



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Elkhart County Farmer Receives Statewide ‘River-Friendly Farmer’ Award

In these days of water quality concerns, there are those that are utilizing conservation practices on their farms that are protecting waterways and water quality in Indiana and beyond. In Elkhart County, Kerchers Sunrise Orchard’s is among 48 farmers who received the statewide award of ‘River-Friendly Farmer’ at the Indiana State Fair. This award, hosted by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), recognizes landowners and farmers in the state of Indiana for the work they do on their land to protect Indiana’s natural resources.

The Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Kerchers Sunrise Orchard’s for the award based upon their farm management practices.

Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch addressed the recipients and their families at the event recognizing them for their implementation of conservation practices, like no-till and cover crops. Randy Kron, President of Indiana Farm Bureau, offered thanks and appreciation to these farmers and landowners who go the extra mile in protecting Indiana’s natural resources.

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. Since that date, Indiana has honored over 1,100 Indiana River Friendly Farms.

Thank You Kerchers Sunrise Orchard’s for all your conservation practices and stewardship in Elkhart County. Your efforts improve the water quality in our community and beyond.

For a complete list of this year’s winners go to: <http://wordpress.iaswcd.org/river-friendly-farmer-award/>.



FORESTRY FIELD DAY

OCTOBER 22, 2022 • 9 AM - 12 PM

Elkhart Community Schools ACCELL Farm

51242 Ash Rd. • Granger, IN 46530

Elkhart County & St. Joseph County SWCDs Present...

- Integrated approach to land management practices
- Mother Nature’s way of controlling invasive plants
- Field Borders for Agronomic, Economic and Wildlife Benefits

Setting the Space

One of my favorite activities to do with students is learning about water quality through macro invertebrates. The reaction students have to these cute little critters are often shrieks, screams, and “Oh cool! Look at this!” No one student reacts the same and it is so fun to watch how their reactions change over time as they dive deeper into the tubs of “macros”. The more they look, the more they find.

The SWCD recently had the pleasure of hosting a water quality station for Goshen Junior High School students at Shanklin Park. The students rotated through three stations: fish with Darragh Deegan (Aquatic Biologist), watersheds with Jason Kauffman (Stormwater Coordinator), and macro invertebrates with the SWCD staff. The goal of the field trip being that the students learned about water quality, the effects of pollution on the ecosystems, and making connections to the river that flows through the school’s backyard.

For our station to be successful, we had to setup the space for hands-on learning. We setup tables with tubs of river water and “critters” lined along the length of them. Next to each tub was an array of tools for the students to use to dig through the tubs and identify the things they found. The learning environment that we setup allowed the students to take learning into their own hands allowing them the freedom to explore. This is the fourth principle of Montessori teaching: the prepared environment. When students have a space setup with the appropriate tools, our teachings can be much more effective.



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BLOGGING BMP'S

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

Calling All Construction Project Site Owners!!

Do you have a project in Elkhart County that has disturbed at least 1 acre of ground?

Did you submit a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to the SWCD?

If so, and your project has been going on for the last year, there is a good chance you will be getting an email from our office reminding you to renew your project. It is also possible that you had an older project that was completed and should have been terminated, but for some reason was not. You may get an email too. Please take action if you get one of these emails! Even if it is just to reach out to me and figure out what the next steps are to get the project terminated or to find out what it is you need to do to keep the project in good status, I will be glad to help you through the process!

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2023 Tree Sale Showcase

Deciduous Trees



Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)

A versatile member of the white oak family, the burr oak grows well in both wet and dry soils. This oak matures to the 70 - 80 feet range and can produce an impressive spread to its canopy. Its distinctive acorn gives this tree its Latin name being the largest acorn of our native oaks. The fringe of coarse fibers around the edge of the acorn cap gives this tree its common name.



Northern Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)

The northern red oak has been called "one of the handsomest, cleanest, and stateliest trees in North America" by naturalist Joseph S. Illick, and it is widely considered a national treasure. It is especially valued for its adaptability and usefulness, including its hardiness in urban settings. This medium to large tree is also known for its brilliant fall color, great value to wildlife and status as the state tree of New Jersey. Whether you're selecting a tree to plant in your front yard or out on the farm, it's a fast-growing species worth keeping in mind.



Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

The native red maple is another one of those great four seasons tree. Its small red flowers are a real harbinger of spring and its silvery gray bark presents a nice contrast to the spring flowering bulbs. Its spreading canopy makes this tree a perennial shade favorite and its fall colors are striking. As well, its gray bark and classic shape make it a winter standout. Like all the maples, the red maple is a heavy drinker so plant this one where you can give it weekly watering during dry periods.

2023 Tree Sale Showcase

Evergreen Trees



Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

A native to the Pacific Northwest, the Douglas Fir can get very large and live a long time in its native range. Here in the Midwest, the Douglas Fir can reach 100 ft., half the size it can reach in the Northwest. This tree makes a wonderful Christmas tree so plant several and in a few years you can harvest your own!



Norway Spruce (*Picea abies*)

Norway spruce is a familiar sight in much of the United States, but it's really a tree of Europe. Throughout the globe, this tree has many uses including lumber, pulpwood, Christmas trees and landscape specimen trees. Its dense branching pattern and tolerance of soil variations has also made it a popular tree for windbreaks. If you have enough space and want to add a sense of formal dignity to your landscape, the Norway spruce will suit you well.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

October

22nd **Forestry Field Day:** 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM,
ACCELL Farm 51242 Ash Rd., Granger

November

11th **Veteran's Day Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed
for the *Veteran's Day Holiday*

21st **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM,
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

24th-25th **Thanksgiving Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed
for the *Thanksgiving Holiday*

December

19th **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM,
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

26th **Christmas Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed
for the *Christmas Day Holiday* being observed

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

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www.elkcoswcd.org

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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.