



Van Buren Conservation District

October 2026 Report

Materials Management Planning (MMP) Update – The MMP Education working group is working on updating contact information for informing the municipalities of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties about MMP updates. The Materials Management Planning Committee reviewed the first draft of the Materials Management Plan. At August's meeting, we had a presentation by Recycle Coach for an option for implementation for the education and outreach goals. The policy working group continues development of the siting plan, once that is complete, we will be able to release the draft for the public.

Reminder – District Board Director Election – The Van Buren Conservation District Director Election will be held Friday, October 29, 2026 from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM at the Van Buren Conservation District office in the USDA Service Center at 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, 49079. In accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan, all voters must provide one piece of identification that demonstrates residency in Van Buren County to cast a qualifying vote. Votes may be cast by absentee ballot by mail or in person on October 29th. Please contact Executive Director Emily Hickmott with questions. director@VanBurenCD.org 269-633-9054

Invasive Species – Spotted Lanternfly Lookout – Spotted lanternflies are on the move, so let's be ready! Our team detected the first population of Spotted lanternfly in Southwest Michigan in Niles in August 2026. Help protect our fruit crops, homes, and landscapes by following the three steps: See it, Squish it, Report it. You can report through the MISIN app or by contacting our CISMA Team at InvasivesED@VanBurenCD.org 269-633-9044.



Upcoming Events (details available on [our website](#))

- October 3 | Van Buren County Tractor, Truck, or Treat
- October 4 | Volunteer Water Monitoring
- October 12 | Indigenous People's Day Holiday | Office closed
- October 17 | Recycle Roundup collection event | Lawrence
- October 17 | Black River Fall Colors Paddle Shuttle Trip | [TwoRiversCoalition.org](https://www.tworiverscoalition.org)
 - Rain date: Sunday, October 18
- October 28 | VBCD Board Meeting
- October 29 | VBCD Board Director Election



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Program Updates

Resource Recovery & Recycling (*Kalli Marshall*) – August started with a Recycle Roundup Event in South Haven, we had a blast serving the 265 households who attended. Planning has begun for the 2027 season as well as working on the new Materials Management Planning focus area of food waste. I have reached out to connect and learn from the county food pantries to see where we can best assist. The month ended with great news! Our 2026 Recycling Infrastructure Grant was fully funded and we should be able to start work later next month.

Agriculture & Water Quality Team (*Erin Fuller and Colleen Forestieri*) – In August, the Water Quality Team assisted in hosting a farm field day. The "Regenerative Ag Road Show" brought about 50 farmers to four different Van Buren County farms to highlight a variety of regenerative practices that benefit our soil, water, and farms. The team also worked this month to promote fall cover crop installation and tree planting on inland lakes.

Invasive Species SWxSW Corner CISMA Team (*Alex Florian and Jena Johnson*) – On August 12 our team detected the first population of Spotted lanternfly in Southwest Michigan, at the Fraternal order of Police Park in Niles. Followup surveys by our team, as well as USDA and MDARD, have found a total of 4 lanternflies at the site. We are still working to determine what steps we can take next to best support our community. We also completed Red Swamp Crayfish and Hydrilla surveys, with no new detections.

Conservation Technical Assistance Program: MAEAP and Regenerative Agriculture Programs (*Kyle Mead*) – The CTAP Specialist worked with fellow staff members to finalize preparations for the Regen Road Show field day, as well as pushing for final Soil Health Assessments, Analysis, and Management plans to end the year strong. He has also extended help to Kami with Van Buren NRCS in writing Nutrient and Pest Management Plans for clients who would otherwise not get paid for their projects and contacts. The specialist already has clients lined up following harvest and after the start of the new fiscal year to get the momentum built early for FY27 accomplishments.