

### Give our Facebook pages a "Like":

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

Eighteenmile Creek Great Lakes Area of Concern



#### FYI...

The District has a No-Till drill available for your next conservation seeding project.

\$50 delivery charge and \$15/acre rental fee

We provide drill delivery and cleaning. Customer provides own seed.



### Interseeder Rental

Interseeder rental is still available for farmers to plant cover crops between corn rows. Planting can occur between v3 and v7 stage, and won't impact the corn being grown.

First use of the interseeder is free, subsequent uses will cost \$5 per acre.



## Eighteenmile Creek Benthos Review

When reviewing Eighteenmile Creeks Beneficial Use Impairments (BUI), benthic macroinvertebrate communities are used as a monitoring benchmark within the AOC. Benthic (which means "bottom dwelling") macroinvertebrates are small aquatic animals and aquatic larval stages of insects that typically live in the bottom of streams or other waterbodies. In perfect habitats and conditions, an area could support many different families and species of macroinvertebrates. As pollution is introduced, the diversity of those species and families decreases. This is why benthic macroinvertebrate community monitoring is used in its own BUI and included in other removal criteria.

The first part of the Degradation of Benthos BUI removal criteria uses NYSDEC indices to determine impairment status. This is useful because it takes many measurements of benthic macroinvertebrate communities and combines them into a score/rank. Each score falls into four different categories; non-impacted, slightly impacted, moderately impacted and severely impacted. When macroinvertebrate communities were assessed in 2013 and 2017 they ranked from nonimpacted to moderately impacted. The cause for moderately impacted scores may not be caused by pollution.

To address habitat or other region wide stressors additional removal criteria also look at a comparable reference site (in this case Oak Orchard Creek) and test the toxicity of sediment. A 2017 study through USGS/NYSDEC indicate macroinvertebrate communities in Eighteenmile Creek were no worse than those found in Oak Orchard Creek. However, one site at Eighteenmile ranked poorly in all analyses. Sediments below Burt Dam don't contain a lot of legacy contaminants (PCBs/heavy metals), it's suggested poor testing are caused by regional/seasonal variables such as eutrophication, sedimentation or poor habitat.

To further investigate the benthos BUI another study will be started in 2021 that will follow similar sampling described above but include more sampling sites in the

Story Continued on Page 3 under Benthos.

## District holds first 4-hour Contractor Workshop

On June 23, 2021 the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a 4-hour Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop for contractors at the Fairgrounds in Lockport. Since 2010, these workshops have been required for certain contractors that will be involved with the implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan on a construction site that has coverage under a NYSDEC State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit for stormwater discharges from construction activity.

The program was presented by Dave Reckahn, Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control and trainer for the 4-hour training. The workshop has local contractors attend to be certified or renew expiring certifications. The training is good for 3 years and has to be renewed to stay certified.

The training is available to anyone interested in learning more about erosion and sediment control practices to reduce runoff from disturbed areas. The District is planning to offer the program again November 17th.

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.

2020 SWCD Annual Report of Accomplishments

- Tree Program - 33,086 seedlings / 605 customers
- Ag Value Assessments - 102 totaling 5,159 acres
- Pond Stocking - 42,740 fingerlings to 33 ponds
- Grass Carp - 103 carp to 12 ponds
- Pond Site Evaluations - 21
- Wildlife Houses Sold - 53
- Regional Envirothon - 1 teams / 1 county
- Newsletters - mailed/mailed to 11,252 addresses
- Media Articles - 5
- Resource Map Requests - 25
- Permit Assistance - 2
- Technical Assistance - 10
- WQ/Land Use Planning - 6 municipalities
- Wildlife Habitat Improvements - 1
- No-Till Drill Plantings - 4.8 acres at 1 site
- Interseeder acres planted - 285 at 3 farms
- Stormwater Management site visits - 42
- Invasive Species - Japanese knotweed - treated 426 sites for 55 acres
- Ag Best Management Practices:**
- Drainage/Ditching - 8 sites, 2 tiles 6 ditches
- Silage Leachate Systems - 2
- Agchemical Handling & Storage System - 1
- Erosion Assistance - 2
- Roof Water Mgmt System - 1
- Waste Storage and Transfer System - 3
- Soil Health Projects - 16 cover crop plantings, 1244 acres
- AEMs completed:** Tier 1 - 13, Tier 2 - 10, Tier 3a - 10, Tier 4 - 0, Tier 5a - 9, Tier 5b - 22

2021 Tree Program

Thank you everyone for your continued support of the seedling program! Even during a pandemic, together we are planting almost 33,000 seedlings for wildlife habitat and restoration. Much appreciation goes to Cornell Cooperative Extension for the use of the Merchant Building. Also much thanks for supplies and boxes to Niagara County Produce, Wrights Corners Wine and Spirits, Supermarket Liquors (Niagara Falls) and TOPS Markets in both Newfane and Lockport. Please remember to support these local businesses!

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AOC (below Burt Dam) and archiving sediment samples at each site. If macroinvertebrate communities or toxicity testing show Oak Orchard Creek is superior to Eighteenmile Creek, sediment chemistry may be looked at to determine if legacy contaminants are the cause. Results of this study will be reported in a future Niagara Nature News.

**CONSERVATION COMPLIANCE**

**Don't Lose Your Benefits!**

Have you, will you or are you thinking about doing any of the following activities that have not been evaluated by NRCS on land you farm?

- Land clearing?
- Working new land?
- Excavation?
- Stump removal?
- Create a new drainage system?
- Constructing a building or structure?
- Improving an existing drainage system?
- Modifying an existing drainage system?
- Maintaining an existing drainage system?
- Land leveling?
- Dredging an area?
- Filling an area?
- Plant an agricultural commodity on land where an NRCS determination of Highly Erodible Land (HEL) or wetland has not been made?

If you answered yes and want to remain eligible for USDA program payments, you MUST file Form AD-1026 with FSA and answer yes to one or more of the following questions:

- 5 • 9 • 10A • 10B • 10C



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Feb. 2010



**Summer Field Crew**

This summer you may see our Conservation Assistants Alexandra Sholk, Brandon Metzinger and Michael Seider (pictured above) working hard to control Japanese knotweed at over 300 sites throughout the county. This has been an ongoing program to eradicate Japanese knotweed on public and private lands. If you see a patch feel free to contact us and we'll investigate the site.

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