

MARION COUNTY  
SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# Conservation in the Neighborhood

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SUMMER, 2019

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Remembering Harold Thompson	2
Welcome Elizabeth Grubb	3
Leadership Academy	3
Native Plants	4
Grower Workshops	5
Sudden Oak Death	6

## Make No Small Plans!

By John Hazlett, District Manager

The visionary urban planner and architect Daniel Burnham once famously said “make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized”. Burnham’s words characterize two major local initiatives happening here locally with the release of the City of Indianapolis Thrive Indianapolis climate action plan and the draft White River Vision Plan. The District is a partner in both initiatives and we are excited about how these plans will guide long term conservation efforts in our region.

In April our District Manager presented at the City’s Sustainability Summit about the benefits of and design considerations for residential rain gardens, as we assist the City in getting to the [Thrive Indianapolis plan](#) goal of 500 registered rain gardens by 2022. The



Over 40 participated in a short river float

presentation is available [here](#) and we are currently developing a new rain garden resource with information about the City registration process and available stormwater utility fee credits.

In June District staff attended the [White River Vision Plan draft](#) release event which was featured in the *Indy Star* and highlighted the work that has been completed over the past year and a half on this significant regional coordination effort between Marion and Hamilton counties. District Manager John Hazlett serves on the board of directors for Friends of the White River, who handled logistics for the short river float that followed the press event.

Over 40 individuals participated in the float including local government officials and various plan participants.



John Hazlett at Sustainability Summit



# Harold Thompson

## *A True Friend of Conservation, 1949-2019*



***Earth Day in April saw the passing of a longtime friend and conservation partner, Harold Thompson. At our 2019 Annual Meeting, Harold was presented***

***with a Lifetime Achievement in Conservation Award. We honor his memory with the award language below and he is already greatly missed!***

Harold Thompson's first "retirement" happened in 2008 after working for NRCS for 40 years, where he was responsible for administering the organization's financial assistance and easement programs and managing an annual budget of nearly \$40 million. Harold couldn't sit still for long and took a contract with the Upper White River Watershed helping farmers implement conservation—a position that eventually led to other opportunities with SWCDs and Hoosier Heartland RC&D helping guide and promote the conserva-

tion partnership's programs. In 2015 he helped launch Marion County SWCD's Soil Health Initiative and worked hard to bring conservation planning into urban agriculture. Harold's passion and his optimistic approach has inspired conservation across Indiana, from statewide strategies all the way to educational pollinator gardens in downtown Indianapolis.

Harold has always found time to volunteer, even before he retired. He has worked tirelessly as an Earth Team Volunteer and currently also works with Marion, Boone and Hendricks SWCDs implementing a variety of conservation practices, putting on work-

shops, working with watershed groups and training and mentoring new SWCD, NRCS and FSA employees. His soil health and invasive species demonstrations at the Pathway to Water Quality are a highlight of the Indiana State Fair.

Harold is a past recipient of Purdue's Ag Alumni Certificate of Distinction; the Governor's Distinguished Hoosier Award; the Soil and Water Conservation Society's Distinguished Fellow Award; and the Wayne Township Community Service Award. He is a 25 year 4-H leader and he spent 30 years as a volunteer EMT. He has served on the board of directors for the Hoosier Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and was president in 2018.

Harold was instrumental in our Soil Health Program & loved teaching children about agriculture.



Paula Baldwin presents Harold with Lifetime Achievement Award

# SWCD Welcomes Intern Elizabeth Grubb

My name is Elizabeth Grubb and I am the intern placed with the District through the Indiana Sustainability Development Program this summer. I will be a third-year graduate student at IU Bloomington's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. I am a dual degree candidate pursuing a Master of Science in Environmental Science and Master of Public Affairs with a concentration in Water Management graduating this December! I am so excited to be working with the district. My main interest is managing stormwater issues within urban watersheds. This summer I am really able to explore this through working with the district. Throughout my time with the district, I will be researching materials to inform the revision of the "Build Your Own Rain Garden Brochure", creating a database for historical drainage reports, and assisting with erosion control inspections and drainage surveys. I am very excited about this opportunity to learn about real issues in Marion County. This directly aligns with my goals as I hope to move back to Indianapolis following graduation.



Elizabeth, a SPEA Grad student & SWCD intern, helping with Rule 5 inspections

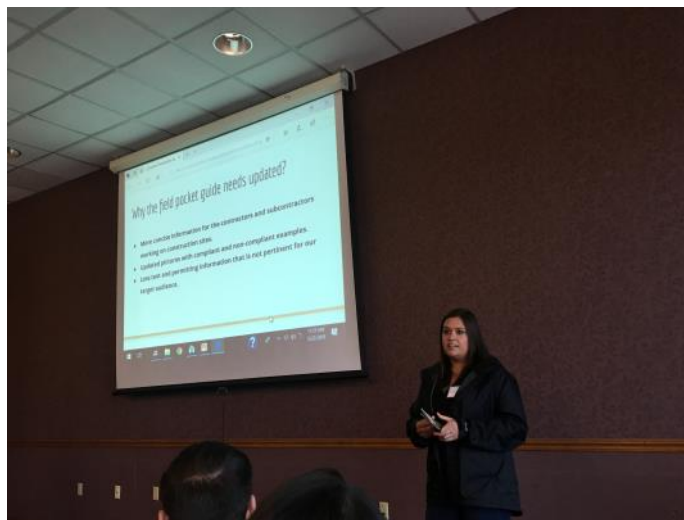
# Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy

By Cheyenne Hoffa, Resource Conservationist

I was lucky enough to participate in the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy earlier this year. The program, offered through Purdue University, is a five-month learning and networking experience for professionals in the water quality field. Not only will I use some of the skills I gained for my day-to-day work at the SWCD, but in future watershed projects we have been hoping to start.

My final project included updating a field pocket shirt guide for contractors that will be used to help educate contractors throughout Marion County on proper erosion and sediment control practices and maintenance. The updated guide will also be available to SWCD's and MS4's throughout Indiana to better educate their contractors as well.

The greatest part of participating in the Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy was seeing all the water quality professionals working on their local water quality issues but knowing that overall, we are all working together on the same goal of better water quality for everyone in Indiana.



Cheyenne explains updates to Field Pocket Guide for Erosion Control Contractors



## Native Plants for Beneficial Insects & Pollinators



Native Plantings at SWCD Demo garden on Eagle Creek Trail

When scientists report that insect biomass is declining 2.5% per year, it's time to plant habitat. The Marion County SWCD has been hands-on this spring in

planting hundreds of native plants in an effort to do just that.

Native plantings are beautiful, but their benefits go far beyond aesthetics. They are filled with perennial forage and host plants that attract, shelter, and feed a number and diversity of beneficial insects and pollinators, many of which can have a

positive impact on fruit and vegetable production. In tune with our soil health initiative's mission to assist urban farmers and

gardeners, the SWCD is actively working with local growers to provide habitat for the insects that pollinate crops or suppress crop pests through predation and parasitoidism. Soldier beetles, predatory wasps, tachinid flies, an assortment of bees, among

others, can bring an important balance to a food producing ecosystem.

The Marion County SWCD Eagle Creek Demonstration Garden is located at the Mayor's Garden on the Eagle Creek Trail. Feel free to visit and see a new native planting in action. This particular planting has a special twist to it, as it was installed using regenerative agricultural practices. In the fall of 2018, a thick stand of oats cover crop was planted to suppress weeds. Common oats do not survive the Indiana winters, and the tactic resulted in beds with very little weed pressure and no need for tillage. In April 2019, the little weeds remaining were pulled and two to three layers of newspaper and 2" of hardwood fines were added to the beds. We then layed out and planted over 100 native plants of the following species:

- Allium cernuum* – Nodding Wild Onion
- Coreopsis palmata* – Plains Coreopsis
- Dalea purpurea* – Purple Prairie Clover
- Echinacea purpurea* – Purple Coneflower
- Liatris spicata* – Dense Blazing Star

- Parthenium integrifolium* – Wild Quinine
- Pycnanthemum virginianum* – Virginia Mountain Mint
- Symphotrichum ericoides* – Heath Aster
- Zizia aurea* – Golden Alexanders
- Bouteloua curtipendula* – Side-oats Grama
- Schizachyrium scoparium* – Little Bluestem
- Sporobolus heterolepis* – Prairie Dropseed

Our hope is that this native planting effort inspires other growers and homeowners to act. With support from Clean Water Indiana funding, the SWCD is currently working on outreach materials to educate and assist vegetable growers in native plant selection and maintenance strategies. This is a far from complete list, but special thanks to the Department of Public Works, Indy Urban Acres, CUES Farm at Butler University, the STEM Connection at Moore Road Farm, Touba Gardens, the Normandy Barn at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, St. Alban's Peace Garden, the Flanner House, Groundwork Indy, and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful in partnering in this effort to get native roots in the ground.



Native Planting at STEM Farm

Click [HERE](#) for more info on Pollinators

# URBAN GROWER WORKSHOP SERIES 2019

## 2019 Grower Workshop schedule

- April 25: Seedling Production at Mad Farmers Collective (MFC)
- May 2: Lasagna Gardening at Temple Garden\*\*
- May 16: Urban Livestock at Paramount School of Excellence
- June 6: Summer Production in High Tunnels at MFC
- June 20: Veggie Wash-Pack at MFC
- July 11: Intro to Cut Flowers at Indy Urban Acres
- July 25: Native Plants for Pollinators and Pest Control at CUE Farm at Butler University\*\*
- August 1: Organic Pest Control at MFC
- August 22: Soil Health in Intensive Production at Eagle Creek Community Garden\*\*
- September 5: Vermicomposting at Lawrence Community Garden
- Sept. 28 (Saturday 2-4:30): Season Extension at MFC

\*Workshops with (\*) are offered in partnership with Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District

## GROWER WORKSHOPS: JOIN US IN THE FIELD THIS SEASON!

Visit urban farms and gardens around Indy to build your skills and connect to other growers. Workshops take place Thursday evenings from 6 - 8 pm. Workshops are \$10/each or \$8/each if you register for 3 or more.

See full workshop descriptions and REGISTER:  
<http://www.cvent.com/d/h6qcmy>

*Also check out...*

### URBAN AG CERTIFICATE

A yearlong experience to gain knowledge and connections to build and sustain your urban farm or garden. Next course launches in November 2019!

## LEARN - CONNECT - GROW



**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY®

Extension  
MARION COUNTY

Connect with us!

Instagram: @purdueurbanag  
[www.indygrown.com](http://www.indygrown.com)

<https://www.purdue.edu/dffs/urbanag/>

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service is an equal access/equal opportunity institution.

Register for Grower Workshops [HERE](#)





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

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

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

**We are now looking for 2019 Supporting Affiliate Members! Please consider supporting your Marion County SWCD. Applications are available on our website: [www.marionswcd.org](http://www.marionswcd.org)**

## Sudden Oak Death Warning

**Sudden Oak Death (SOD)** is caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*, a water mold pathogen. The pathogen is also the cause of the Ramorum Leaf Blight, Ramorum Dieback and *Phytophthora* Canker Diseases. SOD was first detected in the San Francisco Bay Area in the mid-1990s. It was first recognized as killing trees in Oregon forests in in 2001. The SOD pathogen is considered especially dangerous because it affects a wide variety of trees, shrubs and plants and there is no known cure. The pathogen has killed millions of tanoak and coast live oak trees along the central CA coast into Southern OR and is a concern because it also infects rhododendron, camellia and other common horticultural nursery plants

Indiana DNR Division of Entomology & Plant Pathology inspectors detected SOD (*Phytophthora ramorum*) in several varieties of rhododendrons being sold in more than 70 Walmart store and 18 Rural Kings. If you have purchased rhododendrons in 2019 call 1-866-NO-EXOTIC (663-9684) or call the local county extension office at 1-888-EXT-INFO

(1-888-398-4636) for instructions.

For more information click [HERE](#).

Follow us on our new Facebook page!



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