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United States
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Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563

www.stjosephswcd.org

(574) 936-2024 Ext. 4

info@stjosephswcd.org

2021 Annual Report

As early as 1935 USDA Soil Conservation Service (now known as NRCS) began to search for ways to extend conservation assistance to more farmers. They believed the solution was to establish democratically organized soil conservation districts to lead the conservation planning effort at the local level. To create a framework for cooperation, USDA drafted the Standard State Soil Conservation Districts Law, which President Roosevelt sent to the governors of all the states in 1937. The first soil conservation district was organized in the Brown Creek watershed of North Carolina on August 4, 1937. Today, there over three thousand conservation districts across the country. On Thursday, April 9, 1959 the St Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District was organized as a governmental subdivision of the state of Indiana by John R Walsh, Secretary of State of the State of Indiana.

SWCDs, or Districts, are local units of government that manage and direct natural resource management programs at the local level. We work closely with other forms of local, regional, and state government, private nonprofits, and educational institutions to provide a high level of conservation service to private landowners. We

work to promote the wise use, development, and conservation of our state's soil, water, and related resources in ways that are relevant to our unique county.

The St Joseph County SWCD is located within the USDA service center in Plymouth. This location allows us to work hand in hand with Farm Service Agency (FSA) and NRCS both of which are our closest federal partners. We are also part of the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP). The ICP is comprised of eight Indiana agencies and organizations who share a common goal of promoting conservation.

The St. Joseph County SWCD fills a unique and crucial role in conservation and stewardship: that of providing soil and water conservation expertise and services to private landowners. For the last 62 years you have heard us talk about topics like green manure, conservation tillage, and most recently soil health. In our current time where weather extremes are becoming the norm and production challenges are plentiful, we continue to work with individuals to address resource concerns like soil erosion and compaction that can affect soil health and water quality. Over the years as research has progressed, we've learned that many of the



Cover Crop



No-Till



Pollinator Habitat

practices that we promote have other positive impacts on our environment like sequestering carbon and other greenhouse gases, mitigating floodwater, and reclaiming excess nutrients that could otherwise contribute to algal blooms in surface waters or create other water quality problems. Every practice that goes into place, large or small, is beneficial to our environment! We will continue to strive to provide up to date information, valuable education, and quality technical assistance.

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Melissa Lehman CCA, NRCS TSP

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Clean Water Indiana Grant Conservation Cropping Systems to Improve Soil Health

This past year through our Clean Water Indiana grant we were successful in providing technical and financial assistance to implement 289.1 acres of cover crops and 1.8 acres of pollinator habitat in St. Joseph County. These practices are helping improve soil, water, and air quality as well as providing food and habitat for our important pollinator communities and wildlife. Our grant provides cost share for cover crops, no-till, filter strips, and pollinator habitat. If you are interested in trying any of these practices or would like more information on them, please contact our office.



**St Joseph County
2019-2021 Totals**
1,510.3 Acres of Cover Crops
193 Acres of No-Till
4.4 Acres of Pollinator Habitat

**Marshall County
2019-2021 Totals**
2,132.63 Acres of Cover Crops
283.3 Acres of No-Till
0.6 Acres of Pollinator Habitat



YEAR 3 OF 3	CWI Funds	District Funds	District In-Kind	Partner Funds	Partner In-Kind
Conservation Cropping Systems	\$65,000.00	\$12,694.57	\$4,920.00	\$33,229.96	\$4,880.00

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Indiana has been in the process of expanding our staff in the state to improve our on the ground assistance to landowners. In the beginning part of 2022, we will be bringing on 2 new biologist positions. One of our new positions will be a Farm Bill Biologist that will be stationed in the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Plymouth field office and will help with the high conservation workload present in the north central and north west part of the state. The second new biologist will be a Coordinating Wildlife Biologist position, which will be centrally located in the state and focus on improving our pollinator habitat outreach and education efforts. Both new positions will be funded through an expansion of our existing partnership with the NRCS and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with additional support provided by a new partnership with the Indiana Soybean Alliance and the Indiana Corn Marketing Council. In 2021, we added a Precision Agriculture and Conservation Specialist (PACS). This position is a partnership between Ceres Solutions, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and Land O'Lakes. Our PACS utilizes precision agriculture data and analyses generated by the Truterra Sustainability Tool to identify opportunities for conservation practice implementation to increase farm sustainability. All these positions are in addition to our 4 existing Farm Bill Biologists, which work closely with NRCS and SWCD field staff to promote wildlife habitat throughout the state, with a primary focus on native wildflower and grass plantings.

The native wildflower and grass plantings we focus on are beneficial to a whole host of wildlife species including quail, pheasants, deer, turkey, and songbirds, as well as beneficial insects. Not only do these plantings support wildlife, but they also do a fantastic job of reducing erosion and filtering runoff, leading to more sustainable agriculture and cleaner water. In many situations, farmers can install wildlife friendly practices on unproductive areas of the farm, which can lead to higher average yields and reduced input cost across their operations, while reducing erosion and improving water quality.

In addition to providing individualized assistance to landowners, our staff also help our local Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever chapters deliver our organization's mission to "conserve pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public access, education, and conservation advocacy." Our dedicated chapter volunteers have made a lasting impact on wildlife across the state through planting habitat and helping to introduce youth to the outdoors.

If you are interested in talking with one of our Farm Bill Biologists or our Precision Agriculture and Conservation Specialist about potential improvements on your property, or if you have an interest in joining like minded conservationists through a local Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever chapter, please do not hesitate to reach out. Ryan Owen, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Senior Farm Bill Biologist in Indiana, 260-226-5884, rowen@pheasantsforever.org.

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Jacob Farrer
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St Joseph County SWCD Hosts 61st Annual Meeting

On Wednesday February 24, 2021, the St Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) held their 61st Annual Meeting virtually through a zoom meeting.

Our supervisor election was held through mail in ballots. Candidate Chris Matthys was elected to the board for his first 3-year term. Sam James was appointed to serve his first 3-year term by the board prior to the annual meeting. John Dooms, Chairman, conducted the oath of office for the two newly elected supervisors. We want to thank Matthys and James for their willingness to serve our district.

We want to thank all of our supervisors and associate supervisors for their dedication and service to the St Joseph County SWCD.

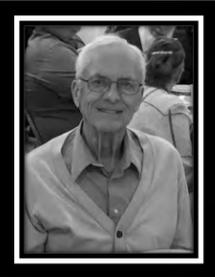


Jeremy Cooper,
10 years



Dave Craft,
20 years

Tenure supervisors and associate supervisors.



Jim LaFree,
30 years



Richard Schmidt,
35 years



Chuck Lehman,
40 years

Save The Date: 62nd Annual Meeting February 11, 2022

Where: St. Hedwig Memorial Center, 331 S Scott St., South Bend, IN 46601

Time: Doors open at 5:45 pm, call to order is at 6:30 pm.

Cost: Tickets are \$15 each. Includes Dinner

Key Note Speaker: Brian Capouch, History of the Grand Kankakee Marsh. Brian grew up on a big commercial "muck farm" in Jasper County. He has a Bachelor's degree in Spanish from Indiana University, and a Master's in Agricultural Engineering Technology from Purdue. After graduation, he ran

a crop consulting business for a few years, and then became involved in education. After working briefly as a technology facilitator at West Central High School in Pulaski County, he began a 34-year career teaching Computer Science at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, retiring in 2016 as chair of his department. Since his retirement, most of his time has been spent working to restore Sunny Crest, an architect-designed farm estate in Benton County established in 1916. He also engages in historical research, and has done many presentations to a variety of audiences on topics of local historical interest. His primary interest is the Settlement Period in Northwestern Indiana, approximately 1830-1880. He is currently living at Sunny Crest, where he keeps a flock of Rhode Island Red chickens and has a huge vegetable garden.



We Need You

You may think that soil and water conservation affects only farmers but, Indiana's soil and water quality affects the water you drink and the food you eat. If you are concerned about these issues, and want to have a voice in decisions affecting Indiana's soil and water quality and other related natural resource issues, think about becoming involved with the St Joseph County SWCD.

Volunteer We welcome your involvement. Work with us to promote legislative awareness programs for local, state and federal officials. Help us promote urban and agricultural best management practices (BMPs), conservation programs, field days, fundraising, youth and adult education events, surveying and so much more.

Serve as a Supervisor Serve as an elected or appointed representative of your SWCD by serving on our board of supervisors. Identify local soil and water conservation issues and priorities and develop SWCD programs that provide solutions to these local conservation issues. What are the responsibilities of a district supervisor? To be an effective district supervisor requires more than just attending a meeting. Supervisors are encouraged to serve on various committees within the district and /or state and have a key role in establishing natural resource policy. Part of their role is to educate the public about soil and water conservation. They also help in the development of tours, newsletters, displays and much more. The ways in which district supervisors can contribute are endless.

Serve as an Associate Supervisor Although associate supervisors are a non-voting position, we encourage their attendance at monthly board meetings and provide input to the SWCD board on soil and water conservation issues and programs. Associate Supervisors are also encouraged to serve on district committees and help with tours, education and workshops.

Benefits of Serving Being a part of the St Joseph County SWCD has many benefits, including:

- ◆ Serving for a cause in which you personally believe
- ◆ A chance to use your skills and experiences and explore your own strengths
- ◆ Give back to your community
- ◆ Help save soil and water resources for generations to come

The SWCD works closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and other Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) agencies. There is a popular misconception that local SWCD and the USDA NRCS are one and the same. This is untrue. While the two often work together within the same office, the

district administers its own programs and assists with programs offered by the other agency partners. NRCS provides additional technical assistance and guidance as well as their own programs to complete BMP's.

Take a look around you. The conservation practice in the field near you may belong to someone involved with the SWCD already! Supervisors, Associate Supervisors and other volunteers of the SWCD practice what they preach and usually have farms and/or land to prove it with conservation practices installed.

For more information about becoming a St Joseph County SWCD supervisor, associate supervisor or volunteer, contact our office at (574) 936-2024 Ext. 4 or email us at info@stjosephswcd.org. More information about our district is available on our website, including our 2018-2022 business plan, programs, upcoming events, resources, and so much more. Board meetings and several of our programs are open to the public and we encourage you to join us at any time.



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St. Joseph & Marshall County SWCD's Host 5th Annual Producer's Workshop

As with so many things this last year, we had to alter how we offered our annual Producer's Meeting. With the generous support both financially and logistically from Izaak Walton League we were able to provide an incredible virtual presentation featuring Ray Archuleta of Understand Ag, LLC. Ray is a Certified Professional Soil Scientist and worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 30 years before retiring and founding Understanding Ag, LLC and the Soil Health Academy. On the afternoon of February 23rd we gathered virtually to hear Ray talk to us about soil health, biomimicry, and how big change takes a change in mindset, not just actions. We were also pleased that local soil health farmer Nathaniel Ness was willing to speak to our group about some of his successes and struggles right here in St. Joseph County. While doing a virtual program was a new experience for us here at the SWCD we feel like it went well and provided excellent information to our audience. Another benefit is that we have it recorded for those who weren't able to attend the event live or who want to watch again or share the information with someone else. You can find the recording at

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHzYYb_FS14&t=6603s
or at our website at www.stjosephswcd.org.

Coffee County TN: % change in the Soil
Fall 2014 to Spring 2017

- 279 % Change in CO₂ Respiration
- 39 % Change in WEOC (food) more consumption
- 50 % Change in SHC: Soil Health Score

NT without Covers NT with Covers

Three basic concepts.....

1. The Soil is Alive!
2. Understand Relationship (connectedness)- Why we have "Death By Tools"!
3. Understand the goal: "Biomimicry"- emulate Nature's Principles and Patterns.

Plant and Soil are One
Ray Archuleta

Manage Disturbance or Stress:

FIST

- FREQUENCY: EVERY YEAR VERSUS ONCE EVERY 4 YEARS
- INTENSITY: VERTICAL TILL OR PLOW
- SCALE: ONE FIELD VERSUS THE WHOLE FARM
- TIMING: WHEN YOU DO DISTURBANCE

Dr. Stephan Gleissman

Direct Marketers Gain Knowledge to Increase Sales of Products

Rachel Rawls, Purdue Extension Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator

According to the USDA 2015 Local Food Marketing survey, farmers produced and sold \$8.7 billion (15% of which is from Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana farms) of edible food products directly to consumers, retailers, and institutions via a variety of marketing opportunities. Of those sales, direct marketing to consumers accounted for 35 %, 27% to retailers and 39% to institutions or other businesses. In 2019 and 2020, the COVID 19 pandemic vastly limited marketing opportunities for direct marketers. Local food systems were completely disrupted and farmers were looking to increase sales directly to end consumers. Farmers were looking to increase their knowledge and skills relating to direct marketing success and to possibly diversify their markets as local food systems began recovery. The highly diversified production found among direct market farms correlates with a need for focused information on a variety of topics. Frequently, these interests and the corresponding need for information is too diverse to be addressed adequately by any single educator in any one county. Consequently, a collaborative effort is required to provide programming for this diverse client group.

Purdue Extension Educators and Specialists organized six – 2 hour virtual programs on the following topics: Basics of Direct Farm Marketing and Market Planning, Farmers Markets and Roadside Stands, U-Pick and Agritourism, Consumer Supported Agriculture, Wholesale Markets (Food Hubs and Farm to School), and Value added Processing. This program was advertised statewide. Topics were taught by specialists, educators and local farmers successful implementing some of the strategies discussed in each season. Program objectives were to increase farm sales by increasing knowledge about different markets, marketing techniques and increase to peer to peer networking. Over 100 participants registered for each of the sessions, however; live viewing numbers averaged 10-25 individuals / night. Sessions were recorded and sent about approximately a week after the live event. Evaluation surveys (Qualtrics) were sent after the sessions via email to each registered participant. Post event views of recordings still need to be calculated.

Team: Steven Engleking, Rachel Rawls, James Wolff, Lais McCartney, Amanda Mosiman, Elysia Rodgers, Mathias Ingle, Maria Marshall, Beth Vansickle, Renee Wiatt, John Hawley

SWCD Board of Supervisors

<p>John Dooms Chairman 40 Years of Service</p>	<p>Dave Vandewalle Vice - Chairman 12 Years of Service</p>	<p>Mike Burkholder Supervisor 9 Years of Service</p>	<p>Sam James Supervisor 1 Year of Service</p>	<p>Chris Matthys Supervisor 1 Year of Service</p>	<p>ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dave Craft *21 years* Chuck Lehman *41 years* Randy Matthys *34 years* Richard Schmidt *36 years* Dru Wrasse *14 years* Dave Straughn *4 years* <p>HONORARY Board Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jerry Knepp Keith Lineback William Millar
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A big heartfelt thank you to all of our Supervisors & Associate Supervisors, as well as our partnership staff. Without all of you we would not be able to accomplish all that we have this year and in the years to come!

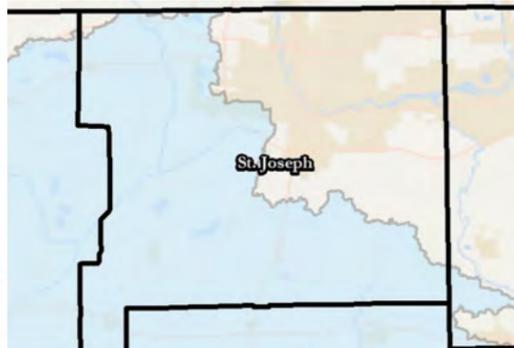
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) offers the Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) Program to private landowners. The PFW Program provides technical and financial assistance to help willing landowners restore and enhance wildlife habitat for priority species. With 97% of Indiana's land base in private ownership, developing partnership with private landowners is paramount to successfully conserving habitat for these species across the landscape.

The PFW program identifies focus areas across Indiana in a strategic plan every five years. Projects that are located outside of the designated focus areas are still considered and evaluated on a case by case basis. Close to one half of St. Joseph County falls within the Grand Kankakee/ Northwest Moraines Focus Area. Through strategic habitat conservation within this area, the program aims to benefit the following focal species; mallards, grasshopper sparrows and red-headed woodpeckers.

Focal Species

Mallard, Grasshopper Sparrow and Red-headed Woodpecker



USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program

- The PFW program provides free technical assistance
- The program strives for a 50/50 split of total project cost
- Landowner equipment, labor and time counts as match
- The PFW program does not require cropping history
- The landowner maintains control of the property
- Landowner agreements have a 10-year minimum

The U.S Fish and Wildlife Service - Indiana Private Lands Office has biologists stationed throughout Indiana. Jared O'Brien is the private lands biologist based out of the Kankakee Fish & Wildlife Area and covers eighteen counties in northwest Indiana, including St. Joseph. He is currently working with a private landowner in the southwest corner of the county on a wetland restoration and native prairie planting.



Jared O'Brien

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service,
Private Lands Biologist
Mobile: (812) 272-3164
Email: jared_obrien@fws.gov

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs)

Our Mission Statement

Build partnerships to promote native plants and wildlife through education and management of invasive species in St. Joseph and Marshall Counties.

Why should we form a CISMA?

Invasive plants threaten our economy, environment, and even human health. Natural resource managers and land owners across the country spend huge amounts of resources trying to manage invasive plants that are encroaching into natural areas, agricultural lands, backyards, and other properties.

State, federal, and private natural resource managers have worked together to reduce populations of invasive plants for years, but often the scale of the cooperative effort is confined by political or land ownership boundaries. As anyone who has grappled with invasive plants can tell you, invasive plants know no boundaries. Even the diligent, intensive control efforts of land managers won't be successful in the long run, if invasive plants can find refuge on a neighboring property.

CISMAs are highly visible, building community awareness and participation. Cooperative efforts can bring the issue of invasive plants to the attention of state and federal legislators and demonstrate broad support from the community for preventing and controlling invasive species.

CISMAs can improve control efforts by training all partners in the use of best management practices. Training local landowners in control methods can reduce non-target damage and help them select the most appropriate methods for their situation.

What have we accomplished so far?

In 2021 the group has started to meet virtually and in person to establish a local CISMA. The group has created the mission statement and is currently working on a name for the group. The group held a Weed Wrangle® at the Marshall County Memorial Forest on April 17, 2021. At this event, participants were able to get hands on experience in invasive species removal.

More Information

If you are ready to join our group or would like more information, contact our office staff.



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Why Are Conservation

Listed below are the acres and/or number of conservation practices installed in St Joseph County during the 2021 fiscal year and why they are important for conservation.

<p>Crop Production 2,257.2 Acres of Cover Crops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce erosion from wind and water. ◆ Maintain or increase soil health and organic matter content. ◆ Reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excessive soil nutrients. ◆ Suppress excessive weed pressures and break pest cycles. ◆ Improve soil moisture use efficiency. ◆ Minimize soil compaction. ◆ Provide food and escape cover for wildlife. 	<p>1,419.5 Acres of No-Till</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Reduce sheet, rill and wind erosion. ◆ Maintain or increase soil health and organic matter content. ◆ Reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ◆ Reduce energy use. ◆ Increase plant available moisture. ◆ Provide food and escape cover for wildlife. 	<p>916.8 Acres Nutrient Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To budget, supply and conserve nutrients for plant production. ◆ To minimize agricultural non-point source pollution of surface and groundwater. ◆ To properly utilize manure or organic byproducts as a plant nutrient source. ◆ To maintain or improve the physical, chemical and biological condition of the soil. 	
		<p>811.2 Acres of Irrigation Water Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Improve irrigation water use efficiency. ◆ Minimize irrigation induced soil erosion. ◆ Reduce energy use. 	 
	<p>Wildlife Habitat 174.5 Acres Conservation Cover (pollinator/monarch habitat) and 19.5 Acres of Monitoring of Habitat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Native Grasses and Forbs. ◆ Reduce sheet, rill and wind erosion and sedimentation. ◆ Reduce ground and surface water quality degradation by nutrients and surface water quality degradation by sediment. ◆ Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. ◆ Improve soil health. ◆ Enhance wildlife, pollinator and beneficial organism habitat. 	<p>265.2 Acres Early Successional Habitat Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To provide habitat for species requiring early successional habitat for all or part of their life cycle. <p>18,060 Feet Firebreaks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Contain prescribed burns. ◆ Reduce the spread of wildfires.  	



Plymouth Location:
 10209 Iris Road
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Mishawaka Location:
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Practices Important?

Forestry

134.7 Acres of Tree and Shrub Establishment

- ◆ Provides forest products such as timber, pulpwood, etc.
- ◆ Provides wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Provides long term erosion control and improvement of water quality.
- ◆ Stores carbon in biomass.
- ◆ Reduce energy usage.
- ◆ Improving or restoring natural diversity.
- ◆ Enhancing aesthetics.

49.3 Acres Forest Stand Improvement

- ◆ Improve and sustain forest health and production.
- ◆ Reduce damage from pests and moisture stress.
- ◆ Initiate forest stand regeneration.
- ◆ Restore and maintain natural plant communities.
- ◆ Improve wildlife and pollinator habitat.

97.4 Acres Brush Management Invasive Species Control

- ◆ Restore or release desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment, improve water quality, or enhance hydrology.
- ◆ Maintain or enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Pervasive plant species are controlled to a desired level of treatment that will ultimately contribute to the maintenance of the natural area.
- ◆ Create the desired plant community consistent with the ecology of the site.

1 Forest Management Plan Written

- ◆ Develop a site-specific forestry plan which identifies resource concerns where forestry-related conservation activities or practices will be planned and applied.



Other

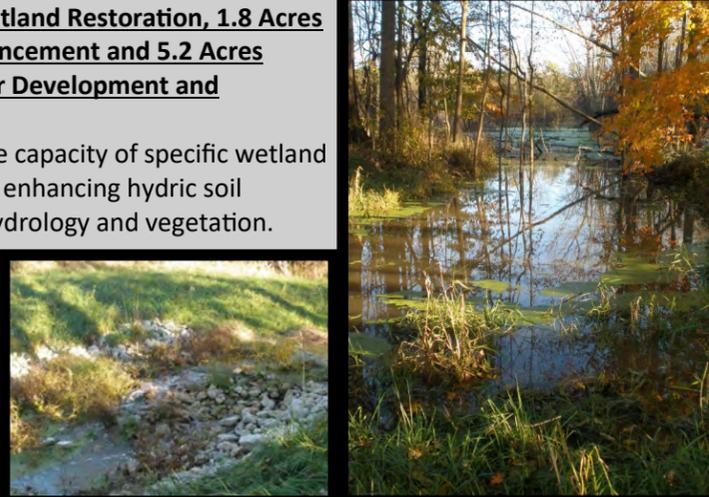
Seasonal High Tunnels (2,178 Square Feet)

- ◆ Improve plant health and vigor.
- ◆ Extend growing season.



67.2 Acres Wetland Restoration, 1.8 Acres Wetland Enhancement and 5.2 Acres Shallow Water Development and Management

- ◆ Increases the capacity of specific wetland functions by enhancing hydric soil functions, hydrology and vegetation.
- ◆ Enhances plant and animal habitats.



Livestock

125.2 Acres Forage and Biomass Planting

- ◆ Reduce soil erosion.
- ◆ Improve soil and water quality.
- ◆ Improve and maintain livestock nutrition and health.
- ◆ Provide or increase forage supply during periods of low forage production.
- ◆ Produce feedstock for biofuel or energy production .

73.4 Acres Prescribed Grazing

- ◆ Improve or maintain quantity or quality of forage for grazing and browsing animals health and productivity.
- ◆ Improve and maintain water quality, soil health, and watershed function.



4,900 Acres Applied

2,900 Acres Planned

Area farmers & landowners in St. Joseph County received \$622,780.35 through federal programs in 2021.



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Indiana DNR Urban Biologists

Designed primarily as “people habitats,” urban landscapes provide unique challenges and opportunities for wildlife conservation. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) created the Urban Wildlife Program to specialize in promoting sustainable, wildlife-friendly practices in Indiana’s most populated areas.

The urban wildlife biologists work with private businesses, local governments, and individual citizens to develop attractive landscapes that provide habitat for desired wildlife, reduce wildlife conflicts, improve water quality, and increase outdoor recreation opportunities. Initiatives on which the Urban Wildlife Program focuses include providing information for living with wildlife,

developing urban wildlife habitat, and educating individuals about conservation practices. Free services provided by the Urban Wildlife Program include cost share opportunities for habitat establishment on qualifying projects, technical assistance for wildlife-friendly planning and development, educational presentations and workshops, and guidance on maintaining positive human-wildlife interactions (excluding animal removal).

Currently, urban biologists assist in Allen, Elkhart, Hamilton, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, and St. Joseph counties. For more information about habitat assistance, visit wildlife.IN.gov/landowner-and-wildlife-habitat-assistance or find your local biologist at on www.IN.gov/wildlifebiologist.

Before

After



IASWCD Announces Northeast Regional Specialist to promote Urban Soil Health Program



The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) announces Jamie Perry as a Regional Urban Soil Health Specialist with the Urban Soil Health Program. This program promotes conservation agriculture on urban and small-scale farms.

Jamie Perry will cover the Northeast Area (following the NRCS’ designation of regional areas) and be based in the Fort Wayne NRCS Area Office. Jamie is a local grower based in Fort Wayne, whose background includes managing a greenhouse, mentoring Burmese refugee farmers, and teaching agriculture courses at Ivy Tech

Community College. His passion for soil is evident by his current attendance at Oregon State University’s Soil Science program. He looks forward to working with growers throughout Northeast Indiana.

The Urban Soil Health Program is a contribution agreement between USDA -NRCS and IASWCD, that includes additional support from 15 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) and Clean Water Indiana. The program’s mission is to improve soil health on Indiana’s urban and small-scale agricultural land. Our goals are to establish local working groups that can deliver technical assistance, training, education and outreach related to soil health management systems to urban landowners, land-users, and other

interested groups or individuals. Each Urban Soil Health Specialist will work with current partners as well as help facilitate new partnerships to form local working groups across the state to address the needs of small-scale growers.

We aim to reach new and underserved audiences such as backyard farmers and gardeners, church gardens, and small-scale agricultural production operations in or near towns, including vegetable produce, livestock (including bees), flowers, or fruit production. We can assist with questions about soil tests and sampling, cover crops and crop management, high tunnels, or even container gardening. In other words, if you’re not sure how you fit with our program, ask us anyway! Soil health is for everyone and we are excited to promote and improve urban and small farm soil health in Indiana.

You can reach Jamie directly at jamie-perry@iaswcd.org to welcome him to the program or find a local working group in your area.

See more about the Urban Soil Health Program and reach our staff through our website: <http://wordpress.iaswcd.org/for-districts/statewide-initiatives/urbansoilhealth/>



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St Joseph County January—December 2021 Financial Report

Balances in checking and savings accounts:

Name of Bank	Date of Statement	Statement Balance
PNC - Checking	12/31/21	\$9,646.70
PNC - Savings	12/31/21	\$131,541.23
Total:		\$141,187.93

Outstanding checks:

Ck# 11675	\$1,709.25
Ck# 11679	\$228.10

Total outstanding checks	\$1,937.35
Adjusted bank balance	\$139,250.58
Cash Change Fund	\$40.00
Total Cash Available	\$139,290.58

2021 Total Income = \$54,769.31
2021 Total Expenses = \$51,798.47
Net Income for 2021 = \$2,970.84
2021 Beginning Balance = \$136,279.74
2021 Ending Balance = \$139,250.58

Balance Brought Forward		\$ 136,279.74
R122	State Funds for Soil/Water Operations	\$ 10,000.00
R134	Federal and State Grants and Distributions - Oth-	\$ 32,299.03
R423	Other Charges for Services, Sales, and Fees	\$ 7,879.96
R902	Earnings on Investments and Deposits	\$ 18.05
R908	Donations, Gifts, and Bequests	\$ 2,055.35
R913	Other Receipts	\$ 16.92
R914	Grants and Distributions from Non-Governmental	\$ 2,500.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$ 191,049.05
D101	Salaries and Wages	\$ 665.00
D201	Office Supplies	\$ 1,087.78
D202	Operating Supplies	\$ 5,097.08
D302	Communication and Transportation	\$ 3,543.29
D303	Printing and Advertising	\$ 5,476.27
D304	Insurance	\$ 1,609.42
D312	Other Services and Charges	\$ 3,904.51
D703	Distributions to Other Governmental Entities	\$ 21,324.24
D707	Other Disbursements	\$ 9,090.88
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		\$ 51,798.47
BALANCE AT DECEMBER 31, 2021		\$ 139,250.58

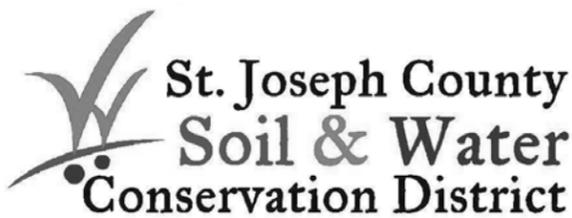


If you have questions about our financial report, contact the SWCD office (574) 936-2024 Ext. 4 or info@stjosephswcd.org.

SWCD/NRCS Partnership Staff

 <p>Sarah Longenecker, SWCD County Conservationist 8 Years of Service</p>	 <p>Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD Administrative Assistant 7 Years of Service</p>	 <p>Ally Pudlo, SWCD Environmental Education Coordinator 1 year of Service</p>	 <p>Debbie Knepp, USDA NRCS District Conservationist 38 Years of Service</p>
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St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership



Helping St. Joseph County residents improve their natural resources through conservation and education.



Mission: Helping People help the Land

Vision: Productive Lands Healthy Environment



To facilitate the protection and enhancement of Indiana's land and water.

<p>PURDUE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE (USDA)</p> <p>Office Manager/ Administrative Assistant - ANR: Cara Alderfer Administrative Assistant - 4-H Youth Development: Julyanne Freeland Interim County Extension Director: Julie Jones NEP Community Wellness Coordinator: Rebecca Lies EFNEP Advisor: Jennifer Noie NEP North Region Administrative Assistant: Michele Poitras NEP Advisor: Lindsay Witwer</p>		<p>FARM SERVICE AGENCY (USDA)</p> <p>Gideon Nobbe - County Executive Director</p> <p>Program Technician's: Devan Harrell Katie Leitch Aldona Martin Tara Wolfe</p>
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Kids Corner

DIY Pinecone Bird Feeder

Ingredients:

- Pinecone (make sure it is cleaned off and doesn't have any insects)
- Lard or Peanut Butter
- Butter Knife (with adult supervision)
- Birdseed
- Scissors
- String or Yarn



Steps:

1. Tie a piece of string or yarn around the top of the pinecone.
2. Cover the pinecone in lard or peanut butter. You can use a knife, with adult supervision, or you can use your hands.
3. Once the pinecone is completely coated, roll the pinecone in the birdseed until it is completely covered.
4. Go outside with your pinecone and find a nice spot in your yard to hang it. A nice spot would be where you have seen birds in your yard before. Make sure it is high enough off the ground that animals can't jump up and reach it.
5. Once you find a nice spot, hang your pinecone.
6. Enjoy!

Soil and Water Word Search

N W N N Y G W L H G Y T L F W
 A I U O X R R E R B B F K R L
 T L U I I J C E T G S P Q A X
 I D X T Y T S I E L A D T H E
 V L U A H O U R M N A N S T I
 E I M V U E L L R I E N X D R
 Z F A R M I N G L M M M D S I
 Y E C E O Q P H N O J O R S A
 H E Z S R X X O A F P B I Q R
 S L E N I U R B A N S N D B P
 E V G O T I V Q Y K X B J X V
 V T Z C V K R Q R F W K V X I
 Q X T N S R O T A N I L L O P
 K N E S V D E W B O K H D T N
 E R U T L U C I R G A H X Z O

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| Agriculture | Biomimicry | Conservation |
| Environmental | Farming | Green |
| Native | Pollinators | Pollution |
| Prairie | Resources | Soil |
| Urban | Wetlands | Wildlife |

Discover BMPs

Match the best management practice its photo:

Cover Crops

1.



No Till

2.



Grassed Waterway

3.



Pollinator Habitat

4.



Filter Strips

5.



Answers: Cover Crops = 3, No Till = 4, Grassed Waterway = 2, Pollinator Habitat = 5, Filter Strips = 1

WINTER SCAVENGER HUNT

Put on your jacket, hat, and gloves and explore nature in the snow!

Take this list and a pen and look for these items on your next winter walk.

- ◇ Pinecone
- ◇ Animal Tracks
- ◇ Ice or a Frozen Body of Water
- ◇ Cardinal
- ◇ A Single Snowflake
- ◇ Icicles
- ◇ Squirrel
- ◇ A Tree with a Hole in it
- ◇ Brown Leaf
- ◇ Winter Berries
- ◇ Evergreen Tree
- ◇ Waterfowl



Annie's Project: Farming in Indiana's Cities and Urban Fringe

Rachel Rawls, Purdue Extension Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator

In a 2012 survey 86% of the vegetable growers of the Indiana farmers interviewed reported revenues of less than \$250,000 (Torres and Marshall 2016). Accordingly, by USDA farm size categories, 86% of the Indiana vegetable growers that responded to the survey owned small and medium-sized farms. In addition, the 2020 Marion County (Indianapolis) Urban Agriculture Advisory Committee members identified the need for programming to assist with skills in financial management for urban growers. Increasingly, new and beginning urban growers participating in educational programming are female. With urban farming vegetable and specialty crop businesses increasing in urban centers, women are in need of skills to manage the financial risk and be more effective decision makers. Developing an Annie's Project course for urban women growers to learn how to manage risk and a dedicated marketing series will increase their success in developing a financially stable business. People want to participate in programs such as Annie's Project and see the value it provides. As one participant stated in the post-survey, "I signed up for Annie's Project to network but also to understand the risks that farmers take on."

A 6-week course was delivered virtually statewide to 28 participants. 26 participants were female, and 2 participants were male. Program delivery focused on 5 key risk factors: financial risk, human resource risk, legal risk, production risk, and marketing risk. Focus areas centered around the main risks identified by the National

Annie's Project Organization, but topics were centered around urban agriculture issues. For example, zoning and local ordinances vary between rural and urban areas. Succession planning and land leasing look differently in an urban setting on a city lot versus a family farm passed down from generations. Participants were also able to hear from successful women entrepreneurs who had a diversified portfolio in urban agriculture during the Women's panel in the final session. Code Red was provided as supplemental curriculum to support participants outside of the classroom and as a record-keeping system after the program.

28 participants completed the 6-week course, Annie's Project: Farming in Indiana's Cities and Urban Fringe. In the post survey, one participant noted that as a result of this program, they were designing a research project where they would track expenses that were being kept low due to utilizing repurposed materials. One participant noted that she "made her husband sign up for the Beginning Farmer program so that they could speak the same language."

The Marketing Risk session was the highest valued session according to the post-survey, and participants stated that they increased their online presence as a result.

This program, which intentionally included topics specifically for urban ag women, was a trial run for a larger statewide effort for the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center. In early 2022, a larger statewide Annie's Project: Farming in Indiana's Cities and Urban Fringe will be available to 150 participants.

St Joseph County SWCD Environmental Education Coordinator

As we transitioned from 2020 to 2021, the coronavirus continued to affect the residents of Indiana and the SWCD. Former district environmental education coordinator, Sam Buchanan continued to offer virtual programming and materials for public and private schools in St. Joseph County until she left the district. Our new district environmental education coordinator (EEC), Ally Pudlo, started where Sam Buchanan left off in July 2021. The EEC started networking to get Soil and Water Conservation District programs back into county schools. Teachers from both public and private schools requested programs from the SWCD. Topics included an introduction to watersheds and pollution, canoe trips down the St. Joseph River with two area high schools, native Indiana wildlife for 4th graders from four area schools, food webs, and soil science.



In addition, she participated in a ton of community programs, including Celebrate the St. Joe, Monarchs and Milkweed: A Migration Celebration, Treats On The Trail, and the Snite Museum of Art's Fall Family Night. The EEC lead a Soil class for the Indiana Master Naturalist class of 2021 at Rum Village Nature Center. She has also led multiple public programs at Potato Creek State Park, including an owl prowl where two native species were heard in the woods.

The EEC continued to further her education in order to provide more accurate information and resources for residents. She completed the Hoosier Riverwatch Basic Training and Project Learning Tree Training. She is currently enrolled in the Indiana Watershed

Leadership Academy and hopes to enroll in a class to become a Project Learning Tree workshop facilitator.

In 2022, she hopes to do more programs for students at St. Joseph County schools, create more public programs, and bring more educational programs and opportunities to St. Joseph County. The EEC will also be offering a brand new pollinator education kit to use for school programs and to loan out to youth groups and clubs.



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