



Niagara Nature News

An Environmental Publication by Niagara County
Soil & Water Conservation District
SUMMER 2016 - ENEWS

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GM GREEN Projects Making A Difference

For the past two school years we have been getting students involved with improving their watershed. In 2016, we had three classes participate in a program called Global Rivers Environmental Education Network (GM GREEN). The program receives funding from our local GMCH Lockport Components plant, and is facilitated by Earth Force and Niagara County SWCD. Every year participating classes come up with a project to improve the watershed they live in.

The Newfane environmental science class taught by Rich Meyers, designed and built six rain barrels that were distributed to the public. The rain barrels have a dual purpose of preventing rainwater from collecting sediment and pollutants before entering storm drains and giving home and business owners a source of fresh water for plants and gardens. The students also created guides on how to build your own rain barrel that can be picked up at our office, Newfane Town Hall, Singer Farm Naturals, and Flint Bros. Hardware in Newfane. The class also released trout into the Olcott Harbor that were raised in the classroom, and learned about alternative energy sources used by Singer Farm Naturals.

The Lockport High School science class taught by Megan Hauser investigated an ephemeral stream inside the Eighteenmile Creek Watershed between Davison Road and Remick Parkway. The City of Lockport suspected there was pollution from local storm drains. No major pollution was found, but there are some blockages that could obstruct water flow. The class also did some work at Fisherman's Park in Newfane, including a litter cleanup, removal of chicken wire that was placed around trees impeding tree growth, and planting a River Birch tree. At the end of the school day the class went to the Olcott Marina where they planted a perennial garden and did a litter cleanup on West Olcott Beach.

The Niagara Career and Technical Education Center Conservation Program also participated. The class hoped to replace an interpretive/bulletin sign at Grant Wilderness Park, do a litter clean up and complete some water quality testing in Gulf Creek. Unfortunately due to class conflicts, completion of their project has been delayed and will be completed in the future.

The GM GREEN program takes place every school year with water quality monitoring in the fall, and then a watershed action project in the spring. If anyone has any questions or has a class interested joining the GM GREEN program, please contact Scott Collins at 434-4949.

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Left: Lockport High School GM GREEN class after planting their perennial garden and tree in Olcott Harbor



Right: Newfane High School GM GREEN class after building their first rain barrel



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

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Niagara Career & Technical Education Center Wins 2016 Regional Envirothon

Congratulations to Niagara Career & Technical Education Center (NCTEC) for defeating 16 other teams to take home the win on May 5 at Bonds Lake Nature Center for the Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon. Team Members Mike Wardinski, Joe Parisse, Hunter Kroening, Jake Lucas, and Samantha Bell scored the highest cumulative total on written exams in five areas: Soils/Land Use, Aquatics, Forestry, Wildlife, and Current Issues. The winning team went on to represent the county at the State Envirothon held May 25-26 at Hobart and William Smith College in Geneva. Advisors Paul Dewey and Brandon Lindke said they did an impressive job. We want to give special thanks to this year's sponsors of the Envirothon: GM Foundation, M&T Bank, NY Forest Owners Association, The Printing Place, Newroyal Orchards and Orleans Poverty Hill Farm.

Get your school involved in the 2017 Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon, call the office for more info today.



Envirothon Receives \$5000 Grant

This year we were the extremely fortunate recipient of a generous donation from the GM Foundation. The Regional Envirothon wishes to thank Roy Knapp, Susan Gouthro, Mary Ann Brown and Darvan Draper for their guidance in obtaining the grant, presenting "the big check" along with other gifts to the students, taking photographic memories, and giving us a view of their electric car, the Chevy Volt. Thank You!

2016 Niagara County Regional Envirothon Winners

L-R: Joe Parisse, Samantha Bell, Mike Wardinski, Jake Lucas & Hunter Kroening

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.



Winner of the 2016 Conservation Raffle
rustic bench was Robin Root from Orleans County



Be Sure to Visit Us
Aug 3 -7 at the
2016 Niagara County Fair!

Environmental Field Day for 5 and 6 Graders

Black clouds hovered briefly over Victor Fitchlee Royalton Ravine Conservation Park on June 7, but the Environmental Field Day was spared from rain so everyone could enjoy the day!

Over 500 students from ten public, private, parochial and home schools attended the annual event this year. Twenty-six learning stations were set up throughout the park, where individuals, agencies and organizations educated the 5th and 6th graders on everything from soils, water quality, wildlife and forestry to recycling, energy and fossils. New topics included lawn mower safety, food waste alternatives, and fishing local tributaries.

Held each year since 1969, this FREE educational event offers a variety of 25-30 learning stations to all Niagara County students. It is a great opportunity for them to sample several topics in quick, 15-minute presentations. You never know where a lifelong interest may be sparked! Contact the office to enroll your school.

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

Fall 2016 Pond Stocking

Order Deadline: August 26, 2016

Pickup Date: September 16, 2016 at 10:00am SHARP

General Information: Stocking rates usually are 50-100 bass and 500-600 minnows per surface acre. 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 2016 Grass Carp Stocking

Order Deadline: August 26, 2016

Pickup Date: 4th week of September, date TBA

General Information: The average size of the carp will be between 10-12". Stock grass carps 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 submitting your order. If you require 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** (an 18-gal plastic tote holds 4 carp) filled 1/2 full with pond water. 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 reminders

Fall 2016 Pond Stocking				Fall 2016 Grass Carp Stocking	
Type of Fish	Cost	# of Fish	\$ Amount		
Perch 2 - 4"	25/\$46			Name: _____	
Largemouth Bass 2 - 4"	25/\$54			Address: _____	
Channel Catfish 4 - 6"	12/\$32			Daytime Phone: _____	
Sunfish 2 - 4"	25/\$42			Number of Carp: _____	
Fathead Minnows 1"	100/\$20			X \$22/fish + Delivery \$4.00 Total Due _____ (NYS sales tax not required)	
Golden Shiners 2 - 3"	50/\$26				
Subtotal					
+ Delivery			\$4.00		
Total Due					
<i>(NYS sales tax already included)</i>					
Name: _____				Mail payment WITH ALL 3 ORIGINAL COPIES of your DEC Permit to: Niagara County SWCD 4487 Lake Avenue Lockport, NY 14094	
Address: _____					
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____					
Daytime Phone: _____					
Mail to Niagara County SWCD 4487 Lake Ave. 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.

NRCS Practice Standard Completed in 2015

250 ac -590 Nutrient Management
36 ac -595 Pest Management
275 ac -329 Residue Mgt. – No-Till
7 ac -328 Conservation Crop Rotation
97 ac -528 Prescribed Grazing
1/2 ac -386 Field Border (pollinator habitat) organic farm
50 ac - 106 Forest Management Plan written
1 - 309 Agrichemical Handling Facility
2 - 104 Nutrient Management Conservation Plan written
300 ft -362 Diversion
1000 ft - 468 Lined waterway or Outlet
1500 ft - 516 Livestock Water Pipe
3000 ft -382 High Tensile Fence
1200 ft -575 Animal Trails and Walkways
2 - WRPO (Wetland Reserve Plan of Operation written and funded.)
10ac - WRPO (Wetland restoration constructed)

Tree Program Thanks!

The District would like to thank the entire community for your never-ending support of this program. Together we are planting 30,773 seedlings for restoration and wildlife habitat! Thanks so much to those who helped prepare and distribute over 556 tree orders: Co-workers Jamie and Lori in the FSA office and Charlie from NRCS, and Greg (retired, NRCS). Also thank you to Roy-Hart teacher, Jessica, who pitched in when she came to collect the school's Arbor Day seedlings. Much appreciation goes to Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Niagara County Sheriff's Work Program and the Orleans County SWCD. A special thanks for packaging supplies and boxes goes to TOPS- Lockport, Wrights Corners and Newfane locations, along with Walnut Street Liquor and the Wine and Liquor Outlet. Please remember to support these local businesses!

2015 SWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

Tree Program - 28985 seedlings / 468 customers
Ag Value Assessments -79 totaling 3707 acres
Pond Stocking -8280 fingerlings to 32 ponds
Grass Carp -110 carp to 22 ponds
Pond Site Evaluations -15
Wildlife House Sold -22
Environmental Field Days - 498 students
Regional Envirothon - 14 teams
Other Educational Events - 7 / 1214 participants
Newsletters - 4770 mailed/emailed
Media Articles - 14
Resource Map Requests - 41
Permit Assistance -1
Watershed Management Plans -1
WQ/Land Use Technical Assistance -14
Wildlife Habitat Improvements -2
No-Till Drill Plantings -12
Critical Area Seeding -1
Invasive Species Issues -24
Ag Best Management Practices:
 Drainage/Ditching -190,000 LF
 Silage Leachate Systems -1
 Barnyard Runoff Control - 8
 Other Barnyard Systems -7
AEMs Completed:
 Tier I—6, Tier II—6, Tier III—8, Tier IV—5, Tier V—10



Eighteenmile Creek Remediation Update

Since Eighteenmile Creek has been part of the superfund process, significant progress has been made toward site remediation. The creek was broken into 3 Operable Units (OU). OU1 included the relocation of the residents on Water Street, demolition of the Water Street houses, and demolition of the Flintkote building on Mill Street. Currently, there is fencing placed around the perimeter of the former Flintkote Plant and Water Street Houses to protect the public from entering contaminated areas. Stone has also been placed down to hold the sediment in place until soil remediation occurs.

Soil remediation for many commercial/industrial properties south of Harwood Street including the properties described in OU1, will be addressed in OU2. Most of 2017 is being used for assessing how much contamination has occurred on all of these properties and preparing supporting documents to get a Record of Decision out before the end of the year. No field work is planned to be completed in 2017, however some field staff may be present to address any data gaps that may be discovered. No major work is planned for OU3 (Eighteenmile Creek sediment from Lockport to Lake Ontario) until work in OU2 is completed. If you have questions about Eighteenmile Creek, contact Scott at our office.



Above: Homes on Water Street prior to demolition



Above: Homes on Water Street after demolition

Agriculture Energy Audit Program

NYSERDA launched the Agriculture Energy Audit Program in March 2016. The program offers farms and on-farm producers no-cost energy audits that provide recommendations for energy efficiency measures. The program also offers assistance identifying and accessing funding to implement the measures identified in the audits. Three levels of audits are offered:

Level 1: This walk-through energy audit provides a summary letter with limited evaluation of feasible energy efficiency measures. This level is ideal for smaller operations with minimal energy use or for quick assessments.

Level 2: This detailed energy audit analyses the farm's previous year's utility bills along with equipment specifications and run-time information for that equipment. This information will then be used to help calculate estimated energy savings for energy efficiency upgrades on the farm. The comprehensive report will provide a list of recommended measures with associated energy and cost savings and measure payback. This audit meets ANSI/ASABE 612 standards. This level is the most common and the best option for most farms.

Level 3: This energy audit is focused on a specific system, energy efficiency measure, or renewable energy. This report is ideal for operations with a complex system to be analyzed beyond standard energy efficiency upgrades, or if the farm is interested in renewable energy.

Once the audit report has been completed, NYSERDA's program implementer, EnSave, will assist each farm in identifying the most appropriate measures to implement and programs to pursue for implementation funding. There are several options available, including programs through utilities and the federal government.

Call 800-732-1399 or email aEEP@nyserda.ny.gov for more information.

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