



We would like to offer a very special thank you to:

The Berrien County Board of Commissioners for their continued financial support to the Conservation District and interest in preserving Berrien County's Natural Resources.

National Grape Cooperative for donating the juice for this evenings event and monetary support through cost share funds.

Natural Resources Conservation Service
Berrien County Farm Bureau
Eau Claire Fruit Exchange
GreenStone Farm Credit Service
Michigan State University Extension
Michigan Department of Agriculture
Holloway Farms
Zirk Welding & Irrigation
John Byrdak of TVB "The Very Best" Catering & Food

Lee LaVanway for being our special guest speaker.

The Berrien County Conservation District would like to thank all of our partners, supporters, and volunteers from 2009.

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Berrien County Conservation District

"Managing Our Natural Resources"



2009 Annual Report

Date: 02/23/10

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A note from the Administrator

We value our partnerships with other organizations, businesses, and individuals tremendously. This past year we were able to have a very successful field day, purchase a no-till drill, carry on daily business, and provide services due to many of these partners. To maintain a tight budget, we do rely on our partners and volunteers to help us accomplish many of our goals. I am very excited about this coming year; with the purchase of the no-till drill with financial assistance from the County Commissioners we should be able to provide producers with alternatives to their farming practices and save valuable resources. We are planning another on-farm field day in mid summer with no-till planting and cover cropping as the theme.

Through a working relationship with Ottawa Conservation District we have been and will continue to contract a technician to do our vegetation assurances in critical dune areas - protecting that resource for many generations to come.

In April we will once again partner with Resource Recovery and others to help provide conservation education to over 1000 area 5th graders at Natural Resource Days.

A partnership with Van Buren Conservation District and Two Rivers Coalition will enable us to utilize a DNRE grant to cleanup up two stream sites in Berrien County; one on the Paw Paw River and one on Mills Creek. Pending approval of the grant, the trash cleanup date will be scheduled in late summer.

A grant proposal with MDA through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative would fund a technician in our office for watershed best management practices. It would be a 5 yr program if funded as proposed. A partnership with Calhoun Conservation District may result in a full time technician available in our county for best management practices in the St. Joseph River watershed through a 319 grant proposal.

Through a partnership with the SW Michigan Land Conservancy, the District is applying for a grant to purchase the development rights to a significant natural area in Chikaming Township called Tower Hill Camp. Funding will be awarded to approved grants in 2011.

These are some very exciting projects we are looking forward to. We are always receptive to new partnerships and ideas. Please contact myself or a board member if you have a project to discuss.

Nancy Carpenter

BCCD FY 2009 Appropriations Budget

		2008-2009
		As <u>Amended</u> to end of fiscal year
Revenues		
State Funds	Operations & Groundwater	51,826.61*
Federal Funds		0
Contributions from Local Units		20,807.76
Charges for Services		3,950.00
Interest and Rentals		1,460.56
Tree Sales		12,570.49
Other revenue		15,757.29
Total Revenue		\$106,372.71
Expenditures		
281 Operations		44,928.38
281 Materials for resale		1,899.30
281 Services—Critical Dune		2,385.00
282 Groundwater stewardship		31,074.84
294 Tree Sale Expenses		4,546.35
Total Expenditures		\$84,833.87
Budget Balance		\$ 21,538.84

Staff Salaries and Directors Pay:

Directors \$35 per diem

District Manager part-time \$17,557.36

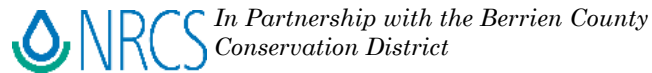
Technician (GW) part-time \$23,650.07

*Figure includes grants for groundwater stewardship, operations, and also includes \$17,000 of groundwater grant monies carried over from 2006 and can only be allocated for groundwater stewardship employee payroll.

Note:

In 2006, the Groundwater state grant was \$26,500.00. In 2007 no groundwater money was received as the BCCD did not have an employee for that program. In 2008, the grant available dropped to \$24,000: we received a portion of that as a new employee was hired to institute that program midyear. Cost share money from the state in 2008 was \$3,750. For 2009 and 2010, cost share money from the state is no longer available to districts. We have been fortunate to be able to provide cost share money on programs to producers from funds obtained from the National Grape Co-operative and from the County Commissioners. Operations state grant in 2008 was \$11,600. In 2009, it was \$10,700. In the budget for 2010, no state grant money is available for District Operations. Without support from the local community, and most specifically the Berrien County Board of Commissioners; our largest local supporter, the Conservation District would struggle to be able to provide resources for our county.

Berrien County Summary of Conservation Plans, Contracts, and Practices Planned & Applied in FY 2009 As of September 10, 2009



New Conservation Plans Developed = **11** Cons Plans w/practices Applied = **32**
Acres with Plans = **3,663** Applied Acres = **5,027**
Conservation Planning Backlog = **45**

New Conservation Contracts:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)-**4**
Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)-**5**
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)-**0**
Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP)-**0**
Continuous Reserve Program-Safe (CRPS)-**4**
Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)-**0**
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)-**0**
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)-**0**
Debt-for-Nature -**0**
Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)-**0**
Overall Active Conservation Program Contracts -55

Dollars obligated in '05 & '06 = \$1,220,036 excluding CRP, CCRP and GRP.
Dollars obligated in 2007 = \$799,522 excluding CRP, CCRP and GRP.
Dollars obligated in 2007 = \$912,174 including CRP and CCRP.
Dollars obligated in 2008 = \$530,711 excluding CRP, CCRP, and GRP.
Dollars obligated in 2008 = \$668,624 including CRP and CCRP.
Dollars obligated in 2009 = \$561,281 excluding CRP, CCRP, and GRP.
Dollars obligated in 2009 = \$664,346 including CRPS.

Dollars as **conservation payments** 1997 to 2009 = **\$2,931,211** including 2007 and 2008 CRP & 2009 CRPS.

2009 Annual Conservation Plan/Contract **Status Reviews = 40**
FSA **Compliance Reviews** Conducted = **19** Tracts
Identified **Wetland Violations = 1**
Identified **Highly Erodible Land Violations = 0**
HEL and/or Wetland **Determinations = 45** Tracts
Non-federal **land treated for fish and wildlife** habitat quality = **127 acres**
Cropland treated to **improve soil quality = 4,820 acres**
Land treated to **improve water quality = 4,950 acres**

List of individual Conservation Practices Planned and Completed available upon request

L

Agenda

Invocation Ernie Klug

Dinner Catered by TVB Catering

Pledge of Allegiance Terry Holloway

Welcome, Introductions, & District Update Brian Dargus

Other Updates and Reports

Groundwater Stewardship Suzanne Forraht, GW Technician
NRCS Mike Stickle, Soil Conservation Technician
MSU Extension Joann Davidhizar, County Extension Director

Awards

Groundwater Stewardship Award presented by Suzanne Forraht

Conservation Farmer of the Year presented by Brian Dargus

Special Guest Speaker Lee LaVanway, Market Master,
Benton Harbor Fruit Market

Closing Comments and Drawing Winners Nancy Carpenter

Thank You!

Personnel

Conservation District Board of Directors

Brian Dargus, Chairman Terry Holloway, Vice Chairman
Ernie Klug, Treasurer Bonnie Kuehl, Secretary
Eira McDaniel, Director

Conservation District Staff

Nancy Carpenter, Administrator
Suzanne Forraht, Groundwater Technician
Kelly Goward, Critical Dunes Technician *
*contracted through Ottawa County

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff

Sherman Reed, District Conservationist
Bruce Green, Soil Conservation Technician
Mike Stickle, Soil Conservation Technician



Groundwater Stewardship Program



2009 Berrien County Groundwater Report

The Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP) has had a successful year in Berrien County. A number of agricultural producers have been actively involved in the program and continue to be effective in voluntarily reducing environmental risks on their farms, particularly to groundwater. Several environmental assessment workbooks are available to growers including the Farm*A*Syst, Livestock*A*Syst, Green-house*A*Syst, and Crop*A*Syst (which includes most commodities). This year a new assessment was developed, called the Grape*A*Syst, a collaborative effort by Michigan State University, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and National Grape Cooperative. This tool, aimed at grape juice and wine growers, takes a look at management practices relating to soil and nutrients, pest and disease, and vineyard management. It also focuses on pesticide storage and handling, and soil and water conservation practices. Producers go through these workbooks with the local groundwater technician and develop an action plan to aid in addressing some of the concerns on their farms.

As a result of the dozens of assessments completed, approximately 125 on-farm risk reductions have taken place in the county this year. Some examples of these risk reductions are: abandoned well decommissioning, pesticide storage security, drift management plans, emergency plans, proper pesticide mixing & loading, annual drinking water testing, impermeable surface for fuel transfer, pesticide label compliance, pesticide application recordkeeping, and routine soil testing, just to name a few. A total of \$3,750.00 in cost-share dollars was provided to producers to accomplish some of these practices.

Three local producers have become environmentally verified through the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). They are Twixwood Nursery North (Benton Harbor), Domaine Berrien Cellars (Berrien Springs), and Tower Hill Farms (Sodus). This environmental assurance indicates that their farms are in conformance with state and federal regulations, Right-to-farm GAAMPs, and that they are continuing to protect Michigan's natural resources for future generations.

Events in 2009 consisted of an on-farm Fruit & Vegetable Production Field Day held in July at Holloway Farms in Buchanan with 60+ people in attendance. The topics discussed were: Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), Good Handling Practices (GHP), Agrichemical Handling Facilities, USDA cost-share, irrigation management, and an IPM update. Another event held was a free well water screening sponsored by MSU-AG Expo. The water was tested for nitrates, nitrites, and atrazine. A total of 73 samples were sent in from Berrien County.