



## Van Buren Conservation District June 2022 Program Update

Submitted by *Emilly Hickmott, Deputy Administrator*

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JUN 24 2022  
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The Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) has partnered with Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery to offer summer programming on June 29, July 13, and July 20 from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM for any child in Van Buren County ages 4-10. Sign-ups are required and available now:

<https://vanburencd.org/summer-education/>. The public is invited to this year's annual meeting, director election, and picnic to be held on July 27, 2022 at 5:00 PM (with an optional tour at 4:30 PM) at the Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery. Please RSVP by contacting the Deputy Administrator at 269-633-9054 or [deputy@vanburencd.org](mailto:deputy@vanburencd.org).

We also want to remind you of available funds through EGLE for: wastewater treatment plant upgrades, combined and/or sanitary sewer overflow abatements, collection system installation or improvements, stormwater treatment, non-point source pollution reduction projects, and more. More details here: <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/regulatory-assistance/grants-and-financing>

### Program Updates:

- **Administrator** (*Kim Sinclair*) – Summer activities are happening! Our CISMA Strike Team is fully accredited and out working on management and mapping. Our big water sampling events have started as well. At least two days a week, we have staffers out getting samples. The Michigan Association of Conservation Districts (MACD) Summer Conference was held in person for the first time in two years. It was great to see all the new folks and the familiar faces we've been missing.
- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Hannah Hudson, Carlie Southland*) – Staff worked with a consultant to perform soil testing and evaluate practices to improve soil health on farm fields with high phosphorus levels and degraded soils. Through a series of soil amendments and conservation practices, the plan is to improve yields to reduce soil phosphorus and reduce runoff to nearby waterways. Staff will collect water samples to help evaluate the effectiveness of several different conservation practices.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Justin Palthe, Lance McCarty*) – The team has begun doing site visits for private and public lands to survey for invasive species. They also trained the Van Buren County Road Commission on how to avoid spreading invasive species and how to report them. The Strike Team has been onboarded, certified as pesticide applicators, and is conducting management at grant-funded land conservancy properties.
- **Education & Water Quality** (*Carlie Southland*) – Conservation Associate, Carlie Southland, began working for the Van Buren Conservation District in early May. She has been put in charge of creating lesson plans and materials for our summer programming with both Van Buren District Library, South Haven Memorial Library, Paw Paw Public Library, Hartford Public Library, and Lawton Schools, which will begin in late June. In addition, she partnered with Two Rivers Coalition to assist in their water sampling project in the Black River Watershed.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) – Kyle and Lucas have been visiting a lot of farms together in an attempt to better serve farmers and landowners in



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Van Buren County. These co-visits allow the farmers to learn about how to enter into Federal cost share dollar programs that will also help towards the goal of MAEAP Verification.

- **National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) - Lucas Hartman, Conservation Technician for VBCD, completed a conservation plan for an approximately 13-acre property owned and operated by Hamilton Township. The plan includes pollinator habitat and a recreation and education trail system.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - May kicked off with the Macroinvertebrate Stream Sampling and the Salmon Release with Paw Paw Public Schools. Food, Farm & Fun Guides are distributed, promotional billboards will be going up soon, and local food promotional events are being planned.
- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall*) - May was a busy month for the recycling program. We successfully held the collection in Almena Township where we collected 11.3 tons of tires. Kalli attended the Michigan Recycling Coalition Conference in Lansing, Michigan where she networked with many partners. From the conference, we began the process of writing a grant to help fund our recycling program and many other opportunities to look forward to in the coming months.