

**Thank you for your continued support.
We look forward to helping you meet
your conservation goals.**



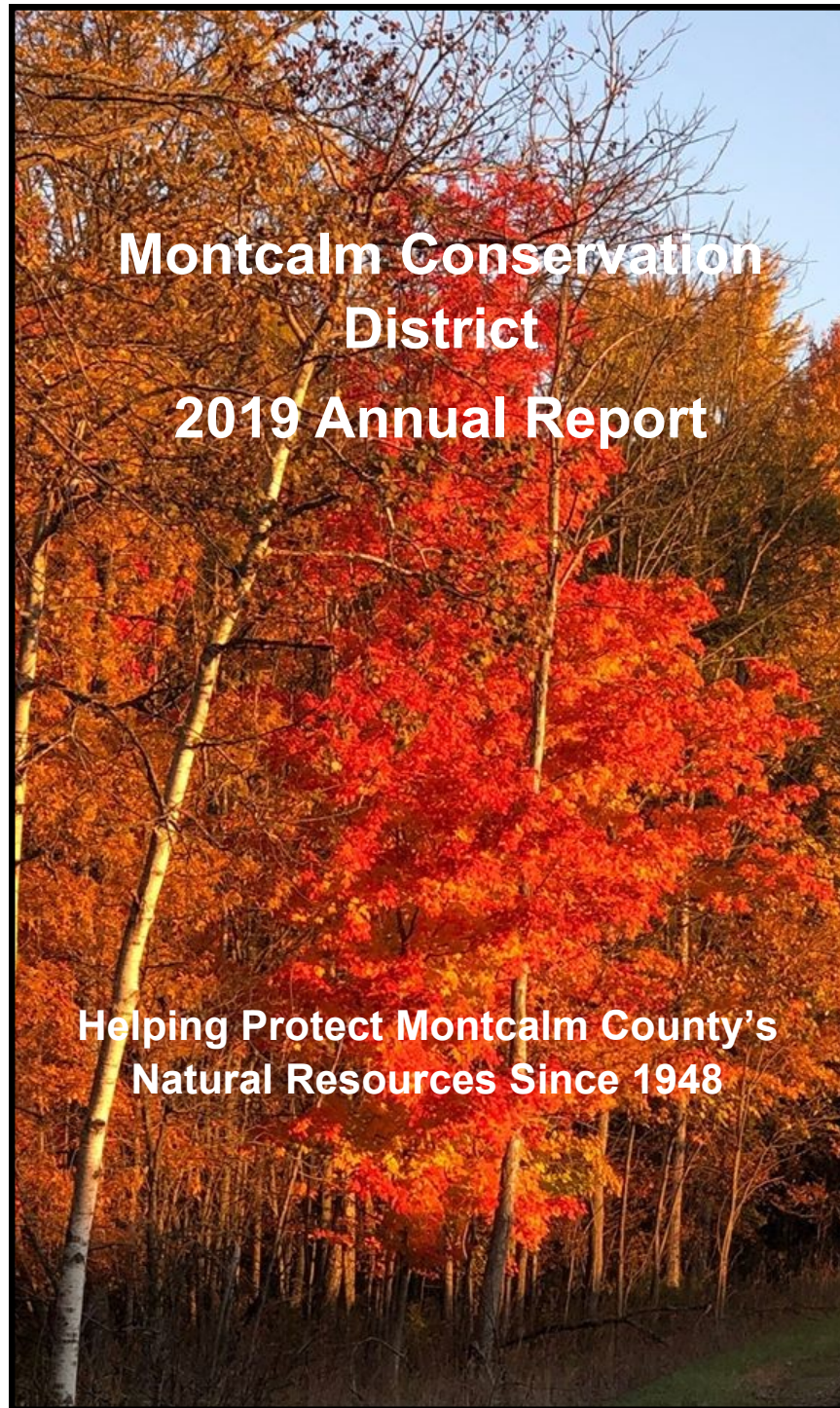
Montcalm Conservation District

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www.montcalmcd.org

Montcalm Conservation District 2019 Annual Report

**Helping Protect Montcalm County's
Natural Resources Since 1948**



District Board

Bruce Noll, *Chairman*

Chris Mark, *Vice Chair*

Mark Sabin, *Treasurer*

Steve Wyckoff, *Director*

Jed Welder, *Director*

John Johansen, *Associate Director*

Sue Aagaard, *Associate Director*

District Staff

Amber Snow, *District Manager*

Dixie Ward, *Resource Recovery/Watershed Technician*

Will Wagner-Ertz, *District Forester*

Emma Costantino, *Conservation Assistant*

Karen Ickes, *MAEAP Technician*

NRCS Staff

Di'Shun Melbert, *District Conservationist*

Frank Packard, *Soil Conservation Technician*

The Montcalm Conservation District celebrates its 71st anniversary at the District's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2019 at 6 pm. The evening includes the business meeting, election for one director position, dinner and an auction with the proceeds designated for the District's Scholarship Fund.

The District is grateful for the support of the Montcalm County taxpayers and the resulting millage funding that has enabled us to more adequately staff the office and expand our programming.

Welcome New Staff



Amber Snow, District Manager

Amber is a graduate of Central Michigan University and has experience in governmental, nonprofit and for profit organizations. A true farmer's daughter and conservationist, she is an outdoor enthusiast that enjoys hunting, snowshoeing, photography and gardening.



Will Wagner-Ertz, District Forester

Will is originally from Southeast Iowa and attended Iowa State University where he graduated with a degree in Forestry. After graduation he worked as a forester for the Oregon Department of Forestry. He is excited to work in Michigan and help landowners manage their forests



Emma Costantino, Conservation Assistant

Emma graduated from Michigan State University in May of this year with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife. After graduation, she served in AmeriCorps with the Antrim Conservation District. She will be managing a grant to clean up the Flat River Watershed as well as assisting with other district programs.

District Programs

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

The Conservation District had a successful 2019 Spring Tree Sale and is preparing for an additional Fall sale in 2020. Montcalm County 4-H, Farm Bureau and the District partnered to hold a Natural Resources Field Day in May, with over 300 local students participating. After more than 30 years of service to the District, Executive Director Judy Cloer retired in June. A retirement open house was held to celebrate Judy's many years of dedicated service. The September 2019 Conservation Tour focused on renewable energy and pollinator/native species habitat plantings. Nearly 50 participants toured a solar array, wind turbine site and Heritage Village. The District is working to add programming and services, made possible through the successful 2018 millage.

FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

The Forestry Assistance program encourages proper forest management by providing landowners with information, resources and technical assistance from our district forester at Montcalm Conservation District. There are numerous federal, state, and local forest management programs and incentives for which you may qualify. Our forester will identify what is the best fit for you based on your objectives and your specific natural resource needs. Even if you just have questions or need advice about your forest, we are here to help!

RESOURCE RECOVERY

The Conservation District was approved by the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners to administer and coordinate the solid waste program. The Conservation District began working on the program in March 2019. The program had previously been administered by the Mid-Michigan District Health Department. Montcalm county solid waste funds support the program and are generated through the county landfill in Pierson. The solid waste program includes, (5) single stream recycling sites, household hazardous waste, tire & electronic collections & solid waste education and outreach. Through the Michigan Department of environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), the Conservation District received a rural electronics recycling grant and a scrap tire cleanup grant. The rural electronics recycling grant will provide funding for a permanent electronics recycling site at the Conservation District as well as, (4) electronic recycling events to take place in, 2020 & 2021. The grant will cover recycling fees for televisions and computer monitors. The scrap tire cleanup grant will fund (2) tire collections during 2020. The program is off to a strong start with high public participation at recycling events in 2019. The Conservation District will continue to expand and strengthen the solid waste program in Montcalm county.

MAEAP

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) worked with landowners to reduce environmental risk on 12 new farms and on over 30,000 acres of forested lands between Mecosta and Montcalm Counties.

Fiscal Year 2020 Appropriations Act

Revenue

State Funds	\$205,513.00
Federal Funds	\$20,554.45
Contribution from Local Units	\$46,420.65
Interest and Rentals	\$1,285.00
Tree Sale	\$35,000.00
Other Revenue	\$120,500.00
Total Revenue	\$429,273.10

Expenditures

281 Operations	\$129,825.00
294 Reforestation	\$20,000.00
283 FAP Grant	\$70,500.00
286 Resource Recovery	\$40,420.65
288 Rural Electronics Recycling Grant	\$11,515.00
291 Watershed 319 Grant	\$123,498.00
282 NACD Grant	\$20,554.45
Total Expenditures	\$416,313.10
Budget Balance	\$12,960.00
Beginning Fund Balance	\$149,253.00
Ending Fund Balance	\$162,213.00



NRCS Update

NRCS has continued to prioritize conservation for Montcalm County. This year we have seen interest in all our conservation programs. Although we are proud of our performance in 2019 we know more can be accomplished. NRCS programs currently have 13,486 acres compared to the 224,000 acres in farmland according to www.montcalm.org.

We have 15 new applications contracted in FY19 adding an additional 1,853.10 Acres in NRCS programs and obligating \$277,315.45 to Montcalm Landowners Conservation Efforts and Stewardship.

NRCS has certified 34 payments this year. Some practices certified with those payments include:

- Brush Management (Invasive Species Treatment)
- Cover Crops = 1805 ac.
- Conservation Cover (Wildlife Habitat)
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Livestock Fencing and Pipeline
- Forest Management Plans
- Agrichemical Handling Facilities
- Streambank Shoreline Protection
- Management Techniques to optimize irrigation, grazing, and harvesting.

These landowners' commitments to conservation and efforts to achieve NRCS Standards for practice certifications have allowed NRCS to cost share \$291,211 of conservation for Montcalm County.



2019 Montcalm County FSA Year End Report

A new Farm bill has been passed that covers the years 2019 – 2023, the implementation of a Farm Bill is always a very demanding time for the Montcalm FSA staff consisting of Pam Brooks, Carrie Albert and Carolyn Waite. I continue to cover both Isabella and Montcalm FSA offices.

ARC/PLC (Agriculture Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage)

ARC/PLC - This program is a revenue-based program using a national marketing year average for the crop. Producers need to make an election for this program by March 15, 2020.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

A general CRP signup is scheduled to be available sometime in December. Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) is an ongoing signup.

Market Facilitation Program (MFP)

The Market Facilitation Program (MFP) provides direct payments to help corn, soybean, wheat, alfalfa, as well as dairy and hog producers who have been directly impacted by illegal retaliatory tariffs, resulting in the loss of traditional exports. Producers have until December 6, 2019 to apply for MFP for 2019. Payments have been issued on the first 75 percent of the producer's total projected payment

Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC)

This program provides financial assistance to participating farmers when the margin – (the difference between the price of milk and feed costs) – falls below the coverage level selected by the farmer.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

This program provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2018, through Sept. 30, 2019, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

The Montcalm FSA Office continues to implement an appointment policy. With such a policy, both the customers and the staff enjoy the ability to most effectively complete the business at hand without significant interruption or delay.