



Bi-monthly

# NEWSLETTER



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### January:

- 29 - 30 - 2020 Delaware Wetlands Conference
- 30 - USC Retreat - Day 1 - Partners
- 31 - USC Retreat - Day 2 - District Staff only

Add your event to our calendar by emailing [Palmerm@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:Palmerm@co.tioga.ny.us)

## IN THIS ISSUE

USC Stream Construction Projects	2
Cover Crops in CBW	3
Welcome Taylor Held	3
Cons. Professionals Attend CSW	4
Hellbender Conservation Sale	5
Project Spotlight	6-7
District Recognitions	8

## Reminder: USC MOU Making It's Way Around the Watershed!

Just a reminder that the updated USC MOU is making its way to your county, please make note the changes to the document were minor and mainly includes the addition of 2 new member counties, Yates and Schoharie. Please let Wendy know if you have any questions or would like for her to attend a board meeting regarding the update!



# 2019 USC Construction Team Stream Stabilization Projects

By: Jeremy Waddell and Kevin VanHine  
USC Wetland Team

The USC Stream Team completed the implementation of 4 streambank stabilization projects in 2019 through NRCS EQIP funding totaling 1,840 linear feet of streambank and 3,518 tons of stone. In January, 160 linear feet of streambank was stabilized along Pipe Creek in the town of Tioga. The project involved the installation of 502 tons of R6 stone along the actively migrating streambank. In July, USC completed the installation of 3 stream rock deflectors and streamco willow plantings to stabilize 500 feet of streambank along West Branch Owego Creek in the Town of Berkshire. The project involved the installation of 83 tons of R6 stone and 450 rooted willow cuttings. In August, USC completed the stabilization of 750 feet of streambank along Ouleout Creek in the Town of Franklin, Delaware County. The project involved the installation of 1,498 tons of R6 stone and an agricultural equipment crossing. In October, USC completed the stabilization of 430 feet of eroding streambank along Owego Creek in the Town of Owego. The project involved the installation of 1,435 tons of R6 stone within a severely eroded reach. We would like to thank districts for continuing to involved USC in their steam project planning and looking to USC for implementation support.



# Cover Crops in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

By: Emily Dekar  
USC Ag Coordinator

If you are anything like me, by this time of the year, you probably feel like you haven't thought about anything other than cover crops for what seems like an eternity. So, to end the year out right, here are just a few more facts on cover crops! Cover crop implementation is one of the top practices that New York is relying on to meet our Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals. However, that is not the only benefit that New York farmers can gain from this practice. Other benefits such as preventing soil erosion, increasing water infiltration, relieving soil compaction stress, improving soil structure, increasing organic matter which encourages beneficial soil microbes, and protecting water quality by slowing erosion and nutrient runoff. These are just a few of the benefits that cover crops provide; the list could go on and on. While there are many benefits to cover crop implementation, there are also countless challenges including the current economic situation.

In 2017 and 2018, DEC supported cover crop implementation in Upper Susquehanna Watershed by providing \$200,000 annually to increase our acres of implementation by 2000 acres per year. We exceeded those goals in 2017 by almost 500 acres, and again in 2018 by just over 600 acres. In 2019, DEC increased our cover crop funding to \$350,000 annually. By doing so, we were able to support not only 2,383 "new" acres, but also 6,428 "continued" acres. The additional funding from DEC allowed us to support our farms in the watershed during a difficult economy. Cover crops were implemented by a number of different means including the use of district equipment, farmers equipment, high boy inter-seeder, and even by helicopter! Every year, there seems to be new technology and ideas that arise for how to get implementation on the ground earlier in the fall to increase success rates before the snow fly's.

Now that winter has made its arrival, the USC is looking ahead to 2020. While cover crop implementation season seems as though it is a long ways off, it will be here before you know it. We plan to continue the DEC Cover Crop Program in 2020 to support additional implementation in the watershed. Stay tuned for an official announcement in the spring of 2020!



## USC Welcomes Taylor Held!

Taylor Held has taken over the role as the Upper Susquehanna Coalition's Riparian Buffer Technician. This summer, she has been serving as the Buffer Steward for Tioga County Soil and Water District where she has visited riparian forest buffers throughout Tioga County and evaluated their survivability rates and performed maintenance work. Taylor graduated from SUNY Oneonta in May 2019 with a dual major in Environmental Science and Geography and a minor in Biology. During her time at college, she was involved with the environmental science club, in which the club volunteered with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition every semester by planting trees to establish riparian buffer zones. Taylor is looking forward to taking on this role and to working alongside the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and landowners!



# Conservation Professionals Increase Knowledge to Support Client Needs

By: Troy Bishopp  
USC Grazing Specialist

Cortland, NY—As the autumnal equinox is ushered in, so too is the annual conservation skills training regime for conservation professional partners. Whether environmental stewardship is agriculture, rural, municipal or urban related, the folks on the front line of service seek ongoing training to help clients reach their water quality goals throughout the state.

The weeklong indoor and out-in-the-field workshops were sponsored by the NYS Conservation District Employee's Association, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee. Seasoned practitioners and leaders in their respective fields teach the theories, designs, techniques and tools for getting thoughtful, effective conservation on the ground.

Newly hired local professionals worked through the NRCS /AEM planning process starting with an introduction to the core planning components and headed to the field to do on-farm assessments and learn the fundamentals of planning key farm land uses such as farmsteads, cropland, and pasture.

Statewide employees honed their skills in surveying, wetland delineation and the basics of GPS data collection for inventory and evaluation as well as conservation practice implementation and project oversight. They gained knowledge in the fundamentals of prescribed grazing planning and management, treating cropland erosion issues and using a suite of practices to improve soil infiltration capabilities and also forest conservation planning and practices associated with landings, skid trails, forest roads, stream crossings, sensitive areas for setbacks/buffers and post-harvest restoration.

Featured speakers from several local Soil & Water Conservation Districts described their individual Rural Roads Active Management Programs and how each district interacts with their municipalities and landowners when managing rural roads for water quality. Classes also addressed assisting municipalities with developing and implementing an effective pollution prevention and good housekeeping program.

The weeklong mentorship also prepared staff with the New York State Erosion & Sediment Control Implementation Course and administered the certification test which implements the state's water quality objectives for construction sites. "A trained professional is a valuable asset to our local community, said Conservation Skills Workshop Coordinator, Stacy Russell. The week gives us an opportunity to acquire new skills, determine what is working in the field and network across all conservation disciplines to support our customers better and improve our environmental footprint".

To learn more, visit [www.nyscdea.com](http://www.nyscdea.com).



# Hellbender Conservation Sale

All proceeds go directly to support ongoing efforts to conserve and protect Eastern Hellbenders in the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed!



Mugs - \$50

Magnets - \$20

[Click Here to Order!](#)

Mail Check or Money Order to:  
Upper Susquehanna Coalition  
183 Corporate Drive  
Owego, New York 13827

\*\*Prices include shipping, orders will be shipped within 3 days of receipt of payment.

## Project Spotlight : Delaware County SWCD

Submitted by: Jessica Moore

### Aerial Cover Crop Seeding Pilot Program

This fall, the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District implemented an aerial cover crop seeding pilot program. Farms for this program were selected based on two factors. First, we examined the number of acres in corn silage that each farm reported to the USDA Farm Service Agency. Additionally, these fields needed to be in close proximity to each other. These attributes were critical for developing a sensible flight path for the helicopter. The seeding took place on three farms in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed from October 5 through October 8. JBI Helicopter Services, based in New Hampshire, was hired to perform the work for this project. A total of 299.4 acres of corn fields were seeded with winter rye.

Soil health benefits from cover crops are achieved by suppressing weeds, managing erosion, and improving overall soil quality and nutrients. Winter rye is one of the best cover crops to grow in our area as it is extremely adaptive. This cover crop grows quickly, even in cold or unfavorable conditions. During the aerial seeding process, rye seed was broadcast over the standing corn by helicopter and was worked into the ground when the corn was harvested.

With the success of our 2019 pilot program, we hope to expand implementation of aerial seedings on additional cropland in the future. To measure overall success of this project, we are collecting data on the rye growth. The germination rate is being measured through plant density and growth rate by measuring the height of the rye. Additionally, we are recording temperature and precipitation data to determine any significant effects on the rye growth. Finally, we are collecting the same data from fields that were seeded using conventional techniques to compare to the aerial seeded fields. The most common conventional practice for planting cover crops involves a tractor driven seed drill or spin spreader. Ultimately, the data that we collect will help to determine which technique yields better cover crop growth and establishment.



The pilot flew the helicopter approximately 50 ft high in a precise, GPS guided pattern over the cornfield to ensure that all areas were evenly covered.



After several passes over the corn, the helicopter's spreader was refilled with approximately 460 pounds of rye seed. The helicopter can cover roughly 4 acres with one load of seed.



## Project Spotlight : Steuben County SWCD

Submitted by: Chelsea White

### Loon Lake Project

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District recently wrapped up a super unique project they worked on for the last 3 years in The Town of Wayland, NY on Loon Lake.

The property was bought by the Loon Lake Alliance, this team is constructed of retired citizens trying to make Loon Lake a better, cleaner place! In this particular situation, everything that this alliance has been working on with the District is as follows.

The expansion of the floodplain, in 3 different areas on this property on Loon Lake. Taking down the elevation of soil to what it used to be before the previous owner filled and was not supposed to. Restoring the elevation that it should be. Hauling some out/leaving some in a stockpile on-site (vegetated & out of the floodplain) for future purposes.

A riparian buffer has been planted, in coordination with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC), specifically utilizing T4T to get the materials needed to keep the trees growing, safe and alive!

Lastly, another interesting fact is that in restoring the natural floodplain here there were 22 truckloads of garbage hauled out of the site (also from previous owner). This lakefront property is open to anyone, there are trails mowed in the summer, and the Wayland Cohocton School bring their students here for educational proposes sometimes etc.

This is just a great, beautiful, natural place for people to go.



## District Recognitions

# 75

YEARS AND  
COUNTING

# HAPPY 75TH ANNIVERSARY

*Broome County - 7.11.1944*  
*Onondaga County - 3.06.1944*  
*Otsego County - 6.15.1944*  
*Tioga County - 11.27.1944*  
*Tompkins County - 5.8.1944*

ON BEHALF OF THE UPPER  
SUSQUEHANNA COALITION

# CONGRATULATIONS!

Bradford County Conservation District



### NFWF /RCPP Wysox Creek Watershed Projects

**A Partnership between: Landowners, Local Contractors, BCCD, NRCS, NFWF, PA DEP, USC, CBF**

Highlights of funding: Exceeded deliverables, additional federal dollars in match of \$1,405,000, additional non federal dollars in match of \$1,679,000, 22 stream sites rehabilitated, 12 on farm projects, 4 dirt and gravel road improvement projects.

**ANNUAL SAVINGS - 10,472,500 lbs. sediment, 36,800 pounds of Phosphors, 87,500 lbs. of Nitrogen**

