



KALAMAZOO
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT
**MONTHLY
MEETING OF THE
BOARD**

***Our Mission: “Working
with our community to
protect, conserve, and
restore the natural resources
of Kalamazoo County”***

August 21st, 2026



Call To Order!

2. Roll Call! (State Name and Association(s))

3. Consider Approval of July 17th, 2026 KCD Meeting Agenda

4. Consider Approval of June 12th, 2026 KCD Board Meeting Minutes

5. Public Comments:



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Technical Reports:

1. Kalamazoo CD DM Report - Chandra Kinney; District Manager
2. MACD Report - Rivka Hodgkinson, Executive Director MACD
3. MDARD Partner Report - Jack Knorek; MDARD Regional Coordinator
4. ~~Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs - Di'Shun Melbert; District Conservationist~~
5. CTAP Report - James Benjamin; MAEAP & Regenerative Agriculture Technician
6. ~~USDA NRCS Soil Con Report - Celina Robertson; Soil Conservationist~~
7. ~~CTAI Report - Michael Martinez. CTAI Technician (BCD/KCD/NRCS)~~
8. ~~BCK Cisma - Sara Hutteman; Invasive Species Coordinator~~
9. Produce Safety - Patrick Gordon; Produce Safety Technician
10. ~~Forestry Assistance Program - Isabelle Uganski; Regional Forester~~
11. Regen. Ag. Incubator Farmer - Grant Reinhart; Intern



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Kalamazoo CD DM Report - Chandra Kinney; District Manager

Highlights

- Worked on strategically formatting the NFWF Conservation Partners Grant and successfully completing it in time for its submission date on July 22nd. This submission included funds for an Agriculture Programs Coordinator, a Grant Writer and a Conservation Technician, with a 15% administrative overhead built into the grant.
- Started a Capacity Building Cohort that has given me/the District a \$500 stipend for attending the course. This cohort has 4 live sessions with in between videos and work along documents. 1) Checklist and Mission, 2) Leadership and Decision Making, 3) Roles and Responsibilities, and 4) Budgeting and Workplanning.
- Launched the 2026/27 Kalamazoo County Natural Resources Assessment Survey at a local 'Green Drinks' Presentation. The survey will be available until June 30th, 2027. Additionally, I have applied for a small local grant through the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation to fund our survey distribution.
- Completed our county board presentation to get a dedicated budget line on the FY27 budget line.
- KCD has completed our FY26 Operational Elements Review with Jack Knorek, Sandy Bleisner and Chandra Kinney.



MACD Report - Rivka Hodgkinson, Executive Director MACD

Highlights

- You can also get involved by submitting nominations for our annual awards. See all the categories and submit your nominations at <https://bit.ly/27Awards> by August 28.
- We will be implementing a virtual option to attend the Annual meeting on October 20 from 8:30am to 11:30am to ensure that every District has the opportunity to vote and be represented in important decisions that affect all Districts.
- At the NACD North Central Meeting, it was shared that regardless of what happens with the budget passage, USDA/NRCS is fully funded into 2027 in order to minimize impacts from a potential shutdown during budget negotiations. MACD will continue to get additional guidance and information as it is available.
- Additionally, a federal judge ruled future grants cannot be canceled for changing administrative priorities. While this does not impact past grants that were already terminated, it gives more security for future grant applications.



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MDARD Partner Report - Jack Knorek; MDARD Regional Coordinator

Highlights

- MDARD is working with MACD to conduct four in-person regional trainings for CD directors and managers this summer and fall. A 101-level training during the day (12:30-4:30 pm), followed by a 201-level training the same evening (5:15-8:30 pm; the Lansing 201 training will be held October 21st during the Fall Conference). Scholarships for directors are available. We encourage all directors and managers, especially newer ones, to attend one of these training sessions. The first session was held on July 29th in Scottville. The remaining sessions will be held in:
 - Iron Mountain: August 12th – Register Here - TownePlace Suites by Marriott – 200 S. Stephenson Ave., Iron Mountain
 - West Branch: August 26th – Register Here - Edwards Township Hall – 3601 Wickes Rd., West Branch
 - Lansing: October 19th (101-level only) - Lansing Center – 333 E. Michigan Ave., Downtown Lansing
- At least six days before the September budget hearing, the conservation district must place a newspaper ad to invite the public to comment on the proposed budget prior to final passage by the board; this does not need to be a legal notice. During this time, the proposed budget should be available at the district office for public viewing



Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs - Di'Shun Melbert; District Conservationist *Highlights*

In-Person



[illegible]

USDA-NRCS Soil Con Report - Celina Robertson; Soil Conservationist *Highlights*



No Report this month!

BCK-Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area - Sarah Huetteman; Invasive Species Coordinator (Housed in Barry CD)

Highlights

- No updates this month



Produce Safety - Patrick Gordon; Produce Safety Technician (Housed in Berrien CD)

Highlights

- PSA Training Recap (7/7)
- Farm Visit Kalamazoo (7/8)
- MIOFPS Newsletter Planning Meeting (7/14)
- KCD All Teams Meeting (7/15)
- USDA Credential update Lansing (7/21)
- NCR State/ FDA Quarterly Discussion (7/23)
- Ongoing Farm/ Stakeholder Correspondence
- Continue working on resources for program

Upcoming:

- KCD Regenerative Farmer Program Steering Committee (8/12)
- Newsletter Planning Meeting (8/12)
- NCR FSMA Webinar (8/20)
- PSR Book Club (8/28)
- MIOFPS Huddle (8/28)



**Forestry Assistance Program -
Isabelle Uganski; Regional Forester
(Housed in Barry)**

Highlights

Isabelle will be reaching out soon to introduce herself to the team!



Regenerative Agriculture Incubator Farmer Start Up - Grant Reinhart; Regen. Ag. Incubator Farmer Intern *Highlights*

- Began planning an outreach event for municipal stakeholders to garner interest in regenerative agriculture and the incubator farmer program.
- The draft of the Regenerative Incubator Farmer Program Feasibility Report has been completed. It is 57 pages, including appendices, and covers the 2022 Census of Agriculture in Michigan and Kalamazoo County, and highlights important information to consider in the development of a program.
- On August 12th, the Regenerative Incubator Farmer Program Steering Committee had its inaugural meeting. The meeting included an overview on the feasibility report, as well as the agenda for the committee going forward. Future meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

Old Business:

- Conservation Needs Assessment is now available! (Board Members MUST take and assist in distribution of survey)
- Review of Grants Submitted (CTAP, NACD-TA, NFWF, Irving S. Gilmore, Consumers, ENBRIDGE.)
- Post and Pre - Event Overview



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New Business:

- DRAFT Appropriation Bill & Budget
- Request to open a KCD Business Card
- Recommend Recruitment Plan for Opening Board Positions



Treasurer Reports

Review and Approve all July 2026 Reports:

- Balance Sheet
 - QBD compared to QBO
- Profit & Loss Summary
 - QBD compared to QBO
- Bills & Deposits Summary
- Payroll Detailed Report
- Reconciliations - Signature Needed
- Treasurer Check List

Any Questions?



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Public Acts & Notices:

- 433 Reed Street – Demolition and Stormwater Improvement Project

- Any Comments or Concerns?



DIRECTORS TIME!

- How do you see us aligning to better growth strategies?
- What connections do you have?
- What's going on in your world - environmental related?
- How can you better contribute to the growth of KCD?



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**NEXT MEETING - 8 AM on
September 18th, 2026
at the KCD office, Thank you!**

MEETING ADJOURNED!