



# Fall Quarterly Newsletter 2020



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Hi Everyone!

Fall arrived with a glorious display of color this year! Although the pandemic remains with us, we were able to accomplish much at the Manistee Conservation District office this summer! At our Native Herbaceous Plant and Seed Sale this year our sales totaled just under \$3500! We have already begun placing orders for next year's Native Herbaceous Plant sale to be scheduled in June of 2021, as well as for the Native Tree and Shrub Sale to be scheduled in April 2021. Stay tuned for more details as we finalize ordering and pick-up dates and locations!

We finalized our 5-year Strategic Plan (2020-2025), based on input received from a survey of Manistee County landowners and other community members. You can view it on our website at: [www.manisteed2.org](http://www.manisteed2.org), and at the upper left hit the menu bar and click "About" then Strategic Plan, or access it directly at: <https://www.manisteed2.org/uploads/2/8/1/9/28197077/mcdstrategicplan2020through2025-final2020sep23.pdf>. This will help guide our programming and educational efforts through 2025!

The Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection event held at the Manistee Road Commission facility in August was a great success this year! We received many positive comments as staff and volunteers worked hard on a very hot day, while following Covid-19 safety precautions, to collect HHW from 259 cars representing 294 households across 19 jurisdictions in Manistee County. The table below tallies the poundage collected in each category:

Collection Items	Manistee County (lbs)
Household Hazardous Waste	9,866
Controlled Pharmaceuticals	*
Non-controlled pharma & Sharps	208
Pesticides and other chemicals	3,415
Oil / Auto fluids (est. 350 gal-	4,523
Auto Batteries	2,100
Household Batteries	650
Electronics/Appliances	7,501
Oil Based Paints	6,584
Total Pounds	34,847

\*Less than 3 lbs. of Controlled Pharmaceuticals was also collected but not included in the total.

Although the pounds of HHW collected exceeded projections for this event, enough money was raised through grants, municipal allocations and donations to cover the HHW handling and disposal costs!

In September, MCD Board Director David Roskoski tendered his resignation from the MCD Board of Directors. The Board members accepted his resignation and wished him the best in the future!

The Manistee Conservation District office remains closed in response to recommendations from Public Health officials to prevent the spread of COVID-19. We're still interacting with our community through telephone and e-mails, and our technical staff remain very busy conducting technical assessments in the field,

following COVID safety protocols. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we do what we can to help mitigate the spread of this dangerous virus! I've shared some additional HHW statistics below!

This is a wonderful time to enjoy the trails and scenic drives our region offers! Enjoy the season and stay safe!

*Renee Mallison, Executive Director*

<b>Townships/ Villages/Cities</b>	<b>Amount Re- quested</b>	<b>Amount Re- ceived</b>	<b>Num- ber of Cars</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>
<b>Arcadia Twp.</b>	\$275	\$275	10	12
<b>Bear Lake Twp.</b>	\$600	\$600	16	17
<b>Brown Township</b>	\$300	\$300	11	12
<b>Cleon Township</b>	\$325	\$325	5	6
<b>Dickson Twp.</b>	\$400	\$400	5	6
<b>Filer Township</b>	\$950	\$950	22	26
<b>Manistee Twp.</b>	\$1,450	\$1,450	23	31
<b>Maple Grove Twp.</b>	\$350	\$350	8	8
<b>Marilla Township</b>	\$175		1	1
<b>Norman Township</b>	\$625	\$625	7	9
<b>Onekama Twp.</b>	\$375	\$375	20	21
<b>Pleasanton Twp.</b>	\$350	\$350	10	11
<b>Springdale Twp.</b>	\$325	\$325	1	1
<b>Stronach Twp.</b>	\$350	\$350	4	4
<b>Village of Bear Lake</b>	\$125	\$125	13	13
<b>Village of Copemish</b>	\$100	\$100	2	3
<b>Village of East Lake</b>	\$225		2	4
<b>Village of Kaleva</b>	\$200	\$200	2	2
<b>Village of Onekama</b>	\$175		35	39
<b>City of Manistee</b>	\$2,500	\$2,500	62	68
<b>Manistee County</b>	\$7,000	\$7,000		
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$17,175	\$16,600	259	294

**Manistee Conservation District Staff**

**Main Office Phone: 231-889-9666; x3**

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**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

*Scott Hughey, USDA/NRCS District Conservationist*

[Scott.hughey@usda.gov](mailto:Scott.hughey@usda.gov)

**Manistee Conservation  
District Board of Directors**

*Dave Wallace, Chair*

*Erik Johnson, Vice Chair*

*Nate Grossnickle, Secretary*

*Rob Carson, Director*

***The MCD Board meets the third Tuesday of each month the via Zoom at 5:30pm, except during the winter months (December-March) when meetings begin at 3:30pm. Be sure to check the MCD website:***

***[www.manisteed2.org](http://www.manisteed2.org) for any schedule or location changes.***

***Public Welcome!\****

***\*Due to the pandemic & social distancing requirements, meetings are held via Zoom. Contact the MCD office to get access information.***

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## **District Programs & Services**

**All programs, plant sales, events and meetings will be managed to help minimize COVID-19 transmission risks in accordance with the MDHHS Epidemic Order.**

### **Various General Education and Outreach Activities:**

-Newsletter, social media, speaker events and workshops

### **Technical Assistance Programs, Annual Plant Sales & Events, Stream Monitoring and Watershed Coalition meetings:**

-General Natural Resource Technical Assistance

-Forestry Assistance Program (FAP)

-Technical assistance and presentations such as Timber Tax, Mushroom and Tree Planting workshops, etc.

-Produce Safety Grant (PSP)

Includes technical and educational assistance, risk assessment and on-farm assistance

-Conservation planning assistance and financial assistance through USDA/NRCS

-Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Farm Risk Assessments

-Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network

Autumn Olive Workshops, invasive species treatments, other outreach

-Stream Monitoring-9 sites x2 per year (Generally May and October)

-Annual Spring Native Tree Sale (April)

-Annual Native Plant Sale (June)

-Annual Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Event (Always the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in August)

-Watershed Coalition Partnership Host

-Beachgrass plant sale for dune stabilization/shoreland erosion prevention

### **Regional Programs**

-Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network

-Aquatic Invasive Species Pathways Program

-MAEAP (Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program)

## **We're improving the habitat at our office!**

***By Josh Shields, forester and wildlife biologist***

When you drive by the Manistee Conservation District office, you may notice some interesting changes to the landscape near our office building. In the coming months and years, you will notice an array of pink flags, yellow flags, standing dead trees, and piles of brush. While this may seem confusing, there is a method behind this madness!

In 2020 we began the process of improving the habitat of the ecosystem surrounding our office building. The pink pin flags mark the locations of native trees and shrubs that we planted this past May. We also planted native trees and shrubs in the open-canopy forest behind our building. The purpose of planting native trees and shrubs is to enhance the structural and species diversity of woody plants for our native wildlife species – a higher diversity of native trees and shrubs of different sizes results in a more diverse array of habitats available to native wildlife such as mammals and birds. The yellow flags mark the corners of an area where we eliminated the turf grass, planted a cover crop (rye, clover, and oats), and will eventually plant native wildflowers and grasses, which will in turn provide habitat for wildlife such as pollinators. In October we also began the process of controlling non-native invasive species such as autumn olive and Scots pine, using a combination of mechanical methods (cutting with a chainsaw and brush saw) and chemical methods (applying herbicide to the cut stumps of autumn olive). We also used a girdle treatment (using a chainsaw to cut rings around the entire circumference of a tree, but without felling the tree) to kill non-native spruce and fir trees, whereby the intent was to thin trees in our windbreak. Currently, conifer trees in our windbreak are spaced too close, thus creating a competitive environment where they will all eventually suffer. Girdling some of the spruce and fir trees will therefore eliminate undesirable competitive trees, allowing for the remaining trees in the windbreak to thrive without heavily competing with the nearest trees. Lower branches from girdled spruce and fir trees were also removed and piled to provide habitat for mammals such as eastern cottontails, and the girdled trees, while standing, will provide habitat for woodpeckers and other cavity nesting birds and mammals. Stay tuned as we continue to improve the habitat at our office!

For more information about habitat management, contact Josh Shields, forester and wildlife biologist with the Manistee and Mason-Lake Conservation Districts, at 231-889-9666 (Office Phone), 989-220-9236 (Mobile Phone), or via email at [joshua.shields@macd.org](mailto:joshua.shields@macd.org).



*Planted native trees and shrubs (denoted by pink flags), girdled Colorado blue spruce, and a brush pile created for eastern cottontail habitat. Photo by Sharon Goble, Administrative Specialist with the Manistee Conservation District.*



*Stellar volunteer Craig Goble creating a double girdle on a Colorado blue spruce to thin our conifer windbreak and provide habitat for cavity nesting birds and mammals! Photo by Sharon Goble.*

## Micro irrigation: Conserving Water and Promoting Safe Produce

By Michelle Jacokes, Produce Safety Technician

For the full article visit:

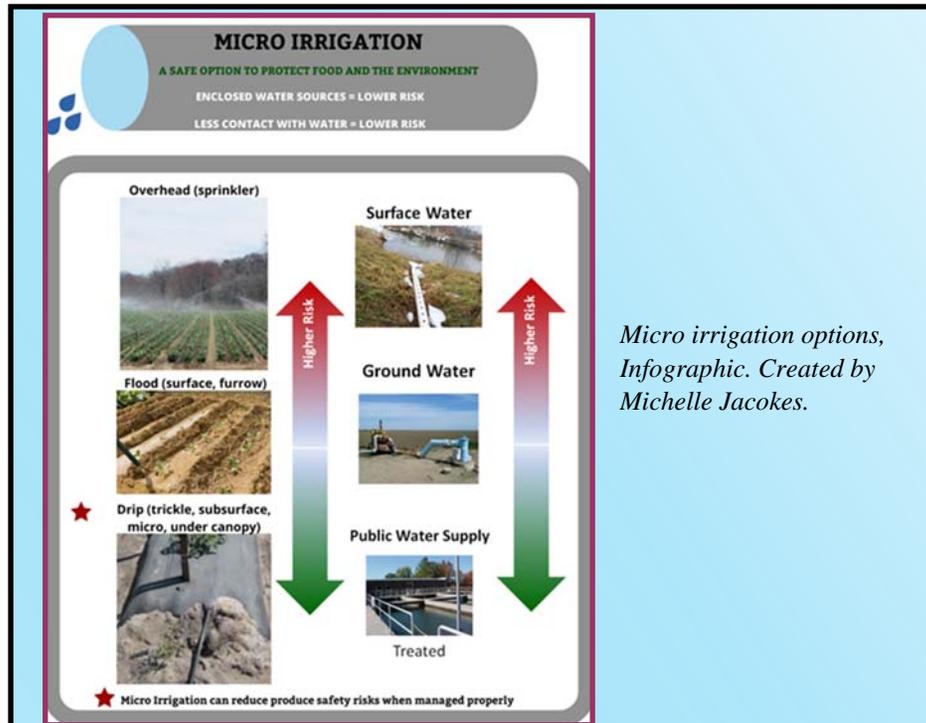
**Record Eagle Ag Forum:** [https://www.record-eagle.com/news/business/micro-irrigation-conserving-water-promoting-safe-food/article\\_0f40ded8-0804-11eb-a9a2-3f2b4026fc67.html](https://www.record-eagle.com/news/business/micro-irrigation-conserving-water-promoting-safe-food/article_0f40ded8-0804-11eb-a9a2-3f2b4026fc67.html)

Micro irrigation, that sounds... interesting, and small? It is not literally, what it sounds like. Micro irrigation is the delivery of water to crops in a system that can directly deliver water to the plants roots. While this type of irrigation is not suited for all operations, it can be a very efficient and safe way to deliver water to fresh produce. Micro irrigation typically appears as a trickle, drip or soak system. They are designed to efficiently apply water directly to root zone of plants by means of applicators at a low pressure. This system has benefits like reducing irrigation costs, protecting soil from erosion and compaction, and reducing the amount of water lost due to environmental evaporation or structural components.

These systems are great for water and soil conservation, as they only deliver the amount of water needed for the plant and can effectively reduce how irrigation water can create situations that are unfavorable. Compared to traditional irrigation methods, a drip/micro irrigation system can lead to water savings of up to forty percent (*NRCS*). Not only is this system great for conservation practices; including decreased runoff, soil compaction, evaporation loss, and more; but it can also lessen the risk of potential microbial contamination of the produce. This is because water introduces a risk in produce safety. Agricultural water, and all water, has the potential to become contaminated with microorganisms. In agriculture, many farms use water from multiple sources; like wells, municipal and surface water systems. The system that is utilized varies depending on the farm, or home garden.

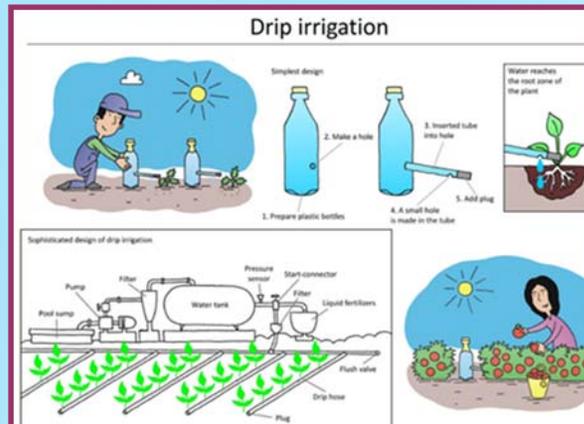
In order to deter risks, farms have to go through rigorous water testing or water treatment to ensure that water used in production will not introduce unwanted microbes. They also should perform water system inspections to make sure everything is in sufficient working order.

Many home gardeners utilize rain water as water for irrigation, and this is a great way to conserve water usage. This water is considered 'surface' water, so when applying it at home it is best to use a watering method that directly situates the water at the base of the plants, this is also called indirect irrigation, as it does not directly touch the edible portion of the crop. This is especially important for fruits or veggies that are eaten without undergoing a kill step like cooking. It is also good to monitor the system, and test this water often for generic *E.coli* if using it on fresh produce.



*Micro irrigation options, Infographic. Created by Michelle Jacokes.*

*Photo credit: Zoi Environmental Network*



*Photo credit: Zoi Environmental Network*



United States Department of Agriculture

## Natural Resources Conservation Service

Since 1935 the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has been “helping people help the land.” Supporting America’s working lands NRCS has a proud history of supporting America’s farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. As the USDA’s primary, private lands conservation agency we use objective, reliable science to assist our partners, and communities to make decisions about their natural resources.

The NRCS staff also administer personal conservation and financial assistance programs to private landowners of Manistee and Benzie Counties. These programs help landowners to offset some of the cost involved in implementing conservation practices. In 2020 the Bear Lake NRCS office funded 25 applications for Farm Bill assistance for landowners. These applications equated to \$384,316.00 of Farm Bill assistance going to landowners serviced by the Bear Lake NRCS office.

The most commonly sought-after assistance of 2020 was for the removal of invasive shrubs and trees. Between Manistee and Benzie County there are 316.8 acres of invasive species scheduled to be removed by 2020 applicants. Some other notable practices from the 2020 signup include: 5 Forest Management Plans, 21.8 acres of native grass and wildflower habitat to be planted, 83.3 acres of tree plantings planned, 15,504 linear feet of fencing to be installed on 109.8 acres receiving payments for developing a rotational grazing system, 4,230 linear feet of windbreaks planned, and much more.

The purpose of NRCS programs is to address natural resource concerns on private land. Whether a landowner is aware of any resource concerns on their property or not, these programs are here to help landowners manage their own land for the future. Many landowners can overlook the early signs of a problem that might impact the future health of their property. Our technical staff can help residents look at their land with its future in mind. In turn, creating a conservation plan to improve the health and prosperity of the private lands of Manistee and Benzie counties for generations to come.

We are currently scheduling site visits and accepting applications for 2021 conservation programs. If you would like to hear more about what is available to you, do not hesitate to contact our office and set up a free site visit with a conservation professional.

Bear Lake NRCS Office  
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*Figure 1: Autumn olive (Elaeagnus umbellata) is non-native invasive shrub commonly present in Manistee County. It is easily distinguished by the silvery color on the underside of the leaves and often copious amounts of berries. Photo by Tyler Dula*

*Figure 2: A commonly contracted practice through the NRCS Bear Lake office is treatment of invasive shrubs. This is an example of a "cut-stump" treatment at the Manistee Conservation District. This method involves cutting the shrub at ground level and applying herbicide to the outer edge of the exposed trunk. Photo by Tyler Dula*



## **Making Strides in Conservation**

*By: Jamie VanDerZanden, MAEAP Technician*

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) works with farms of all sizes and all commodities prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. The program is separated into four systems that each focus on different potential risks. The Farmstead system focuses more on pollution risks associated with fuel, pesticide, fertilizer, and manure storage. Whereas, the cropping system focuses more on risks associated with pesticide and nutrient application, erosion control, and record keeping. The Livestock system focuses on manure storage, transfer and land application, record keeping, feed storage and lot management risks. The fourth system, the Forest, Wetlands, and Habitat (FWH), is geared more towards non-farm landowners that manage and protect their natural resources.

MAEAP Technicians across the state are working with farms and landowners to complete risk assessments and implement risk reduction practices on their farms. In our 2020 fiscal year, the program in Mason County completed 6 new risk assessments, 7 repeat risk assessments, 3 reverifications, and 8 new verifications on many different types of farms and forest property. The program in Lake County completed 2 new risk assessments and 2 new verifications on forest property. The program in Manistee County completed 8 new risk assessments, 3 repeat risk assessments, 1 reverification, and 2 new verifications on many different types of farms and forest property.

The MAEAP program has continued to work with many different farms across the state since 1998, when the program first started. To date, there are currently 5645 (and counting) MAEAP Verifications across Michigan. MAEAP is a great program to learn more about risk reduction practices, be recognized as a Top Steward of the Land, and to help promote conservation. The program is 100% voluntary and 100% confidential, and it is achievable with the help of your local MAEAP Technician and Conservation District. If you are interested in learning more about MAEAP, want to become MAEAP verified, or if you know of someone that would be a good fit for the program, feel free to call us at our office at (231) 757-3707 ext. 5 to learn more.



Wetland in Mason County. Picture from Mason-Lake Conservation District

## **Managing Invasive Species in the Fall and Winter: Why the arrival of snow does not necessarily signal the end of treatment season**

*Emily Cook, ISN Outreach Specialist, NW MI Invasive Species Network*

The Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network (ISN) has a mission of directly managing terrestrial invasive plants. In most cases, this means we have an obvious line between “field season” and the months we spend hunkered down indoors, planning for the next time we can get outside to see green again. Some invasive plants, however, can be successfully treated when there is snow on the ground, extending the window for management well into the winter months.

Woody species like autumn olive, Japanese barberry, buckthorn, and honeysuckle (make sure it is the invasive variety – [here is a good way to tell](https://www.habitatmatters.org/honeysuckle.html) - <https://www.habitatmatters.org/honeysuckle.html>) are all excellent plants to manage later in the season. During this time of year, the roots are working to pull nutrients down for storage. Any herbicide applied to the plant will be pulled down readily as well. The opposite occurs in late winter and spring when nutrients are being pushed out of the roots to encourage growth after dormancy. Before getting started on treatment, there are some details to consider.

Successful invasive species management requires preparation and patience. Take some time to assess your property to determine what plants are growing and which may require treatment. Sometimes it can be quite overwhelming but consider the surrounding ecosystems! Are there any areas that would benefit more from having invasive species cleared? Focus on those spots first.

Next, come up with an integrated management plan. You may have to use multiple techniques for several years before you can determine if your treatment has been successful. Japanese barberry, for example, can require cutting and herbicide treatment the first year and then hand-pulling of young plants the next.

Once you have determined the steps you will take to manage your invasives, specifically the woody species that can be targeted in the winter, you can move forward with direct treatment. Ideally, utilize the cut-stump method which involves cutting the stem close to the ground and immediately treating the stump with herbicide. [Visit ISN’s website for instructions](https://www.habitatmatters.org/treatment-information.html) on how to utilize this method. (<https://www.habitatmatters.org/treatment-information.html>) Interested in a different technique, perhaps without chemical use? That information is available online as well. Remember, when utilizing herbicides, the label is the law. Be careful and follow the guidelines set-forth by the herbicide you are using, including personal protective equipment and decontamination.

ISN is always available to help answer questions and guide you in the right direction when it comes to managing invasive species on your own property. Please feel free to contact us at anytime by visiting [www.HabitatMatters.org](http://www.HabitatMatters.org). Not interested in treating your invasive species but want to report them? Let us know what you have at [www.misin.msu.edu](http://www.misin.msu.edu).



*A Japanese Barberry infestation at Magoon Creek Natural Area in Manistee County. Photo credit: Katie Grzesiak.*



*An example of how to properly apply herbicide on a stump for cut-stump treatment. Source: Buckthorn-blaster.com.*



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