



CONSERVATION UPDATE

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

WINTER 2011
Volume 44, Number 1

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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 annually in 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



A Waste Knot Partner

“Henry Ford & Agriculture” to be topic at District Annual Meeting

James McCabe, Collections Manager, Curator of Buildings and Acting Curator of Agriculture at The Henry Ford will discuss automobile pioneer Henry Ford’s interest and involvement in agriculture at the Washtenaw County Conservation District’s 64th Annual Meeting.

Henry Ford is well-known as the man who put the world on wheels" for the creation of Ford Motor Company and the Model T. His many efforts on behalf of farmers are less familiar to the public at large. This informal, illustrated talk will examine Henry Ford’s agricultural background, and some of his many attempts to improve the lot of the farmer.

Mr. McCabe received his BA from St. Lawrence University and MA from the Cooperstown Graduate Programs. He has been involved with documenting and presenting historic rural life and the rural landscape for over three decades.

He has worked at Iowa Living History Farms, Longstreet Farm and Historic Walnford in Monmouth County, New Jersey, and for the last 19 years at The Henry Ford. He has had curatorial responsibility for the historic buildings of The Henry Ford since 2001 and the agricultural collections since 2006. He was Conference Chair for the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums, held at The Henry Ford. He also co-authored [Norman Rockwell’s Four Freedoms: Images that Inspire a Nation](#) in 1992.

District Director Election

All residents of Washtenaw County who are of legal age may vote in the election of one district director, by one of two methods following completion of a Voter Registration form and demonstration of residency by 1 piece of identification.

1.) *Absentee Ballots* can be completed by mail or at the Conservation District Office, during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, by Wednesday, January 18th, 2012.

2.) *At the Annual Meeting* on January 19, 2012.

Director Candidates

One 4-year Director term expires this year.

Matthew Koenn of Sylvan Township, current Board Secretary is seeking re-election.

Award Presentations

The meeting program will also include presentation of the 2011 Conservation Farmer of the Year and Tree Conservationist Awards. See page 2 for more information about the award recipients.

The Annual Meeting will be held:
Thursday, January 19, 2012
6:30 p.m.

at the Washtenaw County
Farm Council Grounds
5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Road

The public is welcome to attend.

A buffet dinner will open the evening.

Cost is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children 12 and under.

Reservations for the dinner are needed, but payment can be made at the door.

To make your reservations, call the District Office at:

(734) 761-6721 ext. 5,
by January 13, 2012.

2011 Conservation Award Recipients

Conservation Farmer of the Year



The Washtenaw County Conservation District is pleased to present the 2011, "Walter Wolfgang Memorial", Conservation Farmer of the Year Award to Dewey Baker.

Dewey operates a 1,400 acre cash crop farm

with his family in Bridgewater and Manchester Townships and some ground in Lenawee County, growing corn, soybeans, wheat and hay.

Dewey's father Donald purchased the home farm in 1953, and other farmsteads and acreage were added in later years. Between Don, Dewey and his sons Ben and Josh, three generations have worked the farm.

In 1962 Don became a cooperator with the Conservation District for assistance with grassed waterways and a farm pond. He also planted many trees obtained from the District. There are almost 2 acres of waterways throughout the farm, the longest being about one-half mile. "It drains from west of M-52, carrying a lot of water--knee deep in spots," said Dewey.

In the mid to late 80's Dewey participated in the Rural Clean Water Program implementing conservation tillage and fertilizer management practices. And in recent years, Dewey has participated in the Conservation Security Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

Through the Conservation Security Program Dewey maintains 190 acres of no-till for residue management, almost 4,500 feet of field borders for wildlife habitat, 2 acres of filter strips for water quality, almost 4,500 feet of grassed waterways for erosion control, soil testing for proper crop nutrient management, uses low hazard rating pesticides for pest management, he uses bio-diesel fuels when available, and recycles used motor oil.

Most recently, through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Dewey has constructed an agrichemical handling facility to safely store and use both fertilizers and pesticides, including an inside mix-load pad.

Dewey first tried no-till when the Conservation District offered a no-till planter for rent in the 1980's, and has been using no-till for 28 years. "Using no-till has been cheaper for us because it saves fuel," said Dewey.

The Bakers also heat their home and the farm workshop with a wood furnace. "We installed it last year and it has worked well," said Dewey.

Dewey's wife Vicki handles all the recordkeeping for the farm, and when asked what makes the farm operation successful, Vicki said, "hard work and team work from all family members."

Doing his part to conserve our soil and water resources through good conservation efforts, and an overall stewardship philosophy has helped Dewey Baker maintain a successful farm operation. The Conservation District is pleased to recognize Dewey Baker as the 2011 Conservation Farmer of the Year.

Tree Conservationist

To recognize excellent tree planting efforts, the Conservation District is pleased to present the 2011 Tree Conservationist Award to Jim Kaercher and Spring Valley Trout Farm in Dexter Township.

Jim's father Robert Kaercher cleared the land on which the trout farm is now located for farming, and thought having a pond on the farm would be nice. During excavation for that pond, a large artesian well was unearthed and it was suggested that it would make a nice trout pond.

So what started out as a hobby became a business when Spring Valley Trout Farm opened in 1970. Jim became a partner with his dad in the trout farm at the age of 16 and has worked there ever since and handles day to day operations.

Spring Valley Trout Farm is located on 20 acres and includes nine spring-fed ponds ranging from 1/2 to one acre in size where visitors can fish for trout and channel catfish.

Land around the ponds is maintained in a park-like setting which includes pavilions, picnic tables, barbecue grills, a children's play area, an authentic log cabin used as a fishing lodge and snack bar, and lots of trees.

Spring Valley has a family atmosphere with about 15,000 visitors a year, including families, schools, tour buses, and other groups that come for a unique field trip or outing. "We really enjoy the reactions of the kids," said Jim.

Spring Valley has been featured in the Ann Arbor News, Chicago Tribune, Detroit News and Free Press, and on Detroit and Lansing television stations, as well as in other publications over the years. Multiple newspaper clippings are posted on the walls of the fishing lodge.

The Kaercher's began planting trees from the Conservation District in the early 1980's and have continued since then. "We became addicted to planting trees," said Jim. "I have a genuine love for trees," he continued. Trees are planted for aesthetics, wildlife habitat, privacy, and windbreaks.

Initial plantings were pines, then blue and white spruce and some hardwoods. But Jim has found that white spruce in particular is well suited for his soils. "They stay green and full right to the ground," said Jim.

They have moved a lot of their spruce trees around the farm to replace dying pines and to add to the park-like atmosphere of the farm and fishing experience.

Over 3,000 trees have been planted over the years and Jim has found that the use of weed mats has really been helpful in improving tree survival and competition with weeds.

"We have appreciated the assistance offered by the Conservation District in our tree planting efforts," said Jim. "You got us hooked on planting trees and we can't stop," he continued.

Because of his consistent, long-term tree planting efforts, and overall stewardship ethic, the Conservation District is pleased to recognize Jim Kaercher and Spring Valley Trout Farm with the 2011 Tree Conservationist Award.



Assistance Provided in 2011

TECHNICAL & OTHER ASSISTANCE	
Businesses, Community Groups & Individuals	545
Forestry & Wildlife Assistance Provided	78
Trees, plants & other items Distributed	44,750
Number of Orders Received	610
Groundwater Assistance Provided	136
Farm, Crop, Livestock or Other *A*Systs Completed	8
MAEAP Verifications & Re-verifications Completed	1
Comprehensive Nutrient Mgt. Plans Written / Applied	4 / 2
Conservation Systems Planned (# plans / # acres)	25 1,834 Ac.
Seasonal High Tunnel Systems	12,578 sq.ft.
Wildlife Habitat Management	788 Ac.
Wetlands created, restored or enhanced	8 Ac.
County Financial Assistance to NRCS (Farm & Ranchland Protection Program)	\$7,992,435
TECHNICAL REVIEWS AND/OR APPROVALS	
Public Act 116 & Purchase of Development Rights Applications Reviewed	34
State Natural Resources & Environmental Protection Act Public Notices Reviewed	14
NRCS Conservation Plans Reviewed	28
EDUCATIONAL	
Conservation Update Newsletter	3
E-Conservation Update E-mail Issues	12
Educational Materials Distributed	4,762
Presentations, Demonstrations, Meetings & Tours Number of Participants	10 290
News Releases or Radio PSAs Distributed	20
District Web Site Home Page Visits	26,814

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MAEAP Water Stewardship Program Report

By Amy Gilhouse, MAEAP Water Stewardship Technician

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program has now melded into the MAEAP Water Stewardship Program, a welcome transition in my field of work as I can now provide a less confusing presentation to producers.

MAEAP (Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program) went into Legislation this year under the support of Governor Snyder and now more producers than ever are interested in pursuing verification.

Washtenaw's Ag Day at the Farm Council Grounds was testimony that the MAEAP program is moving forward in Washtenaw County as six producers signed up to do Farm*A*Systs. In addition, two producers have been actively pursuing verification in Washtenaw County.

2011 accomplishments in the three-county program area included:

ITEM	3-COUNTY TOTALS	WASHTENAW COUNTY
Farm*A*Systs	20	5
Crop*A*Systs	9	2
Small Farm*A*Systs	2	0
Livestock*A*Systs	3	1
Greenhouse*A*Systs	2	0
MAEAP Farmstead System Verifications	2	0
MAEAP Cropping System Verifications	3	0
MAEAP Livestock System Verifications	2	1
MAEAP Greenhouse System Verifications	1	0

In Washtenaw County, Ken Siler of Freedom Township became MAEAP verified in the Livestock System.

Twelve presentations were made in Washtenaw County promoting MAEAP and the Stewardship Program using displays and making information available at community fairs, farmer's day, commodity group meetings, agronomy field days, Farm Bureau meetings and pesticide training sessions.

Other activities during 2011 included collection of water samples for an MDA Well Screening Program in Lenawee, Monroe and Washtenaw Counties to monitor the movement of a soil fumigant that was legally applied to crop fields years ago.

2012 will be a busy year and I anticipate many environmental improvements taking place in the counties that I serve.

For more information about the MAEAP Water Stewardship Program, contact Amy at (517) 673-1655.

2011 Conservation Highlights

By Steve Olds, District Conservationist

Over the past year there has been increased demand from Washtenaw County residents for conservation planning and other technical assistance provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) working in collaboration with the Washtenaw County Conservation District (CD).

The result has been just over \$4,790,770 of 2008 Farm Bill Conservation Program monies being awarded in Washtenaw County to address soil, water and other existing resource concerns for qualifying participants. This is a 34% or over \$1.2 million increase over last year when \$3,562,380 of federal conservation funds was brought into the county to address resource issues. This was tops in Michigan.

These monies came through the following federal conservation programs: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). In total, 22 new contracts were approved in the county on over 1,800 acres.

Prior to contracts being selected, applicants had to first have an approved conservation plan developed for their farm by the NRCS and CD planning team. Selections were competitive with factors such as resource protection versus dollars spent being taken into account.

The Seasonal High Tunnel (SHT) practice continues to be in demand. They were offered for the second year, as part of the three year EQIP national pilot project. The tunnels, which are similar to hoop houses, are popular with new and beginning as well as socially disadvantaged farmers who are raising vegetables and other specialty crops. Most of these applicants had farms of less than 10 acres in size. Several were organic, or transitioning to organic.

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP) were also contracted using monies through the EQIP program. As a result, livestock producers were able to hire an approved Technical Service Provider from the private sector to develop a CNMP for their operation. The CNMP plan would then be used to plan for greater resource protection.

Of note, Washtenaw County purchase of development rights programs (PDR) benefited from the federal match dollars utilized through the FRPP program. In all, 13 new projects were funded this year. This program is locally driven. Local sponsoring entities the NRCS worked with included: Ann Arbor Greenbelt, Scio and Webster Townships.

The Southeast Michigan Resource Conservation and Development Council recently entered into a contribution agreement with the NRCS. The purpose is to increase promotion of USDA Farm Bill Conservation Program opportunities for beginning and socially disadvantage farmers in Lenawee, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties. As a result, the Council hired a contractor to help implement the agreement.

This past year, has seen some changes to the NRCS field office team. Bryce Rinkenberger (Soil Conservationist) recently left to join the Peace Corps. He will be working as an agronomist in Paraguay for two years. Upon fulfilling his term, he will be rejoining our agency. Quincy Colman (Soil Conservationist) and Jeff Long (Soil Conservation Technician) continue to be productive members of the Team.

Financial Statement

Washtenaw County Conservation District

October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

REVENUES

Federal: Contribution Agreement Services	\$ 258.00
County Appropriation	30,000.00
Tree & Native Plant Sales	66,424.01
Other Product & Materials Sales	28,222.09
Interest	378.54
Other Revenues	2,802.08
Charges for Services	3,511.00
TOTAL REVENUES	\$131,595.72

EXPENDITURES

PERSONAL SERVICES

Employee Expenses	\$64,187.07
Director Expenses	1,872.44
Total Personal Services	\$66,059.51

SUPPLIES

Office supplies, Postage & Petty Cash	\$427.44
Credit card fees & Bank service charges	1,739.99
Sales Tax	5,131.36
Total Supplies	\$7,298.79

SERVICES AND CHARGES

Audit	\$2,000.00
Insurance & Bonding	403.00
Web Site	1,336.10
Telephone	59.06
Mileage – Staff	532.23
Community Promotion (Annual Meeting)	1,103.15
Education/Demonstration	409.95
Newsletters/Annual Report	3,682.02
Equipment Repair	109.00
Dues/Subscriptions	500.00
Products & Materials Purchased for Resale	18,062.68
Total Services and Charges	\$28,197.19

CAPITAL OUTLAY

Depreciation – Office Equipment	\$113.17
Total Capital Outlay	\$113.17

PROGRAM EXPENSES

Tree & Native Plant Sales	42,428.54
Total Program Expenses	\$42,428.54

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$144,097.20

EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUES (\$12,501.48)

FUND BALANCE / NET ASSETS

as of October 1, 2010 \$95,989.89

FUND BALANCE / NET ASSETS \$83,488.41
as of September 30, 2011



The NRCS and our valued CD partner are looking forward to meeting your conservation planning and practice application needs for the coming year. For additional information on the 2008 Farm Bill Conservation Programs, please visit <http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>, or call us at (734) 761-6722 extension 3.

ATTENTION READERS:

Conservation Update Shifts to E-mail Format

Due to budgetary constraints, the print version of the “Conservation Update” newsletter will now only be published once a year—the Annual Report and spring Conservation Plants Catalog issue, like the one you are reading now. It was previously published three times per year in spring, summer and winter.

However, you can continue to receive information on District programs, events, services and other information on a monthly basis by signing up for the “E-Conservation Update” e-mail newsletter.

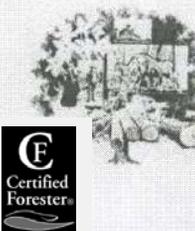
Currently, those who have requested the e-mail newsletter through the District’s web site, or who have been customers of the District’s tree and native plant sales, rain barrel sales or other product sales are included on the e-mail newsletter distribution list.

If you have an e-mail address and want to continue receiving information from the Conservation District more than once a year via the “E-Conservation Update”, simply provide us with your e-mail address by sending an e-mail to:

*District Executive Director Dennis Rice at: dennis.rice@mi.nacdnet.net
and type “subscribe” in the “Subject” line.*

The District is sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, but we believe expanding the use of our “E-Conservation Update” format will provide more timely and regular information to assist you, while making wiser use of our limited funds.

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*District Annual Meeting
January 19, 2012
Make your reservations
today!*

2011 ANNUAL REPORT

