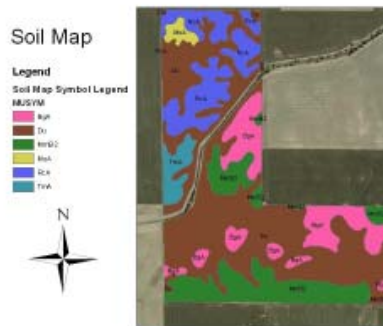


Rural Conservation News

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Conservation Plans Provide Roadmap



News from NRCS

Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds

Habitat buffers for upland birds are strips of vegetation established around the edges of crop fields to provide habitat for bobwhite quail, ring-neck pheasant, and other upland birds. Many of these birds have suffered population declines due to loss of habitat. These buffers can provide important nesting, brood rearing and escape cover while also serving as travel corridors between areas of suitable habitat. In addition to habitat for upland birds, these buffers may provide habitat for other animals and may limit sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other contaminants from entering streams and other water bodies.

By diversifying vegetation in these buffers, desirable habitat will develop. The growth forms of variety of species, combined with mid-management to increase open cover, will provide food sources in the forms of seed, insects and soil invertebrates. Shrubs may be included to diversify cover and food, but are optional.

It is highly recommended that the local Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) district biologist, Dean Zimmerman be consulted for technical assistance. It is important that site selection and layout, seeding mixture selection, and other critical planning issues be performed correctly in order to maximize population gains.

Habitat can be established through either natural succession, or through planting a mixture of native warm season grasses, legumes, and forbs. Limited shrub and tree plantings, on up to 10% of the practice acreage, are allowed.

For more information on Upland Gamebird Habitat, contact the NRCS office.

An inventory of your land is the first step in developing a conservation plan.

When most of us decide to take a vacation or other trip, we pull out the maps, travel and attraction guides, and other reference material. We have family discussions about what everyone wants to see and do. All this results in a general plan to serve as a guide for the trip. Good planning results in fewer bottlenecks and lost opportunities to have fun.

The same is true of natural resource management on the farms and in the woods across Indiana. Almost ninety percent of Indiana is privately owned, each tract of land is different, and each owner's desires and objectives are different. Soils vary in depth, drainage, erodibility, natural productivity, slope, texture and stoniness. Other resources – water, plants, and animals – also vary from one property to another. These characteristics affect how the owner or manager uses the land. Since the land and its related resources are unique, so should be the planning for its use. Other variables are equipment, management knowledge and skills, crops, fertility programs and especially the goals and objectives of the farm family.

Short-term plans may include what crops to grow and livestock to raise or sell. Long-term plans may consider protecting and improving soil and water resources. The latter is where the local Soil and Water Conservation District and its conservation partners come in.

As you think about how to farm more efficiently and how to protect the soil from wind and water erosion and improve soil quality, so that it will continue to produce good crops year after year, you are doing conservation planning.

The first step in conservation planning is a good inventory of the land and its current condition. Soil information is basic to the process and includes the soil map and a description of the soil in terms of texture, characteristics, capabilities, limitations, and erosion potential. When you are ready to start, you and the conservationist discuss the soils, your goals and objectives, the kinds of crops you want to grow, livestock you want to raise, and other special interests like wildlife or forestry that you have for the farm operation.

Together, you discuss the ways to meet your goals while protecting the land from erosion and other problems. The conservationist offers ideas on conservation practices and management techniques to overcome any problems. You decide which is best for you and how to carry out the conservation measures.

The result is a conservation plan, or your roadmap, to successful soil and water management.

Contact the Soil and Water Conservation District for help in conservation planning and installing the measures in your conservation plan.

10 Reasons to Use Conservation Tillage



Conservation tillage systems offer numerous benefits that intensive or conventional tillage simply can't match.

1. Saves Time

As little as one trip for planting compared to two or more tillage operations means fewer hours on a tractor and fewer labor hours to pay ... or more acres to farm. For instance, on 500 acres the time savings can be as much as 225 hours per year. That's almost four 60-hour weeks.

2. Saves Fuel

Save an average 3.5 gallons an acre or 1,750 gallons on a 500-acre farm.

3. Saves Machinery Wear

Fewer trips save an estimated \$5 per acre on machinery wear and maintenance costs—a \$2,500 savings on a 500-acre farm.

4. Increases Soil Tilth

A continuous no-till system increases soil particle aggregation (small soil clumps) making it easier for plants to establish roots. Improved soil tilth also can minimize compaction. Of course, compaction is also reduced by reducing trips across the field.

5. Increases Organic Matter

The latest research shows that the more soil is tilled, the more carbon is released to the air and the less carbon is available to build organic matter for future crops. In fact, carbon accounts for about half of organic matter.

6. Traps Soil Moisture to Improve Water Availability

Keeping crop residue on the surface traps water in the soil by providing shade. The shade reduces water evaporation. In addition, residue acts as tiny dams slowing runoff and increasing the opportunity for water to soak into the soil. Another way infiltration increases is by the channels (macropores) created by earthworms and old plant roots. In fact, continuous no-till can result in as much as two additional inches of water available to plants in late summer.

7. Reduces Soil Erosion

Crop residues on the soil surface reduce erosion by water and wind. Depending on the amount of residue present, soil erosion can be reduced by up to 90% compared to an unprotected, intensively tilled field.

8. Improves Water Quality

Crop residue helps hold soil along with associated nutrients (particularly phosphorous) and pesticides on the field to reduce runoff into surface water. In fact, residue can cut herbicide runoff rates in half. Additionally, microbes that live in carbon-rich soils quickly degrade pesticides and utilize nutrients to protect groundwater quality.

9. Increases Wildlife

Crop residues provide shelter and food for wildlife, such as game birds and small animals.

10. Improves Air Quality

Crop residue left on the surface improves air quality because it: Reduces wind erosion, thus it reduces the amount of dust in the air; Reduces fossil fuel emissions from tractors by making fewer trips across the field; and Reduces the release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by tying up more carbon in organic matter.

Fall harvest is a good time to plan your spring tillage changes. Call for more info.

River Friendly Farmer



Dale Workman

Dale Workman of Wabash Twp. has been named a "River Friendly Farmer" by Tippecanoe County SWCD.

Dale's agricultural operations incorporate buffer strips, grass waterways, no-till / conservation tillage methods, erosion control practices, and crop management practices that protect soil and water resources and provide wildlife habitat.

Dale will be recognized during the River Friendly Farmer program at the the Indiana State Fair on August 17, 2 p.m. in the Dickies FFA Pavillion.



News from

CRP Cost-share Assistance

If you are interested in cost-share through the Farm Service Agency CRP (USDA Conservation Reserve Program), *NOW* is the time to apply. In order to maximize your payments it is best to have all paperwork completed prior to September 30th so the contract can be effective October 1st, which is the beginning of the CRP crop year. CRP practices include grassed waterways, filter strips, field windbreaks, field borders, tree plantings, and more.

REMINDER: PLEASE report any cropping changes or ownership changes to the FSA Office as soon as possible after the change so records can be updated.

-Sandy Weaver, FSA CED

Calendar of Events

July

16 Butterfly Count - Eli Lilly
16-23 Tippecanoe Co. 4-H Fair

August

5 SWCD Board Meeting
10-21 Indiana State Fair

September

2 SWCD Board Meeting

October

7 SWCD Board Meeting



Visit the SWCD website at

www.tippecanoeswcd.org

Please let us know if you would like to receive this newsletter, program updates, and meeting notices by email.

Email your information to:
linda.eastman@IN.nacdn.net
or follow the link on our website.

Urban Conservation Committee to meet with 'Planning with POWER' Representative

Land use, water quality, and natural resource stability are inseparable. In fact, nonpoint source water pollution, caused by polluted runoff from the land, is the number one water quality problem in the United States. Increased development throughout the state, due to a higher population and today's economy, is a major threat to the health of our water and environmental resources.

Efforts to combat this threat are focused primarily on changing the individual behaviors of land users, but few programs address the impact of land use policies, which are created and enforced at the town, city, and county levels. Ultimately, protection of the nation's water and natural resources will depend upon educating local officials about the links between land use and water quality, and providing them with the ideas and tools to take action at the local level.

So, how can land use plans for community growth be made while still looking out for the environment? That

is the question with which land use decision makers must constantly struggle. The answer may be a collaborative effort of the SWCD Urban Conservation Committee, along with other interested agencies and organizations, becoming involved and learning more about "Planning With POWER (Protecting Our Water and Environmental Resources)".

The *Planning with POWER* Program combines three strategies to protect water and other natural resources while allowing for compatible economic growth: 1) natural resource-based planning, 2) improving site design and using best management practices, and 3) remediation and maintenance.



The Urban Conservation Committee is looking forward to meeting with *Planning with POWER* Coordinator Bob McCormick next month to see how our two groups can work together to incorporate natural resource protection into the everyday land use decisions being made by our local officials.

For more information on the *Planning with Power* meeting or joining the Urban Conservation Committee, please contact Chris Remley at chris.remley@in.nacdn.net or by phone at 765-474-9992, Ext. 101.

-Chris Remley
Urban Conservation Committee News

See You at the 4-H Fair!

What do the following have in common: the site of blue ribbons, the smell of elephant ears in the air, fresh bedding in the barns, and nights spent tending to your prized animal?

If you have the image of the annual 4-H Fair in your head then we must think alike. Beginning July 16 over 1875 students will be displaying their projects that they have chosen from over 60 topics. Along with the projects that may include a poster, live demonstrations, a craft, or even an animal, the students are required to complete their handbook activities.

A 4-H project is a series of learning experiences for 4-H members. Most projects have manuals to assist the 4-H'er with his or her project. Ideally it motivates a youth to learn and to have fun. The five projects with the highest enrollment are arts and crafts, foods, swine, photography, and clothing. Roberta Crabtree, Extension Educator for the Tippecanoe 4-H program has taken



the lead to ensure this year's fair runs smoothly and have the children prepared with project information before the fair begins.

4-H is the largest youth-serving organization in the United States with members living in the city, small town, suburb and country. It is designed for boys and girls currently in grades 3-12. Programs are conducted in all 92 Indiana counties and participants benefit from the experience and guidance of more than 14,000 adult volunteer leaders and professional staff.

4-H provides an opportunity for youth to soar to new heights. These youth can develop leadership skills, use their talents, explore new interests, make new friends, experiment with career choices, visit new places, discover self-confidence and have fun.

Come out and experience the 2005 Tippecanoe County 4-H Fair at the Tippecanoe Fairgrounds from July 16-23. See "ewe" there.

-Don Emmert
Education Committee News



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**Tippecanoe County SWCD
Board of Supervisors**

Jim King, Chair
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Chuck Shelby
Roger Verhey
Dale Workman

PLACE YOUR AD HERE

You can help support the SWCD by placing an ad in our quarterly newsletter. Contact Linda Eastman for more information. Next newsletter coming in October.

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Office Administrator
Linda Eastman (ext. 110)
Environmental Coordinator
Don Emmert (ext. 111)
Water Quality Educator
Jennifer Boss (ext. 114)

NRCS Office Staff

Mark Eastman
District Conservationist

ISDA Staff

Sue Gerlach (ext. 115)
Resource Specialist
Waneta Lowe (ext. 112)
Admin. Assistant for SWCD Support

SWCD Committee Chairs

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

Fun in the Sun and Busy as Bees!

As the old saying goes, “time flies when you’re having fun”. And to that extent, I guess we must really be enjoying our jobs, since we’ve just looked up and discovered that 2005 is half over and summer has already arrived.

In most cases, when you think of the SWCD and its summer activities, you probably envision our time being spent out in the field, surveying, providing technical assistance, etc. Some of us are fortunate enough to work outdoors and have ‘fun in the sun’, but there are others of us who work indoors and enjoy the sun from our windows. Regardless of whether we are indoors or out, there is much to be done to protect the natural resources of Tippecanoe County, and all of our staff members have been very busy the last few months carrying out the goals of the SWCD.

Staff member Linda Eastman has been in the business of selling buffers. She has mapped the riparian buffer “remaining need” on the Geographic Information System (GIS) and sent postcards to 635 landowners and/or producers in priority areas. She is scheduling appointments to meet individuals one-on-one and has developed a cost analysis worksheet indicating the financial benefits of buffers. Linda is also the editor of your Rural Conservation newsletter.

Water Quality Educator Don Emmert has also been as busy as a bee. During the month of May alone, he provided educational programs to 11 schools and 634 students, including the coordination of a Pond Day at Cole Elementary School. He completed an Education newsletter which was mass emailed to all Tippecanoe County teachers, and has recently coordinated educational efforts with Purdue University to co-host a webcast entitled “Protecting Water Resources through Land Conservation”.

Part-timer Jennifer Boss has been productive in the office by providing computer data entry assistance for our USDA/ISDA partners.

I’ve been keeping busy with the Urban Conservation Committee and personnel and administrative responsibilities including job description revisions, budgets, etc. As another old saying goes... “You’re not finished, until the paperwork is done”, and that’s my job.

As you can see, the SWCD staff is hard at work, having fun in the sun and staying as busy as bees. So, take the time to enjoy your summer and the beauty of nature around you....we’re all in this together!

-Chris Remley
Office 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.