



Calhoun Conservation District Five-Year, Long-Range Plan

July 1, 2023 – July 1, 2028

For more information, call or email us at: (269)781-4867, ext. 5 or calhouncd@gmail.com

Organization of the Calhoun Conservation District

Calhoun Conservation District History & Goals

A governmental subdivision of the State of Michigan and a public body corporate and politic; exercising public powers, as outlined in Conservation District Law, Act 463 of 1998.

Calhoun Conservation District (CCD) was created in 1945 and has been a leading local conservation entity for 78 years. CCD partners with environmental and agricultural communities by coordinating conservation projects and programs throughout Calhoun County and Southwest Michigan.

Function of the Calhoun Conservation District

Serving as a local source for individual and community assistance in natural resource management and education. The CCD strives to provide services and programs to meet the needs of the community.

Mission of the Calhoun Conservation District

To serve, educate, and empower our community by providing technical assistance and information to landowners in all aspects of natural resource management.

Vision of the Calhoun Conservation District

To coordinate conservation projects and programs locally to provide responsible land, water, and air quality management resources.

Values of the Calhoun Conservation District

- **Stewardship** – We honor this land by making decisions that will benefit ecosystems while being resilient to climate change. We hope to inspire land stewardship and offer guidance to accomplish that goal.
- **Community** – Our decisions are made with community in mind and for the best interests of ecosystems and residents of Calhoun County.
- **Collaboration** – We resolve to collaborate with local groups, schools, and businesses to maximize the impact on the community.
- **Services** – We strive to provide excellent technical assistance to the residents of Calhoun County and to provide the community and grant projects for the protection of natural resources.
- **Inclusiveness** – We aim to create programming that is inclusive to all county residents and are committed to hosting a workplace of respect and equality.

Operations Priorities

- **Local Partnerships** – Build upon past partnerships within the conservation and agricultural communities.
- **Community Outreach** – Increase the yearly outreach and educational events; research possibility of seeking a county milage.
- **Staffing Needs** – Increase staff to include full-time district manager, part-time administrative associate, MAEAP technician, watershed technician, and forester.

Natural Resource Priorities

1. Loss of agricultural lands to development (farmland preservation).
2. Impact on water quality.
3. Agricultural pesticide usage.
4. Invasive species impact to agricultural and natural areas.
5. Access to hunting land.

Measures of Managements

- Increase awareness and enrollment in PA116 farm preservation program; collaborate at the township level.
- Improve water quality in streams and lakes; sponsor stream/lake clean-up events; study impact of livestock on natural watersheds.
- Plan agricultural pesticide/herbicide safety courses to include produce safety risk assessments and research support offered through governmental agencies.
- Proactive involvement with regional CISMA; with goal to reduce current invasive yearly.
- Meet hunting lease requests to increase HAP program education and enrollments.

Staffing Goals

- Increase District Manager position from part-time to full-time.
- Hire administrative associate, watershed coordinator, educational outreach coordinator.
- Collaborate with neighboring districts for MAEAP Technician, CISMA Technician, and Forester

Budget Needs – 5 Year Projection

- Annual operations funding to employ and retain qualified staff to include health benefits and benefit package:
 1. Employee benefits –
 2. District Manager – full time salary
 3. Administrative Associate – part time salary
 4. Watershed Coordinator – full time salary
 5. Education Outreach Coordinator – part time salary
 6. Operational Expenses: office rent, phone/internet, program, and office supplies

Budget Needs – Totals Projected for Five Years

Expense	Annual	5 Year Total
Operations	\$25,000	\$125,000
Outreach	\$10,000	\$50,000
Staffing	\$80,000	\$400,000
Property Stewardship	\$15,000	\$75,000
Grants Opportunities	\$100,000	\$500,000
Total Five-Year Projected Budget:		\$1,150,000

Strategic Partnerships

Michigan Association of Conservation District (MACD)

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MiDNR)

Branch Calhoun Kalamazoo (BCK) CISMA

Calhoun County Board of Commissioners

Calhoun County Township Governments

Calhoun County Public and Private Schools

Calhoun County/Michigan Farm Bureau

MSU Extension/4H Leadership Program

Pheasants Forever, Trout Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited

Local Natural Areas and Nature Organizations (non-profit)

City of Marshall and City of Battle Creek Recreation Departments

Benchmark, Timeline, and Actions

Natural Resources Priority: 1.) Farmland Preservation

Measure of Success:

1. Build a stronger local agricultural community through partnerships and educational workshops.
2. Support farm community at an individual and township level to build trust.

Benchmark	Annual Action Plan	Timeline
Increase PA116 enrollments through township partnerships	Facilitate PA116 informational seminars and appointments	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Support MAEAP Technician	Increase farm certifications in Calhoun County	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Establish regional initiatives to research State funding, USDA-RCPP, County and government	Attend local board meetings; host bi-annual informational meetings	10/1/23 – 9/30/28

Natural Resources Priority: 2.) Maintain and Improve Water Quality

Measure of Success:

1. Improve water quality in streams, rivers, and lakes through county wide clean-up initiatives.
2. Study watersheds to identify problems and build support at the local level for clean and free-flowing water in streams, rivers, and lakes.

Benchmark	Annual Action Plan	Timeline
Public Education and Awareness	Host educational events such as stream/river clean-up; offer guided walks along streams/rivers, boat landings	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Stream Connectivity and Drain Maintenance	Work with Calhoun County Water Resources department to identify drain maintenance projects; research grant funded stream connectivity projects	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Study 10 stream BMPs enacted on farmland	Promote water testing and on-site farm visits to ensure clean and safe water quality	10/1/23 – 9/30/28

Natural Resources Priority: 3.) Agricultural Pesticide/Herbicide Responsible Use

Measure of Success:

1. Reduce pesticide spray drift and usage through educational support.
2. Encourage agricultural best practices for pesticide/herbicide application, storage, and post-harvest disposal.

Benchmark	Annual Action Plan	Timeline
Educate farmland crop plantings for responsible use of pesticides.	Seek professional guidance to provide public awareness in best farmland practices.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Broaden the outreach and communications between the farming community.	Plan a yearly farm visit to illustrate the MAEAP farm certification process and benefits.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Research and provide education on the impact of agricultural run-off into local streams.	Support MAEAP technician in studies of maintaining safe water quality.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28

Natural Resources Priority: 4.) Invasive Species Management

Measure of Success:

1. Detection and treatment of invasive species on farmland and natural areas
2. Partner with three county CISMA program; coordinate support group

Benchmark	Annual Action Plan	Timeline
Coordinate volunteer support for invasive species eradication on natural areas.	Plan bi-annual event coordinated by CISMA to impact local areas of concern.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Survey and treat aquatic invasive species.	Offer workshops to educate high school students about invasive species for training as volunteers.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Provide educational literature for responsible recreation boating habits.	Provide boot brush stations and boat wash stations at river clean-up events.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28

Natural Resources Priority: 5.) Hunting Land Access

Measure of Success:

1. Identify potential properties for HAP enrollment.
2. Practice responsible hunting lease guidelines on Calhoun Conservation District owned properties.

Benchmark	Annual Action Plan	Timeline
Research potential properties to meet requirements for HAP enrollment.	Contact conservation districts with HAP program to seek guidelines.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Establish policy for yearly hunting leases on CCD owned properties.	Determine length of leases; publish notice for bidding by deadline determined.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28
Support hunter safety in Calhoun County.	Staff participation in hunter safety courses offered through public safety.	10/1/23 – 9/30/28

Submitted by Maureen Reed
August 1, 2023