

# HENDRICKS Communicator



Soil and Water  
Conservation  
District

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A Quarterly Newsletter Devoted to Conservation

SPRING 2010

## Hendricks-Boone-Putnam Conservation Field Day

### “Improving Soil Health”

August 17, 2010 8 am—1 pm

Moore Farm, 3501 W. CR 100 S., Danville

#### Preventing Soil Compaction - Michelin Tires

*Discussion on proper tire pressure and tracks vs. tires.*

#### Nitrogen Testing - Andy Nicholson, Nicholson Consulting Services, LLC, & Steve Allen, Hagie Manufacturing Company

*Using crop canopy sensing technology to fine-tune nitrogen rates. Open discussion on available equipment for late season nitrogen application.*

#### Cover Crops - Barry Fisher, State Agronomist, NRCS

*A look at strategies to “jump start” the natural biological processes within the system by integrating cover crops into crop rotations and nutrient management systems.*

#### Woodlot Management - Jack Nelson, Consulting Forester

*An introduction to Timber Stand Improvement, forestry cost-share programs, and potential tax savings for woodlot owners.*

***\*Also...Field Demonstrations, Equipment Displays, Practical Information and a chance to share Knowledge with Peers and Industry Experts!***

Registration is at 8 am. Participants will rotate between several stations beginning at 8:30. Lunch is provided by Farm Credit Service and catered by A Lovin’ Spoonful. The field day is free, but reservations are required for lunch.

**Please RSVP by August 10.**

**Hendricks County SWCD 317-745-2555**

## Cover Crop Cost-Share

A key soil quality concept is to have something green and growing during all times of the year. Cover crops have the potential to fix nitrogen, build soil organic matter, control weeds, control erosion, and improve soil quality.

Hendricks County SWCD received a Clean Water Indiana grant from the State of Indiana to offer cost-share incentives for winter cover crops. The SWCD will pay \$25/ acre up to 50 acres for cover crops listed in the NRCS Indiana Field Office Technical Guide, including annual ryegrass, oil seed radishes, and crimson clover.

Applications will be accepted until **August 16, 2010**. Priority will be given to new applicants who have previously not used cover crops and/or are outside of the Big Walnut and Eagle Creek watersheds. Call the SWCD at 745-2555 to request an application.

The Big Walnut Creek and Eagle Creek Watershed Alliances have cost-share funds available for cover crops and other conservation practices through 319 grants from the Indiana Dept. of Environmental Management (IDEM).

Harold Thompson is the Ag Liaison for both watershed groups. He is available to meet with interested landowners in these watersheds to discuss the cost-share programs. Contact Harold through the Hendricks County SWCD.

**Visit the Pathway to Water Quality at the Indiana State Fair, August 6-22, 2010.**

*“Walk the Path that Water Walks.” Located on the northeast side of the fairgrounds, the Pathway to Water Quality has been a popular fixture at the State Fair since 1993. Visitors learn how people use the land and care for our natural resources as they follow the path through the watershed.*

## 75th Anniversary of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), NRCS has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges, like climate change.

NRCS draws on a tradition of principles in working with private landowners that is as relevant today as when it was a dream to Hugh Hammond Bennett in the late 1920s and early 1930s. A career soil scientist in USDA, Bennett became convinced that soil erosion was a national menace and that its solution lay in tailoring conservation practices to fit the capability of the land and the desires of landowners.

Simple solutions for all situations would be fruitless. The crops, the land, and the climate were so diverse that specialists in agronomy, forestry, soil science, biology, engineering, and social sciences contributed to conservation methods. They worked with farmers to find solutions that benefited the land and fulfilled the landowners' aspirations.

In 1933, the Soil Erosion Service, predecessor to the Soil Conservation Service and NRCS, began working with farmers in the Coon Creek watershed of southwestern Wisconsin to transform the square, eroding fields into what one sees today—a conservation showplace of contouring, strip cropping, terracing, and wise land use that benefits the soil, air, water, as well as the plant, animal, and human life of the whole watershed.

The carpeting of the land with soil conservation works nationwide was hastened with the passage of the Soil Conservation Act in April of 1935. Recognition of the first conservation district, bounded by the Brown Creek watershed in North Carolina, on August 4, 1937, established a method for the Service to assist farmers in the conservation districts. Locally elected citizens established priorities and plans for the district's work. Implementing conservation on individual properties contributes to the overall quality of the life in the watershed or region.

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned, making stewardship by private landowners absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment. NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

### Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative

The Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) is a joint effort by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and others. Purdue University Extension provides expertise. CCSI promotes a systematic approach to production agriculture focusing on:

- Continuous no-till/strip-till
- Cover crops
- Precision farming
- Nutrient and pest management

This will result in improved soil quality, water quality and profitability on Indiana cropland.

Contact the CCSI coordinators Hans Kok and Dan Towery by email.

[hans-kok@iaswcd.org](mailto:hans-kok@iaswcd.org)

[dan-towery@iaswcd.org](mailto:dan-towery@iaswcd.org)

Visit the CCSI website for resources, links, and events.

<http://www.in.gov/isda/ccsi/index.htm>

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The following principles are NRCS's heritage and still guide its work:

- Assess the resources on the land, the conservation problems and opportunities.
  - Draw on various sciences and disciplines and integrate all their contributions into a plan for the whole property.
  - Work closely with land users so that the plans for conservation mesh with their objectives.
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### Purdue FNR Extension Workshop

A Natural Resource Enterprise landowner workshop will be held at Dull's Tree Farm in Boone County, 8:30-2:30 on September 9, 2010.

*Keep the family farm, create additional income and improve wildlife habitat.*

Learn:

- How to manage your land's resources
- How to market your enterprise
- What cost-share programs are available
- How to reduce your liability
- About different types of enterprises

The early registration (\$35 fee) deadline is August 30th. On-site registration is \$45. The registration fee helps pay the costs of workshop materials (700+ pg binder and 60 pg workbook), morning refreshments & lunch.

For more information call the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Office at 765-647-3538.

For information about the NRE program in Indiana visit <http://www.fnr.purdue.edu/NREnterprises/>

## Hendricks County Partnership for Water Quality

### Stormwater Quality Corner

When ideal temperature and water conditions coincide algae “blooms” may occur – commonly from May to October in Indiana. Factors promoting algae growth can include sunlight, warm weather, low turbulence, and nutrient sources, such as phosphorus and nitrogen. Some types of algae prefer turbid, or cloudy, water with low levels of light. Blooms may appear for only a few hours or remain unchanged for weeks depending on water and wind conditions.

High-density algae blooms can create taste and odor issues for public drinking water supplies. However, these are considered secondary drinking water standards. In some cases, these algae blooms can impair drinking water supplies that use a surface water source.

When algal blooms die off, they sink to the bottom and absorb available oxygen in the water. In some high concentrations, the depletion of oxygen may be great enough to result in fish kills. In extremely rare instances, toxin-producing blue-green algae have resulted in the sickness or death of some other animals, including livestock. There have been no such reported cases in Indiana. Most algae blooms do not produce toxins.

There are more than fifty major types of freshwater blue-green algae, but only about one-third of them are capable of producing toxins. In toxin-producing blue-green algae, toxins may be produced in response to dying after natural bloom conditions or to the treatment of affected lakes with an algaecide. In Indiana, the blue-green algae of concern are in the group *Cyanophyta*.

The State of Indiana is researching algae to gain a better understanding of its behavior, relative toxicity, environmental impacts and management.

For more information visit the IDEM Algae website at <http://www.in.gov/idem/algae/>

#### 2010 SWCD Fall Tree Sale

The 2010 species list and order form will be available on the SWCD website [www.hendricks-swcd.org](http://www.hendricks-swcd.org) in August.

Tree pick-up will be in October. Date and location are yet to be determined. Details will be on the order form.

**2010 Plat Books      \$16.00 ea      \$17.50 mailed**

**Flags    red or yellow wire    \$15.00/ 100**  
**pink plastic            \$5.50/ 50**

**Rain Barrels    standard w/ diverter      \$100**  
**economy                      \$70**

## What You Can Do

Help reduce the influx of nutrients into the watershed and improve overall water quality.

- Check soil nutrient levels prior to applying fertilizer to ensure correct application. Always read and follow the fertilizer label directions.
- Use phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer on established grass. Look for a zero (0) as the middle number (phosphorus content) to indicate phosphorus-free fertilizer.
- Do not fertilize up to the edge of a waterway. Sweep excess fertilizer from pavement.
- Do not dispose of grass clippings or leaves in or near a waterway.
- To prevent nitrogen input from human waste, have your septic system inspected and tank pumped out at least every two years.
- Pick up pet waste. Do not dispose in storm sewers.
- If conducting land disturbing activity, prevent soil and organic matter from washing into waterway. Soil can carry nutrients into the waterway.

### Indiana Water Monitoring Council Field Day

Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at McCloud Nature Park, 8518 North Hughes Road, North Salem, IN.

Two sessions: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 – 3 p.m.

This is a collaborative effort sponsored by the Indiana Water Monitoring Council to provide an opportunity for organizations and individuals to learn about the different methods for collecting water quality data and measuring discharge that are used by U.S. Geological Survey, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and Hoosier Riverwatch.

The event is free but participation will be limited to the first 60 people who RSVP. Preference will be given to watershed coordinators and others conducting or planning to conduct water quality monitoring on the local or regional level. Please send your RSVP to Jody Arthur, [jarthur@idem.IN.gov](mailto:jarthur@idem.IN.gov)

### Indiana Master Naturalist Program

The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana’s plants, water, soils and wildlife and to promote volunteer service in local communities.

IMN sessions will be held at the Twin Bridges Recreation Lodge on County Road 150 E., Danville. Sessions are every Thursday starting September 16, 2010 thru November 18, 2010, from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Class size is limited to 20 students and is on a first-come, first-served by date of payment. Class fee is \$30.

For more information, contact Carole Smith at (317) 718-6865.