



Conserving the Natural  
Resources of Steuben County  
for Future Generations!

# The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

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## 2014 River Friendly Farmer

Steuben County farmer Scott Schultz was among 59 farmers from around the state, who received the River Friendly Farmer award Aug. 13 at the Indiana State Fair. Awarded since 1999, it recognizes farmers who, through good production management practices, help keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean.

Scott farms around 500 acres, and has practiced no-till for almost 30 years. He stated that he has made the decision to be a good land steward, and is sticking with it.

For example, he also created a buffer strip decades ago. The grass stretch between his fields and an open ditch that goes to the Pigeon River helps keep sediment and chemicals from running off into the water and flowing downstream.

Scott grows corn, soybeans and hay. The hay, which he uses for his beef cattle and sells to area Amish, is also a good practice for soil health and retention. Schultz took advantage of funding available through the Pigeon Creek Watershed Management efforts of the Steuben County SWCD, and the Farm Bill programs of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). "They have different programs you can use. It helps to cost share," he said. "It made it attractive to me."

Last year, Scott began using cover crops on all his fields. In September, he plants cereal rye on half the farmed land, and radish and peas on the other half. Because much of the soil on his farm is sandy, he said it adds humus and improves its productivity. In addition, cover crops help with weed control, "so you don't have to use quite as much weed killer."

At the state fair, Scott said he learned more ways he could help the land, and plans to look into practices with guidance from the Soil and Water Conservation District and NRCS.

"Quite a few of the people were recognized for woodland control and management," he said, noting that he was interested in the bird sanctuaries



Ted McKinney, director of the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, left, and Don Villwock, president of Indiana Farm Bureau, right, present Scott Schultz and his wife Joyce the River Friendly Farmer Award during the Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis.  
Photo by Kris Vance, NRCS

and other wildlife benefits that could be created. "We've got some wetlands. I'd like to protect them as much as I can," he added.

The award is sponsored by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Division of Soil Conservation, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Scott and the other farmers who received the River Friendly award this summer were congratulated by ISDA Director Ted McKinney, President of Indiana Farm Bureau Don Villwock, NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, and IASWCD President Jeff Meinders, among other leaders from the Indiana Conservation Partnership.

This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River Friendly Farmers in Indiana since the award's beginning to 761. Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may

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Scan this symbol with your  
smartphone to link to our website.



## Lake Life Class wraps up its 3rd Year:

Lake Life, sponsored by the Steuben County SWCD and Steuben County Lakes Council, finished its third year recently, with 26 people registered; more than half return participants. This year, we added a new highlight to the class: four of the six classes met at various local



attractions. The first meeting was held in the multipurpose room of the Angola Community Center, and focused on three presentations from local experts discussing endangered species, invasive plant management, and forestry practices. The second session met at the new Trine State Recreation Area where Park Interpreter, Fred Wooley facilitated an excellent discussion about the history of the recently acquired property, and led a property tour. For the third meeting, we were back in the multipurpose room so that a panel discussion with county officials could be organized. The Treasurer's Office, Assessor's Office, Recorder's Office, Coroner, and Health Department all made representatives available to field

questions from the audience. The fourth meeting was held at Dry Dock Marina where boating, the history of Lake James, and how to document your own lakes' history was presented. The fifth session was held at the Fawn River State Fish Hatchery in Orland where IDNR's Neil Ledet led a short tour of the hatchery facilities, then presented an informative discussion on fish management, and NRCS District Conservationist Brian Musser gave a demonstration on soil health. The final session was held at the Caruso's Family Restaurant for a delicious meal and a brief history of Caruso's and Italian cooking given by Dan Caruso. Plans for 2015 Lake Life Class are currently being discussed, so please contact us if you are interested in "becoming a class act on your lake!"



**FSA Updates:** Quick updates, call the office (260-665-3211, X2) for more details:

**Signup activities are beginning for the various new farm bill programs. ARC/PLC is the new crop program. Please call the office with any questions you have about the new programs. ARC/PLC signup is a multistep process.**

**Signup dates for new Farm Bill programs :**

**Current through February 27, 2015:** Able to update yields and reallocate bases for ARC/PLC program.

**November 17 through March 31, 2015:** Make ARC/PLC elections (picking between Agriculture Risk Coverage County, Agriculture Risk Coverage Individual and Price Loss Coverage)

**Mid April 2015 through summer 2015:** Complete annual enrollment for 2014 and 2015 ARC/PLC.

**December 5, 2014:** Deadline to get coverage under the new Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy)

**January 30, 2015:** Deadline to sign up for 2012 pasture losses under the Livestock Forage Program (LFP)

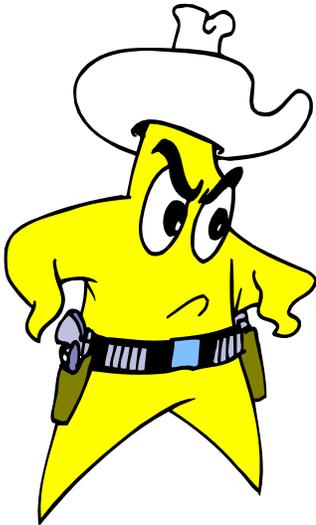
**January 30, 2015:** Deadline to sign up for livestock losses under the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)

**CRP early release provisions:**

There is an opportunity get an early release from all or part of a CRP contract with no refunds or penalties. The deadline to apply for an early out is January 30, 2015. There are numerous eligibility criteria that must be met before an early out is approved, such as:

- Contract must be in effect for at least 5 years
- Mainly applies to grass practices and some limited tree practices
- Must meet certain erodibility requirements
- Must not be with 120 feet of a water body.

*By: Thomas R Saggars  
County Executive Director, Steuben County FSA Office*



## Soil - Wanted Dead or Alive:

NRCS wants to help you revive the soil on your farm.

No-Till, Cover Crops, Nutrient, and Pest Management Plans will bring the life back to your soil, and increase your yields.

Stop in so we can help resuscitate your soil!

## River Friendly Farmer

*(Continued from page 1)*

nominate up to two farmers who do an outstanding job of protecting their rivers, lakes and streams through their everyday conservation management practices on the farm. Watershed organizations also may nominate farmers for the award by submitting an application to a county SWCD.

Please feel free to stop in or call about our many programs available to assist you with putting conservation on the ground and helping improve your property.

*Excerpts from her newspaper article reprinted with permission from Amy Oberlin (The Herald Republican)*



## Duck Days

For the 3rd year in a row, District Staff participated in the Delta Waterfowl "Duck Days" event. The annual gathering was held October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Trine State Recreational Area this year, and drew approximately 400 seventh graders from each school system in Steuben County. The Duck Days event featured seven interactive

and educational stations. The stations included; Wood Duck Box Construction, Edible Land Fill Activity, Wild Animal Trapping, Retriever Dog Demonstration, Water Fowl Education Station, and Wetland Zoo Experience. The District hosted the water quality station which emphasized the link between land use and water quality/quantity. SWCD Resource Conservationist, Zac Martin introduced students to concepts of land use, runoff, erosion, sedimentation, pollution loading, why water quality is important to individuals, societies, and wildlife.

## Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2014 Affiliate Members. The donations received from these individuals and businesses help support the Information and Education programs of the District. If you or your business would like to become an Affiliate Member, please contact our office.

### Platinum (\$100 and above)

**Angola Seed & Supply**  
Angola, IN

**City of Angola/Trine University MS4**  
Angola, IN

**Farm Credit Services Mid America**  
LaGrange, IN

**North Central Co-Op**  
Wabash, IN

**The Nature Conservancy**  
Angola, IN

**CM Holman Farms**  
Angola, IN

### Gold (\$75 - \$99)

**Aquatic Enhancement Survey, Inc.**  
Angola, IN

**Tom Green Engineering**  
Angola, IN

### Silver (\$50 - \$74)

**Edon Farmer's Co-Op**  
Edon, OH

**Kevin Northup Excavating**  
LaGrange, IN

**Noll Bros. Oil, Inc.**  
Hudson, IN

### Bronze (\$25 - \$49)

**Carper Farm Supply, Inc.**  
Ashley, IN

**Caruso's Restaurant**  
Angola, IN

**Daft Erosion Control, LLC**  
Ada, OH

**Stroh Farm Supply**  
Stroh, IN



## Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

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**Conserving the Natural Resources of  
Steuben County for Future Generations!**

You can help us go green by subscribing to the newsletter via e-mail. Visit our website and click on the Newsletter tab or call the office to change your subscription at any time. You may change your subscription to *The Conservator* at any time.

*All programs and activities of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and its Partnership Agencies are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.*

## Upcoming Events...

Nov. 27 & 28 <sup>th</sup>	County Offices Closed Happy Thanksgiving!!
Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Dec. 25 & 26 <sup>th</sup>	County Offices Closed Merry Christmas!!
Jan. 11-13 <sup>th</sup>	IASWCD Annual Conference in Indianapolis Office Closed
Jan. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Feb. 19 <sup>th</sup>	Lakes Country Cluster - Stewardship Network Workshop on Invasives and restoration - Planning still in process - Call to make your reservation
March 4 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning underway - Stay tuned for more details
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Conservation Farming Expo 8:00 am @ Potawatomi Inn - Pokagon State Pk.

*\*\*For more events and updates please check the website.\*\**

*Times and places of meetings are subject to change due to unforeseen issues.*

## Septic System Education

The District hosted two septic system awareness workshops, "Flushing into the Future," on August 21<sup>st</sup> and October 23<sup>rd</sup>. These workshops were sponsored by the Steuben County and Allen County SWCD and the Steuben County Health Department.

Septic awareness for home owners and business operators is an essential step for ensuring optimal water quality in Steuben County. Failing or misused systems can be responsible for



contributing significant sources of contaminants to local water resources. The goal of the workshop was to educate septic system owners about choosing experienced installers, suitable site selection, proper construction, acceptable uses, regular necessary maintenance, and how to identify problem systems. A presentation was given by Health Department Environmental Sanitarian Kris Thomas, and participants were given the chance to ask questions of several experts from the health department. Participants were also treated to door prizes and refreshments. If you have questions about locating your septic system or questions about maintenance, please contact the Health Department at (260) 668-1000, ext. 1500.