



BARRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL REPORT 2018

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Fred Flower (Chair)

Fred is a lifelong sportsman who has become very active in the local chapter of QDMA, which has given him new insight on habitat and how it relates to wildlife and quality of life for us all.



Bill Sowle (Secretary)

Bill is a sales representative for a large technology company. In his spare time he runs a small beef farm and supports conservation practices and NRCS programs.



Mark Bishop (Treasurer)

Mark grew up in Calhoun County and is recently retired from a career as a DNR public land manager. His background includes extensive experience with habitat improvement and restoration projects.



George Cullers

George served on the MUCC board of directors for over 15 years and the Michigan Trappers Association for 25 years. He founded the Baltimore Twp Pheasant Co-op and the Barry County Outdoor Recreation Youth Day.



Scott Atkinson

Scott is a retired Police Officer from the City of Taylor and run his own businesses for energy rating and property inspections. Scott has served on many boards and has been very involved in the local conservation community

BCD STAFF



Sarah Nelson

Executive Director

Sarah has served in the Peace Corps and has also worked for the USFS. She likes tackling the challenges of conservation education, restoration, and finding feasible conservation options for everyone.



Ben Savoie

District Forester

Ben has experience in community organizations and forestry field work. He enjoys involving the community in ecological restoration and improving public knowledge on conservation management.



David Comeau

Watershed Coordinator

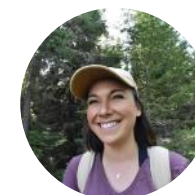
David has a background in water resources management. He seeks to educate landowners on the importance of water quality and empower them to take action locally.



Fallon Januska

BCK CISMA Coordinator

Fallon has participated in numerous invasive species projects. She looks forward to assisting the community in invasive species management through education and research.



Victoria Frailey

MAEAP Technician

Tori has a background in environmental education and wildlife fieldwork. She studied abroad in South Africa and enjoys communicating with others about conservation and the environment.

2019 BOARD SCHEDULE

The BCD Board meets at 8 am on the first Wednesday of the month at the Barry 911 Dispatch Center, 2600 Nashville Rd, Hastings, MI, **unless otherwise noted:**

***January 9, 2019**– 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

February 6, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

***February 22**– 5:30 pm—Annual Meeting, Walldorff Ballroom, Hastings

March 6, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

April 3, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

May 1, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

June 5, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

July 3, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

August 7, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

September 4, 2019- 8:00 am, Central Dispatch

*Note different date, time, and/or location

2019 BOARD CANDIDATE

SCOTT ATKINSON



Scott and his wife own 16 wooded acres on Little Cedar Lake in Hope Township, where they built their Net-Zero Energy home.

Scott is a retired Police Officer from the City of Taylor and has worked for the Police Officers Association of Michigan and served on the City of Taylor Police and Fire Pension Board. He also started his own Energy Rating and Auditing business in Southeast Michigan to help improve the energy efficiencies of both new and existing homes.

Currently Scott works as an independent contractor doing insurance related property inspections in Barry and Calhoun Co.

Scott has been a long time supporter of Pierce Cedar Creek Institute and volunteer for Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy. He has recently been involved with the Conservation District's Forestry Assistance Program and is in the process of becoming MAEAP verified. While working on improving and protecting the resources of his property, Scott feels he has received outstanding support from a wide spectrum of the local conservation community. Serving on the Conservation District board is a way for him to give back to that community.

2019 CONSERVATION DISTRICT EVENTS

CHECK OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MORE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

February 5— 1-3pm— BCK CISMA Steering Committee Mtg— Kellogg Bird Sanctuary

February 20— 6-8pm— BCK CISMA at Science Night— Hastings Library

February 22— 7 pm Faces of Conservation— Walldorff Ballroom, Hastings

March 2— BCD Booth at Quiet Waters Symposium— East Lansing

March 3- "Ugly Conservation" lunch and learn— Pierce Cedar Creek Institute

March 23— 10am-3pm Seed planting at Science Festival- Pierce Cedar Creek Institute

April 20— 9am tree wrapping volunteer work day— Charlton Park

April 22— 9am tree wrapping volunteer work day— Charlton Park

April 26— 9am-5pm- Spring Tree and Habitat Sale—Charlton Park

April 27- 9am-noon- Spring Tree and Habitat Sale—Charlton Park

May 18— Natural Shoreline workshop— Charlton Park

Early June- Crandell Park Water Fest— Crandell Park, Charlotte

September 7— 10am-3pm— Youth Day— Charlton Park

OUR MISSION

To promote responsible natural resource and land-use management for present and future generations

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FORESTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (FAP)

Want Better Woods? Forest Management Can Help

By Ben Savoie, District Forester

Every woodland is unique, which makes forest management complicated, interesting, and ultimately very rewarding. The features of a forest, such as the geography, soil type, moisture levels, and present plant communities, can tell us a lot about what is going on in the woods. Land use and management history are also important factors in the current state of a woodland. Just as the woods can vary, so can what each landowner hopes to get out of a forest. You may be interested in valuable timber, wildlife habitat, or just the beauty of nature. When deciding how to manage forests, we must keep in mind both the unique characteristics of the land and the landowner's goals, to reach the best possible outcomes.

Often forest landowners decide to "let nature take its course." This may work in places where disturbance is historically rare and not very severe, but most of Barry County's forests have a different history. Prior to European settlement in the 1800s, low intensity fires were intentionally set frequently, shaping the natural plant communities in Southwest Michigan. Since farms and towns sprung up, these prescribed fires have been all but eliminated, forests have been fragmented, and many problematic invasive species have been introduced. To reach a desired outcome, even if that is just to keep the forest as it is, active management is

generally required.

Once you have a goal in mind, the next step is figuring out which forest management practices will help you reach that goal. While there are some management practices to avoid, there are many techniques which can be beneficial to the long-term health of your woods. Think of all these management practices like the many different tools in a toolbox. Depending on what you hope to build and what you are starting with, you will need to choose the right combination of tools for your project.

For example, there is a much-maligned harvesting technique known as clear-cutting. It is a tool that foresters may use for species of trees that benefit from that kind of disturbance, such as quick growing aspen stand. But clearcutting often looks bad and has been used poorly in the past, giving it a bad name. Timber stand improvement is a tool commonly used to help improve the health of the forest, while also saving the best trees for harvest later. It may be easy to sell your best trees first for a quick dollar, but waiting and harvesting a properly managed stand later can lead to a greater long-term payoff and can keep the forest healthy for longer. If you are unsure about certain management practices, it is important to talk to a qualified forester and see if a given practice is right for you.



**MICHIGAN
FORESTRY
Assistance Program**

2018 FAP STATS

Allegan, Barry, and Ottawa Counties

104 landowner site visits

62 professional referrals

560 acres enrolled in QFP

13 forestry outreach events conducted

15 forestry education media publications

\$98,805 estimated economic impact

Active forest management is key to improving and protecting the health of this county's forests for generations to come, and the conservation toolbox is full of great management tools to help us get there. If you are interested in learning more about forest management or would like assistance in finding a consulting forester in your area, give District Forester Ben Savoie a call at 269-908-4134, email at ben.savoie@macd.org, or stop in at 1611 S. Hanover St. in Hastings, Suite 105.

Forest Pests You Should Know



Oak Wilt— In Barry County!

Red and black oaks are most vulnerable. Symptoms include rapid summer leaf die-off. Oak wilt can be spread through root grafts or spores carried by insects. Cutting live, infected trees quickens the spread of the disease. Please do not cut or trim oaks April through September. If an oak is wounded, apply tree wound or latex-based paint immediately. Do not move firewood.



Beech Bark Disease (BBD)— not yet found in Barry County, but widespread in Michigan

Beech bark disease (BBD) is caused by both a sap-feeding scale insect and a fungus. American beech trees are first infested with beech scale. Scale feeding allows infection by the *Neonectria* fungus. The fungus kills the wood, blocking the flow of sap. Don't move beech firewood or logs from infested areas to uninfested areas. Controlling the natural spread of BBD is not feasible because both the scale and fungus are moved by animals and the wind. Report new finds.



Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB)— not yet found in Michigan

Maple trees are the main target of ALB attack, but this hungry critter can cause serious damage to over a dozen Michigan native tree species. Adults are glossy black with irregular white spots on its wing covers. Body lengths range in size from $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{4}$ ". The antennae are black with blue bands and are as long as the body in females and longer in males, giving it the "longhorned" moniker. Visit mi.gov/alb for more information.



Hemlock Woolly Adelgid— (HWA) not found in Barry County, but nearby

HWA was recently detected in four Southwest Michigan counties. An internal quarantine has been established that regulates the movement of hemlock from these four counties. Barry County does not have many naturally occurring hemlock, but landowners with hemlock should be on the lookout. An infestation is generally recognized by white, waxy material at the base of hemlock needles. Visit mi.gov/hwa for more information.

BCK CISMA

A CISMA is a partnership of local organizations, agencies, businesses, and citizens sharing resources and expertise to effectively manage invasive species. BCK CISMA serves Barry, Calhoun, and Kalamazoo counties.

New watchlist species found in Calhoun County

By Fallon Januska, BCK CISMA Coordinator

Parrot Feather is an aquatic invasive that is native to South America, which explains its other common name- Brazilian watermilfoil. It was once commonly sold for water gardens and aquariums, but it is now prohibited in Michigan.

Parrot Feather is bright blue-green in color and has densely whorled leaves. The rooted stems are horizontal except for the last few inches, which are upright. This plant can grow completely

underwater or on land next to or in lakes, ponds and slow-moving waters. Only female plants exist in the United States, so all new growth is formed by plant fragmentation.

Like many invasive species, Parrot Feather threatens native aquatic species through competition. Dense mats will take over an area, providing habitat for mosquito larvae and impeding boats.

In the fall of 2018, the first instance of this invader in the BCK CISMA was



detected. The infestation was found in a backyard in Homer, in Calhoun County. Prior to that, only three infestations had been found around the state since 2013. The landowner was unaware of how the plant got there, though often Parrot

Feather is planted as an ornamental or can grow in an area after being dumped out of an aquarium. It could also spread via fragments not cleaned from a boat, which is just one more reason it is so important to Clean, Drain, and Dry all boats thoroughly before leaving a

launch site.

Upon discovery of this infestation, BCK CISMA contacted the MDEQ's Aquatic Nuisance Control Program to work on a management plan for the watchlist species. Homeowners who believe they may have Parrot Feather or other aquatic Watchlist species can contact BCK CISMA Coordinator Fallon Januska at 269.908.4136 or MDEQ at DEQ-WRD-ANC@michigan.gov or 517.284.5593.

Spotlight on: BCK CISMA Steering Committee

The BCK CISMA Steering Committee are voting members that are a subset of all CISMA partners and collaborative groups. Each county in the service area is represented by three Steering Committee members to ensure diversity and experience guides the decision making process. While all partners are invited to the quarterly Steering Committee meetings to guide the direction of the BCK CISMA and provide oversight for BCK CISMA staff, the nine Steering Committee members have the deciding vote.

2019 Steering Committee Goals

Update strategic plan
Establish survey and treatment priority protocols
Revise mission statement



2018 BCK CISMA STATS

93 CISMA event/workshop participants

103 acres surveyed

129 sites treated

3 steering committee meetings

Michigan Invasive Species Watchlist- be on the lookout and report!



Spotted Lantern Fly (SLF) Not yet found in Michigan

The spotted lanternfly is an invasive insect with distinctive spotted wings. It damages plants by feeding on the sap which weakens the plant and attracts mold and other insects. The eggs of the SLF look like dried mud, so be sure to clean off all equipment to prevent spread. You can also remove its attraction to the area by removing the common invasive Tree of Heaven, which is the SLF's preferred host.



Parrot Feather Watermilfoil Found in BCK CISMA!

Parrot feather has spikes of stiff, feathery leaves that grow in whorls of 4 -6. It has bright green upper stems that emerge up to one foot above water and small inconspicuous white flowers where leaves attach to the section of stem above water.



Red Swamp Crayfish Found in BCK CISMA!

Red Swamp Crayfish have dark red color with bright red raised spots - they look like small lobsters. They can live in a variety of permanent freshwater habitats. They feed heavily on snails, fish, amphibians, and plants. An infestation found in Vicksburg (Kalamazoo County) in 2017 is being monitored and managed collaboratively by DNR Fisheries, DEQ, Michigan State University, and BCK CISMA.



Chinese Yam Found in BCK CISMA!

Chinese Yam has slender vines that spiral counterclockwise and pointed, heart-shaped leaves that are often indented on the sides. The bulbils or air tubers are present from June to September and resemble very small potatoes. It has small, white or greenish-yellow flowers that smell like cinnamon.

THORNAPPLE RIVER NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION REDUCTION PROJECT

In 2017, the Barry Conservation District was awarded a grant through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to fund implementation of the Thornapple River Watershed Management Plan. The GLRI grant provides the funding for the Conservation District to educate the public on the importance of water quality and help landowners find new ways to manage their land that benefit them as well as protect our water resources. Watershed Coordinator David Comeau will help landowners by providing planning assistance and funding for agricultural conservation practices and septic maintenance.

Given the rural nature of Barry County, the main focuses of the grant are agriculture and on-site waste water treatment (septic systems). On the land

management side, BCD has funds available to help farmers and landowners implement practices such as filter strips, cattle fencing along streams, and planting of cover crops. BCD is also offering funding to cover voluntary septic system inspections to look for failing septic systems as well as a cost-share option to replace or repair failing septic systems.

The project scope covers over 57,000 acres in three of the most impaired sub-watersheds in the Thornapple River watershed: Mud Creek, Fish Creek, and Milbourn Drain. This project aims to reduce nutrient, sediment and E. coli runoff into the streams in these subwatersheds. With your continued support, we hope to work together with the community to ensure clean water for many generations to come.

2018 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

13 workshops
17 farm site visits
475 acres cover crops planted
3 septic inspections and replacements
4 classrooms conducting water monitoring
2,488 Educational mailers
11 Newspaper articles

NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTANTS KEPT OUT OF THE THORNAPPLE TO-DATE BY THIS PROGRAM:

27 tons of sediment
2,168 lbs of nitrogen
454 lbs of phosphorous

Community steps up to address septic issues, improve water quality

David Comeau, Watershed Coordinator

Grant projects and cost share programs are all well and good, but it takes a village to effect sustainable results. That is to say, real change hinges on the willingness of a community to come together, rethink the status quo, and take action. The Thornapple septic cost share program wouldn't be what it is without our wonderful homeowners.

One such homeowner, Chris Tossava, submitted the program's very first application for septic assistance this past summer. He had heard about the program from a family member and knew he had a septic problem. What he didn't yet know was how big of a project and problem he was taking on.

Tossava noticed some issues with his system and figured it needed to be pumped, which he had done. Shortly after pumping, he began having problems again. Depending upon size and use, a septic tank should only need to be pumped every two to three years, so Chris knew something was amiss. Tossava took action right away, giving Watershed Coordinator David a call to see if the Thornapple Septic Assistance program could help in his area. After confirming

that he was in one of the priority watersheds and met the criteria of the program, Chris chose to set up an inspection with the Health Department. The results

showed that his drain field had failed, and the soil conditions were poor. The Tossavas would need a new system as soon as possible, and a traditional system was not going to cut it. Given their soil conditions, the new system would need to be a low-pressure dose



The new septic system installed at the Tossava residence is having a great impact, reducing nonpoint source pollution in the Thornapple Watershed.

system, also commonly called a mound system.

After receiving his new system permit from the health department, Chris contacted a certified installer of his choice and set up the replacement. The price tag for low dose pressure systems can be a bit steep, and the \$2500 maximum cost share was a small help, but Tossava knew he had to fix the problem for the health and safety of his

family, his community, and all of our water resources. So, the project moved forward, and a new system was installed and is functioning perfectly for the homeowner and his family. Chris is proud of the positive changes he has made and notes that "the system is working great, it changed our lives, one of the best investments ever."

And that's just what Watershed Coordinator David likes to hear, "That is why I work in this field. It is extremely rewarding to help people be good stewards of their natural resources, and even more rewarding seeing them take action to fix an issue and do the right thing by the environment even when it may be expensive or challenging."

The very first project of the Thornapple Septic Assistance program was a win-win for us all, but it could not have happened without great community members stepping up. Not only was it a rewarding experience for both homeowner and the Conservation District, but it also helped mitigate part of a big water quality problem

in a high-priority watershed. The replacement of just this one failed system means nine pounds less phosphorous, twenty six pounds less nitrogen, 204 pounds less total suspended solids, and 369 pounds less biochemical oxygen demand in the Thornapple **each year**. Imagine the cumulative impacts if each of the estimated over 10,000 failing systems in the Thornapple Watershed were replaced!

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

Verification Program Lets Growers Show Off Their Stewardship: A good sign for Michigan growers

Excerpted from an article of the same name by Leslie Mertz, from *Good Fruit Grower*, December 27, 2017

Northwest Michigan cherry grower Jeff Send admits he was a “hard egg to crack” when a state technician first approached him about going through the process to get his nearly 1,000-acre Cherry Lane Farms environmentally verified.

“I didn’t want a damn thing to do with it, because I didn’t want anybody on my property. I didn’t want anyone seeing what we were doing or what was behind that (fuel) tank or in that chemical building. I didn’t want anybody seeing any of this,” he recalled. His wife, Nita, who co-owns the farm with him, said he needed a good deal of convincing before finally relenting. Technician Dan Busby with the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, also known as MAEAP, sold him on the idea by emphasizing that it was voluntary and confidential.

“It wasn’t the government coming to look for problems and issue a fine or penalty,” she said. “This is proactive. It is trying to prevent problems, and it just makes sense.”

She looked out toward a blue and green sign posted at the entrance to the orchard and said, “We’re proud of our sign.” In big letters, it reads, “This Farm is Environmentally Verified.” MAEAP (pronounced “meep”) ensures that Michigan farmers are engaging in cost-effective pollution prevention practices and working to comply with state and federal environmental regulations.

In other words, according to MAEAP director Joe Kelpinski, “It’s an environmental check that lets a farm know where they’re at and how to find

solutions to do it better. We essentially act as their environmental consultants.” Funding for MAEAP primarily consists of fees collected from the sale of pesticides and fertilizers.

The process to become verified has three phases, the first being an overview of the program. Then, a MAEAP technician visits the site and gathers information, using a set of tools to assess various practices, such as how pesticides, herbicides and petroleum products are stored, or how waste is managed. The technician then sits down with the farmer and comes up with an action plan.

“In going through the list, we would constantly come across things where, gee, we had never thought about that,” Nita Send said. “So, it’s not like farmers are intentionally trying to do the wrong thing; it’s just that it hasn’t been specifically pointed out and there hasn’t been anybody that you trusted to ask.”

The Farm Bureau offers a reduction in the pollution liability portion of its coverage, which ends up being a fair amount, though it’s the only insurer on record to do so, said Busby, who is now

a MAEAP verifier. From the standpoint of the agriculture industry, MAEAP verifications are an excellent way to showcase farmers as environmental stewards, Busby said. Additionally, growers are finding that the MAEAP process helps to prepare them for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP) audits that are designed to minimize food safety hazards.

For the Sends, the MAEAP process just seemed like the right thing to do. “Jeff’s grandpa originally bought this farm 99 years ago, our daughter runs the receiving station, her husband works on the farm, and their kids, who are only 11 and 4, also help out. We have a responsibility to all five generations to take care of the land and water,” Nita Send said.

“And those of us who have been verified are always encouraging other growers to get verified,” she said. “You really do want one of these signs on your farm.”



2018 MAEAP STATS
BARRY AND IONIA COUNTIES
48 farm visits
31 MAEAP verifications

FARMERS: SAVE MONEY, REDUCE USE OF COMMERCIAL FERTILIZERS, AND PROTECT WATERWAYS

The Michigan EnviroImpact tool is a free web tool that uses National Weather Service information about precipitation, soil moisture and temperature, and landscape characteristics to help farmers plan effective short-term manure application.

The tool shows daily nutrient runoff risk across Michigan and allows users to receive text or email alerts for runoff risks.

“Farmers want to prove that we are sustainable and good stewards of the land. The MI EnviroImpact tool helps us, along with the other tools we have, with nutrient management.”

Brent Wilson
Wilson Centennial Farm

Create an account, watch video tutorials, and learn more at: www.enviroimpact.iwr.msu.edu

BARRY COUNTY WILDLIFE HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Building a home for Henslow's

Excerpted from an article of the same name by Sarah Nelson, from the *Jack Pine Warbler*, Spring 2018

Major restoration efforts are underway at the Michigan Audubon Otis Farm Sanctuary in Hastings. BCD began work in October 2017 to restore 153 acres of wildlife habitat, including 106 acres at Otis.

Healthy habitat fosters healthy avian populations, which is great for birds and birders alike. In this case, good habitat starts with diverse native plant communities for food, nesting, and cover. The work at Otis includes creating or restoring 32 acres of fen, 48 acres of tallgrass prairie and cool season grassland, 19 acres of oak savanna, and 7 acres of oak forest.

Development, invasive species, intensive agriculture, unsustainable logging, and fire suppression or ending prescribed burning are just some of the past practices that have led to conservation and restoration challenges today. Land-use practices post-European settlement led to the loss of over 99% of both native prairies and savannas in the Midwest.

"It has been well-documented that the populations of many bird species are in

decline, some in serious decline. One of the reasons cited for the decline is the lack of suitable habitat. There are many ongoing projects already in progress to develop more high quality habitats, but the need for more exists. The current habitat improvement projects at Otis Farm Sanctuary will help fulfill this crucial need," explained Jack Wykoff, a top birder in Barry County.

Given the history of some parcels of land, a hands-off approach isn't always the best option. Work needed over the next two years includes non-native and undesirable tree species removal, invasive species management, prescribed burns, native seed planting, and native tree planting. Removing trees and shrubs in grassland habitat is especially important for grassland birds like the Henslow's Sparrow, which has been seen at Otis for many years. Grassland birds require large tracts of contiguous open space because trees can serve as perches for predators like hawks, so grassland birds are less likely to nest where the trees are too close.

This project was made possible by support from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources through the Wildlife Habitat Grant Program (WHGP).

"This is a great example of the type of project the DNR is interested in, because of the strong collaborative relationships and broad wildlife benefits," said Clay Buchanan, WHGP coordinator for the Wildlife Division. "The project partners have done a great job of navigating through the project complexities of different habitat restoration needs towards the end goal of great wildlife habitat."

Since 2013, the Wildlife Habitat Grant Program has funded over \$3.7 million in wildlife habitat work. The grants are funded by a portion of hunting and fishing licenses that are sold each year. The work done by these grant projects benefits everyone, so thank a hunter for helping to protect our natural spaces. Better yet, consider buying a license yourself, even if you don't hunt!

Oak Savanna Restoration Underway on the Institute's Little Grand Canyon Property

Excerpted from an article of the same name by Corey Lucas, from *Naturally Speaking*, December 2017 - February 2018

Pierce Cedar Creek Institute's 50 acre Little Grand Canyon parcel, located just north of Cloverdale Road on South Broadway Street, is unique in that it boasts a ravine in excess of seventy five feet in depth. The deep ravine's undevelopable terrain has preserved it in its natural state; with minimal human disturbance, its plant diversity and abundance remain high.

However, traditional agricultural practices that have occurred on the 24 acre tillable portion of the property over the decades threaten the quality and function of this unique ecosystem.

In October 2017 the Barry Conservation District and Pierce Cedar Creek Institute partnered on a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Habitat Grant, which provides funding to restore the field to an oak savanna. The grant also provides habitat improvements on two other sites within Barry County.

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The goals of the Little Grand Canyon oak savanna restoration

are to reduce or eliminate erosion of the upland areas, reduce pesticide use and runoff, increase habitat for a variety of wildlife species, and increase recreational opportunities for the public. To accomplish these goals the Institute will be planting a diverse mix of native plant species that will reduce erosion by slowing storm water surface runoff through the capture and retention of water in the native plant's deep root systems. Minimal pesticides will be used to control invasive plant species on the project, as much of the management work will be done mechanically using Institute staff and volunteers, thus greatly reducing threats to the connected streams from pesticide runoff. Introducing mast-producing oak species into the open uplands of the parcel will aid in achieving the project's management goals, as the presence of these trees has multiple benefits. The light scattering effects of their canopy provides shade-loving and shade tolerant plants the proper conditions to grow, which improves plant di-

versity. Oaks also contribute important food sources (acorns) and habitat for a variety of wildlife species including deer, wild turkeys, barred owls, wood ducks, and other cavity nesting birds.

In addition to habitat restoration, the Institute's stewardship staff also plans to develop a trail system in the spring of 2019 to allow for public access on the property, which is currently closed to the public without permission. Opening up the Little Grand Canyon will be a benefit to the Institute's visitors because it has long been a desirable destination for outdoor enthusiasts, especially bird watchers and hikers. Additionally, partnerships with other recreational groups are being developed to provide opportunities for mentored and disabled veteran hunts to occur on the Little Grand Canyon property.

For more information on the restoration projects or to learn about how you can get involved, please contact Stewardship Manager Corey Lucas at (269) 721-4198.

YOUTH DAY

Youth Day tells kids: Go outside and play!

Excerpted from an article of the same name by Tanett Hodge, Staff Writer, from the *Hastings Reminder*, September 1, 2018

Compared to a generation ago, more able-bodied adults and children are spending a lot more time indoors. According to the Washington Post, the average American child spends five to eight hours a day in front of a digital screen, often at the expense of unstructured play outdoors.

It's a concern that Barry Conservation District shares with more than two dozen local outdoor enthusiast organizations. So, they're trying to do something about it: They're offering a great opportunity for folks to step outside during the annual Outdoor Recreation Youth Day at Charlton Park. It is a free day of fun where people get hands-on experience in many different outdoor activities. Dozens of activities will be led by local experts. If an adult or child finds one they like, he or she will be able to connect directly with the folks who can help continue their participation in that activity throughout the year.

For many people locally, outdoorsmanship is like a fiber woven into the cloth of what it means to be from Barry County. Generations past reveled in the treasures of the land and water. Fifty years ago, one would have been hard-pressed to find a boy whose family hadn't taught him to hunt, fish, canoe, or camp. All that time spent outdoors together benefitted children and adults alike, cemented strong family ties, and fostered a

genuine appreciation for the beauty of nature. Tony Heath, a local hunter, archer and member of the Quality Deer Management Association, grew up in the Hastings area and has fond childhood memories of time spent outdoors with family. "Originally, for me, I would go hunting with my grandfather and run beagles at field trials," Heath said. "I started squirrel hunting and then moved on to birds and big game. "It gave me a real love for the outdoors." Heath is not alone in his experiences. What he describes was once the quintessential Barry County boyhood, but far fewer children have that knowledge handed down today. "It was a lifestyle - it was what we did every fall," he said. "Me and my buddies went hunting together after school. We looked forward to it, and putting food on the table was a benefit." Hunting continues to be a major part of Heath's lifestyle. He works hard through the harvest and then takes a couple of months off for hunting every year. "When I go hunting, I don't think of anything else. It's like my reset button from the world. "I love to be in the woods in the morning and watch them come alive as all the animals wake up. And then at night you get to see them all go to bed." Heath, like many outdoorsmen, is concerned about the notable drop in recruitment

for hunting and other outdoor sports. "Each generation is getting set back further and further from the outdoor sports - all of them. Hunting, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, archery, and others." Outdoor enthusiasts like Heath say that Barry County is fortunate to have such beautiful natural resources and so many people who care about them. Now it is up to the adults today to be active - and make sure their children are active - and to take advantage of the many opportunities in the area to be outside and stay active.

Families can reap the benefits of spending time outdoors by simply being more intentional in their efforts to be active. Taking time to learn about and explore local wildlife by using the resources available is a positive step in the healthy direction. A quick stop at a local park on the way home from somewhere is always exciting. Fishing in a nearby stream or having a picnic makes memories in addition to creating quality time for family members.

Fifth annual Youth Day hits the mark

By Tanett Hodge, Staff Writer, from the *Hastings Reminder*, September 15, 2018

Target shooting, straw bale throwing, metal detecting, stilt walking, fossil making and much more brought Charlton Park to life Saturday at the fifth annual Outdoor Youth Day.

Despite the chilly weather, 797 children flowed through the registration line, received free backpacks and information, and ventured on to explore more than two dozen types of outdoor activities.

Barry Conservation District spearheaded the event, with major contributions from the Gun Lake Tribe, Lake Trust Credit Union, Pheasants Forever, and the Barry County branch of the Quality Deer Management Association. Through hands-on games, exhibits, demonstrations and experiences, the day offered a mix of opportunities to explore and enjoy the outdoors.

"It's a little bit of connection to both nature and each other that we could all use more of," Barry Conservation District

director Sarah Nelson said.

The Boy Scouts of America sponsored several activities including stilt walking, rope making, polish snowshoeing, koy tying, and setting off Alka Seltzer rockets.

Barry County Agriculture Promotion Board held a bale toss, QDMA gave the children a chance to try their hands at archery, and Barry County Community Mental Health Authority and Substance Abuse Task Force led the children in making their own fossils.

Other activities included forestry, trap shooting with BBs, a .22 shoot, hiking, kids yoga, rock wall climbing, birdwatching, canoeing, trapping and lessons on how to throw an ancient weapon called an atlatl.

Sled dog and pointing dog demonstrations ensued, hunter safety was discussed, wildlife education abounded, and the ecology of the Thornapple River



Kids explore skulls and scat at the 2018 Youth Day

water was explored by little hands. The Barry County B. Bus showed up and provided lawn games and opportunities to read outdoors.

Overall, the day was filled with action and learning, and children and their families enjoyed being outdoors. Kids were allowed to experience outdoor recreation and gain an appreciation for the beauty around them, which was the hope of George and the late Donna Cullers, the founders of this special day.

Because of 29 sponsors, many volunteers and wonderful community response, another Outdoor Youth Day has successfully hit the target.

HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM (HAP)

Landowners needed to join Hunting Access Program, help fight deer disease

By Monique Ferris, Michigan Department of Natural Resources

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is asking landowners to help fight deer diseases like chronic wasting disease and bovine tuberculosis by opening their private property to hunters in 2018. The DNR's Hunting Access Program currently is accepting applications in the northern Lower Peninsula and five counties in the southern Lower Peninsula. Landowners should have at least 40 acres of land with some wildlife habitat, such as forest or brush, to apply.

Michigan is home to one of the nation's largest and longest-running dedicated private-land public-access programs. Since 1977, the Hunting Access Program has ensured landowners make the most of their property by allowing hunters to access private land for hunting.

HAP-eligible counties in the northern Lower Peninsula include Alcona, Alpena, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Cheboygan, Emmet, Charlevoix, Antrim and Presque Isle. For those with property in the Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency or Oscoda TB region (Deer Management Unit 452), there are additional incentives for enrollment.

The five eligible HAP counties in the southern Lower Peninsula are Ionia, Kent,

Montcalm, Newaygo and Mecosta. Some benefits to landowners include: An annual payment based on acres of land enrolled, type of land cover, and type of hunting landowners choose to allow. Better management of wildlife on the property.

The opportunity to promote and support Michigan's rich hunting heritage. Liability protection, through Public Act 451, for landowners enrolled in HAP. Flexible options for hunting types allowed on the property and the maximum number of hunters on the property at a time, as well as the option to allow youth and apprentice hunting exclusively.

"You can help improve wildlife population management, support the local economy, reduce wildlife conflicts, and get paid to do it," said DNR Hunting Access Program coordinator Monique Ferris.

There are no extra costs for hunters to use HAP lands, but they are responsible for reviewing information for the land they plan to hunt (available online), checking in at the property before each day of hunting and respecting the landowners' private property.

Most counties have local conservation district staff available to assist with enrolling. Interested landowners are asked to contact their local conservation district to learn what they could earn on their land.

For more information on enrollment, visit michigan.gov/hap.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. For more information, go to www.michigan.gov/dnr.

The Hunting Access Program in Barry County

Looking for some quality HAP land to hunt? Look no further than the Keech farm right here in Barry County! This 69 acre parcel features cropland, wetland, and forestland to keep your hunt productive and interesting. For more information, visit Mi-HUNT online or take a look at the site yourself at 6344 Bivens Rd, Nashville. This lovely site is open to all hunting and can take up to six hunters at a time.

GEAR UP FOR SPRING TREE AND HABITAT PLANTING WITH THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT!

Despite the discouraging weather, spring really is just around the corner! Brighten up these dreary winter months with thoughts of fresh foliage and flowers. Now is a great time to plan your next planting project so you are ready to go when the spring sun starts shining. Native trees and shrubs are a great part of any planting project and have a multitude of benefits. Barry Conservation District can help meet your planting goals through the Spring Tree Sale, which will include more habitat supplies and partners than ever this year!

Trees and shrubs provide a wide variety of backyard benefits. Oaks, hickories, maples and other large broadleaf trees planted on the south side of your home can provide relieving shade in summer and allow the winter sun to furnish warmth. Conifers mixed with tall and medium shrubs provide a privacy screen.

A mixture of deciduous plants (whose leaves drop in fall) and

evergreens (whose needles stay on year-round) is highly effective for creating shade, windbreaks, and visual barriers. Locate them on the windward side of your home and plant them a distance from your home of three to four times the mature height of the tallest plant. In other words, if your tallest tree is 50 feet, plant the windbreak 150 to 200 feet from your home.

Trees and shrubs also add visual interest through the variety of their shapes, foliage, spring flowers and fall color. Medium and short shrubs mixed with perennial flowering plants can furnish color and serve as attractive foundation plantings around the base of your home. This mix can also serve as a border around trees, fences and other structures. These plantings reduce the size of your lawn, which saves you time and money as you will not need as much mowing, fertilizers or pesticides. All these great additions to your yard can also add to your overall property value.

Trees and shrubs are also an integral part of good wildlife habitat on any type of property. Food production and cover are the two most important values that trees and shrubs have for wildlife. Both of these habitat components are critical during all months, so opt for a variety of native plants and shrubs that provide different benefits to different wildlife throughout the year.

Trees and shrubs provide pollen and nectar in the spring and throughout the summer. Butterflies, moths and bees especially rely on these trees and shrubs at these times as they play an important role for pollinating insects. Basswood and maple, for example, are key pollen sources in early spring. Crabapple, hawthorn, dogwoods, and nannyberry have beautiful springtime flowers that also provide pollen sources. Birches, aspens, willow, hackberry, cherries and oaks also provide important food habitat for butterflies and caterpillars.

TREE AND HABITAT SALE CONT'D

Plantings that provide food in summer help juvenile birds as well as early migrants to develop early winter energy reserves. Wild plum, serviceberry, hazelnut, and the cherry species (choke, nanking, and pin) all provide important late-summer foods. The dogwoods (red-osier, silky, and gray), hawthorn, crabapple, nannyberry and arrowwood are all shrubs that provide valuable fall fruits. Hard mast (acorn and nut) producing trees such as oak, hickory, butternut and black walnut are also key fall foods for wildlife.

Shrubs and trees must have persistent fruits to have winter value. The better winter fruits are not palatable earlier in the year. Winter thaws and cold weather may make them more desirable to wildlife later in the season. Black chokecherry, American crabapple, staghorn sumac, hawthorn, nannyberry and highbush cranberry all have persistent winter fruits. Maple, white pine and white cedar are important sources of winter browse for deer and rabbits.

Many of these species provide cover for wildlife. Evergreens are important sources of thermal and nesting cover for many species, especially songbirds. Red and white cedar, white and black spruce, and white pine provide crucial winter cover. All native trees and shrubs can provide nesting cover for some type of songbird, but plants that offer high quality nesting cover include native hawthorns, cedars, crabapples, dogwoods and spruces. Cavity-

producing trees such as older beech and white oak provide homes for squirrels, screech owls, wood ducks and many songbirds. Therefore, dead and dying trees (snags) should be kept, if possible.

Barry Conservation District hosts an annual tree sale to provide landowners with high quality plant material, helping ensure that there are native species available locally to implement conservation practices on private lands. The Conservation District offers a wide selection of native tree and shrub bare root seedlings and transplants for reforestation, wind breaks, wildlife corridors, and even species selected for residential backyard habitat projects. Plants that serve multiple purposes, such as providing both food for wildlife and aesthetic beauty for your home, deserve the strongest consideration.

When planted in the appropriate spot, native plants require less watering and maintenance over the years than non-native species and are more likely to withstand the wide range of extreme weather conditions in this area. They are also more resistant to local "pests". Native plants are better-suited for sustaining diverse native wildlife communities and are much less likely to become problematic over time and we have plenty of species that will fit that bill.

The sale will be held on Friday, April 26, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday, April 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Trees are sold on a first-come, first-served

basis, so get your orders in now for pickup in April! You can order online at squareup.com/store/bcd or check this edition of the Reminder for an order form you can cut out and mail in.

New this year, the Spring Tree Sale will be the Spring Tree *and Habitat* Sale, featuring local partners who will have advice and products available for various aspects of habitat. Pierce Cedar Creek Institute will be taking orders for their May native plant sale and answering all your planning questions including what to plant and when. Pheasants Forever will be selling native wildflower and grass seed mixes and offering prairie restoration advice. The Quality Deer Management Association will be selling food plot seed and providing information on how to get the necessary elements of deer habitat on your acreage. Local habitat contractors will be available as well to answer questions and discuss projects.

Planting trees not only improves your landscape and provides habitat and food for wildlife - planting trees purchased from your local conservation district also supports natural resource education, programming and projects in your area. Approximately 15,000 trees and shrubs are purchased and planted annually by Barry County residents. That amounts to about 20 acres of new forest per year! If you have questions regarding the sale, please call Barry Conservation District at (269) 908-4135.

BARRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SPRING TREE SALE
SALE AND ORDER PICK UP
APRIL 26, 9-5
APRIL 27, 9-12
CHARLTON PARK,
HASTINGS

Pheasants Forever
The Habitat Organization

QDMA

NEW! HABITAT SALE DURING PICK UP, FEATURING:

PHEASANTS FOREVER- NATIVE GRASS AND WILDFLOWER SEEDS, GRASSLAND RESTORATION INFORMATION
QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION- FOOD PLOTS, WILDLIFE HABITAT INFORMATION
PIERCE CEDAR CREEK INSTITUTE- NATIVE PLANT SALE ORDERS AND INFORMATION
BCK CISMA- INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT INFORMATION AND ADVICE
EQUIPMENT DISPLAY AND HABITAT CONTRACTORS



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