

Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

Minutes of Regular Meeting - January 12, 2026

Attending:

Board Members

John Dickinson, Chairman

Jay Skellie, Director

Sherri Slater, Director

Kate Ziehm, Director

Cassie Fedler, Director

Others:

Tina Williams, Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Ben Luskin, NYS-SWCC

Staff Members

Corrina Aldrich, District Manager

Lori Sheehan, Office Manager

Bob Kalbfliesh, District Technician

Amber Stark, District Technician

Ashley Leemans, District Technician

Call to order at 11:01 a.m. by Chairman Dickinson.

Chairman Dickinson turned the meeting over to Aldrich for election of Board Chairman.

Organizational Business:

Aldrich called for a nomination for Board Chairman.

Motion by Skellie/Slater to elect John Dickinson as Board Chairman. **Unanimously carried.**

Aldrich turned the meeting over to John Dickinson to chair the remainder of the meeting.

Motion by Fedler/Slater to elect Jay Skellie as Vice Chairman.

Motion by Slater/Fedler to rescind previous motion and to make a new Motion to keep election of officers the same as 2025:

- Jay Skellie, Vice Chairman
- Catherine (Kate) Ziehm, Treasurer

Unanimously carried.

Motion by Fedler/Slater to appoint Lori Sheehan as Secretary/Assistant Treasurer of the SWCD Board of Directors. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to appoint the following representatives:

- Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC): Ashley Leemans / Sherri Slater (alternate)
- Farmland Protection Board: Corrina Aldrich / Sherri Slater (alternate)
- Upper Hudson River Coalition: Amber Stark / Corrina Aldrich (alternate)
- Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York: Corrina Aldrich – SWCD; Ashley Leemans – WQCC; Amber Stark – SWCD alternate; Sherri Slater – WQCC alternate

Unanimously carried.

Motion by Skellie/Slater authorizing payment of certain bills prior to Board approval, including payroll & payroll liabilities, health/dental insurance, office/field supplies, program supplies (tree & fish programs), utility bills, employee travel, credit card, county pool car (fuel), and reimbursement of petty cash. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to designate Arrow Bank and Trustco Bank as the district's official banking institutions and appointment the following authorized signers:

- Arrow Bank Authorized Signers: Catherine Ziehm, Treasurer; Lori Sheehan, Assistant Treasurer; Catherine Fedler, Designated Board Member
- Trustco Bank Authorized Signers: Catherine Ziehm, Treasurer; Lori Sheehan, Assistant Treasurer

Unanimously carried.

Minutes: **Motion** by Skellie/Fedler to approve the minutes of the last meeting. **Unanimously carried.**

Treasurer's Report: Upon review and approval of the finances, **Motion** by Slater/Fedler to approve the Treasurer's Report (as a whole) for December 2025 and to pay bills as presented. **Unanimously carried.** (Attachment)

Agency & Staff Reports:

- A. Farm Service Agency: Verbal Report by Williams
- B. NRCS: No Report
- C. District Manager: Verbal Report by Aldrich
- D. District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Kalbfliesh
- E. District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Stark
- F. District Technician: Attachment, reviewed by Leemans
- G. NYS-SWCC Report: Attachment, reviewed by Luskin

New Business:

Motion by Fedler/Ziehm to approve disposal of certain 2018 financial records according to Schedule LGS-1. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to open Certificate of Deposits at Trustco Bank (Money Market Funds \$250,000) and Arrow Bank (Part C Funds \$200,000). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to approve participation in the Regional Envirothon (including cost of event expenses, est. \$1,000). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Ziehm/Slater to approve NYS Urban Forestry Council Membership (\$140), Upper Hudson River Coalition Dues (\$500). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to approve the following employee trainings: Leemans – ArcGIS Pro Training Class (\$250), Kalbfliesh & Stark - CaroVail Annual Winter Meeting (\$35/pp), Kalbfliesh & Stark - No-till & Cover Crop Conference (\$75/pp). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Ziehm/Slater to set the Equipment Reserve Fund Amount to \$28,000. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Fedler to approve accepting donations from newsletter sponsors for our February & August newsletters. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to approve opening interest-bearing checking account for AEM Round 19. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Ziehm/Fedler to approve submitting a Time Extension Amendment Request for CRF Round 6 Contract #C012424 – Permaculture & Soil Health to SWCC. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Ziehm/Skellie to approve CropwareNet Software Yearly Subscription (est. \$1,100 Part C Funds). **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to allocate Part C Funds (\$5,962) to match CWICNY Lake Champlain Basin Cover Crop Funds (\$29,038) to total \$35,000 to reimburse the farmers who participated in the Lake Champlain Basin Cover Crop Program for 2025. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Skellie/Ziehm to approve CWICNY Pass-thru grant funds (\$20,000) for Lake Champlain Basin Cover Crop Program for 2025 to make the following partial payments to the 10 participating farms: **Unanimously carried.**

Albert Marns (\$2,000), Wayne Foote (\$2,000), Foothill Farm (\$2,000), Yorkmont Farm (\$2,000), Toolite Farm (\$2,000), Twin Brooks Farm (\$2,000), Fred Burch (\$2,000), Manor View Farm (\$2,000), Walker Farms (\$2,000), Jeffrey Bush (\$2,000)

RESOLUTION
of the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District
Motion by Ziehm/Fedler. Unanimously Carried.

Authorizing participation by the Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District in the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program created pursuant to section 11-b of the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts Law.

WHEREAS, the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee has issued a Request for Proposals inviting Soil and Water Conservation Districts or groups of Districts acting jointly to submit proposals for funding under Round 31 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program; and

WHEREAS, funds are available for projects that consist of activities that will reduce, abate, control, or prevent nonpoint source pollution originating from agricultural sources; and

WHEREAS, the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District has determined that certain work, as described in its application and attachments, (the “Project”) is in the public interest and consists of activities that will reduce and/or prevent nonpoint source pollution from agricultural sources;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the **Washington** County Soil and Water Conservation District Board

- 1) That **Corrina Aldrich, District Manager**, or such person’s successor in office, is the representative to act on behalf of the District’s governing body in all matters related to State Assistance under Round 31 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program. The representative is authorized to make application, execute the contract for State Assistance, submit project documentation, and otherwise act for the District governing body in all matters related to the Project;
- 2) That the District agrees to fund its portion of the cost of the Project as provided in the application;
- 3) That one (1) certified copy of this Resolution be prepared and attached to the application for funding under Round 31 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program;
- 4) That this resolution take effect immediately.

Motion by Ziehm/Fedler to approve submitting RFP applications for Kings Ransom and Walker Farms for AgNPS Round 31 grant funding. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Ziehm/Fedler to approve Agreement between Washington County SWCD and Warren County SWCD for AEM Round 19 Technical Services, January 2026. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to approve the sale of the Fennig 6-Row Interseeder Model RM730 on Auctions International, with the right to reject any or all bids. **Unanimously carried.**

The next Board meeting will be held on February 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

Motion by Fedler/Ziehm to enter Executive Session at 11:57 a.m. to discuss performance review of District Manager. **Unanimously carried.**

Motion by Slater/Ziehm to leave Executive Session at 12:55 p.m. and adjourn the meeting. . **Unanimously carried.**

Lori Sheehan, Secretary

Director

Reports Attached: *Treasurer Report, District Reports, NYS-SWCC Report*

District Technician Report – Bob Kalbfliesh – January 2026

AEM

- I have completed all AEM time sheets for Round 18.

CWICNY – Lake Champlain Basin Cover Crop Program

- I have completed all the necessary paperwork for this grant.

Ag Assessments

- I have completed 41 soil group worksheets to date. Last year I completed 176, so I expect January and February to be very busy.

Meetings / Events

- CaroVail Annual Winter Meeting, Greenwich – 2/6
- UVM No-till & Cover Crop Conference, South Burlington, VT – 2/19

Technician's Report-Amber Stark- January 12, 2026

Ag Non-Point Source-

- Round 28-
 - Kenyon Hill- Reception pit one is completed. We have received invoices from the farm and the engineer signed off on the practice. The project is 75% complete with a small portion left to be finished on reception pit number 2. We have submitted a request for a 1-year extension with consideration of what work is left to be done and taking into consideration the engineers' timeline to certify the final practices, along with our timeline for close-out paperwork.
- Round 31- Released January 5, 2026.
 - I have reached out to both farms (and CNMP planners) interested in applying and made them aware of our timelines. Kings have indicated that they would like us to try one more time for their satellite manure storage.
 - As of right now we have Walkers Farm and Kings interested in applying.

Climate Resilient Farming (CRF)-

- Round 6-
 - Maple Grove Farm- Had a phone call from the farm. They are working on getting bids for the project now that they have a final engineered design for the Access Road and Pond. I reminded the farm to make sure all bids had dates, business name, and contact information etc.
 - Ghost Light Farm- Talked with the contractor. The snow has slowed things down a bit, but he still plans on finishing the last part of the project this winter. The one access road is the only part left for this project. I told him the contract end date is April 2026, so as of right now we are on schedule to complete this project without the need for an extension as long as the weather allows for construction.
- Round 7-
 - Southerland- No new updates. The contractor is monitoring the stream during the winter. The plan is to start construction in the Spring of 2026.

CAFO Waste Storage and Transfer System Program-

- Round 3
 - Woody Hill Farm- Provided the program manager with some clarification on bids that were chosen. Have not heard anything back. I let the farm know the status.

AEM-

- AEM Reporting: Working on getting all the time logs completed & updated, so that I can start working on the closeout. Round 18 has officially ended.
- AEM round 19 timesheets have been added to the shared drive to allow staff to keep them up to date as work is completed.
- Tier 4 Cost Share-Contracts Round 19
 - ROUND 19 T4 CS-I have received 4 applications. We applied for \$300,000 in state cost share funding for projects. Nate Mattison, du Trieux Farm, Hick's and Hepatica Farm.
 - I have started to work on the budgets for these 4 projects. I will finalize them in the next coming weeks and work on setting up appointments to get them signed by landowners.

- AEM 3A Planning:
 - Hepatica Farm-Completed the Grazing plan for the farm. Staying in contact with the farm and waiting for budget form to come out so we can finalize things.
 - Du Trieux Farm- Grazing plan completed. Staying in contact with farm and waiting for budget form to come out so we can finalize things.
 - Partnering with Warren County SWCD to provide technical assistance with a Nutrient Management Plan. Warren County is working on a contract for us to review.

Ag Assessment-

- Assisted with taking multiple Ag Assessment requests from landowners.

Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition- (President)

- Meeting was held on 1/8/26. This was our annual organizational meeting. We went over the bylaws, organizational items and elected officers.
- Only change to the bylaws was the inclusion of paying dues in the amount of \$500.00 annually to support current outreach and project activities going forward until we can establish a fund balance that is self-sustaining. This will help with yearly fees, as well as be a pot of funds that we can access to help with administrative and outreach efforts.
- Doug Reed attended and provided information to the group on the Day in the Life of the Hudson River event.
- Caitlin Stewart is working on finalizing our 2025 Newsletter. I will share with the board once it is finished.
- The next regular meeting will be held on February 12, 2026, at 10 AM. Located at the Warren County SWCD.

Trainings/Meetings Attending or Attended-

- Attended the Warren County SWCD Board meeting on behalf of the UHRWC on 12/15/25.
- CCA Virtual Training attending on 12/16/25 & 12/17/25.

Miscellaneous:

- Sent Olivia Fuller a reminder about filling out the application to CWICNY engineering funds.
- Wrote a newsletter article highlighting what we achieved during AEM round 18.
- Went to Syracuse to get my new Linc Pass (10 years with SWCD). Will need to go back out to get another new card once my name gets changed in the USDA system.

Technician's Report – Ashley Leemans – January 12th, 2026

Meetings and Trainings Attended

- 12/16 – Tuned into the SWCC meeting via Zoom.
- 12/17 – Attended a Stream Smart Workshop in Plattsburgh with Corrina.
- 01/07 – Corrina and I met with Ari from APIPP – he is going to help us prioritize our invasive species management efforts.
 - I have a follow-up meeting with the Hadlock Pond Association on 01/16.
- 01/08 – I attended the Upper Hudson Watershed Coalition Organizational meeting with Corrina and Amber.
- 01/12 – Today I will be attending an in-person LG HWA Coalition meeting at the Lake George Park Commission Office.
- I started a series of free webinar series given every other Friday on green infrastructure through Rutgers.

Part B

- I have completed a draft job description for the invasive species intern and have sent it to everyone else for review.

WQCC

- Our next meeting will be on February 11, 2026.
- I have completed the water quality report for 2025 water testing. It will be available and discussed at the meeting.

Education and Outreach

- I attended the Battenkill Conservancy's annual meeting on January 11th and presented on our experience of doing the Day in the Life of the Hudson River Program.
 - I worked closely with Doug Reed and Mike Levy to put together a brief presentation.
- Corrina, Amber, and I will be attending Winterfest at Lauderdale Park in February!

CWICNY

- Education and Outreach Grant through the Lake Champlain Basin Program.
 - The grant will fund World Water Day event, a watershed wide public fishing event, and a Champlain Watershed focused DITL event.
 - I worked with Sue Hagar to finish writing the grant and took over the responsibility of submitting the grant and became the point of contact as Sue has resigned from her position as CWICNY Coordinator.
- Our next meeting is on 01/15.

Misc.

- I have submitted the Organizational Support Grant application through the Lake Champlain Basin Program.
 - The goal is to hire a technology consultant to help us create a strategic plan for technology acquisition and independence from NRCS.

NYS SWCC News

Round 31 Agricultural Non-Point Source Program: The SWCC has made a total of \$25 million available through the AgNPS Round 31 RFP for SWCD's to propose AEM Tier 3 Planning and Tier 4 Implementation projects. This matches the record level of funding from last Round. RFP materials and the Application Form are available now through the Program's SharePoint Site (AgNPS Round 31 SharePoint) and Department of Agriculture's Funding Opportunities Website (AGM Funding Opportunities). An informational RFP Webinar will be held (and recorded) over Webex on January 20, 2026 from 10-11:30 AM, questions on the RFP are due in writing to Jason Kokkinos (Jason.kokkinos@agriculture.ny.gov) by March 2, 2026, and proposal submission to SharePoint is due **Monday, April 20, 2026 by 4:30 PM.**

2025 State Aid to Districts – DUE 2/15: All 2025 annual reporting documents (State Aid, Treasurers Report, Annual Report, etc.) are now available on the SWCC SharePoint <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>, under Resources for Districts – State Aid to Districts. All reports are due to the State Committee by February 15, 2026. Please contact Bethany.bzduch@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions. If you have questions on the Treasurer's Report, it is suggested to contact OSC representative directly. This link (<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/contact.htm>) will provide regional contact information.

AEM Base Program Round 18 - Options for AEM Base Round 18 Payments: A reminder that the Final Report/Close Out package for Round 18 of the AEM Base Program is due to the State Committee by **February 29th, 2026**, (please upload files to your District's AEM18 folder on SharePoint and email your Regional AEA and Chastity Miller once uploaded). AEM18 close out packages and their CFPs won't likely be paid until after the Blackout Period if sent after February 20th (depending on the number of Districts submitting and needs for report updates). While it varies, that could mean delays in payments until July 2026. Round 18 documents can be found on SharePoint: <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/AEM.aspx>

AEM Base Program Round 19 - If you have not submitted your Round 19 25% Technical Assistance Claim of Payments, please do so as soon as possible to beat that blackout period. Round 19 documents can be found on SharePoint: <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/AEM.aspx>. Questions, please feel free to contact your AEA or Chastity Miller chastity.miller@agriculture.ny.gov.

Claim for Payment Black Out Period Approaching: We are approaching the "Blackout Period" for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. The "Blackout Period" is the time of year (starting April 1st, 2026, lasting until June/July 2026) when payments for programs supported by the Environmental Protection Fund (AGNPS, CRF, EBM, AEM) cannot be processed due to end of the year reporting/accounting. We encourage Districts to consider what projects may be implemented in 2026 and what projects are eligible for advances or reimbursements. If you will need to request a 25% Advance, 65% BMP Implementation Payment, Subsequent/Interim Payment, or Final Payment prior to the start of the black out period, please email the CFP packet to the appropriate State Committee program manager, regional coordinator and Maureen Irish by **Friday, February 20th, 2026. Please remember to only submit claims for payment for contracts that have been fully executed.** Questions can be directed to your Regional Coordinator or appropriate Program Manager.

SWCC Meeting: The next meeting of the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee will convene on **February 17th, 2026**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out in advance of the meeting. All Districts are encouraged to attend and participate at SWCC meetings. Each meeting agenda provides an opportunity for Conservation Districts to provide reports, updates, or feedback to the SWCC. **Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.**

SWCD Operations Sub-Committee Recording: A recording of the November 2025, SWCD Operations Sub-Committee meeting has been uploaded to Sharepoint. The next sub-committee meeting will convene **January 29th, 2026, 1PM – 3PM**, via Webex. Details to follow.

[https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/Mangers%20Meetings/SWCD%20Operation%20Sub-Committee%20\(2025\)/November%206,%202025%20Meeting?csf=1&web=1&e=0h9d04](https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/Mangers%20Meetings/SWCD%20Operation%20Sub-Committee%20(2025)/November%206,%202025%20Meeting?csf=1&web=1&e=0h9d04)

Migrating to ArcGIS Pro - Online Class: The Society of American Foresters (SAF), and LandMark Spatial Solutions, LLC are offering a "Migrating to ArcGIS Pro for Foresters: Basic Short Course." You can start the course at **any time after January 6th, 2026**. The course is designed to be self-paced with an expected completion time of just over 7.5 hours, divided into four sections intended to be completed over four weeks. For more info and to register, visit: https://learn.eforester.org/p/lmss-janfeb-2026?utm_source=Society+of+American+Foresters&utm_campaign=eace66f419-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2024_02_23_01_16_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_-74c5fc6bea-525959153&mc_cid=eace66f419&mc_eid=e9613e17fc#tab-product_tab_overview

Other Events

NACD 2026 Annual Meeting: The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 80th Annual will take place in San Antonio, TX from **February 14th- 19th, 2026**. Please save the date. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/event/2026-nacd-annual-meeting/>

2026 Water Quality Symposium: The New York State Conservation District Employees' Association and Soil and Water Conservation Committee are thrilled to announce the 2026 Water Quality Symposium will convene in Rochester, NY. **March 10th – 13th, 2026**. Please save the dates. Registration information will be available from CDEA shortly.