

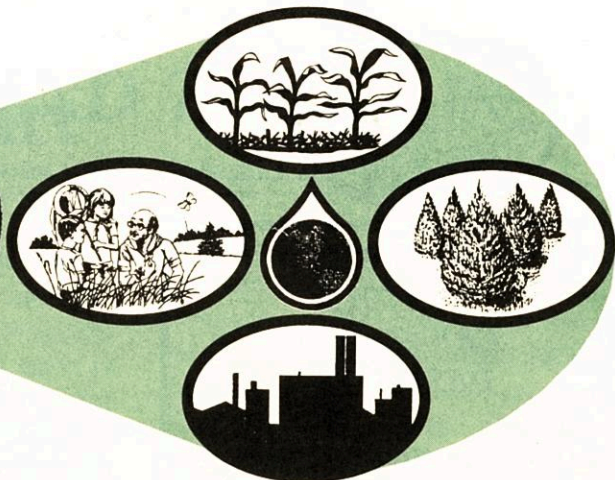


**St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District**

**CONSERVATION**



**KALEIDOSCOPE**



*Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future*

Jan/Feb/Mar/2001  
Volume 3, Issue 1

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Calendar of Events

January 1

New Year's Day - Office Closed

January 10

Reservations Due for Annual Meeting

January 16

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting  
7:30 - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

January 19, 2001

SWCD 41st Annual Meeting  
Holy Family Parish Hall - 6:30

February 10

Science Alive   
St. Joseph Co. Library

February 20

George Washington's Birthday  
Office Closed

February 21

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting  
7:30 - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

March 1

Last day for Tree orders

March 9, 10, 11

Ag Days - Scottsdale Mall

March 19

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting  
7:30 - Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

**ANNUAL MEETING**

Please join us on January 19th, 2001 at 6:30 p.m. for our 41st Annual Meeting. A polish-style meal will be served. Tickets are \$7.50 per person. Reservations should be made by January 10th, 2001. Our guest speaker will be Jane Hardisty, Indiana State Conservationist. Please call the office at 219-291-2300, ext. 3 for more information.

**REMINDER**

Tree orders are due in our office by March 1, 2001.



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# THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

**WATER IS  
NEITHER  
CREATED OR  
DESTROYED**

**IT CHANGES FORM,  
FROM A GAS TO A  
LIQUID, TO A SOLID.**

**BASICALLY, THE  
WATER YOU DRINK  
TODAY, IS THE SAME  
WATER THAT THE  
DINOSAURS PLAYED IN.**



Winter is an excellent time of the year to go outside and explore the natural world. No leaves on the trees, mean you can see farther and if there is snow, animal tracks abound. Follow the tracks both directions to learn about the feeding and resting habits of your wild neighbors.

## WINTER TIME SCAVENGER HUNT

Look for:

- \* A tree cavity, where an animal might spend the night. (Use a stick to knock on the tree, someone might just look out to say hello.)
- \* An insect that has survived the cold. (Think it might be dead, take it home and put it someplace warm. Some insects can be frozen solid and live.)
- \* A whole unchewed acorn.
- \* A pine cone
- \* A still yellow maple leaf.
- \* A feather.
- \* A woolly bear caterpillar.
- \* A partially eaten hickory nut
- \* A set of animal tracks



## SOME INTERESTING STUFF

Every year you consume about two pounds of insects in your normal food intake.

During your sleep, you eat about eight spiders year.

## PROTECTING STORM DRAINS

Do you know where the water that is traveling into storm sewers goes? It does not get treated at the local wastewater treatment plant — it goes straight into local streams and rivers. Good neighbors do not dump leftover fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, pet waste, lawn clippings, used motor oil, antifreeze, paints, cleaners and other pollutants into these seemingly convenient waste sites.

Here are some things you should consider to protect storm drains:

- \* Volunteer to help label drains with the message – No Dumping, Drains to stream.
- \* Adopt a storm drain in your neighborhood and teach your neighbors how to properly dispose of potential pollutants.
- \* Recycle used motor oil, anti-freeze and get household hazardous waste to a collection site
- \* Do not dispose of lawn care items into the storm drains.
- \* Mulch or compost your lawn clippings and leaves.
- \* Clean away debris from storm drains as it collects.
- \* Stop erosion from your property, before it gets to a storm drain.



## DID YOU KNOW? A LITTLE ACTIVITY

- \* TAKE A FIVE GALLON BUCKET OF WATER AND FILL IT WITH WATER. THIS REPRESENTS ALL OF THE WATER ON PLANET EARTH.
- \* REMOVE 2 1/2 CUPS OF WATER, THIS REPRESENTS ALL THE FRESH WATER. THE REST OF THE BUCKET IS SALT WATER, NOT AVAILABLE FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION.
- \* REMOVE 1 1/2 CUPS FROM THE FRESH WATER. THIS IS FRESH WATER IN ICE CAPS, THE SOIL AND THE ATMOSPHERE. THIS IS NOT AVAILABLE FOR HUMAN USE.
- \* NEXT REMOVE FIVE DROPS FROM THE REMAINING ONE CUP OF FRESH WATER. THIS IS ALL THAT IS AVAILABLE TO USE FOR US. THE REST OF THE ONE CUP IS POLLUTED OR TOO EXPENSIVE TO ACCESS FOR USE.



# WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

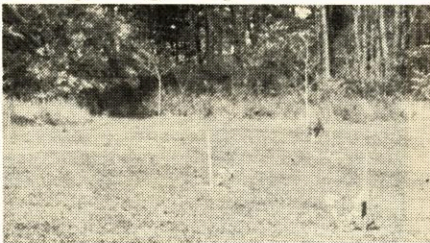
## **Hurry!!!, Tree Orders**

**Due March 1, 2001!!!**

We have a wide variety of trees to choose from for this year's Tree Sales Program, but we're only accepting orders until March 1st. If you don't have an order form please give us a call and we'll be glad to send one to you. You can also print one from our website at:

[www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph](http://www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph)

The pick-up day for the trees will be held on Saturday morning, April 21st at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. All of those who submit orders will receive a confirmation through the mail near the beginning of April.



*Young trees planted from last year's sale.*

For those who do not get their orders in or those who decide they need more trees, you have another option. We will have extra trees for sale at the same time and place as the tree pick-up, Saturday morning, April 21st at the Fairgrounds. Please call or e-mail our office if you have any questions.



1995

## **Plant Trees If You Can**

We've all heard from articles, pamphlets, and even newsletters that the role trees play on earth is critical. The environmental benefits of trees (erosion control, cleaner air, wildlife habitat, etc.) have been documented many times.

Although tree plantings are beneficial they can be quite costly. If you're interested in a windbreak, wildlife area, riparian buffer, or reforestation there may be some financial assistance available.

Some people feel that trees simply take too long to grow and that they will not be able to enjoy them within their lifetime. It's true that trees can seem like slow growers, but most who have planted trees are very happy about their tree growth. Also, there is a great deal of joy that comes from watching them develop. Just look at these before and after pictures of a tree planting done here in St. Joseph County approximately five years ago. Some of the trees in this planting are over 10' tall now.

Some of these trees were acquired through our Tree Sales Program!



2000

This was a cost-shared tree planting through the Conservation Reserve Program. The landowners have seen a significant increase in the amount of wildlife in the area and they are very pleased with their planting. Contact our office to see if we can assist you too!

***(Watch for upcoming information on Tree Planting Seminars in March or contact the SWCD office!)***

## **Oak Trees for Wildlife**

The more mature oaks left in a wooded tract, the better for wildlife. Acorns are one of the most valuable wildlife foods. They are eaten by at least 40 mammal and 37 songbird species. Acorns are relished by such game species as quail, pheasant, deer, turkey, grouse, mallards and wood ducks.



*Acorns are food for squirrels, deer and many other wildlife species. Both red oaks and white oaks should be maintained in a woodlot.*

The well-stocked woodland contains a mixture of trees from both the white and red oak groups. The presence of trees from both groups is insurance against total acorn production failure due to frost or wet weather in the spring. The acorns from red oaks take two years to develop, while a single year is required for white oaks. Unless late spring frosts occur for two consecutive years, the red group will produce when the white oaks fail. When spring weather is good for several years in a row, both oaks have the potential of providing a bumper crop of acorns, and wildlife populations benefit accordingly. Oaks usually begin producing acorns at about 15 years of age.



# FIELD NOTES



Natural Resources Conservation Service

## It's A Good Time for Conservation!

As we enter the year 2001 this is a good time to revisit the many different ways that the St. Joseph County Conservation Partnership can help you. We want everyone to understand what a great time this is to do conservation on your property.

Environmentally there has never been a greater need for good conservation and stewardship on the land. Our staff is always happy to meet with you to discuss ideas/concerns that you may have on your property, whether it be 1 or 100 acres in size.

Another reason that this is a great time to do conservation is there are some great incentives available for numerous conservation efforts. Most programs offer greater than 50% cost-share. Cost-share amounts depend on the type of improvements that are made and environmental benefit.

We encourage you to contact our office to see how we can best assist you. If you would like to meet with someone from our technical staff then please call and we will arrange an appointment.

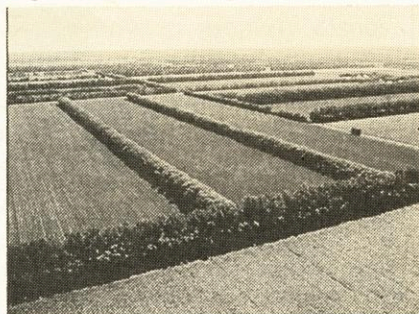
We wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope to hear from you!

# CONSERVATION

## Managing the Landscape For Wildlife

Conservation corridors are linear strips of vegetation that differ from the adjacent surroundings and which function to conserve soil, water, plants, wildlife or fish resources. Natural corridors of woody and herbaceous riparian vegetation occurring along the edges of streams, rivers and lakes, are visually dominant in many landscapes. Windbreaks, field borders, roadsides, contour buffer strips and grassed waterways are introduced corridors found in agricultural landscapes.

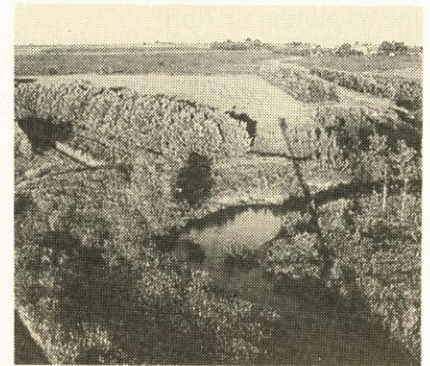
Corridors preserved or planted for soil and water conservation provide wildlife habitat for a variety of species. Riparian corridors are used by over 70% of all terrestrial wildlife species during some part of their life cycle, including many threatened and endangered species. Corridors provide food and nesting, brooding, loafing, and protective cover for game and non-game wildlife. They also afford wildlife relatively safe access to adjacent resources and serve as travel ways for species dispersal and migration in our increasingly fragmented landscape.



Perhaps the most significant benefit of conservation corridors in urban and agriculturally dominated landscapes is increased habitat area. Additional habitat benefits can be realized if

corridor width is increased. Wide corridors obviously increase total area but they also provide for the life requirements for a greater diversity of species.

Properly located conservation corridors that connect with each other and adjacent patches may facilitate immigration and colonization of habitat patches within the watershed. Immigration may help sustain local populations and connected patches may facilitate recolonization of vacant areas.



Corridors connecting patches increase overall habitat quality within the watershed. They provide wildlife relatively safe access to a diversity of habitat resources, which are typically dispersed across the landscape and may change with climate and seasons. Introduced corridors aligned perpendicular to stream corridors facilitate wildlife migration from uplands to riparian areas and wetlands during times of drought. When corridors are aligned with natural wildlife travel patterns, movement and access to different habitats are greatly enhanced.



# FIELD NOTES



Predators appear to benefit from fragmented landscapes. Corridors connecting patches may bring predator/prey relationships into a better balance by allowing prey species more options to move with greater safety among patches.

There are other social benefits provided by wildlife corridors to humans. Outdoor recreation is one such benefit. The linear configuration of corridors makes them well suited for a variety of activities, especially trail oriented sports such as hiking, jogging, cycling, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding. Wildlife corridors are also well suited to educational activities involving natural history, archeology, environmental science and art.

Natural corridors provide economic benefits and values because they satisfy human wants or needs. Often, the value is hard to define because it is not traded on a market. Economic benefits from introduced corridors include environmental services (reducing soil erosion/sedimentation), increased yields and quality (microclimate modification produced by shelterbelts enhances crop and livestock production), reduced energy consumption, agroforestry products, increased property values and recreation revenues.

Wildlife corridors provide a wide variety of benefits to both wildlife and humans. If you are interested in planting a wildlife corridor on your property, please call our office and we will be glad to assist you.

## Money Available to Assist Livestock Operations

A Water Quality Improvement Grant program is being launched in Indiana to make available up to \$2 million of funding to livestock and poultry operations. This project is designed to assist producers in managing nutrients associated with their livestock operations. Grant funds will be made available to administer or install environmental practices to help protect water quality. Monies may also be used to help offset expenses operations may incur in complying with the proposed confined feeding regulation.



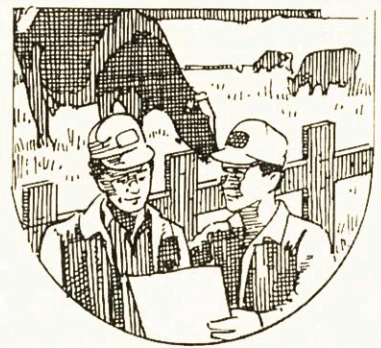
Highest priority will be given to those livestock operations within 600 feet of a waterbody which are willing to address their manure concerns with a waste management system. Operations outside the 600 feet range will be ranked by willingness to apply a waste management system versus a single practice.

Eligible practices for cost share include waste management systems,

manure and soil testing (nutrient management), manure storage structures, field borders/filter strips, tile riser grass buffer strips, exclusion fencing, storm water and feedlot diversions, stream stabilization, and livestock water facilities. All practices must be designed and installed in accordance with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation practice standards. Certain practices will receive a flat rate for implementation and maintenance, while some will be eligible for either a 70 or 80 percent cost-share basis, based on proximity to a stream or lake.



This grant is a great opportunity for livestock producers across the state to implement conservation practices that help protect water quality. Applications will be accepted through late winter. For more information, contact the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District.



**Watch for upcoming information on the Nutrient Management Seminar to be held in late February or early March.**



# FIELD NOTES



## Dam Safety Trees and Brush

The establishment and control of proper vegetation is an important part of dam maintenance. Properly maintained vegetation can help prevent erosion of embankment and earth channel surfaces, and aid in the control of groundhogs and muskrats. The uncontrolled growth of vegetation can damage embankments and concrete structures and make close inspection difficult

## Trees and Brush

Trees and brush should not be permitted on embankments. Extensive root systems can provide seepage paths for water. Trees that blow down or fall over can leave large holes in the embankment surface that will weaken the embankment and can lead to increased erosion. Brush obscures the surface limiting visual inspection, provides a haven for burrowing animals, and retards growth of grass vegetation. Tree and brush growth adjacent to concrete walls and structures may eventually cause damage to the concrete and should be removed.



## Stump Removal & Sprout Prevention

Stumps of cut trees should be removed so vegetation can be established and the surface mowed. Stumps can be moved either by pulling or with machines that grind them down. All woody material should be removed to about 6 inches below the ground surface. The cavity should be filled with well-compacted soil and grass vegetation established.



Stumps of trees in riprap cannot usually be pulled or ground down, but can be chemically treated so they will not continually form new sprouts. Certain herbicides are effective for this purpose and can even be used at water supply reservoirs if applied by licensed personnel. These products should be painted, not sprayed, on the stumps. Other instructions found on the label should be strictly followed when handling and applying these materials. Only a few commercially available chemicals can be used along shorelines or near water.

## Embankment Maintenance

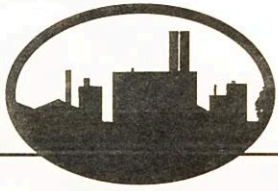
Embankments, areas adjacent to spillway structures, vegetated channels, and other areas associated with a dam require continual maintenance of the vegetal cover. Grass mowing, brush cutting, and removal of woody vegetation (including trees) are necessary for the proper maintenance of a dam,

dike, or levee. All embankment sloped and vegetated earth spillways should be mowed at least once a year. Aesthetics, unobstructed viewing during inspections, maintenance of a nonerodible surface, and discouragement of groundhog habitation are reasons for proper maintenance of the dam's vegetal cover.

Methods used in the past for control of vegetation, but are now considered unacceptable, include chemical spraying, and burning. More acceptable methods include the use of weed whips or power brush-cutters and mowers. Chemical spraying to first kill small trees and brush is acceptable if precautions are taken to protect the local environment.

It is important to remember not to mow when the embankment is wet. It is also important to use proper equipment for the slope and type of vegetation to be cut. Also, always follow the manufacturer's recommended safe operation procedures.





# URBAN MEANDERINGS

## FROST SEEDING OPPORTUNITY FOR EARLY SPRING

Frost seeding is a temporary or permanent seeding application in early spring when soils are in the freeze-thaw stage. This practice can be used to repair or enhance areas having a thin stand or declining cover or to re-vegetate an area. The seed is broadcast over the prepared seedbed, or over the existing lawn and incorporated into the soil by natural freeze-thaw action. The optimum seeding period for St. Joseph County is February 28 to March 28.

Apply fertilizer as recommended by the soil test. If testing was not done, consider applying 200 - 400 lbs. of 12-12-12 fertilizer. If the area is to be re-seeded and the soil is dry enough to work, the fertilizer can be incorporated into the soil as the seed bed is being prepared. If the fertilizer is being broadcast over an existing lawn, the application should not be on frozen soil.



*Use of dormant seedling could have reduced excessive early spring erosion on this site.*

There are several different seeding species or mixtures available for use. The two general seeding groups are temporary and permanent. The temporary seeding group includes annual cereal grains (wheat, rye or spring oats at 150 pounds per acre) or annual ryegrass at 60 pounds per acre. The second general group, permanent seeding is much larger and there are more factors to consider. Permanent frost seeding for large areas can be accomplished using perennial ryegrass and ladino clover at 75 and 2.25 pounds per acre. Areas of concentrated flow can be frost seeded with the same mixture but at 225 and 3 pounds per acre. Steep banks, cuts and low maintenance areas can be frost seeded with smooth bromegrass and red clover at 50 and 24 pounds per acre or with crownvetch and tall fescue at 21 and 45 pounds per acre. Thin areas of your lawn or high maintenance areas may be frost seeded with perennial rye grass and blue grass at 90 and 135 pounds per acre. The above listed seeding rate are for seeding on top of existing vegetation. If a new seeding is being done with a well prepared seedbed, seeding rates can be reduced by 1/3. Mulching with straw will improve the establishment of the young seedlings. The size of an acre is approximately 200 feet by 200 feet.

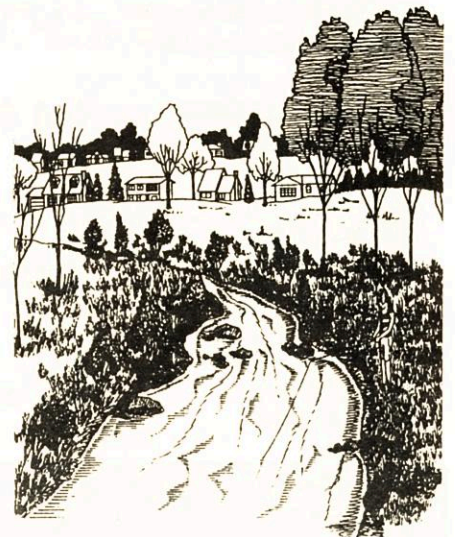
There are many other different seeding mixtures and species available also and you are encourage to seek the advice of your local landscaping retail establishment, nursery or seed house. The seeding options listed were general ones that are effective in a large number of conditions and were listed for illustrative purposes. Professionals can offer more specific recommendations based on your soil type, location, drainage and other site specific conditions.

You may also contact the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service at 219-533-0554 for additional information.

## JUDAY CREEK AND ELLER DITCH

If you have bank erosion problems on your property and you live along Juday Creek or Eller ditch, then you should give the St. Joseph County Surveyor's Office a call. The Surveyor's Office has received grants to help stabilize the shoreline along Eller ditch and Juday Creek.

These waterways are stabilized by using innovative practices which naturalize the shoreline. In most cases the work includes: shaping the banks to have a gradual slope, and then establishing a vegetative cover to help control future erosion problems. Please contact the Surveyor's Office for details or questions about this project at (219) 235-9631



# *St. Joseph County Soil And Water*

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Keith Lineback  
Joe Long  
Randy Matthys  
Eugene Myers  
Beverly Riddle  
Richard Schmidt

## 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:

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Al Gostola  
Harold Mutti

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Jerod Chew, SWCD  
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