



Our Mission:

To promote the economic viability of agriculture and forestry, the protection of water quality, and the conservation of working landscapes through strong local leadership and sustainable public-private partnerships.

Thank you to our collaborative partners: Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County, United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service and the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

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Celebrating our Participants and our Region



alancing economic viability and water quality truly is the ultimate challenge, and something we strive for in the work that we do every day. The watershed region is populated with generations of hard working families, first and foremost. Making a living off the land through farming, forestry and associated businesses is critical to the local economy. Implementing conservation and water quality

initiatives on the land starts with respecting what people value the most and building trusting relationships with land owners to jointly become good environmental stewards.

A few years ago we showcased our Conservation Footprint, the environmental impact that the Watershed Agricultural Council has had on the land base throughout the New York City Watershed. The boundaries of the 2,000 square mile watershed are where we focus the majority of our environmental programs. However, the economic region extends beyond the topography of the watershed throughout each of the counties we serve and into surrounding counties where our collective economic impact has been significant since our inception, we are equally proud to spotlight the impact with the economy of the region.

"Watershed Proud" is about recognizing the commitment of participants, stakeholders and partners past, present and future. It is also about the Watershed Agricultural Council's commitment to fulfill our mission. Next year marks our 25th anniversary, and we look forward to highlighting the collective efforts of countless individuals that have been the keys to our success.

-Craig Cashman, Executive Director



ur partnership with DEP is based on protecting water quality and ensuring agricultural waste is kept out of streams, but our true task is keeping farmers on farmland for as long as they want to be there and maintaining productive forestland. WAC prides itself on working hand-in-hand with our farming community. Our planners, educators and technicians listen to participants and try to solve

problems. Whether it's a farmer that wants to raise grass-finished beef, a dairy farmer wanting to experiment with making and marketing cheese, another farmer wants to see his farm remain as farmland after he retires, or a forestland owner needs assistance to comply with the requirements of 480a. We help with these things and much more to support this community while protecting water quality at the same time. It's our water in our neighborhoods and communities that is sent downstream to NYC's nine million people.

Perhaps a more subtle, but also significant, achievement of WAC over its tenure has been to stabilize the rural landscape. The tapestry of hazy mountains, fields, forests, cows on pasture, gurgling brooks, and small towns draws people to our region. This could not continue without a healthy working landscape. Those of us who work this land know we could go somewhere else where the soils are better, the hills not as steep, and the fields nearly stone-less, but we stay here because this is our community. This way of life is anchored in that working landscape, kept green with a judicious application of our favorite fertilizer. We'll continue to work together with our neighbors to be sure we all thrive. We care, and we are Watershed Proud.

-Sally Fairbairn, Council Chair



290

Active West of Hudson Farms 127

Farms
enrolled
in Nutrient
Management
Credit

49

Farms
Enrolled in
Precision
Feed
Management

26

NRCS Approved
Feeding Plans

92%

Large Farm
Participation

153,000

Acres of Farm Land



Impacting Local Farm Communities and Improving Water Quality

The Watershed Agricultural Program (WAP) had another great year of implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) that addressed multiple resource concerns on participant farms. From covered barnyards to manure storage systems, exclusion fencing to cover crops and nutrient management and precision feed management plans, BMPs ranged from structural to non-structural and are tailored for each individual farm operation. The planners and technicians in the Agricultural Program work as a team with partners from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, Delaware County Soil and Water. NRCS and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA).

An example of a structural BMP that was implemented this year was at the residence of Jim and Karen Householder,

an equestrian facility in Grand Gorge, NY. A covered feeding area with an attached manure stacking area that was constructed to allow the manure and feed waste to be collected and stored under dry conditions for spreading in accordance with the farm's nutrient management plan. The farm has 30+ horses and had an existing Heavy Use Area Pad and is adjacent to the Bear Kill (stream), which flows into the Schoharie Reservoir.

The Nutrient Management Credit (NMC) program currently has 129 participants. With DEP funding, NMC will be expanding to allow all eligible participants into the program. This program is recognized as a great benefit to water quality by spreading manure nutrients to fields that need them the most and increasing the economic viability of participating farms. When farms spread according to their plan they earn credits, which in turn allows them to purchase needed manure handling equipment for their operation. NMC has been instrumental in rewarding farmers for being land stewards and partnering for the benefit of water quality.

"As stewards of the land we always try to do the best we can to provide a good environment for ourselves and anybody around us. Everybody has to have good quality of water and we just try to do our part."

-DAVE HOLLEY, HOLLEY-HILL FARM

Lastly in 2017, the WAP in coordination with the FSA identified and agreed to fund 84 conservation practices worth \$274,395 for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). These projects include exclusion fencing, water crossings and watering systems. CREP is a program that benefits a wide range of farm operations and gives the landowner a rental payment for excluding animals from water courses. WAC is proud to help our participants take advantage of this program by providing funding for the BMPs needed to implement these conservation practices.

"The project is amazing in so many ways. The technical assistance and contractors that built our project were constantly concerned with our needs. The quality of construction is phenomenal, the amount of light coming in through the new clear panels is great for the animals. We can now feed in a clean area, and the paddock manure can be cleaned much easier. We no longer have to haul water with the new troughs. We have absolutely nothing to complain about, very happy!"

-Jim & Karen Householder, Grand Gorge, NY

"I started out wary of the program, but through working with the staff I became confident with what they wanted to do on my farm. WAC has been such a help for me and have captured my faith in the organization. Everyone knows the farmers and care about their animals, I really appreciate the passion of the employees, it's a joy to work with them."

-ERNIE SUTTON, GILBOA, NY











Helping Landowners and Loggers Steward the Land

The Watershed Forest Management Plan (WFMP) Program helps landowners address the greatest threat to forestland in the Watershed-high property taxes. We do this by providing technical support and financial incentives to help landowners enroll their forestland in New York's forest tax abatement program, 480a. In 2017, the WFMP Program helped landowners enroll 750 acres and re-enroll 7,670 acres in 480a.

Since 1996, WAC has help 290 Watershed forest landowners enroll and re-enroll 48,700 acres of forestland in 480a.

The Best Management Practice (BMP) Program provides money, materials and technical support to help loggers plan and apply water quality Best Management Practices. The BMP Program stabilized more than 104 miles of logging roads this year. To date more than 670 miles of logging roads have been stabilized through the BMP Program.

The Management Assistance Program (MAP) provides money and technical support to help forest landowners plan and apply forest stewardship practices.

MAP projects range from Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) to the control of invasive plants. This year, MAP encouraged the

The BMP Program is great because it paid me to do something I couldn't afford to do otherwise."

-LOGGER, DELAWARE COUNTY, NY

completion of 52 forest stewardship projects effecting more than 350 acres of Watershed forest. Since its inception in 2005, MAP has funded over 450 forest stewardship projects, impacting 4,700 acres of watershed forest.

"Borrowing the 30-foot bridge saved me at least a couple of thousand dollars and a ton of time."

-Logger, Sullivan County, NY

"This training saves lives. Awesome. Training I would do again. Been cutting for some time and have never heard or seen this method. Will use it going forward. Nice job, well taught!"

-Logger at Trained Logger Certified Event











n 2017 there were numerous events in the NYC Watershed that the Watershed Agricultural Council hosted, participated in or sponsored. Here are a few highlights:

AG TOUR

The annual Watershed Agricultural Program Tour was once again a success!



The 2017 Ag Tour had 65 attendees from agencies including the Watershed Agricultural Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County, Watershed Affairs, Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Health, Environmental Protection Agency, Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the United States Department of Agriculture. Three farms were visited including the Mark MacGibbon beef operation in Walton, Springdale Farm, a dairy in Hamden and Lucky Dog Farm, an organic vegetable farm in Hamden.

MEREDITH DAIRY FEST

The Dairy Fest came back this year after a long hiatus. It was a great event with multiple Pure Catskills members and WAC participants present. WAC sponsored this

event in an effort to support dairy and awareness in the region. WAC and Pure Catskills both tabled for the weekend. The event was held June 17 & 18 in Meridale, NY.

COW TO CAFETERIA

An initiative of Farm Catskills, the Cow to Cafeteria program connects schools to local farmers who provide ground beef for school lunches. The program educates kids about where their food comes from while providing nutritious meals. This year WAC sponsored the Cow to Cafeteria Program and helped bring local beef into South Kortright Central School, Stamford Central School and Andes Central School. All the beef was purchased from WAC participant farms.

JUNE 17 - 18

DELAWARE COUNTY FAIR

WAC and DEP partnered once again at the 130th Delaware County Fair in Walton, NY held August 14–19. A shared tent featured all of WAC's programs and included soil health demonstrations, feed samples, forage analysis and cheese tastings from two Pure Catskills members Bovina Valley Farms/Cowbella and Byebrook Farm.

On various days the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Greene County Master Forest Owners, Catskill Watershed Corporation and MyWoodlot shared the tent to educate a larger demographic.







FARMER EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

WAC partners with CCE of Delaware County to deliver over 30 agricultural education events a year. On October 10th a Farm Demo Day was held at Del-Rose farm with an attendance of 48 people. Three demonstrations were held that day including: a demonstration of a no-till drill by Eklund Farm Machinery and AGCO, a manure tanker demonstration by Marc Johnson and Ed Weber that spread 8,500 gallons in two minutes and included a transfer truck that diminished over the road transportation time and soil compaction,

and a plot of perennial forage varieties and species mixtures that were established by CCE on the property and were toured by attendees with Harold Schrock and Mark MacGibbon guiding participants. This is just one example of a farmer educational event offered in the NYC Watershed.

WATERSHED TOURS

Each year WAC receives requests from both domestic and international groups to tour the NYC Watershed. This year WAC hosted various groups including Forest Delegates from India through SUNY ESF,

> Diplomats from the United Nations, DEP staff, FAD Regulators, students and professors from the Bard Center for Environmental Policy and a team from the Environmental Defense Fund. Tours spanned farms and

offices both in the West of Hudson and East of Hudson region.

TASTE OF THE CATSKILLS

The Taste of the Catskills Event was held at Maple Shade Farm in Delhi, NY October 7 & 8. Pure Catskills (PC) was a main sponsor and had a tent with 22 PC members tabling inside. The event featured local food and farm and forest producers from around the region.

NYS WOODSMEN'S FIELD DAYS IN BOONVILLE

WAC's Forestry Program has had a booth at this event every year since 2007. This lumberjack festival is the biggest of its kind in New York, and the Forestry Program uses the event to promote Trained Logger Certification (TLC). The cornerstone of TLC training is the Game of Logging class, which the Forestry Program offers twice a year. This workshop teaches loggers safe felling techniques and then scores them in a friendly competition. Loggers who complete this class can go on to compete at the

Game of Logging competition at the Woodsmen's Field Days, which is sponsored in part by the Forestry Program.















Living and Working in the NYC Watershed



"The Watershed
Agricultural Council
benefits farms in
many different ways,
but I am partial to the
Ag program since
I work in it. Aside

from building structures, we are able to give management support to farms on a variety of topics such as grazing, manure and crop management, and precision feeding, which will hopefully make the farms more money. The best part about the WAC is that we are helping out our farmers while also impacting water quality!"

-Shylabeth Parenteau, Precision Feed Management Planner, DeLancey, NY



"WAC is a great resource to the region's farming community. As a life-long Delaware County resident, I see the direct impact

we have made to the local farm and forest landowners. From helping family farms remain viable to protecting the working landscapes, WAC cares about the future of the NYC Watershed and its residents. Our staff is dedicated to not only just agriculture and forestry, but to the region and community as a whole."

-Heather Magnan, Communications Director,

East Meredith, NY



"I think that logging in general is misunderstood. It's often viewed in a negative way when in fact good logging practices

can be very beneficial to the environment, the landowner and the economy. WAC's Forestry program is educating landowners in this region about such benefits, therefore helping them to make good management decisions when it comes to their woodlots."

-Heather Hilson, Forestry Outreach Specialist, Delhi, NY



"I feel so fortunate and proud to work for the Watershed Ag. Program. As a Downsville native, I spent many summers floating down

the East Branch of the Delaware River. I always recognized how clean the water was, but it was only after I started working with WAC that I truly valued all that goes into ensuring that higher level of water quality protection. I appreciate the relationship our program has with participants. WAC helps our farmers become better stewards of their land. Whether it's implementing structural BMPs, or improving on existing management practices, WAC works with farms to help them meet quality standards, while improving their bottom line as well."

-Kari Sheridan, Nutrient Management Planner, Oxford, NY



"My work is all about connections—between land, water, people and generations. I am honored to work with teachers who are so passionate about

connecting their students to the forests, streams, farms and communities that keep them alive every day. Helping young people—both upstate and downstate—discover their personal connection to the watershed enriches lives and advances our conservation work into the future."

-Tyler Van Fleet, Forestry Program Watershed Educator, Astoria, NY



"Working for the Watershed Agricultural Council for almost two decades, I have seen the long-term value of the Watershed Agricultural

Program to our voluntary participant pool (base). This watershed protection program has partnered with producers to implement Whole Farm Plans to protect the surface drinking system for our downstate neighbors. I am still amazed at the amount of time and commitment that our ever-transitioning participants are willing to invest to implement, operate and maintain structural and management Best Management Practices identified together as part of their Whole Farm Plans."

-Brian LaTourette, Program Operations
Coordinator, Downsville, NY



"I am proud to be an advocate for farmers and water quality. As a result of the voluntary efforts of farmers and the work that WAC does, the

threat of regulation has been alleviated for the last 20+ years on our communities. It has also provided an opportunity for us to be an economic driver not only for farms, but the local contractor base and employment opportunities. I feel blessed to have a job where I grew up and to be a part of a program that benefits the environment and local people."

> -Nate Townsend, Whole Farm Planning Coordinator, Bainbridge, NY



"One of the highlights of my job is meeting with landowners, and hearing their stories and associated rationales for pursuing a conservation easement. Whether

it be a farmer whose family has worked the same ground for six-generations or an individual whose forests provide recreation, income, and often-needed solitude, it is my observation, that regardless of background, those whom live and work in the watershed understand and value our connection to the land. Conservation easements placed on watershed farms and forests are one way to ensure that legacy is protected for future generations. To know my work with WAC's Easement Program is a small piece of preserving this area's rural heritage makes me 'Watershed Proud.'"

-Serena Orleski, Land Conservation Acquisition Specialist, Hamden, NY



Protecting Farm and Forest Land

The Conservation Easement Program had another successful year in 2017. In its 16th year of land conservation in the NYC Watershed, WAC now manages a portfolio of 27,500 acres that are protected from development and will remain a part of the working farm and forest landscape. By year's end, the Easement Program will have closed on nine agricultural properties totaling 1,579 acres and looks to enter into contract with another eight properties (totaling 2,700 acres), including several for the Forest Conservation Easement Program.

The Forest Conservation Easement Program was a pilot program in 2015. After one year of planning, and another year for solicitations, the first properties are now in contract. "Working with our local forest owners is a win-win for local communities and the water quality, of which nine million plus people depend on downstream,"

stated Easement Program Director Ryan Naatz. "Our easements prevent the subdivision and development of working forest lands, keep lands on the local tax rolls, and promote commercial timber production and bluestone mining which are two important industries for our local economies," he further explains.

The first success story of the new

"Partnering with the Council just made sense for our family." -NILS MORGAN

program is exemplified by the forest lands owned by the Morgan family in the Town of Walton. Nils Morgan, along with his family, have owned the land since 1968 when his parents purchased it as a former dairy operation. Over the past 50 years they have planted thousands of trees, built ponds in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and continue to work with local foresters,

loggers, quarrymen and neighbors as they manage the land for timber, bluestone, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreation.

"Partnering with the Council just made sense for our family," Morgan declared. "The goals of WAC and the Forest Conservation Easement Program closely align with our family's goals. The easement allows us to continue to use the land as it has been for generations, producing timber and bluestone, while at the same time preventing the excessive development of the forest. Our partnership with the Council has helped us create a sustainable plan for the next generation to continue to work and enjoy the property."

WAC looks forward to growing the success of the new Forest Conservation Easement Program and the continued success of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, connecting with local landowners to preserve lands vital to local economies and water quality for those who depend on it downstream.

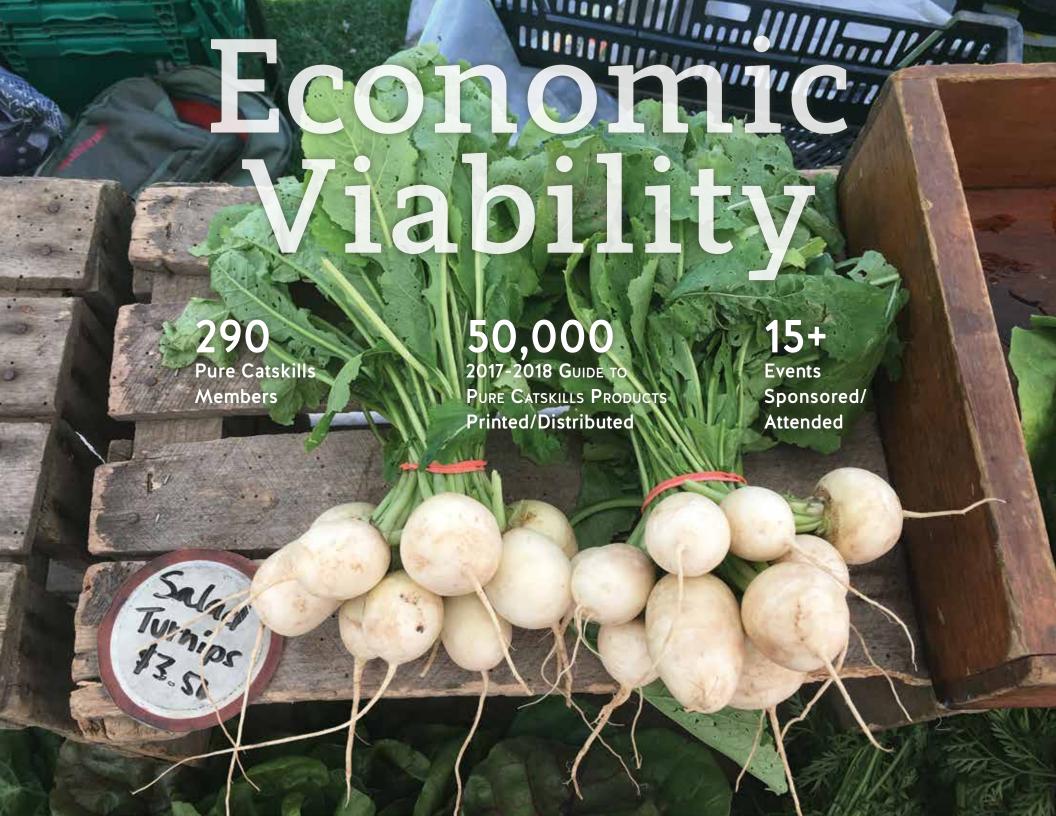
"WAC has been great! You can do pretty much anything except parcelize the land and build in areas not designated... People don't realize how good the programs are here, the benefits there are for farmers, or how beautiful it is."

-Judith Tait and Joan Khouzam-Roberts









Highlighting our **Local Producers**

This year, the Economic Viability Program and Pure Catskills is proud to say we are continuing to highlight not just the pristine working environment of the Watershed, but also showcasing the Catskill region as a prospering Foodshed. We achieved this by attending/sponsoring over 15 events, sharing information on our Pure Catskills social media platforms, financially supporting the Lucky Dog Local Food Hub, cultivating partnerships with other likeminded organizations, and promoting our Pure Catskills members daily.

The Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) developed Pure Catskills, a regional buy local campaign, to improve the economic viability of the local community, build up our Foodshed, sustain working landscapes and preserve water quality in the NYC Watershed region because it all runs hand-in-hand. The mission is simple, buy from local farmers, foresters and businesses to support the local economy which preserves the rural Catskills way of life.

Showcasing the unique partnerships within our Foodshed between the farmers, growers and producers in the Catskills, and the chefs who use their products was a major focus of our branding efforts. The 72 pages of the 2017-2018 Guide to Pure Catskills Products show how deeply rooted the local food movement is in this region. It is a part of our livelihood, our everyday routine, and to put it simply—it's our lifestyle.

With each passing year we are proud to be a part of a flourishing buy local movement. As 2017 comes to a close, we are excited to see what is in store for next year!

"We have been proud member of Pure Catskills for many yearsand often use their directory as our go-to site for finding new ingredient sources for our menu."

-PEEKAMOOSE RESTAURANT & TAP ROOM

"Being a member of Pure Catskills has given us the needed connections to meet our standard of quality and support other resident entrepreneurs. "

-PICKLED OWL

"It's so helpful for us to have resources like Pure Catskills to promote the area, creating unity. We were drawn to the Catskill region due to its clean air and water, protected by the passion of our local community. We buy from many farms, and are proud to have our own chickens for eggs and a large garden for much of our produce."

-Rolling River Café, Gallery & Inn







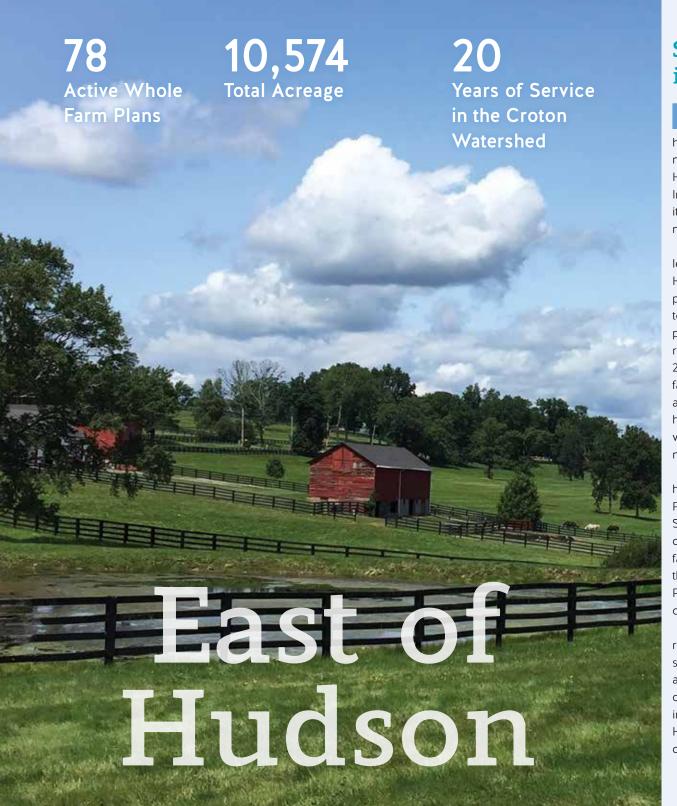












Supporting Agriculture in the Croton Watershed

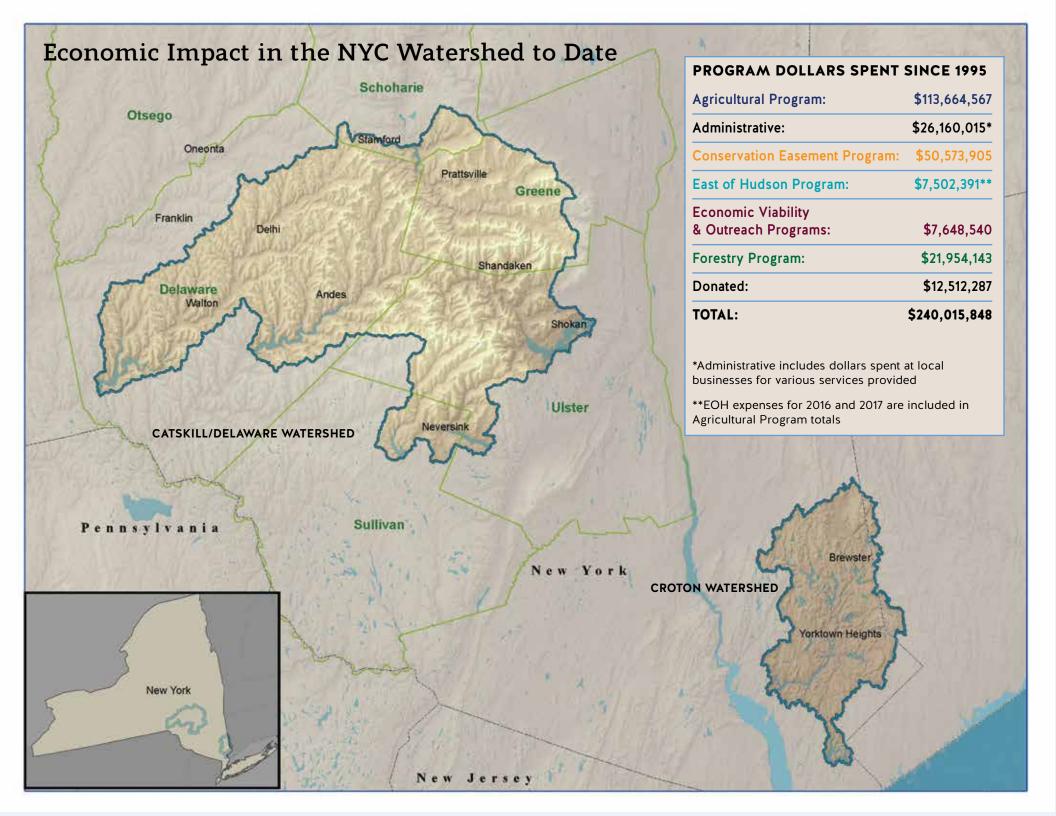
reserving working landscapes and farmland presents a unique challenge in the East of Hudson Watershed. The area has population density of more than 1,000 people per square mile and is subject to intense development pressure. The East of Hudson Program works with 78 farms and protects 10,574 acres. In addition to safeguarding water quality, EOH works closely with its farm partners to provide technical assistance, improve farm management and preserve farms in the Watershed.

Little Creek Farm in North Salem, NY is one of the nation's leading alpaca and fiber producers. The farm is home to 300 Huacaya alpaca and is the annual host of the Parade of Champions, America's Premier Alpaca Seedstock Auction. In addition to Little Creek's commitment to breeding top quality animals and promoting the alpaca industry, the farm is dedicated to environmental conservation and preserving working landscapes. In 2017, Little Creek acquired 260 acres of fallow land, allowing the farm to increase the herd, construct additional animal housing and increase grazing. Five Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been implemented at Little Creek Farm, and staff will be working with the farm to develop prescribed grazing and nutrient management plans.

The East of Hudson Program is pleased to welcome Tomahawk Farm as the newest member of the Watershed Agricultural Program. Tomahawk is a small family-run horse farm located in Somers, NY. The farm provides riding lessons, horse boarding, a children's summer camp and a therapeutic riding program. The farm also operates a Mustang rescue and rehabilitation program through the Bureau of Land Management. The East of Hudson Program will be implementing 11 BMPs to improve water quality on the farm in the upcoming year.

Both new and established participants in the East of Hudson region are vital to supporting agriculture in the Croton Watershed. Voluntary participation and a shared conservation ethic are key in making the program a success. 2017 marked the East of Hudson Program's 20th year. In November participants were invited to celebrate this milestone at Wilkins Farm in Yorktown Heights, NY, as we celebrated a partnership we hope will continue for years to come.

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Farmland, clean water and a way of life. All three are dependent on a thriving agricultural community that is threatened by rising land prices and development. Safeguard these irreplaceable resources—our rural landscape and its family farms—by protecting regional farmlands and working landscapes through this Fund.

Advocate: \$35

Supporter: \$50

Investor: \$100

Friend of the Watershed: \$250

• Sponsor: \$500

• Benefactor: \$1,000

• Steward: \$2,500

Conserver: \$5,000

• Guardian: \$10,000

nycwatershed.org/donate









