



CONSERVATION UPDATE

Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan

2016 ANNUAL REPORT Volume 49, Number 1

Board of Directors

Matthew Koenn, *Chairman*
Howard Sias, *Vice Chairman*
Carley Kratz, *Secretary*
Jill Dohner, *Treasurer*
Don Rentschler, *Director*

District Staff

Dennis Rice,
District Manager

Chris Coulter,
MAEAP Technician

Fred Schettenhelm,
Equipment Manager

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff

Solomon Andrews,
District Conservationist

Dextrin Dorsey,
Soil Conservationist

Our Mission

To educate and assist the people of Washtenaw County with the conservation and management of their natural resources.

Web

www.washtenawcd.org

Facebook

facebook.com/wccd.org

Conservation Update is published annually in December and is available at no charge. To be placed on the mailing list, phone or send a request with complete address to:

Washtenaw County CD
7203 Jackson Road
Ann Arbor MI 48103-9506
Phone: (734) 761-6721 ext. 5

Presentation on Washtenaw County Birdlife at 69th Annual Meeting

Richard A. Wolinski, a field ornithologist in Michigan for over 45 years will present a program, "Some Changes in the Birdlife of Washtenaw County" at the Conservation District's 69th Annual Meeting on January 19, 2017.

His presentation will discuss population trends of some of the bird species in Washtenaw County, such as the sandhill crane, house finch, and turkey vulture, and will also highlight how changes in vegetative cover types, land-use changes, and farming practices affect how and when birds utilize the local landscape.

Wolinski is a retired wildlife ecologist from the Michigan Department of Transportation. He was a consulting biologist for over ten years, and is a co-author of "The Birds of Washtenaw County, Michigan" and author of "Enjoying Purple Martins More: A Landlords Guide to Colony Management".

Wolinski has also been involved with a number of bird-related organizations and efforts, and is now retired, spending his time on research projects, writing for publication, and working on a family genealogy while also devoting time to his family.

Call the District Office to make your dinner reservations today!

Award Presentations

The meeting program will include presentation of the 2016 Conservation Farmer of the Year and Tree Conservationist Awards.

See pages 2 and 3 for more information about the award recipients.

District Director Election

All residents of Washtenaw County who are of legal age may vote in

the election of two district directors, by one of two methods following completion of a Voter Registration form and demonstration of residency by 1 piece of identification.

1.) **Absentee Ballots** can be completed by mail or at the Conservation District Office, during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, by Wednesday, January 18th, 2017.

2.) **At the Annual Meeting** on January 19, 2017.

Director Candidates

Two candidates are running for Director positions, including:

- Jill Dohner of Webster Township, current Board Treasurer who is seeking re-election to a 4-year term.
- Donald Rentschler of Lodi Township, current Director who is also seeking re-election to a 4-year term.

The Annual Meeting
will be held:

**Thursday,
January 19, 2017
6:30 p.m.**

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

The public is welcome to attend.

A buffet dinner will open the evening.

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

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

To make your reservations, call the District Office at:

**(734) 761-6721 ext. 5,
by January 13, 2017**

2016 Conservation Farmer of the Year

The Washtenaw County Conservation District is pleased to present the 2016, “Walter Wolfgang Memorial”, Conservation Farmer of the Year Award to Philip Selter.

Phil operates a 385 acre cash crop farm in Augusta Township, growing corn, soybeans, wheat and hay. He owns a 35 acre farmstead on Bemis Road and rents 350 acres in Augusta Township and Wayne County.

In addition, Phil has four horses and twenty laying hen chickens. The horses are used for pleasure riding and eggs from the chickens are sold from the farm.

Phil works with his four brothers and a nephew to farm 1,300 acres of cash crops, sharing equipment and working together on all the field work.

His conservation efforts include: no-till, cover crops, crop rotations, filter strips, nutrient management, pasture rotation, and Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verifications in the cropping and livestock systems.

He has found the use of cover crops to be greatly beneficial. After first trying a cover crop and seeing the improvement in his soil and crop yields, he has expanded to using radishes after wheat, rye after soybeans, and clover. “I tried a cover crop, saw how well it worked and now use them all the time,” said Phil. “They add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. And the radishes also provide channels for moisture to get deeper in the soil for the next crop,” he continued. “Cover crops combined with rotating crops has worked well by allowing us to be more cost efficient, cutting down our fertilizer costs,” said Phil.

Verifications in the MAEAP cropping and livestock systems were completed several years ago, and Phil is working toward the farmstead verification after he installs a fuel storage facility. “Having the MAEAP verifications shows we are doing things right,” said Phil.



Filter Strip



Philip Selter

Phil has planted over 7 acres of filter strips along tributary drains of Stony Creek which flows directly to Lake Erie. The strips help filter nutrients from adjacent cropland flowing into the drains. In addition, Phil is able to harvest hay from the strips, getting an additional benefit from this conservation practice.

A small pond on Phil’s farmstead is used for fishing, and he uses a windmill to generate electricity to run an aerator to keep the pond oxygenated for the fish.

And Phil plans to manage a recently purchased small woodlot near the pond by removing less desirable trees and establishing riding trails.

Phil first came to the Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service because he wanted to try some conservation practices. “They had the programs available to help me try some practices. When I found that they worked I stuck with them,” said Phil.

He has been a Rupp Seed Dealer for about 15 years; is the membership chairman for the Wayne County Farm Bureau; is a member of the Monroe County Ag Council; and is a member of the Waterloo Horseman’s Association—a horse riding club that conducts various riding activities.

Doing his part to conserve our soil and water resources through good conservation efforts, and an overall stewardship philosophy has helped Phil Selter maintain a successful farm operation.

The Conservation District is pleased to recognize Philip Selter as the 2016 Conservation Farmer of the Year.

2016 Tree Conservationists



Galen and Rhonda Kenyon

To recognize excellent tree planting efforts, the Conservation District is pleased to present the 2016 Tree Conservationist Award to Galen and Rhonda Kenyon of Manchester Township.

The Kenyons started by planting 700 trees in 1991 when they first bought their property in Manchester Township, and found they were overwhelmed, as they learned it takes more to care for the trees after they are planted than the actual planting, “so we did not do much planting again until 2007,” said Galen.

From 2007 to 2016 Galen and Rhonda have planted almost 1,200 trees obtained from the Washtenaw County Conservation District, a number of other seedlings purchased from neighboring Conservation Districts, and larger specimen-type trees from other sources.

Over the last 25 years, the Kenyons have planted roughly 4,000 trees on their 80 acres and Galen’s brother Barry’s adjoining 150 plus acres in Manchester Township, including: balsam and concolor fir, hemlock, larch, white pine, white spruce, beech, yellow and white birch, blackgum, American chestnut, white dogwood, Gingko, paw paw, red maple, serviceberry, sycamore, tulip tree, and a number of ornamental trees and various cultivars. In addition, they have planted a number of shrub species, including: highbush cranberry, red dogwood, winterberry holly, snowberry, and spicebush.

The Kenyons’ planting efforts have been to restore native habitats, for aesthetics and for reforestation. Their long term goal is to create an arboretum and nature preserve. They have also been removing invasive species and replanting with native trees.

Two key areas where the invasives are being targeted are a large wetland on Barry’s property where the invasives are being replaced with native highbush cranberry and dogwoods; and, along the banks of Iron Creek, which runs through the property, where native trees are being planted to replace the invasives that are removed.

In addition to tree planting there are 50-60 acres of woodland on the Kenyon properties, which are

managed using selective cuts conducted on a regular schedule to keep the woodlots productive.

To remove invasive species such as autumn and honeysuckle, Galen cuts the plants back to near the ground when they are dormant, then sprays the stumps with herbicide. He has had excellent success knocking back the larger plants with this method. “We still find smaller plants after cleaning out an area, but these are much easier to remove than the huge shrubs,” said Galen.

Galen puts many of the trees to be planted in pots and keeps many of them in a fenced nursery area. This allows them to increase in size and provides protection from deer damage until they are planted. This method has been very successful for the Kenyons, improving survival rates.

To combat heavy deer browse pressure, the Kenyons fence most of their smaller trees with wire cages until they reach sizes that are not as attractive to the deer. And, “we have had very good success using Plantskydd deer repellent,” said Galen.

The Kenyons have planted, and continue to expand a number of tree and shrub collections, including: a variety of conifer species and cultivars, beech, gingko, holly, horse chestnut, dawn redwood, maple, magnolia, oak, redbud, and sweet gum. The cultivars in these attractive collections account for only about 5% of the Kenyons’ total tree plantings, with about 95% being native species. This combination fits well with their goal of creating an arboretum and nature preserve.

Galen is an engineering specialist for General Motors and Rhonda is a pharmacy team leader at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. The Kenyons are members of the American Conifer Society and occasionally volunteer for plant sales and propagation seminars at Hidden Lake Gardens in Tipton, Michigan.

Because of their consistent, long-term tree planting efforts, and overall stewardship ethic, the Conservation District is pleased to recognize Galen and Rhonda Kenyon with the 2016 Tree Conservationist Award.



2016 MAEAP Report

By Chris Coulter, WLEB-MAEAP Conservation Technician

2016 has continued to see significant growth for the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). Currently, the program has achieved nearly 3,700 verifications statewide.

In Washtenaw County, we now have 32 farms that are verified in one or more system, with nearly all of the 6 newly-verified farms for 2016 being verified in multiple systems!

This year's newly verified farms include: Tilian Farm Development Center, Ann Arbor Township; Nicole Streeter, Freedom Township; Green Things Farm, LLC, Ann Arbor Township; Schiel Farms, Bridgewater Township; Trinkle Farms, Webster Township; and the Frosty Apple, Webster Township. Additionally, two farms previously verified in cropping system earned farmstead and livestock verifications to become verified in all applicable systems: Bruce and Shirley Heaussler, Freedom Township; and Mill Creek Stock Farm, Lima Township. In total, these farms represent 18 system verifications. Congratulations to these producers who have taken the steps to earn environmental verification for their farms!

2016 accomplishments in Washtenaw County included:

ITEM	# COMPLETED
Risk Reduction Practices	212
Farm*A*Systs	16
Crop*A*Systs	12
Livestock*A*Systs	10
MAEAP Farmstead System Verifications	7
MAEAP Cropping System Verifications	6
MAEAP Livestock System Verifications	5

In addition to working with producers on risk assessments and verifications, the following activities were accomplished:

- **MAEAP Presentations at:** Washtenaw County Conservation District Annual Meeting; Washtenaw pesticide exam review classes; Crop Production Services winter meeting and fall field day; and Eastern Michigan University CSIE class.
- **Events Organized and/or Hosted:** Two Phase 1 approved meetings focusing on pesticide applicator license exam review and the MAEAP verification process – demonstrated groundwater flow model at February meeting; well water screening event for nitrates in partnership with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Eastern Michigan University CSIE students.



2016 MAEAP verified farm: Green Things Farm, LLC, Nate and Jill Lada.

- **Assisted with:** inventory and evaluation site visits for NRCS conservation plans; provided support materials for producers applying for EQIP funding under the MAEAP fund code.
- **Meetings attended:** WLEB staff meetings; Washtenaw MMPA annual meeting; Washtenaw County Farm Bureau annual meeting; Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) fall kickoff and summer conferences; MACD Region 10 meeting; Farmer's Advisory Council meetings; Washtenaw Ag Banquet; FWH*A*Syst training; Plant ID training; and Customer Service Toolkit training.
- **Other Activities:**
 - Coordinated with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to collect well water samples for detailed analysis.
 - Assisted with Conservation District fall and spring tree sales and spring native plant sale.
 - Assisted in collecting 15 soil samples through WLEB soil sampling incentives program.
- **Promotional, Public Relations Activities:**
 - Partnered with NRCS, Lenawee Conservation District, Washtenaw County Farm Bureau, and Crystal Flash Fuels to coordinate and facilitate bus tour to 2 Washtenaw Co. MAEAP verified farms.
 - Assisted with fair display at Saline community fair.

For more information about MAEAP or how your farm can become MAEAP-verified, contact Chris Coulter by phone at: (734) 205-1218 or e-mail at: christopher.coulter@mi.nacdnet.net.

2016 NRCS Highlights

By Solomon Andrews, District Conservationist

The Washtenaw County NRCS field office now has a permanent District Conservationist. Solomon Andrews, who started in June, 2016, is the new District Conservationist coming from the Bay City field office. Solomon's goal is to increase farmer participation in USDA programs and apply as much conservation on the ground as possible.

Soil Conservationist Wilma Bird moved to California during 2016, but still is working with NRCS; and Dextrin Dorsey still serves as the Soil Conservationist for Washtenaw County.

NRCS is still working hard at putting conservation on the ground by continuously accepting applications for its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP provides cost share to address resource concerns dealing with soil, water, plants, animals and energy. A few of the conservation practices that were funded in 2016 included Fueling Facilities, Nutrient and Pest Management and Seasonal High Tunnels. Special funding opportunities are also available for producers in the Western Lake Erie Basin watershed that have resource concerns.

NRCS has a program called CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program), which rewards producers for being a good steward of the land. Ground that is eligible to enroll in the CSP program is crop, pasture, forest and rangeland. If you think you are a good steward of the land, please stop by our office and fill out an application for the Conservation Stewardship Program.

Easement programs through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) are also offered through NRCS to landowners who want to maintain or enhance their land in a way beneficial to agriculture and/or the environment. All NRCS easement programs are voluntary. We provide technical help and financial assistance, but local landowners and organizations are needed to make the NRCS easement programs successful.

NRCS is working closely with the Conservation District to help producers obtain Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verification. Producers can apply for cost share assistance to help fund the last two practices they may need for MAEAP verification.

NRCS and the Conservation District look forward to working with you on your upcoming conservation projects. For more information visit our website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/site/mi/home/>, stop by the office, or give us a call at (734) 761-8789 ext. 3.



2016 District Manager Report

By Dennis Rice, District Manager

2016 marked the 68th year the Conservation District has been assisting the landowners of Washtenaw County with the conservation and management of their natural resources. The information on page 6 provides a statistical picture of the activities and assistance provided by the District and Natural Resources Conservation Service in fiscal year 2016 through our regular programs such as, tree and native plant sales, rain barrel and composter sales, Fish Day, MAEAP Grant, and USDA Farm Bill programs. In addition, there were several other efforts undertaken by the District in 2016:

- New Website: the District rolled out a new website in January, 2016. The new site can be easily updated, and includes the option for on-line sales of trees, rain barrels and other items, which we have tried on a limited basis and will likely expand for 2017.
- Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) grant proposal: the District partnered with The Stewardship Network, Huron River Watershed Council, Legacy Land Conservancy, City of Ann Arbor and Washtenaw County Natural Areas Preservation Programs, The University of Michigan and many other groups to prepare a CISMA grant proposal for Livingston and Washtenaw Counties. The objective of this effort is to control and manage invasive species on public and private lands that are negatively impacting native habitats.
- Resource Assessment: every five years the Conservation District conducts a resource assessment survey of landowners and residents, government officials, conservation/environmental groups and partners to determine the resource concerns within Washtenaw County. The results of the survey are then used to prepare a strategic 5-year plan that the District will use to identify actions it can take each year to address the resource concerns. The 2016 resource assessment identified the following resource concerns, in priority order:
 - Surface and Groundwater Quality
 - Land Use
 - Wildlife and Habitat
 - Forests and Trees
 - Energy Use
 - Solid Waste/Recycling
 - Wetlands
 - Air Quality

The full resource assessment can be found on the District website at:

<https://www.washtenawcd.org/resource-assessment.html>

The Conservation District Board and staff thank you for allowing us to work with you in 2016, and look forward to assisting you with the conservation and management of your natural resources in 2017.

District and NRCS Assistance Provided in 2016

TECHNICAL & OTHER ASSISTANCE	
General Conservation Assistance Provided	261
Forestry & Wildlife Assistance Provided	46
Trees, Plants & other items Distributed & Number of Orders Received	41,490 534
Fish Day: Number of Orders Received & Number of Fish / Gallons of Minnows	41 2,443 / 46.5
Rain Barrels Sold	27
Pedestal risers/Downspout diverters Sold	17
Tumbling Composters Sold	14
MAEAP Crop *A*Systs Completed & Acres	12 5,171 Ac.
MAEAP Farmstead & Livestock *A*Systs Completed	22
MAEAP Verifications & Re-verifications Completed	18
Conservation Systems Planned: (# plans / # acres)	17 / 978 Ac.
Fueling Facility	5
Forest Management Plans Written	1
Seasonal High Tunnel Systems	4,356 Ft.
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	825 Ft.
TECHNICAL REVIEWS AND/OR APPROVALS	
MDEQ Public Notices Reviewed	30
NRCS Conservation Plans Reviewed & Acres	37 1,422.64 Ac.
EDUCATIONAL	
Conservation Update Newsletter Issues	1
E-Conservation Update E-mail Issues	12
Educational Materials Distributed	846
Presentations and Demonstrations: (# / # of participants)	6 / 184
News Releases or Radio Public Service Announcements Distributed	24
District Web Site Visits	25,760

Financial Statement Washtenaw County Conservation District October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016

REVENUES

State Western Lake Erie Basin MAEAP Grant	\$ 67,750
County Appropriation	30,000
Conservation Sales <i>(Trees and native plants; rain barrels and composters; other products and materials)</i>	81,101
Charges for Services	13,875
Interest	129
Other Revenues	2,425
TOTAL REVENUES:	\$195,280

EXPENDITURES

Operations Expenses <i>(Director & employee expenses; office supplies; bank service charges; postage; petty cash; telephone; web site maintenance; office services; audit; mileage; sales tax; equipment purchases & repairs; products and materials purchased for resale; annual meeting; annual report)</i>	\$ 86,934
Tree & Plant Sales Program Expenses	43,438
Western Lake Erie Basin MAEAP Grant Expenses	68,759
TOTAL EXPENDITURES:	\$199,131
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUES	(\$3,851)
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE as of October 1, 2015	\$ 71,535
ENDING FUND BALANCE as of September 30, 2016	\$ 67,684



2016 DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

(Starting at left and clockwise)

Fair Display;
MAEAP Bus Tour;
Fish Day;
Board Tour;
Spring Tree Day





CONSERVATION UPDATE

Washtenaw County Conservation District
7203 Jackson Rd
Ann Arbor MI 48103-9506

NON-PROFIT
ORG.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ann Arbor MI
Permit No. 374

2016 Annual Report

Vol. 49 No. 1

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

- 2017 Annual Meeting
- 2016 Award Recipients
- MAEAP Program Report
- NRCS Conservation Highlights
- CD District Manager Report
- Assistance Provided in 2016
- Fiscal Year 2016 Financial Report
- 2016 District Activities Photos
- 2017 Spring Tree & Plants Sale
- 2017 Order Forms
- Tree/Shrub Selection Guide
- Native Plants Information Chart

District Annual Meeting
January 19, 2017
Make your reservations
today!

2016 ANNUAL REPORT & SPRING 2017 TREE & PLANTS SALE CATALOG

