



Van Buren Conservation District Strike Team Crew Job Description and Posting Updated: 2025

Background Information: The Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) is seeking to hire up to two full-time (30-40 hours per week) Strike Team Crew Members. The Southwest by Southwest (SWxSW) Corner Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) Team is grant-funded and works collaboratively with the community to minimize the impact of invasive species. Every Michigan county is part of a CISMA, and our service area covers Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. The CISMA Team manages and surveys for invasive species and are the local experts on invasive species for the surrounding community. The Van Buren Conservation District employs the CISMA Team and houses the CISMA program for the tri-county service area.



Position Description: The SWxSW Corner CISMA Strike Team Crew Member furthers the mission of the Van Buren Conservation District as a part of the VBCD's CISMA Team. The CISMA Strike Team consists of the Strike Team Coordinator, the Invasive Species Technician, and the Strike Team Crew Members.

The Crew Member is a Seasonal, grant-funded, hourly position. Wages will be commensurate with education and experience and range from \$19 to \$21 per hour. Seasonal positions are not eligible for benefits except those required by law. The standard week for the Crew Member is 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM, Monday – Thursday and 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Friday, with occasional necessary evening meetings and weekend programs. Hours may vary due to workload, weather conditions, and daylight hours.

The successful candidate will survey and manage for aquatic and terrestrial invasive species throughout Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties in a variety of field sites. The Crew Member may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions. These examples do not include all of the tasks that the employee may be expected to perform.

Field work may involve wading in water or traversing uneven, boggy, or steep terrain in a range of temperatures and conditions. This may require carrying equipment and materials of up to 50 pounds on strenuous hikes. The Crew Member must be ready and willing to work in a variety of conditions, as well as travel throughout the CISMA's entire service area. A truck, trailer, and UTV will be provided for navigating to/through sites, as available.

Responsibilities and number of open positions are contingent upon awarded project funding. Extended job offers are contingent upon passing a background check.



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May-August

The Crew Member will survey for aquatic plants by walking and kayaking in drains, streams, and rivers (50%). The Crew Member will apply herbicide to invasive plants in wetlands or residential areas (30%). The Crew Member will check live traps for invasive insects (20%).

September-November

The Crew Member will apply herbicide to roadside invasive plants (80%). The Crew Member will operate cutting tools or small-engine equipment such as loppers or brush cutters to manage invasive shrubs (20%).

Training will be provided by CISMA Team staff and other partner trainers, as appropriate.

Position Supervisor: Strike Team Coordinator

Location: Report to the Van Buren Conservation District office (1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079) each work day. Travel will be required for work performed throughout the CISMA tri-county area of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. Travel will occasionally be required for work outside of the tri-county area. Vehicles are provided for travel, as available.

Seasonal Position Dates:

Start date: May 5, 2025 (negotiable)

End date: November 14, 2025 (negotiable)

Essential Functions:

- Survey for target invasive plants and insects
- Kayak ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, and other water bodies to conduct surveys and collect invasive aquatic plant specimens
- Use ArcGIS, FieldMaps, and Google Sheets to accurately and completely record data while out in the field or in the office
- Study for Pesticide Applicator exams for Core, and categories 2 - Forestry, 5 - Aquatic, and 6 - Right of Way (if applicable; study materials provided by VBCD)
- Treat invasive species through chemical or mechanical means using backpack sprayers, brush cutters, etc.
- Install and check spotted lanternfly circle traps every other week
- Determine necessary supplies and equipment before visiting a site
- Clean, maintain, and keep track of equipment and supplies
- Conduct invasive species management using best management practices
- Follow protocols for decontamination, herbicide safety, and equipment safety
- Communicate with partners and the public on invasive species in the field and at



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events

- Drive UTV with supplies/equipment through large sites
- Other duties as assigned by Strike Team Coordinator and VBCD Management
- Assist with administrative duties, as necessary

Minimum Qualifications:

- Basic understanding of plant identification
- Must be (or be able to become) a certified or registered Michigan Commercial Pesticide Applicator in Categories 2, 5, and 6 (paid for by employer, if needed)
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Strong time management skills
- Ability to work well within a team
- Ability to make decisions in accordance with established policies and procedures
- Ability to conduct customer service at a professional level
- Ability to communicate with groups of diverse size and demographics through various mediums in English
- Reliable transportation to the office, field sites, and other off-site locations
- Ability to work occasional nights and weekends
- Valid driver's license

Preferred Qualifications:

- An educational background and/or work experience in natural resource management, biology, or ecology
- Strong organizational, recordkeeping, and task prioritization skills
- Ability to navigate off-trail, execute transect paths while managing or surveying for invasive species using a compass & map and/or GPS unit
- Ability to identify some native and invasive plant and/or insect species of the Midwest
- experience mixing and applying herbicide using a backpack sprayer
- Experience with data recording, managing, and tracking
- Experience using ArcGIS or FieldMaps
- Experience operating and maintaining a brush cutter
- Experience towing and maneuvering a hitched trailer
- Experience driving a UTV
- One or more seasons of relevant field experience
- First Aid, Wilderness Safety, or other similar certification(s)



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Physical Requirements:

- Able to work outdoors in all kinds of weather, often for most of the work-day hours
- Able to wade through streams and drains wearing waders
- Able to kayak on rivers and lakes wearing proper safety vests
- Able to walk on trails and uneven ground
- Able to lift and carry up to 50 pounds
- Able to effectively communicate in English
- Able to visually and auditorily identify and respond to environmental and other hazards related to fieldwork
- Able to work at work station for extended periods of time
- Ability to utilize office and computer equipment
- Able to go between offices to meet customers for assistance
- Able to bend over to access files and tools
- Able to visually survey outdoor areas for plant identification

To Apply: Interested applicants must submit: a VBCD Employee Application form, a cover letter, resume, unofficial transcripts (if applicable), and a list of three (3) references (all documents must be in PDF form) to: info@vanburencd.org or mail to: Van Buren Conservation District, 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079. If submitting these materials via email, use the subject line “[last name] 2025 Crew Application”. Official transcripts may be requested at the time of an interview.

Deadline to Apply: Interviews will occur from the end of February to mid-March. Preference may be given to applications received before 11:59 PM EST, Monday, February 17, 2025.

Equal Opportunity Employer: The Van Buren Conservation District is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. VBCD programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. The VBCD collectively acknowledges that its offices and gatherings occupy the ancestral, traditional and contemporary Lands of the Council of the Three Fires – the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi, ceded in multiple historic treaties. Through this acknowledgement, we recognize, support and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, and for historic Indigenous communities and individuals. The VBCD is committed to our obligations to those communities. The process of knowing and acknowledging the land we stand on is a way of honoring and expressing gratitude for the ancestral people who stewarded this land before us and their descendants who steward this land today.