

CWICNY Representatives

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Alice Halloran, Essex County	Corrina Aldrich, Washington County
Kristin Ballou, Franklin County	

Water Quality Coordinating Committee:

Kelley Tucker, Ausable River Association, Clinton County
Anna Reynolds, Essex County Planning Department, Essex County
Guy Middleton, Upper Saranac Foundation, Franklin County
Randy Rath, Lake George Association, Warren County
Laura Generous, Washington County SWCD

Lake Champlain/ Lake George Regional Planning Board:

Allison Hargrave Gaddy



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2019 Annual Report

Providing a coordinated effort to improve water quality and other natural resources within the New York Lake Champlain counties through project implementation.

Cover up with Cover Crops Workshop

On September 19th CWICNY partnered with Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and SUNY Adirondack to hold a "Cover Up With Cover Crops" workshop at the college. The goal of this workshop was to teach students and farmers about cover crop techniques for soil erosion, nutrient management, compaction, organic matter and weed suppression. Sandy Arnold from Pleasant Valley Farm presented on the different applications cover crops have on their market farm from nutrient management to mulching and disease control. Sandy discussed cover crops throughout the different seasons as well as a variety of planting techniques such as intercropping with cover crops for long term and late season vegetables. USDA-NRCS Soil Scientist Olga Vargas presented on the science of cover crops and the direct effects on soil



health. Vargas dug soil pits in the demonstration market farm plot to identify the different layers of soil and setup a soil demonstration table to further show the key characteristics of healthy soil at the plot and the need for continuous soil improvement with best management practices (BMPs). Soil is the base of agriculture (and the skin of the earth) and it is important to keep this vital resource healthy. This workshop was part of a larger grant Warren Co. SWCD received through the Lake Champlain Basin Program to work with the SUNY Adirondack Agricultural Business Program to build a demonstration market farm plot with soil health BMPs.

Roadside Erosion Assessment Updates

In 2018 and 2019, Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Warren and Washington County Soil & Water Districts continued work on reducing roadside erosion in the Lake Champlain Watershed. Districts used funding from Phase II of the Lake Champlain Watershed Roadside Erosion Plan Implementation to update the current Lake Champlain Roadside Erosion Assessment Report, published in 2012. District staff completed assessments evaluating the cause and extent of erosion, soil types, slope, site stability, percent of vegetation cover and proximity to waterbodies. The report was updated to remove erosion sites that have been addressed and to identify new project sites.

Through this process 350 roadside erosion sites were identified and documented. Districts will continue to use this report to implement BMP's to prevent roadside erosion and for future grant projects in the Lake Champlain Watershed.



Letter from the President

It has been a busy year for CWICNY as we continue to move forward in positive directions! First off we would like to thank past board members Chastity Miller, and Robert Kalbfliesh, for their service to CWICNY. At the same time we welcome new members Anna Reynolds and Guy Middleton. We look forward to Anna and Guy's experience and participation to help keep CWICNY meeting the needs of the watershed.

In the past year CWICNY has become a more active partner with the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), by reaching out and having conversations and by providing presentations. Through these interactions we have been able to identify and discuss items that present funding and project implementation challenges to communities and organizations.

In 2019 representatives from CWICNY and the Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition (UHRWC) were invited to Albany to discuss issues related to the Non Ag Non Point Source Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP). The NYSDEC representatives asked specific and pointed questions and listened intently as various watershed members discussed issues related to the program. After we left, all of the participants from both coalitions felt it was a very productive meeting. When the WQIP applications were released in the spring, we were very excited and pleased to see that much of what was discussed in that meeting was addressed in the WQIP program. We would like to thank the NYSDEC for allowing us to come and discuss program issues and that they were willing to evaluate their program and listen to other perspectives. Several of the items that were discussed in the meeting were included in the 2019 WQIP - funds to assist with engineering/planning by entities to have projects designed and shovel ready, as well allowing administrative funds to be an eligible expenditure. These inclusions will certainly assist applicants to develop and implement projects.

In 2019 CWICNY was able to highlight how our projects are implemented on this side of Lake Champlain, both through the strength of CWICNY and by the individual Soil and Water Conservation Districts, by presenting at the LCBP Steering Committee meeting held in Lake George in September. By reaching out to partners and agencies, we are becoming more vested in regards to following through the process for those who are part of our support system through the various seats/appointments within the LCBP organization. There is a renewed energy coming to the New York LCBP Citizens Advisory Committee through support for appointments to current vacancies and following up as to what the makeup and the responsibilities of this committee are. By being a more active participant with our state and regional partners, the Champlain watershed will benefit, as it will allow us to have a louder voice in locally led conservation efforts.

It has been a great year full of momentum and rich in conversations. I look forward to keeping the positive progress, partnerships and lines of communication open to further enrich the communities that CWICNY represents as we move forward in 2020.

Corrina Aldrich



Other 2019 Project Highlights from the Basin (Continued)

Utilizing District funds the Essex County SWCD partnered with the Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program (APIPP) to host a Forest Health Workshop in November. Over a dozen attendees including local residents and regional professionals participated in our second event in this series at Noblewood Park in Willsboro. The workshop focused on common tree diseases and non-native invasive forest pests including the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Emerald ash borer, and the Spotted lanternfly which threaten the current composition of Adirondack forests. Our presenter, Julie Fogden from Nature Conservancy, provided example specimens and pointed to evidence of pest activity to illustrate the difference between native insects and invasive impacts.



Each year the Warren County SWCD conducts site visits for landowners and municipalities in regards to erosion and sediment control issues on timber harvesting sites. Depending on the watershed or municipality, timber harvest requirements may include erosion and sediment control, stormwater regulations or site plan review, which can be confusing to a logger or forester. Many municipal officials have little to no education or background in forest management and cannot readily determine what a good or bad management plan is. A common issue that arises is in the case of the division between timber harvest regulations and proper forest planning. To assist local communities, the District hosted a one day training that brought municipal officials and other interested parties together to hear from local planners, the NYSDEC and a private consulting forester in regards to the issues and challenges that both the municipality and logger may face when conducting harvests. This was very educational for all, as there are conflicting points of view when looking at protecting the resources and forest health. Thanks to the Lake Champlain Basin Program for providing funding towards this training!



CWICNY Inc. is a 501-C-(3) Not-for-Profit group originally formed in 2001 with the goal of "Providing a Coordinated Effort to Improve Water Quality and Other Natural Resources Within the Lake Champlain Counties Through Project Implementation." This coalition is a grass-roots approach that recognizes the importance of local participation and cooperation in addressing the many sources of pollutants into Lake Champlain.

CWICNY is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors that includes representatives from each of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and each of the Water Quality Coordinating Committees from Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Warren and Washington Counties, and a representative from the Lake Champlain - Lake George Regional Planning Board. Advisors to the group include the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and The Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development Council.

Other 2019 Project Highlights from the Basin

In 2019 the LGA successfully replaced the Foster Brook culvert on Goldey Road in Huletts Landing on Lake George. The previous undersized, perched culvert had been a stream system and maintenance issue for many years. It was replaced with a properly sized culvert that is more climate resilient and allows for fish passage. Additional stream restoration work took place above and below the site. Project Partners included the Town of Dresden Highway Department, Trout Unlimited, US Fish & Wildlife, Ausable River Association and the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP). Funding for the project came from the LCBP and the Helen V. Froehlich Foundation.



Pre-construction



Post-construction

Fairy Brook in the Town of Dresden, is a trout and smelt stream that outlets to Lake George, became inundated with organic matter and sediment which greatly reduced fish, flood, and recreational passage.

With technical assistance from LGA, a general permit from Washington SWCD, and work completed by Washington County DPW, the obstruction was successfully removed. The project occurred on property owned by Washington County and was considered part of the regular maintenance of Huletts Park. This project is an excellent example of multiple players working together for a common benefit!



Pre-construction

Otis Brook is a small native brook trout stream in the Town of Jay, on the East Branch of the Ausable River. The 4-sided concrete structure as shown in the pre-construction photo, was undersized and its smooth concrete bottom was less than ideal for aquatic organism passage. It was a functional road crossing before the high water from Hurricane Irene scoured away the bed and banks of the stream, leaving a 5-foot deep pool with a 2-foot drop to water surface, and badly eroding banks at the outlet.

Instead of a costly full replacement on this county road, the Ausable River Association designed and installed a stream retrofit. The post construction photo shows the restored step-pool structure creating storm resiliency and natural grade control. The deep scour pool was filled creating a smaller pool with a natural passageway for brook trout and other aquatic organisms. The eroding bank was stabilized using a log vane, local river cobble, and native plants. This project provides a cost effective example for creating flood resilience while rebuilding stream health and fish passage.



Post-construction

Stormwater Tradeshow Reaches 15 Years!

The 15th Annual North County Tradeshow and Conference was held on October 17, 2019 at the Great Escape Lodge in Queensbury, New York. This year's Tradeshow hosted approximately 80 attendees, including federal, state, county and local government representatives along with stormwater professionals. Presentations were made by a wide array of professionals and included the following topics: Phase II MS4 Permits and EPA Watershed Model, the Sustainable Use of Recycled HDPE in Stormwater Drainage Applications, NFIP Flood Maps and Determinations, Utilizing Cloud-Based GIS for MS4 Mapping, Neighborhood-Scale Engineering for Green Infrastructure Projects in the City of Albany, and the NYSDEC Source Water Protection Program. Program support was provided by CWICNY and the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

Fifteen years of addressing stormwater issues, impacts, technologies and other related subjects is a considerable feat in our area, as a significant portion of the Champlain Watershed is more rural in nature. Fifteen years ago, individuals and communities believed that stormwater only is in the urbanized areas/"cities" but by offering this tradeshow, the conversation has changed. Now most rural highways, roads and other developments in our watershed have significantly impacted our waters through stormwater runoff and alterations of the natural hydrology. Providing information to communities across the basin to understand that all of these changes to the natural landscape are critical and may have unintended impacts. These impacts need to be addressed and minimized or eliminated through proper planning, design, implementation and maintenance. The North County Stormwater Tradeshow provides an avenue for individuals and communities to change the conversation and see diverse presentations each year, which moves the ball forward towards the goal of conservation of our waters.



Lake Champlain Basin Program

Expands *Raise the Blade* Campaign to New York

The LCBP in conjunction with our partners, began expanding the *Raise the Blade* campaign which is part of the Healthy Soils program, in select communities on the New York portion of the Lake Champlain Watershed. This initiative encourages residents, businesses, and lawn care professionals to mow lawns to three inches in height, in an effort to promote soil health, increase water absorption, and reduce pollution.

Mowing to three inches allows grass to invest more energy in developing and strengthening its root system, retain more moisture, and increases the lawn's ability to have better infiltration during heavy rainfall events. This can lessen the chance of flooding and erosion due to runoff. Results of a recent two-year SeaGrant research study at 10 local businesses in the greater Burlington area of Vermont, suggest that grass is denser when it is cut to three inches rather than two, competes better with weeds, and allows for deeper rooting to better withstand midsummer heat and drought conditions.

The LCBP has worked with the Clinton County Department of Health to include *Raise the Blade* in the Health Impact segment of the Clinton County Community Health Improvement Plan. A new ad campaign has been developed and will be installed on Plattsburgh area busses for 2020! The LCBP continues to recruit businesses and homeowners to participate in the program and for additional information, go to www.lawntolake.org or contact the LCBP at 802.372.3213.



Rural Road Active Management Program in Hague, NY



Utilizing funds from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Water Quality Improvement Program grant, the Warren County SWCD continued the use of best management practices to reduce roadside ditch erosion in Hague this past year. The District worked alongside the Town of Hague Highway Department to make improvements to a steep section of Decker Hill Road that often becomes hazardous for drivers during bad weather conditions. The project location has highly erodible sandy soils and which are shallow to bedrock causing cracking, buckling and seepage from the pavement during winter months. This project required reconstruction of the ditch using a combination of best management practice solutions. The upper section of the ditch was lined with stone due to shallow bedrock and significant volumes of stormwater runoff. The stone lined ditch now transitions to a vegetated ditch reinforced with rolled erosion control blankets; compost filter logs were properly spaced along the vegetated section as check dams to help capture sediment. The lower section of the project captures runoff in a stone lined bio-retention area that confines the remaining sediment and allows water to slowly infiltrate into the ground. Over-



flow from the bio-retention area goes to a vegetated ditch armored with ShoreMax mats that ends in a stone pool. Overall, the Town of Hague was happy to work with the District to stabilize and improve a frequent problem area and reduce their need for winter salt applications in this area.

On Halloween night, the project site was put to the test as Warren County experienced a severe rain event resulting in up to 7.5 inches of rainfall in just a matter of a few hours. While the town dealt with many road closures and washouts the next day, Decker Hill Road, which was previously an area of frequent concern during even minor events, remained in excellent working condition. The District looks forward to continuing its work stabilizing areas like Decker Hill throughout the county, to ensure safe road conditions, reduce roadside erosion, and decrease road repair costs.

Amy Hill Road RRAMP Stabilization Project

Essex County Highway 47, or Amy Hill Road, has some steep grades with ditches that are susceptible to erosion. This project addressed an area that had manufactured check dams that had come to the end of their lifespan. The ditches were eroding and sediment was being transported downhill to where the road crosses a class C(T) tributary to Putnam Creek. The goal of the project was to slow down stormwater to prevent erosion and to install sediment controls to remove sediments before they enter the stream. The old check dams were removed and some of the ditch was cleaned out. Check dams were spaced according to slope on the hill and two sediment basins were installed at the base of the hill above the stream. All exposed and unvegetated areas were hydroseeded. The area was hit by a large storm on October 31-November 1, 2019, and the work held up well. The project was implemented in the summer of 2019 by Essex County Department of Public Works and Essex County SWCD, with funding provided by CWICNY.

Interstate 87 Goes Green



The Lake George Association (LGA) is using a \$86,227 grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program to pay for materials and some labor to replace asphalt stormwater channels along the Adirondack Northway (Interstate 87) in partnership with the New York State Department of Transportation (Region 1) and the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District. The project kicked off this past summer and work was completed in the top 3 priority areas identified.

The existing paved stormwater channels convey untreated stormwater into local streams that end up in Lake George along with the nutrients, sediment, and pollution that comes with it. The LGA's Lake Protection Projects focus on that mission: Protecting the Lake's water quality.



Approximately 1,100 feet of asphalt swales along the corridor were removed. Low-growth vegetation and erosion control mats were installed to slow the stormwater flow, allowing some of it to seep into the ground and filter naturally and nutrients in the stormwater stay in the soil and are taken up by the vegetation.

This project will continue and will address additional sites. We look forward to continuing this simple, yet valuable project!

Rural Roads Active Management Program (RRAMP) Goes Statewide in 2019!

In 2019, CWICNY continued to advocate for statewide guidelines to protect rural road infrastructure and water quality through the integration of cost effective best management practices (BMP's) to facilitate a harmonious, resilient, and sustainable network of secondary road corridors.

After a successful completion of the 2018 RRAMP funding and implementation program, CWICNY felt it was important to get this program out statewide by reflecting on the experiences, challenges faced and successful projects. In February 2019, CWICNY members and other county Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff took part in a Municipal Sub-committee meeting in Albany.

The RRAMP program, Best Management Program Guide and other existing maintenance programs were discussed and the New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee staff were assigned to pursue the feasibility of advancing the program. As a result of this meeting, a 2-day class at the Fall 2019 NYS Conservation District Employees Association Conservation Skills Workshop was organized to discuss and share information about the RRAMP program and others similar programs. Peter Hagar from Clinton SWCD, Dean Moore from Warren SWCD and Dave Reckahn, formerly of Essex SWCD, attended to instruct Districts about the RRAMP program, the BMP guide, and building stronger relationships with local highway departments.

CWICNY and its members are encouraged that this program has raised awareness of rural road maintenance and erosion prevention best management practices on a state wide level and look forward to continuing the work that has been initiated.

