



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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YOUR PATH TO TOTALITY

Well, I hope everyone enjoyed the 2024 solar eclipse last week and has many stories to share. It is always neat to listen to all the people talk about their experiences of past solar eclipses and where they were. Honestly, the one I remember the most was in the 5th grade at Harrison Elementary school; we made our viewer and stood around the back of the school. Not sure why I can remember that one so well, but Mrs. Weaver wanted us to be able to see it and remember it, and that I did. The other thing that I remembered was the importance of our solar system. I got to see it in action, reminding me that all this stuff does things for a reason; it is part of the system.

Not sure I have heard the word “totality” more than just a few times before last week, but that’s all I have running through my head: “Totality.” Reminds me of the ad for New Paris Speedway, “Night of Destruction,” “Path of Totality.” So now I take my conservation thoughts and add in the word “totality.” I then add in the word “system,” “Conservation Totality System.”

We have been putting pieces of conservation together for years, and they all work, but what would happen if we took all our pieces and put them into a system, “your system?” Creating your own “Conservation Totality System.” I believe that’s where we are missing out and not taking full advantage of our efforts. We tend to piece things together (tape, baler twine, wire, etc.) create a system that works for you, create the full system. Your system should help you walk with your chin up and chest out, be proud, and most of all, smile. Even if that conservation totality system has a flaw, you figure out what needs to be done differently or what needs to be added into the system. One thing to always remember is you are not alone; there are many partners out there to help educate and network with. We are all working towards a strong “Conservation Totality System” because what else can you do that positively affects an entire community and more for generations.

We have spent the last couple of years putting together pieces of educational events and information for you to take and use, or if nothing else, create thought. I have brought in speakers like Ray Archuleta, Jason Mauck, Dan Towery, and many others to inspire, provoke, and stimulate thought. Each of these speakers has given examples of their work, and many of you have used those ideas to piece together your system. The SWCD and all its partners are going to keep putting together information for you to use and keep striving towards a successful “Conservation Totality System.”

Rain Garden & Rain Barrel Workshops

~ Informational Sessions ~

April 23rd & April 30th, 2024

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Elkhart Environmental Center | 1717 E. Lusher Ave, Elkhart

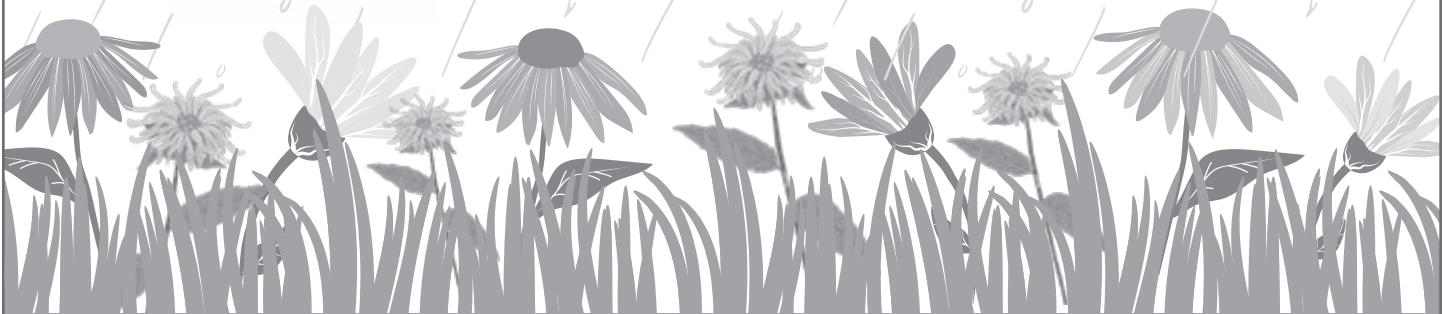
FREE Workshop!

Learn all about installing and maintaining rain gardens and rain barrels at this informational workshop in April! Elkhart Soil and Water Conservation District will be hosting this session about conserving water in your own yard from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM at the EEC on two separate nights: April 23rd and April 30th (guests only need to register for ONE evening).



For additional details and to register, scan the QR code or visit elkhart-environmental-center.ticketleap.com

Advance registration required



BLOGGING BMP'S

A monthly Blog discussing the Best Management Practices (BMP's) that must be used to aid in erosion and sediment control.

Welcome back to another edition of Blogging BMPs! Today, I would like to discuss the very first step of any project that disturbs more than 1 acre here in Elkhart County, and that is the process of obtaining permit coverage and what purpose this information serves when it comes to your jobsite.

Before I get into the meat of this particular blog, the first thing that needs to be pointed out if you didn't already know, is that the original Stormwater program operated under Indiana Administrative Code (327 IAC 15-5 or Rule 5). As of December 18, 2021, the permitting coverage is now issued under the Construction Stormwater General Permit or CSGP. The CSGP is a performance-based regulation designed to reduce pollutants that are associated with construction and/or land-disturbing activities. In other words, Rule 5 is no longer a thing.

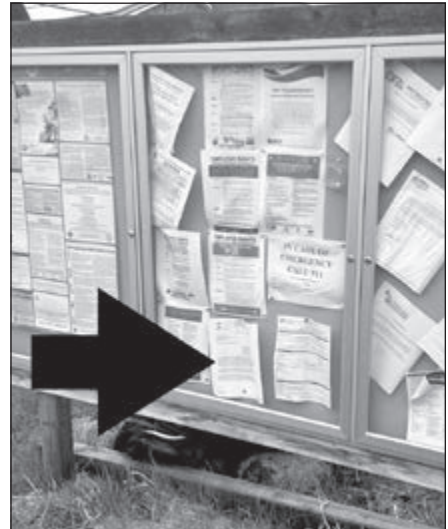
When considering your permit, make sure to understand the many requirements that go with it, to include how the physical document itself should be obtained and posted. This is not a comprehensive breakdown of this process, but it is some of the often overlooked aspects of the permitting process that should be brought to light.



**Notice of Sufficiency
at project entrance**



**Notice of Sufficiency
in document box**



**Notice of Sufficiency
on project job board**

- **A public notice is mandatory prior to filing for permit coverage. This can be done in 3 ways. More information on this can be found in the NOI section of the SWCD website. Please scan the QR.**
 1. A notice posted at the job site 10 days prior to the submittal of your Notice of Intent to IDEM.
 2. A notice published in a local newspaper in the public notices section of the classifieds.
 3. A notice posted on a public website for ten days prior to submittal of your Notice of Intent to IDEM.
- **Your Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan or SWPPP needs to be reviewed and approved by both the Elkhart County SWCD and the local permitting authority (Goshen, Elkhart, Bristol, Elkhart County MS4, Nappanee) prior to requesting permit coverage from IDEM.**
 1. The process is available on our website
<https://www.elkcoswcd.org/rule-5-2/compliance-process-for-elkhart-county/>
or scan the QR code.
 2. It is not required, but it is highly encouraged, that a certified professional prepare your SWPPP for you to expedite the process.



(Continued on page 4)

BLOGGING BMP'S

(Continued from page 3)

- **Once your SWPPP is approved by the SWCD and local authority, you must submit your Notice of Intent, or NOI documents to IDEM to obtain permit coverage.**
 1. This is done through the IDEM regulatory e-portal system online.
 2. IDEM will inform you when the permit is approved and send you a Notice of Sufficiency Document to post on site.
 3. The SWCD will notify you when you are able to move earth, which is 48 hours after submitting for coverage on the regulatory e-portal.

When you receive the Notice of Sufficiency document from IDEM, this should be posted at the entrance of your project until it is complete and the SWCD has notified you that the project is terminated. Please see the examples provided for ways to properly display your permit. Some simple ways to do so include, but are not limited to posting on a job board next to a building permit, in a document box, in the window of a job trailer, attached to the fence at the construction entrance or in the window of a completed building. The most important thing is that it is posted in a location that is visible to the general public and easily accessed by the regulatory authorities.

To bring it back to the purpose of the NOI and making sure it is posted has to do with being transparent in what you are doing on your project and making available the information to the general public as required by the Freedom of Information Act. Contact information should be legible on the document and include the owner of the project, the plan preparer, and the local authority that approved the project and any contact information associated with these individuals.

For more information on the CSGP and the compliance process for Elkhart County, please visit our website as previously referenced in this article or email me at tclark@elkhartcounty.com and I will answer any questions you may have.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April

23rd Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Workshop:
Elkhart Environmental Center,
1717 Lusher Ave. Elkhart, visit our
website at www.elkcoswcd.org to register.

24th-26th IDNR State Tree Pick up:
We will be picking up the IDNR State Tree
orders, then the participants will pick
their orders up at our office, from
April 24th through April 26th during
normal business hours, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

30th Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Workshop:
Elkhart Environmental Center,
1717 Lusher Ave. Elkhart, visit our
website at www.elkcoswcd.org to register.

May

20th SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM,
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

21st Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Workshop:
Elkhart Environmental Center,
1717 Lusher Ave., Elkhart, visit our
website at www.elkcoswcd.org to register.

27th Memorial day Holiday: The SWCD Office
will be closed for the *Holiday* observed.

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

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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.