



St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

January/February 2021
Volume 23, Issue 1

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What's Going On...

Events hosted by the St. Joseph County SWCD
& Our Partners in Conservation



January

1st - New Years' Day -
Office Closed

18th - Martin Luther King
Jr's Birthday - Office
Closed

19th - January Board
Meeting - Open to the
Public. 11 am via Zoom,
contact our office for zoom
link if you'd like to attend.

February

12th - Election Ballots due
to our office.

15th - President's Day -
office closed

16th - February Board
Meeting - Open to the
Public. 11 am via Zoom,
contact our office for zoom
link if you'd like to attend.

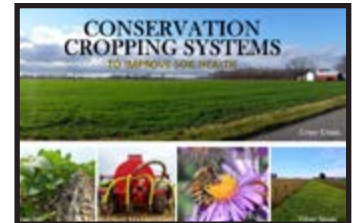
24th - Annual Meeting -
Open to the Public . 9 am via
Zoom, contact our office
for zoom link if you'd like
to attend.

Clean Water Indiana Cost Share Available

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District has many continuing programs available. In hopes being able to maintain some of these programs and help producers, the SWCD recently applied for and received a grant from the 2021 cycle of the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant program. The CWI program was created to help provide financial assistance to landowners and conservation groups who wish to reduce nonpoint sources of water pollution through education, technical assistance, training, and cost-share programs. SWCD partnered with Marshall County for this grant application cycle. The CWI program grant helps producers by making installation of soil health best management practices (BMPs) more affordable and accessible.

The district's 2021 CWI program grant will provide cost-share incentives for the following BMPs that reduce soil degradation and improve water quality and soil health: cover crops, nutrient management,

no-till, filter strips, and pollinator habitats. Conservation cropping BMPs such as these are important because they help reduce the amount of chemicals, nutrients and sediment that can contaminate not only our local water supply but also the Mississippi River, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Great Lakes via watersheds. The districts previously received a CWI program grant that has helped install over 5,000 acres of BMPs in St. Joseph and Marshall Counties and they hope to continue the momentum toward installing BMPs. With this year's CWI program grant, the districts' goals are to increase conservation cropping acres; increase BMP awareness among landowners and producers; and reduce sediment, nitrogen, and phosphorus levels.



2021 Annual Meeting and Election

Due to COVID-19, the St Joseph County SWCD will not be hosting an in person annual meeting, instead we will be hosting a Zoom virtual Annual Meeting on February 24, 2021 at 9 am EST. If you would like to attend, please contact our office for the link or call in number. During our annual meetings, the district holds an election for board supervisor. This year we are mailing ballots to all landowners in St Joseph County and asking for your vote. **Completed ballots must be returned to the SWCD office by February 12,**

2021. If you have not received a ballot and you are eligible to vote, contact our office.

SWCD Voter Eligibility

An individual of voting age (18 or older) or a representative of a firm, limited liability company, or corporation that owns or rents land/property located within the district/county may vote. (Eligible individuals also include the owner and tenant of the same land/property as well as any owner's or tenant's spouse.)

2021 Annual Meeting and Election

Supervisors' Job Description

1. **Identify** local soil, water and related natural resource concerns, set natural resource priorities, and then develop, implement and evaluate long and short-range plans and programs to address these prioritized resource concerns.
2. **Participate** in appropriate multi-district activities such as watershed projects, river basin projects, resource conservation and development efforts, and multi-district educational efforts such as field days, workshops, and seminars.
3. **Educate and inform** landowners and operators, general public, and local, state, and federal officials and legislators on conservation issues and programs.
4. **Seek** funding and coordinate program assistance from local, state and federal sources, commercial sources, charities, and private groups and individuals.
5. **Administer** the SWCD programs and activities by delegating tasks through a structure of SWCD supervisors, staff, committees and volunteers.
6. **Supervise** SWCD staff and volunteers working with the SWCD, and coordinate conservation efforts with cooperating agency personnel.
7. **Manage** all district-owned funds, facilities and equipment.

Nominee Name: Chris Matthys

Qualifications: Farming on his own since 2012, grew up on a farm in St Joseph County.

Occupation: Farmer corn/soybean/wheat, Peppermint/Spearmint Oil Buyer, prior had been teacher and principal South Bend Washington, Michigan, & Oregon Davis

Conservation Interests: No-Till everywhere possible even tried on muck ground, cover crops

Nominee Name: Marty Lappin

Qualifications: Farming on his own for 30 years, grew up on a family farm in North Liberty

Occupation: Farmer, sells outdoor boilers on the side

Conservation Interests: No-Till, cover crops, beef herd with rotational grazing



Concrete Washout Systems

One of the widely used materials in construction is concrete. While it is a necessary element in most construction projects there can be negative environmental impacts if stormwater best management practices aren't followed when it comes to proper disposal of the water used to clean the excess concrete and residues from the mixer trucks.

The water used to wash the chutes of concrete mixers and the hoppers from concrete pumps contains lime (calcium oxide), chromium, and other potentially harmful metals and chemicals. If people at construction sites disposed of this water on the ground or directly into the storm sewer, it could seep into the ground water or flow to surface water and contaminate it. This contamination causes higher pH and can be dangerous for terrestrial and aquatic life. Without the proper disposal, solids might cause clogs in storm drains and pipes, which could lead to flooding. By adding concrete washouts to construction sites, workers have a safe place to put these dangerous materials, so they do not cause as much harm.

There are many styles of concrete washout

systems available. According to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), prefabricated containers or systems tend to be more reliable but on-site constructed above or below grade systems can work as well. For more specific details please reference the Indiana Storm Water Quality Manual on IDEM's webpage:

https://www.in.gov/idem/stormwater/files/stormwater_manual_chap_07.pdf



Environmental Education

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District offers programs to any school or group located within St. Joseph County.

The SWCD believes that conservation education extends to all ages and that students can develop an understanding of conservation at an early age and hopefully carry those lessons with them throughout their lives.

The St. Joseph County SWCD provides many educational opportunities throughout each year for schools and other groups serving students and adults committed to lifelong learning.



Types of Programs and Services

- elearning resources
- Outreach and classroom programs
- Curriculum design
- Series of lessons
- Establishing or maintaining outdoor labs
- Environmental field trips
- Special events
- Adult programs
- Loaning of resources
- Environmental education grant writing assistance

We bring activities, experiments, and supplies to teach these lessons. Any topic is able to be modified to help meet standards, objectives, or any age group you would like.

Contact Sam Buchanan, environmental education coordinator, with any questions or to schedule a program!

samantha.buchanan@in.nacdnet.net
(574) 936-2024 ext. 4
2903 Gary Dr.
Plymouth, IN 46563
<https://www.stjosephswcd.org/education>

Lesson topics



- Watersheds
- Soils
- Composting
- Pollinators
- Wildlife of St. Joseph County
- Habitats
- Invasive species
- Backyard conservation
- Conservation agriculture
- Urban agriculture
- Stream monitoring

Have an idea for a topic you don't see listed? We are happy to develop something unique for you!



Visit us on Facebook 2903 GARY DRIVE PLYMOUTH IN 46563

St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

\$7.7 Million Available to Help Protect and Restore Sensitive Lands

State Conservationist Jerry Raynor announced today that Indiana’s USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is making available over \$7.7 million to help landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands across Indiana. The funding is provided through the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), created by the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourage private owners to maintain land for farming. Eligible entities must submit applications for the current funding pool on or before February 3, 2021.

“I cannot overemphasize the benefits of restoring, enhancing and protecting these working agricultural lands and critical wetlands,” said Raynor. “NRCS is committed to preserving working agricultural lands to help protect the long-term viability of farming across Indiana as well as restoring and protecting wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat and improve our water quality.”

ACEP’s Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) not

only protect the long-term viability of the nation’s food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses, they also support wildlife habitat, historic preservation and protection of open spaces. State and local governments, non-governmental organizations and Native American Tribes that have farmland or grassland protection programs are eligible to partner with NRCS to protect farmland through easements.

Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) allow landowners to successfully restore, enhance and protect wetlands on their land which provide habitat for wildlife, reduce damage from flooding, recharge groundwater and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities. Eligible landowners can choose to enroll the wetland in a permanent or 30-year easement. Tribal landowners also have the option of enrolling in 30-year contracts.

ACEP applications may be submitted at any time to NRCS; however, applications for the current funding round must be submitted on or before February 3, 2021.

SWCD Supervisors:

John Dooms, Chair
Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair
Dave Craft
Mike Burkholder
Dave Vandewalle

SWCD Associate Supervisors:

Chuck Lehman
Randy Matthys
Richard Schmidt
Dave Straughn
Dru Wrasse

SWCD Honorary Members:

Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:

Sam Buchanan, SWCD
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD
Sarah Longenecker, SWCD
Debbie Knepp, NRCS

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Gideon Nobbe, CED
Devan Herrell
Katie Leitch
Aldona Martin
Tara Wolfe

Are you ready to “GO GREEN” and help us save money and natural resources? We can deliver your “Conservation Kaleidoscope” newsletter by email ... Give us a call or send us an email and tell us you’d like to “GO GREEN” THANK YOU!!!!



Scan me to go Green!