

Conservation at the Crossroads

Winter, 2025 Vol. 46, No. 1

Join Us for Our 55th Annual Meeting Tuesday, February 18th

Save the date! Please join us for our 55th Annual meeting on Tuesday, February 18th at 6:00 p.m. Our meeting will once again be held at Bethany Lutheran Church at 4702 South East Street in Indianapolis. The church is located in the southwest section of the intersection of I-465 and U.S. 31. Dinner will be provided and board members Maggie Goeglein and Brian Neilson will be up for re-election and appointment. (Get to know them [HERE](#)) More information about our keynote speaker, agenda and a registration link will be sent your email in the coming weeks and will also be posted on our website.

Hope to see you there!



This Issue:

Soil Health & Urban
Agriculture Page 2

Urban Ag Conservation
Grant Page 3

Notice of Termination Filing
Page 4

Winter Water Problems
Page 5

Invasive Highlight
Page 5

Top 10's Page 6

In with the NEWs Page 7



Soil Health & Urban Agriculture

By Kevin Allison, Urban Soil Health Specialist

2025 Clean Water Indiana Grant

Much like it did in 2015, The Marion County SWCD’s Soil Health Program will enter 2025 with a new 3-year Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant! The SWCD was granted \$100,000 through a competitive application process that is administered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture’s Division of Soil Conservation under the direction of the State Soil Conservation Board. The purpose of the grant is to continue to improve soil health and water quality in small-scale agriculture and gardens through conservation practices, direct technical assistance, on-farm workshops, webinars, training videos and materials, and continuance of the MCSWCD Demonstration Garden. The grant also funds our assistance to the Indianapolis Public Library seed library to add species and volume to their free cover crop seed packet offerings. For Marion County gardeners looking to plant larger amounts of cover crops, the grant will fund a program in which the SWCD will host an application period in spring, bulk order the requested cover crops for approved applications, and then host pick up dates at select locations in summer 2025. Funding will likely be prioritized on a first-come, first-served basis, with preference given to those who participate in SWCD educational events.

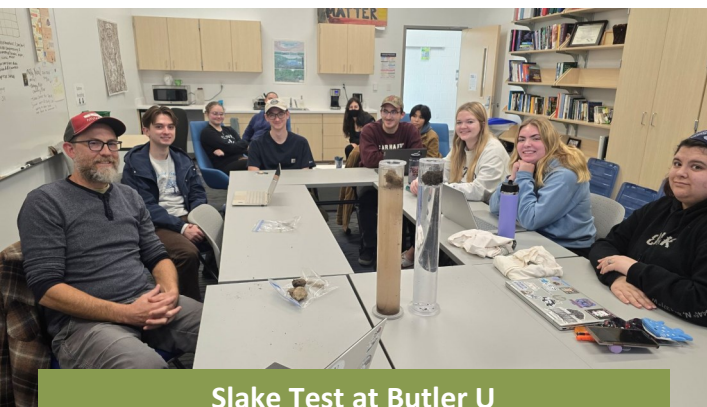
Over the next 3 years, at a minimum, the Soil Health Program will spearhead 6 bus tours for growers to expert farms, 6 in-person trainings for the Indiana Conservation Partnership to increase technical assistance capacity, 15 SWCD demonstration garden workshops, 9 webinars, and a variety of training and educational material.

Growers and gardeners, keep your eyes on our newsletters in 2025 for upcoming information on some fantastic opportunities, such as registering for our free workshops, bus tours, and cover crops.

**Learn More
About Soil
Health**
[Click HERE](#)



Oats & Crimson Clover



Slake Test at Butler U



Soil Health on the left—conventional on right



Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant

By John Hazlett, District Manager

Earlier this year we were fortunate enough to receive our third Urban Agriculture Conservation Grant (UAC) through the National Association of Conservation Districts. Our previous UAC grants from 2016 and 2020 were pivotal in helping build the foundation for our Urban Soil Health program started in 2015. Our current UAC grant includes a partnership with Indy Urban Acres, with whom we will be holding five workshops on native plant selection, planting and maintenance; invasives identification and management strategies; utilizing cover crops and the implementation of a native hedgerow and rain garden expansion. The workshops will take place at the IUA Main site near 21st and Shadeland Ave as well as the recently added IUA Faith site near 16th and Post Road and will utilize several key district resources including our [Native Plantings for Beneficial Insects and Pollinators](#), the SWCD [Rain Garden Guide](#) and our recently released [nutrient management calculator](#).

Thus far in 2024 we've held two of the five workshops that were attended by a total of 24 attendees and included a follow up planting day of a wetland at the Faith site. Our most recent workshop on December 6th featured Nathanael Pilla from Midwest Biological Survey speaking on invasives as well as our Kevin Allison. Attendees braved 20 degree temps to check out the cover crops and slake test at IUA Main, and we warmed up in the greenhouse amongst the 35,000 plus native plants IUA is currently growing. Look for future workshops in this series in 2025. IUA Farm Manager Tyler Gough and District Manager John Hazlett will present the Indy Urban Acres and Marion County SWCD partnership at the upcoming [2025 NACD Annual Meeting](#) in Salt Lake City coming up in February. We look forward to highlighting our unique partnership with IUA!



**Support Conservation in
Marion County!**

**Become a 2025 SWCD
Affiliate Member**

[JOIN](#)

NOT Filing Using IDEM's ePortal

By Rob Kendall, Urban Conservationist

Filing for Notice of Termination (NOT) for Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) projects can be done electronically. NOT can be filed once the following is accomplished:

- All soil disturbing activities are completed.
- All temporary erosion and sediment control measures are removed
- Vegetation has at least grown to 70% density. Meaning that a 2 ft by 2 ft area is at least 70% grass or another kind of vegetation.
- All construction materials, waste, waste handling devices, equipment, and vehicles have been removed and:

For Private sites: The site's contracted inspector has completed a NOT Inspection Report

For Public sites: Marion County SWCD has completed a NOT Inspection Report

Once the above conditions are met. The following steps will instruct CSGP holders on how to file for NOT through Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) regulatory portal:

If you do not have access to the permit coverage within the ePortal, request access from an administrator of the site or by emailing Eric Roberts, eroberts@idem.in.gov. Please include

the permit number with the request. Permit numbers begin with INRA and can be found on the CSGP Letter of Sufficiency, SWCD Inspection Reports, and at <https://stormwater.idem.in.gov/nsite/map/help> after searching by project name or address.

Upon receipt of the invitation to the ePortal, create an account at stormwater.idem.in.gov with the email that received the invite.

1. Select permits tab on the left-hand side of the screen.
2. Click the 3 vertical dots button next to the permit you wish to terminate.
3. Click "view permit change forms."
4. Select "Construction Stormwater - Notice of Termination - Termination of Activities" if the project is complete and stabilized.
5. Complete the form.

Permit closure after NOT conditions are met ensures any other activity in the area does not become the responsibility of the initial permittee. Make sure to follow the above steps once a NOT Inspection Report is requested and received. As always please reach out to MCSWCD with any questions.



Winter Water Problems

We usually think that spring is the main time to worry about water problems, but winter conditions can also trigger similar drainage and flooding issues. In the winter months, the ground is often frozen not allowing for much percolation into the soil. The temperatures fluctuate frequently in our part of the state, and we can get quite a bit of rain even in January and February. In addition, many of our soil types have a high groundwater table during the winter months, compounding the drainage problem.

What can be done?

- ◆ Be sure to keep storm drain inlets clear of debris or accumulated snow if there is one in your yard or on the street in front of your home. The city will not clean these for you, and it is vital that they remain functional throughout the winter.
- ◆ Check your crawl space occasionally to be sure that your sump pump is working and there isn't water standing down there. Sump pump water should be drained at least 10 feet away from the house.
- ◆ Check your downspouts to be sure they are draining and extend them out away from the house at least 10 feet.
- ◆ Has your house settled? If there are low areas along the

foundation, note those and in the spring bring in some topsoil to provide at least 6 inches of fall within the first 10 feet of the house.

- ◆ If you have a drainage swale or creek on your property monitor its condition regularly and remove any obstructions such as accumulated leaves, tree limbs or trash.
- ◆ Check our [website](#) for more information on how to improve drainage on your property.

If you have severe drainage problems in your yard [contact Julie Farr](#) in our office for an on site consultation.



Invasive Highlight: Japanese Stiltgrass

Japanese Stiltgrass is an aggressive invasive that is unpalatable, which encourages deer to move on to browse on young trees instead. It is an upright, annual bright green grass with a silver midrib. It will thrive in both full sun or deep shade and prefers moist soils but will grow on all sites. It spreads rapidly in disturbed soil and its seed is often carried to new areas on the feet of animals and humans.

It can be easily pulled up but since this disturbs the soil and promotes additional seed germination, using grass specific herbicides is usually recommended for control. Mowing in late summer before the seed forms can also be effective.

For more information on controlling invasives visit our [website](#).



10 Years of Soil Health

Congratulations to Urban Soil Health Specialist Kevin Allison!

Ten years ago, the SWCD saw a need to help landowners and small farmers find ways to improve their soil and increase the productivity of their gardens while protecting our valuable topsoil. The Soil Health Initiative was born! With support from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Indiana Conservation Partnership, the Marion & Hendricks County SWCDs teamed up to implement soil health management systems with funding through Clean Water Indiana.

Kevin Allison was hired to lead the way by providing growers with technical and financial assistance to implement soil health components such as soil tests, minimum tillage, and cover crops on their land. Hundreds have been assisted through numerous workshops, farm tours, educational materials, and personal on-site assistance.

The Soil Health initiative has grown substantially over the last ten years, and Kevin has been instrumental in training others as the program has spread not only across Indiana but

throughout the country. Our [website](#) provides excellent information and materials to help improve the health of our soils so be sure to check it out! Also, be watching for future workshops coming soon.

Thanks Kevin on this special anniversary for all of your hard work!



10 Great Winter Conservation Practices

- 1) Clean up litter in your neighborhood
- 2) Clean out your home or garage & [recycle](#)
- 3) Prepare for the next [Tox Away Day](#)
- 4) Plan your garden—remember [Soil Health!](#)
- 5) Shop seed catalogues & [start seeds indoors](#)
- 6) Hike with [IDNR State Park](#) Winter Series
- 7) Make a [bird house](#)
- 8) Participate in Cornell University's [bird count](#).
- 9) Create [Wildlife Habitat](#)
- 10) Become a [SWCD Affiliate member](#)

10 Winter Fun Facts

- 1) Many birds grow 50% more feathers in the winter—a down jacket!
- 2) Animals don't dream during hibernation. They enter long periods of REM sleep.
- 3) The Wood Frog is the only amphibian known to live north of the Arctic Circle. In hibernation its breathing and heart stop and the fluids outside its cells freeze.
- 4) Polar bears are not white—their guard hairs are transparent, an optical illusion makes them appear white.
- 5) A snowflake can take up to 2 hours to fall from a cloud to the ground.
- 6) There are officially 90 days of winter
- 7) Every snowflake has 6 sides.
- 8) The coldest temperature recorded in the U.S.: -70° F
- 9) The largest recorded snowman was 113 feet, 7 inches
- 10) The sun looks bigger in the winter because it is much lower in the sky.



MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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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.

SWCD Board Supervisors

Heather Buck, Secretary
Tyler Gough, Member

Owen Dwyer, Treasurer
Brian Neilson, Chair

Maggie Goeglein, Vice Chair

Out with the Old—In with the NEWs

Our Last Traditional SWCD Newsletter

For 45 years the Marion County SWCD has provided District news and educational information on various natural resource issues through our newsletter. Once snail-mailed in printed form, then sent out digitally by email, our new format, starting in the spring, will be quarterly News Blasts sent to your email.

News Blasts will give short, timely information on what's happening with the SWCD, inform readers about upcoming workshops, and provide important topics of interest on natural resource issues. Further information will be linked to our monthly blog posts. Our most recent blog posts can always be found on the front page of our website under "News". Use the search engine to find past blog posts by topic.

Watch for our first News Blast coming in early April!

Follow us on
Facebook!



SWCD Staff

John Hazlett,
District Manager

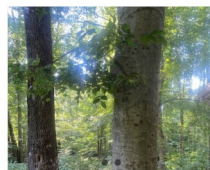
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Urban Soil Health
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Julie Farr,
Resource
Conservationist, PT

Susannah Hinds,
Acting NRCS District
Conservationist

News



The Mark
The following story is from a former employee of the Marion County SWCD who worked for us for many years before starting his own consulting business. As we begin the holiday season it's a good reminder to remember why the [...]



Indiana's Construction Stormwater General Permit (INRA00000): Key Insights for Construction Sites
By Rob Kendall, SWCD Urban Conservationist Indiana's Construction Stormwater General Permit (INRA00000) is essential for developers, construction companies, and environmental compliance officers who are working on projects that disturb one or more acres of land. Issued by the Indiana Department [...]



Maximize Soil Cover
One of the four soil health principles is to keep the soil covered as much as possible. Mulches, cover crops, and even the vegetation of the crops themselves can help cover and protect garden soil. When soil is covered, [...]

