

**MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, December 15, 2015**

- I. CALL TO ORDER - On Tuesday December 15, 2015, at 7:06 pm a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the St Joseph County SWCD at the Centre Township Branch of the St. Joseph County Public Library was called to order by John Dooms, Chairman.**

**PRESENT – SWCD**

John Dooms, Chair/Supervisor  
 Stacey Silvers, Supervisor  
 Mike Burkholder, Supervisor  
 Jim LaFree  
 Dale Stoner  
 Dave Vandewalle

**PRESENT – SWCD/NRCS**

Debbie Knepp, NRCS DC  
 Jan Ivkovich  
 Dru Wrasse  
 Rick Glassman, SWCD EEC  
 Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD Admin Assistant  
 Sarah Longenecker, SWCD CC

**Present -**

**EX-OFFICIO**  
 n/a  
**PRESENT –**  
**Public**  
 n/a

**ABSENT – SWCD**

Jeremy Cooper, Vice-Chair/Supervisor  
 Arlene Schuchman, Supervisor  
 James Rodriguez, NRCS SC  
 Chuck Lehman  
 Randy Matthys  
 Carole Riewe  
 Richard Schmidt  
 Dave Craft  
 Joe Long

**II. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA -**

**III. REGULAR BUSINESS**

- A. Legislative Updates** – Dooms passed around a copy of the legislative notebook that will be taken to Indy in January.
- B. Conservation Moment** – Hoffarth told the board the details of the NRCS contract agreement (PSS) and annual payment process.
- B. Indiana Conservation Partnership Updates** – n/a
- C. Minutes: October 20, 2015 board meeting**– The minutes were reviewed and approved as submitted.
- D. Treasurer’s Report: (11/18/15-12/15/15)** – The treasurer’s reports were both reviewed and approved as submitted.
- E. Approval of Claims (11/18/15-12/15/15)** - A recommendation (Ivkovich, LaFree) & motion (Silvers, Burkholder) was made to approve Claim Nos. 11063-11071 for a total of \$2,730.08 as presented. both carried.

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

- A. St. Joseph Co. Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff Written Reports** – The field office report was presented to the board and reviewed. (Attached). Knepp went over the NRCS talking points (attached) as well as handed out the Client Gateway postcards to all in attendance.
- B. Committee Reports**
  - a. Annual Meeting** – Vandewalle announced that Hoffarth has tickets printed and ready to go! They were passed out after the meeting concluded. All money and remaining tickets are due back to her January 19<sup>th</sup> (next board meeting date). Also forms for the silent auction are available contact Hoffarth. We have 3 sponsors so far with room for 3 or more additional. Anyone wanting to sponsor contact Hoffarth.
  - b. Rural Conservation** – Burkholder updated the board on the planning for our 2016 Producers Meeting. The date was moved to March 22 due to schedule conflicts with the key note speakers. Otto Doering and Hans Kok have been confirmed as our key note speakers. Tickets will be \$15 each to help cover expenses. Letters will be going out to prospective vendors. Vendor booth space will be \$250 for a 2’X6’ table space and will include 1 lunch ticket (additional lunch tickets can be purchased at \$15/ea.). The committee/staff are looking into pricing reusable bags and folders as giveaways for each participant. We will be using our \$1,000 education money received from our 2016 CWI grant. Each county will also be given a vendor booth space to promote their county and get information out about the CWI cost share programs. See attached report for preliminary agenda.
- C. 2016 Budget** – A recommendation (Vandewalle, Ivkovich) and motion (Burkholder, Silvers) was made to accept the 2016 budget as presented. Both carried.
- D. 2016 Annual Work Plan** – Glassman added compost seminars to April. Ivkovich recommended we move the AWP confirmation to December’s meeting instead of January and to present it at the November meeting. A recommendation (Wrasse, Vandewalle) and motion (Silvers, Burkholder) was made to accept the AWP with the revisions names. Both carried.

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Schedules/ Upcoming Events / Any Related Claims** - calendars were handed out explaining upcoming special events & holiday schedules on the back of the agenda.

- a. **Leadership Institute – Feb 5-6 Board Development** – this will be held in Wabash, IN! Perfect timing for the board recruitment meeting being held in Feb. Cost is \$150/person. Let Hoffarth know if you'd like to attend so it can be approved during the January meeting.
- b. **Growing Summit – March 12-13** – Longenecker asked if any supervisor would like to be involved as far as giving a topic speech. Those interested or if you'd like more information see Longenecker.
- B. **Cobus Creek Watershed Diagnostic Study** – Glassman passed out a fact sheet containing a map of the watershed. He then informed the board that if anyone is interested in joining the steering committee to let staff know so you can receive e-mail updates. Ivkovich and Wrasse said they might be interested.
- C. **Michiana Stormwater Partnership (MSP)- doggie bag dispensers** – Longenecker let the board know that the MSP is ordering doggie poop bag dispensers and asked if we would like to go in with them to purchase some to hand out at our events mainly Science Alive since that will be mostly urban participants. It was recommended (Ivkovich, Silvers) and a motion (Silvers, Burkholder) to spend \$500 to purchase doggie bag dispensers. Both carried.
- VI. **PRIVILEGE OF FLOOR** – Glassman reminded the board that Feb we will be having our recruitment meeting and to get names to the staff so we can send personal invitations to them. John Dooms took a few minutes to thank the board and staff for the hard work throughout 2015. He gave each of the staff a Christmas card on behalf of the board of supervisors.
- VII. **ADJOURNMENT** – The board meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Sandra Hoffarth**  
*Administrative Assistant*  
**St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
 2903 Gary Drive, Plymouth, IN 46563  
 Email: [Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:Sandra.hoffarth@in.nacdnet.net)  
[www.stjosephswcd.org](http://www.stjosephswcd.org)

**Approved by:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Supervisor



# CONSERVATION MOMENT

November 2015

## NRCS Contract Agreement Program Support Services (PSS)

EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150B5
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150JT
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150M3
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY1510X
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY151EA
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY151EF
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY151EJ
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150GY
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY15106
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150I2
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY151AK
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY151EG
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150LZ
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150TF
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY1519T
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY1504A
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150M5
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY1512P
EQIP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	7452KY150M9
CSP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	8152KY1501H
CSP 2014	IN	MIAMI	NE PERU SERVICE CENTER	8152KY150MR

EQIP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE PLYMOUTH SERVICE	7452KY1507P
EQIP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE PLYMOUTH SERVICE	7452KY150B7
EQIP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE PLYMOUTH SERVICE	7452KY150C3
EQIP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE PLYMOUTH SERVICE	7452KY150J5
EQIP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE PLYMOUTH SERVICE	7452KY150C9
CSP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE SOUTH BEND SERVICE	8152KY15014
CSP 2014	IN	ST JOSEPH	NE SOUTH BEND SERVICE	8152KY15015

EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150QQ
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY151G4
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150MH
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY1519C
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY151HH
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150D8
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150L4
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150IP
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150IQ
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY151CS
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150R6
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY151CN
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150D9
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY150D7
EQIP 2014	IN	WABASH	NE WABASH SERVICE	7452KY151SD

### Purpose

The purpose of this agreement is to deliver administrative assistance on EQIP, CSP and CTA programs to landowners in Indiana as authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. Contracts assigned to this agreement are 2015 contracts only.

### Timeframe

Start: June 1, 2015

End: December 1, 2016

### Contracts by County

- ◆ St. Joseph = 7
- ◆ Miami = 21
- ◆ Wabash = 15



EQIP  
Payment  
Certification

**Practice Certification**

Participant: [Name] | Status: [Planned] | Application: [Submitted] | Book Status: [Submitted]

Completion: [Completed] | Inquiry: [Inquiry] | Inspection Date: [12/15/15] | Payment Status: [Not Paid]

Participating States: [List of States]

Performance Report: [Link to Report]

Conservation Plan: [Link to Plan]

Conservation Plan	Status	Tract	Lead Dist.	Code	Practice	Units	Planned	Applied	Applied Date
10000	Act	1000	1	1000	Subsurface Drain	1	1	1	12/15/15

Summary: Total Earned: \$ 90.00, ACI Payment Reduction: \$ 0.00, SPI Earned: \$ 90.00

**Practice Certification**

Participant: [Name] | Status: [Planned] | Application: [Submitted] | Book Status: [Submitted]

Completion: [Completed] | Inquiry: [Inquiry] | Inspection Date: [12/15/15] | Payment Status: [Not Paid]

Participating States: [List of States]

Performance Report: [Link to Report]

Conservation Plan: [Link to Plan]

Conservation Plan	Status	Tract	Lead Dist.	Code	Practice	Units	Planned	Applied	Applied Date
10000	Act	1000	1	1012	Grassed Waterway	1	1	1	12/15/15

Summary: Total Earned: \$ 174.40, ACI Payment Reduction: \$ 0.00, SPI Earned: \$ 174.40

**CONSERVATION PRACTICES PERFORMED**

Practice	Units	Planned	Applied	Participant's Cost	Participant's Unit Cost	Unit Cost	Cost Share Rate	Obligation	ACI Reduction	Cost Share Earned
Subsurface Drain	1	1	1	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00	\$ 90.00	100%	\$ 90.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 90.00

**ROYAL AND PAYMENT APPLICATION**

Participant: [Name] | Program and Contract Number: [Number]

County and State: [County, State] | Fund Code: [Code]

Payment Application Number: [Number]

Item	Payment Type	SPN or Tax ID	Account	Participant Payment Share	Payment Amount	Payment Amount
1	P	[ID]	[Account]	10.0000%	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
2	P	[ID]	[Account]	10.0000%	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$ 40.00</b>	<b>\$ 20.00</b>

**PAYMENT APPLICATION**

Participant: [Name] | Program and Contract Number: [Number]

County and State: [County, State] | Fund Code: [Code]

Payment Application Number: [Number]

Item	Payment Type	SPN or Tax ID	Account	Participant Payment Share	Payment Amount	Payment Amount
1	P	[ID]	[Account]	10.0000%	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
2	P	[ID]	[Account]	10.0000%	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
<b>Total</b>					<b>\$ 40.00</b>	<b>\$ 20.00</b>

CPA-1245

**Payment Review Checklist**

Profracts - Financial Management Modernization Initiative (FMMI) Payment Review Checklist

Contract Number: [Number] | Office or County: [County]

1. Prepare for Participant Signature on NRCS-CPA-1245

- Verify the payment is within the period of performance start and end dates according to applicable program policy.
- Where applicable, itemized receipts, invoices, or bills to support payment applications based on actual cost not to exceed the average cost (AAC) and actual cost not to exceed a specified maximum cost (AMC) method.
- Verify that the higher payment rates that are applicable to historically underserved producers are appropriately administered.
- Verify that practice certification was appropriately completed, where applicable (Ref. 450-GM, Part 407, Subpart B).
- Verify correct extent performed amount is entered to calculate the payment.
- Verify correct extent performed amount is entered to calculate the payment.
- Verify correct extent performed amount is entered to calculate the payment.

2. Payment Types/Indicator

- Conservation Activity Plan Payment
- EQIP Advance Payment
- Completed Partial Payment
- Final Contract Payment
- Direct Deposit Review of SF-1199a

3. Determine Signature Authority for Businesses (If Applicable)

- Entity documents verifying the name of the entity, and who has the authority to sign (2008 and earlier)
- Entity documents verifying the name of the entity, and who has the authority to sign (2009 and later)
- Sam.gov entity registration active (FY 2011 contracts and later)

4. Power of Attorney (If Applicable)

- NRCS-CPA-09, notarized or witnessed by FSA employee on contracts signed on or after 12/17/2008 (REQUIRED on contracts signed after 10/01/2009), indicating applicability to WES programs
- contracts signed after 10/01/2009, indicating applicability to WES programs
- contracts signed after 10/01/2009, indicating applicability to WES programs

5. Direct Deposit Review of SF-1199a

- Verify that a separate SF-1199a exists for each participant receiving a payment per the NRCS-CPA-1202 and NRCS-CPA-1245
- Verify that a separate SF-1199a exists for each participant receiving a payment per the NRCS-CPA-1202 and NRCS-CPA-1245
- Verify that a separate SF-1199a exists for each participant receiving a payment per the NRCS-CPA-1202 and NRCS-CPA-1245

6. Determine Assignments with NRCS-CPA-1236 or CCC-36 (If Applicable)

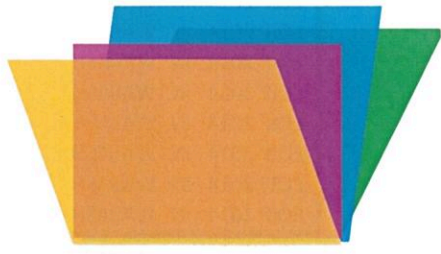
- Names match the NRCS-CPA-1245 and NRCS-CPA-1202 or NRCS-CPA-1245
- Routing number and bank account information is current and correct.
- Participants have verified their bank account information is current and correct.
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) waiver in lieu of direct deposit, if applicable.
- Determine Assignments with NRCS-CPA-1236 or CCC-36 (If Applicable)
- NRCS-CPA-1236 or CCC-36 is signed and dated by the assignee and matches the SF-1199a.
- NRCS-CPA-1236 or CCC-36 is signed and dated by the assignee and matches the SF-1199a.

7. Complete Payment Instructions for Payees

- NRCS-CPA-1245 is accurate and complete for participant signature and applicable payment reductions.
- Payment instructions were not completed by a vendor coordinator.
- NRCS-CPA-1245 is accurate and complete for participant signature and applicable payment reductions.
- Payment instructions were not completed by a vendor coordinator.
- NRCS-CPA-1245 is accurate and complete for participant signature and applicable payment reductions.
- Payment instructions were not completed by a vendor coordinator.

Payment Review  
Checklist

Scan and upload files to NE Area  
Payment Docs drive  
File in 6 part folder



Field Office Report  
November 16 – December 11, 2015

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Field visit and process payments for –

4 cover crop contracts	1 Nutrient Management
1 Irrigation management	1 Fence for Grazing
1 Seasonal High Tunnel	1 Heavy use Area
2 Roof Runoff Structures	1 Animal Trail and Walkway
1 Filter Strip	1 Invasive Species Control
1 No-till	

Sandra processed 2 payment requests for Miami County NRCS

Field visit for new applications – 1 Native Wildlife habitat; 2 pollinator/monarch butterfly habitat

Contract modifications – Substitute Roof Runoff practices

Correct acreage in contract

2 new cover crop applications

Toolkit folders for 10 new applications

Contract Reviews –

Processed cancellation request

Wetland Reserve Program

Enhancement planning meeting between Pokagon Tribe and NRCS

Conservation Reserve Program

4 grazing applications received

Field evaluation for 3 applications – 1 Grassed Waterway and 2 Filter Strips

Soil loss figured for 2 contracts

Conservation Stewardship Program

Payments processed for 5 participants

Contract reviews completed for 5 contracts

RULE 5/13

3 SWPPP reviews

Wetlands – 7 (Marshall)

5 (St Joseph)

Met with FSA County Committee for meeting on a wetland violation

Newsletter articles/layout

Assemble legislative Notebook

53 in-school programs for 13 schools

Science Alive Display

Cover Crop Transect – 2 days

## Meetings

Staff Meetings – 4

NRCS Area Meeting

MSP meeting – Sarah

NRCS Contracting Training – Sandra

Forestry Training – Sarah

Food and Ag Council

Managing for Excellence – James

Met with 2 NRCS offices for contracting info (Sandra)

Webinars: Non-traditional Grazing

Warm Season Grass plantings

Webinar – project Wild

Quarterly Supervisor's meeting

Rural Conservation Committee

IDEA Planning – Sandra



**DC Talking Points  
December 2015**

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**FY 16 Budget**

Indiana NRCS has received our initial allocations for fiscal year 16 (FY16). While funding for technical assistance (TA) has decreased by about \$2.5 million, financial assistance (FA) has increased by approximately \$3 million. Total funding for FY16 has increased by more than \$400,000.

	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>	<b>CHANGE</b>
<b>TA</b>	\$24,451,435	\$21,954,988	-2,496,447
<b>FA</b>	\$25,987,973	\$28,898,127	+2,910,154
<b>TOTAL FA/TA</b>	\$50,439,408	\$50,853,115	+413,707

**Farm Bill Program Updates**

Monarch Butterfly Habitat Conservation

NRCS recently launched a special effort to improve habitat for monarch butterflies in 10 Midwest and Southern Plains states to address diminishing populations of this important species due to the decline of native plants like milkweed. Because monarch butterflies are always on the move, they need to have the right plants at the right time along their migration route.

NRCS worked with The Xerces Society and butterfly experts to choose the best milkweed species and nectar-producing plants to recommend to landowners. This targeted effort will invest \$4 million in 2016 to help combat the decline of this important pollinator using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), remaining funds from the former Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Indiana is one of 10 states selected for this program because we are in the heart of the Monarch's migration area. We will focus on conservation practices that provide buffer habitat along waterways and in wetlands, cover crops and pasture management and that increase soil health, control invasive species and provide other beneficial wildlife habitat.

Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- January 15 is the cutoff for ACEP applications (including Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE and Ag Lands Easements (ALE). Rankings will be scheduled prior to March 1 for all FY 2016 applications making the cutoff date. There is a new ranking form for 2016 and it has been posted to the NRCS website.  
(<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/in/programs/easements/acep/?cid=stelprdb1248149>)
- Over the course of the next year, NRCS will be make extra efforts to contact and meet with all easement landowners. This is an effort to make sure communication between the landowners and the agency remains open, and that concerns or issues with the easements can be addressed before there is a serious problem.
- The Monarch habitat initiative can be used to enhance existing Wetland Reserve Program (WRP)/WRE easements. Landowners may work with their local DC to apply for funds to increase suitable monarch/pollinator habitat on their WRP/WRE easements.

### Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- NRCS will be conducting a statewide review of all active EQIP and CSP contracts obligated from 2011 to 2015 that were contracted under an entity participant Employer ID Number (EIN). Evaluations involve validation of contract DUNS numbers and SAM.gov registration and will involve field, area and state level coordination.
- CSP 16-1 Renewal applications have all been preapproved and District Conservationists should request Quality Assurance from the Area Program Staff. Indiana had a December 21st deadline for obligation and to work with area staff for any flexibility needed. These will be the last CSP applications which will be evaluated using the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT). General CSP 16-1 sign-up will be offered under new ranking process similar to EQIP and is anticipated for the new calendar year.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The sign up deadline for EQIP applications is ~~January 15~~<sup>22</sup> to be considered for FY-16 funding. In addition to EQIP General the deadline applies to the following initiatives:

- EQIP Conservation Activity Plans
- National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI)
- Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)
- National Organic Initiative
- National On-Farm Energy Initiative
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)

Many applicants have interest in addressing soil erosion and water quality issues on cropland. However, there is also funding for grazing land operations, confined livestock operations, drainage water management, nutrient management plans, and wildlife habitat improvement.

### **USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Survey**

As part of a national CEAP study, NASS is contacting farmers to provide input that will measure the environmental benefits associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated agricultural lands. Data obtained from the project will help NRCS conservationists and partners determine the efficiency and effectiveness of current conservation techniques and help identify best practices.

NASS has completed the screening phase of the CEAP project and determined there are 435 eligible points in Indiana. They will be starting the farmer interview process soon, which will continue through February. NRCS staff are also responsible for completing a portion of the survey (the Supplemental Survey) and this will happen after some initial training starting January 11 and running through March. If you have any questions, please contact Rick Neilson, NRCS Soil Scientist, at 317-295-5875 or [rick.neilson@in.usda.gov](mailto:rick.neilson@in.usda.gov).

### **Avian Bird Flu Updates: Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5 (HPAI)**

On a national level, continued surveillance of the wild bird migration patterns in the Mid-Atlantic fly zone found a wild bird which tested positive for the H5 Avian Influenza. USDA Secretary Vilsack has enacted the Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Team made up of all relevant agencies that will assess current needs, surge needs, agency resources, and skill capability from each agency and how these capacities can be quickly mobilized and brought to bear in the unfortunate event of an outbreak or pandemic.



Guidance that NRCS employees received August 26<sup>th</sup> remains in place until further notice. This guidance continues to suspend all direct contact with all poultry areas or areas with recently spread poultry manure, but allows for access to portions of farms where poultry are not located. Communication with the farmer is required, and biosecurity protocols must be followed. For more information visit BOAH's website at: [www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm](http://www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm).

Report sick poultry, including backyard poultry, by calling the Healthy Birds Hotline: 1-866-536-7593. Indiana's state and federal veterinarians are receiving and triaging these calls. Citizens who see five or more wild, feeder-type birds dead should call the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at: 812-334-1137. More information on avian influenza is available online at: [www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm](http://www.in.gov/boah/2390.htm).

**Conservation Client Gateway (CCG) is Available for Individual Farmers:** Please help us continue to spread the word that Conservation Client Gateway is available to all individual farmers. CCG is a secure website that makes it easy for farmers to access conservation information and request assistance. Client Gateway will be extended to business entities and available on mobile devices in the future. For more information check out the website [www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway). CCG is completely voluntary, NRCS field staff will still be available in for individual assistance.

### **Wrap up of International Year of the Soil and World Soil Day – December 5**

We are coming to a close for the *2015 International Year of the Soils*, which has brought unprecedented focus to the importance of our soils and has inspired people across the world to take a second look at what is under their feet. NRCS has used this opportunity to promote soil health to encourage people to make changes in the way they care for it. World Soil Day on December 5 is yet another opportunity to celebrate and bring recognition to this nonrenewable resource and how we can utilize soil health practices to improve and sustain it.

For more information about the *International Year of Soils*, visit:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/soils/yos/>. For more information on *World Soil Day*, visit the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at:

<http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/world-soil-day/en/>. For more information about NRCS's Unlock the Secrets of the Soil efforts visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/>.





# Cobus Creek Watershed

Hydrologic Unit Code #040500012203

Cobus Creek Watershed is a scenic watershed located in both Michigan and Indiana: Cass County, Michigan and Elkhart and St. Joseph Counties, Indiana. Its 23,413 acres are composed primarily of agriculture in the north, developed residential and commercial land uses in the south, and forest and wetlands sprinkled among several surface water bodies. Many residents live in close proximity to Cobus Creek or one of the watershed's seven lakes and many are very interested in continuing the tradition of preserving the health of their creek, lakes, and 1,600 acres of wetlands. This watershed is especially unique in that it is one of the very few cold-water streams in Indiana supporting a naturally reproducing population of brown trout, walleye, and blue gill, making it a popular spot for local anglers. These resources give reason as to why Cobus Creek Watershed is held in high regard by its landowners and stakeholders.

*"Beyond its ecological importance... Cobus Creek provides significant social and economic benefits to the residents of Michiana through recreational and quality of life benefits, and increased property values."*

-Biological Community Assessments of Cobus Creek (2014)

**Size:** 23,413 ac.

**Municipalities:**

- Indiana - Elkhart & Granger
- Michigan - Edwardsburg

**Population:** ~15,600 residents

**Landuse:**

- Agriculture (43%)
- Developed (35%)
- Forest (14%)

**Water Resources**

- 25 mi. of streams
- 1,603 ac. of wetlands
- 7 named lakes

**Unique Resources**

- Natural trout reproduction
- High wetland retention
  - 68% of pre-settlement wetlands preserved
- Cobus Creek County Park
- Boot Lake Nature Preserve

