



Monroe County, New York

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)

Strategic Plan 2021-2025



Prepared by: Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

Rochester NY

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Section 1: Introduction

Background Information

The Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District (MCSWCD) has been actively involved in assisting farmers evaluate, install and improve conservation management practices since the District formed in 1954. In conjunction with evolving state and federal funding opportunities, District technical staff has assisted many farmers with planning and implementation of conservation practices to protect and conserve Monroe County's natural resources.

The primary tool used to help farmers implement conservation projects on the ground is the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM)¹ program. AEM is a state-wide program where policy is developed under NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, NYS Soil & Water Conservation Committee (SWCC). The AEM program in Monroe County was established in 1998 in Northrup Creek watershed, a priority watershed of local importance, and continues to expand based on determinations of watershed priorities today. The program now covers all Monroe County watersheds with agricultural impacts, and has expanded to include 600 participants throughout Monroe County.

Farms in the AEM Program progress through a series of Tiers as follows:

Tier 1 - Inventory current activities, future plans, and potential environmental concerns

Tier 2 - Document current land stewardship; assess and prioritize areas of concern

Tier 3A - Develop conservation plans addressing environmental resource concerns while helping to reach farm goals

Tier 4 - Implement plans utilizing available financial, educational, and technical assistance

Tier 5A, 5B - Evaluate to ensure the protection of the environment and farm viability

Mission Statement

The mission of the Monroe County AEM program is to promote the awareness and adoption of agricultural conservation practices on local farms, increase environmental stewardship and climate resiliency among agricultural producers while enhancing the economic viability of agriculture in Monroe County. The AEM program also seeks to improve awareness of the benefits of agriculture throughout the County, assist agricultural producers with achieving their farm's objectives, and protect and improve local water quality and natural resources.

¹ More detail regarding the AEM Program can be found on the NYS SWCC website at: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/agricultural-environmental-management>

Vision Statement

Ensuring agricultures role in land and water stewardship.

Status of Agriculture in Monroe County

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2017 Census of Agriculture, Monroe County holds the following statistics:

Acres of Farmland in Monroe County

- **106,778 Acres of land in farms**
- **64,006 Acres of active cropland**

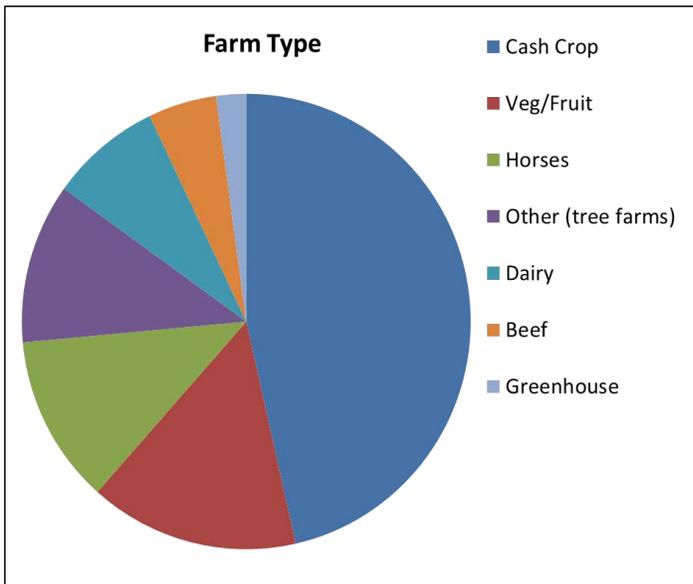


Figure 1. Percent of each farm type that exists in Monroe County (2017)

Farm Type	Percent
Cash Crop	46.5
Veg/Fruit	15.1
Horses	12.0
Other (tree farms)	11.4
Dairy	8.0
Beef	5.0
Greenhouse	2.2

History and Current Status of Projects Funded to Support Monroe County Agriculture

Monroe County SWCD has been successful since 1998 in securing funds to either collect data, plan farms best management practices (BMPs), and implement BMPs under the AEM program. The funding program, year, support provided by watershed and whether the project/program is complete has been summarized below.

Name of Program	Year	AEM Tier	Support Provided	Watershed (s)	Notes	Status
Monroe County Water Quality Coordinating Committee Mini-Grant	1998	1 & 2	9 Tier 1 and Tier 2 assessments were completed	Northrup Creek		Complete
Agricultural Non-point Source (AgNPS) Pollution Abatement & Control	Round VI 1998-2002	1 & 2	21 Tier 1 and 13 Tier 2 assessments were completed	Oatka Creek		Complete
	Round VII 2000-2003	1, 2 & 3A	97 Tier 1, 13 Tier 2 assessments completed; and 4 Tier 3A plans completed	Braddock Bay	Watershed includes Salmon Creek and Buttonwood Creek	Complete
	Round VIII 2001-2005	3B	1 Tier 3B Certified Nutrient Management Plan was completed for a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)	Oatka Creek	Watershed encompassed Monroe, Genesee and Wyoming counties	Complete
	Round IX 2003 – 2006	1 & 2	11 Tier 1 and 9 Tier 2 assessments completed	Sandy Creek (including Monroe & Orleans Counties)	8 of the farms included have operations in both Braddock Bay watershed & Sandy Creek watershed	Complete
	Round XI 2005-2009	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 17 best management practices (BMPs) implemented on 13 farms	Genesee River (including Monroe, Genesee and Wyoming counties)	Monroe County included 2 dairy farms and 1 dairy replacement (heifer) operation representing 1 Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) dairy in Oatka Creek watershed, 1 CAFO dairy in Salmon Creek watershed, & 1 CAFO dairy in Little Black Creek watershed	Complete
	Round XIII 2007-2010	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 6 best management practices implemented on 3 CAFO farms	Lake Ontario	Includes 3 BMPs in Salmon Creek watershed, 1 BMP in Black Creek watershed, & 1 BMP in Oatka Creek Watershed	Complete
	Round XIV 2007-2010	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 2 agrichemical mixing facilities were implemented on 2 farms	Sandy Creek		Complete

Name of Program	Year	AEM Tier	Support Provided	Watershed (s)	Notes	Status
Agricultural Non-point Source (AgNPS) Pollution Abatement & Control	Round XV 2008	4	Three applications were submitted for three watersheds to support 10 farms and 17 BMPs	Honeoye Creek, Irondequoit creek, and Hamlin-Parma Beach	Not Funded	N/A
	Round XVII 2010-2011	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 36 BMPs on 10 farms	Black Creek watershed and Oatka Creek watershed	Watershed encompassed Monroe, Genesee and Wyoming counties	Complete
	Round XVIII 2011-2012	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 36 BMPs on 5 farms	Oatka Creek	Watershed encompassed Monroe and Genesee counties	Complete
	Round XX 2014	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 1,370 acres of cover cropping on 9 farms	Salmon Creek		Complete
	Round XXI 2015	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 12 BMPs on 4 farms	Irondequoit Creek		On-going
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)	2010-2014	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 8 BMPs on 4 farms	Lake Ontario	7 counties participated to implement 50 BMPs on 25 farms in the Lake Ontario Basin	Complete
	2018-2022	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 4 BMPs on 4 farms	Genesee River	5 counties participating to implement erosion & sediment control BMPs on farms in the Genesee River Basin	On-going
Great Lakes Commission (GLC)	2010-2015	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 25 BMPs on 10 farms	Black Creek watershed and Oatka Creek watershed	Watershed encompassed Monroe, Genesee, and Wyoming counties participating to implement over 95 BMPs on 23 farms	Complete
Climate Resilient Farming (CRF)	Round 3 2018-2021	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 2 BMPs on 1 farm	Black Creek watershed		On-going
AEM Cost-Share	Round 16 2020-2021	4	Tier 4 Implementation: 9 BMPs on 3 farms	Black Creek watershed, Buttonwood Creek watershed, and Genesee River Direct Drainage		On-going

Section II: Evaluation and Prioritization Planning

Priorities have been developed for the AEM program planning effort by reviewing the estimated number of acres of agricultural land in each watershed within Monroe County, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Priority Waterbodies List and known or suspected impacts to water quality from agriculture, other local watershed management plans developed for high priority watersheds within Monroe County, and the level of current and past participation/interest of farmers in the AEM program. These priorities are set and reviewed with the AEM Advisory committee. The committee meets prior to each strategic plan update and evaluates this information to determine the priorities for the County.

A. Monroe County AEM Advisory Committee Members

The MCSWCD solicited input over the last 10 years on developing priorities for the strategic plan by requesting participation in the Monroe County AEM Advisory Committee. Invitations over the years were extended to Farm Service Agency, local municipalities, the County Farmland Protection Board, the Monroe County Department of Health, Environmental Services (DES) and Planning, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Water Quality Coordinating Committee, Environmental Management Council, farmers representing different agricultural interests throughout watersheds of the County, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC), Black Creek Watershed Coalition, Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Water Education Collaborative, Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Agriculture & Life Sciences Institute at Monroe Community College, and Monroe County Farm Bureau. The list of parties and/or agencies that chose to participate on this committee in 2009, 2015, and 2021 are listed below.

AEM Advisory Committee Members				
	Organization	2009	2015	2021
1	Monroe County Health Department	✓	✓	
2	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)	✓	✓	✓
3	Monroe County Department of Environmental Services	✓	✓	✓
4	Monroe County Planning Department	✓	✓	✓
5	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) - Region 8		✓	
6	Monroe County Farm Bureau	✓	✓	
7	Monroe County Farmland Protection Board	✓	✓	
8	Monroe County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC)	✓		
9	Water Education Collaborative (WEC)	✓		
10	Black Creek Watershed Coalition	✓		
11	Oatka Creek Watershed Committee			✓
12	NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets, Soil & Water Conservation Committee	✓	✓	
13	Monroe County Environmental Management Council	✓		
14	Monroe County Farm Representatives	✓	✓	
15	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County			✓

B. Agricultural Land & Watersheds within Monroe County

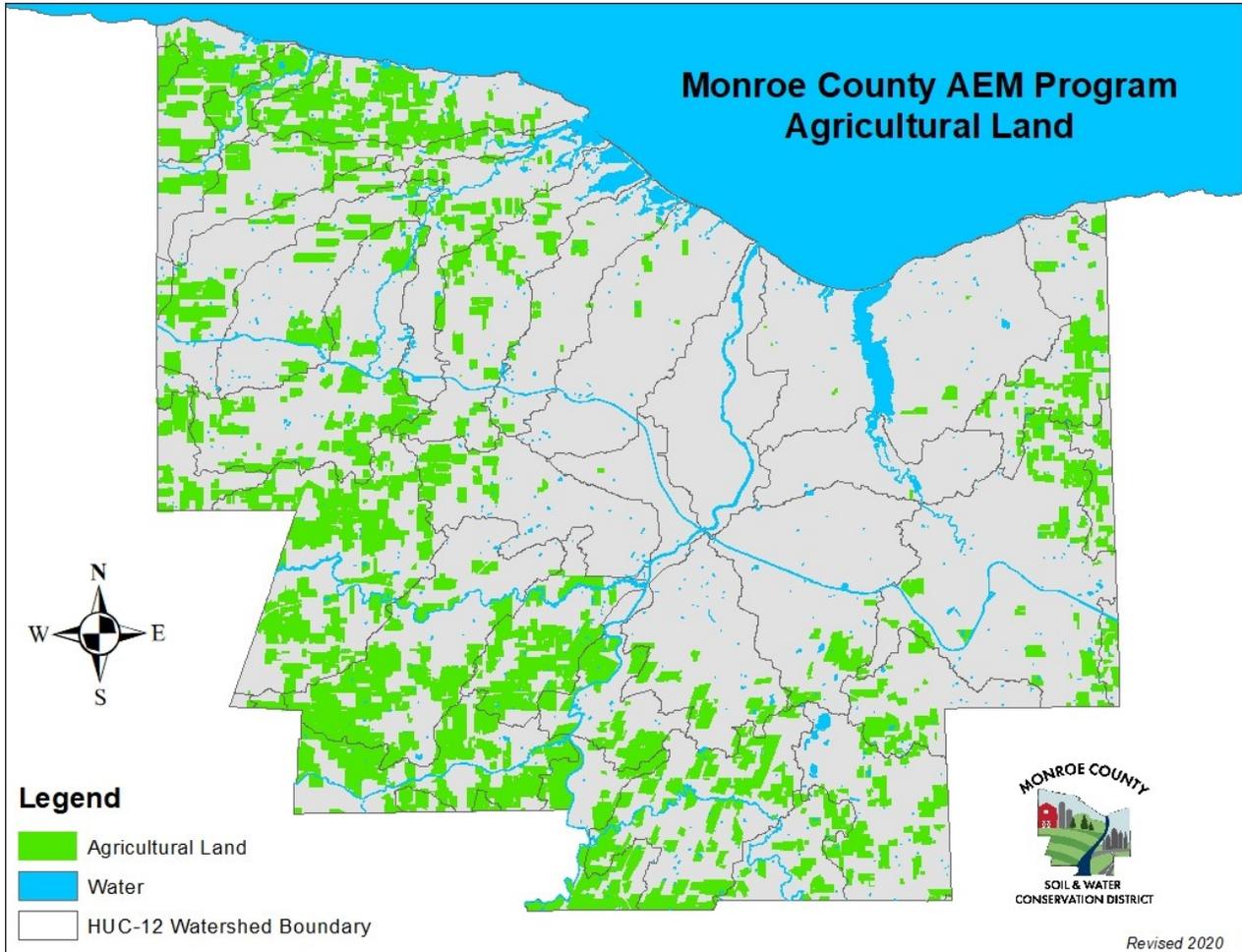


Figure 2. Agricultural Land & Watersheds within Monroe County

C. Priority Waterbodies Lists, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

The Waterbody Inventory/Priority Waterbodies List (WI/PWL)² provides narrative assessments of New York State's waterbodies. The (WI/PWL) dataset is an inventory of the state's surface water quality. The WI/PWL reports are produced for each of the 17 major drainage basins in the state on a schedule that allows each to be updated every 5 years. The review and updating of these reports include a public participation component. The data are displayed in four themes, representing the types of waterbodies included on the WI/PWL. They include Shoreline, Rivers/Streams, Lakes/Reservoirs, and Estuary.

This dataset provides a summary of general water quality conditions, tracks the degree to which a waterbody supports its designated uses, and monitors progress toward the identification and resolution of water quality problems, pollutants, and sources. Figure 3 shows waters in Monroe County with designated impairments due to agriculture.

² More detail regarding the WI/PWL assessment effort can be found on the NYS DEC website at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8459.html>

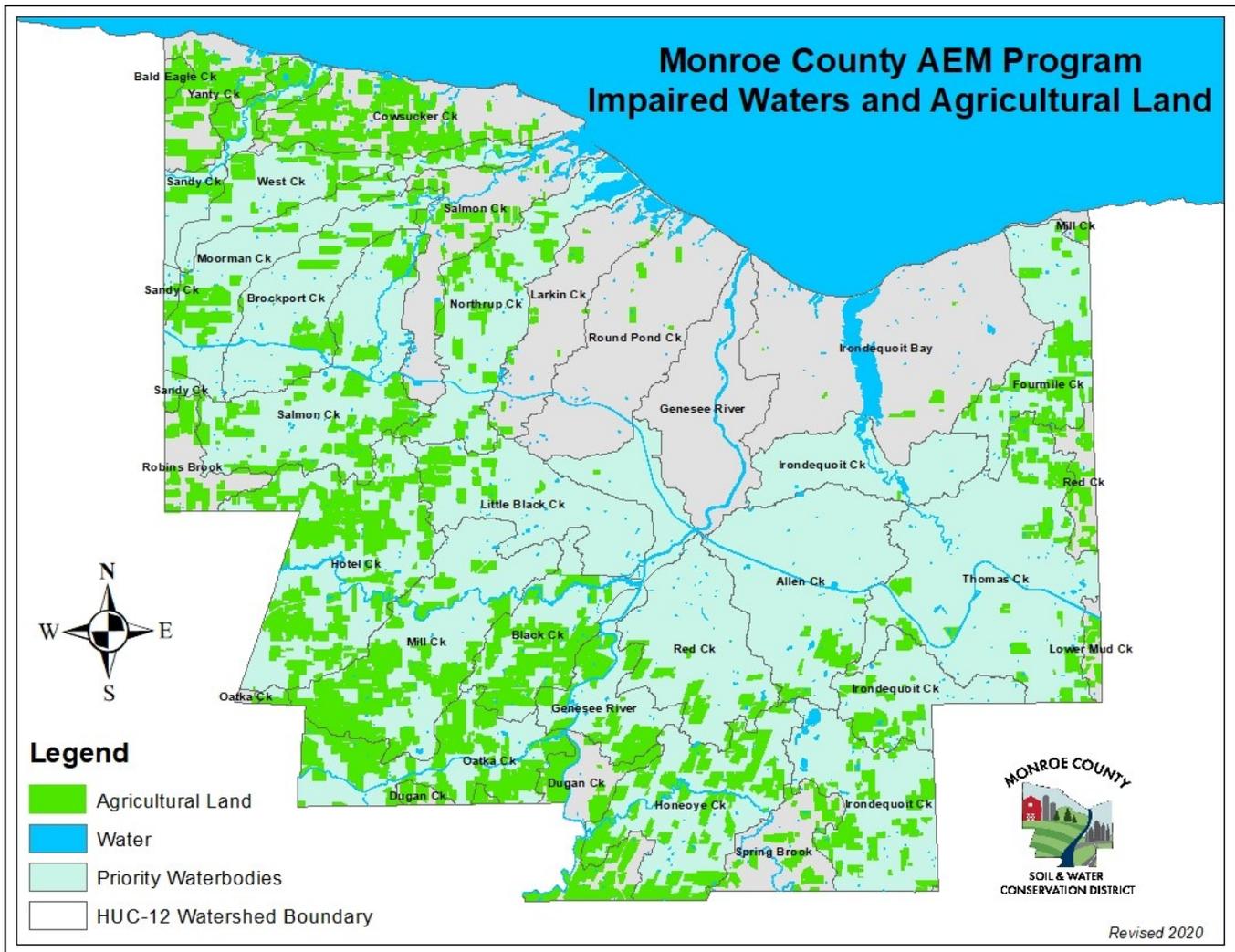


Figure 3. Waterbodies listed on the WI/PWL and the location of active agricultural land in Monroe County

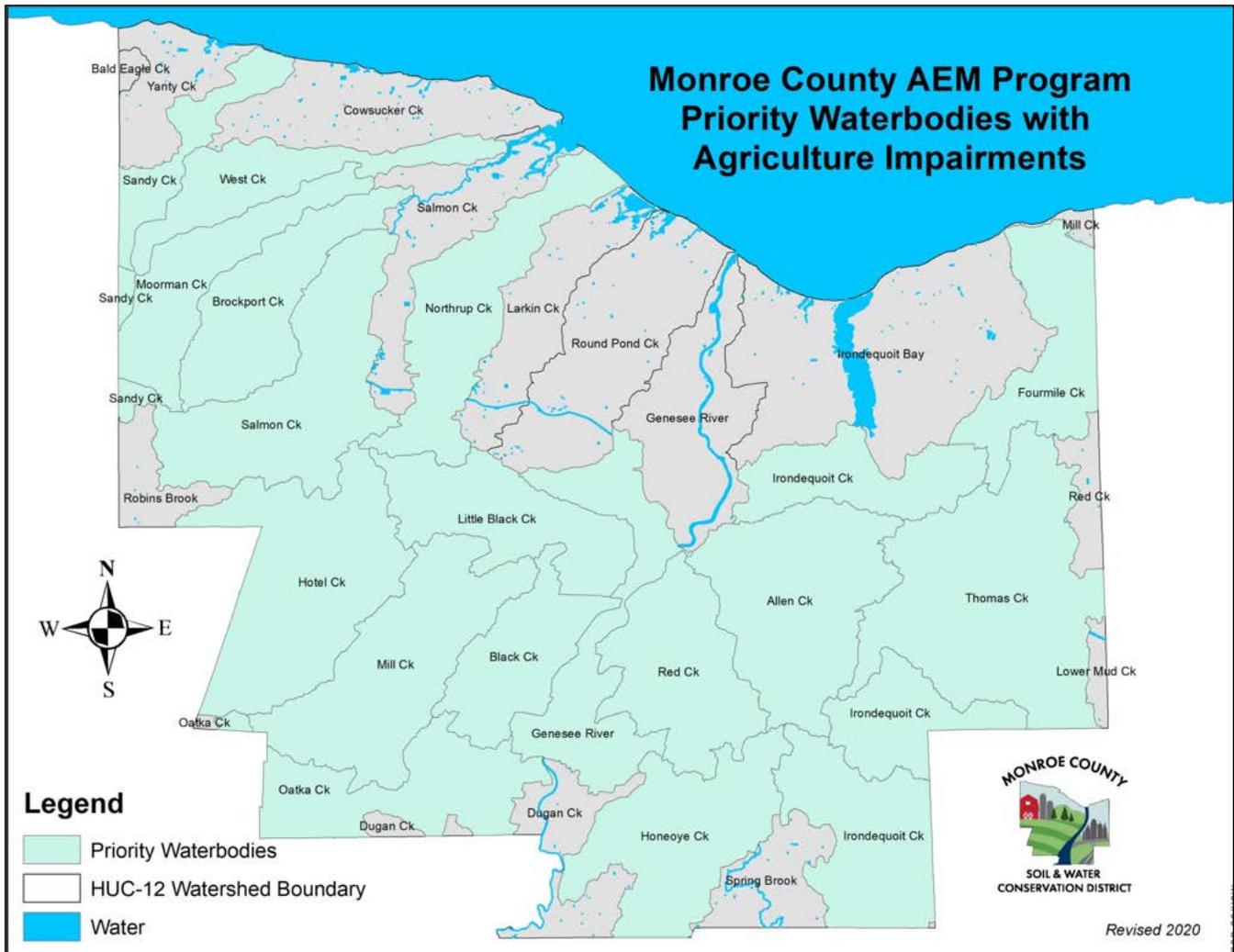


Figure 4. Watersheds with “Known” or “Suspected” agricultural impacts to water quality

D. Other Watershed Plans

The following watershed plans were used to further the AEM strategy goals & objectives:

- Genesee River Basin Nine Key Element Watershed Plan for Phosphorus and Sediment
- Oatka Creek & Black Creek Management Plans
- Irondequoit Bay Harbor Management Plan

Genesee River Basin Nine Key Element Watershed Plan for Phosphorus and Sediment

With the Genesee River the second largest tributary responsible for phosphorus loading into Lake Ontario, all the major sub-basin required management plans. The first element is to identify causes of impairments and pollutant sources, many of which are listed in the NYS Section 303 (d) List. The second element is to estimate load reductions based on the management plan(s). The third element is to identify your specific nonpoint source management measures, which also help with preventing the creation of new sources. The fourth element is to determine, and obtain if necessary, your technical and financial assistance. Agricultural land BMP’s are almost entirely voluntary.

The fifth element is information and education, with several stakeholder groups engaging and planning as part of the management plan. The sixth element is determining the implementation schedule. Initial focus of management falls to the highest priority sub-basins. The recommended timeframe for implementation is 10 years for high priority, 15 years for medium priority, and 25 years for low priority watersheds. The seventh element is the “milestones” of assessing your watershed plan at the HUC12 level. It is recommended that high priority watersheds are assessed five years from the plan date, medium priority watersheds assessed 13 years after plan date, and low priority watersheds assessed 20 years after plan date. The goal would be to have at least 60% of practices on the ground at that point in time. These assessments are based off miles or acres of management measures installed. The eighth element is knowing your assessment criteria. In the case of this plan, it was the soluble reactive phosphorus loaded into Lake Ontario. The ninth and final element is regular monitoring of the major basin of the watershed, in this case the Genesee River³.

Oatka Creek & Black Creek Management Plans

The Oatka Creek Management Plan and Black Creek Management Plans (WMPs) were developed through grant funding to ensure the protection and restoration of water quality within these watersheds. Oatka Creek and Black Creek are the second and third largest drainage areas in the Genesee River Basin, and collectively overlap over 40 municipalities. These WMPs developed from the cooperation between Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC), Black Creek Watershed Coalition (BCWC), Genesee, Monroe, & Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, Monroe County Planning and Water Development, Genesee Community College, and New York State Department of State in 2009. The WMPs were completed in 2014 and each consists of 5 documents: Executive summary; Watershed Characterization; Regulatory & Programmatic Review; Subwatershed Report; and the Identification and Description of Management Practices, Approaches and Strategies for Watershed Protection, Restoration, and Plan Implementation, which included the list of recommendations and actions that can be implemented, individually or collaboratively, by municipalities; county and state agencies; and other organizations⁴.

Taking the Oatka Creek WMP as an example, in the Description of Management Practices, Approaches and Strategies document there are 72 individual actions that can be implemented to protect and restore water quality. The actions are divided among 12 Areas of Concern (e.g. Wastewater Treatment Plants and Agriculture). Under Agriculture, a high priority action is to “Encourage all farms throughout the watershed to participate in AEM and to implement BMPs” and the progress in achieving this goal would be based on the % of farms in AEM tiers 3-5. AEM is a program used actively by all SWCDs in the watershed. Many other actions in the WMP are currently being implemented by programs undertaken by County & State agencies.

³ Genesee River Nine Element Watershed Management Plan can be viewed and downloaded at:
<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/103264.html>

⁴ Oatka & Black Creek Watershed Management Plans can be viewed and downloaded at:
<http://www.gflrpc.org/publications.html>

In terms of organizations, among the activities (education outreach, riparian tree planting, storm water grate marking) that OCWC is undertaking to implement the WMP, included is the collaboration with NYSDEC to produce Guidebooks (for both watersheds) that provide a summary of the WMPs, including recommendations, for each watershed municipality & county. For Oatka Creek, OCWC volunteers are making presentations at municipal Board meetings to introduce the WMP, handout Guidebooks, discuss local water resources concerns and identify local potential projects to implement the WMP. A similar effort is underway to convene representatives from Counties in the Oatka Creek Watershed to finalize a County Inter-municipal agreement to support and promote the WMP's implementation. The ultimate goal would have Municipalities and Counties within the watershed form an Inter-Municipal organization that would further the Plan's goals of preserving, restoring, and enhancing the health of Oatka Creek by leading the efforts to implement the WMP.

Irondequoit Bay Harbor Management Plan

As one of the largest coastal bays of Lake Ontario, Irondequoit Bay has 1,680 acres available for public use. The plan was prepared as part of New York State's Coastal Resources and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, and authorized by the Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act. With the approval of this plan, local and federal agencies would follow the guidelines set forth.

The plan outlines many goals dealing with resource protection, water surface use conflicts, public access, and economic development. For resource protection, the plan states the following goals: better protect and enhance sensitive natural areas and resources of Irondequoit Bay, improve and protect water quality for desired uses emphasizing a healthy aquatic system, and ensure that any development around Irondequoit Bay occurs without impacting significant environmental, historical, and aesthetic resources. To minimize water use conflicts while still preserving the natural environment of Irondequoit Bay, the plan states to work in conjunction with all stakeholders to provide an adequate mix of recreation and natural uses. Additional goals of the plan are to increase public access to recreation at the Bay and make the Bay integral to regional and local economic development. This plan has not been updated since 2003⁵.

E. Farmer Participation in AEM by Watershed in Monroe County

Table 1 incorporates all AEM data that has been collected by each watershed through December 2020 and identifies any waterbodies in a watershed that is "Stressed", "Impaired" or "Threatened" with agriculture listed as a "Suspected" or "Known" source. Table 1 also serves as an indicator of AEM participation in each watershed since the program's inception in 1998.

⁵ Irondequoit Bay Harbor Management Plan can be viewed and downloaded at:
<https://www.monroecounty.gov/planning-planning>

Table 1 - Summary of Monroe County Agricultural WI/PWL and AEM Data collected through December 2020

Monroe County Watersheds Including Huc-12 watersheds	WI/PWL Water Quality Impacts	WI/PWL Agricultural Source	AEM Priority Waterbody Region	Agricultural Land (acres)	AEM Interest*	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3A	Tier 4	Tier 5A	Tier 5B
Black Creek	Impaired	Known	1	23,276	High	79	20	9	6	19	5
Robins Brook											
Hotel Creek											
Mill Creek Black Creek											
Buck Pond	Impaired	Suspected	2	556	Low	7	1	0	0	1	0
Larkin Creek											
Buttonwood Creek	Stressed	Suspected	2	1,680	Medium	12	1	0	0	4	0
Durand	Non-Ag	Non-Ag	3	0	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finger Lakes	Unassessed	UnKnown	3	1,793	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red Creek Lower Mud Creek											
Four Mile Creek	Impaired	Unconfirmed	3	2,695	Medium	20	4	4	0	0	0
Genesee River	Stressed	Known	1	10,170	Medium	19	6	4	1	4	2
Dugan Creek Genesee River											
Hamlin-Parma Beach(Lake Ont West)	Unassessed	Unknown	2	6,539	High	31	13	9	2	8	3
Cowsucker Creek											
Honeoye Creek	Stressed	Suspected	1	8,217	High	29	8	5	1	1	2
Spring Brook Honeoye Creek											
Irondequoit Creek	Stressed	Suspected	3	9,535	High	48	22	12	3	3	5
Allen Creek											
Thomas Creek											
Irondequoit Creek Irondequoit Bay											
Little Black Creek	Impaired	Suspected	1	1,721	Medium	14	4	3	1	5	2
Little Pond	Non-Ag	Non-Ag	2	58	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Slater Creek											
Long Pond	Threatened	Known	2	3,277	Medium	22	4	1	1	3	3
Northrup Creek											
Mill Creek	Impaired	Suspected	1	269	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oatka Creek	Stressed	Known	1	8,979	High	29	9	3	4	6	3
Red Creek	Stressed	Unconfirmed	1	1,748	Low	10	2	2	0	0	0
Round Pond	Stressed	Non-Ag	2	319	Low	7	2	0	0	2	0
Round Pond Creek											
Salmon Creek	Stressed	Known	2	13,729	High	113	19	10	6	19	7
West Creek											
Moorman Creek											
Brockport Creek Salmon Creek											
Sandy Creek	Stressed	Suspected	2	4,218	Medium	9	4	0	0	3	0
East Brach Sandy Creek Sandy Creek											
Shipbuilders Creek	Impaired	Non-Ag	3	104	Low	1	1	0	0	0	0
Webster(Roch Embayment E)	Stressed	Possible	3	149	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yanty Creek	Unassessed	UnKnown	2	4,457	Low	14	4	4	1	2	2
Yanty Creek Bald Eagle Creek											

*As perceived through MCSWCD AEM farmer participation/interest, outreach and planning efforts

Table 1. AEM data collected by watershed

F. Priority Watershed Region Ranking

Watershed regions were selected based on the position of the watersheds around the county. Each region was then ranked according to total agricultural land, known water quality impacts from agriculture, and current farmer participation in AEM. *Figure 5* indicates priority watershed regions and 12 digit HUC codes.

PWR 1. Lower Genesee River

- a. Genesee River- Direct Drainage
- b. Black Creek
- c. Little Black Creek
- d. Oatka Creek
- e. Honeoye Creek

PWR 2. Lake Ontario Shoreline - Rochester West (West of Genesee River Outlet)

- a. Salmon Creek
- b. Yanty Creek
- c. Sandy Creek
- d. Buttonwood Creek
- e. Long Pond
- f. Hamlin—Parma Beach
- g. Little Pond
- h. Round Pond

PWR 3. Lake Ontario Shoreline Area- Rochester East (East of Genesee River Outlet)

- a. Irondequoit Creek
- b. Four mile Creek
- c. Thomas Creek

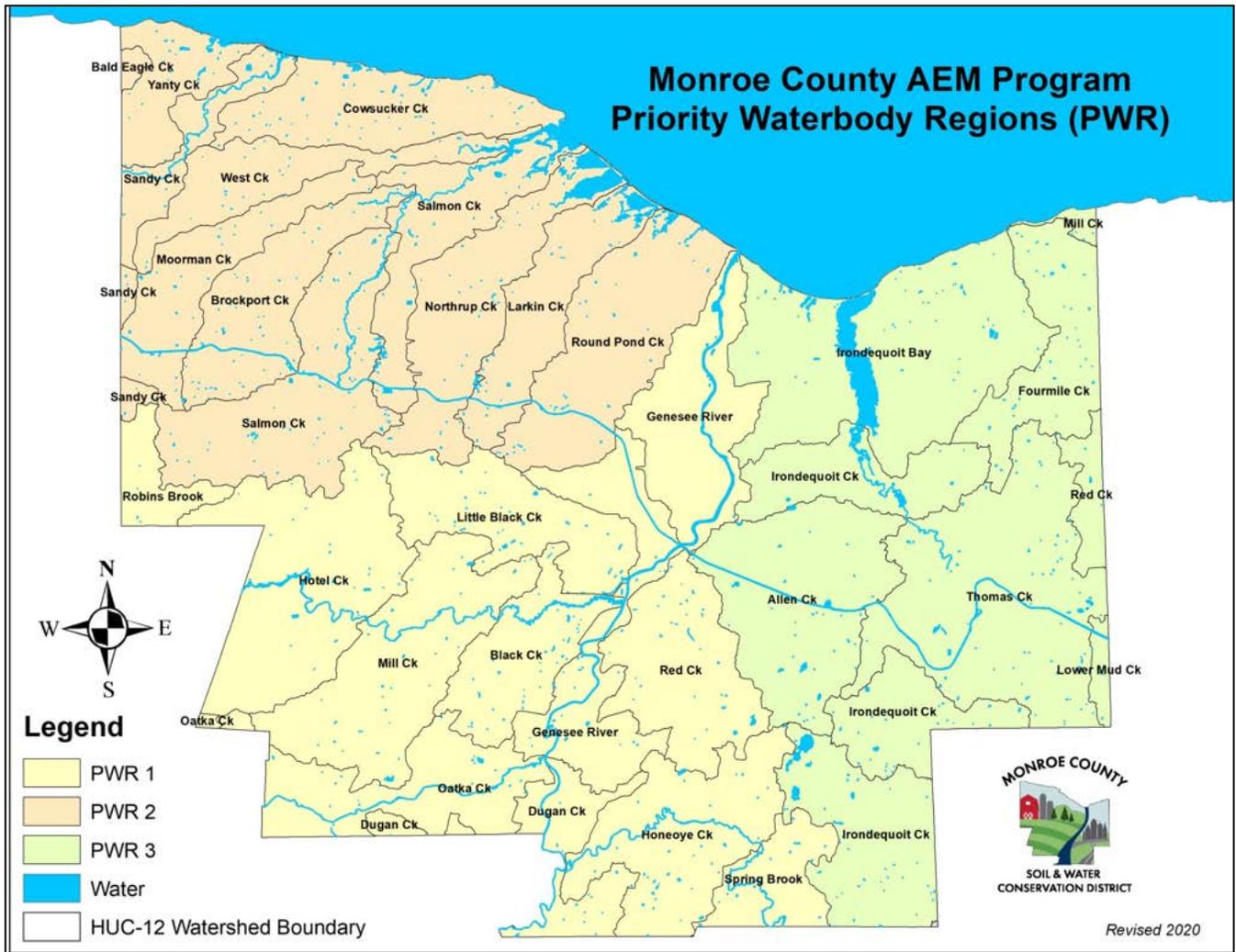
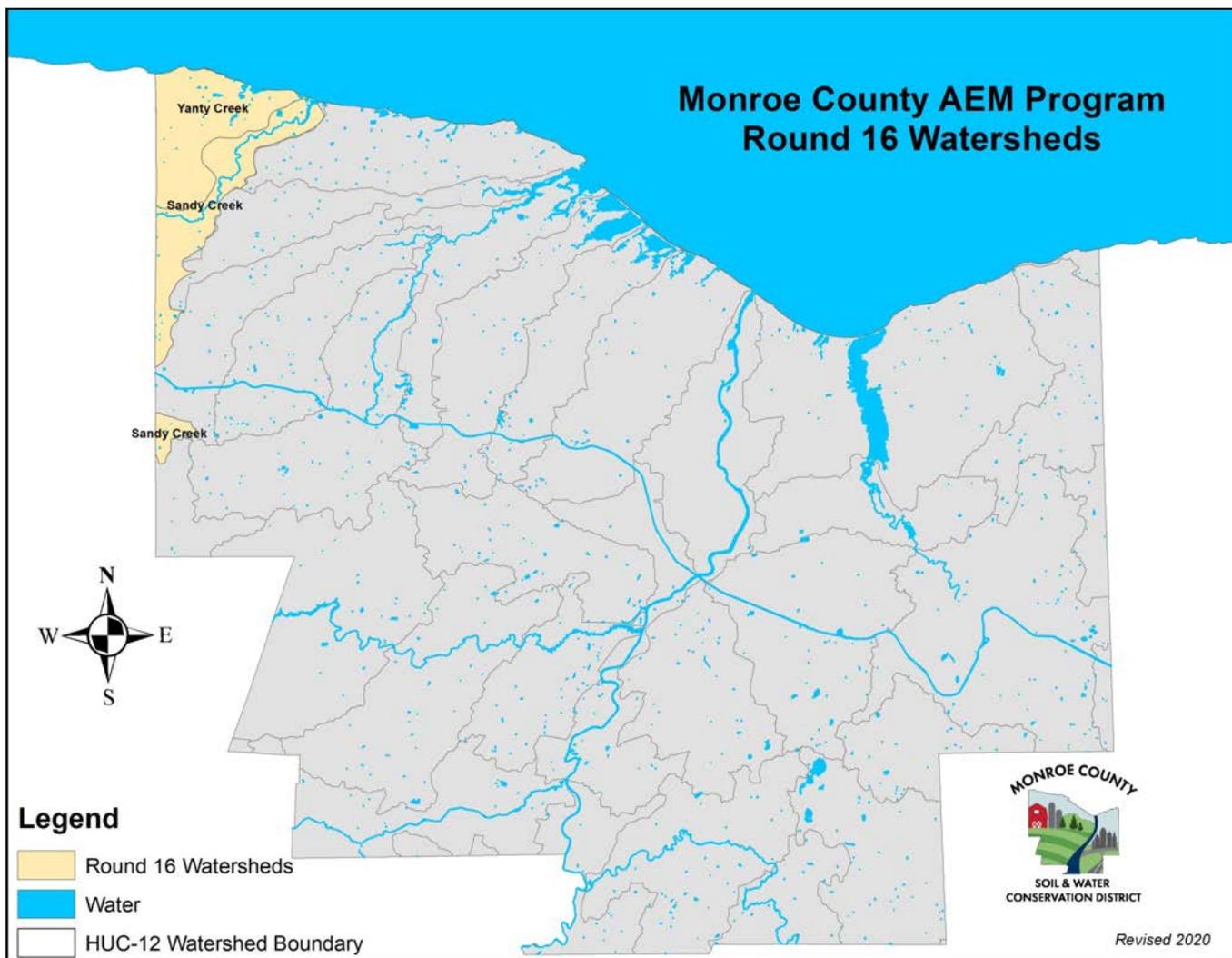


Figure 5. AEM Priority Watershed Regions

Section III: AEM Round 16: Year 2 - 2021
Priority Watershed Region – 2

1. **Sandy Creek Watershed** - The fishery resource of the creek provides substantial recreational opportunities and it experiences heavy fishing pressure. The Monroe County Water Watch program has adopted a portion of Sandy Creek. Monitoring by the group finds good to excellent water quality. Sedimentation in the harbor near the mouth of the creek limits boating by larger vessels. Agriculture is the dominant land use in the watershed. Sampling has shown water quality to be slightly impacted, primarily by nonpoint source nutrient enrichment. Although aquatic life is supported, the level of eutrophication is sufficient enough to stress or threaten aquatic life (DEC/DOW, BWAM/SBU, June 2005).
2. **Yanty Creek Watershed** - The Monroe County portion of Yanty Creek is un-assessed for water quality impacts, but land use in the watershed is estimated to be over 75% agricultural.

The focus of Round 16 will be to move more farms to tier 4 level in these focus watersheds. We have previously focused on AEM outreach and Tier 1-3s in these watersheds and will continue to do so in the smaller watersheds for the second half of Round 16. While continuing to move farms into the tier 4 level and 5B level to monitor existing BMP's and their function.



Section IV: AEM Round 17

A. Round 17: Year 1 - 2022

Priority Watershed Region – 1

1. **Black Creek Watershed** - Was first identified in NYSDEC 2004 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development due to Phosphorus loading from agriculture and municipal sources. It is now currently listed on the NYS 2016 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters. Also, nutrients and silt/sediment loads from agriculture are known to have impaired aquatic life and stressed recreation and aesthetics (2016 Genesee River Basin NYSDEC PWL). A biological assessment found the water quality to moderately impacted, resulting in the reduction of sensitive taxa, and the taxonomic group distribution significantly different than naturally expected (DEC/DOW, BWAM/SBU, January 2015).

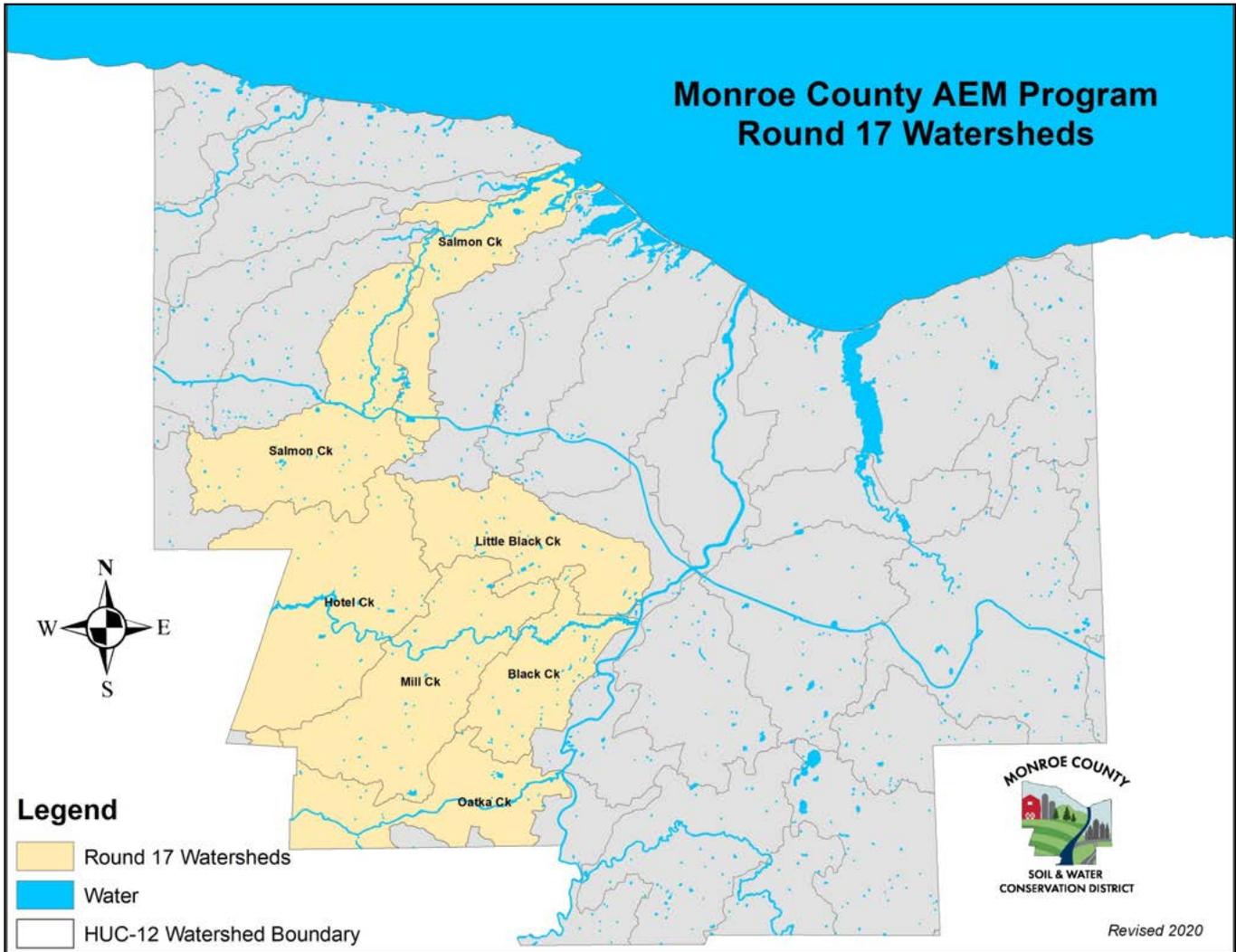
2. Oatka Creek Watershed - Nutrients, silt/sediment and algal/weed growth are known pollutants with agriculture and municipal wastewater as known sources (2016 Genesee River Basin NYSDEC PWL). Land spreading of manure is indicated as the cause of agricultural nutrient loading. NYSDEC developed a nine key element watershed plan for phosphorus and sediment loading in September 2015. The Lower portion of Oatka Creek (0402-0027) that flows through Monroe County was evaluated by NYSDEC in a September 2016 update to the WI/PWL for the Genesee River Basin. In this portion of Oatka Creek, aquatic life use was evaluated as supported, but stressed, based on biological sampling that showed slight impacts. This portion of Oatka Creek has attained all standards and does not convey any impairments justifying addition to the NYS 2016 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters. However the middle main segment, immediately upstream of the lower portion that flows through Monroe County, was assessed as having aquatic life use being moderately impacted based on biological sampling. Sampling results reflected moderately impacted water quality where aquatic life was considered to be impaired throughout the sampling sites. NYS DEC has indicated that this portion of Oatka Creek be considered for inclusion on the next update to the WI/PWL. This is the first segment on Oatka Creek that has been assessed as impaired, and the water quality here could negatively affect the lower portion of Oatka Creek that flows through Monroe County.

B. Round 17: Year 2 - 2023

Priority Watershed Region – 2

- 1. Salmon Creek Watershed** - Priority Organics and Silt Sediment are known Pollutants, with Agriculture as a known source (2001 Genesee River Basin NYSDEC PWL). Land use in the watershed is estimated to be 80% agricultural. There are over 20,000 acres of active agricultural land in the watershed. There is high interest in AEM from farmers in this watershed, with several farms moving into the Tier 3, Tier 4, and Tier 5B Level for Conservation Practices.
- 2. Little Black Creek Watershed** – Included in the NYS 2016 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired Water Requiring a Total Maximum daily Load (TMDL), after first being listed on the 2004 List (DEC/DOW, BWAM/WQAS, January 2016). Agricultural activity, including manure spreading from dairy and replacement operations, are suspected of contributing to aquatic life impairment, especially in the Western half (2001 Genesee River Basin NYSDEC PWL).

The focus of Round 17: years 1 & 2; will be to work in the more agricultural heavy watersheds to continue awareness as many new farms participated and completed Tier 1's and some Tier 2's, and then moved onto the Tier 3 and Tier 4 Level. The focus for this year will be to get the farms that have participated in the past to continue moving forward with the progressive planning to Tier 4 projects, as well as to conduct 5B plan updates and BMP evaluations in each of these watersheds.



Section V: AEM Round 18

A. Round 18: Year 1 - 2024

Priority Watershed Region – 1 & 3

1. **Honeoye Creek Watershed** - 80% agricultural land use in watershed has the potential to pose a threat to water quality due to onsite sewage systems. Honeoye Creek is a fishing area for county residents. This watershed is also a local priority due to an increased interest from farmers in the watershed for participation in AEM over the last five years. A segment of Honeoye Creek has phosphorus listed as a known pollutant with perhaps agriculture being a source of the impairment. Honeoye Creek has attained all standards and does not convey any impairments justifying addition to the NYS 2016 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired/TMDL Waters.
2. **Irondequoit Creek Watershed** - The PWL lists Irondequoit Creek as having nutrients as “Known” pollutants and agriculture as being a “Suspected” source, especially in the upper parts of the watershed (2007 Lake Ontario Basin NYSDEC PWL). Irondequoit Creek drains to Irondequoit Bay and Irondequoit Bay is listed for having pesticides, PCB’s and nutrients as a “Known” pollutant and silt/sediment as being “Suspected” and agriculture as being a “Suspected” source (2007 Lake Ontario Basin NYSDEC PWL). Irondequoit Creek watershed has been a focus of AEM due to an interest among the farmers in this watershed and it will continue to be included as a priority.

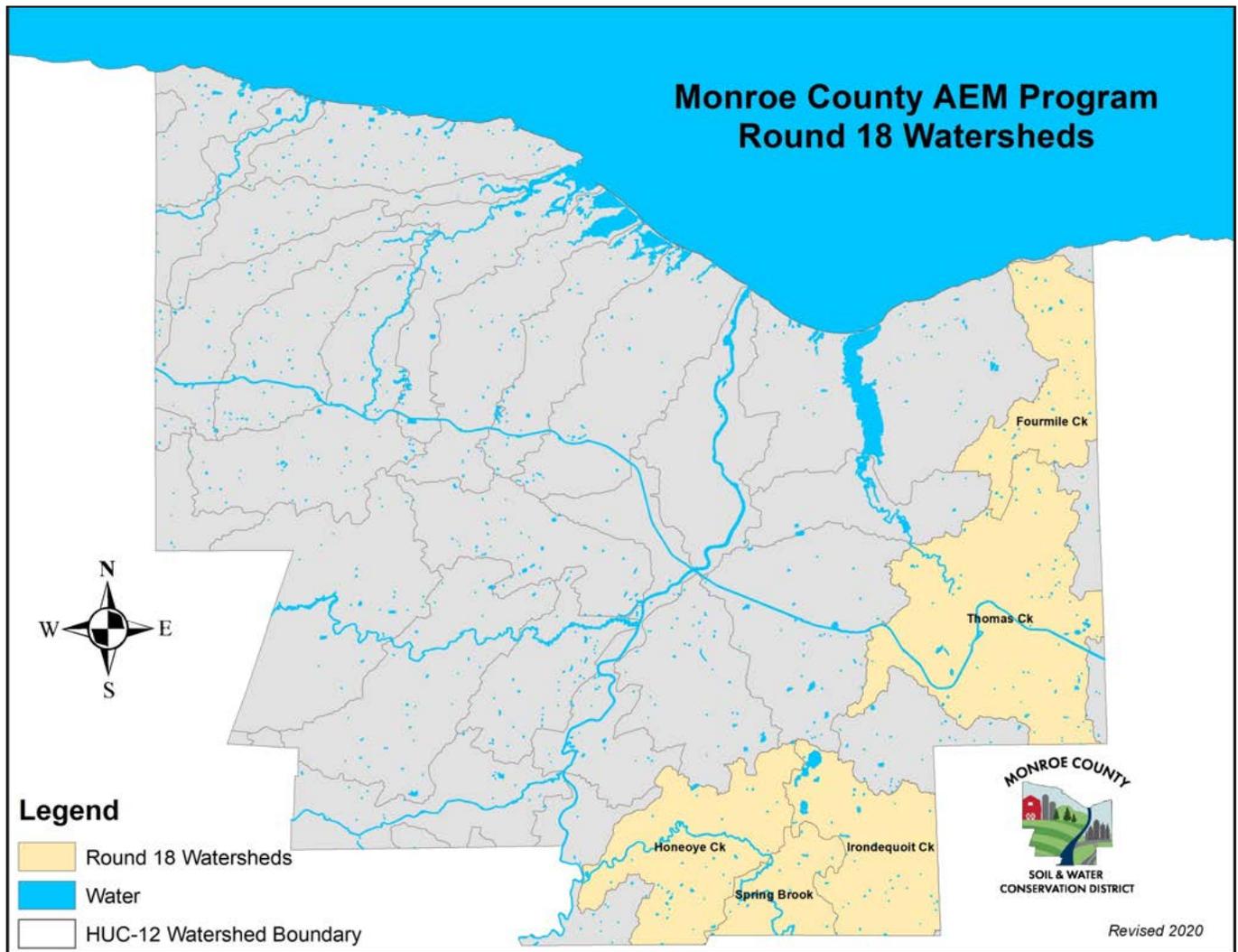
Round 18: year 1; will focus on some more of the major streams, and its impact on Irondequoit Bay. These watersheds will likely be targeted for outreach as well as more BMP implementation to help curb sediment loading in the upper parts of these watersheds, as well as to get updated information for landowners who currently participate.

B. Round 18: Year 2 - 2025
Priority Watershed Region – 3

2. **Four Mile Creek Watershed** - Four Mile Creek was listed in the 1996 Genesee River Basin NYSDEC PWL for fish propagation and fish survival as “Threatened”, and agriculture was listed as a source that may be contributing nutrients and sediments. This watershed is included in Part 3b on the NYS 2018 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL, meaning it is pending listing as impaired once verification of source pollutant is identified. Also, the creek supports a seasonal salmonid run. There has been an expressed interest from farmers in this watershed to get involved in the AEM process and apply for agricultural non-point source grants to obtain funds to implement high priority BMPs.

3. **Thomas Creek Watershed** – Silt and sediments in the watershed are of known importance with aquatic life being impaired. Agricultural activities in the upper portion of the watershed are thought to contribute to nutrient and silt/sediment loadings. More producers are becoming interested and aware of the AEM process and there is great potential for implementation of BMP’s in this watershed. This watershed is included in Part 3b on the NYS 2018 Section 303 (d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL, meaning it is pending listing as impaired once verification of source pollutant is identified.

The focus of AEM Round 18: year 2; will be to work in the more urbanized watersheds with the smaller live stock farms to try and increase awareness and outreach with the AEM program.



Section VI: AEM Outreach

The MCSWCD will work to set up education and outreach presentations in the community as needed and/or requested. A list of some of the groups that the MCSWCD will conduct presentations and educational outreach to include, but are not limited to: the Monroe County Legislature, the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Environmental Management Council, the Black Creek Watershed Coalition, the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Irondequoit Bay Technical Steering Committee, Conservation Boards of agricultural communities, the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County and the Monroe County Farm Bureau. As new groups, agencies or other interested parties are identified, additional presentations will be scheduled. The local AEM Advisory Committee will partner with MCSWCD efforts to promote the AEM program and educate farmers and the community on the benefits of farmer participation through multi-media including:

Agency newsletters: MCSWCD, CCE, Monroe County Farm Bureau

Watershed Committee newsletters & meetings: Black Creek Watershed Coalition, Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County, Irondequoit Bay Technical Steering Committee

Local newspapers: Greece Post, Gates-Chili Post, Henrietta Post, Webster Post, Suburban News

Websites: MCSWCD, Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County, Black Creek Watershed Coalition, Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, and municipal run websites

Section VII: Overview of Monroe County AEM Strategic Plan Objectives

The MCSWCD will use the AEM Strategic Plan to identify and address agricultural sources of impacts to water quality concerns in these identified high-priority watersheds. The MCSWCD will continue progressive planning and implementation and will continue to encourage more farms to proceed beyond the Tier 1 and 2 levels and move to the Tier 3 planning phase and Tier 4 implementation phase.

General Tasks associated with each year for focus watersheds:

1. Notify local stakeholders and municipal officials about AEM program so that the word gets out to farmers about program.
2. Update mailing lists and collect all AEM data from previous years for focus watershed year.
3. Contact all landowner/farmers in focus watersheds in Monroe County via letters and emails, and follow up phone calls to generate interest in participating in the AEM program.
4. Follow-up with past participants of AEM in focus watershed to update information and encourage farms to move forward in Tiered process.
5. Schedule outreach and education presentations and look for new opportunities to collaborate and form new partnerships.
6. Conduct meetings with farmers as requested to complete tiered worksheets, including Tier 3 conservation plans.
7. Prepare Tier 3's for farmers interested in pursuing funding through agricultural related grant funding to implement high priority practices on farms in priority watersheds.
8. MCSWCD Staff will attend AEM and any relevant trainings or updates as scheduled.

Annual Program Evaluation

MCSWCD will evaluate effectiveness of program at the end of each year by soliciting feedback from interested parties and AEM advisory group, conduct assessment of program through use of New York State's AEM report card, and incorporating new ideas, programs, outreach and educational efforts that complement the AEM program.