



St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



**Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future**

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## ***It's Not Just a Hole!***



One thing the SWCD is tasked with doing is a landfill inspection twice per year. While the purpose of these inspections is to look for erosion issues and any evidence of sediment leaving the site, those that do the inspections usually learn a whole lot more about what goes on at the landfill.

At Prairie View Landfill, our local facility, and its other landfills, Waste Management uses the latest advances in landfill technologies, with environmental protection systems that meet or exceed government regulations.

Over the last few years, Prairie View has added many practices to aid in slowing down the flow of stormwater, which help minimize sediment in the water and keep the soil in place. They are using a combination of berms, sediment traps and ponds, vegetation, and armored diversion channels to direct the flow of water in order to let the sediment drop out prior to the water leaving the site.

Another aspect of Prairie View's environmental protections that we found interesting is their management of landfill gas. Decomposition of organic matter in the landfill produces gas. Prairie View collects this through a system of wells, in order to reduce emissions and minimize odor, and then converts it to electricity.

Also, recently they have started construction on a plant to convert the gas, which is 50% methane, into renewable natural gas. Waste Management has already converted their trucks to run on natural gas, and they plan to use the gas produced at the plant to fuel them. Renewable natural gas is considered carbon neutral because it reduces the amount of methane emissions being released into the atmosphere.



It's great to see Waste Management doing what they can to keep our waste from having a negative impact on our environment!

June 23rd is  
**National Soil Health Day!**

Did you know that soil is a vital, living ecosystem? It's home to earthworms, bacteria, fungi, insects, and more. Plus, according to the Soil Health Institute, soil supports 95% of our food production.

This precious resource supports life – plant, animal, and human. Because of this, everyone should learn about ways you can help to conserve and protect this important natural resource.

Soil has five essential functions:

1. Regulating drainage, flow and storage of water.
2. Sustaining plant, animal, and microorganism life.
3. Filtering and buffering potential pollutants.
4. Cycling nutrients.
5. Physical stability and support.



Conservation practices work to preserve the integrity of the soil and to improve the soil to provide resiliency. Our four principles for soil health are minimizing disturbance, maximizing living roots, maximizing biodiversity, and maximizing soil cover. Agricultural conservation practices include no-till and reduced till, cover crops, rotational grazing, and diversified crop rotation. Backyard practices include composting and mulching.

For more information on what conservation practices would work for you, and to learn about upcoming workshops and community events about these topics, check out our website and follow us on Facebook!

**#Plant23**  
**Share your stories!**

Spring is here which means it's planting season!

Indiana NRCS, Farmers.gov, and your very own St. Joseph SWCD want to share your story! Take photos or videos during planting and send to [brandon.oconner@usda.gov](mailto:brandon.oconner@usda.gov). If you post on social media, tag @FarmersGov and use the hashtag #Plant2023.

We hope to see some of you showcased this year!  
Happy Planting!



**Meet Our Newest Employee!**

Hi, I'm Misty Sorchevich, the new Administrative Assistant/Treasurer for the St. Joseph County SWCD.

I have a BS in Forestry and more recently earned an AS in Accounting. Over the years, I have played a variety of roles in a few different companies and organizations, including working in teaching, marketing, bookkeeping, customer service, and event planning. Also, until about two years ago, we had a small, 13-acre farm, with a large garden and pastures for our animals.

For fun, I like hiking, playing games with my family, walking my dog, and working in my (much smaller!) garden. I am excited to be with the SWCD and learn about conservation from this perspective!



## Ag Days Recap

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth at the 2023 Ag Days to learn more about pollinators!

We had a blast teaching people about pollinators and how they are responsible for pollinating the plants that we get our food from. It is estimated that over 180,000 plant species and more than 1,200 crops are pollinated by pollinators! Some of the most common things we eat, like strawberries, apples, chocolate, and even coffee, are all thanks to pollinators!



Our office provides technical assistance and financial assistance through the Clean Water Indiana grant for Pollinator Habitat. If you would like more information on how to bring pollinators to your property, please contact our office at 574-936-2024 ext. 4.

## Pollinator Week

will be here soon!

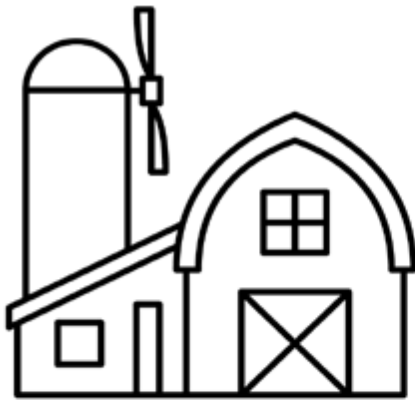


Watch our Facebook page that week for tips on attracting pollinators to your yard! And be sure to check out [www.pollinator.org](http://www.pollinator.org) to check out some of their great activity ideas!

**“... the soil of any one place makes its own peculiar and inevitable sense. It is impossible to contemplate the life of the soil for very long without seeing it as analogous to the life of the spirit.”**  
— Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, 1977

## Transitioning to Organic

In April, the USDA announced details around its investment in conservation assistance for producers transitioning to organic production. As part of the multi-agency Organic Transition Initiative (OTI), NRCS will dedicate financial and technical assistance to a new organic management standard. They will help producers adopt the new organic management standard, to get the assistance and education they need such as attending workshops or requesting help from experts or mentors.



The organic management standard will be the core practice required by all participants. Farmers cannot instantaneously transition to organic. They must manage their land without prohibited inputs, like most synthetic pesticides, for 36 months before crops can be certified organic. The standard allows flexibility for producers to gain the assistance, training, and expertise they need through organic transition.

Eligible producers include farmers, forest landowners, and other producers beginning or in the process of transitioning to organic certification. NRCS will announce state-specific deadlines later this year, after which producers will be able to apply. For more information, visit [farmers.gov/organic](http://farmers.gov/organic).

## St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

### Upcoming events!

#### May

2nd—Primary Election Day—  
County holiday

13th—SMIPP Spring Weed Wrangle—Marshall County Memorial Forest—10AM

13th—Invasive Species ID—North Liberty Library Gardening Gala—11AM

16th—Monthly Board Meeting—Centre Township Library—7PM

#### June

19th—Juneteenth—Office Closed

20th—Monthly Board Meeting—Centre Township Library—7PM

21st—What is a Watershed? - Mishawaka-Penn-Harris Public Library—9:30AM & 11AM

28th—SMIPP/ CISMA Educational Hike—Location TBA



#### SWCD Supervisors:

Chris Matthys, Chairman  
Marty Lappin, Vice Chairman  
Dave Vandewalle  
Sam James  
Joe Gregory

#### SWCD Associate Supervisors:

Dave Craft  
John Dooms  
Chuck Lehman  
Randy Matthys  
Richard Schmidt  
Dave Straughn  
Dru Wrasse  
Mike Burkholder

#### SWCD Honorary Members:

Jerry Knepp  
Keith Lineback  
William Millar

#### St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:

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Misty Sorchevich, SWCD  
Debbie Knepp, NRCS  
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#### Farm Service Agency Staff:

Gideon Nobbe, CED  
Devan Harrell  
Aldona Martin  
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