

# WATERSHED AGRICULTURAL COUNCIL

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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





## REVENUES JULY 1, 2013 – JUNE 30, 2014

Federal	\$495,237	(4.46%)
Donated Services	\$349,770	(3.15%)
Foundations & Other Grants	\$0	(0.0%)
Interest and Gain/loss of Asset Sale	\$2,017	(0.02%)
NYC DEP	\$10,251,948	(92.37%)
Total	\$11,098,972	(100.0%)

## EXPENDITURES JULY 1, 2013 – JUNE 30, 2014

Forestry Program	\$1,208,246	(11.08%)
Easement Program	\$1,264,045	(11.59%)
East of Hudson Program (Croton Watershed)	\$527,339	(4.83%)
Agricultural Program		
BMP Implementation & Construction	\$3,524,488	(32.31%)
Nutrient Management Planning	\$422,252	(3.87%)
Watershed Agricultural Program	\$1,755,120	(16.09%)
Farm to Market/Outreach Programs	\$504,425	(4.62%)
Program Administration & Depreciation	\$1,351,102	(12.39%)
Donated Services	\$349,770	(3.21%)
Total	\$10,906,787	(100.0%)

This 2014 Annual Report is a publication of the Watershed Agricultural Council, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization whose mission is to promote the economic viability of agriculture and forestry, the protection of water quality, and conservation of working landscapes through strong local leadership and sustainable public-private partnerships. The Council is funded by New York City Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service and other sources. The Council is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer. This issue is printed on environmentally friendly paper.

# Conservation Footprint (kon sur va shen-fut print)

DEFINITION: The actions an organization conducts which result in a positive impact on the environment



Many of the Watershed Agricultural Council's (WAC) program initiatives, in our four service areas, are represented here in the 2014 annual report through geospatial maps (GIS). The maps shown throughout the report are a visual expression of WAC's "*Conservation Footprint*," our conservation ethic, and our environmental and economic impact throughout the 1,972 square mile New York City (NYC) Watershed and surrounding counties.

Each map represents a visual expression of WAC's conservation efforts with farm and forest owners through our Forestry, Conservation Easement, Agricultural and Economic Viability Programs. The illustrations demonstrate our careful planning and management of natural resources, coupled with our recognition that the preferred land use in this pristine region is working landscapes.

Actions and program initiatives protect the environment. Working with the land owners of this region from developing whole farm plans and forest management plans, to conservation easements are successful due to building strong relationships and developing commitment with landowners to protect their property and keep water resources clean.

Consistent with our mission we also recognize the importance of keeping working landscapes economically viable. Over 300 Pure Catskills members, who are part of our regional buy local campaign which assists with the sale of their products, are also represented on the map. With a growing emphasis on local food and sustainable product development, connecting consumers to our environmentally sensitive region and the quality of the products is part of our conservation footprint.

Looking forward to 2015, we anticipate extending our conservation footprint even further as we launch two innovative initiatives that take advantage of the growing technological world. The Economic Viability Program will be introducing the

"Pure Catskill Marketplace," an online store which will further assist members with product sales. Through our Forestry Program we will be launching "My Woodlot.com," an extensive online service that will educate forest owners and allow for the creation of forest management plans.

For the first time, the Conservation Easement Program will be launching the acquisition of forestry easements in addition to agricultural easements. Finally the Agricultural Program, with our partnering organizations, will be introducing Precision Feed Management, a science based approach to keeping farms more profitable and environmentally sound.

The Watershed Agricultural Council continues to expand our *Conservation Footprint*, and I invite you to become a dedicated steward of our land, water and food by giving to our new fundraising campaign "Every Drop Counts." Your donation will have a ripple effect on working landscapes throughout the watershed communities.

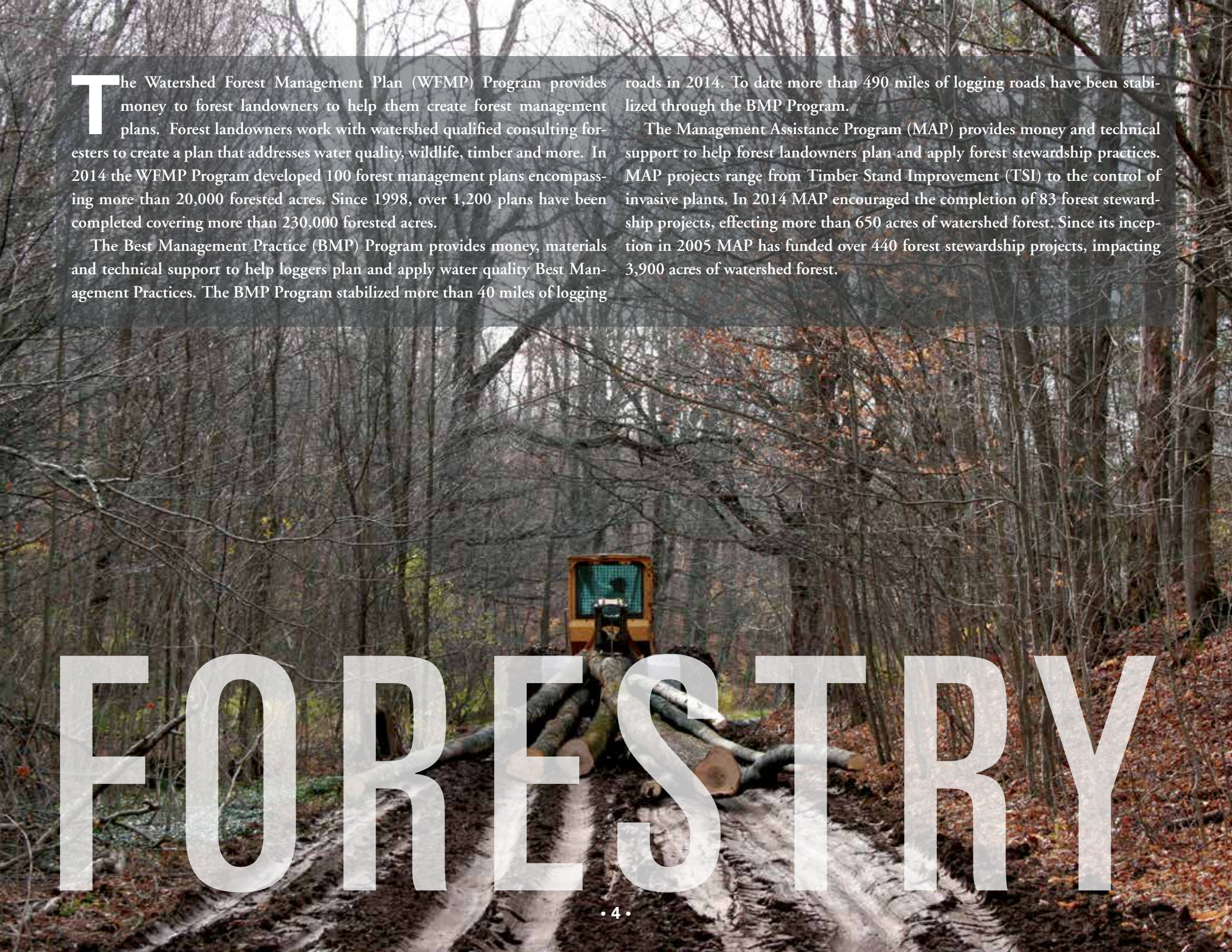
You can donate easily online at [nycwatershed.org/donate](http://nycwatershed.org/donate).

Thank you for protecting our *Conservation Footprint*.



Sincerely,  
Craig J. Cashman  
Executive Director





**T**he Watershed Forest Management Plan (WFMP) Program provides money to forest landowners to help them create forest management plans. Forest landowners work with watershed qualified consulting foresters to create a plan that addresses water quality, wildlife, timber and more. In 2014 the WFMP Program developed 100 forest management plans encompassing more than 20,000 forested acres. Since 1998, over 1,200 plans have been completed covering more than 230,000 forested acres.

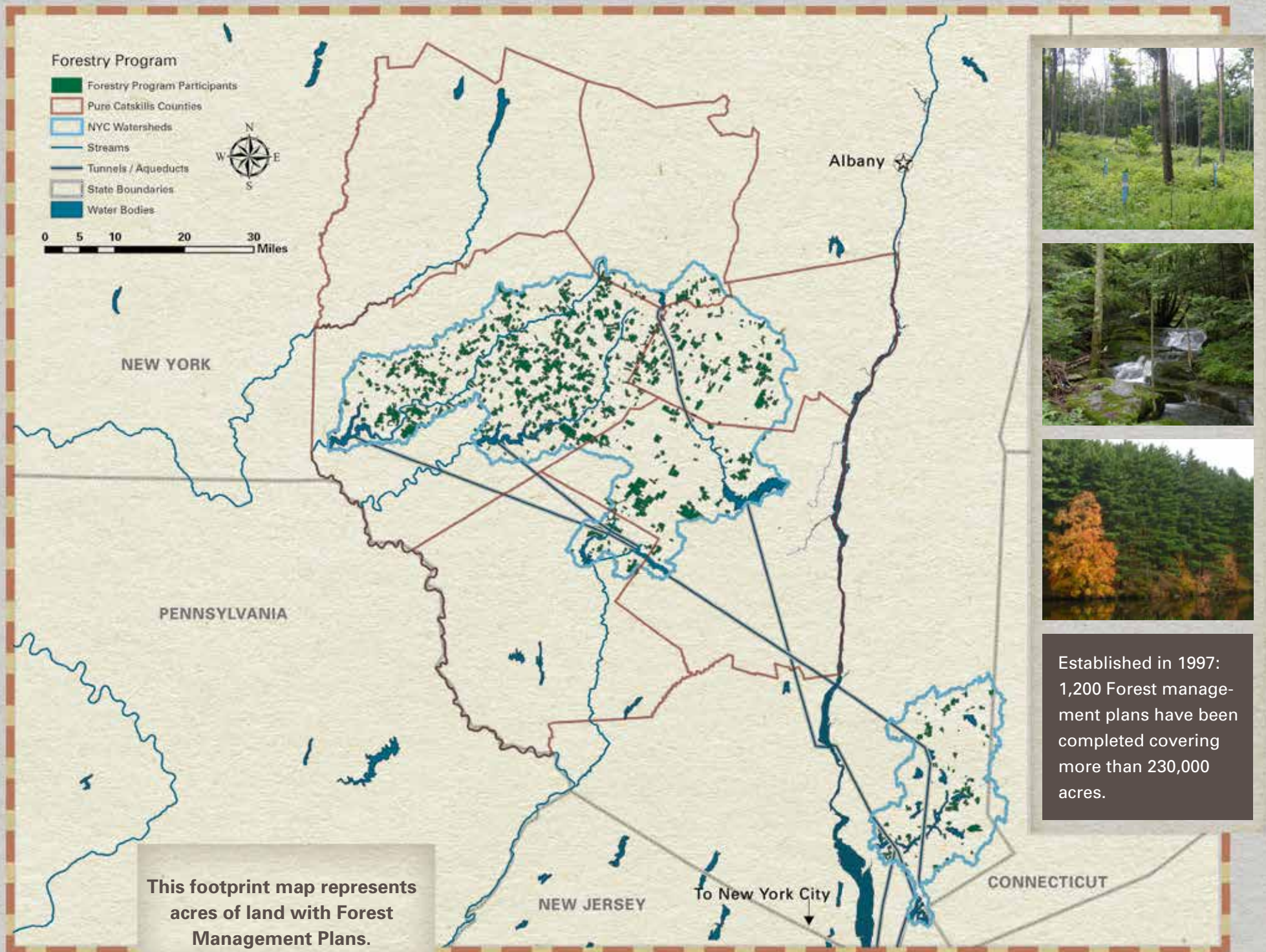
The Best Management Practice (BMP) Program provides money, materials and technical support to help loggers plan and apply water quality Best Management Practices. The BMP Program stabilized more than 40 miles of logging

roads in 2014. To date more than 490 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. In 2014 MAP encouraged the completion of 83 forest stewardship projects, effecting more than 650 acres of watershed forest. Since its inception in 2005 MAP has funded over 440 forest stewardship projects, impacting 3,900 acres of watershed forest.

# FORESTRY







# CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

**S**ince taking its first step in 1997, the Watershed Agricultural Council's (WAC) Agricultural Easement Program has expanded to include nearly 24,000 acres to date. Helping to support more than 100 working farms throughout the NYC Watershed, WAC's easement footprint marks one of the largest land protection efforts in New York State.

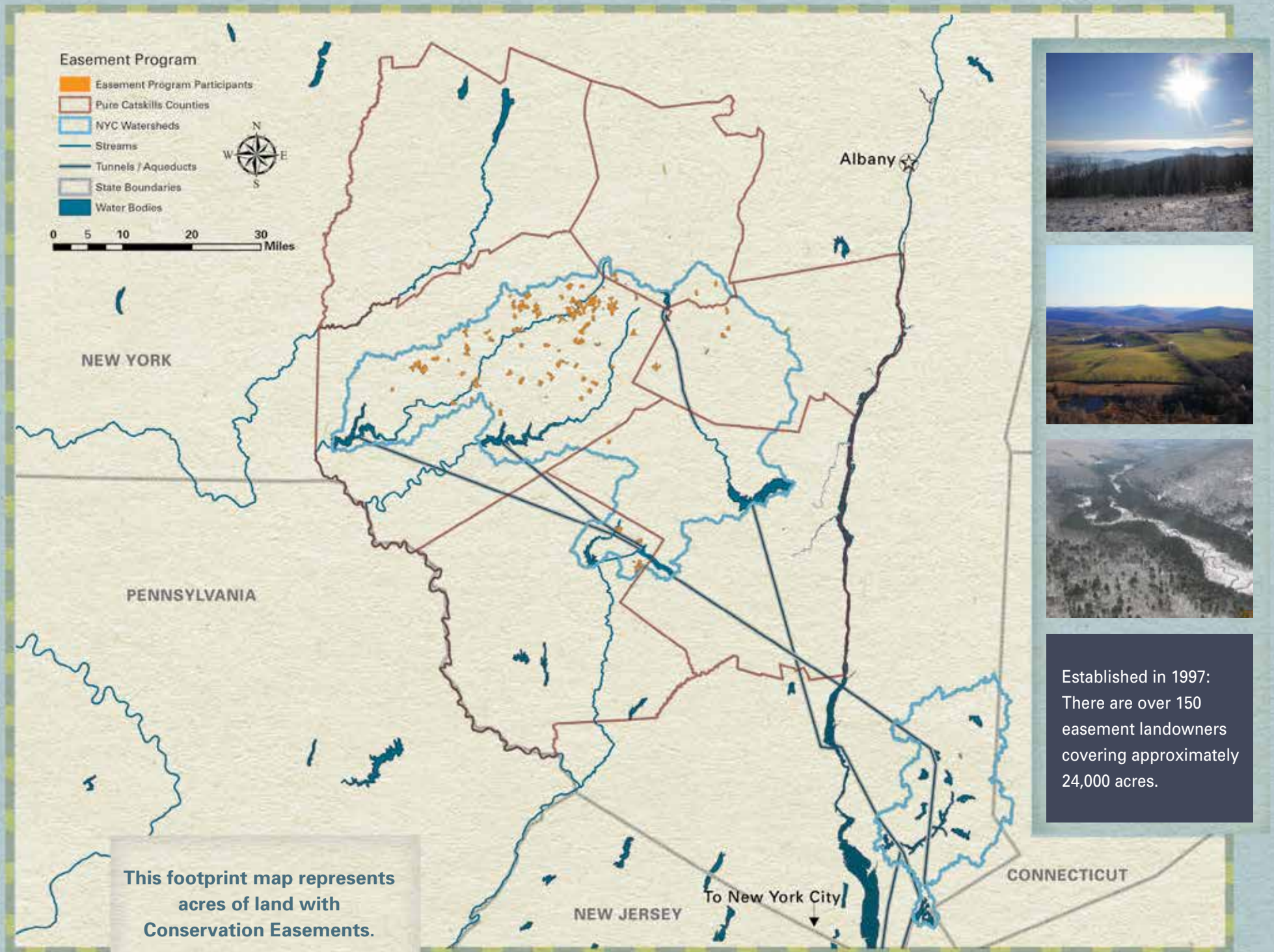
With funding from the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the program is well-positioned to continue to promote the economic viability of agriculture and forestry, the protection of water quality, and the conservation of working landscapes through strong local leadership and sustainable public-private partnerships.

While agriculture remains a top priority, WAC has recently moved to enhance

its mission through the development and implementation of Forest Conservation Easements. Through the collaborative efforts of 9 full-time staff, several subcontracted vendors and DEP, WAC aims to acquire interests in an additional 10,000+ acres of working farm and forest lands over the next 5-7 years.

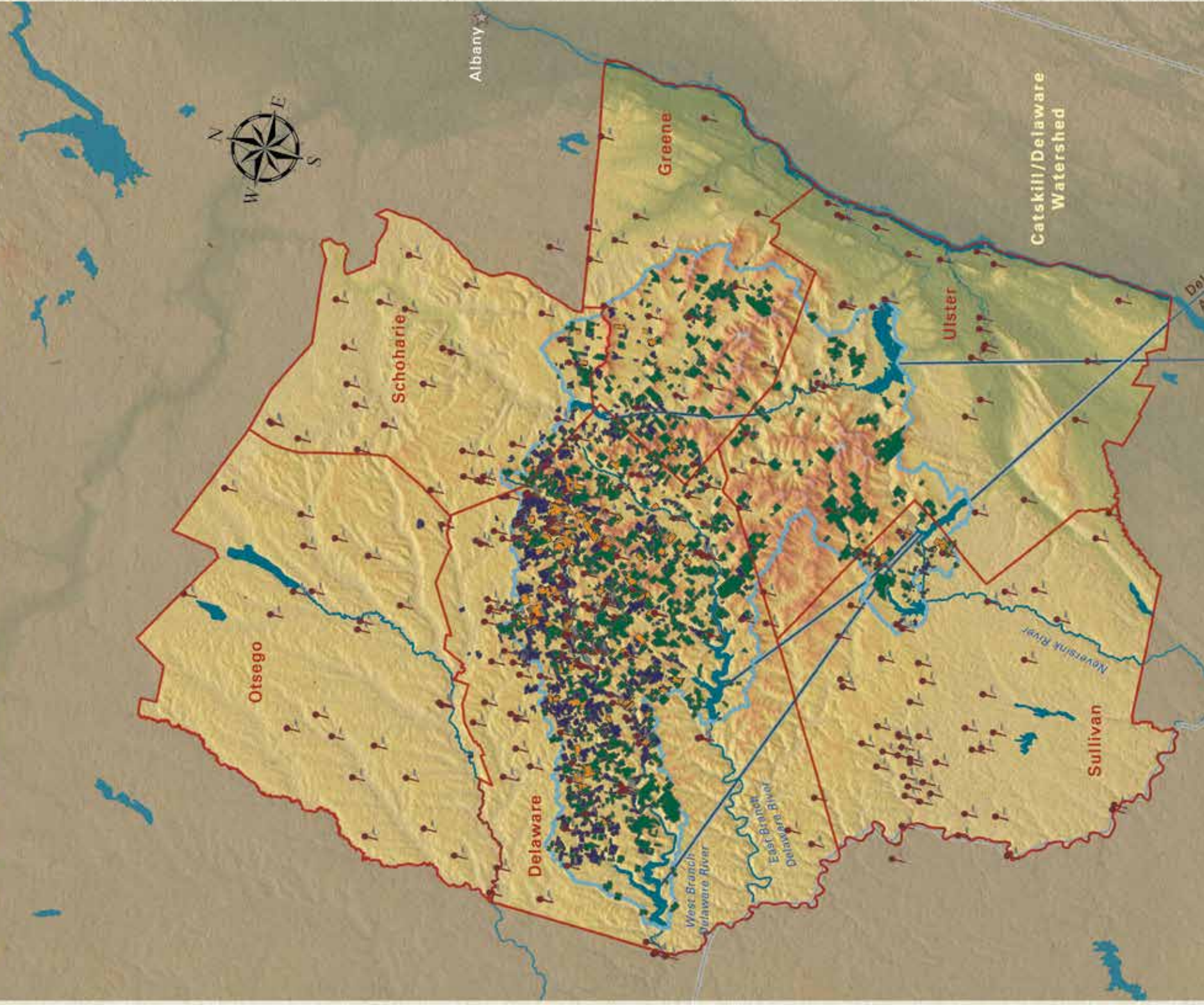
WAC recognizes that equally important to conserving land, is the perpetual responsibility of stewardship. WAC's Easement Stewardship Program monitors over 150 easements annually and helps facilitate landowner requests to activate reserved rights. These requests range from the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to Commercial Timber Harvesting. Effective stewardship ensures WAC's mission is upheld, safeguards water quality, and continues to promote viable working landscapes.



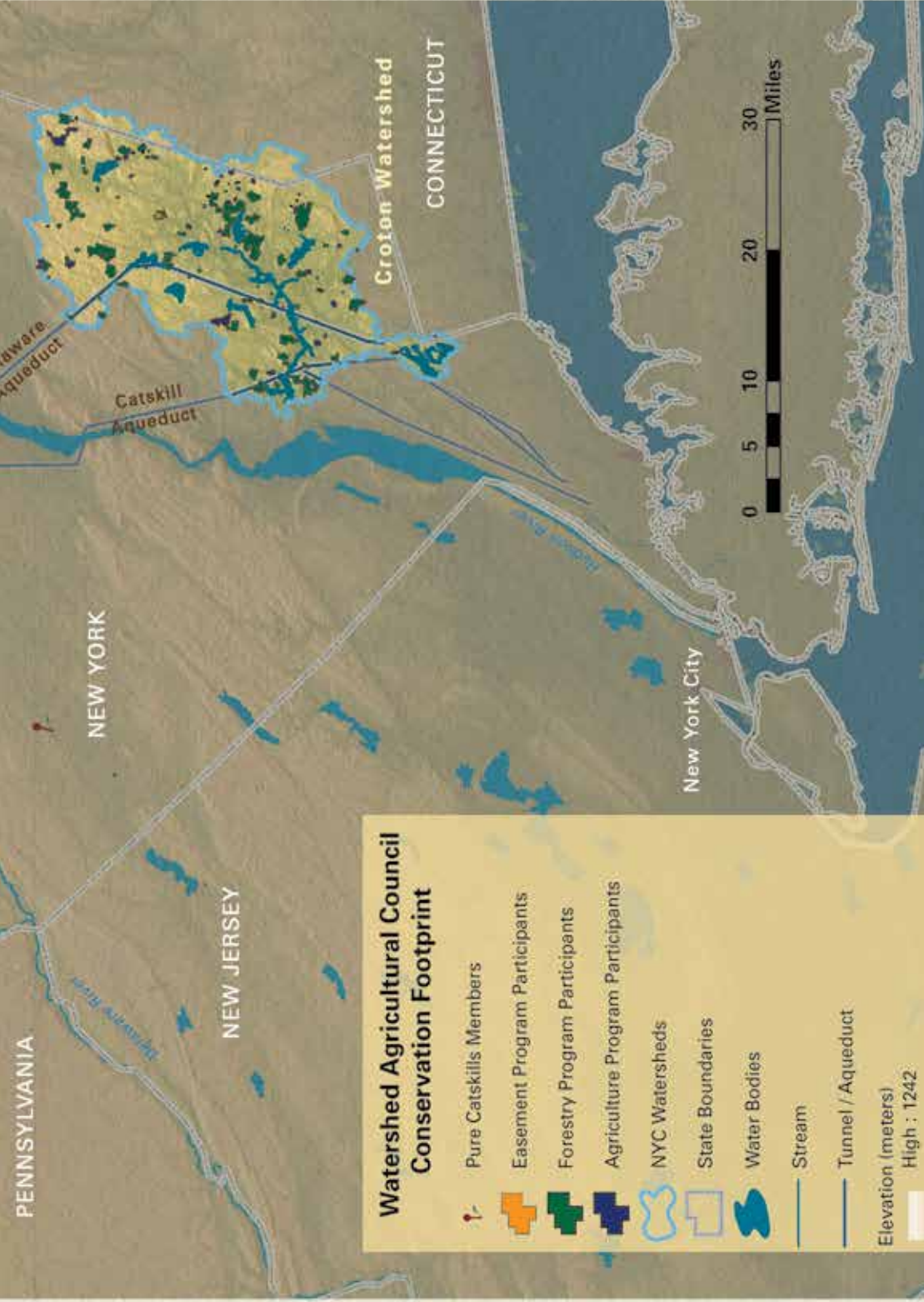




# CONSERVATION FOOTPRINT







This map demonstrates a visual expression of our “*Conservation Footprint*,” our conservation ethic, and our environmental and economic impact throughout the 1,972 square mile New York City (NYC) Watershed and surrounding counties.

Our conservation effort supports the NYC water supply system, one of the largest surface water storage and supply systems in the world. The system reliably delivers more than 1.1 billion gallons of safe drinking water daily to nine million people—this represents nearly half the population of all New York State.

The NYC water supply system consists of three surface water sources:

- the Croton watershed east of the Hudson River
- the combined Catskill and Delaware watershed system west of the Hudson River





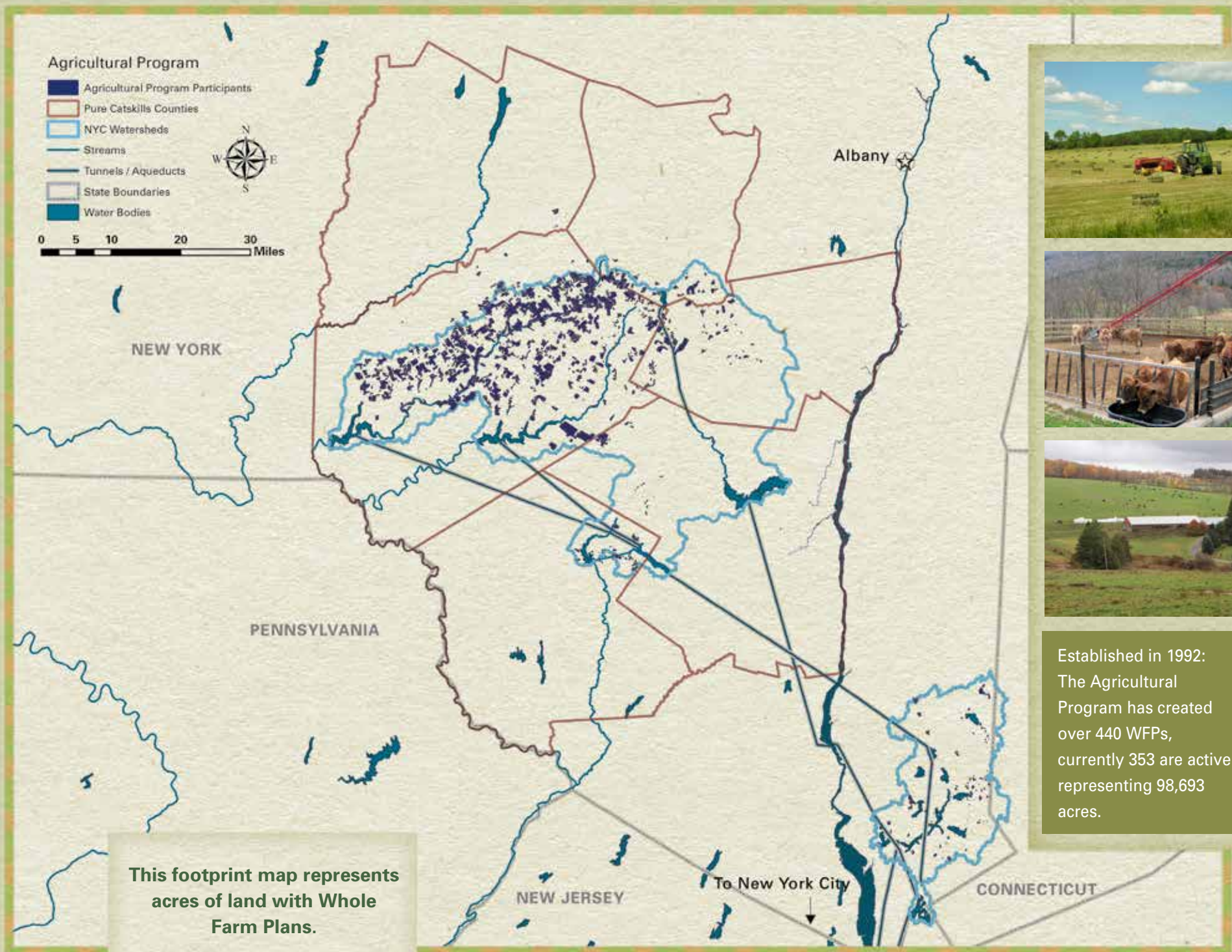
**T**he Watershed Agricultural Program (WAP) has developed 366 Whole Farm Plans (WFP) on farms in the the Catskill and Delaware Watersheds and 75 WFPs in the Croton Watershed East of the Hudson River. Of those farms there are currently 353 active large, small and East of Hudson farms in production. The WAP conservation planners conduct an Annual Status Review (ASR) on these farms to update their WFPs and to record the land that is needed for their production of agricultural products. A majority of farmers do not own all of the land that is needed for their production needs, so it is critical that WAP can identify the land either leased or loaned to the farmers that are managed under their WFP. The Conservation Footprint encompasses all of these properties that are needed for agricultural production

both owned and leased. In 2014 a pilot program was initiated that provided the farmer with a map that shows their current conservation footprint and they are requested to identify any additional or reduced acreage used for their agriculture production. The pilot program has been very well received by the farmers as they understand how critical this non-owned land is to their economic viability. Without this land they would not be able to maintain the production needed to sustain their family or expand their production to include other family members or partners. Looking forward to 2015 the WAP conservation planners will use the conservation footprint maps with all of the farmers to identify the total acreage in the NYC Watershed that is being managed for water quality and economic viability.



# AGRICULTURE









# ECONOMIC VIABILITY

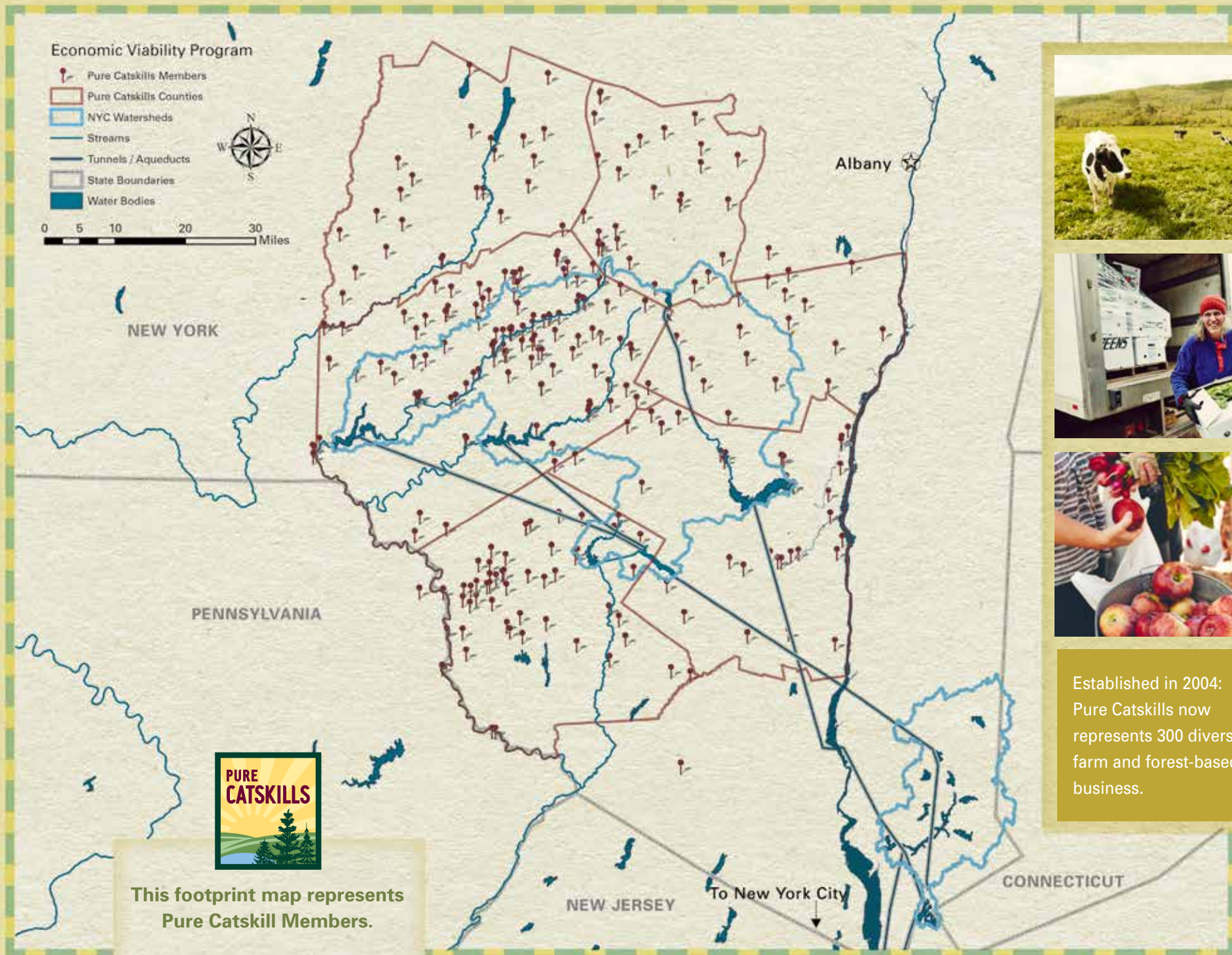
**T**his year, the Economic Viability Program rebranded the Pure Catskills initiative, and launched a new logo to continue efforts of improving the economic viability of working landscapes in the Catskills and preserve water quality in the NYC watershed region. Pure Catskills creates marketing opportunities and provides resources for hundreds of farm, forest and local businesses throughout Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Ulster Counties, inside and outside of the watershed boundaries.

When the Pure Catskills initiative began in 2004, it started with a small group of farmers in the Catskills region. Now, it represents 300 diverse farm and forest-based businesses, restaurants, local artisans, other non-profit orga-

nizations and accommodations. The Pure Catskills brand is evolving to properly represent the diversity of its membership base, capitalize on current market trends and create economic opportunities for members.

As we look to the future, the development of the regional food system, ongoing concerns about the environment and consumer demand for high-quality, natural products made in the Catskills, the Watershed Agricultural Council recognizes the distinct opportunity for Pure Catskills to set itself apart by becoming a premium and trusted brand for food and forest products. The new logo is one way we celebrate and look forward to a bright and diverse future for the Catskills, and keeping this region pristine.





This footprint map represents Pure Catskill Members.



Established in 2004: Pure Catskills now represents 300 diverse farm and forest-based business.



# Looking to the Future . . .

Last year we celebrated the Watershed Agricultural Council's 20th year of incorporation. We noted the advancement of a small fledgling organization designed to offset the threat of regulations initiated by New York City as a result of a change to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act to a multifaceted watershed management program. Over the years, we have developed a model that is now looked at as the standard for watershed management by cities across America and by countries around the globe. Interestingly enough this came about not by design, but as a result of the dedicated men and women who have, over time, devoted a portion of their lives to this endeavor and by the farmers and foresters who took the risk to be part of our programing and who now we refer to as our "participants".

Over this same period of time people have come and gone. WAC employees, Council members, contracted agencies and DEP personnel all adding the expertise needed at the time during whatever phase of development we were in. I have had the distinct honor and privilege of telling this story to a multitude of audiences from a multitude of places many times over in my role as Council Chair.

Successful organizations require constant vigilance to attain and maintain excellence through strategic planning, evaluations, assessments, and questioning "Can we do better?" What develops from this is a constant transition from one phase to another. The phases may not be definitive and easily recognizable but they have occurred in the past and will continue to occur in the future.

At present the Council is looking toward the future, taking on the task of positioning the Council and its programming for the changes that the agriculture and forestry industries, the regulatory and the environmental communities inevitably will experience. As part of this task new Council members will be elected and at

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



the end of January, my tenure as Chairman will end as I head further into retirement. Sally Fairbairn has been elected to the Chair position and will provide the guidance necessary to continue this watershed protection model forward. Sally comes to the position with experience gained as the Chair of the Agricultural Program, Chair of the Economic Development Program, and serving as my Vice Chair for the past year.

Going forward we can work towards developing improvements to the Watershed Management Model, provide a regional economic framework for the Agriculture and forestry industries, and continue to be an economic engine in the NYC Watershed. The opportunities for WAC are endless.

*Fred Hunneke  
Council Chair (2002-2015)*



*Sally Fairbairn and  
Fred Hunneke,  
present and past  
Council Chairs*



# One Drop, Many Ripples

**Working landscapes protect clean drinking water  
for generations to come**



## **Photo Credits**

Cover Photo:  
MacKenzie Waro

p2  
Josh VanBrakle

p4  
Heather Hilson

p5  
Forestry Staff  
Josh VanBrakle  
Brendan Murphy

p6  
Josh Gorman

p7  
Ryan Naatz  
Billy Martin  
Connor Young

p10  
Larry Hulle

p11  
Lorinda Backus  
Agriculture Program Staff  
Lorinda Backus

p12-13  
Andy Ryan Photography

GIS Mapping :  
Nadine Trahan

Art Director:  
Heather Magnan

Editorial Director:  
Kristan Morley

Designed by:  
Cynthia Dunne

**Donate today at [nycwatershed.org/donate](https://nycwatershed.org/donate)**



Watershed Agricultural Council

[www.nycwatershed.org](http://www.nycwatershed.org)



NONPROFIT  
US POSTAGE PAID  
WALTON NY  
PERMIT NO. 250

33195 State Highway 10, Walton, NY 13856



Follow us on Facebook

