



CONSERVATION CORNER

A quarterly publication of the Jackson County Conservation District

Winter 2011

CELEBRATE ANOTHER YEAR WITH US!

The 2011 Annual Meeting Banquet will be held on **Tuesday, January 25th, 2011** at 5:30 pm at the Gene Davis Banquet Hall, 3575 Francis Street in Jackson. You are invited to join the JCCD as we review the accomplishments of 2010, elect a new member to our board of directors, and enjoy Italian food and lively bluegrass music from The Village

Square Acoustics.

A brief business meeting will take place, followed by a short presentation about the Clean Sweep Program and pesticide disposal given by Abigail Eaton from the Michigan Department of



Agriculture.

Tickets are \$13 per person, or \$7 for children 10 and under. Reservations are required by Tuesday, January 18th, 2011. Please RSVP by calling the Conservation District at 517-784-2800 x5. Payment will be accepted at the door the night of the banquet, or can be mailed or dropped off at the Conservation District office.

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NEW YEAR BRINGS PROGRAM SIGN-UPS

Through the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, financial assistance for 2011 is now available to qualified landowners under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

(WHIP). EQIP provides assistance for conserving resources on agricultural land, and may include practices such as animal waste storage facilities or prescribed grazing (see article on page 6).

WHIP is targeted at improving wildlife habitat and may assist with

wildflower and native grass establishment or forest stand improvements.

Applications are accepted continuously for both of these programs, but must be received in Lansing by January 19th for this funding period. Thus, interested landowners



should contact Andrew Gust **before January 12th** at 517-784-2800 Ext. 3 or andrew.gust@mi.usda.gov.



GOODBYE TO OUR CTAI

At the end of October, the Jackson CD had to say goodbye to our technician for the Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI). Zac Smith joined the Jackson CD staff in 2006 after previously working for the Lenawee Conservation District for several years. Luckily, Zac has not gone too far and he remains in the conservation family. In November, he began working as a Soil Conservation Technician for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Jonesville field office. When asked about his experience working for JCCD Zac said, "I appreciate most the diversity of the landscape in Jackson, especially the lakes, streams, rivers and wetlands, as well as the diverse groups of people that live around the County. The Conservation District in Jackson is a vital resource to the land, water, wildlife and people. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be part of this wonderful organization."



The Jackson Conservation District staff and board will certainly miss having Zac around, but we wish him the best in his new position in Jonesville.

KIDS CORNER

Hey kids! It may be cold outside, but that doesn't mean that you can't go out and enjoy nature and some fresh air—just dress warm! There are many ways to have fun outdoors during the winter. See if you can find the ones listed here.



WINTER WORD FIND

W	Z	A	P	L	Z	P	V	G	Y	H	U	A	E	W	P	G	G
M	C	M	Q	T	J	P	Q	X	V	D	Y	Q	I	G	U	N	N
Z	S	P	B	V	R	P	L	D	P	H	B	N	Y	N	W	I	I
Z	F	R	Z	I	K	G	S	M	P	N	T	S	D	I	G	H	K
C	S	W	A	N	R	K	A	A	Q	E	I	A	J	I	X	S	I
V	A	N	H	D	A	D	R	D	R	I	C	Z	H	K	I	I	H
Q	H	S	W	T	U	G			F	P	X	G	L	S	R	F	Q
I	R	E	I	J	O	I	C	W	N	J	N	R	L	F	S		Y
N	V	N	B	T	V	A	Y	B	A	I	D	G	R	L	Y	E	O
F	G	E	O	D	M	D	Q	V	D	T	U	Z	N	Z	J	C	W
M	T	H	N	P	X	Y	F	D	W	M	C	B	Y	H	Z	I	Z
L	P	G	I	Q	W	F	E	F	C	J	J	H	F	A	E	A	Z
S	Z	N	J	O	M	L	C	B	K	B	H	G	I	N	J	E	U
J	G	D	F	P	S	U	C	U	Z	E	E	I	K	N	E	N	K
E	F	K	N	G	N	I	E	O	H	S	W	O	N	S	G	T	W

- PHOTOGRAPHY
- SKIING
- HIKING
- BIRD WATCHING
- SLEDDING
- SNOWSHOEING
- SKATING
- ICE FISHING
- WINTER CAMPING



PRODUCT FEATURE: IT'S THE YEAR OF THE SUGAR MAPLE

The featured tree for our spring tree sale this year will be the sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Sometimes known as the Rock Maple or Hard Maple, the Sugar Maple is an attractive tree that provides nice shade cover. The dense green foliage varies from light yellow-green to deep green, with greenish yellow flowers budding with the leaves.

The seed pods are known for their helicopter resemblance, and the tree produces sap in the spring that can be turned into maple syrup.

Sugar maples have smooth silvery bark and are a popular tree to plant for beautiful fall color.

Sugar maples have slow to medium growth, and can reach heights of 125 feet with 5-foot diameter trunks.

JCCD will be selling the sugar maple seedlings in groups of 5, 10, 25, 50, and 100. The seedlings are 12-



Photo Credit:
www.bemisfarmsnursery.com



Photo Credit:
www.deq.state.mi.us/pw/Acesac.shtml

18 inches in size with bare roots. All of the trees available for sale through the Jackson CD come from local nurseries in Michigan.

Conservation District tree sales are held in order to promote reforestation, erosion control, and the improvement of wildlife habitat. Both coniferous and deciduous seedlings

and transplants are available at the spring sale, as well as larger fruit trees and native grass and wildflower seed. In addition, JCCD offers other conservation products like rain barrels, composters, tree collars and shelters, and deer repellent.

By purchasing these products through JCCD, you are helping to further conservation efforts throughout Jackson County. Visit www.jacksoncd.org for more information.



Photo Credit:
www.cas.vanderbilt.edu

The spring tree sale catalogs are being mailed out in January. If you do not receive your copy or would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact our office at 517-784-2800 x5.

Tree sale information and order forms will also be posted online by February (www.jacksoncd.org).

The spring tree sale order deadline is March 25th, 2011.

WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON IN THE WATERSHED?

By Cecilia Govrik, *Watershed Project Manager*

Another year of the Upper Grand River Implementation Project (UGRIP) has come and gone, and we are now looking ahead at what is still on our agenda for the final year of the project. In 2011, one township in the project's focus area will be selected to receive land use planning services from the consulting firm ASTI Environmental. The services will include a full Natural Resources Inventory, a review of all township planning documents and policies, and recommendations for protecting unique natural features. These services were funded by UGRIP

in the past for two townships, Henrietta and Waterloo, and the information and resources the townships received have proven to be very

useful when working to protect the Upper Grand. We look forward to offering the services to another township in 2011.



Join us for the Upper Grand River Watershed's
Winter Stonefly Hunt!



Saturday, January 29th, 2011
1:00-3:00 pm

**Meet at the Dahlem Center,
 7117 S. Jackson Rd.
 Jackson, MI**

Journey out into the watershed to find winter stoneflies. Come dressed for the weather—you will be outside for about an hour. Training and equipment is provided. Kids age 12 and up are welcome if accompanied by an adult.

Please RSVP by January 27th to Cecilia Govrik at 517-784-2800 x208 or cecilia.govrik@macd.org.

** Backup date in case of bad weather is Feb. 12th, 1-3pm*

To learn more about the Upper Grand River Watershed and upcoming events, visit www.uppergrandriver.org or become a friend of the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance on Facebook!

GREAT RECEIVES “FRIEND OF CONSERVATION” AWARD

In December, the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts selected the Grand River Environmental Action Team (GREAT) as its 2010 “Friend of Conservation.” Every year an individual or organization somewhere in Michigan is chosen to receive this award—and this year the recipient was right here in Jackson County!

The honor is based upon contributions to: 1) improving the public’s understanding of natural resources conservation, 2) partnering with a local Conservation District on resource management projects, and 3) furthering the mission of Michigan’s Conservation Districts to help our citizens conserve their lands and our State’s resources by working for a cleaner, healthier, and economically stronger Michigan.

JCCD was pleased to nominate GREAT for the award due to an exceptional year for the organization. In 2010, GREAT hosted its 100th free public paddle event, held another hugely successful volunteer river



Jim Seitz and Kenny Price accepted the award on behalf of GREAT.

cleanup, and dedicated over 200 hours of hard labor in clearing the headwaters for the Grand River Expedition.

GREAT president Jonathan Hoover stated, “I can say that it's an honor to be GREAT Board President this year. Much has been accomplished by members of a hard working, talented and conscientious Board. I couldn't be more proud of the contributions made this year by our Board and by our membership.”

Cecilia Govrik presented the award to GREAT at the state-wide winter convention

for Conservation Districts. She highlighted the group’s long-standing partnership with the Jackson Conservation District, as GREAT members continue to be strong supporters of the Upper Grand River Adopt-A-Stream program and have carried out river cleanups under the Upper Grand River Implementation Project. JCCD nominated GREAT saying “it’s a group of great people doing great things to make a real difference in the Grand River Watershed.”

Congratulations GREAT!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jackson CD Annual Meeting Banquet

Tuesday, January 25th, 2011
5:30pm-9:00pm
*Gene Davis Banquet Hall,
3575 Francis St.*

Adopt-A-Stream Winter Stonefly Hunt

Saturday, January 29th, 2011
(backup date 2/12)
1:00pm-3:00pm
*Dahlem Center,
7117 S. Jackson Rd.*

Tree Sale Order Deadline

Friday, March 25th, 2011

Sprayer Clinic

Thursday, April 7th
All day
Lincoln Farms in Parma

“Celebrate Earth Day” Festival

Saturday, April 30th
1:00pm-4:00pm
Cascades Park

Please Note:

The Jackson County Conservation District will be closed for Federal holidays on January 17th and February 21st.

PRESCRIBED GRAZING FOR HIGHER PROFIT

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Many farmers today are looking for a way to lower their operating costs in their livestock enterprise. With the high feed and energy costs, along with uncertain beef and milk price fluctuation, it is getting harder to earn a living on the farm. Typically, farmers place more emphasis on growing a good crop of corn than they do on a good crop of grasses and legumes. Studies have shown that when grasses and legumes are managed through a prescribed grazing system, there is a higher profit return.

Prescribed Grazing is the management of harvesting grasses with grazing and/or browsing animals. Generally, farmers participate in prescribed grazing for the following reasons:

- To improve or maintain a desired plant composition and vigor of plant communities
- To improve or

maintain the quality and quantity of grasses for the health and productivity of grazing and browsing animals

- To improve or maintain ground and/or surface water quality
- To improve or maintain the quantity or quality of food and/or cover for wildlife
- To reduce soil erosion and maintain or improve soil conditions

Prescribed grazing may be applied on pastureland fields used for grazing livestock (i.e. sheep, dairy, horses, beef, etc.). Observe these factors when considering grazing pastureland fields:



- Product limitation – how much grass is available for harvesting?
- Recovery Rate – what are the number of days it takes for the grass to regenerate before grazing the fields again after the initial grazing cycle?
- Faster weight gain
- Higher milk production at a cheaper cost
- Less feed cost

When considering a prescribed grazing system, a farmer should ask the following questions:

- Do I have a reliable fresh water source?
- Do I have a good fence system?
- Do I have a good quality and quantity of grass?

There are several recognizable benefits of going to prescribed grazing, including:

- Improvement in the quality of grasses
- Better soil conditions on field(s)
- Improvement in herd health (less diseases and parasites problems)
- Longer life expectancy of the animal
- Decrease in mortality rates
- Less labor time for manure handling

Financial assistance through the Environment Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) may be available to install the component practices noted in this system. All livestock producers are eligible for this system. For more details and technical assistance on this process, contact District Conservationist Andrew Gust at 517-784-2800 Ext. 3.

DON'T SLIP UP—USE DEICERS WISELY THIS WINTER

You can't ignore it—winter is here. Snow and ice can make things more difficult, whether it's traveling on the slippery roads or simply stepping out onto your own doorstep or walking through your neighborhood. Sand, salt, and chemical deicers are often applied to roads and walkways in order to make conditions safer. Unfortunately, anything applied to these surfaces has a straight path to our waterways when the snow and ice melts and enters storm drains.

There are three general categories of deicers: sands, chloride-based deicers, and acetate-based deicers. Sand can provide traction, but will not actually melt ice. Since sediment is the biggest pollutant in the U.S.

and in our Upper Grand River Watershed, sand should be used sparingly on ice.

Chloride-based deicers (rock salt) cost less than other deicers, but do not work as well in lower temperatures. Furthermore, chloride deicers increase the salinity of soils and ground and surface waters, which especially is a concern if you have well water that may become high in chlorides and lead to health problems.

An alternative deicer is Calcium Magnesium Acetate (CMA). CMA is much more expensive, but prevents snow and ice particles from adhering to one another and to road surfaces. Made from limestone and acetic acid,

CMA is often used in environmentally-sensitive areas because it is biodegradable and low in toxicity. Yet, it can still deplete oxygen in waterways if it accumulates in high concentrations (which may happen since its application rate is double

that of rock salt).

All deicers have their pros and cons, so no matter which method you choose make sure that you are reading the label instructions and applying it properly in order to minimize impacts.

TIPS FOR MANAGING SNOW & ICE

- ◆ Shovel early and often to avoid needing deicers.
- ◆ Read the label instructions and follow them carefully—only apply in the correct temperature and conditions.
- ◆ Choose pellet form deicers over flakes in order to increase ice penetration.
- ◆ Don't use leftover fertilizers as deicers. While urea-based fertilizers may melt ice, they perform poorly below 20 degrees and have a MUCH higher application rate and cost.
- ◆ Stick with one main ice-free entrance to your home—are you really going to use the garage's back service door or your deck steps in the snow?

ANOTHER HONOR FOR JCCD

In December, Jackson CD received a certificate from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts for being one of five nominees for the "Conservation District of the Year." While the award went to Van Buren

County, JCCD was proud to be a nominee. The award is based upon multiple factors, ranging from educational program attendance to the number of trees sold for conservation purposes, so it's a nice honor for JCCD.



Board member Dick Ekins (second from left) accepted a nomination certificate along with staff from other nominated Conservation Districts.



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YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER, YOUR MICHIGAN,



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Our office is open 8:00am—4:30 pm, Mon. through Fri.

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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.