



# *2022 Annual Report*

*Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District*



## Table of Contents

Agricultural Program	4-5
Stream Program	6-7
Buffer Program	8-9
USC Funding & SWCC Funding	10-11

## District Staff

Wendy Walsh	District Manager
Lisbeth Monell	Administrative Assistant
Mike Jura	Field Stream Technician
Alex Marks	Field Conservation Technician
Brian Reaser	Professional Engineer
Danielle Singer	Nutrient Mgmt. Specialist
Connor Hubbard	Engineering Technician
Heather Scott	AEM Specialist

## Board of Directors

Dale Weston	Chairman, TC Legislator
Tracy Monell	Vice Chairman, TC Legislator
Mark Kwiatkowski	Treasurer, Member At Large
Tom Zorn	Grange Representative
Eileen Selnekovic	Farm Bureau Representative
	Member At Large

## A Note From The District Manager...

2022 was a challenging year for implementation as we continued to see high cost for supplies and materials for our projects. We worked to secure additional funding to help support these costs and even postponed some pending projects to see if next year would be better. District staff continue to support agriculture operators with our AEM program, rural landowners with stream permits, technical assistance and implementation of Riparian Forest Buffers, as well as assist municipalities with Hazard Mitigation work. Our outreach and education efforts were able to get back on track by planning and holding Sundaes at the Farm this year. Along with participating at the Fair and numerous other field walks as well as one-on-one discussions with landowners we feel we were able to engage with many on the value of our natural resources and the importance of conserving them!

Wendy Walden



# Agricultural Program

The majority of our work with farms in the county is done through the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program. It is a statewide voluntary program lead by Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help farmers make smart cost-effective decisions that meet business objectives while protecting natural resources.

We work with interested farmers to create conservation plans that make them eligible to apply for funding. From large state and federal programs to local District and watershed programs, we planned and implemented many best management practices (BMPs) on farms in the county this year.



# 2022 Project Spotlights

Photos Top Left: We added 35 acres to a rotational grazing system that supports a small beef farm in Berkshire, NY. The project included a culvert replacement for a stream crossing, fence, spring development watering system and riparian forest buffer.

Photo Bottom Left: We worked with 19 farms to plant cover crops on 1,943 acres of cropland across the county. Cover crops are planted after the main crop (usually corn or soybeans) to reduce erosion, improve water infiltration, add soil organic matter and keep soil biology alive over the winter months.

## Agricultural Environmental Management

**The AEM Program is the foundation of our work with the Ag Community in the county.** The program provides the framework and technical assistance needed to move through grant programs at no cost to the farm. Additionally, it has offered some cost-share funds for small projects and soil sampling in recent years. See below a snapshot of the work we have accomplished this year with AEM as our blueprint and farmers as our partners in stewardship!



**35**

Farms assisted this year



**2**

Rotational Grazing Systems Installed



**13,675**

Acres of Nutrient Management



**1,943**

Acres of Cover Crops



**685**

Feet of Diversion Ditch Repair



**5**

Stream Projects on Farms



**4**

New Acres of Riparian Buffers on Farms



**6**

Awarded Grants in Construction Phase



**4**

New State Grants Awarded



**10+**

Farms in the Planning Phase

**35**

*Farms served*

**3**

*New Conservation Plans Completed*

**7**

*Projects Completed*

**163**

*Acres Of No-till Implemented*

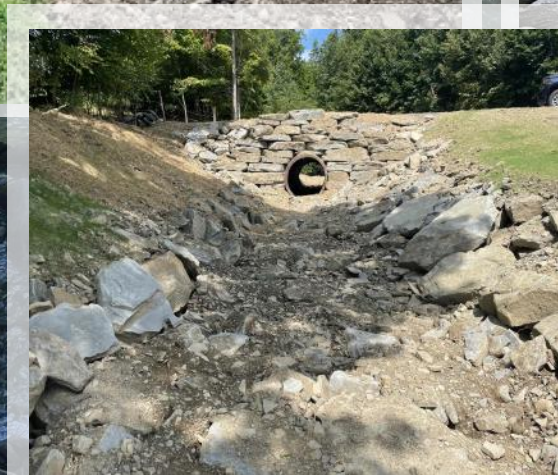
# Stream Program

The District stream program is focused on assisting municipalities and private landowners with environmentally sensitive maintenance and repair, while keeping in mind the need for safety, stability, and private property rights. The District works toward these goals by providing a variety of services: monitoring, mapping of stream issues, education, outreach, technical assistance and advice in regards to permit application and design, securing funding for implementation, construction oversight, hazard mitigation planning, flood recovery, and culvert assessments.



## Gaylord Road Project

SWCD coordinated the funding and implementation of design and replacement of the pictured crossing (left and below) in the Town of Owego, in the Apalachin Creek watershed. The project was prioritized by two watershed assessments conducted by the district, and completed through our partnership with the Town of Owego. The undersized culvert frequently plugged, overtopped and washed out, impacting local residents, and causing repeated costs to the town.



3 Culvert projects completed in 2022. Culvert Assessments allow us to prioritize funding applications.

# Hazard Mitigation Support and Disaster Recovery

Since 2013, the District has contracted with the County to provide hazard mitigation coordination services. The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local governments to prepare and update a hazard mitigation plan that addresses natural disasters. The District, as coordinator of the plan, works with the County and all 15 municipalities on project implementation. Priorities of the plan include flooding and flood mitigation projects, with the goal of reducing flooding and flooding impacts to our communities.

## Trainings and Seminars

### Post Flood Emergency Stream Intervention Training (ESI)

-34 Attendees from local highway departments in the county. (photo on right)

-One day training, with a field component.

### Site/project Tour with NYS DEC Region 7 staff:

Members of DEC region 7 permit and habitat department toured numerous sites with SWCD to discuss construction methods, design techniques and permit efficiency. (photo below)



9

Projects Implemented

6

DEC Stream  
Disturbance  
Permits

2,900

Feet of Stream Bank  
Stabilized

78

Landowners visited for  
stream related  
technical assistance

12

Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Nationwide  
Permits

## Buffer Program

The Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District had another successful season of riparian forest buffer establishment in 2022. Over the last four years the District has been dedicated to establishing a Buffer Program to promote the restoration and long-term functionality of riparian areas for water, soil, and habitat quality. The promotion, implementation, and vitality of riparian buffer projects have emerged as a top priority for the District. The District promotes riparian buffer creation and restoration via education, outreach, and technical assistance.

## Buffer Volunteers

An integral part of what makes Tioga County's riparian buffers possible is the support of our volunteers. The District is always looking for ways to create new partnerships and forge new friendships with those in the community who wish to make a meaningful difference in the watershed. This year, 150 volunteers worked with the District to help plant riparian buffers all across the county.



Hickories Park Arbor Day Community Tree Planting took place in April of 2022. We had over 20 volunteers join us, and 340 trees & shrubs were planted.



Local school groups participated in plantings on agricultural land within the county. 200 trees & shrubs were planted with 10 volunteers.



# Buffer Monitoring & Maintenance

Our Buffer Stewards collect and report critical plant data, and perform continued monitoring & maintenance activities to ensure successful establishment of the plants. These funds have allowed the District to better support landowners and manage problems that arise in buffer plantings more effectively. The work done by our Buffer Stewards over the past four growing seasons has positively impacted the survival and success of buffer plantings, and has aided in achieving nutrient reductions, improved water quality, and expansion of wildlife habitat!



**25.5**

Acres of New  
Buffer  
Created

**6,161**

Trees and shrubs  
planted

**13**

New Project Sites

**255**

Buffer Acres  
monitored and  
maintained

**12,732**

Trees and shrubs  
monitored and  
maintained

# Outreach & Education

One of the District's main priorities is to serve the public. We believe that engaging and involving county residents in our work creates a strong and more resilient community. Throughout 2022, the District supported the regional Envirothon, local stream clean-ups, held various volunteer plantings, staffed education booths, and organized several educational events across the county which resulted in meaningful engagement with thousands of our county residents.

150

Volunteers engaged

15

Events held

2,048

Members of the community reached

6

Local Schools/Community groups participated

25

Volunteer hours donated



We assisted with the Sundaes at the Farm Event that was held at Spencer Farms in July 2022. The event celebrates local agriculture at a different dairy farm each year. Over 800 people attended!



The Regional Envirothon took place at the Sportsman Club in Owego, NY. Tioga Central School won first place in the County.

# New York Soil and Water Conservation Committee Funding Support

Through the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, Districts statewide are eligible to receive funding to complete implementation projects that further our mission and goals. In 2022, Tioga SWCD requested Part B Funding and received \$6,000 to support a pilot a planted retention basin. Additionally, Part C funding was made available to Districts who meet the required performance measures established by the state. This funding is awarded competitively, and the District was awarded \$112,874.08 for meeting all established performance measures!

## Part B Funding

We worked with a small equine farmer to address erosion issues at the end of their farm road ditch. To address the issue, the District designed a small stormwater retention basin with wetland plantings inside to reduce flow velocities in smaller rain events. Around 100 trees and shrubs were planted in the basin by staff. Species were selected based on present soil types, and selected to mirror the existing forest surrounding the site (witch hazel, serviceberry, nannyberry, silky dogwood, red-osier dogwood, red oak, hackberry, and tulip poplar). Within the physical storm water retention basin, species were selected based on their water retentive qualities, tolerance to flooding, and wildlife value (buttonbush, winterberry, arrowwood and willow).



## Part C Funding

In 2022, the District utilized awarded funds to support technical capacity by funding staff to work on non-ag land buffers, streams and our ag program. Funds were also utilized for staff training, as continued training is key for staff to increase proficiency in their fields and building skill sets. Through the Buffer Program, staff assisted rural landowners with riparian forest buffer plantings. Through the Stream Program, staff conducted numerous sites visits to consult on various stream issues, including many site visits to assist local municipalities. Through the Ag Program, Part C funds assisted covering soil sampling, water testing, and the cover crop program payments.

250

Water Quality and Land Use  
Management Technical Assistance  
Requests

18,229

Tree and Shrubs  
sold at District Sale

5

Stormwater  
Management Plans Reviewed

27

Completed Road-Stream  
Crossing Culvert Assessments

3

Flood Mitigation  
Assistance/Projects

263

Enrolled and active  
AEM Program Farms





Find us on:  
**facebook®**

@TiogaSWCD

[www.Tiogaswcd.org](http://www.Tiogaswcd.org)