



**No Goats, No Glory**

*During the Fall Farm Tour, visitors to Hymnote Farms learned all about the wonderful world of Dwarf Dairy Goats.*



**ST. CLAIR**  
**CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**62nd**  
**ANNUAL**  
**REPORT**

**January, 2011**

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**RURAL ROUTE PATRON**

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 Permit #448  
 Port Huron, MI

**ST. CLAIR CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S 2011 TREE SALE LIST**

Full payment must accompany orders and sent in no later than April 1st. Order early as these trees are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. After April 2nd you may order at the office only!

PRICE PER:							TREE SPECIES	AGE	SIZE	QUANTITY	COST
500	100	25	10	5	1						
<b>EVERGREEN SEEDLINGS</b>											
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	DOUGLAS FIR	2 YRS	10-15"			
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	AUSTRIAN PINE	2 YRS	10-15"			
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	WHITE PINE	3 YRS	10-15"			
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	BLUE SPRUCE	3 YRS	10-15"			
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	NORWAY SPRUCE	3 YRS	10-15"			
<b>EVERGREEN TRANSPLANTS</b>											
N/A	\$140	\$50	\$25	\$14	\$3	BLUE SPRUCE TRANSPLANT	4 YRS	10-16"			
N/A	\$140	\$50	\$25	\$14	\$3	NORWAY SPRUCE TRANSPLANT	4 YRS	15-24"			
N/A	\$140	\$50	\$25	\$14	\$3	BALSAM FIR TRANSPLANT	2 YRS	8-15"			
<b>EVERGREEN PLUGS</b>											
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	WHITE PINE	1 YRS	5-10"			
\$130	\$40	\$20	\$12	\$8	N/A	WHITE SPRUCE	1 YRS	5-10"			
<b>HARDWOODS</b>											
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	SUGAR MAPLE	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	RED MAPLE	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	PIN OAK	1 YRS	12-18"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	SWAMP WHITE OAK	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	MAGENTA CRABAPPLE	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	CANOE BIRCH	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	EASTERN REDBUD	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$75	\$35	\$25	\$15	\$4	HYBRID POPLAR	1 YRS	2-3'			
<b>SHRUBS</b>											
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	FORSYTHIA (multi-stemmed)	1 YRS	12-18"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	COMMON LILAC	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	AMERICAN ELDERBERRY	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	HIGHBUSH CRANBERRY	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	SILKY DOGWOOD	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	NINEBARK	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	NANNYBERRY	1 YRS	18-24"			
N/A	\$100	\$35	\$25	\$13	\$3	BUTTERFLY BUSH	1 YRS	18-24"			
<b>FRUIT TREES &amp; BERRY BUSHES</b>											
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$140	\$75	\$17	HONEYCRISP APPLE	1 YR	4-5'			
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$140	\$75	\$17	GALE GALA	1 YR	4-5'			
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$140	\$75	\$17	LAPINS DARK SWEET CHERRY	1 YR	4-5'			
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$140	\$75	\$17	STANLEY PLUM	1 YR	4-5'			
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$30	\$17	\$4	ENCORE RED RASPBERRIES		2.5" POT			
N/A	N/A	N/A	\$30	\$17	\$4	NAVAHO BLACKBERRIES		2.5" POT			
<b>NATIVE WILDFLOWER SEED PACKETS</b>											
HUMMINGBIRD MIXTURE - 1/2 oz. covers 125 sq ft.									\$4 EACH		
AMERICAN WILDFLOWER MIX - 1 oz. covers 250 sq ft.									\$4 EACH		
<b>MISC. ITEMS FOR PLANTING</b>											
RED MARKING FLAGS									.10 EACH		
FERTILIZER TABLETS									.10 EACH		
TERRA SORB -1/2oz Moisture Retention Gel									\$1 EACH		
TREE PLANTING BAR - \$20 Refund if Returned									\$30 EACH		



**America Wildflower Mix**

A blend of up to 20 different annual & perennial wildflower varieties.

Includes: White Yarrow, Bachelor Button, Wallflower, Lance-leaf Coreopsis, Plain Coreopsis, Rocket Larkspur, Sweet William, Foxglove, African Daisy, Purple Prairie Cone flower, Blanket flower, Indian Blanket, Baby's Breath, Dame's Rocket, Globe Candytuft, Toad flax, Scarlet Flax, Perennial Lupine, Baby Blue Eyes, Evening Primrose, Corn Poppy, Prairie Cone flower, Black-eyed Susan and Catch fly.

Covers 250 sq.ft.....  
Available in BULK QUANTITIES at a cheaper rate.

**Hummingbird Mix**

Includes: Lemon Mint, Rocket Larkspur, Scarlet Sage, Cilia, Dwarf Catchfly, Mexican Sunflower, Giant Columbine, Four-O-Clock, Foxglove, Rocky Mt. Penstemon, Tussock Bellflower,



Perennial Lupine.  
Covers 125 sq. ft.  
Available in BULK QUANTITIES at a cheaper rate.

**Red Marking Flags**

3 ft. tall; bright red flags, excellent for marking seedlings

**Terra Sorb**

Root dip that is designed to increase the moisture retention of plants and soil. Each 1/2 oz. packet mixed with 1 gallon of water covers 400 seedlings or 200 transplants.

**Tree Planting Bar**

Recommended for planting evergreen and shrub seedlings. Rent for \$28 with \$20 refunded after return of bar.

Mail Orders to: St. Clair Conservation District  
2830 WADHAMS RD., Kimball, MI 48074



**Method of Payment**

- Check/Money Order
- Mastercard
- Visa

<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>6% TAX</b>	
<b>HANDLING</b>	<b>\$3.00</b>
<b>DONATION</b>	
<b>AMT. DUE</b>	

Tree Pick-Up April 15th & 16th, Goodells County Park

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Order # \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Signature (required for Credit Card purchase only)

Credit Card Number

Exp. Date

\*Please add your orders carefully. Adding errors with overpayment up to \$10 will be considered a donation to the St. Clair Conservation District. All donations in addition to overpayments are welcome to support District programs!

# LOCAL DIARY FARM

## RECOGNIZED AS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARD BY THE STATE OF MICHIGAN



Jason Nielsen,  
Water Stewardship  
Technician

Reid Dairy Farm in Jeddo has recently been recognized by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) for years of being an environmental steward at his farm. Jim Reid has been working very hard to upgrade his farm and the management processes on the farm to be more environmentally friendly. His efforts were rewarded this past summer with the verification by MDA in the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program or MAEAP. There are almost 900 farms in the state verified in the MAEAP program. Reid Dairy Farm is one of the very few that has been acknowledged as meeting all environmental standards on the farmstead, as well as in the livestock and cropping operations.

Throughout the fall and winter the Reid's have been honored by the Michigan Agriculture Industry for their leadership and efforts they have made towards environmental stewardship. We here at the St Clair Conservation District are proud to have assisted the Reid's when and where we could. We know it takes a lot of hard work and the path to environmental verification has not always been evident.

The St Clair Conservation District applauds everyone at Reid Dairy Farm for their efforts and we appreciate them stepping up and becoming a local leader in environmental stewardship. Reid Dairy Farm has proven that they are farming in ways that have the best possible impact on our local environment. They have also set the example for other farmers and proven that if somebody is willing to put in the effort to look after our resources, there will be many benefits personally, professionally, and environmentally.



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(810) 648-2404

### CARO

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(989) 673-8400

### MARLETTE

7454 Vandyke Highway  
(810) 346-2761

### BAD AXE

1314 Sand Beach Rd  
(989) 269-9249

### SAGINAW

6150 Bay Rd  
(989) 791-1234

### BURTON

4135 Davison Rd  
(810) 742-3364

### BIRCH RUN

8461 Main St  
(989) 624-9356

### REESE

9952 Saginaw St  
(989) 868-4165

### LAPEER

3120 N. Lapeer Rd  
(810) 664-3798

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L-410006288

AD1W102L443524-00339527

# CONSERVATION STAFF



*St. Clair Conservation District Staff (LtoR):*

Ben Thelen, District Conservationist; Stacey Kautz, District Administrator;  
Jason Nielsen, Groundwater Tech.; Joe Goubert, Soil Conservation Tech.

# DONATING

## a conservation easement on your farm

From the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board

St. Clair County's agricultural land is a unique and economically important resource. The county has a rich history of farmland that supports a locally important and globally unique agricultural industry that includes dairy, livestock, food from grains, vegetables, fruit, and nursery and greenhouse crops. The county's climate, topography and accessibility make it well-suited to the production, processing, and distribution of agricultural products on a regional, state and national level.

The St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board is dedicated to permanently preserving the best agricultural land in the county, so that future generations can continue the rich farming tradition that helps define our communities and so that our residents will always have access to an abundance of quality, local produce. In 2009, the Board received its first conservation easement donation from the late Chuck Kwasnik and his wife Connie on 57 acres of farmland in Avoca.

Upon signing the conservation easement in December 2009, Chuck noted that, "Agriculture is an important economic activity in St. Clair County and is dependent on a secure land base for its future. I hope this first step is a start in securing farming's future in St. Clair County." Sadly, Chuck Kwasnik passed away in early 2010 as a result of a stroke. He will always be remembered for his contributions to farming in St. Clair County and his dedication for farmland preservation.

A conservation easement is a voluntary agreement that allows a landowner to limit the type or amount of development on their property. They protect the farmland for future generations while allowing the landowner to retain many private property rights and to live on and use their land, at the same time potentially providing them with tax benefits in compliance with Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules. A conservation easement does not open the property for public use. A conservation easement is legally binding, whether the property is sold or passed on to children. In other words, the conservation easement runs with the land.

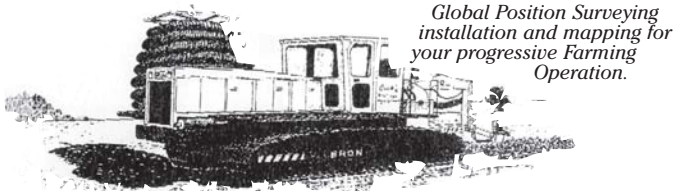
If you are interested in learning more about donating a conservation easement to the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board, contact the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission at (810) 989-6950 or email [farmland@stclaircounty.org](mailto:farmland@stclaircounty.org).

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**Larry Cook**

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**John L. Cook**

**(810) 378-5588**

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5310 Elk St., Peck, MI 48466*

# THANK YOU!

This November, the citizens of St. Clair County were asked to approve a millage proposal for the St. Clair Conservation District. The millage request would have cost the average homeowner of a property worth \$100,000.00 ten dollars per year (\$10/year). A yes vote on the millage would have allowed the District to re-establish and expand services beyond "what was" and move into "what could be" -Unfortunately this mileage was defeated.

On behalf of the St. Clair Conservation District Board and its staff, I would like to extend our gratitude to those who voted yes and to those who supported the effort including the Friends of the St. Clair Conservation District, St. Clair County Education Association, and St. Clair County Farm Bureau. I would also ask those who voted no to please feel free to contact the Conservation District with your reasons why you decided not to support this millage effort and how we can do a better job in gaining your support in the future. The St. Clair Conservation District has been serving this county for over 60 years and has a long history of helping its citizen's. We continue to believe St Clair County has a vast potential that can be reached with the assistance of the Conservation District.

The St. Clair Conservation District has become "a one stop shop" for the landowners of the county assisting any landowner who walked in the door with

either information or services of which, in the past, came at little or no fee whether it was related to agriculture or residential. The reality of the current situation is that the Conservation District will continue to do what it can for the citizens of St. Clair County for as long as we can. We will explore various funding opportunities as they emerge to remain viable and provide what services as we can for as long as we can. It will be two years before the Conservation District can come before the electorate for another try at a stable funding source. Until then I would like to place before those who voted Yes and even to those who voted No, if you are still inclined, to support the St. Clair Conservation District by sending in that \$10 which would have been collected as a tax, as a donation to keep a longstanding agency alive and well in your county.

Tim Maxwell, Vice Chairman

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LJ-0100068898

# SUPPORT THE DISTRICT!

The St. Clair Conservation District is operated similar to a non-profit organization with initiatives and financial support coming from the local community. Your generous contributions will help to ensure the health and beauty of St. Clair County's natural resources both for today and for future generations to come. Every dollar invested in the District goes directly into implementation of hands on conservation projects which will build an environmental legacy we can be proud of.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Payment (please circle) CHECK VISA MASTERCARD  
Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contribution Level**

- Friend (\$10+)
- Donor (\$50+)
- Patron (100+)
- Sponsor (\$500+)
- Benefactor (\$1000+)

**Please mail to:**

St. Clair CD  
2830 Wadhams Rd.  
Kimball, MI 48074

Your donations are tax deductible under Section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code.



The St. Clair Conservation District sponsors many workshops and educational programs throughout the year. Profits from our Spring and Fall Tree Sales make these programs possible. If you are interested in receiving more information on what the Conservation District has to offer, please contact us at (810) 984-3001, ext. 5.

## ST. CLAIR CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### FARM SERVICES AGENCY STAFF



Farm Service Agency Staff (LtoR): Dean Forrester, Ellen Wilson, Brenda Boyd, Karla Frammolino, Steve Simmons

## WANTED DISTRICT DIRECTORS!

The St. Clair Conservation District is accepting nominations for the District Board of Directors. District Directors are responsible for the operation and management of the Conservation District. An effective board uses all resources available to carry on strong District programs. Directors are elected to four-year terms in April at our Spring Tree Sale. All residents of St. Clair County desiring to run for Conservation District Director in this election may acquire a petition that is to be signed by at least five residents of the county 60 days prior to the election. Three positions will be open for this year's election, one serving the remaining 1 year of an appointed position and the other 2 serving full four year terms.

Residents are individuals of legal age (18) who can demonstrate residency in the county via one piece of identification. If you have an interest in protecting, conserving, and encouraging the wise use of natural resources, and a willingness to take the time to implement its programs, contact the District office at (810)984-3001 ext. 5 for more information.

### DISTRICT DIRECTORS



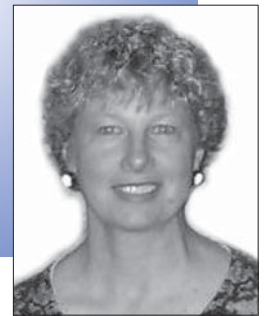
Don Gardner



Tim Maxwell



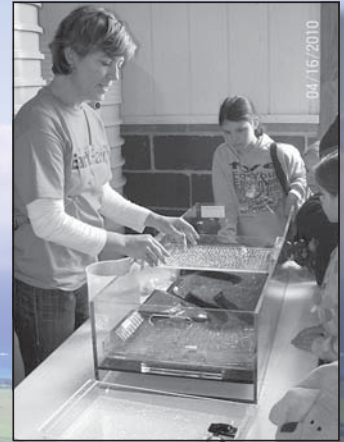
Mike Taylor



Karyn McCue

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# FALL FARM TOUR, SPRING TREE SALE & EARTH FAIR!





By: Ben Thelen, NRCS District Conservationist

# PARTICIPATION IN FARM BILL PROGRAM INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN 2010

There were 15 new contracts in 3 different conservation programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, and the Conservation Stewardship Program. Conservation Programs provide incentives for landowners to put conservation on the land.

The most popular program was the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a cost share programs that helps landowners implement conservation practices. These include structural practices such as Agrichemical Handling Facilities and Fencing, and management practices like Nutrient Management, Pest Management, and Residue Management. We had eleven new contracts in 2010 worth over \$250,000. Through the EQIP program, nearly 20 acres of trees were planted, four Agrichemical Handling facilities were constructed, and two Seasonal High Tunnels were installed. Landowners also adopted new management practices with over 1000 acres of Nutrient Management, 500 acres of Pest Management, over 350 acres of Cover Crops and Conservation Crop Rotation applied. The EQIP program also assisted

two landowners in have a Forest Management Plan written for their woodlands.

For the first time in St. Clair County, landowners also took advantage of the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), a cost share program to establish improved habitat for wildlife. Common Practices for WHIP include Tree and Shrub Establishment, Grassland Plantings, and Windbreaks.

The Conservation Stewardship Program rewards farmers for being good stewards of the land, and also doing additional practices. This program is not for everyone, but for the best of the best conservation farmers.

If you have any questions or are interested in any Farm Bill Programs, please stop by the office for more information.



## EARTH DAY, EVERY DAY! COUNTY 5TH GRADERS PARTICIPATE IN TREE EDUCATION DAYS!

Each year between Earth Day and Arbor Day, the St. Clair Conservation District goes into local schools and educates 5th grade students on the importance of reforestation and planting trees native to Michigan. This year, District Chair Mike Taylor and District Administrator Stacey Kautz, traveled to 16 schools giving presentations to 800 eager students on the importance of trees in our community. Not only do the students receive valuable information regarding the importance of trees, their planting and growth but they also received a White Pine seedling to call their own. Students are then instructed on how to take care of their tree and the importance it will play in wildlife habitat. This year's program included educational pamphlets that teach students basic information about how to plant trees properly. The tree education program encourages students to be stewards of the land by conserving our natural resources and reforesting our valuable forests.

For 17 years the District's Tree Conservation Education Program has provided 5th grade students in St. Clair County with knowledge about the importance of trees, their planting and growth. We encourage schools to participate in this program as it gives the students some



basic knowledge of our natural resources and what they can do to preserve them. If your school does not currently participate in this program and you would like to see them take part, please encourage them to contact the District Office at (810)984-3001 ext. 5 by April 6th.



United States  
Department  
of Agriculture

Farm and Foreign  
Agricultural  
Services

Farm Service Agency  
  
Kimball USDA  
Service Center



FARM SERVICE AGENCY

P.O. Box 7900,  
Kimball, MI 48074-7900

Tel: 810-984-3865 Ex. 2  
Fax: 810-984-2345

2010 was a good year for the Farm Service Agency but we are looking forward to what the new year will bring and the new challenges ahead.

We had a regular Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup and the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) continues. Producers can offer land for CRP general sign-up enrollment only during designated sign-up periods. With CCRP environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled at any time under CRP continuous sign-up. Certain eligibility requirements still apply, but offers are not subject to competitive bidding.

For more information on these programs and the other programs that the Farm Service Agency offers please contact our office at 810 984-3865 Ex. 2 or you can email me at [dean.forrester@mi.usda.gov](mailto:dean.forrester@mi.usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

St. Clair Conservation District  
October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010

**OPERATING RECEIPTS:**

MDA Grants	\$	2,940.00
Reforestation Program	\$	59,502.84
Product Sales	\$	9,558.63
Interest Earned	\$	775.76
Tree Planter Rental	\$	420.00
Local Contributions	\$	889.01
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS:</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>74,086.24</b>

**DISBURSEMENTS:**

Operating Expense	\$	57,852.46
Tree Sale Expense	\$	26,255.10
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>84,107.56</b>

**BALANCE ON HAND SEPTEMBER 30, 2010** **\$ 39,737.76**

St. Clair Conservation District Fund Equity was used to offset the unbalanced budget in the amount of \$10,021.32

# DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ADDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT TO MISSION

From the Michigan Department of Agriculture

Governor Rick Snyder has signed an executive order officially adding rural development to the Department of Agriculture's mission.

The executive order - his second since taking office on Jan. 1 - follows through on his pledge to make sure all of Michigan moves forward without leaving some behind. "This should be seen as more than just a symbolic name change," Snyder said. "This should be seen as a clear signal that my administration intends to work with the agriculture industry to help it grow in order to bring more and better jobs to our rural areas, which are suffering with some of the highest unemployment rates in the state."

As director of the newly-renamed Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Keith Creagh has been charged by the governor with integrating resources across government in order to make infrastructure improvements and expand educational opportunities that will make producers of food and other agricultural products anchors in rural communities, providing sustainable, long-term jobs. We already have a lot of the necessary tools at our disposal, it's just a matter of making sure they are used wisely," Creagh said.

To that end, Creagh has already had discussions with Department of Transportation Director Kirk Steudle about making smart investments in infrastructure to enhance economic growth in rural areas. Creagh also said it is important to expand educational opportunities.

"Agriculture today is a high tech industry that relies on trained professionals with knowledge of the newest methods from biology and chemistry to packing and shipping. Expanding educational opportunities will give Michigan's agricultural producers a competitive edge and ensure jobs are available for recent graduates who want to stay in their home communities," Creagh said.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will focus on expanding agriculture's role in Michigan's economy by making sure regulations are based on sound science and expanding programs such as the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program, which aims to help farmers run environmentally-sound operations.

It will also work to improve customer service by providing technical assistance to food processors and farmers that need help solving permit and regulation issues.

# THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY!

## St. Clair County Celebrates Earth Day at Local Event

On Friday and Saturday, April 16TH and 17TH, 2010 in honor of "Earth Day", the St. Clair County Environmental Education Network held their 8th Annual Earth Fair at Goodells County Park.

The event is a grass-roots effort to educate people who want to promote a cleaner, healthier world for themselves and future generations. Earth Fair is held in conjunction with the St. Clair Conservation District's annual spring tree sale. Many exhibitors and activities, geared especially for children and families, filled the first two exhibit barns and overflowed into the third where the tree sale was being held.

Over forty years ago, Senator Gaylord Nelson conceived of the first Earth Day as an event to mobilize citizens across the country to get involved with the environment. Last year in St. Clair County there were nearly 2000 people participating in activities featuring homemade bird feeders, nature-inspired art, gardening, water monitoring, native plants and biodegradable cleaners, wagon rides, hybrid vehicles, and live animals and picking up information on recycling and endangered and invasive species.

The St. Clair County Environmental Education Network was developed in May 2002 and consists of County and local agencies, and nonprofit groups committed to environmental education in St. Clair County. Earth Fair will be held once again in conjunction with the Conservation District Tree Sale to be held April 15th and 16th. If you would like to become in the planning of Earth Fair or would like to participate by sponsoring an activity/event or are an "earth-friendly" vendor, please contact Sheri Faust at the Health Department (810) 987-5306.



Jim Kneebone, St. Clair County Drain Office, helps visitors to the Earth Fair identify macroinvertebrates at the Drain Office Exhibit.

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# MICHIGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

## PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES ONE FARM AT A TIME



Jason Nielsen,  
Water Stewardship Technician

It's been just over a year since I started working with the Michigan Water Stewardship Program at the St. Clair Conservation District. My coverage area includes St. Clair, Lapeer, Macomb, and sometimes Oakland counties. I am constantly impressed by the number and variety of farming operations in my area. From Dairy and chickens, to vegetables, sod, and Christmas trees. From farms on just a few acres to thousand plus acre conventional cropping operations. Certified organic, no-till, farm stores, and value added farm products are all right around us if you just look.

livelihoods. It may sound easy but in some circumstances can be quite challenging. That's where I step in.

As a representative of the Michigan Water Stewardship program my job is to help operators to recognize and appreciate all those positive environmental impacts on their farm. I also work with the farmer to identify practices that could be improved, figuring out site specific ways to better meet the needs of the surrounding lands without compromising farm operations.

Those farms that meet or exceed all standards of environmental compliance can choose to be recognized for their efforts by the State of Michigan through the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP). There are over 850 MAEAP verified farms all over the state and thousands in the process. All it takes is a phone call and some commitment to see things through and your farm can be next to be MAEAP verified as an environmentally friendly operation.



Farmers themselves are all just as varied and interesting. From homebodies who rarely leave the county to the agro-jet set who travel the world after harvest. It's interesting to see how every farm has evolved around the farmer and every farmer around their respective farm. One shapes the other based on the land and existing and created markets and products.

A common thread in all of these farms and farmers is their impact on the environment. All farmers know that their operations have an impact on their environment and all farmers want to minimize negative impacts without ruining their



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# 5TH ANNUAL FALL FARM TOUR

## St. Clair County Fall Farm Tour a hit, despite the rain

From the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board

October 2, 2010 was a cold, rainy day that brought out the umbrellas and concealed the sunshine. However, the day-long showers were not enough to dampen the spirits of those taking part in the 5th Annual St. Clair County Fall Farm Tour, which was held in the Capac area. The Fall Farm Tour, which is sponsored by the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board, the St. Clair Conservation District, and the St. Clair County Farm Bureau, provides residents and visitors alike the opportunity to visit some of the most interesting farms and places in the county – places that most people would otherwise rarely or never see.

The 2010 Fall Farm Tour featured six great tour stops, including: Lauwers Alfalfa and Straw Farm, Blueridge Blueberry Farm, Lynn Island Farms, Hymnotes Farm, Sunny Fields Botanical Park, and BST Orchard. Despite the rain sticking around for the duration of the tour, which lasted five hours, roughly 120 people visited each farm – many of whom live in St. Clair County, as well as visitors from around the Metro Detroit region who came to enjoy what St. Clair County has to offer.

People of all ages spent an enjoyable day with their families touring St. Clair County's countryside, taking in the fall colors, and learning about life on the farm. For the most part, people stayed dry! Visitors had the unique opportunity to see farm animals up close and personal, in their natural environments and learned firsthand why farming is important to St. Clair County.

At the Lauwers Alfalfa and Straw Farm, visitors were treated to "Local Chefs Cooking Local Food for Healthy Eating," where two local chefs conducted cooking demonstrations with locally-grown produce throughout the day. Chefs Jim Kokenyesdi and T.J. Robinson from Community Mental Health served up plenty of tasty dishes, including baked apple crisp and a barley stew. Rain or not, children enjoyed climbing on the giant hay stack.

At Blueridge Blueberry Farm, visitors learned how the King family grows their delicious blueberries and how they produce a variety of baked-goods. Those who visited the Stuever family at Lynn Island Farms got to see a real, working dairy farm and how high-quality milk is produced.

Hymnotes Farm allowed visitors to spend some time interacting with their many goats of all ages. BST Orchard afforded visitors the opportunity to go behind the scenes at an apple orchard and Sunny Fields Botanical Park provided a tranquil setting to admire some of its 1,400 different kinds of plants.

Agriculture has a deep history and is a vital part of the St. Clair County economy. The purpose of the Farm Tour was to show residents and visitors that the rural and urban areas need one another. Beyond that, the Farm Tour proves year after year that there is a real opportunity for successful agricultural tourism in St. Clair County. The sponsors' goals were to educate visitors, provide some family fun, and create lasting impressions on those who attended – especially those who had never before set foot on a farm. As our visitors learned, St. Clair County farms are very easy to appreciate when you take the time to experience them and realize just how important they are to our daily lives.

Stay tuned for more information about the 2011 St. Clair County Fall Farm Tour, which will be held on Saturday, October 1 in the southern part of the county. Tour sponsors are busy planning another great tour for this fall. Details on the St. Clair County will be available on the St. Clair County Agricultural Preservation Board's website at: <http://cis.stclaircounty.org/agriculture.asp>.

The Fall Farm Tour is held in a different part of the county each year. If you are interested in having your farm featured at a future Tour, please call the St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission at (810) 989-6950 or email [farmland@stclaircounty.org](mailto:farmland@stclaircounty.org).



*Crystal Sovey spins raw wool into yarn at Hymnote Farms during the 2010 Fall Farm Tour*