



Conserving the Natural
Resources of Steuben County
for Future Generations!

The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

VOLUME 41, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2018

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2018 Affiliate Members 2

Farm Service Agency Updates 2

Forest Management in Indiana 3
(continued from page 1)

Upcoming Events 4

Summer Conservation Day Camps 4

National Pollinator Week
June 18 - 24, 2018



Celebrate pollinators!
Spread the word about
what you can do to
protect them.

Need ideas? Give our
office a call!
(Photo by USDA NRCS)

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



Forest Management in Indiana

Spring has been slow to come to the forests and fields of Northern Indiana this year. Where usually splashes of color from emerging wildflowers and swathes of green meet the eye by the end of April, vegetation is finally becoming active enough to notice. Did you notice the one particular shade of light green that first enflamed the understory of our native woodlands, unwelcomed by both foresters and those concerned with the well-being of Indiana's forests? Even as this color heralds the coming of a warmer season and the excitement and growth that happen amongst the trees in summer, the early green in an Indiana forest betrays an inconspicuous threat.

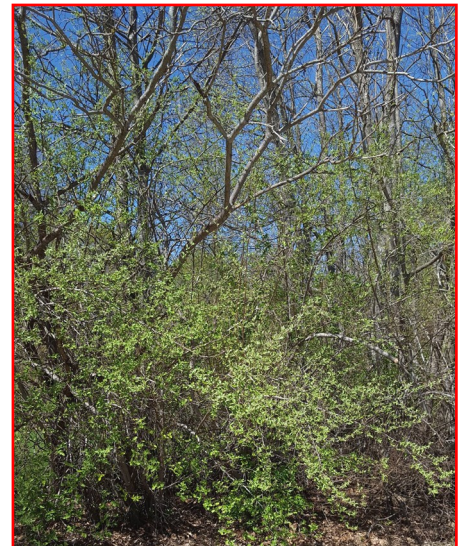
The shrub species you see opening their buds to the sunlight early in the growing season, most likely do not belong here. Asian Bush Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*) and Autumn Olive (*Elaeagnus umbellata*) are two identified, common invasive shrubs in Indiana. They grow as short statured woody brush, often dominating the understory of a forest or open woodland. Both species cast a dense shade, and tend to choke out our native Oaks, Hickories, and Maples. Sun-loving Tulip Tree, Black Cherry, and Black Walnut Trees never have a chance to sprout and grow in a forest infested with Honeysuckle.

To make matters worse, wildlife are hindered by the dense growth of these invasive brush species. Multi-Flora Rose, another invader covered with prickly spines, grabs at not only passing deer and turkey, but has the potential to rip through the coats and pants of people traveling through the woods as well. According to Purdue University, the red berries produced by these shrubs may look appetizing to songbirds, but their nutritional value is sub-par compared to native food sources¹. As invasive plant species spread throughout a forest, the wildlife habitat quality of the area quickly diminishes.

But the forester and landowner may not feel the negative effects of these invaders until the consequences are seen in their pocketbooks and bottom lines. Honeysuckle growth, for example, seems to explode in a forest directly after a timber harvest. The removal of canopy dwelling oaks and walnuts for high quality saw logs and veneer, can certainly be a profitable and sustainable source of income for a forest owner, with harvests occurring in intervals of about 15 years.

But the resulting increase in sunlight reaching the lower levels of the forest canopy

(continued on page 3)



Autumn Olive (photo courtesy of Janel Meyer)

Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2018 Affiliate Members. 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 Level (\$100)

Angola Seed & Supply, LLC (Angola, IN)
Edon Farmers Co-Op (Edon, OH)
Lake George Conservancy (Coldwater, MI)
Tom Green Engineering (Angola, IN)
Lake James Association (Angola, IN)
Moody and Crew, LLC (Fremont, IN)
Sheets LP Gas, L.P. (Angola, IN)
Steuben County Lakes Council (Angola, IN)

Gold Level (\$75)

Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, Inc. (Angola, IN)
Mary Alice & Tom Filbrun (Angola, IN)
Sandhill Environmental Services, LLC (Angola, IN)

Silver Level (\$50)

City of Angola/Trine University MS4
Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy (Fremont, IN)
Tom & Marilyn Deweese (Angola, IN)
Kevin Northup Excavating (LaGrange, IN)

Bronze Level (\$25)

Carper Farm Supply, Inc. (Ashley, IN)
Jerome & Lynn Chandler (Angola, IN)
Bill & Diana Clingan (Hudson, IN)
Daft Erosion Control LLC (Ada, OH)
Hoham Feed & Seed (Auburn, IN)
Mel & Sandy Hathaway (Fremont, IN)
Peter Mountz (Garrett, IN)
Sue A. Myers (Angola, IN)
Stroh Farm Supply (Stroh, IN)
John Williamson (Angola, IN)

Farm Service Agency Updates *Please call the office, 260-665-3211, ext. 2 for additional details.*

1.) ARC PLC signup: Producers on farms with base acres, under the safety net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill, known as the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs, can visit FSA and sign contracts to enroll for the 2018 crop year. **The enrollment period will continue until Aug. 1, 2018.** Since shares and ownership of a farm can change year-to-year, producers on the farm must enroll by signing a contract each program year. **Make your appointment today to get signed up!!**

2.) 2018 Crop Certification: The deadline to report spring-planted 2018 crops is **July 15, 2018.**

3.) Payment Eligibility: Please make sure to update your eligibility when you are in the office. Adjusted Gross Income Forms (AGI's) need completed yearly. Any farming changes, such as adding or dropping a farm, or adjusting acreage will change your farm plan, and the plan will need updated and signed. If you have any fields requiring a wetland or Highly Erodible determination, a new AD-1026 will need completed. Please make sure to report these changes.

4.) All CRP maintenance activities, such as mowing, burning, disking and spraying, must be conducted outside the primary nesting or brood rearing season for wildlife, which for Indiana is April 1 through August 1 each year for contracts which started in 2008. If your contract was approved prior to 2008, then the primary nesting season is March 1 through July 15.

However, spot treatment of noxious weeds (ex. Thistle) that would adversely impact the approved cover may be permitted. Spot treatment is limited to the affected areas in the field, **and requires County Committee approval prior to beginning the spot treatment.** The County Committee will consult with NRCS to determine if such activities are needed to maintain the approved cover. **Annual mowing of CRP for generic weed control, or for cosmetic purposes, is prohibited at all times.**

If you have mid-management activities to perform on your CRP acreage this year, please make sure you turn in your bills, so you can get reimbursed for your costs. Once again, do not perform management activities between April 1st and August 1st.

5.) Prevented Planting: The final date to submit a claim for prevented planted corn is June 20; prevented planted soybeans is July 5.

6.) Failed Acreage: Report failed acreage before the disposition of the crop. The crop must have been planted under normal conditions, but failed because of a natural disaster, and not a management decision.

7.) Nomination forms to run for the FSA County Committee will be available June 15th. We will be electing a representative for LAA 1, which includes the townships of Millgrove, Jamestown, Fremont, and Clear Lake in Steuben County. Stop into our office to pick up a form, and make your voice heard!!

Forest Management in Indiana *(continued from page 1)*

after a timber harvest, allows invasive shrubs to increase exponentially in growth. Their rapid spread and leaf growth produces a dense shade at the soil level. Acorns and walnuts which would normally sprout and grow, to produce saplings, eventually becoming a harvestable, merchantable tree, are now choked back and killed in the shade of the honeysuckle. The economic and ecological value of the forest quickly decreases as invasive species spread throughout it.

Fortunately, even if a forest is already experiencing infestation from Honeysuckle or Autumn olive, there is still hope. Cutting these shrubs off near the ground level and dabbing herbicide on the cut stump, allows the herbicide to travel to the entire reach of the plants underground root system, stopping it in its tracks. By this method the forest understory can slowly be reclaimed, and valuable useable tree species can once again take root and grow in the absence of invasive competition. Multiple years of treatment may be necessary to eliminate an established population of invasive brush.

Foresters may also, at this time, look for other ways to improve the health and productivity of a forest. Cutting and killing wild grape vines that hang off the canopy branches of mature trees can lead to higher quality trees at harvest time. The heavy vines can make the main branches of crop trees more susceptible to breaking in ice or wind storms. Killing and removing sick or dead trees is also a recommended timber stand improvement practice. By making additional room for healthy growing trees, a landowner will see improved return on investment in their forest.

Assistance on how to start this process can begin in one of many ways. Private professional consulting foresters are always willing to work with landowners on preparing their woods for a timber harvest, performing the harvest, and cleaning up, ultimately helping the forest on a quick path to recovery. Even if one's goals for their forest do not involve profit, a consulting forester can point out ways to improve the ecological value of a forest, identify invasive species or tree diseases and suggest improvements to create additional wildlife habitat. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources also employs District Foresters, who are available to answer your woodland related questions. Purdue University's Cooperative Extension Service can also provide many good sources of information on forestry management.

The implications of invasive species and forestry management has also been identified as a national issue. Financial Assistance funds and support for technical assistance

by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, (NRCS) are funded through the Farm Bill. Landowners interested in pursuing management in their forests are encouraged to apply for a Forest Management Plan (NRCS Code 106) through the USDA's "Environmental Quality Incentives Program" (EQIP). This conservation program will provide a flat rate of financial assistance for a forest owner to have a qualified forester, acting as a Technical Service provider for the NRCS, write a Forest Management Plan for their property.

This plan will include tree species present, invasive species present, merchantable trees, tree densities, harvest intervals, and even the landowner's future goals and plans for their forest. Once the plan has been developed, applicants could be eligible for further financial assistance to help fund invasive brush species control, timber stand improvement activities, tree plantings, etc. Your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office, will have additional information on this program².

Many of these forestry management activities can become expensive when spread over many acres, but the USDA financial assistance funds provided by EQIP, help the practices to become much more economical for the landowner. So if you are considering a future timber harvest in your forest, have already completed one, or simply are looking for ways to make your woods more enjoyable for hunting, bird watching, or simply walking, conducting management practices on your property may be a step in the right direction. A good place to start would be to contact one of the above agencies, or service providers, and let them know about your goals for your forest and inquire about what practices may fit your properties' situation. A decision made today, may affect your forests' health, profitability, and viability far into the future.

Submitted by:

Arthur Franke, Soil Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Sources Cited:

¹ https://www.entm.purdue.edu/iisc/pdf/plants/more/asian_bush_honeysuckle.pdf

² <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/financial/eqip/>

Bush Honeysuckle





Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

Peachtree Plaza 200
1220 N 200 W STE L
Angola, IN 46703
260-665-3211 x3



www.steubenswcd.org

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

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

May 28 th	County Offices Closed Memorial Day Holiday
June 2 nd	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 AM at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
June 7 th	Steuben County Youth Fishing Workshop Trine State Recreation Area—call for details.
June 13 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:00 PM @ USDA Service Center
June 19 th	Conservation Camp - LaGrange County 9-2:30 PM @ Par Gil Learning Center
July 4 th	County Offices Closed Independence Day Holiday
July 7 th	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting (see above)
July 11 th	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:00 PM @ USDA Service Center
July 17 th	Conservation Camp - Steuben County 9-2:30 PM @ Pokagon State Park
July 19 th	Agronomy Field Day 7:30-2:30 PM @ The Anderson's Waterloo Ag Center

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

Conservation Day Camp

The Northeast Indiana Conservation Districts are offering three individual Conservation Day Camps this summer for your children to enjoy! Each camp costs \$10 per child from ages 9-13. The camp is from 9:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m. with lunch and supplies provided.

Tuesday, June 19, 2018

Par Gil Learning Center, LaGrange, Indiana

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

Pokagon State Park, Angola, Indiana

Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Camp Whitley, Columbia City, Indiana

Call your local SWCD to Register

DeKalb SWCD: (260) 925-5620 x 3

LaGrange SWCD: (260) 463-3471 x3

Steuben SWCD: (260) 665-3211 x3

Whitley County: (260) 244-6266 x3

