



**Progress Report
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Development**

**Towns of Seward and Carlisle
May 18, 2009**

Prepared by Laura Ten Eyck, Field Consultant, American Farmland Trust

Soils

Stephen Hoerz, district manager for the Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District, presented information to the Seward-Carlisle Joint Executive Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Committee on soils of agricultural importance in the towns. He explained the various soil classifications with prime soils and soils of statewide significance being of particular interest to the committee. He gave maps to the committee members depicting the locations of these soils. He also distributed breakdowns of the different soil types in the county. He pointed out that only 15 percent of the soils in the state are classified prime and of statewide significance and more than 15 percent of Seward and Carlisle were composed of these soils. He emphasized the need for the towns to use planning and zoning to protect land with these soil types.

Stephen also demonstrated to the committee how to access and use the Natural Resources Conservation Service's website to view soil maps for specific sections of the town to analyze a wide variety of features. Stephen also explained how the state's Agriculture Environmental Management program helps farmers manage nutrients and protect water resources on their farms.

Maps & Inventories

The committee continues to work on the maps identifying active agricultural land in the town. Carlisle is still in the process of completing its inventory.

Seward Survey

The Town of Seward is preparing to develop a comprehensive land use plan. They are going to conduct a survey of town residents that will be useful for development the agriculture and farmland protection plan as well as the comprehensive land use plan. The town's boards are currently reviewing a survey done for the Town of Sharon by the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Board. The committee will review the survey as well.

Farmer and Landowner Interviews

Laura is currently at work on the interview summary.

Website

The joint executive committee's minutes and progress reports are now up on each town's page on the Schoharie County website. Laura has written an introduction with information about the agriculture and farmland protection plans. The committee approved this document and it will be posted on the towns' web pages as well.

Goals

The committee has continued its discussion of goals and recommendations to be made in the plan. They are reviewing goals drafted by other towns including Wright, Bethlehem, Brutus and Eden. Committee members have focused on the issue of economic viability of farming in the towns and how to support both existing and new farmers. The committee will finalize goals at their June meeting.

Next Meeting: Monday, June 22, 2009, 7 PM, Schoharie County Planning Department