



Van Buren Conservation District  
September 2023 Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects Board Report  
Prepared 10/12/23

Staff: Colleen Forestieri Erin Fuller Carlie Southland

## Highlight

The Van Buren Conservation District staff worked with 15 farmers to install 5,407 acres of cover crops via airplane in September 2023. These cover crops will help prevent erosion and pollution of our waterways, as well as improve soil health so farmers can see better yields. 2,615 of these acres were cost-shared through grant programs.

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

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Water sampling from tile drains and streams 9/14/23, 9/28/23
2. Farmer meetings
3. Fall cover crop applications, September 2023 (2,615 acres cost-shared)
4. Prep for post-harvest cover crop applications
5. Kellogg Bio Station LTAR Field Day 9/15/23
6. Farming for the Future conference prep meeting 9/19/23
7. Meeting with EGLE 9/19/23
8. Meeting with UND 9/26/23
9. U of M Cover Crops & Nutrients field day 9/22/23

#### Upcoming Activities

1. Water sampling from tile drains and streams
2. Fix leaking water control structures
3. Work with farmers to install post harvest cover crops
4. Farming for the Future conference prep meeting 10/24/23
5. Quarterly reporting due 10/4/23

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

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Team video conferences
2. Outreach planning
3. Wrap up meeting 9/7/23

#### Upcoming Activities



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1. Grant close-out

### USDA - AFRI (Notre Dame)

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Continue outreach activities
2. Team meeting 9/26/23
3. Farming for the Future conference prep meeting 9/19/23

#### Upcoming Activities

1. Quarterly reporting
2. Continue outreach activities

### Other

#### Activities & Accomplishments

1. Weekly staff meetings
2. Social media tasks
3. Ag and WQ Team meeting 9/5/23
4. Internal GLRI "Lakes & Trees" grant application meeting 9/5/23
5. GLRI grant webinar 9/5/23
6. Staff photos 9/6/23
7. VBDL Story Time 9/19/23
8. VBDL Story Time 9/21/23
9. NACD Climate Smart Commodities grant discussion 9/21/23

#### Upcoming Activities

1. Ag and WQ Team meeting 10/3/23
2. Lakes & Trees GLRI grant meeting 10/3/23
3. Lakes & Trees GLRI grant meeting 10/5/23
4. Pre Recycle Roundup meeting 10/12/23
5. Recycle Roundup 10/14/23
6. EGLE 319 grant webinar 10/17/23
7. Lakes & Trees GLRI grant writing (due 10/23/23)
8. EGLE 319 grant writing (due 11/15/23)
9. Staff retreat 11/16/23



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New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. Submitted NOI letter for EGLE 319 grant 9/20/23

## Photos

*Senior Conservation Specialist Colleen Forestieri gets dusted with cover crops seeds during an aerial seeding application on September 12, 2023.*





## SW x SW Corner Cisma

September 2023 Board Report

Prepared 10/02/2023

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

### Highlights

This Month SWxSW Corner Cisma Staff detected the first known population of Hydrilla in Michigan. Staff also attended an on-site training in Oakland county to better familiarize ourselves with spotted lanternfly. The Strike team has been hard at work performing treatments for the Van Buren County Road Commission.

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. 1 Site visit
2. Had a booth at the Lawrence Farmers Market
3. Began writing MISGP grant applications
4. Camp Tamarack cattail management
5. VBCRC Phragmites and Knotweed treatments
6. Knotweed conservation corner
7. Steering committee meeting
8. Parrot Feather monitoring and Hydrilla detection
9. Continued spotted lanternfly surveys
10. Organized and began VBC drain surveys

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. Visited Oakland County Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) site

### Upcoming Activities

1. October 1st Stream Sampling
2. MISC Annual Meeting Planning Committee
3. TSN Coordinator Summit
4. MiCorps Conference

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. N/A



## SW x SW Corner Cisma

September 2023 Board Report

Prepared 10/02/2023

Staff: Alex Florian Abigale Bristol Caleigh Dahn Jena Johnson

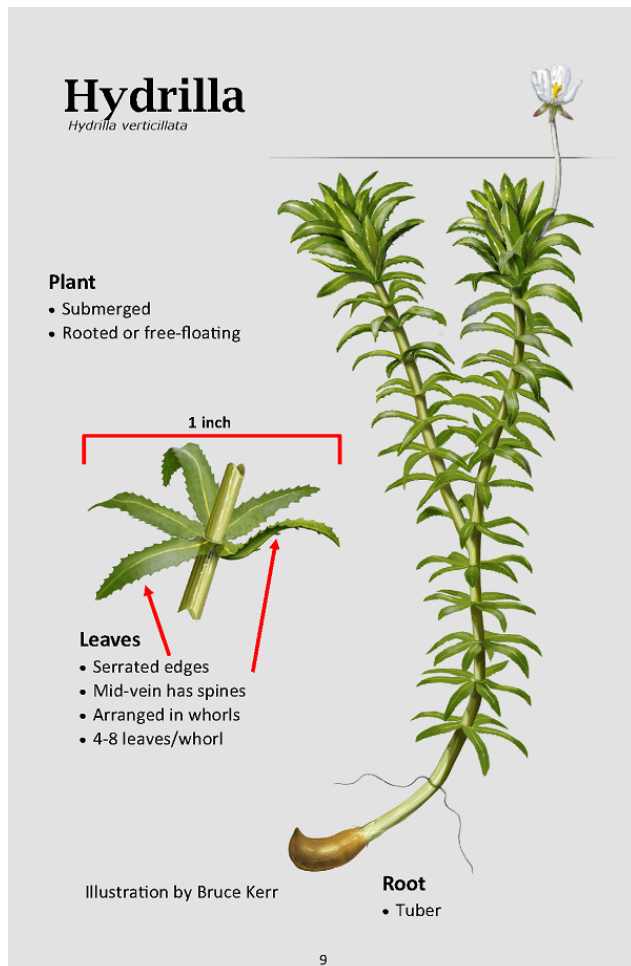
### Species of the Month: Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*)

#### Overview:

1. Hydrilla is a submerged aquatic plant
2. It forms dense mats which shade out native vegetation.
3. Eradication in other infestations has taken 10 years or more.
4. So far only known in 2 ponds that

#### Identification:

1. Leaves arranged in Whorls of 4 to 8
2. Serrated leaf edges (may require a hand lens to view)
3. Stems up to 30 feet long





## Van Buren Conservation District

August 2023 MAEAP Board Report

Prepared October 2023

Staff: Kyle Mead



### Highlights:

The specialist finished the FY strong with several assessments, some Verifications and meetings/training. He has already begun meeting with farmers that are due for new assessments and verifications for FY24 with the goal of knocking out as many visits as possible before the weather gets cold.

Percentage Completed: 91.0% of required assessments completed

50% of verifications

### Activities, Accomplishments, & Challenges

1. 9/6 - staff photo day
2. 9/12 - New Assessment in South Haven
3. 9/13 - assessment followup
4. 9/14 - New assessment in South Haven
5. 9/18 - 2 New Verifications and 3 Re-Verifications
6. 9/26 - Re-Assessment in South Haven

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 9/7 - Envirothon Meeting
2. 9/8 - Ag Check In Meeting
3. 9/19 - FFtF check-in meeting
4. 9/21 - MAEAP Program Review with MDARD
5. 9/28 - Tag along with NRCS for a visit of potential customer
6. 9/28 - Pre-assessment visit of a farmer in Bangor



# Van Buren Conservation District

August 2023 MAEAP Board Report

Prepared October 2023

Staff: Kyle Mead



A*Syst Type	Monthly A*Systs	Fiscal Year to Date A*Systs
Farm*A*Systs:	3	34
Orchard*A*Systs:	2	20
Greenhouse*A*Systs:	0	2
Nursery*A*Systs:	0	0
Crop*A*Systs:	1	9
Livestock*A*Systs:	1	6
FWHP*A*Systs:	0	0
Total Assessments Completed (always year to date):	7	71/ 78 Goal
On Farm Risk Reductions (always year to date):	Not easily tracked in DB	0 / 150 Goal
MAEAP Verifications (always year to date):	5	29 completed YTD (12FAS, 13CAS, 2LAS, FWH) 58 Goal

## Photos



Van Buren Conservation District:  
September 2023 NACD Technical Assistance  
Board Report  
Prepared October 2023  
Staff: [Lucas Hartman](#)



## Highlights

Conservation Stewardship program participants have completed all required conservation practice enhancements for 2023. Certification process for these participants is complete.

## Activities & Accomplishments

1. Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
  - a. Establishing new customer list for Applications in FY2024
    - i. Fulfilling Farm Bill Program eligibility requirements with FSA
    - ii. Land control verifications, and preliminary natural resource evaluations
2. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
  - a. All enhancements certified for FY 2023
    - i. 2000+ acres of enhanced conservation practices implemented in 2023
    - ii. New contracts will not begin enhanced practices until the 2024 growing season.
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.
    - i. Providing additional conservation planning assistance and plan production to a variety of landowners not eligible or interested in cost share programs.
    - ii. Began conservation planning for customer in Hartford
      1. Forestry and elevated water table concerns.
4. Upcoming Events
  - a. New Farm Bill in 2024
    - i. New farm bill has not been signed but we are still accepting program applications for 2024.
      1. No existing conservation programs from the 2018 Farm Bill are expected to be removed from the new bill.

## New Grant Proposals Submitted





Van Buren Conservation District:  
September 2023 NACD Technical Assistance  
Board Report  
Prepared October 2023  
Staff: [Lucas Hartman](#)



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

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

Currently awaiting selections.

Still awaiting selections from NACD.



## Highlights

### Activities & Accomplishments

1. The technician previously applied for a grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Services "Sustain our Great Lakes" grant. Unfortunately, we were not selected for that project, but that hasn't deterred our hopes to run a grazing program from Van Buren County. Forming a partnership with Grand Valley State University and a new MAEAP-verified farm, Tending Tilth LLC, the VBCD is submitting a Letter of Concept to the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) for their Climate Smart Commodities (CSC) Grant. The proposed project is for the implementation of a grazing team within Van Buren County and a free Grazing School for area residents to learn skills in conservation-minded livestock management.

### Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 9/6/23 - 9/12/23 - Paw Paw farm EQIP Fencing Installation
2. 9/11/23 - Van Buren Youth Fair Board Meeting
3. 9/19/23 - Farming for the Future Meeting
4. 9/22/23 - VB Historical Society Visit
5. 9/27/23 - Farm Visit - South Haven
6. 9/27/23 - VB Historical Society Visit
7. 9/28/23 - Farm Visit - Paw Paw
8. 9/29/23 - State Archaeologist Visit and Site Visit - Paw Paw

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

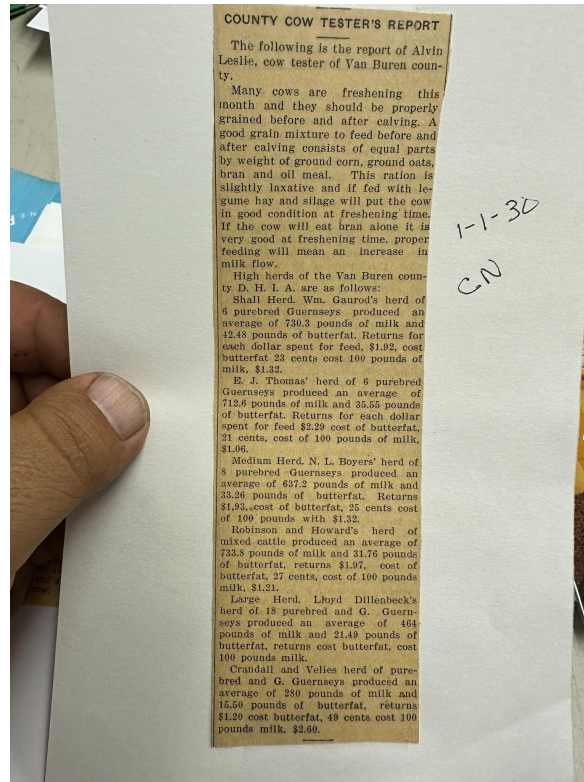
1. N/A

### Upcoming Activities

1. NACD CSC Grant Letter of Concept Due October 13
2. 2024 EQIP Farm Planning



## Photos



Farm Report done in 1930 by a Mr. Alvin Lesley, the Official Van Buren County Cow Tester



Goats during a farm visit in Paw Paw, Michigan



Van Buren Conservation District  
September 2023 Outreach Board Report  
Prepared 9/28/2023  
Staff: **Jacob Diljak**

## Highlights

Two community cleanup events were held in September: one on the Paw Paw River and the other on the Van Buren State Trail in Covert. Registration to advertise in the 2024 Food, Farm, & Fun Guide is now open!

## 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. Paw Paw River Clean Up: planning, volunteer and partner coordination, reporting
7. Van Buren State Trail Clean Up: planning, volunteer and partner coordination, reporting
8. Butterfield Drain: timelapse photography project
9. Macroinvertebrate Stream Sample: promotion and coordination
10. 2023 Annual Report
11. 2024 VBCD Calendar
12. 2024 Food, Farm, & Fun Guide

## Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. Staff meetings (9/5, 9/12, 9/19, 9/26)
2. Admin team meetings (9/6)
3. Outreach Check-In (9/20)
4. Weekly Outreach Check-In (9/7, 9/13, 9/22, 9/28)
5. Lawrence Farmers Market (9/2)
6. Breedsville Village Council Meeting (9/5)
7. Staff & Board Photos (9/6)
8. Van Buren County Road Commission Invasive Species Treatment Photography (9/11)
9. Paw Paw River Clean Up Packing (9/12)
10. Covert Township Regular Board Meeting (9/12)
11. Paw Paw River Clean Up (9/16) **pictured**
12. Two Rivers Coalition Board Meeting (9/19)
13. Van Buren Historical Society: Historical Photos (9/22, 9/27)
14. VBCD Board Meeting (9/27)



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 Prepared 9/28/2023  
 Staff: **Jacob Diljak**

- 15. Packing for Van Buren State Trail Clean Up (9/28)
- 16. Van Buren State Trail Clean Up (9/29) **pictured**

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

- 1. NA

### Upcoming Activities

- 1. Macroinvertebrate Sampling (10/1)
- 2. Village of Decatur Regular Board Meeting (10/2)

	Trends	Content	Audience
Facebook	8,814 People Reached	33 Posts	2,586 Page Followers (17 ↑)
Instagram	178 People Reached	30 Posts	238 Followers (4 ↑)
LinkedIn	4 Impressions	0 Posts	47 Followers (0 ↑)
YouTube	Total Views	-	1,040 Subscribers (10 ↑)
TikTok	521 Likes	3 Posts	37 Followers (2 ↑)

Event Category	Number of Events	Impressions
Miscellaneous	2	24
VBCD Events	3	62
Farmers Markets	1	135



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September 2023 Outreach Board Report  
Prepared 9/28/2023  
Staff: **Jacob Diljak**



Outreach Coordinator Jacob Diljak and Two Rivers Coalition Secretary Lisa Adams with collected trash and items from the Paw Paw River from the Paw Paw River Clean Up (9/16).



Executive Director Emily Hickmott collecting trash during the Van Buren State Trail Clean Up (9/29).



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



## Highlights

September has been a great month. We were offered partial funding for the EGLE Infrastructure grant so work has commenced to finalize budgets and work plans before signing . We also held our last Passenger & Semi and electronic recycling event of 2023 in Porter Township.

## 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 September 2023
4. Read resource recovery updates from Michigan Recycling Coalition and EGLE to keep informed of trends and changes
5. Tracked electronics collection for September 2023
6. Remained up to date with 2023 Scrap Tire Grant requests from partners
7. Worked on community discussions for 2024 Scrap Tire Collections
8. Scheduled recycling events for 2024
9. Resupplied Battery Recycling Stations
10. Completed Recycling Conservation Corners for publication
11. Processed Invoices from Scrap Tire Grant
12. Rescheduled residents for additional or another collection date
13. Contacted communities for 2024 year round collection sites
14. Reviewed billboard designs prior to printing
15. Assisted Columbia Township with additional tire pickup needs
16. Held discussions and planning for EGLE Infrastructure grant

## Meetings/Trainings Attended

1. 9/1/2023 - Bloomingdale Meeting Infrastructure Grant Meeting
2. 9/1/2023 - Geneva/ South Haven Meeting Infrastructure Grant Meeting
3. 9/5/2023, 9/19/2023 - Staff Meeting
4. 9/5/2023 - Hartford Elementary Recycling Education Discussion
5. 9/5/2023 - Diversys Meeting
6. 9/5/2023 - The Recycling Partnership Grant Discussion
7. 9/6/2023 - Staff Photo Day
8. 9/6/2023 - Admin Team Meeting
9. 9/12/2023 - Geneva Township Board Meeting
10. 9/12/2023 - Paw Paw Township Grant Discussion



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11. 9/13/2023 - South Haven Township Board Meeting
12. 9/14/2023 - Cobalt Holdings Tour and Video Making
13. 9/14/2023 - Lawrence Township Board Meeting
14. 9/16/2023 - Paw Paw River Cleanup
15. 9/19/2023 - Columbia Township Board Meeting
16. 9/20/2023 - Materials Management Planning Workgroup Meeting
17. 9/21/2023 - Porter Township Collection

### New Grant Proposals Submitted

1. The Recycling Partnership Infrastructure Grant
2. 2024 Scrap Tire Grant

### 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

