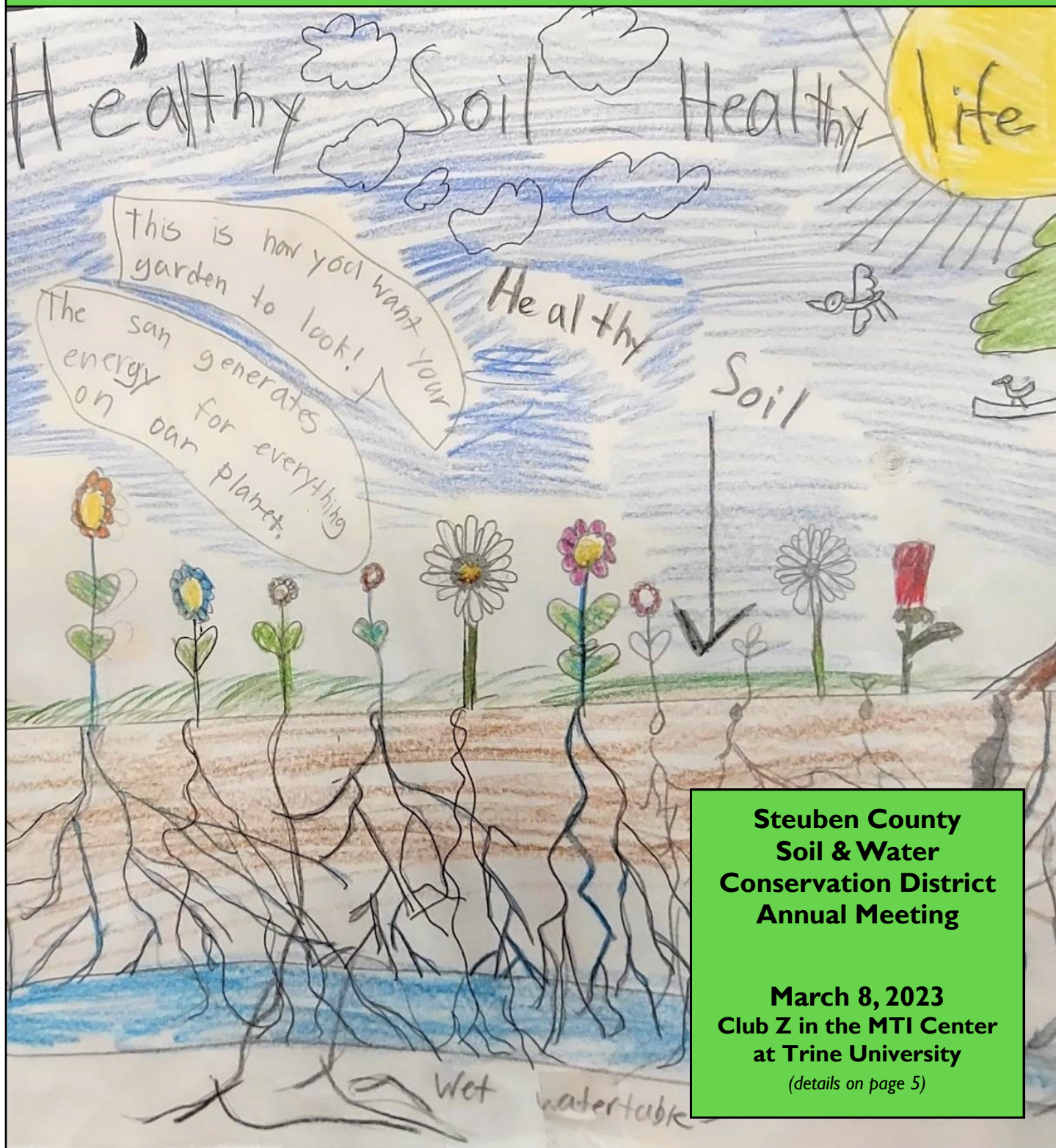




2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Volume 46 Issue 1
Winter 2023



**Steuben County
Soil & Water
Conservation District
Annual Meeting**

**March 8, 2023
Club Z in the MTI Center
at Trine University
(details on page 5)**

MISSION

It is the mission of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to provide leadership and assistance in the proper use and management of soil, water, and related natural resources in Steuben County.

HISTORY

Across the United States, nearly 3,000 conservation districts are helping people conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. Conservation Districts serve as the local hub for connecting land users to direct sources of educational, financial, and technical assistance for applying conservation practices and best management technologies on the land to address soil and water quality problems.

The Steuben County SWCD was organized by Steuben County landowners in 1948. It is a legal subdivision of the State of Indiana, established by the Indiana Soil Conservation Act of 1937. The District is managed by a board of five local supervisors, who are Steuben County residents familiar with the conservation needs and opportunities in the county. Three are elected by Steuben County landowners, and two are appointed by the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board based on a recommendation from current Supervisors. Associate Supervisors are appointed annually, by the SWCD Board, to assist in activities and programs sponsored by the SWCD. Both Board and Associate Supervisors serve the Steuben community on a volunteer basis. Steuben County Government funds the two full-time staff positions.

Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)*

Staff

Janel S. Meyer, Administrative Coordinator
Aimee M. Wentworth, Resource Conservationist

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)*

Staff

Arthur Franke, District Conservationist

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Division of Soil Conservation*

Staff

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist
Sandra Hoffarth, District Support Specialist

2022 Board of Supervisors

Kayleen Hart, Chair
Chuck Howard, Vice Chair
Craig Holman
David Perkins
Beth Williams

2022 Associate Supervisors

Tim Groosbeck
Bridget Harrison
Daniel Oberst

If you have an interest in assisting us with accomplishing our mission, consider joining our team as an Associate Supervisor. Contact the office at (260) 665-3211 ext. 3 for additional details.

**The Steuben County SWCD, NRCS and ISDA Division of Soil Conservation are three of the eight agencies which comprise the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP), who all share a common goal of promoting conservation (see page 16 for additional details about the ICP). Arthur Franke is the District Conservationist assigned to Steuben County. Kate Sanders is the Resource Specialist assigned to Steuben & DeKalb Counties. Sandra Hoffarth is the District Support Specialist for 18 Northern Indiana counties.*

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FRONT COVER

Artwork by Sydney Mitchell, second place winner for the 2022 Steuben County Stewardship Week Poster Contest in the 2nd- 3rd Grade category.

The contest is held in conjunction with Soil & Water Stewardship Week, celebrated between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May. Stewardship Week has been observed annually since 1955 to remind us of our responsibility to care for our natural resources.

INSIDE FRONT COVER

Sunset over Orland, Indiana.

Photo courtesy of Janel Meyer

THIS PAGE

Winter Wheat planted into a no-till corn field in Angola, Indiana.

Photo courtesy of Janel Meyer

BOARD CHAIR REPORT

“Essentially, all life depends upon the soil...There can be no life without soil and no soil without life; they have evolved together.”

- Charles Kellogg

Do you ever think about the soil? As you're driving down the road watching the annual fall harvest, or going on a hike admiring the gorgeous scenery, are you wondering what would happen if that soil was unhealthy? “Of course not,” you say. “Why would I think about the soil? It's just dirt, right?” Although many of us use the terms interchangeably, dirt and soil are not the same thing. Dirt is actually unhealthy soil. It has no beneficial nutrients or microbes. When you add water to dirt, it doesn't easily clump together or grow things. Soil, on the other hand, is alive with organisms that help plants thrive.

Soil has so many important purposes. Trees and flowers couldn't flourish, and as the theme for “World Soil Day” stated in December 2022, “Soil, where food begins!” **Did you know that there are more living organisms in a tablespoon of soil than people on Earth?** Soil is a world made up of organisms, minerals, and organic components that provides food for humans and animals through plant growth. **Over the last 70**

(continued on page 4)

BOARD CHAIR REPORT *(continued from page 3)*

years, the level of vitamins and nutrients in food has drastically decreased, and it is estimated that **2 billion people worldwide suffer from lack of micronutrients**. This is known as hidden hunger because it is difficult to detect ([fao.org/world-soil-day](https://www.fao.org/world-soil-day)). It just makes sense to try to keep our soil as healthy as possible. So how do we do this?

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and its many partners work diligently throughout the year to educate and assist landowners and farmers financially with what they can do to make their soil healthier and increase its productivity. There are many conservation practices someone can incorporate, ranging from planting cover crops to increase soil organic matter, planting trees or pollinator habitat to assist wildlife and crop survival or keeping the healthy soil from washing away by installing grassed waterways or filter strips on large acreages and rain gardens and buffers in smaller areas. Did you know we can thank pollinators for one out of every three bites of food we eat? About 35% of the world's food crops and 75% of all flowering plants need pollinators to reproduce. Without pollinators, these plants would not survive, and neither would we! If you have a patch of bare ground or grass, consider planting some beneficial pollinator habitat and native plants. It will improve the quality of your soil and pollinating species will love you!

The mission of the Steuben County SWCD is to provide leadership and assistance in the proper use and management of soil, water, and related natural resources in Steuben County. If you are interested in what you can do to ensure your soil is sustainable for many generations to come, a good place to start is either a phone call to our office (260) 665-3211, ext. 3, or a visit to our website at steubenswcd.org. The website contains valuable information on the conservation practices described above, who our partners are, and where you might find educational and financial assistance. We also have several educational videos available to inform you or a small group you know on the benefits of soil and water conservation.

The SWCD currently has several grants to provide cost-share assistance to both urban and rural landowners:

- 1) Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake and River Enhancement Grants in the Pigeon Creek and Fawn River Watersheds, as well as the Western Lake Erie Basin. Eligible practices include both agronomic/cover-based practices (critical area plantings, field windbreaks, filter strips, pasture and hay plantings, pollinator plantings, tree plantings, etc.) and engineered practices (blind tile inlets, filter strips, grade stabilization structures, grassed waterways, pasture best management practices, streambank protection, etc.).
- 2) The Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds program provides technical and financial assistance to improve or develop grassland and pollinator-friendly habitat in selected regions of Indiana.
- 3) Steuben County SWCD District Cost-Share Program covering the entire County. Please contact us to discuss your project or idea for either urban or rural conservation.

In addition to the District programs, there are also many Federal conservation programs we can direct you to if these would be a better fit.

Healthy Soils equal a Healthy Life! Please take the time to learn what you can do to improve the soil around you and improve wildlife and pollinator habitats. The future generation thanks you!



Kayleen Hart, Chair
Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District



ABOVE

Steuben County SWCD Board of Supervisors and staff.
Front (left to right): Beth Williams, Janel Meyer, Aimee Wentworth.
Back (left to right): Craig Holman, Chuck Howard, Kayleen Hart.
David Perkins not pictured

Photo courtesy of Arthur Franke

ANNUAL MEETING



2023 ANNUAL MEETING

Club Z in the MTI Center at Trine University
1215 Thunder Drive, Angola

MARCH 8, 2023

6:00 P.M.

CONTACT US

Phone

(260) 665-3211 ext. 3

Email

steubenswcd@gmail.com

DINNER

Doors will open at 5:45 p.m.
Free buffet-style dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.
Join the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in a 75th Anniversary Celebration!



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Bob Barr, Research Scientist at the Center for Earth and Environmental Science at Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis, will discuss healthy stream systems in a continually changing landscape. The Steuben County SWCD Annual Business Meeting follows the keynote presentation.

REGISTRATION

Pre-registration is requested by February 27, 2023.
Registrations accepted by phone or email.

SAVE THE DATE!

MARCH 8, 2023

73rd Annual Meeting

The evening will include a brief report of 2022 District activities and the election of a Board Supervisor. Charles "Chuck" W. Howard will be running unopposed; nominations will also be accepted from the floor*.

• Charles "Chuck" W. Howard •

Incumbent Chuck W. Howard is the current Vice Chair of the Steuben County SWCD Board. He has served as a Board Supervisor since 2014. Chuck has resided in and raised corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay in Steuben and DeKalb County for over 50 years. Some of the conservation practices he has implemented on acreage he farms include conservation tillage, cover crops, grassed waterways, and wildlife/pollinator plantings. Chuck lives near Hamilton with his wife of over 40 years. They have raised 4 children, and are now enjoying their grandchildren.

An R.S.V.P. is requested for dinner by February 27, 2023 to help with meal planning. Please consider joining us to help celebrate the SWCD's 75th Anniversary!

**To hold the position of elected supervisor an individual (1) must be an occupier of a tract of land that is located within the district; (2) must maintain the individual's permanent residence within the district; and (3) must be qualified by training and experience to perform the supervisor duties as required by Indiana Code.*



ABOVE

WANE-TV Meteorologist Greg Shoup at the 2022 Steuben County SWCD Annual Meeting.

Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

The 2022 Steuben County SWCD annual meeting was held on March 9, 2022. WANE-TV Meteorologist Greg Shoup discussed how subtle weather changes would affect future farming.

Incumbent David Perkins was re-elected to the SWCD Board of Supervisors for an additional 3-year term.

We thank everyone that joined us for the evening, especially Erin Dove (Northeast Indiana Regional Director for U.S. Senator Todd Young), Mary Martin (Regional Director for U.S. Senator Mike Braun), Landon Porter (Field Representative for U.S. Congressman Jim Banks), Steuben County Council members Lisa Aldrich and Tony Isa, and Steuben County Commissioner Ken Shelton.

2022 STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD & NRCS CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Agriculture Conservation Practices

Listed below are the acres, feet, and/or number of conservation practices installed during the 2022 fiscal year and why they are important for conservation (practices include SWCD and NRCS projects).

Except where indicated, all photos courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

CROP PRODUCTION / SOIL HEALTH

3,344.5 Acres of Cover Crops

- Reduce wind and water erosion.
- Maintain/improve soil health and organic matter.
- Reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excessive soil nutrients.
- Improve soil moisture use efficiency.
- Minimize soil compaction.
- Supply nutrients.
- Break pest cycles.
- Suppress excessive weed pressure.
- Provide food and escape cover for wildlife.

26.01 Acres of Forage-Biomass Plantings

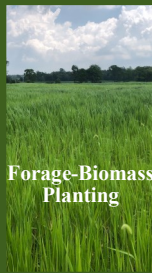
- Reduce wind and water erosion.
- Maintain/improve soil health & organic matter.
- Reduce water quality degradation by utilizing excessive soil nutrients.
- Improve soil moisture use efficiency.
- Minimize soil compaction.
- Supply nutrients.
- Break pest cycles.
- Improve or maintain livestock nutrition and/or health.
- Provide food and escape cover for wildlife.

1,210.2 Acres of Nutrient Management (+ 2 Plans)

- Minimize agricultural nonpoint source pollution of surface & groundwater resources.
- Properly utilize manure or organic by-products as a plant nutrient source.
- Maintain/improve soil health.



Windbreak/
Shelterbelt
Establishment



Forage-Biomass
Planting



Fencing
Photo
courtesy
of
Amanda Avila



Manure
Storage
(during
construction)
Photo courtesy
of
Arthur Franke

FORESTRY

214.4 Acres of Brush Management

- Restore or release desired vegetative cover to protect soils, control erosion, reduce sediment, improve water quality, or enhance hydrology.
- Maintain, modify, or enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
- Improve forage accessibility, quality, and quantity for wildlife.
- Control pervasive plant species to a desired level of treatment that will ultimately contribute to the creation or maintenance of a natural area.
- Create the desired plant community consistent with the ecological site.

39.3 Acres Tree/Shrub Establishment

- Long-term erosion control and improvement of water quality.
- Improve or restore natural diversity and provide wildlife habitat.
- Forest products such as timber, pulpwood, etc.

1.0 Acres Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment

- Reduce soil erosion from wind.
- Provide shelter for structures, animals, and people.
- Enhance wildlife habitat.

6 Forest Management Plans

- Provide detailed information about species composition, potential harmful pests and other ecosystem components of the property and surrounding landscape; a "road map" to assist landowners with achieving their conservation goals in a cost-effective & strategic way.
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat.

2,720 Feet of Fencing

- Improve erosion control & water quality.
- Regulate livestock access to areas.
- Permit proper grazing distribution.

3,040 Ft.² Heavy Use Area Protection

- Protect & improve water quality.
- Provide a stable, non-eroding surface for areas frequently used by animals.

2 Manure Storage Facilities

- Store manure, agricultural by-products, wastewater, and contaminated runoff.



Heavy Use Area
Protection



Pollinator/Wildlife
Habitat

WILDLIFE HABITAT

28.0 Acres of Conservation Cover (Pollinator/ Wildlife Habitat)

- Reduce sheet, rill, and wind erosion and sedimentation.
- Reduce ground and surface water quality degradation by nutrients and surface water quality degradation by sediment.
- Improve soil health.
- Enhance or develop wildlife, pollinator and beneficial organism habitat.



Nutrient Management
Photo courtesy of Mike Starkey (ccsin.org)

2022 STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD & NRCS CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

Urban Conservation Practices

While the Steuben County SWCD did not have a grant specific to the installation of urban best management practices in 2022, we do offer a District Cost-Share program for the county for urban or rural conservation practices that may not be covered by other grant programs. If you have a project or idea you would like to discuss, let us know. We're here to provide technical assistance and offer cost-share assistance, if available. We would love to hear from you!

URBAN PRACTICES

In 2022, the Steuben County SWCD Board of Supervisors approached the Steuben County Commissioners requesting approval to repurpose plants from the Community Center Building rain garden. The rain garden needed to be removed to allow for the construction of a much needed new Judicial Center. The garden installation was partially funded through a Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Grant administered by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). Since all grant requirements were met (i.e., the County fulfilled the maintenance obligation period), IDEM and the SWCD were supportive of the courthouse construction. The Commissioners graciously granted approval for plant removal in order to save as much of the vegetation as possible for replanting and to reduce waste. The exciting news for the new Judicial Center design is it incorporates a rain garden/bioretention area. We know that rain gardens are not only beautiful, but they also:

- Increase the amount of water that filters into the ground, which recharges local and regional aquifers.
- Help protect communities from flooding and drainage problems.
- Help protect streams, rivers, and lakes from pollutants carried by urban stormwater (lawn fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other automotive chemicals, and numerous harmful substances that wash off roofs and paved areas).
- Enhance the beauty of yards and neighborhoods.
- Provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and many beneficial insects.



LEFT

Steuben, DeKalb, and LaGrange County SWCDs removed plants from the Martha/Wall rain garden in early September, 2022. They were used to supplement native plantings in all three counties. This rain garden was removed to make way for the construction of a new Judicial Center, which includes a new rain garden/bioretention area in its design.

*Photos courtesy of
Steuben County SWCD*

Practices installed through the Steuben County SWCD Urban Clean Water Indiana Grant (2018 - 2021) continue to thrive. One example is the pollinator planting at the Town of Clear Lake Town Hall. The goal of the grant was to help landowners integrate conservation practices into existing landscapes to help protect and improve natural resources.



ABOVE

The Town of Clear Lake native-scaping/pollinator planting installed on June 9, 2021 (left photo) and a year later on July 29, 2022 (right photo).

*Photos courtesy of
Steuben County SWCD*



EDUCATION

As the Steuben County SWCD, it is our responsibility and privilege to educate the public and local landowners about our natural resources and how to conserve them. We are strong believers in education to help people of all ages understand and appreciate Steuben County's resources. We want to empower residents and visitors through education by providing resources and technical expertise to help everyone learn about our environment. We try to reach people on many levels through workshops, larger events, school presentations, social media, our website, and quarterly publications.

There are many conservation partners, landowners, businesses, agencies, and organizations that assist us with our education efforts. We appreciate **all** of you for the support we receive for this critical endeavor. We recognize the many Affiliate Members - individuals, groups and organizations, who choose to financially sponsor our work. Donations received from Affiliate Memberships are used to help support our adult and youth information and education programs. A list of the 2022 Affiliate Members can be found on page 15.



All photos courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

The SWCD was very busy with educational events last year, which was great! The year started off with a soil health workshop where participants learned the basics of soil health principles and about native pollinators. We partnered with our Northeast Area Urban Soil Health Specialist Jamie Perry for this event. Staff then assisted with the Northeast Indiana Regional Envirothon competition where teams answer questions and study resource problems in each of five environmental areas, which include: soils/land use, aquatic ecology, wildlife, forestry, and a current environmental issue. The first place winners were the Warsaw Senior Team, second place went to Whitko, and third place was awarded to the Warsaw Junior Team. In April, as in past years, the SWCD delivered educational materials to the Steuben County elementary schools for the annual National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) Stewardship Week and also conducted a "Healthy Soils, Healthy Life" poster contest. There were 139 entries - Steuben County youth are so talented and excited about conservation!

This past spring, the SWCD partnered with Pokagon State Park staff to host an Indiana Master Naturalist (IMN) workshop at the park. The mission of the IMN program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils, and wildlife, and promote natural resource volunteer service within the State of Indiana. If you are unfamiliar with the IMN program, students participate in a series of sessions on designated topics. To receive IMN certification, they are then required to complete 24

(continued on page 9)

EDUCATION *(continued from page 8)*

volunteer service hours at a natural resources-related organization. The program was such a huge success the SWCD and Pokagon State Park planned another IMN workshop with limited registrations available for spring 2023!

In May, the Smithsonian Museum's traveling Water/Ways exhibit was set up in the Carnegie Public Library. The Steuben County SWCD supported the planning and design process of the required local display and helped promote the exhibit through various channels. Since the end of the Smithsonian exhibit, the local component has been displayed at Trine University during their Back-to-School Carnival, at Angola Middle School, and at the Pokagon State Park Nature Center. In addition to the Smithsonian display and the local component, the SWCD's Augmented Reality Sandbox (ARS unit) was set up at the library as part of the exhibit. According to a Steuben County Tourism Bureau statistic, over sixteen hundred visitors took advantage of the opportunity to view the dynamic displays meant to encourage guests to consider their attitudes towards our planet's limited water resources.

In addition to being on display at the library, the ARS unit was also put on display for Family Fun Day at the Steuben County 4-H Fair in July, where children and their adults enjoyed learning about watersheds and creating diverse landscapes in the sand. There was also a table display set up for the duration of the Fair explaining the SWCD's mission and detailed many of the programs offered to assist landowners and land users in implementing conservation practices on their property.

June brought the kick-off of our inaugural Self-Guided Conservation Practice Tour which featured ten stops highlighting various conservation practices in action, including a filter strip, a two-stage ditch, and constructed wetland, among others. Tour finishers who brought photos of all ten of the tour stop signs to the SWCD office received a small prize (an SWCD ball cap) and were entered into a drawing for a \$50 Rural King gift card. We thank all who took advantage of this opportunity to tour the county and see some of the conservation practices that are helping reduce nutrient and sediment loading in our local waterways.

Appreciation also goes out to the landowners who graciously partnered with the SWCD to conduct the tour.

The Northeast Indiana SWCDs again presented summer Conservation Camps at Par-Gil in LaGrange, Pokagon State Park in Angola, and Camp Whitley in Columbia City. Steuben County SWCD staff were able to assist with the camp in LaGrange, and we reached the maximum camper registration limit for our camp held at Pokagon. Staff also assisted with Agronomy Field Day at The Andersons® in Waterloo and conducted a Survival Lesson for the Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy Knee-High Naturalist program. In the spirit of the survival theme, the SWCD provided mini First Aid kits to all children that attended.

September was another busy month. Youth Conservation Field Day (YCFD) returned to Pokagon State Park for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled it in 2020 and 2021. The over 250 Steuben County 4th graders that participated had a blast! New this year, the fisheries station was replaced with a pollinator station featuring "Pollinator Pizza" which was very well received by the students. Thank you to Jenna Wait from the Elkhart County SWCD for stepping in to share an important lesson about how limited our food choices would be if there were no pollinators.

(continued on page 10)



Except where indicated, all photos courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

EDUCATION (continued from page 9)

On the same day as YCFD, the SWCD hosted the first session of the six-week long Steuben County Life Program at the Anthony Wayne Scout Reservation in Pleasant Lake. Other sessions included Fox Lake and Steuben County history, Cookies and Canvas, Alternate Energy, and the final session at Pokagon State Park exploring the recently renovated nature center exhibit room and enjoying dinner at the Potawatomi Inn. Additionally, the SWCD partnered with the Steuben County Health Department and the City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Coordinator to conduct a Rural Homeowners Septic 101 Workshop. The SWCD awarded one door prize for a cost-share incentive payment towards a septic inspection and pumping.

To finish out the fun in September, the SWCD worked with the LaGrange County SWCD and NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke to conduct a Water Quality Field Day in cooperation with Angola Middle School 8th grade science teacher Sarah Koch. The SWCDs and NRCS introduced 8th grade students to the world of Hoosier Riverwatch and water quality monitoring at Commons Park. It was a great day of sharing our collective knowledge and possibly inspiring

some of the students to pursue an education related to water quality and the environment. To finish out the year, the SWCD again partnered with the City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Coordinator and held our annual Contractors Workshop. More information about the Contractors Workshop can be found on page 17.

As you can see, the SWCD has been very involved in the community, sharing information about conservation practices and environmental issues to encourage Steuben County residents to protect soils and local water resources. By inspiring younger generations to pursue education and careers in soil and water related fields, the Steuben County SWCD hopes to carry on its good work well into the future with your continued support.

Be sure to visit the SWCD website for a link to the Conservation Education video series. In addition to the Steuben SWCD informational video released at the March SWCD Annual Meeting, six additional educational videos have been added. These include *Pollinators*, *Stormwater*, *Invasive Species*, *Water Pollution*, *Soil*, and *Recycling*. Be sure to keep checking back as more videos are being planned.

2022 Tri-State Regional Science Fair Soil and Water Conservation Award Winners

Each year the NE Indiana Conservation Districts of DeKalb, LaGrange, and Steuben counties sponsor special Conservation Awards at the Tri-State Regional Science Fair. Awards consist of a certificate of recognition, a monetary award (1st-Place: \$75; 2nd-Place: \$50; 3rd-Place: \$25), and a conservation book. Congratulations to the 2022 Tri-State Regional Science Fair Soil and Water Conservation Award winners!

○ **First Place**

Olivia Rigby (11th Grade), DeKalb High School
“Effect of Fertilizer Levels on Hydroponic Tomato Plants”

○ **Second Place**

Mylan Mosier (3rd Grade), DeKalb Central Schools

“Soil Absorption: Which Soil Absorbs the Most Water?”

○ **Third Place**

Emma Creager (7th Grade), Fremont Middle School
“Effluent Water, Ground Water, and Surface Water: How Does Effluent Water Compare to Potable and Leisure Water Sources in Terms of Meeting State Standards for Water Quality”

WELL DONE!!

2022 4-H Soil & Water Science Poster Winners



ABOVE

Soil & Water Science Grand Champion Logan Sattison.

Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

The Steuben SWCD was excited to see participation in the 2022 4-H Soil & Water Science poster exhibit. The primary purpose for the poster project is to encourage 4-H'ers to explore information and learn something new. The secondary purpose is to display something learned through 4-H and perhaps to fulfill other learning experiences (e.g., school assignment or science fair).

○ **Grand Champion**

Logan Sattison
“It’s Not Just Dirt”

○ **Reserve Grand Champion**

Emma Creager

“Effluent Water, Ground Water, and Surface Water”

EDUCATION

Thank You!!

- **Steuben County Lakes Council** for sponsoring educational activity booklets for local 1st - 5th grade students within the county for our Stewardship Week and 4th-Grade Youth Field Day Education program, and **Bill Schmidt** for assistance with the Steuben County Life Program.
- **City of Angola/Trine University MS4** for sponsoring educational storm water activity booklets as part of our 4th-Grade Youth Field Day Education program.
- The Steuben County Community Foundation's **Ralph E. Taylor Grant** for providing a 2022 grant to support the 4th-Grade Youth Field Day Education program.

Angola Parks & Recreation, Angola United Methodist Church, Anthony Wayne Scout Reservation, Carnegie Public Library of Steuben County, Fox Lake Association, Potawatomi Inn-Pokagon State Park, Steuben County Government, The Andersons, Inc., and Trine University for providing workshop facilities.

Carrie Allen, Nicky Ball, Dr. Scott Bergeson, Linda Bidlack, John Brittenham, Kevin Colbert, Joel Conrad, Nicole Corwin, Tom Crowe, Cheyenne Cunningham, Terry Daily, DeKalb County SWCD staff, Deborah Easter, Gary Fair, Anthony Filogamo, Tony Fleming, Arthur Franke, Cory Garman, Ron Geater, Gibson's Heating & Plumbing, Inc., Gwen Hall, Matt Hanna, Jody Heaston, Jacob Houghman, Tracy Hughes, Dr. Bruce Kingsbury, Jayna Kozlowski, LaGrange County SWCD staff, Jim Lake (Lake George Conservancy), Jennifer LaRose, Lynne Liechty, Andy Lewis, Don Luepke, Lauren Malcolm, Dr. Jordan Marshall, Jan McGowen, Matt Meersman, Chad Montgomery, Bruce Moody, Tami Mosier, Dr. Robin Newburn, Jim Penick, David Perkins, Jamie Perry, Renewable Energy Systems LLC, Marissa Renz, Kate Sanders, Jim Somers, Ben Taylor (ACRES Land Trust), Kris Thomas, Joyce Thompson, Deb VanDyne, Savanna Vaughn (Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area), Jenna Wait, Beth Williams and Betsy Yankowiak for presenting at and/or assisting with Steuben County SWCD 2022 programs.



Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District

2023 NATIVE PLANT KIT SALE

Steuben County SWCD Office
1220 N 200 W, Suite L
Angola, IN
Ph. (260) 665-3211 ext. 3
steubenswcd@gmail.com

Orders and payment due by March 20, 2023
Plant pickup June 8 & 9

Native plants provide food and habitat for wildlife,
help keep our rivers and lakes clean,
enhance the beauty of yards and neighborhoods,
and
make wonderful bouquets.

\$150.00 PER 50 PLANT KIT

Available Kits:
Prairie Grass
Prairie Wildflowers
Rain Garden
Shade

For a complete list of component species, please contact the SWCD office.

2023 Indiana Master Naturalist Workshop



Join us this spring as we host an adult Indiana Master Naturalist Workshop in partnership with Pokagon State Park!

10 sessions
April 19—June 10

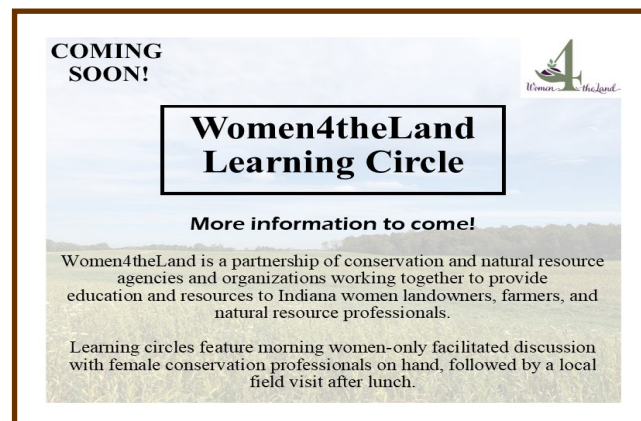
**\$120.00
Workshop
Fee**

Registration due by March 24

Contact the Steuben County SWCD office for more information
(260) 665-3211 ext. 3
steubenswcd@gmail.com

The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soil, and wildlife, and promote natural resource volunteer service within the State of Indiana.

COMING SOON!



Women4theLand Learning Circle

More information to come!

Women4theLand is a partnership of conservation and natural resource agencies and organizations working together to provide education and resources to Indiana women landowners, farmers, and natural resource professionals.

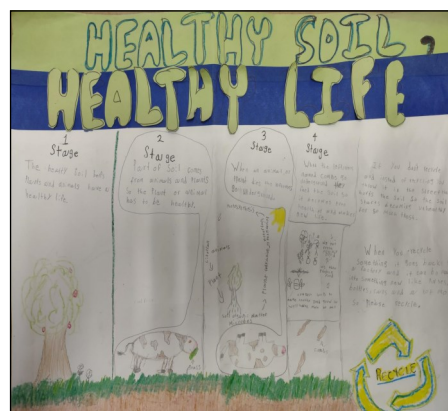
Learning circles feature morning women-only facilitated discussion with female conservation professionals on hand, followed by a local field visit after lunch.

2022 STEWARDSHIP WEEK POSTER CONTEST WINNERS



ABOVE

1st Grade, 1st Place: Scout Lindsay
Fremont Elementary (Mrs. Fitzpatrick)



ABOVE

2nd – 3rd Grade, 1st Place: Leo Salinas
Hendry Park Elementary (Mrs. Perschke)



ABOVE

4th - 5th Grade, 1st Place: Sadie Delaney
Pleasant Lake Elementary (Mrs. Walters)

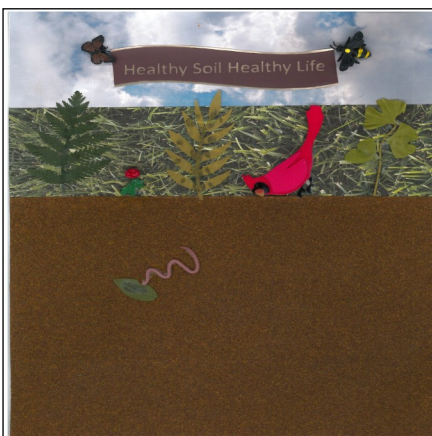
“Healthy Soil, Healthy Life”

The 2022 National Association of Conservation Districts’ (NACD) Stewardship Week theme was “Healthy Soil, Healthy Life.” This national program began as a way to encourage Americans to focus on stewardship. Stewardship Week is officially celebrated from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. It’s one of the world’s largest conservation-related observances.

The goal of this year’s theme was to teach students how our health and well-being are connected to the health of our soil. Agriculture and food production are tied to the vitality of the soil, impacting our economy and our communities. Students gained an understanding how products they use can be traced back to the soil, and soil is an important ingredient in the production process. Most people rarely think about the important role of soil in the food they eat daily and how it impacts our lives. Farmers and ranchers take great pride in their soil - most of their families have been working the land for generations and they understand the important link between healthy soil and healthy life.

To celebrate Stewardship Week, each year the Steuben County SWCD provides educational activity booklets to the MSD of Steuben County and Fremont Elementary Schools. A poster contest was also sponsored for 1st through 5th grade students. The poster contest gives students a chance to have their art displayed as part of the SWCD’s local conservation outreach initiative. Each student that submitted a poster received a small participation gift bag. Winners received an award certificate, colored pencils, an “America’s Favorite Birds” or “Backyard Birds and Blossoms” coloring book, and a Walmart gift card. Here, we recognize our 2022 “Healthy Soil, Healthy Life” first place poster contest winners.

All posters were judged on their conservation message (50%), visual effectiveness (30%), originality (10%) and universal appeal (10%).



ABOVE

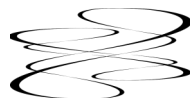
1st – 2nd Grade, Honorable Mention:
Charlie Drerup
Fremont Elementary (Mrs. Stukey)

Poster judges included Steuben SWCD and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff, NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke, and ISDA Resource Specialist Kate Sanders.



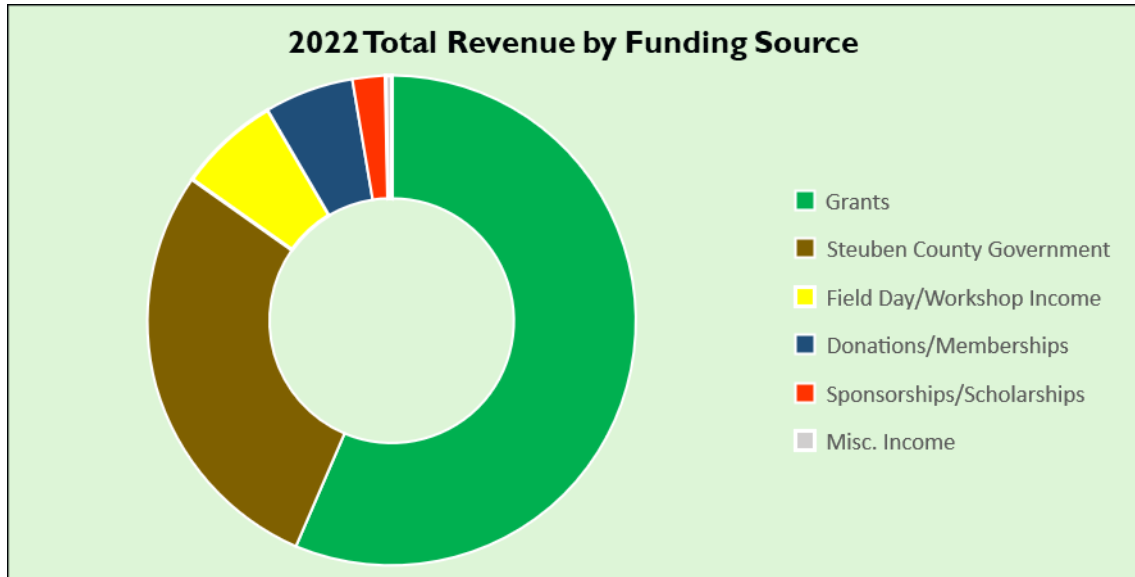
2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

Receipts	
State—Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Matching Grant for District Operation	\$10,000.00
County for District Operation*	\$16,000.00
Clean Water Indiana Grant	\$1,000.00
State Funds—Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Grant	\$20,791.32
Workshop/Field Day Income—Steuben County Life, Conservation Camp, Indiana Master Naturalist	\$3,805.00
Donations & Memberships	\$3,329.00
Reimbursements/Refunds/Sponsorships—Conservation Education	\$1,221.17
Sales Income—Flags & Rain Barrels	\$191.25
Interest on Savings Account	\$35.21
Total Income	\$56,372.95
Balance brought forward from 2022	\$54,400.22
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$110,773.17
Disbursements	
Annual Meeting Expense	\$1,298.57
Conservation Education Programs	\$8,083.55
Contractual Services	\$604.00
Cost-Share Projects—SWCD Funded	\$1,176.31
Cost-Share Projects—State Funded (LARE)	\$20,383.64
Dues and Subscriptions	\$3,568.89
Office Supplies	\$997.97
Postage	\$1,723.43
Printing/Copying Expense	\$5,871.30
Sales Tax	\$14.59
Supplies for Resale (Flags & Rain Barrel Parts)	\$361.54
Travel/Lodging/Mileage/Registration/Meals	\$3,950.41
Workshop/Field Day Expense—Agronomy Field Day, Youth Conservation Field Day, Steuben Life, etc.	\$3,294.13
District Vehicle—Fuel, Repairs, and Maintenance	\$2,486.88
Computer Expenses—Web Hosting	\$448.00
Insurance	\$918.00
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$55,181.21
Balance in Checking at December 31, 2022	\$55,556.75
Petty Cash	\$100.00
Savings Account	\$41,914.71
* In addition to the grant for District Operation, the County directly paid the salary for the two District staff.	

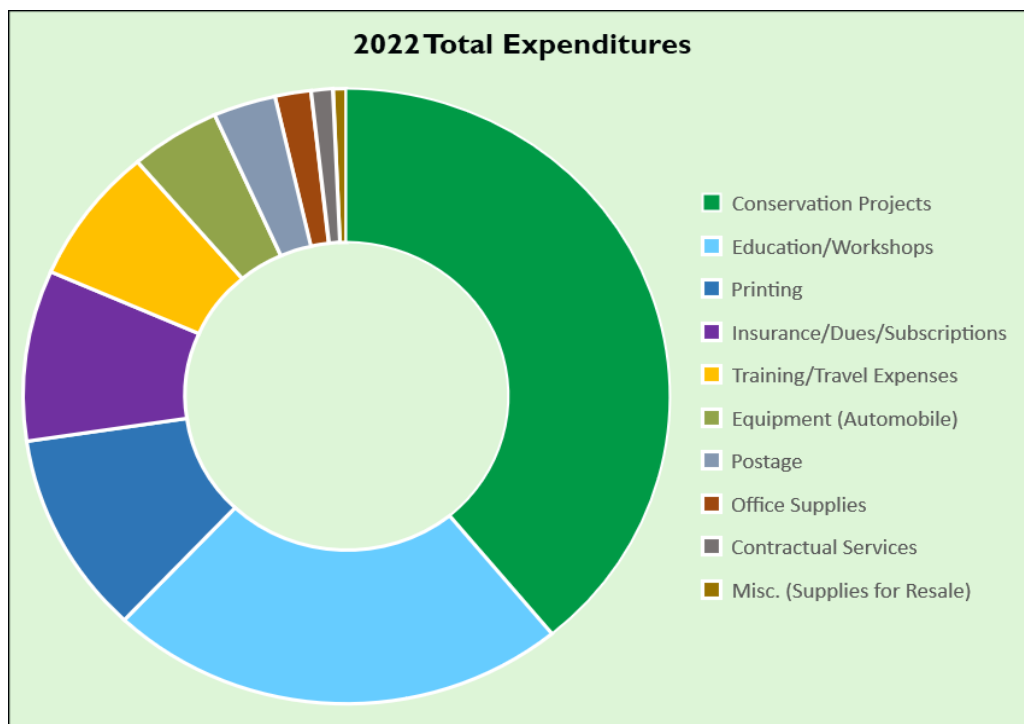


2022 FINANCIAL REPORT

2022 Total Revenue by Funding Source (\$56,372.95)



2022 Total Expenditures (\$55,181.21)



AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Affiliate members are individuals, groups or organizations who choose to financially support the work of the Steuben County SWCD. **Donations received from Affiliate Members are used to help support District information and education programs for youth and adults.**

THANK YOU 2022 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

The District Board gratefully acknowledges our 2022 Affiliate Members. If you would like to help support conservation education in Steuben County, please complete the 2023 Affiliate Membership Form on the back page and mail it with your check or money order to:

Steuben County SWCD
1220 N 200 W, Suite L
Angola, IN 46703

“Change is the end result of all true learning.”

-Leo Buscaglia

Bronze Level

Bill & Diana Clingan (Hudson)
Crowe Forest Management LLC
Daft Erosion Control LLC
Hoham Feed & Seed
Deloris Howarth (Fremont)
Lake of the Woods/McClish Lake Association
Niann Lautzenhiser (Hamilton)
Peter Mountz (Garrett)
Stroh Farm Supply

Silver Level

Booth Farms—William Booth
Carper Farm Supply
City of Angola/Trine U. MS4
Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy
Franklin Paul Group, LLC
Beverly Holse (Ashley)
Kenn-Feld Group
Kevin Northup Excavating
Ken Shelton (Angola)
John Williamson, Jr. (Angola)

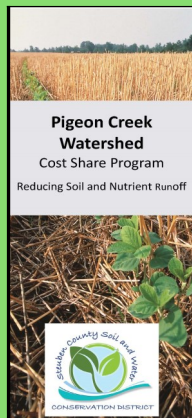
Gold Level

Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, Inc.
Holman Excavating
Raymond Lauer (Fremont)
S & P Earthwork

Platinum Level

Angola American Legion Post #31
Angola Seed & Supply, LLC
Cameron Memorial Hospital
Dailey Farms
DeForest Family (Hamilton)
Edon Farmers Co-Op
Farm Credit Mid-America
Mary Jo Fitzenrider (Fremont)
Tom Green Engineering
Chuck & Nila Howard (Hamilton)
Lake George Conservancy, Inc.
Lake James Lake Association
Steuben County Lakes Council
Stoy Farms
Lynn Wernet (Angola)
The Wilson Farm

Fawn River & Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project Grants Available



The Steuben County SWCD's Fawn River and Pigeon Creek Watershed Land Treatment Project Grants both received additional funding in FY22-23 to provide cost-share and incentive payments to land users (i.e., landowners or long-term lease holders) for the construction of a variety of conservation practices to help reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering area waterbodies. A variety of practices are eligible, including field windbreaks, filter strips, pasture plantings, pollinator plots and tree plantings, to name a few. Program sign-up will be on a continuous basis until all funding has been obligated. Call our office to discuss your project.

We are an active partner in the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP), which is comprised of eight (8) Indiana agencies who share a common goal of providing technical, financial and educational assistance needed to implement economically and environmentally compatible land and water stewardship decisions, practices and technologies. The Steuben County SWCD is an active partner, alongside:

- Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and their 92 SWCDs
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources
- ISDA Division of Soil Conservation
- Purdue Cooperative Extension Service
- State Soil Conservation Board
- USDA Farm Service Agency & NRCS



"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make."

- Jane Goodall



"The Conservation of Water" display panel from the 2022 Steuben County Water / Ways exhibit. The mission of the exhibit was to inform and educate residents and visitors about the importance of Steuben County water resources for many activities including drinking, recreating, and agriculture. This panel focused on the multitude of local governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations working every day to preserve and maintain water quality for everyone.

There are many other agencies and organizations working to improve the health and ecology of our community. The Steuben County SWCD has worked alongside many of them in order to accomplish large scale, mutual goals. We recognize these partners here, with great appreciation for the results we are achieving together.

- ◆ City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Stormwater Management Program
- ◆ Friends of the St. Joseph River
- ◆ Pheasants Forever
- ◆ St. Joseph River Basin Commission
- ◆ Steuben County Government
- ◆ Steuben County Lakes Council

SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

Contractors' Workshop - A Team Effort to Protect Steuben County Waters

by Kris Thomas, City of Angola MS4 Coordinator/Engineering Assistant

Every year the City of Angola/Trine University Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (COA/TU MS4) Department partners with the Steuben County SWCD to offer a workshop to area contractors. Although the primary target group is building contractors, the workshop is open to anyone interested in learning about erosion and sediment control requirements on construction sites. In addition to building contractors, other interested parties include those involved in design, such as engineers and surveyors, landscapers, government agencies, and members of the general public.

Why is this workshop necessary? Few people realize the environmental impact sediment (loose soil), resulting from the removal of vegetation, can have on local water quality. Vegetation holds sediment in place. When it is removed through land disturbance, sediment flow to local waterways may occur. When sediment loads are introduced to water resources, the result is diminished water quality. Poor water quality has a direct effect on recreational activities including fishing and swimming. Sediment stresses fish and other aquatic animals that can result in death. Aquatic plants can also be covered reducing available food sources. Although there are different types of land disturbance, such as poor agricultural practices, construction activities are typically the source of the most concentrated sediment releases, which, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), makes sediment the most common pollutant found in our rivers, streams, and lakes.

Once vegetation is removed during the initial phase of construction, the potential for erosion is dramatically increased. When the natural vegetative stabilizer is removed, the exposed sediment can be carried away by wind, rain, and snowmelt. Implementation of proper erosion and sediment control measures is essential to keep sediment on the construction site and out of waterways. Unfortunately, not all contractors are equal when it comes to having knowledge in the use of proper control measures. Contractors are often not aware of the environmental impact their construction projects may have on water quality. As a result, installation and maintenance are not always a top priority. This is one reason construction sites having one or more acres of land disturbance are required to be regulated by the EPA under the Clean Water Act. These regulations hold

(continued on page 18)



ABOVE

Sediment flow coming off an improperly managed construction site. Vegetation removal, along with inadequate erosion control measures, caused a large amount of sediment to flow off the site.

Photo courtesy of City of Angola MS4 Department

SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

*Contractors' Workshop - A Team Effort to Protect
Steuben County Waters
(continued from page 17)*

the contractor accountable to be trained and knowledgeable in the implementation and maintenance of these measures.

Another requirement of the Clean Water Act is for designated MS4s to provide this erosion and sediment control training to contractors once a year. As such, the Steuben County Contractors' Workshop is specifically designed to provide those in the construction industry with the latest regulatory information that applies to erosion and sediment control requirements on construction sites, as well as to provide information on the many products available to address all pollutants that could result from construction activity. This information can be used to control erosion and sediment on any project, large or small.

This year's workshop included regulatory information as well as industry and product information. Information on the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM's) new Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) was provided, which highlighted major changes to regulations as Indiana transitioned from the previous construction permit by Rule, also known as Rule 5, to the new administrative general permit. Participants also learned information on a specific erosion and sediment control product not typically utilized in this area. This

year Flexamat™ was the highlighted product. Participants discovered benefits of using this product instead of traditional rock rip rap including lower maintenance requirements and a more aesthetically pleasing look. And finally, participants learned of the environmental impact of concrete washout slurry and the importance of providing appropriate concrete washout systems from the Indiana Ready Mixed Concrete Association.



LEFT
Concrete washout slurry discharged to the ground. Concrete slurry has a pH similar to Drano® and contains heavy metals. This liquid can leach into the soil and is a potential contaminant of ground water.

*Photo courtesy of
City of Angola
MS4 Department*

Each year, the COA/TU MS4 and Steuben County SWCD strive to provide a workshop that delivers relevant up-to-date information that benefits not only building contractors, but many others who have vested interests in protecting Steuben County's waterways. The workshop continues to grow and find success with new participants representing a multitude of backgrounds who have a desire to make a difference.

**Information provided at the 2022 Contractors'
Workshop can be found online at:
steubenswcd.org/construction-and-stormwater-control/**



LEFT
Flexamat™ is a tied concrete block mat designed to control erosion and also provides a stable driving/walking surface as compared to traditional rip rap.

*Photos courtesy of
City of Angola
MS4 Department*

SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

2022 River Friendly Farmers



ABOVE

Ron and Ryan Waite of Waite Farms, Steuben County SWCD's nominees for the 2022 River Friendly Farmer Award. This award program began in 2000 and is sponsored by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) and the Indiana Farm Bureau.

Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD

In a county known for more than 101 lakes, there are individuals using conservation best management practices on their farms to protect waterways and water quality in Indiana and beyond. In Steuben, Ron and Ryan Waite of Waite Farms are two such individuals and were nominated for the statewide award of River Friendly Farmer by the Steuben County SWCD for their efforts. The Waites were two of forty-eight Indiana farmers who received this statewide award in 2022.

The River Friendly Farmer Award program began in 2000 and has honored over 1,100 Indiana farms. The state-wide initiative recognizes farmers, who through good production management practices help keep Indiana's rivers, lakes and streams clean. Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may nominate up to two farmers who do an outstanding job of protecting their rivers, lakes and streams through their everyday conservation management practices on the farm.

Ron and Ryan Waite are the landowners/operators of approximately 1,117 acres of farmland in Steuben County. Waite Farms produces corn, beans, mixed hay, and grows seed for cereal rye cover crop. The majority of the tracts/fields they farm are located within the St. Joseph River-Michigan Watershed (Fawn River). These fields are located among several large and small lake systems which are a significant economic base for the region, including Crooked Lake, Loon Lake, Pine Canyon Lake, and Grass Lake.

The primary conservation practices they use include no-till and reduced-till, cover crops, and soil sampling with nutrient management. Waite Farms started implementing cover crops in 2015, and by 2021, planted cover crops on all their farmed row-crop acreage (approximately 696 acres). They use cover crops to increase soil moisture capacity, improve nutrient cycling, and for weed suppression. Cover crops and no-till help with adding organic matter to the soils, which in turn improves soil health and overall profitability. Many of their fields have rolling hills; several are categorized as Highly Erodible Land (HEL). Cover crops and no-till help to reduce sediment loss, nutrient runoff, and leaching. The presence of HEL can contribute to increasing the amount of sediment carrying other pollutants such as nutrients and pesticides to open water. The conservation practices they employ help reduce the amount of potential pollutants reaching area water bodies and downstream waters. Waite Farms is also involved with planting food plots for wildlife. Food plots not only help provide food for wildlife during colder months, but they also add cover to help with wildlife survival. Waite Farms has also installed filter strips and grassed waterways, to help slow water runoff from fields—trapping and filtering sediment and nutrients before reaching any water bodies for water quality protection.

Thank you, Ron and Ryan, and all our conservation-minded farmers and landowners that do their part to improve water quality and other natural resources.



Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

Peachtree Plaza 200
1220 N 200 W, Suite L
Angola, IN 46703
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.

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.

2023 Affiliate Membership Form

Yes, I am interested in being an Affiliate Member of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District for calendar year 2023. It is my understanding that the donations received from Affiliate Memberships are used to supplement the District's Information and Education programs for youth and adults, and that the District will publish a list of Affiliate Members in its annual report and newsletters throughout the year (circulation - over 1,600 individuals).

Personal or Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Membership Levels

_____ \$25.00 - Bronze Level

_____ \$50.00 - Silver Level

_____ \$75.00 - Gold Level

_____ \$100.00 and above - Platinum Level

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form with your donation made payable to: *Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District*
A receipt will be mailed to you to acknowledge your donation
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Steuben County SWCD • 1220 North 200 West, Suite L - Peachtree Plaza 200 • Angola, IN 46703