St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE

Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Jul/Aug/Sep 2005 | Volume 7, Issue 3 | 5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN* | Website: stjoseph.iaswcd.org | Telephone (574) 291-7444 Ext.3 | Fax (574) 291-0284 | Editor: Troy Manges | Tonia Albright

Calendar of Events

July 4
4th of July Holiday
Office Closed

July 18
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 PM – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

August 1
St. Joseph County 4-H Fair Begins

August 15
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 PM– Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

September 5
Labor Day
Office Closed

September 17
3 – County Forestry Field Day

September 19
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 PM – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

3-County Forestry Field Day
September 17, 2005

(See Woodland Times for more information)

Soil Survey CD's are still available at the office for $5.00/ea.

What's Inside . . .

POISON – IVY
POISON SUMAC
BUT NO POISON-OAK

What would a camping trip be without bringing home a little rash of Poison-Ivy?

Remember this little saying to help avoid these poisonous plants:

Leaflets three, let it be,
berries white, poisonous sight.

It is the Urushiol oil in these plants that give us the rash. We actually do not have Poison-Oak in our state since it grows west of the Mississippi River. Don't worry if your doctor says the rash is Poison-Oak, it is the same Urushiol oil in all three plants that causes the allergic reaction. In some people, only one nanogram (one billionth of a gram) can cause the reaction.

The best cure for Poison-Ivy and Poison-Oak is prevention. Learn to recognize the plants and then look for them. Poison-Sumac is a wetland, boggy plant. It is a small shrub with compound leaves (7 to 13 leaflets) that are usually a very shiny green color but also can be red. Also look for the clusters of white berries. Most of us do not travel in places that Poison-Sumac grows. If it is a Sumac with red berries, it will not cause a rash.

Poison-Ivy on the other hand grows in a wide range of habitats. From shaded forests to open fields. It can be a vine (look for a vine that appears to be hairy) on a tree, a single plant, or even a small bush. Poison-Ivy is also a compound leaf (three leaflets) that is usually shiny but not always. It also has clusters of white berries on mature plants.

Avoiding these plants is not always an option. If this is the case, wash the affected area with soap and water a few times. Make sure you do not touch any other body parts since it takes so little oil to cause a rash. If this does not work, you will usually know in 24 to 48 hours when the rash appears. A common myth is that you can spread the rash by scratching. This is not true, but the oil can stay viable for some time and if you did not remove it all, you will continue to spread the rash.

The good news is that Poison-Ivy and Poison-Sumac are actually excellent wildlife plants. Deer and rabbits actually eat Poison-Ivy and over 40 species of birds feed on the berries. Basically, humans are the only animals that are really affected by the plants.

An excellent source of information on these three plants can be found at:

www.poinsonivy.aesir.com

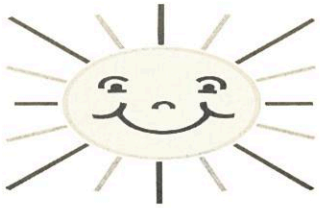
Did you know that Poison-Ivy was named by Captain John Smith in 1609?

Cranesbill

Keep your eye out for the wild-type of a favorite cultivated perennial, Cranesbill. There are several species native to our region, including Carolina Cranesbill, Bicknell's Cranesbill, Herb-Robert, and Wild Geranium. The cranesbills are part of the genus *Geranium* and are cousins to the garden or zonal geraniums which are part of the genus *Pelargonium*. Both groups of plants are part of the geranium family, Geraniaceae.

Cranesbills can be annuals, perennials, or biennials. Some, like Carolina and Bicknell's, prefer sunny, dry locations that are relatively sterile. Depending on the species, the leaves have 3-9 toothed lobes and clusters of 5-petaled flowers which range form light pink to purple, depending on the species.

Cranesbills are so named because the fruiting body resembles the beak of a crane. Not surprisingly, the genus *Geranium* comes from the Greek *geranos*, "crane."



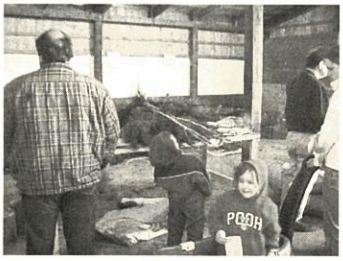
WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

19th Annual Tree Sales Program A Big Success

Many young trees have been planted in the community this Spring. The 19th Annual Tree Sales Program started in October, 2004, and ended April 16, 2005, at the St Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to announce that approximately 27,200 of those trees are from our 2004 – 2005 Tree Sales Program.

The Tree Sales Program has been very successful over the past nineteen years due to the outstanding conservation attitude of the community and the hard work of volunteers. Our thanks go out to Randy Matthys and Family, Master Gardeners from St. Joseph and Elkhart County, St. Patrick's County Park, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, Ryder Truck Rental and Leasing, Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds,



Elkhart County SWCD, John Manuszak and the Mishawaka High School Waltonian Club, and John Glenn High School FFA.

This year we were able to donate trees to five different projects through our Tree Grant Program. The trees will be used for conservation, beautification, restoration, and educational practices. This is one of many ways that the money raised from the tree sales program is given back to the community. For those of you who happened to miss this years Tree Sales Program you can request a Tree Flyer for next year by contacting the office at (574) 291-7444 ext. 3 or check out our web site in October 2005.

Trees of Indiana CD Available

The St. Joseph County SWCD has copies of the Trees of Indiana – Their Identification and Uses CD for sale at our office. The CD contains pictures and detailed descriptions of all the native trees of Indiana plus some introduced trees. The pictures illustrate leaves, buds, twigs, flowers, fruit, bark, habitat and form. Also included is U.S. Forest Service range maps for the tree species. You can purchase the CD from the St. Joseph County SWCD for $25.00 by stopping in the office. If you have questions please give us a call.

New Carlisle Post Office Utilizes Tree Grant Program

Mike Skoczylas, the New Carlisle Postmaster has utilized the Sales End Tree Grant Program for an Earth Day/Arbor Day tree give away. The New Carlisle Post Office has given away trees and other plant materials to customers since the mid-1990's.

This year Mike utilized his contacts with different schools and teachers in the area to give away some of the trees. The teachers at the schools used the trees as part of Earth Day/Arbor Day Programs and class projects. The rest of the trees that Mike received were given to customers as they walked in to get their mail. Wee Care Day Care Center gave its students 42 trees to take home and plant.

WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

TIMBER MARKETING

Much has been happening in the woodlands in the area. Those selling trees have found markets to be good. While the markets for Cherry and Oaks tend to be steady, Maple, both hard and soft, are selling extremely well with rising prices being paid for trees in the woods.

Careful marketing of trees is more important than ever due to rapidly changing market conditions. I have talked with many folks who still are under the impression that Walnut is king and Cherry is a scrub tree, along with Silver Maple. In fact, Cherry long ago passed Walnut in price, and both hard and soft Maple are in high demand. This does not mean that the Walnuts and Oaks are not in demand. In fact, prices for both are very good.

Provided the proper trees are marked in a selective harvest, the result will be a better quality stand following the harvest. Since there are generally poor quality trees that have no commercial value in the woods, harvests are often followed by timber stand improvement work. This practice is the same as pulling weeds in a garden. Even though you don't utilitize the pulled weeds, they are removed because they will reduce or crowd out the plants you do want.

Knowledgeable selection of the trees to harvest also allows you to reduce the risk of future insect and disease problems in the stand. For instance, most foresters in Northern Indiana are marking Ash more heavily today than several years ago. This has resulted from efforts to reduce the exposure of risk to these trees from the Emerald Ash Borer. Hopefully, the bore will be contained in its' current area, but if it is not, you don't want to have a woods full of Ash to sell at a salvage sale when the market might be glutted by infested logs. Knowledge of issues such as these as well as current markets makes working with a professional consulting forester worth the expense.

The Indiana Division of Forestry can assist you with developing a plan for your woods.

You can reach the Division of Forestry by phone, mail, or e-mail at:

Indiana Division of Forestry
Kankakee Fish & Wildlife Area
P.O. Box 77
North Judson, IN 46366
(574) 896-3538
swinicker@dnr.in.gov.

(Information on Timber Marketing provided by Steve Winicker – IDNR, District Forester)

3 – COUNTY FORESTRY FIELD DAY

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Kosciusko, Elkhart, and St. Joseph Counties will be hosting a 3-County Forestry Field Day on Saturday, September 17th, from 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

The host site for the field day will be at the Carl Diehl farm, north of Warsaw, Indiana.

Due to the large number of woodlots in the three sponsoring counties, this day is being planned to share forest management information with those landowners interested in optimizing the opportunities in these wood-lots. It is being held on a farm where forest management practices have been in place for several decades.

Some of the highlights will include:

- Tree Plantings from the 1940's through today
- Plantings for timber production
- Examples of Timber Stand Improvement with particular emphasis on thinning
- Various stages of harvest
- Conservation Reserve Program Planting
- Management of a Tornado damaged wood-lot
- Wildlife

This farm also contains one of two woodlots in the county designated as a Forest Health Plot, being monitored by the district forester.

For more information regarding the Field Day, call the office at the beginning of August at:

(574) 291-7444, ext. 3.

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS DATA SHOW SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN AGRICULTURAL WETLAND ACREAGE

WASHINGTON, March 31, 2005 – U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Bruce Knight today announced agricultural wetland net gains of about 263,000 acres between 1997 and 2003.

"America's farmers and ranchers are protecting and restoring wetlands at unprecedented rates," said Knight. "Between 1997 and 2003, agricultural producers across the nation achieved an average net gain of 44,000 acres of wetlands each and every year. Producers who participate in USDA programs have proven themselves good stewards of the land and NRCS local offices are working closely with them to improve our nation's wetlands."

The results are based on new data in the NRCS National Resources Inventory (NRI), an annual statistical survey of natural resource conditions and trends on nonfederal land in the 48 contiguous states. Nationally, there are 111 million wetland acres on nonfederal lands with most located in the eastern half of the United States, particularly in the Great Lakes states, the Southeast and the Mississippi Delta. Wetland gains have been most prevalent in the central part of the nation where there are extensive agriculture operations and the highest level of participation in conservation programs authorized by the the 2002 Farm Bill.

The NRI data show that since 1997 annual wetland losses on all lands have been on a decline, while annual agricultural wetland gains have been increasing. Between 1997 and 2001 wetland annual gain was 33,000 acres per year. Between 2001 and 2003 the annual loss declined to 30,000 acres while the annual gain nearly doubled to 66,000 acres.

Net Wetlands Change Due to Agriculture, 1997 – 2003

Time Period	Total Net Change	Annual Avg. Net Change
1997-2001	+ 132,000 Acres	+ 33,000 Acres/Year
2001-2003	+ 131,000 Acres	+ 66,000 Acres/Year
1997-2003	+ 263,000 Acres	+ 44,000 Acres/Year

USDA show very few instances of noncompliance with the wetlands programs and highly erodible lands provisions. NRCS uses an internal web-based system for compliance reports that provides immediate delivery to each field office and allows tracking progress, violations and findings by county on a real time basis. This web-based system has been in use since December, 2004.

In order to continue improvements for accuracy in reporting, NRCS has developed a more representative sample of tracts, significantly increased sample size, and modified sample methodology to include only agricultural lands involved in wetlands programs. Violations in wetlands programs are consistently and extremely low with more than 95 percent of participants in compliance of program rules and regulations.

Year	Random Sample Tracts*	Wetland Tracts Non-Compliance
1998	12201	59
1999	11980	98
2000	13264	74
2001	13552	121
2002	11396	60
2003	11672	86

**Approximately 4,000 tracts are added to the random sample for prior year variances, etc.*

**These tracts have totaled between 4.5 million and 5 million acres annually.*

On Earth Day 2004, President Bush announced an aggressive new national goal, moving beyond a policy of "no net loss" of wetlands, to having an overall increase of wetlands in America each year. The President's goal is to create, improve and protect at least three million acres over the next five years in order to increase overall wetland acres and quality.

To help achieve this goal, NRCS provides voluntary incentive-based conservation programs to help private landowners protect and restore wetlands. Depending on their particular goals, farmers and ranchers can choose from a variety of voluntary programs including the Wetlands Reserve Program, Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program, Environmental Quality Incentives program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and Conservation Technical Assistance. NRCS also provides technical assistance to the Conservation Reserve Program through USDA's Farm Service Agency.

For more information contact the USDA Service Center nearest you or visit our website at:

http://www.usda.nrcs.gov

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE MARKS 70TH ANNIVERSARY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service is marking seven decades of conserving natural resources on private and tribal land. The anniversary's theme, "A Partner in Conservation since 1935," reflects the agency's mission – providing leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

Conservation practices carried out by farmers and other landowners in Indiana have improved the quality of life and built stronger rural communities. Our food supply, water and air have improved tremendously. Agency statistics have shown dramatic improvements in Indiana's natural resources that have resulted from the use of conservation tillage, filter strips, windbreaks, grassed waterways, nutrient management, pest management, and waste storage facilities.

This agency's rich conservation legacy has resulted in many benefits to the state's citizens – abundant food and fiber, clean water, pure air, productive soils and open spaces to use and enjoy.

NRCS was created as the Soil Conservation Service within USDA on April 27, 1935 in response to the devastation of the Dust Bowl on the nation's agricultural land.

The agency's primary mission then was to conserve soil on agricultural land. It became NRCS in 1994 to better reflect its expanded role of servicing other natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants and animals on private and tribal lands.

For more information about NRCS in Indiana, please visit:

http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

Rick Kennedy

SUMMER INTERN

Once again, The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District has provided an opportunity for on the job training to an individual currently studying in the field of natural resources.

This summer the intern position was offered to Rick Kennedy who began with the district on May 16th.

Rick lives in Elkhart with his wife Sandi. After teaching composition, business writing, and technical writing at Purdue University for several years, he returned to the classroom as a student to study horticulture, with an emphasis in design, at Purdue. In December, Rick will graduate with a degree he feels will be much more useful.

Of particular area of interest to Rick are conservation practices in the (sub)urban landscape and horticultural education.

Welcome aboard Rick!

WARM SEASON GRASS DRILL

The Warm Season Grass Drill will be available for fall plantings of filter strips, pasture inter-seeding and cool season grasses.

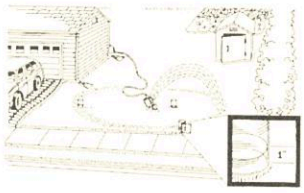
Call the office and ask for Troy at:

(574) 291-7444, ext. 3.

Dry Conditions Cause Stormwater Pollution From Artificial Rains?

Yes, artificial rains from lawn sprinklers and other watering methods can cause soil erosion and nutrient and pesticide runoff which can lead to "stormwater" runoff pollution. The stormwater we are talking about in this article is from lawn sprinklers. The runoff occurs when the lawn or garden is over watered or the sprinkler sprays water on impervious surfaces such as roads and concrete or paved driveways. We would like to discuss some options for property owners to consider when watering their lawn or garden.

In Indiana most lawns or gardens will need about 1 to 1-1/2 inches of water per week. This can be affected by weather conditions, soil type and slope of the area. It is best to water deeply and infrequently, this means watering every three to four days. One way for you to measure how much water you are applying to your lawn is to place several containers with 1 inch marks under the sprinkler. This will help you gauge how much water you are applying. This can also help you know when to stop watering your lawn to prevent runoff.



Water that runs off your lawn, whether from a storm event or from over watering, can cause erosion under certain conditions. If the lawn has bare spots and they are on slopes, you may be able to see where the soil has washed away. One way to combat this is to seed the area and then use a mulch netting or erosion control blanket to hold the soil in place until the grass becomes well established. Once the grass becomes established it should hold the soil in place. You will need to water this area differently than the rest of your yard. You will need to water the lawn on a daily basis but for a shorter amount of time. This will allow the seed to germinate and grow quickly but prevent runoff. Once the grass starts growing well you can begin watering deeper and less frequently making sure to prevent runoff.

Another problem when watering your lawn is the timing of fertilizer and pesticide applications. If you apply fertilizer and/or pesticides and then water immediately there is potential to wash them offsite. If over watering occurs after a fertilizer application the runoff can contain the unused nutrients.

This can also be a problem in gardens. To help treat runoff from gardens, especially near ditches and streams, you can leave grass planted around them. The grass will act as a filterstrip and trap sediment, nutrients and pesticides before they reach the stream. The grass does this by slowing the runoff down and letting the sediment settle out before it reaches the stream or storm drain as the case may be.

Placement of the sprinklers for the yard or garden can cause runoff. If the sprinklers are over spraying the lawn and hitting the driveway or road, they can send runoff into stormdrains or roadside ditches which usually end up draining into the river. On the way to the stormdrain the water can pick up oil and sediment from the road or driveway which affects water quality negatively. If the sprinklers are adjusted correctly and water lands in the lawn or garden then you are preventing pollution from getting into the storm drains.

Here are a few tips to help you prevent "stormwater" pollution when watering your lawn or garden when weather conditions are dry:

* Do not over water your lawn or garden. Stop watering before runoff starts. This will benefit both the plants and prevent possible erosion or nutrient and pesticide loss.

* Leave grass filterstrips around your garden, especially between roads and ditches. If runoff does occur, then it can be filtered by the grass strips and be clean when it enters the stormdrains or ditches.

* Placement of the sprinklers to keep the water in the lawn and garden where it can infiltrate into the soil is key. This prevents the washing of oils or sediment off of driveways and roadways into the stormdrains.

These are a few things you can do to help keep our river and stream waters cleaner and healthier while keeping your lawns green during dry conditions.

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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Dave Craft, Chairman
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Dale Stoner, Member

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Charles Lehman
Jay Lindenman
Joe Long
Eugene Myers
Beverly Riddle
Carol Riewe
Richard Schmidt
Paul Williams III

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
Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar
Harold Mutti

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Brook Rieman, NRCS
Tonia Albright, SWCD
Rick Glassman, SWCD
Troy Manges, SWCD
Tim Nemeth, SWCD
Kevin Lackman, IDNR

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Helene Cannoot
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Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli