

Conservation Today For Tomorrow

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Organic Matter Benefits Agricultural Production and the Environment

Increasing organic matter in agricultural soils means money in the farmer's pocket and a better environment for all. More organic matter is translated into better soil structure, and that means better rainfall infiltration and better holding of the moisture for farmers crops. Likewise, it means less runoff from the field, and that leads to improved groundwater supplies, less water for flooding, less potential sediment and pollutants, and better water quality in our streams and lakes.

Indiana's 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts place a high level of emphasis on increasing conservation tillage, especially no till as a way of increasing soil organic matter. Soils with improved organic matter also do a better job of nutrient cycling. High organic matter soils require less nitrogen and that helps us all by reducing the demand on fossil fuels for nitrogen manufacturing. It provides food for all the little critters that live in the soil that are so important for nutrient cycling.

You may or may not understand or buy in to all the discussion about global warming and the greenhouse effect. But it is an established fact that conservation tillage will increase the amount of carbon and organic matter in the soil and reduce the loss of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. Each one percent of organic matter in the top six inches of soil will contain about the same amount of carbon as in the whole atmosphere above the field!

More organic matter means more microbes that can break down pesticides applied to the crop. That means less pollutants going into the water. Humus and soil organisms both produce substances that stimulate plant root growth and development. A better root system means a more aggressive and productive plant.



Continuous no-till field

The increased organic matter content also brings more of the "friendly fungi" that help protect plant roots from fungal and nematode attack. These fungi also help to bring phosphorus and moisture for plant use.

We have known for a long time that organic matter is very important to the quality of our soil. More recent research findings not only confirm this, but also point out even greater benefits to the physical, chemical, and biological soil components. Advances in equipment, residue production, and management now make it possible to get meaningful improvements in soil organic matter levels.

WANTED!

**Agricultural landowners
and producers to serve
on the SWCD
Rural
Conservation
Committee**

If you are interested, contact
Linda Eastman at 474-9992, ext. 110.
The committee meets 4 times a year.

News from...



Indianapolis, Oct 31

While USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial assistance through conservation programs, the most valuable thing the agency offers may be free. The agency's Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) program allows conservation planners to work directly with farmers to develop customized conservation plans on their farms.

According to NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, "We offer financial assistance to farmers to apply conservation practices, but we also offer the technical assistance needed to develop farm conservation plans for free. As a federal agency, NRCS utilizes its CTA budget to offer conservation planning at no cost to the landowner. It's a big part of how we meet our mission, which is helping people help the land," says Hardisty. "And, by developing conservation plans now, farmers can move to the front of the line when conservation program funds become available."

"Our CTA program is the motor that makes other conservation programs work," says Hardisty. "We combine a producer's farming experience with the science-based knowledge of a conservation planner to develop a plan to meet a farmer's land and natural resource management goals. Farmers today are top notch managers and know production agriculture. At NRCS, it's our job to know natural resources and what it takes to apply conservation measures to farm land to solve natural resources issues," says Hardisty. "We have broad experience in knowing which conservation practices can work to help farmers reduce erosion, improve soil and

Continued on page 2...

SWCD Awarded Grants for Conservation Initiatives

Tippecanoe SWCD has been awarded three separate grants to help landowners get "conservation on the ground" in Tippecanoe County.

\$ 10,000.00 Tipmont EnviroWatt Grant
\$ 9,076.50 ISDA Unique Partnership
\$ 3,400.00 ISDA Marketing Grant

Grant money will be used to purchase a no-till grass drill, warm season grass seed, tree seedlings and herbicide. Funds will also be used to develop promotional materials about the SWCD riparian initiative.

In addition to the grants, the SWCD



Landowners will be able rent this drill for planting grasses. The SWCD will purchase the drill with grant monies.

is receiving \$2000 from the **Indiana Smallmouth Conservation** organization (ISC website: www.iscconservation.org) to help with the riparian buffer initiative.

-Linda Eastman

Rural Conservation Committee

2006 Agriculture Conservation Awards

Earlier this year, the SWCD Board of Supervisors nominated local farmers for agriculture conservation awards. Tippecanoe County award winners were:

River Friendly Farmer: Dean Craig
Conservation Farmer of the Year: Roger Verhey
Master Farm Conservationist: Dale Workman

Congratulations!

Award winners will be recognized at the SWCD annual meeting in March, 2007

Check out the SWCD website at www.tippecanoeswcd.org. You will find SWCD board meeting minutes, supervisor contact information, committee news, a link to NRCS online soil survey, calendar of events and more. While there, take the SWCD urban conservation survey!

Continued from page 1...NRCS news

water quality, provide a place for wildlife, and continue raising good crops."

In Tippecanoe County, you can start the planning process by visiting NRCS at the local USDA Service Center at 1812 Troxel Drive in Lafayette, or by calling 765-474-9992, ext. 3. "A conservation plan is the key to addressing natural resource issues with solutions that fit your farm operation," says Mark Eastman, NRCS district conservationist. "And now, after harvest, is a good time to get started."

NRCS offers planning assistance to farmers large and small. Not only is a conservation plan valuable, it is also required for financial assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

Calendar of Events

November

7 SWCD Closed - Election Day
 8 SWCD Board Meeting
 19 Office Closed - Veterans Day
 23 Office Closed - Thanksgiving
 24 SWCD Closed - Holiday

December

13 SWCD Board Meeting
 25 Office Closed - Christmas
 26 SWCD Closed - Holiday

January

1 Office Closed - New Year Day
 10 SWCD Board Meeting
 15 Office Closed - MLK
 16-17 IASWCD Conference

Please Note:

Board Meetings are held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 8:30 a.m., at the SWCD Office.



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed three energy tools designed to increase energy awareness in agriculture and to help farmers and ranchers identify where they can reduce their energy costs. The results generated by these tools are estimates based on NRCS models and are illustrative of the magnitude of savings.

Energy Estimator: Irrigation

The Energy Estimator for Irrigation tool enables you to estimate potential energy savings associated with pumping water for irrigation. NRCS technical specialists developed this model to integrate general technical information on farm-specific crops, energy prices, and pumping requirements. This tool does not provide field-specific recommendations.

Energy Estimator: Nitrogen

The Energy Estimator for Nitrogen tool enables you to calculate the potential cost-savings related to nitrogen use on your farm or ranch. NRCS agronomists developed this model to integrate general technical information on nitrogen use with farm-specific information on fertilizer types, costs, timing, and placement. This tool does not provide field-specific recommendations.

Energy Estimator: Tillage

The Energy Estimator for Tillage tool estimates diesel fuel use and costs in the production of key crops in your area and compares potential energy savings between conventional tillage and alternative tillage systems. The crops covered are limited to the most predominant crops in 74 Crop Management Zones (CMZ's). NRCS agronomists have identified these crops and estimated the fuel use associated with common tillage systems. The Energy Estimator gives you an idea of the magnitude of diesel fuel savings under different levels of tillage.

To access the Energy Estimators visit:

<http://ecat.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

News from the Urban Conservation Committee...

Keep Stockwell Beautiful

The small town of Stockwell is taking giant leaps towards making it a more beautiful place to live through the Keep America Beautiful organization. Keep America Beautiful is a national nonprofit public education organization founded in 1953. It's the nation's largest volunteer-based community action organization dedicated to litter and graffiti prevention, beautification, waste minimization and community improvement. Keep America Beautiful involves millions of volunteers each year in hands-on community improvement activities, where they learn how to take personal responsibility for improving their local community environments and their quality of life. They teach young people how to care for, preserve, and protect our environment.

Stockwell is the fifth community around the state working to become certified with the organization. Kris Ziller of Lauramie Township has been the key motivator behind the project. There is now a place to drop off household recyclables in Stockwell. The town offers this service



to the whole township along with toxic waste days. Both services have had enormous turnouts. The recycling dumpsters are emptied every week and the tox-away-days have seen over 70 vehicles drop off old paint, fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, mercury, motor oil and more. Already this year, they have filled a semi truck full of tires, another semi full of odds and ends and five 50 gallon drums of oil. They are also planning a bulky trash day with Allied Waste in the near future.

The John and Ruby Parks Foundation started up the Keep Stockwell Beautiful project by donating \$5,000 dollars. With

the money, the town has purchased flower seed, boxes and pots, a flag pole and more. Volunteers from the United Methodist Youth Group and the Boy Scouts of America have helped get the program up and running by distributing flyers, planting flowers around town, watering, mulching, pulling weeds, etc. Mrs. Ziller is working with students from Ivy Tech along with other community volunteers as well. She is planning to submit a grant to Tipmont's EnviroWatts program in hopes of offering a discounted tree sale to residents. Furthermore, a "Backyard Conservation" workshop will be offered next year through the Tippecanoe County SWCD. Finally, Mrs Ziller is continuing to work with the area schools to incorporate the Keep America Beautiful program into their curriculum. Mrs. Ziller believes, "Stockwell is a beautiful town and that people should be capitalizing on that beauty. The town just needed someone to organize the efforts." She also wanted to thank everyone for all their help.

-Tandy Easler

Urban Conservation Committee News

News from the Education Committee...

What's in Our Stormwater Runoff is in Our Wabash

The water you swim, fish, wade, and canoe in is not pure water. You might be surprised to discover the source of some of our most common water pollutants. Want to point at "big business?" What if it's you? Could you be contributing to the contamination of the Wabash? Every drop of rain that falls in Tippecanoe County either ends up in a lake, pond or wetland, the groundwater, or the Wabash River. It's all part of the Hydrologic Cycle. This includes the rain that falls on your lawn, your roof, your driveway, your street, and your community. What gets added along its way to the river? Typically, stormwater runoff picks up fertilizers and herbicides from lawns, carwash soap from driveways, grease and oil from roads, mud from construction, bacteria from broken septic systems, and lots of other spilled or dumped contaminants, before reaching the Wabash River.

As a part of a coalition of local governments' National Pollution



Discharge Elimination Stormwater Permit, the Tippecanoe SWCD is dedicated to improving water quality in our Wabash River as well as all the creeks and streams that feed it. If you are surprised to learn that you might be a source of contaminants, hopefully you will be equally surprised by how easy it is to improve water quality. Everyone can make a difference - from homeowners, to business owners, to developers, and especially kids. You can make a difference at home, at work, and at school. There are opportunities to volunteer, explore, learn and enjoy the incredible water

resources we have in Tippecanoe County. Please take a minute to fill out the Tippecanoe County Stormwater Quality Program Survey at <http://battleground.in.gov/stormwater.htm>. This survey helps us to evaluate the need for public education and outreach. Spilling, dumping, or discharging chemicals, dirt, debris, oil or other non-stormwater substances into county ditches, creeks, streams, curb drains, storm drains, or the river is a violation of federal, state, and local regulations. Allowing sediment or chemicals to wash off a construction site is also a violation. If you have witnessed an act that you feel is in violation of the Tippecanoe Countywide Stormwater Ordinance, anywhere within the Tippecanoe County border, please report the activity to the Stormwater Quality Coordinator at (765) 423-9228.

-Don Emmert

Education Committee News



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**Tippecanoe County SWCD
 Board of Supervisors**

Roger Verhey, Chair
 Randy Geswein
 Jim King
 Gene Kroeschen
 Chuck Shelby

The **Rural Conservation Committee** needs your help. If you are interested in helping plan SWCD agricultural related activities, contact Linda Eastman at 765-474-9992, ext. 110

SWCD Office Staff

Chris Remley (ext. 101)
 District Administrator
 Linda Eastman (ext. 110)
 Rural Conservation Coordinator
 Don Emmert (ext. 111)
 Water Quality Educator
 Tandy Easler (ext. 113)
 Erosion Control Technician

USDA NRCS Staff

Mark Eastman
 District Conservationist
 Monica Jackson
 Soil Conservationist

ISDA Staff

Sue Gerlach
 Resource Specialist

SWCD Committee Chairs

Rural Conservation - Jim King
 Urban Conservation - Dave Kovich
 Education - Lorraine Rund
 Personnel - Roger Verhey
 Finance - Steve Roy
 Marketing - KD Benson

The Fact of Matter is...

FACT #1: The Tippecanoe SWCD has proven itself, both physically and fiscally, getting conservation on the ground while being financially responsible! Fiscal attentiveness has provided us with a truck, two no-till drills, laser equipment, computers, printers, cameras and GPS units, in addition to allowing us to maintain our day-to-day operating budget.

FACT #2: Since 1940, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has paid Tippecanoe SWCD's rent, in lieu of services provided. However, due to shrinking federal budgets, NRCS can no longer absorb the SWCD's overhead rental costs.

FACT #3: Beginning in 2007, the SWCD is faced with the cost of renting office space. Due to the excellent working relationship and sharing of resources over the past 60+ years, it is of the utmost importance that Tippecanoe SWCD remain co-located with NRCS.

FACT #4: The current office staff includes county, state and federal

employees, yet we've been able to provide a seamless office environment. Over the years, through our collective efforts, we've brought about conservation, development, and wise use of land, water, and related natural resources throughout Tippecanoe County.

FACT #5: Conservation dollars make good sense and good sense means using dollars wisely for conservation! Pay particular attention to Fact #5, and take a moment to contact the Tippecanoe County Council and Commissioners. Thank them for the additional funding provided for 2007 to assist the Tippecanoe SWCD in maintaining our partnership and co-location with NRCS. By doing so, they have allowed us to continue to provide you with the best service possible.

As always, we thank you for your continued support!

-Chris Remley
District Administrator

All programs and services of the Tippecanoe County SWCD, ISDA, IDNR, and USDA NRCS are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, age, gender, national origin, religion, marital status, or handicap.