



# Lapeer Conservation District

## 80th Annual Report

October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

### Featured Inside

|                                      |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| GiLLS CISMA Report .....             | p. 2 |
| MAEAP Report .....                   | p. 2 |
| Conservation Technician Report ..... | p. 2 |
| Legislative Update .....             | p. 2 |
| Outreach Program Report...           | p. 3 |
| 2021 Financial Report .....          | p. 4 |
| Volunteers .....                     | p. 4 |

### Board of Directors

|                    |               |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Gary Nolan .....   | Chairman      |
| Steve Schaub ..... | Vice-Chairman |
| Wade Decker.....   | Treasurer     |
| Chris Swoish ..... | Director      |
| Jacob Kinney ..... | Director      |

### District Staff

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Mary Brown....        | District Manager         |
| Ryan Foley ...        | Conservation Technician  |
| Arlene Gibbs-Smith... | Administrative Assistant |
| Mila Resetar          | MAEAP Technician         |

### USDA-NRCS Staff

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Kendrick Flowers.... | District Conservationist     |
| Anna Geister—        | Soil Conservation Technician |
| Stephanie Vickers—   | CRP Specialist               |

**For on-line information about the Farm Bill USDA 2018**  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/farm-bill>

### 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.



2022 Annual Report By Anna Geister, Soil Conservation Technician  
**"Helping People Help the Land"**

The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) saw yet another successful year of conservation in Lapeer County in 2022. NRCS Farm Bill programs provide technical and financial assistance to farmers and landowners with goals of addressing concerns related to natural resources. Conservation plans contracted in 2022 focused on building soil organic matter through cover crops, addressing invasive plant species through forest management, and improving pollinator habitat through the permanent establishment of native grass and wildflower prairies. If you are a farmer or landowner experiencing issues relating to soil, water, air, plants, livestock, etc, do not hesitate to call your local USDA NRCS Service Center at (810) 664-0895 ext. 3.

### FY2022 Farm Bill Statistics for Lapeer County

|                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Farm Bill Total Acres Lapeer         | <b>1,009.7acres</b> |
| Farm Bill Total Contracts            | <b>8</b>            |
| Farm Bill Programs Total Obligations | <b>\$ 102,700</b>   |

### 2022 Annual Report by Kendrick Flowers, District Conservationist

*"My time in Michigan has come to a close but this was a great experience. The knowledge of the Lapeer staff is great and the people here are wonderful. I thank you all for what you were able to accomplish with Farm Bill Programs. Now it is time to pass the baton to someone else and cheer for them as they run a leg of this race. Remember to "Be quick but don't hurry!" That's just a weird way of saying pace yourself and staying on task will get results." Lapeer Conservation District sincerely thanks Kendrick as he moves on to the Maryland Area Conservationist position.*

### Stephanie Vickers- CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) Specialist

I began this NRCS position in February. I am working on creating a list of farmers eligible for CRP and EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) in Oakland and Lapeer County. I am also actively working on GIS (Geographic Information System, *a commonly used tool for environmental management, modeling and planning*) to create a watershed database of Lapeer and Oakland County, which will support where to place certain conservation practices. Continuous CRP is still actively taking applications for new acreage as well as combined old and new acreage. Michigan's CRP State Acres for Wildlife Program (SAFE) is not taking applications until an agreement with the State has been completed. General Sign-Up as well as Grasslands Sign-Up dates are TBA.

### Rowan Griffiths - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Technician for Lapeer and Genesee Conservation Districts

I began working with the Genesee Conservation District (GCD) back in late January of 2022, just after graduating from the University of Michigan - Flint with a degree in General Biology. Most of my work involves working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, where I help implement the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). It is a smaller part of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), but differs in what land is eligible. For CREP, lands within the Saginaw Bay Watershed near water bodies or wetlands with a Farm Service Agency documented cropping history are eligible. If eligible, farmers can take advantage of many practices that are aimed at low yielding land near water bodies/wetlands that help with nutrient or sediment runoff that commonly pollute water. In exchange, farmers may receive annual rental rates for land enrolled and cost share to establish the practices.



## **GILLS CISMA** by Jessica Ableson

In March of 2022, I became the new GILLS CISMA coordinator.

One of the first activities I was able to do as the new coordinator was a presentation to 27 members of the Lapeer Chapter of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Since then, the CISMA has been able to participate in a list of activities in Lapeer County. Site visits to homeowners with concerns over invasive plants unearthed established infestations of black swallow wort, bohemian knotweed, and phragmites. The swallow wort infestation presented the opportunity for the land-owner to work with the Lapeer Conservation District to find way to work together in removing the vine, which was most likely brought in during a utilities project several year ago. Another community inquiry led to a check for beech leaf disease, which is a new threat to Michigan's native beech trees. Thankfully, this turned out negative. In addition to the Flint River Watershed Coalition presentation, a talk was given to 18 Kiwanis Lapeer members for a total of 45 people presented to. Further outreach included a volunteer work day at Sutherland Nature Sanctuary in Metamora and one at Seven Ponds Nature Center. Three people were in attendance and 8 bags of invasive garlic mustard and dames rocket were removed from site. The largest outreach opportunity was in assisting with three boat blitzes planned by the Lapeer Conservation District. These boat washes took place at Lake Minnwanan, Lake Nepessing, and Big Fish Lake and totaled 41 boaters reached and 36 impressions from additional visitors.

Overall, 2022 offered many opportunities for learning for our new coordinator, Jessica. The new year will hopefully bring opportunities to hold additional work days in Lapeer County and perhaps work with local schools for additional outreach opportunities.

## **2022 MAEAP Annual Report**



Rob Malcomson, MAEAP Technician for Lapeer and Macomb Counties continued with new assists and made many visits to small operations for technical advice for the year. Rob has worked with Lapeer Conservation District for eight years.



We welcomed our new MAEAP technician Mila Resetar. Mila was born and raised in Metro-Detroit and graduated from Penn State with a degree in Community, Environment, and Development. She has two seasons of diversified fruit and vegetable farming experience in northern Michigan and Maine, where she fell in love with agriculture and environmental conservation. Mila is excited to work with the LCD team and the Lapeer and Macomb agricultural communities in order to promote the MAEAP program and enhance agricultural conservation practices in the area.

## **Conservation Technician for the Lapeer Conservation District by Ryan Foley**

I was born and grew up in Mason County on the west coast of Michigan, however I had the opportunity to come to Lapeer for this position and I am very pleased to be here. My degree is in Earth and Environmental Science from the University of Michigan. The conservation technician position is provided through a National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) grant in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help implement farm bill programs to landowners in Lapeer and Oakland counties. During my first 5 months here, I've had the opportunity to be able to help with both the Lapeer Conservation District and the NRCS. I've helped with the district's fall tree sale, improve our website, and speak with landowners for conservation technical assistance. With the NRCS, I have been able to help certify numerous EQIP, CSP, and CRP contracts alongside Anna Geister and Kendrick Flowers. I have also assisted with all our 50+ EQIP applications and helping with anyone new who might be interested in our programs.

## **Legislative Update**

On Thursday, May 19th, the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts hosted a Capitol Day in Lansing, where Manager, Mary Brown was joined by dozens of MACD members representing Conservation Districts throughout the state. They connect with legislators and staff to advocate on behalf of Michigan's Conservation Districts. Mary was able to meet with Rep. Howell at that time as well as Sen. Daley's aide.

Since 2009, Lapeer CD has not received funding from the County of Lapeer or the State of Michigan, and has been forced to rely largely on revenue from tree sales and grant administrative services. Across the state, despite being mandated under state law, Michigan's CD's haven't received a cent in state funding for operational expenses, outside of administrative support for specific grant-based programming. A few Michigan districts have been able to pass millages and many states, such as Wisconsin, support their districts with dedicated funding. After years of effort, the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts and local Conservation Districts were elated that the bill passed for a \$3 million appropriation for baseline operational support for all 75 of Michigan's Conservation Districts (\$40,000 per district)! Now, the challenge will be to convert that annual appropriation into permanent funding!

## Outreach 2022 Annual Report, submitted by Arlene Gibbs-Smith

Essentially we are back to the new normal. Board meetings are in person and the staff are back in the office with remote options. **Education:** The annual NACD poster contest was offered to all schools in Lapeer County with the theme Healthy Soil, Healthy Life, with a total of 149 posters submitted. The volunteer Judges were Alicia Pierce of Stone Oak Farms and is a teacher, Donna Hines, PA and a Master Gardener, and Crystal High a commercial artist and 4H leader.

The Lapeer County winners are as follows:

|       |                       |                     |                             |   |
|-------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| K-1   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Place | Presley Stroup      | Imlay City Christian School | (MACD state winner 3rd place)             |
|       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place | Caylee Humphrey     | Imlay City Christian School |   |
|       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place | Mya Albert          | Imlay City Christian School |   |
| 2-3   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Place | Wyatt Eddings       | Imlay City Christian School | (MACD state winner 3rd place)             |
|       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place | Henry Verougstraete | Imlay City Christian School |   |
|       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place | Nina Galli          | Imlay City Christian School |   |
| 4-6   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Place | Isaac Verougstraete | Imlay City Christian School | (MACD state winner 2 <sup>nd</sup> place) |
|       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place | Natalie Gali        | Imlay City Christian School |   |
|       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place | Meredith Babach     | Almont Middle School        |   |
| 7-9   | HM                    | Lilliana Wyckstandt | Borland Elementary          |   |
|       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Place | Lola Battalia       | Almont High School          | (MACD state winner 2 <sup>nd</sup> place) |
|       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place | Jacqueline Coronel  | Almont High School          |   |
| 10-12 | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place | Rachael Johnson     | Almont High School          |   |
|       | 1 <sup>st</sup> Place | Gradin DePauw       | Almont High School          | (MACD state winner 1 <sup>st</sup> place) |
|       | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Place | Sydney Burkett      | Almont High School          |   |
|       | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place | Tara Tencza         | Almont High School          |   |

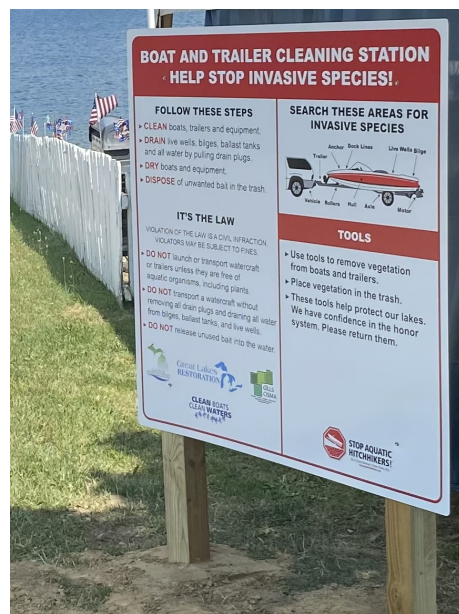
2022 Lapeer County  
1<sup>st</sup> place winner Gradin DePauw of  
the Poster Contest goes on to the  
NACD Finals TBD in February at the  
NACD Annual Conference.



The Lapeer Conservation District received a grant of \$2,588.18 funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, through the Great Lakes Commission for the Great Lakes Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz. This event is held throughout the Great Lakes basin and it is to raise awareness about preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species. Almost all of Lapeer County belongs to the Saginaw Bay Watershed and has been an EPA-listed Great Lakes Area of Concern so we were excited to promote and educate that prevention is a front line of protection for the Great Lakes. GILLS CISMA was a supporting partner for all sites and Oakland CD was a supporting partner at the Big Fish Lake site. The focus was “Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose” for boats, canoes, kayaks and other water vessels including paddle boards. We worked with our DNR partners at the Lake Nepessing boat launch, Lake Minniwana boat launch, Big Fish Lake boat launch and with the Village of Otter Lake boat launch. Metal signs

with boat cleaning tools were installed at each site. On July 8, Lapeer staff talked and demonstrated on how to clean boats at Lake Minnawanna, and on July 9 the staff did the same at Lake Nepessing and Big Fish Lake. Board member Steve Schaub along with volunteer Patty McNinch worked at the Otter Lake boat launch. We had 50 total contacts and 55 total site impressions (meaning who came to the table to see what was going on). We gave away towels, cozies, boat sponges, laminated boat cards with the message

**Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose.**



**Lapeer Conservation District  
Financial Report**  
Oct. 1, 2021 - Sept. 30 2022

|                                |                      |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>                 |                      |
| State Funds                    | \$ 115,500.00        |
| Federal Funds                  | \$ 26,588.00         |
| Contributions from Local Units | \$ 278.00            |
| Charges for Services           | \$ 4,441.00          |
| Interest and Rentals           | \$ 645.00            |
| Tree Sales                     | \$ 47,100.00         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>           | <b>\$ 194,552.00</b> |
| <b>Expenditures</b>            |                      |
| 281 Operations                 | \$ 64,800.00         |
| 282 MAEAP Grant                | \$ 75,500.00         |
| 298 NACD TA                    | \$ 14,860.00         |
| 291 Ed Program                 | \$ 173.00            |
| 293 Great Lakes AIS Grant      | \$ 2,588.00          |
| 294 Tree Sale                  | \$ 24,000.00         |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>      | <b>\$ 181,921.00</b> |
| <b>BUDGET BALANCE</b>          | <b>\$ 12,631.00</b>  |
| <b>Beginning Fund Balance</b>  | <b>\$ 12,671.00</b>  |
| <b>Ending Fund Balance</b>     | <b>\$ 25,302.00</b>  |

Between the spring and  
fall tree sales for 2022  
17,180 trees were sold

Our heartfelt thanks always goes out to our amazing volunteers especially for the tree sales. A total of 16 for the spring and a total of 7 for the fall tree sales volunteered. The DAR organization (7 volunteered) packed our 5th grade white pine plugs for the Lapeer County students that we give out.

**Conservation Needs Assessment Survey for  
Lapeer Conservation District**

We had 243 responses. We used the Google forms program and started the survey 5/18/2022 and ended it 6/14/2022.

85.6% of the responses were permanent home owners

17.3% of the responses were agricultural landowners

**Based on the survey the natural resource priorities were (all are in order of priority):**

1. Water Quality: drinking water, groundwater, rivers and streams
2. Agriculture/Farmland: use of chemicals, runoff, wildlife/pollinator habitat and farmland preservation
3. Forests/Woodlands: plant and wildlife habitat, invasive species, sustainable forest management
4. Non-farmed Land: Backyards, open lands, parks and recreational land

If you would like more specific results of the survey please contact us at [lapeercd.org](http://lapeercd.org) and go to contact us or call us at 810-664-0895 ext. 5



**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 Lapeer 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!**



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](mailto:admin@lapeercd.org)  
[www.lapeercd.org](http://www.lapeercd.org)



*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.*