



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Pay Dirt IN-field Event Recap: A Success at the Hess Family Farm



Hess Family Farm during Pay Dirt IN-field

On August 22nd, the Hess Family Farm, located just outside of Goshen, Indiana, hosted the highly anticipated Pay Dirt IN-field event. Organized by local agricultural and environmental leaders, the event brought together a diverse audience, including farmers, conservationists, and stormwater professionals. The goal was to showcase innovative techniques and best management practices that address both agricultural productivity and environmental sustainability. With clear skies and a bustling lineup of activities, the event offered hands-on demonstrations and educational sessions throughout the day.

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Pay Dirt attendees get a close-up look at options for manure incorporation

Pay Dirt IN-field Event Recap

(Continued from page 1)

One of the key agricultural sessions, "Managing Your Manure Assets," was led by Melissa Lehman from Agronomic Solutions and Brook Wilke from Michigan State University's Kellogg Research Facility. They provided valuable insights into efficient manure management, emphasizing the importance of nutrient recycling in maintaining soil health. The session "Drone Features and Flights," presented by Clay Kusbach of Davey Resource Group, demonstrated how drones can be leveraged in precision agriculture, from crop monitoring to mapping field conditions, giving attendees a glimpse into the future of farm technology.

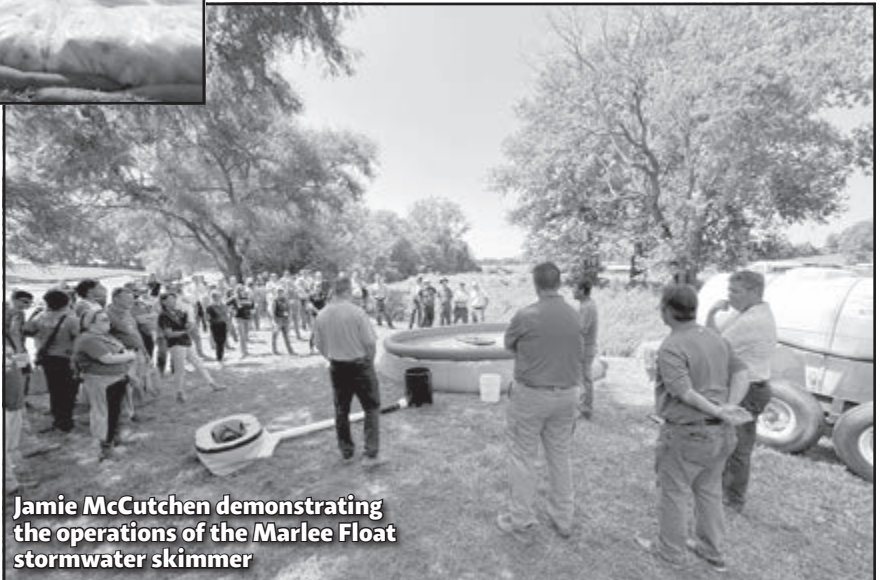


Representatives from Smith Ready Mix demonstrate the proper technique for washing out on a job site



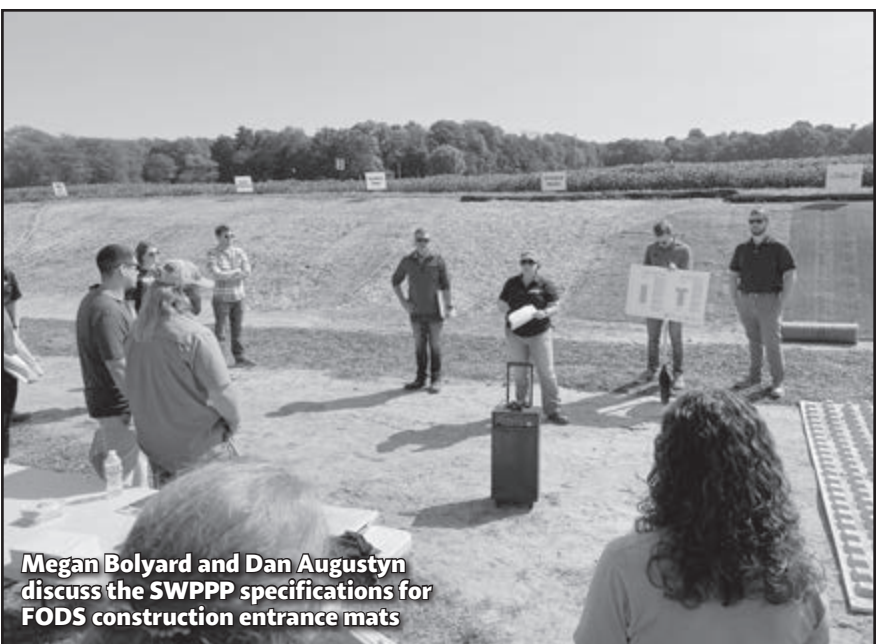
Davey Resource group demonstrating the drone seeding application

For stormwater professionals, the event featured demonstrations on best management practices aimed at reducing runoff and preventing pollution. The "Concrete Washout Demonstration," facilitated by the Indiana Ready Mix Concrete Association, Smith Ready Mix Concrete, and featuring concrete washout options provided by Erosion Control Solutions, LLC, showcased environmentally friendly ways to handle concrete waste on job sites. Another highlight was the "Stormwater Skimmer Demonstration" by Jamie McCutcheon of Ryamar Waterworks, offering practical solutions for reducing sedimentation and maintaining water quality in stormwater systems.



Jamie McCutchen demonstrating the operations of the Marlee Float stormwater skimmer

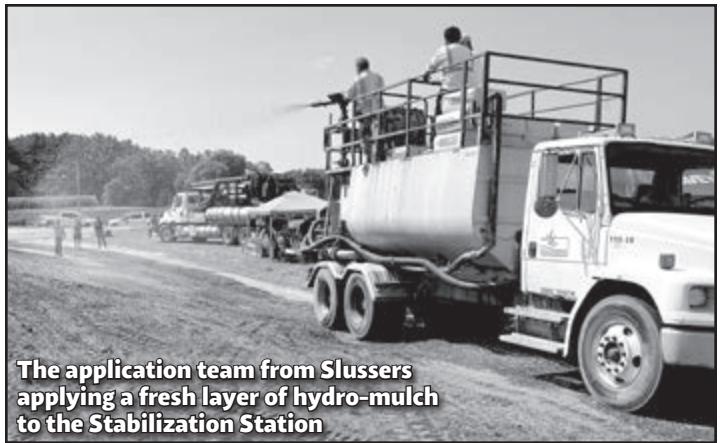
In addition to the hands-on demonstrations, the Pay Dirt IN-field event featured valuable sessions on stormwater management. Dan Augustyn from FODS presented "Stabilized Entrance Installation and Maintenance." This session highlighted how the use of advanced mat systems can reduce sediment tracking onto roads, a common issue at construction sites that contributes to water pollution. Megan Bolyard from BF&S Engineering led a session on "Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Preparation," guiding participants through the essential steps of developing an effective SWPPP. Bolyard's session emphasized regulatory compliance and the importance of proactive planning to mitigate stormwater runoff and protect water quality during construction activities. These sessions provided practical, field-based knowledge that reinforced the critical link between construction practices and environmental protection.



Megan Bolyard and Dan Augustyn discuss the SWPPP specifications for FODS construction entrance mats



Attendees listen in to Kevin Boyce at the Stabilization Station



The application team from Slussers applying a fresh layer of hydro-mulch to the Stabilization Station

Attendees also explored a 150-foot slope, the "Stabilization Station," which displayed 9 different methods of slope stabilization led by Ron Geator from Flexamat, Kevin Boyce from American Excelsior, and Tim Lancaster from Grassworx, LLC. This display offered practical, visual insights into erosion control strategies. The final touch on the station was a demonstration of hydro-seeding that was applied by Slussers Green Thumb, showcasing yet another option for bank stabilization.



Krista Daniels discussing the water quality impacts on macro invertebrates in the Yellow Creek



Daragh Deegan showing off one of the many fish species found in the St. Joseph River

Another highly informative session, "Permitting Beyond the SWPPP – Waterway, Floodway, and Wetland Permitting Q&A," brought together Allyson Oliger from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Janelle Kozelichki from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), Ryan Cassidy from the Army Corps of Engineers, and Steve Schweisberger from the Elkhart County Surveyors Office and Elkhart County Drainage Board. This panel discussion provided attendees with crucial clarification on the additional permits required when working in or near sensitive areas such as waterways, floodways, and wetlands. The session covered a range of regulatory challenges and highlighted the importance of compliance when engaging in construction or land development activities in these protected zones. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions directly to the representatives, gaining a better understanding of the permitting process and how to navigate these often-complex environmental regulations.

Wrapping up the event, the session "Macro Biology in the Yellow Creek," with Krista Daniels from the Elkhart County Parks Department and Daragh Deegan from the City of Elkhart Aquatic Biology Program, educated participants on how biological indicators in the water reflect environmental health, further highlighting the event's blend of agriculture and environmental stewardship.

The Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) extends heartfelt thanks to all who made the Pay Dirt IN-field event possible. Our deepest appreciation goes to the vendors, sponsors, and environmental partners whose support and participation were crucial to the event's success. We also want to acknowledge the Northwood High School FFA for their enthusiastic involvement and contribution. Special thanks to Dave and Diane Hess for graciously allowing us to use their beautiful property at the Hess Family Farm, providing the perfect setting for this informative and impactful event. Your commitment and support play a vital role in advancing our shared goals of environmental stewardship, sustainable agriculture, and water quality of life here in Elkhart County.

All photos were taken by Jason Kauffman, Jim Hess, David Chau, and Todd Clark

Storm Water Alliance Management Program (SWAMP)

Administered by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Elkhart County Surveyor.

What is the Storm Water Alliance Management Program?

The Storm Water Alliance Management Program (SWAMP) was established to provide financial assistance to landowners in order to implement conservation practices that reduce non-point source water pollution, especially sediment erosion, into waterways in Elkhart County.

SWAMP is a cost-share program assisting with up to 75% of the total cost of the project. Conservation practices implemented through the program must remain functional on the land for 5 years.

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
- Exclusion Fencing:** \$1.20 per foot

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!

Elkhart County SWCD

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Elkhart County Surveyor

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UPCOMING EVENTS

October

10th **Pasture Walk:** Jonathan Needham, Thursday 1:00 – 3:00 pm, 7775 N 575 E, Fremont, IN. **Topic:** Beef, sheep, poultry & small-scale hay operation.

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

November

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

18th **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

28th-29th **Thanksgiving Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be closed for the *Thanksgiving Holiday*

December

16th **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

24th-25th **Christmas Holiday:** The SWCD Office 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.