Medication Disposal Boxes

MONITOR—keep track of all medications and number of refills.

SECURE—lock up medications in a safe place. Do not store medications in bathrooms or kitchen cabinets.

DISPOSE—dispose of medications by turning them in to law enforcement. Do not flush medications down the toilet or throw them in the garbage.

*70% of teens who abuse prescription drugs say they get them from family and friends.

Trace amounts of medications are being found in our drinking water

LOCATIONS

MECOSTA COUNTY:
SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT
BIG RAPIDS DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC SAFETY
FSU DEPARTMENT
OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OSCEOLA COUNTY:
SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT
REED CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT
EVART POLICE DEPARTMENT

For more information contact: Shay Tullar at 231-527-1499

For more information contact: Kim Livingston at 231-527-1499

Conserve Resources...Conserving the Land, Water and Air...

Remember...Littering is a crime!
# Fall 2019 Seedling Price List

## CONIFERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>250</th>
<th>500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-12&quot;</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$38</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8&quot;</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-8&quot;</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12&quot;</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$44</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## WILDLIFE SHRUBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIZE</th>
<th>25</th>
<th>50</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>250</th>
<th>500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-24&quot;</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$38</td>
<td>$56</td>
<td>$78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24&quot;</td>
<td>$38</td>
<td>$48</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24&quot;</td>
<td>$32</td>
<td>$42</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>$28</td>
<td>$54</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18&quot;</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$42</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Other Conservation Products

- **Geobin Home & Garden Compost Bin**: Price $38
- **TerraSorb Root Gel**: Price: 1 oz. $2.00, 8 oz. $8.00, 1 lb. $15.00
- **NutriPak Fertilizer Packets**: Price: $1.25 each or 6 for $7.00. Scientifically designed fertilizer packet formulated to continuously fertilize over a five year period.
- **Tree Planting Bars**: Price: $25.00 or $5/day rental. Excellent tool used for planting seedlings in non-rocky soil that is easy to penetrate. Each bar has a footstep, handle and weighs approx. 7 lbs.
- **Tree Flags**: Price $0.20 each or 100 for $15.00. 4" x 4.5" florescent flag on a 30" wire stake.
- **“Trees Planted” Signs**: Price $3.00. Made of heavy grade aluminum. Each sign measures 7.5" x 11". Black print on high visibility yellow or orange background.
- **“No Trespassing” Signs**: Price $3.00. Made of heavy grade aluminum. Each sign measures 7.5" x 11". Black print on high visibility yellow background.
- **Tree Shelters**: Price $5.00 each. 5 ft. max grow tube tree shelters to protect seedlings. Tree stakes not included.
- **Best 1 Hummingbird Feeder**: Price $13.95
- **Books For Sale**
  - **The Muskegon, The Majesty and Tragedy of Michigan’s Rarest River** by Jeff Alexander. Price: $25.00
  - **Pollinators of Native Plants** by Heather N. Holm. Price: $19.95
  - **2018 Mecosta County Platbook** Price: $25.00
  - **2017 Osceola County Platbook** Price: $27.50
  - **2018 Lake County Platbook** Price: $27.50
Important Ordering and Pickup Information

Complete the order form below. Send order form to the District in which your property is located. All orders under $50 must be paid in full at time of ordering. Orders less than $200 require a $50 deposit. Orders larger than $200 require a minimum 25% deposit. Orders will not be placed without receipt of a deposit. Balance due at time of pickup.

Orders may be placed by mail, phone or fax and can be paid by check or credit card. Visa, MasterCard and Discover are accepted.

Ordering deadline is Thursday, September 19, 2019, 3:00 pm. Orders received after this date will be filled based on availability.

Quantities are limited and orders will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis.

We do not guarantee survival. Our liability ceases when seedlings are delivered to buyer or custom planter.

“It is unlawful for these trees, shrubs and other plants to be resold with the roots attached in accordance with the Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act, P.A. 189 of 1931, as amended.”

Pickup location will be at the Paris Park Fish Hatchery. Pickup Date: Friday, September 27, 2019, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Orders are not shipped. For those who place an order a reminder email or phone call will be made regarding pickup date and time.

If you are unable to pickup your order on the scheduled date you must make other arrangements. We will not be responsible for lost or stolen trees that are not picked up on the scheduled pickup date.

We will not be responsible for lost or stolen trees that are not picked up on the scheduled pickup date.

Please let us know if a tree planter will be picking up your order. The order must be paid in full prior to pickup.

The district reserves the right to cancel orders and refund payments due to reasons beyond our control.

ORDER FORM

Name ____________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
City, State, Zip ____________________________________________________
Phone __________________________________ Email _______________________

If your property is located in Osceola County or the East half of Lake County mail to:
Osceola-Lake Conservation District
138 W. Upton Ave, Suite 2
Reed City, MI 49677
Phone orders: (231) 465-8012
Fax orders: 855-790-7472

If your property is located in Mecosta County mail to:
Mecosta Conservation District
18260 Northland Drive
Big Rapids, MI 49307
Phone orders: (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3
Fax orders: 855-693-2483

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Species/Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payment by Check or Credit Card
Visa MasterCard Discover
(V code is last 3 digits on signature line on back of card) - V code example: 1234 567
# ___________________________ V code: ____________
Exp. Date ________________________

Subtotal __________________________
Add 6% Sales Tax ____________________
Tax Deductible Contribution ________
Subtotal __________________________
Required Deposit ____________________
Balance Due ________________________
Consortium News 2019

Select cutting and chipping Food Plots - Firewood Wildlife Habitat Improvement
21364 Meceola Rd. • Paris, MI 49338

A Family Tradition Since 1957

District Information

Osceola-Lake Conservation District
138 W Upton, Suite 2
Reed City, MI 49677
Telephone: (231) 465-8012
Fax: 855-790-7472
Email: mark.sweppenheiser@macd.org
Website: www.osceolalakecd.org

District Directors
Patrick Kailing, Chairman
Connie Theunick-Perley, Vice-Chairperson
Mike Stilwell, Treasurer
Jack Thornton, Secretary
L.D. Hesselink, Member

District Staff
Mark Sweppenheiser, District Manager
Rick Lucas, District Forester
Alex Svoboda, MAEAP Technician

USDA-Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Greg Watre, District Conservationist

Board Meetings
Regular board meetings are held bi-monthly the second Thursday of the month at Richmond Township Hall in Reed City. Call the office to confirm dates and times. Open to the public.

All programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

A BIG THANKS to our volunteers and all those who supported the 2018 Household Hazardous Waste Collection.
41,776 pounds of toxic and hazardous materials were collected!

Mecosta County Supporters
Aetna Township
Austin Township
Big Rapids Township
Chippewa Township
City of Big Rapids
Colfax Township
County of Mecosta
Deerfield Township
Fork Township
Grant Township
Green Charter Township
Martiny Township
Meceola County Senior Center
Meceola County Sheriff’s Posse
Meceola Township
Millbrook Township
Morton Township
Nestle Waters North America
Recycle of Mecosta County
Sheridan Township
Village of Morley
Lake County Supporters
Big Bass Little Bass Lake Association
Chase Township
Cherry Valley Township
County of Lake
Dover Township
Eden Township
Elk Township
Ellsworth Township
Lake County Community Foundation
Lake County Riverside Property Assoc.
Newkirk Township
Peacock Township
Pere Marquette Watershed Council
Pinora Township
Pleasant Plains Township
Sable Township
Sweetwater Township
Webber Township
Village of Baldwin
Osceola County Supporters
Bordell Township
Cargill Hersey LLC
Cedar Township
City of Evart
City of Reed City
County of Osceola
Evart Township
Hershey Township
Highland Township
LeRoy Township
Lincoln Township
Marion Township
Orient Township
Osceola County Community Foundation
Osceola County Road Commission
Osceola Township
Recycle of Osceola County
Richmond Township
Rose Lake Township
Sherman Township
Sylvan Township
Village of Marion
Village of Tustin

Wildcat Landscape, LLC
Custom Brush Cutting
Bert Chambers • (248) 762-3276 • Wildcatlandscape@att.net

Habitat Projects
Food Plot Clearing
Shooting Lanes
Autumn Olive Control
Right-of-Ways

Trails
Driveways
Fence Rows
Site Prep for Building

Doyle Forest Products, Inc.
Buyer of Standing Timber
Joe Doyle, Owner
(231) 832-5586

Select cutting and chipping
Food Plots - Firewood
Wildlife Habitat Improvement
21364 Meceola Rd. • Paris, MI 49338

A Family Tradition Since 1957
The decline in pollinating insects should concern every conservationist. The reasons for the decline are many but this concern spurred the Osceola-Lake Conservation District to do something about it. On Wednesday, March 29th, the Conservation District partnered with Reed City and the Reed City Public Schools to plant and seed three-quarters of an acre with a diverse mix of wildflowers. The area planted is at the south entrance to Westerburg Park along the Hersey River.

Reed City Middle School students planted 600 native wildflower plugs. The two dozen students are part of Dave Carlson’s Science Exploration class. The students went right to work digging, planting, and watering every plug. “They didn’t hesitate at all,” Carlson said. “It is an outdoorsy type of project they like. This is what the course is all about. We receive a lot of support from our principal Dean McGuire and superintendent Myra Munroe, to provide a positive outdoor experience for these kids. The kids can always come back to see what they have done.”

The plug planting consisted of 16 species of native wildflowers. The wildflower plugs were made possible with a grant from Cargill. In addition to the plug planting, the area was seeded with a pollinator mix that was donated by the Mecosta/Osceola Chapter of Pheasants Forever. Thank you to all the organizations that made this project possible.
Ten DNR State Game Areas were verified under the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) in the Forest, Wetlands, and Habitat (FWH) system on June 11th, 2019. The State Game Areas totaled more than 51,000 acres and spanned across Mecosta, Montcalm, and Ionia counties. Each State Game Area had its own management plan that was tailored to the needs of the area, with some plans including information regarding prescribed burns, timber harvest, specific wildlife management, and food plots.

MAEAP is designed to assist landowners in reducing environmental risks on their property. There are a variety of systems included in the program: farms (Livestock, Farmstead, Cropping) and as mentioned above Forest, Wetlands, and Habitat. The program is confidential, voluntary, and non-regulatory. All MAEAP systems address risks to ground and surface water and include assessments of the risks associated with the system being verified (FWH: timber harvest, Livestock: animal waste, Cropping: chemical storage, etc).

A land management plan is required for verification in FWH. If you are enrolled in the USDA Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) or the MDA Qualified Forest Program (QFP) then you most likely already have a plan that qualifies for FWH verification. Call your Conservation District office if you would like a risk assessment of your property!

**Mecosta Conservation District**

Karen Ickes  
MAEAP Technician  
231-408-3574  
karen.ickes@macd.org

**Osceola-Lake Conservation District**

Alex Svoboda  
MAEAP Technician  
231-465-8005  
alex.svoboda@macd.org
Throughout this past year, a wonderful partnership was developed in Mecosta County between Mecosta County Parks, North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA), and Mecosta Conservation District. This partnership has two different aspects; a strike team for treatment of invasive plant species and a multi-step restoration project at Paris Park. The Mecosta County Parks Board approved the work plan to begin restoration of Paris Park last year.

Historically, Paris Park was planted with traditional landscape plants, which unknowingly incorporated invasive species. NCCISMA has been working on removing these invasive species and replanting the areas with native species such as fragrant sumac, cardinal flower, great blue lobelia, turtle head, swamp milkweed, smooth sumac, and a variety of sun loving plants. Interpretive trail signs have been designed and will be put in place explaining the work that has been done as well as going into detail about some of the species planted. Mecosta County Parks has also designed signs that will add an historical aspect, going into detail about the hatchery, statues, and fish species.

This partnership also incorporated an invasive species strike team based out of the Paris Park field office. The strike team is a two-person crew that mechanically and chemically treats invasive plant species in Mecosta, Osceola, and the eastern part of Lake County. A resource assessment survey conducted by Mecosta Conservation District identified invasive species as the #1 natural resource concern in Mecosta County. This partnership helps address the concerns of the citizens, as well as, restoring habitat for our native birds and butterflies. Paris Park is a unique destination in Michigan with its historical fish hatchery and replica of the Eiffel tower.

NCCISMA will be showcasing the restoration work at Paris Park on Saturday, August 24th, from 10 am to noon. There will be a walking tour throughout the park starting at 10:30 am with stops along the way to view restoration areas. Information booths and displays will be located along the park entrance. Please join us to see the work that has been done and the opportunity to talk to your local resource professionals. The parking lot off of Northland Drive next to Paris Park will be open to attendees.

This event is free and open to the public.
To learn more visit www.NorthCountryInvasives.org

In Fall of 2018, English ivy was sprayed to create an opening for native plants.
Here Are Your Local Resource Professionals and the Services They Provide:

Mark and Charmaine provide information and educational outreach. They support and promote all District and NRCS programs and services as well as develop conservation programs which expand community partnerships. They are the fiduciary agents for numerous grants. They administer annual spring and fall seedling sales, native plant sales, and offer assistance in pollinator plantings, rain gardens and other wildlife plantings. They coordinate tire, electronics and household hazardous waste collections. They refer landowners to the appropriate resource professionals/agencies. You can reach Mark at 231-465-8012 or Charmaine at (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3

Karen and Alex administer the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) in their respective counties. They offer free on-site evaluations of environmental risk in addition to discussing cost share opportunities to address those risks. They present options that lead to sustainable practices as well as conservation planning assistance. They provide support to landowners through each step of the MAEAP program. You can reach Alex at 231-465-8005 or Karen at 231-408-3574.

Rick administers the Forestry Assistance Program (FAP). He provides: free onsite assessments, forest management and wildlife habitat enhancement options, tree and shrub planting recommendations, forest insect and disease identification including invasive forest plants offering monitoring and control options. Rick provides information on state tax incentive programs. He refers landowners to appropriate private and governmental service providers. Contact Rick at 231-408-3567.

Vicki is the invasive species management coordinator for six counties: Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Osceola, and Wexford. She and her North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (NCCISMA) team are available to advise property owners in invasive species identification, treatment and control. This includes demonstrations of control methods and help in obtaining required permits. Cost-share for control of some species is available through April 2020. NCCISMA also provides educational presentations and displays on invasive species for community events. Contact Vicki at 231-429-5072.

Greg and Jennifer provide technical expertise and conservation planning assistance to private landowners wanting to make conservation improvements to their land. Their services include planning science-based solutions to meet landowners objectives and resource needs on crop, pasture, forest and wildlife lands. They offer soil health recommendations to improve the productivity of the soil and reduce farm inputs. Clients can apply for financial assistance from NRCS through USDA Farm Bill programs to make improvements to their land. They help landowners complete the application process, provide technical support in implementation, provide engineering designs as needed and manage the conservation contracts. Contact Greg at 231-465-8007 or Jennifer at 231-408-3573.
The DNR’s Hunting Access Program (HAP) is currently enrolling private property in deer disease priority counties in portions of the southern and northern Lower Peninsula. Landowners should have at least 40 acres of land with some wildlife habitat (forest, brush, etc.).

Enrollment in the central region of Michigan is open to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) priority counties only including Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Mecosta and Newaygo county.

Michigan is home to one of the nation’s largest and longest running dedicated private land public access programs. Since 1977, HAP has provided private landowners another option to earn income from their land for allowing controlled hunting access.

Benefits to landowners include:
- An annual payment based on acres of land enrolled, type of land cover, and type of hunting allowed.
- Liability for the landowner through Public Act 451 if enrolled in HAP.
- Flexible options that allow selection of the hunting types allowed on the property, a maximum number of hunters on the property at a time, as well as the option to allow youth and apprentice hunting exclusively.
- Promoting and supporting Michigan’s rich hunting heritage.
- Better management of wildlife on the property.

“You can get paid to help with wildlife disease management, support the local economy and reduce wildlife conflicts on your property,” said DNR Hunting Access Program coordinator, Monique Ferris.

Most counties have local conservation district staff available to assist with enrollment. Call today to learn what you could earn for your land! Enrollment will remain open through September 1, 2019.

There are no extra costs for hunters to use HAP lands, but they are responsible for reviewing rules for each property they plan to hunt (available online), checking in at the property before each day of hunting, and respecting the landowners’ property. For more information on enrollment visit Michigan.gov/hap.
Use Your Land to Help Pollinators

By Jennifer Taylor, NRCS District Conservationist

The dramatic decline in honeybees from colony collapse disorder grabbed the headlines but researchers continue to document the decline of other pollinator species and insects in general. If you own or control land, whether it’s a small yard or thousands of acres of farmland, there are actions you can take to improve habitat for pollinators.

Habitat of course includes food and shelter. Pollinators need forage throughout the growing season so a variety of flowering plants with blooms from spring through fall is the goal. The ideal way to provide this is by establishing permanent pollinator plantings consisting of native species of flowers, trees, shrubs or any combination of the three. Native species are the best source of nourishment for native pollinators as the species have adapted to each other over time. Establishing a permanent plot of native plants takes preparation, persistence and patience. For best results the site should be prepared to eliminate as much of the seed bank of weeds as possible. After planting from seed, it will take several growing seasons for the desired variety of flowering plants to become established. Regular maintenance like mowing or controlled burns will help native species out compete weeds and control woody vegetation.

While permanent plots of native plants are the ideal, they are not the only means to provide forage for pollinators. Flowering plants like clover, buckwheat, spring peas, sunflower, mustards and calendula can be included in pasture mixes, cover crops or on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program or in conservation practices like conservation cover or filter strips. While cover crops cannot provide a season long source of forage for pollinators, they are still beneficial and can fill a gap when fewer plants are in bloom. Pollinator forage can also be incorporated into windbreaks and forest habitats.

In addition to providing forage, landowners should also closely manage pesticide use and avoid disturbing ground nesting bees. An integrated pest management plan will minimize the impact of pesticides on pollinators and other beneficial insects. Carefully selecting the correct pesticide along with the time and method of application is important to reduce their residual impact on beneficial insects. There are also many alternatives to pesticides for reducing the impact of crop pests.

NRCS and Conservation District staff can provide technical and sometimes financial assistance with improving and establishing pollinator habitat and for developing pest management plans. Most conservation districts hold annual or semi-annual plant sales featuring native flowers and flowering trees and shrubs. NRCS provides financial assistance for a variety of conservation practices that benefit pollinators or that can incorporate pollinator forage. In Michigan, NRCS has dedicated funds for improving habitat for honeybees and monarch butterflies. Pollinators need our help and your local NRCS and Conservation District staff are there to assist you.
Muskegon River
Trash Bash

September 14th, 2019
By Sydnie Harding,
Student Assistant for the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly

In the heart of the Michigan’s Lower Peninsula flows the mighty Muskegon River. The Muskegon River is Michigan’s second longest river, meandering over 219 miles through nine Michigan counties. The watershed covers approximately 2,700 square miles and includes ninety-four tributaries that sustain diverse populations of fish and many other aquatic species and wildlife. It is each of our responsibilities to help keep the Mighty Muskegon healthy and vibrant! To help protect the Muskegon River and her surrounding ecosystems, the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MWRA) is asking for your help. Get outside with us for the annual Muskegon River Trash Bash on September 14, 2019. The goal of this project is to remove trash and debris from the Muskegon River and nearby areas. Every single bit of trash picked up makes a difference. The 2019 Muskegon River Trash Bash includes multiple teams that are working together to cover over 50 miles of the river. Participants may bring their own canoes/kayaks and boats, contact local liveries, or walk the riverbanks. There are teams coordinating clean-ups in Evart, Big Rapids, Paris, Roger’s Dam, Mecosta, Bridgeton (August 3rd event), Hersey, Muskegon Lake, and Newaygo. BUT, there are still areas of the river that are in need. If you are interested in joining a team or starting your own cleanup team (great event for families, friends, organizations, and businesses), contact the MRWA today!! What a great reason to spend a day on the Mighty Muskegon River!

To register for one of the teams or learn more you can sign up at www.mrwa.org or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MuskegonRiverWatershedAssembly/. You can also contact the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly at mrwa@ferris.edu. Remember what happens up river doesn’t stay up river!
Logging debris (slash) left on the ground can be ugly but, in some cases, may serve a valuable purpose. Many areas of Michigan are afflicted with a lack of adequate tree regeneration due to deer browsing. High slash piles may help protect those vulnerable seedlings and saplings.

For decades, foresters were encouraged to leave clean sites and use all merchantable material during timber harvest operations. A massive study on northern hardwood forest regeneration may change that practice.

Researchers have begun a large experiment in Michigan to test different ways to regenerate tree species that deer like to browse. On some sites, regeneration of yellow birch, basswood, and sugar maple has been nearly absent for decades.

The project adopted two general approaches to encourage recruitment into the overstory. One approach is to flood an area with so much regeneration that enough desired trees make it to the overstory. The other approach is to use logging tops as barriers that restrict deer access. (Photo 1)

Admittedly, the result does not look pretty, resulting in a tangle of downed tree tops, but it may offer one solution to help desirable tree species regenerate in areas with heavy deer use.

The study involves 140 30-acre sites ranging from Grayling to the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Half of those sites include the “leave tops” prescription. Loggers were asked to leave tops that were over nine inches in diameter, and then overlay the tops to create a tangle that will, hopefully, deter deer. Unfortunately, these sites are ugly and difficult to walk.

When Ugly is Beautiful

By Gary Roloff

Logging debris (slash) left on the ground can be ugly but, in some cases, may serve a valuable purpose. Many areas of Michigan are afflicted with a lack of adequate tree regeneration due to deer browsing. High slash piles may help protect those vulnerable seedlings and saplings.

For decades, foresters were encouraged to leave clean sites and use all merchantable material during timber harvest operations. A massive study on northern hardwood forest regeneration may change that practice.

Researchers have begun a large experiment in Michigan to test different ways to regenerate tree species that deer like to browse. On some sites, regeneration of yellow birch, basswood, and sugar maple has been nearly absent for decades.

The project adopted two general approaches to encourage recruitment into the overstory. One approach is to flood an area with so much regeneration that enough desired trees make it to the overstory. The other approach is to use logging tops as barriers that restrict deer access. (Photo 1)

Admittedly, the result does not look pretty, resulting in a tangle of downed tree tops, but it may offer one solution to help desirable tree species regenerate in areas with heavy deer use.

The study involves 140 30-acre sites ranging from Grayling to the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Half of those sites include the “leave tops” prescription. Loggers were asked to leave tops that were over nine inches in diameter, and then overlay the tops to create a tangle that will, hopefully, deter deer. Unfortunately, these sites are ugly and difficult to walk.

When Ugly is Beautiful

By Gary Roloff

Logging debris (slash) left on the ground can be ugly but, in some cases, may serve a valuable purpose. Many areas of Michigan are afflicted with a lack of adequate tree regeneration due to deer browsing. High slash piles may help protect those vulnerable seedlings and saplings.

For decades, foresters were encouraged to leave clean sites and use all merchantable material during timber harvest operations. A massive study on northern hardwood forest regeneration may change that practice.

Researchers have begun a large experiment in Michigan to test different ways to regenerate tree species that deer like to browse. On some sites, regeneration of yellow birch, basswood, and sugar maple has been nearly absent for decades.

The project adopted two general approaches to encourage recruitment into the overstory. One approach is to flood an area with so much regeneration that enough desired trees make it to the overstory. The other approach is to use logging tops as barriers that restrict deer access. (Photo 1)

Admittedly, the result does not look pretty, resulting in a tangle of downed tree tops, but it may offer one solution to help desirable tree species regenerate in areas with heavy deer use.

The study involves 140 30-acre sites ranging from Grayling to the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula. Half of those sites include the “leave tops” prescription. Loggers were asked to leave tops that were over nine inches in diameter, and then overlay the tops to create a tangle that will, hopefully, deter deer. Unfortunately, these sites are ugly and difficult to walk.
Research technicians are collecting data on deer behavior on these sites. Although preliminary results suggest success, deer are pretty persistent (Photo 3)! Unless large material is left, the slash may not last long enough for the new trees to grow tall enough to evade the deer. Additionally, deer and hare exclosures were built on 24 leave-top sites. Therefore, we can compare how the tree tops are functioning to an area we know that deer and hare can’t access. We won’t know the official results of all of these treatments until the trees are big enough to release from the deer browse zone (about 10 years for some species). However, the research partners are committed to the long-term monitoring to answer this important question.

Interestingly, research from other parts of the world suggests that tree tops function better at deterring deer when deer predators are in the vicinity. The thought is that predators (like wolves) change deer behavior in that deer avoid dense tangles, presumably because they are more vulnerable to being trapped. Our study will be able to document this effect in that we are recording deer and other wildlife use with remote cameras on our sites.

The “leave top” prescription is ugly, and reduces the amount of merchantable timber produced. However, if successful regeneration of these highly valuable northern hardwood forests is the result, then this is a sound investment. So, the next time you are walking through the Michigan woods and come across a site that looks ugly because of the amount of residual material left, remember that it may be part of this innovative research project to help produce a beautiful northern hardwood forest of the future.

This long-term study is being conducted in cooperation with Michigan State University, the Michigan DNR, the forest products industry, and Safari Club International, Michigan Involvement Committee. For more information, contact Gary Roloff (roloff@msu.edu) or Mike Walters (mwalters@msu.edu).

Photo 2: Heavily-browsed maple sprouts at the end of a leave top pile. About four feet into the pile are healthy, unbrowsed maple sprouts.

Photo 3: Persistent deer caught on camera.
Words We Should All Live By

By Rick A. Lucas, 
CF FAP Forester

Every day is a good day. But some days are just a bit better than others. Such was the case on Thursday, February 28th of this year. What started out as an average, mid-winter work day, ended with a sort of Steve Hartman, “On the Road” ending.

For those less familiar with Steve Hartman’s reporting with CBS News, his “On the Road” feature airs on Friday’s at the end of the evening news. The feature brings viewers moving stories from the unique people he encounters and the special places he visits as he travels around the country. The feature is a follow-up to his award-winning series, “Everybody Has a Story” and is hands down my favorite part of the news.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, the words “BE KIND” planted in conifers before me, on the screen, were the natural message. After showing my many years ago to the family calls, the “BE KIND Trees”. I have even gotten a doe while hunting from the letter “N” of what my father requested that some of his cremains be scattered in the letter “D” for Dad, Dwain, Doc and Dear. Love you Mom and Dad! My late mother would giggle at knowing that some of Dad’s smoking hot body was sprinkled in the sand on the property and we kept the soil from blowing and to send a wonderful message to all. I have greatly enjoyed watching the wonderful message grow over the last 50 plus years.

I have even gotten a doe while hunting from the letter “N” of what the family calls, the “BE KIND Trees”. My parents have passed on but their wonderful legacy continues to grow. My father requested that some of his cremains be scattered in the “BE KIND Trees”. My late mother would giggle at knowing that some of Dad’s smoking hot body was sprinkled in the letter “D” for Dad, Dwain, Doc and Dear. Love you Mom and Dad! And everyone, BE KIND! Words we should all live by.

The other task I wanted off my plate before departure, was our regular, short message post to Facebook. For some time now, the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts have been utilizing the online social network to further our mission. Sometimes, coming up with a timely FB message is challenging. Such was the case this morning.

My initial attempt to locate the Mecosta Township parcel in aerial view did not show the US-131 expressway, which, according to the plat book, flanked the east side of the 80 acres. This likely meant, I was too far west of my destination. To expedite my task, I turned on the infrared layer to differentiate the all green landscape. Upon doing so, my jaw dropped.

Before me, on the screen, were the words “BE KIND” planted in conifers many years ago. I have worked in Mecosta County for nearly 32 years and had never encountered this natural message. After showing my finding with office staff, I now knew what my FB message was for the day.

Prior to departing for my site visit, I posted to FB: “Words we should all live by......while preparing aerial photos for a site visit in western Mecosta County, I discovered where a thoughtful person planted red pine trees many years ago. I have worked in Mecosta County for nearly 32 years and had never encountered this natural message. After showing my finding with office staff, I now knew what my FB message was for the day.

Over the course of the next few days, the post would reach 15,588 people, be commented on by 41 family members and friends and be shared 134 times. Within minutes of leaving the office that morning for my site visit, we received a call from one of the children of the family responsible for the planting. She was so excited to see my post and eager to share more. What follows is her reply on FB to the posting verbatim: Brenda Cummings Schrandt- My family planted these trees!

My parents, Dwain (Bill, Doc, The Buffalo Doctor) and Jean Cummings had bought a large parcel of land in Stanwood, Michigan located in Mecosta County. In the early 1960’s, the Department of Natural Resources was encouraging planting seedlings. My father drove a Ford Bronco spelling out, “BE KIND” in a large area of sand on the property and we planted the seedlings in the two-track tire marks.

Our whole family, Mom and Dad, my brother Bruce 11 years old at the time, my sister Beth age 9, and me Brenda age 4 planted about 1,000 jack pine and scotch pines in the sand to keep the soil from blowing and to send a wonderful message to all. I have greatly enjoyed watching the wonderful message grow over the last 50 plus years.

I have even gotten a doe while hunting from the letter “N” of what the family calls, the “BE KIND Trees”. My parents have passed on but their wonderful legacy continues to grow. My father requested that some of his cremains be scattered in the “BE KIND Trees”. My late mother would giggle at knowing that some of Dad’s smoking hot body was sprinkled in the letter “D” for Dad, Dwain, Doc and Dear. Love you Mom and Dad! And everyone, BE KIND! Words we should all live by.

My other task I wanted off my plate before departure, was our regular, short message post to Facebook. For some time now, the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts have been utilizing the online social network to further our mission. Sometimes, coming up with a timely FB message is challenging. Such was the case this morning.

My initial attempt to locate the Mecosta Township parcel in aerial view did not show the US-131 expressway, which, according to the plat book, flanked the east side of the 80 acres. This likely meant, I was too far west of my destination. To expedite my task, I turned on the infrared layer to differentiate the all green landscape. Upon doing so, my jaw dropped.

Before me, on the screen, were the words “BE KIND” planted in conifers many years ago. I have worked in Mecosta County for nearly 32 years and had never encountered this natural message. After showing my finding with office staff, I now knew what my FB message was for the day.

Prior to departing for my site visit, I posted to FB: “Words we should all live by......while preparing aerial photos for a site visit in western Mecosta County, I discovered where a thoughtful person planted red pine trees many years ago to share a message with those having an aerial view. Thank-you for the kind words!”
Native Wildflowers, Grasses and Shrub Sale September 27th

Again this fall, native plant nursery, Go Grow Natives, will have native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs available at the Conservation Districts fall seedling distribution. Pre-orders will not be taken for this sale. Plants will be available to purchase at the Paris Park Fish Hatchery on Friday, September 27th, from 9 am to 4 pm.

Over thirty-five varieties of native wildflowers, grasses and woodland plants will be offered along with eighteen varieties of trees and shrubs. Find your favorites or select those that meet the specific needs for your location. Go Grow Natives nursery owner, Deb Montgomery, will be available to answer all your questions.

Come and choose from a wide assortment of wildflowers such as: Butterfly weed, Cardinal flower, Showy goldenrod, Foxglove beards tongue, Horsemint, Purple coneflower, Wild petunia, Rattle snake master and more. Or choose your favorite trees and shrubs such as Birches, Elderberry, Hazelnut, Sumac, Spice bush, Chokeberry and Wild cherry, to name just a few.

Fall is a great time to plant natives. For one, soil moisture gives them a head start to grow and initiate root growth. And two, because they are adapted to our climate, they do not need to be protected in winter. And don’t forget that our native wildlife, pollinators and beneficial insects all need native plants in order to survive. In the words of Dr. Doug Tallamy, author of “Bringing Nature Home”:

Unless we modify the places we live, work and play to meet not only our own needs but the needs of other species as well, nearly all species of wildlife native to the United States will disappear forever. This is not speculation.

– Dr. Doug Tallamy
Lake - Mecosta - Osceola Counties
Household Hazardous Waste Disposal Day

When: Saturday, October 12, 2019 • 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon

Where:
- Lake County: Wenger Pavilion, downtown Baldwin (behind Jones Ice Cream Parlor)
- Mecosta County: Fairgrounds (540 West Ave., Big Rapids)
- Osceola County: Road Commission North Facility, Tustin (13353 20 Mile Rd., Tustin)

Cost: No charge, but donations are appreciated.

Household Hazardous Waste are materials that, if disposed of incorrectly, can cause environmental damage by contaminating ground and surface waters, threatening human health and wildlife.

Items such as: Oil based paint products (NO LATEX PAINT), glue, adhesives, pesticides, fertilizers, mercury, household cleaners, used motor oil (see note below), florescent light bulbs, unused medication, gasoline and antifreeze, to name but a few.

Note: Used motor oil will only be accepted in 5 gallon containers or less. No 55 gallon drums.

Pre-registration is not required unless you are bringing over 200 lbs of waste for disposal. For a list of acceptable and non-acceptable items call Lake County MSU Extension at (231) 745-2732, Osceola-Lake Conservation District at (231) 465-8012 or Mecosta Conservation District at (231) 796-0909 Ext. 3, or go to our website at www.mecostacd.org or www.osceolalakecd.org.

This project is supported by the Mecosta and Osceola-Lake Conservation Districts, Lake, Mecosta and Osceola County MSU Extension, Michigan Water Stewardship “Clean Sweep” Program, local units of government, municipalities, businesses, organizations, foundations and individual donations.

MAEAP Launches Website Redesign

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) announced its new, redesigned website, www.MAEAP.org. The new site puts more focus on user experience by including a convenient top navigation, responsive design, and in-depth search capabilities.

“We’re very excited to launch the new site,” said Joe Kelpinski, MAEAP Program Manager. “Our responsibility is to provide the best customer service to our producers, partners, and stakeholders. This new site makes it easier for us to provide the information our customers need.”

MAEAP partnered with CiesaDesign, a Lansing-based company, to create a user-friendly site by implementing several new features, including a resource library, educational sessions, news, and even a “meet the verifiers” section.

Additional highlights about the new website include:
- Easier Navigation from desktop/mobile
- New Language/messaging throughout the site
- Testimonials – these personal stories can help a farm find one that is similar to their operation
- Educational videos – these are much easier to find on the new site, and a landowner can quickly find something that relates to them.
  - Click on the filter session tag to check out this feature.
- Request a Farm Visit – As soon as MAEAP receives a request, we forward it to the local conservation district.
- Subscribe to the MAEAP newsletter

For more information about MAEAP and to check out the new and improved website, visit www.MAEAP.org.

For additional information, contact Karen Ickes, Mecosta Conservation District MAEAP Technician at 231-796-0909 x, or Alex Svoboda, Osceola-Lake Conservation District MAEAP Technician at 231-465-8005.

About MAEAP:
MAEAP is a collaborative effort of farmers, commodity associations, universities, conservation districts, conservation and environmental groups, and state and federal agencies. Michigan conservation districts house technicians that provide technical assistance to assist farmers as they move through the MAEAP process toward verification. An average of 3,000 Michigan farmers attend educational programs annually. 10,500 Michigan farmers have started the verification process and over 5,000 verifications have taken place to date. MAEAP allows farmers to work toward verification at their own pace, best managing time and resources. The program recognizes four systems designed to help producers evaluate the environmental risks of their operations. Each system – Livestock, Farmstead, Cropping, and Forest, Wetlands and Habitat – examines a different aspect of a farm, as each has a different environmental impact. The four systems allow producers to comprehensively evaluate any or all aspects of their farm operations to mitigate environmental risks.