

Celebrating
50 Years
of Conservation



MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation in the Neighborhood

VOL. 41, NO. 4

AUTUMN, 2020



SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Heather Buck,
Secretary
Maggie Goeglein
Scott Minor,
Vice Chair
Brian Neilson,
Treasurer
Blake Wilson,
Chairman

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS

Paula Baldwin
Rick Bein
Marvin Brethauer
Robert Eddleman
Mark Kautz
Robert Kleinops
Beth Mason
Mark Mongin
Dennis Slaughter
Henry Wallis

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Fall Creek Trail Ride & map 2
- Preparing your lawn for winter 3
- Canada Thistle 4
- Asian Carp Film 5
- Beneficial Insect Workshop 6
- CWI 2021 Grant 7

SWCD Welcomes New Urban Conservationist

In September, the District welcomed Alena Jones as its new urban conservationist. Like her predecessor, Cheyenne Hoffa, Alena will focus on Rule 5 construction sites - working with contractors and project managers to prevent erosion and ensure our waterways are protected from sediment pollution.

Alena has previously worked in brownfields - identifying, inspecting, and securing funding to remediate and redevelop blighted and polluted sites - and on various food and farming initiatives in the community. In 2018, she co-founded Bellfound Farm, a nonprofit that focused on farming as an avenue to economic independence and holistic wellbeing for young women. Alena holds a B.S. in sustainable management and policy from IUPUI.

You can contact her by calling 317-287-4131 or emailing alena-jones@iaswcd.org.



Alena Jones is the District's new Urban Conservationist working to improve water quality in our county.



Office Update

Due to the Covid Virus health advisory the SWCD office is temporarily closed to the public and staff is primarily working in the field and from home. We are monitoring the office answering machine but you may experience a delay in getting back with you for this reason. For prompter service please contact us through our website:

<https://marionswcd.org/contact/>



A Fall Creek Trail Ride

On October 1st, SWCD District Manager John Hazlett joined staff members from the Indianapolis Parks Foundation (now called The Parks Alliance) for a ride on the Fall Creek Trail from the intersection of the Monon Trail and Fall Creek Trail just south of the Indiana State Fairgrounds to the Millersville area near the 56th St bridge. Along the way, John talked about many unique features of Fall Creek and the current effort to update the 2009 Lower Fall Creek Watershed Management Plan. We even looked at some great erosion control measures installed as part of trail improvements happening between 46th and 56th St and met Millersville residents at their beautiful greenspace project.

Check out the ride here:

[Fall Creek Ride](#)



Enjoy a relaxing autumn day on Fall Creek!

And make sure to check out the interactive map of Fall Creek being utilized for the Watershed Management Plan Update-add key concerns and special features to inform the plan update process. Click below:

[Fall Creek Interactive Map](#)



Support
Urban
Conservation
Become a
SWCD Affiliate
Member!

[Click Here to
see details on
our website.](#)

Eco-Friendly Fall Lawn Care

Tidying up the yard to get ready for winter? Do nature a favor by following these guidelines:

Fall

- Mow, as needed.
- Hand-pull weeds or spot treat with herbicidal soaps, as needed.
- Irrigate, as needed.
- Core aerate, as needed.
- Topdress with compost in conjunction with core aeration.
- Chop up fallen leaves with mowing.
- Pull mulch away from tree trunks to discourage rodents
- Clean out garden debris to discourage insect and disease damage for spring plantings
- Have your soil tested

Late Fall (November and possibly into December)

- Continue to mow as long as the grass is growing.
- Chop up fallen leaves with mowing.
- Apply late fall fertilizer.*

*Fall Fertilization

University research has shown that a schedule of late summer/fall (September) and late fall (November) fertilization is best for home lawns. This is when turfgrass plants are enlarging their root systems. Good root growth in the fall will result in better top growth in the spring. Fall fertilization also contributes to better color late in the fall, earlier spring green-up, and fewer disease problems.

The first step for natural lawn care is to have your soil tested to see what your lawn's true needs are. Fertilizer bags will label

how much of the major nutrients - nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are available in their fertilizer. It is best for the environment to use low or no-phosphorus fertilizers (0 will be the middle number) as phosphorus is a major pollutant of our waterways. Phosphorus is usually available in the soil anyway but extra may be needed if you are reseeding your lawn. Choose natural fertilizers which release nutrients more slowly than synthetic, making them available steadily over a longer period of time. Natural fertilizers preserve the biotic quality of the soil, encouraging earthworm populations and normal microbial activity. They often contain organic matter, derived from animal manures and previously living plant and animal sources. Be aware that some fertilizers sold as "organic" or "natural" may be enhanced with synthetic chemical fertilizers. Always read the label.

To determine how much fertilizer to apply you must know: 1) the analysis of the fertilizer, 2) the amount of actual N needed per 1,000 square feet of lawn as determined by your soil test, and 3) the square footage of lawn to be fertilized. A general rule of thumb is to apply 1 pound of actual N per 1,000 square feet. Divide actual N needed by the percentage of nitrogen contained in the fertilizer, expressed as a decimal, to determine how much fertilizer to apply. For example, if using cottonseed meal with an analysis of 3-1-1: $1.0 \div .03 = 33$ pounds. Thirty-three pounds of cottonseed meal per application are needed to supply 1 pound actual N per 1,000 square feet.

(Continued on page 5)



Invasive Highlight: Canada Thistle



Hoosier Heartland RC&D

New colonies of Canada Thistle are started by wind swept seeds.

A much overlooked threat to the health of our environment is the continual spread of invasive, non-native species of plants. These plants are so common today that the damage they are doing is unseen by most people. In an effort to help land-owners recognize and eradicate these species from their properties we highlight a plant in each edition of our newsletter. We also have a section of our website dedicated to invasive species.

The Canada Thistle is one of these common plants. Canada Thistle has a

purple to lavender flower and can grow from 2 to 6 feet in height. The name Canada Thistle does not explain its origin. This really tough invasive plant originated in the Mediterranean area and southeast Europe, not Canada. Although it reproduces and starts a colony by seed, its rapid spread is by sprouts from the massive underground root system shown below. It is this massive root system that makes

it difficult to control. Canada Thistle grows profusely along roads, in pastures, along edges and in crop fields, in flower beds and any where a seed can get in contact with the soil. Control is best accomplished with a systemic herbicide such as glyphosate when the plant is in the rosette stage in the spring or fall. Usually takes several treatments and sometimes 2 or 3 years to get control.



Purdue University photo



Hoosier Heartland RC&D



Virginia Tech photo

More information on invasive species is available on our website:
<https://marionswcd.org/invasive-species/>

Clean Up for Good Drainage & Water Quality!

Fall and winter rains often cause drainage & flooding problems throughout the county. It is landowners' responsibility to keep storm drains cleared of leaves and debris so that they do not become clogged.

Also do not pile leaves and lawn debris along ditches and creeks that run along your property. Ditches and streams need to stay clear so that storm water can move on downstream & not add extra nutrients to the water.



NWF Film Highlights Asian Carp Damage

The National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Regional Center released a new film exploring the national scope of the problems caused by invasive Asian carp. The film, *Against the Current*, focuses on the impact Asian carp have on the values and economies they threaten in the Great Lakes and the impacts they're currently having in Southern and Midwestern waters. It also highlights what's needed to stop them. It features diverse viewpoints representing scientific, tribal, business, tourism, fishing, outdoor recreation, and conservation communities from northern Michigan to Tennessee.

For more information click the link below:

[Asian Carp Film](#)

(Continued from page 3)

Information on how to take a soil sample, a listing of soil labs and more lawn and garden tips can be found [on our website](#).

Compost

Fall is a wonderful time to start creating compost. Don't just throw those leaves away – add them to a composting pile and you will have wonderful nutrients to add to your gardens and flower beds next spring! For instructions on how to create compost see our website page:

<https://marionswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/composting-04121.pdf>



Planning for Spring

- The 2021 Seed catalogs will be coming out soon! Request a catalog or go online to try a new company or two.
- Call a few gardening friends and swap seeds. Don't know how to save seeds for next year? There are many good online sources of information. Look up the specific plant you want to save seeds from since some seeds will need to be processed differently from others. Don't save seed from hybrid plants – they won't stay true to type.
- Check out the [Soil Health](#) pages on our website for information and inspiration for your spring garden!

Beneficial Insect Workshop for Growers & Gardeners

Join us on Zoom! Heather Holm, author of 'Pollinators of Native Plants' and 'Bees', will give a presentation about beneficial insect identification, their habitat, and predator-prey relationships. Special attention will be given to those insects that predate on common vegetable crop pests.

[Register here](https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?zmt=1&url=https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYudeGgqzMiG9ysvuFLx7PDEZ4Lcjt54Pjo)
<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYudeGgqzMiG9ysvuFLx7PDEZ4Lcjt54Pjo>

Hosted by the Marion County SWCD
Wednesday, November 18
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
via Zoom

5 minute intro
40 minute presentation
15 minute Q&A

This workshop is limited to 100 participants and will not be recorded. Related resources can be found at marionswcd.org/insect-management.

The same presentation will also be provided to Indiana Conservation Partnership

staff on November 13. For more information on that session, please go [here](#).

This workshop was made possible through funding provided to the Marion County SWCD by Clean Water Indiana, the National Association of Conservation Districts, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Heather Holm photo

Aphid Wasps are a biocontrol agent which will attack many common species of aphids.



Heather Holm photo

Lacewing larva— these insects are predators of aphids, mealybugs, scaly insects & more

Insect Management Resources

Insects have five big jobs in the web of life. As soil engineers, they help create soil structure that is stable for water and nutrients. As decomposers, they eat organic material and unlock nutrients. As pollinators, they play a part in one out of every three bites of food humans eat. As providers, insects exist in almost every food chain as an important source of food for birds, bats, amphibians, and fish. As pest controllers, they help suppress pests through predation and parasitoidism. The paper wasp and aphid wasp (upper left), for example, are beneficial insects in the garden as natural enemies to pests.

There is an estimated 5 million insect species. Of these, it really is just a handful that happen to cause issues in the garden, though they can certainly be tough. Here are some resources that can help you manage them.

<https://marionswcd.org/insect-management/>



MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
—CONSERVATION DISTRICT—

1200 S. Madison Ave., Suite 200
 Indianapolis, IN 46225

Phone: 317-786-1776

Find us on the web: 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.

**** PLEASE NOTE****

Due to the current COVID 19 crisis our office is temporarily closed and staff is working remotely. Use the “[Contact Us](#)” tab on our website to leave a message & we will get back with you as soon as possible.

**Johnson/Marion County
 Farm Service Agency
 Calendar**

3059 N Morton St
 Franklin, IN 46131

Phone: 317-736-6822
 Fax: 855-373-6991



- **December 7 - Ballots due for FSA County Commissioners Election** (More information on county committees, such as the new 2020 fact sheet, can be found on the FSA website at fsa.usda.gov/elections or at a local USDA Service Center.)
- **December 11-** CFAP2 (Corona Virus Food Assistance Program 2) application deadline
- **December 15-** Wheat, Oat, and other fall-seeded small grain certification deadline.

**Marion County
 SWCD Receives
 Clean Water Indiana
 2021 Grant Award**

Grant awards were announced at the October meeting of the State Soil Conservation Board for the 2021 Clean Water Indiana grant program (<https://www.in.gov/isda/2379.htm>), and our district is thrilled to be selected for a partial grant award! This year’s application process was highly competitive with 29 applications. Our district’s awarded application for \$27,500 features a partnership with Reconnecting to Our Waterways (www.ourwaterways.org) and other grassroots partners to execute rain barrel and rain garden workshops for residents. Stay tuned for more program info to come in 2021!

**Follow us on
 Facebook!**



SWCD Staff

John Hazlett,
 District Manager

Kevin Allison,
 Urban Soil Health
 Specialist

Alena Jones, Urban
 Conservationist

Julie Farr,
 Resource
 Conservationist, PT

Eliana Blaine,
 Soil Health, PT

Jerod Chew,
 NRCS District
 Conservationist

SAVE THE DATE
February 16, 2021

**Marion County SWCD
 Virtual Annual Meeting**

Watch our website for more information