



Benzie Conservation District 60 Years of Service

Program Highlights

Finances

Stakeholder Survey

Getting Out On the River

Leave No Trace

Environmentally Educational Canoe Trips

Once again, the Benzie Conservation District joined with the Benzie Fishery Coalition, the National Park Service and Riverside Canoes to continue the "Leave No Trace in Your Waterway" program. This fall seven classes, 161 students, and 75 parents, local leaders and volunteers ventured down the Platte River

learning how trees, plants, buildings, parking lots, and people help or hinder river and fishery health. All sixth graders from Platte River Elementary and several Buckley High School students participated in this program of discovery and responsibility. This spring 50 seventh graders from Frankfort High School will paddle the river.

"Leave No Trace in Your Waterway" canoe trips emphasize low-impact recreation, the role of shoreline trees and vegetation, and healthy river system preservation. The Benzie Fishery Coalition supports these trips as the kick off to their "Salmon in the Classroom" program. This year, the District hired three members of the community to co-lead the trips. Their creativity resulted in a student-performed skit demonstrating the effects of non-point source pollution. The young community members left with an understanding of this complex problem and the know-how to keep the river clean.



Special thanks to the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation, John N. Barnes Environmental Education Fund, the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control and the Benzie Fishery Coalition for additional financial support of this program.

If you would like to participate in this spring's program or volunteer for other programs please contact The Benzie Conservation District at 882-4391.

Thank you leaders: Ed McIntosh, Marie Scott, Susan Green, Barb Graves, Kari Tomashik and Ronnie Brown.

*"The
Conservationist's
most important task,
if we are to save the
earth, is to educate"*

Peter Scott

WATERSHED PROJECT UPDATE

Highlights of 2005 include completion of projects in the Platte River and Herring Lakes watersheds. The main focus in both watersheds over the past several years has been to define water quality problems and threats to determine sensible plans for long term water resource protection. Substantial efforts have been made and two management plans have been delivered to the State and local watershed communities. Some work has begun toward addressing problems identified in these plans although much work remains to ensure that our high-quality water resources are preserved.

Platte River Watershed

The *Platte River Watershed Management Plan* was completed in 2002. The Plan called for correction of the most prevalent pollution concern: the reduction of erosion and sedimentation. The Platte River and its tributaries have long suffered from heavy sand and sediment burden which in turn has harmed aquatic habitat and has been a source of attached pollutants such as nutrients, oils, salts and chemicals.

Reducing other types of pollution by controlling nutrient and chemical run-off was another key element of the management plan.

In the absence of funding to address some of the more critical pollution problems in the Watershed, District staff turned to increasing awareness and water quality monitoring as a way to forward the project.



Mouth of Platte River

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Developed and calibrated the EPA BASINS Watershed Model
- ✓ Began a 5-year sampling program with MDNR and Platte Lake Improvement Association
- ✓ Corrected four eroding road-stream crossings with the Benzie County Road Commission
- ✓ Installed a Greenbelt Demonstration project on Big Platte Lake
- ✓ Developed watershed curriculum for area schools
- ✓ Installed eleven watershed road signs
- ✓ Led “Leave No Trace in Your Waterway” canoe trips reaching 1,000 students, parents and teachers.

Herring Lakes Watershed

The primary task of the 2005 Herring Lakes Watershed Project was to bring the current management plan into compliance with new EPA rules. This meant clearly defining the following:

- 1) causes of water quality problems;
- 2) proposed pollution reduction methods;
- 3) anticipated pollution reduction results after restoration activities.

Increasing outreach and education was another key focus of the project.



Upper Herring Lake

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Developed the Herring Lakes Watershed Management Plan
- ✓ Developed the Herring Lakes Aquatic Plant Management Plan
- ✓ Installed six Herring Lake Watershed road signs
- ✓ Concluded a three-year comprehensive water quality monitoring program
- ✓ Protected over 1,800 acres with project partner Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- ✓ Installed a Greenbelt Demonstration Project on Lower Herring Lake
- ✓ Completed four Farm*A*Syst programs, seven well closures and other farm practice improvements through the Groundwater Stewardship Program

Winds of Change

The District has weathered several unexpected personnel changes in the past year.

After nearly thirteen years of dedicated service as Conservation District Director and District Administrator/Executive Director, Mary Pitcher has moved on to cultivate other interests in natural resource work. Through Mary's dedication and hard work, the district achieved numerous goals and objectives while raising conservation awareness in our community and throughout the region.

Also departing the District this past year was our Outreach Coordinator, Jenee Rowe. Jenee provided excellent outreach and education services furthering the efforts of all District programs. Jenee is missed by staff, directors and the many colleagues, volunteers and students she worked with during her short term with the District.

District Forester, Diane Hash, has accepted responsibilities of the District's newest Executive Director. Diane combines her expertise as a Forester with business skills to continue the District's work

and prepare it for future challenges and successes.

The District recently hired Ariel Sutter and Kyle Axtell, two young professionals. Stop by and welcome Ariel as Executive Assistant and Kyle as Environmental Outreach Coordinator.



Forestry Program Highlights October 2004 - September 2005

Benzie County residents continue to take advantage of the Conservation District's Forestry Assistance Program. You might recall the forestry funding disappeared from the state's budget in 2002 and so did the local forestry position! October 2004 to September 2005 completed Diane Hash's first full year back at the District. We will let the numbers tell you how the local landowners responded to her return.

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| In office and phone assistance provided: | 560 |
| Landowner on-site visits | 75 |
| Newspaper articles published: | 13 |
| Public programs presented: | 12 |

In addition to timber harvest guidance, the most popular topic this year was the emerald ash borer, now present in Benzie County. Teams from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Michigan Technological University set up detection trees all over the state. MTU discovered an adult caught on a detection tree in Veteran's Memorial Park, right across from the Platte River Fish Hatchery on Highway 31.

Six to seven square miles surrounding Veteran's Memorial Park is now quarantined. The quarantine prohibits the movement of all ash materials and hardwood firewood. Firewood and other regulated articles, including ash logs and ash lumber with bark, are not allowed to move from the quarantined area except under a compliance agreement with the Michigan Department of Agriculture. The MDA supports timber harvesting and will work with the timber and wood products industries to make sure their business continues uninterrupted.

For more details on the quarantined area and compliance agreements, contact the Benzie Conservation District Forester or browse the web at <http://www.michigan.gov/mda>. Go to quick links: emerald ash borer.

Benzie Conservation District Board of Directors

The Conservation District board is made up of five locally elected directors, serving four-year terms. Elections are held at the District's annual meeting. Responsibilities of the Board include oversight of fiduciary activities of the District, attending board meetings, providing guidance to the executive director, being a positive advocate for the District, and participating in fundraising activities in any number of ways that a director may choose. There are no positions open this year.

Martin Smeltzer, Chairman
Judy Webber, Vice-chair

Deb Lindgren, Member
Brian Putney, Member

Ray Kadlec, Treasurer
Steve Haugen, Benzie County
Commissioner Liaison

Staff

Diane Hash, Executive Director/Forester
Ron Harrison, Watershed Project Coordinator
Kyle Axtell, Environmental Outreach Coordinator
Ariel Sutter, Executive Assistant
Dan Busby, Groundwater Stewardship Program
Erin Early, AmeriCorp Volunteer

Machines and Muscle on the Maley Forest



Harvester moves many trees



Muscles move one tree at a time

A simple letter written on a winter day in 1991 began a chain of events that ended with the Conservation District owning property. Dick Cooper, board member and chairman from 1980-2000, asked if the Maley family would be interested in gifting property to the District for the use of nature trails and as a model demonstration woodlot for pine management. The Maley family said yes, saving their estate considerable tax dollars, and giving the District a wonderful opportunity.

This year, under District Forester Hash's guidance, a sustainable harvest yielded over 600 cords of red pine and \$27,000. Two parcels were logged, one for the second time. The Bisballe Brothers out of Cadillac won the bid. Two massive machines operated by two brothers cut through the sale in no time.

On the other (blistered) hand, the District received a small grant from the DNR Forest Stewardship Program to install a demonstration trail. Students from Benzie Central blazed the two mile trail through different stages of red pine. The interpretive trail gives Benzie County residents an opportunity to see the results of sustainable forestry practices. Look for more news and workshop announcements as the project progresses.

Thank you team: Richard Cooper, DNR Forest Stewardship Program, Barry Hahn's Benzie Central High School science class, Patty Moody, Ron Harrison, Carla Wichtner, MSU Extension 4H Summer Club: Erica Evans, Nicole Evans, Jill Louisignau, Jeana Louisignau, Ian VanDePerre, Forrester Dobson, Nikita Larson, Josie Hughes, Leif Scramlin, Guy Sauer, Roxanne Evans and Jessie Mitchell.

Native Tree and Plant Sale

Each spring the Conservation District sells native tree and shrub seedlings, wildflower seeds, groundcovers and perennial plants. In response landowner requests, we also offer a Fall Tree Sale.

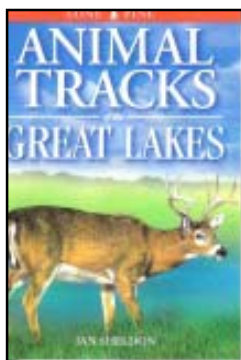
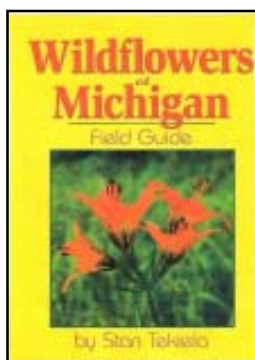
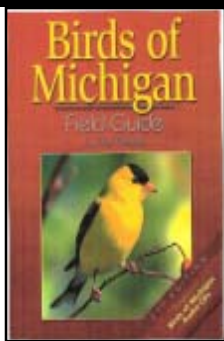
The sale brings in much needed revenue to keep the District rolling. It is an easy way to support the District and take home trees to plant. Check your mail this winter for the spring sale catalog.

This year Central State Bank and Cherryland Electric sponsored the spring sale. With their support, we were able to donate seedlings to local schools.

Platte and Betsie River Elementary students celebrated Arbor and Earth Days by planting trees, shrubs and perennial wildflowers with our forester's guidance. Students also designed the planting scheme: deciduous trees and shrubs surround a circle of evergreen trees creating year-round wildlife protection and food.

The District established a partnership with the Wild Turkey Federation and now offers easy-to-plant seed mixes. Hunters and wildlife watchers can choose from a corn or soybean mix to provide cover and food for deer and turkey. Proceeds support the District and the Wild Turkey Federation.

Thank you friends and volunteers: Central State Bank, Cherryland Electric, Sarah Slade, Platte Elementary teacher and her 6th grade students, Asa Kelly, Betsie Valley Elementary teacher and his Environmental Club, Kari Tomashik, Susan Green, Deb Lindgren and Mindy Carter.



Come check out the many books and other products we have for the "conservationist" in all of us.

Great Holiday Gift Ideas!



District Seeks Local Input

It is time again for the Benzie Conservation District to update our long-range plan. We would like your help identifying and prioritizing Benzie County's natural resource concerns and how the District can partner to meet those challenges.

You will find a survey in this report. Please take the time to give us your input. Return the survey so that we can better serve you and our natural resources.

Everyone who returns a completed survey is entered in a drawing for a Platte River Watershed t-shirt. If you want your input to remain anonymous, just stop by the office or mail a separate card with your contact information for the drawing.



Minutes Benzie Conservation District Annual Meeting Wednesday November 1, 2004

The 59th Annual Meeting of the Benzie Conservation District was called to order by Chair Ann Bourne at 7:05 pm. Bourne made opening remarks and introduced board members and staff.

Secretary/Treasurer Ray Kadlec presented minutes of the 2003 Annual Meeting. Motion by Joan Wolfe to adopt minutes as presented. Supported by Keith Westphal. Motion carried.

Ray Kadlec presented pre-audited FY 2004 financial report. Motion by Will Wolfe to accept financial report as presented. Supported by Virginia Sorenson. Motion carried.

Executive Director Mary Pitcher introduced board candidates and read "Who May Vote." Registration forms were collected and ballots distributed. Election officials Char Ester, Pat Laarman and Virginia Sorenson conducted the election.

Mary Pitcher introduced Marilyn Shy, Executive Director of Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, and Bill Bobier, former State Representative. Shy and Bobier spoke on the historic and future roles of Conservation Districts.

Mary Pitcher presented recognition awards to outgoing board members: Jon Royer, Keith Westphal, Ann Bourne and Willard Wolfe.

Election results: Deb Lindgren, Judith Webber and Brian Putney were each elected to a four year term.

Ann Bourne made closing remarks. Meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Pitcher, Executive Director

Benzie County Environmental Resource Directory

Here is a free booklet that answers questions like "Where can I take my old computer?" "Who can I call to get my drinking water tested?" and "What do I do with an injured bird?" The AmeriCorps Volunteer serving Benzie County helps produce the resource directory. They are available at the Benzie Conservation District downtown Beulah office. Contact Erin Early at 922-4857 if you like to add or change any information for the next publication.

2005 Finances*

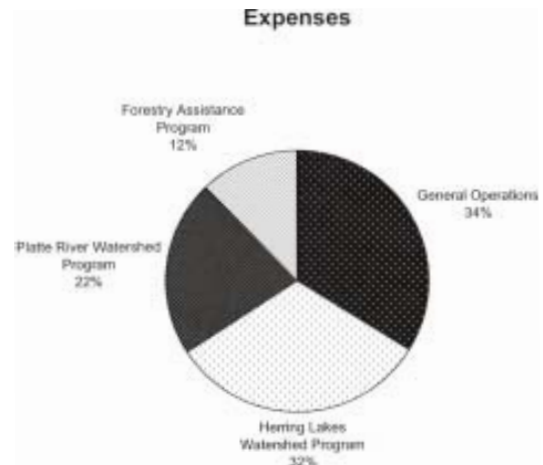
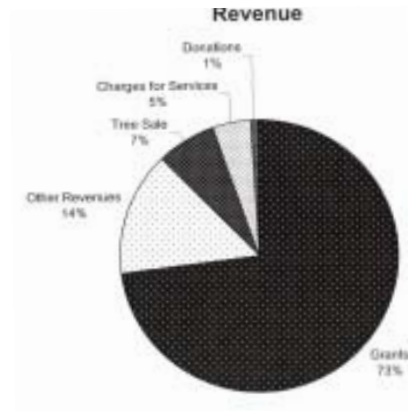
Revenue

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| Grants | \$156,538.09 |
| Other Revenues | \$ 24,705.85 |
| Tree and Plant Sale | \$ 21,131.35 |
| Charges for Services | \$ 9,660.69 |
| Donations | \$ 1,857.98 |
| Interest and Rentals | \$ 197.36 |
| Total Revenue and Other Sources | \$ 214,091.32 |

Expenditures

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| General Operations | \$ 71,507.66 |
| Herring Lakes Watershed Program | \$ 67,984.87 |
| Platte River Watershed Program | \$ 46,677.94 |
| Forestry Assistance Program | \$ 25,646.06 |
| Total Expenditures and Other Uses | \$ 211,816.53 |

*Data above is for period October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005 and is not audited.



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www.benziecd.org

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 US Postage Paid
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Mission Statement

The Benzie Conservation District will promote responsible use of natural resources in our community by providing leadership, information and services.

2005 Annual Report