



## St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership 2016 Annual Report



On January 29, 2016 we were joined by 150 community members at the Hedwig Memorial Center in South Bend for the 56th Annual Meeting. Fascinating Rhythm entertained us with a mix of jazz, big band and swing music.

We were honored to have Lauren Varga Regional Director to US Senator Joe Donnelly, Ben Falkowski District Director to US Representative Jackie Walorski, IN State Representative David Niezgodski and wife Sheila, IN State Senator Jim Arnold and wife Lauren, and Commissioners Dave Thomas and Deborah Flemming as honored guests.

Our annual supervisor election was held with candidate Mike Burkholder being re-elected to the board for a second 3 year term.

We'd like to thank Dave Craft (15 years), Jim LaFree (25 years), Richard Schmidt (30 years), and Chuck Lehman (35 years) for their dedication and service to our board!

Conservation Awards were given to our 2015 River Friendly Farmers of the Year, Ed Leininger and Tom Hesters; our Friend of Conservation was given to Unity Gardens; and our Educator of the Year was shared by Tracy Slattery & Terri Hebert.

## **SAVE THE DATE**

### **57th Annual Meeting**

Join us in celebrating 57 years of serving St. Joseph County

February 10, 2017

Doors open at 5:45 PM

St. Hedwig Parish

331 S Scott St., South Bend, IN 46601

**Please RSVP by Friday, February 3, 2017**

Tickets for the Family-Style Polish Dinner are available for \$15.00 each from any St. Joseph County SWCD board member or call the office at

574-936-2024 ext. 4. You can also visit our website to register: [www.stjosephswcd.org](http://www.stjosephswcd.org)

The evening will feature:

**John Glenn High School's Show Choir**

The evening will also include our very popular Silent Auction, board supervisor election and awards ceremony.



# 2016 Conservation Practices



## Crop Production

2,251 Acres of Cover Crops  
754 Acres of No-Till  
94 Acres of Reduced Tillage  
171 Acres of Nutrient Management  
335 Acres of Integrated Pest Management  
426 Acres of Irrigation Water Management  
13 Acres of Filter Strips  
1 Grassed Waterway



## Wetland Restoration

19 Acres of Wetland Restoration  
1 Water Control Structure  
68 Feet of Dikes



## Wildlife Habitat

123 Acres of Warm Season Grasses/  
Pollinator & Monarch  
193 Acres of Early Successional Habitat  
Management  
9 Acres of Restoration of Rare and  
Declining Habitat  
14 Acres of Upland Wildlife Management  
51,154 Feet of Firebreaks



## Forestry

121 Acres of Tree/Shrub Establishment  
5,953 Feet of Windbreaks  
7 Acres of Invasive Species Control  
5 Acres of Forest Stand Improvements  
10 Acres of Herbaceous Weed Control



## Prescribed Grazing

10 Acres of Forage Planting  
7 Acres of Rotational Grazing  
2 Heavy Use Protection Areas  
430 Feet of Animal Trails and Walkways  
341 Feet of Fence



## Other

2 Agrichemical Facilities  
1 Roof/Cover  
2 Seasonal High Tunnels  
2 Roof Runoff Structures

**2,822 Acres Planned**

**4,600 Acres Applied**





## Members of the MSP include:

City of South Bend  
City of Mishawaka  
Town of the Roseland  
Town of Osceola

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District  
St. Joseph County  
Ivy Tech Community College  
Bethel College  
St. Joseph River Basin Commission/MACOG

The Michiana Stormwater Partnership (MSP) is a cooperative effort of local governments to improve the quality of stormwater runoff in our area while fulfilling the requirements of our communities' Rule 13 permits as issued by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

What can YOU do to help our rivers and streams? Visit [www.clearchoicescleanwater.org](http://www.clearchoicescleanwater.org) to learn about choices we make everyday and the impact they have on our streams, rivers, lakes and oceans. Water quality friendly lawn care includes practices such as; using phosphorus-free fertilizer, landscaping with native plants, managing yard and pet wastes and properly maintaining septic systems.

## 2016 Urban Conservation Accomplishments and Community Involvement

Stormwater Management, Erosion Control Planning, and Public Education are critical elements in protecting and improving water quality in St. Joseph County and our downstream neighbors. An agreement with St. Joseph County allows us to be involved with the Michiana Stormwater Partnership which help us contribute and bring about results in all three of these areas.



As part of the Clean Water Indiana Grant that the SWCD was awarded, we focused much of our urban outreach in 2016 on raingardens. Raingardens help improve water quality by allowing stormwater to infiltrate the soil slowly rather than running off and carrying pollutants directly into our waterways. They can also benefit the environment further by providing essential habitat for our hardworking pollinators! The SWCD participated in the Unity Garden's "Growing Summit" and Ginger Valley's Spring Show, educating all who were interested on the basics of raingardens. This helped prepare us for year two of this three year grant which will include a hands-on workshop and at least one demo garden in 2017!

The SWCD along with the Solid Waste Management District of St. Joseph County held two composting seminars as well. This helped educate St. Joseph County residents on the basics of composting and why it is important for all of us to compost!

# CLEAR CHOICES CLEAN WATER

make a difference

## Take the PLEDGE now!

[www.ClearChoicesCleanWater.org](http://www.ClearChoicesCleanWater.org)

### Go Native

Get Back To Your Roots

### Plant Native Plants

### Lawns

Happy Lawns Healthy Water

### Use Less Fertilizer & Buy Phosphorous Free

### Pet Waste

It All Piles Up

### Pick Up Pet Poop!

### Septics

What Goes Down Comes Back Around

### Maintain Your Septic System!

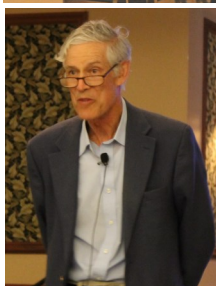


## Farming for the Future

### A Tri-County Producers Workshop

On March 22, 2016 the St Joseph County SWCD along with the Marshall & Starke County SWCD's hosted a producers workshop. The discussion topics involved combining productivity, profitability and conservation. Our keynote opening speaker was Dan Towery who spoke on "Understanding the Journey for Soil Health," and our keynote closing speaker was Otto Doering who spoke on "Conservation & Economics – No Simple Answers." The day also included 13 breakout sessions covering basic cover crops, bees & pollinators, no-till, nutrient management, etc.

If you missed this workshop but you are interested in joining us on February 28, 2017 from 10am-2pm at Christos Banquet Center in Plymouth, see our website or call our office for more details.



## Women's Learning Circle

Elkhart, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties partnered to hold a Women's Learning Circle on October 25, 2016. Women-only learning circles bring women landowners together with conservation professionals – also women – to have an informal discussion about their hopes and dreams for their land and to share ideas with each other.

According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture, the number of women farmers in the United States was 969,672. In Indiana, there are 58,695 farms and of those, 5,745 or 10.22% had women as principal operators. Research shows that women landowners who lease their land face greater gender barriers in managing their land for long-term sustainability. They may need assistance in collaborating with their farming tenants to achieve their conservation goals, or they may not know how to approach the resource management agencies (like Soil and Water Conservation Districts) for help.

This learning circle was attended by 12 women land owners/operators. They left with more knowledge about their land and made many more connections to help them in the future. They, along with the staff, look forward to future Women's Learning Circle Workshops.



## Youth Education & Outreach



St. Joseph County Ag Days

56 Schools participated in 466 in school programs.



2016 Poster Contest  
Indiana 6th Grade Winner

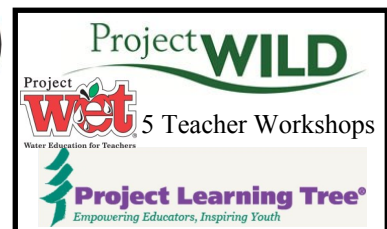


St. Joseph County Science Alive

### Other 2016 Youth Education Highlights

- \* 4 - St. Mary's College & IUSB River Watch Programs
- \* Family Science Night Success Academy
- \* Camp Topenebee Scout Camp
- \* ED3; IUSB & South Bend Schools teacher Water Quality Training

St. Joseph  
River  
Expedition





## Legislator Conservation Tour

On Thursday June 9, 2016 the St. Joseph County SWCD & NRCS hosted a Legislator Conservation Tour for our local, state and federal legislators. During the tour we were able to share many examples of the conservation practices on the ground in St. Joseph County such as; no-till, cover crops, filter strips, irrigation & nutrient management, wetlands & prairie plantings, and prescribed grazing, just to name a few.

**Front Row left to right:** Brian Spaulding, Esq. - District Director/ General Counsel Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, Debbie Knepp NRCS, Kimberly Neumann NRCS Area Conservationist, Sarah Longenecker SWCD, Brandon Herget - Deputy State Director Office of U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly, Charlotte Wolfe

**Second Row left to right:** Indiana State Representative Tim Wesco, Rick Glassman SWCD, John Doods SWCD, Rebecca Holwerda from the Office of U.S. Senator Dan Coats, Mike Burkholder SWCD, Robert Wolfe

Photo taken by Sandra Hoffarth - St. Joseph County SWCD



## Conservation Cropping Systems to Improve Soil Health

1,117.04 Acres of Cover Crops paid for by the Clean Water Indiana Grant in 2016.

245.1 Acres in  
St. Joseph  
County

726.38 Acres  
in Marshall  
County

145.56 Acres  
in Starke  
County

Funds are still available for

- Cover Crops
- No-Till
- Filter Strips
- Nutrient Management

Contact our office for more  
information and an application.



## Other SWCD Paid Cost Share

The SWCD was able to provide cost share to help fund a couple of conservation projects outside of our Clean Water Indiana Grants as well. Approximately 125' of livestock pipeline and over 2 acres of pollinator habitat were installed thanks to funds from the SWCD which includes our generous donors and affiliate members.

While 125' doesn't seem like a lot, this length was just the beginning run of pipeline to be installed to facilitate a rotational grazing plan to keep the soil, forage, and cattle healthy.



We hope that this native forb (wildflower) planting will not only benefit our hardworking pollinators but will encourage others to plant native forbs as well! Pesticide use and lack of habitat have led to a decline in pollinator population. Getting Monarch and pollinator habitat established is a priority practice that benefits us all!







# Thank you!

## To our 2016 Donors

### Gold Donors

Ava Preacher & Coleen Hoover  
Andy Beutter - Farm Bureau Insurance  
Keith & Nancy Lineback

### Silver Donor

The Farmers Exchange

### Bronze Donors

Lehman & Lehman, Inc.  
Todd Matthys  
Matthys Farm Market  
McCormick Electrical Services  
Scott Laidig - Pioneer Hi-Bred  
Robin & Dema Vater  
Chez Chevaux Farm  
Bellman Oil  
North Central Coop

### Affiliate Donors

Jeff Peterson - Pioneer Hi Bred  
Peter Holmgren  
Gunter Kison  
Rick Stoner  
Dale & Dorothy Stoner  
Dave & Pam Craft  
Donald Sporleder  
Randy & Cindi Stoner  
Ron & Jan Ivkovich  
Shoemaker Welding  
Jim & Marianne LaFree

Bob's Country Store  
Kuharic Enterprises  
Roger & Evelyn Teske  
Kristin & Patrick Clauss  
Zahl's Elevator  
Prairie Winds Nature Farm  
Fredrick Ulbricht  
St Joseph Co Farm Bureau Inc.  
Mike & Lois Burkholder  
Bill Lappin  
Robert & Charlene Plasschaert

## Get Involved

### Are you interested in enhancing and promoting conservation in your county?

Soil and Water Conservation Districts are governed by boards made up of local "supervisors" who work to promote the wise use, development, and conservation of our state's soil, water, and related resources in ways that are relevant to our unique regions.

Past state board member Mike Starkey says:

"The benefits of being a supervisor, is a tremendous opportunity to meet others that have a passion for conservation but also to educate others that are not aware of how they can be conservationists. The general public has no idea that there are others like us that serve to conserve the soil and water that we all use. When they become aware of that, we as supervisors are respected for not only who we are but what we do in serving in our community and state."

**Associate Supervisor** - This is where most people begin their journey with the SWCD. New Associate Supervisors are approved by the Board, which is comprised of both Supervisors and Associate Supervisors. Potential Associates are encouraged to attend a few board meetings prior to board approval.

**Supervisor** - This is the official voting voice of the SWCD. Three supervisors are elected (for a three-year term) at an annual meeting of land occupiers. Two are appointed (also for three-year terms) by the State Soil Conservation Board based upon recommendations of the current supervisors in the district. Elected Supervisors must own 10 acres of land in the county.

### How much time is involved?

The amount of time depends on how much or how little you have available to offer. Listed below are some examples of the ways you can volunteer with us.

**Monthly Meetings** - The SWCD meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Please see our website for dates, times and location. Meetings generally last 1.5 hours. The public is always welcome to attend our monthly meetings, so come by any time!

**Committee Meetings** - The St. Joseph County SWCD believes in the committee process. The committees bring their recommendations to the board for approval and generally meet before the monthly meeting lasting about 30 minutes.

**Supervisors** - Generally meet an extra 4 times per year.

**Events** - Field Days & workshops, science alive, and other events can add 10 to 20 extra hours per year.

Contact us if you are interested in joining the St. Joseph County SWCD.





## SWCD/NRCS Partnership Staff



Rick Glassman, SWCD  
Environmental Education  
Coordinator



Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD  
Administrative Assistant



Sarah Longenecker, SWCD  
County Conservationist



Debbie Knepp, USDA-  
NRCS District  
Conservationist

## SWCD Board of Supervisors



John Dooks  
Chairman  
35 Years of Service &  
Dedication



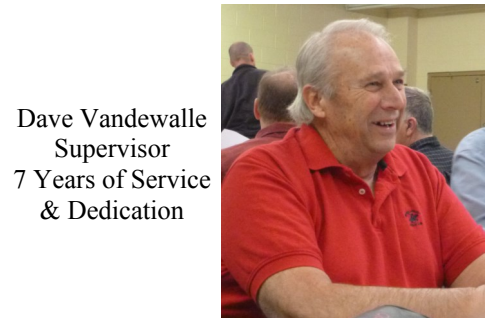
Jeremy Cooper  
Vice - Chairman  
6 Years of Service &  
Dedication



Mike Burkholder  
Supervisor  
4 Years of  
Service &  
Dedication



Stacey Silvers  
Supervisor  
8 Years of  
Service &  
Dedication



Dave Vandewalle  
Supervisor  
7 Years of Service  
& Dedication

### 2016 ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS

Dave Craft \*16 years\*  
Jan Ivkovich \*23 years\*  
Chuck Lehman \*36 years\*  
Joe Long \*30 years\*  
Randy Matthys \*29 years\*  
Jim LaFree \*26 years\*  
Carole Riewe \*12 years\*  
Richard Schmidt \*31 years\*  
Arlene Schuchman \*6 years\*  
Dale Stoner \*47 years\*  
Dru Wrasse \*9 years\*

### HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS

Bernie Byrd  
Jerry Knepp  
Keith Lineback  
William Millar

### PURDUE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE (USDA)

Extension Educator - Agriculture & Natural  
Resources : Phil Sutton  
Extension Educator - 4-H Youth  
Development : Matthew Bellina  
Secretary: Rebecca Best & Julynne Freeland  
Nutrition Education Program Assistants:  
Kathleen Doyle, Myriam Nicodemus,  
Michele Poitras, & Lindsey Walejewski  
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education  
Program Advisor - Jennifer Noie & Luz  
Rivera  
Nutrition Education Program Community  
Wellness Coordinator - Margaret Gibney,  
Rebecca Lies  
Extension Educator - Health and Human  
Sciences : Ashley Dixon

### FARM SERVICE AGENCY (USDA)

Gideon Nobbe, County Executive Director  
Abby Ciesielski, Aldona Martin,  
Cindy Slonaker, Tara Wolfe



A big heartfelt thank you to all of our  
Supervisors & Associate Supervisors,  
as well as our partnership staff.  
Without all of you we would not be  
able to accomplish all that we have this  
year and in the years to come!





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

### St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Members' Mission Statements



*To provide guidance and education to the youth and adults of St. Joseph County and to administer programs to preserve, improve, and protect soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources for future generations.*



*Mission: Helping People  
held the Land*

*Vision: Productive Lands  
Healthy Environment*



*To facilitate the protection and  
enhancement of Indiana's  
land and water.*

**Got Questions? For St. Joseph County, Indiana Residents, here are a few numbers we give out regularly:**

- ◆ **Soil Testing:** St. Joseph County Purdue Extension: 574-235-9604
- ◆ **Free Mulch/Compost for South Bend Residents:** Organic Resources: 574-287-6841
- ◆ **Solid Waste Management District, including Recycling & Household Hazardous Waste Disposal:** 574-235-9971
- ◆ **Water Testing:** St. Joseph County Health Department: 574-235-9750
- ◆ **Trees/Forestry:** Indiana DNR District Forester: 219-843-4827
- ◆ **"Nuisance" Wildlife:** Indiana DNR Conservation Officer: 574-457-8092
- ◆ **Other wildlife questions:** Indiana DNR Wildlife Biologist: 765-320-0517
- ◆ **St. Joseph County PLAT BOOK:** Farm Credit Services: 574-291-1277
- ◆ **NOT SURE who to call? We can help figure that out:** St. Joseph County SWCD: 574-936-2024 EXT 4