



Emmet Conservation District

Annual Report 2020-2021

FY' October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021

About the Emmet Conservation District:

The Emmet Conservation District (ECD) is a local unit of government that provides a number of conservation and natural resources services for the residents of Emmet County. Our office is located in the lower level of the Watson Community Building, located at 3434 Harbor-Petoskey Rd., Harbor Springs, MI 49740.

Our Mission as stewards of the environment is to improve the quality of life for residents of Emmet County, by protecting and conserving our natural resources, promoting sound, sustainable agricultural practices, and providing educational opportunities for the community.

The ECD is governed by a 5-member Board of Directors that meets on a monthly basis for Board Meetings that are open to the public. We also have several Associate Directors who support and assist the District with its mission. Emmet County residents who are registered voters are allowed to run for open Board positions, and elections take place at the Annual Meeting in October. There are three positions up for election this year, which will take place on Tue. Oct. 19 at Gabriel Farm in Petoskey.

2021 Board of Directors:

Chairman: Marcus Kurburski
Vice-Chairman: Dr. William Meengs
Treasurer: Mark Givens
Director: Dr. Russell LaBeau
Director: Vacancy

Thank you to all of our Board Members! We would like send a special thanks to Dirk Shorter, Lucy Blythe, and Kevin Hammond, for all of your many years of service as Board Members! We appreciate all that you have done over the years - from picking up trees from the nurseries for the spring tree sale and for volunteering with tree sales, workshops, and events. Kevin also made numerous, beautiful, hand-made cedar bluebird houses for the District for many years. Many thanks to all of you!! We appreciate you and your service!!

Staff:

District Manager: Jackie Pilette

MAEAP Technician: Chris Anderson

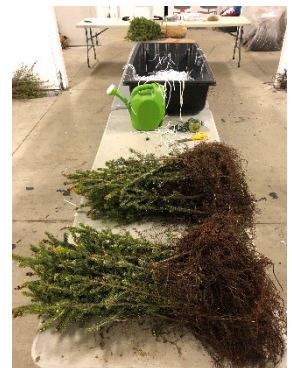
NRCS Liaison: Bill Borgeld

A Review of 2020-2021 activities, events, and accomplishments:

Although COVID led to the cancellation of the 2020 fall tree sale and the October 2020 Annual Dinner Meeting, the ECD had a busy and productive 2021. ECD staff worked with hundreds of landowners, land managers, municipalities, students, and organizations on a number of topics and issues including erosion control, farming/agriculture, invasive species, forestry, and water resources.

~ Jackie gave a presentation on the ECD and its role as a local unit of government to the North Central Michigan College Environmental Policy class in March.

~ The 2021 Spring Tree Sale was held at the Emmet County Fairgrounds on April 30 and May 1. With the help of many volunteers, we packaged and distributed thousands of trees, fruit plants, and vegetables. For the first time, we had an online store that allowed customers to place their orders online as well as allowed us to accept credit cards for trees! We also offered a service delivery for local tree orders. It was by far our biggest tree sale ever. Unfortunately, we were unable to have a fall tree sale this year due to low availability of nursery stock. We appreciate everyone that purchased trees and other plants from us this year, and are looking forward to next spring!



~ The 2021 Fruit Tree Sale & Workshop in May was an amazing success! We expanded the numbers of trees sold and provided a greater variety of types of fruit trees for customers. All of the 19 workshop participants were first-time attendees that learned important tips on growing fruit trees from one of our leading local experts – Steve Fouch. A huge thanks goes out to Gabriel Farms for hosting us, to our volunteers for help with preparing orders and the sale, and to our charismatic and informative presenter, who as always, shared a wealth of knowledge!



~ The 2021 West Branch Maple River Clean-Up took place on May 19th and 20th in Pellston. Working through the Adopt-A-Forest program, we were able to secure and remove a large dumpster full of trash/debris along the Maple River. Mogford's donated the use of a scrap metal recycling dumpster and took care of removal. Working with our local MDNR Conservation Officers, we were also able to secure and post several "No Dumping" signs at various locations near the river. Though wet weather slowed the clean-up down some, we spent a great afternoon with friends and staff from the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Natural Resources Department and their Youth Conservation Corps. removing large amounts of trash including several tires, couches, shingles, and broken concrete. Several bags of recyclable materials such as plastics and glass were also taken to the Emmet County Transfer Station. The MDNR also has placed large boulders to prevent people from driving vehicles into the river. The good news is that after all these years, the work we have done with all of our partnerships has made a major difference! Dumping is occurring less, the overall ecological health of the river and local area has improved, our trees are growing, and people are enjoying the river by swimming and fishing. Stay tuned for more updates on this ongoing success story!



1 West Branch Maple River showing boulders and litter/debris

~ Invasive Species continue to be a conservation priority, and the ECD was busy at work throughout the year updating invasive knotweed surveys, organizing and contracting knotweed herbicide treatment at dozens of sites throughout the county. Staff also surveys for invasives such as Japanese barberry, baby's breath, oriental bittersweet (still sold in stores), invasive Phragmites, hemlock woolley adelgid, and oak wilt.



2 Invasive Knotweed mapping and herbicide treatment

~ Forestry Notes: We are happy to announce that Emmet County residents now have access to a Conservation District Forester – Dr. Greg Corace! Greg is the Alpena Conservation District Forester, and their District has generously agreed to extend forestry assistance to Emmet County residents. Greg is a great wealth of information and is able to provide much-needed forestry management information to landowners.

Volunteers and Donors:

A huge thank you to all of our volunteers! We really cannot do the work that we do without your help. To everyone that helped out with our spring tree sale, the fruit tree sale, the native plant sale, our invasives work, and so many other ways you have helped to make this year fun and successful – THANK YOU!!!

We would like to acknowledge a very generous financial gift this year from an anonymous donor, in the amount of \$5,000 for the District to use on local projects to benefit the community, especially regarding priority invasive species projects. Those funds will be used to purchase supplies and equipment for projects, to develop educational materials, and to hire contract help to assist with invasive species projects.

We also want to acknowledge and thank Emmet County for its continued support for the District with funding, office space, and continuing to allow the ECD to conduct our spring tree sale at the Emmet County Fairgrounds. Thank you to D&W Fresh Market in Petoskey for donating paper bags for our spring tree sale every year! We are grateful to you all for supporting the Emmet Conservation District! We strive to provide quality local conservation projects and programs that produce positive results and benefit us all!