



Conservation Quarterly

Spring 2018

CLARK COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dates to Note

- 4/22/18—Earth Day
- 4/27/18—Arbor Day
- 4/29-5/6/18—Stewardship Week
- 5/3/18—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting
- 5/28/18—Memorial Day, SWCD office closed
- 6/7/18—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting

Incentive Funds Available for Conservation Practices

The Clark and Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were recently awarded a 2018 Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant for a project that will strive 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.



Though the project primarily focuses on practices associated with livestock, the cover crop practice is included. Cover crops are not only a means to reduce erosion, and diminish sediment entering our waters, they can also be grazed as part of a pasture management plan. Practices producers can implement through the project are as follows: heavy use area protection (HUAP), access road, pipeline, watering tanks, forage and biomass planting, cover crop, roof runoff structure, animal trails and walkways, underground outlet, and permanent interior fence. Additional funds from the SWCD's have been pledged to help implement the practices should there be demand exceeding grant dollars available. Cost-share rate on practices installed is 60% of actual cost; caps on individual practices have been set. Practices must be completed according to Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) specifications. Practices must be completed in the year that the participant's application is approved for funding.

Producers interested in applying for this incentive program should contact their home county's Conservation District office to receive an application, and detailed information. Applications will be taken continually, and evaluated and ranked on a timely, periodic basis throughout the 3-year project life or until all grant monies are expended.

Producers in Clark County, please contact the Clark County SWCD office at 812-256-2330, ext. 3, or visit www.clarkswcd.org; in Jefferson County, please contact the Jefferson County SWCD office at 812-265-7609, or visit www.jeffersoncountyswcd.com.

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**

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Stewardship Week Celebrated



The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has proclaimed April 29 – May 6, 2018, as Stewardship Week, marking the 63rd year of this national event. Stewardship Week reminds us of our individual responsibilities to care for the natural resources upon which we all depend. The theme for this year's celebration is "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home".

"Clean water is important to everyone," says NACDs' President Brent Van Dyke. "Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. They cross county, state and national boundaries. Every inch of the land on planet Earth is part of a watershed. In the continental U.S., there are 2,100 watersheds; if we include Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico, the count rises to 2,267. No matter where you are right now, you are in a watershed. Take time to learn about your local community water supply sources, and volunteer for river, stream or beach clean-up days. You can make a difference!"

For more information about Stewardship Week and conservation, contact the Clark County SWCD office at 812-256-2330, ext. 3. Additional information about the "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home" 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.

Mile A Minute Vine— Now in Indiana!

Accidentally introduced from Eastern Asia, Mile-a-Minute Vine (*Persicaria perfoliata*) is an annual, herbaceous vine that gets its name from its remarkable ability to grow (up to 6 inches per day during the growing season). Mile-a-Minute Vine has unique alternate, triangular-shaped leaves and sharp prickles along the stems, leaf stalks (petioles), and midrib underneath the leaves. Mile-a-Minute Vine also produces a distinct terminal



clusters of bluish berry-like fruits, subtended by a perfoliate (wraps around the stem) leaf structure called an ocrea.

Because of its explosive growth (around 25 ft. in a single growing season), Mile-a-Minute Vine can quickly overtop small trees and shrubs, smothering native vegetation. Mile-a-Minute Vine has recently been discovered in Monroe County. If you see this vine elsewhere, please report your findings on EDDMaps at: <https://www.eddmaps.org/indiana>.



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 15, 2018. Farmers chosen will receive special recognition during Farmers Day, August 15th at the 2018 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.



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

Fishing and Hunting Licenses Now Available

Annual fishing and hunting licenses are now available for purchase. Remember that 2017 annual fishing and hunting licenses expire on March 31. If you purchased your license online last year, just log into your account, confirm your information, and purchase your new licenses.

Indiana residents can purchase a Hunt/Fish Combo license for just \$8 more. Not only can you hunt AND fish for just a few dollars more, but the DNR receives \$58 in federal funds that go directly back into conservation to help us continue to provide opportunities for hunting, fishing and other wildlife recreation activities.

Helpful tip: Snap a photo of your license on your phone and carry your phone with the license on it with you while hunting and/or fishing. No need to print out your license to keep with you.



For \$8 more, your purchase of a Hunt/Fish combo license invests \$58 in federal funds back into conservation.	FISHING LICENSE	HUNTING LICENSE	HUNT/FISH COMBO
	\$17	\$17	\$25
FEDERAL FUNDS RECEIVED FOR CONSERVATION	\$9	\$49	\$58

Help Purdue with Vole-Northern Harrier Study

Northern Harriers (*Circus hudsonius*) are an iconic Midwestern species. Primarily associated with marshes and grasslands, they can be found in Indiana throughout the year, flying low over fields and suddenly turning to pounce on prey. Harriers preferentially hunt areas of high prey density, including remnant prairies, grasslands, alfalfa fields, and old fields. Anecdotal evidence indicates that they may also hunt cover crop fields, and in doing so, consume pest species such as voles. However, as native prairies have disappeared, their population has declined. In Indiana, the breeding population is listed as state endangered.

Harriers are an important predator of agricultural pests, including voles. Although they are opportunistic in their feeding, in areas with high vole densities, voles comprise anywhere from 79-98% of their diet. Thus, they can be an extremely valuable vole predator.



Fig. 1 Adult Male Harrier

Purdue researchers ask for your help in studying whether cover crops might lead to even more voles eaten by Harriers. Notifying researchers of Harriers would be greatly appreciated (contact information below).

Northern Harriers are easily recognizable. All individuals have a characteristic white band on their rump and a feathered facial disc, similar to owls. As in owls, their facial disc helps channel sound to their ears, improving their ability to hear mice and voles moving amongst dense



Fig. 2 Adult Female Harrier

vegetation. Adult males (Fig. 1) have been called “grey ghosts” due to their pale gray plumage with black wing tips. Adult females (Fig. 2) are brown, with a light belly and streaking on their sides. Juvenile harriers of both sexes resemble females, but are more rufous, particularly under their wings.

For comparison, the Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), one of Indiana’s most common hawks, also displays a narrow white band at the base of the tail. However, this band is less conspicuous and is off-set by the namesake bright rufous tail (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3 Red-tailed Hawk

In winter, Harriers will often roost communally, sometimes in groups of dozens of individuals. Harriers roost on the ground, often in tall, dense vegetation at a central location compared to the members’ hunting grounds. Roosts can be identified most easily in the late afternoon by the presence of multiple Harriers returning from all directions to a central location. Alternatively in the morning, multiple Harriers leaving the same general area is another indication of a roost.

Contact Information

Do you think you have located a Northern Harrier or its roost? If so, please contact Megan Zagorski, M.S. student in Purdue University’s Department of Forestry and Natural Resources: mzagorsk@purdue.edu.

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**

Return Service Requested

SWCD Supporters....we thank you!

*Clark County Farm Bureau
Dan Cristiani Excavating
Farm Credit Mid-America
Jim O'Neal Ford*

*Indiana Land Company
New Washington State Bank
Wright Brothers Implement Sales, Hardware & General Store
Sanders Farm Service LLC*

Announcing—2018 4-H Fair Events!

The annual Clark County 4-H Fair will be held July 13-21, 2018, and the Clark County SWCD is already busy making preparations! Our outdoor exhibit area, which began its transformation into a “Pathway to Water Quality” last year, continues to grow.

New this year will be a butterfly enclosure in which many native Indiana butterflies will make their home for the duration of the fair. There will also be additional educational activities offered nightly for children and adults alike (and possibly some giveaways!).

We are bringing back two guests this year that have proved to be crowd favorites: Silly Safaris, and Take Flight! Raptors. Silly Safaris will perform on Wednesday, 7/18, at 7 p.m.; Take Flight! on 7/19, at 7 p.m. More guests will be announced as we confirm them. Be sure to watch for updates in our next newsletter!



Watershed Project Updates

The Clark County SWCD recently received word that its Management Plan for the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek-OH River Watersheds Improvement Project has received approval from the EPA. This will allow us to move forward with the implementation of that project as soon as final paperwork is signed, and funds are released by the EPA. We are hopeful for a Fall 2018 start date.



Once implementation begins, cost-share funds will be available for projects in identified critical areas for selected BMPs needed to address identified resource concerns. Many educational activities will also be available to provide information to citizens so they can make better environmental decisions, and help improve water quality within the watersheds. Updates on this project will be published as it is available, or inquiries may be made to the SWCD office at (812) 256-2330, ext.3.

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