

# 2022 Annual Report

"Promoting, Protecting and Improving Natural Resources"





## From the Field



Cow



Monarch butterfly



Dragonfly



Great blue heron



Garter snake



Painted turtle



Eastern Red-backed  
salamander



Honey bee

### Cover photos from left to right:

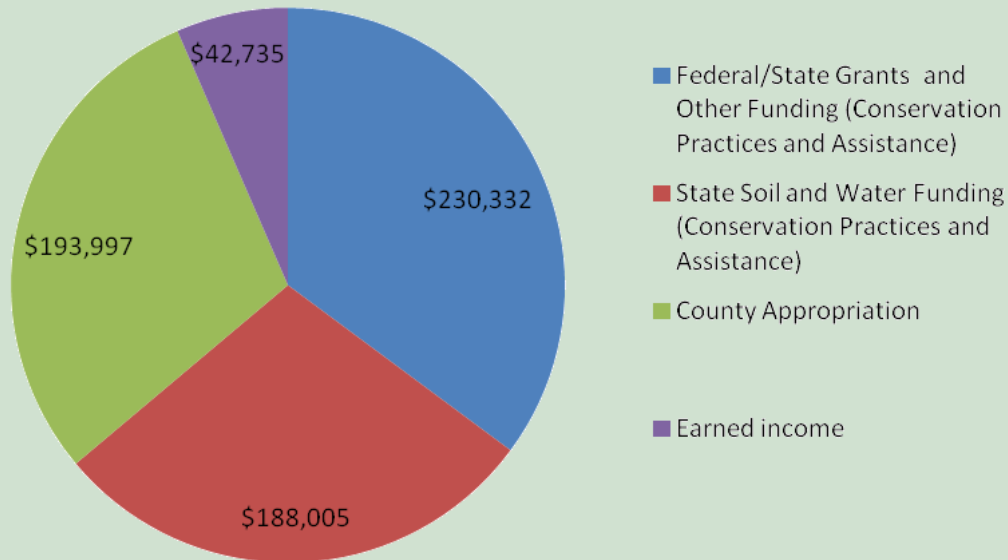
1. May - North Shore Sportsmen's Association, Constantia
2. September - Students learning about kayaks and water safety at the annual Conservation Field Day.
3. August - Intern holding up a water chestnut rosette from Rice Creek.
4. July - Trail at Independence Park, Oswego
5. November - District manager, Joe Chairvolotti, measuring diameter for a forest management plan.
6. October - Cattle photographed during a field visit.



Snapping turtle

## 2022 Funding Allocations

During 2022, the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District (OCSWCD) **leveraged \$461,072** in funds for the **\$193,997 investment** from the county. This represents a **\$2.38 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**, *District Technician*

### Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District

3105 State Route 3

Fulton, NY 13069

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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.





## 2022 District Achievements

- **1** New Staff Member (Sarrah Learned, Photo A)
- **1** Board Member Who Achieved 20 Years of Service (Jeff Richards, Photo G)
- **4,780** Trees and Shrubs Sold
- **437** Acres in Forest Management Plans for Landowners (Photo E)
- **\$2.38** Return for Each Dollar From County
- **56** Sites Surveyed for Giant Hogweed
- **960** Mosquito Dunk Kits Distributed to Landowners
- **36,149** Pounds of Water Chestnuts Hand-Pulled (Photo B)
- **150** Acres of Water Chestnuts Treated
- **38** Ag Land Value Assessments Completed
- **152** Trees Tagged, and Treated for Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Monitoring (Photo C)
- **30** Acres of farmland marked for a timber harvest
- **344** Landowners and municipalities Assisted
- **24** Farmers Assisted Through the Agricultural Environmental Management Program (Photo F)
- **6** Summer Interns
- The District Worked with **681** of K-12 Students
- **4,983** Trees Distributed Through Plant-A-Tree (Photo D)
- **39** Bluebird houses and Bat Boxes Sold





## Environmental Education

### Plant-A-Tree

In April, participants in the 31<sup>st</sup> annual Plant-a-Tree (PAT) program received Norway spruce seedlings and educational materials. PAT was open to 4,983 County youth in grades pre-kindergarten through five. Two hundred eighty-four educators from fourteen county schools participated. The program is coordinated by the District and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County. It was funded by Constellation and the Oswego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs.



**Left:** Plant-a-Tree program sponsors met with fifth grade students from Mexico Elementary School to deliver tree seedlings and educational materials.

**Top:** Thank you note from one of the students who received a tree and educational materials through the annual Plant-a-Tree program.

### Envirothon

Students from Altmar-Parish-Williamstown, Central Square, G. Ray Bodley (Fulton), Oswego, and Pulaski high schools participated in a hands-on environmental competition about aquatics, current environmental issues, forestry, wildlife, and soils. The event was held at the North Shore Sportsmen's Association in Constantia. Students from Oswego High School placed first, G. Ray Bodley second, and Central Square third. Constellation and the Indeck-Oswego Energy Center were the primary sponsors.

**Right:** Students from Oswego High School placed first at the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Oswego County Envirothon. They are shown here with their team advisor (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) and the many awards they earned.



### Conservation Field Day

**Left:** At Oswego County's 34<sup>th</sup> annual Conservation Field Day at Selkirk Shores State Park, students learned about the duties of a forest ranger from Jacob Murphy of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The event was sponsored by the Oswego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and Selkirk Shores. Each of the twelve classes in attendance traveled to five different natural resource related presentations.



## Forestry

### Oswego County Reforestation Management

The District continues to implement a multiple use forest management plan on 2,200 acres of County Reforestation property. **Right:** In 2022, District staff administered and monitored 1 active harvest on Reforestation property in the Town of Parish. The sale covered approximately 35 acres and consisted of a thinning to improve growth rates in

one forest stand and patch cutting to establish regeneration in another. District staff monitored the harvest operation to ensure site integrity was maintained and impacts to the residual trees were minimal. This photo shows a tree marked with double yellow rings to be left in a patch cut in order to produce seed and establish desirable tree seedlings.

**Left:** The District began marking a timber sale on approximately 35 acres of Reforestation property, which was based on a sustainable harvest prescription. The treatments included a thinning in a red pine stand to improve growth rates and a shelterwood treatment in a mixed pine stand to initiate a regeneration response. The marking will be completed in 2023 and the timber will be sold through a competitive bid process.



### Forestry Technical Assistance

**Right:** The District provided forestry assistance to more than 75 forest landowners and municipalities in 2022. Staff were 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, layout of practices for federal forestry programs and invasive species. The program plays an important role in promoting sustainable forestry practices in Oswego County. The photo shows the classic “D” shaped holes caused by the emergence of emerald ash borers as well as the damage from woodpeckers searching for the larvae. This tree was 1 of 30 dead or dying ash removed by a single landowner and the District was contacted to recommend replacement trees to be planted.



### Forest Management Planning

**Below:** The District developed or updated 3 management plans for landowners in Oswego County on a total of 437 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. This photo shows District Manager, Joe Chairvolotti, using a prism to determine which trees to obtain measurements for at a single inventory point. The data collected during an inventory provides composition, size class, stocking details and other data regarding each forest stand on a given property.





## 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 implement Best Management Practices

(BMPs). **Photos:** District staff surveyed for the design of three Best Management Practice projects that are scheduled for 2023. These projects will protect and improve water quality.



## Public Outreach

- Agricultural Literacy Week: volunteer reader at a local elementary school
- Biological Regionalism: interactive booth at Rice Creek Field Station in support of artist Alberto Rey's gallery exhibition about the history and present condition of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario
- Day in the Life of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Watershed Student Summit: presentation about water quality
- Empire Farm Days: booth with SWCDs statewide
- Great Lakes Basin Bin: host site for educational materials
- New York State Envirothon: volunteer at event
- New York State Fair: booth with SWCDs statewide
- Oswego County Bee Keepers: presentation about District services
- Oswego County Beef Producers: presentation about District services
- Oswego County Fair: booth
- Oswego County Progressive Agriculture Home and Farm Safety Day: presentation titled Safety in the Outdoors
- Oswego County Rotary: presentation about District services
- Volney Elementary School Earth Day: presentation titled Animal Tracks and More!





## Technical Assistance

**Right:** Water quality and general technical assistance was provided to more than 265 landowners and municipalities throughout Oswego County in 2022. Assistance was offered regarding shoreline and stream bank erosion, drainage concerns, stream corridor management, flooding, pond construction and maintenance, culvert repair, 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 2022 for guidance including agricultural producers, recreational users,



municipalities, and rural, urban/suburban residents and riparian landowners.



**Left:** This picture shows active erosion occurring on the Oneida River. In this case, District staff offered technical advice with regards to a solution and contacted the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as well as the US Army Corps of Engineers on behalf of the landowner to determine allowable materials and practices as well as necessary permits.

**Right:** Before and after photos of a culvert on State Route 104 in the Town of Scriba. A landowner contacted this office for assistance as they were experiencing flooding and also wanted to report a deteriorating culvert crossing. District staff initiated communications with the NYS Department of Transportation office for this region and within two months, a crew constructed the new headwall and wingwalls visible on the right.

Before



After



**Left:** This photo shows a pond experiencing algae growth. In this case, District staff offered assistance in identifying potential sources of nutrient loading, as well as offered recommendations for maintenance.



### North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative Training

This office hosted a North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC) training, which was coordinated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This 2-day course held on October 6 and 7 covered the non-tidal aquatic connectivity protocol for the assessment of road stream crossings (culverts and bridges). A short presentation was provided to approximately 15 participants and then the remainder of the time was spent learning the protocol in the field with experienced trainers from The Nature Conservancy and NYS DEC. Three Oswego County SWCD staff received their certifications and plan on conducting assessments in the future. This work can lead to projects and assist with improving stream connectivity and water quality in Oswego County.

**Right:** Oswego County SWCD staff members, Erica Schreiner (L) and Joe Chairvolotti (R), assessing a culvert during the training.



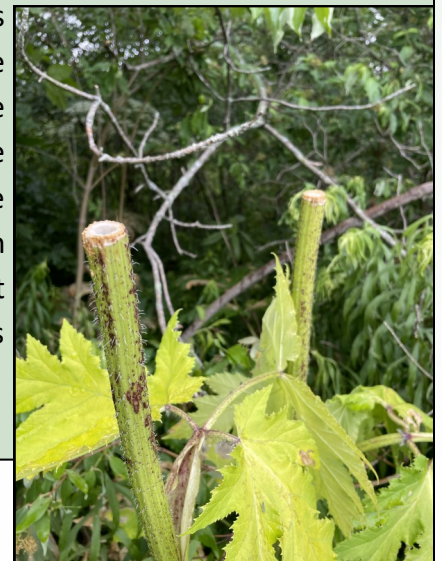
### Invasive Species Programs



#### Giant Hogweed

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 2022, approximately 60 sites were visited for control. Approximately 50% of these sites located throughout Oswego County were treated with herbicides. Many others were monitored with no control efforts needed. The photo on the **left** shows a plant that has been

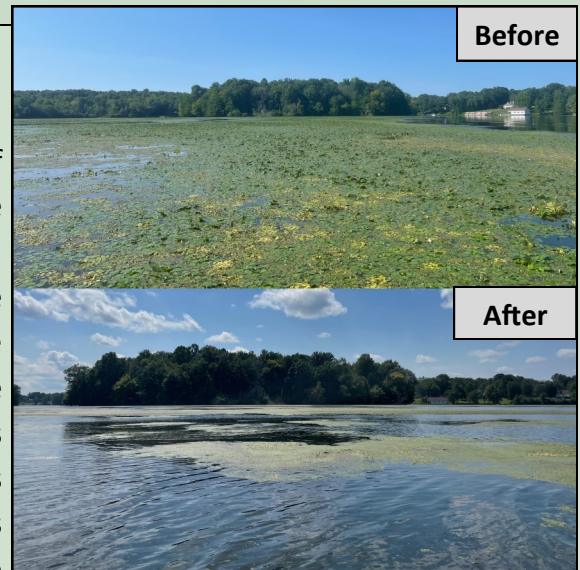
treated with herbicide effectively and the photo on the **right** is of a plant that received flower head removal to prevent the seed from falling. This program was implemented using State Soil and Water funding.





## Water Chestnut

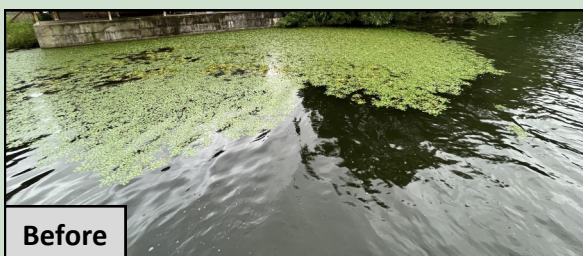
**Right:** OCSWCD arranged for the herbicide treatment of approximately 150 acres of dense water chestnut patches on the Oswego River. An initial application was conducted in July with a follow-up treatment completed in August. In addition to the airboat being utilized to apply the herbicides, an agricultural drone was also employed for the first time. The contractor, Chase Enterprises, spent months navigating a rigorous permitting process and completing the necessary training. The split photo here shows a before and after image where the drone was utilized. The results are exceptional, but repeated applications are still necessary 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 (FOLLOWPA) funding as well as county appropriation.



**Left:** In addition to herbicide treatment, the District also employed 6 college interns for a period of 9 weeks during the summer to physically hand pull water chestnuts while riding in a canoe or small motor boat. The team removed almost 37,000 lbs of chestnut plants from the Oswego River as well as other waterbodies throughout Oswego County. The program was supported with State Soil and Water and Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) funding as well as county appropriation. Pictured here are District Interns, Ella Moody (L) and Shawna Mulvihill (R), hand pulling a small population of water chestnuts in the Fulton Marina.



**Below:** Before and after photos of a chestnut population that was hand pulled on the Oswego River.





### Hemlock Woolly Adelgid

**Right:** Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA), an invasive forest pest, was confirmed in Oswego County 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. In September of 2022, District staff selected and marked approximately 150 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, which provides both immediate and residual control. Financial support from Oswego County and State Soil and Water funding were utilized to conduct this work. The photos show the white cottony masses indicating the presence of HWA and a numbered disk installed at the base of a hemlock tree to assist in monitoring and controlling the infestation.



### Emerald Ash Borer Biocontrol Release

**Left:** The District assisted the St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) with the release of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) biocontrol wasps. These wasps were released in different stages and with varying methods at SUNY Oswego Rice Creek Field Station. The intent is to establish a population to control EAB, but future monitoring will be needed to determine success.



Photo Credit: SLELO PRISM

### Eastern Equine Encephalitis

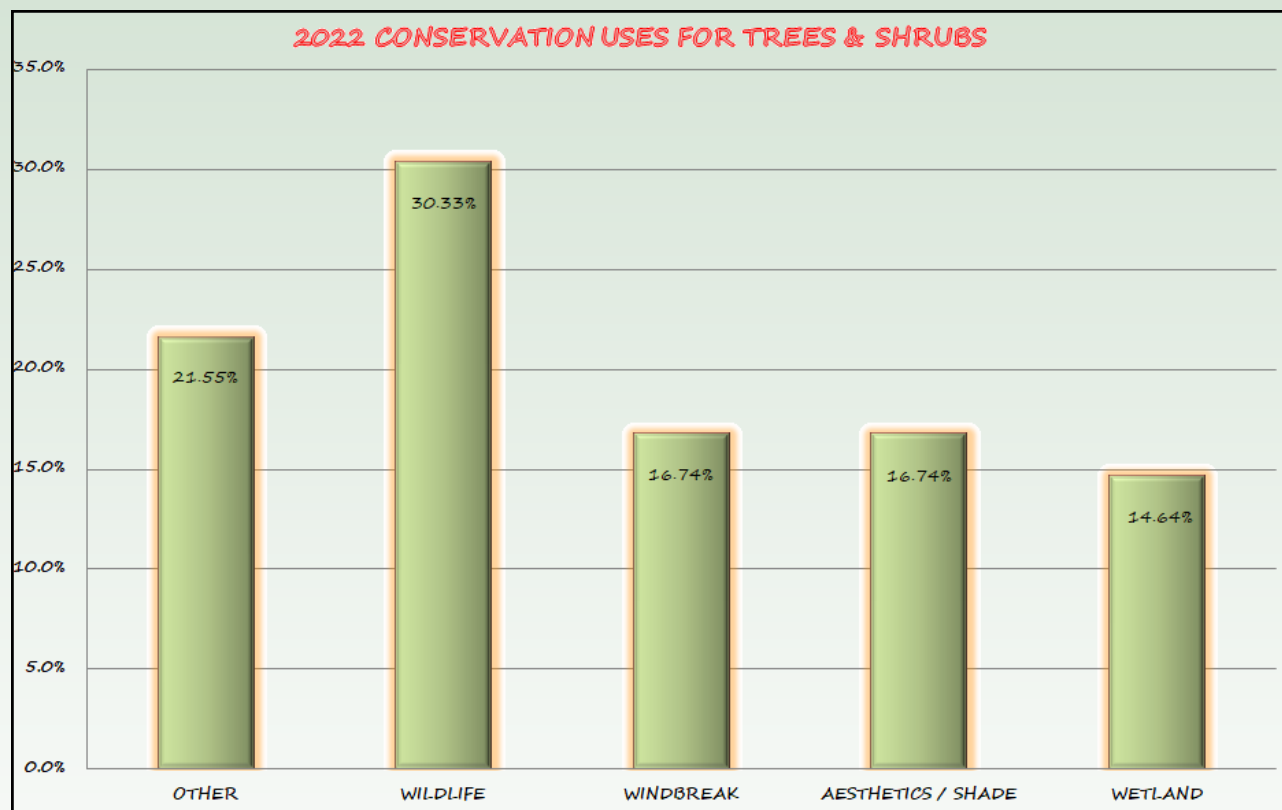
**Right:** Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), a mosquito borne illness, has had a known presence in Oswego County in past years. This area is rich in water resources, especially wetlands, causing mosquito populations to thrive and allow this disease to become established given the right conditions. Although residents can take certain precautions to avoid mosquito bites, control measures for individual homeowners are limited. In 2022 the District provided approximately 1,000 larvicide kits to homeowners, which were available at our office and delivered to municipal buildings as well. 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.).





## 51st Annual Tree and Shrub Program

In 2022, the District offered 23 varieties of trees and shrubs to the public in the spring tree and shrub sale. Almost 4,800 trees were planted for a variety of reasons including reforestation, shade, erosion control, wind and snow breaks and wildlife habitat improvement.







Mini Ronny Raindrop<sup>®</sup> checks out the Great New York State Fair: Dairy Building (**Right**), NYS Commissioner of Agriculture Richard Ball and NYS Governor Kathy Hochul (**Left**).



District Manager, Joe Chairvolotti participated as an instructor for the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Forestry course at the Conservation Skills Workshop (CSW) along with Ron Bush with the State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, Pat Crast of Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District and Kristin Ballou from Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District. The CSW offers a series of trainings with a focus on various conservation skills to Soil and Water



District staff from across New York State. This course in particular was intended to teach District employees about the AEM process as it relates to forestry, how to fill out a tier 2 assessment form and about the various Best Management Practices that can be installed in the woodlots of agricultural operations to improve water quality. The photo on the **right** shows a skid trail being graded, which is one of the practices taught during the course.



In October, a District staff member participated as an instructor at the Biological Water Quality Assessment station as part of the Day in the Life of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Watershed Student Summit. The station was positioned along the Little Salmon River in the Town of Mexico (**Below**) and students looked at live macroinvertebrates (**Right**).





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