

# Flooding in Columbia County: A Public Flood Investigation

Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> 2019

Presented by:

Stroud Water Research Center

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Columbia County Conservation District

## Agenda:

- 5-5:45 Stroud presentation at Orange Township Municipal Building  
*Strategic choices for restoring watersheds*
- 5:45-6 Drive to outdoor location (~5 minutes north on 487)  
*Location on Fishing Creek behind Melanie's Kold Kup at 2764 Route 487, Orangeville*  
*Please park along the dirt road between the farm fields, walk to the cabin grounds, and*  
*join us at the 2<sup>nd</sup> cabin on the right*
- 6-6:30 Fishing Creek stream site discussion  
*Discuss location history, Successes and failures, Upstream activities, Importance of vegetation, Sustainable timber management, Why not dredge?, BMPs that could be put in place upstream and at the site, etc.*
- 6:30-7 Farm field site discussion  
*Discuss crop field flood history, Soil health, Cover crops, Importance of floodplains and relief areas, BMPs that could be adopted on area farms, etc.*  
*Soil erosion demonstration*
- 7-7:10 CREP program and other opportunities
- 7:10-7:30+ Q & A

## Key Take-Aways:

- Healthy soils, establishing vegetation, and smart land development in the landscape are KEY to managing water!
- Goals: SLOW IT DOWN, SPREAD IT OUT, SOAK IT IN
- **Activities that may increase runoff and damage downstream:** Removing trees and vegetation, Construction of new buildings and other non-permeable surfaces, Tilling cropland, Leaving soil exposed, Removal of floodplains and wetlands, Mowing along streambanks, etc.
- **Activities that reduce runoff and damage downstream:** Establishing permanent vegetation along streams, Reconnecting the rivers and streams to floodplain, Protecting and re-establishing wetlands, Planting riparian buffers, Cover cropping and other sustainable agricultural practices, No mow zones or reduced mowing on private properties, Planting a rain garden, Minimizing non-permeable surfaces (*turf grass is a non-permeable surface!!*), etc.
- Most of the issues affecting today's streams are due to past and current land use and development practices. Additionally, increased rainfall rates are only predicted to continue so we must work with the land, not against it.
- Streams are extremely dynamic and naturally move throughout the landscape over time.
- Erosion and deposition is natural and normal, but not at the current rates.
- If a stream is not in balance with itself, it will find a way to correct the imbalance.
- Dredging is NOT a smart solution. Dredging ultimately increases flood damage both down and upstream.
- Floodplains and wetlands are nature's way of storing, slowing down, and spreading out water during high rain events.
- **What can YOU do on your property?**
  - Plant a riparian buffer (if you live by a stream)
  - Use cover crops and focus on soil health (if you farm)
  - Open areas along streams up as floodplains
  - Reestablish wetlands on your property
  - Reduce mowing or establish no mow zones
  - Plant native plants that thrive in our climate and grow deep roots that improve the soil structure and encourage healthy soils
  - Plant a tree! *1 Deciduous tree can intercept 700-1,000 gallons of rain water annually!*  
*1 Evergreen tree can intercept >4,000 gallons of rain water annually!!*
- **Need some help? Call us! We're here to help!!**
  - Columbia County Conservation District – (570) 317-9456
  - Natural Resources Conservation Service – (570) 317-9465

