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# Schuyler County SWCD 2023 Annual Report



## A Focus on Flood Retention

The Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) once again spent a concerted effort on flood retention work throughout the county. The Schuyler County SWCD has a unique program with an extensive inventory of its own equipment and two very experienced, highly talented equipment operators. James Barrett, and Michael Manwaring work seamlessly together, each year implementing upwards of 50 conservation practices in just six short months time. Their knowledge and dedication allow for truly expedite projects with the utmost quality. It also allows for the most cost effective conservation, allowing competitive grant dollars to have the most benefit over the broadest area of landscape in any one given construction season. This year once again a key focus area was flood retention.

The Schuyler County SWCD has worked diligently to have an immense impact on flood retention over the last several years. The conservation district has installed sixteen flood water retention ponds in just the last three years. Retention ponds are sited in the very upper sub-reaches of our most flood prone sub-watersheds. They are built with an inline structure in the dike itself, acting as the primary spillway. This structure allows for the conservation district to build in an adjustable amount of free-board into the pond. This allows for hundreds of thousands of gallons of stormwater to be captured, retained and then slowly released after the worst part of the storm has past. The intention of these retention ponds is to reduce the peak flow or runoff curve during our high intensity short duration storm events that we now face many times throughout a calendar year. Culverts, waterways, drainage and other infrastructure can only be built to handle a certain amount of water over a given period. Our storm events, due to their increased volume over very short time periods, exceed the abilities of much of our areas infrastructure especially in our lower sub-reaches.

The above retention pond was constructed on Saylor Road. It serves to aid in flood reduction for Catlin Hill Road, Pearl Street and ultimately County Road 18. We have constructed several retention ponds in this area with plans for several more in years to come. As you can imagine it takes many of these structures in any given sub watershed to have the intended impact. These projects are done in combination with soil health improvement efforts to increase porosity, permeability, and water holding capacities of our soils on crop land.

(retention ponds continued on page 10)

# Community Programs

## Annual Tree and Shrub Sale

We were able to once again hold our annual tree and shrub seedling sale. We sold nearly 6,000 seedlings to over 100 area residents at the well attended annual event.



## Agricultural Pesticide Plastics Collection

The Schuyler and Chemung County Soil and Water Conservation Districts once again had a very successful free of charge collection of agricultural pesticide plastics from Schuyler and Chemung Counties. This plastic will be recycled and used for drain tile.

## Stormwater Education

Jessica Verrigni, District Stormwater Technician, taught the 4 hour Erosion & Sediment Control Contractor training to our area BOCES students. 58 students participated and received their certificate. In New York State any project disturbing 1 acre of soil requires require a trained contractor which these students are now.

Jessica also taught basic Stormwater Management to the environmental construction management class at Alfred State University. 26 students took this class.

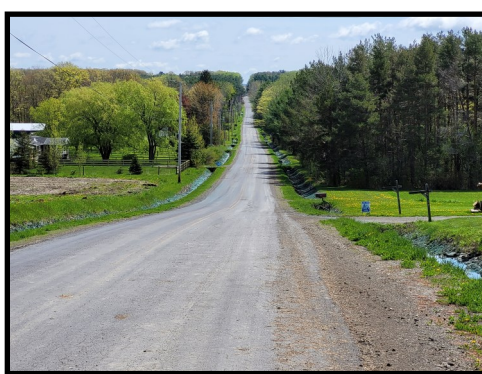




# Community Programs

## Hydro-seeding

The conservation district continued its annual conservation seeding program with its owned hydro-seeder. We were able to seed 34.28 miles of excavated road ditches free of charge to our municipalities. In total we were able to seed 123.94 acres of exposed soil including conservation project locations, gravel pit reclamations, and road ditches. This work alone conserved over 300 tons of soil from entering our surface waterbodies. This large undertaking utilized many competitive grant funding sources to make it possible. Including FL-LOWPA, and Seneca Lake Pure Waters.





# Municipal Assistance

## Burlingame Road—Town of Cayuta

We assisted the Town of Cayuta Highway Department with an outlet stabilization project on Burlingame Road. We utilized 113 tons of rip and conserved over 170 tons of soil erosion by stabilizing this area.



## Varney Hill Road—Town of Cayuta

We worked on a outlet collapse and culvert failure on Varney Hill Road. We extended the culvert pipe and stabilized the eroded area with 117 tons of rip rap and conserved over 66 tons of soil erosion with this project.





# Municipal Assistance

## County Road 23 and Stamp Road—Town of Reading

We were able to assist the County with a perpetual issue at the intersection of CR23 and Stamp Road. A plugged culvert outlet and a failing drop inlet structure posed a serious risk to road failure and flooding. We were able to remove the drop inlet structure and culvert and to stabilize the road ditch. We also installed a new cross culvert to give water a place to go if flooding from stamp road was to persist.



## County Road 7 and County Road 8—Town of Hector

We were able to assist the County with two culvert replacements and upsizes at the corner of County Road 7 and County Road 8. We were able to save the exiting poured concrete drop inlet structure. We also stabilized the area.





# Municipal Assistance

## Wolverton Road —Town of Orange

We worked with the Town of Orange Highway Department to stabilize an eroded culvert outlet that was causing the road to fail into the adjacent stream. The old headwall was constructed of failing gabion baskets and tires. We stabilized the area with 233 tons of rip rap and conserved 251 tons of soil.



## Yawger Hill Road—Town of Orange

We assisted the Town of Orange Highway Department in replacing and upsizing a failed culvert on Yawger Hill Road. We utilized over 200 tons of rip rap to stabilize the inlet and outlet of the culvert, conserving over 77 tons of soil.





# ***Municipal Assistance***

## **DeCamp Road—Town of Tyrone**

We worked on two large scale culvert replacements on DeCamp Road. Both existing culverts were failing causing significant erosion and serious safety concerns. We not only replaced both culverts but we upsized them to handle much larger storm events and stabilized these culverts with over 200 tons of rip rap and conserving over 300 tons of soil.





# ***Municipal Assistance***

## **Reading Highway Department—Town of Reading**

We were able to work with the Town of Reading to construct a Salt Storage. We were able to complete all site preparation, digging of footers, final grade and backfill in house and covering all costs of engineering to make the project as cost effective as possible for the Town. Seneca Lake is on the priority waterbodies listing for salt levels on the south end of the lake. This is a AA drinking water source for many including the village of Watkins Glen.





# Municipal Assistance

## County Road 30 (Salt Point Road) - Village of Watkins Glen

Schuyler County experienced a microburst that caused flood damage to a very specific localized area in early July of this year. This storm caused damage to County Road 30, the railroad, and significant damage to the salt plant. We were able to assist the Schuyler County Highway Department by stabilized the two culvert outlet areas with 60 tons of rip rap and concrete.



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## Summit Avenue - Village of Watkins Glen

During the microburst mentioned above a significant culvert on private property at the end of Summit Ave. in Watkins Glen was completely plugged. Facing more rain and the potential for devastation to downstream homes and roads the conservation district worked with the Village of Watkins Glen to open up the culvert and clear it of debris.





# Flood Retention

## Bassett Road—Town of Hector

We were able to construct a retention pond off of Bassett Road. This retention pond is sited in the upper sub reaches of the hardest hit area from the flooding of August of 2018. We have built several retention ponds in this area and will continue to do so in order to have the greatest impact.



## County Road 23—Town of Reading

This retention pond was placed in the upper sub reaches to reduce flooding impacts we have faced regularly on Salt Point Road, State Route 14 and County Road 28.





# Stream Stabilization

## Beardsley Hollow Road—Town of Catharine

We were able to stabilize over 600' of stream on Beardsley Hollow Road. We utilized a series of engineered rock riffles to stop significant head cutting. We also utilized a combination of rock barbs/veins and toe rock stabilization to aid in bank stabilization. This project utilized nearly 600 tons of rip rap and saved over 444 tons of soil. Prior to the start of the project no fish were found in this stretch of degraded stream. Just 7 days after the project was completed the entire section of stream had schools of fish between every structure. So although the focus of the project is stabilization for water quality improvement, this work will also have a great deal of habitat improvement benefit as well.

**Active Erosion Before  
The Project**



**Some of the hundreds  
Of fish just 7 days after completion**



# Stream Stabilization

## Glen Creek—Village of Watkins Glen

There was a serious hazard facing Glen Creek and Seneca Lake. A Village of Watkins Glen septic main was exposed when a previously installed rock weir failed due to the incising and erosion of Glen Creek. With this Village main line exposed it allowed it to be hit during storm events by rock, debris and other bedload carried by the stream. If this line broke it could have sent tens of thousands of gallons of human waste to Seneca Lake. We were able to utilize over 600 tons of rip rap to replace the rock weir with an engineered rock riffle. This will prevent the incision of the stream bed, allowing bedload to be deposited over the pipe keeping it safely below the bed of the stream.

**Exposed Septic Line**

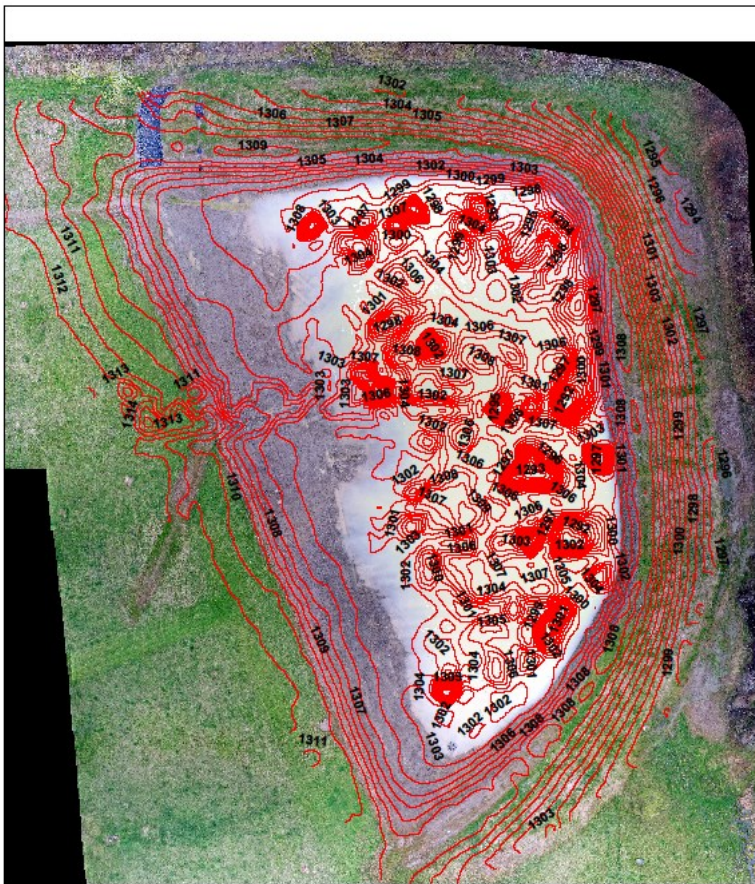




# Drone Surveys

## Drone Surveys

We were able to complete over 15 topo surveys for design work on our projects on over 160 acres of land. This work was done by Jessica Verrigni, who is a licensed drone pilot. These surveys would normally have taken weeks of time or thousands of dollars of engineering fees. This technology will allow us to complete surveys in advance to add to our competitive grant applications. The possibilities with this technology is endless.

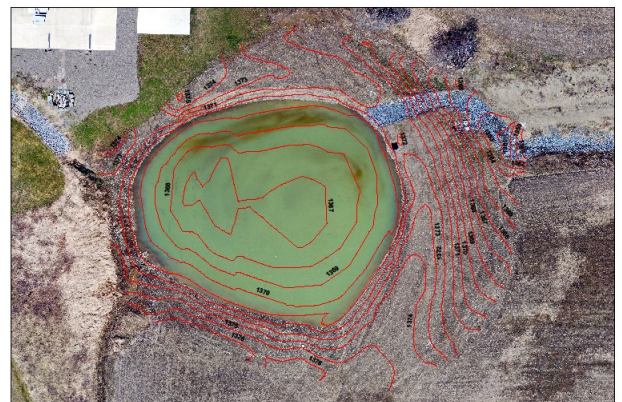


Dunn Retention Pond "As-Built" Contour Map  
1' Contour

1 inch = 57 feet



Richmyer Retention Pond "As-Built" Contour Map  
1' Contour  
1 inch = 67 feet



Senna Pearl Street Retention Pond "As-Built" Contour Map  
1' Contour  
1 inch = 28 feet

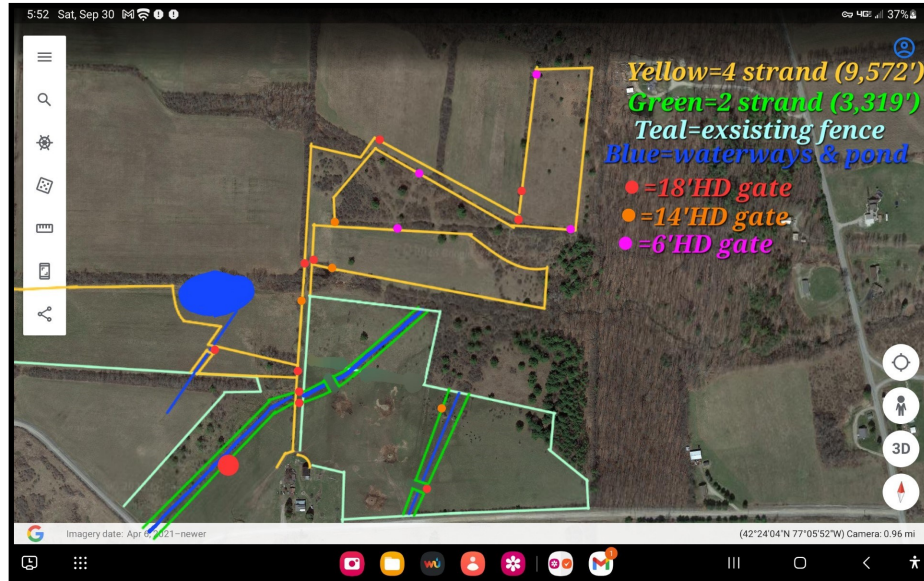




# Agriculture

## Whispering Woods Farm—Town of Tyrone

We were able to complete a dual use retention pond/livestock alternative watering pond. We also installed five stream crossings, and over 12,000' of fencing that aided in establishing nearly 10 acres of riparian buffer. This significant retention area will aid in flood reduction on West Lake Road and Lamoka Lake. This pasture based beef operation has been in the family for over 100 years.





# Agriculture

## Under the Vine Mower and No-Till Drill

Continued use of our under the vine mower was utilized by participating vineyards of a multi year demonstration project. The mower was utilized on more than 200 acres of vineyards reducing the need for herbicide on this acreage by over 70%. We also continued rental use of our No-Till drill system on area farms. Over 200 acres of no-till was completed throughout Schuyler County this year.



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## Cover Crops

We once again worked with our area farms to focus on one of the most beneficial and cost effective practices we have in our arsenal. Cover crops help to reduce erosion, improve soil health by increasing organic matter, permeability, and water holding capacity, and reduce the need for imported commercial fertilizer the following crop year to name a few. We were able to get over 1,700 acres of cover crops established and documented. We purchased seed, distributed the seed and followed up with the necessary documentation for a multitude of funding sources including the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, New York States Finger Lakes Cover Crop Initiative, and Seneca Lake Pure Waters.





# *Agriculture*

## **Forge Wine Cellars—Town of Hector**

We were able to complete 660' of lined waterway on Forge Wine Cellars vineyard. We utilized a unique material called flexi mat. Flexi mat allows for grassed vegetation to be established at higher velocities than it can normally withstand. It utilizes a dissolvable erosion control matting that is webbed between permanent concrete structures that help to keep the bottom of the waterway from incising. This project helped conserve 684 tons of sediment with direct flow paths to Seneca Lake. Utilization of this unique material is necessary due to the many trips each week by tractors in order to maintain the vineyards. Flexi mat allows a seamless transition over the stabilized area.



## **Apples & Moore—Town of Dix**

We were able to complete a pesticide storage and mixing facility on Apples & Moore. The farm is our largest orchard and is located in Seneca Lake Watershed. The structure allows for safe storage and mixing of all chemicals on the farm. If any spill was to occur the structure has specifically engineered tanks that collect the spill. The material is then safely pumped back into the farm's sprayer.





# Retirement

## John and Jackie Wickham

It's with sadness mixed with happiness and gratitude for them that we announce the official retirement of John and Jackie Wickham. John worked contractually for the Soil and Water Conservation District for nearly 25 years! John was renowned state wide as one of the most knowledgeable grazing specialists in his profession. John was utilized by counties, and farms alike around the entire state of New York. Jackie Wickham came to work contractually with the Soil and Water Conservation District nearly 15 years ago. Her meticulous nature led to some of the most thorough conservation plans state wide. Together they did conservation planning on hundreds of area farms, tens of thousands of acres of farmland. Implementation of over hundred grazing systems, countless acres of riparian buffer, and millions of dollars of conservation implementation.

Most importantly John and Jackie brought instant credibility to the Soil and Water Conservation District. They themselves have been farmers all their lives. They still today run one of the most intensively managed rotational grazing operations in the Northeast. Their historical knowledge of issues (that seem to arrive cyclically) saved our office countless hours by knowing the facts, the whys, and the why nots. They have an incredible family. They have made all of us that have had the honor of working with them feel like we are apart of that family. We wish them nothing but health and happiness! We know we will still see them often, being the pillars of our community that they are.



## Elaine Dalrymple



I feel it would be remiss when talking about retirements to not talk about Elaine. Elaine held many hats at the Schuyler County SWCD for over 30 years. She retired from her full time technical role at the end of 2015, but in true Elaine fashion didn't want anything made of it. She continued on helping immensely in a contractual role performing an enormous amount of education and outreach work. I'm happy to say Elaine will still remain a part of the Soil and Water Conservation District by chairing the Water Quality Coordinating Committee.

There is no person that has more heart or passion for our community, for conservation work, and for agriculture. Elaine is a certified crop advisor, and certified nutrient management planner. One of less than two dozen in the state at the time of her certification. Anyone that has met Elaine sees how big her heart is immediately. She works countless hours still to this day. She does that because she believes and lives what we do.

Elaine has brought conservation to dozens of farms, assisted all of our municipalities, and had a tremendous impact on thousands of area kids. She has an innate ability to reach kids no matter the topic, and to make it fun, and exciting. Her dedication after all these decades of work in our community is truly surreal. She is truly one of the kindest people anyone could meet. We can't thank her enough.



# Education - A Key Focus Area

## Southern Tier Regional Envirothon

The Odessa-Montour High School Team, the Otters, were the highest scoring Schuyler County Team at the 2023 Southern Tier Regional Envirothon. There were 23 teams from 11 regional schools, and five counties that participated in this great hands on annual event.

Schuyler, Chemung, Broome, Tioga, and Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation Districts combine their efforts to provide high school students in the five counties with a regional, Southern Tier Envirothon competition to determine county champions. The students' knowledge is put to the test as the teams complete tough written exams in five categories: Current Issues, Wildlife, Forestry, Soils, and Aquatics.



## 4 hour Erosion and Sediment Control Contractor Certification Training

Schuyler County SWCD's own Jessica Verrigni, with the gracious help of Steuben County SWCD's Jeff Parker put on an area wide training for contractors throughout the region. This 4 hour Erosion and Sediment Control course is mandatory in New York State for equipment operators excavating more than an acre of land at any-time. The certification has to be renewed by each contractor every three years. The course was opened up free of charge to all Schuyler County Municipalities. 79 people attended the course on December 5th in Montour Falls at the Shared Services Facility.



## Implementation Summary

★ 2,100' of stream stabilization	★ 4 retention ponds	★ 5 stream crossings
★ 700' lined outlets	★ 15 culvert replacements/upsizings	★ 1 salt storage
★ 12 outlet stabilizations	★ 1 drop inlet	★ 1 covered barnyard
★ 660' lined waterway	★ 300' grassed waterway	★ 1 manure storage
★ 15.5 acres of riparian buffer	★ 22,000' of fence	★ 1 pesticide mixing facility

**Nearly 2 Million Dollars in Conservation!**



Schuyler Co. Soil & Water Conservation			2024 Tree Order Form				
District <b>Order Deadline: March 8, 2024</b>			<b>Full payment must be included with your order.</b>				
The District is not responsible for orders not picked up or for the success or failure of your plantings.							
All trees are bare-root stock for conservation practices.							
Pickup date is April 20, 2024. You will be notified by mail as to the time and place of pickup.							
QUANTITY	SPECIES	SIZE	NUMBER OF PLANTS				Total Cost
<b>Conifer Transplants</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	
	Col Blue Spruce	(2-2)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Douglas Fir	(2-2)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Norway Spruce	(2-2)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Canaan Fir	(3-1)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Balsam Fir	(2-2)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Eastern White Cedar	(3-1)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	Concolor Fir	(3-1)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
	White Pine	(2-2)	\$33	\$66	\$165	\$300	
<b>Deciduous Trees &amp; Shrubs</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	
	Native Birch	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Red Osier Dogwood White	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Flowering Dogwood	6-18"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Butterfly Bush	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Black Cherry	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	White Oak	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Swamp White Oak Hybrid	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Black Walnut	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Eastern Redbud	12-18"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
	Tulip Tree	18-24"	\$30	\$60	\$150	\$275	
<b>Berries</b>							
	Blue Ray Blueberry	9-12"	\$6.00 ea.				
	Jersey Blueberry	9-12"	\$6.00 ea.				
	Darrow Blackberry	1-2'	\$4.00 ea.				
	Latham Raspberry	1-2'	\$4.00 ea.				
*All berries are sold individually.			<b>Total Berries Cost ---&gt;</b>				
<b>Deciduous Fruit Trees</b>							
	Honeycrisp Apple	3/8-7/8" caliper	\$30.00 ea.				
	Bartlett Pear	1/2-7/8" caliper	\$30.00 ea.				
	Red Haven Peach	1/2-7/8" caliper	\$30.00 ea.				
	Stella Cherry	3/8-1/2" caliper	\$30.00 ea.				
*All fruit trees are sold individually.			<b>Total Fruit Tree Cost ---&gt;</b>				
<b>Conservation Pacs</b>							
2 of ea. Species total of 10 plants							
	Native Flowering Pac	W.F. Dogwood, Elderberry, Chokeberry, Nannyberry, Redbud	\$25.00				
	Bird and Butterfly Pac	Butterfly Bush Elderberry, Liatris Spicata, Ninebark, Daylily	\$25.00				
	Hosta Variety Pac	Ventricosa, hyacinthia, albo marginata, F.A. marginata, hardspan	\$25.00				
			<b>Total Miscellaneous Cost ---&gt;</b>				
<b>Miscellaneous</b>							
	Bluebird Boxes		\$10.00				
	Fertilizer Tablets	Pkg of 10	\$2.50				
			<b>Total Miscellaneous Cost ---&gt;</b>				
~Listed prices already include 8% NYS sales tax~			<b>Total Cost of Order--&gt;</b>				
Make check payable to, and mail to: <b>Schuyler Co. SWCD, PO Box 326, Montour Falls, NY 14865</b>							
Name			Mail Address				
Phone No.			City				
Email			State	Zip			



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Jessica Verrigni, Stormwater Program Tech.  
Jim Barrett, Equipment Operator  
Michael Manwaring, Equipment Operator

### Contractual Staff

Elaine Dalyrmple, WQCC Chair

David L. Sidle Agency  
219 S. Catherine Street  
Montour Falls, NY 14865  
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Moose International  
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Montour Falls, NY  
607-535-4741



2106 College Ave.  
Elmira Heights, NY 14903  
607-426-5684

**Seneca Lodge**  
3600 Walnut Road  
Watkins Glen, NY  
14891  
607-535-2014

Seneca Lake Pure Waters  
Association  
[www.senecalake.org](http://www.senecalake.org)

**Reisinger's Apple  
County**  
2750 Apple Lane (Off Ellison  
Road)  
607-535-7493

*THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR 2023  
ENVIROTHON DONORS*

This Newsletter is made possible through  
funding from the Finger Lakes– Lake On-  
tario Watershed Protection Alliance  
(FL-LOWPA).

All programs and services of the Schuyler County Soil & Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.



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