

Midland Conservation District ANNUAL REPORT



Taking care of the Earth, to feed the world

Prepared By: Thurlow, Karen | – MCD District Manager | FY16-17



Office Hours and Contact Information:

Location-954 E Isabella Rd Midland, MI 48640.

Co-located with the NRCS office in the Midland USDA Service Center.

New Hours: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 8:00am-2:00pm and
Tuesday & Thursday 7:00am – 4:30pm or by appointment.

Phone: 989-486-2325

Email: midlandconservation@macd.org

Web Page: <http://www.midlandcd.org/>

We are also on Facebook



History of the District

The Midland Conservation District was developed on June 27, 1950 as a unit of government.

The Midland Conservation District is one of 78 Conservation District in Michigan.

Michigan Conservation Districts are “unique” local units of State Government, established to carry out conservation programs. Conservation Districts utilize state, federal, and private sector resources to assist people with the wise use and protection of the natural resources on their lands.

Conservation Districts continually scan the needs of their local communities, work in partnership with others involved in conservation to set local priorities, and develop action plans to solve natural resource problems. The delivery of these efforts by Conservation Districts allows citizens to manage their private lands for a cleaner, healthier Michigan.

The Midland Conservation District is governed by a locally elected, five-member Board of Directors. The Directors make decisions regarding the District’s programs and activities, and hire qualified staff. The staff provides information, conservation planning, technical assistance, workshops, public education, and cost-share opportunities, as well as the Annual Tree Sale, selling trees/shrubs to enhance wildlife and reforestation.

This district was shut down in December 2012 after the state invalidated an election of board of directors. In August of 2014 the state appointed 5 board of directors that were selected from letters of interest that had been submitted. The current board has been working on the reestablishment of programs and funding and regaining community support.

We are currently looking for Associate Directors, and volunteers. Contact us if you are interested.

Current Board of Directors



Karen Thurlow – Administrator/District Manager is a Business Manager, Farmer & Beekeeper. Co-Owner Seed 2 Table, an 11 acre farm featuring Naturally Grown Produce and Vern's Bees Naturally Produced Honey. Karen is passionate about conservation practices of all types and youth education about farming and conservation are a big priority.

Justin Pelton- Chairman - Farmer & Mechanical Designer, is a local farmer with his Father at their family farm in Mt. Haley township of Midland county, were they grow row crops; corn, soybeans & wheat. Justin wants to advance conservation efforts in Midland County and promote agriculture.

Dennis Varner-Vice Chairman- Retired Farm Supply Consultant, Farm owner in Mt Haley Township, Once employed by the Midland Conservation district assisting NRCS in several programs. I have always enjoyed learning about conservation practices. I have valued my time serving on the new Board of Directors and hope to get the support of the landowners and conservation partners to return the District to be successful again.

Mary Johnson –Director holds a BA from the University of Michigan. She is a retired social worker and has been a Master Gardener Volunteer for Michigan State University since 1993. She and her husband own a small, 8 acre, property in Midland County where they grow flowers and vegetables. Gardening, preservation of farm life and the enjoyment of the outdoors are very important parts of her life. As a member of the Midland County Master Gardener Association, she is committed to encouraging good gardening practices and IPM.

Clint Bresbois- Director-Full time farmer in Mt. Haley Township. Farms with his father and raises Corn, Soybeans, Wheat, and Edible beans along with growing and selling hay for horse farms. Also serves on the board of Directors for the Michigan Farm Bureau. Very dedicated to the farming community and ready to help Midland CD get back on it's feet.

Jake Terwillegar- Director-Comes from a big farming family in Ingersoll Township where he works several acres along with many family members. Wants to help return the District to a fully functioning organization helping with conservation concerns in Midland County.

Midland Conservation District Funding

The Midland Conservation District does not currently receive funding through operational grants from the State of Michigan. Midland Conservation District does receive funding to oversee the DNR HAP (Hunting Access Program) and have a cooperative agreement with the NRCS office which puts a full time employee in the office.

The Annual Tree Sale is our main source of funding.

Other Sources: We have 2 unique Educational tools, a Water Tunnel and Earth Tunnel used to educate on soil and water health and used for many events around the state. They are available for rent through the District. Rental fees go into maintenance and promotion for the trailers and educational programs.

Also the sales of Midland County Platt Books, Woodworking for Wildlife, Landscaping for Wildlife, Plantskydd Organic Repellent, and T-Shirts help to gather funds for district activities.

Donations from public sources were minimal. Currently developing new funding sources. And accepting Donations for education and conservation projects in our area.

[We are currently co-located and working with the NRCS Office. Promoting Conservation Practices and Planning in Midland Co.](#)



Boyd Byelich the District Conservationist in the Midland USDA/NRCS office. has worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 26 years, in the states of Michigan, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. He has degrees in fisheries and wildlife management from Lake Superior State and grazing management from Montana State. Much of his work experience has been with livestock grazing management, wildlife habitat, forestry, and diversified agricultural enterprises. His family raises beef cattle near Harrisville, MI.

*The great story of American agriculture is one of hard work, ingenuity and passion,
And it's a story best told by the folks who live it.*

Practices Established: 2016 in review

Annual Tree and Shrub Sale

The District makes available tree and shrubs that are compatible with USDA conservation practices and Native to Michigan.



Without the use of the Red Barn on Olsen Rd. the tree sale was a challenge, working out of the back of a U-Haul was a challenge but the tree sale was a success and we look forward to continuing this service. The Red Barn was the location for over 30 years for the district to distribute trees. We currently distribute them in the parking lot of the USDA Center. Orders for 2017 will be taken January 17 through March 30. Delivery is the 3rd week in April 20,21 and 22. Look for order forms and details on our website.

Water and Earth Tunnel Rental Program



For educational purposes we have an Earth Tunnel and a Water Tunnel that can be rented. The Tunnels help teach Soil and Water conservation. Great hands on learning tools for students. These tunnels were made possible by a grant from the local Farm Bureau. They were rented 5 times to organizations in 2016. Contact us for details.



HAP Hunters Access Program: Public Hunting on Private Lands

HAP is a voluntary land leasing program. The DNR leases land from private land owners to provide additional hunting areas for hunters. Private land owners determine if all hunters or youth and apprentice hunters only may hunt on their property. Landowners specify the number of hunters allowed and can determine the species that they want hunted on the property. Land owners receive payment, up to \$25.00 per acre for high quality hunting property and are free from liability as stated in Public Act 451 of 1994.

Midland County currently has 3 Landowners and 387 Acres enrolled.

HAP offers a chance to increase and diversify your farm income, while helping control deer damage or nuisance wildlife. It's a way to allow controlled access on your land and is flexible.

Must be a landowner of 40 acres or more. Leases are for 2 years.

The Midland Conservation District enrolls landowners and maintains the sign up boxes visiting the property once a week during hunting seasons and once a month during off season.

Joan Timmer, HAP Participant states

"HAP program serves to help pay my taxes and insurance on my farm. Further it serves to provide a resource so young people can learn to hunt in an area that is not overcrowded with other hunters. Good sportsmanship is expected in this environment.

It provides a way to balance the population of turkeys, white tail deer and other game that can quickly become overcrowded for the food sources available."

Joan has 40 acres set for youth and apprentice hunting and has been a participant for 2 lease terms.(4 years)



HAP also has Wildlife Improvement Funding for those enrolled in the program, Landowners receive funds for improving wildlife habitat.

Eligible Projects include: Grassland planting, management and/or maintenance, Perennial or Annual Food plots, Soft Mass producing trees.

Project pays up to \$250.00 per acre.

Contact our office for details on the HAP Hunting Access Program.

4th Grade Farm Tour



September 2016 marked the 29th year of the 4th Grade Farm Tour hosted by the Laurenz Family Farm and Breckenridge FFA and sponsorships from The Exchange Club of Midland, Gleaner Life Insurance Society Thrivent Financial and Midland Conservation District.

4th grade classes from schools in Midland Co are invited for hands on education in farming and conservation. The FFA provided tour guides for 16 stations that included, Farm Animals, Petting Animals, Containment Shed & Technical Information, Corn Classroom, Corn Maze, Grain Hauling and Storage, Soils, Earth and Water Tunnels, Popcorn, Dairy Demonstration, Farm Machinery, One Acre Plot, Bugs on the Farm, Michigan Pork Producers, All Food Comes from the Farm and FFA Organization Opportunities.

2017 will mark 30 years and we hope to make this a very special event!

PLEASE Help: If you'd like to donate to make this upcoming 30 year celebration a special event, Contact the Midland Conservation District, go to our web site for more information and pictures of this event.

Other Workshops and Educational programs.

February 6, 2016 we hosted a Workshop Called "Hogs on the Loose" which gave an overview of local feral swine management, tracking swine movements and financial and technical assistance available to land owners. Speakers and presenters were Nathan Newman, APHIS, Steven Gray, MSU, and Boyd Byelich, NRCS/USDA. We had over 40 attendees. It was held at the Homer township Hall.

We will be hosting 2 workshops in 2017, Benefits of Cover Crops and Backyard Conservation. Details, Dates and the location to be decided.

Conservation Matters Educational Show on MCTV

With the help of Joan Timmer, HAP participant and District supporter as the director and the great volunteers at MCTV we have created a television show to inform and educate the public on conservation issues and practices.

In 2106 we produced 10 Shows. 1. Who are we, 2. Tree Sale Program, 3.Planting Trees.Why Plant Trees, How to Plant Trees, 4. Creating Wildlife Habitat, 5. Pollinators: What are they and what do they do, 6. Invasive and Natives what are they and why should we care, 7. Grazing Management, 8. Hunting Access Program, 9. Founding Fathers-Founding Farmers and 10. Back Yard Conservation.

Look for it, "Conservation Matters" on the local MCTV Community Voices Channel. On Charter Communications and AT&T Uverse. Or Go to the MCTV Website <http://www.cityofmidlandmi.gov/457/Whats-On-Now> Community Voices Channel and search Conservation Matters. Or you can go to our website, www.midlandcd.org, where all shows are available to watch by clicking on the link to watch.

We look forward to making more shows this year.
Contact us if you'd like to suggest a topic for a show.

Other Programs

GAAMPs (Generally Accepted Agriculture and Management Practices)

The Michigan Right to Farm Act authorized The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development to develop and adopt GAAMPS for farms and farm operations. These voluntary practices based on available technology and scientific research to promote sound environmental stewardship.

MAEAP-Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program- A proactive, voluntary program created to help all farmers to address environmental risks on farms and forests. A 3 phase program addressing education, on farm assessments & verification. MAEAP allows farmers to be proactive and proud of their environmental stewardship. It promotes effective land stewardship practices that comply with state and federal regulations.

FWH*A*Syst: Forest, Wetlands and Habitat*A*Syst, will assist you in developing and implementing a management plan that prevents contamination of ground water and surface water resources and maintains your forest, wetland or habitat. **CNMP** Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, **Livestock*A*Syst**, **Farm*A*Syst**, and **Crop*A*Syst** are all environmentally assured systems and are eligible for various incentives and recognition.

EQIP- Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Provides financial and technical assistance to producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits, such as improved water quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation and improve or create wild life habitat.

CSP-Conservation Stewardship Program, helps landowners build on existing conservation efforts. We can custom a plan to help you improve grazing conditions, increase crop land or develop wildlife habitat. We can help you find new ways to meet your conservation goals

The following is a Draft of what you can expect from us in the next year.
Get on our e-mail list to get quarterly updates.

Midland Conservation District
Annual Plan of Work Fiscal Year
October 1, 2016- September 30, 2017

1st Quarter October 1, 2016- December 31, 2016

Begin Annual Meeting Plans: create annual report, plan meeting according to MACD Standards
Tree Sale Planning: Finalize tree sale form and pricing by Dec. meeting. Update Website.
HAP Program: Target large parcel property owners.
MCTV Show: Show Training. Learning to direct shows.
Quarterly News Letter out first week October.

2nd Quarter January 1, 2017 – March 30, 2017

Annual Meeting: January 17, 2017 No Election required at this meeting.
Annual Report and Resource Assessment.
Come see us at the Annual Local Seed Swap, Creative 360 February 28, 2017
MCTV Shows: To be announced
Workshop: March 11, 2017 10:00am-12:00 Noon Backyard Conservation, Homer Township Hall
Tree Sale Orders due by March 30.
Quarterly News Letter out first week January.

3rd Quarter April 1, 2016 – June 30, 2016

Tree Sale Distribution: April 21-22, 2017
MCTV Shows: To Be Announced
Work Shops: June, Location and Topic to be announced
Quarterly News Letter out first week April.

4th Quarter July 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016

Appropriations Act Planning & Budget Planning:
Midland Co Fair:
4th Grade Farm Tour & Follow up with Classes that attend.
MCTV Shows:
Quarterly News Letter out first week July.

5 Year Plan of Work:

Create a list of partners and target them for support & funding.
Develop trailer rental program. Create a target list and advertise.
Become familiar and support the NRCS, FSA programs.
Develop more education programs.
Attend County Meetings, Create a schedule for attending at least one meeting a year for each county.

Agency Cooperation and Partnerships

Currently we have a working relationships with
USDA (United States Department of Agriculture)
NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service)
DNR (Department of Natural Resources)
MARD- (Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development).
MACD (Michigan Association of Conservation Districts)

In the past the district has received grants from the following foundations:
Charles J. Strostaker Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, The Herbert H. Dow Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation, The Dow Chemical Foundation , Michigan F.F.A. Foundation, Saginaw Bay WIN, S.C. Johnson Company, Three Rivers Corporation and Midland County Commissioners who have supported us in the past. Also Little Forks Conservancy, Mid MI Wild Ones, Chippewa Nature Center, Michigan Farm Bureau.
If your name is on this list we certainly appreciate your support!

We would like to thank the following for their support in 2016,
MCTV volunteers and Joan Timmer for their support and help in the production of Conservation Matters,
Midland County Farm Bureau for their Grant to us to pay for the food at our Annual Meeting 2016.
Paul Card CPAs for their accounting and financial help and the great work they do,
The Gerald Laurenz Family and the Breckenridge FFA for the great work they have done with the Farm Tour.
Albert Jones Area Conservationist with the USDA/NRCS Service for his support in our return to operation,
Boyd Byelich District Conservationist Midland NRCS for all his support.
Chris Savona, MACD Regional Coordinator, for all his help and advice.
The Michigan DNR and Monique Ferris for the help on the HAP Program.
All the customers that purchased Trees in our tree sale and all those who have donated money and time.
Little Forks Conservancy for the help in promoting our activities.
Chippewa Nature Center, Curt Holsinger for help on our Invasive Native show and Kyle Bagnall for his knowledge and programs.
The District would also like to thank the board of directors, for their time and commitment to getting the district back to functioning.

It has been a productive and learning year. We are looking forward to continuing community involvement and support, developing more programs and promoting good conservation practices in Midland Co..

Please help us by taking our Resource Survey located on our website or contact us and we will get it to you. This is a way for us to get input from community residents on their resource concerns and helps with direction. What would you like to see us work on?
Reminder to get on our e-mail list to stay informed. Volunteer, Donate, Thank You!



2017 Monthly Meeting Schedule

January 17, 2017 Annual Meeting	February 21, 2017
March 21, 2017	April 18, 2017
May 16, 2017	June 20, 2017
July 18, 2017	August 15, 2017
September 19, 2017	October 17, 2017
November 21, 2017	December 19, 2017

The Meetings will be held under the provisions of the Open Meetings Act (Public act 267 of 1976) at the USDA-NRCS Service Center Office located at 954 E Isabella Rd. Midland, MI 48640 (989) 835-1921

*If there is a change in schedule, within 3 days of the meeting in which a change is made, the Midland Conservation district will post a notice stating the new dates, times and places of regular meetings.

*Special Meetings must be posted at least 18 hours in advance. The notice will include date, time and place of the meeting.

*The Open Meetings Act provides provisions for the public to address the District board during the meeting

Join us for an Evening of Celebration

January 17, 2017 6:00pm- 9:00pm

Larkin Township Hall 3016 N. Jefferson Midland, MI 48642



Agenda:

Music & Mingle 5:30pm-6:00pm

Entertainment-The Midland Guitar Ensemble

Dinner 6:00pm

Catered by Shirlene's Cuisine

*No charge for dinner, Donations are greatly appreciated

7:00pm-9:00pm

Speakers & Presentations

Karen Thurlow- Midland CD Annual Report

Ken Wawersik- MAEAP Phase 1

Boyd Byelich- NRCS Updates

Kyle Bagnall- Floods of Midlands Past

Happy New Year 2017



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E-MAIL : midlandconservation@macd.org

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Please RSVP by January 13, 2017