MARQUETTE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2019 Annual Report
780 Commerce Dr., Suite C • Marquette, MI 49855 • 906-251-3072

Our mission is to provide for the conservation and restoration of resources in Marquette County through forestry and wildlife practices, watershed management, and education.

NRCS Site Preparation for Pollinator Planting

Board of Directors:
Randy Gentz - Chairperson, Jeff Chiodi - Vice Chairperson, Leah Kainulainen - Treasurer,
Bernie Huetter - Secretary, Kevin Downs - Board Member

District Staff:
Jaimi Cawley - District Manager, Elise Desjarlais - Lake to Lake CISMA Coordinator,
Matt Watkeys - District Forester, Evan Dunbar - Soil Conservationist,
Landen Tetil - Produce Safety Technician, Jaime Beranek - Urban Agriculture Coordinator

District Partners:
Misa Cady - NRCS District Conservationist, Holly Moss - MAEAP Technician, Kayla Knoll - ABC Partner Biologist

www.marquettecd.com
Mark your Calendars!

**Tree Sale 2020 Order Deadline:**
Friday March 27th, 2020

**Tree Sale Order Pick Up:**
Friday May 8th from 5-7 &
Saturday May 9th from 10-12

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### 2020 Meeting Schedule

The Marquette County Conservation District Board of Directors and District staff will meet at the District office for regular monthly board meetings as follows:

- Monday, January 6, 2020
- Monday, February 3, 2020
- Monday, March 2, 2020
- Monday, April 6, 2020
- Monday, May 11, 2020
- Monday, June 1, 2020
- Monday, July 6, 2020
- Monday, August 3, 2020
- Monday, September 7, 2020*  
  *Budget Hearing*
- Monday, October 5, 2020
- Monday, November 2, 2020
- Wednesday, December 3, 2020*  
  *65th Annual Meeting & Election of Officers*

Each meeting begins at 5:30 pm & is open to the public.

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### Holiday Items for Sale at your Conservation District!

Stop in to check out our selection of wildlife feeders and houses, table-top composter bins, and field guides.

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Remember, MCCD Holiday Tree Bucks (gift certificates) make great holiday gifts!
11th Annual Agri-Palooza!

On a cool, wet, and windy Friday in late September, the Marquette and Alger Conservation Districts co-hosted the 11th Annual Agri-Palooza conservation festival at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (UPREC) in Chatham. This year’s event brought over 300 fifth grade students from Superior Central, Mather Elementary, Munising Baptist, Aspen Ridge, Cherry Creek, Father Marquette, Graveraet, Powell Township, and Republic-Michigamme schools. The students enjoyed a day on the farm learning about conservation and natural resources, setting off on a soggy hayride, and delighting in ice cream donated by Jilbert Dairy. This year 36 natural resource professionals presented at 26 educational stations. Representatives from MSU UPREC, MSU Extension, Hiawatha National Forest, the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife, Marquette and Alger Conservation Districts, Michigan DNR, Trout Unlimited, the National Weather Service, Marquette Food Co-op and the Natural Resources Conservation Service inspired the students with hands-on, interactive learning. New this year were stations with Weyerhauser Forest Products, Pirman Corner Farm, the Marquette Board of Light and Power and the NMU Conservation Club. Students learned about bees, invasive species, pollinators, agronomy, forest pests, fly fishing, stream ecology, alternative energy, soil science, composting, apple varieties, produce safety and much more. There were even goats and calves present to really enrich the time on the farm and put smiles on the students’ (and teachers’) faces. Thank you to all the presenters who keep coming back year after year and to the presenters who joined us this year for the first time to make this an amazing experience for the students. Thank you also to Jilbert Dairy, the Marquette Food Co-op, Super One Foods, Econo Foods, and Double Trouble Entertainment for your generous donations. A final thank you must go out to the MSU North Farm for hosting Agri-Palooza again. We are looking forward to next year!
Another great year is in the books, and I couldn’t have done it all without our great partners and landowners! Between site visits, workshops and trainings, tree sales, deadlines, grant projects, habitat improvements, and timber harvests, the year has flown by. Here are some highlights and information to share:

- The USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) allows for landowners to apply for, and utilize Farm Bill cost-assistance grants to implement many forest practices and wildlife habitat improvements. Some of these items include, written Forest Management Plan assistance, Forest Stand Improvement through timber sale set-up, administration, and harvesting, Tree and Shrub Establishment and Site Preparation for windbreaks, and larger re-forestation projects, Invasive Species Brush Management, Oak Wilt treatments, and Conservation Cover plantings (food plots), to name a few. Also included in these Farm Bill programs is the American Bird Conservancy’s Early Successional Habitat improvements (young aspen and alder) to help target the Golden Winged Warbler habitat needs, as well as many wildlife habitat and forestland maintenance through NRCS’s Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

- Michigan’s Qualified Forest Program continues to be of interest to forest landowners as a way to help reduce property taxes on non-residential parcels in exchange for good forest management and some timber harvesting to continue and facilitate Michigan’s 2 billion-dollar economic benefits through wood products. A slight revision in the law also helped larger land-owners and hunt clubs to enroll, due to the removal of the 640-acre cap for each taxable township. Acres enrolled in this program in Michigan now exceeds 700,000 acres! For more information contact me, and look here: [http://www.michigan.gov/qfp](http://www.michigan.gov/qfp)

- This year we saw increased demand and workload on Forest and Environmental Certification through a few programs, such as The American Tree Farm System, and Michigan’s Agricultural and Environmental Assurance Program’s (MAEAP) Forest Wetland and Habitat Assist (FWH) verification. These programs and certifications seem to help follow the globalization of wood markets, and the increased demand for certified and verified wood products.

- Of course, there are always a few forest health concerns and issues, and this year was no different in that aspect. The top of the list still includes the continued Spruce Budworm outbreak, which is affecting our stands of spruce and balsam fir. Oak wilt, though not in Marquette County yet, is an upcoming and scary concern for many reasons, most important may be a possible loss of another hard mast (nut) producing tree, after we have lost most of the beech trees from Beech Bark Disease. And also, Hemlock Wooly Adelgid, again, not confirmed in Marquette County, but can greatly impact our large Hemlock forest component, which is used in many cases as winter deer habitat areas for our local deer herds. If you suspect any of these issues and/or want more information, contact me, and look here: [http://www.michigan.gov/foresthealth](http://www.michigan.gov/foresthealth)

- The Great Lakes Logging and Heavy Equipment Expo occurred in Escanaba again this year, and there was an amazing turnout! We also had a lot of fun talking to attendees and hosting a booth there. It usually comes to the UP only every two years, but it will be back in 2020 for the 75th anniversary! Can’t wait for that, and we hope to see you there.

- Spare time was also spent with many landowners, local consulting foresters, loggers and local mills, to help facilitate and implement timber harvesting as requested. I take great pride in being able to help forest landowners get in contact with interested parties who, in many cases, need to “bundle” their projects with nearby state, federal, and private harvesting occurring nearby. Please let me know if I can help you with something like this.

If you are a landowner, or know someone who is, and would like to learn more about the Forestry Assistance Program, or any other topic that I may be able to help with, please consider calling your District Forester to discuss your questions, goals and objectives.
This year has been a year of conservation and valued partnerships. In 2019, Congress passed the 2018 Farm Bill which provides support, certainty, and stability to our nation’s farmers, ranchers, and forest managers by enhancing farm support programs, improving crop insurance, maintaining disaster programs, and promoting and supporting voluntary conservation. We continue to offer voluntary conservation programs through the following Farm Bill programs:

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- Conservation Innovation Grants

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and our Conservation Stewardship Program continue to be our most successful programs here in Alger and Marquette Counties. In 2019, we processed and approved 75 new conservation agreements. The best management and conservation practices include but are not limited to:

- Forest Management Planning
- Forest Stand Improvement – Commercial Timber Harvest with Birds in Mind
- Early Successional Habitat Development
- Forest Trails
- Patch Openings for Wildlife and Structural Diversity
- Tree and Shrub Plantings for Wildlife
- Reforestation Projects
- Wildflower Plantings for Pollinators
- Seasonal High Tunnels

All of our conservation programs are voluntary and an application is required to be eligible for funding. Applications are supported by an approved conservation plan which will identify the appropriate conservation practices needed to address specific resource concerns and is considered the decision making tool for our customers. If you are interested in hearing more about our conservation programs and/or would like conservation assistance on your property, please feel free to contact me at (906) 226-8871 ext. 3070.
In 2016, The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) established the Urban Agriculture Conservation Program Initiative to “help increase technical assistance capacity for urban agriculture conservation projects”. In 2019, the Marquette County Conservation District was one of 20 districts across 14 states awarded funding to do just that. Around the time the grant was awarded, newly established land use ordinances in Marquette County provided residents the opportunity to implement urban agriculture practices at home. These practices included raising small livestock, building season extension structures, and backyard composting. Based on the new ordinances and on feedback received from resource concern surveys, MCCD organized four urban agriculture workshops during the 2019 growing season. Following is a summary of the workshops:

- Topics included: Backyard Mushroom Growing; Gardening with Season Extension; Rabbits, Chickens, and Composting in the City; and Native and Invasive Plants and Pollinators.
- Approximately 60 people attended the four workshops.
- Participants took home inoculated mushroom logs, season extension structure materials, countertop composting bins, soil test kits, native seed packets, and educational materials.
- Rain barrels made by a local artisan were raffled off to one participant of each workshop.

Thank you to all our partners who made this workshop series possible - Michigan State University Extension, Marquette Food Co-op, Upper Peninsula Food Exchange, and Marquette County!
Our field season went incredibly well, with two interns and four field technicians joining us this year. We had a water-based and land-based crew, with one team conducting inland lake surveys for aquatic invasive species, and the other working away at our battle against upland invaders. In total for 2019, we surveyed 13 inland lakes and treated 23.6 acres of invasives within Marquette County for private landowners, local non-profits, and on state and federal landscapes. We’re on the lookout for new invasions, including a project focused on hemlock woolly adelgid surveys. This forest pest is present in Michigan, though still only found in the lower peninsula. We’re hoping its spread is limited, as it would greatly diminish our hemlock population, hurting valuable U.P. ecosystems. Normally this is where I say that field season has wrapped, but we will continue winter surveys for the hemlock woolly adelgid, and sooner than we know it the snow will be gone again, and we’ll be set for another productive field season! Its been a great year, and I look forward to new projects working to manage invasive species in our area.
2019 was a great year for produce safety progress across the Upper Peninsula. I focused on community outreach, trying to spread the word on my services and availability across the UP. Here are some of my highlights from the year:

- Delivered the Michigan Produce Safety Risk Assessment on 16 U.P. farms
- Assisted U.P. farms in executing risk reduction practices, such as water testing, writing a produce safety plan, worker training protocols, compost and manure use, managing wildlife, record keeping, and more
- Attended/organized a total of 8 educational public events
- Authored 12 articles on produce safety for U.P. publications
- Taught in 5 Produce Safety Alliance Grower Trainings throughout the state
- Co-authored a successful National Association of Conservation Districts grant proposal to bring the Urban Agriculture grant to MCCD
- Taught basic produce safety concepts to 5th graders at Agri-palooza
- Attended 14 trainings - always striving to be a better Produce Safety Technician!

To learn more about assessing produce safety risks on your farm and to earn a produce safety certificate from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, contact your local Produce Safety Technician at Landen.mqtcondist@gmail.com or call (906) 251-3061
As a soil conservationist with the Marquette County Conservation District, I assist four Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) service centers (Marquette, Gladstone, Kingsford, and Stephenson) which in turn provides services to eight Upper Peninsula counties. I provide resource and conservation assistance to private landowners regarding forestry, wildlife habitat, and other related natural resource concerns. My main role is to assist local NRCS field offices in the implementation of Farm Bill programs resulting in federal financial assistance going to local producers to implement conservation practices through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP). Services provided include promoting programs, technical support, and plan writing assistance. This year I assisted with the implementation of 62 forest management plans and 22 other forestry related conservation practices through the EQIP program. Additionally, I worked heavily with the Gladstone NRCS Field Office with the processing of over 150 Conservation Stewardship Applications. This summer, I also had the opportunity to attend the USDA’s Conservation Planning Bootcamp in Lincoln Nebraska. The three-week training course covered current conservation planning policy, procedures and guidelines as outlined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Overall this past year has been busy and productive – I look forward to what the next year will hold!

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Improving Forest Health for Wildlife

Kayla Knoll, American Bird Conservancy Partner Biologist

This program is a tri-state effort across the Great Lakes region to improve young forest habitat. While the program is aimed at creating unique breeding habitat for a declining neotropical songbird known as the Golden-winged Warbler, its habitat also benefits 19 other at-risk species and popular game species such as the American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and white-tailed deer. Technical and financial assistance is available for interested landowners in 22 Michigan counties and Marquette County is designated as 1 of 5 priorities.
The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is a voluntary, non-regulatory, confidential program that is 100% FREE for farms and forest owners. Michigan is an agriculturally diverse state and Marquette county is no exception. Whether you own a small farm, a large farm, or just own some forest land this program is a good fit for all. Being MAEAP verified you are recognized in your community as a top steward of the land, you have regulatory assurances, and increased access to cost share and technical assistance. Many producers are proud of their accomplishments and display the MAEAP sign for their community to show that you are being a good steward of the land, but can also use your MAEAP verification as a promotional tool for your products. There are four categories of recognition: Cropping, Livestock, Farmstead, and Forestry, Wetland and Habitat. If you’re interested in a FREE assessment or would like to learn more about MAEAP, please contact Holly Moss, MAEAP Technician @ 906-428-1060 Ext 122

In 2019, the Marquette County Conservation District received funding from the Michigan DNR’s Wildlife Division for a sixth year to improve critical overwintering habitat for white tail deer. This year, the District restored 3.5 acres of recent logging and skid trails into a looped trail system designated for the foot traffic of hunters and trappers located on Weyerhaeuser’s property in Marquette County (T49N, R27W, Section 14 and 23). The parcels that were selected for the project are enrolled in the Michigan’s Commercial Forest Act and are therefore open to public foot access for hunting and trapping purposes. The parcels selected are also near identified Deer Wintering Complexes, are used for migration routes, and spring breakup foraging areas. MCCD spread wildlife seed purchased from Mel’s Feed Store that included Ryegrass, Alfalfa, Ladino Clover, Alsike Cover, Red Clover, White Clover, and Berseem Clover onto the trail. The naturalized seed that was planted will provide a critical and sustainable food source for winter and early spring. In the spring of 2020, volunteers from both MI United Conservation Clubs and Ruffed Grouse Society will plant 200 soft and hard producing shrubs onto the edges of trails and in nearby openings. Project partners included Michigan DNR Wildlife Division, U.P. Whitetails of Marquette, Ruffed Grouse Society, and Weyerhaeuser Inc.,
The strength of the Marquette County Conservation District depends upon our volunteers, our partners and you for support of our activities and events. Our appreciation is not adequate compensation for this valued treasure, but please accept these words as our gratitude for your continued support!
### Marquette County Conservation District Active Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Title</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Awarded</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry Assistance Program</td>
<td>MDARD</td>
<td>Private Land Forestry</td>
<td>$73,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Produce Safety Program</td>
<td>MDARD</td>
<td>Deliver MI Safe Food Risk Assessment Education Tool</td>
<td>$78,500.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRCS Landowner Technical Assistance in the Central Upper Peninsula</td>
<td>NFWF</td>
<td>Provide additional assistance and resources to NRCS field offices and FAP forester</td>
<td>$235,780.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program: Exhibit D Tier 1</td>
<td>MDNR</td>
<td>Employ full time L2L CISMA coordinator; allow employment of 2 field crew for 2019</td>
<td>$60,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Project</td>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>Non-native invasive species management within PWR service area</td>
<td>$30,448.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019 US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration</td>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>Hire 3 person field crew to survey and provide invasive treatment</td>
<td>$39,967.42</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018 US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration</td>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>Survey 44 inland lakes for aquatic non-native invasive species with a 2 person field crew</td>
<td>$39,615.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coastal Restoration in the City of Marquette</td>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>Plant native trees/shrubs on Lake Superior Shoreline to reduce water runoff</td>
<td>$51,451.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019 City of Marquette Wetland</td>
<td>City of MQT</td>
<td>Wetland Mitigation Monitoring, test plots, and invasive control</td>
<td>$10,309.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban Agriculture Conservation</td>
<td>NACD</td>
<td>Increase urban ag technical assistance to Marquette - host 4 workshops</td>
<td>$30,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Road Stream Crossing Inventory of Upper Escanaba Watershed - Sub contract</td>
<td>Trout Unlimited</td>
<td>Complete road stream crossing inventories to identify existing connectivity barriers for brook trout</td>
<td>$12,908.26</td>
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<td>WE Energies Purple Loosestrife</td>
<td>WE Energy</td>
<td>Partner with 3 CISMA entities to survey and treat purple loosestrife on the Michigamme river</td>
<td>$84,355.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life After Phragmites- Sub Contract</td>
<td>MDNR</td>
<td>Provide for the continuation of the management Phragmites</td>
<td>$37,139.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>UP Multi-CISMA HWA Project</td>
<td>MDNR</td>
<td>Survey hemlock trees for HWA in high priority sites</td>
<td>$7,065.00</td>
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<td>Restoration of Dead River Tributaries</td>
<td>MDNR</td>
<td>Restore riparian zone on Brickyard Creek and replace a perched culvert on Norwald Creek</td>
<td>$138,712.00</td>
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<td>Non-Native Invasive Plant Control and Public Outreach</td>
<td>USFS</td>
<td>Survey, monitor and treat invasive species on Forest Service Land and to engage to outreach events</td>
<td>$25,000.00</td>
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<td>McDHPI</td>
<td>MDNR</td>
<td>Improve critical deer wintering habitat in Marquette County</td>
<td>$8,223.39</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$962,475.43</strong></td>
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### 2019 Tree & Shrub Sale Recap

Thanks to our conservation district supporters, we saw another great tree sale in 2019. The annual sale is our largest fundraising event with all proceeds going back to conservation district programs. As always, thank you to the Marquette Board of Light & Power for their continued support, and to our tireless volunteers who continue to make this event seem easier and more fun-filled each year! Look for the 2020 tree sale catalog to come in February on our website, at partner locations around the county, and in your mailboxes. It will feature a variety of native conifer and deciduous trees and shrubs, groundcovers, and fruit trees and berries. We have again partnered with Michigan nurseries that propagate native plants beneficial to pollinators. If you are not on our mailing list to receive a catalog and wish to be, please give us a call or send us an email. The staff and board of directors at the Marquette County Conservation District would like to thank the customers and volunteers who support our tree sale and we look forward to seeing you again next year!

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We are an equal opportunity employer and program provider.  
**Our mission is to provide for the conservation and restoration of resources in Marquette County through forestry and wildlife practices, watershed management, and education.**