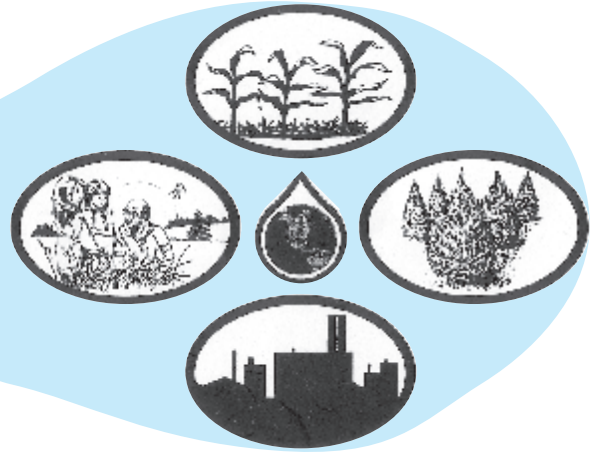




St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Oct./Nov./Dec. 2011
Volume 13, Issue 4

5605 U.S. 31 South, Ste. 4 South Bend, IN
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St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District's 52nd ANNUAL MEETING - 1959-2011

You are cordially invited to join us at the **St. Hedwig Parish** (331 S. Scott St., South Bend, Indiana) for a **Polish Family-Style Dinner on Friday, January 27, 2012 @ 6:30 PM.** Doors will open at 6:00 PM. Reservations will be accepted until Thurs., January 19th. Ticket prices for dinner still to be determined.

Guest Speaker: **Brett Eastburn**

Brett Eastburn was born with a condition he calls Quadmembral Limbs Deficiency, which means he has no arms and no legs. While in school, Brett played baseball, football, and basketball. He also became an accomplished swimmer. In junior high, he became a member of the wrestling team. In high school, he wrestled on the varsity team.

In 1988, Brett took 4th place in the nation for wrestling in the Amateur Athletic Union. Afterwards, he was made one of high school varsity team captains. After graduating, he earned a green belt in the martial arts. Brett is also a nationally recognized artist.

Brett began speaking professionally in 1990. He has done over 3,000 presentations worldwide to over 1 million people. Brett and his wife, Chrisa, have owned and operated their own company, called No Boundaries Inc., since the year 2000.

Brett is also a standup comedian and has appeared on the Bob and Tom show

He is currently working full-time as a motivational and inspirational speaker. He is also a substitute teacher in his hometown area.

Brett has no arms and no legs, but more importantly, he has **No Handicaps!!**



Chrisa and Brett Eastburn
Image Source:
bretteastburn.com

CONSERVATION TREE PRE-SALES

Order Forms for our **26th Annual, 2011-2012 Tree Sale** would usually mailed out during the 1st week of October.

However, this year, the St. Joseph County SWCD will be mailing them out around the 1st week of December.

You can obtain an order form **early** by download at www.stjosephswcd.org or call us @ **574.291.7444 x3.**

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Animal Spotlight: The Praying Mantis

Every fall I enjoy seeing the **Praying Mantis** or **Mantid** flying around or stalking in the bushes and although they may look similar, we actually have 20 native species of Mantis in the United States and another three exotic species of Mantis. If you refer to the map below, you will see that Mantis species are found around the world, with a total of 2,200 species,

the largest being 18" in length (it is found in the rainforest). Praying Mantids are insects, and as such they have 3 main body parts, six legs, an exoskeleton and compound

eyes. Mantids also have 3 simple eyes located by their antennas. Here in Indiana, our Mantids get about 6" long and are remarkable predators. They are able to move their head 180° (some species in the world actually move their head 300°) and have chewing mouths, but are probably best known for their front two legs that move so quickly it is only a blur as they catch other insects, small amphibians and, yes, even hummingbirds. Praying Mantids do have predators of their own - birds, bats, spiders and even fish have been known to make a meal out of Mantises.

Probably one of the most interesting behaviors of the Praying Mantis is that the female will eat the male during mating. While this is most often observed in captive species, it does happen in the wild. But if the male is smart, doesn't walk in front of the female, or the female is well fed, he has nothing to worry about and, yes, he will continue to mate even while being eaten. The eggs look like a brownish

Styrofoam case about an inch long and it will be attached to trees, walls, rocks and plants. I have even seen one attached to a discarded potato chip bag. If you find an egg case, leave it in the wild. Removing it will destroy the case and since the adults do not overwinter around here, we need the little nymphs out in our forest and fields.

Note - if you bring an egg case inside now, it will hatch around the 1st of January, essentially killing all of the young.



Image Source: kids.nationalgeographic.com

grasshoppers and other insects, but make sure you let it go after a couple of days -it has a job to do, mating. If you'd like to see more Praying Mantis around your yard, provide weedy areas that will attract its prey and, yes, you can actually buy Mantids and egg cases.

So, enjoy one of the unique creatures of our neighborhood this fall. To learn more about Mantids, visit mantisfacts.com.



Male Carolina Mantid - a native species to Indiana
Image Source: indyparks.blogspot.com

Thank you to The Farmer's Exchange & Exchange Publishing Corp.!



Image Source: farmers-exchange.net

Have you ever stopped to think about where the various flyers, newsletters, and other publications

you read were commercially designed and/or printed?

For many, many years now, we at the St. Joseph County SWCD have been very fortunate to have the excellent and professional ongoing support of the weekly agriculture newspaper serving northern Indiana and southern Michigan, known as "The Farmer's Exchange", as well as the paper's commercial printing services that operate under the name "Exchange Publishing Corp." Currently operating as a 4th-generation family business, The Farmer's Exchange was founded and the first issue was published in 1926.

We loyally utilize the commercial printing services for our newsletters, annual reports, and tree sale flyers. By offering the service of distributing our publications as an insert to The Farmer's Exchange, we are able to reach a much wider audience than we could on our own. We could not be happier with the customer service provided by the Yeater family and the Exchange's staff, and we highly recommend their services for products such as brochures, envelopes, letterhead, catalogs, business cards, and business forms. For a quote, contact Steve Yeater at The Farmer's Exchange/Exchange Publishing in New Paris at 574-831-2138, and be sure to visit www.farmers-exchange.net.



3 FREE Upcoming Educational Events

October 6, 2011

THREE-COUNTY FORESTRY FIELD DAY Featuring Tree Plantings, Pollinator/Bee Habitats, Invasive Species, and More!

The 2011 Tri-County Forestry Field Day will be held on Thurs., October 6th, from 5:00-7:30pm, at the Bryan Wipperman Farm located at Rose & Darden Roads, just west of South Bend. This event is cooperatively sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Elkhart, Kosciusko, and St Joseph counties. Registration will begin at 5:00pm, and the Field Day will commence at 5:30pm with a presentation on an innovative tree planting consisting of a few acres. Each Soil & Water Conservation District will then highlight their local spring tree seedling sale and other pertinent information. From that point, attendees will be able to choose presentations from two distinct woodland-themed tracks: one for wildlife enthusiasts and one for timber producers. For those who are generally interested in their local woods, either tract should prove to be an educational experience.

Mr. Wipperman has successfully established several tree plantings on his farm, which include some research plots with native chestnut trees. Mr. Wipperman is also actively combating several exotic-invasive species in his timber stands, with great success. Several experts that have helped Mr. Wipperman in his forestry efforts will be on hand as guest speakers during the field day. Some of these speakers include Bruce Wakeland, Consulting Forester, and Linda Byer, Wildlife Biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Dave Laney of the Indiana Beekeepers Association will also be on hand to discuss the potential for pollinator habitat in our forests, and specifically in a semi-naturally occurring savannah on Mr. Wipperman's property.

RSVPs are not required, but would assist us with site preparation. To RSVP, or for additional information about this field day, contact your local SWCD: Elkhart County SWCD office at 574-533-3630, ext. 3; Kosciusko County SWCD office at 574-267-7445, ext. 3; or St. Joseph County SWCD at 574-291-2300, ext. 3. If you have a disability that requires assistance for your participation in this event, please let us know at least 3 days prior to the event.

October 13, 2011

COMPOST 101 SEMINAR

The St. Joseph County Solid Waste Management District and YOUR St. Joseph County SWCD will again be sponsoring a FREE COMPOST 101 SEMINAR on Thurs., October 13th at the downtown South Bend branch of the St. Joe County Public Library in the Colfax Auditorium. The Seminar begins at 6:30 pm and ends at 7:30 pm, so plan to show up around 6:00-6:15 in order to get signed in and receive your handouts. Reservations are appreciated by calling our office at 574-291-7444 ext. 3

**Don't
Forget to
Recycle Re-
use Reduce
And
Rethink**



November 3, 2011

PASTURE WALK

Do you graze, or have you thought about grazing, dairy, beef, sheep or other livestock? Have you had trouble in the past with drought, flooding, poor stand development, or too much growth? Boy have we got the opportunity for you. We have a chance for you to come and listen to a group of experts as they try to solve all of these problems and more. Who are these experts you ask? Why they are your peers and fellow grazers of course!

The St. Joseph County SWCD, in conjunction with the LaGrange County SWCD, is proud to bring the Pasture Walk Series to St. Joseph County, Indiana. D&R Schroeder Farms, Inc in southeastern St. Joseph County/Lakeville, IN will be hosting what is sure to be a day full of lively discussion, on Thurs., November 3 beginning at 1:00 pm. The Schroeders have faced many challenges during their grazing careers including water line placement, stand establishment, and efforts to increase stand longevity throughout the year. Come and join in the discussion on these topics and many more.

For more information and to RSVP for this event, please contact the St. Joseph County SWCD at 574-291-7444 x 3.



Coal-Tar Sealants, Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons, and Your Health

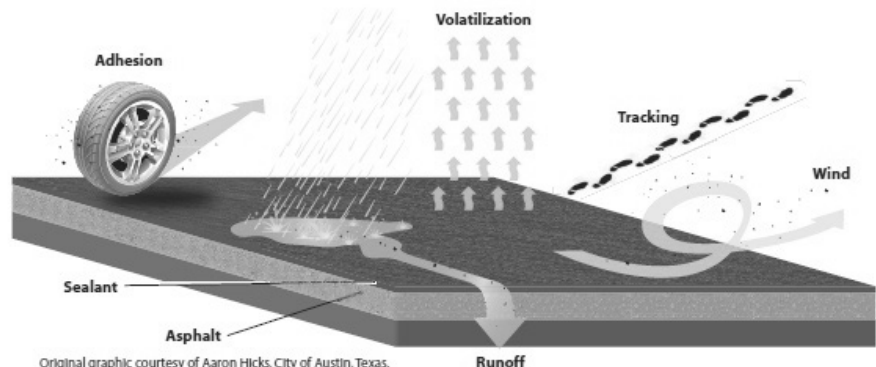
Carbon Monoxide, Methane, and DDT are pretty well-known names of chemicals that are not necessarily the best to have in or around our homes. What about **Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons** or **PAH's**? Have you heard of these? Chances are that many people have interacted with these harmful chemicals and not even known it ... but you should! Recent studies have shown these chemicals as a significant carcinogen and mutagenic in humans and wildlife. These poisons to many ecosystems, (especially aquatics) are being indiscriminately utilized in urban settings.

You are probably asking yourself just what are PAH's? One definition on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS's) website explains them like this:

"PAHs are a group of organic contaminants that form from the incomplete combustion of hydrocarbons, such as coal and gasoline. PAHs are an environmental concern because they are toxic to aquatic life and because several are suspected human carcinogens."

- Van Metre and others, 1996

Just where are these organic contaminants found? Well one of the biggest sources right now may be coming from your driveway. If you



Original graphic courtesy of Aaron Hicks, City of Austin, Texas.
Image Source: USGS.gov

have sealed you driveway within the past couple of years, you probably used a Coal-Tar based sealant. These sealants are made from a bi-product of steel refinement called Coal-Tar, and according to a 1980 study by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, Coal-Tar contains 50% or more PAHs by weight and is known to cause cancer in humans. These sealants are designed to protect your asphalt from different elements including the abrasions of your vehicles' tires and kids that play on the driveway. The problem comes though when these sealants begin to break down into dust particles from the abrasions.

As the elements degrade the sealants, storm water flushes the sealant dust that contains the PAH's chemicals into storm drains, nearby waterways, or can possibly filter into the ground water. This dust can also be blown into the atmosphere or tracked into our vehicles and homes on our shoes. Once these chemicals are in our homes and our

ecosystems, they can be inhaled or ingested and can potentially cause serious problems due to their carcinogenic and mutagenic natures.

The issue of PAH's is serious enough that dozens of local towns, cities and county governments across the country have banned or restricted the use of the Coal-Tar Sealants (CTS). Austin, Texas was the first city to ban CTS, with Washington D.C. following. Last year, the Washington State legislation voted to ban the use of the CTS's. Even Home Depot and Lowe's Home Improvement stores have pulled CTS products from their shelves.

If you would like to become more educated on the topic of PAH's and how they are affecting you, visit coaltarfreeamerica.blogspot.com and truthaboutcoaltar.com. These websites have tons of useful information, including links to news articles, scientific studies, home testing kits, sealant removal facts and much more relating to PAH's.



Sealcoat is the black, viscous liquid sprayed or painted on the asphalt pavement of many parking lots, driveways, and playgrounds.

Image Source: USGS.gov



Myth vs. Fact: Five Things You Should Know About the NRCS

It seems like there are a lot of myths out there about what the **Natural Resources Conservation Service** requires when someone signs up for a Farm Bill Program or asks for technical assistance. So in order to set the record straight, we've decided to play "myth buster" with five of the most frequent ones we've been hearing.

Myth: All Farm Bill Programs require an easement.

Fact: Only a few of the Farm Bill programs require an easement. These are the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). The easement is clearly stated within the contract. All other Farm Bill programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), have no easements included in the contract. They are strictly cost-share programs.

Myth: Signing a contract with NRCS allows for public and government agency access to the area under contract.

Fact: All contracts, including those with easements, do not allow for the general public to access to your property. The only government agency allowed to access the property is the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service while carrying out conservation practices during the course of the contract. All other government agencies will only have access under the invitation of NRCS to collaborate on contract practices or by invitation of the property owner.

Myth: Farm Bill Programs are only available to farmers.

Fact: Many practices present in the Farm Bill Programs are geared toward implementing conservation on working crop land. However, there are also practices, such as forest stand improvement in forested areas, and wildlife habitat building practices, such as warm season grass planting, that can be carried out on agricultural land and forests by non-farmers.

Myth: In order to receive technical assistance from NRCS, you must be enrolled in a Farm Bill Program.

Fact: NRCS offers technical assistance to anyone who contacts our office, whether you are interested in enrolling in a program or not. The only difference in receiving technical assistance without a Farm Bill Program contract is that there will be no cost-sharing on the suggested practices.

Myth: If there is a wetland on your property, you cannot do anything that disturbs it.

Fact: If the owner of the land where the wetland is present is enrolled in any USDA Programs (through FSA or NRCS) they must follow the wetland rules and regulations set forth by the agency. Some activities, such as timber harvest, are allowed on these wetland sites. Being a part of the USDA programs is a **voluntary decision** of the landowner or producer, and if they choose not to participate, they are not bound by the agency wetland regulations. The best thing to do if you think there is a wetland on your property that is going to be impacted by your actions is to contact the NRCS office and speak to them about your options.

As always, please feel free to contact your local USDA Service Center for more information.

In St. Joseph County, the number to call is 574-291-7444, ext. 3.



Tillage Transect Assesses Agriculture Trends

Every other year, the Indiana Conservation Partnership, including the local NRCS and SWCD, partner to look at agriculture trends in the state of Indiana through performing the “Indiana Tillage Transect.”

“The Tillage Transect is a mechanism for tracking trends in conservation and cropland trends. The information collected can help us determine whether important soil quality building conservation activities, such as No-till, are being more heavily adopted or not. We can also take the collected data and estimate the average annual soil loss from Indiana’s agricultural lands. All of this information can help us to determine how to focus conservation efforts and resources in the future.”

~ Jerod Chew, Director of Conservation/Environmental Stewardship with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (from Mr. Chew’s blog, “Chew on Dirt” at chewondirt.blogspot.com)

The tillage transect is a predetermined route through each county on which certain fields are evaluated. The same fields are observed on each year’s run of the transect, and the current crop, tillage, and amount of residue left from the previous crop are recorded for each field. The data for St. Joseph County gives our local office a good idea of the agricultural trends for the area. The transect began in 1990, and the years of data can show changes in agricultural practices over time. It also gives us an opportunity to physically visualize the entire county and assess any resource concerns that may be present, such as soil erosion or how heavy spring rains affected farming practices. This knowledge and data give an idea of which issues our efforts should be focused on locally.

This year in St. Joseph County, the tillage transect showed that 40% of corn and 74% of beans were under conservation tillage systems, meaning that the fields were no-tilled, mulch tilled, or strip tilled. These practices leave more residue on the surface of the soil, protecting it from erosion and helping water to infiltrate. This means that approximately 2.2 tons/acre/year of soil was saved by these tillage practices as opposed to conventionally tilling all of the crops. Conservation plantings, such as hay, pastures, and ground in the Conservation Reserve Program, saved an estimated 5.9 tons/acre/year of soil this year. These plantings work in the same way that crop residue does by protecting the soil surface from erosive forces, such as wind and water. In total, it is estimated that due to conservation practices observed on the transect, 272,000 tons of soil were saved throughout St. Joseph County in the 2011 cropping season. Soil isn’t the only thing being saved by conservation practices. Switching to conservation tillage or permanent cover in a field can be more energy efficient as well. Due to this year’s conservation practices, it is estimated that 120,500 gallons of diesel fuel were saved. Through conservation practices, such as no-till and hay

Estimated Acres of ST JOSEPH County Corn and Soybeans with indicated Tillage system for each Present crop (based on 2009 NASS data)

Present crop	No Till + Strip + Ridge acres	Mulch Till acres	Reduced Till acres	Conventional Tillage acres	Cover Crops acres	Rain / Flood Damaged acres
Corn	13,100	16,100	16,800	27,000	700	5,800
Soybeans	20,900	16,800	9,200	4,100	0	4,400
TOTALS	34,000	32,900	26,000	31,100	700	10,200



FIELD NOTES

in crop rotations, St. Joseph County farmers are helping the area to increase soil and water quality, as well as, become more fuel efficient.

To give you a better idea of the types of data that are recorded during the tillage transect, we've included a few charts that were generated from this year's data. To see the data for St. Joseph County in its entirety, give our office a call at 574-291-7444, ext. 3.

For more information on the Indiana Tillage Transect program, visit the blog of Jerod Chew (Director of Conservation/Environmental Stewardship with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture), which is called "Chew on Dirt" at chewondirt.blogspot.com and look for his June 27, 2011 entry entitled, "No-till, Mulch-till, or Conventional-till Corn?." For past year's Tillage Transect results, visit the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Conservation Tillage Program webpage at www.in.gov/isda/2354.htm.

ST JOSEPH County's Tillage on Cropland - Impacts on Sheet/Rill EROSION in 2011:

If each Corn or Soybean site on the 2011 tillage transect in ST JOSEPH County were:

CONVENTIONALLY TILLED = an estimated **496,000** tons of soil would be lost from sheet/rill

As a result of the actual tillage practices on ST JOSEPH County's Corn and Soybean acres,
an estimated: **272,200** tons of soil in 2011 are **SAVED!**

ST JOSEPH County's Tillage on Cropland - Impacts on DIESEL FUEL USED in 2011:

If each Corn or Soybean site on the 2011 tillage transect in ST JOSEPH County were:

CONVENTIONALLY TILLED = an estimated **617,500** gallons of diesel fuel would be used

As a result of the actual tillage practices on ST JOSEPH County's Corn and Soybean acres,
an estimated: **120,500** gallons of diesel fuel in 2011 are **SAVED!**

Have You Heard? Our Office is Moving (We Think)!

It's not 100% official, but the **USDA Service Center in St. Joseph County, Indiana**, which includes the offices of the **St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD)**, the **USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**, and the **USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)** will likely be moving to a new office in South Bend before the publication of our January/February/March 2012 edition of the Conservation Kaleidoscope newsletter.

We expect to keep the same phone numbers that we've had for years (**SWCD/NRCS** can be reached at **574-291-7444 ext. 3** and **FSA** can be reached at **574-291-7444 ext. 2**). We'll also post updates on the SWCD website once we receive the official "word" (www.stjosephswcd.org).

Our best advice for those of you who might want to stop by our offices without an appointment is to give us a quick call beforehand to ensure that you come to the right office location. THANKS!





**ST JOSEPH COUNTY SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
5605 US HIGHWAY 31 SOUTH STE 4
SOUTH BEND IN 46614-5296**

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Jim LaFree, Vice-Chair
John Kulwicki, Member
Carole Riewe, Member
Paul Williams, III, Member

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Melvin Kulwicki
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Dale Stoner
Dave Vandewalle
Dru Wrasse

Honorary Members:

Bernard Byrd
Al Gostola
Jerry Knepp
Keith Lineback
William Millar



OCTOBER

6 - Three-County Forestry Field Day, 5:30PM, South Bend (see pg 3)
10 - COLUMBUS DAY (Office Closed)
13 - Compost 101 Seminar, 6:30PM, South Bend (see pg 3)
17 - **SWCD Monthly Board Meeting**, 7:00PM, South Bend (Call ahead for exact location)

NOVEMBER

3 - Pasture Walk, 1:00PM, Lakeville (see pg 3)
11 - VETERAN'S DAY (Office Closed)
21 - **SWCD Monthly Board Meeting**, 7:00PM, South Bend (Call ahead for exact location)
24-25 - THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY (Office Closed)

DECEMBER

19 - **SWCD Monthly Board Meeting**, 7:00PM, South Bend (Call ahead for exact location)
23 - Friday before CHRISTMAS (Office Closed)
26 - Monday after CHRISTMAS (Office Closed)

Office Staff:

Debbie Knepp, NRCS
Rick Glassman, SWCD
Andrew Fox, SWCD
Amanda Kautz, NRCS
Lisa Wynn, SWCD

Farm Service Agency Staff:

Allen Ellison, District Director

OUR 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.