



NYACD Meeting  
Zoom  
Monday, March 24, 2025  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendance:**

Sam Casella, President      Rob Carpenter, 1<sup>st</sup> V. President  
Scott Ryan, 2<sup>nd</sup> V. President      Ernie Swift, Treas.  
Brian Danforth, Div. IV      John M. Stortecky, Div. V  
Sherri Slater, Div. VI  
Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Director

**Absent:**

Dan Farrand, Past Pres.  
Bruce Dolph, Secretary  
Jim Brick, Div. I  
Rollin Pickering, Div. II

**Guests Present:** Corey Nellis, Montgomery SWCD District Manager, Linda Jones, Cortland SWCD Director, Jeremy Boylan, Cortland SWCD Director

**Partners Present:** Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Ex. Dir., Caitlin Stewart, NYSCDEA' President

**Absent:** Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation

**I. Call to Order:** Sam Casella, President Called the meeting to order 7:09 p.m.

**II. Roll Call:** Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Dr. gave roll call.

**III. Secretary's Report/Approval of Minutes:**

- A motion by Sherri Slater was seconded by John M. Stortecky to approve the February minutes. Carried. **#3/24/2025 = A**

**IV. Treasurer's Report:** Ernie gave a report on the February financial reports and Bills to be Paid.  
**V.**

- A motion by Sherri Slater seconded by Scott Ryan to approve the February Treasurer's report as provided. Carried. **#3/24/2025 = B**
- A motion by Brian Danforth seconded by Sherri Slater to approve the February Bills to be Paid. Carried. **#3/24/2025 = C**

**VI. Partners Reports:**

**NYSCDEA' Report:** Caitlin Stewart, CDEA President CDEA Report appended to the minutes.

**NRCS Report:** Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation, was unable to attend. No report provided.

**State Committee Report:** Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Executive Director, reported state-aid Part C funds have gone out and should be received by all districts. If all Performance Measures were met the districts would receive \$231,280.

The State Program Advisory committee will be meeting April 10<sup>th</sup> to talk about programs that the State Committee runs and receive feedback on ideas from districts and moving forward. They will be showcasing a new tool for districts to use to track their Performance Measures. Hopefully it will improve the reporting.

April 11<sup>th</sup>, we have a 4-Way Partner meeting scheduled.

On April 15<sup>th</sup> we have a SWCC In person meeting in Utica and hoping we have a good attendance. Bethany reported she has scheduled two soil and water districts to highlight and showcase what they are doing within their districts. Lunch will be provided, so be sure to let Bethany know if you plan on attending.

Following up with our last 4-way partner meeting SWCC created a survey of districts for information on how they interact with SUNY Colleges within their area. The baseline will help paint a picture of how they can improve and move forward to better prepare conservation students. The survey is due back on April 1<sup>st</sup>, and it is Bethany's plan to have the data to share at the next 4-Way Partner meeting.

#### **Board Report:**

**President:** Sam reported he will be attending the Fly-In on March 26<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. Blake will be unable to attend with him this year. Sam will be attending a briefing in the morning and meeting with Legislators later in the day. They will be discussing district needs. He will also be having a special Farm Bill meeting and discussing that as well. He is on the NACD Legislative Committee and Sam is Vice Chairman of this committee.

Chris Young, Government of Affairs person is leaving NACD this coming Friday. Chris was great to work with and attended one of NYACD annual meetings and was impressed on how NY works.

Sam has been working with FLCC with their huge conservation department and working with the information that NACD provided two years ago to better prepare students for the conservation field. They want to come up in the soil and water conservation department to enhance their programs.

Sam expressed his appreciation to Caitlin regarding the Water Quality Symposium.

**Executive Director:** Blanche reported expressed her thanks to Caitlin for the plug in her report for the NYS Envirothon and the need for volunteers.

Legislative Days went well and since Legislative Days Blanche has met with three additional Legislators sharing what Soil and Water Districts do to protect NY's soil and water as well as express concerns over the NYS Retirement System and the need for the resolution Everyone Deserves Clean Water and the

need for funding to do this. Blanche reported she sent out more Legislative booklets to their home office at their request.

Blanche reported that they held their first joint meeting with NE NACD regarding the joint event to on September 21-24, 2025, at the DoubleTree, East Syracuse. Things are moving along with selecting training sessions, guest speakers, tours, etc. Committee members are selecting areas they will be handling, and our next meeting is Wednesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will be meeting bi-monthly throughout the year to complete all the necessary things we need to do before the event.

On Friday Blanche reported that she will be meeting with the Great Lakes Commission and the Ohio University folks. We will receive updates from the Ohio State University team, review the fact draft sheet, and examine existing project information along with our next steps.

Blanche reported that she attended the Water Quality Symposium and expressed her thanks to the CDEA committee for another great job.

#### **Director & Representatives –**

- a. **Division I:** Jim Brick was unable to attend due to a conflict. No report provided.
- b. **Division II:** Rollin Pickering was unable to attend. No report provided.
- c. **Division III:** No representative. No report.
- d. **Division IV:** Brian Danforth reported he will be attending the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation district board meeting on April 19<sup>th</sup> share with them what NYACD does on behalf of districts.
- e. **Division V:** John M Stortecky had questions. John asked if the minutes include all the information Sam and Blanche reported during the meeting. Sam stated that all the information reported during the meeting is in the minutes.

John asked if the minutes could be sent to Division Representatives to share with their divisions. Blanche stated that once approved, the minutes are sent to districts, the NYACD Board, and directors. She can also provide them with NYACD division representatives beforehand.

John inquired as to what role Blanche and Sam are managing as their duties. Sam explained that he manages programs, meetings, etc. at the federal level where Blanche manages more state-level meetings and programs. Also, they work together depending on needs and concerns.

John inquired about reviewing the NYACD By-Laws before the annual meeting. Blanche stated that she had sent the by-laws out to the Board members last month for review, Blanche is waiting for comments and will gather and share with Board members once received.

John wants to discuss the per diem again. Blanche stated she will put the By-laws and per diem on next month's agenda for discussion.

John reported that he talked with every Legislator and/or staff during Legislative day regarding a lobbyist. John requested that we discuss this further. Blanche will put this on the agenda for next month's meeting.

John reported that he attended a Warren Co. SWCD meeting and Warren Co. felt the need that NYACD be the legislative arm for the districts. NYACD has historically had a lobbyist and was not aware they no longer had a lobbyist. Warren Co. SWCD stated they thought their assessment paid for an NYACD lobbyist.

John reported that Hamilton Co. SWCD is making a call that NYACD Board and division representatives review the Legislative day packet. John addressed Hamilton Co. SWCD concerns related to the Legislative Booklet, the evening meeting before Legislative day. They did not like the format of the booklet and Blanche can work with districts to provide better information. Hamilton Co. SWCD felt that they or the CDEA and division representatives for review the booklet for comments.

- f. **Division VI:** Sherri Slater reported that she is heading out to meetings at Saratoga, Rensselaer, and Schoharie. Sherri will have more information to report at next month's meeting. Sherri stated that she is looking forward to working on the NYACD/NE NACD.
- g. **Division VII:** No representative, no report.
- h. **Division VIII:** No representative, no report.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**2024-2025 NYS Envirothon:** Ernie stated that they had a meeting early today. Each committee updated where they are at, and the timeline was reviewed. Things are moving along as expected and the next meeting will be a face-to-face meeting at SUNY Cortland, 11:00 a.m., April 9<sup>th</sup>.

**VII. Old Business:** No old business to discuss.

#### **VIII. New Business:**

- **Static Plan:** Blanche reported she had started creating/updating and emailed to the board for review.
- **NYACD Booklet:** Scott and I discussed the creation of a NYACD Booklet all in one little booklet. Reformatting what we have and updating it.
- **NYACD/NE NACD:** Need to raise funds and set up possible classes. Groups moving forward and Blanche provided a funding packet for Board members to use searching for potential sponsors.

- **Permitting:** Brian inquired about a letter regarding permitting with DEC. Caitlin stated that it was not a letter but a survey to districts to see if they have a general permit or want one. There is a need to work together with DEC regional folks.

**IX. Adjournment:**

- A motion by Brian Danforth seconded by Sherri Slater to adjourn the meeting. Carried.  
**#3/24/2025 = D**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Next meeting date is **Monday, April 23, 2025, 7:00 p.m. by Zoom.**

Respectfully submitted by

*Blanche L. Hurlbutt,*

NYACD Executive Director March 10, 2025

**March Motions Meeting:**



## New York State Conservation District Employees' Association, Inc.

*Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide ongoing programs and services to conserve, enhance, and protect soil and water resources in communities.*

### CDEA Report: NYACD Meeting, March 24, 2025

- The **March CDEA Annual Meeting** was held at Water Quality Symposium, on March 12, 2025. The meeting packet is on SharePoint, and I can email it to those interested. Thank you, Blanche, for providing the NYACD report. A resolution for the NYS CDEA and NYACD representatives to promote and support efforts for reform of the NYS and local retirement system was unanimously approved. The Executive Committee, Member-At-Large, and odd Division Representatives were reelected.
- Save the dates for upcoming **CDEA meetings**, with agendas and minutes available here: <https://www.nyscdea.com/agenda-minutes/>
  - June 4 and 5, Division VI
  - August 19 – 20, Division VI
  - October 22 – 23, Division VIII
- CDEA Vice President Jessica Armstrong and board, track committee chairs and members, and presenters put on an incredible **Water Quality Symposium** March 11 through 14, 2025, at the Hyatt Regency Rochester. A record thirty-six courses in Ag, Non-Ag, Clerk / Admin, Forestry, and Education tracks were offered in addition to the NYS Erosion and Sediment Control review course and exam. Three hundred and eighty-seven people attended the training session. We thank our NYACD, SWCC and NRCS partners for their continued support of this effective and valuable professional development experience! I give special recognition to Blanche who co-presented the New Employee Orientation class and provided an overview of NYACD. **Ronnie Raindrop®** was born in Oswego County in 1990, celebrated his 35<sup>th</sup> birthday during the Symposium, and made special guest appearances throughout the 4-day event. He made his debut in a brand-new costume with streamlined shoes that are efficient for walking and a raindrop that is easy to assemble. Jess emailed the evaluation form, and the board will review the event at our next meeting.
- CDEA hosted a **Managers' and Partners meeting** on February 27, 2025 to provide employees, Directors, and partners the opportunity to have an open and honest discussion about an attorney, lobbyist, Private Forest Stewardship and Bioeconomy Proposal of \$2.8M, and the District line item in the SFY 2026 and 2027 Environmental Protection Fund.
- The CDEA board reviewed and approved the response to **NYACD's letter** sent January 23, and emailed it statewide.
- I met with SWCC AEAs to discuss agenda items for the **Municipal Assistance Subcommittee**, finalized and printed the CDEA Annual Meeting packet, organized the

CDEA Annual Meeting, and attended a CDEA SPAC meeting to discuss priority agenda topics and other issues of concern.

- CDEA board members and I attended the following meetings and provided updates to ensure CDEA's support of and contribution to the **4-Way Partnership** and beyond:
  - SWCC Technical Advisory Committee. Thank you CDEA Vice President Jess Armstrong and Division II Representative Jason Cuddeback for attending!
  - NYACD February meeting
  - NYACD Legislative Day
  - SWCC February meeting
- The CDEA Board agreed to publish **CDEA News** quarterly, and the next edition will be released at the end of March. Back issues can be read here:  
<https://www.nyscdea.com/newsletter/>
- Upcoming events:
  - **New York State Envirothon**  
May 28 - 29, 2025 • SUNY Cortland  
Volunteers are greatly needed and appreciated! Sign up here:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfolzWMhXKcvHS4n0l\\_0EDro7I1Q2glOFRIBE9Bn4\\_yK6FQAw/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfolzWMhXKcvHS4n0l_0EDro7I1Q2glOFRIBE9Bn4_yK6FQAw/viewform)
  - **CDEA Golf Tournament**  
August 7, 2025 • Casolwood Golf Course, Canastota  
Information to follow

Respectfully submitted,



Caitlin Stewart, CDEA President