



THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD



*Providing Today,
Protecting Tomorrow*

Don't Forget Your Plants! 2020 Conservation Tree & Shrub Reminder

Our Tree & Shrub order window has passed and distribution is rapidly approaching—which means you can receive your pre-ordered trees! You can come pickup your new trees during our distribution, which occur at the following times:

Distribution:

Monroe County ecopark at 10 Avion Drive, Rochester, NY

Thursday April 23rd 9:00 am—5:00pm

Friday April 24th 9:00 am—5:00pm

If you didn't get the chance to pre-order any of your trees or you're just looking to pick up some more then come to our overstock sale! This is a first come, first serve sale for any trees that were not purchased during our pre-order period. Because some trees are in higher demand than others—we cannot promise to offer every species.



Overstock Sale:

Saturday, April 25th 9:00 am—11:00 am at the Monroe County ecopark at 10 Avion Drive, Rochester, NY

For directions to the ecopark facility visit <http://www.monroecounty.gov/ecopark>. There will *not* be household recycling hours available during our pre-order distribution (April 23-24) as there will not be any ecopark staff available. For more information and household recycling hours, check the link above.

Compost mulch will continue to be available at the ecopark during both the Tree and Shrub pre-order distribution and overstock sale. This is a great source for you to obtain excellent nutrients and cover for your plantings, just make sure to bring a container and shovel!



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2020 District Dates & Deadlines

April 23 & 24
Tree & Shrub Distribution

April 25
Conservation Tree & Shrub Overstock Sale

May 7
Illicit Discharge, Pollution Prevention Programs, & the MS4 Permit

May 8
Fish Stocking Program Distribution

May 14
2020 Envirothon Competition

Spring Fish Stocking is Coming Soon! Save the Date: May 8, 2020

Our Spring fish stocking sale will take place **May 8th, 2020 from 12:00-1:00PM** Are you looking to add some new fish to your pond this spring? Do you have nuisance algae or vegetation growing in your pond? Consider ordering from our fish stocking program!

What we offer:

Fish: Black Crappie, Bluegill, Yellow Perch, Largemouth Bass and Fathead Minnow. We also offer Triploid Grass Carp for biological algae control.

Other pond health supplies: Fish food (recommended for newer ponds) and barley straw for non-chemical algal control).

Please note that in order to stock Triploid Grass Carp, you will need to first obtain a stocking permit through NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC). A copy of the permit will need to be sent to us along with your order form if you wish to order Triploid Grass Carp. 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.



Triploid Grass Carp—one of the fish offered at our annual fish stocking sale

Using Fertilizer Correctly

As spring approaches you might be thinking about fertilizing your lawn to keep it nice and green for the summer. However it is important to recognize that fertilizer can negatively impact a watershed. Often fertilizers may be discharged directly into a waterbody or washed by rain and into waterbodies, and some can also seep into the soil and into groundwater. When fertilizer is washed away and carried into a waterbody it can do the most damage – because algae love fertilizer just as much as your grass does – and contributes to algal blooms. These pollutants generally enter our environment as they run over impervious surfaces, like roads. Depending on the type and level of pollutants in the water the waterbody that receives this runoff may become unsuitable for the activities it was intended for, like fishing or swimming. If these pollutants increase even higher, the organisms in this environment may not be able to survive.



It is important to remember these tips when we are getting our outside spaces ready for spring. If you choose to use fertilizer on your lawn, make sure you are following New York State's Nutrient Runoff Law that states you **cannot purchase fertilizer that contains phosphorus** unless a soil test indicates that additional phosphorus is needed for growth of that lawn or non-agricultural turf; or the phosphorus fertilizer is used for newly established lawn or non-agricultural turf during the first growing season. Another tip is to only apply fertilizer when it is dry outside. If it rains soon after fertilizer is put down, then most of it will be washed away before it can even sink into the soil. This is to protect our waterbodies from becoming over-fertilized and reduce the risk of algal blooms in the future. You can learn more about the specific New York State law here: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/67239.html>

NYS Nutrient Runoff Law Application Dates:

Under the new phosphorus law, you **CANNOT** apply phosphorus on your lawn from December 1st-April 1st

Saying Goodbye to Josh Bauroth

Monroe County Legislator Joshua Bauroth, serving as the Democratic Liaison for the Monroe County SWCD Board of Directors, has recently stepped down after over eight (8) years of dedicated service.



Josh's attention to details for ensuring accurate financial reports, proposed contracts, and policies and other critical documents and decisions was essential in ensuring that the District's operations were legitimate, honest and fair and were in the best interest of the residents of Monroe County.

He certainly made his mark on the Soil & Water Conservation District Board, and was very saddened to resign, leaving his sentiments of regret. "It has been a great pleasure to be a part of a professional and dedicated team, both the Board and the entire staff of the Soil & Water Conservation District. I have the utmost respect for all of you and have learned a lot over the past 8 1/2 years. You can always count me as a friend and I am so pleased to have worked with you all".

The entire SWCD board and staff hope the next phase of his career and legislative responsibilities result in well-deserved success. The District board and employees will miss you!

Welcome Michael Yudelson!

Monroe County Legislator Michael Yudelson was appointed as the Democratic Liaison to the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Directors on February 11, 2019. Michael is a graduate of East High School and SUNY Brockport. He served three terms as Henrietta Town Supervisor after six years as a member of the Town Board, and was elected in November 2019 to represent the county's 13th Legislative District, which includes a majority of the Town of Henrietta and a portion of the Town of Pittsford. Michael currently serves as a member of the Human Services Committee and the Environment & Public Works Committee.

Much of Michael's career has been devoted to serving young people – including as the Director of the Henrietta Youth Bureau and Recreation Department, the Director of Operations at the Center for Youth Services, and the Executive Director of Threshold Youth Services (now a part of Community Place of Greater Rochester). Currently, Michael is the Executive Director of Temple B'rith Kodesh, where he is a life-long member and was a Sunday School teacher for more than 20 years. The District staff and board members are looking forward to Michael serving on the Board.



Great Lakes Commission Grant



The Genesee River Watershed Coalition received a \$199,230 grant award from the Great Lakes Commission Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program. The grant will be shared among Allegany, Genesee, and Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and will aim to stabilize and restore streambank erosion problems in the Genesee

River watershed. Tributaries in the upper portion of the watershed are highly impacted by erosion, losing acres of working farmland every year. Downstream portions have been heavily impacted by invasive species, including the Emerald Ash Borer, and efforts will focus on removing dead trees and replanting riparian areas with native plants. The projects will kick off this spring and will continue over the next three years. Questions about the projects can be directed to Stephanie Castle (stephaniecastle@monroecounty.gov) Genesee River Watershed Coordinator.

Nutrient Management on the Farm

Nutrient management involves managing the amount, placement, and timing of plant nutrients to obtain optimum yields and minimize the risk of surface and groundwater pollution. This practice can be used on any area of land where plant nutrients are applied to enhance yields and maintain the biological condition of the soil. Some of these nutrient sources include organic wastes (manure), commercial fertilizer and crop residues. The amount and timing are based on soil testing and growing season, to minimize the risk of surface and groundwater contamination.

Nutrient management is documented in the form of a nutrient management plan. This plan is developed in conjunction with the current farm practices and production styles, while allocating manure and fertilizer appropriately for crop uptake and at optimum growth periods. Soil samples, manure and fertilizer analyses, crop rotations, soils, topography, proximity to water bodies and any other hydrologically sensitive areas are all taken into account in the plan--to provide the proper and responsible use of all the nutrients on the farm. In New York State a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) can only be developed by a certified nutrient management planner that has extensive experience in agronomy, plant science, animal husbandry and soil & water conservation. This experience allows a planner to make the best professional judgement when allocating nutrients and identifying resource concerns, while at the same time making a plan that is efficient for the farm to use.

In terms of keeping nutrients on the land and out of the water, nutrient management plans are the best tool to minimize risk in the landscape.

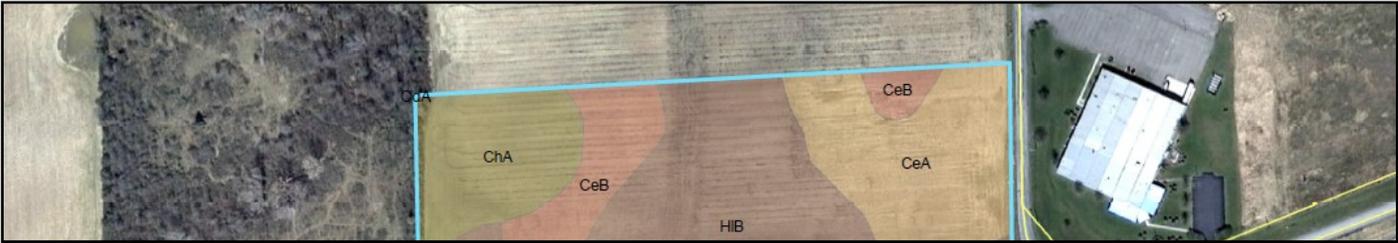
Changes to AEM

Agricultural Environmental Management, or AEM, is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers make common-sense, cost-effective, and science-based decisions to meet business objectives while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources. By participating in AEM, farmers can document their environmental stewardship and further advance their positive contributions to their communities, our food systems, the economy, and the environment.



New for the AEM program, the District will offer a new type of funding for farms participating in the program, to implement Best Management Practices (BMP) that have been recommended on their farm through the AEM planning process. This funding is non-competitive and is another avenue for farms help install conservation on the farm. Contact Jeremy Paris (jeremyparis@monroecounty.gov) for more information.

Agricultural Assessments



Many of you have been in contact with us lately about agricultural assessments (otherwise known as soil group worksheets or simply “ag” assessments). Ag assessments are a necessary and important part of how agricultural land is taxed, and we often receive many questions regarding it and so in order to clear things up a bit – we’re going to talk about the basics of ag assessments, what they are, how you complete them, and why they matter.

In New York State, agricultural land is entitled to certain property tax exemptions based on the quality of the soils of the parcel. Soils of higher quality and productivity receive larger exemptions than those of poor quality. These soils are ranked on a scale from 1 to 10 with 1 being the best agricultural soils and 10 being the worst. You may also receive exemptions based on the amount of farm woodland (forested areas on your property that you actively harvest timber or firewood) you have – but this only applies up to 50 acres. All other non-agricultural land is taxed at normal property tax rates.

If you are interested in an ag assessment then you should contact your local land assessor – as they have the necessary forms for you to fill out to begin the process, and they are ultimately the ones who decide how much your exemption will be. Upon completing the necessary forms with your assessor, they will direct you to have a soil group worksheet completed, and this is where the Soil & Water Conservation District comes in. You fill out a SEPARATE form with us (forms can be found on our website here: <http://www.monroecountyswcd.org/AgSGW.html>) and requires a \$40 payment per parcel that you want assessed. We will create a map showing all the soils on your agricultural land and you will receive two completed copies of your map from us, one of these is for you to keep while the other must be sent to your assessor. The assessor will process your new map and make the final determination as to your exemption. It’s that easy!

FAQS:

Do you have to come out and sample my soil?

No! We have software containing the data needed to complete the maps.

Do you know how much my exemption will be?

The Soil & Water Conservation District does not decide how much your tax exemption will be – that is up to your assessor. Our role is simply to create the soil maps.

Are there any limitations in what qualifies for an exemption?

Generally, your parcel must be greater than 7 acres, used in crop production for the last 2 years, and have annual gross sales of over \$10,000.

You can find out more information about how ag assessments work on our website here:

<http://www.monroecountyswcd.org/AgSGW.html>

Stopping Invasives: Recognizing Invasive Species Pathways

An increasing area of concern—invasive species pose a large threat to our economy and environment. Simply put, an invasive species is an organism that is introduced to a new location outside of its home range whose population grows out of control due to lack of natural predators. You are likely already familiar with some invasive species—like the Brown Marmorated Stinkbug (pictured). Introduced unintentionally from China, stinkbugs have no natural predators in North America, and with nothing to eat them their population grows without end.



An all-too frequent and familiar invasive species—the brown marmorated stinkbug

The effects of invasive species are profound. It is estimated that as much as 20% of all species that have ever gone extinct did so because of an invasive species. Their effects cost billions in damages by destroying crops to costly management and control programs.

But how do invasive species get around? After all, it seems that a little insect like a stinkbug would have very low chances of ever making it to the US and establish a population. Invasive species use several pathways to travel that we will highlight below:

Shipping

Most invasive species come from other continents like Europe and Asia. The primary way they arrive to North America is by shipping containers. Thousands of containers filled with products are moved across the ocean every day to major ports—and in most cases animals, plants, and fungi can hitch a ride inside these containers.

People

Unfortunately, humans often directly move species from place to place. This can include buying a plant that isn't native to North America and planting it in your yard (whose seeds will spread into the environment), sticking to your shoes and gear after you go hiking, hunting, or fishing (think algae and microscopic fungi), attaching to cars and boats, in firewood, and more.

The single best thing you can do to stop the spread of invasive species is to be mindful of what you could possibly be moving around. If you are a boater and move your boat around to different waterbodies—clean it first—zebra mussels might be attached and you could bring them to a lake or pond that has never seen zebra mussels before. When planting for your lawn or garden, use plants that are from North America. A plant not originally native to the continent might spread its seeds beyond your property or could bring an insect or fungus with it from another regions.

Identifying invasives:

Changing your own impact is important, but what do we do about the thousands of invasive species already in New York? We can eradicate them with pesticides, traps, or by introducing a new predator, but often the populations of invasives is too large to completely destroy. Learning more about the invasive species in your area and removing them is important as well. Contacting local invasive species organizations like Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) (<http://fingerlakesinvasives.org/>) the Monroe County Soil & Water District when you think you find an invasive species or are looking for help is a good way as well. You can even help by going out in the field and tracking down these species yourself! With the iMapinvasives app, you can help researchers find invasive species with just your phone! Learn more here: <https://www.nyimainvasives.org/copy-of-report-an-invasive>

Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

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<http://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountySWCD>

WNY Stormwater Training Series

Please join us for the final class in our Stormwater Management Training Series! Class 4: Illicit Discharge, Pollution Prevention Programs and the new Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit being held on May 6, 2020. This class will focus on the fundamental requirements of both Minimum Control Measures, including proven strategies for compliance, mapping strategies, as well as highlighting some of the more advanced strategies to help meet future permit requirements. This class, co-instructed with Andy Sansone of Monroe County, will review the elements of successful municipal Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) and Pollution Prevention programs, with case studies, mapping tools and class exercises. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation personnel from Central Office will also be present to provide a brief update and summary of the pending updates to the MS4 general permit. Please register by going to our website and clicking the Register Here button by April 29th! Link can be found here:

<http://www.monroecountyswcd.org/StormwaterTrainings.html>

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Vice-Chairman/Farmer Rep.

Michael Yudelson
Legislative Rep.

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Soil & Water Planning Technician

Josh LaFountain
(NYSE&SCC)
Soil & Water Resource Technician

Stephanie Castle
Watershed Agricultural Coordinator

Amanda Little
Soil & Water Resource Technician

Matthew Gallo
Conservation Program Specialist

2020 Envirothon

Our annual Envirothon competition is fast approaching, and soon high school students from across Monroe County will compete in a rigorous environmental challenge testing their knowledge of Forestry, Aquatics, Wildlife, Soils, and Current Issues (this year's current issue is Water Quality Management). Students will be connected with experts in the field who will teach them in each of these topics. Participation in Envirothon is a great way for students to receive more experience in these exciting fields and prepare them for a possible career.

We need volunteers to help with:

- Event Set-up and Break-down
- Picture Taking
- Participant Management

If you are interested in learning how you can be involved you can email matthewgallo@monroecounty.gov.



Winners of the 2019 Envirothon from Brighton

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.