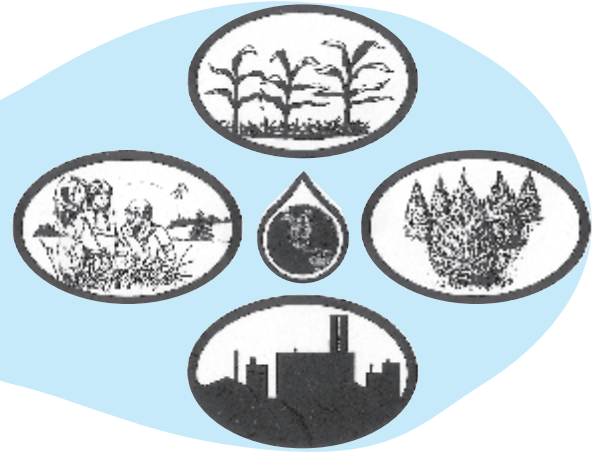




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

September/October 2015
Volume 17, Issue 5

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Website: stjosephswcd.org

Telephone (574) 936-2024
e-mail: info@stjosephswcd.org

What's Going On...

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

September

7th - Labor Day Office closed

10th - Pasture Walk - Marlin
& Doris Eash 3540 N 675
W, Shipshewana, IN 46565

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

23rd - First Day of Autumn

October

8th - Pasture Walk - Jerry &
Loretta Lehman 9485 W
200 S, Shipshewana, IN
46565

12th - Columbus Day -
Federal Holiday

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

November

3rd - Election Day - County
Holiday

11th - Veteran's Day - Office
Closed

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

26th - Thanksgiving Day -
office closed

27th - County Holiday

The New NRCS Conservation Client Gateway



The world is constantly changing and so is its technology. As years pass by technology has developed at astonishing rates, creating ways and tools to facilitate the way we deal with our everyday needs. To keep up with the speed of technology, the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service developed a new online portal: **The Conservation Client Gateway**. With this technology, producers save time, money, and fuel, with fewer trips to your local NRCS Field Office to take care of administrative tasks, and will have the ability to work with conservation planners online to access Farm Bill programs, request assistance, and track payments for their conservation activities.

"What used to require a trip to a USDA service center can now be done from a home computer through Conservation Client Gateway. NRCS is committed to providing effective, efficient assistance to its clients, and Conservation Client Gateway is one way to improve customer service."
Said Jane Hardisty, Indiana State Conservationist.

With this tool, producers and private landowners will be able to conveniently and securely;

- ◆ Request help on a natural resource issue or request a conservation plan on your property;
- ◆ Review and sign conservation plans and practice schedules;
- ◆ Complete and sign an application for a conservation program;
- ◆ Electronically sign key documents, such as financial assistance conservation program applications and contracts;
- ◆ Document completed practices and request certification of completed practices;
- ◆ Request and track payments for conservation programs; and
- ◆ Store and retrieve technical and financial files, including documents and photographs;
- ◆ Request updates (e.g. address, e-mail, phone numbers) to your customer profile information.

Producers who want to learn more about Conservation Client Gateway may contact their local NRCS office (574) 936-2024 ext. 4 or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway to access the online portal. We also have a YouTube video with more information about this technology; https://youtu.be/l5mT_5nBk5Q.



"Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you." ~Wendell Berry

The Value of Wetlands

By: Elkhart County SWCD, June Grass Roots Newsletter

Historically much of Indiana was covered in wetlands, from the forested wetlands of northeastern and southern Indiana to the wet prairies of northwestern Indiana. Over the years we have lost at least 70% of these, if not more to draining by humans. Wetlands provide many services for us and through wetland restoration we are starting to regain those that have been lost. Even small restorations have a big impact on the environment. Some of the essential wetland values that are recovered and also exist in natural wetlands include:

- **Water Storage:** Wetlands function like a sponge storing water and slowly releasing it. This helps with flood control after heavy rain events, especially since a one acre wetland can store 1-1.5 million gallons of water. By slowing the water, wetlands also reduce the erosive potential protecting our life giving soil. Slowing water also allows for recharging of the ground water table.
- **Water Filtration:** The slowing of the water causes sediment to drop out, leaving it clear. Dissolved nutrients are also removed by being absorbed by plants and soil microbes. This filtration means that the water leaving the wetland is much cleaner than when it entered.
- **Biological Productivity:** Wetlands have a level of productivity and a number of species that is on the same level as a tropical rainforest or a coral reef. Half of all North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands, and they are home to 31% of US plant species. A healthy wetland also helps control those pesky mosquitos by providing a home for their natural predators reducing the population.
- **Recreational and Aesthetic:** Wetlands provide beautiful and interesting places to bird watch, hike, hunt, take photographs, and more! They are home to many beautiful native plants and lots of unique wildlife you can't enjoy anywhere else. Next time you go past a wetland remember that it isn't a "dirty swamp" or a "mosquito breeding ground". It is an ecologically important area that provides many services for us each and every day whether we realize it or not!

Locally check out watershed organizations such as Friends of the St. Joe River, and the St. Joseph River Basin Commission or the SWCD/NRCS office for more information on wetlands and how you can help with wetland restoration.

Planning A Pond

There are over 40,000 private ponds in Indiana, averaging about one acre each, and new ponds continue to be constructed each year. Besides fishing, ponds can be important for erosion control, fire control, livestock watering, irrigation, swimming, picnicking, and wildlife enhancement.

If you are considering developing a pond, several state and local agencies can assist you. There are also federal, state, and local regulations to consider. Take the time to call the offices listed below to make sure you have the information you need. Collect the following information before you call: county, township, and crossroads of your property; responsible party (usually the property owner); and name and phone number of the contractor who will be doing the work. Some of the information below is also available on the Internet. Visit our resource & links page on our website; www.st.josphswcd.org.

Before you dig any hole on your property, call the Indiana Underground Plant Protection Service at (811) or (800-382-5544) to locate underground utilities. Call them at least two working days before you want to begin your project.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (574-232-1952) is responsible for regulating navigable waters of the United States. If pond construction will affect an existing wetland, pond, stream, or river, you may need a permit from the Army Corps.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management or IDEM (574-245-4870) has jurisdiction over some wetlands that are not under the Army Corps. If you're dealing with an existing wetland, you should call both IDEM and the Corps to get the proper permits.

Notify the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water (877-928-3755) to make sure that the construction is not within the 100 year floodway. Floodway maps show floodways that have been delineated in an area, but not all streams have had a delineation; contact the IDNR division to confirm the status of the area you want to work in.

Contact the St. Joseph County Highway Department (574 235-7800) to make sure you do not work within the highway right of way. This distance may vary, and each site needs to have an individual assessment.

If your pond will overflow into a county regulated drain, you will need permission from the St. Joseph County Drainage Board (574-235-9543). Pond construction should also be outside of the 75-foot right of way on any county regulated drain. You should also be aware of farm tiles. You must maintain the elevation of any private tile and you cannot inhibit the natural flow of water.

If the total disturbance for the pond is over one acre (including digging the pond, stockpiling soil, and any associated activity that will disturb the soil), you will need to fulfill the requirements of Rule 5, Indiana's stormwater quality rule for construction sites. Contact Sarah Harville at the SWCD for help in making the proper submittals (574-936-2024 ext. 4). This process can take 30 days or more, so plan ahead.

Several publications are available with helpful information that covers planning, design, and construction. The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has a publication on Ponds. The IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife has a "Fish Pond Management" brochure. The Purdue Cooperative Extension Service (574-235-9604) has an "Aquatic Plant Management" brochure (publication #WS-21) that will assist with aquatic weed control after a pond is established.

IDNR Fish Management Biologist (574-896-3999) can answer questions, although they cannot make on-site investigations of private ponds. They can provide a list of private hatcheries for individuals who want to purchase fish stock. They can also advise you on weed control and help with weed identification.

Your pond can bring you hours of pleasure, but like most things, it will also require many hours of careful planning, many dollars for construction, and on-going maintenance.

St. Joseph County River Friendly Farmers

The 2015 Indiana State Fair was dedicated the Year of the Farmer. On Aug. 19th two of St. Joseph County's Agricultural Producers, were honored as winners of the Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts' 2015 River Friendly Farmer Award. **Congratulations to Tom Hesters and Ed Leininger.** The Award is given to those farmers across Indiana who have shown a dedication to improving the quality of their local waterways through sound conservation farming techniques. Some of the conservation practices utilized by our local farmers include but are not limited to; no-till planting which reduces or eliminates erosion, planting winter cover crops that trap excess nutrients in the field before running off into the waterways, and intensive Nutrient Management that only applies fertilizer where and when a crop needs the fertilizer.



Winterizing Your Rain Barrel

Leaves are falling and the scent of apples baking means it's already time to think about getting ready for winter. One thing you need to do is winterize your rain barrel. Preparing your rain barrel for winter can prolong its life and save you from replacing it anytime soon. Youcanfixit.com has an easy 7 step process to get this off your to do list.

1. Drain your rain barrel completely once the growing season has ended. Run the discharge hose over to an established tree or use the remaining water on other nearby vegetation. Plants need moisture throughout the winter, so water away.
2. Clear away any debris whether it is on the top of the barrel, inside its strainer basket or in the down spout itself. Now is a good time to trim back vegetation or tree branches that may have grown around the area.
3. Remove the drainage and over flow hoses and store them in a safe and protected area. Keeping garden hoses out of the elements will prevent them from prematurely cracking or hardening.
4. Open the spigot located at the bottom of the rain barrel and leave it open until spring arrives. This will allow any water that may accumulate in the barrel to flow freely out and onto the ground.
5. Once the hoses have been removed and the bottom spigot has been opened, it is typically safe to leave the rain barrel in place over the winter. Ideally any melting snow or winter rain will flow through the barrel and out the spigot without doing damage to the barrel itself.
6. If the empty rain barrel is removed and stored indoors for the winter, it is imperative to extend the existing downspout down and away from the home's foundation. An easy way to do this is to purchase a flexible downspout extension and attach it to the existing downspout using short, self-drilling sheet metal screws. Downspouts and extensions should always be secured into place using sheet metal screws to prevent them from slipping loose. Improperly drained gutters are the number one cause of damage to home foundations.
7. When spring draws near and the threat of one more deep winter freeze has passed, close the rain barrel's spigot, reattach the overflow and drainage hoses and start using your virtually free water supply once again.

What Can You Do To Help the SWCD?

~ Join Today ~

Associate Supervisor - This is where most people begin their journey with the SWCD. Associate Supervisors are approved by the Board (which is comprised of Supervisors and Associate Supervisors). The board believes in the committee process, which is made up of both Associates and Supervisors. The committees then bring recommendations to the board for approval.

Supervisor - This is the official voting voice of the SWCD. The Supervisors are five volunteers drawn from the list of Associate Supervisors. Three are elected at the SWCD's annual meetings in January. The other two are appointed by the three elected Supervisors. Elected Supervisors must own 10 acres of land in the county.

How much time is involved?

Monthly Meetings - The SWCD meets the 3rd Tuesday normally at 7pm. The meetings take place at the Centre Township Library (1150 E Kern Rd, South Bend, IN 46614) Meetings generally last 1.5 hours. The public is always welcome to attend our monthly meetings, so come by any time!

Committee Meetings - Generally held before the monthly meeting. Most last about 30 minutes. Depending on the committee, one to six times per year.

Supervisors - Generally meet an extra 4 times per year.

Events - Tree sales, science alive, field days, Locally lead meeting (helps to set the ranking process for all NRCS programs) and other events can add 10 to 20 extra hours per year.

If you are interested in the St. Joseph County SWCD please give us a call at (574) 936-2024 ext. 4, send us an email us at info@stjosephswcd.org, or stop by our Office at 2903 Gary Dr., Plymouth, IN 46563.



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

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St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership



Forestry Field Day

Saturday October 17, 2015
 9am-Noon
 Bob Feitz Farm located at
 67998 Linden Rd
 Lakeville, IN 46536

Topics to include:

- Invasive Species Identification
- Forest Management/Tree Thinning
- Pollinators/Pollinator Habitat
- Responsible Lawn Care
- Managing Forest for Profit
- Wetland Management

Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisors:
 John Dooms, Chair
 Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair
 Mike Burkholder
 Arlene Schuchman
 Stacey Silvers

SWCD Honorary Members:
 Bernard Byrd
 Jerry Knepp
 Melvin Kulwicki
 Keith Lineback
 William Millar

SWCD Associate Supervisors:
 Dave Craft
 Jan Ivkovich
 Jim LaFree
 Charles Lehman
 Joe Long
 Randy Matthys
 Carole Riewe
 Richard Schmidt
 Dale Stoner
 Dave Vandewalle
 Paul Williams, III
 Dru Wrasse

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:
 Rick Glassman, SWCD
 Sarah Harville, SWCD
 Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD
 Debbie Knepp, NRCS
 James Rodriguez, NRCS

Farm Service Agency Staff:
 Gideon Nobbe, CED
 Linda Bentele
 Aldona Martin
 Cindy Slonaker
 Abby Ciesielski
 Lorrin Awald

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!!!!



Scan me to go Green!