



Bi-monthly

# NEWSLETTER



## Phase III WIP Out For Public Comment:

The Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan is now available for public comment. Districts are encouraged to review the plan and make comments. The draft will be available for public comment until June 7, 2019. Click [here](#) to review the draft.

## 2019 Spring Stream Team Meeting:

The USC's spring Stream Team Meeting is being held at the Tioga SWCD meeting room in Owego on April 26th at 9 AM to noon. All folks are invited to attend and participate in this meeting primarily focused on a number of program organizational topics that include: 2019 stream corridor related trainings; the new state road ditch program; the Cornell hydrology modeling of NAACC inventory sites; a stream data app for tablets in the field; needs to be included in this year's grant applications; quality assurance and follow-up site checks of CBP stream BMPs; riparian components to stream projects; and consideration of new watershed inventories. For those that cannot attend and have additional topics or considerations or input on any of the agenda topics for the Team, they should send them on to Mike Lovegreen at [Mike.Lovegreen@u-s-c.org](mailto:Mike.Lovegreen@u-s-c.org), phone 607-346-2718, before the meeting. USC members that are planning their own stream corridor related trainings for the public or any targeted audience that would like support from the team can always contact Mike or any member of the stream team to help organize or assist with events.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**May:**

May 1: Rural Landowner Workshop on Native Plants - Cortland County SWCD

May 17: USC Bi-monthly meeting - Owego, NY



**June:**

June 7: Phase III WIP Public Comment Deadline

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## WIP III Outreach Meeting Summary:

By: Emily Dekar  
USC Ag Coordinator



Tioga WIP Meeting held April 8, 2019. Farmers from six different counties attended.

During the week of April 8th, local Soil and Water Conservation Districts partnered together with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Farm Bureau to hold informational meetings across the Upper Susquehanna Watershed in New York State regarding the DRAFT Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan. The DRAFT Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) can be found on DEC’s website and is currently open for public comment until June 7th. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition, DEC and partners will continue to provide education and outreach regarding the DRAFT WIP, and the nutrient reduction goals expected from the New York portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The five meetings were held in various locations across the watershed, as an opportunity for farmers and landowners to provide feedback and ask questions directly to DEC regarding the proposed implementation goals in New York’s portion of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

With over 100 attendees throughout the week, there was definite concern from our farmers regarding how New York will meet our expected load reduction goals without a major increase in available funding. With New York’s load reduction goals where they are at, and the current economic situation of our farming community due to continued low milk and meat prices and rising costs of inputs, our farms in New York are struggling with where the funds will come from to do additional practice implementation.

Some of the common feedback received throughout the week of meetings was the need for improved techniques for practice reporting, to be sure that we are capturing all implementation. Improved communication with our federal partners, as many of the annual practices are currently reported directly to USDA NRCS and/or FSA, and shortening the timeframe in which cost shared projects take to move from the contract to the implementation stage. Things such as “Where does the money come from for implementation?”, “What are the expectations from the other sectors?” as well as “What will happen if we don’t reach our goals?” were all questions that came up.

## Community Science Institute To Attend May USC Meeting

By: Wendy Walsh  
USC Watershed Coordinator

Nathaniel Launer, the Outreach Coordinator from the Community Science Institute (CSI), will be attending the May 17 USC meeting and presenting on the CSI volunteer monitoring program. Nate reached out to Wendy at the Finger Lakes Regional Conference after she gave a presentation on the USC. CSI is interested in possibly partnering with the USC to do water quality monitoring of project implementation sites that we are involved in, specifically looking at riparian areas and stream corridor management projects. This could be an opportunity for the USC to meet monitoring requirements associated with NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship funding. Come learn and help us brainstorm on what opportunities there might be to partner with this volunteer water quality monitoring network at the upcoming May USC meeting!



# Stop the Spread: Oak Wilt

By: Laura Grant  
USC Buffer Team

## Background:

Oak Wilt is yet another pest threatening the health of our forests in New York and beyond. The Oak Wilt fungus, *Bretziella fagacearum*, believed to be introduced from Central or South America, could have devastating effects on our forests.


Oak Wilt is classified as a vascular disease meaning that the fungus interrupts the transport of water and sugars with the result being wilting foliage, known as flagging. Flagging is often the first symptom that your oak tree might be infected. Beginning in May, generally at the top of the canopy, individual leaves will turn brown from the tip of leaf inward. In red oaks, this disease spreads rapidly, killing trees in a year or less. White oaks, are more resilient to the disease but are not resistant and can further the spread if no action is taken.


## How Does it Spread?


Oak Wilt has two methods of spreading. When trees grow close together, their roots intermingle; this intermingling is known as root grafting. Root grafting usually is a beneficial process making trees more resistant to wind throw, and allowing trees to share resources. Oak trees infected with oak wilt not only share water and sugar through these root grafts, but the fungus as well.


Around springtime, the fungus begins forming fungal mats just under the bark of infected oaks. As the spores mature, the fungus produces a scent similar to that of stale beer. This smell attracts sap-feeding beetles and bark beetles, who collect the spores as they explore the infested tree. As these beetles travel from tree to tree, they deposit these fungal souvenirs onto non-infected trees. All the fungus needs is a wound and it can start an entirely new infection.

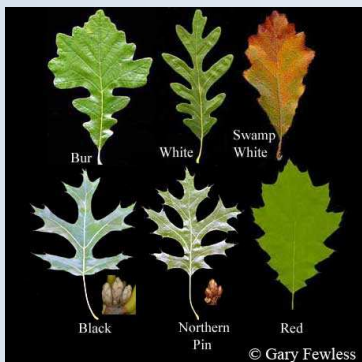
## How to Stop the Spread:

 Don't prune in June! Although not quite as catchy, do not prune oak trees between May and September. During this window, the beetle vectors are active and can readily spread the fungus. Wait until winter to prune your trees. If you hire a contractor between May and September ask that the oaks not be pruned until winter.

 Don't transport firewood! The beetles and fungus can be present in cut logs. Transporting wood in and out of infected areas will proliferate the disease. Firewood harbors all sorts of environmental fugitives, emerald ash borer was spread this way which will result in the death of more than 900 million trees across NYS. For more information visit [dontmovefirewood.org](http://dontmovefirewood.org).

 Detect and report! Are your oaks experiencing a fall color change in August, noticing some flagging on oak trees in your local park? Call someone. Your local Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water office, or regional DEC office are all equipped to report infestations to the regulating authority. DEC has regional offices in both Cortland (607-753-3095) and Kirkwood (607-775-2545).

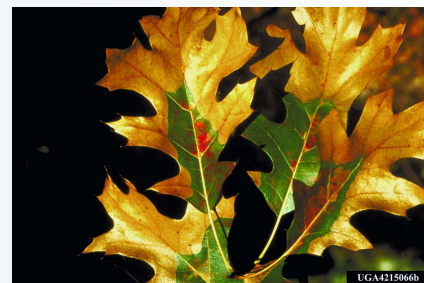
 Hire qualified tree care workers. There are many tree services around the state. Make sure you hire one with a certified arborist on staff. Certified arborists are required to attend educational workshops where they are kept up to date with tree care techniques and new invasive pests. To find an arborist in your area you can visit the [Trees are Good website](#).



Oak Leaf Images. Digital Image. Gary A Fewless Herbarium.



Healthy Oak Leaf. Digital Image Seiberling et al.



Oak Wilt Leaf. Digital Image New York Invasive Species Information



# Wetlands in the Phase 6 Model

By: Melissa Yearick  
USC Wetland Coordinator



With the Phase 6 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (CBWM) in effect and the Phase III WIP on the horizon, we thought it would be helpful to do a quick review of wetland BMPs and how they are counted towards nutrient reduction goals. Much of this information was developed by the Chesapeake Bay wetland workgroup and is available on the workgroup webpage.

In early CBWM phases, wetland restoration nutrient reductions were limited to a simple landuse conversion – converting X acres from whatever the prior landuse was into X acres of forest, the lowest model loading rate available. With advances in science, the complexity of the model and a series of wetland expert panels, wetlands efficiencies have changed significantly. The 2014 Wetland Expert Panel and resulting 2016 Wetland Expert Panel Report, presented a summary of findings outlining BMP definitions, and specifically targeted the filtration of nutrients from surface and shallow groundwater by restored wetlands, and their varied nutrient retention capacity depending on landscape position. The Phase 6 CBWM took the report recommendations into account, resulting in many changes to how wetlands are now handled in the model. These changes include: wetlands as a landuse in the model, expansion and defining of wetland Best Management Practices (BMPs), reductions in nutrient loads for the watershed area draining into all wetland BMPs with significantly higher reductions for Wetland Restoration projects (the focus of the 2016 Wetland Expert Panel Report).

The four wetland BMP categories in the Phase 6 model:

Practices resulting in a wetland acreage gain:

**Wetland Restoration** - The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of returning natural/historic functions to a former wetland. Examples\* include: *Restoring hydrology to prior-converted agricultural land (cropland or pasture); ditch plugging on cropland.*

**Wetland Creation** - The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics present to develop a wetland that did not previously exist at a site. Examples include: *Modifications to shallow waters or uplands to create new wetlands. Placement of fill material or excavation of upland to establish proper elevations for wetlands; Hydrologic measures such as impoundment, water diversion and/or excavation of upland to establish nontidal wetlands.*

Practices resulting in a functional gain:

**Wetland Rehabilitation** - The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of repairing natural/historic functions to a degraded wetland. Examples include: *Restoring flow to degraded wetland; ditch plugging in a forested wetland area; invasive species removal; floodplain reconnection; re-establishing needed vegetation on cropland with wetland hydrology*

**Wetland Enhancement** - The manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a wetland to heighten, intensify, or improve a specific function(s). Examples include: *Flooding seasonal wetland for waterfowl benefit, create potholes in existing wetland community to benefit wildlife.*

\*Please note, project examples listed above are not a comprehensive list.

Functional gain practices result in nutrient reduction to upland acres only since these projects enhance or rehabilitate existing wetlands. Acreage gain practices result in nutrient reduction to upland acres and are also a land use conversion BMP since they either re-establish or establish a wetland that was not there at the time of implementation. Because Wetland Restoration BMPs result in significantly more nutrient reductions than other wetland projects, and these projects only qualify if they occur on ag landuse types, identifying wetland restoration sites on ag land is a USC Wetland Team goal.



# Project Spotlight : Bradford County Conservation District

Submitted by: Joe Quatrini



## Project Details: Unpaved, Bradford County, Smithfield Twp, Jung Road, \$92,000 grant, \$15,000 in-kind

This unpaved road was severely entrenched and extremely narrow. The ditches remained saturated most of the year and any runoff made its way directly to the stream. Nearly 9,000 tons of fill was added which raised the road enough to achieve sheet flow on one side – nearly 5' in some locations! The opposite ditch was shaped and stabilized with vegetation and mulch-mat. Also, 1,300 feet of underdrain was installed to prevent saturation of the road base. Additional fill was placed and graded to achieve a stable and appropriately crowned road surface.

