

# The Conservator

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Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

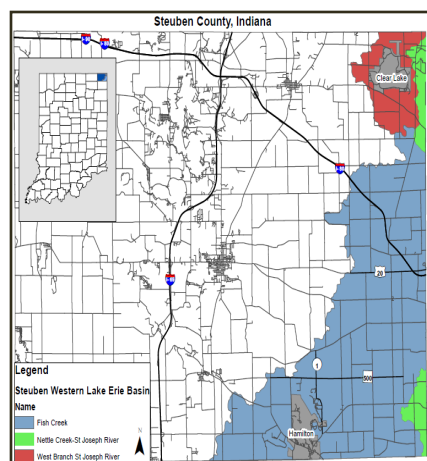
1220 N 200 W, Suite L ~ Angola, IN 46703 ~ Phone: (260) 665-3211, ext. 3

***Providing leadership and assistance in the proper use and management of soil, water, and related natural resources in Steuben County.***



## Steuben County SWCD Receives LARE Grant to Benefit the Upper St. Joseph River Watershed

The Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was one of twenty-one Indiana counties that received funds to improve local water bodies, thanks to grants awarded by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program. The Steuben grant is a new watershed land treatment project which provides cost-share and incentive payments to local producers to implement practices that reduce sediment and nutrient loss in the Upper St. Joseph River Watershed (USJRW), including the sub-watersheds of the West Branch of the St. Joseph River, Nettle Creek, and Fish Creek (see map below). The project area is part of the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB); getting conservation applied in the basin will help reduce nutrient and sediment loading from the USJRW to Lake Erie. Eligible practices include critical area plantings, field windbreaks, filter strips, grassed waterways, pasture and hayland plantings, pollinator plots, tree plantings, and water and sediment control basins, among others.



*Upper St. Joseph River Watershed (USJRW)  
Steuben County, Indiana*

The SWCD is excited to receive dedicated funding to assist with the implementation of voluntary conservation best management practices. LARE grants are funded through an annual LARE fee paid by boat owners when they register their watercraft with the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. This user-funded program benefits boaters all over the State as these grants assist with reducing non-point pollution of surface waters to insure the continued viability of Indiana's publicly accessible lakes and streams for multiple uses, including recreational opportunities. LARE grant funds are intended for projects demonstrating not only a need, but a local commitment to getting the task accomplished in a timely manner at a reasonable cost. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

Contact the Steuben County SWCD at (260) 665-3211, ext. 3 if you would like additional information or have an interest in the program. Program sign-up will be on a continuous basis or until the funding has been obligated. This funding is in addition to monies available through the Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Collaboration Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). See page 2 for additional details about RCPP funding.

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## **Indiana NRCS Announces General EQIP & Western Lake Erie Basin Collaboration 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 17 is the EQIP application deadline in Indiana. While EQIP applications can be submitted throughout the year, applications received after December 17 will be considered in future announced application rounds.

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. Many applicants are interested in using funds to address soil erosion and water quality issues on their land; however, funds are also available for pasture and grazing land, confined livestock operations, organic producers, drainage water management, invasive plant control and wildlife habitat improvement.

Also included in this sign up are several state and national initiatives, including the Western Lake Erie Basin Collaboration. While these initiatives use EQIP funding, landowners that apply for one of the special funding pools will not compete against the general EQIP funding pool. For farmers located in the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB), dollars are available through the Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Collaboration Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The partnership is driven by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture, which joins forces with more than 30 partners to help participating farmers improve soil health, reduce phosphorus and sediment loading, and prevent harmful algal blooms in the Western Lake Erie Basin. The goal of the program is to work towards a 40% reduction of dissolved phosphorus by using a suite of conservation practices. The partnership targets the Maumee watershed within the WLEB and covers acres in northeastern Indiana which includes portions of Steuben, DeKalb, Noble, Wells, Allen and Adams counties.

While no single approach will eliminate nutrient loading into Lake Erie, a systems approach to conservation best management practices will help reduce surface and subsurface nutrient loss. The 2018 Farm Bill provides several programs, like RCPP, that offer financial assistance to farmers, aid in the potential financial risk of conservation practice adoption and provide technical assistance when developing site-specific conservation plans that reduces nutrient and sediment transport. Applications for this round of funding consideration must also be received by December 17.

## **SWCD - NRCS - ISDA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY**

### **Board of Supervisors:**

Kayleen Hart, *Chair*

Chuck Howard, *Vice Chair*

Craig Holman

David Perkins

Beth Williams

### **Associate Supervisors:**

Timothy Groosbeck

Bridget Harrison

Daniel Oberst

### **SWCD Staff:**

Janel Meyer, *Administrative Coordinator*

Aimee Wentworth, *Resource Conservationist*

### **Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff:**

Arthur Franke, *District Conservationist*

### **Indiana State Department of Agriculture Staff:**

Kate Sanders, *Resource Specialist*

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

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

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



## 2021 Affiliate Members



• Angola American Legion Post #31 • Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, Inc. • Booth Farms—William Booth • Carper Farm Supply • Caruso's Restaurant • City of Angola MS4 • Mike & Sue Claphan • Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy • Bill & Diana Clingan • Daft Erosion Control, LLC • Dailey Farms • Edon Farmers Co-Op • Franklin Paul Group LLC • Tom Green Engineering • Hoham Feed and Seed • Deloris Howarth • Lake George Conservancy, Inc. • Niann Lautzenhiser • Peter Mountz • S & P Earthwork • Steuben County Lakes Council • Sue Myers • Kevin Northup Excavating • Sandhill Environmental Services, LLC • Stroth Farm Supply • Pete Thompson • John Williamson • The Wilson Farm (in Memory of Loyal Wilson, Travis Wilson & Tom Wilson)

## Chris Weaver & Jacob Willson Steuben County SWCD's 2021 River Friendly Farmers

In a county known for more than 101 lakes, there are individuals using conservation practices on their farms to protect waterways and water quality in Indiana and beyond. In Steuben County, Chris Weaver and Jacob Willson are two such individuals - among the 47 farmers who received the state-wide award of 2021 River Friendly Farmer.

Since 1999, key conservation and agricultural organizations have sponsored the River Friendly Farmer (RFF) Program. The Steuben SWCD nominated both Chris and Jacob to recognize their sound conservation management practices that help keep Indiana's rivers, lakes, and streams clean.

Chris Weaver is an owner of The Bridgewater Dairy Group. The Bridgewater Dairy Group cares for 6,000 dairy cows and over 5,500 acres of cropland in Steuben County and Williams and Fulton counties in Ohio. Chris believes it's their responsibility to respect the environment around their farms including manure storage areas,

farm fields, and adjacent ditches and waterways. Over 50% of their farms are planted to cover crops through the winter to minimize erosion and maintain nutrients in the soil. The primary conservation cropping systems and practices Bridgewater Dairy uses include dragline manure injection, buffer strips, cover crops, bi-annual soil sampling, and variable rate nutrient management.

Jacob Willson is the owner/operator of approximately 300 acres of farmland in Steuben County and over 400 acres of farmland in Fulton County, Ohio. He produces corn, soybeans, and hay. The primary conservation cropping practices he uses include no-till, reduced-till, cover crops, and grassed waterways. Conservation practices are important to Jacob's operation because the ground he farms is categorized as highly erodible (HEL). Jacob reports he has experienced a reduction in erosion by implementing these practices.

Congratulations Chris & Jacob!

## Free Teaching Resources



Our new Resource Conservationist, Aimee Wentworth, has been hard at work developing new resources for educators in Steuben County.

Nine lesson kits have been curated on subjects ranging from Erosion to Soil to Worms. Each kit includes a lesson and the supplies required to conduct a demonstration or complete an activity with the students. These kits are intended to be either an enhancement to in-class lessons or as a stand-alone presentation. They can be checked out by a teacher or be brought into the classroom by a District staff member. There are resources for all ages and grades.

The SWCD – in conjunction with Steuben County Purdue Extension & the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy – have also created conservation education videos “Earth as an Apple” & “Macro-invertebrate Sampling” Check them out at:

<https://sites.google.com/view/steubenenvironmentalscience/>

In “Earth as an Apple,” NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke teaches an important lesson on the availability of habitable land and drinkable fresh water on the Earth. “Macroinvertebrate Sampling” features Bridget Harrison



of the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy demonstrating aquatic macroinvertebrate sampling, including how to use a dichotomous key to identify the specimens. Additional videos are being developed on invasive species and storm water.

Finally, we've been working with Purdue Extension on completing a Steuben County Soil Geotrail. Stay tuned for additional details...keep watching for the announcement the Geotrail is open! Not familiar with geocaching? Visit [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) for more information.



## Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Angola, IN 46703

260-665-3211, ext. 3

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



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

Providing Leadership and Assistance in the Proper Use and Management  
of Soil, Water, and Related Natural Resources in Steuben County.

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 10<sup>th</sup> Steuben SWCD Board Meeting  
5:00 PM (Community Center)
- November 11<sup>th</sup> County Offices Closed  
Veteran's Day Holiday
- November 25 - 26<sup>th</sup> County Offices Closed  
Thanksgiving Holiday
- December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2021 Steuben County Contractor Workshop  
10:00 - 12:00 PM (Club Z at  
Trine University, Angola)
- December 4<sup>th</sup> Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting  
8:30 AM (First Congregational  
United Church of Christ, Angola)
- December 8<sup>th</sup> Steuben SWCD Board Meeting  
5:00 PM (Community Center)
- December 23 - 24<sup>th</sup> County Offices Closed  
Christmas Holiday
- December 31<sup>st</sup> County Offices Closed  
New Year's Day Holiday
- January 12<sup>th</sup> Steuben SWCD Board Meeting  
5:00 PM (TBD)

*\*\*For more events and updates please check our website\*\**

## 2021 STEUBEN COUNTY CONTRACTOR WORKSHOP AGENDA

Presented by:  
City of Angola MS4/Storm Water Department and  
Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District

**Friday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**  
(snow date: December 10<sup>th</sup>)

Club Z on the campus of Trine University  
MTI Center, 1215 Thunder Drive, Angola, IN 46703

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 9:30 a.m.  | Registration and Refreshments              |
| 10:00 a.m. | Welcome and Opening                        |
| 10:20 a.m. | "The Impact of Runoff on Watershed Health" |
| 11:00 a.m. | Alternatives to Silt Fence                 |
| 12:00 p.m. | Dismissal and Lunch                        |



**RSVP required by NOVEMBER 22, 2021 for this FREE event**  
Please call 260-665-3211, ext. 3 or  
email [steubenswcd@gmail.com](mailto:steubenswcd@gmail.com) to register