



Van Buren Conservation District Monthly Update

Respectfully submitted by Kim Sinclair, Administrator

October 2020

- ❖ Van Buren County is working to update its parks and recreation plan. Having an approved parks and recreation plan is especially important as it establishes eligibility for certain state and federal grants. As part of the planning process, public input about parks and recreation opportunities in Van Buren County is being sought. You can take an on line survey by visiting <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VanBurenCounty>. The survey takes less than 10 minutes to complete and will be open through November 13, 2020.
- ❖ **Watershed Coordinator** (*Erin Fuller*) and **Conservation Technician** (*Colleen Forestieri*) - Staff continues to provide technical assistance and cost share to farmers to install best management practices on farm fields.
- ❖ **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Coordinator** (*Nor Serocki*) - The CISMA is assisting EGLE with monitoring a patch of invasive parrot feather, a new species in our area. Parrot feather is an invasive milfoil, which is an aquatic plant once popular in the aquaculture trade. If you see this species, please report it to the CISMA.
- ❖ **SWxSW Corner CISMA Strike Team Coordinator** (*Abbie Bristol*) - Stream monitoring was a success with 14 out of 15 signed-up volunteers turning out for the event. The Paddle with a Naturalist event in New Buffalo allowed a connection with a HOA board member interested in invasive species management/native species planting. The seed mix for Hartford Library native planting project was designed and conversations about a variance for an ordinance on grass height is ongoing.
- ❖ **MAEAP Technician** (*Kyle Mead*) – Booking Fall dates for Verifications and Assessments for MAEAP. Also working on leads for some larger new growers. Equipment Rental has stopped, and billing info has been completed. 2 Re-Verifications were complete early this month, several more coming later this month. Rental Equipment brought in \$13,791 and billed for nearly 930 acres. 6 renters used the Truax, while 23 used the JD Drill.
- ❖ **National Association of Conservation Districts Technician** (*Lucas Hartman*) - September and the end of Q3 for 2020, marked a deadline for NRCS, to obligate funds for FY2020 EQIP and CSP contracts. In total, 6 CSP contracts and 13 EQIP contracts have been obligated, and more EQIP's may follow in early October.
- ❖ **Resource Recovery Coordinator** (*Emily Hickmott*) – With the help of our vendors, the Van Buren County Sheriff's Department, and a volunteer, we pulled off a well-attended Recycle Roundup event in South Haven. We offered electronics recycling, passenger tire recycling, paper shredding and recycling, and household hazardous waste disposal (including paint). In addition, we launched a three-month pilot project in partnership with Pratt Industries and Broken Arrow Recycling, with support from RRS. This pilot project is aimed at increasing mixed paper and cardboard recycling in Southwest Michigan, so we have set up a location for folk to drop-off material in Hartford, MI.
- ❖ In accordance with recommendations from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [World Health Organization](#) and the [Michigan Department of Health & Human Services](#), modifying or cancelling events is the most responsible course of action to mitigate any potential risks to all involved and the friends and family with whom our staff come in contact. The VBCD staff will intermittently be working at the office and will be working from home the rest of the time. You can find staff emails on our website <https://vanburencd.org/about/meet-our-staff> or email me at kimberly.sinclair@mi.nacdnet.net for any Van Buren Conservation District needs.