



Niagara Nature News
 An Environmental Publication by Niagara County
 Soil & Water Conservation District
 SUMMER 2010 - ENEWS

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**EIGHTEENMILE CREEK SEDIMENT SAMPLING
 CONTINUES - DEEP WATER CORES COLLECTED**

In a move that highlights the success of inter-agency partnerships, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District (NCSWCD) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) have joined together in partnership to address contaminated sediments in Eighteenmile Creek.

In late 2009, 102 sediment samples were collected from the creek in the area between the Erie Canal in Lockport, NY and Ide Road in Newfane, NY. In May 2010, field teams mobilized once again to collect addition deep water sediment cores from the areas behind Burt Dam and Newfane Dam, both located in the Town of Newfane, NY. It is also anticipated that once the deep water sediment cores have been collected, additional samples will be taken from the area that was investigated in late 2009.

Scientists have taken the samples to determine the extent of contamination in the Creek. Samples will be analyzed for PCBs, mercury, heavy metals, dioxins, and pesticides. The results will be used by stakeholders to assess the best ways to clean up the contaminated sediments and eventually submit a sediment cleanup proposal to USEPA in the near future.

The Great Lakes Legacy Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in 2002. Beginning in 2004, the Act authorized \$270 million over five years to help with remediation of contaminated sediments in designated AOCs within the Great Lakes Basin. Any comments, questions, or concerns related to this work scheduled should be forwarded to Victor DiGiacomo @ (716) 434-4949, or 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, NY 14094. Additional information about Eighteenmile Creek can also be found at, www.eighteenmilerap.com.

The Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District is a local government subdivision under New York State law. The District was established as a public benefit by the County of Niagara in 1954. Your support of our programs aid in the District's conservation efforts to protect natural resources and water quality for our residents. In these wavering economic times, we thank you for your continued assistance in fulfilling our goals.

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LOCAL STUDENTS TO COMPETE IN NYS ENVIROTHON



Niagara County Envirothon Winners

L-R: Charles Ninischer, Adam Robins, Danielle Cable, Justin Warriner, and Lou Paonessa (NY Power Authority)

Four students from Niagara Career and Technology Center will join hundreds of high school students this June at Keuka College to participate in the 2010 New York State Envirothon. Team members Danielle Cable, Justin Warriner, Charles Ninischer and Adam Robins recently won the Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon competition held at Bond Lake Nature Complex. They will travel with their advisor, Paul Dewey, to compete at the state level for scholarships and the opportunity to represent New York at the international Canon Envirothon this summer at California State University. Other participating schools

from Niagara County were Niagara Falls Alternative, Royalton-Hartland and North Tonawanda. Sponsored by New York Power Authority for over twenty years, Community Relations Manager Louis Paonessa presented the winning plaque. Local supporters that contributed to this year's event include Albion Sports and Graphics, Lockport Dunkin' Donuts, Upstate Milk Cooperative Inc, Newroyal Orchards, Orleans VFW, Walmart, Barker Chocolate Box, Murphy Orchards, Singer Farms, and Hens Honey Bee Farm. The Envirothon is a series of hands-on contests in which teams of 4-5 students compete to solve environ-

mental problems in 5 subject areas including aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current issue. Each team also gives an oral presentation based on the current issue of, "Protection of Groundwater Through Urban, Agricultural and Environmental Planning". The SWCDs of Niagara and Orleans County jointly coordinate the Regional Envirothon to incorporate environmental studies into the school curriculum and expose students to career options in conservation. Held throughout the U.S. and Canada, the program reaches more than 500,000 students every year. To learn more about the Envirothon visit www.nysenvirothon.net or call #434-4949.

FYI...

The District is now selling reusable shopping totes. They are a generous size: 13"h x 12"w x 8"d and are made from 100% recycled material...and washable! Only \$1.85 plus tax.



LOCAL GIRL WINS ENVIROTHON RAFFLE

Eight year old Hayley Berner was the big winner of two handmade Adirondack chairs. It came as a complete surprise since she didn't even know she had entered a contest. Her grandfather, Gasport resident Brian Berner, has a generous habit of entering raffles to benefit various charities, and to keep it fun, he does so in each of his grandchildren's names. So when the two Adirondack chairs being offered for an educational event caught his eye, he just could not resist signing their names on the little blue tickets.

environmental competition for high school students. This year, the Districts held a raffle featuring two Adirondack chairs as first prize that were handmade and donated by the conservation class at Orleans-Niagara BOCES Niagara Career and Technology Center. The quality of the chairs is really remarkable, especially when conservation teacher, Paul Dewey, gets more specific. "The students actually cut down the trees, milled the lumber, and constructed the chairs. They processed native wood from tree to chair," Dewey said. "The students also tap trees each spring and learn the entire process for maple syrup production, too."

Niagara Career and Tech Center also donated some of their maple syrup and made wren houses, which three other ticket holders were lucky enough to win. Brian Thorn from Rushford, Allan Pichey from Lockport, and David Arnold from Holley received reusable totes filled with local products donated from the school, *Murphy Orchards*, *The Barker Chocolate Box*, *Singer Farms*, and *Hens Honey Bee Farm*. Hayley Berner was excited that the winning ticket was in her name. "I'm giving one chair to my mom since she had to work on Mother's Day." Sounds like her grandfather's spirit of sharing is a family trait!



Envirothon Raffle Winners

L-R: Winner Hayley Berner, Brian Berner, and Rebecca Berner

Each May, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Niagara and Orleans jointly host the Regional Envirothon, an

2010 POND STOCKING AND GRASS CARP PROGRAMS

Pond Stocking

Order Deadline: August 5, 2010

Pickup Date: August 19, 2010 10:00am SHARP

General Information: All fingerlings will be 1-2" in size. Stocking rates usually are 50-100 bass and 500-600 minnows per surface acre. If your pond is relatively new, be sure there is vegetation for reproductive habitat and aquatic life for a food chain. Recommended time to establish a pond before stocking is one year. You **MUST** obtain a stocking permit from the DEC prior to pickup. Applications are available in our office.

Pickup Information: Pickup will be at the SWCD office located at the northeast end of the Coop. Extension Administrative Building on the County Fairgrounds, Route 78, Lockport. Your order will be pre-counted and in an aerated bag for your convenience. You will just need to bring a box or cooler in which to stabilize the bag for transport. Transferring the fish to your pond immediately is of utmost importance due to oxygen needs. The hatchery personnel will be available for only 1/2 hour for delivery so **PLEASE BE PROMPT!**

Triploid Grass Carp for Aquatic Weed Control

Order Deadline: September 1, 2010

Pickup Date: Tentatively scheduled for the third/fourth week of September

General Information: The average size of the carp will be between 10-12". You **MUST** obtain a stocking permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There is no charge for the permit. If you require a permit application, our office retains a supply of them. Stock grass carp only in ponds which have been properly protected so they are unable to escape through inlets and outlets into other NYS waters.

Pickup Information: Tentative pickup will be the end of September at the County Fairgrounds, Rte. 78, Lockport. We will contact you by phone when a definite date has been scheduled. At the time of pickup, you will need to bring a container WITH A LID (an 18-gal plastic tote holds 4 carp) filled 1/2 full with pond water. These fish are highly perishable and must be transported as quickly as possible. For more information on Triploid Grass Carp and how they can benefit pond weed control, call #434-4949.

Payment Information: Submit payment by check or money order with the bottom portions of this form, payable to Niagara County SWCD. Keep the top portions as your delivery date reminders.

2010 Pond Stocking Program			
Type of Fish	Cost	# of Fish	\$ Amount
Largemouth Bass 1"- 2"	25/\$40.00		
Perch 1" - 3"	25/\$35.00		
Fathead Minnows 1"-1 1/2"	100/\$20.00		
Koi (2 - 4" asst. colors)	4/\$30.00		
Daphnia (to start food chain)	1qt/\$28.00		
		Subtotal	
		x .08 Tax	
		+ Delivery	\$5.00
		Total Due	

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Daytime Phone: _____

**Mail to: Niagara County SWCD
 4487 Lake Ave.
 Lockport, New York 14094**

2010 Triploid Grass Carp Program	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	
Daytime Phone: _____	
Number of Carp _____	
x \$21.00 _____	
+ Delivery	\$3.00
Total Due _____	

Mail payment WITH ALL 3 ORIGINAL
 COPIES of your DEC Permit to:

**Niagara County SWCD
 4487 Lake Avenue
 Lockport, NY 14094**

FISH FACTS

The following are brief descriptions of the fish we offer for our Pond Stocking and Triploid Grass Carp programs. Order forms are included in this newsletter on page # 3.

Largemouth Bass – Found throughout NYS, they are considered one of the state's most important sport fish. These members of the Sunfish Family (Centrarchidae) prefer weedy, rocky areas to provide both protection and food supply. Usually weighing 3-5 lbs, they can get over 10 lbs and 2 feet in length. They are carnivorous; which means they'll eat small fish, crayfish, frogs, snakes, and some small mammals and birds if given the opportunity.

Yellow Perch – Common throughout NYS, the Perch Family (Peridae) boasts three popular sport fish; walleye, sauger, and the yellow perch. These colorful little darters prefer weedy, warm water temperatures. Average size is 6-10 inches, weighing ½ to 1 lb. This popular panfish feeds on zooplankton. Not a fierce fighter when hooked, the yellow perch are a favorite catch of the impatient younger anglers.

Minnows – A general name for a family of fishes that is by far the largest such family in NYS. Some 48 species of minnows are found – five of which are introduced species, among them the goldfish (Koi). Various kinds of minnows live in almost all freshwater habitats, widely distributed between both cold and warm water locations. Although the exotic **Koi** are large and may live 7-10 years, most native minnows seldom exceed 4" and live only 3 years. Aquatic insects, plants and animal plankton are the main foods of this fish. The fathead minnow is a hardy bait fish. It is widely raised for this purpose, providing an important link in the food chain for larger game fish and fish-eating birds.

Daphnia – Small freshwater crustaceans used to start a food chain in new ponds. These microscopic aquatic arthropods, nicknamed "waterfleas", also help control pond water quality by feeding on particulate algae.

Triploid Grass Carp – The grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) is one of the largest members of the minnow family, commonly reaching weights in excess of 25 lbs. They can live up to 10 years. Native to Asia, this carp lacks the barbells and spiny dorsal and anal fin rays characteristic of its North American relatives, bearing a closer resemblance to a large creek chub. It is called "triploid" since it has been bred to retain an extra chromosome, rendering it sterile. Grass carp feed strictly by grazing on aquatic vegetation and are effectively used as aquatic plant control agents in over 50 countries.

TREE PROGRAM THANKS!



The District would like to thank the entire community for their never-ending support of this program. Together we are planting over 53,000 seedlings in and around the county! Thanks so much for assisting in the reforestation and wildlife habitat enhancement of our area.

A big thank you to all our volunteers for taking time to assist us –too many of you to list in this small space, but who know who you are! A special thanks to Budwey of Newfane, TOPS Wrights Corners, and TOPS Lockport for all the packaging supplies – please remember to support our local community-minded businesses!

E-NEWSLETTER REMINDER

Just a friendly reminder that Niagara County SWCD is transitioning to an electronic newsletter to reduce paper waste and defray from office printing costs. If you have not done so already, please provide us with your email address by calling the office at (716) 434-4949 or email Victor DiGiacomo at victor.digiaco@ny.nacdnet.net.

Once you provide us with your email address, you will receive our new "electronic only" Spring and Fall edition newsletters in addition to Summer and Winter editions you already receive. Spring and Fall newsletters are only distributed via email, so send us your address today.

2009 ANNUAL REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Trees Sold - 52,875 to 792 customers
- Ag Value Assessments - 82 totaling 4,883.01 acres
- Ponds Stocked - 3,400 fish to 11 ponds
- Grass Carp - 108 carp to 22 ponds
- Pond Site Evaluations - 15
- Technical Assistance Request - 146
- Resource Map Requests - 35
- Environmental Field Days - 850 students
- Regional Envirothon - 11 teams
- Newsletters - 4,500 mailed twice a year
- Stream/Shore Stabilization - 3
- Tile Drainage Surveyed - 33,900 ft.
- Open Ditches Surveyed - 9,800 ft
- Grassland Management - 240 acres
- No-Till Drill Plantings - 9.7 acres
- Critical Area Seeding Sites - 2
- Grazing Mgmt Assistance - 5 farms
- Silage Leachate Systems - 3 installed
- Ag Waste Storage Facilities - 1
- Barnyard Runoff Mgmt Systems - 3
- Stream Crossing - 1

USDA/NRCS PROGRAMS

- WHIP Assistance - 1
- WRP Assistance - 5
- Wetland Restorations - 4 acres
- EQIP Completed - 1
- EQIP Practices - 7
- EQIP - New Applications - 15
- AMA - New Applications - 3

PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

Niagara County Public Works, Sheriff's Work Program, Cities of Niagara Falls, Lockport, North Tonawanda, Towns of Hartland, Somerset, Newfane, Wilson, Porter, Royalton, US EPA, US Army Corps, US Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA, NYS-DEC, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York Power Authority, Aquarium of Niagara, NC Federation of Conservation Clubs, Tuscarora Environment Program, Ecology and Environment

HIGHLIGHTS

- Installed 18 watershed identification signs and 3 watershed education signs around the county.
- Donated grant funding and engineering for Royalton Ravine Park pond.
- Donated grant funding and engineering for Oppenheim Park pond and wildlife habitat.
- Continued coordination of Eighteenmile Creek Area of Concern.



NIAGARA COUNTY SWCD TO RECEIVE FUNDING FROM GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Great Lakes National Program Office invited 270 finalists to submit applications for a total of \$161,450,000 in competitive grant funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

In response to its November 2009 request for grant proposals (RFP), EPA received more than 1,000 proposed projects from state, tribal, and municipal agencies, non-governmental organizations and other eligible entities aimed at restoring and protecting this national treasure.

GLRI grants will fund projects that address the most important Great Lakes priorities, including reducing toxic contaminants, restoring the Great Lakes Areas of Concern, protecting beaches and beachgoers, keeping out invasive species and reducing polluted land-based runoff.

Locally, Niagara County

SWCD has been invited to submit a full application to USEPA in support of a \$130,000 Lake Ontario Education & Outreach project. Niagara County SWCD proposes to engage residents, schools and communities in the implementation of the public education, outreach and community participation necessary to effectively administer the Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Plan and Lake Ontario Area of Concern (AOC) Remedial Action Plans.

Through the development of a community-based public involvement program that brings decision makers, residents, schools and communities together, the public will be provided with opportunities to provide input and a sound understanding of the complex problems facing the Lake and its four U.S. AOCs. This 2 year project is scheduled to commence in August 2010.

In addition, Finger Lakes -

Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA) has been invited to submit a full application to USEPA in support of a \$1,000,000 Lake Ontario Water Quality Improvement Project. Funds will be distributed to 7 SWCD offices to complete agricultural Best Management Practices intended to remediate high priority areas that contribute sediment, excessive nutrients and priority pollutants to the lake.

Locally, Niagara County SWCD will receive approximately \$150,000 to construct a Silage Leachate Management System and 2 Agrichemical Mixing Facilities on farms located in Niagara County.

In addition, Cornell Extensions NWNYS Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team will receive \$30,000 to conduct a cover crop outreach and education program for the producers in their 9 County region.

ESCARPMENT GRASSLAND RESTORATION

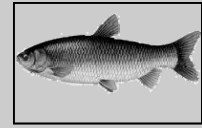
The Western New York Land Conservancy has obtained a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to protect land and to establish grasslands at sites along the Niagara Escarpment. Any land that is currently in grassland, cropland or property that does not have a significant amount of woodlands or brush will be considered

for the program. The land must be located on or near the escarpment to be eligible. Any landowner that is interested in finding out more about the program can contact Nancy Smith of the WNY Land Conservancy at nancys@wnylc.org or 716-687-1225.



Niagara County SWCD No-Till Drill being used to plant warm season grasses to establish native wildlife nesting habitat.

Species Profile



Grass Carp
(*Ctenopharyngodon idella*)

Description:

The grass carp is one of the largest members of the minnow family, commonly reaching weights in excess of 25 pounds. Native to the rivers of eastern China and the Soviet Union, it has been introduced into over 50 countries worldwide due to its uncanny ability to control a wide variety of aquatic plant species. Although grass carp are related to both common carp and goldfish, distinct differences exist both in appearance and feeding habits. Grass carp lack the barbels and spiny dorsal and anal fin rays characteristic of goldfish and common carp, bearing a closer resemblance to a large creek chub or common shiner. Coloration of the fish ranges from dark grey to golden brown on the back, blending to white on the belly. Grass carp feed strictly by grazing on aquatic vegetation and do not share the bottom feeding habits typical of common carp and goldfish.

Although fertile (diploid) grass carp have seen widespread use abroad, the majority of states in the US presently prohibit the fish. This is due to concerns over the potential impact fertile grass carp could have on sensitive aquatic habitats should uncontrolled reproducing populations of the fish become established. **In New York State, use of diploid grass carp is prohibited!**

In 1983, US grass carp producers began production of a sterile (triploid) form of grass carp, mitigating the reproductive concerns associated with the diploid fish. Triploid grass carp are created through shocking grass carp eggs immediately after fertilization with either hot or cold water. This temperature shock results in the retention of an extra chromosome set, rendering the fish incapable of producing viable young. With the exception of this extra chromosome set, triploid grass carp are identical to their diploid counterparts. Triploid grass carp are the only form of grass carp legal in New York State.

For more information about Grass Carp, please visit: www.dec.ny.gov

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