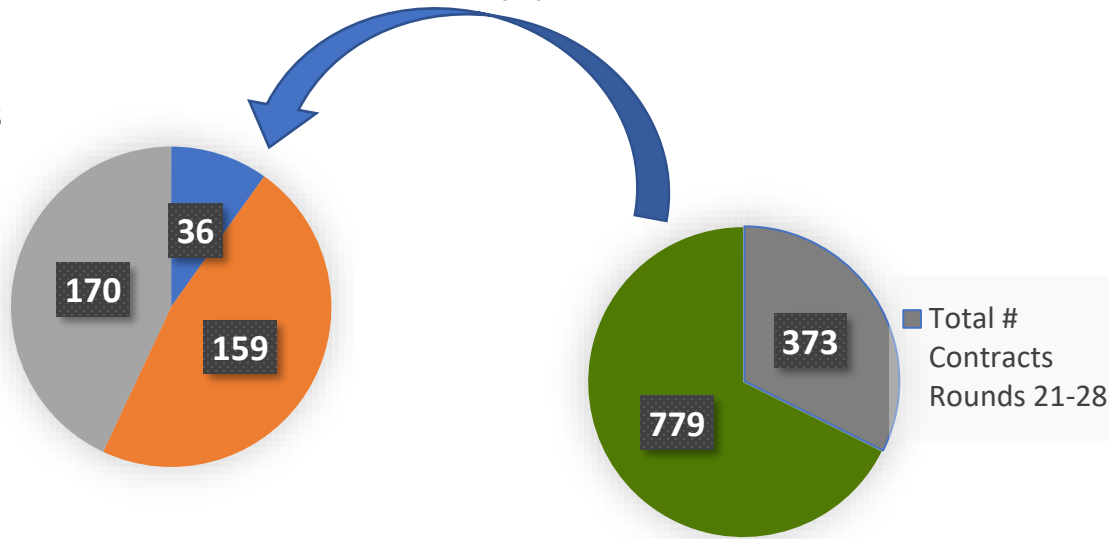
# AgNPS Program Updates

| Round         | Total # Contracts | Total Contract \$        | Pending # Contracts | Total Pending Contract \$ | Total # Active Contracts | Total Active Contract \$ | Completed # Contracts | Total Completed \$      |
|---------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 21            | 40                | \$12,908,317.67          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 2                        | \$652,475.33             | 37                    | \$12,255,842.34         |
| 22            | 49                | \$14,853,024.49          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 5                        | \$1,721,768.81           | 43                    | \$13,131,255.68         |
| 23            | 58                | \$18,308,160.81          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 6                        | \$4,827,253.00           | 48                    | \$12,975,591.81         |
| 24            | 54                | \$17,148,693.00          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 27                       | \$9,944,397.16           | 25                    | \$6,632,091.84          |
| 25            | 47                | \$16,273,749.00          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 33                       | \$11,738,615.00          | 14                    | \$4,535,134.00          |
| 26            | 46                | \$14,954,454.00          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 43                       | \$14,603,889.00          | 3                     | \$350,565.00            |
| 27            | 43                | \$13,691,836.00          | 0                   | \$ -                      | 43                       | \$13,691,836.00          | 0                     | \$ -                    |
| 28            | 36                | \$13,118,676.00          | 36                  | \$13,118,676.00           | 0                        | \$ -                     | 0                     | \$ -                    |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>373</b>        | <b>\$ 121,256,910.97</b> | <b>36</b>           | <b>\$ 13,118,676.00</b>   | <b>159</b>               | <b>\$ 57,180,234.30</b>  | <b>170</b>            | <b>\$ 48,880,480.67</b> |

## AgNPS - Contract Breakdown (#)

### Rounds 21 - 28

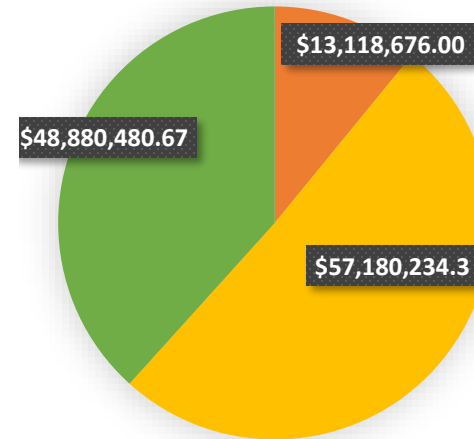
- Total # Pending Contracts
- Total # Active Contracts
- Total # Completed Contracts



## AgNPS - Contract Breakdown (\$)

### Rounds 21 - 28

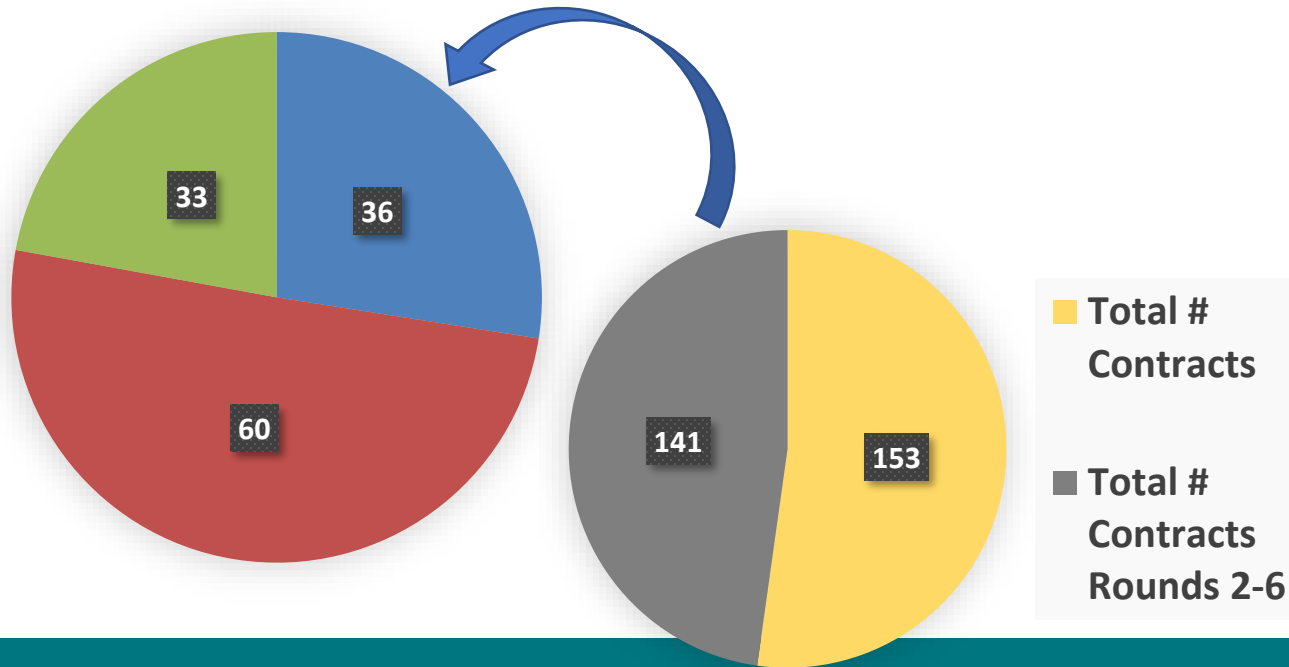
- Total Pending Contract \$
- Total Active Contract \$
- Total Completed \$



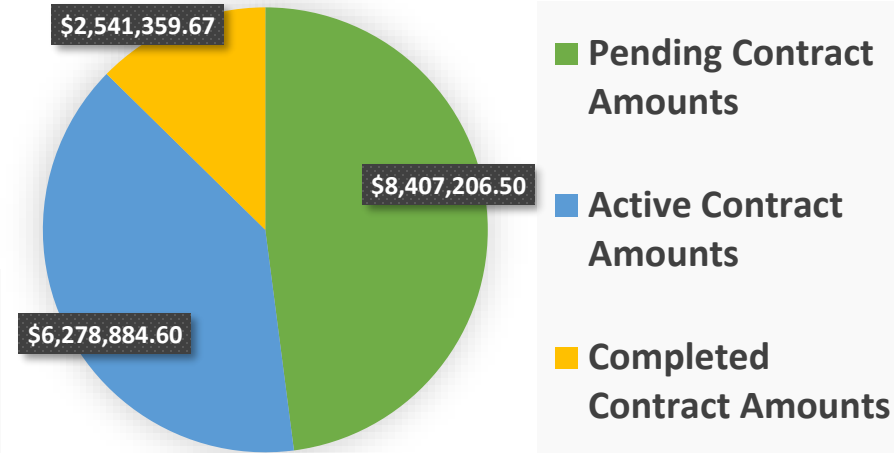
# CRF Program Updates

| Round        | Total Contract Amounts | Total # Contracts | Pending Contract Amounts | Pending # Contracts | Active Contract Amounts | Active # Contracts | Completed Contract Amounts | Completed # Contracts |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2            | \$1,200,408.50         | 14                | \$ -                     | 0                   | \$353,502.10            | 3                  | \$847,906.40               | 9                     |
| 3            | \$2,376,734.27         | 28                | \$ -                     | 0                   | \$808,131.00            | 6                  | \$1,436,383.27             | 18                    |
| 4            | \$2,300,000.00         | 20                | \$ -                     | 0                   | \$1,471,443.00          | 11                 | \$257,070.00               | 6                     |
| 5            | \$3,989,003.50         | 43                | \$ -                     | 0                   | \$3,645,808.50          | 40                 | \$ -                       | 0                     |
| 6            | \$8,407,206.50         | 36                | \$8,407,206.50           | 36                  | \$ -                    | 0                  | \$ -                       | 0                     |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>\$18,273,352.77</b> | <b>141</b>        | <b>\$8,407,206.50</b>    | <b>36</b>           | <b>\$6,278,884.60</b>   | <b>60</b>          | <b>\$2,541,359.67</b>      | <b>33</b>             |

CRF - Contract Breakdown (#)



CRF - Contract Breakdown (\$)







**Agriculture  
and Markets**

# **NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee**

2024 – 2029 Strategic Plan

Kathy Hochul  
*Governor*

Richard A. Ball  
*Commissioner*

Bethany Bzduch  
*Land and Water*

# NYS SWCC Strategic Plan

- NYS SWCC Strategic Plan:
  - Establishes mission statement for the State Committee
  - Identifies values and vision for the future
  - Defines broad strategic goals and objectives to help us meet each goal
- Plan is available on Department website and SharePoint
- Current plan expires at the end of 2023

Strategic Plan 2019-2023

## New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee



# 2024 – 2029 NYS SWCC Strategic Plan Timeline

- April 2023 – Survey to Districts
- June 2023 – Regional Meetings with Districts
- Sept/Oct 2023 – SWCC Advisory Member meetings
- Nov 2023 – NYS SWCC Discussion
- Dec 2023 – NYS SWCC Approval