

# Conservation News

Newsletter of the  
Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District

Fall 2020

## Current Status of the Soil & Water Conservation District

- Since we are co-located with the USDA-Farm Service Agency and the NRCS, our office has been closed to the public, However, we are now able to setup limited one-person appointments with masking & sanitary precautions.
- District Staff have been working since the beginning of the pandemic– 1st from home and now in the office and in the field.
- District staff are available for field visits, rental equipment delivery, and are performing ongoing conservation planning, projects and activities.

## AEM Strategic Planning

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a **voluntary**, completely **FREE**, **confidential** program through Soil and Water Conservation Districts that help farmers meet business objectives while protecting and conserving the state's natural resources.

Every five years the district looks back at the progress we made reviews our priorities to make sure our Strategic Plan still an effective tool. It is intended to help the district address water quality and other natural resource concerns related to agriculture. This document also helps us when competing for grant funds.

We are looking for your help to address water quality related to natural resource concerns and opportunities tied to Agriculture. Your input will help us Identify &

prioritize local issues & opportunities.

We are asking all farmers, partners, and stakeholders to fill out our questionnaire at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3215Acn>

If you would like to be involved in the discussion as well, we will be holding an informational Zoom meeting November 12<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Contact our office for an invitation.

If you have any questions please contact District Technician Jillian Zajac by phone: (518) 561-4616 ext. 3 or email [jillian.zajac@ccsoil-water.com](mailto:jillian.zajac@ccsoil-water.com).



## The Emerald Ash Borer is HERE!

Earlier this year, the District set up Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) traps around Clinton County to pinpoint potential breeding spots and to confirm the presence of a population.

To our dismay, we trapped EAB beetles in 4 locations; Beekmantown, Chazy, Rouses Point and Champlain.

EAB only affects Ash (Black, Green & White) trees and will eventually devastate the Ash tree population. They lay eggs in Ash trees and the larvae burrow under the bark and eat the tissue which transports sap.



- D-shaped holes in bark
- Bark loss from woodpeckers
- Suckers– sprouting from along the trunk or branches

### Control/Treatment Options:

- Begin harvest now of marketable timber
- Remove infected trees before completely killed
- Treatments are available for valuable trees



### EAB infected trees will often show these signs:

- Thinning and yellowing leaves

For more information, visit:  
[www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info)

## Summer 2020 Projects



### 2020 Cover Crop Program

Over 600 acres of winter rye cover crop have been established with financial assistance from the District.

Why should you consider Cover

Crops?

It's all about your soil! Covering it, keeping it, and improving it.

Over time, a cover crop regimen will increase soil organic matter, improve soil structure, stability and lead to better moisture and nutrient holding capacity.

In our climate, Winter Rye is the cover of choice following corn silage or soybeans. Easy to establish and extremely cold hardy, winter rye can be planted up to October 10th.

Another benefit of winter rye is that it will scavenge leftover Nitrogen. When the rye is terminated in the spring, this nitrogen becomes available to the subsequent crop.

Other Benefits:

- Reduce soil compaction
- Reduce soil erosion
- Greater water infiltration and water holding capacity
- Control weeds
- Increase yields! Research shows yield benefits, especially in drought years.

If you haven't tried cover crops yet, consider signing up in 2021!

### Roadside Erosion 2020

This summer, the Soil and Water Conservation District hydro-seeded over 11 acres or roughly 6 linear miles of recently ditched or exposed roadside.

Hydro-seeding is a quick and effective way of establishing vegetation to reduce soil erosion and excess run off into nearby bodies of water.



With funding from the NYS Water Quality Improvement Project program, the District is able

to address roadside erosion in the Lake Champlain Watershed. This allows us to address roadside erosion in about 90% of Clinton County on town and county roads.

In partnership with local highway departments, the District can also provide reimbursement for supplies and materials used by them to implement best management practices to reduce roadside erosion. In the past several years, we have assisted many towns with culvert replacements, sediment traps and infiltration basins. All of our hydro-seeding and technical assistance is provided at no cost to local municipalities.

### Scrap Tire Roundups

Even during this year's pandemic, we were able to collect and recycle almost 2,000 old tires.

2 collection events were held; Thanks go out to the Town of Champlain and the Town of Altona Highway departments who hosted and helped us out.



This has been a very popular project and we plan on doing more tire roundups in 2021.

### On Farm Projects



Installing a rubber water bar on a laneway District staff helped to install many water bars, culverts and other BMPs to protect water quality.

## Watershed Education and Outreach

Thanks to a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program, the district was able to make 4 presentations this summer that focused on educating residents of all ages about our watershed and the importance of our role in it using the EnviroScape® Model.



If you are an educator or group that would like to see the watershed model presentation, please contact District Technician Jillian Zajac by phone: (518) 561-4616 ext. 3 or email [jillian.zajac@ccsoil-water.com](mailto:jillian.zajac@ccsoil-water.com).

## 2020 AEM Maple Project

With new funding from the AEM program, we were able to plan and implement erosion control practices on a maple sugaring operation in Ellenburg.



↑ Water bars on sloping road  
Jillian moving straw blower →

Multiple waterbars, culverts and seeding with straw mulching was done with the help of Franklin County Soil & Water, the landowner and District Technician Jillian Zajac.



## Equipment Available To Landowners

It's not too early to think about planning for next Spring's hay and pasture improvements and fence building.



The District's Great Plains 10' No-Till Drill has been used on

hundreds of acres this year and just finished fall cover crop seeding.

If you need to seed down fallow land or pastures without tillage and rock picking, the No-Till Drill has been used in all types of soils with good results.

The District's **Wheatheart Post Pounder** offers the convenience of towing posts with you as you

work. This will be ideal for driving posts for pasture fence building and stream exclusion.

For more details about how you can use the post pounder on your next fencing project, contact the District office at 518-561-4616 ext 3.



## 8' Aerway

New this year was an Aerway pasture/hayfield aerator. If you have old rundown, compacted fields or pastures, contact the District and try out the Aerway!



## Summer Interns

Luke Cutter and Alex Sweet spent an interesting summer doing a wide variety of projects; from hydro-seeding roadsides, assessing culverts, trapping Emerald Ash Borers and helping on a variety of farm projects.

We are grateful for their assistance and wish them well in their future education and career opportunities. If you know a student interested in conservation, we are looking for help in

2021!



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Joe Wetzstein, Soil Conservationist  
Allison Holmes, Soil Conservationist  
Ethan Bentley, PE, Civil Engineer  
Josie Tripp, Administrative Assistant

Visit our Website at :

**[www.clintoncountyswcd.org](http://www.clintoncountyswcd.org)**

If you would like to be **removed** from our mailing list or if your address has **changed**, please notify our office at:  
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