

MARION COUNTY  
SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# Conservation in the Neighborhood

VOL. 44, NO. 2



SPRING 2023

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## SWCD Annual Meeting Recap

The 53<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting of the Marion County SWCD was held February 21<sup>st</sup> at Half Liter in south Broad Ripple. The event was a great success with 58 registered and over 50 in attendance. Attendees enjoyed socializing prior to the program that featured updates from SWCD, IASWCD and NRCS partnership staff, as well as a tribute to Mary Durkin, a true champion of conservation who we lost in December. The program also featured an annual financial report by our treasurer, the election of a board supervisor (Tyler Gough) and several door prizes. Couldn't make it to the meeting? **Consider supporting the district through a tax exempt contribution [HERE](#).**



## Drainage 101

Are you one of the many Marion County residents who suffer from drainage problems for much of the year? Because of the topography and soil types that cover much of the county, we see flooding, long-standing puddles, continuously running sump pumps, failing septic systems, and mold or mildew problems in many areas. Most drainage problems need to be solved by homeowners themselves but also need to be addressed by us all as a whole.

The first place to start is by caring for our ditches, streams, and rivers. These are our outlets for surface and subsurface drainage. Keeping sediment, grass clippings, leaves, branches, trees and trash from obstructing drainage is crucial. After each large storm, check the ditch or stream on your property and properly dispose of anything that has fallen in or washed down into them.

Controlling erosion along the banks of streams and ditches protects your property and reduces the amount of sediment entering the stream. Sedimentation is a considerable problem for water quality and aquatic wildlife but is also detrimental to drainage as the stream loses capacity and depth. Check out our new [Stream Steward Guide](#) for ideas on how to control erosion.

This spring, consider hosting a neighborhood clean-up campaign to improve the drainage in your neighborhood. For more information check out our website's drainage page [HERE](#).



Our District Conservationist has been promoted to Assistant State Conservationist!

Support Urban Conservation Become a SWCD Affiliate Member!

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

## Best Wishes Jerod!

Congratulations to our new NRCS Assistant State Conservationist, Jerod Chew! Jerod has served Marion and Hendricks Counties as our District Conservationist for over ten years. He has been instrumental in helping reduce erosion from our farm fields and improving soil health on many of our small farms.

Daniel Welage is our acting District Conservationist for the next month. Daniel grew up in Vincennes, IN and attended Purdue University. He worked for the Parke and Vermillion Counties' Soil and Water Conservation Districts before working for NRCS. He has been stationed in the Danville office covering

Hendricks and Marion counties since October 2021.

Daniel works with landowners and producers to install conservation practices that treat resource concerns and allow people to use the land in a sustainable manner. Daniel enjoys cooking and outdoor activities like hiking, backpacking, and kayaking in his free time.



## Indy Urban Acres Happenings

In late February our District Manager John Hazlett worked with staff from Indy Urban Acres (IUA) on a site visit and discussion with IUPUI's Director of Graduate Studies in Geography Owen Dwyer and his class. Students engaged on various environmental topics including green infrastructure and native plants. Don't miss IUA's native plant sale next month-order your plants now, they are going fast: <https://www.iuaplantsale.com/#/>



*Planting into cover crop at Indy Urban Acres*

## SICIM Annual Report

It's been a busy year for our partners at State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management! We support this 501(c)(3) organization through membership on their board of directors as well as locally through the [Circle City CISMA](#). Read more in the recently released [SICIM annual report](#).

# First Line of Erosion Control Defense

By Alena Jones, Urban Conservationist

Perimeter protection, inlet & outlet protection, and construction drives constitute a first line of defense against erosion and sediment control issues on any building site. With these basic measures in place pre-disturbance and kept in good repair throughout the construction period, construction sites are well on their way to good housekeeping and pollution prevention.

Perimeter protection comes in multiple forms; the most common is either silt fence (a geotextile barrier fence) or filter sock (a netting filled with straw or mulch). Proper installation for both is required to ensure that the perimeter protections function as intended - silt fence must be trenched into the ground and fastened taut between stakes; filter socks must be staked in and filter sock ends must be overlapped if multiple filter socks are required.



Inlet protection is important as a last line of defense to keep sediment from leaving a build site. There are many types of inlets and equally many types of inlet protection - dandy bags, which drop into the inlets; coconut coir mats, which cover inlets, and various types of gravel dams and filter sock dams to keep sediment out of inlets and waterway. Consider ease of cleaning and type of traffic the site is likely to receive when choosing inlet protection.



Outlet protection differs depending on whether the protection is temporary or permanent; both are equally important to make sure that there are no construction-related or long-term erosion concerns. *(Cont. on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

Temporary outlet protection often takes the form of a stone horseshoe check dam, which can be stone or filter sock; long-term outlet protection is typically either riprap or some other type of armoring (such as concrete mats) to prevent scouring and erosion from concentrated flows of water.



Construction drives are stone drives with geotextile underlayment; the purpose of these drives is to provide a mechanism for dirt to be knocked off of the tires of heavy equipment, which is why Marion County ordinances require at least a minimum length of 50'. Sometimes, when conditions on the site make a stone drive difficult, other measures (such as rumble strips or wheel washes, other measures of removing truck wheels) to prevent dirt tracking may be employed, but they are less common.



With just these few baseline preventive measures, the majority of sediment pollution from construction can be prevented - but timely installation, regular monitoring for functionality, and consistent maintenance are key to success. Installing measures at the time of or if possible prior to disturbance (depending on what is practical for the site and what phasing is required in the stormwater pollution prevention plan), checking to make sure that the erosion and pollution prevention are working as planned on at least a weekly basis, and fixing damage or replacing measures as they wear out or prove to be ineffective are what makes a stormwater pollution prevention plan work.

For more information visit our website: <https://marionswcd.org/construction/>

# Soil Health Focus

By Kevin Allison, Soil Health Specialist

## Workshops

The SWCD Demonstration Garden is greening up! Snap peas are planted, and onions and spinach are likely in the ground by the time this hits your inbox. These early crops are planted without tillage in beds that were cover cropped with oats and field peas in the fall. A couple of advantages to this approach are related to the soil's relationship with water. A no-till garden doesn't have to wait for the soil to dry out to allow for tillage and bed preparation. In addition, the soil structure and organic matter will help maintain good moisture content through the spring, which bodes well as the community garden doesn't turn on the water until late April or May. Whether you're a beginning gardener or an advanced grower, don't miss out on our free educational workshops focused on soil health, no-till vegetables, cover crops, mulching, crop rotation, compost, fertility, and more!

May 15: 6:00 - 7:30 PM

May 16: 10:00 - 11:30 AM



See page 7 of our newsletter to find another SWCD Demonstration Garden opportunity on Wednesday, May 24th in partnership with Reconnecting to Our Waterways and the Nina Mason Pullium Charitable Trust!



*Experimenting with planting sugar snap peas into a winter killed sorghum sudangrass cover crop. Adjacent beds are cereal rye cover crops that will be crimped and tarped later this spring before planting sweet potatoes.*

## Resources

One-pagers on cover crop strategies used at the demo garden to prepare for the next vegetable crop.

~ [Oats and Field Peas > Early and Mid Spring Crops](#)

~ [Oats and Crimson Clover > Kale and Spring Brassicas](#)



Read March's blog about the Web Soil Survey with links to historical surveys for Marion and Hamilton counties [HERE](#).

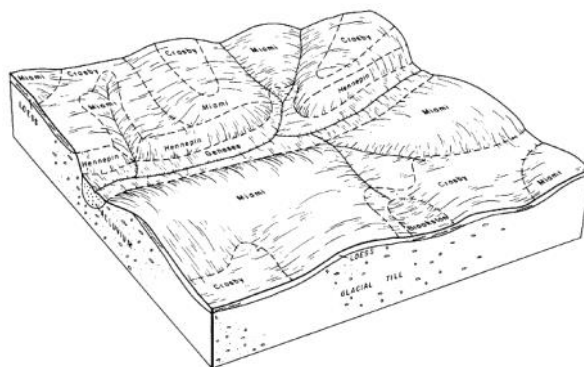


Figure 2.—Pattern of soils and underlying material in Miami-Crosby association.



For a more information on our Soil Health Program visit:

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

## 2023 Black Loam Conference

The Black Loam Conference builds agricultural relationships and networking opportunities. These workshops will provide introductions to USDA programs and resources available to BIPOC and socially disadvantaged rural, urban and community farmers, producers, and growers to increase participation of USDA programs, loans, grants and scholarships, sustainable agriculture practices, business planning, and community development.



May 19 and May 20, 2023 in Indianapolis

For more information, visit

<https://www.legacytasteofthegarden.com/events>

### Upcoming Workshops

Spring is in the air-don't miss these exciting upcoming in person workshops, all free but you must register to attend!

**Saturday 4/15/23 Stream Steward Workshop (with Friends of White River):**

Register for Stream Steward Workshop [HERE](#)

**Tuesday 5/9/23 Rain Barrel Workshop with ROW Canal Committee:**

Register for Rain Barrel Workshop [HERE](#)

**Wed 5/24/23 In the Know with ROW: The Dirt on Dirt (featuring our own Kevin Allison):**

Register for The Dirt on Dirt workshop [HERE](#)





MARION COUNTY  
SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

GENEROUSLY  
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NINA MASON PULLIAM  
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IN THE KNOW WITH ROW:

# THE DIRT ON DIRT

MAY 24  
6-7:30 PM

MAYOR'S GARDEN

W 56TH ST & REED RD

RSVP:  
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/ROWDIRT](https://bit.ly/rowdirt)



TOPICS INCLUDE...

- NO-TILL GARDENING
- CROP ROTATION
- COVER CROPS
- NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT
- LEAD RISK AND MANAGEMENT
- AND MORE!



[REGISTER HERE](#)



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

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**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.

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE\*\***

SWCD staff work in the office, remotely, and in the field.

To reach us, email [marioncountyswcd@iaswcd.org](mailto:marioncountyswcd@iaswcd.org), utilize our website's 'Contact' tab, or call 317-786-1776 to leave a message when staff members are not in the office.

## NRCS Expands Assistance to Underserved

NRCS is seeking applications for projects that will improve outreach to underserved producers and communities about conservation programs and services and opportunities for students to pursue careers in agriculture, natural resources and related sciences. NRCS is offering up to \$70 million nationally in cooperative agreements with entities for two-year projects that encourage participation in NRCS programs, especially in underserved communities and among urban and small-scale producers.

The Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements will include projects that:

- Promote the benefits of NRCS programs through education or demonstration of conservation practices.
- Develop community conservation partnerships that engage underserved producers to plan and protect farmland ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitat in underserved communities.
- Inform small-scale or urban agriculture producers about opportunities to participate in conservation programs.

- Support education on, planning for and adoption of climate smart conservation practices.

Projects should reach underserved groups through a combination of program outreach and technical assistance in one or more of the following five NRCS priority areas:

- Addressing local natural resource issues
- Promoting conservation career opportunities
- Expanding adoption of climate-smart conservation
- Encouraging conservation in small-scale and urban agriculture
- Developing conservation leadership skills and opportunities

Applications must be received by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on April 27, 2023. See the [grants.gov announcement](#) for details and application instructions. A pre-recorded webinar is available on the [Equity in Conservation Outreach Cooperative Agreements - Fiscal Year 2023](#) page.

Follow us on  
Facebook!



### SWCD Staff

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