

2014 Annual Report

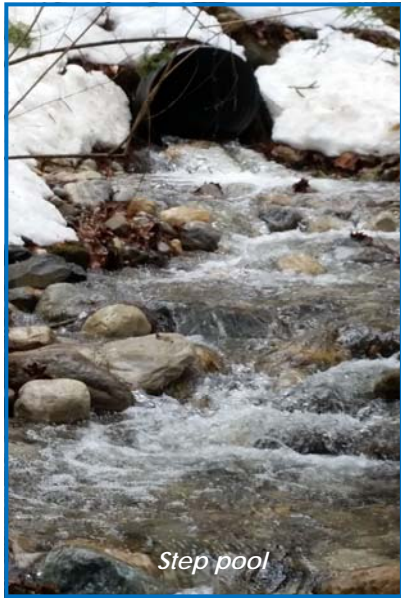
A brief summary of some of the many projects and programs undertaken by your local Conservation District in 2014.

The District's mission is to protect and improve the lakes, rivers, streams, soils and other natural resources of Warren County through locally-led conservation projects and programs.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Warren County 2014 Annual Report. The District staff and Board of Directors work hard to ensure that our projects and programs are developed to meet the needs of the landowners and communities of Warren County. We actively seek programs that can be tied together to produce as many positive benefits as possible, and even though we are a small office, we accomplish big things.

We strive to assist any individual or community that seeks our help, and are happy to hear ways that we may improve our service to you. We had a very busy 2014 and are looking forward to 2015.

Lake George/Hudson River Aquatic Wildlife Passage Culvert Improvement Project: Completed



Step pool

The Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District successfully partnered with the Warren County town and county highway departments to provide local on-the-ground training for new culvert installation techniques.

In an effort to **improve habitat in our local trout streams**, this project worked to reconnect sections of brook trout waters previously impassible due to poor culvert placement. The goals of this initiative were to improve spawning and migration for all aquatic species as well as to upgrade existing municipal infrastructure and educate local highway departments on the sizing and installation of wildlife passable culverts. In total, nine new culverts were installed in seven towns in Warren County. In addition to the nine squash culverts, one aluminum box culvert, a bottomless arch bridge and two step-pools were also funded or assisted through this program.

Step-pools are designed to allow aquatic wildlife

passage at structurally sound culverts that have significant drops (1.5' to 3') at their outfalls. A series of lifts are built from native materials (i.e. stone, logs) in the stream which brings the streambed up to the base of the culvert. This allows fish and other aquatic wildlife access to the upstream section of the waterway for both habitat and reproduction. The Lake George/ Hudson River Basin Aquatic Wildlife Passage Culvert Improvement Project was funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



Aluminized box culvert

Glen Lake Watershed Retrofit Projects— “Conservation On the Ground”

In order to **reduce stormwater runoff** from entering directly into Glen Lake and its tributaries the Town of Queensbury, the Warren County Department of Public Works and the Conservation District teamed together for the stormwater retrofit program with funding provided by the NYSDEC.

Stormwater runoff is the major contributor of sediment and non-point pollutants in many water ways. Runoff from the surrounding roads was treated by improved ditching, drywells and infiltration systems installed inside the Glen Lake Watershed. Runoff that once flowed directly into Glen Lake from its surrounding roads will now recharge the lake as groundwater.



Drywell installation, Gurney Lane Park



Porous pavers set at the Glen Lake Boat Launch.

Over the life of the project, a total of nineteen site upgrades were completed within the Glen Lake Watershed. Included in the upgrades were 16 single stack drywells, 4 perforated pipe infiltration systems, six StormTech® infiltration chambers, one rain garden and 3,800 square feet of permeable pavers. By reducing sediment and the subsequent nutrient loading to the lake, the need for dredging and the proliferation of invasive aquatic plants will diminish.

The District would like to recognize the Glen Lake Association for their support of this program and the education that they conducted to landowners in the watershed.

The MS4 Programs: Queensbury & Warren County

The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Programs are continuing to progress with great accomplishments in ensuring all aspects of stormwater are addressed. This year we had five volunteers collect outfall samples to be tested for any signs of illicit discharge. We also teamed up with the Lake George Association and Apex Solar Power to place 20 storm drain markers on drop inlets that flow to waterbodies in the Lake George and Halfway Brook watersheds.

Storm drain markers inform the communities “Only Rain in the Drain” or “No Dumping Drains to Lake”. Five stormwater samples were collected by the highway department during snowmelt to be tested for chloride levels in road runoff. Also, during the summer months, the outfalls were assessed for physical condition and water quality (vegetation, turbidity, flow, temperature, etc.)

FYI: The Village of Lake George and a section within the Town of Lake George are newly designated MS4 communities. We have been asked to assist with these programs in 2015.



Storm drain marking

English Brook Stormwater and Sediment Abatement Project

English Brook is a major tributary to Lake George in the Town of Lake George. This past year, a stormwater infiltration system along Route 9 was installed to reduce sediment and other nonpoint source pollutants from stormwater. **This system now captures stormwater from 600 linear feet of Route 9.** Previously, this road section drained to a catch basin and was piped directly to English Brook. With the installation of a concrete drywell and 27 stormwater infiltration chambers, a majority of the runoff from this section of Route 9 will be treated and will now recharge the English Brook system as groundwater.



The District has been working with Jarrett Engineering, the Fund for Lake George and the Village of Lake George DPW on designing a project. The project intends to take a direct connection of stormwater from English Brook at the I-87/Route 9 exchange and divert it to a treatment system at the Exit 22 Park and Ride. This project is scheduled for construction in 2015.

Lastly, in conjunction with the Lake George Association, the District contributed both time and funds to the replanting of trees and shrubs along the banks of English Brook at Route 9L in the Town Lake George following bridge maintenance work conducted by the NYSDOT.



The District Fish and Tree Programs once again successfully provided low cost **tree and shrub seedlings and fish fingerlings** to residents of our county. Between the spring and fall fish sale, we sold over 1,000 fish (brook and rainbow trout, largemouth bass and fathead minnows). The tree and shrub program sold over 7,500 items including trees, shrubs, wildflower packets, bird houses, fertilizer tablet packs, and wild game seed packs.

Although this sale happens just once a year; seeds, fertilizers, tree shelters and stakes, wild game plot mixes, bird & bat houses and wild flowers can be purchased *all season long*. There are a multitude of uses for the specimens we offer, including wind breaks, visual barriers, wildlife enhancement, insect control, bloom, fall foliage, pollination and wildlife food supply. Call our office for more information for both of these programs.



Schroon Lake Watershed Program

Aquatic Invasive Species Program

The Towns of Chester, Horicon and Schroon have joined together with the Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District to help fight the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) in Schroon Lake. Aquatic Invasive Management LLC (AIM) picked 36+ bags of milfoil weighing **approximately 900 pounds** from Schroon Lake in their 4 weeks of harvesting. Two sites this year accounted for 39% of the EWM removed from Schroon Lake; 23% was removed from the Adirondack Lodges area and 16% from the west shore area between Grove Point and The Landings. The next largest area harvested accounted for 9.7% of the EWM totals from the Meadow Cove site. During the 2013 harvest season 87+ bags weighing over 2100 pounds of milfoil were removed during the harvest season; a nearly 60% reduction in harvested plants between 2013 and 2014.



Stormwater Management

The District along with the Towns of Chester, Horicon and Schroon, with funding from the New York Department of State, have begun implementing the 2010 Schroon Lake Watershed Management Plan recommendations for the reduction of stormwater runoff. In 2014, the District met with the **Town of Schroon** Supervisor and the heads of the Highway, Water and Wastewater Departments to discuss potential stormwater infrastructure covering the four major areas of concern within the town. The Town will be installing drywells and other infiltration devices to capture and treat stormwater. The Town is also considering green infrastructure techniques such as a small bioretention area and water reuse from municipal buildings to reduce the volume of untreated stormwater that reaches the lake.



In the **Town of Horicon**, locations along the roadways will be receiving upgrades to reduce storm water to the lake. Subsurface infiltration devices and a raingarden are planned. The District continually searches for ways to assist towns to direct stormwater into the ground for treatment.

Stewardship Projects

2014 was the beginning of the **voluntary septic pumpout program** in Warren County. Eligible landowners were contacted for their interest. A 50% payment on a 1,000 gallon septic tank was provided, along with educational material and a water conservation kit. In 2015, the program will be in the Essex County portion of the watershed. An additional project included marking stormdrain inlets in the Hamlet of Adirondack. Members from ESSLA, SLA, the District and Schroon Lake placed **18**



markers down to raise awareness for water quality and this program will continue into 2015.

The 2014 SWCD Conservationist of the Year

Mark Dutra, Town of Queensbury Highway Foreman. The District has worked with Mark on numerous projects, specifically working to reduce impacts from stormwater to the town's lakes and streams. Mark is very proactive with reaching out to the District for assistance including permitting needs and other natural resource concerns. He is more than willing to lend a helping hand to the District when needed, which is a huge benefit for the projects that we conduct in Queensbury. The Conservationist of the Year Award has evolved over the years in that the District recognizes an individual, group or municipality that assists with getting conservation on the ground and is willing to go beyond what may be considered the normal work routine. Here are the recent Conservationists of the Year:



2002: Tim Coon, *Bolton Highway*

2003: Dave Decker, *LG Watershed Coalition*

2004: Dan Hajek, *Village of LG Dept. of Public Works*

2005: Doug Paton, *Brant Lake Association*

2006: George Hilton, *Town of Queensbury Planning*

2007: Gary Clark, *Chester Highway*

2008: Walt Lender, *Lake George Association*

2009: Marc Migliore, *NYSDEC*

2010: East Shore Schroon Lake Association

2011: Mike Travis, *Queensbury Highway*

2012: (1) Bill Lupo, *NYSDEC* and (2) Warren County

2013: Ed Pennock, *Warrensburg Highway*

Landowner and Municipal Assistance

The District responds to numerous **landowner and municipality requests for assistance** each year. These requests range from stormwater or drainage issues, habitat improvements, erosion and sediment control, permitting assistance, green infrastructure, forestry, trails, stream/streambank concerns and much more.

The District is here to provide technical assistance and recommendations to landowners and municipalities that helps to address their resource concern. Please feel free to contact our office with any questions you may have.



*Erosion and sediment control site visit.
Warren Rosenthal (L), Lake George Land Conservancy
Nick Rowell (R), SWCD*

The 2014 Warren County Envirothon was once again a huge success! Even though we had cold weather, nearly **200 students, facilitators and volunteers** made it work smoothly, which shows that it is a worthwhile program.

Administrators from the competing schools, District Board members, and Envirothon alumni were on hand to contribute their time. The winning team was from Glens Falls High School, who went on to represent Warren County at the state competition held at SUNY Morrisville. A big "Thank You" to all of the sponsors and volunteers that make this event a yearly success.



Schroon River Habitat Project

This past year, the District successfully worked at **improving aquatic habitat** at three locations in the Schroon River, installing a total of 22 habitat structures. Pre planning paid off and the installation went very smoothly. By meeting with the land owners, highway superintendents and project foremen in advance, the work seemed effortless. The structures will provide cover and habitat for fish and riverine wildlife. We look forward to continuing the work this summer and are involving the DEC Fisheries Biologists and Environmental Science students from Warrensburg to record wildlife found around the structures. For more information on the structures, or if you are a landowner in the Warrensburg area, along the Schroon River who may be interested in participating in the program, please contact our office for more information.



Agricultural Environmental Management

The **AEM** Program in Warren County has grown exponentially over the past two years. The program has seen a 200% growth and has added 16 new farms. A large part in the expansion our AEM Program is due to our outreach and educational series called **The Farm Talks**. The "Talks" have been a great success with outreach to our niche farms and communities. The four "Talks" have had over 190 attendees with numerous organizations attending and requesting to use the series design. A nice compliment was from Harold Shippey of Unicorn Farm: *"The Farm Talks are very helpful from everything I would use on my farm...."*. It has also been called a *"Friday night cup of coffee"* for the relaxed, personal presentations and the social interactions that occur.



Throughout the series we've partnered with SUNY Adirondack, three SWCD's, USDA-NRCS, the NYSDEC and numerous farms from around Warren County. The program is designed to bring in new and successful Warren County farm subjects by having area experts present on agricultural topics such as year-round high tunnel production, hop yards and soil health and nutrition.

At each "Talk", we give a presentation on the benefits of the AEM Program and how the program provides farm conservation plans, technical assistance and grant funding opportunities. **From The Farm Talks, additional agricultural groups have been created through the opportunity for farmers to network, which has led to Warren County farms partnering in both business and knowledge.** The talks have proved so popular that we have hosted most of them at the NYSDEC meeting room, even a Subaru with engine problems did not stop two attendees from coming. They simply had the flatbed driver drop them off for the "Talks" and their car was taken to the mechanic.

Now that's dedication and enthusiasm!

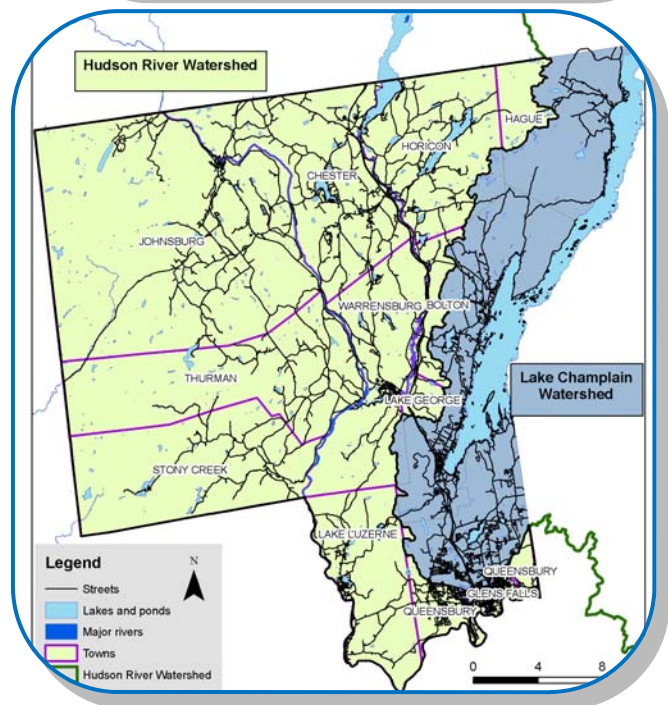


A Few Other Conservation Efforts.....

Hazard Mitigation: Over the past few years the District has developed a tremendous working relationship with the Warren County Office of Emergency Services (OES). The District is actively involved in several programs with OES resulting in several presentations that include the development of the new **County Hazard Mitigation plan and the Emergency Stream Intervention program**. By having mitigation projects planned out, they can assist in reducing impacts from environmental causes such as snow storms, significant rainfall events and beaver dams breaches. This can help communities recover quicker and reduce the costs of the repairs.

Champlain Watershed Coalition of New York: Warren County, an active member of CWICNY, has assisted in several programs within the last year. The Lake Champlain/Lake George Regional Planning Board received funding to develop a **Nonpoint Source Subwatershed Assessment plan** for the New York side of the basin. District staff have participated in several meetings in regards to that project. In addition, the District was the technical reviewer for the two Rural Roads Assistance Management Program (RRAMP) documents that are available upon request. The planning manual is at our website. Both the manual and a pocket guide are available at the District office.

Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition: In addition to CWICNY, The District is part of UHRWC. This coalition was successful in **bringing state grant dollars to the watershed for natural resource issues**, with funding from the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and the NYS Dept. of State. We look forward to implementing projects in this watershed to reduce roadway impacts on our streams and lakes.



2014 was a great year for the District in acquiring funding for projects,

- (1) Through the **NYSDEC's Water Quality Improvement Project Program**, the District secured 4 grants that will assist communities with (a) stormwater remediation, (b) erosion and sediment control, (c) stormwater maintenances and (d) stream habitat/stream crossings.
- (2) The District applied to **FEMA** on behalf of the county, for funding to update the Warren County Hazard Mitigation Plan. This project has begun to move forward.
- (3) Lastly, for 2014, the District received several grants from the **Lake Champlain Basin Program**:
 - (a) Erosion and Sediment control – hydroseeding and powermulching with basin municipalities and
 - (b) Soil Savers – soil health education.

We continue to apply for grants in partnership or on behalf of our communities.



Did you know...

- The Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District has **been in existence for 59 years**, and was created by the Warren County Board of Supervisors in 1956 under NYS Soil and Water District Law.
- The District is a county-based organization overseen by a seven member board of Directors for local priorities.
- The District's total 2014 operating expenses were **\$440,789**.
- Our 2014 funding allocation from Warren County was **\$292,201**. The remainder of the District budget comes from competitive grants and some reimbursement from NYS.
- The District has received over **seventy grants in the past twelve years, totaling over five million dollars**. These dollars go directly to conservation projects and programs for Warren County.

2015 SWCD Board of Directors

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