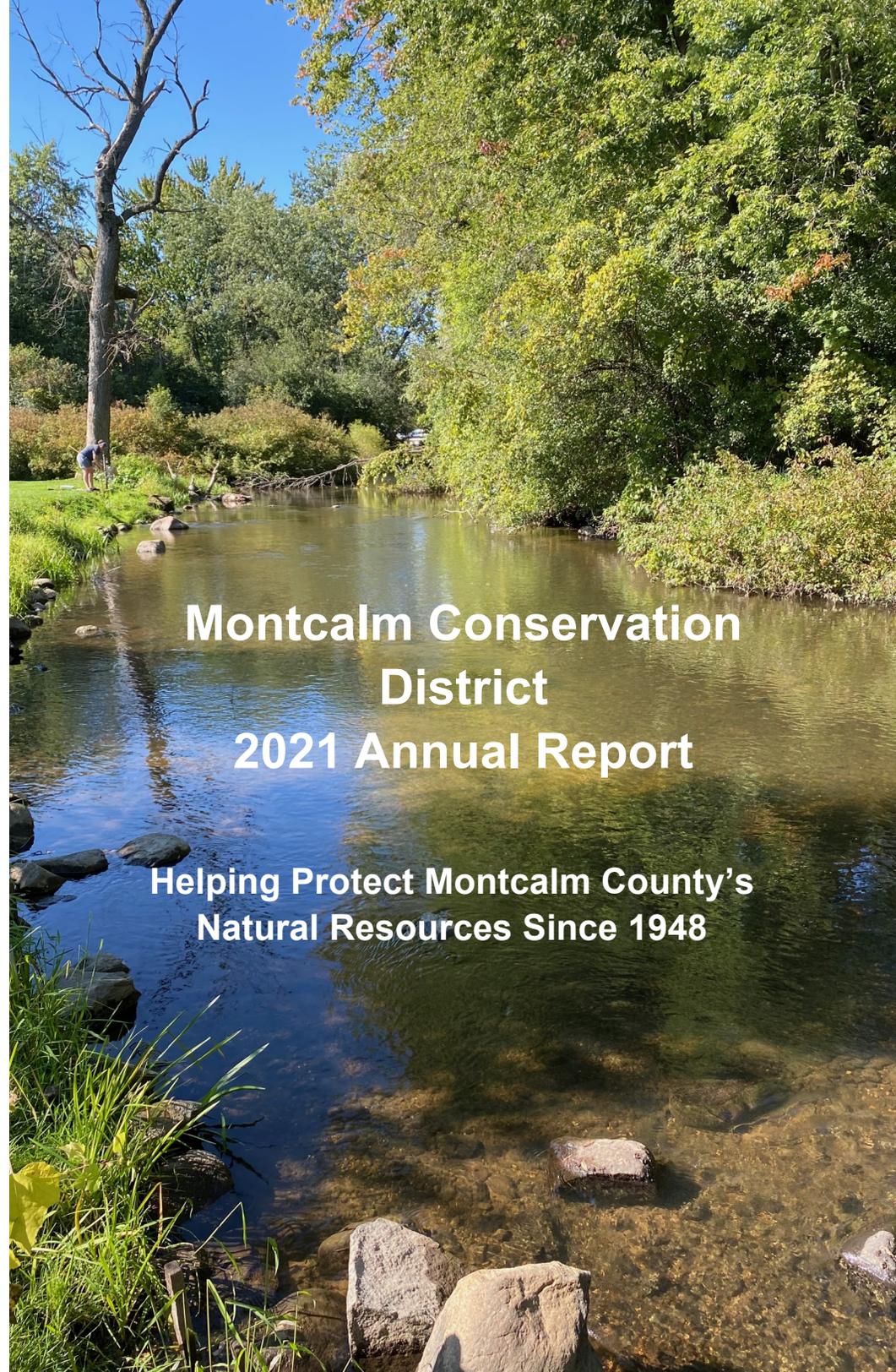


**Thank you for your continued support.
We look forward to helping you meet
your conservation goals.**



Montcalm Conservation District
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Stanton, MI 48888

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Montcalm Conservation District 2021 Annual Report

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



2019 Montcalm County FSA Year End Report

District Board

Bruce Noll, *Chairman*
Chris Mark, *Vice Chair*
Mark Sabin, *Treasurer*
Steve Wyckoff, *Director*
Jed Welder, *Director*
Sue Aagaard, *Associate Director*

District Staff

Amber Snow, *District Manager*
Mike MacEachron II, *Conservation Programs Technician*
Karen McDaniel, *MAEAP Technician*
Marleigh Worden, *Student Intern*

NRCS Staff

Luis Martir, *District Conservationist*

The Montcalm Conservation District celebrates its 73rd anniversary at the District's Annual Meeting on Thursday, December 9, 2021 at 6 pm. The evening includes the informational meeting, election for two director positions, 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 enhance and expand our programming.

After 20 years of service with the Farm Service Agency, CED Wayne Stickler, has decided it's time to enjoy family, friends and any other adventure life brings his way and retire. Wayne spent his first nine years as the Montcalm County CED. In 2011, he took on the challenge of being shared management, covering both Montcalm and Isabella Counties for the last 10 years of his career. We all wish him the best. He will be missed by all.

The Montcalm FSA staff consists of Carolyn Waite, Carrie Albert and Sydney Stauffer. Wayne's position has not been filled at this time. Steve Markley, CED from Gratiot County, is currently assisting with administrative office operations as acting CED. Heather Hadder, County Operations Trainee, is also assisting the office with day-to-day CED office operations where needed.

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

The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level. The PLC Program provides income support payments when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price. Producers need to make an election for this program by March 15, 2022.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) is an ongoing signup.

Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC)

The DMC program is a voluntary program that provides dairy operations with risk management coverage that will pay producers when the difference (the margin) between the national price of milk and the average cost of feed falls below a certain level selected by the program participants. The signup period runs from December 13, 2021 to February 18, 2022.

Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP)

The program provides organic producers and handlers with financial assistance to reduce the cost of organic certification. The program reimburses producers and handlers for a portion of their paid certification costs. The application deadline for program year 2022 is October 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022.

The Montcalm FSA Office continues to serve producers by appointment, email and phone following COVID-19 guidelines. Please call the office prior to your visit for an appointment, (989) 831-4212.

NRCS

NRCS Announces Conservation Funding Opportunities for 2022

USDA has several fiscal year 2022 assistance opportunities for agricultural producers and private landowners for key programs, such as the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#), [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#), [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program \(ACEP\)](#), [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#) and [Agricultural Management Assistance \(AMA\)](#) program.

Through conservation programs, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help producers and landowners make conservation improvements on their land that benefit natural resources, build resiliency and contribute to the nation's broader effort to combat the impacts of climate change.

Applying for Assistance

NRCS accepts applications for its conservation programs year-round. State Technical Committees, composed of representatives from conservation and agricultural-related organizations, work with NRCS to set state-specific, ranking dates to evaluate applications for funding. These dates account for producer needs, staff workload and ensure potential participants have ample opportunity to apply. Producers should apply by their state's ranking dates to be considered for funding in the current cycle.

Funding is provided through a competitive process. [State-specific, ranking dates](#) for all programs are available. Applications received after ranking dates will be automatically deferred to the next funding period.

Program Options

EQIP provides cost share assistance for producers to use 170-plus conservation practices to address a wide variety of resource concerns. Within EQIP, Conservation Incentive Contracts allow producers to further target priority resource concerns. CSP helps producers take their conservation activities to the next level through comprehensive conservation and advanced conservation activities. ACEP helps producers enroll wetlands, grasslands and farmlands into easements for long-term protection. Additionally, through RCPP, producers and landowners can work with partners who are co-investing with NRCS on targeted projects.

Historically Underserved Producer Benefits

Special provisions are also available for [historically underserved producers](#). For EQIP, historically underserved producers are eligible for advance payments to help offset costs related to purchasing materials or contracting services up front. In addition, historically underserved producers can receive higher EQIP payment rates (up to 90% of average cost). NRCS sets aside EQIP, CSP and ACEP funds for historically underserved producers.

Conservation Practices and Climate

NRCS conservation programs play a critical role in USDA's commitment to partnering with farmers, ranchers, forest landowners and local communities to deliver climate solutions that strengthen agricultural operations and rural America. States may prioritize a variety of voluntary conservation practices through these NRCS programs, including those that support climate-smart agriculture and forestry (CSAF).

In fiscal year 2022, EQIP and CSP will provide targeted funding for CSAF practices, and Conservation Incentive Contracts – a new EQIP program – will be available nationwide with an emphasis on CSAF practices. Building on these efforts, NRCS will also prioritize climate investments through ACEP, RCPP and Conservation Innovation Grants.

Producers, landowners and forest managers interested in applying for assistance should contact the NRCS at their [local USDA Service Center](#).

Fiscal Year 2021 Appropriations Act

Revenue	
State Funds	\$201,498.00
Federal Funds	\$32,276.00
Contribution from Local Units	\$44,996.00
Interest and Rentals	\$550.00
Tree Sale	\$36,500.00
Other Revenue	\$130,759.00
Total Revenue	\$446,579.00
Expenditures	
281 Operations	\$133,809.00
294 Reforestation	\$20,000.00
283 FAP Grant	\$68,000.00
286 Resource Recovery	\$38,996.00
288/289 Rural Electronics Recycling & Scrap Tire Grants	\$10,000.00
291 Watershed 319 Grant	\$123,498.00
282 NACD Grant	\$32,276.00
Total Expenditures	\$426,579.00
Budget Balance	\$20,000.00
Beginning Fund Balance	\$152,690.39
Ending Fund Balance	\$172,690.39

District Programs

DISTRICT ACTIVITY

The Conservation District had successful Spring Tree Sales in both 2020 and 2021. In the Fall of 2020 we had a tree sale which we held again in Fall 2021. The addition of the fall sales has been well received and we have experienced good support for them. Fall is a great time to plant! The offerings in each sale continue to be evaluated and adjusted, with a focus on native species. Native plant sales were held both Spring and Fall of 2021. This addition to our efforts of providing native species and suitable habitat materials for any size area have been very well received and expand our education and service efforts to a broader audience. The availability of native species is critical in the effort to provide suitable habitat for wildlife and pollinators. The District is expanding efforts to control invasive species, both terrestrial and aquatic. The District worked with the Farmer Veteran Coalition—Michigan Chapter to host a Soil Health workshop, Part I. This event was held in September, with topics that covered not only soil health but also diversification, beginning farmer resources, hoop house production and organics. Part II will be held Spring 2022. The District has experienced a steady increase of individuals interested in the variety of services we offer. The District continues 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.

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 Montcalm Conservation District along with the Montcalm Solid Waste Committee strive to enhance recycling education and outreach by promoting the goals of our Management Plan. For our recycling programs, we offer our annual events including our Tire, Electronics, Household Hazardous Waste, during the Spring and Fall as well as the Shred-it events. Through the Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), we manage grants relating to Rural Electronics and Scrap Tires. Montcalm Conservation District also maintains the drop-off recycling sites located in Stanton, Edmore, Lakeview, Crystal, and Carson. We have just received a grant for \$86,000 from the Recycling Partnership for our drop-off recycling sites. This campaign will improve drop-off recycling and implement tactics to increase awareness of the need to recycle, reduce contamination, sustain an efficient and effective program, provide great customer service, and divert clean recyclable materials from the landfill to viable end markets. Another component of this program is to take appointments for our permanent electronic recycling site located at our office in Stanton. All of these programs together help to keep the County roads, private, and public lands and our water clean.

District Programs

MAEAP

Karen McDaniel is the MAEAP (MI Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program) technician covering Montcalm and Mecosta Counties.

MAEAP is a voluntary and confidential program that helps farms and forest land owners reduce environmental risk on their property. By being verified in one of the systems (Farmstead, cropping, livestock, forest wetland habitat) you can have recognition as a top steward in the community, be covered by regulatory protections, and have preferred consideration for technical assistance and cost share programs.

To get started contact Karen to set up a time for a property visit.

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This project is about addressing water quality in the Flat River Watershed. The Flat River is one of 16 rivers in the State with a Natural River designation by the Michigan DNR. It was discovered that 16/18 subwatersheds were impacted by E. coli and other pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, and increased water temperatures. For our 319 project we manage around \$800,000 in grant funding through the EGLE nonpoint source program. This project funds efforts such as Natural River Act ordinance adoption, conservation easements in high probability biorarity areas, septic education through workshops and priority mailers, farmer-led workgroups (where farmers will meet and discuss conservation practices on their lands and what they have learned), we offer cost-share options for grassed water ways, cover crop installation and manure storage, and a natural shoreline project.