



# Conservation in the Neighborhood

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## Wisconsin Urban Farm & Restoration Agriculture Tour

Through a special opportunity offered by Purdue Extension, Kevin Allison (MCSWCD staff), Maggie Goeglein (District Supervisor), and Jerod Chew (District Conservationist) joined a weeklong tour of unique urban and ecologically focused small farms in and near Milwaukee and Madison, Wisconsin in early June. The purpose of the trip was to introduce beginning farmers, Extension staff, and SWCD partners to established and innovative urban farms, farm markets, CSA collaboratives, and small rural farms focused on restorative agriculture.

On the urban side of the trip, the group visited Alice's Garden, Firefly Ridge Community Garden, and Growing Power in Milwaukee, as well as the

Fondy Farmer's Market and Fondy Farm, which is located just outside of Milwaukee and gives urban farmers access to larger parcels of land. All of these enterprises seek to make healthy food available and affordable to their underserved communities. In Madison, the F. H. King Farm in the Eagle Heights Community Garden, is run by students at UW-Madison and provides free produce to the school community.

Leaving the cities behind, the next stop was Carandale Farm in Dane County, a pick-your-own fruit farm that also houses ongoing research of lesser-known perennial fruiting plant species, with the goal of identifying new species for commercial production and helping to re-

establish and maintain a regional marketing infrastructure with a smaller environmental footprint.

Next, the group arrived at Mastodon Valley Farm, near Viola, WI, where Peter and Maureen Allen are restoring their land to the oak savanna ecosystem that is native to it. The savanna system supports perennial fruit and nut crops and a variety of pastured meats produced through a multi-species grazing system.

The final farm tour was with Mark Shepard at New Forest Farm, a large-scale conversion of degraded conventional farmland into a perennial agricultural ecosystem. Like the Allens, Shepard also seeks to replicate the oak savanna biome, where trees, shrubs, vines, canes, perennial plants, and fungi are planted together in ways that conserve water and produce food, fuel, and medicines while filling ecosystem niches all along the spectrum between forest and meadow.

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Walking labyrinth planted in herbs at Alice's Garden, Milwaukee, WI.

# Soil Health Assistance & Cost Share



Soil Health Program assists growers

The Soil Health Program Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are in place to help people help the land. The Soil Health Program is an initiative to provide technical and financial assistance to improve soil health and water quality in Marion and Hendricks Counties. The program is made possible through Clean Water Indiana competitive grant funds awarded to the districts.

Soil health is the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Improving it can be accomplished through a systems approach to your landscape: Disturbing the soil as little as possible, keeping plants growing throughout the year to feed soil life, maximizing plant diversity where possible, and keeping the soil covered and

protected. Soil building practices like nutrient management, garden cover crops, mulching, and deep rooted native plants are tools that the SWCD can help you understand and utilize.

For more information click the link below:

[2016 SWCD Soil Health Program Guidance](#)

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In addition to the farm tours, there were conversations with groups focused on infrastructure and research such as the FairShare Community Supported Agriculture Coalition, and the Center for Integrated Agricultural Sciences at UW-Madison. The trip was packed with fascinating information, beautiful landscapes, and deli-

cious meals at local restaurants committed to sourcing their ingredients close to home. We came home full of new ideas and much appreciation to Purdue for designing the trip and for their invitation to come along.



Restorative, sustainable agriculture at Mastodon Valley Farm made by mimicking native ecosystems.



## Learn more about the farms and programs we toured:

Alice's Garden: [www.facebook.com/AlicesGarden](http://www.facebook.com/AlicesGarden)

Growing Power: [www.growingpower.org](http://www.growingpower.org)

Fondy Farmers Market and Farm: [www.fondymarket.org](http://www.fondymarket.org)

Carandale Farm: [www.carandalefarm.com](http://www.carandalefarm.com)

Mastodon Valley Farm: [www.mastodonvalleyfarm.com](http://www.mastodonvalleyfarm.com)

New Forest Farm: <http://newforest.farm>

Center for Integrated Agriculture Sciences: [www.cias.wisc.edu](http://www.cias.wisc.edu)

FairShare CSA Coalition: [www.csacoalition.org](http://www.csacoalition.org)

# Residential Storm Credits Now Available



**Raingarden creates savings on storm-water fees**

duced in July 2015, residents are charged a user fee based on the amount of impervious surface on their properties. Go

forms for the credit as well as the Green Supplemental Document for design guidance. Planting plans and additional residential green infrastructure resources are available on the Office of Sustainability's website located here: <http://www.indy.gov/eGov/City/DPW/SustainIndy/GreenInfra/Pages/Build-Your-Own-Rain-Garden1102-7425.aspx>

Residents of Marion County can now take advantage of the Residential Property Credit and earn 25% off their stormwater bills through the City of Indianapolis' Stormwater Credit Program. Under the revised stormwater utility user fees intro-

duced in July 2015, residents are charged a user fee based on the amount of impervious surface on their properties. Go to [www.indy.gov/stormwater](http://www.indy.gov/stormwater) and utilized the City's new user interface to determine your monthly stormwater fees. Additionally, residents can find the City's Stormwater Credit Manual on the site for instructions and application

*The Marion County SWCD can help you find ways to add green infrastructure to your property.*

# Hoosier Interfaith Names New Director

Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light (H-IPL) is pleased to announce Holly Jones as its new executive director. Jones brings nearly two decades of nonprofit and environmental experience to H-IPL, most recently as the Executive Director of Indiana Urban Forest Council, which protects, expands, and improves Indiana's urban forests.

"Holly's passion for the Earth, her strong background in not-for-profit environmental leadership, track record with fundraising and collegial style together bode well for a season of growth, building on the fruitful tenure of H-IPL's first executive director, the Rev. Larry Kleiman," said acting Board Chair, The Reverend T. Wyatt Watkins. "We greet her arrival with excitement and hope."

As executive director of H-IPL, Jones will oversee the varied work of H-IPL, which ranges from equipping congregations

to reduce their energy use, to providing education about global warming and energy conversation, to advocating for public policies to benefit the environment, as well as focus on growing H-IPL's presence statewide and increasing the number of H-IPL affiliates and donors.

"My passion for building resilience to climate change through local action has never been greater," said Jones. "Having partners in the faith-based communities throughout our state is a tremendous asset in serving the greater cause."

An IU graduate with degrees in Geology and Public administration and work background in non-

profit leadership in the environmental sector, Jones brings the skills and experience of a scientist, environmentalist, educator, fundraiser, and executive leader. Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light brings together Hoosiers of faith to promote renewable energy and energy conservation and efficiency as a response to climate change. H-IPL is an affiliate of [Interfaith Power and Light](#), a national network of over 40 state chapters working to protect the earth's ecosystems, safeguard the health of all creation, and ensure sufficient, sustainable energy for all.



## Hoosier Interfaith Power & Light



# Healthy Soil for Life



Our staff can help you improve your soil's health

*Only "living" things can have health, so viewing soil as a living ecosystem reflects a fundamental shift in the way we care for our nation's soils.*

Soil health, also referred to as soil quality, is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. This definition speaks to the importance of managing soils so they are sustainable for future generations. To do this, we need to remember that soil contains living organisms that when provided the basic necessities of life - food, shelter, and water - perform functions required to produce food and fiber.

Only "living" things can have health, so viewing soil as a living ecosystem reflects a fundamental shift in the way we care for our nation's soils. Soil isn't an inert growing medium, but rather is teeming with billions of bacteria, fun-

gi, and other microbes that are the foundation of an elegant symbiotic ecosystem. Soil is an ecosystem that can be managed to provide nutrients for plant growth, absorb and hold rainwater for use during dryer periods, filter and buffer potential pollutants from leaving our fields, serve as a firm foundation for agricultural activities, and provide habitat for soil microbes to flourish and diversify to keep the ecosystem running smoothly.

For more information contact Kevin Allison, Soil Health Specialist at 317-786-1776 or email him through our website's "[Contact Us](#)" link.



## Fall Tree Sale Cancelled

Fall is the best time to plant trees!



Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Marion County SWCD fall tree sale will not take place this year.

Other SWCD's in our area are still conducting tree sales so check with the next nearest

SWCD to see what they are offering.

Visit the Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts' website for contact information:

<http://wordpress.iaswcd.org/?p=290>

Information on selecting, planting and caring for new trees can be found on our website at

<http://marionswcd.org/trees/>

# Mark Poeschle New FFA Chief Executive Officer



Congratulations to Mark Poeschl on his selection to serve as the next chief executive officer of National FFA. As the home of FFA's national headquarters as well as the

national convention, Indiana has a special appreciation for the great work of the organization to encourage, train and support the next generation of leadership in the agriculture industry. His industry experience and leadership as an FFA member and former state FFA president means Mark is uniquely qualified to lead this important organization.

"I also join all Hoosiers in thanking Dr. Dwight Armstrong for his many contributions to the agriculture indus-

try, and his personal commitment to the mission of FFA. He is a friend to all Hoosier farmers, and we wish him well in his retirement," **said Lt. Governor Eric Holcomb.**

"This organization plays a critical role in the future of agriculture by developing and investing in the lives of tomorrow's leaders, and I'm confident that under Mark's direction FFA will continue to grow and thrive."

**Support the  
Marion County  
SWCD by  
becoming an  
Affiliate Member.  
For information  
check our website:  
[www.marionswcd.org](http://www.marionswcd.org)**

## SWCD Update

The Marion County SWCD is going through some adjustments as changes are being planned for the upcoming year. We appreciate the patience you have shown us as we have been understaffed the last several months. Plans are in the works to hire a new full time Resource Conservationist to take over the Rule 5 / SWPPP program.

As the existing staff is often working out in the field, the easiest way to contact us for assistance is by emailing Kevin Allison for Soil Health program questions or Julie Farr for Rule 5 or drainage questions. You can send them an email

through our website's "Contact Us" tab. They will get back to you as soon as possible.

Engineering firms wishing to drop off construction plans should call the office to be sure a staff person will be in.

Thank you again for your patience. We continue to be committed to providing the best possible conservation assistance to our residents and landusers.



**FSA NEWS**

The latest updates on Farm Service Agency programs and sign up dates can be found on their website:

[www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

or call 317-736-6822



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

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1202 East 38th Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46205

**Phone: 317-786-1776**  
**Find us on the web:**  
**[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.

**THANK YOU Supporting Affiliate Members!**

**Ruth & Paul Hayes, in honor of Glenn Lange, Marilyn Hughes  
& George Haerle and in memory of Eli Bloom**

**George Haerle, Marion Haerle**

**Stephanie Schuck**

## Fill Your Fall with Fun & Facts!

### *Workshops & Educational Fun*

#### **Pasture Workshop, Floyd County**

**When: Tues. 10/11, 6:30 p.m.**

**Where: Purdue Polytechnic, New Albany**

**What: An informative workshop on pasture improvements for horse owners**

**Free but register at 812-945-9936**

#### **Family Fishing at the Fort**

**When: Sept 17 & 18**

**Where: Fort Harrison, Delaware Lake**

**What: A fun fishing event with stations from tying fish knots to how to hold a fish. Rod & bait provided if needed. Bring your fishing license if over 18.**

#### **SWCD Staff**

Julie Farr, Resource Conservationist PT

Kevin Allison, Urban Soil Health Specialist

Jerod Chew, NRCS District Conservationist

