

Watershed Agricultural Council
Agriculture ♦ Forestry ♦ Conservation Easements ♦ Economic Initiatives
44 West Street, Suite 1, Walton, New York 13856-9751 phone: 607-865-7017 fax: 607-865-5535 www.nycwatershed.org



Supporting Working Landscapes in the NYC Watershed Region

Pure Catskills is a regional, buy local campaign developed by the Watershed Agricultural Council to improve the economic viability of the local community, sustain the working landscapes of the Catskills and preserve water quality in the NYC watershed region. Pure Catskills works to promote hundreds of farm, forest and local businesses throughout Delaware, Greene, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan and Ulster Counties in New York State. [Click here](#) for a snapshot of how strong agriculture and forestry businesses in the Catskills ensure over nine million New York residents have access to clean water and food.

A Unique Public-Private Partnership

Internationally recognized as a successful example of public-private partnership, the Watershed Agricultural Council (The Council) holds a dual mission to address surface-water quality through land conservation while supporting the economic viability of agriculture and forestry in the watershed region. The Council provides incentives to landowners for implementing watershed management practices. Landowners' willingness to participate in WAC's upstream water quality programs continues to provide New York City residents with over 1.1 billion gallons of clean drinking water each day.

Learn more about the history of The Council [in this video](#) celebrating 20 years of working landscapes for clean water.

History of Pure Catskills

Working together is not a new concept for farmers in the Catskills. For a good part of the 20th century, the Catskills, in particular Delaware County, grew what was widely considered the best cauliflower anywhere. From the 1920s through the 1940s, local cauliflower was shipped in huge quantities via rail and highway to ready markets in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, making the Catskills synonymous with fine quality produce. Marketing cooperatives, working together to increase efficiency and maximize profit, created distinctive labels for their wooden cauliflower shipping crates. The first Pure Catskills logo was based on the original art on the shipping crates.

In this spirit, members of The Council decided to create a buy local campaign to generate economic opportunity for participating farms. Pure Catskills first started in 2004 with a small group of farmers in Delaware County committed to working together to help promote their products. The first *Guide to Catskills Products* brochure was printed in 2004 and included approximately 30 farms and farm-related businesses in Delaware County.

Expansion to Forestry

In 2014, the Watershed Agricultural Council announced the expansion of Pure Catskills to forestry businesses in the Catskills region, in addition to the farm and food businesses that have been a part of

EDITORIAL BACKGROUNDER

Pure Catskills since inception. Expanding this program allows The Council to enhance economic opportunities for farm and forestry businesses, and support working landscapes in the Catskills while ensuring the delivery of clean water to approximately nine million people in New York State.

Pure Catskills Today

Today, Pure Catskills represents nearly 300 diverse farm and forest-based businesses, restaurants, local artisans, other non-profit organizations and accommodations. Each spring, Pure Catskills publishes the *Guide to Catskills Products* and distributes over 50,000 copies across the region. The guide is a one-stop source for where to eat, drink, shop, stay and play in the Catskills, and offers consumers a way to help preserve the working landscapes of the region, keep the water clean and ensure small communities in the Catskills thrive.

See the story behind a few Pure Catskills members and how they work together to build the region::

[Eleanor Blakeslee and Patrick Henneberry of Berry Brook Farm](#)

[Chef Deanna – Hamden Inn](#)

[Katrok Woodworking](#)

[Lucky Dog Local Food Hub](#)

Economic Development for Business Members

The Pure Catskills initiative also offers several programs to connect farms and forestry businesses to retail and wholesale markets, promotes farmers and foresters through print, web and social media campaigns, works to increase brand recognition for Pure Catskill members and educates consumers on the benefits of buying locally. The program also partners with numerous local, regional and state organizations that support regional economic development in agriculture and forestry.

For high-res images and more information about Pure Catskills or the Watershed Agricultural Council please contact:

Kristan Morley
Watershed Agricultural Council
Pure Catskills Coordinator
607-865-7090 x 293