# Geography Field Research in Schoharie Valley
## University of Guelph Student Experiences August 2012

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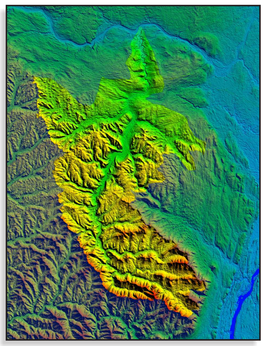
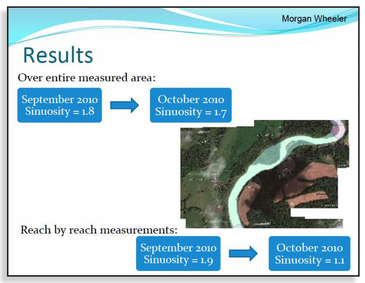
August 2012, students and their three faculty (fearless?) leaders left University of Guelph campus heading for Schoharie Valley (~7 hour drive if the border goes well). Our goal was to immerse ourselves in the Schoharie Valley landscape to study human-environment interactions. Through formal and informal tours, guest-speakers and key informant interviews students collected data toward their independent research projects, which then formed the basis of their collaborative analysis (group projects, listed in the abstract). Included on the poster are photos and samples of research and accompanying the poster are student projects (pdfs are available via email from Jackie (jaclyn.cockburn@uoguelph.ca).



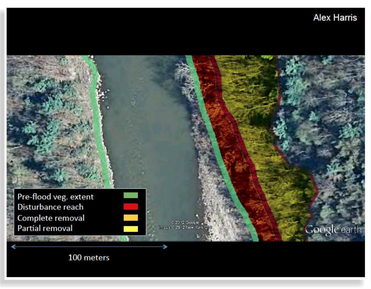
Digital elevation model of Schoharie Valley

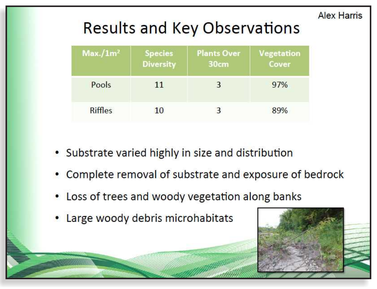
Students at Schoharie Creek near Burtonsville




Results from Morgan Wheeler's independent research project 'An analysis of stream sinuosity changes in a section of the northern Schoharie Creek due to August 2011 flood events using air photo analysis'

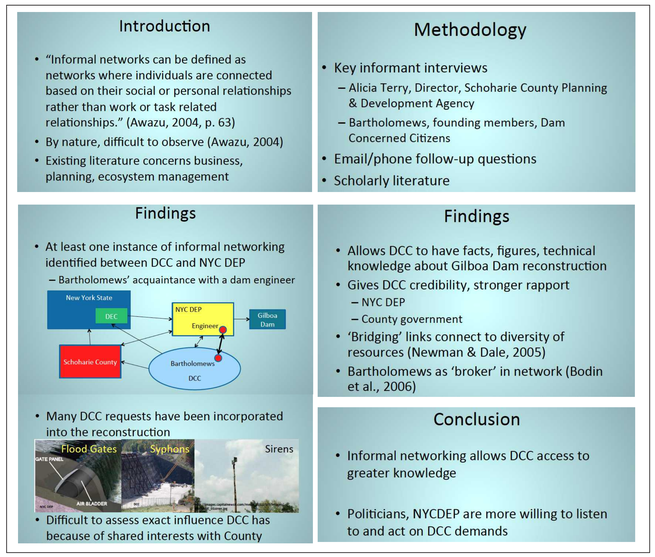
Visiting one of the stops on the Flood Recovery tour in Schoharie County, August 2012



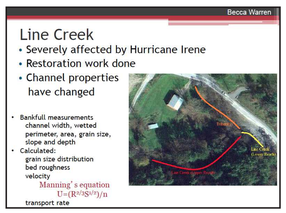

Analysis and key findings from Alex Harris's independent research project titled, 'Analyzing the vegetative environment along a riffle-pool sequence in Schohaire Creek at Burtonsville one year after a 500-year flood event'.

Speaking with Howard and Sherrie Bartholomew at the Schoharie River Center



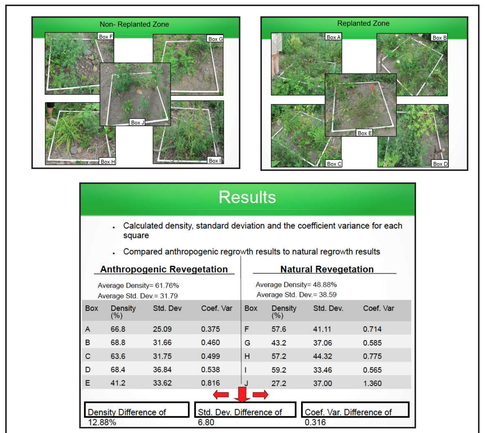

Informal Networks and Management of the Gilboa Dam –Nick Revington

Visiting Schoharie Valley Farms and Richard Ball. Inside the vegetable processing room (left top and bottom), outside the greenhouses.




Results from Rebecca Warren's research project, 'Modeling the bedload transportation rates at bankfull in Line Creek'

Hiking along the riparian zone with John McKeeby, Schoharie River Center.




Key findings from Erica Wilkinson's independent research project 'Describing the Difference between Natural Revegetation and Anthropogenic Assisted Revegetation in the Riparian Zone after a Flood'

- Do food deserts exist in Schoharie County?
  - MAIN OBJECTIVE: To find out where food deserts are and what role local food might play in alleviating food insecurity.
- Food deserts
  - Definitions and context
- Schoharie demographics
- Agricultural production

### Methodology

- Participant-observation & semi-structured interviews
- Location information of food retailers & farmers markets
  - Google Earth and ArcGIS
- Nearest-neighbour analysis
  - Euclidean distance
- Paired t-test


### Results

- Four locations and one census tract are food deserts regardless of Farmers' Markets inclusion


### Implications

- Fits into growing field of GIS analysis of food deserts (McEntee & Agyeman, 2010)
- Identifies potential areas of expansion for local and commercial food vendors
- Risks of dependence on supermarkets as food source (Russell & Heidcamp, 2007)
- Farmers' markets and food prices (Larsen & Gilliland, 2009)

### Application & Extension

- Analysis of rural food deserts by Morton & Blanchard (2007)
  - Issues of scale?
- Ground truthing of purchasing habits and health
- More detailed analysis
  - Predictive variables & multivariate modelling (E.g. income, age, race, educational attainment, etc.) (Black et al., 2011)
- Program and policy recommendations

*We are extremely grateful to all that helped us during the course, either through interviews, guided tours, formal talks or email answers in the fall. In particular we would like to*
*Acknowledge the following people and organizations:*
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John Prokoff, Crossbrook Dairy Farms
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