



Van Buren Conservation District

INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM CREW

JOB DESCRIPTION & POSTING

Updated: 2026

Background Information: The Van Buren Conservation District (VBCD) is seeking to hire up to two Seasonal Invasive Species Strike Team Crew Members to further the mission of the Van Buren Conservation District. Crew Members are a part of the larger CISMA Team at the VBCD, which also includes the CISMA Coordinator and the Invasive Species Technician.



The Southwest by Southwest (SWxSW) Corner Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) Team is grant-funded and works collaboratively with the community to minimize the impact of invasive species. Every Michigan county is part of a CISMA, and our service area covers Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. The CISMA Team manages and surveys for invasive species and are the local experts on invasive species for the surrounding community. The Van Buren Conservation District employs the CISMA Team and houses the CISMA program for the tri-county service area.

Position Description: The Crew Member is an at-will, Seasonal, grant-funded, hourly position. The work hours schedule for the Crew Member is 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM, Monday - Thursday and 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM, Friday, including break and meal periods. Some occasional evening and weekend hours are necessary. Total hours worked and the work hours schedule may vary due to workload, weather conditions, and daylight hours.

Wages will be commensurate with education and experience and range from \$19 to \$21 per hour. Seasonal employees are eligible for benefits as required by law. Seasonal employees are eligible for paid holiday leave, paid sick leave, employer-provided portions of Social Security/FICA, Medicare, Unemployment Insurance, and Worker's Compensation Insurance.

The successful candidate will survey for and manage aquatic and terrestrial invasive species throughout Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties in a variety of field sites. The Crew Member may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions. These examples do not include all of the tasks that the employee may be expected to perform.



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Field work may involve wading, swimming, kayaking, or snorkeling in lakes, streams, and rivers. Field work may also involve traversing uneven, boggy, or steep terrain in a range of temperatures and conditions. This may require carrying equipment and materials of up to 50 pounds on strenuous hikes. The Crew Member must be ready and willing to work in a variety of conditions, as well as travel throughout the entire service area. A truck, trailer, and UTV will be provided for navigating to and through sites, as available.

Responsibilities and number of open positions are contingent upon awarded project funding. Extended job offers are contingent upon passing a background check.

The Crew Member will survey roadsides for terrestrial high-priority invasive plants such as cinnamon vine, kudzu, stiltgrass, *Phragmites*, and Japanese knotweed (35%). The Crew Member may survey for aquatic plants by walking, kayaking in drains, streams, and rivers, as well as snorkeling in inland lakes (25%). The Crew Member may check circle and minnow traps and handle insects, arachnids, crayfish, or small fish (25%). The Crew Member may mix and apply herbicide to Watch List invasive plants such as kudzu and cinnamon vine, and may operate cutting tools or small-engine equipment such as loppers or brush cutters to manage invasive shrubs (15%). Data collection is integral to each of these tasks.

Training will be provided by VBCD staff and other partner trainers, as appropriate.

Position Supervisor: Van Buren Conservation District Invasive Species Technician

Location: Report to the Van Buren Conservation District office (1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079) each work day. Travel will be required for work performed throughout the CISMA tri-county area of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. Travel may occasionally be required for work outside of the tri-county area. Vehicles are provided for travel, as available. Crew Members are not eligible for remote work. This does not apply if there is a government emergency declaration requiring people to work remotely.

Position Dates: May 18, 2026 (negotiable) through mid to late October (based on workload)



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Essential Functions:

- Survey for target invasive plants and insects
- Kayak ponds, lakes, streams, rivers, and other water bodies to conduct surveys and collect invasive aquatic plant or invertebrate specimens
- Wade in ponds, streams, lakes, and drains (waders will be provided)
- Snorkel inland lakes to collect aquatic plant specimens (pending funding)
- Use ArcGIS, FieldMaps, Survey123, and/or Google Sheets to accurately and completely record data while out in the field or in the office
- Obtain and/or maintain Michigan Commercial Pesticide Applicator certifications in Categories 2, 5, or 6 for the duration of employment (paid for by employer, if needed)
- Treat invasive species through chemical (i.e. pesticide) or mechanical means using backpack sprayers, brush cutters, etc.
- Install and check spotted lanternfly circle traps
- Deploy and check minnow traps at lakes to survey for invasive crayfish. This will require handling crayfish and other animals (pending funding).
- Determine necessary supplies and equipment before visiting a site
- Drive UTV to survey for invasive plants
- Clean, maintain, and keep track of equipment and supplies
- Conduct invasive species management using best management practices
- Follow protocols for decontamination, pesticide safety, and equipment safety
- Communicate with partners and the public on invasive species in the field and at events
- Drive UTV with supplies/equipment through large sites
- Other duties as assigned
- Assist with administrative duties, as necessary

Minimum Qualifications:

- Basic understanding of plant identification
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Strong time management skills
- Strong organizational, recordkeeping, and task prioritization skills
- Ability to work well within a team
- Ability to make decisions in accordance with policies and procedures



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- Ability to conduct customer service at a professional level
- Ability to communicate with groups of diverse size and demographics through various mediums in English
- Reliable transportation to the office, field sites, and other off-site locations
- Ability to work occasional nights and weekends
- Valid driver's license

Preferred Qualifications:

- Current Commercial Pesticide Applicator certification(s) in Categories 2, 5, or 6
- An educational background and/or work experience in natural resource management, biology, or ecology
- Ability to navigate on water from a vessel
- Experience snorkeling in inland lakes
- Ability to navigate off-trail, execute transect paths while managing or surveying for invasive species using a compass & map and/or GPS unit
- Ability to identify some native and invasive plant and/or insect species of the Midwest
- Experience mixing and applying herbicide using a backpack sprayer
- Experience with data recording, managing, and tracking
- Experience using ArcGIS, FieldMaps, or Survey123
- Experience operating and maintaining a brush cutter
- Experience towing and maneuvering a hitched trailer
- Experience driving a UTV
- One or more seasons of relevant field experience
- First Aid, Wilderness Safety, or other similar certification(s)

Physical Requirements:

- Able to work outdoors in all kinds of weather, often for most of the work-day hours
- Able to wade through streams and drains wearing waders
- Able to kayak on rivers and lakes wearing proper safety vests
- Able to swim
- Able to snorkel
- Able to walk on trails and uneven ground



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- Able to lift and carry up to 50 pounds
- Able to handle insects and macroinvertebrates
- Able to effectively communicate in English
- Able to visually and auditorily identify and respond to environmental and other hazards related to fieldwork
- Able to work at work station for extended periods of time
- Ability to utilize office and computer equipment
- Able to go between offices to meet customers for assistance
- Able to bend over to access files and tools
- Able to visually survey outdoor areas for plant identification

To Apply: Interested applicants must submit: a VBCD Employee Application form, a cover letter, resume, unofficial transcripts (if applicable), and a list of three (3) references (all documents must be in PDF form) to: info@VanBurenCD.org or mail to: Van Buren Conservation District, 1035 E Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079. If submitting these materials via email, use the subject line “[last name] 2026 Crew Application”. Official transcripts may be requested at the time of an interview.

Deadline to Apply: February 22, 2026 before 11:59 PM EST. Interviews will occur in March.

Equal Opportunity Employer: The Van Buren Conservation District is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. VBCD programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. The VBCD collectively acknowledges that its offices and gatherings occupy the ancestral, traditional and contemporary Lands of the Council of the Three Fires – the Ojibwe, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi, ceded in multiple historic treaties. Through this acknowledgement, we recognize, support and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, and for historic Indigenous communities and individuals. The VBCD is committed to our obligations to those communities. The process of knowing and acknowledging the land we stand on is a way of honoring and expressing gratitude for the ancestral people who stewarded this land before us and their descendants who steward this land today.