

**OSWEGO
COUNTY**

2021 Annual Report

**SOIL AND WATER
Conservation District**

“Promoting, Protecting and Improving Natural Resources”



Celebrating 75 Years (1945—2020)

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager (4th from right) and Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician (3rd from right) accepted a proclamation in recognition of the 75th anniversary of the District which was presented on behalf of the Oswego County Legislature by the Economic Development and Planning Committee. Pictured from left are Paul House, District 8; Linda Lockwood, District 11; Committee Vice Chairwoman Mary E. Chesbro, District 10; Committee Chairman Tim Stahl, District 20, Joe Chairvolotti, OCSWCD; Erica Schreiner, OCSWCD; Edward Gilson, District 3; and Morris Sorbello, District 23.



This customer, Gordon P., was the 1st customer to place an order for our 50th annual tree and shrub program in 2021. It also happened to be his Birthday the day he picked up his order.



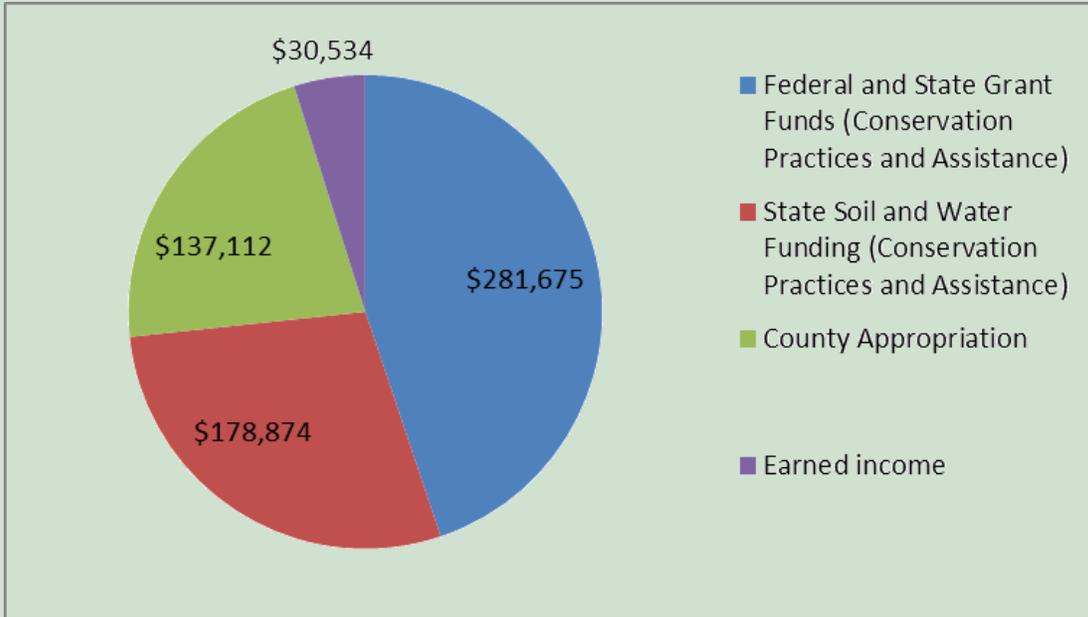
A mini Ronny the Raindrop® enjoys the New York State Fair. Ronny is the mascot of New York's Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



Office landscaping

2021 Funding Allocations

During 2021, the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD) leveraged **\$491,083** in funds for the **\$137,112 investment** from the county. This represents a **\$3.58 return** for each dollar in County appropriation funds to help meet the conservation needs of residents and municipalities in Oswego County.



Board of Directors

- Jeffrey Richards**, *Chairperson/Grange Representative*
- Linda Lockwood**, *Vice-Chairperson/Legislative Member*
- Tom Bonoffski**, *Farm Bureau Representative*
- Marry Ellen Chesbro**, *Legislative Member*
- Sandy Tuori-Bell**, *Member at Large*

District Staff

- Joe Chairvolotti**, *District Manager*
- Laura Romanowicz**, *District Treasurer*
- Erica Schreiner, Sr.**, *District Technician*
- Sarra Learned**, *Conservation Aide (Seasonal)*

Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District

3105 State Route 3

Fulton, NY 13069

(315) 592-9663

www.oswegosoilandwater.com

We hope that you enjoy reviewing the highlights of the district from a very productive year. If you have any questions about programs or services offered, please feel free to contact us.



Environmental Education

Plant-A-Tree

Participants in the 30th annual Plant-a-Tree (PAT) program received Norway spruce seedlings and educational materials. PAT was open to 4,287 County youth in grades kindergarten through five. Three hundred and five educators from thirteen county schools participated. The program is coordinated by the District and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County. It was funded by Exelon Generation and the Oswego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.



Left: Students at Lura Sharp Elementary School in Pulaski packed the tree seedlings individually for their classmates. **Right:** This student from Minetto Elementary School proudly displays the Plant-a-Tree tree seedling that he just planted.



Envirothon

Students from three county high schools participated in the virtual NY Statewide Regional Envirothon, an environmental competition about aquatics, current environmental issues, forestry, wildlife, and soils. This virtual event took the place of the Oswego County Envirothon, a hands-on environmental competition covering the same topics as above. Exelon Generation was the primary event sponsor.

Right: These students from G. Ray Bodley High School placed first for Oswego County teams at the virtual NY Statewide Regional Envirothon. They are shown here after completing a review session about wildlife. The student on the screen attended the review class virtually.



Lake Ontario fish

Lake Trout



Photo credit: USFWS, D. Gorsky



Photo credit: USGS, S. Furgal

Conservation Field Day

The annual Conservation Field Day, normally held in-person at Selkirk Shores State Park, was held virtually. Sixteen presenters submitted video presentations and activities for participants. Three hundred and eighty-six fifth graders took part in the event. Materials were shared with registered teachers through a Google Drive. **Left:** Photos clipped from presentations. 1. How to Age a Fish, and 2. Birds: The Piping Plover.

1

2



Forestry

Oswego County Reforestation Management

The District implements a multiple use forest management plan on 2,200 acres of County Reforestation property. **Right:** With input from this office, the Oswego County Department of Development, Tourism and Planning updated the design for the Reforestation properties. The OCSWCD then purchased 500 signs which staff began posting along the roadside first and then on each boundary line. Several hundred signs were installed with more needed in future years. This activity along with boundary maintenance identifies the property for the public's use and assists in preventing accidental timber trespass. **Left:** A stream crossing planned and then marked in the field by staff in order to allow access to a remote forest stand for harvest. This crossing required a permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation obtained by this office and will entail a temporary bridge supplied and installed by the contractor during the harvest operations. The orange flags mark the future location of the trail and bridge, and the trees painted in blue will be removed as part of the harvest to facilitate access.



Forestry Technical Assistance

Right: The District provided forestry assistance to more than 80 forest landowners and municipalities in 2021. OCSWCD was contacted for advice in the following categories: forest management, insect or disease identification and control, wildlife habitat improvement, forestry or trail Best Management Practices, urban forestry and invasive species. The program plays an important role in promoting sustainable forestry practices in Oswego County. This photo shows trees that have been marked for a participant in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. District staff assisted this landowner with laying out practices in their forest and they will begin implementation in 2022.



Forest Management Planning

Left: The District developed 6 management plans for landowners across Oswego County on a total of 533 acres of forested land. Staff conducted an inventory of resources and analyzed the data for each property. The results of the analyses formed the basis for the management plans produced. Each document developed includes the identification and description of natural resources on the property, recommendations and options available for management of those resources, a schedule of management activities, invasive species information and several maps detailing forest stands, water features, roads, soils and topographic features. The photo shows District Forestry Intern, John Early, standing next to a large oak tree while conducting the fieldwork for a plan.

Agriculture

AEM - Agricultural Environmental Management



AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers operate environmentally sound and economically viable businesses. Site specific farm plans are developed for participants by Oswego County SWCD staff and contracted planners. Using the priority issues identified in the plans, District staff apply for state and federal grants to improve and correct the issues.

Left: Grant funds are used for Best Management Practice projects such as installing a

Heavy Use Area Protection System which is a system for the interception, collection, and safe treatment of runoff water from the barnyard. This helps protect and improve water quality. The tall corner walls on this concrete pad barnyard serve as an area where the farmer can push manure and easily scoop it up with a tractor bucket.

Right: All the rainwater/snowmelt leaving the concrete pad passes through two wire mesh screens before emptying to a grassy vegetated filter area. The purpose of the screens is to collect any solids.



Public Outreach

- Empire Farm Days: booth with SWCDs statewide
- Evidn Research Project: provided information about farmer participation in Best Management Practice programs
- New York State Fair: booth with SWCDs statewide
- Oswego County 4-H: Winter Tree ID presentation
- Oswego County Progressive Agriculture Home and Farm Safety Day: Safety in the Outdoors presentation
- State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry Careers at SWCDs presentation
- Forest Management Presentation at the New York Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting

Presentations

Educational Booths

Outreach



Technical Assistance

Right: Water quality and general technical assistance was provided to more than 140 landowners and municipalities throughout Oswego County in 2021. Assistance was offered regarding shoreline and stream bank erosion, drainage concerns, stream corridor management, flooding, pond construction and maintenance, culvert repair, bridge replacement, wetland and nuisance beaver issues, plant identification, permit requirements, available natural resource programs, government or private services, water and soil testing, aerial photos, property mapping and soils information. District staff conducted site visits in most cases, with phone calls or emails used to follow up with individuals. An array of residents contacted OCSWCD in 2021 for guidance including agricultural producers, recreational users, municipalities, and rural, urban/suburban residents and riparian landowners.



Before



After



Left: Throughout 2021 District staff worked collaboratively with the Mexico Trail Riders, a local snowmobile club, on the replacement of a trail bridge in the Town of Schroepel. This office assisted in the pursuit of state and federal permits for the replacement of this dilapidated crossing that was causing flooding. The site was on a protected stream and also considered to be within regulated wetlands by both the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Staff collected measurements, worked with the club on developing a design and completed an application which was submitted to both regulatory agencies. The necessary permits were issued within approximately five months and the club members were able to begin implementation in September of 2021. The completion of this project prior to the snowmobiling season resulted in maintained trail access, increased safety of the crossing and improved water quality as bank stabilization measures were also included.

Right: The District was asked by the NYS DEC to work with a landowner on a stormwater related issue. The landowner had a large sand pile that was unprotected and material was migrating off-site. This had the potential to cause sediment increase in a protected stream, which can have negative impacts on salmon and trout populations. District staff recommended that large concrete blocks be placed at the base of the pile where the sand was eroding. The red area in the photo outlines the amount of sand that was prevented from escaping after one storm event.



Invasive Species Programs

Giant Hogweed

Right: Giant hogweed not only has an ecological impact, but also is a threat to human health. The sap from this invasive can induce hyper-sensitivity to sunlight and cause severe burns. The District has led a program for several years to control this noxious weed and in 2021 approximately 60 sites were visited for control. The majority of these sites located throughout Oswego County were treated with herbicides. Many others were monitored with no control efforts needed. This program was implemented using State Soil and Water funding.

Before



After



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), an invasive forest pest, was confirmed in Oswego County at Camp Hollis and Independence Park in 2021. This aggressive insect causes the decline and eventual mortality of Eastern hemlock trees resulting in ecological, economic and aesthetic impacts as well as safety issues. The District participated in a survey of the infested area that the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) arranged. The information collected was utilized in the planning process and this office worked collaboratively with the Oswego County Legislature and Oswego City-County Youth Bureau for approval to begin control work. In

September of 2021, District staff selected approximately 100 hemlock trees for treatment based on size, health and proximity to hiking trails or parking areas. Pesticide treatment was performed by a qualified applicator in mid-October and provides both immediate and residual control. Financial support from Oswego County and State Soil and Water funding was utilized to conduct this work. The photos show the white cottony masses indicating the presence of HWA (**Left**) and numbered disks placed at the base of each tree to assist in monitoring the infestation (**Right**).



Water Chestnut

Right: OCSWCD arranged for the herbicide treatment of approximately 120 acres of dense water chestnut patches. Applications were conducted in several locations in early August. Generally, this work is conducted in July, but the Oswego River was closed for approximately 2 weeks due to high water conditions. This split photo shows a patch of water chestnuts before treatment on the top and about 3 weeks after treatment on the bottom. Repeated applications are necessary over a 3 to 5-year period to reduce the chestnuts populations to densities that can be controlled through hand pulling. The program was supported with State Soil and Water and Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLOWPA) funding as well as county appropriation.



In addition to herbicide treatment, the District also employed 4 college interns for a period of 9 weeks during the summer to physically hand pull water chestnuts. The team removed almost 15,000 lbs of chestnut plants from the

Before

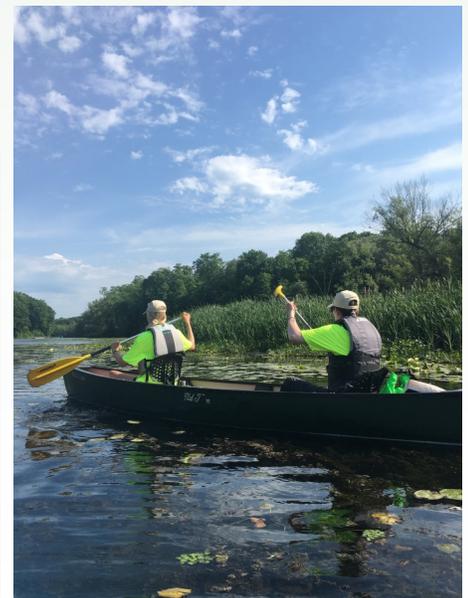
After



Oswego River as well as other waterbodies throughout Oswego County. The program was supported with State Soil and Water and FLOWPA funding as well as county appropriation.

Left: Before and after images of a population on the Oswego River that was hand pulled by SWCD interns in 2021.

Right: Oswego County SWCD interns on the water surveying for water chestnuts.



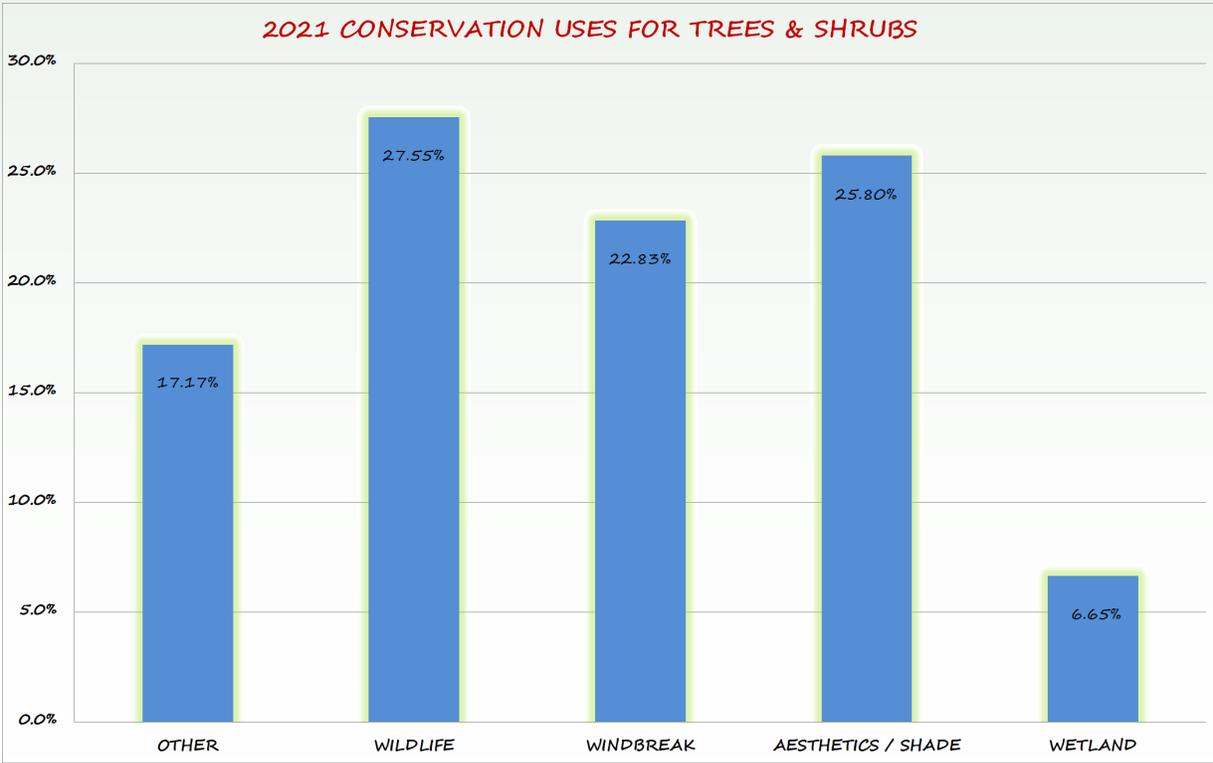


Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Left: Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a mosquito borne illness, has had a known presence in Oswego County in past years. This area is rich in water resources, especially wetlands, causing mosquito populations to thrive and allow this disease to become established given the right conditions. Although residents can take certain precautions to avoid mosquito bites, control measures for individual homeowners are limited. In 2021 the District provided 550 larvicide kits, also called dunk kits, to homeowners, which were available at our office. Each package of larvicide contains 24 water soluble packets that are intended to be placed in any containerized water (i.e. bird baths, rain barrels, etc.).

50th Annual Tree and Shrub Program

Right: In 2021, the District offered 22 varieties of trees and shrubs to the public in the spring tree and shrub sale. Over 8,000 trees were planted for a variety of reasons including reforestation, shade, erosion control, wind and snow breaks and wildlife habitat improvement.



Tree pick-up promotion

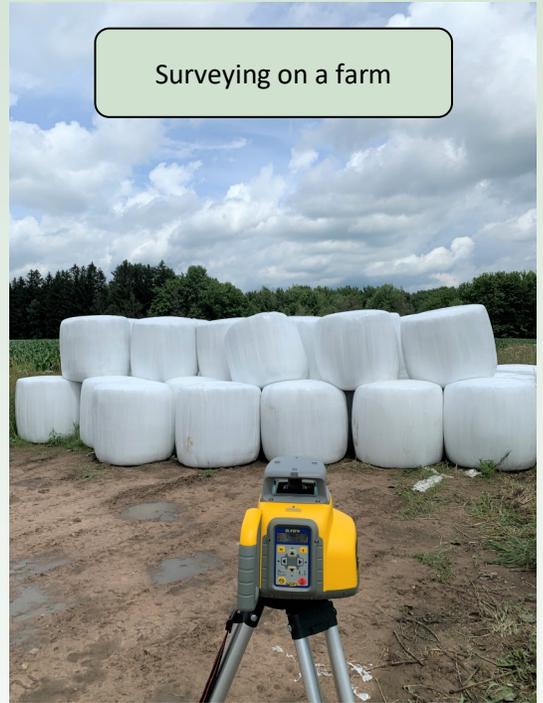
Dunk kit promotion



Beaver activity on county reforestation property in Parish



Surveying on a farm



Cranberry harvest time in Oswego County. These photos were taken in Williamstown in October. When the cranberries are ready to harvest, the once dry field is flooded. A machine (not pictured) is driven through the field to stir up the water, like an egg beater. The churning removes the berries, which have an internal air pocket, from the vines. The berries float to the surface and are corralled, loaded in a truck, and sent to an Ocean Spray processing facility.

Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District

3105 State Route 3

Fulton, NY 13069

Phone: (315) 592-9663

Fax: (315) 592-9595

www.oswegosoilandwater.com

Connect with us on Facebook @OSWEGOSWCD

