

Rural Conservation News

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Lafayette, Indiana

Buffers May Pay More Than Corn!



Conservation Buffers make sense environmentally and economically! By planting trees, shrubs, and native grasses along streams and next to wetlands, you are helping prevent soil erosion, filter pollutants from reaching our streams, and provide a healthy environment for fish and wildlife. And through CRP, you could get paid!

Buffers may pay more than corn!

Push your pencil hard! Installing conservation buffers on cropland through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) sign-up may pay more than planting corn.

CRP rental rate for buffers in Tippecanoe County range from \$75 to \$186 per acre. That includes a 20 percent rental rate incentive for key buffer practices: filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, and field windbreaks. Rental rates are paid annually.

CRP rental rates are based on soil types and cash rent in a county, so producers should check with their local USDA service center to determine exactly what their payments would be.

In addition to the annual rental rate payments there is a one-time, up-front signing incentive payment for selected buffer practices of \$10 per acre for each year of the 10- to 15-year CRP contract. This amounts to \$100 to \$150 per acre at the start of the contract.

There also is the usual 50 percent cost sharing for practice installation under the CRP, as well as a one-time practice incentive payment equal to 40 percent of the eligible practice installation costs. This means a producer gets about 90 percent of the cost of

practice installation, and there may be opportunity for private-sector funds to reimburse you the remaining 10 percent. Annual maintenance payments of \$5.00 per acre are also available for certain practices.

The bottom line is that a producer may net more per acre by installing buffers than by planting a crop. This is particularly the case if the land is marginal or floods out periodically.

Buffers can be installed on cropland if that land was planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity in two of the last five years. The land also must be physically and legally capable of being cropped. It need not be highly erodible land.

Marginal pastureland suitable for use as a riparian buffer also can be enrolled in the continuous CRP sign-up. This includes any land along permanent or seasonal streams or around lakes and other permanent water bodies that is grazed. The land does not have to meet normal cropland eligibility requirements. CRP rental rates for marginal pastureland differ from the rental rates for cropland.

Participation in the continuous CRP sign-up is simple because producers can offer land for enrollment any day their local USDA service center is open. There is no

News from UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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> and in the NRCS office on compact disk or as a printed workbook.

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.

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LARE Funds Available in Indian Creek Watershed

The Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program provides technical and financial assistance for controlling erosion and keeping sediment and associated nutrients from entering Indiana streams, rivers, and public lakes.

There are two components of LARE: 1) The lake enhancement component which funds lake and watershed diagnostic studies, engineering feasibility studies, and design/construction plans and 2) the watershed land treatment (WLT) component which provides cost-share and incentives to landusers for applying practices on their land that reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients from agriculture sources entering a project lake or river. Tippecanoe County currently has one WLT project within the Lake and River



Tippecanoe County

Enhancement Program, focusing on the Indian Creek watershed in the northwestern part of the county.

Landowners may receive reimbursement up to 80% of the cost of practices installed or applied within one-half mile of Indian Creek and 65% for practices beyond and still within the watershed boundary. Maximum payment is \$20,000 to a landuser on any single practice.

Eligible practices include:

- Blind Tile Inlet
- Closure Of Livestock Waste Storage Facilities
- Conservation Tillage
- Cover Crops
- Critical Area Seeding
- Diversions
- Fencing For Livestock
- Field Windbreaks
- Filter Strips
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Grassed Waterways
- Intergrated Crop Management (Nutrient and Pest Management)
- Livestock Watering Facility

- Livestock Watering Impoundment
- Pasture and Hayland Planting
- Sediment Basin
- Streambank Stabilization
- Terraces
- Tile Riser Grassed Buffer
- Tree Planting
- Waste Management System and Waste Utilization
- Water and Sediment Control Basin (Wascob)
- Watercourse Outlet Buffer
- Wetland Development and Improvement

If you are interested in installing any of the above practices and are located within this watershed, please call the Tippecanoe County SWCD at 765-474-9992 ext. 3 or stop by the office.

Calendar of Events

May

30 Holiday - Office Closed

June

3 SWCD Board Meeting

4 Celebrate the Wildcat!

July

1 SWCD Board Meeting

4 Holiday - Office Closed

16-23 Tippecanoe Co. 4-H Fair

Buffers...

Continued from Page 1

competitive bidding. All offers are accepted if the land offered is suitable for the buffer practice the producer wants to install and the producer meets other eligibility requirements.

For more information about the continuous CRP sign-up and the available incentives for installing conservation buffers, contact your local USDA service center.

In addition to CRP, there are other state and federal programs that can help provide funds for conservation practices on your land.

If you are interested in learning more about cost-share programs, are interested in planting a conservation buffer, or simply want an estimate of economic benefits specific to your farm, contact the SWCD office at 474-9992, ext. 3 for an appointment.

CSP...

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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>.

The SWCD is sponsoring a meeting on **July 12** to share information about the program.

CSP

INFORMATION MEETING

July 12, 2005 @ 9:00 a.m.

at the

Cooperative Extension Service

If you want to learn more about preparing your farm for CSP tier eligibility, make plans to attend this meeting.

Agri-culture Shock?

Although sometimes shocking, changes in roles and responsibilities can be a sign of progress. To explain, the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC - formerly a division within the Indiana Department of Natural Resources) was recently moved into the newly created Indiana State Department of Agriculture. As a result, DSC Resource Specialist, Sue Gerlach, will be assuming a different role in SWCD activities. Her urban responsibilities will be dropping off and she will become more focused on agricultural activities in the near future. Until recently, Gerlach served as the staff representative on the SWCD's Urban Conservation Committee. Due to Gerlach's changing role, Chris Remley, SWCD Office Administrator, will be serving on the Urban Conservation Committee in the future.

As established through the SWCD strategic planning process, the Urban Conservation Committee's top priority is to have an urban technical assistance program in place by 2010. Due to recent developments, it is becoming increasingly more important for the



Due to recent developments, it is becoming increasingly more important for the SWCD to provide urban technical assistance in the wise use of soil and water resources.

SWCD to move forward with the development of the urban technical position, and a meeting has been scheduled of the Urban Conservation Committee for **Tuesday, May 17th at 4:00 p.m. at the USDA Service Center.**

Discussion will include the position title, duties, job requirements, salary, etc. and key players in the urban community have been asked to share with us their needs and/or wishes in regard to this position. We will also be requesting the support of other county agencies, local

organizations, and/or individual landowners for this position. As you can see, we value the diversity of Tippecanoe County and are making every effort to meet the needs of both the urban and agricultural communities. "Agri-culture shock" will benefit all of us...our agricultural producers will have the focus of our state conservation agencies while locally, we will move toward addressing our urban community's needs as natural resource conservation continues to move to the forefront.

-Chris Remley
Urban Conservation Committee News

Water Quality Educator Assists Other SWCDs

Don Emmert, Water Quality Educator, has been very busy in Tippecanoe County the past month. He has been a presence in the community by educating the youth including over 800 students in one day at the Tippecanoe County Ag Days at the Fairgrounds. Don, along with Board of Supervisors member Roger Verhey, demonstrated the soil erosion boxes to fourth graders. This allows the students to see how grasses hold soil in place and reduce erosion as opposed to a bare field without vegetation cover.

Reaching out to other SWCDs in an effort to network his skills with other educators in surrounding counties has helped build strong relationships. Earlier in April, Don assisted Clinton SWCD in their County Field Day for fourth graders. Along with Cori Kiff, Resource Specialist, they educated 399 students and 40 adults on how macroinvertebrates are an indicator of water quality. Since these creatures lack a backbone and are able to be seen with the eye, they are a good source of information on the health of a stream because of their tolerance to pollution.



Children make "water cycle bracelets" to document their travel through the water cycle as a water molecule while playing an activity called Incredible Journey.

Don has also visited Carroll County to assist with the SWCD Earth Fair. 96 second grade students were introduced to the water cycle and took an "incredible journey" through the air, water, and ground as a water

molecule. A colorful bracelet was made by the children to remind them of all the places they had visited as a molecule of water.

-Don Emmert
Education Committee News



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SWCD Office Staff

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Jennifer Boss (ext. 114)

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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

Times Are Changing....Not Just Daylight Savings Time Either!

“The world hates change, yet it is the only thing that has brought progress.”
-Charles Kettering

Times are definitely changing within the SWCD partnership...And it all began with House Bill 1008 establishing an Office of Rural Affairs and Department of Agriculture. HB 1008 also called for the transfer of various agricultural state agencies to the Department of Agriculture, including the Division of Soil Conservation, which was formerly a division of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

When Governor Daniels signed HB 1008 on April 25, 2005, Lt. Governor Becky Skillman assumed the title of Secretary of Agriculture and Andy Miller became the Director of the newly formed Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). And on May 3, 2005, Miller named Gail Peas to lead the Division of Soil Conservation within ISDA.

“I believe we can help Indiana farmers and landowners make better conservation decisions in the near future that will have lasting benefit for the state in the long run.” said Miller, and “Gail has the experience and leadership to revitalize the Division and make it effective in every county in the state.”

So, ‘Where is the Division of Soil Conservation headed?’ you might ask. “I understand the challenges facing Indiana’s landowners,” said Peas, “and I plan to keep the division focused on its mission of helping landowners and farmers reduce erosion and manage their natural resources.”

As you can see, this is an exciting time for our conservation partnership and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. New faces on the Indiana landscape and a new time zone as well.

-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.