Conservation Quarterly

Fall 2017

CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SWCD Seeks Candidates for Supervisor Position

The Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District is looking for persons with an interest in natural resources management who would like to serve as a district official. Candidates are being sought for an elected seat on the district's five-member board of supervisors. Term of office runs from January 2018 through January 2021.

Clark County SWCD is a legal subdivision of state government responsible for the protection, conservation and wise use of the soil, water and related natural resources within the county. Working cooperatively with federal, state and local agencies and organizations, the district brings educational, technical and financial assistance to bear on the conservation problems of the county.

Activities of the district are directed by the five supervisors, three who are elected by the local landusers and two appointed by the State Soil Conservation Board. Meeting on the first Thursday of each month, the supervisors plan and oversee the efforts aimed at fulfilling the district's responsibilities, which include:

- Assessing natural resources management needs within the county;
- Developing and implementing policies and programs that address those assessed needs;
- Carrying out program initiative given to SWCDs by state and federal government (e.g., the review of farm conservation plans and construction site erosion/sediment control plans and the inspection of landfills for erosion control); and,
- Advising local government on natural resource management issues.

Candidates for Clark County SWCD's elected-supervisor position must be of voting age, must be an occupier of a tract of land located in Clark County, and must maintain permanent residence within the county. For more information about Clark County SWCD, its programs, supervisor duties and qualifications, or to register as a candidate, visit the district office at 9608 Highway 62, Charlestown, IN, or call 812-256-2330, ext.3. Deadline to register as a candidate is November 30, 2017.

SWCD Annual Meeting

The 73rd Annual Meeting of the Clark County Soil & Water Conservation District will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 25, 2018, in the Community Building on the Clark County 4-H Fairgrounds. Following a catered meal there will be a brief presentation, and an election of one member on the Board of Supervisors.

Dates to Note

- *10/5/17—SWCD Monthly Board meeting, 7:30 p.m.*
- *10/9/17—Columbus Day Holiday, SWCD office closed.*
- *11/2/17—SWCD Monthly Board meeting, 7:30 p.m.*
- *11/10/17—Veterans Day, SWCD office closed*
- *11/23-24/17—Thanksgiving Holiday, SWCD office closed*
- *12/7/17—SWCD Monthly board meeting, 7:30 p.m.*
- *12/25&26/17—Christmas Holiday, SWCD office closed*

Older Clark/Floyd County Plat Books are available from the SWCD office:

2009 edition—$15

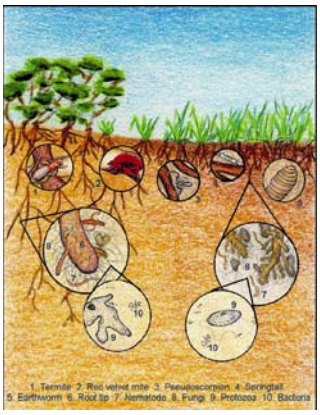
1998 edition—$5

Visit us Monday-Friday

8 a.m.-4 p.m. to purchase

Inside this issue:

Do You Know About Soil?

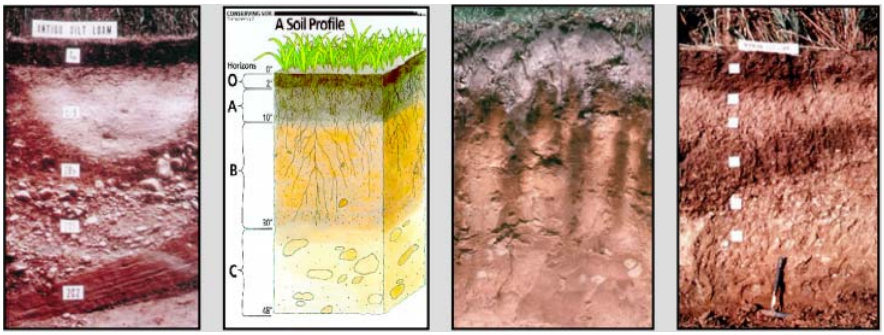


Soil is the basis of the ecosystem.
The living systems occurring above and below the ground surface are determined by the properties of the soil. We often ignore the soil because it is hard to observe.

Soils perform vital functions:

- Sustaining plant and animal life above and below the surface.
- Regulating and partitioning water and solute flow.
- Filtering, buffering, degrading, immobilizing, and detoxifying.
- Storing and cycling nutrients.

- Soils have unique physical, chemical, and biological properties important to their use: color, texture, structure, consistence, roots, pores, and other features.
- Soil is a natural body of solids, liquids, and gases, with either horizons or layers, or the ability to support rooted plants.
- Pedology, the study of soil, is a unique discipline.



Grazing Bites—*Victor Shelton, NRCS State Agronomist/Grazing*

Much of the tall fescue in Indiana is infected with an endophyte, a fungus that produces a toxic substance known as ergovaline; Kentucky 31 is no exception. The endophyte and ergovaline are responsible for reduced palatability of tall fescue especially when it is under stress. Fescue toxicosis is responsible for elevated body temperatures, restricted blood flow to extremities and poor animal performance.

Most people think that ergovaline doesn't pose a problem in stockpiled fescue because the ergovaline appears to concentrate in seed heads and stockpiled fescue is generally vegetative. The fact that livestock tend to eat stockpiled fescue better after a couple of hard frosts or freezes, suggests that there is still ergovaline present, reducing intake until after freezing conditions. Most studies have found that ergovaline content drops fairly fast after mid-December. Sadly, as long as endophyte infected tall fescue is growing, it probably is still producing some ergovaline. Long, warm falls can delay ergovaline reduction; earlier cold weather tends to prompt lower levels. So, the best time frame to utilize endophyte infected tall fescue is probably mid to late winter. Ergovaline in hay also reduces over time.

Good, improved varieties of tall fescue are available. Jesup MaxQ is one novel animal friendly endophyte variety. These endophyte friendly tall fescues provide increased average daily gains, good yields, and persistence even better than Kentucky 31. This was a huge improvement over low endophyte varieties that were not very persistent and were often quickly taken back over by old Kentucky 31.

In order to switch a dominantly endophyte infected tall fescue field to an endophyte friendly tall fescue, make sure to kill out as much of the old fescue as possible. Time helps along with some good herbicides. Spraying the field of tall fescue when it is actively growing will help get a good kill. Buy some time to check for a successful kill, and allow for any possible growth from seed. Plant the field to a summer annual (or winter annual if done in late summer) and utilize that annual for grazing or hay. When the next planting season arrives, check for any remaining old fescue plants or new plants and apply appropriate herbicides to clean up those remaining plants, then plant the field to an endophyte friendly tall fescue or a mix including it. The new fescues stockpile just as good, if not better, than Kentucky 31.

Safety Alert: Giant Hogweed

Giant hogweed is an invasive plant currently growing in northern areas of the country. The primary spread is in the Northwest in Washington and Oregon, and the Northeast in the New England area. In the Midwest, this plant has taken root in Michigan and Illinois and has recently been spotted in northern Indiana. Giant hogweed is especially dangerous due to the sap coating the entire plant. If the sap makes contact with skin or eyes, and is then exposed to any kind of UV light or moisture, it reacts in a way that inhibits our protection from UV light. What this means is that if an affected area is exposed to sunlight, skin can be severely burned and eyes can be blinded.

IF YOU ARE EXPOSED TO SAP:

- Wash the affected area thoroughly with soap and **COLD** water as soon as possible
- Keep exposed area away from sunlight for 48 hours
- If a reaction occurs, topical steroids applied early can reduce the severity of the reaction and ease discomfort
- If sap goes in eyes, rinse them with water and wear sunglasses
- If a reaction has occurred, the area of skin may be sensitive to sunlight for a few years and you may want to apply sun block or keep the affected area covered from the sun when possible
- See a physician if you have a reaction or any questions.

Currently giant hogweed has only been found in two counties in northern Indiana. There are a number of other members of the carrot family which look very similar and can cause similar, but more mild photosensitive reactions. If you believe you've come across a giant hogweed plant, call the **Indiana Department of Natural Resources** at **1-866 NO EXOTIC (1-866-663-9684)** or email them at **depp@dnr.IN.gov** to have experts take care of removal. Some of these plants require teams in hazmat suits to dispose of them safely, so **DO NOT HANDLE ONE**.

Clean Water Indiana Funds Going...and Coming?

In 2015, the Clark, Jackson, Jefferson, and Scott County SWCD's jointly applied for, and received, a Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant. The grant, which ends this December, provided $75,000 towards reducing sediment and nutrients from non-point sources in an effort to improve water quality. To accomplish this, participants of this incentive project utilized no-till cropping systems, and planted cover crops and/or installed buffer practices.

Funds for the 2015 grant have been expended, however, the Jefferson and Clark County SWCDs have formed a new partnership, and are applying for 2018 CWI funds. The application will be submitted before the end of September, and if approved, the project will start January 1, 2018.

The purpose of the project is to promote soil health on pasture/hay land, and improve water quality. Conservation practices will be installed that help to: improve forage and biomass quality; reduce soil erosion and compaction; reduce excessive nutrients and sediments in surface and ground waters; and improve inadequate feed, forage, and water. Producers can expect to see cost-share funds available for practices such as heavy use area protection, access roads, watering facilities/pipelines, forage and biomass plantings, and cover crops. For more information, or to be put your name on the list to receive notification of application deadlines, contact the Clark County SWCD at (812) 256-2330, ext. 3.

State Nurseries Offering Tree Seedlings

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)-Division of Forestry, operates two nurseries within the state that grow and distribute to landowners high quality plant materials for conservation plantings. Conservation plantings include plantings for timber, wildlife, windbreaks, soil and water protection, reclamation, carbon sequestering, and education. Individual tree species are available as packets of 100 seedlings; packet mixes of seedlings (10 each) are also available according to planned use (i.e., wildlife, bottomland, etc.).

Orders are accepted October 2, 2017—May 1, 2018 (depending on inventory) for standard spring pickup. Order forms are available at the SWCD office; online orders may be placed beginning October 2nd at www.INForestryX.com. More information on the nurseries and the seedling sale can be found at www.dnr.IN.gov/forestry.

9608 Highway 62
Charlestown, IN 47111
812-256-2330, ext. 3
Fax: 855-391-1921 (toll free)

CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage PAID
Charlestown, IN
Permit No. 6

SWCD Supporters….we thank you!

Clark County Farm Bureau
Dan Cristiani Excavating
Farm Credit Mid-America
Indiana Land Company
Sanders Farm Service LLC
Memphis Meat Processing
New Washington State Bank
Jim O'Neal Ford
Wright Brothers Implement Sales

Clark County Farm Receives Award

Higbie Farms is now a part of a prestigious list of over 400 Hoosier agriculture operations who have been recognized for outstanding farm management practices that protect our soil and water resources. The Clark County, IN, farm is the 2017 winner of the River Friendly Farmer Award handed out August 16th at a special ceremony at the Indiana State Fair. Rick Higbie represented the farm at the ceremony, and is pictured here with Lieutenant Governor, Suzanne Crouch, and Farm Bureau President, Randy Kron.

Environmental stewardship is the focus behind the River Friendly Farmer Award, a program established in 1999. It is designed to recognize farmers who protect and enhance Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams by using sound cropping and livestock management practices in their operations.

River Friendly Farmer award recipients are nominated locally by their county Soil and Water Conservation District.

Higbie Farm produces corn, soybeans, hay, and runs cow-calf operation. They are located within the Fourteen Mile Creek Watershed. Along with rotating crops, the Higbie's practice woodland management as well as livestock exclusion from the creek. They have discovered that their conservation practices, including implementation of buffer strips, has improved their soil quality and organic matter, increased wildlife habitat and protected the water quality in the creek.