



**Van Buren County  
Parks and Recreation Commission**

Tuesday, January 27, 2026  
11:00 AM

**Location: Donald Hanson Board of  
Commission Chambers, Rm 204,**  
Van Buren County Administration Building  
219 E Paw Paw Street, Paw Paw MI 49079



**Special Meeting Agenda**

- 1. Call to Order, and Quorum Determination:** Chair Mike Chappell, Vice Chair John Small, Wayne Nelson, Gail Patterson-Gladney, Kurt Doroh, Joe Parman, Becky Grabemeyer, Paul Garrod, Emilly Hickmott, and Daywi Cook
- 2. Approval of Agenda**—By unanimous consent or motion.
- 3. Approval of Minutes**—November 14, 2025, by motion.
- 4. Public Comments**
- 5. New Business**
  - a. Election of Officers
  - b. Establish 2026 Meeting Schedule
- 6. Ongoing Business/Reports**
  - a. Recommend Approval of Van Buren County Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2026 – 2030 to the County Board of Commissioners.
  - b. Kayak Launch Update
  - c. Fair/Museum Signage Update
- 7. General Member Comments and Discussion**
- 8. Adjournment**—by motion or unanimous consent.

**Next meeting:** Tuesday, February 10, 2026



## VAN BUREN COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Regular meetings of the Van Buren County Parks Commission will be held on the following dates and locations at 11:00 a.m. Agendas are posted on the website at or can also be requested during regular business hours by calling (269) 657-8200 ext. 1073.

**Tuesday, January 27, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, April 14, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, May 12, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, June 9, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, July 14, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, August 11, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, September 08, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, October 13, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, November 10, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

**Tuesday, December 8, 2026 – 11:00 am**

Donald Hanson Board of Commission Chambers, Second Floor, 219 E. Paw Paw Street Paw Paw, MI 49079

VAN BUREN COUNTY PARKS COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, SEX, AGE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, HEIGHT, WEIGHT, MARITAL STATUS OR DISABILITY. VAN BUREN COUNTY WILL PROVIDE NECESSARY REASONABLE AUXILIARY AIDS AND SERVICES, SUCH AS SIGNERS FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED AND AUDIO TAPES OF PRINTED MATERIALS BEING CONSIDERED AT THE MEETINGS/HEARINGS, TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE MEETING/HEARING UPON FOUR (4) BUSINESS DAYS NOTICE TO THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE. INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES REQUIRING AUXILIARY AIDS OR SERVICES SHOULD CONTACT THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE BY WRITING OR CALLING (269) 657-8200 ext. 1073.



## Van Buren Conservation District January 2026 Program Update

*Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director*

Happy New Year! The Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) Board & Staff hope you had a great end of the year and that 2026 is off to a great start already. We look forward to working with you to provide conservation assistance and services in Van Buren County this year. Reach out anytime – staff-specific contact information is available at [VanBurenCD.org/about](https://VanBurenCD.org/about). Our full board reports can be found on our website as well.

**Did you know?** Each spring, most Michigan conservation districts (including the VBCD) conduct a conservation plant sale to offer a variety of high-quality, native seedlings, plugs, flowers and grasses, for erosion control, wildlife habitat, reforestation, windbreaks, and many other conservation purposes. Varieties generally include shrubs, deciduous and coniferous trees, and sometimes aquatic plants, grasses, ground covers, and wildflowers.

The VBCD's annual **Tree Seedling Sale** begins accepting pre-orders on January 1, and this year, we're accepting them through March 29. After that, all pre-orders should be picked up during our leftover sale and pickup days: April 10 and April 11.

Pre-orders are a great way to make sure you have access to all of the species we're selling that you might want to improve your land with. If you're not sure where to start, you can check out the chart on each species' webpage or contact us for more information. Help us build wildlife habitat and beautify your space in 2026 by considering native and adapted species.

<https://vanburencd.org/shop/>

### **Upcoming Events (Details available on [our website](#)):**

- Office Closed for the Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. | January 19
- Staff Training | The Stewardship Network Conference | January 22-23
- VBCD Board Meeting | January 28 at 10:00 AM | 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw
- Discover with the District: Winter Wildlife | February 2 at 5:00 PM | Van Buren District Library Bloomingdale Branch | 109 E Kalamazoo St., Bloomingdale | registration preferred
- SWxSW Corner Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) Annual Meeting | February 11 at 10:00 AM | Van Buren ISD Conference Center | 490 S Paw Paw St., Lawrence
- Birds and Blooms Family Event | February 14 at 10:00 AM | Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery | 34270 CR 652, Mattawan
- Office Closed for Washington's Birthday | February 16
- Staff Training | Michigan Invasive Species Conference (MISC) Annual Meeting | February 18-19



## Van Buren Conservation District January 2026 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Executive Director

### Program Updates:

- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller and Colleen Forestieri*) – The Ag and Water Quality team focused on planning outreach and education events for 2026. This includes finding speakers as well as sponsors and grants to support these events. We look forward to hosting a conference for local farmers as well as field days and small grower meetings in the coming year. The team also worked with farmers on completing contracts for cost-share for post-harvest cover crops.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) Team** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Jena Johnson*) – The CISMA Team was able to take a breath and focus more on the tasks we set aside in October while grant-writing. As we finish up reporting on our last year of work, we're looking ahead to make 2026 a year that is fully funded with diverse opportunities. Everything from large federal grants to state grants to new and recurring partner contracts, the CISMA Team is hard at work making 2026 a successful year.
- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) and Regen Ag Program** (*Kyle Mead*) – The specialist worked to visit farmers between snowstorms to be able to see and access what happens at farms. He also scheduled with the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development's (MDARD) MAEAP Verifier for two full days of program verification on farms in January.
- **MDARD Forestry Assistance Program (FAP):** (*Benjamin Savoie, CF of Barry Conservation District*) – Ben will begin covering Van Buren County as part of the program's expansion from three counties to nine. We look forward to working with Ben to organize site visits and enroll interested landowners in the State's Qualified Forest Program. If you have any questions, contact Ben at (269) 908-4134 [ben.savoie@macd.org](mailto:ben.savoie@macd.org)
- **National Association of Conservation Districts (NRCS) Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman, Gabriel Francisco*) – The technicians conducted farm visits and site evaluations to support existing CSP and EQIP participants, as well as assisted prospective 2025–2026 EQIP applicants with preparing required documentation in anticipation of application availability.
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) – While conservation may look “sleepy” right now, we're building a year of public engagement, events, support, and sharing local stories. You'll want to stay tuned for programs, material (like our annual report and local guide), and the many ways we get involved in our community.
- **Resource Recovery & Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall, Jacob Diljak*) – Kalli has nearly finished reporting for the EGLE Infrastructure grant that improved many transfer stations. Work included further forward movement on Materials Management Planning, data collection and showcasing, and prepping/ planning for collections and events in the 2026 season.

\*NOTE: Available Balance / Pct Budget Used does not reflect amounts encumbered.

GL NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	2025-26		ACTIVITY FOR MONTH 11/30/25	YTD BALANCE 11/30/2025	AVAILABLE BALANCE	% BGD
		ORIGINAL BUDGET	AMENDED BUDGET				
<b>Fund 208.0 - PARKS &amp; RECREATION FUND</b>							
<b>Revenues</b>							
Dept 751.00 - PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT							
208.0-751.00-402.000	CURRENT PROPERTY TAXES	430,000.00	430,000.00	0.00	0.00	430,000.00	0.00
208.0-751.00-539.000	STATE GRANT	283,700.00	283,700.00	0.00	0.00	283,700.00	0.00
208.0-751.00-665.000	INTEREST	2,500.00	2,500.00	553.10	1,851.57	648.43	74.06
Total Dept 751.00 - PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT		716,200.00	716,200.00	553.10	1,851.57	714,348.43	0.26
<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>		716,200.00	716,200.00	553.10	1,851.57	714,348.43	0.26
<b>Expenditures</b>							
Dept 751.00 - PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT							
208.0-751.00-752.005	SUPPLIES	5,000.00	5,000.00	80.75	80.75	4,919.25	1.62
208.0-751.00-801.000	CONTRACT SERVICES	201,500.00	201,500.00	0.00	0.00	201,500.00	0.00
208.0-751.00-801.700	DISBURSEMENTS	400,000.00	400,000.00	0.00	4,430.00	395,570.00	1.11
208.0-751.00-999.101	TRF TO GENERAL FUND #101	44,000.00	44,000.00	0.00	0.00	44,000.00	0.00
Total Dept 751.00 - PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT		650,500.00	650,500.00	80.75	4,510.75	645,989.25	0.69
Dept 804.00 - MUSEUM							
208.0-804.00-930.913	LAND & BUILDING REPAIRS - HIST.	25,000.00	25,000.00	0.00	0.00	25,000.00	0.00
208.0-804.00-931.913	EQUIPMENT REPAIRS - MUSEUM	15,000.00	15,000.00	0.00	0.00	15,000.00	0.00
Total Dept 804.00 - MUSEUM		40,000.00	40,000.00	0.00	0.00	40,000.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		690,500.00	690,500.00	80.75	4,510.75	685,989.25	0.65
<b>Fund 208.0 - PARKS &amp; RECREATION FUND:</b>							
TOTAL REVENUES		716,200.00	716,200.00	553.10	1,851.57	714,348.43	0.26
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		690,500.00	690,500.00	80.75	4,510.75	685,989.25	0.65
NET OF REVENUES & EXPENDITURES		25,700.00	25,700.00	472.35	(2,659.18)	28,359.18	10.35

Fund 208.0 PARKS & RECREATION FUND

GL Number	Description	Balance
*** Assets ***		
208.0-000.00-001.000	Cash In Common Investment Pool	473,099.77
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>473,099.77</b>
*** Liabilities ***		
208.0-000.00-202.000	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	80.75
208.0-000.00-339.003	UNEARNED REVENUES	100,000.00
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>100,080.75</b>
*** Fund Balance ***		
208.0-000.00-390.000	Fund Balance	6,439.16
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>		<b>6,439.16</b>
<b>Beginning Fund Balance - 24-25</b>		<b>6,439.16</b>
<b>Net of Revenues VS Expenditures - 24-25</b>		<b>369,239.04</b>
<b>*24-25 End FB/25-26 Beg FB</b>		<b>375,678.20</b>
<b>Net of Revenues VS Expenditures - Current Year</b>		<b>(2,659.18)</b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>		<b>373,019.02</b>
<b>Total Liabilities And Fund Balance</b>		<b>473,099.77</b>

\* Year Not Closed