

TIPPECANOE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2010 - 2014

Strategic Plan



Adoption Statement

This plan was adopted by the Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors on February 26, 2010.

Roger Verhey, Chairman

Randy Geswein, Vice Chair

Gene Kroeschen, Supervisor

Larry Underwood, Supervisor

Jim King, Supervisor

The staff of the Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District are equally committed to carrying out the priorities established within this document to further the SWCD mission and its commitment to foster natural resource conservation and environmental stewardship.



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Tippecanoe County, Indiana

County Seat:
Lafayette

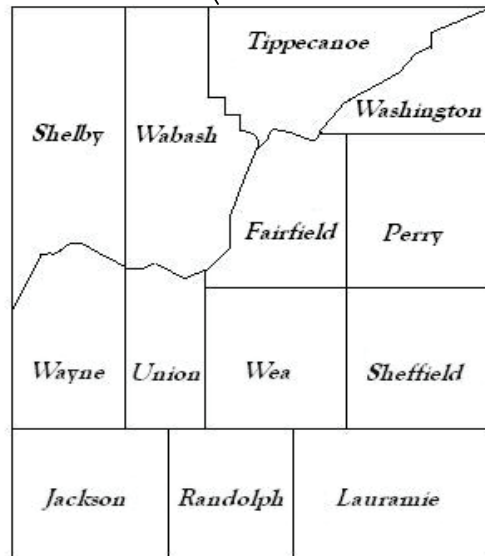
Origin of Name:
Tippecanoe River & Battleground

Organization Date:
March 1, 1826



Tippecanoe County Townships:

- Fairfield
- Jackson
- Lauramie
- Perry
- Randolph
- Sheffield
- Shelby
- Tippecanoe
- Union
- Wabash
- Washington
- Wayne
- Wea



Organization

The Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a legal subdivision of state government; the only local unit of government responsible for coordinating the conservation of our soil, water, and related natural resources.

The Tippecanoe District was organized through a public referendum held in 1940 in accordance with the Indiana Soil Conservation Act, now amended. At its origin, only five townships were served by and included in the District. Over the course of time, the District has come to serve all of Tippecanoe County, including the once excluded cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette, as well as the smaller towns.

The official governing body of a Conservation District consists of five supervisors. Three are elected at the local Annual Meeting of land occupiers and two are appointed by the State Soil Conservation Board based upon recommendations of the leadership in the District. Selection of all five supervisors is based on input from the local people they serve, and as public officials responsible to the district and state, supervisors are required to subscribe to a standard public oath of office.

Purpose

The purpose of a Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide information about soil, water and related natural resource conservation; to identify and prioritize local soil and water resource concerns; to implement conservation practices and technologies, and to connect land users to educational, technical and financial assistance from local organizations and state and federal agencies.

Because each Conservation District develops its own programs to suit the needs of the people in its county, local citizens play an important role, and each district serves as a means for all interested people in a county to work together for natural resource conservation and development.

Days Gone By and a Fresh New Start...

Tippecanoe County's history leads back to densely wooded forests and abundant wildlife, to prairies and fertile farmlands, to wetlands and the Wabash River. This wealth of natural resources is what initially drew the first permanent settlers here in 1822, and led to the establishment of "Marquis de Lafayette" in 1825, now known as Lafayette. Tippecanoe County was established in 1826, and to accommodate progress, the Wabash and Erie Canal was constructed and arrived in Lafayette in 1843. West Lafayette was established in 1845, and the first railroad reached Tippecanoe County in 1851. Within 30 years, urbanization and progress replaced the native grasses and woodlands, with cities and modes of transportation, changing the natural landscape of Tippecanoe County forever.

Today, urbanization, mobility and the fast pace of modern life often separate us from daily personal contact with the natural elements. Yet even when they go unnoticed, these resources remain a powerful influence on our quality of life and our prospects for the future.

Recently, the SWCD sent out a survey to a diverse group of community members requesting assistance in the identification of local natural resource concerns in three areas: 1) soil; 2) water; and 3) land use & development. Based on the concerns identified, we are hopeful that our accomplishments through this Strategic Plan will fulfill their visions and those who have spent their lives here in the cities, in the rural areas, and along the banks of the Wabash. We will persistently move forward with comprehensive conservation programs and innovative approaches to put "conservation on the ground". It will translate into action by combining science and gentle persuasion to advance the conservation ethic, and by joining efforts with those of other conservation organizations and partners. Overall, this Plan encourages a thoughtful course of action that gives equal weight to the immediate and the long-term, as well as to the local and far-reaching impacts of our actions on the natural environment.

Our continued vision of natural resources for Tippecanoe County are:

- Stable Soils
- Clean Streams and Water Resources
- Sustainable Communities

Throughout the plan, you will note that there are goals, strategies, and a public education and outreach component for each of these natural resources. Education has been a part of the Tippecanoe Soil and Water Conservation District's general objective for nearly seven decades, and we continue to believe that education is one of the most effective ways to guarantee the wise use of our natural resources for the future. Building public awareness will move us forward into the next decade while ensuring stable soils, clean streams, sustainable communities, and an overall pleasing quality of life for the people of Tippecanoe County.

Our Vision:

Stable Soils

Today, as in the past, certain agricultural uses and community projects accelerate soil erosion and carry pollutants into our streams and rivers. Erosion can mean the loss of important, fertile soils, and application of excessive nutrients and pesticides can turn those once productive, beneficial soils into a community problem. When the disturbed soil gets into our streams, it becomes a pollutant that deteriorates and smothers aquatic life, promotes flooding, and reduces recreational opportunities.

Below is a list of soil resource concerns that were recently identified and will be addressed over the next five years through goals and strategies that follow.

- Soil Erosion and Sedimentation (Agricultural)
- Nutrient and Pesticide Application (Agricultural)
- Streambank Stabilization (Non-Agricultural)

All of these concerns exist as a result of “progress”. Added together, they have the cumulative effect of making nutrients and sedimentation two of our greatest water pollutants by volume.

Consequently, the need for proper care and stabilization of our soils remains a high priority and an essential component of the District’s priorities over the next five years.

The surface of the earth is soft and impressible by the feet of men, and so with the paths which the mind travels.

-- Henry David Thoreau

Stable Soils

RESOURCE CONCERN — SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION:

Goal 1: No till practices shall be increased by 2,500 acres in the Upper Wabash and Wildcat Creek watersheds by 2014.

Strategy 1: Host biannual no-till workshop in partnership with the Greater Wabash River RC&D.

Strategy 2: Host no-till breakfasts annually.

Strategy 3: Perform annual tillage transect.

Strategy 4: Conduct site visits with landowners promoting conservation systems.

Strategy 5: Encourage buffer installation as part of a conservation system.

Goal 2: Cover crops shall be increased by 2,500 acres in Tippecanoe County by 2014.

Strategy 1: Host biannual cover crop workshop in partnership with the Greater Wabash River RC&D.

Strategy 2: Develop cover crop demonstration areas with different species throughout county.

Strategy 3: Submit grant application for cover crop cost-share and incentive monies.

Strategy 4: Create a contractors list specific to cover crop seeding.

RESOURCE CONCERN — NUTRIENT AND PESTICIDE APPLICATION:

Goal 1: The SWCD will educate 20 landowners in high manure application areas on best management practices for manure application by 2014.

Strategy 1: Submit mailing that targets manure applicators for workshop invitations and promotion of existing waste management programs.

Strategy 2: Partner with Greater Wabash River RC&D and surrounding counties to host educational workshop targeting best management practices for manure management and cost-share opportunities.

Strategy 3: Partner with various entities to identify water courses where pesticide and nutrient levels are high.

Goal 2: Cover crops shall be increased by 2,500 acres in Tippecanoe County by 2014.

Strategy 1: Develop inventory of acres currently utilizing cover crops in rotation. Include and define highest nutrient loading areas.

Strategy 2: Host biannual cover crop workshop in partnership with the Greater Wabash River RC&D.

Strategy 3: Develop cover crop demonstration areas with different species throughout county.

Strategy 4: Submit grant application for cover crop cost-share and incentive monies.

Strategy 5: Create a contractors list specific to cover crop seeding.

RESOURCE CONCERN — STREAMBANK STABILIZATION:

Goal 1: The SWCD will increase streambank stabilization awareness/education through 10 partnering opportunities by 2014.

Strategy 1: Improve working relationships with County Drainage Board and city engineers through SWCD representation at County Drainage Board meetings and discussions relative to ditch banks.

Strategy 2: Partner with neighboring counties and/or the Greater Wabash River RC&D to conduct one educational workshop for public officials and one for private citizens.

Strategy 3: Develop a resource Homeowners Guide to advise individuals about streambank stabilization, including a reference map of correctly installed stabilization Best Management Practices in Tippecanoe County.

Our Vision:

Clean Streams & Water Resources

Water is essential for life on Earth and plays a vital role in the proper functioning of its ecosystems. The pollution of water has a serious impact on all living creatures, and can negatively affect the use of water for drinking, household needs, recreation, fishing, transportation and commerce.

Two water resource concerns identified locally that will be addressed over the next five years are:

- Need for Buffers and Waterway Protection (Agricultural)
- Lawn Fertilizer and Pesticide Contamination (Non-Agricultural)

Did you know that there is a direct correlation between buffer strips and high-quality streams? It has been documented that, as forested buffer strips are reduced, water quality declines. Protecting, maintaining, and even creating new forested corridors along streams is essential to protecting the vitality of our water resources, now and in the future.

Were you also aware that water pollution can be simply sediment finding its way into streams? Or it can be nitrogen and phosphorus resulting from malfunctioning septic systems, sewage treatment plants, animal manure, and lawn fertilizers which accelerate the growth of algae clogging our streams and harming aquatic life.

Human activity, as well as the forces of nature, inevitably impact the quality of the water resources that we depend on. Education and appreciation for this fundamental resource is the first step toward changing the behavior of society to realize that we all live in a watershed and we all live downstream!

*Nature and education are somewhat similar.
The latter transforms man, and in so doing
creates a second nature.*

-- Democritus

Clean Streams & Water Resources

RESOURCE CONCERN — NEED FOR BUFFERS AND WATERWAY PROTECTION:

Goal 1: 125 acres of buffers will be installed in the Wea Creek and Wildcat Creek watersheds by 2014.

Strategy 1: Submit grant application for restoration and easement purchase to increase zones of protection with emphasis on partners and water monitoring.

Strategy 2: Seek financial incentives for landowners to establish field borders/buffers with priority given to areas with greatest potential for pesticide/nutrient loading.

Strategy 3: Identify and map areas for comprehensive county inventory of conservation practices

Goal 2: The SWCD will educate 150 landowners about the benefits and installation of two stage ditches by 2014.

Strategy 1: Partner with the Tippecanoe County Surveyor to host a workshop for educating landowners on benefits of two stage ditches.

Strategy 2: Partner with the Tippecanoe County Surveyor to develop an informational brochure detailing the two stage ditch process.

RESOURCE CONCERN — LAWN FERTILIZER AND PESTICIDE CONTAMINATION:

Goal 1: The SWCD will provide 10 educational and/or outreach opportunities on the environmentally wise use of lawn fertilizers and pesticides by 2014.

Strategy 1: Establish a “Green Recognition” program for lawn care businesses that follow a specific standard, established by the Tippecanoe County SWCD.

Strategy 2: Develop a flier and a display to educate the general public and retail garden centers.

Strategy 3: Host a workshop with local retail garden centers and lawn care companies concerning lawn fertilizers and pesticides.



Our Vision:

Sustainable Communities

As more people discover the pleasing quality of life in Tippecanoe County, they will put more pressure on our land, water, and ecosystems, as well as our infrastructure systems, and recreation facilities.

As more and more of our natural resources are consumed, the specific characteristics of a given piece of land become the essential clues which reveal its best use. The physical properties of a parcel as well as human needs and nearby uses all should factor into land use decisions. Planners, farmers, engineers and builders should all rely on the soil survey to identify the characteristics of soil in a given location and whether it would be suitable for uses such as farming or road construction.

Below are two land use and development resource concerns identified that will be addressed over the next five years:

- [Wildlife Habitat Loss & Fragmentation \(Agricultural & Non-Agricultural\)](#)
- [Stormwater Runoff \(Non-Agricultural\)](#)

The District's role is to consider all resources, i.e., soil, water, air, plants, animals, and humans and to promote good resource management. This, plus providing detailed information about Tippecanoe County's streams, wetlands, soils, and topography continue to be of utmost importance to encourage wise management and development of our sustainable communities, both natural and manmade.

When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

-- Aldo Leopold

Sustainable Communities

RESOURCE CONCERN – WILDLIFE HABITAT LOSS & FRAGMENTATION:

Goal 1: The SWCD will educate 750 landowners about beneficial native plants and the negative impact of invasive plants on the environment by 2014.

Strategy 1: Partner with wildlife groups to host a workshop about the benefits of native plants and invasive plant control.

Strategy 2: Partner with wildlife groups to host an Invasive Plant Removal Day targeting specific lands.

Strategy 3: Work with State of Indiana to develop a “Grow Native” program for tagging native plants at nursery level.

Goal 2: 350 acres of wildlife habitat will be installed in Tippecanoe County by 2014.

Strategy 1: Partner with specific wildlife groups to target corridor areas and install habitat to increase connectivity.

Strategy 2: Submit grant applications focusing on native plant buffer establishment.

RESOURCE CONCERN – STORMWATER RUNOFF:

Goal 1: The SWCD will work to reduce stormwater runoff by facilitating programs to establish 250 best management practices by 2014.

Strategy 1: Work with Lafayette & West Lafayette engineering departments to: a) establish a rain garden cost-share program for Lafayette and West Lafayette citizens; b) install two rain garden demonstration sites and; c) conduct an annual rain garden workshop for homeowners and businesses.

Strategy 2: Promote and sell 200 rain barrels to encourage water conservation.

Strategy 3: Promote and sell native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses and sedges to encourage water absorption in the natural landscape.

Strategy 4: Review all submitted Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) for Rule 5 compliance and provide recommendations to local builders, developers, municipalities, and the Area Plan Commission.

Strategy 5: Improve working relationships with County Drainage Board, Area Plan Commission, and city engineers through early involvement in proposed construction/development projects and SWCD representation at County Drainage Board and Area Plan Commission meetings.

Strategy 6: Distribute 5,000 trees to elementary students for planting at their home or other appropriate location.

Strategy 7: Conduct tours of installed conservation practices for government officials and local citizens to educate them on soil and water conservation programs.

Tippecanoe Soil & Water Conservation District - 70 Years and Counting -

The Tippecanoe Soil and Water Conservation District was created in 1940 to serve county farmers by helping them to conserve their soil and water resources.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the District became deeply involved in broader-based issues, including flood prevention, inventorying of county soils, and land use planning. The District staff consisted of one part-time secretary whose responsibilities were directed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's District Conservationist.

The 1980s presented a new set of challenges, including technical issues such as non-point source pollution and groundwater protection. The 1990s were a time of accelerated urbanization and growth in Tippecanoe County, and programs addressing those needs, including sediment control and stormwater management, were added. District staff was increased to two full-time employees and one part-time.

The beginning of the new century was marked by the continuing diversification of programs and related activities. In addition to the two existing full time positions, a Water Quality Educator was hired in 2001 through an EPA 319 Grant for a two-year cycle. As the demand for education continued to grow, the position was continued with County funding beginning in 2004.

Currently, the District has a staff of three full-time and two part-time employees to address the ever-increasing demand for natural resource information, education, and technical assistance.

Subsequently, it is the goal of the Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District board, staff, and supporters to continue to grow and change in response to the needs of our community now and in the coming years.

Vision Statement

The Soil and Water Conservation District is recognized by the community as Tippecanoe County's foremost conservation organization providing leadership and assistance through promotion of natural resource stewardship and responsible planning.

Mission Statement

The Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District is committed to provide quality technical, educational, and informational resources for the community through leadership, service, and citizen involvement to foster natural resource conservation and environmental stewardship.

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."

*~Gaylord Nelson
Co-founder of Earth Day*

