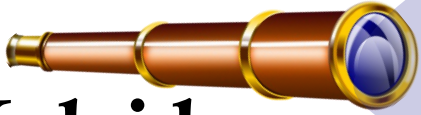


Conservation

Kaleidoscope



Today's Visions for
Tomorrow's Future

Volume 25, Issue 6

November/December 2023

From Waste to Rescue

Did you know that 30 to 40% of food in the US is wasted? That's about \$165 billion of food wasted each year! The EPA estimates that more food was sent to landfills than any other single material in 2018. Decomposing food and other organic materials produce large amounts of methane and carbon dioxide, making significant contributions to climate change. Food waste is also a waste of our natural resources, taking a lot of water and energy to produce and transport.



In our May/June newsletter, we had an article about steps our local landfill is taking to reduce emissions by converting methane emissions into renewable natural gas. This issue, we wanted to highlight programs that are making an impact before the food makes it to the landfill.

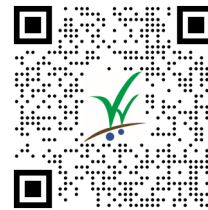


Composting is an activity that can have a major impact on decreasing the amount of food entering the landfill, and two of our universities, St. Mary's and IUSB, are doing just that. IUSB's Center for a Sustainable Future has in the past placed buckets around the dorms to collect food scraps, which they would then take to composting tumblers. They are looking to build the program, making it campus wide. St. Mary's College collects food scraps from the dining hall to compost and use in their sustainable garden - compost is an excellent soil additive! Notre Dame, on the other hand, uses a program called Grind2Energy. This takes all of the inedible food waste and converts it into clean water and renewable energy.

Of course, not all uneaten food is inedible. There is a lot of edible food wasted, but luckily there are programs that divert this food to feed people that need it. St. Mary's group works with campus dining to package excess food and deliver it to the Center for the Homeless. Notre Dame sends food from events and dining halls to Cultivate Food Rescue. This is an organization who 'rescues' food from many sources, like Notre Dame, grocery stores, farms, and caterers. They organize and prepare the food, then distribute it to feed many food-insecure families in northern Indiana.

We can make an impact on how much food is wasted in our own homes, too. A good first step would be to watch how much food you throw away. Are you buying more than you really need? Or more than you can use before it spoils?

And, of course, we can all be composting! There are many methods and setups available, so there is something for everyone, even people in an apartment! And compost makes a huge impact on your soil health. Visit the Compost page on our website for tips and ideas to get compost started at your home!



StJosephSWCD.org/Compost

2903 Gary Drive
Plymouth, IN 46563

www.stjosephswcd.org

info@stjosephswcd.org

(574)936-2024 ext. 4

Keep It Covered!

In September, we co-hosted a Cover Crop Field Day with Marshall County, which included soil health demonstrations and checking out a soil pit with conservation agronomist, Bryan Overstreet. It was a great day with great conversations!

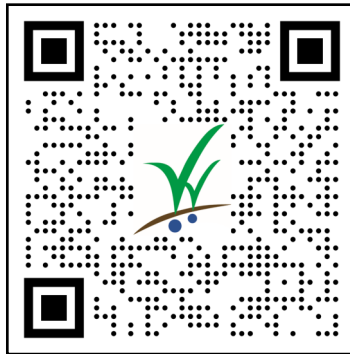
Cover crops are an important practice in regenerative agriculture. Utilizing cover crops in between cash crops greatly improves the fertility and structure of the soil, which in the long run increases yield for your crops.



Have you seen our signs? Throughout the county, we are placing signs near farms that are using cover crops. Our goal is to educate the public on how *everyone* benefits from cover crops, not just farmers.

And if you missed our Cover Crop Field Day, watch our website and

Facebook page for the next one! We hope to be at the same farm so we can see the improvement in soil health over time!



StJosephSWCD.org/eventspage

Join Us!

Soil and water conservation does not effect only farmers! Conservation practices we promote to improve soil and water quality directly effect the water you drink and the food you eat. If you are concerned about soil, water, and other natural resources in St. Joseph County, consider becoming involved!

The St. Joseph County SWCD is always looking for volunteers to help with promoting urban and agricultural best management practices, conservation programs, field days, and youth and adult education events. We are also looking for Associate Supervisors to attend board meetings and provide input to the SWCD Board on soil and water conservation issues and programs.

We would welcome your involvement! You are invited to contact us for more information or attend a board meeting. Also, watch into the spring for our recruitment event when you can come out to talk directly with our staff and board about what volunteering would look like.

Wrangling the Invasives!

The St. Joseph-Marshall Counties Invasive Plant Partnership (SMIPP) held the last Weed Wrangle of the year in October. It was a chilly and rainy day, but we had good attendance and got a lot of invasives removed! Invasive species are non-native organisms that spread aggressively and disrupt the ecosystem. They pose a threat to native plants and wildlife.

SMIPP is here to provide information and resources to the community and to build and improve control efforts. We hold Weed Wrangles in the spring and fall in public spaces for hands-on removal of invasive species. We also host Invasives Walk and Talks through the year to educate about identification and removal methods, and to give the public a chance to talk directly with professionals. And 2024 is going to bring even more! Watch the SWCD website and follow SMIPP's webpage for ways you can be involved in keeping our ecosystems natural!



2024 Membership Form

Thank you for your support! Our outreach and education projects would not be possible without the help of community members like you!

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:
Phone:
Email:
Website:

Choose your giving level:

Affiliate Member (\$25-99)

Silver Member (\$250-499)

Bronze Member (\$100-249)

Gold Member (\$500 & above)

All donors will receive a tax-deductible donation receipt and recognition in our 2023 Annual Report and website. Gold, Silver, and Bronze members will include a certificate of recognition and contact information on our website.

Please keep my donation anonymous.

If you would like to donate to a specific project or event, please indicate below.

General Education & Outreach

Youth Education Programs

Annual Meeting Banquet (donation must be submitted by 1/15/2024)

Conservation Programs Cost Shares

Other (Please specify)

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

Or visit our website to make payments through Paypal!



Save the Date!

You're invited to join us as we celebrate 64 years of serving St. Joseph County!

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District 64th Annual Meeting

February 16, 2023
St. Hedwig Memorial Center

331 S. Scott St.
South Bend, IN 46601

Meeting starts at 6:30 PM
Doors Open at 5:45 PM

Cost: \$15 per person (includes dinner)



EQIP Application Deadline!

For those interested, the deadline to be considered for the next round of funding for EQIP is
December 8th, 2023!



St. Joseph County
Soil & Water
Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive
Plymouth, IN 46563

www.StJosephSWCD.org

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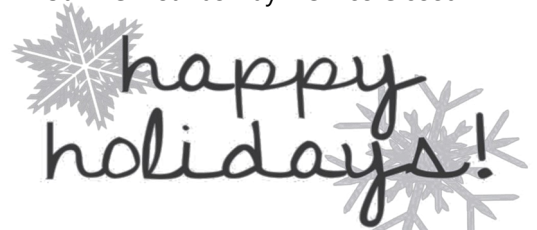
Upcoming Events!

November

7th - Election Day - No District Staff
10th - Veteran's Day - Office Closed
15th - STEAM Expo Night - Kennedy Academy, 6 pm
21st - Board Meeting, Centre Township Library, 7 pm
23rd - Thanksgiving Holiday - Office Closed
24th - Thanksgiving Holiday - No District Staff

December

8th - EQIP Application Deadline
17th - Board Meeting, Location TBA
25th - Christmas Day - Office Closed



Go Green!

Contact us to choose
to get your newsletter
by email!



Visit our website & watch Facebook for more information!

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership

St. Joseph County SWCD Partnership Staff

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD
Ally Pudlo, SWCD
Misty Sorchevich, SWCD
Debbie Knepp, NRCS
Jorge Lozoya, NRCS

SWCD Honorary Members:

Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar

SWCD Supervisors:

Chris Matthys, Chairman
Marty Lappin, Vice Chairman
Dave Vandewalle
Sam James
Joe Gregory

Farm Service Agency Staff

Gideon Nobbe, CED
Devan Harrell
Aldona Martin
Diane Stichter
Michael Cuff

SWCD Associate Supervisors:

Dave Craft
John Dooms
Chuck Lehman
Randy Matthys
Richard Schmidt
Dave Straughn
Dru Wrasse
Mike Burkholder