



Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District

2025 Annual Report

Our Mission

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.

Thank you SWCD Board of Supervisors!

The SWCD Board consists of 5 members who donate their time and expertise to oversee Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District's operations and represent the interests of land users in the county. Staff is hired by the Board of Supervisors to deliver services, based on local land uses and natural resources concerns. Supervisors are made up of five non-paid county residents. Three are elected, two are appointed. Elected Supervisors are selected at our Annual Meeting.

Appointed Supervisors are approved by the State Board of Conservation. Additionally, Associate Supervisors, also are selected to assist the Board, but they do not have voting power. They participate in advising the supervisors in the decision-making for district business. Both Supervisors and Associate Supervisors take an active roll in setting forth the District's Plan of Work.

At this year's annual meeting Amanda Keene will be running for our open Supervisor position. Find out more about her on page 7. A list of our current board members can be found on page 9.

Chairman's Report

by Owen Dwyer

WOW, another year and we continue to move forward. Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (MCSWCD) continually strives to find more opportunities and activities to serve you in our local conservation actions. And that is the key: ACTION! The MCSWCD team of our staff and our Board of Supervisors working in conjunction with all of our partners in 2025 have continued to take direct action towards a cleaner environment.

Our staff, led by District Manager John Hazlett, has pursued numerous funding sources to assist in implementing our programs. These grants include:

- Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE);
- It's My City with Empower Results and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) for content and training related to water quality;
- Clean Water Indiana (CWI) – continuing multiple year program funding;
- Stream Stewards, in partnership with the Friends of the White River, as funded through the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust; and

to name but a few. None of these activities would be as effective and enduring if not for our dedicated staff:

John Hazlett – District Manager

Julie Farr – Resource Conservationist

Kevin Allison – Urban Soil Health Specialist

Robert Kendall – Urban Conservationist

John has taken the District to a new level with his leadership, Julie has been the cornerstone for drainage issues throughout the county for many years, Kevin has taken the Soil Health – Nutrient Management tool for Small Farms and Gardens on a national tour, and Rob has kept the soil in its place on all those local construction projects. These professionals have exhibited extraordinary dedication and ACTION! for a healthier Marion County environment.

As we look forward to 2026, we want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who have continued to partner with and support us. The list is extensive, but I specifically want to thank the City of Indianapolis and Mayor Joe Hogsett, the Department of Public Works, the Department of Business and Neighborhood Services, Marion County Health Department, the City-County Council, the ISDA and the NRCS for their continued faith in us, partnerships and financial support of our efforts. My personal thanks to our District staff and of course to our elected and appointed, all-volunteer District Board of Supervisors – Heather Buck, Owen Dwyer, Maggie Goeglein, Tyler Gough & Brian Neilson.

A special thanks to Tyler as he leaves the board to pursue other conservation-related interests. Tyler and the staff at Indy Urban Acres have worked closely with the District since the farm's start back in 2011. Numerous workshops and training sessions have been held there over the years, including rain garden workshops, native-plant identification training, and the occasional SWCD monthly meeting. Good luck, Tyler, in your future endeavors!

Stay tuned for news on our newest board member!

Our team and partners' 2025 efforts have continued to bring in \$2.71 of urban and agricultural conservation funding for every dollar of our budget, which allows us to continue our existing conservation and public education programs. So, check out all the things we do at our website — marionswcd.org — where we keep our blogs, newsletters, recorded webinars, small farm and garden nutrient tool, and much more conservation information for your use. While there, [register](#) for the February 17, 2026, Annual Meeting being held at Common Ground at Faith community center on the east side, one of our newest partners in soil and water conservation. Come join us, all are welcome.

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- IDEM 319 non-point source water pollution project in the Lower Fall Creek watershed.

These program and action grants are in addition to our funding and cost-sharing with the City of Indianapolis, the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). With the combined grant and partner assistance the District has been able to continue our workshops at our District demonstration garden, pond workshops, rain barrel workshops, Stormwater Action Team cleaning, White River and Fall Creek cleanups, work with campus partners and students at IU Indianapolis, invasive plant education, small farm and garden nutrient education, and of course our participation in the 32nd Annual Bug Fest,

District Manager's Year in Review

by John Hazlett, District Manager

2025 was a year of establishing and maintaining new partnerships and projects! Our district was lucky enough to contract with the City of Indianapolis Department of Public Works for the public education and outreach component of the It's My City Contract under Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. Our team for these activities includes Empower Results and Metric Environmental and we were able to hold 30 events and 6 trainings in 2025 related to native plants and stormwater management. These events were attended by a total of 2,882 attendees and held at a variety of locations including the Children's Museum, the Indiana State Museum, Indy Parks sites and the Indianapolis Art Center.



Earth Day at the Children's Museum

Pathway to Water Quality



New projects were also kicked off including our 319 implementation grant of the updated Lower Fall Creek Watershed Management Plan funded by IDEM. This is a 3 year grant that officially kicked off in April and it's been off to the races with these activities with drafting and approval of the program cost share guidelines, completion of two community events and two workshops, and implementation of a large rain garden project along Devon Creek in coordination with Greater Indianapolis Habitat for Humanity. District staff also completed several residential homeowner site visits for the rain garden cost share program which is officially accepting applications. Look for lots of activities tied to this grant in 2026, including completion of a large rain garden project at a local school and various workshops at project locations, as well as promotion of the cost share program.

In addition to the new partnerships and project described above, we also kept the momentum going on various previously established projects including the following:

- Conclusion of our Stream Steward workshop series at Spirit Lake with Friends of the White River. The Stream Steward Guide used for this series has recently been updated [HERE](#). Contact our office for hard copies if interested!
- Conclusion of our CWI 2023 grant and our 2024 NACD Urban Agriculture grant with a rain garden planting at Indy Urban Acres. Thank you to ISDA and NACD for this important funding.
- Adding new plants and signage to our native plantings at the Pathway to Water Quality Exhibit at the Indiana State Fairgrounds.

Lastly, a special thank you to board member Tyler Gough who is concluding his board term with us in February 2026. We'll no doubt continue to work with Tyler and Indy Urban Acres in the future on various initiatives, and thanks for all your hard work Tyler!



HOA Training at Millersville

Soil Health & Urban Agriculture

by Kevin Allison, Soil Health Specialist

Our Soil Health Program's mission is to provide technical assistance, training, and support to Indiana conservation staff, small farmers, and gardeners in the use of conservation practices to benefit soil health and water quality.

With recently obtained funding support through Clean Water Indiana and the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education grants, the SWCD's journey through 2025 crafted numerous educational opportunities for people and organizations involved in food production. This included four well-attended charter bus trips to working farms, ten in-depth tours of the SWCD Eagle Creek Demonstration Garden, eight statewide on-farm training for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service field staff, several virtual webinars, and several in-person presentations at libraries and events. At year's end, the program totaled 46 events, with 18 focused on conservation agencies and 28 for farmers and gardeners. Thank you Marion County Farm Bureau which sponsored meals at our urban agriculture events!

The Soil Health Specialist also provided one-on-one technical assistance to 31 unique farming operations and conducted 18 site visits.

As the leaves expressed their fall colors, the SWCD entered into a new 5-year contribution agreement with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (2025–2030) to provide the federal agency with technical training and resource development within small-scale agriculture. It's a major win for the district, and we are thankful for our fantastic conservation partners at NRCS Indiana.

One major grant objective is to develop and enhance the SWCD's new agronomic spreadsheet tools. These tools are now used by USDA conservation staff to plan and document cover crops, mulching, and nutrient management practices for farmers in federal programs. However, they aren't limited to agencies. We are excited about their potential to help growers efficiently plan and calculate amounts and types of cover crops, mulches, and fertilizers. We plan to provide multiple educational opportunities to learn how to use these tools in your own garden.

2026 hopes to be another exciting year! Many of our usual activities will resume, including a cover crop program for urban agriculture and collaboration with the Indianapolis Public Library to co-fund cover crop samples in their seed libraries. Stay in touch through our newsletter to learn about programs, events, on-farm workshops, gardening classes, virtual webinars, and more.



Connecting and learning through on-farm workshops @ Full Hand Farm

[Learn More!](#)



Networking and first-hand learning on the bus trip to Wilderlove Farm in Bloomington



Cover crops and vegetables @ the SWCD Eagle Creek Demonstration Garden

Urban Conservation in 2025

by Rob Kendall, Urban Conservationist

October 2025 marked my two-year anniversary as the Urban Conservationist for MCSWCD. Each year, I have increased the number of training sessions I lead and attend. I successfully met my 2025 goals by expanding the library of accessible Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) educational materials. This included developing newsletters, educational emails, and presentations, as well as updating the MCSWCD field guide. I've also completed:

- 503 CSGP site inspections
- Coordinated 7 trainings with Indy Parks, DPW, and BNS for CSGP-related education and strategic planning
- Attended 6 trainings related to stormwater
- Co-led 7 native planting projects
- Met with Marion County's new IDEM Regional Stormwater Specialist
- Created 12 stormwater monthly topics
- Proposed new clarification additions to the City of Indianapolis Stormwater Design and Construction Specifications Manual
- Begin tracking completed projects that have not begun permit closure with IDEM
- Volunteered at 2025 Bug Fest at Southeastway Park.
- Attended DigIndy ribbon cutting celebrating the completion of Indianapolis' improved stormwater system which will nearly eliminate all combined sewer overflows



Rain garden at Big Car Collaborative after a volunteer weeding event

In 2026 I would like to continue the efforts I put into my position in 2025 as well as:

- Participate in the renewal of the CSGP to contribute possible areas of clarification
- Continue to create accessible CSGP educational material
- Facilitate the increase of site documentation being posted upon inspection
- Work towards a certification for Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan review

Creating material and familiarizing contractors with the CSGP isn't a fast or perfect process. As I talk with more contractors and visit sites multiple times throughout its life, various requirements of the CSGP start to become normalized. The amount of inspections I've completed throughout the 2 years, provide me with photos for real-life examples and experience working with contractors not familiar with the CSGP. Investing in my knowledge of the construction field beyond inspections will better equip me to help contractors through more technical issues related to sediment and erosion control.





Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District 2025 Annual Activities Report

January 1 through December 31, 2025

The Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a unit of state government, supported primarily by the City-County Council with some funds from state government. The SWCD was established to provide technical assistance to Marion County residents and land users concerning the proper management of soil, water, and other related natural resources. We work closely with local government, community organizations, and residents on such items as water quality and drainage issues, soil erosion and sedimentation control, urban soil health, green space and wildlife habitat, conservation planning, and education to help create a better-quality living environment for everyone in the county.

This 2025 annual report was developed to keep city, county, and federal level legislators, government agency directors, and various community leaders informed of our ongoing activities. This is just a snapshot of our activities, anyone with any questions or comments is encouraged to contact our Marion Co. SWCD office at 200 E. Washington St. Suite 1401, Indianapolis, IN 46204 for more details. Our phone number is 317-786-1776, and our website is www.marionswcd.org



Urban Soil Health Program



Construction Site Review & Inspections



Natural Resource Consulting

2025 Major Natural Resource Projects Summary

Marion Co. SWCD conservation projects and public outreach efforts were completed to help the district communicate, coordinate, assist, and cooperate with others on conservation needs and solutions for landowners and land users in the county. The efforts can take a minimum of 2-4 hours to several days or weeks or are ongoing depending on the type of project.

Project Summary	Numbers	Date	Comments
Urban Soil Health Program – Presentations/Workshops	46	Various	Outreach/Training
Urban Soil Health Program – Consultations/Site Visits	31 / 18	Various	Technical Assistance
City of Indianapolis Training	7	Various	Indy Parks, DPW, BNS, for CSGP Ed
Stream Steward Workshop	2	Various	33 attendees
Native Plant Workshops	2	Various	91 attendees, CWI Funded
SWCD Annual Meeting w/ Annual Report	1	2/18	99 attendees
It's My City - Education & Outreach	30	Various	2,882 attendees, 29 in MS4 area
Lower Fall Creek 319 Implementation Workshops/Events	4	Various	50 attendees
Distributed Newsletters on activities, education & programs	4	Quarterly	1,639 on mailing list
Marion County SWCD Website	16,000 users	Various	Public Outreach, 45% increase



**Marion County
Farm Bureau®**

**Thank You Marion County Farm Bureau for sponsoring
meals at our Urban Ag events & this year's annual meeting!**

Natural Resource Technical Requests, Contacts, and Visits with Land Users

Through on-site visits, telephone calls and written recommendations, the district assists landowners, land users, and construction site managers with drainage, water management, erosion control, vegetative management options, and other related natural resource topics. These assistance efforts take an estimated number of hours shown below depending on the type of assistance provided to schedule, inventory available site data, visit the site, plan recommendations, and respond to the request with written comments to the land user, landowner, or contractor.

Township	# of Technical Assists	# of Site Visits	# of Reports Provided	# of Surveys Provided	# served via group or HOA	Preliminary Plat Reviews
Center	4	12	3	0	0	21
Decatur	4	14	6	2	6	4
Franklin	5	21	15	1	21	10
Lawrence	4	18	14	3	124	6
Perry	4	19	19	3	25	6
Pike	6	9	6	2	16	8
Warren	8	16	9	3	27	3
Washington	10	25	13	3	9	5
Wayne	4	13	8	2	11	2
TOTALS	45	147	93	19	239	65

Construction Site, Erosion Control, and SWPPP Stormwater Reviews, Contacts & Reports

# SWP3 Provided	# Erosion Control Inspections Completed	# Public Complaints Responded to	# Technical Assistance Site Visits Made
40	503	1	5

Note: SWP3 = Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans

Total Conservation Leveraged through the SWCD: \$ \$838,157.32

The Marion Co. SWCD is always looking for ways to assist landowners via a variety of county, state, and federal cost share and grant funds to assist with the installation of conservation practices in the county. Local funds are often limited or non-existent for the SWCD to provide monetary assistance for land improvement or land protection conservation measures. The projects can take a minimum of 2-4 days to several months depending on the type of activity. The following program funds are being provided through our joint, cooperative efforts with the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assigned to assist the Marion County SWCD and the Clean Water Indiana Grant Program, administered by the State Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation and the State Soil Board.

Program	Funds Provided	Type of Projects
Clean Water Indiana (CWI)	\$20,000.00	General District Operational Funds
Clean Water Indiana (CWI)	\$63,750.00	Competitive Grants
Clean Water Indiana (CWI)	\$999.79	Supervisor & Staff Training Reimbursement
USDA-NRCS Contribution Agreement	\$39,615.04	Urban Soil Health Program- staff, technical assists, demonstration
ISDA-DOSC Regional Support	\$4,260.00	Technical & SWCD Support Staff
Urban Soil Health Program	\$3,361.00	Allocation per county
NACD Urban Ag grant & travel funds	\$41,473.25	Workshops & technical assistance
LARE-IDNR	\$34,514.40	Lake & River Enhancement Feasibility Study
EQIP-USDA/NRCS	\$102,753.34	Cost Share
USDA Federal Investment for District Support	\$99,283.08	NRCS District Conservationist & Regional Conservation Implementation Team
EPA 319 Nonpoint Source Program	\$42,000.00	319 Implementation Grant for Lower Fall Creek
Other District Income	\$34,696.76	Donations & CSGP Plan Review

Each City/County Tax Dollar Invested in the SWCD Leverages \$2.71 in Other Funding

Land Owner Assistance from Your SWCD

by Julie Haxton Farr, Resource Conservationist

This past year we have continued to see growth and improvements to our county. The city has taken on more miles of rails to trails, street and sidewalk improvements, and additions to the stormwater infrastructure in many areas. All of these have included plans to control erosion to protect our vital water quality and provide for adequate drainage.

While improvements continue to be made, there are still many natural resource problems that our residents are dealing with. [Drainage problems](#) which are on private property are the responsibility of the landowners. Sometimes, their ideas of how to solve problems end up inadvertently causing problems for their neighbors. Our office is uniquely able to assist with land use problems and work with neighborhoods to find the best possible solutions.

Maintenance of drainage conveyances such as streams, ditches, inlets, and retention ponds often falls to landowners or their home owners association. As many of our subdivisions age, more maintenance is needed to keep them in working order. Our office is increasing our assistance to HOA's in order to help them plan for needed repairs and ongoing care for these facilities. We have recently updated and expanded our popular [Stream Steward Guide](#), created more informational fact sheets, held numerous in person workshops, and provided one-on-one, onsite visits to address specific needs and answer questions.

This year we have reviewed and commented on 65 preliminary plats in order to provide soil and environmental information for better land use decisions. We highly recommend contacting our office if you are looking for a home site or want to improve the land you already own. We can consult on soils, drainage, erosion, ponds, plantings, invasives, green infrastructure, and building for proper drainage. [Contact us](#) for more information.



Regular maintenance is more cost-effective in comparison to large, reconstruction projects.



SWCD Supervisor Elections



At our February 17th annual meeting we will be holding an election for Board Supervisor. We are pleased to have Amanda Keene willing to run and serve. Amanda is the Director of Campus Sustainability at IU Indianapolis, where she leads efforts to reduce the university's environmental footprint and foster a culture of sustainability across campus. She also serves as associate faculty in the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, teaching an introductory sustainability course. Fun fact: Amanda is also the campus beekeeper!

Outside of work, Amanda enjoys gardening, traveling, and exploring Fountain Square where she lives with her partner (Max), dog (Beta), and cat (Ozzy).

**Support Your
SWCD
Become an
Affiliate
Member
Today!**

[**CLICK HERE**](#)

SWCD Receives Awards in 2025

In 2025 our district received a few awards we are quite proud to show off! This past Fall the SWCD received the Purdue Extension-Marion County 2025 Friend of Extension Award, presented at the Purdue Extension-Marion County Annual Meeting for partners who unwaveringly help extension progress their mission of providing practical solutions to local issues. Then in December, our board chair, Owen Dwyer, received a Board Leadership Program Award from the State Soil Conservation Board for his leadership and completion of modules in the Board Leadership Program. District Manager John Hazlett accepted the award for Owen.



Congrats & Thank You Tyler!



IUA Rain Garden Planting

A huge thanks and congratulations to Tyler Gough for completing his 3 year term as an elected board supervisor starting in February 2023. Tyler has served in multiple roles including vice chair and treasurer during his board tenure and has been an invaluable resource as the district partners with Indy Urban Acres on various initiatives. Over the past 10 years, the district has partnered with Tyler and IUA on 6 grants, resulting in 10 workshops held with a total of 250 attendees. These workshops have distributed a total of 2,871 native plants to attendees and have included the installation of 6,500 natives at two IUA locations. Check out our annual meeting to learn more about our incredible partnership with Tyler and to thank him for his board service!



SWCD Board Supervisors

CHAIR: Owen Dwyer, a professor of Geography at IU Indy who teaches classes in the history of conservation, map-making, and public space. In his courses he emphasizes service learning as a way to gain valuable experience while doing good. He has collaborated with Indy Urban Acres and the SWCD to make his students more aware of the impact of their choices on society and the natural environment.

VICE CHAIR: Brian Neilson, PE, LEED AP - Brian has over 36 years of experience working in both the public and private engineering sectors in the water, wastewater and storm water sectors. As an active water quality enthusiast, conservationist, and engineer at HNTB, Brian also works with the White River Alliance, IWEA Water for People International, and ASCE Environmental & Water Resources Institute. A fan and advocate for Low Impact Development (LID) Green Infrastructure design concepts, Brian works to integrate them into all aspects of his career.

SECRETARY: Heather Buck - As a Resource Planner with Christopher B. Burke Engineering, LLC in Indianapolis, Indiana, Heather works with the MS4 Coordinators from several NPDES Phase II communities in Indiana to develop and implement all components of their Stormwater Quality Management Programs (SWQMP). Heather also completes erosion and sediment control inspections on behalf of both public agencies and private development. In addition, Heather completes various water quality evaluations through chemical, physical, and biological data collection and analysis; including IDDE screening, QHEI, macroinvertebrate, and fish community sampling. Heather and her family reside in Franklin Township.

TREASURER: Tyler Gough oversees the planning and operation of all aspects of Indy Urban Acres. Gough was hired by the Parks Alliance in 2011 to transform eight acres of unused city park land into a sustainable, urban farm. Today, IUA is a system of four organic farms on the east, west, and south sides of Indianapolis that grows and harvests fruits and vegetables to feed more than 50,000 individuals who are food insecure. IUA produces an average of 40,000 pounds of produce, which is delivered to food pantries and directly to families via the Veggie Box program. Gough is driven by the belief that each member of our community should be able to attain proper nutrition for themselves and their families, and to have access to the educational tools necessary to provide for themselves.

MEMBER: Maggie Goeglein - Maggie is the Development Director of the Edna Martin Christian Center, a 76-year-old community center serving Indy's Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood. Maggie provides direct service in the youth program and assists with fund development and site development for EMCC's new 12-acre facility. In addition to working with youth, Maggie has managed multiple large corporate service events focused on renovating the new facility and building a youth and seniors garden on the property, and worked with other staff on several successful grant applications totaling nearly \$1 million in funding.

Associate Supervisors

» Mark Mongin

» Paula Baldwin

» Mark Kautz

» J. Dennis Slaughter

» Rick Bein

» Bob Kleinops

» Henry Wallace

» Marvin Brethauer

» Beth Mason

» Blake Wilson

» Bob Eddleman

» Scott Minor