



Grass Roots for Conservation



www.stormwaterelkco.org

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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

17746-B County Rd. 34 ~ Goshen, IN 46528 ~Phone: 574-533-3630 jenny.brosius@in.nacdn.net

Northern Indiana Soil Management Seminar

Sponsored by

Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District & Purdue Cooperative Extension Service

March 5, 2009 9:15 AM – 3:00 PM

Martin Room, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds • Goshen, Indiana

Continuing Education Units (CEU); Certification Credit Hours (CCHs); Private Applicators Credit (PARP) are available.

There is an additional \$10 fee the day of the meeting for PARP credit. Please bring your \$10 and applicator number.

- 9:00 - 9:45 Registration
- 9:15 – 9:45 Jeff Burbrink, Program Director, Elkhart County Purdue Extension. Private Applicator Recertification. (PARP)
- 9:45– 10:00 Welcome
- 10:00 – 11:00 Farm Family Exposures to Pesticides: What's In Your Blood? - Fred Whitford, Coordinator, Purdue Pesticide Programs. (PARP)
- 11:00 – 12:00 Greg Kneubuhler, Agronomist, Nester Ag Management. Nutrient management—including soil sampling, variable rate technology, and economics.
- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:00 Eileen Kladviko, Professor, Department of Agronomy, Purdue University. Cover crop effects on soil quality and characteristics.
- 2:00 – 3:00 Panel Discussion: Barry Fisher, NRCS; Tim Harrigan; Michigan State University; and Dave Eby, AgriFlite Indiana cover crop trends, application methods, management and plant varieties.

(Approximately 10 minutes will be given at the end of presentations for questions.)

Morning only (no lunch): \$15 - All day (lunch included): \$30

Late registration for all day (after February 27, 2009): \$35

Send your registration form and check to: Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District,
17746-B County Road 34, Goshen, Indiana 46528. For more information call: 574-533-3630, ext. 3.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

I am attending: _____ Morning session only \$15 (no lunch) _____ All day \$30 (lunch included)

I am interested in: _____ CEUs for Certified Crop Advisors _____ CCHs for Commercial Pesticide Applicators

_____ Private Applicator's Continuing Credit _____ information only

USDA Unveils CRP Incentives



USDA has announced that additional payment incentives are being provided through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to agricultural producers to encourage enhanced wetland and bottomland hardwood conservation. The 2007 Farm Bill provides \$25 billion to help states, communities, farmers and ranchers practice conservation. Those USDA conservation programs help reduce nutrient runoff, control erosion and sedimentation, protect and restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat, sequester carbon, improve air quality, manage livestock waste and preserve farm and ranch land.

Wetlands conservation is a prominent feature of CRP. Incentives target wetland restoration and bottomland timber establishment. These incentives are being added to encourage additional producer interest in these initiatives and are available for Floodplain Wetlands Restoration, Non-Floodplain Wetlands Restoration, Bottomland Timber Establishment on Wetlands, and Duck Nesting Habitat practices.

FSA county offices take offers for these CRP practices on a continuous signup basis, and the offers are automatically accepted provided the acreage and producer meet certain eligibility requirements. Producers can enroll eligible land in 10- to 15-year contracts. Participants plant appropriate cover such as grasses and trees in crop fields and along water bodies to help prevent soil and nutrients from running into waterways and affecting water quality. This vegetation also enhances wildlife habitat. It is estimated that CRP created habitat that led to a 30-percent increase in duck production in the prairie pothole region of the country.

CRP participants receive annual rental payments based on average dry-land cash rent and practice maintenance – plus up to 50% cost share to establish and manage conservation practices on the enrolled land. A practice incentive payment (PIP) equal to 40% of the cost of installing these practices is available upon completion. A signing incentive payment (SIP) of \$100 per acre is made after the contract is approved. And, a soil rental rate incentive equal to 20% of the average soil rental rate will be added to the annual rental payment.

If you have wet bottomland fields, and would like to look into any of these practices to convert those acres into permanent grass or trees, please contact us at 533-4383 and we'll be happy to help you with the planning and application process.

Stormwater Fees Billed with Property Taxes

When Elkhart County property tax bills are distributed in 2008, most bills will include a “Stormwater User Fee.” This fee is to help local governments pay for programs to improve the quality of water in our streams, rivers, and lakes.

Due to mandates of the federal Clean Water Act, Elkhart, Goshen, Bristol, and Elkhart County are working cooperatively to reduce the impact of stormwater runoff. To gain efficiency and hold down costs, these government entities have formed the Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership

The programs the Partnership is required to put in place include public education and participation, regulation of construction site runoff, post-construction stormwater management on new development, illicit discharge elimination, and pollution prevention in municipal operations.

Some results residents will see in the coming years include: improved maintenance of infrastructure; better development standards; uniform erosion control on construction sites; street sweeping; elimination of direct septic discharges to waterways; storm drain markers that say “please don't pollute”; and increased public education about water quality.

The stormwater fee applies to all owners of property with hard surface, including tax-exempt property owners, located in Elkhart, Goshen, Bristol, and unincorporated parts of Elkhart County.

For more information, please contact Eric Kurtz, Stormwater Coordinator, at eric.kurtz@in.nacdn.net or 574-533-3630 ext. 3, or visit www.stormwaterelkco.org.

The Civilian Conservation Corp

The country was in economic chaos. High unemployment numbers kept willing workers from finding jobs. It was 1933, and newly elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was rolling out his "New Deal" to move the United States out of the Great Depression.

The Tennessee Valley Authority brought electricity and flood control to all or parts of the seven states in the Tennessee valley. The Treasury Department's Section of Painting and Sculpture brought a variety of artwork to public buildings, including Post Office murals that can still be seen today.

The Works Projects Administration, "WPA," was also created to provide jobs for citizens. By 1936 over 3.5 million people were employed on various WPA programs. The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC), also known as "Roosevelt's Tree Army," was part of the WPA. It was a program designed to provide jobs for unemployed young men, ages 18 through 20. These young men planted trees, built parks, worked on flood control projects, and other jobs that helped conserve the environment. Much of their work was done through the Forest Service and National Park Service. The Soil Conservation Service, now known as the Natural Resources Conservation Service, used CCC labor to demonstrate the value of conservation activities.

Pokagon State Park was home to CCC Chapter 556 for eight years, beginning in 1934. The Gate House, Spring Shelter, Saddle Barn and CCC Shelter, all still in use at the State Park, were all built by the CCC. The original toboggan slide was built for the enjoyment of CCC members. Eventually a version was made for park visitors. Although the original is no longer there, the toboggan slide is still a major attraction at the park. It is open from the Thursday after Thanksgiving through February.

If you are interested in learning more about the work of CCC Chapter 556 join us for the 67th Annual Meeting of the Elkhart County SWCD. Fred Wooley, Interpretive Naturalist from Pokagon State Park will share stories and artifacts from this fascinating chapter of American History.

(Information for this article was gathered, in part, from the following web sites:

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/ABOUT/history/articles/ccc.html>

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USARccc.htm>

http://www.museumofthesoldier.com/ccc_history.htm

<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USARccc.htm>

<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1586.html>

Affiliate Memberships & Annual Meeting Reservations

All of us at the SWCD appreciate those who choose to support our efforts throughout the year either by becoming an Affiliate Member, reading this newsletter, attending a workshop, participating in an educational training session, consulting us for the installation of a conservation practice, or attending one of our Annual Meetings. We appreciate all of you.

We especially appreciate our Affiliate Members who have helped to sponsor conservation campers, provide materials for school presentations, and fund our local poster contest.

We extend an invitation to all to attend the 2008 Annual Meeting. It will be held on February 23, 2009 at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds in Goshen. The meeting will begin with dinner at 6:30 p.m. in the Martin Room of the ECCC building.

There is no charge for the Annual Meeting, but it is still important for you to contact us to let us know how many will be attending, as we will need a count for the caterer.

67th Annual Meeting Reservations & 2009 Affiliate Membership Form

Yes! I would like to be a partner with Elkhart County SWCD in its mission to promote and implement the protection, conservation, and wise use of natural resources in Elkhart County by becoming an affiliate member:

_____ \$25.00 First Tier Affiliate Membership Donation

_____ \$125.00 Second Tier Affiliate Membership Donation

(If you have selected this option, please provide us with a business card or a business card size ad layout for *Grass Roots*.)

_____ \$ _____ Other Donation Amount

_____ (#) Annual Meeting Dinner Reservations for me/my family

Name _____
(as you wish it to appear on certificate)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

*Please make checks payable to the
Elkhart County Soil And Water Conservation District
and mail this form to:
Elkhart County SWCD
17746-B County Road 34, Goshen, IN 46528*

IDEM Encourages Smart Use of Lawn Fertilizer

Zero phosphorous fertilizer prevents water quality problems

Fertilizing in the fall is a great way to get a jump start on a lush, green lawn next spring, but applying fertilizer improperly can pose a hazard to local water bodies.

Fertilizer is composed of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium, and when applied to lawns, it helps grass grow. However, problems can arise from improper usage. By applying too much product or not sweeping up fertilizer on driveways and sidewalks, the result can cause excessive algae growth and an unhealthy imbalance in lakes, streams and rivers.

Many fertilizers contain phosphorous, which enables lawns to grow faster. Unfortunately, when phosphorous ends up in a stream or lake, it also makes algae grow. The good news is that phosphorous is only needed for new growth and once a lawn is established, most Indiana soils already contain enough phosphorous.

"Adding more phosphorous to our lawns is like trying to fill an already full gas tank in our cars," said Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Commissioner Thomas Easterly. "Homeowners with plans to fertilize their lawns are encouraged to purchase zero or low phosphorous fertilizers and to check nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium numbers on fertilizer bags."

When fertilizer is applied before a rainstorm or if it is spread on the sidewalk or paved driveway or street, much of it will be washed into the storm sewers. From there, the fertilizer travels to the nearest stream, river or lake.


Recommendations for proper lawn care and fertilizer use include:

- Test your lawn and soil. Contact your local county extension office to find out how to test your soil and determine how much nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium your lawn needs.
- Select a fertilizer that is right for your lawn and soil. The label on fertilizer bags lists a fertilizer grade, which is a national standard, and it consists of three numbers which represent the amount of primary nutrients; the first number is the amount of nitrogen, the second is the amount of phosphorous and the third is the amount of potassium.
- Find alternatives to fertilizer high in phosphorous. Choose phosphorous-free products that are available at local lawn and garden centers. As an alternative, consider using organic compost or homemade compost. Garden or yard waste make excellent compost which releases nutrients more slowly.
- Fertilize at the proper times. As fall fertilization helps prepare lawns for next year, spring fertilization makes grass grow faster, causing the need to mow more often. Therefore, fertilize in the fall, not in the spring.
- Use fertilizers sparingly. Lawns and many plants need less fertilizer, less often, than one might think.
- Be mindful and cautious when applying fertilizer. Sweep up any fertilizer that lands on hard surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks or streets. Never hose off these areas as the fertilizer could run into storm drains and streams.
- Maintain a buffer strip of natural vegetation, such as wildflowers and native grasses bordering watercourses and ponds. This traps and keeps excess fertilizers from seeping into lawns and gardens.
- Refrain from bagging grass. Use a mulching lawn mower to cut one-third of the blade length each week and naturally fertilize your lawn with grass clippings.

For additional information, contact Karen Teliha, IDEM Community Health and Education Coordinator, at (800) 988-7901 or visit www.IN.gov/idem/4527.htm.

- Article Courtesy of IDEM

CHECK IT OUT!!

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- Nov. 27 Thanksgiving Day – Office Closed
 - Nov. 28 Thanksgiving Holiday – SWCD Staff Unavailable
 - Dec. 15 Elkhart County SWCD Board Meeting – 7 P.M., Extension Conference Room, 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen
 - Dec. 25 Christmas Day – Office Closed
 - Dec. 26 Christmas Holiday – SWCD Staff Unavailable
 - Jan. 1 New Year's Day – office closed
 - Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – office closed

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

17746-B County Road 34, Goshen, IN 46528-9261

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www.elkcoswcd.org www.stormwaterelkco.org

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All programs and service of the Conservation Partnership and the Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.