



Niagara Nature News

An Environmental Publication by Niagara County
Soil & Water Conservation District
SUMMER 2020 - NEWS

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Conservation District
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Faces of the District

Happy Retirement Mike Clifford!

After working with USDA-NRCS for 26 years, Mike is ready to retire a second time. For the past 7 years as the Natural Resource Technician, he's been the District's go-to guy for AEM and NY Grown & Certified Cover Crop grants. His last day will be August 31. He will still be working at his third job as Assistant Pastor at Pendleton Center United Methodist Church. After keeping up with his "honey-do" list at home, Mike plans on spending time golfing, fishing and hunting. He and his wife also plan to visit Florida this winter.



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Time Flies!

Congratulations to our District Engineer, Mark Seider, who celebrated 20 years with the District in June. Mark has been the driving force for getting the District to run like a well-oiled machine - organizing programming, obtaining grant funding, and promoting partnerships with area municipalities, agencies and non-profit groups. When he's not busy at work, he's donating his time to the Wilson-Newfane North Stars hockey team, church maintenance activities, family time...and a round of golf with a cold one!



Summer Field Crews

This summer you may see our Conservation Assistants Hunter Kroening, Cheyenne Reuillard and Michael Seider working hard to control Japanese knotweed at over 300 sites throughout the county. This has been an ongoing program to eradicate Japanese knotweed on public and private lands. If you see a patch feel free to contact us and we'll investigate the site.



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Give our Facebook pages a "Like":

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

Eighteenmile Creek Great Lakes Area of Concern



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.



Interseeder Rental

Interseeder rental is still available for farmers to plant cover crops between corn rows. Planting can occur between v3 and v7 stage, and won't impact the corn being grown.

First use of the interseeder is free, subsequent uses will cost \$5 per acre.



Eighteenmile Creek BUI Removal Update

Later this summer, the Eighteenmile Creek AOC will host an online event to present assessments that support a Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) removal for Restrictions on Dredging Activities. Several lines of evidence are considered when removing a BUI, including; why the BUI was originally impaired, removal criteria approved by a local remedial advisory committee, history of the site in the Olcott Harbor, and several recent assessments that support removal.

An online public outreach event will be held on July 30, from noon to 1pm to present BUI removal rationale. Following the presentation will be a 30-day comment period where the public can provide their thoughts/opinions on the removal. Please visit www.eighteenmilerap.com for meeting information and other details.

While visiting the website you can view other information about the AOC. Eighteenmile Creek has several outreach events that team with local schools or other local organizations. An 'About Us' tab explains the history of Eighteenmile Creek. The data repository also has over 275 scientific and outreach articles about Eighteenmile Creek and the Great Lakes. The repository is used by a wide variety of users from the general public to researchers and project managers.

District holds first 4-hour Contractor Workshop

On March 4, 2020 the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the first 4-hour Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop for contractors at the Fairgrounds in Lockport. Since 2010, these workshops have been required by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation to be able to work on permitted construction sites.

The program was presented by Dave Reckahn, Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control and trainer for the 4-hour training. The District was very pleased with our first workshop that had 68 local contractors attend to be certified or renew expiring certifications. The training is good for 3 years and has to be renewed to stay certified.

The District was happy to help out local contractors that in the past had to travel as far away as Syracuse to be certified. The training is available to anyone interested in learning more about erosion and sediment control practices to reduce runoff from disturbed areas. The District will present the program again next spring.

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.

2019 SWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

Tree Program - 28,465 seedlings / 525 customers
 Ag Value Assessments - 358 totaling 23,568 acres
 Pond Stocking - 15,980 fingerlings to 22 ponds
 Grass Carp - 56 carp to 12 ponds
 Pond Site Evaluations - 16
 Wildlife Houses Sold - 41
 Environmental Field Days - 58 students
 Regional Envirothon - 17 teams / 2 counties
 Other Educational Events—28 events /
 1,163 participants
 Newsletters - mailed/mailed to 5,306 addresses
 Media Articles - 6
 Resource Map Requests - 25
 Permit Assistance - 2
 Technical Assistance - 15
 WQ/Land Use Planning - 4 municipalities
 Wildlife Habitat Improvements - 1
 No-Till Drill Plantings - 18 acres at 3 sites
 Interseeder acres planted - 289 at 4 farms
 Road-Stream Culvert assistance - 1
 Stormwater Management site visits - 4
 Invasive Species - Japanese knotweed - treated 295 sites

Ag Best Management Practices:
 Drainage/Ditching - 9,267 LF
 Silage Leachate Systems - 2
 Petroleum Secondary Containment System - 1
 Roof Water Mgmt System - 3
 Waste Storage and Transfer System - 2
 Soil Health Projects - 12 cover crop plantings, 994 acres

AEMs completed:
 Tier 1 - 6, Tier 2 - 6, Tier 3a - 6, Tier 4 - 6, Tier 5a - 6, Tier 5b - 6

NRCS (325) High Tunnel System

A High tunnel system is an enclosed polyethylene, polycarbonate, plastic, or fabric covered structure that is used to cover and protect crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall, or cold, to extend the growing season in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel systems are currently being offered for cost sharing assistance through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Environment Quality Incentives Program. To be eligible for the program, producers must show minimum of 2 years crop history records and have been selling product to a local market. The practice does not apply to crops not grown in the natural soil profile. Raised beds are limited to 12 inches in depth. For further information and conservation planning assistance, contact your local USDA NRCS field office at

716-434-4949

ext 6255.

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2020 Tree Program

Thank you everyone for your continued support of the seedling program! Even during a pandemic, together we are planting almost 29,000 seedlings for wildlife habitat and restoration. Much appreciation goes to Cornell Cooperative Extension for the use of the Merchant Building, and Savannah Fox who volunteered to assist us with packing tree orders. Also much thanks for supplies and boxes to Niagara County Produce, Wrights Corners Wine and Spirits, Supermarket Liquors (Niagara Falls) and TOPS Markets in both Newfane and Lockport. Please remember to support these local businesses!

Niagara County SWCD assists with distributing PPE

In April, district staff assisted Cornell Cooperative Extension with transporting personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and sanitizer that were distributed to farmers. Bulk supplies were shipped to Niagara County for Cornell's handout in response to COVID-19. Then district staff delivered them to Grand Island for handout in Erie County.

Our office continues to work through coronavirus, but customers are asked to call for any Soil & Water needs (716) 434-4949 x4.



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