



NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY & ROTARY
**YOUTH STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM**

EDUCATE * INSPIRE * EMPOWER

**Sample listing of guest speakers,
resources, and lesson topics.**



Rotary
Clubs of WNY

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Jay Burney is the Special Projects Director, [Pollinator Conservation Association](#); US Chair of the [Birds on Niagara](#) Festival; Advocacy Chair, Western New York Environmental Alliance; Co-founder of the Our Outer Harbor Coalition and the Friends of Times Beach Nature Preserve.

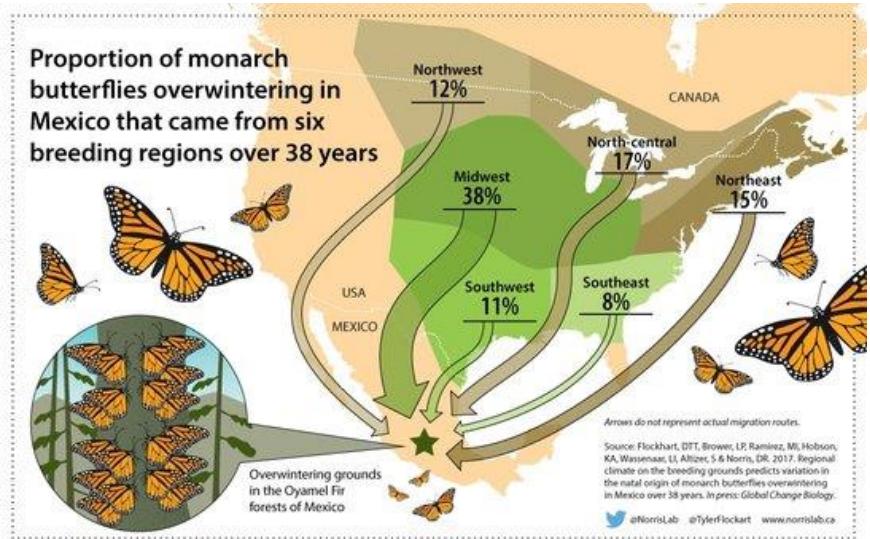
In 2018, the PCA partnered with the Niagara River Greenway to create the Greenway Pollinator Partnership. The International Niagara River Corridor linking Lake Erie with Lake Ontario is a Globally Significant Important Bird Area (IBA) and a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. The IBA and Ramsar designation helps to characterize the region on a conservation level similar to the Galapagos, Yellowstone, and the Everglades relative to abundance, variety, and threats to birds species.

At his farm in Chaffee, New York Mr. Burney created one of the regions first pollinator conservation areas. In addition to many other positions he has held, he has also written and published numerous articles and created multi-media products on environment, ecology and nature – including local pollinators and a guide to WNY Butterflies.



Our Great Lakes region has important connections to pollinator conservation needs. For example, the story of the discovery of the wintering areas for the Monarch Butterfly goes through the Niagara River corridor as Canadian researchers tracked butterflies released in Ontario on their way to the small mountainous area in Mexico where they overwinter. [New studies](#) show that Monarch populations including more than 12 percent of overwintering Mexican Monarchs come from the Great Lakes. The rapid monarch decline over the past few years is dramatic and has caused the Monarch butterfly to be considered for Endangered Species protection. Our region's native ecology is suffering due to pollinator decline. Familiar species such as the Monarch Butterfly, the Nine-spotted Ladybug, and the American Bumblebee have all but vanished. This makes the restoration of the Niagara River Greenway very dependent upon pollinator conservation strategies.

The [Pollinator Conservation Association](#) is a not for profit that advocates for/raises awareness about, and provides consultation, evaluation and design, installation, and management and maintenance plans for sites.



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Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The Niagara Region Parks Interpretive Program's instructional team will provide in class, in parks, and virtual lessons and activities on topics such as nature in winter, the challenges of invasive plants, Japanese fish printing, and STEM presentations. They also provide recreational programs with an environmental or historical theme.

The Parks Interpretive office works with the Connect Kids Program to help bring students to our state parks for hands on learning. Connects students attending New York State primary and secondary public schools with nature and history.

Reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for field trips to state and federal parks, historic sites, fish hatcheries and other outdoor recreation areas. <https://bit.ly/NYConnectKids>



Niagara Region Parks Interpretive Programs' mission is to educate the public about our natural resources and the natural history of the Niagara Region. Offering environmental education programs and historical programs throughout Western New York. Every quarter a new list of programs and events are published for the public.

The Parks Interpretive office is located at Deveaux Woods State Park but provides programming throughout the region. The office also houses the Great Lakes: Ecosystem Education Exchange Basin Bins. The Basin Bins are filled with hands-on resources for teachers and educators to use in teaching about the Great Lakes ecosystem and environment. It includes worksheets, activities and other materials to share environmentally-sound information about the Great Lakes with students via classroom, organization, or club. All materials are free of charge and do not need to be replaced by the teacher or school. Basin Bins can be borrowed for up to two weeks from the Parks Interpretive office. More information visit NY's Great Lakes: Ecosystem Education Exchange Basin Bins <https://bit.ly/GLBasinBins>.



Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper protects and restores our water and surrounding ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations. We connect people to water. We inspire economic growth and community engagement.

For the past 30 years, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper has been the guardian of Western New York's fresh water. Our mission is four-fold: we PROTECT the water, we RESTORE both the waterways and the surrounding ecosystems, we CONNECT people to their waterways, and we INSPIRE both economic activity along the waterways and community engagement.

In the late 60s, the Buffalo River was officially declared dead. Fast forward to 1989, with not a lot of improvement, and Friends of the Buffalo River is formed. Our organization worked tirelessly for the last three decades, and many partners, to bring the Buffalo River back to life. It's a tremendous, largely untold story that played a large part in the city's resurgence and renaissance in recent years. The story of the Buffalo River is a tale of caution, determination, hope and resurgence, and our mission going forward is to work to achieve the same successes on other waterways, as well, in addition to protecting our headwaters throughout the watershed.



CLASSROOM LESSONS Bring our local waterways inside!

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper staff and volunteer ambassadors can teach a variety of lessons in the classroom to strengthen the connection and awareness of waterway resources and issues. Lessons can be adapted to meet student's grade level needs and include a hands-on activity or props. Please look over the Presentations & Assemblies list for other possible classroom opportunities.

- **What's a Watershed?** - Learn what a watershed is, how water flows through it and what features form its boundaries. The concept of waterway pollution is also introduced. Recommended Grades: K-12
- **Stormwater & Sewage Pollution** - Introduce students to the concept of stormwater runoff and ways to prevent water pollution in their community. Recommended Grades: 5-12
- **Invaders in our water** - One of the most threatening forms of pollution to biodiversity is biological. Learn how aquatic invasive species made their way into the Great Lakes Basin, how they are impacting water quality and biodiversity, and management strategies. Recommended Grades: 5-12
- **Eating Local Fish** - Legacy pollution in local waterways has caused many species of fish to come unsafe to eat. Learn about the sources of pollution, how these toxins impact human health and best practices for eating local fish. Recommended Grades: 5-12
- **Plastic Pollution** - Our local waterways are threatened by plastic pollution and other litter. Explore sources of this plastic pollution and learn how it is impacting waterway systems and aquatic life. Recommended Grades: 5-12
- **Climate Change in the Great Lakes** - Climate change is impacting the planet in many ways. Explore the effects on the Great Lakes region. Recommended Grades: 5-12



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Ornithology - Birding is a natural gateway to conservation. Students will learn how to properly identify common bird species by observing field marks and using field guides. They will also learn how their observations can be part of a worldwide upsurge in community science that can help environmental scientists.

Habitat Restoration - Students will participate in a hands-on, immersive session helping to remove invasive species from local habitats. Comparison studies will be made with former restoration sites.

Aquatic Ecology - Students will use an identification key to become familiar with several common aquatic macroinvertebrates and microinvertebrates found in local waterways. Using their findings, students will also calculate the biotic Water Quality Index (WQI) for the pond. Additional concepts covered are pond succession, trophic levels, and bioaccumulation.



Buffalo Audubon Society, established in 1909, is dedicated to the promotion of the appreciation and enjoyment of the natural world through education and stewardship. A regional, independent organization and chapter affiliate of National Audubon, we currently steward over 1,000 acres of land throughout Western New York, with our office headquarters located at Beaver Meadow Audubon Center in Wyoming County. We connect people to nature through delivery of educational programs for all ages and seek to engage participants as advocates and stewards for and of the natural world.

Education delivery and outdoor experiences at Beaver Meadow have been our historical foundation, yet Buffalo Audubon is also engaged in large scale conservation and habitat improvement projects in Niagara and Erie Counties, currently including invasive species management at Buckhorn Island State Park, and the construction of a 14,000 square foot island in the City of Buffalo's Niagara River Corridor for Common Tern habitat. These projects present long term opportunities to engage the public in meaningful community science efforts while increasing visibility. As Buffalo Audubon looks toward its future, we recognize and embrace the need to engage and represent new audiences while continuing to build on and celebrate the legacy of Beaver Meadow

Buffalo Sewer Authority protects public health and our local waterways from water pollution. We capture dirty water, treat it, and clean it so that it can be safely returned to our rivers and lakes.

Though the Great Lakes contain one-fifth of the world's fresh surface water, they are very fragile. These lakes are essentially glacial puddles – ones that receive only 1% of their volume in new inputs from annual rain and snowfall. This makes it all the more important that every community takes actions to preserve and protect our water.

Each year, Buffalo residents, businesses, and visitors use billions of gallons of water for drinking, food, cleaning, health care, industry use, and recreation. Before the creation of wastewater treatment systems, that water would all be directed to local waterways, which would pollute our water and spread disease. We protect our Great Lakes by collecting and cleaning:

- Sanitary water from toilets, port-a-potties and medical facilities
- Wash water from bathrooms, kitchens and laundry facilities
- Process and wastewater used by local factories and businesses
- Rain and snowfall from rooftops, parking lots, roadways, and lawn

We do this using a combination of techniques:

- Traditional, "hard" engineering: pipes, tanks, and structures collect and carry wastewater to the treatment plant
- Innovative, "smart" approach: sensors and computers maximize the capacity of the city's sewer infrastructure
- Soft, "green" infrastructure: landscape techniques help hold and clean water where it falls

BUFFALO SEWER AUTHORITY

The Buffalo Sewer Authority offers free, educational and entertaining tours of their facilities to students. The tour staff will provide your students with an engaging tour they will remember for a long time!



Rain Check is a citywide effort to manage water where it falls to protect water quality and quantity.

WATER PURIFICATION PROCESS





**Partnering to Protect
Western New York From
Invasive Species**

WNY PRISM is dedicated to helping prevent and minimize the damage caused by invasive species, non-native species that cause harm to the environment, economy or human health. Education is one of the tools we use to fulfill this mission and WNY PRISM is excited to work with educators of all kinds to help spread information about invasive species in western New York.

Resources – WNY PRISM offers a variety of resources to educators interested in bringing invasive species into the classroom. Our lending library is available to all to borrow and return invasive species posters, specimens and even an emerald ash borer costume!

Teacher Trainings – WNY PRISM is available to offer trainings to groups of teachers and other educators about invasive species and offer the tools they need to teach their own students. Bring plant ID, citizen science, technology and much more into your lessons with invasive species!

Field Trips – WNY PRISM is available to join your class in the field to talk about or manage invasive species, after all the best place to learn about invasive species is right alongside them. WNY PRISM will teach them about invasive species, the harm they cause and actions that anyone and everyone can take to help prevent their spread.

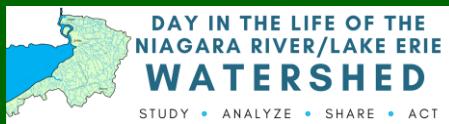


WNY PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management) is one of 8 regional partnerships in New York State created to help prevent or minimize the harm caused by invasive species.

This harm is felt around the world as invasive species contribute to plant and animal extinctions, cause damages estimated at \$120 billion each year in the U.S. alone and disrupt the ecological processes we as humans need to survive.

WNY PRISM has worked since 2014 to prevent and minimize these damages in western New York by educating over 65,000 WNY residents, performing over 20,000 voluntary watercraft inspections for aquatic invasive species, leading surveys for important early detection species and managing invasive species on over 50 projects that protect our most important ecological and recreation resources.





The Day in the Life of the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed program supports teachers and students through the four steps of a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE).

Step 1: Issue Definition: Educator workshops are offered throughout the year to share standards-based curricular and background information on the Great Lakes and local watersheds.

Step 2: Field Experiences: Reinstein Woods organizes the annual “Day in the Life” field experience every October in which hundreds of students work with local environmental professionals to collect water quality data throughout the watershed. Water quality sampling equipment is available to borrow throughout the school year.

Step 3: Synthesis and Conclusions: Reinstein Woods compiles water quality data and provides guidance on using data for classroom analysis.

Step 4: Stewardship Actions: Educators can borrow stewardship equipment for invasive species removal, native plant propagation, and clean-ups.

Click here for more information:
<https://reinsteinwoods.org/explore/programs-services/dayinthelife/>



The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, in partnership with the non-profit Friends of Reinstein Woods, operates Reinstein Woods Environmental Education Center in Cheektowaga. We invite teachers to explore all of the [virtual, in-school, and field trip options](#) that we offer, as well as [professional development opportunities](#).

Reinstein Woods Staff will bring nature to your classroom through exciting standards-based virtual or in-person programs. Topics range from habitat explorations to skull science to watersheds. [Online resources](#) provide lesson plan overviews, correlations to NYS learning standards and post-visit activities.

Classes can explore Reinstein Woods' ponds and forests on a visit to our unique 292- acre preserve. Guided lessons invite students to engage in hands-on learning.

Reinstein Woods is committed to helping teachers incorporate the environment into their classroom. Trained educators share nationally recognized, standards-based curricula in [workshops](#) that help teachers better understand their own local environment. Teachers become comfortable using place-based education methods to make their students more college and career ready. These interdisciplinary programs are targeted at Pre-K through high school teachers. Workshops and schoolyard habitat consultations also can be done at an individual school upon request.

For more information on all of these services, visit:
<https://reinsteinwoods.org/explore/programs-services/school-programs/>.



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The Western New York Land Conservancy is an accredited regional not-for-profit 501 (c) 3 land trust that works with landowners, municipalities, and other organizations to help them conserve their most cherished natural areas and working farms.

From the Appalachian foothills to the south, to the shores of two of North America's Great Lakes, and over one of Earth's greatest natural wonders, Niagara Falls, Western New York is one of the most fascinating and bountiful natural places in the entire world. Forests, meadows, lakes, streams, farms, orchards, and vineyards abound. The region is witness to the dramatic changes of all four seasons, great migrations of fish and wildlife, and harvests that have sustained people for many millennia. We are all the stewards of this immense natural wealth. Like the many visionary people who protected some of these places in the past for us to enjoy today, the Western New York Land Conservancy is working to protect the remaining special places for the next 100 generations.

They protect land through the use of conservation easements, property acquisitions, and by assisting transactions between other parties. Founded in 1991, they have helped protect more than 7,000 acres of land on more than 80 properties throughout Western New York.



Alexa Ringer is a Community Engagement Specialist at the WNY Land Conservancy. She has a love for the wild outdoors as well as a passion for quality, community based urban planning. She is originally from New York City and has been living in Buffalo for 4 years, where she completed her Bachelors in Environmental Design from the University at Buffalo.

Her fascination for excellent public parks originates from her 2016 thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail, where she traversed the Appalachian Mountains along the US's oldest National Scenic Trail for 6 months. While hiking, she observed sprawling urban development that threatened to infringe on pristine wilderness sparked her interest in urban planning. Ever since, she has dedicated herself to improving city planning through creating more livable outdoor spaces while protecting spaces that already exist.

Her work spans different scales, from working at a local bicycle shop to developing the public participation plan for the Regional Bike Master Plan in Erie and Niagara counties. She loves backpacking, reading, and looking at unique architecture.



Kofi Flynn-Aikins, a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Manager, was the founder of the Great Lakes Experience, an NGO that worked closely with his office to raise more than \$100,000 from businesses and foundations to host environmental festivals that attracted thousands of community members, as well as create fun and educational programs for the youth. Kofi was actively involved in supporting training activities at the National Conservation Training Center in WV on leadership, outreach and education, community engagement, and diversity. He was also one of the trained Diversity Change Agents in the USFWS, working with others to educate employers about the importance of diversity and inclusion in the work place.

Kofi was recognized for his leadership in the Great Lakes with several awards including, Invest in People Award; Conserving America's Fisheries Award; Milford "Pinky" Robinson Memorial Award; Promoting Our Natural Resources Award; and Diversity Award. He holds a PhD in Ecology from the University of California, Davis; MS in Biology from the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse; and BS in Fishery Science from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Kofi Flynn-Aikins is a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Manager who was responsible for restoring and protecting fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats in the Lake Ontario and Lake Erie watersheds. Before retiring from the USFWS, he was the Manager for the Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Complex, which includes the Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, Basom, NY; Allegheny National Fish Hatchery, Warren, PA; Harrison Lake Fish Hatchery and Virginia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, both collocated in Charles City, VA; and White Sulphur Springs National Fish Hatchery, White Sulphur Springs, WV. He provided leadership, guidance, and coordination on scientific and technical matters, as well as on outreach and educational matters.

The **Lower Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office**'s mission is to conserve and restore healthy populations of native fish and other aquatic species, and protecting the lakes, rivers, wetlands and estuaries where they live. Our work provides valuable recreational and economic benefits to the American people, and restores the checks and balances important to the overall function and health of our lakes and rivers.

Kofi is passionate about educating the American public regarding the role of the USFWS in their community and connecting them, especially children, with nature. His presentation to students will focus on, "Outreach and Community Engagement: Promoting Conservation Stewardship for Future Generations."





BRRA has been working hard at making the City of Buffalo a National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat.

It is official, the City of Buffalo is registered to become a certified National Wildlife Federation Community Habitat. An ambitious undertaking for a small organization but an important one for the future of our local environment and all that it influences. What started out as a small community project for the Black Rock/Riverside area of the city has spread to now include the entire City. When certified, Buffalo will be the only large, urban community in NY State to have such a designation (there are currently only two others and both have populations under 5,000 people). And Buffalo will rank #11 in population size certified communities in the country!

We need your help! Our environment needs your help! If you haven't already seen the National Wildlife Federation's easy to follow certification check list and walked through it to see how easy it is certify your yard, then download it today and get your yard certified. If you don't have a yard that will work, check out green spaces around your place of business, or your neighborhood, community gardens, and small pocket parks and certify them. It's quick and easy and every space certified goes toward our goal to certify the City of Buffalo as a habitat community. For more information on this project visit www.nwf.org/certify. BRRA is moving forward with this project by expanding it to include the entire counties of Erie and Niagara. They will be working hard to make these two counties certified as a National Wildlife Habitat. Visit their website, <https://brralliance.org/>, to find out more.



Black Rock Riverside Alliance has been working to grow their community since 2011. They are committed to the overall betterment of the Northwest neighborhoods of Buffalo New York. Born out of the good neighbor planning alliance initiative that was a community drive for revitalization their goal was to put the initiative identified in the plans into reality. Their work has continued in the form of Community Gardens, Habitat Development, Storefront Revitalization, creation of community spaces and multiple grants bringing resources and awareness to their communities.

Their goals are to:

- Revitalize and preserve these vibrant, historic communities.
- Improve the overall quality of life in these communities.
- Work towards the beautification of these neighborhoods.
- Bolster private economic development.
- Increase commercial desirability.
- Foster community involvement.



The **Citizen Coalition for Wildlife & Environment** aspire to be the voice of wildlife and the stewards of our environment. Through education and action we resolve to protect our ecosystems. We know that working to improve the environment and the lives of animals will improve our lives as well. We join together to encourage and enlist citizens in the practice and promotion of compassionate coexistence and the realization of a kind and compassionate world.

Being part of the Citizen Coalition for Wildlife and Environment means:

- Bringing together individuals, organizations and agencies for collective strength and action
- Staying informed on topics and actions that affect wildlife and the environment
- Receiving notices of educational events, meetings and trainings
- Being apprised of local, state and federal legislative actions and initiatives
- Advocating for protection of the environment and for compassionate coexistence with wildlife
- Being a member of a collective voice



Nicole Gerber and David Reilly founded the Citizen Coalition for Wildlife & Environment in 2016 as a non-profit organization. Nicole is a Program Manager at Roswell Park and Dave is a professor at Niagara University. Together with the coalitions' members they have worked hard to advocate for wildlife and the environment, by focusing on community awareness and education.

They have presented at schools, libraries and other community venues on various topics, including; Ecosystems as Communities; The Interdependency of Plants & Animals, How ecological gardening helps biodiversity, Reconnecting your yard with nature: coexisting with plants and animals, Animals, Plants, and You: How and Why to Make Your Backyard a Habitat.

They have tabled at multiple events, such as the Pollinator Conference, Elmwood Festival of the Arts, Birds on the Niagara, Erie County SPCA Wildlife Baby Shower, WNY Environmental Alliance and others.





Citizen Science Community Resources is a grassroots organization in Western New York dedicated to science-based activism for winning environmental health and justice campaigns. Teaching others through our example, we empower people to investigate their air, soil, or water and use the power of scientific data to create healthier communities and a more just society. Citizen science is the practice of public participation and collaboration in scientific research to increase scientific knowledge. We seek to educate, empower, and advocate.

Students as Citizen Scientists

Our youth education program gives K-12 students hands on experience gathering soil and air samples in the field. Students participants help to empower Western New York communities in protecting their environment.



Jackie James Creedon is the founder and Vice-Chair of Citizen Science Community Resources.

In 2005, Jackie and her neighbors founded the Clean Air Coalition of WNY and worked together to hold Tonawanda Coke and its environmental manager responsible for emitting benzene, particulate matter, and other dangerous chemicals into surrounding neighborhoods. Using community-based science, collaboration with government agencies, and a campaign of public pressure, community members achieved a 92% reduction of benzene (a known carcinogen) at Tonawanda Coke.

Additionally, the work of Jackie and her fellow citizens contributed directly to the company's 2013 conviction on fourteen counts of breaking environmental laws in U.S. district court which ultimately resulted in the plants closure in 2018.

In 2014, Jackie received the Environmental Quality Award from the EPA for her leadership and science-based activism in the fight against clean air violations at Tonawanda Coke. She holds a BS in Chemistry from SUNY Fredonia.

CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



Activism Climate and Energy Legislative Public Health and Toxics Water Protection

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) was formed in 1985 by a small group of concerned citizens who recognized the need to provide public involvement to advance stronger environmental policy. Today CCE has grown to a 120,000-member organization with offices in Farmingdale, NY, Albany NY, Syracuse, NY, Buffalo NY, and Hamden, CT. CCE continues to work to empower the public by providing members with opportunities to participate in the political process and thereby advance a strong environmental agenda.

CCE engages in extensive education, research, lobbying and public outreach. One of their primary goals is to help citizens increase their influence and participation in important environmental campaigns. Through such activism, the public has a stronger voice in the development of public policies and legislative agendas. Their achievements thought public involvement have resulted in greater awareness and protection of drinking water quality, preservation of open spaces, protection of beaches, bays, rivers and Great Lakes waters, advancing renewable energy and a reduction in pollutants that impair our air and water resources.



Brian Smith is the Associate Executive Director for Citizens Campaign for the Environment, where he has been an employee for over 20 years. Although CCE campaigns throughout New York State, Brian is located right here in Western New York and is passionate about helping our youth understand how they can have an impact on our environment. He has been a guest in many classrooms, to explain not only the current issues they are working on, but also to help teach kids how they can be effectively involved in environmental policies.

CCE's primary goal is to empower individual citizen's to have a stronger voice and greater influence in the development and implementation of public policies affecting our water, land, and air in the New York and Connecticut region. In order to achieve this goal they provide resources to help citizens take action where they live. These resources can be found at this link:

<https://www.citizenscampaign.org/take-action>



The mission of the Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm is to actively campaign for awareness to conditions that are detrimental to the environment, other pollinators, wildlife and indigenous plant species. They sincerely, want people to succeed with their ambitions to create an environment conducive not only to Monarch Butterfly recovery; but also to a sustainable environment; beneficial to all native insects, wildlife and nature in general. They facilitate these efforts by providing educational experiences for students and families, and making native milkweed seeds available for purchase. Planting native plants from localized environments provide habitat that our pollinators and wildlife identify with. Providing more exact growing stages and bloom times, local native plants are more reliable and have adapted to our unique micro climates that our wildlife have come to depend upon.



Eastern Monarch Butterfly Farm is a self-funding organization dedicated to increasing the Monarch population. Through restoring and replacing indigenous natural habitat, releasing healthy butterflies and conducting educational presentation; together we are making a difference. They are located in Western New York and all of their butterflies are released here in NY. We believe the iconic Monarch Butterfly is a messenger and its rapid decline is the message; ***coexist with that which enables us to exist.***

Their goal is to inspire people to contribute in preserving, conserving, and restoring indigenous habitat starting with their own properties. They will gladly answer any questions or provide assistance with planting pollinator habitat.

Funds generated through the sales of native plants, seeds and other Monarch butterfly related items go directly to our habitat/butterfly recover efforts.





The **Lower Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office** is part of a network of field stations located throughout the nation that works to conserve fish and aquatic resources. Biologists from Alaska to the Florida Keys restore native species, protect imperiled species and their habitats, and monitor and control invasive species.

Research shows us that outreach and environmental education has a host of benefits for children, schools, and our families. Just a few of these include: enhancing creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills; helping students make connections between the classroom and the real world; and developing an appreciation and respect for the environment while promoting healthy lifestyles and strengthening communities.

The outreach and education program seeks to educate, inform, and improve the public's awareness to promote a better understanding of the role each of us plays in the environment. The program offers presentations to area schools, scout troops, youth organizations and environmental fairs.

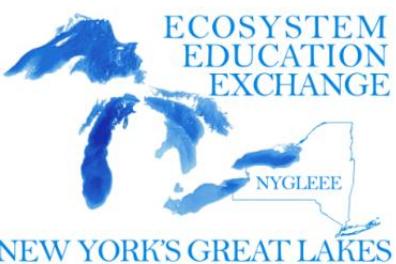
- Students, Nature, and Photography (SNAP!)
- Schoolyard Habitat



Studies have demonstrated that “nature smart” children perform better on standardized tests and become more resourceful and better problem solvers as a result of the hands-on learning that our natural environment demands of us. **Schoolyard Habitats** not only benefit wildlife, they also get children in touch with nature. This program provides an interactive opportunity to teach children about nature and how they can help take care of it. The staff works with the school to design and establish natural habitats on school grounds using native plants to benefit wildlife. These habitats can be pollinator gardens, bird gardens, forests, rain gardens, ponds or meadows. Habitat type is dependent on soil type, shade, location, space, and the needs of the school. They are designed to not only provide food and refuge for wildlife, but to serve as a place of learning for children, as part of curriculum. Through **SNAP**, staff works with small groups of students, teaching students techniques for successful nature photography and providing ecology lessons. At the end of the program, students select their favorite photo and write a brief statement about it, describing the inspirational meaning the image has for them. For more information,



visit: <https://www.fws.gov/office/lower-great-lakes-fish-and-wildlife-conservation>



NYGLEE has created a Great Lakes Model Educators (GLME) Network, bringing together like-minded k-12 educators to bring Great Lakes literacy and stewardship into classrooms and nature center programs throughout the state. The GLME Network provides educators of any discipline access to shared professional development and educational experiences. A GLME is an environmental educator who has participated in Great Lakes workshops and successfully integrated the Great Lakes Literacy Principles into their classroom.

Resources available to educators include:

- Basin bins
- Great Lakes curriculum
- Downloadable resources
- Funding opportunities
- Experiential learning and stewardship opportunities



As a GLME, educators are responsible for integrating Great Lakes Literacy Principles into their program and promoting environmental stewardship through curriculum and experiential learning opportunities, as well as supporting other educators to do the same. Interested educators may fill out an application, and recommendations for deserving educators are also accepted.

Under the New York Sea Grant and the New York State DEC, New York's Great Lakes Ecosystem Education Exchange, NYGLEE, partners with educators in the Great Lakes Watershed to encourage stewardship on the Great Lakes and develop experiential learning curriculum focused on the Great Lakes Literacy Principles.

NYGLEE Goals

- Ensure the next generation is prepared to make sound decisions that consider and contribute to improving the health of New York's Great Lakes, including water quality, natural resources and social impacts.
- Encourage K-12 students to pursue careers in fields such as water quality management, environmental engineering, habitat protection, and environmental education.

NYLGE works to expand improve efforts to develop educational programs related to the Great Lakes, provide resources and curriculum options for classroom and field learning opportunities, and assist educators in encouraging students to become steward of the local watershed.

For more information, visit:

<https://seagrant.sunysb.edu/articles/t/new-york-s-great-lakes-ecosystem-education-exchange-about-nyglee3>



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