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Conservation Update:  
News from the Montmorency Conservation District

### **Consider the Soil First**

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Montmorency Conservation District board member

Winter is a good time to use the information in the *Montmorency County Soil Survey* (2003) or the soil survey for your county if you reside outside of Montmorency County. Soil Surveys have been completed for each county in the state. Since it is not easy to dig your own holes this time of year, why not read about your land in the comfort of your favorite chair in a heated room.

Much planning is done in winter—gardens, tree planting or harvesting projects, that dream house, landscaping, farm activities (planning pastures, irrigation systems, tillage operations)—and many other projects that are based in part on land. Using the information in the soil survey report can make the planning process easier and give better results because you will know what lies beneath the surface and can use that knowledge to your advantage.

In addition to showing what your soil is like, the soil survey has aerial map views of your land. These show the soil types and land-use features such as forest, cropland, lakes, houses, etc. The number of acres in the area of concern can be calculated using these maps.

Tables in the soil survey report provide information for almost any use you can think of that depends on the soil. For example: the kinds of trees to plant are given for each soil type, how much wood is produced per year, and best methods and seasons for harvesting trees are given in the forestry tables. Irrigation systems can be designed with knowledge of the size in acres, rate of intake, and water holding capacity given in the “Water Management” and the “Physical Properties” tables. Ratings for wildlife habitat and potential for wildlife food plots are given in the “Wildlife Habitat” table.

Knowing how deep the water table is can make the difference between a dry or flooded basement. The “Building Site Development” table shows the soils that have high water problems and also information on landscaping for homes.

Soil survey information for Montmorency County is available in three formats. The printed book along with separate map sheets is available at the Conservation District office. There is no charge if picked up at the office (call first); or it can be mailed for \$12.00 S&H. The report is also in a CD format for your computer. This CD has a digital form of the printed book and maps plus an interactive form that has many

features including an acreage measuring tool. The CD is also free and available at the District office. The third format is web based. The Soil Survey report including tables, but not the maps is at [www.soils.usda.gov/survey/online\\_surveys/michigan/](http://www.soils.usda.gov/survey/online_surveys/michigan/) . The soil maps are at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx> .