

# CLINTON CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



**Aaron Snell, Lindsey Martin, & John Switzer sampling aquatic insects**



**John Bauer teaching students about trees**



**Kelcie Sweeney investigating bank erosion next to a field**

*The mission of the Clinton Conservation District is to provide information and technical assistance to private landowners, local units of government, educational institutions and other citizens to better understand, plan, manage, protect and utilize the resources of Clinton County.*

Managing Natural Resources  
*An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender*

# INTRODUCTION

The Clinton Conservation District is a local unit of state government established in 1954 to carry out programs focused on the wise use of natural resources for current and future generations. The guiding philosophy is that decisions on conservation issues should be made at the local level, by local people, with technical assistance provided by government.

Historically, the District focused on soil erosion from farmlands. With time, our scope has expanded. Today, the District works on a broad spectrum of natural resources. Soil erosion remains a major focus, but we also provide services on watershed management, wildlife habitat improvement, stream restoration, and woodland management. We offer information and technical assistance to private landowners in rural, suburban, and urban environments, as well as schools, partner organizations, and local units of government.

The formation of a local conservation district also enabled a means for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners in Clinton County with conservation needs. Today, these services are still provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) who continues to be our closest partner and supports the District with office space, IT support and office supplies.



**From left to right: Kelcie Sweeney, Elaine Brown, John Switzer, Lindsey Martin, and Andrea Polverento**

## Board of Directors

Andrea Polverento,  
Chair

Jim Graham,  
Vice Chair

Elaine Brown,  
Treasurer

Jack Enderle,  
Director

John Schulz,  
Director

## District Staff & Partners

John Bauer,  
CTAI Technician

Erin Jarvie,  
CISMA Coordinator

Linda Klooster-Smith,  
Administrative Assistant

Lindsey Martin,  
MAEAP Technician

Josh Stephens,  
Student Intern

Kelcie Sweeney,  
Watershed Coordinator

John Switzer,  
Executive Director

Kurt Wolf,  
Farm Bill Biologist

## NRCS Staff

Olandous Curry,  
District Conservationist

Tiffari Jenkins,  
Soil Conservationist

Juanita McCann,  
Agricultural Engineer

# FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clinton Conservation District's fiscal year runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. In fiscal year 2016 funding for the District came from four primary sources: 1) Grant funding from several departments of the State of Michigan. 2) Clinton County, as appropriated by the County Commissioners. 3) The District's semi-annual tree and native plant sale fundraiser. 4) In-kind support from our partner agency NRCS.

The District had its best financial year since before the economic downturn seven years ago. This was due to the addition of another grant, and continued funding from six existing grants. Additionally, operation expenses were lower and tree sale revenues were higher for the third consecutive year. Although total revenues were down overall from last year, total expenditures were also down from the previous year. Despite the financial success from 2016, it's important to note that grant funding remains the primary source of income for the District. Grants can be inconsistent and without a stable source of funding for programs and operations, the long-term sustainability of the District remains uncertain. We will continue to seek additional funding opportunities with a focus on more permanent sources to ensure the future viability of the organization.

## FISCAL YEAR 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT OCTOBER 1, 2015 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2016

Revenues		Expenditures	
Federal Grants & Contributions	\$128,048	District Operations	\$30,796
State Grants & Contributions	\$126,723	MAEAP	\$62,750
Local Grants & Contributions	\$12,000	Invasive Species	\$4,173
Charges for Goods & Services	\$40,848	Looking Glass SAW	\$46,509
Interest & Rental Income	\$1,573	UMR Watershed 319	\$63,790
Other Revenue	\$5,351	Hunter Access Program	\$2,490
		CTAI	\$60,126
		CMI Water Monitoring	\$6,915
		Reforestation	\$25,895
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$314,543</b>	<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$303,444</b>
<b>Profit (Loss)</b>			<b>\$11,099</b>
<b>Fund Balance at Beginning of Period</b>			<b>\$65,724</b>
<b>Fund Balance at the End of Period</b>			<b>\$76,823</b>

# MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is an innovative, proactive, and voluntary program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. MAEAP has continued to move forward this year and has seen great support from the agricultural community here in Clinton and Gratiot Counties. While the final step in the MAEAP process is verification, many producers begin mitigating high risk practices long before that takes place.

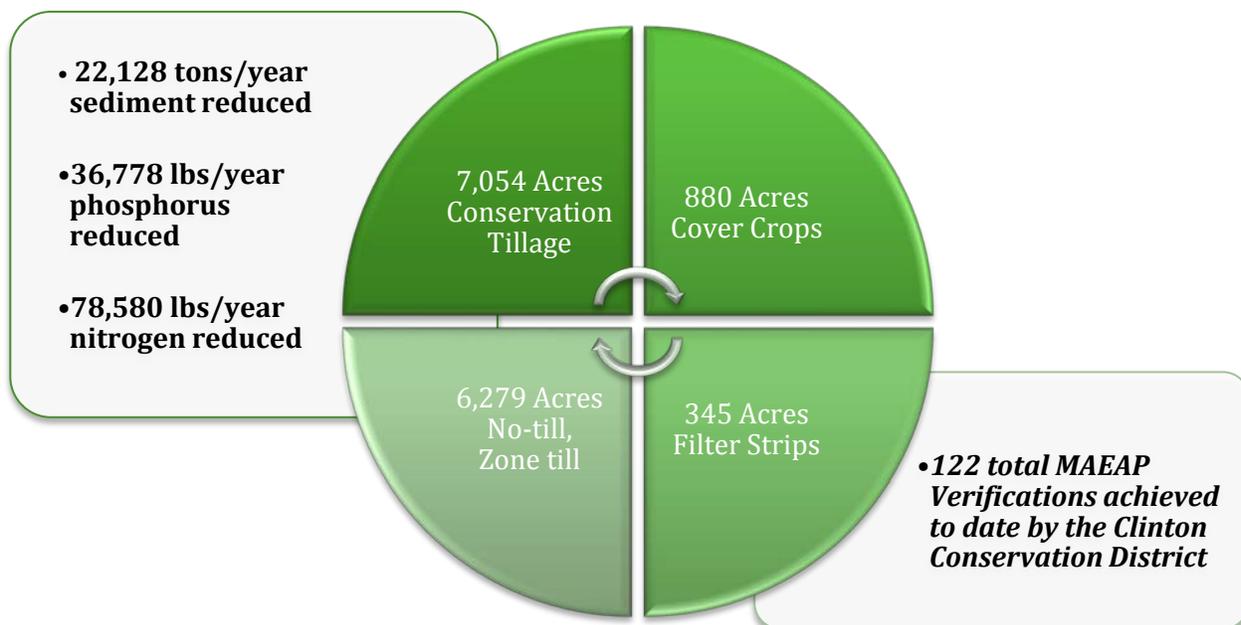


Lindsey Martin with spill kits for MAEAP

## CLINTON/GRATIOT 2016 MAEAP ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

On Farm Risk Assessments	53 assessments
Pollution Reduction Practices	203 risk reducing practices
MAEAP Verifications	14 new, 12 renewals
Drinking water sampled for Nitrates and/or Bacteria	30 wells
Attendance at Educational Meetings	150 people

## CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN 2016 ON MAEAP VERIFIED FARMS ACCOUNTED FOR:



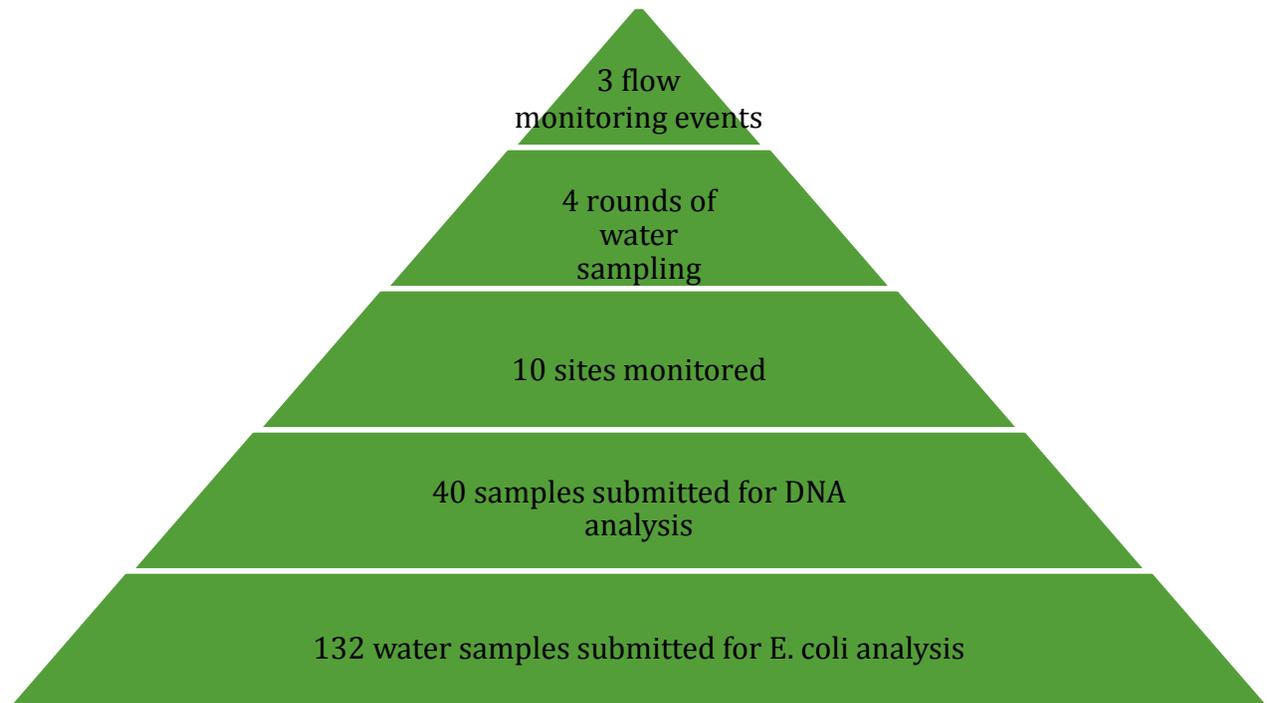
# MAPLE RIVER E. COLI MONITORING & SOURCE TRACKING PROJECT

The Clinton Conservation District received a grant in 2015 through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality through the Clean Michigan Initiative to monitor E coli levels in the Maple River Watershed. Over the course of 2015 and 2016, samples were collected six times from 10 sites around the watershed. These samples were analyzed for E coli counts as well as for DNA markers to indicate the source of the E coli. Canine scent-tracking and some DNA analysis in 2015 indicated the need for additional source-tracking utilizing DNA markers. With additional funding provided through generous community support, the District analyzed DNA in all water samples collected in 2016. A report of the findings of the project will be written and presented at a meeting in 2017.



**Kelcie Sweeney and Josh Stephens collecting stream depth and flow data**

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES IN 2016



# UPPER MAPLE RIVER WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION GRANT II



Daikon radish cover crop with 10 weeks growth before hard freeze

The Clinton Conservation District received a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in October 2015 to implement the activities outlined in the watershed management plan for the Upper Maple River Watershed. The plan serves as guidance for protecting and improving water quality in the region as well as quantifying pollution and risks. This

funding allows the District to start a cost-share program for agriculture-

focused Best Management Practices (BMPs), host workshops and field days that help bring conservation innovation to the forefront in Clinton County, survey the community and implement a relevant education and information strategy regarding septic systems, and engage partners and stakeholders in discussions on septic systems in Mid-Michigan.

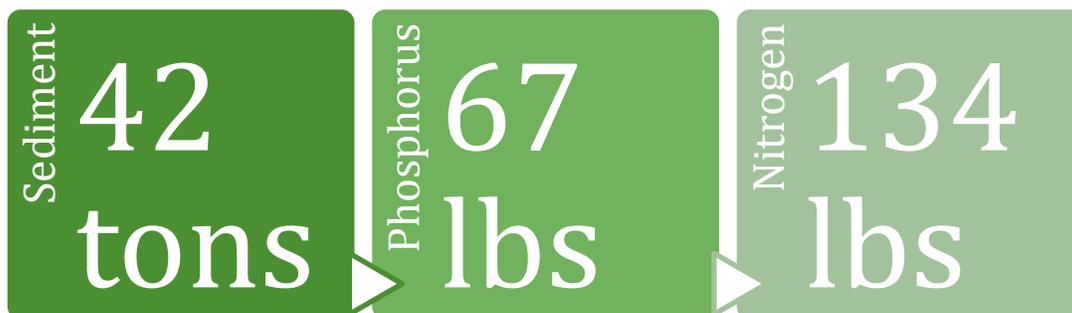


Root mass of barley cover crop with 8 weeks growth

## BMP Cost-Share Program Summary

- Engaged 9 landowners
- Implemented BMPs on 4 farms
- Cost-shared 400 acres of cover crops

## Pollutants prevented from reaching surface water as a result of BMP program in 2016



# UPPER LOOKING GLASS WATERSHED STORMWATER, ASSET MANAGEMENT, AND WASTEWATER (SAW) PROJECT

A Michigan Department of Environmental Quality grant held by the Shiawassee Conservation District is assisting in an update to the Upper Looking Glass watershed management plan. The Clinton Conservation District is assisting in the update by collecting information pertinent to the watershed in Clinton County. The District is also helping to develop and implement an information and education strategy and to develop conservation plans for producers, landowners, and municipalities within the watershed.

## 2016 Accomplishments

Stream Walking Inventory	35 sites inventoried
	10.4 miles of streams walked
Water Monitoring	6 stations monitored for 6 consecutive weeks
	324 samples collected for E. coli analysis
Septic System Aerial Map Survey	Identified 2,167 potential on-site wastewater treatment systems in Clinton County part of ULG
Conservation Planning/Information and Education Strategy Development	Scouted out site for green infrastructure and conservation practice implementation on public properties in Clinton County part of ULG
	Developed table of suggested practices and recommendations for public lands



Kelcie Sweeney completing a stream inventory data sheet in the Looking Glass River Watershed

# MID-MICHIGAN COOPERATIVE INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT AREA GRANT

The Mid-Michigan CISMA (MM-CISMA) was established in April 2016 by the Ingham Conservation District through funding from the Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP), a program through the Departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality, and Agriculture and Rural Development. This CISMA covers Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and Ionia counties and creates a partnership between the four county Conservation Districts and over 25 local organizations. The MM-CISMA increases our ability to work together across jurisdictional lines coordinating prevention, early detection, and rapid response to invasive species both on land and in our lakes and streams. Currently, the MM-CISMA is prioritizing black swallow-wort, Japanese knotweed, and invasive phragmites. Through education and outreach, identification and reporting, and treatment of invasive species on public lands, we hope to spread the word, not the species, in Clinton, Eaton, Ingham, and Ionia counties.



Josh Stephens in a patch of invasive phragmites found during a field survey

## In 2016 the Mid-Michigan CISMA:

- Created partnerships with over 25 organizations
- Engaged 80 volunteers in Mid-Michigan CISMA activities
- Reached over 1300 people directly through educational displays at local and regional events
- Reached over 177,000 people through outreach activities such as newsletters, Mid-Michigan CISMA website and social media, etc.
- Held 2 mobile boat wash and 2 Landing Blitz events for aquatic invasive species education at local lakes
- Held 6 invasive species identification and survey events on public lands
- Reported 391 new reports to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network- almost doubling 2015 total reports!



Mobile boat wash station at Park Lake in Clinton County

# NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE AND CONSERVATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

The objective of the Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI) is to provide assistance to the local NRCS field staff with the implementation of Farm Bill programs in Michigan. John Bauer provided assistance on many different projects throughout Clinton, Eaton, and Ionia Counties, resulting in federal financial assistance going to local producers to implement conservation practices through Farm Bill programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetland Restoration Programs (WRP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP).

Services provided include promoting programs, technical support, plan writing assistance, surveying, engineering designs, as-built inspections, preconstruction meetings, and contract maintenance.

Below is a list highlighting practices completed in FY 2016.



**\$789,818 was obligated towards new contracts in federal Farm Bill programs last year**

CONSERVATION PRACTICES	ACTIVITY	CONSERVATION PRACTICES	ACTIVITY
Brush Management	3	CNMP	2
Cover Crops	7	Cultural Resource Review	6
Energy Plan	1	Fence	1
Forest Management Plan	3	Forest Stand Improvement	2
Grass waterway	1	Heavy Use Area Protection	3
Herbaceous Weed Control	1	Nutrient Management	1
On Farm Secondary Containment	3	Pollinators	1
Prescribed Grazing	1	Roof Runoff Structure	1
Seasonal High Tunnel	1	Stream Crossing	1
Underground Outlet	1		

**\$462,328 in federal financial assistance was paid to local producers for conservation practices implemented in Clinton County in Fiscal Year 2016.**

## LAND & HABITAT IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

The Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative (MPRI) is a conservation initiative of diverse partners working together to focus on the restoration of pheasants and habitat in Michigan. MPRI activities in 2016 focused on supporting the *Clinton Lakes Pheasant and Wildlife Cooperative*, which was formed in 2015 by interested and concerned individuals surrounding the vicinity of Motz Park and Clinton Lakes Park. The 110 acre native grassland planting completed in 2015 serves as the main “hub” of the cooperative. Private landowners surrounding the parks were contacted and encouraged to expand on the quality habitat created by improving habitat on their own land.



Tom Olson, Jon Morrison, and Kurt Wolf installing a co-op sign at Clinton Lakes County Park

The semi-annual tree sale fundraiser continues to be a reliable source of revenue for the Clinton Conservation District. Thanks in part to continued partnerships with Clinton Pheasants Forever, Clinton/Ionia Quality Deer Management Association, Friends of the Looking Glass, and Looking Glass River Garden Club revenue from both sales was up in 2016 as these organizations helped bring in new customers. The District also continued to offer landowners affordable equipment rental options for habitat improvement project.

### 2016 Habitat Improvement Summary

357 native plants sold	21,980 trees and shrubs sold
68 acres of grasses/food plots planted with the no-till drill	10,400 trees planted with the tree planter

## HUNTER ACCESS PROGRAM

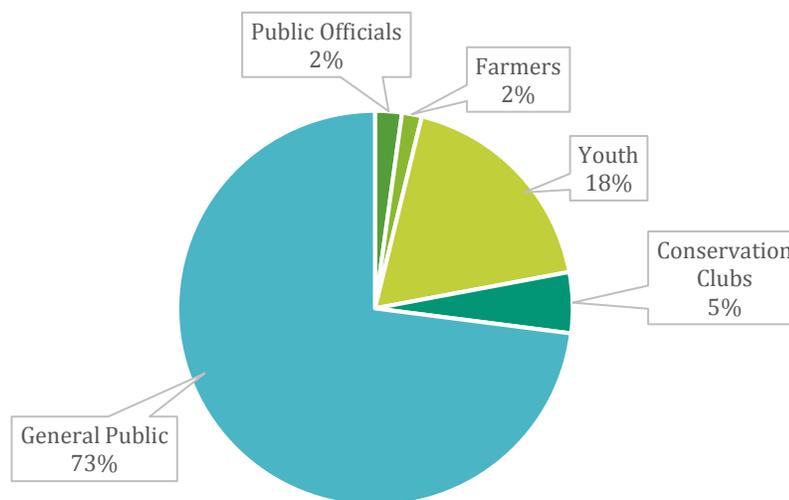
The Hunter Access Program (HAP) is a statewide program administered through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) aimed at increasing public hunting opportunities in southern Michigan. HAP provides financial incentives to landowners who allow hunters access to their lands. Two properties renewed HAP contracts in 2016, resulting in 157 acres combined of private land open for public hunting in Clinton County. These two properties were used by 55 hunters in 2016, most of whom came from outside of Clinton County.



## EDUCATION & OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Educating our citizens on important conservation issues is a critical part of the Clinton Conservation District's mission. General education and outreach is provided on a regular basis through newsletters, articles, social media, and daily interactions with landowners. Last year we provided education indirectly to over 9,750 people. More importantly the District participated in many activities last year that educated citizens directly on specific conservation topics. In 2016 the Clinton Conservation District provided direct education and outreach to nearly 1,350 people, bring the total number of people reached last year to more than 11,000!

### Breakdown of Total Audiences Reached in 2016



## THANK YOU

We would like to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, organizations, and agencies who worked with us in 2016. We would not have seen the successes we did without these partnerships! We would also like to thank all the landowners who attended our events, purchases trees and native plants or implemented conservation practices. Your support and participation in District programs helps ensure the natural resources in Clinton County will be enjoyed for generations to come.



John Bauer at a field day



**Clinton Conservation District**  
**2343 N US 27**  
**St. Johns, MI 48879**  
**(989) 224-3720 x5**  
**[www.clintonconservation.org](http://www.clintonconservation.org)**  
**[www.facebook.com/ClintonConservation](https://www.facebook.com/ClintonConservation)**