



Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

# Conservation News

WINTER 2025/2026

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*Legislator*

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*Legislator/Secretary*

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**Nichelle Swisher**  
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**Michael Durant**  
*District Technician*

**Carla Yaw**  
*District Treasurer*

**Alexis Lyndaker**  
*Watershed  
Ag Conservation  
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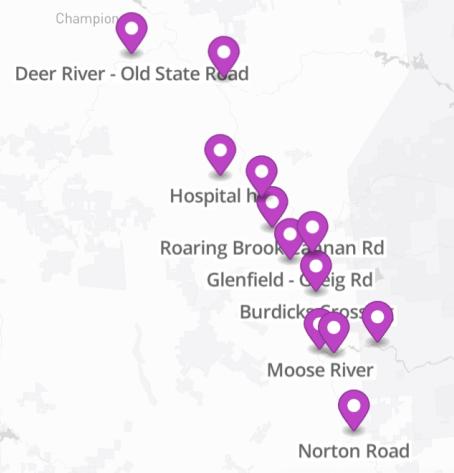


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## Monitoring Stream Levels for Emergency Management

New technologies are helping Lewis County keep a better eye on its flood waters in the Black River Watershed. The Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District is working with Hyfi, a company headquartered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to monitor our waterways for flood response, stormwater management and safe recreation. The Hyfi group wrote a grant through the Great Lakes Protection Fund to pilot communities in monitoring their water infrastructure. After discussions with the Lewis County emergency management committee, the District requested to be considered for a pilot monitoring project with Hyfi. Lewis County was chosen as a recipient of a no-cost pilot project to explore how water level sensors and AI could transform stormwater and sewer management. There are currently 12 sensors out on our rivers and streams in the Black River Watershed with 6-8 more to be added soon.



Pictured Above: General map of water level gauge locations.

What exactly are we monitoring with these gauges and where are they located? Water levels are recorded at the mean sea level every 10 minutes and pushed to the website every hour. Water level rise can be monitored at each site and compared with flood data from the past. Water level peaks can also be measured in the rate of rise between level gauges to predict how quickly a peak flood is travelling downstream. Also noted on each stations' graph is the precipitation at that location in inches per hour, sourced from the National Weather Service's Multi-Radar Multi-Sensor.

To view local water levels follow this link to our website <https://www.lewiscountysoilandwater.com/river-stream-levels> and click *Lewis County Black River Watershed River Levels*. More exact flood warning alerts for each location will be added at a later date.

### Beaches Bridge



Pictured Above: Beaches Bridge water level reading screen shot.

# 2026 Tree Sale: What You Should Know

Each year we receive questions regarding our order form. We would like to take the opportunity to explain a few things. Lets start with the basics. Everything we sell is **Bare Root** or lacking a root ball and it does not have soil surrounding its roots. **Seedlings** are grown from seeds that are planted in a bed together and are “bare rooted” when extracted from the soil to be packaged for distribution. **Transplants** are older seedlings that have been moved into more widely spaced rows where they have had more room to grow. **Coniferous** trees produce cones and do not drop their “leaves” in the winter while **Deciduous** trees lose their leaves annually. All of our deciduous species are seedlings, while all of our coniferous species are transplants.

As you look at the order form, the first thing you will see is the **Species** name and **Approximate Size**. In addition to the estimated size in inches, you will see two numbers with a dash (2-2). The number before the dash indicates the number of years it was raised in a seed bed. The number following the dash is the number of years it has been transplanted on its own. Adding these two numbers together gives you the age of the tree. Sometimes you will see something like 2-2/P+2, meaning this particular tree is 4 years old, 2 years in a seed bed then 2 years on its own, or it was started as a plug (P) in its own plastic tube then moved out on its own for two more years. Please keep in mind the sizes listed are approximate sizes given to us by our supplier and are not guaranteed. The **Zone** refers to the extreme temperatures that the plant can tolerate and grow successfully. The lower the number the greater the cold tolerance. The **Soil Preference** defines the most suitable soil type that the tree can grow in, although other soil types do not preclude it from growing. Use the guide at the bottom of the form for the soil preference definitions. The **Growth Rate** lets you know if the tree will grow quickly. Some species grow much faster than others. The **Sun Preference** column displays full sun, partial sun, or full shade graphics depicting the preference of each species.

Our **Bare Root Deciduous and Coniferous Trees** are sold in packs of 10, 20, 50, or 100. As you look across the order form at the prices, look up to find the corresponding quantity. **Shrubs and Fruit** are sold individually and the each price is listed. Bare root shrubs are similar to deciduous trees at our sale. Some of them are not branched and only require the root system to establish when planting. **Packets** contain two of each species listed for the price shown. **Wildflower Seeds** are available in two varieties; Sunny (all perennials) and Partial Shade (a mix of both perennials and annuals). Each variety is available in two sizes, 1 ounce or 4 ounce, and the price for each is listed. We also offer Fertilizer Tablets and Marking Flags. The **Fertilizer Tablets** that we sell are N-P-K, 20-5-10 (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium) and each tablet will feed for up to two years. These are not meant to be tossed in the hole when you plant your tree and should not be used on seedlings! Fertilizer directly touching roots can burn them. The best way to use the tablets is after the transplant is planted back to the original depth and covered with soil, a hole is poked off to the side of the trunk at a diagonal angle and the tablet is put inside so rainfall can gradually dissipate the nutrients of the tablets to the roots over time. The **Marking Flags** are pink flags on 36” wire posts that can be used to help identify where you planted your smaller seedlings.

Some people ask if they will need a trailer to pick up their trees. The answer is no. Most packed orders can be carried in your arms. If you order 100 or more, the trees will most likely be packed in 4-5' boxes that would easily fit in your trunk or backseat. All of our orders are hand packed by our staff. We add a root gel to keep moisture on the roots, and carefully wrap each order in craft paper and a plastic bag to keep the roots dark. The trees will be in a dormant state when you pick them up and keeping the roots dark and cool will help maintain their dormancy until you plant them. We recommend that you plant your order as soon as possible. Keep your plants in a cool dark place, like a cellar or garage, until you are ready to plant them. **DO NOT ADD WATER to the bag.** The root gel we add will keep your roots plenty moist for a few days until you get them planted. Dumping water in the bag may cause your roots to rot if left too long before planting. When planting, it is recommended that they are replanted to the original depth. You should be able to easily tell where this was by looking at the trunk. **HAPPY PLANTING!**



Tree Orders Ready for Pickup



Deciduous Seedlings



Coniferous Transplants in varying sizes



# Lewis County Soil & Water Conservation District

## 2026 Bare Root Tree & Shrub Sale Order Form

Species	Approximate Size	Zone	Soil <sup>1</sup>	Growth Rate <sup>2</sup>	Sun <sup>3</sup>	Qty 10	Qty 20	Qty 50	Qty 100	Total Quantity	Total Cost
Trees	Sugar Maple 2-0 18-24"	3	L-M/D	Mod/Fast		\$27	\$54	\$129	\$253		
	Red Maple 2-0 2-3'	3	SLC-M	Fast		\$24	\$48	\$115	\$226		
	Red Oak 2-0 2-3'	4	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$24	\$48	\$115	\$226		
	White Oak 2-0 2-3'	3	SLC-M	Slow/Mod		\$24	\$48	\$115	\$226		
	Eastern Redbud 2-0 2-3'	4	LC-M/D	Moderate		\$24	\$48	\$115	\$226		
	Native Birch 1-0 18-24"	2	SL-M	Moderate		\$19	\$36	\$85	\$167		
	Balsam Fir 2-2/P+2 10-18"	3	SLC-M	Slow		\$24	\$48	\$115	\$226		
	Douglas Fir 2-2 16-22"	4	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$22	\$42	\$101	\$198		
	Fraser Fir 3-2/P+2 10-18"	4	M	Moderate		\$22	\$42	\$101	\$198		
	Col. Blue Spruce 2-2 16-22"	2	SLC-M/D	Slow/Moderate		\$22	\$42	\$101	\$198		
	Norway Spruce 2-2 15-24"	2	LC-M/D	Moderate/Fast		\$22	\$42	\$101	\$198		
	White Spruce 2-1/2-2 15-24"	2	SLC-M	Moderate		\$22	\$42	\$101	\$198		
	White Pine 2-2 14-20"	3	Acidic M/D	Fast		\$27	\$54	\$129	\$253		
Shrubs & Fruit	Red Osier Dogwood 18-24"	2	SLC-M/D	Fast		\$ 1.50 each					
	Common Lilac 2-0 18-24"	3	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$ 2.00 each					
	Elderberry 18-24"	3	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$ 2.00 each					
	Blackberry Darrow 1-0 RC 1-2'	3	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$ 3.25 each					
	Raspberry Latham 2-0 RC 1-2'	3	SLC-M/D	Moderate		\$ 3.50 each					
	Blueberry Jersey 2-0 12"	4	Acidic Required	Moderate		\$ 5.50 each					
	Blueberry BlueRay 2-0 12"	4	Acidic Required	Moderate		\$ 5.50 each					
Packs	Bird & Butterfly Pack	2 Each of: Black Chokeberry, Elderberry, Liatris Spicata, Ninebark, Apricot Beauty Daylily					\$ 26/pack				
	Native NY Wildlife Pack	2 Each of: White Pine, Red Osier Dogwood, Black Cherry, Hazelnut, Serviceberry					\$ 26/pack				
	Nut Tree Pack	2 Each of: White Oak, Bur Oak, Sawtooth Oak, Red Oak, Black Walnut					\$ 26/pack				
	Edible Fruit Pack	2 Each of: Blackberry, Jersey Blueberry, BlueRay Blueberry, Raspberry, Strawberry					\$ 35/pack				

1- Soil Preferences: SLC = Sand, Loam or Clay    M=Moist (well drained)

    M/D= Moist (well-drained) or Dry    D= Dry

2- Growth Rates: are as listed - Slow, Moderate, Fast, Slow to Moderate or Moderate to Fast

3- Sunlight Preferences: Full Sun= Partial Sun/Partial Shade= Full Shade=

Front Total	
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Complete Back of Form!

		Package Size	Order Quantity	Total
<b>Wildflower Seeds</b>		<b>All Perennial Wildflower Mix:</b> Prefers full sun exposure, Plant height: 25+", Direct sow, Planting depth 1/2", Zones 3-10. Multicolor blooms, attracts pollinators. Fall or Spring planting. 4 ounces covers 250-500 sq ft	1oz pkg: \$4.00 each 4oz pkg: \$15.00each	
		<b>Partial Shade Wildflower Seed Mix:</b> Annual/Perennial Mix, Partial shade, Plant height: 25+", Direct sow, Planting depth 1/2", Zones 3-10. Multicolor blooms, attracts pollinators. Fall or Spring planting. 4 ounces covers 250-500 sq ft	1oz pkg: \$4.00 each 4oz pkg: \$15.00each	
<b>Etc.</b>	<b>Marking Flags</b>	36" Wire Post, Fluorescent Pink Plastic Flags	<b>10 for \$ 2.50</b>	
	<b>Fertilizer Tablets</b>	N-P-K (20-10-5) Feeds up to 2 years per tablet	<b>10 for \$ 2.00</b>	

## Orders Due by March 4<sup>th</sup>

Orders are reserved as they are received. Waiting too long to place your order may result in items being out of stock.

**While Supplies Last - No Deliveries - No Returns**

**Pick Up: Thursday April 23<sup>rd</sup> or Friday April 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Payment Due With Order!**

<b>Back Total</b>	
<b>Front Total</b>	+
<b>TOTAL DUE</b>	

Due to the perishable nature of nursery stock, the SWCD is not responsible for stock condition after pickup by the customer or if picked up after the scheduled dates. Sizes on order form are estimates.

SWCD reserves the right to offer refunds or approved substitutions for stock not available.

Nursery stock obtained will be planted for the purpose of conservation.

**Customer Signature Required** X \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Name</b>
<b>Mailing Address</b>
<b>City, State, Zip</b>
<b>Phone #</b>
<b>Credit Card Number</b> If preferred, you may phone in credit card orders to: 315-376-6122 ----- CCV -----
Exp. ____ / ____ Billing Zip Code _____
<b>Signature Required for Card</b>



**Make Checks or Money Orders Payable to: Lewis County SWCD**

*Mail Completed Order Form with Payment to :*

**Lewis County SWCD – Tree Order**

**7356 East Road  
Lowville, NY 13367**

**\$35 Fee  
for  
Returned  
Checks**

# Web Soil Survey

The Conservation District often get requests from landowners for soil maps and soil-related information. To get this information we typically use a website called “Web Soil Survey”. This is a free online soils mapping program that anyone can use and is provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Soil Survey Data for anywhere in the United States can be accessed through the mapping interface. If you are interested in obtaining soil information for your property, we recommend visiting the site listed below. Once you reach the website home page you will see some basic directions to use the program. Click on the prominent green “Start WSS” button to proceed to the mapping page. Now you can search for your address, scroll and zoom to your area and use the Area of Interest (AOI) tool at the top of the map to outline your parcel. Once you have your AOI outlined, double click to finish your selection and you will notice a soil map tab becomes highlighted. You can click on this tab to bring up a map of your chosen area. From there a “Soils Data Explorer” tab is now available as an option. If you click on this tab, it will open a whole series of soil reports and ratings. Now it is just a matter of spending some time clicking through the reports to find what information you may be looking for. The District is always more than happy to assist if you want to contact us for soils information on your parcel or need help with this program. If you want to explore your soils data on your own, follow this link below:

<https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>



## 2025 COVER CROPS

- On average, cover crops reduce sediment lost from erosion by approximately 20.8 tons per acre on conventional-till fields
- Allow the soil to retain nitrogen and phosphorus in the soil where it is useful to the plant
- Surface water quality improves because nutrient laden runoff does not reach our waterways
- Increases organic matter in soil boosting field productivity

Funding Source	Total Acres Planted	Cost Shared to Lewis County Farms
AGNPS Round 27	2,103.8	\$140,954.60
AGNPS Round 28	824.6	\$57,722.00
AGNPS Round 29	2,087.7	\$146,139.00
AEM Year 18	1,121.9	\$93,117.70
Total	6,138	\$437,933.30

AGNPS = Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program  
AEM = Agricultural Environmental Management Program

# Jefferson/Lewis FFA Land Judging



On October 16<sup>th</sup>, middle and high school students from Jefferson and Lewis County schools attended the FFA Land Judging contest held at Garden of Eden Farm in Philadelphia. The contest involved FFA students visiting several test pit stations that were dug on the property. The students examined the soil characteristics and determined which agricultural and urban practices were suitable for each site. An activity station and a snack station were also provided this year. Camp Oswegatchie provided the interactive activity station giving the students a break from the testing while cider and doughnuts were available for all participants.

The contest is co-sponsored annually by Jefferson and Lewis County SWCD's and the event location alternates counties each year.

Congratulations to all the students that participated in the 2025 Land Judging Competition. The Jefferson and Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District's would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to all of our volunteers and to the Kiechle family for hosting the event.

## Career Day Events

This past fall Michael Durant and Alexis Lyndaker attended two different career day events at local schools. The first career day we were invited to was for Copenhagen Central School on October 28th. This event was organized for middle and high school students, with each student's interests in mind. Mike and Alexis first discussed their journey on becoming Soil & Water employees, followed by a presentation describing all areas of their job. The second event was held at South Lewis Central School for middle school students. This was a similar day with three different sessions explaining to students what a Soil & Water Conservation District is and what we do in Lewis County. The District is always happy to attend these events in hopes that we can familiarize our youth on the many different aspects that a Soil and Water Conservation District has as well as the many employment opportunities with District's throughout the state.



## Water Testing

Are you interested in testing your water? Did you know that our office is a drop off point for Converse Labs? Save yourself the drive to Watertown and drop your samples off at the Soil & Water Conservation District office.

The District accepts samples for Converse Laboratories from 8:00am—10:00am on Wednesdays. For testing and pricing information visit [www.converselabs.com](http://www.converselabs.com) or call 315-788-8388.

# Sampling Local Waterways for De-icing Salt

If you are curious as to why we sample for de-icing salt, here's the dirt on salt. The contents of de-icing salt are usually sodium chloride (NaCl) and sometimes magnesium (MgCl) or calcium (CaCl) chloride. The common denominator is chloride, which is not natural in high concentrations in our waterways in Lewis County.

So what does it do? High chloride concentrations can impact drinking water quality, corrode plumbing and can harm freshwater organisms. As we continue to use more de-icing salt on our roadways and parking lots, the concentration of chloride increases in waterways. As a result, NYS initiated an Adirondack Salt Task Force to begin looking at alternatives to rock salt for winter road management. In Lewis County, we decided to take a look at de-icing salt before salt season began. Working with the Stroud Water Research Center, we tested 11 locations; one site at Mill and Otter Creek, Deer River each, two in the Beaver River, five in the Black River, and one in Roaring Brook. The good news is that our waterway baseline tested below the limits of the chloride titrators before salt season began. But we have to consider that prior to sampling, de-icing salt had not been spread since April/May and our creeks are constantly moving water downstream. Stay tuned, we will take a look at our mid/late winter chloride readings to see what our chloride levels are during the de-icing salt spreading season. To learn more about de-icing salt, visit the following link on the NYS DEC's website: <https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/rock-salt-reduction>.

## Lewis County WQCC Shoreline Cleanup



On October 21st members of the Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committee hosted the annual Lewis County Shoreline Cleanup. Eatonville Falls was the chosen site with approximately 101.5 pounds of garbage collected.



Lewis County Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
7356 East Road  
Lowville, New York 13367  
[www.lewiscountysoilandwater.com](http://www.lewiscountysoilandwater.com)  
Phone (315) 376-6122

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 97  
Lowville, NY



## Mill Creek Streambank Stabilization

The July 2024 storm not only flooded many places in the Village of Lowville, but also caused major streambank erosion in Mill Creek, including downed trees and large rock deposits choking off much of the stream. Working with the Lewis County Department of Planning and Community Development, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Oneida County SWCD and the Lewis County Highway, the Lewis County SWCD prepared a feasibility study to stabilize Mill Creek's streambanks that will protect the East State Street bridge and Village of Lowville's infrastructure.

This collaboration yielded a \$306,126 NYS DOS Bond Act grant through the Inland Flooding and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program awarded to the county. The project will protect critical infrastructure at the Lowville wastewater treatment plant, improve water quality, reduce erosion, enhance habitat, and ensure the longevity of the East State Street Bridge. The project will include natural stream design elements, including the installation of cross vane structures, and the use of vegetation and root wad embedment in the streambank, which will enhance the long-term integrity of the streambank.

