

Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District

2023 Annual Report

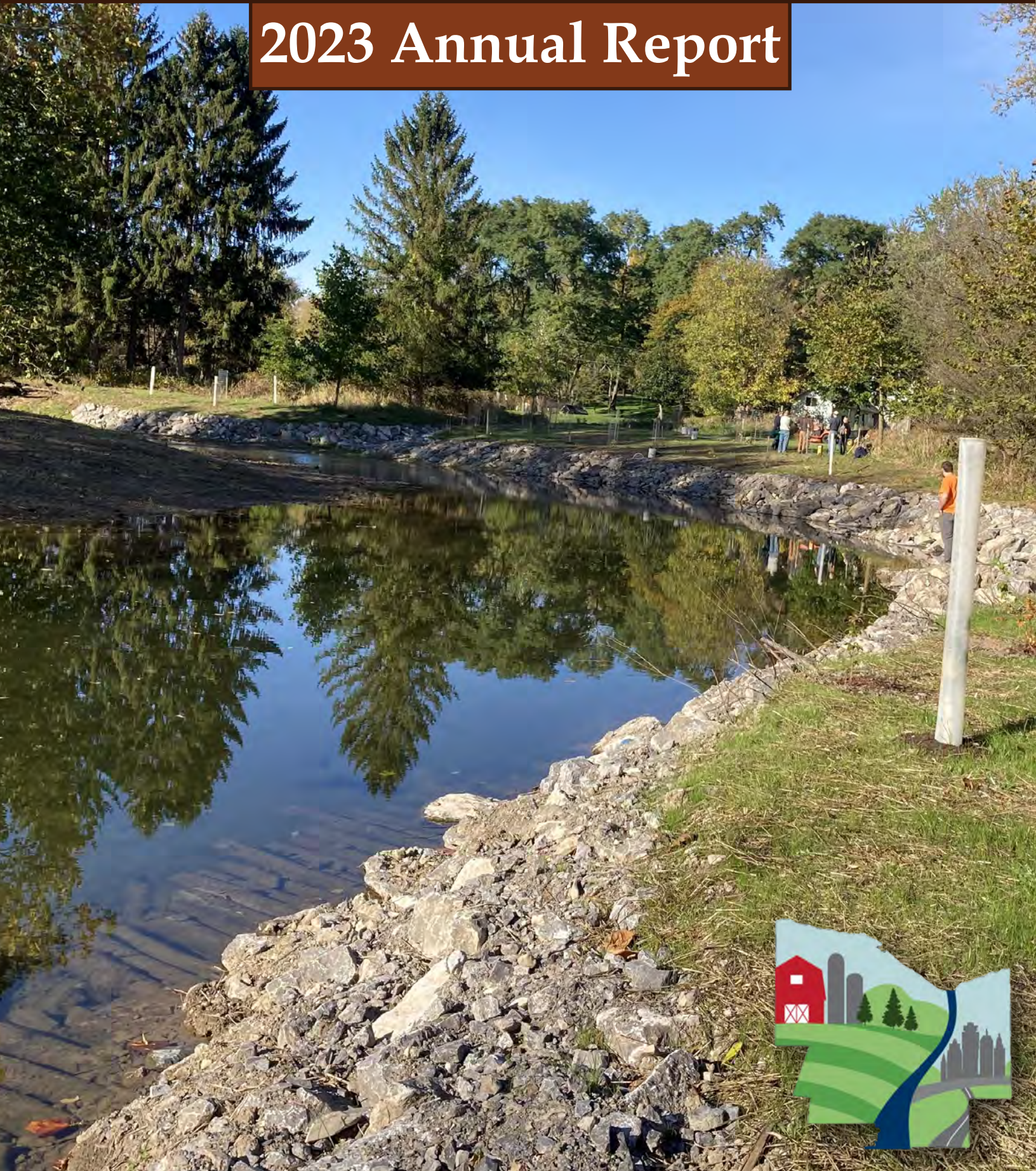


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Who Are We & What is Our Mission?

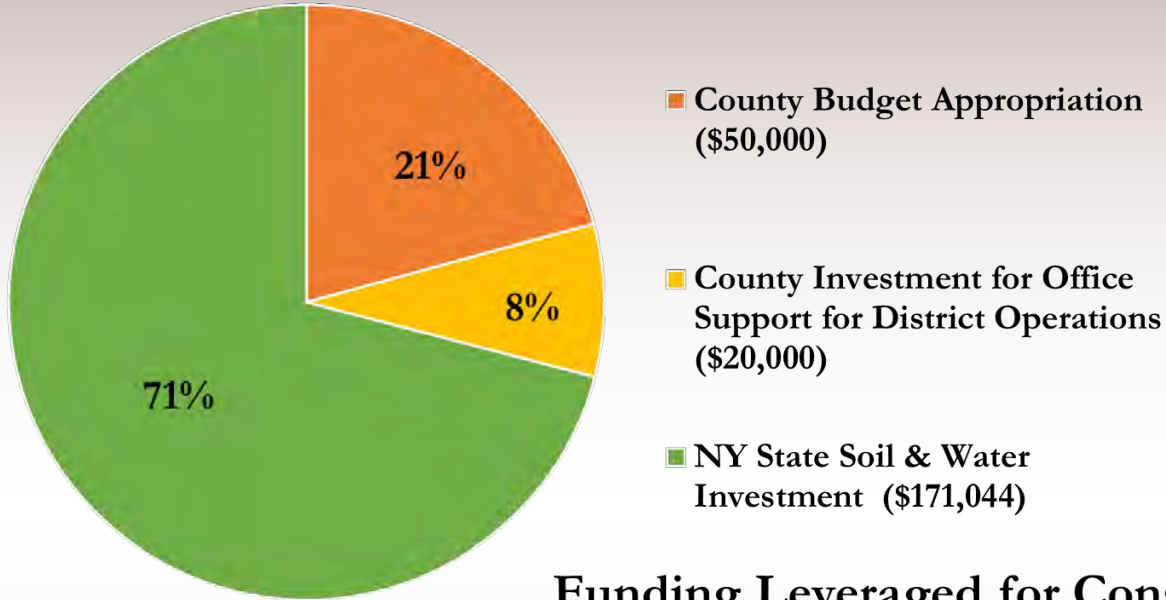
The MCSWCD is a municipal subdivision that partners with state, local and federal agencies, as well as watershed groups to educate and assist landowners and municipalities in planning and implementing best management practices that stabilize soil, improve water quality, manage stormwater runoff , preserve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

2023 Funding

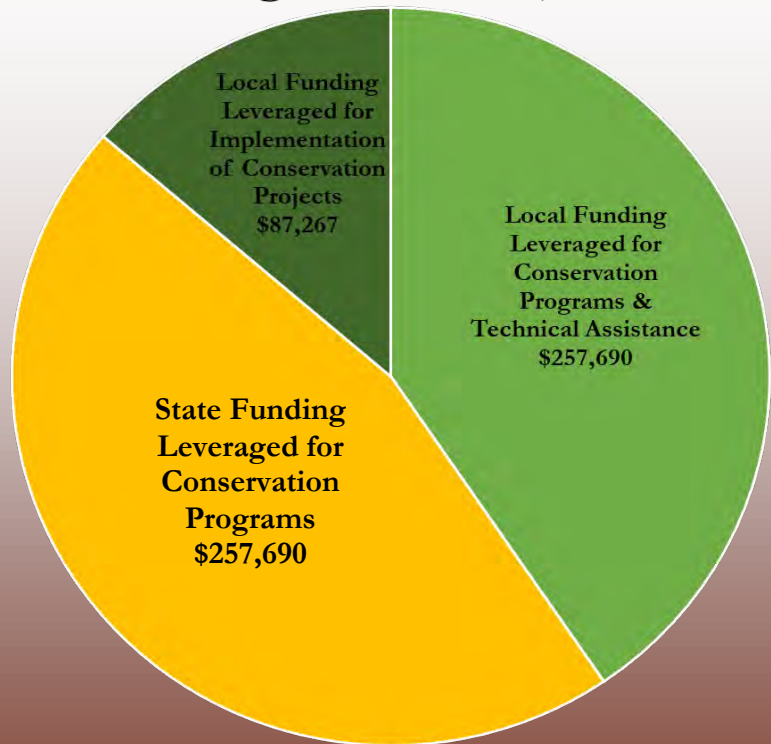
During 2023 the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District (MCSWCD) leveraged **\$877,355** in funds for the **\$50,000** investment from the County.

This represents a **\$17.55 return** for each dollar in County appropriation funds to complete conservation initiatives for Monroe County.

Partner Investment for MCSWCD Operations



Funding Leveraged for Conservation Programs & Projects



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 2023, the MCSWCD responded to **202** requests for water quality technical assistance and **145** requests for land use management, of which 191 were requests from our local municipalities.

2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Stormwater management site visits	69	Stormwater management trainings	15
Contractors, developers, qualified inspectors, municipal officials, engineers, & landscape architects trained	666	Stormwater technical assistance requests completed	179
Hours dedicated to stormwater technical services	863.5	Students educated on environmental topics	1,116
Pounds of agricultural plastic recycled	973	Number of people encountered about invasive species	4,219
Feet of streambank stabilization implemented	300	Square feet of riparian buffer installed	8,712
Number of residents that received native trees and shrubs	526	Native trees and shrubs distributed	21,474
Raised beds installed at urban community gardens	14	Pounds of produce yielded through urban agriculture	1,600

Value of 2023 Staff Technical Services Provided by Program



Envirothon



The Envirothon is a series of testing stations in which teams of high school students compete by answering questions about five environmental topics: Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Current Issues, and Wildlife. The 2023 Current Issue topic was “Waste to Resources.”



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!



2023 Envirothon winning team

Held at Monroe County’s Ellison Park, **100 students** from **9 schools** participated in the 2023 Monroe County Envirothon!

Churchville-Chili High School took first place at our event and placed 30th out of 42 teams at the State Envirothon in Geneva, NY.



Soils exam station

Conservation Field Days

Hosted in Ellison Park, Conservation Field Days is an opportunity for students to learn about environmental issues like invasive species, agriculture, from experts working for Seneca Park Zoo, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Genesee Country Village & Museum, and more!

The event was a success with **910 5th and 6th grade students** from **13 schools** coming out to Ellison Park to learn about a variety of topics including plastic pollution, dairy farming, tree planting and identification,

water pollution, and more and participated in hands-on activities including making their own seed balls, making butter, and going on a GPS scavenger hunt! Overall, **19 different organizations** provided engaging, hands-on presentations to students! Thank you to all of our volunteers for this event. If it wasn't for you it would be impossible to host this great multi-day outdoor educational event.

Flushables - Monroe County DES



Vermicomposting - CCE



THANK YOU TO WEGMANS FOR SPONSORING THE SNACKS FOR THE STUDENTS AND MONROE COUNTY PARKS FOR THE USE OF ELLISON PARK AND THE STAFF FOR ASSISTANCE WITH SETUP!



Water Quality Education

District staff participated in two local summer programs in 2023 hosting a stream health activity for **43 youth** involving aquatic macroinvertebrate surveying and determination of stream health based on their findings.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates are the nymph or larval stages of insects who spend at least part of their time in water. Aquatic macroinvertebrates also include crayfish, clams/mussels, some snails, and some worms. They are important to stream ecosystems as they replenish nutrients back into the ecosystem, along with providing food to higher level organisms. They are also very important indicators of stream health. Aquatic macroinvertebrates can be broken up into three groups: pollution sensitive, somewhat pollution tolerant, and pollution tolerant. As their names each suggest, macroinvertebrates that are pollution sensitive would not be found in streams affected by heavy amounts of pollution while those that are pollution tolerant would still be present in pollution-heavy streams while pollution sensitive would not.

Scouts from Pack 2005 in Rochester sampled Irondequoit Creek in July, finding more pollution tolerant than pollution sensitive species, suggested the sampled part of the stream is taking in some nutrients/pollution. In late spring, students from Genesee Charter School took part in a two day sampling event at Oatka Creek Park, finding organisms from all three groups suggesting Oatka Creek is currently healthy enough to support pollution sensitive organisms.



Oatka Creek



Irondequoit Creek

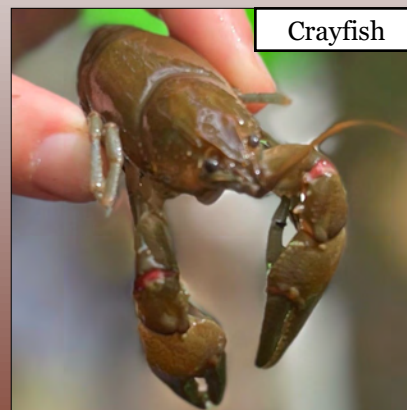


Oatka Creek



Stonefly nymphs

***This activity is not an official survey or comprehensive study of the streams they take place in and as such are not indicative of the overall health of said streams. Often this activity is held in an area away from the main section or center of the stream for safety and access, resulting in a very small area of the stream being sampled. This activity also does not take into account weather, turbidity, etc. which have an effect on sampling results.**



Crayfish

Conservation Tree & Shrub Program

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

21,474 trees and shrubs were distributed to **526** landowners, sequestering approximately 781,653 pounds of carbon (1,288 metric tons of CO₂) over the next 10 years!



Species offered through the program are to further conservation efforts such as providing wildlife habitat, food, and shelter, as well as soil erosion control and wind breaks. Our top five most popular species sold in 2023 were Norway Spruce, White Spruce, American Sycamore, Tulip Poplar, and Red Osier Dogwood.

New in 2023



Ninebark

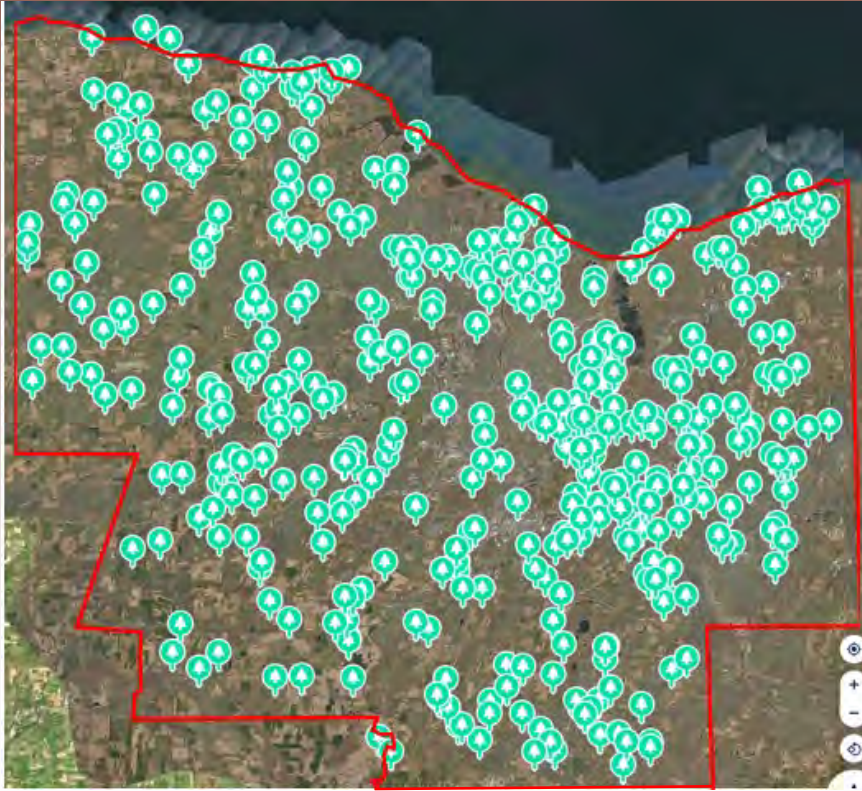


Witch-hazel

Pollinator Multi-Pack



Conservation Tree & Shrub Program



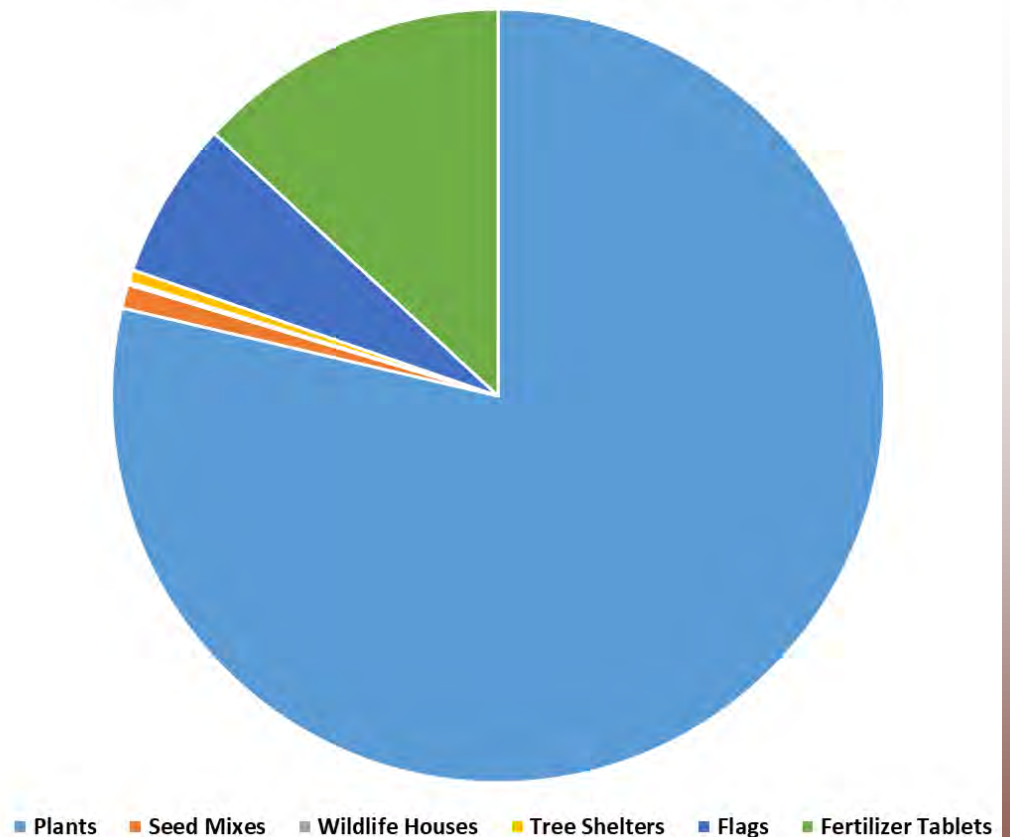
The Tree & Shrub program reaches residents all across Monroe County with customers from every town participating in this program.

We reach residents across the county through our District mailing list, town or village advertising, social media, online or printed media, and local library advertising.

Distribution of Items Sold in 2023

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

In 2023, seedlings made up 79% of all sales followed by fertilizer tablets at 13% and flags at 7%. Seed mixes, wildlife houses, and tree shelters made up the final 1% of sales.



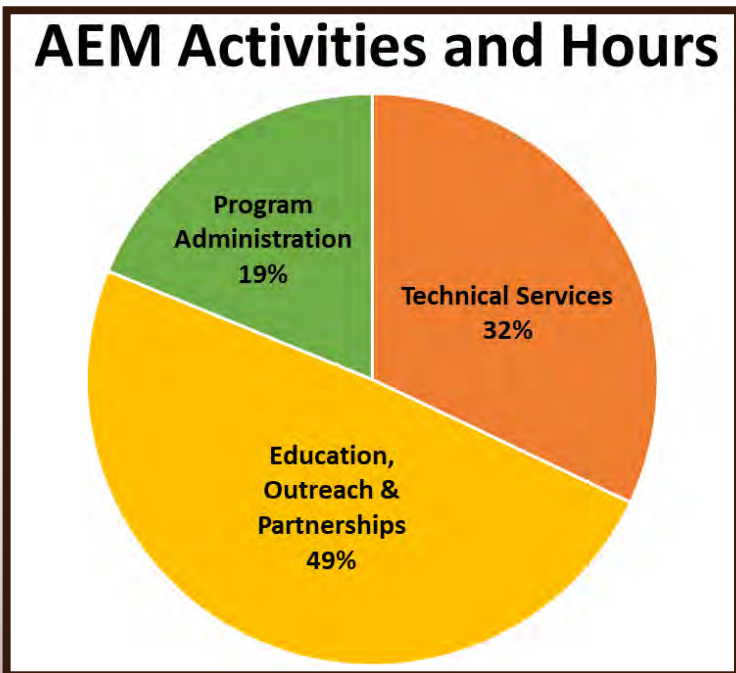
AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

AEM is a locally led and implemented voluntary program focused on watershed based water quality concerns, farm-specific conservation practices, and individual farm business objectives. AEM has been a consistent framework for over 20 years to partner with farmers on environmental management to promote and protect the preservation of Monroe County's soil and water quality while helping to ensure farm viability for future generations.



AEM targets program, technical, and financial assistance to farms in a cost-effective manner through a well-established environmental planning process and implementing best management practices that are based on scientific principles and research.

In 2023, Salmon Creek and Little Black Creek watersheds were focus areas for the AEM program. Those watersheds comprise 65,282 acres and 15,450 acres of agricultural land respectively (or total of 24%) in Monroe County with over 60 farms participating in AEM from both watersheds.



MCSWCD dedicated **416.25 hours** to AEM Services in 2023 with **133.5 hours** dedicated to technical services provided to local farms and **204.5 hours** dedicated to education, partnership, and outreach services.

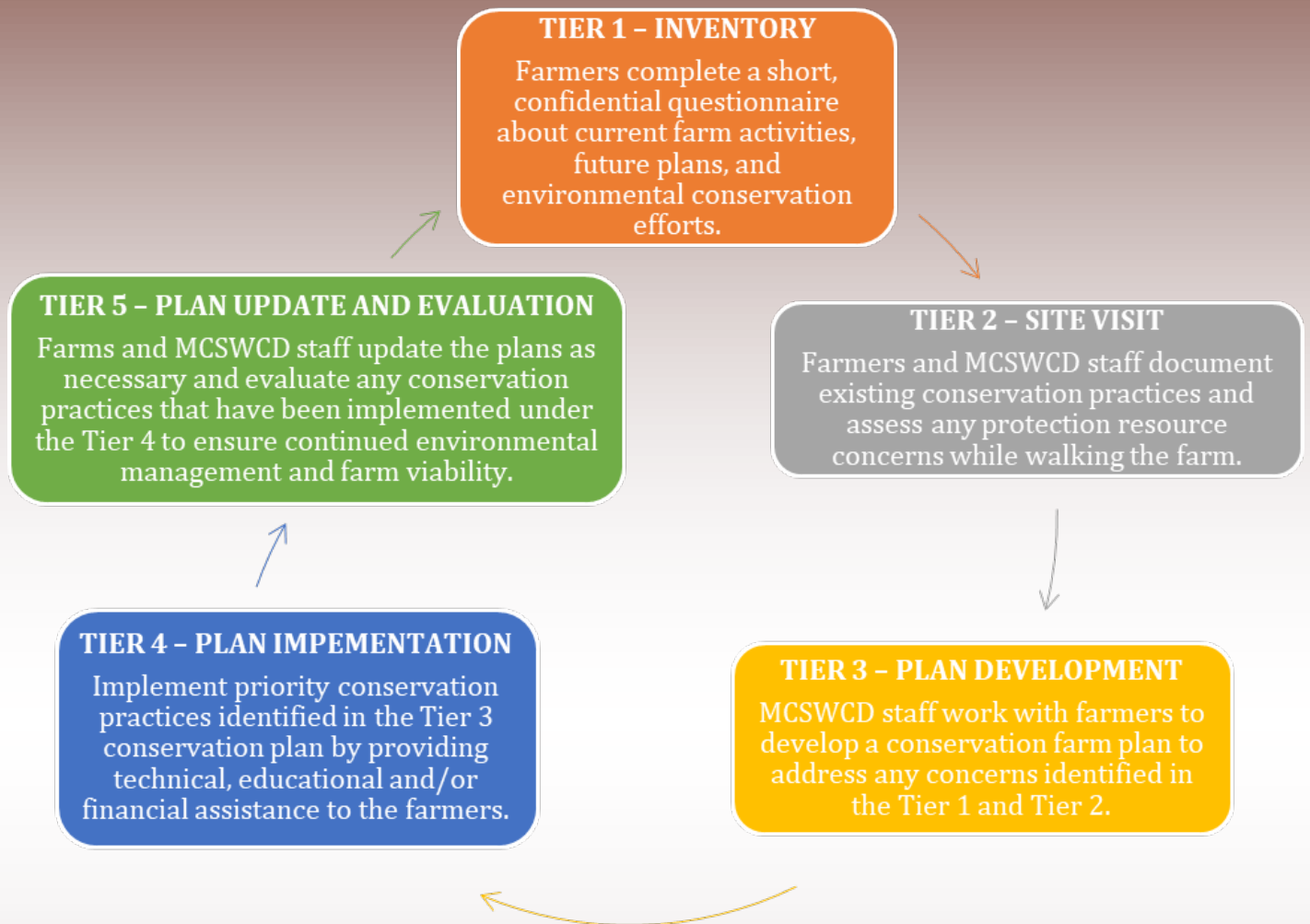
Tier 5A visit for field erosion



Tier 2 site visit on a sheep farm

AGRICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

AEM Planning Uses a Five-Tiered Approach:



AEM Benefits

The AEM Program helps farmers address sources of water pollution originating from agricultural activities by:

- Documenting existing environmental stewardship
- Assessing environmental concerns associated with their farming operations
- Developing conservation management plans
- Implementing best management practices from the conservation management plan to address identified environmental concerns
- Allowing access to technical and financial resources to manage changes in farm operations or implementing best management practices
- Advance farmers positive contributions to their communities, food systems, the economy, and the environment

Urban Agriculture

In 2023, the District worked with three community garden groups within the City of Rochester who were located in food deserts and would use their garden as an educational tool for residents, youth, and community organizations, along with harvesting and utilizing their produce to serve their community:

Living Word Temple: Living Word Temple of Restoration is a community comprised of various generations, ethnic backgrounds, and cultural groups working to share their beliefs with each other and help the community. Through this project, the garden size doubled with six more beds installed resulting in a total yield of **1,135 lbs. of produce**. There is no end in sight for this garden as it continues to grow and help the surrounding community.

Spiritus Christi/The Nielsen House: Spiritus Christi is a church organization with a prison outreach program offering residential support and amenities to individuals re-entering society from prison and treatment centers. Five raised beds were installed on the property of one of these centers (Nielsen House), yielding over **400 lbs of produce** which were distributed to the house residents and their families, Spiritus Christi parishioners, the residents at Nielsen's sister house for women, Grace of God church outreach, Walden Project students, and more! Additionally, many residents took advantage of the garden for educational and meditational purposes during their rehabilitation. This group plans to expand by adding more beds next year.



RCSD No. 42: One of our many elementary schools in the Rochester City School District, Abelard Reynolds No. 42 partners with community organizations and colleges to help offer their students a diverse educational experience. As part of this experience, three raised beds were installed on the school's grounds producing **over 100 lbs of produce**. These beds grew produce for students and their families, along with serving as an educational tool for the students to learn about growing their own local produce and learning where fresh vegetables come from. A dedicated garden club has been formed for next year to continue the success of the garden!



We want to thank our partners on this grant for providing support, education, and seedlings to these gardens as well: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, Harvest NY, and EquiCenter. This project was funded through the New York State 2023 Conservation Project Financial Assistance (Part B).

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Harvest New York



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

See highlights from the project on the next page



AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Urban Agriculture

LIVING WORD TEMPLE

NIELSEN HOUSE

RCSD NO. 42



BED CONSTRUCTION AND SOIL PLACEMENT



INITIAL GROWTH A MONTH AFTER PLANTING



GROWTH WELL INTO THE GROWING SEASON



EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS AND GARDEN CLUB MEETINGS

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Urban Agriculture

In 2023, the MCSWCD expanded their partnership with the Urban Agriculture Working Group (UAWG) 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.



Sheet mulching workshop

The District participated in the 2023 Spring Urban Agriculture Conference held at Edison Career & Tech High School on May 6th. 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, a panel discussion, and a keynote speech from Leah Penniman from Soul Fire Farm where she spoke about her experience starting an urban farm and the lessons she learned along the way.



Soil health workshop

In addition to the spring conference, the District once again worked with the UAWG to put together the second annual Urban Gardens ROC event held September 9th, where thirteen community gardens in the City of Rochester hosted events for guests to visit their gardens.

As part of our 2023 community garden project, the District also partnered with UAWG and EquiCenter to help deliver free seedlings to several community gardens around the City of Rochester.

Agricultural Plastics Recycling

The Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District partnered with Ag Plastics Solutions LLC to promote the recycling of **973 pounds** of agricultural plastics from **7 farms** and **1 ag business** within Monroe County in 2023.

Recycled containers are processed for use in certified end use products, such as: Agricultural Drain pipe, Cinder blocks, Fence Posts and Nursery Pots rather than landfilled or burnt. By recycling agricultural plastic, we help save space in landfills, reduce the use of fossil fuels and save water.



AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

Genesee River Watershed Coalition

GENESEE RIVER WATERSHED
COALITION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



The Genesee River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts (GRWCCD) was established in 2016 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under NY Soil & Water Conservation District Law between **10** Soil & Water Conservation Districts within the Genesee River Basin to cooperatively promote, and implement, the conservation and improvement of natural resources on lands both public and private within the Genesee River Watershed (GRW).

The Genesee River is 157 miles long that seeps out of the ground in Potter County, PA and empties into Lake Ontario in Monroe County, NY. The upper reach of the river is known for its excellent trout waters and recreational opportunities such as canoeing and kayaking. The river runs through many towns and villages and flows over 3 magnificent waterfalls in Letchworth State Park and 3 more in Rochester, ending its journey through the Port of Rochester, home to many marinas and yacht clubs, into Lake Ontario. The creeks and rivers that flow into the river make up its 2,500 square mile watershed dominated by forests and agriculture. This watershed has been well studied for over 20 years, and has known impairments relative to phosphorous and sediment from various sources such as streambank erosion, agriculture, urban/municipal impacts, waste water treatment plants and septic systems.

In 2023, the GRWCCD, with Monroe SWCD acting as coordinator, began working as a critical partner on developing a Watershed Implementation Plan for the river basin to provide:

1. An updated framework to implement the *Genesee River Basin Nine Key Element Plan for Phosphorus and Sediment (9EP)* in the Genesee River watershed (GRW) in alignment with New York's Great Lakes Action Agenda and the Lake Ontario Lakewide Action and Management Plan.
2. A framework of goals and actions that focus and guide coordinated efforts among the GRWCCD and its partners to effectively manage the water resources of the GRW.
3. A mechanism to ensure projects that manage and use the GRW's water resources receive stakeholder support, are current, and reasonably assured to be successful.

GRWCCD members applied for \$4,570,730 and were **awarded \$2,101,422** in 2023 to implement **agricultural best management practices** throughout the GRW to reduce sediment and nutrients. Over 90% of the funds awarded were from the NYS Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) with support from the NS Soil & Water Conservation Committee for projects such as riparian buffers, livestock waste storage, silage leachate collection and treatment, erosion control systems including cover cropping, water and sediment control basins, and critical area planting.

Funding also from the EPF was awarded in the amount of **\$3,216,918** for **non-agricultural practices** such as stormwater retrofits, road and ditch stabilization, invasive species management, reforestation, aquatic passage, municipal salt storages, riparian buffers, and stream stabilization.

STREAMBANK STABILIZATION

Genesee River Watershed Coalition

The Coalition was awarded a \$200,000 Great Lakes Commission (GLC) grant in 2019 to implement streambank stabilization projects in Monroe, Allegany and Genesee Counties. Monroe SWCD implemented the final project along Oatka Creek in 2023.

Monroe County SWCD completed a **300 foot streambank stabilization** project within the Oatka Creek watershed along Oatka Creek in the Town of Wheatland with \$90,450 in funding through the GLC's Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program via the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), and \$28,480 in funding from the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services via the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA). The remaining \$13,408 in project costs was provided by in-kind services from the GCVM, District Staff, and the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee. It is estimated that it will save 848 tons of sediment, 848 pounds of phosphorous, and 1,696 pounds of nitrogen over a 10-year life span.

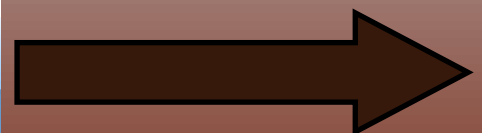
Oatka Creek is a popular fishing and recreational creek in Monroe County, along with being an important trout creek providing food and habitat. A particular stretch of Oatka Creek was experiencing severe advancing erosion causing high amounts of sediment and nutrients to enter the creek, along with the loss of aquatic habitat. This section of the creek runs through property owned by the Genesee Country Village & Museum (GCVM). In addition to their historical village and education, the GCVM owns a lot of natural land that is used for conservation and education purposes.

The District planned, designed, and oversaw implementation of the streambank stabilization project, resulting in the 300 foot section of the creek being protected to prevent further erosion and stabilize the bank. Other protective measures were installed to direct the flow of water away from the bank, along with a spillway constructed to safely convey overflow from an adjacent pond. Additionally, 20 feet of cover logs were installed along the end of the project providing fish cover and habitat.

Once construction had finished, **8,712 feet (0.2 acres) of riparian buffer** were established by planting native trees and shrubs as well as streamco willow stakes and whips throughout the project area along with conservation grass seed mix. District staff, along with partners from the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee (OCWC) planted 103 shrubs, 61 trees, 200 live stakes, and 250 whip cuttings.



See highlights
from the project
on the next page



STREAMBANK STABILIZATION

Genesee River Watershed Coalition



BEFORE CONSTRUCTION



Bank begins to be shaped back



Soil being placed while a District technician places willow whips



Rock being placed

DURING CONSTRUCTION



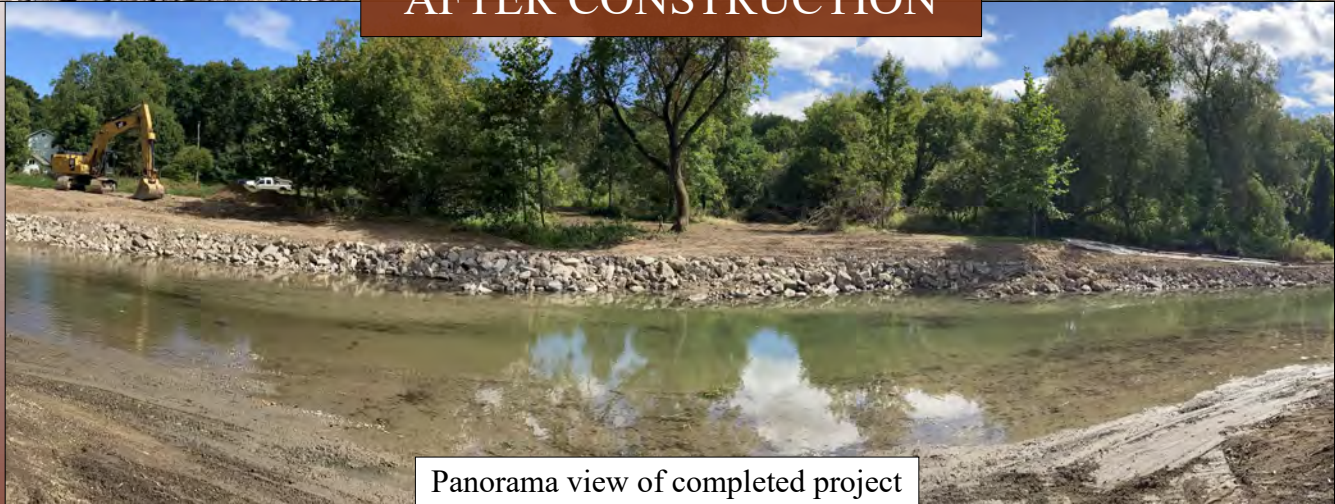
Aquatic habitat cover logs



Riparian buffer installed



AFTER CONSTRUCTION



Panorama view of completed project

Spotted Lanternfly Monitoring

In partnership with SUNY Brockport and Monroe County Parks Department, the District continued an early detection and monitoring project for the invasive spotted lanternfly (SLF).

SLF is an invasive pest from Asia that has caused huge economical damage in Pennsylvania and New York City and surrounding areas. Since the first arrival of SLF in August 2020 in Staten Island, populations have been found in Tompkins County, Broome County, and Erie County with individuals found in several other counties. SLF feed on over 70 different plant species but most often target hops, grapes, and apples. In the fall of 2023, an established population of SLF was found for the first time in Monroe County. Continued monitoring is crucial for early detection of SLF.

A circle trap installed on an an invasive tree-of-heaven, which is the host plant of SLF and the species they are most attracted to. Each sign is accompanied with an educational sign.



Fifteen spotted lanternfly (SLF) traps were installed in eight county parks to assist in the ongoing efforts of early detection of SLF in Monroe County. Educational signs were also placed with each trap. Traps are made of netting wrapped around a tree trunk funneling insects into a plastic cone which empties into a detachable bag. District staff collected the bags throughout summer and fall with SUNY Brockport investigating each bag for any SLF presence. No SLF were found in any of the traps in 2023!



INVASIVE SPECIES

Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention

MCSWCD partnered with Monroe County Department of Environmental Services (DES) via funding received from the Finger Lakes-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FL-LOWPA) for the sixth year to provide a Watercraft Steward Program at the Port of Rochester on Lake Ontario, and the Ayrault Road launch on the Erie Canal. These boat stewards act as the frontline of aquatic invasive species detection and education, directly working with the public. The District collaborates with the Finger Lakes Institute through their Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FLPRISM) program to hire two stewards who were able to inspect **1,856** boats at the launches and educate **4,219** people during the course of the season.



Top 3 most common invasive organisms found during inspections



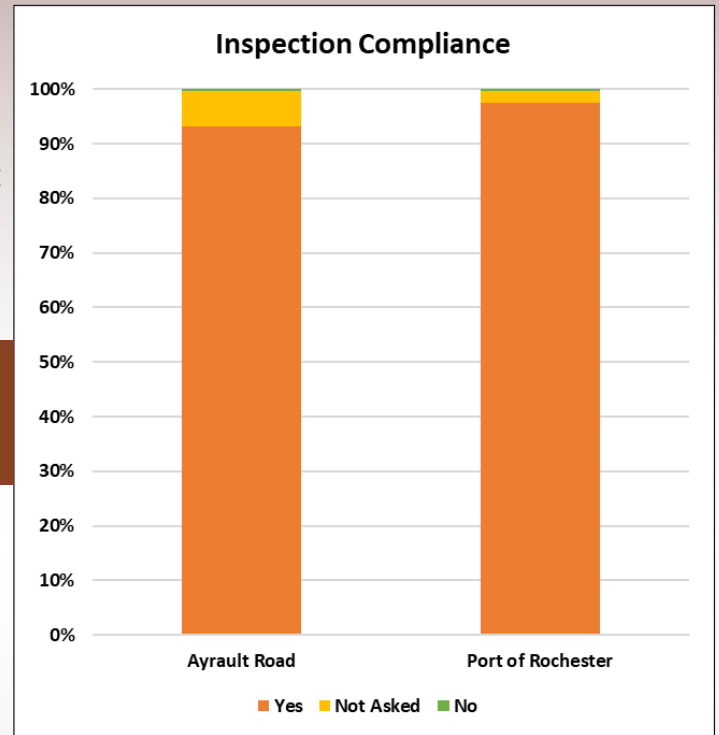
Eurasian Watermilfoil



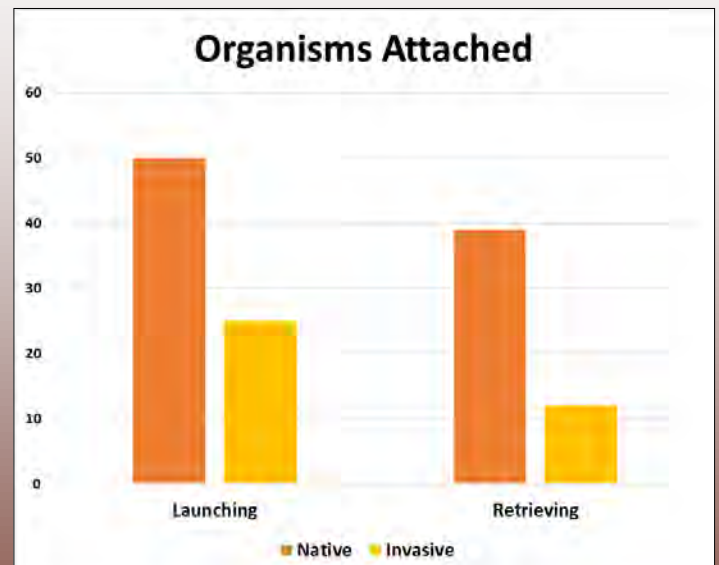
Curly-leaf Pondweed



Zebra Mussel



Proportions of boaters agreeing to an inspection of their watercraft. Over 95% of boaters agreed to an inspection!



Native vs invasive organisms found during inspections

Stormwater Management Assistance

The District partners with the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County (<https://www.stormwatercoalition.com/>) to provide technical assistance and education to municipalities, developers, construction site operators, consultants such as engineers and landscape architects, and residents within Monroe County to meet state and federal regulations to ensure local water quality is protected from sediments and nutrients from construction activity, streambank erosion, and flooding.



In 2023, the District staff received and responded to **179 technical assistance requests**, providing **863.5 hours** of staff time to the Stormwater Coalition of Monroe County. The majority of these requests were related to stormwater management ponds, drainage, and erosion and sediment control.

Stormwater Management Training

The MCSWCD hosted **15 stormwater related trainings and workshops** in 2023.

A total of **666 people**, such as engineers, municipal officials, landowners and contractors received necessary training to improve planning, design, and construction practices to protect water quality throughout the county. **143** of these people trained were Monroe County municipal employees that are members of the Stormwater Coalition.

Training	# of Trainings Held	# of Attendees	# of Municipal Employee Attendees (SWC Members)
Erosion & Sediment Control Training	5	260	44
Stormwater Management Training Series	5	311	51
Code Enforcement Office Site Plan Review	1	81	34
In-Field Construction Inspection Training (SWC Members Only)	2	8	8
In-Field Stormwater Pond Inspection Training (SWC Members Only)	2	6	6
Total Training Provided in 2023	15	666	143

District staff conducting In-Field Stormwater Pond Inspection Training



District staff conducting In-Field Construction Inspection Training



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Pond Consultation, Inspection & Education

MCSWCD responded to a total of **35 pond-related assistance requests** in 2023 including 31 stormwater management pond technical assistance requests, 3 landowner recreational pond consults, and 1 pond feasibility request.

Stormwater ponds are constructed basins that have a permanent pool of water throughout the year that are common is controlling stormwater runoff from development sites to improve water quality, reduce pollution and prevent flooding. The primary pollutant removal mechanism is sediment settling and pollutant uptake, particularly of nutrients, through biological activity in the pond.

A stormwater pond being evaluated for excessive algal growth



Many factors are evaluated during an inspection including but not limited to: structural components, maintenance, erosion and siltation, algae growth (fertilizer use), human pollution (such as trash, grass clippings), non-native invasive aquatic species (such as phragmites), and nuisance rodents and waterfowl (such as muskrat, Canada geese). Inspection is imperative to the function of stormwater ponds in perpetuity. Many of these same factors are evaluated during consults with residents that have recreational ponds. Additionally, District staff conduct an analysis of properties for landowners interested in building a recreational pond to assess if it is feasible. This includes looking at hydrology, topography, soils and regulatory requirements.

Runoff & Erosion Control Technical Assistance

Severe erosion undercutting a tree along a streambank



District technicians provided assistance to **17** municipal and/or landowner requests for erosion and streambank erosion concerns.

Technicians evaluate and prepare recommendations to remediate erosion on residential and public land and streams. Erosion control is the first line of defense in preventing sediments from entering our streams, rivers and lakes that can otherwise cause loss of aquatic habitat, beach closures, and drinking water contamination.

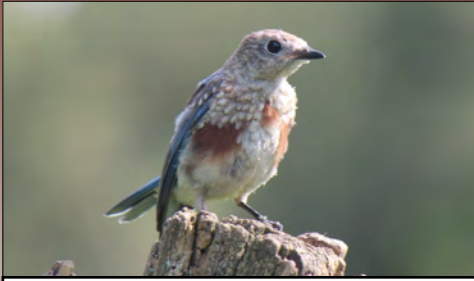
17 landowners and/or municipalities were assisted for stormwater runoff related concerns to help alleviate minor flooding and drainage issues within isolated areas. Staff evaluates the soils, source of runoff, historic drainage, and other items as needed to provide tailored recommendations specific to each site visit.

Sinkhole from stormwater runoff



WILDLIFE PROGRAMS

Wildlife Houses



Juvenile bluebird molting into its adult feathers

In 2023, **48 bluebird and bat houses** were distributed to the residents of Monroe County. As part of our wildlife programming, the District distributes wildlife shelters for bluebirds and bats each year to county residents. Bluebirds and bats faced population declines following continued loss of habitat for breeding, nesting, and roosting. Bluebird houses provide safety for nests to be built and young to be raised, while bat boxes provide a safe space for communal roosting.

Bats do not build nests and instead need a safe, warm place to establish a nursery roost. Caves are too cold in New York to raise young, making roosting boxes the perfect place.

Eastern Bluebirds are the state bird of New York and given the right circumstances will have two sets of young per year. Thanks to simple conservation efforts like installing a bluebird house, their populations have been on the rise for the last several decades!

Group of little brown and Indiana bats



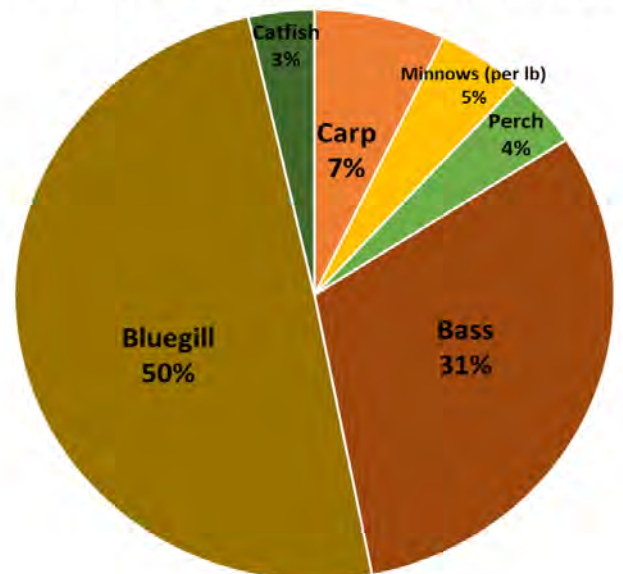
Fish Stocking Program

The District holds a spring and fall Fish Stocking Program each year to assist Monroe County residents in stocking their ponds for recreational fishing purposes or for managing nuisance plants, fish, or insects. Since fish cannot be collected from the wild and stocked into another waterbody due to potential for spreading diseases, the Monroe County SWCD offers fish from a licensed commercial fish hatchery to ensure fish being released into the water are certified disease-free from harmful pathogens.

In 2023, **7,873 fish fingerlings** were distributed to **27 landowners**. Of those fish, **54** were Triploid Grass Carp.

It was a good year for bass and bluegill, with both comprising 81% of fish distributed in 2023

2023 Fish Species Distributed



Staff & Board Members

Staff 2023

Kelly Emerick

Executive Director

Kristin White

Assistant Treasurer & Secretary To The Board

James Sroka

Soil & Water Resource Technician

Jacob Kearney

Conservation Program Specialist

Board of Directors 2023

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

Susan Hughes-Smith

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.



The District was awarded “Best Media Core Mission Story” at the 2023 NYACD Annual Meeting, while Board Chairman Rollin Pickering was awarded the William Peoples Lifetime Friend of SWCD Award for his dedication and commitment to carrying on the legacy of being a true citizen servant.

Celebrating 70 Years!

2023 marked 70 years of the District proudly started serving Monroe County residents, municipalities, community organizations, students, contractors, and more through technical service, educational events, public outreach, erosion and sediment control trainings, and more!

Since June 1953, the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District has been hard at work providing for our residents and we look forward to another 70 years of delivering locally led conservation programs and projects to Monroe County.

From Highland Ave to Scottsville Rd to Paul Rd, the District has a lot of history. Let's take a look at some programs and services over the years:

- Since the District's inception we have worked to assist Monroe County farmers and operators with farmland protection, environmental management, agricultural assessments, and more
- We now offer over 20 species of native or naturalized tree and shrub species through our annual Conservation Tree & Shrub Program but our 1976 program offered just nine species
- The first fish stocking programs offered only bass and minnows to landowners. We now offer a variety of over 6 pond-dwelling species
- The first Conservation Field Days was held in 1989 over two days for over 940 sixth graders at Mendon Ponds Park. Instructors included SUNY Brockport, NYS DEC, CCE of Monroe County, RG&E, Sea Grant, and more. We now hold the event over three days at Ellison Park for over 1000 students annually with over 20 different organizations instructing
- The first Envirothon was held in 1992 and crowned Churchville-Chili as the first ever county champion. Twenty-nine schools competed in the first Envirothon when it was regionally held with Genesee and Erie County SWCDs. Now we hold our own event welcoming over 20 teams each year
- Since the 1990s, the District has held Erosion & Sediment Control trainings to educate construction and stormwater professionals on proper site maintenance
- 2023 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Monroe County Soil Survey. Now digitized and available online, the Soil Survey is what we use for agricultural assessments, pond evaluations, drainage evaluations, and more



District staff and programming throughout 2023

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Cover Photo: Streambank stabilization and riparian buffer project installed along Oatka Creek in the Town of Wheatland



Local students learning about tree planting during Conservation Field Days



Programs and services offered through the MCSWCD 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, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability.