



Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District

Conservation in the Neighborhood

Winter, 2014

Indianapolis, Indiana

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The Marion
County Soil
and Water
Conservation
District works to
provide technical,
financial, and
educational
services to help
Marion County
land users
conserve soil,
water, and related
natural resources.

Come Join Us

SWCD 43rd Annual Meeting - February 18th

Please plan to attend the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District on Tuesday evening, February 18th beginning at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in the third floor conference room in Discovery Hall at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

Our guest speaker for the evening will be Dr. Tim Carter, Ph.D., director of the Center for Urban Ecology at Butler University. Dr. Carter will address the ecological problems associated with alterations in urban watersheds and how they are using interdisciplinary use of technology, performance, public art and the development of an alternative currency program as outreach tools to connect the general public with their urban water system. He will propose creative and dynamic outreach tools to be explored, as new urban infrastructures related to the urban water system develop, which can translate ecological understanding to the public at large.

We will also review the programs and achievements of the SWCD during 2013 and address the plans and goals for the near future of the District.

There is no cost to attend, but **please RSVP by Thursday, February 13th** to the office (317-786-1776) so we can plan on your attendance. Enter the fairgrounds through Gate 1 or Gate 6 and follow the signs to Discovery Hall.



Annual Meeting Speaker
Dr. Tim Carter

Mark Your Calendar!
43rd Annual Meeting of the
Marion County Soil & Water
Conservation District

When: Tuesday, February 18th,
Light refreshments served at 5
p.m. with the meeting following

Where: Discovery Hall, 3rd Floor
Conference Room, Indiana State
Fairgrounds (Located in the
northwest corner of the fair-
grounds)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Tim Carter,
Director of the Center for Urban
Ecology, Butler University

Applications Still Accepted for Fall Creek Watershed Project

If you own property in the Fall Creek Watershed, you may be eligible to apply for cost share assistance for conservation projects.

Goals of the Fall Creek Watershed Project:

- “ Increase Fall Creek Watershed landowners’ and land users’ awareness and understanding of water quality issues and conservation practices that can protect water, soil and natural resources.
- “ Provide tailored “how-to” information to encourage adoption of water quality conservation practices for single family home sites, neighborhood common areas, parks, corporate campuses, and agricultural/ urban interface areas.
- “ Build and strengthen partnerships with local organizations (civic, corporate, municipal, non-profit, and educational institutions) to encourage a conservation ethic, joint projects and collaborative best management practice implementation for the betterment of Fall Creek Watershed’s environmental health.
- “ Provide financial assistance when possible to encourage implementation of conservation practices.

Fall Creek Watershed Cost-Shareable Practices

Composting	
Rain Gardens	Pervious Pavement or Pavement
Bioswales	Backyard Ponds for Wildlife
Filter Strips	Rain Barrels
Wildlife Habitat	Terracing
Mulching	Tree Planting
Native Plants	Wetlands
Nutrient Management	Water Conservation
Pest Management	Land Grading
Invasive Plant Control	Outdoor Classrooms
Water Edge Enhancements	Vegetative Streambank Stabilization



Contact Leslie White for more information (317)773-2181 or leslie-white@iaswcd.org

Thank You 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

**Become a 2014 SWCD
Affiliate Member**

Contact the SWCD
office at
317-786-1776
or check out more
information at our
website:

www.marionswcd.org

Identify - Eradicate - Replace

New Fact Sheets on Invasive Species Now Available

The Marion County SWCD is joining in the fight to help eradicate invasive species in our county and across the state, and replace these species with beneficial, native plants.

“Invasive species continue to multiply across the globe, causing billions of dollars in losses,” explains Kevin Tungesvick from Spence Restoration Nursery, a wholesale producer of native herbaceous plugs and seeds of Ohio Valley and Great Lakes origins. “Whether accidentally introduced in seed from other lands, or intentionally planted for wildlife or landscaping, invasive plants represent a significant portion of these losses. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to judge whether an introduced plant is likely to be invasive. Plants like autumn olive and Callery pear were extensively utilized for a couple of decades with few problems, but have spread explosively in recent years. These two species are likely to soon be the

most common invasive woody plants of open successional areas in the Midwest.”

Our SWCD is helping to promote the information needed to identify known problem invasive species so they will no longer be planted and those already growing in our county can be eradicated. In order to help residents identify invasive species on their own property or on public properties, fact sheets created by West Central Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) with funding by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, can now be found on our website. These fact sheets show pictures and contain descriptions of common invasives found in central Indiana and provide suggestions for how to eradicate them. The CWMA consists of 27 western and central Indiana counties and strives to help land users identify and control invasive terrestrial plants through workshops, field days and other educational activities.

In addition, the SWCD is encouraging residents to replace eradicated invasives with native species which are vitally important to our native



Autumn Olive, once highly recommended for wildlife habitat, has become an invasive species.

insect, butterfly, bird and wildlife species. Non-native plants have little to no benefit to our local ecosystems and in fact are often quite detrimental, because they can take over large areas, wiping out native plant communities. Eradicating non-natives and reestablishing native species in their place can help maintain the food chain, stabilize our ecosystems and preserve our natural history.

Check out the invasive species fact sheets on our website by going to www.marionswcd.org and click on the Go Green tab at the top of the home page. From here click “Plants” from the drop down menu. Check our website frequently through the spring and summer for updates on upcoming workshops and educational activities on invasive and native species.



Callery Pears are now an invasive species.

Replant Native Plants to Help Wildlife

The problem of invasive species taking over large areas of our woodlands, pastures and along stream corridors has grabbed the attention of many people in our state, especially those interested in wildlife, birds, insects and native flora. Eradication projects are being initiated, joining neighborhood groups, scout troops, and environmental organizations to make this labor and time intensive job do-able and even enjoyable. (See the article on page 3 to learn how to identify and eradicate our most troublesome species.)

Once eradication has been completed, native species should be planted before other undesirables move into the empty space. The definition of native plants is somewhat debatable, but basically it includes plants which grew in natural communities within the state before European contact. Native plants include trees, shrubs, grasses, sedges, forbs, ferns, bryophytes and fungi (not really plants but are plant-like). Though not yet popular in most neighborhoods, use of native plants

of all kinds for landscaping are a wonderful alternatives to reduce extensive areas of turf grass and non-natives which can eventually become unmanageable. Natives will help maintain the food chain of our native fauna, providing much needed help to stabilize our ecosystems.

In determining what to plant, look first to the soil type and growing conditions including the amount of light available for the planting area. Investigate your options to find plants suited for your area, and then look at their attributes to find ones that will give you an aesthetically pleasing mix which also will provide food and shelter for fauna species you are interested in attracting to your property.

Our website, www.marionswcd.org has a section dedicated to native species under the “Go Green – Plants” drop down menu. Even more information and great lists of native species for Indiana can be found on the Indiana Native Plant and

Wildflower Society website: www.inpaws.org Indiana is benefitted by some wonderful companies dedicated to preserving and providing native plants such as Spence Restoration Nursery (www.spencenursery.com). Other companies are listed on our website.



Rattlesnake Master

photo courtesy of Spence Restoration Nursery

Our SWCD tree and shrub sales always contain primarily native species. We plan on having another sale in the spring.

Winter is the time to be planning changes for your landscape. We encourage you to look into adding native species to your plant list.



Dense Blazing Star

photo courtesy of Spence Restoration Nursery

SWCD Spring Tree and Shrub Sale

Watch for the order form in our next newsletter. Orders will be taken in April and early May. Pick up will be at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

Stop That Dirt Campaign

Join in Reducing our Largest Pollutant

Remember the comedian Rodney Dangerfield and his famous saying “I don’t get no respect!”? When I first started working for the SWCD in the mid ‘80s, I was told that soil is the Rodney Dangerfield of the natural resource world – it gets little respect. Unfortunately that old saying remains true. Soil is not glamorous and it is esteemed by only a few who see beyond its plain exterior. But soil is the foundation for all other natural resources, where life begins and ends. Knowledge of soil types will help us make good decisions in how to use our land to its highest potential. Topsoil kept in place provides the substance needed for the life of all species.

Soil in the wrong place however is a large detriment to the environment. Soil is our country’s largest pollutant by volume. It is a carrier for potentially dangerous chemicals into our waterways and it chokes the life out of our lakes and streams. The Marion County SWCD’s main focus for many years has been to decrease the amount of erosion taking place in the county; erosion that is polluting our streams, creating blockages to our drainage systems and decreasing the productivity of the land in our county. We have worked with our farmers to improve their soil conservation measures. We have promoted watershed projects to help landowners install agricultural and urban conservation practices created to help reduce sedimentation and runoff. As our county’s largest sedimentation contributor, we work with developers and builders to encourage them to install and maintain erosion control measures during construction.



You can be a great help to us by participating in our “Stop That Dirt” campaign. As you travel around the county, if you see evidence of sediment leaving a construction site please let us know about it. You can find information on what to look for and how to contact us by visiting our website:

www.marionswcd.org and clicking the “Stop That Dirt Campaign” drop-down box off the “Soils” tab at the top of the page. Builders and developers can find erosion control requirements and information on how to control erosion on our website. Thank you for your assistance in keeping soil on the land!

Go Green!!

Save natural resources by having this newsletter emailed to you! Contact Marilyn at our office to make the switch: marilyn-hughes@iaswcd.org

Report erosion at: www.marionswcd.org

Upper White River Watershed Alliance Helps Fund Conservation Practices

In 2012, the Upper White River Watershed Alliance (UWRWA) was awarded an Indiana Department of Environmental Management Section 319 grant to implement best management practices (BMPs) in priority areas throughout Central Indiana. Through this grant, the UWRWA administers a cost-share program that landowners in priority areas can apply to and if approved, receive up to 75% reimbursement for the costs of installing conservation practices like rain gardens, native shoreline plantings, green roofs, rain barrels, and more.

To date, twenty-three projects have been approved by the UWRWA totaling \$338,930. Two of the approved projects are unique Healthy Shores Initiatives, focused on installing rain gardens and native shoreline plantings on shoreline properties around Geist and Morse Reservoirs. The other twenty-one projects are being installed on individual residences, schools, and places of worship. Seven of the approved projects are complete with the rest scheduled to be completed in 2014. Below is a highlight of two projects that were installed this year with help from the UWRWA.



Broadway United Methodist Church Rain Garden – Broadway and Fall Creek Drive

Members of the Broadway United Methodist Church, neighborhood volunteers, the Fall Creek Watershed Partnership, and the Upper White River Watershed Alliance teamed together to install the 560 square foot triangular rain

garden located behind the church's sign. The rain garden was constructed in this location to help with the large amount of stormwater runoff from the church's slate roof. Twelve different plant species were planted in the rain garden to filter pollutants and manage stormwater runoff. Plant species installed include: Prairie Dropseed, Meadow Sedge, Tufted Hair Grass, Blue Mist Flower, Smooth Beard Tongue, Foxglove Beard Tongue, Mountain Mint, Showy Black-Eyed Susan, Riddell's Goldenrod, Heath Aster, Purple Coneflower, and Blue Flag Iris.



Not only will the rain garden work to reduce the amount of pollutants and sediment that enter into Fall Creek, but it will also provide habitat for many birds, butterflies, and bees. The church also plans to use the rain garden as a meeting place for church goers, neighbors, community members, and users of the Fall Creek Trail. The church hopes that the rain garden can be a public demonstration area for all, highlighting simple conservation practices any homeowner can do.

(Continued on page 7)

Walking in a Winter Wonderland

(Continued from page 6)

MacGregor Park Pervious Pavers and Native Tree & Shrub Establishment – US 31 and SR 38

Walking in a Winter Wonderland — can be dangerous when ice builds up on sidewalks and streets. Traditionally, many people have used various types of salts to melt ice from walkways. They've worked fairly well, especially if it's not bitterly cold outside but they do have some negative environmental side effects. Many plants and trees are sensitive to salt and when salt runs off sidewalks and streets it enters our streams, creating water quality problems.

Many Indiana towns are using beet juice to help de-ice streets. A beet farmer in Illinois patented beet juice for this use in 2005 after finding that brown beet juice doesn't freeze – even when temperatures plummet below 0 degrees F! So instead of disposing of his excess brown beets, he could use them for an environmentally superior ice melting mix.

Other ways to combat ice include:

- 1) Shovel – early and often! Keeping snow off of sidewalks and driveways helps keep ice from building up. Shoveling often helps – it's much easier to shovel an inch of snow than a foot – especially if it's a wet, heavy snow. Check with your doctor before deciding whether to shovel snow yourself this winter or hire it done.
- 2) Snow melt mats – if you're building a new home and especially if your driveway will be steep, consider installing electric heaters in your driveway. Yes, you'll use extra electricity, but it will make your driveway much safer in the winter.
- 3) Use sand or even birdseed to give you some traction on sidewalks.
- 4) Wear boots or buy boot ice grippers/cleats to put on your shoes to give you much better traction for walking

If you must use salt, calcium chloride is thought to be a better choice than sodium chloride or potassium chloride. Urea is also not very environmentally friendly since you need to use ten times the amount you would need to fertilize the same area of lawn. Be sure to only use the recommended amounts and keep it away from salt sensitive plants and trees.

The Upper White River Watershed Alliance provided cost-share funding to Washington Township Parks and Recreation for the installation of pervious pavers and native trees and shrubs as part of a larger initiative at MacGregor Park. The larger MacGregor Park initiative includes the conversion of nine acres of cropland to recreational greenspace by planting over 4 acres of native prairie plants and two bioswales, in addition to the nearly 310 native trees and shrubs and 3350 square feet of pervious pavers. A parking lot, a one mile limestone trail, two picnic shelters, and an outdoor learning center will all be constructed as a part of the project.

The need for the project at MacGregor Park has been demonstrated by the severe erosion that has occurred on Lindley Ditch, which is located on the north side of the project. It has also been determined by the Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan that Hamilton County is critically deficient in natural greenspace. By implementing the best management practices at the park, Washington Township Parks and Recreation hopes to restore and protect the land all while managing stormwater runoff and providing an outdoor recreational and educational space for the community.

The next deadline for cost-share applications is January 31, 2014. To view details of this program, visit <http://www.uwrwa.org/cost-share/>.



Conservation in the Neighborhood is a semi-annual publication to give information to landusers by the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District, Discovery Hall, 1202 E. 38th St, Suite 200, Indianapolis, IN 46205
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Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District

SWCD Affiliate Members Needed!

What is a SWCD Affiliate Member? Affiliate members are individuals, groups or organizations who choose to financially support the work of the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District. These funds are vitally needed especially during these lean financial times. The SWCD's traditional funding from state and local government has not seen an increase in 13 years, while our cost of operations have continued to rise. Without additional funding our services will not be able to continue.

What are the Affiliate Membership funds used for?

Gifts from affiliate members are used to continue services provided to county residents including consultation in land use, erosion control and drainage problems. For many of our lower income residents, it is not financially possible to hire private engineering and consulting firms to design and install drainage and erosion control practices on their property. In many instances our office can provide simple, do it yourself suggestions that will alleviate or minimize their problems. No other agency is able to do this for individuals and small neighborhood groups. Funding is needed to help continue erosion control inspections which are a critical part of improving and protecting water quality in the county. New

construction, without proper erosion control can release literally tons of sediment into our waterways each year. Sedimentation clogs drainage ways, is a carrier for pollutants and is detrimental to fish and other aquatic life.

In addition, the SWCD is active in promoting wise land use and improvements in water quality through their educational programs, workshops and publications. Education is key to long term progress in soil and water quality and has always been a high priority for this District.

What are the benefits for Affiliate Members?

Affiliate members are rewarded for their generosity based on levels of contributions.



Check our Website - www.marionswcd.org for more information on benefits for Affiliate Members and how to donate.