

Onondaga County Soil & Water Conservation District

Who We Are & What We Do



www.OCSWCD.org

For Onondaga
County
Legislature
April 21, 2026
M. Burger

History & Demographics

- **District formed March 6, 1944**
- **499,388 ac land**
- **156,100 ac farmland**
- **295 farms in AEM**
- **Ag 14th largest employer**



Vision, Mission, & Purpose in County

- **Vision**: To live in a society in which future generations will have natural resources necessary to sustain and enrich their quality of life.
- **Mission**: Promote excellence in the wise use of our rural and natural resources.
- **Purpose**: Only agency in County to implement AEM and address other forms of NPS pollution.

Onondaga County SWCD Staffing & BOD



- **112 years total combined experience**
 - **3 AEM Planners**
 - **3 Implementers**
 - **6 CPESC**
 - **2 Cert. Crop Advisors**
 - **2 Cert. Nut. Mgnt. Planner**
 - **4 Forestry backgrounds**
 - **2 Stream technicians**
 - **4 Cert. Pesticide Applicators (NYS DEC)**
- **7 person BOD**

City of Syracuse SLWAP Staffing & BOD



15-year Volunteer

- Roland Ivers



And, we support interns from:

- OCC
- SUNY Morrisville
- SUNY ESF
- Le Moyne College
- SUNY Binghamton



6 Major Watersheds

- **Otisco Lake** (*drinking water supply for County*)
- **Onondaga Lake**
- **Oneida Lake**
- **Upper Tioughnioga**
- **Seneca/Oswego River**
- **Skaneateles Lake**
(*drinking water supply for City of Syracuse & 10 municipalities*)

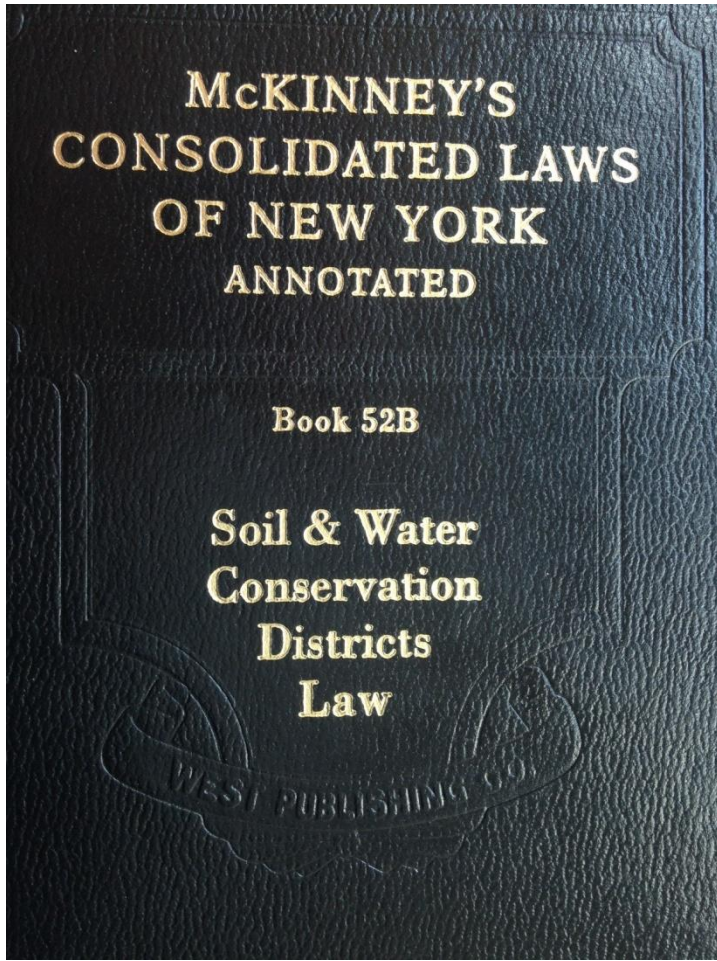


Workload & Partnerships & Programs

- **50%** Agricultural Environmental Management
- **23%** Invasive Species
- **15%** Stormwater Management & Training
- **10%** Critical Area Seeding
- **2%** Stream Bed/Bank Stabilization
- Partner w/ USDA, CCE, Towns, Villages, City, County



District Law



- Enables SWCD to go onto private property
- We develop solutions & secure resources to solve environmental problems
- Mechanism for DPW to work off ROW
- Allows USDA to go onto farms
- Helps us to address community's needs!
- ***Projects done for the benefit of the public**

Agricultural Environmental Management



Barnyard Runoff Management



Stream Exclusion



Cover Cropping



Buffers



Strip Cropping



Regrading & Bank Stabilization Onondaga Creek - Tully



Bendway Weirs

Limestone Creek – Rte. 20, Pompey



Our District is now Emergency Stream Intervention Certified Trainer's



Critical Area Seeding – 75% Cost-Share to Municipalities



Stormwater Management Services



- **Assist County W.E.P.**
 - 400 Stormwater Outfall Inspections
 - Data Management
 - Review Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans
 - Inspect Construction Sites
 - Complaint Investigation
 - Prepare Annual Report to DEC
 - Municipal Good Housekeeping Presentations



TEACH 4-Hr CONTRACTOR CLASS

Teach the NYS DEC 4-Hr ESC class to contractors, municipal officials, engineers/ architects, Codes Enforcement Officers, etc.

Syracuse Builders Exchanges advertises & hosts event and does registration; we teach and send paperwork to NYS DEC

Taught 200 classes
4,268 contractors
16 years!



Annual Tree/ Shrub Sale

Sell 3,000 seedlings/year

Sold 37 wildlife houses

150 customers



Emerald Ash Borer Preparation



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Treatment

Our staff are NYS DEC Certified Applicators (2 Forestry) (3a Ornamental & Turf)

Infested tree



Applicator



Basal bark spray



Tree Risk Assessment for Municipalities

A way to quantify the risk associated with a tree by looking at the targets, health, defects, and other aspects of the tree and site. This allows the municipality to make management decisions based on their acceptable level of risk.



Water Chestnuts – Removal & Eradication

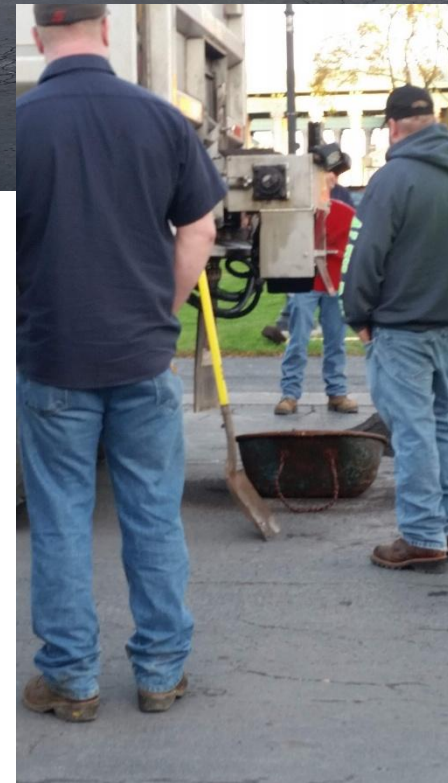


Road Salt Reduction Programs - Training

Training / Classroom Education



Calibration of Equipment



Live Edge Snow Plow Blade – 50% Reimbursement Program

**12 ft blade, only cleaning part of
road surface**

**Live-Edge blades are twelve, 12”
sections, that contour to the road
for better scrape**



Agricultural Spill Response



New Spill Equipment Has Arrived!



THANK YOU!
Senator /
Congressman
Mannion!

Onondaga County Animal Response Team (OnCART)



Part of County E/M Disaster Preparedness Committee and EOC



Rental of Conservation Equipment



- \$75,000 grant from City of Syracuse (2007)
- 6 row JD 1750 Planter
- Esch 12' N/T Drill
- Goal:
- Rent conservation equipment to farmers
- They like it/good results
- They purchase conservation line of equipment

Enviro-Thon

- **Statewide environmental education competition**
- **Tests each students knowledge and understanding of natural resources and environmental issues**



SWCD's provide Technical Assistance to All!

- We help people **obtain permits**, even if it is not our own project
- Spent 1 month on a 50+ acre Water Chestnut mat that dislodged on Cross Lake impacting 3 communities
- 16" diameter/25 ft long tree floating in navigational channel (life safety hazard)
- ***The public typically call us when they have no where else to turn and need a solution!***



2017, Onondaga County Ranking in NYS

- **3rd** in Poultry & eggs
- **6th** Livestock, poultry & products
- **9th** in Milk from cows
- **11th** in Cultivated Xmas trees, short rotation woody crops
- **12th** in Grains, dry beans, dry peas
- **13th** in Fruit, nuts & berries
- **\$178 Mil in Market Value of Products Sold** (10th in NYS)

Top 4% for total pounds of milk produced in all dairy counties of US!



Top 10% of Best Places to Farm in US!

NYS Award Winning Farms!



2009–Trinder Farm

2014-Smith's Tre-G Farm



2022 – Greenfield Farm's

U.S. Dairy Sustainability Award Winning Farms!

McMahon's E-Z Acres Dairy Farm
- 2018



Young's Twin Birch Dairy Farm - 2020



Major Funding Sources & Partners



Water Environment Protection

Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive
A. T. Rhoads, PE, Commissioner

ongov.net



NYS Environmental Protection Fund

Onondaga County, New York

Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive

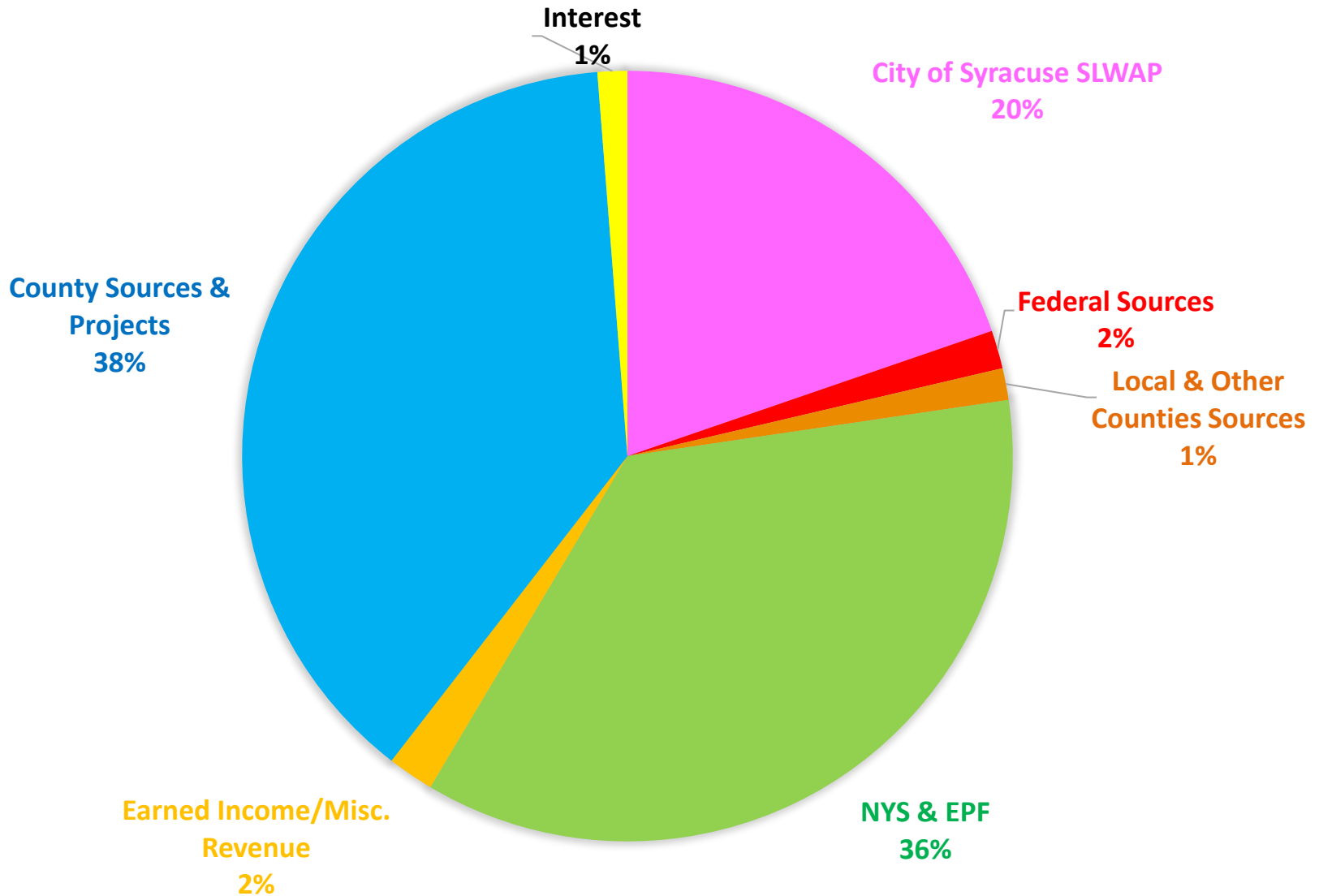
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ONONDAGA COUNTY
AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND
PROTECTION PLAN



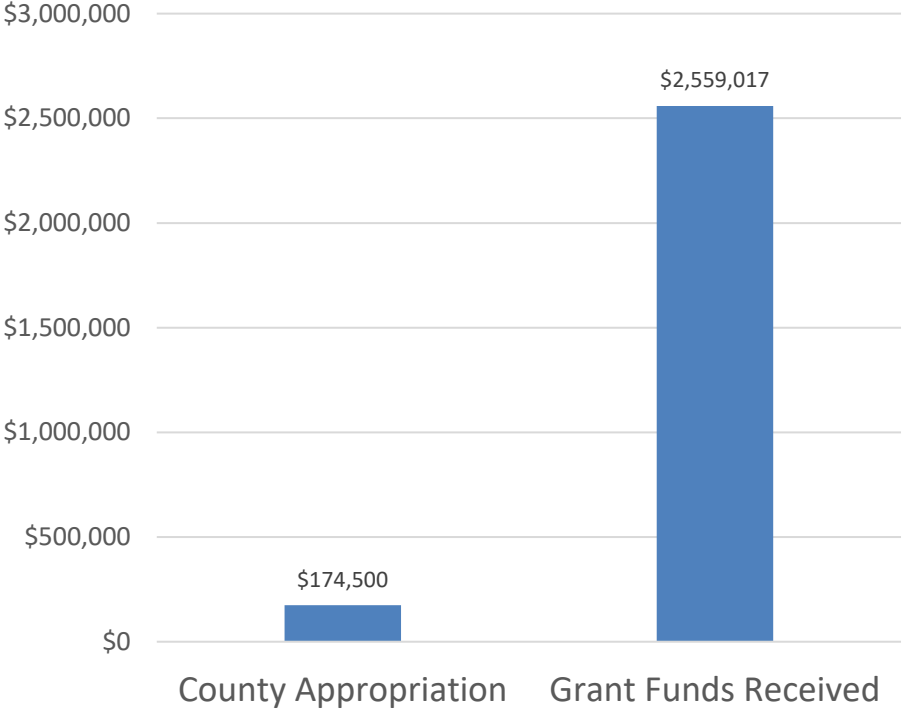
2025 Funding Sources



A breakdown of the \$\$\$

How we Leverage County \$\$\$

8 of 17 Grant Applications Funded -
2025



• We returned \$14.66 for every \$1 the County invested in SWCD!

Local Businesses Supported by SWCD

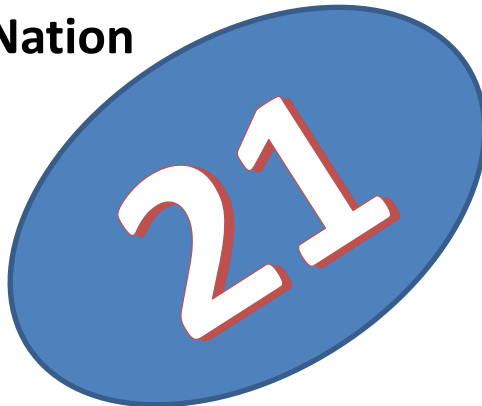


A Few Final Thoughts:

“While there are 2 million farms across the US, farmers and ranchers make up just 1.3% of the labor force AND the employed population!”

Agencies w/ Dairy Farm & Project Oversight

- Consumers
- Milk Inspectors (Local & NYS)
- APHIS (Federal Milk Inspector)
- OSHA
- NYS Dept. Ag Markets
- NYS Power Authority
- NYS DEC (CAFO & Stormwater)
- NYS DEC (Pesticide, Herbicide)
- US EPA
- NYS Dept. of Health
- Onondaga Nation
- Neighbors
- NYS Dept. of Labor
- NYS Dept. of Transportation
- US Department of Homeland Security
- Town Codes Official
- USDA Nat. Res. Con. Srv.
- USDA Farm Service Agency
- NYS Soil & Water Consv. Comm.
- Local SWCD
- NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, Historic Preservation



What Is A Farmer?

- Entrepreneur
- Building Contractor
- Mechanic
- Accountant
- Human Resources Manager
- Veterinarian
- Soil Scientist
- Agronomist
- Plumber
- Geneticist
- Inventor
- Entomologist
- Robotics Engineer
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- Electrician
- Land Manager/Forester
- Landlord
- Livestock Herd Manager
- Nutritionist
- Salesperson
- Educator (Agri-tourism)
- Public Relations Specialist
- Investor
- Welder
- Botanist
- Drainage Specialist



Questions?



Thank You!

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