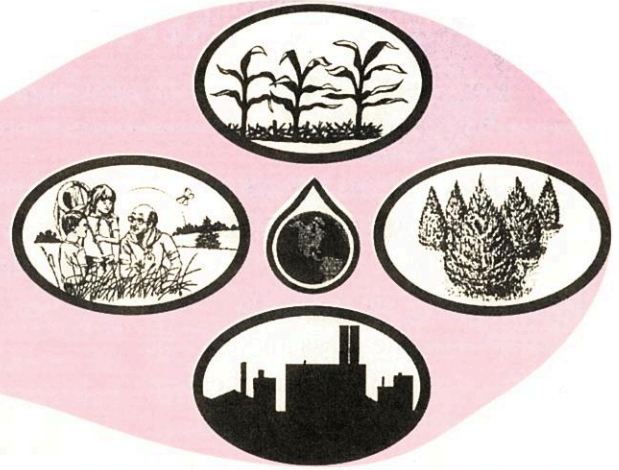
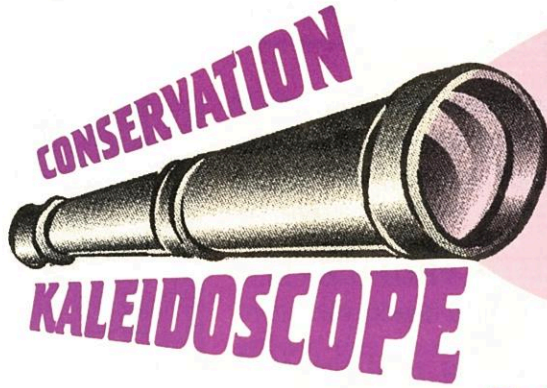




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Apr/May/June 2006 5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN* Telephone (574) 291-7444 Ext.3 Editor: Troy Manges
Volume 8, Issue 2 Website: stjoseph.iaswcd.org Fax (574) 291-0284 Tonia Albright

Calendar of Events

April 10

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

April 14

Good Friday - Office Closed

April 22

Tree Sale - St. Joseph
County 4-H Fairgrounds

May 3

Compost Seminar - 7:00 PM
St. Joseph County Farm
Bureau Mtg. Room

May 15

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

May 29

Memorial Day Holiday
Office Closed

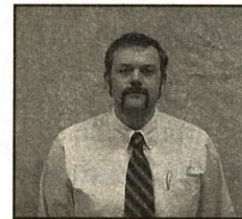
June 19

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

**Supervisor's Sworn In
At
Annual Meeting**



Carole Riewe



Paul Williams III

On January 27, 2006, Carole Riewe and Paul Williams were sworn in at the 46th annual meeting of the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District by Jim Lake, District Support Specialist, ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation, for a 3 year term.

Paul & Carole join supervisor's John Dooms, John Kulwicki and Randy Matthys in their leadership roles for 2006.

**TREE SALE
&
PICK UP**

**Saturday, April 22, 2006
8:00 a.m.—12:00 Noon
St. Joseph County
4-H Fairgrounds @
The Swine Barn**

Spring Fever



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Field Notes	4, 5
Urban Meanderings	6, 7



THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

CONSERVATION THAT YOU CAN (AND SHOULD) DO

Wash your car on the lawn - This way you water the grass and the soil filters the soap before it reaches our drinking water.

Never pour anything down a storm drain - Even natural items like leaves and grass clippings can pollute the water.

Compost - Start a small compost pile in your yard for your food scraps. Or you may want to try vermicomposting and raise earthworms as well as mulch.

Build a bird house - It's fun and if you build it, they will come.

Plant a tree - Or any plant for that matter. It will help protect the soil, clean the air, give us oxygen and just look good.

Walk or ride a bike - Any time you can prevent starting your car, you are doing a good thing for planet earth.

Have a water jug in the refrigerator - This helps save water and you will always have a cold glass of water, without the wait.



Use an electric lawn mower - Or at least a mulching mower. Never collect lawn clippings, they actually fertilize and water the yard.

Measure your yard - If you fertilize your yard, knowing how large your yard actually is will help reduce water pollution and probably save you money. Plants can

only use so much fertilizer and if you add more, it will just wash away and your yard will not be any greener.

ANIMAL PROFILE

The Wild Turkey

Driving down the road the other day, I saw a flock of Wild Turkeys feeding contently in an old corn field. As I continued on my way, I began to think what a wonderful sight I had just seen and how amazing it is that I could not have seen that sight a mere 15 years ago.



The Wild Turkey has been extinct in Indiana since the early 1900's. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) began to restock the turkey in 1956 in Southern Indiana. Marshall County received the first area birds in the late 1980's. Other northern counties received birds in the early 1990's, with St. Joseph County receiving the final batch of transplants in 1997. The IDNR has stocked a total of 2,795 wild turkeys throughout Indiana since 1956. Today, there are turkeys in all 92 counties. In fact, the turkey population has grown so much, that today 87 counties actually have a hunting season for turkeys.



The Wild Turkey has adapted to many different habitats. Originally thought to be a bird of forest areas, today it includes everything from agricultural land to forest as its habitat. Young turkeys usually hatch in late May to early June and are called poults. The females or hens are smaller than the males or toms. Toms can be identified by the beard that spouts from the chest and their spurs. Year old toms or jakes will have a short (3 to 5 inches) beard, while older toms may have up to a 12 inch beard.

So, this spring make sure you take a walk in the woods and listen for the gobbling of the tom and when you hear one, I hope it brings a smile to your face.

Compost Seminar

May 3, 2006

7:00 P.M.—8:30 P.M.

Farm Bureau Insurance

Meeting Room

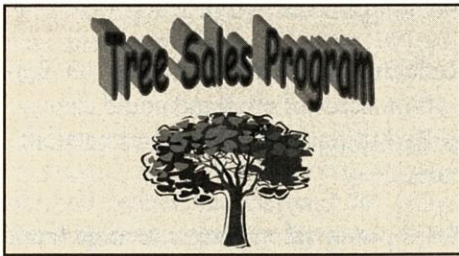
5605 U.S. 31 South

South Bend, IN. 46614

Join us as we discuss the magic formula for proper backyard composting.

Every participant will also receive a free compost bin.

Please call for reservations!



Tree Pick-up and Extra Trees Sales



The tree pick-up for the 20th Annual Tree Sale Program is set for Saturday, April 22, 2006, from 8 AM to 12 PM at the Swine Barn. The Swine Barn is located at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. If you missed the order deadline, you still have a chance to purchase trees. We will have extra trees for sale at the same time as the tree pick-up. At printing time, we have extras of all the tree species listed on the tree sales flyer. We look forward to seeing you on April 22, 2006.

Tree Seminar a Success

A tree seminar was held on February 7, 2006, and was well attended. A lot of information was received from Dave Duncan, of Custom and Moore Tree Experts.

Dave talked about topics such as selecting the right tree for the place and purpose you have in mind. For example, make sure that the tree you select will grow in the soil type you have. If the soil is heavy clay and is located on the landscape where water will pond; do not plant a tree in this area that does not like to have its roots wet part of the year.

If your soil is well drained and sandy, choose a tree that does well in dry conditions. Dave also talked about the consequences of planting a tree that will grow to 50 feet tall at maturity, underneath or close to overhead power lines. As the tree grows, this could cause a problem with the branches getting into the power lines and causing a potential power outage.

Another topic covered was planting your trees once you have picked them up. If you are planting a balled and burlapped tree, make sure that the hole is at least 2 times as wide as the root ball. Make sure that you do not plant the tree too deep depriving it of oxygen, resulting with the tree dying.

If you are getting your trees from the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District's Tree Sales Program you will be getting bareroot trees. These trees need to be planted in a hole that is deep enough for the roots, but not causing the tree to have a J-root or bent root when finished planting. This can cause the root to grow toward the soil surface, in which the root will dry out and die when it reaches the air. If the main root stops growing it can kill the tree.



Also, water the tree well when you plant it which will help rid any air pocket out of the soil and help keep the roots wet and growing.



A final point presented at the tree seminar was not to top your trees.

If you top the tree, it will grow many branches out of the branch cutoff. These branches are not usually as strong as the ones cut off. Since the new growth is weaker, the tree is more susceptible to storm damage. A properly pruned tree will grow stronger, hold its form better and be less susceptible to storm damage. If you are unsure how to properly prune a tree, you may want to seek the advice of a certified arborist to assist you.



Emerald Ash Borer and Homeowners

(The following information comes from a Purdue Extension Publication.)

Should I Treat My Ash Trees?

At this time, treating infested ash trees or applying preventative treatments to healthy ash trees in Indiana is not recommended.

If an emerald ash borer is found in Indiana, all ash trees within a one-half mile radius of the confirmed find will probably be removed in an effort to eradicate the insect. Research on other means of controlling emerald ash borer is being conducted at all levels. At the moment, complete removal of ash trees in affected areas that occur outside of the generally infested "Core Zone" (the areas in Michigan and Ontario where emerald ash borer first became a problem) is considered the best way to protect North America's uninfested ash trees.

Continued on page 7



FIELD NOTES



Save ENERGY
Save MONEY

In support of the USDA Energy Initiative that Secretary Johanns announced on December 7, 2005, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is launching an Energy Campaign called "Save ENERGY Save MONEY." The campaign focuses on conservation practices that contribute to energy efficiency and fuel savings.

The "Save ENERGY Save MONEY" Web site provides information for farmers and ranchers to cut input costs, maintain production, protect soil and water resources, reduce the Nation's dependence on fossil fuels, and save money by using cost-efficient soil and water conservation practices. NRCS developed an online "three-click" Energy Estimator to help producers make practical, money-saving, and energy efficient decisions. These items - and more - are accessible from the NRCS homepage.

USDA Energy Initiative NRCS Key Concepts

Theme

Save energy, save money.

Key Quotes

When he signed the Energy Policy Act last August, **President Bush** said, "The bill recognizes that America is the world's leader in technology, and that we've got to use technology to be the world's leader in conservation . . . Energy conservation is more than a private virtue; it's a public virtue."

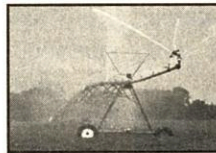
"USDA has put together an array of efforts to assist producers both short and long term. I've appointed a leadership team to oversee our comprehensive strategy and ensure specific goals are met relating to energy-saving assistance for producers and the advancement of renewable fuels," said **Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns** in announcing the USDA Energy Initiative.

Why Save Energy?

Saving energy reduces cost for producers and thus boosts their bottom lines. It's part of an integrated effort to conserve natural resources, including soil and water. But there's also a payoff for our nation—improving the U.S. import/export balance and reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. In short, saving energy is a sound business strategy with multiple benefits.

Potential Annual Nationwide Savings

Doubling no till acreage (from 62 to 124 million acres) could save an additional 217 million gallons of diesel fuel and \$480 million.



Converting irrigation systems from medium or high pressure to low pressure could cut energy costs by \$167 million.

Improving water efficiency by just 10 percent could reduce diesel consumption by 80 million gallons and save farmers and ranchers about \$180 million.

Doubling the use of manure-based nitrogen to replace fertilizer produced from natural gas could save about \$1.2 billion and 100 billion cubic feet of

natural gas.

Reducing application overlap on 250 million acres of cropland could save up to \$1 billion in fertilizer and pesticide costs.

Total potential national savings from implementing these conservation measures: more than \$3 billion per year.

How Individual Producers Can Save Energy and Money



• Switch from conventional tillage to no-till - and save at least 3.5 gallons of fuel per acre - \$7.70 at November 2005 prices - or 3,500 gallons of diesel and 47,700 for a 1,000-acre farm.

• Move to low-pressure irrigation systems - and save \$9 per acre for medium-pressure systems and \$41 per acre for high-pressure systems.

• Replace old or inefficient irrigation pumps - and achieve 10-percent improvement in water use efficiency, reducing diesel consumption by 8 gallons per acre, saving \$17,600 on 1,000 acres.

• Use manure instead of petroleum-based fertilizers - and reduce costs by up to \$85 per acre, for a corn producer, for example.

• Better manage nutrient and pesticide applications through precision agriculture - and almost pay for the cost of an inexpensive "auto-steer" guidance system by saving \$6000 on a 3,000 seeded - acre farm.

• Improve pesticide use with scouting, spot spraying and integrated pest management - and



FIELD NOTES

cut costs significantly. Some producers may realize savings of up to 25 percent.

• Adopt management intensive grazing practices - and extend the grazing season and reduce the demand for grass-hay extending grazing by one month can reduce hay consumption by 30 pounds per cow and reduce direct energy costs to produce, store and feed the hay, saving more than \$10 per cow.

• Plant windbreaks and shelterbelts to reduce heating and cooling costs - and save up to 20 percent on energy bills for the farmstead.

How NRCS Can Help



Energy Estimator - NRCS's new Energy Estimator give farmers and ranchers a quick read on how much money they can save by using conservation tillage. It's simple and easy - just three "clicks" on the computer.

Producers enter their zip code, fuel costs, crop plans and acreage and the Energy Estimator calculates estimated costs for various conservation tillage options versus conventional tillage. Based on the Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation tillage and cropping database, this new tool is available on the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov under the special NRCS Energy Campaign. With the Energy Estimator, producers can consider a variety of options as they make plans for next year's crops and equipment purchases.

Additional on-line tools—The agency is also developing an Energy Audit Self-Assessment tool that will establish a baseline for Conservation Security Program energy enhancement payments and also be useful to any farmer or rancher looking for ways to reduce

energy costs.

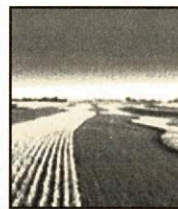
Also, on the drawing board is expansion of the Energy Estimator to include a module to help plan for nitrogen/nutrient needs and an irrigation calculator that will provide a rough estimate of savings from increasing efficiency and effectiveness of these inputs. Finally, NRCS is developing an energy checklist to help producers spot additional opportunities to cut costs.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Conservation practices under EQIP that specifically contribute to saving energy include conservation tillage, manure management, rotational grazing, irrigation water management, digesters and drainage water management.

Conservation Innovation Grants - In 2005, NRCS provided more than \$3 million for 11 innovative trials and demonstration projects that include a focus on improving energy efficiency. In 2006, the agency has designated \$5 million - one quarter of the national CIG funding - for energy - related projects.

GET READY FOR CSP!

Producers have often commented that there were plenty of programs to assist those who had environmental problems on their farms, but if they were already taking care of their resources, they were out of luck. The newest conservation program, the Conservation Security Program (CSP), is an answer to those producers.



Each year, a select group of watersheds are chosen for the signup. Producers within those watersheds can fill out a Self Assessment Workbook to document the stewardship of their land and find out if they are eligible for the

program. Each eligible applicant is then placed into a specific tier and category level. Funding decisions are based on category level, as there may not be enough funding to cover all eligible applications. We do not know exactly when the watersheds in St. Joseph County will be opened for enrollment, so now is the time to prepare so that you can be eligible once your watershed is chosen.

Total payments are determined by the tier of participation, conservation treatments completed, and the acres enrolled:

- **For Tier I**, contracts are for 5 years; maximum payment is \$20,000 annually.
- **For Tier II**, contracts are for 5-10 years; maximum payment is \$35,000 annually.
- **For Tier III**, contracts are for 5-10 years, maximum payment is \$45,000 annually.

The specific eligibility requirements can change from year to year but the following are a few of the basic eligibility requirements from the past 2 years:

- Have up to date soil tests on your fields and apply nutrients accordingly.
- Keep records of your Nutrient Management and Pest Management (for at least the last 2 years).
- Have filter strips on open ditches and streams as well as ponds and wetlands.
- Have a Conservation Plan for your farm.
- Maintain a positive Soil Conditioning Index (based on tillage levels, more tillage = negative SCI, less tillage = greater SCI).

It is important to think ahead to get your agricultural operation ready to reap the benefits of CSP. Doing the "right thing" can now pay off in a BIG way.





URBAN MEANDERINGS

Phosphorus in Lawn Fertilizer



Warmer temperatures and longer days are approaching quickly. Once again it is time to think about spring and maintaining our lawns. Most residents will start fertilizing their lawns to make them thick and green for the summer months. Some of these weekend gardeners will choose a fertilizer high in phosphorus. In most cases lawns do not require as much phosphorus as they would other nutrients. If phosphorus is not used, it will become a contributor to pollutant runoff and end up in storm sewers which enter our waterways.

A while back I happened to come across an article published on the internet about phosphorus use on lawns and how it affects downstream watersheds. The publication was produced by Minnesota governmental agencies in an effort to educate homeowners about the repercussions of phosphorus misuse. Since January 1, 2005, the "Land of 10,000 Lakes" placed a ban on phosphorus in lawn fertilizer to protect their natural resources. Only lawns that have phosphorus deficiencies proven by a soil test are allowed to use fertilizer with phosphorus. Fertilizers used in agriculture, flower and vegetable gardening, or golf course turf maintenance activities are exempt from this ban. Phosphorus is naturally found in soils, minerals, living organisms, wind-blown dust, and water.

Phosphorus is an element that is

extremely reactive in nature forming compounds with aluminum, calcium and oxygen. When phosphorus is found in soil and water, it usually exists as phosphate or orthophosphate.

In most soils, a phosphorus deficiency is rare. Some key signs that may indicate a phosphorus deficiency are slow and stunted plant growth, small or poor fruit and flower development, and in some plants or grass the foliage may appear purple. Before assuming that the soil is deficient in phosphorus, have a soil analysis completed before adding fertilizer with a higher content of phosphorus.



Fertilizers contain three main elements that plant roots pull from the soil. They are nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. When buying fertilizer with a 25-3-10 ratio, the first number represents the nitrogen content, the second number represents the phosphate content (a phosphorus compound) and the last number represents the potash content (which contains potassium).

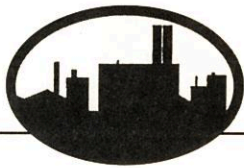
Phosphorus found in fertilizer can be taken from natural organic sources like manures, composts, animal by-products or mined rock phosphate processed with phosphoric acid or a heat source. According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, seventy-five percent of the rock

phosphate used in the United States is surface mined in Florida.

Plants require phosphorus for energy and reproduction, but in smaller quantities. When new lawns are created, fertilizers containing higher amounts of phosphorus are often used to promote quick growth and establishment of vegetation. The majority of the unused phosphorus is then taken up by the soil's positively charged particles or cations.

Typically, phosphorus will attach itself to fine textured soil particles like clays and silts over coarse soil types. Fine textured soils are more vulnerable to runoff and erosion into downstream lakes and rivers making it essentially important to contain any potential runoff. Once this soil enters the water, it will be contained in the sediment and will have the potential to release phosphorus into the water causing an increase in algae growth and a decline in water quality. The soil can only hold a certain amount of phosphorus before it reaches its' capacity. Once a soil's capacity has been reached, any additional phosphorus will be lost to rain or watering activities. The final path of this runoff will end up in nearby waters.

Other forms of phosphorus runoff may occur from urban sources like tree leaves and debris, grass clippings, animal waste, bird droppings, and windborne dust. Many of these pollutants end up on pervious or impervious surfaces. A pervious surface is a surface that allows water infiltration like lawns, mulched landscaping beds, flower beds, and wood lots are a few examples.



URBAN MEANDERINGS

These areas are also great for filtering or decomposing potential contaminants. Impervious surfaces like concrete, asphalt streets and sidewalks do not allow water to penetrate their surfaces. Pollutants that end up on impervious surfaces will be unfiltered and left to runoff into nearby storm sewers that eventually end up in our lakes and rivers.



Ways you can reduce phosphorus runoff:

Keep leaves, tree debris and grass clippings out of gutters, streets, and ditches.

- Never wash or blow soil or grass clippings into the street.
- Use a mulching lawn mower that leaves clippings on the lawn. This will replenish any lost nutrients back into the soil and reduce the need for fertilizers.
- Pick up animal waste promptly. Animal wastes contain bacteria and nutrients which are harmful to the watershed.
- Control soil erosion around homes and new construction sites. When bare ground is left exposed, soil containing phosphorus is easily washed away with the rain. Erosion can be prevented covering the bare ground with vegetation, mulch or mulch products.
- Thick, dense lawns often slow the speed of water runoff and potentially reduce the amount of pollutant runoff from dissolved and suspended chemicals.
- Be smart when applying fertilizer. Do not apply it on sidewalks, driveways, or streets.

- Read product labels for proper application rates of fertilizer.

- Choose a fertilizer appropriate for your soil chemistry.

For a list of soil testing labs in the United States, go to http://www.motherearthnews.com/directory/soil_test/. Soil tests are usually not too expensive (most are under \$20).

Continued from page 3 (Woodland Times)
Following are some important things that homeowners should do:

Cultural Practices and Sanitation

Before emerald ash borer arrives:

• Maintain the health of uninfested ash trees.

- *Ash trees should be watered during dry spells. Note: It is likely that new methods of control and treatment will become available in the future. In that case, generally healthy trees will have a better chance than poorly maintained ones.*



• Do not move ash products into uninfested areas or out of infested areas.

- Please advise neighbors and friends not to bring ash products or wood from infested areas or take ash products or woods to an infested area. The movement of infested firewood and nursery stock is a major way emerald ash borer is moved from site to site.

After emerald ash borer arrives:

- **Remove and destroy infested**

ash trees and products immediately.

- Since emerald ash borers emerge from infested trees in early spring, Infested trees should be removed and destroyed before spring arrives.
- Felled trees must be chipped, de-barked, or burned to prevent beetles from emerging as just cutting the trees and stacking logs as firewood will not kill the beetles.

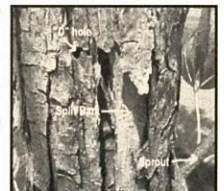


If my ash trees have to be cut, can any wood be salvaged?

Salvage of ash trees for lumber may be possible in Indiana, although there are no policies to address this issue yet. However, because of the way EAB larvae live in trees, all ash wood and probably the sapwood of the tree would have to be removed and destroyed. This could make such an undertaking for homeowners prohibitively expensive.

Unfortunately, the best option at this time for dealing with an infested ash is to remove and destroy it.

If you choose to replace your infested ash tree, be sure to select a tree that is not vulnerable to emerald ash borer. Contact your local extension office or tree professional for advice.





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:

John Dooms, Chairman
Paul Williams III, V-Chairman
John Kulwicki, Member
Randy Matthys, Member
Carole Riewe, Member

Associate Supervisors:

Dave Craft
Jerry Dominiack
Jan Ivkovich
Melvin Kulwicki
Jim LaFree
Charles Lehman
Joe Long
Eugene Myers
Beverly Riddle
Richard Schmidt
Dale Stoner

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.

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