



Bi-monthly

# NEWSLETTER



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### February:

26 - 5th Annual Pro-Grassive 100% Grass Fed Dairy Grazing Conference.



### March:

6 - USC Education and Outreach Meeting  
18 - Connecting Soils to Profits hosted by Bradford Conservation District  
19 - Broome County Stormwater Coalition ESC Training  
20 - USC BiMonthly Meeting

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

# Earth Week

The USC is looking for help celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day! This year, the USC is looking to fill the calendar with events during earth week, April 20 - 26. Please participate by sending on an event that you or your partners are hosting during that time so that we can promote all of the good work being done during that week! If volunteers are needed, or encouraged, please indicate in case someone who sees this is interested in helping out! If you are interested in volunteering at any events please reach out to the contact person indicated below!

### Current Scheduled Events:

- April 25 - Buffer Planting - 10:30am - Chenango County - Contact Taylor Held
- April 25 - Stream Cleanup - Time TBD - Tioga County - Contact Miranda Palmer



# Connecting the Dots: Linking Dollars to Dairy Grazing Decisions Workshop

By: Troy Bishopp  
USC Grazing Specialist

Do you want more quality grazing days? Are you ready to make more money within your grazing system? Do you know your cost of production for pasture? Are you dealing with weather events proactively? Can you get away for a vacation during the growing season?

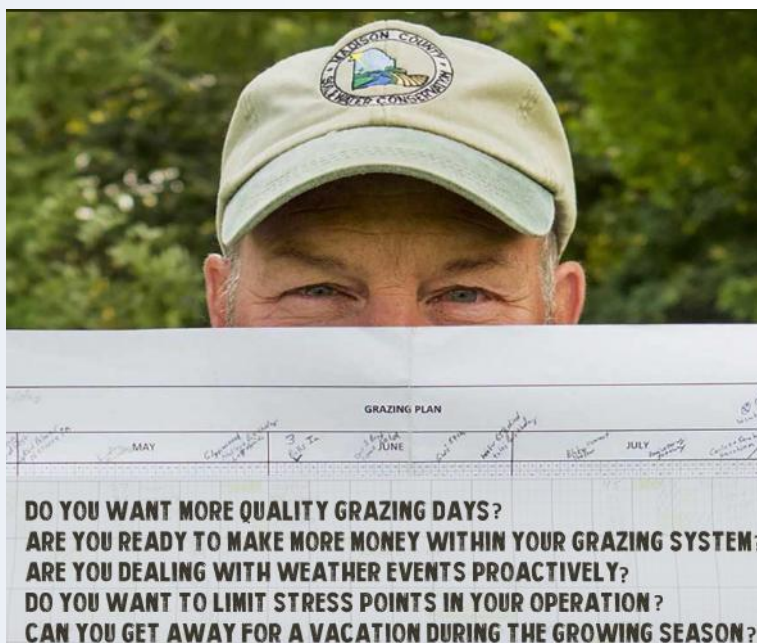
If you answered yes, join the South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team and be part of the Dairy Grazing Discussion Group on Tuesday February 25, 2020 from 11am - 3pm at Venture Farms, 6978 Route 80, Tully, NY 13159. All grazing dairies are welcome and the cost is free but you must register in advance by calling Donette at 607-391-2662 or online at <https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1085>.

A collaborative team will help dairy farmers learn how to plan and manage their grazing system to achieve practical results. Madison County SWCD Grazing Specialist and veteran grazier Troy Bishopp, aka The Grass Whisperer, will be on hand to facilitate a discussion around grazing approaches, real-life scenarios and planning tools.

Using Bishopp's custom "Jumbo-Tron" grazing chart tool, farmers can actively predict changes in recovery periods and see trouble brewing, while developing management scenarios to save money at every decision. Troy's light-hearted show and tell format will draw on his own farm grazing experience and approaches from his mentors to implementing a consistent season right into winter grazing.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Dairy Specialists and Farm Business Management Educators will also share tools for calculating pasture costs and tracking income over feed costs throughout the grazing season. Understanding the cost of production for pasture can help dairy graziers connect the dots between grazing decisions and dollars. Bring your own farm map, grazing plan, grazing charts, etc. to the meeting so that we can draw from everyone's experiences and perspectives on developing a grazing plan that really works.

Lunch will be served, followed by an ice-cream sundae bar to add nutrients for a lively conversation! Each participating farm will receive a free 2020 grazing chart to take home. This meeting is supported by a grant from the Dairy Advancement Program (DAP) and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.



## USC MOU Still Making It Through 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!





# Butternut Land Conservation Project

By: David Diaz  
Director of Land Protection, Otsego Land Trust

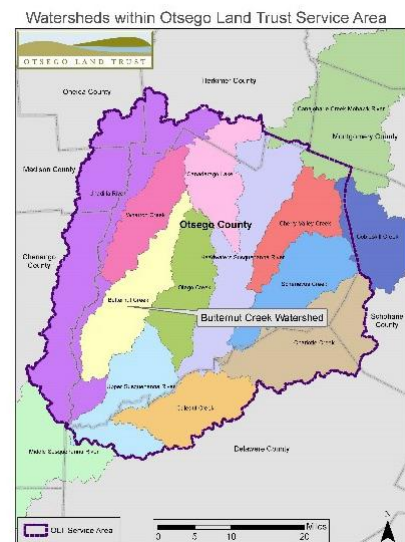
The Otsego Land Trust, Otsego SWCD, Butternut Valley Alliance, and USC are working on an exciting project in the Butternut Creek Watershed. The project, temporarily nicknamed "Mussel Flats", already has several funders in place, including USC.



Farm field and road leading to Butternut Creek



Area for buffer improvement



The property has many conservation worthy attributes including over 1 mile of Butter Creek streambank, 24 acres of wetlands, existence of yellow lampmussels, 30 acres in active agriculture, and will result in the establishment of 15 acres of riparian buffer. It's also important to note that American eel were released at the property in 2019, with future plans for more releases. Additionally, Butternut Creek has an active eastern hellbender recovery program.



Eastern Hellbender



Yellow Lampmussel



American Eel

A multi-pronged approach to conserving the property is being utilized:

- Otsego Land Trust purchases the property.
- SWCD designs and installs extensive riparian buffers.
- USC covers costs related to purchase transaction (appraisal, survey title, etc.) and riparian buffers.
- Otsego Land Trust sells the property subject to a conservation easement that will protect the property forever.
- Otsego Land Trust will hold and steward the conservation easement.
- USC provides funding and expertise to manage the buffers.

This approach is being heralded as a potential model in Otsego County, with the hope that additional projects will be identified in the future. If all goes well, Mussel Flats will be protected by the end of 2020.

The Otsego Land Trust works in Otsego County and portions of Chenango, Madison, Oneida, Herkimer, Schoharie and Delaware counties. We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with the chief purposes of conserving land and providing open spaces for public use.



# No Till and Cover Crops

By: Kevin Brown  
Bradford Conservation District

The time has come for our 6th annual Soil Health Conference. Looking for the latest on the soil health movement? What are people doing with no till and cover crops these days? This year we will have two of the best speakers in the nation come talk to us about what they are doing to cut costs, cut time in the field, and look at other considerations to make them more profitable. These guys are really looking at the bottom line. See how they have cut fertilizer bills significantly, along with seed bills, spray applications and the like. They are using less horsepower, less diesel fuel, lime, etc. Sound too good to be true? Hear it right from the horse's mouth. These guys are living it. They are planting "green" and relay cropping and a whole lot of other things that we may not even be familiar with.

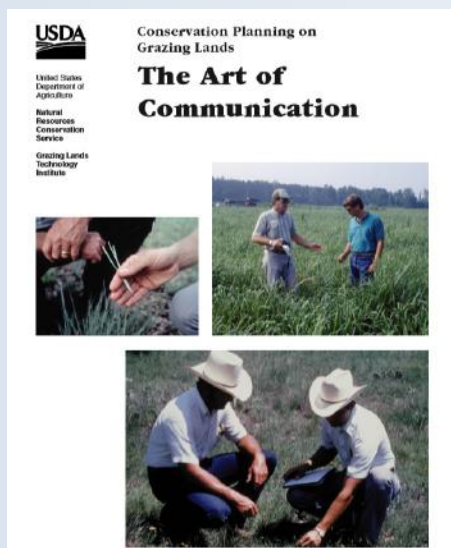
Join us on March 18th at the Wysox Fire Company and hear from Rick Clark, farming in Williamsport Indiana, and Russell Hedrick, from North Carolina. This has been an extremely successful conference in years past. Reservations are \$15/person before March 6th, and \$20 after that. Registration and information is on our website- [bccdpa.com](http://bccdpa.com). Call Kevin Brown (570-485-3105) at the Bradford County Conservation District for any other details. The conference will run from 8:30 to 3:30, lunch provided with payment.

# Selling Conservation Means Acquiring Skills

By: Troy Bishopp  
USC Grazing Specialist



I attended the Northeast Pasture Consortium meeting in Vermont last month where I heard storyteller and NRCS Grazing Lands Specialist, Kevin Ogles, talk about the art of communication. He was describing verbal and non-verbal cues as he was talking to a landowner about what silvopasture was. Walking the land, observing, asking the right questions, listening and framing a discussion around a conservation topic is a skill that needs continual training. Developing relationships and helping get conservation on the ground or being a solid, technical, independent advisor is a key component in working with our customers. Is your confidence tested? Need a little pick me up going into spring?



I learned from Kevin there is a NRCS pamphlet (supposedly in agency offices) on the "Art of Communication". I didn't find the hardcopy, but I did find it online ([https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/UT/Art\\_of\\_Communication.pdf](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/UT/Art_of_Communication.pdf)). Even though it's from 1969, the author, H. B. Passey, doles out sage advice we can use today. "Get to know and understand the person with whom you are working. Then adapt your approach accordingly."; "There is no disease as contagious as enthusiasm!" Check it out for yourself.





# Local Conservation Organization Engages Communities throughout the Butternut Creek Valley

By: Danny Lapin, AICP  
Environmental Planner, Otsego County Conservation Association

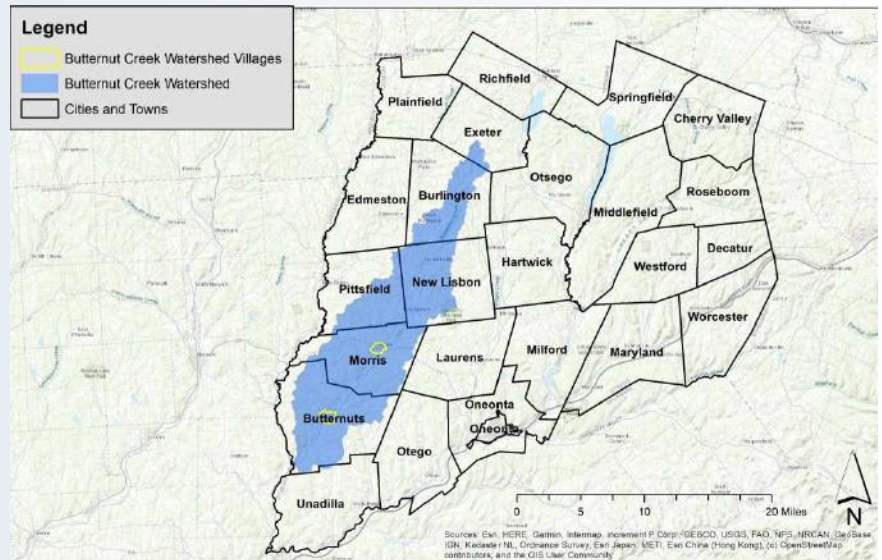


On a balmy Tuesday evening in September, the Otsego County Conservation Association attended three municipal meetings at once. Former OCCA Executive Director Leslie Orzetti went to the Town of Pittsfield, former OCCA Assistant Planner Bailey Gano made the journey to the Town of New Lisbon, and OCCA Environmental Planner Danny Lapin, AICP paid a visit to the town of Morris. The objective: to introduce the Butternut Creek Valley's nine towns and two villages to the Butternut Creek Watershed Management Plan.

In New York State, municipalities have the authority to decide how land is used within their respective boundaries under Home Rule. Towns can decide whether they want to regulate land-use, how to plan for future growth, and what role local governments should play when it comes to protecting water quality. This fact compelled OCCA to establish open lines of communication with local governments early in the planning process. OCCA has taken that principle to heart. To date, OCCA has attended six Town Board meetings and have delivered 10 presentations throughout the area.

Successful watershed management plans rely on open communication between municipal governments and local planning entities. Local residents often have knowledge about a watershed that cannot be gleaned from a computer or a peer-reviewed paper. OCCA typically ends each local presentation by giving local officials a chance to share their perspectives on the largest water-related challenges and opportunities facing their municipality.

“Local leaders and dedicated community members usually are the best advocates for this type of planning,” said Lapin, OCCA asked local officials to mention the plan to at least five colleagues in the watershed to increase local interest in the planning process. OCCA’s goal is to attend Town Board meetings in all eleven watershed municipalities by the end of April 2020.



## Local Farmer Receives Prestigious NYS Journalism Award

By: Troy Bishopp  
USC Grazing Specialist

Syracuse, NY---“Sometimes it pays to be at the right place at the right time with the right equipment,” says Deansboro farmer and free-lance agriculture correspondent, Troy Bishopp.

Bishopp, also known to many as the “Grass Whisperer”, found himself in a spring pasture with his trusty point and shoot Canon camera and got a shot of an Angus beef calf waking up from a nap in a bed of grass and dandelions. Little did he know the picture would adorn the cover of Farming Magazine, and become the 2020 “Cap” Creal Journalism award winning picture.

The awards are presented in conjunction with the NYS Agricultural Society’s 188th annual meeting and agriculture forum. Named for farmer, NYS Ag Society member and NYS Assemblyman Harold “Cap” Creal, the journalism award is designed to recognize and encourage positive and accurate media coverage of events, people and issues related to New York State agriculture.

The award sponsored by the New York State Agricultural Society, Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity and Zeta Chapter at Cornell University recognizes well-written, informative, and timely news stories and photos about agriculture in NYS. Formats range from printed news stories, editorial content, audio/visual news clips, photography and blogs/online features. Bishopp joins award winning journalists, Christa Lemczak and Scott Trimble (Syracuse.com), Margo Sue Bittner (Lockport Union-Sun & Journal), David Sit (Ithaca Times), Judy Rife (Times Herald-Record), and Fernando Narro of North Country Public Radio.

This state honor adds to Bishopp’s relentless, 15 year body of work and pragmatic photography within the agricultural community. He covers agriculture topics and writes essays for Lee Newspapers, OnPasture.com, Farming Magazine, Lancaster Farming, The Waterville Times, the Mid-York Weekly and other regional and national media outlets with over 500 published articles, features and pictures.

He has garnered numerous past media awards for his work including two Harold “Cap” Creal Excellence in Journalism awards, NYS Conservation Committee Agriculture in the News awards, a 5 time National Association of Conservation Districts photo contest winner, Madison County CCE Best Farm Promotion by Media award and several Mohawk Valley Toastmasters International Public Speaking contest awards.

Troy also manages Bishopp Family Farm, a distinguished NYS Agriculture Society's Century Farm Award recipient for continuous operation since 1890 and works full-time for the Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District.





## Project Spotlight : Schuyler County SWCD

Submitted by: Jerry Verrigni

### Peggy Clarke: Town of Chemung, Chemung County NY

This project stabilized and buffered a tributary to Baldwin Creek located less than 2 miles from the intersection with the Chemung River. Two heavily eroding bends were stabilized that were threatening first cropland then pasture. These two sections were stabilized with a series of stream barbs at the toe, willow plantings in the embankment, and tree plantings on the upper edge. Each of the two bends had either a large vertical face or were undercut with a large amount of erosion occurring during each storm event.



Images above: Before construction - picture showing eroding streambank into cropland at bend one



Images above: After constructon (L), during construciton (R)



# STROUD WATER RESEARCH CENTER

# RIPARIAN BUFFER TRAINING

**When:** June 17 and 18, 2020

**Where:** The Grange Auditorium, 100 Grange Place, Cortland, NY 13045

**What:** Put on by Stroud Water Research Center and the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, this workshop focusing on riparian forest buffers will provide:

- An understanding as to the importance of riparian forest buffers;
- Why they are a prioritized practice;
- How to implement them technically and financially; and
- Measures to ensure practice functionality.

Special emphasis will be given to their role within the stream corridor with agriculture as the adjacent land use. This training will include class and field sessions.

Stroud Water Research Center, located in Avondale, PA, seeks to advance knowledge and stewardship of freshwater systems through global research, education, and watershed restoration.

**Who should attend:** This training is for conservation professionals from throughout New York State, including Soil and Water Conservation District technicians and managers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, NRCS, FSA, Land Trusts, and watershed organizations, as well as other conservation professionals.

Registration coming soon. Contact Lydia Brinkley, [lbrinkley@u-s-c.org](mailto:lbrinkley@u-s-c.org) with questions.



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