



## Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250  
East Lansing, Michigan 48823  
Phone: (517) 324-4421, Fax: (517) 324-4435  
[www.macd.org](http://www.macd.org)

“Your Land, Your Water, Your Michigan”

### News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: January 12, 2009

For more information contact:

Ann Cool

Communications Associate

Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

[ann.cool@macd.org](mailto:ann.cool@macd.org)

### **Application Deadline Approaching for Michigan Farmers and Landowners Interested in 2010 Funding from USDA for Conservation Programs**

EAST LANSING, Jan. 8, 2010 – Michigan Association of Conservation Districts reminds Michigan farmers and landowners to submit their applications by February 19 to be considered for 2010 funding from two conservation programs sponsored by the U.S Department of Agriculture – the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

Michigan Conservation Districts work closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to bring these programs to Michigan farmers and landowners. NRCS and Conservation Districts work with farmers and landowners to develop program plans and applications throughout the year with completed, eligible applications submitted by February 19 in order to be ranked and considered for 2010 program funds.

“Conservation Districts are the local providers of natural resource management services, working in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service to provide local access, information and assistance to farmers and landowners interested in conserving their lands through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. We are pleased to partner with NRCS on these very beneficial programs.” said MACD Executive Director Lori Phalen.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial assistance to agricultural producers for making conservation improvements in their operations. The program offers financial assistance for farmers to implement over 80 conservation practices to prevent soil erosion and protect water, air and wildlife resources. The February 19 cutoff date will not apply to initiatives introduced in 2009, including specific practices for organic producers and producers transitioning to organic, the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative.

Some of the conservation practices eligible for financial assistance through EQIP are tree and shrub planting, establishing vegetative barriers around fields and waterways to contain nutrient run-off, pest management practices, irrigation water management, comprehensive nutrient management plans, forest management plans and prescribed grazing. Financial assistance through the program can cover up to 75 percent of the estimated cost for implementing a new conservation measure.

Beginning farmers and historically under-served producers may be eligible for enhanced financial assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) provides financial assistance for landowners to improve wildlife and fish habitat. The program assists landowners in implementing practices such as tree and shrub plantings, native grass plantings, stream bank and shoreline protection, forest stand improvement and controlling invasive plants. WHIP provides financial assistance of up to 75 percent of the estimated cost of installing a practice.



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“There are opportunities for all types of agricultural producers and private landowners to participate in NRCS conservation programs. There is assistance available whether you are a livestock or commodity producer, an organic producer, a private forest land owner or a specialty crop producer,” said NRCS State Conservationist Garry Lee.

Applications must be submitted to a local NRCS field office, many of which are co-located with Conservation Districts. Additional information on Conservation Districts and NRCS conservation programs can be found at [www.macd.org](http://www.macd.org). A listing of Michigan NRCS field offices can be found at [www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov).

MACD is a non-profit organization that represents the interests of Michigan Conservation Districts and works to strengthen Districts through leadership, information and representation at the state level. Michigan’s 79 Conservation Districts are the local providers of natural resource management services that help our citizens conserve their lands and our environment for a cleaner, healthier, economically stronger Michigan.

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