



Van Buren Conservation District

May 2025 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

My, my, it's summer already! That means it is time for us to invite you and yours to our Annual Meeting & Director Election. This year, the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum will be hosting us on Wednesday, July 23 at 5:30 PM (optional 5:00 PM tour). We will give out a couple of awards and celebrate conservation successes while enjoying a locally-sourced dinner. We encourage you to RSVP here:

<https://vanburencd.org/2025-annual-meeting/>

As a part of our work on the Van Buren County Resource Recovery Program, Kalli has added several events to the calendar over the next few months that we hope you'll join. Please also help us share these events with anyone and everyone who might be interested. You can find more details on our Recycling page soon: <https://vanburencd.org/recycling-news/>. Throughout July and August, you'll find Kalli giving presentations at our Lunch & Learn events, mingling at Sustainable Samplers, or answering all your questions during Recycling Station Power Hours. Be sure to check out these free, fun events! See dates and times below, and keep an eye out for more details.

Upcoming Events:

- [Recycle Roundup Collection Event](#) | Saturday, June 7 | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM | 801 Hazen St., Paw Paw | household hazardous waste, oil paints, foam, electronics, passenger & semi tires | open to all Van Buren County
- Water Monitoring Education at Hartford High School STEM Camp | Tuesday, June 10
- [Two Rivers Coalition Prothonotary Warbler Paddle](#) | Saturday, June 14 | 9:30 AM – 2:00 PM | Maple Lake Dam River Access | see TwoRiversCoalition.org for details
- Recycling Presentation | 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM | Lawton Library – 125 S Main St., Lawton
- Juneteenth National Independence Day | Thursday, June 19 | office closed in observance
- Independence Day | Friday, July 4 | office closed in observance
- Recycling Lunch & Learns – two opportunities! RSVP encouraged 269-633-9314
 - Tuesday, July 1 | 11:45 AM – 1:15 PM | Lions Park Pavillion – Mill Race Road, Bangor |
 - Wednesday, July 2 | 11:45 AM – 1:15 PM | City of Gobles Park Pavillion – S State St., Gobles
 - Open to all ages, get your recycling questions answered!
- Recycling Power Hours – drop off your recycling at newly-improved stations and ask Kalli your recycling questions!
 - Tuesday, July 8 | 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM | Bloomingdale Transfer Station – Rocky Road
 - Friday, July 11 | 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Paw Paw Transfer Station – Red Arrow Hwy
 - Saturday, July 12 | 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM | Arlington Transfer Station – 26th Ave., Bangor
- VBCD Regular Board Meeting | Wednesday, July 23 | 10:00 AM | USDA Service Center – 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw
- Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) Annual Meeting & Director Election | Wednesday, July 23 | 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM | Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum – 903 S Bailey Ave., South Haven | open to all, RSVP encouraged 269-657-4030 x5



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Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) – In April, the Water Quality Team helped coordinate a variety of outreach and education activities, including Earth Day student presentations, demonstrations at the Paw Paw Middle School's Salmon in the Classroom release event, and Paw Paw Elementary STEM Day presentations.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) – Aside from wrapping and selling trees, the CISMA Team has been planning for the short-term and long-term future. We finalized road surveys and are helping develop management ideas for both Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) properties. We planted seeds for the first time to discourage kudzu returning at treatment sites. We're developing a facilitated meeting plan to discuss the Strategic Plan with the Steering Committee. We are preparing ourselves for not only a productive field season, but for 2025 and beyond.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) – The technician is leading a presentation to other MAEAP Technicians on irrigation and organizing a field day of irrigation testing in June. Tech also finalized Envirothon for the year, with the State competition at Western Michigan University in May.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) – With Tree Sale being the largest task of the month, that didn't stop Lucas and Gabe from also getting out and seeing farms, talking with landowners, and getting out to present for some events. These included some of the local schools in the area for Sustainability Week/ Earth Day, and all of that while closing the application period for the 2025 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and starting to facilitate our round 2 of general EQIP applications. We closed the month on a bittersweet note on our side of the office. After many dedicated years at the NRCS we bid farewell to our district conservationist Jeffery Douglas as he takes his retirement. Kami Williams will now serve as acting District Conservationist (DC), with other area DC's assisting (Gabe from Allegan, Di'Shun from Kalamazoo, and Brandon in Cass).
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – Our Tree Seedling fundraiser was a huge success! Together, we raised funds for local services and efforts and planted over 15,000 seedlings. Our community isn't just greener with trees. We're seeing more year-round recycling and disposal services with our upcoming collections and project partners – transfer stations. Look for collections and services near you: VanBurenCD.org/van-buren-county-recycling-collections/
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) – April was a busy month as we kicked off the spring season. Tree sale was a success, then recycling and educational event planning took over. Later, we celebrated with the Village of Decatur, Decatur Township, and Hamilton Township at the Decatur Area Waste & Recycling Center Grand Opening. To end the month, Kalli was honored by the Michigan Sustainable Business Forum with a Sustainability Leadership Award.