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## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017

*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

NRCS administered Farm Bill offers conservation practices and easement programs to eligible landowners to conserve working agricultural lands, wetlands, grasslands and forestlands.



Total currently, brought to Kent County by NRCS: 18 active Farm Bill Program contracts that are administered from the Grand Rapids Field Office. This includes 16 active EQIP contract (\$390,257) and 2 active CSP contracts (\$19,344). Two of ACEP Wetland Reserve Easement restorations were successfully completed this year with the tree and shrub plantings. This resulted in 69.8 acres of restored wetlands. NRCS also helped to acquire another preserved farm through ACEP Agricultural Land Easement by permanently protecting 120 acres consisting of 68 ac of farmland and 52 ac of forestland.

### Forest Health

Nick Sanchez, District Forester, assisted 99 private landowners on over 3,900 acres resulting in 52 referrals for forest management plans, consulting forester services, and sustainable timber harvests in the Kent, Montcalm and Ionia service area. Over 1,800 people participated in 31 forestry related outreach events.



### Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

MAEAP is a 'stamp' of approval from the state that an agricultural production operation is protecting the environment.



Our widely respected MAEAP technician, Sam Braman is proud to share that Kent has 25 MAEAP verified farms making up a total of 47 system verifications, and several landowners working towards verification.

In July 2017, KCD hosted the Region 7 Michigan Association of Conservation Districts meeting followed by a MAEAP education event. Look for our

2018 field days on our website and at Eventbrite.

### Show Your Support for Healthy Land



Mark your calendar for the spring native plant sales, April 28th, May 12th and May 26th and our various workshops. Signup to learn more at our website or email administrator@kentconservation.org.

## Habitat Restoration and Technical Assistance

Presented a “Gardening with Native Michigan Plants” workshop to educate landowners on using native plants to support pollinators and a healthy ecosystem, uniquely West Michigan.



Held the bi-annual native Michigan tree and plant sales, providing a resource for ecosystem restoration.

Installed a native plant riparian buffer at the KCD office pond with Forest Hills Northern Trails students. This was a Groundswell project funded through DEQ/GVSU to demonstrate non-point pollution best management practices in a commercial setting.



## Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative

Katie Droscha worked with 47 different farms during 2016-17; 19 in Kent County and 28 in Ottawa County. Katie helps to manage active NRCS contracts, and works with new Farm Bill Program applications. Katie assisted with 14 applications funded in 2016, and 9 new applications funded in 2017. She earned an outstanding 2017 service award from the MDARD Environmental Stewardship Division.

Lexi Feutz joined Kent CD in July of 2017 as the new District Engineer. Since starting, she has worked on 29 projects throughout southwest Michigan. In Kent County alone she has visited 10 farms and worked on 5 designs – including grade stabilization structures, a fueling facility, an agrichemical handling facility, and a livestock pipeline with watering facilities. She has also provided conservation technical assistance in Alpine, Sparta, Nelson, Courtland, Grattan, Cannon, Vergennes, and Ada townships, as well as the City of Walker.

The previous District Engineer, Eric Wahrman, worked on 35 projects throughout southwest Michigan.

## Cooperative Invasive Species Management

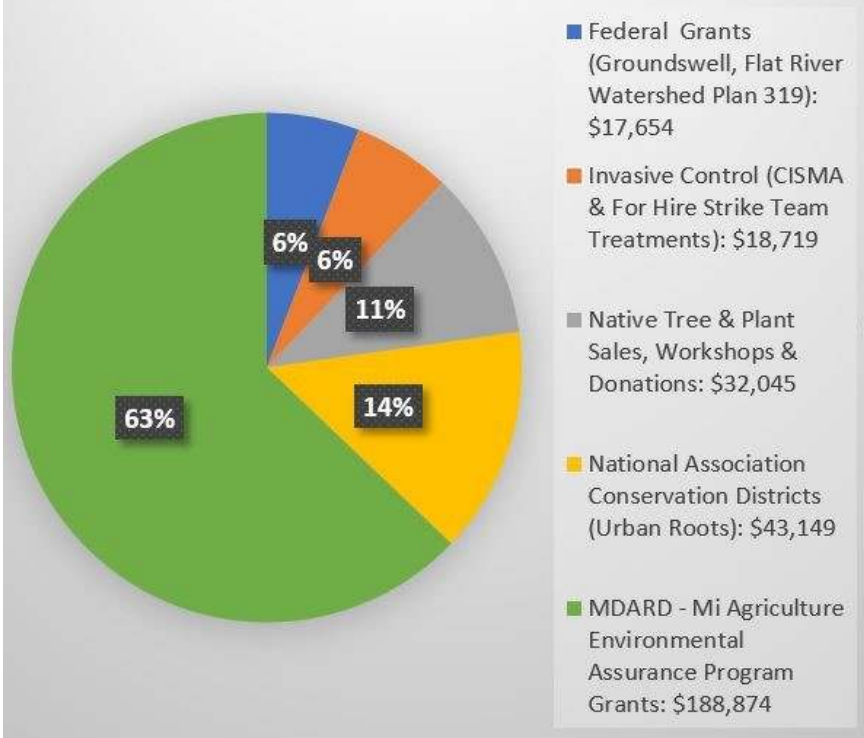
The Kent Strike Team began the year with partner education—presenting over 10 programs on invasive species identification and control. KCD hosted a herbicide workshop entitled *A Land Manager’s Tool Kit* to educate landowners and professionals about proper identification and treatment of invasive plants.



The team treated invasive black swallow-wort, black jet bead, poison hemlock, Japanese knotweed and Phragmites at over 300 sites and 60 acres in 2017 through a partnership with the West Michigan Conservation Network funded by the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program. KCD is proud to be working with the Kent County Road Commission, East Grand Rapids Parks, Cascade Parks, City of Lowell, Grand Rapids Charter Township, Caledonia and City of Grand Rapids to control aggressive invasive species in priority locations to protect the natural resources of Kent County.



## Income FY 2017



**Revenue:** The District receives no funding through the County but earns a substantial portion of its revenues through its tree sales. KCD currently receives two grants through the Mi Department of Agriculture & Rural Development. They cover the MAEAP and the CTAI programs. The USDA NRCS provides in-kind services such as use of office space. Sponsors are recognized in our newsletters and on our social media outlets. Your gift qualifies as a charitable deduction under IRC 170 (a)(1). Our tax-exempt number is 38-2134644.

**When communities work together, great things happen!**