



NOVEMBER 2019

## WYOMING COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

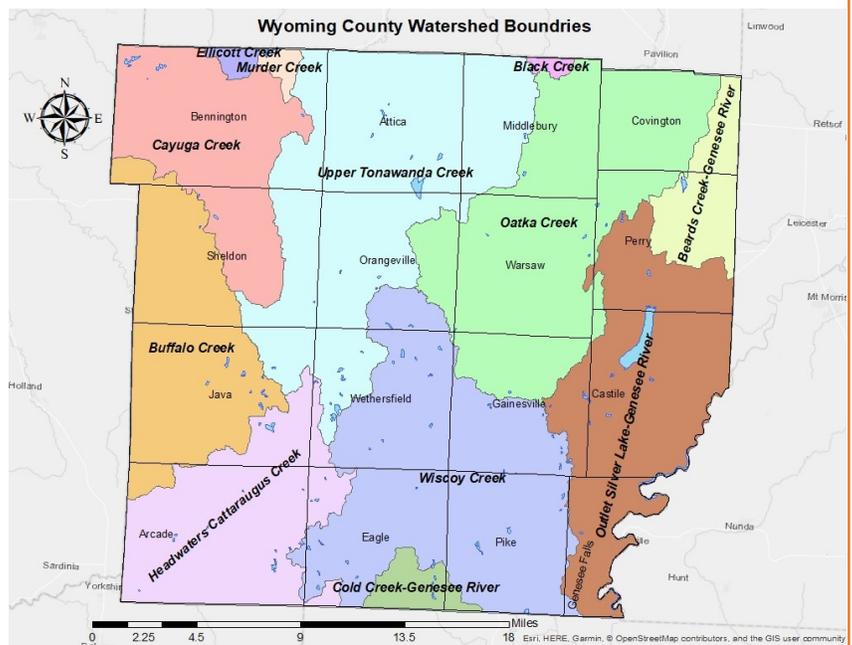
### Wyoming County Ends The Year Strong



Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to announce that three dairy farms in the county have received grant funding through the Ag Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Grant Program. The cumulative total of awarded BMP implementation money for these farms is \$1.32 million. Each farm is situated in a different watershed, and will be implementing projects that aid in our ever growing efforts to improve water quality.

The first farm, which is located in the Silver Lake (Genesee River) Watershed, was awarded funding to install a multifaceted waste management system. Some of the system's components include a 2.9 million gallon waste storage, a small reception pit, three transfer lines, and the necessary pumps to move the waste. In addition, the farm has agreed to install 1.3 acres of herbaceous riparian buffer as part of their contribution. The buffer would be situated along a field drainage that has a history of erosion from field runoff and the channel itself.

We partnered with a second farm, in the Cattaraugus Creek Watershed, that expanded their silage bunk and was looking to install an appropriate sized silage leachate management system. These grant funds have been allocated so the farm will be able design and build a system that meets the new bunk runoff specs. The silage leachate management system will eliminate the possibility of nutrients impacting the waterways in the sole source aquifer. To further improve water quality, the farm will also implement a livestock access control, and install 0.83 acres of riparian buffer along a nearby tributary.



The third farm is located in the Tonawanda Creek (Niagara River) watershed. Currently, the mid-sized dairy doesn't have a long term storage and relies on daily spreading to eliminate waste. However, with the funds from Round 25 of Ag Nonpoint Grant, the farm will be installing a 1.3 million gallon waste storage. The storage will allow the farm to avoid spreading on frozen or saturated ground in a priority watershed with a public drinking water source. Currently, the livestock have access to a tributary in the pasture but through this grant, the farm will install a livestock access control and herbaceous riparian buffer to reduce downstream impacts.

The District looks forward to building a working relationship with these farms and plans on applying for more Ag Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program grants in the future. In the end, our goal is to promote best management practices that will improve water quality for Wyoming County.

## Invasive Species Corner

Spotlight Species: American Pokeweed

Scientific Name: *Phytolacca americana*



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### What is American Pokeweed?

Interestingly enough, American Pokeweed isn't considered an invasive species by definition. However, Wyoming County SWCD felt that many of our readers would benefit from learning more about this noxious, nuisance agricultural weed. Pokeweed is native to the eastern United States but can be found in other regions around the world. All parts of this large perennial plant are toxic to livestock, humans, and can potentially contaminate agricultural cash crops. Keep reading to learn more about this hazardous weed...

### How to Identify?

Pokeweed, in its adult stage, has a distinct purplish—red stem with large, bright green leaves that can measure almost a foot long. The flowers bloom in mid summer into the fall. Its bright green berries are visible in early summer but by fall they will turn to a dark purple hue. The plant will begin to sag under the weight of the fruit. Pokeweed can grow exceptionally tall, most plants measure between 4-6 feet with others reaching almost 10 whole feet!



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**Fun Fact:** If Pokeweed seeds drop, they are viable in the soil for 40 years!

### Let's Get Rid of It!

There are several ways to eradicate American Pokeweed including: manual removal, spread prevention and chemical control. Manual removal would involve digging the plant (taproot and all) and disposing of it in a heavy duty black trash bag. A similar approach called spread prevention is to remove the fruit before it seeds and to burn the rest of the plant. Chemical control methods require pesticide (glyphosate) application to the leaves during the growing season in spring and early summer. Please make sure to wash your hands after touching American Pokeweed!

## Agricultural Assessments

As winter approaches the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District is preparing for the annual agricultural assessment rush and would like to provide some information regarding the process.

The agriculture assessment program allows for eligible farmland to be taxed at a designated agricultural assessment rate rather than fair market value. The Agricultural Assessment establishes an “upper limit” for taxable assessment based off of the soil types. These soil types are determined by the District Staff using the USGS soil survey. These worksheets are required by Wyoming County Real Property to carry out the Agricultural Assessment process.

**The process of obtaining or updating an agricultural assessment should begin with Wyoming County Real Property, who can be reached at (585)-786-8828, or the designated town assessor.** Wyoming County Real Property will also be notifying land owners when an updated soil group worksheet is required. Once the process has begun a request form can be submitted to the Soil and Water District Office for a Soil Group Worksheet. **The District charges \$25 per parcel for the completion of a soil group worksheet.**

### ***Does Your Property Qualify for Ag Assessment?***

**If over 7 acres of the property are producing agricultural products (row crops, hay, pasture, maple, etc.), the property may qualify for agricultural assessment. The land also qualifies if it is rented to a farm operation or maple operation.** The final decision of whether a parcel qualifies is determined by the landowner’s assessor. The district is happy to answer any questions regarding agricultural assessment and can be

### **From Our Partners at the Natural Resources Conservation Service...**

**A Success Story:** In late 2017, Pete Broughton of Broughton Diversified Farming LLC approached his local conservation office to see what funding programs were available to help manage the manure at his heifer replacement facility. Both the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Wyoming County SWCD commenced the conservation planning process with the end goal of helping Pete address the manure issue. By the end of summer 2018, Pete had secured cost share funding from both the NRCS and WCSWCD. This was made possible by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative administered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the NYS Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Waste Storage and Transfer Storage Program (CAFO). During the Summer of 2019, a 2.2 million gallon storage system was installed. This system allowed the farm to optimize nutrient management and ease daily labor requirements. Additionally, the farm is protecting their cropland from the wear and tear of field traffic during inopportune weather conditions. Most importantly, the best management practices on this farm are now protecting a tributary to the Genesee River and ultimately Lake Ontario.



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*This publication is the quarterly newsletter of the Wyoming County Soil and Water Conservation District and is available at no cost to all District cooperators, all interested landowner and land users, and to the general public. To receive this newsletter, simply email us at [wcsxcd@frontiernet.net](mailto:wcsxcd@frontiernet.net) or send your complete mailing address to our office.*

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Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation  
 District Phone & Fax: 585-786-3675  
[wcsxcd@frontiernet.net](mailto:wcsxcd@frontiernet.net)



Wyoming County SWCD  
 36 Center St. Suite D  
 Warsaw, NY 14569

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