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MANAGEMENT



# 2023 Black River Watershed Conference

THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED STEERING COMMITTEE  
WELCOMES YOU TO THE 13TH ANNUAL BLACK RIVER  
WATERSHED CONFERENCE!

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

HAMILTON

HERKIMER

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LEWIS

ONEIDA

NYS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION



AGENDA

TIME	TOPIC
9:00-9:15	Welcome & Opening Remarks
9:15-9:45	Black River Adaptive Management (Jasmine James, Ramboll Engineering)
9:45-10:30	SLELO – eDNA (Rob Williams, Invasive Species Program Director)
10:30-10:45	BREAK
10:45-12:00	Emerging Contaminants Panel (Paul Hare, Ramboll Engineering; Sujan Fernando, Clarkson University-CAARES; Kristine Wheeler, NYS Department of Health)
12:00-1:00	LUNCH
1:00-2:00	<p>LIGHTNING ROUND</p> <p>Waterfest (Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton County SWCD)</p> <p>Ag Plastics Recycling (Rosalee Walters, Herkimer County SWCD)</p> <p>Streambank Stabilization (Payton Reese, Oneida County SWCD)</p> <p>Youth Education- SW CARES: Storm Water, Carbon Awareness, and Reforestation Education for Students (Sarah Trick, Jefferson County SWCD)</p> <p>Friends of the Black River (Heidi Lehman, Village of Castorland)</p> <p>River Area Council of Governments (Mickey Dietrich, NYS Tug Hill Commission)</p> <p>Eastern Great Lakes Program (Emily Fell, NYS DEC)</p>
2:00-2:15	BREAK
2:15-2:45	Road Salt (Nichelle Swisher, Lewis SWCD; Timothy Hunt, Lewis County Highway)
2:45-3:00	Environmental Facilities Corporation (Dorian Di Cocco, NYS EFC)
3:00-3:15	The Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) Madeline Silecchia and Colleen Bradley
3:15-3:30	Closing Remarks

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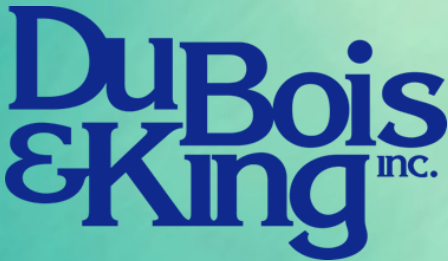
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CONFERENCE EXHIBITORS



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**DORIAN DI COCCO**

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITIES CORPORATION**

Dorian Di Cocco is the engineering lead for the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation's Adirondack Regional Community Assistance Team. As an Environmental Engineer with EFC, he has been assisting communities with the implementation of clean water projects in central and northern New York State since 2021. Dorian has over 10 years of experience in wastewater including responsibility for the operations of a 10MGD industrial wastewater treatment facility.



**COLLEEN BRADLEY**

#### **DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM**

Madeline and Colleen both serve the NYSDOH in the Bureau of water supply protection as technical assistance providers to New York State's Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2). They Coordinate with municipalities, Local Health Departments, and non-governmental entities to develop source water protection and implementation strategies at the local level. Madeline holds a B.A. in environmental studies with a minor in political science and international studies from Siena College. Colleen holds a BS in Environmental Science and Policy with a minor in Biology from Marist College.



**MADELINE SILECCHIA**

## **MASTER OF CEREMONIES TOM BOXBERGER**



Tom graduated from SUNY Cortland in 1974 with a degree in Natural Science/ Biology with concentrations in Chemistry and Geology. After graduation Tom and his wife Maryann moved to Watertown and he started his career with the NYS Department of Health, being promoted to Director in 1981. Tom retired after 36 years of State service and shortly after was appointed as a Commissioner for the Tug Hill Commission. He currently is serving as Secretary for the Commission and Co-Chair for the Town of Watertown Planning Board, Treasurer for the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District, board member the State C.S. Credit Union and is on the American Cancer Society Relay for Life Committee.



# CONFERENCE PRESENTERS



**JASMINE JAMES**

## **BLACK RIVER ADAPTIVE MODELING (BRAM) PROJECT**

Ms. James is a staff scientist at Ramboll with experience in consulting and a wide range of water quality and watershed projects. She graduated from Le Moyne College in May 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Biology and a minor in applied statistics. She previously worked at Upstate Freshwater Institute (UFI) (Syracuse, NY) and EcoLogic LLC (Cazenovia, NY), an environmental consulting company. She has worked on multiple environmental projects, including alum treatment analysis in Cape Cod, Drinking Water Source Protection Programs (DWSP2), Nine Element Plans, and Integrated Watershed Action Plans (IWAP).



**ROB WILLIAMS**

## **MESSAGE IN A MOLECULE - USING ENVIRONMENTAL DNA (EDNA) FOR INVASIVE SPECIES EARLY DETECTION.**

St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario (SLELO) – Partnership for Invasive Species Management (The Nature Conservancy). Rob is educated as a freshwater biologist (Brockport State University) and has experience in public administration, strategic planning and natural resource management. Rob is one of the co-founders of the Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance and co-founder of the North Coast Initiative, a.k.a. Lake Ontario Coastal Initiative. Rob's professional experience includes work with The Nature Conservancy, New York State Soil and Water Conservation Districts and New York State Sea Grant Extension. During his career he has been instrumental in securing over \$12 million in project funding from various funding sources. As the Invasive Species Program Director of the SLELO-PRISM, Rob leads a team of specialists towards protecting the ecological health of our lands and waters. Rob currently serves as Chairperson to The Nature Conservancy's Invasive Species Advisory Committee/North America and various other state and regional Technical Working Groups.



**NICHELLE SWISHER**

## **ROAD SALT**

Nichelle Swisher is the District Manager of the Lewis County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Chairperson for the Lewis County Water Quality Coordinating Committee. She is a native of Lewis County, has her Master's Degree in Biology-Aquatic Ecology (SUNY Brockport) and has over 24 years experience in soil and water and natural resource conservation. Mrs. Swisher served as the Project Manager for the Black River Watershed Management Plan and is part of the watershed steering committee assisting in organizing the Annual Black River Watershed Conference. Nichelle will also speak about road salt and New York State's Salt Task Force.



**TIMOTHY HUNT**

Timothy L. Hunt is a dedicated public servant and the Highway Superintendent of Lewis County, NY. With a strong commitment to improving infrastructure and ensuring the safety of the county's roadways, Timothy plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of life for the community.

As the Highway Superintendent, Timothy oversees all aspects of road maintenance, construction, and repair in Lewis County. With his extensive knowledge of transportation systems and keen attention to detail, he implements effective strategies to optimize road conditions and address any challenges that may arise.

Timothy's leadership skills are evident in his ability to manage a skilled team of professionals and coordinate complex projects. His collaborative approach fosters teamwork and ensures that the department operates smoothly and efficiently. Under his guidance, the Lewis County Highway Department

has successfully executed numerous road improvement initiatives, resulting in safer and more reliable transportation for residents and visitors alike. Beyond his role as Highway Superintendent, Timothy actively engages with the local community. He values open communication and actively seeks feedback from residents to better understand their concerns and priorities. By actively involving the community in decision-making processes, Timothy ensures that the department's efforts align with the needs of the people he serves. With a deep-rooted passion for the community, Timothy remains committed to staying up-to-date with industry advancements and best practices. He continuously explores innovative approaches and embraces technology to optimize operations, reduce costs, and enhance sustainability in road maintenance.

Timothy L. Hunt's dedication to serving Lewis County shines through his work as the Highway Superintendent. His leadership, expertise, and unwavering commitment to the community have made him an invaluable asset in driving positive change and creating a safer and more efficient transportation network.





**MICKEY DIETRICH**

also served on various committees for the NYS GIS Association and was also a member of the NYS GIS Advisory Council. However, his love and passion for working more closely with local governments led him to the RACOG Circuit Rider position.

Mickey is always learning new things and his learning has never stopped since getting out of college. While in college, Mickey received a M.P.S. (Master's of Professional Studies) in Quantitative Methods in Forest Management (GIS Concentration) from SUNY ESF, a B.S. (Bachelor of Science) as a dual major in Wildlife Biology and Forest Management from SUNY ESF, and an A.A.S. (Associate of Applied Science) in Natural Resource Management from SUNY Morrisville.

A fun fact about Mickey and his family. They have adopted and taken in 5 horses, which tend to be older and/or needing medical care. As of today, they have two Clydesdales, a Percheron, a Quarter Horse, and a Shetland Pony.

#### **RIVER AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Mickey Dietrich has enjoyed working as a local government advisor for the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) for the past 5.5 years under the Tug Hill Commission. RACOG members include the towns of Champion, Croghan, Denmark, Lowville, Wilna, and the villages of Carthage, Castorland, Copenhagen, Deferiet, Lowville, and West Carthage. Mickey is proud of what the RACOG group has been able to accomplish by working together and partnering with other organizations in a collaborative effort. Before being the RACOG Local Government Advisor (Circuit Rider), Mickey was the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist for the Tug Hill Commission for 15.5 years. During that time, Mickey served three years in a presidential role for the NYS GIS Association. He



**EMILY FELL**

#### **EASTERN GREAT LAKES WATERSHED COORDINATOR (NYSDEC'S GREAT LAKES PROGRAM, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NYS WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE)**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Great Lakes Program, in partnership with the NYS Water Resources Institute at Cornell University works to protect and restore water quality and ecosystem integrity in NY's portion of the Great Lakes and their lands and waters. Guided by NY's Great Lakes Action Agenda, this program works with partners to:

- Coordinate science and adaptive management
- Provide research, education, and training
- Coordinate community engagement and stewardship
- Provide and identify grant funding

To learn more and sign up for the listserv, email [greatlakes@dec.ny.gov](mailto:greatlakes@dec.ny.gov) or visit: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html>



**PAUL HARE**

#### **EMERGING CONTAMINANTS PANEL- PFAS**

Paul Hare is a Certified Professional Geologist (AIPG) and a New York and Pennsylvania licensed Professional Geologist. He has BS degrees in Agronomy and Geology from Penn State, an MS degree in geology from Penn State, and an MBA degree from RPI. Paul has been working on legacy environmental issues for over 35 years. He has been at Ramboll for the past 8 years and spends a significant amount of his time dealing with emerging contaminants such as 1,4-dioxane and PFAS. Paul's prior experience includes consulting and over 20 years in industry.



**SUJAN FERNANDO**

#### **GREAT LAKES FISH MONITORING RESEARCH IN LAKE ONTARIO AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WATERSHED**

Dr. S. Fernando currently serves as the Analytical Laboratory Director and a Research Assistant Professor at the Center for Air and Aquatic Resources Engineering and Science (CAARES) at Clarkson University. His main area of research focuses on the analysis of legacy contaminants and identification of novel contaminants in the environment using state-of-the-art analytical techniques including multidimensional chromatography and high resolution mass spectrometry.



**KRISTINE WHEELER**

#### **PFAS REGULATORY LANDSCAPE**

Kristine Wheeler, P.E. is Director of the New York State Department of Health's Bureau of Water Supply Protection (BWSP). The BWSP has primary enforcement authority for the Safe Drinking Water Act and is responsible for regulatory development and implementation for multiple programs including public water supplies; cooling towers; legionella control in healthcare settings; individual water supply; onsite wastewater treatment systems; lead in school drinking water; New York City watershed; bottled and bulk water; lead service line replacement; drinking water operator certification; cybersecurity and emergency preparedness in public water supplies and recreational water facility design. The BWSP also administers the drinking water state revolving fund (DWSRF) and Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (WIIA) in conjunction with the Environmental (continued)



Facilities Corporation. Kristine has been with the Department of Health for nearly 20 years, with extensive experience both in policy and implementation. She is a graduate of Clarkson University and lives in the Lake George area with her husband and children.



CAITLIN STEWART

**ADIRONDACK WATERFEST**

Caitlin has been part of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District team since 2003, first as an intern, then conservation educator, and now, manager. Educational credentials include a MS in Geoscience, UMass Amherst, and a BS in Environmental Science and Geography, SUNY Oneonta. She lives with her husband, Matt, and their dog, Artemis, in Lake Pleasant, and stokes her life with outdoor adventures in the Adirondack wild and beyond. Discover how Caitlin upholds the Conservation District’s mission of promoting the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County by visiting [www.hamiltoncountyswcd.org](http://www.hamiltoncountyswcd.org).



ROSALEE WALTERS

**AG PLASTIC RECYCLING**

The Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District works to serve and educate landowners, organizations, and government agencies while developing, conserving, and preserving the natural resources of Herkimer County. The Herkimer County SWCD runs an Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program, an annual tree and shrub sale, and natural resource programs, such as hydroseeding, fish stocking, and invasive species management. More recently, the district is starting up a new Ag-plastics program, intended to help farmers bale the loose plastic at their farms. Rosie recently started working for the Herkimer County SWCD as a Natural Resource Conservation Technician. She is responsible for the coordination of various programs, such as, hydroseeding, fish stocking, invasive species management, and educational events.



PAYTON REESE

**STREAM PROJECTS**

Payton is the District Technician for Oneida County SWCD. He mainly works on stream projects including culvert replacements and bank/bed stabilization projects. He started at the Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District in November of 2022 and before that interned with Oswego and Onondaga Counties SWCD working on hydroseeding and invasive water chestnuts.



SARAH TRICK

**YOUTH EDUCATION- SW CARES: STORM WATER, CARBON AWARENESS, AND REFORESTATION EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS**

Sarah is an Environmental Resource Specialist for Jefferson County Soil and Water. She is the lead on the Sandy Creeks Nine Element Plan currently in development in Jefferson and Oswego Counties and previously worked for the Indian River Lakes Conservancy as their Watershed Coordinator. Throughout her professional career she has been dedicated to water quality and youth education. Jefferson County SWCD’s SW CARES program mixes these two specialties into an interactive lesson both in and out of the classroom, explaining high-level concepts in a way local 4th graders can digest.



HEIDI LEHMAN

**FRIENDS OF THE BLACK RIVER**

In addition to being a local small business owner, Heidi Lehmann currently serves as a Trustee for the Village of Castorland and is an active member in the Friends of the Black River group. She obtained her Bachelors degree from SUNY Potsdam and earned a Masters in Business Administration from Empire State College. Mrs. Lehmann resides in Castorland with her husband and four children.