

THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD

2025 District Tree Program Sees Record Involvement

The District once again had an increase in participation for our annual Conservation Tree & Shrub Program. A total of **642** orders were fulfilled, distributing **over 27,150** trees and shrubs including **over 420** conservation multi-packs. New or returning species included Black Tupelo (Gum), Common Hackberry, Dense Blazing Star, Eastern Redbud, Eastern Sand Cherry, Ninebark, and Red Mulberry. Thank you to all of our customers who ordered this year, we hope you had a successful planting season and we will see you next year!

In order to package all our customer's trees in less than a week, it not only takes the hard work of District staff, but also the help of volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension's Master Gardener Program and SUNY Brockport Environmental Science & Ecology Department. The help of these volunteers helps us ensure your trees are out of the ground for the least amount of time before being planted by you! A special thanks to the Monroe County ecopark and Monroe County Department of Environmental Services (DES) staff for their help and use of their facility once again for this program.



Orders and enhancement items packed for distribution

Attention customers: the DEC has begun tracking plantings across the state for the '25 Million Trees by 2033' Initiative. We encourage you all to record your tree plantings here: [Tree Tracker](#)



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Protecting Today, Providing Tomorrow

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2025 District Dates & Deadlines

September 16
Soil Health Field Day

September 16-18
Conservation Field Days

October - December
(Dates TBD)
NYS DEC Endorsed 4-Hr Erosion
& Sediment Control Training

**Our office will be closed July 4th
for Independence Day and
September 1st for Labor Day**

District Implements Streambank Stabilization and Riparian Buffer Along Shipbuilders Creek

Last year the District closed out the summer with the implementation of a streambank stabilization project along the East Branch of Shipbuilders Creek at Thomas High School in the Town of Webster. In partnership with Thomas High School and the Town of Webster Highway Department, 425 feet of the streambank was restored. The Town of Webster Highway Department removed failed existing curbing and placed new rock riprap along impacted areas helping to stabilize the banks. Additional practices implemented included student litter cleanup, vegetation management to improve stream flow, reshaping of vertical banks to stable slopes, stabilizing areas of gully erosion, and installing several coir logs along areas of moderate erosion where rock was not used.

Construction was followed by the establishment of a robust, multi-row riparian buffer this past spring where 400 native trees and shrubs were planted, creating a 42,000 square foot buffer. Over 60 high school students helped install the buffer while learning about the various streambank stabilization practices and the importance of riparian vegetation. Shipbuilders Creek (including the east branch) is listed by the NYS DEC as an impaired waterway, so these types of conservation efforts can help to improve water quality and aquatic habitat, as well as enhancing the aesthetic of one of the few remaining greenspaces in the local watershed.



Project area after stabilization practices installed



Above: High school students examine the coir logs before planting trees

Below: Coir log installation



Completed riparian buffer a month after planting



Year Two of Reforestation Efforts Against Ash Tree Loss Implemented Across the County

This spring, continued reforestation efforts were implemented as part of the awarded \$200,000 in federal funds through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Forest Restoration grant. Over 11,000 trees will be planted by the end of this three year project, restoring 200 acres within Monroe County where ash-dominated forests have been decimated by the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

Since first being detected over a decade ago, EAB has destroyed Monroe County's mature ash populations leading to ecological and economical disruptions including an increase in invasive species, increased economic costs for tree removal, and safety hazards in many of our public lands. Monroe County historically has had some of the highest ash tree density in New York, so restoring a healthy forest is of utmost importance to benefit our residents with clean air and drinking water, wildlife habitat and food, erosion control, carbon sequestration, and more.

In May, 3,235 trees were planted across 13 sites by six partners, adding on to the 2,975 trees planted in 2024. Monroe County Parks Department planted 2,704 trees at Black Creek Park, Ellison Park, Greece Canal Park, Northampton Park, Oatka Creek Park, and Powder Mills Park; Tinker Nature Park planted 92 trees around their Henrietta park; NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation and volunteers from Braddock Bay Raptor Research planted 117 trees in the Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area; Village of Honeoye Falls planted 80 trees at Rotary Park and the village cemetery; Oatka Creek Watershed Committee planted 138 trees at undeveloped park land in the Village of Scottsville and on Genesee Country Village & Museum property; and Rush Recreation & Park Association planted 104 trees at Hundred Acre Park.



Volunteer planting at Braddock Bay WMA



Many of these plantings rely on volunteers!

If you are interested in helping at a planting event, please reach out to our office.

Invasive Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring Continues This Year

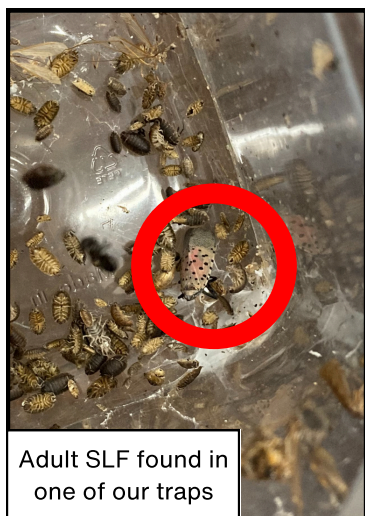
Last year the District expanded our early detection and monitoring project for the invasive spotted lanternfly (SLF) installing and monitoring 35 traps around the county. Detection and monitoring will continue this year with **33 traps** installed in late May and early June that will be monitored until late October.

For 2025, we partnered with SUNY Brockport, Monroe County Parks Department, the City of Rochester, the Towns of Chili, Gates, Greece, Hamlin, Henrietta, Penfield, Perinton, and Pittsford, and the Village of East Rochester to monitor these traps. Our town, village, and city partners have taken a more active role in monitoring this year highlighting the cross-organizational partnership needed to stop the spread of invasive species. Traps this year were also more focused on the invasive tree-of-heaven which is the host tree of SLF and the species it is most likely to first be found on.

Two SLF adults were found in a trap in October last year that was located closest to the established SLF population in the Town of Greece. This shows that our trap network can help track the spread of SLF individuals from this population and report it to the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets who will investigate.

If you see one of our traps, or another organization's traps, do not touch or move them. Traps are monitored bi-weekly. If you think there is an issue with a trap you see (damage, etc.) or if you have any questions regarding monitoring, you can reach out to our office.

If you think you have seen SLF, please report it to NYS Dept. of Agriculture & Markets: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/spottedlanternfly>



Adult SLF found in one of our traps



Adult SLF next to its own ID card



A trap and sign on a tree-of-heaven

The Harley School Wins County Envirothon for 2nd Year in a Row

The 33rd annual Monroe County Envirothon was held on May 22nd in Ellison Park, where six local high schools were welcomed to compete against each other.

This annual outdoor, environmental education competition for high school students involves teams of five competing against each other to demonstrate their knowledge in five core topics: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and current issues which is selected at the national level each year. This year's current issue topic was Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Changing Climate. The winning team represented Monroe County at the New York State competition held at SUNY Cortland on May 28th & 29th. The winner of the state competition goes on to compete at the national level.

Students used learned knowledge, critical thinking, and their surroundings to have the best chance at victory, along with helping prepare them for future environmental careers and gain an appreciation for each environmental topic.

This year, 18 teams of 90 students from Brighton Brockport, Eastridge, Greece Arcadia, The Harley School, and Honeoye Falls-Lima High Schools competed against each other for the chance to move on to states. The Harley School Team C took first place and represented Monroe County in SUNY Cortland, where they placed 10th out of 39 teams! Congratulations to The Harley School!



Winning Team: Harley Team C

**Thank you to all our
instructors/exam authors,
volunteers, and sponsors who
make this event possible!**



**Monroe County
Parks**

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2025 Conservation Field Days Open for Registration

We are now accepting registrations for the 2025 Conservation Field Days, being held September 16th, 17th, and 18th at Ellison Park.

Conservation Field Days brings together local 5th and 6th grade students with environmental and conservation professionals for three days of learning and hands-on activities. Each year we welcome around 1,000 students over the three days.

Schools or professionals looking to attend or lead a station can reach out to our office for more information.

Join AEM: Get Support for your Farm while Protecting our Natural Resources

Are you a Monroe County farmer looking to grow your contributions to your community and environment, while also protecting and conserving our natural resources? With the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program you can do just that! AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program allowing farmers to make cost-effective decisions based on common sense and science to help meet their own business objectives, all while helping conserve and protect the natural resources of New York State. Through AEM, farmers are able to document their environmental stewardship, furthering their positive contributions to their communities, food systems, economy, and the environment. Join over 600 farms in Monroe County, and over $\frac{1}{3}$ of all farms in New York State, who participate in AEM and reach out to our office for more information.



Soil Health & Climate Resiliency Field Day

SAVE THE DATE: A soil health field day for urban and small scale growers is being held in Rochester at Foodlink Community Farm on September 16th, 2025. More details and registration coming soon at <https://www.newyorksoilhealth.org/fielddays/>

Agricultural Plastics Recycling Program

Attention farmers! Agricultural plastics recycling will once again be coming to Monroe County soon. This program accepts rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE) 55-gallon or smaller containers, previously holding products utilized in pesticides, animal health, specialty pest control, micronutrients, biologicals, fertilizer, and/or adjuvant products.

Clean plastic containers picked up through this program must be triple rinsed and free of all remaining liquid and dried flaky residue to be accepted. All caps and labels must be removed as well. Stained containers are accepted. Recycle containers are processed for use in certified end use products including agricultural drain pipe, cinder blocks, fence posts, and nursery pots rather than landfilled or burnt.

Recycling pick-up is available by appointment only. If you are interested in learning more about this program please contact our office at 585-753-7380 or mcswcd@monreocounty.gov



Summer Stormwater: Rain Gardens

It's no secret that we have gotten a significant amount of rain all spring, with various outlets reporting our wettest May in over 30 years. With all of these rain events, you have surely noticed the amount of stormwater runoff on your property. A great way to manage this runoff is to install a rain garden on your property.

Rain gardens can benefit both your home and the environment. When done right, rain gardens provide beautiful, low maintenance landscaping; habitat and food for native pollinator species; habitat for native birds; increased groundwater recharge; and pollutant removal.

Creating a rain garden doesn't have to be an arduous process. In just six simple steps you can have a functioning rain garden on your property:

Step 1: Determine the Best Location

Selecting an area where runoff already runs to is ideal. Be sure to be 10 ft away from your house and avoid septic systems and utility lines

Step 2: Check the Soils

Dig an 8 inch wide, 12 inch deep hole and fill it with water; a good location will have that water drop an inch in less than an hour

Step 3: Determine the Size

Rule of thumb formula:
 $\text{sq ft. roof area} \times \text{soil factor} = \text{area of garden}$

Step 4: Design Layout

You want a fairly level garden with a six inch depression in the middle to capture runoff

Step 5: Choose the Plants

Choose native, non-invasive species that are tolerant of both wet roots and dry spells

Step 6: Plant, Water, Mulch, Maintain

You should weed and mulch your garden for the first couple years until plants are large enough to outcompete weeds

**Monroe County Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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Environmentally-Friendly Alternatives to Celebrating with Balloons

As summer begins, so too do many outdoor celebrations and other events including weddings, graduation parties, birthdays, family reunions, and more. Many of these occasions involve a familiar practice that is about time it became outdated: releasing balloons.

Releasing balloons is harmful to the environment leading to pollution in our forests and waterways and incapacitating or killing wildlife. Balloons commonly strangle or get tangled with birds and when they fall in waterways are commonly mistaken for food which can lead to death for larger aquatic organisms. Balloons that end up in pastures can end up being fatal when consumed by farm animals, as well.

There are many environmentally friendly alternatives to balloons including bubble blowers or throwing native wildflower seeds in the air if you want to release something; hanging flags or banners that won't float away if they come loose; or planting trees or holding candles at a memorial or similar event.

Don't forget to come visit us on opening day at the Great NYS Fair!

Staff from our office will be working the NYS Conservation District Employees' Association booth on August 20th educating attendees on the Soil & Water Conservation Districts in NYS including programs, services, and potential funding opportunities. Take a chance on our guessing contest, participate in our Ronny Raindrop Coloring Contest, and even get a photo as Ronny!

We hope to see you there!

The fair runs from August 20th to September 1st.



**ENJOY THE
SUMMER**

