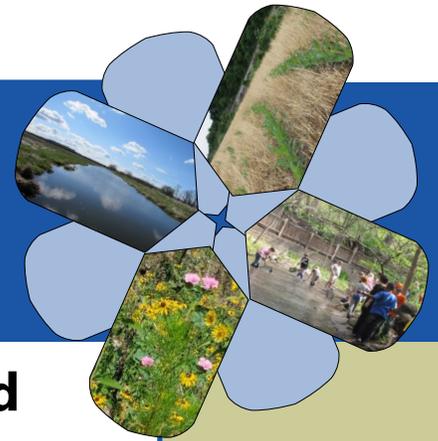


Conservation Kaleidoscope



Volume 27, Issue 6

November/December 2025

Supporting Pollinators Year-Round



Fall has settled in and winter is just around the corner. As we look around, we see plants dying back, birds and pollinators migrating, leaves falling from the trees. While our gardens may look like they are going dormant for the winter, the truth is there are many birds and other wildlife that depend on our gardens for survival.

Did you know that the majority of native pollinators do not migrate, but stay home? For example, most native bees overwinter in the ground. Fun fact: many of the ground nesters are some of our earliest pollinators, pollinating fruit trees, native plants, and spring ephemerals.

By now you are aware that native plants in our gardens is important to all of these little creatures. In a natural setting, they have places to hibernate, seeds to eat. In our landscapes, however, we often clean up debris. Creating natural habitat for wildlife, even if just small areas of your yard, can make a significant impact on their wellbeing.

Leave the Leaves - Leaves not only insulate the soil, but they also provide shelter for many insects and other things. Wood mulch is beneficial, but many of our native insects prefer leaf litter, so choose beds where you can leave the leaves!

Logs and Brush - Many of our tall native plants look like the tops have died back, But these stalks hold valuable seeds. Also, many native bees overwinter in hollow stems, so leaving the vegetation standing provides more shelter. Brush piles and logs serve as habitat for a variety of creatures, too, whether the moist area between the wood and soil or the dry spaces inside.



Rocks - Rocks also create small niches for a wide diversity of wildlife. Cracks, crevices, and the space between the soil and stone are ideal spaces for many creatures, and make an attractive landscape when incorporated in native plantings.



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

2903 Gary Drive
Plymouth, IN 46563

www.stjosephswcd.org

info@stjosephswcd.org

(574)936-2024 ext. 4

Farm Advisors: Farmers Mentoring Farmers

Sustainable farming practices have been proven to have many benefits for soil health and water quality, as well as for the farmer. But for many farmers, implementing these practices on their farms is a challenge. Changes on the farm can be risky.

Introducing Farm Advisors, a new, farmer-led mentoring program in Indiana. Farm Advisors connect experienced conservation farmers with farmers new to conservation. From answering questions to getting conservation practices on the ground, farm mentors share their experience to help farmers on their sustainable agriculture journey.



For more information and to get started, visit FarmAdvisors.ag. Are you an experienced conservation farmer already? Share your knowledge and experience! Visit the website to find out how to become a mentor.

Invasive Plant Management Training

Join us for a comprehensive, practical training led by natural resource professionals!

We still have space at our upcoming training. Register today for our Invasive Management Training being held at Potato Creek Park on Saturday, November 15th. You'll learn invasive plant identification and assessment, the three pillars of invasives management, and effective control and management techniques.



Visit our website for more information and to register - www.StJosephSWCD.org/invasives-management-training-for-landowners.

New SICIM Regional Specialist

We are pleased to announce our new State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management Northwest Indiana Regional Specialist, AJ Popovic. He is passionate about restoration and invasive species control and we're excited to work with him!



AJ Grew up in St. Joseph County and currently lives in Mishawaka. He went to Purdue Fort Wayne and has a BS in Computer Engineering Technology, but during college read *The Natural Heritage of Indiana*, which completely altered his view. He believes it is critical the we work to protect what is left of our natural spaces.

Before being hired by SICIM, he worked at Pure Green Farms, a hydroponic lettuce farm in South Bend, where he lead a native wetland prairie restoration project as the farm is near the headwaters of the Kankakee River. AJ also regularly volunteers with Shirley Heinze Land Trust, which has increased his invasives plant management skills.

AJ will be a regular participant in many of our SMIPP (St. Joseph/Marshall Counties Invasive Plant Partnership) events and is available to do landowner surveys. You can contact him at NWregion@sicim.info.

2026 Membership

Help us expand our conservation programs and continue protecting soil and water in St. Joseph County! Thank you for your support!

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:
Phone:
Email:
Website:
<input type="checkbox"/> Please keep my donation anonymous.

Giving Levels

- Seed Saver** (\$25.00 to \$99.00)
- Soil Steward** (\$100.00 to \$249.00)
- Water Guardian** (\$250.00 to \$499.00)
- Habitat Hero** (\$500.00 and above)

All donations are tax-deductible.

Payment Options

Make checks out to "St. Joseph County SWCD" and mail to: 2903 Gary Drive
Plymouth, IN 46563

Visit our website to make a payment through PayPal or Venmo. www.StJosephSWCD.org/donations



Planting hope and protecting the future in St. Joseph County!

Join us to celebrate our 2025 accomplishments at our Annual Meeting!
Friday, January 30, 2026 ~ 6:30 pm ~ Hedwig Memorial Center
www.StJosephSWCD.org/66th-annual-meeting



Change Service Requested

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

**St. Joseph County SWCD
Partnership Staff**

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD
Misty Sorchevich, SWCD
Shelley Chaffee, SWCD
Andrea Baker NRCS

SWCD Supervisors:

Chris Matthys, Chairman
Marty Lappin, Vice Chairman
Joe Gregory
Ryan Lee
Nathaniel Ness

SWCD Associate Supervisors:

John Dooms
Dave Vandewalle
Chuck Lehman
Randy Matthys
Richard Schmidt
Dave Straughn
Dru Wrasse
Mike Burkholder
Scott Laidig

SWCD Honorary Members:

Keith Lineback

Farm Service Agency Staff

Gideon Nobbe, CED
Devan Harrell
Diane Stichter
Michael Cuff

Calendar

November

- 8th - Soil Health Saturday
- 10th - Veteran's Day - Office Closed
- 15th - Invasives Management Training
- 18th - Board Meeting
- 27th - Thanksgiving - Office Closed
- 28th - County Holiday - No SWCD Staff

December

- 16th - Board Meeting
- 25th - Christmas - Office Closed
- 26th - County Holiday - No SWCD Staff

Save the Date!

**66th
Annual Meeting
January 30, 2026**



Contact us to choose to get your
newsletter by email!

Use the QR code to email us at
info@stjosephswcd.org.

