

**GOGEBIC CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**FY 08 ANNUAL REPORT**



Conservation Districts are often referred to as “gateways” in their local communities. They provide linkages between land managers and a host of conservation service providers that include state, federal and local governments, conservation organizations, and Internet resources.

Conservation Districts continually scan the needs of their local communities, work in partnership with others involved in conservation to set local priorities, and develop action plans to solve natural resource problems. The delivery of these efforts by Conservation Districts allows citizens to manage their private lands for a cleaner, healthier Michigan. It allows the public a point of access in their communities when questions arise on how to manage natural resources.

Your Gogebic Conservation District is a “unique” local unit of state government that utilizes state, federal and private sector resources to address any conservation concern. While sponsoring educational seminars and an annual tree sale, the Gogebic Conservation District also brings assistance and coordination on forestry and water quality issues, land use planning, and any other conservation concerns that our county residents may have.

The philosophy guiding all Conservation Districts is that conservation decisions should be made at the **local level**, by **local people**, with technical assistance provided by the District staff and partner agencies. Those partnering agencies include the Michigan Dept of Agriculture, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, National Association of Conservation Districts, USDA Farm Services Agency, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Ottawa National Forest, Gogebic County Board of Commissioners, Gogebic County Forestry and Parks, and other agencies where there are issues of mutual concern to which beneficial solutions can be achieved.

The Gogebic Conservation District cooperates closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) which was formerly the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the primary federal agency that works with private landowners to help them conserve, maintain and improve their natural resources. The agency emphasizes voluntary, science-based conservation; technical assistance; partnerships; incentive-based programs; and cooperative problem solving at the community level. Thomas Berndt is our NRCS District Conservationist with an office located in Kingsford, MI. He is available to landowners for technical assistance and providing direction for financial support in various conservation programs. You can reach Tom at ( 906) 774-1550 ext 108.

On June 22, 1961, citizens of Gogebic County organized and formed the Gogebic Soil Conservation District to promote soil and water conservation and better land use within the District. Among some of the people first involved in the District were John Hautanen, Jack Koivisto, Carl Martinson, Rev. Rudolph Kempaninen, William Kantala, Andrew Hendrickson, Paul Cook, Edward Backman, and Andrew Bednar.

We are now known as the Gogebic Conservation District. Currently serving on the five member Board of Directors are David Harmon, Chairman; Dan Perotti, Secretary-Treasurer; Marvin LaGrew, Robert Fredrickson, and Mary Powell. The Directors all serve on a volunteer basis and receive no monetary compensation other than mileage reimbursement for meetings.

The Board is grateful for the financial assistance from the Gogebic County Board of Commissioners (\$3,000) and the Michigan Department of Agriculture (\$11,605). As we tightened our belt when decreasing revenue became apparent, we no longer have a paid administrator, and rely on volunteer assistance from our directors. The annual tree sale also produces additional income to keep our “lights on”. The Gogebic Conservation District hopes to continue conservation programs and expand its reach through new programs and community education initiatives, but without adequate operational funding sources, these goals have become increasingly harder to achieve.

This past year has brought a change in office location to the Gogebic Conservation District. In order to better serve our residents, we moved to the Natural Resources Center at 500 N. Moore Street in Bessemer, MI.

We are delighted to be under the same roof as Michigan State University Extension and the Gogebic County Forestry and Parks.

Our telephone number is (906) 663-4512. Our current office hours are on Friday - 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Unless otherwise posted, monthly meetings are on the second Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room (lower level) of the Natural Resources Center. The meetings are open to the public and we welcome you to attend to learn more of what is happening in Gogebic County or to make your conservation concerns known.



Gogebic County Natural Resources Center  
Bessemer, Michigan

The election of one person to fill a vacant four year term Board position will take place at the annual meeting on January 29, 2009. Ronald J. Zaleski from Bessemer has filed a petition to have his name on the ballot for that vacancy. There were no other petitions filed.

In accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan, persons who are of legal age and are a resident of this District, and can demonstrate residency by one (1) piece of identification, are eligible to vote in this election. Absentee ballots may be requested prior to the meeting by calling 663-4512 or writing or visiting the Gogebic Conservation District, 500 N Moore, Bessemer, MI 49911.

This year we have initiated a “Conservationist of the Year” award. The Board wanted to recognize the valuable contributions an individual or organization made towards conservation and stewardship in Gogebic County. The “Conservationist of the Year” will be revealed January 29 during the annual meeting.

Matt Johnson, Director of the Northern Michigan office for Governor Granholm, was our guest speaker at last year’s annual meeting. Governor Granholm wants Michigan to be a leader for the country in solutions to reduce global warming, create jobs, and provide alternative and renewal energy. Matt’s presentation gave an overview of the many challenges facing Michigan and how we can best meet them.

We are pleased to have as our main speaker, David E. Young, author of “True Bear Tales”, and retired Porcupine Mountain Ranger. We know you will enjoy David’s stories of the amazing and amusing predicaments involving campers and our northwoods bruin!

The Gogebic Conservation District will be launching a website in 2009 to enable our residents another way to access information, stay current on the District and programs, and contact us with any concerns. As we strive to serve as a conservation resource for our community, it is imperative that we strengthen our relationships with interested partners and stakeholders. In 2009, the Gogebic Conservation District endeavors to maintain and develop those partnerships vital to meeting the new challenges ahead.



Members of the Gogebic Conservation District Board, along with Mark Bale and Dave Anderson from the Gogebic County Forestry and Parks Dept, will be in the area schools with a celebration of Arbor Day in April 2009. Educating our youth in good stewardship and conservation practices is part of our goals.

Plans are in the works for another tree sale in early May. Approximately 8,000 trees and shrubs were purchased last year. We hope you support this important fundraising event while enhancing your property. Contact our office for our spring tree sale catalog.

*“Acts of creation are ordinarily reserved for gods and poets. To plant a pine, one need only a shovel.” - Aldo Leopold*

Your Gogebic Conservation District serves over 17,000 residents and covers 1102 square miles in land areas. Conservation challenges are even greater today with resources ever dwindling. It may not seem like a gift from one or two in the community could make a difference, but that donation combined with others help the Gogebic Conservation District meet its goals. Consider supporting the Gogebic Conservation District by contributing to one of the levels below:

Friend	\$ 25.00	Checks payable to Gogebic Conservation District
Donor	50.00	Mail to: Gogebic Conservation District
Patron	100.00	500 N. Moore St
Sponsor	500.00	Bessemer, MI 49911
Benefactor	1,000.00	
Other	_____	Your financial and volunteer support is always greatly appreciated!

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” - Margaret Mead*

Did you know ~

The Gogebic Conservation District has a no-till drill for rent. There are many benefits to planting with a no-till drill ~ decreased soil erosion, reduced soil compaction, use less fuel and labor than conventional planting plus the soil retains moisture longer. For more information on renting the no-till drill, call 663-4512. There is a minimal rental charge and contract agreement to sign.

The District also maintains a library of reference books on a wide range of conservation topics. These books are available for loan to our residents at no charge.

Also interesting to know ~

The Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps’ work from 1933 to 1942 had 102,814 participants - eighth highest among all the states and occupied an average of 57 camps annually.

Equally impressive are the 484 million trees that were planted. More than twice as many as any other state! They spent 140,000 man-days fighting forest fires, planted 156 million fish and constructed 7,000 miles of truck trails, 504 bridges and 222 buildings. They revitalized the Michigan State Park system, established Isle Royale National Park, and built campgrounds in Michigan’s national forests.

The Civilian Conservation Corps appropriation was defeated in the House on June 5, 1942. Remains of a camp are still visible at the Norrie Park location in Ironwood, Michigan.

One of our District projects that has been a “work in progress” is fish habitat restoration on the Black River with Director Dan Perotti overseeing. Working with Dick Bolen, Gogebic County Forester, a volunteer team was formed. They observed blockages disrupting and inhibiting the fish passage both upstream and downstream. The trout habitat was degraded and trout population reduced. The blockage has since been greatly minimized and hopefully a healthy native population of brook trout will be restored. The stream will continue to be monitored.

Director Marvin LaGrew is active with the Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council (UP RC&D) in exploring local possibilities for woody biomass as renewable energy source through the Biomass Utilization & Restoration Network (BURN UP). For more information on woody biomass, visit [www.upwoodybiomass.org](http://www.upwoodybiomass.org)

Other activities held by the District (with partial funding from the Michigan State University Extension) included an apple tree and shrub pruning workshop. Michael Erdman was the facilitator for the workshop. A roadside cleanup with recycling of aluminum cans was also completed.

Although state funding has been eliminated for the Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) in the districts for several years, we continue to search for funding for this valuable program for our residents and will assist our landowners to the best of our ability with their forestry concerns.

**Gogebic Conservation District Revenue/Expense**

<b>Revenue:</b>	State grant	11,605		
	Gogebic Co	3,000		
	Tree Sale	15,120		
	<u>Other</u>	<u>957</u>		
<b>Total:</b>			\$	<b>30,682</b>
<b>Expense:</b>	Operations	15,504		
	Tree Sale	10,356		
	<u>Other</u>	<u>1,320</u>		
<b>Total:</b>			\$	<b>27,180</b>

(Data is for October 1, 2007 to September 30, 2008 and is subject to audit)