



Conserving the Natural
Resources of Steuben County
for Future Generations!

The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 4

FALL 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**Staff Changes
at the Steuben
SWCD** 2

**Pigeon Creek
Watershed
Management
Plan 319 grant
update** 2

**Conservation
Workshop
Success** 3

**Phosphorus
Soil Sampling
for Western
Lake Erie Basin** 3

**2015 Affiliate
Members** 3

**Farm Service
Agency (FSA)
Updates** 4

**Upcoming
Events** 4

Travis Fifer honored as River Friendly Farmer

Steuben County resident Travis Fifer was among 48 farmers from around the state, who received the River Friendly Farmer award on August 19th at the Indiana State Fair. This award recognizes individuals who utilize farm management practices that help to protect Indiana's rivers, lakes, and streams.

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Travis for the award based upon his management practices including conservation tillage, cover crops, and nutrient management which reduces sediment and nutrient runoff into area waterbodies.

Travis farms and raises cattle on land that has been owned by his family for generations. He feels it is his responsibility to care for everything, including the environment, in order to be a good steward of the land.

In 2014, Travis worked with the United States Agriculture Service's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the SWCD to install a waste storage facility where manure can be stored prior to field application. Waste storage facilities help in reducing/eliminating runoff.

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.

Travis and the other farmers who received the River Friendly award at the ceremony were congratulated by Lieutenant Governor Sue



Don Villwock, President of Indiana Farm Bureau, left, and Lieutenant Governor Sue Ellspermann, right, present Travis Fifer and his family—wife Cathrine, and sons, Matthew and Eric— with the River Friendly Farmer Award during the Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis. Photo by Kris Vance, NRCS

Ellspermann, ISDA Director Ted McKinney, President of Indiana Farm Bureau Don Villwock, NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, and IASWCD President Mike Starkey.

This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River Friendly Farmers in Indiana since the award's beginning in 2000 to 809. Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may 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.

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



Staff Changes at the Steuben SWCD

At the end of August, the District lost an incredible asset that has been with the SWCD for 12 years. Kayleen Hart, Administrative Coordinator, accepted a new position as a Program Technician for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Her new position offers her a career advancement, as well as many new and exciting challenges. Those of you who worked with Kayleen know that she is a dedicated employee who worked with many landowners in the county to implement both agricultural and urban best management practices (BMPs). She brought in over \$1.2 million dollars in grant funds, which offered financial incentives to assist Steuben County landowners with adopting BMPs. She will be greatly missed, but you are still likely to see Kayleen in the USDA Service Center since she only moved to the FSA office next door. We thank Kayleen for her public service, dedication, and passion to "Make a Healthy Watershed". Janel Meyer replaced Kayleen as the Administrative Coordinator. She started with the District

as the Resource Conservationist in April. Janel has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries & Aquatic Science from Purdue University and brings over twenty years of experience working in natural resources to her current role. Our new Resource Conservationist, Tara M. Lee, joined the team at the end of October. Tara has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Trine University and comes to us from FSA.

Janel and Tara are both passionate about resource conservation and education, and look forward to meeting and working with the many landowners of Steuben County. Remember, regardless of where we live, **everyone** can make a healthy watershed.

Former SWCD Administrative Assistant Kayleen Hart (right) is now a Program Technician for FSA.



Grant Updates...

Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan 319 grant

In August, the SWCD was granted an amendment to our Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan grant agreement. Our original end date of January 16, 2016 was extended to January 16, 2017. The extension was granted due to personnel changes, which created delays in completing the implementation task in the time allotted by the original grant term.

So what does this mean? This means we are still able to assist with funding Conservation Best Management Practices, such as tree plantings, buffer/filter strips, hay plantings, or cover crops, in priority sub-watersheds throughout the Pigeon Creek Watershed. If you live in this area and are interested in seeing if you are eligible to participate, please call the office. We would love to work with you to improve the quality of the soil and water on your property.

Now is a great time for planning those 2016 projects. If you are thinking about adding conservation practices, we can meet with you to complete conservation plans

and associated forms. Waiting until the last minute could result in funding not being available for your project.

Pigeon Creek



★ Conservation Workshop Success ★

The Steuben County SWCD held a successful Conservation Workshop with Moody Farms and Moody & Crew LLC on August 19, 2015 in a partnership with the LaGrange County SWCD, Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, USDA, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and Purdue Extension with 90 farmers from the tristate region attending.

Keynote speaker Dr. Ray Weil, University of Maryland, shared Soil Health practices that Great Lakes farmers can use to voluntarily reduce effects of agriculture on the environment. Key conservation practices for Soil Health included repetitive use of No-Till called Never-Till, enhanced nutrient management to ensure the right source of nutrients are applied at the right rate in the right

place during the right part of crop production, and cover crops to build soil organic matter, structure, and cycle nutrients.

Indiana farmer Dan DeSutter of DeSutter Farms discussed the economics of using Soil Health practices as a systems-approach to farming. The payback of this approach can lower input expenses including fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide application, through the cycling of nutrients, weed suppression, and improving soil biology; all benefits that can be achieved through the use of a Soil Health system.

Farmers were able to see Soil Health practices in use by visiting Moody Farms fields planted with cereal rye and oilseed radishes. Tyson Franks of Moody & Crew LLC discussed the challenges and benefits their operation has faced using cover crops.

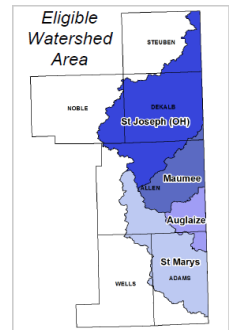


Approximately 300 area 4th graders spent the day at Pokagon State Park September 8th learning about conservation. Stations included sessions on wildlife, soil, forestry, fish management, 4H natural resource projects, and water/water safety. Above, a group of students learn about fish management from Fisheries Biologist Larry Koza.

Free Phosphorus Soil Sampling Program for Producers in Western Lake Erie Basin

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a new program available providing **FREE Soil Sampling** to producers in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Soil sampling for this program will only be done on agricultural fields, which includes pastures.

For more information, contact Jill Krause, Resource Specialist ISDA Division of Soil Conservation at (260) 417-1313 or jikrause@isda.in.gov.



Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2015 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

Farm Credit Services Mid America
LaGrange, IN

The Nature Conservancy
Angola, IN

Gold (\$75 - \$99)

Aquatic Enhancement Survey, Inc.
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

Hoham Feed and Seed
Auburn, IN

Stroh Farm Supply
Stroh, IN

Sue A. Myers
Angola, IN



Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

Peachtree Plaza 200

1220 N 200 W

Angola, IN 46703

260-665-3211 x3

www.steubenswcd.org



facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD

**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. 26 & 27 th	County Offices Closed Happy Thanksgiving!!
Dec. 5 th	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Dec. 9 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Dec. 24 & 25 th	County Offices Closed Merry Christmas!!
Jan. 1 st	County Offices Closed Happy New Year!!
Jan. 13 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Jan. 14 - 15 th	IASWCD Annual Conference in Indianapolis Office Closed
March 2 nd	Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning underway - Stay tuned for more details

For more events and updates please check the website.

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

FSA Updates - Quick updates,

call the office (260-665-3211, ext. 2) for additional details:

- 1) **ARC PLC payments:** Payments have recently come in, and should be released soon.
- 2) **CRP General signup:** The CRP is a long term (10-15 year) program which takes cropland out of production and devotes the acreage to conservation or wildlife uses. There has been a general CRP signup period announced that runs from **12-1-2015 through 2-26-2016**. The general signup includes practices such as grass/legume plantings and general tree planting practices, wildlife habitats, pollinator habitats, wildlife food plots and others. Feel free to contact us ahead of the signup if you have questions about the program.
- 3) **Grain Loans:** Price support loans will again be available this year for corn, soybeans, and wheat. Once your grain is harvested, you can apply for a 9 month loan using the grain as collateral for the loan. Interest rates are usually lower than what is available from commercial sources.
- 4) **2016 wheat certification:** The deadline to report fall seeded 2016 wheat is **12-15-15**.

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