



CONSERVATION UPDATE

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

SPRING 2010

Volume 42, Number 2

Board of Directors

Mary Beth Day, *Chairman*
Howard Sias, *Vice-Chairman*
Matthew Koenn, *Secretary*
Bill Van Riper, Jr., *Treasurer*
Don Rentschler, *Director*

District Staff

Dennis Rice, *Executive Director*
Amy Gilhouse,
Groundwater Technician
Lauren Lindemann & Nathan McNett, *CREP Technicians*
Fred Schettenhelm,
Equipment Manager

USDA

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

Stephen Olds,
District Conservationist
Quincy Coleman,
Soil Conservationist
Bryce Rinkenberger,
Soil Conservationist

Our Mission

To educate and assist the people of Washtenaw County with the conservation and management of their natural resources.

Web Access

www.washtenawcd.org

Conservation Update is published in April, July & December and is available at no charge. To be placed on the mailing list, phone or send a request with complete address to:

Washtenaw County CD
7203 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor MI 48103-9506
Phone: (734) 761-6721 ext. 5



Waste Knot Partner

DuRussels' and Camp Munhackle Receive Conservation Awards at Annual Meeting

DuRussel's Potato Farms of Freedom and Sharon Townships was presented the "Walter Wolfgang Memorial" Conservation Farmer of the Year Award for 2009 at the 62nd Annual Meeting of the Washtenaw County Conservation District, January 21, 2010 at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds.

The "Wolfgang Memorial" Award is presented to outstanding conservation farmers. DuRussels' were recognized for a number of conservation practices implemented on their farm, including: Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verifications in the farmstead and cropping systems; buffer strips & cover crops; abandoned well closures; and construction of an agrichemical mixing facility. The DuRussels' operate a 2,000-acre family vegetable farm, growing, packing and shipping potatoes and a wide variety of vegetables, in addition to cash crops. Their stewardship ethic over the years was also instrumental in their selection as the 2009 Conservation Farmers of the Year.

Camp Munhackle of the Great Sauk Trail Council, Boy Scouts of America and Camp Ranger Dee Slate received the 2009 Tree Conservationist award in recognition of excellent tree



Pat, Diane & Mike DuRussel received the 2009 Conservation Farmer Award at the District Annual Meeting.

planting and forest management efforts. Between 15-18,000 trees have been planted since 1987 at the 118-acre Camp Munhackle in Lyndon Township, and at two other camp properties owned by the Boy Scout Council.

In addition, Camp Munhackle has a conservation plan and Forest Stewardship Plan which specify forest management efforts to be conducted at the Camp. Mr. Slate has been camp ranger since 1987 and oversees the tree planting and forest management work.

An election of two District Directors was also conducted at the annual meeting, with Howard Sias and William Van Riper, Jr. both of Lima Township re-elected to four-year terms on the Conservation District Board of Directors.



Dee Slate, Camp Munhackle ranger received the 2009 Tree Conservationist Award at the District Annual Meeting.

TREE SALE PICK-UP REMINDER

Pick-up for spring tree sale orders will be **FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2-7 p.m.** and **SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 9-11 a.m.** at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road.

NATIVE PLANT ORDERS DUE

Orders for wildflower and prairie grass plants, fern roots, butterfly garden and beneficial/pollinator insect garden kits will be accepted through **APRIL 30, 2010**. Order forms are available at the District Office or on the District web site at:

www.washtenawcd.org



A Legacy of Conservation: 75 Years of Helping People Help the Land

A conservation legacy reaching back to 1935, 2010 marks the 75th anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the beginning of the federal commitment to conserving natural resources on private lands.

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment.

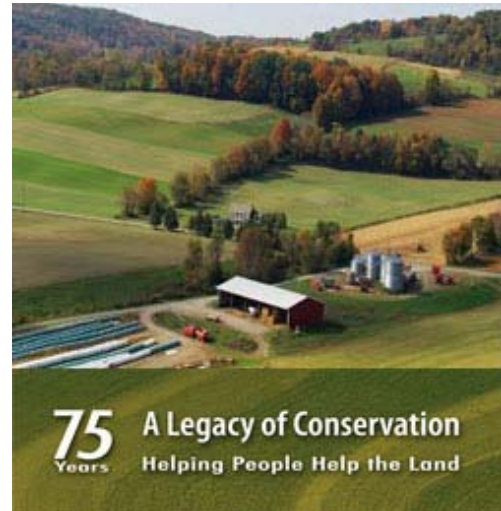
NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

Science and technology are critical to good conservation. NRCS experts from many disciplines come together to help landowners conserve natural resources in efficient, smart and sustainable ways. Whether developed in a laboratory or on the land, NRCS science and technology helps landowners make the right decisions for every natural resource.

NRCS succeeds through partnerships, working closely with individual farmers and ranchers, landowners, local conservation districts, government agencies, Tribes, Earth Team volunteers and many other people and groups that care about the quality of America's natural resources.

We work at the local level, – in field offices at USDA Service Centers in nearly every county in the Nation. NRCS employees' understanding of local resource concerns and challenges result in conservation solutions that last.

In the words of the first NRCS Chief, Hugh Hammond Bennett – "If we take care of the land, it will take care of us."



Wildlife Ways—Did You Know. . .

- The original name for the butterfly was "flutterby".
- Many spiders have eight eyes.
- A falcon can see a 4" object from nearly a mile away.
- Can an owl really turn it's head completely around? No. It's actually a ¾ turn quickly, giving the appearance of a full turn.

This Conservation Update is sponsored by

The Washtenaw Land Trust has a new name!

LEGACY
Land Conservancy

*Protecting and Preserving
Southern Michigan*

Established as a private nonprofit in 1971 to protect farmland and natural areas, we offer preservation options that:

- Respect your private property ownership
- Provide access to income, estate and property tax benefits
- Allow you to leave a legacy of land for future generations

★Contact us today! (734)302-5263, www.legacylandconservancy.org

Wacker Oil & Propane
Supplying All Your "Fueling" Needs Including
"Alternative Fuels" and "Propane"

Package & Bulk Lubricants - Tanks, Pumps, & Hoses
Transport Loads - Volume Discounts
Budget Plan - Automatic Delivery

Delivering In Your Neighborhood Since 1932

Manchester 428-8366 or 800-535-5949

Controlling Buckthorn by Bill Cook, MSU Extension Forester

You don't want buckthorn on your property. It's not good for deer and it really doesn't have thorns. Such is the oddity of common names, sometimes, but eliminating buckthorn will improve the habitat on any property.

Buckthorn is one of the few really nasty, invasives in forests. The species will gradually overtake the entire understory, unless conditions are particularly shady or dry. It's commonly seen in wetlands and under power lines. Many people mistakenly call it tag alder. It's hard to believe that one would long for tag alder, but it beats the heck out of buckthorn.

Buckthorn casts dense shade. Native herbs and shrubs lose out. Tree regeneration fails. The structure and fruits provide benefits to some wildlife species, but nothing as rich as the native flora.

Actually, there are three species of buckthorn. Two are exotics. One is native. All are in the genus *Rhamnus*: *R. cathartica* (common buckthorn) and *R. frangula* (glossy or European buckthorn) are the bad guys. *R. alnifolia* (alder-leaved buckthorn) is the native, but it's not nearly so common as the other two.

Common buckthorn tends to grow more in and around wetlands. Glossy buckthorn has a bit stronger preference for upland soils. Neither does particularly well on sand. Alder-leaved buckthorn also prefers wetlands but the leaves are different from its evil cousin. The leaves are more like the glossy buckthorn.

It's good to know how to identify these noxious pests. The leaves are rather plain-looking and you can use that ID feature, sometimes. If you scrape the stems, you'll notice that the inner bark is often bright yellow and smells a bit like squashed ladybugs.

The flowers and fruits are distinctive. They grow in small clusters and the fruit turns from red to black. Some folks mistake them for cherries. I was busy chopping-out a bunch of buckthorn one day, and my neighbor happened by and asked why I was cutting down all the cherries.

Eradicating buckthorn is impossible. However, by taking a serious whack at it, the native plants will sometimes take advantage of the temporary demise of buckthorn.

During the winter, I spend a fair amount of quality machete time. Chopping buckthorn would probably be more effective around mid-June, but that's also when the mosquitoes are really bad and the wetlands are wet. Winter is more pleasant.

Come spring, the cut buckthorn stumps sprout back vigorously. It's amazing. No wonder the native plants don't stand a chance. However, after that thick flush of growth forms a nearly complete canopy of leaves, it's also the perfect surface to collect herbicide. I generally spray in late September or early October. By then, many of the native herbs have gone dormant. The collateral damage from the herbicide is minimized. Sometimes, I have to return to an area to spot spray the next season. Buckthorn is a tough customer.

There is no easy way to get rid of buckthorn. It takes physical work and persistence. The visual quality of removing buckthorn is immediate as the woods at least appear a bit more native without the thick stands of buckthorn.

More rewarding is watching the native vegetation respond over the next few years. Given a sporting chance, quite a few species increase their presence. But this is a case where human intervention is needed.

HELP POLLINATORS HELP YOU

For most Americans, pollen means allergies and bees mean stings—but to farmers and home gardeners too, when 1 out of every 3 bites of food people take is made possible by a pollinator, bees and pollen mean much more. Pollinators, which include bees, bats, butterflies, and even birds, play a tremendous economic role for farmers and the success of your garden too.

Pollinators are particularly important to fruit, vegetable and nut growers, with crops valued in the billions. California producers alone rent half a million bee hives a year for just almond trees!

On your land, here are some things you can do to help pollinators:

- **Don't disturb wild areas.**

Bumblebees nest in grass and old mouse nests, while other bees nest in dead wood.

- **Use conservation buffers.**

Hedgerows, filter strips, contour strips, grassed waterways and windbreaks on cropland offer some of the best habitat for pollinators, and they can be within the crop field that needs their pollination service.

- **Time pesticide application.**

Check pesticide labels for bee toxicity and residual times in order to manage your pesticide applications to minimize impacts on pollinators.

- **Plant habitat.**

Planting a variety of nectar-producing native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and trees across your landscape offers good habitat for pollinators. Farmers can plant pollinator-friendly crops such as: clovers, alfalfa, trefoils and other legumes that are pollinator favorites and also enrich and protect the soil.

Consider planting a Butterfly Garden Kit or Beneficial/Pollinator Insect Garden Kit offered through the Conservation District spring sale. Orders will be accepted through April 30, 2010. Visit the District Office or web site for an order form: www.washtenawcd.org.

This Conservation Update is sponsored by



Burhop
Forestry Consulting
(734) 426-6967
burhopforestry03@yahoo.com

TIMBER SALE PREPARATION
TIMBER APPRAISALS
TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

Carl W. Burhop
Registered Forester #536

P.O. Box 362
Dexter MI 48130

YOUR HOMETOWN LENDER

- Home Construction
- Country Mortgages
- Vacant Land & Homesites
- Agricultural Loans
- Equipment Financing
- Crop & Life Insurance



734-769-2411
www.greenstonefcs.com
3645 Jackson Rd., Ann Arbor



CONSERVATION UPDATE

Washtenaw County Conservation District
7203 Jackson Rd
Ann Arbor MI 48103-9506

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ann Arbor MI
Permit No. 374

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Printed on 30%
post-consumer recycled
paper with soy-based ink

FISH DAY COMING May 8th

Buy fish to stock your pond at FISH DAY, sponsored by the Conservation District in cooperation with Harrietta Hills Trout Farm, Saturday, May 8, 2010, 12noon – 3 pm at the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds, 5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road. How FISH DAY works:

- Phone you order to Harrietta Hills at least 3 days in advance of Fish Day. **Call Toll Free: 1-877-389-2514.**
- Minimum order: 25 for any species except Koi, no minimum on Koi. **Cash or checks only** will be accepted for payment of orders at Fish Day.
- Meet fish truck on Fish Day during the hours noted.
- Only the species & sizes listed will be available at Fish Day.
- Oxygen bags and Oxygen will be provided to transport your fish home. Bring one 5-gallon bucket for every 25 fish ordered to set bags in to help get your fish safely home.
- Harrietta Hills reserves the right to substitute smaller or larger sizes at an adjusted price, if necessary.

- For more information call the District Office: (734) 761-6721 ext. 5 or visit our web site at: www.washtenawcd.org

Species	Size	Price per Fish
Rainbow Trout	5-7"	\$ 1.37
Hybrid Sunfish	5-7"	\$ 1.55
Largemouth Bass	5-7"	\$ 2.15
Channel Catfish	4-6"	\$ 0.70
Yellow Perch	3-5"	\$ 0.99
Koi	4-6"	\$12.50
Fathead Minnows	N/A	\$46/gallon

This Conservation Update is sponsored by



Think Habitat!

For information on establishing food or habitat plots for pheasants and other wildlife, call

Norwin Raus at (734) 320-4177
or write:

Washtenaw County Chapter,
Pheasants Forever, PO Box 3478,
Ann Arbor MI 48106-3478
Web Site: www.washtenawpf.org