



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

## **2026 Annual Work Plan**

## Declaration of policy

### Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) CHAPTER 9-B, ARTICLE 1

#### § 2. Declaration of policy.

(1) Preservation of soil and water resources. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the legislature to provide for the conservation of the soil and water resources of this state, and for the improvement of water quality, and for the control and prevention of soil erosion and for the prevention of floodwater and sediment damages and for furthering the conservation, development, utilization and disposal of water, and thereby to preserve natural resources, control and abate nonpoint sources of water pollution, assist in the control of floods, assist in the drainage and irrigation of agricultural lands, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, preserve wildlife, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of this state.

(2) Promotion of soil health and resiliency. It is further declared the policy of the legislature to promote the health and resiliency of New York's agricultural soils, including the biological, physical, and chemical components of such soils, to sustain agricultural plants and animals, produce a healthy, affordable food supply, promote climate resilient farming and the reduction of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, and further protect and promote natural resources and the health, safety and welfare of the people of this state.

(3) Utilizing resources to enhance the quality of life. It is further declared the policy of the legislature to encourage the use of agricultural land for recreational uses which are consistent with the primary use of such land while, at the same time, promoting additional tourism and employment opportunities and income for landowners in rural areas and enhancing the quality of life of persons not otherwise able to obtain access to agricultural land for recreational uses.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Linda Jones, Vice-chair, Legislative Representative  
Bill McGovern, Legislative Representative  
Timothy Elliott, Farm Bureau Representative  
John Phelps, Grange Representative  
Jeremy Boylan, Treasurer, At-large Representative

#### SWCD STAFF

Amanda Barber, Manager  
Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer  
Stacy Russell, Natural Res. Program Specialist  
Shawn Murphy, Natural Resource Conservationist  
Russell Smith, Natural Resource Conservationist  
Jake Lynch, Conservation Assistant  
Brandan Aschmutat, Conservation Assistant  
Emma Bland, Conservation Assistant

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## PLAN COMPONENT

### I. RESOURCE CONCERNS/PROGRAMS

**A. Water Quality - Prevention of nonpoint source (NPS) pollution including, but not limited to the following sources: agricultural land use, construction sites, mining sites, stormwater runoff, streambank erosion, and roadbank erosion.**

#### 1. Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM)

|                                                                                                             |                 |           |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|------------------|
| a. Review strategy and goals; coordinate outreach with partners                                             | High Priority   | Quarterly | Murphy           |
| b. Implement strategy and AEM Base program                                                                  | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Staff            |
| c. Participate in County Agricultural Emergency Response and Skaneateles Lake Watershed Large Animal Rescue | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Smith            |
| d. AEM Base Grant Round 18 Documentation/Closeout and Round 19 Management                                   | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Murphy           |
| e. Coordinate USC data verification                                                                         | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Smith            |
| f. Maintain NRCS Planner certification                                                                      | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Murphy           |
| g. AGNP, CRF, and other applications and POW development                                                    | High Priority   | March     | Staff            |
| h. AGNP, CRF and other grant reports                                                                        | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Russell          |
| i. AGNP Round 27 Bean HUA closeout                                                                          | High Priority   | January   | Smith<br>Barber  |
| j. AGNP Round 28 Ruschmann HUA closeout                                                                     | High Priority   | January   | Murphy<br>Barber |
| k. AGNP Round 28 Ullrich HUA closeout                                                                       | High Priority   | January   | Murphy<br>Barber |

|    |    |    |                                                                                        |               |         |                   |
|----|----|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-------------------|
| I. | A. | 1. | I. AGNP Round 29 Park MS/SL implementation                                             | High Priority | Ongoing | Smith<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | m. AGNP Round 29 Finch HUA implementation                                              | High Priority | Ongoing | Murphy<br>Barber  |
|    |    |    | n. AGNP Round 29 Randall SL closeout                                                   | High Priority | January | Murphy<br>Barber  |
|    |    |    | o. AGNP Round 29 Murray HUA closeout                                                   | High Priority | January | Smith<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | p. AGNP Round 30 VanPatten MS implementation                                           | High Priority | May     | Smith<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | q. AGNP Round 30 Trinity Valley HUA implementation                                     | High Priority | June    | Smith<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | r. AGNP Round 30 East River MS implementation                                          | High Priority | Ongoing | Smith<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | s. Climate Resilient Farming - Hall implementation/closeout                            | High Priority | June    | Russell<br>Barber |
|    |    |    | t. Climate Resilient Farming - Hicks implementation                                    | High Priority | June    | Russell           |
|    |    |    | u. Climate Resilient Farming - New Hope main farm silage leachate closeout             | High Priority | Ongoing | Russell<br>Barber |
|    |    |    | v. Climate Resilient Farming - Parker/Hunts Creak stream corridor restoration closeout | High Priority | Ongoing | Russell<br>Barber |
|    |    |    | w. Climate Resilient Farming - EZ Acres silage leachate implementation                 | High Priority | May     | Russell           |

|       |                                           |                                                                                                                      |                 |           |                   |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|
| I. A. | 1.                                        | x. Climate Resilient Farming - Evanick pond implementation                                                           | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Murphy            |
|       |                                           | y. Climate Resilient Farming - Hollenbeck pond implementation                                                        | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Murphy            |
|       |                                           | z. Climate Resilient Farming - Currie soil health/crossing implementation                                            | High Priority   | June      | Smith             |
|       |                                           | aa. Climate Resilient Farming 8 - Villnave soil health contracting and implementation                                | High Priority   | October   | Smith             |
|       |                                           | bb. Climate Resilient Farming 8 - Michocik forestry closeout                                                         | High Priority   | October   | Russell<br>Barber |
|       |                                           | cc. Climate Resilient Farming 8 - Barber forestry/buffer contracting and implementation                              | High Priority   | July      | Russell           |
|       |                                           | dd. Upper Susquehanna and Finger Lakes cover crops implementation                                                    | High Priority   | September | Smith             |
|       |                                           | ee. Upper Susquehanna nutrient management - including planning tool and urban nutrient management                    | High Priority   | September | Aschmutat         |
|       | 2. Lake and Watershed Management Programs |                                                                                                                      |                 |           |                   |
|       | a.                                        | Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA)                                                   |                 |           |                   |
|       | a.                                        | 1. FOLLOWPA county representation and work plan management                                                           | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Barber            |
|       | a.                                        | 2. FOLLOWPA 23/24 close-out                                                                                          | High Priority   | June      | Barber            |
|       | a.                                        | 3. Technical and financial assistance per FOLLOWPA grant scopes                                                      | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Staff             |
|       | a.                                        | 4. Coordinate with lake associations                                                                                 | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Barber            |
|       | b.                                        | Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP)                                                              |                 |           |                   |
|       | b.                                        | 1. SLWAP cooperative agreement reporting                                                                             | High Priority   | July      | Russell           |
|       | b.                                        | 2. Represent Cortland County at Watershed Agricultural Program Review Committee meetings and act as liaison to Board | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Russell           |
|       | c.                                        | Represent Cortland SWCD and participate in Eastern Finger Lakes                                                      | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Barber            |

|    |    |    |                                                                                                                                    |                 |          |                     |
|----|----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|
| I. | A. | 2. | d. Work with lake associations to implement Management Plans and Kettle Lake WIPs                                                  | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Barber<br>Aschmutat |
|    |    |    | d. 1. Coordinate and implement Little York Lake management program                                                                 | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Barber              |
|    |    |    | d. 2. Coordinate and implement weed harvester                                                                                      | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Aschmutat           |
|    |    |    | e. Coordinate Little York Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District                                                              | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Barber              |
|    |    |    | f. Represent county at other lake and watershed group meetings                                                                     |                 |          |                     |
|    |    |    | f. 1. Cayuga Lake IO and committees                                                                                                | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Murphy              |
|    |    |    | f. 2. Skaneateles Lake Association and 9e Watershed Advisory                                                                       | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Barber              |
|    |    |    | f. 3. Oneida Lake 9e Watershed Advisory Committee                                                                                  | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Smith               |
|    |    |    | g. Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC)                                                                                               |                 |          |                     |
|    |    |    | g. 1. Voting rep., Exec. Committee, and Ag Team Leader                                                                             | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Barber              |
|    |    |    | g. 2. Promote and support Upper Susquehanna Coalition Ag Team                                                                      | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Smith<br>Russell    |
|    |    |    | g. 3. Riparian Buffer Workgroup representation                                                                                     | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Russell             |
|    |    |    | g. 4. Stream Team representation                                                                                                   | Medium Priority | Ongoing  | Lynch               |
|    |    |    | g. 5. Riparian Buffer Stewardship Program                                                                                          | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Lynch               |
|    |    |    | h. Implement WQIP Engineering Feasibility Study grants - Hoxie Gorge, Tioughnioga River (Yellow Lantern), Owego Creek, Trout Brook | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Barber              |
|    |    |    | i. Cortland County Critical Area Road Ditch Stabilization (WQIP grant) and closeout                                                | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Aschmutat<br>Barber |
|    |    |    | j. Implement WQIP Assessment Grants - Owego Creek and Grout Brook culvert and stream assessments                                   | High Priority   | Ongoing  | Lynch<br>Staff      |
|    |    |    | k. Implement Trout Brook Watershed Stream Corridor Stabilization project                                                           | High Priority   | August   | Russell<br>Barber   |
|    |    |    | l. Implement Finger Lakes watershed special project and close out                                                                  | High Priority   | February | Barber              |

|    |    |                                                                                                                     |                 |         |                |
|----|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|----------------|
| I. | A. | 2. m. WQIP, NFWF, and other WQ grant applications                                                                   | High Priority   | Ongoing | Staff          |
|    |    | 3. General Water Quality Monitoring, Investigations, and Assistance                                                 |                 |         |                |
|    |    | a. SWCD WQ Monitoring Plan                                                                                          |                 |         |                |
|    |    | a. 1. Review and revise - coordinate with partners                                                                  | Low Priority    | Ongoing | Bland          |
|    |    | a. 2. Implementation - data collection and analysis                                                                 | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Bland          |
|    |    | b. Provide technical assistance to County Health, NYSDEC, municipalities, etc. relating to water quality management | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Bland          |
|    |    | c. Coordinate Landfill Monitoring, Data Management and Reporting                                                    | High Priority   | Ongoing | Bland<br>Lynch |

**B. Natural Resources Protection - Conserve and enhance natural resources while maintaining a viable land base and encouraging the sustainable production of food and fiber**

1. USDA Programs

|                                                                                              |                 |         |                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|------------------|
| a. Assist USDA in promoting programs and implementing conservation best management practices | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Staff            |
| b. Facilitate and Coordinate Local Working Group meetings and feedback                       | High Priority   | Ongoing | Barber<br>Murphy |

2. Waste Management

|                                                                     |              |         |       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------|-------|
| a. Support local composting efforts - municipal, school, individual | Low Priority | Ongoing | Staff |
| b. Support recycling and reuse efforts and activities               | Low Priority | Ongoing | Staff |

3. Farmland Protection/Agricultural Viability

|       |    |                                                                                                                                |                 |         |        |
|-------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|--------|
| I. B. | 3. | a. Provide technical assistance to county farmland protection board, local municipalities and farmers with farmland protection | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Barber |
|       |    | b. Serve on Board of New York Agricultural Land Trust to create opportunities and support agricultural land protection         | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Barber |
|       |    | c. Support Ag Summit, Ag Awareness Week, Ag Celebration Luncheon                                                               | Medium Priority | March   | Barber |
|       |    | d. Complete soil group worksheets for landowners                                                                               | High Priority   | March   | Staff  |
|       |    | e. Provide technical information and assistance to further urban conservation and urban agriculture initiatives and practices  | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Staff  |

**C. Rural/Urban Development - Provide soils, plant material, and land use information to facilitate sound land use decisions. Provide technical assistance on urban erosion/sediment control and stormwater management; protect infrastructure and the tax base while protecting natural resources**

1. Landuse Management

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                 |         |             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|-------------|
| a. Provide Inventory and Evaluation (I&E) reports to Coordinated Review Committee, planning boards, and municipalities related to soils, stormwater, erosion, nonpoint source pollution, agriculture, and other | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Bland Smith |
| b. Provide other technical assistance as requested by municipalities, including code review and planning committees                                                                                             | Medium Priority | Ongoing | Staff       |
| c. Technical assistance and resource information to landowners related to soils, stormwater, erosion, nonpoint source pollution, agriculture, etc                                                               | High Priority   | Ongoing | Staff       |

2. Management of Flooding, Stormwater, Erosion/Sediment, Stream Corridors and Lakes

|                                                                                                                                                    |               |         |                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------|
| a. Provide assistance to landowners and municipalities relating to streambank stabilization, stream corridor management, and floodplain management | High Priority | Ongoing | Russell Smith Lynch |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------|



|       |                                                                                                                                              |                   |         |                |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|---------|----------------|
| I. C. | 2. b. Support Emergency and Disaster Planning, Management and Response                                                                       | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Smith          |
|       | c. Assist municipalities with aquifer protection and stormwater management, including review of proposed development projects                | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Smith<br>Bland |
|       | d. Town of Cortlandville assistance with Stormwater Code including plan review, site maintenance inspections and reporting                   | High Priority     | Ongoing | Smith<br>Bland |
|       | e. Implement Hydroseeding program                                                                                                            | High Priority     | Ongoing | Aschmutat      |
|       | f. Implement Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Spread Prevention activities                                                                     | High Priority     | Ongoing | Barber         |
|       | f. 1. Manage boat decontamination unit at Dwyer Park                                                                                         | High Priority     | Ongoing | Aschmutat      |
|       | 3. Permits                                                                                                                                   |                   |         |                |
|       | a. Assistance with state/federal permits for protection of waters, wetlands, etc. where projects are consistent with our environmental goals | Priority - Varies | Ongoing | Staff          |
|       | 4. Resource Conservation and Development                                                                                                     |                   |         |                |
|       | a. Provide technical assistance for planning, design and implementation of projects such as alternative energy, septic maintenance, etc.     | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Staff          |
|       | b. Provide technical assistance for planning, design and implementation of projects such as living snow fences, dry hydrants, etc.           | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Staff          |
|       | c. Provide technical information and assistance to further the implementation of forest management and tree planting                         | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Staff          |
|       | c. 1. Implement Dwyer Park Community Forestry implementation grant                                                                           | High Priority     | Ongoing | Lynch          |
|       | c. 2. Implement Upland Tree Planting                                                                                                         | High Priority     | Ongoing | Lynch          |
|       | c. 3. Provide forest management, pollinator, native species TA                                                                               | Medium Priority   | Ongoing | Staff          |

|                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                 |           |                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|
| I. C.                                                                                                                                                                 | 4. d. Provide technical information and assistance to further the implementation of dirt, gravel and low-volume paved road maintenance practices                                               | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Aschmutat      |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | e. Provide technical assistance for planning, design and implementation of riparian forest buffer projects                                                                                     | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Staff          |
| <b>I. D. Education and Outreach - Conduct education programs to heighten awareness of local natural resource conservation concerns and resource management issues</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                |                 |           |                |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 1. Envirothon - sponsor and coordinate local high school competition                                                                                                                           | High Priority   | May       | Lynch          |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 2. Conservation Field Days - sponsor and coordinate event for all 6th grades in county and including DeRuyter                                                                                  | High Priority   | September | Rutter         |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 3. Spruce Up America - Tree planting with schools, municipalities, and community groups                                                                                                        | Medium Priority | April     | Aschmutat      |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 4. River Clean-up – Coordinate event registration and trash disposal                                                                                                                           | High Priority   | September | Rutter         |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 5. Coordinate Water Festival and Water Week activities                                                                                                                                         | High Priority   | June      | Bland<br>Staff |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | 6. General Education - workshops, presentations, programs, and activities as requested or as otherwise necessary to promote and educate about natural resources and related concerns or issues | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Staff          |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | a. Coordinate development of special PR videos                                                                                                                                                 | High Priority   | Ongoing   | Lynch          |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | b. Coordinate displays and presentations at various events as requested                                                                                                                        | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Lynch          |
|                                                                                                                                                                       | c. Committees – participate in committees for WQ Symposium, Conservation Skills Workshop, NYSCDEA, SWCS, etc.                                                                                  | Medium Priority | Ongoing   | Staff          |

|       |                                                                                                                                        |                 |                 |                  |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| I. D. | 6. d. Stewardship Week – Press release, FB posts, materials to local churches                                                          | Low Priority    | April           | Staff            |
|       | 7. Conduct outreach to heighten awareness of SWCD assistance                                                                           | Medium Priority | Ongoing         | Staff            |
|       | a. County Legislators – Outreach at Ag and Planning committee including testimonials and videos of producers or other project partners | High Priority   | Ongoing         | Barber           |
|       | a. 1. Outreach to full Legislature target Soil and Water Stewardship Week and Budget Outreach                                          | High Priority   | April/September | Staff            |
|       | b. State Legislators – attend NYACD Legislative Day to educate on issues                                                               | High Priority   | Feb/Mar         | Board            |
|       | b. 1. meet legislators during local visit                                                                                              | High Priority   | August          | Barber           |
|       | c. Media – maintain media contacts list                                                                                                | High Priority   | Ongoing         | Staff            |
|       | c. 1. contribute program press releases for publishing                                                                                 | High Priority   | Ongoing         | Barber<br>Staff  |
|       | d. Newsletter/Annual Report - distribute at least annually                                                                             | High Priority   | January         | Barber           |
|       | e. Website - maintain and update quarterly                                                                                             | High Priority   | Ongoing         | Barber           |
|       | f. Facebook - regular posts to keep current                                                                                            | Medium Priority | Weekly          | Murphy<br>Barber |
|       | g. FSA County Committee - attend and report at meetings                                                                                | Medium Priority | Quarterly       | Murphy           |

**E. Service/Earned Income Programs - Conduct programs as a service to assist in achieving natural resource conservation goals and help support district programs**

|                                                                                                             |                 |            |                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Spring Planting and Conservation Program-coordinate program, manage distribution of materials, reporting | High Priority   | April      | Barber<br>Rutter<br>Staff |
| 2. Pond stocking – bass, trout, minnows, other                                                              | Medium Priority | April-June | Aschmutat                 |

|       |                                                                             |               |         |       |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| I. E. | 3. Seek operational funds from all sources including grants, donations, etc | High Priority | Ongoing | Staff |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|-------|

## II. OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

### A. Administration

|                                                                         |               |                 |                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Develop Annual Plan - forward to SWCC and County; review quarterly   | High Priority | October         | Board<br>Barber/Staff |
| 2. Risk Management - review policies, agreements, MOUs, insurance, etc. | High Priority | January         | Board                 |
| 3. Board of Directors Meetings – conduct regular meetings               | High Priority | Monthly         | Board                 |
| a. Annual Organizational Meeting                                        | High Priority | Jan             | Board                 |
| 4. Maintain records for Performance Measures evaluation                 | High Priority | Ongoing         | Rutter                |
| 5. Records retention, filing system and procedures                      | High Priority | Ongoing         | Rutter                |
| 6. Develop and monitor annual budget                                    | High Priority | August; Monthly | Board                 |

### B. Personnel

|                                                                              |               |         |                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------------------|
| 1. Evaluations – Conduct evaluations annually                                | High Priority | August  | Barber/Board              |
| 2. Training and Training Plans – Review employee and director training plans | High Priority | January | Barber                    |
| a. Budget and promote employee development                                   | High Priority | Ongoing | Staff/Board               |
| b. Track and administer required training                                    | High Priority | Ongoing | Rutter                    |
| 3. Review Personnel Policies – update as needed                              | High Priority | Ongoing | Barber<br>Rutter<br>Board |

|        |                                                                       |               |                    |                  |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|
| II. B. | 4. Conduct weekly staff meetings                                      | High Priority | Ongoing            | Staff            |
|        | <b>C. Financial</b>                                                   |               |                    |                  |
|        | 1. Maintain and manage bookkeeping system, payroll and benefits, etc. | High Priority | Varies             | Rutter<br>Barber |
|        | 2. Outside audit of books for grants and county                       | High Priority | Annually by county | Rutter<br>Barber |
|        | 3. State Annual Reports                                               | High Priority | February           | Rutter<br>Barber |
|        | <b>D. Equipment Management/Maintenance</b>                            |               |                    |                  |
|        | 1. Maintain field and office equipment inventory                      | High Priority | Ongoing            | Rutter           |
|        | 2. Vehicles and field equipment - maintenance, inspections, purchases | High Priority | Ongoing            | Smith            |
|        | 3. Computers and office equipment - maintenance and purchases.        | High Priority | Ongoing            | Murphy<br>Barber |