

2010 Annual Report

Stewardship Programs of the Watershed Agricultural Council

Balancing Economic Development with Water Quality

Over the last year and into 2011, the Directors and staff of the Watershed Agricultural Council have been conducting a strategic planning process that will ultimately guide our direction over the next five years. Balancing Economic Development with Water Quality has been the center of our discussion.

Our organization firmly believes in working landscapes. We also take our responsibility of protecting the Water Supply for nine million people in New York City (NYC) very seriously. Over the last 18 years, we have developed staff and collaborative partners with world class skills and experience in the delivery of programs for watershed management. Our collaborative efforts—with funding through the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), U.S. Forest Service and blended funding with our many partners—is a model in many parts of the world and throughout the United States.

The Watershed Agricultural Council holds a dual mission: to address surface-water quality through land conservation while supporting the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in the watershed region. Each of our service areas—Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation Easements, and Farm to Market—are a blend of our mission with the intent to strike a balance between water quality and economic viability.

Science dictates much of our approach to ensure clean surface water. We can utilize “best practices,” tested and proven measures, and implement programs with a strong degree of confidence that those science-based measures will succeed. We can analyze surface water runoff in streams, rivers and reservoirs and determine that certain programs and practices would be more effective. We can then focus those efforts on river basins that have a high degree of contaminants. We know that conserving farm and forest land

prevents parcelization, has a positive impact on the environment, and therefore enhances water quality. By all accounts, our collaborative approach to implement effective programs that address surface-water quality has been a resounding success.

Though science dictates much of our approach to clean surface water, developing effective socio-economic measures that support the viability of agriculture and forestry requires creative and collaborative solutions based on the uniqueness of the watershed, issues of supply and demand, and available products and markets.

Our Council of Directors recognizes that we are at a unique juncture in the evolution of our organization. The support of our Farm to Market program and our *Pure Catskills Guide* and buy local campaign for food and wood is thriving; web technology and our ability to connect our message in a variety of mediums are at an all-time high; and, the interest, as well as connections, in the New York City region for local products has never been greater.

As we finalize our strategic plan in 2011, our organization will look to take an elevated leadership role regionally with partners to support working landscapes. We are excited about the possibilities and mindful of the development of future strategies that strike the balance that we seek.



Craig Cashman
Executive Director

Working Together

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Revenues July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Federal	\$621,256	(5.1%)
Donated Services	\$231,353	(1.9%)
Foundations & Other Grants	\$11,687	(0.1%)
Interest and Gain/Loss of Asset Sale	\$2,478	(0.02%)
NYC DEP	\$11,317,126	(92.9%)
Total	12,178,944*	(100.0%)

*Includes loss on sale of assets \$8,604.00

Expenditures July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Forestry Program	\$1,156,578	(9.5%)
Easement Program	\$3,699,034	(30.4%)
East of Hudson Program (Croton Watershed)	\$784,700	(6.5%)
Agricultural Program		
BMP Implementation & Construction	\$3,965,194	(32.6%)
Status Reviews & Nutrient Management Planning	\$462,143	(3.8%)
Farmer Education & Farm to Market Programs	\$426,485	(3.5%)
Program Administration & Depreciation	\$1,435,142	(11.8%)
Donated Services	\$231,353	(1.9%)
Total	\$12,160,629	(100.0%)

Find more detailed financials, audit report and Form 990 at nycwatershed.org.

Protecting Water Quality



Over the year, the Watershed Agricultural Council connected with people like you in a variety of new ways: in the field with participant farmers, in the forest with international visitors, in the conference room with local students, and over the airwaves with passionate food and fiber business partners.

On the farm, the Watershed Agricultural Program (WAP) implemented 285 BMPs at a total investment value of \$3,559,528. Through a creative financing agreement between NYC DEP WAP and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, 13 farms were awarded an Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program (AWEP) grant and contract totaling \$473,690.

This additional grant funding (slated for another two years) extended the 2010 WAP budget of

\$3.2 million, allowing DEP funding to go even further on watershed farms during a tough economic downturn. These projects kept many people working through the area during the country's hardest recession. The work of staff coupled with third-party contractors put projects into place such as these shown in before-after photos at left, and demonstrate the positive impacts of collaborative financing backing teamwork approaches to whole farm planning.

For more on these and other Agricultural Program projects, review the *2010 Watershed Agricultural Program Annual Report & 2011 Workload* at nycwatershed.org

Finding Solutions

When we meet with a farmer to create a Whole Farm Plan, we really do listen. Sometimes, we troubleshoot a solution that meets the on-farm Best Management Practice (BMP) recommended in the Plan *and* that benefits the farmer's overall business and equipment efficiency. Last year, East of Hudson Program Engineer Andy Cheung PE, created a solar-powered system to address a watering facility issue. Combining the pump, water reservoir tank, pipeline, and hydrants, the team designed and installed a new approach to an old BMP that worked well at a livestock farm located in Westchester County, within the Croton Watershed. Originally, livestock

used a stream running through the property as their water source. Installed fencing prevented the animals from accessing the stream, but the watering system posed the issue. Water troughs were easy enough to install to provide water to livestock in a series of pastures, but transporting water to the troughs posed the difficulty. There was no electric service for pumps near the pastures. An existing water well at the woods' edge, built in the 1950s, was the closest water source. The design included evaluating the feasibility of the existing well, sizing a water reservoir tank for the number of animals requiring water, and analyzing the system hydraulics to properly size

the pump and piping network. The engineer's math proved the well worthy; it calculated to yield approximately 6-7 gallons per minute with a 2-3 gallon recharge rate. A submersible pump was then powered by seven solar panels located in an open field, which pumped water from the well into a 1,000-gallon, pre-cast concrete underground tank. Water was then discharged by gravity to two hydrants via 1,700 linear feet of pipeline. These hydrants provided water to several troughs with water shut-off floats. The installation of this system now allows the landowner to rotationally graze livestock and utilize limited pasture more efficiently.

At this 115-acre livestock, hay and vegetable operation in Westchester County, beef cattle now have an alternative source of water, supplied by an alternative source of energy—note solar panels in the background.



Saving Farm and Forest Lands

251-acre farm in Sullivan County protects water quality of nearby Rondout Reservoir

As of December 31, 2010, the Council's Conservation Easement Portfolio consisted of 105 easements, covering 19,639 acres (103 purchased easements covering 18,596 acre and 2 donated easements covering 1,043 acres). Additionally in 2010, the Council's staff signed 18 purchase and sales contracts on a total of 3,021 acres and closed on 9 easements covering 1,499 acres. Furthermore, the council's staff developed land plans and ordered appraisals for approximately 27 easements in 2010.

With funding from DEP, the Council has invested approximately \$39 million in the Easement Program's efforts to protect farmland as of December 31, 2010, preserving land for future farmers, protecting our watershed and providing space for our regional food supply to grow. The Easement Program, initially prescribed within the 1997 New York City Watershed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) as part of the City's Land Acquisition Program (LAP) to protect water quality, is projected to spend \$47 million by September

2012 in support of the City's efforts to protect watershed lands. Conserving farmlands within the NYC watershed is a critical component of DEP's Land Acquisition Program because watershed farms are typically comprised of relatively large, contiguous land holdings with extensive road frontage and valuable water resources.

As one of New York State's largest land trusts, the Council balances the need to conserve and protect farmland with the need to protect water quality for NY City residents. The Council firmly believes in working landscapes. We also take our responsibility of protecting the water supply for nine million people in New York City very seriously. The protection of farmland and water resources is a delicate balance for the organization; however, we see supporting agriculture as a viable economic lifestyle in the watershed.

Two Easement Program Specialists monitor properties twice annually and work with landowners to ensure that they understand the terms and conditions of their

conservation easements. They also work one-on-one with property owners to execute Reserved Rights requests and approvals through the Easement Committee. Along with annual ground visits, the Council conducts yearly aerial monitoring of eased properties. During 2010, the Council conducted ground and air monitoring on 111 properties covering roughly 18,400 acres.

During these visits, staff often walk the property together with the landowner and photograph beautiful landscapes such as these throughout the year. Their photos capture the untold reasons why the Council remains a firm supporter of farm and forest land protection and the businesses that grow from available working landscapes and accessible natural resources.



Tir'na Nog, an 80-acre farm raising sheep and pigs in Hamden, Delaware County



Why Farmland Protection?

According to American Farmland Trust's publication, "Planning for Agriculture in New York", we are losing 9,000 acres of agricultural land a year. Multiply that over a decade or more and you realize the devastating effect that landloss has, not only on the farming sector, but on the rural communities where they are located. As we connect the dots, we see a mural develop containing food safety, food security and food independence issues.

We do live in a global economy as is evident by the abundance and availability of food products from all over the nation and the world. But we must maintain a reasonable amount of independence by maintaining our connections to regionally grown and marketed food products. That means supporting local efforts on behalf of farmers including farmland protection.

We are a farm family. My wife and I hope to pass this farm onto our children, and they on to theirs, for future generations. It just makes sense for us to support these same efforts on behalf of our family, those who came before us, and those coming along after we leave this farm.

*Marilyn & Fred Huneke
Thorn Ridge Farm, Delhi, Delaware County
Supporting the Easement Stewardship Fund
since 2007*

In 2010, 10 others joined Fred and Marilyn by collectively making cash donations of \$26,310.66 to the Conservation Easement Stewardship Fund. The Fund currently holds \$587,049.35, of which \$356,000 represents DEP contributions. A special thanks to Heidi Dolnick, Kenneth Smith, Fred and Marilyn Huneke, Tara and John Collins, John and Sally Fairbairn, Maureen Holderith, NYC DEP, Linda Reed, David Allen, and Marc Neves who believed in watershed farmland protection in 2010. You too can help protect farm and forest lands. Simply click on the Donate Water Drop on our homepage, nycwatershed.org

The Forestry Dinner and Silent Auction raised \$5,220 thanks to

the generosity of the businesses who donated products to the silent auction, the 200+ guests who tried their luck in the chainsaw raffle, and the roomful of bidders who made competitive challenges on over 40 items: Diane Galusha, Jake Rosa, Allen Young, Edna Boroden, Jim & Margaret Hilson, Heather Hilson, Tara Collins, Ron Beam, Catskill Forest Association, Art Reed, Terry Leonard, Dan Palm, Paul & Leslie Deysenroth, Karl VonBerg, Ian Lamont, Dave McFarland, Eric Dahlberg, Ken Smith, Frost Valley YMCA, Tom Pavlesich, Michael DiBenedetto, John and Beth Verhoeven, Randy and Lucci Kelly, Heather Gunshor, Amber Birdsall, Ed Shaw, Glen and Elaine Faulkner,

Ben Mack, Charles Johnston, Calicoon Cooperative, Fred Huneke, Eric Rasmussen, David Emerson, Tom Hutson, Harris Beach, Jessica Olenych, Karl Connell, Barbara Howard, Bethia Waterman, John Riedl, Stephen Robin, Farm Credit East and Van Peters. If we missed someone, please forgive us and let us know so we can mention you

in our next newsletter. Contact us with corrections by calling (607) 865-7790 or by emailing communications@nycwatershed.org.

For a complete list of donors, supporters, and committee members, visit the 2010 Online Annual Report Supplement at nycwatershed.org

Building Better Businesses

practice. Thank you for letting us be part of something so important and inspiring. We feel a greater connection to the local and global community as a result."



DEVIN AND MARYBETH MILLS
PEEKAMOOSSE RESTAURANT AND TAP ROOM,
BIG INDIAN

As I stepped off the bus, the realization sank in – what an immense undertaking to nurture and coordinate such an event. People the world over had responded, showing up, standing together in common-unity for a positive declaration of good, clean and fair food. Delegates had journeyed long and far, proudly representing their regions and sharing their wares at this global, yet intimate convergence. It is a powerful thing to witness, and recognize, the potential of looking forward together in this good way. Living on the 'frontier' of rural New York has an element of isolation, so the sheer numbers of Terra Madre is a memory that will sustain me."

KENDAL CRAIG – MASONVILLE
GENERAL STORE, MASONVILLE

School and spent the day in their edible schoolyard. Each grade harvested crops for us to cook. The children washed their bounty and Devin prepared salads, grilled vegetables, and soups for the children to sample. Seeing the kids try new things, identifying plants grown abundantly in our area, picking fresh vegetables with their own hands were sights to see. What a surprise to witness children excited about a kale salad—not often considered an exciting vegetable—from the under-10 crowd.

"We established a working relationship with Pure Catskills member, Neversink Farm. This local farmer is well-versed in the governmental regulations of certified organic agriculture. They're also very aware of popular marketing ploys used to confuse the public with terms like "farm fresh" and "all-natural." We're starting a Farm to Fork lecture/dinner series with Neversink, hopefully in Spring 2011. We hope to raise awareness of the importance of supporting a local agricultural economy. We can begin to change our local landscape of thought and

Every other year, the Council sends a delegation of farm and food producers to Terra Madre, an international food conference organized by Slow Food. Through the Council's Farm to Market Program, six Pure Catskills members represented our region: Upon their return, the delegates shared their post-trip perspectives and photos. (Find more details in Pure Catskills blog postings dated October 18 and December 9.)

"Since we've been back, Devin and I visited Phoenicia Elementary

"A special encounter with young American farmers and old farmers (like me!) was organized by Slow Food USA. Before 100 new farmers, 12 of us old timers from all over the USA described our farms, what worked and what did not. I was the only farmer that had expanded into on-farm renewable energy systems. My suggestion to the new farmers was to make personal pleasure and play a regular part of their farm work day."

SONIA HEDLUND – APPLE POND
FARM, CALICOON CENTER



Sharing Our Successes

Under Agriculture Teacher Tina Miner-James, the Walton High School (WHS) Ag Science and Ag Mechanics classes visited several watershed farm businesses as part of a Catskill Watershed Corp. Farm to School grant, which encouraged the school group to conduct farm research trips. Thirty-two students visited Maple Shade Farm with Pure Catskills members Jay and Abby Wilson and Bear Farm with owner Gordy Fletcher. Both farms hold WAP whole farms plan and are actively farming in the Walton area. The WHS Ag Science and Ag Mechanics Classes then visited the Watershed Agricultural Council offices in late December to find out more about the jobs and programs offered through the watershed management industry. Students heard from a variety of WAP personnel including whole farm planners, interns, managers and engineers.

The Council also hosted dozens of watershed and model forest tours in 2010. Nearly 2,000 people visited watershed farms and forests, among them 75 foresters from India sponsored by the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, 30 first-year graduate students from Bard College; 30 World Bank-Latin



Austin Phoenix, a Walton High School freshman attending the field trip wrote in his final essay: "I attained knowledge of engineering processes and opportunities our watershed offers to local farmers. This trip opened my eyes to new career opportunities related to agriculture that I had never thought of before. I learned how important it is to keep our water clean not only for ourselves, but the people who live in New York City and everywhere in between."

America/Caribbean water specialists; 296 students through Green Connections, 1,037 others through the Council's Forestry Bus Tour Grant Program. Thanks to the collaborative contributions of DEP, Cornell Cooperative Extension, County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Frost Valley YMCA, SUNY-ESF and Council staff, groups were exposed to over a dozen different educational venues including Frost Valley YMCA Model Forest (Denning), The Peekamoose Restaurant (Big Indian), River Haven Farm (DeLancey), Thunder View Farm (Grahamsville), Liddle Farm (Halcottsville), Buehl Farm (Gilboa) and Manhattan Country School (Roxbury).



During a Frost Valley model forest tour, Forester Tom Foulkrod explained to 20 Mongolian parliamentary officials the reasons why forest management planning is vital to healthy woodlands, productive local economies and enhanced water quality.



Thank you so very much for the incredible hospitality with which you received our group. The team was very much inspired by what we saw in New York with the WAC tour being the highlight of a fabulous trip. The work you all are doing there is truly world-class, both on the farm and in the forest.

—ANN JEANNETTE GLAUBER, THE WORLD BANK, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



In August, newly-appointed DEP Commissioner Cas Holloway (far right) wanted to see the Council's water quality work first hand. Holloway met with farmer Joe Brannigan (far left) for a one-on-one to discuss how the Watershed Agricultural Program worked for him, his family and dairy business. Graydon Dutcher (Delaware County Soil & Water Conservation District) and Council Executive Director Craig Cashman (both center) escorted Holloway and other City representatives on this personalized farm tour.

Agricultural Program

- Achieved the FAD milestone of meeting substantially implemented status on 90% of large farms in the watershed
- Placed 285 Best Management Practices on over 100 farms in 2010
- Designed to date 328 Whole Farm Plans and 273 Nutrient Management Plans for individual farm businesses
- Enrolled 42.2 acres in riparian forest buffers through the USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program in 2010
- Enrolled 10 new small farms in the Catskill/Delaware Watershed with Whole Farm Plans in 2010
- Administered/awarded 10 new 3-year AWEF Nutrient Management Credit contracts totaling \$121,182
- Administered/awarded 3 new AWEF structural BMP participant contracts totaling \$352,508
- Educated 626 farmers through 26 educational programs in 2010
- Conducted status reviews on all active participating farms

Easement Program

- Signed to contract 3,021 acres of farmland through 18 purchase contracts for conservation easements
- Infused \$3.99 million into the regional economy through easement purchases and easement-related services from local business providers

East of Hudson Program

- Enrolled 6 new Croton Watershed farms with Whole Farm Plans
- Placed 40 BMPs totaling \$400,000 on Croton Watershed farms in 2010
- Allocated \$784,700 to Croton Watershed projects with the help of private landowners and third-party service providers
- Continued collaboration on two conservation easements

Forestry Program

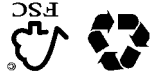
- Developed/updated 76 forest management plans encompassing 10,000+ acres
- Stabilized 52+ miles of skid roads and trails that reduced soil erosion
- Developed 15 stream crossing plans for active logging jobs
- Developed 56 forest stewardship projects on 580 acres
- Educated 10 rural/10 urban teachers in watershed curriculum
- Educated 296 students in 10 classrooms through the Green Connections Program
- Brought 1,037 people from 20 City organizations upstate to share the watershed experience
- Trained 162 forest professionals through 12 workshops on safety, forest ecology and water quality
- Hosted 44 model forest educational events with stewardship partners
- Provided 6 regional businesses with ways to save \$700,000 in annual energy expenditures
- Promoted 75 members through the Catskill WoodNet/Pure Catskills branding campaign

Farm to Market Program

- Promoted 223 farm and food businesses in the PURE CATSKILLS GUIDE TO FARM FRESH PRODUCTS
- Connected 135 buyers and sellers through the regional Farm to Market Conference
- Awarded \$50,000 to Pure Catskills members to improve/expand their agricultural businesses through Agricultural Business Development Grants
- Awarded \$3,500 in educational scholarships to 15 farmers to acquire knowledge and stimulate business growth

For more details and narratives on program accomplishments, visit the Council's 2010 Online Annual Report Supplement at nycwatershed.org.

2010 Annual Report is a publication of the Watershed Agricultural Council, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to support the economic viability of agriculture and forestry through the protection of water quality and the promotion of land conservation in the New York City Watershed region. The Council is funded by New York City Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service and other sources. The WAC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. This issue is printed on 100% post-consumer paper, certified Ecologo, Processed Chlorine Free, FSC Recycled and manufactured by Cascades using biogas energy.



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