



STRATEGIC DIRECTION— Committing to Build a Responsible Nation

GOALS:

- ◆ Improve water quality of Trout Creek and associated waters by reducing soil erosion and nutrient runoff from agricultural fields.
- ◆ Improve soil health, leading to increased quantity and quality of forage for grazing animals' health & productivity

BACKGROUND:

The Environmental, Health & Safety Division has been working to restore the entire Trout Creek watershed for nearly 20 years. In an agricultural landscape, this means implementing practices that minimize erosion and runoff from farm fields.

Shifting from row crops to grazing pasture is an effective approach to accomplishing this goal, when possible. Maintaining continuous cover is key to protecting water quality, as vegetation slows the flow, keeping the soil and nutrients on the landscape and out of nearby waters.



The end of the lease at the former State Farm in 2016 presented a valuable opportunity to shift to more ecologically-sound and economically viable agricultural practices. The Oneida Land Commission had designated the land as an environmentally sensitive area, thus limiting the lease to options that would be compatible with this designation. For this reason, the lease was put out for open bid to be for grazing only.

PROJECT DETAILS: The USDA defines Rotational Grazing as planting forage and using grazing rotations among different fields to maximize production and reduce sediment and nutrient runoff.

Diederich Farm LLC received the lease and worked with NRCS and the Nonpoint Program to design a managed grazing operation. This lease will enable Diederich Farm to move heifers from a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) to an open intensive rotational grazing operation.

- ◆ During the summer months, a beef herd will be on the field east of County U. Number of animal units will not exceed capacity for 86.1 acres as established in the grazing plan
- ◆ 3 groups of dairy heifers will graze the remaining 417.5 acres, including a group of pre-bred animals (400-700 lbs); a group of breeding animals (700-1,000 lbs); and a group of post-bred animals (1,000-1,200 lbs).
- ◆ Maximum of 300-500 animals
- ◆ Conversion of 503.6 acres of row crops to rotational grazing management which will provide permanent cover year round
- ◆ 48,122' of 4-strand High Tensile Electric exterior fence installed in summer 2017
- ◆ 76,566' of 1-strand High Tensile Electric interior fence installed in summer 2017
- ◆ Steel Gates were installed at 9 locations in summer 2017

FUTURE:

A corral system will be installed on the field east of County U for the beef herd. Two wells will be installed to supply water to all the pastures. Potentially three new buildings will be constructed to handle the 3 groups of dairy animals, pending the possible lease of the existing State Farm Buildings that are already on site.

FUNDING: (100% Outside Funding Sources)

\$ 13,412	GLRI (Great Lakes Restoration Initiative)
<u>\$146,743</u>	<u>NRCS</u>
\$160,155	TOTAL

BENEFIT TO THE NATION:

Permanent pasture and grazing will improve soil and plant health by promoting uptake of water and nutrients by plants; and minimize surface runoff containing soil and nutrients. By using the land for grazing instead of row cropping, the smell of manure will be minimized because there will no longer be manure spreading taking place. These practices will also enhance the protection of the nearby trout stream (Trout Creek) and help the Oneida Nation move towards food sovereignty.

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