



Bi-monthly

# NEWSLETTER



## DATES TO REMEMBER



### November:

30 - Cover Crop Documentation Due



### December :

2 - Watershed Wednesday - Customer Testimonials

4 - T4T Application Deadline

9 - Watershed Wednesday - Valuing our Kettle Lakes

15 - EPA Tool Webcast

16 - Watershed Wednesday - Answering the "So What" Question? A Workshop on Landowner Attitude About Riparian Conservation



### January:

29 - USC Bi-Monthly Meeting

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

## What's That Tool?

By: Lydia Brinkley  
USC Buffer Coordinator

Brooktondale, NY - This paddle is cut out of a ½" piece of plywood that was used by Williams Forestry Associates to paddle the tree and shrub tubes down into the ground. This task was made a little easier because the crew had also scalped the sod off of the area where the tube will go into the ground. Placing the tubes at least 1" below the soil surface is recommended to prevent vole and other rodent damage. Small rodents can squeeze between the tube and soil surface during the winter months and cause significant damage to seedlings. I personally enjoy calling this tool the tube smacker.

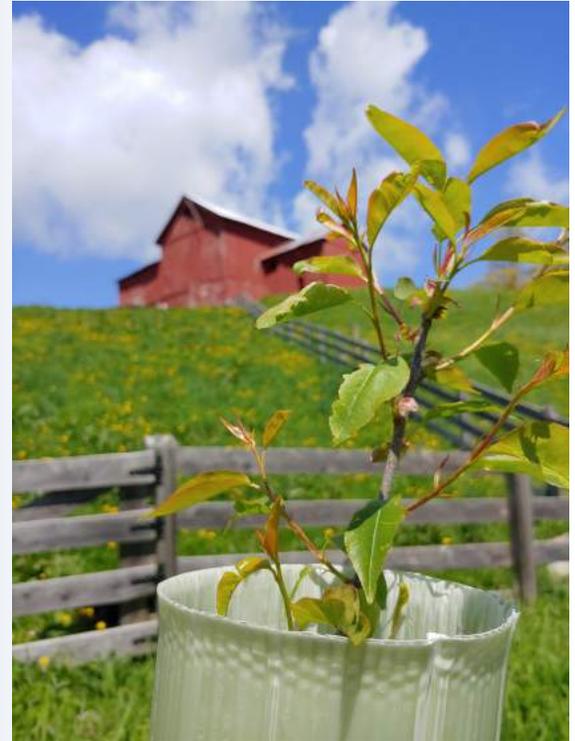


Picture Above - The tube paddle

## Trees for Tributaries Deadline Quickly Approaching

By: Taylor Held  
USC Buffer Technician

Just a reminder that the Trees for Tributaries program will be continuing this year, and the deadline to send a list of requested plants and their quantities for the upcoming spring is **Friday December 4th**. Project eligibility is dependent on a stream being present. The species that are available to order can be found on our website [here](#), but please keep in mind when requesting plants, to order each species in intervals of 5 or 10. You can find the the application for the program by clicking [here](#), this application must be signed by the landowner and submitted by **June** along with a map of the planted area. If you have any further questions please contact Taylor Held ([heldt@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:heldt@co.tioga.ny.us)) or Lydia Brinkley ([lbrinkley@u-s-c.org](mailto:lbrinkley@u-s-c.org)). Thank you!



### Key Dates/ Program Requirements:

- Deadline to submit plant requests for T4T: Friday, December 4th
- Deadline to submit the signed application for T4T: June
- Must include map of the planted area (June)
- Pictures are optional but recommended (June)

## Importance of Best Management Practice Verification

By: Emily Dekar  
USC Ag Coordinator

Each year our Soil and Water Conservation Districts are assigned a list of farms to perform “Whole Farm Verification” by June 30th. Whole Farm Verification is the process in which a staff member from the SWCD is on site at the farm to look at all Best Management Practices (BMP’s) that have been implemented to report to the Chesapeake Bay Model. Sometimes, landowners implement practices through programs provided by other partners, such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) or Farm Service Agency (FSA), and this gives the SWCD a time to record and track those practices. This is also a time to discuss with the landowner any annual practices they may be implementing, or future needs they may have that the SWCD could assist with. All information reported to the Chesapeake Bay Model is 100% confidential under AEM Law, and is not tied back to the specific farm or farm location, only the BMP type and the county in which it has been implemented.

Through the Chesapeake Bay Program, all BMP’s have been assigned a “lifespan”. Performing verification allows us to renew the lifespan of that practice if it is functioning as intended. Without verification, at the end of the assigned lifespan, the practice will no longer receive credit in the Chesapeake Bay Model. While this task is time consuming, it is necessary that all farms selected for verification are visited and that the data is updated in the USC’s AEM Online Tool. This ensures that our farms in NY are receiving the most possible credit for the great work they are doing in the Upper Susquehanna Watershed.

Cooperation between SWCD’s and other partner agencies is extremely beneficial in the verification process, not only for efficiency, but also for our landowners. Every BMP that is implemented in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, should be reported to the Chesapeake Bay Model for credit. That “credit” is the way that New York shows progress each year with meeting our nutrient reduction goals for the Chesapeake Bay Program. New York is committed to doing everything possible to reach our nutrient reduction goals by 2025. Reaching these goals not only enhances water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, but also locally in our streams and rivers, and assists with preventing additional regulations for our farms.

For further information regarding New York’s Best Management Verification Program, please contact Emily Dekar, USC Ag Coordinator, [dekare@co.tioga.ny.us](mailto:dekare@co.tioga.ny.us).



# Cover Crop Plantings Continue to Increase

By: Troy Bishopp  
USC Grazing Specialist / Madison County SWCD

Hamilton, NY---“A farmer's productive capacity is directly related to the health of his or her soil”, said Howard Buffet. Farmers across the Empire state are planting this health sentiment with acres of cover crops and nutrient management strategies. Folks aren't treating their soil like “dirt” anymore.

“Soil health, or the capacity of the soil to function, is critical to human survival. Soil health constraints beyond nutrient limitations and excesses currently limit agroecosystem productivity and sustainability, resilience to drought and extreme rainfall, and progress in soil and water conservation. With mounting pressure to produce food, feed, fiber, and even fuel for an increasing population, soil health is gaining national and international attention.” ~ [Soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu](http://Soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu)

Cover crops are used after row crops are harvested or in between harvest and re-planting to promote general soil health in agricultural lands. Soil health is important as it means less erosion, less compaction, greater nutrient cycling, increased microbial activity and improved water infiltration into the soil, improving overall water quality. Cover crops can also contribute to weed suppression and interruption of pest cycles, while attracting beneficial insects. Another added benefit is that cover crops can reduce the use and cost of fertilizer by supplying sufficient nutrients to the soil. When the cover crop “season” is over, crops can be harvested and used as additional forage.

Paul Brockett from Growmark FS Inc. in Sangerfield, NY said, “The trend of planting cover crops is going up and is moving from annual and cereal ryes’ to more mixtures including; oats & barley, clover & radishes and peas & triticale.” Harold Schrock, Sales and Support Manager at Cayuga Ag, commented “2020 saw a modest growth in cover crop seed sales but overall the last 5 years have seen a sharp increase.”

Because of the TMDL pollution diet regulations, a significant amount of education, support and resources are being directed in the Upper Susquehanna River Watershed as a cover cropping model area. Addressing these issues with the aim of stimulating more cover crop implementation on corn silage acres in New York, the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) of Conservation Districts continues its Cover Crop Initiative with funding from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to reach their customer's environmental goals.



Above: Good growth means less erosion



Above: Cover crop signage identified farms doing their part to help water quality



## Continued... Cover Crop Plantings Continue to Increase

In 2020, The Upper Susquehanna Coalition has planted over 7900 acres of “covers” to stem soil erosion, increase soil organic matter and improve the biological, chemical, and physical soil properties that will create a more resilient 2021 cropping season. “The need still far outweighs the funding capacity as more farmers are adopting this water quality practice”, says USC Ag Coordinator, Emily Dekar.

One of the Districts in this effort is the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District. Now in its 8th season of planting cover crops for improving soil health, the local organization has eclipsed the 1200 acre threshold with funding help from farmers, NYS Ag & Mkts, The Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance and The Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

“The success is in the logistics and getting seed in the ground as soon as the corn choppers harvest the first plants, said District Manager, Steve Lorraine. 2020’s drier weather pattern has led to another successful cover crop season. The plants have reacted positively to the unseasonable warmth and timely rains.” “To make this work cohesively, we work closely with Clinton Tractor Company for equipment rentals and Growmark-FS in Sangerfield to purchase certified rye seed. We employ seasonal staff to plant non-stop with a 15 foot, John Deere 750 no-till drill and it also helps that we perform most of our own maintenance.”

To learn more about the Upper Susquehanna Coalition Conservation Tillage Initiative and the New York State Agronomic Cover Cropping Workgroup, visit [www.u-s-c.org](http://www.u-s-c.org) or contact [Emily Dekar](mailto:Emily.Dekar@usc.org), USC Ag Coordinator at (607) 972-2346 for more details.



Above: Cover crops are an integral part of a dairy farms resilience strategy

## Watershed Wednesday Continues!

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition is excited to announce a second round of Watershed Wednesday mini webinar series. To the right you will find the schedule for Round 2 of the series!

Each webinar will begin at 9:30am and can be accessed using this same link every time:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87453133125>

Additionally, if you aren’t able to join us live, all webinar recordings, including the webinars that were held over the summer, are posted on our Watershed Wednesdays webpage:

<http://www.u-s-c.org/watershedwednesdays>

## 2020 Upper Susquehanna River Watershed Virtual Forum Round 2

Join us for our online mini-session series highlighting conservation initiatives and projects from across the watershed. Round 2 will include:

- 11/4 - Aquatic Invasive Species: A Hands On Approach
- 11/12 (Thursday!) - Improving In-Stream Habitat through Fish Passage
- 11/18 - Best Management Practice Implementation on a HUC-10 Scale
- 12/2 - Customer Testimonials - Telling Your Customer’s Story
- 12/9 - Valuing our Kettle Lakes
- 12/16 - Answering the “So What” Question? A Workshop on Landowner Attitude About Riparian Conservation



Watershed Wednesdays in November & December 2020 starting @ 9:30 am on zoom <https://us02web.us/j/87453133125>



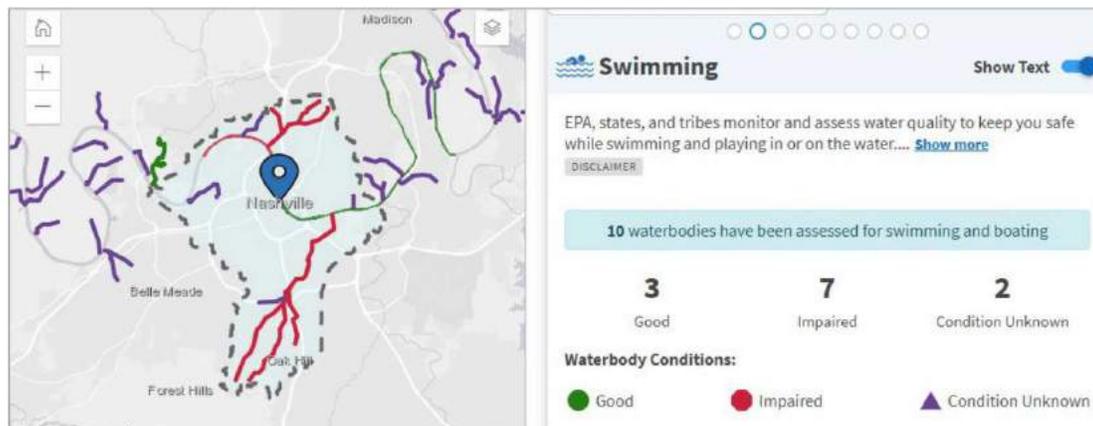
# Don't Miss Out on EPA Tool - How's My Waterway



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

## How's My Waterway

Informing the conversation about your waters.



## Join Us For a Special Webcast on How's My Waterway December 15<sup>th</sup> 2020

An updated version of How's My Waterway (HMW) was released publicly in June 2020. HMW provides a comprehensive overview of water quality data and information in the United States on three different scales: community, state and national. HMW pulls in data from eight databases across EPA through web services with the goal of answering questions about aquatic life, eating fish, swimming, drinking water, restoration and protection. This demo is meant to help users:

- **Explore** information about their drinking water, local stream conditions, and whether their waterways are suitable for swimming or eating fish and if they support aquatic life.
- **Discover** if their waterways are being monitored and the location of local monitoring stations.
- **Learn** what issues might be affecting their waterways.

Please join us for this webcast to view a live demo of the recently enhanced version of How's My Waterway. This webcast will provide an overview and demonstration of this user-friendly, accessible, data-rich and map-centric HMW application. Participants will feel empowered to communicate water quality information to their community in order to restore and protect their waters.

For more information on How's My Waterway visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/how-s-my-waterway>

To access the tool directly visit: <https://mywaterway.epa.gov/>

### Speakers:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds

- **Dwane Young**, Chief, Water Data Integration Branch
- **Kiki Schneider**, IT Specialist, Water Data Integration Branch

EPA's Watershed Academy provides self-paced training modules and webcast seminars on current information from national experts across a broad range of watershed topics. [www.epa.gov/watershedacademy](http://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy)

December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

3 – 4:30 pm Eastern  
2 – 3:30 pm Central  
1 – 2:30 pm Mountain  
12 – 1:30 pm Pacific  
11 – 12:30 pm Alaskan  
9 – 10:30 am Hawaii-Aleutian

Register in advance at:

<https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy/how-s-my-waterway-december-webcast>

Hosted by the Watershed Academy

For more Watershed Academy webcasts visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy>



## New signs on Walnut Street Bridge in Elmira Warn Paddlers of Dangerous Dam in the Chemung River

By: Emily Marino  
Chemung River Friends

New signs are being installed on the Walnut Street Bridge in Elmira to warn Chemung River paddlers about the hazardous Chase-Hibbard low-head dam 1,000 yards downstream.

Each of the four, easy-to-see, 8-foot-by-4, aluminum signs read "Danger Dam Ahead" printed in white letters on a red background. The signs, purchased by the Chemung River Friends, will be installed on the four main sections of the side of the bridge facing upstream.

"The dam is nearly impossible to see when you are paddling downstream toward it," said River Friends Executive Director Emily Marino. "If you don't know that it is there, you and your kayak can easily be swept over the dam and trapped in a churning river hydraulic and drown."

In the early 1970's two Binghamton firefighters drowned after their boat was pulled into the dam's swirling water overturning and trapping the men and the rescue boat in the powerful hydraulic.

River Friends purchased the signs following a Chemung River rescue this past summer when the river was high and fast. A group of several women paddled under the Walnut Street Bridge and were unable to paddle back upstream to escape the dam. Fortunately, they were able to paddle to an island above the dam and await rescue by the Elmira Fire Department before their boats were swept over the 8-foot-high dam.

A few weeks later a few paddlers in rubber rafts, at the Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira, were about to paddle downstream toward the dam unaware of its location and danger. Fire officials who were training at the boat launch told the men about the dam and the group cancelled their trip.

Several years ago, River Friends and the City of Elmira, built the Don Hall portage on the Southside bank of the river adjacent to the dam. Paddlers can exit the river, above the dam, carry their boats up a set of steps and along a paved trail that leads to the water's edge below the dam where it is safe to resume the paddle.

"The Grove Street Boat Launch is the most used launch on the river," Marino said. "It's part of our mission to improve river safety".

The project was a partnership with Eastern Metal in Elmira, which manufactured the signs at a reduced price, and the Chemung County Department of Public Works which is installing the signs while the bridge is closed for renovations. The bridge is expected to reopen by the end of October.



The dam is owned by the Elmira Water Board, and it keeps the river level behind it high enough to allow the water board to withdraw more than 60 percent of the community's drinking water from the river.



The Chase-Hibbard Dam (foreground) is located below the Walnut Street Bridge (background) and the popular Grove Street Boat Launch in Elmira



# Project Spotlight: Chenango County SWCD Blauvelt Riparian Reforestation Project

Submitted By: Jennifer Kelly

In 2019, the SWCD was tasked with evaluating this buffer to determine if it was eligible for re enrollment into the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). The contract was set to expire in September 2019. This small farm north of the Village of Bainbridge, surrounds a large pond with several beaver dams constructed downstream of the pond outlet. The land was previously used to pasture livestock and during the previous contract, the landowner planted white spruce tree seedlings with a local Boy Scouts Club. The white spruce seedlings performed poorly over the 15 year contract. To boost canopy cover and plant diversity, the SWCD developed a new conservation and planting plan and FSA entered into a new CREP contract with the landowner for 6.5 acres.

This fall, Conservation Services, Inc. planted 800 shrubs including; American cranberry, buttonbush, arrowwood and silky dogwood. Additionally, Conservation Services planted 950 tree species including; red maple, swamp white oak and black gum. Our goal is to diversify the woody species along the pond to provide a variety of wildlife habitat, cover, food and pollinator friendly plants. Additionally, the tree and shrub seedlings will sequester nutrients, provide water temperature regulation and sequester carbon.

**Partners:** NYS Ag & Markets, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Funding:** NYS Ag & Markers AEM Implementation Track, CREP



Tree seedlings with tubes and mats planted adjacent to the pond. In the background some surviving small white spruce can be seen.



Crew is finishing planting downstream of the pond dike.

