



Leelanau Conservation District

Promoting the Wise Use of Our Natural Resources

www.leelanaucd.org
231.256.9783

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale

~ ORDER FORM ENCLOSED ~

(For best availability, order early!)

Pick Up: Friday, April 30th

Time: 8 am to 6 pm

Place: Leelanau Enterprise (warehouse)

7200 E. Duck Lake Rd, Lake Leelanau

Leelanau Conservation District
8527 E Government Center Dr, Suite 205
Suttons Bay, MI 49682



Tree & Shrub Seedling Sale
Spring 2021
www.leelanaucd.org



Our Assisted Tree Range Expansion Program (ATREP) is back!

Join us by purchasing seedlings from six available species on the order form.

A Citizen Science Project Based in Northwest Lower Michigan

Director's Corner: Highs & Lows...of 2020

Buzz Long, Executive Director

Even in these crazy Covid-19 times there can be highlights. Last year we saw a huge increase in our seedling and native plant sales: People were looking for things to beautify their own piece of the world and to divert their attention to things that not only help the environment, but also their hearts. We broke our all-time record for the number of Soil Erosion Permit applications serviced, which meant that more people are being vigilant about our soils and lakes and the contractors were able to continue working.

The pandemic brought a new way of thinking and working. We limit the amount of time in the office and have been working from home, and yet continuing to serve everyone that relies on us for our services.

One highlight of the year was completing a promotional video about the District that emphasized all the activities and services we offer. To view the video, go our website, www.leelanaucd.org, and get a feel for what the District does and how we can assist you with your natural resource needs.

Be sure to read the rest of the newsletter to catch up on the activities of the staff. We hope to see you all at the annual Seedling Sale! Stay safe and remember Spring is just around the corner!

In Memoriam: Gerry White

In January we lost a treasured friend and longtime board member of the Leelanau Conservation District. Dr. Gerry White served on the board of directors for the district for 26 years. He was so full of wisdom and kindness and will truly be missed. Gerry and his late wife Vivian were very supportive of the district and very conscientious of the environment. Gerry planted trees from our annual tree sale every year on their farm. For years they donated a huge beautiful Christmas tree to Fox Motors to use for their Toys for Tots drive.

On a personal note, whenever Gerry would call the office and I answered he would always say "Karen I'm so glad I got you" and we would catch up on our lives, it was very special to me. I believe there are two new stars in the sky and they are named Gerry and Vivian.

*~ Karen Long,
Administrative Assistant*



LCD staffers enjoying being outdoors in a group shot for the District's new video!

Resiliency with Climate-Adaptive Tree Planting

Kama Ross, District Forester

I am a forestry educator, helping area landowners connect with their properties and hopefully inspiring them to become more active stewards. I can honestly say that forest stewardship is getting more complex and challenging. Forest fragmentation and urban sprawl makes each acre in forest cover so important for the connectivity of wildlife corridors and the very survival of certain species that are now so limited with the loss of their habitat. Ecosystems are struggling with climate change stressors. Non-native insects and diseases are decreasing species diversity and lowering the productivity of the forest. Pretty much, my favorite opening remark at a one-on-one site visit, is that "doing nothing, really isn't an option anymore." As a forester, I see the forest as an incredible 100% renewable resource with products and services that we can sustainably manage. A forester utilizes what the forest offers – peace and tranquility, clean water, fresh air, habitat for wildlife, wood. the list is long. There are a lot of variations of good forest management that are deeply rooted in science. I encourage all landowners to seek professional assistance to help them be the best steward of the land you are lucky to care for.

Management practices that lead to an increase in landscape diversity and connectivity can increase the ability of systems to adapt to changing climate and associated stresses. The best place

for any sized property owner to start is to talk with a forester; the Conservation District offers free on-site visits for all landowners regardless of the number of acres you own.

There are many fallow unproductive areas that could be enhanced by planting trees and shrubs. Riparian areas, seasonal and permanent wetlands, field edges, wooded areas that have suffered loss from ash borer, beech bark disease or oak wilt, abandoned field of knapweed and brome, and lawns that you are just tired of mowing. I keep a lawn for croquet – just enough for some great family fun - so keep those areas if they are being used, otherwise, fill the landscape with native plants that add biodiversity, provide nectar source for pollinators, food for songbirds and small mammals, shelter for those we share our landscape with, capture storm water, and sequester carbon. These incidental areas have substantial opportunity to diversify and improve ecosystem services.

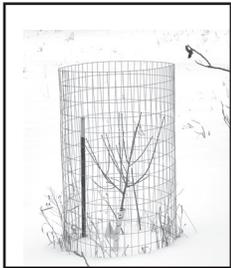
Matching the site conditions to the species for the right planting reason is key. Digging around and making some observations about the amount of sand or organic material, presence of gravel or large rocks, type and amount of existing vegetative cover, aspect, number of sunlight hours the site will receive, proximity to a water source— are all things to assess. We strongly recommend soil tests. Once you have a good idea about the qualities of your

planting site, determine your goals for planting trees and shrubs in that area. Think of how many benefits could be attained by planting and try to maximize the effects of a well planted windbreak or privacy screen as they can provide multiple niches in the landscape. Make decisions on which species will work at that planting site to provide the benefits you are looking for – think well adapted Michigan native species or species that are native just south of us but will be migrating north as our climate changes. Check out the Assisted Tree Range Expansion Project, www.ATREP.net for some of those species

Protect Your Trees

Tom Adams, Natural Resource Specialist

The wildlife are happy to see you plant your trees. Everyone needs dinner! It could be one of their favorites or it could be some new treat that they are excited to try. The deer like most everything! Even if it is not one of their favorites, if it is new they have to try it. Then the bucks are looking to rub their horns on young trees. The rabbits are a little pickier as to what to eat, and the voles will girdle some trees or even eat the roots. A fenced tree with a rodent guard will help greatly. What is needed is fence with a grid 2 inches by 4 inches and 5 feet high. To make



research has predicted to do well in the coming decades.

Windbreaks/privacy barriers/living fences, wildlife and pollinator habitat plantings, understory plantings in struggling hardwoods, timber production, wild edibles/perennial fruit and nuts, intense woodland gardens and just turning fallow sites into productive acres—all are great options to explore with LCD staff before you order your spring seedlings.

For more information contact Kama Ross, 231.256.9783 x 264, kama.ross@macd.org.



a fence about 3 foot in diameter you will need about 10 feet of fence. Most fence comes in 100 foot rolls so you get about enough for 10 trees. You will also need 1 steel “T” post and a rodent guard.

When you plant trees the wildlife may not eat them for several years or they may eat most all of them the first year. With the cost of the trees and your time it is hard to recoup the effort and cost and years lost.

The cost protection for each tree is about \$15. All the supplies can be purchased at your local farm store. If you do not need fence for 10 trees you could get together with a friend or neighbor to split the costs.

Contact Tom at 231.256.9783 x 265, tadams@leelanau.gov.

Invasive Species Network (ISN) Optimistic for 2021

Katie Grzesiak, Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Coordinator

As it was for most, 2020 was a unique and challenging year for the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network (ISN). 75% of the budget was paused in April due to restrictions in the Michigan Discretionary Fund, so ISN relied on the advocacy of many partners to exist at a basic level. When funding was reinstated in August, staff were able to jump back into invasive species management and outreach, while also being humbled by the outpouring of support – thank you!

Despite the struggles of the year, ISN’s planned projects were still successfully completed (or extended)! Surveys for hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) were completed in the winter months and due to a grant extension, are continuing in 2021. More than 110 sites and 1,200 acres were surveyed with no detections of HWA.

Garlic mustard season was deeply impacted by COVID-19 restrictions as our annual volunteer-based workbees were cancelled. Regardless, sponsored dumpsters in each of our four counties (Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Manistee) were very popular and 160 bags of pulled garlic mustard were reported by community members. Additionally, top-priority species were treated, including invasive knotweeds,

black swallow-wort, Chinese yam, Phragmites, Invasive bittersweet, butterbur, and giant hogweed.

ISN’s outreach efforts moved online and in all, we contacted over 3,000 people one-on-one by phone, email, or socially-distanced in-person work. Over half a million people were reached through social and traditional media efforts.

For 2021, COVID-safe events are being planned and a treatment crew will be hired this spring for direct management of invasive species.

ISN’s work is funded in part

through grants from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (administered by the US Forest Service and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians), the Michigan Invasive

Species Grant Program (www.Michigan.gov/invasives), and the Good Neighbor Authority (a partnership of the US Forest Service and Michigan DNR), as well as cost-share from landowners and generous donations from supporters.

If you have any questions, want to get involved, or wish to schedule a presentation to an interested group, please visit www.HabitatMatters.org or contact Katie Grzesiak – kgrzesiak@gtcd.org or (@31)941-0960 x29.



The History and Today's Programs of the NRCS

Jason Kimbrough, District Conservationist

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service was created in response to the Dust Bowl era in the 1930s. At that time of the agency's creation, catastrophic soil erosion was taking place, particularly in the southern Great Plains states. Hugh Hammond Bennett, an early soil scientist, urged congress to create a federal agency to address the crisis. In 1933 the Soil Erosion Service was created in the Department of Interior with Bennett as Chief.

Bennett also championed the creation of local conservation districts to work in partnership with the Soil Conservation Service, now part of the USDA.

Conservation districts were intended to serve as locally-led organizations to identify resource concerns and to promote scientifically supported conservation practices to landowners. Michigan passed a law allowing for the creation of conservation districts in 1937 and they rapidly organized with the Leelanau Conservation District becoming Michigan's eleventh district in 1946.

The USDA Soil Conservation Service later became the Natural

Resources Conservation Service to better describe the agency's mission of conserving not only soil, but also water, air, wildlife, and energy. NRCS has played a large role in promoting conservation in Michigan, including northwest Michigan.

The agency's primary role is providing technical and financial assistance to farmers, private forest owners, and American Indian tribes to implement new conservation practices on their land. NRCS and conservation district staff work with landowners to develop



individualized conservation plans that protect natural resources while maintaining or improving their land's productivity. When resource concerns are identified, NRCS can often provide financial assistance for

implementing practices like conservation tillage, forest management plans, nutrient management, windbreaks, pollinator plantings, and many others.

NRCS also has a program to preserve valuable farmland that has been widely utilized in northwest Michigan. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program works with local land preservation agencies to purchase agricultural easements. The program provides matching funds to organizations like the Leelanau Conservancy for purchasing development rights

on valuable farmland and orchards.

Another NRCS program benefiting Northern Michigan is the Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The Tribal Stream and Michigan Fruit-belt Collaborative which was created through this program in 2016. The Collaborative has been active in purchasing farmland easements and in improving stream crossings in Leelanau County and the surrounding area. Some of the collaborating partners for this project

include the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Leelanau Conservancy, the Leelanau Conservation District, and the Conservation Resource Alliance.

For more information, contact Kelly Claar, Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative Program Services Assistant, kelly.claar@usda.gov 231.486.2550; or Jason M. Kimbrough, District Conservationist, jason.kimbrough@usda.gov, 231.486.2509.

Produce Safety Program

Michelle Jacokes, former Produce Food Safety Technician

The Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety Program (MIOFPS) for Northwest Lower Michigan provides assistance to fresh produce growers to be compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule or are working to optimize produce safety practices and procedures on their farm. Produce Safety Technicians are located throughout the state to provide technical and educational assistance to growers to raise awareness and offer resources to all things produce safety.

In FY20, the Michigan On-Farm Produce Safety Program in Northwest Lower Michigan reached over 291 fresh produce growers in Manistee, Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau and Antrim counties with information and resources regarding Produce Safety. Leelanau County had 19 farms that underwent an assessment, and/or made changes to their processes and procedures on the

farm through direct contact in FY20. Over 99 fresh produce growers in Leelanau County received information on produce safety throughout FY20.

The FY20 19 season included farms in total that had inquired about direct produce safety technical assistance on their farms. Those included remote virtual assistance, in-person on farm site visits, Produce Safety Risk Assessments, and On Farm Readiness Reviews.

A special thanks to all farms that provide fresh, nutritious, local produce that is safe for eating! This year was incredibly tough, and the agricultural community in Northwest Lower Michigan's resiliency shown through brightly!

To stay up-to date with Produce Safety in the area visit www.manisteed2.org/produce-safety.html or miofps.org. Stay tuned for a replacement for the Northwest Lower Produce Safety Technician in coming months.