



# Van Buren Conservation District

## May 2023 Program Update

Submitted by *Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator*

April was a whirlwind for District staff! With our annual tree sale, prescribed burn of one of our properties, Earth Day, and all of our normal activities, we sure kept busy. On the horizon early this summer, we have recycling collections, farm equipment rental, a grazing workshop, and more. Be sure to sign up for our e-newsletter at the bottom of our website ([www.VanBurenCD.org](http://www.VanBurenCD.org)) to keep up to date on all that is available to you through the District.

### Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) – As part of a collaboration with University of Notre Dame and the MI Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) VBCD staff are collecting water samples during rainstorms. This will help us track how much nutrient and sediment runoff happens during big storms. When these big storms occur before crops are planted, farm fields are especially vulnerable to soil loss. This type of water sampling will also help us determine what types of storms drive the most runoff, so we can develop strategies to prevent erosion and polluted runoff from entering our waterways.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian*) – In April the CISMA finished our final preparations for the start of the field season. The CISMA also gave two presentations, and helped with the VBCD's prescribed burn at Butterfield drain. Two Grants were awarded for CISMA work during April, a GLRI grant from the US Forest service, and a grant from MDARD to survey for spotted lanternfly.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) – April was a great month with many outdoor activities and (mostly) outdoor-worthy weather. The Senior MAEAP Specialist attended the Van Buren Farm Bureau Meeting, did a presentation for the Van Buren County Democrats and Paw Paw Middle School's Salmon Release, and picked up and then helped to wrap trees for the Annual VBCD Tree Sale Week. He also completed work with a new farmer and a long-term MAEAP farmer resulting in their Re Verification and a New Verification. The Specialist was asked to help train new MAEAP Technicians on Irrigation Uniformity and sit on a committee hoping to bring back Envirothon ending with a presentation at MACD Summer Conference.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) – VBCD staff, USDA partners, and volunteers successfully completed a controlled burn on ~30 acres of district owned native grassland in Waverly Township. Invasive species present throughout the native area are continuing to subside with this method of control.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Assistance** (*Gabe Francisco*) – This month was the VBCD annual tree sale, lots of trees were sold helping to make Van Buren County green and beautiful for years to come! VBCD was asked to help build a forestry display in conjunction with our Annual Tree Sale for the Lawrence Public Library. Using old teaching material we had in our storage lockers that the technician revamped, we were able to provide a fun, interactive display on forestry succession and identification for virtually no-cost to the VBCD or Lawrence Public Library.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – April was a busy month for outreach with Tree Sale wrapping and pickup; Food, Farm, & Fun Guides arriving; recycling collections starting, a prescribed burn, and other



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outreach events. 16,950 seedlings were sold or donated, over 3,000 Food, Farm, & Fun Guides were delivered, and 3 recycling collections were held!

- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall*) - April kicked off the collection season for the resource recovery program. The beginning of the month began with tree sale, squeezed in work on the 2023 EGLE Recycling Infrastructure Grant, and finished with three fantastic collection events. In those first three days of collections, we have already collected over 3,600 passenger tire equivalents!