



Spring 2023

WYOMING COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2023 Water Quality Symposium

In March, the Wyoming County SWCD Staff attended the Water Quality Symposium training event in Syracuse, NY. This annual event is hosted by the New York State Conservation District Employees Association in an effort to bring District employees from across the state together.

The Symposium is an intense four-day training session for District Employees, USDA/NRCS Employees, WQCC Representatives, and all Conservation Partners. It is perhaps one of the most effective professional development experiences available to participants.

Wyoming County SWCD was honored to receive two awards at the 2023 event. First, the "Special Project Award" was received for the Pike Mills Dam Removal Project. This award acknowledged the District for our efforts in removing and replacing the dam in Pike, NY which will improve

aquatic connectivity and native trout habitat.

Secondly, the Division I Merit Award was presented to District Manager, Al Fagan. This award recognizes District employees who have shown outstanding efforts in promoting their District and its activities.

In addition, Wyoming County District Technician, Rebecca Campbell, was nominated and elected to be the new Division I Representative for the Conservation District Employees Association Board. Division I is comprised of Niagara, Erie, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, and Allegany Counties.

The District Board and Staff were grateful for the recognition and will continue to pursue conservation efforts to the best of their ability for Wyoming County!



District Chairman, Daryl Heiby, and District Manager, Al Fagan smiling with the Wyoming County Awards.



Left to right: Jake Kelly, Becca Campbell, Emelyn Bell (District Technicians), and Al Fagan (District Manager)

14th Annual Pride of Wyoming County Agriculture Dinner

Greg and Ben Chamberlain, LLC is the recipient of the District's 2022 Conservation Farm of the Year Award for their continued environmental stewardship of the land and efforts to mitigate their environmental impact.



Jodi, Greg, Ben and Emily Chamberlain

Greg and Ben Chamberlain LLC, also known as Hi-Land Farms, is a 5th generation dairy farm located in Wyoming, NY. The farm milks 850 cows and has a total of 1,600 registered jerseys on their farm. They operate 1,650 tillable acres to grow cash crops and to

support their animals as well.

The farm began in 1888 and is now operated by Greg and Jodi Chamberlain (4th generation) as well as Ben and Emily Chamberlain (5th generation). The Chamberlains strive to incorporate partnerships in the surrounding farming community, such as sharing services and resources with neighbors, much like farms in decades past. The farm has participated in the District's Agricultural Environmental Management program since 2003, but has been a cooperator with the District for many decades beforehand.

Greg and Ben Chamberlain, LLC has implemented numerous conservation practices through the District, including multiple waste storage and transfer systems, a silage leachate management system, stream crossings, erosion control practices, soil health practices such as cover cropping and reduced tillage, and livestock exclusion systems.

The farm has also utilized its no-till drill on other farms to plant cover crops, leading to improved soil health on those farms. These practices implemented over the lifespan of the farm have led to erosion reduction and improved water quality in the Oatka Creek watershed, and beyond to the Genesee River Watershed.

Ronald P. Herman Partner Award - James LaGioia, NRCS Resource Conservationist

The Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District's Ronald P. Herman Partner in Conservation Award recognizes an individual or agency annually who has continually assisted the District further its mission and goals. Jim LaGioia, the 2022 recipient of this award, is well deserving.

To date, Jim has worked to successfully fund 23 conservation practice contracts in conjunction with grants that Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District have been awarded through NYS Agriculture and Markets.

Partnering together, the District, Jim, and other NRCS

staff has implemented waste storage & transfer systems, silage leachate management systems, heavy use area protection, livestock exclusion systems, riparian buffers, and numerous other systems, leading to millions of dollars being utilized for environmental conservation practices in Wyoming County.

Along with assisting the District in implementing its mission and goals, Jim has helped plan three times as many contracts which were only funded through NRCS.

Jim has always been willing to assist the District with its other programs as well, such as conservation education and streambank stabilization.



Jim and Lauren LaGioia

Campbell Dairy Farm , LLC AEM Award

Campbell Dairy Farm, LLC is the recipient of the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2022 Agricultural Environmental Management Award. The Farm is owned and operated by Jim and Allison Ikeler. They are the 4th generation to farm at their location in the Upper Cattaraugus Creek Watershed. Today, the Ikeler's milk 200 cows, and operate 365 acres of cropland with their 4 children and one fulltime employee.

Campbell Dairy Farm, LLC has been a cooperator with the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District for decades and has been involved in the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program since 2007.

Recently, the Ikeler's have installed a major waste storage and transfer system that included numerous components, an access control system to remove animals from the trout stream adjacent to the farmstead, and a riparian buffer system to filter sediment and nutrients from runoff before reaching a waterway.

The farm has been planning these practices with the District for several years; and in addition to these, the farm has also addressed their silage leachate control system. The completion of these projects has led to an overhaul of their farmstead to reduce their manure spreading frequency and address all runoff concerns from the farmstead.

This aligns with the farms belief of having to make progress annually, be mindful of the environment, and continue to improve on what they have in order to remain sustainable and not be phased out in the agricultural industry. This forward thinking and goal setting are integral to the Agricultural Environmental Management planning process.



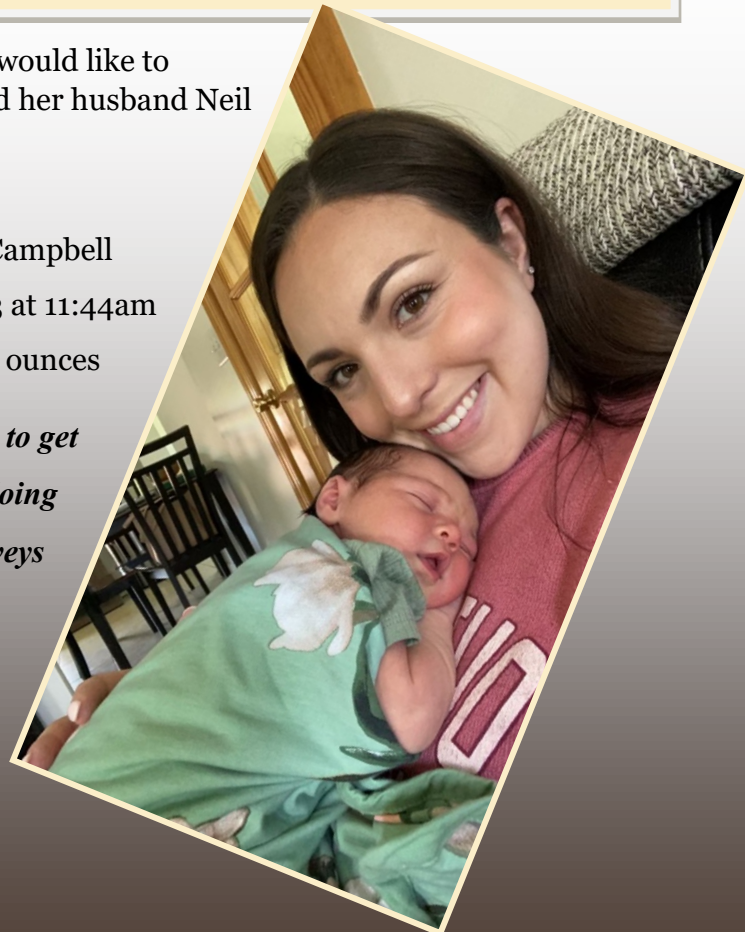
Allison and Jim Ikeler

Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to Congratulate District Technician, Rebecca Campbell and her husband Neil on bringing the newest conservationist into this world!



Vivian Reid Campbell
Born 5/18/2023 at 11:44am
8 pounds, 7 ounces

*We can't wait to get
Vivian out doing
stream surveys
with us!*



Letchworth Central School Wyoming County's 1st Place Team



On Wednesday, May 10th, the District hosted the Trailside Envirothon at Letchworth State Park. Partnering with Allegany County SWCD and Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District, 14 teams from 4 different school districts tested their knowledge of Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife, Soils, and a Current Issue for a chance to move on to the New York State Envirothon later this month. Congratulations to the team from Letchworth Central School District that will be representing Wyoming County!!

Thanks to donations, great weather, great people, and great volunteers, it was another great event!

Thank you for the help from Letchworth State Park, Allegany County Soil and Water Conservation District, Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NY State Parks & Historic Sites, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS, and other volunteers!

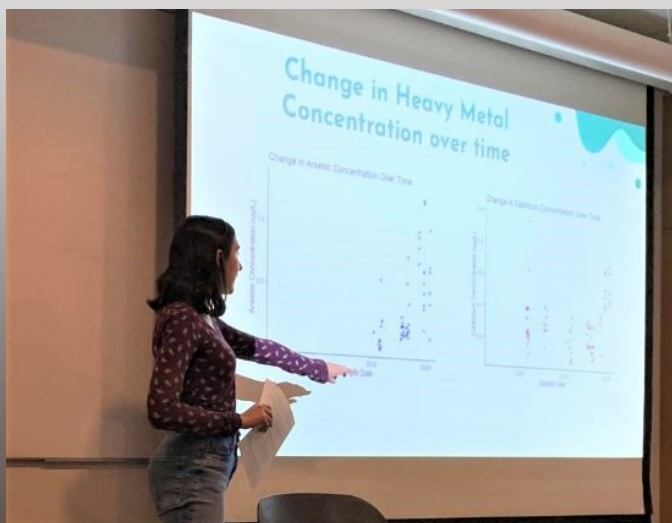


The Collaboration Continues with SUNY Geneseo to Better Understand Water Quality in Wyoming County

On Thursday, May 18th, 2023, the 2nd Annual Stream Water Quality Research Symposium was held on Campus at SUNY Geneseo. 25 students in Dr. Suann Yang's Foundation of Biostatistics class presented their final findings after studying the seven major watersheds in Wyoming County, NY. Over the last 4 months students worked in groups utilizing the NYS DEC's Division of Water public data to statistically analyze both physical and chemical parameters of stream health with the intention of identifying information useful to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts management efforts.

The Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and SUNY Geneseo Department of Biology are in their second year of partnership. District Technician Emelyn Bell, a graduate of SUNY Geneseo and former research student of Dr. Yang's remained in touch upon her full time hire at the District. Wanting to provide her students with the opportunity of real-world experience, Yang and Bell decided that her class may be able to provide information valuable to directing the Districts efforts to preserve and improve water quality in the county.

The first year of research included a baseline assessment to evaluate the most useful indicators of water quality by exploring the relationships among macroinvertebrate biodiversity, physical stream characteristics, geomorphology, and water chemistry parameters.



This year's research efforts were focused on identifying relationships among parameters of stream health over space and time. Some research groups looked for patterns or correlations between stream health and land use (urban & agricultural) and different geomorphological watersheds. While other groups looked at changes in water chemistry, heavy metal presence, and other parameters over time.

Each year has yielded information to direct watershed management in Wyoming County as well as how to best proceed with research efforts. The Wyoming County SWCD is committed to improving and preserving water quality by understanding the current and historic water quality conditions of our watersheds and how to best allocate time and resources to preserve and restore them. Thanks to Dr. Yang, and countless students hard work and time, we continue to make great strides!!!

Protect Your Environment By Doing Your Part!

As weather warms up and plants start to grow, most people will find themselves with a long list of landscaping tasks to do around their property. Mowing the lawn, weeding the garden, cleaning out flowerbeds are just a few. Whatever your spring projects are, keeping the environment in mind can help you be more productive, keep your property healthier, and contribute to a cleaner environment!

Yard Clippings: Grass clippings can be beneficial to your lawn! Short clippings can be left on the lawn and can be beneficial to the lawn! They will decompose quickly, keeping them out of landfills and recycling nutrients back into the environment. Studies have shown that leaving lawn clippings can reduce the need for fertilizer, making your yard healthier. Excess clippings can be composted to make an environmentally sustainable fertilizer for your garden or flowerbeds.

Reduce Erosion: Seed bare spots in your lawn and plant native shrubs and trees along waterways and shorelines. Plant roots hold soil in place and stop it from being carried away and into waterways.

Manage Runoff: Watch areas where downspouts release water or runoff concentrates. Those areas are susceptible to erosion. Consider installing rain barrels on downspouts or adding stronger vegetation in these areas to reduce the amount of flow going over them.

Fertilizer: Only use fertilizer when absolutely necessary. Be sure to have your soil tested and find out what nutrients your soil is lacking. Cornell Cooperative extension can send your soil samples out and provide you with the results. Do not



spread fertilizer near waterbodies! Leave a buffer zone along any ditch, stream, pond, or lake to reduce excess nutrients in the water.

Limit Pesticide Use: Pesticides and Herbicides can end up in local waterways. Limit their use and consider tolerating “weeds”. Some of them are flowering (especially Dandelions) and are vital to Bee populations! There are natural alternatives to herbicides as well! Try a 10% vinegar solution. Multiple applications can be just as effective and will keep harmful chemicals out of your environment.

Leaves, Sticks and Small Debris: These can also be composted! Leaves, small sticks and organic debris can be added to your compost pile. Large debris can be disposed of curbside or through drop off in some municipalities. If neither are an option then dispose of them upland in an area where they can decompose and not end up in a waterway.

Keep it out of the water: Do not throw lawn clippings and other debris into any nearby waterbody, these materials can cause excess nutrients and lead to algae growth and poor water quality. Dispose of them properly and keep your property and your environment healthy.

*Environmental stewardship isn't just for large projects and group efforts, small individual decisions to do the right thing for the environment make the difference!
It starts with you!*

What is AEM?

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts in each county lead the local AEM effort. Over one-third of all farms in New York State participate in AEM. AEM is designed to work with farmers to further protect those important natural resources. By participating in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, our food systems, the economy, and the environment.

AEM is a voluntary program led by your local Soil and Water Conservation District with a focus on local and watershed-wide environmental concerns, farm-specific conservation practices, and individual farm business objectives.

HOW DOES AEM WORK?

THE AEM FIVE-TIER APPROACH

AEM uses a five-tier voluntary approach to (1) gauge interest, (2) assess existing stewardship and environmental concerns, (3) develop farm-specific conservation plans, (4) implement the best management practices identified in the plan, and (5) update plans and conservation practices over time.

Contact the Wyoming Soil and Water Conservation District at (585) 786 - 3675

Or visit the AEM website at <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/agricultural-environmental-management> to learn more.

TIER 1: Farmers complete a short, confidential questionnaire about current farm activities, future plans, and environmental conservation interests.

TIER 2: Farmers and local conservation professionals document existing environmental practices and assess potential resource concerns while walking the farm.

TIER 3: Local conservation professionals work with farmers to develop environmental farm plans to address concerns identified in Tier 1 and Tier 2.

TIER 4: AEM partners provide technical, educational, and/or financial assistance to help farmers implement priority practices from their Tier 3 environmental farm plans.

TIER 5: Farmers and conservation professionals update plans and evaluate practices to ensure continued environmental management and farm viability.

AEM experts can help with:

- farm environmental assessment,
- environmental farm plan development,
- best management practice design and implementation,
- updates to plans and installed practices, and
- education programs for environmentally sound farming.

WHY AEM?

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) links farmers with local conservation professionals to identify existing environmental stewardship, address natural resource concerns, and enhance farm viability. For qualifying operations, participation in AEM may also help promote farm products through the New York State Grown & Certified program.





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County Supervisor - Joseph Gozelski

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Conservation Technician - Rebecca Campbell

Conservation Technician - Emelyn Bell

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