

Contours of Conservation Winter 2019 Newsletter

www.tiogacountyny.com/programs-agencies/soil-and-water/

The District at Work

In 2018, the District worked with over 60 farms in the county to plan or implement conservation practices such as riparian forested stream buffers, milk house waste systems, manure storage systems, grazing systems, exclusion fence, watering facilities, wetland enhancement, stream stabilization, berm removal and cover cropping.

The District is always looking for more projects on farms; specifically rotational grazing, riparian forested or grass stream buffers with exclusion fence, grass cropland stream buffers, wetlands and cover crops. To find out what opportunities are available for your farm please contact Danielle Singer at (607) 972-2365.

Riparian forest buffers and wetland projects can be funded for non-agricultural land as well, please contact Alex Marks if interested. Our Stream Technician, Mike Jura can also provide technical assistance for stream stabilization and restoration work.



Riparian forest buffer between stream and livestock pasture planted by the District in fall 2018 to improve water quality on the farm, provide shade and windbreak to livestock in the adjacent pasture.

The District's no-till drills were used to plant cover crops in fall 2018. Pictured are oat cover crops. To rent the drills contact Alex Marks at the District.

Points of Interest

- NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets awarded Tioga Co. SWCD \$61,370 under the Ag Nonpoint Source Abatement & Control Program. Funds will be utilized to install prescribed grazing practices on a local farm and address water quality concerns.
- NYS Department of Environmental Conservation awarded Tioga Co. SWCD \$145,926 under the Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) to address a severely eroding streambank along Owego Creek.
- Tioga County SWCD is working with the Governor's Office of Storm Recovery to complete watershed assessments and plans for Apalachin, Huntington and Wappasening Creek Watersheds. Plans will provide for documentation of project need in all three watersheds to secure funds for implementation.
- Upper Susquehanna Coalition provided funding to Tioga County SWCD for implementation of prescribed grazing projects, wetland restoration and riparian forest buffers. Total award amount \$175,466.

Permits—What is needed and When

The following is a brief explanation of some of the different permits you may need to be aware of when working on conservation projects.

Dam Safety Permit: A permit is required if either of the following conditions are met : a) the height of the dam exceeds 6’ and the volume of the pond is 3 million gallons more **OR** b) the height of the dam exceeds 15’ and the volume is greater than 1 million gallons. The height of the dam is measured from the top elevation of the dam to the lowest point where the toe of the dam meets the natural ground.

Protection of Waters Permit: This is required for any work in or around protected waters. Protected waters include designated public drinking water supplies and trout streams. Contact the SWCD or DEC before working in or around any streams to see if a permit is required.

Freshwater Wetlands Permit: These are necessary for any work in or within 100’ of protected wetlands. Information regarding protected wetlands can be obtained from your local SWCD, County Planning Department, and NYS DEC regional office.

Mining Permit: If you plan on removing more than 1,000 tons (about 750 cubic yards) of excavated material from a site within a 12 month period **OR** more than 100 cubic yards from unprotected waters you will need this permit.

Fish Stocking Permit: This permit is applicable to anyone who plans on stocking fish in their ponds. It is simply a form that needs to be filed with DEC at no charge and can be obtained at the SWCD office.

Grass Carp Permit: If you have decided that grass carp are the best means to control submergent vegetation in your pond (it is highly recommended that you consult SWCD staff), this permit will be necessary before you are able to purchase fish.

State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES Permit): A permit is required and the regulations must be adhered to for any disturbance of 1 acre or more in size. For more information please contact the SWCD office.

Additional Permits: Other permits may be required from your local zoning/code enforcement officers and/or US Army Corps of Engineers.

In many cases, the SWCD can help with obtaining the necessary permits and some projects can fall under the districts “blanket” permit. For more information on any of the above mentioned permits please contact the office directly at **607-687-3553** or the regional NYS DEC office (Region 7; Cortland) **607-753-3095**.

AEM Sign Award by Brian Reaser

All too often the hard work and dedication of our farm co-operators goes unnoticed, so we continue to make an effort to change that by honoring farm operations in the county that have been committed to our Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) program. The primary goal of the AEM program is to protect and enhance the environment while maintaining the viability of agriculture in New York State. Both past and present AEM honorees have shown that they are exemplary stewards of our soil and water resources in the county, and the road-side AEM sign is a way to make both the public and farming community aware of their high level of commitment to protecting the environment, which benefits us all.

In March, we honored Robinson Farm, which will become the 12th farm to receive this award. Robinson Farm is owned and operated by Jim, Delos and Josh Robinson. They have been dairy farmers since 1867. The farm is located in Owego in the Little Naticoke Creek watershed. They are farming 875 acres and milking 230 cows.

They have installed the following practices: milk house waste system with vegetated treatment area, covered heavy use area, temporary manure storages, CNMP, stream buffers, and access road improvements.



Brian Reaser, left, of Tioga County SWCD presents the AEM road side sign award to Jim Robinson of Robinson Farm

DISTRICT STAFF	
District Manager	Wendy Walsh
Conservation District Technician/Editor	Alex Marks
Administrative Assistant	Lisbeth Monell
Administrative Assistant	Miranda Palmer
Conservation District Technician	Mike Jura
AEM Specialist	Brian Reaser
USC Ag. Coordinator	Emily Dekar
Conservation District Technician	Danielle Singer

Riparian Buffers

Saying that Tioga County experienced a lot of rain this year would be an understatement. On average Tioga County experiences around 40 inches of rainfall per year, this year county residents saw anywhere from 10-20 inches above this average. Under these gray skies, it was challenging to harvest both grass and corn and in some places corn still stands in late December. 2017 even saw precipitation above the average, and it is likely this pattern will continue into the future. One way to alleviate the effects of excess precipitation is to implement a riparian buffer. A riparian buffer is the vegetated land along streams and waterways. These areas mitigate stormwater, reducing erosion throughout the water way. If you have a stream you think could benefit from implementing a buffer contact Laura Grant (grantL@co.tioga.ny.us) with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC). By utilizing the state program Trees for Tributaries the USC is able to provide free plants to residents for streamside plantings, as well as, technical assistance throughout the project. Public and private sites qualify for assistance, although projects led by environmental organizations, or sites located in high-profile, highly visible areas will receive precedence. Since there is greater success in establishment of trees in spring and fall this is when buffers will be installed.



What does the Chesapeake Bay TMDL mean for you?

by Emily Dekar

There has been a lot of talk recently among the agricultural and rural communities regarding the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). You may be thinking, "What does the TMDL really have to do with me?" or "I am a long way from the Chesapeake Bay.". These are all common things to hear from landowners in our area. The Susquehanna River Watershed and Chemung River Watershed form the northern headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay here in New York, with land area across 19 NY counties that eventually drains into the Chesapeake Bay. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is essentially the projected nutrient loads that the Chesapeake Bay can receive from numerous nutrient sources and still attain water quality standards for dissolved oxygen and clarity. Those nutrient sources are broken up into five main source sectors; Agriculture, Wastewater, Urban, Forest and Septic. Each of these sectors in NY are assigned a target reduction goal to meet by 2025. The NY counties within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed are comprised of 69% forestlands, 23% agricultural lands, 3% urban/suburban lands, and 4% open water/waterways. With forestland having a low nutrient runoff rate, the Chesapeake Bay is relying heavily on the agricultural community for a large portion of the nutrient load reductions for NY. However, everyone has a part to play in the Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. Soil and Water Conservation Districts in NY are committed to helping the agricultural community, along with others, in obtaining assistance to improve our local water quality, which will also improve the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. Remember, we all live downstream from something! To find out what you can do to improve your local water quality, and assist in meeting the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, contact the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation District office today.

Machine Rentals

12' Esch No-Till Drill– 100 HP tractor min., \$100 delivery/ Set-up, \$20/ Acre

7' Esch No-Till Drill– 40-50 HP tractor min., \$50 delivery/ set-up, \$15/ Acre

Wheatheart Post Pounder– Tow behind with its own gas motor. \$50 delivery and \$50/ day

Sidewall Tire cutter- \$20/day. New rule states that waste tires must either be cut or drilled holes in if left on property. NYSDEC Part 360

Tree planter- \$25/ day. Can plant between 2,000 to 5,000 trees/day with 4 people. 30 HP tractor minimum

Contact Alex at 607-687-3553 with any questions.

**12' Esch
No-Till
Drill in
Transport
mode**





WINTER 2019

Office Hours: M-F from 8-4:30pm

Phone: 607-687-3553

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Education and Outreach Activities in 2018—over the last year the SWCD has made a conscious effort to reach out to our ag and rural landowners to help them understand the assistance we can offer with natural resources in the county. This year we participated in our annual **Sundaes at the farm** event held at Mead Dairy Farm in South Owego. The Mead family along with local agencies and businesses hosted the gala that drew in over 750 visitors with 675 free ice cream sundaes served. Guests had a choice of a blue berry sauce (berries donated from Gary's Berries), strawberry sauce (berries donated from Terry's Berry Farm), chocolate syrup made by Confection Connection and maple syrup made by Cupola Ridge Farm, in addition to a variety of yummy toppings. We would like to say thank you once again to Mead Farm for hosting the event! We also held an **Open House** at our office in June where attendees could walk around and learn about our programs and see equipment rentals first hand. We participated in the **Tioga County Fair** as well as a lot of other events where we were able to interact with the farmers, teachers, students, rural landowners and many more! **Other events we attended** included Ward and Van Scoy Farmer Appreciation Luncheon, iMap invasive Species workshop, Owego Free Academy Career Day, Tioga Central Harvest Festival, Candor's Daffodil Festival, CCE Grant Workshop for Farmers, Ag Literacy Week, Stream Clean up, Lawtons Farm Days, Owego Rotary presentation, Lions club presentation, and Kiwanis presentation.



Left: Kids petting a calf at Mead Farm during Sundaes at farm

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Board of Directors meet the third Wednesday of the month @ 9:00am