



## **Antrim Conservation District 2018 Annual Report**

Submitted by Wendy Warren, District Manager with contributions from staff: Heidi Shaffer, Soil Erosion Officer, Mike Meriwether, County Forester, McKenzie Fox, Conservation Program Assistant, Benjamin VanDyke, Regional Invasive Species Coordinator. Photo contributions by Meghan Chase, former staff.

### **Executive Summary:**

Antrim Conservation District helps people to manage, protect and appreciate soil, water, wetland and forest resources through on-site assistance, demonstrations, education and outreach. We accomplish these goals through programs targeted toward Water Quality, Soil Erosion, Forestry, Invasive Species, Agriculture and Natural Resources Education. The District also serves Antrim County by managing recycling and household hazardous waste services, county forests, and the Soil Erosion Control Permit program. We work to bridge the gap between environmental regulation, conservation practices and personal property rights; that was our charge in the 40's when Conservation Districts were established, and it's our charge today. The Conservation District is working hard to be the go-to agency for environmental-related concerns. We are committed to bringing great customer value, continuous improvement, workforce sustainability and financial stability in all that we do.

### **Highlights from 2018:**

1. Forestry work resulted in
  - Selectively harvested 236 trees on 80 acres of county land
  - Generated timber revenue of \$36,200 to county general fund
  - Consultations with 372+ landowners
  - Assessed 3,684 acres (47 parcels) of private lands
  
2. Water Quality/Soil Erosion Control work resulted in:
  - 218 total permits issued requiring approximately 1500 site visits
  - Consulted with and issued 144 permits for new homes, additions or buildings
  - Consulted with and issued 45 shoreline stabilization and 29 landscaping projects
  - Netted \$28,720 in revenue to the county (40% of program cost)
  
3. Household Hazardous Waste events (3) resulted in:
  - Coordination, advertisement and management of three drop off events held in Elk Rapids, Bellaire and Mancelona serving 350 households

- Total of 30,358 lbs. of hazardous waste and 1259 scrap tires disposed properly
  - County received \$12,658 in revenue through participant fees and grants (1/4 cost of disposal)
4. Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area of Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska, Emmet achieved the following in Antrim County:
- Surveyed and treated invasive species at 90 private and public properties (Antrim)
  - Cost-share program generated revenue > \$8,000.00 for the 4-county region
  - Assisted paddlers in proper decontamination of equipment at Paddle Antrim Chain-of-Lakes event
5. Natural Resource Programming included:
- Recycling Center Management, clean-up and outreach/education
  - Healthy Soils, Healthy Farms field day in collaboration with Kalkaska County
  - 4H Kids Camp in collaboration with MSU Extension
  - Jordan River Clean Sweep



## **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The District brought in \$87,650 in grant funds and \$12,000 in donations. Four new positions were created including one regular full time and three temporary (seasonal).

**Antrim Conservation District Financial Statement Year ended December 31, 2018**

<b>Revenues</b>	<b>\$</b>
County Allocation	159,328
County Millage	173,832
Local/State/Federal Grants	87,650
Sales/Services	106,604
Donations	12,260
Interest Income	488
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>540,162</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	
Wages	261,016
Payroll Taxes and Fringe Benefits	43,435
Grant Expense	44,298
Vehicle Expense/Mileage	10,570
District Operations	57,289
Contract Services	1,920
Household Hazardous Waste	4,940
Equipment	17,784
Tree Sale Expense	28,692
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>467,944</b>
Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues over Expenditures	72,218
<b>Fund Balance - Beginning of Year</b>	<b>179,242</b>
<b>Fund Balance – End of Year</b>	<b>251,460</b>

**PROGRAM DETAILS**

**WATER QUALITY/SOIL EROSION PROGRAM**

***More than 50% of the fresh water held in Michigan’s inland lakes is stored right here within the Chain of Lakes that includes 70 miles of interconnected waterways.*** It is a huge responsibility to the people of the State of Michigan to be the caretakers of all that fresh water. Much of the tax base is dependent on stable property values, farming, water and forest resources supporting abundant recreational opportunities, all dependent on high quality water.

***The Soil Erosion Control Program is the most effective tool available to Antrim County in the preservation and protection of its water quality.***

Antrim County contracts with Antrim Conservation District to manage the Soil Erosion Control Permit Program that is mandated by the State. Any earth change that occurs within 500’ of a river, lake or stream requires a soil erosion control permit, and an earth change over 1 acre in size, regardless of its location in the landscape, also requires a soil erosion control permit. The soil erosion control program is not just a regulatory function. Antrim County’s program balances its commitment to people with the natural environment to create an effective and well respected program.

The fee structure for soil erosion control permits had remained the same for the last 20 years. Last year, with the help of Bryan Smith, Kearney Township Commissioner and liaison to the Conservation District, the fee structure was compared to surrounding counties, and it was determined that the fees should be increased. As a result, revenues received from permit fees have increased by about 54%.

#### **Soil Erosion Control Achievements –**

- Processed 218 soil erosion control permits
- The 218 permits required approximately 1500 on-site inspections
- Provided guidance to 218 property owners, 56 builders, 15 excavators, 10 landscapers, and 5 engineering firms
- Collaborated with each of the zoned townships in the county for regulatory assistance
- Received over 40 calls/week about environmental concerns, property purchases, MDEQ issues, zoning issues and overall permitting questions during the construction season

#### **Water Quality Activities – Total of over 560 contacts**

- Lancer Leap (20 high school students)
- Americorps Conservation Presentation (15 attendees)
- Contractors Training (45 attendees)
- Planted trees with 100 volunteers at EJ Ironworks new facility
- Elk Rapids Garden Walk - Resource Person (300 people)
- Soil Health Field Day (60 attendees)
- Provides input on two Water Quality Management Plan Steering Committees

### **COOPERATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area of Charlevoix, Antrim, Kalkaska, Emmet (CAKE CISMA) is housed at the Antrim Conservation District, and the District serves as the fiduciary for the regional group. CAKE CISMA staff conducts educational programming, surveying, monitoring and treatment of priority invasive species throughout the four-county region. The Cooperative Regional Group shares an equipment trailer, a mobile boat wash station and hazardous material storage cabinet, among other assets. It provides services to individual landowners, municipalities, Land Conservancies, Parks, The Nature Conservancy, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, to name a few.

#### **Invasive Species Control Achievements:**

- Surveyed 90 private and public properties in Antrim County
- Treated approximately 70 acres for invasive terrestrial plants
- Primary invasive targets for the season were Japanese and giant knotweed, oriental bittersweet, offering a net savings to landowners > \$8,000
- Treated purple loosestrife at 25 sites and phragmites at 9 sites on Elk and Skegemog lakes and the Torch River bijou
- Monitors and treats Lake Michigan shoreline for invasive phragmites

## COUNTY FORESTRY PROGRAM

Public and private landowners who own forestland, wetlands, and other land-based resources throughout the state, not unlike the farming community, provide a myriad of benefits to society. These benefits include clean air, clean water, wildlife habitat, locations for recreation, food, fish habitat, raw wood products, etc. Without these beneficial resources the quality of life experienced by our community would be diminished. As large tracts of forestland are broken up into smaller parcels, the number of private landowners in need of forest management planning assistance continues to grow annually.

Antrim County contracts with Antrim Conservation District to oversee county owned forest land and provide private land technical support. The Forester's responsibilities are as follows:



- Write forest management plans for individuals
- Implement forest management plans
- Monitor use of county lands
- Maintain property lines
- Assist county board with special projects
- Oversee all timbering and improvement cutting
- Issue firewood cutting permits
- Maintain designated recreational trails
- Improve recreational usage
- Provide technical assistance and advise to residents

## 2018 Forestry Achievements

### Private Land Services –

- Made 112 referrals to private sector contractors
- Completed 15 Forest Management Plans for improvement on 750 acres
- Enrolled 4 landowners in the Hunter Access Program, opening up new lands to hunters
- Provided seedlings to commercial ventures planting 49 acres of trees
- Inspected 44 private yard trees for tree health and guidance
- 6 referrals made for the Qualified Forest Program
- 220 conservation calls were fielded in office, and by telephone/e-mail
- Made presentations during three events reaching approximately 136 people

### Antrim County Forest Land –

- Prepared and coordinated forest management activities including timber sales on 6 properties: Leonard Rd, Cedar River, Simpson Rd., Like of the Woods, Alba Rd and Grass River, generating \$36,200 in revenue.
- Completed trail, bridge, and sign upgrades and hazard tree removal at 6 Parks including: Morhman Park, Barnes Park, Elk River Day Park, Cedar River Natural Area, Frog Hollow, and Glacial Hills.

## **NATURAL RESOURCE EDUCATION**

Our new Conservation Program and Americorps staff focused on outreach and natural resource education and coordinated the following programs in 2018.

- Recycling Center Management, clean-up and outreach/education
- Spearheaded Spencer Creek Rain Garden demonstration in Alden (20 volunteers)
- Coordinated Wildlife Management Workshop
- Healthy Soils, Healthy Farms field day in collaboration with Kankaska County
- Coordinated Lancer Leap in collaboration with Ellsworth Highschool
- Conservation Essay Contest, with area schools
- 4H Kids Camp in collaboration with MSU Extension
- Tree Sale and Native Plant Sale
- Jordan River Clean Sweep
- Annual Meeting Presentations

## **DISTRICT BOARD & ADMINISTRATION**

The District held its annual meeting and elections on December 6, 2018. New Directors were elected that included Mary Schoenherr, Ray Ludwa, Randy Johnson. Continuing directors include Joe Pomerville, and Libby Hiser. The first order of business was to get the Five Year Strategic Plan completed in order to ensure the District is meeting the needs and expectations of the County's citizens, commissioners, and others. That plan is expected to be completed by the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter, 2019. Please feel free to contact the District Manager for a copy of the plan or for questions or comments at [antrimcd@macd.org](mailto:antrimcd@macd.org) or (231) 533-8363 ext. 1 at any time.

The District would like to thank Bryan Smith, for his faithful and thoughtful input to our meetings over the years while he served as the County Commission liaison to the District.