

SUMMER 2023

SCHOOLCRAFT CONSERVATION DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Schoolcraft Conservation District's (SCD) quarterly newsletter! As we grow as an organization and expand our staff, we hope this newsletter will serve as an opportunity to increase our community engagement and keep the residents of Schoolcraft County informed about the events, programs, and services we offer. We're passionate about our work in resource management, habitat improvement, scholarship and grant endowment, soil health, forestry, education and outreach, and so much more; we want the people we serve to celebrate this passion with us.

If you're interested in keeping up to date with newsletter issues as we release them, please consider subscribing at www.schoolcraftcd.org/newsletter.

We're excited to share our journey toward a more sustainable future with you. Thank you for being here to walk alongside us.



Inside This Issue:

UPCOMING EVENTS

Page 2

TREE SALE

Page 3

CONSERVATION GRANT PROJECTS

Page 4

DEER HABITAT IMPROVEMENT GRANT

Page 5

WARBLER WONDERLAND

Page 6

MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF MEMBER

Page 7

BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPCOMING ELECTION

Page 8

PLANTING A POLLINATOR GARDEN

Page 9



June 13 | Composting Workshop

The SCD will be hosting a composting workshop at 5 pm in the Manistique Community Garden, located on the corner of Mackinac Ave and Wolf St. Attendance is free, and participants will receive their own complimentary composting bin!



June 22 | Native Plant Gardens Workshop

A native plant gardens workshop will be held at 6 pm in the pollinator garden just outside the SCD office (100 N Cedar St, Manistique). Join us to learn about how to start a garden that will serve both you and local wildlife alike.



July 14 & 15 | Scrap Tire Collection

Do you have any old tires lying around? We want to recycle them! Drop them off at Zellar Sanitation (125 Chippewa Ave Manistique) on June 14 between 12 and 4 pm or on June 15 between 8 am and noon.



August 17 | Annual Meeting & Election

We'll be holding our board of directors' elections during our annual meeting this August. Join us in person at 6 pm at the Inwood Township Hall (1040 Co Rd 442, Cooks) to hear about our district's latest activities and vote for our next directors. You can also get in touch with us to receive an absentee ballot. Every vote counts!



August 23 | Native Plant Sale

Native plant sale pickup will be held in the SCD office on Wednesday, August 23 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at the Manistique Farmer's Market (180 N Maple St). Plants can be bought the day of or ordered in advance by calling the SCD office at (906) 286-2890.

The SCD held our annual tree sale the last week of April to great success! Over 160 orders were placed and roughly 16,000 individual trees sold. As one could guess, preparing so many trees for pickup is a big undertaking, and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of the Hiawatha Behavioral Health Center who partnered with us for the first time this year. A huge thank you to the hardworking folks from Hiawatha, including Dan, Danny, Evan, Josh, Kelly, Michelle, Phil, and Valerie.

Additional thanks to Hiawatha for letting us use their garage, as well as to Schoolcraft County Fairgrounds for the use of their barn.



Missed this year's tree sale? Consider ordering a native plant from us during our upcoming sale! Orders can be made by calling our office.



The SCD is excited to announce this year's Conservation Grant projects: the Manistique Community Garden and Ross Lake Fish Passage Improvement.

The residents of Manistique are getting a new community garden following a \$4,000 grant award from the SCD. The garden has been a collaborative effort of the City of Manistique, Women's Club, First United Methodist Church, Builder's Club, Girl Scouts, and Scouts. It's meant to give interested persons a place to harvest their own foods while providing additional opportunities.

The Manistique Community Garden (MCG) Committee is dedicated to ensuring accessibility for all. Along with 48 regular four by eight beds, several raised beds are available for those with limited mobility. The garden is also adjacent to a well, giving gardeners easy access to free water. Beds are being offered on a first come first serve basis. Interested persons can reserve a space through the MCG's Facebook page. Questions and donation/volunteer inquiries can be directed to Sherri Krause at (906) 341-7601.

The SCD is also excited to announce our other grant recipient, the Schoolcraft County Road Commission, which will be using their \$1,000 award to improve a stream crossing in northern Schoolcraft County. The Commission plans to replace deteriorating culverts at the crossing and build two new overflow culverts nearby.

Construction is set to begin in August. Alongside improving road safety by limiting potential flooding, the renovations are intended to reduce soil erosion, improve the

fishing passage between Ross Lake and its connecting stream, and foster recreational fishing in the lake and stream.



Newly planted fruit trees in the Manistique Community Garden, donated by SCD Manager Ashley Reitter

Credit: Michelle Guzzetta



For the sixth year running, the SCD received a Deer Habitat Improvement Partnership Initiative (DHIP) grant, which will be used to help maintain deer habitats on private land plots across Schoolcraft County. We began our work on DHIP projects in 2017, partnering with local landowners to plant a variety of wildlife shrubs and trees.

Thanks to the warm weather, we've already started going out to monitor and update these previously established areas. We're currently replacing dead trees with fruit trees and deciduous and coniferous saplings, as well as increasing the number of trees at certain sites. Our monitoring and maintenance will be an ongoing project throughout the summer. Our goal is to continue enhancing conditions for deer and other wildlife for years to come.



INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT!

We've seen a lot of spotted knapweed, an invasive species that poisons other plants and reduces biodiversity, during our field work. See the links below to learn about how you can identify and control any suspected spotted knapweed you come across.

deschutes.org/sites/default/files/fileattachments/road/page/1690/spotted_knapweed.pdf

nwcb.wa.gov/pdfs/Knapweed-Control_Whatcom.pdf



We recently held our first Warbler Wonderland, which we hope to repeat in upcoming years. The weekend-long event included guided morning bird hikes to a number of local places, including the Manistique Boardwalk along Lake Michigan's shores, Kirtland's Warbler habitats, and forest areas. We had fun marking off all the birds we saw--18 warblers in addition to 60 other birds--along the way! Later in the day, we returned to Indian Lake State Park, where we listened to presenters Michael Palin of the American Bird Conservancy and Joe Kaplin of Common Coast Research & Conservation.

Over 30 species of warblers are known to spend summers in Michigan. These little songbirds come in a beautiful array of colors, making the wetlands and woods they inhabit come alive with a medley of yellows, reds, and blues. It's always a delight to see them, and if you weren't able to join us this time around, we hope you'll be able to attend our Warbler Wonderland next spring.



In April, the SCD staff welcomed Sara Solberg, who will be serving as the district's new Communications and Administrative Coordinator, to our team. Sara is coming to us from Ishpeming, where she and her family have lived for the past fifteen years. She received her bachelor's in English Writing with a minor in Environmental Studies from NMU, where she went on to earn her master's in Creative Writing.

Sara has strong opinions about octopuses (superb), Marvel movies (mixed), and Monopoly (which she maintains nobody since the dawn of Hasbro has ever been the better for playing). Her favorite people are dogs. She is passionate about conservation and sustainability, and thrilled to be part of an organization working toward these goals.

As SCD's Communications and Administrative Coordinator, Sara will be helping to increase the district's outreach initiatives, as well as lead this summer's Boat Decontamination project. Her goal is to increase community awareness of services offered by the district and strengthen community engagement through social media, educational events, and outreach programs. She can be reached at sara.solberg@macd.org.



Sara's to the left

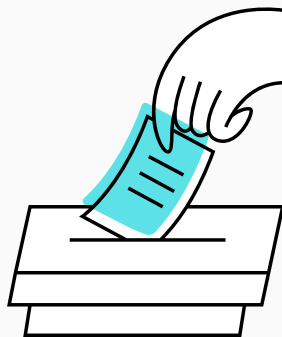
Our board of directors is made up of five members who are elected by the local community.

In addition to attending monthly board meetings, directors oversee the management of funds and budgeting, hire and oversee district staff, and develop policies and regulations to be implemented by staff. They play an important role in the district's functioning and are an opportunity for community members to get involved in local conservation and enact positive changes for generations to come.

Several of our director positions will be up for election this August, with nominating petitions due on June 16. Petition forms require signatures from five Schoolcraft County residents and are available in our office. Anyone who wants to learn more about running is encouraged to contact District Manager Ashley Reitter at (906) 286-2890. We'd love to hear from you!

Current Board Members

Anthony Wright | Chairperson
Deb Le Blanc | Vice-chair
G. Tom White | Treasurer
Brad Hayes | Member
Kipp Beaudoin | Member
William Banzhaf | Associate Member



CURRENT BOARD PRIORITIES

Invasive species: promote the control of invasive species and facilitate projects that directly control them.

Recycling: promote recycling and facilitate projects that increase recycling in the county.

Wildlife Management: promote the concept of wildlife management and facilitate projects that improve management for both game and non-game species.

Rare and endangered species: promote the preservation of rare and endangered species and facilitate projects that directly affect them.

Agriculture: promote agricultural activities and facilitate services to existing agriculture community as well as facilitating projects that increase agricultural activity.

Forestry: promote forest management and facilitate services and projects that result in well managed private forest lands.

The warm weather is here, and with it, the pollinators are starting to emerge. As you plant your garden and prepare for the growing season, consider adding a space for pollinators as well.

Pollinators are vital to both our ecosystems and us, but they are facing an increasing number of challenges due to habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, pesticide exposure, decreasing pollen and nectar sources, and climate change. As a result, many species of bees, butterflies, birds, and bats have seen population declines in recent years.

The good news is that you can make a difference right in your own backyard. Pollinator gardens tend to consist of native plants which provide food and habitat for pollinating wildlife--and they're beautiful to look at as an added bonus! Some steps to think about as you get started:

Choose your location. Ideally, your pollinator garden will be in a place that is sheltered from the wind but still in direct sunlight for at least a few hours each day. Remember that even a small space can still be hugely beneficial!

Choose your plants. Native plants are well-adapted to the local environment and provide the most suitable food sources for native pollinators. Select a variety of flowering plants that bloom at different times throughout the growing season to provide a continuous food supply. Aim for a diverse mix of flowers with different shapes and colors.

Mix it up. Pollinators need more than just flowers for their survival. If you can, try to incorporate a variety of plant heights, including trees, shrubs, and groundcover. Deadwood or brush piles can offer habitat for certain pollinators, while leaving some areas of bare ground can benefit insects like ground-nesting bees.

Provide a source of water. Even insects need to drink! Attract pollinators by putting some shallow water, such as in a bird bath or basin, near your garden.

Visit schoolcraftcd.org/pollinator-habitats for more resources.

DID YOU KNOW?

Roughly 85% of flowering plants and 35% of the world's food crops depend on pollinators to reproduce.

