



Mecosta Soil Conservation District
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Conservation News 2022



Mecosta And Osceola–Lake Conservation Districts Annual Report

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OSCEOLA-LAKE & MECOSTA CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Fall 2022 Seedling Price List



CONIFERS

	<u>SIZE</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>250</u>	<u>500</u>
Red Pine (<i>Pinus resinosa</i>)	6-12"	\$32	\$44	\$62	\$110	\$180
White Pine (<i>Pinus strobus</i>)	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$66	\$125	\$195
Jack Pine (<i>Pinus banksiana</i>)	6-12"	\$32	\$44	\$62	\$110	\$180
White Spruce (<i>Picea glauca</i>)	6-12"	\$32	\$44	\$62	\$110	\$180
Norway Spruce (<i>Picea abies</i>)	6-12"	\$33	\$46	\$66	\$125	\$195

WILDLIFE SHRUBS

Gray Dogwood (<i>Cornus racemosa</i>)	12-18"	\$42	\$53	\$77
Silky Dogwood (<i>Cornus amomum</i>)	12-18"	\$35	\$46	\$75
Arrowwood (<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>)	12-18"	\$42	N/A	N/A
Ninebark (<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>)	12-18"	\$36	N/A	N/A

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: \$3.00**

"No Trespassing" Signs - Made of heavy grade aluminum. Each sign measures 7.5" x 11". Black print on high visibility yellow background. **Price: \$3.00**

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 \$13.95**

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**

Pollinators of Native Plants by Heather N. Holm **Price: \$22.95**

2021 Mecosta County Platbook **Price: \$28.30**

2022 Osceola County Platbook **Price: \$28.30**

2021 Lake County Platbook **Price: \$28.30**

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 Thursday, September 16, 2022, 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 30, 2022, 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.

ORDER FORM

Name	
Address	
City, State Zip	
Phone	Email

<p>If your property is located in Osceola County or the East half of Lake County mail to:</p> <p>Osceola-Lake Conservation District 138 W. Upton Ave, Suite 2 Reed City, MI 49677 Phone orders: (231) 465-8012 mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org</p>	<p>If your property is located in Mecosta County mail to:</p> <p>Mecosta Conservation District 18260 Northland Drive Big Rapids, MI 49307 Phone orders: (989) 309-9229 brook.baumann@macd.org</p>
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Quantity	Species/Item	Cost
		Subtotal
		Add 6% Sales Tax
		Tax Deductible Contribution
		Subtotal
		Required Deposit
		Balance Due

Payment by Check or Credit Card

Visa MasterCard Discover

(V code is last 3 digits on signature line on back of card) - V code example: 1234 **567**

_____ V code: _____

Exp. Date _____

Mecosta Conservation District needs help with natural resource assessment

By: Brook Baumann,
Mecosta CD District Administrator

Mecosta Conservation District is working with the community to do a natural resource assessment.

Every few years, the Mecosta Conservation District seeks feedback from residents, landowners, and resource users about their concerns regarding the natural resources in Mecosta County. Baumann shared, “Our goal is to identify natural resource priorities so we can assist local landowners, organizations, and others with the best management practices to improve and protect our land and water resources.”

By completing this survey, participants will be entered in a drawing

to win a \$50 gas card. Participants will need to provide their contact information at the end of the survey to be entered into the drawing, but their answers will remain confidential.

Baumann shared, “Your feedback will help the Mecosta Conservation District identify important natural resource concerns so we can prioritize our efforts over the next five years, and also determine our program funding, staffing, and volunteer opportunities.”

The response deadline for this survey is August 1st, 2022.

All Mecosta County residents and visitors can visit the webpage at <https://mecostacd.org/whats-happening> and take the survey online or download a copy to fill out and mail in or drop off at the Big Rapids USDA Service Center



drop box at 18260 Northland Drive, Big Rapids.

For more information, contact Brook

Baumann, District Administrator at 989-309-9229 or brook.baumann@macd.org

DISTRICT INFORMATION

OSCEOLA-LAKE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

District Directors

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

District Staff

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

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Greg White, District 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.



MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

All programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

MECOSTA CONSERVATION DISTRICT

18260 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Phone: (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3
Email: brook.baumann@macd.org
Web site: www.mecostacd.org

District Directors

Bill Jernstadt, Chairman
Mary Lou Kuehn, Vice-Chairperson
Tom Samuel, Treasurer
Clare Cook, Secretary
Joe Ward, Member

District Staff

Brook Baumann, District Administrator
Rick Lucas, District Forester
Cristen Cornell, MAEAP Technician
Olivia Martinek, CTAI Program Assistant
Vicki Sawicki, NCCISMA Program Coordinator
Emma Costantino, NCCISMA Outreach Coordinator

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 2021 Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

45,385 pounds of toxic and hazardous materials were collected!

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Blue Spruce Will No Longer Be Offered for Sale



Blue spruce suffering from spruce decline

By: Mark Sweppenheiser

The Osceola-Lake and Mecosta Conservation Districts have decided to discontinue offering blue spruce for our seedling sales. Several other Conservation Districts have eliminated offering blue spruce for sale as well. Unfortunately, blue spruce is being heavily impacted by disease and insects. All the contributing factors affecting blue spruce are referred to as spruce decline. The key symptom for spruce decline is branch dieback, usually starting on lower limbs. We don't want to sell a species that is currently experiencing such health issues. We are choosing to only offer species that have the best chance for long-term success.

There are three primary fungal diseases that are impacting blue spruce: needlecasts, tip blights, and canker diseases. Additionally,

the two most common insects attacking blue spruce are gall adelgids and spider mites. Finally, environmental factors are also leading to blue spruce decline. Colorado blue spruce is native to the arid west and our Michigan climate is generally more humid. The increase in humidity promotes fungal pathogens and increases spruce decline. In most cases, it is several of these factors that are affecting your trees health.

Spruce decline is widespread, but not all trees have been infected. It is common to still see blue spruce planted that appear healthy. Blue spruce prefers full sunlight, generous spacing for optimal airflow, and soil with excellent drainage. If you have already planted blue spruce, take the time to assess their current site conditions. I know I am guilty of planting trees

too close, if that's the case with your plantings, cutting some trees to increase spacing may help keep your trees healthy.

If your current trees are in severe decline, one option is to remove impacted trees and plant a diverse mix of native trees and shrubs. Depending on the number of trees impacted, a portion of your existing blue spruce plantings could be removed annually and replaced over time.

There seems to be a constant threat from disease and insects to our forests. Blue spruce decline highlights the importance of having a diverse and resilient landscape. Forest stands that have less diversity are more susceptible to disease and pests. If you have not thought about tree diversity, this fall is a great time to add diversity to help protect your property.

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It Really is Paradise

By: Katy Robinson

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is intended to assist landowners in improving and protecting their natural resources. We began as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in the early 1930s. Farming practices were causing serious soil and crop health decline in our Great Plains. A large dust storm traveled from the Great Plains to Washington D.C. and 300 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean on May 11, 1934, during Congressional hearings on a proposed soil conservation law. Hugh Bennett, Chief of the Department of Interior Soil Erosion Service, took the opportunity to explain the dust storm and solutions. The hearing resulted in the creation of the SCS in 1935 which aimed

to increase the understanding of erosion and conservation activities that could assist farmers in increasing their soil health to decrease erosion. Nearly 60 years later, SCS was renamed to NRCS to better encompass what the agency had been doing.

To assist you we need to first determine what the natural resource concerns (RC's) on your property are. They might be obvious like a wash out or compaction throughout your field. They could also be less obvious like inefficient energy usage or loss of organic matter. Once we determine your RC's we have a few Federally funded programs that you could sign up for: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). With EQIP, we assist you on focused projects to resolve a specific RC on a given area of your land. With CSP,

we evaluate every piece of land you own and reward you for the conservation activities you have already been doing, as well as assisting you with enhancing more areas of your property.

My personal favorite project these days is grazing operations. These projects can contain installing fence and pipeline, waterers and concrete, and even reseeding pastures. My absolute favorite part is designing the grazing plan to help clients learn to rotate their animals throughout the pasture system. Jennifer's favorite is animal waste storage system, as well as assisting clients with collecting and utilizing farm waste that is beneficial to their crops.

How do you obtain our assistance? Well, it's super easy! Just give us a call at the office (231-796-2659 Ext. 3) and ask for Jennifer or Katy. To apply for our programs, you need to have a Farm and Tract set up with



Jennifer Taylor and Katy Robinson, NRCS

the Farm Service Agency, which requires a deed to the property. There are more forms to fill out, that our staff will assist you with.

The best part about our location, is we are co-located with your local Conservation District (CD) and the Farm Service Agency. This means that not only do you get NRCS assistance but also our talented CD staff and FSA staff! We frequently partner with Rick Lucas on Forestry components,

Vicki Sawicki and her team for invasive species, and Cristen Cornell with the MAEAP program. Olivia Martinek is the key connecting point between NRCS and the CD due to her roll as a Farm Bill Specialist. We like to say around the office "Welcome to Paradise." So much of this stems from the amazing family that has been built here. We are all constantly working together to improve our county and we are all excited to work with you on your next project!

Qualified Forest Program Re-visited

By: Rick A. Lucas, CF
FAP Forester

Michigan's Qualified Forest Program (QFP) reached yet another milestone with the completion of the 2021 sign-up year when it surpassed 805,000 acres of enrollment statewide into the program. Since being revised nearly a decade ago, the program has added nearly 60,000 acres annually since. Although not every forested parcel will qualify for the QFP, many will. And although the QFP is viewed as a forest management program, it fully embraces a multiple use approach including wildlife, recreation, aesthetics, and overall forest health activities. For those eligible forest owners looking to actively manage their forest resource, the QFP would significantly lower their annual property taxes.

Forested parcels with a non-homestead tax exemption are the target of the QFP. Parcels must be 20 acres or larger in size to qualify. Those parcels that are 20-39 acres in size, must be at least 80 percent stocked with forest species capable of producing a commercial wood product. Parcels containing less than 80 percent stocking can still become eligible by planting additional forest land or where parts of the parcel are in productive agriculture, these acres can be included to reach the 80 percent minimum. Parcels greater than 40 acres in size, need only to have at least 50 percent of the acreage stocked with forest capable of producing wood products.

QFP participants are required to have a forest management plan (FMP) for their eligible acres. The plan must be written by a qualified forester that has met

department eligibility criteria. These plans serve as a roadmap in guiding your decision making for your forest resource over the next 20-years. In other words, the FMP defines the professional prescription for the forest-type present to create the ideal conditions to regenerate the species, which in turn, keeps the forest healthy, productive and sustainable over a long period of time. Even if you weren't looking at the QFP, having a FMP for your property is a great idea.

Once eligible parcels are fully enrolled, the QFP participant will begin receiving up to a 16-mill reduction on their 18-mill school operating tax the first full calendar year after meeting the September 1st enrollment deadline. Additionally, when a parcel currently enrolled under the qualified forest program changes ownership, it prevents



the "uncapping" of a property's taxable value.

Many inquiries into the QFP have expressed concern with allowing public access to their land. The QFP does not allow public access onto parcels enrolled in this program. Only Michigan's Commercial Forest Program requires allowing public access. You can withdraw your property from the QFP at any time, but the longer you remain in the program, the greater the benefits to participation. Lastly,

when a FMP calls for a practice to be implemented, participants actually have up to six years to carry out the activity. In most cases, your local FAP forester will assist with the entire process.

Local Conservation Districts (CDs) have played an instrumental role in both promoting and implementing the QFP at the local level. If you have questions about the Qualified Forest Program and want to see if it is for you, feel free to call me at the CD office at 231-408-3567.

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Conservation News 2022

**GO WITH THE FLOW! JOIN OUR VOLUNTEERS DURING MRWA'S EPIC
CLEAN-UP EVENT MUSKEGON RIVER TRASH BASH SET FOR AUGUST 2022**

The Muskegon River Trash Bash is an annual family-friendly event intended to encourage environmentalists of all ages to work together to remove accumulated trash from the river.

“We understand that it can be a rather daunting task considering the scale and scope of this incredible natural wonder, and a challenge to know where to start,” explained Marty Holtgren, Principal Watershed Scientist for the MRWA. “Our goal as event organizer is to provide direction to our volunteers and a process to measure our success.

According to MRWA executive director Scott Faulkner, “A river clean-up makes a great family outing, reunion, or team building event and provides a perfect opportunity to get outside and affect real change. You can clean up an area while tubing your favorite section, hiking a new trail, fishing a secret spot or taking a leisurely boat ride on a hot afternoon.

Trash Bash co-coordinator, Patricia Tice Jarrett, notes that the momentum continues to build. "Last year our teams of volunteers removed over a ton of trash from the river, which was the biggest total ever. We fully expect this year's haul

to set a new record. To create an atmosphere of friendly competition we have always offered prizes and other incentives for outstanding performance and I am very excited about the prizes we are able to offer this year.

For example, this year's Grand Prize is a Traeger Grill (retailed at \$1000) graciously donated by Lume Cannabis."

According to Trash Bash guidelines, designated team leaders will assemble their teams, and select a date and location. To have the largest possible impact across the watershed, the MRWA is using the entire month of August 2022 for the event, when water levels are at their annual low, and trash is easier to identify and safely remove.

To avoid duplication of efforts, one team member must register on the MRWA Trash Bash website after July 1st reserving their desired location. Register at: www.mrwa.org/trashbash.

After registration, you will receive an email with further details, requiring participants to sign and return a digital liability waiver prior to participating in the cleanup. All teams must complete their clean ups during the month of August to be eligible for gifts and a certificate of achievement as a “Protector of the River”.

Faulkner noted, “The MRWA could never do this without the amazing support we have received from the small business community, large corporations and foundations, and our media partners. To date, we are pleased to have assembled an impressive list of sponsors

- Ice Mountain,
- The Consumers Energy Foundation,
- Jackson-Merkey Contractors,
- Cargill, Inc.,
- The DTE Energy Foundation,
- WBZX - B103.9,
- Lume Cannabis,
- Wisner's Rents Canoes,
- River Stop Café (Newaygo),
- High Profile, and
- Republic Services.

“They truly support the MRWA vision, and we appreciate their generosity”

Please contact our MRWA assistant, Sarah Himes for questions, interviews, or media at: MRWA01@ferris.edu.

About the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly is dedicated to the preservation, protection, restoration, and sustainable use of the Muskegon River, the land it drains, and the life it supports, through educational, scientific and conservation initiatives.



The logo is set against a teal background. The text 'the' is in a small, white, italicized font. 'Massage Spot' is in a large, white, serif font, with 'and Fitness center' in a smaller, white, serif font below it. To the right of the text are three interlocking gears of different sizes, rendered in a dark grey color with white outlines.

Your Land and Your Legacy

By Brook Baumann, Mecosta
Conservation District

As an owner of agricultural, forested or wildlife land, you are a steward of one of the County's greatest natural heritages. No matter your acreage, you are in a position to shape the landscape of your region for generations to come.

Perhaps you are already implementing conservation on your land. You may be controlling erosion, planting trees, managing invasive pests, creating pollinator and wildlife habitat. These practices, especially when performed on a large scale, can influence water quality, forests, and wildlife, all for the better.

But will your management wishes continue on your land for the long-term?

If you are passionate about protecting your land and its natural heritage, now is the time to make a succession plan for the future. Estate taxes are one good reason. Taxes can be so high that they sometimes force heirs to sell. In addition, future owners might not share your values or concern for the land, resulting in development, subdivision, or harmful practices.

Until you have a plan, your legacy is only a good intention. This is a lengthy and detailed process, but an important one. The sooner you familiarize yourself with your options and begin to take steps towards securing your legacy, the

more likely you are to succeed.

Here are a few options of land conservation programs you may want to consider:

Land Donation – Donating land for conservation purposes is one option. The Mecosta & Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts has the legal authority to accept land donations, and they will work with you to come up with a long-term plan that will manage the land for environmental/agricultural/forestry education. This option may be best if you do not wish to donate land to heirs; own property you no longer use; own highly appreciated property; have substantial real-estate holdings and wish to reduce tax burdens; or would like to be relieved of the responsibility of managing and caring for the land.

Donation with Life Tenancy – It is possible to donate your land now, while continuing to live on and/or enjoy the property for the duration of your life. Such a donation would relieve you of some of the burdens of ownership and could possibly provide tax benefits.

Examples of land donations to Conservation Districts are many and varied. In Oceana County, a husband and wife donated 80 acres to the Conservation District in 2019. The District agreed to protect the property, maintain its ecological health, and refrain from developing the property. Visitors are welcome to hike the trails and enjoy the natural surroundings.

In addition, the District plans to hold educational events including birding field trips, snowshoe hikes and owl prowls. In both Alger and Manistee Counties, individual parcels were donated to the respective Districts and are used in various ways. The Manistee Conservation District has performed some research and conducted educational demonstrations on controlling non-native invasive autumn olive, Scotch pine and black locust. They have also initiated native wildflower and grass experiments with two plots comparing different methods of site prep and planning.

Land stewardship is no small task. Thankfully, there are public resources to support you in your efforts. From the start, it is important to know your options as well as your management goals for your land. The decisions you make now will have impacts far into the future.

For more information on resources available to help landowners with land donation, or succession and estate planning, contact your local Conservation District.

Mecosta CD- Brook Baumann-
(989) 309-9229 brook.baumann@
macd.org

Osceola-Lake CD- Mark
Sweppenheiser – (231) 465-8012
mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org



MECOSTA & OSCEOLA LAKE

FALL Native Plant Sale

**WHEN: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
9 A.M. - 4 P.M.**

WHERE: PARIS PARK FISH HATCHERY

**We do not take pre-orders for
this sale. Plants will be
available on a first-come,
first-served basis.**

Controlling Invasive Species with the North Country CISMA

The North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA) has several ongoing projects in Mecosta, Osceola, and Lake Counties. For more information about NCCISMA or these projects, visit www.NorthCountryInvasives.org, or contact the Program Coordinator by calling 231-429-5072 or emailing vicki.sawicki@macd.org.

Strike Team for Hire
NCCISMA's strike team is available for hire to control high priority invasive species on private property. These species are Japanese and giant knotweed, Oriental bittersweet, Phragmites, wild parsnip, tree-of-heaven, bristly locust, garlic mustard, and buckthorn. This program is best suited for small infestations where it would be cost prohibitive to hire a contractor. For more information or to request a free quote, call 248-210-6047 or email zach.peklo@macd.org.

Engaging ORV Enthusiasts
NCCISMA is implementing a pilot program to engage off-road vehicle (ORV) users in stopping the spread of invasives species. The main goal of this project is to build recognition within the ORV community of the threat invasive species pose to the forest resource they enjoy and value, and to inspire new practices that will slow the spread of invasives to, and from, recreational trails. This project was funded by the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP).

Prioritizing High Value Habitat for Survey and Control
In order to better strategize survey work, NCCISMA is utilizing data from Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI), a clearinghouse where data pertaining to

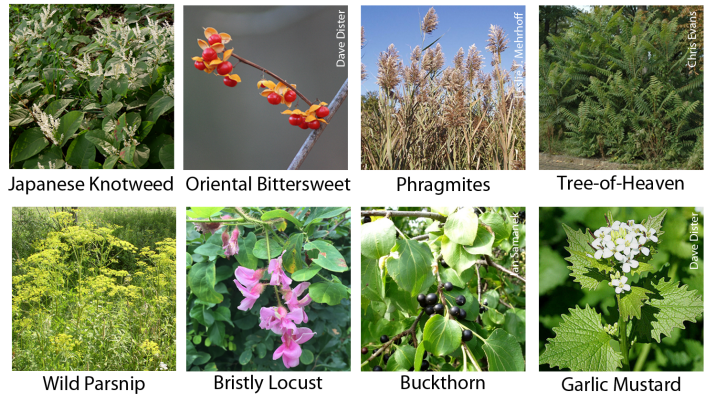
occurrences of rare species in the state of Michigan is collected. With this project, NCCISMA will survey over 2,000 acres of public land, focusing on areas where high value habitats, or areas with threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, are likely to coincide with invasive species. Infestations of invasive plants found in high value habitats will be targeted for control. Funding for this project is from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative through the U.S. Forest Service (USFS).
Wild Parsnip Survey and Control

Wild parsnip produces sap that increases skin sensitivity to sunlight and cause severe blisters. For several years, NCCISMA has been controlling this plant along the White Pine Trail, which is the source of the infestation. This year, NCCISMA is continuing to treat the wild parsnip along the trail and will also be surveying 345 miles of roadsides for wild parsnip. This project was funded by the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP).

Muskegon River Watershed Project
NCCISMA is finishing up work on a grant to target aquatic invasive plants in the Muskegon River Watershed. A large part of this grant has been promoting enrollment in the Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch (EAPW), a statewide program that trains volunteers to monitor local lakes for invasive plants. For more information on the EAPW, call 313-570-6853 or email emma.costantino@macd.org. NCCISMA is also conducting riparian invasive species surveys along 312 acres of the Muskegon River. This project was funded by the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP).

Strike Team for Hire

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



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

2022 Pasture Walk Series

Come see innovative agriculture practices that can improve farm soil heath and increase productivity!

Please join us at each location in the series where different practices will be highlighted. NRCS & MAEAP will be on hand for discussions on programs that are available.

MAEAP Phase 1 Event

Please call 231-465-8005 or email brandi.mitchell@macd.org to RSVP

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- July 11th 6:00—8:00 pm**
Hinken Farms
 9681 E 80th St, Reed City MI 49677
- August 15th 6:00-8:00 pm**
Mitchell Cat Creek Farms
 15412 Hersey Rd, Hersey MI 49639
- September 21st 6:00-8:00pm**
Grindstone Farms
 11744 50th Ave, Evart MI 49631

Carbon Credits Weed & Forage Management Perennial Crops Work Shop

August 31, 2022
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Venue 20
9039 20th Ave
Remus, MI 49340

Agenda

- MAEAP opening
- Farm Bureau - Carbon credit, policy/legislative update
- FAP Forester - Testimonial
- Lunch Break
- MSU Extension - Weed Management, Forage & Perennial Crops
- MAEAP Phase 1 Credits
- RUP Credits Requested

Lunch Provided
Registration Required

Email cristen.cornell@macd.org or call (989)400-2427 to register.

Please register by August 19 to reserve your lunch spot.
 Please include any dietary requirements (allergies, gluten free, etc.) when registering.

\$5
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Using Prescribed Fire to Meet Management Objectives

By Kathleen Lavey
Michigan Department of Natural Resources

A very important part of the job for Michigan Department of Natural Resources fire teams is putting out wildland fires, with a goal of keeping them less than 10 acres in size.

But there’s another important aspect to their work as well: Using fire as a management tool.

Prescribed burns – when DNR staff starts and carefully monitors fire to achieve a goal for the landscape – are a critically important tool in creating wildlife habitat, battling invasive species and

helping fire-adapted native plants to thrive. Species that benefit from fires include grassland birds, prairie plants, wild blueberries and the endangered Karner blue butterfly, which lays its eggs on fire-adapted lupine.

“Prescribed burns mimic natural fires in that they renew the landscape and provide for new plants and young forests,” said Dan Laux, fire section leader for the DNR’s Forest Resources Division.

The DNR conducted 57 prescribed burns on 5,100 acres during 2021 and has already surpassed that number for the 2022 season.

To plan for prescribed

fire, DNR wildlife and land managers evaluate the landscape, specifying which goals a burn would accomplish. Once a burn is approved as a treatment option, fire managers create a plan for the burn.

A shift in wind or weather patterns mean a planned burn can be canceled at any time, even after it has been started. Safety is always a top priority.

After a burn is conducted, staff will evaluate how the burn went and conduct site monitoring to measure how well the burn met objectives as the site regenerates new growth.

“Prescribed burns are both



Two DNR firefighters work on a prescribed burn in the Rose Lake State Wildlife Area.

a science and an art that can have a good impact on a site,” Laux said.
Learn more about the

DNR’s fire management program, including prescribed burns, at [Michigan.gov/FireManagement](https://www.michigan.gov/FireManagement).

Soil 101: What is Soil Health and How Can We Manage it?

By: Olivia Martinek

“Soil is what’s in your yard or field and dirt is what you sweep up off the floor of your house” is a phrase I learned from my soil science professor. Soil is so much more important than many think. Soil is one of the greatest natural resources on Earth. It is the basis of everything in our daily lives, so it is very important to keep it healthy. Soil is full of life. Not only does it give life, but it is living itself. Soil has billions of bacteria, fungi, and microbes in just one teaspoon which help our plants grow. With healthy soil comes bountiful crops and forests as well as beautiful landscapes, diverse wildlife, and clean air and water. Soil does this by preforming 5 essential

functions: regulating water, sustaining plant and animal life, filtering out potential pollutants, providing physical stability and support (not only for plants, but for buildings and roads too), and cycling nutrients. For the soil to do these 5 things the best it needs to be healthy.

The basics for keeping soil health is easier said than done. First off, you want to encourage and maximize the biodiversity of your soil. This means making sure there is more than one type of plant or animal utilizing the soil. Having a plethora for different plants brings in different animals, which all encourages biodiversity and healthy soil. Next, make sure to keep a living root system growing throughout the



year. Using things like cover crops helps soil because the area around a root system (called the rhizosphere) is the most active part of the soil ecosystem. Much of the water and nutrient cycling system occurs in this area. Keeping a living root system “feeds” your soil throughout

the year. Additionally, keeping the soil covered is also very important. Covering the soil conserves moisture, reduces temperature, suppresses weeds, provides habitat, and reduces the impact of rain to the soil. Imagine you’re at the beach on a windy day,

sand is flying everywhere. This can also happen in any area that soil is exposed. In fact, it did happen in the 1930s which resulted in a catastrophic event: The Dust Bowl. Wind and water erosion are significant resource concerns putting our soil health at risk. Bare fields are at a much higher risk than a field or area that has plants in place.

Lastly, minimizing soil disturbance is a key factor in soil health. Disturbing the soil can be physical, chemical, or biological. Physical activities like tilling results in a destructive and hostile environment for the soil microbes to live in. It essentially destroys their habitat. An example of biological disturbance would be overgrazing. Overgrazing reduces

root mass, increasing soil temperature and the potential for runoff. Chemical disturbance could be improper fertilization, which ruins symbiotic relationships (meaning they work to help each other) between fungi, plant roots, and other microorganisms.

The methods we use to keep our soil healthy is called soil health management. Some management practices that can be used are no-till farming, crop residue management, cover cropping, crop rotation, and much more. To learn more about these practices for managing soil health (and more), contact local Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel.

New MAEAP Technicians at the Mecosta & Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts

By: Cristen Cornell & Brandi Mitchell
MAEAP Technicians

The biggest concerns many producers and landowners share is water quality and environmental concerns. Most are already enacting and following best management practices on their operations. The goal of MAEAP is the be a “second set of eyes” to look at practices and verify that landowners are doing the best that they can to protect their resources. MAEAP stands for: Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program, it looks at and assesses the Farmstead, Livestock, Cropping and/or Forest, Wetland and Habitat Systems that are applicable for each producer or landowner. It is a voluntary, non-regulatory program. To become MAEAP verified one must attend an educational workshop, invite a local MAEAP technician to tour your farm, implement practices recommended by the technician, then lastly, have an inspection with an Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development verifier. Once verified, you are provided with a sign to highlight the operation is following the best agricultural or environmentally sustainable land management practices. Both the Osceola-Lake and Mecosta Conservation Districts have recently hired new MAEAP

technicians, each with a great background bringing excellent skill sets to both districts.

Cristen Cornell is the new MAEAP technician covering Mecosta and Montcalm Counties. She is transitioning over to the MAEAP position after being the Farm Bill Specialist out of the Mecosta Conservation District office. She performed a lot of behind-the-scenes work, such as conservation planning support and administrative duties for all NRCS programs. She also helped at district events like Tree Sales, Native Plant Sales and Household Hazardous Waste Collection. Prior to working for the Conservation District, Cristen spent nearly ten years working in the dairy industry as a Dairy Herd Improvement (DHI) Specialist and had the opportunity to service more than 100 different dairy farms throughout Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. In addition to collecting milk samples, she assisted dairy producers with data analysis and decision-making to benefit the future of their operations. She also has 15+ years of personal and professional equine management experience. Cristen currently has two horses, owns/operates a part time equine therapy business, and competes in local events. She hopes to carry forward her experiences to advocate MAEAP in Mecosta and

Montcalm Counties. Brandi Mitchell is the new MAEAP Technician covering Osceola, Eastern Lake and Clare counties. Brandi comes from a background in agriculture & Veterinary Technology. Her family currently owns and operates a small produce farm, providing homegrown vegetables for sale in their fruit market. Brandi grew up working on the farm with her family for many years, helping with planting, capping, weed removal, as well as picking and distributing items for sale. She also worked in their greenhouse and spent time aiding customers with their vegetable, annual and perennial flower selections. After graduating college with a Veterinary Technician License, she worked as a Vet Tech for 15 years. Her and her husband own a small beef cattle operation that they have been steadily growing, proudly raising pastured natural beef. They raise a variety of cattle breeds on the farm including Belted Galloway, Angus, British White crosses, and composite commercial cattle. Her cattle are rotationally grazed, and care is taken to continuously improve overall farm practices to aid in soil and water conservation. Brandi has a large garden where she grows a vast selection of produce, makes maple syrup and gathers honey from her beehives.



Cristen Cornell, Mecosta Conservation District MAEAP Technician



Brandi Mitchell, Osceola-Lake Conservation District MAEAP Technician

She looks forward to sharing her enthusiasm and passion for agriculture with producers and landowners while assisting them in achieving MAEAP verification.

For more information regarding MAEAP please reach out to the technician covering your county and check out the web site www.maeap.org for more information.

Shrub borders give the edge to wildlife

By Greg White,
*District Conservationist,
Natural Resources
Conservation Service*

Got a well-kept property, but not as much wildlife as you would like?

Could be you have very little edge habitat, that zone of shrubs, grasses, legumes and weeds between forests and crop fields.

For wildlife habitat, you want a “soft” or gradual transition from crop field to woodland, rather than an abrupt change from one to the other.

A border of shrubs can help you do that. Plant five to seven rows of shrubs between the field and the woodland. Spacing depends on the mature size of the shrubs you choose; typically, they are planted 6’ to 8’ apart within the row and 8’ apart between

rows. The more variety in the shrubs, the better for wildlife. That’s because some shrubs offer better nesting cover than others, some better escape cover, and some are better loafing cover.

The mixture of shrubs also gives fruits that mature at different seasons, fruits that remain on the plants for different lengths of time. For both reasons, the mixture of shrubs will attract a more diverse group of wildlife.

Shrubs commonly recommended for borders include grey and silky dogwood, sumac, chokecherry, highbush cranberry, hawthorn, and crabapple. Species selection should be based on your soils and site characteristics.

Seedlings should be

planted in a weed free area. This can be in a furrow where the sod was pushed back by a plow. Weed barrier fabric, straw or mulch may be used to smother the competing vegetation. You will also want to protect the shrubs from deer browse with a cage or tree protection tube.

You can improve the shrub border’s value to wildlife by adding ten more feet of grasses or legumes on the crop side of

the border. A mixture of grey dogwood and highbush cranberry will offer young quail and turkeys a prime bug area.

Native grasses like little bluestem and Indiangrass work well, as do a number of clovers. Another good option is to plant

an annual game bird mix including seeds such as milo, millet, soybeans or wheat.



It’s a built-in food plot near a wooded area that you would leave standing for two or three years.

You could also disk the area and allow native weeds to regenerate naturally. Discing the area once every

three years will help to spark new growth of weeds.

For more information, stop at our office or visit the NRCS web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Mecosta & Osceola-Lake Conservation District Seeking Candidates for Board of Directors and Associate Director Positions

The Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation District Board of Directors is pleased to announce that each District has two positions that will be up for election in 2022. Each position is a four-year term, with the candidates elected serving through fall of 2026. If you are someone with energy, enthusiasm and experience in regards to conservation matters, and specialized knowledge, skills, abilities, and contacts which the Board needs to take the District program to the next level of effectiveness, please consider joining our team. The board

also has an Associate Director Program in place to help aid the District in success.

The Board of Directors is made up of community members of diverse backgrounds. District seats are non-partisan. For the election, eligible candidates are residents of the County you are running for, who are 18 years of age or older and can show proof of residency. Additionally, a candidate must complete a nominating petition by obtaining signatures from five County residents age 18 or older. Nominating petitions are now available at the respective offices

or by request.

Mecosta Conservation District- 18260 Northland Drive, Big Rapids, MI

Brook Baumann (989) 309-9229 brook.baumann@macd.org

Nominating petitions due by August 19th, 2022 at 3 p.m.

Osceola-Lake Conservation District – 138 W. Upton Ave. #2, Reed City, MI

Mark Sweppenheiser (231) 465-8012 mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org

Nominating petitions due by August 14th, 2022 at 3:00 p.m.

Frequently asked questions. What are some examples of

Conservation District Programs? Conservation Districts provide access to the Forest Assistance Program (FAP), Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), and Michigan’s Hunting Access Program (HAP) for Mecosta County residents. The District currently has a variety of additional projects aiming to improve water quality, restore wildlife habitat, manage invasive species, and engage youth in outdoor recreation. Along with regular District business, we facilitate bare root seedling sales twice per year to encourage reforestation efforts. We also operate an annual Household Hazardous Waste Collection.

What is a Conservation District? A Conservation District is a local unit of state government organized by the people within the District boundaries under provisions of the Soil Conservation District Law, Act 297 of Public Acts of 1937, as amended. As such, it is a locally controlled resource management agency, created by concerned landowners and administered by publicly elected boards of directors.

What is the Purpose of the Mecosta Conservation District?

Over the years, the role of Conservation Districts has somewhat evolved. The District now works closely with the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to bring cost share programs to county farmers implementing soil, water and

habitat conservation practices. Additionally, the District has developed partnerships with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to provide resource conservation assistance to both farming and non-farm landowners.

How is it Operated? The locally elected five-member board of directors makes all decisions regarding the District’s programs and activities. The directors hire qualified staff to conduct and carry out the programs and activities that they have approved. These programs provide technical help, information and awareness to assist people in the District to properly manage their natural resources. In Michigan, there are 75 Conservation Districts which are generally organized along county boundaries.

How is a Conservation District Funded?

District funding sources currently include county appropriations, federal and state grants, and an annual spring and fall tree sale. Conservation District Directors are responsible for developing these funding sources for the operation of the Conservation District and for public programs focused on solving resource issues.

For more information regarding the Conservation District and the programs available, please visit mecostacd.org or osceolalakecd.org.

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**Osceola-Lake
Conservation
District**

Tire and Electronic Collection
Saturday, August 6, 2022
9:00 a.m. to Noon
Location - Recycle of Osceola County
531 E. Lincoln, Reed City

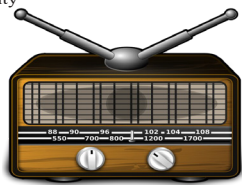
Tire Recycling
No charge - passenger tire on or off rim

- 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
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



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**WHEN: OCTOBER 20, 2022
TIME: 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.
WHERE: VENUE 20
9039 20TH AVE., REMUS**

- ✓ Conservation Programs Presentation
- ✓ Broasted Chicken Dinner
\$10 donation requested to cover a portion of the food costs
- ✓ Election- 2 Director Positions
- ✓ Prize Drawings

**RSVP DUE BY
OCTOBER 6TH, 2022**

989-309-9229
brook.baumann@macd.org




**OSCEOLA-LAKE CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL MEETING**

**Thursday, October 13, 2022
6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Reed City Depot
200 N. Chestnut Street
Reed City, MI**

We will be holding a District Director Election from 6:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. After the election, we will visit Gingrich Meadows Dairy at 18109 140th Ave. Leroy for a farm tour. Please RSVP if attending the farm tour. Voting will take place to elect two (2) District Directors. Must be a resident of the Osceola or east half of Lake Counties to vote. Absentee ballots will be available at the district office after August 26, 2022.

For additional information or to RSVP please call (231) 465-8012 or email mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org

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.



Lake - Mecosta - Osceola Counties Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day

When: Saturday, October 8, 2022 • 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Where:	<u>Lake County</u>	Wenger Pavilion, downtown Baldwin (behind Jones Ice Cream Parlor)
	<u>Mecosta County</u>	Chippewa Hills Intermediate School (3226 Arthur Rd., Remus)
	<u>Osceola County</u>	Road Commission South Facility (4737 Makwa Dr., Hersey)

Cost: No charge, but donations are greatly appreciated.

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: Lithium batteries (**NO ALKALINE BATTERIES**), oil based paint products (**NO LATEX PAINT**), glue, adhesives, pesticides, fertilizers, mercury, household cleaners, used motor oil (**see note below**), florescent light bulbs, unused medication, 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 call Lake County MSU Extension at (231) 745-2732, Osceola-Lake Conservation District at (231) 465-8012 or Mecosta Conservation District at (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3, or go to our website at www.mecostacd.org or www.osceolalakecd.org.

This project is supported by the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts, Lake, Mecosta and Osceola County MSU Extension, Michigan Water Stewardship "Clean Sweep" Program, local units of government, municipalities, businesses, organizations, foundations and individual donations.

