

2022 STEUBEN COUNTY SELF-GUIDED CONSERVATION TOUR

STEUBEN COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- * Please obey all applicable traffic regulations while taking the tour. The Steuben County Soil Water Conservation District is not liable for traffic violations or incidents that may occur during your participation.
- * Distances are approximate.
- * Please be aware there are several state highways and gravel roads on the tour route.
- * Stops 1, 2, 5, 6 & 10 have places to park and exit your vehicle. For safety reasons, please stay in your vehicle at the other tour stops and respect landowners by not trespassing or parking on their property.

***STOP #1 – NATURAL WETLAND** – Located on 300 N west of N. St. Rd. 327 in the northwest corner of Steuben County



Pigeon River Fish & Wildlife Area is dedicated to providing quality outdoor recreational opportunities while maintaining 11,794 acres of land, 529 acres of lakes and impoundments and 17 miles of free-flowing river. The area was established in 1956 when three reservoirs in the Pigeon River Valley were given to the state. These included Mongo, Nasby, and Ontario. Since then, the state has acquired additional land along the river valley. Wetlands are an important feature of the landscape in that they provide vital drainage and ecosystem functions. Wetlands filter sediment and contaminants from the waters that flow through them before it reaches larger water bodies. They also offer flood storage during periods of heavy rainfall. In addition, wetlands provide habitat for many migrating bird species and other ecologically sensitive animal and plant species.

- ☞ Drive east on 300 N (1.2 mi.); turn north onto St. Rd. 327 (3.1 mi.); turn east onto St. Rd. 120 (9.8 mi.); turn north onto Old U.S. 27 (1.5 mi.); turn into the drive for the Lake George Conservancy Preserve on the east side of the road at the Steuben County SWCD sign; follow the drive around the property (0.4 mi.); Stop #2 will be on your right (north).

***STOP #2 - POLLINATOR PLANTING or CONSERVATION COVER**



Not only do pollinator plantings or conservation cover practices enhance wildlife, pollinator, and beneficial organism habitat, they also reduce erosion and sedimentation. A reduction of ground and surface water quality degradation by nutrients and surface water quality degradation by sediment is another benefit of this practice. This 6-acre pollinator planting was frost-seeded in early spring of 2019 through a project with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

- ☞ Exit the Conservancy and turn south onto Old U.S. 27 (1.9 mi.); turn east onto St. Rd. 120 (6.4 mi.); turn south on 600 E (1.9 mi.); Stop #3 is on the east side of the road (if you reach Angola Motor Speedway, you passed the site).

In consideration for being allowed to participate in the 2022 Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District Self-Guided Conservation tour (henceforth known as this Activity), I release from liability and waive my right to sue Steuben County SWCD, their employees, officers, volunteers and agents (collectively "SWCD") from any and all claims, including claims of the SWCD's negligence, resulting in any physical injury, illness (including death) or economic loss I may suffer or which may result from my participation in this Activity, travel, or any events incidental to this Activity.

STOP # 3 - FILTER STRIP



A filter strip is a strip or area of vegetation that removes contamination from overland flow before it enters nearby waterbodies. Filter strips reduce suspended solids and associated contaminants in runoff and excessive sediment in surface waters. They also reduce dissolved contaminant loadings in runoff. This filter strip was installed through a program with the USDA NRCS approximately 10 years ago.

- ☞ Continue driving south on 600 E (4 mi.); turn east onto 200 N (2.6 mi.); turn south onto Old State Route 1 (1.1 mi.), continue driving south (at stop sign) on Old State Route 1 to the road split (0.2 mi.); turn east at 100 N onto Old St. Rt. 1 to Stop #4 (1.0 mi.).

STOP #4 - TWO-STAGE DITCH



A Two-Stage ditch is a drainage channel that can benefit both agriculture and the environment. Two-Stage Ditches use the current infrastructure of drainage ditches and are constructed by adding a floodplain area on the sides of the ditch, referred to as “benches.” These benches allow water to spread out, which decreases the velocity of the water moving through the ditch. The benefits of a Two-Stage Ditch includes improved channel stability from reduced water flow and beneficial natural processes are restored, such as reducing the amount of sediment and nutrients being transported. This Two-Stage Ditch was constructed in 2016 through cooperation between the landowners, The Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Steuben County Drainage Board, the Maumee River Basin Commission, and the Steuben County SWCD.

- ☞ Continue driving south on Old St. Rt. 1 (0.4 mi.); turn east at the ‘T’ (0.1 mi.); turn south at the intersection with 40 S (0.6 mi.; note the Old Powers Church on the east side of old Route 1); turn west (toward Angola) onto US Hwy 20 (7.9 mi.); turn north onto Cemetery Hill Drive at Harold Ford (0.1 mi.); follow signs to the Selman Timber Frame (0.2 mi.). To view the constructed wetland, walk east on the walking/bike path toward Angola Middle School for 0.27 mi. down to the bottom of the hill. There is an interpretive sign as well as the Stop #5 sign.

***STOP #5 - CONSTRUCTED WETLAND**



Work on this 2.66-acre constructed wetland project was completed in 2012 and included a wetland detention area with an outlet structure. The main goal of this project was to filter sediment and pollutants and add water storage capacity. A one-acre wetland can store up to 1.5 million gallons of floodwater; that’s equivalent to 37,500 bathtubs full of water! This wetland construction was funded through a Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source (NPS) grant administered by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) in partnership with the Steuben County SWCD, with cooperation from the City of Angola.

- ☞ Exit Commons Park onto south Cemetery Hill Drive (0.2 mi.); turn west onto US Hwy 20 (0.5 mi.); turn south onto Martha St, (0.05 mi.). Stop #6 is on the west side of the street, approximately halfway down the block. There is an interpretive sign as well as the Stop #6 sign.

***STOP #6 - RAIN GARDEN**



Rain gardens are designed to reduce stormwater runoff while allowing more to infiltrate the ground with plants that can tolerate periodic immersion. This project, the Southeast Quad Drainage Improvement Project, is a stormwater separation project combining an underground retention area with a rain garden. The underground retention and rain garden capture water that has been diverted from downspouts from buildings located in the southeast Public Square Quad. Prior to construction, stormwater was collected and combined with sanitary sewers, which at times resulted in an overabundance of water going to the sewage treatment plant and ultimately being discharged into Pigeon Creek. This rain garden was funded through a Federal CWA Section 319(h) NPS grant administered by IDEM in partnership with the Steuben County SWCD, the City of Angola, and Steuben County Government.

- ☞ Drive south on Martha St. (1/2 block.); turn west onto Gale St. (1 block); turn north onto Wayne St., at the traffic circle take the third exit onto West Maumee St.; head west on Maumee/US Hwy 20 to 600 W (5.4 mi.); turn south onto 600 W (0.6 mi.); turn west onto 100 S (0.5 mi.), turn south onto 650 W (0.5 mi.) to Stop #7, located on the west side of the road.

STOP #7 - PASTURE PLANTING



This young alfalfa-grass seeding was done in spring of 2021 for hay as part of a long-term conservation cropping system. This practice typically lasts five or more years and it adds Nitrogen and organic matter back into the soil. This project was completed through cooperation with the landowner and the Steuben County SWCD.

- ☞ Continue driving south on 650 W (0.8 mi.); turn west onto 250 S (3.1 mi.); turn south onto St. Rd. 327 (3.6 mi.); turn west onto Turkey Creek Road (1 mi.); turn south onto 1050 W (0.5 mi.) to Stop #8, on the east side of the road.

STOP #8 - NO-TILL PLANTING SYSTEM



No-till farmers grow crops with minimal disturbance to their fields and the organisms that call them home. This builds healthier soils while reducing money spent on fuel and labor. This farm has been implementing no-till practices for the last fifty years; they have seen decreased erosion and improved tilth in their fields.

- ☞ Continue south on 1050 W (0.8 mi.); turn east onto 700 S (0.3 mi.); turn south onto 1025 W (0.5 mi.); turn east onto 750 S (0.6 mi.); turn south onto St. Rd. 327 (0.5 mi.); turn east onto St. Rd. 4 (9.1 mi.: through Hudson/Ashley & through the flashing red light at Old Route 27); turn north onto 50 W (1.0 mi.); turn east onto 700 S (0.4 mi.) to Stop #9, located on the north side of the road.

STOP #9 – WILDLIFE HABITAT PLANTING



Wildlife habitat plantings are established to enhance wildlife, pollinator, and beneficial organism habitat, and they also reduce erosion and sedimentation. A reduction of ground and surface water quality degradation by nutrients and surface water quality degradation by sediment is another benefit of this practice. The installation of these warm-season grasses and wildflowers on both the east and the west side of the home was completed through a project with the USDA NRCS.

- ☞ Continue east on 700 S (1.5 mi.), which will turn into Lemmon Road (0.9 mi.); turn south onto Bellefontaine (0.6 mi.); turn south onto Lane 201 Ball Lake (0.2 mi.); turn east onto Lane 201 Ball Lake (0.2 mi.) to Robb Hidden Canyon ACRES Land Trust property. To find the sign for Stop #10, you must exit your vehicle and walk into the preserve to the trail that turns toward the south (right).

***STOP # 10 - TREE ESTABLISHMENT**



A tree establishment is applied to a site for multiple reasons. These include establishing wildlife habitat, long-term erosion control and improvement of water quality, and carbon storage in the biomass of the trees. This 24.7-acre tree establishment consists of mixed native hardwood species such as oaks, hickory, walnut, and tulip trees and was completed through a project with the USDA NRCS.

Thank you for participating in the 2022 Conservation Tour. We hope you enjoyed driving through the county to observe all of these conservation practices at work improving and protecting our water resources. If you would like more information on how you can implement some of these conservation practices on your land, please contact the SWCD at (260) 665-3211, ext. 3.

Don't forget to bring your photographs to the Steuben County SWCD office at Peachtree Plaza, 1220 N. 200 W., Suite L, Angola, to claim your free hat (while supplies last) and be entered into a grand prize giveaway to be drawn at the conclusion of the tour. (Please call the office at (260) 665-3211, 3xt. 3 before making a special trip as there are times staff are not available.)