



Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District

2014 Annual Report

Discovery Hall, Suite 200, 1202 East 38th Street Indianapolis, Indiana 46205 317-786-1776

Chairman's Report

By Brian Neilson

Once again, we look back at the many changes the District has gone through in the past year and look forward to the new opportunities that 2015 brings. One immediate change is our transition from paper newsletters to electronic media. Don't hesitate; send Marilyn an email right now (marilyn-hughes@iaswcd.org) to make sure you don't miss our new format and quarterly conservation news!

So as they say the only sure thing in life is change...once again over the past year, two more board members have left their supervisor positions to focus on other personal passions and directions. We are sad to see them step down, but welcome Paula Baldwin's and Dennis Slaughter's continued support as Associate Supervisors. The District can't thank each of them enough for the decades of conservation action each have taken for Marion County/Indianapolis. But they have not disappeared; they are still in the mix helping our board daily!

Along with such changes comes the welcoming of new board members. We welcome Maggie Goeglein, Fall Creek Urban Gardens and Blake Wilson, Shrewsberry and Associates. Each brings strengths to the District to support our vision to further urban farming, gardening and conservation practices throughout the Indianapolis Metropolitan area.

Big News! The District is growing! As you know, the District works with numerous partners to bring conservation based assistance to land users of Marion County. In 2014, working through the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), the District is partnering with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in a cost share partnership to bring a new Urban Conservation / Healthy Soils resource to the metropolitan area. Please join me in welcoming Kevin Allison as our new technical resource for healthy soils, urban farming, and conservation practices. (Read more about Kevin later on page 7.)

Kevin joins CWI Project Coordinator, Leslie White, and our longstanding District staff, Glenn Lange, Julie Farr, and Marilyn Hughes, who continue to provide project erosion control technical review and oversight for private development throughout Marion County. In addition to all of these services and activities, the District also continues to support the implementation of agricultural and urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) including Green Infrastructure techniques. These include the opportunity for the public to implement such things as rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement, wetland creation/restoration and conservation farming techniques including (Continued on page 5)

Supervisor Election Nominees

At the Marion County SWCD Annual Meeting two elected positions will be filled on the Board of Supervisors. All Marion County residents are eligible to vote. Two nominees will be on the ballot.

Maggie Goeglein is the Executive Director of Fall Creek Gardens, an urban gardening resource center in the heart of Indianapolis. Her work there centers on developing a community-focused organization which shares tools, resources, and educational opportunities with anyone interested in growing sustainable, organic food for their families – particularly residents of urban neighborhoods with limited access to fresh, healthy, affordable food.

Blake Wilson is a Licensed Professional Geologist (LPG) with over 25 years of experience in the environmental field. His environmental background includes asbestos inspection and management planning, lead, underground storage tank management, hazardous waste site characterization, wetland delineation and mitigation design, NEPA investigations, storm water management, erosion control and environmental site assessment and testing.

NRCS - Diversified Conservation Assistance

By Jerod Chew, District Conservationist

The great thing about being the District Conservationist covering Marion County is that it's like a "box of chocolates, you never know what you're going to get!" 2014 was no exception to this truth. I found myself in all of the following settings and more, meeting landowners/land managers discussing conservation options..... cattle farm, urban gardens, backyards, woodlands, corn/bean fields, horse farm, streambanks, and schools.

I am happy to report that we have had some new conservation projects receive funding for practices such as grassed waterways for gully erosion control, pasture forage improvements for maximizing land cover/plant diversity, heavy use areas for minimizing offsite impacts from livestock, and field borders for increasing and enhancing wildlife habitat. When these practices are complete, Marion County will have received in excess of \$25,000 in conservation funding for improvement of natural resources.

One project of particular national interest is re-

garding the rapidly urbanizing Eagle Creek Reservoir and the Schoolbranch Creek Watershed. This watershed has a significant number of agricultural acres of applied conservation measures and the water quality changes have been regularly monitored for a number of years. IUPUI along with several other partners have committed staff time, resources, and real-time monitoring equipment towards learning the effectiveness of particular conservation practices on the landscape. I am continually working closely with the landowners in this area to encourage the implementation of practices to improve soil health, such as cover crops, no-till, buffers and nutrient management.

Soil Health is a theme that permeates throughout our Indiana Conservation Partnership and is the foundation for many of our conservation visits. NRCS is elated to be able to assist the Marion County SWCD with bringing the new Soil Health Specialist position to reality. I look forward to working with this new position to reach more Marion County landowners. (See page 7 for more.)



Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District

2014 Annual Activities Report

January 1 through December 31, 2014

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a unit of state government, supported primarily by the City-County Council with some funds from state government. The SWCD was established to provide technical assistance to Marion County residents and land users concerning the proper management of soil, water and other related natural resources. We work closely with local government, community organizations and residents on such items as water quality and drainage issues, soil erosion and sedimentation control, green space and wildlife habitat, conservation planning and education to help create a better quality living environment for everyone in the county.

This 2014 annual report was developed to keep city, county, and federal level legislators, government agency directors, and various community leaders informed of our on-going activities. This is just a snapshot of our activities, anyone with any questions or comments are encouraged to contact our Marion Co. SWCD office at Discovery Hall, Suite 200, 1202 E. 38th St., Indianapolis, IN 46205 for more details. Our phone number is 317-786-1776, and our web site is www.marionswcd.org



Assisting Residents with Flood-ing Issues



Construction Site Reviews and Inspections Prevent Pollution



Fall Creek Partnership – Practices Improve Water Quality

I. 2014 Major Natural Resource Projects Summary

Marion Co. SWCD educational and outreach efforts were completed to help the district communicate, coordinate, assist, and cooperate with others on conservation needs and solutions for landowners and landusers in the county. The efforts can take a minimum of 2-4 hours to several days depending on the type of activity needed

Project Summary	Numbers	Date	Comments
Clean Water IN (CWI) Grants - Fall Creek Partnership	400 contacts	during year	Public Outreach
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Presentations	15	during year	Public Outreach
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Grants to Landowners	29	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Consultations/Site Visits	180	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Conservation Practices Implemented	239	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Events/Workshops	19	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Golf Course Workshop	75 attendees	11/12	Best Management Practices
City of Indianapolis-DPW & DCE - MOU & NPDES Report	3 items	12/01	MOU, budget, and report
City of Indianapolis-DPW Water Quality Meetings	9 meetings	during year	Water Quality Issues
City of Indianapolis-Rezone Indy Task Force	4 meetings	during year	Redevelopment Zoning Rules
City of Indianapolis-DPW, DCE & Contractor SWPPP Training	8 Presentations	during year	Water Quality Training
Indiana Association of Conservation Districts (IASWCD) Conference	3 days	1/06-8	Board & Staff attended
IASWCD CWI - Fall Creek Partnership Award	1	1/18	Recognition
INAFSM (Assoc. of Floodplain and Stormwater Managers) Stormwater Quality Inspectors Meetings	5 meetings	during year	Construction Site Water Quality Planning/Training
INAFSM Annual Meeting	250+ attendees	9/10-12	Networking/Training
Marion Co. SWCD Annual Meeting w- Annual Report	50+ attendees	3/18	Reported accomplishments
Upper White River Watershed Alliance	9 meetings	during year	Assisting watershed/Member
Indianapolis Earth Day at White River State Park	150+	4/26	Hosted SWCD booth
Spring and Fall Tree, Shrub and Rain Barrel Sales	224 trees/shrubs	5/10 & 10/4	Also Sold 17 Rain Barrels
NRCS State Technical Committee	3 meetings	during year	Farm Bill Technical Issues
Reconnect To Our Rivers (ROW) – Marion Co. Grassroots Movement	6 meetings	during year	Serve on Technical Committee
Distributed newsletter on activities & watershed programs	4 / yr	during year	2,500+ on mailing list
Marion County SWCD Website	5016 users	during year	Public Outreach
Affiliate Member Program (and other donations)	\$1,025	during year	Seeking local monetary support

II. Natural Resource Technical Requests, Contacts, & Visits with Landusers

Through on-site visits, telephone calls and written recommendations, the district assists landowners with drainage, water management, erosion control, vegetative management options, and other related natural resource topics. These assistance efforts take an estimated amount of hours shown below depending on the type of assistance provided to schedule, inventory available site data, visit the site, plan recommendations, and respond to the request with written comments to the land user or landowner. The Mayors Action Center routes many assistance requests to our office.

Township	# Technical Assists Provided (@1 hr)	# Site Visits Made (@ 2hrs)	# Letters or Reports Provided (@ 4hrs)	# Conservation Plans or Surveys Provided (@ 6 hrs)
Center	0	0	1	0
Decatur	1	1	0	0
Franklin	7	7	0	0
Lawrence	11	11	3	2
Perry	6	5	0	0
Pike	9	8	1	0
Warren	7	7	4	2
Washington	13	13	2	0
Wayne	9	7	2	0
TOTAL	63	59	13	4

III. On-Site Development, Erosion Control and Stormwater Reviews, Contacts & Reports

Township	# Construction Sites Assisted (@1 hr)	# SWPPP * Reviews Provided (@ 3 hrs)	# Erosion Plan** Inspections Reports (@ 2hrs)	# of Site Inspections Made (@ 2hrs)
Center	52	5	18	31
Decatur	53	0	25	34
Franklin	62	3	25	46
Lawrence	29	5	4	13
Perry	59	4	15	40
Pike	35	4	7	20
Warren	35	6	8	18
Washington	51	5	14	28
Wayne	35	8	5	9
TOTAL	411	40	121	239

Notes: *SWPPP= Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans

**Written Reports Detailing Non-Compliance

IV. State/Federal Cost Share/Grant Projects- SWCD brought into the county an additional \$122,153

The Marion Co. SWCD is always looking for ways to assist landowners via a variety of county, state, and federal cost share and grant funds to assist with the installation of conservation practices in the county. Local funds are often limited or non-existent for the SWCD to provide monetary assistance for land improvement or land protection conservation measures. The projects can take a minimum of 2-4 days to several months depending on the type of activity. The following program funds are being provided through our joint, cooperative efforts with the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assigned to assist the Marion County SWCD, IDNR Lake & River Enhancement Program, EPA 319 funds and the Clean Water Indiana Grant Program, administered by the State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation and the State Soil Board.

Program	Funds Provided	Type of Projects
NRCS Conservation Programs	\$15,153.80	710 Acres of Planned and/or Applied Land Conservation Practices
Two (2) Clean Water Indiana Grants, Fall Creek Partnership	\$13,750.00	Grants implement a Backyard Conservation program to improve water quality in Fall Creek
Clean Water Indiana Grant (CWI)	\$10,000.00	General District Operational Funds
Lake & River Enhancement Grants	\$67,200.00	Geist Lake & Thorpe Creek
EPA 319 Grant	\$16,049.31	Urban Conservation Projects

EACH CITY/COUNTY TAX DOLLAR INVESTED IN THE SWCD LEVERAGES \$2.66 IN OTHER FUNDING

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District working every day ... to help people care for the land & provide a better quality of life in our community.

Fall Creek Watershed Benefits from Project

Marion County residents living within the Fall Creek watershed have benefited from a Clean Water Indiana program over the past few years, which provided funding and education for urban conservation practices. Leslie White, Backyard Conservation Coordinator for this project has provided 120 site visits this year in order to promote the use of urban backyard conservation practices. Of these, 60 conservation plans were produced and \$16,049 cost share dollars were spent to help implement the projects. In addition, Leslie helped to initiate the Urban Farm & Community Garden Program with partners Fall Creek Gardens, Urban Patch and Highland Vicinity. Through this program, technical assistance, resource leveraging and volunteer coordination were used to work on 6 urban garden projects during the year.

The Fall Creek Watershed Partnership also helped to sponsor numerous educational workshops this year including “Conservation Best Management Practices All Day Workshop for Golf Courses and Large Property Owners”. Twenty new conservation fact sheets were created or updated, articles and press releases were sent out, and web & social media posts were used to help provide conservation education to residents.



For more information on this project contact Leslie at leslie-white@iaswcd.org * 317-773-2181

Please join our e-mailing list to receive our newsletter & information on local events. Send your email address to marilyn-hughes@iaswcd.org

(Chairman’s Report—Continued from page 1) cover crop considerations to reduce sediment and storm runoff pollution.

The District continues to bring in outside financial resources to the benefit of Marion County. In 2014, the District has brought in over \$2.66 of urban and agricultural conservation grant funding for every dollar of our budget. With these resources, we are able to continue our conservation and public education programs.

As we look forward to 2015, we want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have continued to partner with and support us. The list is extensive, but I specifically want to thank the City of Indianapolis and Mayor Greg Ballard, the Department of Public Works, Department of Code Enforcement, Marion County Health Department, Fall Creek Watershed Alliance, the White River Alliance and Clear Choices-Clean Water cam-

paign, Citizens Energy, the Indianapolis Airport Authority, and the City-County Council for their continued faith in us, partnerships and financial support of our efforts. My personal thanks to our District staff and partners and of course to our District Board of Supervisors.

But as you have witnessed in 2014, conservation and healthy soils work is not done, not until our waterways are clean. As we look forward, the District envisions continuing to expand our urban and agricultural conservation and water quality enhancement programs and public education. Our 2015 vision is to continue to bring in local, regional and national resources to further enhance our ongoing programs as well as look to increase our technical, financial, and educational capabilities to serve the metropolitan area land users. In order to best accomplish these services we very much welcome your input and participation with our efforts.

Marion River Friendly Farmer Award Winners

Since 1999, key conservation and agricultural organizations have sponsored the River Friendly Farmer (RFF) Program. The statewide initiative recognizes farmers, who through good production management practices helps keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean.

Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may nominate up to two farmers who do an outstanding job of protecting their rivers, lakes and streams through their everyday conservation management practices on the farm. This past year, the Marion County SWCD nominated Joyce Moore of Urban Patch and Maggie Goeglein of Fall Creek Urban Growers Resource Center for this award. Congratulations to both of these nominees who were recipients of this award!

Maggie Goeglein

Fall Creek Gardens grows vegetables and has a small orchard at their community garden. Maggie uses cover crops and the site is capped with tree mulch, to protect against contaminated soils below and holds rainwater. To ensure that storm water stays on site, Fall Creek Gardens uses a 3000-gallon cistern, rain barrels, and bioswale rainwater harvesting and catchment system.

Joyce L. Moore

Urban Patch farm, located in the Fall Creek watershed, includes fruits, vegetables, herbs, and nut trees at various inner city locations. Joyce uses clover as a ground cover instead of grass and uses mulch to enrich the soil and conserve water. Her storm water conservation practices include rain gardens, bioswales, and rain barrels.

The sponsors of the River Friendly Farmer Award Program are the Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts and our 92 county SWCDs, Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc., Indiana State Department of Agriculture Division of Soil Conservation, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Thank You 2014 Affiliate Members!

Silver Member

Marion County Farm Bureau

Platinum Member

D2 Land & Water Resource, Inc.

Nickel Member

Professor Frederick Bein

Copper Members

George Haerle in honor of Eli Bloom

Steve Wicker, Cool Ponds

Robert Eddleman

Beth Mason

To support the Marion County SWCD by becoming a 2015 Affiliate Member go to our website
www.marionswcd.org

New Urban Soil Health Program

Beginning the first part of February, the Marion and Hendricks County SWCDs will be starting a new Soil Health program. Kevin Allison, Urban Conservationist for Healthy Soils will be heading up the program for central Indiana. Kevin comes from the Daviess County SWCD where he served as their Conservation and Livestock Technician. He has experience with conservation cropping & the NRCS Healthy Soils programs and their resources. He has worked with various age groups for urban farming and gardening. Much of his experience comes from his years with the Peace Corps doing these types of activities in South America.

The Urban Soil Health Program will help urban landowners protect and build their soil which will in turn benefit water quality, improve soil water holding capacity to reduce flooding, increase nutrients and organic matter in the soil which will produce stronger, healthier plants, gardens and wildlife communities. In the urban environment these principles can be practiced through:

- ◆ Urban erosion control & water quality improvement practices such as diversified seeding, bioengineering techniques, bioswales, and rain gardens
- ◆ No-till or minimal till gardening techniques, and mulching
- ◆ Rotational planting, interplanting, companion planting and various composting techniques
- ◆ Cover crops, filter strips and native plantings while encouraging eradication of invasive species that destroy natural diversity
- ◆ Eliminating or decreasing chemical fertilizers, herbicides & pesticides in lawns and gardens through the use of natural alternatives and soil building techniques

Educational materials and workshops as well as cost share on implementation projects and soil testing will be used to promote soil health in Marion and its surrounding counties. Be watching our newsletters and website (www.marionswcd.org) for more information in the coming months.

The Urban Soil Health Program is made possible through grant funding from the USDA Natural

Resources Conservation Service & CWI, managed by the Indiana Association of SWCDs.

2014 SWCD Sponsored Workshops

Educating people on the importance of conservation has always been the keystone to the Marion County SWCD's work towards improving the environment for our residents. One of the means of education is by hosting workshops where residents can meet with experts in the field of natural resource conservation to learn about various conservation measures. This year our efforts have allowed 23 different venues for this to happen. Staff provided 8 erosion control training sessions for city inspectors.

Through the Clean Water Indiana Fall Creek Watershed Partnership 15 presentations and 5 workshops on Backyard Conservation topics were held in 2014. In June, a workshop for landowners with a well or septic system was held with co-sponsors Marion County Public Health Department and SWCD, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Citizens Energy Group and with special financial assistance from the Marion County Farm Bureau. A groundwater simulator was purchased to assist the county with similar workshops in the future.

In October a workshop on manure management was held to help residents with small livestock. It was held through the cooperative efforts of the SWCD, Purdue Extension – Marion County and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Meet Your SWCD Supervisors & Staff

Elected & Appointed Supervisors

Brian Neilson, Chairperson, P.E., LEED AP , is Vice President with KERAMIDA, Inc. with over 30 years experience working with the public & private engineering sector. He is involved with alternative water & wastewater management, Low Impact Development, green infrastructure, watershed planning, stormwater master planning, combined sewer overflow abatement, water quality assessments of lakes, rivers & streams, and land use & greenway planning, among others.

Heather Buck, Vice Chair is a Resource Planner at Christopher B. Burke Engineering, working in local natural hazard mitigation, stormwater management planning, & water quality monitoring. She serves as the President of the Indiana Lakes Management Society Board and as an Area Representative for EnviroCert International's Certified MS4 Specialist program.

John Hazlett, Board Treasurer LEED AP O+M is a Manager-Water Footprinting Services with experience working in energy efficiency, water conservation, recycling and stormwater management. Prior to joining Williams Creek, John was the Director of the Office of Sustainability for the City of Indianapolis. John assists clients develop strategies to reduce their water footprint by identifying opportunities to minimize, capture and reuse water.

Maggie Goeglein is the Executive Director of Fall Creek Gardens. She holds an M.A. in Earth Literacy, is a member of the Indiana Organic Gardeners Association & serves as a director for the Mid-North Food Pantry. She develops educational opportunities for growing sustainable, organic food and bringing environmental health to the garden site especially for residents of urban neighborhoods.

Blake Wilson (2015 Candidate) is a Licensed Professional Geologist (LPG) with over 25 years of experience in the environmental field. His environmental background includes asbestos inspection and management planning, lead, underground storage tank management, hazardous waste site characterization, wetland delineation and mitigation design, NEPA investigations, storm water management, erosion control and environmental site assessment and testing.

Associate Supervisors

Paula Baldwin Rick Bein Marvin Brethauer Bob Eddleman Mark Kautz

Bob Kleinops Beth Mason Mark Mongin Dennis Slaughter Henry Wallis

SWCD Staff

Marilyn Hughes, Administrative Assistant

Glenn Lange, Resource Conservationist

Leslie White, CWI Backyard Conservation Coordinator

Kevin Allison, Urban Conservationist - Soil Health

Julie Haxton Farr, Resource Conservationist, Editor (PT)

NRCS Staff

Jerod Chew, District Conservationist

To learn more about the Marion County SWCD check out our website: www.marionswcd.org