



Conservation Conversation

The Van Buren Conservation District is a unique local unit of government that is fostered by five very supportive, elected Board of Directors. The day-to-day successes are made possible by eight hard-working, knowledgeable staff that are dedicated to the mission and passionate about their programs. The team that we have here at our District is outstanding and shines among Districts in Michigan.

Year 2013 may have been our best year yet! Our conservation technicians were on hundreds of local farms working with producers on farm practices, renting farm equipment, and encouraging Best Management Practices like no-till and cover crops. Technicians hosted farm field days, verified environmentally sound farms, wrote conservation and emergency plans, and promoted education and research that will be beneficial to farmers and the environment. Our watershed coordinators worked hard to restore and protect many acres of wetlands, educated the public on natural shorelines on our inland lakes and started a new grant working with the local Drain Commissioner on a program to benefit the water quality in county drains that lead into our local waterways. The District has grown the county's Resource Recovery Program and was able to collect and properly recycle thousands of pounds of household hazards, tons of electronics, hundreds of tires and is working with local schools on setting up great recycling programs.

Members of our team have been recognized by many partnering organizations. Dr. Carl Druskovich, Board of Directors Vice Chair, was nominated for "Director of the Year" for his outstanding support of the District and was acknowledged at the Michigan Association Conservation District's Annual Meeting. Dr. Carl was also awarded the "Farm Stewardship Award" from our local Van Buren Farm Bureau as well as Colleen Forestieri, Conservation Technician, received the "Ecology Champion" of the year award. The Van Buren Conservation District was nominated for "Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Grant Host of the Year" by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for the dedicated work our MAEAP technicians do in the field and the extra effort put forth for the success of programs for Michigan farmers.

The Van Buren Conservation District continues making strides to educate and make a difference in our community.

Best regards,
AJ Brucks
Executive Director

VBCD Financials for 2013

Kim Sinclair, Administrator

Primary Supporters

REVENUES

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| Federal Grants | \$ 169,067.47 |
| State Grants | \$ 192,656.50 |
| Local Contributions & Grants | \$ 133,995.64 |
| Charges for Services | \$ 27,888.70 |
| Interest & Rentals | \$ 21,981.57 |
| Other Revenues | \$ 65,472.61 |
| Indirect Income from Grants | \$ 63,008.59 |
| Tree Sales | \$ 19,250.29 |
| Total Revenue & Other Sources | \$ 693,321.37 |

EXPENDITURES

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| 281 Operations | \$ 105,105.66 |
| 280 Resource Recovery | \$ 11,105.10 |
| 282 MAEAP | \$ 133,059.10 |
| 295/295.1 CTAI | \$ 59,597.40 |
| 278 PPBRWP | \$ 161,447.74 |
| 279 Nature Conservancy Coke-Cola | \$ 24,141.15 |
| 277 World Wildlife Fund | \$ 28,577.89 |
| Cost of Goods Sold | \$ 5,232.95 |
| 276 Southwest MI Planning - GLC | \$ 54,091.11 |
| 287 Drain Commission | \$ 8,626.99 |
| 291 Michigan Natural Shoreline | \$ 5,301.35 |
| 291.1 Model Lake Ordinance | \$ 2,318.40 |
| 294 Reforestation | \$ 12,556.74 |
| 296 Critical Dune Remediation | \$ - |
| Total Expenditures & Other Uses | \$ 611,161.58 |
| Net Revenues (Expenditures) | \$ 82,159.79 |
| Beginning Fund Balance | \$ 461,573.30 |
| Ending Fund Balance | \$ 543,733.09 |

*Based on unaudited numbers

Special Thanks

A very special thanks to our Board of Directors for supporting the Van Buren Conservation District and for being so passionate about our mission. Without an active Board, we would not be able to accomplish what we do everyday in our community and for our natural resources. On behalf of the Van Buren Conservation District Staff, we thank you.



2013 Board Of Directors

Bryan Cronemwett, Chair,
 Carl Druskovich, Vice Chair
 Shirley Bush, Treasurer,
 Jan Petersen, Secretary
 Mike Rainey, Member

Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

Kyle Mead, MAEAP Technician

Van Buren County



Kyle has been working for the VBCD since October of 2004, serving as the technician for the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP), a grant through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). He is a specialist in MAEAP Verifications, irrigation, and small fruit, and is also a member of Michiana Irrigation Association and the Local Emergency Planning Committee for Van Buren County.

The goal of the MAEAP Program is to offer free, confidential, and non-regulatory farm assessments to assist farmers in complying with state and federal laws and Michigan Right to Farm Guidelines. Farm*A*Systs are assessments that evaluate practices done at the Farm/Homestead such as Fertilizer Storage, Fuel Storage, Pesticide Storage and Well Isolation. A Crop*A*Syst works the same as a Farm*A*Syst, in that there are Assessment Questions pertaining to specific practices, but the Crop*A*Syst covers practices in the field such as Pesticide, Fertilizer, and Irrigation Recordkeeping.

- **Farm*A*Systs completed in FY 2013 – 28**
- **Crop*A*Systs completed in FY 2013 – 4**
- **Orchard*A*Systs completed in FY 2013 – 22**
- **Livestock*A*Systs completed in FY 2013 – 1**
- **MAEAP Verifications in FY 2013 - 24**

*FY 2013 year end percentage:
324% of required deliverables completed*

Practices found with the potential to cause adverse environmental impacts are logged in the Farm*A*Syst or Crop*A*Syst as a 'to-do list' for the producer and MAEAP Technicians to complete. When a potential impact is reduced it is known as a Risk Reduction. Risk Reductions can be the closing an unused well, pouring a concrete pad for the transfer of fuels, or erecting a building designed specifically for fertilizer and pesticide storage.

- **Risk Reductions completed in FY 2013 – 311**

Once a farm has completed a Farm*A*Syst or a Crop*A*Syst, evaluated and reduced all risks on their farm, they can then become MAEAP Verified by MDARD. A MAEAP Verification is recognition from the State that all practices, procedures and operations done on the farm are environmentally sound according to Michigan's Generally Accepted Agricultural Practices (GAAMPS). Producers obtaining this Verification may choose to post a sign at their farm site to let friends, neighbors, and customers know that environmental stewardship is important to the farm owners and operators. A MAEAP Verification also comes with marketing opportunities as well as legal protections for MAEAP Farmers that maintain MAEAP Standards.

- **MAEAP Verifications completed in FY 2013**
 - Farmstead System Verifications – 10
 - Cropping System Verifications – 13
 - Livestock System Verifications - 1



*Congratulations to farms that
were MAEAP verified in 2013!*



*Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
Abbey Dorr, MAEAP Technician
Cass County*



Ag Affair VII at Sparks Cedar Lee Farm

Abbey Dorr serves as the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) Technician for the Michigan Water Stewardship Program covering Cass County. Abbey is also the Livestock Specialist covering Southwest MI.

MAEAP is an innovative proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agriculture pollution risks. It teaches farmers how to identify and prevent environmental risks and to comply with state and federal environmental regulations.

To become MAEAP verified, farmers must complete three comprehensive steps which include attending an educational seminar, conducting an on-farm risk assessment (Farm*A*Syst, Crop*A*Syst etc), and passing a third party on- farm verification.



Abbey gets inducted as an Honorary Member to the Van Buren Technology Center FFA Chapter

Accomplishments

- 23 Farm*A*Systs
- 16 Crop*A*Systs
- 20 Livestock*A*Systs
- 2 Fruit*A*Systs
- 5 MAEAP Verifications
- 176 Risk Reductions



Groundwater Presentation at Berrien 5th Grade Natural Resource Day



In 2013 The Van Buren Conservation District completed a three-and-a-half-year grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality through the U.S. EPA Federal Clean Water Act. The grant supported activities focused on wetland protection and restoration and builds off the watershed management plans developed for the Paw Paw and Black River Watersheds. The project had three main focus areas: wetland protection, wetland restoration, and outreach & education.

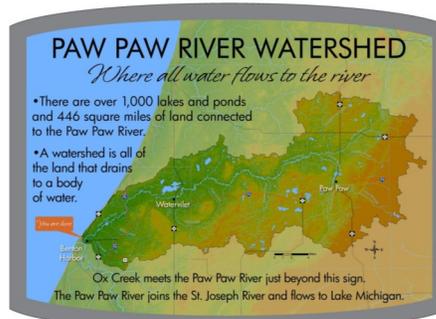


Wetland restoration , before



Wetland restoration , after

Grant Amount: \$698,917
Match Funds: \$723,654
Total Amount: \$1,422,571



Project Highlights

- Wetland protection: 874 acres (418.6 of which are existing wetlands) permanently protected with conservation easements.
- Wetland restoration: 6.4 acres of land were restored to wetland conditions. Project partners restored an additional 63 acres of wetland.
- Total suspended solids reduced/prevented: 120,512 lbs/year
- Phosphorus reduced/prevented: 138.3 lbs/year
- Nitrogen reduced/prevented: 2,234.2 lbs/year
- Mailed letters/brochures to top 300 wetland landowners
- Held 8 workshops for landowners and municipal officials
- Held 20+ meetings with municipal officials
- Created a GIS-based wetland prioritization model
- Developed educational video clips
- Installed educational signage

Partners involved

- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
- Two Rivers Coalition
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- Ducks Unlimited
- Van Buren County Drain Commissioner
- Sarett Nature Center
- Harbor Shores
- Revolution Designs
- Landowners
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Van Buren County Road Commission



Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership Outreach and Model Ordinance Development

Erin Fuller, Watershed Coordinator

The Van Buren Conservation District was awarded an 18-month, \$20,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to support the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership, a statewide initiative promoting natural shoreline landscaping to protect Michigan's inland lakes.



Activities include:

- assisting with the writing and distribution of *Landscaping for Water Quality*, a booklet for homeowners
- distributing educational materials statewide to priority townships and lake associations
- assisting in developing measures of success to track the progress of the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership

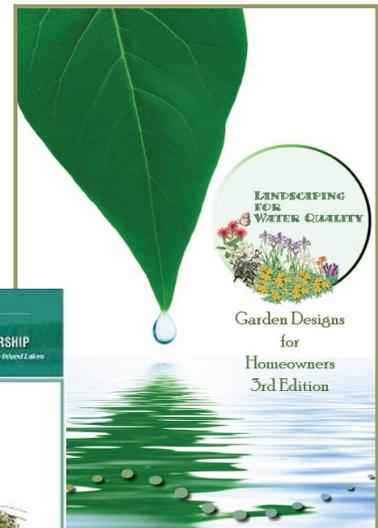
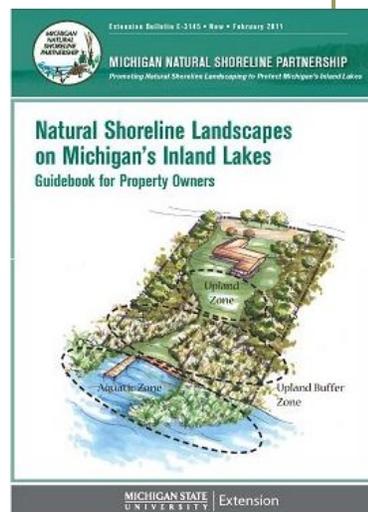
We were also awarded a separate 3-year, \$30,000 grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to develop model ordinances for inland lake protection.



Certified Natural Shoreline Professionals install a demonstration site on Maple Lake in Paw Paw, June 2013

Activities include:

- Developing model ordinances
- Creating a "toolkit" for communities to support the ordinances (educational materials, tips for enforcement, etc.)
- Distributing 500 copies of the model ordinance toolkit statewide



Agricultural BMP & Fieldprint Calculator Programs

Paw Paw River Watershed

Colleen Forestieri, Conservation Technician



Photograph by TNC Archives

Colleen Forestieri, VBCD, listing the many benefits of No-Till practices to a group

Colleen Forestieri is in her second year with the District working to improve ground and surface water quality through the promotion of Best Management Practices (BMPs) on Corn and Soybean ground – no-till, cover crops, filter strips & wetland restoration. In addition to her original outreach tools, efforts and goals, Colleen is working to promote the Fieldprint Calculator. The Calculator is an online tool that gives growers the chance to compare their grain operations to others in the state, county and watershed using real data from their farm inputs. With a goal of 75 growers, we'll also be able to get an in-depth look at the overall impacts to our watershed and where we can best focus our efforts in promoting conservation to local growers. Colleen has also been working to promote the District's newest piece of rental equipment, a 2011 John Deere No-till corn planter, which was donated by the Coca-Cola Company and The Nature Conservancy. The planter was rented out in 2012 & 13 to a number of Van Buren landowners who implemented almost 1,700 acres of no-till practices. Colleen was recently honored with the Farm Bureau 2013 Ecology Champion Award for her work with the District.

BMPs and Potential Acreage as a result of BMP Outreach:

- Wetland Restoration — 94.5 acres into WRP
- Conservation Cover & Cover Crops — 763.5 acres
- Conservation Tillage & No-Till — 1106 acres
- Filter Strips — 23.5 acres/5 landowners

Estimated Groundwater Recharge:

134,795,478 total gallons of water

Estimated Sediment Reduction:

2492.4 total tons of erosion saved from water bodies

Information & Education Activities:

- Annual Spring Field Day for Growers
- Recruiting for Fieldprint Calculator
- Managed No-Till Rental Equipment schedule
- Recruiting for Sediment Reduction Grant
- Managing contracts for Groundwater Grants
- Working with Drain Commissioner on Buffer Programs
- Recruited for Farming for the Future

Partners:

- *The Nature Conservancy
- *The Coca-Cola Company
- *VB County Drain Commission
- *NRCS
- *SW MI Planning Commission
- *World Wildlife Fund
- *Field to Market



Left: No-till soybeans with more than 90% residue coverage. Residue on surface helps to reduce erosion, hold moisture and build soil. *Right:* Colleen with Farm Bureau's Tod Kubisaz, receiving the 2013 Ecology Award for her work with getting BMPs on the ground in Van Buren Michigan.





*Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative
Mike Wozniak, Conservation Technician*

Mike Wozniak discussing key points with a landowner.

Conservation Technical Assistance Initiative (CTAI) work is performed under the technical guidance of the NRCS District Conservationist. This work is primarily focused on individuals in the agricultural community to provide on-site technical assistance for the implementation of conservation measures; completes surveys, designs, and layouts for construction of practices; inspects construction to determine adherence to specifications. These practices include, but are not limited to, pest, nutrient and irrigation management, prescribed grazing, tree and shrub establishment, agrichemical handling facilities, fencing, waste storage, grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures and heavy use area protection (HUAP's).

The CTAI grant also allows for the technician to work closely with the MAEAP Program to offer free, confidential, and non-regulatory farm assessments to assist farmers in complying with state and federal laws and Michigan Right to Farm Guidelines.



Mike Wozniak inspecting a chemical building (left) and pile of aggregate (right) to ensure its completion to standards and specifications.



Mike was commended by the NRCS for revising and completing a heavy workload, ensuring the Paw Paw Field office stays in state compliance.



Mike Wozniak overlooking a completed Seasonal High Tunnel, with a very happy landowner.



Each year, the Conservation District works directly with the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to administer Federal Farm Bill programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and the new Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) that funds projects specifically in our small region. These programs not only offer valuable technical assistance to Van Buren County farmers and landowners, helping them become better stewards of the land, but also contribute to the local economy by bringing in federal dollars to fund conservation practices. This money has a direct impact on the success of local farms, businesses and contractors. The figures below represent the federal cost share dollars brought into Van Buren County as a result of this partnership and the farm bill programs.

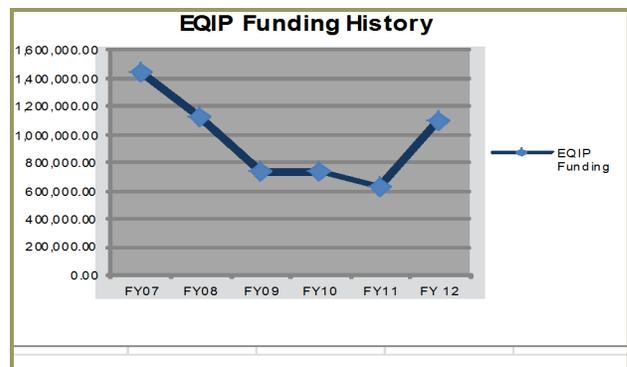
In FY2013, the program delivered approximately \$15.4 million in program benefit practices in Michigan through the Farm Bill. The VBCD and Paw Paw Service Center NRCS had 63 contracts on 2,895 acres with a total cost share payout of \$1,044,479.

The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is by far the most popular farm bill program in Van Buren County. Since FY2007, over **\$6 Million** dollars of federal funding has been allocated to Van Buren County landowners through the EQIP program alone.

Total amount of farm bill program funding obligated to Van Buren County landowners in 2013: \$1,044,479

Some of the more common practices funded through the EQIP program include (but not limited to):

- Irrigation Water Management
- Pest and Nutrient Management
- Agrichemical Containment Facility
- Cover Crops
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Prescribed Grazing
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment
- Invasive Species control/removal
- Stream Crossings





Tree Seedling Sale and Native Plant Palooza

The Native Plant Palooza was a terrific day with tons of fun. The air was filled with music by Vince Miller, powered by Four Elements Energy's mobile solar generator. Beautiful native plants were available from Hidden Savanna Nursery, as well as a great rain barrel building workshop, The Fresh Food Fairy, who used her bike powered blender to whip up some tasty treats, and many vendors who set up to show their products and encourage gardening and native plants. Almost 900 native plants found their way home to Van Buren County yards.



Erin Fuller discussing natives with a customer

Why we encourage natives: native plants are adapted to Michigan's unique soils and climate, they often require less water and fertilization, and are generally lower maintenance once established. Natives can be used in any landscaping situation, from your yard to your back 40, shoreline stabilization to raingardens. Proceeds from the Native Plant Sale directly support the educational programs and projects hosted by the Conservation District.

THANK YOU to staff and volunteers that helped prepare thousands of trees for our annual seedling sale.

Tree Seedling Sale in April

Despite the terrible weather, over 23,000 trees and shrubs were sold to be used in projects such as: windbreaks, wildlife plantings, reforestation, stream stabilizations, landscaping and beautification. Trees benefit all of us from the air we breathe to the shade we sit in!



Left over tree seedlings were donated to many Van Buren County District Schools to allow elementary kids to properly celebrate Arbor Day. Children were able to take home a tree to plant in his or her own backyard.





Van Buren County Resource Recovery Program

Chemists from Drug and Lab separate, weigh and properly package hazards

The Resource Recovery Program is growing in Van Buren County. Two Household Hazardous Waste Collections were held in 2013; one in Paw Paw and the other in South Haven. Many townships, villages and cities supported their residents by pledging monies to help recycle collected materials and residents from almost all municipalities participated in bringing household hazards to the collection. Almost 10,000 pounds of hazardous waste was collected and properly recycled. Along with hazards such as oil based paints, batteries, fluorescent bulbs, and cleaners, thousands of electronics were dropped off overflowing a 40 yard container.

The Van Buren Conservation District would like to thank Van Buren County Commissioners, Administrator and Community for supporting this great program.



Overflowing electronics taken to Padnos Recycling for recycling



Semi trailer from Deer Path Recyclers full of passenger tires

Van Buren County and Van Buren Conservation District are partners of the Southwest Michigan Solid Waste Consortium (SWMSWC). For the past two years the Consortium has been awarded a Scrap Tire Recycling Grant from the State of Michigan. Last year, 23,000 passenger tires were recycled in our region, and this year was another success. Almost two semi load trailers were filled from Van Buren County residents at the 2013 fall collection. The Clean Sweep grant from the State also had it best year ever. Granted funds of \$39,735.00 were used to properly recycle pesticides and mercury in Berrien, Cass, Van Buren and a special collection in Branch County.



Clean Sweep Farm and Home Pesticides

The Van Buren Conservation District has partnered with The Community Thrift Shop in Paw Paw and Universal Recycling Technology to offer year round E-waste recycling. This collection site offers residents a free and convenient way to recycle unwanted electronics and appliances (anything with a cord). All items collected are recycled properly and the waste is diverted from the landfills.



Year round-Electronic Recycling at the Community Thrift Shop in Paw Paw



Safely dispose of your household hazardous waste!

- OIL-BASED PAINTS
- PESTICIDES, GARDEN & LAWN CHEMICALS
- BATTERIES
- HOUSEHOLD CLEANERS
- AUTOMOTIVE CHEMICALS
- ANTIFREEZE
- FLUORESCENT BULBS
- SOLVENTS & PAINT THINNERS
- AEROSOLS
- GASOLINE & KEROSENE
- MERCURY & MERCURY DEVICES
- PHARMACEUTICALS & SHARPS
- REACTIVE & CORROSIVE
- PASSENGER TIRES (Reservation Required - Limited Qty's Accepted)
- COMPUTER ELECTRONICS
- TELEVISIONS (CONSOLE TV'S ARE NOT ACCEPTED)
- ANY ELECTRIC DEVICE THAT HAS A PLUG
- WALKERS/CANES/EYE GLASSES & HEARING AIDS
- AMERICAN FLAGS

Cost is \$1.50 per pound of household hazardous waste materials unless you are a resident in a participating township/city. Items marked with * are free to recycle. Call the VBCD at 269.657.4030 x5 for more information or to make an appointment for drop off, or visit www.vanburencd.org.

Proudly Sponsored by the:

SEPT. 28, 2013
SOUTH HAVEN PUBLIC WORKS BUILDING
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SOUTH HAVEN, MI
269.657.4030 ext. 5
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New Poster design for Household Hazard Waste Collections

Promoting and Protecting Our Natural Resources

Agricultural Conservation Education

Brillion Seeder



17 farmers and 250 acres later the Brillion Seeder has traveled all over our county.

No Till Planter



Our no-till corn and soybean planter had a great season, out and about in the whole county. Eleven farmers were able to rent and no-till their crops on nearly 500 acres.

No Till Drill



The Truax No-Till drill planted over 75 acres of land in Van Buren County.



AJ Brucks and Colleen Forestieri with "Don't Farm Naked" t-shirts

Beers, Burgers & BMPs

Many District grants promote no-till, cover crops and buffer strips that helps maintain soil's organic matter and keep sediment from blowing or washing off a field into our local waterways. Some of these grants offer incentive monies to encourage landowners to try these Best Management Practices (BMPs). Grain farmers around the Paw Paw River Watershed were invited out to TJ's Bar and Grill in Watervliet to hear about our programs that pay for conservation practices on their farm. Farmers that attended were bought a beer, burger and were given

a very popular "Don't Farm Naked, Plant Cover Crops" t-shirt!

Cover Crop Co-Op

1600 acres of cover crops were flown on this year by Nick's Flying Service out of Indiana.

Seed was dispersed before the crop was harvested which will allow a cover of annual rye grass into the spring. This was a first year Co-Op that will be available again next year.



Nick's Flying Service

Farming for the Future

The annual "Farming for the Future" conference held in Lawrence brought in residents from Van Buren, Cass, Allegan, and Kalamazoo Counties. Topics were geared for every agricultural producer from the starting farmer to the farmer that has been in agriculture for generations. Knowledgeable speakers presented on issues including emerging pest management issues, conservation programs, residue management and creating healthy organic matter on the farm, cover crops, hops in Michigan, and water as a crop. The keynote speaker, Lori Evesque from Tillers International, presented on "Animal Power on the Farm- Relevant Today, Anachronism, or Only for the Third World?". A great slide presentation showed the changes from past agriculture practices that are still the main way of farming



across the world, and how animal power works and benefits the farm. Between eighty and one hundred people attend the yearly conference and were able to take home valuable information about ways to improve their farm.

Cover Crop Test Plots

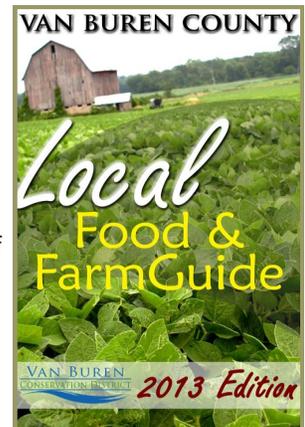
Conservation Technician Colleen Forestieri, worked with board member Carl Druskovich to plant six different species of cover crops at four different times of the fall to see which mixes established better in a Michigan temperate zone. Test plots were at the Druskovich Farm in Decatur. Local producers were invited out to the test plots the following April to see the results.



Cover crop test plots

Supporting Local Food & Farms

Buying local keeps your money in your community. It is not only beneficial to the farmer, it is beneficial to your health. The Van Buren Conservation District distributed 7000 Local Food and Farm Guides in 2013. These reached the hands of many of our county residents and visitors, which increases business at our local farms and encourages folks to have healthy, fresh and local foods in their homes.



Promoting and Protecting Our Natural Resources

Conservation Education

Annual Meeting-Summer Farm Day and Picnic

The Van Buren Conservation District staff and board gave two awards out at our Annual Summer Farm Day and Picnic to recognize a person or persons that have made a difference in the Van Buren County community.

Dave Foerster, president of Two Rivers Coalition (TRC), was awarded as "Conservationist of the Year" for his hard work and dedication to creating awareness of water quality, importance of wetlands and stewardship for the entire region. Dave recently put a conservation easement on his property in Waverly Township that will allow his land to be permanently protected and wetlands that benefit our water quality and wildlife forever.

George Kusmack was awarded the "Farmer of the Year." George has been working with many of our conservation programs to improve conservation on his own farmland. He has implemented almost 300 acres in no-till, uses cover crops, supports District events and has helped out with the rental of the no-till corn planter.

With friends, family, partners and community residents we celebrated our great accomplishments at the Rainey Farm in Bangor. Local food was served, local flowers decorated the farm, and a good time was had by all. A big thank you goes to the Rainey Family for hosting our event this year.

Michigan's
Critical Dune-
Vegetative
Removal
Assurance
Program

Michigan's shoreline is a showcase for 275,000 acres of sand dune formations. These windswept dunes represent the largest collection of freshwater dunes in the world. Michigan dunes are home to 5 federally listed threatened and endangered species. The diversity of wildlife, topographic relief, vegetation, habitats, and climatic conditions occurring within these landforms represents a phenomenon unique to

the State of Michigan.

The Van Buren Conservation District reviewed permit applications for uses in critical dune areas in 2013. The District works with landowners, landscapers, contractors and builders to encourage the least amount of impact and damage to critical dunes. Protection of Michigan's Critical Dunes is a priority to Conservation Districts.

The Van Buren Conservation District's Fourth Annual "River Rescue" was a great success

The overall goal was to improve the water quality and vitality of local creeks, stream banks and the health and biodiversity of critical wildlife populations and habitats by removing anthropogenic sources of trash and debris from the water and along the banks at or below the water's edge on creeks and rivers in the Paw Paw River Watershed. River Rescue continues efforts from the past three years in both the Paw Paw and Black River Watersheds.



Kevin Haight and Kyle Mead pull a tire from Carter Creek



Truck overflowing with trash

Sixty-two volunteers cleaned up over eight thousand pounds of trash from our local waterways. Twenty seven tires, mattresses, coolers, construction barrels and other items were picked up out of 12 miles of water in the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds.

Great contributions from event partners like Great Lakes Commission, Two Rivers Coalition, Bangor South Haven Heritage Water Trail Association, Hartford Public Schools, City of South Haven and Southwest Michigan Planning Commission helped make this event a success.

Over the past four years volunteers have picked up over 48,000 pounds of garbage and 4,766 tires from our local waterways. This one day event, held the first Saturday in August, makes a difference and creates awareness of the importance to property recycle and dispose of trash.



Volunteers in Hickory Creek put on their waders



VAN BUREN
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Van Buren Conservation District
1035 E. Michigan Ave.
Paw Paw, MI 49079
269-657-4030x5
www.VanBurenCD.org

 www.facebook.com/VanBurenCD



VAN BUREN
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A decorative blue wavy line graphic that curves under the text, resembling a stylized wave or a ribbon.

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