The Dirt on Clean Water:
How Farmers are Helping Protect the Paw Paw River Watershed

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Van Buren Conservation District
Paw Paw, MI
Tell us what you've done with all the grass!
Van Buren Conservation District
Promotes the Conservation of Natural Resources through Partnerships

- Tree Seedling Sale
- Native Perennial Sale
- River Rescue
- Tire Collection
- Farming for the Future
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection
- Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)

We also offer Technical Assistance, Public Education and Demonstrations
http://vanburencd.org/
Paw Paw River Watershed Incentive Opportunities

Legend
- Paw Paw Watershed
- Fieldprint Calculator
- Groundwater Recharge Grant
- Sediment Reduction Loss Grant

Van Buren County

For more information, contact:
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Why the Paw Paw River Watershed?

High Priority for Protection
- More stable than other rivers in Southern MI
- Large floodplain forest along the river

Wetland loss in the PPRW
- 43% of the wetlands in the PPRW have been drained or filled
- Increased stream bank erosion and loss of filtration capacities

Pollution problems have been identified
- Sediment, excess nutrients, pesticides, temp, pathogens
- PPRW annually delivers over 10,000 tons of sediment to Lake Michigan

Industry and Recreation
- Coca-Cola, Canneries & Welch’s
- Fishing and Tourism
Why are we focusing on farmers?

Land use can cause exposed soil

- Gravel pits, development, row crops, vineyards, orchards
- How we manage the land impacts the quality of the water

47% of the watershed is used for agriculture

- Approx. 25% of Van Buren County is used for row crops

Incentives exist to change farm practices

- Better practices can make money and reduce pollution!
How farmers are helping the PPRW

#1 Filter Strips

#2 Cover Crops

#3 No-Till
Fieldprint Calculator Pilot Project

• Run 50+ Corn Producers

• Assess general farming practices and overall “fieldprint” for grain production

• Use Calculator as a decision-making and educational tool to ultimately increase agricultural sustainability and overall watershed health

• Allow producers to anonymously compare their operation (inputs and yields) to state and watershed averages

http://www.fieldtomarket.org/fieldprint-calculator/
Groundwater Recharge Grant

- Replenish Aquifers
- Improve water quality and hydrology
- Restore habitat for native plants and animals
- Goal of 100 million gallons by 2014

46 million gallons recharged in 2013
135 million gallons total recharged
Total Acres 747
Sediment Reduction Grant
Bidding for Best Management Practices

Sediment delivered to the PPR is about 10,000 tons/yr

- Habitat loss for fish and invertebrates
- Pollution is carried with sediment
- Increased algae blooms in lakes
- Costs millions of dollars to dredge

Growers can earn up to $20K
- Filter Strips
- No-Till
- Reduced-Till
- Cover Crops

Sediment Reduction Grant = 819 Acres
By The Numbers

We reach our goals because of the willingness of growers

Fieldprint Calculator = 58 growers
Ground Water Recharge Grant = 747 Acres
Sediment Reduction Grant = 819 Acres
Total Acres = 1,566 Acres

No-Till = 744 Acres
Reduced Till = 405 Acres
Cover Crops = 800.5 Acres
Filter Strips = 22 Acres
Grass Waterways = 3.5 Acres
New Projects

Van Buren County Drain Commissioners Pilot Project
- Change in Drain Assessment Methodology
- Reduction in drain assessments for landowners with BMPs

Village of Paw Paw, 319 Grant Project
- Water Quality Survey
- Incentive Money for BMPs
- Funding for Wetland Restoration
Promoting Cover Crops

Great Benefits for both Growers and the Watershed

Challenges for growers with corn and soybean rotation

- Getting all the grounds covered
- Wet fall condition
- Equipment
- Additional management in spring
Aerial Seeding Cover Crop Co-op

- 1600A were flown on Aug. 28, 2013
- Annual Ryegrass @ $32.50/A
- Jamie Scott – Seed Dealer
- Aerial co. – Nick’s Flying Service

Photo Credit: Jamie Scott
Aerial Seeding Cover Crop Co-op

Other ways to get Cover Crops in early:

- Highboy sprayers
- Combine broadcasters
- Slurry mixes
- Shorter season corn varieties
- Wheat rotation

Benefits are magnified when cover crops are established early!
Rye Total N Uptake for Three Planting Dates

Staver & Brinsfield, 1998

Graph showing the Rye Total N Uptake for three planting dates: Oct 1, Oct 15, and Oct 30. The chart tracks the N uptake from October 15 to March 15 during the 1988-1989 season.
Field Tours: Promoting with Partners
Educational Events

Farming for the Future

Spring Field Day

Fall Field Day – Root Pits
Fall 2014

Winter Conference – March 19
“Cover Your Assets”
We attend conferences and field tours too!
We Rent Out Equipment

- John Deere 1750 No-Till Planter (>2 thousand acres)
- Brillion SS10 Seeder
- Truax Utility 86 No-Till Drill

Thanks

[Image of people posing with agricultural equipment]
Press

**Find Your Footprint**
January 4, 2014
By: Ben Potter, Farm Journal, Technology Editor

**Speaker Touts the Benefits of Cover Crops**
November 29, 2013
By: Bev Berens, Farmers Exchange & No-Till Magazine
Thank You!

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