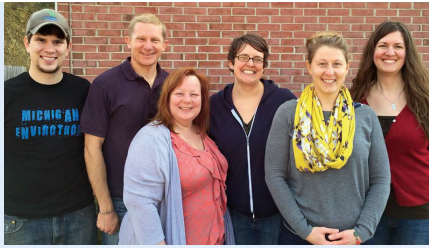


WHO WE ARE:

Who makes it happen at the Van Buren Conservation District?

- 5 publicly-elected Board of Directors
- 3 full time staff
- 3 part time staff
- Supporting partners and volunteers



WHAT WE NEED:

Funding to allow the Van Buren Conservation District to continue programs that benefit the economy, human health and natural resources in Van Buren County

ADDITIONAL FUNDING WOULD ALLOW:

- all **red highlighted** programs [on reverse] to **CONTINUE** whereas they **will not otherwise**
- all **blue highlighted** programs [on reverse] to **CONTINUE** when current funding ends
- all programs in **black** [on reverse] will be able to be **EXPANDED**
- **outreach to farmers** countywide, allowing us to assist them with cost share opportunities and best management practices that increase profitability, improve soil quality and protect our local waters
- **increased recycling opportunities** with a focus on schools, businesses and convenient services
- **development of new programs** like "Adopt a Stream," expanding current programs which keep our waterways free of litter and monitored for habitat health and clean water
- the VBCD to continue to be a **local resource with local connections**, strong partnerships, up-to-date educational materials and contacts that provide answers for VBC residents
- the VBCD to continue to **provide public education, demonstrations and technical assistance** for our farmers, educators, business owners, municipalities and residents of VBC
- the VBCD to continue to provide services, programs and projects that help **protect our wildlife, habitat, forests, farmlands, water and soil health and quality of life** in VBC
- opportunities to **seek grant funding** from federal, state, local and private sources



VAN BUREN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1035 E. Michigan Ave. Paw Paw, MI 49079
www.VanBurenCD.org | 269-657-4030 x5

TESTIMONIALS:

"I feel so lucky to live in the same county where this skilled team of super-friendly and super-helpful people work at educating farmers, land-owners and everyone else about the most important issues in the world—care and conservation of the soil, water and natural environment that all of our lives depend on. You won't find a more dedicated group anywhere; I'm proud to know them and proud to support their programs in any way I can."

—PJ Chmiel, Van Buren County Resident

"I support the Van Buren county conservation district for three distinct reasons. First, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure;" local conservation districts are uniquely positioned to work with local land owners to educate and implement practices that protect our environment and resources. Second, they are undoubtedly the lowest cost / best return on investment in environmental and resource protection. Third, Conservation districts are nimble, energetic work places that attract, recruit and train the best resource professionals in the country—I want these professionals in our communities."

—Josh Appleby, Local Elected Official

"The Conservation District has shared so much information that's helped me improve my soil health and my bottom line."

—George Kusmack, Kusmack Farms

AWARD-WINNING STAFF:

- 2010 Michigan Conservation District of the Year Award
- Multiple state and county Farm Bureau Ecology Awards
- Multiple Technician of the Year Nominations, MACD
- MAEAP Host of the Year, MI Dept. of Agriculture



2015 PROGRAMS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

*Programs in red will END without new funding;
Programs in blue will END when current grants end;
Programs in black can be EXPANDED w/ add'l funding*

RUNOFF REDUCTION, PAW PAW RIVER WATERSHED

(South Branch, Paw Paw—Local Contract with State Grant)

- Leverage \$56,500 of local funds to implement conservation
- Cover crops implemented: 841 acres
- No-till practices implemented: 336 acres
- Reduces sediment: 226 tons/yr., Phosphorus: 203 lbs./yr., Nitrogen: 407 lbs./yr



DRAIN FEE REDUCTION PILOT PROGRAM - GATES AND EAGLE DRAIN

(Decatur, Private Grant)

- Saves VBC residents and County Drain Office maintenance costs, increases conservation practices on farmland, improves water quality in drains
- Cover crops implemented: 94.6 acres
- Filter strips implemented: 12.7 acres
- No-till practices implemented: 599.9 acres
- Sediment reduction: 287.0 tons/yr.
- Increased groundwater recharge: 37,027,006 gal.



FARM BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

(Paw Paw, Private/Local Grants)

- Leveraged \$169,700 of private & local cost share funding to implement conservation
- Cover crops implemented: 3,168 acres
- Reduced tillage/no-till: 2,556 acres
- Filter strips/grass waterway: 23.0/5.5 acres
- Groundwater recharge: 156,820,381 gallons
- Sediment reduction: 1,675.2 tons/yr.

COVER CROP CO-OP PROGRAM - AERIAL SEEDING (VBCD Operations)

- Enrolled over 10,000 acres of Van Buren/Cass County farm acres
- Lowers cost to local farmers
- Benefits water quality and soil health



MI AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM

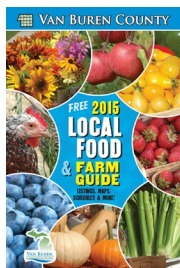
(State Grant—year by year)

- 2015 Grant Host of the Year State Award
- Ranked 5th County in the State for verifications
- 119 MAEAP Verifications in VBC
- 136 Risk Reductions completed
- Assists farmers with water use reporting
- Farm water samples
- Irrigation scheduling and uniformity for prime production
- 1 residential water nitrate/nitrite testing event
- Local Emergency Planning Committee Member
- Over 100 farmer consultations about proper fuel storage, well locations, food safety, manure management, etc.



LOCAL FARMS PROMOTION (VBCD Operations)

- 7,000 Local Food and Farm Guides distributed
- List local farms/farm markets on website
- Direct residents and tourist local food products
- Promote Agri-tourism: 5 farmers markets & 35 local farms



USDA FARM BILL PROGRAMS IN VB COUNTY (VBCD Operations)

- 80 active contracts; \$546,811 of federal funds to VBC landowners
- Over 7,000 acres of conservation practices
- Provide additional tax revenue for VBC with new buildings
- Generate work for local contractors
- Increase property values by improving farmsteads/homesteads
- Protect rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater
- Increase profitability of farm product and farm operations
- Provide educational information about NRCS and programs



AGRICULTURE EDUCATION, OUTREACH & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

(VBCD Operations)

- 3 farm field days and 1 full-day workshop
- Over 100 farmer consultations / plans
- Conservation newsletters, brochure mailings



INEXPENSIVE FARM EQUIPMENT RENTAL (VBCD Operations)

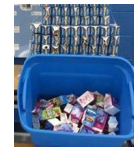
FARM/LAND PRESERVATION (VBCD Operations)

- Secretary position on the Land Preservation Board
- PA 116 Application Review



RECYCLING & RESOURCE RECOVERY (VBC Prg. Funding—year by year)

- 2 County wide collections for hazardous chemicals
- Year-round chemical drop-off opportunities for all municipalities except Almena, Antwerp & Paw Paw Twp., who fund their own
- Over 9,000 lbs. of household chemicals collected/recycled
- Hundreds of cans of latex paint recycled
- Free pesticide recycling throughout the year
- Year-round electronic recycling collecting over 50,000 lbs.
- Over 1,100 tires collected/recycled
- Education to County residents
- Tech. Assistance Committee for SW MI Solid Waste Consortium
- Assist businesses, schools and residents with recycling
- Work with VBC municipalities to help increase recycling/grants
- Secretary for Southwest Michigan Solid Waste Consortium Board



VOLUNTEER STREAM MONITORING PROGRAM

(State Grant—1 year remaining)

- Engage residents with the importance of water quality
- 2 insect collection events and 2 insect identification sessions
- 12 river/stream sites monitored for insect and habitat health
- Collected data entered into a State-wide data exchange



RIVER RESCUE - RIVER/STREAM TRASH CLEAN UP (VBCD Operations)

- Annual event, miles of river cleaned up
- Over 75,760 lbs of trash and 4,785 tires removed from waterways



ROAD CULVERT/STREAM CROSSING SURVEY PROGRAM

(State Grant—1 year remaining)

- Develop a survey program for VBC road culvert/stream crossings
- Enter data in State-wide Road Software
- Benefits Van Buren Road Commission by ranking maintenance needs
- Future leverage of State funds to fix and improve critical Van Buren Country road/stream crossings



WELLHEAD PROTECTION (VBCD Operations)

- Village of Paw Paw Board
- Assist wellhead boards with educational information
- Water quality education in the classrooms

TREE SEEDLINGS/FORESTRY (VBCD Operations)

- Over 25,000 tree seedlings purchased and planted in County
- Hundreds of White Pine seedlings given to local schools
- Education on tree care, windrows, diseased trees
- Resource for local foresters and arborists



NATIVE PLANTS (VBCD Operations)

- Education on native seed, wildflowers, grasses
- 1,000 native plants sold and planted in our County

INLAND LAKE PROTECTION (State Grant)

- Developed *Protecting MI's Inland Lakes: Guide for Local Govt.*
- 4 workshops around the state on local inland lake protection
- Creating a "toolkit" for communities for inland lake protection
- Developing an online training for local government officials
- Natural shoreline workshops for landowners and contractors
- Consulting for homeowners and lake associations



INVASIVE SPECIES (State Grant—2 years)

- Leverage State funds for Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area to cover Van Buren, Berrien and Cass County
- Education about invasive vs. native species
- Education on identification and reporting
- Training on reporting and eradication



RAIN BARREL/RAIN WATER COLLECTION (VBCD Operations)

- 1 workshop to build rain barrels to collect water at residences



CRITICAL DUNE VEGETATION REMOVAL ASSURANCES

(VBCD Operations)

- Assist residents with MDEQ critical dune permitting
- Work with VBC and partners on Syndicate Park

MDNR HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAM (State Grant—1 year)

- Increasing public hunting areas in Van Buren County

ANNUAL MEETING SUMMER FARM DAY AND PICNIC (VBCD Operations)

- Director Elections and Annual Meeting

LOCAL RESOURCE FOR RESIDENTS

- answers on water testing, soil testing, plant and animal ID, gardening, backyard habitat, permits, forestry and more.
- link residents to proper agencies, organizations, businesses and offer contacts that will help solve problems and fulfill their needs.



The Mission of the VBCD is to promote the conservation of natural resources through partnerships by providing public education, demonstrations and technical assistance while working together for future generations.

