

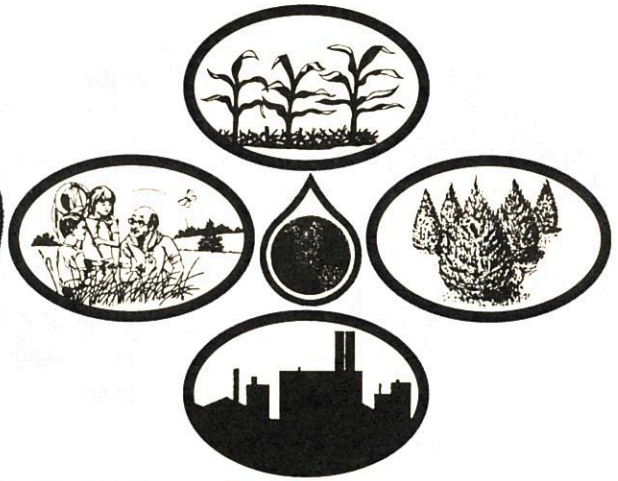


**St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District**

CONSERVATION



KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Jul/Aug/Sep 1998
Volume 2, Issue 3

60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 * South Bend, Indiana * Telephone (219) 291-2300
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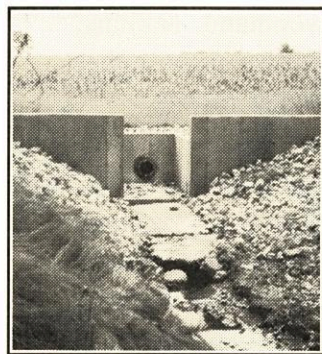
Calendar of Events!

- July 20
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room
- July 25
Backyard Composting Workshop
9-10:30 a.m.-Farm Bureau Mtg Rm
- August 3 - 8
4-H Fair
St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds
- August 12 - 23
Indiana State Fair
Indiana State Fairground
- August 17
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room
- September 7
Labor Day
Office Closed
- September 19
4-County Forestry Field Day
Mike Girvin Farm (see article pg 4)
- September 21
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room
- September 29 - October 1
Farm Progress Show
Tipton County

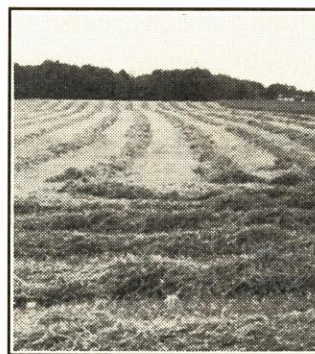
**EQIP \$\$\$ AVAILABLE - 75% COST-SHARE
ARE YOU INTERESTED?**

If you are interested in putting money in your pocket, while enhancing or improving your natural resource conditions on your farm, then you need to pick up the phone immediately and call the Natural Resources Conservation Service at (219) 291-2300 and ask about EQIP. EQIP stands for the *Environmental Quality Incentive Program*, which has replaced the old, familiar ACP (Agricultural Conservation Program) cost-share program, administered by the Farm Service Agency, to assist you with the installation of conservation practices. This new, volunteer conservation incentive program is designed to improve environmental conditions on private agricultural lands, as well as, meet other conservation needs that were identified by a local needs assessment or by national priority. The program is also aimed at providing cost-share to accelerate widespread adoption of cost effective conservation measures by agricultural producers.

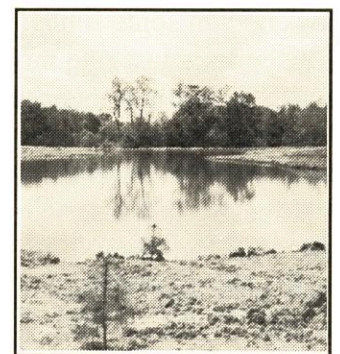
Curiosity still aroused? Do any of these conservation practices look like something that you need on your farm?



Streambank Stabilization



Hay/Pasture Planting



Shallow Wildlife Water Facility

If so, then EQIP just might be for you! Turn to the "Field Notes" section and find out how the Natural Resources Conservation Service's EQIP Program can help you achieve your ongoing conservation and environmental goals.

What's Inside . . .

- The Natural Educator 2**
- Woodland Times 3 - 4**
- Quick Bites Insert**
- Field Notes 5 - 6**
- Urban Meanderings 7**



THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

WILDLIFE BRUSHPILES*

When feeding wildlife in your backyard, we create unnaturally high concentrations of birds and other critters. This makes them prime targets for natural predators, as well as stray cats. To give everything an equal chance, some measure of protection needs to be provided. One way this can be done is by constructing a **wildlife brushpile**. Properly constructed, it will also provide some protection from inclement weather. Some species of butterflies will hibernate in a brushpile and song sparrows may nest in it. Rabbits, opossums and numerous other species of birds have been known to use a wildlife brushpile.

The raw materials are readily available anytime you prune your trees and shrubs or when a storm knocks down some limbs. Building a brushpile is just one more way to recycle. It is much better to reuse the trimmings than have them end up in a landfill. The brushpile will slowly decompose and release nutrients back into the soil. As it breaks down, keep adding fresh materials to the top.



A good location for the wildlife brushpile is 15 or 20 feet away from your feeders. If you don't like the looks of the pile, you can hide it by planting a screen or shrubs. These shrubs will also offer good cover for wildlife.

Start the brushpile by putting down a layer of crisscrossed limbs. Then, use more branches to make a pyramid so that the pile has a hollow core. Place finer branches over the top, and then cover with pine boughs or leaves. Branches stripped from used Christmas Trees work well for the cover layer. Leave opening in the sides (not too big - you don't want a cat to get in!) in several places for wildlife to enter and exit. A good size pile will be five feet tall or more. In the spring, trumpet vine, squash or beans can be planted and trained up over the pile.

Wildlife brushpiles can also be constructed in woodland habitats, using branches left over from timber harvesting or firewood cutting.

Brushpiles make excellent cover. In fact, it may be so good that you don't realize just how many critters are using it. Check around it after a light snow and you'll be amazed at the number of tracks going in and out of the pile.

*Reprint from Hoosier Conservation, Indiana Wildlife Federation, (800) 347-3445



Scholarship Winner

St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored an Agricultural/Natural Resource Scholarship program for local High School Seniors. **Kelley Millar** from New Prairie High School received a \$600 scholarship.

Kelley will be studying Animal Agri-Business when the fall semester begins. Congratulations, Kelley!



1998 Poster Contest Winners

This year's category winners are **Sarah Wise, Caleb Laux, and Jennifer Worfel**.

Sarah is a second grade student at LaVille Elementary School. Sarah was the winner in the kindergarten through second grade category.

Caleb is a fifth grade student from Elsie Rogers Elementary School. Caleb was the winner of the third through sixth grade category.

Jennifer is an eighth grade student at New Prairie Junior High School. Jennifer was the winner in the seventh through twelfth grade category.

Congratulations to all of the 1998 Soil and Water Conservation District Poster Contest Winners. You all did an excellent job. Good luck to our category winners in the State Competition.





WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

Topping Is An Act of Cruelty To Trees

"Can't you see that you're hurting me?" These would be the exact words your trees would be sharing with you, if they could talk after being topped. The term "tree topping" is referred to "as the act of cutting back of an older trees' limbs to an arbitrary point. Topping has been considered as an acceptable practice to eliminate unsightly branches, provide clearings for power lines and to increase the growth of trees. This particular theory, however, is changing among arborists and reputable tree consultants, after witnessing the long term effects that are showing up in our community trees.

There are many terms irreputable "tree experts" use such as stubbing, heading, hatracking, lopping or dehorning, but the terms are all synonymous to the same destructive

action of topping. Topping is unproductive, ill-pleasing to the eye, destructive to the overall health of the trees and extremely costly.

We ask that you don't confuse topping with pruning. Pruning, when done correctly, is extremely beneficial and sometimes, essential to the health of a tree. Arborists encourage you to prune correctly and regularly. A light pruning is suggested every three years, which will keep your trees healthy, be less costly and have minimal effects on the surrounding.

"WHOO KNOWS BEST"

Question:

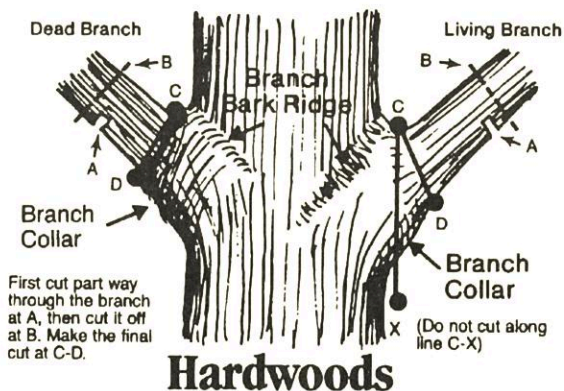
"My trees are dying. Is there some new disease going around?"

Answer:

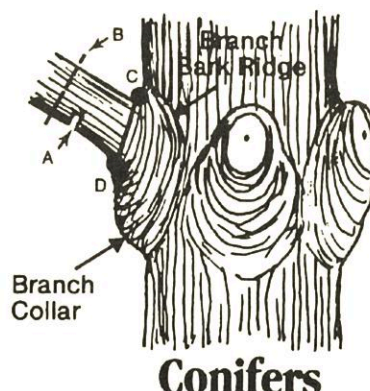
I am not an entomologist nor a pathologist, but I can tell you from my experiences, that you should know what kind of tree you have and what are the symptoms before you call for a diagnosis. Purdue's Plant Diagnostic Center is the best place to identify plant diseases and insects. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Service for further information.

Currently there are no major threats to trees in this area. Diseases such as Chestnut Blight and Dutch Elm Disease have been a concern, but work is being done to create a more resistant species for the Chestnut. Elms tend to die off in woods and remain standing, which makes the wooded area more threatened than it is. The gypsy moth is probably the next big problem that will be affecting our area. Work is also being done to help minimize the effects of this insect. Lightning strikes and old age will also affect a tree's health and vigor. Most trees die within thirty to fifty years being shaded out by their more vigorous neighbors. Accumulating stresses such as air pollution, mowers/trimmers, soil compaction and construction will also cause trees to become more susceptible to insects and diseases, such as ants and termites. These insects are generally secondary invaders of existing weakened or damaged trees and are seldom the cause of tree decline.

Proper Pruning Principles



Hardwoods



Conifers

Based upon experiments conducted by Dr. Alex L. Shigo and the USDA's Forest Service's Northeastern Forest Station, the following methods of pruning are recommended to help work with rather than against a tree's natural tendency to wall off injured tissues and prevent the spread of decay. In these illustrations, final cuts should be made from points C to D. Do not cut along line C - X, which is simply an imaginary vertical line to help you locate C - D. (National Arbor Foundation)



The "OWL knows best!"



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

THE CURTAIN RISES ON BACKYARD CONSERVATION

From the countryside to your backyard

Did you realize that no matter how large or how small of an area you own, you can develop a portion of it into a backyard haven for wildlife. Reports indicate that more than 1.4 billion acres are managed by farmers and ranches, while over 92 million acres of our land is privately developed and cared for by homeowners. Those statistics, in turn, place a tremendous amount of responsibility on landowners to continually find ways to enhance and improve their natural resource base within their local communities. Farmers and ranchers already observe USDA Farm Bill guidelines to help them accomplish their conservation goals. To help the non-ag community clearly understand the variety of conservation practices that farmers and ranches use everyday to protect and preserve the nation's natural resources, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, in cooperation with the National Association of Conservation Districts and the Wildlife Habitat Council is sponsoring the "Backyard Conservation Initiative". This multi-faceted

campaign is supporting the idea to make 1 million backyards a "friendlier place for nature".

This cooperative coalition hopes to provide homeowners and city residents an opportunity to bring diversity into their own backyards by adopting miniature versions of the



same practices that producers use on their agricultural land, such as composting, terracing, tree planting and drip irrigation. The program will also furnish how-to information that encourages the adoption of conservation practices that can be adapted for community gardens, school labs and other public places. In addition to these goals, the program hopes to spark a strong interest for volunteerism to help carry out this progressive campaign.

If you are interested in taking an active role in this crusade for developing creative and diverse backyard sanctuaries, additional information is available on the **WEB** at <http://nrcs.usda.gov> or <http://www/nacnet.org>. Contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or

Cooperative Extension Service. Local garden centers, landscapers, garden clubs and native plant societies are also excellent sources for additional advice or information.

4-COUNTY FORESTRY FIELD DAY SET FOR SEPTEMBER 19, 1998

The saying goes, *It's important to advertise early*. That is exactly why we are taking this opportunity now to advertise the 4-County Forestry Field Day, even though the event is two months away. No matter what activities you have planned for the month of September, we encourage you to keep Saturday, September 19, 1998 open to attend the 1998 4-County Forestry Field Day. This year's special event will be held at Mike and Lee Girvin's farm in Pierceton, Indiana (Kosciusko County). Complete details for the day's program are just being initialized, so keep your eyes peeled for upcoming publicity announcements around the 1st of September. If you have questions or need additional information prior to that time frame, please contact our office at (219) 291-2300.



QUICK BITES

38th Annual SWCD Meeting in Review

On Saturday, March 7, one hundred and seventy-three guests of the 38th Annual Meeting of the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District were treated to a delicious Polish-Style meal at St. Hedwig Memorial Center, and then sat back and listened to, Indiana State Representative, Richard Mangus, talk about the history of the District.

The District then presented awards to outstanding conservation-minded individuals in the community. **Dale Stoner** was recognized as St. Joseph County's 1997 Indiana Conservation Farmer of the Year by the South Bend Audubon Society and the District. Dale also received an Award of Merit on behalf of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company and the District. The **Lichtenbarger Family** received the Master Farm Conservationist Award for St. Joseph County and **Gene J. Feitz** received the Natural Resource Conservation Award. **Janet Hoke** of Hums Elementary School received the Conservation Teacher of the Year Award. **Tyler Grant** was recognized as the County and State Poster Contest Winner.

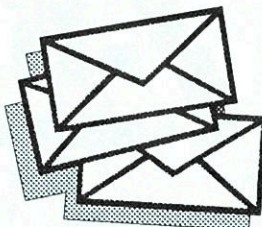
The District also presented length of service awards to the following board members: **Jay Lindenman** for 35 years, **Keith Lineback** for 25 years and **Randy Matthys** for 10 years. After the awards were presented a motion was made from the floor and seconded to approve the 1997 Treasurer's Report. The motion carried. Then elections were held. **Paul Williams III** was elected to a three year term as Supervisor to the SWCD Board.



Changes, Changes, Changes

The St. Joseph County Conservation Offices have gone through a few changes in the past couple of months.

The first change is adding suite numbers to our addresses. The new addresses are as follows:

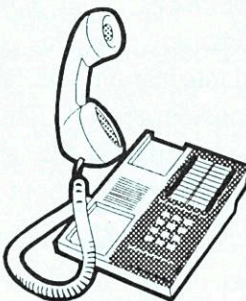


USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

**IDNR, Div. of Soil Conservation
St. Joseph County SWCD
60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4
South Bend, IN 46614**

**USDA, Farm Service Agency
60455 U.S. 31 South, Suite 5
South Bend, IN 46614**

The second change is our telephone system. When you call any of the above agencies, you will reach an auto attendant. This is a computer recording telling you which extension to press to reach each agency. These extension numbers are as follow:



**USDA, Farm Service Agency - 2
USDA, NRCS - 3
IDNR, Div. of Soil Cons. - 3
St. Joseph County SWCD - 3**

Or if you know a certain person's direct extension, you may dial it at any time during the message.

The final change is our new fax number. The number is **(219) 291-0284**. This fax number is for all of the above offices.

If you have any questions, just give us a call and we will gladly answer your questions.



Welcome, Phil Sutton

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District would like to extend a warm welcome to Phil Sutton, Extension Educator Agriculture & Natural Resources with the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service.

Phil came to St. Joseph County from Batavia, New York where he worked for 10 years as an area extension educator for Dairy and Field Crops Integrated Pest Management with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Prior to that he had worked for 3 1/2 years as an extension entomologist for the Department of Entomology at Purdue University.

Phil is located in the St Joseph County Extension Office, 227 W. Jefferson Street, 646 County City Building, South Bend, IN 46601-1870. Please feel free to call him with questions at (219) 235-9604. You can also reach him by computer at Phil_Sutton@acn.purdue.edu.



QUICK BITES

Rinse and Win!

Agricultural Pesticide Container Recycling Program

No, it's not a contest. You don't win any special prizes or go on any special trips; however, you will be able to make a significant contribution toward the protection of your local community, neighbors and family members by participating in the upcoming Agricultural Pesticide Container Recycling Program. This important program, which is scheduled to run from August through the middle of September, is sponsored by the Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc., Indiana Plant Food & Ag Chemical Association and the Office of the Indiana State Chemist. The program is in cooperation with Solid Waste Management Districts across the state and Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service.

The co-sponsoring organizations are cooperating to organize this special program to collect and recycle plastic agricultural pesticide containers from local residents across the state. Before preparing your pesticide containers for delivery, there are specific instructions you will need to follow before the containers can be dropped off. To receive a copy of these instructions along with information on dates, times and locations for the late summer and early fall drop-off sites, you can contact any one of the organizations and/or agencies listed above. You can also call the St. Joseph County Conservation Office at (219) 291-2300 for a schedule. Don't pass up this great opportunity to do something for the

safety of your family and your community!



Pond Management Clinic

LaPorte County SWCD will be sponsoring a Pond Management Clinic July 21st from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Keith Swanson farm, located on 600 West, one mile south of U.S. 30 in LaPorte County. Follow the signs!

The topics to be covered include: site selection/soil considerations and construction; watershed care and treatment; fish stocking and care; aquatic weed control and identification; and safety and insurance considerations. This clinic will be a good time to ask all those questions that you have about ponds. (*We know that everyone wants a pond*).

For more information, contact the LaPorte County SWCD at (219) 362-6633.



Goodyear Award

We are always being told that we don't toot our horn enough about all of the work that we accomplish in the field of conservation. Well, I'm going to change that statement into something more positive. The St. Joseph County SWCD has just received word that we have been selected as a **GRAND AWARD WINNER** for the state of Indiana in the 1997-1998 Goodyear/NACD Conservation Awards Program. One of our board members will be receiving an all-expense-paid trip to Scottsdale, AZ in December to accept the prestigious award.

This is the 50th year celebration of Goodyear, in conjunction with the National Association of Conservation Districts, recognizing soil and water conservation districts nationally for their efforts in protecting and conserving soil, water, forests, wildlife and other natural resources.

The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company uses this program as a tool to help districts assess their strengths and weaknesses and identify ways to improve their effectiveness within their individual communities. Districts across the nation complete an evaluation to be screened on a regional basis and then forwarded to the state level for review, if approved.

We would like to thank the residents of St. Joseph County for helping us to receive this award, because it is because of you and your surrounding environment, that we commit our work and time. Thank you!





FIELD NOTES

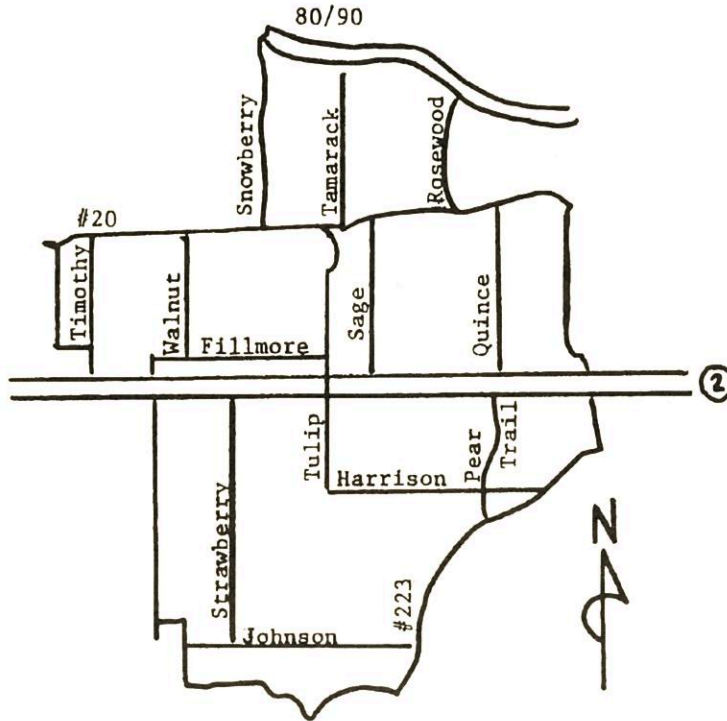


ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)

WILLING TO BE A VOLUNTEER?

With this new program, special targeted areas called Priority Areas are submitted by Natural Resources Conservation Service offices from each state to Washington, D.C. Selective process begins by choosing specific targeted area projects nationwide, based upon environmental needs and concerns, to receive funds to address local conservation issues. For fiscal year 1998, St. Joseph County received \$25,000 for the **Upper Kankakee Priority Area**, which is located in the northwest quarter of the county, including sub-watersheds of the Grapevine and Niespodziany ditches. There are approximately 35,734 acres in this *Priority Area* that can be greatly enhanced through your active support and volunteer participation.

Being selected as a Priority Area allows individual ag producers within the designated boundary to apply for EQIP cost-share funds to install a variety of conservation practices that address local concerns identified within the area. Just a few of the conservation practices that would comply within



the application guidelines include: grassed waterways, manure management facilities, water and sediment control basins, grade stabilization structures, streambank stabilization, filter, riparian and buffer strips, nutrient and pesticide management plans and field windbreaks. Applications for funding will be taken until September 30th, but we don't recommend that you wait until the last minute. Once all the funds have been earmarked, there will be no additional funding available unless we apply for the same geographical area again for next year's allocation. There is no guarantee that we would receive additional funding, even if we did reapply. We believe that you would be passing up a great opportunity if you did not take advantage of the unique alternatives that EQIP is offering to help you to address your environmental concerns, especially with an incentive of 75% cost-share.

If you are interested in this new cost-share opportunity, pick up the phone and request a field visit with one of our technical staff members. We will be glad to look at your problem area(s) or even to sit down with you to discuss new conservation applications that you could adopt to enhance or improve your

existing natural resources. Call now at (219) 291-2300. Time is running out!



Bears Repeating - -

UNLESS someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.

- The Lorax
Dr. Suess





FIELD NOTES

St. Joseph County Producer's Farm, Saves Soil and Enhances Wildlife Habitat

Raymond Dillon, a St. Joseph County landowner, is doing a great job of controlling erosion, improving wildlife habitat and producing crops.

When Ray bought one of his farms, it had "gullies big enough to swallow a tractor". He was able to stabilize the gullies by filling them with gravel, backfilling with topsoil, planting alfalfa for 5 years, then using no-till.

Ray uses no-till on the more erosive soils/slopes, and on the steep hilly areas he has planted trees or native grasses. Ray says he has at least 80 acres which were planted to trees 10 years ago or so.

Another problem Ray has had to solve was a fish kill he experienced on a private lake. When he bought the farm, which contains a lake, the land was cropped right up to the water's edge. In the spring after the ice thawed, most of the fish were dead. A fisheries biologist determined that

the fish died due to a lack of oxygen. He determined that the sediment and chemicals may have been getting into the lake and promoting weed growth. In the winter, when the lake was frozen over, the weeds would die and begin to decompose using most of the oxygen which in turn caused a fish kill. Ray planted filterstrips around the lake and he now has a healthy fish population in that lake. Ray also has filterstrips around or along most bodies of water on his properties.

In several low, wet spots, Ray has been able to create "shallow water areas" for wildlife. These marshy spots are great havens for waterfowl, muskrats, fish, reptiles, amphibians, deer, insects and other forms of wildlife.



As previously mentioned, Ray has been able to produce a healthy crop on his more productive soils and improve wildlife habitat on the less productive soils. In addition to planting filterstrips, native grasses, trees and creating shallow water areas, Ray has planted food plots for wildlife and places feeders in strategic positions for wildlife. He said he has also released gamebirds in the past only to have them disappear. In more recent years, he has

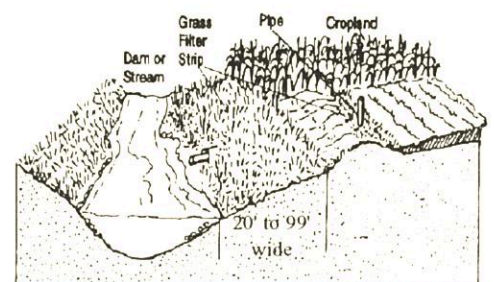
seen an increase of gamebirds on his properties.

Ray is setting a fine example of how to get the most out of those less productive areas and still produce crops.

Filterstrips

The fall seeding date for filterstrips will be here before you know it; August 15th to September 30th. So, if you don't have filterstrips along those ditches, why not stop in at the St. Joseph County Conservation District Office and sign up. The District will fund the fertilizer and seeding of the filterstrips. While you're in, you can also check on other programs that will help pay for filter/buffer strips and riparian buffers. The minimum size will be 20' wide and the maximum will be 99' wide.

You can benefit from filterstrips in a number of ways. They help filter out sediment, chemicals and organics before they reach the water. Filterstrips can also serve as a parking area for wagons and trucks during planting and/or harvesting. They provide wildlife habitat and they enhance the aesthetic value of the farm.





URBAN MEANDERINGS

Permanent Seeding Recommendations

The following table provides several non-fescue seeding options for environmentally sensitive areas. Additional seed species and mixtures are available commercially. When selecting a mixture, consider site conditions, including soil properties (e.g., soil pH and drainage), slope aspect and the tolerance of each species to drought or wet conditions.

Seed species and mixtures	Rate per acres
---------------------------	----------------

Open and Disturbed Areas (Remaining Idle More Than 1 Year)

1. Perennial ryegrass	35-50 lbs
+ white or ladino clover*	1 - 2 lbs
2. Kentucky bluegrass	20 lbs
+ smooth brome grass	10 lbs
+ switchgrass	3 lbs
+ timothy	4 lbs
+ perennial ryegrass	10 lbs
+ white or ladino clover*	1 - 2 lbs

(For Channels and Areas of Concentrated Flow, increase Perennial ryegrass rate by 100 lbs. per acre in the first mixture)

Steep Banks and Cuts, Low Maintenance Areas (Not Mowed)

1. Smooth Brome grass	25-35 lbs
+ red clover*	10-20 lbs
2. Orchardgrass	20-30 lbs
+ red clover*	10-20 lbs
+ ladino clover*	1 - 2 lbs

* For best results: (a) legume seed should be inoculated; (b) if legumes are fall-seeded, do so in early fall; (c) an oat or wheat companion of 1/2 bu./acre or nurse crop may be used with any of the above permanent seeding mixtures.

NOTE: For a splash of color add wildflower seeds available through the SWCD or most seed vendors.



Green Lots = Profit\$

Much has been said about the need to install conservation practices, such as permanent seeding, on construction sites to control sediments. Sediments, the result of soil erosion and a form of pollution, has been determined to be the main cause of surface water quality degradation in Indiana.

Construction sites are a major source of sedimentation because, as land is stripped of vegetation and exposed for development, soil erosion rates dramatically increase. As the eroded soil (sediment) eventually reaches a waterway, the physical and biological characteristics are altered. This also impacts local tax structures and spending, because local funds need to be diverted for removal of the accumulated sediments.

Because of the negative impacts on public waters that sediment can pose, state regulations requiring erosion and sediment control have been enacted. From this stand point, controlling sediments makes good environmental and public sense. From a developers view point, these regulations could be perceived as an economic burden.

The St. Joseph County SWCD office participated in a multi-state study to determine if there is actually an economical advantage to controlling erosion on individual subdivision lots.

What did the study find?



Actual homebuyers perceive vegetated lots at a higher value than bare lots.

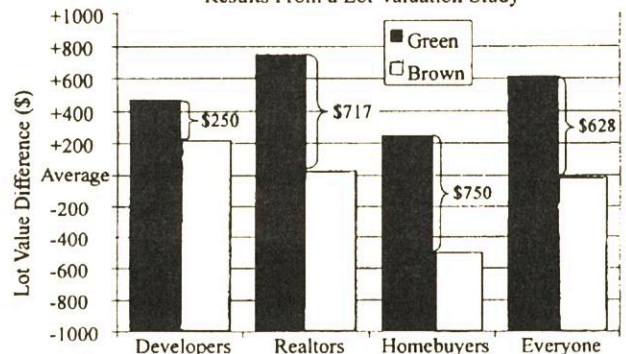


Based on the homebuyers' perceived increased value, the developer has an opportunity to return 150% on the initial cost of seeding the lots.



Vegetative cover as a means of erosion control has economic, as well as, environmental benefits.

Prices Differences for Green and Brown Lots
Results From a Lot Valuation Study



If you would like more information on this study or a copy of the results and findings, please contact the office.





**St. Joseph County Soil and Water
Conservation District**
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South Bend, IN 46614

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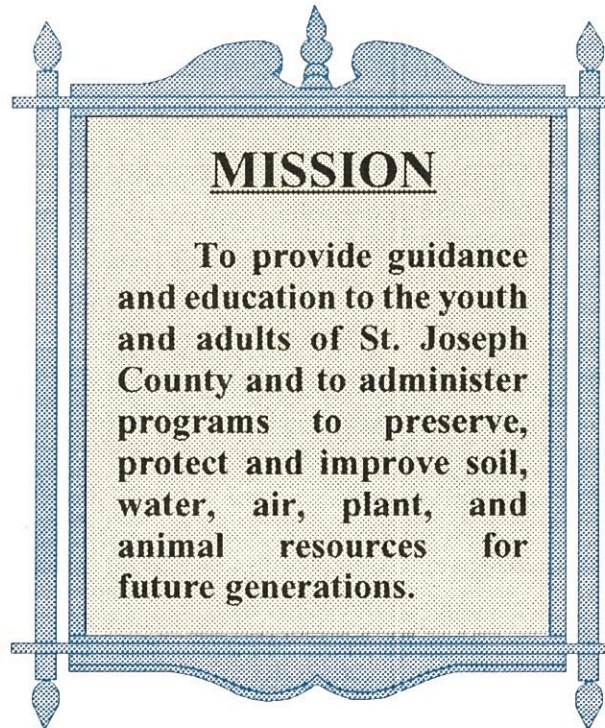
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