

December 2021



# Calhoun Conservation District Winter Newsletter

Fiscal Year October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022

## Calhoun Conservation District 2021 Highlights

### Board of Directors

Brian Huggett  
Board Chair

Gregory Fountain  
Associate Director

Kent VanSickle  
Treasurer

Linda Kubiak  
Director

Paul Egnatuk  
Director

Margaret Steele  
Director

### Staff & Partners

Maureen Reed  
District Manager

Jeremiah Swain  
MAEAP Technician  
Calhoun & Jackson Counties

Jack Knorek  
Regional Coordinator  
Southwest Michigan  
Conservation Programs-  
Environmental Stewardship  
MDARD

Colleen Reynolds, EA  
Barry Associates Inc.

Chris Corgan  
District Conservationist-  
Megan Fawcett  
Conservationist  
NRCS Natural Resource

**Calhoun Conservation District** welcomed a new director to the board in 2021. Margaret Steele was elected at the February Meeting. She brings new ideas and enthusiasm for future projects. With a background in outdoor education and hand-on experience managing the family-owned nursery, garden, and pet supply center, Margaret will be an asset to local conservation.

**The Annual Tree Seedling Spring Sale** was held on Earth Day, April 22nd at the Calhoun County Fairgrounds at Floral Hall. Even though it turned out to be blustery, spring day, the enthusiasm from the customers made it worth the effort.

Special thanks to David Reed, Brian Huggett, and Jeremiah Swain who lent a hand to sort and pack the seedlings, and meet with the public during the distribution.

### **USDA Service Center Update**

When visitor restrictions lifted during spring/summer 2021 at the USDA Service Center (where the Calhoun Conservation District office is located), there was a feeling of normalcy after a year of COVID-19 restrictions. But by fall 2021, visitor appointments and mask wearing was mandated, which continues today for the safety of staff and the public. We continue to serve Calhoun County residents, where safety comes first.

### **Garfield Lake Outlet Drain Stream Restoration Project**

Grants provided several years ago by the United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MIDNR) marked the beginning of a concept to restore a Calhoun County Drain located in Convis Township.

The main objective of the project includes completion of a Natural Channel Design to restore a

1.5-mile stretch (3,500') of a designated Calhoun County drain. By connecting Garfield Lake to Indian Creek, improved water quality, stream stability, and sediment transport can be achieved. In the process, fish spawning areas and aquatic species habitat are restored to a natural state.

Due to inflation over the past year, the excavation expenses requires the work to be completed in 2022. Raising additional funds for the project continues to be a priority for the Calhoun Conservation District.

Special thanks to Randy Ramsey, Chief Engineer with Civil Engineers Incorporated (CEI) of Battle Creek, Michigan and to Rick Pierson who were instrumental in getting the project back on track after a delay,

For more information on the programs offered by Calhoun Conservation visit [www.calhouncd.org](http://www.calhouncd.org) or e-mail [calhouncd@gmail.com](mailto:calhouncd@gmail.com) for all inquiries.



### **Calhoun Conservation District**

13464 Preston Drive, Suite 120  
Marshall, Michigan 49068

Phone (269) 781-4867, ext. 5  
e-mail [calhouncd@gmail.com](mailto:calhouncd@gmail.com)  
[www.calhouncd.org](http://www.calhouncd.org)

# Calhoun Conservation District

## Successful Pollinator Planting Results in Grant Award



One of the most successful programs offered through the Michigan DNR, Conservation District, Farm Services Agency, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service is the rental of the Truax Flex II No-till Drill. After nearly a year-long pause in the program, due to COVID, Calhoun County landowners were ready to plant again in 2021 to benefit pollinators' habitat. When the last field was planted in early November, a total of 185 acres of

native grasses and wildflowers took hold alongside the agricultural fields this year.

Transportation to the fields and operation of the Truax Flex II Drill, owned by the Michigan DNR and managed by local conservation districts requires knowledge of the equipment. To address the need for practical drill instruction, Calhoun Conservation District submitted a grant proposal to the Marshall Community Foundation. A grant was awarded to fund the produc-

tion of a video and printed literature to assist landowners using the no-till drill for the benefit of restoring pollinator fields. The video, produced by Ben Reed of Depth Media will be ready for viewing by the spring of 2022.

Greg Fountain, former board chairman, oversees maintenance of the no-till drill. He noted that "this grant benefits landowners in the operation of the drill, regardless of whether they have farming experience."

Did you know that the Marshall USDA Service Center in Marshall provides a wide range of services for agriculture, conservation and gardening resources? Offices include the USDA Farm Services Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Calhoun Conservation District.

For more information, call (269) 781-4867



## Publication Spotlights Michigan Agriculture & Rural Communities

Since established 76 years ago, the Calhoun Conservation District has provided a wide range of services including educational resources publications. Programs are often highlighted in the yearly Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) publication, a complimentary magazine titled "Michigan Agriculture."

Articles in the 2021 Edition range from Digital Marketing in

Agriculture to Pivoting in the Pandemic, highlighting businesses that found alternative way to serve their communities.

Contact Calhoun Conservation District call (269) 781-4867, ext. 5. to request a complimentary copy of Michigan Agriculture,



*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

## Calhoun Conservation District Welcomes New Watershed Staff

Calhoun Conservation District was awarded a grant to develop the Nottawa Creek Watershed Management Plan for Calhoun, Kalamazoo, Branch, and St. Joseph Counties by the Environmental Great Lake & Energy (EGLE) of Michigan. The Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater Grant (SAW Grant) is designed to help communities develop an asset management for stormwater and wastewater collection systems.



Brian Huggett, Board Chair views this grant as “a great opportunity to move forward with watershed management studies that the District has been known for in the past. “

Three new Watershed Staff hired in October 2021 began their work to implement the plan.

Kayla Wright will lead the Watershed Team as Watershed Coordinator. With Isiah Strand and Renee Walden providing experience and support as Watershed Technicians.

## Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Conference Held Virtually

Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) held the Fall Annual Convention virtually the week of November 8, 2021. Dan Moilanen, MACD Executive Director was instrumental in planning the diverse workshops and trainings held virtually to keep the momentum going.

MACD is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established in 1937 through the monumental Soil Conservation District Law in response to the Dust Bowl and extreme drought across the country. The Association consists of 75 locally-led Conservation Districts that assist farmers, producers, and foresters with implementing conservation practices across Michigan's 83 counties. To learn more about the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, visit [macd.org](http://macd.org).



### Calhoun Conservation District Manager Plans for Retirement

“Thank you for the opportunity to serve the community and local conservation outreach over the last four years. It has been an honor to work on behalf of dedicated, long-time board directors. The board has stayed true to their Mission, and we made new friendships along the way. “

Respectfully, *Maureen Reed, District Manager*

### Special Thanks to Calhoun Conservation District Board of Directors & Supporting Partners...

For their dedication and resolve in 2021 to continue working on behalf of Calhoun County citizens, for protection of natural resources. Brian Huggett, Board Chair Greg Fountain, Associate Director Kent VanSickle, Treasurer Linda Kubiak, Director Paul Egnatuk, Director Margaret Steele, Director

## What Conservations Do...



**Calhoun Conservation District**  
13464 Preston Drive, Suite 120  
Marshall, Michigan 49068

Phone (269) 781-4867, ext. 5  
e-mail: calhouncd@gmail.com  
www.calhouncd.org



### Spring Tree Seedling Sale

The sale of tree seedlings and native wildflowers has been a long-standing tradition for Michigan Conservation Districts to raise funds and awareness for conservation.

Calhoun Conservation District plans to hold a Spring Tree Seedling Sale with pre-orders beginning in January. Traditionally, the distribution of the tree seedlings is held in April. When the tree order forms are ready, the information will be posted on the CCD website at calhouncd.org. For more information, contact the Calhoun Conservation District (269) 781-4867 ext. 5 or email: calhouncd@gmail.com.

*Locally led conservation is local people, with leadership from conservation districts, assessing natural resource conditions and needs; setting goals; identifying programs and other resources needed to meet these goals; developing proposals and recommendations; implementing solutions; and measuring their success.*



**Michigan Association of Conservation Districts** offers state-wide programs, and trainings during the year for their 75 Conservation Districts.

The Summer and Fall Conference and Annual Meetings were conducted remotely.

Calhoun Conservation District directors and staff attend conferences and trainings to gain knowledge and relevant information to promote conservation practices.

### Winter Walks & Activities Series Planned for 2022

Calhoun Conservation District plans to host a series of winter activities for families and friends to enjoy the outdoors. Join us for fresh air, and exercise to discover the natural winter wonderland in your own back yard!



January 15—Cross Country Skiing at Binder Park Golf Course from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Back-up date: February 19)

January 30—Snowman Building Contest at Ketchum Park from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

February 27—Hike at Meadows Trail, Baker Sanctuary from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

March 5—Guided Nature Walk at Kiwanis Youth Conservation Area from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.