



Van Buren Conservation District

December 2022 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

The VBCD worked with the County and most municipalities to include yellow tax bill inserts or a blurb on a newsletter in this month's winter tax bills. Please note that one of the dates for 2023 recycling collections has changed. The Recycle Roundup event in Paw Paw will occur on Saturday, June 24, 2023 from 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM. All other dates remain the same. The battery recycling and year-round electronic recycling in South Haven opportunities will be available soon so keep an eye out for more details! The District's pre-order tree seedling sale will be live the first week of January online and in the office.

Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) – Van Buren Conservation District staff are working with researchers at the University of Notre Dame to study the effects of several farm conservation practices on water quality and soil health. This month, the team installed water level sensors in several water control structures in farm fields to help measure water flowing from tile lines. Combined with regular testing of nitrogen and phosphorus in water samples from these tile outlets, this information can help understand which practices are keeping nutrients on farm fields for crops to use instead of running off into rivers and streams.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian*) – The CISMA engaged with partners throughout November by reciprocating grant-writing needs, aiding in field work, and networking at partner events. In preparation for the 2023 Strike Team season, permits and licenses were renewed and updated. Several grants have been submitted by the CISMA as well as partners that address sites throughout the service area. Reporting for grants that are soon concluding has begun.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) – November was busy. VBCD is off to a fast start with the planning of field days and summer events. The MAEAP technician is helping to secure speakers for the Farming for the Future event in March as well as a planned Fruit Field Day in the summer months. It is trade show season so the technician plans to attend GLEXPO in Grand Rapids, the SWM Horticulture Days in Benton Harbor, and several more around SW Michigan.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) – NRCS and Conservation District staff entered more than 30 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives program (EQIP) in 2023. We are expecting a significant increase to funding for the 2023 program year.
- **Natural Resource Conservation Service Technical Assistance (Gabe Francisco)** – The technician has been working on planning a grazing workshop for area farmers in 2023. Dec. 2nd was this year's NRCS deadline for EQIP applications. On Dec. 6th, the technician digitally attended a fantastic lecture on the future of beef production and its ability to become a global warming mitigation strategy. As a better way to connect to farmers and future farmers, Gabe has signed up to become a volunteer 4-H Leader with the Almena Happy Helpers and a Judge for next year's Van Buren County Youth Fair. The Ag Team has been hard at work planning exciting and engaging speakers for the upcoming conference!



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- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – VBCD calendars are off to the printers and will be available next month. The 2022 Annual Report will be finished next month and available in January. Tree Sale online store updates are underway and postcards will be available next month.
- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall*) – November marks the slow down for the Resource Recovery program. We have been wrapping up the 2022 collection season and quickly pushed into planning for 2023. Kalli also connected with the community while attending the Trees for Troops event at our recently MAEAP verified Wahmhoff Farm.