



Quarterly NEWSLETTER



DATES TO REMEMBER



October:

19 - Broome County Riverbank Clean Up



November:

15 - USC Bi-Monthly Meeting



December:

13 - Winter Newsletter Submission Deadline

17 - Riparian Forest Buffer Task Force Meeting

18 - Planting Contractor Estimate Requests Due

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Supporting the Approach: Stream Corridor Restoration in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed (NY, PA)

Our overall goal for this proposal is to offer comprehensive stream corridor restoration assistance to diverse landowners across the landscape, to address nutrient and sediment pollution within priority watersheds in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed. We plan on achieving this goal by strengthening a stream program that supports capacity, fills implementation financial gaps, and continues to support watershed assessments.

Project Deliverables Include:

- Implement 1.2 miles of stream corridor restoration, 11.8 miles of riparian forest buffer, 0.5 miles of exclusion fence, 5 acres of floodplain restoration, 5 acres of wetland restoration, 50 acres of grazing, and 8 acres of upland tree planting;
- Reach 500 people and Engage with 200 volunteers,
- Create 100 Best Management Practice plans, and
- Assess 500 sites through watershed assessments.





A group of farmers take a look at Moyers riparian buffer tree planting site

creek became a lesson plan and practical farmer “rock turnovers” led by Tioga County’s CCE Ag Educator, Kelly Jackson, in identifying beneficial Benthic macro-invertebrates, such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies that are indicators of water quality who live at the bottom of water bodies. Upon observation, the Moyers are clearly helping their stream ecosystem.

Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District Professionals, Heather Gulliford and Danielle Singer highlighted the work and technical assistance put on the ground working with Marvin to create a legacy project for generations. Work included: Creek berm removal reconnecting to the flood plain, installation of 11,000 feet of fencing and 4,800 feet of waterline for ... two watering systems to facilitate rotational grazing in their new pastures, a five acre riparian forest buffer with cattle exclusion fencing on both sides of the

A Journey Through Grazing

By: Troy Bishopp , *USC Grass Whisperer & Madison SWCD Grazing Specialist*

Owego, NY- Fresh off the 2023/2024 Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Report Card that indicated the Upper Susquehanna River in New York received the 2nd highest quality score (B-) of all the Bay state jurisdictions, a group of farmers celebrated at a recent Tioga County pasture walk.

“Rotational grazing has been a lifetime journey of learning and now it’s extra important in the case for maintaining water quality for my downstream neighbors,” said Marvin Moyer, host of the pasture meeting.

Marvin and Mildred Moyer along with their family members have been organically raising 100% grass-fed beef cattle at Twin Brook Farm on their acreage for over 35 years, along with chickens, pigs and sheep, and selling meat directly from the farm for decades. “It’s been a passion of mine that customers appreciate, as we show and tell, how our management compliments the holistic goals of the watershed”, said Moyer. “I want to help solve the problem and not be a part of it. I want to be the solution.”

Before Marvin Moyer purchased an additional 90+ acres of farmland adjacent to Little Nanticoke Creek, he was already safeguarding the land and water cycle on his property by running a rotational grazing system and keeping perennial plant communities intact. The twilight walk introduced farmers to Moyers cow/calf pastures, management style and his genetic base and moved into plant identification by Cortland CCE Field Crops Specialist, Janice Degni. Cortland CCE Dairy Specialist, Betsy Hicks helped guests learn about grass growth indicators, forage inventory measurements and animal nutrition guidelines given the sward that was there.

Marvin provided a wagon ride to his “new” land that crossed over the creek where significant conservation work was doing its job. The

Danielle and Kelly



1,400 feet stream reach and a 3-acre upland tree planting project dedicated to fruit, mast and wildlife habitat species with adjacent wetland pond to increase biodiversity on the farm.

His grazing system is now 160+ acres for his 40 cow/ calf, replacement and finishing herds.

“These localized get-togethers on a farm to share experiences, ideas and see what’s happening on the land is an approach that is unmatched”, said Singer. “Getting farmers together and making connections to their land within a holistic context is really energizing towards our Agricultural Environmental Management Program goals here at the district and with our regional partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition,” emphasized Gulliford.

To learn more about Tioga County SWCD and CCE Programs call (607) 972-2365



Betsy Hicks talks about forage quality and inventory for beef animals

On the Farm STEM Inspires NY Science Educators

By: Troy Bishopp, *USC Grass Whisperer & Madison SWCD Grazing Specialist*

An On the Farm STEM professional development event, hosted by the New York Beef Council, provided eighteen dedicated middle and high school science educators with practical agricultural experience into the beef and dairy industries was held in Oneida and Lewis County.

Participants visited Simply C Farm in Boonville, exploring the beef lifecycle and learning about grazing principles from Troy Bishopp of Madison County SWCD, soil health principles from Oneida County SWCD Ag Intern, Hayleigh Gates, and forestry careers and initiatives from District Forester, Jessica Pyrda. Ronny Raindrop was on hand to help with chores and demonstrated the water infiltration test for teachers.

The program continued with a visit to Beller Farms in Lewis County, where attendees explored engineering and technology used in modern animal handling and care.

The session showcased the latest agricultural innovations, demonstrating how technology is applied to improve efficiency and animal welfare and how the farm works with Lewis County SWCD.

The “On the Farm STEM” trainings are a Beef Checkoff-funded program produced by the American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture, a contractor of the Beef Checkoff, that helps STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math) teachers develop curriculum for their classes using food and agriculture as a vehicle for scientific learning and development.



Steuben County Project Spotlight

By Josh Meacham - Steuben SWCD District Technician

- June 2024 Town of Avoca buffer planting, adjacent to Ten Mile Creek.
- Total buffer area was approximately 2.10 acres. With 2 acres planted.

Site prep required the use of the District’s John Deere 85g mid-sized excavator and Kubota SVL 97-2 tracked skid steer with brush cutting head to remove and mulch invasive species.

Initially the site was overrun with multiflora rose and honey suckle that needed to be removed before planting could take place. As we looked over the site, we did notice some natural willow regeneration that we selectively kept in place to keep some native vegetation. Also on site were a few blackberry patches that the landowner wished to keep in place for their grandchildren, while mowing the site, we cleaned up around those patches and mowed access points for the landowners to pick berries. We also found a large patch of Elderberries that we cleaned up around to get more sunlight.

After site prep was completed, we utilized plant materials, tree tubes, and stakes from Tioga SWCD in conjunction with NYS DEC Trees for Tribs program.

The planting was completed over two days in partnership with the landowners who brought approximately 6 people along with them.

It was a great experience for all involved and the landowners were very pleased with the outcome.



Species included:

Trees

- Silver Maple
- River Birch
- Hackberry
- Eastern Redbud
- American Persimmon
- Tulip Poplar
- American Sycamore
- Swamp White Oak
- Black Willow
- Hickory

Shrub

- Streamco Willow
- Silky Dogwood
- Red Osier Dogwood
- Witch Hazel
- Elderberry
- Arrowwood
- Nannyberry



Site Prep



Planting



The Finished Product



Local Conservationist Awarded for her Inspired Work

By: Troy Bishopp, *USC Grazing Specialist*

Owego, NY---“Sometimes the bravest and the most important thing you can do is just show up” ~ Brene Brown.

According to many farmers, community leaders, conservation peers and friends, Water Quality and Nutrient Management Specialist, Danielle Singer from the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District is always showing up for her local community. From her job at the district working with farmers, planting trees in the watershed, being on the Tioga CCE board or scooping ice-cream during the “Sundaes on the Farm” event, her passion and drive to help is getting noticed.

Tioga County SWCD Board Member and local Lions Club Member Jake Brown recently presented Danielle with a Robert J. Uplinger Distinguished Service Award from the New York State and Bermuda Lions Club Foundation. The award is in “recognition of outstanding dedicated work of promoting agriculture programs, stewardship and education in Tioga County”.

Tioga County SWCD District Manager, Wendy Walsh said, “I can’t say enough about how hard she works to lead our ag program and pull all the outreach components together to help tell our story. Her dedication to growing and promoting agricultural programs, partnering with other organizations and coordinating events that expand the public’s understanding of agriculture in our county is inspiring. She’s an asset to our team and our community and we’re proud to see her recognized for the many hours she puts in away from her family”.

“I am very honored to receive this award,” said Singer. “It means so much to me because I believe bringing conservation practices that protect and enhance our water and soils to local farmers and landowners is incredibly important to the future of agriculture”. “I think of my son and see my rewarding work will ensure there is a sustainable and healthy local food system for him. I love Tioga County’s agricultural community, and I enjoy working with producers. Thank you for this recognition”.



Danielle and Jake Brown Lions Club Member, Tioga County Legislator, and TCSWCD Board member

NFWF Project Tour

By Wendy Walsh - *USC Coordinator*

On July 29th and 30th, members of the USC staff and SWCDs hosted a consultant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to view firsthand the work that is being implemented in NYS. Over the course of the 2 days we visited 4 sites in Chenango and Cortland Counties.

The projects showcased stream restoration, riparian forest buffers and wetland restoration work that is being accomplished by NFWF funding secured by the USC and distributed via our Water Quality Program.



Reforestation for the Future



Practice Overview New York State

About the Program:

Reforestation for the Future offers New York landowners like you the opportunity to plant trees and implement climate-friendly, forest management practices on your property to benefit your community and increase tree cover for wildlife, provide shade, improve water and air quality, and sequester carbon dioxide.

This new offering is part of the larger Family Forest Carbon Program led by two national nonprofits, the American Forest Foundation (AFF) and The Nature Conservancy. The program is available for a limited time and is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

How to Participate:

By participating in the Reforestation for the Future program, you will be provided with free trees, planting services and expert guidance to transform your land—of five acres or more—into a growing forest. You will also receive a monetary, onetime payment for program participation.

Participants will partner with The Nature Conservancy and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff to receive technical assistance and professional guidance on their best options for tree planting—including the selection of suitable, native tree species. Potential planting sites will be individually evaluated to ensure they meet program requirements.

To Learn More:

If you live in Jefferson County, get in touch with your local Soil and Water Conservation District to get started:
(315) 782-2749 or info@jeffersoncountyswcd.org

If you live in Allegany, Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Livingston, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Otsego, Schuyler, Schoharie, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins or Yates counties, contact the Upper Susquehanna Coalition Buffer Team to get started:
(607) 687-3553 or bufferteam@u-s-c.org



Reforestation for the Future



Practice Overview New York State



General Eligibility Guidelines:

To be eligible for Reforestation for the Future, you must meet the following guidelines:

- Your property is in Jefferson County or in a county within the Upper Susquehanna River Basin.*
- Your property is privately owned, including ownership by individuals, families, trusts or nonprofit organizations (camps, churches etc.). Land owned by land trusts is not eligible at this time.
- At least 5 acres are available for tree planting—including open idle fields, pasture/hay, grass and relatively open shrubland—and must not have been forest for at least 10 years.
- Cultivated cropland and/or land with highly productive agricultural soils may not be eligible unless in riparian zones or floodplains.
- Planting equipment and workers can access the planting areas relatively easily.
- You must be willing to let the trees grow for at least thirty years.

Questions? SWCD staff will help interested landowners determine if they qualify.

Each project will be evaluated by The Nature Conservancy and SWCD on an individual basis.

Payment Terms & Conditions:

Contract Length: 30 years

Program Benefits:

- One-time payment of \$500 per acre paid after the time of planting
- No out-of-pocket costs for the landowner—nursery stock, labor and coordination for planting, maintenance and monitoring are all covered services

Agreement Terms:

- Allow access to your land for tree planting, maintenance and related activities
- Sign and help complete USDA paperwork
- Hold the land for at least 4 years, unless transferee is willing to sign USDA paperwork
- Authorization to The Conservancy or AFF to sell carbon credits at a future date from the planted area
- Provide feedback on pilot program experience

To Learn More:

If you live in Jefferson County, get in touch with your local SWCD to get started: **(315) 782-2749** or info@jeffersoncountyswcd.org

*If you live in Allegany, Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Livingston, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Otsego, Schuyler, Schoharie, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins or Yates counties, contact the Upper Susquehanna Coalition Buffer Team to get started: **(607) 687-3553** or bufferteam@u-s-c.org

Thank You to Our Program Partners:



38TH ANNUAL BROOME COUNTY RIVERBANK CLEAN UP

THIS YEAR'S EVENT IS DEDICATED TO
BILL HEAVISIDE



**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 19TH, 2024
8:00AM-12:00PM**

Clean Up Sites All Across The County

HOW DOES IT WORK?

1. Organize Your Team (Individuals are welcome!)
2. Designate a Stream Captain
3. Register Online
4. Receive Confirmation of Your Clean Up Site
5. Pick Up & Gather Your Supplies
6. Head Out & Help Us Clean Up our Watershed!



SCAN ME

VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION!

Find Registration Information Here:

<https://broomecountyny.gov/emc/riverbankcleanup>

DEADLINE TO
REGISTER:
OCTOBER 11TH

Watershed Wednesdays Returns

You are invited to our 2024 mini-session series highlighting conservation initiatives and projects in the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay.

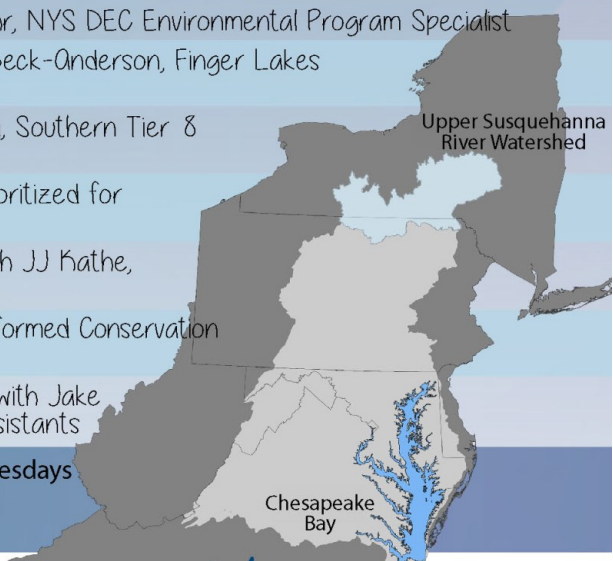
Watershed Wednesdays webinars will take place each Wednesday morning from September 11 through November 20 @ 9:30 am on zoom: www.u-s-c.org/webinars



Scan Here for Zoom Link

Mark your calendars for the following sessions:

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|-----------|----|--|
| September | 11 | What I have Learned about Implementing Practical Silvopasture Systems and Working with Farmers with Austin Unruh, Trees for Graziers CEO |
| September | 18 | Head Over Heels for Eels, SRBC's Eels in the Classroom Program with Johanna Hripto, SRBC Environmental Scientist |
| September | 25 | Land, Air and Water: Building Participatory Science in Your Community, Panel Discussion, with Jeff O'Handley, OCCA Program Director |
| October | 2 | Following the Nutrients - Strategies of Record Keeping with Selected USC Ag Team Members |
| October | 9 | Watersheds and the New Wetlands Regulations with Krista Spohr, NYS DEC Environmental Program Specialist |
| October | 16 | Addressing Spotted Lantern Fly in the Finger Lakes with Sam Beck-Anderson, Finger Lakes PRISM Coordinator |
| October | 23 | NYS's Climate Smart Communities Program with Ashley Seyfried, Southern Tier 8 Sustainability Coordinator |
| October | 30 | Evaluating Water-Quality Trends in Agricultural Watersheds Prioritized for Management with Jimmy Webber, USGS Hydrologist |
| November | 6 | New York's Statewide Reforestation Planning Effort Update with JJ Kathe, NYS DEC Resiliency Planting Coordinator |
| November | 13 | Exploring Yellow Lampmussel Life History, A First Step Towards Informed Conservation with Brian Hefferon, SUNY Cobleskill |
| November | 20 | Assessing Road Crossings in the Upper Tiohoughnioga Watershed with Jake Lynch & Brandon Aschmutat, Cortland SWCD Conservation Assistants |



Visit www.u-s-c.org/watershedwednesdays to view post-session Watershed Wednesdays resources, and contact us at contact@u-s-c.org with questions about this, or other outreach programs.



Wishing our Extraordinary Grazier and Outreach Wiz Troy Bishopp - Best of Luck on his newest adventure!

Updates to NYS DEC Wetland Regulations

By Melissa Yearick - USC Wetland Team

The 2022 adoption of amendments to the New York State Freshwater Wetlands Act provided increased protections of wetlands in the state in several ways. Beginning January 1, 2025, the state will no longer use the static State freshwater wetlands maps that previously identified wetlands protected under Article 24 of the Environmental Conservation Law. Moving forward, NYS DEC will develop new mapping to identify protected wetlands that can be updated at any time and shared on the department website. Protected wetland minimum acreage will remain at 12.4 acres (except for wetlands of Unusual Importance) until January 1, 2028 when it will be reduced to 7.4 acres. Wetlands of "Unusual Importance" will be protected regardless of size as long as they contain one or more of the following characteristics:

it is in a watershed that has experienced significant flooding (see map below)	it is within or adjacent to an urban area	it contains rare plant species	it contains habitat for an essential behavior of a T&E/Special Concern or SGCN species
it is classified by DEC as a Class I wetland	it was previously classified as a wetland of unusual local importance	it is a vernal pool that is known to be productive for amphibian breeding	it is located in an area designated as a floodway
it was previously mapped by the department as a wetland	it has wetland functions and values that are of local or regional significance	it has significant importance to protecting the state's water quality	

The USC Wetland Committee completed a review of the draft regulation changes and submitted comments to NYS DEC during the comment period. USC comments included concerns about the many parts of the programmatic changes still in development, and the lack of opportunity for public review and comment before the regulations go into effect. We cited the tremendous outreach effort needed to fully inform the public and conservation professionals alike within the limited time remaining before these changes are instituted. And we requested consideration of permit needs for wetland enhancement and restoration activities, and the difficulty of completing restoration projects under the current rules let alone what the process will be with an expanded footprint.

While wetland regulation is a valuable tool for protecting wetlands, these Freshwater Wetlands Act amendments will significantly change the Article 24 permit process, and we are anxiously awaiting the development of more resources that will hopefully answer many of our questions.

