MONROE COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

May 15, 2024

In Attendance:

EMC

At Large - Tom Dooley; EMC Chair
At Large – Haines Lockhart
At Large - Deb Muratore
City of Rochester – Wes Grooms
Town of Chili - Larry Lazenby
Town of Gates - Charles Johnson
Town of Hamlin – Steve Rutherford
Town of Ogden – Bill Parkhurst
Town of Penfield – Cynette Cavaliere
Town of Perinton - Mark Gaul
Town of Pittsford - Caroline Kilmer
Town of Riga - Greg Adams
Town of Rush – Beth Hoak
Town of Webster - Charles Zlotkus
Ex Officio Alternate - Clement Chung; MCDES
Ex Officio Alternate - Yasmin Guevara; MCDES
Recording Secretary - Ryan Parra-Merrell

Guests

Ethan Huynh – Gates-Chili HS
Hunter Preece – Churchville Chili HS
Dana McCarthy Churchville-Chili HS
Orlando Marrero – W. Irondequoit HS
Collin Pieters – W. Irondequoit HS
Brian C. Eshenaur - Presenter
Nathaniel A. Jones – MCDES
Madison Quinn - MCDES
Sally Howard - FMCE

Meeting location:

- Monroe County Fleet Center, Building 1 Conference Room
  145 Paul Road, Rochester 14624

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 4:02pm by Chairman Tom Dooley.

Introductions:

- Introductions were made from all present. Student members also gave introductions and shared why they were interested in being part of the EMC.

Review of Minutes:

- Motion to approve April minutes by Steve Rutherford; seconded by Mark Gaul. All in favor; approved.

Meeting Topic(s):

Tree Health for Monroe County Landscapes:
Brian C. Eshenaur, Sr. Extension Associate, Cornell University Integrated Pest Management Program

- Trees provide a number of benefits to us. They produce oxygen, control soil erosion, regulate the climate, support wildlife and biodiversity, enhance aesthetics and recreation, reduce noise pollution, and conserve energy.

- Trees can have an impact on reducing atmospheric carbon in one of two primary ways.
    - They sequester ("lock up") CO2 in their roots, trunk, stems, and leaves as they grow, and in wood products after they are harvested.
    - Trees near buildings can reduce heating and air conditioning demands, thereby reducing emissions associated with power production.
- The top tree health and invasive pests of concern are the spotted lanternfly, box tree moth, beech tree disease, and zig zag sawfly.
- Spotted lanternfly
    - A species of planthopper native to Asia, they can feed on over 100 species of plants in the United States.
    - Their preferred host tree is called the Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which is another invasive species, but they will also feed on black walnut, willow, red maple, and grapes.
    - Their impact on grape industry is of concern, as there are nearly 500 wineries and around 900 grape farms in New York. Grape industry provided $6.6 billion direct economic impact on the state.
    - They started appearing in the Northeast of the US and have been spreading. They are typically moved around by human activity, since they can easily cling to vehicles, etc.
    - Spotted lanternflies cause significant damage to trees, but they do not bite or sting and are not structural pests. A spotted lanternfly can typically only survive indoors for no more than 48 hours due to their need to feed on plants outside.
    - They feed using a piercing mouthpart, but can cover plants in large swarms. They then excrete sugar water as they feed. This can impact honey production, because bees will feed on the excretions and it will affect the quality of the honey.
    - Lanternflies kill trees by feeding on and removing their sap, which makes it harder for the trees to survive winter months.
    - Females lay eggs around September. They will lay even more eggs when their preferred host, the Tree of Heaven, is available.
    - Current management tools and tactics include traps, destruction of eggs, insecticides, and vacuum removal.
    - Spotted lanternflies are also susceptible to a few species of entomopathogenic fungi that specifically target them. We may be able to use these fungi as natural insecticides.
    - They are also preyed upon by birds and other insects.
- Box tree moth
    - A moth native to East Asia, but introduced into Europe, Canada, and the United States recently. They most likely spread into the US from Canada. As of 2024, eight counties in New York have seen infestations.
    - The only known host in North America is the boxwood. Only the caterpillars cause direct damage, as the adults do not feed at all.
    - Box tree moth life cycle takes approximately 45 days. Eggs hatch after 3 days and become adults in around 5 weeks.
    - Boxwoods are traditional evergreen shrubs often used for landscapes because of their resistance to deer browsing. But due to the threat posed by box tree moths, some gardeners are using alternative landscaping plants such as bayberry, cypress, and holly.
- Beech tree leaf disease is caused by a species of nematode that attack the leaves of trees.

Committee Reports:

- **Program and Presentations**
    - This meeting wraps up the academic year. Next meeting will be roundtable meeting taking place in September.
- **Nominating and Community Liaison**
    - Nomination for members sent to legislature was approved.
- **Natural Resources**
    - The next committee meeting the following week will cover GIS and natural resources inventory.
    - Chair Paul Johnson has retired from all EMC positions.

Monroe County Staff Reports:

- Yasmin Guevara (Environmental Services)
    - Solid waste management have started. Represented at the 2024 Lilac Festival. Currently working on 2025 budget for solid waste.
- Madison Quinn (Environmental Services)
    - Climate Action Plan draft on website monroecountyactionplan.com. Public comment period extended.
- Clement Chung (Environmental Services)
    - *EPA update regarding PFAS*

Other Business/Announcements

- None.

Privilege of the Floor

- Charles Johnson (Gates): Watch out for ticks as weather has started to get warmer.

Adjourn:

Meeting was adjourned at 5:15.