



Quarterly NEWSLETTER



DATES TO REMEMBER



April:

- 1 - Day 2 of USC Annual Retreat
- 7 - Grafting Workshop at Tioga SWCD
- 21 - State Committee Meeting



May:

- 5 - Cortland Eel Release Event
- 6 - Stream Team Meeting
- 7 - Trees for Graziers training in Chemung County (Notice on page 2)
- 12 - Elmira Eel Release Event
- 15 - Precast Concrete Tour (Notice on page 8)
- 20 - Virtual Stewardship Training (Flyer on page 11)
- 21 - First Steward Workday, Tioga County
- 29 - USC Bi-Monthly Meeting

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June:

- 11 - Watershed Forestry Task Force Meeting
- 13 - BVA on the Trail of Art (Program info on page 4)
- 16 - USC Ag Committee Meeting

Save the Dates

Returning for 2026: Watershed Wednesdays

Each Wednesday Morning at 9:30 from 9/16 to 12/16 (excluding holidays) USC will host a series of mini, watershed-focused webinars. We're looking forward to presentations by watershed partners on a wide variety of topics. Mark your calendars and find videos of past Watershed Wednesdays sessions on the USC webpage: www.u-s-c.org/ww or on our youtube channel.

Keeping Salt in its Place and Out of Our Water

By Chuck Lanfranchi, *Broome County SWCD Natural Resource Assistant*

The Broome County Soil & Water Conservation District has been awarded funding through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation’s Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to construct a new salt storage building in the Town of Triangle.

Proper salt storage plays a critical role in protecting water quality. Without a covered structure, some municipalities are forced to store road salt in exposed piles, often relying on tarps for minimal protection. Exposure to rain and snow can dissolve the salt, allowing it to leach into the ground and eventually contaminate nearby streams, lakes, and groundwater supplies.

The new salt storage building will help prevent this by keeping salt dry and contained, significantly reducing the risk of environmental contamination. This project is especially important for the Town of Triangle, as Whitney Point Lake and Dorchester Park are located directly across the street from the town’s highway department. By improving salt storage practices, the town is taking a proactive step toward safeguarding these valued natural resources.

Congratulations to the Town of Triangle on this important investment in water quality and environmental stewardship!



Newly constructed salt storage building in the Town of Triangle



Training Opportunity

Trees for Graziers Silvopasture Workshop

Join us for a hands-on, day-long silviculture training in partnership with Trees for Graziers. This workshop will explore how to successfully integrate trees into pasture systems, improving livestock performance, soil health, and farm resilience. Participants will learn practical strategies for tree selection, spacing, protection, communicating design options with landowners, and long-term management in working grazing systems. Silvopasture intentionally combines trees, forage, and livestock to enhance productivity and sustainability.

Space is limited, so register today.

When: May 7th 10-3 pm

Where: Pine City, NY



USC Attends Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee Meeting for Healthy Forests

February 24 & 25, 2026 - Frederick, MD

By Lydia Brinkley, *USC Watershed Forestry Team Coordinator*

As the revised Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement seeks clarity on how each program goal will be achieved, a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee meeting was held in Maryland, focusing on Healthy Forests: Proactive Strategies for Managing Threats and Promoting Conservation. One of the Four Interconnected Goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration is a Healthy Landscape. The Healthy Landscapes outcome is to “Conserve, protect, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic, recreational and cultural value to improve water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.” The main objective of the STAC meeting was to identify major stressors to forest health in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and evaluate how they affect forest resilience, water quality, and Bay goals; explore proactive management and stewardship strategies to strengthen forest conservation beyond traditional easements and develop actionable recommendations for the Partnership.

Day one focused on understanding major stressors to forest health and resilience, while Day two focused on developing action items for forest management, including both short-term and long-term strategies. Each day had about 55 attendees, and they were from throughout the watershed geographically, but also in terms of their roles, as researchers, state foresters, partners, and technicians. These folks were specifically selected to provide feedback and context regarding agenda items. From New York, Riley Krupitza (See Photo 1) of Chenango Soil and Water Conservation District and also the Watershed Forestry Committee Chair, and Lydia Brinkley, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition’s Watershed Forestry Team Coordinator, both attended. The group took in information about forest pests and other ecological stressors, opportunities to engage with conservation groups to better facilitate stewardship, and listened to stories about people’s connection to forests, whether it is for timber, wildlife, or for peace of mind.

The results from STAC meetings need to be organized and a report provided to the Chesapeake Bay Program within 90 days of the meeting, outlining the strategies identified there. One major outcome from the workshop is that we need to work collaboratively across the forest landscape to address what we can, across agency and state lines. Conventional timber management doesn’t fit all landowner and forest needs; communities want their livelihoods to be connected to the forests. And lastly, forests are resilient, and with our help, can become more resilient to changes that are to come, with our intervention.



Riley standing outside of the meeting space in Frederick, near a sculpture of a variety of different native tree leaf types.



Expanding Nutrient Management Across All Landscapes

By Emily Dekar, *Upper Susquehanna Coalition*

We recently finished up our Nutrient Management Project, funded through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundations. This project focused on increasing access to nutrient management planning across not just agricultural lands, but urban areas as well. By assisting farmers plan how nutrients are applied and managed, the program supports healthier soils and more efficient fertilizer use, resulting in reduced nutrient runoff to local waterways. Soil and Water Conservation District staff worked with landowners through the Upper Susquehanna Watershed to plan over 42,000 acres across 155 farms. This included over 2,500 soil tests and 89 manure analysis that were completed as part of the planning process.

A large focus of nutrient management for farms is record keeping. In addition to paper record keeping, we wanted to develop a streamlined way for farms to track their nutrient management in real time from their phones. The USC worked with the University of Vermont to finalize a Record Keeping Application that will be available for farms to use to track things such as manure and fertilizer applications, seeding records, tillage types and records, cover crops, soil testing schedules, and precision feed management. This “app” will be available early 2026!

The second portion of this project focused on urban areas. We worked with NYSDEC and TetraTech to establish an urban nutrient management planning framework for turfgrass and landscaped areas. As part of this project, member counties and partners engaged with 33 urban sites resulting in 175.1 acres planned. Additional outreach and education regarding urban nutrient management resulted in 242 urban landowners pledging that over 1250 acres of turfgrass, mainly private lawns, were meeting the 10 requirements for urban nutrient management.

While our main focus is always local water quality and assisting farms and urban landowners with improving conservation efforts, the results of projects such as these also assist us in achieving our nutrient and sediment reduction goals with the Chesapeake Bay Program. This project alone resulted in an estimated 124,709.32 lbs. of Nitrogen and 3,662.18 lbs. of Phosphorus reduced annually from reaching the tidal waters of “the bay”.

COMING SOON!!!!



By Farmers, For Farmers

goCrop™ is a simple tool for integrated planning and record-keeping on crop and livestock farms. Use it to build a complete nutrient management plan, Record tillage, nutrient applications, planting, scouting, harvest, and more from the field. Refer to your crop and nutrient plans on the go to help you make decisions and stay on track.



Make Plans



Keep Records



Generate Reports

Butternut Valley Alliance - 2026 On the Trail of Art Activities



JUN
12

On the Trail of Art Opening Reception

Join us at Dunderberg Gallery in Gilbertsville on Friday, June 12, to celebrate the artists of this year's On the Trail of Art, which takes place at General Jacob Morris State Forest on June 13 and 14.

Jun 12, 2026 · On the Trail of Art



JUN
13

On the Trail of Art (Day 1)

On the Trail of Art is a free, outdoor arts festival presented by Butternut Valley Alliance and held this year in General Jacob Morris State Forest. The event transforms the forest into an immersive art experience, featuring original works by professional artists living in the Butternut Valley alongside artwork by local students.



JUN
14

On the Trail of Art (Day 2)

On the Trail of Art is a free, outdoor arts festival presented by Butternut Valley Alliance and held this year in General Jacob Morris State Forest. The event transforms the forest into an immersive art experience, featuring original works by professional artists living in the Butternut Valley alongside artwork by local students.



Broome County SWCD staff explaining how nonpoint source pollution can be carried by stormwater into nearby waterbodies and tools we can use on the landscape to protect water quality.

Family Science Night at Whitney Point: Exploring Watershed Hydrology

By Bailey Griffiths, *Broome County SWCD Natural Resource Conservationist*

At Family Science Night in the Whitney Point School District, fourth and fifth grade students and their families took a closer look at how water moves across the landscape and into our rivers, lakes, and streams.

Using a hands-on watershed model participants simulated a rain event with spray bottles, watching as water flowed through farms, construction sites, and urban areas. This interactive activity demonstrated how nonpoint source pollution can be carried by stormwater into nearby waterbodies.

Broome County Soil & Water Conservation District staff also showcased practical solutions to help protect water quality, including the use of vegetation, fencing, and forested buffers to filter runoff before it reaches streams and lakes.

Through this engaging experience, students learned where water pollution comes from, how it is managed, and the important role everyone can play in protecting our shared water resources.

A special thank you to Tioga County Soil & Water Conservation District for lending the EnviroScape model—an invaluable tool for educating and connecting with our community’s youth!



Student simulating a rain event to observe how water flows across the landscape, picking up potential pollutants along

Hay There

By Troy Bishopp, *NatGLC Northeast Grazing Resource Manager*

Truxton, NY—At its simplest form, bale grazing is a way to feed animals on the land. However, farmers are known to tinker with such practices and make them their own. Depending on a farm’s context, goals and the tools to implement, it’s rarely a “Cookie/Hay Cutter” approach.

A capacity crowd of farmers were invited to "Come and kick the bales" at Hillside Farms in Cortland County run by Jacob and Alexa Newton and their two children, Leon and Nelson. The direct-to-consumer farming operation specializes in producing grass fed beef, pastured poultry and forested pork supplying roughly 320 families, two farmers markets and three restaurants, with local pastured protein from over 200 acres of pasture and hayland.

The farm’s topography of rolling hills and ponds dictates what land management tools can be used effectively. They utilize bale grazing primarily for the brood cow and yearling herds. Jacob described his non-grazing season approach as “± 90 days of bale grazing and 90 days of pack barn feeding” in using the strength of frozen concrete or suitable conditions to feed on the land and limit soil damage. “We are continuously looking at our weather app during the bale grazing season as a guide to our management decisions”.

The large contingent of farmers met amongst the cows and bales to observe the impact of hay and baleage residues, hooves and manure placement and ask their pertinent questions. Jacob said his animals have evolved to move daily for fresh forage which works well with bale grazing. “This is very much a planned activity”, said Newton.

“Our bale grazing plan takes into account different areas throughout the farm on land in need of additional fertility. We adjust our bale groups to the number of days we would like in between cattle movements. This allows for a clean feeding area, fresh air and sunlight. Whether it’s coming out of the barn or moving to the next group of bales, the cows love the movement”, added Newton.

Newton’s recipe includes setting bales in grids, especially when reclaiming pastures with Goldenrod and multiflora rose in them, using gravity to roll out bales and bringing 3 bales of baleage a day to the herd put in a strategic row to reduce waste. He likes to start feeding bales near the barn that creates a lane out to the planned pastures and helps with winter footing in frozen conditions.

“Bale grazing is a great herd management tool but can seem to go sideways when not planned out. We will not place bales when there is an abundance of moisture or no frost in the ground. Hoof traffic is fine, but tractor ruts not so much. We avoid winter mix and 30-degree rain as much as possible. We have pack barns and use those in the shoulder seasons when needed to be resilient”, said Newton.

No bale grazing workshop would be complete without a “wasted hay” discussion. Jacob was ready. “It’s a great way to deposit fertility on pastures that have limited access. We are able to relocate fertility with minimal mechanical impact on these hillside pastures with bale grazing”.

“We aim to bale graze in between the shoulder seasons. This maximizes consumption of hay, reduces trample waste, and leaves a nice thin layer of residue for bedding. If we can get 60 days of good bale grazing we can cut our bedding cost by about \$0.55 per head per day. Also, we reduce 2 loads of manure spreading/stockpile per week, estimated at \$0.23 per head per day cost. Result is \$46.80 per head saving cost on a 60-day period”, emphasized Newton.

Cornell’s SCNY Dairy Extension Specialist, Betsy Hicks added her expertise on the importance of forage quality and

Jacob Newton and son Leon discuss the attributes of bale grazing



dry matter intake for colder months. She added, “I think one of the most important parts of this feeding regime is the fact that there is no “one size fits all” strategy. There are lots of different ways to graze bales and different strategies can be employed based on conditions and management capacity”. The group of practitioners as a whole were a great resource of shared experiences and thoughtful questions, adding a layer of context for beginning farmers and novices alike.



Jacob Newton discusses winter watering options

Several farmers, including the Newton family, are keeping records of their progress as 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” that partners researchers and farmers from Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and New York.

Jacob concluded the walk with a look at winter watering options and his “Freeze Miser®” spigot, a tour of their poultry processing facility and pack barn area. He added, “Be patient for regrowth in the spring. The bale grazing area may need to be rested for more days next season, but once the sward is established, the grass grows thick! Like most farmers, sometimes we aren’t as patient as we should be. So— in areas that have hoof traffic or high impacted areas, we will broadcast a cocktail of annual and perennial seeds and harrow them in to build a forage base back quicker”.

Guests left with plenty of coffee, local donuts, new grazing charts and an appreciation of a new tool that improves fertility, animal performance and reduces labor costs. Just the kind of things that make this practice “bale-ievable”.

This workshop was 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 #NR223A750013G01

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=v7tzTOM06jU>



Farmers learn about bale grazing in the field

March 2026

Training Opportunity

Exclusive Precast Concrete Tour: An Unmissable Experience!!

Where:

Jefferson Concrete
22850 County Route 51
Watertown, NY 13601

When:

May 15, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Plus:

Enjoy a Complimentary Lunch on Us!

Secure your spot by RSVPing to Brian Reaser at reaserb@tiogacountyny.gov by May 1st.
Limited to 40 people. Don't miss out!



Silvi-Corner: *Platanus occidentalis*

The American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis* L.) is a dominant, early-successional hardwood species native to eastern North America, frequently associated with alluvial floodplain forests and riparian corridors.

Habitat & Site Characteristics

Platanus occidentalis is most commonly distributed on recent alluvial deposits, where soils are deep, stratified, and periodically inundated. The species prefers full sunlight and is considered shade-intolerant, typically establishing in canopy gaps or disturbed sites. While it demonstrates adaptability to a range of soil textures - from silty loams to clays - growth is maximized under conditions of high soil moisture and nutrient availability.

Establishment & Silvicultural Considerations

Due to American sycamore's rapid height growth and expansive crown, recommended spacing ranges from 30-50 feet depending on management objectives. Early protection from herbivory (e.g., tree shelters or exclusion fencing) is often necessary in grazed or wildlife-rich systems. The species is frequently utilized in riparian buffer design, bioengineering applications, and silvopasture systems, where its rapid canopy development contributes to microclimate regulation and bank stabilization.

Morphological Traits

American sycamore is a long-lived, deciduous angiosperm, often exceeding 100 feet in height and capable of attaining diameters greater than 5 feet. Mature individuals commonly develop hollow trunks and large cavities, which provide critical habitat for cavity-nesting birds and mammals. The species is resistant to physical disturbance including flooding and windthrow, though may be susceptible to certain pathogens (e.g., anthracnose under conducive conditions).

The bark of *P. occidentalis* is distinctive due to its exfoliating nature, wherein thin plates of periderm slough off irregularly. This process exposes underlying tissues of varying coloration - white, cream, olive, and gray - resulting in a mottled, camouflage-like appearance. The persistent whitening of upper boles increases reflectivity and may play a role in temperature regulation and pathogen deterrence.

American sycamore leaves are large, simple leaves arranged alternately along the twig. They usually have three to five broad lobes, giving them a shape similar to a maple leaf, with coarse, uneven edges. Leaves typically measure 4-10 inches across and are attached by long petioles that cover the buds at their base, a key identifying feature of sycamores. The upper surface is dark green, while the underside is lighter in color and may feel slightly fuzzy. In the fall, leaves turn a dull yellow-brown before dropping.

The species is monoecious, producing separate staminate and pistillate inflorescences on the same tree. Fertilized flowers develop into round, seed balls (or buttonballs) composed of hundreds of small seed-like fruits called achenes, with each achene wrapped in fine, fluffy hairs used for dispersal. These seed balls persist through winter before disintegrating to release propagules. Seeds serve as a seasonal food resource for various bird species and small mammals.



Photo source: greenup.on.ca/

Through its physiological tolerance to disturbance, rapid growth dynamics, and contributions to habitat complexity, *Platanus occidentalis* remains a keystone species for riparian restoration and multifunctional landscape design.



2026 CDEA Awardees in the Watershed

Paul Gier won the Division IV Merit Award at this years CDEA Awards Ceremony. Starting with Tompkins SWCD in 2015, Paul hit the ground running, helping farms in his district through STAIEP. After assisting 17 farms through that effort, and 1.2 million dollars later, he dove into learning and facilitating other district programs, such as AEM, AgNPS, and CRF, to mention a few. Paul, a champion of grazing and soil health, has infectious positivity, always willing to help and spread words of encouragement. Congratulations to a Great Conservation Warrior!



Joann Burke was awarded the CDEA Division III Merit Award this past Awards Ceremony, after only 22 years of being with the Madison County SWCD. We all know Joann as an active member of the USC, helping with data management, conveying information, and always planting trees. Beyond that, Joann goes above and beyond by serving as the CDEA secretary. She's always there to help move a project or committee along. We're grateful to have her as a participating member of the USC!



Tioga County SWCD Hosts Annual Soil Health Meeting

By Danielle Singer, *Tioga County SWCD*

The Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District held its annual Soil Health Meeting on February 23rd, drawing 30 attendees for a day of education, discussion, and a tasty hot lunch.

The program opened with Kristen Workman of Cornell Pro-Dairy, who highlighted the significant value of manure as a nutrient resource. She emphasized the importance of timely incorporation, noting that up to 50% of total nitrogen in manure can be lost through ammonia volatilization when left on the soil surface. Incorporating manure within one day helps retain a substantial portion of ammonium-N, while leaving it unincorporated can result in nearly complete nitrogen loss.

Paul Cerosaletti of CCE Delaware and Custom Operator Frank Albano shared insights from their manure injection Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) project. They discussed their county's efforts to help small farms empty manure storages before winter and the environmental and agronomic benefits of manure injection.

Following lunch, Kristen Loria from the New York Soil Health Program presented on various cover crop options. Then Danielle Singer from Tioga SWCD facilitated a farmer roundtable. This open discussion gave producers an opportunity to voice their needs, interests, and challenges related to soil health practices.

The meeting sparked productive conversations, identified priorities for future SWCD planning and implementation, and renewed interest in foundational practices such as manure management and soil sampling for nutrient management.



Training Alert

SAVE THE DATE!



USC STEWARD VIRTUAL TRAINING

May 20th, 2026

9am-1:00pm



Learn the basics of forestry stewardship, from field safety to survey and assessment protocols. Contact Ava Glasser at GlasserA@tiogacountyny.gov with questions.

Register here:

www.u-s-c.org/stewardtraining





Protecting Headwaters, Building Resilience: New Restoration Project Takes Root in the Upper Susquehanna

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition, in partnership with the Southern Tier Land Conservancy, Broome County SWCD and with funding from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission is advancing a major conservation effort to protect and restore nearly 118 acres in the headwaters of the East Branch Nanticoke Creek. This project focuses on strengthening drought resilience by safeguarding important water features, including wetlands, riparian corridors, and an engineered impoundment capable of holding over 13 million gallons of water during peak flows. These features work together to reduce flooding, sustain streamflow during dry periods, and improve overall watershed health.

We are pleased to share that property has been successfully acquired, ensuring its permanent protection and long-term stewardship of the site. With ownership secured, the project team has moved into the next phase—developing a comprehensive planting and restoration plan. This includes designing over 17 acres of riparian forest buffers, additional wetland restoration, and targeted upland reforestation to enhance groundwater recharge and water quality. Broome County SWCD is developing the project planting plan which is expected to be included in the fall 2026 contractor planting. In addition to activities funded through this grant, the Southern Tier Land Conservancy is developing the property as a public use resource designing a trail system in partnership with Binghamton University students and faculty.

Funding for this project was awarded by the Susquehanna River Basin Commission through its Consumptive Use Mitigation Grant program, supporting this critical investment in the resilience of our landscape. Upon completion this project will provide protected and valuable wildlife habitat, improve water quality, and provide lasting community benefits.

