



## Van Buren Conservation District

### January 2022 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator*

In December, the VBCD website was launched with an updated host and more navigable format. The 2022 Tree Seedling Sale is now live on the updated website. We are still updating website content, but we encourage you to check out the new look and let us know if we can help you find anything you or your residents are looking for. <https://vanburencd.org/>

#### Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Hannah Hudson*) - Erin Fuller partnered with the Michigan Glacial Lakes Partnership to coordinate the production of Issue 2 of Shoreline Living, a magazine featuring five landowners across the Midwest who have used natural landscaping and conservation easements to enhance their lakefront properties and improve the water quality in their lakes. VBCD subcontracted with professional writers and a photographer to develop compelling stories to encourage other lakefront property owners to take a more natural approach in their landscaping. These magazines will be distributed across the Midwest, in print and online.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Andrew Michalek*) - This month, the SWxSW Corner CISMA began planning to survey for spotted lanternfly in the summer in collaboration with BCK CISMA and MDARD. We also had booths at the Cass County Conservation District annual meeting and the Two Rivers Coalition annual meeting. The Strike Team season has officially closed. Reflection upon the 2021 season and planning for the 2022 season has begun.
- **MAEAP** (*Kyle Mead*) - The technician attended all three days of GLEXPO in Grand Rapids and saw many VBC farmers that he wanted to follow up with. Some of the farmers are due for Re-Verification and some are new to MAEAP and are working towards their initial verification. The sessions were also interesting and informative.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) - The technician worked with landowners to put more than 300 total acres into applications for forest management plans through NRCS for FY2022.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - December saw the codification and implementation of policy and procedure in financial matters. Projects continue to make progress with the VBCD calendar being finalized and the 2021 Annual Report near completion. Attendance in trainings and events, such as the Great Lakes Expo, expanded staff knowledge in conservation matters and thus ability to provide resources to residents.
- **Produce Safety** (*Patrick Gordon*) - The technician devoted significant time to the proposed Produce Safety Food Safety Modernization Act water rule.
- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Emily Hickmott*) - Along with fellow committee members, Hickmott completed all tasks associated with the dissolution of the Southwest Michigan Solid Waste Consortium, effective December 31, 2021. Work for two grant proposals began: EGLE FY 2022 Materials Management County Engagement and EGLE FY 2022 Scrap Tire Grant. Hickmott contacted 18 local municipalities and partners to encourage regional collaboration for Scrap Tire Grant and connected some neighboring counties with the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum (WMSBF) to promote regional engagement with the Materials Management County Engagement (MMCE) grant.

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