



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence

Governor Holcomb honored the Elkhart County SWCD with the Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Land Use\Conservation, this past month. In 2017 the SWCD created a program the Storm Water Alliance Program (SWAMP) which is a cost-share program that covers up to 75% of the total cost of each approved project. SWAMP covers six best management practices (BMPs) that benefit not only the land users, but Elkhart County as well through increased water quality. The six BMPs included in the program are blind inlets, cover crops, filter strips, grade stabilization structures, grassed waterways, and exclusion fencing. Since the beginning of the project, the number of participants in the SWAMP program has increased from seven in 2017 to 68 in 2019. Since the program's inception, SWAMP has prevented a total of 20,373 tons of soil from entering local waterways, saved \$42,783 in total on-farm nutrient benefit, and saved a total of \$100,438 in total off-farm water quality benefit.

When I was notified, even as I was receiving the award, I was reminded of the many people that it takes to pull off this kind of thing. From the SWCD supervisors to the drainage board and stormwater board, the look of excitement on the faces of local entities is something I will always remember from when SWAMP first began. I have to thank our County Surveyor Phil Barker for having some faith in me and the SWAMP program. Through this program, many county departments have been brought together to achieve a common goal: clean water.



As I was sitting in the Governor's office discussing the program with him, my mind was racing with all sorts of ideas. In 1941 do you think Bernard Myers and Harry S. Eby thought one day Elkhart County SWCD would be discussing local conservation to the Governor? I do, I think they did or they wouldn't have started all this in the first place. I am constantly drawn back to the SWCD mission statement: "to assist land users and other agencies in the wise use of natural resources in Elkhart County". My grandpa always told me, "You will never know if you don't try it". Now, I always tell my daughters, "Use your surroundings".

A couple of years ago at the annual meeting I stood up and told all of you, the land users, "YOU DID IT". You are the ones putting conservation on the ground, you are the good stewards of this land. The SWCD will continue to build simple, common sense, conservation programs that fill the gap. You have proven that you will put them into practice. Thank you for using a locally owned and operated conservation program and making it yours. Governor Holcomb asked me, "Why do you think Elkhart County land users put conservation into practice?" My response was "because it is the right thing to do".

If you would like to see a video of local land users talk about the SWAMP program please see the video at this link: https://youtu.be/y_twH5uYHBU

Thank you,

IMN Class of 2020 Points to the Future!



Congratulations to the Elkhart County Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) class of 2020! They have successfully completed the IMN course and they are well on their way to becoming certified Indiana Master Naturalists. It is the mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils and wildlife and promote volunteer service in local communities.

A typical IMN course will include:

- A total of 24 hours of class time
- Lots of hands-on opportunities

- Speakers from a variety of backgrounds in natural resources
- Class material organized in binders
- Quality reference materials
- Endless connections to nature and like-minded people

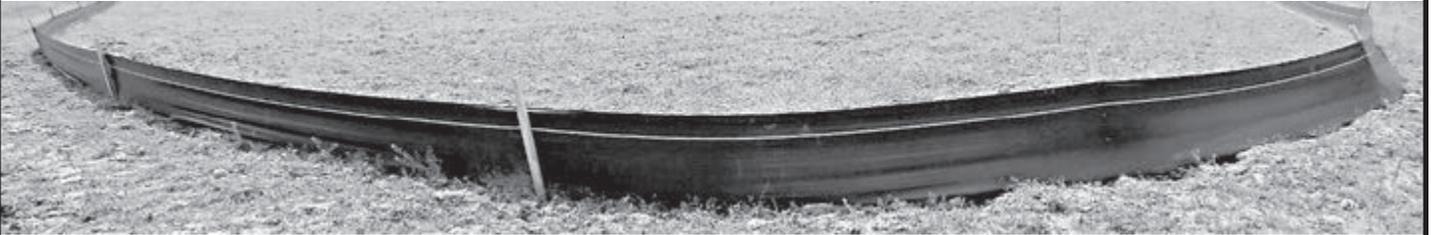
Does this sound like something you want to do? Sign up for our email list to be one of the first to know when the next class is scheduled. Email Jenna Wait at jwait@elkhartcounty.com for any questions or to sign up.

"I was informed and surprised on multiple subjects, even subjects I have studied before." —2020 IMN student



BLOGGING BMP'S

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



Ah yes, the urban pop up mountain that we in the conservation world refer to as a “soil stockpile”. They are so majestic, often towering over buildings and trees and are visible from miles around. These piles of earth are glorious examples of how man is able to manipulate the soil and build structures that help move people and their businesses into the future. Conservation cat is seen here working away on a stockpile as we speak. Let’s hope he does the right thing!

So what happens to these monster piles of dirt and rock when the project is over? It all has to go somewhere, right? The truth is, not all soil stockpiles are able to be relocated, at least in a timely manner. Most of these piles are accounted for even before the soil is removed from the ground. The high quality soils are often trucked directly to a new location that is thankful for the fill dirt or topsoil that has come their way. Some stockpiles are only temporarily left on site as the job progresses and the soil is used to build up foundations and fill in holes left behind by the massive equipment it takes to move the earth. But a few stockpiles simply have no place to go. They just sit there in the sun of the summer and dry out and make a home for the occasional weed or two. Seems pretty harmless, wouldn’t you say? Well, not so much.

The best management practice for a soil stockpile is to make sure it is located away from natural or manmade stormwater systems, has perimeter protection around it, and is stabilized with seeding and some type of erosion control blanket if necessary. If left unmanaged, these mountains can shed soil and sediment at very high rate filling our waterways with unwanted pollutants. For more details on this and any other BMP we discuss, please visit our website <https://www.elkcoswcd.org/developers> where we have an extensive list of stabilization options.



Upcoming FSA Deadlines

October 13th: 2021 Dairy Margin Coverage Signup Begins

October 31st: Organic Cost Share Program Signup Deadline

November 11th: Office Closed for Veterans Day

November 26th: Office Closed for Thanksgiving

December 11th: Coronavirus Assistance Program 2 (CFAP2) Deadline

December 15th: Wheat Reporting Deadline

Never miss a deadline! Signup for text alerts by texting **INElkhart** to **372669**. No more than one text a month.

USDA Service Centers are open for business by phone appointment only. Please contact the Elkhart County FSA and NRCS service center by phone (574) 533-4383 ext. 2 to schedule time for program services or with any questions.

Have a safe harvest!

STORM WATER ALLIANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (SWAMP) PRICE LIST

Cost-share is available for the following Conservation practices:

Blind Inlets: \$59.00 per square foot

Cover Crops: \$30.00 per acre

Filter Strips: \$553.00 per acre

Grassed Waterway: \$2,350.00 per acre

If you have any questions about the Storm Water Alliance Management Program cost-share in Elkhart County or other conservation practices you want to implement on your land, don't hesitate to contact us!

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 19 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM,
New SWCD Office,
59358 County Road 7, Elkhart

November 11 Veteran's Day Holiday:
The SWCD & NRCS Offices will
be closed for Veteran's Day

November 16 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM,
New SWCD Office,
59358 County Road 7, Elkhart

November 26-27 Thanksgiving Holiday:
The SWCD & NRCS Offices will be
closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday

December 21 SWCD Board Meeting: 5:30 PM,
New SWCD Office,
59358 County Road 7, Elkhart

December 24-25 Christmas Holiday:
The SWCD & NRCS Offices will be
closed for the Christmas Holiday

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.