

Celebrating 46 years
of conservation!

Marion County SWCD
Annual Meeting:
February 28th, 5:00 p.m.



Report from the Chair...

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The Mission of the Marion County SWCD is to assist Marion County land users in conserving soil, water and related natural resources by providing technical, financial and educational services.

By Heather Buck

It appears that changing the future while holding the past has become the tradition for Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (MCSWCD). For the past 3 years, we have reported our exciting changes; new supervisors, new staff, and a new address. This year will not be different as we are going through some additional changes while continuing to provide the same great service and personal connections we have throughout our decades of hard work and dedication.

Through collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Clear Choices, Clean Water, LLC, the MCSWCD has assisted with development of a Healthy Soils campaign, website (Indiana.clearchoicescleanwater.org/soils) and education materials. As with other facets of the Clear Choices, Clean Water citizens may visit various components of the website to learn about the basics of soil health, learn how their actions may affect soil health; and learn new techniques to increase soil health on their property and within their community. Be on the lookout for more information regarding this campaign and how you can become in-

involved.

We are also very excited to announce that once again, through the hard work of our staff, Associate Board members, and Board members, the MCSWCD has secured nearly \$100,000 in grant funds for support staff, program related materials, and direct project implementation. We continue our success with the Clean Water Indiana grant program and strengthen our partnership with Hendricks and Hamilton County SWCDs.

We are eagerly embarking on a new partnership with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) as we bring our shared conservation efforts to full force in Marion County. Through this effort we are adding educational and technical information to our website related to healthy soils, residential lot conservation efforts, and community partnerships to promote healthy soils and healthy living. Williams Creek Consulting will be assisting the District and Marion County through the development of permaculture prototypes which can be used in urban settings on abandoned lots or re-development sites; again, increasing soil health,

reducing pollutant runoff to nearby storm drains and waterways, and increasing the amount of healthy food in underserved areas.

Finally, in the coming months, the MCSWCD will be strengthening our working relationship with the City of Indianapolis in such a manner that will result in being able to redirect funding typically dedicated to overhead expenses back into countywide programs and personnel. The funds saved will be better used to serve the citizens of Marion County and the City of Indianapolis by increasing our ability to manage and leverage benefits of grant programs, reduce duplication of efforts for state and federally required programs; and to implement additional projects throughout the County and surrounding areas. We are very excited about the near future and we hope you will re-connect with us as we revise our website, continue our newsletters, and increase the conservation within Marion County.

Please visit our website (www.marionswcd.org) to learn more and offer your thoughts and suggestions.

Soil Health Program Report

By Kevin Allison



Observing how conservation cropping systems change the soil profile

The focus of the Urban Soil Health Program is to assist small farmers and gardeners with cropping systems that regenerate soil and conserve water. The program encourages a suite of conservation practices that includes soil testing, cover crops, reduced soil disturbance, mulching, and native plantings. The goal of these practices are to improve soil health and to enhance crop productivity, nutrient efficiency, and soil's ability to infiltrate, store, and clean water. The soil conservation efforts by the SWCD and local growers to grow cover crops and reduce tillage stopped 20 tons of sediment from eroding off small farms. The nitrogen bound to that sediment would have entered water ways requiring 1.6 million gallons of water to dilute to drinking standards. Growers achieve fertility and central Indiana achieves water quality.

In 2016, I conducted thirty nine consultations, visited twenty nine urban farms and gardens, and provided sixteen

growers with Soil Health Grants, an effort made possible by competitive Clean Water Indiana funds secured by the Marion and Hendricks SWCDs. The program engaged a diversity of growers with different soils, techniques, and purpose in planting over 10 acres of cover crops in 2016. As always, a special thanks to the small farmers, backyard gardeners, communities, institutions, schools, and churches for their willingness to try conservation gardening techniques and for welcoming us onto their land.

Workshops and presentations have provided an excellent forum for community education and outreach. In the second year of the program, I presented to over 737 attendees at thirty three training and educational events. In 2017, the Soil Health Program will continue to provide opportunities for growers, conservation professionals and the general public to learn the hows and whys of soil regeneration.

I work in conjunction with numerous partner organizations, both local and statewide serving as an advisor and trainer for the Purdue Urban Farm

Incubator Network and continuing progress in cutting edge techniques as a member of Indiana's Southwest Soil Health Team. While giving feedback to the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service on the progress and lessons learned in conservation in urban agriculture, I work closely with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to report the implementation of conservation practices and determine environmental outcomes. I also provide technical soil support to ecological and community organizations in Indianapolis also working to promote growing local food and direct conservation technical assistance to those that grow it.

2016 saw soil coming to life in urban gardens. The Soil Health Program looks forward to facilitating education and additional Soil Health Grants to growers in Marion and Hendricks Counties. It is currently progressing website material development to enhance on-site support, all made possible by the input from local urban farmers and vegetable gardeners. It will continue to offer sample cover crop seed packages to encourage experimentation and practice adoption, and it will continue to support urban growers in getting conservation on the ground.

"2016 saw soil coming to life in urban gardens"

2016 Supporting Affiliate Members



The Marion County SWCD Supervisors and Staff would like to express our deep gratitude for the ongoing support of our Affiliate Members! These individuals help to provide the programs and educational materials which help

promote conservation work in our county.

Paul Wright Hayes and Ruth Rosser Hayes in honor of:

– George Harley
– Glenn Lange

– Marilyn Hughes
– Eli Bloom Memorial

George Haerle and Marion Haerle
Stephanie Schuck



Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District 2016 Annual Activities Report

January 1 through December 31, 2016

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 2016 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 Flooding Issues



Construction Site Reviews and Inspections Help Prevent Pollution



Urban Soil Health Program
Cover Crops Help Rebuild Soils

I. 2016 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
• Clean Water IN (CWI) Grants – Heartland Conservation			
• CWI Heartland Partnership – Grants to Landowners	3	during year	Urban Conservation Practices
• Clean Water IN – Urban Soil Health Program			
• Urban Soil Health Program – Presentations/Workshops	33 / 737 Attendees	during year	Outreach/Training
• Urban Soil Health Program – Consultations/Site Visits	39/29	during year	Outreach/Training
• Urban Soil Health Program – Grants to Landowners	16/48	during year	Grants/Conservation Practices
• Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program			
• City of Indianapolis-DPW & DCE - MOU & NPDES Report	3 items	12/01	MOU, budget, and report
• City of Indianapolis-DPW Water Quality Meetings	3 meetings	during year	Water Quality Issues
• Other Projects & Coordination with Conservation Organizations			
• Indiana Association of Conservation Districts (IASWCD) Conference	3 days	1/12-14	Board & Staff 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
• Distributed newsletter on activities & watershed programs	4 / yr	during year	900 on mailing list
• Marion County SWCD Website	4,107 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	5	3	2	0
Decatur	4	2	2	0
Franklin	15	7	3	1
Lawrence	23	10	6	0
Perry	16	10	5	2
Pike	5	3	2	0
Warren	12	8	5	3
Washington	21	16	9	0
Wayne	10	5	3	0
TOTAL	111	64	37	6

Construction Site, Erosion Control and SWPPP Stormwater Reviews, Contacts & Reports

Township	# SWPPP * Reviews Provided (@ 3 hrs)	# Erosion Plan** Inspections Reports (@ 2hrs)	# of Site Inspections Made (@ 2hrs)
Center	1	9	1
Decatur	0	4	26
Franklin	2	16	28
Lawrence	1	10	11
Perry	4	15	56
Pike	2	1	3
Warren	3	9	23
Washington	2	7	26
Wayne	0	0	7
TOTAL	15	71	181

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

III. State/Federal Cost Share/Grant Projects- SWCD brought into county additional: \$73,144

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	\$12,974.00	Acres of Planned and/or Applied Land Conservation Practices
Clean Water Indiana Grants (CWI) for Heartland Conservation	\$3,861.00	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 Program Agreement- Urban Soil Health	\$30,000	Urban Soil Health Program with Hendricks County
Clean Water IN Grant - Urban Soil Health	\$16,308.54	Urban Soil Health Program with Hendricks County

EACH CITY/COUNTY TAX DOLLAR INVESTED IN THE SWCD LEVERAGES \$1.92 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.

Drainage & Erosion Control Report

By Julie Farr

This year I had the opportunity to personally see how far we have come in our work to decrease soil erosion, especially on construction sites. It has been many years since I have worked on our Rule 5 program (as my main position is to give technical assistance for drainage problems). While we are in transition after the retirement of Glenn Lange, I have been filling in doing erosion control inspections.

While there are still some developments that are not doing all they should to control erosion, I am encouraged to see how many companies have become sensitive to the prob-

lems and are now doing a good job. Over the last 10 years the percentage of violations cited has steadily decreased. We have developed an organized program of inspecting and educating construction companies. Our [“Stop That Dirt”](#) program is in place to help the public contact us when they notice new construction which is causing off site erosion.

Accountability is in place as we inspect city projects and work with the Department of Public Works to ensure that private construction projects adhere to all erosion control requirements. This past summer the U.S. EPA did an audit on the city of Indianapolis to confirm

that our program is working well and gave us suggestions for improvements.

Our office continues to provide technical assistance to landowners who are experiencing drainage and streambank erosion problems which are the homeowners’ responsibility to solve. This year we provided assistance to over 110 landowners and businesses. Many of these were neighborhood problems that adversely affected many individual lots.

While there often is no financial assistance available, finding a viable solution and help in working with neighbors is a service that is a unique service to our county. We look for-



ward to filling our position to continue making progress in alleviating offsite erosion from construction sites in 2017 and hope to add a District Director in the near future. The overall goal is to provide services to Marion County residents which will promote water & soil quality improvements.

If you have questions please email us from our “Contact Us” tab on our website: www.marionswcd.org

From D.C. Jerod Chen

As professional facilitators for getting conservation on the land”, it is our job to look at the land from the perspective of natural resources; We also assess the impact of various actions on those natural resources, positively and negatively. Similar to how a mechanic likely sees the pros/cons of various vehicles/engines or a basketball coach sees defensive weaknesses/offensive strengths... as conservationists we see erosion, soil structure, wildlife habitat, invasive species, overgrazing, water quality indicators, etc. I like to jokingly say that we are looking at the world through Conservation Goggles”.

The title of conservationist has expanded into many aspects of our life and more and more

people are strapping on the “Conservation Goggles”.

Science and technology have brought forth understanding about our impacts on the natural world much more clearly than ever before. Take for instance water quality issues like algae blooms, people now know that there is a clear connection to between blooms and phosphorus in freshwater; therefore we know we need to reduce phosphorus fertilizer on our yards, fields, in our washing machines and animal feed, etc. The significance of pollinators! Simple facts like reducing carbon emissions through carpooling, properly servicing of engines and fewer trips across the field generally are win-wins resulting in lower cost = more money in your pocket and greenhouse gas

reduction. In agriculture, especially no-till, just add in cover crops and not only are we reducing carbon emissions, but we are capturing free carbon from the air and putting it in our soil leading to better water infiltration, better nutrient uptake and weather resilience.

Our enhanced conservation awareness has shown us that successful and profitable farming is absolutely achievable while providing positive conservation benefits through techniques like no-till, cover crops and proper timing/form/placement/amount of fertilizer.

In agriculture, there is a real need to balance the absolute necessity of producing food with the absolute necessity of ensuring that we leave our children a world where they can continue to do the same and thrive. I like this quote from Theodore Roosevelt,

“Conservation means development as much as it does protection. I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land; but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us.”

We all have a responsibility to take a look through the Conservation Goggles every now and then to see if there are some positive tweaks we can make in our daily routine. As for agricultural producers and land managers, that’s why we are here. So give us a call, we’ll bring our spare set of goggles!



SWCD Board Members

Heather Buck, 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.

Maggie Goeglein, Vice Chair In February 2016, Maggie accepted a position with the Edna Martin Christian Center, a 76-year-old community center serving Indy's Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood. Maggie provides direct service in the youth program and assists with fund development and site development for EMCC's new 12-acre facility. In addition to working with youth, Maggie has managed multiple large corporate service events focused on renovating the new facility and building a youth and seniors garden on the property, and worked with other staff on several successful grant applications totaling nearly \$1 million in funding over the next three years.

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.

Brian Neilson 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.

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.

Associate Supervisors

Paula Baldwin Rick Bein Marvin Brethauer Bob Eddleman Mark Kautz
Bob Kleinops Beth Mason Mark Mongin Dennis Slaughter Henry Wallis

SWCD Staff Members

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