



Conservation Quarterly

Spring 2017

CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dates to Note

- 4/14/17—Good Friday, SWCD office closed
- 4/22/17—Earth Day
- 4/28/17—Arbor Day
- 4/30-5/7/17—Stewardship Week
- 5/4/17—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
- 5/29/17—Memorial Day, SWCD office closed
- 6/1/17—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting

Conservation Practices in Review—Buffers

Conservation buffers such as habitat buffers for upland birds, filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, and field borders are especially applicable to Indiana landscapes and have multiple environmental benefits while serving to significantly improve wildlife habitats. Research has also demonstrated that these practices can be cost-effective for producers.

Grass filter strips improve water quality through sediment and herbicide retention. In addition to erosion control, native warm season grasses add diversity to agricultural landscapes and provide wildlife habitat. Species selection can be based on producer needs and objectives.



Riparian buffers that include both trees and grass offer the greatest multiple environmental benefits. They enhance water quality and aquatic habitat by slowing velocity of nutrient laden water running off of agricultural fields. **Forested riparian buffers** also further enhance streams by providing woody debris that helps stabilize channels and provides additional habitat for fishes and other aquatic wildlife.

Traditionally, sod forming grasses such as Kentucky Tall Fescue and Bermuda grass have been used for **grassed waterways** to provide erosion control benefits. However, research suggests that native warm season grasses can provide excellent filtration and erosion control benefits, and diverse mixtures of native grasses will provide simultaneous wildlife benefits.



Field borders are herbaceous, non-crop buffers used around the entire field margin to

remove low producing areas from production and provide wildlife habitat. They can be established with an initial small-grain or legume cover crop. Field borders

should be left undisturbed during the growing season; however, woody vegetation should be controlled with periodic disturbance such as disking or prescribed fire every 3-4 years



Conservation buffers are indeed commonsense conservation. Conservation buffers can be implemented through several USDA programs including the continuous Conservation Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, Wetlands Reserve Program, and Emergency Watershed Protection Program. They provide producers with tremendous flexibility and incentive to develop a conservation cropping system that meets production objectives, improves environmental quality, enhances wildlife habitat, and helps farmers be good stewards of our natural resources. For more information on these programs, contact your county USDA Service Center or see www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Stewardship Week Celebrated



The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is celebrating the 62nd year of Stewardship week April 30 – May 7, 2017. The Clark County SWCD is a member of NACD, which oversees the Stewardship Week program. Stewardship Week is one of the largest national annual programs to promote conservation. NACD represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, which were established to encourage resource conservation across the country.

The 2017 Stewardship Week is themed "Healthy Soils Are Full of Life!" Soil is the starting foundation of all of the food we eat. "Making the connection back to the soil, where our food gets its start is so important," says Gene Schmidt. "The next time you sit down to a meal, take a minute to think about where your food came from, and the farmers and ranchers who helped produce it." As they work to produce food for the growing population, today's farmers and ranchers are dedicated to using responsible land-management practices to ensure a sustainable food supply and healthy land and soil for future generations.

For more information about Stewardship Week and conservation, contact the Clark County SWCD office at 812-256-2330, ext. 3. Additional information about the Healthy Soils Are Full of Life! program and other useful resource education is available on the NACD website at <http://www.nacdnet.org/general-resources/stewardship-program/>.

Soil Testing Service Offered

The Clark County SWCD is now offering soil testing services for homeowners seeking fertilizer recommendations for their lawn and gardens.

Soil samples may be brought to the SWCD office at 9608 Highway 62, Charlestown. Soil sample bags are available at no charge from the SWCD.

Cost of a basic test is \$22; a more extensive test is \$32. Both tests provide suggested fertilizer recommendations for up to three crops (i.e. lawn, flowers, trees). It normally takes 4-5 working days for samples to be analyzed and recommendations returned.



Since 1999, key conservation and agricultural organizations have sponsored the River Friendly Farmer (RFF) Program. The statewide initiative recognizes farmers, who through good production management practices helps keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean.

River Friendly Farmer nominations are being accepted through June 16, 2017. Farmers chosen will receive special recognition during Farmers Day, August 16th at the 2017 Indiana State Fair.

They will also receive a River Friendly Farmer sign for display on their farmstead and recognition through news articles highlighting them for their stewardship efforts.

Contact the SWCD office for nomination forms.



Rent our Equipment

No-Till Drill - \$8 per acre

Outback S2 Guidance Systems

- \$10 per day

Call 812-256-2330, ext. 3 for scheduling

Stop by our office and sign an Equipment Rental Agreement

Scholarship Applications Available

Applications are currently available for the Marvin Wright Conservation Scholarship sponsored by the Clark County SWCD and funded through the Southern Indiana Community Foundation. This is a \$1,000 scholarship awarded each year to a current high school senior or current college student from Clark County, pursuing a career in a natural resources related field. Forms are available by contacting Tami Kruer, SWCD Education Coordinator, at 256-2330, ext. 3462, or from the SWCD web site at www.clarkswcd.org.



Invasive Species Spotlight

Wintercreeper

Euonymus fortunei



Description: Evergreen, woody, clinging vine; dark green or variegated thick, egg-shaped opposite leaves with toothed margins; stems narrow, warty, with rootlets; flowers green-white on long stalks; fruits pinkish to red capsules that split open to expose orange fruits.

Problem: Outcompetes native vegetation by depleting soil moisture and nutrients, blocking sunlight, and by forming a dense vegetative mat that impedes the growth of seedlings of native species. If you think you have seen an invasive species, report it, and if possible, get a picture.

Call 1-866 NO EXOTIC (1-866-663-9684) or email to depp@dnr.IN.gov

SOIL HEALTH NUGGETS

There are some *amazing* things going on underground...

- There are more soil microorganisms in a teaspoon of healthy soil than there are people on the earth! Millions of species and billions of organisms—bacteria, algae, microscopic insects, earthworms, beetles, ants, mites, fungi and more—represent the greatest concentration of biomass anywhere on the planet! Microbes, which make up only one half of one percent of the total soil mass, are the yeasts, algae, protozoa, bacteria, nematodes, and fungi that process organic matter into rich, dark, stable humus in the soil.
- The best soil on most farms is found in the fence row. These undisturbed remnants of what soil properties were once like is no surprise to farmers who have dug into that soil. It's crumbly, dark, and loose, and it's a model of soil structure and organic matter for farmers who are trying to make their soil healthier.
- Tillage (or plowing) destroys the soil's structure! Tillage destroys "aggregation" or the soil's structure – the habitat soil microorganisms depend upon to ensure critical soil functions like nutrient cycling. Tillage also reduces organic matter content and increases erosion, which reduces the sustainability of our food production system.
- Tilling the soil up does NOT allow more water to soak into it. Don't believe it? Fill two containers with untilled and tilled soil and simulate rainfall on them. Watch the water stand on top of the tilled sample, but soak down through the untilled sample. Or, give them the slake test (placing clods of untilled and tilled soils on wire mesh at the top of water filled jars). You'll find if you submerge tilled soil just below the surface it will soon collapse in a heap at the bottom of the jar, but untilled soil will still be intact for the most part even 24 hours later. Tilling soils causes pores to collapse and seal over, causing more rain to runoff than soak in.

Tree Seedling Orders Still Accepted

Tree seedlings are still available to Indiana landowners through the IDNR Division of Forestry nursery in Vallonia, IN. These trees may be used for reforestation, erosion control, wildlife habitat development, watershed improvement, wetlands enhancement, windbreak, or other conservation purposes. Plant materials cannot be redistributed or resold for profit. Order forms are available in the Clark County SWCD office or from the IDNR web site. www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/3606.htm. For assistance in deciding what species to plant, contact Clark County's District Forester, Allie Cline at (812) 294-4306, or ACline1@dnr.IN.gov.

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
Jim O'Neal Ford*

*Memphis Meat Processing
New Washington State Bank
Wright Brothers Implement Sales
Sanders Farm Service LLC*

Wetland Mitigation Banking

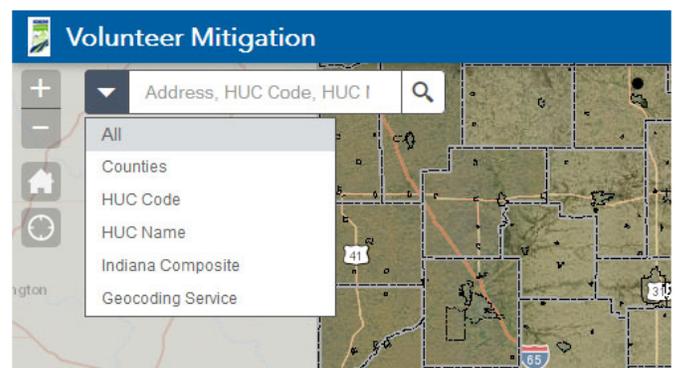
Compensatory mitigation is the last step in the three-step approach of (1) avoidance of impacts to wetlands, (2) minimization of impacts to wetlands, and (3) compensation. The purpose of mitigation is to compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands.

There are occasions when wetland losses are unavoidable. When these situations arise, the wetland that is lost due to impact must be replaced. The majority of these wetland replacements occur individually, resulting in small wetland restoration or creation attempts either on the same property as the wetland loss, or within the same county or watershed as the filled wetland. IDEM requires that wetland replacement occur within a year of the wetland loss.

Wetland Mitigation Banking allows a sponsor (e.g., individual, corporation, governmental entity etc.), to restore a large wetland area in advance of impacts with the expectation that the sponsor may use or sell these "wetland credits" at a future date. Under certain circumstances, the sponsor may be al-

lowed to use or sell a percentage of the wetland credits before the wetland is restored.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has developed a Volunteer Mitigation application was created to provide property owners a way to volunteer their land to be used for Wetland Mitigation. Access to this application can be found at www.in.gov/idem/wetlands/2338.htm.



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