

☀️ Turning the Tide with #RisingStrongwater2023: A Movement of Resilience and Hope 🌊

Join Strongwater Farm as We Rise Above Challenges Together!

[Tewksbury, 13 September 2023] – In the face of challenges as daunting as rising waters, Strongwater Farm is turning the tide and inviting the community to join them in a movement of resilience and hope. During the August and September historic rainfall, Strongwater Farm experienced devastating flooding. Not only did their grain and hay room become flooded, resulting in unusable hay, ruined grain, and a scramble to find sources for enough dry and non-moldy hay for 15 horses, but the flood waters created deep channels in their walking paths and paddocks. This damage has been ongoing, increasing slightly with every new onslaught of rain. Now hurricanes threaten them with thousands more gallons of rain, but they are taking it all in stride.

Impact Reported

Some of the impact reported includes:

- 1-3 Foot Deep channels carved through walking area where volunteers and staff lead horses to access paddocks and trails
- Fallen trees in trail areas, utilized for therapeutic riding individual and group instruction
- Deep unstable areas within some paddocks including uneven channels filled with jagged rocks that are dangerous in full sunlight, but could be fatal in the cover of darkness or if a horse fails to pay close attention to where they step.
- Multiple leak in roof resulting in more wet feed (and horses!)

Due to the level of damage sustained by facilities, volunteers and staff are exercising extreme caution around traversing unstable and dangerous ground. This situation is made more unsafe for some of the farm's most dedicated volunteers, themselves former and current program participants who live with disability or illness in their lives.

These damages have resulted in stretched staff and volunteers, increased need for staff supervision of volunteer activities, approximately \$85,000 in damages not budgeted for, and limitations on programming, which is itself a source of revenue for the organization.

Counter-Impact: Turning the Tide

Even amidst the tumult of the unknown, and as the flood waters prepare to build and recede again, our excitement is building at Strongwater Farm.

#RisingStrongwater2023 encapsulates the spirit of the Strongwater Community: Strongwater Farm aims to turn the tide on the flood waters of 2023 and demonstrates their unwavering resolve in the face of adversity - taking a moment of calamity and turning it into a story of triumph, with the help of their partners and community members. Recent events have exposed vulnerabilities, but their response is marked by unity, determination, and unwavering optimism.

How can the community get involved?

- **Volunteer:** Strongwater is always looking for volunteers - both to work with program participant groups, and to "help around the farm"! Got special skills? They can use those too, with needs in the area of marketing and social media, partner connections, and all sorts of other ways. Find out more about volunteering by going to <https://strongwaterfarm.org/volunteer-opportunities/> or emailing vc@strongwaterfarm.org
- **Recruit your organization to help:** With a number of ways to partner with Strongwater Farm, they invite the business community to reimagine community engagement by participating in the Community

Barn Raisin'! Through this program, your organization can benefit from special hosted team-building events, and take part in something that will make a lasting impact in the community. Learn more here: <http://bit.ly/45Pq9Y6> and email jbryan@strongwaterfarm.org to find out how you can participate!

- **Recruit your friends:** Besides volunteering, Strongwater invites individuals to get creative about hosting a fundraiser or event. All the tools for a successful online fundraiser have been provided to interested persons at strongwaterfarm.org/donate or bit.ly/48hkagb
- **Follow Strongwater Farm** on social media (Facebook & Instagram)
- Attend an upcoming event or open house. An open house is tentatively scheduled for the end of October, since Strongwater had to cancel their annual Hoe Down, barring additional damage from flooding in the interim. #RisingStrongwater2023 Giving Tuesday is also scheduled for the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Follow their social media or visit the website to sign up for updates.
- And of course, they welcome donations, which can be made at StrongwaterFarm.org

For more information and inquiries, please contact:

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Strongwater Farm stands as a beacon of hope, healing, and transformation through equine assisted services. Challenges may arise, but our resolve is unshaken: We're stronger together.

Photos included for reference.

Flood Water Images Upper Barn Flooding with standing water - August 2023 (Photo Credit: Strongwater Farm)





(Left) Melissa Salerno, Equine Operations Manager, stands knee deep in flood water in the Strongwater upper barn parking lot directing a Board Member (not pictured) on status of pump - August 2023 (Photo Credit: Strongwater Farm)



“When life hands you lemons...” Volunteer Coordinator, Stacy Tofuri, demonstrates how to “make lemonade.” (September 2023. Photo Credit: Strongwater Farm)

Strongwater Farm Volunteers are never afraid to get in the trenches with them. Sue, a long-time volunteer at Strongwater stands knee-deep in a culvert created by recent flooding in August 2023.



Overtured tree in riding path by the Farm







