

**2017-2018 Survey of Farm Operators and Owners in the
New Jersey Central Region of the Delaware River Watershed**

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on behalf of
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STUDY OVERVIEW

This report summarizes findings from a 2017-2018 survey of farm operators and owners in Warren, Sussex and Hunterdon Counties of New Jersey, within the Central region of the Delaware River Watershed (see Figure 1 below). The survey project was motivated by a number of questions, including:

1. Are farm operators/owners taking advantage of opportunities to develop conservation plans and stewardship plans with government agencies and non-profit groups?
2. Are farm operators/owners employing conservation farming practices, such as installing filter strips and sowing cover crops? If so, why, and if not, why not?
3. Are farm operators/owners participating in conservation programs with government agencies or non-profit groups? If so, why, and if not, why not?
4. Are farm operators/owners generally satisfied with their experience participating in conservation programs, and what kind of impact are these programs having?
5. How much do farm operators/owners know about threats to water quality in the Delaware River Watershed? And how much do farm operators/owners know about efforts to improve water quality in the region through the Delaware River Watershed Initiative?
6. Overall, what are the major factors that farm operators/owners take into account when making farm management decisions?

Each of these research questions was explored through one or more survey questions, the findings from which are detailed in this report. On the survey, all questions asked respondents to comment on farm characteristics and practices in 2017, unless otherwise noted.

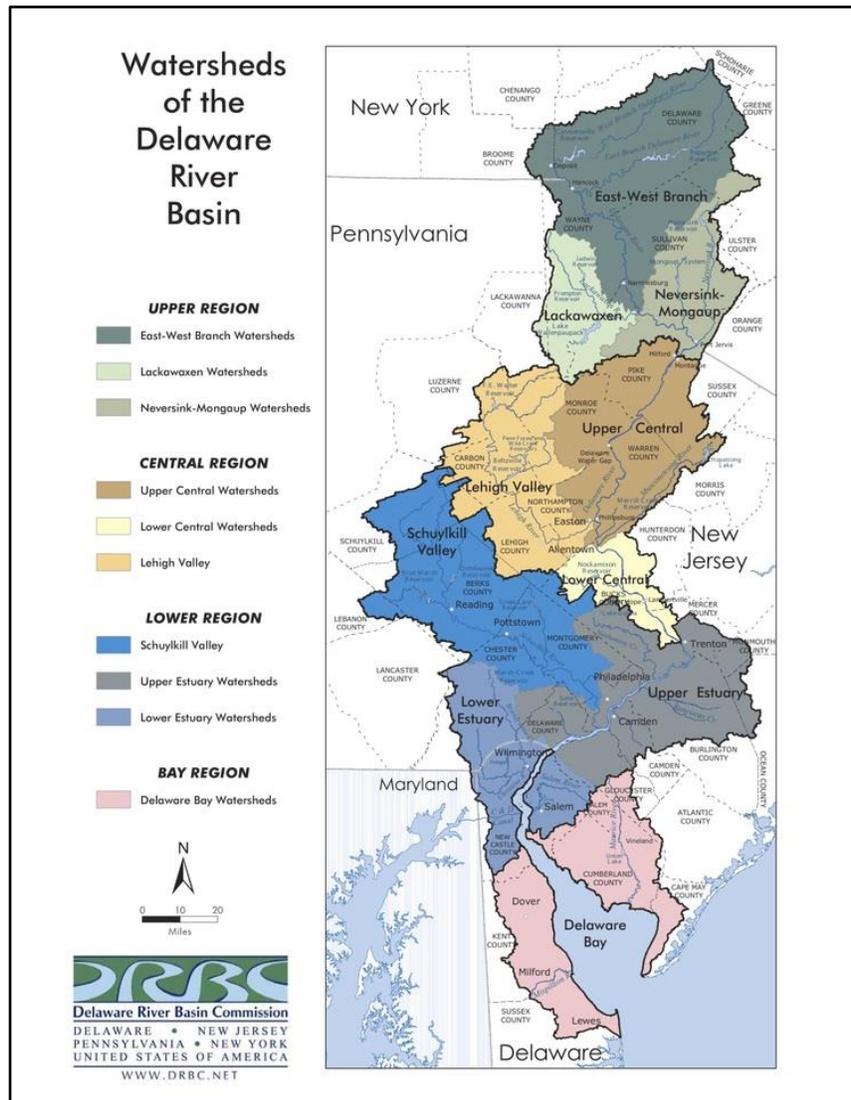
Conducting the survey was a collaborative effort between New Jersey Audubon (NJ A) and Rutgers University. The project director at NJ A was John Parke. The principle investigator at Rutgers was Dr. Ethan Schoolman in the Department of Human Ecology. The target population for the survey included farm operators and owners managing farms in north-northwestern sections of NJ within the Central Region of the Delaware River Watershed. This region of the Watershed spans most of Sussex County, all of Warren County, and parts of western and northern Hunterdon County. Properties located within the geographic boundaries for the survey included, but were not limited to, properties in the NJ Highlands area as defined by the State of NJ and the DRWI Highlands Cluster focal area. Surveys were sent to farm operators/owners based on contact information compiled by NJ Audubon over many years. These operators/owners may have been contacted by NJ A previously (e.g., received a mailing for a farm-related event, activity or opportunity), but have not necessarily worked with NJ A. The survey was conducted from September 2017 – January 2018. Respondents were contacted three times:

1. September – October 2017: A paper questionnaire was hand-delivered to each respondent's home address by NJ A staff; completed questionnaires were picked up by NJ A staff;
2. November – December 2017: Respondents who did not complete a paper questionnaire received an email invitation to complete the survey online;
3. January 2018: A final email invitation to complete the survey online was sent to respondents.

All farm operators/owners included in the original sample were given a random ID number, and no identifying information was retained in the final dataset. Paper questionnaires were labeled with the ID numbers of respondents to which they were delivered, and respondents completing the survey online received their ID number via email and were required to enter it to start the survey. These measures ensured that respondents were not asked to complete the survey more than once.

The survey sample included 298 farm owners/operators in the Central Region of the Delaware River Watershed. Questionnaires were returned or completed online by 62 respondents. The survey response rate was 20.8 percent. However, the agricultural landbase in the region is relatively small and several key families that own and/or operate several thousand acres in the region did respond and provided completed surveys.

Figure 1. Watersheds of the Delaware River Basin



KEY FINDINGS

The survey generated a wealth of data into many aspects of how farmers in the Central Region of the Delaware River Watershed are managing their land, and the role that NGOs like NJA are playing in helping farmers to manage their land in an environmentally responsible way. In this section, key findings of special relevance to “project deliverables” are summarized. Full summary statistics for all survey data follow in the next section of the report.

Finding 1: In general, survey results suggest that outreach and assistance from non-profit conservation groups in the Watershed may be helping to shift the attitudes of farm owners/operators toward conservation for water quality improvement. Survey results that support of this conclusion include:

- It can be said with a high degree of statistical confidence that farm owners/operators in the Watershed who have worked with a non-profit group such as NJA, Musconetcong Watershed Association, or NJRC&D, are more likely to have a Farm Conservation Plan, to have enrolled in conservation programs with USDA, and to have heard of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative. (Section 7)
- Survey respondents who had worked with a non-profit conservation group were also more likely to believe that they can improve Watershed water quality through their own farm management decisions, and to have a Forest Stewardship Plan. (Section 7)
- Nearly 90 percent owners/operators who had participated in conservation programs with non-profit groups said that working with these groups had either a “big influence” or a “moderate influence” on their farm management decisions. (Section 4)
- Over 75 percent of farm owners/operators who had participated in conservation programs with non-profit groups said that they were “very likely” to continue conservation farming practices, once their work with these groups had concluded. (Section 4)

These findings cannot be taken as “proof” that outreach by non-profit groups is having its desired effect. However, these findings, and other results of the survey, are consistent with what one would expect to see, if such outreach in the Watershed was in fact having an impact.

Finding 2: Farm owners/operators in the Watershed are motivated to participate in conservation programs by both economic AND environmental goals. In fact, environmental goals may be, if anything, more important than economic ones. For instance:

- When asked why they had participated in conservation programs with non-profit groups, 49 percent of farm owners/operators said that “increasing crop yield” had been a “very important” reason, and 40 percent said that the “economic incentive” had been very important. (Section 4)
- But 63 percent of farm owners/operators said it had been “very important” to “improve wildlife habitat,” and 53 percent said the same about improving water quality in the Watershed. (Section 4)

Finding 3: Most (60 percent) of farm owners/operators had heard of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative. For farmers familiar with the DRWI, non-profit conservation groups like NJA had been by far the most important source of information. (Section 5)

SECTION 1: FARM CHARACTERISTICS

The farm operations in the survey area are diverse in size, income, and output, producing row crops, specialty crops, livestock products and timber.

Please note that the rows for many tables in this report are *not additive*—in other words, the percentages *down rows* do not sum to 100%. For instance, Table 1.2. shows how respondents answered ten different question about sources of farm income. Most respondents described more than one source of income as being “not important” (or “very important”), and so the percentages *going down* the first and last columns sum to a number that is greater than 100%. However, percentages in this table (and others like it) are additive *across columns*; in any given row, the percentages in each column sum to 100% (or very close to 100%, allowing for rounding error).

Table 1.1. Acres operated (n=62)

Category	Percent of growers	Mean (acres)	Median (acres)	Range (acres)
Acres owned	89%	176	73	0 – 1,500
Acres rented from other landowners	50%	189	5	0 – 1,550
Acres rented to other landowners	19%	16	0	0 – 170
Total acres operated	100%	355	112	0 – 3,000

Table 1.2. Sources of farm income (n=62)

Farm income source	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
Row crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, etc.)	56%	3%	6%	34%
Vegetables for fresh market or processing	66%	6%	6%	21%
Fruit for fresh market or processing	77%	10%	6%	6%
Greenhouse nursery (flowers and shrubs)	89%	3%	3%	5%
Forest management	66%	11%	10%	13%
Trees (including nursery and Christmas)	81%	3%	6%	10%
Hay	45%	0%	13%	42%
Cows (dairy and/or beef)	68%	5%	6%	21%

Poultry	73%	10%	3%	15%
Other livestock	79%	6%	3%	11%
Horses (boarding and/or equestrian)	90%	6%	2%	2%
Other (please describe)	90%	0%	2%	8%

Table 1.3. Total gross farm revenue (n=57)

Revenue category	Percent
Less than \$10,000	21%
\$10,000 – \$49,999	14%
\$50,000 – \$149,999	28%
\$150,000 – \$349,999	16%
\$350,000 – \$999,999	16%
\$1,000,000 or more	5%

SECTION 2: FARMING PRACTICES

Broadly speaking, agricultural producers, or farmers, have for decades undertaken projects or implemented on-farm activities aimed at minimizing impacts on natural resources and the environment, while boosting farm productivity and minimizing operations and maintenance costs. These activities have commonly been referred to as “best management practices” (BMPs) or conservation practices. Over the past 10-15 years, some practices, like sowing cover crops in fall months and employing a strategy of “integrated pest management” (IPM), have become relatively widespread. Even in areas where conservation practices are becoming more common, however, farm managers must deal with erosion and soil depletion problems caused by multiple years of use.

Table 2.1. Farm status (n=62)

Farm operation...	Percent	Mean years in category
Has a <u>Farm Conservation Plan</u> that was developed with a government agency or non-profit group	68%	19 years
Includes land that has been <u>preserved as farmland</u> through a government or non-profit program	63%	16 years
Includes land that has been <u>assessed as farmland or woodland</u> for tax purposes	89%	28 years
Includes farmland that has been " <u>certified organic</u> "	5%	7 years

Table 2.2. Forest planning (n=46*)

Farm operation...	Percent
Has a <u>Forest Management Plan</u>	35%
Has a <u>Forest Stewardship Plan</u>	43%

**Only respondents with forest on their property or farmland were asked this question*

Table 2.3. Farm conservation practices (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent	Mean years using practice
Uses manure or composted manure as fertilizer	55%	30 years
Practices <u>manure management</u> (capture, storage, etc., of manures in an environmentally sustainable manner)	47%	24 years
Practices crop rotation	63%	34 years

Plants cover crops	60%	17 years
Uses any form of <u>reduced tillage</u> (strip, residue, no-till, etc.)	58%	23 years
Has installed filter strips, riparian buffers, or grassed waterways to trap sediment and filter runoff	52%	22 years
Has established <u>conservation cover</u> (perennial vegetative cover to protect soil and water on land retired from production)	34%	15 years
Practices <u>nutrient management</u> (testing soil, manure, or plant tissue to determine fertilizer rates)	60%	27 years
Has installed <u>stormwater controls</u> (detention areas, rain gardens, etc.)	29%	18 years
Practices <u>integrated pest management</u>	40%	25 years
Practices <u>conservation irrigation practices</u> (subsurface drip lines, surface tape, pivots, micro-irrigation)	26%	19 years
Has performed or installed stream bank stabilization measures	27%	18 years
Has installed livestock stream crossings and/or exclusion fencing from waterways	21%	12 ears

Table 2.4. Minimum width of buffer strips of grass, trees, or wild vegetation next to streams, ponds, wetlands or other waterbodies on or next to crop fields (n=42*)

Buffer strip width category	Percent
1 – 10 feet	7%
11 – 25 feet	24%
26 – 50 feet	31%
51 – 99 feet	19%
100 feet or more	19%

**Only respondents with waterbodies on or next to crop fields were asked this question*

Table 2.5. Livestock management practices (n=31*)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
Practices prescribed grazing	55%
Does <u>not</u> allow livestock unrestricted access to streams, ponds, or wetlands	81%

Has a manure management plan	74%
Does <u>not</u> allow silage leachate, milkhouse wastewater, or barnyard runoff to drain into wetlands or waterbodies	90%

**Only respondents with livestock were asked this question*

Table 2.6. Reasons for planting cover crops (n=43*)

Farm operator/owner has planted cover crops because he/she...	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
Wanted to improve soil health on the land	2%	0%	21%	77%
Wanted to reduce soil erosion on the land	2%	0%	21%	77%
Believes that cover crops increase yield	28%	9%	19%	44%
Heard from other farmers it was a good idea	47%	26%	5%	23%
Wanted to improve water quality in the region	5%	2%	28%	65%

**Only respondents who had planted cover crops sometime in the past 5 years were asked this question.*

Table 2.7. Open-ended responses about conservation practices

Farm operators and landowners were also asked: “Are there other things that you do to keep streambanks and shorelines from eroding, or to control runoff, on the land you farm?”

Here are a few of the responses received. For a full list, see Appendix A.

I started contour farming with an FFA project in 1967. I won the Porfeely Award.

Streambank plantings of native species. Native grass plantings for runoff and erosion control, 2014.

We have planted native grasses, bushes, trees, and other native plants in the field and along the streambank to help control erosion and runoff as well as for the purposes of preservation and health.

SECTION 3: PARTICIPATION IN USDA CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Many agencies within the U.S. Department of Agriculture offer programs to enable and encourage farm managers to implement conservation farming practices. These programs offer both technical and financial assistance to farm managers for acting to conserve natural resources on their land and helping to protect water quality in overall regions in which farms are situated. In the aggregate, respondents to this survey reported enrolling in a wide range of government conservation programs, for economic as well as environmental reasons.

Table 3.1. How many farm operators/owners have enrolled in USDA conservation programs? (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
Has enrolled in USDA conservation programs	69%
Has <u>NOT</u> enrolled in USDA conservation programs	31%

Table 3.2. USDA conservation programs in which farm operators/owners have enrolled (n=38*)

Respondents could name up to three programs.

Program	Agency	Number of farms
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	NRCS	18
Specific program not identified (runoff control, erosion, irrigation)	various agencies	8
Specific program not identified (misc.)	various agencies	7
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)	FSA	6
Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)	NRCS	4
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (PFWP)	FWS	4
Specific program not identified (hoophouse or high tunnel)	various agencies	3
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	NRCS	3
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	NRCS	2
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	FSA	2

Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement (LRP)	FAS	2
Specific program not identified (Integrated Pest Management)	various agencies	2
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)	NRCS	2
Specific program not identified (cover crops)	various agencies	2
State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE)	FSA	2
Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)	FSA	2
Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP)	USFS	1
Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)	NRCS	1
Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) & Farm Loss Conversion (FLC)	FSA	1
Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program	NRCS	1

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question. Not all respondents asked this question identified a specific USDA program in which they had enrolled.*

Table 3.3. Reasons for enrolling in USDA conservation programs (n=43*)

Farm operator/owner has enrolled in USDA conservation programs because...	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
Farmers and/or landowners that I know recommended that I enroll	63%	9%	12%	16%
I believed that enrolling would help my farm operation to comply with present or future environmental regulations	14%	12%	26%	49%
There was an economic incentive for enrolling	16%	7%	26%	51%
I wanted to improve water quality in my region	7%	5%	26%	63%
Enrolling in this program helped my farm operation to achieve a farmland or woodland tax assessment	58%	26%	7%	9%
I wanted to improve soil health on the land	7%	2%	19%	72%
I thought it would help increase my crop yield and/or productivity	23%	19%	16%	42%
I wanted to improve wildlife habitat	21%	5%	26%	49%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.4. Views about results of USDA conservation programs (n=43*)

According to farm operator/owner: Participation in USDA conservation programs has...	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree
Improved wildlife habitat on the land	9%	23%	67%
Reduced soil erosion/runoff on the land	2%	14%	84%
Increased soil health on the land	5%	14%	81%
Improved water quality around the land	2%	16%	81%
Increased my awareness of how agriculture can impact water quality in my region	9%	30%	60%
Made me a better farmer and/or landowner	7%	23%	70%
Improved my understanding of how I, as a farmer and/or landowner, can help improve regional water quality	5%	23%	72%
Provided useful information for managing the land	7%	16%	77%
Caused me to take water quality in my region into account when I make decisions about land management	7%	33%	60%
Caused me to change my land management practices in ways that will improve water quality in my region	9%	33%	58%
Made me a better steward of the land	5%	14%	81%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.5. Influence of participation in USDA conservation programs on farm management decisions (n=42*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: "Overall, how much influence has enrolling in USDA conservation programs had on how you manage your land?"	Percent
No influence at all	2%
A little influence	12%
Moderate influence	45%
Big influence	40%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.6. Influence of participation in USDA conservation programs on views concerning the environmental impacts of agriculture (n=42*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “Overall, how much influence has enrolling in USDA conservation programs had on how you think about the environmental impacts of agriculture in your region?”	Percent
No influence at all	7%
A little influence	7%
Moderate influence	45%
Big influence	40%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.7. Would participants in USDA conservation programs recommend these programs to other farmers and/or landowners? (n=42*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “Would you recommend to other farmers and/or landowners that they also enroll in USDA conservation programs?”	Percent
Definitely <u>not</u>	2%
Maybe	5%
Probably	24%
Definitely <u>yes</u>	69%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.8. Likelihood of continuing conservation farming practices, once current participation in USDA conservation program has concluded (n=42*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “How likely are you to continue doing, on your own, what USDA conservation programs enabled you to do while you were enrolled?”	Percent
Not likely	0%
Somewhat likely	5%
Likely	29%
Very likely	67%

**Only respondents who had enrolled in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

Table 3.9. How many farm operators/owners have, at some point, been aware of opportunities to enroll in USDA conservation programs, but chose not to participate? (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
Has at some point chosen <u>NOT</u> to enroll in USDA conservation programs of which he/she was aware	44%
Has never chosen not to enroll in USDA conservation programs of which he/she was aware	56%

Table 3.10. Reasons for not participating in USDA conservation programs (n=35*)

Farm operator/owner has decided <u>not</u> to enroll in USDA conservation programs because...	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
It would have been too time-consuming	29%	17%	26%	29%
The reimbursement process would have taken too long	34%	17%	17%	31%
The reimbursement funding was too low and did not reflect actual costs	23%	14%	26%	37%
I didn't know if I could complete the program	40%	17%	23%	20%
I heard from other farmers and/or land owners that it was not a good idea	69%	17%	9%	6%
The practice requirements were too restrictive	20%	17%	26%	37%
I did not have enough money or time to lay out upfront to do the work	23%	17%	29%	31%
I did not think it would improve water quality on the land	63%	20%	6%	11%
I did not think it would improve wildlife habitat on the land	63%	20%	11%	6%
I did not trust the agencies in charge of these programs	71%	23%	3%	3%
I did not agree with the suggestions that the agencies were making	43%	23%	17%	17%

**Only respondents who had chosen not to enroll in USDA conservation programs were asked this question.*

SECTION 4: PARTICIPATION IN CONSERVATION PROGRAMS WITH NON-PROFIT GROUPS

Non-profit groups operating in the Central Region of the Delaware Watershed—an area that includes the New Jersey Highlands Cluster (focal area) of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative—include New Jersey Audubon, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, Musconetcong Watershed Association, North Jersey RC&D, and many others. These groups provide additional sources of education, funding and technical assistance for farm managers looking to implement conservation farming practices. In some cases, these programs are funded and directed entirely by the groups themselves. In other cases, non-profit groups act to channel funding initially made available by government agencies. While groups running these programs share a non-profit status, they can differ on many other characteristics, including size, budget, history in the region, and organizational culture.

Table 4.1. How many farm operators/owners have participated in conservation programs funded or directed by non-profit groups (NPGs), like New Jersey Audubon or The Nature Conservancy? (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
Has enrolled in conservation programs with non-profit groups	69%
Has <u>NOT</u> enrolled in conservation programs with non-profit groups	31%

Table 4.2. Conservation programs, funded or directed by non-profit groups, in which farm operators/owners have participated (n=31*)

Respondents could name up to three programs.

Program	Agency	Number of farms
Cover crop program	New Jersey Audubon	11
No program identified	New Jersey Audubon	10
Warm-season grasses	New Jersey Audubon	4
Mini-loan program	New Jersey Audubon	2
Herbicide containment	New Jersey Audubon	1
Cover crop program	NJRCD	1
Stream bank improvement	New Jersey Audubon	1

Vernal pool program	New Jersey Audubon	1
Manure management program	NJRCD	1

**Only respondents who had participated in conservation programs with non-profit groups were asked this question. Not all respondents asked this question identified a specific program in which they had participated.*

Table 4.3. Reasons for participating in conservation programs funded or directed by non-profit groups (n=43*)

Farm operator/owner has participated in conservation programs with non-profit groups because...	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
Farmers and/or landowners that I know recommended that I participate	70%	5%	9%	16%
I believed that participating would help my farm operation to comply with present or future environmental regulations	26%	12%	19%	44%
There was an economic incentive for enrolling	23%	14%	23%	40%
I wanted to improve water quality in my region	14%	9%	23%	53%
Participating in this program helped my farm operation to achieve a farmland or woodland tax assessment	51%	21%	7%	21%
I wanted to improve soil health on the land	9%	9%	12%	70%
I thought it would help increase my crop yield and/or productivity	26%	12%	14%	49%
I wanted to improve wildlife habitat	21%	2%	14%	63%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.4. Views about results of conservation programs with non-profit groups (n=43*)

According to farm operator/owner: Participation in conservation programs with non-profit groups has...	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree
Improved wildlife habitat on the land	12%	21%	67%
Reduced soil erosion/runoff on the land	5%	5%	91%
Increased soil health on the land	7%	7%	86%
Improved water quality around the land	5%	14%	81%

Increased my awareness of how agriculture can impact water quality in my region	12%	21%	67%
Made me a better farmer and/or landowner	9%	14%	77%
Improved my understanding of how I, as a farmer and/or landowner, can help improve regional water quality	12%	19%	70%
Provided useful information for managing the land	14%	9%	77%
Caused me to take water quality in my region into account when I make decisions about land management	12%	21%	67%
Caused me to change my land management practices in ways that will improve water quality in my region	14%	21%	65%
Made me a better steward of the land	5%	12%	84%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.5. Influence of participation in conservation programs with non-profit groups on farm management decisions (n=41*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “Overall, how much influence has participating in conservation programs with non-profit groups had on how you manage your land?”	Percent
No influence at all	0%
A little influence	7%
Moderate influence	41%
Big influence	51%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.6. Influence of participation in conservation programs with non-profit groups on views concerning the environmental impacts of agriculture (n=41*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “Overall, how much influence has participating in conservation programs with non-profit groups had on how you think about the environmental impacts of agriculture in your region?”	Percent
No influence at all	2%
A little influence	12%

Moderate influence	32%
Big influence	54%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.7. Would participants in conservation programs with non-profit groups recommend these programs to other farmers and/or landowners? (n=41*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: "Would you recommend to other farmers and/or landowners that they also participate in conservation programs with non-profit groups?"	Percent
Definitely <u>not</u>	0%
Maybe	10%
Probably	22%
Definitely <u>yes</u>	68%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.8. Likelihood of continuing conservation farming practices, once current participation in conservation programs with non-profit groups has concluded (n=41*)

Asked of farm operator/owner: "How likely are you to continue doing, on your own, what conservation programs with non-profit groups enabled you to do while you were participating?"	Percent
Not likely	0%
Somewhat likely	5%
Likely	17%
Very likely	78%

**Only respondents who had participated in conserv. programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

Table 4.9. How many farm operators/owners have, at some point, been aware of opportunities to participate in conservation programs funded or directed by non-profit groups, but chose not to participate? (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
------------------------	---------

Has at some point chosen <u>NOT</u> to participate in conservation programs with non-profit groups of which he/she was aware	32%
Has never chosen not to participate in conservation programs with non-profit groups of which he/she was aware	68%

Table 4.10. Reasons for not participating in conservation programs with non-profit groups (n=20*)

Farm operator/owner has decided <u>not</u> to enroll in conservation programs with non-profit groups because...	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
It would have been too time-consuming	15%	15%	35%	35%
The reimbursement process would have taken too long	20%	35%	15%	30%
The reimbursement funding was too low and did not reflect actual costs	10%	10%	20%	60%
I didn't know if I could complete the program	15%	20%	30%	35%
I heard from other farmers and/or land owners that it was not a good idea	65%	20%	15%	0%
The practice requirements were too restrictive	15%	10%	40%	35%
I did not have enough money or time to lay out upfront to do the work	10%	15%	15%	60%
I did not think it would improve water quality on the land	50%	25%	20%	5%
I did not think it would improve wildlife habitat on the land	60%	20%	20%	0%
I did not trust the groups in charge of these programs	65%	5%	15%	15%
I did not agree with the suggestions that the groups were making	50%	10%	15%	25%

**Only respondents who had chosen not to participate in conservation programs with non-profit groups were asked this question.*

SECTION 5: THE DELAWARE RIVER WATERSHED

As set forth by the Delaware River Watershed Initiative: “*The rivers, lakes and trails of (this region) are among the most popular recreation spots in the state. Many rare species make their homes here. A portion of the region also provides drinking water for 5.4 million people, the majority of whom live outside the region. Most residents in the region draw their water from private and community wells, making groundwater quality just as important as surface water quality. Currently, groundwater quality is typically good in the (region). The main exception is groundwater in vulnerable shallow wells. Where porous limestone lies beneath portions of the (region), groundwater resources are especially susceptible to contamination from the surface.*”

Table 5.1. How do farm operators/owners rate the current water quality in their region of the Delaware River Watershed? (n=46)

According to farm operator/owner: Water quality in “my region” of the Delaware River Watershed is...	Percent
Very bad	0%
Bad	0%
Neither good or bad	22%
Good	61%
Very good	17%

Table 5.2. According to farm operators/owners, what has the biggest negative impact on water quality in their region of the Delaware River Watershed? (n=60)

According to farm operator/owner: The biggest negative impact on water quality in “my region” of the Delaware River Watershed comes from...	Percent who said...
Stormwater runoff from <u>impervious surfaces</u> in developed, non-agricultural areas (roads, parking lots, roofs, etc.)	50%
Stormwater runoff from suburban lawns	8%
Agricultural runoff: eroded soil, agricultural chemicals, and animal waste from crop fields, pasture, barnyards, etc.	20%
Loss of forest land	8%
Dams	0%

Table 5.3. Have farm operators/owners heard of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative? (n=62)

Farm operator/owner...	Percent
Has heard of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative	60%
Has <u>NOT</u> heard of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative	40%

Table 5.4. How have farm operators/owners heard about the Delaware River Watershed Initiative? (n=37*)

Source of information/awareness about the Delaware River Watershed Initiative	Percent**
Newspaper	14%
Radio or TV	0%
Communication from a farm group (Farm Bureau, Grange, County Extension Office, etc.)	24%
Communication from a conservation group (NJ Audubon, NJRC&D, etc.)	70%
Communication from a federal agency (NRCS, FSA, etc.)	27%
Word of mouth from other farmers or landowners	24%
Social media (facebook, twitter, etc.)	0%
Other	11%

*Only respondents who had heard of the DWRI were asked this question.

**Respondents could indicate more than one source, so percentages do not add up to 100%

Table 5.5. Attitudes about the Delaware River Watershed (see items for “n”)

Asked of farm operator/owner: “Please say whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.”	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree
I can help improve water quality in my region of the [DWR] by how I manage my land (n=59)	2%	10%	88%
In 10 years, the water quality in my region of the Delaware River Watershed will improve (n=58)	3%	40%	57%
In general, it matters to me whether other farmers and/or landowners approve of how I manage my land (n=59)	25%	27%	47%

If all government and non-profit funding for farmland conservation practices ceased tomorrow, there would be no negative impact on water quality in my region of the [DWR] (n=59)	75%	14%	12%
If all government and non-profit funding for farmland conservation practices ceased tomorrow, I would change the way I manage my land (n=58)	57%	21%	22%

Table 5.6. How much do farm operators/owners know about non-profit groups and government agencies working in the Delaware River Watershed? (see items for “n”)

Non-profit group or government agency	I have <u>not</u> heard of this group	I have <u>heard</u> of this group	I have <u>worked with</u> this group
Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (n=58)	62%	24%	14%
Hunterdon Land Trust (n=59)	39%	46%	15%
The Land Conservancy of New Jersey (n=61)	18%	66%	16%
Musconetcong Watershed Association (n=59)	24%	49%	27%
The Nature Conservancy (n=60)	25%	57%	18%
New Jersey Audubon (n=61)	0%	20%	80%
North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development (n=59)	34%	34%	32%
Lopatcong Creek Initiative (n=58)	74%	22%	3%
New Jersey Conservation Foundation (n=58)	41%	40%	19%
New Jersey Highlands Coalition (n=59)	12%	71%	17%
Sussex County Municipal Utilities Authority-Walkill River Watershed Mngmnt. Group (n=57)	72%	19%	9%
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (n=60)	2%	52%	47%
USDA-Natural Resource Conserv. Service (n=61)	2%	11%	87%
USDA-Farm Service Agency (n=60)	3%	32%	65%
United State Fish and Wildlife Service (n=58)	3%	36%	60%

Table 5.7. Open-ended responses about helpful things that government agencies and non-profit groups can do when working with farm operators/owners.

Farm operators/owners were asked: “In your view, what is the most helpful thing that a government agency or non-profit group could do to help you meet your goals for their land?”

Here are a few of the responses received. For a full list, see Appendix A.

Aid in soil testing and IPM work.

Answer or return phone calls.

Cover crops are a great help. The stewardship programs are useful since landlord signatures are needed.

Table 5.8. Open-ended responses about unhelpful things that government agencies and non-profit groups can do when working with farm operators/owners.

Farm operators/owners were asked: “What is the least helpful thing that a government agency or non-profit group could do to help you meet you goals for their land?”

Here are a few of the responses received. For a full list, see Appendix A.

Providing funding in a way that benefits poor operators, or drives good operators into bad management practices just to be eligible for funding.

Taking forever to reimburse.

Requiring long and complicated applications for programs.

Table 5.9. Open-ended responses about which government agencies and/or non-profit groups farm operators/owners say they are comfortable working with.

Farm operators/owners were asked: Is there any government agency or non-profit group that you feel particularly comfortable working with? If so, why?

Here are a few of the responses received. For a full list, see Appendix A.

NRCS, NJ Audubon, and the Foodshed Alliance of NJ.

NJ Audubon is always very enthusiastic about opportunities to enhance our property. They are also excellent at coordinating with other partners to ensure lasting improvement.

The Nature Conservancy, Wallkill Group, and NJ Audubon are great to work with because they are committed to educating both land owners and the general public on why conservation is worthwhile.

Table 5.10. Open-ended responses about which government agencies or non-profit groups farm operators/owners say they absolutely will not work with.

Farm operators/owners were asked: Is there any government agency or non-profit group that you absolutely will not work with? Is so, why not?

Here are a few of the responses received. For a full list, see Appendix A.

Possibly the Farm Bureau due to their negative views of anything environmental.

No but townships are a big problem. Taxes on manure storage building is a big deterrent!

Anyone that wants to do streambed manipulation; it is too invasive.

SECTION 6: FARM OPERATOR/OWNER CHARACTERISTICS

Table 6.1. Years operating and/or owning current farm (n=62)

Years category	Percent
1 – 10 years	23%
11 – 20 years	29%
21 – 30 years	18%
31 years or more	30%

Table 6.2. Years operating and/or owning any farm (n=62)

Years category	Percent
1 – 10 years	15%
11 – 20 years	21%
21 – 30 years	19%
31 years or more	45%

Table 6.3. Considerations for farm management decisions (n=61)

Considerations that farm operators/owners take into account	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
High crop yields	18%	7%	18%	57%
Profitability (i.e. net revenue, once cash inputs and outputs are accounted for)	11%	8%	20%	61%
Maintaining or improving soil health	2%	5%	18%	75%
Good water quality in bodies of water around where I farm	2%	3%	25%	70%
Availability of clean water in my region	2%	5%	25%	69%
Maintaining good quality wildlife habitats	3%	10%	26%	61%

Property aesthetics	5%	11%	31%	52%
Property value	5%	10%	23%	62%
Recreational opportunities (fishing, swimming, wildlife watching, etc.)	16%	18%	38%	28%
Achieving a farmland or woodland tax assessment	16%	5%	20%	59%

Table 6.4. Age of farm operator/owner (n=62)

Age, in years	Percent
30 years old or younger	5%
31 – 45 years old	15%
46 – 60 years old	45%
61 years old or older	35%

Table 6.5. Education level of farm operator/owner (n=59)

Education category	Percent
Less than a high school degree	5%
High school degree/GED	34%
College degree	45%
Graduate degree	17%

Table 6.6. Gender of farm operator/owner (n=61)

Gender	Percent
Male	79%
Female	21%

SECTION 7: STATISTICAL ANALYSES

An important goal of this survey was to address the research question: Is outreach and assistance conducted by non-profit groups operating in the Watershed helping to create any shift in attitudes toward conservation for water quality improvement? The tables below present statistical analyses motivated by this goal.

In each of the “cross-tabulation” tables in this section, frequencies and proportions are given for:

1. The number of farmers who stated that they had worked with any of the following non-profit groups: Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, Hunterdon Land Trust, The Land Conservancy of New Jersey, Musconetcong Watershed Association, Trout Unlimited, Wallkill River Management Group, The Nature Conservancy, New Jersey Audubon, North Jersey Resource Conservation and Development, Lopatcong Creek Initiative, New Jersey Conservation Foundation, New Jersey Highlands Coalition.
2. The number of farmers who had engaged in some form of conservation planning, or who expressed an attitude or opinion thought to be conducive towards conservation for water quality in the Watershed.

By showing survey results for two variables simultaneously, the relationship between these variables can be observed. However, it must be kept in mind that these tables only show relationships between two variables using data from the sample for this survey. Therefore, results of a standard “chi-square test for statistical significance” are also given. When the “p-value” for the chi-square test is less than .05, it is considered acceptable to say that a relationship observed in the sample likely also exists in the population from which the sample was drawn (in this case, farmers in the Delaware River Watershed Central Region).

When the chi-square test does not attain statistical significance, this should not be taken to indicate that no relationship exists between the two variables in question. A “failed” chi-square test only means that a relationship observed between two variables in sample data is not strong enough to clearly suggest that this relationship also exists in the population.

It is important to note that the rule of “correlation does not equal causation” applies to all findings. In other words, even a “statistically significant” relationship does not necessarily mean that one variable is causing the other. In some cases, the causal relationship could run in the opposite direction. Or, a relationship between two variables could be the result of the causal power of an unobserved, third variable. (For instance, the relationship observed in Table 7.1 could indicate that working with non-profit groups helps farmers to produce a Farm Conservation Plan. But it could also be the case that farmers with a Farm Conservation Plan are more likely to seek out non-profit conservation groups to work with.) For these reasons, the findings from the tables below should be taken as suggestive of certain relationships, but not, in any way, as indisputable evidence.

In the tables in this section, percentages in each row sum to 100%.

Table 7.1. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and having a Farm Conservation Plan. (n=63)

	Does the farm owner/operator have a Farm Conservation Plan?			
	No	Yes	Total	
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	9 (100%)
	Yes	15 (28%)	39 (72%)	54 (100%)
Total	21 (33%)	42 (67%)	63 (100%)	

Chi-square test statistic: 5.25; $p < .05$

We can say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.2. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and enrolling in conservation programs with USDA. (n=63)

	Has the farm owner/operator ever enrolled in a conservation program with USDA?			
	No	Yes	Total	
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	6 (67%)	3 (33%)	9 (100%)
	Yes	14 (26%)	40 (74%)	54 (100%)
Total	21 (33%)	42 (67%)	63 (100%)	

Chi-square test statistic: 5.91; $p < .05$

We can say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.3. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and having heard about the Delaware River Watershed Initiative. (n=63)

	Has the farm owner/operator heard about the Delaware River Watershed Initiative?			
	No	Yes	Total	
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of	No	7 (78%)	2 (22%)	9 (100%)

the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	Yes	19 (35%)	35 (65%)	54 (100%)
	Total	26 (41%)	37 (59%)	63 (100%)

Chi-square test statistic: 5.77; $p < .05$

We can say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.4. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and believing that one can help improve Watershed water quality through farm management decisions. (n=59)

	Does the farm owner/operator <u>agree</u> with the statement: "I can help improve water quality in my region of the Delaware River Watershed by how I manage my land"?			
		No	Yes	Total
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	2 (29%)	5 (71%)	7 (100%)
	Yes	5 (10%)	47 (90%)	52 (100%)
	Total	7 (12%)	52 (88%)	59 (100%)

Chi-square test statistic: 2.12; "p" is NOT less than .05

We cannot say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.5. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and believing that agricultural runoff has the biggest negative impact on water quality in the region. (n=60)

	Did the farm owner/operator state that, in his/her opinion, <u>agricultural runoff</u> has the biggest negative impact on water quality in the Delaware River Watershed?			
		No	Yes	Total
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	6 (100%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
	Yes	42 (78%)	12 (22%)	54 (100%)
	Total	48 (80%)	12 (20%)	60 (100%)

Chi-square test statistic: 1.67; "p" is NOT less than .05

We cannot say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.6. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and having a Forest Stewardship Plan. (n=46*)

		Does the farm owner/operator have a Farm Conservation Plan?		
		No	Yes	Total
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)
	Yes	23 (53%)	20 (47%)	43 (100%)
Total		26 (57%)	20 (43%)	46 (100%)

**Only respondents with forests on their property were included in this analysis.*

Chi-square test statistic: 2.47; “p” is NOT less than .05

We cannot say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

Table 7.7. Examining the relationship between working with a non-profit group in the Delaware River Watershed and having a Manure Management Plan. (n=31*)

		Does the farm owner/operator have a Farm Conservation Plan?		
		No	Yes	Total
Has the farm operator/owner worked with ANY ONE of the Watershed non-profit groups named above?	No	0 (0%)	5 (100%)	5 (100%)
	Yes	8 (31%)	18 (69%)	26 (100%)
Total		8 (26%)	23 (74%)	31 (100%)

**Only respondents who raised livestock were included in this analysis.*

Chi-square test statistic: 2.07; “p” is NOT less than .05

We cannot say with statistical certainty that these two variables are related to one another.

APPENDIX A: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Table 2.7. Open-ended responses about conservation practices

Farm operators and landowners were also asked: “Are there other things that you do to keep streambanks and shorelines from eroding, or to control runoff, on the land you farm?”

Complete list of responses:

I started contour farming with an FFA project in 1967. I won the Porfeely Award.
Built two diversion swales.
Flash grazing.
Grassland as a buffer. Also, leaving fallen trees and dead vegetation around the buffer. Planted some border plants.
Tree planting.
Remove invasives (2011). Plant native grasses, trees, and shrubs (2011). Perform regular maintenance on these areas (2011).
Let vegetation grow.
Use grass seeding to control water runoff into water.
We mow the grass around the banks of the pond these last 43 years.
No water on property or bordering property.
While we have no streams on our farm operation, we do have highly erodible lands (HEL). On these acres, we prefer that land stay in perennial grass hay for 7 out of 10 years.
Plantings.
Cover crop strips prevent run off to streams ext.
No till and minimum till. Create grass buffers, grass waterways and diversions, maintain sufficient organic debris and old crop residue on soil surface. Use of controlled drainage of surface waters to prevent erosion including but not limited to underground drain tile and controlled outlets.
These areas are in the WRP.
Streambank plantings of native species. Native grass plantings for runoff and erosion control, 2014.
We have planted native grasses, bushes, trees, and other native plants in the field and along the streambank to help control erosion and runoff as well as for the purposes of preservation and health.
Grassed waterway near river, stream bank re-stabilization WRP-rap. In hay fields that are rented out, have been trying to get NRCS to provide cost chare to address a 2 ft. deep, 2 ft. wide ditch about 75 long but so far no luck.

Table 5.7. Open-ended responses about helpful things that government agencies and non-profit groups can do when working with farm operators/owners.

Farm operators/owners were asked: “In your view, what is the most helpful thing that a government agency or non-profit group could do to help you meet your goals for their land?”

Complete list of responses:

Aid in soil testing and IPM work.
Provide funding for startup, transitional, and progressive farmers participating in BMP's.
Provide technical help. Funding is always helpful.
Assist with both financial and technical support.
Funding, not incentives.
Cover crop.
Provide cover crop seed with use of no till drill and rollecrimper use for cover crop management.
Make sure programs are well announced and are well funded.
\$
Offer suggestions.
Cost share conservation practices.
Continue their support, help with questions and concerns. Also, follow up with recommendations to help other landowners begin conservation projects.
Education and funding.
Answer or return phone calls.
Help make farming profitable along with preserving the environment.
Education and awareness of programs.
Provide a cost share incentive.
Keep the communication open in order to hear about new programs or opportunities.
Reduce the red tape and eliminate the strings that are often attached, particularly with government organizations
Provide information and guidance. Cost share.
Anything we've ever asked for has been denied.
Educate/participate with land owner. Provide financial resources and manpower.
Make money more available for true farmers.
Increase awareness of available programs and grants.
Information on best practices and applications of composting.
Cover crops are a great help. The stewardship programs are useful since landlord signatures are needed.
For farmers of need, NRCS could make programs ready immediately, not 1 or 2 years later. A farmer only asks for help when he really needs it.
Provide incentives to do positive farming practices for our area.
Reduce property taxes.
Cost share trees take a long time. Wildlife is very important.
Access to seed or some financial assistance is a great help, because using cover crops to prevent soil loss or soil erosion is very important for me.
Provide guidelines.
Help improve our land. Put programs together to help cut input costs to improve the farmer.
Awareness of programs available to farmers. Listen to the farmer; sometimes he knows and understands his soils and local history best.
Cost sharing.
Cost share programs: no till, pasture improvement.
Support, both in taking action and as liaisons with the program. Most farmers are too busy to know all this.

Use common sense regulation with minimal red tape (clean cut).
Understand our business and find a way to work together to benefit both parties.
Continue the education service that has been so effectively provided to me and my land.
Supply funding, expertise, and equipment.
Offer financial support.
Provide information about best management practices and funding.
Provide funding with cost share match paid for to address soil erosion. Test soil for free.
Answer when asked. Stay out of the way.
Make it worthwhile and feasible.
Inform the farmer of programs by preferred means of communication. Do not make excessive use of technology to convey basic information.
Educate me.
Cost assistance.
Coordination and financing.
More free money.

Table 5.8. Open-ended responses about unhelpful things that government agencies and non-profit groups can do when working with farm operators/owners.

Farm operators/owners were asked: “What is the least helpful thing that a government agency or non-profit group could do to help you meet you goals for their land?”

Complete list of responses:

Controlling what crops are planted.
Providing funding in a way that benefits poor operators, or drives good operators into bad management practices just to be eligible for funding.
Not helping.
Promoting deforestation.
Applying too many stipulations when considering using programs. Too many obstacles will just make people deem it not worth their effort.
Being too restrictive.
Restrictions for agricultural use.
None.
Regulations.
Not sure.
Strict regulation.
Lobbying for or adding burdensome regulations.
No following up on an existing program or grant after implementation.
A non-profit should be assisting in any way possible, not suing like some non-profits. Lopatcong Creek Initiative and Musconetcong Watershed seem to be in league with the NJ Highlands Coalition.
Taking forever to reimburse.
Anything we've ever asked for has been denied, so we stopped participating. We asked for invasive species removal but because we began the project ourselves no help was given.

Just handing out paperwork without strong recommendations for a long term plan.
Controlling the problems already made.
Requiring long and complicated applications for programs.
Grazing opportunities on public land. Most land in public use is left unattended, and is within 100 ft. of a waterway.
Possessing all rental ground, I try to avoid programs that require landlord signatures. These programs confuse the landlords and acquiring signatures is tedious.
Denying help.
Being too controlling and restrictive.
Mandating technique that don't have a positive impact on my way of farming the land.
Excessive paperwork.
If, for some reason, there was no recognition about the significance of this country's topsoil and the overall agronomic health of the soil, that would be alarming. Regardless of finances we must protect the soil.
Filing legal action against us (NJ Highland Coalition).
Anything to help farmers or the land would help.
Placing "blanket" regulation over everyone. Every farm and farmer's situation is different.
Heavy oversight.
Land use restrictions.
Acting only as a regulatory entity.
Causing delays on projects good for the state, land, and our business.
Nothing.
Creating confusing, time consuming paperwork. Bureaucracy surrounding the programs.
Making their programs complicated and expensive for the landowner.
I feel that pushing too hard to participate in programs could be a turn off to some landowners. An organization or group's goals for a parcel of land might not always be in line with the owner's goals for various reasons. Providing information and allowing them to make their own decisions to participate or not is best.
Create an environment where either preferred use of my fields and pasture is forest. The Highland Council calls a field with 4 hedgerows a "forest resource area". When we have tried to preserve with SADC, they wouldn't do it. However Green Acres would, and turned it into forest.
Telling me what to do from reading a book or regulation.
Calling on the phone and asking to fill out long surveys.
Being dictatorial and not listening.
Excessive regulations.
Being overbearing.

Table 5.9. Open-ended responses about what government agencies and/or non-profit groups farm operators/owners say they are comfortable working with.

Farm operators/owners were asked: Is there any government agency or non-profit group that you feel particularly comfortable working with? If so, why?

Complete list of responses:

FSA, NJRCD, NRCS, and Audubon are very helpful.

NJ Audubon. They seem to have a better understanding of programs designed to transition the farmer to economic viability.
No.
NJ Audubon and NRCS.
NRCS, NJ Audubon, and the Foodshed Alliance of NJ.
NRCS, because of familiarity.
NRCS, FSA, NJ Audubon. I have past working relationships with these groups.
No.
NRCS, SADC. I am familiar with them.
NJ Audubon. They are the greatest!
Audubon, MWA, NRCS. All work on solving problems, not regulating others to do so!
NRS. People are nice and helpful.
NJCF, NJ Audubon. They have always been helpful.
NRCS: they are not regulatory. USFWS (partners in wildlife program only): they are not regulatory. NJ Forest Service: similar minded staff. NJ Audubon: conservation minded staff rather than preservationist.
NJ Audubon is always very enthusiastic about opportunities to enhance our property. They are also excellent at coordinating with other partners to ensure lasting improvement.
No government agency, except USFWS, which was a good experience. I have had experience with many. Very comfortable working with NJ Audubon.
NRCS: experience with them.
No. Most of their experts seem to know little about small diverse farms; monocrop experts!
NJAS: most comfortable staff support and ongoing assessment.
NJ Audubon.
All. Everyone brings something to the table.
NRCS, Audubon, FSA. Been working with them for years. Have a comfort level.
NJ Audubon are very helpful with crop cover funding. Often times when cover crops need to be planted the farmers does not have a lot of resource money as he has not sold his crop yet.
Audubon: not as restrictive.
FSA.
FSA, USFWS, NRCS.
Audubon: people check up and don't forget.
NRCS: They are systematically uniform in their approach in each case, but thorough in defining all aspects of each project.
None in particular.
So far the Audubon has been successful. All the others suck and are out to take your money!
N/A.
NRCS.
No.
SCMUA, NRCS, NJ Audubon Society.
USDA, NRCS: Debbie is wonderful. NJ Audubon: John Parke has been very helpful.
USDA, NRCS, FSA: I understand their practices.
NJ Audubon, NRCS, USFWS.
NJ Audubon: it's been so informative to work with John Parke. He has been very encouraging and supportive. NOFA NJ: This organization is integral to the community of organic farmers.

I've enjoyed with working with people from the NCRS, USFWS and NJ Audubon. They are knowledgeable and supportive.
The Nature Conservancy, Walkkill Group, and NJ Audubon are great to work with because they are committed to educating both land owners and the general public on why conservation is worthwhile and the particular benefits provided.
RCD: they provide matching funds for NRCS programs. MWA: long family history with them. NJAS: they help farmers and can provide trees and bird/bat boxes.
No.
FSA, NRCS.
NJ Audubon.
NJ Audubon and USFWS. They did positive things on my land and taught me a lot.
NRCS and USFWS.
NRCS, overall. I like working with those that have money and knowledge.
NRCS, overall. I like working with those that have money and knowledge.
All of them; it has been a great experience.

Table 5.10. Open-ended responses about what government agencies or non-profit groups farm operators/owners say they absolutely will not work with.

Farm operators/owners were asked: Is there any government agency or non-profit group that you absolutely will not work with? Is so, why not?

Complete list of responses:

No.
No.
None.
None.
Possibly the Farm Bureau due to their negative views of anything environmental.
No. But that depends on what they are asking of me. That could change if they are making regulations/rules I don't agree with for my operation.
No.
None.
No.
No.
No.
NJ Sierra Club, NJ Highlands Coalition, NJ Conservation Foundation, The Land Conservancy of NJ, Pinelands Alliance. All of the above lack actual knowledge and experience as land managers and therefore cannot offer me any meaningful insight on anything besides preserving a piece of land.
No.
Nj Highlands Coalition: they are uniformed, not true environmentalists. Their goals are simply to fundraise to line their own pockets and to litigate whenever they can. Farmers and landowners big and small are intimidated by them and therefore choose to do nothing to improve their properties.
Intrusive and ignorant of our methods. And anything we ever asked for we were denied so we stopped asking. No fencing, no pump, no well, no invasive species removal.

None.
No.
No but townships are a big problem. Taxes on manure storage building is a big deterrent!
No.
No.
No.
NJ Highlands Coalition: they are fake environmentalists designed to protect their donors, Lopatcong Creek Initiative, Musconetcong Watershed Association. Dislike Lopatcong Creek Initiative. Disagree with ANJEC.
Fish and Game suck. DEP, EPA, the townships. They are all out to put the farmer out of business. Audubon has helped me more than any of these other agencies that I've worked with.
N/A.
EPA
No.
No.
I'm mad at the Sierra Club NJ for not understanding the ecological forestry practice in New Jersey.
No.
Not that I know of.
No.
Anyone that wants to do streambed manipulation; it is too invasive.
What and have them come after me??
Sierra Club. They have arrogant members who do not comprehend basic science.
No.
NJ Conservation Foundation. They are the most unethical group I have ever encountered.