

Niagara County
Soil And Water
Conservation District
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Fish Order Form Enclosed

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Niagara Nature News

An Environmental Publication by
Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District

Summer 2009



Legacy Act Project Moves Forward

In a move that highlights the success of inter-agency partnerships, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District (NCSWCD) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) have joined together in partnership to address contaminated sediments in Eighteenmile Creek. EPA and NCSWCD have signed an agreement to assess the contaminated sediments in the creek, which is an important step toward the eventual de-listing of the creek as a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC).

Beginning this summer, the Eighteenmile Creek Project will investigate the levels and volumes of contaminated sediments within the creek starting at Olcott Harbor and progressing south to the Erie Canal in Lockport, NY. Scientists will take samples of the sediment to determine the extent of the contamination in the main branch of Eighteenmile Creek, focusing on the areas near the Burt and Newfane Dams. The results will be used by Eighteenmile Creek stakeholders to assess the best ways to clean up the contaminated sediments and eventually submit a sediment cleanup proposal for potential USEPA Legacy Act funding in the near future.

Any comments, questions, or concerns related to the work scheduled for this summer should be forwarded to Victor DiGiacomo @ victor.digiacomo@ny.nacdnet.net, or 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, NY 14094.

"The activist is not the man who says the river is dirty. The activist is the man who cleans up the river."

- Ross Perot (1930-) Founder of EDS, Philanthropist,
U.S. Presidential Candidate in 1992 and 1996

Endangered Species Profile



Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*)

Description:

The Blanding's Turtle has a smooth helmet-shaped shell (carapace) decorated with streaks and light yellow dots. Its hinged underside (plastron) allows it to partially close for protection. It is recognized by the bright yellow on its chin and throat. Some seem to have what appears to be a black moustache around its mouth. Male turtles are larger than the females with a concave underside for mating. They can weigh up to 3lbs. Its head, tail and legs are a blue-black color. Young turtles are dully patterned to blend into the environment and lack the yellow chin.

Habitat:

Semi-aquatic, it needs both water and land to survive. It likes living in shallow waters of bogs, marshes, and streams, preferring thick emergent vegetation. Some adult turtles may travel a distance to rest in plowed fields, pastures and road berms. It also likes to lie in the sun to keep warm. Being cold-blooded, in the winter they hibernate by burrowing in the silt on the water bottom to stay warm.

Reproduction:

Blanding's turtles mate under water, after which the female moves onto land to lounge in the sun, called thermoregulation, which helps to speed the development of the eggs. It lays its 3 to 17 eggs on sandy ground, traveling up to 1 mile or more to find a suitable site. It takes 65-90 days for the clutch to hatch. Hatchlings are about 1.25 inches long and range from dark green to gray in color. Scientists know very little about the habits of the young because they are so secretive. A Blanding's turtle takes 18-22 years to reach sexual maturity and may live to be 70 years old.

Diet:

They eat crayfish, tadpoles, frogs, small fish, leeches, insects, snails, worms, berries and aquatic vegetation, feeding both on land and under water.

Range:

Centered around the Great Lakes, their range extends from central Nebraska and Minnesota eastward to southern Ontario and the south shore of Lake Erie, and as far east as northern New York, New England and Nova Scotia. Some reports have recorded the Blanding's turtle also in the vicinities of the Thousand Islands and along the St. Lawrence River.

Other interesting facts:

A major problem facing this timid, gentle turtle is the destruction of its wetland habitat through construction, shoreline developments and summer recreation facilities. Roads which cross migration routes between ponds where the turtles hibernate and where they nest are particularly hazardous. They also face predation from raccoons, skunks and foxes. They will plunge into water, remaining on the bottom for hours when alarmed. Field studies are being conducted to define their range and estimate population sizes. Experimental nesting sites are being created in order to minimize hazards and release newly hatched turtles into the wild.

Fish Facts

The following are brief descriptions of the fish we offer for our Pond Stocking and Triploid Grass Carp programs. Order forms are included in this newsletter.

Largemouth Bass – Found throughout NYS, they are considered one of the state's most important sport fish. These members of the Sunfish Family (Centrarchidae) prefer weedy, rocky areas to provide both protection and food supply. Usually weighing 3-5 lbs, they can get over 10 lbs and 2 feet in length. They are carnivorous; which means they'll eat small fish, crayfish, frogs, snakes, and some small mammals and birds if given the opportunity.

Yellow Perch – Common throughout NYS, the Perch Family (Peridae) boasts three popular sport fish; walleye, sauger, and the yellow perch. These colorful little darters prefer weedy, warm water temperatures. Average size is 6-10 inches, weighing ½ to 1 lb. This popular panfish feeds on zooplankton. Not a fierce fighter when hooked, the yellow perch are a favorite catch of the impatient younger anglers.

Minnows – A general name for a family of fishes that is by far the largest such family in NYS. Some 48 species of minnows are found – five of which are introduced species, among them the goldfish (Koi). Various kinds of minnows live in almost all freshwater habitats, widely distributed between both cold and warm water locations. Although the exotic **Koi** are large and may live 7-10 years, most native minnows seldom exceed 4" and live only 3 years. Aquatic insects, plants and animal plankton are the main foods of this fish. The fathead minnow is a hardy bait fish. It is widely raised for this purpose, providing an important link in the food chain for larger game fish and fish-eating birds.

Daphnia – Small freshwater crustaceans used to start a food chain in new ponds. These microscopic aquatic arthropods, nicknamed "waterfleas", also help control pond water quality by feeding on particulate algae.

Triploid Grass Carp – The grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) is one of the largest members of the minnow family, commonly reaching weights in excess of

25 lbs. They can live up to 10 years. Native to Asia, this carp lacks the barbells and spiny dorsal and anal fin rays characteristic of its North American relatives, bearing a closer resemblance to a large creek chub. It is called "triploid" since it has been bred to retain an extra chromosome, rendering it sterile. Grass carp feed strictly by grazing on aquatic vegetation and are effectively used as aquatic plant control agents in over 50 countries.

Tree Program Thanks!

The District would like to thank the entire community for their never-ending support of this program. Even with the unsteady economy we still are planting over 53,000 seedlings in and around Niagara County! We also thank TOPS Lockport and TOPS Wrights Corners for supplies, and all of our volunteers: Taren LaGamba, Mike Binas, Greg Tessmann, and the Niagara County Sheriff's Work Program. We appreciate everyone's assistance with our reforestation and wildlife habitat efforts.

Share the Road Safely

NYS is currently producing a "Share the Road" campaign to focus on traffic rules and safety tips for bicyclists, pedestrians, scooters, and all types of slow-moving vehicles (SMV), which includes all farm equipment. NYS law requires vehicles traveling 25mph or less to have a SMV emblem placed in the middle of the back end, 2-6ft above the ground. It must be kept clean and replaced if faded.

Caution is stressed when passing a SMV. According to the National Safety Council, there are more than 15,000 crashes each year involving farm vehicles. More than two-thirds involve the farm vehicle being hit from behind and more than 90% occur during daylight hours and on dry roads. When a fatality occurs, the victim is typically a tractor operator.

For more information and to get an emblem visit the Department of Agriculture and Markets website www.agmkt.state.ny.us.

Be cautious, be polite and share the road responsibly!

2009 POND STOCKING AND GRASS CARP PROGRAMS

Pond Stocking
Order Deadline: August 6, 2009
Pickup Date: August 20, 2009 10:00am SHARP

General Information: All fingerlings will be 1-2" in size. Stocking rates usually are 50-100 bass and 500-600 minnows per surface acre. If your pond is relatively new, be sure there is vegetation for reproductive habitat and aquatic life for a food chain. Recommended time to establish a pond before stocking is one year. You **MUST** obtain a stocking permit from the DEC prior to pickup. Applications are available in our office.

Pickup Information: Pickup will be at the SWCD office located at the northeast end of the Coop. Extension Administrative Building on the County Fairgrounds, Route 78, Lockport. Your order will be pre-counted and in an aerated bag for your convenience. You will just need to bring a box or cooler in which to stabilize the bag for transport. Transferring the fish to your pond immediately is of utmost importance due to oxygen needs. The hatchery personnel will be available for only 1/2 hour for delivery so **PLEASE BE PROMPT!**

Triploid Grass Carp for Aquatic Weed Control
Order Deadline: September 1, 2009
Pickup Date: Tentatively scheduled for the third/fourth week of September

General Information: The average size of the carp will be between 10-12". You **MUST** obtain a stocking permit from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. There is no charge for the permit. If you require a permit application, our office retains a supply of them. Stock grass carp only in ponds which have been properly protected so they are unable to escape through inlets and outlets into other NYS waters.

Pickup Information: Tentative pickup will be the end of September at the County Fairgrounds, Rte. 78, Lockport. We will contact you by phone when a definite date has been scheduled. At the time of pickup, you will need to bring a container WITH A LID (an 18-gal plastic tote holds 4 carp) filled 1/2 full with pond water. These fish are highly perishable and must be transported as quickly as possible. For more information on Triploid Grass Carp and how they can benefit pond weed control, call #434-4949.

Payment Information: Submit payment by check or money order with the bottom portions of this form, payable to Niagara County SWCD. Keep the top portions as your delivery date reminders.

Pond Stocking Program			
Type of Fish	Cost	# of Fish	\$ Amount
Largemouth Bass 1" - 2"	25/\$40.00		
Perch 1" - 3"	25/\$35.00		
Fathead Minnows 1"-1 1/2"	100/\$20.00		
Koi (2 - 4" asst. colors)	4/\$25.00		
Daphnia (to start food chain)	1qt/\$28.00		
Subtotal			
x .08 Tax			
+ Delivery			\$5.00
Total Due			
Name: _____			
Address: _____			
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____			
Daytime Phone: _____			
Mail to: Niagara County SWCD 4487 Lake Ave. Lockport, New York 14094			

Triploid Grass Carp Program	
Name:	_____
Address:	_____
City:	_____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Daytime Phone:	_____
Number of Carp	_____
x \$21.00	_____
+ Delivery	\$3.00
Total Due	_____
Mail payment WITH ALL 3 ORIGINAL COPIES of your DEC Permit to:	
Niagara County SWCD 4487 Lake Avenue Lockport, NY 14094	



NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
NYS Education Department



IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Help Protect New York's Waters

Don't Flush Unwanted Household
Medications or Pour Them Down the Drain

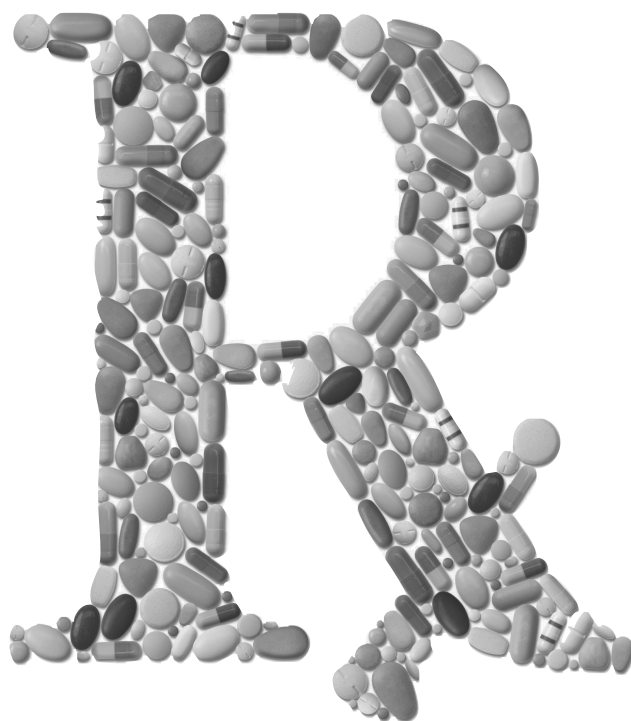
Return to collection
events where available

or

Mix with something
undesirable such as coffee
grounds, cat litter or dirt

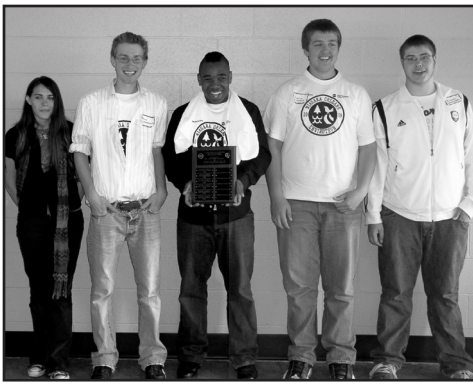
Tape up containers

Toss in your garbage



For full instructions or designated collection events visit:

www.dontflushyourdrugs.net



Envirothon Celebrates 20 Years

The day might have been overcast, windy and awaiting a thunderstorm, but the spirit was sunny as the 20th Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon began on May 1st at the Bond Lake Nature Center.

It was a nail-biting event with only 3 pts separating the top three team scores. But in the end, Niagara Career & Tech Center Team E just squeaked out the win by 2pts from Roy-Hart Team A. Advisor Paul Dewey led his team members (photo, l-r) Danielle Cable, Russ Leaderstorf, Isaiah Nalls, Chris Nogle and Robert Gordener to the victory, guaranteeing their attendance representing Niagara County at the State Competition on May 27-28 in Keuka Park.

Louis Paonessa, Community Relations Manager for New York Power Authority presented the winning plaque. All 12 teams received participation certificates, T-shirts and outdoor survival kits, complements of NYPA. The ninety attendees enjoyed delicious catering by Donna Eick. Proctors of the exams were: Jeannette Brunner, Aquarium of Niagara (Aquatics); Victor DiGiacomo, Niagara County SWCD (Current Issues); Patrick Marren, NYS DEC (Forestry); Dan Schuth, Orleans County SWCD (Soils); and Robert Glidden, Cornell Master Forest Owner (Wildlife).

The District would like to thank the New York Power Authority for 20 years of dedicated commitment to the Envirothon. You were the catalyst since the first year and continue to be through your time, sponsorship and promotion of our program. It is truly appreciated.

We also want to thank the amazing school advisors who continue each year to encourage so many students to explore and nurture involvement in various aspects of their environment. You are their catalyst, and the future will be in good hands from the knowledge that you have made available.

Congratulations to one and all on 20 years. Well done!



Are You Wild About Wetlands? Become a Member of the Marsh Monitoring Program

Bird Studies Canada, with support from the NCSWCD, is seeking volunteers to help assess wetland health and monitor the marshes of Eighteenmile Creek and Niagara River. We are seeking wetland enthusiasts (prior experience not necessary) who are interested in learning how to identify amphibians and/or birds that live in the wetland habitats of the Eighteenmile Creek and Niagara River watersheds and who are willing to spend about 10 hours per year monitoring a wetland area. Learn the techniques employed in this internationally recognized volunteer monitoring program from the folks who coordinate it and help advance the study and protection of the marshes in YOUR area! For more information, call (716) 434-4949 or go to www.niagaraswcd.com.

Bigger Better Bottle Bill Passed *Don't Trash'em...Cash'em*

Governor Patterson recently signed the expansion of NY's Returnable Container Act (RCA). Effective April 1, 2010, water bottles will now have a 5-cent deposit. In 1982 when the bottle bill was first passed, non-carbonated drinks made up only a small fraction of the market compared to soft drinks, beer and wine. Today, they make up more than 23 percent of the market. Over the past 27 years, the bottle bill has:

- 1) reduced roadside litter by 70%
- 2) recycled 90 billion containers, equal to 6 million tons of materials, at no cost to local governments
- 3) saved more than 52 million barrels of oil
- 4) eliminated 200,000 metric tons of greenhouse gases each year

The expanded law also requires 80% of the nickels not redeemed to be returned to the state and invested in environmental programs such as parks and open spaces, recycling improvements, pollution prevention and water quality. A small deposit pays big dividends in conservation of energy and valuable resources!

You may email specific questions to NYBOTTLE@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

FYI...

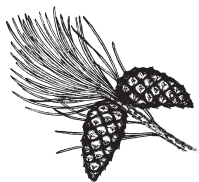
The District is now selling reusable shopping totes.

They are a generous size: 13" h x 12" w x 8" deep and are made from 100% recycled material...and washable!

Only \$1.85 plus tax

Non-Discrimination Statement

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."



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