



# Lapeer Conservation District

## 76th Annual Report

October 1, 2017 –September 30, 2018

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### Board of Directors

Leo Ruhana.....	Chairman
Matt Swoish.....	Vice-Chairman
Wade Decker....	Treasurer
Gary Nolan.....	Director
Doug Hodge.....	Director

### District Staff

Mary Brown....	District Manager
Matt Swain...	Farm Bill Technician
Rob Malcomnson...	MAEAP Technician
Lois Rheume...	Education Coordinator
Arlene Gibbs-Smith...	Administrative Assistant

### USDA-NRCS Staff

Kendrick Flowers....	District Conservationist
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**For on-line information about the USDA 2014 Farm Bill:**  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/mi/programs/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/mi/programs/)

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Lapeer Conservation District is to deliver information and technical assistance through educational programs and professional services in order to conserve and enhance the natural resources of Lapeer County now and for future generations.

My name is Matthew Swain, I am the new *Farm Bill Conservation Technician* covering Lapeer County. I was born and raised here in Lapeer County, and have a degree in Environmental Science and Planning. I have been hired through a cooperative agreement with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) under a Technical Assistance grant. The focus of this grant is to assist landowners in implementing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts. During my first 3 months here, I have helped certify 1,396 acres of EQIP practices, designed conservation plans for 185 acres with 96 of these acres being enrolled into the Conservation Reserve Program - State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (CRP-SAFE). There has also been an additional 1,700 acres that I have helped provide conservation technical assistance with.

I look forward to meeting more of you, helping you all with your conservation planning, and getting you enrolled into EQIP and other Farm Bill programs.

Pictured L-R Matt Swain LCD Farm Bill Technician and Anna Geister (job shadow)



Another year has come around in Lapeer County and we have such a bright future ahead of us. Soil Health has been a big topic this year, whether the problem is erosion, compactions, microbiology or organic matter, a healthy soil produces a bountiful yield. NRCS cost share programs can help with practices such as cover crop, no-till and residue management to help revive marginal producing soils.

An issue in Lapeer that we are on the outlook for is Oak Wilt. It has not been noted here in Lapeer County but with some areas noted in Oakland County. Oak wilt has been around for a while, and it can cause catastrophic damages to timber specifically the red oaks. Red oaks are also an important produce of acorns for wildlife habitats. Oak wilt spreads underground through root grafts and overland, which means you have to remove both the tree as well as the roots to treat this disease. The disease can also lie dormant for years before the tree shows signs of the infection. Timber has been a large part of Michigan's economy and this is a devastating blow to Michigan's forest. If oak wilt is an issue, please contact MSU Extension or NRCS for more information.

**Kendrick Flowers**, the District Conservationist, of the Lapeer Field Office for the Natural Resources

### MAEAP 2018 Annual Report By Rob Malcomnson, MAEAP Technician

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program had another good year in Fiscal Year 2018 (Oct. 1, 2017-Sept. 30, 2018). This program verifies, and gives official recognition, that farms have met environmental protection standards, and provides legal protections in the event of a complaint. Farmers who complete the process can be proud of going the extra mile to protect surface water and groundwater from potential contamination from agricultural activity. MAEAP Technician, Rob Malcomnson, a Conservation District employee, assists numerous farms with getting ready to be verified, in both Lapeer and Macomb Counties. After 5 years of verified status, farms can be re-verified.

Total numbers of initial verifications and re-verifications for FY18 are 33 for Lapeer County and 7 for Macomb County. Over the last 4 very busy years, the combined total for the 2-county area is 162! Corn and bean farms, orchards, vegetable farms, greenhouses, and livestock farms have been verified. MAEAP signs are popping up in farm yards or on barns, and interest is growing. Consumers are beginning to learn what the sign stands for... that best management practices to protect water resources are being used at that farm.

Verifications can be earned in the Cropping System, Farmstead System, Livestock System, and Forest/Wetland/Habitat System. So far, no farm has earned all three systems, although 3 are currently in process. We'll see who gets there first! The program is free, confidential, and size-neutral. The Conservation District cost-shares many items commonly needed to complete verification preparation, such as spill kit components, soil/manure tests, well water tests, concrete pads for fueling, and others. Remember: Michigan's MAEAP program is the envy of other states and has been noticed federally. We believe that the more that farmers do voluntarily to reduce risk, the less likely legislation will be aimed at us.

For more information, contact Rob at 810-664-0895 ext. 9145. (Rob's farm is verified in 3 Systems, and grows hay, corn, soybeans, wheat, rye, oats, vegetables, freezer beef, freezer pork, chicken, and eggs in Davison Twp.)



## LAPEER STATE GAME AREA—SNOW DEN TRAIL SITE

Lapeer Conservation District Project Manager-Jay Blair: 8-27-18

The Snow Den Trail site of the Lapeer State Game Area 2018 report showed a great improvement over 2017. In April the Lapeer Conservation District and MDNR staff of the Lapeer State Game Area met and discussed how to manage and control the infestation of the spotted knapweed. It was discussed to use herbicides to control the spotted knapweed in May.

It was agreed upon to use Milestone herbicide to control the knapweed. Along with the herbicide an adjuvant was needed to help the herbicide. Additionally, Weedmaster herbicide was added to help suppress the brambles and re-sprout of shrubs.

The contractor began spraying the first weekend of May. It was delayed a couple of hours because I was late getting there to let the contractor in. Over the next few weeks the whole site was completed with spraying. As one walks the Snow Den Trail site you can sort of see the different spraying intervals. The area sprayed the first weekend of May has more summer annual grasses, but an awesome spotted knapweed control and other weeds. The other two spray intervals have very good spotted knapweed control, but the dead stems are still erect and easily seen. Of course, there are a few skips especially by the conifer trees. Coreopsis, wildflower, seems to be tolerant to Milestone as you can see it blooming nicely on August 24, 2018 when I was walking and looking at the site.

I also noted that west of the road that goes through the site the native grass stand is much thinner. I suspect that the seeding was thinner as the area was seeded last in the fall of 2016, and the fertilizer/seed mix was getting low. The contractor probably adjusted seeding rate to get some seeding on the whole site. The grass stand east of the road is very good over all. The brambles were suppressed but not controlled. The shrub sprouts are few but will need to keep watch.

I think going forward we should consider plowing the old fence lines and make them in to the food plots and managed tilled areas. The old fence lines have the most brambles, a good growth of quack grass and shrub sprouts. By plowing we can control the pests and plant our food plots. I stepped off the width of some of the old fence lines and they were 50-60 foot wide. I will calculate the acreage of the old fence lines and see if this meets our criteria for the ratio of grassland to food plot.

I think this winter the standing stems of dead spotted knapweed will lay flat. Next year we can treat the spotted knapweed we missed. Treat the site in late April for cool season grasses (prior to native grass green up) and add an herbicide for weed control that will peter out by fall. Plant wildflowers in the fall or the following spring. I like the idea of planting in fall as we have moisture available in the spring. If planting in the spring it seems we run out of moisture by June and makes it harder to establish.



### Lapeer County's Hunting Access Program (HAP) has been discontinued in Lapeer County

**Monique Ferris—Acting SE Private Lands Biologist**  
**HAP Coordinator | DNR-Wildlife**



There were changes to HAP as we entered the 2018 hunting season. DNR is refocusing program efforts to address CWD and TB disease concerns and using HAP as an important tool to encourage hunting in these regions. By prioritizing HAP property locations, DNR can redirect funds to allow for continued availability of private land pheasant hunting opportunities supporting the Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative as well as new enrollments in counties affected by CWD and TB. With this being said, Lapeer County HAP program was discontinued and the DNR sent letters to all participating landowners of this change. Signs and mailboxes belonging to the program were removed.

### Micah Hutchison, Produce Safety Technician

Stationed at the Genesee Conservation District office, Micah has spent a considerable amount of time getting to know the area she covers which includes Lapeer, Genesee, Shiawassee, Oakland, Livingston, Saginaw and Tuscola Counties. She has visited 3 Lapeer County Farmers' Markets and passed out cards/flyers about the produce safety program. She is hoping to meet with our directors soon and it is her future goal to spend time on the road cold calling producers letting them know of what is offered through the CD. If you have any suggestions of groups she should contact, please call 810-820-2681 or email micah.hutchison@macd.org

# 2018 Education Program Statistics by Lois Rheume, Education Coordinator

## Soil Program (Grades 4, 5 & 6)

31 presentations - 863 students

## Watershed Program (Grades 4, 5 & 6)

30 presentations—853 students

## Tree Program (Grades 4, 5 & 6)

32 presentations—893 students

**893 White Pine Seedlings** delivered  
To Fifth Graders

**Total Students served through  
School Programs—2,609**



(L-R) Kendall Sommer, Lisa Granz, Lois Rheume LCD Ed. Coordinator, **Rebecca Bruce - 1st Place LCD & MACD poster contest winner**

## Poster Contest (Grades K—12)

246 participants—30 local winners

**3 State Winners** are

**Emma McMeans \* 1st Place** (4-6 grade category)

Ruth Fox Middle School, North Branch

**Emerald Anderson \* 1st Place** (7-9 grade category)

Imlay City Christian School, Imlay City

**Rebecca Bruce \* 1st Place** (10-12 grade category)

Imlay City High School, Imlay City

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## Project RED (Rural Education Day) (Grade 3)

208 students and

900 White Pine Seedlings donated

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## Davis Brothers Farm Fest (all Ages)

Approx. 75 students and adults  
6 hour event with on-going activity

## Lapeer Conservation District Education and Outreach Events, (and partners) FY2018

- Wildlife and Pollinator Habitat Workshop (NRCS, MDNR, Bluewater Conservation District, Hadley Twp.)
- Project RED (Rural Education Day) (Lapeer County Farm Bureau)
- Davis Brothers Farm Fest (Lapeer County Historical Society)
- Field Day at the Farm (NRCS, LCD-MAEAP)
- Marsh Haven Farms Farm Tour (NRCS, LCD-MAEAP)
- How Soil Conservation Began & Why It's Still Relevant Today (MACD, County of Lapeer) *1st in 75th Anniversary Event Series*
- Backyard Conservation (County of Lapeer, Saginaw Bay Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) *2nd in 75th Anniversary Event Series*
- Inland Lake Shoreline Conservation (MSU Extension, Seven Ponds Nature Center) *3rd in 75th Anniversary Event Series*
- 75th Annual Meeting and Farm Tour (AG Community Relief, Swoish Farms, Ankley Dairy, Raub Rae Farm)
- Well Water Nitrate Testing (LCD-MAEAP, Lapeer County Habitat for Humanity)
- Southern Michigan Pheasant & Monarch Recovery (MDNR, Hadley Twp.)
- Farmer Appreciation Day (Lapeer County Farm Bureau, Riehl's Friendly Chrysler)
- Cover Crop Workshop (MSU Extension, NRCS, Swoish Farms)
- Chatfield Science Fair



Farm Tour @ Swoish Farms



Joe Stock in discussion @ 75th Anniversary "Are Conservation Districts Still relevant today?"



Marsh Haven Farm Tour



Spring Tree Sale Packing @ Mutch's Hidden Pines



Chatfield Science Fair



700 South Main Street  
Suite 120-C  
Lapeer, MI 48446  
(West end of the Marketplace  
on M-24 and Demille Blvd.)

(810) 664-0895, ext. 5  
admin@lapeercd.org  
www.lapeercd.org



**Lapeer Conservation District  
Fiscal Year 2018 Financial Report**

October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018

Beginning Balance October 1, 2017 \$ 51,730.00

**Revenue**

State Funds	\$ 73,377.00
Federal Funds	141,745.00
Contributions from Local Units	2,073.00
Charges for Services	31,886.00
Interest & Rentals	464.00
Tree Sales	57,740.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$ 307,285.00</b>

**Expenditures**

Operations	60,391.00
MI Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)	70,797.00
Hunting Access Program (HAP)	2,588.00
NACD Technical Assistance Agreement	14,954.00
DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant	4,423.00
Conservation Education Program	4,238.00
Invasive Species (Phragmites Monitoring Grant)	128,549.00
Tree Sale	27,429.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 313,369.00</b>

Budget Balance \$ (6,084.00)

\*Ending Fund Balance September 30, 2018 \$ 45,646.00

*\*Budget was balanced using unassigned funds*

In honor of Lapeer Conservation District's 75th Anniversary a special tribute signed by Governor Snyder was presented to the LCD Board of Directors by Kevin Daley, past representative.



**Congratulations to the Lapeer Conservation District  
2018 Volunteer of the Year  
DONNA HINES**

Mary Brown, District Manager, and Board Director Lou Ruhanna presented Donna Hines with the Lapeer District Volunteer of the Year Award. Mary Brown said "Donna has gone beyond when needed and one particular time during the tree sale a customer had forgotten part of their order and Donna went to their home and dropped the rest of the order off which was out of her way." "It are things like these that make all of our volunteers so greatly appreciated by us and this year Donna especially."

Our volunteers play a very important role for the District. We rely not only on their physical help but their many skills and knowledge too.



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Our volunteers make it possible for us to have Tree Sales, the Fall Farm Tour, and a number of other educational and outreach activities that we hold each year.

If you are interested in helping to support natural resource conservation in Lapeer County, fill out and submit the volunteer interest form on our website at [www.lapeercd.org](http://www.lapeercd.org), or contact us at (810) 664-0895, ext. 5.

Please volunteer and be a part of the fun - thank you!



**2019 SPRING TREE SALE COMING SOON!**

Watch for our Spring Tree Sale information which will be available mid-February. You will be able to view our items for sale in our catalog, on our website or Facebook page. We will have an order form and full-color descriptions available on our website.

This year's items for sale will include new products such as Concolor Fir seedlings. We look forward to seeing you. this spring!! Order deadline will be April 1.



All programs and services of the Lapeer Conservation District and USDA-NRCS are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital status.