

Benzie County

2016–2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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FROM THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR:

MSU Extension staff continue to provide education and outreach on needs facing Benzie county residents. Our recent needs assessment utilized focus group and online survey input to solicit feedback from the public on what are the most vital needs and priorities for Michigan residents. These results have provided a local direction and educational focus to meet the emerging, critical issues facing Benzie County residents.



Your local MSU Extension staff have linked the knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities and businesses over the past year. It is my distinct privilege to present these accomplishments in our annual report. This report summarizes the important work done by MSU Extension staff in Benzie County. It has captured most of the significant highlights of our work in 2016 and provides a sense of the direction of our work into the future.

As always, I thank you for your continued support every year. Without you, we would not be here doing this important work with your constituents.

Jennifer Berkey

 District 3 Coordinator

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MEASURING IMPACT:

CONNECTING WITH RESIDENTS

4-H: Developing Youth & Communities	809
Keeping People Healthy & Ensuring Safe Food	1,141
Supporting Food & Agriculture, Fostering Strong Communities & Businesses, and Enhancing Our Natural Assets	250

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS IN BENZIE COUNTY 2,200

MSU EXTENSION'S EXPANDED DIGITAL REACH IN DISTRICT 3 AND STATEWIDE:



3.7 million visitors viewed more than 7.2 million pages



1.3 million topic newsletters distributed to more than 16,900 email addresses



Nearly 3,500 Facebook and more than 2,800 Twitter followers

Statewide 2015-16 Digital Reach



27% Increase in District 3 Visitors to MSU Extension Website



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DEVELOPING YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension 4-H programs, youth participants learn life skills that prepare them for the workforce – especially for highly sought after jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Extension programs help children develop early literacy skills that support school readiness. They learn leadership and decision-making skills in 4-H that increase their likelihood of becoming civically active.



The Benzie County 4-H Advisory Council

- This group serves as an advisory board to 4-H staff and helps to give the local program vision, structure and direction. The current board consists of 8 members, representing the communities of Benzonia Township, Beulah, Homestead Township, Honor, and Joyfield Township.
- The 4-H Advisory Council also works with 4-H staff to support a 4-H Ambassador program, county plat book, annual youth trip to Michigan State University, and a volunteer recognition program.
- Donor support has been found to help fund an annual \$1,000 college scholarship intended solely for Benzie County 4-H members. There will be an application and interview process from which one winner will be selected. This will be the first-ever Benzie 4-H sponsored scholarship.



The Benzie County 4-H Ambassador Program

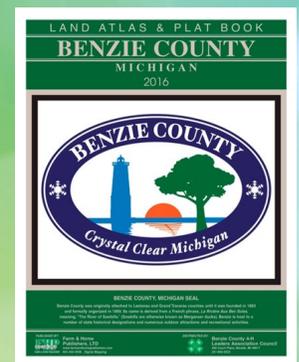
- Youth selected serve as representatives of the program at public 4-H events and council meetings.
- The Benzie County 4-H Ambassador for the 2016-17 year is Hannah Long, an eight-year member of the program. Hannah is currently a junior at Benzie Central High School and will be pursuing a teaching degree after she graduates in 2018.

The Benzie County Land Atlas and Plat Book

- The latest edition of this book was launched in March of 2016. This is a 2-year fundraising project and the Benzie book is scheduled for a new release every even-numbered year.
- Proceeds from all sales go directly to the Benzie 4-H Leaders Association Council.
- The book is an added asset to Benzie County in promoting local tourism and real estate interests. Sales records continue to show that the book is ordered statewide, by residents of both peninsulas, as well as the states surrounding Michigan.

4-H participants reported higher academic competence in grades 7, 9, 11 and 12, and higher school engagement at grades 11 and 12, than participants enrolled in other out-of-school-time activities.

~ Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development



Developing Youth and Communities, continued

“Speaking for myself, 4-H has been a way of life. I grew up through the 4-H livestock program with my parents (Jack & Joyce Einodshofer) and Clarence Davis as my club leaders. 4-H taught me basic accounting principles, how to write a professional letter, and most of all – responsibility. I became a 4-H club leader to help other youth in Benzie County have the same experiences that I did and also to have them know that there is someone who cares.”

*~ Elaine Taghon,
4-H volunteer since 1996, and leader of the Benzie Cowabungas 4-H Club*

- Numerous local 4-H activities, special events, and funding for travel to statewide 4-H educational events and 4-H Exploration Days at the MSU campus are made possible in part due to the financial support received annually through plat book sales.
- The book is sold at the Benzie County Treasurer’s Office and the Benzie MSU Extension office, as well as at several local businesses, including Backcast Fly Shop, Lake Ann Grocery, Nugent Ace Hardware, Stapleton’s Market, Tag Limit Outdoors, and Victoria’s Floral Design & Gifts.

4-H Exploration Days at MSU

- This 3 day event, held annually in late June at the Michigan State University campus, simulates college life for over 2,200 4-H youth from all over the state.
- The Benzie 4-H Leaders Association Council pays all costs for the head adult male and female delegation chaperones and 50% of the registration fee for youth and other adult attendees, plus additional expenses such as group insurance and chaperone needs.
- The 2016 trip included a group of 14 youth from Benzie County. The youth and their chaperones live on campus, experience dorm life, and attend a variety of classes and other educational events in subject areas that include human and animal sciences, international culture and languages, career exploration in dozens of fields, music, human services, life skills, hobbies and sports, and personal and business finance.
- For most of these Benzie County youth, this will be their first exposure to a college campus and it will influence most of them towards a college education and a greater career goal than they had originally planned.

The Benzie Youth Soccer Program

- In 1987, a need was realized for Benzie County youth to participate in and reap the benefits of a well-organized, county-wide youth athletic program such as softball or soccer. In most communities, these programs typically fall under the authority of a community recreation association. As Benzie County did not have this type of agency, event organizers looked to Benzie MSU Extension to provide that leadership – and the program choice was soccer.

- To support the program, the Benzie MSU Extension office, under the direction of 4-H Program Coordinator Debra Laws, handles most of the business aspects of the program. This includes coach selection and thorough volunteer background checks, player registration, communication between coaches/players/families, liability issues and insurance needs, and financial management.



**141 Benzie
County Youth**

Developing Youth and Communities, continued

Benzie County Volunteers Are An Essential Part of Two County Fairs

- The premier event carried out by 4-H Livestock Council is the annual 4-H Livestock Auction at the Manistee County Fair. In August of 2016, the auction celebrated its 36th year with a sale featuring 156 animals and 18 donated items. With 89 buyers participating, the event raised over \$126,000. Honor State Bank, which is also a 33-year consecutive buyer, has served as auction cashier since 2005.
- A total of 7.5% of auction proceeds go back to the Livestock Council for ongoing support of its programs. A smaller portion goes to other 4-H councils that were designated as recipients of income from certain donated items that were sold.
- At the 2016 auction, figures indicate that 21 of the registered buyers represented Benzie County businesses. People want to support businesses that support 4-H. These local businesses report that the exposure and publicity they get by being involved in this event increases their foot traffic and volume.



156 Animals



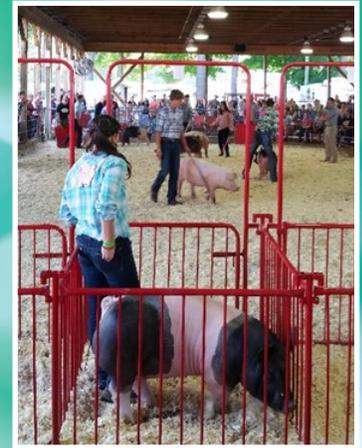
89 Buyers



\$126,000
Raised

Benzie County 4-H Educational Programming

- There is an increased effort to involve 4-H livestock members in regular educational programs. Often, the 4-H livestock auction has been viewed as an event where some participants put in minimal effort just to receive a market check.
- 4-H Program Coordinator Laws has worked with the 4-H Livestock Council to establish an annual day-long educational event to be held every April. The focus of that event isn't just about raising and selling animals. It's about gaining skills that can be utilized later – in life, in college or trade school, and on the job.
- The 2016 educational event featured topics such as building social skills to improve relationships with adults (potential auction buyers), exploring ways to show appreciation to businesses and individuals that support the 4-H Market Livestock program, and animal health and well-being. The event was attended by 63 youth.
- The most outstanding feedback about the day, spoken by youth and adults alike, centered on a session involving greetings and handshakes. It was apparent at the start of the class that most of the youth had little to no experience with making introductions or even in executing a proper handshake. The youth in attendance did a fair amount of maturing in that time frame and also walked away with some of the most important life skills they will ever have.



The majority of the auction money raised goes back to the 4-H members and is used for back-to-school needs and college funds.



KEEPING PEOPLE HEALTHY & ENSURING SAFE FOOD

When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn safe food handling practices, increase their physical activity and improve the quality of their diets. Extension programming also helps decrease incidents of violence and bullying. Encouraging these healthy behaviors helps reduce food and health care costs by helping prevent chronic health conditions and providing safe environments throughout a person's life span.

Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) provides nutrition education to income-eligible adults and children. This program focuses on improving dietary quality, increasing physical activity while stretching food dollars. The ultimate goal of these programs is to promote healthy weight maintenance and obesity prevention. In 2016, 1,015 adults and youth were reached through nutrition education classes at various venues in Benzie County.

- 671 youth were enrolled in Show Me Nutrition (SMN), a six-week program for youth from Pre-K through eighth grade. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in age appropriate, interactive, hands-on activities that promote good eating habits, positive body image, physical activity and food safety. Through each interesting and fun nutrition class, students will gain the skills necessary to make healthy lifestyle choices. SMN is taught at schools where at least 50 percent of students are eligible for the National School Lunch Program.



1,015 Adults & Youth Reached



5,141 Newsletters Distributed

Impacts with Youth:

- 94% of teachers reported that the children increased their awareness of the importance of good nutrition.
- 69% reported that the children were making healthier snack choices.



- One of the adult classes MSU Extension staff teach each year is called Project FRESH. In collaboration with the Benzie-Leelanau Health Department, MSU Extension Program Instructors provide nutrition education to families involved in the Women, Infants and Children program (WIC) on the benefits of including more fruits and vegetables in their diet. Coupons were provided to these participants to purchase locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables from Benzie County farmer's markets through Project FRESH. Local farmers then redeem coupons for payment of local produce. Last year, over \$2,500 was distributed.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

“My work at the Benzie Area Christian Neighbors Food Pantry has been rewarding. It is nice to see the connection between the food the participants receive at the pantry and the cooking demonstrations I provide. Participants feel more confident to make meals at home using ingredients they have never tried before with the recipes and ideas I provide. One participant told me that she thought she didn't like black beans and never took them from the food pantry. After trying the Mexican rice with black beans this month, she said she will be adding them to her recipes.” - Connie Hemingway, MSUE Nutrition Program Instructor

“I am cooking more than ever before! I'm planning meals for the week, from breakfast to dinner, including snacks. I've gotten so many helpful hints on how to add more fruits and vegetables without my son even really noticing it. My change in eating habits has also extended to my family's behavior, as well. We are having so much fun cooking together as a family. This class has helped me develop confidence in the kitchen.” - Class Participant

PSE Changes are a way of making sustainable changes within our community to policies, systems, and environments so that healthy choices can be a feasible option made available to all community members. In Benzie County, this is happening through the **Fuel Up to Play 60 program**. This free in-school nutrition and physical activity program allows teams of students to make PSE changes that encourage other students, staff members, and administrators to lead healthier active lives. The changes within our schools cause a ripple effect of positively impacting our communities as students incorporate their leadership skills to motivate and encourage family and community members to properly fuel their body so they can be active every day.



Connecting Kids to Healthy Food in Schools

MSU Extension serves as one of seven FoodCorps service sites in Michigan. FoodCorps is a national organization working to connect kids to healthy food in school, so they can lead healthier lives and reach their full potential. Through this program, MSU Extension provides leadership and support to a FoodCorps service member. Service members support Farm to School strategies through delivery of hands-on nutrition and food systems education in classrooms, support healthy school meal, and work with the whole school community to support a schoolwide culture of health. Throughout the last year MSU Extension's FoodCorps service member, Julia Paige, has served in Platte River Elementary. From September 1, 2016 – March 15, 2017, Julia has taught 20 hands-on lessons to 52 students in two classrooms and exposed all 262 Platte River Elementary students to 7 cafeteria taste tests. In addition to classroom lessons and cafeteria taste tests, Julia is engaging the Benzie Central Schools Food Service Director and the Platte River Elementary kitchen team through a process that works to “nudge kids to eat healthy.” This process, known as Smarter Lunchrooms, works to provide schools with knowledge, motivation, and resources needed to build a lunchroom environment that

Impacts with Adults:

- 100% improvement in one or more nutrition practices like planning meals, making healthy food choices or reading food labels.
- 95% of participants in Project FRESH will eat more fresh fruits and vegetables per day.



Julia Paige, FoodCorps service member, blends up cherry smoothies on Platte River's smoothie bike on Michigan Cherry Slurp Day.



Keeping People Healthy, continued

makes healthy food choices the easy choice. Thanks to a partnership between MSU Extension and the Michigan Department of Education, Platte River will purchase \$250 worth of materials to support Smarter Lunchroom goals. Knowing the school will unfortunately be closing at the end of the academic year, materials will be purchased so they can be transferred easily for use at Crystal Lake Elementary School cafeteria.

“We are so proud to partner with MSU Extension FoodCorps and offer opportunities to our kids to try new food and learn how to grow their own. This is a great organization.” - Platte River Elementary School Principal

“Can you tell the school to send it (the recipe) to my mom?” - Platte River Elementary School student following a fresh applesauce taste test.

Preventing and managing chronic disease

Chronic diseases are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health issues. Compared to the national average, Michigan adults suffer from more risk factors (obesity, hypertension, and high cholesterol) that contribute to chronic disease. Michigan State University Extension disease prevention and management programs work to promote health and wellness by reducing and managing the incidence and impacts of chronic diseases among Michigan residents and communities. Health factors such as obesity and physical inactivity significantly influence risk for developing chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

The County Health Rankings, an annual measure of the overall health of nearly all counties in the nation ranked Benzie County 30th out of all 83 Michigan counties. Rankings are comprised of several national measures that affect the health of communities, such as high school graduation rates, access to healthy food, rates of smoking and obesity.

MSU Extension can support improved health of individuals and communities through delivery of evidence-based programs and engaging in multi-level partnerships with shared goals of reducing the prevalence of chronic disease. Noted activity within Benzie includes the following:

- **Supporting the development of new health network.**

MSU Extension is one of the many partners supporting the development of an emerging community health network. Live Well Benzie is in the process of developing a strategic plan and mission statement for the next two years. Current efforts to date have produced a draft strategic plan with strategic direction targeting coordination, communication and outreach, engaging communities and schools, and creating sustainable network infrastructure.

Keeping People Healthy, continued

- **Enhancing health communication to low resource individuals and families.**

Local MSU Extension Health & Nutrition is currently in the process of adding health and nutrition communication messaging efforts targeting patrons of Benzie Area Christina Neighbors (BACN). Staff member Sarah Eichberger and a public health graduate student are partnering with this local resource hub to integrate health messaging into an existing communication system targeting patrons as they wait for services, such as visiting the food pantry. The updated communication debuted in April and will continue for several months.

Reducing anger, bullying and stress

Stress Less with Mindfulness

Provided in collaboration with West Virginia University Extension, Stress Less with Mindfulness introduces participants to the experience and practice of mindfulness to reduce stress. Mindfulness can be defined as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.

Research has shown that practicing mindfulness is effective in reducing stress related symptoms such as worry, depression, and physical tension, and may be helpful in managing chronic conditions such as cardiac disease and diabetes. The MSU Extension program is offered as a five-part series or as a one-time workshop. Two program evaluation surveys collect different outcomes for series and one-time events.

RELAX: Alternatives to Anger

RELAX is a four-part educational series designed to help adults, parents, teens and caregivers increase their knowledge about anger issues and put anger management and healthy relationship skills into practice. Through discussion and skill-building activities, participants explore what anger is and what triggers it. This interactive program teaches participants techniques for calming down and de-stressing, the principles of problem solving, effective communication skills, and ways to forgive and let go of the past. It is offered as a series, and also as a one-time workshop, including a Train the Trainer version and *RELAX: For Parents and Caregivers*. RELAX is available as an online course.

During 2016, more than half of program participants left with improved knowledge or new skills designed to promote social and emotional well-being with others in their lives and immediate social environments.

As a result of the RELAX program:

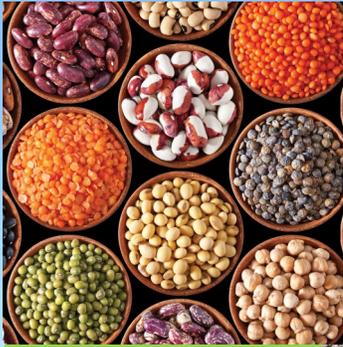
- 62% now work hard to be calm and talk things through
- 63% talk things through until they reach a solution

As a result of the RELAX for Parents and Caregivers workshop:

- 93% increased knowledge on the developmental stages of self-control in children
- 94% learned new activities to assist children with self-control

- 97% can identify three mindfulness tools to help them manage stress.
- 93% practice mindful movement as a way of calming the mind and body.
- 96% describe how a mindfulness perspective can change reactions to daily stressors.

SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS



When you support MSU Extension, you help participants learn profitable and efficient business and production practices.

- 84.3% reported that the meetings were very valuable.
- 100% reported that attending IPM Updates improved their knowledge of practices that helped them to reduce production risks.

Benzie-Manistee Horticultural Society Annual Equipment Demonstration and Annual Meeting – Extension Educators, Emily Pochubay and Nikki Rothwell teamed up with the Benzie-Manistee Horticultural Society to host an orchard mechanization workshop and on-farm equipment demonstration in April 2016. Tree fruit orchards across the globe have been transitioning to modern high-density systems and implementing the concept of precision orchard management that works toward optimizing all aspects of orchard production including the mechanization of farm tasks. Farm mechanization has helped increase efficiency and improved orchard business' profitability. This event exposed over 40 Michigan tree fruit growers to the future of orchard production and strategies which will keep these businesses globally competitive.

2016 International Fruit Tree Association Post-Conference Tour highlighted Benzie County fruit production - Tree fruit growers from across the globe visited Michigan to attend the 59th International Tree Fruit Association (IFTA) conference, IFTA 2.0 – The Precision Generation, that was held in Grand Rapids and Traverse City in early February. The theme for this meeting was precision tree fruit horticulture for profitable orchard businesses. The main conference was hosted in the Grand Rapids area followed by a two-day post conference tour of orchards in our northwest corner of Michigan. In conjunction with the IFTA's Program Development Committee, Extension Educators: Phil Schwallier, Amy Irish-Brown, Nikki Rothwell, and Emily Pochubay hosted - 40 growers and crop consultants for this post-conference tour of orchards and a processing facility in Benzie County. Attendees visited cutting edge orchards including Lutz Farms and Lentz Farm of Benzie County and the outstanding farmers who manage these businesses. Attendees also had the rare opportunity to have an exclusive tour of a fruit processing facility – Smeltzer Orchard Company.

Tree Fruit Integrated Pest Management Update Seminars – District 3 Fruit Educator, Emily Pochubay, coordinated and hosted a total of 42 seminars (nine in Benzie County) in northwest Michigan from May – July 2016. Over the course of this program, a total of 584 repeating participants comprised primarily of NW MI fruit growers and local crop consultants attended these seminars. A post-program survey polled 72 participants who represented approximately 1,757 acres of apples and 7,065 acres of cherries in NW MI. Participants were asked how valuable attending IPM Updates was for helping them manage production risks.

Grower SWD Trap-Swap and Training Sessions – The invasive pest, spotted wing drosophila (SWD), has become a significant threat to Michigan's fruit industry and is the cherry industry's top priority. To help cherry growers combat the threat of SWD, Extension Educators, Emily Pochubay and Nikki Rothwell worked with the Michigan

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Cherry Committee to secure funding from an MDARD Specialty Crop Block Grant to offer growers an SWD trap-swap program that aimed to facilitate on-farm SWD monitoring and detection to reduce the likelihood of economic and crop losses caused by SWD. This program also offered SWD identification, monitoring, and management training sessions.

Through volunteer outreach, **Extension Master Gardeners** share science-based gardening knowledge and engages citizens and empowers communities in environmentally responsible gardening practices, improving food security, improving community, and developing youth through gardening.

Other **Consumer Horticulture** programming and services available for residents of Benzie County include:

- Gardening Hot Line
- Gardening in Michigan website
- Ask an Expert system
- Smart Gardening programming
- Soil tests for home gardens, yards and landscape plants
- Master Gardener Training and Volunteer Program



Assistance to support beginning farmers across MI

The MSU Product Center Food-Ag-Bio assists county residents in developing products and businesses in the areas of food, agriculture, natural resources and the bio economy. Extension educators are specially trained as innovation counselors to deliver these services to local residents. Business counseling is conducted on a one-on-one basis and may take place at the MSUE office or the client's home or business location. The assistance provided is tailored to meet the needs of the client and may include things like developing a business plan, navigating the regulatory maze, accessing the supply chain or seeking funding options. The innovation counselor also assists clients in accessing specialized services they may need that are offered through Michigan State University like feasibility studies, nutritional labeling, food science, and packaging assistance. The MSU Product Center assisted 2 individuals with 14 business counseling sessions. Two new jobs were created as a result of this work.

Supporting Hops Production

MSU Extension provides valuable hops education throughout the state of Michigan. Northwest Michigan's Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Benzie Counties collectively boast more acres of hops than anywhere else in the state.

The reemergence of commercial hop production began in 2009 with a 1.5 acre yard on Old Mission peninsula. Since then hops have been planted in many counties across Michigan though the majority of Michigan's acreage is in northwest Michigan.

- 97% improved their knowledge of SWD biology, monitoring, and management strategies
- 46% increased their on-farm SWD monitoring from previous seasons to the 2016 season.

Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Northwest Michigan producers have invested tens of millions of dollars in hopyard, harvest, and processing infrastructure over the last several years.

New 20+ acre hop yard recently installed in northwest Benzie County.



In 2016, MSU Extension held its 9th annual summer hop tour. Sixty-five participants had the opportunity to visit multiple hop yards throughout Northwest Michigan. Of particular interest to many attendees was a delicious lunch and educational tasting at Stormcloud Brewing Company in Frankfort, MI. Head brewer, Brian Confer, described the brewing process, particular hop varieties of interest, and his thoughts on local production of craft beer raw materials. The annual tour is sponsored by the Michigan Brewers Guild.



Dr. Rob Serrine (MSU) and Michigan Brewers Guild Director Scott Graham address participants.



MSU also held a statewide Great Lakes Hop & Barley Conference in March, 2017 in Detroit, MI. The conference attracted over 300 participants from multiple states and countries. MSU Extension has taken a leadership role across the North Central and North East regions by providing valuable research and outreach to current and prospective growers on best practices for planting, harvesting and pest management. In 2016, MSU Extension hosted members of the Hop Quality Group (HQG), a national organization dedicated to improving hop quality for the craft beer industry. Over two days, the (HQG) toured multiple hop harvest and processing facilities offering recommendations to improve quality. The HQG was extremely impressed with the quality control measures and food safety protocols that growers had in place.



FOSTERING STRONG COMMUNITIES

When you support MSU Extension, participants learn how to implement best practices in good governance that keeps communities solvent, productive and engaged; learn effective conflict management skills that help leaders and residents work collaboratively on complex issues; and engage youth leaders in decision-making. In the personal finance area, MSU Extension helps youth and adults alike learn the skills they need to increase their savings, manage their spending avoid predatory lending and reduce mortgage defaults. All of these outcomes help lower the cost of governmental services and lead to personal and community stability, strong neighborhoods and safe communities.

Northern Michigan Counties Association, organized by MSU Extension, county commissioners from 34 counties in northern lower Michigan meet 8 times per year to share information and learn from the experiences of others.

Building Strong Sovereign Nations is a leadership building program developed by MSU Extension in cooperation with leaders of Tribal Nations in Michigan and delivered annually in conjunction with the United Tribes of Michigan fall meeting. The program is open to leaders from all Tribal Nations in Michigan and is also available to leadership and staff of individual tribes. Onsite workshops are also available.

New County Commissioner Workshops were held at 7 locations in November and December 2016. Participants included both new and experienced commissioners and other county officials, with 92% indicating that they found the program valuable for their professional (or personal) growth and development.

Registers of Deeds who are members of the United County Officers Association learned about **Intergovernmental Cooperation** at their annual meeting in May.

The **Stronger Economies Together (SET)** program is a national initiative collaborating with USDA and local partners in Manistee, Benzie, Grand Traverse and Kalkaska, to help identify and develop business sectors that hold the highest growth potential in an effort to help create, attract, and retain jobs.

MSU Extension educators were also involved in the following **Government & Public Policy** related efforts in and around Benzie County this year:

- Benzie County Benchmarking
- Herring Lakes Watershed Steering Committee with the Benzie County Soil Conservation District
- Professional development and planning education programs with County Planners
- Form Based Code Training with Networks Northwest
- Sign Training with Networks Northwest





Supporting Food and Agriculture, continued

Enhancing & protecting our Great Lakes coastal resources

Sea Grant Extension

MSU Extension's Greening Michigan Institute supports efforts to carry out Sea Grant programs throughout Benzie County and the rest of Michigan. Michigan Sea Grant Extension helps apply research, conducts educational activities and is connected to more than 40 coastal counties. Extension educators provide technology transfer by interpreting scientific knowledge for decision-makers, public officials, community leaders, businesses and industries.

Michigan Sea Grant Extension provides targeted support focusing on marinas and other businesses, restoring coastal habitats and related industries, such as commercial and recreational fishing. In partnership with state and federal agencies, Extension educators are responsive and proactive in addressing local, regional and national issues relevant to Michigan.

Outreach Topics and Programs:

- Economic Impact of Charter Fishing
- Vibrant Waterfront Communities
- Restoring Fish Habitat
- Michigan Clean Marina Program
- Coastal Hazards – Dangerous Currents

Sea Grant educators are working with the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, City of Frankfort Superintendent and Police, Benzie 911, and others on swimming safety in Lake Michigan, whether in Frankfort Harbor or along Platte Bay beaches. Drowning prevention is an urgent topic as more visitors come to these shores.



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