



Michigan Conservation Districts are the local providers of natural resource management services that help our citizens conserve their lands and our environment for a cleaner, healthier, economically stronger Michigan

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Branch Conservation District
387 N. Willowbrook Rd.,
Suite F,
Coldwater, MI 49036

Your Local, Natural Resource, Resource.

Branch Conservation District Calendar

2012 District Monthly Board Meetings

Meet the second Tuesday of each month - 7 PM,
387 N. Willowbrook Ave. Coldwater

February 11th, 2012 - 6th Annual Conservation Expo & 64th Annual Meeting

Keynote speaker: Kenneth Kesson, will address Hunter Access Program (HAP) and the Michigan DNR: Hunter and Private Land Programs

(For other topics please read further in this newsletter.)

February 20th - See us at Farmer's Day at the Branch area Career Center

April 20 and 21st - Branch Conservation Spring Tree Sale - Branch County Fair Grounds
Pre-order before March 28, 2012

Come join us this spring for our Coldwater River - MiCorps Stream Monitoring Events
May 19th - Sampling and Training **May 23rd** - Bug ID Night

Prairie River Watershed - District Partnered Events:

June 23rd - Native Plant Workshop and Sale

July 28th - Watershed Tour - Including Clean Boats Clean Waters (Aquatic Invasive Species) Training.

Watch for other events coming this summer:

MWSP MAEAP Farm Field Day & Forestry Workshop

Newsletter - Tree Sale Issue

January 2012, Issue 12-01

CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP-DISTRICT NEWS

Directors:

John Mitchell, Chair
Mary Ellen Newton, Vice-Chair
Insa Raymond, Secretary
Duane Clover, Treasurer
Bill Earl, Director

Staff:

Kathy Worst, Administrator
Brad Love, CTAI Specialist
Michael Censke, MWSP
Rachel Smith, Prairie River Watershed Coordinator

kathy.worst@mi.nacdnet.net
Brad.love@mi.nacdnet.net
Michael.censke@mi.nacdnet.net
Rachel.smith@mi.nacdnet.net

District Phone: (517) 278-2725 ext. 5 **Fax** (517) 278-5176 **Web site:** www.Branchcd.org

Facebook - Branch County Conservation District

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

USDA/NRCS:

Derrick Harmon - District Conservationist Derrick.Harmon@mi.usda.gov

NRCS Phone - (517) 278-2725 ext. 3 & **Fax** (517) 278-5176

64th BRANCH CD ANNUAL MEETING & 6th CONSERVATION EXPO

Please join us on Saturday February 11th, 2012 at Branch Area Career Center in Coldwater for our 6th Annual Conservation EXPO and 64th District Annual Meeting. Multiple natural resource conservation issues will be presented at this year's EXPO, which will be open from 8:30AM until 2:30PM. Our Annual Branch Conservation District Business Meeting will be held during the EXPO luncheon, along with this year's Conservation Awards presentations.

Branch Conservation is pleased to present this year's keynote speaker:

Kenneth Kesson

Michigan DNR: Hunter and Private Land Programs

Ken has just been assigned to our region as our area DNR Wildlife Biologist covering outreach, response, and private lands. Additionally he is State CIG coordinator. He will be discussing the [Michigan DNR: Hunter and Private Land Programs](#), including a description of the newly revamped "Hunter's Access Program" otherwise known as (HAP) and its benefits to hunters and landowners alike.

Additional expo topics will include: Our Prairie River Watershed project covering parts of St. Joe and Branch Counties in Michigan and a section of Steuben County in Indiana - Rachel Smith (BCCD Coordinator); Meri Bryant (US Fish & Wildlife) covering the Swan Creek wetland and habitat restoration projects; Lauren Lindemann (Farm Bill Biologist, Lenawee CD) will cover Pheasant Corridors and Habitats; "Wetland Management- Functional Maps and Landowner Assistance to Protect and Restore Wetland Resources," with Matt Meersman (FOTSJR) and Geoff Cripe(SWMLC); and Pollinators, Native plants and Their Importance, with Chris Reidy (State Biologist - USDA NRCS).

***Special children's programming** for children ages 7 to 12, also available covering computer game "Otto the River Otter" & Enviroscope (Bob Sweet MNDR and Rachel Smith BCCD Watershed Coordinator), "I'm a Lumberjack" (Dennis Worst Forester), waters quality, and more! (*Children under age 7 must be accompanied by an adult.*)

Please make reservations for lunch by calling Kathy at (517) 278-2725 ext. 5

A \$5.00 donation is requested to help offset luncheon costs

District News and Events

This year has been a mixed bag of good and not so good at Branch Conservation. On the positive side, we have continued to offer and improve upon our normal programs providing education to adults and children, tree sales, offering prescribed burn assistance, no-till drill rentals and progressing with a variety of granted projects. We were even fortunate enough to welcome two new staff members, Rachel Smith and Brad Love, along with a new USDA NRCS District Conservationist, Derrick Harmon. Our restoration projects in the Swan Creek and MiCorps Stream Monitoring Program also continued to progress quite nicely. We gained two new grants last summer, The Prairie River Watershed Planning Grant, a two year grant, and the Michigan DNR Hunter's Access Program Grant.

On the downside, main operational funds continue to be scarce. The state once again zero-funded all 79 conservation districts. Donations and tree sale earnings are the sole funds we use to communicate with you, hold educational events for our local students and adults, work towards gaining projects and granted funds for conservation efforts in our county and keep the office operating. We are however still here, functioning and doing our very best to bring quality programs, practices, technical assistance, and conservation aids to you, our Branch County citizens.



John Mitchell Receives Michigan Association of Conservation

District Director of the Year Award:

We are proud to announce that, John Mitchell (left) our very own Board Chairman received the 2012 Director of the Year award during the MACD Annual Convention, December 8, 2012. John received the award for his outstanding work and leadership in advocating for conservation concerns at the local, state and national level from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD).

Branch Conservation Welcomes New Staff Members

Rachel Smith joined us in June to coordinate the Prairie River Water Planning Project. She holds a BS from Western Michigan University in Environmental Analysis and Resource Management – Earth Science. Rachel's task will be to research, evaluate and write a DEQ approvable 319 watershed plan for the Prairie River in Branch, Saint Joseph, and Steuben Counties along our border and into Indiana. Rachel comes to us extremely well qualified as a past groundwater technician and an experienced watershed coordinator.

Brad Love came to the district in July as our new CTAI Specialist. Brad comes from a farming family with a long history near Bancroft, MI. He holds a B.S. and M.S. in Biosystems and Ag. Engineering, from Michigan State University and volunteered as a USDA-NRCS Earth Team Volunteer. Brad is working primarily with USDA-NRCS farm bill programs in Branch, St. Joseph and Kalamazoo Counties.

USDA-NRCS Welcomes New District Conservationist

Derrick Harmon, our new District Conservationist, came to us from the Clinton County NRCS office. He was born and raised on his family farm in Mississippi and started his career with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Minnesota in 2005. Derrick has been serving NRCS rural and urban communities ever since and enjoys working with producers and landowners alike.

New Director Comes to Branch County Conservation District

Branch Conservation welcomed Bill Earl to the District Board of Directors last summer to replace Gordon Porter who stepped down for personal reasons. Bill has been active in conservation for many years as a long time agriculture and natural resources instructor at the Branch Area Career Center, Envirothon coach, 4-H coach and so much more. Bill is proving to be a great asset to the conservation district board.

New this summer, the Hunter's Access Program at Branch County Conservation District

This summer (HAP) was added to the list of opportunities the district offers. The Hunter's Access Program is a revised, reinvented version of an old program designed to create more public hunting access. The program offers rental rates of between \$5 and \$25 / acre to land owners who would like to open their property to the public. A \$5 premium is given to landowners who also have their land under a farm bill program and the state accepts all liability barring gross negligence. Contact the BCCD (517) 278-2725 ext. 5 for more information or attend this year's Conservation EXPO to learn more.

Michigan Water Stewardship Program (MWSP) MAEAP

Branch Conservation District is pleased to continue as your local home for the MWSP program in Branch and St. Joseph counties. Mike Censke your MWSP/MAEAP technician continues as you contact for technical issues and assistance with Farm*A*Syst, Livestock*A*Syst, Crop*A*Syst, Greenhouse*A*Syst and other MAEAP verifications. You may reach Mike by calling the district at: (517) 278-2725 ext. 5, or by email at: michael.censke@mi.nacdnet.net.

Coldwater River Stream Monitoring Program (MiCorps Grant)

The Branch Conservation, Coldwater River Watershed stream monitoring program, with assistance from the Michigan Clean Water Corps has now finished three sampling events. Our local volunteer base from Branch County partnering with the BISD young adult students did a phenomenal job covering ten sites in difficult conditions; rain, flooding and some rather nasty sites. Data so far shows our waters to be average. A report can be found on our website at Branchcd.org. We want to thank everyone who volunteered for doing a wonderful job. We would also like to invite everyone to give this a try. The program needs a variety of volunteers and donations to continue. So please consider becoming a Stream Team Volunteer. For more information contact Kathy at (517)278-2725 ext. 5 or email her at kathy.worst@mi.nacdnet.net.

Warm Season Grassland Prescribed Burns

Branch Conservation continued its partnership with Pheasants Forever in 2012 to provide assisted burns to landowners throughout Branch County. While this season was a major challenge filled with rain, rain and more rain, we still managed to complete prescribed burns on 146.5 acres. The district also managed to gain a short season extension from NRCS of about two weeks, which allowed us to complete a couple more burns and the remaining clients were given contract extensions through fall of 2012. We hope for a better spring season to

finish our projects and add a few more. The funds received by the district were split to benefit both Pheasants Forever, who assisted us and the district. Overall, this program has been successful and we are once again offering signup opportunities to those in need of assistance. With mid-contract management and renewal of old CRP agreements at their peak, our list is filling fast. For more information on requirements and fees, please contact Kathy at the district offices: (517) 278-2725 extension 5. (*The landowner retains all liability responsibilities concerning the burn and accompanying activities.*)

Truax No-Till Drill

2012 Drill Use Sign-ups are open now. In 2001, Branch Conservation began working jointly with MDNR, Pheasants Forever, and Ducks Unlimited offering rental use of a Truax No-Till Warm Season Grass Drill. The drill is intended to provide landowners with the equipment necessary to establish warm-season fluffy-seeded grasses for increased wildlife habitat. 212.1 acres were planted in Branch County last year alone. We all know that sometimes problems arise. Over the last few years the drill has been extensively overhauled. However, a lack of common courtesy and mishandling by a very few has caused the district to spend long difficult hours repairing and cleaning the drill. Regretfully, this year changes have been implemented to address these issues. An upfront cash deposit of \$75.00 will now be required for drill rental to cover any cleaning, damages or misuse of the drill. This deposit is refundable or partially refundable depending upon the condition in which it is returned. We will continue to do any normal repairs and for your convenience, we still do deliver! For more information on availability, fees and contracts please contact Branch Conservation Administrator, Kathy Worst at (517) 278-2725 ext 5 or email kathy.worst@mi.nacdnet.net.

Swan Creek Migratory Waterfowl Habitat Restoration

We have continued our progress with the North Bronson (Swan Creek) Migratory Waterfowl Habitat Restoration project now having completed 93.1 acres of restorations and contributing \$48,000 to projects since the program's onset. This project will continue until all of the special funds are expended. Landowners interested in the program may be eligible for cost share assistance of up to 90% of the project. A 10-year minimum agreement, with Branch Conservation District and Fish & Wildlife Service to maintain any restoration is required. If you are interested in restoration of your property, give Kathy a call at the district.



Always Needed: District Volunteers!

As lovers of the outdoors, environment, and natural world are you interested in helping with special projects? If your answer is yes, please call or email Kathy Worst at the District office to check out opportunities. 278-2725 ext. 5 kathy.worst@mi.nacdnet.net

Special Note from our friends at Pheasants Forever: Native seed orders are now being taken and are due March 15. Forms are available at the district or contact Erick Hillborg, at Pheasant's Forever at (517) 741-7000.

2012 Branch County Conservation District SPRING TREE & SHRUB SALE

Orders will be accepted through **March 28, 2012** or when we're out of products, whichever comes first! All products are sold on a first come – first serve basis! We will do our best to fill all orders received by the deadline. Distribution will be held at the Branch County 4-H Fairground, Starter Calf Feeder Barn, 262 Sprague Street, **Coldwater on April 20th (9am to 4pm) and 21st (8am to noon)**. We'll send you a postcard reminder in April.

Tree/Shrub/Plant Descriptions

Conifers:

Colorado Blue Spruce – (*Picea pungens*) – A moderately slow-growing and long-lived tree reaching 80 feet in height. Will tolerate most upland soils, except poorly drained and does best in full sun. Common Christmas tree.

White Pine – (*Pinus strobes*) – A long-lived, moderately fast growing tree capable of reaching 100 feet in height. Best growth occurs on moist sandy loam soils, but will do well in most soil conditions. Moderately shade tolerant.

White Cedar – (*Thuja occidentalis*) – Pyramid shaped, single or multiple trunked, with blunt or pointed dense crown growing from 30 to 50 feet. Slow growing, but very long lived, with some trees over 700 years old. Prefers moist or wet soils, commonly found in swamps. Foliage is a favorite for deer. Its common name (arborvitae) meaning "Tree of Life" may have come from French voyagers who used it to treat scurvy, a disease resulting from lack of vitamin C.

Common Juniper – (*Juniperous communis*) – Low, spreading shrub, 1-3 ft. tall and 6 or more ft. across. The rigid, steely, blue-gray needles are short-pointed. Berries are bright blue with a white bloom.

Red Cedar – (*Juniperous virginiana*) – Pyramid shaped, single trunk, with a pointed crown. Likes dry soils, swamps, open hillsides and sun. Slow growing to 50'. Liked by birds and is often used for its pleasant sent in chests and a variety of other products.

Deciduous Trees:

Black Cherry – (*Prunus serotina*) – Grows best in sunny spots with a variety of soils to about 75'. "Burnt potato chips" describes the bark of this wonderful wildlife tree, which provides abundant fruit.

White Oak – (*Quercus alba*) – Long-lived and slow growing on upland sites, given full sun to light shade. Valuable for wildlife and forestry purposes. Sweet acorns are among the most prized by wildlife. Strong, durable wood is very valuable. Makes an attractive lawn or shade tree. Grows 50 to 80 feet in height.

Red Oak – (*Quercus rubra*) – A long-lived, moderately fast growing tree reaching 70 feet in height. Prefers well-drained, fertile soils. Adaptable to clay, loam, or sandy soils. Prefers sun, but will grow in light shade. Excellent timber and wildlife tree. Acorns ripen early providing an early wildlife food.

Black Walnut – (*Juglans nigra*) – Grows to 75' high or higher. Likes rich, well-drained soils. The nuts are a wonderful source of food. Beautiful wood for furniture and other items. Native Americans also used it for dyes, ink, medicine, and fence posts. Needs space from other plants as it produces an inhibitor affecting other vegetative growth.

Sugar Maple – (*Acer saccharum*) – A moderately slow-growing, long-lived tree reaching 90 feet in height. Very shade tolerant. Will grow in most soil types, prefers moist well-drained, clay or loam soils. Good timber and maple syrup producer.

Tulip Poplar – (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) – Fast growing for a wide range of soils. Unique leaves and beautiful orange tulip shaped flowers. Grows straight and tall, 80 to 100 feet in height.

American Plum - (*Prunus Americana*) - Tall native shrub to small tree growing to 35', with showy, large, white fragrant flowers before leaves in spring. Fruit ripens in August to September. Good for jellies and wildlife.

Eastern Redbud - (Graceful spreading crown growing 20' to 30'. Likes partial shade and windy dry areas. Rosy pink flowers appearing in April.

Fragrant Sumac - (*Rhus aromatic*) – Irregular deciduous shrub. Grows 6 to 12' tall. Has aromatic foliage, with yellowish catkin-like flowers and dark red berries.

River Birch - (*Betula nigra*) – Has attractive papery salmon to cinnamon colored bark growing 40' to 70'. Tolerant of wet soils and dry summers and is resistant to most borers. Nice for landscaping and parks.

Dwarf Chinkapin Oak - Bush form to small tree that produces sweet acorns in 3-5 years.

Fruit Trees:

Wild Pear – Whitetail are fond of these pioneer pears that fruit in 4 to 5 years. Easily grows in a variety of soils.

Crabapples – Dolgo - Large fruited crab. Specialty trees grown in Jiffy plugs. Need protection from animals.

Whitney – Late ripening Large fruited crab. Specialty trees grown in Jiffy plugs. Need protection from animals.

Shrubs:

Red Osier Dogwood – (*Cornus stolonifera*) – Prefers sandy to clay soils, does well on moderately wet soils. Grows 7 – 10 feet tall; 6 to 8 feet wide. Fruit eaten by cardinal, ruffed and sharptail grouse. White berry, red in winter.

Flowering Dogwood - (*Cornus florida*) - Spring white flowering, native shrub with red berries for wildlife in the fall. Partial shade. Moist to well drained soils. Grows 20 to 40 ft.

UpCycle Products:

Rain Barrels – Made from recycled materials. Keep them outside all year round (drain in winter) linkable, screened for mosquito and debris control, spigot to fit typical hose or trickle hose. Various sizes & colors.

Composter – 55 gal tumbling barrels. Kit for stand and all parts included inside the barrel for easy assembly.

Other Upcycle rain barrel sizes, linking hoses, diverters, placement stands, potting benches and products available. Contact Kathy at the district (517) 278-2725 x 5

Other Items:

Mosquito Barrier – This natural product, when sprayed upon your lawn will help keep mosquitoes, gnats, flees, and ticks away for approximately one month. (Additional applications required after rain.) Does not harm other beneficial insects, pets or people.

Full Color Books (Additional titles will be available on sale day and at the district store.)

What's Doin' the Bloomin'? - Clayton Oslund - Comprehensive guide of native and naturalized plants Organized by bloom time - over 620 full-color photographs.

Paddler's Guide to Michigan – Jeff Counts - A well put together guide to canoeing and kayaking areas in Michigan.

Wildflowers of Michigan Field Guide - Stan Tekiela - Nice, color pictured, field guide to wildflowers in Michigan.

Trees of Michigan Field Guide - Stan Tekiela - A compact, color pictured, field guide to Michigan trees.

Fish of Michigan Field Guide - Dave Bosanko - A color pictured, field guide to Michigan Fish. (Water resistant pages too!)

Butterflies of Michigan Field Guide - Jaret C. Daniels – A beautiful colored guide to Butterflies and Moths of Michigan.

Monarch Butterfly's Journey - Suzanne Buckingham Slade – A wonderful children's book about the Monarch Butterfly.

Great Lakes Wildlife Nature Activity Book - James Kavanagh – A fun activity book for children covering nature in Michigan.

Birds of Michigan Field Guide – Full color field guide to Birds of Michigan.

“Trees Planted” Signs – Metal signs that flag your tree planting. Saves damage that cost money and time to replace.

Marking Flags – Wire flags with a Flo Pink flap easily seen.

Tree Planting Gel – Ensures root, water retention, lessens transplanting shock. Depending on seedling size, ounce covers 250-500 trees.

Plantskydd Deer Repellent – Controls deer/rabbit damage. Active ingredient is dried blood with vegetable oil used as plant material adhesive. Stimulates a predator, fear-based response. USA sources only Protects up to 6 months over winter. Available in larger sizes or as a crystal as well – let us know if you are interested.

Protective tree tubes – Variety of possible sizes for protecting your seedlings from animals and weed trimmers. Please call to order.

(Don't see what you are looking for? Call the Conservation District to place an order or discuss your interest.)

"It is unlawful for these trees, shrubs, and other plants to be resold with the roots attached, in accordance with the Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act, P.A. 189 of 1931, as amended." The Branch Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, or family status. The Branch Conservation District and NRCS are equal opportunity employers.

Branch County CD
387 N. Willowbrook Rd, Suite F
Coldwater, MI 49036

2012 Branch Conservation District Spring Tree Sale
Ordering Information
Order Deadline March 28 , 2012

278-8008 Ext. 5
Fax 278-5176

Seedling Pickup: Seedlings will be available for pick-up at **Branch County 4H Fair grounds, Starter Calf Barns on Friday, April 20th from 9a.m. to 4pm & Saturday April 21st from 8am to Noon, ONLY.** Sales tax must be included with all orders. If you do not pay sales tax under an exemption provision, you must provide the District with a certificate of tax exemption. *We do not guarantee survival of products. Our liability ceases, when seedlings are delivered to buyer. The District reserves the right to cancel orders and refund payments due to reasons beyond our control.*

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

Species / Age	Seedling/plug	Size	10	25	50	100	250	500	Quantity	\$ Amount
Conifers:										
Red Cedar 2-0		S 6" - 12"	14.60	22.25	33.50	62.00	152.50	285.00		
White Cedar 3-0		S 6" - 12"	14.60	22.25	33.50	62.00	152.50	285.00		
White Pine 3-0		S 12"- 18"	12.90	18.00	25.00	45.00	110.00	200.00		
Colorado Blue Spruce 3-0		S 12" - 18"	12.90	18.00	25.00	45.00	110.00	200.00		
Common Juniper 3-0		S 12" - 18"	16.00	25.75	40.50	76.00	187.50	355.00		
Hardwoods:										
Black Cherry 1-0		S 12" - 24"	14.30	21.50	32.00	59.00	145.00	275.00		
White Oak		S 12" - 18"	15.00	23.25	35.50	66.00	162.50	310.00		
Red Oak 1-0		S 12" - 18"	14.60	22.25	33.50	62.00	152.50	290.00		
American Plum 2-0		S 12" - 18"	14.90	23.00	35.00	65.00	160.00	305.00		
Black Walnut 1-0		S 12" - 18"	15.70	25.00	39.00	73.00	180.00	345.00		
Sugar Maple 1-0		S 6" - 12"	14.20	21.25	31.50	58.00	142.50	270.00		
Tulip Poplar		S 12" - 18"	17.00	28.25	45.50	86.00	212.50	405.00		
River Birch		S 6" - 12"	13.70	20.00	29.00	53.00	130.00	245.00		
Specialty Fruit and Nut Trees:										
Dwarf Chinkapin Oak	JIFFY (protect)		\$5.50 each							
Wild Pear	JIFFY (protect)		\$5.50 each							
Crabapples:										
Whitney	JIFFY (protect)		\$5.50 each							
Dolgo	JIFFY (protect)		\$5.50 each							
Shrubs:										
Highbush Cranberry 2-0	S	6" - 12"	15.70	25.00	39.00	73.00	180.00	345.00		
Eastern Redbud 2-0	S	12" - 18"	14.80	22.75	34.50	64.00	157.50	300.00		
Fragrant Sumac 1-0	S	6" - 12"	13.70	20.00	29.00	53.00	130.00	245.00		
Other Items:										
Trees Planted Signs			\$2.00 each							
Tree Planting Gel (1oz. covers 250-500 trees)			\$2.00 each							
Marking Flags			\$0.25 each				\$20.00 for 100			
Plantskydd Deer Repellent (1Qt Ready to use Sprayer)			\$21.00/quart							
Mosquito Barrier (Must dilute 33:1 with water.)			\$22.5/quart - covers 1.25 acres							
(Must dilute 33:1 with water.)			\$84.95/gallon - covers approximately 5 acres							
Tree Tubes Talk to us about your needs.										
Upcycle Products: Rain barrel 30 Gallon in Blue			60.00							
50 Gallon on Brown, Terra Cotta, Blue, Black or Grey			70.00 Please list color choice =							
55 Gallon in Blue or Terra Cotta			75.00 Please list color choice =							
Rain Barrel Wooden Pedestal Riser			22.50							
Upcycle: Tumbling Composter - 55 gallon			125.00							
Books:										
What's Doin' the Bloomin'?			19.95							
Paddler's Guide to Michigan			18.95							
Wildflowers of Michigan Field Guide			16.95							
Trees of Michigan Field Guide			12.95							
Fish of Michigan Field Guide			13.95							
Butterflies of Michigan Field Guide			16.95							
Birds of Michigan Field Guide			12.95							
Monarch Butterfly's Journey (children's book)			6.95							
Great Lakes Wildlife Nature Activity Book (children's book)			6.95							
									Subtotal:	
Full Payment must accompany your order!			Tax @ 6%							
Orders must be received by March 28th			Donation							
									Grand Total:	