



KALAMAZOO
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT

Kalamazoo Conservation District

Annual Report 2022



*"Protecting Soil & Water for Generations;
not only today's generation but future generations."*



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Kalamazoo Conservation District is a governmental agency established under state law to carry out programs for conservation, use and development of soil, water, and related resources at the local level.

Established in 1946, KCD is an independent county level resource assisting Kalamazoo County residents in resolving natural resource concerns. The District was self-funded in 2022, serving the public with revenue obtained through an annual tree and shrub sale, grants, sponsorships and donations.

At KCD, we partner with federal and state agencies to coordinate and implement conservation and environmental programs throughout the community. We have capabilities in protection, development and management of natural resources.



KALAMAZOO
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Conservation District Board of Directors

Ed Cagney, Chair

Lynn Coville, Vice Chair

Mike Klooster, Treasurer

Tricia Keala, Director

David Benac, Director

Conservation District Staff

Molly Buckham, MAEAP Technician

Linda Zabik, Conservation Program Assistant

Elizabeth Rochow, District Manager

Zach Whitacre, BCK-CISMA Invasive Species Coordinator—housed at Barry CD

Patrick Gordon, Produce Safety Technician—housed at Berrien CD

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

Di'Shun Melbert, District Conservationist

Brandon Fisher, Soil Conservationist & Maria Weston, CRP Technician

2023 BOARD SCHEDULE

The KCD Board is scheduled to meet at 8 am on the third Friday of the month at the District Office. Please check the district website for up-to-date meeting information.

**note changes to the scheduled dates

These meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend!

January 31**

February 17

March 17

April 21

May 19

June 16

July 21

August 18

September 15

October 20

November 17

December 15

Dear Friends of the District,

There was a lot happening all around Kalamazoo County in 2022!

The year got off to a great start with a habitat work day at Gourdneck State Game Area in March. During the South County Trash Bash in April volunteers picked up road side trash along rural roads. Not only did we help get over 10,000 seedlings in the ground during our annual spring tree sale, we delivered additional seedlings to area 4th graders! The summer months found us busy holding passenger scrap tire events and collecting agricultural tires for recycling. Throughout the year, KCD continued to actively provide land owner assistance through MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program), BCK-CISMA (Barry, Calhoun, Kalamazoo—Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area), and Produce Safety Programs. We hope you enjoy reading about our programs, partners, and accomplishments from 2022. All of these are only possible with the support of Kalamazoo County residents. Whether you work with our technicians, purchase trees at our sale, or participate in any of our other programs, we thank you for joining us in natural resource conservation efforts.

Elizabeth Rochow,

District Manager

MAEAP: Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program



The Kalamazoo Conservation District would like to introduce Molly Buckham as the new MAEAP Technician for Kalamazoo County! She joined our district in March 2022.

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. That's why Kalamazoo Conservation District is helping farmers to enroll in MAEAP - the voluntary program that assists farmers adopt cost-effective practices that reduce soil erosion and water runoff into ponds, streams, and rivers. This helps farmers comply with state and federal laws. Through this program, conservation districts are able to recognize and reward top stewards of the land within four categories: 1) Cropping, 2) Livestock, 3) Farmstead, and 4) Forest, Wetlands, and Habitat.

In 2022, the Kalamazoo MAEAP program conducted over 40 risk reductions, 1 new MAEAP verification, 2 MAEAP reverifications, and 14 risk assessments. Additionally, \$3,000 in cost share funds were distributed to Kalamazoo County farms and included the following items and/or practices: spill kits, analyses of drinking water for nitrates and coliform bacteria, manure and soil nutrient testing, backflow valves, roof gutters, fire extinguishers, and retaining blocks.



The Kalamazoo Conservation District held a MAEAP Small Farms Field Event on September 7 at The KVCC Food Innovation Center. This workshop was designed for small-scale fruit and vegetable producers. Participants toured the grounds and learned how the Valley Hub connects produce growers and businesses looking to source food locally. Following the tour, Chris Lattak discussed small scale irrigation systems and management; Mike Reinke and Ben Phillips of MSU Extension provided an introduction to integrated pest management (IPM), and Patrick Gordon described the Produce Safety Program. Josh Appleby of MDARD and Molly Buckham provided MAEAP updates.



If you are interested in learning more about MAEAP or are wanting to work towards MAEAP verification, please contact Molly at the office!

Produce Safety Program

Patrick Gordon, Produce Safety Technician, provides many tools to help growers of Southwest Michigan (Allegan, Berrien, Kalamazoo, and Van Buren counties) assess risks involved with the growing, handling, harvesting, storing, and transportation of fresh produce covered by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). All services offered are free, voluntary, and confidential with a primary goal of assisting area growers to reach or maintain compliance with regulations and educating on best practices for preventing contamination of fresh produce.

Last year Patrick worked to foster relationships with local partners allowing the program to reach a larger population of growers in SW Michigan. He worked closely with the Kalamazoo Valley Community College's Valley HUB, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, MSU Extension, along with other organizations and agencies to plan and facilitate multiple events catering to growers in SW Michigan. Growers in attendance were able to learn more about growing and supplying safer produce, what the program technicians can do for them, and scheduling farm visits.

During 2022, Berrien County Conservation District Produce Safety Program was able to: Conduct 54 farm visits, Complete 16 Produce Safety Risk Assessments, Conduct 2 On-Farm Readiness Reviews, Publish 3 Newsletter articles, and Hold or assist with 6 educational outreach events.

Growers can access services by contacting Patrick directly, reaching out to the KCD office, or through the Produce Safety Team website (www.miofps.org).

BCK-Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

The Barry-Calhoun-Kalamazoo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (BCK CISMA) was busy in 2022! They treated over 200 acres for invasive species, which is the most extensive treatment season to date. Eighty private properties were treated for Japanese knotweed, phragmites, Chinese yam, and black swallow-wort. To do this, three seasonal invasive species technicians, Ben, Donavin, and Steve, were hired and did a great job!



The BCK CISMA has been battling an invasive vine called mile-a-minute weed in Calhoun county. This vine is known for growing up to six inches in one day! This year BCK CISMA surveyed over 1000 acres for this vine, found 4 new infestations, and treated roughly 15 acres. The goal is to eradicate or at least limit the spread of this invasive vine.

In Barry county, invasive phragmites and Japanese knotweed were treated along county roads as part of a long-standing partnership with the Barry County Road Commission. The Michigan Department of Transportation became interested as well and together, 25 phragmites and Japanese knotweed infestations along

county roads and 14 infestations along state roads were treated in Barry county.

In Kalamazoo county, the BCK CISMA has a contract with the Fort Custer Training Center to treat woody invasive species in one of their land navigation courses. We do this so the soldiers have a slightly more manageable and less prickly time while navigating the course. Also, in Vicksburg, CISMA has continued to catch invasive red swamp crayfish - catching over 600 in 2022! The goal is to reduce their spread from the infested to un-infested areas downstream.

Zach Whitacre, the CISMA coordinator, in addition to assisting with invasive species treatments, has published 67 posts and articles on social media, the Hastings Reminder, and the partner newsletter, reaching 226,894 people. Zach went on 38 site visits and held 11 presentations for local organizations and community events, reaching 743 people.



Spotted Lanternfly Surveys

This year the BCK CISMA surveyed for spotted lanternfly (SLF) in Calhoun and Kalamazoo counties. SLF is an invasive insect that was first introduced to Pennsylvania in 2014. Since then, it has spread to at least 14 other states, including Michigan. While we did not find SLF in either county, a small population of SLF was located on the east side of the state near Pontiac in Oakland county.

In Pennsylvania and other states, SLF has caused concern for grape growers. Adult SLF feed by sucking the sap from plants which can reduce grape yield and can kill young plants. As adults feed in large numbers, they secrete honeydew which is a sugary, sticky substance that sooty mold can grow on. When mold grows, it can block sunlight from reaching the plant and stop photosynthesis from occurring. While SLF likes to feed on grapes, its preferred food source is the invasive plant tree-of-heaven. In native China, the Tree-of-heaven is the host plant for SLF.



To survey for SLF, circle traps were put on tree-of-heaven near high-risk areas such as truck and train stops. The Michigan Department of Agriculture considers these high-risk areas because SLF have been known to hitch a ride on trucks and train cars and will even lay their eggs on them!

Each year the Conservation District works directly with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service to recruit agricultural producers for the Federal Farm Bill Programs such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP). These programs not only offer valuable technical assistance to Kalamazoo County farmers and landowners, helping them become better stewards of the land, but also contribute to the local economy by bringing in thousands of federal dollars to fund conservation practices. This money has a direct impact on the success of local farms, businesses, and contractors.

This year has been phase two of a joint outreach effort between KCD and NRCS. In 2021 we worked together to identify forestland owners and inform them of opportunities and benefits of the EQIP program. Through that outreach we built relationships with local foresters and land owners, received seven contracts, and met many interested individuals. In 2022 NRCS certified all the forest management plans that went to contract and are continuing to work with the landowners to implement the conservation practices in the forest management plans through EQIP and CSP. These practices will address forest health, wildlife habitat, and invasive plant species. In 2023 we are planning additional outreach to cropland agricultural producers to address soil and water quality.

Contact Di'Shun Melbert for more information.

Annual Reforestation Seedling Sale

KCD had another busy tree sale, supplying over 10,000 seedlings to local customers. It's amazing that Kalamazoo County residents planted so many seedlings!

Thank you to our dedicated tree crew volunteers who put in over 100 hours wrapping, sorting, and bundling the seedlings making our tree sale possible. We are in need of assistance with the 2023 sale in April. Please contact the office for volunteer details.



Wildlife Habitat Enhancement at Gourdneck State Game Area

This Wildlife Habitat Enhancement project began in 2019 and was completed in the fall of 2022. This work contributed to the restoration process of 63.6 acres of the NW Unit in the Gourdneck State Game Area. As the Gourdneck SGA habitat is restored to an oak savanna community, the quality and quantity of food, cover, feeding and roosting areas will improve. Game species such as white-tailed deer, cottontail rabbits, wild turkey and American woodcock as well as nongame wildlife including birds, reptiles, and insects will all benefit within a healthy oak savanna community.



Various habitat improvements were accomplished during the project. One of these



was to develop and maintain wildlife openings by opening the canopy through selective and targeted timber cutting. This included undesirable barrens tree species such as some red maple, various pine species and planted red pine stands while leaving the species which are important in early successional forests and oak savanna communities. The undesirable shrub understory was dramatically reduced throughout the entire project area while leaving native understory plants. Species such as witch hazel, dogwood, and spice bush were left to accelerate the re-establishment and enhancement of the oak barrens community. A variety of upland shrubs that were targeted and cleared included Autumn olive, Bush honeysuckles (Tatarian, Morrow's, and Amur), Buckthorn (glossy and common), Burning bush, Asian bittersweet, Multiflora rose, Spotted Knapweed, Black locust, Tree of Heaven, and Japanese Barberry.

These were mechanically mulched, cut and immediately treated, and/or foliar treated within an area of 17.5 acres. The mulched trees and shrubs were allowed to resprout and then treated with a foliar application of herbicide. On the remaining 46.1 acres of the project area, these and other targeted species were selectively cut and immediately treated or were treated with a foliar herbicide spray. The actions described above are also instrumental in promoting oak growth and the growth of diverse edible forage. In addition, oak regeneration was also promoted by leaving existing oak trees and saplings to grow. Finally, in order to improve wildlife cover throughout the area, an On the Ground work day was held where hard-working volunteers constructed 12 large brush piles from some of the downed trees and brush.



This project has been instrumental in the preparation of the area for further habitat restoration which will include prescribed burns and seeding with a diverse forb mix.

The Kalamazoo Conservation District would like to thank our partners for contributing to the success of the enhancement in the Gourdneck SGA project: The City of Portage, DNR staff Nate DeVries and Don Poppe, the National Wild Turkey Federation, Michigan United Conservation Corps and their On the Ground program staff and volunteers.

This project work was done with the assistance of the Michigan DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant to enhance wildlife habitat. These grants are funded through a portion of hunting and fishing licenses that are sold each year with the purpose of providing funding to conservation partners to assist the Wildlife Division with developing or improving wildlife habitat for game species.

District Events and Activities

South County Trash Bash



On Saturday April 9, the KCD staff was joined by 35 volunteers who filled two dumpsters with all sorts of trash they collected along country roads in Pavilion, Climax, Schoolcraft, Wakeshma and Brady Townships. Over 140 volunteer hours were spent walking the roadsides and picking up trash. If only we could convince residents that roadsides are not dumping grounds!



To assist others with their trash pick up events, KCD has supplies to donate: heavy duty trash bags, trash pickers, worker vests, nitrile gloves, etc. Contact the KCD office for more information.



Agricultural Tire Collection Event

An additional part of the South County Trash Bash was holding a tire recycling event for scrap agriculture tires. On September 8th, ninety oversize agricultural tires were collected. Due to their large size and the stacking methods, 320 additional passenger tires were also able to be packed into the semi trailer.

A special thanks to all of the volunteers who worked hard and got dirty at these events and to Perkins Tire for providing the location and assistance with loading the huge agricultural tires!

These projects were generously funded through Enbridge's Fueling Futures Grant to make tomorrow safer, more vibrant and sustainable.



Passenger Scrap Tire Collection Events

In 2022, KCD obtained grant funds through Michigan EGLE's Scrap Tire Program. These are community-based grants that support local municipal tire cleanups. KCD held four collection events throughout the summer.

Four semi trailers were filled with more than 3,100 passenger tires! These were collected from 361 households throughout 16 zip codes in Kalamazoo County. The tires were hauled off to be recycled.

There were 24 volunteers who provided 75 hours of assistance with loading and stacking tires during these four events.

KCD is grateful for all of the volunteers who made these events possible! We would also like to thank the City of Kalamazoo, Comstock Township, Richland Township, and Schoolcraft Township for providing collection locations and support.

4th Grade Tree Seedling Pilot Program



Partnering with the Michigan Arbor Day Alliance and Eaton Conservation District, KCD was able to provide over 1,200 free white pine seedlings to Kalamazoo County 4th graders in April. To encourage growing garden plants, the Kalamazoo Earth Day organization donated seed kits which were also delivered to several of these classrooms.

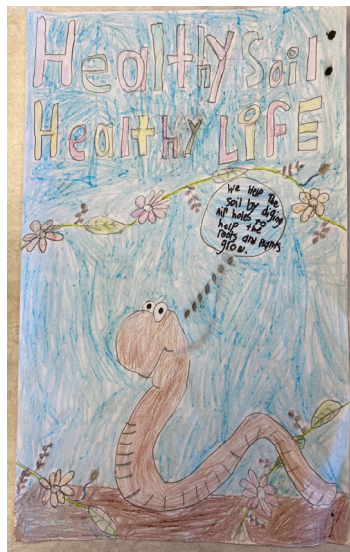


2022 National Association of Conservation Districts Poster Contest

The theme for 2022 was *Healthy Soil, Healthy Life*. KCD chose three winners from the entries and they were sent on to the contest at the state level. Congratulations to the Kalamazoo County 4-6th grade winners!



1st: Maria Keilen



2nd: Hailey Kiel



3rd: Kendall Wark

Rain barrel workshop

What's a great way to capture and use rain water? Construct rain barrels to collect runoff from roofs and downspouts and use the water during dry periods to water gardens! KCD worked with the Fabrick of Life organization's summer program to build 12 rain barrels for use in their neighborhood.





Kalamazoo Conservation District Awards

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2022 Conservation Farm of the Year

Krupp Farms

The Kalamazoo Conservation District Board and Staff would like to recognize Krupp Farms as the 2022 Conservation Farm of the Year. Ira Krupp has been involved with many of the stewardship programs the Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have to offer.



Ira was farming while also working as an MSU Extension Dairy Production educator for 30 years before retiring in 2011. The Conservation District started working with Ira in the early 2000's when MAEAP was known as the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program. Ira was one of the early adopters and received his farmstead verification in 2006 and his cropping system verification soon after. Although he was working full time and farming, he always found the time to attend farming workshops and field events. In 2006, Ira hosted a District field event at his farmstead to share his knowledge and use his farmstead as an example of good farming practices. Ira has also been involved with the Conservation District and USDA programs since the mid-1990s to implement best management practices at his farm and to ensure he is protecting our natural resources.



Ira currently farms approximately 100 acres of soybeans and corn. He has adopted sustainable and regenerative practices such as cover crops, irrigation water management, nutrient and pest management, crop rotation, and conservation tillage. Ira recognized the importance of best farming practices in order to limit soil erosion and to increase soil organic matter. Other conservation practices that Ira implemented over the years included an agriculture chemical containment building, secondary containment for bulk fertilizer, fueling facility, well decommissioning and continual soil testing.

We would like to thank Ira Krupp for being a leader in conservation and for all the years dedicated to farming education.

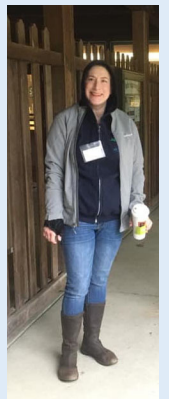


Friend of the District

Melanie Stoughton

The Kalamazoo Conservation District Board and Staff would like to recognize Melanie Stoughton with the 2022 Friend of the District Award. Melanie is no stranger to the inner workings of conservation districts, and she understands that without a team of ready and willing volunteers, the good work that conservations districts do couldn't get done!

Melanie is one of the district's most experienced tree wrappers. For many years, Melanie has been wrapping and labeling seedlings for our annual spring seedling sale. Melanie also works during the tree sale distribution days to provide advice and assistance during the sale. This past year, in addition to wrapping approximately 10,000 seedlings for the sale, the district provided individually wrapped seedlings to 1,200 fourth graders in Kalamazoo County. Melanie graciously spent two additional days with the district staff helping wrap and package these seedlings for classroom distribution.



In 2022, Melanie also volunteered as a site leader during the district's South County Trash Bash. This event took place on a cold, rainy, snowy, windy day in April and Melanie stayed for the duration of the event supervising the volunteers out collecting roadside trash.



Throughout the years, Melanie has also assisted the district in many other ways including volunteering at our Conservorama Fifth Grade Educational Event at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, holding a position on the district's board of directors, and often lending a helpful hand at a moment's notice.

Melanie is a familiar face around the Kalamazoo Conservation District and her enthusiasm and commitment are greatly appreciated.



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Fiscal year 2022 Financial Statements

Balance sheet FY2022

Profit & Loss FY 2022

| | <u>Sep 30, 22</u> |
|--|-------------------------|
| ASSETS | |
| Current Assets | |
| Checking/Savings | |
| 001 · General Checking | 5,372.91 |
| 004 · Petty Cash | 205.02 |
| Total Checking/Savings | <u>5,577.93</u> |
| Accounts Receivable | |
| 018 · Accounts Receivable | 26,447.47 |
| Total Accounts Receivable | <u>26,447.47</u> |
| Other Current Assets | |
| 100 · Undeposited Funds | -280.00 |
| 108 · Tree Inventory | 8.30 |
| 109 · Platbook Inventory | 3,111.00 |
| 110 · Resale Materials Inventory | 864.98 |
| Total Other Current Assets | <u>3,704.28</u> |
| Total Current Assets | <u>35,729.68</u> |
| TOTAL ASSETS | <u><u>35,729.68</u></u> |
| LIABILITIES & EQUITY | |
| Liabilities | |
| Current Liabilities | |
| Accounts Payable | |
| 202 · Accounts Payable | 1,668.60 |
| Total Accounts Payable | <u>1,668.60</u> |
| Other Current Liabilities | |
| 227 · Sales Tax Payable | 2.62 |
| 228 · Due to State of Michigan | 1,459.26 |
| 231 · Payroll Deductions Payable | 3,350.42 |
| 257 · Accrued Wages Payable | 843.18 |
| Total Other Current Liabilities | <u>5,655.48</u> |
| Total Current Liabilities | <u>7,324.08</u> |
| Total Liabilities | 7,324.08 |
| Equity | |
| 30000 · Opening Balance Equity | 143.85 |
| 390 · Fund Balance | 25,853.89 |
| Net Income | 2,407.86 |
| Total Equity | <u>28,405.60</u> |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY | <u><u>35,729.68</u></u> |

| | <u>Oct '21 - Sep 22</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | |
| Income | |
| 530 · Items for Purchase | 23,562.30 |
| 539 · State Grants | 115,999.93 |
| 600 · Charges for Services | 22,886.22 |
| 664 · Interest & Rent Control | 175.00 |
| 671 · Other Revenues Control | 13,299.92 |
| Total Income | <u>175,923.37</u> |
| Cost of Goods Sold | |
| 789 · Cost of Goods Sold | 1,121.40 |
| Total COGS | <u>1,121.40</u> |
| Gross Profit | <u>174,801.97</u> |
| Expense | |
| 701 · Personal Services | 104,572.82 |
| 726 · Supplies Control | 16,663.11 |
| 800 · Other Services & Charges | 27,572.66 |
| 900 · Printing & Publishing | 135.10 |
| 956 · Nutrient Tests | 117.50 |
| 957 · Dues & Fees | 1,000.00 |
| 960 · Meeting Expenses | 633.92 |
| 967 · District Overhead for Grant | 21,699.00 |
| Total Expense | <u>172,394.11</u> |
| Net Ordinary Income | <u>2,407.86</u> |
| Net Income | <u><u>2,407.86</u></u> |

Thank you 2022 donors & sponsors!



RICHLAND

