

# 2009 Annual Report



BARRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

March, 2010

## Thornapple River Restoration Project Keeps Growing



An aerial view of the former Nashville Mill Pond area, post-dam removal.

In 2009, Barry Conservation District undertook its biggest project to date, the Thornapple River Restoration Project, which removed the Nashville Dam on the Thornapple River and Maple Hill Dam on Butternut Creek. With technical and engineering assistance from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (now DNRE) as well as grant support through the Inland Fisheries Grant program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Ser-

vice and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the project totaled over \$600,000. The District enlisted contractors from Barry, Eaton and Ionia Counties to provide stone, fill, excavation and landscaping for the project. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act reporting indicates that 2.5 FTE jobs were retained by the project.

The project included extensive monitoring of water quality, aquatic habitat, fish, mussels and vegetation. Students from Grand Valley State University and Olivet College took part in the monitoring efforts along with District staff, DNRE and other volunteers. Monitoring will continue into 2012 to determine the effects of the dam

removals.

The Thornapple River Floodplain Restoration Project will begin this spring along the banks of the former Nashville Mill Pond area. With funding from the FishAmerica Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the District will provide training, landscape planning and native plant materials to help at least thirteen landowners create natural vegetative **buffers along the river's floodplain.**

With funding from Barry County Parks and Recreation Board, the District will also help the Village of Nashville replace the Middle St. boat launch in 2010.

## We Need Your Online Vote!

<http://www.rivernetwork.org/forms/votemillercoorsgrantscontest2010>

The Thornapple River Watershed Council, in partnership with the Barry Conservation District, has been chosen as one of 8 finalists to receive a \$25,000 grant from MillerCoors and the River Network.

If awarded, we will use the

funds to help one local farmer develop an agricultural demonstration site for soil erosion reduction along Quaker Brook, just south of the Village of Nashville.

We need your help to bring this project to the Thornapple River Watershed. Please

vote online! The finalist with the most votes will win the \$25,000 grant. Voting is open from March 1– March 26. Vote for the *Thornapple River Watershed Council* at the address above, then share it with all of your email pals!

*Each year, the Barry*

*Conservation District*

*Board of Directors*

*develops an annual*

*plan of work based*

*on its assessment of*

**Barry County's long**

*range resource needs*

*and concerns. The*

*plan of work priori-*

*tizes action items*

*based on program*

*support, public input*

*and community re-*

*sources. The Dis-*

**trict's Annual Report**

*summarizes activities*

*undertaken in 2009*

*and those planned*

*for 2010*

# 2009 Annual Report

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## USDA-NRCS Provides Conservation Assistance



**With the mission of “Helping People Help the Land,”** the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides products and services that enable people to be good **stewards of the Nation’s soil,** water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. Our locally-based NRCS staff works directly with farmers, ranchers, and others to provide technical and financial conservation assistance. Our guiding principles are service, partnership, and technical excel-

lence.

In 2009, the Barry County NRCS staff worked with over 50 clients on new and existing conservation projects. Over 3200 acres of new conservation projects were planned on both agricultural and non-agricultural land. Existing projects accounted for 4000 acres of improvements to soil and water quality. Wildlife habitat was also created and maintained with a total reported number of 1400 acres. These pro-

jects accounted for over \$400,000 in conservation cost assistance.

A new Farm Bill Program Signup period has just been completed. Conservation plans were written for over 20 new applicants, and requests for assistance are being received every day. If you are interested in assistance for conservation projects, please call the NRCS office at 269.948.8038 ext 3.

SPRING TREE  
SALE ORDERS  
ARE BEING  
ACCEPTED  
THROUGH  
MARCH 26. PICK  
UP DATES ARE  
APRIL 16-17 AT  
CHARLTON PARK

## District Moves Forward Despite State Budget Cuts

Despite the loss of state funding in 2010, the Barry Conservation District will continue its annual programs and activities in 2010. The Barry County community continues to help reforestation efforts through purchasing trees from the District. Spring and fall tree sales, which provide low-cost trees and shrubs for reforestation and backyard

habitat development, exceeded 33,500 plants in 2009. In addition, 300 trees were donated to schools and businesses to support Arbor Day and Earth Day celebrations. District staff and volunteers annually provide natural resource-focused presentations, classroom visits and workshops for schools, clubs and organizations throughout

the county. Our education programs reached over 600 students and 260 adults in Barry County last year. In addition, staff provided on-site assistance to 121 landowners and responded to over 2000 in-office or phone queries about natural resource concerns, programs and events.



The Michigan Water Stewardship Program unveiled its new logo in December, 2009.

## MGSP: New Name, New Logo—Same Great Service!

**The District’s Barry-**Eaton Groundwater Stewardship Program has a new name for 2010, the Michigan Water Stewardship Program (MWSP). The Michigan Department of Agriculture also unveiled a new program logo in December, 2009 (see left).

The Barry-Eaton program has

a new local face, as well - Rachel Dennis is now providing on-farm assistance in reducing water contamination risks for small, large and hobby farms. The MWSP also prepares farms for certification through the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP).

For more information or to schedule an appointment, please contact Rachel Dennis, Groundwater Technician for Eaton and Barry Counties at 517-543-5848 ext. 5 or email [ra-chel.dennis@mi.nacdn.net](mailto:ra-chel.dennis@mi.nacdn.net).

## High Banks Creek Project Receives \$200,000 from USFWS

The Barry Conservation District was notified on March 2nd that it has been awarded \$200,000 from the U.S.

**Fish and Wildlife Service's** (USFWS) Fish Passage Program for the High Banks Creek Restoration Project—Fish Passage Barrier Removal. The project, slated for 2010, entails removing the **creek's Morgan Dam, located** on private land near Thornapple Lake Road, and re-engineering the Lawrence Road stream crossing in partnership with the Barry County

Road Commission. Additional project funding through the USFWS Partners program is pending.

For 2010-2011, the District has submitted additional requests for funding through the Federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to develop a management plan to restore Quaker Brook as a sustainable trout stream, and to experiment with biological control of Eurasian milfoil above the Ada Dam on the Thornapple River. The District has

also applied for funding from the Great Lakes Commission to provide technical assistance and cost share support over four years for agricultural soil erosion reduction in the Middle Thornapple River Watershed. Award announcements for these projects are expected throughout the spring and summer, 2010.



Part of the Morgan Dam on High Banks Creek blocks stream flow, restricting fish passage. The dam will be removed in 2010 with support from a grant from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Partnerships Grow Stronger

The Annual Thornapple River Clean Up, co-sponsored by the Thornapple River Watershed Council (TRWC) and the Barry Conservation District, had its biggest turn-out ever in 2009, with over 100 volunteers working in locations from Nashville to 48<sup>th</sup> Street, and over \$3,500 in support from local cash and in-kind donations. The District has applied for support from the

Great Lakes Commission for the 2010 cleanup, scheduled for September 18, 2010, and will add partners from Ada Township Parks and Recreation and the Coldwater River Watershed Council to make an even bigger event this year.

The District continues its support of the Barry State Game Area Protection Project, initiated in 2006 by the

Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, Audubon, MDNRE and other partners. In 2010, the District has requested funding through the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to restore and enhance up to 500 acres of public and private forestland in the project area to support the Cerulean Warbler and other listed bird species.

THE ANNUAL THORNAPPLE RIVER CLEAN-UP HAD ITS BIGGEST TURNOUT EVER IN 2009 – WITH OVER 100 VOLUNTEERS . . . “

## Service to Barry County

Barry Conservation District staff works with several committees established by the Barry County Commission. Represented on the Solid Waste Oversight Committee, the District participates in the semi-annual Household Hazardous Waste Disposal program and this year has assisted in producing the *Barry*

*County Recycling and Hazardous Waste Guide*. District staff serves on the Parks and Recreation Board, working on both the McKeown Bridge Park project and the Trails subcommittee. This year the District and partners will install an 8-acre wildflower and native grass prairie on a portion of the McKeown

Bridge Park. The District provides interim administration for the County Agricultural Preservation Board, which is currently revising its enabling ordinance to permit the county to accept donated development rights for both farmland and open space parcels.



BCD and Health Department Staff dispose of used oil during Barry County's Household Hazardous Waste Disposal days

Promoting responsible natural resource and land use management for present and future generations.



## BARRY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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### Barry Conservation District Board of Directors, 2009

*Dan Kingma, Chair*  
4574 Maple Grove Rd., Hastings, MI 49058

*Laverne Bivens, Vice Chair*  
11437 M-66 Hwy., Bellevue, MI 49021

*Dave Kietzmann, Secretary*  
704 W. Bond St., Hastings, MI 49058

*John Warren, Treasurer*  
3801 Heath Rd., P.O. Box 519, Hastings, MI 49058

*Doug Westendorp, Member*  
5815 S. M-66 Hwy., Nashville, MI 49073

### Staff

Joanne Barnard  
Executive Director

Hailey Converse  
Administrative Assistant

Rachel Dennis  
Water Stewardship Technician

## Meet the District Director Candidates

Gordon B. Barlow: Gordon B. Barlow was born and raised in Barry County, attending a one-room rural school, then graduating from Hastings High School, where his interest in agriculture and conservation began. Barlow served four years in the US Air Force, three of which as a Flight Engineer on a C-119 cargo plane.

Barlow was active in auctioneering business for 38 years, and in 1977 became the Michigan State Auctioneers Association President. During those years, he was also a licensed realtor with his own company, Barlow Auction and Realty.

Barlow presently serves on the Hastings Zoning Board of Appeals. He enjoys being an active member of the Michigan Nut Growers Association, where he serves as director at large. He is involved in the growing and propagation of English walnuts, Japanese Walnuts, Hazelnuts and Chestnuts.

Barlow explains that as a member of the Barry Conservation

**District, "My wish is to make the people of Barry County more aware of the pleasure and profit found in these trees."**

Scott Hanshue: Scott, age 47, is a Fisheries Biologist for the Department of Natural Resources with the Southern Lake Michigan Management Unit, located in Plainwell. His management responsibilities include the lakes, rivers and streams within the Grand River watershed. He has been at his current position since early in 2002. Prior to that, he worked for over 10 years as an Aquatic Biologist for the Department of Environmental Quality assigned to the Grand River watershed. These duties have given him a good appreciation of and experience in, the technical and legal requirements of stream and lake protection and natural resources management. Scott has a BS degree from Michigan State University in Fisheries Biology and prior to his work in Michigan, he worked for the National Marine

Fisheries Service of NOAA in Alaska, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Michigan and in Utah. He was born and raised in Newaygo County.

Scott enjoys hunting and fishing, bird watching and other natural history studies. He is member of Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited. He lives in Assyria Township with his wife, Sharon and his English Setters.

Dave Kietzmann: Raised in Ludington, Dave Kietzmann is a long-time resident of Hastings. He holds a Masters' Degree from Michigan State University and taught high school for 31 years, with 28 in service to the Hastings High School. Following his retirement, he entered a second career as a real estate agent, from which he retired after 12 years. For the last ten years, he and his wife Freddy have been co-owners of the Hauser Tree Farm in Rutland Township.

Kietzmann is an incumbent, having served on the Barry Conservation District Board of Directors since 2002. He has held the offices of Vice Chair and Secretary and has been active on several committees, most recently the Executive Committee, Thornapple River Watershed Steering Committee and the Barry-Eaton Groundwater Stewardship Team.

Kietzmann is a year-round outdoorsman, enjoying hiking, biking, fishing, cross-country skiing and snow shoeing. He also enjoys reading and spending days on the beach in Ludington.

