

**OSWEGO
COUNTY**

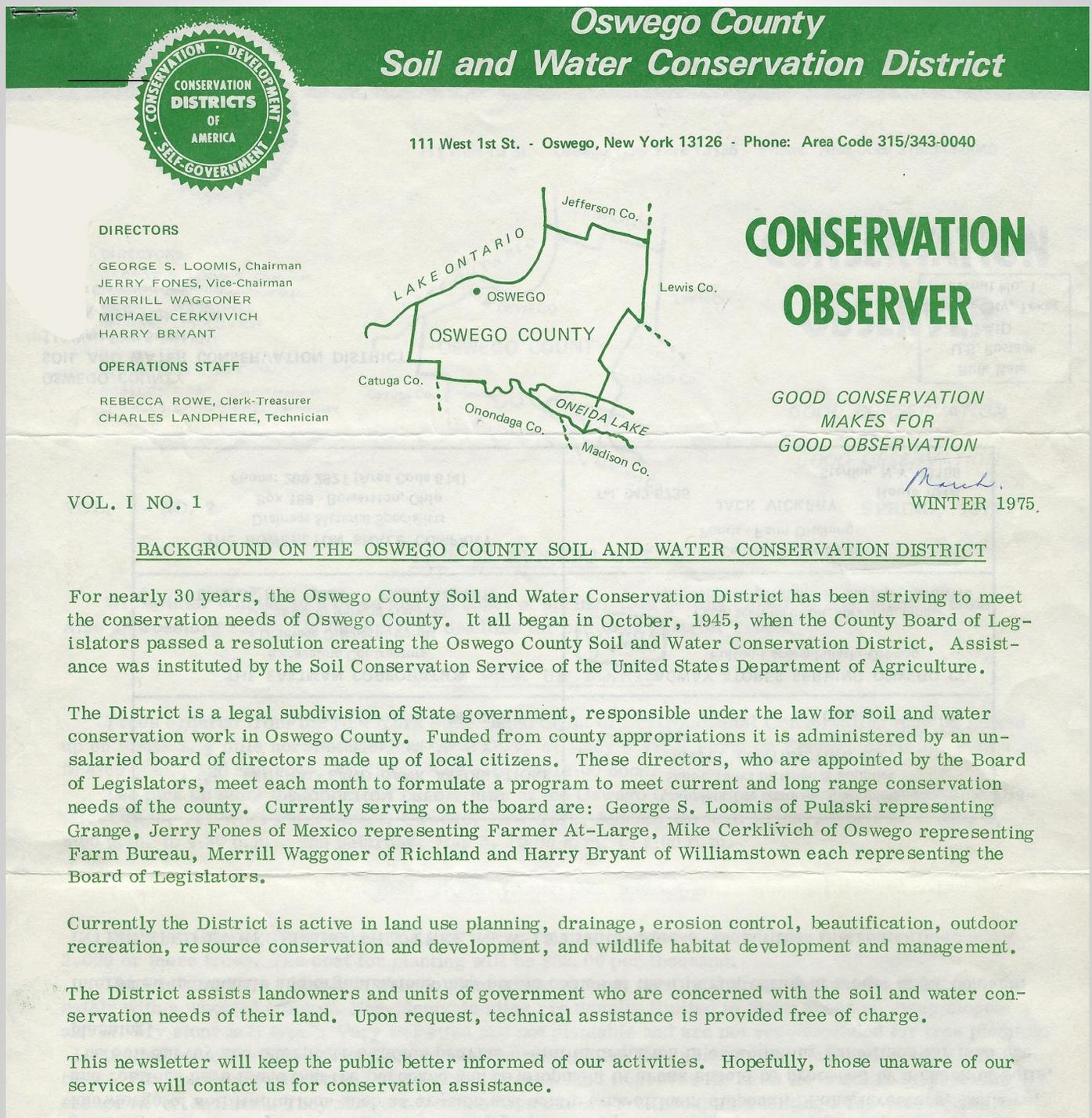
**SOIL AND WATER
Conservation District**

2020 Annual Report

"Promoting, Protecting and Improving Natural Resources"

75 Years Serving Oswego County

The Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District was formed on October 4, 1945. The March/winter newsletter 1975, a portion of which can be found below, is the oldest newsletter in the District files.



Cindy Williams

Oswego County Soil and Water
Conservation District

District Secretary/Treasurer
May 19, 1986 ~ May 29, 2020

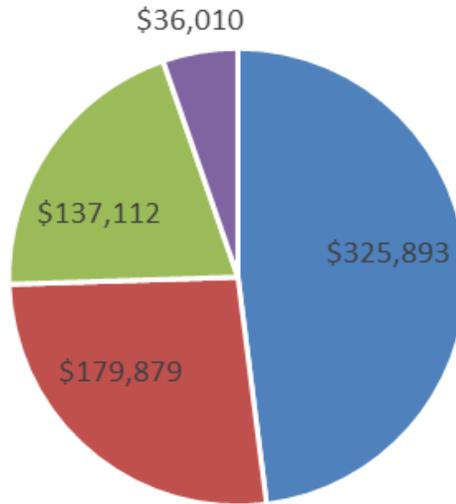
34 years & 10 days

thank you for
your service



2020 Funding Allocations

During 2020, the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District leveraged **\$541,782** in funds for the **\$137,112 investment** from the county. This represents a **\$3.95 return** for each dollar in County appropriation funds to help meet the conservation needs of residents and municipalities in Oswego County.



- Federal and State Grant Funds (Conservation Practices and Assistance)
- State Soil and Water Funding (Conservation Practices and Assistance)
- County Appropriation
- Earned income

Board of Directors

Jeffrey Richards, *Chairperson/Grange Representative*

Linda Lockwood, *Vice-Chairperson/Legislative Member*

Tom Bonoffski, *Farm Bureau Representative*

Mary 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*

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

Right: Participants in the 29th annual Plant-a-Tree (PAT) program hold their Norway spruce seedlings. District staff made no-contact deliveries to participating schools and the trees were most often distributed through the lunch pick-up/delivery that was put in place when schools were fully closed at the start of COVID-19 restrictions. PAT was open to 1,500 County youth in grades kindergarten through five. 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.



Envirothon

Oswego County Legislature



In Recognition of

**NY Statewide Regional Envirothon
First Place for Oswego County Teams
Altmar Parish Williamstown High School**

In Witness Whereof, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed, the Seal of Oswego County, NY, on this, the 13th day of August, 2020

James Weatherup, Chairman of the Legislature

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.

Students from Altmar Parish Williamstown High School placed first for Oswego County teams. **Left:** In August, the students and their advisors were recognized in a virtual presentation with a proclamation by members of the Economic Development and Planning Committee of the Oswego County Legislature.



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 twenty-five fifth graders took part in the event. Materials were shared with registered teachers through a Google Drive. **Right:** The photos of Trapping as a Wildlife Management Tool and Bird Watching and Nature Exploration were clipped from videos.



Oswego County Reforestation Management

Forestry



The District implements a multiple use forest management plan on 2,200 acres of County Reforestation property.

Right: Seasonal District employee, Alex Cooley, marks a tree as part of the 2020 timber sale. Alex was receiving training from District Manager, Joe

Chairvolotti, on sustainably marking a forest stand for harvest. This particular tree is being marked for removal for the installation of a skid trail, which will be used to extract timber. The District marks each harvest according to a sustainable forestry

prescription, and plans the operational aspects as well. One timber sale was planned and marked in 2020 on a total of approximately 40 acres of hemlock-hardwoods in Parish. A competitive bid was conducted for an income of \$10,200.

Left: Bailey Lumber conducts harvest clean-up in the spring of 2020. The contractors are required to grade all skid trails and log landings, and repair or install any Best Management Practices to maintain site integrity and water quality.



Technical Assistance

The District provided forestry assistance to approximately 57 forest landowners and municipalities in the following categories:

- Forest Management
- Insect/Disease Identification & Control
- Forest Management Plan Development
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Forestry/Trail Best Management Practices
- Urban Forestry
- Invasive Species Outreach

Forestry assistance plays an important role in promoting sustainable forestry practices in Oswego County.



Forest Rehabilitation

Left: A recent tree planting in a heavily degraded forest stand on a private property. This area was intensely logged 10-15 years ago and is now enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), which is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). District staff, in cooperation with NRCS and the landowner, marked this woodlot applying a timber stand improvement treatment and also created small openings. These areas are where the landowner planted a variety of hardwoods, visible in this photo. Tree tubes and weed mats were utilized in order to adhere to NRCS requirements and increase the survival rate. This rehabilitation project improved the sustainability of a degraded forest stand as well as enhanced the wildlife habitat.





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 a barnyard or concentrated livestock area. This helps protect and improve water quality.



Presentations
Educational Booths
Outreach



The year began with a presentation at the Oswego County 4-H Winter Weekend and a career day booth (**above**) at the School of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse. Shortly thereafter, COVID-19 hit. After that our outreach efforts were virtual. We used various virtual platforms to address the needs of, and interact with, members of the public. We also instituted a detailed set of procedures to allow us to conduct field work like site visits in a safe manner. We look forward to the time when we can conduct presentations, educational booths, and outreach in-person.

Technical Assistance



Below Right: Water quality and general technical assistance was provided to more than 130 landowners and municipalities throughout Oswego County in 2020. Assistance was offered regarding shoreline and stream bank erosion, drainage concerns, stream corridor management, flooding, pond construction, rehabilitation or maintenance, culvert repair, wetland and nuisance beaver issues, leaking water supply pipes, sink holes, 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 the individuals. COVID-19 protocols were followed on each visit between staff and the landowners. An array of residents contacted OCSWCD in 2020 for guidance including agricultural producers, recreational users, municipalities, and rural, urban/suburban residents and riparian landowners.



Left: A Town Highway Department in Oswego County contacted the District early in the summer of 2020 regarding a large culvert that was in need of

repairs and resulting in a road closure. Town staff had been in contact with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), but were in need of assistance with the permitting process, if one was necessary. District staff immediately conducted an environmental review on the stream and the area of concern, and proceeded to discuss the case with the DEC. The District was

asked to conduct a site visit, obtain photographs and offer water quality guidance. The repairs the highway department were considering were reasonable, but specific steps were necessary to alleviate the possibility of sediment increases downstream. Recommendations were provided on-site and all of the required data was collected. Once the information was assembled, it was sent to the DEC for review and further discussions were held between them and District staff. It was determined that the project was environmentally sound and a letter of non-jurisdiction was issued. This allowed the highway department to follow through with repairs and re-open the road, alleviating the safety concerns associated with a deteriorating culvert and eroding road bed, visible in the accompanying photograph.

Tree and Shrub Program

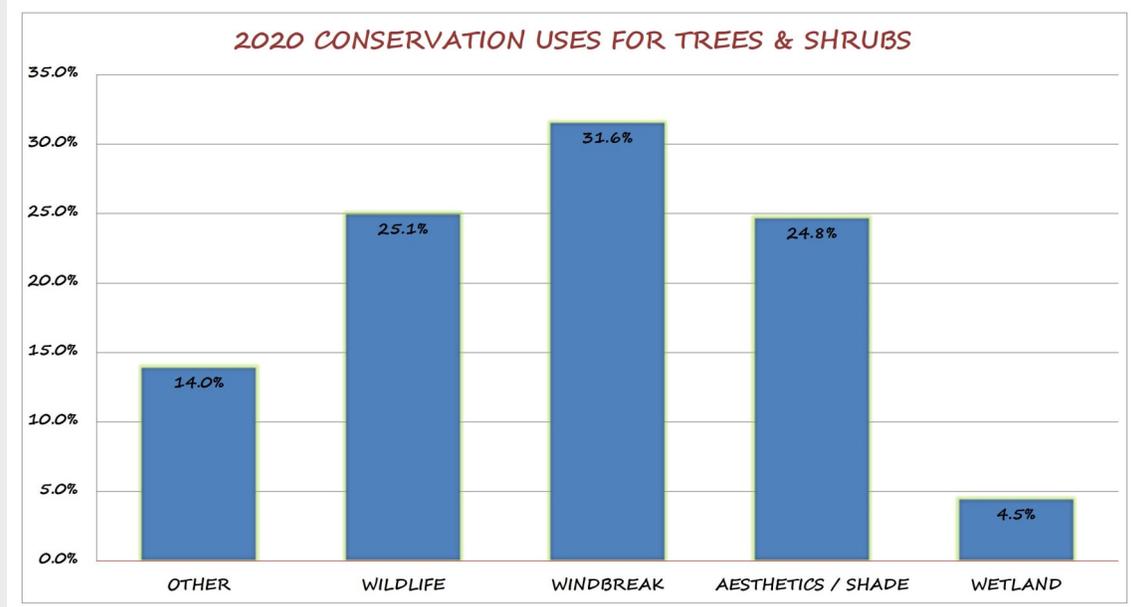


49th Annual Tree and Shrub Program

In 2020, the District offered 21 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. **Above Right:** Orders assembled for pick up at the 49th Annual Tree and Shrub Program.



Right: summary of our 2020 tree & shrub sales



Mosquito Control

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. The District provided larvicide kits for 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, rain gutters, etc.).



Invasive Species Program

Left: An ash tree damaged by Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). As EAB larvae feed inside of the bark of a tree, serpentine (S shaped) galleries are formed, which are visible here. This photo, taken by an Oswego County landowner, allowed District staff to determine that EAB was present on their property. Guidance was offered to the landowner on salvaging the infected trees and managing the residual forest. EAB was originally confirmed in New York State in 2009 and Oswego County in 2018.

Invasive Species Program

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 2020 approximately 60 sites were visited for control. The majority of these sites located throughout Oswego County had been treated with herbicides. Many others were monitored with no control efforts needed. This program was implemented using State Soil and Water funding.



AFTER



BEFORE

Below Left and Right: Of the original 280 acres of water chestnut just in the Oswego River and Ox Creek, approximately 90 acres were dense enough to require herbicide treatment in 2020. Treatments were conducted in several locations in late July and mid-August. The post-treatment photo shows a patch of water chestnuts exhibiting discoloration, which indicates impact from the herbicide. 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 funding as well as grants from US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Finger Lakes-Lake



Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA). **Above Right:** Oswego County SWCD interns showing off water chestnuts, while practicing social distancing. The plants were hand-pulled from a Lake Ontario tributary.



PRE-TREATMENT



POST-TREATMENT

In addition to herbicide treatment, the District also employed 4 college interns known as the Water CATs (Water

Chestnut Assault Team) for a period of 7 weeks during the summer to physically hand pull this aquatic invasive. The team removed approximately 14,000 lbs of chestnut plants from the Oswego River as well as other waterbodies throughout Oswego County. This effort was supported with State Soil and Water funding as well as grants from US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA).



LEFT: Before hand-pulling,
RIGHT: After hand-pulling

NOTE: only the water chestnut plants were removed, other "greenery" was left in place



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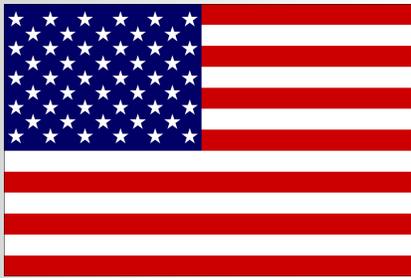
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Connect with us on FaceBook @OSWEGOSWCD



October: surveying at a farm in preparation for the installation of BMPs (Best Management Practices)



October: District Manager Joe Chairvolotti measuring the diameter of a tree that will be included in a timber sale



July: water chestnut plants removed from the Little Salmon River