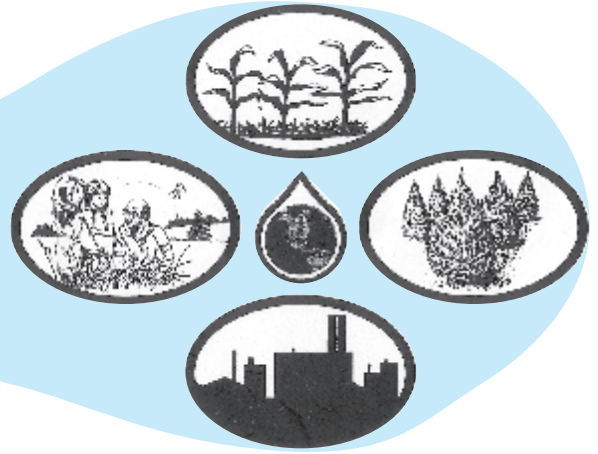




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

July/August 2014
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What's Going On...

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

July

4th - Independence Day -
Office Closed

10th - Pasture Walk,
LaGrange, IN

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

August

1st-14th - Indiana State Fair

14th - Pasture Walk,
Shipshewana, IN

19th - St. Joseph County
SWCD Board Meeting
(7:00 pm @ Centre
Township Library)

Have You Heard? ...

Help find the BIGGEST trees in St. Joseph County!



The *Big Trees of St. Joseph County* is a cooperative program of St. Joseph County Parks, Purdue Extension of St. Joseph County, St. Joseph County SWCD, Rum Village Nature Center, and the University of Notre Dame Department of Biological Sciences. Champion trees are determined by a point value based on circumference, height, and crown spread. If you would like to nominate a tree please visit the St. Joseph County Parks website at www.sjcparks.org to download a nomination form with measuring instructions or call them at 574-277-4828 to request a form. Nominations are due by September 1st.

Pasture Walks

There will be several pasture walks this summer in different locations in northern Indiana. There is one coming up on July 10th in LaGrange, IN and another on August 14th in Shipshewana, IN. If you would like more information on these programs or would like to RSVP, please call the St. Joseph County SWCD at 574-936-2024, ext. 4 or the LaGrange County SWCD at 260-463-3471, ext. 3.



Considering the Cover

More than just a buzz word, cover crops are continuing to gain popularity. This is because producers are seeing the benefits first hand, hearing about them from neighbors and friends, and reading about the amazing research results that are occurring. What is a cover crop? It is a planting, typically between cash crops, whose purpose is to benefit the soil through the reclamation of nutrients, increasing organic matter, water infiltration, and water storage capacity, reducing erosion, and loosening compacted soil. These are just some of the benefits. Others use cover crops to help manage weeds and other pests, improve water quality, or provide forage for wildlife while still getting the many other benefits that they provide.

The first thing that you want to consider when choosing a cover crop is what the needs of your soil are. Is it compacted from tillage or lacking organic matter? Or maybe you want to cut back on how much chemical fertilizer you have to apply. The type of cover crop you plant should be based on the needs of your soil as well as the goals you have for your cropland. A second consideration is what method of termination does the cover crop require? If you don't want to have to manually terminate the cover crop before planting your cash crop then you may want to consider one that winter kills.



The three major groups of cover crops are grasses, legumes, and brassicas. Grasses such as wheat, oats, and rye have large, fibrous root systems that help break up the soil, add organic matter, create channels for water and plant roots to travel, as well as good masses of organic matter above the soil that help prevent weeds and keep the soil at a more consistent temperature. Legumes include soybeans, cowpeas, winter peas, clovers, and alfalfa. They are known best for their nitrogen scavenging benefits and add organic matter to the soil as well. The third group is the brassicas. Radishes and turnips are the stars of this

group. Brassicas have been popular because their deep tap roots recycle nitrogen and their storage roots break up soil compaction. They normally winter kill and decompose quickly to eliminate the need to manually terminate them prior to spring planting.

Cover crops aren't just for large farms though. They can benefit farms and gardens of any size. The soil in your home gardens needs nutrients and organic matter just as much as larger operations. If you would like more information on cover crops for either, please contact the Soil & Water Conservation District at 574-936-2024, extension 4.



Attention Teachers!!



In an effort to pass the conservation torch and help educate the next generation on being good stewards of our environment, the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District provides nature/environmental education programs for classrooms all over St. Joseph County. Our Environmental Education Coordinator's calendar for the 2014-2015 school year will open up on August 11, 2014. There are more than 25 topics to choose from, including hands on programs and field trips! The programs are very affordable and a limited amount of grants are available as well. To schedule programs for your class or school please email Rick at richard.glassman@in.nacdnet.net (best way) or call our office at 574-936-2024, extension 4. Please note that his calendar fills up quickly so email or call soon to get the dates you'd like for your program!



Highly Erodible and Wetland Compliance

With the new farm bill came an “old” requirement when it comes to federal crop insurance subsidies... highly erodible land and wetland conservation compliance requirements. While the link between compliance and federal crop insurance subsidies was dropped in the 1996 Farm Bill, these requirements were still in effect for those participating in other (Title I) farm programs. Because of this, *most* producers are already in compliance so nothing will change as long as they continue to follow the conservation plan that they already have.

For highly erodible land, a farmer who has not had to implement conservation plans for farm program eligibility will have five years to develop an approved conservation plan. As well, a farmer also has at least two years of reinsurance to mitigate or restore a wetlands conversion before becoming ineligible. This provision does not apply to any wetland conversion prior to enactment of the farm bill (Feb.7, 2014). There are also other options for producers who have converted wetlands on fewer than five acres. The crop insurance subsidy ineligibility would only apply after a *final* determination has been made and only applies to future crop years afterward. A determination is not final until the producer has exhausted all appeal rights. This does not mean that a producer found ineligible cannot buy crop insurance. They just cannot receive the premium subsidy.

As always, if you have questions on compliance or any other farm bill issues, please call your USDA Service Center!





**ST JOSEPH COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
2903 GARY DRIVE, SUITE 1
PLYMOUTH IN 46563**

**NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
SOUTH BEND IN
PERMIT NO. 225**



St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

Rain Barrels! Accessories! Composters!

Due to recent increased interest in purchasing Rain Barrels and other conservation items, we will have another chance to order them this summer. Order deadline will be July 31st!

- * The barrels and composters are made from repurposed, thoroughly cleaned USDA food-grade , high-density poly-ethylene plastic.
- * 5 year warranty on the materials and workmanship
- * 55 gallon barrels are available in blue, terra cotta, black, and gray. 30 gallon (good for balconies or small areas) is available in blue only
- * Aluminum screening keeps our leaves, debris, and mosquitoes. They feature a hose connector/ spigot with shutoff valve, an overflow fitting & cap, and a linking fitting & cap to connect multiple barrels if desired.
- * Accessories available include: flex elbows for 2x3” or 3x4” downspouts, diverter kits, linking hose, pedestal riser, and more
- * For more product details and pricing, visit www.stjosephswcd.org or call our office at 574-936-2024 ext 4 to receive an order form!

Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisors:

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

SWCD Associate Supervisors:

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

SWCD Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS
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!!!!