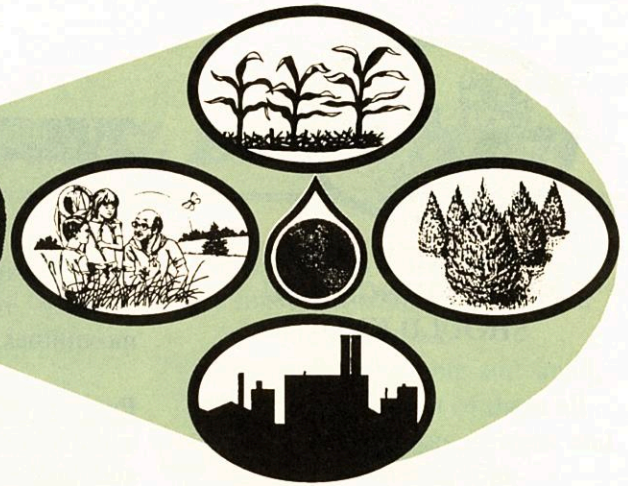




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Jul/Aug/Sept 2003
Volume 5, Issue 3

5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN *
Website: www.iaswcd.org/stjoseph

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Calendar of Events



July 4

4th of July Holiday
Office Closed



July 21

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

July 28 – August 2

St. Joseph County 4H-Fair



August 18

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room



September 1

Labor Day Holiday
Office Closed

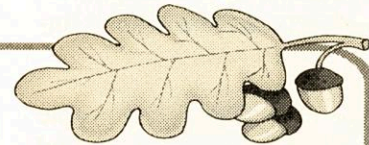


September 15

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room



FORESTRY FIELD DAY



Plans are currently under way for this year's 3-County Forestry Field Day to be held in Mid-September.

More information will become available as plans are finalized.

You may call the following SWCD offices for more information around the beginning of August:

Elkhart Co. - 574-533-3630, ext. 3
Kosciusko Co. - 574-267-5726, ext. 3
St. Joseph Co. - 574-291-2300, ext. 3



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THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

WEST NILE VIRUS SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW!



What is it? West Nile is a mosquito-borne virus that can cause encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain and spinal cord).

How is it spread? A mosquito becomes infected by biting an infected bird and then biting a human. It cannot be spread person to person, such as, contact by touching, kissing or caring for someone who is infected.

Notes: Less than 1% of the people who get bitten and become infected will get severely ill.

West Nile is not a new disease, just new to North America. It has been around for a while in Africa and Asia.

Horses, cats, bats, chipmunks, skunks, squirrels, and domestic rabbits have been known to contract West Nile. Birds are by far the vast majority of animals to contact the disease.

What you can do! *Culex* mosquitoes seem to be the main type of mosquito to spread the disease. These are what I call the bucket mosquitoes. They breed in small amounts of water, old tires, plastic containers, bird baths, etc. Remove this type of water from your yard and you are helping to reduce the spread of the disease.

Healthy wetlands do not produce many mosquitoes, too many predators live there. A healthy wetland is not the problem, it is the temporary water.

By restoring wetlands you can actually reduce the number of mosquitoes.

Prevention: Wear insect repellent, and avoid high mosquito times, dawn and dusk.

Understand that the percentages of contracting West Nile are small. 293 cases and 11 deaths in all of Indiana in 2002. Understand the disease, but do not let it rule your life.

Decorate the caterpillar's body. Draw its eyes and mouth on one of the circles.

4. Make accordion folds, each about 1 inch wide, along the length of the body.

5. Tape or glue the caterpillar face to one end of the body and the other circle to the back end of the body.

6. You can also tape or glue on construction paper "horns" or spines.

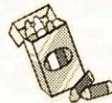
Caterpillar Pal

Make an accordion-folded paper caterpillar.



Materials needed for one caterpillar:

- Construction Paper
- Tape or Glue
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Crayons or Markers

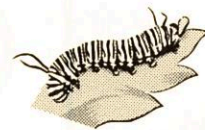


1. Cut two circles, each 3 1/2 inches in diameter, out of construction paper. The circles will be the caterpillar's front and back ends.

2. Cut a 3 1/2 x 12-inch rectangle out of construction paper. This will be the caterpillar's body.

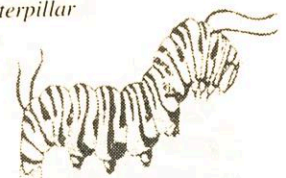
3. Use crayons or markers to

Fun Facts



- ♦ Moths and butterflies go through four life stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. A caterpillar is the larval stage.
- ♦ Caterpillars munch on leaves and other plant parts with their strong, chewing jaws. Some "picky" caterpillars eat only one kind of plant.
- ♦ In North America, the smallest caterpillars are less than 1/4 inch long. But the biggest caterpillars can get to be nearly 6 inches long.
- ♦ Some caterpillars have smooth skin. Others have hairs, spines, or fleshy "horns" on their bodies.

Monarch Caterpillar





THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

Indiana River of Words Winners

Indiana Project Wet along with the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts – Education Committee sponsored the 1st Indiana River of Words contest. Students were to design a poem around the theme of watersheds.

Over 125 entries were received from around the state. Two top prizes and one honorable mention were awarded in each category. One grand prize winner was selected among all of the first place winners. All entries were sent on to the national River of Words poetry contest.

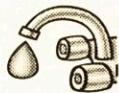
In the Grade 10 – 12 category, three winners were from LaVille High School, in St. Joseph County.



CONGRATULATIONS GIRLS

Everyone is Affected by Watersheds

Everyone uses water sometime or someday. If we don't take care of our watersheds we all may pay. Who wants to have contaminated water come out of their sink? That certainly isn't something I'd want to drink.



We should try to save our watersheds while we still can, to do this though we must have a plan. We need to make the importance of this issue clear, if we work harder now the future generation won't have to fear. So even if you find it an annoying topic being said, Remember it is better safe than dead.

Helping promote clear watersheds may keep water clean, that's better than rust, or dirty, which I find obscene.

So now's your chance to make a difference, don't waste it, this is the only planet Earth we get we can't replace it.

**1st Place and Grand Prize Winner
Amber Pittman,
10th Grade**

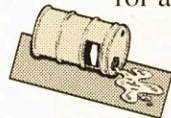
Washed Upon You

There's nothing I can say or write to take back what we've done. But I want to tell you sorry, for aiding in your destruction.

I'm sorry for every single spill, That has washed upon your shores.

Even though the damage is done, what was is gone, I hope for a chance to take it back.

While man fills your watershed with chemicals, other search for a way. To save the water,



you support our lives And keep the one we still possess.

Save the water, let it be. Keep our pure watersheds pollutant free. Please for me, hold on a little longer And I will try my best to return the favor and help you now.

**Second Place
Kara Richard, LaVille High School
10th Grade**

Watershed

As the rain trickles down It hits the hard ground. It flows a long way And may end up in the bay. It can fall as a flake, And make its way to a lake. Fish and plants should grow, Where fertilizers and minerals flow.



Buffer strips help to clean, They make our water clear and our grass green.

There are many sizes, big and small, The earth is the largest of them all.



Parking lots, sewers, and roof tops All serve as drainage spots.

These are all examples of Point-source Pollution.

The other examples take a longer course.

LaVille contributes to the Kankakee And that contributes to another county.

Everything that you've read All belong to a watershed.

**Honorable Mention
Shari Papczynski,
12th Grade**



We All Live in a watershed

Everything we do in our watershed affects the soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

Let's work together to keep our watersheds healthy. Here are some things you can do.

1. **On the farm**
Keep plant residue on the surface of sloping cropland. This reduces runoff and prevents sediment, fertilizers, and pesticides from entering streams, rivers, lakes, and ponds.
2. **At home**
Landscape your yard with plants that need a minimum of water and fertilizer. Use only the amount of fertilizers and pesticides that plants need.
3. **In your community**
Protect wetlands that serve as natural buffers against pollution, soil erosion, and flooding.

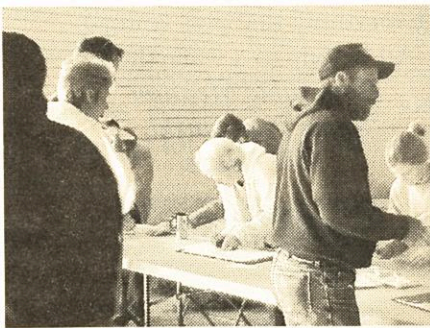


WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

Tree Sales Program A Success!

This Spring you might have noticed some new trees being planted in yards and fields in the community. The 17th Annual Tree Sales Program started in October, 2002, and ended April 12, 2003, at the St Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to say that approximately 26,000 of those trees are from our 2002 - 2003 Tree Sales Program.



On pickup day confirmations are checked to make sure the orders are correct.

The Tree Sales Program has been very successful over the past seventeen years due to the outstanding conservation attitude of the community and the hard work of volunteers. Our thanks go out to Randy Matthys and Family, Master Gardeners, St. Patrick's County Park, Rum Village Nature Center, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, Penske Truck Leasing, Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds, Elkhart County SWCD, John Manuszak and the Mishawaka High School Waltonian Club, and John Glenn FFA.



Extra trees are purchased and useful information is received.

This year we were able to donate trees to two different projects through our Tree Grant Program. The trees will be used for conservation, beautification, and educational practices. This is one of many ways that the money raised from the tree sales program is given back to the community. For those of you who happened to miss this year's Tree Sales Program you can request a Tree Flyer for next year by contacting the office at (574) 291-2300 ext. 3 or check out our web site in October 2003.

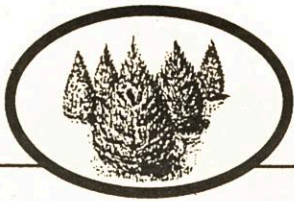
Benefits of Managing for Timber Production

Managing for timber production is the most efficient and cost-effective way to manage for wildlife habitat and recreational uses of the woodlot. Natural resources management, for any purpose, requires time, labor, and money, so it makes sense to seek assistance and do some study and planning up front. St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and IDNR Division of Forestry provide that assistance.

Protecting the woodlot from livestock grazing provides both timber production and wildlife

benefits. From the timber standpoint, soil compaction is reduced, improving the vigor and growth rates of trees. It also provides for more regeneration, species diversity, and reduces the amount of decay and defects in timber trees. For wildlife, protection from grazing increases mast (food) production, provides greater browse availability, and thicker stem density (for cover). A mixture of hard mast producing trees (oak, hickory, beech, walnut) and soft mast trees (cherry, black gum, ash, sassafras, tulip poplar, maple) and small trees (dogwood, hazelnut, ironwood, viburnum) is best for wildlife and should be available in every stand. A variety of red oak and white oak species will maintain more consistent acorn production from year to year.

Another excellent management tool for both wildlife and timber production is to allow shrubs, vines, blackberries and similar plants to develop and grow along the woods edge. This edge effect reduces wind speeds and drying effects in the woods and promotes growth in the woodlot interior. Timber quality along the edge is usually of lower quality and less economic concern. These edge plants provide excellent sources of food and habitat for many different species. Many wildlife species live in this edge since they require several different habitats. If the woodlot edge is of poor quality and low density, consideration can be given to planting shrubs. Another good idea is to allow felled trees to remain along the edges of the woodlot. This provides cover and insect sources for wildlife.



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

Building brush piles near the woodlot edge provides shelter and escape cover from predators. Simply pile limb trimmings on top of stumps. Another way is to cut large diameter limbs and stack them in a criss cross pattern and pile the brush on top. Both of these methods provide protection from predators and have adequate space underneath for small animals. Maintaining cavity trees and scattered snags in a woodlot is also an important wildlife management tool. Many woodland wildlife species depend on one, or both, for food and shelter. Many cavity trees will also be good for future harvest. Dead snags at least 10 feet tall provide valuable insect sources and are often used by woodpeckers and others for nesting activities. If there is a need to remove a low value tree, consider girdling and deadening the tree so that it will become snag and a great home for insects and wildlife.

Good timber management leads to healthy and productive wildlife populations. Help in managing a farm woodlot for wildlife and timber production is as close as the St. Joseph County SWCD. Stop by, get some pointers and make contacts for help in the woods.

Putting Trees to Work

(The following information can be found in the National Arbor Day Foundation Tree City USA publication No. 39)

Here are a few ways that you can put trees to work for you.

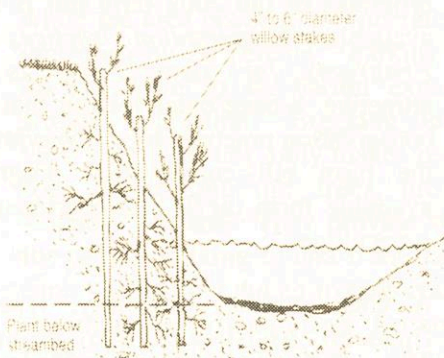
Controlling Hillside Erosion

The contours of growing communities are constantly

changing. On slopes and steep banks, either natural or created by development, trees have a job to do. While sod and ground covers hold topsoil in place, tree roots can penetrate deeper and anchor large blocks of soil. Just as importantly, leaves and branches break the force of falling rain, providing a first line of defense against soil erosion. Densely planted conifers or trees with thorns can do additional duty by keeping mountain bikes, foot traffic and motorcycles off slopes that are prone to erosion.

Streambank Stabilization

Trees and ground covers can be planted to prevent creeks from eroding their banks. Willow cuttings are perhaps the fastest way to establish tree cover. In severe cases, willow posts up to six inches in diameter are used. These are cut from willow thickets elsewhere and are placed in holes created by steel rams or hydraulic augers. By planting the posts deep, the soil holding ability of the roots they grow is increased. If the trees are planted closely in offset rows (staggered), their branches will interlock and provide a high degree of protection from heavy rains.



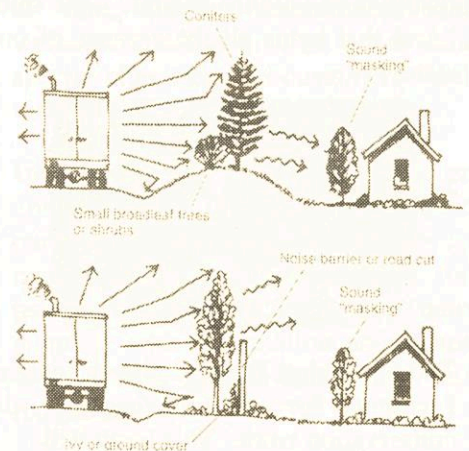
Sticks, or stakes, cut from willows elsewhere will sprout roots and branches that hold soil in place and break the force of falling rain.

This kind of growth will also slow flood waters, reducing their power to erode.

Sound Barriers

Strips of densely planted trees and shrubs will not completely remove the annoyance of city noise, but they can significantly reduce it. Leaves are especially effective in absorbing high frequencies which are the sounds that human ears find most bothersome. Robert W. Miller's *Urban Forestry* (Prentice Hall) provides summaries of research that even narrow belts of trees can reduce noise by 3-5 decibels. Combining trees with land forms such as mounds has resulted in reduction by as much as 15 decibels. When combined with solid noise barriers, trees not only help muffle objectionable sounds, they reduce the visual harshness of walls and fences.

Trees also improve the sound environment by "masking" unpleasant noise. The rustling of aspen leaves, for example, outside a window or beside a porch can actually replace other noise and make the setting more enjoyable.



Trees working in partnership with mounds and walls can reduce noise from highways, stadiums, playgrounds and other sources of bothersome, urban sounds.



FIELD NOTES



One Year Later: Farm Bill Conservation Programs Deliver

Indianapolis, IN, May 13-- Hundreds of agricultural producers across Indiana are among the first to benefit from the conservation provisions in the 2002 Farm Bill, which was signed into last year on May 13th, by President Bush. In the last year, more than 4400 producers in Indiana have received technical and financial assistance under this Farm Bill. Like most agricultural producers they can't quote the 600 – page 2002 Farm Bill by line and verse. But they know one thing for sure: It continues to help them be good stewards of the land.

"I'm delighted by the overwhelming response by Indiana's producers to participate in Farm bill conservation programs," said NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. "These programs help Indiana's farmers continue their efforts to improve watershed health, water quality, soil quality and wildlife habitat," she said. "And that helps all the citizens of our state."



There is a huge demand among Indiana farmers for costsharing to do conservation work. This Farm Bill

authorized increases in conservation funding and 2002 was the first year of those increases. In past years NRCS has had requests for two or three times more conservation dollars than we could fund. By this time next year, NRCS officials expect a significant increase in the number of producers receiving assistance.

"The conservation provisions in this new Farm Bill represent a greater opportunity for producers in Indiana to do conservation work on private lands," Hardisty said. "And, I'm proud of the excellent service our field staff provides to our customers in doing conservation work," she said.

"I urge Indiana's landowners with natural resource concerns to contact our local offices to take advantage of this new Farm Bill," Hardisty said. "The first year has been a success," she said, "but we're looking forward to getting a lot more conservation on the ground in Indiana throughout the life of the Farm Bill."



Brochure Simplifies, Summarizes Conservation Programs in 2002 Farm Bill

A simplified guide to conservation programs of the 2002 farm bill is now available. *Conservation Practices and Programs for Your Farm* is an attractive, 8-page color foldout that ties conservation practices to an overview of the farm bill conservation programs available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A chart outlines eligibility, type of financial assistance, and producer obligations for eight major USDA conservation programs.

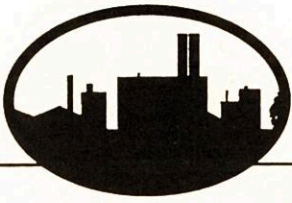
The guide is meant for agricultural producers – owners of small and large farms, dairies, and forestlands, even vineyards – but will also be a handy reference for USDA field staff, federal and state agencies, conservation districts, conservation organizations, and technical service providers.

While it's not complete enough to answer detailed questions on individual programs, its overview gives producers a starting point in deciding how conservation programs might help them reduce erosion, improve water quality, and manage for wildlife on private land.

The guide was produced by the Wildlife Management Institute with technical help from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Wildlife Habitat Management Institute.

Individual copies of *Conservation Practices and Programs for Your Farm* are available by calling: 1-888-LANDCARE, or from the web at www.nrcs.usda.gov and clicking on publications. They are also available, as long as supplies last, from local NRCS or conservation district offices. Electronic files of the brochure are on the web at www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov.

You can watch a video version of the publication today on the NRCS national web site at www.nrcs.usda.gov - just click on the One Year Anniversary feature. The video is called *Farm Bill 2002 – What It Can Do For You*.



URBAN MEANDERINGS

Is Your Septic System Polluting the Water?

Have you noticed an unusual odor in the back yard? Does part of the lawn stay green when the rest turns brown due to lack of rain? If your home is connected to an on-site waste disposal system, commonly called a septic system, it may be the culprit.

Over 30 percent of Indiana's population live in houses with private waste disposal systems. Many of these systems are failing and can lead to water pollution. All of Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts rank maintaining good water quality as a high priority. Districts and cooperating agencies can help homeowners better understand and use on-site waste disposal systems.

The most common on-site system in Indiana is the septic system. Water from the household flows into an underground septic tank. The waste components separate in the tank. The heavier solids settle to the bottom while the grease and fatty solids float to the top forming a scum. The more liquid part, called effluent, flows through an outlet to the soil absorption field.

A properly designed soil absorption field has a distribution box to send effluent to a series of level trenches each containing a distribution pipe bedded in coarse gravel. The effluent moves out through holes in the pipe, through the gravel and into the soil. The soil filters out any remaining solids. Nutrients and microorganisms are also treated in the soil under the trench and are also diluted by groundwater.

A well-designed absorption field, in the right kind of soil, properly constructed, and maintained should last a long time. Many Indiana soils, though, are not well suited to conventional septic

systems. Soil conditions such as slow permeability and high water table, especially where coupled with poor design, faulty construction, or lack of maintenance, greatly reduces the life of septic systems in Indiana and begin to create the backyard problems.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts, their conservation partners, and County Health Departments are good sources of information and help when planning for on-site waste disposal or when problems occur with older systems. The Cooperative Extension has several bulletins to help you understand the importance of maintenance and simple things that you can do to keep the system functioning. Clean water for Indiana's future depends partly on proper waste disposal in rural areas. Many conservation districts are cosponsoring local seminars to help citizens understand on-site waste disposal. These are good places to learn about the latest research and new kinds of system. Some of these newer concepts, such as constructed wetlands, have potential for improved livestock waste systems as well.

Trees and Parking Lots Go Hand in Hand

Trees, parking lots and people are a great combination. During the past fifteen years the number of trees in many cities has declined by 30 percent while the area covered by concrete has increased by 20 percent. Parking lots do not have to be barren expanses without vegetation. Breaking up the view with trees not only makes people feel better but the trees provide valuable benefits. They provide shade for people walking to and from parked cars. Trees cool the air to help counter the urban heat island effect that comes from the paved surface. Another benefit is that they muffle noises,

provide visual screening and contribute to increased property values.

Trees clean air by absorbing exhaust gases and giving off oxygen. Ozone is a serious air pollutant in cities, and trees moderate its impact. Many refer to trees as nature's pollution control devices, or nature's air conditioners. They can mark borders and outline walkways to separate vehicles and pedestrian traffic. Another function can be to control speed and direct traffic flow. The trees can also screen undesirable sights from view.

Experts say to remove 18 inches of soil in the areas where trees will be planted before building the parking lot. Bring that soil back after construction to serve as the foundation for the trees. It is important to mix the species of trees planted to provide diversity, disease protection, and to increase the educational value.

Marking the trees with common and scientific names increases the educational value of the planting. Few people will argue about the aesthetic value of trees but the other values may be more important. Research has shown that people spend more money in business districts and shopping areas with trees than those without them. Trees send a message of care, quality, commitment and welcome and can give an urban area special character that customers and visitors like.

Indiana's 92 soil and water conservation districts and their partners encourage the use of trees as nature's air conditioners and for pollution control. They can help planners with information about tree species, their growth habits, and soil requirements.



**St. Joseph County Soil and Water
Conservation District
5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4
South Bend, IN 46614**

St. Joseph County Soil And Water

Supervisors:

Paul Williams III, Chairman
Dave Craft, V-Chairman
Steve Horvath, Member
John Kulwicki, Member
Dale Stoner, Member

Associate Supervisors:

Jerry Dominiack
John Dooms
Jim Gries
Melvin Kulwicki
Jim LaFree
Charles Lehman
Jay Lindenman
Joe Long
Randy Matthys
Eugene Myers
Beverly Riddle
Richard Schmidt

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.**

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Harold Mutti

Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS
Rick Glassman, SWCD
Troy Manges, SWCD
Tonia Albright, SWCD
Beth Forsness, IDNR

Farm Service Agency

Staff:

Mike Hoskins, CED
Helene Cannoot
Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli
Dee Fox
Claudia Bell