

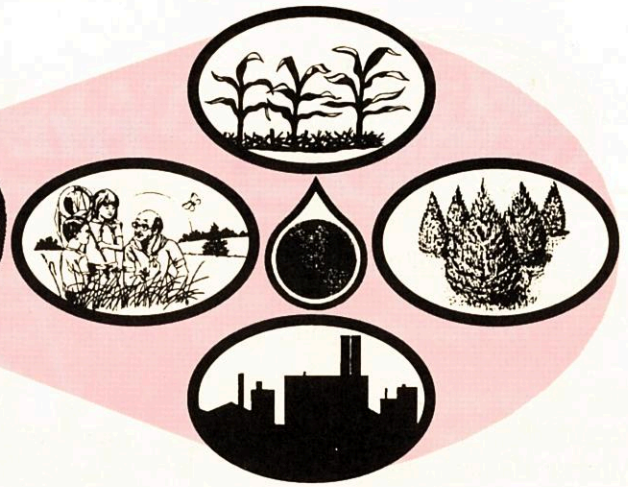


St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION

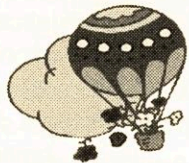


KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Apr/May/June 2003 5605 U.S. 31 South, Suite 4 *South Bend, IN * Telephone (574) 291-2300 Ext. 3 Editor: Troy Manges
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Calendar of Events

April 12
Tree Pick Up – 8:00 am to 12:00 Noon
St. Joseph Co. 4-H Fairgrounds
Esther Singer Building

April 18
Good Friday – Office Closed

April 21
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

April 22
Composting Seminar – 7:00 – 8:30 pm
Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

May 19
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room

May 26
Memorial Day – Office Closed

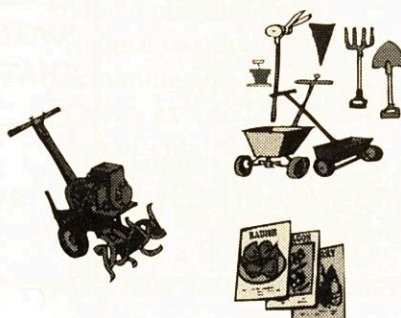
June 16
SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 – Farm Bureau Mtg. Room



TREE PICK UP

And Extra Trees

Saturday
April 12th, 2003
8:00 am to 12:00 noon
St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds



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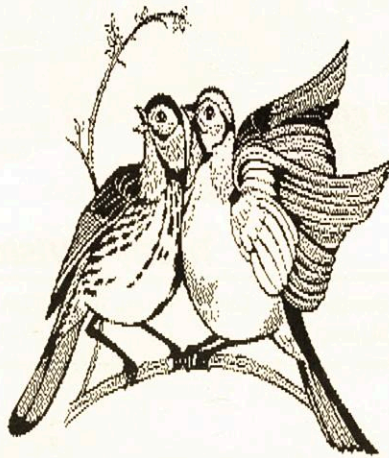
THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

Portrait of an Animal

The Eastern Bluebird

The Bluebird is often called the herald of spring. Legend has it that Mother Nature gathered all the birds in the warm south and told them that their home in the north was going to be warm again. She asked who would go north early to tell all the animals that had remained behind the good news. She warned that this was not to be an easy journey. All the big, strong birds remained silent. Finally a small drab bird stepped forward. Mother Nature was not sure that this small bird would live through the hardship but the little bird insisted and so headed north. The journey was difficult but when the animals heard the sweet song of the little bird it brought joy to their hearts. When the little bird saw this he knew that everything would be all right, no matter how difficult the journey. Spring arrived and all the animals rejoiced and the other birds returned. Mother Nature gathered all the animals together and painted the little drab bird's feathers the color of the summer sky to reward it. And to this day the Bluebirds song and color brings hope and joy to all who see it.

The Bluebird is a perfect example of what we can do to life on the planet if we do not think. Bluebirds nest in hollow trees along the edge of open fields. We thought that these trees were worthless and cut them down. Without a place to raise their young, the population declined rapidly. Fortunately we saw the error of our ways and by leaving hollow trees and building nest boxes, the Bluebird continues to bring hope and joy to the world.



TRY THIS!

If you are already feeding the birds, you might want to add a new type of feed, waxworms and mealworms. These usually can be purchased at your local bait shop. Just place them in a tray near your feeder and soon you may notice some new visitors. Since they won't last long once they are found, place them out at the same time of day. Your feathered friends will soon become used to your routine and will be waiting.

COMPOST SEMINAR

TUESDAY
APRIL 22, 2003
7:00 P.M. – 8:30 P.M.

FARM BUREAU
MEETING ROOM

Please call for reservations!
All participants will receive a free compost bin.

It is Spring Time Time for Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes like to breed in **temporary water. They can go from egg to adult in about 2 weeks.

**Permanent waters, even marshes and swamps have many predators that eat the wiggler (mosquito larva) before it can become an adult.

**The female needs blood in order to produce her eggs and is the only one to bite. Male mosquitoes feed on plant juices.

**Dragonflies love to eat Mosquitoes, both larva and adult.

**There are hundreds of different types of mosquitoes, all designed to feed on different

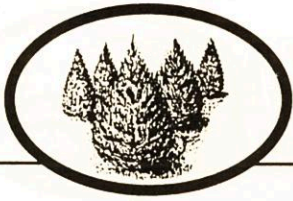


types of animals. That is why some mosquitoes hurt when they bite and some don't.

**Mosquitoes do not "drink" blood, you fill them up. She just sticks here piercing mouthpart into you and you pump your blood into her.

THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO TO GET RID OF MOSQUITOES IS TO GET RID OF TEMPORARY WATER IN YOUR YARD. DUMP OUT BUCKETS, OLD TIRES AND THE LIKE. I HAVE EVEN SEEN MOSQUITOES LARVA LIVING IN A POTATO CHIP BAG FULL OF WATER. CLEAN BIRD BATHS AND LIVESTOCK WATERING TANKS ON A REGULAR BASIS, ONCE A WEEK. REMEMBER IT IS TEMPORARY WATER, NOT PERMANENT WATER THAT IS THE MAJOR PROBLEM.

Bluebird nesting box plans available by calling the office.
5 74 – 291 – 2300 ext. 3



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

Tree Sales Pick-up Day

The pick-up day is set for April 12th from 8 A.M. to Noon. Trees can be picked up at the Esther Singer Building at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fairgrounds. We will have any extra trees, groundcovers, and wildflower packets on sale that day. They will be on a first come first serve basis so you will want to get there early. Also on the 12th the Northwest Territory RC&D will be selling Siberian Irises. If you have any questions about the Saturday Tree Pick-up please call us at the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District office at (574)291-2300 ext. 3.

Myths About Trees

I thought maybe we could set the record straight on a few things and clear a few trees of wrong doing. Here are a couple of tree myths that you might find interesting.

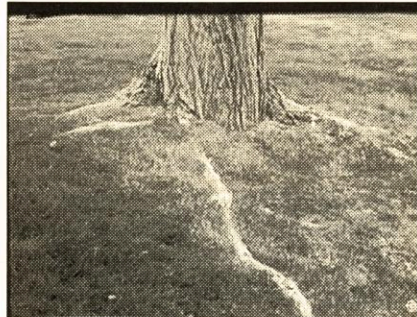
Myth #1: Roots surface and damage lawn mowers.

A common complaint from frustrated homeowners and grounds keepers is: "what in the world can I do about those tree roots that keep coming to the surface and destroying my lawn mower? I can't even grow grass there anymore!"

The truth is that under good conditions, tree roots grow through the soil, not on top of it. Admittedly, in nature, roots sometimes are forced near the surface by shallow rocks, or by a high water table, such as in bogs. However these are not the kind of sites where houses are usually built.

In a community setting, roots normally grow well beneath the surface.

The trouble often begins with construction activity that disregards the conditions needed by trees. Commonly, the poor soil excavated from foundations and basements is placed in future lawn areas, compacted by construction traffic, then covered with a thin layer of topsoil. Roots then grow in this shallow depth of good soil. When foot traffic compacts this thin layer, or even if compaction occurs on deeper soil, erosion can follow. In addition, excessive raking of leaves, twigs, fruits, flowers and other natural debris prevents the building of new soil that would otherwise cover shallow roots.



To save the tree roots (and your lawn mower) you can try one of the ideas listed below.

To prevent exposed roots and lawn mower conflicts:

- *Break up compacted soil around new construction before adding top soil and planting trees.
- *Reduce or eliminate raking, power vacuuming and "thatching."
- *Cover exposed roots with a thin layer of good soil.
- *Create gracefully designed mulch beds over the exposed root area.
- *Develop a flower, shrub or ground cover area that needs no mowing.

Myth #2: Tree Stakes are Essential.

This is no myth where winds are strong or when evergreens are planted. Larger bare root stock, too, often requires stakes for the first growing season. But in other cases, stakes are not needed.

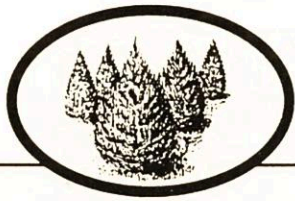
Stakes are expensive, not only to purchase, but in terms of labor to install and remove. The tendency is to ignore the stakes after installation, a condition that can lead to girdling of the tree as it grows. Improperly installed stakes also reduce the natural sway of the trunk necessary for good taper and strong wood, and retard root development. Again the money would probably be better invested in more trees.



Tree stakes can be very helpful but you need to remove them before they interfere with the tree's growth. Here the cables are girdling the tree and the top is larger than the bottom.

Myth #3: Water is a tree's wonder drug.

With good judgement, this is true. Water usually does more good than adding fertilizer. It also is important for preventing stress that predisposes a tree to disease, insect infestations and early decline, and it is essential at the time of planting to remove air pockets and give the tree

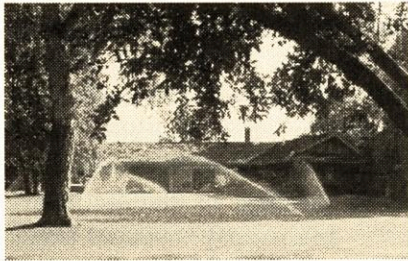


WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

(Myth #3 continued)
a good start in its new home.

The problem is that more trees ultimately drown than die of drought. This is simply from over watering, especially where there is an automatic sprinkler system nearby to water grass.



Make sure that your sprinkler system is set to match the normal amount of rainfall your area receives annually.

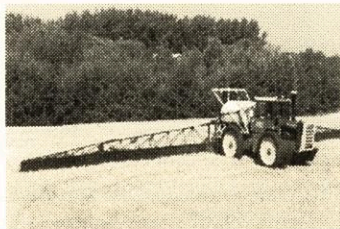
The key to watering is to match your schedule with the amount of local rainfall. In some areas, regular rainfall makes it unnecessary to water street trees. Watering should be done only during long dry spells, essentially if windy or hot, and in dry climates. In these cases, water is the wonder drug. Unfortunately, due to labor and equipment costs, watering street trees is not always cost effective. But for individual trees on private property, watering is more economical than you may realize. A large newly planted tree needs only about 10 gallons of water a week in dry weather. *(These tree myths can be found in the Tree City USA Bulletin No. 30 published by the National Arbor Day Foundation)*

Trees and Shrubs Soften the Rural-Urban Interface

Urban development in rural areas makes maintaining good relationships a challenge.

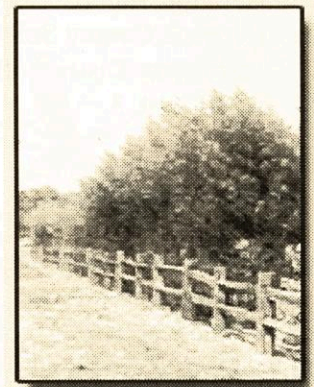
Sometimes folks moving out from town don't understand what happens in agriculture to produce food and fiber. Odor from livestock and other farming operations are often the bone of contention. Planting trees and shrubs as a screen can buffer odor, dust, noise and unpleasant views. Installing vegetative filters or windbreaks is an opportunity for developers and agriculture producers to not only increase production efficiency, but to demonstrate their commitment to being a good neighbor and an environmental steward.

Farmers often view odors and dust that come from livestock, chemical sprays and fertilizers as just a part of agriculture and have come to accept them as a part of life. As urban and residential dwellers move into areas that were previously rural in character, the differences in lifestyles often become painfully apparent.



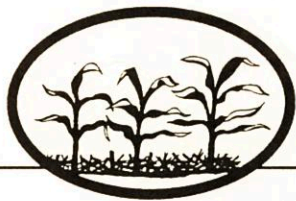
What to do about this concern is a question that many are asking. Agroforestry may have a partial answer. Windbreaks and shelter belts can be designed to reduce some of the problem. Odor is attached to water and dust particles and is transported by wind. Windbreaks modify wind movement and have been designed to trap dust for decades. Tree species, especially conifer types, have extensive leaf surface area that can interact with water vapor and

particles that carry odor. Denser plantings have a greater ability to detain or deflect odors and will be the most effective. Some recent studies show that a forest edge or windbreak can trap as much as four times as many airborne pollutants than barren land. It is also important to note that the greatest trapping occurs only ten feet into the forest edge or windbreak showing that the planting does not need to take a lot of productive agricultural land.



Odor control may require different considerations than the traditional windbreaks for wind erosion control or energy conservation. Developers and planning commissions can plan windbreaks into subdivision plans to provide odor control, wildlife habitat, energy conservation and to enhance the overall quality of the development.

Some of the answers to the use of trees for odor control are yet to be learned, but the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District and its partners can be of help. They can help you consider "working trees" as a part of the solution.



FIELD NOTES



2002 Provides Record Cost Share

The 2002 Farm Bill re-authorized and amended the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. This program, which is administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is one of the largest conservation programs in the 2002 Farm Bill. A summary of the final rule plus information on EQIP and other Farm Bill conservation programs is on the web at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/products.html>

“The Farm Bill represents an unprecedented investment in conservation over ten years, which is an 80 percent increase,” Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist for Indiana said. “This Farm Bill offers voluntary solutions for complying with the Clean Water Act, clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act and other regulations. EQIP – one of the largest programs in the Farm Bill – is designed to help producers meet the significant environmental regulation they face.”

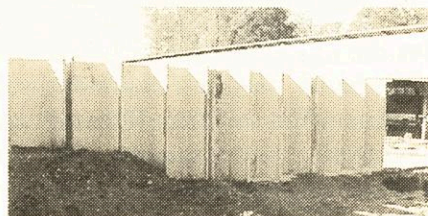
EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that promotes environmental quality and helps producers to meet local, state and federal regulations. Funds will help farmers install conservation practices that protect

natural resources by reducing soil erosion, improving water quality and protecting grazing land.

Through the rule making process, NRCS has streamlined program administration and addressed several primary statutory changes in the proposed rule, including:



- Up to 90 percent cost share for limited resource and beginning farmers.
- A payment limitation of \$450,000 per qualified individual or entity for all fiscal year 2002 – 2007 EQIP contracts.
- Providing livestock producers with cost share assistance for waste storage facilities regardless of size. (Producers who receive cost share on waste storage facilities must develop and implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan).
- Allocating 60 percent of EQIP funds towards livestock related practices, including grazing livestock.



“In St. Joseph County, farmers are proud of their environmental stewardship and conservation on working lands,” says District Conservationist Debbie Knepp. “The 2002 Farm Bill more than doubled the cost share money for Indiana producers in EQIP last year. For this year, we have made changes in the local ranking process so we can be more responsive to producers requests. EQIP is available to any

farmer who wants to deal with natural resources concerns on farmland. We expect to have even more money available this year to help producers install conservation practices and adopt management practices that are good for water quality and soil health.”

NRCS New Delivery System

During the past year the Natural Resources Conservation Service reorganized their technical assistance delivery system. For farmers in St. Joseph County it means that you may receive assistance from a different NRCS person than in the past. Will you get a different level of service than before? According to Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist, “We’ve made some adjustments in the way we work to ensure we can provide timely, high quality service to a greater number of customers than in the past. The new Farm Bill offers greater opportunity than we have ever seen for Indiana’s private landowners to integrate conservation practices on the farm and our technical assistance workload is growing.”

To begin with NRCS has re-established District Conservationist (DC) positions in all 82 Indiana USDA Service Centers. The DC is the primary point of contact for USDA conservation programs. DCs make the initial farm visits and work with the owner or operator to develop a conservation plan and other materials needed for each Farm Bill conservation program.



FIELD NOTES

Then, when it is time to survey and design conservation practices, specialists that are members of a "Technical Service Team" (TST) get involved. These technical specialists include engineers and technicians armed with high-tech equipment, and will be assigned to jobs and locations where they will be the most proficient.

"This organizational structure should give us the flexibility to respond to even the heaviest workloads locations effectively and efficiently," says Debbie Knepp, District Conservationist in St. Joseph County. "We want to continue to provide timely, high quality assistance to our program participants. The Technical Services Team will be a real asset to the farmers in this county who are ready to utilize the conservation programs of the 2002 Farm Bill."

Farmers Provide Many Benefits When They Restore Wetlands

When the settlers came to Indiana, they found a lot of wetlands. Most were in the northern part of the state, but they could be found throughout Indiana. Nearly 25 percent of the state was originally wetlands. Most of the rest was woodlands. To make Indiana the productive agricultural state that it is many of the wetlands were drained and many of the woodlands were cleared for crop production. Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their cooperating agencies are helping to convert some of that cropland back to woodland and wetlands and bring a balance to land use. They recognize that today's population and that of the future will require large amounts of

productive agricultural land for food and fiber production, but that some can be restored to wetland and woodland.

Over the past several years' farmers in the state have restored over 30,000 acres to highly productive and beneficial wetlands. Wetlands perform many functions. Usually located in depressions, wetlands capture water running off higher land. Water collected in the wetlands contributes to stream flow when full or through ground water movement. They act as holding areas for large quantities of surface water that is slowly released to the streams. As this water is temporarily stored in the wetland, downstream flooding is reduced. A one-acre wetland, one foot deep, holds approximately 330,000 gallons of water.

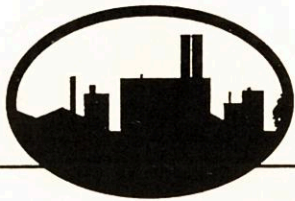


Wetlands play an important role in nutrient and sediment filtering, thereby protecting water quality. The source of the nutrients and sediments can be farm fields, roads and streets, recreation areas and lawns. Nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen flow into the wetland from either surface runoff or underground drainage. The wetland plants absorb most of the Nitrogen. Phosphorus, organic nitrogen and some metals usually attach to sediment and are carried by runoff to the wetland. The sediment settles to the wetland bottom where the root system of wetland plants

absorb the nutrients from the sediment. Some pesticides also bond to soil particles and are carried to the wetland where they settle on the bottom.

The function of a wetland varies with the seasons. During the growing season emergent and submerged aquatic plants take up large quantities of nutrients from water and sediment. Algae and floating plants absorb nutrients from surface water. These plants essentially convert the wetland into a "nutrient sink" by taking nutrients from the water and sediment and storing them as plant material. By taking up and holding nutrients during the summer, wetlands decrease the potential of contamination downstream. When the plants die, a large portion of the nutrients return to the water and sediment from decaying plant material. During this period in late fall and early spring, wetlands serve as a nutrient source when water flows from the wetland to downstream areas.

Wetlands not only play an important role in the state's freshwater system, but also are valuable wildlife habitat. Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts can help farmers and other convert cropland areas to wetlands through the Wetland Reserve Program. This program provides funding for landowners to enter into various kinds of easements making this program an alternative for use of land in the state.



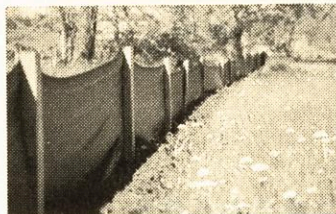
URBAN MEANDERINGS

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is a set of federal regulations administered through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The regulations are intended to improve water quality in surface waters of the United States. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is the administering authority for Indiana's NPDES regulations. Since the fall of 1992, Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) have been actively involved in the field implementation of Indiana's regulation, 327 IAC 15-5 which governs storm water discharges from construction sites disturbing five (5) acres or more. SWCDs and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil conservation have been reviewing the required Erosion and Sediment Control Plans and providing on-site technical assistance through a site inspection process.

Implementation of Phase II of the NPDES program is to begin in early 2003. Phase II brings a new set of requirements for certain designated urbanized areas within Indiana. These urbanized areas are designated through criteria set forth in 327 IAC 15-13, and are called Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s). MS4s are required to establish a plan for storm water quality improvement within their jurisdictions. There are 6 minimum control measures required as part of this plan. The 6 measures are as follows; Public Education and Outreach, Public Participation/Involvement, Illicit Discharge

Detection and Elimination, Construction Site Runoff Control, Post-construction Runoff Control and Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping. MS4s will need to develop programs and establish ordinances within their jurisdictions to address these issues.



Phase II of the NPDES program also will place additional requirements on smaller construction sites. The threshold for projects required to comply with 327 IAC 15-5 will drop from sites disturbing five (5) acres or more to those that will disturb one (1) acre or more. Each of these projects will be required to submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan meeting the requirements of the rule to the local SWCD or other entity established by IDEM. The projects will also be required to implement appropriate measures on site to minimize pollutants from the construction project.

SWCDs will continue to be involved in implementation of 327 IAC 15-5 in those areas outside of designated MS4s. However, within designated MS4 areas SWCDs are not automatically involved in the development and implementation of the local storm water management plans. SWCDs participation will be

determined locally through agreements with the MS4s.

SWCDs throughout Indiana have been working with local MS4s to provide resource information and technical expertise as the MS4s begin to develop their local storm water management programs. Individually, SWCDs have identified specific NPDES program areas for which they have technical expertise and staff trained in erosion and sediment control. In addition, SWCDs have been active in education and have existing programs that are aligned with the requirements of NPDES Phase II. These programs are centered on soil and water quality and include a variety of activities for both adults and youth.



(St. Joseph Co. SWCD sponsoring an informational meeting on the implementation of Phase II of the NPDES program.)

SWCDs have a long history of protecting our natural resources. It is only appropriate that SWCDs take an active role in local storm water issues.

For more information on the NPDES program or other water quality issues, contact the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District at 574-291-2300, ext. 3

(Information provided by: DNR Division of Soil Conservation - Stormwater & Sediment Control Program)



**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:

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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

Farm Service Agency

Staff:

Mike Hoskins, CED
Helene Cannoot
Cindy Philhower
Denise Trimboli
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