

THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD

Months of Preparation and One Big Day of Competition – The Monroe County Envirothon

Competition was intense between the twenty-two local high school teams registered for our local Envirothon, May 1st at Ellison Park. Each five-member team worked together as they were tested on their knowledge of five environmental topics including: Aquatics, Soils, Forestry, Wildlife and Current Issues (Sustainable Agriculture). Teams that participated included: Brighton, Brockport, Churchville-Chili, Eastridge, the Rochester City School District/Northeast College Prep and Our Lady of Mercy High Schools.

Brighton High School's Team 1 placed first overall and went on to compete at the New York State Envirothon at SUNY Morrisville placing 11th against 41 other county champions throughout the State. Congratulations Brighton High School!



This year's first place team was from Brighton High School. Brighton Team #1 members include: Tongtian Liu, Max Franklin, Isaac Toohey, Pablo Stein, and James Guo.

We appreciate the support from all our partners, volunteers, and that of our sponsors, The Bank of Castile, Finger Lakes Systems Chemistry, the Monroe County Parks Department and the Rochester Institute of Technology. Our instructors and proctors put forth great effort to teach and guide students that register for this event each year, making it a wonderful opportunity for all that attend. Our deepest thanks go to the State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Forester Mark Gooding, Ron Schroder, retired (DEC) Wildlife Specialist, Karl Korfmacher with the Rochester Institute of Technology, Charlie Knauf with the Monroe County Department of Health, Donald Peterson with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and Robert King with Monroe Community College Department of Agriculture and Life Sciences Institute for assistance with this event.

WANTED: Instructors and Volunteers for Conservation Field Days

This year our Conservation Field Days are scheduled for September 16, 17, and 18th at Ellison Park with approximately 1200 students expected throughout the three days. This event is a huge undertaking each year and we're looking to offer those that participate a unique learning opportunity. School groups register their classes to travel through a series of stations and become more aware of a variety of local environmental topics and concerns. Are you a retired teacher or do you work with an area environmental organization that may be interested in teaching sessions for these young students? If your answer is YES, please contact Karen Ervay at: 753-7380 or email her directly at: karenervay@monroecounty.gov to register! Are you interested in assisting for the day as a guide or photographer? If so, contact Karen Ervay at the above phone number or email address!

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*Providing Today,
Protecting Tomorrow*

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2014 District Deadlines & Dates

6-11-2014

4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training Registration Deadline

6-18-2014

4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training, Town of Ogden

9-16, 17 & 18-2014

Conservation Field Days

9-10-2014

Summer Fish Program

Conrow Farms Named 2013 Conservationist of the Year and 2013 AEM Award Recipient

On April 12th, 2014, the District proudly named Conrow Farms as the 2013 Conservationist of the Year as well as the recipient of the 2013 Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Award at this year's Celebrate Agriculture Dinner. Conrow Farms has been in operation in the Town of Clarkson for 63 years and is run by Tom and Robert Conrow.

Since Conrow Farms began participating in the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program in 2010, they have successfully installed an Agrichemical Handling Facility for the storage and mixing of on-farm pesticides and fertilizers as well as a Fuel Secondary Containment Facility to hold and contain 3 bulk fuel storage tanks on the farm. Both projects were cost-shared through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program.

Conrow Farm's commitment to conservation goes beyond the farmstead practices that the District has completed on the farm, into the field, where the family follows sensible crop rotations and implements cover crops on their land to improve soil health and reduce erosion. They are active participants in the District's Agricultural Recycling Program and also follow principles of integrated pest management to help reduce the use of pesticides and overall risk to the degradation of water quality. Conrow Farms has also been a participant in the federal Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) training program, and has worked with the MCSWCD for years on ways to correctly manage drainage on their lands. This farm serves as a good representative of a progressive family farm rising to meet the challenge of farming sustainably into the future.



(L to R): SWCD Board Members Rollin Pickering and Josh Bauroth, SWCD Planning Technician, Tucker Kautz, Tom and Robert Conrow from Conrow Farms, and MCSWCD Executive Director, Kelly Emerick.

Summer Fish Stocking Program—Save the Date!



If you missed our Spring Fish Stocking Program, we can still accommodate your needs in our Summer Fish Stocking Program! We're scheduling our next distribution date for September 10th so please save the date. We'll be offering koi, fathead minnows, largemouth bass, yellow perch, catfish, and triploid grass carp within this next program.

For pond owners that are experiencing significant aquatic vegetation growth in their ponds, triploid grass carp can provide a non-chemical, environmentally-friendly control method.

IMPORTANT NOTE: triploid grass carp can only be purchased once you obtain a permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). If you need that permit, please contact the NYS DEC office at: 226-2466 and ask for the Fisheries Department for details on applying.

The District's Fish Program is a pre-order program that requires pond owners to send in our order form and payment prior to the distribution so check our website for upcoming details regarding the program in August. The Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District website is full of conservation program and land management information, visit us at: www.monrecountyswcd.org or contact our office at: (585) 753-7380.



Above: MCSWCD Technician Tucker Kautz displays two largemouth bass from our spring distribution in May.

EPA – Proposed Clarification of Waters of the United States Rule

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) recently jointly released a proposed rule to clarify protection under the Clean Water Act for streams and wetlands that form the foundation of the nation’s water resources. The proposed rule will increase efficiency in determining coverage of the Clean Water Act. The proposed definitions of waters will apply to all Clean Water Act programs. It does not protect any new types of waters that have not historically been covered under the Clean Water Act.

Specifically, the proposed rule clarifies that under the Clean Water Act:

- Most seasonal and rain-dependent streams are protected
- Wetlands near rivers and streams are protected
- Other types of waters may have more uncertain connections with downstream water and protection will be evaluated through a case specific analysis of whether the connection is or is not significant



The proposed rule preserves the Clean Water Act exemptions and exclusions for agriculture. Additionally, EPA and the Army Corps have coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to develop an interpretive rule to ensure that 56 specific conservation practices that protect or improve water quality will not be subject to Section 404 dredged or fill permitting requirements. Any agriculture activity that does not result in the discharge of a pollutant to waters of the U.S. still does not require a permit.

To comment on this this proposal or for more info, please visit- <http://www2.epa.gov/uswaters>

2014 Conservation Tree & Shrub Program Reaches More Than 400 Local Landowners!

Let’s start with THANK YOU!!! Our 2014 Conservation Tree and Shrub Program is closed for this year and we’re pleased to say that we reached a total of 429 landowners while distributing 23,100 trees, shrubs and plants this spring. We very much appreciate those that participated and will continue to offer this program for those interested next year.



It’s our goal to provide an opportunity for landowners to continue toward improving their property by providing a variety of programs and services, one of which is our Tree and Shrub Program. Offering these trees, shrubs and plants helps support conservation planting projects, wildlife enhancement, erosion control and windbreak development needs throughout the area.

While we made several changes in our program offerings this year, we will begin the process for our 2015 program soon and hope to bring back popular species along with new species to consider. This year there were 28 individual tree, shrub, and plant species offered with an addition 37 species available in our plant variety packs. Popular species offered for the first time in 2014 were: Winterberry, River Birch, Sweet Crabapple, Black-eyed Susan, Wild Geranium and we launched a new multi-pack for Hummingbirds and Honey Bees.

This would not have been possible without the help of our volunteers and the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services. Thank you!

Remember to give your plants plenty of water and patience! As always, if you have questions or comments on our program, please contact our office at 753-7380.



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Soil & Water Resource Technician

Karen Ervay
*Education Coordinator/Secretary to
Board*

USDA NRCS Staff:

Anwar Karim
District Conservationist

Agricultural Environmental Management in Monroe County - Year 10



New York State's
Agricultural Environmental
Management (AEM)
program supports farms of
all types and sizes in their
efforts to be environmentally

sound and economically viable in their efforts to farm
cleaner and greener into future generations.

Participation in the AEM program allows the Monroe
County Soil and Water Conservation District to
document the importance of agriculture in Monroe
County, while making the District more competitive for
the limited funding opportunities available for the
implementation of water quality improvement projects
on local farms.

For the current AEM 2014-2015 plan year we will be
continuing to advance planning with current program
participants, while working to increase new participation
in our current focus outreach watersheds. In 2014,
outreach efforts will be primarily focused on the Honeoye creek watershed.

While we try to focus on specific watersheds each plan year, the AEM program is
open to all interested farmers and agricultural landowners regardless of location in the
county. We urge any farmers in the county that may be interested in the AEM program
to contact the District at 753-7380 for information on how to get started on a
conservation plan for their operation.

AEM...

- ⇒ **Increases farmer awareness**
- ⇒ **Enhances the environment**
- ⇒ **Documents farmer stewardship**
- ⇒ **Maintains viability of farm enterprise**
- ⇒ **Reduces farmer exposure to liability**
- ⇒ **Assists farmers in complying with regulations**
- ⇒ **Coordinates federal, state & local assistance**
- ⇒ **Promotes agriculture's benefits to the community**

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. 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 age, 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.