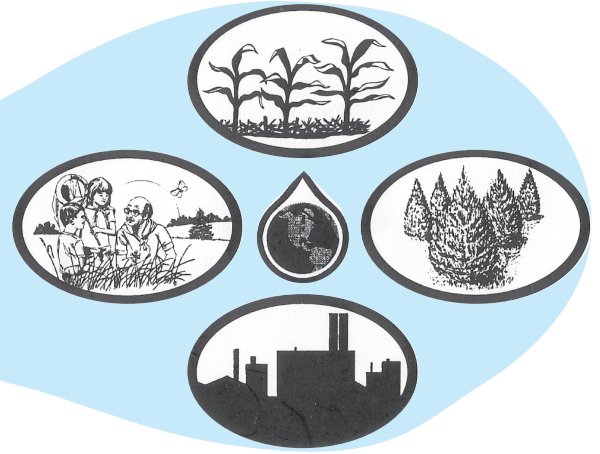




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

January/February 2016
Volume 18, Issue 1

2903 Gary Drive, Ste 1, Plymouth, IN 46563
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*

January

- 1st - New Years Day - Office Closed
- 14th-15th - IASWCD Annual Conference - Indianapolis
- 18th - Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday - Office Closed
- 19th - St. Joseph County SWCD Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre Township Library)

29th—St. Joseph County SWCD Annual Meeting

February

- 1th - George Washington's Birthday - Office Closed
- 6th - Science Alive
- 16th - St. Joseph County SWCD Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre Township Library)

March

- 13th - Daylight Savings Time Begins. Don't forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour!
- 15th - St. Joseph County SWCD Board Meeting (7:00 pm @ Centre Township Library)
- 22nd - Tri County Producers Conference (see page 3 for details.)
- 25th - Good Friday - County Holiday



Have You Heard? ...

56th Annual Meeting

Join us to celebrate all of our 2015 accomplishments. This years meeting will be held at St. Hedwig Memorial Center (331 S Scott St., South Bend, IN 46601) on January 29, 2016. Doors open at 5:45 pm and the call to order is at 6:30 pm. We will enjoy a family style Polish dinner and have our ever popular silent auction.



Entertainment this year will be Fascinating Rhythm! Rod Noftsgers Fascinating Rhythm is a stylish ten piece swing band with featured soloist Joyce Jones. They will be performing your favorite swing and jazz standards.

Their repertoire includes songs made famous by Glenn Miller, Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Frank Sinatra to name a few. Rod Noftsgers brings his professional experience to the band having performed in Nashville, TN for over twenty years both as a band leader and as a featured trumpet soloist.

The evening will also include board supervisor election and awards ceremony.

**Call the office for more details
or to order your tickets!
574-936-2024 Ext. 4.**

2016 Membership Form

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Phone: _____
E-Mail: _____

Please Confirm Your Giving Level

- _____ Affiliate Membership: \$25-\$99
- _____ Bronze Membership: \$100-\$249
- _____ Silver Membership: \$250-\$499
- _____ Gold Membership: \$500 & above

**Please make checks payable to
"St Joseph County SWCD"
and mail along with this form to:**

**St. Joseph County SWCD, 2903 Gary Drive,
Plymouth, IN 46563**



**Want to donate with your
Visa, MasterCard, or PayPal
account? Visit our website
at www.stjosephswcd.org
and click on the
"Donate" button.**

Scan me to donate now!

2016 Clean Water Indiana Grant Recipient



The St. Joseph County SWCD along with Marshall & Starke County SWCD's are proud to announce that we have had two separate three year Clean Water Indiana grants approved! Both grants will begin in 2016!

The goal of the first grant, called Conservation Cropping Systems to Improve Soil Health, is to improve water quality by helping producers utilize all aspects of the conservation cropping systems (no-till, cover crops, nutrient management, & filter strips) which will improve soil health, reduce erosion & nutrient runoff in the Kankakee Watershed. To reduce nutrient loading our program will offer a cost-share program for new acres for cover crops, no-till, nutrient management & filter strips.

We selected the Kankakee River Watershed area because of the vulnerability of our watershed due to the water table being very close to the surface in many areas and easily contaminated by chemical and nutrient runoff as well as sediment runoff. We also have many areas of sandy soils which drain too quickly to properly filter the same contaminants. Encouraging and implementing the conservation cropping systems will help to

reduce the contamination of our water by limiting the chemicals, nutrients, and sediment that is released from the soil.

The second grant, called Rainscaping, is more of an urban focused grant with the goal of mitigating non-source point pollution from entering the St. Joseph River watershed from stormwater runoff. This grant has a three year, three phase approach. The first year of this grant will focus on education. Since this is a new concept, we will have workshops and information available in this first year to better understand what Rainscaping is. The second year of this grant will implement a demonstration plot which will allow us to show exactly what rain gardens are and how they work. Year three will be a cost-share year which will allow for the installation of rain gardens throughout the St. Joseph River watershed.

Please contact the office for more information or to receive an application for cost-share opportunities. 574-936-2024 ext. 4 or info@stjosephswcd.org.

NRCS Programs 101

Environmental Quality Incentives Programs (EQIP)

This program seeks to enhance and protect water and air quality, conserve ground and surface water, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and create wildlife habitat. This is done by offering different sets of agricultural practices that producers can implement on their land like No-till, cover crops, seasonal high tunnels, prescribed grazing, forest stand improvement, invasive species management, and many more.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program – Regional Conservation Partnership Program (EQIP-RCPP) Michigan/Indiana St. Joseph River Watershed Conservation Partnership

This program works almost exactly like the general EQIP, but it only covers the Michigan/Indiana St. Joseph River Watershed. The focus is the protection and conservation of water resources, including optimizing groundwater use, improving infiltration, and reducing nutrients and sediment while also improving wildlife habitats. Some of the practices promoted by this initiative are cover crops, irrigation water management, no till, mulching, waterways, heavy use areas, and filter strips.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems while adopting additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance, the higher the performance, the higher the payment. This program is suitable for advanced conservation producers.

Wetlands Reserve Easement (WRE)

Under this easement program, we provide technical and financial assistance directly to private landowners and/or Indian tribes to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands through the purchase of a wetland reserve easement. These are offered under permanent (perpetuity) easements which NRCS pays 100% of the easement value for the purchase of the easement. Additionally, NRCS pays 100% of the restoration costs.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program is funded through the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). The Farm Service Agency (FSA) administers CRP, and NRCS provides technical land eligibility determinations and conservation planning. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. Some of the practices offered under this program are establishing pollinator habitats, filter strips, grassed waterways, and field windbreaks.

Conservation Reserve Program - Grasslands (CRP-Grasslands)

This program is a division from the general CRP but focused on protecting grasslands or pastures while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. It provides support for grazing operations and plant/animal biodiversity. Participants voluntarily limit future use of the land while retaining the right to conduct common grazing operations, haying or mowing. Haying and mowing cannot be performed during ground nesting season (April 1st – August 1st). Approved participants enroll in a 15 year contract and receive a flat annual rental payment of \$38.00 - \$40.00 per acre for the land enrolled in the program.

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

ACEP was created by the 2014 Farm Bill to protect critical water resources and wildlife habitat, and encourage private owners to maintain land for farming. ACEP's Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) not only protect the long-term viability of the nation's food supply by preventing conversion of productive working lands to non-agricultural uses, they also support environmental quality, wildlife habitat, historic preservation and protection of open spaces.

To learn more, contact Debbie Knepp or James Rodriguez with the St. Joseph County NRCS at 574-936-2024 Ext. 4.

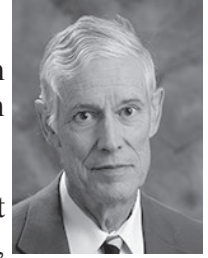
2016 Tri-County Producers Conference

When: March 22, 2016
 From 9am-3pm
 Where: Swan Lake
 Resort, 5203
 Plymouth
 LaPorte Trail,
 Plymouth, IN
 46563



Key Note Speakers

Dr. Hans Kok is a renowned Soil Health speaker and field manager for the Soil Health Partnership, covering Indiana and Ohio.



Dr. Otto Doering III is a public policy specialist on economic issues affecting agriculture, natural resources, the environment, and energy as well as a Professor of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University.

NRCS Launches New Conservation Effort to Aid Monarch Butterflies

Indianapolis, {November 15, 2015} – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced a new conservation effort to help farmers in Indiana and nine other states provide food and habitat for monarch butterflies. This targeted effort in the Midwest and southern Great Plains by USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest \$4 million in 2016 to help combat the decline of this iconic species.

“These beautiful and once-common butterflies are growing less familiar, and we know private landowners, especially farmers can play a crucial role in aiding their recovery,” said Jane Hardisty, NRCS state conservationist in Indiana. “Indiana’s farmers are good stewards of the land, and this effort helps them make improvements that benefit all natural resources and wildlife, including pollinators such as the monarch.”

The orange-and-black butterflies are known for their annual, multi-generational migration from central Mexico to as far north as Canada. Monarch populations have decreased significantly over the past two decades, in part because of the decrease in native plants like milkweed – the sole source of food for monarch caterpillars.

Indiana is at the heart of the monarch migration so NRCS will focus on integrating milkweed and high-nectar plants along field borders, in buffers along waterways or around wetlands, in pastures and other suitable locations in the state.

NRCS will provide technical and financial assistance to help producers and conservation partners make pollinator and butterfly-friendly improvements to farms using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and remaining funds from the former Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Cost share funds are also available through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to establish monarch habitat.

Examples of conservation improvements include buffer habitats, cover crops and better pasture management practices which help reduce erosion, increase soil health, inhibit the expansion of invasive species and provide food and habitat for insects and wildlife.

This effort by NRCS contributes to a multi-agency, international strategy to reverse the monarch’s population decline in North America, estimated to have decreased from one billion butterflies in 1995 down to about 34 million today. *The National Strategy to Protect Pollinators and Their Habitat* has a goal of increasing the eastern population of monarchs back up to 225 million by 2020.

To learn more about the Monarch butterfly, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/monarchs. For more information about NRCS and other technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, contact Debbie Knepp or James Rodriguez with the St. Joseph County NRCS.



NRCS Client Gateway

What is Conservation Client Gateway? The Conservation Client Gateway is a secure online web application that lets landowners and land managers, operating as individuals, to track their payments, report completed practices, request conservation assistance, and electronically sign documents anytime, anywhere. Conservation Client Gateway provides users the flexibility to determine when they want to engage with NRCS online and when they prefer in-person conservation planning assistance.

It’s an easy 3 step process to sign up for access. Visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/cgate/> To get started today. If you have questions or need assistance contact Debbie Knepp or James Rodriguez with the St. Joseph County NRCS at 574-936-2024 Ext. 4.

Are you on social media?



Find us on Facebook, search St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District



Twitter: @stjosephswcd



You Tube: St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District



Pinterest: StJosephCountySWCD



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

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



St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

Youth Poster Contest



We All Need Trees

Posters are due by
March 25, 2016

Check out our website:
www.stjosephswcd.org for
complete details

Rick Glassman, St. Joseph County SWCD Education Coordinator still has dates available for the 2015-2016 school year. Contact him today to reserve your date at Richard.glassman@in.nacdnet.net.

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

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

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

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:
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Sarah Longenecker, 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!