



**Niagara Nature News**  
 An Environmental Publication by Niagara County  
 Soil & Water Conservation District  
**SPRING 2010 - ENEWS**

Niagara County Soil & Water  
 Conservation District  
 4487 Lake Avenue  
 Lockport, New York 14094  
 Phone: (716) 434-4949  
 Fax: (716) 434-4985  
 www.niagaraswcd.com

**Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District**  
 presents the 1st Annual  
**CONSERVATION EDUCATION RAFFLE**



Proceeds to benefit the **2010 Niagara-Orleans Regional Envirothon\***

\*A natural resources competition for high school students

**1 GRAND PRIZE – (2) TRADITIONAL CHERRY WOOD  
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 May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

**Donation: \$2 EACH OR 3 TICKETS FOR \$5**

**STOP BY THE SWCD OFFICE TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS**

**2010 TREE SEEDLING PROGRAM**

As of Friday, March 19, 2010, the District is no longer accepting orders for its 2010 tree seedling program. If you did not get your order to us in time, don't worry, there is still an opportunity to purchase trees for this year! Tree seedling distribution for pre-orders

has been set for Friday and Saturday, April 23rd & 24th. During those two days, we will have additional tree, shrub, and groundcover stock for sale on a walk-in basis. Doors open at 9AM on Friday morning. REMEMBER, first come first serve. Earlier is better than later!!!!



**TREE DISTRIBUTION  
 DAYS**  
**April 23-24, 2010**

*The Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District is a local government subdivision under New York State law. The District was established as a public benefit by the County of Niagara in 1954. Your support of our programs aid in the District's conservation efforts to protect natural resources and water quality for our residents. In these wavering economic times, we thank you for your continued assistance in fulfilling our goals.*

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*District Engineer*  
 mark.seider@ny.nacdnet.net

Darcy Rae Tone  
*District Secretary/Education  
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 darcy.tone@ny.nacdnet.net

Victor F. DiGiacomo, Jr.  
*Remedial Action Plan Coordinator*  
 victor.digiacom@ny.nacdnet.net

Evan R. Stachnik  
*Natural Resource Technician*  
 evan.stachnik@ny.nacdnet.net

**USDA, NRCS**

Gregory A. Tessmann  
*Conservation Program Manager*  
 gregory.tessmann@ny.usda.gov

Gregory Briggs  
*Conservation Aide (Americorps)*  
 gregory.briggs@ny.usda.gov

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## EMERALD ASH BORER EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS



**Emerald Ash Borer - Adult**  
Photo by David Cappaert,  
Michigan State University,  
[www.insectimages.org](http://www.insectimages.org)

The Cornell Department of Natural Resources received a grant from USDA-APHIS to conduct a series of workshops in New York State establishing Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) as the source of information and guidance to citizens and communities on the invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).

The EAB is a small beetle from Asia that is spreading throughout the Midwest since the mid 1990's killing millions of native ash trees in urban and rural settings. It was first detected in west-

ern New York State in the summer of 2009 and will gradually spread throughout the state.

The goal of the Emerald Ash Borer Workshops is to train CCE Educators and community volunteers as a source for trusted information and guidance helping communities prepare for the eventual arrival of this devastating pest.

14 workshops are scheduled throughout the State. The target audience for these workshops is CCE educators, Master Gardeners, Master Forest Owners,

Master Naturalists, members of NY's Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs), foresters, tree care professionals, and land management professionals in county and municipal governments.

A Niagara County workshop will be held on Saturday, May 15th, from 9am - Noon, at the Niagara CCE 4-H Training Center, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, NY. For more information, contact: John Faraglia at (716) 433-8839 x 226. To register for the event, contact: Karen Kryza at (716)433-8839 x221.

### FYI...

**The District is now selling reusable shopping totes. They are a generous size: 13"h x 12"w x 8"d and are made from 100% recycled material...and washable! Only \$1.85 plus tax.**



## SPRING SHORELINE CLEANUP CREWS NEEDED

For the past 15-20 years, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has organized biannual (spring and fall) cleanups along various local waterways to remove litter and other accumulated debris. Riverkeeper's Spring Shoreline Cleanup is scheduled for 9AM-Noon, on Saturday, April 17th and will kickoff Earth Week events

around Western New York. In addition to cleanup crews, Riverkeeper is looking for 5 additional site captains for sites that do not have leaders. Volunteer crews receive all the supplies you need to remove trash from the site and a free t-shirt. This is a great opportunity for students looking for service learning

hours. If you are interested in this fun volunteer event, please contact Adrienne Kina, [akina@bnriverkeeper.org](mailto:akina@bnriverkeeper.org) or call 852-7483.



## \$9 MILLION IN EPF FUNDING AVAILABLE TO SWCDs TO IMPLEMENT FARM PROJECTS

The Soil & Water Conservation Committee of the NYS Department of Ag & Markets has announced that \$9million in EPF funding will be available to Soil & Water Conservation Districts statewide for Round 16 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program.

The objective of the program is to support the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program in

New York State by funding Tier 3 plans or Tier 4 implementation practices that will reduce and/or prevent the nonpoint sources of water pollution from agricultural activities.

This funding is very competitive. Round 16 will focus priority on projects that propose to implement agro-nomic and/or vegetative Best Management Practices (BMPs) that are cost effective relative to the expected

water quality benefit. Structural practices will also be considered for funding. To be eligible for funding, a farm must have completed at least AEM Tier 3 planning, ensuring that the appropriate BMPs are being implemented in the most suitable places to meet both environmental needs and the farms' management objectives. To participate in the AEM program, contact Evan Stachnik at (716) 434-4949.



**AEM is a voluntary, incentive-based program that helps farmers operate environmentally sound and economically viable businesses.**



## FISH FOOD: HUNGRY SALMON OVERWHELM LAKE ONTARIO ALEWIVES

A biological balancing act between the premier Great Lakes sportfish and its prey could be at a tipping point in Lake Ontario.

Chinook salmon are the foundation of the Lake Ontario recreational fishery, which is worth \$76 million to New York alone. But new research shows that the popular predators could be so abundant in the lake that there may not be enough alewives – the Chinook's main prey fish – to go around.

If there aren't enough alewives to both reproduce and feed the salmon, each species will collapse. That's what happened over the past five years in Lake Huron, where alewives and the Chinook salmon fishery have all but disappeared.

"The alewife population could be at severe risk of collapse like what happened at Lake Huron," said Brent Murry, a biology research assistant professor at Central Michigan University who did doctoral research on Lake Ontario. "We need to re-evaluate the stocking plan."

In 2006, Lake Michigan

managers fearing the same fate as Lake Huron cut back Chinook salmon stocking by 25 percent, hoping to make life easier for alewives. So far, that strategy has worked, said Randy Claramunt, research biologist with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

"Reducing stocking has contributed to a reduced number of Chinook salmon in Lake Michigan," he said. "Likewise, we've seen a response in the increased survival of alewife." And the salmon that remain are bigger and healthier than they were a few years ago, he said.

A similar salmon stocking cut could ease the pressure on Lake Ontario alewives, Murry said. But such a move is unpopular with the lake's recreational anglers. But there may be reason to believe that a stocking cut might not be so bad for anglers looking to hook a Chinook.

The link between salmon stocking and catch rates is based on an old assumption that the only salmon in Lake Ontario are the fish that were planted in there, said Michael Connerton, a senior

research biologist with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

A 2009 study shows that's probably not the case. The study, co-authored by Connerton and Murry, found that the 2.3 million Chinook salmon planted by New York and Ontario annually produce less than half of the Chinook in Lake Ontario. Most have never seen a hatchery; they were born wild in tributary streams like the Salmon River in north central NY.

Lake Ontario managers still aren't convinced that a new stocking plan is needed, Connerton said.

"The best indicator of the balance between Chinook and alewives is the average size of full-grown salmon," he said. That average was recently near an all-time low, but has since rebounded and stabilized.

"I think what they've decided over the past ten years is there doesn't seem to be enough to indicate a stocking change," he said. **More at, [greatlakesecho.org](http://greatlakesecho.org)**

### Species Profile



**Alewife**  
(*Alosa pseudoharengus*)

#### Description:

The alewife is a small herring having a greenish to bluish back and silvery sides with faint dark stripes. Although this species is overshadowed by other herring species in the marine environment, alewife are a key player in many freshwater lakes within which they have been introduced -- particularly the Great Lakes. Freshwater alewives, sometimes called sawbellies, are important as prey for popular game fish such as salmon and trout. They are extremely abundant in the Great Lakes, and are often regarded as a nuisance when large masses of these fish wash up on shorelines following large spring die-offs. Currently, alewives are a key player in a mysterious thiamine deficiency syndrome that has caused widespread reproductive failure in key native salmonine fishes, such as lake trout and Atlantic salmon. Alewives often contain thiaminase, which is an enzyme that causes thiamine deficiency in predators that eat alewives, yet mysteriously, alewives do not suffer from this thiamine deficiency. Ongoing research studies are underway to determine factors responsible for development of the thiamine deficiency syndrome.

#### Habitat:

Sea-run alewives are common near Long Island and in the Hudson and lower Mohawk rivers, and have also been reported from the St. Lawrence River. Landlocked alewives are common in Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, the Finger Lakes, Oneida Lake, Oswego River system, and Ballston and Round lakes. Alewives have also been introduced into various reservoirs in the upper Delaware drainage system (Pepacton and Cannonsville).

Sea-run alewives move up freshwater streams from the sea to spawn during the period from late April to early June. Spawning takes place in lakes and sluggish stretches of rivers above tidal influence. Landlocked alewives move from deep water to shallow beaches in lakes or move up streams to ponds to spawn in spring.

## Tonawanda Creek Watershed Committee Meeting

A multi-county community group for the Tonawanda Creek Watershed will meet on Wednesday, March 31st at 6:30 p.m. at the Corfu Community Center, 116 East Main St., Corfu, NY. All are wel-

come to help with the planning and management of Tonawanda Creek and its resources. If you are unable to attend but are interested in joining this effort, contact Elizabeth Bentley-Huber at

Genesee County Soil & Water Conservation District at (585) 343-2362. Tonawanda Creek lies within parts of Erie, Wyoming, Genesee and Niagara Counties and is approximately 90 miles long.

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