

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



2024 MEMBERSHIP GUIDE







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WELCOME MESSAGE



Dr. Gerald "Jerry" Miller

President, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts Dear Friends and Colleagues,

As we wind down 2023, we have much to look forward to in 2024. Michigan's Conservation Districts continue to address the pressing natural resource concerns at the local level in every community throughout the state. With today's pressing ecological challenges such as climate change, soil erosion, persistent drought, wildfires, algal blooms, and more, Michigan's Conservation Districts are at the forefront addressing these issues. Working together Michigan Conservation Districts have a bright future delivering assistance to landowners and operators.

No other local entities partner with the Federal Government, State Government, County Governments, Local Municipalities, NGOs, and private landowners to the extent of Conservation Districts. This uniquely positions our 75 distinct local units of government to effectively deliver conservation on the ground throughout the state. The hard work of your District staff and directors make a tangible difference in conserving our precious natural resources for generations to come. Our work could never come at a more pivotal inflection point in human history. The actions we take now support our civilization's future capacity to produce food, feed, fiber, fuel, and building materials for present and future generations. Our work has never been more important than this moment in time. The association is working hard to tell our story to leaders who are eager for comprehensive solutions and documented outcomes to today's ecological challenges.

Every day, your association is hard at work advocating for a stronger, more resilient Conservation District system in Michigan. On your behalf, we are at every table participating in critical conversations with State and Federal leaders to ensure you have the funding and tools necessary to effectively deliver conservation programming and practice implementation. Your association is your voice in Lansing that consistently brings your issues and concerns to the highest levels of government. Your membership in your association directly supports our capacity to represent you in these rooms and on these calls. Membership dues comprise the associations' largest source of unrestricted revenue that enables your leadership team to further support and strengthen your district.

This year, I encourage you and your board members to consider increasing your membership level with MACD. Your additional support will capitalize on the energy and vision of our Executive Director, Dan Moilanen, which you will learn about in the coming pages of this guide. If MACD can raise additional funds, we can better support your district through increased advocacy, training and development opportunities, expanded business support, strategic partnership opportunities, and so much more. MACD was formed as a grassroots organization of conservation-minded people and we are always stronger when we work together. I wish you much success in 2024 and thank you for your continued membership in this association.

Sincerely,

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OUR MISSION:

Strengthen Conservation Districts through leadership, information and representation at the State level. We do this by providing outreach and advocacy, educational programming, and business services to help Conservation Districts thrive.





OUR COLLECTIVE **MISSION:**

As a grassroots-founded organization, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts is first and foremost comprised by our members. You are the driving force behind the work we do in strengthening Michigan's Conservation Districts. Many years ago, the Michigan CD community came together and recognized a need for a statewide association to represent our collective interests in Lansing and Washington, D.C. alongside the *National Association of Conservation Districts*. Collectively as an association, our voice is louder and stronger than it is on our own. As your state association, we meet on a regular basis with critical state leaders ranging from the Governor and her staff, MDARD Director Tim Boring and other MDARD Staff, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist Garry Lee, MDNR Staff, EGLE Staff, and State and Federal Legislators.

MACD is at the table for critical conversations that ultimately determine the level of financial or business support your District receives from the State, as well as how programs are structured to better meet your needs. Your memberships is *critical* to supporting this overall effort. By increasing





your membership level, our Executive Director, Dan Moilanen, hopes to expand our legislative program to include additional programming, messaging, and other activities -- like our annual Capitol Day -- that will help us collectively deliver our message to Lansing. With your support, we can ensure that State leaders hear our collective voice and fully understand that CDs are *essential* infrastructure for addressing today's pressing environmental and natural resource concerns.

In addition to the plethora of other membership benefits your CD receives with MACD, the foundational value of your membership is built on that representation in Lansing. There's an old saying that if you're not at the table, then you're on the menu.

In recent years, with your help and MACD's leadership, we were able to collectively secure **\$9** million in operational funding for Michigan's **Conservation Districts**, in FY22, FY23, and FY24. Conversations regarding the FY25 budget are *already* taking place and MACD intends to advocate for increased funding for our Districts. Stabilizing Michigan's CD system through additional operational funding remains our *highest* priority. Will you help us get there?

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jerry Miller - Kent Conservation District

President

Gerald "Jerry" Miller is Director of the Kent County Conservation District and currently serves as KCCD's Board Chair. Jerry joined MACD in 2014 and served as Region 7 Vice-Chair. In 2015, he was elected Vice-President of MACD, reelected in 2017, and was elected President of MACD in 2019 for a 2-year term.

Jerry is a native of Virginia and grew up on a crop and livestock farm in the Shenandoah Valley, graduating with a degree in agronomy from Virginia Tech, and an M.S. and Ph.D. in soil science from Iowa State University (ISU). During his academic career, he conducted applied research and served as a professor and Extension specialist for soil, water and watershed management and soil survey and land use at ISU. Jerry also spent his professional career working in soil and water management, and has more than 35 years of experience working with soil and water conservation districts. He still is very active, as well, as an emeritus professor of agronomy at ISU.

// Email: pedology@live.com

Carol Higgins - St. Joseph Conservation District

Vice President

Carol was raised on a multi-commodity farm in St. Joseph County. Her first connection to Conservation Districts was as an elementary student when she helped plant hundreds of trees with her family. Carol has been a director on the St. Joseph County Board since 2008, and served as board chair for approximately ten years. She has served as an officer for Region 8 for about 6 years, and became Vice President of MACD in 2023.

Carol is a certified science/social studies teacher (retired) with a B.S. from Nazareth College, and a M.A. in Science Education from Western Michigan University. She considers herself a riparian-agrarian-naturalist-grandma, with ties to the Friends of Portage Lake, Friends of the St. Joseph River, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy and other environmental groups. She is a member of the Michigan Farmers Union, and also serves as a trustee for Glen Oaks Community College.

// Email: covecarol34@gmail.com

Nancy Szikszay - Genesee Conservation District

Secretary / Treasurer

Nancy Szikszay started her Conservation District life about 20 years ago, when she was appointed to the Genesee Conservation District Board of Directors. One year later she was elected to represent Region 9 on MACD's State Council. She has served as Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer for Genesee CD. It is Nancy's sincere hope to have had as much positive influence on our Conservation Districts as these experiences have had on her. // Email: <u>Sixeye2@aol.com</u>







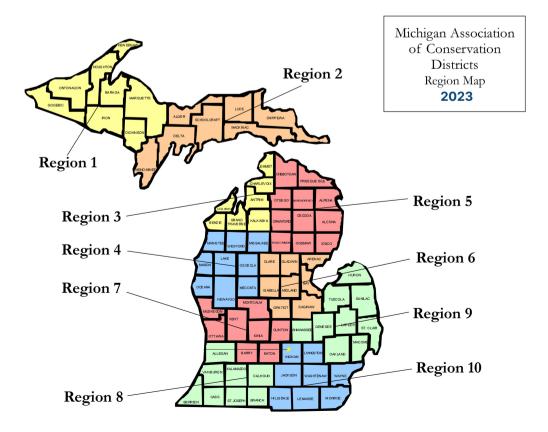
STATE COUNCIL

The MACD State Council, the governing board of our Association, has overall responsibility for the organization. Made up of member-elected officers and regional representatives, the State Council provides fiscal oversight and planning to assure that our Association provides members with quality programs and services to its members.

We encourage all Conservation District Directors to interact with your region's State Council Members, as they can take any issues, concerns, or ideas to the rest of MACD's leadership team accordingly.

Whether it's through our conventions, conferences, trainings, webinars, or Regional Meetings; we find that the more local CDs interact with our State Association the more proactive they can be (versus reactive) to any State or Federal-level changes in policy.

If there is a vacancy in your region for any of the State Council Positions, we encourage you to consider stepping up and taking on the role, or help us identify leaders who might be interested in serving. According to MACD bylaws, Region Chair vacancies can be filled by the President to fulfill the remainder of the twoyear term. The Region Chairs can appoint Vice Chairs and Secretaries/Treasurers if they so choose.



2023 STATE COUNCIL

Region 1

Chair: Kurt Lehmann - Dickinson CD Vice Chair: Randy Gentz - Marquette CD Secretary / Treasurer: Bernie Huetter - Marquette CD

<u>Region 2</u> Chair: Jane Bishop - Chippewa Luce Mackinac CD Vice Chair: Vacant

Region 3 Chair: Dawn Moses - Kalkaska CD Vice Chair: Vacant

<u>Region 4</u> Chair: Ned Hughes - Newaygo CD Vice Chair: Susanna Schwager - Missaukeee CD

<u>Region 5</u> Chair: Vacant Vice Chair: Vacant

Region 6 Chair: Kevin Craig - Gratiot CD Vice Chair: Aron Buechler - Bay County CD

Region 7 Chair: E. Paul Schroeder - Muskegon CD Vice Chair: Rivka Hodgkinson - Ottawa CD Secretary/Treasurer: Gary Boersen - Clinton CD

<u>Region 8</u> Chair: Brandy Wise-Tenter - Berrien CD Vice Chair: Vacant

Region 9 Chair: Steve Schaub / Lapeer CD Vice Chair: Vacant

Region 10 Chair: Steve Law - Jackson CD Vice Chair: Clark Humrich - Livingston CD

MEET THE TEAM

Dan Moilanen

Executive Director

Dan has been with MACD since 2019, when he was first elected to the Genesee Conservation District Board of Directors. As a Legislative Staffer at the time, Dan joined MACD's Legislative Workgroup to help the Association deliver on our collective legislative goals. In 2021, Dan took on the role of Executive Director and hit the ground running. Dan brings to the table a wealth of legislative experience, an extensive professional network, a diverse skillset, technological knowledge, and first-hand experience as a CD Director. Prior to his work in the legislature, Dan was the owner and operator of Flint's first food truck business, Vehicle City Tacos, where he successfully engaged in placemaking and social entrepreneurial efforts. In addition to his work in Conservation, Dan has a passion for music. He serves on the Flint Institute of Music Board of Trustees, and plays in his own band in his spare time.

Taylor Pack

Member Services Assistant

Taylor joined our Association team in 2021 as Member Services Assistant. She handles front-line requests from members for items such as new macd.org email addresses, document retrieval, scheduling for the Executive Director, and other critical business support tasks. Taylor splits her time with Genesee CD, where she helps manage the urban forestry program in the City of Flint. In 2021, She graduated from Saginaw Valley State University with a Bachelor's in Geography. Taylor enjoys spending time outside and traveling.

Melissa Harris, M.S.

Western Lake Erie Basin Project Manager

Melissa joined MACD's team in 2023 as the Western Lake Erie Basin Project Manager. MACD has an on-going project in Monroe, Lenawee and Washtenaw Conservation Districts focused on farmer-led conservation programming, funded by the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation. Melissa earned her M.S. in Ecosystem Science and Management through the University of Michigan, and her B.S. in Environmental Studies and Sustainability through Michigan State University. Prior to joining our Association's team, Melissa worked within the public-health non-profit sector for the Michigan Medicine-Adolescent Health Initiative.





MEET THE TEAM

Waynette Ginter

Bookkeeper

Waynette has been with the Association since 2014, providing part-time bookkeeping and accounting services. Prior to joining MACD's team, she served as Operations Manager at Ingham Conservation District.

Michael Ethridge

MACD Webstore Manager

Michael has been on MACD's team since 2023, and brings with him a wealth of retail and tech experience. Michael spent several years in the retail customer service sector, in addition to his time as a Quality Assurance tester in the gaming industry. Michael fulfills and ships orders from MACD's online store, providing additional assistance with inventory management, product development and more.





2024 MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Platinum // \$1,300

Platinum is the best bang for your District's buck. The benefits your CD will receive at the Platinum Level will help your CD reach the next level, while taking full advantage of all the business support services offered by MACD. This year, we're highlighting a new benefit -- a customizable eCommerce Tree Sale Store -- as one of the key features of this level. Learn more on the following pages of this guide.

Gold // \$1,000 - \$1,299

If Platinum is too much of a financial stretch for your District, Gold is the next best thing. Take advantage of features like a discount on MACD's eCommerce Store, plus a discounted registration rate for all MACD events, like our Summer Conference and Fall Convention.

Silver // \$700 - \$999

While every level offers many features and benefits, Silver will still get you discounts on our eCommerce Store and registration rates for Summer Conference and Fall Convention. (Bronze is the only level that does not receive any discounts in this manner.)

Bronze // \$400 - \$699

Bronze is our base-level of membership with MACD. This gets your District access to our discounted insurance program with Fischer Insurance, and provides the bare minimum to get your District by. While base membership is essential, we strongly encourage your District to consider increasing your dues level if you've only come in at Bronze in past years. Your additional support can further help us develop and grow our Association to offer additional support and programming.



PLATINUM LEVEL: STREAMLINE YOUR TREE SALES

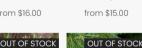
One of the new and exciting benefits of the Platinum Level is the pre-built Tree Sale eCommerce Online Store Template that will be provided by Burly Mermaid, our in-house design team, who will help take your tree sale to the next level. Every year, Michigan's Conservation Districts provide 1-3 million seedlings, trees, and native plants to be planted on private and public land throughout Michigan. Our annual, collective reforestation program remains one of the most significant services and fundraisers Michigan CDs offer to their communities. If your District has considered setting up an online store in the past, but lacked the technical knowledge or the funding to pay a designer to build out a website, this is a very cost-effective means to bring your CD's sales into the 21st century. Hiring a designer to build a website from scratch can cost anywhere from \$3,000-5,000+, and for only \$1,300 you can take advantage of this exciting new membership benefit.





Red Pine White Spruce

from \$16.00



OUT OF STOCK



White Cedar

from \$30.00

OUT OF STOC

Jack Pine

din't

American Larch

White Pine

If your district is still processing tree-sale orders the "old fashioned way" by paper mail-in forms, upgrading to the Platinum Level will not only make the purchase experience easier for your clientele. It will also save your CD staff substantial time and frustration through an automated inventory management system. Every year, MACD hears of CDs over-selling their stock and scrambling to secure seedlings to meet the demands of "overselling." Building out a tree sale website from our pre-built custom template can help prevent this major headache and frustration.

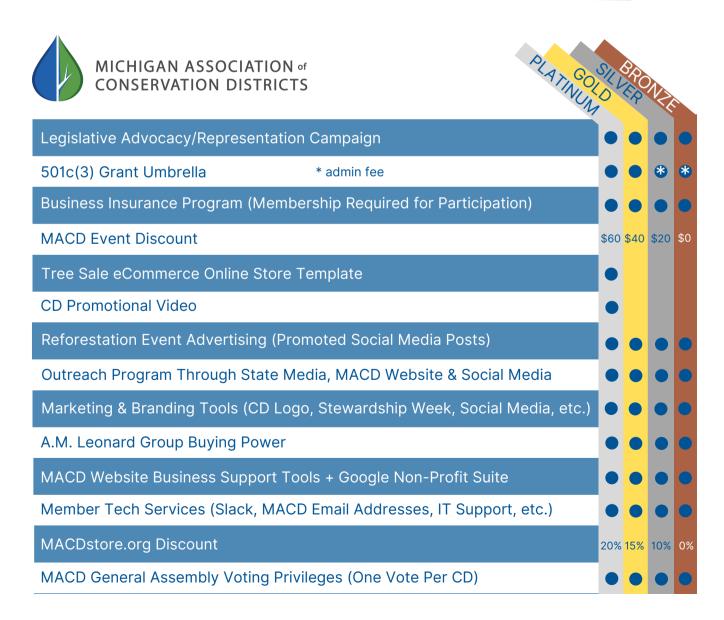
By offering a webstore option for your CD, you will also recover thousands of dollars in the CD staff time it takes to process paper orders by hand. You will absolutely see a return on your investment -- and increased plant sales overall -- by increasing your membership to the Platinum Level to take advantage of this new benefit.

In addition, you can rest easy at night knowing that your local residents and partners will have the best possible experience purchasing trees and native plants through your District.

If you're not using an eCommerce webstore platform to manage your sale, you are absolutely not providing the best, most convenient tree/plant sale experience to your customers. Bring it to the next level and consider a Platinum MACD Membership in 2024!



2024 MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS





2024 MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT PACKAGE DETAILS

MACD Legislative Advocacy / Representation Campaign

Arguably the most important benefit offered via your membership, MACD advocates on your behalf with legislators, State and Federal agencies, partners and advocacy groups. We represent your interests and advocate for you, your programs, and your natural resource conservation issues, providing a strong presence to build partnerships and understanding that grows into opportunity and programs for Conservation Districts. With your assistance, MACD successfully secured \$3 million in State Operational Funding for Fiscal Years 2022, 2023 and 2024, totaling \$9 million; resulting in \$40,000 per district each year, for a total of \$120,000.

The MACD Executive Council, with our registered lobbyist and support by the Legislative Committee and Workgroup, leads legislative advocacy activities that include direct legislative communication with legislators and the administration, in addition to legislative committee engagement and testimony to promote the role and purpose of Michigan Conservation Districts.

In addition, MACD holds an annual Capitol Day in Lansing, where our members are strongly encouraged to attend and meet with their District's legislators. Moreover, MACD drafts policy advocacy documents and materials to aid MACD members in our collective advocacy efforts.

MACD 501(c)3 Grant Umbrella

Platinum and Gold Level Members are eligible to utilize the MACD 501(c)3 status for grants that require non-profit status. Pre-authorization is necessary, with customized support and authorization for the 501(c)3 grant umbrella. Districts have been very successful in obtaining grants and donations from community, corporate and national foundations through this membership service.

MACD Business Insurance Program

MACD and program partner Fischer Insurance Agency have provided a comprehensive, customizable insurance program for member Conservation Districts since 1998. The Business Insurance Program offers:

- Complete insurance coverage at competitive rates (20-30% savings)
- Insurance that accommodates the unique activities specific to Conservation Districts
- A program that supports the work of Conservation Districts
- Available to Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze Level Members

MACD Events and Member Discounts

Several quality educational and networking events are provided throughout the year, including the Summer Conference, Fall Convention, District Manager Retreat, and Director Workshops. These events provide a chance to learn best practices, gather new ideas, develop skills, and connect with fellow board and staff members from across the state. Region Meetings are also held to provide Districts with the opportunity to come together locally to network and discuss issues of importance.

- Platinum Event Discount: \$60 per person (board and district manager)
- Gold Event Discount: \$40 per person (board and district manager)
- Silver Event Discount: \$20 per person (board and district manager)
- All membership levels allow a discounted additional board member event registrant (excludies meals and overnight expenses)



All Signs Custom Mr Educationa Salo







Pre-Order - 2023 Limited Custom Silk-Screen Santora

Trees Planted Sians \$131 50

No Trespassing Signs \$131 50

2024 Printed Poster by Justin \$45.00 **MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT PACKAGE DETAILS (CONT.)**

Tree Sale eCommerce Website Template (Platinum Only)

Our newest Platinum level perk that will streamline your tree/plant sales into the digital setting, saving your District staff time and labor, while improving customer service. A perk valued at \$3,000-5,000 for only \$1,300! This will help your District save money and sell more trees.

CD Video Advertisement (Platinum Only)

Many Districts in 2022 and 2023 took advantage of the Platinum Level Custom Video Advertisement produced by Burly Mermaid Media. It's an excellent "Introductory Message" for use on social media, in presentations, or anywhere else you can use a high-quality intro. video. The length is approximately 1-3 minutes, and the content can be adjusted (within reason) to fit your District's branding and region. Districts can submit high quality video footage or photos to help highlight and best represent your programming.

MACD Outreach Program

The MACD Outreach Program shares the work of Michigan Conservation Districts through social media and statewide media organizations. The MACD Facebook, Instagram, Twitter/X, and LinkedIn accounts regularly post information about Conservation Districts, and CDs' many fantastic benefits, events and programs. Articles that highlight Conservation Districts and their programs are posted to the MACD Blog and shared through news media outlets and conservation-related media sources, including Michigan Farmer, Michigan Outdoors, and Woods-N-Water News. Annually, MACD promotes Stewardship Week in April by collecting and producing materials and marketing for our members. In addition, MACD works with the Governor's office for an official proclamation on "Conservation District Day" on July 17th.

Marketing and Branding Tools

Branding is essential for building recognition of Conservation Districts' incredible work throughout Michigan. MACD provides a logo and marketing tools that are customizable to your District, to help build recognition for your CD's work locally, while also maintaining a common brand for Michigan Conservation Districts statewide.

A.M. Leonard Group Buying Power

The A.M. Leonard Horticultural Tools and Supply Company partners with MACD to provide group discount pricing to members. With a dedicated agent, A.M. Leonard provides great service and pricing for reforestation sales and habitat projects. Contact MACD to obtain A.M. Leonard customer service contact information.

MACD Association Management System Website, Google for Nonprofits Platform

The MACD website promotes the work of Conservation Districts in a refreshing new way, while providing a robust and continually evolving "Members Only" section where members manage their member record, post jobs, and find important business support documents, trainings, and more.



2024 MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT PACKAGE DETAILS (CONT.)

MACD Association Management System Website, Google for Nonprofits Platform (Cont.)

The MACD Google for Nonprofits platform provides our Conservation Districts with a robust email communications system, which includes Gmail-based email and calendars, an internal Google Drive, 30 GB of cloud storage, and GoogleMeet, a valuable virtual meeting system. To create new macd.org email addresses (or manage existing ones), please contact <u>Taylor.Pack@macd.org</u>.

To facilitate member communications, MACD utilizes the <u>www.macd.org</u> website, Slack, enewsletters, and the internal Facebook group for directors and staff. MACD keeps members in the loop with legislative updates, event details, advocacy efforts, program updates, agency communications and partner information.

MACD Member Services

Have a question? Need assistance? MACD is available to help on issues from basic board processes to working with county commissioners. MACD can answer questions and provide assistance on a broad range of business and conservation program topics, including:

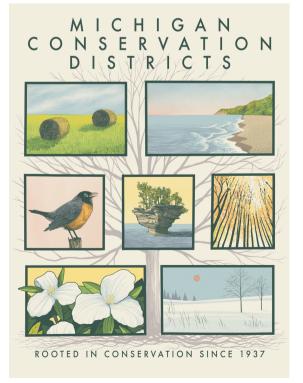
- Local leadership support
- Strategic planning
- Board member training
- Policy development
- Legislative assistance with local issues

MACD Webstore Discount www.macdstore.org

Our new <u>online store offers beautiful silk-screen</u> printed posters from Chicago "rock star" artist <u>Justin Santora</u> -- limited edition means there's 250 prints. A perfect addition to your home, CD office, or as a gift for your favorite conservation-minded people in your life. Once they're gone, they're gone forever -- **we will never print more of this particular print!**

Platinum, Gold, and Silver Members will receive a discount to our new store as part of their premium membership.

MACD will continually build out our inventory and products offered via the store, with plans to produce custom-branded CD goodies, custom print orders, and more!





2024 AND BEYOND: LOOKING AHEAD

As MACD's Executive Director Dan Moilanen enters his third year working for the Association, he has his eyes set on keeping MACD within the "Growth Mindset." Dan's vision for the future of MACD involves hiring a Development Director to help further grow revenue streams for our Association. Historically, MACD has underutilized our "Partner Memberships," which we hope to expand with the help of a full-time Development Director dedicated to building strategic partnerships, securing sponsors for MACD events, Envirothon, and more. If your District typically only renews your membership at the Bronze level, we strongly encourage you to consider increasing your dues this year. If MACD is able to raise an additional \$40,000 through membership dues -- a total of 30 CDs increasing their membership to the Platinum level -- we will be able to hire a Development Director. This staff member would then essentially pay for their position by increasing MACD's revenue streams and sponsorships. With additional resources, MACD could also expand our programming to further support our mission of strengthening Michigan's Conservation Districts.





What would that look like? MACD providing expanded services to our membership like Human Resources, Accounting, and other expanded business support programming.

With additional development funds, MACD could also expand our lobbying team to include a full-time MACD Staff Member dedicated to tracking legislative bills, developing white-papers, and continually building relationships with legislators.

Lastly, we're working hard to bring Envirothon back to Michigan. Increased funding for this critical program will be essential. Your CD's additional support will help us improve Envirothon's funding structure to ensure today and tomorrow's high school students are introduced and recruited into careers in Conservation.

By increasing your CD's support, MACD will be stronger than ever, ready and running to help Michigan's Conservation Districts take on whatever challenges 2024 (and beyond) throws at us. We can do this, together. We thank you for your consideration and continued membership.

Let's grow!



2024 MEMBERSHIP FORM



MACD provides a convenient Dues Payment feature on our website: <u>www.macd.org</u>. At our site's main menu click *Membership -> Pay Membership Dues*. Alternatively, open up the Camera App on your smartphone and scan the QR Code above right: it will bring you to MACD's PayPal Dues Payment Page.

Before making your membership selection, please review the Member Benefit Descriptions to fully understand the specific benefits included in the Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze member categories.

Payment by Check Instructions:

Fill in your Conservation District's name, check the appropriate payment box, complete payment plan details where applicable, including board member signature, and submit along with your check to MACD:

_

Conservation District Name:

Platinum Level // Full Membership = \$1,300+

Gold Level // Full Membership = \$1,000 - \$1,299

Silver Level // Membership Support = \$700 - \$999

Bronze Level // Membership Support = \$400 - \$699

Dues Payment Plan - Payment of \$ _____ will be submitted on a quarterly basis for the level of membership noted above.

* Payment Plan Board Signature REQUIRED:

Advocacy Campaign Donation

Conservation Districts that designate **Silver** or **Bronze** membership: your membership does not financially contribute to the Legislative Advocacy Campaign. Please consider a donation to this specific campaign to show your support.

Advocacy Campaign Donation \$ _____

FY24 Membership Deadline*: Friday, December 1, 2023.

*Where financial situation necessitates, quarterly payment plans are accepted. This Invoice, with level of membership noted and board member signature, MUST be submitted to MACD by Friday, December 1, 2023.

Please pay with Credit Card via <u>PayPal</u> or make check payable to MACD & mail to: Michigan Association of Conservation Districts

P.O. Box 477 Flint, MI 48501

Thank you for your support!

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION of CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

LET'S GROW

(517) 331-4391 www.macd.org

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