

Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Summer
2016

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Fish Sale, Envirothon, Water Quality Improvement Projects, school programs, lake association annual meetings, construction inspections, deep hole and percolation tests, onsite wastewater treatment system inspections, Agricultural Environmental Management Projects and more: spring and summer are extra busy times for Ontario County SWCD.

This issue of the Ontario County SWCD newsletter will highlight a few of the programs and projects of the season.



FISH SALE GOES SWIMMINGLY.

2,680 fish found homes in Ontario County via the 2016 Spring Fish Stocking Sale. Farm ponds, a church camp and other watery venues were enriched with fingerling fish made available by SWCD.

Largemouth Bass, Catfish, Koi, Triploid Grass Carp And Fathead Minnows (for forage) were offered in the Spring Fish Stocking Sale.

During the fall Fish Stocking Sale, Rainbow Trout, Catfish, Bluegill, Koi, Triploid Grass Carp and Fathead Minnows are typically on offer for stocking. Watch for the announcement later in the Summer.

*Photographs:
Tad Gerace*



2016 Western Finger Lakes Envirothon

The first time was the charm for the Marcus Whitman Envirothon team, winning Ontario County honors for 2016. Ten teams from Ontario County represented their high schools at the Western Finger lakes Envirothon held on the FLCC campus on April 20. Yates and Seneca Counties also participated in the event. Winners represented their respective counties at the State Envirothon at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in June.

Envirothon teams are tested on their knowledge of five subject areas: soils, aquatics, forestry, wildlife, and a current issue that changes focus each year. The 2016 current issue was invasive species, which unfortunately, is an issue of grave importance locally as well as nationally.

In addition to the testing sessions, participating students enjoyed learning sessions provided by FLCC faculty and staff: stream sampling (aquatic macroinvertebrates as water quality indicators), forestry and electronic animal tracking techniques were a great ending to the day.



OUCH! My Lake!

Spring cleaning shouldn't equate to spring trashing of the lakes. Two SWCD staff members have shared photographs that make us cringe when we see the lakes being used as disposal sites.

The top photograph at right shows yard waste that was being shoveled into the lake. In response to the "But, it's biodegradable!" excuse, we remind everyone that decay bacteria consume oxygen and the nutrients released feed algae and water weeds. Yard waste can be composted or taken to the Town transfer center for shredding and reuse as mulch.

Leaving adequate buffers between water and fertilizer or pesticide applications is important. Green lawns don't need to result in green lakes.

Speaking of **GREEN**, here's an unwelcome way of sharing with the neighbors. The green dye shows the path of materials exiting a residence via a pipe from a basement sink. Paint brushes in a sink were an indication of what had come down the pipe previously.



Programs With Schools – Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition Education

As Ontario County SWCD is part of the partnership of the Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition, schools in Wayne County have participated in programs and activities assisted by District Educator, Edith Davey. Wayne County High School physics and environmental science students enjoyed a day of stream assessment and aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling at Webster Park.

Mapping a stream segment, calculating discharge rates, assessing water quality through chemical and biological means were some of the activities experienced.



Photographs: Nolan Flores, Edith Davey

Following a classroom session of watershed education, PalMac Environmental Science students in teacher Mrs. Jessica Roethel's class, elected to undertake a stormdrain marking project in the Village of Palmyra. The students obtained permission from the school officials, municipal officials and the Village Public Works director.

The Ontario-Wayne Stormwater Coalition funded purchase of 250 stormdrain markers with the words "NO DUMPING, DRAINS TO ERIE CANAL."

Wearing safety vests borrowed from Coalition members, the students recorded the condition of the storm drains, established GIS coordinates for each drain, affixed the metal markers with epoxy and marked their work on maps provided by the Palmyra DPW.

Some stormdrains previously unmarked on the official map were discovered, so the students have contributed to the knowledge of the Village infrastructure. Completion of the project will occur in the fall so that incoming students will be able to participate in the project.



Photographs: Edith Davey

Vernal Pool Workshop

As part of the Round 11 Water Quality Improvement Program grant benefiting the Honeoye Lake Watershed, a free vernal pool workshop and installation demonstration was offered to the public at Cumming Nature Center on Saturday, June 18, 2016. Sedimentation reduction and nutrient mitigation are a focus of the grant.

Speakers included Jim Curatolo, Chairman of the Wetland Trust; and Maura Sullivan, Instructor of Environmental Conservation, FLCC. The Upper Susquehanna Coalition performed the installation demonstration.

Vernal pools (aka ephemeral pools) are temporary pools of water usually formed by seasonal runoff or groundwater. The pools may be dry during the summer months, but provide extremely important habitat for amphibians during the spring. As fish never live in these pools, tadpoles of frogs, toads and salamanders enjoy an improved success rate. Fairy shrimp and *Daphnia* and other wildlife are usual parts of the ecology of vernal pools.

The opportunity to view and enjoy wildlife is a benefit to landowners or park visitors where these pools are found. Vernal pools provide other services as well, including water storage, flood mitigation and groundwater infiltration.

Ten pools were installed at locations in the Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreational Area, Wesley Hill Nature Preserve (Finger Lakes Land Trust) and at FLCC's Muller Field Station located at the inlet of Honeoye Lake.

Landowners were encouraged to consider creating vernal pools on suitable lands within the area.

As illustrated by the photograph at right, the pools are shallow and sited to create minimal disruption to existing vegetation.



Installation at Cumming Nature Center



A volunteer mulches a newly created pool.

Emergency Stream Intervention Training

More than 50 people attended an Ontario County SWCD sponsored Emergency Stream Intervention Training held in the Town of Richmond along Mill Creek on May 12 and May 26.

Municipal employees, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation staff, New York State Department of Transportation staff and US Army Corps of Engineers personnel were among those present for the training. Mike Lovegreen from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition and Jeff Parker from Steuben SWCD were instructors.

The program was designed for immediate post-flood corrective action, working with the stream's natural dimensions while protecting aquatic habitat.

The training encompassed procedures to be followed both before and during construction, including: identification and prioritization of work sites, proper stream channel location and sizing, and reconnecting to floodplains.

Streambank stabilization was also an issue of focus in the training.

As part of the event, 350 trees and shrubs provided by NYS DEC's Tribes for Trees program and Steuben County SWCD were planted along Mill Creek.

Special thanks are offered to the Town of Richmond for hosting the event and project installation.



Emergency Stream Intervention Training and Demonstration



Tree Planting for Streambank Stabilization

Photographs: Megan Webster

Native or Not?

On June 16, 2016, Ontario County SWCD, the Town of Canandaigua Environmental Conservation Board and Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association sponsored a workshop aimed at increasing the knowledge of the public about aquatic plants – both native and alien – and at learning the procedures of boat inspection.

Lakeshore property owners and other lake users learning to identify native aquatic plants (macrophytes) is a step toward protection of local lakes from aquatic alien invasive species.

Watercraft Stewards, now present at launch sites on many local lakes, assist boaters in complying with the “Clean, Drained, Dry” requirements of NYS Environmental regulations.

Dr. Bruce Gilman, FLCC Professor of Environmental Conservation, brought examples of native and alien aquatic plants, and encouraged attendees to examine the specimens. He described their growth patterns and life cycles and discussed factors that encourage or inhibit the growth of some plants.

Watercraft Steward Cynthia Smith provided a demonstration of how Stewards approach and interview persons launching boats. Bob McCarthy, CLWA Board member, trailered his boat to Onanda Park for the program. Walking around the boat and trailer to identify points where plants might be caught and transported, Cynthia noted the trailer hitch, anchor, propeller, trailer supports and other areas that should be checked for aquatic hitch hikers.



Photographs: Katrina Busch, Edith Davey



WATER CONSERVATION IN YOUR HOME

Water conservation is a priority when supplies are stressed. Keeping water usage under control protects your water supply. Help your well or supplier - and yourself - by conserving water.

INSIDE

Keep drinking water cool in the refrigerator instead of running the faucet until the water cools.

Compost food waste. Disposals use lots of water and load the septic tank with solids.

Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only when full. If your well or wastewater system is stressed, use a laundromat instead.

When hand-washing dishes, fill one sink or pan with wash water and the other with rinse water. Rinsing (or worse, washing and rinsing) dishes under running water results in much higher usage.

Don't use running water to thaw food.

Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth, shave or wash your face and save 2-4 gallons per minute.

Take shorter showers! Set a timer or take a military-style shower, turning off the flow to apply soap and then turning it on to rinse. Multi-head or waterfall showers can use as much as 10 gallons per minute.

Check for leaking toilets. Put food coloring in the tank, wait for 30 minutes without flushing and check for color in the toilet bowl.

Don't use the toilet to flush tissues, spiders, insects and other waste-basket articles. Never flush baby wipes or similar products. Even if labeled, "*Flushable*", they do not dissolve in septic tanks and can cause clogging in sewers.

Close a bathtub drain before you fill the tub, then fill to about 1/3 full.

Low-flow fixtures use much less water than older versions. Installing a faucet-head aerator will also reduce the flow rate.

OUTSIDE

Water the plants on your deck early in the morning to minimize evaporation. Mulch (1" deep) cools roots and conserves soil moisture.

Washing your car by spraying it clean can use 100 gallons of water. Washing by hand and using the hose to rinse uses about 15 gallons. If your well is stressed, use a commercial car wash. These facilities recycle water.

Let lawn grass grow taller. It uses less water, encourages deeper root growth and holds soil moisture better than a closely trimmed lawn. Cornell recommends cutting lawn grass to no less than 4" tall.

If the lawn grass becomes dormant, don't panic. Most grass is adapted to seasonal changes and will be green again when dry conditions change.

Less than 1% of all the water on Earth is fresh water available for human use in surface water or ground water supplies.



Ontario County SWCD Staff Directory

Senior District Manager:
 Patrick J. Emerick – CPESC, CPSWQ, CMS4S
 Administration
 Soil Erosion Control
 Streambank Stabilization
 Water Resources Council

District Clerk/Treasurer/Secretary
 Elaine Borgeest
 Fish Stocking Program

Senior Conservation Technician
 Megan Webster

Conservation Educator
 Edith Davey
 Education & Training Programs
 Website & Newsletter

Conservation District Technician
 Tad Gerace
 Onsite Wastewater Systems
 Tree and Shrub Sale

Water Resources Technician
 Tucker Kautz- CCA
 Ag Environmental Management
 Drainage & Farm Assistance

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Inspector
 George Barden - CPESC
 Onsite Wastewater Systems

Jamie Noga
 Administrative Assistant



Farmers interested in the Agricultural Environmental Management Program can contact Tucker Kautz
 Ontario County SWCD 585-396-1450
 The Tier 1 assessment form may be found on our website:
www.ontswcd.com or obtained at the SWCD office.

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