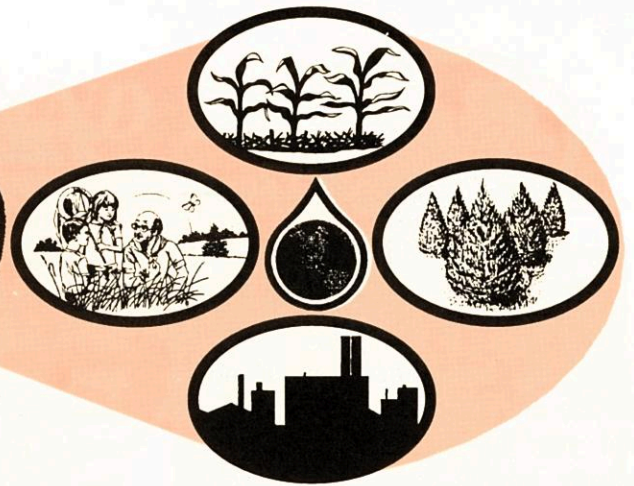




**St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District**

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Oct/Nov/Dec/ 2000
Volume 2, Issue 4

5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN *
Website: www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph

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Editor: Jerod Chew
Tonia Albright

Calendar of Events

October 9

Columbus Day – Office Closed

October 16

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

October 19

Composting Seminar
7:00 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

November 7

Election Day – Office Closed

November 15

Composting Seminar
7:00 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

November 20

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

November 23 & 24

Thanksgiving Holiday
Office Closed

December 18

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

December 25

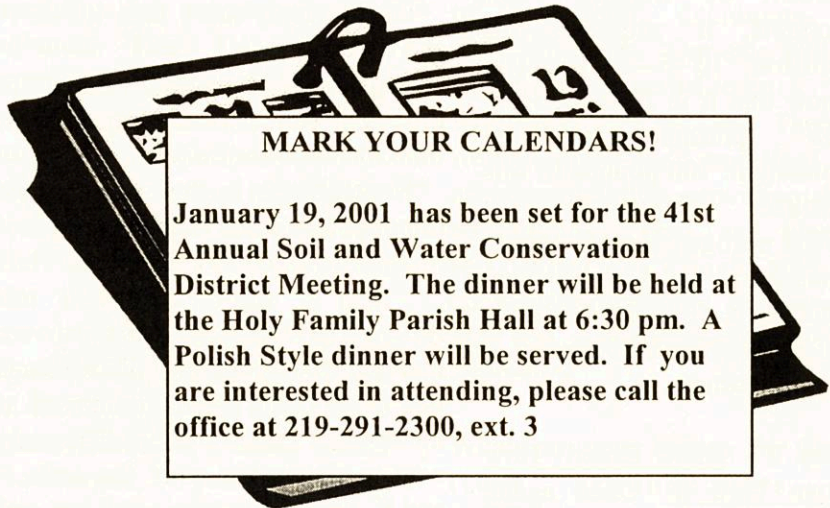
Christmas Holiday
Office Closed



January 19, 2001

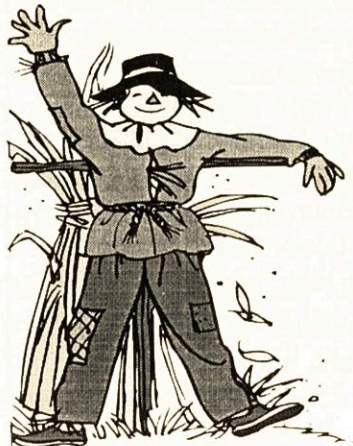
SWCD 41st Annual Meeting
Holy Family Parish Hall – 6:30

Due to rising costs, we find it necessary to
downsize our mailings. *If you would like to
continue receiving our newsletter* please call
the office at 219-291-2300 ext. 3.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

January 19, 2001 has been set for the 41st
Annual Soil and Water Conservation
District Meeting. The dinner will be held at
the Holy Family Parish Hall at 6:30 pm. A
Polish Style dinner will be served. If you
are interested in attending, please call the
office at 219-291-2300, ext. 3



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THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

EVALUATING A FERTILIZER PROGRAM

One of the best things you can do for the environment, water quality and your lawn, is to understand exactly how much fertilizer you need to apply to your yard.

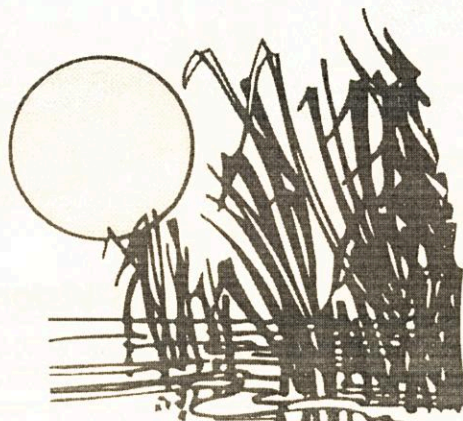
Plants can only use so much fertilizer and if you apply more than can be absorbed, the extra will end up as water pollution.



Step 1 - Understanding The Numbers. Nitrogen (N) is the first number on a bag. Phosphorus (P) is the second number and the third number is Potassium (K). Each number tells you how much of each element is present as a percent by weight. For example, if you see this fertilizer, 10-5-14, then you know that it is 10% nitrogen, 5% phosphorus and 14% potassium. 100 pounds of this fertilizer contains 10 # of actual nitrogen, 5 # of actual phosphorus and 14 # of actual potassium. Being able to calculate actual N, P, and K is very important.

Step 2 - Know Exactly How Big Your Yard Is. Once again, applying more fertilizer than your yard can use is not good for the grass, environment or your wallet.

Step 3 - The Rule Of Thumb. To start out with, your yard needs 4 # of Nitrogen, 1 # of Phosphorus and 2 # of Potassium **per year** per 1000 square feet. All programs will need adjustments due to soil type, desired appearance and the fact that Mother Nature has the last word.



Sample Program — This is for 1000 square feet.

September 1 - 10 # of 10-5-14

November 1 - 10 # of 10-5-14

May 15 - 4 # of 25-3-3

July 10 - 3 # of 25-3-3

Total nutrients applied -

3.75 - 1.21 - 3.01

Step 4 - Other Things You Should Know!

*Do not apply more than 1 # of N at a time.

*September 1 is the most important time to fertilize, it is also the best time for weed control.

*November 1 is the second most important time to fertilize, do not miss these two dates.

All fertilizer programs are a maintenance program. This means that P and K are present in the soil at medium or high levels. The only way to determine what the soils P and K levels is to take a soil test and send it to a soil lab for analysis. A lab soil test will measure P and K levels and then a plan can be made to correct any P and K deficiencies. The lab will also test the soil pH. Lime should never be added unless a soil test is taken. Soils in our area are usually high in pH so lime is seldom needed to be applied. N is not stored in the soil and always needs to be part of the program.

Some Other Notes

Grass clippings need to remain on the yard. They add water and nitrogen to the yard. If you bag grass clippings you should increase fertilizer rates by 10%.

Water your yard deeply. Watering twice of a 1/2 inch per week is better than 1/7 of an inch every day. This allows the roots to grow deeper and helps prevent diseases.

Finally, follow application directions.

**Special thanks to
RED HEN TURF FARM,
for this information.
Contact them at:
www.redhenturf.com**



COMPOST SEMINARS

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District in Partnership with the St. Joseph County Solid Waste Management District will again be sponsoring seminars on Composting.

All meetings will be held at the office of the St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District and start at 7:00 P.M.

Each Participant will receive a compost bin and book at no cost.

Monday

September 25, 2000

Thursday

October 19, 2000

Wednesday

November 15, 2000

Reservations are appreciated

219-291-2300 ext. 3



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

What Grants or Cost Shares are Available for Forestry?

There are several types of cost assistance programs that are available out there. Whether you are a private landowner, member of a conservation group, or an environmental educator you may qualify to receive financial assistance for your forestry interests.

The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry, (317)232-4105, has several grants available for forestry programs and practices.

—Arbor Day Grants

Arbor Day grants can be used to fund any type of activity that helps promote Arbor Day, tree planting and care of urban trees. Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but any event in March, April or May would be eligible.

—Tree Steward Grants

The Tree Steward Program is an educational training program that can be conducted in any county in Indiana. A county sponsor such as a city or county government, conservation group, or the county extension office can conduct the program. The program involves six training sessions of three hours each, which cover a variety of tree

—Urban Forest

Conservation Grants

The Urban Forest Conservation (UFC) grants are intended to help communities develop long-term programs to manage their urban forests. Grantees may conduct any project that helps to improve and protect trees and other associated natural resources in urban areas.

Here are some federally funded programs that apply primarily to landowners.

Forestry Cost Share Assistance Programs:

—**The Forest Improvement Program (FIP)** is concerned with the supply of wood products. **The Forest Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)** is to encourage Stewardship for privately owned woodlands. **The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** is intended to remove erodible land from row crop production. Maximum refund rates range up to 50% of your cost as approved by a district forester. All programs require that you follow a plan approved by a district forester and that you participate for at least 10 years. Practices covered under these programs include: Timber Stand Improvement, Tree Planting, Critical Area Stabilization, Certain Fencing and some Wildlife Practices. To inquire about these programs, contact the Farm Services Agency Office or Natural Resources Conservation Service Office at (219)291-2300.

This information was obtained through the DNR, Division of Forestry's web page. The address is www.state.in.us/dnr/forestry/index.html

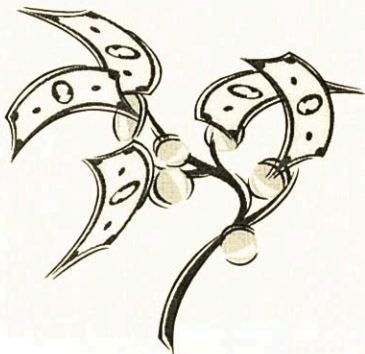


The St. Joseph Soil and Water Conservation District would like to announce that we will be holding it's 15th Annual Tree Sales Program. We would like to extend a big "Thank You" to everyone who has purchased trees from our program and have helped support the SWCD.

This year we are offering a variety of evergreen, deciduous, and flowering trees. Our sale will also include groundcovers and wildflower seed packets. There are items that are excellent for attracting wildlife, providing shade, controlling erosion, and blocking the wind. Those are the conservation benefits, but trees can also just make your property look really nice.

Whatever your reason for buying trees, groundcovers, and wildflowers might be, please take a look at our program and see what we have to offer. The order forms will be mailed around the end of October. If you are not on our mailing list then please call in and request an order form to be sent to you. Ordering will end on March 1st and the items will be available for pick-up in April. We should have a list of available species on our website soon.

www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph





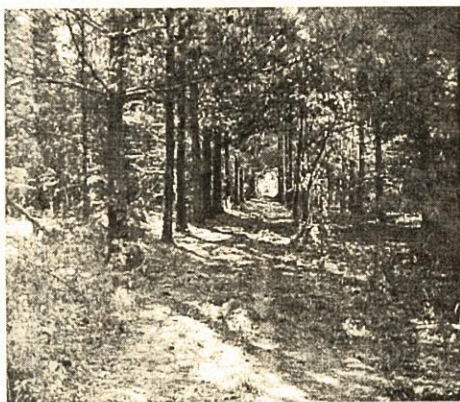
WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

10 Steps To A More Profitable Woodland

1. If you have ten acres or more of woods, consider placing it in the Classified Forest program to reduce property taxes.

2. Do Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) work after a harvest or in a young woods as needed. Concentrate the growth of the woods on the best trees.



3. Consider Tree Planting on Conservation Reserve Program acres, or on any idle land that is not being used.

4. Check with the District Forester to see if cost share funds are available to help pay for TSI or tree planting expenses.

5. Seek the advice of a professional forester before deciding to harvest any timber. Strongly consider a second opinion.

6. Don't harvest trees until they reach financial maturity or unless they are damaged, overcrowded, or suppressed. For most species, financial maturity occurs around 22 to 24 inches in diameter at eye level.

7. When you sell timber get competitive bids. This is the key to getting the top price for your trees. Different buyers have different markets.

8. When you harvest trees, don't high grade your woods. Be sure to also take the lower value trees that are mature. Proper tree selection is critical.

9. Before harvesting trees make sure you have a timber sale contract that adequately protects you and your lands.

10. Be sure to report the sale of standing timber as a capital gain to lower you taxes and avoid paying self-employment tax. Be sure to reduce the net taxable gain by subtracting the cost basis of the trees from the selling price.

*Information provided by Harold Bruner, Consulting Forester
(219)626-3396*

State Nurseries Buy Tree Seeds From The Public

To insure tree seed health and promote trees that grow well throughout the state's climate, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources forestry nurseries will operate a remote seed-purchase program. In the past, most seed have been collected at the nurseries or bought from commercial vendors. State foresters and nursery specialists believe that diversifying the seed source will result in better trees that are well adapted throughout the state.

Seeds bought as part of the program will be grown at state tree nurseries in Vallonia and Medearville. The two nurseries produce almost 6 million seedlings each year.

Last year, more than 600,000 seeds were collected at two purchase stations. This year a third station will be established at the Northeast Purdue Agricultural Center (NEPAC) in Columbia City. Collectors will be paid for the amount of viable seed brought to a purchase station. An introductory meeting will be held at each location to discuss program details, explain the payment system and provide help with tree identification. Interested sellers should contact Phil O'Connor at (812) 358-3621.



State's Tree Sale

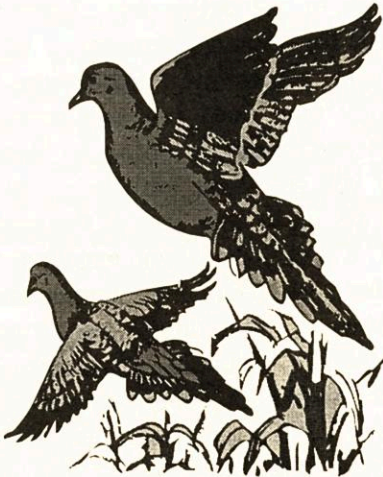
The Indiana DNR, Division of Forestry's tree sale is underway for 2000-2001. The minimum order is 100 hundred trees per species. Orders received by October 15th are processed through a random drawing. Orders received after October 15th are filled on a first-come/first-served basis. Contact our office to request an order form.



FIELD NOTES

What are the Benefits of Warm Season Grasses?

Warm season grasses or native grasses have really grown in popularity over the last few years. Many people have begun to discover the benefits that these types of plants can bring to a property. Probably the most common reason for planting native grasses is for wildlife habitat improvement.



The wildlife benefits of a native warm-season grassland for pheasants and quail are impressive. Along with the obvious benefits of nesting, roosting, and loafing cover, the warm-season grasses provide a degree of winter cover when little or no snow cover exists. Few if any other grasses have such a wide range of benefits, but the benefits do not stop there. From the landowner's viewpoint, the nearly maintenance and disease free characteristics of the native grasses are highly desirable by themselves, but when you add the drought resistance and aesthetic qualities that they possess, it's quite clear that a native warm-season grassland is hard to beat.

Some example species of the native warm season grasses are: Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indiangrass, Side-oats grama, and Switchgrass.

Establishing Warm Season Grasses

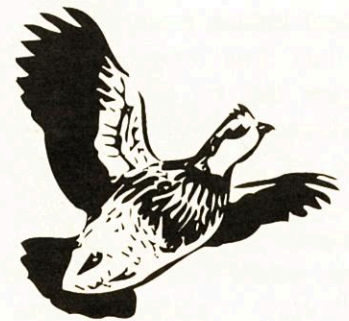
When trying to establish warm season grasses (WSG) the two most important factors for successful stand establishment are proper pre-planting site preparation and proper seed placement.

If the field is going to be cropped prior to establishing WSG, it is best to plant the field to soybeans using weed control products that do not provide carry-over. Previously cropped soybean fields provide a good seed bed for drilling WSG, providing the stubble has been sufficiently removed. Cornfields may also provide a good seedbed as long as the stubble is mown to as short as possible. *Caution should be used when converting a previously cropped field to WSG, if the herbicides used on the crop have a residual carry-over. Certain chemicals can severely harm or kill newly established WSG.*

If the field has an established cover of tall fescue or other cool season grasses, these grasses must be eliminated prior to or at the time of planting. In all methods of establishment, it is important that any excessive top growth of grasses and weeds first be removed by burning, mowing/baling, or heavy grazing.

This will allow the herbicide to be more effective and permit improved seed placement. Allow the existing vegetation to re-grow approximately 6-12 inches, then apply the herbicides. *Always consult and follow herbicide label directions and precautions.*

The method used for sowing WSG will depend on (1) the initial site preparation and (2) the availability of equipment in your locality. The optimum time for planting WSG is from April through June, after soil temperature reaches a minimum of 55 degrees F. *Regardless of the method used, seed should not be planted deeper than 1/4 inch. This is the most common mistake made when planting WSG. It is better to have the seed somewhat exposed on the surface than to have it planted too deep.*



This is just a basic overview of the details that are involved when planting WSG. For more specifics please contact our office, so that we can provide you with the best chance for success. If you need planting equipment, the St. Joseph County SWCD, in conjunction with the Elkhart County SWCD, and Pheasants Forever, owns a no till grass drill that we are happy to loan out. Please call for details.



FIELD NOTES

Nutrient Management and Waste Utilization

Nutrient Management is a process which focuses on the wise use of plant nutrient resources. Creating a nutrient plan can be beneficial both financially and environmentally.

Benefits

- The maintenance of optimum conditions for crop growth.
- The optimum use of plant nutrient resources.
- The enhancement of farm profitability.
- The protection of local and regional waters.

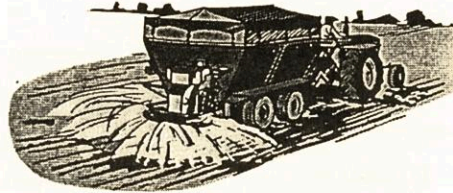
The key principle which underlies nutrient management planning is simply balancing soil nutrient inputs with crop requirements.



Is Nutrient Management for you?

If you use commercial fertilizers, manure, or sewage sludge (biosolids) on your crops/pasture then you could benefit from a Nutrient Management Plan.

A nutrient management plan can also help serve as some environmental protection for your operation. For example, if a "fish kill" occurs in the nearest body of



water to your operation, there is a good chance that you may be the first place that officials look at as a source of contamination. If you have a nutrient management plan that you are following, then the focus of concern is likely to be shifted elsewhere.

What does a plan involve?

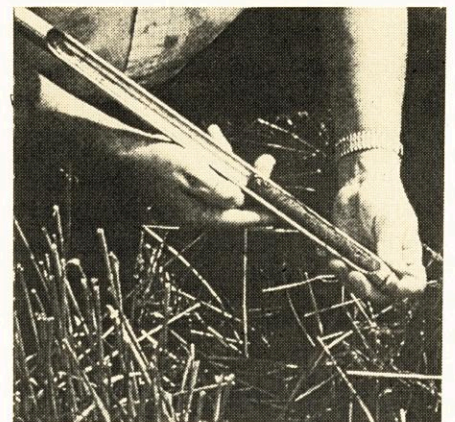
The first stage is the assessment of the existing on-farm nutrient resources. This involves obtaining field histories, soil sampling/testing, manure sampling/analysis, nutrient contributions made by leguminous crops, and calculating recommendations. Your nutrient management consultant would also look at your pest management practices, determining preferred application techniques/timing, and realistic yield goals.

Who can help with creating a nutrient management plan?

The Purdue Cooperative Extension Service has many resources available to help a producer with this process (219)235-9604. The St. Joseph Soil and Water Conservation Partnership is always available for assistance with soil and water quality issues (219)291-2300. There are several private consultants in the area who provide nutrient management plans for producers. Our website also contains some links to some informative sites on the internet. Look under Related Links.

St. Joseph Soil Survey Update

In conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation District, St. Joseph County is currently in the process of updating the Soil Survey of St. Joseph County. Updating the Soil Survey requires numerous amounts of field data that must be collected by Soil Scientists. For the next several months these Soil Scientists will be in the county, probing the soils to collect this data. We would ask for your cooperation in letting them gather the information that they may need on your property. Please remember not to be alarmed if you see these Soil Scientists out working in your area of the county. The Soil Survey is an excellent tool that is used by homeowners, farmers, developers, conservation planners, schools, engineers, and contractors. Your cooperation on this project is greatly appreciated. Once the Soil Survey has been issued, copies will be obtainable through the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation Partnership Office. For questions or information please contact the Soil and Water Conservation District at (219) 291-2300 ext. 3.





URBAN MEANDERINGS

Ground Covers for Steep Slopes

Steep slopes present both challenging and wonderful opportunities for landscaping your property. Steep banks are difficult and dangerous to mow and considerable time can be spent in weed eating these areas. Soil erosion from these steep banks can become a serious problem if vegetation cannot be established. South facing slopes tend to warm up quicker and dry out faster than north facing slopes which receive less direct sunlight and will generally be cooler than southern facing slopes. East facing slopes will receive less direct sunlight and generally the plants on these slopes have less stress from lack of rainfall than west facing slopes.

You need to take an inventory of your site to help you in determining what options and choices are available to you. What direction does your steep slope face? Is the site sunny or partially shaded by trees? Is the soil sandy, loamy or more dominated by clay particles? What type of a lawn setting do you prefer (formal (manicured look) or a more natural look)? Don't be afraid to seek the help of professionals in a nursery or landscaping retail store in helping you make planting choices.

Is the steep slope starting at the top of a hill or is there a gentle slope of the lawn towards the steep slope prior to arriving at the slope? The soil erosion on the steep slope will be much greater if storm run off from surface areas above the slope travels over the steep non-vegetated

The raindrops themselves striking the soil on the steep slope will erode it, but surface water from above will greatly accelerate the soil loss. A row of temporary sandbags and 4" flexible black tile can be used to divert and safely convey the stormwater runoff away from the newly planted ground cover



If you prefer a well-maintained and neat looking lawn, then planting low growing groundcover would be a good option. There are numerous plants that are available that will blanket the soil and reduce the impact of the rain drops. Many of these plants remain neat looking and require very little or no maintenance. Low growing species of juniper (prostrate juniper) will do well on sunny and dry locations. Junipers spread rapidly and vary in texture and color from green to blues. In shady spots, the non-native pachysandra often does well. This plant will remain green throughout the winter and spreads easily. Wintercreeper is another non-native plant that will grow in both sun and partial shady conditions. Periwinkle is another possibility that does well in partial shady conditions. There are several other options that local nursery personnel can inform you of.

When planting groundcover on slopes, try to avoid planting into bare soil. When this is not possible, mulching around the plants with organic mulch will help keep the newly transplanted plants from drying out. If you are lucky enough to have existing sod present, it is preferable to kill the sod and plant the groundcover into the killed sod mulch. This killed mulched sod will help reduce soil erosion and aid in helping the groundcover become established. In conventional plantings, mulching around the newly planted groundcover helps the area look neat, conserves soil moisture available to the young plants and reduces soil erosion on the steep slope. Providing extra water during dry periods will also help the young plants becoming established.

If you prefer a more natural look, planting wildflowers and native grass prairie plants on that steep incline in your lawn that is causing you maintenance problems is an option. Once established these natural plants can provide season long food, color and shelter for birds and butterflies. Periodic mowing may be needed to control growth, and keep woody shrubs and trees from becoming established. Check on local ordinances dealing with unmowed areas prior to planting. Some people may prefer to have a more formal front yard and a backyard with natural conservation plantings. For more information, please contact the St. Joseph County Conservation Offices or the Purdue Cooperative Extension Office.



**St. Joseph County Soil and Water
Conservation District
5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4
South Bend, IN 46614**

St. Joseph County Soil And Water

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John Kulwicki, Member

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Randy Matthys
Eugene Myers
Beverly Riddle
Richard Schmidt

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.**

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Al Gostola
Harold Mutti

Office Staff:

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