



# **VOLUNTEERISM: HOW TO BECOME AGENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

A Trees For Tributaries Perspective

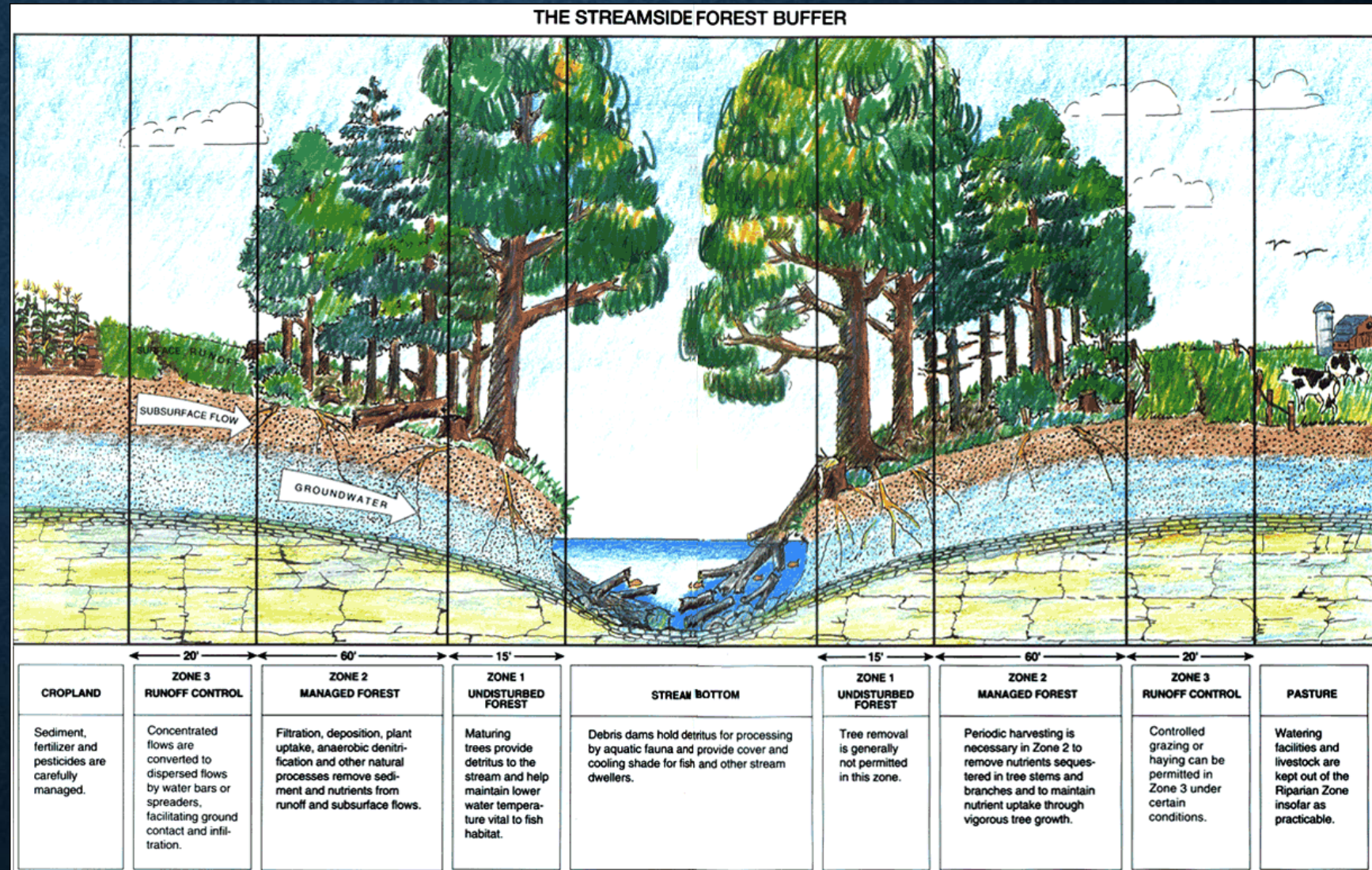
Ranier Lucas – Upper Susquehanna Coalition / Riparian Buffer Technician



# RIPARIAN FOREST BUFFER

Latin - “Riparius”  
 “Ripa” - meaning  
 bank

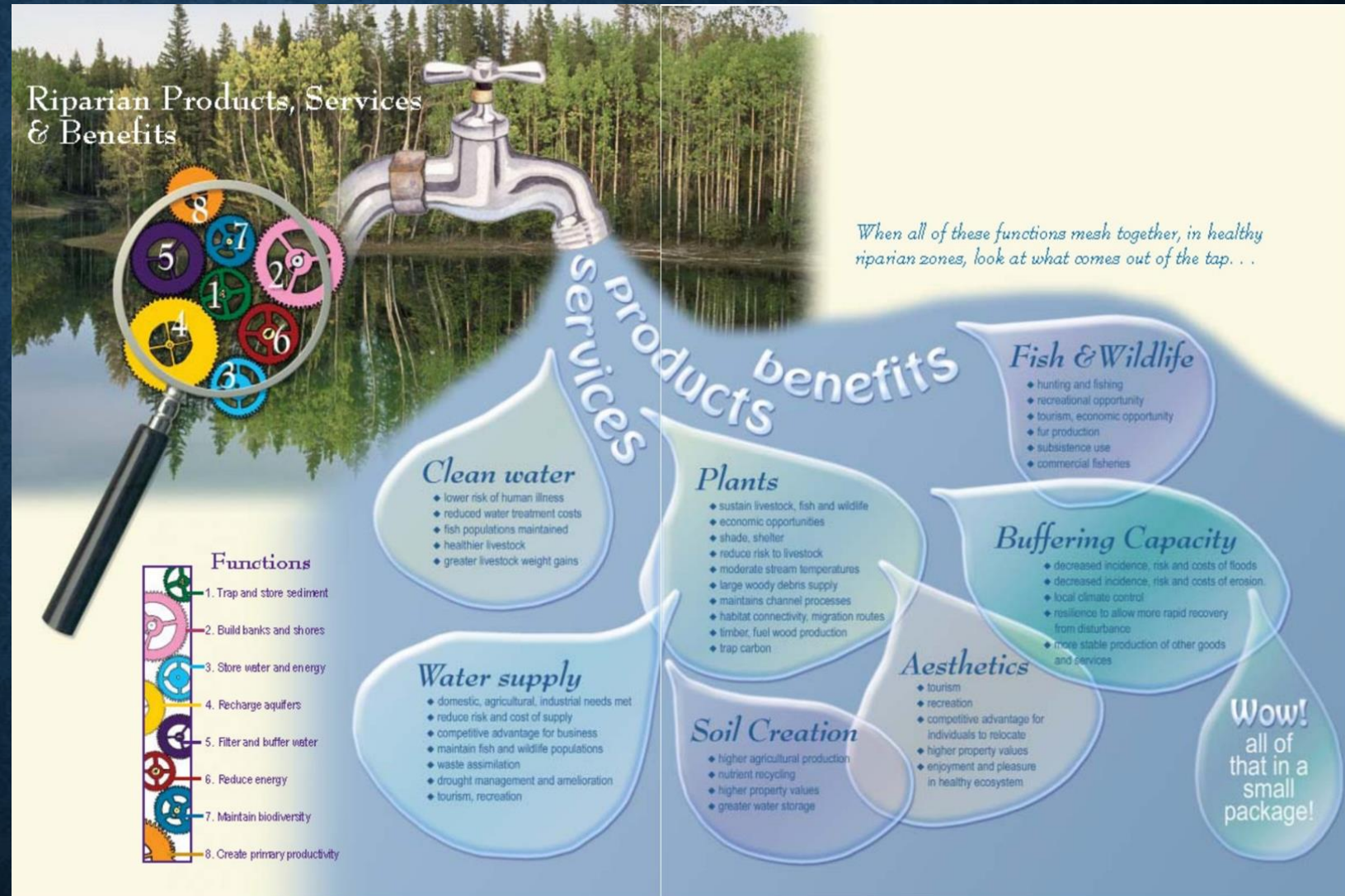
A Riparian Zone is  
 the land area that  
 occurs along a  
 streamside, river,  
 lake or other  
 bodies of water.





# BENEFITS OF RIPARIAN FORESTS

- Benefits of riparian forest buffers (include but not limited to) –
- Slow down and filter runoff
- Improve wildlife and stream habitat
- Decrease erosion
- Shade over streams
- Flood control
- Protects OUR water quality





# TREES FOR TRIBUTARIES

- USC is able to provide Free Plants, Materials, and Technical Support to aid in reforesting the Upper Susquehanna Watershed Tributaries. The goal of this program is to create or enhance Riparian forest buffers along our waterways.





# TREES FOR TRIBUTARIES

- Trees For Tributaries – Our say “YES” program
- Land owner requirements –
- Must provide stream, creek or body of water. Even intermittent streams qualify.
- No width requirement. – can be planted within 300 feet of waterbody
- Land owners must agree to care for the seedlings for the first several years until they are well established
- Map of planting area
- Photos of the planting area
- Filled out and signed Trees for Tribs Application





# TREES FOR TRIBUTARIES

- Planting stock density  
200 - 300 stems per acre
- On average 33 sites per season
- Average buffer size – 0.85 acres
- 25 -30 acres per year





# WHAT TYPES OF SITE CONDITIONS YOU MAY COME ACROSS





# WHAT TYPES OF SITE CONDITIONS YOU MAY COME ACROSS





# T4T COORDINATOR ROLE

- 2-year nursery agreements ordering 5,000 plants per season. 10,000 plants per year.
- Supply plant protection materials – 5ft tree tubes, 2-2.5ft tree tubes for shrubs and 5ft white oak stakes
- Coordinate deliveries of plant stock and materials to soil & water districts or sites
- Help facilitate volunteer efforts by organizing events, finding volunteers and supplying snacks and refreshments.
- Provide technical support or an extra hand to districts

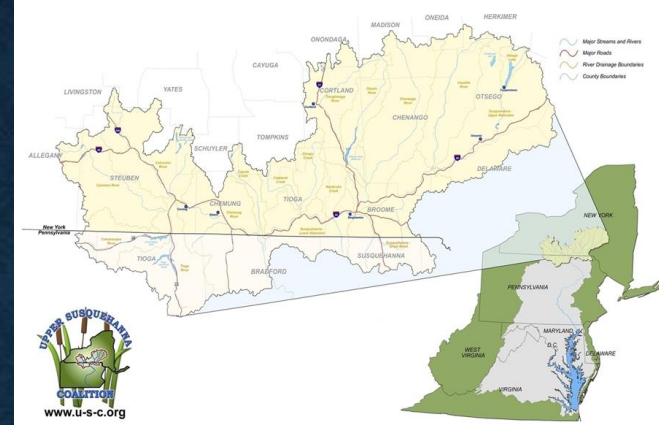




# DISTRICT ROLE

- Scout potential planting sites, create a planting plan for each site, and collaborate with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.
- Develop operation and maintenance plans with landowners and contractors
- Take additional measures to ensure the success of the program within their own county
- Give added support to plantings planned by the USC in their county.
- Collect and provide data to track the survivability and maintenance for prior plantings.
- Utilize the Buffer Steward program that assists with data collection and sometimes planting

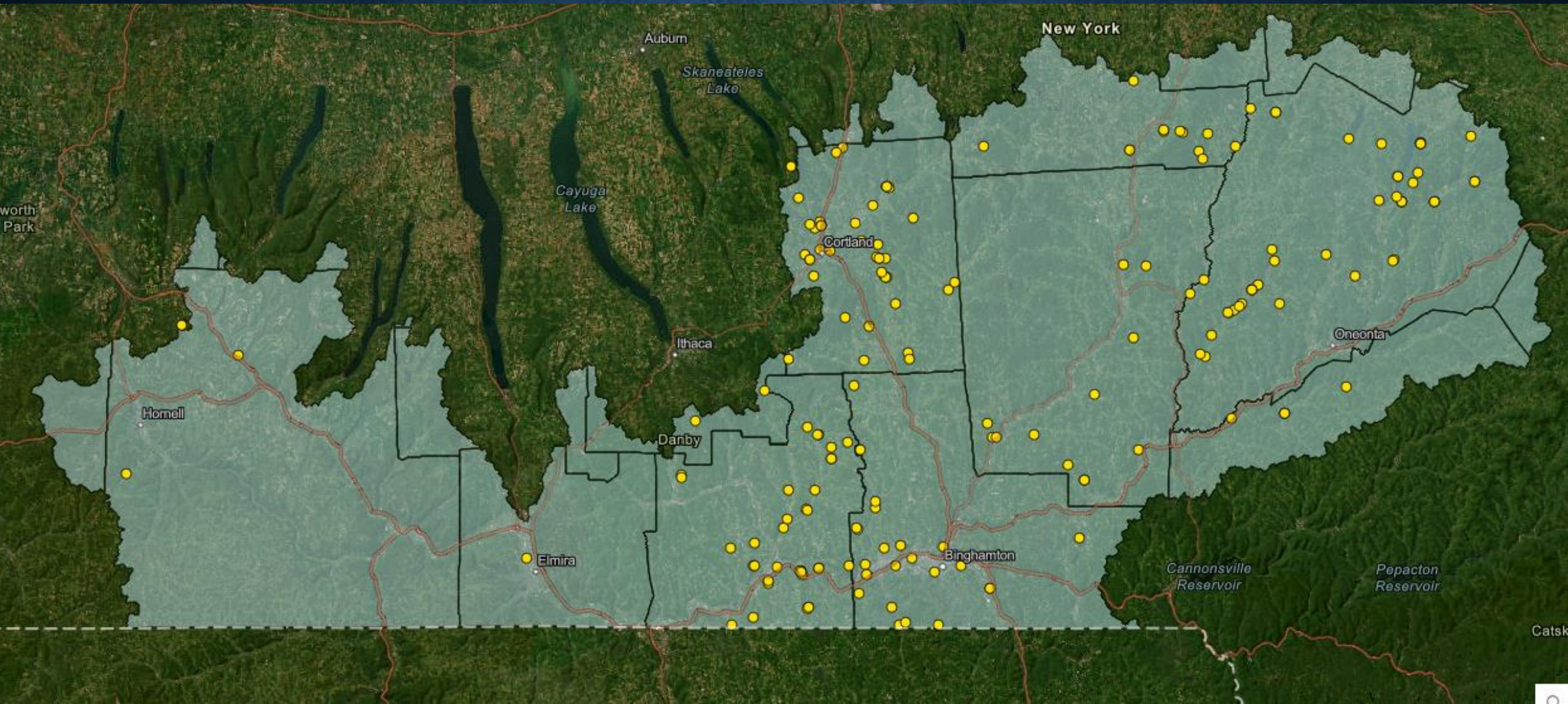
## THE UPPER SUSQUEHANNA COALITION HEADWATERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY





# SPRING 2020 - 2023

## 183 SITES - 154.8 ACRES





# HICKORIES PARK



Planted in 2016



# HICKORIES PARK



2017



2018



# HICKORIES PARK



2020



2022



# HICKORIES PARK







**WHO HAS PLANTED  
A TREE ?**





**WHO HAS  
VOLUNTEERED ?**



# OUR GREATEST NATURAL RESOURCE

- Human intervention helps facilitate nature's recovery from disturbances.
- Volunteers → Our Greatest Natural Resource for Reforestation





# WHO ARE THEY

- A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.
- Elementary School to College, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, 4H, Rotary Club, Local Environmental Organizations, Local Community Organization, Town / Village / City Municipalities.





# KEY COMPONENTS OF VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

**Recruitment:** How do you get the word out? Do you consider certain groups for certain plantings?

- Know your planting needs
- Advertise – Email, Social Media, Google Forms, Local Newspaper

**Engagement:** What keeps volunteers interested in your program?

- Does your organizations goals align with others? Girl Scouts 5 million tree promise, Environmental Clubs, Rotary Club, High school students, Engaged Science teachers.

**Retention:** How do you keep volunteers coming back?

- Keep them engaged – invite them to future events. Ask them if they have a future planting location in mind.





# BEST PRACTICES TO EFFECTIVELY RUN A VOLUNTEER EVENT

- Create a strategy that is proactive and have the end result in mind when creating a plan.
- Make a plan that serves as a win-win. If you utilize the interests and skills of your volunteers, you will have a more efficient and successful event and your volunteers will want to keep coming back!
- Make your volunteer event FUN! Happy volunteers = Quality planting
- Announce your appreciation, and regularly remind the volunteers of the lasting impact of their efforts.
- Make sure to provide drinks, snacks, and even pizza!





# KNOWING YOUR VOLUNTEERS

## Consider Your Site

- Planting Location - Urban? Rural? Desolate location?
- Site Location - How far from parking location?
- How many stems to plant?
- What type of plant stock are you using? Container, Bare Root, B&B?

## Consider You Volunteers

- Physical abilities
- Have they ever planted a tree before?
- How many volunteers are needed?





# MATERIALS & PLANTING STOCK



Twin walled ventilated  
tree tubes



5ft White Oak  
Stakes



Anderson  
Bandpots



- C. The trench or hole for planting must be deep and wide enough to permit the roots to be spread out as naturally as possible.
- D. Sufficient soil compaction is needed to assure good root-soil contact and to eliminate air pockets that allow the soil and roots to dry.

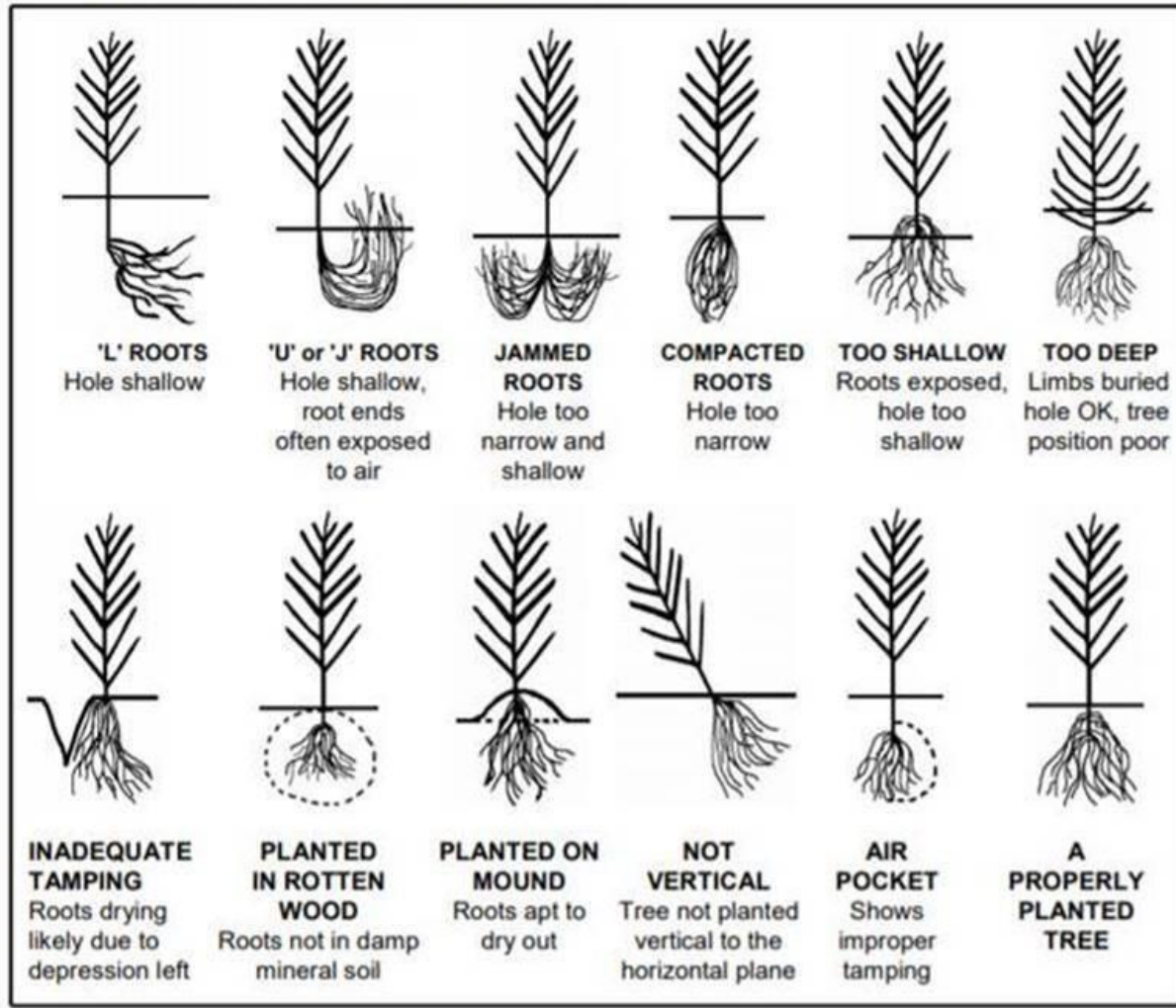


Figure 2. Eleven Ways that Trees should NOT be Planted (illustrated in Drawings 1-11). The Ideal Planting is shown in Drawing 12.



# VOLUNTEER EVENT CHECK LIST

- Equipment – Digging Equipment (Shovels, Hoedad, Dibble Bar), 3lbs Hammers
- Planting Materials - All Planting Stock and Materials (Tree Tubes, Shrub Tubes, 5ft Stakes)
- Water, Snacks, Pizza!! – Always remind your volunteers to wear closed toe shoes and to bring a reusable water bottle
- Planting location map
- Liability/Photo Release Form
- A Good Attitude!

Upper Susquehanna Coalition  
183 Corporate Drive  
Owego, NY 13827  
607-687-3553  
www.us-c.org

**EMERGENCY CONTACT AND RELEASE**

Emergency Contact Information      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

In case of an emergency, contact:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Any allergies, medications, or other information needed in an emergency:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Release and Waiver of Liability

This Release and Waiver of Liability (the "Release") by \_\_\_\_\_ (the "Volunteer") in favor of the Upper Susquehanna Coalition, Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District, a nonprofit corporation, and its directors, officers, employees, and partnering agencies.

The Volunteer desires to work as a volunteer for with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and engage in the activities related to being a volunteer for but not limited to tree plantings, stream cleanups, planting stewardship or other organized events in partnership with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. The Volunteer understands that the Activities may include, but are not limited to lifting heavy objects, working in remote areas, working within high vegetation, exerting in physical activities, or other circumstances that may result in personal injuries. The Volunteer hereby freely, voluntarily, and without duress executes this Release under the following terms:

1. **Release and Waiver.** Volunteer does hereby release and forever discharge and hold harmless The Upper Susquehanna and its successors and assigns from any and all liability, claims, and demands of whatever kind or nature, either in law or in equity, that arise or may hereafter arise from Volunteer's Activities with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and partnering agencies.

Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) is a coalition of 22 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) in NY and 4 in PA that established to work on nonpoint source water quality and natural resource issues in the headwaters of Chesapeake Bay. We formed under an MOU signed by all 22 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This agreement designates Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District as the administrative entity of the USC responsible for all contractual and other legal obligations.





# TIPS I HAVE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY



Mark Your Equipment



Don't Be Afraid To Ask Your Volunteers To Get Dirty



Never Turn Down An Extra Hand



**DON'T LIMIT YOUR  
SELF ON WHO TO  
INVOLVE**





# VOLUNTEER IN NUMBERS

- From Spring 2022 to Spring of 2023 The Upper Susquehanna has had 698 volunteers giving 1,976 hours of their time and planting almost 7,000 trees.
- Upstate New York , not including any metropolitan areas, has approximately 6 million people.
- If we can get volunteer help from 1% of that population, we would be able to plant a minimum 60,000 trees a year. That's with each volunteer planting only 10 trees a year.





# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

- More consistent volunteers
- Can volunteers adopt site for future maintenance
- Volunteer Ambassadors
- Keeping all volunteers engaged
- Outreach & Education
- Funding for district educational staff
- Funding for planting equipment





# IF ALL ELSE FAILS, COUNT ON YOUR COWORKERS





“Unless someone like you  
cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get  
better. It’s not.” – Dr. Seuss



Ranier Lucas  
Upper Susquehanna Coalition  
Riparian Buffer Technician  
Trees For Tributaries Coordinator  
[Lucasr@tiogacountyny.gov](mailto:Lucasr@tiogacountyny.gov)