

**Van Buren  
Conservation District  
1035 E. Michigan Ave  
Paw Paw, MI 49079**

**(269)657-4030 ext. 5  
<http://www.vbco.org/vbcd.asp>  
E-mail: [amy.lockhart@mi.nacdnet.net](mailto:amy.lockhart@mi.nacdnet.net)**

**The Van Buren Conservation District would like to thank all of our supporters and volunteers from 2006. Your support and enthusiasm has and will continue to be an inspiration to us as we work together to put conservation on the ground.**



## Van Buren Conservation District

*"Your Gateway to Natural Resource Management"*

# 2006 Annual Report

### **Board of Directors**

Jon Mills, Chair

Bryan Cronenwett, Vice Chair

Shirley Jones, Treasurer

Mike Rainey, Secretary

Bill Mihelich, Director

### **Staff**

Amy Lockhart, Administrator

Erin Fuller, Watershed  
Coordinator

Kyle Mead, Groundwater  
Technician



**Table of Contents**

Administrator's note	3
District Operations	4
FY2006 budget	5
Black River Watershed Project	6
Paw Paw River Watershed Project	7
Watershed Information and Education	7
Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program	8
Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative	9
NRCS Partnership	10-11
Leveraging Federal Funding	10-11
Special Thanks	12



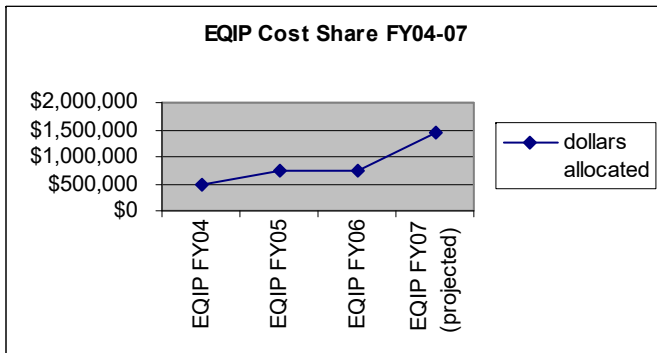
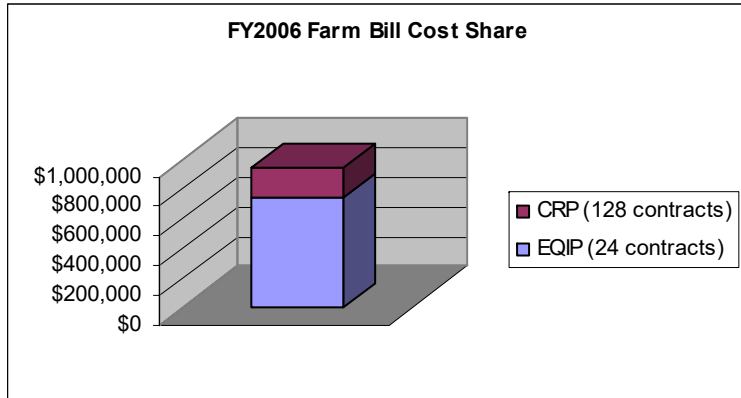
Eager learners at the Community Expo, part of the Watershed Short Course held in October, 2006

**FY05 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)  
Information by Practice**

	no. planned	planned amount	planned cost
<b>Agrichemical Mixing Facility (702)</b>	10	10	\$200,001.00
<b>Conservation Cover (327)</b>	2	12.1 ac.	\$334.00
<b>Conservation Crop Rotation (328)</b>	2	482.6 ac.	\$1,449.00
<b>Cover Crop (340)</b>	16	721 ac.	\$10,257.00
<b>Critical Area Planting (342)</b>	1	1.6 ac.	\$1,000.00
<b>Diversion (362)</b>	3	1250 ft.	\$3,425.00
<b>Fence (382)</b>	3	5955 ft.	\$5,796.00
<b>Grade Stabilization Structure (410)</b>	1	1	\$2,250.00
<b>Heavy Use Area Protection (561)</b>	11	8756.7 ac.	\$102,261.00
<b>Hedgerow Planting (422)</b>	11	900 ft.	\$709.00
<b>Invasive Plant Species Control (797)</b>	1	13.6 ac.	\$0.00
<b>Irrigation Water Management (449)</b>	16	1056.9 ac.	\$5,286.00
<b>Nutrient Management (590)</b>	39	3144 ac.	\$24,577.00
<b>Pasture and Hay Planting (512)</b>	2	11.7 ac.	\$527.00
<b>Pest Management (595)</b>	41	3057.2 ac.	\$76,966.00
<b>Pipeline (516)</b>	4	6728 ft.	\$20,184.00
<b>Prescribed Grazing (528A)</b>	7	161.3 ac.	\$2,772.00
<b>Residue Management, Mulch Till (329B)</b>	3	659.2 ac.	\$1,978.00
<b>Residue Management, Seasonal (344)</b>	3	172.3 ac.	\$518.00
<b>Roof Runoff Structure (558)</b>	1	3	\$7,500.00
<b>Stream Crossing (728)</b>	1	260	\$1,876.00
<b>Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)</b>	1	18 ac.	\$8,654.00
<b>Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)</b>	4	14.5 ac.	\$353.00
<b>Use Exclusion (472)</b>	5	120.4 ac.	\$14,663.00
<b>Waste Utilization (633)</b>	2	394.5 ac.	\$5,918.00
<b>Water and Sediment Control Basin (638)</b>	1	1	\$1,788.00
<b>Water Well (642)</b>	1	1	\$2,250.00
<b>Watering Facility (614)</b>	3	9	\$9,000.00
<b>Well Decommissioning (351)</b>	1	4	\$2,000.00
<b>Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644)</b>	1	2 ac.	\$10.00
<b>Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380)</b>	3	1145 ft.	\$509.00

### Conservation Partnership: NRCS

Each year, the Conservation District supports the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) with the administration of Federal Farm Bill Programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The following figures represent federal cost share dollars brought into Van Buren County as a result of this partnership.



	dollars allocated	no. contracts	acres under contract
<b>EQIP FY04</b>	\$484,394	15	1534.4
<b>EQIP FY05</b>	\$722,577	19	1717
<b>EQIP FY06</b>	\$735,568	24	2610.3
<b>EQIP FY07 (projected)</b>	\$1,433,942	22	n/a

### A note from the Administrator

#### 2006 saw several changes for VBCD

What a year 2006 was for the Van Buren Conservation District. Two new staff members joined the ranks; Amy Lockhart was hired in February of 2006 as the Conservation District Administrator and Doug Young was brought on board in September as the technician for the new Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative.

The conservation District's involvement with area watershed projects swung into full gear as the Black River Watershed Implementation Grant started up in March bringing back Erin Fuller as the Watershed Coordinator. The District also participated in the Paw Paw River Watershed Project which is a two year planning grant being administered by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. Van Buren Conservation District and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission maximized their partnership by combining education and outreach efforts in the two watersheds to lay the foundation for a strong educational campaign in the County.

The Van Buren Conservation District also welcomed two new Board members during 2006. Mike Rainey and Bryan Cronenwett were appointed to the board in March.



Bangor City Manager Larry Nielsen gives a tour of the Lions Park restoration project in downtown Bangor during the Watershed Short Course

## Conservation District Operations

The information provided below reflects conservation technical assistance provided during FY2006 which was not performed by other grants (ex. Groundwater, Watershed Project, etc.)

<b>In-office &amp; phone assists</b>	490
<b>Tree and Shrub Sales</b>	
customers	264
trees sold	\$22,513.00
<b>Educational Programs</b>	
Youth education	300
adult education	21
newspaper articles	9
newsletter	1
<b>Reviewing applications/permits</b>	11
<b>Conservation sales</b>	
customers	182
dollars	\$6,157.96
<b>Equipment Rental</b>	
customers	12
acres no till	169.6
acres seeded	71.4
<b>Volunteer hours</b>	
total hours donated	115

Right: Kids learn about stream habitat and macro-invertebrates during 2006 Fish Fest at the Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery.



Van Buren

## Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative

In October of 2006, Doug Young started with the Van Buren Conservation District in the newly created technician position for the Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative program. This program is the result of the cooperative efforts of the Van Buren Conservation District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the State of Michigan-Department of Agriculture. The goal of this program is to hire staff that can assist with the many requests for conservation assistance that the Natural Resources Conservation Service receives.

In the three months that Doug has been with the District, he has been primarily busy working with Van Buren county producers developing pest and nutrient management plans for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). Doug's role is to work closely with NRCS in assisting landowners with any of the various Farm Bill programs. Doug is looking forward to working with more Van Buren county landowners.



Black River Watershed Coordinator Erin Fuller and volunteers after a river cleanup in July 2006.

2006 Annual Report

## Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program

### 2006 Overview

Farm*A*Syst conducted	18
Crop*A*Syst conducted	
On farm risk reductions	156
Irrigation Management Plans written	
Van Buren County	7
Allegan County	4
Irrigation Scheduling Program	
Customers	8
\$ contributed to local cost share budget	\$3,950.00
On Farm Field Day Attendance	30
Emergency Plans Written / Updated	
GSP Cost Share	
Spill Kits	\$614.33
Seasonal Pesticide Storage	\$1,000.00
Well-Decommissioning	\$902.02
Other approved practices	\$2,462.27
Total Cost Share Paid	\$4,978.62



Van Buren Groundwater Technician Kyle Mead demonstrating basic contents of an Emergency Spill Kit

Below: The Farm and Crop Assessment tools (Farm\*A\*Syst and Crop\*A\*Syst) along with Farm Emergency Planning are at the core of the Groundwater Stewardship Program, helping local farms to minimize environmental risk.



## FY 2006 Appropriations Budget

	2005-2006 Approved	2005-2006 Amended
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Federal Grants	\$128,272.00	\$14,250.00
State Grants	\$67,000.00	\$66,700.00
Contribution from Local Units	\$2,500.00	
Charges for Sales & Services	\$4,000.00	\$450.00
Interest & Rentals	\$7,000.00	\$24,985.00
Other Revenues		\$1,178.06
Non business License & Permits		\$1,870.00
Sale of Fixed Asset		\$15,930.44
Tree Sales	\$10,000.00	\$12,734.00
Items for Purchase		\$6,436.29
<b>Total Revenue &amp; Other Sources</b>	<b>\$278,722.00</b>	<b>\$144,533.79</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
281 Operations	\$105,834.00	\$73,957.89
282 Groundwater	\$47,000.00	\$46,910.25
285 AmeriCorps		\$385.00
290 Black River Watershed	\$122,188.00	\$14,179.83
291 Paw Paw River Watershed		\$770.22
294 Reforestation	\$3,750.00	\$5,667.21
<b>Total Expenditures &amp; Other Uses</b>	<b>\$278,772.00</b>	<b>\$141,870.40</b>
<b>Net Revenues (Expenditures)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$2,663.39</b>



### Black River Watershed Project

The Black River Watershed Project is in the first year of a three-year grant project to implement the Black River Watershed Management Plan. The Van Buren Conservation District oversaw the creation of the plan, which was completed in 2005. The three main focus areas of this project are 1) reducing polluted runoff to the Black River, 2) outreach and education, and 3) land use planning and land protection.

#### Highlights of the past year have included:

- Conducting a watershed management class for watershed residents
- Writing and distributing watershed newsletters and brochures
- Meetings with local officials and organizations to increase community awareness of the project
- Coordinating several educational workshops for local decision makers
- Funding a streambank stabilization and raingarden installation project in Bangor

Total federal funding from March 2006 to March 2009	\$384,816.76
Total local match pledged to the project	\$517,006.08
<b>Total project cost</b>	<b>\$901,822.84</b>



The Black River Watershed encompasses 287 square miles in Allegan and Van Buren Counties. The Black River flows into Lake Michigan at South Haven. Primary water quality concerns in the watershed are erosion and sedimentation, nutrient loading, and development issues.

### Paw Paw River Watershed Project

#### Planning Project

The Southwestern Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has been awarded an MDEQ and EPA grant of \$216,087 for the Paw Paw River Watershed Planning Project. The total project is \$271,048 with local match totaling \$54,960.62. The two year planning grant will continue through December, 2007.

#### Van Buren Conservation District Involvement

##### Develop a Watershed Management Plan

The VBCD has been involved in the plan writing process by participation on the Watershed Steering Committee and will have future input through the development of the information and education plan.

##### Watershed Inventory

VBCD, along with Berrien Conservation District was involved in the coordination and training of 23 volunteers from Van Buren and Berrien Counties. These volunteers supplied the project with valuable insight into the condition of the watershed. Details such as erosion, vegetation, stream width and canopy cover were all taken into consideration and will be compiled for use in prioritizing future work in the watershed.

### Combined Information and Education Efforts: Black River and Paw Paw River Projects

Sharing multiple municipalities, the Black River and Paw Paw River Watershed Projects saw a unique opportunity to combine educational efforts, allowing them to effectively promote the ideals and concepts being presented by each individual project.

The Van Buren Conservation District is involved in this joint committee and has also agreed to host an on-going watershed workshop series as part its local match to both projects. The first of these workshops, an Agrichemical Containment Facility workshop, was held in August 2006 and focused on the proper use, handling, and storage of ag chemicals as well as construction specifications for the facilities. Several additional workshops are scheduled for 2007.