

New York NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting

August 7, 2025
Virtual: Microsoft Teams

NEXT MEETING DATE: TBD

Attending (MS Teams): Blake Glover (NRCS), Alana Covington (NRCS), Christina Ripplinger (NRCS), Daniel Ufnar (NRCS), Valerie Podolec (NRCS), Scott Travis (NRCS), David Walowsky (NRCS), Emily Armstrong (NRCS), Paula Bagley (NRCS), Tom A. Langen, James LaGioia (NRCS), Christina Ripplinger (NRCS), Nicole Kubiczki (NRCS), Mathew Sandefur (NRCS), Bethany Bzduch (Agriculture), Mirem Villamil, Ashley Sardo (NYFB), Emily Ringen (NRCS), Kim Farrell (NRCS), Karen Hoffman (NRCS), Tim Clark (Agriculture), Brian Steinmuller (NRCS), Gian Dodici (FWS), Sandra J Van Vranken (DEC), Nathan M Ermer (DEC), Arianna Ferrario, Katie Baidon (NOFA), Christopher Deets (NRCS), Catherine Carey (NRCS), Mike Shaw (NRCS), Annie Christian, Greg Taylor (NRCS), Tony Capraro (NRCS), Sue Keister, Sarah Tuori (NRCS), Herminia Gomez (USDA-OPPE), Erica Stach (NRCS)

New York NRCS State Technical Committee Meeting August 7, 2025 | 1:00 p.m. - 3:50 p.m., MS Teams

Agenda

Time	Topic	Speaker
1:00 – 1:10 pm	State Conservationist Welcome	Blake Glover
1:10 – 1:35 pm	Food Security Act Update • Functional Assessment Procedures for Food Security Act Wetland Compliance of Vegetative Cover • Minimal Effect Procedures for Food Security Act Wetland Compliance	Christina Ripplinger
1:35 – 1:45 pm	Interim Conservation Practice Standards • Interim Conservation Practice Standard 827 - Strategic Harvested Forage Management	Karen Hoffman
1:45 – 2:20 pm	USDA-NRCS- Soil and Plant Science Division • Introduction- Dan Ufnar • Recent Coastal Zone Soil Survey for Long Island • Future Efforts	Greg Taylor
2:20 – 2:50 pm	Farm Bill Program Updates • Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) • Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) • Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) • Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	Emily Armstrong
2:50 – 3:00 pm	Easements • Updates	Kim Farrell
3:00 – 3:45 pm	STC Sub-Committee Reports	Committee Leads
3:45 – 3:50 pm	Closing Comments	Alana Covington

Opening Remarks:

Alana Covington, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships, NRCS-NY

- Recap of STC, subcommittees, and goals. Overview of virtual meeting.
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Welcome:

Blake Glover, State Conservationist, NRCS-NY

- Welcome. Blake Glover mentioned that Local Work Group (LWG) meetings are happening around the state in each county and participation in LWG meetings is encouraged. NRCS is in the restructuring phase; the plan has not been shared publicly. He shared how we're currently obligating FY25 applications into contracts. Blake also reviewed ground rules for hybrid meetings. He acknowledged staff at the field level for the amount of work that they've been that was difficult to foresee this year.
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Food Security Act Update *(See slides for details)*

Christina Ripplinger, State Biologist, NRCS-NY

- **Food Security Act Wetland Compliance Procedures:** Christina Ripplinger delivered an in-depth presentation on Food Security Act wetland compliance, focusing on the functional assessment and minimal effect tools, their regulatory basis, application procedures, and calculation methods for assessing wetland conversions and mitigation requirements.
 - **Functional Assessment Tool Application:** Christina explained that the functional assessment tool is used for off-site mitigation of converted wetlands, requiring mitigation of lost functions and values within the same hydrologic unit or based on proximity, with a minimum one-to-one ratio and prioritization of wildlife habitat, sequestration, and floodwater storage.
 - **Assessment Process and Data Collection:** The process involves collecting site data through aerial photography, national wetlands maps, elevation, soils, and on-site information, recording ponding depth, land use, vegetative type, connectivity, and wetland classification, which are entered into a spreadsheet to calculate required mitigation acreage.
 - **Minimal Effect Tool and Regulatory Updates:** Christina described the minimal effect tool, updated in 1996 to include wildlife and wetlands in the area, which calculates the impact of wetland conversion on hydrological and biological values, using weighted functions for wildlife, water quality, and floodwater storage, and considers cumulative effects within a two-mile radius.
 - **Calculation Examples and Eligibility:** Examples were provided showing how changes in hydrology, soils, and vegetation affect eligibility for minimal effect determinations, with specific acreage calculations based on whether drainage is added and how multiple participants within a radius are considered for fair allocation.
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Interim Conservation Practice Standards *(See slides for details)*

Karen Hoffman, State Grazing Specialist, NRCS-NY

- **Interim Conservation Practice Standard 827- Strategic Harvested Forage Management:** Karen Hoffman introduced interim conservation practice standard 827, commonly known as bale grazing, explaining its evaluation process, benefits for soil health, implementation requirements, and the supporting documentation available through NRCS offices.
 - **Practice Overview and Benefits:** Karen described strategic harvested forage management as placing bales in a predetermined pattern to address resource concerns such as soil health, organic matter, and

energy efficiency, with benefits including reduced compaction, improved nutrient distribution, and suitability for various land types.

USDA-NRCS- Soil and Plant Science Division *(See slides for details)*

Dan Ufnar, *State Soil Scientist, NRCS-NY*

- **NY Cooperative Soil Survey-Update:** Dan Ufnar provided an update on the NY Cooperative Soil Survey. He also explained the role of the National Cooperative Soil Survey and who may join. He also provided the names and roles of NRCS-NY soil scientists.

Greg Taylor, *Senior Soil Scientist for Special Projects, NRCS-Soil and Plant Science Division*

- **Coastal Zone Soil Survey and Long Island Sound Projects:** Greg Taylor, introduced by Dan Ufnar, presented on recent coastal zone soil survey efforts, including mapping techniques, equipment, data collection, and applications for oyster restoration and land use decisions in Long Island Sound and other coastal areas, with updates on future plans for New York.
 - **Coastal Zone Soil Survey Background:** Greg explained the evolution of soil survey from agricultural land mapping to coastal and subaqueous areas, describing the need for detailed soil data to support restoration, aquaculture, and land management decisions, and the transition from miscellaneous area mapping to comprehensive surveys.
 - **Mapping Techniques and Equipment:** The team uses specialized boats, bathymetric data, and custom-built equipment to collect soil cores from underwater environments, preserving samples in refrigerated trailers to maintain integrity for analysis and interpretation.
 - **Applications for Restoration and Management:** Soil survey data is used to support oyster restoration, aquaculture, dredge material management, and living shoreline projects, with interpretations published in Web Soil Survey and tailored to partner needs through the Coastal Marine Ecological Classification system.
 - **Current and Future Projects in New York:** Greg outlined ongoing and planned projects for Long Island Sound, Peconic Bay, and Crab Meadow Marsh, emphasizing the importance of local requests, collaboration with experts, and the need to fill data gaps in previously unmapped coastal areas, with travel and funding considerations affecting timelines.

Farm Bill Program Updates *(See slides for details)*

Emily Armstrong, *Assistant State Conservationist for Programs, NRCS-NY*

- **NRCS Program Updates and Rollout Plans:** Emily Armstrong, Scott Travis, and Kim Farrell provided comprehensive updates on NRCS programs including EQIP, AMA, CSP, RCPP, and ACEP, detailing current accomplishments, funding allocations, program changes, and future rollout plans for fiscal year 2026, with input from Blake Glover and other team members.
 - **Program Accomplishments Overview:** Emily Armstrong presented data showing 599 applications for EQIP, AMA, and CSP across New York State, with pre-approved dollars by county and area, highlighting regional differences and challenges in application rates, especially in the Adirondack Park.
 - **EQIP and AMA Program Details:** Scott Travis explained the removal of Inflation Reduction Act funding from the Farm Bill, described the Act Now process for pre-approving contracts, and outlined funding targets for livestock, wildlife habitat, beginning farmers, and water protection areas, including special initiatives like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and source water protection practices.
 - **CSP Program Structure and Enhancements:** Emily Armstrong described the Conservation Stewardship Program's five-year contracts, payment structure based on conservation performance, required ranking pools, and the use of Act Now for pre-approving high-scoring applications, as well as the process for updating priority resource concerns and resource-conserving crops with committee input.

- **RCPP Program and Proposal Process:** Emily Armstrong outlined the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, its activity types (land management, land rentals, entity-held and US-held easements), requirements for private land, current agreements, and the process for submitting proposals, noting the lack of a current announcement for FY26 due to ongoing IRA funding decisions.
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Easements *(See slides for details)*

Kim Farrell, Assistant State Conservationist for Easements, NRCS-NY

- **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program Updates:** Kim Farrell reported on ACEP's two components—agricultural land easements and wetland reserve easements—summarizing new enrollments, funding obligations, stewardship activities, repairs, maintenance, boundary remarking, and the annual area-wide market analysis for determining compensation rates, with updates on permanent and 30-year easements.
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STC Sub-Committee Reports

Committee Leads

- **Subcommittee Updates and Ongoing Initiatives:** Subcommittee leads including Scott Travis, Christina Riplinger, Daniel Afnar, Christopher Dietz, and Kim Farrell provided brief updates on water quality, wildlife, forestry, soil health, tribal relations, and wetland reserve easements, highlighting ongoing meetings, research, training, and program improvements.
 - **Soil Health Alliance Activities:** Daniel Ufnar reported on the New York Soil Health Alliance's biannual meetings, ongoing training, field days, research on biochar and solar farms, and the publication of soil health benchmarks, with collaboration among NRCS, Cornell, and other partners.
 - **Tribal Relations and Conservation Efforts:** Christopher Dietz updated on engagement with eight federally recognized tribal nations, ongoing Farm Bill program participation, interagency advisory committee meetings, and the provision of sweetgrass plugs through the Plant Materials Center.
 - **Wetland Reserve Easement Subcommittee Contributions:** Kim Farrell, for Peter Gibbs, described the WRE subcommittee's role in reviewing compatible uses and ranking criteria for wetland easements, updating conditions and evaluation methods to reflect best practices and science.
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Closing Comments

Alana Covington, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships, NRCS-NY

- **Future meetings:**
 - TBD
 - Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.
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Follow-up Tasks:

- **Water Quality Watershed Map Feedback:** Collect and review input from committee members regarding which watersheds should be included or excluded in the water quality map. (Scott Travis)
- **CSP Priority Resource Concerns Advice:** Submit feedback or suggestions to Emily Armstrong regarding changes to CSP priority resource concerns for FY26. (Emily Armstrong)
- **CSP Resource Conserving Crops List Advice:** Provide recommendations to Emily Armstrong for additions or changes to the list of resource conserving crops for CSP enhancements. (Emily Armstrong)
- **Area Wide Market Analysis Review:** Review the area wide market analysis and geographic area rate cap values sent by Peter Gibbs and relay any questions or concerns to him. (All committee members)

- **ALE Fund Obligation Timeline Follow-up:** Contact Annie to provide a detailed timeline for grant disbursement after ALE Fund obligation forms are signed. (Peter Gibbs)



Natural Resources Conservation Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (STAC) MEETING

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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Christina Ripplinger, NRCS State Biologist

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center



- Functional Assessment
- Minimal Effect Tool

Both are tools for Food Security Act Wetland Compliance

Food Security Act of 1985, as amended

Discussion of Food Security Act:

- The wetland conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended (WC provisions) provides disincentives to farmers who produce annually tilled agricultural commodities or make possible the production of agricultural commodities on land classified as wetlands. (16 U.S.C. Sec. 3801 and 3821).
- That law says:
“Except as provided in section 3822 of this title and notwithstanding any other provision of law, any person who in any crop year beginning after November 28, 1990, converts a wetland by draining, dredging, filling, leveling, or any other means for the purpose, or to have the effect, of making the production of an agricultural commodity possible on such converted wetland shall be ineligible for those payments, loans, or programs specified in subsection (b) of this section for that crop year and all subsequent crop years.”
- The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) implements WC provisions by providing USDA program participants with certified wetland determinations to determine if their land contains wetlands that are subject to the WC provisions.



NRCS WETLAND FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION DECISION PROCEDURES

Used to support the mitigation requirements provided at 7 CFR §12.4(c), §12.5(b)(4), and §12.5(b)(5).

Provided to STAC Feb 10, 2025 for review. No comments received.

NRCS Functional Assessment and Mitigation (FAM) Procedures

- The NRCS Functional Assessment and Mitigation (FAM) Procedures are designed for the **sole purpose of mitigation** and **will not** be used for the administration of the **minimal effect exemption** as provided at 7 CFR §12.5(b)(1)(v).
- Why?
 - This tool does not provide any means of determining whether an action has a minimal effect on wetlands in the area.
 - Rather, this tool is assuming that the action did NOT have a minimal effect (and therefore mitigation is required).

NRCS Functional Assessment and Mitigation (FAM) Procedures

If a USDA participant converts a wetland:

- They can restore it at the site of conversion = easiest and cheapest
- Mitigate for that converted wetland at a different site (called off-site mitigation). This is where this functional assessment comes in.
- Use an approved wetland mitigation bank to purchase wetland

NFSAM §515.10

NRCS policy, outlined in NFSAM §515.10:

- Convert wetland must mitigate the loss of the functions, values, *and* acreage of the converted wetland unless other exemption like PC, CWTE, minimal effect, etc., applies.
- Requires mitigation to occur within the same 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) (unless NRCS determines that mitigation outside the HUC provides advantages).
- Mitigation may not be funded at the expense of the Federal Government (7 CFR Section 12.5 (b)(4)(i)(C)).

Proximity

- Restoration at site of conversion is best.
- But off-site mitigation occurring near the impacted wetland *can* have ecological advantages.
 - The greater distance between the converted wetland and the mitigation site, the more the advantages diminish.
- Mitigation tool:
 - Doesn't use HUC8 but the proximity of the mitigation site to the converted wetland is used.

Mitigation of lost wetland acres, functions and values

- Reminder: Mitigation must replace lost wetland acres, functions, *and* values.
- Mitigation acre ratios cannot be less than 1:1
 - Replace wetland acres = mitigation site acres $\geq$ Converted wetland acres .
Regardless of the functional lift at a mitigation site.
- Each function must be assessed independent of other functions to ensure that each function's loss is adequately replaced.
- NRCS determines a mitigation ratio for each function and cumulatively for all Wetland Assessment Areas (WAA).
- Largest ratio required to replace the functional loss for a single function will dictate the mitigation ratio required. For example, if the assessment completed for each function determines a ratio of 1:1 for wildlife, but a ratio of 2:1 for water quality, the mitigation ratio for the project will be 2:1.

Wetland Values

- To mitigate for lost wetland **values** is by identifying functions with high societal value, and then using those functions in the assessment.
- The wetland functions identified by NRCS as high in ecological/societal value in agricultural landscapes are:
 - wildlife habitat
 - sequestration of sediments, elements, and compounds
 - floodwater storage

- **Ponding Depth (Vpd):** presence of micro-topography increases the heterogeneity of the WAA
- **Micro-Topography (Vmt):** presence of micro-topography increases the heterogeneity of the WAA
- **Land Use (Vuse):** Use of a wetland impacts the societal value and functional level of wetlands. Prior to conversion was it cropped, pasture, wooded, etc?
- **Vegetative Type (Vvt):** Wetlands with higher species richness of native plants have higher functional levels for wildlife than wetlands with low species richness

- **Connectivity (Vc):** Connectivity is measured by visually estimating the percent of the land within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile (1320 feet) of the Sampling Point that is available for wildlife use.
- **Proximity (Vp):** using a compensatory mitigation site near the converted wetland is preferable to a site located far from the converted wetland.
- **HGM Classification (Vhgm):** Replacing the converted wetland type with the same mitigated wetland type scores higher. I.e., sloped wetland, depressionnal wetland, etc.

Functional Capacity Index-Mitigated Site

Mitigation Site: The formulas used to determine the FCI for each wetland function at the mitigation site are as follows:

- Function 1: Wetland Wildlife Habitat: The following equation will be used to determine the FCI for wetland wildlife habitat at the mitigation site.

$$\frac{3V_{pd} + V_{mt} + 2V_{use} + 6V_{vt} + V^c + V_p}{14}$$

- Function 2: Sequestration of Sediments, Elements, and Compounds: The following equation will be used to determine the FCI for the sequestration of sediments, elements, and compounds at the mitigation site.

$$\frac{3V_{pd} + V_{use} + V_p + V_{hgm}}{6}$$

- Function 3: Floodwater Storage: The following equation will be used to determine the FCI for flood water storage at the mitigation site.

$$\frac{4V_{pd} + 2V_p + V_{hgm}}{7}$$

Total Converted Wetlands Functional Capacity			
Wetland Functions	Total Functional Capacity Units Lost	Acres	Weighted Average Functional Capacity Index
Wildlife Habitat	0.49	1.00	0.49
Sequestration of Sediments, Elements, and Compounds	0.40	1.00	0.40
Floodwater Storage	0.20	1.00	0.20

Mitigation site wetland function calculations.

Mitigation Site Functional Capacity		
Wetland Functions	Formula	Functional Capacity Index
Wildlife Habitat	$\frac{3 V^{pd} + V^{mt} + 2 V^{use} + 6 V^{vt} + V^c + V^p}{14}$	0.38
Sequestration of Sediments, Elements, and Compounds	$\frac{3 V^{pd} + V^{use} + V^p + V^{hgm}}{6}$	0.52
Floodwater Storage	$\frac{4 V^{pd} + 2 V^p + V^{hgm}}{7}$	0.43

Calculations for final mitigation acres required to replace lost function.

Functional Gains after Mitigation				
Wetland Functions	Weighted Average Functional Capacity Index Converted Wetland Site	Functional Capacity Index Mitigation Site	Ratio	Acres Converted
Wildlife Habitat	0.49	0.38	1.29	1.00
Sequestration of Sediments, Elements, and Compounds	0.40	0.52	0.77	1.00
Floodwater Storage	0.20	0.43	0.47	1.00

Final Mitigation Acres Required	on-site mitigation not chosen	1.3
	On-site mitigation	Compensatory mitigation



Questions?



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) MINIMAL EFFECT ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE AND DECISION MATRIX – NEW YORK

Used to support the minimal effect requirements of 7 CFR § 12.31(e)(1).

Provided to STAC May 30, 2025 for review. No comments received.

Minimal Effect

Food Security Act Law updated in 1996 to include wildlife: The statutory language (Section 1222(f)) —

- *The Secretary shall exempt a person... (if) [t]he action, individually and in connection with all other similar actions authorized by the Secretary in the area, will have a minimal effect on the functional hydrological and biological value of the wetlands in the area, including the value to waterfowl and wildlife.*

Minimal Effect

7CFR § 12.31(e)(1) specifies that the decision be based on a wetland functional assessment —

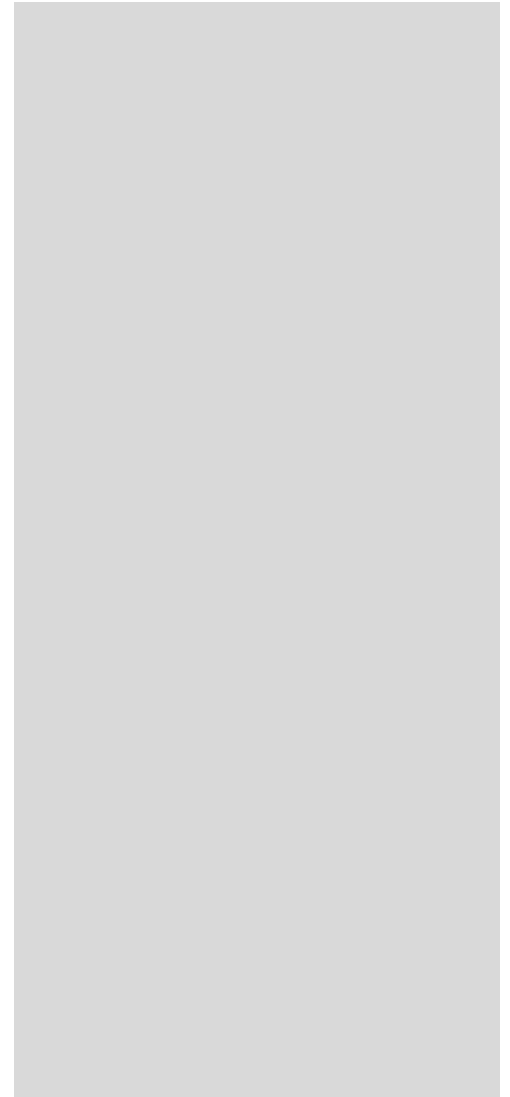
- For the purposes of §12.5(b)(1)(v), NRCS shall determine whether the effect of any action of a person associated with the conversion of a wetland, the conversion of wetland and the production of an agricultural commodity on converted wetland, or the combined effect of the production of an agricultural commodity on a wetland converted by someone else has a minimal effect on the **functions and values of wetlands in the area**. Such determination shall be based upon a **functional assessment of functions and values** of the subject wetland and other related **wetlands in the area**. The assessment of functions and values of the subject wetland will be made through an on-site evaluation. Such an assessment of related wetlands in the area may be made based on a general knowledge of wetland conditions in the area. A request for such determination will be made prior to the beginning of activities that would convert the wetland. If a person has converted a wetland and then seeks a determination that the effect of such conversion on wetland was minimal, the burden will be upon the person to demonstrate to the satisfaction of NRCS that the effect was minimal.

Wetland Functions

- Hydrogeomorphic evaluation procedure (HGM) functional assessment = provides scores for each functions.
- Functions:
 - Wildlife habitat-statutory requirement. Significant habitat can be provided by wetlands in agricultural settings, including areas with small, isolated wetlands.
 - water quality-filtering out excess nutrients and trapping sediments from upland runoff prior to entering lakes, rivers, and streams.
 - floodwater storage-floodwater retention areas, slowing the rate that water re-enters waterbodies, thereby reducing downstream flooding.

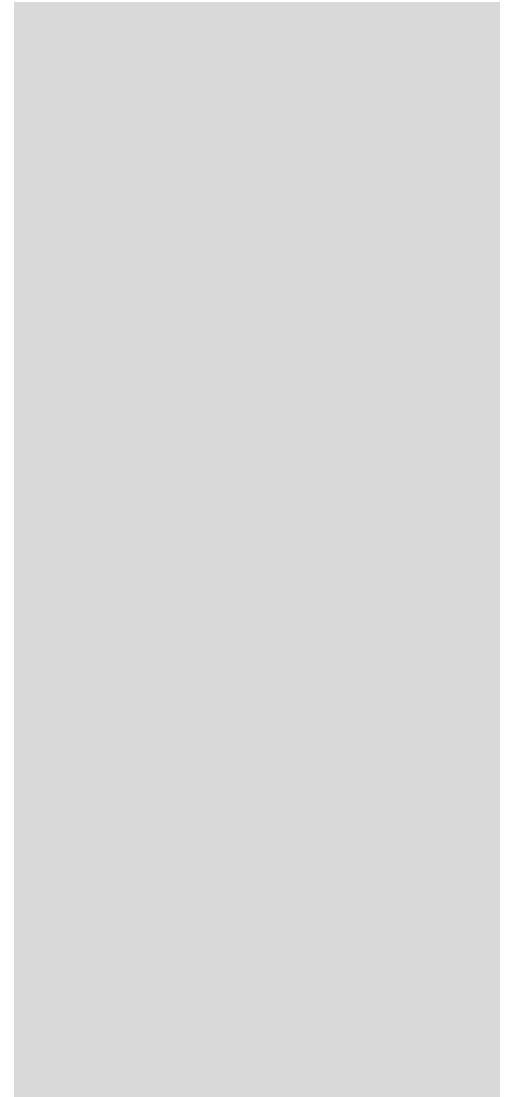
Values

- Calculating values is independent of calculating functions.
- Are a consideration based on the importance wetlands provide to society.
- Highest societal value in an ag landscape = wildlife habitat, water quality and floodwater storage



Values-Wildlife Habitat

- Wildlife is a required statutory consideration for minimal effect.
- Wildlife habitat weighted the heaviest(3x) because it can provide significant habitat in an ag setting (even isolated areas).



Values-Water Quality

- The second most important value of wetlands associated with agricultural production.
- Wetlands can provide important water quality functions (sequestration of nutrients, pesticides, and sediments).
- Weighted by 2.

Values-Floodwater Storage

- Because minimal effect exemptions commonly impact small wetlands (or small portions of larger wetlands), floodwater storage is identified as the lowest valued function and is weighted by one.

$$\frac{3(\text{Wildlife FCU Loss}) + 2(\text{Water Quality FCU Loss}) + \text{Floodwater Storage FCU Loss}}{6}$$

Project Area Hydrology (V^H)

7a. Before-Project Condition		7b. After-Project Condition	
Prior to 1985, there were no alterations to the hydrology.	X 1.0	Prior to 1985, there were no alterations to the hydrology and not further modified by the project.	X 1.0
Prior to 1985, the hydrology of the project area was modified. However, (i) the project area supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and (ii) wetland hydrology returned before 1985.		Prior to 1985, the hydrology of the project area was modified. However, (i) it supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and (ii) wetland hydrology returned before 1985, and hydrology is not further modified by the project.	
The project area was impacted by drainage prior to December 23, 1985 but was still ponded or flooded for longer than brief periods (1-3 days), and the land did not support woody vegetation on that date.		The project area was minimally impacted by drainage prior to 1985, and the land supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and will not be further modified by the project. OR the project will impact the hydrology but will still meet wetland hydrology.	
The project area was impacted by drainage prior to December 23, 1985 such that it did not support ponding or flooding for more than brief periods (1-3 days), and the land did not support woody vegetation on that date.		After the conversion action, the project area hydrology fails to meet the wetland hydrology definition in 7CFR12.	

Project Area Soils (V ^s)			
7c. Before-Project Condition		7d. After-Project Condition	
Standard Reference Condition - There have been no previous significant soil disturbances.	X	Standard Reference Condition - There will be no significant soil disturbances associated with the project .	
Not standard reference condition, but no soil disturbance has occurred within the past 20 years.		Not standard reference condition, but no soil disturbance has occurred within the past 20 years, and no disturbance will be associated with the project activity or purpose.	
Not standard reference condition and some soil disturbance has occurred within the past 20 years.		Not standard reference condition, some soil disturbance has occurred within the past 20 years, and the intensity or frequency of such disturbances will not increase.	
Multiple soil disturbance events have occurred in the 20 years prior to the assessment, and/or disturbance is ongoing.		Multiple soil disturbance events have occurred in the 20 years prior to the assessment, disturbance is ongoing, or such actions will occur after project implementation.	X
	1.0		0.1



Project Area Vegetation (V ^V)			
7e. Before-Project Condition		7f. After-Project Condition	
The before plant community is similar to the historic plant community.	X 1.0	The after-project plant community is projected to be the same as the historic plant community.	
The before plant community is a different wetland community than the historic plant community, but the area is not being actively managed for agricultural production.		The after-project plant community is projected to be a different wetland community than the historic plant community and not being actively managed for agricultural production.	
The before plant community is being actively managed for livestock.		The after-project plant community is projected to be actively managed for livestock or will be managed by periodic mowing.	
The before plant community is actively managed for hay, crop or orchard crops, or supports more than 75-percent aerial cover of highly invasive species as listed below [State Conservationists will need to provide a list].		The after-project plant community is projected to: (1) be actively managed for hay or crops, or (2) is expected to have a vegetative cover of more than 75 percent of highly invasive species as listed in Step 7(f) above.	X 0



Wildlife Habitat Assessment		
Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) $\frac{V^H + V^S + V^V}{3}$	1.00	0.37
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.06
Loss of Wildlife Habitat (ΔWH) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.09	

STEP 9 Determine impacts to water quality functional capacity for the Project Area.

Water Quality Assessment		
Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) $\frac{2V^H + V^S}{3}$	1.00	0.70
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.11
Loss of Water Quality (ΔWQ) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.04	

STEP 10 Determine impacts to floodwater storage functional capacity for the Project Area.

Floodwater Storage Assessment		
Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) V^H	1.00	1.00
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.15
Loss of Floodwater Storage (ΔFS) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.00	

STEP 19 Determine if the conversion action meets the minimal effect threshold provided in the decision matrix.

Cumulative FCU Loss at project area, plus previous minimal effects exemptions (from step 12)	Wetlands in the Area Resiliency (from Step 18)				
	≤ 0.20	> 0.20 to 0.40	> 0.40 to 0.60	> 0.60 to 0.85	> 0.85
≤ 0.10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.10 to 0.25	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.25 to 0.70	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.70 to 0.85	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
> 0.85 to 1.50	No	No	No	No	Yes
> 1.50	No	No	No	No	No

Total Cumulative Functional Capacity Units Loss for the Project Area, plus previous minimal effects exemptions	0.06
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Wetlands in the Area Resiliency	0.50
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Is the Project Area eligible for a minimal effect exemption?	Yes
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Project Area acreage	0.15
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Approximate acreage eligible for a minimal effect exemption?	1.68
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STEP 7 Rating the ecological variables of the Project Area.

Project Area Hydrology (V ^H)			
7a. Before-Project Condition		7b. After-Project Condition	
Prior to 1985, there were no alterations to the hydrology.	x 1.0	Prior to 1985, there were no alterations to the hydrology and not further modified by the project.	
Prior to 1985, the hydrology of the project area was modified. However, (i) the project area supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and (ii) wetland hydrology returned before 1985.		Prior to 1985, the hydrology of the project area was modified. However, (i) it supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and (ii) wetland hydrology returned before 1985, and hydrology is not further modified by the project.	
The project area was impacted by drainage prior to December 23, 1985 but was still ponded or flooded for longer than brief periods (1-3 days), and the land did not support woody vegetation on that date.		The project area was minimally impacted by drainage prior to 1985, and the land supported woody vegetation on December 23, 1985 such that the production of an agricultural commodity was not possible and will not be further modified by the project. OR the project will impact the hydrology but will still meet wetland hydrology.	
The project area was impacted by drainage prior to December 23, 1985 such that it did not support ponding or flooding for more than brief periods (1-3 days), and the land did not support woody vegetation on that date.		After the conversion action, the project area hydrology fails to meet the wetland hydrology definition in 7CFR12.	x 0

Wildlife Habitat Assessment

Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) $\frac{V^H + V^S + V^V}{3}$	1.00	0.03
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.00
Loss of Wildlife Habitat (ΔWH) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.15	

STEP 9 Determine impacts to water quality functional capacity for the Project Area.

Water Quality Assessment

Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) $\frac{2V^H + V^S}{3}$	1.00	0.03
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.00
Loss of Water Quality (ΔWQ) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.15	

STEP 10 Determine impacts to floodwater storage functional capacity for the Project Area.

Floodwater Storage Assessment

Formula	Before-Project ¹	After-Project ²
Functional Capacity (FC) V^H	1.00	0.00
Functional Capacity Units (FCU) FC x Acres	0.15	0.00
Loss of Floodwater Storage (ΔFS) FCU ¹ - FCU ²	0.15	

Cumulative FCU Loss
at project area, plus
previous minimal
effects exemptions
(from step 12)

Wetlands in the Area Resiliency (from Step 18)

	≤ 0.20	> 0.20 to 0.40	> 0.40 to 0.60	> 0.60 to 0.85	> 0.85
≤ 0.10	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.10 to 0.25	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.25 to 0.70	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
> 0.70 to 0.85	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
> 0.85 to 1.50	No	No	No	No	Yes
> 1.50	No	No	No	No	No

Total Cumulative Functional
Capacity Units Loss for the
Project Area, plus previous
minimal effects exemptions

0.15

Wetlands in the
Area Resiliency

0.50

Is the Project Area
eligible for a
minimal effect exemption?

Yes

Project Area acreage

0.15

Approximate acreage
eligible for a
minimal effect exemption?

0.71

NY Minimal Effect Tool

- Plug in the minimal effect wetland and run the tool (target wetland).
- 2 mile radius
- Calculates wetlands in the area using NWI polygons.
- Calculates static tract boundaries.

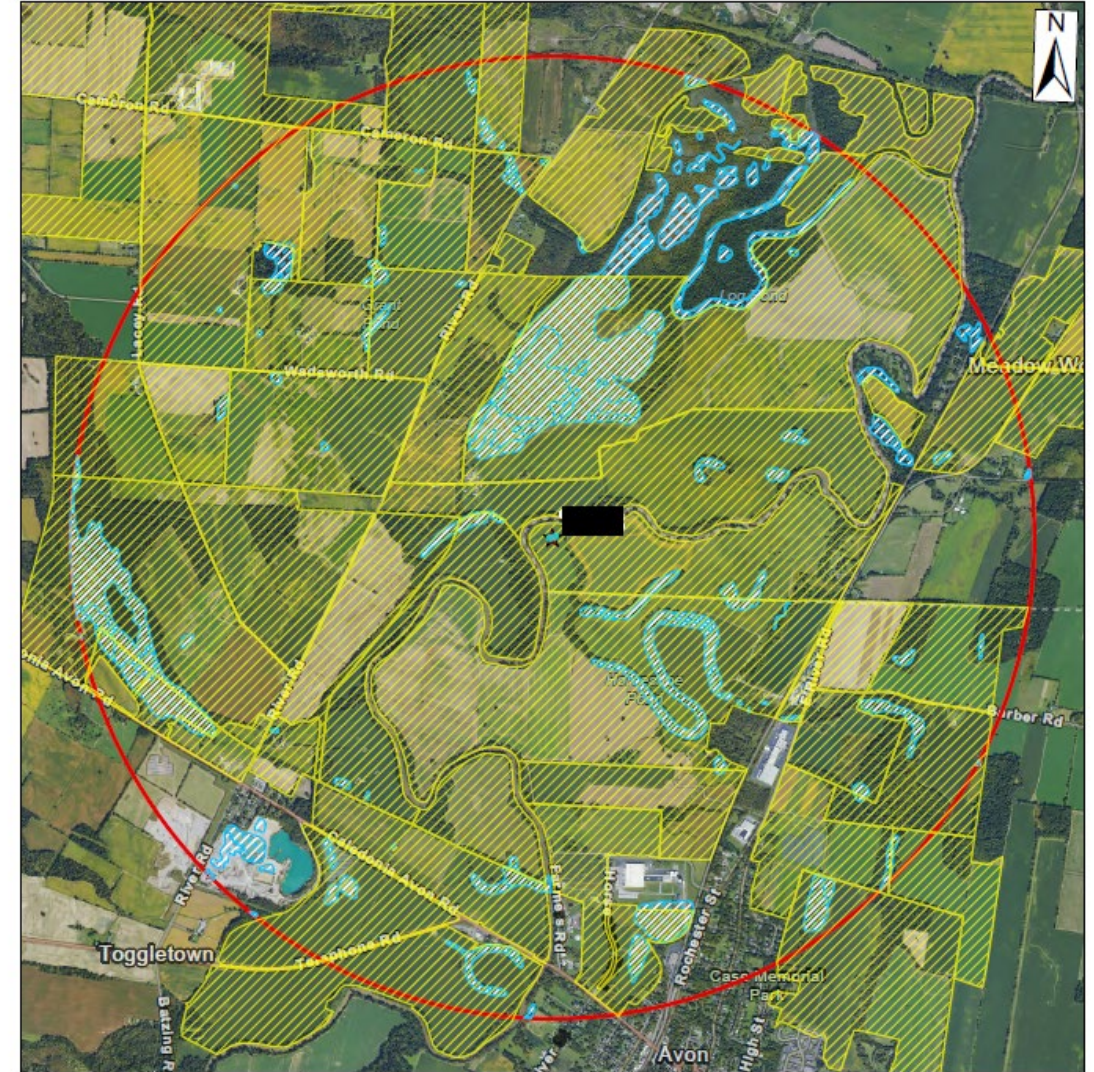
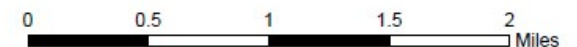


Image: USDA NAIP 2024



Output 1: NWI Wetlands in the Area

Join_Count	TARGET_FI	ATTRIBUTE	WETLAND	ACRES	NWI_ID	area_ac	pointid	grid_code	fun_cap	func_equiv_ac	nwi_asses	nwi_asses	Shape_Len	Shape_Area	
8	598705	PEM1/SS1	Freshwater	2.021985	202409CS	2.021979	7575855	90		1	2.021978778	2.021979	719.4561	8184.629	
7	599222	PEM1E	Freshwater	1.494084	202409CS	1.494078	7633069	90	0.885714286		1.323326096	1.345802	1.191996	382.1316	5447.716
3	599227	PEM1E	Freshwater	0.600567	202409CS	0.600565	7620646	90		1	0.600565333	0.600565	0.600565	188.3448	2431.003
5	599236	PEM1E	Freshwater	1.218004	202409CS	1.217999	7610792	90		1	1.217999483	1.217999	1.217999	363.8836	4930.286
1	599244	PEM1E	Freshwater	0.305936	202409CS	0.305935	7604064	81		0.1	0.030593459	0.305935	3.06E-02	155.8609	1238.402
18	599260	PEM1E	Freshwater	4.071542	202409CS	4.071527	7582492	95		0.4	1.628610721	4.071527	1.628611	525.7934	16481.09
7	599266	PEM1E	Freshwater	1.518446	202409CS	1.518441	7574168	90		1	1.518441441	1.518441	1.518441	368.1396	6146.387
1	599520	PEM1Eh	Freshwater	0.400348	202409CS	0.400347	7590909	81		0.1	0.040034669	0.400347	4.00E-02	165.0245	1620.54
1	600640	PFO1E	Freshwater	0.3778	202409CS	0.377799	7565021	81		0.1	0.037779868	0.377799	3.78E-02	167.6586	1529.292
6	601423	PSS1E	Freshwater	1.480775	202409CS	1.480769	7622878	90		1	1.480769375	1.480769	1.480769	444.065	5993.945
10	601432	PSS1E	Freshwater	2.379353	202409CS	2.379345	7602092	90		0.82	1.951063145	2.379345	1.951063	550.3475	9631.254
22	601440	PSS1E	Freshwater	4.763328	202409CS	4.76331	7555377	95		1	4.763310134	0.018876	1.89E-02	36.27077	76.40591
2	601587	PSS1Fh	Freshwater	0.336016	202409CS	0.336015	7560958	82		0.1	0.033601466	0.336015	3.36E-02	136.4329	1360.132
2	601588	PSS1Fh	Freshwater	0.392977	202409CS	0.392975	7559181	82		0.1	0.039297528	0.392975	3.93E-02	173.8232	1590.698
0	601952	PUBFh	Freshwater	0.098239	202409CS	0.098238				0.6	0.058942882	0.098238	5.89E-02	70.78008	397.6533
0	601953	PUBFh	Freshwater	0.098253	202409CS	0.098252				0.6	0.058951305	0.098252	5.90E-02	70.78509	397.7097
2	603742	PUBHh	Freshwater	0.260648	202409CS	0.260647	7605053	81		0.1	0.026064672	0.260647	2.61E-02	122.928	1055.079
1	603748	PUBHh	Freshwater	0.301835	202409CS	0.301833	7598235	41		1	0.301833009	0.301833	0.301833	139.7374	1221.795
4	603756	PUBHh	Freshwater	0.953518	202409CS	0.953513	7587827	81		0.1	0.095351277	0.953513	9.54E-02	373.7448	3859.666
1	603783	PUBHh	Freshwater	0.288328	202409CS	0.288327	7567319	81		0.1	0.028832673	0.288327	2.88E-02	143.4516	1167.123
2	603799	PUBHh	Freshwater	0.47058	202409CS	0.470578	7543022	81		0.1	0.04705779	0.470578	4.71E-02	173.5561	1904.846
											17.3044051				

Output 2: Tot

Total number of
tracts = 32

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	clu_county_tract	FIRST_clu_county_tr	FIRST_COUNTYCD	FIRST_TRACTNBR	SUM_clu	SUM_tract	COUNT_O	COUNT_TA	COUNT_ATTRIBUTE	
2	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.3193864	1.3193864	1	1	1	
3	XX	XX	XX	XX	3.9766413	3.8736851	6	6	6	
4	XX	XX	XX	XX	11.660964	11.660964	5	5	5	
5	XX	XX	XX	XX	21.398908	14.690203	2	2	2	
6	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.351489	0.261106	1	1	1	
7	XX	XX	XX	XX	2.4820077	2.2827405	2	2	2	
8	XX	XX	XX	XX	6.0041688	5.1213170	7	7	7	
9	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.657342	0.649295	3	3	3	
10	XX	XX	XX	XX	9.0708655	9.0145184	3	3	3	
11	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.3248571	1.3248571	2	2	2	
12	XX	XX	XX	XX	2.3467010	0.436966	2	2	2	
13	XX	XX	XX	XX	3.4470070	3.2793148	1	1	1	
14	XX	XX	XX	XX	5.5021152	4.5285677	3	3	3	
15	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.6339254	1.6339254	1	1	1	
16	XX	XX	XX	XX	20.137044	20.137044	2	2	2	
17	XX	XX	XX	XX	12.754776	12.754776	5	5	5	
18	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.269916	0.16195	1	1	1	
19	XX	XX	XX	XX	213.04174	196.88142	19	19	19	
20	XX	XX	XX	XX	65.789407	64.879850	8	8	8	
21	XX	XX	XX	XX	2.1854654	2.1854654	2	2	2	
22	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.2005715	1.2005715	1	1	1	
23	XX	XX	XX	XX	12.302994	12.302994	2	2	2	
24	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.756332	0.546546	3	3	3	
25	XX	XX	XX	XX	51.940287	26.603581	15	15	15	
26	XX	XX	XX	XX	16.623600	6.7415611	6	6	6	
27	XX	XX	XX	XX	6.1688259	4.2385577	7	7	7	
28	XX	XX	XX	XX	0.715366	0.712628	3	3	3	
29	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.3950353	1.3616146	3	3	3	
30	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.4797733	1.4797733	2	2	2	
31	XX	XX	XX	XX	1.3310896	1.3310896	3	3	3	
32	XX	XX	XX	XX	7.1862997	6.0492234	2	2	2	
33	XX	XX	XX	XX						
34										



Questions?



Karen Hoffman

State Grazing Specialist

- **NEW Interim Practice 827** 
- **Strategic Harvested Forage Management**

ICPS 827 - Strategic Harvested Forage Management

- Commonly known as “Bale Grazing”
- Similar to CSP enhancement E528P
- Definition:

The planned feeding of livestock by controlling access to harvested forages arranged in a predetermined pattern on the landscape to address specific resource needs.



PURPOSE

This practice is used to accomplish one or more of the following purposes—

- Improve or maintain soil health and quality, and soil organism habitat by increasing organic matter, improving soil aggregate stability, or reducing compaction.
- Improve plant productivity, health, and vigor.
- Reduce sheet, rill, and classic gully erosion.
- Reduce seasonal farm energy inputs and improve the efficiency of field operations.
- Reduce the transportation of sediment, nutrients, or pathogens to surface or ground waters.
- Improve infiltration, soil water holding capacity, and naturally available moisture use.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to crop land, hay land, and pasture land where strategic feeding of harvested forages will address an applicable resource concern. Due to the risk of increasing invasive species, this practice is not applicable to native range.

IR and Workbook

- Unable to load supporting docs into FOTG
 - Located on Teams

Resources and Technology > Planning Documents > Pasture and Grazing > Bale Grazing - ICPS827

 Name ▾	Modified By ▾	Modified ▾
 827_NY_ICPS_Strategic_Harvested_Forage_Management_2025.pdf	Hoffman, Karen - FPAC	March 17
 827_NY_IR_Strategic_Harvested_Forage_Management_2025.pdf	Hoffman, Karen - FPAC	March 17
 827_NY_Strategic_Harvested_Forage_Management_Workbook.xlsx	Hoffman, Karen - FPAC	March 17



Workbook

- Similar to PGM Workbook
- Calculates number of bales based on animal numbers, dry matter intake, and length of “feeding season”

**Strategic Harvested Forage Management (827)**

Calculations sheet

Producer

Program

Year

Tract

Field

Field Acres

Purpose:

Enter information in the blue cells to aid in planning this practice.

Step 1: Determine Forage Demand

Enter the animal types and weights that will be utilized during the practice period. Enter a whole number for the percentage of body weight consumed. Typically animals consume between 2 and 4% of their body weight.

Animal Type	Animal Weight (lbs)		Number in Herd		% of Body Weight being Consumed		Forage Demand per day
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
		x		x		=	
Total Herd Demand/Day							0

Enter the number of days for feeding in the blue cells to determine total herd demand.

Animal Type	Animal Forage Demand/Day		# of Days to be Fed		Forage Required (lbs)
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
		x		=	
Total Herd Demand					0 lbs (on dry matter basis)

Total Herd Demand

0 lbs

Forage Dry Matter %

Forage Needed

(as fed basis)

Step 2: Determine How many bales are needed:

Enter the bale weight and either Preferred Residual Amount in pounds or Preferred Residual Amount in Percentage.

Bale Weight (lbs)	Preferred Residual Amount (lbs)	or	Preferred Residual Amount (%)	Number of Bales Needed

Step 3: Setup and Design

Use the following equations below to help in planning the setup and design of the practice. Not all of the equations need to be used.

Enter a planned bale spacing ft

To determine how much forage to allocate for a certain period of time:

Bale Weight (from above)	Demand/Day	Planned Days between Moves	# of Bales allocated each period
0			

To determine how many bales you need to cover a certain area:

Field Length (ft)	Field Width (ft)	Acres

Bales needed:

by

Total

This would feed the herd, forage type, and spacing specified above for approx. depending on weather, forage quality, etc.

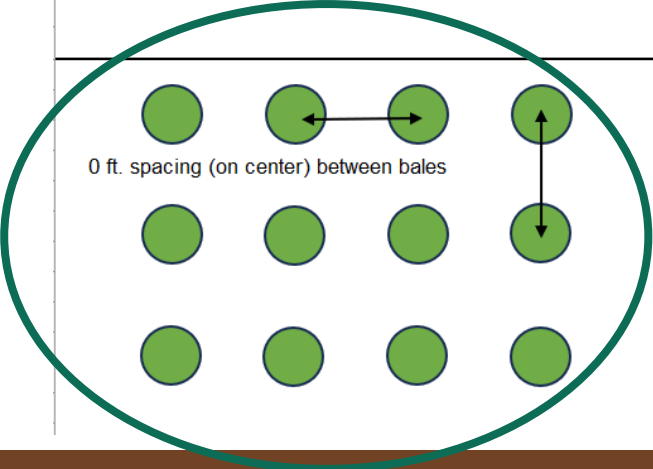
The above information will be prepopulated in the "IR Supplement" tab for printing and giving to the producer. Attach plan map with watering facility locations, fence locations, and other pertinent information

IR Supplement

- Provides extra info to producer based on calculations – optional

Strategic Harvested Forage Management (827)
 Planning and Application
 Producer: _____ Program: 0 Year: _____
 Tract: _____ Field: _____ Field Acres: _____
 Purpose: 0

Planned		Applied	
Total Herd Demand/Day	0 lbs forage	Begin use date	
Total Days in Feeding Period	days	End use date	
Total Herd Demand (as fed)	0 lbs	Actual Days Fed	
Planned bale size	0 lbs	# of bales used	
Number of bales needed		Spacing used	
Planned Rotation Period	0 day moves	Total Acres Treated	
# of Bales for each rotation	bales	Days in Rotation	
Planned Coverage Area	- acres	# of Bales Fed per rotation	
Field Length	- ft	Notes on performance	
Field Width	- ft		
Bales Needed for certain coverage area	bales long bale wide total bales		
Additional Notes		Attach photos, monitoring records, or other information as needed for certification.	



0 ft. spacing (on center) between bales

Additional Planning Requirements
 Attach plan map indicating fence, shelter, water, and mineral locations (as applicable).

 Determine need for contingency plan in case of inclement weather.



Questions?





Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NY Cooperative Soil Survey-Update

April 7, 2025

Dan Ufnar, NY State Soil Scientist, daniel.ufnar@usda.gov

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Public Law (PL 89-560-Sept.7, 1966)

The legislative authority of the Soil Survey Program as defined by PL 89-560 and directed by the Secretary of Agriculture :

- (i) **make an inventory** of US soil resources;
- (ii) **keep the soil survey relevant** to changing needs;
- (iii) **interpret soil information** and **make it available in a useful form**;
- (iv) **promote the soil survey and provide technical assistance** for a wide range of... issues.

National Cooperative Soil Survey

What does the NCSS Do?

- ***NCSS cooperators collaborate on efforts to increase our understanding of soils through field studies, soil mapping projects, soil database development, and other technical soil services.***

What is the NCSS?

- The National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS) is a nationwide partnership of Federal, regional, State, and local agencies and private entities and institutions. This partnership works to cooperatively investigate, inventory, document, classify, interpret, disseminate, and publish information about soils. NCSS standards are common or shared procedures that enhance technology transfer, data sharing, and communications among soil survey participants.

Who can join?

- Anyone can join the NCSS. View our [ArcGIS Story Map](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/partner-with-us/national-cooperative-soil-survey) to learn more about us!

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about/partner-with-us/national-cooperative-soil-survey>

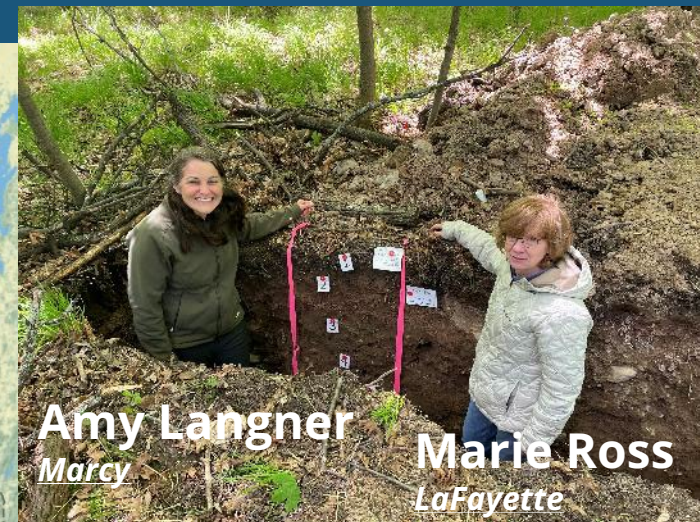




**Troy
Beldini**
Geneseo



**Dan
Ufnar**
Syracuse



Amy Langner
Marcy

Marie Ross
LaFayette



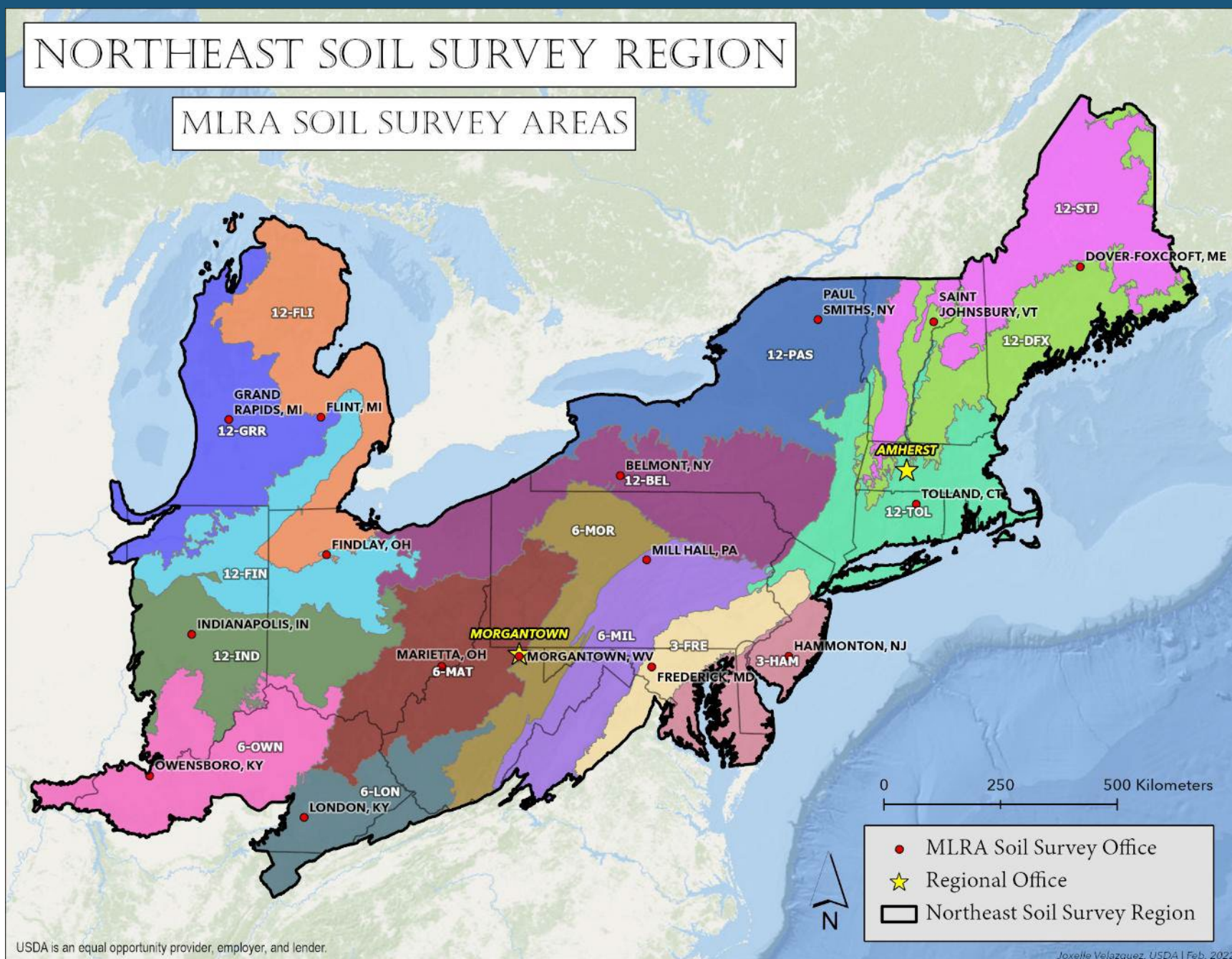
**Olga
Vargas**
Greenwich



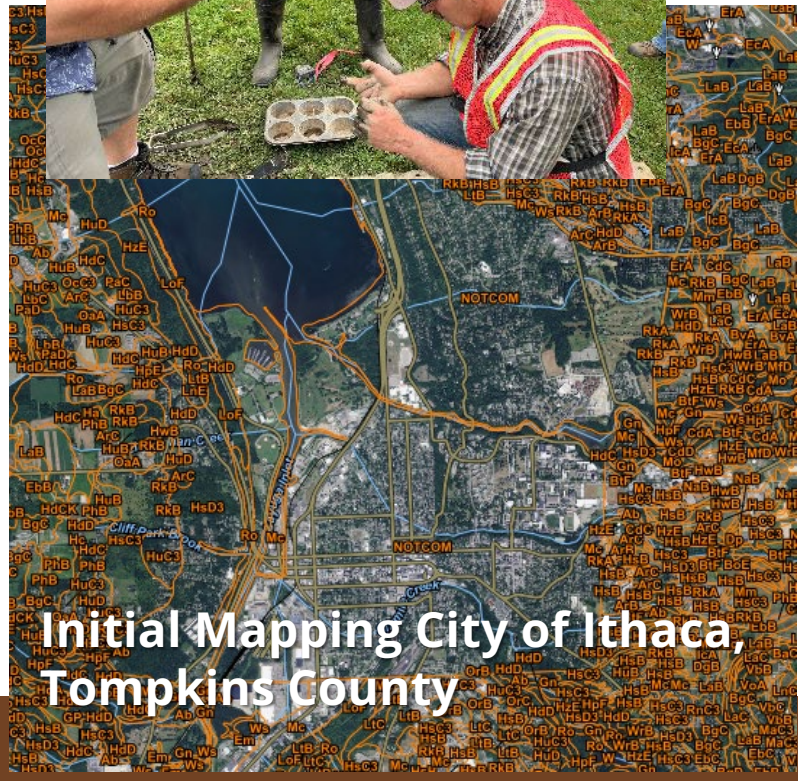
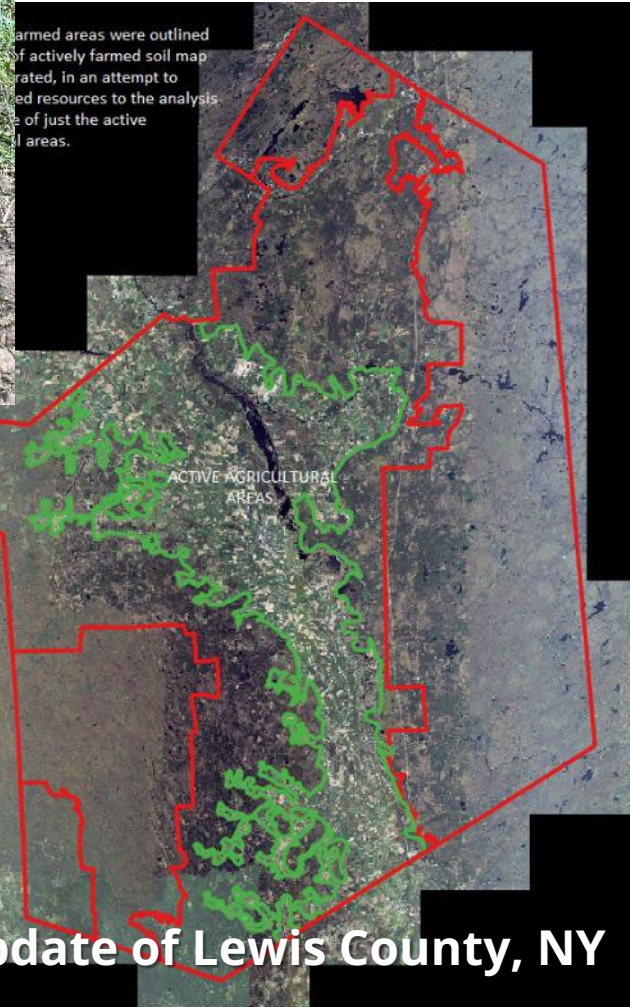
NRCS-NY Soil Scientists

Current MLRA Staff in NY:

Matt Havens, Soil Scientist
Belmont, NY



Active MLRA Projects FY 2025



Initial Mapping City of Ithaca
Tompkins County

Initial Mapping Niagara County

Update of Lewis County, NY

Annual Soils Data Refresh

- All official soils data can be accessed via Web Soil Survey or Soil Data Access
<https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>
<https://sdmdataaccess.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- Annual soils refresh occurs every year in October
- Remember to update the GIS soils data you use, yearly!!
- Sign up for updates in GovDelivery: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soil/govdelivery-topics>

Annual Soils Data Refresh-NY eFOTG

- eFOTG, Section 2, Soils Information: spreadsheets updated after the refresh each year
- Spreadsheets include Farmland Class, Flooding and Ponding Frequency, Hydrologic Soil Groups



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



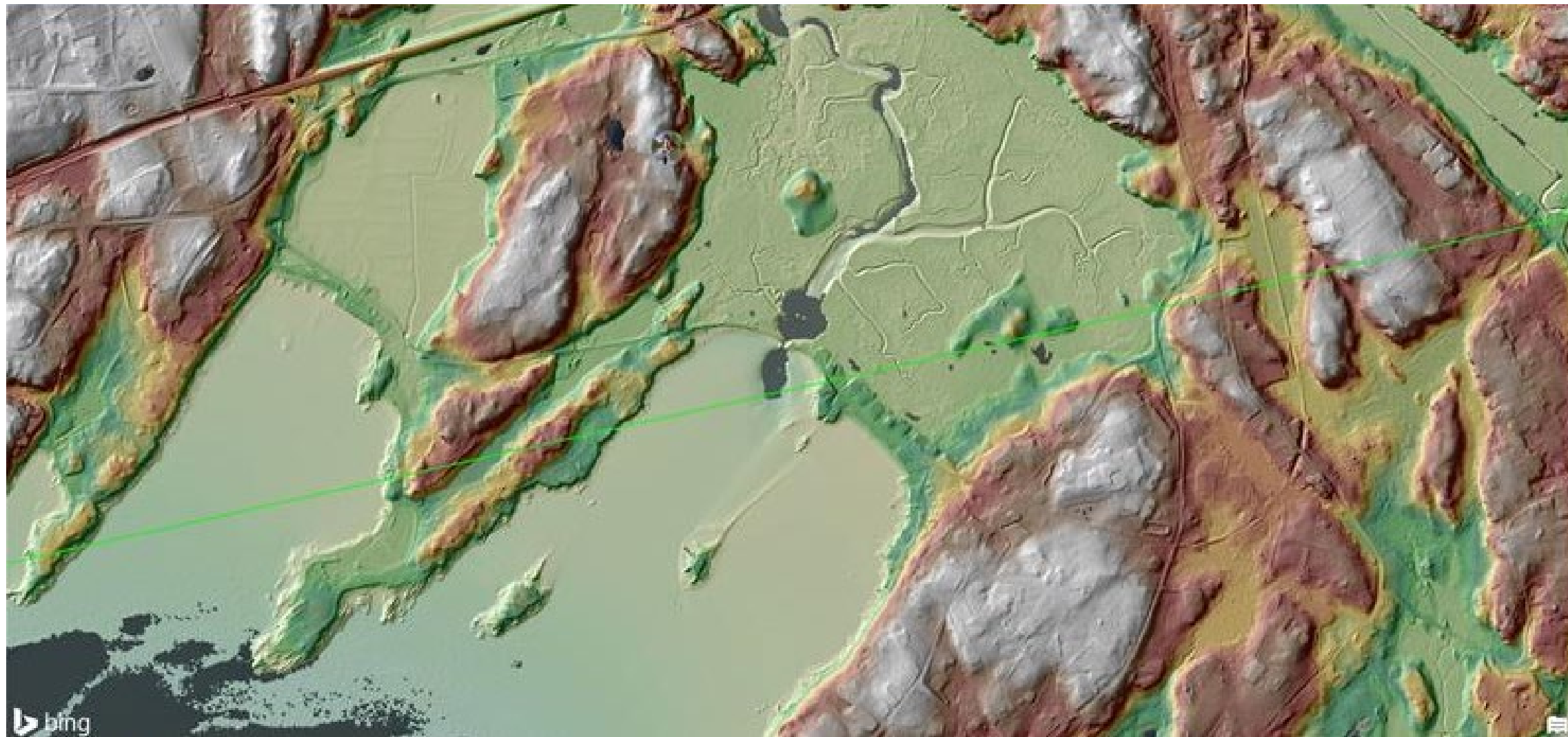
Coastal Zone Soil Survey
Greg Taylor, Senior Soil Scientist for Special Projects

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center





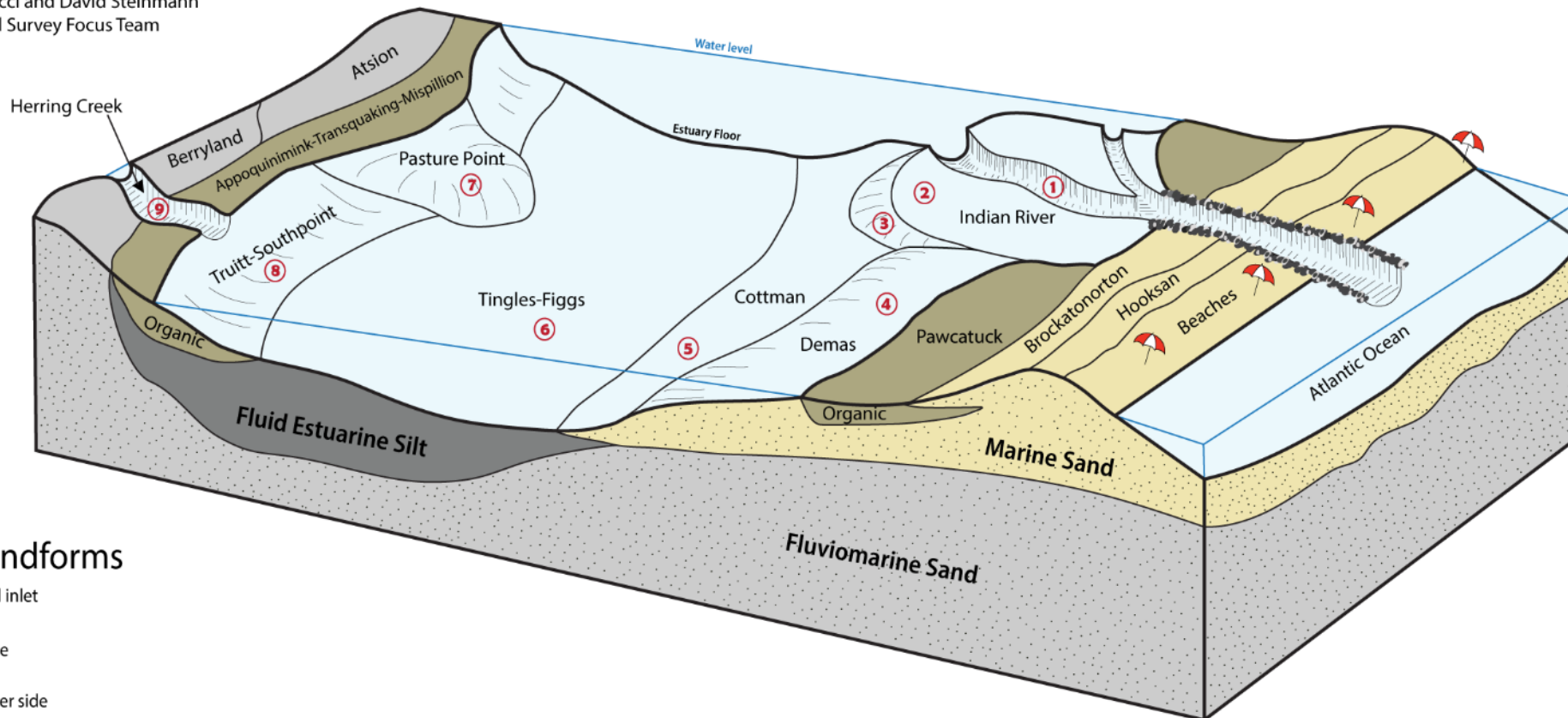
How We Do It



Landform Mapping

MLRA 153D: Coastal and Subaqueous Soils of the Mid-Atlantic

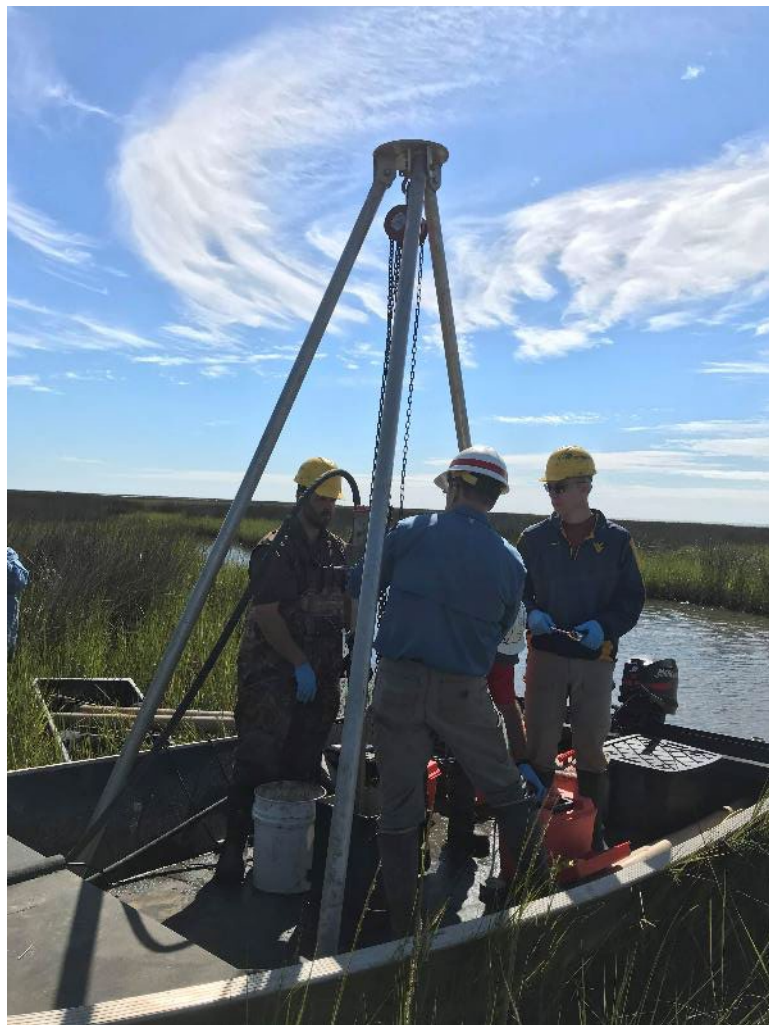
Created by Andy Paolucci and David Steinmann
Coastal Zone Soil Survey Focus Team



Subaqueous Landforms

- ① Flood tidal delta tidal inlet
- ② Flood tidal delta flat
- ③ Flood tidal delta slope
- ④ Washover fan flat
- ⑤ Lagoon bottom barrier side
- ⑥ Lagoon bottom
- ⑦ Submerged wave cut platform
- ⑧ Mainland cove
- ⑨ Estuarine tidal creek

Tools and Equipment – Boats

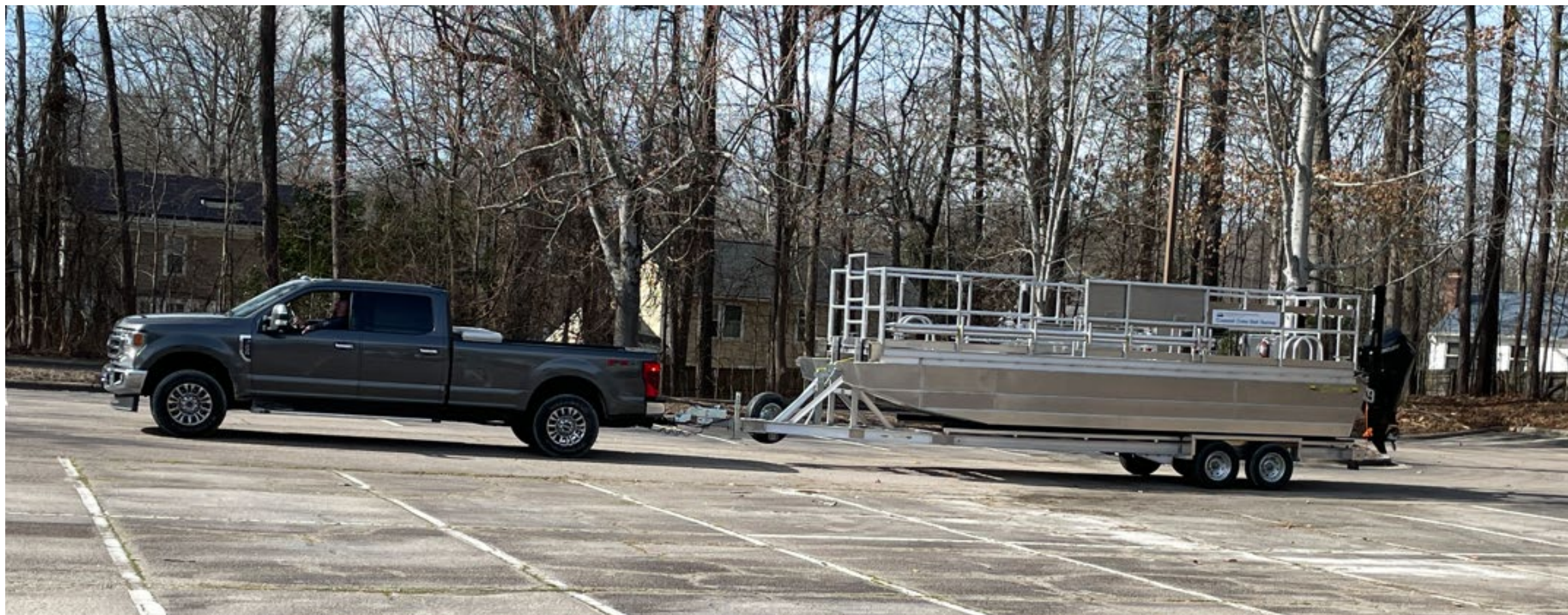


Tools and Equipment – Boats





Tools and Equipment – Boats



Tools and Equipment – Boats



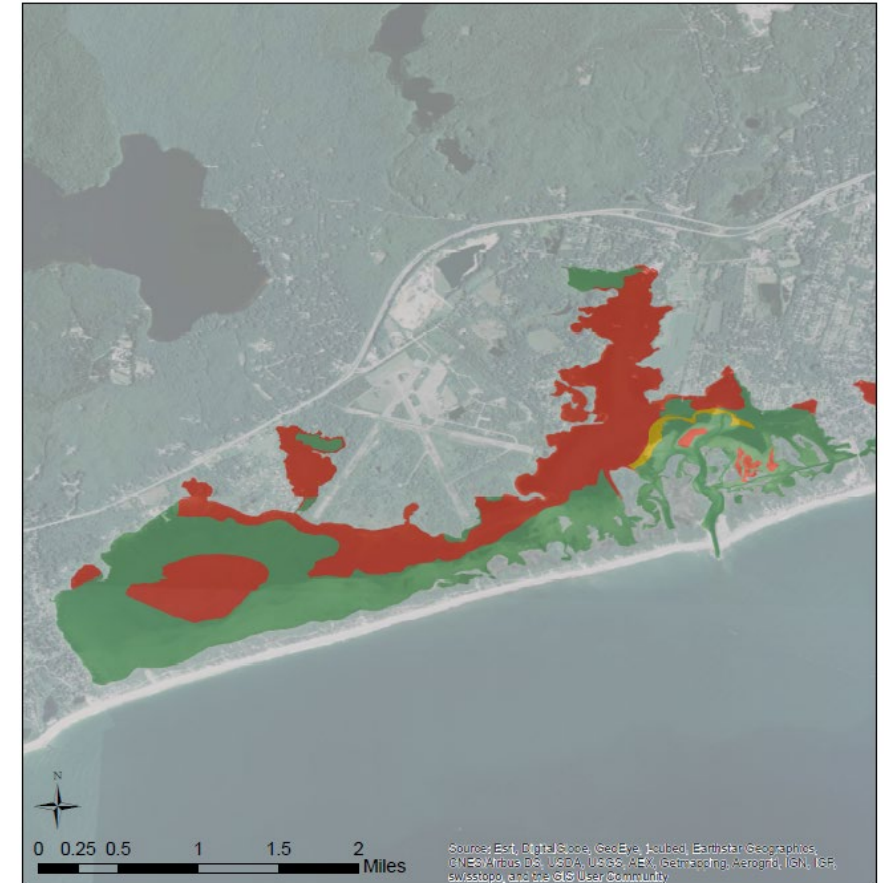
Tools and Equipment – Trailers



What CZSS Is Used for . . .

- If what you're trying to manage, restore, inventory, or protect has a dependency on bottom type, then CZSS can help!
- Bottom type is simply a soil property/soil type!
- Soil physical and chemical properties are related to habitat needs to create interpretations.
- Other factors can also be added to a dataset, such as fetch, current, water quality, or other local conditions.
- It's another resource that can be inventoried.

Oyster Production and Restoration



Legend
soilmu_a_r1600
SAS - Oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*) substrate_rating

- Not rated
- Not limited
- Somewhat limited
- Very limited

Date: 12/29/2016

Soil Interpretations – Getting Started

- We start with research and talking with experts to understand where oysters want to live (habitat and habits)
- Eastern Oyster is most common and native to eastern US spanning from Gulf of St. Lawrence to Gulf of America (geographical location/distribution)
- They like a water depth of 8 to 35' but can also thrive in intertidal zones where water is warmer (water depth, water temp, geographic location, temperature regime)

Soil Interpretations – Continued

- Prefers hard bottoms (surface horizon, soil particle size, and CMECS [Coastal Marine Ecological Classification] bottom type)
- Thrives in brackish and salty water with relative constant turbidity (soil and water salinity – EC – YSI – pH – record general turbidity and other water quality data)

Other Things to Consider

- Freshwater
 - We've seen where freshwater inflows have resulted in fast-growing and very large oysters – not good table fare but good for water filtering and quick establishment
 - Freshwater discharge areas can also increase oyster growth
 - How do we know where freshwater discharge areas are?
- Existing or historical oyster bed locations
 - Clutch planting is used to place processed oyster shells on depleted reefs where suitable bottom types coincide. – FL Dep of Ag
 - Good to tour the area with local experts – why we have a bay boat!

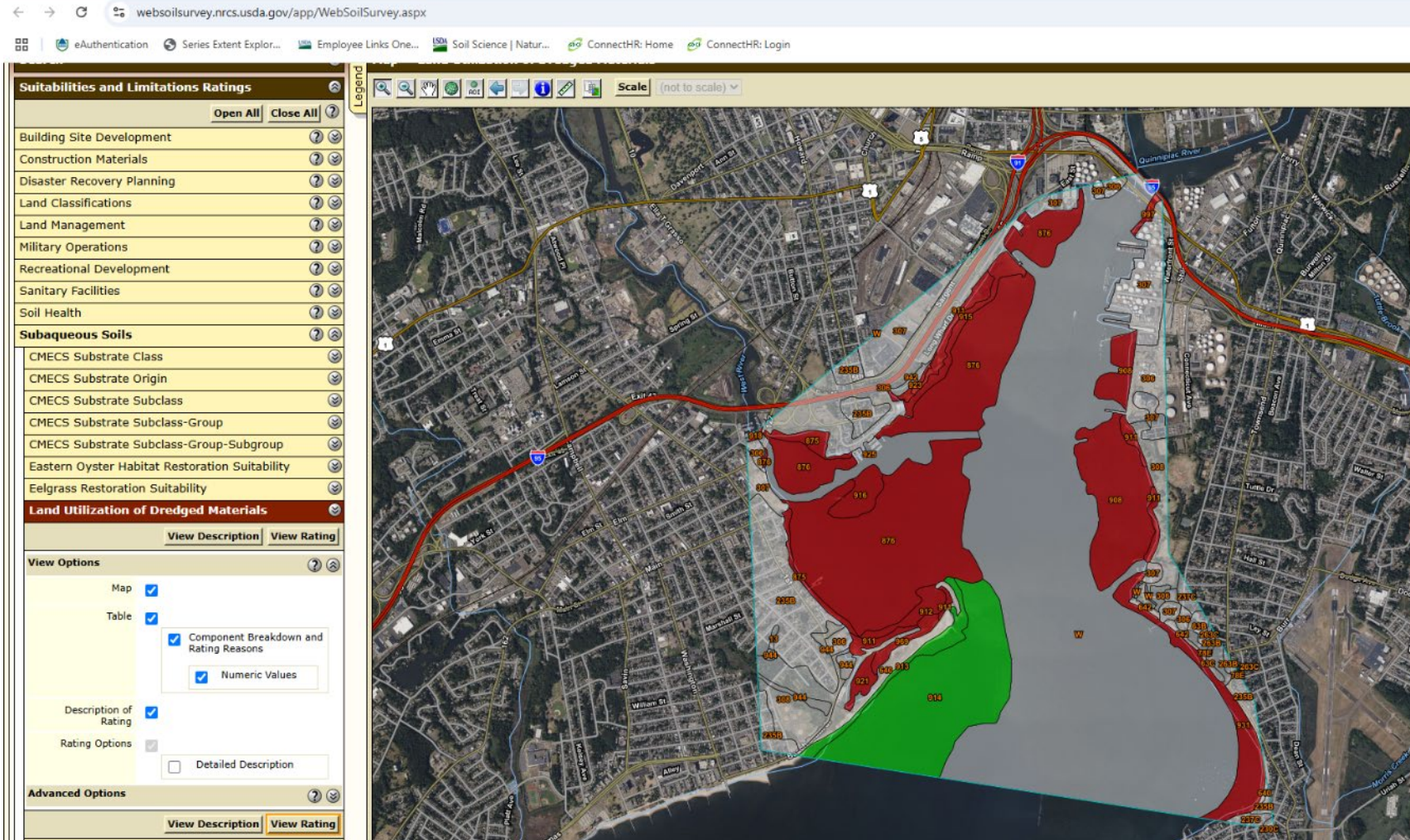
What Does a Soil Interp Look Like?

- Much like any NRCS publications, it's compiled, reviewed, and approved before creation and sharing.
- Tries to capture everything that helps tie soil properties to help fix a problem or guide others in making decisions.
- Is not created in a vacuum.
- Is a dynamic, living document that can evolve as we learn. Not a one-and-done activity.

What Our Oyster Interp looks like



Land Utilization of Dredged Materials Interp



Other Soil Interps on the Horizon

- Living Shoreline Restoration
- Saltwater Intrusion Potential/Risk
- Marsh Migration
- Aquaculture outside of oysters and hard clams (Quahog)
- Updates to engineering interps where saltwater intrusion is changing the soil types/properties

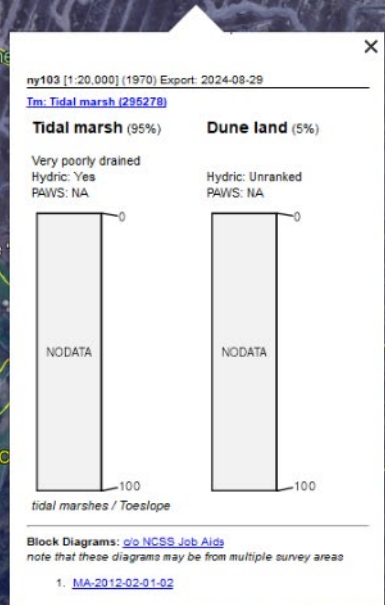
Current Requests for CZSS in New York

- **Long Island Sound – 7 Letters of Request**
 - New York NRCS State Conservationist Mr. Glover
 - Brooklyn College
 - US Environmental Protection Agency
 - The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk
 - New York Sea Grant
 - Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District
 - New York Department of Environmental Conservationist
Division of Marine Resources
- **Builds off LIS mapping from CT side**

Current Requests for CZSS in New York

- **Peconic Bay – 2 Letters of Request**
 - Peconic Estuary Partnership
 - Stony Brook University School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences
- **Crab Meadow Marsh – 1 Letter** (representing 4 groups)
 - National Audubon Society with Atlantic Coast Joint Venture, US Fish and Wildlife, and Town of Huntington, NY

Crab Meadow Marsh



Why???

Peconic Bay



Our Plan

- Start with Crab Meadow
 - Small area that can help us quickly establish marsh soils that can be applied in Peconic Bay and rest of Long Island Sound (LIS)
 - Needing the data sooner due to ongoing, funded project.
- Continue to Peconic Bay and LIS
 - Specific areas based off NY NRCS needs and partner feedback
- Work with local experts to revise/update interps
- Get to work!



Questions?



Greg Taylor
Senior Soil Scientist for
Special Projects
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Cell: (919) 604-7320
j.greg.taylor@usda.gov

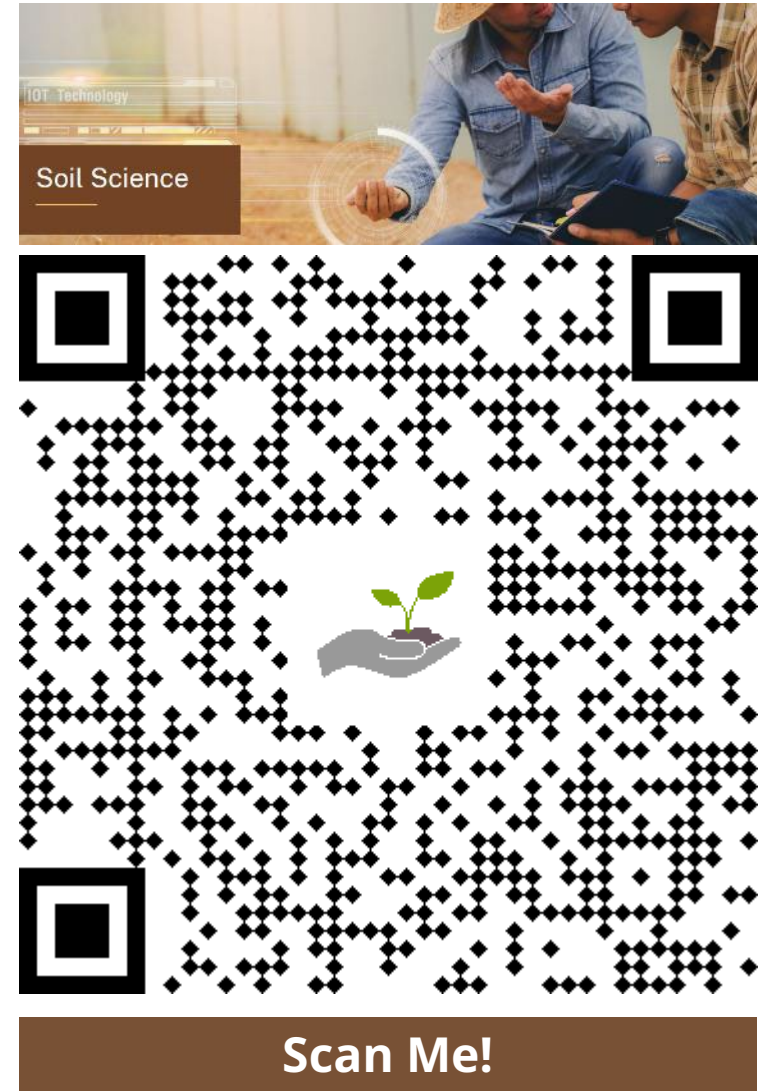


Connect with us!

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State Technical Committee August 7, 2025



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Emily Armstrong,
ASTC-Programs

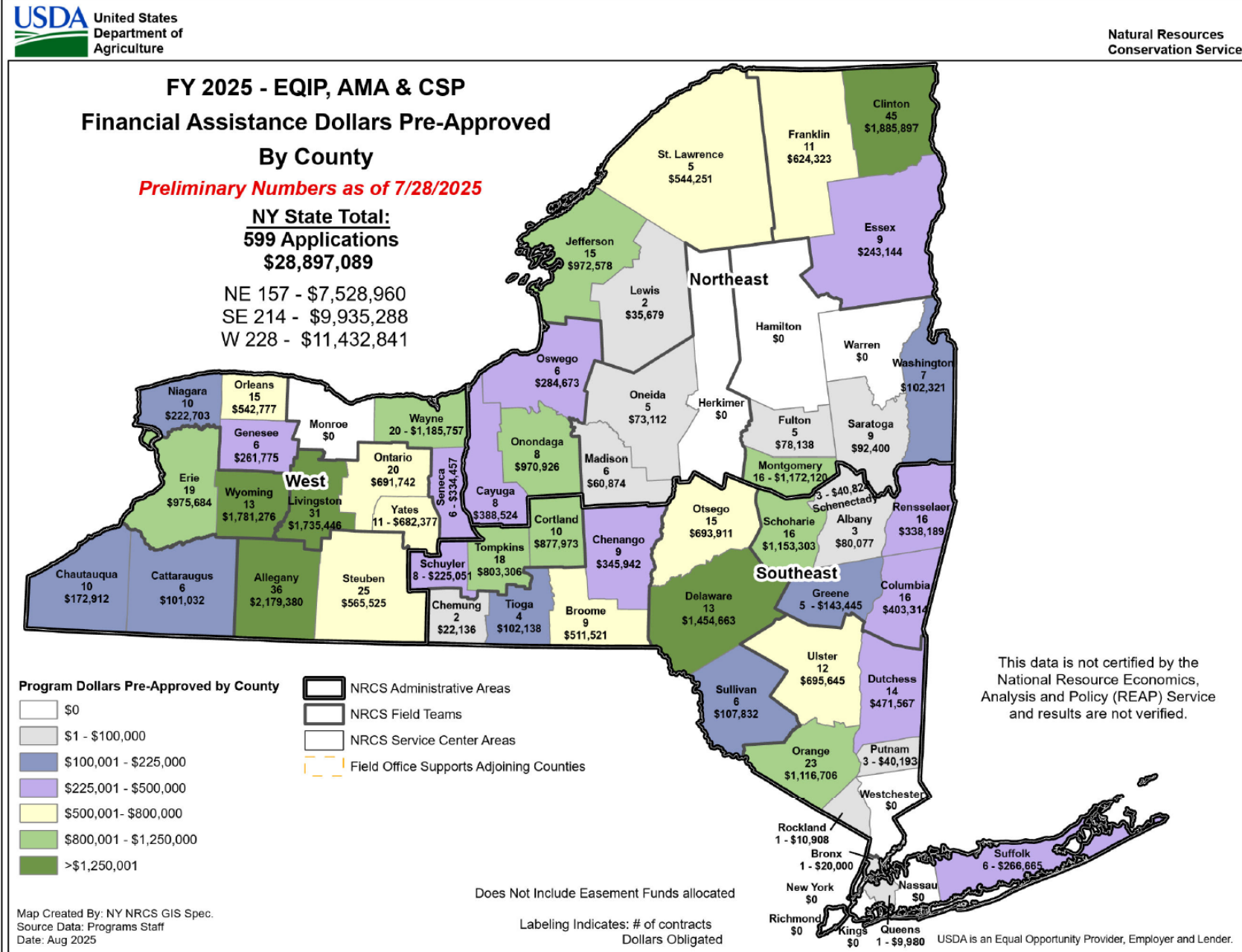


FY2025 Accomplishments

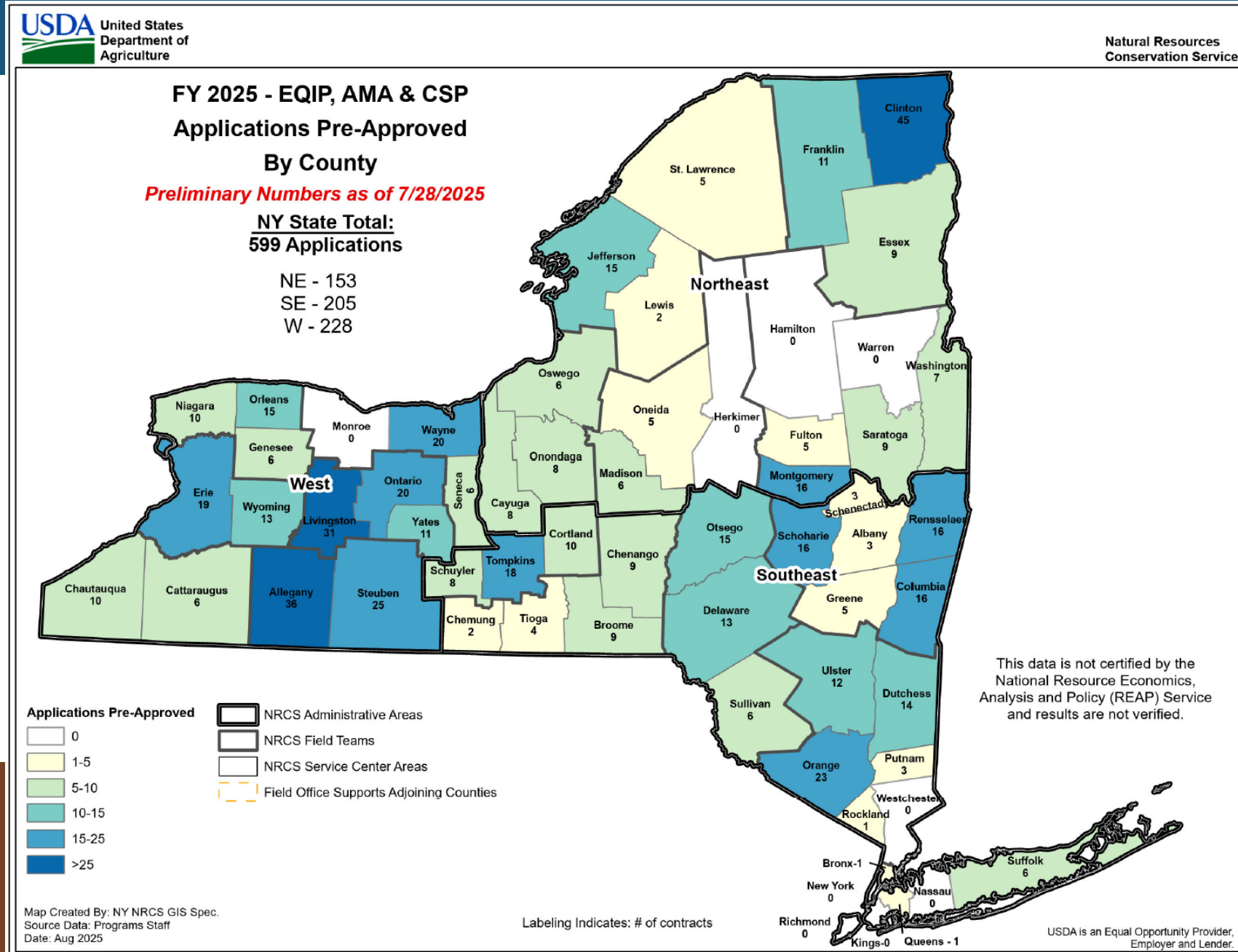
FY2026 Program Rollout



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FY2025 Accomplishments





FY2026 Program Rollout

Program	Application Deadline**	Target Obligation Date
AMA	November 1, 2025	July 10th, 2026
EQIP General	November 1, 2025	July 10th, 2026
EQIP Initiatives	November 1, 2025	July 10th, 2026
EQIP CIC	TBD	July 10th, 2026
EQIP ACT NOW	November 1, 2025	July 10th, 2026
CSP Renewals	June 30, 2025	December 19, 2025
CSP Classic	November 1, 2025	May 15th, 2026

**NRCS accepts applications on a continuous basis but has application cut-off dates to establish funding periods.



Any
Questions



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Scott Travis, Financial Assistance Programs
EQIP/AMA program manager, NRCS
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Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

- Passed into law August 16th 2022
- IRA was rescinded on July 4th 2025
- We will continue to implement existing IRA contracts

Act Now

- Immediately preapprove a ranked application
- Do not need to wait until all applications are ranked in a specific ranking pool
- NY must designate ranking pool(s):
 - Conservation Planning Activities
 - High Tunnel
- Meets or exceeds a NY determined minimum ranking score – 80 points
- Allows for more efficient processing of applications

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)- what is it?

Provides financial and technical assistance to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserve ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

FY 25 ~ \$23 million in funding for NY

What's it for

- EQIP works well for those who are new to working with our financial assistance programs
- They can be short- or long-term agreements
- It can assist with simple or complex projects
- Flexible to best fit the participants needs
- Can be combined with other non-USDA funding
- Have increased payment rates for Historically Underserved populations (HU)

EQIP- payments

- EQIP uses flat rate per unit implemented payment in our agreements (i.e. \$1.30/ft, \$231.72/ac)
 - Payment Rates are created from payment scenarios which are built based on a typical scenario to implement the practice, considering labor, materials, equipment, mobilization, acquisition of technical knowledge, and forgone income
 - NY uses the maximum allowed payment rate of 75% of typical scenario cost for practices (90% for HU participants)
 - Payment rates are created/updated on a yearly basis

Target Funding

- 50% benefitting livestock
- 10% benefitting wildlife/habitat
- 5% for beginning farmers
- 5% for socially disadvantaged farmers
- 10% source water Protection

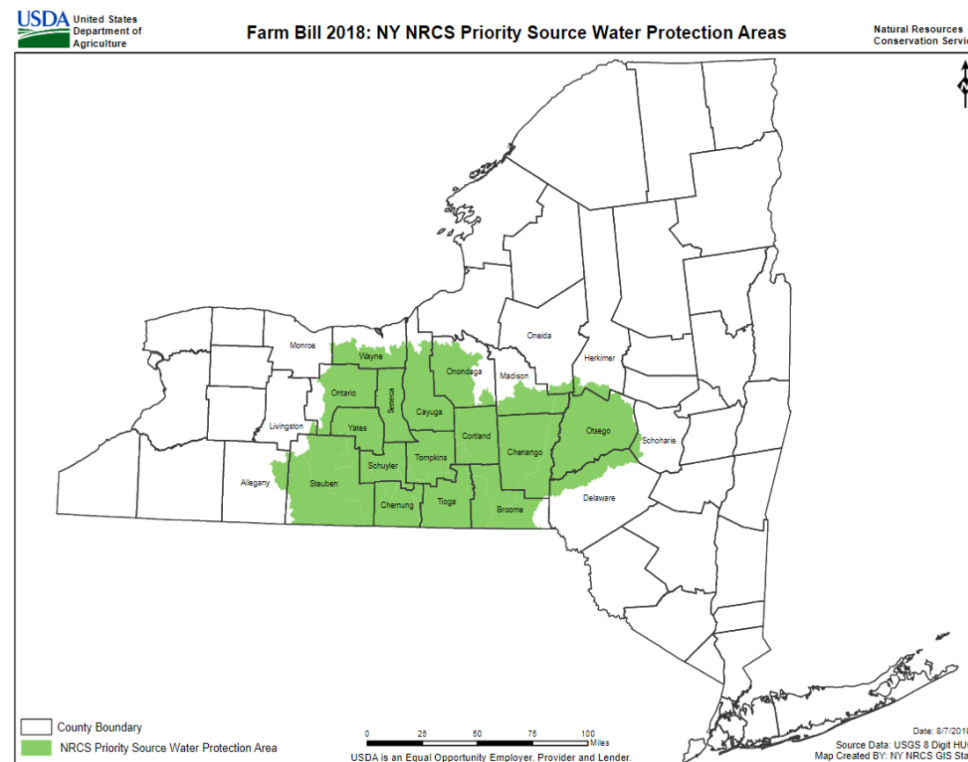
- These targets can overlap

EQIP - Initiatives

- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - ~\$3 million
- On Farm Energy – ~\$250K
- High Tunnel - ~\$3.37 million
- Organic - ~\$248K
- Working Lands for Wildlife
 - NY – Golden-winged Warbler - ~\$291K

Source water protection

- The 2018 Farm Bill included specific provisions to protect sources of drinking water by identifying practices that have a significant water quality or water quantity benefit and implementing those practices where source waters can be protected or improved.
- The Chesapeake Bay watershed and portions of the Finger Lakes watershed have been selected to focus on in the past.



Source water Protection- priority practices

- Below are the selected priority practices which received a higher payment rate FY2025.
 - Cover Crop (340)
 - Filter Strip (393)
 - Nutrient Management (590)
 - Residue and Tillage Management, No Till (329)
 - Riparian Forest Buffer (391)
 - Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390)
 - Roofs and Covers (367)
 - Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)
 - Waste Storage Facility (313)
 - Waste Transfer (634)

EQIP-CIC: Conservation Incentive Contracts

- Purpose: Steppingstone for producers from EQIP to CSP
- Payments for adopting Structural, Vegetative, Management Practices.
- Payments for managing, maintaining, and improving the incentive practices
- \$200,000 payment limitation per Farm Bill
 - Separate from EQIP
- States identify high priority areas
 - Must include the entire state
- States identify priority resource concern associated with a high priority area
 - Field sediment and pathogen nutrient loss
 - Soil quality limitations
 - Wind and water erosion



FY 2025 Contracts

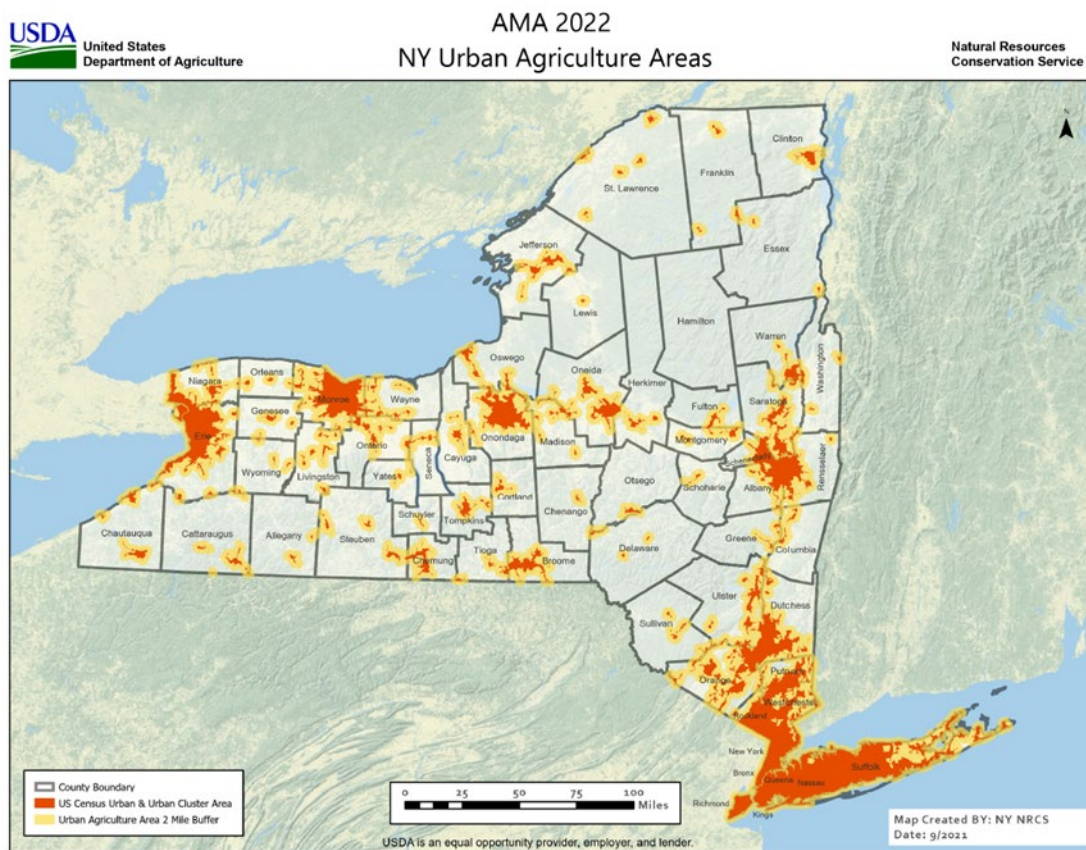
- A total of 454 applications were selected for funding
- For a total value of \$23,853,515
 - Cropland – \$1.3 mil
 - Farmstead – \$9.9 mil
 - Forest – \$1.2 mil
 - Pasture – \$1 mil
 - Wildlife – \$2.2 mil
 - Other \$8.2 mil
 - Urban, initiatives, energy, etc.

Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)

- AMA
 - Construct or improve watershed management structures or irrigation structures.
 - Plant trees to form windbreaks or to improve water quality.
 - Mitigate financial risk through production or marketing diversification or the implementation of resource conservation practices, including soil erosion control, integrated pest management, or the transition to organic farming.
 - NRCS administers the conservation provisions while Agricultural Marketing Service and Risk Management Agency implement the production diversification and marketing provisions.
- There is a \$50,000/Fiscal year cap.
- The payment rate for AMA is the same as EQIP.

AMA

- FY26 NY plans to continue to use the identified Urban Ag Areas with an additional 2-mile buffer for AMA implementation







CSP 2025



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Conservation Stewardship Program

- Purpose of CSP:
 - To encourage participants to address priority resource concerns and improve and conserve the quality and condition of natural resources by maintaining a baseline of good conservation practices and adopting additional conservation activities.
 - For Amland and Forestry
 - NY has added a unique and separate Urban funding pool
 - Participants enter into contracts for 5 years
 - Participants earn CSP payments annually for conservation performance – the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

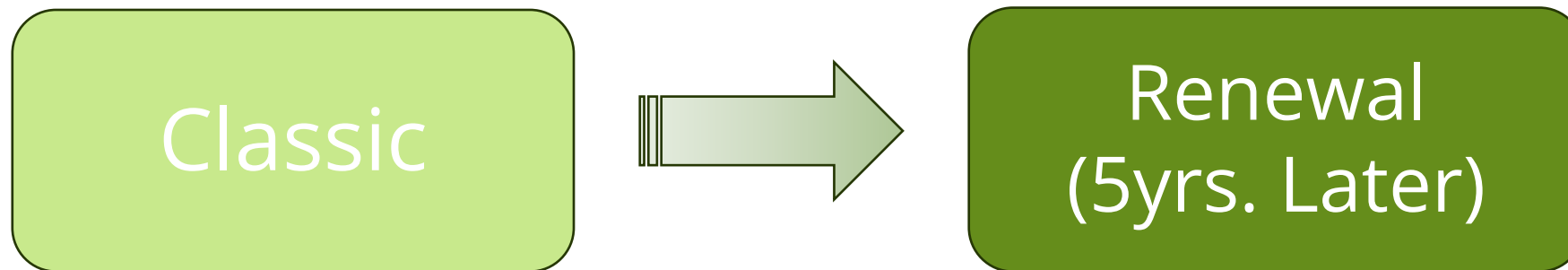
Conservation Stewardship Program

- Purpose of CSP:
 - Payments are in two parts
 1. The first is the Stewardship annual payment for the existing conditions.
 - a. Half of that is based upon the resource concerns already met at time of application
 - b. The other half is based upon a flat rate for General or Historically Underserved
 2. The second part of the payment is for what the participant agrees to do to go “above and beyond” that benchmark stewardship
 - Payments are capped at \$200,000 over the life of the 5- year contract.



Conservation Stewardship Program

- CSP Versions
 - There are two versions of CSP
 1. CSP Classic is where everyone starts. It looks at all land uses for all lands under effective control of the operation and then requires there to be at least one additionality to be completed on one land use
 2. CSP Renewals are what can be entered into after a CSP Classic has come to the 5-year contract life end. It requires a bit more than a CSP Classic in terms of additionalities that have to be done.





Conservation Stewardship Program

2026 Required Ranking Pools

Ag Land

- Agricultural land - Classic
- Agricultural land - Renewal
- Agricultural land - BFR
- Agricultural land – Renewal BFR
- Agricultural land - SDFR
- Agricultural land – Renewal SDFR
- Agricultural land - Organic
- Agricultural land – Renewal -Organic

NIPF Land

- NIPF land - Classic
- NIPF land - Renewal
- NIPF land - BFR
- NIPF land – Renewal BFR
- NIPF land - SDFR
- NIPF land – Renewal SDFR

2026 Planned Ranking Pool

- Urban Ag land

Conservation Stewardship Program

2025 Classic CSP Priority Resource Concerns

Resource Concern Categories	Ag Land - classic, renewal, BFR, SDFR	Forest - <u>classic</u> , <u>renewal</u> , BFR, SDFR	Urban	Organic/Transition to Organic
Air Quality Emissions				
Aquatic Habitat				
Concentrated Erosion	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority
Degraded Plant Condition	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority
Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss	Priority		Priority	Priority
Field Pesticide Loss	Priority		Priority	
Fire Management		Priority		
Inefficient Energy Use		Priority	Priority	
Livestock Production Limitation	Priority			Priority
Pest Pressure		Priority	Priority	Priority
Salt Losses to Water				
Soil Quality Limitations	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority
Source Water Depletion				
Storage and Handling of Pollutants				
Terrestrial Habitat	Priority	Priority	Priority	Priority
Weather Resilience				
Wind and Water Erosion	Priority	Priority		Priority



Per policy in CPM 530.301 A – need to ID 8 PRC for each ranking pool. 7CFR Part 1470.2 need to ask STC for advice.

Conservation Stewardship Program

- Resource Conserving Crops
- Some enhancements encourage a change in rotation by adding in a Resource Conserving Crop. These are currently as follows:
 - Perennial Cool Season Grasses:
 - Kentucky Bluegrass; Meadow Fescue; Orchard grass; Perennial Ryegrass; Redtop; Timothy; Smooth Brome grass; Tall Fescue
 - Cool Season Legumes (Cool Season Broadleaves):
 - Alfalfa; Alsike Clover; Birdsfoot Trefoil; Ladino White Clover; Red Clover; Sweet Clover.
 - Grass/Legume Mixes:
 - Use combinations of the above listed species in accordance with Cornell University Guidelines found at forages.org
 - Warm Season Grasses:
 - Big Bluestem; Coastal Panic Grass; Deer Tongue; Eastern Gammagrass; Indiangrass; Prairiegrass; Switchgrass; Sorghum/Sudan Grass (drilled 7-10 in rows)
 - Small Grains (Annual Cool Season Grasses) Drilled at 7-10 in. Row Spacing, Straw Unharvested:
 - Winter Wheat; Winter Rye; Winter Triticale; Spring Oats; Spring Barley

Per policy in CPM 530.301 B – Develop list of RC crops. 7CFR Part 1470.2 need to ask STC for advice.

FY2026 CSP ACT NOW

- Immediately preapprove a ranked application
- Do not need to wait until all applications are ranked in a specific ranking pool
- NY must designate ranking pool(s):
 - All ranking pools
- Meets or exceeds a NY determined minimum ranking score – 45 points
 - That got us to moving faster on the top 25% of each ranking pool
- Allows for more efficient processing of applications and contract obligation



Any
Questions



RCPP 2025



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Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Purpose of RCPP:
 - Enables NRCS to work with eligible partners to co-invest to implement conservation activities.
 - Conservation activities are accomplished via a combination of partnership agreements and contracts or agreements with eligible landowners, entities, and individuals.
 - Conservation activities are implemented according to one of these eligible activity types:
 - Land management/land improvement practices
 - Land rentals
 - Entity-held easements
 - US-held easements

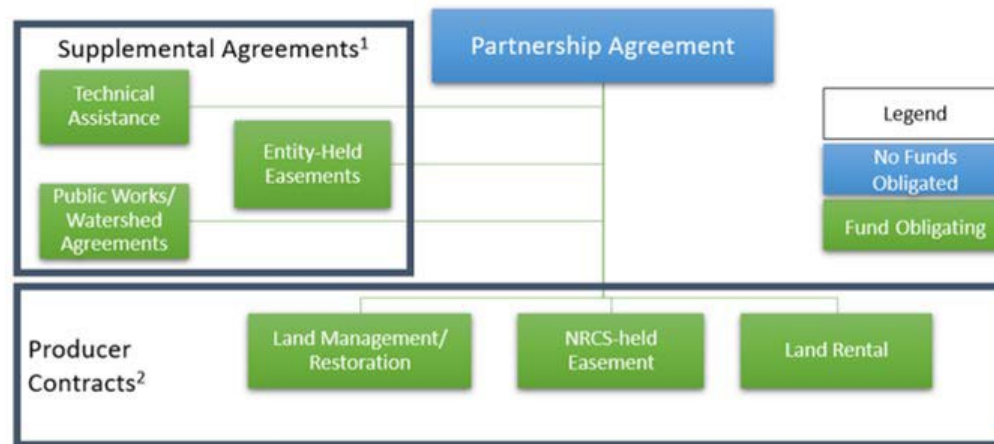


Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Purpose of RCPP:
 - A single RCPP project can propose to employ any combination of those activity types just mentioned
 - RCPP projects must be carried out on private agricultural or nonindustrial private forest land
 - New York currently has 2 active agreements

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Changes with the 2018 Farm Bill
 - Independent program now and not part of EQIP or CSP
 - Partners submit proposals after funding announcements come out on grants.gov



1 – Agreements with partners for public works/watershed activities, technical Assistance, and entity-held easement agreements.

2 – Contracts with a producer may contain one or more of the components listed in this section.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

- Review Process

- ❖ Basis of Reviews—RCPP Principles

- **Impact** 

- **Partner Contributions**



- **Partnership and Project Management**



- **NY had 5 proposals submitted last year**
 - None were selected by HQ



Any
Questions

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FY25 EASEMENTS UPDATES



State Technical
Advisory Committee
August 7, 2025

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Erica Stach, Management and Program Analyst, erica.stach@usda.gov

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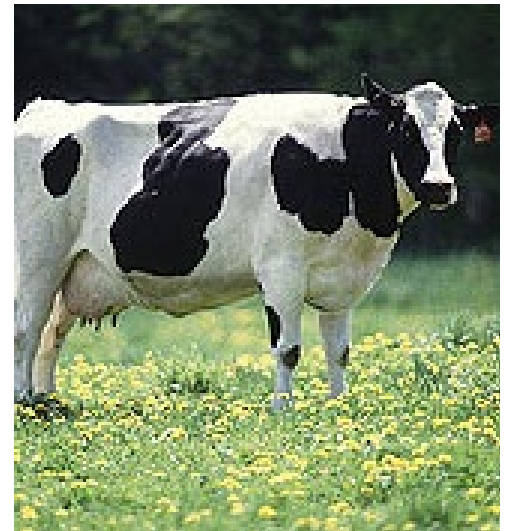
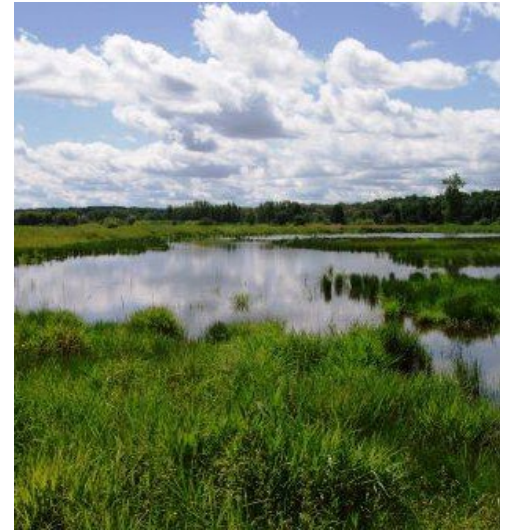
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance **wetlands** or protect **working farms** and ranches through conservation easements.

Two components:

Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)



Agricultural Land Easements (ALE)

- Private and tribal landowners, land trusts, and other entities such as state and local governments
- Protects croplands and grasslands on working farms and ranches by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land through conservation easements.



Agricultural Land Easements FY2025

- **4 new farms** enrolled/being enrolled.
- **Protecting 981 acres** of farmland.
- **\$1.4 million** obligated.
- **Counties:** Franklin, Livingston, Ulster, Dutchess



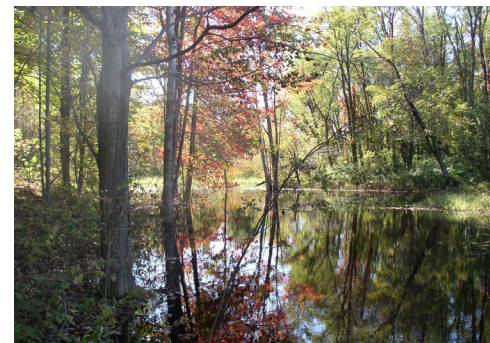
Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)

- Private and tribal landowners
- Protect, restore and enhance wetlands which have been previously degraded due to agricultural uses.



Wetland Reserve Easements FY2025

- **5 parcels** being enrolled.
- Protecting **70 acres** of wetlands and upland buffers.
- **\$470,524** total to be obligated.
- Counties: Cayuga, Chenango, Dutchess (2), Ulster



Wetland Reserve Easements FY2025

- **2 additional easements** closed/closing.
- Protecting **41 acres** of wetlands and upland buffers.
- **\$87,430** easement value paid to landowners.
- Counties: Columbia and Cattaraugus.



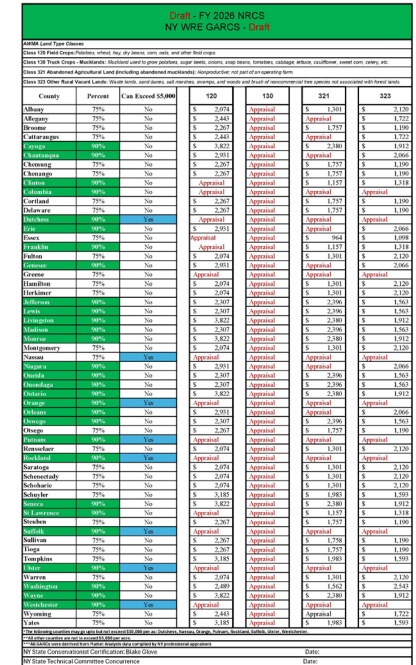
Wetland Reserve Easements FY2025 Stewardship

- **Over 1200** wetland easements held by NRCS in NY
- **\$86,400** spent on repairs and maintenance.
- **\$437,000** estimated for boundary remarkings to manage encroachment.



NY NRCS

Per Acre payment rates for property enrolled into Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE)



AWMA – GARC continued

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Area Wide Market Analysis was completed on July 30, 2025, to recertify FY 2025 AWMA values for use in FY 26.

Because some Property Class Code values fluctuated +/- 10% compared to the FY 2025 values, NY must adjust the FY 2026 GARC rates based on the new AWMA findings.

Yesterday, an email was sent to members of the NRCS NY State Technical Advisory Committee with information pertaining to the draft changes. Please review and submit comments to Peter Gibbs by 8.11.2025

