



2019 Annual Report

17746 County Road 34, Ste B • Goshen, Indiana 46528

Phone: (574) 533-4383, Ext. 3

www.elkcoswcd.org



Please make your
reservations by calling or
stop into our office.

78th Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 5, 2020

DINNER STARTS AT 6:30 PM

Martin Room, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds
17746 County Road 34 - Goshen, IN

There is no ticket fee, but consider supporting the Elkhart County SWCD
with a donation or
an Affiliate Membership!

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District is to assist land users and other agencies in the wise use of natural resources in Elkhart County

Letter from the Chairman

To Elkhart County Soil & Water District Supporters,

As we say goodbye to 2019 and look forward to a new decade, our mission remains. "To assist and educate citizens, land users, and agencies in the wise use of natural resources in Elkhart County." Through your support and participation, and that of our many partners, much has been accomplished. We've organized and hosted many meetings, workshops, events and projects. Our winter seminar "Soak up your Resources" focused on cover crop management. We continue to utilize our popular Augmented Reality Sandbox through classroom visits, science nights, library programs, the Elkhart County Fair, and Indiana State Fair. The Field Trip Incentive Program was a big hit with the 8th grade middle schoolers from Northridge and Goshen School Corporations. The Elkhart County SWCD & Michiana Master Gardeners host a tree sale every year. We also host the Elkhart County Indiana Master Naturalist program who has volunteered over 2100 hours in the community.

I would like to thank the Elkhart County elected officials for your continued support. Our new program Storm Water Alliance Management Program (SWAMP), which is a cost share program, assists in putting conservation on the land, with cover crops, filter strips and grass waterways. Over 65 participants conserving over 7900 acres of farmland in 2019

I would also like to thank the SWCD staff, the SWCD Board, NRCS, and all of our partners who contributed to make 2019 a success. Our challenge continues: To provide leadership, education, and implementation of conservation practices, and to utilize and protect our resources to the best of our ability for us and future generations.

To leave it better than we receive it,

Yours for Conservation,

Thomas Kercher

SWCD Board Chair

Elkhart County SWCD Minutes of February 28, 2019 Annual Meeting

The 77th annual meeting of the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District was held in the Martin Room of the ECCC Building, on the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, in Goshen. 97 people attended. The meeting began at 6:30 pm with Jim Hess welcoming everyone to the meeting. Keith E. Miller gave the invocation. Dinner followed.

Before dinner, Alex Wait introduced Elkhart County SWCD board members, and Government officials present were: Mike Yoder, Elkhart County Commissioner; Dave Hess, Elkhart County Council Member; Phil Barker, Elkhart County Surveyor; Amanda Kautz, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Heath Hurst, Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA); Jennifer Thum,

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA); Stan Moore, IASWCD North/Northeast Region Representative. After dinner Alex Wait then introduced the Elkhart County SWCD Associate board members and then he introduced the staff. They were acknowledged for their support of the SWCD. Affiliate members were acknowledged for their support.

The minutes of the February 27, 2018 annual meeting were approved on a motion by: Garry Weybright and Marty Stroup. The motion carried. The 2018 Annual Financial Report was approved on a motion Penny Stroup and Garry Weybright. The motion carried.

Dale Leer, SWCD board member conducted the supervisor election. He stated the requirements for being a candidate and for voting. He then presented the slate Alex Wait's term of office will expire at the close of this annual meeting, and he has chosen to run for re-election. No nominations were made from the floor.

This year we had Tom Coomes, Meteorologist at ABC57, he spoke about weather, cover crops and the feature piece that was done with our office in fall highlighting Keith E. Miller.

Awards were sponsored by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District. The 4-H awards were presented by Dale Leer, and assisted by Supervisors and Associates, as follows:

The highest placing Elkhart County Soil Judging Senior FFA Team, Garrett Dunlap, Noah Hochstetler, and Garrett Roth (Fairfield High School), Heather Goss, Coach.

Jim Hess, District Manager for the (SWCD) Soil & Water Conservation District spoke about Agriculture and Urban Conservation in Elkhart County, Jordan Beehler, Conservationist spoke about Education.

County poster contest winners were asked to stand up to be acknowledged. Forestry Award was Kara Pounds, Recycling Award was Max Calkins, Soil & Water Science Award was Andrew Miller, Wildlife Award was Laura Scott. River Friendly Farmer Award was Marty Moser. Conservation Farmer was Ron Martin. Educators of the Year Award was Matt Katzer and Joe Vance. Urban Conservationist of the Year Award was Jeff Bienz, and Friend of the SWCD went to Garry & Linda Weybright.

Dale Leer, SWCD Supervisor announced that Alex Wait was elected to a three-year term. The Oath of Office was administered by Elkhart County Commissioner, Mike Yoder to Alex Wait.

Tom Kercher	.....	SWCD Board Chairman
Alex Wait	.....	SWCD Board Vice Chairman
Dale Leer	.....	SWCD Board Member
Dean Rink	.....	SWCD Board Member
Darrell Shover	.....	SWCD Board Member
Lora L. Atkins	.....	Recording Secretary

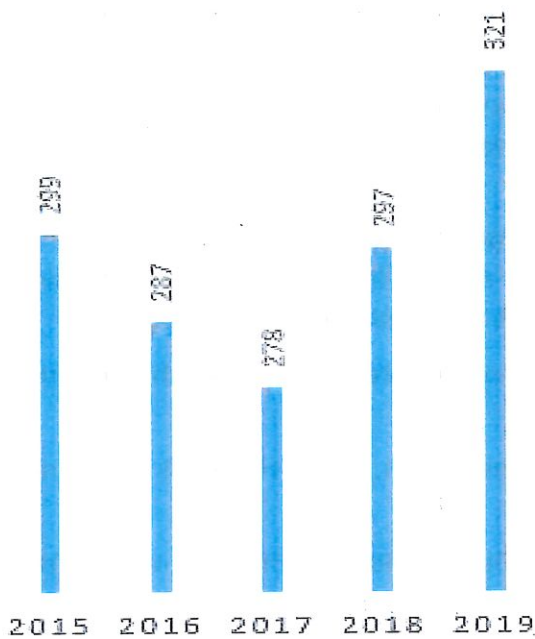
Education Highlights

The SWCD had a great year for education programs within the county. As always, the Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS) was a huge hit in the classroom, at educational events, the Elkhart County 4-H fair, and the Indiana State Fair. One thing that we kicked off this year was the SWCD Educational Kits. These are lesson plans in a box with everything a teacher would need to complete a lesson on soil, water, or other related field. We also completed the 12th Elkhart County Indiana Master Naturalist Program. In 2019, our Indiana Master Naturalists volunteered over 2,111 hours with natural resource partners in our community!

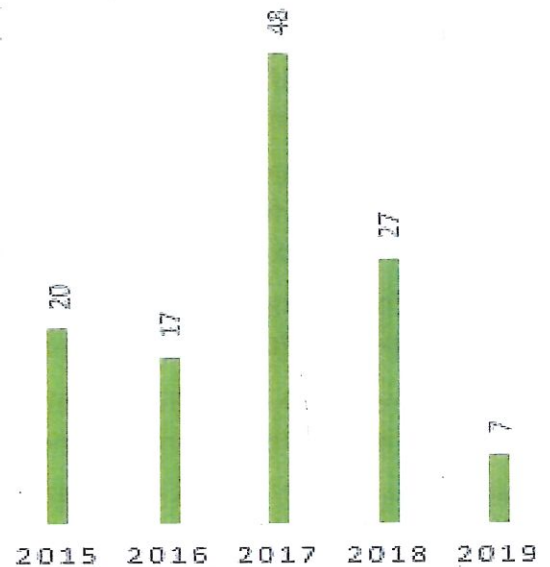
Poster Contest winner:

State of Stormwater

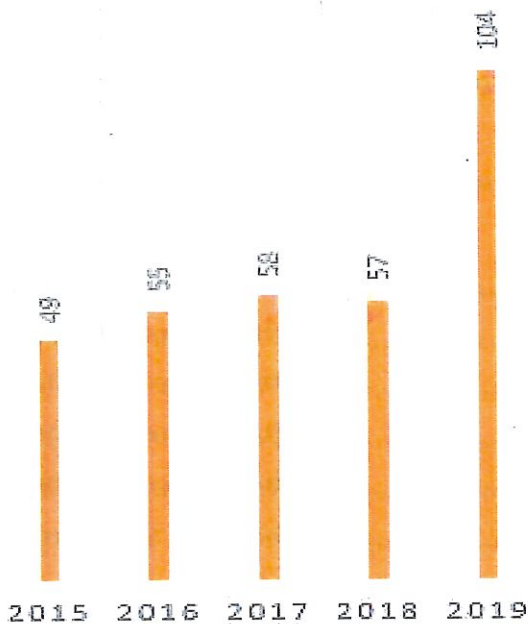
Active Construction Sites



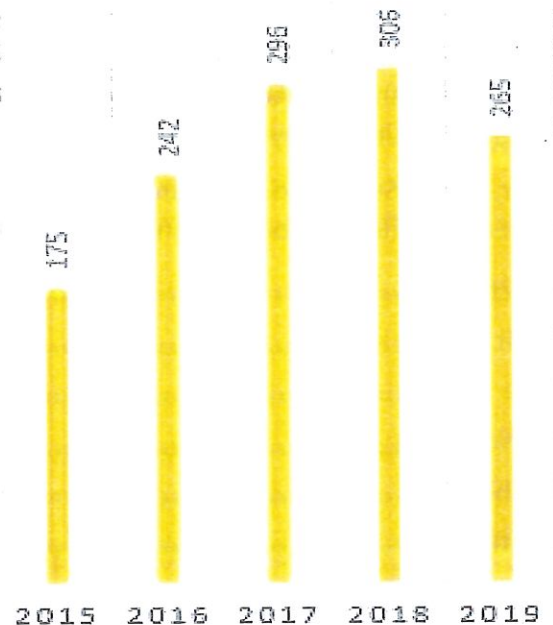
Complaints



Sites Closed



Site Inspections



NRCS Putting Conservation on the Ground in 2019

Cropland Conservation Practices	Applied
Cover Crop	4716 ac.
No-Till/Strip Till	916 ac.
Nutrient Management	58 ac.
Integrated Pest Management	21 ac.
Filter Strip	10.6 ac.
Water and Sediment Control Basin	5 basins

Livestock Conservation Practices	Applied
Heavy Use Area Protection	8200 sq. ft.
Livestock Pipeline	200 ft.
Rotational Grazing	18 ac.
Watering Facility	2 waterers
Waste Storage Facility with Roof and Waste Transfer Area	1 facilities
Gutters or French Drain with underground outlet	2 systems

Wildlife Conservation Practices	Applied
Invasive Species Control	59 ac.
Forest Stand Improvement	15 ac.
Tree/Shrub Planting	2 ac.
Wildlife Habitat Planting- Pollinator	1 ac.
Forest Management Plan	1 plan

Cover crop is the most popular conservation practice implemented through NRCS programs in 2019! This is the 6th year it has topped the conservation charts in Elkhart County. Livestock related practices gained popularity in 2019 as well. The practices listed were implemented with help from the following Farm Bill Conservation Programs: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Storm Water Alliance Management Program

The Storm Water Alliance Management Program (SWAMP) was established to provide financial assistance to landowners to help implement conservation practices that reduce non-point source water pollution, especially sediment erosion, into waterways in Elkhart County.

SWAMP is a cost-share program assisting with up to 75% of the total cost of the conservation project. It is administered by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Elkhart County Surveyor. The program includes practices such as blind inlets, cover crops, filter Strips, grade stabilization structures, grassed waterways, and exclusion fencing.

Through this cost share program, we had 63 participants planting 7957 acres of cover crops in 2019. 9 acres of grassed waterways were installed on critical areas, and 2 acres of filter strips were constructed on stream banks. All of these best management practices (BMP's) will help reduce the amount of sediment entering our local ditches.

2019 Urban Conservationist Andy Knox



Weigand Construction is a construction management, design-build, general contracting company that has completed projects from simple renovations, to state-of-the-art, nationally recognized facilities. The company remains family owned-and-operated, led by fourth generation owner and CEO, Larry Weigand. Weigand Construction has more than 400 skilled tradesmen with annual revenues in excess of \$200 million.

Building upon a successful career of over 30 years in the construction industry, Andy offers a wealth of understanding to his role as Superintendent. Andy is responsible for overseeing and managing the safety and operations of the jobsite, as well as the timeliness of completion, and the quality of completed projects. He is proficient at building and maintaining strong relationships with clients, owners, subcontractors, local building officials, and architects, resulting in highly collaborative and effective teams with proven results.

Andy has had the pleasure of contributing to a number of significant projects throughout his career, including serving such clients as Lippert Components, the University of Notre Dame, Goshen Community Schools, Saint Joseph High School, and Penn High School. In his free time, Andy enjoys spending time with his family, and working on projects around the house.

2019 Friend of the SWCD Ryan Owen



Ryan Owen works for Pheasants Forever where he is responsible for land management and conservation assistance throughout the northeast area of the state. Ryan has earned the title Friend of the SWCD by assisting in local projects that put conservation practices on the ground. His expertise in native plants puts him in high demand around Elkhart County for implementing native plantings. One of the bigger projects he has been a part of is the native planting at ACCELL Ag farm in Elkhart where he wrangled the third graders and helped them seed a one acre plot. His easy going personality and vast plant knowledge makes him an excellent teacher and mentor.

2019 Educator of the Year ACCELL Farm



ACCELL is a 114-acre school farm that is in northern Elkhart county. It is owned and operated by Elkhart Community Schools with the mission to educate the students of the district and community through research, hands-on applied activities and supervised experiences about sustainable agriculture and natural resources. Through rigor and relevance, they empower the students to be successful lifelong learners in secondary, post-secondary, entrepreneurship, industry and leadership settings. Elkhart Community School students have the power to change their lives as well as the image of urban agriculture for generations.

2019 Conservation Farmer Morehouse Grain Farms, LLC



The Morehouse farming operation consists of corn, soybeans, and seed corn. They have been no-tilling a large portion of their farming operation for nearly 6 years, which has improved water infiltration and reduced surface water runoff. In addition to minimizing tillage, Morehouses' have added cover crops on their farm for the last 8 years with the goal of building organic matter. They have found that no-till combined with cover crop has helped reduce moisture loss and has improved soil quality. They also follow nutrient & pest management plans to optimize fertilizer & herbicide applications, using the smallest amount possible to get maximum results. In the last 40 years other conservation practices have been constructed, such as a manure storage facility, several grassed waterways and sediment control basins. Several acres of filter strips have also been installed to help reduce soil erosion and help improve the water quality of Elkhart County. Morehouses' have also been involved with many of the SWCD's field days and activities throughout the years, helping to encourage others to implement cover crops and conservation practices around the county.

The Elkhart County SWCD thanks Morehouse Grain Farms, LLC. for being a good steward of the land.

2019 River Friendly Farmer Oneeda Farms



Out of 58,000 farms in the state of Indiana, one farm in Elkhart County received the statewide award of River-Friendly Farmer at the Indiana State Fair on Farmers' Day August 15.

Oneeda Farms was among 49 farmers who received the award from the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) for the work they do on their land to protect Indiana's natural resources.

The Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Joe and Roger Hibschman of Oneeda Farms for the award based upon their farm management practices that protect Indiana's rivers, lakes, and streams.

Hibschmans conservation farming practices have been implemented on almost all acres of their farming operation. Oneeda farms consists of hay, corn, soybeans, and wheat. Joe and Roger have been planting cover crops on 60% of their crop ground, and, by adding the cover crops to their farm, they have noticed far less erosion, less nutrient loss, and been able to retain more water. They also noticed better soil structure and healthier soils. By using no-till, fuel consumption and maintenance costs have been reduced greatly. No-till has reduced the cost of labor per acre due to less equipment needed and less trips across the field. The Hibschmans are proud that their farming practices are also providing a space for wildlife, especially along their filter strips and grassed waterways.

The River-Friendly Farmer Award has been presented by the IASWCD and sponsored by the 92 local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. since 2000. This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River-Friendly Farmers in Indiana to 1912 since the awards beginning.

2019 Agri-Business of the Year T & T Fertilizer, Inc.



T&T Fertilizer Inc. has been a valued supplier of goods in our local agriculture community for over 35 years. Over the last several years they have helped to promote and install over 5,000 acres of conservation practices in the county. Their passion to help local families reach production goals has evolved into helping them reach conservation goals as well. The conservation efforts of cover crops, grassed waterways, and filter strips will continue to benefit future generations, for many years to come. With T & T and its employees being good stewards and leading by example, they have laid the foundation for many of their customers to build off of. We thank T & T Fertilizer Inc. for being our Agri-Business Conservationist of the Year, and thank them for being committed to conserving our land.

2019 Highlights

2019 Conservation Highlights Featured at 78th Annual Meeting

The 78th Annual Meeting of the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will be held on Thursday, March 5, 2020. We will highlight the conservationists and conservation activities in Elkhart County that contributed to conservation in 2019.

The meeting will be held in the Martin Room of the Elkhart County Community Building on the 4-H Fairgrounds in Goshen. Dinner starts at 6:30 p.m. There is no fee to attend, but reservations are requested, and donations or affiliate memberships are accepted.

This Annual Meeting provides the District with an opportunity to share activities and provide a financial accounting of the year. We will recognize the adults and youth who have advanced conservation efforts in the county in 2019. A preview of those receiving recognition is available in this report.

As 2019 is our 78th anniversary we are looking back and reflecting on how we got where we are and the importance of each partnership that worked together to get us here. As we remember the past, we also look to the future to continue to build a legacy of conservation for generations and generations to come. An important item on the agenda is the election of a member to the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors. Every county in Indiana has a Soil and Water Conservation District. Each District is supervised by a board of local landowners who are responsible for the policies and programs of the SWCD. This board has five members; two are appointed for three-year terms and three are elected for three-year terms. Darrell Shover was appointed to his term which will expire next year. Dean Rink holds the other appointed position and that term will expire this year. The elected positions are staggered, with one elected supervisor's term expiring each year. Tom Kercher has one year remaining in his term of office and Alex Wait has two. Dale Leer's term of office will expire at the close of this annual meeting, and he has agreed to run for re-election. Dale Leer, Goshen, has been an Elkhart County SWCD supervisor since 1996. Dale Graduated from Millersburg High School and owns a Clinton Township Farm. He raises corn, soybeans and hay. He is employed by Fairfield School Corp. in the maintenance department. Dale is currently completing a three year term as SWCD supervisor where he serves as Annual Meeting Committee Chairman.



He is also involved with 4-H and the Fairfield FFA Advisory Committee.

Nominations can be made from the floor by anyone eligible to vote in the election.

Anyone who attends the Annual Meeting, is of legal voting age, and occupies land in Elkhart County is eligible to vote in this SWCD supervisor election. An individual may also vote if they attend; are of legal voting age; and represent a firm, company, or corporation that occupies land located within Elkhart County. Eligible individuals include the owner and tenant of the same land; as well as any owner's or tenant's spouse.

If you are interested in supporting the SWCD with an affiliate membership, you can be recognized at our 78th annual meeting. Individual/family affiliate memberships are available for a donation of \$25 or more. Your membership will be recognized at least twice a year in our monthly newsletter Grass Roots, and during the slide show at the annual meeting. Second tier or business memberships are available for an annual donation of \$125 or more. Second tier membership guarantees at least two business card sized ads in our monthly newsletter Grass Roots and recognition at our 78th Annual Meeting during the slide show.

Form approved by State Board of Accounts, 2002
ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT OF ELKHART COUNTY SWCD
January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019
File with State Board of Accounts by February 29, 2020 (via Gateway)
and with your ISDA District Support Specialist by March 31, 2019

Balance Brought Forward	\$47,723.38
RECEIPTS	
State for District Operations	\$10,000.00
Clean Water Indiana Grant	\$8,449.64
County for District Operations	\$0.00
Federal and State Funds (not CWI)	\$0.00
Non Government Grants	\$0.00
Other Grants (List)	\$0.00
Total Intergovernmental Receipts	\$18,449.64
Equipment Rental & Farm Income	\$0.00
Donations & Memberships	\$1,850.30
Other Charges for Services (Describe)	\$0.00
Other Charges for Services (<i>Rental of Augmented Reality Sandbox</i>)	\$1,200.00
Other Charges for Services (Describe)	\$0.00
Total Charges for Services	\$3,050.30
Advertising	\$0.00
Annual Meeting Income	\$0.00
Interest from Checking, CDs, Savings, Etc.	\$27.92
Reimbursements & Refunds (<i>From County Government</i>)	\$9,012.72
Sale of Used Equipment	\$0.00
Sales Income	\$12,512.30
Workshop/Field Day Income	\$3,570.00
Other Miscellaneous Revenue (<i>2017 Check Void - 4684</i>)	\$250.00
Other Miscellaneous Revenue (<i>Postage</i>)	\$9.00
Other Miscellaneous Revenue (<i>Transfer from 2016 CWI Grant Account to General Acct</i>)	\$8,631.14
Total Miscellaneous Revenue	\$34,013.08
Sub-Total (before investment activity)	\$55,513.02
Sale of Investments (CDs, saving accounts, transfers)	\$0.00
TOTAL (balance forward + receipts + investments)	\$103,236.40
DISBURSEMENTS	
Capital Outlays (Equipment)	\$861.34
Annual Meeting Expenses	\$2,543.24
Audit Expense	\$150.00
Bonding and Liability Insurance	\$0.00
Clean Water Indiana Projects or other State grant funded projects	\$3,398.60
Conservation Education Programs	\$0.00
Contractual Services	\$0.00
Cost-Share Projects/Federally-Funded	\$0.00
Cost-Share Projects/SWCD-Funded	\$0.00
CWI Payments to other SWCDs	\$0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	\$2,915.00
Employee Salaries Paid by District	\$0.00
Office Supplies	\$907.98
Other Services & Charges	\$2,060.83
Postage & Delivery Expenses	\$0.00
Printing/Copying Expense	\$0.00
Rent	\$0.00
Repair Expenses	\$0.00
Sales Tax Paid to IN Dept. of Revenue	\$983.01
Supervisor Per Diem	\$0.00
Supplies for Resale	\$1,403.64
Telephone or Other Utilities	\$0.00
Travel/Lodging/Mileage/Registration/Meals	\$4,758.76
Workshop/Field Day Expense	\$2,467.24
Other Disbursements (<i>Tree Sale Expenses</i>)	\$9,179.31
Other Disbursements (<i>Credit Card Fee-Square</i>)	\$163.16
Other Disbursements (<i>Transfer from 2016 CWI Grant Account to General Funds</i>)	\$8,631.14
Other Disbursements (<i>Other Supplies</i>)	\$1,023.29
Total General Government Disbursements	\$41,446.54
Sub-Total (before investment activity)	\$41,446.54
Purchase of Investments (CDs saving accounts, transfers)	\$0.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS (disbursements + investments)	\$41,446.54
BALANCE AT DECEMBER 31	\$61,789.86
CLAIMS PAID BY COUNTY	
Salaries	\$169,974.04
Fringe	\$97,138.31
Other	\$90,156.11
INVESTMENT INVENTORY	
Beginning Investments	\$70,280.15
Ending Investments	\$70,420.89
Change (+/-)	\$140.74
CASH BOXES	
Petty Cash	\$0.00
Cash Change	\$35.00

SWCD – NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

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

Ph: (574) 533-4383, ext. 3

www.elkcoswcd.org

Board of Supervisors:

Tom Kercher, Chairman Alex Wait, Vice Chairman
Dale Leer Dean Rink Darrell Shover

Associate Supervisors:

David Bontrager Joe Brown Brian Campbell
Gary Kauffman Keith E. Miller

SWCD Staff:

James Hess, District Manager
Jenna Wait, Conservationist
Lora L. Atkins, Secretary/Treasurer

NRCS Staff:

Amanda Kautz, District Conservationist

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Staff:

Claire Larson, County Executive Director
Jenny Brosius, Program Technician, Angi Keim, Program Technician

Elkhart County Purdue Extension Staff:

Robert Kelly, County Extension Director; Nancy Borkholder, Secretary;
Jeff Burbrink, Extension Educator; Brandy Cavanagh, Office Manager;
Jennifer Fink, Secretary; Sthele Greybar, Extension Educator;
Mary Ann Leinhart-Cross, Extension Educator;
Susan Stine, Secretary



Top Row left to right: Amanda Kautz, Lora L. Atkins
Bottom Row Left to Right: Jim Hess, Jenna Wait



Top Row left to right: Darrell Shover, Tom Kercher,
Alex Wait
Bottom Row Left to Right: Dean Rink, Keith Miller,
Dale Leer

Thank you all who made 2019 a SUCCESS!



2019 Affiliate Members

Aquatic Weed Control	Hilbish, Norma	Pine Crest Farms, Inc.
B & A Reed Farms, LLC	Hinds, Mike *	Rink, Dean & Kate
Blough, Michelle	Sunrise Orchards, Inc.	Snider, Rich & Sue
Bontrager, David	Kuert Concrete, Inc. (Steve Fidler) *	Stroup, Martin & Penny
Brookview Farms	Lar-Lee Farms	Sweet Corn Charlie Produce, LLC (Chuck & Tami Mohler) *
Brown, Joe & Nancy	Leer, Dale & Ruby	Teall Tax Service
Burtsfield & Erb Farms, LLC	Lo-Ke Dairy	The Farmer's Exchange (Matt Yeater) *
Crop Tech, Inc.	Loucks, Lynn & Carol	Wait, Jack & Nancy
D2 Land & Water Resource	Marbach, Brady, Weaver, Inc. (Chris F. Marbach) *	Wakarusa Sawmill, Inc.
Elkhart County Farm Bureau, Inc (John Newsome) *	Morehouse Grain Farms, LLC	Wenger, Tina
Garber, James & Peggy	Neff, David & Luann	Weybright, Garry & Linda
Groff, Nancy	Neff, Mike & Annette	Zell, Bob & Laura
Hibschman, Joe & Donna	Perry, Tom & Gina Mazzaferri	* Second Tier/Business Membership

There is still time to renew your membership for 2020, or to become a new supporter of conservation in Elkhart County. The Elkhart County SWCD is again offering two tiers of Affiliate Membership. The first tier or individual membership is an annual donation of \$25 or more. Your membership will be recognized at least twice a year in our monthly newsletter *Grass Roots*. The second tier or business membership guarantees at least two business card sized ads in our monthly newsletter *Grass Roots* and recognition at our Annual Meeting by way of a slide show. Second tier membership has an annual donation of \$125 or more.

If you wish to become an Affiliate Member, you can mail a check or money order to: Elkhart County SWCD, 17746 County Road 34, Ste B, Goshen, IN 46528. Be sure to include your name as you would like it to appear in the upcoming editions of *Grass Roots*, and your full mailing address. For further information, contact the SWCD office at (574) 533-4383, extension 3.

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.

Thank You

