



## Highlight

The Van Buren Conservation District partnered with the Van Buren County Farm Bureau to host a tent for “Kid’s Day” at the Van Buren Youth Fair. Ag and Water Quality staff assisted with this event where kids rode tractors around a farm setup collecting produce then selling it to a market for a prize. Kids were then able to look at real life bugs and pick out a magnifying glass and fake bug to take home.

### Pine/Mill/Mud 319 Project (EGLE 319 Grant)

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Water sampling from tile drains and streams 7/5/23, 7/20/23
2. Prep for farm field day
3. Farmer meetings
4. Prep for fall cover crop applications
5. Alfalfa Harvest 7/27/23
6. Quarterly report submitted 7/29/23

#### Upcoming Activities

1. Distribute farm newsletter 8/2/23
2. Apply amendments to alfalfa field to increase phosphorus uptake 8/3/2023
3. Farm Field Day 8/17/23

### Great Lakes Protection Fund Project (Xylem, Inc. + Notre Dame)

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Team video conferences 7/13/23, 7/25/23
2. Outreach planning
3. Project extended through 9/1/2023

#### Upcoming Activities

1. Quarterly report submitted 8/4/23
2. Meeting to discuss outreach 8/16/23
3. Farm Field Day 8/17/23



Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Board Report  
Prepared 8/4/23  
Staff: Colleen Forestieri Erin Fuller Carlie Southland

- 4. Distribute farm newsletter
- 5. Grant close-out

### USDA – AFRI (Notre Dame)

#### Activities & Accomplishments

- 1. Continue outreach activities
- 2. Distribute farm newsletter

#### Upcoming Activities

- 1. Farm Field Day 8/17/23
- 2. Quarterly reporting

### Other

#### Activities & Accomplishments

- 1. Weekly staff meetings
- 2. Social media tasks
- 3. MI Natural Shoreline Partnership Outreach team meeting 7/6/23
- 4. Fuller bi-annual review 7/6/23
- 5. Spotted Lanternfly survey 7/12/23
- 6. Summer education at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery 7/13/23
- 7. Van Buren County Youth Fair 7/19 – 7/20/23
- 8. VBCD Annual Meeting 7/26/23
- 9. Lakes and Trees grant discussion 7/27/23
- 10. Ross Coastal Plain Marsh Preserve Site Visit 7/27/23

#### Upcoming Activities

- 1. Ag and WQ Team meeting 8/1/23
- 2. Fuller “Hike with a Naturalist” 8/2/23
- 3. Fuller LincPass renewal in Lansing 8/2/23
- 4. Recycle Roundup 8/5/23
- 5. Summer education at Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery 8/10/23
- 6. Staff retreat 8/18/23
- 7. Southland bi-annual review 8/21/2023
- 8. Forestieri bi-annual review 8/22/2023
- 9. Healthy Water Week 8/22 – 8/25/23



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Prepared 8/4/23

Staff: Colleen Forestieri Erin Fuller Carlie Southland

10. MNSP Outreach team meeting 8/29/23

New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. NA

## Photos

*Senior Conservation Specialist, Colleen Forestieri, and Conservation Associate, Carlie Southland, join the rest of the Van Buren Conservation District staff for Kid's Day at the Van Buren County Fairgrounds.*





## SW x SW Corner Cisma

July 2023 Board Report

Prepared 08-03-2023

Staff: [Alex Florian](#) [Abigale Bristol](#) [Caleigh Dahn](#) [Jena Johnson](#)

### Highlights

July is the month when invasive species fear the Cisma Team. We hit the ground hard with treatments throughout the service area, targeting our highest priority species. Our education efforts spanned from water to land as we tabled at boat launches and visited private landowner properties. We joined our sister Cisma Teams from throughout the state to combine our skills and knowledge.

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. The Cisma Team held 3 Landing Blitz events to educate boaters on Clean, Drain, Dry.
2. Alex wrote a Conservation Corner on Spotted Lanternfly
3. Alex attended the Van Buren County Kid's Fair
4. The Cisma Team attended and helped with the Van Buren Conservation District annual Meeting
5. Alex preformed 2 site visits
6. Surveyed known sites of Japanese stiltgrass
7. Continued surveying for spotted lanternfly
8. Began treatment of kudzu and Japanese stiltgrass at known locations

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. MISC Summer Field Trip
2. MISGP Listening session

### Upcoming Activities

1. August 1 Hike with a Naturalist in Lawless Park
2. August 2 Van Buren County Road Commission Presentation
3. August 8 hike at Russ forest
4. August 11 Paddle Training
5. August 17 VBCD MAEAP Field Day
6. August 22 Paddle with a Naturalist
7. September 1 MISGP RFP released
8. Begin treatment for GLRI grant
9. Begin treating invasive *Phragmites* and Japanese knotweed along Van Buren County Roads





## SW x SW Corner CISMA

July 2023 Board Report

Prepared 08-03-2023

Staff: [Alex Florian](#) [Abigale Bristol](#) [Caleigh Dahn](#) [Jena Johnson](#)

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. Wildlife Forever | Clean Drain Dry Mini-Grant | \$2,414.50 | expected decision date: August 18, 2023

### Concept of the Month: Pesticide Quick Tips

#### Overview:

Pesticides are like medications. You choose the right drug for the symptom, just like you choose the right pesticide for the pest. You read the directions to get the right dosage. A dosage that's too low won't help your problem, and a dosage that's too high will certainly give you new problems! This is all the same for using pesticides. Here are some answers to common pesticide misconceptions we've heard from the community:

#### **Label is the Law**

Reading a pesticide label is as important and informative as reading the directions on your prescription bottle. Be sure to fully review the label to make sure you are using the right pesticide at the right dosage.

#### **Use the right dosage**




The wrong dosage of pesticide won't properly treat the pest. Too little pesticide, and the pest won't be affected. Too much pesticide, and you might be hurting more than you bargained for! Possible doses are listed on the pesticide label.

#### **Use the right chemical**

You wouldn't treat an upset stomach with headache medicine. Make sure you're using the right pesticide for the pest you're targeting. A list of affected pests are listed on the label.

### Quick Tips for Pesticides

Use pesticides responsibly. Keep our soil, water, and wildlife healthy!

- **The label is the law**  
The label tells you best practices
- **Use the right dosage**  
The right dosage gives the best results
- **Use the right chemical**  
The right chemical for your target pest



## Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 Deputy Administrator Board Report

Prepared August 2023

Staff: **Emilly Hickmott**

### Highlights

District staff continue to host events through the end of summer, all while preparing for the end of our fiscal year in September. With the year transition, we are planning events and programs for 2024. If there is a service, information, or event that you're hoping to see from the District, please don't hesitate to reach out and share your ideas. Our annual meeting in July was excellent, despite the stormy weather. The Van Buren Conservation District named Tim Kling as our Conservationist of the Year for 2022 in recognition of his commitment to keeping materials in the circular economy and his contributions to making recycling accessible for Van Buren County. The Van Buren Conservation District named Mike & Casey Bozung our Farmer of the Year for 2022 in recognition of their commitment to sustainable agriculture at home and in their community. Be sure to congratulate these well-deserving community members when you see them!

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Provided information for and assistance to local municipalities, agencies, organizations, and residents regarding District programs
2. Reviewed legislative and other partner agency updates and passed along grant opportunities
3. Updated VBCD shared calendars
4. Wrote and distributed July 2023 Municipal Programs Report
5. Prepared VBCD administrative team & staff meeting agendas and conducted meetings
6. Compiled and distributed VBCD board meeting materials
7. Promoted district programs and events through various media including press releases
8. Updated VBCD website
9. Drafted/updated VBCD policies for Board review
10. Arranged preparations for VBCD Annual Meeting and MAEAP Field Day
11. Facilitated preparatory work for regional Materials Management Planning
12. Provided clarifying training on internal staff procedures
13. Worked with technicians and administrative staff to submit NACD Technical Assistance Grant and EGLE Coastal Resilience Grant

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery Volunteer Discussion (07/03)
2. Staff Bi-annual Check-ins (07/05, 07/06)
3. MDARD District Manager Lunch-n-Learn (07/06)
4. Meet and Greet Rep. Joey Andrews (07/07)
5. Year-round Tire Collection Discussion (07/10)



Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 Deputy Administrator Board Report  
Prepared August 2023  
Staff: **Emilly Hickmott**

6. NACD Grant Q&A (07/11)
7. MDARD Operations Review (07/12)
8. Emerging Leaders Program (07/17-07/20)
9. Materials Management Community Engagement Regional Discussion (07/21)
10. Mentor Meeting (07/24)
11. VBCD Annual Meeting (07/26)
12. VBCD Staff Meeting (07/11, 07/25)
13. VBCD Management Team Meeting (07/25)
14. VBCD Admin Team Meeting (07/05)
15. VBCD Resource Recovery Admin Team Meeting (07/12)
16. Ag Check-in Meeting (07/14)
17. Conservation Associate Weekly Check-in (07/06, 07/13)
18. Resource Recovery Check-ins (07/06, 07/24)
19. Outreach Weekly Check-in (07/27)
20. SWxSW Corner CISMA Strategy Meeting (07/10, 07/14, 07/27)
21. NRCS Conservation Tech Check-in Meetings (07/05)
22. VBCD Board Meeting (07/26)
23. VBC Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting (07/11)
24. Commissioner Coffee (07/07, 07/14)
25. VBC Committee of the Whole (07/11)
26. VBC Board of Commissioners Meeting (07/11)
27. Municipal Meetings (Paw Paw Township - 07/10)

## New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. NA



## Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 MAEAP Board Report

Prepared August 2023

Staff: Kyle Mead



### Highlights:

July was busy with VBCD events, two days at the fair and the annual meeting kept the specialist occupied between farm visits. On July 27, the specialist showed a professor from Boston two of the farms that would be part of the Conservation Innovation Grant that will utilize drones to map soil moisture. This professor is the lead for the grant and wanted to see soil structure, rooting characteristics, and canopy of the plants. This grant process has been going on for close to two years now with a payoff within the next year that will give the growers data on their fields.

Percentage Completed: 76.9% of required assessments completed

38% of verifications

### Activities, Accomplishments, & Challenges

1. 7/5 – Planted Cover Crop Demo's for field day
2. 7/7 – Emergency Plan for cannabis grower
3. 7/14 – Field Visit with Lucas
4. 7/14 – Social Media post about picking blueberries
5. 7/19 – Kids day at the fair
6. 7/20 – Fair Auction
7. 7/25 – Prepare for Annual Meeting

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 7/6 – Envirothon Meeting
2. 7/11 – MAEAP Field Day Planning Meeting
3. 7/14 – Ag Checkin Meeting
4. 7/18 – Online Irrigation Training with MAEAP techs
5. 7/26 – Annual Meeting
6. 7/27 – Farm Tour with CIG organizer





# Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 MAEAP Board Report

Prepared August 2023

Staff: Kyle Mead



A*Syst Type	Monthly A*Systs	Fiscal Year to Date A*Systs
Farm*A*Systs:	4	30
Orchard*A*Systs:	2	17
Greenhouse*A*Systs:	0	2
Nursery*A*Systs:	0	0
Crop*A*Systs:	2	7
Livestock*A*Systs:	0	4
FWHP*A*Systs:	0	0
Total Assessments Completed (always year to date):	4	60 / 78 Goal
On Farm Risk Reductions (always year to date):	Not easily tracked in DB	0 / 150 Goal
MAEAP Verifications (always year to date):	2	22 completed YTD (11FAS, 11CAS, #LAS, FWH) 58 Goal

Photos



Van Buren Conservation District:  
July 2023 NACD Technical Assistance  
Board Report  
Prepared August 2023  
Staff: Lucas Hartman



## Highlights

VBCD outreach efforts have resulted in 12 applicants already interested in enrolling in programs provided by the new Farm Bill.

## Activities & Accomplishments

1. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
  - a. Finalizing Obligation requirements, contracting documents, and conservation plans for 2023 Applications and contracts.
    - i. All pre approved applications will become contracts in 2023
2. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - a. Planning and contracting for 2023 applications will begin in August 2023
3. Conservation Operations Technical Assistance (CoTA)
  - a. Continued planning, field visits, resource evaluations, etc. for landowners that are interested in applying to Farm Bill Programs in 2024.
4. Upcoming Events
  - a. MAEAP fruit field day
    - i. Encourage participation in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) from those producers already MAEAP verified.
  - b. New Farm Bill in 2024
    - i. Attending a stakeholder meeting with Congresswoman Slotkin (D-MI) to discuss timeline, and objectives of Ag committee on the bill.

## New Grant Proposals Submitted

Proposal for NACD TA and Outreach 2023 grant submitted to MACD on July 27th

Offering \$35,000 for a total project budget of \$159,000 to support two conservation planning technicians to aid landowners in Farm Bill Programs.



Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 NRCS CT Board Report  
Prepared: Aug 2023  
Staff: Gabriel Francisco



## Highlights

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. 4-H Youth Fair - This year I have been able to return to my roots and help volunteer with the Van Buren County 4-H and this July was their annual Youth fair. It was great to be able to assist in all the capacity I could, and see so many familiar faces of friends I grew up with and showed against who are now there with children of their own!

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 7-7-23 - EQIP Office Visit for new 2024 EQIP client
2. 7-8-23 - Farm Visit for new 2024 EQIP client - Lawrence
3. 7-14-23 - Ag Team Check-In
4. 7-17-23 - Tree Sale Meeting and 2024 tree selection
5. 7-19-23 - Sheep Judging at Van Buren Youth Fair
6. 7-19-23 - Kids Day Booth at the Van Buren Youth Fair
7. 7-20-23 - Large Animal Livestock Auction at Van Buren Youth Fair
8. 7-23-23 - Van Buren Youth Fair clean-up
9. 7-26-23 - Annual Meeting
10. 7-27-23 - NACD Grant Submission
11. 7-28-23 - Farm Visit - Hartford

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. NACD CT Grant - This year Lucas Hartman and I will be applying together for the NACD TA Grant. This will allow both Lucas and I to better focus our time into both of our areas of interest, his in natural landscapes and design, and mine in livestock and pastoral issues. Because of the number of clients that Van Buren is maintaining, we feel that this makes for a more efficient and effective Conservation District and EQIP application process for our customers.

### Upcoming Activities

1. MAEAP Field Day, August 17 - Stocchiero Farms, Bangor - And we are off, planning the next fantastic field day for everyone! Please join us on August 17 and take a tour of the Stocchiero Farm, a beautiful family run farm for over 50 years!



Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 NRCS CT Board Report  
Prepared: Aug 2023  
Staff: Gabriel Francisco



## Photos



Gabe Francisco, Nataile Reidenbach, and Boston the Pig after the Large Animal Auction at the Van Buren Youth Fair.



## Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 Outreach Board Report

Prepared 7/27/2023

Staff: **Jacob Diljak**

### Highlights

Public outreach for VBCD programs saw great strides with invasive species events, recycling events, and other VBCD programs. Planning for the 2023 Annual Report, 2024 VBCD Calendar, and 2024 Food, Farm, & Fun Guide has begun.

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Social media management: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok, data tracking
2. Financials: invoice and receipt management
3. General VBCD photography: events, presentations, stock photography
4. Conservation Corner: review, editing
5. VBCD Newsletter: drafting, sending
6. 2024 Tree Sale: planning, order placement
7. Healthy Water Week: customer questions and promotion
8. Covert Public Health and Safety Event: planning, resource development
9. Annual Meeting: set up and tear down, photography, presenting
10. Van Buren Youth Fair: Kid's Day tent, animal auction, outreach
11. Butterfield Drain: timelapse photography
12. 2024 Food, Farm, & Fun Guide: pricing, planning

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. Staff meetings (7/12)
2. Admin team meetings (7/5)
3. Outreach Check-In (7/12)
4. Weekly Outreach Check-In (7/5, 7/13, 7/27)
5. Landing Blitz (7/6) **pictured**
6. Tree Sale Order Meeting (7/17)
7. Butterfield Timelapse Photography (7/17)
8. City of South Haven Council Meeting (7/7)
9. Two Rivers Coalition Board Meeting (7/18)
10. Hike with a Naturalist (7/18)
11. Strike Team Photography (7/19) **pictured**
12. Van Buren County Youth Fair Kids Tent (7/19)
13. Van Buren County Youth Fair Auction (7/20)
14. Annual Meeting Set Up (7/25)



## Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 Outreach Board Report

Prepared 7/27/2023

Staff: **Jacob Diljak**

15. Annual Meeting, Director Election, & Picnic (7/26)

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. NA

### Upcoming Activities

1. Bi-Annual Check-In (8/1)
2. South Haven Farmers Market (8/2)
3. South Haven Recycle Roundup (8/5)
4. Covert Township Board Meeting (8/8)
5. South Haven Charter Township Board Meeting (8/9)
6. Summer Education at Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery (8/10)
7. MAEAP Field Day (8/17)
8. Staff Day (8/18)
9. Paddle with a Naturalist (8/22)
10. Bloomingdale PSTE Collection (8/24)

	Trends	Content	Audience
Facebook	11,039 People Reached	33 Posts	2,528 Page Likes (12 ↑)
Instagram	233 People Reached	33 Posts	229 Followers (5 ↑)
LinkedIn	2 Impressions	2 Posts	43 Followers (3 ↑)
YouTube	149,707 Total Views	-	1,020 Subscribers (0 ↑)
TikTok	367 Likes	3 Posts	20 Followers (8 ↑)

Event Category	Number of Events	Impressions
Miscellaneous	4	51
VBCD Events	5	110
Farmers Markets	0	0



Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 Outreach Board Report  
Prepared 7/27/2023  
Staff: **Jacob Diljak**



CISMA Coordinator Alex Florian at the Maple Lake Landing Blitz (7/6).



Outreach Coordinator Jacob Diljak and Recycling Coordinator Kalli Marshall at the Paw Paw Large Tire Collection (7/10).



## Van Buren Conservation District

July 2023 Outreach Board Report

Prepared 7/27/2023

Staff: **Jacob Diljak**



Strike Team Coordinator Abigale Bristol treating the invasive plant kudzu in South Haven (7/19).





Van Buren Conservation District  
July 2023 Resource Recovery Board Report  
Prepared August 2023  
Staff: Kalli Marshall Jacob Diljak



## Highlights

The Resource Recovery program joyfully held our Paw Paw Large Tire Event. We collected a lot of tractor tires in the two day period, completely filling two semi trailers to the max. The latter half of the month focused on helping with the VBCD annual meeting, assisting residents with questions, and prepping for 2024 collection planning.

## Activities & Accomplishments

1. Responded to residents who had recycling questions with options for disposal/recycling
2. Submitted appropriate check requests for Gobles Village Market paper/cardboard recycling
3. Scheduled social media posts for July 2023
4. Read resource recovery updates from Michigan Recycling Coalition and EGLE to keep abreast of trends and changes
5. Tracked electronics collection for July 2023
6. Remained up to date with 2023 Scrap Tire Grant requests from partners
7. Started community discussions for 2024 Scrap Tire Collections
8. Reached out to partners for 2024 Scrap Tire Grant
9. Kept up with supplies at Battery Recycling Stations
10. Completed Recycling Conservation Corners for publication
11. Wrote thank you letters to municipalities who participate in the Municipal Pledge Program for Resource Recovery
12. Processed Invoices from Scrap Tire Grant
13. Confirmed vendors for Recycle Roundup Event
14. Rescheduled residents for additional or another collection date
15. Assisted with packing and setup for annual meeting
16. Contacted communities for 2024 year round collection sites
17. Amended Battery Collection Grant to fit needs

## Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 7/5/2023 - Admin team meeting
2. 7/10-11/2023 - Paw Paw Large Tire Collection
3. 7/10/2023 - EGLE year round tire Collection meeting
4. 7/11/2023, 7/18/2023, 7/25/2023 - Staff Meeting
5. 7/12/2023 - Decatur Discussion
6. 7/12/2023 - Community Thrift Shop Walk through
7. 7/12/2023 - Resource Recovery Admin Meeting



## Van Buren Conservation District

### July 2023 Resource Recovery Board Report

Prepared August 2023

Staff: **Kalli Marshall** **Jacob Diljak**

8. 7/19/2023 - Kid's day Van Buren Fair
9. 7/21/2023 - Materials Management Coalition Meeting
10. 7/24/2023 - City of Hartford Meeting
11. 7/26/2023 - Annual Meeting

## New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. Na

## Upcoming Activities

1. Prepare compost video for Paw Paw Library
2. Prepare Resource Recovery Management Plan for Growers
3. Research/develop A\*Syst Program booklets for restaurants, organizations, growers, schools, homes, municipalities
4. Hang Recycle, MI signs somewhere impactful
5. Hartford School Recycling Collaboration
6. School Education Planning

## Photos

