

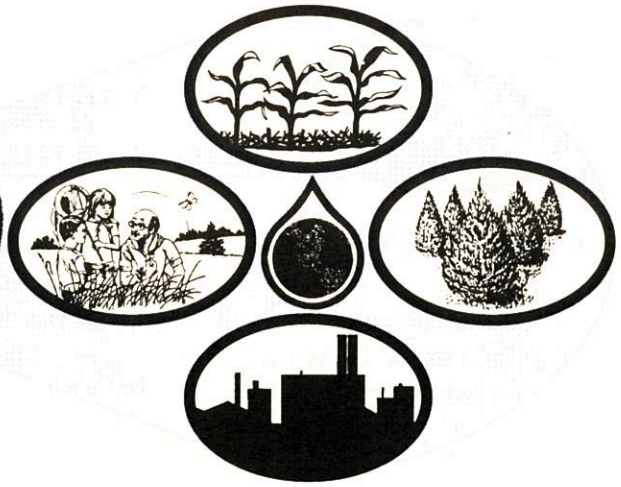


**St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District**

CONSERVATION



KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Jan/Feb/Mar 2000
Volume 1, Issue 1

60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN *
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Editor: Jerod Chew
Tonia Albright

Calendar of Events

January 18th

CRP Sign-up Begins
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

January 20

SWCD 40th Annual Meeting
Holy Family Parish Hall – 6:30

February 5

Science Alive
South Bend Library – 10 :00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

February 11

Last Day for CRP Sign-up

February 14 & 15

International Grazing Conference
(Shipshewana)

February 21

President's Day – Office Closed

February 22

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

February 24

Urban Erosion Control Workshop
Elkhart Co. Fairgrounds – 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

March 1

Tree Order Blanks Due

March 10 ,11,12

Ag Days – Scottsdale Mall

March 20

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

March 23

Composting Seminar – 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

March 29

Tree Planting & Care Seminar
6:30 – 8:00 Centre Twp. Library

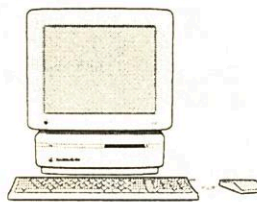
Happy New Year!

Our Calendar for the first quarter of the new millenium is filled with many exciting activities and events. Along with new projects we will be continuing with many of the old.

We are still accepting affiliate members and will continue to do so throughout the year. Please feel free to call the office for more information.

Well Water Testing Kits will be available this Spring at Scottsdale Mall during Ag Days. Fore more information contact one of the following offices:

Farm Bureau 291-1371
St. Joseph Co. SWCD. 291-2300
Co-Op Extension Services . . . 235-9604



Visit Our New Website

Thanks to Jerod and his hard work, the St. Joseph County SWCD now has our own website. For information on conservation practices, educational programs, trees, staff, upcoming events, and much more visit us at www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph.

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Due to rising costs, we find it necessary to downsize our mailings. If you are receiving duplicate newsletters, or wish to be taken off of the mailing list, please call the office at 219-291-2300 ext. 3. Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated.



THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

WINTER TIME FUN

You may be one of the millions of people in the United States that enjoys feeding the birds every winter. Well if you are, here are some tips to make your pastime a little more enjoyable.



Feed what the birds like!

While your standard mixes will attract birds, you may want to spice them up a little. Standard mixes contain a lot of corn which will attract sparrows. Upgrading to a more expensive mix, you will be able to attract more different species of birds and less sparrows. You will also have less waste on the ground. Since I do not mind the sparrows, I will add black oil sunflowers to a standard mix, thus increasing the attractiveness of the food. I mix about 10 pounds of oil sunflower to 50 pounds of standard mix. There are many excellent sources that discuss the different types of food and the different species that they attract. Two of my favorite books are: *How to Attract Birds* by Ortho, found in most garden stores, and *Wild about Birds* by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 1-800-657-3757 or www.commedia.state.mn.us

The greater variety of foods that you provide the more variety of birds you will attract.

I have great success with the before mentioned mix and niger or thistle seed. The other way that you can attract more birds, is by different placement of feeders. Some species prefer to feed on the ground, others a few feet above the ground and some will like a certain type of feeder and avoid others. So by mixing up the type of feeders you use and the location of the feeders, you can enjoy more birds.

Watch out for predators! Actually I do not have a problem with predator at the bird feeder, it is not often that you get a front row seat to the drama of nature. But you do need to make the birds feel secure or they will not come to your feeder. Place feeders with in 10 feet of shrubs or trees. Your old Christmas tree makes great cover near a feeder.



What about the squirrels?

Enjoy them! If you place either shelled corn or eared corn on the ground away from your feeders, this will help stop damage to feeders and lost bird food.

Let's get up close and personal.

Here is a great way to have fun. Make a dummy and put a straw hat on its head and gloves on its hands. Place the dummy in an old lawn chair. Spread suet and peanut butter on the gloves and bird seed on the hat. Place the whole thing near your established feeders and wait. Once the birds have become accustomed to feeding on the dummy, then one day, remove the dummy, put the hat on your head and the gloves on your hands, sit in the chair and be very still and enjoy the birds like you never have before. Warning, little birds can land with a wallop.



WE'RE STILL COOKING WITH COMPOST!!!

Three more composting seminars have been planned for the spring of 2000. These seminars will discuss the basics on how you can get started on your own backyard compost pile.

All meetings will be at the SWCD office from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. Call for more information or to make your reservation.

March 23, 2000 Thursday

April 3, 2000 Monday

May 3, 2000 Wednesday



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County



That's right! March 1st is the last day to turn in your tree sales order form. Order forms are available upon request, so if you need one then please call or e-mail us. Also, if you have friends, relatives, or neighbors who may be interested in our program, please pass on the information.

There are several new and exciting items on this year's order form. We have provided information on some of the featured species on this page. If you are still not sure which trees will be best for your property, give us a call.

Pick-up for the trees will be on Saturday, April 15th at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. There will also be a limited number trees on sale that day for those last minute purchases.



New Tree Sales Species

Black Gum or Black Tupelo—This is an excellent ornamental tree because of the brilliant shades of red, yellow/orange, and purple leaves in the fall. Small white flowers show up in the summer followed by a blue, cherry-sized fruit in the fall.

Black Haw is a member of the viburnum group of flowering shrubs. Mature height is 12 feet. White flowers arrive in late spring and then it bears edible fruits that change color from pink to dark blue.

Chokeberry reaches a height of 8



feet and will have a spread approximately 5 feet. This shrub's ornamental attraction is the abundance of red fruits that are noticeable in late summer. Chokeberry is adaptable to both wet and dry soils.

Zumi Crabapple provides a very rich green foliage. Rose-colored buds open into a profusion of snow white flowers in early spring. The red marble-sized apples attract birds all winter.

Dragon's Red Sedum—This groundcover is excellent for flower gardens. Bright red flowers bloom from June until August. It grows well in shade or full sun. Purplish bronze foliage becomes intensely scarlet in Autumn.



Tree Planting and Care Seminar

On March 29th at 6:30 p.m. we will be holding a Tree Planting and Care Seminar. The seminar will be at the new St. Joseph County Library, Center Township Branch, on Kern Rd. and Miami Rd. Come and listen to forestry professionals talk about topics such as: tree planting techniques, choosing the right tree, and tree care. This would be a great chance for those who have ordered trees to ask questions and for those who haven't ordered trees to find out more information about our Saturday Sales Program. We may be outside for the first portion of this seminar, so please dress appropriately.





FIELD NOTES

USDA NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**CRP SIGN-UP
SLATED FOR
JANUARY/FEBRUARY**

Mark your Calendars. Sign-up 20 for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) runs from January 18th through February 11th, 2000. The CRP accepts offers of environmentally sensitive acreage for new contracts that are planted to some type of wildlife cover. Applications are given an environmental benefit index based on 6 different factors. The 6 factors that are scored are:

- 1) Wildlife cover benefits: Includes plant varieties, threatened and endangered species, proximity to water, etc.
 - 2) Water quality factor: Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching, location, groundwater and surface water quality.
 - 3) On-farm benefits of reduced erosion: On-farm impacts.
 - 4) Enduring benefits: Credits for the likelihood of practices persisting beyond CRP practice period.
 - 5) Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion: Improvements associated with reducing airborne dust and particulate matter.
 - 6) Benefits of enrollment in Conservation Priority Areas: Credits cumulative impacts on CRP contracts in Conservation Priority Areas.
- The type of wildlife cover you choose is the factor that has the potential for the greatest impact on your environmental benefit score. The more species of plants and trees you

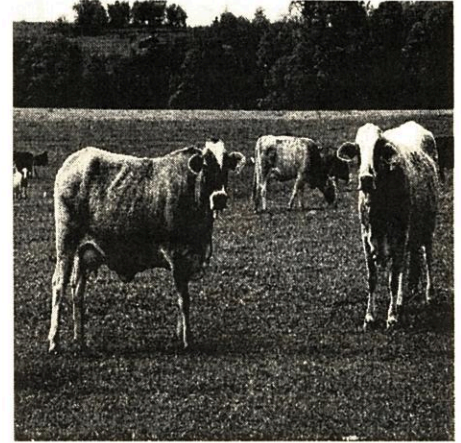
plant, or the more beneficial you make the area for wildlife, the more chance you have of being selected for participation in the CRP. If you are interested in more information, contact our office at 291-2300 ext. 3. We'll be glad to assist you in selecting the best wildlife habitat for your property.



**Water Quality Testing
Volunteers Needed!**

We are looking for people who would be interested in doing some water quality testing here in St. Joseph County. The counties of St. Joseph, Noble, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, and Steuben have a grant to perform water quality testing throughout the St. Joseph River Basin. Volunteers will be trained to conduct chemical and biological testing.

If you are concerned about the environment then this is an excellent way for you to help. The results from the testing will be used to prioritize areas for land treatment. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or would like some more information please contact our office.



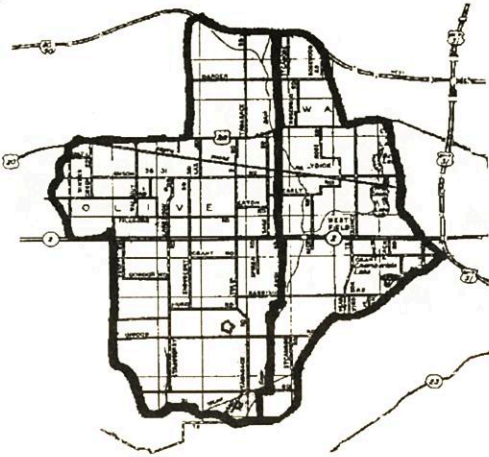
**Dennis Wolheter, Livestock
Management Specialist**

He will be working with small farmers to provide educational, technical, and financial assistance on a voluntary basis to develop detailed livestock management plans. These will spell out specific management practices to address the resource concerns that will result in improved water quality leaving the farm. Several small dairy farmers, including some that are milking over 100 cows, have switched to intensive rotational systems. Dennis will be working with producers interested in learning more about this and pasture walks.

Limited cost-share incentives will be offered to producers. Some of the practices include: fencing to exclude livestock from streams, lakes, and wood lots; filter strips; nutrient management programs; waste utilization programs and storage facility planning; improved water systems; and streambank protection. To set up an appointment contact our office.



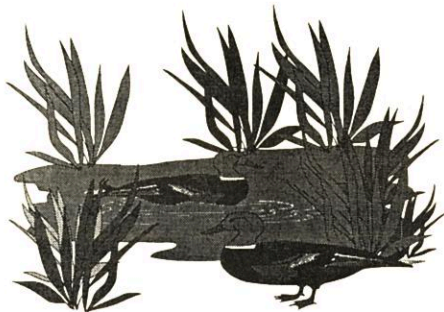
FIELD NOTES



Kankakee Watershed Area:

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) is a cost share program designed to provide assistance to producers who own land in areas where significant natural resources problems exist. The Kankakee River Watershed, which is outlined on the map, is one of the priority areas where the funding will be used. If you are a landowner within the priority area then you may be eligible for assistance.

Practices such as installing grassed waterways, manure management facilities, water and sediment control basins, erosion control structures, wildlife plantings, and others may be eligible to receive 75% cost share. Funds will be available through August, so call for details or come on in and sign up.



Riddles Lake Sedimentation Study Underway

An investigative study was begun in the fall of 1999 to determine the sources of sedimentation in Riddles Lake. The intent of the inquiry was positive in nature and not in any way intended to point fingers at any person, business or land owner. Walter's Ditch and the lower end of Riddles Lake were checked first. A preliminary report will be available for the landowners and the community will be available the first part of January. The report will accurately report the findings and attempt to give the community direction in possible ways turn this disagreeable problem into a positive team building and unifying experience for everyone. If the local people within the community are willing to invest the necessary time, resources and effort, the water quality of Riddles Lake can be improved.



STATEWIDE CONSERVATION BUFFER COST-SHARE PROGRAM

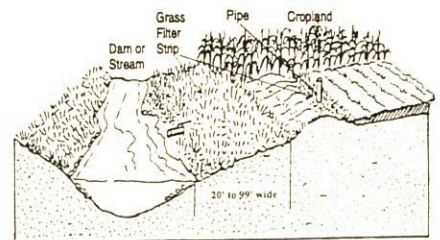
The State Soil Board has allocated \$600,000 for a statewide conservation buffer program to be used to encourage the implementation of Conservation Buffers in the state. The goal is to encourage the acceptance and installation of buffers which have a direct positive effect on water quality. Filter strips are strips of grass a minimum of 20 feet wide that run along side a ditch, stream or body of water. 5

These grassed strips filter the stor water by removing soil particle prior to water leaving the agricul tural field. Local land owners ma apply for these funds by contactin the St. Joseph SWCD office Applications will be accepted an processed March 15th. The loca SWCD board must rank th applications in priority and submi the list to the Division of Soi Conservation by March 31st. It i anticipated that the funding of th applications will be completed an the landowners notified of thei acceptance or non-acceptance b April 15th.

Some general provisions of the pro gram are:

- *\$650 flat rate for the 10 or 15 year practice agreement
- * Landowner may also participate in NRCS CRP program in addition to above
- * Practice must meet NRCS specifications
- * Money is distributed after buffer or filter strip installed

For additional information please contact the St. Joseph SWCD at 219-291-2300 ext #3.





FIELD NOTES

Wetland Reserve Program In Indiana

Many landowners in Indiana have opted to participate in the United States Department of Agriculture Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). This program allows the landowner to receive payments for marginal land that has been put into permanent or 30 year easements as wetland areas. The Wetlands Reserve Program was authorized by the Food Security Act of 1985 (and as amended in the 1990 and 1995 Farm Bills). In addition to receiving payments for the easements, landowners also receive cost-share funds for wetland restoration practices, such as tree planting, water control structures, dikes, etc. Participants in the WRP program retain ownership of the property, and control access to the site. The land can be sold, however, the wetland easement remains with the land. In Indiana, Compatible uses of WRP land include hunting, fishing, trapping, and timber harvest-under an Indiana Division of Forestry approved plan. There are several advantages to restoring land to wetland, including, (1) improved water quality, (2) filtering of sediment, (3) increased habitat for wildlife and endangered species, (4) reduction in soil erosion, (5) flood control, (6) water supply, and (7) increased opportunity for outdoor recreation and education. The program is offered nationwide during a continuous sign-up. Interested landowners sign-up with their local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Office. Certain eligibility requirements must be met to qualify for the program.



Basic eligibility requires that a landowner must have a clear title to the land and have owned the land for 12 months before the end of the sign-up period. Land eligible for inclusion in WRP must have the potential to contribute to the function and values of wetland ecosystems. In Indiana, the following types of lands are eligible, land that has been hydrologically modified (filled, ditched, tiled, or pumped) and farmed, such as those lands identified by NRCS as, (1) farmed wetlands, (2) prior converted cropland, (3) farmed wetland pasture, and (4) lands substantially altered by flooding. Adjacent lands that contribute significantly to the functions and values of an easement area are eligible as long as it is less than 50 percent of the area. This would include upland buffer area and non-cropped wetland areas. Wetlands restored under a state or federal program are eligible. Riparian areas that link two or more wetlands that are protected by a similar agreement are eligible if the area averages no more than 150 feet in width on each side of the stream and up to one mile in length. Applications are taken continuously. The applications are then ranked based on criteria set forth by the Indiana State Technical Committee.

The first sign-up in Indiana was in 1994 with subsequent sign-ups in 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000. The interest in the WRP program has far exceeded the available funding. As of January 2000, NRCS has received approximately \$27 million dollars, which has allowed the funding of 195 applications for a total of 24,800 acres in WRP. The funding includes the cost of appraisals, surveys, title work, wetland restoration and easement costs. Forty-four counties have received WRP funds. The highest area of concentration of funded WRP applications are found in the Muskatatuck/White River Basin in South-Central Indiana, the Patoka/White/Wabash River Basins in southwestern Indiana, the Kankakee River Basin, and the northeastern portion of the state. As interest continues in the WRP program and wetlands in general, NRCS hopes to be able to fund more applications. The Fiscal Year 2000 funding for WRP is anticipated to be the largest thus far. Landowners enrolling in Fiscal Year 2000 (October 1999 to September 2000) should have their best opportunity to get into the program.

If you are interested in the Wetlands Reserve Program, please contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



URBAN MEANDERINGS

RULE 5 EROSION CONTROL BENEFITS EVERYONE

Soil erosion on developing urban land in St. Joseph County is a major problem. Most of the sites are subject to major land disturbing activities that leave the soil bare and vulnerable to rain and wind erosion. Although these sites are only disturbed for a short period of time, the resulting soil erosion losses are generally several times higher than previously occurred. Soil erosion and the resulting sedimentation normally cost the developer and community both economically and environmentally. Reduction of water quality in the lakes, rivers, and streams, increased drainage maintenance for county government, reduced recreational opportunities and sand filled storm sewers and culverts are examples of these costs. Most of these problems can be reduced or avoided through proper land use planning and the application of conservation practices.



What measures can be taken to protect our water quality and to reduce soil erosion in developing areas of our county? Two major keys are: 1) prior development of an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP).

2) Implementation of BMPs (best management practices), vegetative and structural erosion control measures in the development process (before problems arise).

Considering existing topography, soil properties and natural vegetation in planning the development will greatly reduce the potential for erosion and off-site sedimentation. The designing of streets and buildings to fit into the natural topography will reduce the amount of land disturbance necessary. The ESCP will protect areas of existing cover (wetlands, woods, grassed areas and water courses) to reduce soil erosion. These protected land features will increase the esthetic value and improve the quality of life in the new developing community.

Urban erosion control is a two step process. The first is reducing construction site soil erosion levels to workable amounts. This is achieved through disturbing only necessary workable areas for a short period of time and vegetating these with permanent or temporary seeding. The second is trapping sediment before it leaves the development site. This is accomplished by detaining the storm water for a sufficient time to allow the soil particles to settle out.



Examples of BMPs available to help the developer succeed in these two efforts are: vegetative filter strips, silt fences, temporary slope drains, storm inlet protection, rock check dams and temporary sediment traps.



A vegetative filter strip keeps sediment off the road in a new subdivision.

The motivation for control of urban soil erosion and sedimentation within our county will involve concern for the conservation of the county's natural resources, respect for other members of our community and common sense. The benefits of controlling soil erosion and sedimentation within St. Joseph County are numerous and improves the quality of life for all its' citizens. The developer receives both economic and emotional rewards for his stewardship. County government is relieved of expenses involved with plugged culverts, sediment laden roads, silted drainage ditches, eroded slopes, and sedimentation of our rivers, streams, and lakes. Your grandchildren will also have a place to fish, a stream to canoe in, and a lake park to enjoy.

The condition of St. Joseph County's natural resources for our children and grandchildren will reflect the total of all of the choices we make today and tomorrow. For more information please call the St. Joseph Soil and Water Conservation District at 219-291-2300 ext. 3.

Urban Erosion Control Workshop
Feb. 24 @ Elkhart County Fairgrounds
Call Elkhart SWCD—(219) 533-3630



**St. Joseph County Soil and Water
Conservation District
60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4
South Bend, IN 46614**

St. Joseph County Soil And Water

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MISSION

**To provide guidance and
education to the youth
and adults of St. Joseph
County and to administer
programs to preserve,
protect and improve soil,
water, air, plant, and
animal resources for
future generations.**

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Harold Mutti

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Debbie Knepp, NRCS
Jerome Daugherty, IDNR
Jerod Chew, SWCD
Rick Glassman, SWCD
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