

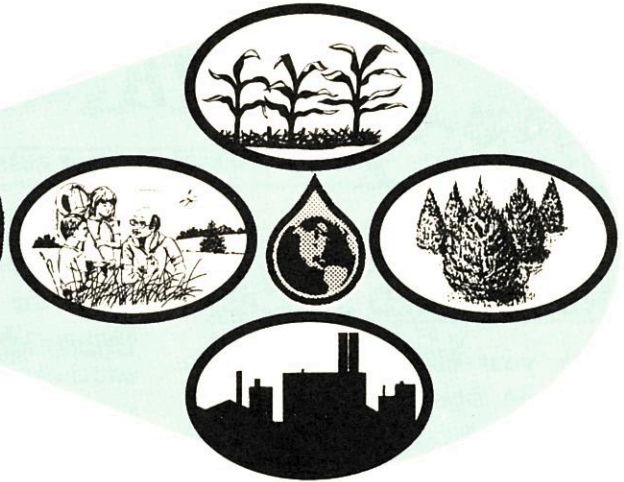


St. Joseph
County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District

CONSERVATION



KALEIDOSCOPE



Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

Jan/Feb/Mar 1998
Volume 2, Issue 1

60455 U.S. 31 South * South Bend, Indiana * Telephone (219) 291-2300
Fax (219) 291-3726

Editor: Chris Forsyth
Beth Gushwa

Calendar of Events!

(All times are EST unless otherwise noted)

January 1

New Years Day
Office Closed

January 20

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room

January 22

Tree Planting Workshop
7:00 pm-Marshall Co REMC Bld.

February 7

Science Alive
St. Joseph County Public Library

February 17

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room

February 27

Deadline SWCD Annual Mtg Reservations (219) 291-2300

Deadline Tree Order Blank

March 7

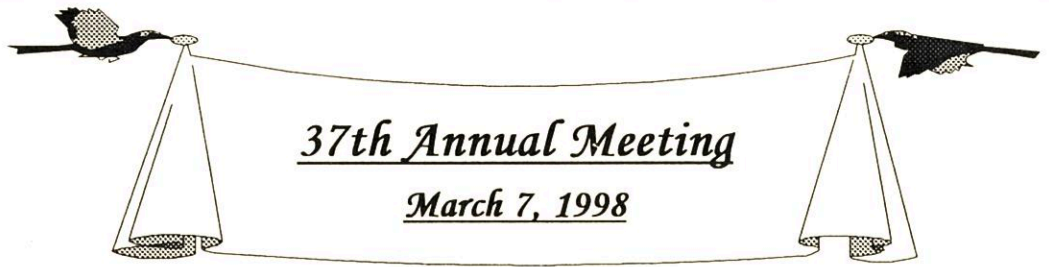
SWCD Annual Meeting
7:00 p.m. - St. Hedwig Center

March 13 - 15

Ag Days
Scottsdale Mall

March 16

SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Farm Bureau Mtg Room



37th Annual Meeting

March 7, 1998

The 38th Annual Meeting of the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District will be held on Saturday, March 7, 1998 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at St. Hedwig Memorial Center, located at 331 South Scott, South Bend (corner of Scott and Western). This year's Annual Meeting speaker will be



Richard Mangus, Indiana State Representative. Representative Mangus was instrumental in forming the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District in 1959. Tickets for the Annual Meeting can be purchased through the SWCD District Office or by contacting one of the local Supervisors. Ticket price is \$7.50, which includes a Polish-Style meal at St. Hedwig. For more information, please call the office at (291) 291-2300 by February 27, 1998.

Become an Affiliate Member

The St. Joseph County SWCD continues to grow and expand into new areas every year. This growth is possible because of the continued financial support of our Affiliate Members. As an SWCD Affiliate Member, you become part of the continued success that we achieve within the community in natural resource management and education. Affiliate Memberships are \$25 and you receive a certificate plus copies of our District Newsletter. Your support will go directly to the future of our county.

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THE NATURAL EDUCATOR

INDIANA'S ENDANGERED SPECIES

Ask your children what is an Endangered Species and they will probably give an answer of an animal with a small and declining population. Not a bad definition. Then ask them to define small and to name an Endangered Species. In my work with school age children, I find that they often define small as less than 100, and usually give me an animal that doesn't live in North America, much less Indiana.

If we stop to think, we realize that small is defined by the number of animals today, compared with what the population used to be. Today approximately 20,000 Sandhill Cranes visit Jasper-Pulaski State Fish & Wildlife area each fall. A large number, perhaps, but not when compared to the million that used to visit our state. Add to the fact that they basically do not breed here anymore, and we still have an Endangered Species.

One thing I should mention is that each State has it's own list of endangered species that contains animals found on the federal list and those animals that may be endangered in just that State. Presently, Indiana has a list of endangered: Birds - 26 species, Mammals - 10 species, Amphibians & Reptiles - 19 species, Fish - 12 species, Crustacean - 1 species and Mussels - 15 species.



River Otter

One of the things the SWCD tries to do, is to educate the local residents about the flora and fauna in our county. While it is important to understand about the plight of animals around the world, education must start in the backyard. Simply, you need to be able to count, to truly understand addition. If you look in our backyard, you will see that we have done a lot to cause endangered species in our state. St. Joseph County was at one time mostly wetlands. We have basically drained the majority of these wetlands. In total Indiana has lost 82% of it's wetlands, the majority being in Northern Indiana. Today's habitat loss is the number one cause of animals becoming endangered. It is a simple fact. Without a home, you do not live.

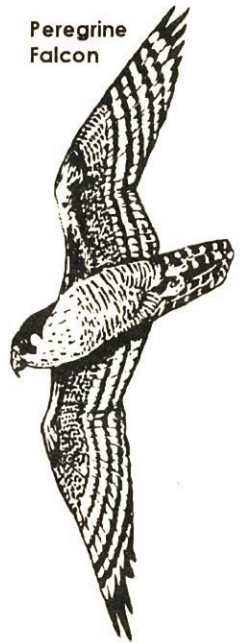
Indiana has accomplished a great deal to help it's endangered species. We have released Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and River Otters. The IDNR is continually studying many of our endangered species in order to better understand them and determine how we can help them, which brings us to the "Activities".

Activity: Take a nature walk with your children. Roll over logs and rocks (please put them back). Make a game out of who can find the most species, both plant and animal. Even if you do not know the names, it will help provide an understanding of what lives outside their windows.

Activity: Build a birdhouse. Place it close to a window, where you can watch.

Activity: After dinner, discuss where your food came from. Try to take it back to the soil. This is a good time to discuss that we are predators and that we eat other animals and living plants. We all know about the web of life but sometimes forget that we are also a point on the web. Use this discussion on your nature walks and try to figure out what each animal you see, eats.

Peregrine Falcon



If you would like more information on Indiana's Endangered Species contact the : Department of Natural Resources, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 402 W. Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN. 46204 (317) 232 - 4080. ☺

Wonders of Wildlife

Soil and Water Stewardship Week
April 26 - May 3, 1998

The Soil and Water Stewardship Week is observed between April 26 - May 3, 1998. Each year the National Association of Conservation Districts selects a theme, prepares materials and distributes them through the nation's 3,000 local conservation district to educators, youth groups and church leaders.

If you are interested in receiving a sample packet of materials, please contact the office at (219) 291-2300. ☺



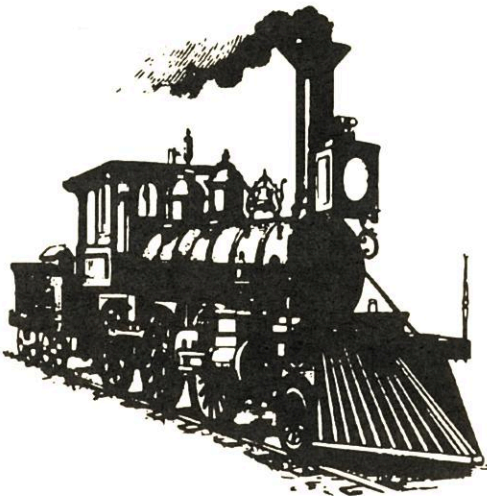
WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

"Cool" Tips From The Tree Express

- Trees reduce soil erosion
- Trees enhance wildlife
- Trees increase property values
- Trees reduce noise pollution
- Trees provide aesthetics
- Trees reduce stress
- Trees provide a "cooling effect"
- Trees reduce air pollution

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District has just the ticket for you if you are interested in getting a running start toward this spring's planting season. The District's annual Tree Sales Program is in full swing offering a variety of thirty different conservation items consisting of evergreens, hardwoods, flowering shrubs, groundcover and wildflower seed. Order blanks are available throughout the community or through the District Office at (219) 291-2300. The program is open to the public without restriction, however, all orders must be prepaid and postmarked no later than February 27, 1998. All orders are on first come, first serve basis, so hurry on down to the depot and secure your seat on the 1998 Tree Express.



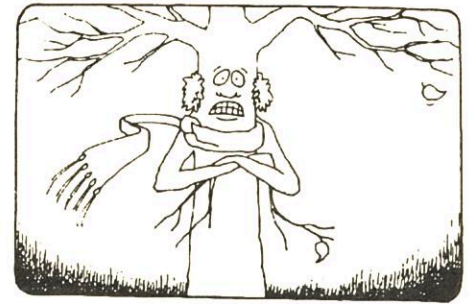
"WHOO KNOWS BEST"

As the days get shorter and the sun dips lower toward the southern sky, resource managers such as foresters and wildlife biologists are often asked, "What do you do in the winter?" It seems a logical question to ask, as the cold weather means more time indoors for many folks. There are also questions like, "How do you identify trees without leaves?", or "How do you count bears when they are hibernating?"

There are always plenty of things to do, no matter what time of the year. There are newsletters to write, reports to complete, and meetings and seminars to attend. However, we do not limit our work in the winter to just the warm confines of the office. We try to keep out of the office, as much as possible, because winter is a great time to do field work.

Winters may be a little cold and snow or ice may make getting around somewhat more difficult, but the advantages winter has makes up for these problems. Both, trees and wildlife, are easier to count during the winter. With the leaves being on the ground, instead of in the trees, one can see the forest (including the wildlife) despite the trees. I have been in woodlands in summer that I could barely see through the leaves. While some hibernating animal species may be hard to locate, many other species are quite active and more easily seen. Even that white stuff from the sky that can make travel harder, makes wildlife tracks show up better.

Best of all, from a forester's standpoint, even a cold subfreezing day is more comfortable than a 90-degree day



with high humidity, nettles and mosquitoes. It is amazing what you can miss in a woods, while scratching one's legs furiously and beating yourself silly trying to keep blood loss from mosquitoes down to survivable levels. Give me a wind chill of 20 below any day. Tree bark, branching patterns and tree form make tree identification, as easy or even easier in the winter. Besides, the leaves are generally on the ground, if you need to make some subtle determinations.

If you have not been on a walk through the woods on a nice winter day for some time, give it a try. You may find a new and educational pass time. While you are on your excursion, you may want to look around to see if you might want to make some changes in your woodland management. Winters are a great time to work in the woods, as well as, walk. If you have questions, invite your forester or biologist to come along on your exciting journey.

THE "OWL" IS GONE ON A WINTER'S PROWL SEE YOU IN THE SPRING



The "OWL" knows best!



WOODLAND TIMES

Forestry News Updates for St. Joseph County

WILDLIFE IN WINTER

Rick Ward, Wildlife Biologist
IDNR - Division of Fish and Wildlife

Are you one of those people who worry about wildlife surviving in the winter, or are you merely curious about how winter affects our Indiana wildlife? Let's take a look at some wildlife survival tactics.

Wild animals have to make changes as winter approaches, because they will lose more body heat, they will need more food to keep warm and less food is available.

Some animals, such as the thirteen-lined ground squirrel, survive by true hibernation. True hibernation means the animal stays in a burrow or den in a state of deep sleep all winter. Breathing and heart rates and body temperature drastically decrease. The critter loses weight over the winter and become very active (looking for food) when he or she emerges in the spring.



Skunks, opossums and raccoons have adapted a slightly different strategy. They remain inactive in dens during bad weather, but come out and

look for food when the weather gets better. They also fatten up in the fall, so they can go without food in case of a lengthy period of bad weather.

Beavers and muskrats spend a lot of time stockpiling food. They remain active throughout the winter, even coming out on the ice to feed. A good layer of fat and a water repellent fur coat helps also!

Deer survive by growing a winter coat. The winter coat has hollow hairs, that trap heat next to the deer's body. They also tend to "yard up" - gather - in places where good cover and food are available so they don't spend as much energy traveling.

Quail gather together in a covey to help keep each other warm. Good winter cover and food close by is essential for quail to survive a northern Indiana winter.

The range of some wildlife species, such as quail, is limited by the severity of the weather. Quail populations in northern Indiana were nearly wiped out by the severe winters in 1978 and 1979. Since quail do most of their feeding within 8" of the ground, snow over 8" deep that lies on the ground for 30 days or more will wipe out quail. The very northern part of Indiana is not considered to be natural quail range because of the winters.

Some wildlife species migrate south as cold weather approaches. Many songbird and duck species travel to traditional wintering habitats where food is available and the weather is much milder. These birds work their way back north as spring approaches. This technique has been adapted by some human beings also!

What can you do on your property to help provide for the creatures that spend the winter here? Birdfeeding is a popular winter pastime. Providing several different types of seed and suet, or peanut butter will attract and feed the most species of winter birds. The next step is winter cover and natural food sources. Native shrubs such as dogwood, hazelnut and highbush cranberry or the use of pines or cedars will offer additional food and winter cover. Warm-season (prairie) grasses is an excellent consideration when desiring winter cover. Winter food plots of corn, sorghum, buckwheat, millet and sunflowers can also be considered, which would remain standing through the winter for wildlife food and cover.

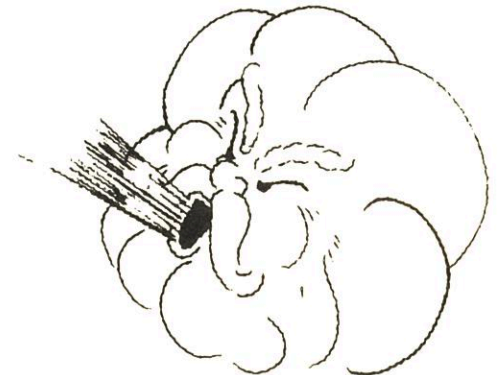
Maybe now you won't worry as much about how winter is affecting our wildlife, and you have a few ideas on what you can do on your land to benefit wildlife in the winter.

Winter's Woe for Trees and Shrubs

Have you ever wondered why your trees are having brown needles that are dying from the tips back, especially those on the side facing the street or road? This is just one of the hazards of using road side

salt. Other salt injury symptoms you might also notice include twig dieback, stunted yellow foliage, premature autumn leaf coloration and/or death of leaf margins. Yellowing of grass on curb borders in the spring can also be a result of road side salt over spray. Various studies conducted across the northern parts of the country, report that carryover from salt spray was found more than 100 yards from lightly used highways, and in some cases, as much as 413 yards of carryover was observed from heavily traveled roads. Additional studies have shown salt levels on the increase throughout the summer after seasonal rains. These reports lend credence to the fact that salt does not disappear when winter fades into the shadows of spring.

There are ways that you can effectively protect your plants from further salt damage. Based upon information provided through the National Arbor Foundation, you should: (1) know what plants are salt tolerant prior to planting (2) clear snow by shovel, blower or blade before it becomes compacted and icy (3) prevent salt-contaminated snow from being piled over the root zone of trees and shrubs (4) erect a solid barrier to protect plants when salt splash or spray is inevitable (5) use alternatives to salt such as gravel, coarse sand or calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) and (6) flush thoroughly heavy salted areas in the spring. Carrying out any one or all of these useful suggestions can help prevent your plants from experiencing continued (a) water loss (b) chloride poisoning (c) soil damage (d) nutrient loss (e) freezing of tender bud and (f) reduced vigor. Instead, you can provide them with a safe and protective environment, overcoming the harsh and unforgiving hazards of winter.





USDA

Another Successful Year With The Farm Programs

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The Conservation Reserve Program is a voluntary program that offers annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource-conserving practices on eligible land.

During the past year, approximately 150 landowners and producers showed interest in the conservation Reserve Program. In the spring sign-up, nearly 30 of the 80 applications were accepted into the program. Conservation practices implemented range from grass plantings to tree plantings to wildlife areas. We are still waiting on word regarding acceptance of the fall CRP applicants. If you are interested in finding out more about the Conservation Reserve Program, contact your Conservation Partnership Office.



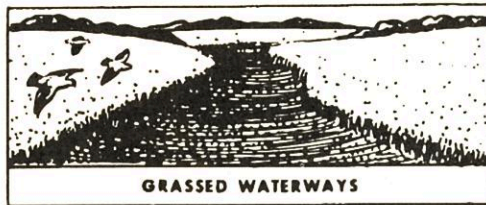
PASTURE AND HAYLAND PLANTING

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP is a voluntary USDA conservation program for farmers and ranchers, who face serious threats to soil, water and related

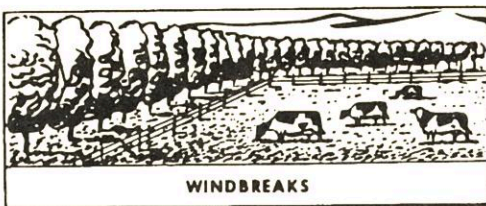
FIELD NOTES

natural resources. It provides technical, financial and educational assistance, primarily in designated priority areas. A few of the practices that are eligible for cost share through EQIP are: grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, grade stabilization structures, filterstrips, field windbreaks, riparian forest buffers, pasture and hayland plantings on erodible fields, wetland development and restorations and waste management systems. Nationally, half of the funding for EQIP is targeted to livestock-related natural resource concerns, and the remainder to other significant conservation priorities.



GRASSED WATERWAYS

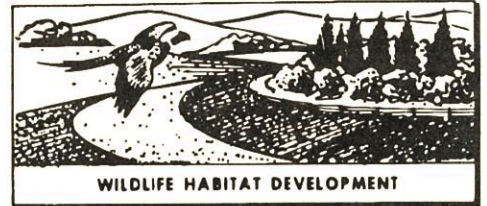
Producers may sign up at the Farm Services Agency (FSA) or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) any time of the year. The ranking and selection of producers will occur during specified periods.



WINDBREAKS

In order to determine resource concerns within the county, how to best address these concerns and define a priority area, locally led meetings were held in March and April of 1997. Members of the community attended and participated in the meetings. The headwaters of the Kankakee River were selected as a priority area for St.

Joseph County. If this priority is approved at the national level, area producers will have a better chance of their applications being accepted in the next ranking period.



WILDLIFE HABITAT DEVELOPMENT

St. Joseph County had two local producers' EQIP applications accepted during the last ranking period; a manure storage pond and a hay planting.

All in all, it has been a very successful year for both CRP and EQIP.

USDA



GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURES

Marking Flags for Sale

Are you tired of mowing over your tree seedlings, or missing your field boundaries? The St. Joseph County SWCD has marking flags available for sale. The flags are \$.10 each and come in fluorescent orange. Come in today and get your flags for spring.



Filter Your Water Away

Water quality and quantity are the most often expressed environmental concerns of local landusers and property owners. Many ask how can they can reduce the flooding on their fields or near their homes. Others want to know how to reduce pollutants that may be flowing into surface waters such as rivers, streams, ditches or wetlands.

A growing number of landusers have found an answer. They have reduced pollutants entering water courses, stabilized ditch/stream banks and reduced sediment blocking the drainage courses. What is their secret?

CONSERVATION BUFFERS! Conservation buffers can be used along any water course, as well as, along field borders or other sensitive areas. Buffers are best described as strips or small areas of land in permanent vegetation. This vegetation may include trees, grass or a combination of both. Examples of buffers include filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, field windbreaks and riparian buffers.

Why are buffers such a big deal? Buffers slow water runoff, trap sediment and enhance water infiltration in the buffer itself. They also trap fertilizers, pesticides, bacteria, pathogens and heavy metals, minimizing the chances of these potential pollutants reaching surfacewater and groundwater sources. Buffers also protect

FIELD NOTES


livestock from harsh weather, provide wildlife habitat and improve aquatic habitat. And if that's not enough, they also increase the property's beauty, recreational opportunities, land value and air quality.

This year alone, landowners planted 18 miles, or 129.9 acres, of buffers along the county's waterways through the Conservation Reserve program. We applaud these concerned residents for their commitment to the future of our natural resources. However, we need



more people to join in and help protect the precious water resources of St. Joseph County.

For those who would like technical


and/or financial help establishing buffers, the St. Joseph County Conservation Service Center is ready to assist. Many programs are in place for the establishment of buffers. In addition, the St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District will be offering cost share to landowners who wish to establish a buffer strip on their property. For those who just want information, we are willing and able to supply the latest information on a diverse range of buffer strips. Stop in and see us, or call at 291-2300. We look forward to spending time with you in the protection of our water resources. 



WHIP It Into Shape

Cost share is now available for landowners, who want to enhance or create wildlife habitat. The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) places emphasis on wildlife and fisheries habitats of National and State significance, as well as, those habitats that are declining or significantly reduced. Additional practices beneficial to fish and wildlife, that otherwise may not be funded, are also included for WHIP cost share.

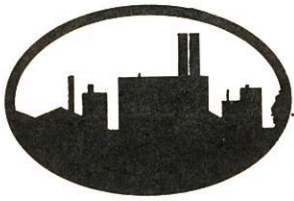
Landowners can come into the Service Center offices to apply at any time. Applications will then be ranked at the local office and forwarded on to the State Office for selection.

If you are interested in providing habitat for wildlife, stop in and see us. We will develop a plan to fit your needs. 

*The trees have offered their gifts to man.
But the glory of trees is more than their gifts;
'Tis a beautiful wonder of life that lifts,
From a wrinkled seed in the earthbound clod,
A column, an arch in the temple of God,
A pillar of power; a dome of light,
A shrine of song and a joy of sight...*

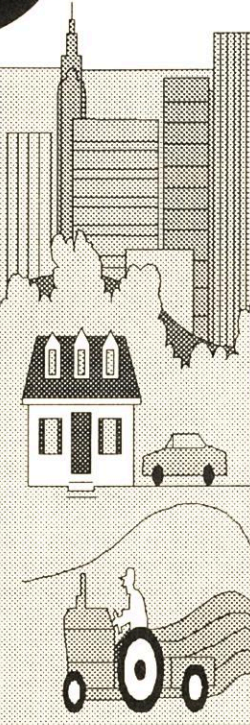
- Henry Van Dyke

URBAN MEANDERINGS



Rule 5 (327 IAC 15-5) Technical Assistance

If you are working on a Rule 5 Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and have questions, or need assistance, contact our office at (219) 291-2300. John Law or Chris Forsyth will be happy to provide assistance to you.



What makes a cat so detrimental to not only song birds, but to small mammals as well, is that a cat does not always eat what is killed. In fact a well fed house cat is even a more effective killer than a cat that must kill to eat. Another reason is that many homeowners attract the birds to their back yards with feeders, which brings the birds to the felines.

Many cat owners put bells on their pets in an attempt to "warn" unwary birds and wildlife that a cat is nearby. This is a misconception, however, because a ringing bell is not an instinctive danger signal for birds and wildlife. Very young birds and wildlife could not escape the approaching cat anyway, bells or not.

What can the cat owner do to protect the avian community of the neighborhood? *Keep your cat inside.*

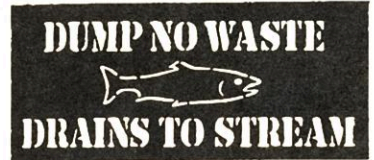
An indoor cat is much healthier than its free-roaming counterpart. A true house cat has a life expectancy of nearly 17 years, where a free-roamer has an average life-span of 3 to 5 years. Inside they are not exposed to dogs, parasites, poisons, rabies, neighborhood kids or their worst enemies, cars.

Other ways of helping our wild friends is to encourage other cat owners to also keep "Fluffy" inside. Many times it is just a matter of education. And as always, have your pet spayed or neutered.



Storm Drain Stenciling

The District is searching for individual groups of students looking for a fun, educational project that will benefit the streams and ditches and rivers of St. Joseph County.



We are looking for local service groups of students, that are looking for a conservation minded project to work on one day during the week, or a Saturday. The project will provide the opportunity to learn a little about storm water design and spread a conservation message, while emphasizing that every storm drain goes down stream and so does whatever is in the water.



The stenciling materials and education will be provided by this office. All you will need is the desire to learn and educate at the same time. This project is still wide open and flexible. So if you would like to participate or know of a group that may, please contact John Law or Rick Glassman at the office. And again: "For the land's sake, thank you for your support!"

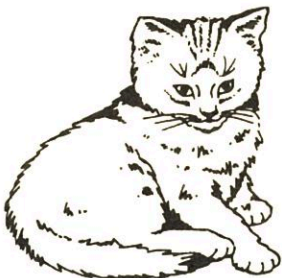


Danger Comes In A Soft, Furry Package

What was responsible for killing an estimated one billion North American song birds in 1992? It's *Felis domesticus*, the common house cat. These cute furry little pets may be bundles of joy while in the living room and playing with a ball of string, but don't be fooled, they are still formidable and dangerous hunters.

The common cat is not native to North America but was introduced by English settlers in the 1700's. It is now estimated that 60 million domestic cats now reside in the U.S. and their numbers are increasing rapidly. This number does not

reflect the feral cats, which is also estimated to exceed 60 million individuals.





St. Joseph County Soil and Water
Conservation District
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South Bend, IN 46614

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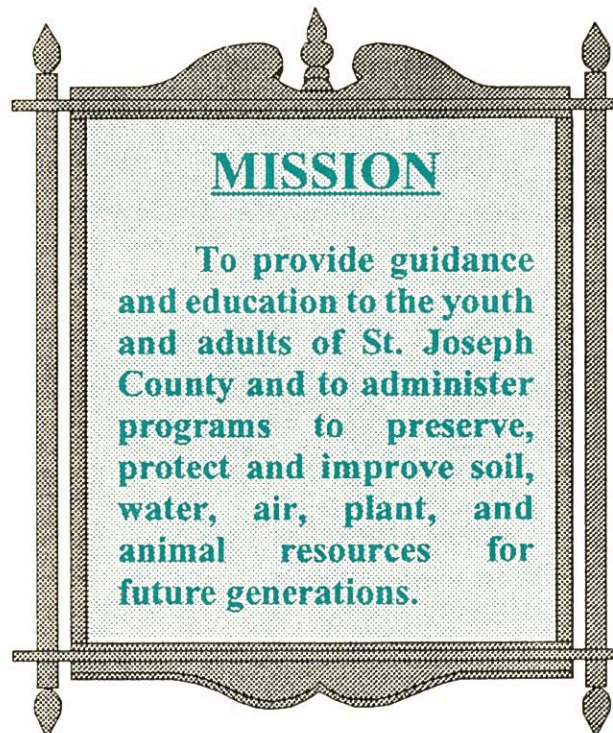
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