

# The Watershed Agricultural Council's Economic Impact in Delaware County



**The Watershed Agricultural Council's 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.

The Watershed Agricultural Council was founded in 1993 as a way to keep farmer-led local control in the region as the threat of strong regulations to upstate watershed communities were presented in 1990. Farmers in the region knew that well-managed farms are a preferred land use for water-quality over denser, residential septic subdivision. Determined to keep both the regional landscape and their way of life, collaboration between farmers and regulators was a necessity. By 1992, after a year of planning and collaboration, Phase I of the Watershed Agricultural Program began with ten pilot farms located throughout the Catskill/Delaware Watershed. In 1993, partners created the Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) to administer the voluntary, incentive-based Agricultural Program.

As the Council expanded, other programs were added to address additional resource concerns. In 1996, the Forestry Program was established to educate and train foresters and loggers in preventing non-point source pollution. In 1998, the Conservation Easements program was added as another tool for farm preservation in the region. The Outreach and Economic Viability Programs began in 1996, and the Pure Catskill's Buy-Local campaign debuted in 2004. Each of WAC's four programs have made a significant financial impact not just in the Catskill/Delaware Watershed as a whole, but specifically in Delaware County.

WAC is funded by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service and other sources. Since inception WAC has received a total of \$265 million in funding.

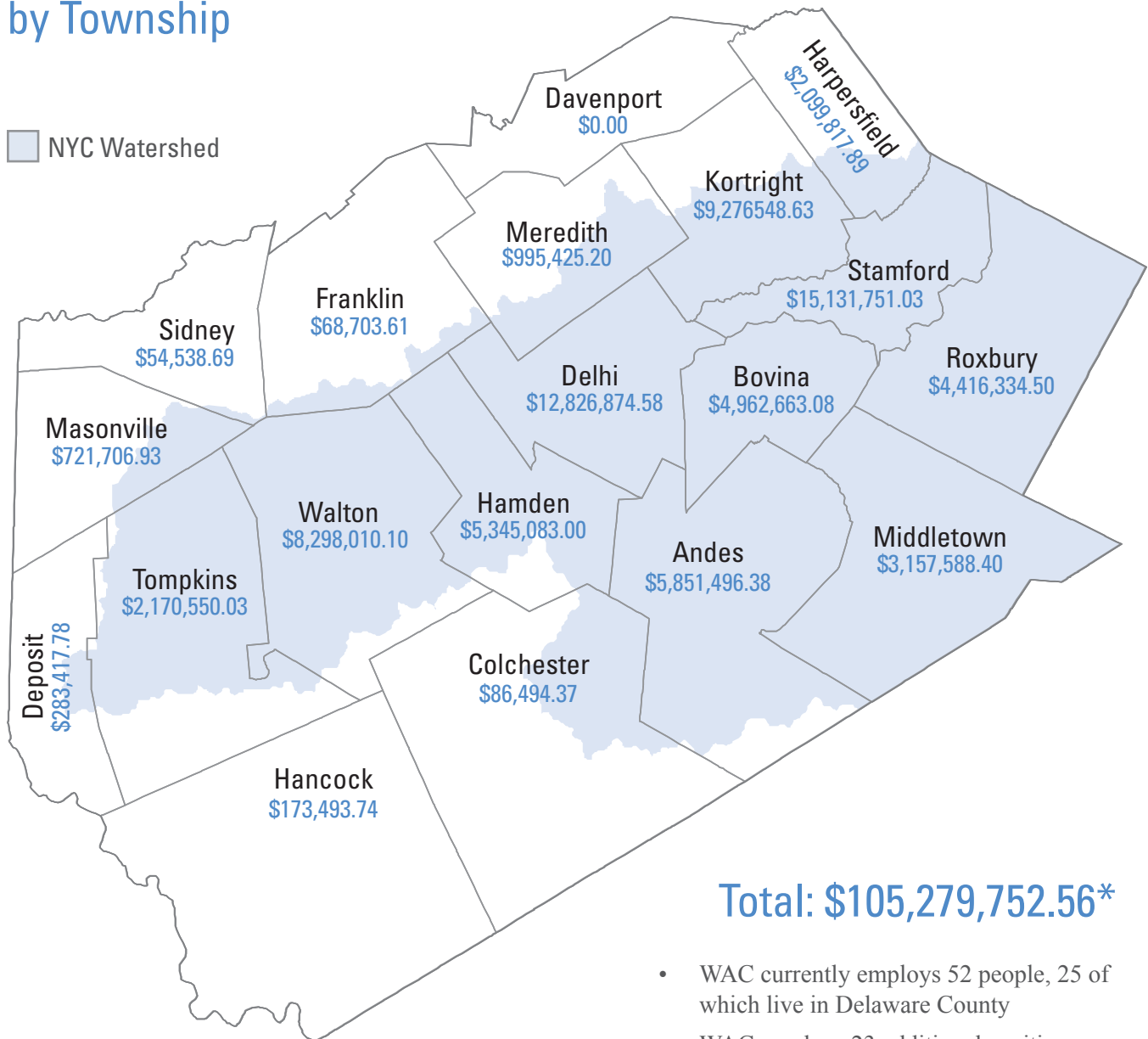
Watershed Agricultural Council  
[nycwatershed.org](http://nycwatershed.org)



# DELAWARE COUNTY

## Total Program Dollars Spent by Township

Watershed Agricultural Council  
nycwatershed.org



**Total: \$105,279,752.56\***

### Program Dollars Spent in Delaware County

Agricultural Program (since 2005)	\$45,572,392.21
Agricultural Program* (1992-2004)	\$26,429,414.40
Easement Program (since 1999)	\$28,586,312.33
Forestry Program (since 1997)	\$3,434,423.62
Economic Viability Program* (since 2005)	\$1,257,210.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$105,279,752.56</b>

\*EV Program expenditures and Agricultural Program totals prior to 2004 are not available by township.

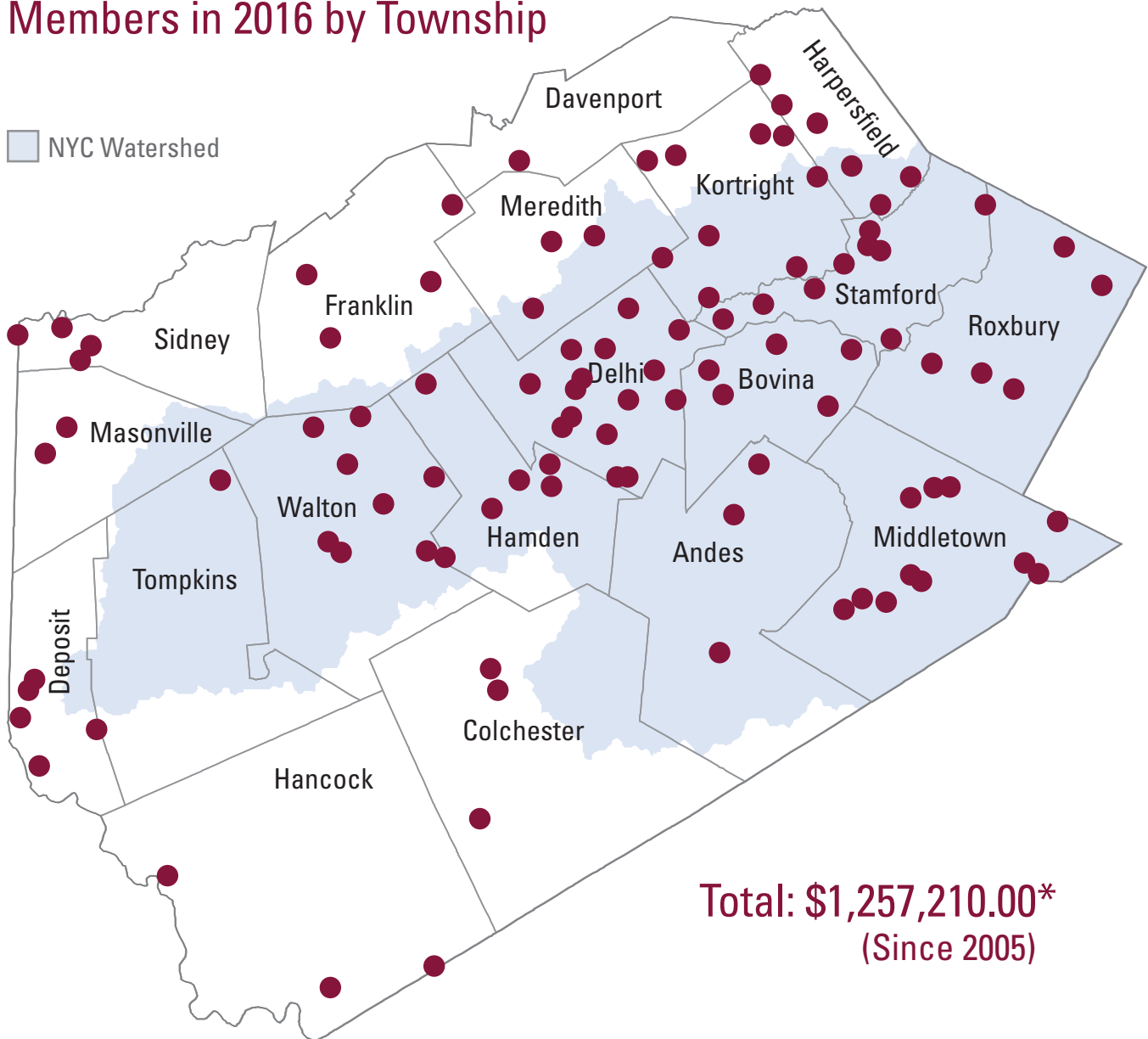
- WAC currently employs 52 people, 25 of which live in Delaware County
- WAC employs 23 additional positions through partnering agencies (DCSWD, NRCS, CCE, etc.) within Delaware County
- WAC has 34 Board/Committee members in the NYC Watershed, 18 of which live in Delaware County
- Annual Budget: \$15 Million
- Additional \$4 million spent in Delaware County since 2005 at local businesses including: catering, advertising, cleaning services, landscaping, snow removal, videography, and other subcontracts

# DELAWARE COUNTY

## Economic Viability Program

### Members in 2016 by Township

Watershed Agricultural Council  
Economic Viability Program  
nycwatershed.org



**Total: \$1,257,210.00\***  
(Since 2005)

- 270+ farm and forest members, 108 of which reside in Delaware County
- \$21,000 total profit for Pure Catskills members from events in Delaware County in 2016 (ex. Taste of the Catskills)
- Business planning and farm transfer planning assistance will begin in July 2017
- Micro/matching grants program will be offered in the fall of 2017
- 50,000 *Pure Catskills Guides* printed and distributed annually
- 10+ events that Pure Catskills attends annually, 50% in Delaware County
- \*Total spent in Delaware County on: Advertising (Radio & Print), Printing, Graphic Design, Local Events, Grants, Local Subcontracts and Promotion

# Economic Viability Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is Pure Catskills?**

Pure Catskills is a regional, buy local campaign developed by the Watershed Agricultural Council to improve the economic viability of the local community, sustain the working landscapes of the Catskills and preserve water quality in the NYC watershed region.

### **Who can join Pure Catskills?**

- **Member:** Pure Catskills membership is available to farm and forest-based businesses, restaurants, local producers and artisans, and farmers' markets throughout Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Ulster Counties in New York State.
- **Partner:** A "Partner of Pure Catskills" is available to other nonprofit organizations and businesses supporting our mission to improve the economic viability of the local community, sustain the working landscapes of the Catskills and preserve water quality in the NYC watershed region.
- **Supporter:** A "Supporter of Pure Catskills" is available to businesses that don't produce a product or sell local products, accommodations and organizations supporting our mission to improve the economic viability of the local community, sustain the working landscapes of the Catskills and preserve water quality in the NYC watershed region.

### **Why buy from Pure Catskills members?**

When you buy from Pure Catskills farmers, foresters and businesses you support a rural economy, protect the working landscapes, preserve water quality, and ensure that small communities in the Catskills survive. It protects the environment: Well-managed farms and businesses help keep the soil fertile and the water clean, which is critical to the ecosystems that plants, animals and humans inhabit.

### **Does Pure Catskills aggregate products?**

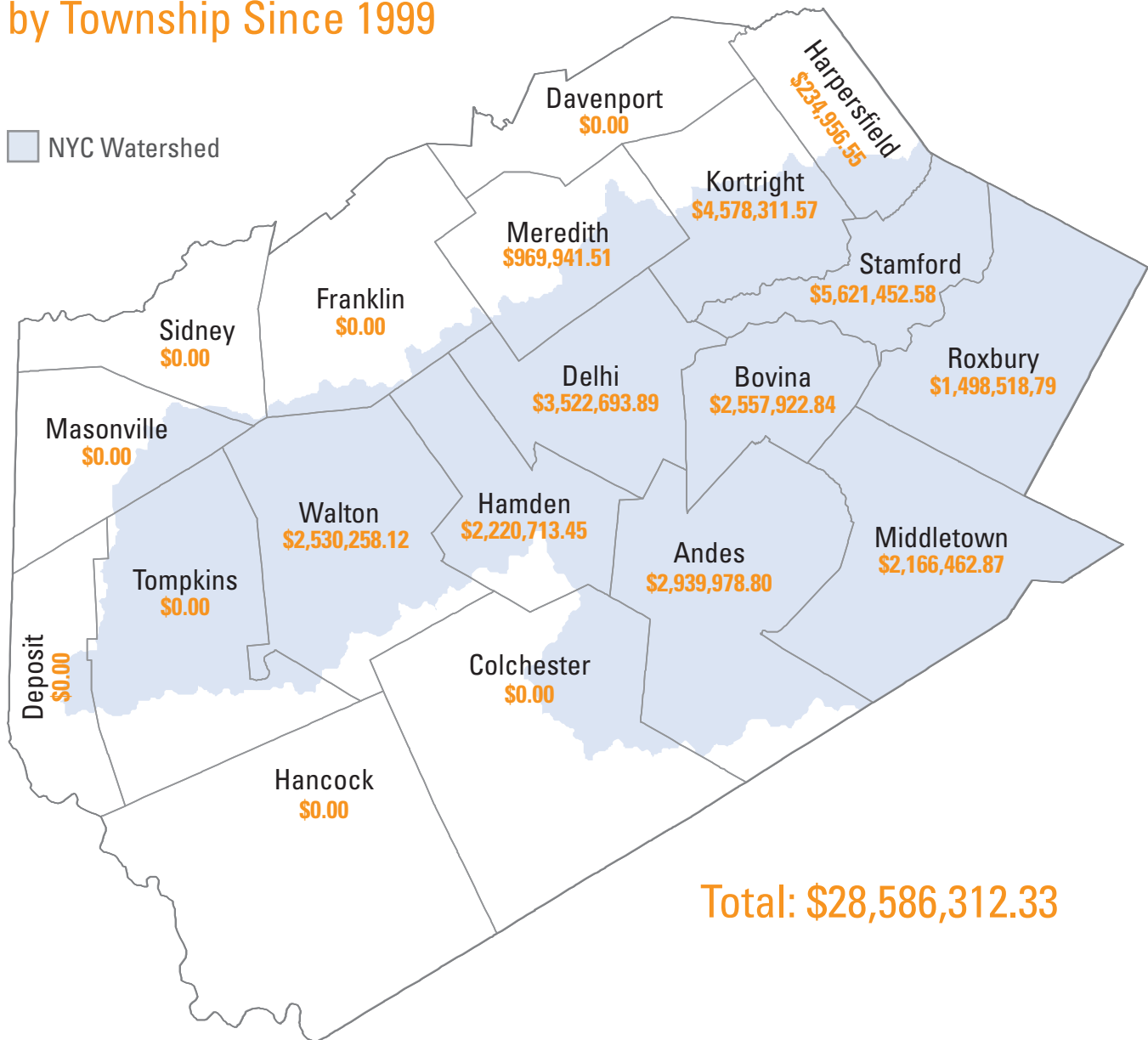
No, Pure Catskills is strictly a membership base marketing campaign. We sponsor the Lucky Dog Local Food Hub, a network of farms based in the Catskills that provide restaurants, cafés, grocery stores, distributors, and other business owners in NYC with the freshest produce, dairy, eggs, meats, syrup, honey, and specialty products delivered bi-weekly.



# DELAWARE COUNTY

## Easement Program Impact by Township Since 1999

Watershed Agricultural Council  
Conservation Easement Program  
nycwatershed.org



- \$28,586,312.33 paid directly to landowners in Delaware County
- 180+ families with WAC Conservation Easements
- Working landscape easements allow for farming, timber harvesting, bluestone mining, stream work, and new rural enterprises
- 1+ Million board feet of timber harvested from Easement Properties a year
- Land Stays on the Tax Roll
- Masonville and Deposit have 1,000+ acres donated to the Easement Program
- Harpersfield has 100+ acres donated to the Easement Program

# Easement Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How does a Conservation Easement (CE) work?**

Conservation Easements (CE) apply a concept whereby landowners convey and/or retain specific rights that “run with the land.” Moreover, that ownership interests go beyond physical acreage and that specific rights can be voluntarily separated (via donation or purchase) and conditioned, accordingly. The Watershed Agricultural Council’s CE Program follows similar logic. By offering economic incentives (the purchase of specific rights at full, fair market value), farm and forest landowners have the opportunity to realize equity, retain ownership and mutually realize conservation goals with the partnering Land Trust (WAC); i.e. water quality, habitat protection, recreation/access, etc.

### **What are WAC’s CE interests in Delaware County?**

Serving as an independent 501c3 Nonprofit Land Trust, WAC currently partners with 180+ farm and forest landowners on approximately 26,000 acres ( >1000 ac. donated to WAC) throughout the NYC Watershed. Approximately 50% of the total CE portfolio lies within Delaware County.

### **How are WAC Conservation Easements and Whole Farm Plans linked?**

The CE compliments the Whole Farm Plan (WFP) which encourages growth and diversification.

Whole Farm Planning is a holistic approach to farm management and identifies and prioritizes environmental issues on a farm without compromising the farm business itself. As part of the Whole Farm Plan (WFP), Best Management Practices (BMPs) are prescribed, 100% paid for and implemented by WAC to mitigate agricultural pollution while also protecting the economic viability of farming.

Additionally, the CE allows for several as of right notifications and 15 “Reserved Rights” which include, but are not limited to; commercial forestry, bluestone mining, stream work, new agricultural and recreational buildings, rural enterprises and more.

### **Have CE program interests changed over time? If so, how?**

While agriculture remains a top priority, WAC has recently reinvested itself in such partnerships with the launch of the Forest Conservation Easement Pilot Program. Forestland is of particular interest in the Catskills as it is the predominant land use (~78%) and represents the smallest percentage (10%) of landowners participating in conservation programs. As such, this also signifies the greatest opportunity for WAC to further its mission and promote our region’s unique working lands heritage.

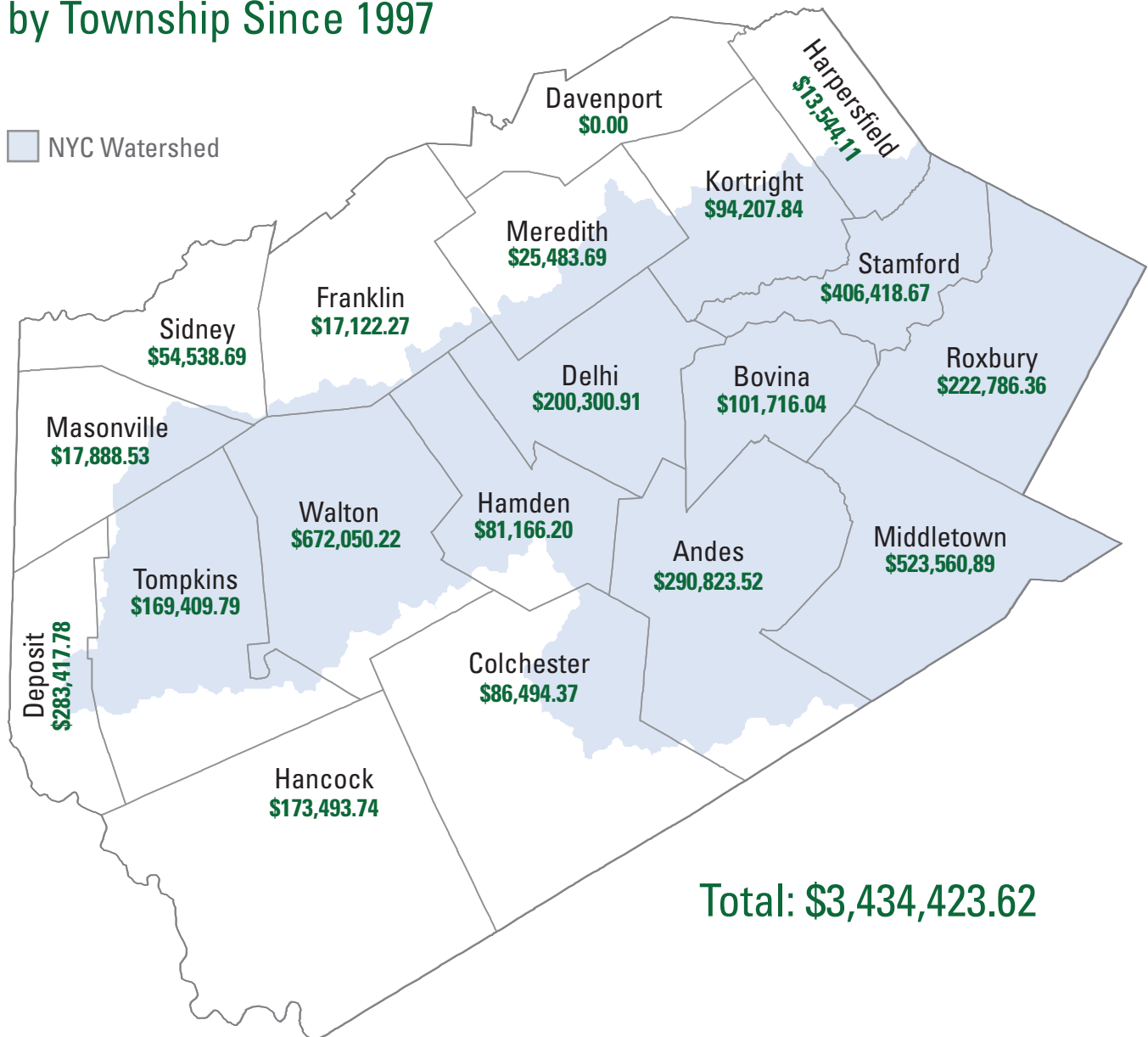
### **How has long-term, local control of WAC’s Conservation Easement Program been guaranteed?**

The Watershed Agricultural Council recently received a \$43 million dollar endowment award from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Since 2010 we have been negotiating through the FAD regulators and eventually DEP to ensure that adequate funding be established to ensure Watershed easements remain locally controlled. The funds will be utilized to “seed” an endowment and to safeguard agriculture and forestry easement stewardship for the next 20 years and beyond.

# DELAWARE COUNTY

## Forestry Program Impact by Township Since 1997

Watershed Agricultural Council  
Forestry Program  
nycwatershed.org



- The Watershed Forest Management Planning Program provided more than \$630,000 to help 600 landowners conserve more than 70,000 acres of forest land in Delaware County.
- The BMP Implementation Program paid loggers over \$880,000 to stabilize 280 miles of logging roads on more than 300 logging jobs in Delaware County.
- WAC's Management Assistance Program (MAP) has provided \$350,000 to Delaware County landowners to complete more than 250 stewardship projects affecting over 3,000 acres of forest land in Delaware County.
- Logger Training has trained more than 3,200 loggers. The Catskill Region currently has 95 TLC loggers. To help loggers get trained WAC has made more the 100 TLC incentive payments to loggers totaling more than \$100,000.

# Forestry Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How does WAC help forest landowners manage their land sustainably?**

The Watershed Forest Management Planning Program provides financial assistance to help forest landowners develop plans with professional foresters to manage their forests sustainably. WAC has provided more than \$630,000 to help 600 landowners conserve more than 70,000 acres of forest land in Delaware County.

### **Caring for forest land is complicated. How does WAC make sure landowners have access to the knowledge they need to make informed decisions for their woods?**

WAC's MyWoodlot.com website is dedicated to giving forest landowners in the Catskill Region the knowledge they need to care for and enjoy their forest land. MyWoodlot is a 24/7 library of on-the-ground forest stewardship activities landowners can do either by themselves or with professional help.

### **How does WAC work with local people to protect water quality?**

The BMP Implementation Program helps loggers protect water quality by providing technical assistance and financial incentives. WAC has paid loggers over \$880,000 to stabilize 280 miles of logging roads on more than 300 logging jobs in Delaware County. WAC's BMP Program funding also makes a big impact on loggers' economic viability, often meaning the difference between profit or loss on a job.

### **Does WAC provide financial assistance to forest landowners to steward their woods like it does for loggers?**

WAC's Management Assistance Program (MAP) provides forest landowners with technical support and financial assistance to help them complete the stewardship activities in their Watershed Forest Management Plans (WFMPs). MAP stewardship projects include Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), Invasive Species Control, Riparian Enhancement, Tree Planting and Wildlife Enhancement. In the ten years since it was created, MAP has provided \$350,000 to Delaware County landowners to complete more than 250 projects affecting over 3,000 acres of forest land.

### **How does WAC support Logger Training in the Catskills?**

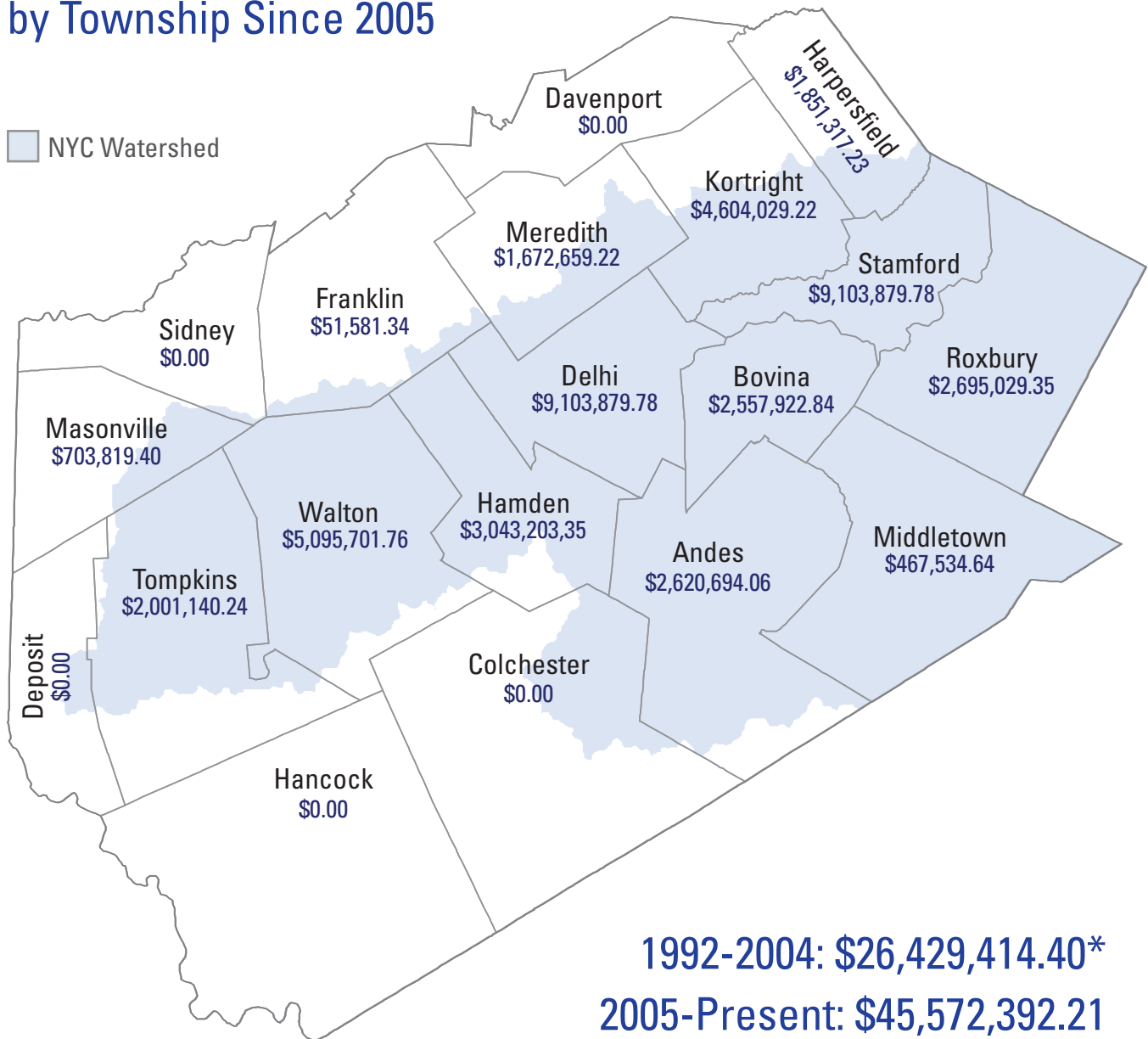
Logger Training strengthens the knowledge and skills of loggers. WAC hosts at least nine Trained Logger Certification (TLC) workshops in the Catskill Region each year. Topics include: safety, silviculture, forest ecology, and water quality protection. Since its inception WAC's Logger Training initiative has trained more than 3,200 loggers. The Catskill Region currently has 95 TLC loggers. To encourage TLC WAC has made more the 100 TLC incentive payments to loggers totaling more than \$100,000.



# DELAWARE COUNTY

## Agricultural Program Impact by Township Since 2005

Watershed Agricultural Council  
Agricultural Program  
nycwatershed.org



1992-2004: \$26,429,414.40\*

2005-Present: \$45,572,392.21

**Total: \$72,001,806.61**

- 274 participant farms in the Catskill/Delaware Watershed, 237 of these are in Delaware County
- \*Agricultural Program funding spent in Delaware County from 1992 - 2004: \$26.4 million (not included in map above)
- Total agricultural Best Management Practices installed to date: 6,695

# Agricultural Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the Watershed Agricultural Program?**

The Watershed Agricultural Program works with watershed landowners with various partnering agencies to protect clean water by the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) through Whole Farm Planning through voluntary participation.

### **What is Whole Farm Planning?**

Whole Farm Planning is a holistic approach to farm management used to identify and prioritize environmental issues on a farm without compromising the farm business. Potential risks to the water supply are identified and addressed through careful structural planning to reduce or avoid the transport of agricultural runoff into farm streams.

### **How are the BMPs funded?**

When the landowner agrees to follow the prescribed Whole Farm Plan (WFP), the best management practices (BMPs) that benefit water quality and land conservation are paid by the Watershed Agricultural Program, which is funded by the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

### **When are BMPs implemented?**

Each year farms are ranked based on the approximate risk of off-farm movement of nutrients and pathogens creating a “Farm Ranking Score”. This score is used in a prioritization process which will organize the highest pollutant categories and sort the most urgent BMPs needed for implementation. Implementation timeliness, relies on the Watershed Agricultural Program’s budgetary contract through the New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

### **Once BMPs are implemented, what is the landowner’s responsibility to maintain them?**

Once a Whole Farm Plan is completed and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are operational, participants receive and acknowledge a BMP Operations & Maintenance Agreement, often referred to as an O&M. This O&M is a long-term contract that outlines the steps a landowner takes to preserve the mutual investment and WFP infrastructure. The O&M lasts the lifespan of a BMP, usually 10-15 years. The O&M requirements are generally basic preventative measures or repairs that a landowner would perform anyway.