

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE YOUR AD OR BUSINESS CARD HERE? YOU CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN!

The second tier/business membership has an annual donation of \$125.00 or more. Second tier 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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- December 21 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, New SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart
- December 24-25 Christmas Holiday:** The SWCD Offices will be closed for the Christmas Holiday
- January 1, 2021 New Year's Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed for the New Year's Holiday.
- January 18, 2021 Martin Luther King, Jr Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed for the New Year's Holiday.
- January 25, 2021 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, New SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart
- February 22, 2021 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, New SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517
Ph. (574) 523-2030
www.elkcoswcd.org

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SWCD Staff:

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

NRCS Staff:

Wes Krug, District Conservationist

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.



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517 ~ Phone: (574) 523-2030 – jhess@elkhartcounty.com



hab·i·tat

Noun: The natural home or environment of an animal, plant, or other organism. We may very well be a pack of wild animals. Some might even say we are feral. We are whatever you want to call us, but now, at long last, we are in our environment.

NEW SWCD Habitat

2020 has been an epic roller coaster of a year and through it all the Elkhart Co. SWCD has somehow managed to move. YEP, we moved! We have been talking about this huge change for some time now but it actually happened the week after Thanksgiving.

You should know that this decision was not taken lightly. A tremendous amount of thought and homework went in to making this event happen. While going through the 75 plus years of photos, books and literature that are housed at the SWCD, we were delighted to find a rich history of great people that put their hearts and souls into the many conservation programs that make this county so great. This year we have reminisced about all those people and memories that put the SWCD and its programs where it is today. I am hoping that the next wave of land stewards can look back through what we have achieved and feel the same motivation and pride that we do knowing that we are filling such big footsteps. This habitat will make all of those people and programs a great home.

To my girls yes, we did use our surroundings. Many thanks go out to all of the board members, local staff personnel, County officials, and fair board. Those individuals had to make some difficult decisions but now know the positives definitely outweigh the negatives. We have the opportunity to not only call our office "ours" but also call it "yours". You are the local individuals that make the programs grow and build off of. The SWCD will continue to offer great programs that reflect what you, the community, will use and make wise decisions to be good stewards of the land. When this office came available thanks to John Bowers, Elkhart County landfill manager, we had an opportunity to be wise stewards and take advantage of what was before us. The future growth and opportunities are endless at the new location.

I wish I could say come on over and see us but right now that is not in the best interest of keeping everyone safe. It is our belief that in time that will happen and we will share our new habitat with anyone who cares enough to be a part of it. In the meantime, keep watching and reading our Grass Roots newsletter, the web page and our Facebook page.



Elkhart County SWCD

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517 • 574-523-2030 • latkins@elkhartcounty.com

BLOGGING BMP'S

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

WHOA THERE, CAT! I DON'T NEED ANY MORE SALT IN MY DIET!



And just like that, it's December! I am pretty sure most of you will agree with me when I tell 2020 "don't let the doorknob hit ya where the good lord split ya!"

And as we move along from this year of uncertainty, one thing will invariably remain the same, Mother Nature. She will bring in some cold weather, a few snow systems, some freezing rain, lake effect snow and melt it all in one day. She is a very busy woman in the winter months dumping an average of 55 inches of snow in Elkhart County. That snow will hang around and make every-

thing absolutely beautiful for a day or two. Facebook and Instagram will light up with photos of snowmen and children dressed in their winter's best outfits. It is almost magical... until you drive.

There are more than 1,700 total miles of roadway in Elkhart county. These roads are diligently monitored by the city and highway departments to ensure they are safe for all of us to continue our daily lives with very little slow down. That is the good thing. What we should all put some thought into is the more than 9,000 tons of salt that is used to help melt the ice to keeping the traffic moving. Why do I bring up salt you ask? When the snow melts, it does the same thing that rain does, goes into the many waterways and wetlands that cover our county. The water that doesn't make it to the waterways infiltrates the ground or evaporates leaving all of the salt behind to remain in the soil.

I could go on and on about the negative effects that salt has on the local environment, and if you would like to get some ideas of how you can help protect our waterways from road salt or any other contaminants, go to <https://www.in.gov/idem/cleanwater>. My suggestions are really more about your own sidewalks and driveways and alternative ways keep them safe for you and your family.

1. Use something that will provide traction rather than melt the ice. Sand, kitty litter, and ash will all work. Just remember that these items are not necessarily good if you live near a ditch or creek as they may clog and contaminate waterways.

2. Alfalfa meal is a natural fertilizer that will melt ice while also providing traction. This will have zero negative effect on the environment, but realize you need the MEAL sold in garden centers, not pellets sold in feed stores.

3. And the most environmentally friendly option, get a good old snow shovel and some boots with traction and get out there and remove the snow and ice with man power.

When you think about ways of removing ice and snow, PAWS for a minute, and at least consider some different options. Your human family (and animal family) will appreciate it. Until next month, stay well and Happy Holidays!



A Big THANKS TO Our

2020 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Aquatic Weed Control (Jim Donahoe)
B & A Reed Farms, LLC (Brent & Ashley Reed)
Bontrager, David
Brookview Farms Partnership (Richard Brookins)
Brown, Joe & Nancy
Burtsfield & Erb Farms, LLC (Rick & Jill Erb)
D2 Land & Water Resource (Al McAuliffe)
Elkhart County Farm Bureau, Inc (Lynn Loucks)*
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Wait, Jack & Nancy
Wakarusa Sawmill, Inc. (Steve & Annette Brown)
Wenger, Tina
Weybright, Garry & Linda
Woodsbrook Farm (Blough, Michelle)
Zell, Bob & Laura

* Second Tier/Business Membership

There is still time to renew your membership for 2021, 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, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517. 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 new SWCD office at (574) 523-2030.