



TREE SALE—A GROWING SUCCESS

by Tami Anderson, Administrator

For over forty years the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District has been providing reasonably priced, quality trees to the citizens of Houghton and Keweenaw counties.

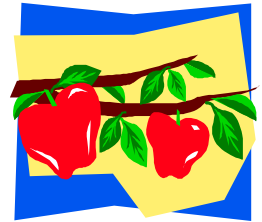
This year was no exception. One hundred and sixty five orders were filled this year, sixty percent over last year.

The biggest change to this year's sale was the increase in variety of plant species made available. Several types of flowering shrubs, blueberry plants, and cherry trees were added this year.

Of the 30,000 plus seedlings sold by the district this year,

28,000 were a variety of conifers, 955 red oak, 350 highbush blueberries, 75 tart cherry trees, 155 apple trees, and nearly 1,000 various berry producing shrubs.

In addition to the new tree species offered this year, a wide array of conservation related products were added to our order form. Items such as native seeds, books, brochures, planting bars, rooting gel, and more were made available. The addition of these products was favorably met. Many of you were impressed with the native seeds we purchased from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts and the Borealis Seed Co.



Although apple and cherry trees arrived late this year, their quality was well worth the wait.

Tree sale products such as the Michigan native perennial wildflower seeds, Tree Guard deer repellent, Terra -Sorb rooting gel, Michigan native plant brochures and more are still available. For availability and prices, call or stop by the district office.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Tree Sale Summary
- Customer Survey Results
- Conservation Districts-An Anniversary Series
- Watershed Funding Report
- Torch Lake Project Report
- Enclosure: Natural Resource Public Survey

50th ANNIVERSARY SERIES

The Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District celebrates with a series of articles exploring Michigan Conservation Districts and the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District.

1951-2001

CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

by Tami Anderson, Administrator

Out of the 165 customers who placed orders this year, 64 of you filled out our survey. Thank you for your feedback.

How did you hear about our annual spring sale?

Newspaper advertisement was the primary means by which most of you had heard about the tree sale. Our quarterly newsletter and other category (friends, neighbor, relatives) came in a close second.

What types of trees and/or products would you like to

see us add next year?

No new products were mentioned, but we did receive a lot of feedback on the species of trees you would like us to add. The overwhelming request was for more berries and fruit trees. The most unusual request? Banana!

What would you like to see us drop from the order form?

Only one person requested we drop anything and that was oak. But don't worry, we have no plans of dropping oak any

time soon.

Would you access the order form from our new web site when it is ready?

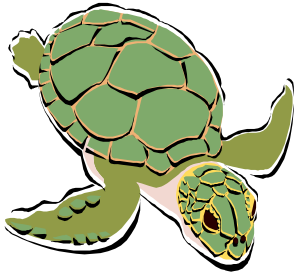
Yes-40; No-24. This response was certainly a relief to our Administrator who will be creating a new web site with an expected launch date of late August.

Suggestions for improvement?

Some of our customers were
Continued on page four.....

Michigan's Conservation Districts

by Tami Anderson, Administrator



A Conservation District is a local unit of state government organized by the people within the District.

As such, it is a locally controlled resource management agency, created by concerned landowners and administered by a publicly elected board of directors.

Many people ask me "What is the Conservation District?" In response to this frequently asked question, the following is the first of several articles on Michigan Conservation Districts and your local Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District.

Conservation Districts and How They Operate

A Conservation District is a local unit of state government organized by the people within the District boundaries under provisions of The Soil Conservation District Law, Act 297 of Public Act of 1937, as amended. As such, it is a locally controlled resource management agency, created by concerned landowners and administered by a publicly elected board of directors. In 1994, the Conservation District Law was made part of The Compiled Environmental Code. It is now Part 93 of Act 451 of 1994, as amended.

The locally elected five-member board of directors makes all decisions regarding the District's programs and activities. The directors hire qualified staff to conduct and

carry out the programs and activities that have been approved. These programs provide technical assistance, information, and education to assist people in the District to properly manage their natural resources. In Michigan, there are 82 Conservation Districts which are generally organized along county boundaries.

The Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District board of directors were all elected by the public at the district's annual meeting. The current board of directors consists of Chairman David Heath, Chassell; Vice-Chairman Thomas Tervo, Chassell; Treasurer Gary Palosaari, Chassell; Secretary Mark Weber, Fulton; and Marsha Klein, Calumet. The District staff consists of a part-time Administrator, Tami Anderson who manages all the operational aspects of the district; Jim Sweeting, Forester/Wildlife Biologist managing the Cooperative Resource Management Initiative (CRMI) project sponsored by funding from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, the Michigan DNR and local districts; and Bruce Petersen, District

Conservationist whose position is funded by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, (NRCS-USDA).

Funding Sources

Conservation District funding includes state appropriations, county and other local governmental appropriations, and locally initiated and conducted fund raising activities.

The Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District funding sources include a twenty thousand dollar annual operating budget from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, profits derived from the annual spring tree sale, and any competitive grant funding that might be awarded to the district for a specific project. Our total operating budget for this fiscal year 2000-2001 is approximately twenty-nine thousand dollars.

In my next article on conservation districts, I will examine the history of our district as we celebrate our fiftieth anniversary.

1951-2001

The Traprock and Otter River Watershed Grants An Update

by Bruce Petersen, District Conservationist, NRCS

The Traprock Watershed

The Traprock River watershed is located in northern Houghton County and is about 46 square miles in size. The Traprock is the main watershed that outlets in the northern end of Torch Lake, a Superfund Site and an AOC "area of concern". The water

leaving Torch Lake finds its way into Portage Lake and ultimately Lake Superior.

The Traprock River Watershed was heavily impacted by historic copper mining activities. Those activities' waste by-products are the pulverized basalt bedrock known as "stamp sands". The

sands in this watershed were hydraulically pumped in to the watercourse and have over the past hundred years or so continued to erode downstream, greatly affecting all the organisms/animals that reside in the Scales Creek/Traprock River watercourse.

Continued on next page...



The Traprock River Watershed was heavily impacted by historic copper mining activities.

The Traprock and Otter River Watershed Grants ***Update continued...***

Continued from page two... The Houghton/Keweenaw Conservation District working with the USDA – NRCS and Steve Albee, previously employed as the Traprock River Watershed Manager, submitted a grant proposal to fund further work in this watershed. The grant proposal was submitted under the State of Michigan's Clean Michigan Initiative – Clean Water Grants (CMI) in November of 2000. Initially, the grant application submitted by the District was met with a favorable response from the DEQ's Surface Water Quality Division. To date there has not been a grant award or a negative response concerning this grant proposal. We continue to wait on a funding outcome.

If this proposal were to be funded it would prove to be very beneficial for area sportsmen, landowners, users in the watershed, as well as the Torch Lake Superfund Site.

The Otter River Watershed

The Otter River Watershed located in the central part of Houghton County is about 166 square miles in size and is a sub-watershed of the Sturgeon River. Presently, the Otter has a well organized Watershed Council complete with by-laws. The council is very involved with numerous public education outreach activities. The Watershed Council has partnered with MTU, the USDA-NRCS, WUPPDR, the Townships within the watershed, the DNR and the

Houghton/Keweenaw Conservation District in an effort to hire a full-time Watershed Manager.

With our initial grant funding attempt submitted in August of 2000, the Otter River Watershed Council learned a great deal about how to become more competitive for future CMI State of Michigan grant dollars. The Watershed Council will submit another application for CMI funding in June of this year in an effort to fund a full time Watershed Project Manager for the Otter River. It is our hope that in this very competitive grant arena, the Conservation District in cooperation with the Watershed Council will be successful in their request for funding.



If this proposal were to be funded it would prove to be very beneficial for area sportsmen, landowners, users in the watershed, as well as the Torch Lake Superfund Site.

Torch Lake Superfund Project Moves to Mason Sands

by Gary Aho, Project Manager

The year 2001 construction season, which is expected to begin in early June, will be the third for the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Region 5-funded project designed to reduce potential hazards from mining tailings left in the area around Torch Lake. This is also the third season construction has been under the direction of the local USDA NRCS office.

The basic treatment for the Torch Lake area is covering the exposed sands, tailings and slags with clean fill, preparing adequate drainage and erosion controls and seeding the new soils with vegetation.

In 1999, approximately 110 acres were covered and seeded

at Lake Linden and another 144 acres were treated at Hubbell/Tamarack City in 2000.

A total of about 240 additional acres of the Mason Sands are expected to be completed by the end of 2001, bringing the total acreage to approximately 490 by year's end. This will leave about 200 acres to be treated over seven different designated sections of the Torch Lake area in the next several years.

The 240 acres scheduled to be worked on this season is the largest single segment in the project. Designs and specifications for the work, which will be on property owned by Lakeshore Estates and Osceola township, are

complete. Sixty seven final bid packets were mailed to prospective contractors on March 28, 2001. A site showing was held on April 12th. The opening of completed bid packets took place on May 11th.

Construction this season is likely to be the most visual, running the length of Highway M26 for more than a mile. Although many final plans depend on the location of the selected borrow pit for this segment of the project, public highways for trucking soil may be used extensively for the first time this year.

For further information on future construction activities or the bidding process contact Gary Aho at 906-482-0360.



The 240 acres scheduled to be worked on this season is the largest single segment in the projected project.



Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District

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TREE SALE SURVEY RESULTS ***Feedback helps the District plan for the future***



Survey results provide us the information we need to make decisions about the future of our tree sale. The public's participation in our decision making process is an essential ingredient to good service.

Continued from page one.....
very pleased with the entire tree sale process. Thank you to the many people who provided us positive feedback about the tree sale. Some of their responses were: "Really good service, Thanks!", "I think the tree sale is fine the way it is.", "You do a very good job." and "Pick-up was convenient and quick—Good job!". A few people had more specific comments to share with us. Some of these were: "Advertise more" "More advance publicity", and "Have more quantity available". These specific suggestions are

especially helpful in identifying areas needing improvement.

New Web Site Will Address Communication Concerns

Several of you asked for more frequent communication from our office. We hope our quarterly newsletter will help to meet that need. The District has received a small grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture to create and maintain a new district web site. We hope to have the site available to you by late August. Our web site will be frequently updated with current issues of interest, conservation events or meetings in the area, products

for sale through our office, links to other conservation related web sites, our quarterly newsletter and a schedule of district board meetings.

*If you did not have an opportunity to complete one of our surveys, please call the office to request one.

NOTICE: If you have not updated your new 911 mailing address with the district office, please call us now to do so. Thank you!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Five Minutes of your time is needed to help give your conservation district the direction it needs to address area natural resource issues in our community.

The Conservation District wants to know what you think are the natural resource issues effecting our two counties. Please read the letter below and complete and return the enclosed survey. When you have completed the survey, simply fold in half with the district address visible, affix postage, tape or staple closed and mail back to us. Thank you for your participation.

Dear Houghton/Keweenaw resident,

Given your interest in the area's natural resources, we are seeking your input into the development of the District's long range plan. Although we have a number of effective resource management programs in place, we do not pretend that we are addressing all the resource needs in Houghton and Keweenaw counties, nor do we feel we have identified, much less prioritized, all those needs. Therefore, we are interested in hearing your comments on local natural resource issues to better develop our district's long range plan.

Moreover, the Michigan Legislature, through the Michigan Department of Agriculture, has asked conservation districts to serve as local "gateways" to resource management. The State envisions districts as acting as clearinghouses for resource management information and for referrals to agencies or businesses that can best meet landowners' resource management needs. We are interested in your suggestions as to how we can best utilize our "gateway" role to enhance our service to the public.

Our staff and board of directors thank you for your participation in our attempt to better serve the people of Houghton and Keweenaw counties.

Sincerely,

Tami Anderson
Administrator



HOUGHTON KEWEENAW CONSERVATION DISTRICT Public Survey

Defining the Conservation District:

1. What do you believe is the purpose of the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District?

Continued on next two pages.....

Identifying the Issues

2A. Among the natural resource issues categorized below, how would you rate the impact each of these issues will have on Houghton and Keweenaw counties in the near future? Please place an “X” in the appropriate block next to each concern listed.

<u>NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS</u>	Very Important	Important	Not Important	No Opinion
<p><u>WATER QUALITY CONCERNS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil erosion with resulting sedimentation of lakes and streams • Protection of Lake Superior water quality 				
<p><u>LAND USE CONCERNS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of residential building along the Lake Superior shoreline • The breakup of large blocks of forested land—fragmentation • Maintaining public access to lakes and streams 				
<p><u>FOREST MANAGEMENT & WILDLIFE CONCERNS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timber Harvesting methods • Gradual decline of young forests (such as aspen) as a component of our forest landscape • The impact of white tailed deer population on forest regeneration & plant diversity • The spread of non-native (exotic) plant and animal species. • The loss of grassland areas due to decreasing agriculture and the resulting loss of bird species diversity 				

2B. In the space below, please feel free to elaborate on your concerns regarding the above natural resource issues. Enclose additional sheets of paper as needed.

3. What other natural resource issues do you think need to be addressed in Houghton Keweenaw counties?

4. What type of future plans are you presently making as a citizen/landowner in response to the natural resource issues identified in questions #2 and #3 above?

5. If you are a representative of a natural resource organization in the area, how is your organization responding to these natural resource issues?

6. How effective do you think the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District is in addressing natural resource issues in Houghton/Keweenaw counties?

7. In what ways do you think the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District could become a more effective and active participant in addressing natural resource issues in our area?

8. In your viewpoint, what current trends in government regulation/policy at the federal, state, and local levels (permitting policies, game management, funding levels, etc.) will have an impact on resource management in the future?

9. In response to these trends in governmental policy/regulation, what activities would you suggest the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District plan for in the future.



**Houghton Keweenaw
Conservation District**

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