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# Conservation News -2023-



## Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts Annual Report





OSCEOLA-LAKE & MECOSTA  
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS  
Fall 2023 Seedling Price List



CONIFERS	SIZE	Quantity				
		25	50	100	250	500
Red Pine ( <i>Pinus resinosa</i> )	6-12"	\$32	\$44	\$70	\$130	\$220
White Pine ( <i>Pinus strobus</i> )	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$83	\$150	\$245
Jack Pine ( <i>Pinus banksiana</i> )	6-12"	\$32	\$44	\$70	\$130	\$220
White Spruce ( <i>Picea glauca</i> )	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$83	\$150	\$245
Norway Spruce ( <i>Picea abies</i> )	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$83	\$150	\$245
Northern White Cedar ( <i>Thuja occidentalis</i> )	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$83	\$150	\$245
Tamarack/American Larch ( <i>Larix laricina</i> )	6-12"	\$34	\$57	\$91	\$170	\$320

WILDLIFE SHRUBS	SIZE	25	50	100
Red-Osier Dogwood ( <i>Cornus stolonifera</i> )	12-18"	\$40	\$58	\$96
Gray Dogwood ( <i>Cornus racemosa</i> )	12-18"	\$45	\$65	\$108
Arrowwood ( <i>Viburnum dentatum</i> )	12-18"	\$50	\$72	\$122
Highbush Cranberry ( <i>Viburnum trilobum</i> )	12-18"	\$49	\$71	\$118
Nannyberry ( <i>Viburnum lentago</i> )	12-18"	\$55	\$80	\$134
Ninebark ( <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> )	12-18"	\$38	\$54	\$90

Other Conservation Products

- Geobin Home & Garden Compost Bin** Price \$38
- Terra Sorb Root Gel** Price: 1 oz. \$4    8 oz. \$12    1 lb. \$20
- NutriPak Fertilizer Packets** - Scientifically designed fertilizer packet formulated to continuously fertilize over a five year period. Price: \$1.75 each or 6 for \$10.00
- Tree Planting Bars** - Excellent tool used for planting seedlings in non-rocky soil that is easy to penetrate. Each bar has a footstep, handle and weighs approx. 7 lbs. Price: \$25.00 or \$5/day rental
- Tree Flags** - 4" x 4.5" florescent flag on a 30 " wire stake. Price \$0.20 each or 100 for \$15.00
- "Trees Planted" Signs** - Made of heavy grade aluminum. Each sign measures 7.5" x 11". Black print on high visibility yellow or orange background. Price: \$4.00
- "No Trespassing" Signs** - Made of heavy grade aluminum. Each sign measures 7.5" x 11". Black print on high visibility yellow background. Price: \$4.00
- Tree Shelters** - 5 ft. max grow tube tree shelters to protect seedlings. Tree stakes not included. Price \$6.00 each
- Best 1 Hummingbird Feeder** Price \$15.95

Books For Sale

- Wildflowers of Michigan: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: \$16.95
- Birds of Michigan: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: \$14.95
- Trees of Michigan: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: 12.95
- Mammals of Michigan: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: \$14.95
- Butterflies of Michigan: Field Guide** by Jaret C. Daniels Price: \$16.95
- Reptiles & Amphibians of MN, WI, MI: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: \$14.95
- Wild Berries & Fruits of MN, WI, MI: Field Guide** by Stan Tekiela Price: \$14.95
- Fish of Michigan: Field Guide** by Dave Bosanko Price: \$14.95
- 2021 Mecosta County Platbook** Price: \$28.30
- 2022 Osceola County Platbook** Price: \$28.30
- 2021 Lake County Platbook** Price: \$28.30

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Important Ordering and Pickup Information

Please complete the order form below. Send order form to the District in which your property is located. All orders must be paid in full at time of ordering. Orders will not be placed without receipt of a deposit.

Orders may be placed by mail, phone or email and can be paid by check or credit card. Visa, MasterCard and Discover are accepted.

Ordering deadline is Monday, August 28, 2023, 2:00 pm.

Quantities are limited and orders will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis.

We do not guarantee survival. Our liability ceases when seedlings are delivered to buyer or custom planter.

"It is unlawful for these trees, shrubs and other plants to be resold with the roots attached in accordance with the Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act, P.A. 189 of 1931, as amended."

Pickup location will be at the Paris Park Fish Hatchery. **Pickup Date: Friday, September 29, 2023, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Orders are not shipped.** For those who place an order a reminder email or phone call will be made regarding pickup date and time.

If you are unable to pickup your order on the scheduled date you must make other arrangements. **We will not be responsible for lost or stolen trees that are not picked up on the scheduled pickup date.**

Please let us know if a tree planter will be picking up your order.

The district reserves the right to cancel orders and refund payments due to reasons beyond our control.



**We will be selling larger potted nursery stock as a browse and buy option on the pickup date (Friday, September 29th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.). No preorders for larger stock, first-come, first-served. Potted stock will be 2' to 3' in size.**

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ORDER FORM

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Phone

Email

If your property is located in Osceola County or the East half of Lake County mail to: <div>Osceola-Lake Conservation District 138 W. Upton Ave, Suite 2 Reed City, MI 49677 Phone orders: (231) 465-8012 Email: mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org</div>	If your property is located in Mecosta County mail to: <div>Mecosta Conservation District 18260 Northland Drive Big Rapids, MI 49307 Phone orders: (989) 309-9229 Email: brook.baumann@macd.org</div>
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Quantity	Species/Item	Cost

<div>Payment by Check or Credit Card</div> <div>Visa                      MasterCard                      Discover</div> <div>(V code is last 3 digits on signature line on back of card) - V code example: 1234 567</div> <div># _____ V code: _____</div> <div>Exp. Date _____</div>	Subtotal	
	Add 6% Sales Tax	
	Tax Deductible Contribution	
	Subtotal	
	Required Deposit	
	Balance Due	



# New Mecosta Conservation District Summer Intern

My name is Bretton Root and I am the summer intern for the Mecosta Conservation District in 2023. I am very excited to learn from and work with all the natural resource professionals in the office.

I was born and raised in Big Rapids and am a recent high school graduate from Big Rapids High School. I plan to attend Lake Superior State University in the fall to study Fisheries and Wildlife Management.

This internship opportunity was a no brainer for me to jump on so I could get a

taste at the many paths I can take with my degree.

I have grown up loving the outdoors and many of my current hobbies revolve around nature. I enjoy hunting, fishing, hiking, and ATV riding. These interests have taken me all over the state and even across the country. I enjoy discovering and learning about the outdoors everywhere I am.

I am excited to get out there and see some of you in the field. Feel free to stop by the office and introduce yourself.



## DISTRICT INFORMATION

### OSCEOLA-LAKE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

138 W Upton, Suite 2  
Reed City, MI 49677  
Phone: (231) 465-8012  
Email: [mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org](mailto:mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org)  
Website: [www.osceolalakecd.org](http://www.osceolalakecd.org)

#### District Directors

Connie Theunick-Perley, Chairman  
Eric Martin, Vice-Chairperson  
Mike Stilwell, Member  
Jack Thornton, Member  
John Beam Sr., Treasurer

#### District Staff

Mark Sweppenheiser, District Manager  
Rick Lucas, District Forester  
Brandi Mitchell, MAEAP Technician

### USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Greg White, District Conservationist  
Justin Brown, Soil Conservationist

#### Board Meetings

Regular board meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday of the month at Richmond Township Hall in Reed City. Meeting schedule can be found on the website. Call the office to confirm dates and times.  
Open to the public.



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### MECOSTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

18260 Northland Drive  
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Phone: (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3  
Email: [brook.baumann@macd.org](mailto:brook.baumann@macd.org)  
Website: [www.mecostacd.org](http://www.mecostacd.org)

#### District Directors

Bill Jernstadt, Chairman  
Mary Lou Kuehn, Vice-Chairperson  
Tom Samuel, Treasurer  
Joe Ward, Secretary  
Connie Redding, Member  
Anne Crawford, Associate  
Tom Manks, Associate

#### District Staff

Brook Baumann, District Administrator  
Rick Lucas, District Forester  
Cristen Cornell, MAEAP Technician  
Melissa Heath, CTAI Program Assistant  
Bretton Root, Summer Intern  
Vicki Sawicki, NCCISMA Program Coordinator  
Tonya Tepin, Seasonal Field Crew

### USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Jennifer Taylor, District Conservationist  
Katy Robinson, Soil Conservationist

#### Board Meetings

Regular board meetings are held bi-monthly the second Wednesday of the month at the USDA Service Center in Big Rapids. Meeting schedule can be found on the website. Call the office to confirm dates and times.  
Open to the public.

## A BIG THANKS to our volunteers and all those who supported the 2023 Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

37,434 pounds of toxic and hazardous materials were collected!

#### Mecosta County Supporters

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#### Osceola County Supporters

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Osceola County Road Commission  
Osceola Township  
Recycle of Osceola County  
Richmond Township  
Rose Lake Township  
Sherman Township  
Sylvan Township  
Village of Marion



# If You Give A Bear A Barbeque



By: Rachel Leightner

The tantalizing aroma of sizzling bratwursts on the grill can awaken more than just your appetite - it can attract bears and other curious wildlife too. As we gear up for the grilling season, it is crucial to remember that keeping bears at a safe distance requires that we think ahead and make a plan for our fun that works for us and the wildlife around us.

Bears have an uncanny memory for food sources and will return if tempted by easy meals.

When bears become dependent on human food, their natural fear of humans diminishes, which can lead to unpleasant consequences for both bears and people.

Grills, bird feeders, unsecured dumpsters and trash cans, chicken coops, and beehives can be attractants for bears. Fortunately, preventing conflicts with bear is easily within our reach. We can help to keep bears at a distance with just a few simple steps:

1. Remove bird feeders: During the spring, summer, and fall, birds have plenty of natural

food sources available. Temporarily remove bird feeders to discourage bears from getting too close. If you like to watch birds from your home, consider planting native flowers and shrubs that attract birds, allowing you to enjoy their presence while supporting their natural diet. Contact the Mecosta or Osceola-Lake Conservation District for recommendations for native species to plant or check out the National Audubon Society's Plants for Birds database for guidance on native plant species.

2. Clean grills thoroughly: After each use, ensure all grease, fat, and food particles are removed from your grill. Store clean grills and smokers in a garage, shed, or other secure area that bears can't get into.
3. Feed pets indoors: Bears possess an extraordinary sense of smell, far surpassing our own abilities. To avoid attracting bears, bring in outdoor pet food and ensure spills on patios and outdoor areas are promptly cleaned.
4. Secure dumpsters: Keep dumpsters secure and store garbage cans indoors overnight. Take garbage to the curb on the morning of pickup. This minor adjustment to your routine saves you from the hassle of cleaning up scattered garbage left behind by hungry critters searching for a midnight snack. Additionally, it discourages bears from lingering around your property.
5. Protect chicken coops and beehives: If you have coops or beehives in rural or forested areas, safeguard them with electric fencing. Find recommendations on fence materials and design online at [Michigan.gov/Wildlife](http://Michigan.gov/Wildlife).

Remember, the effectiveness of these measures lies in taking action before problems start. Around 2,500 bears live in the Lower Peninsula. Don't wait until you encounter a bear before acting. Start implementing these strategies today to ensure the safety of bears – and yourself - and avoid conflicts and property damage at your home.



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# Fall Tree Sale



Top Photo: Family Time, Photo by Mark Sweppenheiser  
Bottom Photo: Tree planting utilizing tree tubes, Photo by Greg White



By: Mark Sweppenheiser

The opportunity to add trees and shrubs to your property this fall is fast approaching. Michigan conservation districts help landowners plant millions of trees each year. Many of our customers have an annual tradition of planting trees each year with family and friends. If this is a tradition you would like to start, we are here to help guide you through the process. Now is a great time to contact our staff of resource professionals to find out what management options may be available to reach your goals for your property. “To plant trees is to give body and life to one’s dreams of a better world.” – Russell Page

**Benefits of Fall Planting**  
I enjoy planting trees and shrubs in spring, but the last two years have been challenging because of the lack of moisture. It is extremely time consuming to water plants during prolonged dry periods. I have also planted trees and shrubs in fall with positive results. Typically, I plant into my lightest soils for a fall planting and have had good seedling survivability. I know a lot of property owners don’t want to plant trees during the start of hunting season, but it is an option to try to reduce seedling mortality. Fall is a great time to plant trees as long as they are planted in the correct soil, heavy clay should be avoided. Fall brings lower temperatures and increased moisture in the soil, reducing the need for supplemental watering. Late September to November is the optimal time to plant. Fall plantings allow trees to acclimate to the site and establish their roots before facing the summer heat in their new location. Soil temperatures are warmer in fall than spring, helping aid in root establishment before going dormant in winter. Weed control is still important, weed mats or mulch should be considered. The number one cause of seedling mortality is grass and

weed competition.

**Keep Tree Diversity in Mind**  
Tree diversity is an important consideration in protecting forests. Forest stands that have less diversity are more susceptible to disease and pests. One of the most recent examples of the need for diversity is the death of the ash tree. The Emerald Ash Borer was first detected in Michigan in 2002. In Michigan, millions of ash trees have been killed and some projections predict the death of billions of ash trees in North America. Still visible in forests and yards today, the ash tree is a stark reminder of the challenges forests face. There are many other reasons to promote tree diversity. Everyone can appreciate spring blossoms and the fall foliage that central Michigan has to offer. Expanding spring bloom periods and increasing fall colors can be a function of simply increasing the tree diversity on your property. Tree diversity also benefits the ecosystem. From bacteria and mycorrhizae in the soil to bird and insect species, tree diversity benefits the most forms of life by providing a mix of diverse food and cover throughout the year. Tree diversity can also be incorporated for the seasonal needs of wildlife. Conifers can be planted to provide thermal and bedding cover during fall and winter.

**Get Started**  
Ordering deadline is Monday, August 28th at 2 p.m. and the pick-up date at the Paris Park Fish Hatchery is Friday, September 29th from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. If you have any questions or would like to place an order, please contact us. Residents of the Osceola-Lake Conservation District can call (231) 465-8012 or email mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org. Residents of Mecosta County can call (989) 309-9229 or email brook.baumann@macd.org. Thank you for supporting your local conservation district.



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2022 Invasive Species Control in Mecosta & Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts		
	Mecosta CD	Osceola-Lake CD
Mechanical Control (sites/acres)	5/24	48/73
Chemical Control (sites/acres)	15/17	67/132
Strike Team for Hire (sites/acres)	8/6	4/3
2022 Invasive Species Surveys in Mecosta & Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts		
European Frogbit	8 lakes / 1,936 acres	1 lake / 55 acres
Roadside Wild Parsnip	0	230 linear miles
High value habitat on state & federal land	326 acres	140 acres
ORV trails	0	124 linear miles
Private property surveys (sites/acres)	2/112	3/549

A close-up photograph of a white water lily flower with a yellow center, surrounded by large green lily pads on a pond. The lily pads are large, round, and have some holes in them, suggesting they might be eaten by insects. The water is dark and reflects the light. The overall scene is a peaceful pond environment.





# Seeking the Benefits of Nature



By: Melissa Heath

Foraging has been practiced by our ancestors since the beginning of time and the benefits are numerous. Wild edibles are typically healthier, as they lack preservatives, chemical additives, and pesticides. Foraging is a fun way to get outside and gain a deeper connection with nature, it's also good exercise and free! Michigan's woods are full of edible foods that not only taste good but also have health & medicinal value. From mushrooms to berries, to edible flowers and greens, there is a wide array of wild edibles in Michigan waiting to be discovered and enjoyed.

Probably the most popular wild edible in Michigan is the elusive Morel Mushroom. This famous fungus is so beloved, festivals are named in its honor. They are delicious fried in butter, but they can also be a great protein choice for a vegetarian meal. Morels are a superb source for immunity-boosting antioxidants and vitamins B and D, as well as minerals such as copper, iron, and manganese. They contain anti-inflammatory properties which can help ease arthritis and some studies show they also possess anti-cancer properties. You're likely to find these mushrooms in wet, wooded areas near Aspen, Ash, Apple & Elm trees. You should exercise caution to avoid picking the false morel because it looks just like the real morel except that the cap opens like an umbrella. These false morels are poisonous so do not pick or eat them! One last tip, to help ensure they grow back in future years, is to place your picked mushrooms in a mesh bag (like an onion bag) to help spread the spores.

Stinging Nettle is an herbaceous plant that has nutritional and medicinal properties and has been used for centuries to treat inflammatory conditions such as allergies, joint pain, and arthritis. It is also a natural diuretic and can be utilized to treat kidney stones and urinary tract

infections. Stinging Nettle is a rich source of nutrients, containing vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium. The plant can grow up to six feet tall and has heart-shaped leaves with serrated edges. The stems and leaves are covered in tiny hairs, which can sting and irritate the skin, so gloves are essential when handling. The leaves can be dried and consumed as a tea or in your favorite soup or you can cook and eat it like spinach. Stinging Nettle is found in damp, shaded areas such as woodlands, riverbanks, and meadows.

Wild Violets are not only aesthetically pleasing, you can eat them as well! The flowers and leaves of Violets can be consumed in salads or added as a garnish to dessert for an extra boost of vitamin C. The leaves, flowers, and roots can be used in different forms to provide medicinal benefits. For example, a fresh violet leaf poultice can be applied directly to the skin to relieve inflammation and soothe bug bites. Dried violet leaves can be brewed into a tea that helps to improve digestion, alleviate coughs and sore throats. Root tinctures or syrups are used to relieve respiratory issues. These flowers can be found in wooded areas, fields, and meadows. They are easily recognizable by their heart-shaped leaves and purple or blue petals. Caution should be used when consuming the raw root, as it can cause nausea in some people.

All of these wild edibles can be foraged in the spring but if you do a little research you will find additional options throughout the year, even in the cold winter months. If you are foraging on public or state land, it a good idea to inquire on the current laws and regulations for harvesting wild edibles. Always pick in moderation, taking no more than what you plan to use, and spread out your foraging over a wide area. Never eat anything unless you know with certainty what it is. And as always, before trying something new, you should first consult your doctor.



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**Potted  
Plant Sale**

**Pots vary from 1 gallon to 3 gallon**  
**Plants range from 2-3 feet tall**

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TAMARACK, FRASER FIR, AMERICAN MOUNTAIN  
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# Conservation Commitment

By: Katy Robinson

I have been the Mecosta County Soil Conservationist for the last three years and I’ve had the pleasure of meeting countless landowners and walking their properties. I’ve seen livestock systems, hundreds (probably more like thousands by this point) of forestland acreage, multiple crop rotations, and various other incredible operations. All have been unique and amazing in their own ways, as have the landowners and operators I’ve met. So, as I was starting to get ready for work, a question came to me: “What makes a good conservation steward?”. This is something I’ve wondered before, but never really put my thoughts down on paper. Here’s what I came up with.

Passion is number one. Regardless of what your land contains, be it forest or crop land, livestock or orchards, passion about your land matters the most. You don’t have to know everything there is to know about a certain landscape system,

but when I show up to meet with a landowner and they are excited for me to be there, boy does that bring out my excitement as well. I find myself wondering, what sort of things have you already researched? What questions have you pondered? What have you experimented with? Which species have you tried planting that were successful or unsuccessful? I am the bridge between the science of conservation and the practicality of how you implement it. When you’re excited about your land, even if there are only a few or many things you’d like to improve or change, it makes my job so much easier. Number two is desire. What do you want to do? Knowing your objectives is vital to making an impact. Do you want more organic matter? What about more species diversity? Do you want to make a change on your land or better conserve the land on a bigger scale? The more you can describe where you want to see your operation in a year, five years, ten years, and beyond, the

better advice and knowledge I can provide you to meet those goals. Number three, innovation. You don’t need to be jumping at the bit to try the newest thing, but a dash of innovation makes for a fun steward. This goes back to “what have you tried?”. It also touches on what are you willing to try. It’s okay if you don’t want to completely convert your entire operation to no-till. But what about the back 5 acres that no one can see? Are you willing to experiment with things to find the ways that can improve what you’re doing and hopefully, give you an economic boost? Ultimately, you are the one who decides what happens within your landscape. I’m the one who gives you recommendations. If I suggest something that sounds cool but there is no way you could feasibly do it, tell me. Number four, understanding. Are you still with me? Do you have any questions? Have I confused you yet? These are questions I ask nearly every person I work with. I want to

make sure you understand the ins and outs of whatever activity we’re discussing. That’s my job, and honestly, it’s one of my favorite parts. I love explaining conservation. So, if you don’t understand, give me the opportunity to find another way to re-explain it. Another point to understanding is learning on your own. Read about what we discussed or look through any information I provided you. I always look forward to reviewing and discussing additional ideas. We will work together to create the perfect plan for your individual operation. Finally, number five is patience. Conservation takes time. The landscape does not improve overnight. If you plant cover crops one year, your organic matter will not change immediately. Patience ties into all aspects. Feel free to send us pictures of what your concerns are if we’re not able to see the site right away. Do you have an enormous gully running through your field? Maybe there is a group of trees dying. Is your

crop struggling? Photos are always great. Ultimately, I want you to know that your actions will have an impact...eventually. Keep trying it. If after a few years things still don’t seem to improve, let’s try to find out why. Being a conservation planner is something I never thought I’d become. I love my job. I have seen so many parts of Mecosta County. I love when I get to visit a site and the landowner is showing me every piece their property. Show me your favorite places. Show me your troublesome locations. Show me something you’re proud of out there. The things I’ve listed in this article do not fully encompass what makes a good conservation steward, but it’s a start. I am so incredibly excited to work with all of you. Thank you for being wonderful landowners and I look forward to seeing how you best exemplify being a conservation steward.

## Conservation Stewardship Program

By: Greg White

Conserving our natural resources is a great way to get outside and do some work on your land. The staff in your local USDA office is willing to assist you with questions related to improving the resources on your farm, forest or grasslands. To assist with voluntary, incentive-based conservation work, the USDA provides financial assistance through various conservation programs. The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is one such program. CSP provides annual payments for 5 years to maintain the existing level of stewardship and provides payments for additional conservation activities. The stewardship component of the payment is based on the number of resource concerns that you have addressed at the time your application is processed. The concerns that we evaluate are related to Soil, Water, Air, Plants and Animals. There are 9 priority concerns evaluated for the crop and pastureland uses, 7 on forestlands and 4 each on your farmstead and other areas that we call associated ag lands. CSP will pay you \$300 per concern addressed on each land use and a per acre payment of \$7.50 per crop acre, \$3 per pasture acre and \$0.50 per forest acre enrolled annually. Existing contracts that I manage in Osceola and Lake counties have an annual payment of \$2,000 to over \$6,000. The annual payment process begins in October and payments are typically received by direct deposit within a few weeks of submitting the request. An additional activity is required

to be installed on each land use enrolled in the contract. The activities can be once or over multiple years of the 5-year contract. There is a wide range of activities that can be used to address a concern or make enhancements to your management. Some examples include the establishment of pollinator habitat to improve habitat for bees and butterflies that are experiencing a decline in populations. Improved systems for managing fertility, soil health, pests and grazing are also included as eligible activities. Forestland owners can increase forest diversity through planting seedlings or managing the number of dead standing trees (snags) which provide habitat for many wildlife species. Others have used the program to implement activities scheduled in their forest management plans. Participants managing cropland can choose to increase soil health by using cover crops or changing their crop rotation to include high residue crops. There are also enhanced nutrient and pest management activities that can be implemented through the program. Those with pastures can update their grazing plan to include areas where grass is left to grow as stockpiled forage that is grazed after the forage goes dormant to extend the grazing season and reduce time and energy that would otherwise have been spent baling hay. To be eligible for this and other USDA programs the applicant must be in compliance with the Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions of the Farmbill. They must also earn less

than the Adjusted Gross Income limitation, which is currently a \$900,000 yearly average. If the applicant is a Corporation, Limited Liability Company, or other type of entity, then each member must certify their compliance with these rules. Payments to entities will be reduced by the percent share that any non-compliant individuals have in that entity. The program is based on a competitive selection process where forestland owners compete against other forest owners for funding and agricultural applicants compete for funds with other farms. Selections are based on a ranking score, where those with the highest level of existing and planned stewardship will score highest. At the end of your 5-year contract you have an option to apply for a renewal contract. Renewal contracts require that you complete additional conservation activities. Renewal application selections are also based on a competitive process. If you don’t feel that you’re ready for a 5-year CSP contract, the USDA has other programs available to assist you in meeting the goals for your operation and address existing resource concerns. Please feel free to contact your local USDA office to discuss your options. Greg White is the District Conservationist for the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service in Osceola & Lake Counties. For more information on USDA conservation programs contact Greg by phone at (231) 465-8007, by email at greg.white@usda.gov. The USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer & Lender.



Large woody debris on the forest floor provides habitat and returns carbon to the soil.



Cover crops provide soil protection and improve soil health.



Rotational grazing of pastures and cover crops benefits many natural resources.



## Tire and Electronic Collection

Saturday, August 5, 2023

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Location - Recycle of Osceola County

531 E. Lincoln, Reed City

### Tire Recycling

No charge - passenger tire on or off rim

- Limit ten (10) tires please
- Semi tires– No tires over 12” wide
- No tires over 4 feet tall
- Tires must be dry and debris free

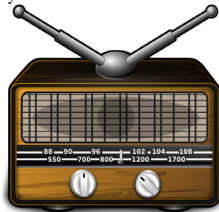
### Electronic Recycling

- No charge - Office and household electronics. Items with a cord (TV’s, computers, monitors, keyboards, microwaves, phones, stereos, game systems, printers, etc.)
- No units containing freon
- No large appliances (refrigerators, washers, etc.)

For additional information call (231) 465-8012 or email [mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org](mailto:mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org)

This program is made possible through generous support from Cargill, Osceola County, Osceola County Community Foundation, Recycle of Osceola County, and EGLE.

All Conservation District programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or disability

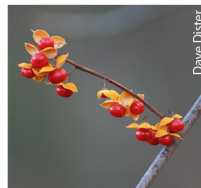


## Strike Team for Hire

The North Country CISMA’s Strike Team can be hired at cost to control these invasive species.



Japanese Knotweed



Oriental Bittersweet



Phragmites



Tree-of-Heaven



Wild Parsnip



Bristly Locust



Buckthorn



Garlic Mustard



For a free quote, call (248) 210-6047 or email [zach.peklo@macd.org](mailto:zach.peklo@macd.org). Visit [www.NorthCountryInvasives.org/strike-team](http://www.NorthCountryInvasives.org/strike-team) for more information.



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**Sean Sobaski**  
231-499-9441

Mason, Newaygo,  
Muskegon, and  
Oceana Counties

**Ben James**  
231-499-1346

Leelanau, Grand Traverse,  
Kalkaska, Missaukee,  
Osceola, Mecosta, Clare,  
and Isabella Counties

# Forest to Mi Faucet

by Mike Smalligan

Do you know the source of your drinking water? If you live in a rural area, you get drinking water from your own well in your backyard. About 2.5 million people in rural Michigan get water from 1.25 million wells. Around 7.5 million people live in urban areas and pay a municipal water utility to deliver their drinking water. While some of this municipal water comes from deep wells and a little from rivers, almost 6 million people in Michigan rely on the Great Lakes as the source of their drinking water. Which Great Lake would

delivered to your home. Forests cover 56% of Michigan’s land so more than half our water flows through 20 million acres of forest on its way to rivers, lakes, and the Great Lakes. Better than any other land use, forests provide clean water and protect the sources of our drinking water.

Lake Superior is clear and blue because its watershed is 91% forest. Detroit is fortunate that it gets water from Lake Huron with 67% forest in its watershed. Lake Michigan is in fair shape with 49% forest in its watershed. Poor Lake Erie is the most polluted Great Lake because its watershed is 19% forest, 61% agriculture

The Michigan Forest Stewardship Program is leading a team of a dozen conservation partners on a new project called “Forest to Mi Faucet” to highlight the connections between forests and drinking water. Forest to Mi Faucet is funded by the USDA Forest Service and builds on its National Forests to Faucets spatial analysis of priority watersheds for protecting surface drinking water. Partners on the project with the Department of Natural Resources include four watershed councils, three land conservancies, three regional conservation organizations, Michigan Forest Association and Michigan Master Loggers. All partners will help municipal water utilities implement their “source water protection plans” with three forest-based strategies.

First, we must protect forests so they can continue to protect water quality. Michigan loses 52,080 acres of forest annually but gains 54,220 acres from other land uses for zero net deforestation statewide (USDA Forest Service, Forests of Michigan, 2019). Yet only 6% of Michigan’s public or private forests are protected in ways that limit timber harvests for other ecological functions. Land conservancies can establish new conservation easements and nature preserves to protect forests that are important for source water protection, especially in the southern Lower Peninsula where we have the most people and highest risk of



losing forests.

Second, we must manage forests well. Forest to Mi Faucet will help landowners, foresters and Master Loggers take good care of the woods. Partners will promote management plans, forest certification with American Tree Farm System, Michigan Forest Association, logger training and always using best management practices to protect soil and water quality.

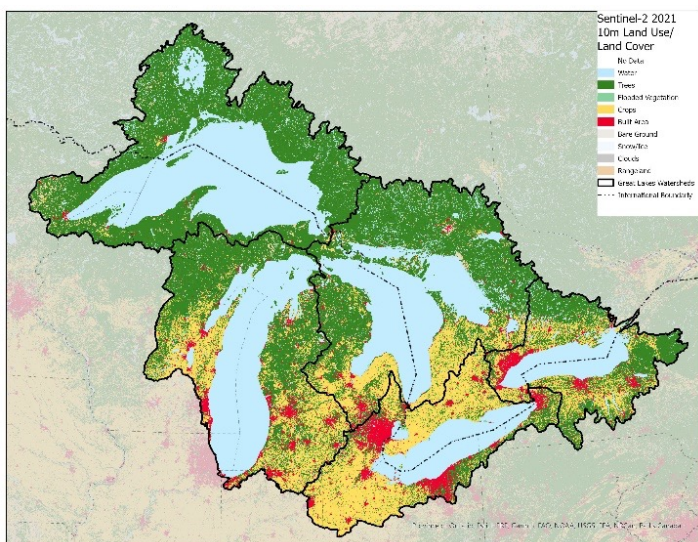
Third, we can expand forests in strategic places. Partners will plant 60,000 trees in riparian zones and the DNR will plant 750,000 trees in upland state forests. Riparian forest buffers and other agroforestry practices help keep soil, nutrients and manure on farms, not in our drinking water. Green infrastructure like rain gardens in cities are important to reduce runoff, especially in cities like Lansing and Detroit that have “combined sewer overflows” that dump 9 billion of gallons of raw sewage into the Great Lakes

every year. Photo: students in Frankfort plant trees in their school forest.

Forest to Mi Faucet hopes to build the foundation for a future “payment for ecosystem services” market where family forest owners are compensated for providing clean water by managing their forests well and protecting sources of drinking water. Carbon markets for large and small forest owners are expanding rapidly, but markets for clean water are rare in the United States and not yet available in Michigan.

Forest to Mi Faucet is a team effort. Please join us by managing your woods in ways that protect drinking water. Life depends on it.

More information is available at [Mi.gov/ForestToMiFaucet](http://Mi.gov/ForestToMiFaucet) or by contacting Mike Smalligan at [SmalliganM@Michigan.gov](mailto:SmalliganM@Michigan.gov).



you prefer to drink from – Lake Erie green with algae or clear, blue Lake Superior?

If the drinking water in your faucet comes from a well, river or Great Lake, a forest helped keep it clean before it was treated and

and 18% urban. As we replace forests with factories, farms and suburban sprawl, we increase pollution and the cost to clean our drinking water. Photo: land cover in the Great Lakes watershed.



# Promoting Stewardship while Protecting the Environment - MAEAP

MAEAP is a voluntary program open to both producers and forest landowners. MAEAP stands for the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program. The process involves a visit from your local MAEAP technician to look at what potential environmental risks may be present. Then producers and landowners work with their technician to change or alter any practices that may have negative impacts.

The final step when ready is a visit from the MDARD third party verifier to complete the process. Once a farm has completed the verification, they are eligible for a sign recognizing their achievements and their outstanding environmental stewardship. Being MAEAP verified helps show your community that the practices you are undertaking on your land include promoting stewardship of the environment.

It also shows you are following best management practices for the state of Michigan, otherwise known as GAAMPS. GAAMPS are the “Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices” for producers, or for forest and habitat owners GAFMMP’s “Generally Accepted Forest Management Practices.” Being verified in systems applicable to your farm also offers Right To Farm protection and for forest owners Right To Forest Protection.

MAEAP technicians are housed in conservation districts around the state and work closely with other resource professionals to help guide you on your conservation journey. Cristen Cornell services both Mecosta County as well as Montcalm, while Brandi Mitchell covers Clare, Eastern Lake, & Osceola County.

By assisting landowners and producers in becoming or maintaining their MAEAP verification your local MAEAP technicians Brandi & Cristen have reduced environmental risks on land across Clare, Eastern Lake, Mecosta, Montcalm &



Osceola counties. These farms vary from dairy, beef, sheep, produce, orchards, along with many others. Forest, Wetland & Habitat owners also can work with their local technician once they have a formal land or forest management plan in place. Some of the cost share options your MAEAP technicians have been using on farms and forestlands include: water testing for bacteria and nitrates, soil sampling for nutrient management, secondary containment for chemical and oil storage, compost thermometers to obtain temperature readings, manure & compost nutrient testing, mobile mix/load pads to prevent soil contamination,

concrete refueling pads, backflow prevention to prevent well head contamination, as well as drain plugs, fire extinguishers, spill kits, polywire for cattle exclusion, & gutters. Want to learn more about MAEAP and if it may be something you are interested in? Reach out to your local technician and find out! Mecosta Conservation District: Cristen Cornell  
Cristen.cornell@macd.org  
231-408-3582  
Osceola-Lake Conservation District: Brandi Mitchell  
Brandi.mitchell@macd.org  
231-465-8005



## Signing Off

**RICK LUCAS IS**

*Retiring*

**After 36 Years**

Join us in a farewell luncheon to honor Rick's hard work & dedication.  
RSVP required.

THIS EVENT WILL BE COMBINED WITH THE MECOSTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING. MEET THE ELECTION NOMINEES FOR DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS. ABSENTEE BALLOTS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE DISTRICT OFFICE STARTING ON SEPTEMBER 7TH. VOTERS MUST BE A RESIDENT OF MECOSTA COUNTY. VOTING ENDS AT 2 P.M. ON OCTOBER 26

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2023**

Big Rapids Eagles  
18361 16 Mile Road, Big Rapids  
12 noon - 3 p.m.

**RSVP BY OCTOBER 15 (989) 309-9229 OR  
BROOK.BAUMANN@MACD.ORG**

By Rick A. Lucas, CF, FAP Forester

I have always considered myself an outsider. I don't mean that in any antagonistic sense of the word. I have always just enjoyed being outside participating in outdoor activities. At an early age, I would often wander off behind my parent's home, on my own, in search of treasures from the great outdoors in the form of bones, stones, sticks, fungus, or basically anything interesting not permanently attached to the landscape. This sense of adventure in the great outdoors, I

owe to my parents. I will always be grateful to the greatest gift a parent can give to their children, and that is, introducing and sharing their love of the outdoors at an early age. As an eight-year-old kid growing up in Luther, MI, I wanted to be the next Mickey Stanley. (Some of you will need to do a Google search to know what I mean by that ). Like most kids my age at that time, knowing what we wanted to do when we grew up, would change with the season. Several years later, for my freshman English class at Pine River,

Miss Sjoberg assigned us the task of writing a term paper on what we wanted to do upon graduation from high school. Without hesitation, I wrote about wanting to be a forester. At that point in my life, I don't recall that I fully understood all of what a forester did or does, but I knew it had a lot to do with being outdoors. Following high school graduation, the next chapters in my life included time spent at Alpena Community College where I would receive an Associate in Applied Science degree in Forest Technology and then following that up by attending Michigan State University where I would receive a Bachelor of Science degree majoring in forestry with a minor in wildlife. With the completion of this formal part of my education, I now had the credentials to call myself a forester and could begin practicing forestry. As it turns out, being a forester would be the only full-time occupation I would hold throughout my entire working career. We never know when we embark on a new adventure how it's going to turn out nor how long it's going to last. After a 6-year stint working in the private sector, on January 4th, 1988, I began my current job as a public service forester. Next January 12th, 2024 will mark the end of my 42-year career as a full-time forester. Thirty-six years of my working career will have been spent serving as the forester for the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts (CD's). I don't know that there is such a thing as falling in love with a job, but, if there is, that certainly would have applied to me, in regards, to this position. In many respects, this job is that of a teacher, minus

a four walled classroom, and most often involving only one student (the landowner). Meeting one on one at the landowner's property, to discuss management options, became, hands down, my favorite part of the job. From the beginning, I realized that the job of a public service forester has as much to do with people management as it has to do with natural resource management. I have often depicted people in the same context as one does when describing snowflakes, no two are exactly the same. Over a period of time, this portrayal of people, is what made the job most appealing, and many times, most rewarding for me. During my tenure with the CD's, I had the good fortune to meet many people along the way, something I have absolutely treasured. Many of you were added to my ever-growing list of favorites. Many of you started out as clients and ended up as friends. Follow-up visits with some of you probably wasn't so much needed, as it was necessary, if you know what I mean. There were many visits where I was more the student, and you were the teacher. I will always hold that realism dear to my heart. The effectiveness of this job relied heavily on creating relationships and partnerships with those having a stake in private forest land management. This included individuals from the private sector, state, federal and local government agencies, special interest groups, academia, and many other organizations. Many of you from this grouping were my mentors and are largely responsible for the success of this Forestry Assistance Program. I will dearly miss the relationships and

partnerships we formed along the way. Those that know me best, know that I am a bit of a sports junky. Having said that, I tried to instill the same qualities and characteristics that make for a good teammate, team and teamwork into my daily work routine. Good teams are always working on building trust, communication, accountability and motivation. It's a fine line knowing when to push someone to perform at a higher level and knowing when to back off. Just like any good team, we should always strive to be better. I feel very blessed to finish my working career surrounded by a group of like-minded individuals that embrace these same principles, qualities and ambitions. I will miss my co-workers. Upon signing off, I want to thank every one of you for the opportunity to serve as your public service forester over these years. It has been nothing but a pleasure to have met you along the way, whether in the office, on your property, over a phone conversation, email or text communication. We will all be better stewards of the land by being more observant, asking more questions, and discussing management options with our local resource professionals before we set our actions in motion. I realized quite some time ago this really is and was the perfect job for me. Not a lot of people get to say that about their work careers. I feel very fortunate that several of my passions in life mended so well with this profession. The saying goes, find a job that you enjoy, and you will never work a day in your life. I feel very blessed to have done just that.



# Habitat Day / Annual Meeting

Erridge Acres

8474 Lakola Rd, Reed City

Saturday, August 26, 2023

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## A Field Event for landowners to learn about:

- Wetland Restoration
- Wildlife Habitat Conservation and Improvement
- Forest Management
- Native Grass Establishment

Please RSVP by Friday, August 11, 2023 by calling  
231-465-8012 or email mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org

The Osceola-Lake Conservation District will also hold a Director Election to fill 1 position on the District Board. Must be a resident of Osceola or the east half of Lake Counties to vote. Voting will end at 2 p.m. Absentee ballots will be available at the district office after July 12, 2023.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you need an accommodation to participate, please contact Greg White at 231-465-8007 or at: [greg.white@usda.gov](mailto:greg.white@usda.gov) at least 2 weeks ahead of any meeting that you wish to attend

# Mecosta and Osceola MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

## Who we are:



Eric Karbowski  
District 6  
Director



Karen Ripke  
Mecosta County  
Office Manager



Chelsea Bancroft  
Osceola County  
Office Manager



Jacob Stieg  
Osceola County  
4-H Program  
Coordinator



Renee Sanders  
Community  
Nutrition Instructor



Christi Demitz  
Health Educator



Gora Okkema Dairy  
Extension Educator



Maribel Richards  
Program Instructor

What we do:  
With services offered in every Michigan county, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension brings knowledge, tools, and resources of MSU to the local community, to help residents do their jobs better, raise healthy and safe families, build their communities and empower our children to dream of a successful future. These are just a few of the online, in-person classes and other services we offer:

## Farming Support & Education

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Business Support & Education  
Stress Education  
Much More!!

## Gardening

Vegetable Gardening  
Flower Gardening  
Soils & Composting  
Pest Management  
Beekeeping  
Garden Hotline: 888-678-3464

Soil test kits (Commercial and Residential)  
Plat Books (proceeds support local 4-H)

## 4-H Youth Programs

Leadership .  
Science & Engineering  
Animal Health  
Life Skills  
So Much More!

## Family Support

Caregiving  
Parent Education  
Money Management  
Homeownership

## Nutrition & Health

Diabetes & Chronic Disease Management  
Emotional & Mental Health Support  
Cooking Classes  
Pressure canner testing  
Food Preservation  
Food Safety (Food safety hotline: 877-643-9882)

## Got a Question?

Ask Extension offers answers from MSU Extension experts and Master Gardener volunteers on topics such

as lawns, gardening, agriculture, nutrition and physical activity, food safety, food preservation, natural resources, community development, youth programming and more!

Go to: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/outreach/ask-an-expert>  
(or search: MSU ask Extension)

## Mecosta Office:

14485 Northland Dr.,  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
Phone: 231-592-0792

E-mail: [msue.mecosta@msu.edu](mailto:msue.mecosta@msu.edu)

Hours:

Monday - Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

## Osceola Office:

215 S. Division St., Hersey,  
MI 49639

Phone: 231-832-6139

E-mail: [msue.osceola@msu.edu](mailto:msue.osceola@msu.edu)

Hours:

Monday -Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm

# Lake - Mecosta - Osceola Counties Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day

When: Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 • 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Where: Mecosta County Mecosta County Fairgrounds  
(540 West Ave., Big Rapids)

Osceola County Road Commission South Facility  
(4737 Makwa Dr., Hersey)

Who: Residents of Mecosta, Osceola or Lake Counties can bring Hazardous material to either collection site.

Cost: The community's continued support and donations are extremely important for the continued success of the HHW event. Suggested minimum donation of \$15 per vehicle is appreciated to help offset the cost of disposal.

*Household Hazardous Waste are materials that, if disposed of incorrectly, can cause environmental damage by contaminating ground and surface waters, threatening human health and wildlife.*

Items such as: Oil based paint products (**NO LATEX PAINT**), glue, adhesives, pesticides, fertilizers, mercury, household cleaners, lithium batteries (**no other types of batteries will be collected**), used motor oil (**see note below**), oil filters, florescent light bulbs, gasoline and antifreeze, to name but a few.

**Note: Used motor oil will only be accepted in 5-gallon containers or less. No 55-gallon drums.**

Pre-registration is not required **unless** you are bringing over 200 lbs of waste for disposal. For a list of acceptable and non-acceptable items or volunteer opportunities, please call Osceola-Lake Conservation District at (231) 465-8012 or Mecosta Conservation District at (989) 309-9229, or go to our website at [www.mecostacd.org](http://www.mecostacd.org) or [www.osceolalakecd.org](http://www.osceolalakecd.org).

*This project is supported by the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts, MAEAP "Clean Sweep" Program, local units of government, municipalities, businesses, organizations, foundations and individual donations. All Conservation District programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or disability.*



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- 8 ft Firewood Logs