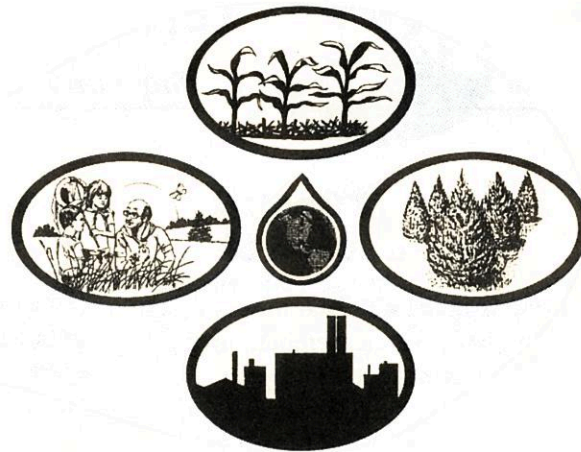
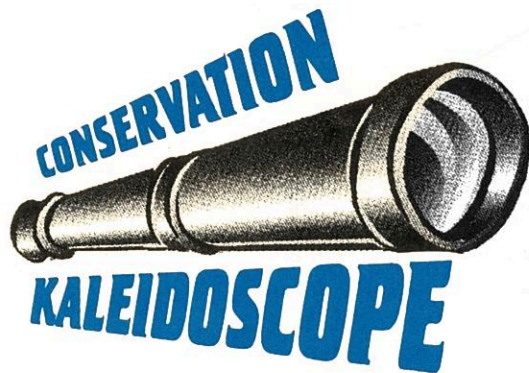




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

April/May/June 2009
Volume 11, Issue 2

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

- 18 - Tree Order Pick-up at the 4-H Fairgrounds
- 20 - SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 7:00 AM - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room
- 22 - Earth Day
- 24 - Arbor Day

May

- 5 - Primary Election Day
- 10 - Mother's Day
- 18 - SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 7:00 AM - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room
- 25 - Memorial Day Office Closed

June

- 15 - SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 7:00 AM - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room
- 21 - Father's Day
- 21 - First Day of Summer



"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

~ John Muir, a Scottish-born American naturalist, author, and early advocate of preservation of U.S. wilderness (1838-1914)



Tree Order Pick-Up and Extra Tree Sales

The pick-up date for the 23rd Annual Tree Sale Program is **Saturday, April 18th, 2009, from 8:00 am until noon (EST)**. The pick-up will be in the swine barn at the **St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds**. If you missed the deadline for ordering trees, you still have a chance to purchase them—we **will have extra trees for sale at the same time as the**

order pick-up. As of the printing date of this newsletter, we have extras of all species listed in the sales flyers. See you at the fairgrounds on April 18th, 2009!

Congratulations to the 2009 Annual Meeting Award Winners!

Conservation Farmer of the Year ~ Bill Lappin

Wildlife Habitat & Forestry Award ~ Will Ditzler

45 Year Service Award ~ Gene Myers

10 Year Service Award ~ John Kulwicki

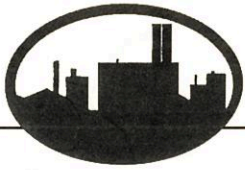
10 Year Service Award ~ Melvin Kulwicki



Congratulations to John Kulwicki and Carole Riewe for their selection as SWCD Supervisors at our 2009 Annual Meeting

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Sediment Control for Construction Sites

Spring is in the air! That means longer days, warmer temperatures, and many construction projects starting up again. We may think of spring flowers and new green grass, but springtime is also a time for something perhaps less beautiful—mud! Because construction areas can contain bare ground, they are often muddy, especially in the spring. But using the right erosion- and sediment-control practices can help prevent that mud from becoming a problem.

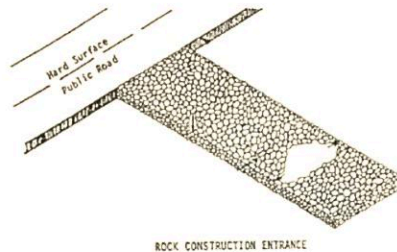
One of the most important practices to keep mud and sediment from moving where it shouldn't be is a **temporary construction ingress/egress pad**, sometimes known as a **construction entrance or exit**. This best management practice is meant to be installed on a construction site at a point where construction traffic will be travelling between the site and a public road or right-of-way. It provides a stable surface on which construction vehicles can enter and exit the site, and traps sediment and soil coming off tires, preventing the soil from entering the street.

There are standard specifications for



building an ingress/egress pad, which can be found in **IDEM's Indiana Storm Water Quality Manual**. The specifications are different for a small site (less than two acres) and a large site (two acres

or more). But both follow the same basic guidelines: a graded foundation (sloped for proper drainage), geotextile fabric for added stability if wet conditions are expected, and aggregate (also sloped for drainage). The aggregate helps knock mud and dirt off truck tires before that mud is tracked onto the road. The pad should be inspected daily, and reshaped as necessary to maintain drainage. Also, because soil gets trapped in the aggregate, an ingress/egress pad needs occasional top-dressing (adding more aggregate). Otherwise tires might start to pick up soil from the pad. Of course, it is very difficult to



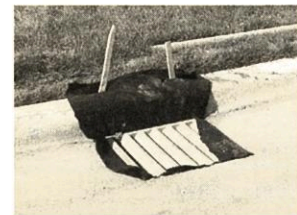
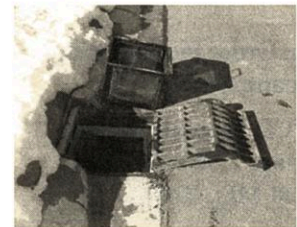
prevent all sediment from reaching a street or road. While mud on a road might be annoying to drive through, it poses another problem as well. On most public roads and streets, there are inlets leading to a storm sewer. If those inlets are not protected, mud from a construction site can easily travel into the storm sewer and end up in our rivers and lakes.

What's a little mud in a river, you might ask? But sediment is a major pollutant of surface waters in Indiana. Sediment causes turbidity in the water, reducing the amount of sunlight that can penetrate to reach aquatic plants. It covers up the rocks and pebbles in the bottom of a river, destroying the habitat of many important aquatic animals. And it can be a carrier of the nutrient Phosphorous, which depletes dissolved oxygen levels.

To prevent further sedimentation in our rivers and lakes, our curb inlets need protection. Some ways they can be protected include: filter "socks" (tubes of filtering material packed in netting), stone bags, concrete blocks and gravel, and filter fabric placed under the grate.

Specifications for inlet protection practices can be found in IDEM's Indiana Storm Water Quality Manual. Below are some photos of inlet protection

Ingress/Egress Pads and Inlet



Protection are only two of the practices that can help prevent erosion and sedimentation at construction sites. By implementing these and other best management practices, we can enjoy the season while keeping the springtime mud out of our streets and rivers.

To view **IDEM's Indiana Storm Water Quality Manual** on the internet, visit:
<http://www.in.gov/idem/4899.htm>



Tree Selection and Planting Seminar Held February 3rd, 2009

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District held a tree selection and planting seminar on February 3rd, 2009. John Scheetz of Hensler's Nursery gave the presentation, providing the audience with plenty of information about trees, tree selection, and tree planting. According to John, it's very important to do your research before you plant a tree. To find the right tree for the right place, a lot must be taken into consideration. Different tree species have different sizes, benefits, and needs.

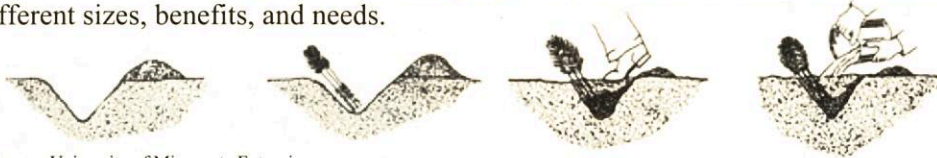


Image: University of Minnesota Extension

Once you've decided which tree to plant and where, you need to make sure you get it planted right. Here are some tips to make sure your tree has a good chance to survive and thrive.

When to Plant—The best time to plant trees in Northern Indiana is in the early spring, from mid-March to mid-May. A cool, cloudy day with little wind gives the seedlings the best conditions to get started. If you cannot plant your seedlings right away, you can "heel them in." This is done by digging a shallow trench, leaning the seedlings along the side with their roots in the trench, and covering with soil. If they are not permanently planted within a week, you may need to water the seedlings to make sure the roots stay moist.

How to Plant—When you are ready to plant the seedlings, place them in a bucket of water to keep the roots from drying out as you plant them one at a time. Dig a hole deeper and wider than the roots, place a seedling in the hole, and fill it loosely with soil. Use your hands or feet to gently firm the soil around the seedling (but don't stomp!). To help make sure the roots have good contact with the soil around them, it is a good idea to water the tree at planting time. The water will fill up any air pockets that could otherwise dry out the roots.

Planting Depth—This is a very important factor in determining a seedling's chances of survival. You want your seedling's root collar (the area between the roots and the stem) to be even with the ground level. You can often tell where the soil level was at the nursery; this is the right level. Planting too shallow can leave roots exposed to the air. Planting too deep can cover up too much of the stem and prevent it from properly growing foliage. Also, watch out for "J" roots; these occur when the roots are forced into a hole that is too small, making them point upwards or sideways instead of down.

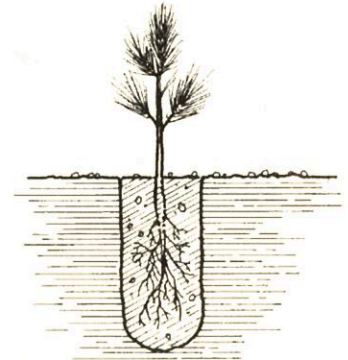


Image: Oklahoma State University Extension

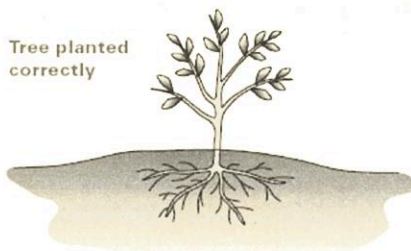
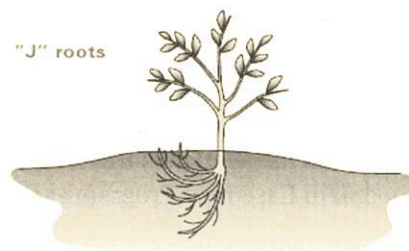


Image: Iowa State University Extension



If you keep these tips in mind, your seedlings should have a good chance of survival. Remember that these tips are for seedling planting and that balled-burlapped trees may require some different methods. **If you run into problems or have tree-planting questions, feel free to contact the St. Joseph County SWCD at 574-291-7444, ext.3.**



NRCS Offers Easement Funds for Flooded Fields

INDIANAPOLIS, February 5, 2009 —

It has been several months since farm fields in Indiana suffered huge damages from some of the most significant rainstorms and flooding ever in the Midwest. Last summer, as the flood waters receded, farmers were in their fields surveying damages and replanting drowned crops. In some fields the damages were so great that it will take years and great expense to restore them to adequate levels of productivity.



Indiana has a new Mackey Bend Island created as a result the June 2008 flooding from the Wabash River.

“We have seen places here in Indiana where flooding losses happen frequently enough, and productivity is low enough that they are not worth the investment it takes to continue to farm them,” says State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, of USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “We have an opportunity to offer farmers who find themselves in that situation.”

“There are two conservation programs in which funding has been authorized to purchase easements on farmlands where flooding is a problem. We anticipate receiving significant dollars for both the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and the Floodplain Easement Program (FEP) in 2009. The eligibility requirements are slightly different in the two programs, but this is an excellent time to enroll fields or parts of fields where flooding or flood damages have made crop production marginal,” says Hardisty.

For the Floodplain Easement Program, land qualifies if it has been flooded at least once in the past 12 months, or

twice in the past 10 years. In the Wetlands Reserve Program, land qualifies if it would have been considered a wetland area before it was converted to agricultural production.



Cornfield in Columbus, Indiana in June 2008

Under both programs, NRCS buys easements on lands to remove them from production agriculture. Once the easements are in place, NRCS may do some restoration work to put the land back into floodplain use or wetland conditions. Restoration work is paid up to 100% by NRCS, and helps retain flood waters in floodplains and associated areas, restore water quality, and provide habitats for wildlife.

Easement compensation is based on a cap set for each county, and the land is valued either as cropland or non-cropland. Interested landowners can get more information and apply by visiting NRCS at the local USDA Service Center. More information can be found on-line at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/> under “Easement Programs.”



Marines and sailors move a hose through water from the White River in Elnora, Indiana on June 9, 2008 to help state and local authorities raise the White River levee in an attempt to prevent further flooding in the area. (U. S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Patrick M. Johnson-Campbell.)

USDA Service Center locations can be found at:
<http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app>



Droplets of Information of Farm Bill 2008

Many of us have been eagerly awaiting the new **Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008**, commonly known as the **2008 Farm Bill**. Currently, we have received information of new provisions and new rules, but we are still waiting for the release of funding. Your local NRCS office in partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District wants to ensure that producers in St. Joseph County have the advantage of receiving accurate information in a timely manner.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)—

With **EQIP**, farmers and ranchers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices. For the 2008 Farm Bill, the **EQIP** now includes forest management and energy conservation as well as practices related to organic production and fuel management. Another of the innovations of this new bill is the addition of the **Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)**.

AWEP is a conservation program under the **EQIP** that provides technical and financial assistance to producers and entities willing to apply agricultural water enhancement activities that conserve ground and surface water and improve water quality on agricultural lands. **AWEP** will assist eligible producers in the county to improve the efficiency of irrigation with the purpose to decrease runoff in farm fields. Congress has reoffered the **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**, providing an excellent opportunity for creative individuals willing to take agriculture to the next step for the benefit of the next



generation. The **CIG** works through **EQIP** for the purpose of stimulating the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 expanded the objectives of **CIG** to include forest resource management, and projects that provide benefits increasing the participation of producers of specialty crops and an effective transfer of technologies that have been created through **CIG**.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)—

The **CStP** will be offered for eligible producers all across the nation. This program, which was previously known as the Conservation Security Program, encourages producers that already are

addressing resource concerns on farmland. Also, **CStP** will compensate producers who install and adopt additional conservation activities or will improve, maintain and manage conservation activities on site. The new 2008 Farm Bill encourages activities related to on-farm conservation research and demonstration activities, and pilot testing of new technologies or innovative conservation practices.



Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)—

The **CCPI** will create new opportunities for partnerships that are interested in implementing agronomical practices that will protect our natural resources.

Farm Lands Protection Program (FRPP)—

If you are concerned about prime farmland loss to development, the **FRPP** is for you. This is a voluntary deed based program whose purpose is to help farmers to keep their land in production.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

For the outdoor lovers, the **WRP** has been reoffered. This is an easement based program that provides assistance to landowners interested in creating, enhancing or restoring wetland areas. Congress has increased the total number of acres that can be enrolled in the program.

(Continued on page 6)



(Continued from page 5)



Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)—

Another option for folks that love hunting, fishing or just watching little critters is the **WHIP**. **WHIP** is a conservation program that provides help in the development or improvement of high quality wildlife areas. The biggest change is that the eligible land is Private agricultural land, non-industrial private forest land and Tribal land.

* * *

The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 provides lots of innovative opportunities for technical and financial assistance for hardworking producers like you that are willing to conserve the land for future generations.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact your local USDA Service Center. We will be more than happy to assist you.

* * *

For the latest official information, visit: <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>

Katie Kurtz . . . New County Conservationist, but not New to the St. Joseph County SWCD



You may recognize my name because I've been at the SWCD as the MS4 Conservationist since August of 2008. But in January I accepted a new position—County Conservationist.

As County Conservationist, I still deal some with Rule 5 plans and inspections, but I have many other responsibilities as well. I am learning about the SWCD's partner, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and will be helping Debbie Knepp (our NRCS District Conservationist) work with landowners to improve erosion control and implement conservation programs.

I also schedule the use of our Warm Season Grass Drill, help plan workshops and field days, and write articles about conservation for our newsletter or other local news sources. Last but not least, the County Conservationist takes a lead role in planning the District's Annual Tree Sale, and since taking this position, I have learned a great deal about all the planning and work that goes into that!

While I am still very new at my job, the rest of the staff here helps me out plenty. I hope to serve St. Joseph County well while discovering all that this new position entails.

Meet Maria Schaefer . . . St. Joseph County SWCD's New MS4 Conservationist



My name is Maria Schaefer and I am the new MS4 Conservationist for the St. Joseph County SWCD.

I am a graduate of the Natural Resources and Environmental Science Program at Purdue University. Before joining the SWCD staff I worked as a private environmental consultant specializing in water quality.

I look forward to working with St. Joseph County contractors and landowners to help maintain and protect our natural resources.

Is it Time to Buy New Seeds? Here's an Easy Way to Tell

1. Lightly dampen a paper towel with water and place 10 seeds on it.
2. Fold up the paper towel, enclosing the seeds inside.
3. Place it in a plastic bag and seal it. Label the bag with the seed name.
4. Place the bag in a warm spot out of direct sunlight, such as on top of the fridge.
5. Check daily; mist the towel with water when it begins to dry out.
6. Depending on the seeds, germination should begin in anywhere from 2 days to a few weeks. When 2-3 days pass without any new seeds sprouting, you can safely assume the rest aren't viable.
7. If you tested 10 seeds from a left-over packet and only six sprouted, you have a 60 percent germination rate from that batch. Plant extra to compensate. If very few germinated, buy new seeds for this year.

To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer.
~ *Farmers' Almanac, 1978*



Composting 101

It's spring clean up time and you are wondering, what am I going to do with all these leaves and branches?

EASY—COMPOST THEM!

It is good for the environment and good for your garden and flower beds and most important it is easy to do, with just a little thought.

Getting started, the optimal conditions...

Oxygen: Greater than 5%

Your pile does not have to be completely turned over, but must stay loose. Keep a pitchfork near the pile and just poke and lift every now and again. The better the aeration the faster to the finished product.

Moisture: Between 40—60 %

You should be able to put your hand in the pile and it should come out feeling moist but not wet. Too much water and you will go into anaerobic decomposition and your pile will smell nasty. Too little water and it will just sit there and do nothing.

Temperature:

Between 90—140° Fahrenheit

If everything else is right, so will be the temperature. 90—140° F is **not** hot enough to kill diseases or pathogens, so no cat or dog droppings and no diseased weeds or plants. It is hot enough to kill seeds.

pH: Between 6—8

Typically, this should not be a problem in most cases.

Carbon / Nitrogen Ratio: 30 : 1

This is the big one—the one where most people fail. Carbons are **browns**, nitrogens are **greens**. Leaves, twigs, sawdust, ashes, straw, paper are all **brown**.

Food waste, grass clippings, fresh weeds and manure are **greens**.

If you think about it you will realize that we have far more browns than greens around us. Take a look and the Simple Compost Recipe on this page and you will see what I mean.

To solve this problem you may actually need to add fertilizer to your compost pile. (Now you know what to do with the block of fertilizer in your shed!)

Where to put the Pile!

Wherever you like. Just keep in mind the optimal conditions. If it is in the sun, you may need to water the pile in the summertime. If it is in the shade, you may need to cover it so it does not become too wet.

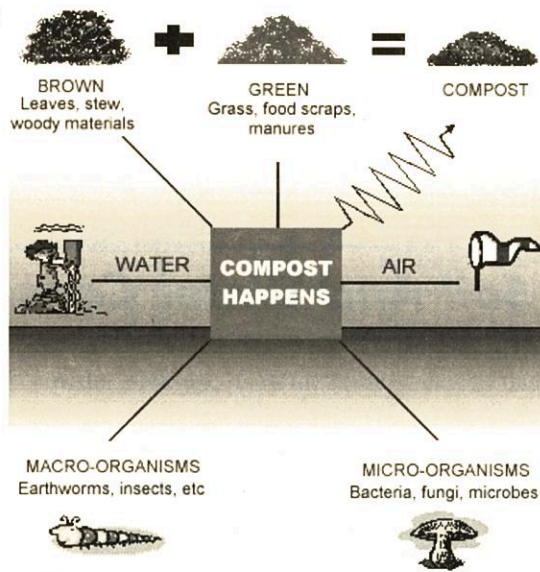


Image Source: Torfaen County Borough Council Website (Pontypool, South Wales) www.torfaen.gov.uk

What not to Compost

Dog & cat droppings—The possible pathogens in them will not be killed.

Meat, bones and oils—These can attract unwanted visitors like dogs and rats.

Diseased plants—Again the pile will not get hot enough to kill them.

What you can Compost

About everything else that is organic matter, including newspaper, and ashes from the grill or fireplace.

Final Composting Notes

Make sure you add some soil to your pile, this will introduce faster the food web (or nutrient cycle and energy flow) that will take your raw materials and turn them into compost. If you are doing it right, you can go from raw materials to compost in about 3 months. You can add manure from herbivores as nitrogen to your compost pile.

For more info on composting, check out the many web sites available or watch your recycling bill for an upcoming compost seminar or give our office a call at 574-291-7444, ext. 3.

Simple Compost Recipe

- 3 parts Dry leaves
- 1 part Fresh garden weeds
- 1 part Fresh grass clippings
- 1 part Food scrapes

FAMILY SWAMP STOMP COMING: JUNE 2009

Come join Rick Glassman from the St. Joseph County SWCD for this family fun day at **Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area**. I have been taking school groups on the swamp stomp for 18 years now and I been asked to do a Family Swamp Stomp, so we are going to give it a try. We will meet at Kingsbury FWA and explore their 350 acre wetland marsh—and I do mean explore, as we will be walking through the marsh. This will be a Saturday in June but unfortunately I can not set the date quite yet. **Call the office AT 574-291-7444, ext. 3 around the middle of May for complete details, directions and above all, what to bring and wear.**

Note: Kingsbury FWA is a great place to hike and ride bikes so plan on making a day of this family adventure.



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 Conservation District

Supervisors:

John Dooms, Chairman
Jan Ivkovich, V-Chairman
Dave Craft, Member
John Kulwicki, Member
Carole Riewe, Member

Associate Supervisors:

Brian Cherry
Melvin Kulwicki
Jim LaFree
Charles Lehman
Joe Long
Randy Matthys
Eugene Myers
Richard Schmidt
Dale Stoner
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

Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS
Lindsay Martinez, NRCS
Rafael Vega, NRCS
Rick Glassman, SWCD
Katie Kurtz, SWCD
Maria Schaefer, SWCD
Alisa Wynn, SWCD

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Morgan Thornburg, CED
Helene Cannoot
Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli