MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

“Out of the long list of nature's gifts to man, none is perhaps so utterly essential to human life as soil”
– Hugh Hammond Bennett

Table of Contents

Who We Are & What is Our Mission?

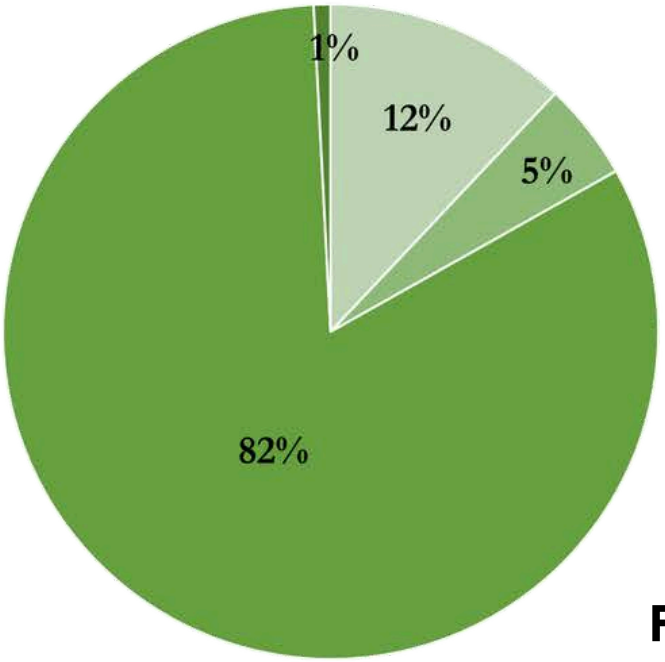
The Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District (MCSWCD) is a municipal subdivision that partners with state, local and federal agencies, as well as watershed groups to educate and assist landowners and municipalities in planning and implementing best management practices that stabilize soil, improve water quality, manage stormwater runoff, preserve open space, and manage fish and wildlife habitat.

2025 Funding

During 2025 the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District leveraged **$1,070,485** for the **$50,000** investment from the county.

This represents a **$21.41** return for each dollar in County appropriation funds to complete conservation initiatives for Monroe County.

Partner Investment for MCSWCD Operations

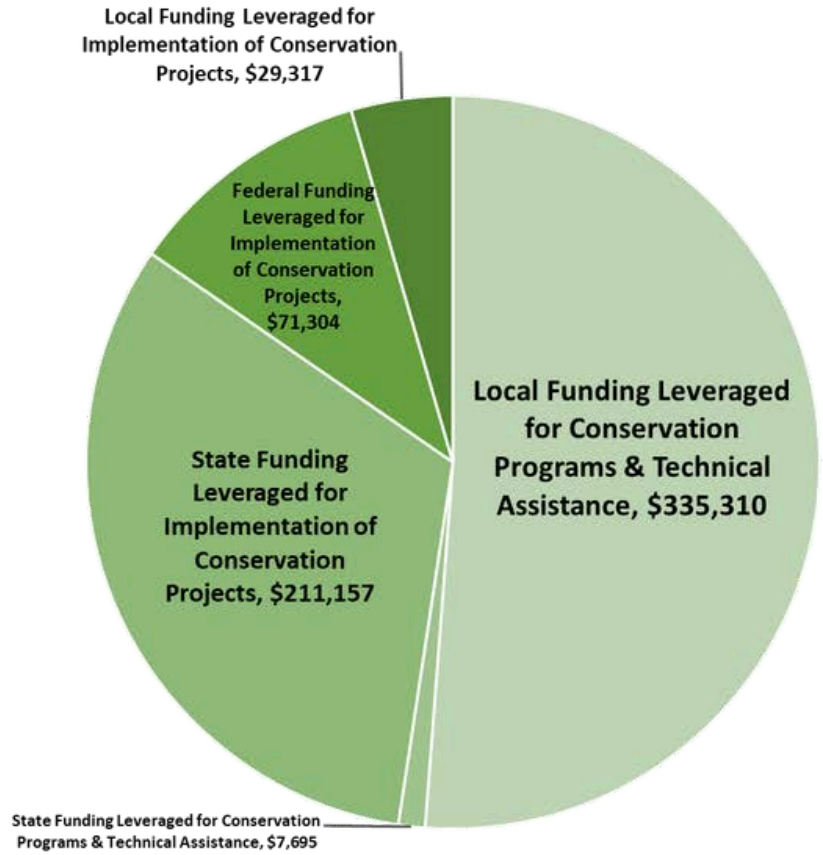


- County Budget Appropriation ($50,000)
- County Office Support for District Operations ($20,000)
- NY State Soil & Water ($342,257)
- Federal ($3,445)

The District continues to provide a variety of valuable services to Monroe County and its residents, including technical assistance to local towns and villages, businesses, landowners, agricultural producers and other county agencies.

In 2025, the MCSWCD responded to **172** requests for water quality technical assistance and **138** requests for land use management, of which **159** were requests from our local municipalities.

Funding Leveraged for Conservation Programs & Projects



2025 Accomplishments

2025 Accomplishments

33 invasive species monitoring traps installed

Over 4,000 people encountered about invasive species

139 stormwater technical assistance requests completed

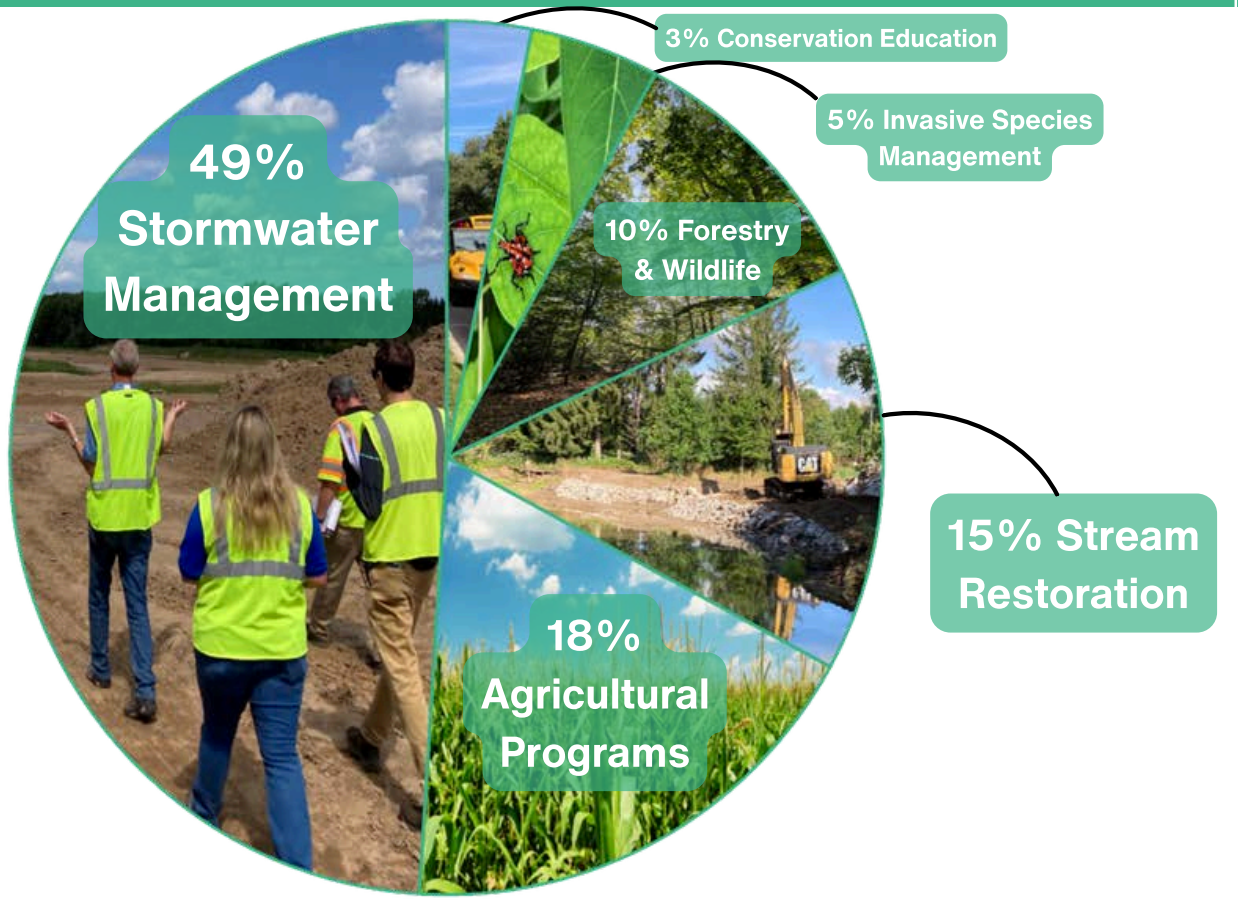
50 stormwater management site visits

12 stormwater management trainings

717 stormwater professionals trained

723 hours dedicated to stormwater technical services

2025 Program Services & Funding



Envirothon

The Envirothon is a series of events in which teams of high school students compete by answering questions about five environmental topics: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Current Issues, and Wildlife. The 2025 Current Issue topic was "Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Changing Climate."

2025 Envirothon winning team

Teams also prepare a short oral presentation based off of the Current Issue topic each year. Winners at the county level advance to represent their SWCD in the State competition!

Held at Monroe County's Ellison Park, **90 students** from **6 schools** participated in the 2025 Monroe County Envirothon! **Team C from the Harley School** took first place at our event and placed 10th out of 39 teams at the state competition in Cortland, NY.

Forestry exam station

This year District staff once again participated in the 2025 State Envirothon, which was held in Geneva, NY, as oral presentation judges!

Conservation Field Days

Tree Planting with MC Parks Dept

Hosted in Ellison Park, Conservation Field Days is an opportunity for students to learn about environmental issues like invasive species, agriculture, water quality, and more from a variety of experts from organizations like Ducks Unlimited, New York Sea Grant, Genesee Country Village & Museum, and more!

This year's event was a success, with **over 680 5th and 6th grade students** from **12 schools** attending the three day event to learn about a variety of topics including plastic pollution, dairy farming, invasive species, and more and participated in hands-on activities including making their own seed balls, making butter, and going on a GPS scavenger hunt! Overall, **18 different organizations** provided engaging, hands-on presentations to students! Thank you to all our volunteers for this event. If it wasn't for you it would be impossible to host this great multi-day outdoor educational event.

Bird Banding with Braddock Bay Bird Observatory

Thank you to our sponsors for our 2025 Educational Events!
Monroe County Parks Department for use of Ellison Park, pavilions and South Lodge.
Wegmans for providing refreshments to volunteers and staff.
Arcadis for providing refreshments to students.

Community Education

In 2025, District staff participated in **6** local programs about water quality reaching **over 230** youth and adults. These events involved an interactive watershed model to learn how their impacts have much bigger effects than they may realize and a color-themed scavenger hunt throughout nature.

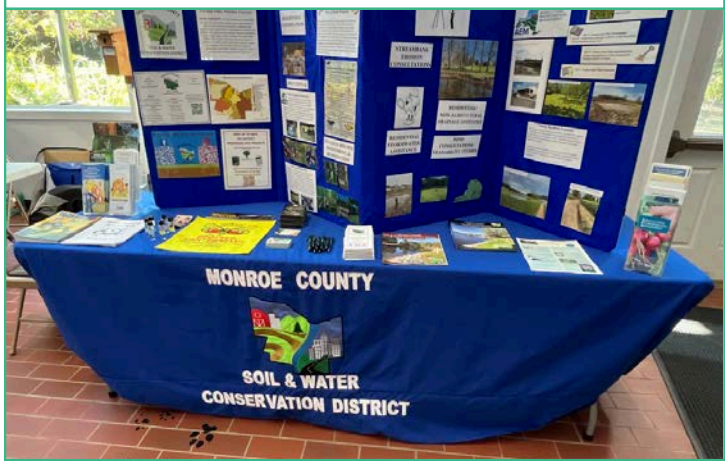
Families participating in Mendon Public Library's summer reading program scoured Rotary Park in the Village of Honeoye Falls for different colored objects to share with others how their object's roles in their environment.

District staff also spoke on conservation planting techniques and native or naturalized species selection for Color Fairport Green, a grassroots, 501(c)(3) non-profit working toward a sustainable future in the Village of Fairport, the Town of Perinton, and the surrounding community.

Using the Enviroscape, an interactive watershed model, District staff educated youth and their families at four separate events including the Great Outdoors Fest at Genesee Country Village & Museum (GCV&M), Earth Day at Seneca Park Zoo, and RCSD #12 and #16's annual project fairs. The Enviroscape allows students to act as a storm event and see the results of said storm on their local streams from pollution, runoff, erosion, etc. and how it eventually affects Lake Ontario. The model helps tie in how connected everything is from a single stormwater drain to their drinking water source.

Mendon Public Library Summer Reading Program's Color Scavenger Hunt

District booth at GCV&M



Enviroscape Model

Conservation Tree & Shrub Program

27,156 trees and shrubs were distributed to **642** landowners in 2025, sequestering approximately 1,567 metric tons of CO2 over the next 10 years!

Landowners purchase the trees and shrubs to be used for various conservation purposes such as wind breaks, wildlife habitat, stormwater runoff control, and climate resilience.

New species for 2025 that were popular included Dense Blazing Star, Eastern Redbud, and Black Tupelo; while returning popular species included American Hazelnut, Streamco Willow, and White Oak.

New for 2025

Black Tupelo

Common Hackberry

Eastern Redbud

Eastern Sand Cherry

Ninebark

Dense Blazing Star

Red Mulberry

The District once again partnered with the County Department of Environmental Services to host the annual Conservation Tree & Shrub Program at the county's ecopark.

Conservation Tree & Shrub Program

The Conservation Tree & Shrub Program yet again suprassed previous years with record participation from every town in the county!

Residents across the county are reached through our District mailing list, town or village advertising, social media, online or printed media, local library advertising, and partnerships with local conservation groups.

Our fastest selling species were: Dense Blazing Star (Top L), Streamco Willow (Top R), White Oak (Bottom L), and American Hazlenut (Bottom R).

Distribution of Items Sold in 2025

In addition to bare root seedlings, we also offer wildflower seed mixes, bluebird nest boxes, bat roosting boxes, tree shelters (tube, stake, bird netting), flags for marking, and fertilizer tablets.

91% seedlings

48% conifers

23% shrubs

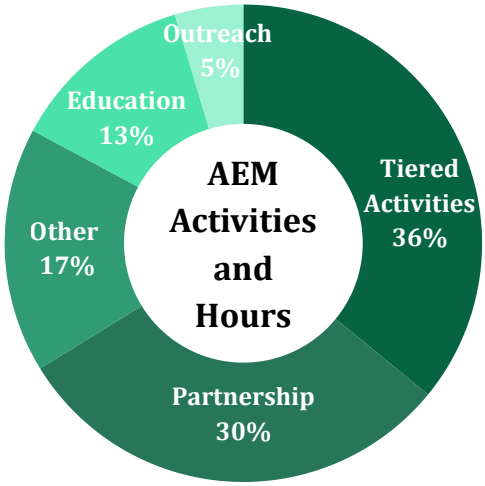
29% hardwoods

3% seed mixes and enhancement items

AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program is a voluntary, farmer-driven conservation initiative administered locally by the MCSWCD. The program supports farmers in enhancing environmental stewardship while sustaining productive and profitable agricultural operations. Through practical, science-based planning, AEM helps farmers identify and implement strategies that protect natural resources and align with their business objectives. Participants collaborate with conservation professionals through a structured five-tier process to assess, plan, and improve environmental practices on their farms. To date, **more than 600 farms** in Monroe County have participated in the AEM program.

MCSWCD dedicated **749.5 hours** to AEM Services in 2025, dedicated to technical assistance to farms, education, partnership, and outreach services where we partner and work with fellow organizations in the region.



The Fourmile Creek and Thomas Creek watersheds were designated as priority areas for the AEM program for 2025. Although these watersheds are located within the more urbanized municipalities of Monroe County, they continue to support significant agricultural activity, with approximately 33% of the land use remaining in agricultural use. This agricultural landscape exists alongside ongoing development, with 37 farms within the two watersheds particpating in the AEM program.

In the program's 27th year (2025), the District updated its AEM 5-Year Strategic Plan and developed a corresponding 3-Year Action Plan. Both were informed by watershed-specific factors, including the percentage of agricultural land, identified water quality concerns, and the level of farmer interest and participation. In 2025, AEM Tiered activities concentrated on udpating outdated farm conservation plans and reviewing conservation practices that had been implemented in prior years. The staff also advanced several farms from a Tier 1 to a Tier 2 farm assessment, recognizing current environmental stewardship while also assessing any environmental concerns associated with their farming operations. These focused activities account for 68% of Tiered activities in 2025.

Tier 5A on a dairy farm

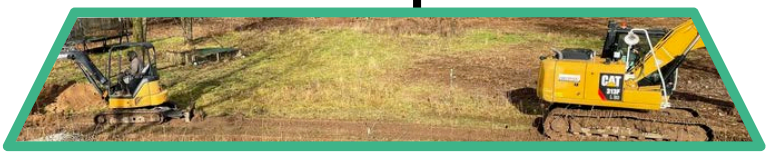
AEM Planning Uses a Five-Tiered Approach

Tier 1 - Inventory

Tier 2 - Site Visit

Tier 3 - Plan Development

Tier 4 - Plan Implementation



Tier 5 - Plan Update and Practice Evaluation

AEM Benefits:

Document environmental stewardship

Improve local water quality

Manage manure, nutrients, and runoff

Reduce soil erosion

Meet environmental regulations and permit requirements

Improve community relations

Meet environmental regulations and permit requirements

Prescribed Rotational Grazing System

To enhance the productivity, profitability, and sustainability of a sheep farm in the Town of Ogden, the District recommended the implementation of a Prescribed Rotational Grazing System. This system will guide the strategic use of available forage resources, improve soil health, and improve overall farm efficiency. The farm lies within two watersheds – Black Creek and Salmon Creek – both of which are recognized as having water quality issues linked to agricultural activity.

In 2025, targeted land management efforts focused on clearing areas overrun with dead ash, poison ivy, Japanese honeysuckle, autumn olive, and multiflora rose. These invasive and problematic species were removed to reclaim these areas for expanded pasture use. The expansion of grazing land is a key step in extending the grazing period as long as possible throughout the year. By increasing pasture availability, the farm will be able to stockpile forage and reduce dependency on supplemental purchased feeds, with the goal of achieving near year-round grazing. This approach will also help reduce internal parasite pressure by enabling rotational grazing and avoiding overgrazing.

To support this expansion, a livestock watering system was installed utilizing an existing well on the property. This new system will eliminate the need to haul water to individual paddocks, significantly reducing labor and energy costs. Additionally, it will improve operational efficiency and ensure consistent access to clean water, supporting the daily hydration needs and overall health of the sheep.

This project was funded through AEM Round 18 Cost-Share grant program.

Before: Invasive plants such as autumn olive and Japanese honeysuckle had taken over what could be prime pasture land

After: Areas of dead ash and invasive species were cleared out to expand rotational grazing pasture land

After: Livestock watering system installed

2025 Monroe County Farm Tour

In collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Monroe County, the District hosted a farm tour this summer for local and state policymakers at three generational Monroe County farms that are local staples of their communities. Through this tour, the District and CCE strived to strengthen the connection between legislators and local agriculture, all while highlighting the continued support our organizations offer to our farming communities.

The tour kicked off at **Colby Homestead Farms**, a large, dairy farm in the Town of Ogden. Legislators observed how the farm continues to embrace the newest science and technology available to farming operations including their robotic milking operation, along with viewing the farm's cow barn, manure management, and silage storage and management.

Following that, they visited **Conrow Farms** in the Town of Clarkson, currently operating 1,000 acres of land including apple orchards, of which are supplied to local NY company, Mott's, hay fields, winter squash crop, and soybeans. Legislators learned about the history of their farm and toured the farm's orchards, pesticide management practices, and fuel containment system.

The final farm on the tour was **Brightly Farms** in the Town of Hamlin. What started as only 120 acres shortly after WWII, is now over 2,000 acres producing cabbage, corn, and more. Legislators were shown soil health management and regenerative agricultural practices, their use of precision farming technology, and alternative energy use. Brightly Farms also operates a family market selling fresh produce, homemade pies, jams, and more; and so kindly hosted the legislators after the tour for a delicious homemade dinner right at the market.

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

(L) Group photo at Brightly Farms
(Top) MCSWCD board members at Colby Homestead Farms
(R) Conrow Farms orchards

Thank you to all the legislators who dedicated their day to supporting local agriculture!

Urban Agriculture

The MCSWCD continued their partnership with the Urban Agriculture Working Group (UAWG) in 2025 as a way to make connections with those involved in urban agriculture and community gardening in the City of Rochester.

The UAWG'S mission is to strengthen Rochester NY's urban agriculture movement, develop community leaders, and collaboratively identify and address policy, resource and educational barriers to urban agriculture and community gardening of all kinds.

The District once again participated in the 2025 Urban Agriculture Conference held at East High School on March 22nd. The District was one of many organizations who tabled at the conference providing attendees the opportunity to learn about our work with urban agriculture. The conference also featured various workshops and incorporated the annual Seed Swap & Share allowing various urban gardens to swap and share seeds for their gardens in anticipation of the upcoming growing season.

In addition to the spring conference, District staff attended a soil health field day at Foodlink Farm as part of the 2025 Soil Health & Climate Resiliency Field Days series. Sixty-five community members attended to learn about urban soil health and cover cropping. The District was one of several organizations at the event along with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Harvest NY, UAWG, Foodlink Community Farm, and New York Soil Health.

Attendees learn about cover cropping establishment and termination

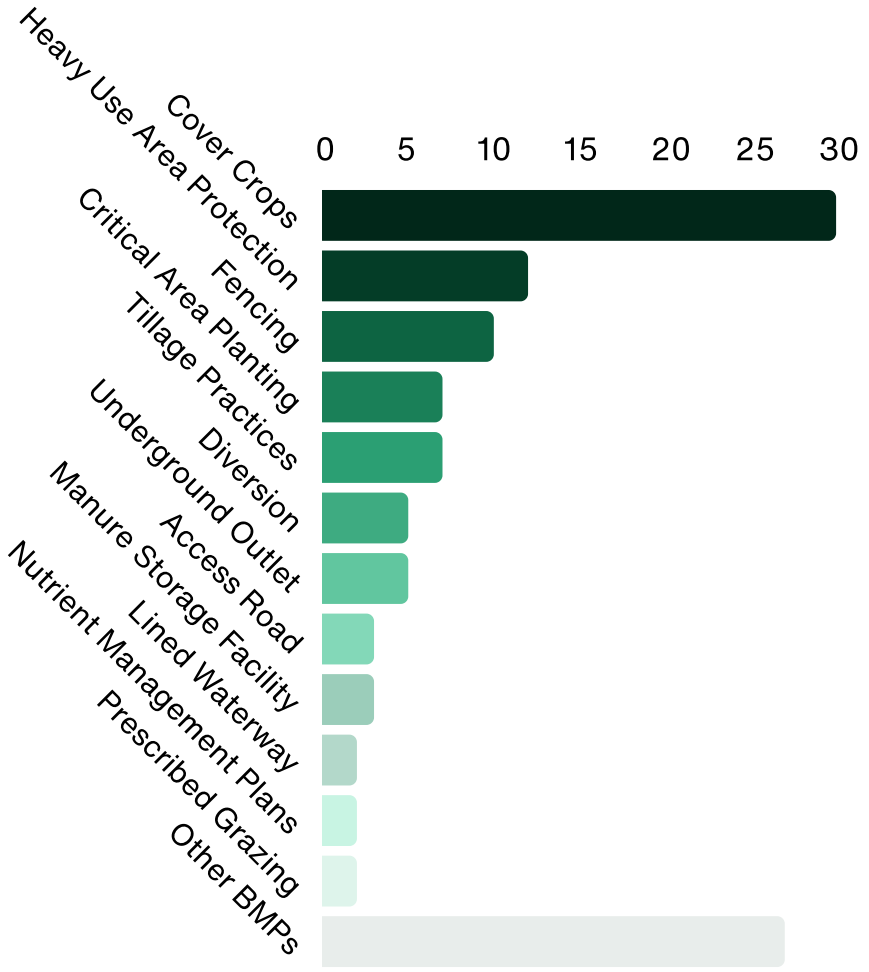
Agricultural Plastics Recycling

In 2025, the District partnered with Ag Plastics Solutions LLC to support the recycling of **1,995** pounds of agricultural plastics collected from **7** farms in Monroe County. Accepted materials include rigid high-density polyethylene (HDPE) containers, 55 gallons or smaller, that previously held products used for crop protection, animal health, specialty pest control, micronutrients, biologicals, fertilizers, and adjuvants. Recycled agricultural plastics are transformed into new products such as drainage pipe, fence posts, and nursery pots, helping conserve landfill space, reduce fossil fuel use, and save water, providing environmental benefits for both the agricultural community and the public.

Genesee River Watershed Coalition

The Genesee River is a major waterway in western New York that stretches from northern Pennsylvania, and its health directly affects communities such as Rochester as well as downstream ecosystems in Lake Ontario. The Genesee River Watershed Coalition (GRWCCD), a regional partnership of 10 Soil and Water Conservation Districts, is focused on improving water quality and ecosystem health across a large, multi-county watershed. Through coordinated conservation projects and shared resources, it addresses pollution and erosion challenges that require coordinated, cross-regional solutions rather than isolated local efforts. Key environmental concerns include nutrient pollution from agricultural runoff, sediment loading and streambank erosion, degraded stream habitats, and impacts of land use on water quality. The GRWCCD supports a variety of conservation and restoration efforts including: streambank stabilization and erosion control projects, tree and vegetation plantings along waterways (riparian buffers), agricultural best management practices (BMPs), such as cover cropping for erosion control and improved manure storage for nutrient management, and watershed monitoring and restoration planning.

In 2025, **115 Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)** were implemented in the Genesee River Watershed by Monroe, Allegany, Genesee, Steuben, and Wyoming County Soil & Water Conservation Districts



Shipbuilders Creek Streambank Stabilization

A large streambank stabilization project was implemented along Shipbuilders Creek at Thomas High School in the Town of Webster. With funding through the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA), this project was the culmination of years of planning and coordination between the District, Town of Webster Highway Department, Thomas High School staff, and Town of Webster Parks Department.

Shipbuilders Creek is part of a highly urbanized watershed and drains directly into Lake Ontario. This project was a priority not just due to the erosion and water quality concerns, but additionally this section of stream is one of the very few last remaining open spaces along the entirety of the stream's length. This is especially important given Shipbuilders Creek has an impaired best usage designation for fish/aquatic habitat and secondary contact recreation. The project site also contained existing curbing previously installed in an attempt to prevent erosion that had failed, requiring new, updated practices to be installed.

In total, **425 feet of streambank stabilization** was implemented along the site by Webster Highway Department over two weeks.

Implemented Practices Included:

Shipbuilders Streambank Stabilization

Following construction, a robust, multi-row riparian buffer was installed creating a **42,000 square foot** buffer comprised of **400** native trees and shrubs. Species planted included Arrowwood, Bigtooth Aspen, Eastern Redbud, Hackberry, Nannyberry, Ninebark, Northern Bayberry, Red Maple, Red Oak, River Birch, Silky Dogwood, Silver Maple, Serviceberry, Tulip Poplar, and White Flowering Dogwood. These specis are all commonly planted for their erosion control traits, wildlife value, and more.

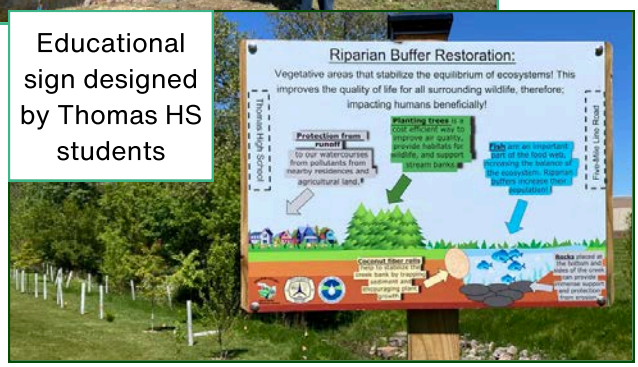
Completed buffer plantings

Webster Highway Department assists with planting large tree stock

Good riparian buffers consist of a mix of vegetation as seen here: trees, shrubs, grass

Students view the coir logs

Educational sign designed by Thomas HS students



Over **60** high school science students from Thomas High School joined District staff to help plant the buffer. Additionally, the students learned about the various stabilization practices implemented and the importance of riparian buffers for water quality, aquatic habitat, and more. Several students also designed an educational sign installed at the project site highlighting the project's importance and future benefits to the greater watershed area.

Project and buffer in May 2025

East Branch of Allen Creek Streambank Stabilization

The MCSWCD implemented a streambank stabilization project within a highly developed watershed along the East Branch of Allen Creek in the Town of Pittsford in Fall of 2025 due to erosion concerns.

The project protected **80 feet of streambank** through the installation of longitudinal peaked stone toe protection. Upon completion of construction activities, District staff planted a multi-row riparian buffer extending along the entire project reach.

This project was funded through cost-sharing through the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA).

Construction along the project site

Mulching is completed after construciton

Plants are prepared for installation of a multi-row riparian buffer following reestablishment of grass

Reforestation in Response to Emerald Ash Borer Decimation

The three-year reforestation initiative, launched in response to the widespread loss of native ash canopies caused by the invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis*), continued through 2025. This invasive beetle, first detected in New York State in 2009, has since spread across the state and severely reduced ash tree populations. Monroe County has some of the highest ash tree densities in New York, reaching 30–100% in certain areas. Given the extensive canopy loss and high ash density, reforestation and EAB mitigation remain critical priorities for restoring healthy forest ecosystems. These efforts provide significant benefits to Monroe County residents, including improved air and water quality, preservation of natural public lands for both people and wildlife, erosion control along riparian corridors, and increased carbon sequestration.

To complete this effort, the District partnered with Monroe County Parks Department, planting **4,961 trees** in six county parks; Tinker Nature Park, planting **92 trees** in the park; Village of Honeoye Falls, planting **80 trees** in Rotary Park; Oatka Creek Watershed Committee, planting **138 trees** on two public lands; New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, planting **234 trees** at Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area with Braddock Bay Raptor Research volunteers; and Rush Recreation & Park Association, planting **181 trees** at Hundred Acre Park. In total, **5,686 trees were planted and 112 acres restored** in 2025.

This effort is being made possible in part through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Forest Restoration grant awarded to the District in the amount of $200,000.

Volunteer plantings at Braddock Bay Park and Owl Woods in the Braddock Bay WMA

Trees planted at Oatka Creek Park

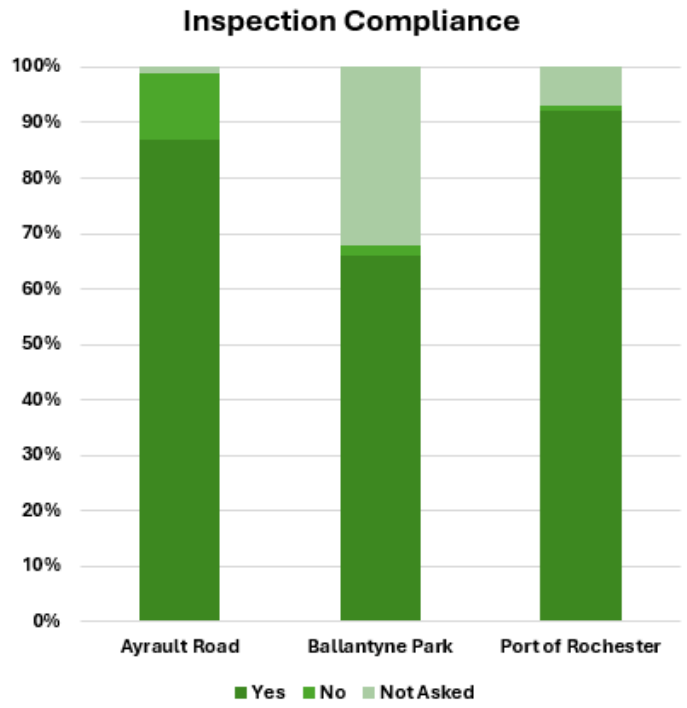
Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention

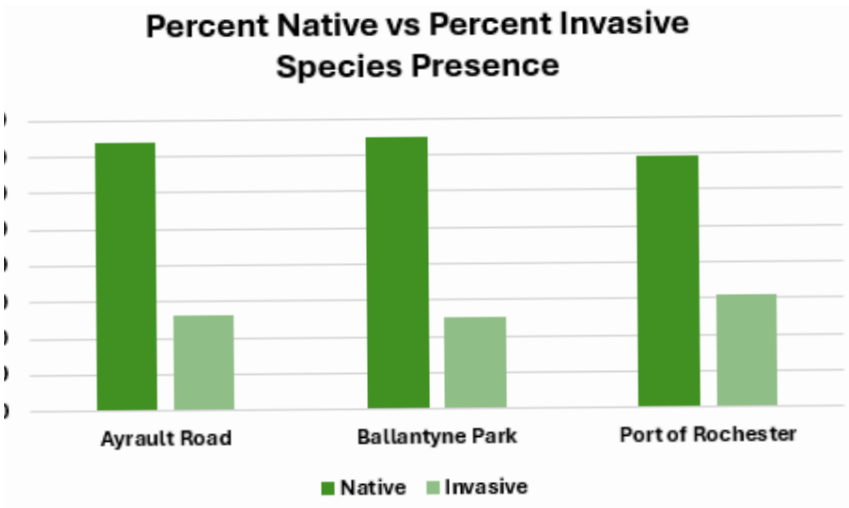
MCSWCD once again partnered with Monroe County Department of Environmental Services (DES) for the eighth year via funding received from the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA) to provide a Watercraft Steward Program at the Port of Rochester on Lake Ontario, Ballantyne Park on Black Creek, and the Ayrault Road launch on the Erie Canal.

Boat stewards play a critical role in protecting aquatic ecosystems by combining direct inspection activities with public education. Through the partnership between the District and Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FLPRISM), the program strengthens its capacity to prevent the spread of invasive species and preserve waterway health in the region.

This year, three stewards were able to inspect **2,355** boats and educate over **4,000** people during the course of the season.

Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) was the most common invasive species found during inspections, being found at all three launches





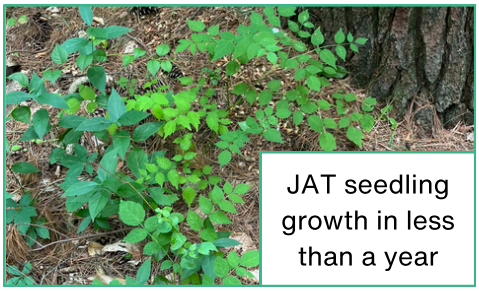
Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring

MCSWCD continued its early detection and monitoring project for the invasive spotted lanternfly (SLF), partnering with SUNY Brockport, Monroe County Parks Department, the City of Rochester, the Towns of Chili, Gates, Greece, Hamlin, Henrietta, Penfield, Town of Pittsford, and the Village of East Rochester to install and monitor **33 traps** around the county. Partners this year took on a larger monitoring role checking the traps bi-weekly to any SLF presence, as well as overall trap maintenance needs. **No SLF** were found in any of the monitoring traps in 2025.

SLF is an invasive pest from Asia that has caused significant economic damage in Pennsylvania, New York City, and surrounding areas. Since its first detection in Staten Island in August 2020, populations have been confirmed in multiple counties across NYS, along with additional counties reporting one or a few individual sightings. SLF feed on more than 70 plant species, but they most commonly target grapes, hops, & apples, leading to both ecological disruption & economic losses.

Traps are comprised of netting wrapped around the tree trunk funneling insects into a cone which further funnels SLF into a detachable bag or container. District and partnering staff collect the bags/containers throughout summer and fall, where they are then examined for SLF presence. Each trap was accompanied with an educational sign.

Japanese Angelica Tree Monitoring



JAT seedling growth in less than a year

Massive size of a JAT leaf

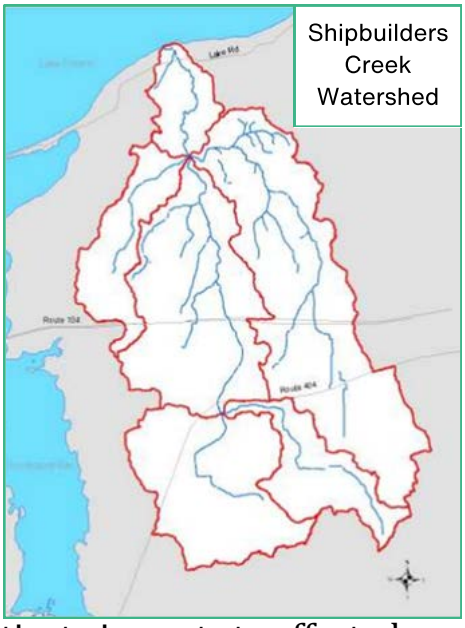
Since 2020, MCSWCD has monitored the populations of invasive Japanese angelica tree (JAT) at Mendon Ponds and Durand Eastman Parks, partnering with SUNY Brockport Department of Environmental Science & Ecology. Since treatment in 2020, the populations at Mendon Ponds have continued to grow seedlings each year. While presence has significantly decreased, continued growth of JAT is a persisting threat due to its fast growth and spread through tubers. One individual that evaded detection grew over 8 feet tall with one meter wide leaves in less than five years! District staff will continue to pull seedlings from the populations and possibly treat the populations depending on the rate of spread.

Shipbuilders Creek Stormwater Improvements

Shipbuilders Creek is an approximately eight-square mile watershed located east of Rochester. The creek originates in the Town of Penfield, flows north through the Town of Webster, and ultimately discharges into the Rochester Embayment of Lake Ontario.

Over the past several decades, the watershed has experienced substantial residential and commercial development. In 2008, the watershed was designated as impaired, with stormwater runoff identified as a primary contributing factor to water quality degradation.

The restoration project described herein was identified through the Shipbuilders Creek Stormwater Assessment and Action Plan. The assessment documented 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. These improvements are intended to reduce erosive stormwater flows, alleviate downstream capacity constraints, and mitigate impacts to affected stream reaches.

At Finn Park in the Town of Webster, a large offline regional stormwater management facility was constructed to capture, infiltrate, and treat stormwater runoff from older upstream development. The project is expected to reduce pollutant loading and flooding to Shipbuilders Creek while advancing implementation of county watershed management objectives.

Funding for the project was provided by the Town of Webster, Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLLOWPA), Monroe County Department of Environmental Services, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program.

Finn Park Stormwater Improvements

Upstream view of
the completed culvert

Start of grading, digging, and hauling of soil
to create the first cell of the pond

This multi-year, multi-phase project involved the installation of two cells of the stormwater pond as well as the stream diversion structure

Stormwater Management Assistance

The Stormwater Coalition (SWC) is a partnership of 26 municipalities in Monroe County, created in 2000 and coordinated by the county's Department of Environmental Services. Its purpose is to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff—such as rain and snowmelt—before it reaches local waterways like the Genesee River and Lake Ontario. By working together, the municipalities lower costs, improve consistency, and better meet environmental regulations. The District supports the coalition by providing construction assistance and training services to its members.

In 2025, District staff received and responded to **139 technical assistance requests,** providing **723 hours of staff time** to the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County. Many of these requests relate to stormwater management ponds, drainage, and streambank erosion assistance.

Stormwater Management Training

As part of our committment to stormwater management and the Stormwater Coalition, the District offers a plethora of training opportunities not just for fellow Coalition members but stormwater professionals across the state.

These trainings include the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control (E&SC) Certification, stormwater management trainings that expand on core topics introduced in the E&SC certification, in-field construction and post-construction trainings, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systm (MS4) audit preparation, and more. The District hosted **12 stormwater related trainings and workshops** in 2025.

Training was provided to **717** engineers, municipal officials, landowners, and contractors to strengthen planning, design, and construction practices that support the protection of water quality across the county.

135 of these people were Monroe County municipal employees that are members of the Stormwater Coalition.

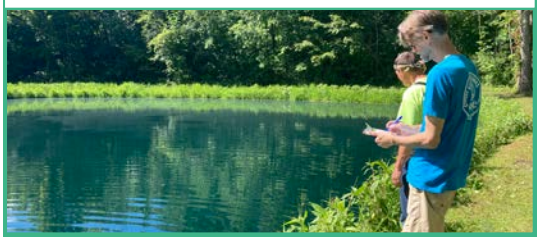
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater Pond Inspections & Education

In 2025, the District completed **8** pond-related assistance requests, including stormwater pond consultations, recreational pond guidance, and pond feasibility evaluations.

Staff provided technical assistance to homeowners, municipalities, and landowners to address pond management concerns, improve stormwater pond performance, and support water quality and flood reduction goals. The District also evaluated potential recreational pond sites by reviewing environmental, design, and permitting considerations to help landowners make informed decisions.

District staff assist a landowner in the Town of Clarkson with pond management



Runoff & Erosion Control Technical Assistance

Staff survey a streambank erosion site in the Town of Gates

Staff responded to **13** requests for erosion control recommendations on residential, municipal, and stream-related sites.

Staff assess the extent and causes of erosion on-site and work with landowners to identify stabilization solutions.

Streambank remediation typically combines rock and vegetation to strengthen streambanks, reduce erosion, and limit sediment entering local streams, making stream stabilization a key county priority.

Water Quality Sampling

Braddock Bay Tributaries Monitoring

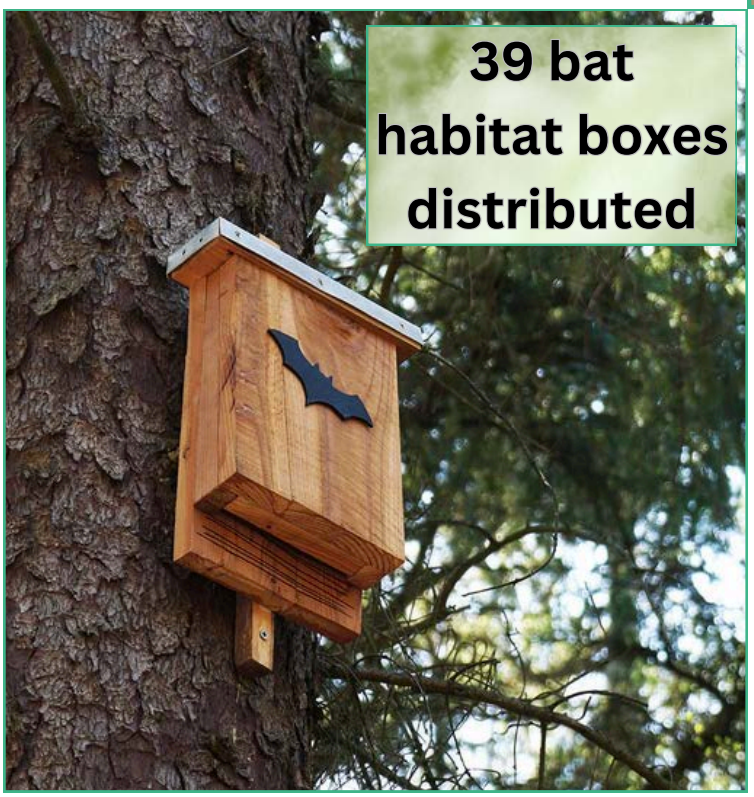
In 2025, the District partnered with SUNY Brockport Department of Environmental Science & Ecology and Monroe County Department of Environmental Services to perform water quality monitoring at three tributaries to Braddock Bay: Buttonwood Creek, Salmon Creek, and West Creek.

Continued monitoring of these sites follows the delisting of the Rochester Embayment Area of Concern to identify seasonal trends in nutrient, plant, and algal dynamics, including input from nutrients in the three tributaries, to further improve water quality. Data collected throughout the sampling effort will help to understand the potential role of several watershed-level events.

Wildlife Houses

Each year, as part of our wildlife programming, the District distributes wildlife housing for bluebirds and bats to county residents. These shelters provide safe spaces for nesting, breeding, raising young, and roosting, all of which are continually threatened by the continued loss of habitat for bluebirds and bats.

As the state bird of New York, it was quite disappointing to have Eastern Bluebird populations plummet in the early 1900's due to the loss of suitable nesting habitat (open areas and cavities), increased harmful pesticide use, and increase in exotic species taking over active bluebird nesting cavities. Bluebirds are vital members of their ecosystems, keeping insect populations in check, including agricultural pest insects. The increase in available nesting boxes to landowners have helped the bluebird population recover.



Like bluebird populations, our bat populations have also severely declined, largely due to White Nose Syndrome. Installing bat roosting boxes can help our bat populations begin to increase again! Bats are extremely important to the ecosystem eating up to 50% of their body weight in insects every night. A decrease in bats means an increase in insect pests. It is estimated that bats save farmers up to $3.7 billion a year eating pests that would otherwise require pesticides. Not to mention they control the mosquito population, reducing the spread of mosquito-borne illnesses.

Staff 2025

Kelly Emerick
Executive Director

Kristin White
Principal Office Account Clerk

James Sroka
Soil & Water Resource Technician

Jacob Kearney
Conservation Program Specialist

District staff and board members attend the annual Water Quailty Symposium banquet and dinner held in our very own Rochester, NY in 2025

Board of Directors 2025

Rollin Pickering
Chairman & New York Grange Representative

Maureen Leupold
Vice Chair & Member at Large

Chuck Colby
Treasurer & Member at Large

Marc Krieger
Assistant Treasurer & Farm Bureau Representative

Steve Brew
Legislative Representative

The Monroe County SWCD was created in **1953** by the Monroe County Board of Supervisors under New York State Soil & Water Conservation District Law.

Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

145 Paul Road, Building 5
Rochester, NY 14624
Phone: (585) 753-7380
Email: mcswcd@monroecounty.gov

Find us on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/MonroeCountySWCD
Find us on Instagram:
www.instagram.com/monroecountyswcd_ny

Cover Photo: Completed streambank stabilization and riparian buffer along Shipbuilders Creek in the Town of Webster near Webster Thomas High School

Steelhead trout at a District project site

Programs and services offered through the MSWCD are made possible through the financial support of the County of Monroe, State of NY, specialized grant opportunities, and fundraising programs. All SWCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, sex, age, martial status, sexual orientation, or disability.