



Conserving the Natural Resources of Steuben County for Future Generations!

# The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

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SPRING 2013

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Conservation Camp
- Regional Science Fair
- Annual Meeting
- Rain Barrels
- Upper Saint Joseph
- Pigeon River
- Prairie River
- Fawn River

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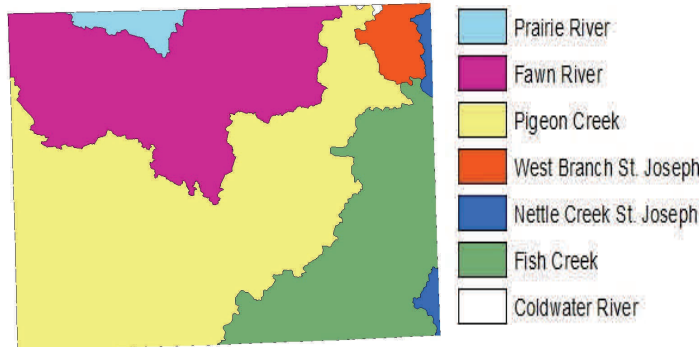
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Scan this symbol with your smartphone to link to our website.



## Where Does Your Water Shed?

Steuben County



You may or may not know the answer to this question, but watersheds are broken down into Hydraulic Unit Codes (HUC). The HUC 08 watersheds are Southeastern Lake Michigan (St Joe River West), that drains to Lake Michigan, and the Western Lake Erie Basin (St. Joe River East), that drains to Lake Erie. Lake Michigan and Lake Erie are a part of the Great Lakes Basin.

These HUC 8's are then

broken down into HUC 10 watersheds. The HUC 10 watersheds in Steuben County are Prairie River, Fawn River, Pigeon Creek, and Coldwater River, West Branch, Fish Creek, and Nettle Creek.

This year is an exciting time for us: With the beginning of the Fawn River Management Plan Grant in early 2013, a Watershed Management Plan is underway in every HUC 10 watershed of the county. Watershed plans allow the Dis-

trict to apply for implementation dollars for conservation best management practices.

### Western Lake Erie Basin:

In 2012, The St. Joe Watershed Initiative received a Clean Water Section 319(h) Grant from the Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to fund the development of a Watershed Management Plan in the **Upper St. Joe River Watershed** and Implement Conservation Best Management Practices in critical areas identified in the Plan.

In Steuben County, this plan encompasses the Eastern portion of the county, covering the West Branch St. Joseph, Fish Creek, and Nettle Creek. As a partner in the grant, the Steuben SWCD serves on the Steering Committee to provide relevant data and input to the plan consultant, and assists with planning and carrying out educational events throughout the watershed. The plan will be

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Rain Barrels - Get one today at RISE

Many states, including Indiana, endure droughts in the summer months, and thousands of cities enforce water bans to conserve municipal water during these times. Take a proactive approach this year, and purchase a rain barrel from the Rehabilitation & Industrial Services Enterprises, Inc.'s *RISE Creations*.

Rain barrels are an excellent way to conserve resources and reduce the amount of well or municipal water you use. Rain water also has no calcium or lime build-up, less sediment and dissolved salts, and is softer and naturally warmer than tap water, making it the perfect choice for watering your garden. Rain barrels also reduce the amount of rain water that flows from your roof into the local storm drain or water body, so "RISE Up to Reduce Your Storm Water," and help the environment. Rain barrels are

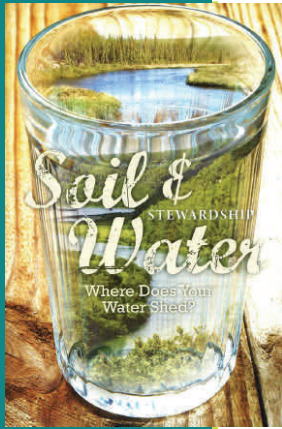
available from RISE, Inc. for \$50. Contact them at 260-665-9408 if you are interested.

Originally partnering with the SWCD to produce and distribute over 240 rain barrels through a National Conservation Foundation grant in 2011, RISE has now incorporated the rain barrels into their own product line, selling approximately 40 barrels since taking over the program in 2012.

*RISE Creations* offers a variety of products, each one meticulously handmade at RISE, Inc. These activities provide opportunities for adults with disabilities to have structured, meaningful, alternative day activities. Their diverse product line includes: Bird, Bat, and Butterfly Houses; Bottle Cap Jewelry; Flower Hair bows including crochet headbands; Decoupage

*(Continued on page 2)*

# What's happening in your Watershed:



Where does your water shed??

(Continued from page 1)

completed in 2015 and will be available to the public by contacting the office.

## **Southeastern Lake Michigan: Pigeon Creek Watershed**

In January, the SWCD began a new three-year IDEM Grant. This grant aims to revise the existing Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan (PCWMP) from 2006 and implement both Agricultural and Urban Conservation Best Management Practices in current critical areas designated in the revision.

The revision of the PCWMP is currently underway. Northwater Consulting is busily reviewing and compiling all data gathered, conservation practices installed, population changes, and land use changes, etc. that have taken place since the present plan was developed. Two PCWMP Steering Committee meetings have already been held; one gathering public input for this revision. The entire Pigeon Creek Watershed will be represented in this revision, encompassing the sub-watershed of Turkey Creek into the Plan, which was not represented in the original plan.

Jeff Boeckler from Northwater, has also met one-on-one with several landowners in the watershed to gather additional insight into problems they have witnessed on their property or in the watershed. If you would like to be involved in the planning and revision process, we would love

to hear your ideas, have you on the PCWMP Steering Committee or meet with Northwater to add your perspective.

During this revision, monthly water testing will take place on 16 sites throughout the watershed. Scott Banfield, from Aquatic Enhancement and Survey, is conducting the sampling that began in March. After this revision is complete, sampling continues quarterly for the remainder of the three year grant.

The sampling regime morphed out of the Steuben County Lakes Council's water testing program (started in 2008). The Lake Council conducts sampling three times a year on approximately 57-60 sites throughout Steuben County. The City of Angola/Trine University MS4, and the Steuben County Drainage Board are also assisting the Lakes Council with their testing program. Water monitoring results can accessed online on the SWCD website, the Lakes Council website or the County GIS.

## **Prairie River**

In 2011, The Branch County, Michigan Conservation District was awarded a two year Section 319(h) grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to write a Watershed Management Plan for the Prairie River Watershed.

The southern part of the Prairie River Watershed lies in Steuben County, encompassing Barton Lake and Lake Pleasant. The Steuben SWCD has been serving on the Prairie River Watershed

Steering Committee, providing data and input about this area, throughout the last two years. The result of this project will be a comprehensive management plan that can be used for future water quality improvement and protection efforts. When completed, the plan will be available to the public, and our office will be able to use this plan to potentially apply for grant funding to implement conservation practices in any critical areas identified in Steuben County.

## **Fawn River**

In early 2013, the LaGrange County SWCD received a IDEM Clean Water Section 205(j) Grant. The grant provides funding for water quality management planning. The Fawn River watershed covers sections of LaGrange and Steuben Counties in Indiana, and St. Joseph and Branch Counties in Michigan. The area is wide spread and has a large number of lakes in St. Joseph County, Michigan and in Steuben County, Indiana.

There will be 54 site specific areas in the watershed that will have monthly water testing, this includes sites that the Steuben County Lakes Council have tested in the past. Water flow will be measured at some sites quarterly. Dave Arrington from SNRT, Inc. found that the watershed contains an abundance of wetlands and marshes. We would love to hear your input on the Fawn River Watershed, please contact the office with any concerns or questions.



Photo By: Brian Musser

## Rise: Rain Barrels & more available

(Continued from page 1)

bottles, including custom orders; Light up bottles; Custom made wood signs; and new to the product line - **Custom screen t-shirt printing.**

Many of these products can also be purchased from their booth at the American-Made Shopper Store, Pawsitively Paradise, and the Pokagon Veterinary Hospital in Angola. A percentage of all RISE Creations' sales is put back into the community. In addition, a scholarship will be created in memory of Joyce Hevel for scholars who choose to pursue high-

er education in the areas of special needs.

A new program at RISE, Inc. this year is "Together We Grow." This is a farm to fork program in collaboration with Trine University and Bon Appétit. "Together We Grow" will produce vegetables and herbs to be purchased by Bon Appétit at Trine, giving RISE clients an opportunity to learn gardening skills, which will increase independence and self-sufficiency. Please contact RISE at 260-665-9408 if you are interested in volunteering or donating to this program.

# Youth Education

**Envirothon:** This annual contest for the Northeast Area was held at Peabody Library in Columbia City and had 9 teams participating. Teams of five students representing a school or organization competed by answering questions covering natural resource areas. The topics were Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils/Land Use, Wildlife, and a Current Issue: "Sustainable Range and Pasture Management: Balancing Traditional and Non-Agricultural Uses".

**Regional Science Fair:** Staff members from two local SWCDs helped judge at the Tri-State Science Fair in March for the Conservation Award. There were many excellent Conservation-related projects including what types of Toilet Paper were best for your septic system, best manure usages, water testing of lakes, and possi-

ble materials for energy production. Please see our website for a list of the winners.

### Soil and Water Stewardship

**Week:** In honor of this annual celebration running from April 28th to May 5th, Educational activity books were passed out to the MSD of Steuben County and Fremont Elementary Schools.

### Upcoming Events:

- \* **Conservation Camp:** Sponsored by the DeKalb, Elkhart, LaGrange, Steuben, and Whitley Conservation Districts, three one-day camps will be held this summer in LaGrange, Steuben, and Whitley County (see upcoming events on back page for days and locations). Registration forms will be available through the County SWCD offices.

### Conservation Officer speaking about Wildlife with Envirothon Participants



Photo By: Martin Franke

- \* Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy is holding a program called **Knee High Naturalists** for children ages 6-12, to promote understanding and appreciation of the lake environment. Events are held each Wednesday in July from 10am-12pm. The events are free, though donations are greatly appreciated.
- \* **Loaner kits** are available for those trained in Hoosier Riverwatch. Please contact the Steuben County SWCD for loaner kit or for more information on these events.

## Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2013 Affiliate Members. The donations received from these individuals and business 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

**Angola Seed & Supply**  
Angola, IN

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

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

**Farmer's State Bank**  
LaGrange, IN

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

**Moody & Crew**  
Fremont, IN

**The Nature Conservancy**  
Angola, IN

### Silver

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

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

**D & J Habitat Restoration**  
LaOtto, IN

**Diggin' & Dozin, Inc.**  
Angola, IN

**Kevin Northup Excavating**  
LaGrange, IN

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

**Tom Green Engineering**  
Angola, IN

### Bronze

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

**Caruso's Restaurant**  
Angola, IN

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

**Hoham Feed & Supply**  
Auburn, IN

**Stroh Farm Supply**  
Stroh, IN

## Annual Meeting

On March 13<sup>th</sup>, we held our 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting at the Witmer Clubhouse at Trine University. Highlights of the evening included our current Vice-Chairman of the Board, Greg Hughes, being re-elected to serve another three years as an SWCD Supervisor; and Susan Brocksmith, our Keynote Speaker for the evening, giving an insightful presentation on Soil Health to our audience. Susan is an Agri-Business Professor at Vincennes University and also runs a family farm with her husband and daughters. Earlier in the day, Susan was also able to speak to an Angola High School Class stressing the importance of appearance when meeting potential employers or

associates.

The evening was enjoyed by all as attendees were treated to music, which was provided during the meal by a local quartet, Common Ground; and a Hog Roast Dinner and Desserts catered by Mike Holman and Bon Appétit Catering. Activities of the District throughout 2012 were also summarized by current Board members and staff.

Thanks to all who joined us for our annual "Celebration of Conservation," and we hope you will join us next year. Keep an eye open for the event in future newsletters and on our website.



Photo By: Kayleen Hart



## Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

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1220 N 200 W  
Angola, IN 46703  
260-665-3211 x3



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www.steubenswcd.org

**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...

- May 27<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day (Office Closed)
- June 4<sup>th</sup> Upper St. Joseph Public Meeting  
6PM @ Arrowhead Lodge; Lake Seneca, OH
- June 12<sup>th</sup> Steuben SWCD Board Meeting  
7:15 pm @ USDA Service Center
- June 20<sup>th</sup> Conservation Camp  
TBA @ ParGil Natural Resources Learning Center
- July 10<sup>th</sup> Steuben SWCD Board Meeting  
7:15 pm @ USDA Service Center
- July 3<sup>rd</sup> Knee High Naturalists  
10am -12pm @ Clear Lake Yacht Club
- July 4<sup>th</sup> Independence Day (Office Closed)
- July 18<sup>th</sup> Conservation Camp  
TBA @ Pokagon State Park
- July 24<sup>th</sup> Agronomy Field Day  
8:30am-3pm @ The Andersons

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

**Spring is finally here!  
Found this toad in  
a forage planting.**

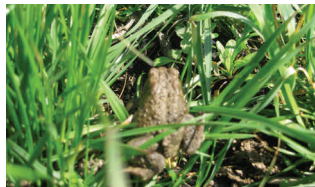


Photo By: Mandy Courtright

### USDA FSA/NRCS

#### Farm Service Agency

GENERAL CRP SIGNUP: We will be having a general CRP signup from May 20<sup>th</sup> thru June 14<sup>th</sup>. If you have a current CRP contract that expires September 30, 2013, this is your opportunity to re-enroll that acreage back into CRP. You can also submit offers for acreage not currently in CRP. Soil rental rates and cover/practice requirements have not been finalized at this point. We are expecting an increase in soil rental rates. Please call the office for more details.

DCP/ACRE SIGNUP: We are currently enrolling farms in the 2013 DCP/ACRE program. Signup will end on August 2, 2013. This program was scheduled to end in 2012 but was extended for 2013. Call the office for more details.

REPORTING (CERTIFYING) PLANTED ACRES: The deadline to report your planted acres is July 15, 2013. Once you get planted, please call to schedule an appointment to certify acres. (260) 665-3211, ext. 2.

#### Natural Resources Conservation Services

The Steuben NRCS office is proud to announce that 12 new contracts have been funded through the Environmental Incentive Program (EQIP), Agriculture Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), and the EQIP Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) bringing in over \$350,000 in financial assistance to enable Steuben County producers to use conservation practices such as No-till, Cover Crops, and Nutrient Management on over 4,500 acres. If you are interested in utilizing conservation practices on your property please contact the office to make an appointment. We look forward to assisting the producers of Steuben County to meet their conservation needs.