



# A Newsletter for the Black River Watershed Project

September 2006

8th Edition

## WHERE IS THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED?

The watershed encompasses 287 acres in Allegan and Van Buren Counties. The Black River has three main branches: the North, Middle and South. These three branches converge and flow into Lake Michigan at South Haven.

The Black River Watershed includes portions of Arlington, Bangor, Bloomingdale, Casco, Cheshire, Clyde, Columbia, Covert, Ganges, Geneva, Lee, South Haven, and Waverly Townships, as well as the Villages of Bloomingdale and Breedsville, and the Cities of Bangor and South Haven.

See inside for a map of the watershed...

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>Black River Watershed Project to Continue</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Activities in the "Implementation Phase"</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Equipment Rental</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Directing the Flow: A Watershed Short Course</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Black River Watershed Map</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Help Wanted: Land Protection Committee</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Upcoming Events</b>	<b>4</b>

## BLACK RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT TO CONTINUE

The Van Buren Conservation District has received a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for the Black River Watershed Project. This is a continuation of the project that ran from October 2002 to April 2005. In that phase, we created the Black River Watershed Management Plan. The new grant will

cover a three-year project in which we work to implement portions of the Black River Watershed Management Plan. This project will focus on three main efforts: 1) On-the-ground restoration projects such as streambank stabilization projects, rain gardens, etc., 2) Land use planning and natural areas preservation, and 3) Providing

information and education on water quality issues (workshops, newsletters, factsheets, etc.)

Primary water quality concerns in the watershed are erosion and sedimentation, nutrient loading, and development issues. Other issues include channelization of streams, loss of wetlands, and polluted runoff.

## ACTIVITIES IN THE "IMPLEMENTATION PHASE" OF THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

This phase will focus on implementing practices that will improve and protect water quality. Activities will include:

- Reduce runoff and restore and stabilize eroding streambanks
- Work with communities to reduce polluted storm-

water (mark storm drains with "Don't Dump - Drains to Waterway" labels)

- Identify failing septic systems by providing septic inspection grants
- Promote agricultural residue management practices (no-till/mulch-till)
- Perform a master plan/zoning ordinance review and update for four communities
- Develop outreach campaign to promote land

protection and preservation

- Support efforts to protect prime farmland from development
- Hold ongoing watershed workshop series
- Hold "municipal summit" workshops on Low Impact Development techniques and planning and zoning
- Provide scholarships for residents to take MSU online watershed management courses



This Nonpoint Source Pollution Control project has been funded in part through the Michigan Nonpoint Source Program by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement C9975464-05 to the Van Buren Conservation District for the Black River Watershed project. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the EPA, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

**"...33% discount on rental fee if the equipment is used to install conservation practices..."**

### EQUIPMENT RENTAL

The Van Buren Conservation District has farm equipment for rent, including a Brillion Seeder and a John Deere No-till Drill.

Residents of the Black River Watershed receive a 33% discount on the rental fee if the equipment is used to install conservation practices like

buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, cover crops and more.

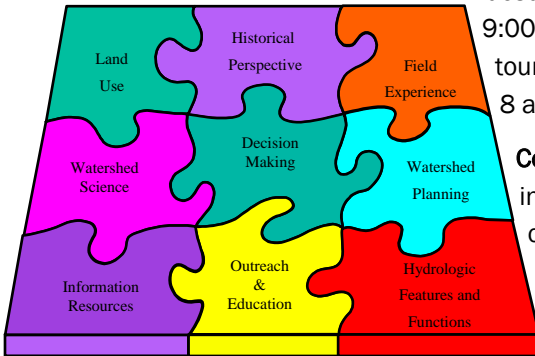
For more information, contact the Conservation District at (269) 657-4030 x5.



### DIRECTING THE FLOW: A WATERSHED SHORT COURSE FOR THE PAW PAW RIVER AND BLACK RIVER WATERSHEDS

This fall, the Black River Watershed Project and the Paw Paw River Watershed Project are teaming up with a variety of agencies and organizations to present this five-week course.

**Date/Time:** October 3 - 31, Tuesday nights from 5:30-9:00 pm with a Saturday tour on October 28 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.



**Cost:** \$50 (course includes 5 dinners, course materials, tour and lunch). \$20 rebate to the first 20 people to register.

**Location:** Van Buren Conference Center, Lawrence

**Course Summary:** Protecting water quality takes more than cleaning up one lake or river - it means looking at all the surface water and groundwa-

ter that flow together in one watershed. Learn to care for our watersheds by attending the Watershed Short Course. The course will address watershed science, land use impacts on water quality, accessing local tools and resources to protect your lake, stream or river and a watershed tour/field experience. The information won't come from some far away place; it will be local and relevant information that is useful to citizens, landowners and decision makers in southwest Michigan. There will not only be opportunities to learn about watershed issues and water quality, but also opportunities to network with others in southwest Michigan facing similar challenges in

protecting water quality and managing growth and development. This course is being hosted by the Van Buren Conservation District, Southwestern Michigan Commission and Van Buren MSU Extension.

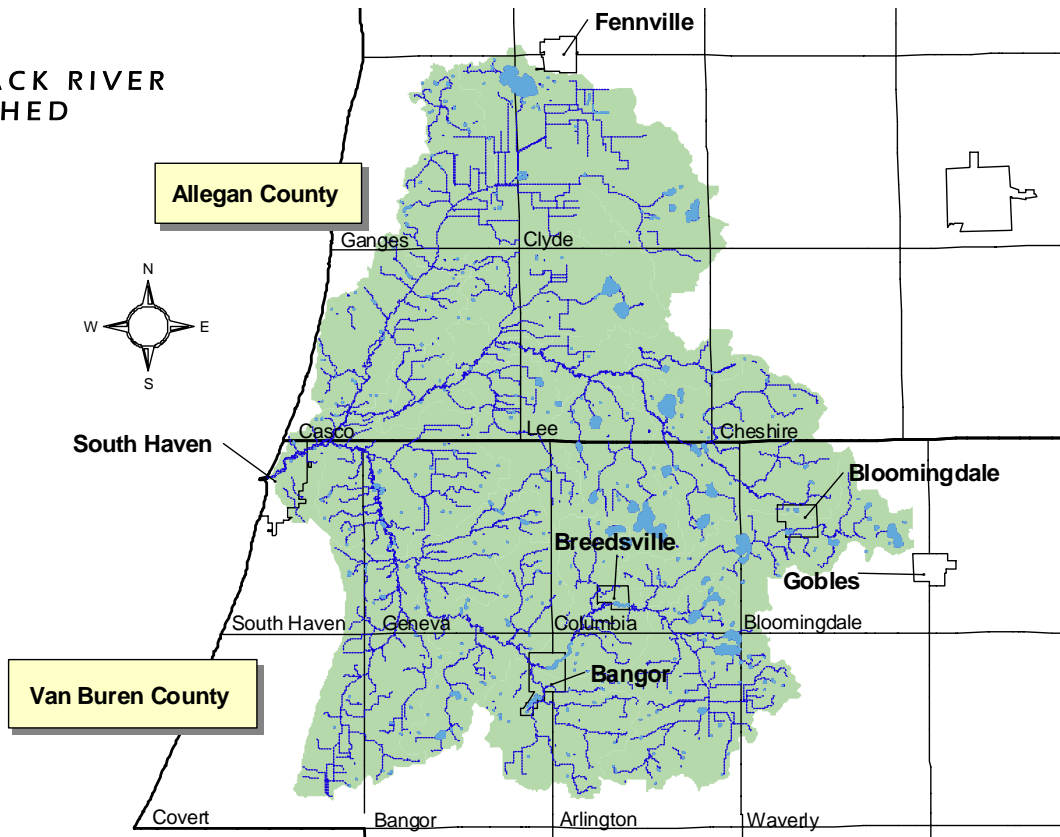
**For more information call:** Van Buren Conservation District at (269) 657-4030 x5 or the Southwestern Michigan Commission at (269) 925-1137 x25.

This course is partially funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and these sponsors:

- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
- J.F. New
- Bangor DDA

For a registration form, visit <http://www.vbco.org/watershedcourse.asp> or contact the Southwestern Michigan Commission at (269) 925-1137 x 25

## THE BLACK RIVER WATERSHED



### HELP WANTED: LAND PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Are you interested in helping protect natural areas in the Black River Watershed? The Black River Watershed Project is working with the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy (SWMLC) to develop a targeted outreach campaign to promote protection of natural areas in the watershed and educate landowners about land protection tools. This protection will be voluntary, through land donations or conservation easements. As part of

this effort, SWMLC will develop a natural resource-based mapping analysis to identify priority conservation areas. Priority areas may consist of wetlands and headwater streams that are particularly important to preserving water quality.

To help guide this process, we are forming a Land Protection Committee. If you are interested in being a part of this committee, contact Pete Ter Louw, Executive Direc-

tor of the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, at (269) 324-1600.



**“Priority areas may consist of wetlands and headwater streams that are particularly important to preserving water quality.”**

Non Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Paw Paw, MI 49079  
Permit No. 87

Erin Fuller – Watershed Coordinator  
Van Buren Conservation District  
1035 E. Michigan Ave.  
Paw Paw, MI 49079  
Phone: (269) 657-4030 x5  
Fax: (269) 657-4925  
E-mail: erin.fuller@mi.nacdnet.net



*Your gateway to natural  
resources management*

---

**We're on the web!**  
[www.vbco.org/blackriver\\_2.asp](http://www.vbco.org/blackriver_2.asp)

---

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Emerald Ash Borer Workshop**  
Saturday September 16, 2006  
1:00 - 3:30 p.m.  
Hartford City Hall  
19 W. Main St., Hartford



**Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program On-Farm Field Day**  
Wednesday, September 20, 2006  
10:00 to 2:00 p.m.  
Cornerstone Ag  
1240 57th St., Grand Junction

**Black River Watershed Steering Committee Meeting**  
Thursday, September 21, 2006  
10:00 a.m.  
Columbia Township Hall  
53053 CR 388, Grand Junction

**Directing the Flow: A Watershed Short Course for the Paw Paw River and Black River Watersheds** (see article on page 2)  
Tuesdays October 3 - 31, 2006  
5:30-9:00 p.m. (with a Saturday tour on October 28 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.)  
Van Buren Conference Center  
490 S. Paw Paw St., Lawrence



For more information or to register for any of these events, please contact the Van Buren Conservation District at (269) 657-4030 x 5.



Printed on recycled paper