

## Butternut Watershed Assessment Update



The Butternut Creek Watershed Assessment is currently underway. There have been some beautiful days this fall for surveying the Butternut. After a two day training session on assessment protocols, volunteers and OCSWCD staff have been working hard to walk and canoe the stream before the weather changes. Approximately 8 miles of Butternut Creek and tributaries in the Upper Butternut Watershed have been surveyed as of 11/21/16. Also, a crew of SUNY Oneonta students, led by Professor Les Hasbargen has surveyed locations in Morris Creek during field trips for the fall Geomorphology Course. In addition to surveying, we have been busy working on streamlining the data collection process, gathering the appropriate equipment, working with landowners to gain access to the stream, and recruiting/training new volunteers.

The assessment is providing a wealth of information of the stream corridor including data on the stream channel, stream banks, floodplain, riparian zone, and upland area. Field crews have been documenting stream conditions at the reach level and measuring sites of erosion. As part of the assessment we will also be surveying culverts and bridges and evaluating their aquatic passage potential and flood capacity. The goals of the assessment are to identify resource concerns and potential sites for restoration. Funding for this project comes from a grant awarded by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation to the Upper Susquehanna Coalition. The three watersheds surveyed in Otsego County, the Upper, Middle and Lower Butternut Watersheds, are three of seven watersheds in the Upper Susquehanna undergoing assessment. The intent is for the Butternut watershed assessment to be a model for future assessments throughout Otsego County and the Upper Susquehanna watershed.

We will continue to survey the watershed through the winter and spring as weather permits. The timeline is to complete the assessment by Spring 2017. The assessment will provide a prioritized list of resource concerns that will then be followed up with detailed surveys in the Spring/Summer 2017. The completed study will be an excellent tool for future planning and funding application efforts to address areas of resource concern in the Butternut Creek Watershed.

OCSWCD sends a huge thank you to all volunteers for their survey and planning efforts to date!!



raining.

Caption: Jeff O'Handley, Chris Andreassen, and Mike Jura measuring stream banks for the Bank Erosion Hazard Index (BEHI) during the protocol training.



Caption: Jeff O'Handley and Roseanna Peloso from Otsego County Conservation Association survey an erosion site on Butternut Creek.



Caption: Beautiful section of Mill Creek, a tributary in the Upper Butternut Watershed.