



A publication of Wayne County Soil & Water



Annual Report 2017

CONSERVATION OF OVER 45,000 ACRES IN WAYNE COUNTY



Lindsey M. Gerstenslager, MSEd,
District Manager

Conservation is a continued tradition to protect heritage of the ecosystem for all living creatures. Legacy is what we leave behind. It is about making sure as a community, what we leave behind the community can be proud of. While being part of an ever changing society, conservation is about protecting habitat for all the life within the community. Many of times, we all are wrapped up in the present and forget to think about what came before us and what will come after us.

The Soil & Water Conservation District was chartered back in 1944 in Wayne County by the State of New York. The mission and purpose of our existence is to help to reduce human and natural impacts on Wayne County's natural resources through implementation and education of conservation practices.

People are responsible for conservation. Every

neighbor, neighborhood, town, and village. Over the last seven years, the District worked to provide 25 programs managing conservation through our MAP – Municipal Assistance Programs, LAP- Landowner Assistance Programs and SAP – School Assistance programs. These programs have grown and developed because the people of this community have asked for them to care for our environment. Technical service assistance is the primary function of the District to all of the community. Our team is small but mighty, managing conservation to over 45,000 acres in 2017 for water quality, habitat creation, preservation and mitigation and invasive species management. The Wayne District is made up of 14 employees including, (7) full, (2) part and (5) seasonal time people and a dedicated five person Board of Directors. Every season is a conservation challenge and a blessing. We touch our community in so many ways. Here are a few ways we did in 2017!

- Completed 45 site visits for stormwater and flood control management related to Lake Ontario Flood Response;
- 67 meetings attended for technical education; 100 hours conservation education, partnership networking and development;
- 139 Watershed management activities completed for habitat mitigation, preservation and development;
- 2 stream stabilization projects completed, protection for over 1225 LF.
- 9 drainage & stormwater management projects completed totaling 10 miles of conduction and two culvert replacements;
- 5 Critical Area Seeding projects completed;
- 1 Habitat Restoration project completed on south of Sodus Bay Bridge;
- 3,114 acres of invasive species management occurred between mechanical harvesting, and 9 hand harvesting events with over 40 volunteers;
- 12 flood mitigation assistance related to stream corridor management;
- 26 permits assisted;
- 1 mine land reclamation and planning permit;
- 6 culvert assessments completed; two installed;
- 1 forestry landowner management plan reviewed;
- 2593 participants in 19 events for conservation/environmental education outreach;
- 173 Ag value assessment worksheets;
- 11 farms assisted with six different systems including but not limited to: Soil conservation system; Erosion control system-structural; Silage leachate control and treatment system; Composting system – animal; Livestock heavy use area runoff management; and Prescribed rotational grazing system.

As we began planning for the District's 75th year in 2019, the team here at the District began reviewing what came before us. Through records, journals, vouchers, and contracts we discovered there are programs that used to be offered in Wayne County that would not even seem possible today. Between then and now, the legacy we have left through conservation community partnership continues to unfold in Wayne County and we are excited to be a part of the community's legacy for what is yet to come.



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Lindsey Gerstenslager MSEd, District Manager
Catherine Comfort, Conservation Sec./Treasurer
Ronald Thorn, CCA, Conservation Field Program Manager
Chris Hotto, CPESC Specialist, District Technician
Scott DeRue, Water Quality Specialist, District Technician
Terry Reynolds, Agriculture Implementation Specialist, District Technician
Maxine Appleby, Conservation Public Relations Specialist
Ian Priestley, District Technician, AEM Specialist
Drew Starkey, District Technician, Program Specialist



Christopher Hotto District Technician, Certified Specialist in Erosion and Sediment Control

Agricultural Drainage Group Accomplishments

The Wayne County Agricultural Drainage program is a program designed to manage areas of flow that affect agricultural lands which in Wayne County's number one industry. The County decided to implement this program in partnership with the District in the late 1980's and continues to provide funding for maintaining 67 conduits for flow. These projects are reviewed every 5 years and planned for maintenance on a regular cycle. In 2018, the Agricultural Drainage program will review the 67 projects and address if they are still serving the original purpose.



Bills Road Project: Located in the town of Walworth, this project is 1.75 miles long and goes through 13 properties. The project was mowed, snagged and a small section was dipped. The project helps maintain proper drainage to hundreds of acres of agricultural land as well as residential property.

Black Brook Project: This project is located in the town of Galen. It begins at the Erie Canal and goes about 1.3 miles north through 9 properties. We mowed and snagged all but one small section that was not accessible due to weather conditions



Ki-Ham-Law Ditch: We completed the replacement of a failing culvert crossing on this project. The existing culvert had begun to fail and was no longer safe for equipment to cross. We replaced the existing pipe with 30 feet of 72" CMP



Second Creek In the town of Sodus, project goes through 5 properties,. about 1 mile long and consisted of mowing and snagging. Could not complete due to weather. There are more trees to be removed in the coming season

Mink Creek: In the town of Williamson, project is about 3 miles long and goes through 16 properties. Mowed and snagged everything except the section north of Lake road, which was too wet due to the high lake levels.



Melvin Brook: This project is in the town of Galen and is about 1.5 miles long. We mowed and removed blockages on the entire project and cleared willows along one side of the ditch that had been skipped the last couple maintenance cycles.

Route 31 Project: This project is in the town of Galen and is about 1 mile in length. The project goes through 3 landowners properties. Maintenance work consisted of mowing and dipping to improve drainage for agricultural land

2017 Conservation Farm of the Year

Hill’s Drumlin View Farm – owned and operated by the Hill Family. Daniel & Donna and Jeff , Clyde, NY.



Daniel & Donna Hill and son Jeff Hill

The Drumlin View Farm facilities are located on High Street Rd. in the Town of Galen. The land base of the farm is 275 where 215 acres are considered tillable with an additional 125 acres rented. The property is used to rotational graze and make hay and corn for the herd. Any additional feed needs are purchased from outside the farm or if there is an excess it is sold. They milk around 80 cows and grow their own replacement stock.

Watershed Protection: The farm works to minimize their impact on Black Brook. This stream system is listed as a class C stream with use impacts on Aquatic Life and Recreation at a stressed severity level. D.O./Oxygen demand and nutrients are the suspected pollutants with agriculture

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary incentive-based program that helps all farmers operate environmentally sound and economically viable businesses.



The AEM Program coordinates existing agricultural and environmental conservation agencies and programs as well as agribusiness, to provide one-stop shopping for services. All agricultural counties in New York State are currently conducting ARM programs and participation has grown to include nearly 8,000 farms.

being the suspected pollutant according to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. The waters from Black Brook flow into Erie Canal, which becomes part of the Seneca River, which flows into the Oswego River, and eventually into Lake Ontario.

Daniel & wife, Donna, and next generation, Son, Jeff and daughter, Jenna, work to keep their dairy on the forefront of conservation. This farm has participated in community agriculture by working with neighboring farms to implement crop rotation, cover crops, manure sharing, natural resource sharing, best management practice implementation, and working on completion of an update Certified Nutrient Management Plan. This plan will help guide the farm for management of rotation on crops, affective manure application for crop production and management of other natural resource issues.

This farm has used available resources to collaborate and make their efforts in the daily grind of farming effective and sustainable for all their production land. Partners like USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, and Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District have found ease in working with this farm to further the benefits of land stewardship and conservation implementation. This farm strives to continue to manage their operation to provide a better product, quality herd health and remain conservation stewards. They have participated in implementation of several farm system planning for Prescribed Rotational Grazing Management (2015), Barn Yard Water Management (2011), USDA NRCS’s Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) 2010 to current, and a Grazing Plan through Graze NY in 2010/2011 in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Agricultural land production and how tax assessment is configured.

Agricultural Value Assessments – Soil Group Worksheets

The agricultural assessment program allows eligible farmland owners to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development value. Any assessed value which exceeds the equalized agricultural assessment on the land may qualify for a reduced tax assessment.

Landowners must apply to their local town assessor annually for an agricultural assessment. Further Information on Agricultural Districts can be found by contacting Wayne County Planning, Ora Rothfuss, Ag Development Specialist.

To qualify for an agricultural assessment, you must meet one of the following criteria:

- Own at least seven acres of land which produces a minimum of \$10,000 annually, or own less than seven acres of land which produces a minimum of \$50,000 annually, on average, in the preceding two years from the sale of crops, livestock, or livestock products.
- Have a start-up farm operation in the first year of operation on owned or rented land that meets the minimum acreage and sales thresholds.
- Own rented land if the land independently satisfies the minimum acreage and sales requirements (see above) or is being used pursuant to a lease agreement of five or more years in conjunction with land which independently qualifies (in other words, if the operation leasing the land meets the acreage and sales requirements).



For more detailed information on Ag Value Assessments, visit the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance for an overview of the rules or contact your local assessor for more detailed information on qualifying for the agricultural assessments. Contact your town offices for information for local assessors.

NOTE: Owners who convert lands benefiting from an agricultural assessment to non-farm use are liable for conversion payments based on the amount of taxes saved. Owners contemplating a conversion may determine the payment owed by contacting their local assessor or by contacting the Wayne County Real Property Tax Services calling 315-946-5916.

2017 Conservation Management Sales for Community Conservation

Tree Sale

Fish Sale

Trees and Shrubs 5,200
Ground Cover: 1,300
Fruit Shrubs: 389

Conservation plant packs: 62
Conservation Supplies: 1,105

Total Stocking Fish: 2010
Total Vegetation Control Fish: 25
Total Management Supplies: 140



Aquatic Vegetative Control Annual Report



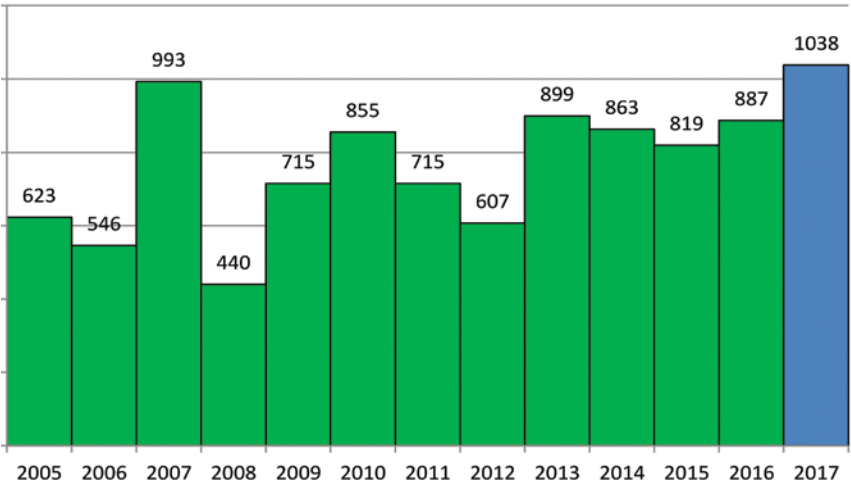
Scott DeRue,
District Technician

2017 Weed Harvesting Season

The annual goal of the program is to capture and remove 500 harvester loads of nuisance aquatic plant material from all five bays serviced over the length of the season. The mechanical harvesting component is evaluated by comparing time spent on respective activities to the amount or tonnage removed and assistance provided to the public.

For the 2017 season, mechanical harvesting of aquatic vegetation in Blind Sodus Bay was not performed due to continuing access issues and a lack of significant concentrations of plant present. The District made the decision to not harvester Blind Sodus Bay based on these observations.

Harvesting operations for the 2017 season were carried out for 58 days between mid-June and late-September. The final removal amounts for each bay are as follows;



Sodus Bay – 863 loads,
East Bay – 90 loads,
Port Bay – 43 loads, and
Maxwell Bay – 42 loads.



Photos by Steve Boone



The total amount removed from the four (4) embayments was 1038 loads. This season, a significant majority of the loads recorded for Sodus Bay came from the wetland area south of the Ridge Rd. bay bridge. This was the inaugural effort to control invasive

water chestnut in the Sodus Bay Lake Shore Marsh complex. 314 loads of plant material were removed from south of the bay bridge.

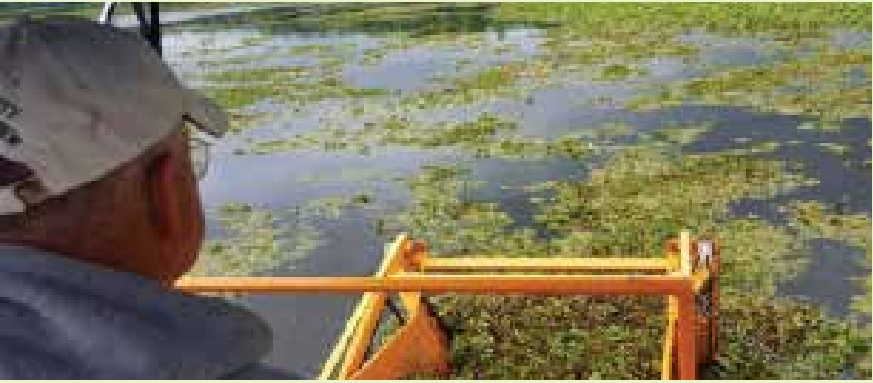
The general rule in previous years has been that one (1) harvester load is equal to two (2) tons of wet plant material. With the advancements in the equipment that SWCD deploys, it has come to attention that 2 tons may be a drastic under-estimation for the capacity of a single harvester.

Acknowledgment

The success of this program depends greatly on numerous groups and individuals: Wayne County Board of Supervisors, Town of Sodus, Town of Huron, Town of Wolcott, Village of Sodus Point, Wayne County SWCD Board of Directors, FLOWPA, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Save Our Sodus, Port Bay Association, and the numerous private landowners who provided access for equipment.

The most important factor that influenced plant density in 2017 was the seasonal Lake Ontario water level fluctuations.

The complete AVC Program report can be found online www.waynecountyNYsoilandwater.org



The most important factors that influenced plant density in 2017 was the seasonal Lake Ontario water level fluctuations. This year, water levels were the highest they have been in years. Lake Ontario was affected by a “perfect storm” of factors that caused high lake levels. Lake Ontario receives water from precipitation, runoff

from the surrounding basin, and water from the Niagara River. This spring (2017), all three sources contributed higher than average amounts of water to the lake, most noticeably precipitation between April and May. This limited aquatic plants growth in the early season like Curly-leaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) and Eurasian Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*). The continuous influx of readily available nutrients fed algae growth. This, plus the increase in suspended solids brought in by tributaries have increased the turbidity in the bays, limiting the amount of light is available for rooted plant growth. The higher than average water levels in the spring limited the amount of early season plant growth. Once the water levels receded, a drastic increase in aquatic plant growth occurred. This was more typical in Sodus Bay where the water clarity commonly extends into the 12 feet of water depth range.

In Partnership with Finger Lakes Prism Strike Team



2017 Red Creek PRISM Crew

Again in 2017 the Finger Lakes Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) strike team assisted with the removal from the four (4) embayments. A total of 1038 loads. A significant majority of the loads recorded for Sodus Bay came from the wetland area south of the Ridge Rd. bay bridge. This was the inaugural effort to control invasive water chestnut in the Sodus Bay Lake Shore Marsh complex. 314 loads of plant material were removed from south of the bay bridge.

An issue that is apparent each year is the need for more and closer access sites for off-loading plant material. A significant majority of the shoreline is privately owned and heavily developed. Access depends on permission from the land owner. With off-loading sites in closer proximity the areas being harvested, production can be increased by greater than 50 percent. A situation that happened a number of times this year was that the access site would become too damp for the dump trucks to operate and harvest.

This was most notable on Sodus Bay south of Ridge Rd. at the bay bridge. The District used two temporary access sites, with hopes to develop them into permanent sites, to harvest 314 harvester loads in 11 days. More access sites available would allow the operators to move to a more use able site to continue harvesting. The staff continually pursues access sites on both public and private lands in an effort to improve efficiency.

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

2017 Wayne County Envirothon Teams, congratulations to all who participated

Envirothon Builds Teamwork

THE
ENVIROTHON
COMPETITION
BUILDS
CONFIDENCE

The Envirothon is designed to give students the opportunity to learn about environmental issues and natural resources by conducting tests in the field. Often times this experience becomes a lifestyle for students and goes beyond competitions—it encourages students to be actively engaged in the environment around them at all times. Many students move onto careers in the conservation and environmental fields.

This year’s Wayne County Envirothon was held at Montezuma Audubon Center. Nine teams, representing area High Schools: Palmyra Macedon, Lyons, North Rose Wolcott and Red Creek competed in the event.



The Red Creek High School team “RAMS” took first place in the 2017 Wayne County Envirothon.

Led by teacher Mr. Joseph Bonanno , Joshua Fillingham, Katie Smith, Matthew Ubbink, Tyler Duvall , Gracie Wright & Skyler Eggelston

The Wayne County Envirothon would not be possible without the support of our sponsors .Thank you to all

The District greatly appreciates the support we receive from area businesses who make donations toward the Envirothon youth conservation program. This support assists in the purchase of Envirothon T-shirts, educational prizes and awards for the event.

Lyons National Bank, Arney’s Marina, Wegmans Newark, Walmart, Dobbin’s Drugs, Lyons Veterinary Clinic, Seneca Foods Foundation, Brick Church Christmas Tree Farm, Marshall Farms Group, Clyde Hardware Store.

Thank you
Sponsors

WATER QUALITY EDUCATION

Over 35,000 water quality educational contacts were made in 2017 from water quality events, newsletters, web and social media.

Keeping our waterways trash free

Maxine Appleby, District Public Relations Specialist

In 2017 the District sponsored two beach clean-up days along the shore of Lake Ontario. In partnership with the Neighborhood Association of Sodus Point residents participated in a spring clean up. And, in the fall, from four area highschool and middle schools, students and teachers collected over 40 lbs of shoreline debris as part of the International Coastal Cleanup days.

Photos by Chris Trine



STEAM Education

Drew Starkey, District Technician, Program Specialist

This year’s STEAM Camp focused on water quality. Day campers K12 students broke out into different age groups and visited stations led by District staff. The stations included; Invasive Species, The Water Cycle, Water Conservation, and Stormwater run off..

“only rain down the drain”



Contact Drew Starkey 315-946-7200 to discuss educational opportunities.



Canandaigua Outlet Streambank and Abutment Removal



After an assessment was completed and mapped of the entire Canandagia Outlet it was found that the major issues contributing to water flow and streambank erosion due to three large abandoned railroad bridge abutments. Due to it's natural setting, a fair amount of woody debris falls into the Outlet. The abutments frequently clog thus impeding the water flow and creating several issues upstream; (additional erosion, sediment nutrient pollution, etc.)

In late 2016 the District worked with the owners of the abutments CSX Rail Company and NYSDEC, to permit the removal of the debris that was accessible. This allowed space to improve the water flow. Early in 2017 the District realized the debris removal was only a temporary fix and a permanent solution was needed that involved totally removing two of the abutments from the Outlet.

With NYSDEC, landowners and Board permission along with proper permits, two of the abutments (east and middle) were removed. The west abutment still seems fairly secure and because of it's location entry would have to come in from the other direction which would be more environmentally challenging.

Since completion, some significant rain events have occurred and flow has vastly improved with the only debris clog occurring near the last standing abutment. During the last rain event a large agricultural field that lies within a floodplain area upstream was partially flooded but quickly dried out. Prior to project, it would have taken a couple weeks for this to occur.



BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION



DURING IMPLEMENTATION



AFTER IMPLEMENTATION

SOIL HEALTH TESTING SERVICES

A continuous goal for all farmers who are depending on the soil is to ensure sufficient nutrients are present. As part of New York State's attempt to improve education and outreach for utilizing soil science discoveries and an ecosystem-based management approach, Wayne County was able to obtain a Soil Health Mini Grant to help farms assess their soil health and the economic risks associated with it. The District is able to offer soil sampling tests at a cost-share rate and provide the man-power to take the samples. It is a winning situation for local communities of Wayne to begin looking at how land management can benefit them economically and environmentally while promoting the good stewardship that has been practiced for decades.

Whether the operation is a large beef farm producing high quality forage or a small scale CSA program focusing on salad greens, a soil sample will be vital in growing the most nutritious and highest yielding product possible. Assessment results from the sample provide clues on what additives and actions need to be taken to improve soil health. Obtaining a baseline for soil nutrition can also provide direction for years to come in regards to soil health as well as being economically beneficial. Soil Health assessments provide a balanced approach to improving the environment and managing necessary input costs for any crop commodity production.

The Soil Health Testing Services offers a variety of tests including those for Field Crops, Home & Landscape, Fruit, Vegetables, and Turf. The tests vary but the main elements tested for are phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, manganese, zinc, aluminum along with pH level, buffer pH and the percent of organic matter. Comments and recommendations from Agro-One and Cornell are also available. Soil sampling is still being offered, give us a call at 315-946-7200 to arrange a site visit!



CONSERVATION TILLAGE FOR SOIL HEALTH

With the help of a soil health grant the district was able to purchase a No-Till Drill in 2015 to be made available to landowners across the county. In 2017 the drill was utilized by 5 landowners and used to seed pasture, hay grounds, cover crops and soybeans. In total it was used on 62 acres.



Benefits of the no-till drill include reduced time and labor, reduced compaction and erosion and better soil structure and water infiltration. The drill costs \$15 an acre and has a \$50 delivery and set up charge. Give the office a call if you have any questions at 315-946-7200.

2017 No-Till Drill Program Operation:

Number of acres planted:
62 acres

Number of farms served:
5 served

Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented:
Pasture Seeding, Buffer Development and Small Grain No Till

Roseview Dairy Farm

Kyle and Whitney Furguson operate a first generation, 300 + cow dairy farm on 160 acres in the Town of Rose. The New York State Agriculture NonPoint Source Abatement and Control Program aided them in installing three systems, two Silage Leachate Control and Treatment Systems and a Composting System-Animal. The first Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System is installed to assist with nutrient management on the already established 80' by 150' bunk silo storage that has a concrete floor and earthen side walls to improve water filtration of those nutrients from entering head waters of Black Brook. A collection area, low flow separator, waste transfer, vegetative treatment area, and a diversion were installed. This system is reducing the effluent and runoff produced from silage from entering either ground water or surface water body. The second Silage Leachate Control and Treatment System in the contract is looking to create a gravel based heavy use area for Ag Bags covering about a half acre, an access road, and a filter strip would be part of the system to reduce erosion and nutrients loading. The Composting System-Animal would be established to allow for the proper composting of animal carcasses while protecting surface groundwater and helping elevate the cost of a rendering service. –



Agriculture Environmental Steward of the 2017

Awarded to Ora Rothfuss, Ag. Economic Development Specialist - Wayne County EDC & Planning

The District was pleased to honor Ora in 2017 as the recipient as he continues to strive to support agriculture through personal and professional work in the entire community of Wayne County. In his earlier years', Ora farmed the family Dairy farm in Macedon NY. During his time of farming, Ora worked the land as a steward. Caring for his acreage and being a community player while working with his neighbors to be affective and respectful of one another during a time of urban sprawl pressures. During a time of Ag economic downturn, Ora and his family decided to sell the farm and made his way to being an agricultural business advocate working as the Ag Economic Development Specialist for Wayne County.



At this time, Ora works with the County to improve the Agricultural Districts program, bringing in new and innovative ways of utilizing low interest loan programs for agricultural industry development. He encourages local leadership to extend their knowledge of all the commodity efforts through an Annual Farm Tour and important issues in collaborative efforts with Wayne County Farm Bureau, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District. In recent years, Ora has mediated efforts with his vast community network, knowledge of Agriculture program resources and his ability to write grants to bring new opportunities to the local level. His character draws people together and inspires the need to work together to accomplish big things to grow our community.

He has acted as a liaison for the Right to Farm Laws, and assisted with the Water Quality Coordinating Committee since the mid 2000's. His resourcefulness helped to implement a merger between the Wayne County Ag Advisory Committee and Ag Economic Development Board. His continued participation with Wayne County Farm Bureau aids in advocacy awareness for Wayne County on the State level. In addition, he works on several other projects to extend the local communities environmental opportunities with US EPA, NYS Local Water-front Revitalization program for extension of the Canal System trails through Wayne Co., local recreational programs such as extension of snow mobile trails and numerous applications to address other community wide environmental issues. Throughout his entire life, Ora has been a part of the Ag community and continues to strive to improve the agriculture industry

2017 CRITICAL AREA SEEDING:

The District offered a 75/25 cost share to Wayne county residents and municipalities to encourage conservation cover as soon as possible. There was a 50/50 cost share to landowners along the out skirting perimeter of the County for Counties that did not have the capacity to provide the program.

Number of Acres of Erosion Control Implemented: 3.5 acres
Number of landowners served: 5 landowners

2017 was a difficult year for conservation construction overall due to the wet weather.



Conservation continuity and community advocacy in 2017

2017 marks milestones for two of the most dedicated staff members to the District. Each person plays a vital role in managing their program area and making the community better.

Ronald D. Thorn – began working with the District in May 2002 as a Program Assistant. He has served 15 years in various roles for Wayne County. His commitment to the Wayne District has endured many changes with personnel and programs. When first hired at the District, he managed the County Contract for Agricultural Drainage, and then became the go to person for every other type of conservation because he is knowledgeable in people management. His friendly, easygoing manner made him an easy go to person for all project overloads. Over the years, Thorn has held many titles: Program Assistant, District Technician, Sr. District Technician, Jack of All Trades, Mr. Clean, "Dad."

Now as the District's Conservation Field Program Manager, Thorn works tirelessly to keep the environment at the District light and productive. He has managed the Agricultural Resource Program since 2009 and has grown himself while growing the program. He is currently working on completing his CNMP certification to add additional services in Wayne County. Because of the diverse pallet of commodities in Wayne County from Field Crops to Fruit Crops and Veggies to Veal, Thorn works to keep up on the regular trends and concerns of the agricultural community so he can relate to the true needs. Through his continued commitment to making the programs better, Thorn has grown the AEM participation from zero to 332 farms. Now with a team of four other people, Thorn works to help continue to make sure new opportunities can improve the local Ag community. He came from a farming family, and he knows everyone. The value of his community network alone makes him a great asset for the District.



Ron Thorn receiving Division II Award

Ron's personnel growth in grant writing and project coordination continues to morph the program each year. We are thankful to have him as part of the team! Cheers* and to another 15 years!



Mike Walker - Aquatic Vegetative Control Specialist

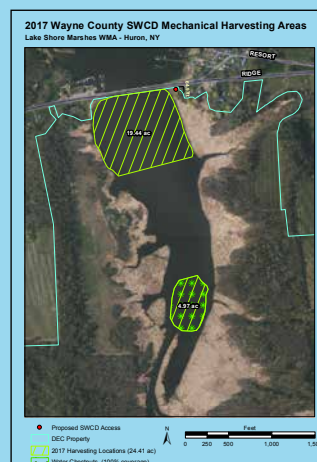
Michael Walker came to the District in June of 2002 as the Crew Chief for the summer harvesting crew, now known as the Aquatic Vegetative Control Program. Walker embraced the role of the program and began learning the ins and outs of the fickle trial and error to the various mechanics of mechanical harvesting and control. A self-study, Walker, spent countless hours talking with the engineers of these machines to address various operational issues. Not only did he begin to manage the invasive species but also he learned their life cycles, tracked their movement and investigated other potential issues associated with them across five of the embayments in Wayne County. He worked with what he had on a shoestring budget and kept the program going and it thrived.

In his 15th year of seasonal service, Walker not only manages the invasive species but he also has learned their life cycles and tracked their movement -- a valuable asset to the District's Aquatic Vegetative Control Program.

First with one "boat" the program advanced to three boats, two 6-wheel dumps, 2 conveyors, pickup truck, an inspection boat and a crew of four other individuals to work with. Walker in charge of the networking for composting sites, and access for removal, gained valuable knowledge and skill for his continued efforts. In 2008, management opportunities at the District sought the need to increase

the data collection of the program and Walker was given the opportunity to work with a District Technician, Scott DeRue, to continue to develop the program.

Together, Walker and DeRue have been working to improve the visibility and awareness of the program. The program policy was developed to assist community members how the priorities were determined and an actual schedule is set and published each year based on several things. In his 15th year of seasonal service, Walker had the opportunity to begin working and researching opportunities to manage invasive species' and habitats. In conjunction with DeRue and District Manager, Gerstenslager, the three wrote a grant that would allow cost share funding to begin the process in developing a management plan, and action plan for access for 24 acres area infested with European Water Chestnut, *trapa natans*. This area south of the Sodus Bay Bridge on Old Ridge Road is part of the Lake Shore Marshes, Lake Ontario and is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Habitat. The project was piloted in 2017 and was a huge success! With a willful and inquisitive attitude, Mike Walker continues to improve the water quality through nutrient removal, water flow management and sustainability of the program.



The District Board Members are chartered specifically in New York State Law Section Soil and Water Conservation District Law. The District Board is made of a five or seven member board and includes a two legislative representatives; one of which has practical farming knowledge, a member of the Farm Bureau, a member of the Grange or active farmer and a member at large. Wayne County is blessed to have a continued wealth of knowledge and interest on the District Board of Directors. A special thank you to two of Soil & Water, Board of Directors for their past services to the District and the community. You both left a mark and both are missed at each meeting.



Monica Deyo, Legislative Representative to Wayne County Board of Supervisors, was a member of the District Board in the beginning of the millennium and returned to the District Board upon reelection. She served the last two years to the District Board and brought a community perspective to the programs and services. Thank you Monica for your continued support.

**Thank you
Laurie Crane and Monica Deyo**



Representative to Wayne County Board of Supervisors, was a member of the District Water Quality Coordinating Committee on and off over the years' with interest due to the Town of Huron's direct relations with several watersheds and water front communities. Laurie was a natural fit to the District Board and continues to advocate for the right action and activities that support all parts of the community. She served the last two years to the District Board and broadened discussions about policy development and program initiatives. Thank you Laurie for your continued support.



Are You On Facebook?

Like our page at Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District for continued updates and notifications about local opportunities