



Niagara Nature News

An Environmental Publication by Niagara County
Soil & Water Conservation District
SUMMER 2019 - NEWS

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Japanese Knotweed Team At Work

The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant from the U.S. Forestry Service, through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), to control the Japanese knotweed population within Niagara County. Knotweed is easily identified from its large heart-shaped leaves and hollow stem with rings (or nodes). It can grow to be about 8 to 10 feet tall, and the stem can get as big as a half dollar and resembles bamboo.

If you see knotweed anywhere or think you have some on your property, we urge you to contact us immediately for help. This plant is extremely easy to spread, even a small amount can be transported unknowingly. Please do **NOT** move it or place at the roadside for brush or leaf pickup. If you must get rid of it, put it in plastic bags for pickup by municipality/town refuse going to the landfill.

Call the office at #434-4949 ext.4 and speak with coordinator Dave Reckahn to add it to our site monitoring list. We have assembled a team of three Conservation District Assistants: Catherine Schultheis, Hunter Kroening and Nicholas Seider, who are diligently going out to eradicate this invasive species in various areas throughout the summer months.



Photos below of Japanese knotweed:



Japanese knotweed leaves during the growing season



Japanese knotweed stems during the growing season



Japanese knotweed stems over winter

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| Inside this issue: | Page |
|------------------------|------|
| Envirothon News | 2 |
| Field Day Fun | 2 |
| Multi-Flora Roses | 2 |
| Fish Order Form | 3 |
| Annual Accomplishments | 4 |
| Tree Program Thanks | 4 |
| Welcome Dave Reckahn | 4 |



Niagara Career & Tech Attends 2019 NYS Envirothon



Niagara Career and Technical Education Center represented Niagara County at the NYS Envirothon held May 22-23 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva. Forty-six counties competed to win the title and scholarships.



Field Days Fun!

In June, 505 students attended Field Days at Royalton Ravine Park in Gasport. Many thanks to our dedicated station instructors who taught about bees, rabies, herbs, fossils, dairy, trees, dogbane, vermiculture, green power, wild turkeys, wildlife rehab, scat tracks and furs, electricity, stormwater pollution, invasive species and the Lockport Locks. They also got to explore the HAZMAT truck! This event is FREE and available to all 4th - 6th graders in Niagara County. Call the office and sign up your school for 2020.

The team pictured l-r: Advisor Paul Dewey, Marcus Schwarzmuller, Jacob Taylor, Jacob Phillips, Alexander Ralph and Elliot Wilczak

Prior to the State event, 17 teams from Niagara and Orleans high schools met at the Bond Lake Nature Center for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon competition. Mr. Roy Knapp, Environmental Consultant at GM Lockport Operations, gave the opening welcome remarks to the students.

We want to thank this year's generous sponsors : GM Foundation, M&T Bank-Charitable Foundation, Heritage Wind, Newroyal Orchards, Orleans Poverty Hill Farm and The Printing Place. Call our office to get your school involved in the 2020 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.



A Little About Multiflora Rose

Multi Flora Rose is another of our invasive plants coming in from Asia with a long history in the US. Historically Multiflora was planted and promoted by the USDA to provide dense cover for wildlife. The plant has the ability to grow big dense thickets for living fences, that provide housing for Cottontail Rabbits, Whitetail Deer, Pheasants and many of our song birds. Those dense thickets were used by Highway departments for erosion control, highway medians to reduce headlight glare and as a stopping agent for automobiles traveling off the highway because the thickets were so dense.

Starting in the 1960's neighboring properties of the early Multiflora Rose plantings started to see these huge dense stands of thorny thickets showing up on their property in areas they did not want them. It was at this time people were finding out how hard it is to control one of these thickets. By the 1980's it was looked at as an invasive and sales were banned in most areas by the 1990's.

Since then landowners have been trying to control it on areas it is not wanted. The same qualities that make it great for wildlife make it hard to control. It is easy to recognize as a dense thorny bush or clump of bushes. The large thorns and thick stalks make this plant very difficult to remove and limits access to apply herbicides. You can use machinery if the plants are accessible but be careful not to spread the plant when pushing it around. It is a very hard plant to use a chipper to control.

Story continued on Page 5.

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

Visit Our Booth July 31– Aug 4 at the 2019 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 2019 Pond Stocking

Order Deadline: August 23, 2019

Pickup Date: Friday, Sept 6, 2019 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 2019 Grass Carp Stocking

Order Deadline: September 6, 2019

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 2019 Pond Stocking | | | | Fall 2019 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: _____ | |
| Fathead Minnows 1" | 100/\$20 1000/\$150 | | | Number of Carp: _____ | |
| Subtotal | | | | X \$22/fish _____ | |
| + Delivery | | | \$4.00 | + Delivery \$4.00 | |
| Total Due | | | | Total Due: _____ | |
| <i>(NYS sales tax already included)</i> | | | | <i>(NYS sales tax not required)</i> | |
| Name: _____ | | | | Mail payment WITH ALL 3 ORIGINAL | |
| Address: _____ | | | | COPIES of your DEC Permit to: | |
| City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ | | | | Niagara County SWCD | |
| Daytime Phone: _____ | | | | 4487 Lake Avenue | |
| Mail with payment to: Niagara County SWCD | | | | Lockport, NY 14094 | |
| 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 Dave!

The District is pleased to welcome Dave Reckahn as our new Natural Resource Technician. An Army veteran, he graduated from Paul Smith's College with an Associates Degree in Engineering and Forestry. Dave is well known to Districts statewide. He began his career in 1993 as the District Manager/

Technician in Orleans County SWCD. He left there in 1999 to work as the Water Quality Technician in Wyoming County SWCD until 2008. Then he took a job in Essex County SWCD as the District Manager, retiring in 2018. He is a Certified Trainer for both Contractor Workshops and for the NYS Emergency Stream Intervention Program. He has served on the Environmental Education Foundation of Soil and Water Conservation Board. He's also the recipient of the esteemed Crony Award, the highest accomplishment for District employees. The District feels lucky to have brought him out of retirement to assist with coordination of our Japanese knotweed grant, AEM, Ag assessments, and many other programs. His knowledge is vast and he is a personable guy on top of it! He and his fiancée live in Lockport with their four Border Collies. He enjoys biking, camping, judging agility competitions and wine tasting.



2019 Tree Program

Thank you everyone for your continual support of this program! Together we are planting almost 29,000 seedlings for wildlife habitat and restoration. 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 Walnut Street Liquor, The Wine and Liquor Outlet and Supermarket Liquors and Wines, both in Lockport, along with TOPS Newfane and Lockport locations. Please remember to support these local businesses!

2018 SWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

Tree Program - 32,500 seedlings / 531 customers
Ag Value Assessments - 125 totaling 6077 acres
Pond Stocking - 19,190 fingerlings to 26 ponds
Grass Carp - 72 carp to 14 ponds
Pond Site Evaluations - 18
Wildlife Houses Sold - 51
Environmental Field Days - 256 students
Regional Envirothon - 10 teams / 2 counties
Other Educational Events - 12 events / 953 participants
Newsletters - 4950 mailed/mailed
Media Articles - 7
Resource Map Requests - 50
Permit Assistance - 2
Technical Assistance - 20
WQ/Land Use Planning - 5 municipalities
Wildlife Habitat Improvements - 3
No-Till Drill Plantings - 2
Interseeder acres planted - 185
Road-Stream Culvert Assessments - 52
Stormwater Management site visits - 12
Invasive Species Projects - 104
Ag Best Management Practices:
 Drainage/Ditching - 9551 LF
 Silage Leachate Systems - 1
 Roof Water Mgmt System - 2
 AgChem Handling/Storage System - 1
 Waste Storage Transfer System - 1
 Petroleum & Oil Products Storage System - 1
Soil Health Projects - 13 cover crop plantings, 579 acres
AEMs completed:
 Tier 1 -10, Tier 2 -10, Tier 3a -10, Tier 4 -5, Tier 5a -5, Tier 5b -9



Eighteenmile Area Of Concern Update

In May NCSWCD assisted the US Geological Survey, NYS Museum and NYSDEC in a fish community survey for Eighteenmile Creek. The purpose of the study is to address updated removal criteria for Beneficial Use Impairment 3-Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations. The new criteria was updated this past winter and requires fish populations to be similar to a reference site. For this study Oak Orchard Creek is used as the reference.

Fish communities were surveyed using “catch and release” for two days in Oak Orchard and Eighteenmile Creek using an electrofishing boat. Over 20 species were found in each creek. Notable finds in Eighteenmile include several bowfin, Longnose Gar and an American Eel. Data analysis will be completed in Fall 2019 that will determine if additional sampling is needed in Summer 2020. Once a final report is available it will be added to the data repository on eighteenmilerap.com.

Below: One of several bowfin netted from Eighteenmile Creek



Rose, cont'd

The birds eat the fruit of the plant and widely distribute the seeds to new areas where they can remain viable for 20 years and start new infestations. If you have it in an area and want to get rid of it is lot of hard work to cut, burn or apply herbicide to eradicate it. But it will be easier to treat the plant in one location rather than waiting and allowing the plant to spread to new areas. Early detection and rapid response is the best motto when dealing with any invasive species. If you need help with recommendations you can call us with questions. Good luck with your efforts.



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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



Above: Multiflora rose leaf and thicket

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