



Call for Nominations
New York 2026
Deadline: May 15, 2026



Presented by
Sand County Foundation *in partnership with*
American Farmland Trust, *and state partners:*
Agricultural Environmental Management,
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets,
and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

2024 recipient Sunnyside Farms
of Scipio Center, New York

The AEM-Leopold Conservation Award

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2026 New York Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) - Leopold Conservation Award.

The \$10,000 award honors farmers and forestland owners who go above and beyond in their management of soil health, water quality, and wildlife habitat on working land.

Sand County Foundation and national sponsor, American Farmland Trust, along with state partners, present Leopold Conservation Awards to private landowners in 28 states.

Given in honor of renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold, the award recognizes landowners who inspire others to consider conservation opportunities on the land. In his influential 1949 book, *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold advocated for "a land ethic," an ethical relationship between people and the land they own and manage.

In New York, the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Leopold Conservation Award honors a landowner and their nominating Soil and Water Conservation District. Interested candidates should contact their local county Soil and Water Conservation District. Contact information can be found at <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/soil-water-conservation-district-offices>

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If you, or someone you know, is a landowner in New York State who is committed to land management practices that increase conservation, we invite your application for the New York Agricultural Environmental Management Leopold Conservation Award.

The New York Agricultural Environmental Management Leopold Conservation Award will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- 1. Conservation Ethic** – Describe how the nominee has voluntarily exceeded the minimum obligations of regulation to enhance and conserve natural resources.
- 2. Resilience** – Describe the business and conservation methods used by the nominee to make the operation productive into the future.
- 3. Leadership and Communication** – Describe significant efforts the nominee has made to share his/her conservation ethics and techniques with others inside and outside of agriculture.
Describe community service, positions held, leadership roles and media outreach.
- 4. Innovation and Adaptability** – Describe how the nominee has taken risks by utilizing or experimenting with new techniques to adapt to change (consumers, markets, weather, regulations, etc.).
- 5. Ecological Community** – Describe how the nominee's agricultural operation works with natural systems (soil, water, plants and wildlife, etc.). Describe how this benefits others.

Apply with your county conservation district office.

Find your county office at:

<https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/soil-water-conservation-district-offices>

Award recipient must be available this summer to host a two-day video shoot and an on-farm award presentation.

Questions? Please contact: Lance Irving at lirving@sandcountyfoundation.org

The New York award is presented and sponsored by:



Cornell Cooperative Extension



The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation



FARM CREDIT EAST

New York State Agribusiness Association

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



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For further information, please see the Leopold Conservation Award website:

www.leopoldconservationaward.org