



Conservation in the Neighborhood

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Save the Date! November 29th Nutrient Management for Veggie Growers

Marion County SWCD Nutrient Management Workshop for Vegetable Growers
Thursday, November 29, 2018
9:00 a.m. to 2 p.m.
John Boner
Neighborhood Center
2236 E. 10th St. Indianapolis

through the SWCD mailing list. Questions about the workshop can be directed to kevin-allison@iaswcd.org



Save the date for this educational workshop on managing the amount, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments!

Last fall, growers came together with the SWCD to learn from two soil consultants about organic nutrient management. This year, the workshop will dive deep into real-life Indianapolis growing scenarios and demonstrate ways to budget, supply, and conserve nutrients for our crops. The SWCD looks forward to offering this workshop to help growers close the loop of soil testing, crop needs, and the actual application of organic fertilizers and soil amendments on small farms and gardens. Workshop registration will be opened in October and advertised

This educational event is made possible by grant funding awarded to the SWCD from Clean Water Indiana. Responsible nutrient management improves the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil, thereby enhancing its ability to infiltrate and clean water.



Keep it Covered!



Cover Crops provide many benefits! To learn more about soil health visit our website:

<http://marionswcd.org/soil-health-initiative/>

A Big "Thank You!" to volunteers from CareSource who helped with maintenance for the Ron Lauster Memorial Rain Garden.



This time of year, fall preparation of our farms and gardens is on our minds. We are still reaping the rewards of our summer vegetable crops. Yet many of you are likely planting your cool-weather crops, and thinking about putting your garden to bed for the winter. At the District, we are focused on planting cover crops.

A cover crop is an unharvested crop grown as part of planned crop rotation to provide

conservation benefits to the soil. Cover crops are grown between vegetable seasons to protect and improve the soil. Their living roots build organic matter that keep garden soils alive and healthy. Cover crops keep the soil covered through the winter, reducing erosion and building organic matter.

We offer **free** cover crop seed packages for micro farms and backyard gardeners through our Soil Health Initiative. The

packages can be picked up now through November from our District office. We offer planting guidance and technical assistance through our staff. If you are new to cover crops, or want to try something new, we can give you management tips and best practices that are suited to your situation.

Seed species available: oats, crimson clover, cereal rye, hairy vetch.

State Fair Wrap-up:

Normandy Barn Rain Garden & Pathway

By John Hazlett, District Manager

Any Hoosier knows that August is State Fair time and this year's fair attendance was over 860,000! District staff were present throughout the fair's 17 day run, leading a volunteer cleanup of the Normandy Barn Rain Garden, volunteering at the Pathway to Water Quality and holding soil health demonstrations. The week before the fair, I had the pleasure of leading a group of volunteers from CareSource in cleaning up the Ron Lauster Memorial Rain Garden located adjacent to the Normandy Barn. Cleanup activities included weeding and mulching. The native plant communities in the rain garden are well established and the deep roots promote infiltration of stormwater runoff from the barn's roof. Thank you CareSource for your help sprucing up the garden!

This was the 26th year for the Pathway to Water Quality ("Pathway") exhibit sponsored by the state and federal agencies collaborating through the Indiana Conservation Partnership. Pathway was once a parking lot and has been transformed over the years to a model watershed that includes a variety of exhibits and activities to teach visitors about how to improve water quality on their own properties. District staff members were amongst the 210 staff and volunteers who interacted with the estimated 60,000 visitors to Pathway this year. In addition to traditional features such as the model home, Water History Cabin's Well Pump, and Woodlands area. Pathway included a soil health tunnel, gabion basket display and a new grassed waterway. District staff Kevin Allison and Harold Thompson completed 17 soil health demonstrations to share their unique knowledge with visitors. Thanks to Pathway Coordinator Sara Peel and the ICP partners for the planning and coordination, and we look forward to supporting Pathway next year!

Two Marion County River Friendly Farmer Awardees

In these days of water quality concerns, there are those that are utilizing conservation practices on their farms that are protecting waterways and water quality in Indiana and beyond. In Marion County both Indy Urban Acres and the STEM Connection Moore Road Farm are among 49 farmers who received the statewide award of 'River-Friendly Farmer' at the Indiana State Fair on Farmers' Day August 15. This award, hosted by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), recognizes landowners and farmers in the state of Indiana for the work they do on their land to protect Indiana's natural resources.

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Indy Urban Acres and the STEM farm for the award based upon their farm management practices and benefits to needs and education in our community. **Indy Urban Acres**, a project of the Indianapolis Parks Foundation, grows 45 types of fruits and vegetables. 100% of the produce is donated to people in need. They are committed to both soil conservation and education. **The STEM Connection**



Indy Urban Acres receive River Friendly Farmer Award.

Moore Road Farm is a 30-acre production farm and learning site located in the historic Traders Point Rural Historic District and Eagle Creek watershed. Recently, this farm received an Outstanding Education and Conservation Award for their outreach and education efforts. Both of these farms work closely with the SWCD sharing experiences and ideas as they work with us to promote conservation education.

Amie Sites from Brownfield Ag News read a short bio as the award recipients received their individual ribbon and certificate from Indiana Lieutenant Governor, Suzanne Crouch, and President of Indiana Farm Bureau, Randy Kron. Jerry Raynor, the new Indiana State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) and IASWCD President, Jamie Scott made brief remarks congratulating the recipients.

The River-Friendly Farmer Award has been presented by the IASWCD and sponsored by the 92 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. since 2000. This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River-Friendly Farmers in Indiana since the awards beginning to 961.

For a complete list of this year's winners along with a short bio and photo (if provided), go to: <http://iaswcd.org/river-friendly-farmer-award/>.



Congratulations to the STEM Farm!

SWCD featured in Indy Star's Food Desert Article

Support the Marion County SWCD by becoming an Affiliate Member. For information check our website: www.marionswcd.org or email juliefarr@iaswcd.org

Contact Urban Health Specialist [Kevin Allison](#) for more information on our soil health program



The problem of food deserts has been a hot topic for Indianapolis for many years, especially since the closure of the Marsh stores. Food deserts are areas of the city in which residents do not have access to a grocery store nearby. Many of these areas have low income populations making the distance an even greater problem. Food pantries often have a hard time keeping up with the needs and many rarely have good quality fresh produce available on a regular basis.

The Indianapolis Star recently published a series of articles dealing with this problem and the efforts being put forth by the mayor and many entities to try to make progress in bringing good quality fresh foods to these areas. The Marion County SWCD has been a part of these efforts as we promote our soil health initiatives including local small farms who are pursuing these markets. A new report from the Indy Food Council estimates the number of urban and community gardens in

Indianapolis has risen 272 percent since 2011, from 54 to 147 at the end of 2016. One such farm is Indy Urban Acres who grow 45 different fruits and vegetables for those in need. (See article on page 3)

Check out these Indy Star articles for more

information:

[https://www.indystar.com/story/news/environment/2018/09/04/indianapolis-food-](https://www.indystar.com/story/news/environment/2018/09/04/indianapolis-food-deserts-farm-table-restaurant-trend/1111620002/)

[deserts-farm-table-restaurant-trend/1111620002/](https://www.indystar.com/story/news/environment/2018/09/04/soil-health-movement-infiltrates-indianapolis/1142618002/)
<https://www.indystar.com/story/news/environment/2018/09/04/soil-health-movement-infiltrates-indianapolis/1142618002/>

Soil health is an important key in this discussion as the health of the soil plays an important role in the health of the food being produced. Soil conservation is also imperative for protecting our watersheds and their water quality.

Our Soil Health Guide provides growers with great background information on how to manage their soil well for best production and soil protection. Find it on our website at: <http://marionswcd.org/soil-health-guide/>

INPAWS 25th Annual Conference

The Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society invites you to celebrate their 25th year at their annual conference Saturday, November 3rd from 8:40 a.m. to 4:10 p.m. The conference will be held at Hine Hall, Indiana University–Purdue University at Indianapolis, [850 W Michigan St, Indianapolis, IN 46202](#). The cost is INPAWS members \$70; non-members \$85; students \$35. Parking fee included.

This year's speaker line ups include many professionals in horticulture who come to share their expertise. The conference will include an abundance of exhibits by sponsors and non-profit organizations, along with a book sale and silent auction.

Detailed information about speakers and topics is posted at <http://www.inpaws.org/ac2018-program/>

Winterization for Construction Sites

Under ideal circumstances for water quality all construction sites would have good vegetative cover throughout and construction would shut down for the winter. But this is not the case for most construction sites in Indianapolis which remain active all winter. Our wet cold winters in central Indiana necessitate pre-planning and preparation for those in charge of erosion control installation and maintenance. Below are a few suggestions for keeping the soil on the site.

- 1) Expect the cost for inspections and maintenance of erosion control to increase substantially during the winter.
- 2) Minimize the amount of soil disturbed and left unprotected.
- 3) Create wide buffer strips of vegetation downhill from slopes.

- 4) Divert surface runoff away from critical slopes to a safe outlet.
- 5) Use thick mulch (twice as thick as during the growing season) with netting on bare areas.
- 6) Hydroseed where erosion control blankets are not appropriate.
- 7) Protect bare swales and channels with rip rap or high quality erosion control blankets.
- 8) Inspect all erosion control practices regularly.

If you have questions or a problem area on your site feel free to contact our office. Our erosion control specialist Cheyenne Hoffa will be happy to meet you to discuss options.



Professor Rick Bein Retires from IUPUI

Long time SWCD Supervisor Rick Bein is retiring from his position as Professor of Geography at IUPUI. Rick has served in this position since 1978. He also serves as Adjunct Professor of Geography at Moi University in Kenya.

Professor Bein has taught

a soils class at IUPUI for many decades that has promoted the importance of soil, the limitations and strengths of various soil types, the crucial need for soil conservation and how to identify and find the best uses for the variety of soil types we find in Indiana.

Rick has also worked with the SWCD staff to develop internships & class projects which have benefited both the students and the District. SWCD staff members have also enjoyed being guest speakers for his classes.

The Marion County SWCD Board and staff congratulates Rick on his retirement and thanks him for all of his many years of work in promoting conservation and conservation education.



Event Highlight:

Permaculture Film Screening



A panel of local Permaculture practitioners followed the film:

Colleen Donahoe and Greg Monzel
Wild Persimmon School of Wellness
<https://wildpersimmonwellness.wordpress.com/>
Rhonda Baird
Sheltering Hills Design
<http://www.shelteringhills.net/>
Laura Recendez and Nick Milan
Chickadee Gardens
<https://www.facebook.com/chickadeegardensfarm/>
Kay Grimm and Sue Spicer
Fruit Loop Acres
<http://www.fruitloopacres.ka.sue.org/>

The District hosted a film screening of *Inhabit: A Permaculture Perspective* at the Irving Theater in the Irvington neighborhood on the east side of Indianapolis. Thanks to targeted marketing efforts by our Outreach Coordinator Elli Blaine, Soil Health Specialist Kevin Allison and other partners, we had over 130 individuals register for the event and approximately 85 attended the event! The film featured a variety of permaculture work happening at the urban, suburban and rural scale primarily in New England and Wisconsin.

Permaculture is based on the principles of working with nature to integrate plant, food and water systems and eliminate the concept of waste, since nature “recycles” all waste through the process of decomposition and nutrient uptake. Water management, shade and aspect are key site design considerations in permaculture design and soil health is paramount to this systems approach. The district had worked with permaculture principles in [vacant lot design charettes](#) completed last summer and the film provided new aspirations for how thoughtful design restores the environment.

An interactive panel with local permaculture practitioners followed the film screening, revealing the variety of work happening at the local level. A listing of the panelists is provided on the left sidebar along with project websites. We hope to build on the buzz and interest by hosting a tour of some of these projects next Spring, so stay tuned! The event was made possible by Clean Water Indiana grant funds from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil Conservation.

Invasive Highlight: Purple Winter Creeper

The traits that made the Purple Winter Creeper a great ornamental have now caused it to become a highly invasive plant. Those traits included rapid growth, evergreen color, glossy leaves and tolerance to harsh growing conditions. It outcompetes native plants by blocking sunlight, depleting soil moisture and nutrients, and by forming such a dense mat that it impedes or stops the growth of native plants. Vines growing vertical on trees can eventually overtop them, climbing

up to 70 feet and stopping photosynthesis by the tree. Fall color is green to purple. Control is best achieved by injuring the plant with a weed eater, lawnmower or other tool and spraying the plant with a systemic herbicide such as glyphosate or triclopyr.

For more information on invasive species check out our website pages: <http://marionswcd.org/invasive-species/>



The Challenge of Water Quality



carries a toxic cocktail from our trucks and cars, our farms and rooftops, our driveways and parking lots into our rivers, streams, lakes, and bays. Add to that the enormously damaging runoff from

When Congress passed the Clean Water Act in 1972, it called for America's waterways to be swimmable and fishable again by 1983. But our great waterways are still in peril and face new waves of pollution. For a decade or so after the Clean Water Act, tough enforcement by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made significant gains by targeting "point sources pollution" - pollution coming out of a pipe- the EPA repaired some of the worst damage. But the challenge today is more complex, largely because today's pollution is nearly invisible.

Contaminants pervade our lives. Harmful chemicals exist in everyday consumer products from home cleaning agents to pesticides and herbicides that we use on our lawns, to personal care products like toothpaste, deodorants, shampoos, certain soaps, and discarded pharmaceuticals. When it rains, stormwater runoff from roads and highways

agricultural operations across the country, primarily large livestock operations. The runoff from manure piles carries not only bacteria and e coli into our waterways but also excess nitrogen and phosphorus, and they spawn the dead zones which suffocate crabs, oysters, fish, and other species.

The third major challenge comes from growth and the sprawl of development- millions of people crowding into the land that lies close to our major waterways and paving over thousands of acres of forest and farmland. These congregations of people not only cause gridlock and ugly sprawl, but spells disaster for the quality of water, unless we learn how to mitigate the impact of so much unchecked growth.

Solutions do exist. Local communities are cleaning up old industrial sites. Watershed coalitions are recovering natural habitat for endangered species.

Grass roots groups have curbed uncontrolled growth. Suburban counties have adopted "Smart Growth" strategies. Others have tackled the difficult issues of better land use to protect the environment. So steps can be taken. Each of us has an important role. Increase your awareness of water quality issues, and then join with your local community organization, government, and soil and water conservation district (SWCD) to help clean up your local waters.

More information on watersheds and water quality issues can be found on our website:
marionswcd.org





MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
— CONSERVATION DISTRICT —

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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.

THANK YOU Supporting Affiliate Members!

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 Michael Surak
Dennis Slaughter Ryan Chrobot

Save the Date!

Marion County SWCD Annual Meeting - Tuesday, February 19th

Plan to join us as we celebrate the SWCD's 50th year of working to conserve our natural resources! We are planning a great time to hear about all of the progress that is being made in our county.

Highlights from our year and programs and an informative guest speaker will round out the celebration. Keep an eye on our website for more details!



www.marionswcd.org

Follow us on our new Facebook page!



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