



# Conservation Quarterly

Summer 2017

CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## *Come To The Fair!*

The annual Clark County 4-H Fair will be held July 14-22, and the Clark County SWCD supervisors and staff have been busy making preparations. We would like to invite you to stop by our Natural Resources Conservation Facility (located at the rear of the Fairgrounds), and experience our newly installed “Pathway to Water Quality”. Modeled after the original Pathway at the Indiana State Fairgrounds, ours is a scaled down version, but uses many of the same educational elements to teach us how to protect and preserve our water resources.

### **Features of our Pathway:**

- Our old fish tank is gone, but it’s been replaced with a more natural-looking, landscaped pond, complete with water-fall, creekstone, and native fish.
- Cover crop plots illustrating common varieties used in this area.
- Signs identifying and explaining each feature.
- Education area to sit and explore the items contained in our “nature” boxes, and to participate in activities.
- Native perennial plantings that provide habitat for pollinators, as well as remove pollutants from water.
- A home for bats! Learn how you can have one too.
- A home, actually a subdivision, for bluebirds! We’re hoping to attract many, so we’ve installed a trail of bluebird boxes that will be monitored regularly for inhabitants.
- Water quality display.

**In addition to our new Pathway, we will also have the following guests and events for you to enjoy:**

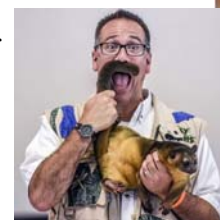
**Monday, July 17, 6-8:30 p.m.—Geocaching event**

**Tuesday, July 18, 7 p.m.—Silly Safaris live animal show, and meet & greet**

**Wednesday, July 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m.—Freshwater Fred the turtle (courtesy of Hoosier Energy), meet & greet, and craft**

**Thursday, July 20, 7 p.m.—Take Flight! Wildlife Education, Raptor program**

The Natural Resources area will be open Monday through Friday evenings,  
July 17-21, from 6-9 p.m.



***We would like to thank the following businesses/groups/individuals for helping make our Pathway possible:***

*Sounds of Water, Sellersburg, IN—pond feature; Dan Cristiani Excavating, Clarksville, IN—removal of fish tank, excavation of plant beds, sealing exhibit building; Eric Whiteford—building benches, plant boxes; Coast to Coast Advertising, New Albany, IN—signs; Sunnyside Master Gardeners Bluebird Team—bluebird boxes; Earth First, Sellersburg, IN—mulch; Providence High School Class of 2018—clean-up*

## Cover Crop Workshop Planned



As part of their 2015 Clean Water Indiana grant, the Clark, Jackson, Jefferson, and Scott County SWCD's will be hosting a Cover Crop Workshop on August 1, 2017, from 6-8 p.m. The workshop will be conducted outdoors in the Clark County SWCD Natural Resources Education Area on the Clark County 4-H fairgrounds.

Speakers will include CISCO Seeds, Bob Backus (Farm Service Agency), and Jennifer Kipper (NRCS District Conservationist). Time will be allowed at the end of presentations for questions.

Light refreshments will be served. For more details, or to RSVP, please contact the Clark County SWCD office at 812-256-2330, ext. 3

## Honeybee Populations Improve—From Horrible to Bad

WASHINGTON — There's a glimmer of hope for America's ailing honeybees as winter losses were the lowest in more than a decade, according to a U.S. survey of beekeepers released Thursday. Beekeepers lost 21 percent of their colonies over last winter, the annual Bee Informed Partnership survey found. That's the lowest winter loss level since the survey started in 2006 and an improvement from nearly 27 percent the winter before. The U.S. government has set a goal of keeping losses under 15 percent in the winter.



"It's good news in that the numbers are down, but it's certainly not a good picture," said survey director Dennis vanEngelsdorp. "It's gone from horrible to bad." Reduction in varroa mites, a lethal parasite, is likely the main cause of the improvement, said vanEngelsdorp, a University of Maryland entomologist. He credited the reduction in the parasite to a new product to fight the mite and better weather for pesticide use. The 10-year average for winter losses is 28.4 percent. "We would of course all love it if the trend continues, but there are so many factors playing a role in colony health," said bee expert Elina Lastro Nino at the University of California Davis, who wasn't part of the survey. "I am glad to see this, but wouldn't celebrate too much yet."

For more than a decade, bees and other pollinators have been rapidly declining with scientists blaming a mix of parasites, disease, pesticides and poor nutrition. While usually hive losses are worst in the winter, they occur year round. The survey found yearly losses also down, but not quite to record levels. About one third of the honey bee colonies that were around in April 2016 were dead a year later, the survey found. That's better than the year before when the annual loss rate was more than 40 percent.

The survey, originally started by the U.S. government and now run by a nonprofit, is based on information from nearly 5,000 beekeepers who manage more than 360,000 colonies.



## Invasive Species Spotlight

### Did you know?

- Invading alien species in the United States cause major environmental damages and losses adding up to almost \$120 billion per year (Pimental et al., 2005)
- The establishment of one exotic fungus in the U.S. – Asian soybean rust – is expected to cause annual losses averaging between \$240 million and \$2.0 billion to farmers. This rust was found in Indiana for the first time in 2006.
- It is estimated that if the emerald ash borer (EAB), an insect that has already killed millions of ash trees in the Midwest, is not contained or eradicated it will cost state and local governments \$7 billion over the next 25 years to remove and replace dying ash trees. EAB invaded Indiana in 2004; there are now 16 infested counties in northern and central Indiana.

## FSA News

### Nominations Open for the 2017 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers and FSA program participants to take part in the Clark County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. County committees may have one or more appointed advisors to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and land owners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

In Clark County, LAA #1 consisting of Bethlehem, Oregon, Owen, and Washington townships is conducting the election. Davide Lewis is completing the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of his 3<sup>rd</sup> term and therefore is ineligible to run again.

All nomination forms for the 2017 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2017. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: *Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member* available online at: [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

### 2017 Acreage Reporting Dates

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to visit the Clark County FSA office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following acreage reporting dates are applicable for Clark County:

- 7/15/17—All Spring planted crops
  - 11/15/17—All 2018 Forage and Pasture Crops
  - 12/15/17—All Fall planted small grains for 2018 harvest.
- The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:
- If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.
  - If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above

acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to the county office.

- If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before grazing or harvesting of the crop begins.

Due to the wet Spring and planting delays, very few producers have been able to certify their crops to date. **As soon as your finish planting, please contact the Clark County FSA office at 812-256-2330, ext. 2 to schedule an appointment for crop certification.**

### Producers are Encouraged to Report Prevented Planting and Failed Acres

Producers who wish to receive history credit for either prevented planting or failed acreage must file a Notice of Loss with the Farm Service Agency. Prevented planting acreage must be reported on form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date as established by FSA and Risk Management Agency (RMA).

The final planting date for corn in Indiana is June 5th and the final planting date for soybeans is June 20th (for both initial and double crop). The final planting date for 2017 wheat was October 30 in Clark County, IN. Producers should contact their local office if they are unaware of the final planting date in their county. The date to timely file a prevented planting request for wheat in Indiana has passed for 2016. However, producers may submit a late filed report. FSA will accept the report as timely if it was filed timely with crop insurance. If not producers will be assessed a measurement service fee per farm and FSA will consider late filed requests dependent upon the assessment of the disaster condition during a farm visit.

Additionally, producers with failed acres should file form CCC-576, Notice of Loss, to report acreage destroyed or damaged by disaster. This must be filed prior to destruction of the crop to provide FSA with an opportunity to inspect the acreage. For losses on crops covered by the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance, producers must file a Notice of Loss within 15 days of the occurrence of the disaster or when losses become apparent. Additionally, many crops covered by NAP require an initial notification of loss be made to the FSA administrative office within 72 hours of loss occurrence or loss becoming apparent. Producers must timely file a Notice of Loss for failed acres on all crops including grasses to ensure the opportunity to receive acreage reporting history credit for the crop as well as potential program benefits.

For questions regarding crop certification and crop loss reports, please contact the Clark County FSA office at 812-256-2330.

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  
Indiana Land Company*

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

## **Native Warm Season Grasses for Wildlife**

Scan the countryside from a car or tractor seat in southern Indiana, and you're probably looking at one of five things: a crop field, a pasture/hayfield, a forest, a homestead, or something wet (be it flooded or flowing). For a variety of reasons, little of this landscape contains native warm season grasses (NWSG). That's unfortunate, because several wildlife species would benefit if more of our landscape had NWSG.

NWSG provide vital habitat including nesting, escape, fawning and foul weather cover. Over the last 30 years, several once-abundant species of wildlife associated with NWSG have become less common in Indiana. Northern Bobwhite is perhaps the most iconic of them, but cottontails, white-tailed deer, wild turkey, numerous pollinating insects and a whole host of songbirds also thrive in NWSG.

Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) are two of the best NWSG for southern Indiana wildlife ('big' is better on wet sites and

'little' on mesic or dry sites). Consider planting NWSG the next time you're pondering what to do with that old field or strip of mowed grass. You may be surprised with the wildlife response.

If you're interested in NWSG for wildlife, contact Jennifer Kipper, Clark County NRCS District Conservationist, at (812) 256-2330, ext. 3, or Zachary Voyles, Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologist, at (812) 346-3411 or [zvoyles@quailforever.org](mailto:zvoyles@quailforever.org).



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