

# Conservation Today For Tomorrow

Volume 2  
Number 2

**Agriculture Edition**

Spring, 2006  
Lafayette, Indiana

## Conservation Programs Provide Wildlife Habitat



This wildlife habitat planting consists of native grasses and wildflowers.

Local response to conservation programs has been overwhelming. This spring, 360 acres in Tippecanoe County will be planted to wildlife habitat with funding through cost-share programs.

Federal and state programs provide funding for conservation practices to address wildlife and other conservation needs. Here is a list of some of the programs:

**The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)** is for landowners who want to develop and improve fish and wildlife habitat on private land. WHIP provides cost-share funds up to 75% for wildlife habitat improvements in association with active farming operations. WHIP agreements between USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed. For more info, visit:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs/whip/>

**The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** program is intended to reduce soil erosion, protect the nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduce sedimentation in streams and lakes, improve water quality, established wildlife habitat, and enhance forest and wetland resources. There are two types of CRP - the general signup (now through April 14) and the continuous signup.

Through general CRP, you can receive annual rental payments based on the agriculture rental value of the land for planting permanent vegetation on your highly erodible and other sensitive farmland. CRP also

provides cost-share assistance for up to 50 percent of the participant's costs in establishing approved conservation practices. Participants enroll in CRP contracts for 10 to 15 years.

Through the CRP continuous signup, ag producers can request funds for conservation practices such as grassed waterways, field borders, filter strips, windbreaks, and more. <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm>

**The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)** is an offspring of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which allows farmers in the Tippecanoe River Watershed to receive incentive payments for installing specific conservation practices in addition to regular CRP funding. <http://www.in.gov/isda/soil/programs/crep/index.html>

**The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. NRCS provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP/>

**The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)** is a conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land.

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News from...



INDIANAPOLIS, February 6, 2006—

### NRCS to offset EQIP Energy costs

As part of an overall energy initiative, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced a one-time payment adjustment to offset increased installation costs of specific conservation practices in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

"We think there are conservation practices that farmers have put on hold because costs have gone up dramatically since they signed their EQIP contracts in 2004 and earlier," says Xavier Montoya, acting State Conservationist for NRCS. "This adjustment will help our producers implement their conservation plans, which will result in the protection of Indiana natural resources."

The one-time payment adjustment will only be paid for practices that are completed between March 1 and June 30, 2006 and will focus on specific practices that have escalated in price by 20 percent or more because of rising energy costs. The cost of installing these conservation practices has increased considerably because of spikes in energy costs and because the costs of some building materials (like concrete, steel and plastic pipe) have gone up with increased demand for those materials following the hurricanes of 2005.

"We want to be sure farmers who might install these conservation practices this spring know about this opportunity," says Montoya, "It is a one-time opportunity, but we think it will help Indiana farmers apply good conservation on their farms. Producers who may be eligible, or who have questions, should contact their local NRCS field office to find out for sure."

The EQIP conservation practices eligible for the energy offset include: composting facility, fence, grade stabilization structure, pipeline, manure transfer, structure for water control, underground outlet, waste storage facility and irrigation water conveyance, pipeline.

Administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, EQIP is a voluntary conservation program for farmers. It promotes agricultural production and environmental quality. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to participants who implement structural or management practices on agricultural land.

# No-till Planter Adjustment Guide



Planter maintenance and setup is one of the most critical management aspects of a No-Till system. Obtaining an even stand is important!

Remember your goal should be a higher ear count, *not* a higher seed count. To achieve this we must strive for a “picket fence” stand, where every plant is evenly spaced and every seedling emerges the same day. To obtain the best stand possible make sure your planter is set correctly by doing the following:

- Adjust hitch so the planter is level with the ground. Parallel linkage and frams should be level with the surface of the field.
- For most planters, the frams should be approximately 20 inches from ground when lowered into planting position.
- Check to see that all row units run true to the direction of travel and that they are not skewed from bent linkage arms or worn bushings.
- To adjust down pressure on row units, lower planter into planting position. You should just be able to turn the gauge wheels by hand.
- To adjust no-till coulter depth, lower

coulter to run one-quarter inch higher than seed opening disks.

- Make sure that seed opening disks are sharp and not smaller than 14-1/2 inches.
- Seed disks should be adjusted to maintain 2 to 2-1/2 inches of contact with a doubled sheet of writing paper held between them.
- Check seed drop tubes for wear every year. Replace if tips are worn. Make sure to use standard size tubes for corn and not the large size for cotton. Check the inside of new seed tubes for plastic burs.
- Adjust depth gauge wheels to maintain contact with seed disks when lifted up to their normal planting depth.
- Replace any worn chain idlers and inspect for worn or sticking chains, lube chains.
- Check bearings on seed drives. Replace if any cause chatter.
- If using row cleaners, run them only deep enough to move residue, not soil.

Adjustment guide provided by the Conservation Tillage Initiative. For more information on no-till systems, visit [www.agry.purdue.edu/cti/](http://www.agry.purdue.edu/cti/)

## Calendar of Events

### April

- 12 SWCD Board Meeting
- 14 CRP last day to apply

### May

- 10 SWCD Board Meeting
- 20 DeTrash the Wabash
- 29 Office Closed

### June

- 14 SWCD Board Meeting

### Please Note:

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

### Programs continued from page 1

EQIP may cost-share up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive. <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/>

**The Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)** is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and certain other lands and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands.

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/GRP/>

News from...



INDIANAPOLIS, March 22, 2006—

## CRP SIGN UP

**March 27 - April 14, 2006**

John D. Nidlinger, Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Indiana today reminded farmers and landowners that the next general sign-up for CRP will begin March 27, 2006 and run through April 14, 2006. CRP is the country's largest conservation program on private lands with a current enrollment of about 35.9 million acres.

“CRP protects fragile cropland from erosion and improves the nation’s natural resources,” said Nidlinger. “By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, the program safeguards surface water and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams, many of which are used for drinking water supplies”.

According to Nidlinger, acreage enrolled in CRP is devoted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to more abundant wildlife populations in many parts of the country.

CRP participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years. In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices.

The 2002 Farm Bill authorized CRP enrollment up to 39.2 million acres. Since there is limited acreage available for enrollment, landowners are encouraged to work with their local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices to maximize the environmental benefits of their CRP offers. During the last CRP general sign-up enrollment offers were highly competitive.

USDA will use the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) to rank the acreage offered. The EBI is based on costs and five other factors: soil erosion, water quality, enduring benefits, air quality and wildlife enhancement.

Offers accepted under this sign-up will become effective Oct. 1, 2006. More detailed information on CRP and the general sign-up is available at local FSA offices and on FSA's Web site at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crpinfo.htm).

## News from the Urban Conservation Committee...

### Backyard Conservation

Conservation is moving from the country to backyards across Indiana. Everyone is interested in natural resource protection. We, and our cooperating partners, not only help rural land users with natural resource concerns but have valuable information for homeowners, neighborhood associations and others.

Over ninety five percent of the land in Indiana is privately owned. Therefore the quality of our water is largely determined by private landowners and how they treat the land. Farmers utilize conservation plans to help them apply practices to meet production objectives while protecting soil, water, air, plants and animal resources. And homeowners may want to develop a similar plan for their backyard.

Stop by our office or go online to get a copy of Backyard Conservation to help you develop a plan for your backyard. This booklet and others available from our office will help you plan for erosion control, wildlife habitat, tree planting and many other activities.

Think about joining with your neighbors for a neighborhood effort.



Photo courtesy of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

The joys of natural beauty, song birds, butterflies, mosquito control, cooler summer evenings and the great outdoors will become a satisfying reward for a little planning and neighborhood effort for backyard conservation. Other values include outdoor education for young people, maintenance of property values, improved air and water quality, overall aesthetics and building community pride. With a little imagination other activities such as a Backyard Tree Farm or Bluebird Trail can be incorporated.

If you're interested in "Backyard Conservation" and would like to purchase some native trees and plants for your backyard this spring, please contact me at 765-474-9992, Ext. 101 or go online for an order form. We will be accepting orders until May 1, 2006!

-Chris Remley

Urban Conservation Committee News

## News from the Education Committee...

### DeTrash the Wabash

#### Planned for May 20th

DeTrash The Wabash Date Is Set! Save the date of Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> for a morning of family fun when residents of Lafayette, West Lafayette, and surrounding areas come to the Wabash River to clean up its banks. The second annual DeTrash the Wabash is being held in conjunction with Clean Sweep this year. Volunteer registration will be held from 8:30-9:00 am at Reihle Plaza. Who can participate? EVERYONE! Volunteers will receive trash bags, gloves, and a free T-shirt. Invite your neighbors, work colleagues, friends from school, bring your Boy and Girl Scout Troops, 4-H Club, church members, fraternities, sororities, even your mailman. We will have maps and crew leaders available at the registration booth to assist you on where to start.

If you are feeling adventurous, boats will be launched directly from Davis Ferry



Volunteers DeTrash the Wabash

on North 9<sup>th</sup> street in Lafayette and float to Mascouton Park in West Lafayette. If you would like to be on a boat to collect debris, please contact Don Emmert at the Tippecanoe Soil and Water Conservation District (474-9992, ext. 111) so he can put you on the short list of available seats remaining.

The hours of the event are from 9:00 am-12:30 pm. A pizza party will be held

directly after the clean up beginning at 12:30 pm in the Big Four Depot! This is located on the Lafayette side of the Wabash River by the Myers footbridge. Children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

See you there!!

-Don Emmert

Education Committee News



1812 Troxel Drive, Ste C3  
Lafayette, IN 47909  
phone 474-9992, ext. 3  
website [www.tippecanoeswcd.org](http://www.tippecanoeswcd.org)

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**Tippecanoe County SWCD  
Board of Supervisors**

Roger Verhey, Chair  
Randy Geswein  
Jim King  
Chuck Shelby  
Vacancy

**Reminder...**  
**Conservation Reserve  
Program (CRP) general  
signup ends April 14.**

**SWCD Office Staff**

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

**USDANRCS 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

## Think Spring! Think Green!

Think Tippecanoe SWCD! And think about planting native trees, shrubs and plants around your home, neighborhood and community! Folks are getting excited about spring being just around the corner, and the Tippecanoe SWCD, in its effort to help people care for their land, encourage all of you “green thumbs” out there to plant, plant, plant for a healthier Tippecanoe County.

Native trees, shrubs and plants are attractive additions to the landscape, but also help attract wildlife, birds and butterflies. Many of the new homes being built in this county are bare of trees and shrubbery, and homeowners are missing out on the benefits that trees and shrubs can provide. Benefits include reduced cooling costs as a result of shade, peaceful surroundings/quality of life, and increased property values of up to 30 percent more than homes without trees and shrubs. So don’t be “green with envy”, make your investment in the future today, and order some trees and shrubs for your yard now.

There are a variety of sources, including local nurseries, where you may

purchase high quality trees and shrubs, and small seedlings can be obtained from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry. However, if you are interested in supporting environmental efforts in this county, the Tippecanoe SWCD is offering you the opportunity to purchase trees, shrubs, and plants this spring to help you “green things up” around your home.

You’ll be “green around the gills” if you don’t submit your order for our trees, shrubs and native plants. We’ll be taking orders until Monday, May 1st. Tree species include Red Sunset Maple, Speckled Alder, River Birch, Northern Pecan, Pagoda Dogwood, Swamp White Oak, Overcup Oak, Bur Oak, Chinquapin Oak, Pin Oak, and Bald Cypress. Shrub species include Buttonbush, Witchhazel, Red Chokeberry, Winterberry and Arrowwood Viburnum. Please call our office at 765-474-9992, Ext. 101 or visit our website at: [www.tippecanoeswcd.org](http://www.tippecanoeswcd.org) for a listing of available native plants and/or to obtain an order form.

-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.