



2021 Annual Report

Providing a coordinated effort to improve water quality and other natural resources within the New York Lake Champlain counties through project implementation.

No-Till Corn Planter Retrofit Project

In 2020, the Champlain Watershed Improvement Coalition of New York (CWICNY) was awarded a Lake Champlain Basin Program Agronomy grant that offered 7 farms on the NY side of the watershed technical and financial assistance towards the implementation of equipment upgrades that allowed for no-till corn planting.

Conventional corn planting usually involves several tillage passes to smooth and prepare the seed bed. No-till planting has been shown to reduce soil erosion and improve soil health while at the same time offering significant savings in labor and fuel costs by cutting out the step of yearly plowing. One of the downsides is that new no-till corn planters can be very expensive and the lack of proper equipment is a barrier to implementing no till practices.

CWICNY selected seven farms across the watershed to participate. Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialists were consulted to make recommendations and guide the selection of equipment. Seven farms in Clinton, Essex and Washington County participated and completed implementation of their planter retrofits. As a result of this project, 380 acres of no-till corn were planted in Spring 2021. CWICNY members assisted the farms with planning, implementation and documentation of the conversion process. We are encouraged that our program has raised awareness of conversion to no-till corn planting and will lead to reduced tillage, less erosion and more farmers protecting the watershed.



CWICNY, Inc. is a 501-C-(3) Not for Profit group originally formed in 2001 with the goal of "Providing a coordinated effort to improve water quality and other natural resources within the Lake Champlain Counties through project implementation." This coalition is a grass-roots approach that recognizes the importance of local participation and cooperation in addressing the many sources of pollutants into Lake Champlain.

CWICNY is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors that includes representatives from each of the Soil and Water Conservation District's and each of the Water Quality Coordinating Committees from Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Warren and Washington Counties and a representative from the Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board. Advisors to the group include the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the USDA Natural Resource Service.

Letter from the President

As we move into a new year, we owe a huge thank you to the 2021 CWICNY Board of Directors for their dedication, service and leadership over the past year, as well as to all of our members and partners for giving your time and talents to make the year a great success.

Throughout 2021, CWICNY was very active in wrapping up projects that have been on going for several years and building on and expanding partnership opportunities. Numerous educational events were held throughout the watershed, a variety of erosion control practices were implemented, corn planters were converted from conventional to no-till machines and funding was secured for 2022-2023 for erosion control practices throughout the watershed. We are thrilled with the amount of education we were able to provide to residents of the watershed. With the variety of opportunities that we were able to provide we were able to educate youth groups, forest landowners, homeowners, farmers, municipalities and engineers.

We also began discussions this year regarding the potential of hiring a coordinator to assist with securing funding, grant management, program implementation and administration. Hiring a coordinator would greatly reduce the pressure on our members and hopefully help with getting more conservation on the ground throughout the watershed.

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North Country Stormwater Tradeshow

On October 21, CWICNY hosted the first virtual North Country Stormwater Tradeshow and Conference. The event, in its 16th year, is an educational opportunity for municipal employees, engineers, landscape architects, and other stormwater professionals.

This year's presentations included Riprap uses for Erosion Control, Promoting Flood Resiliency through Assessment and Monitoring, Stormwater GIS: A Case Study of the Saratoga County ISWM Program, Revisions to the NYS Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit, and Finding and Solving Stormwater Management Issues in Lake George. The event had a total of 60 attendees and ten presenters from state agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, and local municipalities. Eleven attendees received continuing education credits from the Practicing Institute of Engineering (PIE), 31 received CPESC credits (certified professional in erosion and sediment control) and three received credits for municipal planning and zoning board of appeals training.

Funding for the North Country Stormwater Tradeshow and Conference was provided by an Education and Outreach Grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement (LC00A00604) to NEIWPC. The Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board implemented and administered this grant on behalf of CWICNY.

Letter.....

I hope you will take some time to read and learn more about the amazing projects that we completed this year throughout the Lake Champlain Watershed. I am thrilled to be working with such an exceptional group of conservationists and can't wait to see where we go as an organization in 2022. I want to thank you for allowing me to serve alongside you this year. I truly appreciate your support and dedication.

Thank you,

Kristin Ballou, President



Professional Engineering Training: Washington County



Ideal Dairy Farms and Washington County SWCD hosted an engineering training session in late October that focused on manure management practices and the opportunities for state and federal implementation funding for farms. Engineers from many local consulting firms participated, along with several from public agencies. The training was funded by the Lake Champlain Basin Program with staff from Cornell's Pro Dairy providing the training.

A long-term goal of this training is to increase private sector engineering capacity within the Lake Champlain Watershed, and beyond. As the demand for

more programming continues, Soil & Water Conservation Districts are increasingly in need of engineering assistance for the design and implementation of agricultural best management practices. This training provided the opportunity for networking and discussing these needs, along with a review of funding programs, design criteria with regards to farming operations, and USDA standards and specifications for these practices.

A second engineering training, focused on additional agricultural BMP systems, will be held on April 27th, 2022 in Clinton County, and hosted by the Miner Institute. Registration and more information will be available this spring. Many thanks to all participants and supporters of this event, including Ideal Dairy Farms, Deep Roots Farm, Washington County SWCD, NRCS staff, the Lake Champlain Basin Program and Pro Dairy.

Forestry Best Management Practices Training

In 2021, Franklin and Warren County SWCD received over \$9,000 through the Lake Champlain Basin Program's Education and Outreach Grants to host three workshops for loggers, foresters, landowners, and zoning officials on implementing Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) to help protect natural resources within the Lake Champlain Watershed. All three workshops were held in CWICNY partnering counties of Franklin, Warren and Essex. Each workshop consisted of a field visit to a past timber harvest site where attendees



learned about placement and utilization of common BMPs such as water bars, erosion control products, and placement of skid trails. Presenters spoke on permit requirements, stream crossing design and placement, different stream crossing options for contractors, other common forestry BMPs and the use of portable skidder bridges during a timber harvest. At the last workshop NYS DEC Spill Response spoke on reporting spills and BMPs used for leaks, spills, and hazardous materials. Each workshop concluded with having the groups assemble a portable skidder bridge that was raffled off to a logger in attendance to utilize for stream crossings. Franklin and Warren County SWCDs attracted over 80 participants to these workshops and hopes to continue to work within the Lake Champlain Watershed on the importance of utilizing voluntary forestry BMPs for water quality and natural resource protection.

North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative

With funding through a NYS Community Resiliency Training grant, Clinton County SWCD, Essex County SWCD, and The Nature Conservancy collaborated to host a two day NAACC (North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative) training in the Town of Ausable on June 28 and 29. The first day included a short overview of techniques, terms, and tools for assessing road-stream crossings for aquatic connectivity, followed by field assessments of culverts throughout the area.



The second day included the first ever terrestrial connectivity training by Scott Jackson from the University of Massachusetts, one of the founders of NAACC. This session was followed by more culvert assessments that also included the terrestrial assessment portion. At least 15 water quality professionals were trained in these techniques and over 20 culverts were assessed. All assessments are loaded into the NAACC database, which is accessible to the public online. NAACC facilitates information sharing and allows for priority ranking of road-stream crossings for replacement and repair, with the goal of optimizing passage for native fauna. The data set can be found at https://naacc.org/naacc_data_center_home.cfm.

Emergency Stream Intervention Training

CWICNY and the Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition sponsored three Post Flood Emergency Stream Intervention trainings (ESI) in 2021.. This program was supported by funding provided by the New York State through the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. with a goal to provide guidance and education to engineers, SWCD's, highway departments and the general public on how streams function, impacts from events and how to initiate/prioritize work immediately after an event.



One ninety minute virtual training provided an overview in April, and two in person six hour sessions, where each included a field component ,were held in June and in October. In June the training was held at the Saratoga County 4 H Training Center I Ballston Spa, while the October session was at the AuSable Inn, located in Keene Valley. A wide variety of participants for all three sessions, made for great questions and discussions.

It can sometimes be overwhelming to understand what happened after an event such as Tropical Storm Irene, or the 2019 Halloween Storm, but this training provides a good base to (1) mitigation activities before the next event and (2) how to collect data after the event to get the community back up and functioning. If you have questions about this training, please reach out to your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

Augmented Virtual Reality Model at Up Yonda Farm

In 2020, CWICNY was awarded LCBP grant funding to purchase an Augmented Virtual Reality Model and develop a program for its use for school programs, adult education and the genral public. The goal behind this to was to provide an alternative water quality curriculum within the Champlain Watershed, while at the same time introduce a new educational resource to the educators in the region. The model is being hosted at Up Yonda Farm, which is Warren County's Environmental Education center in Bolton Landing. The staff there have quickly acclimated to its use and have effectively developed virtual presentations that can be viewed and used as environmental education in the classroom. The model is interactive and fun and exciting to see and utilize.

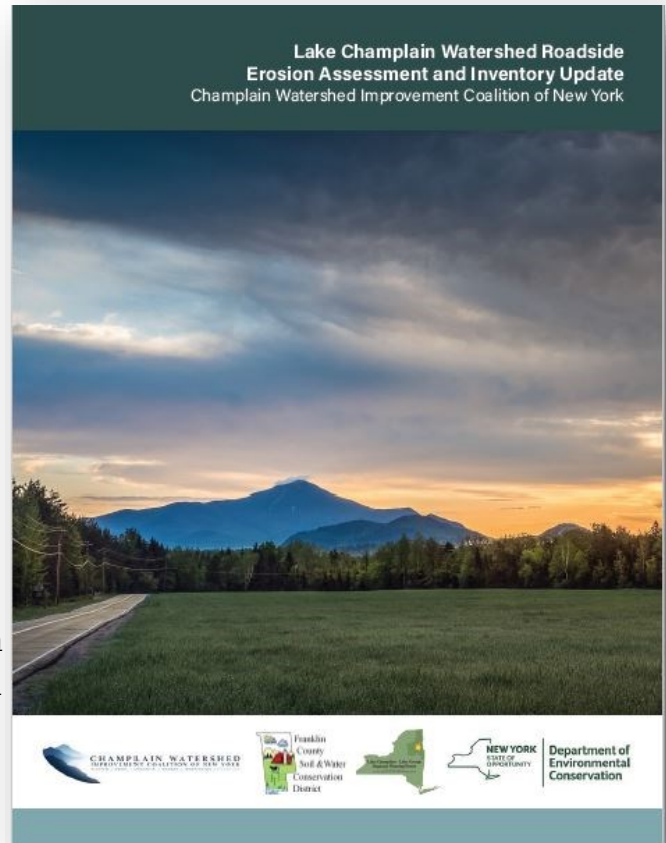
Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHqDQwSogwc>, to check out this fun and educational model!



Lake Champlain Watershed Roadside Erosion Assessment and Inventory Update

CWICNY completed The Lake Champlain Watershed Roadside Erosion Assessment and Inventory in 2021. This project stabilized 61 sites throughout the five counties that comprise the New York State side of the Lake Champlain Basin: Franklin, Clinton, Essex, Warren, and Washington. An additional 321 sites were assessed, inventoried, and prioritized with a total remediation cost of nearly \$2.5 million. The final report can be viewed and downloaded here: <https://www.cwicny.org/>. Stabilization techniques used include hydroseeding, riprap, culvert repairs, and plantings to reduce roadside erosion. To identify and assess new erosion sites, a standard data collection system was utilized. Each site was then prioritized using a scored ranking system created to analyze the data and assign proper emphasis on critical areas for remediation. Using this ranking system, levels of priority were assigned to each site, there were 76 high priority sites, 122 moderate priority sites, and 123 low priority sites identified. Next steps for this project include seeking funding to implement stabilization projects in the high priority areas.

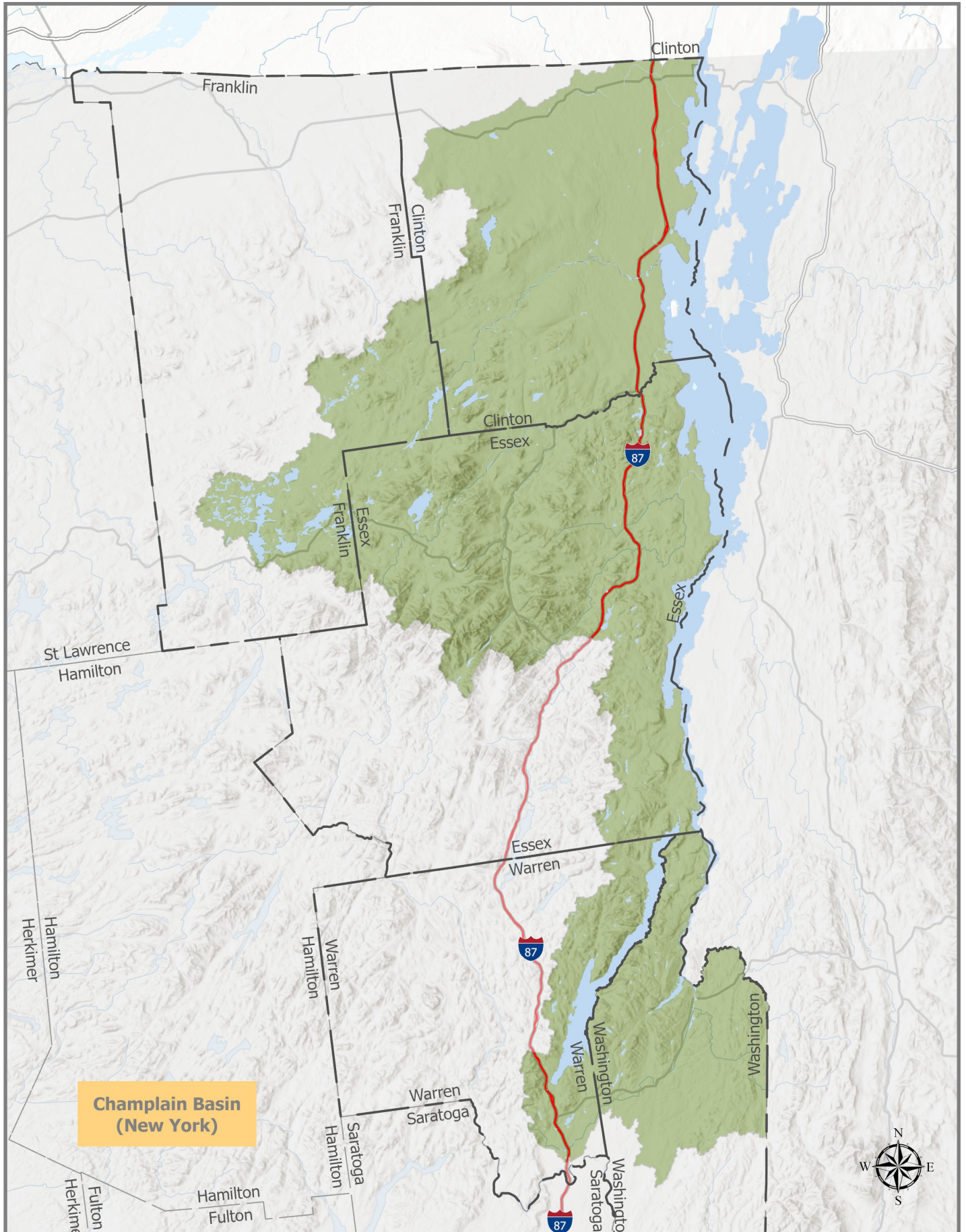
The project was funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to the Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District on behalf of CWICNY. The grant was authored and administered by the Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board (LCLGRP).



Congratulations to The Lake George Association for successfully partnering with the NYSDOT in removing impervious sections of drainage swale and changing to green swales! Additionally thank you to NYSDOT for altering mowing maintenance along I87 in Lake George to reduce mowing, and encourage native species to spread such as Little Bluestem. Small changes in maintenance activities can have significant impacts!



Working to improve water quality in New York State!



CWICNY Representatives

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Kristin Ballou, President

Alice Halloran, Vice President

Jim Lieberum, Treasurer

Randy Rath, Secretary

2021 CWICNY Members

Soil and Water Conservation District:

Peter Hagar, Clinton County

Jim Lieberum, Warren County

Alice Halloran, Essex County

Corrina Aldrich, Washington County

Kristin Ballou, Franklin County

Water Quality Coordinating Committee:

Kelley Tucker, Ausable River Association, Clinton County

Anna Reynolds, Essex County Planning Department, Essex County

Guy Middleton, Upper Saranac Foundation, Franklin County

Randy Rath, Lake George Association, Warren County

Laura Generous, Washington County SWCD

Lake Champlain/ Lake George Regional Planning Board:

Allison Hargrave Gaddy



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