



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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JULY 21-29, 2017



FREE Parking
FREE Grandstand
Gate Admission \$8
9yrs & Under FREE

Fair Admission &
Reserved Concert Seats
available online at 4HFair.org

Discount Gate Admission

On sale through July 20 at area outlets
Advance Admission \$6
Advance Ride Vouchers \$20
CloverCash \$2



4HFair.org

Get The Fun Fair! Mobile App

17746-D County Road 34 Goshen, Indiana 46528
P: 574-533-FAIR (3247) F: 574-534-3743

Join us for Green Earth Education Day at the Elkhart County 4-H Fair

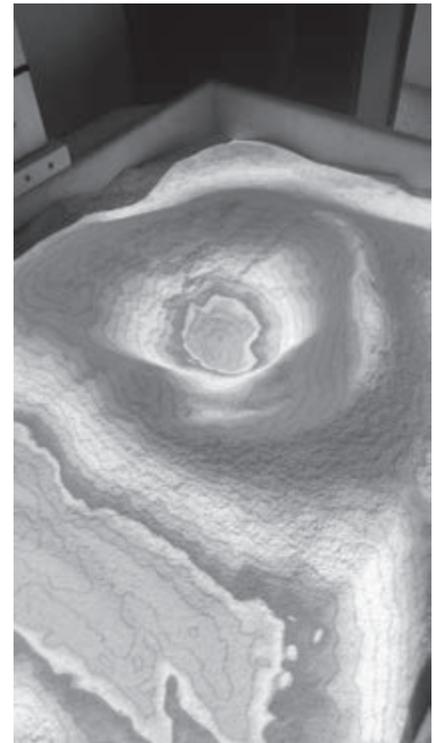
Friday, July 28, 2017

at Heritage Park

“Sandbox and Watersheds!”

Elkhart County SWCD Staff will be on hand to talk about the Augmented Reality Sandbox and watersheds.

***Stop by and see us
at Heritage Park!!!***



Conducting Ag Service Center Business during the Fair

The 2017 Elkhart County 4-H Fair will be held July 21-29. When doing business with our office during the fair, you should enter the fairgrounds at Gate 2 the same as you do during non-fair time. Gate 2 will be marked as the handicap parking entrance. You will need to drive to the entrance, identify yourself, and inform those at the gate that you are here to conduct business with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), or the Farm Services Agency (FSA). Let them know that you have been instructed to use Gate 2.

For your convenience, the regular parking spaces on the south side of our building will be available and clearly marked. All other asphalt parking is allocated for Fair handicap parking. Violators will be towed. Our office will maintain normal office hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. We would appreciate knowing any problems you encounter when doing business with us during the fair.

Build-A-Barrel

Build-Your-Own Rain Barrel Workshop

Saturday, August 19th • 10 am—12 pm

Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds | Sheep/Swine Building

Learn about rain barrels then construct your own!

Fixtures and tools provided by the
Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership

Painting Instructions Available

Limited Availability! Register Early!

First come, first serve until the class is full for Elkhart County residents.



To register, or for more
information, please call
(574) 533-4383 ext. 3
or email

debra.jimison@in.nacdn.net

Indiana's Pollinator Week

Governor Eric Holcomb has proclaimed Indiana is celebrating Pollinator Week from June 20-26, 2017 in conjunction with many other state and nationwide observances. Furthermore, the National Wildlife Federation is calling June National Pollinator Month. A lot of attention is being paid on this subject by many different groups.

Why should we care? Pollination is an important stage of a flowering plant's life. As a critter goes about seeking food, it brings one plant's pollen to be deposited in another, resulting in fertilization and starting production of a seed or fruit.

Why pay attention? Because 75% of flowering plants and 35% of all the food and beverages we consume are a result of pollination. That's a value of about \$20 billion annually in U.S. production. In a world with more mouths to feed every year, and without this important step, there's no food production.

Over 1,000 species of vertebrates help in pollination as those bats, birds and small mammal species contribute to some of the work. But the vast majority of pollinating is completed by the over 200,000 beneficial insects like butterflies, bees and moths.



Unfortunately insect pollinators are having a tough time from increasing pressure from many directions. Most of the important pollinators' populations are declining. Loss of habitat and food sources, chemicals in the environment, parasites, pathogens and changes in weather are all taking a toll on their numbers.

How can we contribute to a solution? Almost anywhere can be made into suitable habitat. Fallow fields, pastures, roadsides, woodlots and backyards can help re-establish re-

placement areas pollinator species need. And we can easily and cheaply supply the other things pollinators require to live.

The Department of Natural Resources has funding and technical assistance for land, public or private. Conservation practices on non-agricultural land improves sites with food and shelter, decreases erosion from questionable land use and improves surface water quality. In 2015, 517 acres of habitat were added.



Residential backyards can also contribute. Avoid misuse of chemicals by following label instructions. Introduce native plants in your area. Provide water sources by installing bird baths or shallow bowls with gravel in them. Leave weedy spots and natural areas that aren't mowed or chemically treated.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service also brings federal attention to these problems by implementing programs on agricultural land. They estimate over 50,000 acres of improvements have been established to benefit pollinator habitat in Indiana.

On the farm, make sure to follow directions on the label in your pesticide and fungicide use. Participate in a government program to re-introduce habitat. Take actions to protect nests and food sources. Allow crops to bolt. Add riparian zones as set-aside areas.

Together, these activities will improve the pollinators' situation and help establish healthy populations for the future. Check out native plant sites like Native Browser or organizations such as Pollinator Partnership, National Wildlife Federation, Wild Ones or the Xerces Society for more information.

Fall Conservation Transect Results Released — Cover Crops Thrive in Tough Farm Economy

One Million Acres of Living Cover Crops Reported

INDIANAPOLIS (May 19, 2017)—According to the 2016 Fall Conservation Transect Report, Hoosier farmers planted over a million acres of cover crops for the second year in a row.

Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) says having over a million acres of planted cover crops makes Indiana the leading state in the Midwest, if not the nation.

"I'm really excited about these numbers because we also have data to show that for each acre USDA pays a farmer to plant cover crops through a Farm Bill program, another four to five acres are being planted without our cost share," Hardisty said. "To me it's significant because it means farmers are realizing the financial benefits of investing in the health of their soil as a farm-business decision."

The transect is a collaborative effort between members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership who team up to conduct a visual assessment of cropland county by county using a predetermined route. They collect data on tillage methods, plant cover, residue, etc. to help document a more complete story of conservation efforts in Indiana. The survey uses GPS technology and provides a statistically reliable method, and then uses USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) data on crops for estimating farm management and related annual trends.

"Conservation continues to be a priority for Hoosier farmers, and this report proves that," said Ted McKinney, ISDA Director. "By observing land use conditions and tracking these trends, we're able to focus our attention strategically and utilize our combined resources more effectively around the state."

Cover crops have many benefits like increasing organic matter for better soil biology and improving infiltration and water-holding capacity, according to NRCS. In a state that receives as much

as 40 inches of rain in a year, cover crops also prevent nutrient leaching by capturing excess nutrients and sediment - keeping them on the farm and out of nearby waterbodies and streams.

According to Hardisty, "Another interesting trend is Hoosier farmers have planted about four times more acres of cover crops than what NASS reports for wheat acres in Indiana. Since most farmers have had some experience with wheat, we see this as a tremendous opportunity to get even more farmers comfortable with trying cover crops, so we expect our numbers of acres to continue to grow."

In addition to cover crops, the transect also analyzes fall tillage and residue trends. Fields not tilled in the fall have crop residues to protect the soil from fall, winter and spring rains, which further limits sediment and nutrient losses. The 2016 report shows that Indiana farmers left their crop residues undisturbed this past fall as follows:

- 67 percent of soybean acres
- 58 percent of corn acres
- 50 percent of small grain acres
- 31 percent of specialty crop acres

The ICP believes the no-till and cover crop acres represented in the transect data are at a much higher and sustainable quality because many farmers are using multiple conservation practices as part of a total *soil health management system*. A systems approach means using practices like adaptive nutrient management, integrated weed and pest management, crop rotations, precision technology and prescriptive buffers that work together with cover crops and no-till to improve soil function.

ISDA maintains tillage transect reports dating back to 1990 on their website at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm> and includes the most recent transect results.

SPAD METER

The chlorophyll meter is a portable, hand-held device that instantaneously measures the greenness (or chlorophyll content) of a plant in the field.

The early season chlorophyll meter test consists of taking meter readings of corn leaves when plants are between the six- and eight-leaf stages (when plants are about 10 to 20 inches tall), which allows time to sidedress if necessary.

Meter readings taken from plants in a field will indicate if N is adequate for optimum yield with no additional N. If additional N is needed, the meter reading and other field information can be used to develop an improved sidedress N recommendation.

Advantages of the early season chlorophyll meter test:

- Chlorophyll meter readings are quick, easy, and provide instantaneous values.
- No samples need to be collected, processed, and sent to a laboratory for analysis.
- Cost of sampling involves only labor costs.
- Nitrogen recommendations are accurate (comparable to the pre-sidedress soil nitrate test).

The SPAD meter is available in the SWCD office, so come in and check your N levels.



Acreage Certification — DEADLINE July 15, 2017!!

After spring planting, producers should certify their 2015 acreage. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

Acreage reports are required for many FSA programs.

For crops enrolled in programs other than Noninsured, (perennials, grazing and forage crops – November 15th). Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), acreage reports are to be certified by the December 15th deadline for fall mint and small grains (wheat), January 15th for apples, and a July 15th deadline for all other crops (corn, soybeans, hay etc)



Elkhart Community School's Ag Days

Recently, the SWCD participated in the Elkhart Community School's (ECS) Ag Days. Over the 3 day event, about 1500 students from Mary Beck, Mary Daly, and Woodland elementary schools traveled to Elkhart Community School's ACCELL farm to participate in hands on learning. Students were able to get up close and personal with hogs, sheep, chickens, calves, tractors, and small engines. For many of the students, it was their first time seeing livestock! The SWCD brought our soil texture kit so the students could feel different type of soil – they loved getting their hands dirty! The kids also got to learn about other agricultural commodities, like soybeans, popcorn, and honey. Elkhart Community School's Director of Ag Curriculum, Cyndy Keeling, along with the Elkhart Area Career Center FFA, Elkhart County SWCD, and Indiana Farm Bureau worked together to make Ag Days an experience the students aren't likely to forget!



Upcoming Events!

July 8 Master Gardener's Garden Tour: Elkhart County's 20th Annual 2017 Garden Tour. This year's tour is in the Middlebury area. Two of the nine gardens will be at Amish farms. Visit the Hospitality Center located at Middlebury Church of the Brethren to find unique gifts, plants, garden art and many other garden related items for sale. The Hospitality Center will be open from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., with gardens open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tour will be held "Rain or Shine."

July 14 EnviroFest: 5-9:00 PM, Wellfield Botanic Gardens, 1011 North Main St. Elkhart, IN, Kid-friendly activities throughout the evening! Visit a variety of vendors and exhibitors! Stop by the Auction and Raffle booth to see a variety of fun items donated by local businesses!

July 17 SWCD Board Meeting: 7:00 PM, SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen

July 18-19 Worm's Eye View Summer Conference: Schlipf's Precision Ag. Invites you to join them at their farm for their Annual Field Day in Milford, IN. *Purdue Extension will be offering PARP credits on 7/19.

July 21-29 Elkhart County 4-H Fair Begins

July 28 Green Day: Come see our booth and this year's theme is: Sandbox & Watersheds.

August 19 Build-A-Barrel Workshop: Sheep/Swine Arena 10 AM-12 Noon - Limited availability – Register early! First come, first serve until the class is full for **Elkhart county residents only**. Learn about rain barrels then construct your own! Painting instructions available. To register, or for more information, please call (574) 533-4383 ext 3, or email debra.jimison@in.nacdn.net.

August 21 SWCD Board Meeting: 7:00 PM, SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen

Sept. 7 Cover Crop Field Day: Elkhart County SWCD, Goshen, IN

Sept. 18 SWCD Board Meeting: 7:00 PM, SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen



908 E. Waterford St. • Wakarusa, IN 46573
Steve Brown 574-596-6182

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All programs and services 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.