



Van Buren Conservation District September 2025 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

It's hard to believe it's Fall already! We're still in the field quite a bit this time of year, so please invite us to your events, properties, and meetings if we can provide support for your water, land, farming, recycling, and invasive species concerns. We're staying active treating high priority invasive species in the road right-of-ways in conjunction with the Van Buren County Road Commission, organizing free native tree plantings for residents on six inland lakes, offering recycling opportunities, and more! See below for some other updates on each of our programs.

Additionally, if the federal budget is not passed tonight, we will be working exclusively from home and the field until otherwise notified because our office is in the USDA Service Center. We won't be available in our office, but we will continue to work and be available to meet you and residents. Contact information is available at VanBurenCD.org/about to find out how our team can best help you.

Upcoming Events (Details available on our website or by calling our office):

- [Sustainable Samplers](#) | Wednesday, October 1, 2025 | 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM | Three Blondes Brewing | 1875 Phoenix St., South Haven, MI 49090
- Indigenous Peoples Day | Monday, October 13, 2025 | office closed
- [Lawrence Recycle Roundup](#) | Saturday, October 18, 2025 | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM | Van Buren ISD Tech Center | 250 South St., Lawrence, MI 49064
 - Tires (pre-register required, [click here](#) or call 269-633-9314)
 - Electronics
 - Foam
 - Household Hazardous Waste (HHW): oil-based paint, batteries, lightbulbs, and more
- Van Buren Conservation District Board Meeting | Wednesday, October 22, 2025 | 9:00 AM | VBCD Office / USDA Service Center | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079
- [Van Buren Together: Resource Sharing Event](#) | Wednesday, October 22, 2025 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM | virtual – on Zoom

Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller and Colleen Forestieri*) – Erin Fuller presented about lake and river conservation at a session of the Michigan Naturalist Program on August 16. This program teaches attendees about Michigan's natural ecosystems, as well as skills to share what they have learned with others.
- **SWxSW Corner Cisma (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) – We got to get in front of and talk to ornamental pond installation contractors from across the state. We were joined by EGLE to pull yellow floating heart from Sarett Nature Center and discovered a new site with a yellow floating heart. The Strike Team wrapped up the Hydrilla survey season and shifted to spraying Japanese knotweed and Phragmites along Van Buren County Road Rights of Way.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and Regen Ag Program** (*Kyle Mead*) – The specialist has been trying to sprint to the fiscal year (FY) finish with more assessments

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and verifications. September assessments will largely see verifications in early fall of FY 26.

Envirothon held 3 webinars on different days of the week at different times of the day and evening in the hopes new teachers, parents, youth leaders would login to see what Envirothon was about. The hope is to gather up a team for next year's competitions. The District's rental equipment saw a small spike in usage for cover crops and late pasture seedings, but it is predicted to quickly drop off so that techs can get equipment set for winter storage.

- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) – The District held their annual field day as a Grazing Field Day at Thunderfoot Farms on September 10, and August was spent preparing for this alongside working on routine Farm Bill conservation programs for landowners.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – August was filled with events and projects – Recycle Roundup, Maple Lake Cleanup, paddling Fish Lake, farmers' market, and more! The VBCD continues to support our community through events, services, education, and projects. From community cleanups to educational events, the VBCD is a must-watch for incredible work. Keep up by following our social media, website, or email or call to chat!
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) – August started off with a bang! We held the South Haven Recycle Roundup on Saturday August 2 and were able to serve about 200 households in Van Buren County for Hazardous Waste, Foam, Tires, and Electronics. Later in the month, we hosted the first Sustainable Samplers at Paw Paw Brewing Company for folks to drop in for free appetizers, check out informational displays, and chat with our team about what Van Buren County needs for recycling and landfill diversion. In between, we have been focused on finishing up the 2023 EGLE Recycling Infrastructure Grant and our Nextcycle Project.