



Annual Report—Fiscal Year 2024

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Kent Conservation District

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Sign up at
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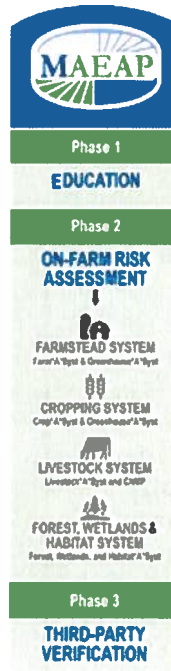
Kent Conservation District's mission is to protect and enhance the natural resources of Kent County through voluntary programs available for private landowners in rural and urban areas, such as: habitat restoration assistance, MAEAP verification, Farm Bill Programs, and technical assistance to all landowners.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Farm Bill offers Kent County residents financial assistance to implement conservation practices for landowners to conserve working agricultural lands, wetlands, grass-lands, and forestlands. For our Kent County landowners in 2024, the District serviced 46 active Farm Bill Program contracts which will help improve soil health on cropland, increase pollinator habitat, reduce sedimentation in our waterways, and improve the diversity of our forestlands by implement a wide array of best management practices. Of these 46 contracts, there are 11 EQIP, 20 CSP, 8 RCPP and 7 RCPP-EQIP that total \$1,501,770.73 in obligated funds on 6,308.1 acres of land.

Agricultural Stewardship / Watershed Protection

The District is continues to partner with local organizations on agricultural outreach through a Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy section 319 water quality grant. This initiative leverages NRCS Farm Bill funds to address sediment, nutrient, and E. coli sources, while helping agricultural producers implement practices that improve soil health and benefit their bottom line and future crops.



Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

Our Kent MAEAP Coordinator Joel Betts worked with:

41 farmers and forestland owners
Completed 78 assessments 66 verifications.

In his time with the district (since 2022), he completed 156 assessments, 97 verifications, and 1075 risk reductions.

Joel was recognized for this impact at the 2024 MACD Annual Conference through the MAEAP Technical Assistance Award for 2024.

In October of this year, Michael Ewing started as our new CTAP/ MAEAP Coordinator.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant

John Bastianelli became the NFWF Engineer in May 2024, succeeding Andrew Elzroth. In this capacity, he has delivered technical guidance, design solutions, and construction oversight to NRCS engineering staff for conservation practices in Southwest Michigan. Over the past year, John has contributed to 43 projects across the 19 counties that make up Area 3, addressing a variety of needs such as Agrichemical Handling Facilities, Energy Efficiency Upgrades, Waste Facility Closures, and Wetland Restoration Efforts. Additionally, the NFWF grant facilitated survey training for Area 3 engineers, strengthening their technical proficiency.



Habitat Restoration & Technical Assistance

To help residents use local plants to support pollinators and a healthy ecosystem, KCD held a workshop called "Transforming Your Yard with Native Plants" and hosted four plant sales featuring native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. These events provided resources for restoring natural landscapes. In 2025, we will offer a Spring pre-order sale for native trees and shrubs on April 19th, and a wildflower pre-order event on May 10th.



Order at:

www.kentconservation.org/plant-sales

Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI)

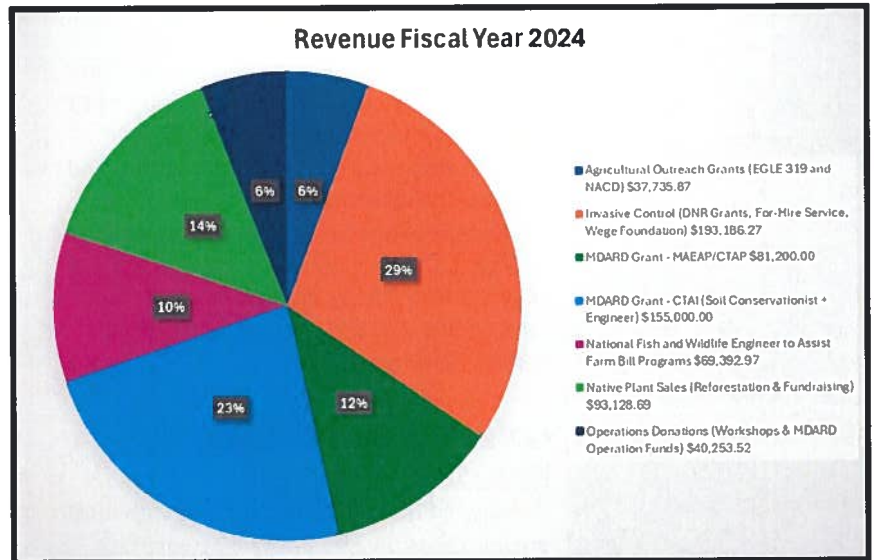
Katie L. Droscha (CTAI Soil Conservationist) worked with 60 landowners during 2024: 33 in Kent County and 27 in Ottawa County. She assisted and processed 14 new conservation applications in 2024. Katie helped enroll 142 new acres, contracted \$303,460 in new practices and processed \$272,222 of existing conservation practices within Kent County. Katie helped enroll 685 acres, contracted \$209,943 in new practices and processed \$182,976 of existing practices within Ottawa County. Katie continues to diligently promote various Farm Bill Programs.

The MDARD CTAI Engineer position was held by Sammy Johnston. The purpose of the CTAI position is to provide technical assistance to landowners through the planning, design, and construction of conservation practices. For FY24, Sammy worked on 14 different engineering practices for 19 different farms, 2 of which were in Kent County. In addition to Kent, Sammy worked in 7 other counties throughout Southwest Michigan. Her work helped allocate \$1,150,000 to Michigan landowners.



Invasive Strike Team Services

The KCD Invasive Strike Team was able to increase its capacity toward protecting our area's parks, right of ways, riparian forestland municipal properties. Working in partnership with the West Michigan Conservation Network, the Kent Strike Team was able to treat 500 sites under various grants and municipal contracts leveraged to provide retreatment of state listed invasive species to landowner properties as well as sensitive natural areas that are being threatened. The strike team concluded a habitat restoration project at the Canonsburg State Game Area and began a new project at the Rogue River State Game Area funded through a DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant. In 2025, the Kent Conservation District Invasive Species Strike team will continue to prioritize increasing treatment efforts in our area's most biodiverse and protected natural lands while also offering grant-covered treatments to existing landowner sites. In 2024, KCD held 10 volunteer service learning work days and organized or partnered on 16 unique outreach events.



Revenue

In 2024 Kent Conservation District earned \$669,887 in revenues through grants, services and bi-annual reforestation work of native tree and plant sales. NRCS provides technical assistance and in-kind services, such as office space. Sponsors are recognized in our newsletters and on our social media. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. **Your gift qualifies as a charitable deduction under IRC 170 (a)(1) 38-2134644.**

**Healthy Soils = Healthy Food = Healthy People =
Healthy Environment = Healthy Michigan = Healthy Planet**