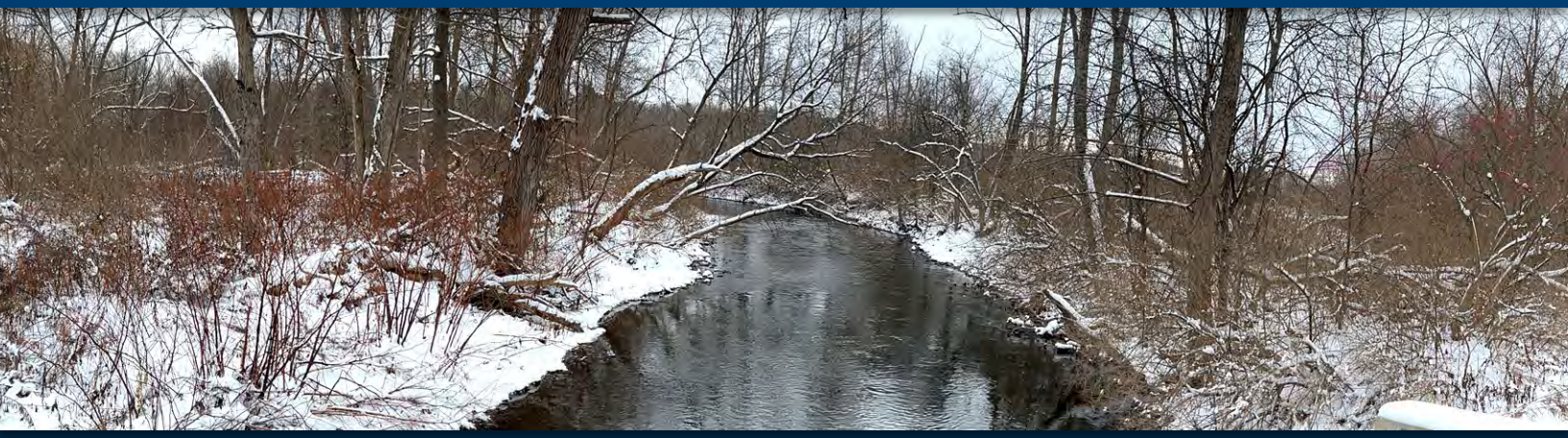
December 2025

Quarterly NEWSLETTER



DATES TO REMEMBER

January:
9 - Planting contractor requests due
10 - Bale Grazing Workshop (flyer on p. 17)
15 - Agroforestry Summit at Cornell
16 - Steward Requests Due
21-22 CDEA Meeting
23 - Bradford County Conservation District Farmers Resource Expo (flyer on p. 6)
30 - USC Bi-Monthly Meeting

February:
5 - Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Workshop (flyer on p. 12)
9-10 Legislative Days
11 - USC Stream Committee Meeting
24 - Ag Committee Meeting

March:
4 - Watershed Forestry Task Force Meeting
10-13 Water Quality Symposium

IN THIS ISSUE

Steward Funding

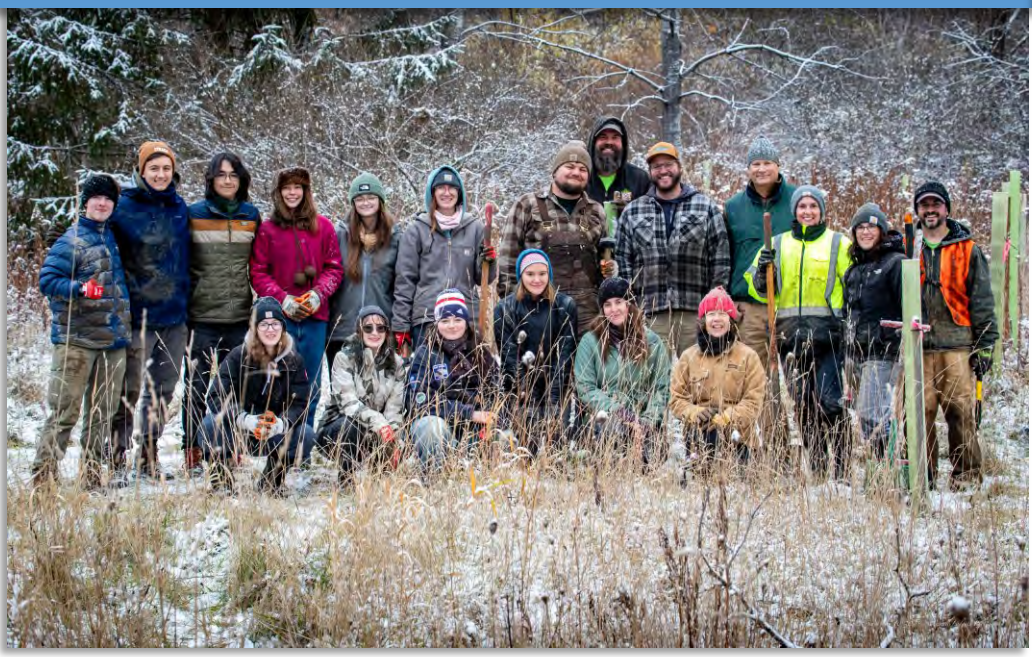
The USC Watershed Forestry Team is now accepting requests for stewardship funding assistance! Funding is available for hiring interns for evaluation & maintenance of afforestation projects, contracted maintenance, and district staff time. Steward requests are due by **January 16th, 2026.**

Contact Ava Glasser (glassera@tiogacountyny.gov) for information or assistance.

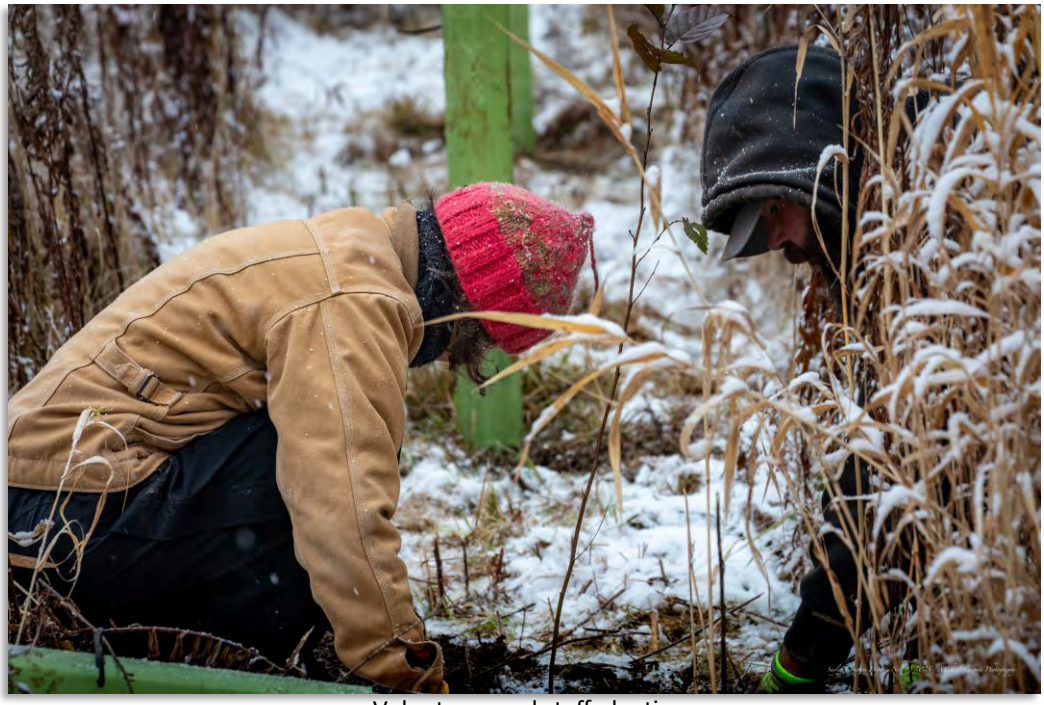
West Branch of Owego Creek Volunteer Planting, Tompkins County

By Ranier Lucas,
Upper Susquehanna Coalition

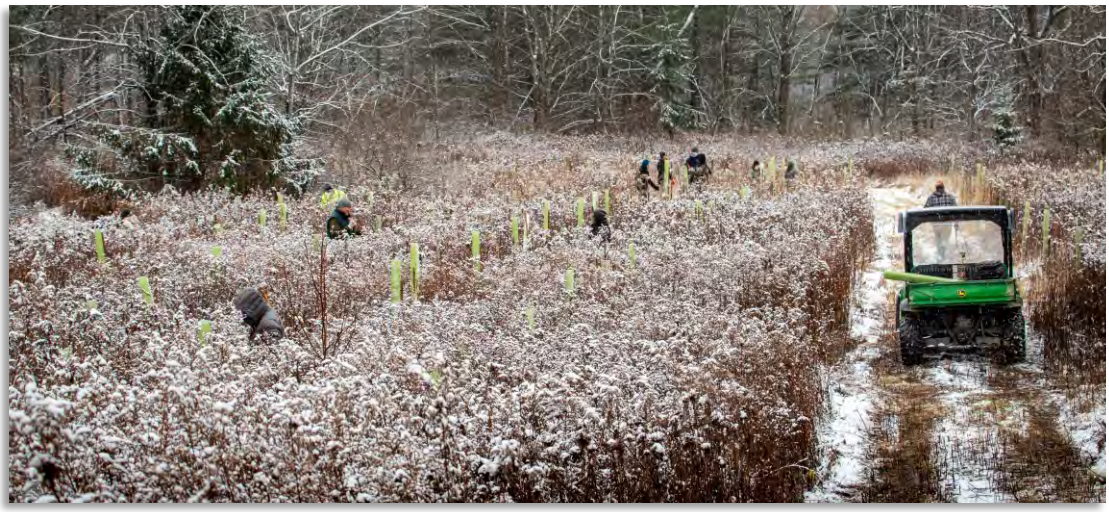
Imagine clear skies and the crisp fall sunshine, no need for a jacket or hat on November 10th; volunteers showing up with a stride in their step and smiles on their faces, ready to give a helping hand to conservation. This is what an ideal volunteer event would be. Instead, only half of this was true. On November 10th, Brooktondale, in Tompkins County NY saw a high of 28 degrees, 100% chance of snow, with an inch already on the ground. Winter had come a little too early and was here to stay. Despite the circumstances, we were greeted with smiling faces and a team of students eager to plant trees in the ground. Our team joined together to plant over 300 trees and shrubs along the west branch of Owego Creek, adding to a previous planting. Though the original planting was largely spaced 20 by 20 ft., adding the additional plants reduced the spacing to 10 by 10ft., focusing on areas closest to the creek to establish canopy closure faster. Among the trees and shrubs planted were Silver Maple, Sugar Maple, Black Willow, Smooth Alder, Buttonbush, Red Osier Dogwood, Winterberry, Nannyberry, and Elderberry; not only increasing canopy closure potential but also increasing wildlife value throughout the site. Special thanks to our volunteers from Ithaca College, staff at Tompkins County Soil and Water Conservation District, and *Michael Ludgate Photography*.



Group photo Tompkins County Soil and Water, Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Ithaca College



Volunteers and staff planting



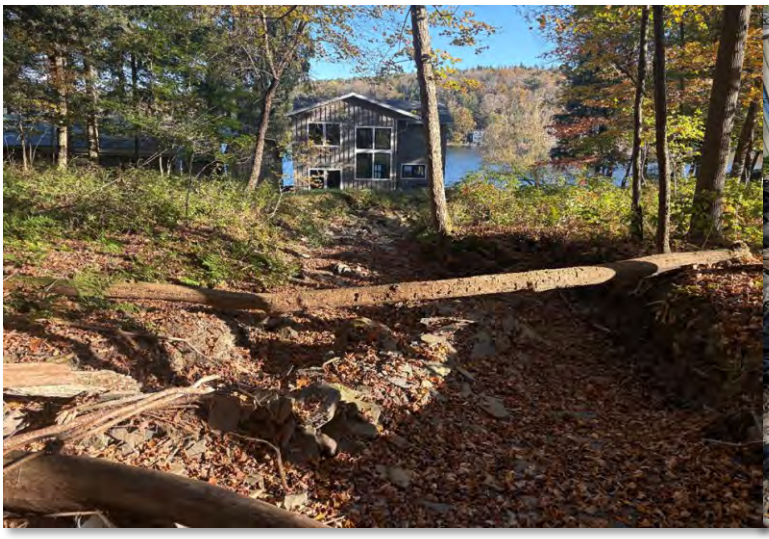
Planting Winterberry *Ilex verticillata*

Madison County Flood Mitigation Project

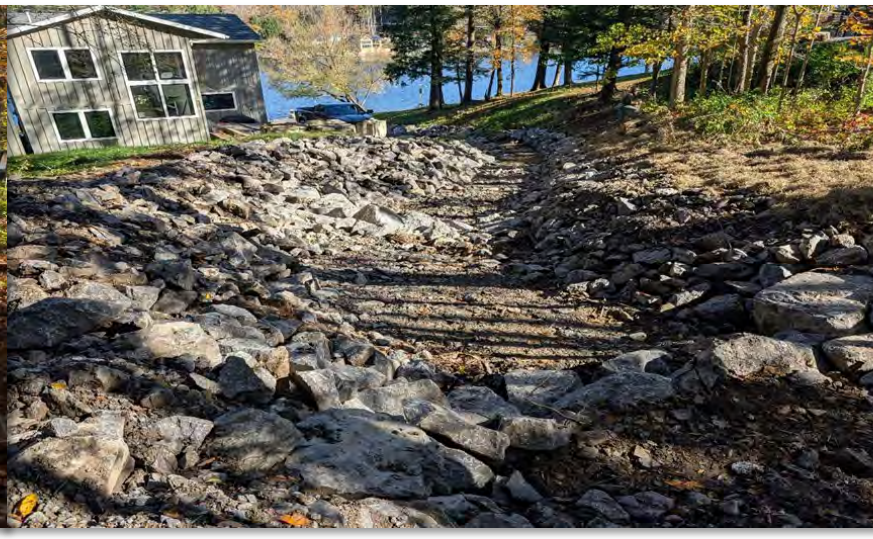
By Steve Lorraine, *Madison County SWCD*

Wescott Road and several homes have experienced repeated flooding as a result of recent severe storm events. As can be seen in the before picture below the stream channel is severely eroded and heading directly towards the home in this picture. In the background you can see Bradley Brook Reservoir. The sediments being removed from this channel are being deposited into the reservoir. A design was developed improve the channel by enlarging it and stabilizing the banks to handle the increased flows we have been seeing. As part of this project SWCD staff designed a large detention basin to collect runoff above this site and slow release it over a 24 hour period.

Site prior to construction:



Newly constructed stabilized channel:



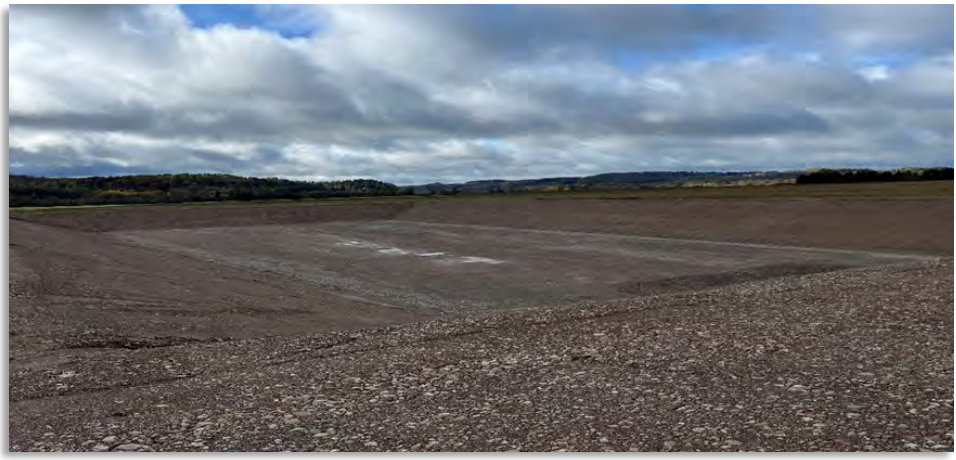
The detention basin that was constructed above the site:

Chenango River Waste Storage Project

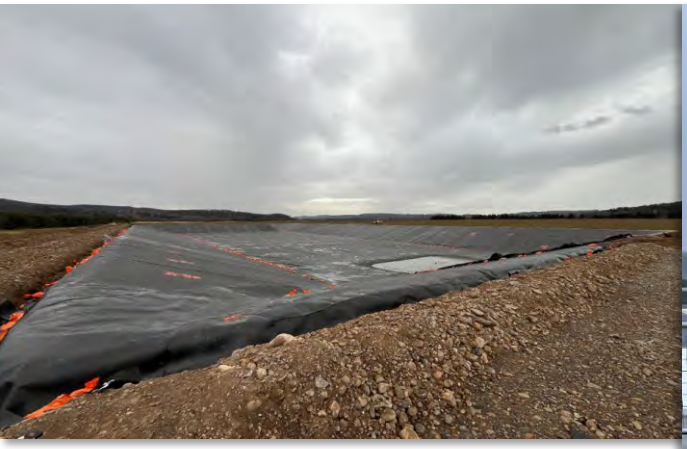
By Steve Lorraine, *Madison County SWCD*

Working with a farm in the Chenango River watershed to improve waste management capabilities on the farm resulted in the construction of a highly engineered lined earthen waste storage facility capable of storing approximately 4 million gallons of manure. The storage was sized to fit the land base that exists adjacent to the storage that will allow the farm to dragline and inject the manure just prior to planting the up coming years crop. This will allow for better uptake of nutrients from the growing crop, reduce synthetic fertilizer usage, reduced chance of runoff and reduce odor concerns. The storage is lined with a polyethylene liner similar to those used in landfill applications to protect ground water and incorporates a leak detection system to ensure the system does not become compromised. Project required a stormwater permit from NYS DEC to ensure no runoff from the site during construction left the site.

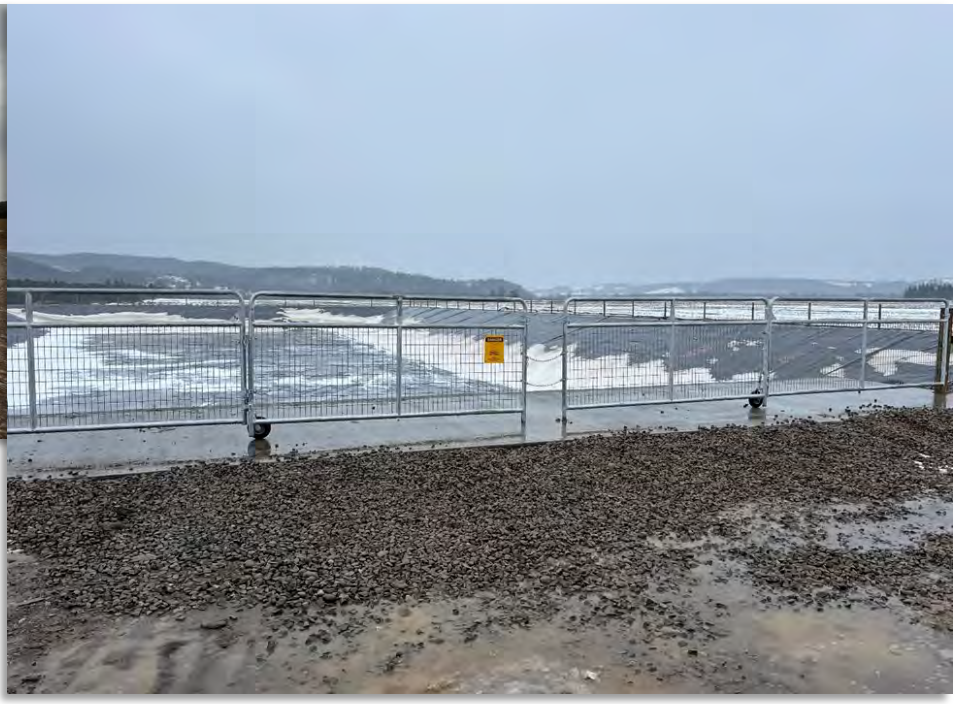
Site work under way



Site work complete with leak detection installed awaiting liner installation



Polyethelene liner installed



Project completed safety fence installed and ready for use.

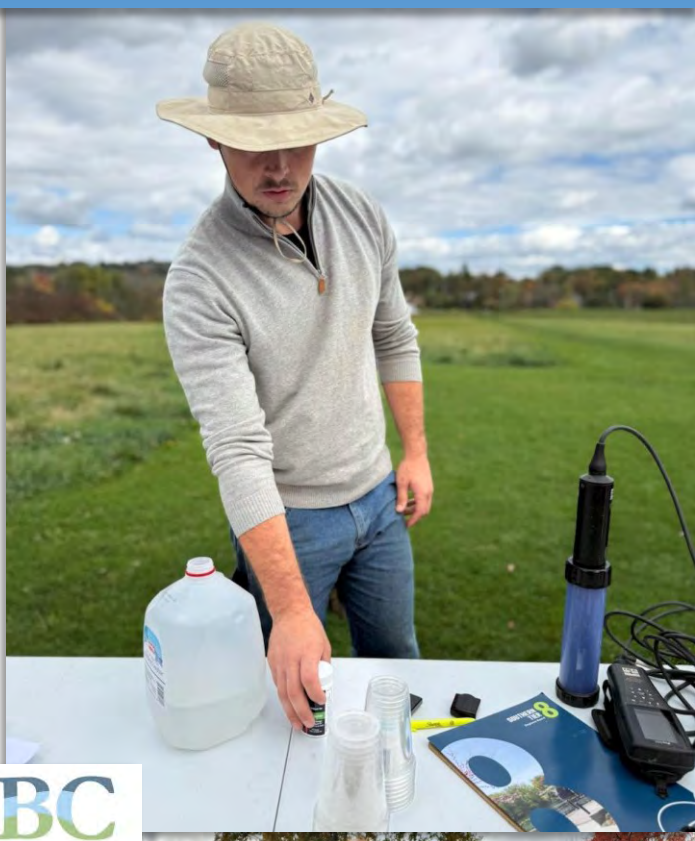
Community Science Field Day

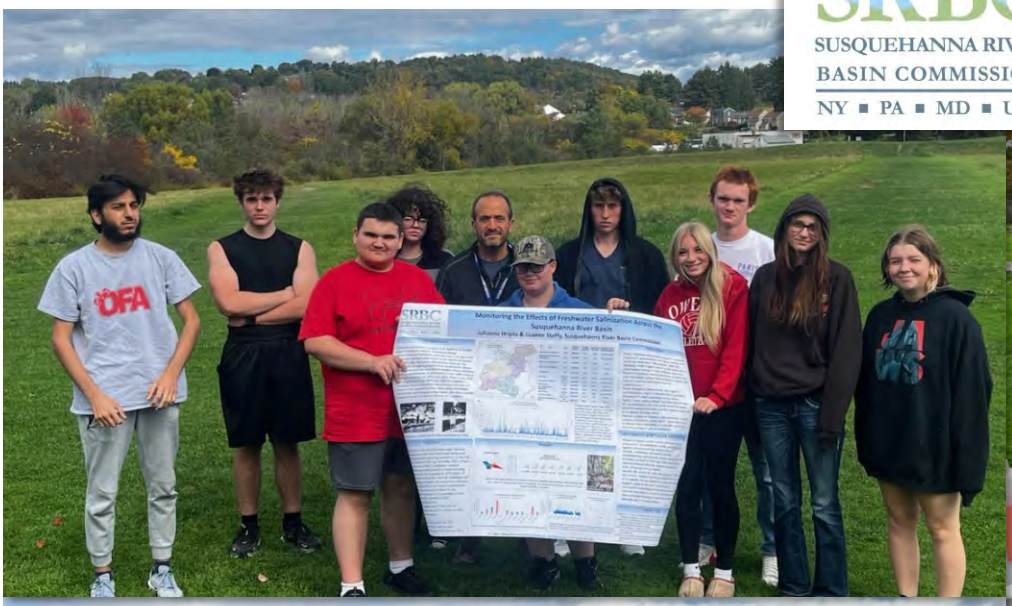
By Stacey Hanrahan, *Susquehanna River Basin Commission*

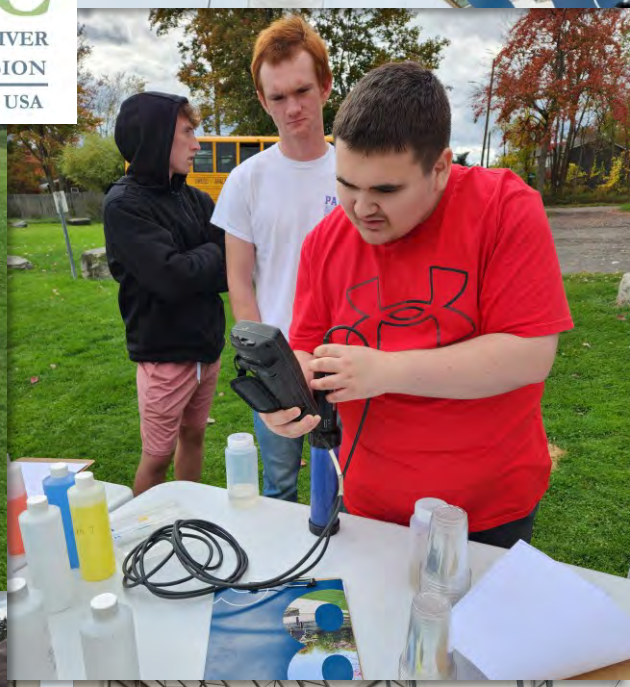
The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) and Southern Tier 8 Regional Planning Board (ST8) recently partnered in a community science field day with Owego Free Academy high school students to test streams for salt pollution levels and to study the impacts of winter road salt use on the environment.

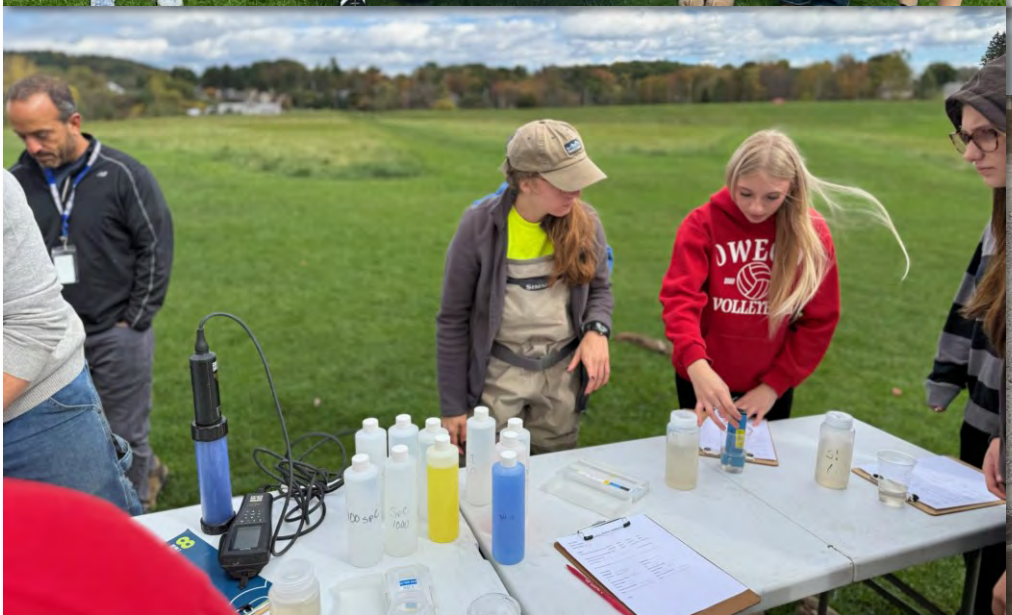
The event was held in Town of Union, New York, and organized by **Southern Tier 8 Regional Board** Regional Water Quality Coordinator Tom Flynn, **Broome Tioga Stormwater Coalition**, SRBC Environmental Scientist Johanna Hripto, and **Stroud Water Research Center** among other partners. The project evolved from connections made through the **Southern Tier New York Susquehanna Basin Monitoring Collaborative**.

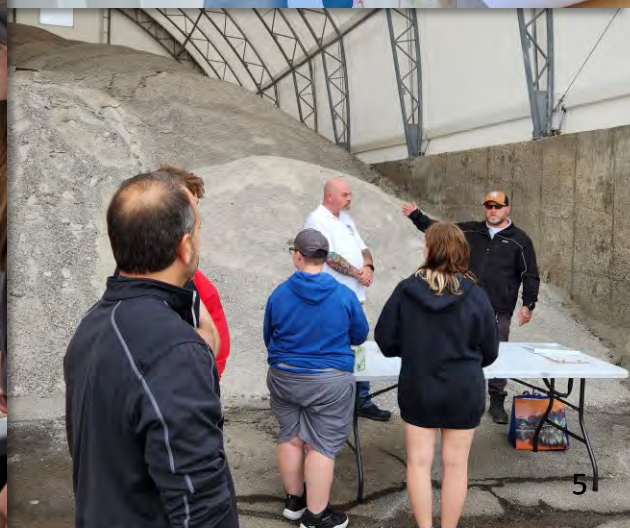
Students got to hear about a recent Commission **study**, tour a salt barn, and learn ways to reduce salt use. The day's events were covered by the local media.











Cover Crops in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed

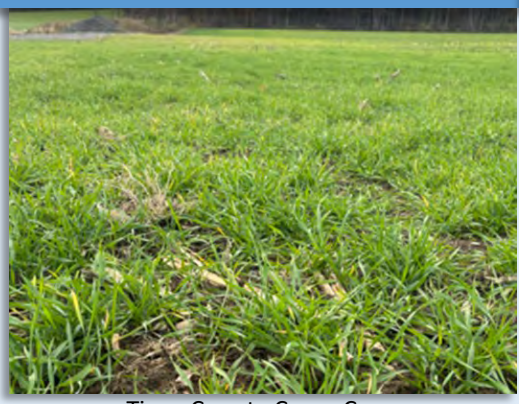
By Emily Dekar, *Upper Susquehanna Coalition*

In 2025, agricultural conservation efforts continued to expand the use of cover crops - a key best management practice (BMP) for improving soil health and reducing nutrient and sediment runoff into local waterways and, ultimately, the Chesapeake Bay.

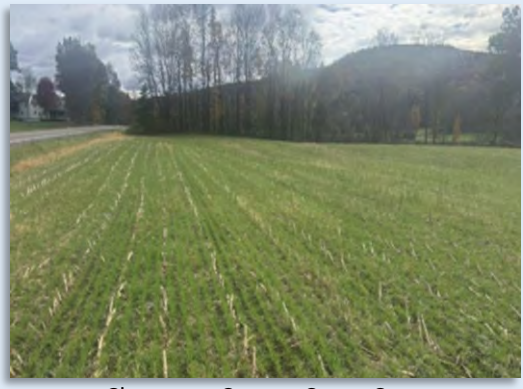
This is the 9th year of the USC Cover Crop Implementation Program. This year, 12,829 acres of cover crops were implemented across the watershed during the fall of 2025. This acreage reflects the work completed under the USC Cover Crop Implementation Program. There were additional acres implemented as well that were not reported as part of this grant. The acres that were implemented this fall, will be counted towards the 2026 progress period for the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.

Farms and SWCD's continue to collaborate through the USC and other programs to document and verify BMPs, such as cover crops, feeding the data into the USC Online Tracking Tool for incorporation into the Chesapeake Bay modeling tools. This reporting supports tracking Progress toward state and Bay-wide water quality goals.

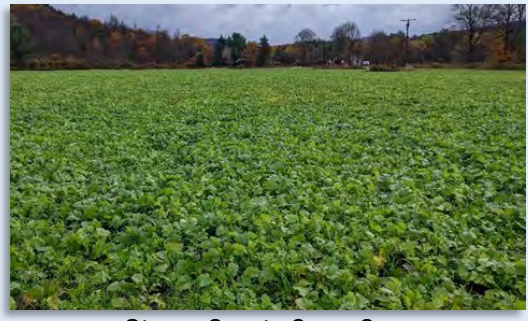
The watershed's goal for the 2025 progress period was to plant nearly 19,983 acres of cover crops — an ambitious target reflecting the continued emphasis on expanding soil conservation practices. Due to the reporting dates, cover crop implementation from fall of 2024 contributed to the 2025 progress period cover cropping efforts that support nutrient capture, erosion control, and overall water quality improvements throughout the Upper Susquehanna Watershed. In 2024, 25,679 acres were reported and verified as implemented across the Upper Susquehanna Watershed in NY, exceeding our goal of 19,983.



Tioga County Cover Crops



Chenango County Cover Crops



Otsego County Cover Crops

FOR FARMERS OF ALL EXPERIENCE LEVELS

FARMER RESOURCE EXPO

JANUARY 23 9:00-1:00

ALPARON PARK - EXHIBIT HALL 2

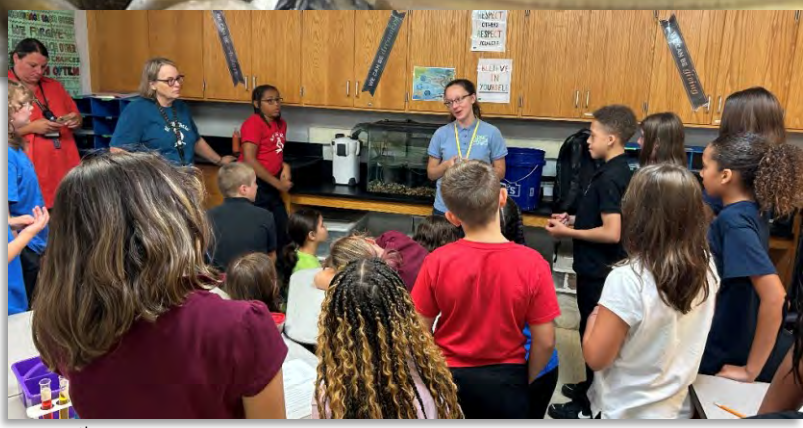
With vendors covering valuable LOCAL resources for farms of all shapes and sizes and a Q&A panel of local, established farmers to answer questions you may have.

BCCD

Growing Eels in NY Classrooms

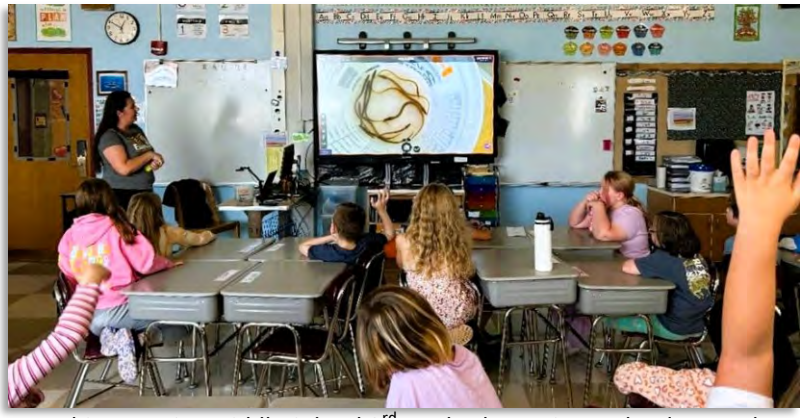
By Melissa Yearick, *Upper Susquehanna Coalition*

The start of the 2025-26 school year brough the successful Pennsylvania Eels in the Classroom program to New York for the first time ever. As students anxiously looked on, five classrooms in four schools across central New York received their eel delivery on Friday, September 12th.



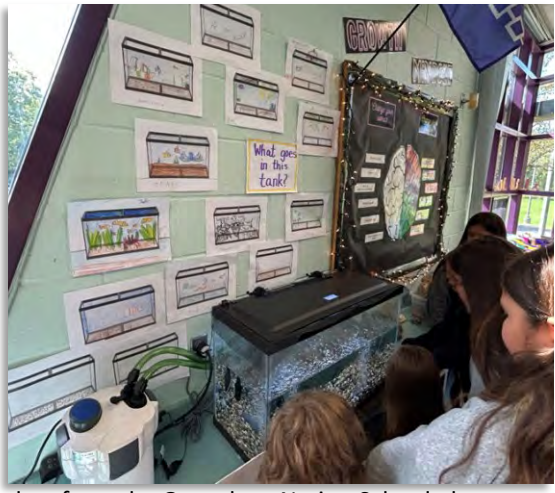
6th grade class at Finn Academy, Elmira, receiving their eels and asking questions of Johanna Hripto, Environmental Scientist with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission

While the eels were all delivered on one day in September, the period leading up to the delivery was time consuming as many partners collaborated to ensure the program would come to fruition. Partners included the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC), the Bradford County Conservation District, the Upper Susquehanna Conservation Alliance (USCA), all the partnering teachers and school districts and funding provided through the NFWF WILD program. Permission was sought and granted from the NYS DEC with the assistance of several very engaged regional biologists, and near the end of the 2024-25 school year, each school submitted a 50-page permit application packet to NYS DEC for an Education and Exhibition License from the Special Licenses Unit.



Whitney Point Middle School 3rd grade class using technology and their whiteboard to meet their eels for the first time

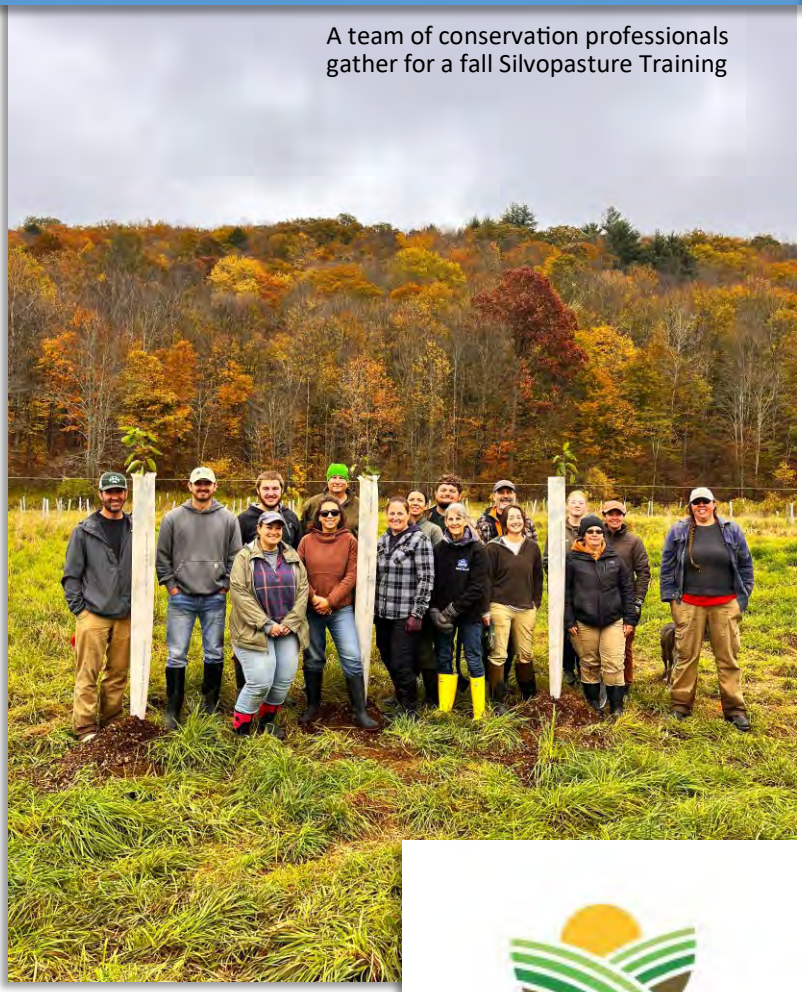
The goal of this 2025-26 school year was to begin participation in the Eels in the Classroom program in New York in partnership with a limited number of schools. Through the course of this school year we plan to work through any impediments to the program, evaluate equipment needs and resources needed for partnering schools, and work through the first eel release day, developing guidelines and protocol along the way to help advance the program going forward. With 50 eel elvers growing in New York classrooms, and nearly 500 students learning about and from them, the program is off to a great start.



Excited sixth graders from the Onondaga Nation School observe their newly delivered eels beside the drawings they made of what they imagined their empty tank would soon hold.

Taking Graziers to New Tree Heights

By Troy Bishopp, *NatGLC Northeast Grazing Resource Manager*



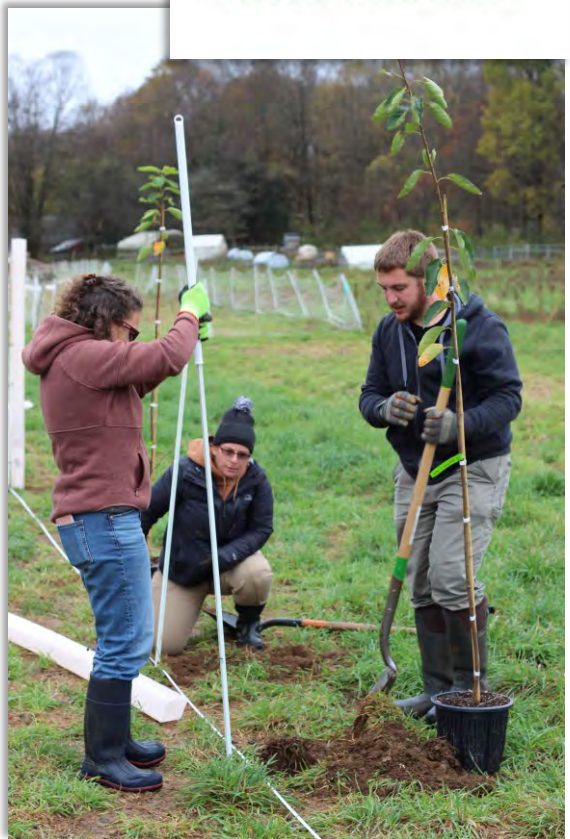
A team of conservation professionals gather for a fall Silvopasture Training

Berkshire, NY—Pardon the tree pun but it's brilliant marketing that helps the Pennsylvania-based, Trees for Graziers Company, "branch" out to help farmers and conservation professionals add trees to perennial pastures, hayland, riparian areas and crop ground.

Founder & CEO, Austin Unruh is on a quest to expand the adoption of agroforestry and silvopasture systems, where the tree component adds more diversity, resilience and profit to an operation which forms the foundation of resilient, regenerative and vibrant food systems in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Farmer, Fisherman and Agroforestry Consultant, Joshua Greene from the tree-forward company recently teamed up with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and their cohort of Soil & Water Conservation professionals to provide a hands-on training at Bottomland Farm in Tioga County. "We were looking for an introduction into the silvopasture and agroforestry practices, as farmers and landowners are seeking qualified local staff to help them make informed land decisions" said organizer, USC Buffer Coordinator, Lydia Brinkley.

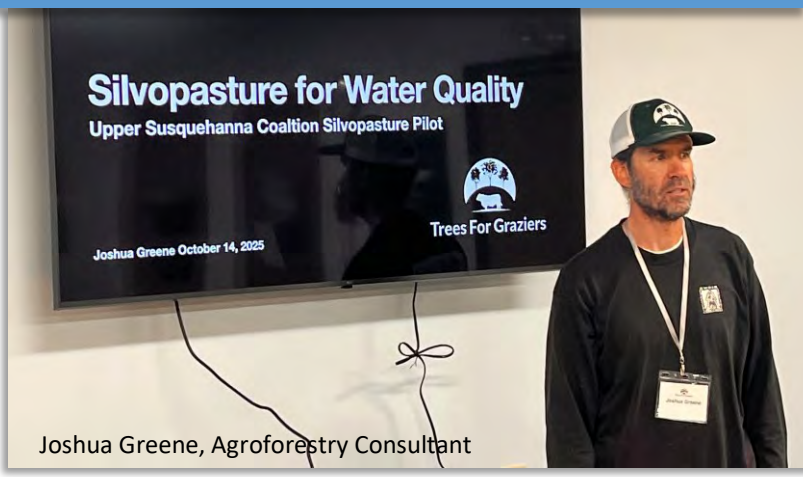
Greene introduced concepts of planting in fields, planning details and implementation logistics to make it easier for the farmer to adopt. "We're not lacking from interest, just navigating and coordinating the right land & tree specific package to make it happen, while moving beyond the 35' stream buffer narrative". He indicated grass-based farmers are interested in dappled shade quality, tree crops for livestock and humans, and for future ecosystem services.



Ms. Brinkley provided an update on the work of the Chesapeake Agroforestry Network to increase adoption and awareness of agroforestry practices across the CB watershed. She talked about the new Agroforestry Crediting and Incentives initiative research, which supports crediting these practices for their water quality benefits if established critical management protocols are followed.

It also recommends crediting BMP efficiency reduction, based on establishing a minimum percentage of added mature tree canopy coupled with precision intensive rotational grazing and stacking management BMPs such as nutrient management, conservation tillage, alternative pasture watering, etc. on the same acreage.

Brinkley shared an opportunity to participate in the Capacity Building State Afforestation Program which provides funding for 35 acres of agroforestry pilot projects and capacity support for SWCDs to participate in afforestation plan development, implementation, training and technical assistance in developing protocols and guidance. Tompkins



Joshua Greene, Agroforestry Consultant

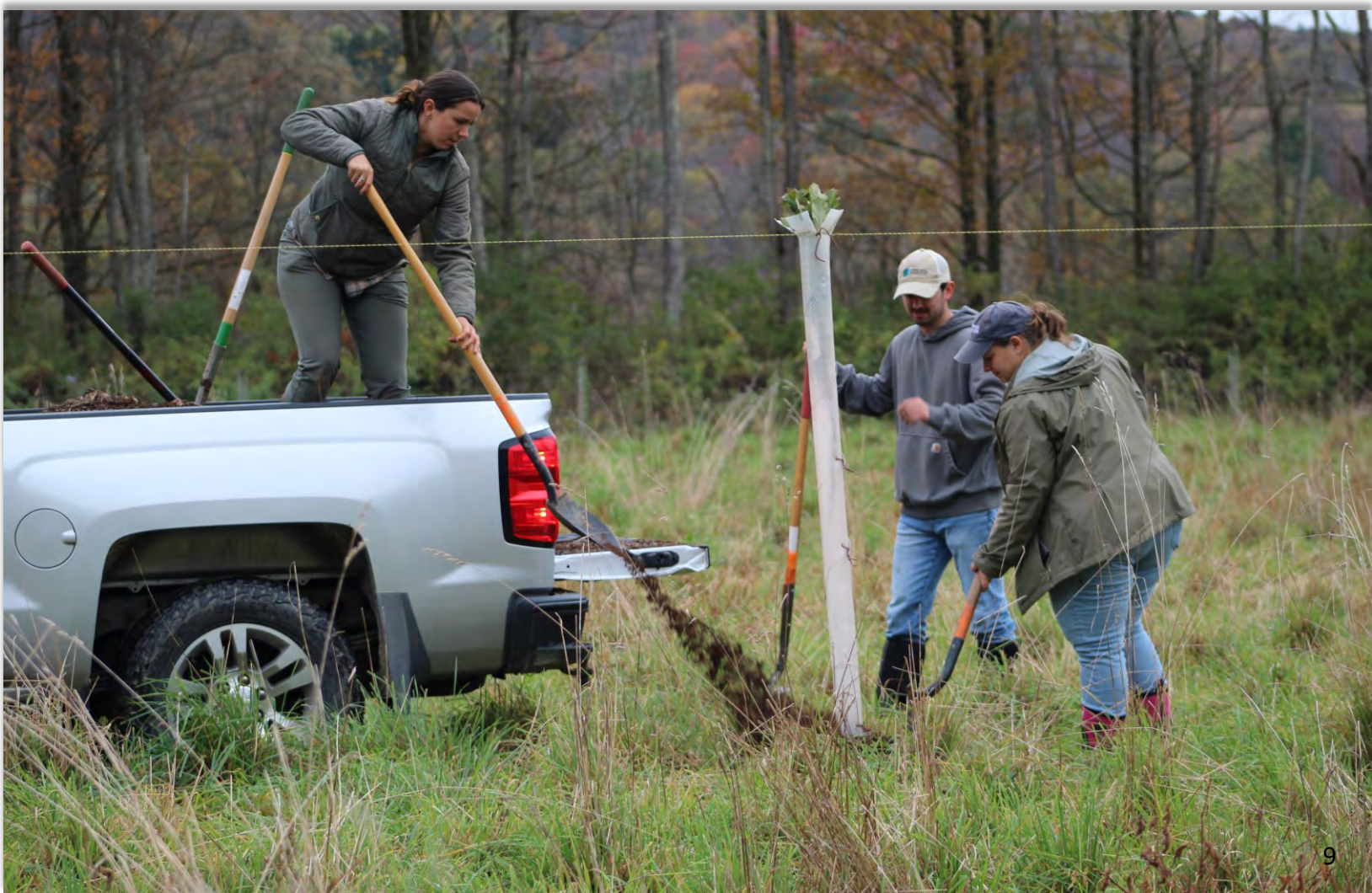
County CCE Agroforestry Educator, Jonathan Bates followed up with a discussion on available resources, initiatives and an opportunity for farms in the southern tier to participate in a demonstration silvopasture project.

The newly inspired crew took their talents, supplies, and young trees to Bottomland Farm who grow direct-to-consumer pasture-raised chicken, pork, rabbit, turkeys, goats and egg layers for a small planting project on their 8 acres of pasture. After a review of owner, Becca Rimmel's goals, Greene led the team on layout procedures, tree spacing considerations, species selection for silvopastures, planting tips, tree protection and mulching practices and a unique "overpass" polywire fencing solution which allows for moving between the trees and electrifying the 6' tree tubes against livestock and wildlife damage.

Rimmel commented that she's excited for the future shade potential and forage crops for her poultry coming from the mix of bur oaks, serviceberries and white mulberries planted. "The planting is a wonderful addition that helps create happier, healthier livestock for our local communities". "Can't wait to see how this practice helps our operation and provides the inspiration to add even more trees in the future", added Becca.

"This was a feasible practical training which is all part of a reforestation effort in the bay watershed, said Brinkley. At the end of the day more trees == improved water quality". Willow you be proactive about agroforestry, (pun intended) and leaf your worries behind?

For more information reach out to the Upper Susquehanna Coalition at (607) 687-3553 or lbrinkley@u-s-c.org



Tioga SWCD Outreach Activities - a Year in Review

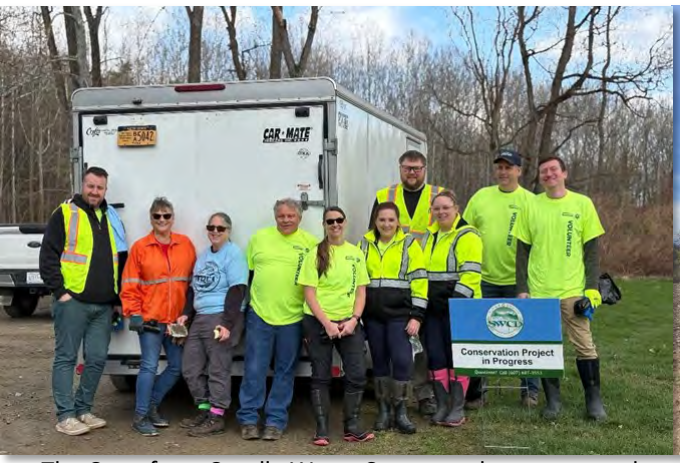
By Danielle Singer, *Tioga County SWCD*

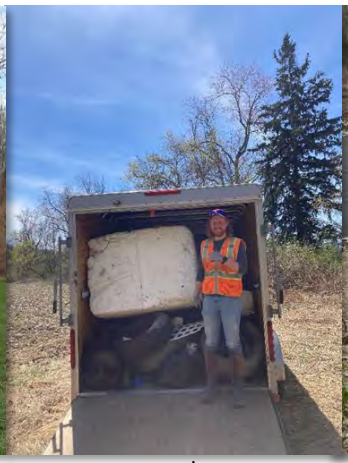
Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2025 was full of community outreach and education activities. Below and on the opposite page are photos from just a few.

Activities began with stream clean-ups and a tree planting event in April. In May, staff led a stream clean-up at Two Rivers State Park for I Love My Park Day, hosted homeschool groups at a dairy farm, and taught soil health at a local school's Planting Fest.

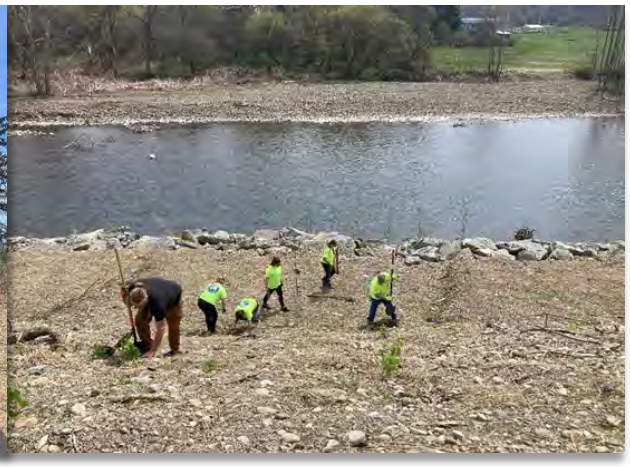
July highlights included the annual Sundaes at the Farm, this year held on an Amish dairy farm with over 700 attendees enjoying local dairy treats and family activities. The District also co-hosted a Pasture Walk with CCE Tioga and the SC Dairy and Field Crops Team on another dairy farm. A full week of educational outreach at the Tioga County Fair - followed by the 4-H Dairy Bar milkshakes and a visit from Commissioner Ball rounded out August!

We participated in the Broome County Riverbank clean-up with a Tioga County site along the Susquehanna River, and 20 volunteers helped on a 300 stem buffer planting in October. And in November we tabled at the second annual Tioga County Pumpkin Smash, teaching kids about composting and the nutrient cycle.

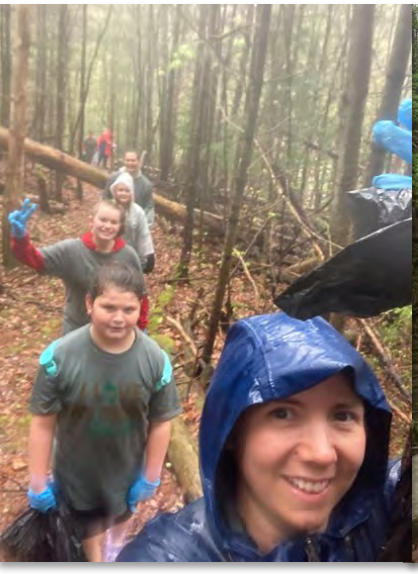


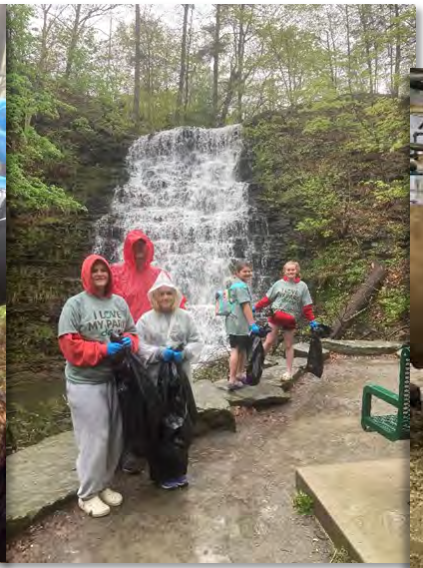


The Crew from Casella Waste Systems who came to volunteer at a stream clean-up on earth Day and District Engineering Technician, Connor, with a fully loaded trailer of trash collected from the banks of Owego Creek that day.

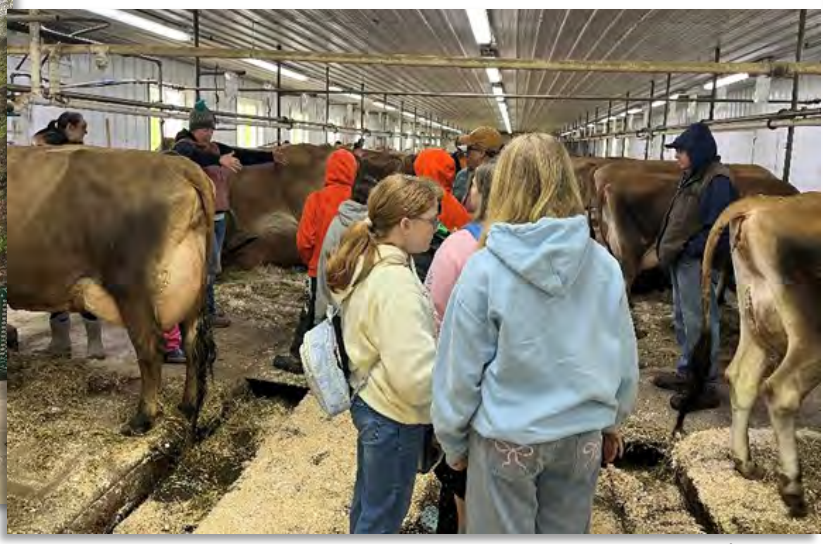


Community planting event held on Arbor Day in Owego, NY. The District partnered with the USC to use the Tree For Tribs Program to plant the buffer. The Casella Waste Systems crew came to assist with the tree planting as well!

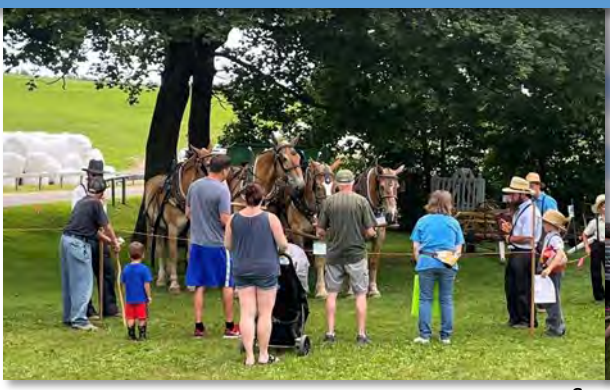
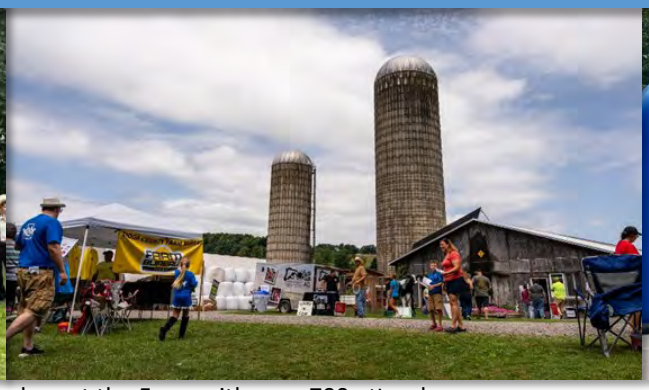




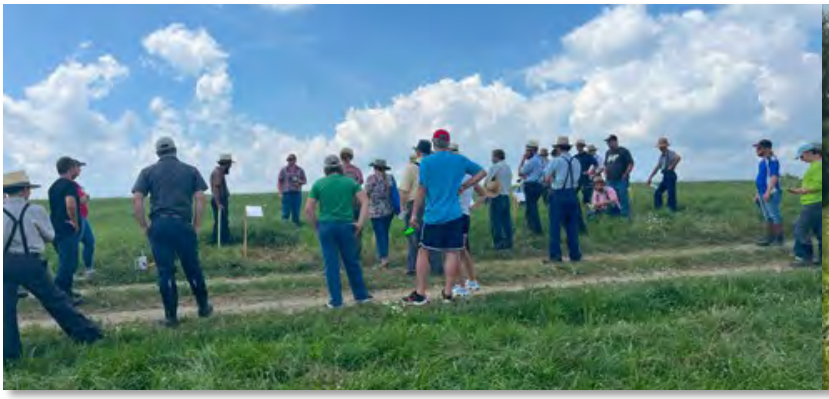
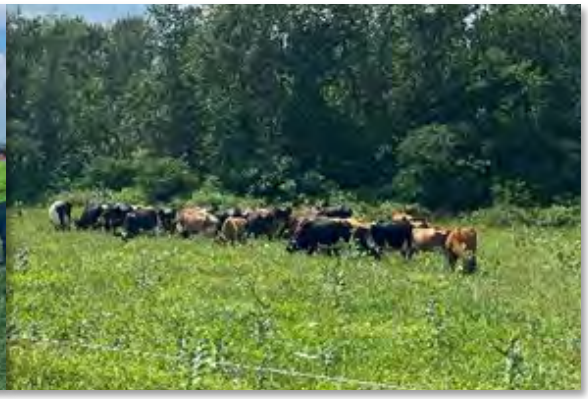
District Technician, Heather with a hardworking group of volunteers on I Love My Park Day. It was a rainy day but they made the best of it and enjoyed the waterfall setting as they did the stream-up!



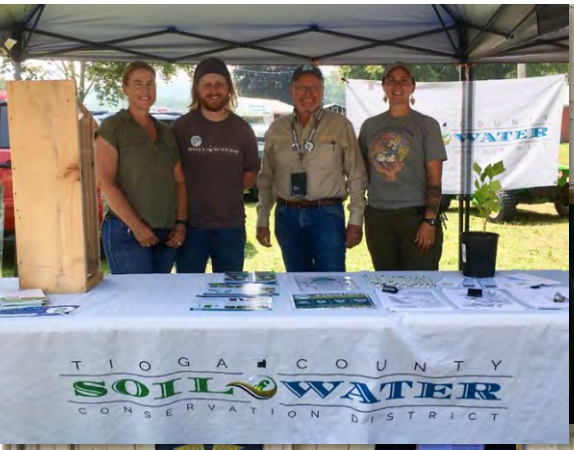
Homeschool students learning about dairy cows at Lawton's Jersey Farm in Newark Valley, NY.

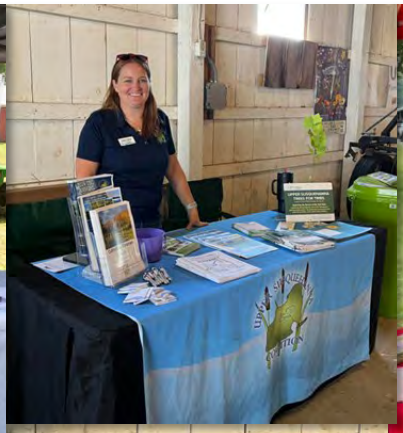
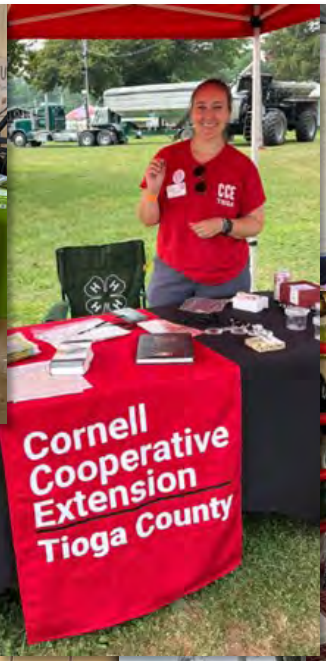



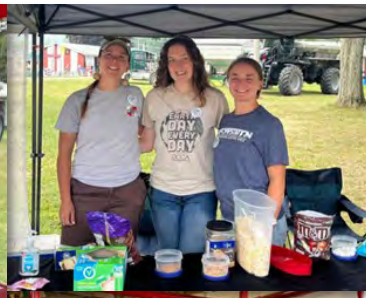
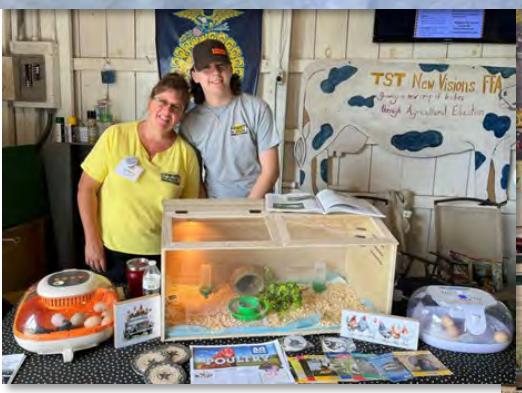

Sundaes at the Farm with over 700 attendees

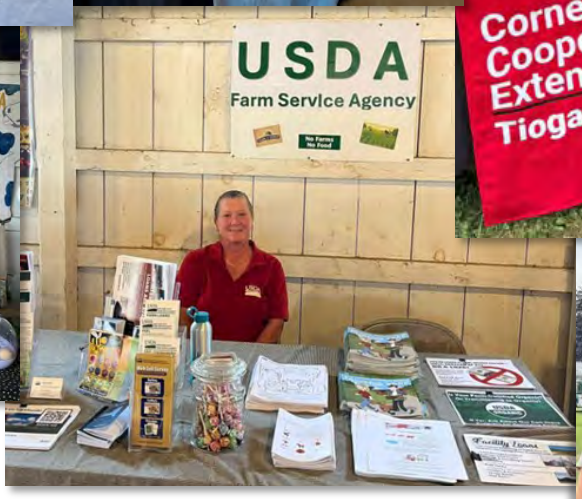



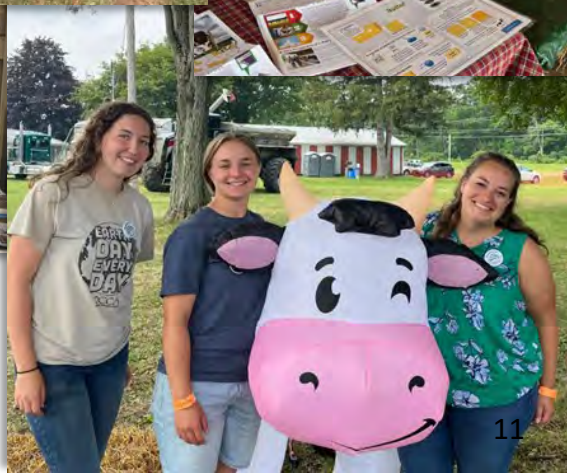
The pasture walk was held in late July and had a great turnout on a very hot day.
We wrapped up with ice cream and chocolate milk in the shade.





The Tioga County Fair was a fun week filled with community connection, sharing about our programs and fun activities! We also talked with Commissioner Ball as he toured the fair on the free admission Agriculture Day festivities and tabled with many of our local partners!

HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH

FINGER LAKES INSTITUTE

PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT FINGER LAKES

Join the Finger Lakes PRISM for a Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey Program Workshop

in partnership with Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Broome County SWCD

USC Upper Susquehanna Coalition

When: Thursday, February 5th from 12pm – 2pm

Where: Wolfe Park

42.160952 N, 75.899863 W

What to Expect: Learn how to identify Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, understand its impact on our forests, and then join us in a hemlock stand at Wolfe Park to conduct a hands-on HWA survey.

Register Here →

Silvi-Corner: *Celtis occidentalis*

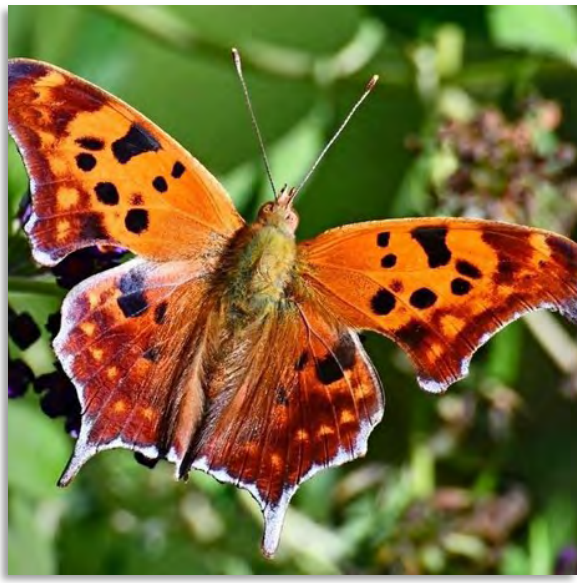
By Ava Glasser, *Upper Susquehanna Coalition*

Hackberry leaves. (Source: UMN Extension)

Celtis occidentalis goes by many common names, including sugarberry, nettlewood and beavertree, but it is most familiar as **northern or common hackberry**. Hackberry is a medium-sized native tree with a wide range in the eastern United States, stretching from western Nebraska all the way south to Texas, and as far east as the Atlantic Coast. The wide range of this tree exemplifies the range of climactic and geological conditions it can tolerate- hackberry is drought tolerant, and is able to withstand annual temperature variations of 140°F in the Great Plains region. While hackberry is very tolerant of flooding, it cannot thrive in sites with a permanently high water table. It is primarily a bottom-land tree, growing best in river valleys and on gentle slopes among its favorite associates: sugar maple, oaks, basswood, sweetgum, and American elm. Though the growth habit of hackberry is very different from its distant relatives, hackberry is actually in the *Cannabaceae*, or hemp family, and shares some lineage with cannabis and hops.


A close up of hackberry bark. (Source: Marija Gajić)

Hackberry has several traits that can help identify it from other trees of a similar size. The alternately arranged leaves are serrated at the margin and ovate shaped, with a distinctly uneven leaf base. The bark is grayish, with very characteristic corky “warts” or ridges (see photo below). This distinct bark is more apparent on the younger individuals, and bark tends to smooth out as trees age. Hackberry is considered moderately long-lived, reaching a maximum age of about 150-200 years. Its shade tolerance is dependent on how favorable other growing conditions are; in very inundated areas, hackberry tends to be less shade tolerant, and can tolerate more shade if hydrology and soil chemistry are more ideal for growth.


The Question Mark Butterfly, which lays its eggs on hackberry leaves (Source: theinsectguide.net)

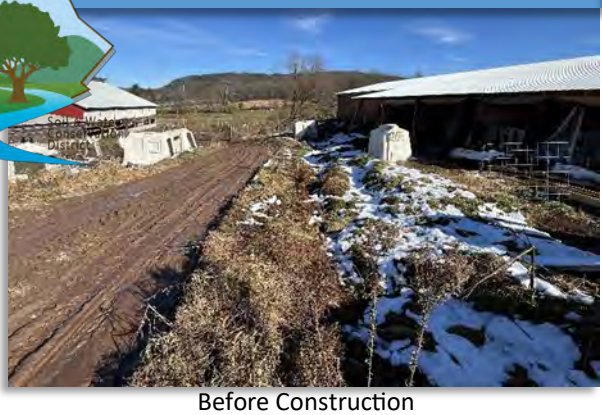
Hackberry’s soft wood tends to rot easily, so it’s not considered valuable for lumber. However, hackberry makes for a great urban or street tree, as it is very tolerant of salt and pollution, and only grows to a height of around 60 feet at its tallest. The city of Montreal in Canada boasts over 10,000 individual hackberry trees in its urban tree population! The fruits of this tree are also edible, and remarkably nutritious- they contain lots of available fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, even when eaten raw. Many Native American tribes that lived in the same vast range as the hackberry tree used the berries for snacking and cooking, and some tribes used parched corn to preserve them over winters. Since they contain so many available fats and proteins, they are also very favored by migratory birds. These trees are also an important larval host for many butterflies and moths, including the Hackberry Emperor (*Asterocampa celtis*), Tawny Emperor (*Asterocampa clyton*) and Question Mark Butterfly (*Polygonia interrogationis*).

We’re excited to offer *Celtis occidentalis* this spring as part of our Trees for Tributaries program, which provides free trees to qualifying landowners along waterways in our watershed! Contact bufferteam@u-s-c.org for more information on available species.

Michael Ritz - Manure Storage, 2025

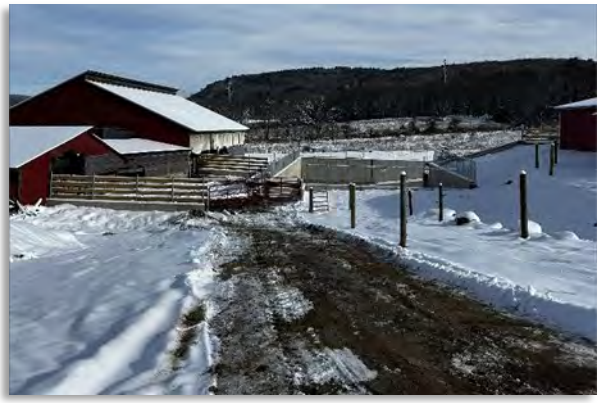
By Olivia DeMott, *Delaware SWCD*

Ritz farms is owned and operated by the Ritz family of Franklin, New York. On average, the farm has two hundred dairy cows and heifers, and utilizes approximately 220 acres in cropland including corn, alfalfa, and mixed forage. Additionally, the farm is a participant in the DCSWCD cover crop program annually. Ritz farms has lacked a waste storage facility and had to spread manure daily, and year around.



Before Construction

DCSWCD took on the project of designing and installing the Ritz waste storage facility--one of the largest waste storage facilities installed by the District. The farm is in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed, and therefore, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; with nutrient runoff from both milkhouse and manure waste, nutrient loading and subsequent eutrophication has been a reoccurring issue for some time. These natural resource concerns are addressed by the District, to implement environmental conservation efforts by protecting and enhancing the quality of the Susquehanna Watershed and ultimately, the federally regulated, Chesapeake Bay.



After Construction

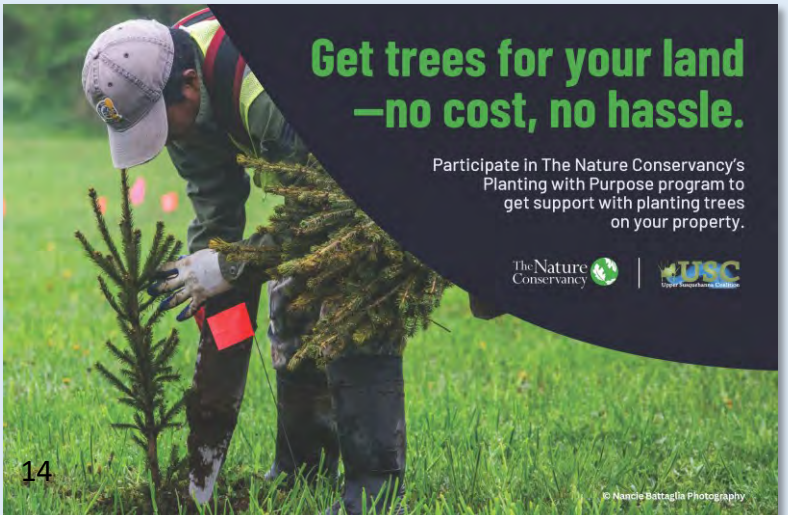
The facility itself is “L-shaped” with an access ramp, and holds approximately 1.5 million gallons of liquid manure. The rest of the farm includes an already-existing freestall and heifer barn, also installed by DCSWCD, and installed with the facility is a scrape area and scrape lane, loading pad and heifer stacking area. This 1.2-million-dollar facility was partially funded through Round 28 of AgNPS and NRCS EQIP, and contracted by Double M Construction who has worked with the District on previous projects. Overall, this was a long-awaited project that took many years to complete.

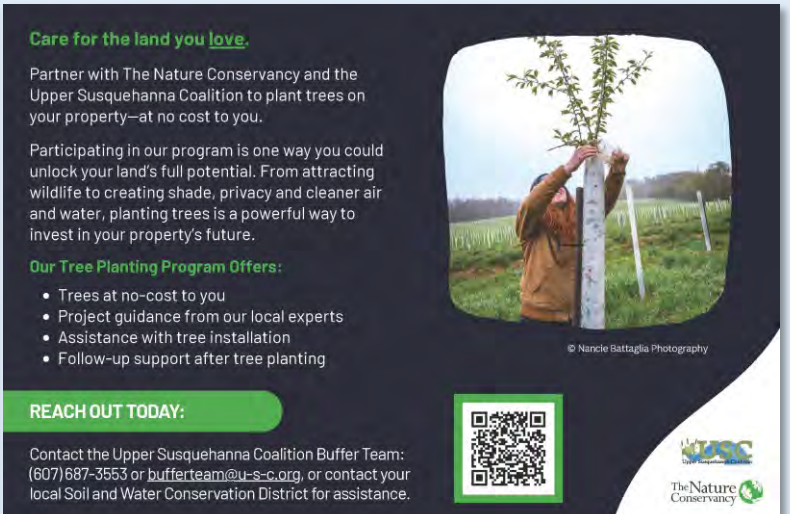
Announcing Our New Planting with Purpose Program

Planting With Purpose will be piloted in 2026 in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, and outreach materials are here for distribution. Get them the next time you attend a bi-monthly meeting or team meeting. The USC’s website for all PWP-related things is here and will be updated for Spring 2026 orders: www.u-s-c.org/PlantingwithPurpose.

For all interested landowners, please fill out the Landowner Intake Form: https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/ef6f83323afd4db2b90e1841cca0634b.

This program will be run similarly to Trees for Tributaries, with some notable differences, including that this program only provides trees, no shrubs, and they’re to be planted at a rate of 500 trees/acre. Tubes and stakes are also provided! Contact bufferteam@u-s-c.org with questions.





Planting With Purpose

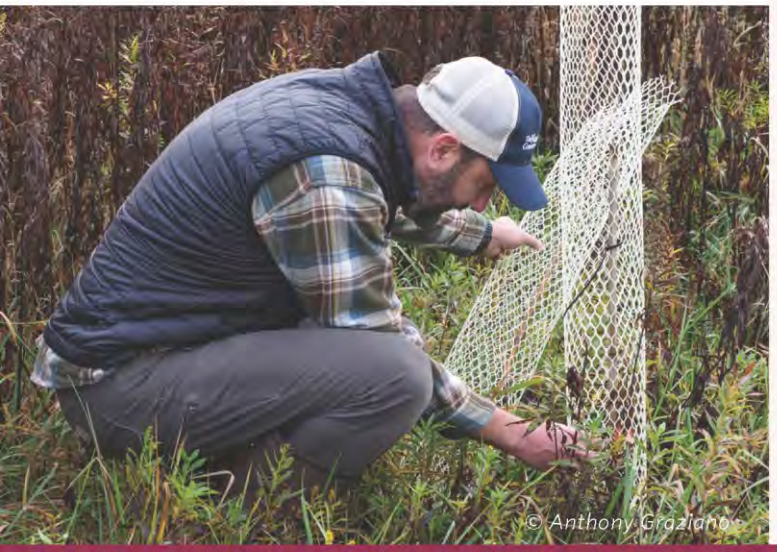
Practice Overview
New York State

About the Program:

Planting trees on your land is an impactful way to help mitigate climate change and improve your local environment by sequestering carbon, increasing wildlife habitat, provide shade and improving water quality. New York landowners like you can participate in The Nature Conservancy's newly launched Planting with Purpose program to get support in planting trees and expanding forest cover on your property.

How to Participate:

Planting with Purpose provides New York landowners with technical assistance in creating a tree planting plan and provides access to free trees and materials through your local Soil and Water Conservation District.



General Eligibility Guidelines:

- Your property is within a county that participates in the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.
- Your property is privately owned, including ownership by individuals, families, trusts or nonprofit organizations (camps, churches etc.).
- Up to 2 acres (up to 1,000 trees) of eligible land on the property with a minimum of 0.2 acres (100 trees), and your land must not have been forest for at least 10 years.
- Commercial Christmas tree stock, fruit trees and shrubs, and native shrubs are not eligible.

**Questions? Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff will help interested landowners determine if they qualify.*

Terms & Conditions:

Contract Length: No term

Program Benefits:

- Tree planting plan, trees, and tree protection are covered services

Program Terms:

- Work with a conservation service professional to create a tree planting plan for your property
- Work with conservation professionals to develop a spring or fall planting plan
- Allow access for monitoring of tree survival
- Maintain the trees (for example, fixing tree tubes and mowing around the trees)

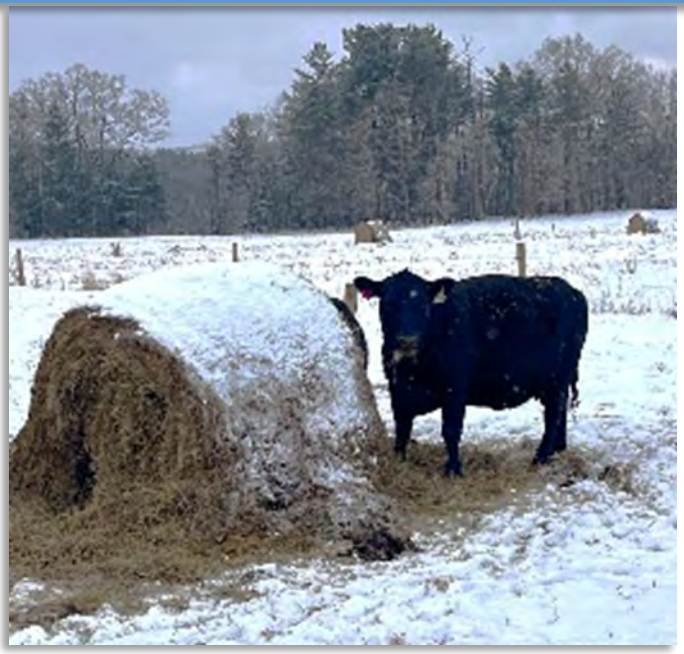
To Learn More:

If you live in Allegany, Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Herkimer, Livingston, Madison, Oneida, Onondaga, Otsego, Schuyler, Scoharie, 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**.

The Nature Conservancy

Join us at a Bale Grazing Workshop January 10, 2026

Come on Down and Kick the Bales in 2026



For farmers and the folks who help them, the practice of bale-grazing is here to stay. Whether in a checkerboard pattern, rolled out or fed in rings, there's lots to learn from practitioners, and value in seeing field-level management considerations & tips.

Join fellow farmers at Jacob and Alexa Newton's Hillside Farms for a "kicking", Bale-grazing workshop on Saturday, January 10th, 2026 from 10am to noon in Truxton, NY. The morning program will be a hardy, on-farm, dress accordingly, winter weather event. Space is limited for this workshop so first come-first serve. There is no cost for the event, but ***pre-registration is required***!

https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/event_preregistration_new.php?id=2678

Hillside Farms is a direct-to-consumer farming operation who specialize in grass fed beef, pastured poultry and forested pork. Their grass-based operation supplies pastured protein for roughly 320 families, two farmers markets and three restaurants. They utilize bale grazing primarily for the beef cow and yearling herds. They supplement feed with bale grazing during drought periods, optimal frozen winter conditions, and in areas of reclaimed pasture on our farm in need of nutrient application. The winter pasture walk will be on established pasture and reclaimed pasture areas.

To learn more about the Newton family operation:

https://thenewshouse.com/off-campus/full-circle-hillside-farm-sustainable-farming/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Jpaq8V3OiM

Questions can be directed to Betsy Hicks at bjh246@cornell.edu or Troy Bishopp at (315) 749-4528. In the case of cancellation due to "extreme winter weather" (think: road closings and emergency weather declarations) a cancellation email will be sent to those who have registered by 7 pm Friday, January 9th.

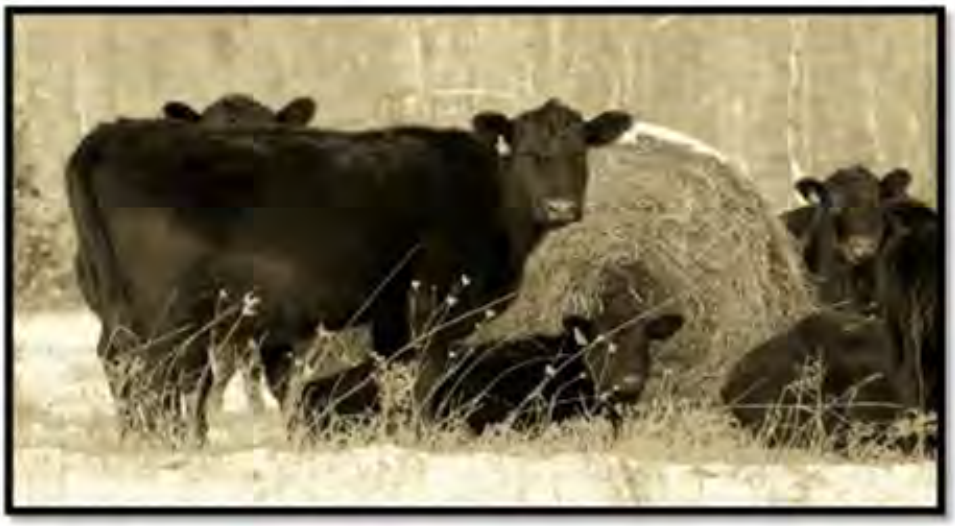
This workshop is a collaboration between the Northeast Region National Grazing Lands Coalition, Hillside Farms and the South-Central NY Cornell Cooperative Extension Team which is part of a National USDA-NRCS CIG Grant by the University of Kentucky Research Foundation entitled: Bale Grazing: A Practical, Low-Cost, and Environmentally-Sound Management Strategy to Winter Beef Cattle.

Wanna learn more about bale grazing? Watch a recent video about *"What we have Learned About Bale Grazing"* by Farmer and University of Kentucky Agricultural Economics Professor, Greg Halich

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7tzTOmO6jU

Troy Bishopp "The Grass Whisperer"
NatGLC, Northeastern Region Grazing Resource Manager
Troy@grazinglands.org
(315) 749-4528

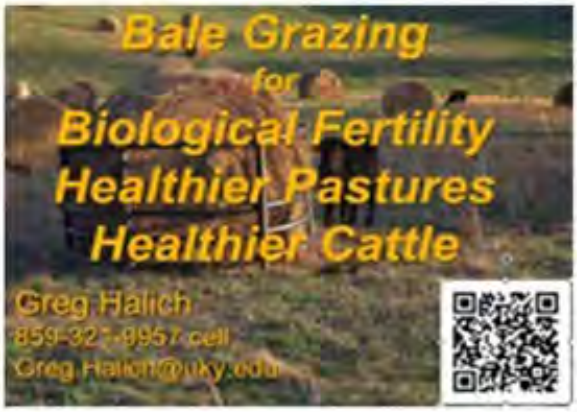
Want some help feeding your cows this winter? Cornell Cooperative Extension is leading a USDA-supported project in New York to demonstrate the benefits of "bale grazing" on beef and dairy farms. NRCS EQIP-eligible farms will receive a payment of $1,500 or similar value in grazing equipment.

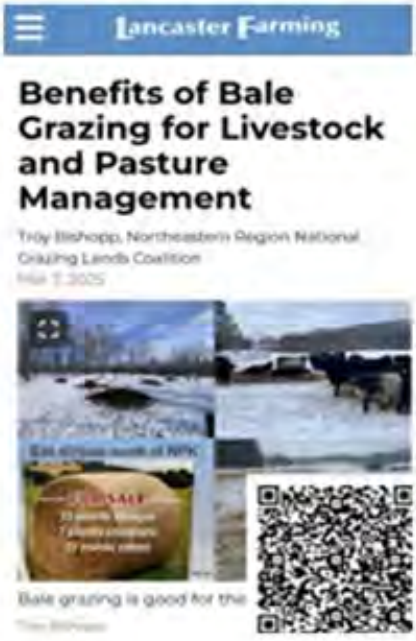


Participating farms will:

- Feed at least 30 round bales over at least a 30-day period during the hay feeding season on pasture with at least 30 feet between bales, preferably without ring feeders. CCE will assist with a flexible design for the demonstration to meet farmer's objectives.
- Complete a short post-grazing evaluation.
- Potentially host a future "pasture walk" or other form of outreach to share bale grazing experiences.

Contact Betsy Hicks (bjh246@cornell.edu, cell: 518-428-2064) or Brett Chedzoy (bjc226@cornell.edu, cell: 607-742-3657) for details, and scan the codes below to learn more about bale grazing.

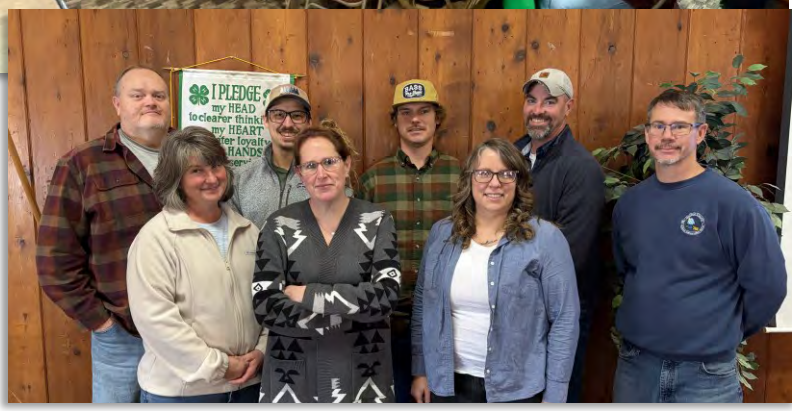




Appreciation Takes Root at Madison County SWCD

By Troy Bishopp

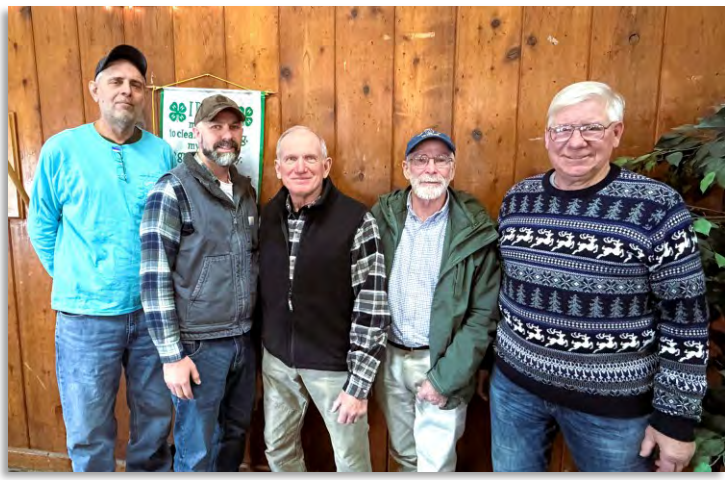
Morrisville, N.Y. – Reflective safety vests, flannel shirts, and calloused hands are the staples of putting water quality practices on the ground for the residents and watersheds in Madison County. For the fifteenth year, the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District celebrated the many work collaborations and connections with their annual appreciation luncheon at the Madison County CCE building in Morrisville, New York.



Madison County District Staff

"It's just a way to give a little back to our local family farmers, local contractors, town supervisors, county employees, elected officials, Agri-business companies, engineering support, state and federal conservation partners and funding organizations who support us throughout the year." said District Manager, Steve Lorraine.

During the family style slideshow presentation attended by another record crowd of over 100 guests, Lorraine highlighted a variety of 2025 projects that he and his staff worked on using the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program planning matrix. These in-house plans led to a diversity of work that include surveying and designing tile drainage, grade stabilization projects, road culvert projects, stream remediation, flood attenuation projects, manure storage systems, pasture systems, spring developments, milk-house waste systems, heavy use areas, riparian buffers and planting cover crops locally.



Madison County SWCD Board of Directors

The luncheon also honored Town of Nelson Supervisor and Chairman of the Madison County Board of Supervisors, Jim Cunningham, for his passionate service as he steps down from his SWCD board position.

In addition, the staff managed the construction projects, planted trees, installed fence on stream buffers and grazing systems, developed and applied nutrient management plans, took soil samples, cleared logjams, delineated watersheds for culvert sizing, secured stream permits and led educational training events and held the popular annual tree sale within their busy work schedule. As the lead for the Madison County Water Quality Coordinating Committee and member of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, district staff also worked in tandem with its partners on a wide array of projects in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed as well as grant writing.

"We appreciate the opportunity to thank all the hands that help us achieve our mission. It's frankly a team effort, where a rising tide raises all boats", said Lorraine.

To learn more about the work the Madison County SWCD does for the community, contact the district at (315) 824-9849 or visit www.madcoswcd.com.