

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

**State Committee Meeting Videoconference - Webex**  
**December 16, 2025**

**10:00 am**

**At a Glance**

- AEM Tier 1 and Tier 2 Worksheets for Near Shore Aquaculture were approved.
- Ryan Cunningham and Jim Lieberum delivered a presentation highlighting the importance of an annual plan of work. SWCC Voting Members approve SWCD Annual Plans of Work for 2026.
- Bethany Bzduch, Greg Albrecht, and Victor DiGiacomo delivered updates regarding the Technical Advisory Committee, State Programs Advisory Committee, and District Operations Sub-Committee.

**Present**

**Voting Members:** Matthew Brower, Chair; Darin Hickling, Scott Ryan, Meghan Hauser, Maureen Leupold.

**Advisory Members:** Jared Popoli, Cornell CALS; Morgan Tarbell, Ryan Bell, NYSDOH; Dan Welch, CCE; Kate Black, Peter Zimmer, DOS; Alana Covington, USDA NRCS; Caitlin Stewart, President CDEA; Tony Prestigiacomo, NYS DEC.

**SWCC Staff:** Bethany Bzduch, Executive Director, Greg Albrecht, PJ Emerick, Chastity Miller, Gideon Frisbee, Travis Ferry, Jason Kokkinos, Tim Clark, Tim Sheldon, Tyler Knapp, Ben Luskin, Ryan Cunningham, Victor DiGiacomo, Jennifer Clifford, Lauren Prezorski, Scott Fickbohm, Melissa Gordon

**SWCDS:**

**Broome:** Justin Puglisi

**Cayuga:** Doug Kierst

**Chenango:** Jennifer Kelly

**Clinton:** Brittany Bashaw

**Columbia:** Dylan Cipkowski

**Delaware:** Jay Czerniak

**Erie:** Michael Kalinka, Kevin Rishel

**Lewis:** Alexis Lyndaker, Michael Durant

**Livingston:** Bob Stryker, Gary Galton

**Montgomery:** Joe Slezak

**Rensselaer:** Megan Myers

**Rockland:** Brianna Rosamilia

**Schoharie:** Pete Nichols, Lisa Kuehnle

**Seneca:** Erin Peruzzini, Curtis Davis

**Sullivan:** Amber Gray

**St. Lawrence:** Melissa Woods

**Ulster:** Cooper Hernsdorf

**Warren:** Jim Lieberum

**Washington:** Corrina Aldrich, Ashley Leemans

**Wayne:** Ron Thorn

**Westchester:** Matthew Castro

**Yates:** Colby Petersen, Tom Eskildsen, Klaas Martens

**Partners and Other Attendees:** Gabriella Taylor, New York Farm Bureau

**Review/Approval of Minutes:** (6 minutes, 14 seconds in the recording)

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the November 18, 2025, draft minutes; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried.**

**Correspondence/Staffing Updates:** (6 minutes, 43 seconds in the recording)

B. Bzduch reported that No Correspondence.

**AEM – Near Shore Aquaculture Tier 1 and Tier 2 Worksheets (motion needed)**

(7 minutes, 11 seconds in recording)

- A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

**S. Ryan made a motion to approve the Tier 1 and Tier 2 Worksheets; seconded by D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried.**

**SWCD Annual Plan of Work Presentation and 2026 SWCD Annual Plan of Work Approval (motion needed)** (42 minutes, 02 seconds in recording)

- A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.
- B. Bzduch reviewed that SWCD Annual Plans of Work that were received and reviewed by November 1, 2025. Recommended approval of all 58 SWCD Annual Plans of Work.

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Annual Plan of Works, seconded by, M. Hauser, Motion passed; carried**

### **Program Updates**

Agricultural Non-Point Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program - (1 hour, 10 minutes 21 seconds in recording)

- Jason Kokkinos provided an update to the NYS SWCC regarding the AgNPS Program. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

AGNPS Amendments for State Committee Consideration

Erie County SWCD – Round 28 - C701501 – Clear Lake Watershed Protection Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete an Erosion Control System –Structural on one farm in the Cattaraugus Creek watershed. Progress was delayed due to unresolved utility conflicts involving a gas line in the project area, which requires coordination with the gas company before design can be finalized. The landowner was unable to assist with this coordination in previous seasons due to operational demands and personal hardships, resulting in additional delays. The District anticipates completing the remaining design work over the winter and will use the next construction season to implement the project.

Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: 0

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Erie County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried**

Wyoming County SWCD – Round 28 - C701523 – East Koy Creek Water Quality Protection Project Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete construction of a Waste Storage and Transfer and a Riparian Buffer System on one farm in the Upper Genesee River Watershed. The Riparian Buffer has been installed this past Fall. Construction of the Waste Storage began in fall 2025 after additional USDA-NRCS funding was secured and designs were reviewed; however, progress and sign-off are expected to be delayed due to limited NRCS engineering and field staff. The additional time will ensure NRCS approvals are obtained, and all documentation and contract closeout requirements are completed within term.

Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: 0

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Wyoming County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, S. Ryan, Motion passed; carried**

Wyoming County SWCD – Round 28 - C701524 – Village of Attica Drinking Water Protection Project Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete construction of a Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System one farm in the Lake Erie Watershed. Initial delays occurred due with USDA-NRCS contracting which affected procurement, contractor selection, and scheduling. Construction is now underway and progressing as weather allows. The additional construction season will allow implementation to be fully completed and all closeout documentation submitted.

Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: 0

**M. Leupold made a motion to approve the Wyoming County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried**

Wyoming County SWCD – Round 28 - C701525 – Genesee River Water Quality Protection Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete a Waste Storage and Transfer and a Riparian Buffer System on one farm in the Upper Genesee Watershed. All BMPs have been implemented and as-built documentation has been submitted; however, final NRCS engineering review and reimbursement remain delayed due to a backlog created by limited NRCS engineering capacity and lack of field staff following the recent federal shutdown. The requested time will allow NRCS to finalize their portion and enable the District to complete reimbursement and contract closeout requirements.

Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: 0

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Wyoming County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried**

Wyoming County SWCD – Round 28 - C701526 – Beaver Meadow Creek Nutrient Management Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete a Waste Storage and Transfer, Silage Leachate, and Riparian Buffer System on one farm in the Lake Erie Watershed. Farmstead modifications since the project began required re-evaluation of the designs, and the landowner is currently working with the project engineer. Bid documents are expected to follow with construction targeted for 2026; therefore, an additional construction season is needed to complete installation and complete the closeout report.

Note: Victor DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

**M. Leupold made a motion to approve the Wyoming County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried**

Cayuga County SWCD – Round 28 - C701494 – Owasco Lake Water Quality Improvement - Sunrise Ag

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Waste Storage and Transfer, Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management, and Silage Leachate Control and Treatment Systems in the Finger Lakes watershed. Construction is nearing completion for all systems, however, the 43-day federal shutdown delayed coordination and payment through the USDA-NRCS EQIP program. The additional requested time will ensure that all closeout reporting requirements can be completed within term.

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

Previous Amendments: 0

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Cayuga County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried**

Wayne County SWCD – Round 27 - C701486a – Sodus Creek Waste & Nutrient Transfer System Project - Humbert Farms

Contract Start: 11/23/2021

Contract End: 3/1/2026

Request: Time Extension to 3/1/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete a Waste Storage and Transfer System on one farm in the Lake Ontario Tributary Watershed. Design is complete and the implementation is underway; however, progress has been stalled due to the price and availability of pipe. The SWCD is also looking to combine purchase of material with another Round 29 project for cost-savings. The additional requested time is requested to complete all construction and closeout reporting requirements.

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

Previous Amendments: 1

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Wayne County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried**

Wayne County SWCD – Round 28 - C701522 – Craft Family Farm Nutrient Management Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete a Livestock Heavy Use Area System on one farm in the Lake Ontario Tributary Watershed. The other contracted Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System is completed, and Soil Conservation System is under way. Delays working

with NRCS slowed progress on the project; however, the farm is ready for implementation with funding and engineering design complete.

Note: PJ Emerick, Region 2 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 0

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Wayne County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried**

Delaware County – Round 26 - C701408a – Shane Stalter - Waste Storage & Transfer System, Silage Leachate Treatment, Heavy Use Area Runoff System, Access Control, Riparian Buffer System.

Contract Start: 3/2/2021

Contract End: 12/30/2025

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Waste Storage and Transfer, Silage Leachate Control and Treatment, and Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management Systems on one farm in the Upper Susquehanna watershed. Progress was delayed by higher-than-expected contractor bids and a subsequent wait for matching funds due to federal funding disruptions. The landowner also faced a temporary change in milk market that limited their ability to commit financially. With funding now secured and designs complete, the project moving forward and will be rebid in the spring. The additional time is requested to allow construction completion during the next season and finalize contract reporting requirements.

Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 1

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Delaware County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried**

Montgomery County SWCD – Round 26 - C701426a – Ridgedale

Contract Start: 3/2/2021

Contract End: 12/31/2025

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of two years to complete several systems on one farm in the Mohawk River watershed. A personal tragedy in the farm's family initially delayed the project and the government shutdown of NRCS further delayed implementation. NRCS has recently approved their EQIP portion of the project, and it is currently underway. The Farm has committed by prioritizing their in-kind work on field practices. All originally contracted systems are underway and the SWCD anticipates being able to complete the project in the additional 2 years of contract term requested.

Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 1

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Montgomery County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Hauser, Motion passed; carried**

Schoharie County SWCD – Round 26 - C701434a – Karker Barnyard Improvement Project

Contract Start: 3/2/2021

Contract End: 12/30/2025

Request: Time Extension to 12/30/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete the Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System on one farm in the Schoharie Creek watershed. The project experienced delays due to the time required to finalize design, rising material costs during COVID that

affected the landowner's cost share capacity, and the withdrawal of the selected contractor after construction had begun. The landowner is now prepared to resume work and make progress before winter. The additional time will allow the project to be fully constructed during the next construction season and ensure completion of all reporting requirements.

Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: 1

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Schoharie County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold, Motion passed; carried**

Lewis County SWCD – Round 27 - C701463a – Kozy Knoll Farm Implementation Project

Contract Start: 11/23/2021

Contract End: 3/1/2026

Request: Time Extension to 3/1/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management, Access Control, and Silage Leachate Control and Treatment Systems on one farm in the Black River watershed. Progress on the farm was delayed when the selected contractor sustained an injury on a prior job, preventing construction from moving forward as scheduled. In addition, the project relies on matching funds through the USDA-NRCS EQIP program, which has experienced delays following the federal shutdown. The additional time will allow the contractor to resume work and ensure that EQIP funding are in place to complete the project.

Note: Ryan Cunningham, Region 4 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee. Previous Amendments: 1

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Lewis County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Leupold Motion passed; carried**

Lewis County SWCD – Round 28 - C701507 – High Falls Farm Implementation Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management and Soil Health Systems in the Black River watershed. The project experienced delays due to necessary engineering design changes, which required additional time to finalize. The revised design is now complete, and construction is scheduled for Spring 2026. The extension will allow adequate time for implementation and contract reporting requirements.

Note: Ryan Cunningham, Region 4 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee. Previous Amendments: 0

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Lewis County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, M. Hauser, Motion passed; carried**

Climate Resilient Farming Program – (1 Hour, 34 minutes, 35 seconds in the recording)

- Jennifer Clifford reported that Round 9 Applications received and shared statistics regarding the solicitation. Presentation is attached.
- All applications have been reviewed and are eligible

CRF Amendments for State Committee Consideration

Niagara County SWCD – Round 6 - C012446: Tonawanda Creek Cover Crop

Contract Start: 09/22/2022

Contract End: 04/30/2026

Request: Time Extension to **4/30/2027**

Reason: The SWCD is requesting a no-cost time extension because the farm was not able to plant all of their proposed cover crop acres due to weather conditions and crop rotations. The time extension will provide an additional season to plant cover crops. The farms and District are committed to completing this project within the new time frame.

Note: Vic DiGiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.

Previous Amendments: None

**M. Hauser made a motion to approve the Niagara County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, D. Hickling, Motion passed; carried**

Schoharie County SWCD – Round 6 – C012449: CrannMor Silvopasture Project

Contract Start: 09/22/2022

Contract End: 04/30/2026

Request: Time Extension to **9/30/2027**

Reason: The SWCD is requesting a no-cost time extension to complete the BMPs. Delays occurred as the farm has undergone management changes and had difficulty getting an engineer for the project. The farm and District are committed to completing this project by the new deadline.

Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee

Previous Amendments: None

**D. Hickling made a motion to approve the Schoharie County SWCD Amendment; seconded by, S. Ryan, Motion passed; carried**

**NYS SWCC Sub-Committee Updates – (1 hour, 44 minutes, 40 seconds in the recording)**

- District Operations Sub-Committee
  - A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.
- State Programs Advisory Committee
  - A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes
- Technical Advisory Committee – Bethany Bzduch
  - The Technical Advisory Committee is made up of 9 state committee advisory members as well as state committee staff. The Committee is utilized to review policies that are being drafted, RFP's or programs. The TAC meets on a quarterly basis. Throughout the year we have had numerous discussions regarding draft policies specifically the tree establishment and soil health policies. The committee has also reviewed the AEM Worksheets for Near Shore Aquaculture and draft RFPs for AGNPS and CRF. During the October meeting, TAC members shared their insights to program proposals. We were able to glean tips and insights that can be shared with Districts. There is a meeting coming up later this week where advisory members will share what tools and other resources are available for Districts.

**Voting / Staff/ Advisory Reports / Conservation Districts / Public Comments** – (53 minutes, 40 seconds in the recording)

**Voting Members**

**Matthew Brower-** Reported Lauren Lyons Swift wanted to say hello.

**Meghan Hauser-** Appreciated the Sub-committee updates to understand what each sub-committee is doing.

**Maureen Leupold-** Wished everyone a Happy Holiday

**Scott Ryan** – Reported the Open Water Data Act. Senate Bill 1211 was Vetoed by the Governor. Legislative days coming up Feb. 10, 2026, and will be held Taste of NY on Feb 9. The legislative booklet deadline was Friday. An email was put out extending the deadline to submit projects there were about 35 districts who submitted projects.

**Darin Hickling-** Nothing to report

### **Advisory Members**

AGM – No Reports

CCE – Dan Welch reported CCA training winter meeting will be coming up.

DEC – No reports

DOH - No Reports

DOS –No Reports

NRCS – Alana Covington reported updated new USDA Regenerative Agriculture pilot. Jan 15, 2026 will be the first funding round of key conservation programs. EQIP payments are going out to farmers on contract payments. Reported on staffing positions.

CDEA- Caitlin Stewart President report attached.

### **Staffing Reports**

**Bethany Bzduch** - Staff are going to start working on compiling 2025 accomplishments and SWCC/AEM Annual Report. Currently serving as the interim program manager for the State Aid program. Wrapping up reporting documents and will get out to SWCDs as soon as possible. Moving forward with setting up an Engineering Workgroup, targeting to meet in January. Working with staff and CDEA to coordinate a Grant Writing session for the Water Quality Symposium.

**Jason Kokkinos-** Reminder that round 31 starts and round 30 contract signatures.

**Greg Albrecht-** Reported on the CCA Conference and thanked Ron Bush, Gideon Frisbee, Brendan Jordan for developing and teaching five classes and helping to facilitate, organize the training.

**Victor DiGiacomo-** Reported 2026 American Farmland Trust will be rolling out a webinar series focused on small farms and conservation on Jan. 15, 2026. (link attached). Operations Sub Committee will meet on Jan. 29 from 1-3pm.

**Travis Ferry-** Attended Board Meetings, reviewing 5-year strategic plans for AEM. AEM 18 closeouts.

**Chastity Miller-** Reported AEM strategies are due by December 31, 2025. Working on closing Round 18 projects out. All round 19 AEM contracts are approved.

**Lauren Prezorski-** Reported Stream Corridor Management Pilot Program funding opportunity closed last week.

**Gideon Frisbee-** Reported the CCA Conference was well attended. Working on CNMP Certification plan review.

**PJ Emerick-** Region 2 working on year-end board meetings. Board meetings with elected officials where districts can show accomplishments throughout the year and how the money is being allocated to different municipalities. Finger Lakes round 2 projects going forward.

**Tyler Knapp** – AEM Closeouts, working with districts that implemented new data basis to summarize AEM data into a new format. Working with DEC to standardize the way that we collect data across both Agencies and Departments for general projects.

**Tim Sheldon-** Reported 2025 NYS Energy Plan was officially adopted today 12/16/2025. The State Energy Plan provides broad energy program and policy, development direction to guide energy related decision making in the state. Link provided.

**Tim Clark** – Nothing to report.

**Scott Fickbohm-** Reported Region 3 Districts holding meetings. Working on CREP Annual Report. Working on AEM 18.

**Ben Luskin-** Reported Region 5 getting new contracts executed off the ground and old contracts closed out. Attending meetings. Lake Champlain Watershed. Working on AEM 18 and AEM Strategies.

**Ryan Cunningham-** Region 4 working on AEA, end of the calendar year projects. Wrapping up AEM 18. Transitioning into AEM 19. Grant closeouts and attending meetings. Attended the Warren County Annual Meeting.

**PJ Emerick-** Region 2 Reported attended year end Board Meetings that involve local elected officials as well as state elected officials. This meeting is an opportunity for Districts to show accomplishments that have been done throughout the year as well as how money is being allocated to different municipalities. AEM closeouts, Round 2 Finger Lakes projects.

### **Conservation Districts**

No Reports

**Others-** Klaas Martin, Yates County SWCD Director shared insights on the growing importance of water management and irrigation practices.

**Next Meeting:** February 17, 2026, Meeting starts at 10:00 am. Annual Organizational Meeting.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:56 pm**

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)  
518-390-0376

### **Links shared:**

<https://www.liogany.org/>

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/shellfishing>

[Approved by unanimous vote February 17, 2026]

<https://dec.ny.gov/things-to-do/shellfishing/safety>

<https://ccesuffolk.org/marine/aquaculture>

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FA208>

<https://energyplan.ny.gov/Plans/2025-Energy-Plan>

<https://energyplan.ny.gov>

**Complete recording of the meeting can be viewed at the following:**

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<https://youtu.be/gf3dUwV-QuA>

# AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

## Nearshore Aquaculture Tier 1

AEM Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_ County SWCD Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Evaluator name: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluating Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Owners Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Internet/Website/Social Media: \_\_\_\_\_

NYS DEC Permit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Producer is a member of:  Farm Bureau  LIOGA  NYS Grown and Certified  Other

Producer works with:  NRCS  FSA  Other  None

### Basic Farm Information

What is the primary species grown in your operation?

- Oyster Species: \_\_\_\_\_  Kelp
- Clam Hard or Soft  Mussels
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_  Bay Scallop

Ploidy:  Diploid  Triploid  Tetraploid

What size seed do you buy? \_\_\_\_\_

What are your average starting numbers? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximately how many animals do you have at one time?

Start of Season \_\_\_\_\_ Mid-Season \_\_\_\_\_ End of Season \_\_\_\_\_

If you use FLUPSY's, how big does the seed grow before moving to gear? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you access your plot?  Marina  Private land  Other

Please indicate the following number of acres:

Owned \_\_\_\_\_ Leased \_\_\_\_\_ Licensed \_\_\_\_\_

Do you lease/license your beds for your operation?  Yes  No

Who do you lease/license your beds from? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, when does your lease/license expire? \_\_\_\_\_

If no what is your situation? \_\_\_\_\_

When does your lease/license expire? \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain your lease/license agreement. \_\_\_\_\_

Where is your farm site? (Four points or center point) UTM Coordinates Zone 18 (Northing, Southing- 6 digits)


Is your site in certified or uncertified waters?  Certified  Uncertified  
NYSDEC Shellfish harvest area? \_\_\_\_\_ (example- NY Harvest P8- On your harvest tag)

What waterway is your farm located in? \_\_\_\_\_

Depth of site at mean low tide. \_\_\_\_\_ ft

Do you own or operate any other farms?  Yes  No

If so, where?

Do you have crop loss insurance through Farm Service Agency (FSA)?  Yes  No

What is your cultivation technique?

Bottom Culture  Rack and bag system  Suspended longline  Floating gear

How do you manage seed upon their arrival from the hatchery?

FLUPSY's  Grow bags and gear  Other \_\_\_\_\_

How do you manage bird aggregation?

## Staffing

How many workers do you generally have? \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal \_\_\_\_\_ Full-Time \_\_\_\_\_

When are your seasonal staff employed? \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

## Boating

Do you own a boat?  Yes  No

How many? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind(s) of boat(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do you keep the boat(s)?

Docked at Marina  Home/Farm on trailer  Mooring

Where do you do your boat maintenance? \_\_\_\_\_

## Water Quality

Do you monitor water quality?  Yes  No

If so, how? \_\_\_\_\_

What parameters do you monitor for?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Temperature           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bacteria                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dissolved Oxygen (DO) | <input type="checkbox"/> Algae                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Salinity              | <input type="checkbox"/> Fecal Coliform/ <i>E. Coli</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turbidity             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                    |

When was your last sampling? \_\_\_\_\_

Did the sample go to a certified lab?  Yes  No  Unsure

Do you have the results?  Yes  No  Unsure

Would you like to do sampling?  Yes  No  Unsure

## Sales

Approximately, what percentage of annual sales are wholesale to:

Distributors \_\_\_\_\_ %

Restaurants \_\_\_\_\_ %

Retail Fish markets \_\_\_\_\_ %

Approximately, what % of annual sales are retail/online sales? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Approximately, what % of annual sales is direct to consumer/farmer market? \_\_\_\_\_ %

Approximately how much product do you bring to market each year? \_\_\_\_\_

Seaweeds? Industrial \_\_\_\_\_ %, Commercial \_\_\_\_\_ %

How do you sort your stock?  Roller  Hand sort

## Food Safety

NYSDEC permits, as applicable:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class A- Shellfish shipper          | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Fish and Crustacea (FF&C) dealer/shipper              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class B- Shellfish processor        | <input type="checkbox"/> Article 20-C License from NYS Dept. of Agriculture Markets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class C- Shellfish re-shipper       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class D- Shellfish digger/shipper   |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class E- Bay Scallop shucker/packer |   |

Town/County/State/Federal Permits

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> NYSDEC On/Off Bottom Culture Permit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Importation Permit (if larvae, seed or fingerlings are obtained from another state) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State, County, Township, Private Lease of underwater lands; or deed for privately owned underwater lands (shellfish producers). | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Hatchery Permit  |

## Agriculture and the Community

Do you have any trouble with the public?  Yes  No

If so, what? (gear damage/tampering, buoy/gear complaints, etc.)

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### Future Status of the Farm

Do you anticipate any major modifications on your farm within the next 5 years?  Yes  No

If yes, please check the condition(s) that best describes the modification(s):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Operation Type              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expansion          | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversification of Business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sale of Farm                |

### Are you interested in any of the following?

<input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms/Sanitation Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Antifouling BMP's
<input type="checkbox"/> Petroleum Storage
<input type="checkbox"/> Coastline Resiliency/Living Shoreline
<input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality Monitoring
<input type="checkbox"/> Power – Variable speed motors
<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration of Oyster Reef (NRCS CPS 643)
<input type="checkbox"/> Biofouling Control (NRCS CPS 400)
<input type="checkbox"/> Access Control (buoy demarcation) (NRCS CPS 472)
<input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
<input type="checkbox"/> Shoreside Facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Electric Access
<input type="checkbox"/> Freshwater Access
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Machines
<input type="checkbox"/> Gear Storage
<input type="checkbox"/> Kelp Processing
<input type="checkbox"/> Brining Tanks
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy Efficiency
<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Support/Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Legislative and Policy
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Support Organizations
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please describe):



# AEM Tier 2 Worksheet

## Nearshore Aquaculture

### Glossary

**Biofouling** - the fouling of pipes and underwater surfaces by organisms such as barnacles and algae.

**Brine** - (or briny water) is a high-concentration solution of salt (typically sodium chloride or calcium chloride) in water.

**Cultch** - is a loose, solid material placed on oyster beds to allow larval oysters to attach themselves.

**FLUPSY** - floating upwellers that are specially designed in-house for low maintenance and high efficiency. The unique design incorporates a basket/silo combination to allow easy access to your seed and extend the oysters further into the water column creating more water pressure and higher water flow. Water flow from individual silos is dumped into a centrally located trough with a well and mounted pump to eliminate cavitation.

**Ploidy** - the number of sets of chromosomes in a cell, or in the cells of an organism.

**Seed** - the early stages of fish/shellfish.

**Stock** - is a defined discrete group of fish with some definable attributes which are of an interest to fishery managers.

## Background

Aquaculture is the production of aquatic organisms under controlled conditions throughout part or all their lifecycle. Its development can help meet future food needs and ease burdens on natural resources. Ensuring that a healthy, competitive, and sustainable aquaculture sector can produce an abundant, safe, environmentally sound, and affordable supply of seafood products is important and necessary in New York. The Long Island region has a long history of aquaculture dating back to the 1820's, and as one of our premier commodities and a growing sector of New York's agricultural industry, New York Agriculture and Markets and the Soil and Water Conservation Committee is working with Soil and Water Conservation District staff and partners in Suffolk and Nassau Counties to expand the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) framework to include nearshore aquaculture. The development and piloting of the AEM tools will help growers to prevent non-point source pollution, protect water quality, prevent biofouling and pests, encourage habitat restoration, protect our food supply, and adapt to a changing climate. This partnership will support the State's fisheries, aquaculture and seafood sectors while protecting the environment and natural resources.

**AEM Principal Aquaculture** is the production of aquatic organisms under controlled conditions throughout part or all their lifecycle. Its development can help meet future food needs and ease burdens on natural resources.

<b>AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Nearshore Aquaculture - Animals</b>		<b>Potential Concern</b>		
<b>Factors Needing Assessment</b>	<b>Lower 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Higher 4</b>
Does the grower have a conservation plan?	Yes			No <i>or</i> the plan is over 10 years old
What are your average annual starting numbers/counts?				
Seasonal Mortality rate? Over the last 3 Years	0-15%	15-25%	25-50%	50-75%
Seasonal Mortality rate? Last year.	0-15%	15-25%	25-50%	50-75%
Seasonal Mortality rate? Two years ago.	0-15%	15-25%	25-50%	50-75%
Seasonal Mortality rate? Three years ago.	0-15%	15-25%	25-50%	50-75%
How are dead stock disposed of?	Disposal into dumpsters	Driveway disposal	Disposing in water	Disposal on harvest dock adjacent to plots
Protocol for mass mortality event?	Yes		No	
Where do you process your stock?	In a building with heavy use area, wash water collection and filtration. Following food safety standards.	In a building with heavy use area with some collection.	In a building with heavy use area.	Backyard or on boat without collection or processing.
What do you do with your wash water and product?	Collect and process			Nothing, kill area present and sediment accumulated
Do you monitor for disease?	Yes		No	

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Nearshore Aquaculture –Growing Gear		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
<b>Gear Type</b>	This section is for the gear that the product is grown on/in.			
How do you process your gear?	Natural Dry and Brush off	Hand wash/scrub (no solutions)	Brine Dip and/or Vinegar Dip	Power Wash
Where do you process your gear?	On land in a contained location	On land not managed	On the shoreline	Out on the water
What do you do with your wash by-product from gear cleaning? Please Explain.	Process		Nothing	
Is gear coated?	No coating		Biocide	Coppercide
If coated, indicate type and brand.				
Substrate on actual site	Sandy		Muddy	
Comments:				

<b>AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Nearshore Aquaculture – Waste Products</b>		<b>Potential Concern</b>		
<b>Factors Needing Assessment</b>	<b>Lower 1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Higher 4</b>
Waste on Boat? (human)	Contained and treated, head on boat		Bucket	Not contained and untreated
Waste on Land? (human)	Facilities			No facilities
Solid Waste on Land (i.e., trash)?	Yes - receptacle and recyclable items separated and recycled			No
Are there any outfall pipes near your farm?	No			Yes
Source:	None		MS4 or Effluent	
Comments:				

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Nearshore Aquaculture – Gear- Boating		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment: Equipment	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
Engine Type on boat	Out-board		In-Board	
What type of motor?	Electric	Diesel	4- stroke	2-stroke
Bottom paint?	No		Yes	
Painted with?	No coating		Antifoul - (biocide)	Coppercide
If painted, please indicate type and brand.				
Do you monitor your boat, trailer and engine for Invasive species?	Yes		No	
Does the launch site exhibit erosion?	No		Yes - where?	
Comments:				

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Nearshore Aquaculture – Other		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
Distance to Port	Less than a mile		More than a mile	
Transport to Market	No		Yes	
How do you transport animals to market?	Refrigerator Truck or Hired Transport		Coolers with ice	Nothing
Comments:				
<p>Benefits to other resources can also be possible while working toward improved water quality. Taking stock of how existing and future management affect <b>soil, water, air, plants, animals, energy, greenhouse gases, people, and economics</b> can result in more effective plans and additional benefits to farms and communities both now and into the future.</p> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p>				



**Department of  
Agriculture and Markets**  
Soil and Water  
Conservation Committee

# **Annual Plans of Work**

**SWCC Board Meeting**

DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## A Brief History

- Annual work plans have been reviewed and approved by the SWCC for the past ~30 years. Eventually incorporated into Performance Measure criteria associated with State Aid Part C (PM 2c – District Reporting and Outreach Activities).
- Draft/final copies due for review by SWCC staff by November 1<sup>st</sup> each year.
- Approved by SWCC board in December of each year.
- Intended to be a management and decision-making tool but also provides indemnification for state projects approved by the SWCC.

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## Strategic Plan (long term) vs. Annual Plan of Work (short term)

### Strategic Plan:

- Establishes foundation and framework
- Is visionary and realistic
- Is conceptual and flexible
- Is directional
- Is attainable

### Annual Plan of Work:

- Defines a set of actions set by the Strategic Plan
- Is used to implement the Strategic Plan
- Is short-term (implemented annually)

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## General Guidelines:

- Serves as a 'road map' for a district – defines the destination
- Sets schedule for programs and activities
- Identifies roles and responsibilities for directors and staff
- Manages risk and reduces liability
- Acts as budgeting tool; identifies resources needed to deliver programs
- Measures performance; can be a tool for staff evaluation

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## Specific Task Areas:

### District Operations:

- Annual organizational meeting
- Regular board meetings
- Annual audit
- Staff/director training details

### District Programs:

- Water quality
- Agriculture
- Stormwater
- Municipal
- Current and planned grants

### District Activities:

- Earned income
- Events
- Technical assistance
  - Landowners
  - Organizations
  - Partner agencies

### Education/Information:

- County Envirothon
- Outreach and workshops
- Technical training

- **District Partnerships:**
- Federal, state, regional agencies
- Committees, local groups
- Not for profits, land trusts

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## Risk Assessment:

### - General Liability

- Indemnification resolutions
- SWCC approved Plan of Work
- General liability insurance
- SWCD board policies

### - Financial Liability:

- SWCD board financial policies
- SWCD board investment policies
- Audit procedures
- Bonding requirements
- Internal controls
- Budgeting

### - Personnel Liability:

- SWCD board personnel policies
- Training and certifications
- Volunteer liability
- Laws/regulations for employees

### - Project Liability:

- Certifications, qualifications
- Standards, specifications
- Contracts and permits
- Hazardous materials, OSHA
- Contracts, procurement

# ANNUAL PLANS OF WORK

## Risk Assessment, continued:

- **Program Liability:**
  - Operational authorities
  - MOU's and other agency agreements
  - Public participation
  - Professional qualifications, certifications
  
- **Operational Liability:**
  - Vehicle and equipment maintenance
  - Annual organizational meeting
  - Election/appointment directors
  - Knowledge of district and municipal law



Department of  
Agriculture and Markets

# AGRICULTURAL NONPOINT SOURCE ABATEMENT AND CONTROL PROGRAM (AGNPS)

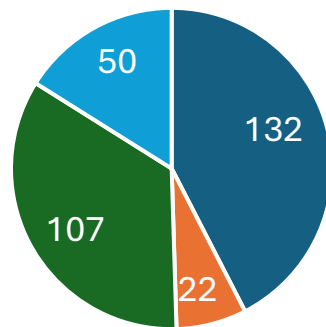
PROGRAM STATUS UPDATE

DECEMBER 16, 2025

# AGNPS ROUND PROGRAM UPDATE

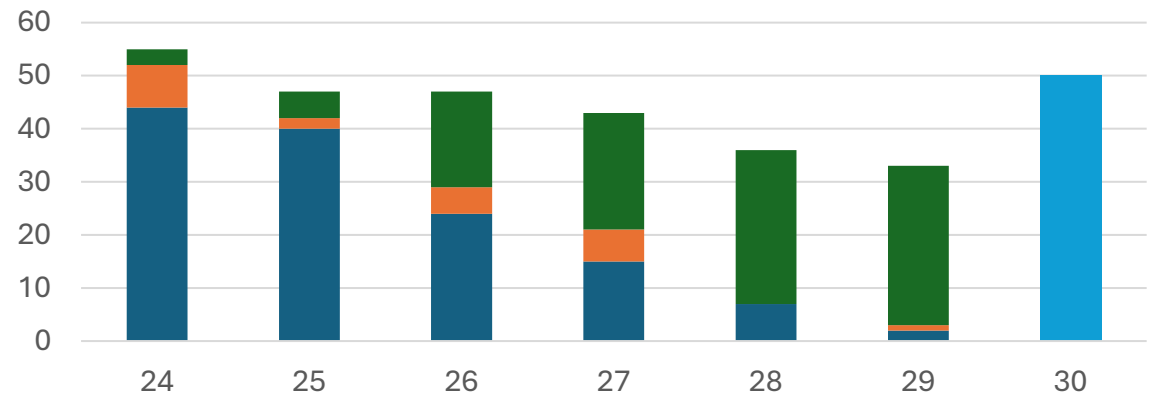
Round	Completed	Cancelled	Active	Pending	State \$ Award
24	44	8	3	0	\$16,800,000.00
25	40	2	5	0	\$16,300,000.00
26	24	5	18	0	\$14,900,000.00
27	15	6	22	0	\$14,000,000.00
28	7	0	29	0	\$13,100,000.00
29	2	1	30	0	\$13,800,000.00
30	0	0	0	50	\$24,800,000.00
	131	22	108	50	\$113,700,000.00

AgNPS Active Rounds  
Contract Status



■ Completed ■ Cancelled ■ Active ■ Pending

AgNPS Contract Status / Round



■ Completed ■ Cancelled ■ Active ■ Pending

# AGNPS AMENDMENT ANALYSIS

Round	Total Contracts	Contracts Amended	# Total Amendments	% of Contracts Amended	Term Days	# Late Contracts
24	55	27	48	49.1%	1190	2
25	47	20	27	42.6%	1189	5
26	47	20	22	42.6%	1216	8
27	43	19	19	44.2%	1194	5
28	36	1	1	2.8%	1201	0
29	33	0	0	0.0%	1826	0
30	50	0	0	0.0%	1825	0
<b>311</b>		<b>87</b>	a	64		
			b	17		
			c	4		
			d	2		

Longest Term w Amendment =  
2632 Days or 7.2 Years

**Agricultural NPS Abatement & Control Grant Program  
December 16, 2025  
State Committee Meeting**

**Staff Approved Amendments**

NONE

**Amendments for State Committee Consideration**

**Region 1**

Erie County SWCD – Round 28 - C701501 – Clear Lake Watershed Protection Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete an Erosion Control System – Structural on one farm in the Cattaraugus Creek watershed. Progress was delayed due to unresolved utility conflicts involving a gas line in the project area, which requires coordination with the gas company before design can be finalized. The landowner was unable to assist with this coordination in previous seasons due to operational demands and personal hardships, resulting in additional delays. The District anticipates completing the remaining design work over the winter and will use the next construction season to implement the project.

*Note: Victor Digiacomo, Region 1 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 0*

**Region 2**

Cayuga County SWCD – Round 28 - C701494 – Owasco Lake Water Quality Improvement - Sunrise Ag

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Waste Storage and Transfer, Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management, and Silage Leachate Control and Treatment Systems in the Finger Lakes watershed. Construction is nearing completion for all systems, however, the 43-day federal shutdown delayed coordination and payment through the USDA-NRCS EQIP program. The additional requested time will ensure that all closeout reporting requirements can be completed within term.

*Note: PJ Emerick, Region 2 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 0*

**Region 3**

Delaware County SWCD – Round 26 - C701408a – Shane Stalter - Waste Storage & Transfer System, Silage Leachate Treatment, Heavy Use Area Runoff System, Access Control, Riparian Buffer System

Contract Start: 3/2/2021

Contract End: 12/30/2025

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Waste Storage and Transfer, Silage Leachate Control and Treatment, and Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management Systems on one farm in the Upper Susquehanna watershed. Progress was delayed by higher-than-expected contractor bids and a subsequent wait for matching funds due to federal funding disruptions. The landowner also faced a temporary change in milk market that limited their ability to commit financially. With funding now secured and designs complete, the project moving forward and will be rebid in the spring. The additional time is requested to allow construction completion during the next season and finalize contract reporting requirements.

*Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.  
Previous Amendments: 1*

Schoharie County SWCD – Round 26 - C701434a – Karker Barnyard Improvement Project

Contract Start: 3/2/2021

Contract End: 12/30/2025

Request: Time Extension to 12/30/2026

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete the Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System on one farm in the Schoharie Creek watershed. The project experienced delays due to the time required to finalize design, rising material costs during COVID that affected the landowner's cost-share capacity, and the withdrawal of the selected contractor after construction had begun. The landowner is now prepared to resume work and make progress before winter. The additional time will allow the project to be fully constructed during the next construction season and ensure completion of all reporting requirements.

*Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.*

*Previous Amendments: 1*

## **Region 4**

Lewis County SWCD – Round 27 - C701463a – Kozy Knoll Farm Implementation Project

Contract Start: 11/23/2021

Contract End: 3/1/2026

Request: Time Extension to 3/1/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management, Access Control, and Silage Leachate Control and Treatment Systems on one farm in the Black River watershed. Progress on the farm was delayed when the selected contractor sustained an injury on a prior job, preventing construction from moving forward as scheduled. In addition, the project relies on matching funds through the USDA-NRCS EQIP program, which has experienced delays following the federal shutdown. The additional time will allow the contractor to resume work and ensure that EQIP funding are in place to complete the project.

*Note: Ryan Cunningham, Region 4 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.*

*Previous Amendments: 1*

Lewis County SWCD – Round 28 - C701507 – High Falls Farm Implementation Project

Contract Start: 10/18/2022

Contract End: 1/31/2026

Request: Time Extension to 1/31/2027

Reason: The District is requesting a no-cost time extension of one year to complete Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management and Soil Health Systems in the Black River watershed. The project experienced delays due to necessary engineering design changes, which required additional time to finalize. The revised design is now complete and construction is scheduled for Spring 2026. The extension will allow adequate time for implementation and contract reporting requirements.

*Note: Ryan Cunningham, Region 4 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee.*

*Previous Amendments: 0*

**Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Grant Program  
December 2025  
State Committee Meeting**

**Amendments for State Committee Consideration**

**Region 1**

Niagara County SWCD – Round 6 - C012446: Tonawanda Creek Cover Crop

Contract Start: 09/22/2022

Contract End: 04/30/2026

Request: Time Extension to **4/30/2027**

Reason: The SWCD is requesting a no-cost time extension because the farm was not able to plant all of their proposed cover crop acres due to weather conditions and crop rotations. The time extension will provide an additional season to plant cover crops. The farms and District are committed to completing this project within the new time frame.

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

**Region 3**

Schoharie County SWCD – Round 6 – C012449: CrannMor Silvopasture Project

Contract Start: 09/22/2022

Contract End: 04/30/2026

Request: Time Extension to **9/30/2027**

Reason: The SWCD is requesting a no-cost time extension to complete the BMPs. Delays occurred as the farm has undergone management changes and had difficulty getting an engineer for the project. The farm and District are committed to completing this project by the new deadline.

*Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 3 AEA, supports the request, but refers to the State Committee  
Previous Amendments: None*



**Department of  
Agriculture and Markets**  
Soil and Water  
Conservation Committee

**NYS SWCC**  
**State Programs Advisory Committee**

SWCC Meeting

DECEMBER 16, 2025

# SPAC UPDATE

- **SPAC Make-Up**
  - SWCDs and SWCC
- **Roll and Function**
  - Forum to discuss existing NYS SWCC programs and seek feedback from District staff
  - Share and gather new program ideas
  - Discuss other District support efforts (e.g., training, engineering)
  - Identify priority focus areas for funding
  - Programs and other efforts then reviewed through TAC and SWCC
  - Advisory, not authorizing
- **Meeting frequency**
  - Every other month or as needed
  - First meeting was on December 2023
  - 12<sup>th</sup> meeting held December 2025
- **Further supported by discussions among Districts via the CDEA SPAC Subcommittee**

# SPAC UPDATE

- **Topics discussed, developed and advanced**

- CRF8 (including the Climate Smart Commodity saga) and CRF9
  - New Track 4 for forestry / agroforestry
- AgNPS 30 and 31, including Bond Act addition
- CAFO ENMP
- AEM19 and AEM Strategic Plan Updates
- State Aid to Districts
- EBM Program Ideas (e.g., engineering support)
- Special Projects
- Soil Health Benchmarks
- SWCC Soil Health Policy Update
  - Including nutrient management equipment
- SWCC Post-Planting Tree Stewardship Policy
- AEM Tools for Urban Ag
- AEM Tools for Near Shore Aquaculture
- Advancing Programming for Climate Resiliency / Preparedness / Adaptation
- Conservation Technical Training
- SWCC Conservation Approval Authority Policy Update
- Engineering Constraints and Opportunities



# SPAC UPDATE

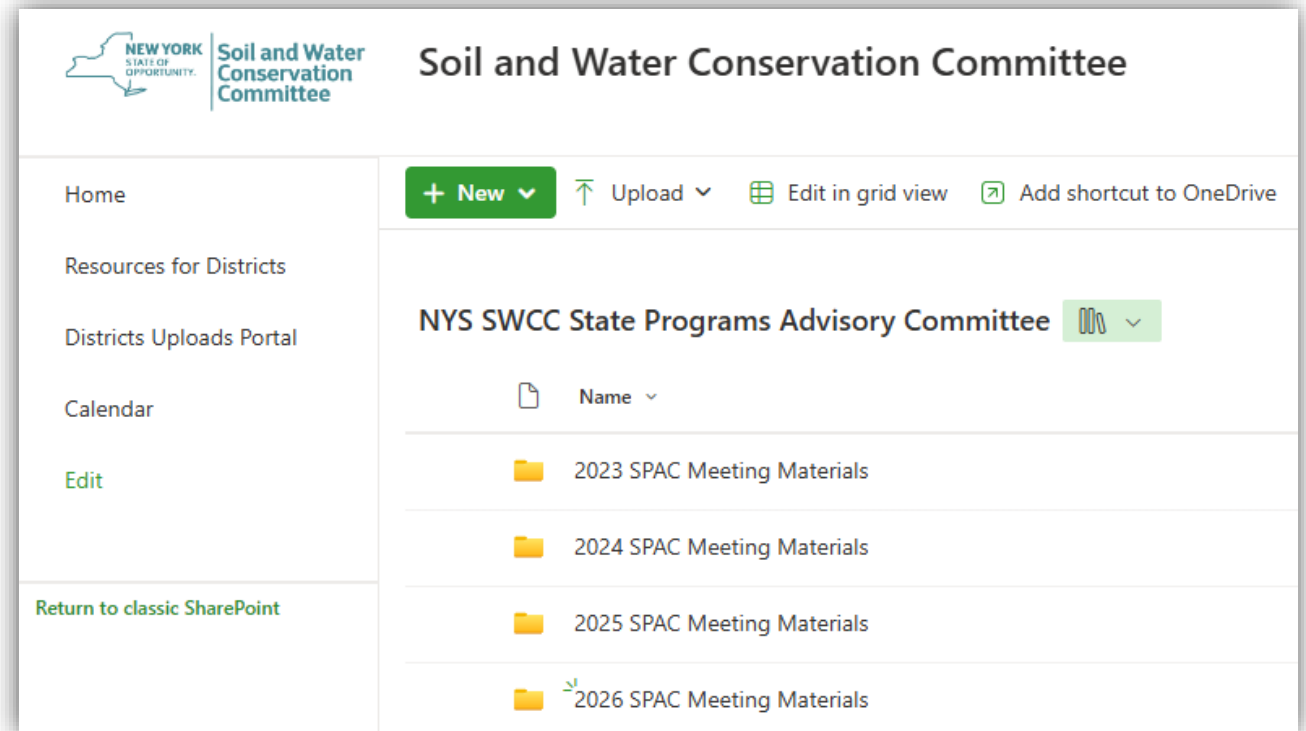
## Agendas, presentations, meeting recordings, and chat archives...

- SWCC SharePoint Site for Districts
  - Resources for Districts
    - NYS SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee

Greg Albrecht

607.229.4654

[greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov)



The screenshot displays the SharePoint interface for the NYS SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee. The top navigation bar includes the New York State logo and the committee name. The left sidebar contains navigation options: Home, Resources for Districts, Districts Uploads Portal, Calendar, and Edit. The main content area shows a list of folders for meeting materials from 2023 to 2026. The interface also features a '+ New' button, 'Upload', 'Edit in grid view', and 'Add shortcut to OneDrive' options.

Thank you!



Department of  
Agriculture and Markets  
Soil and Water  
Conservation Committee

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

Status Report

DECEMBER 16, 2025

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## Background:

### ■ **Sub-Committee, Circa 2015**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Operations Subcommittee meeting held May 2015 in Albany and via phone.
- Active during 2015 and 2016
- Activities focused on Operations Manual development and provided framework for current version

### ■ **SWCD Operation Manual, Circa 2017**

- Operations Manual released at June 2017 Managers Meeting
- Provides information and direction to assist Directors and employees to carry out the District's statutory responsibilities

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## **Committee Roles/Function**

- Provide a routine venue where operational issues can be explored
- Support District administrative effectiveness, strengthening statewide consistency
- Setting a framework of good operational practices for SWCD to model

## **Committee Objectives**

- Focused update on the current version of the SWCD Operations Manual
- Assist with development of polices relevant to SWCD Operations

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## Foreground:

### ■ 2024 - 2028 SWCC Strategic Plan

- SWCC Vision: that District operations are well managed and financially secure to effectively address local natural resource issues - **EVERGREEN**

## Strategic Goal 1 - Conservation District Operations

- Goal Objectives that align with operations subcommittee:
  - Increase access to funding for SWCDs to support District operations and staff capacity
  - Identify areas where SWCC can provide administrative support to District staff
  - Develop a District Operations Training Module based on prominent Operations Manual topics to provide enhanced District administration guidance
  - Recruit a State Aid to Districts Program Manager/District Operations Specialist to manage the State Aid to Districts program and provide additional support to Districts regarding operational issues

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## Strategic Goal 5 - Cooperative Conservation

Goal Objectives that align with operations subcommittee:

- **District Operations Sub-Committee**

- Hold regular District Operations subcommittee meetings to engage with SWCD partners to address operational related inquiries and matters, develop a list of required policies and policy templates for Districts, review and update the District Operations manual
- At annual organizational meeting, nominate NYS SWCC Voting Member to participate on the District Operations Sub-Committee

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## SWCD Operations Manual

- Released in 2017, update in 2019
  - Completed in collaboration between the State Committee, CDEA, and NYACD, with support from individual Districts
  - Information contained in the District Operations Manual provided for informational purposes only and is NOT intended to constitute legal advice.
  - Districts should additionally seek advice from various Departments/Agencies that oversee or issue directives and from their county attorney.

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## List of Sections

1. **Introduction**
2. **History of Conservation Districts**
3. **NY Laws and Rules Governing CD**
4. **Ethics**
5. **Contracts and Agreements**
6. **Public Meetings and Records**
7. **District Directors**
8. **Financial Management**
9. **Personnel Management**
10. **Risk Management**
11. **Planning**
12. **Programs and Fieldwork Policies**
13. **Information Technology and Cyber Security**
14. **Vehicles, Equipment, Buildings**
15. **Partner Relationships**
16. **List of Acronyms**
17. **Appendix**
18. **Index**

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## Updating the Manual – where to begin?

- **OUTDATED INFORMATION**

- The manual's publication date (June 2017) and last revision (September 30, 2019) mean it misses critical updates in legislation, funding, and programs and timelines

- **LEGAL & REGULATORY GAPS**

- Manual cites laws like SWCD Law and GML but does not account for potential amendments or new regulations
- Workplace policies (e.g., Workplace Violence Prevention, Right-to-Know Act) are outlined but may not reflect recent labor law changes

- **PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE MANUAL**

- Are SWCDS using it as intended?
- Many checklists and other aids are static and may not align with current best practices

# SWCD Operations Sub-Committee

## Focus After Operations Manual Update?

- **Common operational challenges expressed by Districts**
  - **Identify Emerging training or support needs**
- **Identify obscure successful practices that could be scaled statewide**
  - **Develop a District Operations Training Module**

**Other Areas of Interest?**

**Next Meeting**

January 29, 2026

1 PM – 3 PM

Via Webex

**Timeline?**

**Thanks!**



## New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

*Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide ongoing programs and services to conserve, enhance, and protect soil and water resources in communities.*

### CDEA Report: SWCC Meeting, December 16, 2025

- CDEA representatives attended or facilitated the following **meetings** and provided updates to ensure CDEA's support of and contribution to SWCD employees, the 4-Way Partnership, and beyond: November 17 – 18 CDEA meeting, November 19 NYACD meeting, December 4 4-Way Partnership meeting, November 24 and December 8 CDEA special meeting, December 9 CDEA Managers' meeting, December 11 New York State Invasive Species Advisory Committee meeting, December SPAC meeting.
- **4-Way Partnership Meeting** discussion items included 2026 NYACD Legislative Days, the NRCS Contribution / Cooperative Agreement process, pending NRCS IRA contracts, and Arc Pro licenses for SWCDs. We also discussed challenges that arise from the shortage of engineers. Bethany spoke with SUNY ESF, and she will spearhead a workgroup to discuss how to connect engineering students with SWCDs. I suggested that SWCD contact information be included on college websites under Careers in Engineering, and make an information packet for engineering students highlighting careers in SWCDs. SWCDs could also offer shadowing days to make connections with students and promote SWCD careers.
- The CDEA Board developed and adopted the draft **2026 budget** that will be discussed and voted on at the March Annual Meeting. Line items include an attorney, lobbyist, and 4-hour fund applications to support trainings.
- The **NYS DEC-Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training Committee** formed a work group of SWCD, SWCC, and DEC employees to update the permit section of the course, move in-person / live course trainings to the CDEA website, updated the course instructor list, and sent an email soliciting feedback from instructors on major updates to the course. The updated course will be rolled out during the 2026 Water Quality Symposium.
- The **NYS Fair and Farm Days Committees held** meetings to discuss and prepare for the 2026 events.
- The SFY 2026-27 budget cycle could be challenging, and the **Environmental Protection Fund** could be used to balance the budget deficit. I encouraged SWCDs and NYACD mail letters to Governor Hochul thanking her for supporting the EPF, and detailing how the EPF is essential to our conservation work.
- The Administrative Conference was held October 28 – 29 in Cazenovia, and the committee delivered another successful event. Thank you to the SWCC AEAs who attended and contributed to discussions.
- The **New York State Envirothon Committee** is preparing to offer high school students an incredible, immersive competition that will put their natural resource knowledge to the test as they take exams in categories: Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soil and Land Use, Wildlife, and this year's Current Issue Pollution: it Begins at Home.
- Upcoming events
  - **CDEA Meeting**  
January 21 – 22, 2025 • Hayatt Regency Rochester • 125 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604

- **Water Quality Symposium**  
March 10 – 13, 2026 • Hayatt Regency Rochester • 125 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604
- **CDEA Annual Meeting**  
March 11, 2026, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. • Hayatt Regency Rochester • 125 E Main St, Rochester, NY 14604
- **New York State Envirothon**  
May 27 – 28, 2026 • SUNY Cortland
- **SWCD booth at the Great New York State Fair**  
August 26 – September 7, 2026 • NYS Fairgrounds

Respectfully submitted,



Caitlin Stewart, CDEA President