

MARCH 2025

FOR LAND'S SAKE

Official Newsletter of
Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District



COWASELON CREEK GRAZING PROJECT

Project installed approximately 14,000 ft of high tensile fence converting approximately 47 acres of highly erodible row cropland to permanent pasture. The project also installed two stream crossings and excluded cows from approximately 7 acres of forested buffer along a tributary to Cowaselon Creek.



New fence and stream crossing after construction



New fence post-construction

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MADISON COUNTY SWCD CELEBRATES ANOTHER BUSY YEAR

BY TROY BISHOPP

Morrisville, N.Y. – Flannel shirts, calloused hands and colorful stories mark another year of putting conservation on the ground for the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District. In the spirit of gratitude, the District held its 14th annual appreciation luncheon at the Madison County CCE building in Morrisville, New York. The casual get-together continues to honor the family of stewards who help the District put conservation in action.



“It’s a small gesture of praise for our local family farmers, local contractors, county employees, elected officials, agri-business companies, engineering support and state and federal conservation partners.” said District Manager, Steve Lorraine.

With a record crowd of over 100 guests, Lorraine highlighted a variety of 2024 projects that he and staff worked on using the NYS Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program planning matrix. These plans led to survey, design, and implementation of tile drainage, grade stabilization projects, road culvert projects, stream remediation, manure storages, pasture systems, spring developments, milk-house waste systems, heavy use areas, riparian buffers and planting over a 1000 acres of cover crops locally.

In addition, the District mentored interns, developed nutrient management plans, cleared logjams, secured stream permits, 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 variety of climate resilient 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 a time to reflect and reconnect over a relaxing meal and continue the personal and professional relationships that support our rural communities, while protecting Madison County’s natural resources and assisting local agriculture and municipalities to make sensible land and water management decisions. It’s frankly a team effort, where a rising tide raises all boats”, said Lorraine.

“We appreciate the opportunity to thank all the hands that help us achieve our mission. It’s a time to reflect and reconnect over a relaxing meal and continue the personal and professional relationships that support our rural communities..”

STEVE LORRAINE



COUNTY FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT

This house located on a tributary to Oneida Creek was at risk of collapsing due to severe erosion along the toe of the slope leading up to the house. As seen in the picture, severe erosion in the stream channel from several significant rain events had eroded the stream bank and the top of the slope had moved to within 8ft of the home. District staff worked with the homeowner to obtain a permit from NYS DEC for the project. Once the permit was approved District staff finalized designs and put the project out to bid to local contractors. A contractor was selected, and the work was completed this summer.



Site prior to bank stabilization



Project site post-construction, showing the installation of large riprap to eliminate the erosion and keep the stream channel from moving closer to the home



Trees For Tributaries

By supporting plantings along tributaries, small streams that feed larger rivers and lakes, the program helps create healthier, more climate-resilient communities



Do you own property along a stream, creek or body of water within the Headwaters of the Susquehanna River? Even Intermittent streams qualify!

Would you like to increase flood protection and reduce stream bank erosion? Or interested in increasing wildlife value on your land?

Many different trees and shrubs are available to attract pollinators and wildlife

Trees for Tributaries improves water quality through offering FREE Plants, Materials, and Technical Assistance

Free Trees Must Supply Stream



NEW YORK STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

Department of Environmental Conservation

For More Information: Email: Bufferteam@u-s-c.org or Phone: (607) 687-3553

CHENANGO RIVER WATERSHED NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Working with a farm in the Chenango River watershed to improve waste management capabilities on the farm resulted in the construction of a 4 million gallon highly engineered lined earthen waste storage facility. The storage was sized to fit the land base that exists adjacent to the storage and will allow the farm to dragline and inject the manure just prior to planting the upcoming years crop. This will lead to improved uptake of nutrients from the growing crop, reduce synthetic fertilizer usage, the chance of runoff and 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 underway



Site work complete with leak detection installed awaiting liner installation.



Polyethelene liner installed



Project completed. Safety fence installed and ready for use.

NYS CLIMATE RESILIENT FARMING PROGRAM HELPING ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE IN NY AGRICULTURE

In 2015, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, along with the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee launched the Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Program. Over \$30 million has been awarded to help farms across the state reduce their GHG emissions and increase resiliency from the effects of climate change. Eligible projects include agricultural waste storage cover and flare systems, water management systems, and soil health projects.

Water management projects supported through CRF address flood events and drought. They include conservation practices, such as riparian forest buffers, stream corridor management, erosion control, ponds, and wetlands that stabilize conveyances, reduce flows, and store water.

Improving soil health on farms can significantly enhance a farm's resiliency to the impacts of climate change. Soil health practices increase soil organic matter, allow for increased water storage, reduce erosion, and improve recycling of nitrogen by crops, thereby mitigating GHG emissions. Eligible soil conservation practices include conservation crop rotations, reduced or no tillage, cover cropping, and nutrient management.

Round 9 of CRF will be released in spring of 2025. Farms interested in applying to the CRF program should call the SWCD office to start the process required for being included in a future application.



CREP PROJECT

White Eagle/Barbland Farms purchased a farm in 2022 and approached the Madison County SWCD with questions about what they could do to utilize an area adjacent to the Chenango River, that has been pastured for the past 100 years. District staff visited the property to see what the best use would be for this location and after discussions with the farm and their CAFO Planner, it was determined that this area should no longer be used as pasture due to the hydraulic conditions and its direct connection to the river. The District pitched the idea of a CREP project that would install a series of potholes to enhance the area. The SWCD in conjunction with FSA, NRCS, and the farm developed a design to install 6 potholes and complete brush management on the 12.5-acre site. Farm staff, under guidance of SWCD, completed construction of the potholes. In total the farm agreed to remove animals from a 15.8-acre site through the course of this project.

SAYING GOOD BYE TO A FRIEND OF FARMERS AND CONSERVATION

As many of you know, the Districts grazing specialist Troy Bishopp has moved on to proverbial greener pastures. Troy had been here with us for almost 20 years and an opportunity came across his path to promote grazing on a regional level. Troy is now the Northeast Regional Coordinator for the National Grazing Lands Coalition. Troy was and remains an advocate for the farming and conservation communities. During his time at the District, Troy completed many tasks and was always ready to lend a hand to those needing it and went above and beyond what was required on a regular basis. Troy was an invaluable resource to the landowners in Madison County and his presence in the County will be missed!
Good Luck in your endeavors for the future.




Funding For Future Forests

Forests offer essential benefits, including clean air and water, vital wildlife habitats, everyday wood and paper products, and opportunities for outdoor recreation. The Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is currently looking for private landowners interested in reforestation of vacant farmland. Approximately 97% of land eligible for reforestation in NYS is privately owned. In recent years there has been an influx of interest and grant funding regarding reforestation for NYS private landowners.

In 2024 NYS Governor Kathy Hochul announced an initiative to plant “25 million trees by 2033” to battle our changing climate and improve community health. There are various grant programs that offer an array of financial assistance on management practices like: reforestation, afforestation, forest stand improvement, deer exclusion fencing, and invasive species removal.

Each grant has specific requirements regarding project acreage, species selection, and maintenance. If you or someone you know believe you are eligible for funding and has an interest in reforestation; please contact Thomas Conklin at thomas-conklin@madcoswcd.com or (315) 824-9849 ext.118.



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:



Expanding Nutrient Management In Madison County, NY



What You Need to Know:

- Madison County SWCD will soil sample your farm and fund the cost of the samples
- Madison County SWCD will provide the farm with a manure spreading schedule
- Madison County SWCD will provide fertilizer recommendations based on your soil samples and manure applications
- All planning will be based on NYS AEM protocols and the NRCS 590 Nutrient Management standard
- Farms need to be located in the Susquehanna River Watershed within Madison County

Madison County SWCD has secured funding from The Upper Susquehanna Coalition through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to focus on expanding Nutrient Management Planning efforts to improve water quality across agricultural and urban landscapes

Contact:

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(315) 824-9849 ext. 5



www.u-s-c.org

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