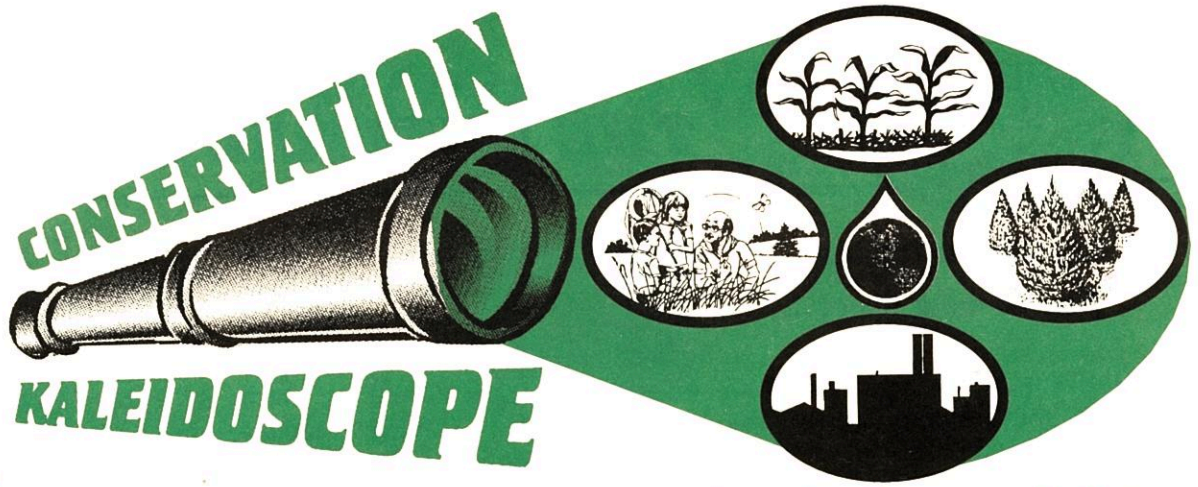




St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District

# CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE



*Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future*

Apr/May/June 2005  
Volume 7, Issue 2

5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 \*South Bend, IN \*  
Website: [stjoseph.iaswcd.org](http://stjoseph.iaswcd.org)

Telephone (574) 291-7444 Ext. 3  
Fax (574) 291-0284

Editor: Troy Manges  
Tonia Albright



## Calendar of Events

### April 4

Tree Seminar 7:00 P.M.  
Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

### April 16

Tree Sale & Pick Up

### April 18

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

### May 16

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

### May 30

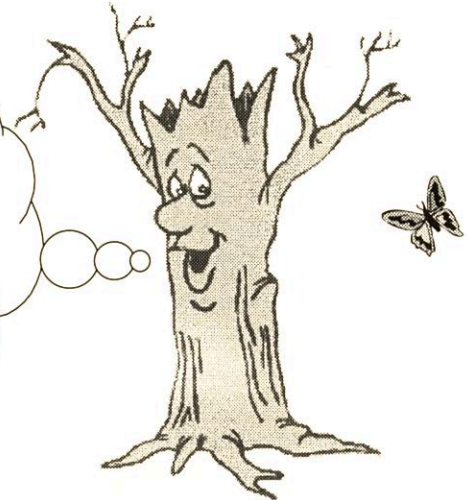
Memorial Day  
Office Closed

### June 20

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



**TREE PICK UP  
&  
EXTRA TREES  
FOR SALE  
APRIL 16, 2005**



### **Did You Know?**

The Frost Free Date to begin planting your garden is April 22nd.



### **What's Inside ...**

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# THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

## It's *SPRING* TIME Time to *mow* or *not*

Yes, that's right, you do not have to mow your yard, unless that is what you really want to do.

I understand that we sometimes need to mow but there are some beautiful alternatives that benefit wildlife, help cut down on pollution and save you money.

I am talking about wildflowers and prairie grasses. These species have adapted to our environment and by choosing correctly you can cut down on your water and maintenance cost, and still have a well manicured look to your yard.

I was looking through some of the catalogs in our office today and they have a seed mix that would please just about everyone. From short mix to tall mix, clay blend to shade blend, just wildflower or just grass and just about everything in between. One of the catalogs even had a grass mix that is designed to be mowed only twice a year. Wouldn't that be great for the yard corners or rough spots in the yard.



"No-Mow" Lawn Mix

The point is that you do not need to mow to have a lovely yard, and by taking a little time to plan you can have a yard that will attract a variety of wildlife. Some of the mixes are designed specifically for attracting butterflies and hummingbirds. These areas will not



need as much water (saving money), nor will they need to be mowed as much (saving money and preventing air pollution) and you can enjoy your weekend, without the dreaded, "I have to mow the yard again"

If you would like more information on what types of seeds and mixes are available, here are some companies you can contact:

Applewood Seed Co  
303-431-7333  
[www.applewoodseed.com](http://www.applewoodseed.com)

Prairie Nursery  
800-476-9453  
[www.prairienursery.com](http://www.prairienursery.com)

J.F. New Nursery  
574-586-2412  
[www.jfnewnursery.com](http://www.jfnewnursery.com)

Rupp Seed Company  
419-337-1841  
[www.ruppseeds.com](http://www.ruppseeds.com)

You can also stop by the office or call 574-291-7444, ext. 3.

## SOME THOUGHTS ON GLOBAL WARMING!

We have all heard about global warming and the fact is that it is happening. But then again, it is a natural part of earth's cycle.

Scientists tell us that Indiana has experienced three ice ages and between each it has gotten warmer, then it became colder. I am not trying to downplay the effects that global warming is having on the earth's environment but why do we need a cause to stop pollution?



POLLUTION IS BAD, PERIOD.

The greatest effect of global warming is something most people have not heard about. We have destroyed or altered the environment to such an extent that plants and animals will not be able to adapt because they can not move across the continent like in the old days. This is the real sadness of global warming, and why it will cause plants and animals to become extinct.

It is of my opinion that we should stop trying to place blame on why we have global warming and admit that pollution needs to stop and focus on the real problems that the natural world faces due to global warming, habitat loss.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The SWCD can provide a variety of education programs for your group, organization, summer camp or classroom.

Presentations cover a wide range of topics, from soil to water quality, earthworms to birds, reptiles to life in a hollowtree and much more. We can also provide talks on conservation programs that are available through the farm bill.

If you are interested in a presentation by the Soil & Water Conservation Partnership, just call the office.





# WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County



The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to remind everyone that the pick up date for pre-ordered trees is April 16, 2005. They can be picked up from 8:00 AM to Noon at the west end of the Swine Barn at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds.

If you missed ordering trees and are still interested in purchasing some, we will be selling extra trees at this time also. If you have questions about the tree sales program, please contact our office at (574) 291-7444 ext. 3.



Helpful hints provided by local experts.

## Tree Planting and Care Seminar Scheduled for April 4, 2005.

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District is holding a tree planting and care seminar on April 4, 2005 from 7-9 PM at the St. Joseph County Farm Bureau Building Meeting Room. The speaker for the seminar will be Bruce Wakeland, Consultant Forester for Wakeland Forestry Consultants. Bruce will provide you with helpful planting

techniques and hints on how to properly care for your tree to help it grow better. Please call the office at (574) 291-7444 ext. 3 to reserve a spot by April 1, 2005.

### Tree Planting and Care Tips

Here are a few tips that may help you in planting a tree correctly and keeping it healthy afterwards.

1. Whether you are planting a bare root, containerized, balled and burlapped, or potted tree you need to dig a proper hole to plant the tree in. You need to dig it so that the tree is not planted to shallow or too deep because this can cause stress to the tree and prevent it from growing well.

A bare root tree should be planted in a hole that is at least 1 foot wider than the root spread of the tree. A balled and burlapped or potted tree should be planted in a hole that is 2 to 5 times the diameter of the root ball. This will give the roots a better chance to grow in the loosened soil that is used to fill in the hole.

Make sure that once a balled and burlapped tree is placed in the hole you remove the wires or mesh from the root ball. This gives the roots a better chance to grow out into the surrounding soil. Wires can also cause root growth to be restricted if it does not degrade away, which can cause health problems from the tree.

2. Watering is key to tree survival. It should be used when filling the planting hole to eliminate large air cavities, firm the soil around the roots, and make nourishment available to the tree. Water deeply

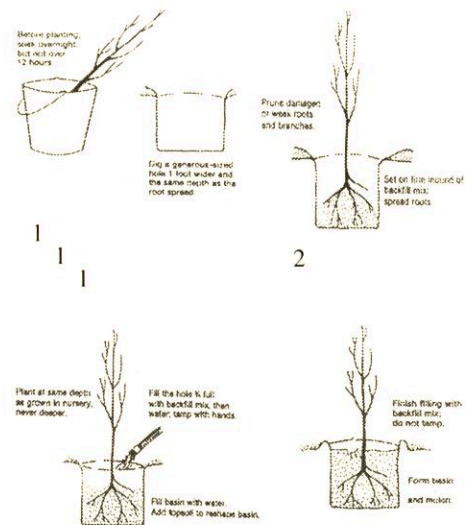
around your tree once a week during dry spells.\*

3. Pruning - generally, it's best not to prune after planting, except for dead or broken branches.\*

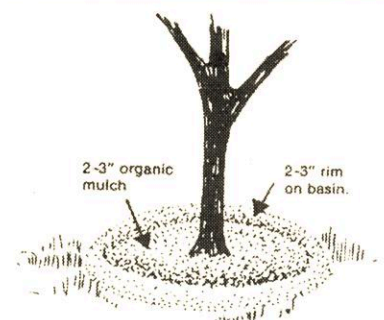
4. Fertilizing - to avoid root burn, do not fertilize trees when planting. It is very easy to over-fertilize and kill young trees.\*

5. Mulching - mulch is a young tree's best friend, placed 2 to 4 inches deep on the soil around the tree, but not touching the trunk.\*

*\*(This information was taken from Tree City USA Bulletin No. 19 published by The National Arbor Day Foundation.)*



4 steps to the proper planting of a bare-root plant in well-drained soil.



How mulch should look when done properly.

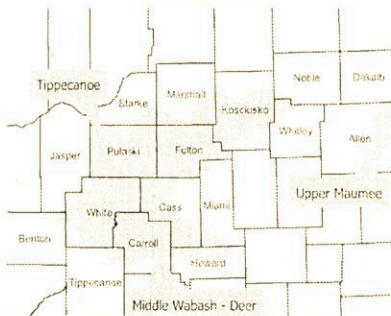




# FIELD NOTES



## PREPARE NOW FOR THE CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM



Watershed Selected for 2005  
In Northern Indiana

The Conservation Security Program is a historic new program designed to reward farmers for long term stewardship. CSP, part of the 2002 Farm Bill, was introduced last summer in 18 watersheds nationwide. In fiscal year 2005, CSP was expanded to an additional 202 watersheds representing every state and the Caribbean area. About one eighth of the Nation's eligible farmers will be given the chance to apply each year over an eight-year period.

"As an agency and as a Nation we have helped farmers and ranchers fix conservation problems such as soil erosion or water conservation since the Dust Bowl days of the 1930's," said Jane Hardisty, Indiana's State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) overseeing CSP. "This, however, represents a whole new direction in conservation and agriculture policy and programs. These payments for demonstrable long-term stewardship will reward many of those

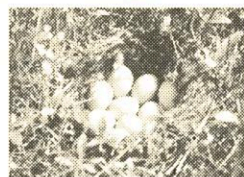
who undertook conservation on their own initiative and who care for the resources we all share."

Hardisty said that while protecting soil and water quality are the "price of admission," farmers will also have options to improve nutrient and pest management activities and to improve wildlife habitat.

Even though St. Joseph County has no selected CSP watersheds for 2005, there are still things the local farmers can do to prepare for future sign-ups. There is a self-assessment workbook available on the internet to help determine eligibility for the CSP program. We would encourage producers to go through the self-assessment to identify any areas where additional conservation treatment is needed. For technical help on developing or updating your conservation plan, contact your local NRCS office.

For more information on CSP, other NRCS programs or the self-assessment workbook see <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>.

### Mowing; Definitely Not "For the Birds"



If you are like many people, thoughts of spring bring to mind visions of green grass and tuning up the mower. Not so fast. If you have ground in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), there are some things you should think about before breaking out the bush hog.



Bobolink



Eastern Meadowlark

CRP fields, filter strips and grassed allows **no mowing from March 1st to July 15<sup>th</sup>**. This is important to note since mowing during this time can put you in violation of your CRP contract.

This period, known as the wildlife nesting period, is a vital time for bird species that nest in grass. Eastern meadowlark, savannah sparrow, bobolink, quail and pheasant are just a few of the ground nesting bird species that are impacted. These birds build nests, raise young, and forage within grassed areas. Mowing not only kills adult birds and nestlings, but also makes the habitat unsuitable for future nesting attempts of birds flushed by the mower. Don't forget to leave those fence rows, field borders and fallow fields, all of which are heavily used by ground nesting birds. Once August rolls around, it is safe to mow these areas as needed. By putting your mower deck at its highest position, you can maintain better habitat for wildlife.

The birds on our farms provide us with a valuable service, eating the insect pests on our crops and reducing rodent populations in our fields. By protecting them, we can decrease our pesticide costs and feel good knowing that we are doing all we can to protect our feathered friends.





# FIELD NOTES

## LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT 319 GRANT

The Saint Joseph River Basin Watershed Livestock Management 319 Grant that was in effect from January 1, 2002 through June 30, 2004 distributed \$7,500 in cost-share funds to 3 livestock producers that completed about \$14,300 of installed Best Management Practices (BMPs) in St. Joseph County. Seventy-eight producers in the six county watershed area received \$78,000 for the cost of \$147,000 of BMPs installed. The grant was received from the Indiana Department Of Environmental Management (IDEM) Clean Water Act Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program. Some of the practices in St. Joseph County include pasture seeding, fence, and waterlines to increase pasture acres. Included are soil and manure testing along with manure management plans and fencing and filter strips along the streams to keep livestock and manure out.



*Filter Strip*

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) in the six counties in the Indiana part of the St. Joseph River Basin sponsors the Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant "Water Quality Improvement Through Livestock Management Planning" to develop detailed plans which will spell out specific BMPs to address the resource concerns and result in improved water quality leaving the farm.

A new 319 Water Quality Grant has started and will run through April 12, 2006. The grant will be administered like the previous grant with some changes. The major changes include a \$5,000 maximum cost-share per landowner and \$2,500 limit on low priority BMPs.



*Intensive Grazing*

Another change is that a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) may be required if the operation meets the requirement of an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and can be cost-shared up to 75%. Cost-share funds can provide up to 75% of the cost of a BMP that could make a major improvement in the quality of the water. Studies are showing that livestock that consume clean well water will produce more milk and market animals will gain weight more efficiently and faster than those that drink water from streams and ponds. Keeping livestock out of waterbodies help prevent banks being tramped into the ditch filling in the ditch and slowing down the water flow. This also helps protect the water from organic matter, microorganisms, and pollutants.

The cost-share BMPs include: Fence to exclude livestock from water bodies and woods, to increase pasture acres and promote intensive rotational grazing; Filter strips to

filter nutrients and slow runoff along water bodies; Converting cropland into pastureland and renovating pastureland; Alternative water systems to keep livestock out of water bodies and to promote intensive rotational grazing which could include spring development; Manure application and nutrient management; and other innovative practices needed to correct problems in high priority areas along water bodies.

Programs during 2004 included:

- A Manure Management Workshop was held at Clinton Christian School.
- The Northern Indiana Grazing Conference (NIGC) in cooperation with local producers, SWCDs, NRCS, and Purdue Extension were held in Shipshewana with over 350 producers in attendance.
- Eight Pasture Walks were held in Elkhart, LaGrange, and Noble counties.
- Nine Pasture News newsletters mailed.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NIGC was held on February 4, 2005 at the Antique Auction Barn in Shipshewana with an attendance of 450. Anyone that would like to host a Pasture Walk please let us know. For information about the NIGC, contact the St. Joseph County SWCD, the Extensive office, or local Agri-businesses.



*Pasture Walk*





# FIELD NOTES

A Manure Management Workshop will be held at the Wolf Building in Shipshewana, Indiana on April 1, 2005. More information will be coming. A field day is being planned for June 14, 2005.

For information, on the 319 Grant, any of the programs, or want assistance, Contact the St. Joseph County SWCD office at 74-291-7444 ext. 3 or Dennis Wolhuter at the LaGrange County SWCD office at 260-463-3471 ext. 3.



## IDNR RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Kevin Lackman is the IDNR Resource Specialist (Division of Soil Conservation) for LaPorte and St. Joseph Counties. His background includes a Biology degree from Franklin College, in which he minored in Conservation.

Prior to his hiring with the Division of Soil Conservation, Kevin worked several summers as a naturalist aide for DNR – Fish and Wildlife.



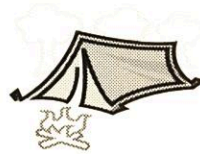
As a resource specialist, Kevin's duties include both agricultural and urban responsibilities. Kevin assists district and federal employees with all of the farm bill programs, and assists district employees with all of the Rule 5 (Urban) workload.

Agricultural responsibilities consist of surveying, designing, and conservation planning.

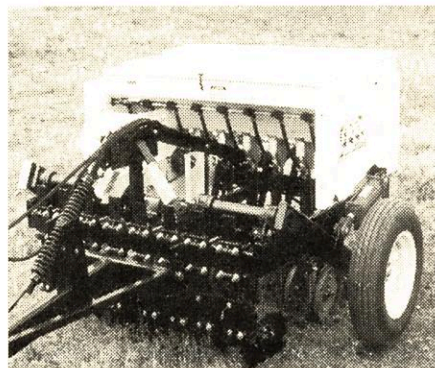
Urban responsibilities consist of stormwater pollution prevention plan reviews, as well as routine/follow-up site inspections.



"I love what I do because I get to be outdoors a lot and ultimately do things that benefit the environment. I enjoy fishing, hunting, camping, and hiking, and work hard to preserve/ conserve these natural resources for all future generations."



## WARM SEASON GRASS DRILL AVAILABLE



*Truax FLEXII Series Grass Drill*

In St. Joseph and Elkhart Counties last year, over 100 acres of wildlife habitat, pasture interseeding and new pasture and hay plantings were put in.

These plantings were made possible through the use of a Warm Season Grass Drill owned by the St. Joseph County SWCD.

A fee structure has been implemented to help defer the annual maintenance costs of the drill.

There will be a \$25.00 flat fee for planting wildlife habitat which includes WSG plantings, filterstrips, and food plots. For pasture and hay plantings or interseedings there will be a \$50.00 flat fee and then a \$5.00 per acre charge for every acre above 5 acres.

The drill has a planting width of 6 feet and has three seed boxes for a variety of seed plantings:

### *Front Seed Box*

Small seeds such as:

- Wildflowers, Clovers, and Alfalfa.

### *Middle Seed Box*

Warm Season Grasses or prairie grasses such as:

- Indiangrass, Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem.

### *Back Seed Box*

Cool season grasses such as:

- Orchardgrass, Timothy and Ryegrass.

Food plot seed such as:

- Sunflowers and Sorghum.

To plant with the drill, you need a tractor with at least a 50 horsepower rating. It also needs a place to hook up 2 hydraulic hoses for raising and lowering the drill.



If you are interested in scheduling the use of the WSG Drill or have other questions, please call the office at (574) 291-7444 ext. 3.





# URBAN MEANDERINGS

## STORM WATER RUNOFF

### What is Storm Water Runoff?



When water falls to earth as rain or snow, most of it seeps into the ground. However,

if the ground is saturated, frozen, or covered with impervious surfaces, precipitation flows over the land, creating storm water runoff. It occurs everywhere and includes flows from storm drains and natural drainage courses serving industrial, commercial, residential, undeveloped, recreational, and agricultural lands. It can cause flooding, erosion, and pollution problems.

### What is Storm Water Management?

Storm Water Management is the process of controlling runoff so it does not harm the environment or human health. The fundamental goals of Storm Water Management are to mimic the way runoff left the site before development and to prevent water pollution.



### What is a Storm Water Management System?

A storm water management system is made up of roads with drainage systems, municipal streets, catch basins, curbs, gutters, ditches, manmade channels, or storm drains. This system is owned and/or operated

by a public entity such as a city, state, town, county, district, or association. The City of South Bend owns and operates its storm water management system.

## REDUCE POLLUTANT POTENTIAL

### Use Less Fertilizers and Pesticides

As we start to put away the snow shovels, and think of tuning the old lawn mower, many people start thinking about a spring lawn fertil-



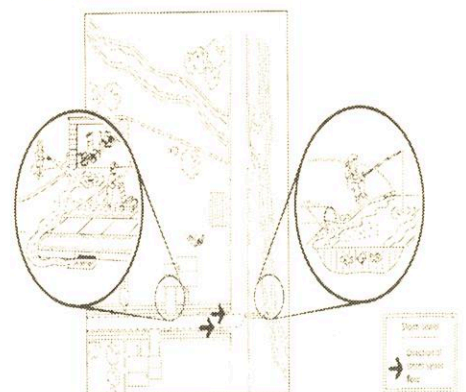
izer plan. Before the spreader is even taken out of the garage, before the fertilizer bag is torn open – read the fertilizer label! According to research conducted throughout the United States, the average homeowner applies more than 5 times the amount of fertilizer per acre than the average agricultural producer. Excessive amounts of fertilizer and pesticides increases the risk of groundwater contamination and increases the potential of these materials running off into neighboring waterbodies or stormwater drains that eventually discharge into the waterways.

Simple rules for a lush landscape include:

- Landscape with native plants and grasses that need little or no maintenance – know the size of your lawn.
- If you choose to have a lawn, plant appropriate seed – Consult with people who know which type of grass works best in your soil type and the climate region you live in.

- Using a mulching mower serves to “recycle” nutrients back into the lawn, reducing the need to fertilize.
- Use caution on the lower side and know the swath of your spreader
- Fill your equipment with the hopper closed
- Don’t fertilize when rainstorms are expected. Applied materials will be washed away.
- Apply fertilizers and pesticides on non-windy days.
- Be careful not to apply fertilizers and other pesticides to sidewalks, driveways, streets, and gutters.
- Fertilize only in the fall and only once per year.
- Use appropriate pesticide for the appropriate pest.
- Spot treat directly on the pest.
- Maintain a buffer along any waterway that is free of fertilizers and pesticides.

When it comes to fertilizers and pesticides for your lawn and garden, less is often best!



Runoff that flows into storm sewers goes directly to streams and lakes without treatment.





**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***

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John Dooms, V-Chairman  
Jim Gries, Member  
Randy Matthys, Member  
Dale Stoner, Member

### Associate Supervisors:

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Melvin Kulwicki  
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Charles Lehman  
Jay Lindenman  
Joe Long  
Eugene Myers  
Beverly Riddle  
Carol Riewe  
Richard Schmidt  
Paul Williams III

### **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  
Jerry Knepp  
Keith Lineback  
William Millar  
Harold Mutti

### Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS  
Brook Rieman, NRCS  
Tonia Albright, SWCD  
Rick Glassman, SWCD  
Troy Manges, SWCD  
Kevin Lackman, IDNR

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