



Preserving Kent County's Prime and Unique Farmland

A Report on the Status of the Kent County Purchase
of Development Rights Program

August 17, 2010

By: Kendra Wills

Staff person to the Kent County
Agricultural Preservation Board

The 154 acre Robinson dairy farm.
Sparta Township. Preserved in September 2007.



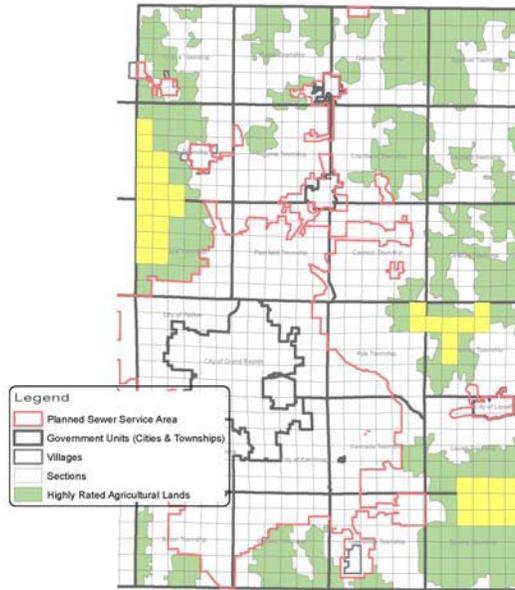
History of the Kent County PDR Program

The 57 acre Merriman farm. Lowell Township.
Preserved in January 2008.

□ The goal of the Kent County PDR Program, as stated in the ordinance adopted in 2002, is to **protect 25,000 acres by the year 2013.**

□ 25,000 acres is represented by the yellow squares on the map (random).

□ 25,000 acres is 4.6% of Kent County's total land area.



Purpose of the Kent County PDR Program



5 Mile Road. 141 acre preserved Seif farm to the north. St. Patrick's Church in the distance. Grattan Township. Preserved in September 2007.

Economics of Agriculture in Michigan

- \$73 billion impact per year.
- Ranked #1 industry today.
- 1 in 4 jobs in Michigan is linked to Agriculture.



Economics of Kent County Agriculture

- 36% of Kent County is farmland.
- #1 in the state for apple production, #9 in the nation.
- Kent County grows a very diverse variety of crops: fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy, grains.

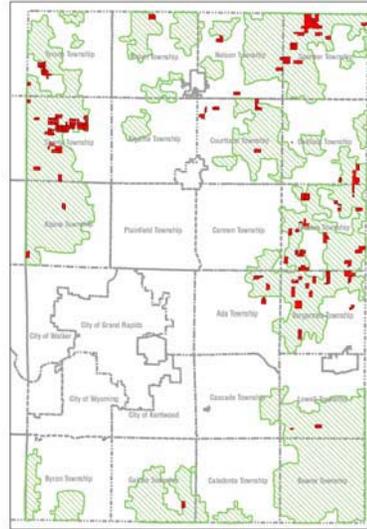


2003 – 2010 Kent County PDR

Applications

- Average number of applications per year = 35
- Average number of acres applied per year = 3,687

Note: Application cycle is March 1 – April 30 of each year. For the past 8 years PDR applications have been accepted.



Applications shown as red areas.
Land planned for preservation in Regional Plan shown in light green.



List of Kent County Preserved Farms

2005: Howard Farm, Vergennes Township. 106 Acres.

2006: Flanagan Farm, Grattan Township. 145 Acres.

2007:

- **Heffron Farm**, Grattan Township. 75 Acres.
- **Bradford Farm**, Sparta Township. 80 Acres.
- **Seif Farm**, Grattan Township. 141 Acres.
- **Robinson Farm**, Sparta Township. 154 Acres.

2008: Merriman Farm, Lowell Township. 57 Acres.

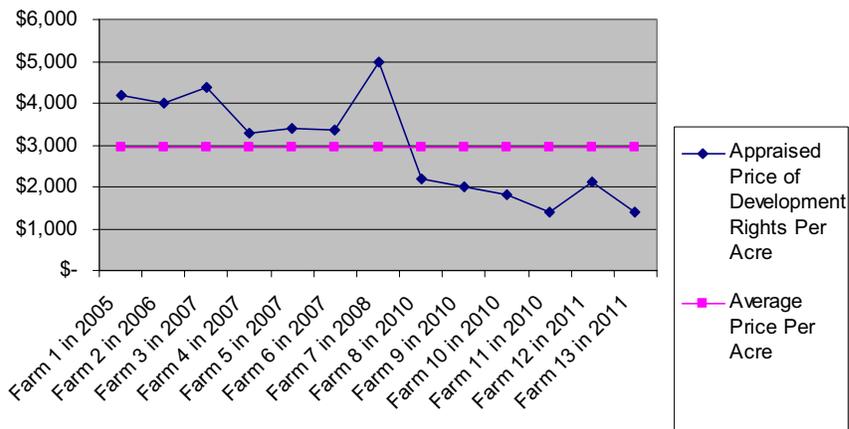
2010: Koning Farm, Vergennes Township. 170 Acres.

- In process for 2010/2011:
 - Cole Farm, Courtland Township. 116 acres.
 - Kingsbury/Bettes Farm, Sparta Township. 138 acres
 - Rittersdorf Farm, Vergennes Township. 228 acres.
 - Nauta Farm, Vergennes Township. 74.5 Acres
 - Wilcox Farm, Vergennes Township. 60 Acres

Total Preserved Acres To Date = **928 Acres, 8 farms**

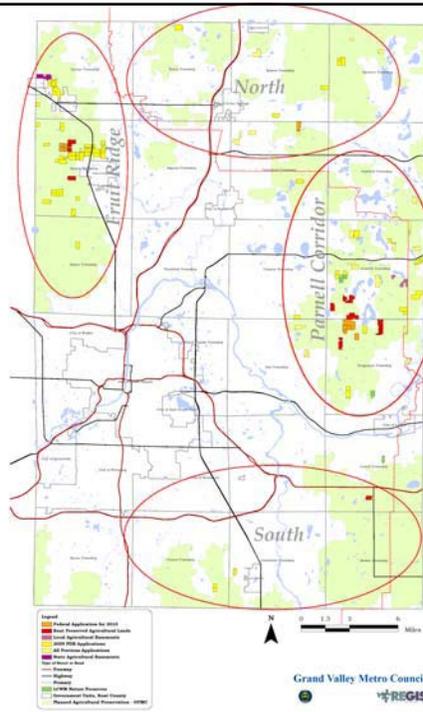
After April 2011.... 13 farms & 1,545 acres

Appraised Price for Development Rights Per Acre 2005-2010



Sub-Regions

- Starting in 2009, PDR applications are now prioritized by sub-region: not countywide.
- Sub-regions will help start blocks of preserved farmland in different areas of the county.



Kent County Agricultural Land Preservation Program

Grand Valley Metro Council
REGAS

Other Preserved Farms in Kent Co.

- Peter M. Wege Conservation Easement Donation
 - 577 acres preserved, Vergennes Township, Dec 2007
- State PDR Program
 - Keech Farm, Courtland Township, 109 acres
 - Bull Farm, Tyrone Township, 153 acres
- Grattan Township Open Space Ordinance
 - 3 farms totaling 170 acres, permanently preserved

Total Preserved Farmland
Acres in Kent County as of
Today

1,937 acres

State and Federal Grants for PDR

- Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund
 - Two grants: 2005 and 2006
 - Total awarded: \$511,097
 - Supported Bradford and Robinson Farms
 - Has only offered grants in 2005 and 2006

- USDA NRCS Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program (FRPP)
 - Four grants: 2003, 2004, 2008, 2010
 - Grand total: \$1,721,475

Township Contributions for PDR

□ Ada Township*	\$23,813
□ Alpine Township	\$1,500
□ Bowne Township	\$5,000
□ Caledonia Township*	\$40,000
□ Cascade Township (new)	\$1,500
□ Grattan Township	\$54,000
□ Nelson Township	\$2,400
□ Sparta Township	\$1,000
□ Vergennes Township	<u>\$500</u>
	\$129,713

*Note: These funds were not able to be used.

Real Cash Contributions from Property Owners

□ Bradford Family (2007)	\$40,000
□ Merriman Family (2008)	\$51,341
□ Robinson Family (2007)	\$79,176
□ Koning Family (2010)	<u>\$5,000</u>
	\$175,517

In Progress 2010 Farms

□ Cole Family	\$44,150
□ Nauta Family	\$15,833
□ Kingsbury/Bettes Family	\$34,000
□ Wilcox Family	<u>\$15,833</u>
	\$109,816

Local Foundation Grants for PDR

□ Dyer-Ives Foundation	\$15,000
□ Frey Foundation	\$257,500
□ Grand Rapids Community Fdn	\$400,000
□ Inst. For Systemic Change	\$50,000
□ Lowell Area Community Fund	\$100,000
□ M.E. Davenport Foundation	\$100,000
□ Steelcase Foundation	\$400,000
□ Urban Cooperation Board	\$25,000
□ Wege Foundation	<u>\$882,000</u>
	\$2,229,500

Other Contributions

□ Kent County Farm Bureau	\$10,000
□ Daverman Fund at GRCF	\$2,000
□ Crystal Flash Corp.	\$500
□ PDR Fundraiser Dinners	\$3,000
□ PDR 2009 Golf Outing	\$4,000
□ Grants for Trips to PA & MD	\$50,000
□ American Farmland Trust	
□ Grand Rapids Community Foundation	
□ Frey Foundation	
□ Kent County Farm Bureau	
□ United Growth for Kent County	
□ Wege Foundation	

Grants and Contributions Secured for Kent County PDR since 2003

\$4,946,618

County Funding

- 2009 PDR Subcommittee of the Board of Commissioners
 - Recommended 3 years of County General Fund Appropriation Support Totaling \$1 million
 - \$275,000 allocated for 2010 (spent on 5 farms, 500 acres)
 - \$350,000 for 2011 in budget process now
 - \$250,000 3-year Frey grant contingent on this level of county funding
 - \$100,000 for 2011 from GRCF contingent on this level of county funding
 - \$375,000 for 2012??

County Funding

- 2010 PDR Financial Sustainability Subcommittee
 - Looking at how to achieve 25,000 acre goal over the next 15 – 25 years.
 - Chaired by Commissioner Talen. Members: Antor, Hirsch, Synk.
 - Examining 10-15 different funding source possibilities.
 - Report to BOC before end of December.

PDR Funding Sustainability Subcommittee

Tier 1

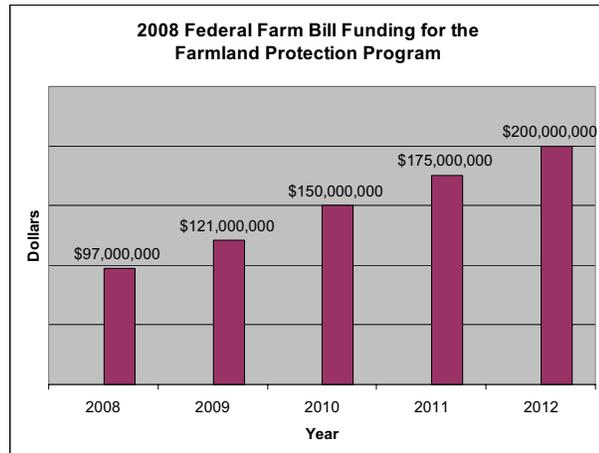
Local

Tier 2

State

Tier 3

Federal

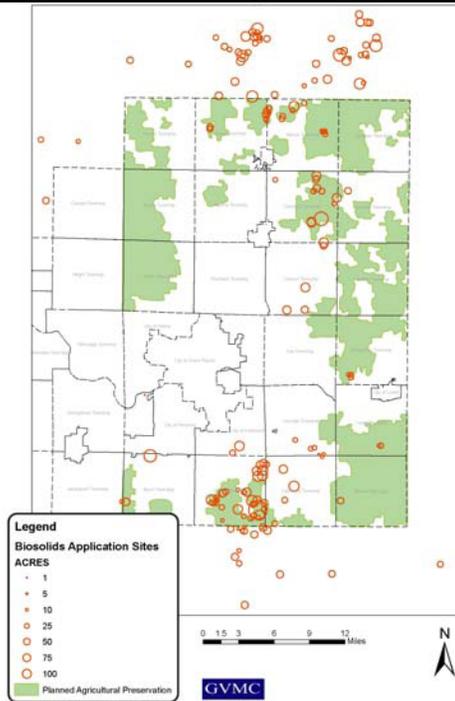


Possible Long-Term Funding Solutions

- \$50,000 of the \$100,000 grant from M.E. Davenport Foundation created the Kent County Agricultural Preservation Endowment Fund at GRCF.
- Contributions from Property Owners at PDR Closing
 - Cost of appraisal + 50% of closing costs
 - Estimated contribution value = \$5,500
- Future Large Donors/Donations

Regional Biosolid Application Sites

- The Clean Water Plant land applies biosolids from Clean Water Plant on 12,000 – 15,000 acres of area farmland.



Protecting the Environment





The Bradford Family

"The land was not given to us by our parents, it was lent to us by our children."

-Abraham Lincoln



The Howard Family



Congressman Ehlers, USDA Representative and Tim Howard



Congressman Hoekstra



Signs provided by the Wege Foundation



The Robinson Family

Thank you. Questions?