



Conserving the Natural  
Resources of Steuben County  
for Future Generations!

# The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

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## HAPPY SPRING!



Photo compliments of [Indiana NRCS](#).

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



## Updates from the USDA Farm Service Agency

### FSA News:

By Thomas R. Saggars  
County Executive Director,  
Steuben County FSA Office

### NEW FARM BILL INFORMATION

The new farm bill, The Agricultural Act of 2014, was signed into law in February. The Bill creates many new programs that FSA will administer. Timing of signup for the new farm bill programs will vary with the specific programs. Program details and signup for the new commodity programs will be furnished later this year, likely after harvest. Program details and signup for the new milk programs will also happen later this year.

However, signup for the new disaster programs has already started. Livestock producers may qualify for LFP (basically a pasture loss program) or LIP (a livestock loss program). These programs are effective for 2012 losses. Tree producers may qualify for the TAP program for losses experienced in 2012, as well. Call the FSA office at 260-665-3211, extension 2 for more details on these programs.

### COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION

This year, we are holding an election for county committee member that will represent the southern district of the county. This includes the townships of: Salem, Steuben, Otsego, and Richland. You may nominate yourself or other eligible producers as candidate for COC election.

Nominations must be made on an FSA-669A form and be received in the FSA office by August 1, 2014. Call the office with any questions.

### SOYBEAN REFERENDUM

Eligible soybean producers may request a referendum of the soybean check off program from May 5 through May 30, 2014. Call the office for more details.

### BE CAREFUL WHEN WORKING AROUND WETLAND AREAS

There can be severe penalties assessed for converting wetland areas. Drainage actions such as tiling or ditching (including installation of new drainage or improving current drainage) can be considered conversion actions. Cutting woody vegetation (trees or brush) can also be considered conversion actions.

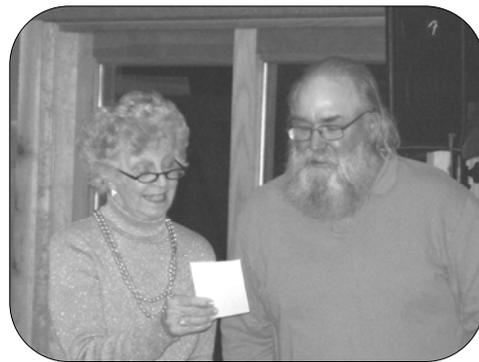
Before you take a backhoe, bulldozer, or chainsaw into any area that could possibly be considered a wet area, please contact our office. If you have picked up a new farm (new owner or operator), check with the office to find out if there are any current determinations on file. IT IS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY WHEN DEALING WITH WET AREAS.

### REPORTING PLANTED ACRES & CRP ACRES

Once you have completed planting, it is recommended that you certify your planted acres. This must be completed by July 15, 2014. If you have CRP acreages, it is required that they also be certified by July 15, 2014. We are able to take the reports now.

## 64th Annual Meeting

The District held its 64th Annual Meeting on March 5th at the Trine University Witmer Clubhouse. This year's annual report highlighted soil health as a key to producing healthy crops and allowing producers to utilize all available nutrients and water. One way to improve soil health is to integrate the use of cover crops into the current crop rotation, using species such as cereal rye, tillage radish, clover, sorghum, and annual rye grass, among others. Currently, four percent of the cropland in Steuben County is protected using cover crops. Other management practices promoting healthy soil include no-till farming and the development of comprehensive nutrient management plans, all of which have been implemented in the county.



Steuben County Commissioner, Loretta Smart gives the Oath of Office to new SWCD Board Supervisor, Chuck Howard.

### Looking for landowners:

Make sure to stop in and see us to find out about developing a conservation plan for your property, and our cost-share and incentive payment programs to assist you with installing practices such as cover crops, tree plantings, hay plantings, and many more. Both NRCS and the SWCD offer programs to improve soil and water quality, and we'd love to help you get started. Come visit us or give us a call.



Jeff Boeckler, Northwater Consulting

Our keynote speaker for the evening was Jeff Boeckler from Northwater Consulting, who recently completed a revision of the 2006 Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan (PCWMP). The updated Plan showed nine lakes and 179 stream miles to be impaired by state water quality standards. However, it also highlighted the improvements and advancements that have been, and continue to be made in the watershed. Northwater identified high quality wetland areas in need of protection throughout the watershed. One initial step for improvement in the watershed would be to investigate and mitigate pollution from leaking septic systems. The SWAMM model developed as part of the watershed management plan indicated bacteria reduction efforts should be focused in the Little Turkey, Silver Lake, and Long Lake subwatersheds. Nutrients and sedimentation are elevated in the areas within Long Lake, Pigeon Lake, and Mud Creek. This area includes part of the City of Angola. Flooding issues still exist at Long Lake, Mud Creek, and the headwaters of Turkey Creek. The number one recommendation of the plan is the implementation of cover crops. This practice is relatively easy to implement compared to other conservation practices. Boeckler stated that if cover crops were used extensively by land owners in the watershed there would be a very noticeable impact on water quality. Last year Steuben County had about 3,330 acres of cover crops planted by farmers. Other conservation practices recommended in the Plan included installation of more stretches of Two-stage Ditches and filter strips. The revision of the PCWMP is complete and the final draft has been submitted to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for approval, since funding for the revision came from an IDEM 319 grant. Comments have been received back from IDEM and these comments are currently being incorporated into the plan for final approval. A copy of the updated Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan is available at the SWCD office, located at 1220 North County Road 200 West in Angola. If you are interested in seeing a copy or have any questions, feel free to give us a call at 260-665-3211, ext. 3.

Other highlights of the evening included the SWCD board welcoming Chuck Howard as a newly elected District Supervisor, and Tyson Franks, 2013 River Friendly Farmer, speaking on his farming experience in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

Excerpts borrowed from a Herald Republican article by Amy Oberlin.



A tillage radish from a field of cover crops this past season.

# Upcoming Workshops - Exciting Summer Events:

## Urban Workshop:

### Water Wise—Managing Water Resources in Your Home and Garden

On Thursday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 6 pm, a workshop will be hosted by The Fremont Public Library featuring best management practices that homeowners can implement such as rain barrels, rain gardens, and pervious concrete, which will assist in improving water quality. This discussion will be presented by the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and City of Angola/Trine University Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). Please join us for an interesting evening learning about these urban practices. The Fremont Library is located at 1004 West Toledo Street in Fremont. Please call the SWCD with any questions at 260-665-3211, ext. 3.

## Agronomy Field Day:

Mark your calendars for the 2014 Agronomy Field Day scheduled for Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup>. All agricultural producers are welcome to attend this educational workshop which is hosted by The Anderson's Inc., in conjunction with DeKalb, Steuben, and Williams County SWCD's and Purdue Extension. Participants are able to see in-field presentations on a variety of topics, such as variable rate Nitrogen application and cover crop management, as well as enjoy other workshops after lunch. The day runs from approximately 8:30 am until 3 pm at the Anderson's facility in Waterloo, and PARP credits are offered with attendance. More details will be available soon, so contact the SWCD if you are interested in attending and we will provide you with the complete agenda when it is available.

## The Steuben County 4H Fair:

Purdue Extension will again be hosting the annual 4H fair out at the Steuben County Fairgrounds, on Crooked Lake, off CR 200 West. The fun-filled week will begin on Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, with 4H participant project check-in, and continue until Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, when the animal auction takes place. For a full list of events, please check out the 4H fair schedule at <http://bit.ly/1sIXAsG>. Hope to see you out at the Fairgrounds—There are always a lot of fun activities during the week. You can also check out the SWCD Booth in the Lion's Building, which always features interesting water quality topics and fun items to take home.

## Lake Life Class:

Now entering its third year, the Lake Life Series is back. Beginning Tuesday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the class meet once a week, from 6 to 8:30 pm, for six weeks. New this year will be class field trips. We are planning to hold one class at the Trine Recreational Facility, another at Lake James, a third in Orland, and our final class at Caruso's Restaurant on October 28<sup>th</sup>. Two sessions will still be held at the Angola Community Center in the Auditorium. Don't miss this awesome opportunity to learn all about the wonderful Natural Resources we have in Steuben County. Cost of the class is \$15 for returning students, and \$50 for new students. This class is sponsored by the SWCD, The Steuben County Lakes Council, and Purdue Extension. Please call our office to register, or for more information.

## 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 - \$75)

- 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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[www.steubenswcd.org](http://www.steubenswcd.org)



[facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD](https://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...

May 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Urban Workshop 6:00 PM @ Fremont Public Library
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	Memorial Day - (Office closed)
June 7 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
June 11 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	Independence Day (Office Closed)
July 5 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
July 9 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
July 17 <sup>th</sup> - 25 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County 4H Fair @ Fairgrounds 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
July 31 <sup>st</sup>	Agronomy Field Day 8:30 AM @ The Andersons, Waterloo
Aug. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Aug. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center

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

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

## SOIL HEALTH SNAPSHOT

Soil Health is an approach to managing soil to its optimum potential through a system of conservation practices.

### Soil Health Practices

- ◆ Functioning No-Till System
- ◆ Cover Crops
- ◆ Nutrient Management
- ◆ Pest Management
- ◆ Buffers

### Soil Health Benefits

- ◆ Balances biological community
- ◆ High organic matter that retains and cycles nitrogen and sequesters carbon
- ◆ Stabilizes soil aggregates
- ◆ Resists the erosive forces of water and wind
- ◆ Improves water infiltration
- ◆ Manages the effects of flood or drought
- ◆ Reduces fertilizer and fuel costs
- ◆ Enhances wildlife habitat
- ◆ Reduces nutrient and sediment pollution to water bodies



Photo compliments of [Indiana NRCS](http://Indiana.NRCS).

<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>