



St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



**Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future**

January/February 2020  
Volume 22, Issue 1

2903 Gary Drive, Ste 1, Plymouth, IN 46563  
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### What's Going On...

*Events hosted by the St. Joseph County SWCD  
& Our Partners in Conservation*

#### January

**1 - New Year's Day** - Office closed

**14, 15 & 16 - 31<sup>st</sup> annual Fort Wayne Farm Show** at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. 1,100 Exhibitors present the latest farm technology the industry has to offer along with the area's largest variety of farm machinery equipment, in one location. [www.tradexp.com/fort-wayne-farm-show](http://www.tradexp.com/fort-wayne-farm-show)

**20 - Martin Luther King, Jr day** - office closed

**21 - Monthly Board Meeting** - Open to the Public 9:00 AM LOCATION: Farm Credit Services, basement conference room, 5310 S Main St., South Bend, IN 46614.

**31 - 60th Annual Meeting** see page 2 for details.

#### February

**17 - President's Day** - office closed

**18** - Open to the Public 9:00 AM LOCATION: Farm Credit Services, basement conference room, 5310 S Main St., South Bend, IN 46614.



with the St Joseph County SWCD.

**Volunteer** We welcome your involvement. Work with us to promote legislative awareness programs for local, state and federal officials. Help us promote urban and agricultural best management practices (BMPs), conservation programs, field days, fundraising, youth and adult education events, surveying and so much more.

**Serve as a Supervisor** Serve as an elected or appointed representative of your SWCD by serving on our board of supervisors. Identify local soil and water conservation issues and priorities and develop SWCD programs that provide solutions to these local conservation issues. What are the responsibilities of a district supervisor? To be an effective district supervisor requires more than just attending a meeting. Supervisors are encouraged to serve on various committees within the district and /or state and have a key role in establishing natural resource policy. Part of their role is to educate the public about soil and water conservation. They also help in the development of tours, newsletters, displays and much more. The ways in which district supervisors can contribute are endless.

**Serve as an Associate Supervisor** Although associate supervisors are a non-voting position, we encourage their attendance at monthly board meetings and provide input to the SWCD board on soil and water conservation issues and programs. Associate Supervisors are also encouraged to serve on district committees and help with tours, education and workshops.

### We Need You

**Benefits of Serving** Being a part of the St Joseph County SWCD has many benefits, including:

- ◆ Serving for a cause in which you personally believe
- ◆ A chance to use your skills and experiences and explore your own strengths
- ◆ Give back to your community
- ◆ Help save soil and water resources for generations to come

The SWCD works closely with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), and other Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) agencies. There is a popular misconception that local SWCD and the USDA NRCS are one and the same. This is untrue. While the two often work together within the same office, the district administers its own programs and assists with programs offered by the other agency partners. NRCS provides additional technical assistance and guidance as well as their own programs to complete BMP's.

**Take a look around you.** The conservation practice in the field near you may belong to someone involved with the SWCD already! Supervisors, Associate Supervisors and other volunteers of the SWCD practice what they preach and usually have farms and/or land to prove it with conservation practices installed.

**For more information** about becoming a St Joseph County SWCD supervisor, associate supervisor or volunteer, contact our office at (574) 936-2024 Ext. 4 or email us at [info@stjosephswcd.org](mailto:info@stjosephswcd.org). More information about our district is available on our website, including our 2018-2022 business plan, programs, upcoming events, resources, and

so much more. Board meetings and several of our programs are open to the public and we encourage you to join us at any time.

*The SWCD and their partnering agencies are an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



### We are Hiring!

Environmental  
Education Coordinator

For the job description  
and to apply visit:

[www.bit.ly/2019EECjob](http://www.bit.ly/2019EECjob)

## St Joseph County SWCD 60th Annual Meeting January 31, 2020

**Where:** St. Hedwig Memorial Center  
331 S Scott St., South Bend, IN 46601

**When:** January 31, 2020.

**Time:** Doors open at 5:45 pm and the call to order is at 6:30 pm.

**Cost:** Tickets are \$15 each. Includes Dinner

**Key Note Speaker:** Chad Pregracke



**Keynote Speaker: Chad Pregracke**

Founder & President of Living Lands & Water



**Mark your calendars to join us as we celebrate 60 years of serving St Joseph County. Contact our office to purchase your tickets today!**

574-936-2024 Ext. 4, [info@stjosephswcd.org](mailto:info@stjosephswcd.org) or register online at [www.stjosephswcd.org](http://www.stjosephswcd.org)

THANK YOU

### **A big thank you to our 2020 Annual Meeting Speaker Sponsors:**

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### **WHAT STARTED AS 'ONE RIVER, ONE PIECE OF GARBAGE AT A TIME' TURNED INTO LIVING LANDS & WATERS FULL TIME**

Chad Pregracke is the internationally named 2013 CNN Hero of the Year, founder and president of Living Lands & Waters; a nonprofit river cleanup organization, author and professional public speaker. **He is proof one person can make a difference.**

Best known for starting out as a young man in East Moline, Illinois wanting a cleaner waterway, Chad has become the champion for the Mississippi River. Growing up on its banks, he worked as a commercial shell diver during his early years, experiencing the river from the bottom up. Sometimes spending 10 hours a day in the depths and current of the pitch black waters, he crawled nearly 150 miles of the river bottom over six years. Chad saw its beauty and was frustrated by the neglect. At the age of 17, he decided to clean it up. Twenty two years later, Chad and his Living Lands & Waters crew have organized and led over 1000 community cleanups on 23 rivers in 20 states and removed over 10 million pounds of garbage. Chad had an idea that evolved into a movement that has helped to restore one of America's greatest icons, the Mississippi River.

Chad has been recognized by former President, George W. Bush as a national "Point of Light." He received a standing ovation at the Kennedy Center from all four living former U.S. Presidents for his inspirational message on dreaming big, taking action, persevering, leading and collaborating. He has been the keynote speaker for college graduations, business conferences and events, classrooms, nonprofit organizations and more. Named "America's Hardest Working Person" by Mitchum, Chad's enthusiasm, sense of humor and passion amplifies his story and entertains audiences. Ultimately, his message inspires people to believe they can make a difference.

Chad currently lives and works with his wife Tammy dividing their time between life on the Teamwork barge and their home in East Moline, IL.

Find out more at  
[www.livinglandsandwaters.org/](http://www.livinglandsandwaters.org/)

## Op-Ed: Stop Soil Erosion, Save Our Future



by Jerry Raynor, State Conservationist  
Thursday, December 5, 2019

According to the United Nations, every five seconds, the equivalent of one soccer field of soil is eroded. Stop and think about that for five seconds. Did you stop and think? Those five seconds cost us nearly 1.6 acres of land – more than 27,600 acres per day. If you're doing the math with us, that's over 10 million acres per year.

As the earth's population continues to grow and the demands on our soil increases, we need to continue raising awareness about the importance of healthy soil and advocate for the sustainable management of one of our most precious resources. I believe there is no better day to talk about the importance of our soil than today - World Soil Day (December 5). This year's (2019) World Soil Day campaign is "Stop Soil Erosion, Save Our Future."

With the increased demand for food production to feed our growing population, a decrease in available land, and the United States and the world becoming more dependent on finite resources just to keep up with demand, healthy soil matters to all of us. Helping to keep the soil from eroding off of our farmlands is of utmost importance.

Managing for soil health is one of the most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while simultaneously reducing the effects of soil erosion on their fields. But soil health isn't achieved overnight. It takes patience, fortitude and a system of

practices working together to produce healthy, fully-functioning soils.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is excited to work hand-in-hand with Indiana farmers to find the best combination of conservation practices to manage their land for optimal soil health and minimal soil erosion. The excitement is building as farmers are seeing incredible success when groups of practices such as no-till, cover crops, advanced nutrient and pest management, and buffers are implemented together as a "system."

Implementing a soil health management system can lead to greater water absorption and retention, making soil less susceptible to runoff and erosion. Soil that is covered year-round with crops, crop residue, grass or cover crops is much less susceptible to erosion from wind and water. Cropping systems that utilize practices like no-till keep soil undisturbed from harvest to planting while reducing the likelihood of erosion.

World Soil Day reminds us all that we owe our existence to the soil. As we face the need to produce more food and fiber and are faced with climate and sustainability challenges, I believe there is no better time to work hand-in-hand with Hoosier farmers to improve the health of this critical living resource.

If you would like to learn more about improving the health of your soil, stop by the NRCS office nearest you to talk to a district conservationist or go online to [www.in.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov). To learn more about the World Soils Day, please visit: <http://www.fao.org/world-soil-day/en/>.

### Now is the Time to Sign Up for Fiscal Year 2020 NRCS Conservation Programs

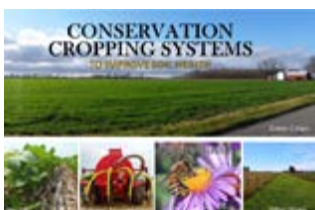
USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service helps America's farmers conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

**The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

**The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

**The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program** helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

Contact Deborah Knepp, District Conservationist St Joseph County NRCS for more details and an application.



#### St Joseph & Marshall County SWCD Offers Conservation Cost Share

The St Joseph County SWCD in conjunction with the Marshall County SWCD has cost share money available through a Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant for cover crops, no-till, filter strips, nutrient management and pollinator habitats. Contact Sarah Longenecker, County Conservationist St Joseph County SWCD for more details and an application.





Visit us on Facebook 2903 GARY DRIVE PLYMOUTH IN 46563

# St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

**Happening in February 2020**

**5th Annual St. Joseph & Marshall County Producers Workshop**

**PARP credits will be available**

**Topics, Date & Location TBA**

**Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisors:**

John Dooms, Chair  
Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair  
Mike Burkholder  
Dave Vandewalle  
Dave Craft

**St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:**

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD  
Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD  
Debbie Knepp, NRCS

**Farm Service Agency Staff:**

Gideon Nobbe, CED  
Aldona Martin  
Tara Wolfe  
Devan Herrell  
Katie Leitch

**SWCD Associate Supervisors:**

Jim LaFree  
Chuck Lehman  
Randy Matthys  
Richard Schmidt  
Dave Straughn  
Dru Wrasse

**SWCD Honorary Members:**

Jerry Knepp  
Keith Lineback  
William Millar



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Are you ready to "GO GREEN" and help us save money and natural resources? We can deliver your "Conservation Kaleidoscope" newsletter by email ... Give us a call or send us an email and tell us you'd like to "GO GREEN" THANK YOU!!!!

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