



Van Buren Conservation District March 2024 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

Our conference season is coming to a close, and our event season is officially upon us! We had a great day connecting with producers around grain, grazing, and forestry topics at our Farming for the Future Conference on March 13 at the Van Buren ISD Conference Center. Recordings of several sessions will be available on our YouTube channel soon. www.youtube.com/VanBurenCD

April 8-12, staff will be out of the office to have our **Tree Seedling Sale**. In addition to being open for pre-order pickup and selling leftover stock, we will be holding a petting zoo at our Paw Paw location (the VBCD office) on Saturday, April 13, 2024. We will have very cute baby farm animals, so come check them out!

Pre-order Pickup and Leftover Stock Sale Dates & Times

- Thursday, April 11, 2024 | 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- Friday, April 12, 2024 | 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- Saturday, April 13, 2024 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Locations

- VBCD Office | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079
- Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum | 903 S Bailey Ave., South Haven, MI 49090

Recycling collections kick off soon and details for all events have been posted at <https://vanburencd.org/van-buren-county-recycling-collections/>. Please encourage folks to sign up their tires ahead of time! In April you can find us...

- Large Tire Collection** | April 22, 2024 | 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM | South Haven DPW | 1199 8th Ave, South Haven
- Large Tire Collection** | April 23, 2024 | 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM | South Haven DPW | 1199 8th Ave, South Haven
- Passenger & Semi Tire and Electronics Collection** | April 27, 2024 | 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM | Decatur Transfer Station | 300 W Beers St., Decatur

Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Carlie Southland*) - In February, the Ag & Water Quality Team staff attended and spoke at several workshops and conferences, as well as prepared for future conferences and field days that we will be hosting. Additionally, we were invited to partner on a grant application with the Sand County Foundation: "Expanding the impact of farmer-led groups: A Michigan pilot to advance climate-smart agriculture."
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) - The SWxSW Corner CISMA Team held our annual meeting to inform the public about current CISMA projects. In this transitional time, we wrapped up permitting and reporting needs from 2023, held and attended meetings, and treated invasive shrubs on partner properties. As our reflection of 2023 comes to a close, we are looking ahead to a full and productive field season!



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- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) - The specialist participated in a tradeshow in Benton Harbor that targets fruit and vegetable growers. He shared a booth with other technicians from the area and talked to several farmers. There were also several planning meetings throughout the month as the team gears up for Farming for the Future in March and then for Michigan Envirothon as the specialist helped plan the March regional competitions. Between meetings, the specialist worked to get several different growers ready for Verifications that are scheduled for March as well.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) - Kicking off 2024 has been a whirlwind for Lucas and Gabe. A large number of EQIP, ACT-Now, and High-Tunnel applications have been submitted by area residents and now we face the task of getting them properly documented and into the system! Can't wait to start seeing all these fantastic ideas surrounding conservation happening in our community!
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - Free, year-round nitrite and nitrate water screening is available at the VBCD office! If you have not gotten our 2023 Annual Report, visit our office or go to VanBurenCD.org/annual-reports. Our Backyard Symposium recordings are now available on our YouTube channel at www.YouTube.com/c/VanBurenCD
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) - February was a month of preparation, learning, and educating. Materials Management Planning has been progressing with meetings to keep Van Buren County on track and Kalli has been busy attending meetings and training to learn about the process. For the second year, Kalli and Jacob attended Lawton Middle School Career Day to teach students about their jobs. Paw Paw Middle School Michigan Green School application was reviewed and approved this month, the only in Van Buren County.