2019 Annual Report

Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District

Alpena Location:
1900 M-32 W
Alpena, MI 49707
989.356.3596 x5

Atlanta Location:
12265 M-32
Atlanta, MI 49709
989.785.4083

www.alpenamontcd.org
**Who We Are**

The Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District is a local unit of government that has been operating for more than a half century. We are geared at the protection of our natural resources and have technical staff that can assist our landowners with these needs. We provide several services to the people of Alpena & Montmorency Counties with the help of grant funding from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Natural Resources Conservation Service-USDA. Our technicians work with many programs and assist surrounding counties with natural resource concerns.

**Our Mission**

To encourage stewardship and sustainable use of local natural resources by providing leadership, information, and technical assistance for the people of Alpena & Montmorency Counties.

### Programs and Services

- Aerial Maps
- Conservation Field Day
- Conservation information and assistance for landowners
- Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI)
- Deer Habitat Improvement Plan (DHIP)
- Enhanced Wildlife Risk Mitigation (EWRM)
- EWRM Cost Share Assistance
- Equipment Rentals: Great Plains Grain Drill, Tree Planter, Augers, & Tools
- Forestry Assistance Program (FAP)
- Hunting Access Program (HAP)
- Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)
- MAEAP Cost Share
- Montmorency Plat Book Production & Sales
- Native Plant, Tree, & Food Plot Seed Sales
- Natural Resources Conservation Services
- Pesticide Applicator Certified Staff
- Soil Surveys
- Soil & Water Testing
- Topography Maps

### Staff & Board of Directors

Aprille Williamson, District Manager  
Kenny Parsons, CTAI Technician  
Alleigh Pagels, MAEAP Technician  
Greg Corace, FAP Forester  
Jesse Gilfillan, Bovine TB Technician  
James Krueger, Chairman  
James Chapman, Vice Chairman  
Donna Hardies, Secretary/Treasurer  
Collin Beyer, Director  
Nathan Skibbe, Director

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District works in partnership with NRCS, with a co-located office in Alpena. Through financial and technical assistance, NRCS provides resources for farmers and landowners to aid them with conservation.

Bryan Zabel, District Conservationist  
Grant Sork, Soil Conservationist

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider and lender.
**DISTRICT ACTIVITIES**

Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District worked with the Alpena Brown Trout Festival to give 300 white pine seedlings to children in the area. The kids were able to plant the trees in the family fun tent and then take them home.

Our staff participated in many group events and booths to help with outreach of our programs to the community with local partners and resources. We attended field trips and kids events to help teach about natural resources.

We also setup an annual Montmorency County Fair booth to offer information on our programs and show the work that we do on a daily basis.

The Conservation District’s Great Plains No-Till Grain Drill is available for rent to landowners in our counties and surrounding counties. It was rented out this year to approximately 10 landowners in Alpena, Montmorency, & Presque Isle Counties. Over 250 acres were planted using our drill this year.

**SOIL TESTS**

Every year we offer soil testing to our county residents through A&L Great Lakes Laboratories. You can bring in a soil sample from your lawn, garden, food plot, or agricultural field and have that sample sent in for analysis. Our staff will work with you to request the proper recommendations you are looking for to yield your best products.

Once we send the tests out, we receive the results within 3 to 5 days and submit the results to the landowner. Our staff can then help assist the landowner in interpreting those results and give them any recommendations. This year we did 225 soil tests for our counties.

**TREE SALE**

Another successful year! We offered food plot seed mixes this year to our residents. The mixes were a great hit and we plan to continue to offer this at future tree sales. Below shows the native tree seedlings, shrubs, and supplies that we have at our annual tree sales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conifer Seedlings</td>
<td>21,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardwoods</td>
<td>2,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wildlife Shrubs &amp; Plants</td>
<td>2,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containerized Seedlings</td>
<td>15,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit Trees</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berries</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Marking Flags</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic Sticks</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Stakes</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Tubes</td>
<td>596</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Dip Packets</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Planted Signs</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Plot Seed Mixes</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1,648 Pounds of Seed Planted**

**PLAT BOOKS**

Our 2018 Montmorency Plat Books were for sale in area businesses. Approximately 500 plat books were sold this year and they are still available. You can get your copy at the Alpena or Montmorency CD office, the Montmorency County Treasurer’s office, AAACU in Alpena & Atlanta, Montmorency Abstract Office, A-I Woods in Water in Hillman, Aero Real Estate, Montmorency County Tribune, Alpena MSU Extension and the Hillman Chamber of Commerce.
Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative—CTAI

Serving Northern Michigan Counties

The CTAI Program provides benefits to Michigan landowners by offering technicians who give conservation and engineering assistance to landowners, allowing them to receive federal cost share dollars for implementation of engineered conservation practices. The program splits the cost between the USDA-NRCS and the MDARD and employs 18 engineers and soil conservationists in conservation district offices state-wide. The environmental benefits gained through this program provide benefits to all of Michigan’s citizens. The Program resulted in over $11 million in federal cost share coming to Michigan as a result of their work and provided over 50 different types of conservation practices, with 960 conservation practices being installed in 2013. Prior to implementation of this program, a backlog of engineering technical assistance through the USDA-NRCS resulted in Michigan landowners being unable to receive the federal cost share dollars for installation of conservation practices. The positive result is less dollars going back to Washington for distribution to other states. This effort is funded via a 50/50 agreement between USDA NRCS and Fresh Water/Groundwater restricted funds.

The 11 CTAI soil conservationists assist NRCS and conservation districts in implementing farm bill programs and practices that enable farmers to reduce identified environmental risks on their farms and become MAEAP verified. In addition, a portion of the Soil Cons time is dedicated to direct MAEAP assistance such as providing Risk Assessments to farmers.

The 7 CTAI engineers work under the direction of the NRCS Area Engineer on Farm Bill practices that require engineering to be completed. Implementing these engineered practices can enable a farmer to become MAEAP verified. The positions are funded about 50/50 from USDA NRCS agreements and Fresh Water/Groundwater restricted funds.

The CTAI Soil Conservationist, Ken Parsons, has worked on a variety of projects during 2019. His involvement in the practices has included design, inventory and evaluation, surveying, pre-construction meetings, construction inspections, plan review, and conservation planning. Contributions were made to approximately 50 projects, covering several practices standards. The most frequently constructed projects were the following:

(309) Agrichemical Containment Facilities-6
(561) Heavy Use Area Protection-18
(313) Waste Storage Facility-8
(367) Roofs and Covers-5
(319) On Farm Secondary Containment-3
(516, 614) Watering Systems (Pipeline/Watering Facilities/Well)-10

The work completed by the CTAI program through this fiscal year provided assistance of approximately $2,000,000 being made available to Michigan landowners through the EQIP program. This is just the financial assistance inventoried, designed, and installed through the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. This does not account for the other $500,000 spent by the local producers above and beyond the financial assistance from USDA/NRCS. The I&E’s, designs, and installed practices cover many counties of Northern Michigan.

For detailed information, feel free to contact Ken Parsons at the Alpena Office 989.356.3596 x110 or kenny.parsons@mi.usda.gov
This year we welcome Jesse Gilfillan to the team at Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District as the Wildlife Risk Mitigation Specialist. Jesse will be participating in the ongoing implementation of the Enhanced Wildlife Biosecurity (EWB) Program and continuing the Wildlife Risk Mitigation Program to help combat TB in our area.

Jesse has received a myriad of experiences in wildlife conservation and research including ecosystems in Florida, Oregon, and her native state of Michigan. Jesse worked as a Biological Technician for the US Fish and Wildlife Services before joining us, assessing the overall health and productivity of the salmonids in Lake Huron. Her experience in this position as well as her career in environmental stewardship gives her the proper tools to complete wildlife and habitat management risk assessments to help mitigate TB in the EWB zone.

To date this year, there are 110 farms in the Bovine TB Enhanced Biosecurity Program. The farms that have completed their fencing and biosecurity protocols will be monitored and verified during the Winter Verification period. There are ~50 pending applications in the EWB area, and we will work with those farmers until January 1st to get those applications signed and to break ground on these projects to help assure they do not lose their Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) certifications. A recent amendment to the to the Wildlife Risk Mitigation Project Grant from MDARD is to provide the Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District with $980,000 for the continued enactment of this Wildlife Risk Mitigation Program in Northern Michigan, and to extend the end date for farmers to gain access to these funds until September 30th, 2020. These funds will allow for the extension of the program outside of the designated EWB so more of the cattle and dairy industries can continue to be protected in Northern Michigan.

For more information on EWB feel free to contact Jesse Gilfillan at the Alpena Office 989.356.3596 x111 jesse.gilfillan@macd.org
Forestry Assistance Program—FAP

Serving Alpena & Montmorency Counties

Over one hundred forest landowners (24,215 forested acres) received on site technical assistance through the Conservation District. Technical assistance may refer to guidance in forest health, sustainable harvesting, and forest management planning. Many landowners were then connected with public programs or private sector foresters. Of those landowners 25 actively pursued sustainable harvesting and 30 actively pursued forest management planning. Forest management plans are then used to enroll in public programs such as the Qualified Forest Program (QFP), MAEAP for Forest, wetlands and habitat, and Deer Habitat Improvement Programs (DHIP). A rough estimate of economic impact from these activities amount to: $457,755.

Outreach and education are also of importance to FAP. The Conservation District held ten workshops and outreach events. Six articles and radio announcements also occurred informing local residents of forestry related programs and opportunities and forest health concerns to be on the lookout for.

Greg Corace joined our staff as District Forester in late July and has spent his time getting up to speed. Most of the last couple of months have been spent on promoting the Qualified Forest Program and verifying applications. Other work has included site visits for Deer Habitat Improvement Program, consultations regarding forest health, and making connections for education and outreach. Greg is currently working with The Alpena News on a column which he hopes will make the reader think critically regarding forest and wildlife management in the area.

For more information contact
Greg Corace at the Alpena Office
989.356.3596 x102
greg.corace@macd.org

Soil Health Opportunities—NRCS

Serving Alpena & Montmorency Counties

NRCS Financial Assistance is Available for Forest Management Plans

Even though Michigan is home to three National Forests in addition to state forests, the majority of forestland in the state is not publicly owned. According to the USDA Forest Service, nearly half of Michigan’s forestland is owned by families or other private, non-corporate entities. With most of the state’s forestland privately owned, proper management of this resource is important. No matter how a landowner uses forestland, a forest management plan is essential. A forest management plan helps the landowner protect soil, water and wildlife resources and identifies other threats such as invasive species and disease. A forest management plan is designed to optimize the resources that are important to the landowner be it specific game species, sustainable timber production or general recreation.

NRCS provides financial assistance for forest management plans through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Once a plan is developed, further financial assistance to implement forest conservation practice may be available.

If you are interested in applying for a forest management plan, please contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District.

An approximate amount of $370,000 has been obligated to Alpena and Montmorency County landowners to address identified resource concerns on 1,020 acres under the EQIP FY2019 funding period. *Unofficial Data

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

For more information, feel free to contact
Bryan Zabel, District Conservationist
Alpena NRCS Field Office
(989) 356-3596 ext. 3
bryan.zabel@mi.usda.gov
The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. MAEAP works with farmers to help identify and prevent environmental risks and comply with state and federal environmental regulations. Farmers who successfully complete the three phases of MAEAP system are rewarded by becoming verified in that system. MAEAP was developed by a coalition of agriculture producers, commodity groups, state and federal agencies, and conservation and environmental groups. MAEAP is not a government or regulatory program but rather a partnership effort.

We are here to help and recognize farmers who reduce erosion and runoff from private land into public waters. MAEAP is 100% CONFIDENTIAL!

Northeast Michigan MAEAP Program for FY19:

- Risk*A*Syst: 65
- Technical Assistance: 91
- Risk Reduction Practices: 154
- Verifications: 30
- Phase 1 Educational Events: 4

Cost Share of $3,000 was used to help farmers attain their MAEAP verification status. These cost share funds help with soil testing, spill kits, water sampling, backflow preventers, well closures, and MAEAP verification sign hanging kits. Other assistance is available for helping with the verification process.

For more information, feel free to contact Alleigh Pagels at the Alpena Office

989.356.3596 x108
alleigh.pagels@macd.org

Hunting Access Program-HAP

Serving Alpena & Montmorency Counties

The Hunting Access Program (HAP) in efforts to help assist with deer and disease management in the Bovine TB area held a special January hunt. This took place in two weekends in early January. The DNR and other partners worked closely with landowners to provide additional opportunities for people to help reduce disease potential in the area.

Five new properties were added in Alpena County to HAP. One property is Youth & Apprentice Hunting Only and the others are Open to All Types of Hunting. All of these new properties have a diverse habitat and are nestled in an agriculture landscape offering great potential for hunting!

If you’re interested in signing up your property for the Hunter Access Program stop by or give us a call. We can go over the various hunting options available and what your annual rental payment would look like.

We have many properties available, so get out there and enjoy them. If you have a successful hunt this year on one of our HAP properties, take your picture next to the HAP sign on the property with your harvest. Send in the picture to the Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District with your name and contact info and you will be entered into our prize raffle drawing.
FY 2018-2019 Alpena-Montmorency CD
Receipts and Disbursements

Receipts:
Federal Grants $67,000
State Grants $390,410
Tree Sales $51,854
Charges for Services $53,548
Interest & Rents $8,263
Other Revenue $17,825
Total Receipts $588,900

Disbursements:
District Operations $86,438
WRM $191,410
MAEAP $74,000
DHIP $50,000
HAP $7,000
Forestry $68,000
Tree Sales $30,670
CTAI $67,000
Total Disbursements $574,518

*These figures have not been audited

Congratulations to the Kuznicki Farm in Presque Isle county on becoming MAEAP Verified!

A Big Thank You!!

After this fiscal year we are losing two great board members from our team. We would like to thank Donna Hardies and Mike Timm for the amount of time and energy they have put into the Conservation District over the past years. Their wealth of knowledge on the programs and activities that we do everyday has been one of the greatest assets to the CD. They have definitely helped the staff and board build a successful District over those years and they will be missed by all of us here at the Alpena-Montmorency Conservation District!

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