

# 65th ANNUAL REPORT

## NEWAYGO CONSERVATION DISTRICT—2014

### The Newaygo Conservation District Newsletter

(Volume 1/Issue 1: February) 2015

Welcome to the first issue of the Newaygo Conservation District (NCD) Newsletter, bringing you up to date on the activities of your conservation district.

The NCD has been an organization quietly serving the residents of Newaygo country for over six decades. As a result, we have found that many residents are not aware of who we are and what we do. So, this first issue of this quarterly newsletter will deal with the history of - not just the NCD - but conservation districts throughout the state of Michigan and the important role they play.

In the early 1930s, along with the greatest depression this nation ever experienced, came an equally unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away. This created huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and covered the countryside and created thousands of "dust refugees"!

The storms stretched across the nation reaching south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Through this effort, Bennett successfully promoted the passage of the Soil Conservation Act of 27 April 1935, which created a Soil Conservation Service at the U S Department of Agriculture. Bennett subsequently served as its first chief until his retirement in 1951.

This new legislation declared soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Because nearly three-fourths of the continental United States was privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending legislation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. On August 4, 1937, Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District in North Carolina became the first district established.

The movement caught on across the country with district-enabling legislation passed in every state. Known in various parts of the country as "soil and water conservation districts," "resource conservation districts," "natural resource districts," "land conservation committees" and similar names, they share a single mission: to coordinate assistance from all available sources—public and private, local, state and federal—in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concern.

In Michigan, there are currently 78 Conservation Districts established through the Soil Conservation District Act of 1937. Today, the country is blanketed with nearly 3,000 conservation districts which coordinate assistance through all available sources—public, private, local, state and federal—in an effort to develop locally-driven solutions to natural resource concerns.

In the next edition of the NCD newsletter, we will detail how we are organized and what we do in Newaygo County to enhance and protect the county's natural resources.



#### **A note about our 2014 Annual**

**Report:** *This Annual Report reflects our effort to minimize spending, as these difficult financial times have also affected the budget at the Conservation District. Nevertheless, we felt that it was important that our citizens are aware of the District's accomplishments and services provided in Newaygo County in 2014*

#### **Board of Directors**

**Fred Folkema: Chairman**  
**Ned Hughes: Treasurer**  
**Jason Dunning: Kris Carlson**  
**Larry Bisson: Vice Chair**  
**Dan Brink: Director**

#### **District Staff**

**Gail Warnement: Exec. Director**  
**Louise Tower: Nursery Manager**  
**Lucas Cotton: MAEAP Technician**  
**Vacant: Raymond Gurley**

#### **USDA-NRCS Staff**

**Kelly Bishop: District Conservationist**

#### **CONTACT US!**

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**Mission Statement:** To provide guidance and leadership in conserving, maintaining, and improving the natural resources of our Newaygo County



# Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

## History of MAEAP

MAEAP was developed by a coalition of farmers, commodity groups, state and federal agencies, and conservation and environmental groups to provide a venue for farmers to become better educated about management options in order to help protect and enhance the quality of natural resources. It is not a government or regulatory program, but rather a partnership effort unified for the protection of natural resources and advancement of positive community and neighbor relations.

### MAEAP's Mission:

- To develop and implement a proactive environmental assurance program ensuring that Michigan farmers are engaging in cost-effective pollution prevention practices and working to comply with state and federal environmental regulations. It is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks.

### MAEAP's Confidentiality:

- With confidentiality guaranteed by law, MAEAP provides a structure under which Michigan farmers can be assured they are effectively following all current Right to Farm Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs) and are working to comply with state and federal environmental laws specific to each system of the program.

### Local MAEAP Accomplishments

The producers in Newaygo and Muskegon Counties have continued to display their dedication to producing a safe, abundant food supply while becoming increasingly conscious of their environmental impact. With 14 new and repeat MAEAP verifications in Newaygo and Muskegon Counties in 2014, the producers of this area are showing to the community that they want to lead the country on a path that ensures protection of our natural resources and increased sustainability in their farming operations.

Local MAEAP Incentives- RUP credits for participating, Soil compaction testing, Irrigation uniformity testing, PH testing, Nutrient Management

For more information or to schedule a farm visit with Luke Cotton, MAEAP Technician for Newaygo and Muskegon Counties.

**Call- 231-924-2420 Ext. 114 Or Email- [lucas.cotton@mi.nacdnet.net](mailto:lucas.cotton@mi.nacdnet.net)**

**The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** provides educational, technical, and financial assistance to agricultural producers to reduce risks to groundwater and surface water. Purchases of nitrogen fertilizer and pesticides fund the program.

### NEWAYGO CONSERVATION DISTRICT—Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Finances

#### Revenues

Grants ..... \$ 65,750.00  
 Tree Sales ..... \$ 165,853.98  
 Native Plant Sale ..... \$ 600.50  
 Other Revenues..... \$ 90,341.17

**TOTAL REVENUE.....\$ 322,545.65**

#### Expenses

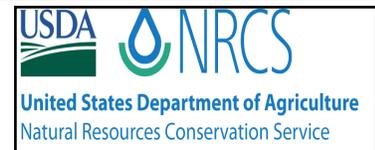
Overall Expenses..... \$ **320,764.91**

**TOTAL EXPENSES.....\$ 320,764.91**

NET GAIN/LOSS.....1,780.74

(un-audited)

# Natural Resource Conservation Service



**The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is a voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers, ranchers, private forest land owners and Federally-recognized American Indian tribes may receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and land management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Eligible producers are individuals engaged in livestock, crop or forest production. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, and private non-industrial forestland. State priorities are developed annually from input from local workgroups based on county resource assessments and individual plans to address those local needs. A State Technical Committee comprised of representation from these local work groups, Tribal groups, commodity groups, and conservation partners advise NRCS on the implementation of EQIP.

EQIP activities are carried out according to a site specific conservation plan developed in conjunction with the producer. All conservation practices are installed according to NRCS technical standards. Producers may elect to use an approved technical service provider for technical assistance.

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term of one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practice and a maximum term of ten years. Total cost share and incentive payments are limited to \$300,000 per individual over a six-year period, regardless of the number of farms or contracts.

**The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSTP)** provides financial and technical assistance for eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, non-industrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary.

CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and non-industrial private forest land. The NRCS will make CSP available nationwide on a continuous application basis.

Michigan will focus program impacts on natural resources that are of specific concern for specific geographic areas within the state. Applications will be evaluated relative to other applications addressing similar priority resource concerns to facilitate a competitive ranking process among applicants within a state who face similar resource challenges.

The entire agricultural operation must be enrolled and must include all agricultural land that will be under the applicant's control for the term of the proposed contract.

CSP offers participants two possible types of payments: 1. Annual payment for installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities 2. Supplemental payment for adoption of resource-conserving crop rotations

**The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)** is a voluntary program designed to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners for the establishment and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat. Ranking criteria are used to select the applicants with a conservation plan that will create, enhance or protect wildlife habitat by types of wildlife habitat.

WHIP activities are carried out according to a site specific wildlife conservation plan developed in conjunction with the producer. All wildlife practices are installed according to NRCS technical standards. Producers may elect to use an approved technical service provider for technical assistance.

WHIP offers contracts with a maximum term of 10 years. Program payments for individual practices will vary based on the average cost for a practice's implementation. Eligibility for WHIP is subject to the adjusted gross income provision of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The information on this page lists general WHIP information including ranking criteria, and provides a pre-application tool that will assist landowners to make choices about their conservation plans.

**The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** is a voluntary program for the restoration and protection of wetlands on private property. Technical and financial assistance is provided in return for placing a conservation easement on the property either permanently or for a period of 30 years. Financial assistance is provided to landowners for restoration and enhancement practices that are implemented on the WRP easement.

**\*\*Please contact Kelly Bishop at (231) 924-2060 x 3 for information!\*\***

## Spring 2015 Seedling Sales!

Get your order in early for spring 2014 before varieties are sold out.

### Inventory Currently Available:

**Conifers**—Red Cedar, White Cedar, Common Juniper, Jack Pine, Red Pine, White Pine, Black Spruce, Blue Spruce, and White Spruce.

**Deciduous**—Quaking Aspen, Black Cherry, Red Maple, Sugar Maple, Red Oak, White Oak, and Black Walnut.

**Small Trees & Shrubs**— Black Chokeberry, Choke Cherry, Am. Hazelnut, Highbush Cranberry, Redosier Dogwood, Silky Dogwood, Mapleleaf, Ninebark and Fragrant Sumac.

*To get an order form and seedling catalog, please contact us at the main office: 231-924-2420 x 5 (Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.)*

## Spring 2015 Native Plant Sale!

The Newwaygo Conservation District will hold their Annual Native Plant Sale on June 8, 2015. Watch for future advertisement or request a catalog anytime!

### Landscaping with Native Plants-

Why use native, wildflowers, grasses, trees and shrubs in your landscaping? Because they are adapted to Michigan's soils and climate, and they provide food and habitat for our native animals. In addition, you cultivate a greater appreciation for Michigan's natural heritage.

A special presentation will be provided by Vern Stephens, from Designs by Nature at the Conservation District Office Building in Fremont. Mr. Stephens has over ten years of experience collecting seed, propagating plants, natural landscaping design and installation as well as prairie restoration of Michigan native plants.

Orders will be accepted beginning in April 2014 (please contact us for a catalog. Orders must be placed by 6/12/15!

*To get an order form and native plant catalog, please contact us at the main office: 231-924-2060 x 101 (Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Online as well: [www.newwaygcd.org](http://www.newwaygcd.org).*

### Newwaygo Conservation District



940 W. Rex Street  
Fremont, MI 49412  
(231) 924-2060 x 101  
(231) 924-4140 (fax)

### ITEMS FOR SALE!

Composters, Rain barrels, Tree Planting Bars, Tree Planting Signs, Tree Tubes, Wood Duck Box, Conservation Materials, Books and booklets (too many to list), Guide Books, Seed (Bird & Butterfly, Butterfly, & Wild Native)

**Please contact us for item list or go online:  
[www.newwaygcd.org](http://www.newwaygcd.org).**