SITE-TO-SOURCE / SAMPLE CONSULTATION

Starting a native woodland on former farmland

Baldwinsville, New York

$349 Enhanced Consultation • Defined 1.8-acre pilot

Illustrative report for a fictional client and site; no real property inspection or purchase. Sample edition: 7 Nov 2026 | PHY-SAMPLE-002A_Baldwinsville_Enhanced_Pilot

Your recommended direction

Start with a defendable, deer-protected upland-to-meadow transition, not the entire field. Combine trees, nurse shrubs and open pollinator pockets; observe success before expanding.

The client behind the question

Fictional client: George Bailey

"I bought an old field north of the Seneca River because I would like to see woods return there someday. It's a big idea, and I can't restore all twenty-four acres at once. The higher ground seems dry and sandy, deer are everywhere, and I still want a place for wildflowers. Could you help me pick one manageable part of the field to start with, and help me choose plants without spending money on trees that never make it through the first summer?"

Illustrative mock submission, not an actual customer testimonial. Adapted from the fictional intake originally prepared for this example.

Selected answers from the client intake

Intake question	Client's answer
Restoration goal	Return former cropland to native woodland while retaining a sunny pollinator opening.
Scope requested	A 1.8-acre pilot within a hypothetical 24-acre tract near Baldwinsville, not the whole property.
Site observations	Higher former fields seem coarse and dry; lower land nearer the river can be wet in spring.
Main worries	Heavy deer pressure, possible invasive shrubs, previous agriculture, uncertain soil pH and limited watering.
Plant preferences	Long-lived trees, flowering shrubs and native wildflowers; keep some open grassland/meadow.
Budget and schedule	Illustrative $4,000-$8,000 for pilot establishment over two seasons; hope to start in spring 2027.

How we answered the client's questions

Client asked	How this report responds
Do I have to plant the entire field now?	No. The report defines a 1.8-acre deer-protected upland/edge pilot and leaves the wider 24-acre plan out of scope.
Can trees and pollinator habitat coexist?	Yes. Variable-density canopy trees, shrubs and a smaller meadow opening form a mosaic instead of a uniform planting.
Which plants suit the apparently drier ground?	Eastern white pine, northern red oak, sweetfern and little bluestem are candidate starting elements, subject to actual soil checks.
What about the wet land by the river?	Floodplain restoration is a distinct ecological and regulatory project, not something the $349 pilot claims to settle.

What we clarified in the simulated consultation

Follow-up question	Client reply and resulting decision
Could you protect a trial block from deer?	Client: I can fence one section, but not all twenty-four acres. Report decision: Concentrate protection and monitoring on a pilot rather than scattered vulnerable planting.
Is a completely closed forest your objective?	Client: No, keep wildflowers and open habitat in part of it. Report decision: Retain a sunny pollinator opening in the conceptual pilot.

How the project developed through feedback

Point in the example	What changed in the recommendations
Client: "I cannot water every acre."	Plant in smaller, monitorable blocks with establishment plans, rather than high-acreage planting promises.
Client: "I have not had a soil test."	Keep pH-sensitive and drainage-sensitive options conditional until measured.
Client: "Deer are everywhere."	Require protection in the pilot and monitor browse before expanding.

The plant recommendations and next steps that follow show the result of these client-specific choices. Site observations remain fictional, and conditions must be confirmed before real installation.

How we interpreted this project

A hypothetical 24-acre former agricultural holding north of the Seneca River, with a specifically defined 1.8-acre pilot on relatively higher ground. The remainder and its floodplain are outside this fixed-price scope.

The $349 Enhanced Consultation models one 30-minute remote discussion and one in-scope consolidated refinement. The result is a site-informed selection strategy, not construction drawings.

Three decisions that matter most

01 Verify soil texture, pH, past herbicide use and deer pressure within the pilot.

02 Select 10–14 first-stage taxa from a broader 31-option palette.

03 Do not extend the pilot into the floodplain without a separate ecological and permitting assessment.

What an enhanced consultation adds

In addition to plant choices, this example shows coordinated site interpretation, practical alternatives and the effect of a client discussion on the final selection. The palette remains a decision tool, not a scaled construction plan.

Plant recommendations

31 screened plant choices are presented below. They are alternatives organized by planting environment and use—not a shopping list you must buy in full. Mature dimensions and growing conditions remain approximate; confirm the supplied plant form, actual site light and water before purchase.

Upland canopy & pioneers

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Eastern white pine *Pinus strobus* Core	Dry to mesic terrace; evergreen structure **Landscape role or indicative setting: Dry to mesic terrace; evergreen structure** **Check:** Deer protection; avoid wet pockets
Northern red oak *Quercus rubra* Core	Long-lived canopy; wildlife food **Landscape role or indicative setting: Long-lived canopy; wildlife food** **Check:** Moderate-moisture upland, not saturated
White oak *Quercus alba* Core	Long-term mast and canopy diversity **Landscape role or indicative setting: Long-term mast and canopy diversity** **Check:** Slow establishment; well-drained position
Black oak *Quercus velutina* Conditional	Drier sandy/acidic upland option **Landscape role or indicative setting: Drier sandy/acidic upland option** **Check:** Verify local provenance
Black cherry *Prunus serotina* Core	Early cover; bird food and host tree **Landscape role or indicative setting: Early cover; bird food and host tree** **Check:** Avoid livestock grazing and sapling access
Gray birch *Betula populifolia* Core	Fast cover on poor dry ground **Landscape role or indicative setting: Fast cover on poor dry ground** **Check:** Short-lived, pioneer only
Quaking aspen *Populus tremuloides* Conditional	Fast native suckering cover **Landscape role or indicative setting: Fast native suckering cover** **Check:** May spread; use only with room

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Red maple *Acer rubrum* Core	Transition canopy and autumn color **Landscape role or indicative setting: Transition canopy and autumn color** **Check:** Use moister pockets; not driest sand
Downy serviceberry *Amelanchier arborea* Core	Fruit for birds; edge transition **Landscape role or indicative setting: Fruit for birds; edge transition** **Check:** Protect from browsing

Wildlife shrubs & edge structure

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Sweetfern *Comptonia peregrina* Core	Dry acidic sand; nitrogen-fixing nurse shrub **Landscape role or indicative setting: Dry acidic sand; nitrogen-fixing nurse shrub** **Check:** Can spread by rhizomes
Lowbush blueberry *Vaccinium angustifolium* Core	Acidic open edge; berries **Landscape role or indicative setting: Acidic open edge; berries** **Check:** Confirm low soil pH; slow establishment
Witch-hazel *Hamamelis virginiana* Conditional	Mesic woodland edge; late bloom **Landscape role or indicative setting: Mesic woodland edge; late bloom** **Check:** Avoid exposed droughtiest site
Gray dogwood *Cornus racemosa* Core	Thickets; nesting & bird fruit **Landscape role or indicative setting: Thickets; nesting & bird fruit** **Check:** Spreads; reserve adequate edge area
American hazelnut *Corylus americana* Conditional	Nut-bearing thicket and cover **Landscape role or indicative setting: Nut-bearing thicket and cover** **Check:** Requires space; check browsing
Mapleleaf viburnum *Viburnum acerifolium* Conditional	Emerging woodland understory **Landscape role or indicative setting: Emerging woodland understory** **Check:** Viburnum leaf beetle and browsing risk
Chokecherry *Prunus virginiana* Conditional	Wildlife edge; rapid cover **Landscape role or indicative setting: Wildlife edge; rapid cover** **Check:** Suckering; foliage problematic for livestock

Sunlit pollinator opening

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Little bluestem *Schizachyrium scoparium* Core	Dry upland matrix; persistent structure **Landscape role or indicative setting: Dry upland matrix; persistent structure** **Check:** Not suited to flooded soils
Poverty oatgrass *Danthonia spicata* Core	Thin, acidic or dry ground cover **Landscape role or indicative setting: Thin, acidic or dry ground cover** **Check:** Fine texture; gradual establishment
Wild bergamot *Monarda fistulosa* Core	Mid-summer native nectar **Landscape role or indicative setting: Mid-summer native nectar** **Check:** Can spread; monitor in small patches
Gray goldenrod *Solidago nemoralis* Core	Dry poor-soil autumn nectar **Landscape role or indicative setting: Dry poor-soil autumn nectar** **Check:** Use locally adapted material
Early goldenrod *Solidago juncea* Conditional	Early summer-to-fall flower sequence **Landscape role or indicative setting: Early summer-to-fall flower sequence** **Check:** Watch height and competition
Smooth aster *Symphyotrichum laeve* Core	Late-season pollinator forage **Landscape role or indicative setting: Late-season pollinator forage** **Check:** Confirm taxon identity at supplier
Hairy beardtongue *Penstemon hirsutus* Conditional	Spring flowers on rocky dry ground **Landscape role or indicative setting: Spring flowers on rocky dry ground** **Check:** Plant in well-drained locations
Common evening-primrose *Oenothera biennis* Conditional	Short-lived pioneer flower **Landscape role or indicative setting: Short-lived pioneer flower** **Check:** Biennial, allow natural reseeding
Butterfly milkweed *Asclepias tuberosa* Conditional	Dry-site nectar/host plant **Landscape role or indicative setting: Dry-site nectar/host plant** **Check:** Toxic to grazing livestock; verify local status

Future woodland understory

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Pennsylvania sedge *Carex pensylvanica* Core	Fine dry-shade ground layer **Landscape role or indicative setting: Fine dry-shade ground layer** **Check:** Install after partial canopy develops

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Rosy sedge *Carex rosea* Conditional	Woodland groundcover diversification **Landscape role or indicative setting: Woodland groundcover diversification** **Check:** Verify ecological fit and ID
Wild geranium *Geranium maculatum* Conditional	Spring woodland flowering **Landscape role or indicative setting: Spring woodland flowering** **Check:** Requires adequate humus/moisture
Blue-stemmed goldenrod *Solidago caesia* Core	Shade-adapted late nectar **Landscape role or indicative setting: Shade-adapted late nectar** **Check:** Use protected part-shade edge
Blue wood aster *Symphyotrichum cordifolium* Core	Late woodland edge flowering **Landscape role or indicative setting: Late woodland edge flowering** **Check:** Self-seeds; manage if needed
Christmas fern *Polystichum acrostichoides* Conditional	Evergreen woodland layer **Landscape role or indicative setting: Evergreen woodland layer** **Check:** Only documented nursery-propagated stock; protected New York lists this species as exploitably vulnerable under 6 NYCRR 193.3. Use documented, lawfully propagated stock; do not collect it from the wild for this project.

How to put the recommendations to work

01 Confirm pilot boundaries, access, drainage and natural regeneration.

02 Prepare modest tree/shrub and meadow pockets with wildlife protection.

03 Track mortality, invasive competition, deer browsing and exposed soil for at least two growing seasons.

Important site and safety considerations

- Coarse soil descriptions and the fictional river setting do not establish parcel-scale ecological units.
- This scope is plant-selection guidance, not forest engineering, wetland delineation or a construction contract.

Plant sourcing and expectations

Ask growers for the exact scientific name (including any trade synonym), the plant or seed format, the propagation source and whether stock is suitable for the local climate. A nursery listing is a lead for shopping, not proof of current inventory, correct provenance, or guaranteed establishment.

Examples of places to inquire

New York State Saratoga Tree Nursery. Seasonal tree and shrub seedling sale; product availability and suitability must be confirmed.

Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Tree and shrub sale lead; request stock type and known origin.

Sources consulted

The references below support the regional botanical, gardening, or regulatory decisions in this illustration. Published range, nursery listings and generalized soils information do not prove parcel-scale conditions, county indigeneity or seed-lot origin. Check dated rules and availability before making real purchases.

NYSDEC: Three Rivers WMA regional habitat context

NYSDEC: Saratoga nursery annual seedling program (2026)

NYSDEC: State Wildlife Action Plan - floodplain forests

NYSDEC: 2025-2027 Freshwater Wetlands Permits

NRCS: Riparian forest buffer / conservation practice 391

NYSDEC: Tree planting and deer protection

USGS (1986): Baldwinsville glacial-outwash aquifer

New York protected native plants - 6 NYCRR 193.3