



Conserving the Natural
Resources of Steuben County
for Future Generations!

The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

VOLUME 40, ISSUE 4

FALL 2017

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Study Emphasizes the Value of Conservation Practices



Indiana farmers in the six counties of the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) who implement conservation best management practices are having a positive impact on Lake Erie, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). This report by USDA's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) shows these practices reduce phosphorus losses from fields by an estimated 61% and reduce the amount of phosphorus being delivered to Lake Erie by an estimated 41%.

This is the second of a two-part report on the WLEB, which has historically suffered from high levels of nutrients and sediment associated with human activities in the region. The first report focused on edge-of-field losses; this report focuses on sediment and nutrients entering streams, rivers and Lake Erie.

The voluntary conservation practices in use by farmers in the entire basin, which also includes portions of Ohio and Michigan, in 2012:

- Reduced sediment losses from fields by an estimated 80% and reduced the amount of sediment being delivered to Lake Erie by an estimated 40%.
- Reduced phosphorus and nitrogen lost from cultivated cropland fields by 61% and 26%, respectively;

- Reduced phosphorus and nitrogen deposition into the streams and rivers of the lake's basin by 72% and 37%, respectively; and
- Reduced phosphorus and nitrogen entering the lake by 41% and 17%, respectively.

CEAP uses sampling and modeling techniques to yield these results, quantifying the impacts of conservation practices adopted across the region.

While many WLEB producers have worked independently to curb agricultural runoff into the Great Lakes, recent Farm Bill programs have accelerated conservation efforts on private lands located in targeted watersheds throughout the region. Coordinated and targeted efforts through the WLEB Initiative, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) and Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) provide additional funding and leverage partnerships in priority watersheds, including those that flow into the Western Lake Erie Basin. Six northeast Indiana counties are encompassed in this watershed including: Steuben, DeKalb, Noble, Allen, Wells and Adams.

Although there is still work to be done, this report shows private land owners are responding to regional needs and putting conservation plans into action to improve water quality across the basin. To read the full report, visit:

https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcseprd1355824.pdf

Graphic courtesy of the
Indiana State Department of Agriculture

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



2018 Tree Sale

The Indiana Division of Forestry began taking orders at their State Tree Nurseries on Oct. 2 for the Spring of 2018. The State Nurseries offer more than 40 species of native tree and shrub seedlings to be planted in Indiana for conservation purposes (timber, windbreaks, wildlife food and habitat, watershed and soil protection, reclamation and education). You have the option to order tree seedlings using the order form or the DoF new online ordering platform. To access the order form, visit:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/3606.htm>

If you would like to use the new online platform, visit the above website, scroll to the bottom of the page, and click on the "Forestry Exchange" link found under the Online Services information.

We will again offer tree pick-up for county landowners. Trees are picked up at the nursery in the Spring & delivered to the SWCD Angola office. We ask for a small donation for this service (overall, this method of pick-up is the least expensive option). If you are interested in having us pick up your trees in the Spring, complete the **3rd party pickup section** on the order form (see below) when placing your order.

- **Check** the Jasper-Pulaski box
- Write **Extension** next to Name
- Write **Steuben** next to County
- Enter **260-668-1000 x 1400** for the telephone number

2017 River Friendly Farmer: Dewey and Marsha Powers

Out of 58,000 farms in the state of Indiana, one farm in Steuben County received the statewide award of River-Friendly Farmer at the Indiana State Fair on Farmers' Day, which was celebrated at the fair on August 16.

Dewey and Marsha Powers received the River Friendly Farmer Award from the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) for the work they do on their land to protect Indiana's natural resources. The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) nominated Powers Farm for the award based upon their management practices that protect our rivers, lakes, and streams.

Dewey and Marsha own a hardwood tree farm located in the Upper St. Joseph River-Western Lake Erie Basin watershed. Their land exhibits filter strips and a 60-acre hardwood tree planting. Surface drains and erosion control structures have been installed as well as a two-stage ditch and a Healthy Forest Reserve Program conservation easement installation in 2015. Some of the property was entered in Classified Forest and Wildlands in 2015, and food plots were added in 2016. The benefits of the two-stage ditch include improved channel stability from reduced water flow and a reduction in the amount of sediment and nutrients being transported. The control structures, filter strips, and tree planting have also reduced the amount of runoff into Fish Creek. The entire focus of Dewey and Marsha Power's conservation plan is to preserve a sustainable environment for current and future generations. They are members of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and have worked with the District to host several conservation field days on their farm.



Pictured with Marsh and Dewey Powers (center) are Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch (left) and Indiana Farm Bureau President Randy Kron (right).

Indiana NRCS Announces EQIP Application Deadline

Indiana's agricultural producers who want to improve natural resources and address concerns on their land are encouraged to sign up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). **December 15, 2017 will be the EQIP application deadline in Indiana to be considered for 2018 funding.**

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve soil health, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

Producers interested in EQIP should submit a signed application to the local NRCS field office. Applications submitted by the **December 15th deadline** will be evaluated for the funding period submitted. Participants in EQIP must meet eligibility requirements. NRCS staff will work with producers to determine eligibility and complete necessary worksheets and rankings in order for the applicant to compete for funding.

For more information about EQIP, please contact our office at (260) 665-3211 **Ext. 3**. For more information about EQIP and other technical and financial assistance available through Indiana NRCS conservation programs, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/financial/eqip/>.

Farm Service Agency (FSA) Updates:

Please call the office (260-665-3211 **Ext. 2**) for more details.

1) Upcoming Perennial Forage and Wheat Reporting Deadlines – Any newly planted Hay or Pasture ground must be reported by November 15th, 2017, or you will have to pay a late-filing fee. If the ground was planted in previous years, it will not need to be reported again if you have signed a continuous certification form, which rolls the certification over from one year to the next. If you haven't signed a continuous certification form, or are unsure if you have, please check with our office in order to avoid any unnecessary fees.

The deadline to report wheat is December 15, 2017.

Please mark your calendars for these important dates.

2) Any operator changes for 2018 will require a lease or cash rent statement in order for us to add that operator on the farm.

3) Dairy Producers Can Enroll for 2018 MPP Coverage NEW - Secretary Allows Producers to Opt Out for 2018

Beginning on Sept. 1, 2017, dairy producers could begin enrolling for 2018 coverage in the Margin Protection Program (MPP-Dairy). USDA/FSA Secretary Sonny Perdue has utilized additional flexibility this year by allowing dairy producers to decide if they would like to opt out of the program for 2018, and not pay the \$100 administrative fee normally required each year.

To opt out, a producer should not sign up during the annual registration period. By opting out, a producer would not receive any MPP-Dairy benefits if payments are triggered for 2018. The decision would be for 2018 only, and is not retroactive. **Enrollment ends on December 15, 2017 for the 2018 calendar year, so please call us to enroll or with any questions.**



Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Steuben County for Future Generations!**

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Please 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 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

November 4 th	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 AM at the First Congressional United Church of Christ in Angola
November 5 th	Daylight Savings Time Change
November 8 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 6:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
November 10 th	County Offices Closed - Veteran's Day
November 15 th	Perennial Forage Deadline
November 23- 24 th	County Offices Closed Thanksgiving Holiday
December 2 nd	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 AM at the First Congressional United Church of Christ in Angola
December 13 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 6:00 PM @ USDA Service Center
December 15 th	EQIP Application Deadline Wheat Reporting Deadline & Enrollment for 2018 MPP Coverage Ends
December 25- 26 th	County Offices Closed Christmas Holiday

***For more events and updates please check our website**
Times and places of meetings subject to change.*

2017 Affiliate Members

Angola Seed & Supply (Angola, IN)
Aquatic Enhancement & Survey (Angola, IN)
Bill and Diana Clingan (Hudson, IN)
Carper Farm Supply, Inc. (Ashley, IN)
Circle B Park Inc. (Angola, IN)
Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (Fremont, IN)
Daft Erosion Control, LLC (Ada, OH)
Edon Farmers Co-Op (Edon, OH)
Farm Credit Mid-America (LaGrange, IN)
Hoham Feed and Seed (Auburn, IN)
John G. Williamson (Angola, IN)
Johnson Petroleum Inc. (Huntington, IN)
Kevin Northup Excavating (LaGrange, IN)
KFG Turf & Rental (Angola, IN)
Lake James Association (Angola, IN)
Sandhill Environmental Services, LLC (Angola, IN)
Sheets LP Gas (Angola, IN)
Steuben County Lakes Council (Angola, IN)
Stroh Farm Supply (Stroh, IN)
Sue A. Myers (Angola, IN)
Tom Green Engineering (Angola, IN)

Thank You for Your Support!