

# ANNUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2009



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## WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSSES...

Everyone knows by now the results of the recent budget woes of our great State, and the Conservation Districts didn't escape the sharp blade of budget cuts. We have collectively been "zeroed out" of the state's budget for the foreseeable future, and not because Districts are deemed without value. There are so many needs in our state and so many programs and services have been slashed, including education, that we are in good, though disheartened, company.

Our challenge is to recognize and mine any opportunities that might have come about because of the cuts. Here's what we know: Benzie County continues to be one of the most naturally beautiful and diverse counties in the state. We continue to develop our most stable economies of tourism and agriculture as the culture of "buying local" becomes more prevalent.



Throughout these historical changes, the Benzie Conservation District has continued to be a vital source of information for everyone in the community from growers to beach front property owners.

The opportunity now exists to access grant funding that will provide dollars not previously available for programming and services. Suc-

cessful awards would help us become the strong leaders in environmental stewardship that the Districts were set up to be. We like to think that when one door closes, another one opens.



### *Our Mission*

*To promote responsible use of natural resources in our community by providing leadership, information and services.*

## NOTES FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR, TAD PEACOCK

Well, the axe has fallen on Michigan's Conservation Districts, as noted above, but that hasn't dampened our spirits here at the Benzie CD. Many, many people here in the county realize the value of this office and that helps us

keep positive about the important work we do here, even if it has been somewhat limited the past couple of years. It is with that support that the District will seek a very small millage request in August of 2010. Yes, it

means the "T" word: taxes; however, we will be asking for the absolute minimum in order to remain open and to provide information, services, and Farm Bill funding for any and all community members. We'll keep you posted.

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

~ Native American Proverb

I think the environment should be put in the category of our national security. Defense of our resources is just as important as defense abroad. Otherwise what is there to defend?.

-Robert Redford, Yosemite National Park dedication, 1985

## A SALUTE TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Many Conservation Districts throughout the state have a core of volunteers who help during various times of the year and the Benzie Conservation District volunteers are especially important to us. Our District is fortunate to have a number of people who come in during the seedling and tree sales and help with all the related activities that

go on in conjunction with the sales. The volunteers have helped to label sales fliers, break bundles of trees into individual orders and help distribute orders to our customers. In addition, we have been able to enlist a few folks to assist in our "Leave No Trace" program, which takes young students down the Platte River to learn about the river's ecology.

So a special 'thank you' to **Joanne Pope, Meg Louwsma, Cathy Snyder**, and especially to **Ron Olson** who is our **Volunteer of the Year!** Ron was kind enough to spend not one or two, but six days on the Platte River with area sixth and seventh grade students in conjunction with the "Leave No Trace" program. To Ron and all Volunteers, Thank you!

## NEW STAFF

**Jodi Lindgren, Outreach/Education Coordinator**, grew up on a third generation farm in Benzie County. She joined the District in October 2009, after returning to the area from working on her MS degree in ecological engineering with a minor in soil

science at North Carolina State University. She completed her BS degree in Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering from Michigan State University.

"I am hoping to continue the district's community activities as well as aid in the

securing of funds for future community outreach."



Jodi Lindgren

## EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN 2009

### CRYSTAL LAKE "WALKABOUT"

Two Crystal Lake "walkabouts" were held by the Crystal Lake & Watershed Association this year, a spring session and a fall session. The Benzie Conservation District was one of the cosponsors for the events.

The Crystal Lake "walkabouts" are events aimed especially towards students to highlight the importance of active stewardship for the Crystal Lake watershed. This "hands on" learning opportunity involving observational monitoring and environmental exploring that can be taken advantage by anyone interested in the health of the Crystal Lake watershed including landowners and visitors.

The Benzie Conservation District had the opportunity to supply the spring Walkabout session with 20 American Chestnut Trees, which were planted around the county by area students. The mighty Chestnuts once ruled the eastern third of the United States, and were used extensively in building, until the Chestnut Blight effectively wiped out tens of millions of these beautiful trees around the turn of the century.

## EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS IN 2009

### LEAVE NO TRACE

For the 7th year in a row, the Benzie Conservation District partnered with the Benzie Fishery Coalition, Riverside Canoes, National Park Service and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to lead the 'Leave No Trace' program.

Students are taught about their impact on the local watershed. They are also given a history lesson on how the Coho Salmon came to exist in the Great Lakes. The overall goals are to teach, guide, and also empower the kids to paddle their own canoe.

"For many students, this is their first trip on the Platte River," says Sarah Slade, 6th grade teacher at Platte River Elementary School. "They learn how to move through the water with a paddle, appreciate the beauty of the river and take water samples of aquatic invertebrates."

### HERRING LAKES WATERSHED

A concerted effort took place this year in the Herring Lakes Watershed, to sample and evaluate the health of the water in that basin. Samples were taken in June and again in late August and the results were very good, when compared with federal guidelines. Two parameters were tested, E. coli and total phosphorus. While there are some areas of minor concern, overall, the results are positive and the overall health of the watershed is good.

Still, there is much to be done. Further testing is planned for 2010, with creek and lake bed soil samples slated to be evaluated. There is still concern about the zebra mussels, an invasive animal species that depletes the water of algae and promotes the growth of unwanted lake-bottom weed beds. And while the ubiquitous Phragmites plant seems to be under control in the watershed, there is always danger of another outbreak. So, things are happening and work is being done, thanks to a vigilant group of volunteers and donors who are very passionate about protecting the this beautiful corner of the county.

### 2009 WORKSHOPS

A number of workshops were held here at the District office over the course of the year. Stacy Daniels of the Crystal Lake And Watershed Association schooled a well-attended workshop on the demise and resurrection of the American Chestnut tree. Later in the year, Jim Barnes informed a group of energy savers on how best to 'go green' around the house and save money doing it. Finally, this summer Suz McGlaughlin showed us how to make food out of that invasive plant, the garlic mustard. It's not often you can eat your enemy. Look for more great workshops coming in 2010!



*"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people."*

-Franklin D. Roosevelt

## THE PURPOSE OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Your Conservation District is a governmental subdivision of the state but organized by the local community, under the provisions of the *Soil and Conservation District Law, Public Act 1937*. Currently Michigan has 80 Conservation Districts, organized along county boundaries.

Major goals of a Conservation District are to:

- Reduce wind and water erosion
- Encourage conversion of all mismanaged land to a productive use.
- Encourage use of effective methods of surface and groundwater management.
- Facilitate land use and land use changes based on land capabilities and user goals.
- Enhance and protect the basic ability of land to produce food and fiber.
- Promote the maintenance of aesthetic values of land and its related resources.
- Control non-point sources of pollution to surface water, groundwater, and air.

*We Make Caring for the Environment Easy for You!*

## Fiscal Year 2009 Finances Report\*

### Revenue

Grants (State allocation)	\$13,061
Donations/Contributions	\$ 3,560
Tree Sales	\$13,814
Charges for Services	\$ 4,073
Other Revenue	\$ 3,354
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$37,862</b>
<b>Net Loss</b>	<b>\$17,613</b>

### Expenses

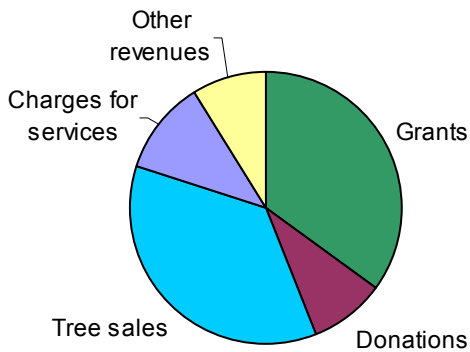
General Operations	\$46,804
Cost of Goods	\$ 8,671
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$55,475</b>

\*Data above is for October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009 and is not audited

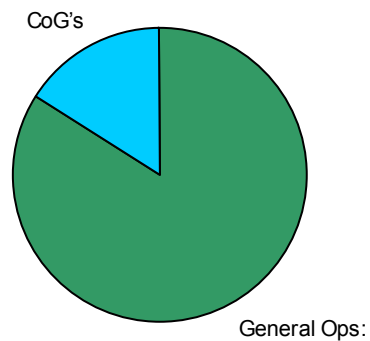
### Percentages

Grants:	35	General Ops:	84
Donations	9	CoG's	16
Tree sales	36		
Charges for services	11		
Other revenues	9		

**Revenue Percentages**



**Expense Percentages**



# THANKS TO OUR 2009 CONTRIBUTORS!

The Benzie Conservation District would like to extend a special thanks to all the folks below for their generous donations to the Benzie Conservation District and/or the Herring Lake Watershed Fund in 2009! The guiding philosophy of all Conservation Districts is that decisions on conservation issues should be made at the local level, by local people with technical assistance provided by the local District. It is through the support of our generous donors that keep our district operating and serving as a conservation resource to the community. THANK YOU!

## Benzie Conservation District\*

Matt and Kris Campau  
Carole Couture  
Louis Danek  
Gloria Von Eberstein  
Thomas J. Gast and Sue Leason  
Joanne Hansen  
John and Wilma Hultman  
Patricia Mead  
Jim and Lynn Mensching  
David Oellerich  
Bill and Joan Olsen  
Roy Pruden, L.C.  
Gail and John Schneider MD  
Pat Sheafor  
Lynn and Dale Wall

\*Please accept our apology if your name was inadvertently left off this list

## Herring Lake Watershed\*

David and Betsy Abeel  
Chuck and Abby Beale  
John and Sharon Blight  
Dave and Piper Chrenka  
Deverne A Coleman  
Bernard M Conboy  
Jack and Ann Devries  
Jeanne Edwards  
Fred and Nancy Hecox  
Edward W. Howard  
Susan and Gregg Johnson  
Dave Long  
Teresa and Glenn Mensching  
Bill and Mary Lou Mick  
Becky and Fred Ploch  
Dick and Betty Robotham  
Bob and Michelle Russell  
Mark and Sue Smith  
Richard R. Taylor

\*Please accept our apology if your name was inadvertently left off this list

## 2009 Board Members

**Chris Cota**, Chair  
**Sally Cook**, Vice Chair  
**Douglas Cook**, Treasurer/Secretary  
**Stephen Fouch**, Director  
**Cheryl Kobernik**, Director

## Benzie District Staff

**Tad Peacock**, District Administrator  
231.882.4391 [benziecd@charterinternet.net](mailto:benziecd@charterinternet.net)

**Jodi Lindgren**, Outreach/Education Coordinator  
231.882.4391 [jodi.cd@charterinternet.net](mailto:jodi.cd@charterinternet.net)

**Scott Hughey**, Consultant, NRCS District Conservationist  
231.889.9666 [scott.hughey@mi.usda.gov](mailto:scott.hughey@mi.usda.gov)

**Dan Busby**, Consultant, MI Groundwater Stewardship Program Coordinator  
231.941.4191 [dbusby@ameritech.net](mailto:dbusby@ameritech.net)

# Benzie Conservation District 64th Annual Meeting

**November 17, 2009**

Tuesday  
4:00–6:00 p.m.  
Open House!

Benzie Conservation District Office  
Downtown Beulah

Public Welcome!  
*Refreshments served*



## **Open House: Come learn about the benefits of the Benzie Conservation District and meet the board of Directors and staff**

Join the Benzie Conservation District Board of Directors and Staff as we celebrate 64 years of serving the community. We will have a brief business meeting at the beginning of the evening.



Benzie Conservation District  
PO Box 408  
Beulah, MI 49617  
Phone: 231.882.4391  
Fax: 231.882.9767  
[www.benziecd.org](http://www.benziecd.org)

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**Annual Meeting  
November 17, 2009**