



JUNE 2020 CONSERVATION UPDATE

Your Source for Conservation News in Washtenaw County



Sharon Mill Pond & the River Raisin

Creating a Vision for the Future

By Megan DeLeeuw

This is the first summer in 14 years that I haven't farmed or grown crops for sale. I'll admit it has been a major adjustment to go from planting acres of vegetables to now maintaining only a large garden for my family. I made the decision to stop farming (at

least for now) mainly so I could devote my time and energy to WCCD as well as enjoy the natural beauty of Washtenaw County that I haven't had time to in years past (see proof in the photo above from an early morning kayak trip on the River Raisin).

I'm grateful for having made this decision because I am truly excited about the future of the WCCD. Despite the damage COVID has had on our lives, I have heard stories of many people reconnecting to natural world as a result of forced social distancing. There is a growing renaissance in gardening, homesteading, rain water collection, tree planting, and basically any activity that seems to connect people back to the land and provide a sense of stability. I believe now more than ever our organization is poised to help more residents become better conservation stewards in new and exciting ways.

This past week the board of directors and staff were led through a visioning session with the help of a team of facilitators at MSU Extension. As a group we were able to create our list of program priorities for 2021. I am inspired by this vision and ready to get to work making these programs a reality (you can read the details [here](#)!).

We'd love to hear any feedback or ideas you have. Please feel free to get in touch and email me at megan.deleeuw@macd.org.

Connect with Friends of the Washtenaw County Conservation District

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Midwest Invasive Species Network

The Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) is a regional effort to develop and provide early detection and response resources for invasive species.

Report invasive species [here](#).

Invasive Species Injector now available for rent!

The injector is used for treating Japanese, Bohemian, giant knotweeds, invasive phragmites. Rental is free with a \$50 refundable deposit is required at pick up. Injector is available on a first come first serve basis. [Contact Megan](#) to reserve and arrange pick-up.



More Habitat Added to MAEAP

By Nick Machinski

This past month, Pat Garrett of Scio Township was able to have her habitat verified in the Forest, Wetland and Habitat system under MAEAP. Though the habitat is just a few acres it contains unique features such as a small vernal pool which is extremely important to the breeding of amphibians. Buckthorn has been an issue in the habitat, but Pat has worked hard at removing the invasive species, opening up the canopy in the process. A defining feature of the habitat is the large bur oak that towers over not only the habitat but

also the nearby house. Estimated to be a few hundred years old, the offspring of this bur oak can be seen throughout the habitat, dwarfed by its mother.

If you have a property that is a contains a woodlot, prairie, wetland or some other type of habitat and are interested in becoming verified in the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), feel free to contact Nick Machinski at [734-761-8789](tel:734-761-8789) ext. 1218 or at nicholas.machinski@macd.org

Order Rain Barrels & Accessories Now

Inventory Re-stocked on June 18th!

All rain barrels, accessories can be pre-ordered now. Pick-up from the District office (7203 Jackson Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103) **must be arranged with the Manager starting on June 29th:** megan.deleeuw@macd.org. We ask for 24 hours to have the barrel ready for pick up!



Order Rain Barrels & Accessories

Winter Rye (Cereal Rye)

Disadvantages

- May have allelopathic characteristics
- May “get away from you” in the spring and become difficult to kill



Advantages

- Can be planted later than many cover crops
- Greatest opportunity to succeed
- Works well with aerial application
- Good rooting depth
- Excellent winterhardiness
- Scavenges N & P
- Used in vegetable production



New Webinars focus on Soil Health

As part of the Farmer-Led Conservation Group focused on promoting conservation practices in the River Raisin Watershed, a series of webinars are available to help farmers learn more about building soil health. The content isn't specific for the River Raisin Watershed and can be applied wherever you happen to farm in the County.

Jim Hoorman, of [Hoorman Soil Health Services](#), presents a series of 3 topics focused on soil health. Click the links for the videos below:

- [Getting Started with Cover Crops](#)
- [The Biology of Soil Compaction](#)

- [How Soil Health can Improve Water Quality and Reduce Nutrient Runoff](#)

Want to learn more about the Farmer-Led Conservation Group? Contact Megan at megan.deleeuw@macd.org or visit [the Farmer-Led Watershed Conservation website](#).

Resources for Grid Soil Sampling

The WCCD has funds for farmers interested in upgrading their soil testing regiment through the STRAND program. The funds will go towards grid soil testing. This testing will allow for more accurate nutrient level readings for one's field. This may save the farmer money on fertilizer should nutrient levels turn out acceptable in parts of a field . Farmers must reside in the River Raisin Watershed or Stony Creek Watershed and must be farming field crops. If you are interested or have question, please contact Nick Machinski at nicholas.machinski@macd.org or at [\(734\)-761-8789](tel:(734)761-8789) ext. 1218.

Upcoming Events

WCCD Move: August

The WCCD office will be re-locating to the Washtenaw County Services Building at 705 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor. We will be located on the second floor next to the Water Resources Commissioner's Office. New contact information TBA.

On-Farm Field Visit: September

Join us for a visit and tour of a MAEAP verified farm. Several speakers will cover conservation topics and light freshments will be included. Details TBA.

Fall Tree & Native Plant Distribution: Friday, October 2nd from 2 - 6 p.m.

A selection of conifer transplants, conifer seedlings and native plants will be available for pre-order on our website starting August 1st. Pick-up will be at the Farm Council Grounds (5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd, Ann Arbor 48103).

Washtenaw County Conservation District

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have purchased trees or plants from us.



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