



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

17746 County Rd. 34, Ste. B ~ Goshen, IN 46528 ~ Phone: (574) 533-4383 ext. 3 – jhess@elkhartcounty.com

Welcome, Todd

Hello! My name is Todd Clark and I am the new Conservationist for the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District. I was raised in the Wakarusa area where my uncle's family has farmed for over 100 years. My father helped farm in the summers and on the weekends giving me exposure to livestock and small animals. I was a member at the Elkhart county fair and showed both steers and hogs until I attended college. Growing up in farm country taught me the importance maintaining soil and water health for crop production as well as the dedication that it takes to care for animals 365 days a year.



As I transitioned into my professional career, I graduated from Indiana University, Purdue University at Indianapolis (IUPUI) with a BS in General Studies and a double minor in Psychology and Management Science. My life path led me to the Dallas, Texas area where I managed and trained for two major companies, The Home Depot and The Finish Line where I trained new store managers. After 17 years in Texas, my Indiana roots called me back and I left the corporate world behind and returned home to farm. For the last four years I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from the same uncle that my father worked for all those years ago.

I have a wife, Krystal and 4 children Peyton 17, Hallie 14, Kinslee 4 and Karlee 2, that fill my heart with joy every day. We enjoy traveling together and have a particular fondness for Disney World and the beach. Our best days are spent outside hiking in the woods or chasing around the cats, dogs and chickens we have at home.

As your Elkhart County SWCD Conservationist I will be reviewing all Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP's) submitted in Elkhart county as well as assisting my colleagues with all the other services we have to offer. I cannot wait to combine my three strengths, farming, education, and management to provide quality service for my community. I look forward to meeting you and spreading the word about soil conservation!

2020 ELKHART COUNTY INDIANA MASTER NATURALIST PROGRAM

An introductory program of nature discovery and service learning for adults brought to you by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)

Weekly classes every Thursday • 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

REQUIREMENTS

- Be at least 18 years old
- Attend at least 8 classes
- Submit registration form to the Elkhart County SWCD
- Complete final open book quiz
- Pay class fee of \$175 once registration is confirmed
- Complete 24 hours of volunteer service

For More Information: visit www.elkcoswcd.org

To register: call 574-533-4383 ext. 3

Or email: jwait@elkhartcounty.com

**REGISTRATION ENDS
APRIL 3, 2020**

15th Annual Elkhart County SWCD/Michiana Master Gardener Tree Seedling Sale

Last chance to purchase seedlings this year: available while supplies last!!!

Saturday, April 18, 2020 • 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds - Sheep/Swine Arena

Quality 10" - 24" Seedlings • Featuring Native Indiana & Adapted Species

American Arborvitae*	\$26.00	Eastern White Pine*#	\$22.00	White Flowering Dogwood*	\$22.00
American Beech*	\$28.00	Hackberry	\$22.00	White Oak	\$20.00
American Plum*	\$18.00	Northern Red Oak	\$20.00	Winterberry	\$30.00
Black Maple	\$26.00	Norway Spruce	\$22.00	# Variety Pack - 1 each	\$20.00
Eastern Redbud*	\$22.00	Tulip Poplar*	\$18.00		

** Native to Indiana*

Beautify Your Landscape - Go Green for less!

For more information: Call the Elkhart County SWCD at: (574) 533-4383, ext 3



TEMPORARY GRAVEL CONSTRUCTION ENTRANCE

Purpose: The purpose of the temporary gravel construction entrance is to provide ingress and egress to a construction site and minimize tracking of mud and sediment onto public roadways.

Specifications: The entrance must be placed to avoid steep slopes, blind spots, or curves on public roads. Gravel entrances for real estate under 2 acres must be 20 feet wide by 50 feet long. Gravel entrances for real estate over 2 acres must be 20 feet wide by 150 feet long. The entrance must be a minimum of 6 inches thick.

Materials: Utilize INDOT CA No. 2 aggregate for the base. Utilize INDOT CA No. 53 washed aggregate for a 2-inch-thick top-dress. Geotextile fabric must be used as a separation layer between the underlying soil materials and the added aggregate to prevent intermixing of aggregate and the underlying soil material.

Installation: Remove all vegetation and other objectionable material from the foundation area and grade the foundation and crown for positive drainage. If longitudinal slope is in excess of 2%, construct a water bar (ridge) approximately 15 feet from the entrance to divert runoff away from the road. Install a pipe under the pad to maintain proper public road drainage if necessary. If wet conditions are anticipated, place geotextile fabric on the graded foundation to improve stability. Place aggregate to proper dimensions and grade as shown on the erosion control plan. Leave the surface smooth and sloped for drainage. Top-dress the drive with INDOT CA No. 53 washed aggregate. Divert all surface runoff and drainage from the stone pad to a sediment trap or basin.

Maintenance: Inspect daily and after each storm event exceeding half an inch or heavy use. Reshape the pad and top-dress as needed for drainage and runoff control. Immediately remove mud and sediment tracked or washed onto public roads by brushing or sweeping. Flushing can only be used if the water is conveyed to a sediment trap or basin or vacuumed up.

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Brighter Future in our Community”



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YOUR WORMS VIEW OF COMPACTION

Mr. Farmer check your soil in a manner similar to myself. Stop the tractor, use a shovel, and dig! As you are observing, ask yourself the following questions. Is your soil filled with pore space from roots and worms? Does the soil crumble easily? Is there residue (food) on the surface for me and my night crawler friends? Is the soil dark with organic matter? Is crop growth even? Are your corn roots reaching to the row center and growing deep? If you answer no to any of these questions based on your shovel full of soil, you might have a compaction problem.

Next compare soil color and structure to soil in the fence row or field perimeter. Which soil is more conducive to root development, i.e. which soil has more pore space and higher organic content? If the answer is the fence row, think about what the differences are between the management of the two. Fence rows tend to have a high diversity of plants and have something growing nearly year-round. Pull or dig up a plant with a tap root, such as pigweed, velvet leaf, or soybean. Does the root go straight down, or does it have horizontal growth indicating that it found a hard compacted layer in the soil? Also think about your fertilizer usage. If planting into wet soil and hard clay ground is likely, was a complete starter fertilizer used? On

the reverse, are you using nitrogen to excess and burning off organic matter?

Now to the quickest way you can minimize compaction. As I communicate with other worms in the basement of your various fields, the question is often asked, "Why do some farmers make only three trips across the field (plant, spray, and harvest) while other fields have five or more trips?" The machines today are heavy and can damage or collapse my burrow. And to the farmer using a tractor three times the weight and power needed for the given field operation, oh my what a compression headache! Is a tram line or controlled traffic pattern a fit for your farm? Using controlled traffic will limit compaction from your equipment to one area of the field, leaving the rest of the field for me and my friends to burrow in without fear of collapse!

From the Underground Web: To compact is to press together and to make solid or dense. Soil compaction also has a biological component to it. "While a number of factors contribute to compaction, such as farm machinery weight and traffic, rain, and tillage, it is fundamentally a biological problem caused by a lack of actively growing plants and active roots in the soil." – Jim Hoorman, "The Biology of Soil Compaction," Crops and Soil Magazine: July-August 2011.

A copy of this publication is available in the SWCD office or online at <https://bit.ly/2YEmwF9> if you are interested in reading more.

2020 EQIP

Application Deadline March 27th, 2020!

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is a competitive, voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers and landowners. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve soil health, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat. Many applicants are most interested in using funds to address soil erosion and water quality concerns on their land; however, funds are also available for pasture, forestry management, confined livestock operations, organic producers, high tunnels, and wildlife habitat. Examples of conservation practices cost shared include:

- Cover Crops
- No-Till/Strip Till/Reduced Till
- Nutrient and Pest Management Plans
- Grassed Waterway
- Rotational Grazing
- Waterline & Livestock Waterers (for pasture)
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Invasive Species Management
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Pollinator Habitat
- Tree/Shrub Plantings
- And many others!

NRCS will work with applicants to determine eligibility and complete necessary worksheets and rankings for the applicant to complete for funding. Part of the application process will include a field visit with staff to the area of concern/where you want to install a conservation practice. If you are interested in applying for EQIP or have more questions please contact Amanda Kautz, District Conservationist, at 574-533-4383 Ext. 3. All applications received by March 27th will be eligible to be considered for 2020 funding. More information about EQIP and other technical and financial assistance available through Indiana NRCS conservation programs, visit: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/>.

Q. Can I seed my cover crop into my cash crop (corn/soybeans) earlier in the fall? Can I interseed my cover crop even earlier in the season?



Send your questions to
Walden the Worm

The "Dear Abby" of conservation farming!

A. Walden here. The short answer to both questions is yes. For corn and soybeans, cover crop seed can be aerial seeded (flown on) early in the fall. Moisture and rain will be the key for success since the seed will not be put into the soil, but on top of it. However, this will work more often than fail and is worth the risk. To increase your chances of a successful stand, species need to be selected for their ability to grow with little seed to soil contact. Common aerial applied cover crops include cereal rye, oats, annual ryegrass, and oilseed radish. Seeds larger than oilseed radish (about BB size) will not be effective in an aerial seeding, as they require a higher amount of seed to soil contact to successfully establish. If using residual herbicides, you must read label to find the ideal time to plant your cover crop. If your seed is planted before your residual is gone, your cover crop will not germinate, no matter how perfect the conditions!

Soybeans can easily have cover crops seeded into them with ground equipment. A high crop tractor equipped with tall narrow tires will go between 15" to 30" row beans. A seeder could be shop built to seed into soil with very little damage to bean plants. You will need to be sober to pull this together. . .in other words you need to drive in a straight line while seeding! Seed no earlier than first sign of leaf yellowing or the risk of cutting lush, green, wet and sticky cover crop with the beans is a real possibility. I love the sound of a large combine driving a slow pace and the chug, chug, bang, of green bunches of material going through the combine. That sound means lots of food for me and my family come fall.

Round up or Liberty corn can be seeded after last herbicide spray with ground equipment. There is wide window to seed, depending on how tall you want the corn to be. Seed at V3 to V6, possibly V7 if you want to seed later in the season. For organic corn cover crop seed could be broadcast ahead of the last cultivation. There are some high clearance (also called high boy) seeders to achieve this, such as the Penn State seeder. A simple seeder could be shop built as well out of an old sprayer or detassler. In order to seed earlier in the season where the crop will eventually canopy over your cover crop, the cover crop needs to be more tolerant of shade. Some shade tolerant species include, brassicas, red clover, and annual rye grass.

Also consider other reasons and options to make earlier seeded cover crops fit your operation. Do you have a great need for fall pasture? Would wide row corn or a lower population be a fit for you? Most likely some corn yield would be given up in this scenario, but the soil health benefits may outweigh any yield loss. Keep in mind as corn yields reach or pass 200 bushel per acre shading will often be a real issue for cover crop establishment and survival. To sum up, the possibilities do have merit and reward, but a win is not a given. It takes practice, time, and effort to be successful at interseeding cover crops.

Until next month,

— *Walden*

Upcoming Events!

- Mar. 27 EQIP Application Deadline:** See Amanda Kautz with Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) for more details, or page 3 more information.
- Apr. 10 Good Friday Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed for the Good Friday Holiday
- Apr. 18 2020 Tree Sale & Order Pick Up:** 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. at the Sheep/Swine Arena at the Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds. Make sure you bring your Confirmation sheet with you when you come to pick up your order, we will have extra trees in 5 packs only in case you didn't order everything you wanted when you sent in your order
- Apr. 20 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m., SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen
- May 18 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m., SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen
- May 25 Memorial Day Holiday:** The SWCD & NRCS Offices will be closed for the Memorial Day Holiday
- Jun. 15 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m., SWCD Office, Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds, Goshen
- Jul. 15 Crop Certification Deadline:** See Farm Service Agency (FSA) with any questions.

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

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www.elkcoswcd.org

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