

MSU EXTENSION

ANTRIM COUNTY

2023 - 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

I'm delighted to share the results of another successful year of partnership between Antrim County and Michigan State University (MSU) Extension. Because of your continued support, we've been able to make a difference in the lives of youth, families, businesses and communities.

MSU Extension offers a broad range of research-based educational outreach to county residents. Over this past year, we've empowered families and individuals to live healthier lives, supported new and local businesses, created opportunities for youth leadership development and career exploration, helped farmers with business management and mental health, and much more. Our staff live and work alongside county residents, are rooted in community relationships and are responsive to community needs.

We continue to provide our programs in a variety of spaces and delivery methods that are convenient for our participants to engage in and access. Our partnership with you makes this all possible. On behalf of the MSU Extension team serving Antrim County, thank you for another great year. We look forward to your continued support and hope you will be able to join us during one of our upcoming programs.

~ Jennifer Berkey District 3 Director

180

Programs accessed
by residents

54,421

Reached by
social media

1,060

Reached through
programming

6,888

Reached indirectly



NORTHWEST MI ORCHARD & VINEYARD SHOW



NW MI ORCHARD & VINEYARD SHOW

NORTHWEST MI ORCHARD & VINEYARD SHOW 2024

The annual Northwest Michigan Orchard and Vineyard Show was another great success with over 310 tree fruit and wine grape producers in attendance and 48 vendor booths at the Grand Traverse Resort. Dr. Brent Black and members of his team from Utah State University (USU) joined us again to provide an update on the Specialty Crop Research Initiative project in collaboration with MSU on precision orchard management. This year he was joined by Dr. Alfonso Torres-

Rua, an expert on irrigation and water management, who discussed new technologies for mapping and remote sensing of irrigation needs and water stress. Richard Price and Dr. Todd Einhorn presented some of the MSU side of the research project on remote sensing for yield estimations and experimenting with variable

Over 310 tree fruit & wine grape producers



NORTHWEST MICHIGAN ORCHARD AND VINEYARD SHOW

rate irrigation in tart cherries.

The 2024 tree fruit educational sessions featured other new topics and speakers including a talk on forest carbon offsets by Daphna Gadoth-Goodman from the MSU Forest Carbon and Climate Program and a segment by Parker Jones from the MSU Product Center on agritourism and cost studies for value-added products to help growers see ways to diversify their income streams. This year's program also featured a section on agritourism, including a panel of local and statewide growers who have integrated agritourism in diverse ways on their farms.



MASTER GARDENER IMPACTS

262 Extension Master Gardener Hours volunteered, valued at \$8,331

These hours were dedicated to educating residents, improving food security, and protecting the natural resources of Antrim County

MASTER GARDENER

MSU EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

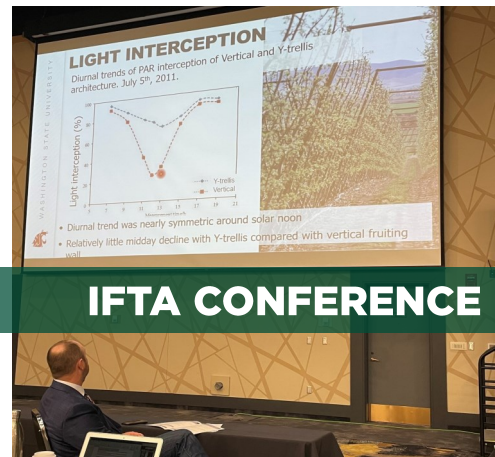
In Antrim County, Extension Master Gardener Volunteers volunteered for 262 Extension Master Gardener hours valued at \$8,331. These hours were dedicated to educating residents, improving food security, and protecting the natural resources in Antrim County. Volunteers at Grass River Natural Area and Torch Conservation Center tended to native plant and pollinator gardens, while educating visitors through educational programming about the importance of pollinator conservation and native flowering plants. During gardening events in public spaces in Elk Rapids and Bellaire, volunteers

educated visitors and community members in environmentally friendly gardening practices that protect water quality.

Throughout the 2023 season, MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteers helped with invasive species management and habitat restoration at Glacial Hills Natural Area. Visitors to Glacial Hills and participants in invasive species removal events were educated on the importance of native plant habitat for wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship in the region.

Invasive species pulls led by an MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer were held weekly April through November of 2023. EMG Volunteers also survey for invasive species throughout the year at Glacial Hills, marking target species for removal. Priority species that are removed include Garlic Mustard, Wild Parsnip, Bull Thistle, and Japanese Barberry. Removing these species improves habitat for wildlife by allowing the return of the native plants they rely on for food and shelter.

12 area farms representing nearly \$6 million dollars in revenue in 2023



IFTA CONFERENCE

Year-end tax estimate meetings provided farmers with the opportunity to save over **\$119,000**, resulting in savings to allow for investment back into the farm business to help build farm resilience



FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

TEL-FARM

Farm Business Management Educator Chris Bardenhagen assists farmers, businesses, families and individuals to improve lives and achieve goals through an educational process that applies management, production and economic knowledge to critical issues in our area. Working with 12 area farms, Chris helped farmers complete a business analysis using MSU Extension's Tel-Farm Record system to manage their taxable income. Farmers who participate in the program gain a greater understanding of their farm's financial strengths and weaknesses, and how they can improve upon their financial standing. These

farms represent nearly \$6 million dollars in sales in 2023. Year-end tax estimate meetings provided farmers with the opportunity to save nearly \$119,000 this year. These savings are often put back into the farm business for upgrading of new equipment and help build farm resilience.

Bardenhagen was also able to attend the International Tree Fruit Association Conference, held this year in Yakima, Washington. He learned about Washington's apple production volumes and economic trends that also affect Michigan. He and other MSU Fruit Team members visited several apple orchards, investigating production practices and apple training systems to inform work here in Michigan. Participation in the IFTA Conference enabled Chris to work with

local farmers on enterprise analysis and provide cost of production estimates for apples to help area growers strategize for the coming season.

FARM STRESS

MANAGING FARM STRESS RESOURCES

Farming can be an incredibly unpredictable, dangerous, and stressful occupation. MSU Extension is committed to supporting agricultural professionals as they navigate tough times and make decisions that impact their families, livelihoods, operations, and farms.

Combining farm business management guidance with mental and behavioral health expertise, MSU Extension's team of more than 20



FARM STRESS PROGRAM



dedicated professionals provides innovative resources and support to the agriculture community—from teletherapy and financial services to free online education and community presentations.

In 2023, the MSU Extension Farm Stress team conducted a record number of programs to a record number of participants; 68 unique direct program activities, which spanned 169 distinct sessions with 5,657 participants. 103 individuals enrolled in the Rural Resilience online D2L (Desire2Learn) training course and 35 farmers and farm family members were referred to counseling services. This is a 52.17% increase compared to 2022. MSU Extension's farm stress specialist Remington Rice also appeared in several key media outlets

to promote resources for farmers, including Michigan Ag Today, Up-NorthLive, WPBN-TV, the AgriSafe Network's Talking Total Farmer Health podcast, among others. As a result of this publicity, several new

farmers have reached out to access MSU Extension's resources.

Rice cherished the individual farmers he and other educators have helped over the years, including this recent meeting with a Michigan fruit farmer:

"I journeyed to his farm, expecting a brief conversation, but what unfolded was a three-hour revelation. This farmer, disenchanted with his vocation and contemplating selling his farm, was recently divorced, and felt hopelessly adrift. We explored the roots of his passion for farming – pride in his work, cherishing public interactions at his farm stand and stewardship of the land. As he recounted his story, he rekindled his love for farming and found new meaning and purpose. Today, his farm flourishes, and he passionately advocates for the MSU Farm Stress Program, sharing history at Research Station events and among fellow farmers. His transformation is a beacon of hope for all."

-Remington Rice



BELLAIRE H.S. SENIOR SEMINAR



“I didn’t know there were so many jobs available in the area to come back to after college.”

-Ronan C. (Bellaire H.S. Senior Seminar)



4-H

LEADERSHIP-BEHIND THE SCENES: ANTRIM COUNTY

In 2023, Behind the Scenes: Antrim County (BTS: AC) was created to empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities by understanding how their county government operates.

Antrim County 4-H Program Coordinator Geep Charlebois partnered with Bellaire High School’s Ashley Young and Tiffany Sutter to provide this program to the Bellaire High School Senior Class of 2024. Over the course of sixteen weeks, 13 participating students visited 12 Antrim County departments and affiliated agencies

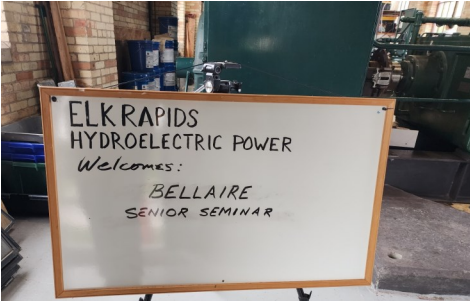
for an introduction on how county government works.

Departments and Agencies

- **Administration/Planning:** Students met with the Administrator and Deputy Administrator to learn about their roles in planning for the County’s future and budgeting.
- **Antrim Conservation District:** The ACD provides wise land and water use assistance and sustainable conservation practices to protect our natural resources. Students had the opportunity to hop into the Cedar River to check for invertebrates.
- **Parks & Recreation:** Toured Barnes Park from campgrounds to beachfront and learned what it

takes to maintain the recreation areas.

- **Grass River Natural Area:** GRNA is a protected outdoor living laboratory to explore and learn. Students hiked through the forest and swamplands identifying native plants, birds, and animals before reaching the river.
- **Commission on Aging:** Students learned how COA improves the quality of life and maintains high levels of independence for people aged 60 and over. Students sat in on a presentation for the Meals on Wheels Drivers.
- **Emergency Services:** This department’s focus is planning for and guiding the response to low-probability, high-impact events.



Students learned how many different scenarios from natural disasters to public events fall under the purview of Emergency Services.

- **Sheriff/911 Center:** Students met with the Under Sheriff and Deputies. This department provides 911 service, civil processing, FOIA requests, handgun permits, and road, marine, and snow patrol. Students toured the jail, courthouse and 911 Center.
- **Clerk:** Met with the County Clerk and learned how the Clerk's office maintains official records. Students also visited the vault to view County archival record books.
- **Treasurer:** Students learned the County Treasurer receives, main-

tains custody of and disperses all county monies, manages investments and property taxes, deeds and plats.

- **Board of Commissioners:** Students participated in two commissioner meetings. This provided students an understanding of how county residents can participate and voice their opinions about important community decisions.
- **County Prosecutor:** Had the opportunity to meet with the Judge and County Prosecutor for an invaluable Q and A session. Students were also able to attend Circuit Court to witness trials and sentencing.

Program Impact

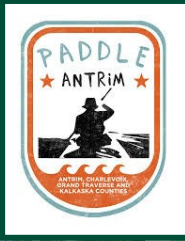
Behind the Scenes: Antrim County actively introduced Senior Seminar

students to elected and appointed officials and provided insight into the functions of Antrim County government departments and agencies. As civics education is limited to the federal level at Bellaire High School, these interactions provided invaluable educational opportunities and insight into how local government affects and serves residents of the county. BTS: AC enabled students to directly correlate their studies in civic education and engagement to real world applications.

The Bellaire School Board stated at their January 2024 meeting that BTS: AC is something that their students need, and they would work to ensure that their partnership with Antrim County 4-H will continue well into the future.



JOHN R. RODGER ELEMENTARY



4-H

Global Art Project

Third, fourth, and fifth graders from John R. Rodger Elementary in Bellaire have been participating in a program that uses art to connect to cultures and countries from around the world. Based on an existing Michigan 4-H program, the Global Art Project has been adapted to fit a monthly hour-long classroom visit from 4-H staff. As the youth are presented the art project from country of the month, they are introduced to that country’s geographic and linguistic facts. As they work on their art, they learn about the culture and traditions of the country of the month. Countries and crafts presented this year include Antarctica,

Norway, Brazil, Egypt and Japan. In addition to the Norway craft, fourth grade students were also able to Zoom with an American high school exchange program student about life in Bodø, Norway.

60 Youth participated in Global Arts Project at John R. Rodger Elementary & CIS Northwest Michigan

New SPIN Club: Kayaking

In the summer of 2023, Antrim County 4-H was able to present a new SPIN club via a grant from Paddle Antrim and partnership with Paddles & Pedals in Bellaire. Youth participants paddled from Bellaire to

Intermediate Lake and back, swam on the natural sandbar, and visited “the island”. Water safety, paddle techniques, and an introduction to lake and stream stewardship were also discussed during this fun and educational event. Through our continued partnerships, the Antrim County 4-H program is able to offer this as an annual SPIN club, with program events scheduled for this summer.

2023 Market Livestock Programs

The most popular program for Antrim County 4-H youth was the Market Livestock which culminated at the Antrim County and Northwest Michigan fairgrounds. Youth participants are required to understand the



4-H MARKET LIVESTOCK

business, science, and management of market livestock prior to bringing their animals to the fairgrounds. Each participant outlines what they have learned and their goals in the project workbook. The workbooks include research on specie/breed, records of feed, expenses, animal weight, and project efficiency (projected income vs. expenses). Prior to the fair, participants must attend the 4-H project planning meeting, specialty livestock workshops or clinics, and fairground work bees. At the fair, the 4-H youth are responsible for guest service and grounds maintenance.

Youth from our clubs were successful in showmanship and market categories at the Antrim

County and Northwest Michigan Fairs.

7 Steer, 8 Sheep, 3 Goats, and 5 Swine

Placed as Grand Champion, Reserve Champion, or First Place in Market and Showmanship between the Antrim County and Northwest Michigan Fairs by

Antrim County 4-H Youth

SNAP-ED

SNAP EDUCATION IN ANTRIM COUNTY

MSU Extension supports individual and community level, or public health approaches, to prevent obesity. Through the United States Dept-

ment of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), we provide a combination of educational strategies, accompanied by supporting policy, systems, and environmental change interventions aimed to increase the likelihood that limited resource youth, adults, and seniors can make healthy choices.

Life Skills Mancelona High School

Mancelona High School reaches youth dealing with high rates of poverty and food insecurity. 74% of students at Mancelona High School qualify for free or reduced lunch. In the past 5 years, MSU Extension has provided nutrition and cooking education for

“I, as the teacher, am always amazed by what I am going to learn each lesson. You’d think after 5 years of doing this program together, there wouldn’t be any new information to learn, but there always is.”



MANCELONA HIGH SCHOOL



SNAP-ED cont'd

68 students in the Life Skills class at Mancelona High School through a curriculum called Cooking for One. These classes focus on food safety, budgeting, resource management, and preparing healthful, low-cost meals. It is important for our students dealing with food insecurity in low socio-economic households to know how to make a safe, nutritious meal on a budget, especially now when food costs are so high. Cooking and nutrition education is vital for students to learn and will serve them their whole lives.

This year, 12 students are participating in Cooking for One but the entire school is benefitting from the program. In February, Mancelona High School Life Skills program received a

\$1,000 SNAP-Ed grant to purchase cooking equipment for the Health Room. The grant allowed Mancelona High School to receive enough equipment to build 5 kitchen “kits” filled with measuring cups, glass cutting boards, thermometers, veggie scrub brushes, pots, pans, mixing bowls, blenders, and more for a total of 155

“I have to grocery shop for my family. Learning how to budget will help me get more food when I shop.”

- Student participant

new items. Students opened all the items, washed and organized the kits so they knew exactly what they had available to them. Cooking equipment before the grant was limited and

often broken. This restricted what recipes classes were able to prepare and many times left the teachers and MSU Extension staff needing to bring items from home. The addition of the new kitchen kits will allow students the chance to prepare a wider range of recipes without being limited by equipment. By the end of the Life Skills class, students will have exposure to recipes that are no-cook, in the oven, on the stovetop and in blenders. Items are available for sports teams, the health class, and special permission to those who request through the Life Skills teacher. The improvements didn’t stop with the addition of new items. National Honor Society students volunteered their time to clean and organize the room, maintenance staff repaired 3 clogged sinks and administration graciously agreed to replace 2 ovens in

MOMS & TOTS CENTER



“I learned to read food labels and be more conscious of what I’m getting. I was able to get my family to try new things. I really like the class and definitely needed it. It was incredibly helpful with dinners”

-Program Participant

Pineapple Carrot Muffins

Ingredients:

- 1 medium carrot, peeled & shredded
- 1 cup crushed pineapple with juice
- 5 Tbs canola oil
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1 Tbs white distilled vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Pinch ground nutmeg, pumpkin or apple pie spice
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)



3. In a large bowl, mix flour, brown sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and nutmeg. Blend well with a fork to break up any lumps.
4. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and mix until just combined.
5. If using walnuts or raisins, gently stir in now.
6. Coat muffin pan with non-stick spray. Fill each muffin cup about full with batter. Bake on middle rack of oven until muffin tops are golden brown and a toothpick inserted comes out clean, about 20-25 minutes.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a medium bowl, mix 3/4 cup carrot, pineapple with juice, oil, water and vinegar, with a fork.

Recipe source: Cooking Matters

Serving size: 1 muffin, makes 12. Per serving: 160 calories, 6 g fat, 21g carb, 2.2g fiber, 1.3g protein, 1mg iron, 1mg sodium, 2g potassium, 0mg cholesterol, 160 mg sodium

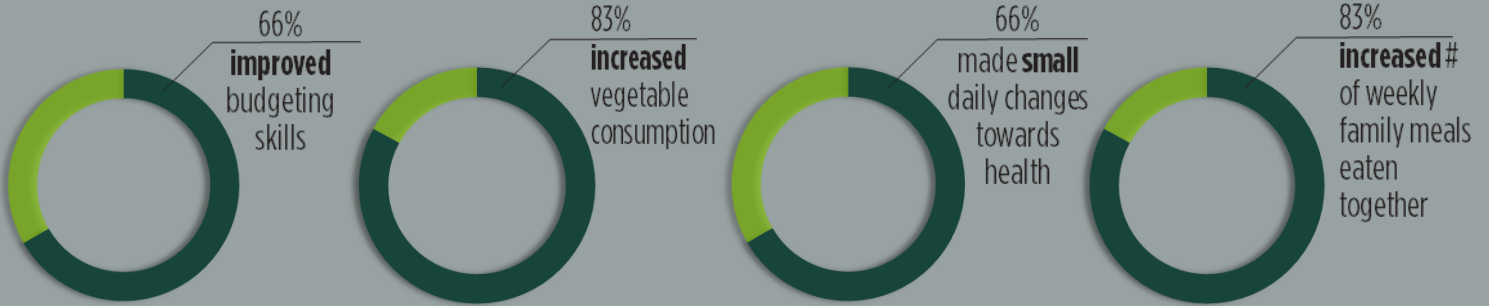
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - 2000. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local SNAP office.
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COOKING MATTERS PROGRAM IMPACTS



room that were in disrepair! Over 100 students and staff who participate in sports, have Health and or Life Skills will all benefit from these changes.

Moms & Tots Partnership

MSU Extension and Moms & Tots Center is on its third consecutive year of programming together! Parents who frequent both Moms & Tots and the Good Samaritan Pantry in Ellsworth were encouraged to attend a 6 week series of Cooking Matters for Families at Moms & Tots. Lessons focused on feeding the family nutritious and budget friendly recipes, incorporating nutrients that are most important for children and preparing meals in class. To remove barriers for attending, childcare was provided during class by Moms & Tots. To incen-

tivize participation, take-home groceries for the meal prepared in class were provided through a grant secured by Manna Food Project. Manna Food Project also donated over 20 pieces of storage and cooking equipment to each participant, knowing that many of our participants do not have equipment like blenders or stovetops to make affordable and quick meals. Participants car pooled and got rides from family members to get to class because they saw the value of the program.

This year, the class took on a life of its own. Participants would bring in their own recipes each week to share with the group. They would stay after class and socialize while their kiddos tried the meal prepared in class. Participants decided to keep the class going on their own by start-

starting a cooking club! This group even celebrated the birthday of one participant by making muffins topped with candles from the Cooking Matters curriculum as a birthday treat. Little did we know, this participant was dealing with her husband’s layoff, the birth of her newborn and the loss of their house. Affording groceries for the family was an active challenge. She said that this program “gave her something to look forward to in one of the hardest times of her life.” Unfortunately, stories like hers are not unique to the audience served through SNAP-Ed, which is why this programming is vital. Healthy people come from healthy and supportive communities. Programs like Cooking Matters for Families with partners like Moms & Tots and Manna Food Project play a large role in creating healthy communities. #SNAP-Edworks!

MSU PRODUCT CENTER IMPACTS



- 15 businesses
- 56 counseling sessions totaling over 56 hours
- \$313,000 total sales growth in 2023
- Over \$6.8 million in annual sales (combined)
- 169 total employees (combined)
- 6 jobs created
- 8 jobs retained
- 2 new licenses secured
- 2 new products launched
- 1 company is exporting



PRODUCT CENTER

MSU PRODUCT CENTER BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

In 2019, the Torch Lake Co-op was formed from a group of grower vendors from the Bellaire Farmers Market. During the pandemic of 2020, the Co-op quickly recognized the demand for reliable locally grown food was sharply increasing as supply chain shortages became the norm for many consumer markets. As the Co-op began to build their business structure, they turned to the Food and Farming Network, a collaborative organization whose purpose is to support local farm businesses. This network included staff from MSU Extension Community Food Systems group, Innovation Counselors from the MSU Product Center, consultants from the

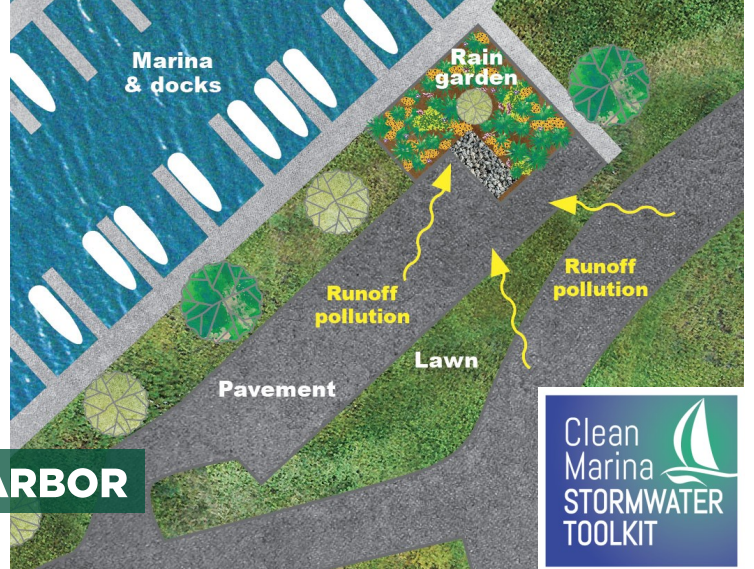
Small Business Development Center, plus staff from Groundwork's Food and Farming program and Crosshatch Center for Arts and Ecology.

Fast forward to 2024. The Torch Lake Co-op is currently comprised of a core group of 7 Antrim County farmer owners. Additionally, 8 area growers supply the co-op with produce and/or value-added farm products. The Co-op also offers the products of 20+ specialty food and farm entrepreneurs. The Co-op has created one full-time and three part-time jobs with plans to add two more positions in 2025. The co-op has shown strong sales since inception and 2025 has a projected revenue of a quarter of a million dollars.

The Torch Lake Co-op currently works with MSU Extension staff who

provide customized support to help various aspects of their growing business. Wendy Wieland, MSU Product Center Innovation Counselor, guided the group through a strategic decision-making process and currently assists them in preparing for funding opportunities. Extension Farm Business Educator Chris Bardenhagen lends expertise in a wide variety of topics including business planning and cooperative development.

The Torch Lake Co-op's mission to provide an affordable and efficient marketplace for small farmers and other producers, as well as a richly varied local food marketplace for shoppers, is a product of the collaboration of many, and MSU Extension remains committed to assisting the group as they grow opportunities for Antrim County farmers.



EDWARD C. GRACE MEMORIAL HARBOR

Northern Michigan Counties Association (NMCA)

County Commissioner Jarris Rubingh is an active participant and represents Antrim County well in the Northern Michigan Counties Association. Approximately 30 counties in the northern lower peninsula are members and participate regularly. Association support service is provided by MSU Extension.

SEA GRANT

In 2023, Michigan Sea Grant and partners completed a demonstration project at the Edward C. Grace Memorial Harbor Marina in Elk Rapids. This public marina on Village land treated one low industrial drainage area with one bioretention cell. The Village of Elk Rapids partnered with The Watershed Center Grand Trav-

erse Bay to install green infrastructure practices throughout the village with the goal of reducing stormwater volume and its effects on water quality in Grand Traverse Bay. These projects included bioretention cells (BRCs) and rain gardens, which are shallow stormwater basins that use soil and vegetation to capture and treat runoff. In 2020, several rain gardens were installed along River Street and a BRC was installed near the main pavilion at the west side of the Edward C. Grace Memorial Harbor using a variety of funding sources. Additionally, a rain garden was installed in the upper parking lot of the harbor using Sea Grant funding. The combined surface area of the rain gardens and bioswale totals more than 10,000 square feet and adds approximately 57,500 gallons of stormwater storage capa-

city. Together, these practices are preventing more than 1.27 million gallons of stormwater from entering Grand Traverse Bay each year, reducing annual pollutant loads by 480 pounds of sediment, 3.9 pounds of nitrogen, and 1.3 pounds of phosphorus. Monitoring continued into 2023. This project, along with paired projects in both Wisconsin and Ohio 1) developed a set of educational resources geared to stormwater management at marinas including development of a decision support tool to identify appropriate marina Green Infrastructure practices; 2) supported marinas in working with contractors to design and implement Green Infrastructure practice on water quality; and 4) installed educational signage at each Green Infrastructure installation to encourage public understanding and support of these efforts.

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