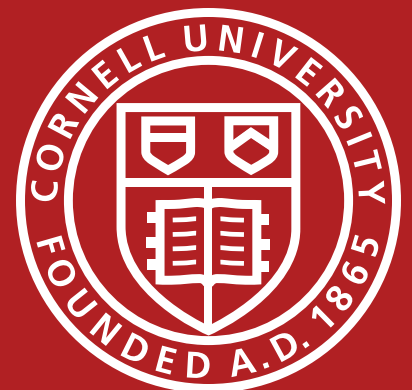




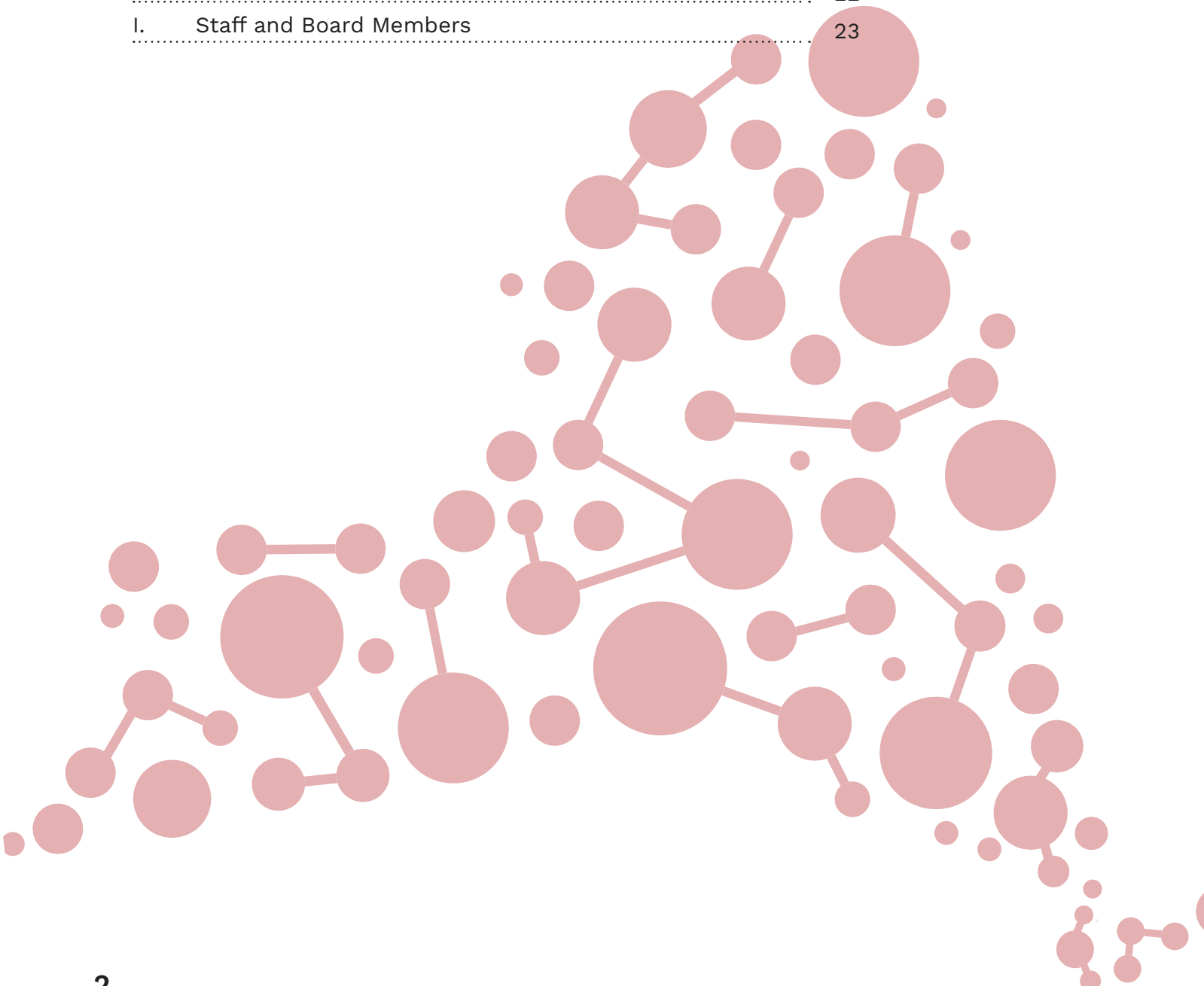
Cornell Cooperative Extension | **Columbia and Greene Counties**

Annual Report 2023



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From the Executive Director

As Executive Director, this past year was filled with exciting opportunities. I attended three Executive Leadership Conferences which provided a greater understanding of CCE. We provided many successful programs in Columbia and Greene Counties.

We have forged new relationships within Columbia County with the leaders of the Youth Bureau and the Commissioner of Social Services allowing us to offer expanded programs to our youth and families. One exciting new program is called HAY (Hiking, Archery and Yoga) via a county contract that allows us to offer these services free of charge! Our Greene County programs with the Department of Social Services have received strong support throughout the county, with them exploring other options with us for the future.

We continue our commitment to existing programs including being the premier source of local Agroforestry and Climate Resilience education, supporting dozens of 4-H clubs and programs, and maintaining our evidence based in-home parenting education.

This fall we hosted our first in-person fundraiser in four years. It was a wonderful night of local food, music, and community at Liberty Farms in Ghent NY.

At both Extension campuses, we hosted a volunteer workday with the Regeneron Corporation. They helped us clear trails, plant Ginseng and general maintenance around our facilities.

We did some re-structuring of our organization, which in many ways has yielded increased collaboration across teams and with the community we serve. For example, 4-H and the Parenting Program have collaborated, as well as Climate and Master Gardener Volunteer programs.

Our 2023 Maple festival had over 300 attendees, we partnered with Wild Hudson

Valley offering an array of educational experiences throughout the day. It was wonderful to bring this great tradition back and have so many old friends of CCE attend as well as meet new members of our community!

We are excited to have hired six new staff, each with new strengths and enthusiasm. I'm confident with the team we have assembled, we will continue to bring some of the best and most accessible education to our counties. We have also retained a large percentage of our leadership team. We promoted several staff internally who are doing stellar work.

Our Master Gardener Volunteer Podcast: Nature calls won a local "Chronnogrammie" award for their exceptional Podcast!

We participated in three fairs: The Greene County Youth Fair, Columbia County and State Fair. Each helps us to further amplify the amazing work we do!

The Taste NY market we manage at the Capital Region Welcome Center had the largest sales in our history. We crossed the million dollar mark! We hosted a fantastic "Taste Turns Ten" event in May with many state and local elected officials present.

I am confident that moving into the coming year we will be able to further our outreach and connect more with our communities.



Lisa Gallina

A handwritten signature of Lisa Gallina in black ink, written in a cursive style.



Family and Consumer Sciences

The Family and Consumer Sciences Program provides resources that advance community resiliency and family well-being. The objectives of this work are to contribute to advancing the socio-economic potential of communities, and the empowerment of people to achieve optimal well-being. We develop our programming through a plan-of-work based on locally identified needs. The goal of our programs is improved quality of life for families and individuals in the areas of personal & family development; nutrition; health & safety; healthy homes and communities; family economics & resource management and community resiliency.





Parenting Education

The Family and Consumer Sciences Program continues to offer multiple opportunities for families to receive parenting education within Columbia and Greene Counties.

The **In-home Parenting Program**, funded through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, provides free, in-home parenting lessons to families exclusively referred by the Greene County Department of Social Services. The program currently offers in-home and virtual zoom-based lessons. In our partnership with Greene County Department of Social Services, we have provided effective and empowering education to over 60 families.

The **Parenting with Confidence Program** is supported through a grant from the Dyson Foundation and is open to all caregivers in

Columbia and Greene Counties. The program currently offers in-home lessons or remote lessons via zoom. Our Parenting with Confidence Program often collaborates with other organizations to offer free, 6-8-week group-based parenting skills series. During 2023, our parenting program was able to offer 6-week series within the Greene County Correctional Facility, Columbia County Correctional Facility and Twin Counties Recovery Series with over 20 participants completing the programs. During 2023, our Dyson Parenting Program has reached over 70 families.

Dedicated parenting educators provide support to families through education, skill demonstration and as empathetic listeners for caregivers dealing with the difficult job of parenting in an ever-changing landscape. Their services are so

Cont

vital to the success of some families that they are requested to maintain a presence in their lives long after their cases are closed with DSS. We have been engaging with some families for several years who still call on their parenting educators any time they are facing a difficult situation, such as parental loss, job loss, or difficulties at school. These maintenance visits have helped families avoid further contact with Child Protective Services as they can get the help they need before the situation becomes a crisis. Our parenting educators often inform and provide our families connection to vital resources such as food and clothing pantries, affordable mental and physical health services, legal aid, educational and training opportunities by providing connections or making referrals to other community partners.

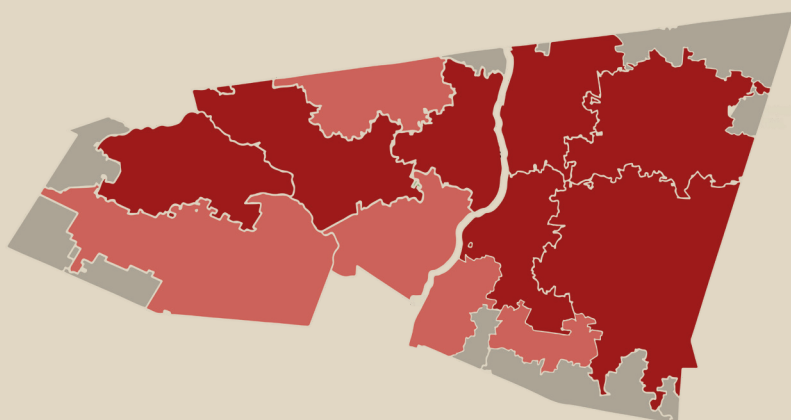
Within 2023, our In-home parenting program expanded due to funding through a contract with Columbia County Department of Social Services to provide free in-home parenting and anger management lessons to families exclusively referred by Columbia County Department of Social Services, primarily the foster and preventative units.

Over 100 families received parenting education and support through our three programs.

Anger Management

Anger Management classes were provided by a certified Anger Management Specialist I and were available to all residents of Columbia and Greene Counties. The Anger Management Program is a 12-week series. Class series are offered multiple times per year and open to the public. Our community-based classes reached over 30 participants in 2023.

In 2023, our anger management educator offered an 8-week anger management series within the Greene County Correctional facility with engagement of 10 participants. Outside agencies can partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension in order to offer 8- or 12-week series within their organizations and/or facilities.



School Districts We Worked With In 2023

- School districts staff have visited
- School districts volunteers have visited
- School districts CCE was not involved with or are based outside the two counties.



PARENTING EDUCATION WORKS



82% of participants reported improved parenting skills.



Over 100 families received parenting education and support.



4-H and Youth Development

Engaging Over 5,300 Youth Through 4-H Programs

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties offers a robust youth development program under the 4-H banner. Our 4-H programs encompass a diverse range of formats and locations, ensuring accessibility and catering to the interests of all youth, from rural to urban communities, ages 5-19.

In 2023, we reached over 5,300 youth through our various 4-H offerings. These included after-school programs, summer camps, workshops, clubs, special events, and traditional community-based programming delivered in collaboration with schools and other organizations. Through this comprehensive approach, 4-H continues to be a leading force in enriching the lives of young people in Columbia and Greene Counties.



4-H Educator, Sam Hopson Jr, demonstrates how to make an origami ornament during the 4-H Holiday Workshop.



4-H Art Show: Starting a New Tradition



We held our first 4-H Art Show at the Agroforestry Resource Center. 4-H members of all ages were invited to submit works of art to the show. The artwork was for sale and the community was invited to an official opening!



Success at the State Dairy Bowl

4-H members Randy Albertson and Robert Pautz participated in the State Dairy Bowl Competition at Cornell University, where both of their teams placed 3rd overall and Robert finished 4th individually.

4-H at the NY State Fair

Fourteen 4-H members exhibited projects at the NYS Fair. Edward Ross IV from Greene County attend the New York State 4-H Fashion Revue as part of the New York State Fair and modeled the 1970's inspired plaid jacket that he sewed.

20+

4-H clubs were active in our two counties

208

Youth participated in monthly 4-H club activities

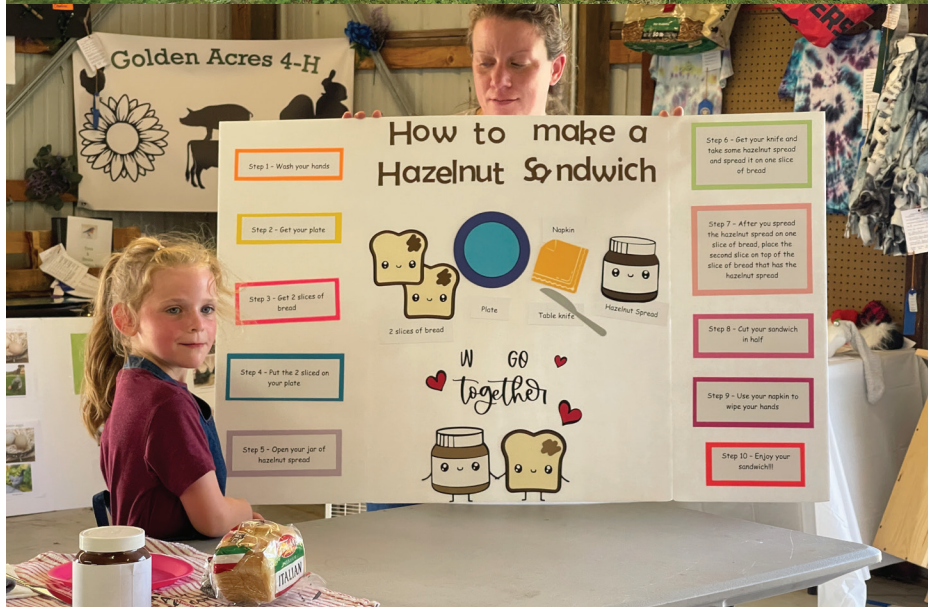
Archery is Back!

Thanks to funding from the Columbia County Youth Bureau youth in Columbia County joined us at the Extension Education Center for four programs that covered the basics of archery.



Public Presentations

Over 50 4-H members participated in our local public presentation day events. Ten youth from our counties participated in the district level 4-H public presentation event. Elise Sayers from Columbia County was selected to go on to represent our district at the Northeast Speak Up Festival.



Environmental Awareness Days

Middle school students from three school districts in Greene County and three school districts in Columbia County participated in Environmental Awareness Days.



Active in our Schools

4-H staff led over 200 lessons in after-school programs spanning both counties.

*Top: 4-H'ers learn archery.
Middle: Public presentations
at the Greene County Youth
Fair Bottom: 4-H'ers work the
4-H Milk Bar at the Columbia
County Fair.*



Community Horticulture

Our team has worked with regional agriculture technical service providers and colleagues to offer programs and resources to the public. We also provide support to community organizations and groups in their effort to build sustainable communities through growing and gardening.



Holiday Wreath Workshops

Our annual Holiday Wreath Workshops sold out in both Acra and Hudson. Master Gardener Volunteers and Staff offered tips and tricks to making beautiful holiday wreaths out of greenery from local trees in these interactive workshops. Participants came empty-handed but left with their own beautifully crafted, handmade wreaths to hang on doors and walls, and fill the air with the rich, crisp smell of evergreens.

*Top: The MGV exhibit at this years two fairs.
Left: Get your tickets early in 2024! Our Holiday Wreath Making sold out in two locations!*

Nature Calls: Conversations From The Hudson Valley

Nature Calls: Conversations from the Hudson Valley, CCE's only Master Gardener Volunteer produced podcast, has gained a lot of traction since its debut in 2022. With over 16,500 downloads, you could say that the project has been a success. The team behind this exciting, informative, and witty podcast was featured in the Tgazette of the Town of Taghkanic this winter after releasing their 100th episode. Earlier in August, Chronogram Magazine recognized this amazing podcast as a winner of their prestigious "Chronogrammmies", a local mark of excellence. With expert interviews on a wide variety of topics from Perennials to American Eels, from Ducks to Regenerative Agriculture, tune in to hear what all the buzz is about.

Listen on our website or on your favorite podcast platform.

Spring Gardening Days

Staff and Master Gardener Volunteers offered multiple workshops in both Acra and Hudson including, but not limited to:

- Gardening for Pollinators
- Guarding the Garden from Deer
- Garden Design
- Vermicomposting – Build your own Worm Bin!



250

community members
directly impacted
through presentations,
outreach and events.

700+

calls, emails and soil
samples from both
counties.

Top 10 Topics You Asked Us



- Native species and biodiversity
- Invasive species and plant pressures
- Soil health and composting
- Tree health & arboriculture
- Insect identification
- Species selection and landscape planning
- Community gardens and public spaces
- Lawn & garden care
- Vegetables, herbs and fruit
- Mushroom and edible plant identification



Agriculture & Natural Resources

*Left: Staff member, Sintya Rodriguez,
plants ginseng in the Model forest.
Opposite: Program Manager, Tracey Testo,
demonstrates how the maple evaporator
works during Maple Fest 2023*



Agroforestry

Agroforestry is the intentional integration of trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create environmental, economic and social benefits. For a management practice to be called agroforestry, it must satisfy the four “i”s: Intentional, Intensive, Integrated, Interactive. Our programs are designed to meet growers where they are at and to support their goals in land stewardship and food cultivation. Agroforestry topics include:

1. Shiitake cultivation and business development
2. Forest Farming programs, including maple, ginseng and mushrooms
3. Wild, edible plants and mushrooms
4. Multifunctional Riparian Buffers
5. Silvopasture (livestock integrated with trees)
6. Alley cropping (short term and long term crop integration)

The Siuslaw Model Forest, our 142-acre demonstration forest, held agroforestry practices of varying scales. This year, key demonstrations were scaled up to a commercial level to meet the growing training needs of farmers and service providers. This includes the shiitake laying yard and an understory cropping demo containing many native understory plants that are used for food and medicine.

2023 Programs and Projects

1. Over 400 people engaged in 11 program and trainings
2. Blogs written for MyWoodlot.com on agroforestry, forest farming and multifunctional riparian buffers
3. New resource release- a guide on multifunctional riparian buffers title *“Protecting Streams with Sustainable Productions: An Agroforestry Guide to Multifunctional Riparian Buffers”*
4. Developed a 90 second video blog on shiitake growing and farming

General Forestry Education

Throughout our work within the Natural Resources Program area, our team's primary focus is to support woodland owners and woodland stewards so forests are valued, cared for and expanded. Nine programs were held in 2023 with over 300 attendees to learn about topics including:

1. Winter tree ID and wildlife tracks
2. Growing trees with deer pressure
3. Chainsaw safety for landowners
4. Native tree seedling distribution and planting education with over 100 trees given away
5. Woodland walks with a forester

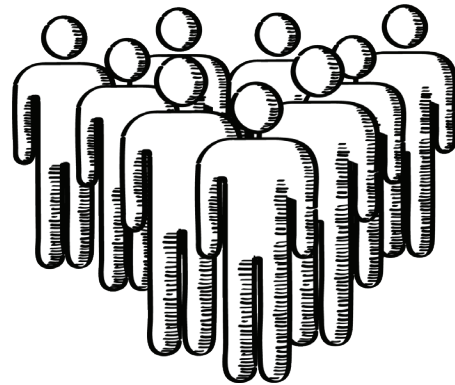
Master Forest Owner Program

Our Association continues its role as regional host for this program that supports woodland owners with a free visit from a trained volunteer. These visits are typically the first step of many in woodland stewardship. 74 visits were conducted in 2023 with 40 participating volunteers assisting with management advice on over 1,606 acres throughout our region. Landowners list many reasons for requesting a visit but some themes did emerge through the year.

1. Guidance on invasive removal and tree planting
2. Care for the health of their woodlands
3. Learn to identify trees
4. Assistance with deer pressure and impacts

Women Owning Woods

In partnership with the Watershed Agricultural Council and Columbia Land Conservancy, our Association continues to support woodland education geared towards women by hosting a local chapter of this national network. In 2023, classes offered to this network included three Women's Game of Logging class, a training on Assessing Vegetation Impacts from Deer, a Wild Woods Restoration Project native understory planting along with routine 'Happy Hour' zoom meetings.



Over 400 people engaged in Natural Resource programs and tours in 2023



Agriculture

In 2023 the Association participated in a variety of outreach and educational programming. Our goals for 2023 were to open communications to farmers about resources, as well as learn from them about their needs. We also began to explore mentorship models between new and seasoned farmers. Conducted over 56 farm visits in Columbia and Greene Counties. We listened and learned about the needs of our Agricultural producers. Our understanding grew throughout the year. Connecting farmers with regional teams who are seeking tech support, fiscal support, course offerings on a variety of topics, soil health, climate, grants and etc.

From these meetings we are working with our regional team, the Hudson Valley Lab and Cornell to offer new and revamped educational opportunities.

Climate Change & the Environment

Climate Resilience in Communities

With continued support from the NYS DEC Hudson River Estuary Program and NYS Water Resources Institute, our staff supported seven municipalities with efforts to enhance climate resilience in their communities. Some of the projects we assisted communities with in 2023 include climate smart planning, road-stream crossing management, climate adaptation and resilience planning and formal submittal for Climate Smart Communities Certification. We are proud to announce three communities were awarded Climate Smart Communities Certification with our support. Communities we supported included:

- The Town of Cairo
- Village of Catskill
- Town of Copake
- The Town Germantown
- The Town of Taghkanic
- The Town of Rensselaerville
- Village of Valatie

Climate Smart Communities Certified in 2023

- Village of Catskill
- Town of Hillsdale
- Town of Taghkanic

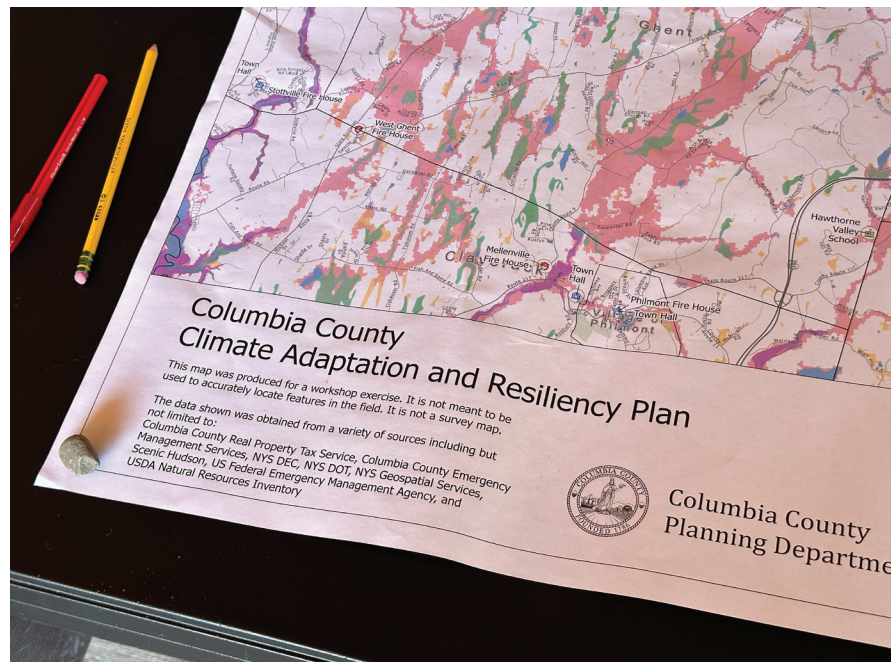
Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Planning Pilot

A new exciting initiative was launched this year in partnership with the Capital District Regional Planning Commission supported by funding through a statewide Climate Leadership Services contract with NYS DEC. This initiative was to facilitate a Climate Resilience and Adaption Planning effort with Columbia County and a cohort of 17 municipalities in the county. Through this process Columbia County communities have recognized the impacts from climate change, assessed local vulnerabilities and



identified ways to adapt. Our staff outreached to municipal officials, volunteer climate leaders, emergency services personnel and community members, providing education and guidance. This community engagement involved public educational presentations, facilitated stakeholder workshops, municipal meetings and community surveys. Communities our team supported to develop Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Plans included:

- Columbia County
- Town of Ancram
- Town of Austerlitz
- Town of Canaan
- Town of Chatham
- Town of Claverack
- Town of Gallatin
- Town of Germantown
- Town of Ghent
- Town of Hillsdale
- Town of Kinderhook
- Town of New Lebanon
- Town of Taghkanic
- Village of Kinderhook
- Village of Philmont
- Village of Valatie
- City of Hudson



Taste NY



The Taste NY Market at the Capital Region Welcome Center celebrated its fifth year in operation in 2023, having opened its doors in November 2018. The store was staffed with nine full-time and two part-time staff members. Additionally, a seasonal part-time worker provided support during peak summer weekends.

The market continues to showcase a diverse and ever-evolving product selection sourced from New York State farms and producers. In 2023, we welcomed new vendors including Cat's View Farm (Germantown), Stoneledge Farm (Leeds), 6 Brooklyn Brittle (Brooklyn),

Chicacelitas (Utica), 9 Mile East (Saratoga Springs), and Belle's Barkery (Hudson Valley). We continued to foster a strong relationship with Jourdin's Syrup (West Coxsackie). Their sugar bush, visible from the Welcome Center entrance, exemplifies the market's impact on local businesses. Jourdin's has seen significant sales growth through exposure at events, promotions, and connections facilitated by the Taste NY Market.

We actively pursued marketing opportunities by increasing outreach and sampling events. Our efforts allowed us to expand sampling days at the Columbia County Fair from three

to five. The Taste NY Market made its debut at the Greene County Youth Fair, further promoting local products. A highlight of the year was the "Taste Turns 10" event. We hosted the NYS Ag and Markets Commissioner, local representatives, and regional producers, solidifying our commitment to the community.

The market achieved significant success in sales and foot traffic throughout 2023. Data from the NYS Thruway Authority indicates a near doubling of visitors to the Welcome Center (480,000 in 2022 to 850,000 in 2023). This translated to a corresponding increase in transactions at the Taste NY Market, rising from 67,500 in 2022 to 110,000 in 2023. This growth propelled the market to surpass \$1.2 million in sales for 2023. Consistent with industry trends, peak sales continued to occur during summer months and major holidays (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Memorial Day, and Labor Day).

The Taste NY Market at the Capital Region Welcome Center remains a vibrant hub for local products, fostering economic development and community engagement. We look forward to continued success in showcasing the best of New York State agriculture in the years to come.

Opposite: Operations Manager Chris Lawton setting up samples at the Columbia County Fair. Top: Ag and Market Commissioner, Richard Ball, speaks during our Taste Turns 10 event. Bottom: Muffins from Our Daily Bread in Chatham.



843,896
visitors came to the
Welcome Center in
2023

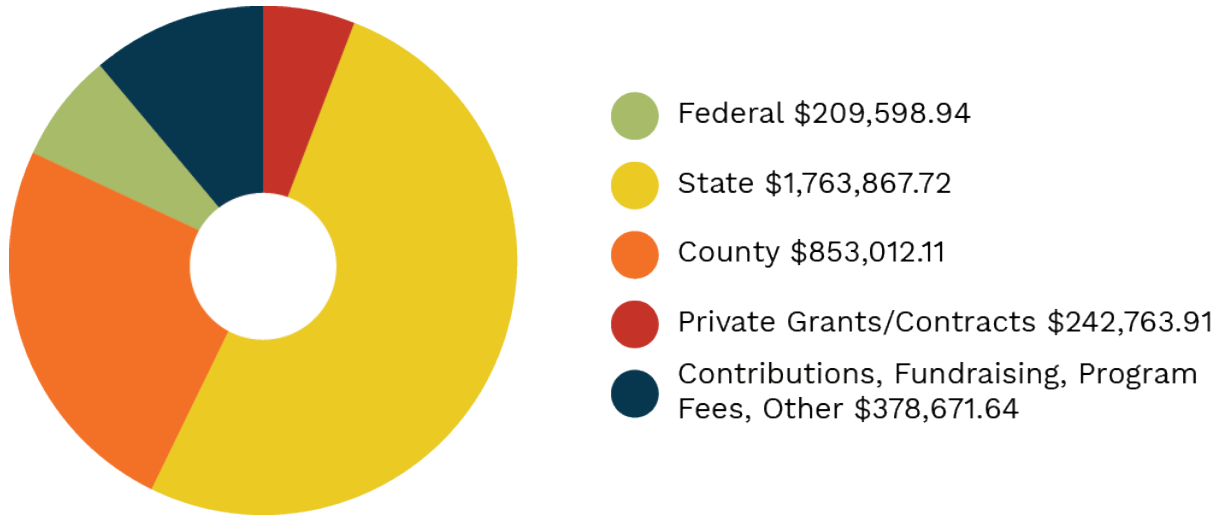


111,429
sales in the last
year

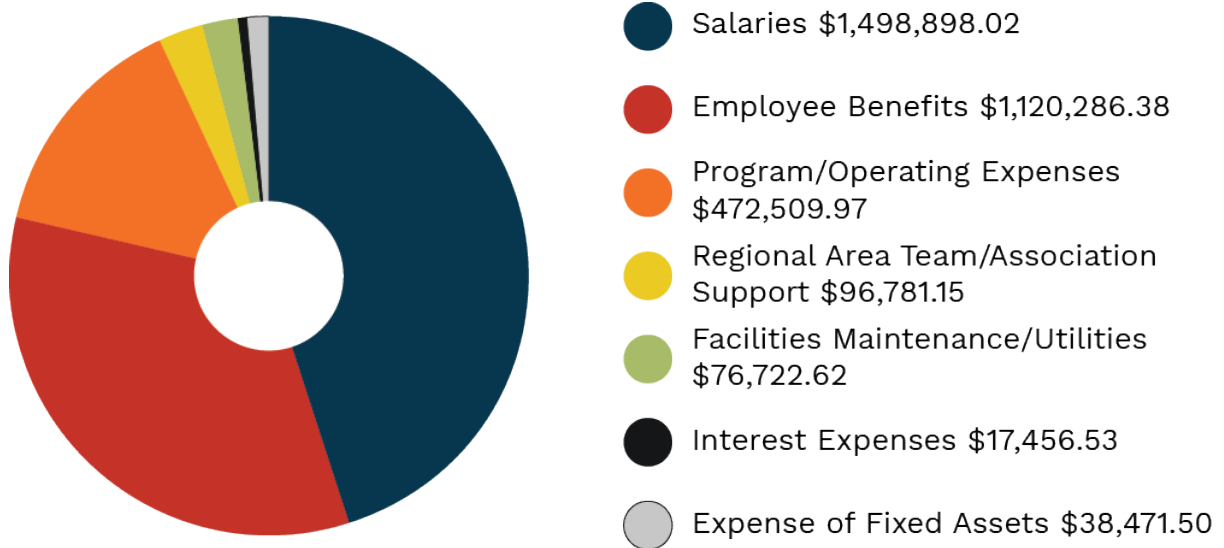


Finances

2023 YTD Revenues



2023 YTD Expenses



Our Staff

Administration

Lisa Gallina, Executive Director
Rebecca Polmateer, Program Director
Jackie Reese, Office Administrator
Deven Connelly, Communications
Manager
Angela Tallarico, Administrative
Support
Olivia Gordineer, Finance Manager
Donna Garafalo, Accounts
Representative
Kody Pinkowski, Facilities Coordinator
Katie Prack, Sr. Administrative
Assistant
Jean Bailey, Administrative Assistant

Family & Consumer Sciences

Megan Gardner, Resource Educator
Peggy Henne, Program Educator
Sintya Rodriguez-Mendez, Program
Educator

4-H & Youth Development

Sara Poggi-Decker, Program Manager
Lou Groundwater, Agriculture
Educator
Samuel Hopson, Jr, 4-H and Natural
Resources Coordinator

Environment and Natural Resources

Tracey Testo, Program Manager
Audrey Kropp, Program Manager
Lindsey Strehlau-Howay, Program
Assistant
Shane Stevens, Program Coordinator
William McCall, Program Assistant
Jaime Winans-Soil, Temporary
Program Assistant
Katie Campbell-Nelson, Northeast
SARE Program Coordinator
Xandra Powers, Program Coordinator
Donna Cooke, Temporary Program
Coordinator

Taste NY

Chris Lawton, Manager
Kaitlin Camarda, Market Associate
Lydia Casey, Market Associate
Joshua Hynes, Market Associate
Vanessa Kowalczyk, Market Associate
Mi-Lyn Dolan, Market Associate
Sara Ashby, Market Associate
Kelly Mazzuca, Market Associate
Bernadette Venezia-Rubino, Market
Associate
Tom Ulscht, Market Associate

Our Board

Virginia Benedict – President
Matthew Maraglio – Vice President
Joshua Lipsman – Treasurer
Linda Levitt – Secretary
Billy Greer - Past President
Cathi Annese
Michael Brown
Elizabeth Chiong
Sandra Gardner
Roberta Keller
Alicia McCagg

Amanda Pierro
Rebecca Pinder
Virgilia Tegiacchi
Timothy Ooms, Columbia County
Board of Supervisors
Representative
Sherry True, Greene County
Legislature Representative
Danielle Hautaniemi, Cornell
Cooperative Extension
State Specialist



CCE at a Glance

CCE connects communities with Cornell research and expertise to enrich and empower New York State neighbors, local businesses, towns, and cities.

In neighborhoods, homes, workplaces, and schools, CCE educators work to empower individuals and families with raising children, saving energy and money, growing and preparing food, starting, sustaining businesses, and protecting the environment.

Each CCE office relies on county, state, and federal funds to solve local problems and strengthen communities.

CCE Columbia and Greene Counties is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Connect

Agroforestry Resource Center
6055 Route 23, Acra, NY 12405
(518) 622-9820

Extension Education Center
479 Route 66, Hudson, NY 12534
(518) 828-3346

Website: ccecolumbiagreene.org
Email: columbiagreene@cornell.edu

Facebook: @CCEColumbiaGreene
Instagram: @CCECGC

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