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## Chairman's Report

**By Brian Neilson**

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District continues to work for you to dynamically provide direct technical, financial and educational conservation services to the citizens of Marion County! As noted through our numerous 2015 electronic newsletters, field visits and public meetings, the District has fully integrated Healthy Soils into our conservation programs. Through the efforts of our staff Glenn Lange, Kevin Allison, Julie Farr and Marilyn Hughes, the District has increased our on the ground presence and support throughout the County. On top of our increased presence throughout 2015, the District is working to bring even more technical, financial and education conservation programs and resources to the citizens of Indianapolis. Check out our website [marionswcd.org](http://marionswcd.org) for our various programs and to get on our electronic newsletter distribution list.

Through our cost share partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Con-

servation Districts (IASWCD), the District is bringing more resources to aid in direct conservation implementation. Working with the NRCS and IASWCD, the District is anticipating a part time technical person in 2016 to assist Kevin Allison in our partnership Healthy Soils program.

In addition to additional technical resources, the District is partnering with NRCS, IASWCD, the White River Alliance and Clear Choices Clean Water to develop a multi-media Healthy Soils public education program. Combining the technical and financial resources of these partners, the District is leading the use of Clear Choices Clean Water web based media outreach to expand the conservation, water quality and healthy soils programs to a wider audience. Keep your eye on this one; it's beginning to heat up!

The District has been awarded Clean Water Indiana grants in partnership with Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Hendricks, Hamilton, Madison and Hancock Counties to further support the use of our combined technical resources to implement in-the-ground

water quality, healthy soils projects. After years of focusing on the urban/suburban Fall Creek watershed, the District is working with Hendricks County SWCD to focus in our western urban/suburban areas to reach out and to further support water quality based healthy soils conservation projects and program public outreach.

Working with the Hamilton, Madison and Hancock SWCD's, the District has been awarded additional resources to continue the Backyard Conservation cost share program. Again, leveraging the extensive technical resources this SWCD partnership brings, the District continues to offer cost share financial, technical and outreach resources to all of Marion County.

So as the District has continued to aggressively leverage and bring additional resources to Indianapolis, we also continue to change. Part of this change, and on a sadder note, the District will soon be losing our primary drainage and erosion control field technician, Glenn Lange, to retirement.

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Please join us for our 46th Annual Meeting  
 Tuesday, Feb. 23rd  
 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
 Discovery Hall  
 3rd Floor Conference Room  
 1202 E. 38th Street  
 Indianapolis, IN 46205  
 Keynote Speaker:  
 Phyllis Boyd -  
 Groundwork Indy



*Maggie Goeglein will be running for SWCD Supervisor*

## *SWCD Election Nominees*

A Board of Supervisors oversees Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District's operations and represent the interests of land users in the county. Staff is hired by the Board of Supervisors to deliver services, based on local land uses and natural resources concerns. Supervisors are made up of five (5) non-paid county residents. Three (3) are elected, Two (2) are appointed. Elected Supervisors are selected at our Annual Meeting. Appointed

Supervisors are approved by the State Board of Conservation. Additionally, Associate Supervisors also are selected to assist the Board, but they do not have voting power. They participate in advising the supervisors in decision-making for district business.

At this year's annual meeting Maggie Goeglein will be running for the elected supervisor position. Maggie has been a SWCD Supervisor for one

year. She is Executive Director of Fall Creek Gardens.

Brian Neilson will be filling this year's appointed position. Brian has served as the SWCD Chairman for the past several years. He has over 30 years of experience working in the public and private engineering sector.

All Marion County residents are encouraged to vote at this year's election.

## *Urban Soil Health Program Report*

**"If the soil is full of nutrients, why doesn't anyone care about it?"**  
 - an Indianapolis 3rd grader

The 68th United Nations General Assembly declared 2015 the International Year of Soils, a perfect backdrop for the initiation of the Urban Soil Health Program in Marion County. The United Nations' objectives are to raise awareness about the profound importance of soil for human life and to educate the public about soil's crucial role in food security, climate change adaptation and mitigation, essential ecological processes, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. And it promotes the investment

in sustainable soil management to develop and maintain healthy soils for diverse population groups.<sup>1</sup> In 2015, the Marion County SWCD put these ideas into action.

Soil Health Specialist Kevin Allison spread the message of the living soil to 625 people over the course of 28 presentations. Along the way, an Indianapolis 3<sup>rd</sup> grader asked, "If the soil is full of nutrients, why doesn't anyone care about it?" Farmers, gardeners, community centers, schools and legislators all turned out to learn more about the soil because they do

care. Many of these folks are planting seeds, harvesting food, and doing revolutionary work, and the Marion County SWCD is proud to be assisting them in moving forward with a spirit of conservation.

Forty-three small farm and garden consultations were made in 2015. Thirty-six growing sites were visited, and eighteen of them were assisted with mini-grants made possible by ISDA Clean Water Indiana funds secured by the Marion and Hendricks SWCDs. As a result, soil health assess-



*Growing Places Indy apprentice helps assess soil health*

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ments, soil nutrient testing, agricultural cover crops, and native plants for pollinators are being implemented across our urban watersheds to sustain food production, nourish soil, and improve water quality. Nurturing nature through our landscapes has a profound impact on quality of life, and a soil health garden filled with diverse soil building plants is truly a site to see.

Numerous partners were instrumental in pushing the Urban Soil Health Program forward. Local and regional entities like Fall Creek Gardens, Indy Urban Acres Farm, Growing Places Indy, the Jewish Community Center, Paramount School of Excellence, Avon Maple Elementary, the Indiana Wildlife Federation, and many more gave soil health an educational forum. The USDA Natural

Resources Conservation Services and the Indiana Conservation Partnership continue to be the cornerstone of conservation in agriculture. Purdue Extension offers us unwavering support and outreach through their urban agriculture wing and master gardeners program. Butler University advances our understanding of soil biology and took a hands-on approach to aid us with 24 of the 31 intensive soil health tests sampled in local gardens. Earth Charter performs immeasurable work in networking educators and inspiring us to fight even harder for the environment. The list goes on. But above all, special thanks to the gardeners and small farmers for their willingness to try new things and for welcoming us onto their land.



*Experimenting with cover crops at Indy Urban Acres Farm*

Going forward, the Marion County SWCD, in partnership with Hamilton, Hancock, and Madison counties, has been awarded another Clean Water Indiana grant to create the Heartland Backyard Conservation Pro-



*Soil Health Garden at Fall Creek Gardens*

gram. Now, with two grants in our arsenal, the Soil and Water Conservation District has the exceptional ability to assist the people of Marion County in getting even more conservation on the ground in 2016. We look ahead to cover crops, native plantings, rain gardens, bioswales and urban practices that protect our precious soil and water.

For more information on the Marion County Urban Soil Health Program visit our website at

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

Or contact Kevin Allison at 317-786-1776 or email [kevin-allison@iaswcd.org](mailto:kevin-allison@iaswcd.org)

*“Special thanks to the gardeners and small farmers for their willingness to try new things and for welcoming us onto their land.”*

<sup>1</sup><http://www.fao.org/soils-2015/about>



## Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District 2015 Annual Activities Report

January 1 through December 31, 2015

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, urban soil health, green space and wildlife habitat, conservation planning and education to help create a better quality living environment for everyone in the county.

This 2015 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. 38<sup>th</sup> St., Indianapolis, IN 46205 for more details. Our phone number is 317-786-1776, and our web site is [www.marionswcd.org](http://www.marionswcd.org)



Assisting Residents with Flooding Issues



Construction Site Reviews and Inspections Help Prevent Pollution



Urban Soil Health Program  
Cover Crops Help Rebuild Soils

### I. 2015 Major Natural Resource Projects Summary

Marion Co. SWCD conservation projects and public outreach efforts were completed to help the district communicate, coordinate, assist, and cooperate with others on conservation needs and solutions for landowners and land users in the county. The efforts can take a minimum of 2-4 hours to several days or weeks or are ongoing depending on the type of project.

Project Summary	Numbers	Date	Comments
• <b>Clean Water IN (CWI) Grants - Fall Creek Partnership</b>			
• CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Grants to Landowners	19	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
• CWI Fall Creek Partnership – Conservation Practices Implemented	37	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
• <b>Clean Water IN and NRCS Grants – Urban Soil Health Program</b>			
• Urban Soil Health Program – Presentations/Workshops	28 / 625 Attendees	during year	Outreach/Training
• Urban Soil Health Program – Consultations/Site Visits	42	during year	Outreach/Training
• Urban Soil Health Program – Grants to Landowners	18	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
• <b>Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program</b>			
• 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-Construction Program Water Quality Plan	16 meetings	during year	Water Quality Planning
• <b>Other Projects &amp; Coordination with Conservation Organizations</b>			
• Indiana Association of Conservation Districts (IASWCD) Conference	3 days	1/12-14	Board & Staff Training
• 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	9/9-11	Networking/Training
• Marion Co. SWCD Annual Meeting w- Annual Report	50+ attendees	3/17	Reported accomplishments
• Indianapolis Earth Day at White River State Park	150+	4/25	Hosted MCSWCD booth
• Fall Tree, Shrub and Rain Barrel Sales	302 trees/shrubs	10/17	Also Sold 10 Rain Barrels
• 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	900 on mailing list
• Marion County SWCD Website	4,553 users	during year	Public Outreach

## II. Natural Resource Technical Requests, Contacts, & Visits with Land Users

Through on-site visits, telephone calls and written recommendations, the district assists landowners, land users, and construction site managers 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, landowner, or contractor.

Township	# Technical Assists Provided (@1 hr)	# Site Visits Made (@ 2hrs)	# Letters or Reports Provided (@ 4hrs)	# Conservation Plans or Surveys Provided (@ 6 hrs)
Center	8	7	0	1
Decatur	6	4	4	1
Franklin	16	12	3	3
Lawrence	21	19	2	0
Perry	23	21	5	2
Pike	10	5	6	0
Warren	12	9	0	2
Washington	24	22	7	4
Wayne	13	8	3	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>13</b>

## Construction Site, Erosion Control and SWPPP 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	12	9	73
Decatur	30	2	7	53
Franklin	37	0	24	94
Lawrence	28	1	11	75
Perry	37	3	10	68
Pike	24	1	14	38
Warren	36	2	15	68
Washington	39	5	7	46
Wayne	37	5	10	66
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>581</b>

Notes: \*SWPPP= Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans  
 \*\*Written Reports Detailing Non-Compliance Issues

## III. State/Federal Cost Share/Grant Projects- SWCD brought into county additional: \$

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 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	\$1,485	Acres of Planned and/or Applied Land Conservation Practices
Clean Water Indiana Grants (CWI) for the Fall Creek Partnership	\$12,208	Participating with Hamilton, Madison and Hancock counties, a three year grant to hire a watershed coordinator and implement a Backyard Conservation program to improve water quality in Fall Creek
Clean Water Indiana Grant (CWI)	\$10,000	General District Operational Funds
NRCS Grant Program – Urban Soil Health	\$30,000	Urban Soil Health Program with Hendricks County
Clean Water IN Grant – Urban Soil Health	\$27,208	Urban Soil Health Program with Hendricks County

**EACH CITY/COUNTY TAX DOLLAR INVESTED IN THE SWCD LEVERAGES \$1.94 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.

## *New Conservation Effort Aids Monarchs*



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced a new conservation effort to help farmers and eligible landowners in Indiana and nine other states provide food and habitat for monarch butterflies. This targeted effort in the Midwest and southern Great Plains by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will invest \$4 million in 2016 to help combat the decline of this iconic species. "These beautiful and once-common butterflies are growing less familiar, and we know private landowners, especially farmers can play a crucial role in aiding their recovery," said Jane Hardisty, NRCS state conservationist in Indiana. "Indiana's farmers are good stewards of the land, and this effort helps them make

improvements that benefit all natural resources and wildlife, including pollinators such as the monarch."

The orange-and-black butterflies are known for their annual, multi-generational migration from central Mexico to as far north as Canada. Monarch populations have decreased significantly over the past two decades, in part because of the decrease in native plants like milkweed – the sole source of food for monarch caterpillars.

Indiana is at the heart of the monarch migration so NRCS will focus on integrating milkweed and high-nectar plants along field borders, in buffers along waterways or around wetlands, in pastures and other

suitable locations in the state. NRCS will provide technical and financial assistance to help producers, landowners and conservation partners make pollinator and butterfly-friendly improvements. Examples of conservation improvements include buffer habitats, cover crops and better pasture management practices which help reduce erosion, increase soil health, inhibit the expansion of invasive species and provide food and habitat for insects and wildlife.

To learn more visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/monarchs](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/monarchs). For more information about NRCS and other technical and financial assistance available through conservation programs, contact the [Marion SWCD](#) or [Jerod Chew](#), USDA-NRCS, District Conservationist.

**Support the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District - become a 2016 Affiliate Member!**

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

## *Thank You 2015 Affiliate Members!*

We thank those who supported the Marion County SWCD's conservation programs by being Affiliate Members this year! Because of your generosity conservation work and education was provided to the county.

### **2015 Affiliate Members:**

Marion County Farm Bureau  
Rick Bein  
George Haerle  
Robert Eddleman  
Ruth & Paul Hayes  
Mark Kautz

Beth Mason  
Stephanie Schuck

For more information on Affiliate Membership with the SWCD please visit our website:

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



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Glenn has been the primary force for the District in support of direct assistance for land owner drainage needs and in eliminating soil erosion and sediment loss through construction activities. Glenn has also led the District's conservation and green infrastructure grant implementation. Please join the Board in giving Glenn our heartfelt thanks for the many years of service of improving the living conditions of Indianapolis and Marion County! We wish Glenn the very best in his next endeavors.

As you have seen, the District continues to aggressively work to bring in and leverage outside resources to the benefit the conservation efforts in Marion County. In 2015, the District has brought in over \$1.94 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. These programs include our: Healthy Soils; soil erosion and sediment control efforts; annual fall tree, shrub and rain barrel promotion; backyard conservation cost share programs; continued presence at Earth Day and other events with our educational booth and conservation program DIY information; our newsletters; our public presentations; our participation in the City of Indianapolis' Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program; updating our website resource distribution capacity; and, our private landowner

technical assistance for drainage and stormwater issues, to name but a few.

And where would I be if I didn't point out that the District is looking to continue to look to bring more opportunities for the public to learn about and implement native plant based green infrastructure such as rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavement, wetland creation/restoration and conservation farming techniques including cover crop considerations to reduce sediment and storm runoff pollution further enhancing our waterways.

As we look forward to 2016, 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, NRCS, IASWCD, Fall Creek Watershed Alliance, the White River Alliance and Clear Choices Clean Water campaign, Citizens Energy, the Indianapolis Airport Authority, and the City-County Council for their continued faith in us, partnership participation and financial support of our efforts. My personal thanks to our District staff, partners, Associate Supervisors and of course to our all-volunteer District Board of Supervisors - Heather Buck, John Hazlett, Maggie Goeglein, and Blake Wilson.

But as you have witnessed in 2015, our conservation and

healthy soils work is not done, not until our soils are healthy and 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 2016 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. Please join us for our Annual Meeting on February 23, 2016 at our offices in the Discovery Building on the State Fair Grounds and get acquainted with our Staff and Board! And keep an eye out for our newsletters and website [marionswcd.org](http://marionswcd.org) for announcements of our programs and resources that will provide you the opportunity to have direct, interactive participation with us... Your Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District. Thank you!

**"Our 2016 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."**



— MARION COUNTY —  
**SOIL AND WATER**  
 — CONSERVATION DISTRICT —

# *Meet Your SWCD Board of Supervisors*

## **Elected & Appointed Supervisors**

**Brian Neilson, Chairperson**, P.E., LEED AP , has 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  
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](http://www.marionswcd.org)**

## *Marilyn Hughes and Glenn Lange Retire*

With great gratitude and best wishes we send off two dedicated, long time employees of the Marion County SWCD into their well-earned retirement years.

Marilyn Hughes has been our District Administrator since 1978. Her great knowledge of District operations and finances along with all of the staff support she has provided throughout the last 37 years has been invaluable. Each District Conservationist and Office Manager who have lead our district, as well as the many staff members who have come and gone have greatly appreciated her professionalism, dedication, honesty and the assistance she has provided to them and the public. In addition to her administrative responsibilities, she was instrumental in organizing and providing support for the many programs and educational workshops and tours that the District has sponsored over the years. Marilyn retired at the end of January.

Glenn Lange, Resource Conservationist with the Marion County SWCD began his retirement at the end of December. Glenn, who came to us in January of 2006 to head up our urban erosion control program, has been influential in providing assistance and monitoring to the many construction projects which disturb more than one acre. Glenn has been very involved in providing training in erosion control measures to other city inspectors and contractors. He assisted homeowners with land use problems and also provided leadership to the staff as we have been without a Director for several years.

Thank you Marilyn and Glenn for all of your dedication and hard work! We will miss you both. Enjoy your retirement – you have earned it!

