



Van Buren Conservation District April 2022 Program Update

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The Spring Volunteer Appreciation Night hosted about 30 community members at Walt & Marie's Country Market where the Deputy Administrator and the Two Rivers Coalition president discussed volunteer opportunities and accomplishments. The new Recycling & Materials Management Coordinator started at the end of the month and has jumped right into training so that the Deputy Administrator can spend more time supporting the operations of the VBCD. As always, the rest of the VBCD staff has been hard at work with several Q1 events occurring and many regional collaborations on current and future projects. Please don't hesitate to let me know how we can support conservation in your community. Check out our upcoming events here: <https://vanburencd.org/my-calendar/>

Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Hannah Hudson*) - In March, the Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) hosted the annual "Farming for the Future" conference in Lawrence, MI. Over 100 local farmers came together to learn about soil health, cost share opportunities, and other agricultural topics. Nationally recognized speakers at the event included agroecologist Lance Gunderson of Nebraska and regenerative farmer Russell Hedrick of North Carolina and Michigan's native farm consultant RJ Rant.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian*) - The VBCD has hired the SWxSW Corner CISMA strike team in preparation for their second field season. The CISMA was also represented at booths for VBCD's Farming for the Future event and Berrien CD's Conservation Open House. The SWxSW Corner CISMA will also be collaborating with BCK CISMA to host the 2022 MISC Summer Field Trip, a training and collaboration event for CISMA coordinators across the state.
- **MAEAP** (*Kyle Mead*) - The technician is taking full advantage of the spring weather by visiting numerous landowners to discuss and move forward with MAEAP assessments and future verifications.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) - Twenty-five applications for funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program were submitted for round 1 in FY2022. The technician was also busy with planning a prescribed burn for one of the VBCD's properties.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - March kicked off more interaction with the public with our office doors opening after the lifting of federal pandemic mandates. With ongoing tree sale orders, technical assistance in federal programs, and events, the public has been more involved. Significant progress in programs has been made, especially tree sale and the completion of the Food, Farm & Fun Guide.
- **Produce Safety** (*Patrick Gordon*) - If you raise and sell produce or know someone who does, be sure to be in contact with your local technician (patrick.gordon@macd.org) as Spring kicks off.
- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall*) - The 2022 collection season is nearly upon us, so the previous coordinator worked at promoting and finishing up coordinating the upcoming April events. The previous coordinator renewed her HAZWOPER certification and began training the new Recycling & Materials Management Coordinator, Kalli Marshall. The team worked together to keep the public informed of 2022 collection opportunities. Collections start April 25, so don't miss out!