



MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation in the Neighborhood

VOL. 44, NO. 1



WINTER, 2023

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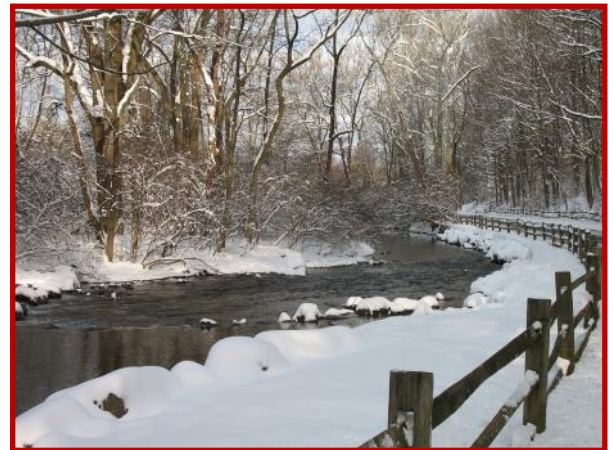
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Save the Date! February 21st - Our 53rd Annual Meeting

**Our Annual Meeting will be
in person at Half Liter**

**Please join us for our Annual Meeting,
Tuesday, February 21st at 5:30 p.m. at
Half Liter, 5301 Winthrop Avenue.**

We have so much to share with you about the wonderful work that has been done in our county in the last year. It will be extra special to finally be able to meet in person again! Our staff will be sharing about the SWCD's accomplishments and you will hear about the plans for 2023 and beyond.



**More information will be coming soon!
Watch our website & your inbox for details.**

Be a SWCD Affiliate Member in 2023!

Join our Conservation Team to benefit Marion County! Donate to become an Affiliate Member.

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 to sustain and enhance the work we do for our county.

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, soil health, erosion control and drainage problems. The SWCD is active in promoting wise land use and improvements in water quality through their consultation with individuals, 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. To become an affiliate member visit our website link [HERE](#). We accept PayPal for your convenience!



Winter Invasives Treatment

Winter is officially upon us and while many woody and herbaceous plants are dormant it is a great season to treat many (but not all!) of our common invasives found in Marion County. For those with a pesticide applicators license, the backpack sprayer also can help keep you warm on those chilly days.

While leaf off condition makes invasive plant identification more challenging during the winter months, invasive shrubs like Autumn Olive, Asian Bush Honeysuckle and Multiflora rose respond to both cut stump and basal bark treatment methods throughout the winter months. Invasive vines like Wintercreeper can be foliar sprayed during the dormant season when temperatures are above 50 degrees. The waxy leaves of invasives vines require the addition of surfactant or seed oil for maximum success.

A great resource for determining which invasives can be treated during the winter

season is the Calendar of Control created by [SICIM](#) (State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management) and posted [HERE](#). Our District Manager John Hazlett recently joined the SICIM board and we are looking forward to collaborating with this and other like-minded organizations across the state to combat the impacts of invasive species on the environment. Learn more about SICIM's new cooperative agreement with NRCS in the article on page 3.



Honeysuckle in winter

Planning for spring tree planting?

Quick Reminders for locating a good planting spot:

- 1) Consider the soil & light requirements
- 2) Plan to leave room for the mature size of the tree
- 3) Don't plant trees near septic systems, utilities, within road right-of-ways, drainage swales or drainage tiles
 - Leave space for the roots to spread (Estimate mature dripline +)
- 4) Native species are best for wildlife & tree health

For more information visit [Arbor Day](#)



Plant a tree—make a positive impact for the future!

Support
Urban
Conservation
Become a
SWCD Affiliate
Member!

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

New Funding for Indiana's Invasive Initiative

The State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM) has officially entered into a new five-year agreement with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to help fund the Indiana Invasives Initiative.

This agreement provides partial funding for Indiana Invasives Initiative staffing and general operations required to manage the initiative. This next iteration will also include reimbursements (up to a certain amount) to Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) in Indiana for conducting Weed Wrangles, landowner surveys and outreach events.

SICIM will work with the CISMAs to develop a method for reimbursement, starting with Weed Wrangles, and more information will be made available as this process is finalized. SICIM will also continue working with counties who are not yet represented by a local CISMA, with the goal of having every county in Indiana represented.

Regional Specialists will continue to work in their counties to help maintain current and create new CISMAs, as well as conduct landowner surveys and create management plans for landowners while participating in outreach events throughout the state.

SICIM is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization established in 2008. The organization is overseen by a Board of Directors. The organization's mission is to protect, restore, and enhance Indiana's landscapes by coordinating efforts to identify, prevent and control invasive species. In 2017, SICIM undertook a statewide role, in partnership with NRCS, to develop CISMAs to represent all counties in Indiana. Under this new statewide role, SICIM currently employs five Regional Specialists, an Indiana Invasives Initiative Project Coordinator, and an Executive Director.

For more information about SICIM and the Indiana Invasives Initiative, visit <https://www.sicim.info/>.

Invasives Highlight—Multiflora Rose

Multiflora Rose is one of the most invasive plants in Indiana. It is also illegal to sell in the state. It tolerates a wide range of soil and light conditions and invades any location not tilled for crop production.

Multiflora Rose plants are very thorny and form massive thickets shading out native plants and often excluding all forms of wildlife. It was brought to the United States in the early 1800s as rootstock for grafted roses. Subsequently, it was widely planted as wildlife food, for living fences, and as crash barriers in highway medians. It can grow up to 10 feet tall.

Multiflora rose, present in all Indiana Counties, is native to Japan and the Far East. Frequent mowing (3 to 6 times per year) for 3 to 5 years has been effective as a mechanical control measure. Many different herbicides have proved effective as a control, but due to the large store of seeds in

the ground, herbicide treatments must be repeated for a few years.

See the article on page 2 for information on treating Multiflora rose during the winter months, and check out the [invasives page](#) on our website.



National Park Service



Alena Jones, our Urban Conservationist can help you stay in compliance & answer your SWPPP questions

For a more information on our Stormwater Construction program visit:

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

Staging Areas: A Critical Component of Pollution Prevention on the Construction Site

Having a staging area with proper siting and setup lessens the chances of accidental pollution on a jobsite - it's important to get it right! In the typical staging area, you'll see a job trailer, temporary parking, sanitary facilities, washouts, dumpsters, and storage spaces for various job materials (including fuels and chemicals). Some things to keep in mind:

- 1) The Notice of Intent or Notice of Sufficiency should be posted somewhere publicly accessible, likely laminated and posted at the job site entrance. Posting should include contact information for a superintendent, project manager, or inspector that is on site.
 - 2) All staging areas should be stabilized (usually with stone) and have a construction entrance that prevents dirt tracking.
 - 3) Staging areas should be sited away from any waterways, wetlands, or storm sewer connections.
 - 4) Litter is considered pollution, so all trash on site should be kept in dumpsters (using dumpster covers, if necessary).
 - 5) Concrete washouts should be marked and regularly monitored to ensure they are not leaking or over-full.
 - 6) Port-a-lets must be secured to the ground.
 - 7) Washouts and port-a-lets must be sited with an eye to the potential for contaminated liquids to flow into inlets or waterways if there was a leak - at least 50' away and at a lower elevation than any inlets is a good guideline.
 - 8) Fuel should be stored in a double-walled tank or have secondary containment; if the secondary containment can take on water from rains, ensure there are means in place to properly dispose of potentially contaminated liquids, and regularly monitor the secondary containment.
 - 9) Chemicals and materials should be in covered storage to prevent the commingling of chemicals and stormwater.
 - 10) Take care to prevent chemical and fuel spills; if a spill occurs, the contaminated soil must be removed, properly disposed of, and replaced with clean fill.
- With a little bit of care and pre-planning, many potential pollution issues can be nipped in the bud through centralizing operations, conducting regular monitoring and maintenance, and having a plan for when things go wrong. For more information about staging areas, refer to the City of Indianapolis' stormwater ordinances and the SWCD's shirt pocket guide (both can be found online [HERE](#)).



Soil Health Update

By Kevin Allison, Urban Soil Health Specialist

In October, SWCD board member and Indy Urban Acres farm manager Tyler Gough, along with his farm staff, joined me for a trip to visit Dan Perkins at Perkins' Good Earth Farm in DeMotte, Indiana with the goal of seeing and learning about soil health practices on the ground. The tour was so informative that we knew we needed to extend the opportunity to even more Marion County growers. With much-appreciated funding support from [America's Conservation Ag Movement](#) and the USDA-NRCS, we rented a 15-passenger van and filled it with local farmers for a November trip back the farm. In addition to being a refreshing break from a season of hard work, outings like these are especially effective for networking and gaining practical information and techniques that we can bring back to our own farms. The SWCD and fellow growers realize the value of seeing productive operations, and we look forward to continuing to organize them.

On May 23rd the SWCD will host a bus trip to visit expert farmer Jesse Frost at Rough Draft Farmstead in Kentucky. If you are a vegetable grower who could benefit from this opportunity, please express an interest [HERE](#).

Photographs from the farm tour show some snapshots of his approach. One of the key takeaways for me is the dedication to keeping the soil covered at all times. Bare soil has the tendency to degrade, and Dan is circumventing this through strategic use mulching, cover crops, and minimizing soil disturbance.

If you are interested in this kind of growing system or adding any type of soil health practice to your operation, I can't help but to keep recommending the book [The No-Till Organic Vegetable Farm](#) by Daniel Mays and to reach out to me and the SWCD for technical assistance.



Learning about tools and how to use them effectively



Diverse mulches including woodchips, shredded leaves, composts, and combinations of the three.



Rows of oats and field pea cover crops. Pathways contain woodchips and other carbonaceous mulches. Growing beds are mulched with composts and leaf mold.



Safe Sidewalks the Ecological Way

Our thanks to Diane Oleson, M.S. Former Extension Educator, Renewable Natural Resources Pennsylvania State University for information on this topic.

This part of Indiana is known for our winter ice storms. Icy streets and sidewalks can be dangerous so making them safe is important. But many chemical deicers and even rock salt can be detrimental to aquatic and plant life. There are many ways to keep walkways safe, while also minimizing pollution to our waterways.

The accumulated effect of all of the deicers that is put on our roads, driveways and sidewalks off adds up to large amounts of salt and nutrients entering local waterways. Freshwater ponds, lakes, streams and rivers are especially vulnerable. Salt is often toxic to animals living in fresh water and can also harm plants in your yard and along the roads. Deicers come in several forms. Consider the best choice for your area.

- **Rock salt** (sodium chloride) is the most commonly used but contains cyanide, as an anti-caking agent that can be toxic to underwater life, and is the most harmful for plants.
- **Calcium chloride** is considered a better choice than rock salt, because it does not contain cyanide, however, it can also harm plants. Calcium chloride costs about three times more than rock salt, but you only need to use about one-third as much.
- **Magnesium chloride** is considered the least toxic deicing salt because it contains less chloride than either rock salt or calcium chloride, making it safer

for plants and animals.

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is considered the best overall choice for safely melting ice. It is less toxic than deicers containing chloride, but can cost considerably more than rock salt. Never use fertilizer as a deicer. Nutrients in fertilizer and urea-containing deicers can run off your property, polluting local waterways. Even rock salt can be applied in a way does the job while causing the least amount of harm. Here are some tips for applying deicer:

- Spread deicer before snow and ice start to accumulate.
 - Remove as much snow and ice as possible before applying deicer.
 - Follow the label directions. If only a handful of rock salt per square yard is needed, using more isn't more effective, just more expensive.
 - Don't use rock salt within 5-10 feet of salt-sensitive plants.
- Once you establish a dry, safe route to the house, block off slippery areas you won't be walking on! Deicer is not the only choice. Alternatives for small areas of thin areas of ice include:
- Warm water mixed with table salt or water conditioning salt
 - Sand to improve traction on slippery areas

If you can anticipate the forecast, cover small areas (such as your steps) with heavy, waterproof plastic or a tarp.



Winter Grazing Tips

A popular idea that has been gaining momentum, even in Marion County, is raising livestock on a small scale for personal use and enjoyment. A large number of people, even in neighborhoods are raising chickens and rabbits. Others with a little more land, raise goats, sheep, horses and miniature cattle and ponies. As with other aspects of small farms, we can learn much from traditional farmers and tweak those ideas and information to suit our specific needs and situations.

Keeping our animals healthy and at a good weight is especially concerning in the winter months. Their calorie needs are high as they are working extra hard to keep warm as well as growing. Hay prices are rising so having extra, good quality forage for as long as possible is a highly beneficial goal.

The following article is adapted from the *December 2022 Grazing Bites* article by Victor Shelton, Retired NRCS Agronomist/*Grazing Specialist* To read the whole original article visit [HERE](#).

If you can get cereal rye planted early enough to get sufficient growth to graze, then grazing can begin in the fall once plants reach 6-12 inches tall and can be grazed to a height of 3-4 inches. That can't be done if it isn't planted until early November – the earlier the better. Mid to late August is really ideal to provide the most growth for grazing in the fall.

For most people, if your livestock are still grazing at this point, you are probably either grazing stockpiled forage, perhaps some corn residue, left over fall annuals or grazing pastures that should have been exited a long time ago. I hope it is stockpiled forage.

Stockpiled forage is technically defined as standing forage allowed to accumulate for grazing at a later period, usually for fall and winter grazing after dormancy. Tall fescue makes some of the best stockpiled forage because it holds quality better and doesn't fall apart with freezing weather mainly due to a waxy layer on the leaves. I love orchardgrass, but it doesn't hold up very long at all after several hard freezes. If you have stockpiled orchardgrass, use it first. Quality stockpiled tall fescue quite often has better feed values than a lot of hay that is fed at the same time. You may cuss tall fescue, especially old Kentucky 31 endophyte infected tall fescue during the growing season, but the KY 31, low endophyte varieties and endophyte friendly varieties all stockpile very well. What about fescue toxicity? Research from the University of Missouri indicates that ergovaline and total ergot alkaloid levels decline significantly within 30 days when tall fescue is cut, dried, and baled for hay.

What about stockpiled KY 31 tall fescue then? When grazing fescue in the late fall or winter the threat of fescue toxicity is reduced. The reduction is probably a combination of time, similar to the hay, and freezing conditions. Most studies have found that ergovaline content drops fairly fast after mid-December. Sadly, as long as endophyte infected tall fescue is growing, it probably is still producing some ergovaline – another good reason to not start grazing stockpiles until completely dormant.

I've tested a lot of stockpiled forage the last couple decades or so and tall fescue has rarely disappointed me. The stockpiled forage quite often is better quality than if the same forage had been harvested for hay – higher amounts of crude protein and total digestible nutrients.

Even in late February, stockpiled fescue is still holding value and not unusual at all to have a crude protein value still of 11% and digestibility of 58%. A very quick and easy way to get a little bit of information on the value of the stockpile without testing it is to look at the manure from the grazing livestock. Unless quite a bit of nitrogen has been added to the stockpiled forage, the crude protein value isn't going to be nearly as high as lush spring forage and creating a thinner more "splattable" manure patty. At best it is going to be more the consistency of pudding or pumpkin pie filling. This manure will have a crude protein range from 12-15% with digestibility in the 60's this time of year on stockpiled forage. At this stage, quality of the forages

(Continued on page 8)





MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
—CONSERVATION DISTRICT—

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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****

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

To reach us, email 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.

Winter Forage -Continued from page 7

consumed is fairly well balanced and stays in the rumen long enough to allow good absorption of nutrients and thus decent performance.

Actual forage analysis is the best way to know what level of various nutrients forage resources can provide but observing manure can provide a quick idea. Consult an animal nutritionist when needed to balance out nutritional shortfalls, especially for growing and lactating animals.

Remember, it's not about maximizing a grazing event, but maximizing a grazing season! Keep on grazing!

Reminders & Opportunities

- Northern Indiana Grazing Conference – February 3-4, 2023 - Michiana Event Center, Shipshewana, IN – More information coming soon!
- Heart of America Grazing Conference – February 20-21, 2023 – Ferdinand, IN - www.indianaforage.org
- Southern Indiana Grazing Conference March 29, 2023 – Shiloh Community Center, Odon, IN – More information coming soon!

Please send comments or questions to grazingbites@gmail.com.

**Follow us on
Facebook!**



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Volunteer with DNR on MLK Day!

On MLK Day, some properties will have self-directed service opportunities such as litter pickup along trails. Check the DNR calendar at calendar.dnr.IN.gov for lists of activities that day, and for volunteer events throughout the year. Work needed year-round includes maintaining trails, helping in nature centers, and sharing photography or art. Projects can also be tailored to volunteers' skillsets. For more information on volunteering see on.IN.gov/dnrvolunteer or email DNRvolunteer@dnr.IN.gov.

