

Conservation Today For Tomorrow

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Agriculture Edition

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Lafayette, Indiana

You Are Invited to Attend the...

Tippecanoe Co. SWCD 66th Annual Meeting February 3, 2006

Mark your calendars! Tippecanoe County SWCD 66th Annual Meeting will be held Friday, February 3, 2006. The annual meeting will be held in conjunction with a conservation workshop at the JS Wright Forestry Center in rural West Lafayette. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m.

Workshop speakers will provide information on a variety of programs designed for both rural and urban audiences. Topics include: Agriculture Outlook for 2006, Reducing Farm Inputs to Maximize Bottom-line, Riparian Buffers, Stormwater Phase II Education, Environmental Data for Your Community, and NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) Program and IDEM's Permitting and Public Notice Information.

The luncheon program, titled "Wabash River Through Time" will be presented by Gary Quigg, Associate Director of Historical Resources at Conner Prairie. Gary will share information about how the Wabash River has



Have a great meal, learn about a variety of topics and elect new supervisors at this year's annual meeting.

served as a provider to the people of Indiana since the prehistoric era.

The SWCD business meeting and election of Supervisors will be conducted after lunch. An **\$8.00** fee includes lunch catered by Parrett's. Space is limited. Reservations are required by Tuesday, January 31. To obtain more information or to make a reservation, contact the SWCD office by calling 474-9992, ext. 3.

Don't Miss Your Opportunity to Receive "\$\$-green-\$\$" CSP payments!

If you farm or own ag land in the Wildcat Creek Watershed (eastern Tippecanoe County), you might miss your chance to receive "green" payments on the conservation practices you have already established if you don't sign up for the program. For some eligible producers, this could mean CSP payments of up to \$45,000 a year for up to 10 years!

As soon as USDA announces the sign-up dates, Tippecanoe Co. SWCD will host a workshop to provide you with details of the program. Letters will be mailed to those farming within the watershed boundaries. Notice of the workshop date will also be posted in the *Journal & Courier*.

Even if you don't farm in the Wildcat Creek Watershed, you may want to attend a workshop so that you will be better prepared for eligibility when CSP funds come to your watershed. If you would like to be added to the mailing list to receive meeting notification by mail, call the SWCD office at 474-9992, ext. 110.

\$33,000 in LARE Funds Available for Cost-share in Indian Creek Watershed

If you own land in the Indian Creek Watershed (northwest Tippecanoe County), we encourage you to apply for Lake and River Enhancement Funds (LARE) from Tippecanoe County SWCD conservation funds.

There is approximately \$33,000 available to cost-share eligible conservation practices such as fencing (to keep livestock out of streams), tree planting, windbreaks, waterways, alternative watering systems, and much more.

CREP Funds Available in Tippecanoe River Watershed

If you own land in the Tippecanoe River Watershed (northeast Tippecanoe County), you can take advantage of CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) funds. CREP is a voluntary land retirement program (with 10-15 yr. funding) that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

News from...



INDIANAPOLIS, December 13, 2005—

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service announced that funding for conservation work on private farmlands continues to be strong. "Specifically, in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), we have over \$10 million to offer farmers as incentives or cost-sharing for conservation work," says Acting State Conservationist Xavier Montoya. "This program promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Since the 2002 Farm Bill was passed, funding for conservation has been strong, and this \$10 million for EQIP is the next installment."

Representing the lead agency that focuses on delivering conservation to farm operations on private lands, Montoya announced that the conservation funds are available for farmers engaged in livestock or other agricultural production.

"Applications for EQIP are accepted on a continuous basis," says Montoya. "All applications we receive by January 13th will be planned, ranked, and considered in the initial funding round. This is the time for farmers to apply, if they haven't already. Applications that were not funded last year will also be considered if applicants let us know they are still interested. In some cases the producers may need to update their conservation plan and application."

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance for eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise apply without the incentive. Limited resource producers and beginning farmers are eligible for higher cost-share rates.

More information is readily available by contacting NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, or on the internet at www.in.nrcs.usda.gov, then click on Environmental Quality Incentives Program in the middle of the page. Information at that site includes Indiana State guidelines and application forms.

What Does Tillage Cost You?



This could be the year to reconsider some of your standard operating procedures when it comes to tillage. Sky rocketing fuel prices are on nearly everyone's mind. But how many will take the time to pencil out the real costs and manage accordingly? Today we have real technological advancements in tillage systems as well as some great tools to analyze the economics of the many options. One of my favorites is the Machinery Cost Calculation Worksheet (w/database), available at <http://www.apec.umn.edu/faculty/wlazarus/machinery.html>, and developed by Bill Lazarus, Extension Economist, U of MN and Roger Selley, Extension Farm Management Specialist, U of NE. This spreadsheet allows you to look at the cost of any tillage operation and adjust for changes in fuel cost, taxes and interest, etc.

After running just a few scenarios, it becomes evident that the cost to till is significant. For instance, chisel plowing alone will have an operational cost of

over \$5.75 per acre, with a total cost reaching almost \$8. Remember, chiseling also commits you to at least one trip with a field cultivator or disk next spring at an operating cost of over \$4.00 per acre (at today's fuel prices), no matter what the weather is next year.

The questions that each farmer must ask each time they hook to an implement are:

- *What kind of return in production do I expect from this operation?*
- *What problems am I expecting this tool to remedy that may benefit future soil quality?*
- *Is the time spent on the tractor going to pay more than the same time devoted to management?*

There are a lot of studies and comparisons that indicate that today's no-till systems, yield comparable, and in many cases better, than conventionally tilled systems. Add to that, the cost saving potential and the additional time devoted to marketing and management; and profitability should be favorable.

So why will so many farmers be hesitant to look at the answers to these questions? The reason is likely risk. Any time a business makes changes in production process or product line, there are inherent risks. Most of us resist change, and get comfort from continuity. As with the American auto industry, U.S. agriculture will need to become more efficient if we are to compete with our neighbors to the South. They will be less affected by oil prices since no-till is the predominant system throughout South America.

The risks in transitioning to no-till are much lower today due to the information network that is available. The Indiana Conservation Tillage Initiative is committed to compiling successful no-till strategies that have been developed and implemented on Indiana farms and sharing these strategies with new no-till farmers. Additionally, the Indiana Conservation Partnership field staff have technical knowledge and financial assistance programs to offer. This assistance can ease the risk of any producer transitioning to a more efficient cropping system. Another strategy is risk protection programs, which have been piloted in Indiana by The Nature Conservancy. These programs offer risk protection to farmers in targeted watersheds to reduce risks of transition. In addition to risk management, more than ever before farm operations now must follow efficient business models. Greater efficiency will help profitability grow. I have heard it said that, "If we keep doing what we did, then we'll get what we've got"...or will we?

For more information on tillage, visit: <http://www.agry.purdue.edu/cti/>

- Barry Fisher
NRCS Conservation Tillage Coordinator

No-till Workshop

February 9, 2006

at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds

Are you interested in converting to a no-till system, wanting to increase your "bottom line", or need to earn PARP or CCA credits? If so, this workshop is for you. Topics include: Transitioning to No-till Corn, No-till Ecology, Efficient use of Nitrogen, Managing Weeds/Pests, and Maximizing the Bottom Line. Workshop will conclude with a panel discussion by local no-tillers. The meeting will be held on February 9, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the Tippecanoe County Fairgrounds.

The \$5.00 registration fee covers workshop materials and lunch catered by Parrett's. For more information or to register for the workshop, contact Linda Eastman at 474-9992, ext. 110 or email: linda.eastman@in.nacdnet.net

Calendar of Events

February

- 3 SWCD Annual Meeting
- 9 No-till Workshop
- 20 Office Closed

March

- 8 SWCD Board Meeting
- 21-22 Ag Days for 4th Grade

Please Note:

Board Meetings will be held the 2nd Wednesday of each month, 8:30 a.m., at the SWCD Office

News from the Urban Conservation Committee...

Trees and Shrubs Soften the Rural-Urban Interface

Urban development in rural areas makes maintaining good relationships a challenge. Sometimes folks moving out from town don't understand what happens in agriculture to produce food and fiber. Odor from livestock and other farming operations are often the bone of contention. Planting trees and shrubs as a screen can buffer odor, dust, noise and unpleasant views. Installing vegetative filters or windbreaks is an opportunity for developers and agricultural producers to not only increase production efficiency, but to demonstrate their commitment to being a good neighbor and an environmental steward.

Farmers often view odors and dust that comes from livestock, chemical sprays and fertilizers as just a part of agriculture and have come to accept them as a part of life. As urban and residential dwellers move into areas that were previously rural in character, the differences in lifestyles often become painfully apparent.

What to do about this concern is a question that many are asking. Agroforestry may have a partial answer. Windbreaks and shelterbelts can be designed to reduce some of the problem. Odor is attached to water and dust particles and is transported by wind.



Photo courtesy of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Windbreaks modify wind movement and have been designed to trap dust for decades. Tree species, especially conifer types, have extensive leaf surface area that can interact with water vapor and particulates that carry odor. Denser plantings have a greater ability to detain or deflect odors and will be the most effective. Some recent studies show that a forest edge or windbreak can trap as much as four times as many airborne pollutants than barren land. It is also important to note that the greatest trapping occurs only ten feet into the forest edge or windbreak showing that the planting does not need to take a lot of productive agricultural land.

Odor control may require different considerations than the traditional

windbreaks for wind erosion control or energy conservation. Consideration needs to be given to plantings on all sides of the livestock operation. Developers and planning commissions can plan windbreaks into subdivision plans to provide odor control, wildlife habitat, energy conservation and to enhance the overall quality of the development.

Some of the answers to use of trees for odor control are yet to be learned, but your local Soil and Water Conservation District and its partners can be of help. They can help you consider "working trees" as a part of the solution.

-Chris Remley

Urban Conservation Committee News

News from the Education Committee...

River of Words

Poetry and Art Contest

The Tippecanoe SWCD Education Committee is announcing the 2006 River of Words poetry and art contest. The contest is held in cooperation with Indiana Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) and the Environmental Education Association of Indiana.

Each year, in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book, River of Words conducts a free international poetry and art contest for youth on the theme of watersheds. The contest is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place they live, and to express, through poetry and art, what they discover.

The free contest is open to any child in the world, from 5-19 years of age. Older students must have not yet completed high school. Contest entries will be sent directly to the International River of Words office by February 15th, 2006.

Students may enter on their own, or as part of a group (classroom, Girl Scout troop, 4-H, etc.). All entrants will receive an



acknowledgement in the form of a "Watershed Explorer" certificate. In 2005 Indiana had a lot of participation. We even had three Indiana students who were Finalists in the art portion of the contest at the International level!

Poetry submissions are judged by River of Words co-founders, Robert Hass, who served as US Poet Laureate from 1995-1997, and writer Pamela Michael. Art entries are judged by children's book writer and illustrator, Thacher Hurd.

About 100 poems and artworks from both US and international entries are selected as finalists each year. All winners receive ribbons, books and/or art supplies, t-shirts and other prizes.

Eight Grand Prize winners—four in poetry and four in art, in four different age categories—are chosen from the US entries.

Category I	—	Kindergarten-Grade 2
Category II	—	Grades 3-6
Category III	—	Grades 7-9
Category IV	—	Grades 10-12

Winners are announced each April. The National River of Words office will send all Indiana entries back to us in May. The Indiana judging will take place as soon as the entries are received. We hope to have the winners announced by June 2006. Please send entries to: River of Words® 2547 Eighth Street, 13B Berkeley, CA 94710 USA. You may contact them directly at info@riverofwords.org or by phone at 510-548-7636.

If you would like to schedule a watershed education program or would like more information on the River of Words contest, please contact Don Emmert at the Tippecanoe SWCD office at 765-474-9992, ext. 111 or don.emmert@in.nacdnet.net.

-Don Emmert

Education Committee News



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Board of Supervisors**

Jim King, Chair
Sarah Baxter
Chuck Shelby
Roger Verhey
Dale Workman

Mark Your Calendars!

SWCD Annual Meeting - Feb. 3

No-Till Workshop - Feb. 9

(additional information inside)

SWCD Office Staff

Chris Remley (ext. 101)
District Administrator
Linda Eastman (ext. 110)
Rural Conservation Coordinator
Don Emmert (ext. 111)
Water Quality Educator

USDA NRCS Staff

Mark Eastman
District Conservationist
Monica Jackson
Soil Conservationist

ISDA Staff

Sue Gerlach
Resource Specialist

SWCD Committee Chairs

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

'Conservation Today for Tomorrow'

Sometimes calls for rolling with the punches....It seems like only yesterday, we recreated the SWCD newsletter, giving it a new name and new face "Conservation Today for Tomorrow".

The name of the newsletter was chosen to represent the SWCD's goal of putting conservation on the ground for future generations and to assist us in carrying out our 2005-2010 Long Range Plan.

2005 was a very busy year for all of us at the SWCD office working toward our goals, while facing many changes that were occurring within our partnership and office. Change seemed to be the one consistent factor in our day-to-day operations. However, we've done well to "roll with the punches" and we continue to "come out swinging".

To sum up 2005...we've worked tirelessly on implementation of our Long Range Plan, utilizing our committees and staff to carry the District forward in realizing our vision for Tippecanoe County's natural resources....Stable

Soils, Healthy Forests and Riparian Buffers, Clean Streams and Water Resources, Productive Farms, and Sustainable Communities. To learn more about our 2005 accomplishments, plan to attend our Annual Meeting on February 3, 2006. The meeting will provide an update on our efforts, as well as afford you a great meal, interesting topics, and the opportunity to learn more about your community!

The past is past, so back to the future....2006 is here staring us in the face with high expectations. As we move forward, you have our promise that we will continue with our current 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.

We would like to thank you all for your conservation efforts in 2005 and encourage you to join us as we continue to put our best foot forward in 2006!

-Chris Remley
District 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.