



CONSERVATION AT THE CROSSROADS

Vol. 34, No. 2, Spring, 2013

SWCD Has New Options for Rain Barrel Sales

The last three summers we have experienced extended periods of draughty weather. Be prepared this year to conserve precious rainwater by collecting it in rain barrels for your flowers and shrubs. You will save money on your water bills and be helping the environment. Rain barrels not only help conserve water they also help decrease flooding and stormwater runoff.

The Marion County SWCD sells rain barrels year round. We now have two styles for sale:

Our **original rain barrel** (right) has approximately a 50 gallon capacity, is a sealed system – no worry about breeding mosquitoes, it has brass hardware, and comes with a water saver overflow protection to divert overflow to your existing downspout. This barrel is \$100 including sales tax.



Our **new economy model** has approximately a 50 gallon capacity, it comes with a screen top to keep out mosquitoes, has plastic spigot and overflow. You will use your own downspout elbow to direct

rainwater into the barrel. The cost of this barrel is \$60 including tax.

Proceeds from rain barrel sales are used to help promote environmental projects through the SWCD.

To order, stop by or call the office at 317-786-1776 or print out an order form from our website at <http://marionswcd.org/rain-barrels/>

SWCD

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Notice:

Spring Tree Sale Cancelled

We are sorry, but due to hail damage there were not enough high quality trees & shrubs available for our sale this spring.

Check back with us - We plan to have a tree & shrub sale in the fall!

Download New “Your Yard, Your Shrubs” Publication for Free!

If you have benefitted from the Hoosier Heartland RC&D’s publication “Your Yard, Your Trees” you will be excited to see their new publication “Your Yard, Your Shrubs” booklet.

Native Shrubs play an important role in our urban landscapes. Shrubs can provide beauty and variety to our lawns. They can provide nutritious food and good habitat for birds and small mammals. Natives are well adapted to our region, are favored sources for wildlife and are not invasive growers that will compete with other plants.

This publication will give you ideas on how to add these beneficial shrubs to your landscape. It is currently only available online.

Check it out at:

<http://hhrcd.org/YYYS%20FINAL.pdf>



Don't Miss IUPUI's Soils Class - *Critical Information for all Land Users*

The Soils Geography Course will be offered this coming fall semester. The classes will be held on Wednesdays from 4:00 – 6:40 p.m. in Cavanaugh Hall on the IUPUI campus starting August 21st. Four field trips will be a part of the class to give you “hands-on” experience in the field. This is a “for credit” class. This course is a MUST for anyone serious about making land use decisions. We highly recommend it!

Two classes are available – G404 offers 3 credit hours for undergraduates and G704 offers 3 graduate credits.

To view options and be admitted to the register at IUPUI, contact the Admissions Center at enroll.iupui.edu/admissions or phone (317) 274 4591. For walk-in admissions information and assistance with registration go to Admissions Center, 255 Campus Center, 420 University Blvd.

For further course information contact: Dr. Rick Bein - Phone: (317) 274-1100; Department of Geography (317) 274-8877; Fax: (317) 278-5220 [rbein@iupui.edu] IUPUI, Cavanaugh Hall, Room 213D, 425 University Blvd, Indianapolis, In 46202.

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.



Conservation at the Crossroads is published quarterly to give information to landusers by the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District, Discovery Hall, 1202 E. 38th St, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46205
Phone: 317-786-1776 FAX: 317-786-1757 website: marionswcd.org
The Marion County SWCD holds a regular monthly board meeting on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 3:00 p.m. These meetings are open to the public & are held at the SWCD office at the address above. This board meets to administer the program of soil & water conservation in Marion County. The district prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Upper White River Watershed Alliance Cost Share Program

Marion County is fortunate to have a number of watershed groups working in our county this year. One of those groups is the Upper White River Watershed Alliance (UWRWA), working in those areas of the northeast portion of our county which drain into the White River. This group is active in work which will improve the water quality of these streams and the White River.

In order to help landowners better care for their watershed, a cost share program is underway which will help to offset the costs of a variety of Best Management Practices (BMPs) that work to reduce nonpoint source water pollutants. The funds are targeted to priority areas of the watershed which can be viewed on their website at www.uwrwa.org

Funding is available for both agricultural and urban practices, with a focus on urban projects. Projects may include practices such as rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales, porous or permeable pavement, wetland creation or restoration, filter strips, grassed waterways, and cover crops.

For more information check out their website above or click the Water / Watershed tabs on our website: www.marionswcd.org

Cost Share Funds Still Available for Fall Creek Watershed Projects

The Fall Creek Watershed Project is in full gear and many projects have been approved to start this spring. Be a part of the solution to improve water quality in your watershed.

Several cost-share programs are available to offset the expense of urban practices. Practices are varied and could include rain gardens / bioswales, water edge enhancements, filter strips, invasive plant removal, prairie plantings, tree plantings, and woodland and wildlife habitat.

For application deadlines and details, contact the Leslie White, Fall Creek Watershed Partnership Backyard Conservation Coordinator, at 317-773-2181 or email Leslie at leslie-white@iaswcd.org

Which Watershed do you live in? Where does your surface water go once it enters your ditch or storm drain? Are you in a critical area for a watershed project? Check out this EPA website to give you an idea of where you are in your watershed:

<http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/index.cfm>

Once you know which watershed you're in, check out our website to see if there is a watershed program currently working in your area:

<http://marionswcd.org/water/water-sheds/>

Get involved and make your neighborhood a healthier place to live!

SWCD & Fall Creek Watershed Partnership Recognize Exemplary Conservation Partners

Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Supervisors President Brian Neilson and Fall Creek Watershed Partnership's Coordinator Leslie White recognized community members at the Marion County SWCD's 2013 Annual Meeting at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. Neilson and White presented the following individuals and organizations with certificates for their outstanding commitment to backyard and urban conservation practices that improve water quality, soil health and natural resources.

- **Dean Farr**, Pheasants Forever and Geist/Fall Creek Watershed Alliance: Clean Water Conservation Initiatives; Geist/Fall Creek Watershed Management Plan
- **Maggie Goglein**, Fall Creek Gardens Executive Director: Bioswale, native plantings and rain water catchment system
- **Noelle Malatestinic**, City of Indianapolis Neighborhood Liaison for the Outer Northeast Region: Community Outreach to Encourage Urban Conservation Practices
- **Joyce Moore**, Urban Patch Program Director and Fall Creek Gardens Board President: Bioswale, native plantings, rain water catchment system, and Historic Meridian Park residential rain gardens
- **Scott Rodgers**, Geist Lake Coalition Board Member, Geist/Fall Creek Watershed Alliance and Upper White River Watershed Alliance Board Member: Clean Water Conservation Initiatives; Geist/Fall Creek Watershed Management Plan; two Lake and River Enhancement grant projects
- **Miriam Ross**, Devonshire Neighborhood Resident; rain garden, native shrub and wildflower plantings, and wildlife habitat
- **Doug Beyers**, Windridge Condominium Owners' Association Property Manager: stormwater bioretention practices – rain gardens and bioswale system; streambank stabilization
- **Tom Ulsas**, Windridge Condominium Owners' Association Board Member: stormwater bioretention practices – rain gardens and bioswale system; streambank stabilization
- **Doug Wickersham**, Fort Harrison State Park Property Manager: rain garden and rain barrel demonstration site at the Park's Visitor Center
- **Jeff Cummings**, Fort Harrison State Park Naturalist: rain garden and rain barrel demonstration site at the Park's Visitor Center

The Backyard Conservation Award honors those who actively promote and practice clean water and soil health conservation measures, bring nature to people, beautify communities, and encourage conservation partnerships across neighborhoods and the Fall Creek and Upper White River watershed region.

Support the Mission of the Marion County SWCD by becoming an Affiliate Member! Check our website: www.marionswcd.org or call the office for more information (317)786-1776

Kids Love to Learn All Summer

Take advantage of the dog days of an Indiana summer this year and make learning a fun and memorable experience this summer. No need listening to “I’m Bored!” complaints! Here are just a few ideas to keep kids (and adults) active, entertained and having fun learning:

1) Visit an Indiana State Park! Parks provide educational, fun activities throughout the summer that will be enjoyable for the whole family. Want to get more involved? Join the “Friends Group” for Fort Harrison State Park or another favorite. Friends help the park by volunteering for needed events or projects or helping financially. Links to each state park and reservoir Friends group are at www.StateParks.IN.gov/2442.htm

2) Visit a museum or historic places. Indianapolis has many great museums for kids and adults to enjoy. Check them out at <http://visitindy.com/indianapolis-attractions-museums>

3) Plant a garden! Kids benefit greatly from time outside and getting their hands dirty gardening is so much fun they won’t even realize their learning. Learn gardening tips for our area from Marion County Master Gardener Jo Ellen Myers Sharp at www.hoosiergardener.com

4) Go canoeing or kayaking and learn about local watersheds

5) Check out Go FishIN in the City! With the help of local partners, the DNR will stock 5,000 catchable-size channel catfish this spring and summer, spreading them throughout small lakes in urban areas. Selected lakes are located in city parks that are family friendly, well maintained, and have amenities. Among the chosen lakes is Krannert Lake in Indianapolis!

6) Help kids learn about aquatic troublemakers at the Nab the Aquatic

Invader website: <http://www.iiseagrant.org/nabinvader/>

7) Visit a Farmers Market – a listing of those in the Indy area can be found at <http://visitindy.com/indianapolis-farmer-markets>

8) Tour a dairy farm. Take a day trip to northern Indiana and visit Fair Oaks Farm. Conveniently located right on I-65 near Brookston is a large dairy open everyday for tours. You can take a bus tour to visit the cows and watch them be milked, see how cheese and ice cream are made and stick around awhile so you can even see a calf birth. Be sure to try their award winning cheeses and yummy ice cream!

9) Sign your kids up for 4H! 4H is not just for country kids. They have great projects for kids with all kinds of interests. Their project books are great for making learning fun. Sign up now at <http://www.four-h.purdue.edu/>, have fun working on projects then enjoy the county fair!!

10) Rainy day? Check out all the fun and educational games at www.myamericanfarm.org/games. This is a really popular agricultural education gaming site sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Foundation, DuPont and Pioneer Seed. It also has educator resources and fun family activities.

11) Lots of learning about forestry and natural resources can be found on Purdue’s website. Check out their page for educators and students at <https://ag.purdue.edu/fnr/Pages/extteacherres.aspx> Then take a walk at a local park with your “50 Trees of Indiana” book and see how many trees you can identify.

12) Visit the Indiana State Fair August 2-18th. Be sure to go by the Pathway to Water Quality demonstration area – they are celebrating their 20th year at the state fair!

Invasive Plants Damage Ecosystems *Workshops Planned to Help You*

Want to learn more about invasive plants and how they affect songbirds and natural systems? Then come to one of the workshops shown below that are jointly sponsored by the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library and the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District. These one hour workshops will help you learn to identify common invasive plants, understand the damages they are causing in our county and how easy it is to control many of them.



Please join us at one of these workshops conveniently held at several Marion County Library Branches:

July 6 – Wayne Branch – 2 PM.

July 29 – Garfield Park Branch – 6 PM

August 3 - Eagle Branch – 1 PM

August 10 – Irvington Branch – 10:30 AM

August 10 – Lawrence Branch – 1PM

August 12 – Glendale Branch – 6 PM

**August 26 – Franklin Road Branch –
6:30 PM**

Water, Water Everywhere!

If you are experiencing drainage problems in Marion County you are not alone! The SWCD has developed fact sheets to help you solve surface and subsurface drainage problems around your home. You can find them on our website under the Soil - Soil Types and Drainage tab:

<http://marionswcd.org/soil/soil-types-and-drainage/>

If you need further assistance please contact our office at 317-786-1776

2013 SWCD Affiliate Members

Silver Member

Marion County Farm Bureau

Nickel Members

Professor Frederick Bein
George Haerle in honor of Eli Bloom

Copper Members

Bob Eddleman
Ruth & Paul Hayes in honor of Eli Bloom

Thank you Affiliate Members for your support of conservation through the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District!

“Go Green” at our Website: www.marionswcd.org

Have you visited our newly updated website yet? Be sure to check out the “Go Green” tab at the top of the homepage (www.marionswcd.org) where you will find lots of ideas and new information on ways to create a healthy home and neighborhood.

The first option under the “Go Green” tab is information on **Plants**. Here you will find information on native plants and trees and why they are the best choice for your yard and gardens. You will also see information on invasive species of plants that are wreaking havoc in our community. See which plants are trouble makers and what can be done to stop their spread.

You can also download the new “Your Yard, Your Shrubs” booklet from this page. Learn how shrubs can be a great addition to your lawn.

Next under the “Go Green” tab is **Water Management**. Here you will find information on rain barrels, rain gardens and bioswales. Each of these best management practices for neighborhoods helps homeowners and the community deal with the weather extremes – both flooding and

Farm Services Agency News Marion/Johnson Counties

3059 N. Morton
Franklin, IN 46131
317-736-6822



**July 15th - Deadline to report
corn & soybean acres**

**July 31st - Deadline to sign up for
DCP Program**

draught, which we’ve seen so much of in the last few years.

Interested in wildlife? Look at our **Wildlife page** for information on creating backyard wildlife habitat and finding helpful websites focusing on all types of wildlife issues. Also check our News page periodically for articles on current wildlife issues for our county. Currently we have an article posted on how to manage nuisance geese.

Our **Lawn & Garden page** is a great place to visit. Here you will find timely, seasonal tips on how to treat your lawn more naturally. There is information on lawn care, soil testing, composting and mulching. We’ve also listed some great lawn and garden websites. This page is a work in progress so visit often for helpful garden tips throughout the seasons.

Looking for even **More**? The last title under our “Go Green” tab is for everything else we think you will find helpful in creating a Green lifestyle. Here you’ll find information such as Backyard Conservation, conservation planning, the Sustain Indy program, where to recycle in Indianapolis, and helpful resources for environmental education. Check here often for the latest ideas on conservation and green living.

Congratulations Indy!

The Arbor Day Foundation has awarded Indianapolis a Tree City USA Growth Award Winner! The Growth Award highlights innovative programs and projects, increased commitment resources for urban forestry, and provides an opportunity to share new ideas and successes across the country.

**Contact Us
for more
information on soil
& water related
issues**

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**On the Web:
marionswcd.org**



Address Service Requested

Spring Into Natural Lawn Care

Seeing the lawn green up in early spring reminds us to take another step towards a healthier community by treating our lawns naturally. Here are some ideas:

Soil Testing – If you did not get your soil test done last fall, take samples and send them in this spring to help you adjust your fertilization plan for this summer and fall - add only what your lawn really needs! See our website under the Soil tab for a listing of soil testing labs and instructions for how to take your samples. (www.marionswcd.org)

Mowing – Bump your mower up a level. Keeping your lawn height higher will help to shade out weeds, improve your grass root structure, keep the soil cooler and reduce moisture loss. Keep your grass 2.5 – 4 inches tall (depending on type of grass) and only mow 1/3 of the blades' height at a time.

Core Cultivation & Compost Topdressing – Core Cultivation or Aeration helps to decrease thatch, improves water percolation and air movement through the soil. Spring is a great time to aerate and

prepare your lawn for compost topdressing while the temperatures are still cool. Compost will add much needed organic matter and some nutrients to your soil. Compost can also help speed up decomposition of thatch. Add a 1/4" layer of compost over the lawn and drag a mat or otherwise work the compost into the holes created with core aeration.

Corn Gluten and Herbicidal Soaps – Corn Gluten has been shown to be an effective natural herbicide, but it needs to be put on in early spring before the weed seeds have sprouted. Corn Gluten application can be a little tricky to time. Read instructions carefully. You will need to treat your lawn for 3 years in order to obtain 90% weed control. Herbicidal soaps are also used with success on small annual and biennial weeds. They will kill desirable plants as well as weeds so use them carefully.

Check our website under the "Go Green - Lawn & Garden" tab for more information and watch for updates over the next few months on Natural Lawn Care ideas for each season.

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