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CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation Quarterly

Celebrate Soil and Water Stewardship Week

“Soil to Spoon” is the theme of this year’s National Association of Conservation Districts’ Stewardship Week, which will be officially celebrated April 29 to May 6, 2012.



Each day people take a spoon of food and put it in their mouth. Where does all of that food come from? How does it get from the soil to the spoon? It is a long process that depends on many people across the country, and sometimes around the world.

Our consumption of natural resources plays a vital role in sustainability of planet Earth. Increasing our “capacity to endure” will involve international and national policies, urban planning, transportation infrastructure, consumerism as well as individual lifestyle choices. What kind of impact does your lifestyle have on Earth’s capacity to endure? Food production and food consumption are vital issues for you, no matter where you live.

The world population is on the rise, while agricultural land is shrinking. The year 2011 saw the world population increase to 7 billion. At the same time, usable agricultural (arable) land is disappearing. Former agricultural lands are used in a variety of ways. Some has been converted to development for new family homes or shopping plazas. It is a difficult balance for our society that needs more room for more people, but also needs more food to feed the people.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”
—John Muir

Each product you use can be traced back to the soil, and soil is an important ingredient in the production process. Most people rarely think about the importance of soil in the food they eat daily. Farmers and ranchers take great care of their soil. Most farm families have been working the same land for generations and they understand the important link between healthy soil and healthy food. Soil can’t be treated like dirt!

America’s network of 3, 000 conservation districts across the country are working on the ground each and every day with local farmers, ranchers and landowners to protect our soil, water and air for future generations. Conservation districts have been involved in delivering locally-driven conservation across America for more than 70 years. Among the things districts help: implement farm, ranch and forestland conservation practices to protect soil productivity, water quality ad quantity, air quality and wildlife habitat; conserve and restore wetlands; protect groundwater resources; assist communities and homeowners to plant trees and other vegetation; guide developers in controlling soil erosion and protecting water and air quality during construction; provide technical expertise to landowners to identify, apply for, and participate in local, state and federal conservation programs; and much more.

At your next meal, try and think where each product came from, and how far it had to travel before it reached your plate. And remember to thank your local agriculture community members for their work to provide our nation and the world.

Inside this issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| Small Farm Workshop Coming in May | 2 |
| Last Year for Tree Planting Initiative | 2 |
| Plant Food for Wildlife | 2 |
| Project Offers Cost-share Dollars | 2 |
| Invasive Species Spotlight—Japanese Chaff Flower | 3 |
| River Friendly Farmer Nominations Sought | 3 |
| Habitat Restoration in Southeast Indiana | 4 |

Dates to Note

- 4/5/12—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.
- 4/6/12—Good Friday Holiday, SWCD office closed
- 4/22/12—Earth Day 40th Anniversary
- 4/24/12—Arbor Day
- 4/29-5/6/12—Soil & Water Stewardship Week
- 5/3/12—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 7:30 p.m.

Small Farm Workshop Coming in May

Chicks on the Farm, a local non-profit dedicated to helping women landowners learn more about how to manage, conserve, and enjoy their land, will be hosting a "Chicks on a Small Farm for Fun and Profit" workshop on Saturday, May 12, 2012.

Are you a "chick" on the farm? You could be if you are a woman land-

owner who wants to learn more about how to manage, conserve, and enjoy the land you love. Pat Larr and Betty Joubert, the original Chicks on the Farm, are both retired from the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). They offer workshops and other on-farm experiences on their own 257-acre working farm in Nabb, IN.



This spring's workshop is co-sponsored by the Clark, Scott, and Jefferson County SWCDs. The workshop will run from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Morning presentations will include the topics of goat production and management, pasture management, mushroom production, invasive plant species, and USDA-NRCS programs. Lunch will be catered by "Leroy's" of Lexington, IN. Following lunch, participants will have

the option of building their own purple martin bird house, or trying their hand at fly fishing.

If you would like to register for the workshop or need more information, please contact the Clark County SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3. Please reserve your spot by Monday, May 7, at 4 p.m., or visit the Chicks web site, www.chicksonthefarm.org, for a mail-in registration form.

Plant Food For Wildlife

You can encourage wildlife to live on your farm by planting trees, shrubs and herbaceous cover that will produce food, and by managing brushy and odd areas. Another way to produce an abundant supply of wildlife food is to plant a food plot. To assist you in providing for wildlife, the Clark County SWCD is currently selling 5-pound bags of wildlife food plot seed for \$3 each. Each bag contains a mixture of sorghum, millet, and buckwheat seed. Seed may be obtained by stopping by the SWCD office at 9608 Highway 62, Charlestown.

*Bulk bags of corn, soybean, and sunflower food plot seed **may** be available at a later date. Please contact the SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3, for availability or more information.*

Project Offers Cost-share Dollars

The Silver Creek Watershed Improvement project currently has agricultural and urban cost-share dollars available to implement best management practices (BMPs) on land within the watershed in order to improve water quality. BMPs are effective and practical methods which prevent or reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants from the land to surface or ground water.

The cost-share program provides **60% match** of the allowed actual costs of implementing approved BMPs. Technical assistance is provided. Some of the practices that may be funded include; *livestock exclusion from streams, cover crops, streambank stabilization, riparian buffers and more.* Visit www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com for more examples. If you are an agricultural producer, homeowner, organization or entity and are located in the Silver Creek Watershed district, you may be eligible to apply.

For more information about the cost share program contact Melanie Davis at 812-256-2330, ext. 3, or melanie.davis@in.nacdn.net.

We still have Rain Barrel Kits available for \$40 each plus tax. These DIY kits, include a 55 gallon plastic barrel, 2 faucets, and instructions (additional materials required for completion). Contact the SWCD office for more information or to purchase yours!

Last Year for Tree Planting Initiative



In August 2007, seven area Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) set out to make a difference in the tree cover of southern Indiana. They began a project called "Plant A Tree For You And Me".

The primary goals of this five year project were to help the citizens of southern Indiana plant 100,000 trees in the seven county area by 2012, and to educate them about the benefits of trees and their management.

Now, 2012 has arrived, and 65,905 trees have been reported as planted for the project to date. Workshops on tree planting and tree care have been held, and many trees have been sold in SWCD trees sales.

Plant A Tree For You And Me will officially end in August of this year, but the SWCDs will continue their educational efforts, and the promotion of tree planting. We hope that you will continue (or start!) planting trees, and that you will let us know when you do by visiting the Plant A Tree website at www.clarkswcd.org/PAT/openpage.htm to record your plantings.

Did you know....Pioneers made a coffee substitute by roasting seeds of the Kentucky Coffeetree.

Invasive Species Spotlight: Japanese Chaff Flower—*Achyranthes japonica*

A native to Asia, Japanese Chaff Flower is a perennial herb that can reach heights of 5-6 feet. Chaff Flower begins growing in late spring and begins flowering in late July. It is most readily identified by its erect “bottle-brush” spike on which flowers and seeds are formed. Flowers lack petals and occur in a tight cluster at the end of the spike. In mid-August seeds are formed and the spikes will elongate. Each seed has a pair of stiff bracts to attach to clothing or fur to aid in dispersal and seeds lie flat along the stem. The leaves are simple, opposite, and the venation is very similar to the dogwood leaf. Chaff flower forms extremely dense stands. Mature plants have extensive root systems supporting multiple stems.



Impact/ Distribution: First reported in Indiana in 2003 Chaff flower is now believed to be in every Indiana county bordering the Ohio river. It is typically found in floodplains, ditches, bottomland forests, and river-banks. It can tolerate moist soils, dry soils, full sun, and dense shade environments. It appears to spread quickly along waterways and public areas like trails. Chaff flower’s tall growth habit and dense infestations easily shade out and displace many native plant species.

Control Methods: Being a new invader there are no set methods for Chaff Flower control. However, the below methods have shown some initial success. In all cases control should be conducted before Chaff Flower produces seed in late August/early September.

- *Manual: Manual control is only feasible for the occasional plant, small infestations, or sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used. The vigorous root system makes hand pulling difficult, digging may be required to successfully remove the plant. The seed head may be removed to prevent further spread. All plant parts, especially seeds should be bagged and disposed of.*
- *Mechanical: Mowing and cutting can be used to prevent flowering and seed head establishment but has not been shown to kill established plants.*
- *Chemical: Foliar applications of a 2% solution of a triclopyr or glyphosate based herbicide appear to be effective if applied before or during flowering around mid-August. In some cases a non-ionic surfactant has been used to increase herbicide uptake.*

This is a high Priority species. Please report any sightings to the Southern Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area by calling (812) 797-8783 or visiting their web site at www.SICWMA.org.

River Friendly Farmer Nominations Sought



The River Friendly Farmer Program is a statewide initiative recognizing farmers who, through good production management, help keep Indiana’s rivers, lakes and streams clean.

The goals of the program are:

- To publicly recognize farmers who manage their farms in a way that protects and improves Indiana’s soil and water resources.
- To promote farming practices that help improve water quality while maintaining and improving the economic viability of Hoosier agriculture.
- To inform the general public about the contributions farmers make to protect and improve our soil, water and related natural resources.

If you know of a farmer deserving of this award (it may be you!), ask them to complete an application. Applications

Rent our Equipment

No-Till Drill - \$8 per acre

Outback S2 Guidance Systems - \$10 per day

Call 256-2330, ext. 3 for scheduling

Stop by our office and sign an Equipment

Rental Agreement

may be obtained by calling the SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3, or by visiting www.iaswcd.org/district_tools/RFF/rffpage.html. Completed applications should be returned to the Clark County SWCD office for evaluation by May 31, 2012.

Award recipients will be recognized during Farmer’s Day at the 2012 Indiana State Fair, will receive a River Friendly Farmer sign for display on their farmsteads and recognition through news articles highlighting farmers for their stewardship efforts.

9608 Highway 62
Charlestown, IN 47111
812-256-2330, ext. 3
Fax: 812-256-0362

Return Service Requested



**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
Farm Credit Services
Huber Orchard & Winery
Kruer Grading-Seeding, Inc.
Sanders Farm Service—Pioneer Seed*

*Dan Cristiani Excavating
Memphis Meat Processing
New Washington State Bank
Ottis Wright—dba Wright Brothers*

Habitat Restoration in Southeast Indiana through PFW Program Dollars

Since 1988, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has been assisting private landowners in the restoration of wetlands, prairies, and native hardwood forests through a program called Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW). These restored habitats provide benefits such as reducing soil erosion, retaining excess floodwaters, providing fish and wildlife habitat, removing contaminants from surface and groundwater, and providing recreational and education opportunities.



Throughout Indiana, the Service has completed more than 1,880 restoration projects totaling nearly 14,900 acres of restored habitat, including more than 7,100 acres of wetlands, 6,000 acres of uplands (mostly native prairie), and 1,600 acres of bottomland hardwood forest. Cost-share for projects varies considerably, from roughly 50% in some cases to 100% in others, depending upon the size and cost of the project. The Service also develops partnerships with other agencies and organizations, which can help to further reduce the cost of the project to the landowner. In return for the cost-share assistance, the landowner agrees to maintain the practice for a minimum of 10 years (15 years for reforestation projects). Access to the property for hunting, fishing, or other uses is left completely up to the landowner, and the habitat practice may be returned to the pre-restoration condition after the agreement expires if the landowner so chooses. A Service representative will make an initial site visit to the property to determine the feasibility of various habitat restoration practices, and will follow up with more detailed survey and design work for projects that hold good potential. The Service can also assist with any state or federal permits that may be required.

One of the geographic priority areas for the Indiana PFW Program is the Muscatatuck Flats and Lowlands Region, which covers all or parts of 12 counties in southeast Indiana. Projects in this area have the potential of providing valuable habitat for waterfowl, marsh birds, forest and grassland songbirds, amphibians and reptiles, and the federally endangered Indiana bat. With much of Indiana's habitat base converted to other land uses, habitat restoration on private lands will continue to play a key role in the Service's strategy to conserve migratory birds, federally threatened and endangered species, and the native ecosystems they depend upon. To learn more about the program, please contact Susan Knowles at Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, 12985 East U.S. Hwy. 50, Seymour, IN 47274; (812) 522-4352.

District activities and programs will be made available to all citizens, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, marital status or disability.