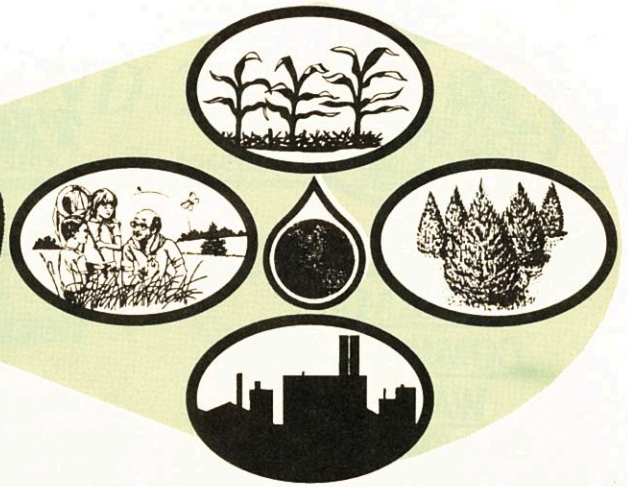




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Apr/May/June 2000
Volume 2, Issue 2

60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN *
Website: www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph

Telephone (219) 291-2300 Ext. 3
Fax (219) 291-0284

Editor: Jerod Chew
Tonia Albright

Calendar of Events

April 3

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

April 15

Tree Pick Up & Tree Sales
St. Joseph Co. 4-H Fairgrounds

April 17

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

May 3

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

May 15

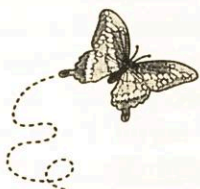
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

May 29

Memorial Day - Office Closed

June 19

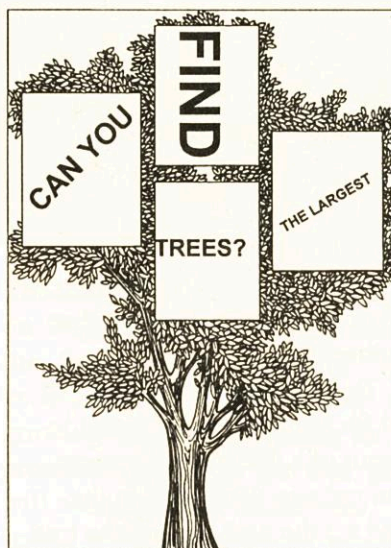
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room



here comes Spring!



With the arrival of Spring, we all look forward to the new beginnings nature brings. Along with the changes of the outdoors, come new changes on the inside at the St. Joseph County SWCD. At the February Board Meeting, a new Chairman, Paul Williams III, was elected taking the place of John Doods, who has served 2 - three year terms. We welcome Paul in his new position, but also thank John for the dedication and service he has given the District for the past 6 years. We also thank Dale Stoner for again accepting the position of Vice-Chairman for the second year in a row. He is also very dedicated and helpful in his position. We also welcome Dave Craft, who is new to our board, and was elected a supervisor at our Annual Meeting held in January. The office staff and board members welcome these men in their new positions.



Join the fun Find the biggest trees in St. Joseph County. Your tree may qualify for state recognition.

For more information call the office at 219-291-2300, ext. 3. Entries are due by September 1, 2000.

What's Inside . . .

The Natural Educator	2
Woodland Times	3,4
Field Notes	5,6
Urban Meanderings	7

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

POSTER CONTEST THEME COMMUNITY WATERS

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District is again sponsoring its annual **Poster Contest**. The poster contest is open to all school aged children in St. Joseph County. All participants will receive a conservation tree and ribbon. This is a national contest and county winners in each category will be sent to the State judging in August.

Poster Contest Rules

- 1) All posters are to be 14" x 22"
- 2) All posters must have theme on poster.
- 3) Posters must have student's name, address, phone number, school name, teacher name and school phone number on back of poster.
- 4) All posters are due into the SWCD office by April 28, 2000
- 5) Posters may use any medium and can have things glued to them.

Good luck

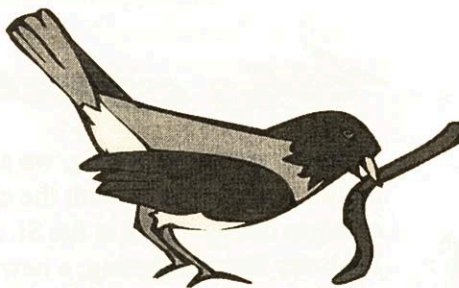


Just a thought

The sight of a bald eagle has thrilled people for years, the sight of a bald man, however, does nothing for the eagle.

SPRING TIME CRITTERS MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE

Now that spring is here and the weather begins to warm, many of us will be enjoying the fine weather by hiking in the woods or working in our yards. Eventually, we will probably encounter some young



wildlife.

If you are fortunate enough to discover some little critters, please leave them where you found them. Most mothers do not protect their young, especially small mammals. If they did, they would most likely be killed, which is not good for the population. This includes White-tailed Deer. Baby rabbits are only nursed once or twice a day, so you will probably never see mom at the nest. If your dog or cat finds a nest of rabbits, just put everyone back in the nest, cover it and leave (the mother will not care about how they smell). If you bring the babies in, they will surely die and even if they are injured, they stand a better chance of survival in the nest, than your house.

Baby birds are also best left to fend for themselves. If a nest is blown out of a tree during a storm, you can put everyone back in the nest and set the nest back in the tree. It does not need to be in the same spot. The parents will most likely still take care of their young.

If the baby bird is learning how to fly, the parents will find it and feed it even after the young have left the nest. The parents are often not nearby, since their search for food can take them some distance from the nest.

A final thought is: yes, something may eat the baby animal, but this too is natural. The fact is, if you are an animal and you want to live, something else must die. It is not good or bad, just the way it is on planet Earth.

Final note — It is illegal to keep wildlife without state and federal permits.



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

Tree Sale

Just One Day, April 15th



Although the deadline for ordering trees is past, you have one more chance to purchase trees from the Soil and Water Conservation District before this year's sale is over. The sale will begin at **8:00 A.M. and run until 12:00 P.M. at the Esther Singer Building inside the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 15th.** Conservation plants such as, evergreens, hardwoods, flowering trees and shrubs, groundcovers, and wildflowers will be available.

We will have plenty of reference materials as well as Master Gardeners on hand to answer any planting and care questions that you may have. Spring is a great time to put these plants in the ground and we are proud to know that these materials are planted around Michiana improving our air quality, water quality, and aesthetics. Just in time for Earth Day, April 22nd!!!

So, if you didn't get your order in or you suddenly have a need for some reasonably priced trees, just come see us on April 15th and we'll take care of you. **If you did get your order in don't forget that April 15th (same time and place) is also your pick-up day.** We'll look forward to seeing you!!!

Springtime in the Woods

The Indiana woodlands are a wonderful resource and a great place to get away and relax. Each season has its own unique features, but there is just something about the woods in the springtime. I encourage anyone who has never paid attention to the activity in the springtime woods to venture out and take a walk among the trees this spring.

The air is very fresh and there are sweet fragrances from the various vegetation growing and capitalizing on the wealth of moisture from the winter melt. Listen for the different birds who may be just arriving from their warm winter down south. The birds will be calling right along with spring peepers and chorus frogs looking for their mates.



The trees begin budding out, putting on their yearly leaves and shading the forest floor vegetation. The vertically challenged plants start growing like crazy, fighting for that precious light that the tree giants will soon keep for themselves. The spring wildflowers are an awesome sight and an often overlooked natural beauty.



Common Morel

Also fighting for the spring moisture and nutrients is a fungus that throughout the ages has provided us with recreation as well as a food source. Mushrooms! However you refer to them as morels, sponges, yellows, or grays they are very interesting little creatures. They feed on decaying material in the cool moist areas and even though they can't run away, they are still sneaky. Mushroom hunting can be great fun or at least a great excuse to explore the woods. If you decide to go mushroom hunting, make sure that you know which fungi are edible because many are not.

Our area has many parks and natural areas that are equipped with trails which offer access to the woods. The parks also present many outdoor programs that are very informative about flora, fauna and natural history. The Indiana woodlands truly are an excellent natural resource. They provide recreation, improved water quality, and excellent wildlife habitat. So, dig out your old shoes and head out for your favorite woods!



FIELD NOTES

Providing Shelter for Wildlife

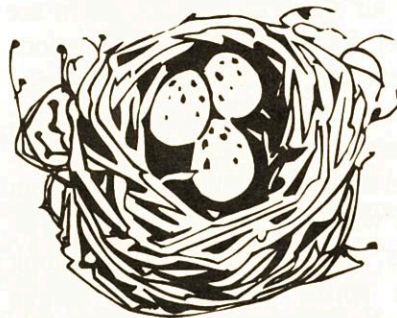
All animals need some form of shelter in their habitat. Many species use shrubs and trees for protection from predators as well as the weather. Birds, squirrels, and many other animals seek nesting sites in trees and bushes. For ground inhabiting animals, shelter can be enhanced easily in many backyards.

You can provide shelter in your yard in several ways.

—Plant a variety of shrubs, trees, and herbaceous plants. Some species of birds may find these attractive as nesting sites. Even if the birds you see in your yard prefer more secluded sites for nesting, trees and shrubs will encourage them to visit your yard, even if for only a few minutes. Placed near birdfeeders, trees become a convenient place for many species to eat their seeds and offer protection from the weather and neighborhood cats. A large evergreen can be especially attractive as shelter in the winter for many species. Low growing plants will provide protection for small animals such as rabbits.

—Provide shelter for ground dwelling species— such as toads and chipmunks, with small piles of rocks, branches, or a decaying log/stump. A piece of drain tile or other tubular material can provide protection from predators and the weather.

—Birdhouses may provide alternative nesting sites for some species. Before placing a birdhouse in your yard, determine what kind of bird you want as a tenant. Birds have specific requirements for the type of house and size of the entry hole they will use. If the species you want doesn't like the house you select, a less desirable species may move in. Also, make sure the house is the specified height above the ground and offers access to vegetation and water.



—Provide the creatures with building materials. While the nest form is unique to each, the materials used to build it will vary with what materials are available locally. Suitable nest building materials for a variety of species include 8 to 10 inch lengths of string, yarn, strips of cloth, or thread. Cotton wool, excess hair from your cat or dog, dried grass, and dried sphagnum or Spanish moss also may be helpful.

For more information on wildlife habitat and other Backyard Conservation Practices, contact our office or call 1-888-LANDCARE for a free colorful Backyard Conservation booklet and tip sheets.

All I Need To Know About Life I Learned From Trees!

- It's more important to be honest than poplar.
- If the party gets boring, just pick up and leaf.
- As you approach the autumn of life, you can't hide your true colors.
- Get all spruced up when you have a hot date.
- Avoid people who would like to cut you down.
- It's perfectly O.K. to be a late bloomer.
- Grow where you are planted.
- If you want to maintain accurate records, keep a log.
- Sometimes, you have to shed your old bark in order to grow.
- Be flexible so you don't break when the wind blows.
- If you really believe in something, don't be afraid to go out on a limb.
- In today's complex world it pays to branch out.
- It's important to have roots.

From the New Jersey PLT Supplement Guide

The Rainforest Live On Stage

On May 1st Understanding Wildlife Incorporated will be presenting two public programs on The Rainforest. These programs will be held at the Clay High School Auditorium at 5:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. For ticket prices and information regarding these programs please contact our office or Darden School at 243-7335.



FIELD NOTES

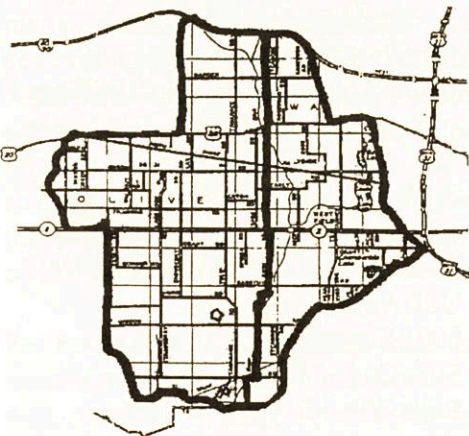


Natural Resources Conservation Service

Last Year for Funds in New Carlisle Area

The third and final year for the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) cost share program is here. Landowners within the watersheds of the Geyer Ditch and the Niespodziany Ditch (see map) are eligible to apply for funds to enhance the environment through conservation practices that control erosion, protect water quality, handle animal waste or create wildlife habitats to name a few. If you are interested in improving the natural resources on your land, contact our office at 291-2300, ext. 3

For landowners outside of these watersheds, limited funds are available for these same conservation practices outside of the EQIP area. Contact the office for more information.

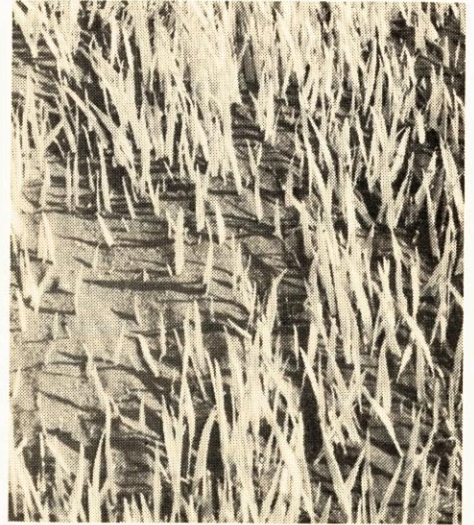


Where Will Your Soils Be When the Wind Blows?

If wind erosion is a problem on your soil types, take a look around your field. Pay particular attention to the north and west ends of the field (this is the direction most of the prevailing winds come from in St. Joseph County). Are the fields bare? Can you see for miles? Or is residue or strips of vegetation visible? Are windbreaks lining the field borders?

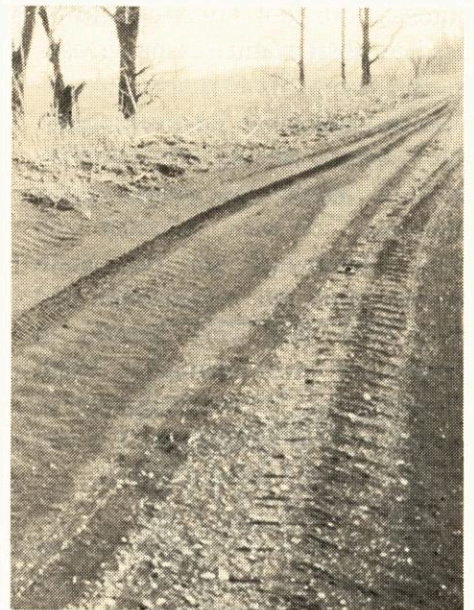
Vegetation plays an important role in reducing wind erosion. If there is residue, vegetative strips or windbreaks to slow the wind and protect the soil, the devastating effects of the wind on the soil is reduced. Just last spring, we received many phone calls from homeowners who's houses were sandblasted by neighboring crop fields. Additionally, a couple of farmers told us they had to replant fields because the wind had sandblasted the young plants, killing them before they were barely out of the ground. As more and more soil blows across the field, streams fill with sediment and conditions become hazardous for driving.

These problems can be reduced by using various vegetative practices such as filter strips around the water courses, field borders, strip cropping, minimum tillage and/or field windbreaks. There are conservation programs available that can help you establish these practices. Some, like the Conservation Reserve Program, will not only pay half of the cost to get the planting started, but will provide a payment each year for the next 10 years. Other programs will



assist in the establishment of the vegetation only.

If you are interested in seeing what can be done on your fields, contact our office. We will be glad to look at your land with you and provide you with a conservation plan that meets your goals and needs.





FIELD NOTES

Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited Assist in Making Warm season Grass Drills Available in 2000

It's not too soon for local landowners interested in planting warm season grasses to make plans for planting in the spring of 2000. Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited are again partnering with local SWCD's to provide local landowners access to use warm season grass drills. These organizations encourage prairie grass establishments because of their value as wildlife habitat.

The St. Joseph Valley chapter of Pheasants Forever partnered with the St. Joseph County SWCD and the Elkhart County SWCD to purchase a 6 foot Truax drill to be used to plant warm season grasses in St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties. This is good news for people who have been wanting to establish wildlife habitat or prairie grass plantings. Warren Allender and Jerry Dominiack are our main contacts with this organization and they have been very helpful in getting 166 acres planted in 1999. Please contact Jerome Daugherty in our office (291-2300, ext. 3) if you are interested in using this drill.

Quail Unlimited serves a larger area and has worked with the SWCD's in Kosciusko, Elkhart, St. Joseph, Marshall, LaPorte and Starke Counties to purchase seed and an eight-foot drill. Persons wanting to discuss scheduling this drill should contact Glen Eash at 219-533-3792.



USDA Draft Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans

The draft Technical Guidance for Developing Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) is a document intended for use by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation partner state and local field staffs, private consultants, landowners/operators, and others that either will be developing or assisting in the development of CNMPs. This document provides technical guidance and is not a proposed regulation.

The development of this technical guidance was an action identified in the USDA/EPA Unified National Strategy for Animal Feeding Operations, released in March, 1999.

What is a CNMP?

A CNMP is a subset of a conservation plan. It is a grouping of conservation practices and management activities which, when combined into a system, will help to ensure that both production and natural resource conservation goals are achieved for animal feeding

operations.

How the Technical Guidance is to be used?

This technical guidance is to be used as a tool in support of the NRCS planning process. It provides a list of essential elements that need to be considered in developing a CNMP. It is not intended as a sole source of reference. To effectively use this technical guidance, the planner needs a solid understanding of agricultural waste management systems, nutrient management, the NRCS planning process, and the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.

Public Review and Comment

The draft Technical Guidance for Developing CNMPs was published in the Federal Register as a Notice for Public Review and Comment on December 9, 1999. The comment period ends in April, 2000.

Get a copy of the Draft Technical Guidance from:

- World Wide Web Site:
<http://www.nhq.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/ahcwpd/ahCNMP.html>

Send Your Comments on the Draft Technical Guidance to:

Francine A. Gordon, ATTN: CNMP
USDA, NRCS
5601 Sunnyside Avenue,
Stop Code 5473
Beltsville, Maryland 20705



URBAN MEANDERINGS



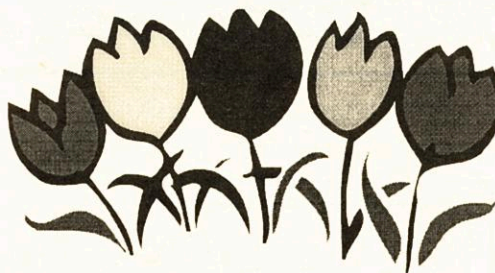
Permanent Seeding

April is here and we are in one of two prime seeding periods (March 1st, to May 1st and August 10th to September 15th) for Northern Indiana. If you have any disturbed, eroded, thin or problem areas in your lawn, now is your window of opportunity. If you have just moved into your new house and are seeding for the first time, some factors you might wish to consider are: How much topsoil is present? How fertile is the soil? What type of soil do we have? What kind of lawn do we want and how much time do we want to devote to maintaining it? Kentucky blue grass is a common turf grass with many desirable characteristics for several well manicured urban conditions. But there are several other options for different situations. For example, if your lawn has considerable shade, there are other varieties of grass that will do better under low sunlight conditions.

For lawns that differ from the ideal or more normal situations, many people will benefit from a visit to a landscaping or nursery center. Homeowners with very sandy soil might consider the turf fescue varieties

selected for drought tolerance. For more remote areas that do not require weekly mowing, there are some new turf fescue varieties that will only grow to 12 to 16 inches tall. The knowledgeable sales staff will be happy to help walk you through the decision making and help you with guidance in the actual seeding process.

Native grass varieties and wildflowers are becoming more common and their unique characteristics more appreciated. However, the planting window is very short (April 15th to May 30th) and native seeding may benefit from some additional watering in a dry summer if planted late in May. Fall planting of native grasses has not proved to be successful in Northern Indiana.



These natural plants are very hardy and will survive well once established, but they do require protection from cool season grasses in the first two years following seeding. Ponds, retention basins, banks on ditches, and streams and rivers are all sites that some warm grass plantings could be considered. Some characteristics of these grasses are: can be submerged in water for short periods of time and still survive, thrive in wet soil conditions, discourage geese from enjoying a walk on your lawn and also survive drought conditions.

There are also several different ways to establish your lawn: direct seeding within a prime seeding period on a suitable seedbed, direct seeding with a straw mulch (works best if straw is somewhat incorporated into the soil), hydroseeding, or using an erosion control blanket in the seeding process, or using sod. All of these options are viable and have definite advantages that will improve your success rate. You need to understand the benefits of each option in your decision making process. Please seek the help of a professional if you lack confidence in considering your possible options. If the area needing seeding has failed after several attempts, you need to determine what the impediment to successful establishment is. Consider the site and determine what the slope is: Is the area too wet or too dry part of the year? What type of soil is present? What is the past seeding history? Seek help from the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, a landscaping professional.





**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

Supervisors:

John Dooms, Chairman
Dale Stoner, V-Chairman
Steve Horvath, Member
John Kulwicki, Member
Paul Williams III, Member

Associate Supervisors:

Paul Cooreman
Jerry Dominiack
Rich Hamman
Janice Ivkovich
Melvin Kulwicki
Jim LaFree
Charles Lehman
Jay Lindenman
Keith Lineback
Joe Long
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.**

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Harold Mutti

Office Staff:

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

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Mike Hoskins, CED
Helene Cannoot
Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli
Dee Fox