



St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

July/Aug./Sept. 2011
Volume 13, Issue 3

5605 U.S. 31 South, Ste. 4 South Bend, IN
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MEET AMANDA & PATRICK!



Hello, my name is Amanda Kautz and I'm the new NRCS Soil Conservationist for St. Joseph County.

I grew up on a small farm in Vermillion County in west central Indiana. Being surrounded by farm fields and woods got me interested in nature and agriculture at a young age.

This interest has stayed with me and led me to attend Purdue University and major in Natural Resources and Environmental Science with a focus on land-use. I interned with NRCS in my hometown office in Rockville, Indiana and enjoyed the experience. This led me to decide I wanted to begin a career with NRCS after graduation.

In May, I graduated from Purdue with my bachelor's degree and moved to St. Joseph County. I haven't spent a lot of time in northern Indiana; so every day is a new experience, and I am excited to explore all of the nearby parks and wildlife areas. I'm looking forward to meeting people throughout the county and continuing to learn about different types of conservation and farming practices.



Hello, my name is Patrick Glassman and I am the summer intern with the St. Joseph County SWCD. I just finished my freshman year at Purdue University. I am studying Agricultural Engineering with an emphasis in Environmental & Natural Resource Engineering. I am very interested in conservation methods and look forward to learning just how these methods are designed and implemented. I believe being able to intern here will teach me and expose me to just what I want to be involved with for my career. I can very easily see my career being with the NRCS in the future.

SWCD's 2010 Annual Report - Get Yours Today -

The SWCD has once again run our Annual Report as an insert into the Farmers Exchange in January and we've been distributing them at various events. If you would like to get a copy of the Annual Report, stop by the SWCD office to pick up a complimentary copy or give us a call at 574-291-7444, ext. 3. For a digital copy, check out this shortcut to our publications webpage at www.tinyurl.com/swcdpub or call us (574-291-7444 x 3) and we'll email a copy to you.



**Help Us
GO
GREEN!**

This newsletter was mailed to you because we don't have your e-mail address.

If you're a regular reader of our newsletter and would like to opt-out of hardcopy newsletter mailing list in the name of **GOING GREEN**, please email us at info@stjosephswcd.org with the subject line **"Go Green"** and include your **name** and **home mailing address** in the body of the e-mail.

Thank you for helping us become more environmentally & economically responsible!

What's Inside . . .

Urban Meanderings.....	2, 3
The Natural Educator.....	4
Woodland Times.....	5
Field Notes.....	6, 7



Over 200 People Attend May 6th Original Art Rain Barrel Auction... Auction to Become Annual Event

If you've been following our email updates and our last edition of the Conservation Kaleidoscope, you know that this year marked South Bend's first Rain Barrel Auction. The event's organizer, Kathleen Petitjean (Fellow recipient with IU South Bend's Center for a Sustainable Future) thought that a community Rain Barrel Auction would be an innovative way to raise money and spread the awareness of the importance of conserving our most precious natural resource — water. Petitjean, who painted one of the 12 rain barrels herself, envisioned this event as a great way to provide local artists a way to make difference in our community's sustainability.

The auction, which was held at the South Bend Museum of Art, raised \$7,750 from the sale of 12 rain barrels painted by area artists and artist groups, and another \$2,200 was donated by over 15 underwriters from local businesses and organizations (including the St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District). The proceeds have gone to the artists (some of whom decided to donate their portions to local causes such as the St. Joseph County Humane Society) and IUSB's Center for Sustainable Future. The Center for Sustainable Future also decided to split its share with the South Bend Museum of Art, which hosted the successful event.

The top-earning barrel painted by Jill Wygant-LaFountain brought a winning bid of \$1,100. As quoted by Petitjean in a May 15th South Bend Tribune article, "It was playful with bold colors and a retro look — kind of like pair of pants from the 1960s...It was a work of art that people could easily see in their garden."

To help educate the community about conserving water through means like rain barrels and rain gardens, the St. Joseph Valley Master Gardeners Club and the Michiana Stormwater Partnership (of which the St. Joseph County SWCD is a member) provided hand-outs, answered questions, and donated two unpainted rain barrels that were given away as door prizes at the conclusion of the auction.



photo by Gary Mester, Master Photographer

Want More Info?

St. Joseph County SWCD - www.stjosephswcd.org
IUSB's Center for a Sustainable Future - www.iusb.edu/~csfuture
Michiana Stormwater Partnership - michianastormwaterpartnership.org
St. Joseph Valley Master Gardeners Club - www.stjoemastergardeners.org
South Bend Museum of Art - www.southbendart.org

Tri-County Forestry Field Day

This event, which is held as a partnership with Elkhart and Kosciusko County SWCD's, will be in St. Joseph County this year...likely sometime in September.

Unfortunately complete details are not available at the time of printing but if you are interested, please give the office a call and we will include you on our mailing list for the event's flyers.

Call 574-291-7444, ext 3 or check out our website (www.stjosephswcd.org) for complete details later this summer.

Did You Miss Our Rain Barrel/Composter Pre-Sale in April?

This spring, we pre-sold 18 rain barrels and 7 composters (and numerous related accessories) to local homeowners. By attending certain "qualified educational events" on these and other topics related to backyard conservation practices that benefit water and soil quality, we were able to provide discounted prices for these items.

If you missed this spring's pre-sale, we MAY be offering another round in the summer of 2011.

We are in the process of working on a list of educational events and self-educational "projects" that would qualify you for a discount.

To be placed on our "waiting list" of interested buyers, give us a call TODAY at 574-291-7444, ext. 3.



Need to submit a plan? Not sure?

An Updated Contact Guide for Rule 5 / Rule 13 Local Reviewing Agencies

Rule 5 Plans for:

- (1) Non-MS4 Sites, including Walkerton, North Liberty, Lakeville, New Carlisle &
 - (2) MS4 Entity-Owned Projects
- No Fee - 1 copy required (may submit electronically) to:

ATTN: Andrew Fox

St. Joseph County SWCD

5605 US 31 South, Ste 4
South Bend, IN 46614
P: 574-291-7444 x 3

Andrew.Fox@in.nacdnet.net

www.stjosephswcd.org

Rule 13 Plans for:

- Sites within St. Joseph County, including Roseland, Granger, Osceola
- (Call for Fees/# of copies required)

ATTN: Maria Schaefer

St. Joseph County

Department of Engineering

227 W. Jefferson Blvd, 7th Floor
South Bend, IN 46601
P: 574-235-9626

MSchaefer@co.st-joseph.in.us

www.stjosephcountyindiana.com

Rule 13 Plans for:

- Sites within City of South Bend, Ivy Tech, IUSB
- (Call for Fees/# of copies required)

ATTN: John Engstrom

City of South Bend

Department of Engineering

227 W. Jefferson Blvd, Ste 1300 N
South Bend, IN 46601
P: 574-235-9251

jengstro@southbendin.gov

www.ci.south-bend.in.us

Rule 13 Plans for:

- Sites within City of Mishawaka, Bethel College
- (Call for Fees/# of copies required)

ATTN: Melissa McGuire

City of Mishawaka

Engineering Department

600 East Third Street
Mishawaka, IN 46544

P: 574-258-1619

mmcguire@mishawaka.in.gov

www.mishawakacity.com

After Your Plan is Submitted...

All plans must be approved by the respective overseeing agency.

Once the plan is approved, a Notice of Intent (NOI) must be sent to IDEM with a \$100.00 fee before construction begins.

For more guidance on the process of submitting plans, NOI's, and other requirements for Rule 5 and Rule 13, check out the St. Joseph County SWCD's website at this shortcut:

www.tinyurl.com/stormwater-stjoe

Comments to the Contractors

With many construction projects underway this summer, I wanted to take a couple of moments to mention a few of the concerns that I am seeing pop up during inspections at various construction sites in the community. One of the biggest issues that I see on construction sites is the inappropriate type and installation of storm drain protection.

Almost every site I have been too has used the Silt Fence/ Filter Fabric Square to "protect" storm drain inlets, even though the Erosion Control Plans called for other practices to be implemented. While the fabric method does offer some protection from sediment entering storm drains initially, there are several problems that come along with them.

For instance, on most sites the silt fence fabric is cut to just barely fit the drains.

When the fabric fills up with sediment, and someone goes to pull the grate up from the drain to clean the sediment out, what usually happens? **KER-PLOP!!** ...the heavy sediment laden fabric falls into the sewer and the sediment washes away anyhow. When proper practices (i.e. inlet drop baskets or block and stone filters, etc) are installed, these kinds of mishaps are far less likely to occur. Some other more minor items that I have been noticing out on some of the construction sites is a lack of posting the required information on the construction sites. These items include:

- Notices of Intent (NOI's)
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits
- Contractor contact information
- Owner contact information.
- Along with the posted information, copies of erosion control practices inspection reports need to be kept on site, but do not need to be posted. These inspections need to be conducted by a "qualified person" on a weekly basis at minimum, and after every rain event in excess of 1/2 inch.

If you have any questions regarding any practices, what forms to use, or to submit a Rule 5 plan please contact Andrew Fox, at the St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) office.

The phone number is 574-291-7444 ext 3 or by email (Andrew.Fox@in.nacdnet.net).



PHOTO by St. Joseph County SWCD: Typical plugging of filter fabric in inlet that is hard to clean



THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

Ripples

This spring has been one of the wettest on record and as I write this article on the 1st of June it is day 3 of no rain, at least at my home. This spring brings to a point that too much of a good thing is not always good.

Most of us have found all of this rain an annoyance, but the ripple effect of this rain is extremely far reaching on so many levels. It is amazing how many acres of cropland, as of June 1st, still have not been planted. With corn prices high this was to be a banner year for the producers of our region and everyone had high hopes, but if the rain continues some of our best cropland may not see a harvest. This, of course, will affect everyone as food prices climb. For farmers, a more subtle ripple effect has and will come from soil erosion. Sediment (or soil suspended in our water) is the number one form of water pollution and all of this heavy rain has caused a lot of sediment-laden runoff. This rain is also going to cause farmers to push the limits and work the soil while it is too wet, this will cause compaction. Add in the sealing effect of all of this rain on the soil and next year the farmers will need to work the soil even more, removing even more residue and further increasing runoff, all of which affect water quality.

I stated early that all this rain has an effect on many levels. Aquatic life will be affected by the pollution caused by the increased runoff. Ecologically-speaking, everything from insects to fish will be affected. Silt washed away with runoff and suspended in the water will cover eggs and clog gills, which will reduce populations. Every spring I take kids "swamp stomping" at Kingsbury Fish & Wildlife Area and normally we count over 100 young geese, but this year I have counted only 10 young geese due to rising water levels that flood the nests and kill the eggs. I would speculate that this has also affected duck populations. Ground-nesting birds from turkeys to pheasants to meadow larks with all see abnormally-high nest failures due to this spring's rains. Young rabbits will not survive due to becoming wet and chilled.

In general all of this rain and storms will have a far-reaching effect on all wild animal reproduction. Deer, however, may actually benefit from the rain. Being a larger animal, the young will not be affected by the rain as much. For instance, if the farmers finally do get to plant their crops, this will translate into a later harvest and, therefore, benefit the deer who love standing corn fields which contain all the food and shelter they need. The later harvest will give the deer better protection from being harvested by hunters, which in turn will cause an already large deer population to grow even larger.

Rain—it is a good thing, it is necessary, it is life, but the effects of too much rain can indeed be very far-reaching and will affect all of us.

Tools for You

No matter what your question or concern may be regarding environmental practices or knowledge, your Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Fish and Wildlife want to help. Here are some new resources to feel encouraged to use:

- To find information on and what programs are working to stop **nonpoint source pollution** (or pollution that is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground, which comes from many diffuse sources like construction sites, parking lots, farms, roads, and even our own backyards) please visit IDEM's Nonpoint Source website at www.in.gov/idem/nps. This site includes water quality data and studies, grant funds, volunteer resources, watershed management plans, success stories, media campaigns, and much more.
- For information on **controlling nuisance waterfowl** like geese and ducks in your yard, pond, or parking lot, the IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife offers answers in the form a free CD containing a 40-minute presentation on the subject. Request a CD by contacting your district wildlife biologist. Find more information about nuisance wildlife control and contact information for your district INDR biologist at www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2351.htm. In St. Joseph County you would contact Linda Byer, IDNR District 2 Wildlife Biologist, at 574-896-3572
- As you plan for future **lake activities** in the warmer weather, find specific lake depth maps as well as other topographic maps, historic maps, etc. from IDNR at www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2355.htm. Maps are available to download for free. You can also contact the Map Sales Office directly by phone at 1-877-463-6367. These maps are developed by the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) staff, and you can contact LARE Program Manager Greg Biberdorf by phone at 317-233-1484 or via email at gbiberdorf@dnr.in.gov.



**Don't forget ...
Recycle Reuse Reduce
and Rethink**



25th Annual Conservation Tree Sales Program a Success (AGAIN!)

St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2010-2011 annual tree sale program was largely popular once again. 24 various species of deciduous, coniferous, and flowering trees and shrubs were offered this past year, and of these just over 10,000 plants were sold. White Pine was the most popular species with over 1,300 sold.

We here at the SWCD would like to say **thank you, thank you, thank you, THANK YOU** to the many volunteers that helped us to pick up the trees from the local nurseries, sort, package, and distribute all of those trees so that they can be planted throughout our community.

- Mel Lenig and the Penn High School FFA
- Tim McLochlin and the John Glenn High School FFA
- Hensler Nursery (Hamlet, IN)
- Alpha Nurseries (Holland, MI)
- Rupp Seeds (Wauseon, OH)

It was a mountain of a job that was turned into an ant hill by all of the support from all of these amazing volunteers!



PHOTO: Volunteers from the Master Gardeners, and John Glenn High School FFA Members helping the SWCD "pack trees"



PHOTO: A volunteer from the St. Joseph County Master Gardeners is having a great time preparing tree orders for pick-up

So (in no particular order) THANK YOU to:

- Master Gardeners of St. Joseph County (aka St. Joseph Valley Master Gardeners Club)
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service of St. Joseph County
- St. Joseph County Parks
- St. Joseph County 4-H Fair
- Ryder Truck Rental and Leasing
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- John Manuszak and the Mishawaka High School Science Club

If you would like to be one of the first people in October to receive the new tree order form for our 2011-2012 program, then please join our mailing list by calling 574-291-7444 ext 3.

The order form will be available online in October as well; simply go to the website (www.stjosephswcd.org), and look for the links on our Home Page.

The best time to plant a tree
was 20 years ago.
The next best time is now.
- Chinese Proverb



Cover Crops: A Valuable Practice in Dry Years & Wet Years

Farmers all over Indiana are realizing the benefits of cover crops, even in a wet year. Fields with cover crops may dry out earlier than fields left bare over the winter due to the ability of cover crops to stabilize wet fields by taking up moisture.

Cover crops are grown between regular crop rotations like corn, soybean and wheat. Examples of cover crops are annual ryegrass, crimson clover, oats, oil-seed radishes, and cereal rye.

“In a wet year cover crop growth can be much farther along than planned, so the management decisions on how to kill the cover crop have to be adjusted. Under these conditions a fast acting herbicide may be needed. However, cover crops are still worth the investment because they stabilize moisture levels and reduce erosion, scouring and nutrient losses.”

**- Barry Fisher, State Agronomist,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation
Service (NRCS)**

Benefits of cover crops include:

- Improving soil structure by increasing soil organic matter and root penetration
- Protecting otherwise bare soil from wind and water erosion
- Using nitrogen left in the soil, preventing it from polluting waterways
- Cycling nutrients back into the soil that will be available for corn and soybean crops

Barry Fisher explains that when used as part of a conservation cropping system, cover crops increase soil productive health and decrease risk, no matter what the conditions: “Fields have less erosion and better moisture management with a cover crop, lessening risks from drought or flooding. Fields in long term no-till with cover crops made it through last year’s drought with higher yields than expected.”

Stop by your local Soil and Water Conservation District

(SWCD) to learn how some conservation practices improve production as well as how federal, state, and local cost-sharing programs can make them affordable.

To make it even more affordable, the St. Joseph County SWCD has been accepting applications through July 1, 2011 for our second annual “Cover It



Fall planted oilseed radish

PHOTO SOURCE: Michigan State University Cover Crops Website: www.covercrops.msu.edu

Green” Cost-Share Program which provides cost-share dollars to eligible landowners to establish winter cover crops. The St. Joseph County SWCD will award a one-time payment of a maximum of \$575.00 for winter cover crops (excluding wheat and soybeans) per approved contract.

If you are just reading about our “Cover It Green” program today, and have missed the July 1st deadline, don’t worry!

Give us a call at the St. Joseph County USDA Service Center and we can talk to you about your options for financial and/or technical assistance for integrating cover crops into your cropping system, as well programs for a number of other conservation farming practices. The number to call is 574-291-7444, ext. 3.

AUGUST 3RD = Tentative Date for Cover Crops 102 Workshop

Last August, we held a workshop called, “Cover Crops Q&A’s”, which covered the basics.

This year, for anyone interested in learning more about cover crops, we plan to have Cisco Seeds Agronomist/Seed Marketing Manager, Dave Robison, talk about the basics and beyond for “Cover Crops 102”. Attendees will go home with lots of great handouts to continue learning more.

**Complete details are not yet available, but give our office a call and we’ll make sure you get a flyer:
574-291-7444, ext. 3.**



Who Do You Call for Levee Break Assistance?

During the floods of 2008, many landowners learned that hard way that there is a complex web of help available after a levee break. With waters rising again this spring, the **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** would like to help landowners and communities navigate the assistance available.

Here's who to contact, depending on the status of the levee in need of help:

- The **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)** can provide assistance for urban or rural levee repairs if the levee is in "Active USACE" status, meaning they are on record with the USACE and are being fully maintained.
- **NRCS** can assist with rural levee repairs where the levee's watershed is less than 400 square miles, and where there is a threat to life or structural property. NRCS assistance is administered through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program, and the project must meet EWP eligibility requirements. NRCS must be contacted prior to construction work for repairs being started. To contact the NRCS office in St. Joseph County, Indiana, call 574-291-7444, ext. 3, (otherwise visit www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact).
- The **Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA)** can provide assistance for government-owned levees with proof that the levee was being maintained. FEMA assistance is only available in counties where FEMA has declared a disaster (county disaster declarations available at www.fema.gov/news/disasters.fema).
- Private levees that are protecting only farmland, and not any structures or homes, may not be eligible for federal assistance. In these cases, the landowners are responsible for levee repairs and maintenance, including any needed permits.

A more permanent solution for rural floodplain areas may be to take the land out of production and receive payment for a federal conservation easement programs. For instance, NRCS can purchase easements on frequently flooded land through the Wetlands Reserve Program or the Floodplain Easement Program and pay to restore these lands to a floodplain habitat.

Need More Info?

- For more information on NRCS programs, visit www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs
- For more information on USACE programs, visit www.LRD.usace.army.mil
- For more information on FEMA programs visit www.fema.gov/assistance
- To hear Brownfield Ag News' Dave Russell's recent interview with Indiana NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty about this topic, visit www.brownfieldagnews.com/2011/05/12/what-to-do-if-a-levee-breaks

The Wetland Reserve Program ... Why Fight Nature?

With much of the southwestern portion of St. Joseph County having once been a part of the Grand Kankakee Marsh, it is no surprise that there are many wetlands and associated habitats found here. The Grand Kankakee Marsh was once the largest fresh water marsh in North America, and supported an abundant diversity of life. In the present day most of what was the Kankakee Marsh is now very productive farm ground—land that helps to feed the world's populations. While many of the Marsh areas have been drained for agriculture, there are still numerous areas that are very difficult to drain, and have posed problems for farmers who are trying to raise a crop here. For these areas, the St. Joseph County SWCD would like to recommend that producers take a look at the Natural Resources Conservation Services' (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

Often called "nature's sponges," wetlands help protect water quality by filtering out pollutants and protecting towns and cities against floods and storm surges. Wetlands also buffer coastal areas from erosion. They offer aesthetic and recreational opportunities, as well. The Wetland Reserve Program is one that helps to protect wetland habitats into the future and to restore these grounds to their natural state. The protection usually comes in the form of a permanent easement that is placed on the property after purchasing the development rights to the ground. When the development rights are purchased and the easement is placed on the wetlands, the land owner still retains ownership of the land itself, while the NRCS will retain the rights to develop that land. This will prevent future destruction of the wetland from development or conversion.

To be eligible for this program, a minimum of 15 acres must be enrolled. Proper soil types and structure will also determine eligibility of acreage to be enrolled into the program. In the WRP program, as with other NRCS programs, funding is provided on a competitive basis. For more details on the Wetland Reserve Program please contact the NRCS/St. Joseph County SWCD office at 574-291-7444 ext 3.



ST. JOSEPH COUNTY SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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SOUTH BEND IN 46614-5296

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St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Jim LaFree, Vice-Chair
John Kulwicki, Member
Carole Riewe, Member
Paul Williams, III, Member

Associate Supervisors:

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Jeremy Cooper
Dave Craft
Jan Ivkovich
Melvin Kulwicki
Charles Lehman
Joe Long
Randy Matthys
Eugene Myers
Richard Schmidt
Arlene Schuchman
Stacey Silvers
Dale Stoner
Dave Vandewalle
Dru Wrasse

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar



JULY

- 1 - Deadline to Apply for SWCD's "Cover It Green" Cover Crop Cost-share Program
- 4 - Independence Day—OFFICE CLOSED
- 18 - SWCD Monthly Board Mtg, 7PM, Farm Bureau Mtg Rm

AUGUST

- 3 - Tentative Date for FREE EVENT "Cover Crops 102 Workshop" (see pg. 6)
- 15 - SWCD Monthly Board Mtg, 7PM, Farm Bureau Mtg Rm.

SEPTEMBER

- 5 - Labor Day—OFFICE CLOSED
- 19 - SWCD Monthly Board Mtg, 7PM, Farm Bureau Mtg Rm.

OTHER EVENTS TO LOOK FOR

- Rain Barrel/Composter Pre-Sale—Summer (see pg. 2)
- Tri-County Forestry Field Day—September (see pg. 2)
- Composting 101 Seminar—September or October (look for details in your water bill or recycling bill)

Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, DC, NRCS
Rick Glassman, SWCD
Andrew Fox, SWCD
Patrick Glassman, SWCD Intern
Amanda Kautz, NRCS
Lisa Wynn, SWCD

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Morgan Thornburg, CED
Helene Cannoot
Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli

OUR 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.