



SUMMER 2025
NIAGARA COUNTY SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER
An Environmental Publication

Niagara County Soil & Water
Conservation District
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NCSWCD HELPING RESTORE ROYALTON RAVINE POND

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District is working with Smith Creek Fish Farm to clear the Royalton Ravine pond of the invasive aquatic weeds including Eurasian Watermilfoil and bladderwort that are plugging the water column and making it difficult to fish at the park. A treatment to reduce the aquatic weeds and cattails around the pond will be performed this summer to open up the water column and increase fishing access around the perimeter of the pond.

Ponds typically required periodic maintenance, and this is not the first time NCSWCD has assisted in maintaining the Royalton Ravine pond. In the summer of 2008, the Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District provided some long overdue maintenance to the pond, including removal of the excess vegetation in and around the pond and dredging of the accumulated muck in the bottom to restore the pond to its original depth. Restoration began with the removal of trees and brush from the embankment berm. The pond was then dewatered to allow the muck to be dredged, spread out in adjacent lawn areas, dewatered, re-graded and planted with grasses to prevent erosion. During the pond dredging, the shoreline access was improved by removing the ring of cattails around the pond, although certain areas

will be allowed to revert back to provide habitat around the pond.

NCSWCD has been stocking the County Park ponds for 25 years. In addition to Royalton Ravine we have also installed and maintained aerators at Bond Lake ponds.

Funds for stocking and pond maintenance come from New Yorks State Ag & Markets Part B funds that are awarded to county conservation districts every year for conservation projects.



Royalton Ravine - Prior to Treatment

ROBINSON FARMS & SMITH FARMS AWARDED 2025 DISTRICT AEM FARM AWARDS

Congratulations to this year's winners of the Niagara County SWCD AEM Farm Award, Robinson Farm of Cambria and Smith Farms of Royalton. Farms are nominated based on their efforts to implement planned Best Management Practices to protect and conserve the natural resources in the County on their own and in collaboration with the District.

Robinson Farms, a well-known fruit and vegetable farm, has been working with the District for many years to improve their impact on the environment. Projects include an the construction of an agri-chemical handling facility for storing and mixing pesticides, the annual planting of cover crops, and installation of tile drainage.

Smith Farms, formally owned and operated by Steve Smith, was the number one user of the District's inter-seeder over the past several years, planting over 450 acres of cover crops to improve soil health and maintain vegetative cover on the land through the non-growing season to reduce erosion and improve water quality. Even though the farm has been sold, Smith Farms continued to be active in protecting the soil this past year.

Winners will be presented with AEM building plaques at the Niagara County Fair Farmer's Breakfast.

No farm is too big or too small to participate in the AEM program. Please contact the office to schedule a farm visit to see how we can assist you in creating an AEM plan and future projects.



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NCSW Board Meetings

Board Meetings are held the fourth Thursday of almost every month. Please contact the office for more information.



THANK YOU TO OUR TREE & FISH CUSTOMERS

It was another great for our yearly tree and fish sales. It is great to see everyone so excited to plant their new trees and see their new fish in ponds.

Thank you to everyone the purchased trees and fish, we hope to see you next year!

NCSW CAN HELP YOU!

Agricultural Grants
Bird/Bat/Duck Houses
Eighteenmile Creek RAP
Invasive Species Control/Eradication
Pond Site Evaluations
Agriculture Value Assessments
Educational Programs
Equipment Rental
Drainage /Tiling Assistance
Permit Application Assistance
Mining Assistance
Erosion Control
Flood Prevention
Water Conservation & Wetlands
Ground Water, Water Quality & Quantity
Nonpoint Source Pollution
Forestland Protection
Wildlife
Recreation
Manure Management
Waste Water Management
Tree/Seed Sale
Pond Stocking/ Carp Sale

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS HELP BRING CONSERVATION TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION

The Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon and Conservation Field Days were held this Spring for high school and elementary school students from around the County.

Our Envirothon held at Clyde L. Burmaster Park aka Bond Lake hosted eleven teams from two counties and fifteen school districts. Students competed in five areas of conservation—Aquatics, Wildlife, Forestry, Soils, and the current issue topic “Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change.” The winning teams from each county went on the New York State Envirothon where the Niagara County team placed sixth overall!



Top: 2025 Envirothon at Bond Lake Bottom: Field Days at Royalton Ravine

Conservation

Field Days was a hit with third and fourth graders from Lockport, Newfane, Roy-Hart, and Niagara-Wheatfield. Students and teachers were welcomed to Royalton Ravine to spend the day learning about different conservation and environmental topics. Stations ranged from furs and skulls to microscopes, recycling relays to hazmat, crops to sugars, water to animals, and so much more. A special thank you to all the presenters, without them we couldn't host this fun day!

If you are interested in either event please reach out to our office and we can get you signed-up.



NO-TILL DRILL RENTAL

No-Till Drill rental is available for your next conservation seeding project. We provide the drill, delivery and cleaning. Customer provides the seed.

Cost is \$15/acre + \$50 delivery in Niagara County.

INTER-SEEDER RENTAL

Inter-seeder rental is 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 inter-seeder is free, subsequent uses will cost \$5 per acre.



INTERESTED IN BEING ON OUR CONTRACTOR'S LIST? GIVE US A CALL

Are you an insured contractor that specializes in one of the following?

- | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| -Tile Drainage | -Earth Moving | -Clay Extraction | -Concrete |
| -Linings | -Ag Pipeline | -Pond Services/ Construction | |

If you would like to be added to our Contractor's List please call the office at 716-434-4949 ext 4. The list is available for anyone working with the District or NRCS on projects as well as individuals that call for recommendations.

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.

**4-HR. ESC
CLASSES**

**3 CLASSES,
62 PARTICIPANTS**



**28,735 LF.
OF DRAIN
TILE/DITCH
DESIGNED**



**FISH PROGRAM
21,925 FISH
61 CARP**



**2 AEM
AWARDS
HANDLED
OUT**

**EDUCATIONAL
BOOTHES**

**7 EVENTS
1,000+ VISITORS**



**38,208
SEEDLINGS
SOLD**



**AG. CHEMICAL MIXING
FACILITIES**

**2 DESIGNED,
AND
2 INSTALLED**



**13 POND SITE
EVALUATIONS**



**ROOF WATER MANAGEMENT
SYSTEMS**

**2 DESIGNED,
2 INSTALLED**



**1.6 ACRES
HYDROSEEDED**



HEAVY USE AREA

**5,100 SQ. FT. INSTALLED
7,480 SQ. FT. DESIGNED**



ENVIROTHON- 12 TEAMS



AEM PLANS

**TIER 1: 17 TIER 4: 2
TIER 2: 17 TIER 5A: 10
TIER 3: 16 TIER 5B: 1**



**10.3 ACRES OF
POLLINATOR + WILDLIFE
HABITAT**



**JAPANESE KNOTWEED
TREATMENT**

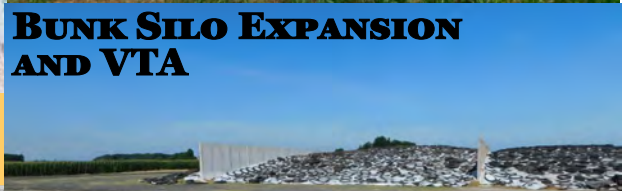
**460 SITES
75 ACRES**

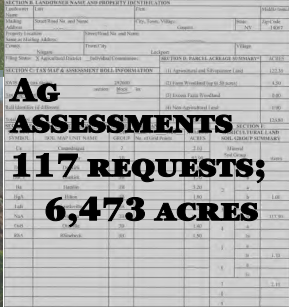



10.3 ACRES OF NO TILL

STUDENT EDUCATION
929 STUDENTS, 5 EVENTS

**65 WILDLIFE
BOXES SOLD**

**780 ACRES OF
COVER CROPS WITH
5 FARMS**

**BUNK SILO EXPANSION
AND VTA**

STORMWATER SITES
VISITS: 80
PLANS DESIGNED: 1
PLANS REVIEWED: 1

**AG
ASSESSMENTS**
117 REQUESTS;
6,473 ACRES
Water Quality Monitorings:
17 Creeks Monitored
105 Samples
Customer Assistance:
Erosion visits- 8
Permit assistance- 1
Technical assistance- 43
Designs:
Compost facility - 1
Waste storage & transfer system- 1
Animal mortality facility- 1
Stream crossing- 1
Short term manure storage - 2
Fencing - 1,700lf
OTHER ITEMS:
X-Mas trees recycled- 48
Irrigation system inspection and install- 1
Litter pickup events- 3 / 515 pounds
Media Articles- 18
Resource maps - 19
USFS Trees Planted - 90
Newsletters - 11,670

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**ALLEGHANY
SERVICES**

BUI REMOVAL PENDING AT THE EIGHTEENMILE CREEK AOC

There will be a virtual public meeting on Tuesday, July 8, 2025, from noon to 1 p.m. to discuss restoration progress in the Eighteenmile Creek Area of Concern (AOC) in the Town of Newfane, and the proposed removal of the Degradation of Benthos Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI).

The Eighteenmile Creek AOC covers the lower creek from just below Burt Dam to Olcott Harbor. It faced water quality and sediment contamination due to past industrial, municipal, and pesticide pollution. The federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has been instrumental in providing funding to address these environmental challenges and advance the BUI removal process.

The Degradation of Benthos BUI was listed as impaired based on historical data which indicated that macroinvertebrate communities were adversely affected by contaminated sediments. Recent DEC and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) surveys show these benthic communities are now similar or superior to those in a regional reference stream. This data satisfies BUI removal criteria and now seeks public feedback on the proposed change in designation.

The virtual meeting will provide details and criteria establishing support for the removal of the BUI. The public can download the draft report and join the meeting through the Eighteenmile Creek AOC website (eighteenmilerap.com). Comments on the proposed BUI removal may be discussed during the meeting or by email at: eighteenmilerap@gmail.com until July 30, 2025.

Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with DEC and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, coordinates restoration efforts under the Eighteenmile Creek AOC Remedial Action Plan. A draft report, which details the completed actions and assessments supporting the BUI removal, is also available for public review at the Eighteenmile Creek AOC website.

Field Crews Continue to Fight Invasive Species

Another year continues in the battle against the highly invasive Japanese knotweed. The goal of the program is to eliminate the invasive plant from Niagara County. Japanese knotweed is a major concern for displacing native species in riparian and native areas and in forests. Japanese knotweed out competes native plants and forms monocultures that displace native and more desirable species. Their lack of fine surface roots can lead to increased erosion which is problematic along waterways. Their rhizomes are capable of cracking concrete and asphalt causing costly damage to roadways, parking lots and building foundations.

Once the knotweed has been successfully eliminated, the native plants are able to grow which are utilized by native insect, bird and animal species. In addition to our existing pollinator fields at Bond Lake Park and Royalton Ravine Park, the crew has begun and will continue to create pollinator habitats of native species where knotweed patches once existed.



If you have or think you have knotweed on your property and would like it treated please contact our office at 716-434-4949 ext 4.

Left: 2025 Knotweed Crew
Top: Japanese knotweed new growth stems
Middle: Knotweed stems
Bottom: Japanese knotweed flowers and leaves



Come See Us Out & About Around the County

This Summer and Fall

NCSWCD employees will be out around the County hosting and attending various events for the community. Please come by to chat about current projects, project opportunities, and even spin the wheel for a prize.

You can find us at the these events:

*NY Forest Owners Association Woods Walk –July 19th

*Niagara County Fair– July 30th - August 3rd

*NCSWCD/CCE/.NRCS Pasture Walk - August 26th

*Soil & Erosion 4 Hour Course– September 17th

*Lytle Nature Preserve Fall Event



*Wildlife Festival-September 27th

*North Tonawanda Botanical Garden's Erie Canal Celebration
September 27th

*NCSWCD/CCE/NRCS Pasture Walk– October 23rd

*Eighteenmile Creek Clean Sweep– October

*More to Come, Follow us on Facebook for Events and Information



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