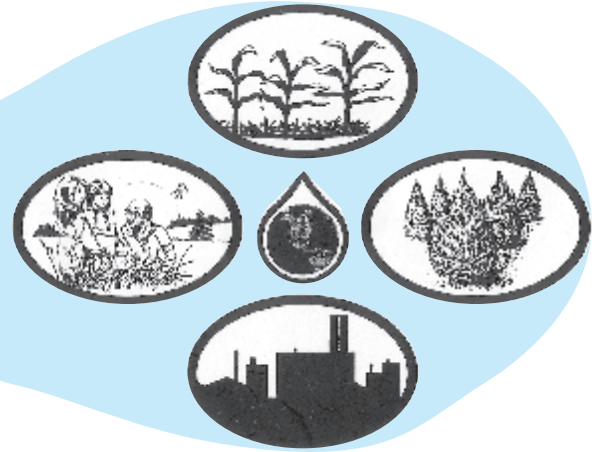




St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



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

May/June 2014  
Volume 16, Issue 3

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### What's Going On...

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

#### May

20th - St. Joseph County SWCD  
Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre  
Township Library)

26th - Memorial Day - Office Closed

#### June

14th - Pasture Walk @ Cook's  
Bison Ranch, LaGrange County.  
For more info, contact our office.

17th - St. Joseph County SWCD  
Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre  
Township Library)

17th - WNIT Kids in the Park

27th - St. Joseph County 4H Fair -  
June 27th - July 5th

#### July

2nd - 11:00 am tentative time and  
date : Frog Jumping Contest @ 4H  
Fair

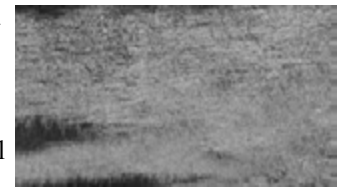
4th - Independence Day - Office Closed

15th - St. Joseph County SWCD  
Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre  
Township Library)

18th - NACD Soil Health Tour  
and Summer Board Meeting,  
Indianapolis

### Have You Heard? ... It's time to check on your stormwater management practices

Let's admit it, this winter was not fun! Lots of wind, snow and cold! By the time this article comes out in May though it should be warmer outside, and work should be well underway...I hope! However there might be some lingering issues resulting from the harsh winter weather that might affect the quality of your erosion control program and you will need to resolve those issues sooner rather than later.



One issue to consider is did you have any newly seeded areas last fall that may have been negatively affected? If you had any grass plantings that did not receive sufficient snow cover for insulation you may have some stands like the one depicted above, with sparse germination/survivability. Due to the low survivability in the picture above, adequate erosion control will not be met and rill/gully erosion will begin to form. According to IDEM's Stormwater Quality Manual 80% establishment is required for Temporary Seeding and 90% establishment for Permanent Seeding.



Another issue that may need to be addressed after the combined rain and snow melts that we had this past spring is how well did your stormwater outlets and structural protections hold up? Are there gullies that have formed around or below your structures, like the picture to the left? These gullies, if left unchecked, can eat away at the integrity of a structural practice creating a larger expense down the road in the form of repair or replacement. The erosion can also be cause for violation of a Rule 5/Rule 13 permit if sediment leaves the sight or effects a wetland.

The final BMP that I am going to touch on is the concrete washout area. First things first, make sure you have a concrete washout area that is fully lined with non-permeable material, unlike the top picture, below on the right. Secondly, make sure that your washout area is not too full like the bottom right picture. In both of these pictures washout water is extremely alkaline can easily be leached through the sandy construction soils into ground water or nearby surface waters. Concrete washout areas should be marked and inspected daily.



Should you have any questions regarding the practices mentioned in this article or any other erosion control practices for that matter, please feel free to contact Andrew Fox in the St. Joseph County SWCD office, at 574-936-2024 ext. 4.

**Thank You! To our supporters...**

## Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

- ◆ **Planning** - Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.
- ◆ **Application** - With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.
- ◆ **Eligibility** - Find out if you're eligible for NRCS' variety of financial assistance programs.
- ◆ **Ranking** - NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.
- ◆ **Implementing** - Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

Call your local NRCS field office or visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted)

\*\*\* As of April 1, 2014 application deadlines have not been announced. This is subject to change at any time so don't put off getting your application in!\*\*\*

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## 2014 Farm Bill streamlines, consolidates conservation programs

A comparison of programs included in the 2008 and 2014 bills is shown below. Current contracts enrolled in Farm Bill programs are not affected.

### Previous Farm Bill

- ◆ Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- ◆ Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- ◆ Conservation Stewardship Program
- ◆ Agricultural Management Assistance
- ◆ Wetlands Reserve Program
- ◆ Grassland Reserve Program
- ◆ Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program
- ◆ Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- ◆ Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative
- ◆ Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
- ◆ Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
- ◆ Great Lakes Basin Program
- ◆ Technical Service Providers
- ◆ Conservation Innovation Grants
- ◆ Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program
- ◆ Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program - administered by FSA
- ◆ Emergency Watershed Protection Program\*
- ◆ Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program\*

### New and Streamlined Farm Bill

- ◆ Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- ◆ Conservation Stewardship Program
- ◆ Agricultural Management Assistance
- ◆ Agricultural Conservation Easement Program
- ◆ Healthy Forests Reserve Program
- ◆ Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- ◆ Technical Service Providers
- ◆ Conservation Innovation Grants
- ◆ Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program
- ◆ Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program - administered by FSA
- ◆ Emergency Watershed Protection Program\*
- ◆ Small Watershed Rehabilitation Program\*

\*EWP and SWRP are not Farm Bill Programs but are offered by NRCS; SWRP was funded through the 2014 Farm Bill.

## **NRCS Improves On-Line Soil Survey Data for Growing Customer Base**

USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced the availability of updated soil data for each of the 3,265 soil survey areas mapped across the nation over the last 118 years.

According to Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist in Indiana, nearly 200,000 users access the Web Soil Survey (WSS) each month, making it the most frequently used USDA web site. "This on-line tool is used by thousands of Hoosiers each year to access information that helps them make better land use decisions. The updated data provides the customer with better, more user friendly information for making resource assessments and conservation plans on their property," said Hardisty.

Gary Struben, NRCS' State Soil Scientist, explains this is the first major update of both software and data since WSS came online in August 2005. The massive effort took fifteen months of programming and moving databases to the new structure, but it was well worth it says Struben. "Each soil survey now contains a full complement of national interpretations giving users the ability to analyze interpretations regionally, multi-state or across the United States," he said.

Web Soil Survey is available free at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> and visitors may be surprised at all that's available and how easy it is to use. Once you locate your site on a map and outline the area of interest, you can click on the soil map tab and view the various soils. Clicking on each soil type will give you information about the slope, drainage, limitations, inherent qualities, etc. This can be very important if for instance, you are building a new house. With over 533 soil types in Indiana, not all of them are the best for a home with a basement. Not only do builders and developers use this tool, but also teachers, foresters, public officials, engineers, realtors, and many others.

One important improvement of the updated website is it now allows soil data to flow seamlessly across political boundaries, such as counties or states explained Struben. "Our customers will see a marked improvement with this release of soils data," he said.

### **Indiana's On-Farm Network®**

Wonder what they're talking about when someone mentions "On-Farm?" The On-Farm Network® is a group of crop producers interested in economics, stewardship, and reducing their environmental footprint.

The goal of Indiana On-Farm Network® is to advance two critical components to driving improved farm-level performance:

1. Access to and education on the use of effective, affordable tools and strategies to assess and verify on-farm environmental and economic performance and
2. coordination of data collection, analysis, and feedback to farmers using these tools at the individual farm level and in aggregate across multiple farms in a geographic region.

Participating farmers use precision ag tools and technologies to conduct research on their own farms. Through the On-Farm Network®, farmers use this data from their own farms and others in their area to evaluate the effectiveness and economic pros and cons of different management practices, such as nutrient application rates, timing, and form. Farmers not only evaluate the effectiveness of different practices on their own farm, but benefit from aggregate data across multiple farms and years.

The end result is farmer-driven adaptive management in real time - farmers gathering and making beneficial changes based on data from their own fields and those of others. The farmers are in the driver's seat, which significantly increases buy in to the results and willingness to make long-term changes. Key tools include the cornstalk nitrate test (CSNT), aerial imagery, and replicated strip trials.

Taken from [www.in.gov/isda/ofn](http://www.in.gov/isda/ofn)



ST JOSEPH COUNTY  
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
2903 GARY DRIVE  
PLYMOUTH IN 46563

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US POSTAGE PAID  
SOUTH BEND IN  
PERMIT NO. 225



## St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

### Free Seed for Wildlife Planting

We have a limited quantity of free sunflower and sorghum seed for wildlife food plots at our office. It will be distributed on a first come, first served basis. Since we do not know how long the bags of seed will last, please call the office prior to coming down to make sure we still have some left!



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

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Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair  
Mike Burkholder, Member  
Arlene Schuchman, Member  
Stacey Silvers, Member

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

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Rick Glassman, SWCD  
Andrew Fox, SWCD  
Sarah Harville, SWCD  
James Rodriguez, NRCS

**Farm Service Agency Staff:**

Gideon Nobbe, CED  
Linda Bentele  
Aldona Martin  
Cindy Slonaker

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!!!!