



# THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD



*Providing Today,  
Protecting Tomorrow*

## Brighton “Team 1” Wins Monroe County Envirothon

On May 17, 2018, 84 students from four local high schools gathered in teams at Ellison Park to compete in the 2018 Monroe County Envirothon. With perfect weather and spirits high, 16 teams put their knowledge to the test for a chance to represent Monroe County at the New York State Envirothon Competition. The teams competed in 5 environmental topics including aquatics, soils, forestry, wildlife, and rangeland management. It was a tough competition with two high score ties in wildlife and current issues.

Bright “Team 1” took first place overall and went on to represent Monroe County at the New York State Envirothon on the campus of Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY. The team placed 13<sup>th</sup> out of 45 teams!



Monroe County Winning Team:  
Brighton “Team 1”

Thank you to all of our instructors, volunteers and staff members that came out to help with the local event!

## Help Wanted: Conservation Field Days

Conservation Field Days is a hand-on, fun-filled, 3-day, outdoor educational event for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students from schools all over Monroe County attend this event and move through a series of stations to learn about various environmental topics such as recycling, stormwater management, wildlife habitat, wetlands, wildlife and bird migration and more! The District is gearing up to host the 2018 Conservation Field Days on **September 18, 19, 20 at Ellison Park!** The District is searching for professionals within the environmental field to instruct students on environmental topics. The District also needs volunteers to help with setup, time-keeping and picture taking. If you are interested in instructing or volunteering please contact Josh LaFountain at [joshlafountain@monroecounty.gov](mailto:joshlafountain@monroecounty.gov) or Megan Aubertine at [meganaubertine@monroecounty.gov](mailto:meganaubertine@monroecounty.gov).



“What is in Our Water?” station, instructed by Kaeti from Delta Environmental, from previous Conservation Field Days where students observe macroinvertebrates from Irondequoit Creek

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### 2018 District Dates & Deadlines

**August 12**

Celebrate Agriculture Dinner

**September 18, 19, 20**  
Conservation Field Days

**October 11**

Fall Fish Stocking Program Distribution

## Join the MCSWCD at the Celebrate Agriculture Dinner!

The District and our partners, Monroe County Farm Bureau and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, would like to invite you to the 2018 Farm to Table Dinner! This event will feature food from local farms along with raffles and a silent auction with amazing prizes. Tickets are only \$25 and are selling fast so don't wait, it's only a few weeks away! Thank you to the Monroe County Parks Department for the use their facility for this great event.

**FARM TO TABLE DINNER**  
 ~ CELEBRATE AGRICULTURE ~



Please join us  
 Sunday, August 12, 2018 at 4 PM  
 The Clubhouse at Durand Eastman Park  
 1200 Kings Highway North, Rochester, NY 14622

~ Proceeds support the Monroe County Farm Bureau scholarship fund & the promotion and education of Agriculture in our community ~

  

**\$25 per person • \$30 at the door • RSVP by calling 585-343-3489 • Payment is required to reserve your seat**

## Genesee River Watershed Coalition Receives Grant to Improve

GENESEE RIVER WATERSHED  
 COALITION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

## Water Quality in the Great Lakes



Monroe County, along with six other conservation districts in the Genesee River watershed, received funding through the US Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) program to improve water quality through best management practice implementation. Through 2020, approximately \$90,000 is available for farmland practices that promote erosion and sediment control within the watershed. Possible practices include cover crops, water and sediment control basins, exclusion fencing, forage and biomass planting, and riparian buffers, among others. Payment rates for implementation are customized and often exceed the 2018 Federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) rates. The District is currently looking for farmers to participate in this program and assist in promoting good water quality practices within the Genesee River watershed.

Please contact Jeremy Paris at the office at [jeremyparis@monroecounty.gov](mailto:jeremyparis@monroecounty.gov) if interested in learning more.



## Create Pollinator Habitat in Your Own Backyard

Pollinators are species that help spread pollen from plant to plant and include species such as birds, bees, butterflies, other insects and bats. These organisms play an essential role in our everyday lives and you may not have known it. A vast majority of plant species (nearly 90%) rely on pollinators to transfer pollen from one flower to the next in the form of pollination to reproduce. This includes agricultural crops such as apples, cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, peaches, carrots, and many other fruits, vegetables and spices. New York is home to over 450 native pollinator species and unfortunately their population numbers are declining due to human activity such as development, pesticide use, and the introduction of invasive species which have degraded and fragmented habitat, negatively impacting pollinators.

There are many things you can do at home to help protect our native pollinators such as avoiding the use of pesticides, mowing lawns less frequently to allow pollinator friendly vegetation to grow, and creating habitat. Planting a pollinator garden is a simple way to create habitat and help our pollinators while also increasing the aesthetics of your property.

Here are a few tips to consider when creating your own pollinator garden:

- 1) **Choose plants native to your area.** Native species are more adapted to your climate and better suited for native pollinators.
- 2) **Choose a variety of flowers.** Plant a variety of plants with different flower sizes and colors. Different pollinators are attracted to different types of flowers.
- 3) **Plant flowers that bloom at different times.** This will provide food for pollinators throughout the season and continue improving aesthetics.
- 4) **Choose perennials over annuals.** Generally, perennials are a more dependable food source for pollinators as they are more plentiful in nectar and pollen. Perennials grown back each year, decreasing the need to replant your garden each year.
- 5) **Provide a water source.** A birdbath, bowl, shallow dish or fountain will work perfectly in any pollinator garden. Remember to change water regularly.

Planting pollinator gardens can help provide food and habitat for our native pollinators that we depend on significantly for many of our fruits and vegetables.



Above: Butterfly Milkweed and Black-eyed Susans, common pollinator garden plants  
Below: Native bees visiting a pollinator garden



## Fall Stocking **Save the Date: October 11th, 2018**

Are you looking to add fish to your pond? Are you looking for more natural methods of treating algae in your pond or removing aquatic vegetation?



If so, you may want to consider placing an order at our Fall Pond Stocking Program. Our Fall Fish Stocking distribution will be on **October 11<sup>th</sup> between 12:00 PM– 1:00 PM**. We will be offering several varieties of fish including: fathead minnows, perch, and catfish. **New this Fall, we will be offering Rainbow Trout!** If you have a deep pond or a spring fed or colder pond, you may want to consider adding rainbow trout to increase the diversity in your pond! Along with the fish sale, we also offer bags of fish food to help your fish acclimate to their new home, and barley straw to inhibit new spring algae growth.

We also offer Triploid Grass Carp to help with manage aquatic vegetation. **Note that Triploid Grass Carp are stocked by permit only through the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)**. You would need to apply and be approved to stock prior to placing an order. For those interested in Triploid Grass Carp please contact the NYS DEC Fisheries Department at (585) 226-2466 or visit their website for application details.

Our order form will be available for download on our website ([monroecountyswcd.org](http://monroecountyswcd.org)), along with more information about the fall stocking event, and what you will need to bring. We will also send out order forms via email to those who are on our mailer list. If you wish to be added to our mailer list, contact the office at (585)753-7380 or email Josh LaFountain at [joshlafountain@monroecounty.gov](mailto:joshlafountain@monroecounty.gov).

## Water Runs Down Hill

The statement “water runs downhill” might seem a little obvious, but when looking at the bigger picture there can be many obstacles in the way that may cause drainage issues. Water will typically flow to the lowest point on a property and eventually make its way to the nearest waterbody, but in some cases it gets trapped by natural landforms or manmade structures. Trapped water will pond on a property until the soil has the ability to absorb the water or the water evaporates, which can take as little as a few hours to a couple of days for typical shallow ponding water. Ponding water can become an issue for individuals when it impacts their home or ability to use their property. Many drainage issues can be fixed with making minor changes to your own property to direct water away from important areas or allowing it to pond in a



Inundated yard during a heavy rain event

preferred location on your property. If you’re correcting drainage issue on your own, we recommend making sure you’re not filling in any wetland areas, by checking the [environmental resource mapper](#) and being especially careful about how your project might affect any neighboring properties. Also, check with you local municipality before correcting any drainage issues.

In many cases drainage issues don’t always have an easy fix or at least not one without looking at the bigger picture. Neighboring properties may also be experiencing similar drainage issues and may also be looking for a solution. Working with your neighbors may not only help reduce the cost of the project, but may also provide a better long term solution that will work for everyone.

## Harmful Algal Blooms

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in freshwater mostly consist of cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. These types of algae are naturally present in all freshwater systems. Under certain conditions, such as calm, warm waters with high nutrients; populations can dramatically increase, forming blooms. In some cases these blooms can be toxic and cause issues such as skin rashes, illness if ingested, and can cause issues with wildlife and the environment. If you see water that looks similar in the pictures to the right, avoid it and report it! Blooms can be reported by filling out the [Suspicious Algae Bloom Report Form](#) and sending it in as directed on the form.

Past research has indicated that the primary cause of HABs is excessive nutrients (mainly phosphorus & nitrogen) in the watershed. Targeted reductions of non-point source nutrients have shown the most effective strategy in preventing eutrophication and reducing the number of blooms in the watershed.

For residents, proper septic maintenance, using zero phosphorous fertilizers and wise fertilizer use, and picking up pet waste and lawn clippings can help reduce nutrient runoff in neighborhoods. For farms, the proper application of nutrients is essential to the health of the watershed. Livestock farms need to be especially aware when spreading manure, sensitive areas should be identified, and proper setbacks from a watercourse should be observed. Incorporation of manure into the soil following application can keep manure in its place and be readily available for plant uptake. By following simple guidelines and best management practices, nutrients can be managed in the watershed and help reduce blooms.



Harmful algal bloom, blue-green algae



## Salmon Creek Stream Stabilization Project



Left-above: The heavily eroded streambank before project  
 Left-below: A completed project with regraded and reseeded streambank and fishing access



The District recently completed a stream stabilization project along Salmon Creek in Salmon Creek Park within the Village of Hilton. The project involved stabilizing an eroding section of the creek by regrading, reseeding and planting a riparian buffer with native plant species along the banks of the stream. A riparian buffer is a vegetated area along a body of water that helps to reduce the amount of sediment and nutrient runoff flowing into the water, protecting water quality and stabilizing the banks. On the most heavily impacted area of the stream, large flat stones were put in place to provide more stabilization and further reduce erosion. These stones will also double as a fishing access for park visitors.

This project was funded through the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services under the Finger Lakes—Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance and will greatly reduce sediment and nutrient loading into Salmon Creek, and into Braddock Bay.



## **Monroe County Soil & Water**

### **Conservation District**

145 Paul Road, Building 5  
Rochester, NY 14624  
Phone: 585-753-7380  
M-F 8am-4pm

[mcswcd@monroecounty.gov](mailto:mcswcd@monroecounty.gov)  
[www.monroecountyswcd.org](http://www.monroecountyswcd.org)



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This newsletter is published quarterly by the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District and is available at no cost to interested landowners, land users, and to the general public. If you would like to receive our newsletter, call us with your email address or view it online at [www.monroecountyswcd.org](http://www.monroecountyswcd.org). Programs and services offered through the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District are made possible through the financial support of the County of Monroe, State of New York, specialized grant opportunities, and fundraising programs. All SWCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Our Board of Director meetings are open to the public; please call for information.