

Hendricks Communicator



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USDA PARTNERS WITH INDIANA TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY

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Seated (right to left) at the signing of the CREP agreement are: Chuck Conner, Deputy Sec. of USDA; Bill Wilson, President of National Association of Conservation Districts; Lt. Governor Becky Skillman; Andy Miller, IN Dept. of Agriculture; and John Nidlinger with USDA FSA in IN.

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Chuck Conner announces a \$20.2 million Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) with Indiana to improve water quality at a signing in Hendricks County.

"Reducing agricultural runoff into the targeted watersheds improves the environment by enhancing habitat for wildlife, especially for threatened and

endangered species," Conner said. "This partnership will also improve water quality, and I encourage all eligible producers to participate." Conner attended the signing ceremony today for the new CREP with Indiana Lt. Governor Becky Skillman at Brownsburg, Ind.

The Indiana CREP targets the enrollment of 7,000 acres in the Highland/Pigeon, Tippecanoe and Upper White River watersheds where sediment, nutrients, pesticides and herbicides run off from agricultural land. Landowners can offer eligible cropland and marginal pastureland in these watersheds.

Over the course of their contracts, CREP participants will receive incentive payments and cost-share assistance for installing approved conservation practices from USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). CCC will also provide annual rental payments for the duration of the contract.

The state of Indiana will contribute at least 20 percent of the overall costs of implementing the CREP and will offer 10-year contract extensions and permanent easements. Indiana will pay all costs associated with monitoring the state's water quality and provide technical assistance to develop conservation plans and implement practices.

The total cost over a 15-year period is estimated at \$20.2 million, with CCC contributing \$14.6 million and the state of Indiana funding \$5.6 million.

Sign-up for the Indiana CREP is scheduled to begin July 18, 2005, and will continue until enrollment goals are attained, or through Dec. 31, 2007, whichever comes first. Land enrolled in the program remains under contract for a period of 14 to 15 years, as specified in the contract.

More information on the Indiana CREP is available at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/default.htm>.

STORMWATER QUALITY CORNER

Introduction to Septic Systems and Stream Contamination

Many of our Hendricks County ditches, creeks and streams are contaminated with the intestinal bacterium *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). This is not a localized issue but is widespread throughout the County. Stream systems affected include all three forks of White Lick Creek, the entire Mill Creek system, Clear Creek, and the East and West Forks of Big Walnut Creek. All of the above noted streams appear on the List of Impaired Water Bodies maintained by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) due to *E. coli* contamination.

While there are a variety of sources for *E. coli* contamination such as pet, wildlife or livestock manures, the largest and most important sources are human domestic and commercial sewage. *E. coli* as it is found in our water courses is not particularly dangerous as a pathogen, but it is used as an indicator of the likely presence of more important disease causing organisms. Water borne pathogens arising from sewage include organisms that cause parasitic diseases, hepatitis, dysentery, and cholera among others.

In Hendricks County domestic sewage comes mainly from our heavy reliance on the septic system as the preferred form of on-site wastewater disposal. Estimates by the Indiana State Department of Health indicate that 25% of these systems statewide are functioning inadequately. An even more dire statistic, the Hendricks County Health Department estimates that 11 – 13,000 households in the County are directly discharging untreated sewage to a field tile, ditch or waterway.

When rains come in these circumstances, the runoff or stormwater flushes the sewage into local waterways, contaminating downstream areas. It is important to properly design, install and maintain on-site sewage treatment systems to minimize these problems. In future columns, we will discuss the proper care of septic systems and other options for on-site sewage treatment. For further information contact the Hendricks County Health Department at (317) 745-9217 or the Purdue Extension “Knowledge to Go” number at 1 (888) EXT INFO. Ask for the Home and Environment Extension Bulletins HENV-1-W through HENV-10-W – all are about septic systems. You may also find this information on-line at <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/HENV/index.htm>.

NRCS HELPS RESTORE FLOOD-RAVAGED TOWN WITH EWP FUNDS

The Labor Day flood of 2003 wreaked havoc in the Town of Plainfield, particularly along White Lick Creek between County Road 300 South and 600 South. The rushing waters downed trees, eroded banks, washed out a trail, and left debris and gravel bars in its wake. To help restore the area back to its pre-flood condition, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is stepping in to help.

Through the agency's Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP), NRCS will provide approximately \$2.3 million for the Town of Plainfield's restoration project. This project represents the largest EWP funding for a single project in Indiana's history. The federal program requires the recipient to match 25 percent of the construction cost through local sources, which the Town of Plainfield has accomplished.

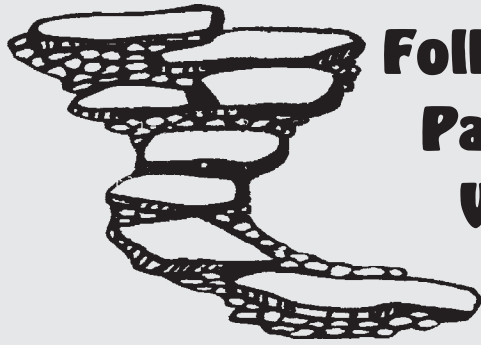
The EWP project agreement between NRCS and the Town of Plainfield was consummated in May at the foot bridge over White Lick Creek in Franklin Park. NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty and Town Manager Richard Carlucci signed this significant agreement so the cleanup process can begin.

“Repair work will include removing fallen trees from the creek and stabilizing the banks where erosion has eaten away long stretches,” said Hardisty. “Some of the rock and gravel bars that were deposited in the channel will be removed, which will help prevent future bank erosion.”

EWP, designed for installation of recovery measures, helps protect lives and property threatened by natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires. The program's objective is to assist sponsors and individuals in implementing emergency measures to relieve imminent hazards to life and property by a natural disaster.



Pictured (l to r): seated: Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist; Rich Carlucci, Plainfield Town Manager; standing: Amie Whitworth, NRCS Engineer; Tim Belcher, Town of Plainfield Engineer; Henry Wallis, District Conservationist; and Jeff Banning, Banning Engineering.



Follow the Pathway to Water Quality

Pathway to Water Quality is a model watershed built by the Indiana Conservation Partnership. Located at the east side of the Indiana State Fair grounds between the pioneer building/display and the horse barns. "Pathways" has been a major State Fair attraction since it was established in 1993.

New for 2005, are storm water quality demonstrations such as pervious pavement, rain barrels, and rain gardens for your home.

You will walk through woodlands, farmlands, cities, and towns to see how everyone has a part in protecting our water quality.

Plant-A-Million

Trees reduce air pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide from the air. An acre of trees can absorb the carbon dioxide produced by driving a car for 26,000 miles. Learn more at www.plantamillion.org.

Tree leaves help settle out, trap and hold particle type air pollutants such as dust, pollen and smoke that can harm human lungs. During rainfall events, these pollutants wash to the soil and are absorbed. Learn more at www.plantamillion.org.

Trees fight the greenhouse effect by acting as "carbon sinks" since they remove carbon dioxide from the air and store it as cellulose in their trunks, branches and roots. A healthy tree stores thirteen pounds of carbon each year. Learn more at www.plantamillion.org.



Trees reduce air conditioning costs by up to 30 percent per year by shading homes and other buildings. This reduces the amount of fossil fuels (coal and oil) needed to produce electricity, thereby reducing carbon dioxide released to the air. Learn more at www.plantamillion.org.

Trees conserve water by catching some of the rainfall in their leaves and bark and slowly releasing it to the soil. This increased infiltration returns more water to the ground water supply than other ground surfaces. Learn more by visiting www.plantamillion.org.

Trees along streams improve stream water quality by filtering sediments, chemicals and other pollutants from runoff before they enter the stream. Trees provide shade to the stream, cooling the water. Cooler water provides homes for organisms that carry out natural water cleaning. Learn more at www.plantamillion.org.

Trees conserve water by storing large quantities in their trunks, roots and leaves, making it available during periods of low humidity. Learn more about the importance of trees in our daily life by visiting www.plantamillion.org.

We've Moved

to a newly remodeled office space!

Actually only across the hall in the northern part of the building at 195 Meadow Dr., Danville.

Come in, take a tour of the newly remodel space and if you have questions with natural resource concerns and conservation programs, we can discuss those issues to.



4-H SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION RESULTS



Again this year, the Hendricks County SWCD sponsored the 4-H Soil & Water Conservation project. There were 7 exhibitors at the County Fair.

They were:

- Level A: Ethan Truax
Dakota Smith
- Level B: Nick Horein
Ross Smith
- Level C: Mariah Truax
Bradley Abtlanalp
- Level D: Tamara Truax

Tree Order Forms

will soon be available

It's time to think about ordering trees from the State Nursery for the 2006 spring planting.

Call the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District office at 745-2555, for a State Nursery tree order form. Or e-mail us at: hendricks@surf-ici.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug. 10 to 21 - Indiana State Fair

Aug. 25 - Conservation Expo/
Pond Management Field
Day.

Jan/Feb. - Hendricks County Soil
& Water Conservation
District Annual Meeting.

YOUR YARD, YOUR TREES – A HOMEOWNERS GUIDE

is available from the Hendricks County Soil and Water Conservation District. This 72 page book, written as a special project of Hoosier Heartland RC&D and its Backyard Trees Committee, is designed to answer many of the questions homeowners in Central Indiana have about selecting, planting and caring for trees around their homes and farmsteads.

It points out, in Chapter One, the benefits trees provide us on an everyday basis. Chapter Two provides background on how a tree grows or the life functions of trees so that we can better understand why various trees live and grow differently. The third chapter explains the importance of native trees, tree characteristics and how exotic (non-native) trees fit into the overall scheme of things. The next chapter (four) is all about tree identification and will help you and your neighbors know more about their trees.

Chapter Five is called "Right Tree – Right Place" and its purpose is to help people select trees that will do the job they expect and not become overbearing to the location, interfere with power lines and other common tree concerns. Chapter Six is all about planting and maintaining the selected trees or maintaining current yard and farmstead trees. Insects and diseases affect all plant life and trees are no different, so Chapter Seven provides basic information on both. Chapter Eight is about attracting, or as the case may be, discouraging wildlife to the yard or farmstead. Finally Chapter Nine is the book's conclusion and summarizes how trees work for us.

The book has extensive Appendixes including a glossary of common forest, tree and plant terms, a listing of applicable web sites, an Indiana tree selection list, a list of tree species beneficial to wildlife, a plant hardiness map for Indiana and a list of alternative trees to ash, since the Emerald Ash Borer is on its way to central Indiana.

Give the SWCD a call at 745-2555 or stop by at 195 Meadow Dr. in Danville to learn how to get your copy.

Over 200 Pounds of Trash collected

The Hendricks County Partnership for Water Quality hosted a trash clean-up event on June 16th in Danville.

Crews were sent to the trails, tributaries and the West Fork of White Lick Creek in Blanton Woods and the area of the Kroger shopping center which is also near the creek. Many bags of trash weighing over 200 pounds were recovered in about 2 hours.

The Partnership for Water Quality includes the towns of Danville, Pittsboro and Hendricks County. It was formed in response to local communities developing their own storm water quality programs. All are assisted by the Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District.

The town of Avon also participated.

A community clean-up event educates citizens about where storm water runoff ends up and the need to prevent runoff from becoming contaminated with trash and other kinds of pollutants such as silt and sediment; motor vehicle pollutants such as spilled fuel, oil, coolant and other fluids; and lawn products such as clippings, fertilizers and chemicals.

The partnership plans to sponsor

Putnam County Conservation Pasture/ Pond Management Field Day and Expo

You are cordially invited to join us on August 25th for a day of conservation. Prior to the sixteenth annual Conservation Expo will be the Pasture/Pond Management Field Day. This field day will be hosted by Robert Heavin. The event will take place from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Fred Glover, NRCS technical team, will be discussing what landowners need to know about newly constructed ponds. Victor Shelton, NRCS, will be discussing pasture concerns. Please plan to join us for this informative field day and stay for the Conservation Expo beginning at 3:00 pm at neighboring farms. Headquarters for the Expo will be the Bill Bollman Farm.

The hosts for this year's Conservation Expo are Bill Bollman, Mac Swem, Stan Ryland and Robert Heavin farms. These farms give a state-of-the-art look at long term No-Till, Nitrogen management, Soil quality, cover crop management and pest management. We will have discussion on what we've learned from one of the coldest Apriils on record. Nitrogen-Polymer coated area vs. 28% plots. A large number of continuous No-Till acres have been set aside for conservation demonstrations. A special feature will be a prescreening of local farms for the Conservation Security Program (CSP) and how to prepare for this program. Special thanks to this year's hosts and neighboring farms for their outstanding cooperation. In addition to the tour stops, there will be commercial and machinery exhibits. Starting at 6:00 pm we will conclude the day with a dinner and special guest speaker, Gail Peas, Director of the Division of Soil Conservation with the new Indiana Department of Agriculture.

We hope that you can join us for the Pasture/Pond Management Field Day and the sixteenth Conservation Expo which promises to be an enjoyable way to learn more about the natural resources in west central Indiana and view operations of local progressive farm businesses. Watch for signs directing you to the field day and expo. Contact the SWCD office at 765-653-7454 if you would like more information or directions to the events.

County Transect Data

For the seventeenth year a tillage/residue transect was conducted. The transect consists of driving a predefined route through the county and recording the land use on both sides of the road at each stop, usually every half mile.

The results show that for 2005;

* 32 percent of the corn planted was no-tilled.

* 73 percent of the soybeans planted was no-till.

Looking for Aerial Photos on the Internet?

Try:

<http://terraserver.homeadvisor.msn.com>

<http://in32plexisgroup.com>

(Hendricks data & aerial maps)

Private Well Testing Program

The Hendricks County Private Well Testing Program was conducted on June 18th at various locations around the county for collecting water samples.



86 participated in the well water sampling from Hendricks County. More importantly, they are assured their water is safe and has levels below the Safe Drinking Water Standards.

Hendricks County SWCD had previously organized a private well testing program in 1992 and 2000.

The testing was done by Hiedelburg College Water Quality Lab in Ohio, a nationally recognized laboratory, testing for nitrates, triazines, andalachlors. This test was voluntary, confidential and a proactive approach to ground water quality issues.

Sponsored by: Hendricks County Soil & Water Conservation District, Hendricks County Farm Bureau, Hendricks County Cooperative Extension Service, Hendricks County Health Department, and Danville Community High School - Future Farmers of America (FFA).

Conservation Security Program

Is your farm ready for CSP?

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing stewardship of private agricultural lands by providing payments for maintaining and enhancing natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations.

CSP provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes.

CSP sign-up will be offered in selected watersheds. Currently, landowners in the Tippecanoe and Middle Wabash Deer Creek watersheds in Tippecanoe County are eligible to apply. Each year, different watersheds will be chosen for program participation.

Will your farm be ready when CSP becomes available in your watershed?

How CSP Works:

The CSP sign-up will be offered in selected watersheds.

Producers complete a self-assessment, including description of conservation activities on their operations, to help determine eligibility for CSP. The self-assessment is available from: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>.

Eligible producers in the selected watersheds complete the self-assessment and schedule an interview to submit an application at the NRCS office.

Based on the application, description of current conservation activities, and the interview, NRCS determines CSP eligibility and in which program tier and enrollment category the applicant may participate.

Eligibility

The land must be privately owned or Tribal land and the majority of the land must be located within the selected watershed. The applicant must be in compliance with highly erodible and wetland provision of the Food Security Act of 1985, have an active interest in the agricultural operation, and have control of the land for the life of the contract.

The applicant must share in the risk of producing any crop or livestock and be entitled to a share.

Tier eligibility

Tier I - the producer must have addressed soil quality and water quality to the described minimum level of treatment for eligible land uses on part of the agricultural operation prior to acceptance.

Tier II - the producer must have addressed soil quality and water quality to the described minimum level of treatment on all eligible land uses on the entire agricultural operation prior to acceptance and agree to address one additional resource by the end of the contract period.

Tier III - The producer must have addressed all applicable resource concerns to a resource management system level that meets the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide standards on all eligible land uses on the entire agricultural operation before acceptance into the program and have riparian zones adequately treated.

Payments:

Payments are determined by the tier of participation, conservation treatments completed, and the acres enrolled.

Tier I - Contracts are for 5 years; maximum payment is \$20,000 annually.

Tier II - Contracts are for 5 to 10 years; maximum payment is \$35,000 annually.

Tier III - Contracts are for 5 to 10 years; maximum payment of \$45,000 annually.

Want to know more?

Additional information is on the USDA website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002>.

HENDRICKS COUNTY



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

195 Meadow Drive, Suite 2, Danville, Indiana 46122 - Phone 745-2555
<http://www.hendricks-swcd.org>



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