

THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD

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Protecting Today, Providing Tomorrow

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2026 District Tree Program Sets Record for Community Participation

Demand for our annual Tree & Shrub Program continues to grow! This year marked the seventh straight year of record-breaking orders. To keep pace with increasing interest, we expanded our inventory for the first time in program history. Even with the added stock, most items sold out before ordering closed, demonstrating the tremendous popularity of the program and our community’s commitment to planting trees and shrubs. More than **770** orders were placed, resulting in the distribution of over **30,500** trees, including nearly **500** conservation multi-packs. New species like Coralberry and False Indigo were popular sellers. We sincerely thank all of our customers for their support and wish you a successful planting season. We look forward to seeing you again next year!

Despite a 13% increase in tree stock, District staff and volunteers from Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Master Gardener Program and local colleges successfully packaged all customer trees in under a week. Their support helps minimize the time trees spend out of the ground, ensuring they are ready for customers to plant quickly. A special thank you to the Monroe County ecopark and Monroe County Department of Environmental Services (DES) staff for their continued support and for allowing us to use their facility for this program once again.

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2026 District Dates & Deadlines

September 1
Soil Health Field Day

September 15-17
Conservation Field Days

Our office will be closed:

July 3rd for Independence Day

September 7th for Labor Day

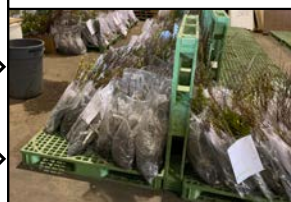
Week 1: Seedlings arrive and are sorted by species



Week 2: Seedlings are bundled in 10s and dipped in a root gel solution to retain moisture



Week 3: Staff pulls species by order and then distributes them to residents



District Implements Stormwater Management Improvements Along Shipbuilders Creek in the Town of Webster

In the fall of 2025, a multi-phase, multi-year stormwater restoration project was completed in Finn Park in the Town of Webster along Shipbuilders Creek. This eight-square mile watershed begins in the Town of Penfield before flowing through the Town of Webster before ultimately discharging into the Rochester Embayment of Lake Ontario. Over the past several decades, Shipbuilders Creek Watershed has experienced substantial residential and commercial development, and was designated as impaired over 15 years ago with stormwater the primary contributing factor to water quality degradation.

The Shipbuilders Creek Stormwater Assessment and Action Plan identified significant streambank erosion within the lower portion of the subwatershed, as well as limited stormwater management infrastructure serving existing developed areas. The Action Plan identified a series of restoration projects designed to improve water quality and, in many cases, provide flow attenuation. This led to a large offline regional stormwater management facility to be constructed to capture, infiltrate, and treat stormwater runoff from older upstream development, reducing pollutant loading and flooding to Shipbuilders Creek while advancing implementation of county watershed management objectives.



Above: Completed offline stormwater basin that will receive stormwater overflows from Shipbuilders Creek
 Below (L): Completed culvert over Shipbuilders Creek with inflow structure to send overflows to the facility
 Below (R): Completed outlet from Shipbuilders Creek into the facility

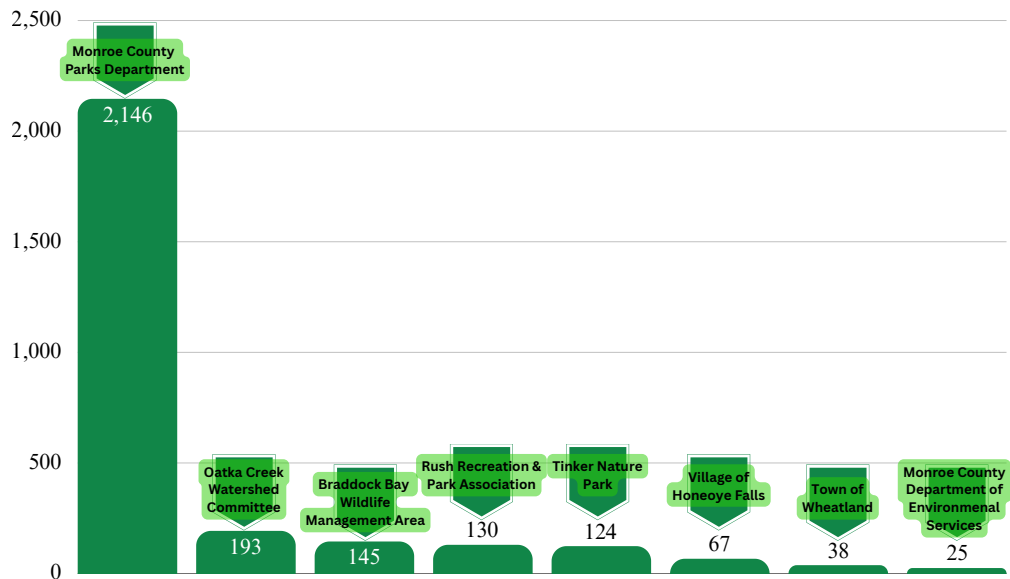


Final Year of Reforestation Efforts Against Ash Tree Loss

2026 marks the final year of reforestation efforts implemented as part of the awarded \$200,000 in federal funds through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Forest Restoration grant. Over 11,500 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 upmost importance to benefit our residents with clean air and drinking water, wildlife habitat and food, erosion control, carbon sequestration, and more.

In May, 2,868 trees were planted across 13 sites by eight partners, adding on to the 8,631 trees planted since 2024.



L to R: Cranberry Trail in Braddock Bay WMA; Oatka Creek Park; Indian Park in Town of Wheatland



Eastridge High School Wins Monroe County Envirothon

Temps in the 80s and smiles filled the 34th annual Monroe County Envirothon at Ellison Park on May 19th, where seven local high schools competed 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 Non-Point Source Pollution Mitigation: It Begins at Home. The winning team represented Monroe County at the New York State competition held at SUNY Cortland on May 27th & 28th. 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, 23 teams of 112 students from Brighton, Brockport, Eastridge, Greece Arcadia, The Harley School, Honeoye Falls-Lima High School, and Webster Thomas High School competed against each other for the chance to move on to states. Eastridge Team #1 took first place and represented Monroe County in SUNY Cortland!



Winning team: Eastridge Team #1



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

Clean, Drain, Dry: Look for the Watercraft Stewards

Boating season has begun, and recreational boaters and anglers are now traveling around to different water bodies to enjoy their summer. Aquatic invasive species are commonly spread between water bodies this way, known as hitchhiking. Hitchhiking can happen in multiple ways with invasive species attaching to boats, boating equipment, fishing equipment, personal gear, and more. There is an easy three step solution you can remember to stop the spread of invasive species in your local water bodies:

1. **Clean** - Plants and mud should be cleaned off of all boating parts and equipment, especially rudders and the undercarriage.
2. **Drain** - All water holding compartments should be drained before leaving the area including ballast tanks and live wells.
3. **Dry** - Make sure your boat and equipment are completely dry before entering another water body. Completely drying your boat and gear is the most effective way to lessen the spread of aquatic invasive species!

If you are boating in Monroe County, look for watercraft stewards! They are stationed at a few launches to inspect boats entering and leaving the launch. In partnership with Monroe County Department of Environmental Services and Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, the District provides stewards at Port of Rochester, Erie Canal on Ayrault Rd, and Ballantyne Park along Black Creek.



Volunteers Needed to Pull Invasive Water Chestnut

The Town of Greece, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management, Genesee Valley Audubon, Seneca Park Zoo, and Genesee Land Trust are hosting water chestnut pulls in Salmon Creek, Long Pond, Buck Pond, Cranberry Pond, and Braddock Bay this summer and they need your help!

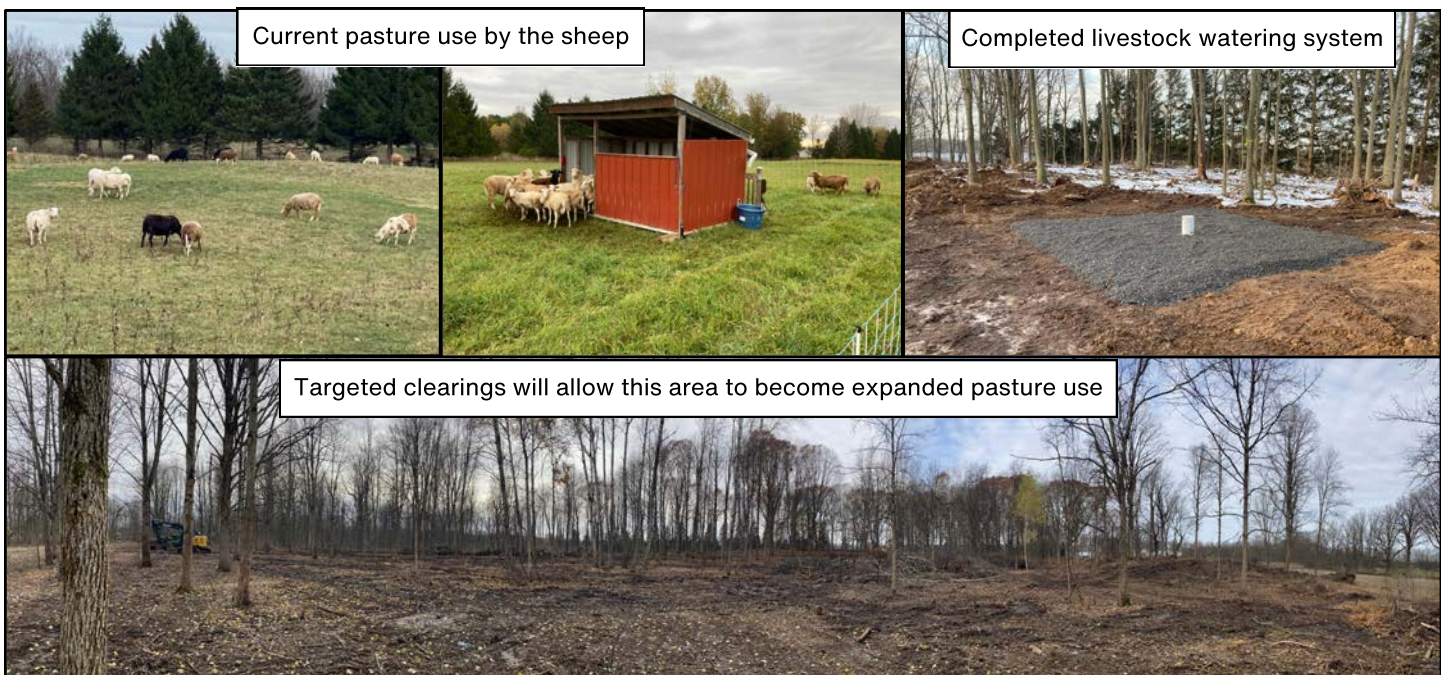
Pulls are scheduled from 10am-1pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays starting June 24th until August 1st. RSVPs are required! Email mmorris@greeceny.gov to RSVP for one or more of the pulls.

District Implements Prescribed Rotational Grazing Project

A prescribed rotational grazing system was implemented on a sheep farm in the Town of Ogden (Black Creek and Salmon Creek watersheds) last fall and winter to guide the strategic use of available forage resources, improve soil health, and improve overall farm efficiency. The District recommended the system to enhance the farm’s productivity, profitability, and sustainability. This project was funded through Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Round 18 Cost-Share program.

Work began with the targeted clearing of areas overrun with dead ash, poison ivy, and several invasive species including Japanese honeysuckle, autumn olive, and multiflora rose. With these problematic and invasive plants removed, these areas can be reclaimed for expanded pasture use, of which is a key step towards extending the grazing period as long as possible throughout the year. Through increased pasture availability, the farm will be able to stockpile forage and reduce their dependence on supplementally purchased feed to achieve their goal of year-round grazing. Additional benefits of this include reduced internal parasite pressure through enabling of rotational grazing and avoidance of overgrazing.

In order to support the expanded pasture availability, a livestock watering system was installed utilizing an existing well on the property. This new system eliminates the need to haul water to individual paddocks, significantly reducing labor and energy costs. Additionally, operational efficiency will be improved and consistent access to clean water ensured, supporting the daily hydration needs and overall health of the sheep.



Wettest Spring in Monroe County in Over 150 Years

It has been an extraordinarily wet spring this year, and according to multiple reports Monroe County saw its wettest March and April in over 150 years. While May did not break records, it was also a very wet month.

What does this mean for you as a landowner? As large scale weather events become more common, it is important to understand if your property can manage stormwater. If you live on a property with a water body, whether it's a small creek or along a Great Lake, there are steps you can take to make sure your property is ready to manage stormwater:

- Maintain a riparian buffer with a mix of deep-rooted trees, shrubs, and grass/perennials to fortify banks of streams or ponds minimizing erosion
- Do not mow to the edge of the stream or pond where the buffer can be left to flourish and focus on root growth
- If you have drainage ways on your property, natural or man-made (grass swales, french drains, etc.) do not block those drainage ways
- Do not direct gutters, downspouts, or pipes directly to a bank as that targeted release of water will undercut the bank and result in more chance of erosion risk

Stormwater Debris Forum

In May, District staff along with several members of the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County (<https://www.stormwatercoalition.com/>), attended a Stormwater Debris Solutions Forum held at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). The goal of this workshop was to create a shared understanding and build support among communities and partners to improve stormwater debris collection efforts and develop practical, easy-to-use guidance.

Stormwater Coalition members heard from representatives from RIT & CASCADE (Community Action for Stormwater Clean-up and Debris Elimination), National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), New York Sea Grant, University of Florida, and got to share their own local experiences (pictured right) on the topic including the use of Litta Traps in the City of Rochester and Towns of Irondequoit and Pittsford to intercept stormwater debris before it reaches our water bodies.



2026 Conservation Field Days Open for Registration

We are now accepting registrations for the 2025 Conservation Field Days, being held September 15th, 16th, and 17th 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.

Common organizations who lead activities for students include, but are not limited to, Seneca Park Zoo Society, Genesee Country Village & Museum, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, and more!

Soil Health 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 1st, 2026. 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



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Don't forget to visit us on opening day at the Great New York State Fair!

Staff from our office will be at the NYS Conservation District Employees' Association booth, sharing information with attendees about Soil & Water Conservation Districts across New York State, including the programs, services, and funding opportunities available.

Stop by to test your luck in our guessing contest and snap a photo as Ronny Raindrop!

We look forward to seeing you there!

The fair runs from August 26th to September 7th

The District also wants to extend our gratitude to Erica Schreiner with Oswego County SWCD who has been a part of the State Fair Committee since 1995 and is retiring this summer.

Thank you for everything you've done for the committee, Erica! We've truly appreciated your time and effort and will miss having you with us. Wishing you all the best!

