



CONSERVATION CORNER

A quarterly publication of the Jackson County Conservation District

2010 ANNUAL MEETING A BIG SUCCESS!

The Jackson County Conservation District held its 61st Annual Meeting and dinner on Tuesday, January 26, 2010 at Gene Davis and Sons Convention Center in Jackson. The evening was a big success with over 80 people attending. State Senator Mike Nofs, County Administrator Randy Treacher, and County Commissioners Cliff Herl, Jim Videto, and Earl Poleski

were all there to support the District. Vic Verchereau, from Farm Bureau Insurance was our speaker. Vic encouraged us all to be stewards of our land and to work together to achieve our goals.

Lathe Clafin and Don Foster were both elected to serve on the JCCD Board of Directors.

A special thank you to the following table sponsors and to everyone who donated door prizes: Spink Seed, Maple Hill Farm, Garst Seed, Napoleon Feed Mill, Family Crest Farms, Syngenta, Channel Seeds, Consumers Energy, Greenstone, Farm Bureau, The Anderson's – Agvantag, Fitzgibbons Fleet Fabricators, D&G

Spring 2010

*Special Edition—
Annual Report*

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Equipment, Adams Building Contractors, Farmer's State Bank, and Rives Quality Meats.

CONSERVATION FARM OF THE YEAR FOR 2009 IS ANNOUNCED

Sears Farms is located near the village of Horton where Mark Sears' father moved from Jasper, MI. Mark started farming with his father in 1975 with about 300 acres. Since then, the operation has grown to 2000 acres of cropland and 1500 acres of pasture with 500 brood cows and 900 beef cattle. In addition to the larger scale operation, Sears Farms had some staffing increase as well. Assisting with the day-to-day operations of the farm is Mark's entire family including his wife, Jill, both of his children and their spouses, and most recently a granddaughter, who is currently assisting Jill with management.



Sears Farms has been using reduced tillage on the farm for 15 years and has developed a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan to help them account for all nutrients produced, purchased, and spread on the farm. Prior to 2007, they installed a dry stack waste storage facility with a wastewater treatment strip to slow the runoff and utilize any nutrients contained in that runoff. Since 2007, they have removed the beef cattle from their winter sacrifice lots and constructed manure storage facilities to keep runoff risk to a minimum. The farm has also constructed a wastewater storage pit to collect what runoff does occur. Finally, Sears Farms has installed a secondary fertilizer containment facility to protect their investment of fertilizer from tank or valve malfunctions.



For these reasons, the Jackson County Conservation District has chosen **Sears Farms** as its Conservation Farm of the Year for 2009. Congratulations **Sears Farms!**

JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

This report reflects activity for Fiscal Year 2009 (October 1, 2008-September 30, 2009).

The past year was a busy one for the Jackson County Conservation District. The year brought staff changes, the kickoff of new grants, a re-designed web page, and the start of our own quarterly newsletter. In all of these efforts, JCCD holds strong to its mission of “promoting wise land-use decisions, based upon the natural resources of Jackson County, through technical assistance and education.”

2009 Activities Summary

- ◆ Assistance provided to almost 700 customers in the office and over the phone.
- ◆ Over 40,000 trees and hundreds of native plants distributed in Jackson County through our tree and plant sales.
- ◆ 500 total volunteer hours utilized for tree sales and special events.
- ◆ Re-design of our website: www.jacksoncd.org.
- ◆ Launch of the *Conservation Corner* quarterly newsletter with the Fall 2009 issue.
- ◆ Continued participation in special events like the Earth Day festival at Cascades Park and Project RED.
- ◆ Acceptance of the “2009 Conservation District of the Year” award for our region.
- ◆ and a successful year for all of our programs—the Upper Grand River Implementation Project, Michigan Water Stewardship Program, Adopt-A-Stream, and the Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (see pages 4-5).



Giving away trees at the 2009 “Celebrate Earth Day” Festival at Cascades Park.



Receiving a grant for 2009-2010 from the Michigan Clean Water Corps.

JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Board Member Spotlight

Gaylord “Butch” Lincoln, Board Chairman: Butch, a Vietnam Veteran, has served on the JCCD Board for 18 years. He has also served as Farm Bureau President, Springport Township Supervisor, and on the Springport School Board and Jackson Farm Service Agency County Committee. He farms 2600 acres of soybeans and corn using no-till and some minimal tillage practices. He uses Garst seed on the farm and actively sells Garst seed. At D&G’s in Rives Junction, he is also a John Deere sales representative.

Butch did not wish to run for re-election to the District Board for 2010, so he was recently honored with a plaque and gift certificate for his many years of service with the District. JCCD will miss having Butch on the Board, but looks forward to still seeing him around at



agricultural events in Jackson County. *Butch Lincoln (center) surrounded by JCCD staff and Board members.*

Statement of Revenues and Expenses for Year Ended September 30, 2009

REVENUES	EXPENSES	EXPENSES (cont'd)
County Funds:	Program Expenses:	Promotion:
Jackson County \$ 20,000.00	UGRIP \$ 70,573.43	Community Promotion/
Grant Funds:	Tree/Native Plant Sale \$ 24,023.68	Advertising \$ 1,814.03
CTAI (Conservation Technical Asst) \$ 49,779.50	Office Expenses:	Organization Activities:
UGRIP (Upper Grand River Project) \$134,357.80	Payroll, benefits and other employee	Fees/Dues \$ 1,100.00
Operations \$ 9,579.00	expenses \$164,030.09	Annual Meeting \$ 1,142.73
Local Sources:	Office Supplies \$ 1,498.47	Director’s Expenses \$ 400.68
Contribution Agreement \$ 554.00	Insurance \$ 1,176.59	<u>Training</u> \$ 800.04
Tree/Native Plant Sales \$ 45,809.11	Newsletter \$ 845.00	TOTAL EXPENSES \$271,039.66
Equipment Rental \$ 621.00	Telephone \$ 1,717.35	NET INCOME -\$ 7,758.23*
Meetings/Workshops \$ 1,794.00	Website \$ 377.34	TOTAL
General Interest \$ 562.02	Copier Lease \$ 914.88	FUND BALANCE \$109,144.33
<u>Miscellaneous</u> \$ 225.00	Postage \$ 625.35	
TOTAL REVENUE \$263,281.43		

**The total fund balance covers any net losses.*

JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative

by Zac Smith, *CTAI Specialist*

The Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI) is a partnership of the Jackson County Conservation District (JCCD), the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and the USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that was designed to promote good stewardship of our natural resources and offer technical assistance on a local basis. Farmers and landowners in Jackson County have benefited from this partnership since 2006.

Through the 2008 Farm Bill, farmers are able to access federal cost-share dollars and address resource concerns on their property under programs like the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

In 2009, the CTAI program brought over \$100,000 in federal cost-share dollars to Jackson County farmers and landowners. Some of the practices that were implemented with these funds include:

- ◆ Livestock watering pipelines (3000 ft)
- ◆ Livestock waste water collection and storage for a 2 million gallon annual capacity
- ◆ Heavy use Area Protection (1-2 acres)
- ◆ Roof water runoff structures (2)
- ◆ Secondary Containment for 250,000 Gallons of Fertilizers and Pesticides

Upper Grand River Implementation Project

by Cecilia Govrik, *Watershed Project Manager*

The second stage of the Upper Grand River Implementation Project (UGRIP) kicked off in 2009. After successfully completing its first grant cycle in 2006-2008, UGRIP will now continue to promote watershed stewardship and sustainable land-use in the Upper Grand River Watershed for another 3 years.

UGRIP's Accomplishments in 2009 include:

- ◆ Hosted 4 educational workshops attended by 120 people.
- ◆ Held 2 river cleanups using 40 volunteers.
- ◆ Delivered educational programs to 2040 students in the watershed.
- ◆ Provided information on conservation programs to 600 landowners.
- ◆ Reached over 1200 people with displays/activities at 6 special events.



JACKSON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Michigan Water Stewardship Program

by Mike Rubley, *Water Stewardship Technician*

The Michigan Water Stewardship Program, MWSP (formerly the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, MGSP) serves both Calhoun and Jackson Counties. In 2009, MWSP primarily focused on reaching producers and working with them to achieve MAEAP verification. From October 2008 to September 2009, the program worked with 32 individuals/facilities. Out of the 32 producers, 8 MAEAP verifications were completed, and additional producers are projected to complete their MAEAP verification in one or more of the systems before the spring of 2010.

The program has accumulated a total of 177 deliverables for the year. This puts the program at 118% of the required deliverables for 2009:

- Farm*A*Systs – 12
- Crop*A*Systs – 6
- Livestock*A*Systs – 2
- MAEAP Farmstead Verification – 3
- MAEAP Cropping Verification – 3
- MAEAP Livestock Verification – 2
- Drift Management Plans/Environmental sensitivity – 7
- Emergency Plans – 11
- Backflow Devices – 8
- Spill Kits/Spill Related – 3
- Fuel Storage Related – 5
- Water Testing – 1
- Well/Water Setbacks – 7
- Pesticide Related – 10
- Nutrient/Manure Related – 9
- Livestock Related – 5
- Miscellaneous – 5



The MWSP unveiled a new logo this year.

The Sprayer Clinic held on March 26, 2009 at Butch Lincoln's farm was a big success. There were 237 individuals in attendance and 4 Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) credits were made available to attendees. Probably the most impressive thing about MWSP is that those who participate in the program are doing so voluntarily in an effort to be good stewards of the land.



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YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER, YOUR MICHIGAN



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The Jackson County Conservation District (JCCD) is a locally elected nonpartisan entity of state government, whose purpose is to promote wise land use decisions, based upon the capability of the natural resources of Jackson County, through technical assistance and education.

JCCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Spink *Chairman*

Scott Maurer *Vice-Chairman*

Lathe Claflin, *Treasurer*

Dick Ekins, *Secretary*

Don Foster, *Member*

JCCD Board meetings are held on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am at the JCCD office and are open to the public.

All Jackson County Conservation District programs and services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.