



Niagara Nature News

An Environmental Publication by Niagara County
Soil & Water Conservation District
SUMMER 2018 - NEWS

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Conservation District
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Free Interseeder Rental for 2018

The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District purchased a Hiniker Interseeder to give farms the opportunity to plant cover crops into standing corns. The interseeder is a six row unit with a 30 cubic foot seed box that plants two rows of cover crops in between 30 inch rows of field corn. The cover crops can be planted into the corn at the v3 to v7 stage which allows the cover crop to sprout and start growing while the corn is small. Once the canopy of the corn closes, it shades out the cover crop and the growth of the cover will slow and stop until the corn is harvested or when the corn starts drying, allowing the sunlight to penetrate through the canopy to the cover crop. Typically, corn is harvested late in the year and there isn't enough growing season remaining after harvest to allow the planting of a cover crop. The interseeding method gives the farms the opportunity to establish cover crops in these corn fields.

For 2018, there is no charge for delivery or set up. The only charge is refilling the fuel tank on the tractor that pulls equipment. It has been working great for planting cover crops between corn up to 18 inches in height. Some recommended cover crops that can be planted include annual rye grass, red/crimson clover or clover and tillage radish. The interseeder (as well as our no till drill) will help improve soil health by increasing organic matter, suppressing weed growth, preventing soil erosion and reducing the amount of fertilizers needed in future growing seasons.

If you are interested in trying the interseeder on your field or would like more details, contact our office. We are happy to provide this free service to the agricultural community in order to improve soil health in the county.



Photo below courtesy of Hiniker Cover Crop Seeding Systems online guide:
https://www.hiniker.com/ag_products%20new/literature/cover-crop-seeders-web.pdf



Cover crops can be precisely placed in standing corn crops using Hiniker's interseeding system.

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Niagara Career & Tech Attends 2018 NYS Envirothon



The team pictured l-r: Advisor Paul Dewey, Justin Rebon, Brandon Broeker, Adam Wagner, Megan Greco, Madelyn Russo

Niagara Career and Technical Education Center represented Niagara County at the NYS Envirothon held May 23-24 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva. Forty-five counties competed to win the title and scholarships.



Field Days Fun!

This year 256 students attended our Field Day events in June. Thank you to our dedicated station instructors who taught about bees, bugs, butterflies, rabies, herbs, fossils, dairy, fishing, green power, watersheds, trees, wildlife rehab, scat tracks and furs, stormwater pollution and invasive species. This event is FREE and available to all 4th - 6th graders in Niagara County. Call the office and sign up your school for 2019.

Prior to the State event, ten teams from Niagara and Orleans high schools met at the Bond Lake Nature Center for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon competition. Mr. William Tiger, Plant Manager at GM Lockport Operations, gave the opening welcome remarks to the students.

We want to thank this year's generous sponsors: GM Foundation, NY Forest Owners Association, M&T Charitable Foundation, Newroyal Orchards, Orleans Poverty Hill Farm and The Printing Place. Call our office to get your school involved in the 2019 Envirothon!

FYI...

The District has a No-Till drill available for your next conservation seeding project.

\$50 delivery charge and \$15/acre rental fee

We provide drill delivery and cleaning. Customer provides own seed.



Lake Guardian features Lake Ontario for 2018

The largest research vessel owned by the U.S. EPA and in the Great Lakes will have Lake Ontario as its featured Great Lake for 2018. The Lake Guardian thoroughly samples one Great Lake every year rotating on a five year cycle. The primary focus of the Lake Guardian is to collect data from the Great Lakes to show status and trends of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Data collected includes: air sampling to determine atmospheric deposition of contaminants; the benthic macroinvertebrate community in the lakes sediment; a corer to study the different layers of sediment in the Great Lakes; plankton nets for phytoplankton and zooplankton as a low level food source; basic water quality data such as dissolved oxygen, pH and conductivity; other data is also collected for additional research and interests. The 180 foot ship contains three interior laboratories including a chemistry lab, biology lab and a multipurpose lab for sample processing.

Prior to being owned by the EPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO), the ship was built in 1981 for offshore oil rigs. In 1988 the ship was purchased by the US EPA and converted into the research vessel we see today. The Lake Guardian has been collecting data in the Great Lakes since 1990. Long term data helps research scientists determine trends in the environment.

Additional information about the Lake Guardian can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-monitoring/lake-guardian>

Are you interested in placing a pond on your property? Call us for a Pond Site Evaluation!

Be Sure to Visit Us Aug 1 -5 at the 2018 Niagara County Fair!

The Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District is a local government subdivision under New York State law. The District was established as a public benefit by the County of Niagara in 1954. Your support of our programs aid in the District's conservation efforts to protect natural resources and water quality for our residents. In these wavering economic times, we thank you for your continued assistance in fulfilling our goals.

Fall 2018 Pond Stocking

Order Deadline: August 24, 2018

Pickup Date: Friday, Sept 14, 2018 at 10:00am SHARP

General Information: Stocking rates usually are 50-100 bass and a minimum 1000 minnows per surface acre. NOTE* Do not skimp on stocking minnows as game fish cannot grow without an adequate supply of natural food. If your pond is relatively new, be sure there is vegetation for reproductive habitat and aquatic life for a food chain. Recommended time to establish a pond before stocking is one year. You MUST obtain a stocking permit from the DEC prior to pickup. Applications are available in our office or on our website, www.niagaraswcd.com.

Pickup Information: Pickup will be at the SWCD office located at the northeast end of the Coop. Extension Administrative Building on the County Fairgrounds, Route 78, Lockport. At the time of pickup, you will need to **bring a cooler or box to stabilize the aerated bags** your fish come in for the trip home. Transferring the fish to your pond immediately is of utmost importance due to oxygen needs. The hatchery personnel will be available for only 1/2 hour for delivery so **PLEASE BE PROMPT!**

Fall 2018 Grass Carp Stocking

Order Deadline: September 7, 2018

Pickup Date: 4th week of September, date TBA

General Information: The average size of the carp will be between 10-12". Stock grass carp in ponds which have been properly protected so they are unable to escape into other NYS waters through inlets and outlets. You MUST obtain a stocking permit from the NYS DEC before ordering, as it specifies number of carp permissible. If you need a permit application, our office retains a supply of them or you can print a copy from our website, www.niagaraswcd.com.

Pickup Information: Pickup will be at the SWCD office located at the northeast end of the Coop. Extension Administrative Building on the County Fairgrounds, Route 78, Lockport. At the time of pickup, you will need to **bring a container with a lid filled 1/2 full with pond water** (an 18-gal plastic tote holds 4 carp). These fish are highly perishable and must be transported as quickly as possible. For more information on Triploid Grass Carp and how they can benefit pond weed control, call (716) 434-4949 ext. 4

Payment Information: Submit payment by check or money order with the bottom portions of these forms, payable to **Niagara County SWCD**. **Keep the top portions as your delivery date reminders and container/water needs at pickup.**

Fall 2018 Pond Stocking				Fall 2018 Grass Carp Stocking	
Type of Fish	Cost	# of Fish	\$ Amount	Name: _____	
Largemouth Bass 2 - 4"	25/\$55			Address: _____	
Bluegill 2 - 4"	25/\$45			Daytime Phone: _____	
Golden Shiners 2-3"	50/\$24			Number of Carp: _____	
Fathead Minnows 1"	100/\$20 1000/\$150			X \$22/fish _____	
Subtotal				+ Delivery	\$4.00
+ Delivery				Total Due: _____	
Total Due				(NYS sales tax not required)	
<i>(NYS sales tax already included)</i>				Mail payment WITH ALL 3 ORIGINAL COPIES of your DEC Permit to:	
Name: _____				Niagara County SWCD	
Address: _____				4487 Lake Avenue	
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____				Lockport, NY 14094	
Daytime Phone: _____					
Mail with payment to: Niagara County SWCD 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, New York 14094					

FISH FACTS

Perch - The true perch of New York State include some of the best tasting and most popular freshwater fishes. As a family, they are widely distributed, adaptable to a wide range of habitats, and fun to catch on rod and reel. In addition, the less known members of the perch family, the darters, are probably the most colorful freshwater fish in North America. True perch are spiny-rayed fish which have one or more sharp spines on their fins. While they are quite variable in appearance, they all are slender in body shape, have two dorsal (back) fins, and one anal fin. True perch can be separated into two groups: larger perches and smaller perches.

Largemouth Bass - Found throughout NYS, they are considered one of the state's most important sport fish. These members of the Sunfish Family (Centrarchidae) prefer weedy, rocky areas to provide both protection and food supply. Usually weighing 3-5 lbs, they can get over 10lbs and 2 feet in length. They are carnivorous; which means they'll eat small fish, crayfish, frogs, snakes, and some small mammals and birds if given the opportunity.

Channel Catfish - Catfishes are characterized by scaleless skin and barbels, better known as whiskers, about their mouth. Channel catfish have a deeply forked tail and dark spots. The spotting, however, diminishes with age. Consequently, older channel cats are frequently mistaken as blue catfish. But the anal fin on blue cats has a flat outer edge and channels have a rounded edge. They can grow to be 4 ft long and weigh up to 58lbs.

Sunfish - Sunfish are small to medium-sized fish with a single anal fin (bottom rear) and a two-part dorsal fin (back). They are spiny-rayed, with one or more sharp spines found on their dorsal, pelvic (bottom front) and anal fins. These spines help protect them from being eaten by larger fish and can prick the fingers of any angler who is not careful when removing the hook.

Fathead Minnows - Fathead minnows are small in size, averaging 2 to 3 inches in length. They are sturdy, heavy bodied fish with small mouths and a lateral line that stops under the dorsal fin. They are generally dull in color, with dark bodies and a slight brass tint on the sides. They prefer ponds and slow moving water in streams. They can tolerate muddy water, and are occasionally found in roadside ditches. In addition, fathead minnows can tolerate water with salt in it.

Golden Shiners - The golden shiner can be found throughout most of the US. These fish can be found in large schools around submerged structures where they primarily feed on zooplankton. The golden shiner spawns several times throughout spring and summer. Spawning can be aided with the use of structures such as sunken evergreens or stacked pallets. The abundant reproduction of this fish makes it an excellent choice for stocking where predatory species are present. These fish are slightly larger than fathead minnows and are preferred by large predators.

Triploid Grass Carp - The grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) is one of the largest members of the minnow family, commonly reaching weights in excess of 25 lbs. They can live up to 10 years. Native to Asia, this carp lacks the barbells and spiny dorsal and anal fin rays characteristic of its North American relatives, bearing a closer resemblance to a large creek chub. It is called "triploid" since it has been bred to retain an extra chromosome, rendering it sterile. Grass carp feed strictly by grazing on aquatic vegetation and are effectively used as aquatic plant control agents in over 50 countries.

Welcome Megan



The District is pleased to welcome another Conservation Intern joining our office this summer. Megan Greco will be working with our two returning student interns from last summer to assist us with our Japanese knotweed eradication program.

Megan graduated this month from Lockport High School and BO-CES Niagara Career and Technical Education Center Conservation program. She will be attending Paul Smith's College near Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks this fall to study Environmental Science.

2018 Tree Program

Thank you to the entire community for your continual support of this program! Together we are planting almost 31,000 seedlings for wildlife habitat and restoration. Thanks so much to those who helped prepare and distribute over 500 tree orders: Charlie Kesterson, Greg Tessmann and Nick Hlywa. Much appreciation goes to the Niagara County Sheriff's Work Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension for the use of the Merchant Building. Also, thanks for packaging supplies and boxes goes to TOPS Newfane and Lockport locations, along with Walnut Street Liquor and The Wine and Liquor Outlet both in Lockport. Please remember to support these local businesses!

2017 SWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

Tree Program - 33484 seedlings / 554 customers
Ag Value Assessments - 100 totaling 4716 acres
Pond Stocking - 7232 fingerlings to 41 ponds
Grass Carp - 86 carp to 37 ponds
Pond Site Evaluations - 13
Wildlife Houses Sold - 34
Environmental Field Days - 208 students
Regional Envirothon - 11 teams
Other Educational Events - 8 events / 831 participants
Newsletters - 5150 mailed/mailed
Media Articles - 6
Resource Map Requests - 32
Permit Assistance - 2
Watershed Management Activities - 9
WQ/Land Use Technical Assistance - 39
Wildlife Habitat Improvements - 4
No-Till Drill Plantings - 2
Road-Stream Culvert Assessments - 182
Shoreline Protection projects - 1
Stormwater Management site visits - 31
Invasive Species Projects - 30
Ag Best Management Practices:
Drainage/Ditching - 45,000 LF
Silage Leachate Systems - 2
Barnyard/Runoff Control - 3
Compost Pads - 1
Soil Health Projects - 9 cover crop plantings
AEMs completed:
Tier 1 -8, Tier 2 -8, Tier 3a -8, Tier 4 -5, Tier 5a -6, Tier 5b - 8



Let us know if you see Knotweed

The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant from the U.S. Forest Service to control the Japanese Knotweed population within Niagara County. If you have Knotweed on your property, or observe the species in other parts of the county, contact our office and we would be happy to document the finding, offer eradication suggestions/assistance, and add it to our monitoring sites.

Knotweed is easily identified from its large heart shaped leaves and hollow stem that has rings (or nodes) going around the plant. Usually the plant gets to be around 8 to 10 feet tall with the stem as big as a half dollar.

This grant is sponsored by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). For more information about projects funded through GLRI, visit www.glri.us

Photo of the Lake Guardian



Photo courtesy of NOAA.
<https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/vessels/lakeguardian/lakeguardian.html>



Japanese knotweed leaves during the growing season

Japanese knotweed stems during the growing season



Japanese knotweed flowers in late summer. Photo by Elaine Haug, courtesy of Smithsonian Institution.

Japanese knotweed stems over winter

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."
-Margaret Mead

CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE

Don't Lose Your Benefits!

Have you, will you or are you thinking about doing any of the following activities that have not been evaluated by NRCS on land you farm?

- Land clearing?
- Working new land?
- Excavation?
- Stump removal?
- Create a new drainage system?
- Constructing a building or structure?
- Improving an existing drainage system?
- Modifying an existing drainage system?
- Maintaining an existing drainage system?
- Land leveling?
- Dredging an area?
- Filling an area?
- Plant an agricultural commodity on land where an NRCS determination of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or wetland has not been made?

If you answered yes and want to remain eligible for USDA program payments, you **MUST** file Form AD-1026 with FSA and answer yes to one or more of the following questions:

- 5 • 9 • 10A • 10B • 10C



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Feb. 2010



Find us on Facebook

Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District and Eighteenmile Creek Great Lakes Area of Concern are now on Facebook! Give us a "Like"

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