



2011 RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND LONG-RANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

**ALGER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
101 Court Street
Munising, Michigan 49862
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www.algercourthouse.com/Conservation**

ACD Mission: To provide sound natural resource and land management assistance to the people of Alger County, present and future.

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CONTENTS

District and County Overview	page 3
Organization Information	page 3
District Activities and Funding	page 4
District Staff	page 5
Resource Assessment Survey Methods & Analysis	page 6
Prioritized Resource Concerns	page 6
Alger Conservation District Long-Range Implementation Plan	page 8
Appendix A: Resource Assessment Questionnaire	
Appendix B: Survey Data Compilation	
Appendix C: Survey Respondent Comments	
Appendix D: Respondent Demographics	

DISTRICT AND COUNTY OVERVIEW

Alger County is located in the north-central Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The county is bounded on the west by Marquette County, on the south by Delta County, on the east and south by Luce and Schoolcraft counties and on the north by Lake Superior. The county contains approximately 918 square miles and has a population of 9601 according to the 2010 US Census. Owing to the large amount of federal and state land, the population density is approximately 10.7 persons per square mile.

The county is mainly forested and has a strong timber based economy. The wood products industries range from primary producers (loggers) to producers of finished products such as snowshoes, furniture, cabinetry, log homes, maple syrup, paper and paper products, and veneer. Agricultural activities within Alger County are limited to less than 60 farms that produce dairy products, beef cattle, hay and potatoes, fresh produce, fiber, flower and tree seedlings, and other commodities. With its abundant natural resources, recreation and tourism are major industries in Alger County in all four seasons.

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

The Alger Conservation District was founded in 1959 and is locally managed by a five-member board of directors who are elected to four-year terms by county residents at the Annual Meeting. The stated mission of the district is to provide sound natural resource and land management assistance to the people of Alger County, present and future.

The District seeks to accomplish that mission by:

- Providing technical assistance to landowners to address wind and water erosion, invasive species, native plantings, watershed protection, sound agricultural practices, and other natural resource concerns.
- Reducing sedimentation pollution of our surface water and protecting against pollution of our ground water from both source and non-point source pollution.
- Providing forestry assistance to non-industrial private forestland owners to improve the health of forests, restore wildlife habitat, provide environmentally sustainable economic benefit to landowners, and expand Michigan's forest products economy.
- Promoting groundwater, habitat and soil stewardship via Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Farm Bill programs and the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), thereby conserving resources, providing financial benefits to producers, and boosting consumer confidence in Michigan's agricultural economy.
- Building partnerships of local government entities, state and federal agencies, private and commercial landowners, and other stakeholders to promote and fund conservation and restoration of Alger County resources.
- Educating youth on conservation concepts, ethics and practices via classroom, field and service learning programs.

- Educating adults about resource concerns such as forest management, invasive species control, and watershed protection.
- Engaging citizens to take steps to protect their own lands and volunteer in local and regional conservation efforts.

DISTRICT ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING

ACD has facilitated over **\$2,077,520** in grant-funded projects in Alger County since 2000. It has received and implemented the following grants which address nonpoint source pollution and other watershed concerns:

- **Collaborative Partnership to Restore Alger County Watersheds**, a grant from EPA through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to reduce non-point source sedimentation by implementing culvert restorations, erosion control measures and other protections and to form a basis for expansion of countywide watershed programs using social monitoring survey techniques. (#GL-00E00600, September 2010-August 2013). Grant = \$789,384.
- **Alger Watershed Restoration Education Project**, a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for nonpoint source sedimentation control and watershed implementation and education. (#2008-0063-001, June 2008-December 2010). Grant = \$127,100; Match = \$154,873; Project total = \$281,973.
- **Munising Bay Watershed Restoration Project**, a Clean Michigan Initiative (CMI) grant for implementation erosion and sedimentation control per the CMI-approved watershed management plan. (#2004-0167, Aug. 2005 – July 2008). Grant=\$325,610 Match=\$101,579 Project total=\$427,189
- **St Martin’s Hill Erosion Control Demonstration Project** from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control (#11-04-41, Apr 2004 – Aug. 2005). Grant=\$110,385 Match=\$91,225 Project total=\$201,610
- **Munising Bay – St. Martin’s Hill**, a CMI/Nonpoint Source Pollution watershed implementation project, (DEQ tracking #2002-0039, July 2004 – July 2006). Grant=\$91,225 Match=\$45,778 Project total=\$137,003
- **Eastern Alger County Watershed Erosion Control Project – Sucker River Demo Sites**, from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion And Sedimentation Control, (#10-03-04, June 2003 – June 2006). Grant=\$27,025 Match=\$21,716 Project total=\$48,741
- **Munising Bay Watershed Restoration Project and Water Quality Management Plan**, a project of MDEQ, Section 319, Nonpoint Source Program. (DEQ Tracking Code #2000-0041 Apr 2000-June 2002). Grant=\$114,185 Match=\$20,182 Project total=\$134,367
- **Alger County Watershed Inventory: Burt and Onota Townships**, a Competitive Grant from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (Apr 2001 – Apr 2002). Grant=\$2000 Match=\$2000 Project total=\$4000

In addition, the District received the following grants and funding to address other resource protection and restoration concerns:

- **City of Munising Streetscape Restoration Project**, a DNR Community Forestry Grant to replant street trees in City of Munising. (CFG 10-01, FY 2010). Grant = \$3,125; Match = \$7,889; Project total = \$10,534.
- **RRIP-IT-UP**, a project funded by NFWF through the UP RC&D to establish early detection and rapid response teams for invasive plants and implement control efforts across the U.P. Funding included work in Alger County, contractual work in Schoolcraft County, and a competitive grant for a demo project at Au Train Beach. (2010-2011) Grant = \$10,829; Match = \$23,617; Project total = \$34,446.
- **Alger Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Monitoring Program**, an initiative to continue EAB monitoring in 2010 and 2011 after existing program was ended by state funding cuts. Funding partners included county & township governments, UPPCO, and the Sault Tribe. (2010-2011). Grants = \$5,173; Match = \$3,100; Project total = \$8,273.

District activities and overhead are partly funded by the spring and fall tree and wildflower sales. In addition to fulfilling the District's reforestation and restoration objectives, these sales clear a total of \$5,000 to \$8,000 per year. The County supplies in-kind support in the form of office space, and the City of Munising and several townships provide financial support by entering into loan agreements and Contracts for Services. The state of Michigan has not provided any operations funding for three years, and is not expected to do so at any time in the foreseeable future.

DISTRICT STAFF

Teri Grout has been the ACD Executive Director since 2008. She has a B.S. in Biology with a minor in Geology and an A.A. in Art. She administers and writes grants, develops and presents public workshops and events, performs bookkeeping and office duties, administers reforestation and native plants programs and sales, develops and disseminates media outreach and publications, acts as liaison with government agencies and entities, performs field work, and supervises field and office interns.

Elizabeth Coyne has been the ACD Watershed Manager since September 2005. She plans and implements all watershed programs and projects and seeks grant funding for programs. She has a B.S. in Physical Geography with a minor in Biology from Northern Michigan University (NMU), including courses in limnology, hydrology, geology, soils and ecology, and is currently enrolled in a graduate program at Michigan Technological University.

Gary Bucklin is the district forester for the Alger and Marquette Conservation Districts and the consulting forester for the County of Marquette. He has a B.S. in Forestry from Michigan State University and over 28 years of experience working

as a multi-county Conservation District Forester. Mr. Bucklin has supervised and executed Michigan Department of Agriculture grants for the Gypsy Moth Suppression Program and Emerald Ash Borer Trap Tree Program. In addition to private landowner assistance, Gary provides technical Timber Stand Improvement marking and cutting assistance to local governments and schools and creates and presents educational programs for local youth.

Jerry Davis is the Acting NRCS District Conservationist for Alger County. NRCS expects to hire a new District Conservationist in the early part of 2012. The District Conservationist will continue Farm Bill program administration and provide technical assistance to county landowners.

Holly Wendrick is the Groundwater Technician for the MDA Groundwater Stewardship Program and the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), serving Alger, Marquette, Delta, Schoolcraft, Luce, and Dickinson Counties. She provides on-site and in office technical assistance to producers and landowners for these programs.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT SURVEY METHODS and ANALYSIS

In 2011, District staff developed a new resource assessment survey based on surveys conducted in 2001 and 2006. The survey (Appendix A) was direct mailed to nearly 9,000 households countywide. It was also mailed to partner agencies and government entities and distributed at outreach events.

The resource concerns survey requested basic demographic information from respondents, asked them to rank land use, water quality, and wildlife and habitat issues in order of importance, and asked them about their awareness of, participation in, and prioritization of Alger Conservation District programs. Staff compiled data into a spreadsheet (Appendix B), and a Strategic Plan Committee composed of staff and board members incorporated results into the following Long-Range Implementation Plan. To a large extent, most respondents' priorities coincided with much of the District's current activities and focus, and these priorities form the backbone of the implementation plan.

The 2011 Resource Assessment and Long-Range Implementation Plan will be used to guide the efforts of the Alger Conservation District for the next five years.

PRIORITIZED RESOURCE CONCERNS by Citation Percentage

Land Use Issues

- 1a.** Spread of invasive species: 68%
- 2a.** Forest management: 55%
- 3a.** Preservation of natural areas: 43%
- 4a.** Local food production & small farm opportunities: 37%
- 5a.** Local planning & zoning for growth: 31%
- 6a.** Loss of recreational opportunities: 20%
- 7a.** Overuse & poor use of recreational areas: 15%

- 8a. Loss of farmland: 12%
- 9a. Urban sprawl: 12%

Water Quality Issues

- 1b. Invasive plants and animals: 52%
- 2b. Protection of recreational waters: 37%
- 3b. Groundwater contamination: 35%
- 4b. Soil erosion and sedimentation: 31%
- 5b. Lake and stream cleanup: 31%
- 6b. Surface water protection & management: 28%
- 7b. Inadequate septic systems: 18%
- 8b. Residential fertilizer & pesticide use: 18%
- 9b. Loss of wetlands: 15%
- 10b. Agricultural fertilizer & pesticide use: 12%
- 11b. Stormwater management: 11%
- 12b. Groundwater overuse: 9%
- 13b. Agricultural cropland drainage: 3%

Wildlife and Habitat Issues

- 1c. Invasive plants and animals: 62%
- 2c. Climate change: 42%
- 3c. Destruction of wildlife habitat: 42%
- 4c. Habitat restoration & management: 34%
- 5c. Wildlife survival: 31%
- 6c. Restoration & management of existing wetlands: 29%
- 7c. Fragmentation of habitat: 23%
- 8c. Wildlife damage to property or crops: 14%
- 9c. Lack of public hunting access: 14%

Highest Priority ACD Services & Programs

- 1d. Invasive species site visits and control: 34%
- 2d. Invasive species workshops: 31%
- 3d. Watershed improvement projects: 28%
- 4d. Invasive species volunteer days: 23%
- 5d. Watershed protection education & planning: 23%
- 6d. Spring tree & wildflower sale: 20%
- 7d. Fall native plant sale: 18%
- 8d. Stream monitoring: 18%
- 9d. Forestry site visits & assistance: 17%
- 10d. Wildlife habitat assistance: 17%
- 11d. Groundwater conservation assistance: 17%
- 12d. Fruit tree workshops: 15%
- 13d. Student service learning programs: 15%
- 14d. Partnership in natural resource protection grants: 12%
- 15d. Classroom programs: 12%
- 16d. Native plant workshops & site assistance: 12%

- 17d. Farm bill assistance: 11%
- 18d. Agri-Palooza: 11%
- 19d. EAB monitoring: 11%
- 20d. NMU internships: 11%
- 21d. ACD webpage: 11%
- 22d. ACD Facebook page: 9%
- 23d. Home Show & Fair booths: 9%
- 24d. Farmers' Market booth: 9%
- 25d. Cost share for natural resource projects: 5%

Additional Concerns and Comments (Single mentions unless indicated)

- 1e. Better advertising of workshops (2)
- 2e. Recycling assistance (2)
- 3e. Soils improvement/sand gardening
- 4e. Monitoring of dumping/polluting of land of & water (2)
- 5e. Encourage wind/solar use & education (2)
- 6e. Native plant & tree ID workshop/Grass ID (2)
- 7e. Evaluation of lakes for acid rain, other contamination
- 8e. More farm markets
- 9e. Septic groundwater contamination/poor septic regulation (3)
- 10e. Invasive species ID workshops & ID signs at public areas (2)
- 11e. Permaculture/self-sufficiency/local sustainability (2)
- 12e. Healthy food production
- 13e. Climate change (2)
- 14e. Wetland preservation & monitoring
- 15e. Stricter environmental enforcement/resist weakening of regulation (2)
- 16e. Assistance to public for contaminated wells

**ALGER CONSERVATION DISTRICT LONG-RANGE
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

Based on the input from our stakeholders, our existing programs and available funding, Alger Conservation District will focus on the following activities over the next five years.

WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

GOAL: Restore compromised streams, coastline, and crossings

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a,3a, 6a, 7a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 11b, 1c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 3d, 5d, 14d, 25d,14e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Implement erosion control projects at Sucker River and Christmas Motorsports track through Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) EPA grant.
- Develop plan for restoration of Joe's Creek and seek funding.

- Prioritize additional restoration projects as identified through crossing inventory, partnership with Alger Road Commission, & stakeholder outreach. Seek funding.

GOAL: Expand protection programs to other watersheds in county

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a,3a, 5a, 6a, 7a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 7b, 8b, 9b, 10b, 11b, 12b, 13b, 1c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 3d, 5d, 14d, 25d, 4e, 7e, 9e, 14e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Implement Social Monitoring phase of GLRI EPA grant. Use results to develop comprehensive watershed protection planning countywide.
- Seek grant monies for planning and restoration projects for other watersheds within Alger County.
- Continue networking with other agencies and organizations to coordinate efforts and funding for large-scale watershed projects.

GOAL: Compile baseline assessment information to prioritize watershed restoration activities.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 2b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 11b, 3c, 6c, 7c, 3d, 5d, 8d, 13d, 14d, 20d, 4e, 7e, 14e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Establish baseline macroinvertebrate & vertebrate population and habitat assessments in key watersheds using interns, volunteers, and students.
- Complete road stream crossing inventory for county, assessing not only sedimentation but also connectivity and biological parameters, using staff and intern labor.

GOAL: Encourage citizen involvement in watershed protection

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 5a, 1b, 2b, 3b, 4b, 5b, 6b, 11b, 2d, 3d, 5d, 8d, 13d, 14d, 15d, 20d, 7e, 14e

ACTIVITIES:

- Seek funding to revitalize Volunteer Water Monitoring program established under Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) grant, help purchase supplies, recruit and train volunteer monitors, and make program sustainable
- Revitalize Munising Bay Watershed Steering Committee, possibly with a countywide mandate.
- Promote watershed protection via workshops and presentations.

INVASIVE SPECIES EDUCATION AND CONTROL PROGRAM

GOAL: Control infestations of non-native invasive species

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a, 3a, 6a, 1b, 2b, 9b, 1c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 1d, 2d, 4d, 10e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Implement garlic mustard mapping & control countywide through two-year RC&D Garlic Mustard Eradication funding using NMU interns, ACD staff, and volunteers; continue after grant period using volunteers.
- Continue knapweed and black locust control and tree replanting at Au Train Beach demo site; foster further cooperation with MDOT.
- Continue raising Galerucella beetles for purple loosestrife biocontrol.
- Obtain permits and insects for Emerald Ash Borer biocontrol.
- Continue control work and mapping of purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, Japanese knotweed, and other invasive species.
- Continue networking with other agencies via the Central UP Cooperative Weed Management Area (CUPCWMA) to engage in large-scale control efforts and maximize efficiency of control.
- Seek funding to cooperate with adjacent counties and entities, recognizing that weeds do not respect civil boundaries.
- Communicate with individual landowners to educate and coordinate mapping and control.
- Seek additional grant funding and private landowner assistance.
- Certify at least one staff member as Commercial Pesticide Applicator.

GOAL: Educate public on threats posed by invasive species and encourage citizen involvement.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a, 3a, 6a, 1b, 2b, 5b, 6b, 9b, 1c, 3c, 4c, 1d, 2d, 4d, 5d, 9d, 10d, 13d, 15d, 18d, 10e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Conduct invasive species workshops.
- Develop and conduct invasive species field ID days.
- Hold volunteer workdays at high-profile infestation sites.
- Disseminate general and in-house produced written materials and Conservation Corner articles.
- Perform site visits as requested to assist landowners in identification, control and restoration of invasive species on their lands.
- Work with lake associations, garden clubs, and other target groups to develop and implement group policies and control efforts.
- Maintain communications with volunteer Early Detection/Rapid Response team developed under RRIP-IT-UP grant in order to find and control new infestations while it is economically feasible.
- Attend regional educational conferences to keep abreast of new methods and developments.
- Network with sportsmen's groups and Munising and Grand Marais officials to increase awareness and prevent spread of aquatic invasives.

FORESTRY PROGRAM

GOAL: Promote general forest health and public awareness of issues, viewing "forestry" in the broadest sense, to include concerns

about wildlife, recreation, soil and water conservation, forest health, and timber management.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a, 2a, 4a, 1b, 1c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 8c, 9c, 1d, 9d, 10d, 12d, 16d, 17d, 25d.

ACTIVITIES:

- Assist landowners of properties of any size, from large wilderness tracts to small urban backyards, with questions concerning control of pests, plant diseases, and invasive species, forest health, wildlife habitat management, maintenance of native biodiversity, tree planting, use of native plants in conservation practices, windbreak establishment, erosion control, urban and community forestry, harvesting options and marketing information, timber stand improvement, ecosystem services.
- Conduct annual tree health workshop or other workshops as appropriate.
- Provide on-site and in-office technical assistance to landowners regarding carbon sequestration and watershed protection
- Provide referrals to private sector resources when appropriate.

GOAL: Encourage the management of non-industrial private forest lands.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 2a, 3a, 4a, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 8c, 9c, 1d, 9d, 10d, 14d, 16d, 17d, 25d.

ACTIVITIES:

- Perform site visits and provide written management options for landowners based on the clients' objectives and best management practices.
- Promote Farm Bill forest management programs via media outreach, workshops, and word-of-mouth.

GOAL: Maintain Inter-District Forestry Program with Marquette Conservation District

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 2a,9d, 14d, 17d, 25d

ACTIVITIES:

- Seek continuing outside funding for program.
- Continue fee-for-service program.

NATIVE SPECIES AND HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAM

GOAL: Promote awareness and utilization of native plants and habitats

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 1a, 2a, 3a, 1b, 2b, 9b, 11b, 1c, 2c, 3c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 1d, 6d, 7d, 9d, 10d, 16d, 21d, 22d, 23d, 24d3e, 6e, 14e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Maintain native planting at courthouse as demonstration area and create matching flyer to promote native wildflowers.

- Complete and maintain Native Plants Pathway in Chatham to promote native habitats using student and intern assistance.
- Continue to hold annual native plants workshop; develop native plants and/or grasses field workshops.
- Seek additional outreach opportunities among suitable target groups (garden clubs, lakeowner associations).
- Promote the establishment of filter strips, greenbelts and wildlife corridors; native plants in conservation practices and landscaping; and native trees and shrubs in stream and buffer plantings via educational workshops, wildflower and plant sales, press releases and publications.
- Educate landowners about threatened and endangered plant and animal species.
- Train staff to begin District involvement in Critical Dunes education and permitting program in order to provide better service and response to shoreline landowners at the local level.

AGRICULTURE AND GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM

GOAL: Educate and encourage implementation of conservation practices through the NRCS financial and technical assistance conservation programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 2a, 4a, 8a, 3b, 4b, 6b, 9b, 10b, 12b, 13b, 1c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 7c, 8c, 9d, 10d, 11d, 14d, 17d, 23d, 25d, 12e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Maintain information about Farm Bill programs at office.
- Disseminate press releases to coincide with signup periods.
- Contact appropriate landowners about suitable programs.

GOAL: Promote MAEAP and MDA groundwater protection program.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 4a, 3b, 4b, 6b, 8b, 10b, 13b, 5d, 11d, 23d, 25d.

ACTIVITIES:

- Educate the public on Farm*A*Syst, Crop*A*Syst, and Livestock*A*Syst assessment tools to reduce nutrient-source (fertilizer/manure) and pesticide-source contaminating surface and groundwater.
- Work one-on-one with MAEAP Water Stewardship Technician on promotion of program.
- Assist producers in getting cost-share if it becomes available.
- Support local groundwater education in the community.
- Contact appropriate landowners about MAEAP programs.

GOAL: Address groundwater contamination issues and landowner concerns

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 2b, 3b, 5b, 6b, 7b, 8b, 10b, 13b, 3d, 11d, 2e, 9e, 16e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Assist Alger County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority by serving on its board and providing technical assistance.
- Provide technical assistance to landowners in closing abandoned wells and with septic system concerns.
- Provide education to citizens on threats to water from household hazardous waste and agricultural chemicals; provide referrals for disposal.
- Identify areas within the county where used oil and batteries can be recycled.
- Investigate additional recycling options in county.

YOUTH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

GOAL: Promote conservation education and development of conservation ethic among young people

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 4d, 8d, 13d, 15d, 18d, 20d, 22d, 5e.

ACTIVITIES:

- Provide in-class ecology and conservation presentations.
- Involve students in field and service learning projects.
- Work with teachers, schools, scout, and 4H groups to plan and fund suitable projects.
- Seek funding and opportunities to continue intern program with NMU.
- Continue and expand annual Agri-Palooza event.
- Collaborate with other agencies (Michigan Works, Sault Tribe) to seek funding for youth education, field study, and work crew initiatives in order to promote both resource stewardship and local economic health.

GENERAL PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AGENCY OUTREACH

GOAL: Disseminate information about District services, events, opportunities, and accomplishments.

RESOURCE CONCERNS ADDRESSED: 5a, 21d, 22d, 23d, 24d; but this topic involves almost all concerns cited.

ACTIVITIES:

- Maintain District web site with regular updates.
- Distribute a biannual newsletter in conjunction with spring and fall tree sales as widely as funds will allow.
- Maintain Facebook page and keep abreast of evolving social networking opportunities.
- Distribute regular press releases, Conservation Corner articles, and PSAs to local news media as appropriate.
- Host public workshops as outlined in specific Activities listed above.

- Continue presence at public events such as the Alger County and U.P. State Fairs, Munising Farmers Market, and Alger Home Show.
- Speak to county and to each township and municipality at least once a year to update them on District activities; mail officials Annual Report, newsletters and other updates as appropriate.
- Provide presentations to civic organizations as opportunities arise.
- Attend interagency meetings to establish and maintain networks.
- Cooperate with and assist Alger Parks and Recreation on large-scale initiatives such as Au Train Recreation Area trail plan.