



THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD



*Providing Today,
Protecting Tomorrow*

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Reopening and Adapting to the Implications of Covid-19

As the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District re-opens its doors to the public, please be assured that we are following the health and safety guidance as prescribed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as well as the Monroe County Department of Public Health to keep our staff and clients safe, secure a healthy workspace, and creating a flexible workplace.

Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday, 8am to 4pm

Our office will be open to the general public by **appointment only** until further notice. Those entering the building will be required to be masked and sign-in and have their temperature taken. Thank you for your cooperation on this.

Clients

All clients must wear a mask or face covering during any in-person contact with our staff members, whether in the office or at your property for a field appointment. When making an appointment, if you do not have a mask or face covering, please let the staff know so one can be provided for you. We request that meetings be conducted via teleconferencing through conference calling, Zoom, Web-ex, Go-to Meeting, etc. when possible to limit in-office, face-to-face interactions.

Staffing

Staff must be socially distanced when reporting to work in-person. All work stations are set-up with walls to ensure 6 foot distance. Whenever an employee is uncertain that they will be able to maintain a 6-foot separation from other employees, they must wear masks. Staff members are all required to check their temperatures in the morning before starting work and anytime they leave and return throughout the workday. They are also required to report any symptoms they may be experiencing and are not permitted to work if they are sick. Deep cleaning and disinfecting the office, including high-touch surfaces, is being taken daily throughout the day.

Thank you for your understanding during this phased process of reopening. We will continue to keep the public updated with any changes. Please let us know if you have any questions and reach out to us by phone at (585) 753-7380 or email mcswcd@monroecounty.gov

2020 District Dates & Deadlines (TBD)

September
WNY Class 3:
Construction Permit

October
Fall Fish Stocking
Program

October
4 Hour S&EC Course

Fall Fish Stocking is Coming October 2020!

Stay tuned for more information coming about our Fall fish stocking sale which will take place in October 2020. 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.

Look for order forms on our website soon!



A carp sold during our Fish Stocking Program

WNY Training Series Update

In lieu of recent events regarding COVID-19 the upcoming WNY Stormwater Training Class 3 originally scheduled for on 3/25 (The Stormwater Construction Permit) has been rescheduled for September. As of right now we are anticipating a reschedule of the course for September, but will confirm the exact date and location pending more information from the county.

In lieu of recent events regarding COVID-19 the upcoming WNY Stormwater Training Class 4 on 5/6 (Illicit Discharge, Pollution Prevention and the new MS4 Permit) has been officially cancelled with no reschedule date. It is no longer possible to reschedule this class for the fall.

AEM: Nitrogen Management

Successful nitrogen management can optimize crop yields and increase profits, while minimizing nitrogen losses to the environment. Placement, timing and rates play an important role in successfully applying nitrogen to crops.

Placement – One of the decisions of application is where to put it. Nitrogen can be surface applied dry or liquid, incorporated or sidedressed. Each operation has its drawbacks and potentials and is dependent on what tools the farm has at their disposal. Some components can be used such as Y-drops or injectors to get the nitrogen in the crop root zone during sidedress. Other times farms may apply nitrogen through the planter at planting time in the seed slot; making the most judicious use nitrogen at the beginning of the season.

Timing – One of the main challenges in deciding on a nitrogen fertility program is the timing of the application. In fertigation systems, the best practice would be to apply frequent small applications, at rates that meet the crop requirements. In less intensive crops, like cereals and grains, where only a few fertilizer applications are made, timing of nitrogen application is critical. Applying nitrogen too early holds the risk of losing it through leaching, before the crop takes it up, especially if rains are to come. The common approach, in such cases is to split the nitrogen application, where most of the nitrogen fertilizer just before the crop's maximum demand for nitrogen. However, there is a risk of applying the nitrogen fertilizer "too late", if logistic or weather conditions do not allow applying it when planned.

Determining nitrogen application rates – Nitrogen goes through of the quick and constant changes between its different forms and it is highly mobile in the soil. As a result, testing soil nitrogen gives a reading that is valid only the same moment of testing, and might lead to erroneous recommendations for nitrogen application. Therefore, the common approach is to give nitrogen recommendations based on yield goal and the nitrogen uptake of the crop. Nitrogen credits, due to organic matter in the soil and residues of previous crops, should be also taken into account when making nitrogen fertilizer rate recommendations. New methodologies and approaches for testing soil nitrogen are currently being developed and evaluated.



Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding Opportunity



In partnership with the Genesee River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts, the Monroe County SWCD has funding available through the Great Lake's Restoration Initiative for farmland practices that promote erosion and sediment control within the Genesee River watershed. Possible practices include cover crops, water and sediment control basins, exclusion fencing, forage and biomass planting for pasture improvements, and riparian buffers, among others. Payment rates for implementation are customized by the grant program. The District is currently looking for farmers to participate in this program and assist in promoting good water quality practices within the Genesee River Basin.

Please contact Jeremy Paris, Planning Technician, at jeremyparis@monroecounty.gov if interested in learning more.



Pollinator Week: June 22-28

Last week was National Pollinator Week, which means events were held all around the country in support of our pollinators!

Pollinators consist of birds, bees, butterflies, other insects and bats. These organisms play an essential role in our everyday lives. Nearly 90% of plant species, like many varieties of vegetables and fruit, rely on pollinators to grow. Human activity such as development, pesticide use, and the introduction of invasive species have degraded and fragmented habitat, negatively impacting pollinators. New York is home to over 450 native pollinator species and unfortunately their population numbers are declining.

There are many things you can do in your own backyard to help protect and create habitat for our native pollinators:

1. Add a variety of native plants to your garden/backyard that flower at different times of year
2. Research specific food for birds (ex. Black oil sunflower seeds for chickadees) as feeders tend to attract unwanted wildlife such as squirrels
3. Do not remove dead trees from your property as these can be used as habitat
4. Install bat and native bee houses
5. Provide a water source for birds, bats and wildlife—this can be water in a saucer, bird bath or pond. Remember to change the water every few days to minimize mosquito populations.
6. Remind your friends and neighbors about the importance of protecting pollinators!



A common pollinator, a monarch butterfly, resting on a flower

Lawn Care: Summer Watering Tips

Seeing lawn sprinklers are a common summer site for most of us in Monroe County. However, it is important to take a critical look at our watering practices to determine small changes we can make that have a huge impact on water conservation. According to the EPA, Americans use 320 gallons of water per day, with almost 100 gallons for outdoor use. The easiest change is the time of day at which you water your lawn. It is best to avoid watering at the hottest time of day (afternoon, evening) because large amounts of water may never actually make it to your lawn due to evaporation. It is advised to water in the early hours of the morning – aim for 8:00 AM or earlier!

It is also important to remember that the water needs of your lawn depend on where you live. Established lawns typically require about one inch of water per week in the summer – most locations, especially in this area of NY – are likely that to get that amount of rain per week. Rain gauges (pictured below) can be used to monitor the amount of water your area is getting! Lawn grasses often go into summer dormancy and can survive on a fraction of that and will rebound as soon as rains pick up again. An interesting trick to seeing if the grass needs water is that if you step on it and if it springs back up, it does not need water. A few other changes to consider are making sure to position sprinklers so water lands on lawn and not paved areas like a driveway. Leaving grass a few inches shorter will help protect it from heat damage and will help it retain moisture longer. Unfortunately, the “perfect” lawn is traditionally seen as a pristine green and weed free area but grass experiences cycles that prevent it from being fully green in summer months. If we make these small changes, we can have a big impact on local water conservation!

Water lawns and gardens at 8:00 AM or earlier!



H2O Hero Rain Gauge

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Conservation District**

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Be Mindful of Flushables!

Don't Flush Wipes!

Unfortunately, due to the covid-19 pandemic, many people turned to wipes as multiple stores across the country were sold out of toilet paper. However, this has caused problems for sewer systems. Please be advised that even if wipes are labeled as “flushable”, these types of wipes (i.e, baby, cosmetic, hygienic) do not break down and often cause issues further down the pipe, especially for septic systems. These types of wipes clog and backup plumbing pipes when they hit an elbow in the pipe. This may eventually lead to a total sewer shutdown and backups into the house. For those not on septic systems, these “flushable wipes” can also damage wastewater treatment equipment at the facility (pictured below). Part of the problem is the lack of a regulating body that determines if products are actually flushable. Furthermore, it is up to the consumer to properly dispose of these wipes and to make choices to protect the integrity of our sewer and wastewater systems.



An aerial image of the primary and aeration basins at the Van Lare Wastewater Treatment Plant located near Rochester, NY.

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.