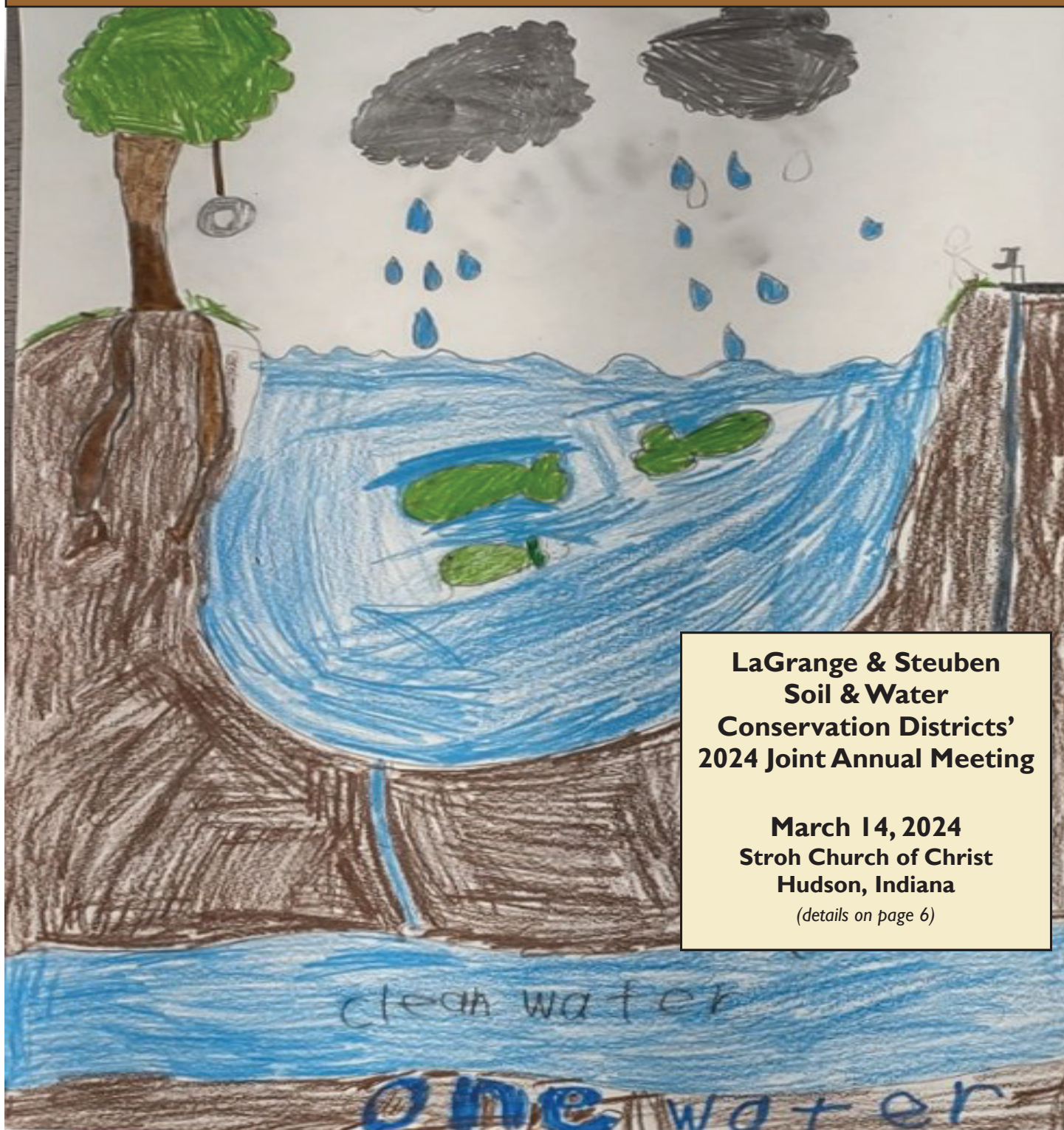




# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Volume 47 Issue 1  
Winter 2024



**LaGrange & Steuben  
Soil & Water  
Conservation Districts'  
2024 Joint Annual Meeting**

**March 14, 2024  
Stroh Church of Christ  
Hudson, Indiana**  
(details on page 6)



## ABOUT

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is one of the nearly 3,000 conservation districts across the United States helping people conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. Conservation Districts are local units of government established under state law to carry out natural resource management programs at the local level. 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 Steuben SWCD serves 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 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.

## MISSION

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



## LEADERSHIP

### **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  
Jamie Perry, Natural Resource Specialist

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

#### **Staff**

Kate Sanders, Resource Specialist  
Sandra Hoffarth, District Support Specialist

### **Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)**

#### **Board of Supervisors**

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

#### **Associate Supervisors**

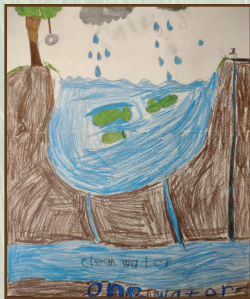
Tim Groosbeck  
Brad Hamlin  
Daniel Oberst  
Ryan Waite

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.



*Learn why the Steuben County SWCD was formed and how we accomplish our mission:*

[https://youtu.be/w8KU\\_nslcY](https://youtu.be/w8KU_nslcY)



### **ABOUT THE COVER**

Artwork by Reid Shull, first place winner for the 2023 Steuben County Stewardship Week Poster Contest in the 2<sup>nd</sup>- 3<sup>rd</sup>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 all of our responsibility to care for our natural resources. See page 11 for additional details.



### **INSIDE FRONT COVER**

Fawn River in Orland, Indiana.

*Photos courtesy of Janel Meyer*

### **THIS PAGE**

A pasture/hay planting in the Upper St. Joseph River Watershed (OH) of Steuben County.



**ABOVE**

Conservation at Work. Various conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) in Steuben County, Indiana to help reduce soil erosion and protect/improve water quality. (Top Left) Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (crop residue left on soil surface throughout the year). (Top Right) Heavy Use Area Protection (provides a stable, noneroding surface for areas frequently used by animals, people, or vehicles). (Bottom) Conservation Cover (perennial vegetative cover).

*Photos courtesy of Janel Meyer and Arthur Franke*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	About The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
3	Leadership
4	Board Chair Report
6	Annual Meeting Information
7	2023 Steuben County SWCD & NRCS Conservation Highlights
8	2023 Financial Report
10	Education
13	Affiliate Members
14	Spotlight on Conservation
	NISWMD Recycles for Cleaner Water
	Growing Green with Soil Health
	2023 River Friendly Farmer
	Conservation Video Series
	Fawn River Watershed Cost-Share Funding
	2024 Native Plant Kit Sale

## BOARD CHAIR REPORT

**ABOVE**

Steuben County SWCD  
Board Chair Kayleen  
Hart.

*Photo courtesy of  
Steuben SWCD*

Recently, I read an article on [Earth.org](https://earth.org) describing what the site's over 150 contributing writers felt were the 15 biggest environmental problems of 2024. It was an interesting and informative article, listing and describing some topics which hadn't necessarily come to my mind when I first read the headline. It also made me think of the times when I spoke to various people who either didn't believe the environmental problems listed weren't as bad as they were portrayed, or others who felt the environmental problems we face are so overwhelmingly bad that there was nothing we could do to reverse it. Both sides had the attitude that it wouldn't do any good to try, or that they didn't need to. I won't even get into political views about the issue of climate change. I realize this is a topic in which we could go down several rabbit holes and never resurface with any kind of solution or resolution.

*(continued on page 5)*



## BOARD CHAIR REPORT (continued from page 4)

The fact is **“The Earth is what we all have in common”** (Wendell Berry). We should all be looking at our lives and our activities and see if there are ways where we could improve how we treat our planet on an individual basis. After that we need to see if there are ways where we could improve our local community, continuing until we can eventually work with governmental policy makers to work on solutions (poor governance is Number 2 in the article’s list of problems). Everyone can contribute to a healthy planet – the first step to do this is through education.



Let’s start with some of the things that you can do as an individual to help become a solution to environmental problems. One simple way is to try to eliminate food waste from your household (Number 3 on the list). Six percent of global greenhouse gas emissions come from food losses and waste. Not only does this help the environment, but it can also help your budget as well. Imagine the ripple effect this could have in a community if individuals, and then businesses and schools tried to pay more attention to what they waste.

Number 5 on the list was plastic pollution. A report by the science journal Nature reported that roughly 14 million tons of plastic makes its way into the oceans every year. Can you recycle those plastic bottles? Or bring a reusable container of water instead? Use a glass container instead of plastic? Reuse and recycle some of the one-time use containers? There are many options to work on this one. Reducing plastic waste would also contribute to lowering the Ocean’s acidification (Number 9).



How about reducing the amount of food you eat. Did you know “most people consume approximately twice as much food as they did 50 years ago, and there are four times as many people on earth as at the close of the 1960’s?” ([Earth.org](https://earth.org)). Consuming less would work on problems Number 10 (Agriculture), 11 (Food & Water Insecurity), and 13 (Overfishing). I know I could also use the other side benefit of consuming less – losing weight and getting healthier.



Who doesn’t love a new outfit? Problem Number 12 (Fast Fashion and Textile Waste) should give us pause when we shop. Monumental amounts of used and even new clothing wind up in landfills. As this breaks down, microplastic from synthetic materials leach into the soil causing further problems. Producing the newest fashion and clothing now accounts for 10% of global carbon emissions. Instead of buying a new outfit, try visiting a thrift store or shopping on Facebook Marketplace. Can you repair that article of clothing or make it into a rag, a quilt, or something else instead of trashing it? Your wallet will thank you, too.

These are **easy** ways that you can help improve your environment and the Earth. I encourage you to read the rest of the article at [Earth.org](https://earth.org) (<https://earth.org/the-biggest-environmental-problems-of-our-lifetime>). Please educate yourself. The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a valuable resource when it comes to learning about conservation. Visit their website: [Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District – Angola, Indiana](https://steubenswcd.org) ([steubenswcd.org](https://steubenswcd.org)), and check out all the activities and events they do, as well as awesome farmer and educational videos. You can also visit the office and talk with Janel and Aimee, or the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Art or Jamie, and they can discuss what you can do on your property to conserve and protect your natural resources. It doesn’t matter if you live in town, in a sub-division, or out in the country, everyone can do something to help solve environmental issues. Even if you don’t believe the problem is as big as portrayed, let’s agree there is a problem and work together to try to solve it.



## ANNUAL MEETING

### MARCH 14, 2024 LaGrange and Steuben Soil and Water Conservation Districts' Joint Annual Meeting



The evening will include a brief report of each District's 2023 activities and the election of Board Supervisors. For Steuben County, Craig Holman will be running unopposed; however, nominations will also be accepted from the floor on March 14<sup>th</sup>.\*


• **Craig Holman** •

*Incumbent Craig Holman has been involved with farming and served as a farm manager for various operations throughout his career. He has been a supervisor with the SWCD Board since 2012, serving as its chairman from April 2019 - April 2021. Craig has also been involved with Purdue Extension, serving on the Steuben County Purdue Extension Board. He is a lifelong resident of the county and enjoys assisting with various agricultural youth groups in the community. Craig has implemented conservation practices on acreage he has farmed, including no-till, minimum tillage, and variable rate technology for nutrient management.*

Please R.S.V.P. by March 4, 2024 if you would like to attend the free buffet dinner catered by Dan's Fish Fry Service.

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



## LAGRANGE AND STEUBEN SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS' 2024 ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

### What

The LaGrange and Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are conducting a joint 2024 Annual Meeting.

### Where

Stroh Church of Christ  
4540 S 1100 W, Hudson, IN, 46747

### When

Thursday, March 14, 2024. Doors open at 5:45 p.m., with a free buffet dinner catered by Dan's Fish Fry Service beginning at 6:00 p.m. The **Dumpster Drummers** will perform at 7:00 p.m., with the business meetings to follow.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY MARCH 4, 2024

LaGrange Co. SWCD (260) 463-3166 ext. 3	Steuben Co. SWCD (260) 665-3211 ext. 3	<a href="https://steubenswcd.org/event/2024-steuben-and-lagrange-counties-annual-meeting/" style="color: white;">https://steubenswcd.org/event/2024-steuben-and-lagrange-counties-annual-meeting/</a>
--	---	---



#### ABOVE

Steuben County SWCD 2023 Annual Meeting.  
*Photo courtesy of Beth Williams*

The 2023 Steuben County SWCD annual meeting was held on March 8 at Club Z in the MTI Center at Trine University. Our keynote speaker was Bob Barr, a Research Scientist at the Center for Earth and Environmental Science at IUPUI, whose work focuses broadly on what is required to achieve and maintain healthy stream systems in a continually changing landscape.

Incumbent Charles "Chuck" W. Howard was re-elected to the SWCD Board of Supervisors for an additional 3-year term.

We thank everyone that joined us for this special evening where we also celebrated the SWCD's 75th Anniversary.



## 2023 STEUBEN COUNTY SWCD & NRCS CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

### Agriculture Conservation Practices

Listed below are the acres, feet, and/or number of conservation practices installed during the 2023 fiscal year and why they are important for conservation (includes SWCD and NRCS projects).

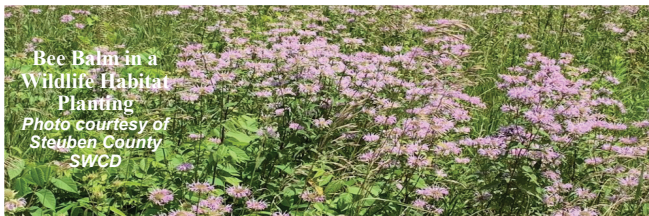
#### AGRONOMIC/COVER-BASED PRACTICES

##### COVER CROPS (422.7 Acres)

- 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.

##### NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANS (>1,000 Acres)

- 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.



#### FORESTRY PRACTICES

##### BRUSH MANAGEMENT (85.1 Acres)

- 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.

##### TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT (57.4 Acres)

- 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.

##### FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS (>500 Acres)

- 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.

#### WILDLIFE

##### WILDLIFE HABITAT (39.5 Acres)

- 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.

#### ENGINEERING PRACTICES

##### FENCING (3,000 Feet)

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

##### GRASSED WATERWAYS (3,960 Linear Feet)

- Convey runoff from terraces, diversions, or other water concentrations without causing erosion or flooding.
- Prevent gully formation.
- Protect/improve water quality.

#### CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

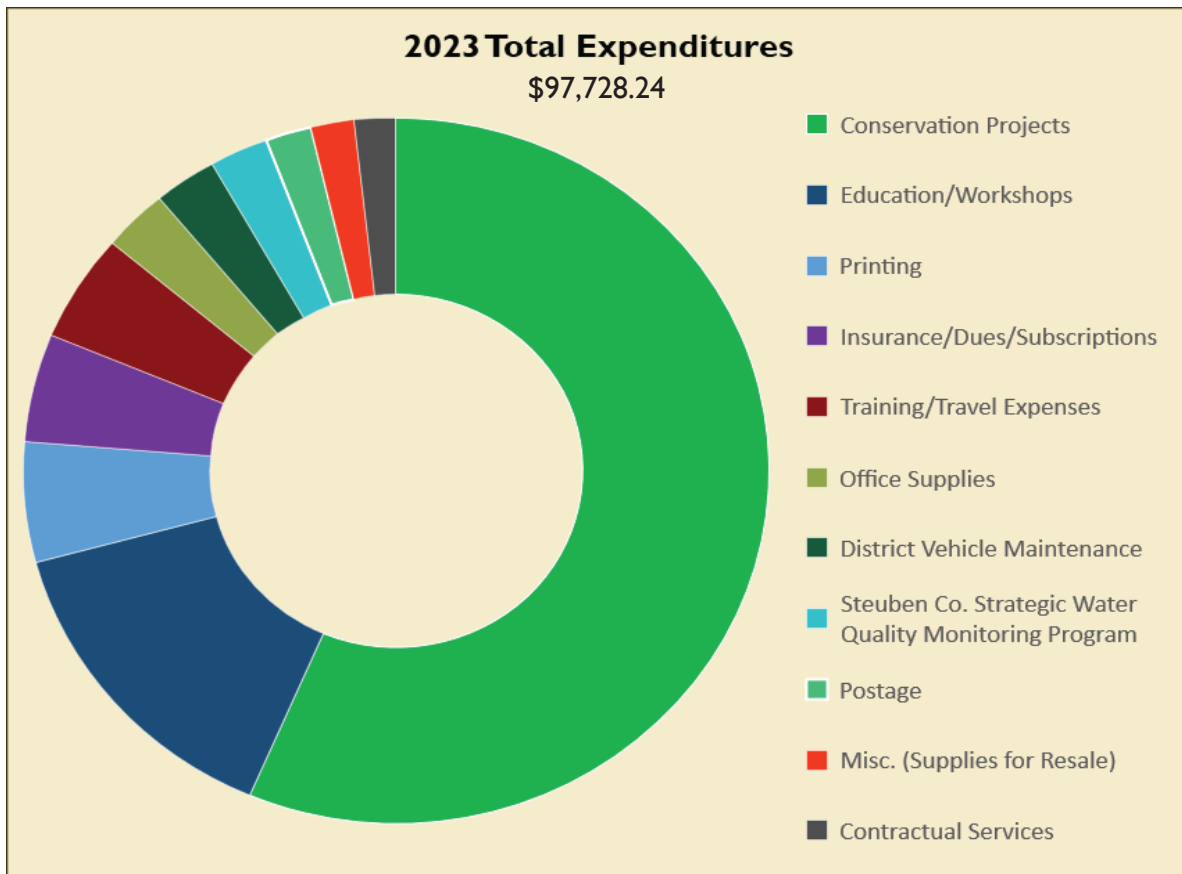
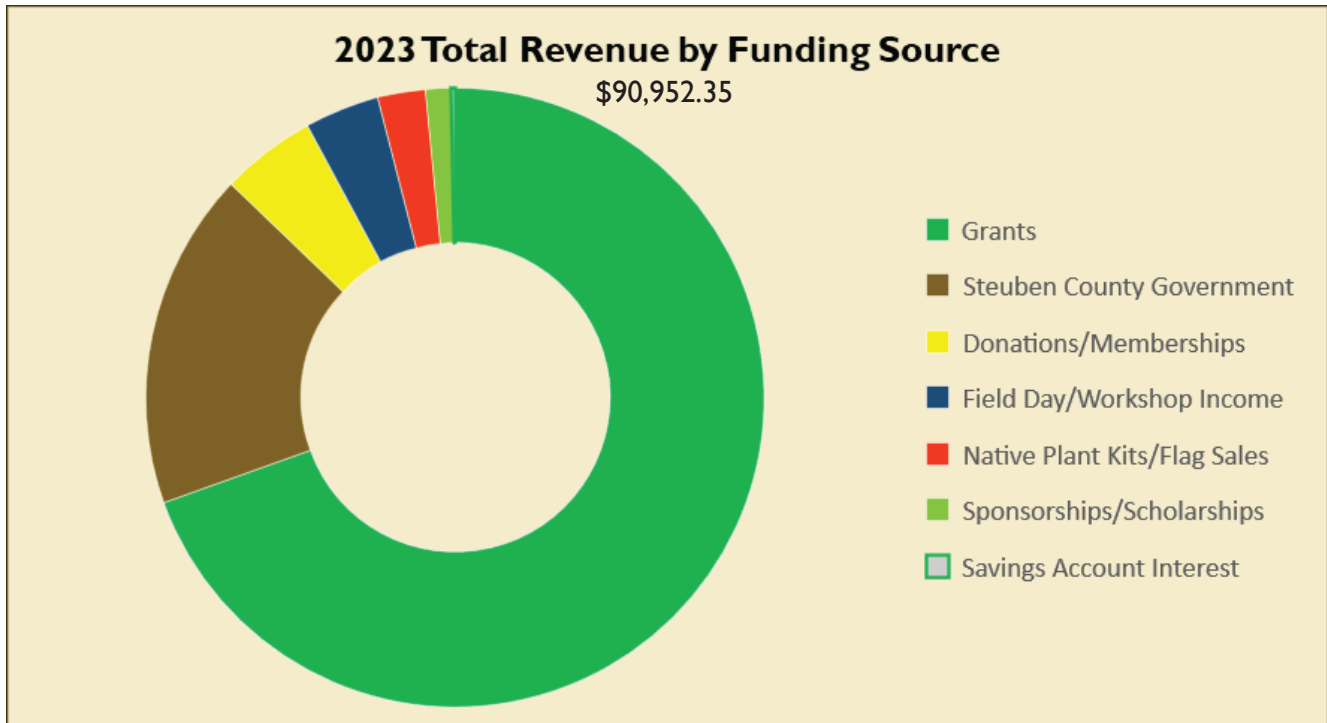
- 304.6 Acres of forestland enhanced by practices including Forest Stand Improvement and Wildlife & Brush Management.
- 291.0 Acres of cropland enhanced by practices including Cover Crops, No Till, and Nutrient Management.



## 2023 FINANCIAL REPORT

<b>Receipts</b>	
County for District Operations*	\$16,000.00
State—Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Matching Grant for District Operations	\$12,000.00
State Funds—Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) Watershed Land Treatment Grant	\$48,917.67
Clean Water Indiana Training Grant and Non-Government Grants	\$2,278.65
Donations/Memberships	\$4,516.00
Field Day/Workshop Income—Steuben County Life, Conservation Camp, Indiana Master Naturalist	\$3,605.00
Sales Income—Native Plant Kits/Flags	\$2,260.00
Reimbursements/Refunds/Sponsorships—Conservation Education	\$1,207.03
Interest on Savings Account	\$168.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$90,952.35</b>
<b>Balance brought forward from 2022 (Checking + Savings)</b>	<b>\$97,471.46</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$188,423.81</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>	
Annual Meeting Expense	\$1,442.38
Computer Expenses—Web Hosting	\$480.00
Conservation Education Programs	\$9,708.83
Contractual Services	\$1,766.00
Cost-Share Projects—SWCD Funded	\$7,160.00
Cost-Share Projects—State Funded (LARE)	\$47,958.50
District Vehicle Maintenance	\$2,650.81
Dues and Subscriptions	\$3,371.89
Insurance	\$969.00
Office Supplies	\$2,807.91
Miscellaneous (Key Bank Fees)	\$34.00
Postage	\$1,934.32
Printing/Copying Expense	\$5,375.10
Projects: Steuben County Strategic Water Quality Monitoring (SCSWQM) Program	\$2,500.00
Sales Tax	\$13.29
Supplies for Resale (Native Plant Kits & Flags)	\$1,800.00
Travel/Lodging/Mileage/Registration/Meals	\$4,802.71
Workshop/Field Day Expense—Agronomy Field Day, Youth Conservation Field Day, Steuben Life, etc.	\$2,953.50
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>\$97,728.24</b>
<b>Balance in Checking at December 31, 2023</b>	<b>\$48,612.86</b>
<b>Petty Cash</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Balance in Savings at December 31, 2023</b>	<b>\$42,082.71</b>
* In addition to the grant for District Operations, the County directly paid the salary for the two District staff.	

**2023 FINANCIAL REPORT** *(continued from page 8)*

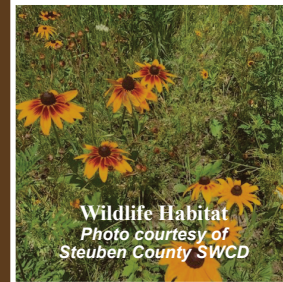




## EDUCATION

This year has kept the Steuben County SWCD and partners busy with many education events teaching students and adults about water quality and soil health—and how their actions can improve local water resources. One of our main goals is to help people of all ages understand and appreciate our precious natural resources.

*“In the end, we will conserve only what we love,  
we will love only what we understand, and  
we will understand only what we are taught.”*  
- Baba Dioum



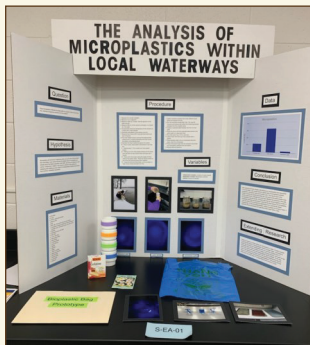
### 2023 Tri-State Regional Science Fair Soil and Water Conservation Award Winners

The 2023 special Conservation Awards at the Tri-State Regional Science Fair were presented to three students for their outstanding science fair projects highlighting the importance of conservation and stewardship of natural resources. Awards are sponsored by the NE Indiana Conservation Districts of DeKalb, LaGrange, and Steuben counties and consist of a certificate of recognition, a monetary award (1<sup>st</sup>-Place: \$75; 2<sup>nd</sup>-Place: \$50; 3<sup>rd</sup>-Place: \$25), and a conservation book.

#### First Place

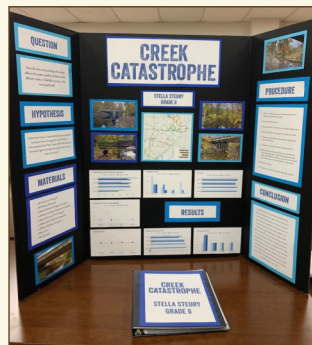
**Isabella Budak** (12<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
Angola High School

*“The Analysis of Microplastics within Local Waterways”*



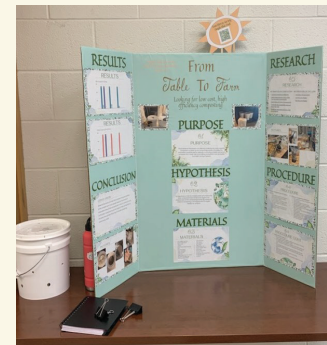
#### Second Place

**Stella Steury** (8<sup>th</sup> Grade),  
Eastside Junior-Senior High School  
*“Creek Catastrophe”*



#### Third Place

**Abigail Todd** (5<sup>th</sup> Grade)  
James R. Watson Elementary School  
*“From Table to Farm: Looking for Low-Cost, High Efficiency Composting”*



*Photos courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*

### 2023 4-H Soil & Water Science Poster Winners

The 2023 4-H Soil & Water Science poster exhibit winners:

- **Grand Champion: Logan Sattison**  
*“Sampling for Success”*

- **Reserve Grand Champion: Emma Creager**  
*“What Role Does Temperature and Aeration have on Dissolved Oxygen”*

The poster project encourages 4-H'ers to explore information, learn something new, and display what they learned through 4-H—and to fulfill other learning experiences (e.g., school assignment or science fair).



*Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*

## EDUCATION *(continued from page 10)*



### **2023 Stewardship Week Poster Contest Winners**

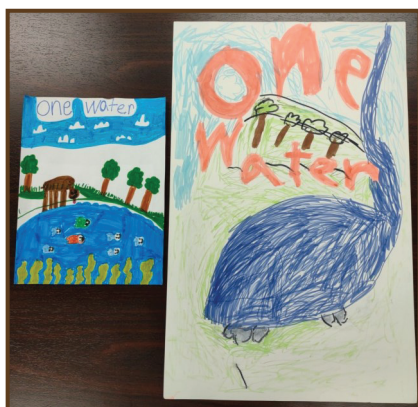
This year's theme "One Water" provided information about watersheds—an area of land that channels rainfall and snowmelt to creeks, streams, and rivers, eventually leading to outflow points such as reservoirs, bays, and the ocean. Those bodies of water are all connected, so every drop that falls becomes part of *one water*.

Each year the Steuben County SWCD provides educational activity booklets to the MSD of Steuben County and Fremont Elementary Schools in celebration of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Stewardship Week. The SWCD also sponsors a poster contest for 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. The contest gives students a chance to have their art displayed as part of the SWCD's local conservation outreach initiative. Every student that submitted a poster received a small participation gift bag. Winners received an award certificate, colored pencils, and

a "Freshwater Pond" educational coloring book. First place winners also received a Walmart gift card. Here, we recognize our 2023 "One Water" poster contest winners.

All posters were judged on their conservation message (50%), visual effectiveness (30%), originality (10%), and universal appeal (10%). Poster judges included Steuben SWCD and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff, NRCS District Conservationist Arthur Franke, and ISDA Resource Specialist Kate Sanders.

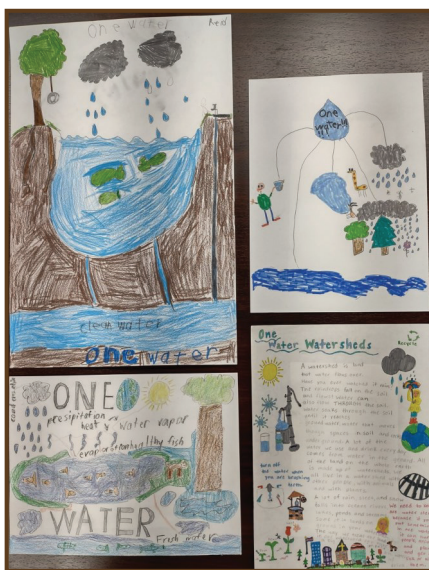
NACD's Stewardship Week stands as one of the nation's largest initiatives dedicated to promoting the conservation of natural resources. Occurring between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May, this week-long event serves as a powerful reminder of our personal responsibilities to safeguard our precious natural resources.



#### **ABOVE 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

(Left) 1<sup>st</sup>: Ashton Budreau,  
Fremont Elementary (Mrs. Stukey)

(Right) 2<sup>nd</sup>: Stone Perry,  
Fremont Elementary (Mrs. Stukey)



#### **ABOVE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade** (clockwise from top left)

1<sup>st</sup>: Reid Shull (Hendry; Mrs. Perschke)

2<sup>nd</sup>: Asher Wilson (Hendry; Mrs. Perschke)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Evan Aldrich (Hendry; Mrs. Gruner)

Honorable Mention: Jayden Weinreich  
(Pleasant Lake, Ms. Clary)



#### **ABOVE**

**4<sup>th</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade** (clockwise from top left)

1<sup>st</sup>: Lucas Greenfield (Hendry; Mrs. Burlingame)

2<sup>nd</sup>: Kharington Roebel (Pleasant Lake; Mrs. Walters)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Brantley Landis (Hendry; Mrs. Burlingame)



## EDUCATION *(continued from page 11)*

The Steuben County SWCD would like to thank the following businesses, individuals, and organizations for their support of our educational programs.



- The **Steuben County Lakes Council** for sponsoring educational activity booklets for local 1st - 5th grade students within the county for our Stewardship Week and 4<sup>th</sup>-Grade Youth Field Day Education program, and **Bill Schmidt** for assistance with the Steuben County Life Program.
- The **City of Angola/Trine University MS4** for sponsoring educational storm water activity booklets as part of our 4<sup>th</sup>-Grade Youth Field Day Education program.
- For providing workshop facilities:

Angola Middle School  
Angola Parks and Recreation  
Cardinal IG Company  
Carnegie Public Library of Steuben Co.  
Foods Alive  
Fremont Middle School  
Howard Farms/Chuck Howard

Pokagon State Park/Trine State Recreation Area  
Potawatomi Inn  
Presbyterian Chapel of the Lakes  
The Andersons, Inc.  
Trine University  
Waite Farms/Ronald & Ryan Waite

- For presenting at and/or assisting with Steuben County SWCD 2023 programs:

Nicky Ball  
Dr. Scott Bergeson  
Linda Bidlack  
John Brittenham  
Jacquelyn Buck  
Cardinal IG Company staff  
Larry Clemens  
Mike Connell  
Tom Crowe  
Cheyenne Cunningham  
Jennifer Danic  
Toby Days  
DeKalb County SWCD staff  
Allison Grimm  
Tim Groosbeck  
Anthony Filogamo  
Tony Fleming  
Arthur Franke  
Hans Franke

Reid Harris  
Jody Heaston  
Nathan Herbert  
Evan Hill  
Zachary Holsinger  
Jacob Houghman  
Tracy Hughes  
Heath Hurst  
Dr. Bruce Kingsbury  
LaGrange County SWCD staff  
Tim Lancaster  
Jennifer LaRose  
Lauren Malcolm  
Dr. Jordan Marshall  
Jan McGowen  
Michael Moor  
Tami Mosier  
Amy Oberlin  
Jamie Perry

Kate Sanders  
Nate Simons  
Stephanie Singer  
Janelle Slone  
Pastor Tom Smith  
Jerry Sweeten  
Michaela Tauil  
Kris Thomas  
Joyce Thompson  
Dani Tippman  
Genesis TauAyala  
Sarah VanHoosier  
Carrie Vrabel  
Jenna Wait  
Ronald and Ryan Waite  
Reba Wicker  
Beth Williams  
Erica Wyss

## 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 2023 AFFILIATE MEMBERS

### Bronze Level

Carper Farm Supply  
Bill & Diana Clingan (Hudson, IN)  
Hoham Feed & Seed  
Niann Lautzenhiser (Hamilton, IN)  
Karen Spake (Angola, IN)  
Stroh Farm Supply

### Silver Level

Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, Inc.  
City of Angola/Trine U. MS4  
Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy  
Crowe Forest Management, LLC  
Tom and Alice Filbrun (Angola, IN)  
James Holse (Ashley, IN)  
Deloris Howarth (Fremont, IN)  
Peter Mountz (Garrett, IN)  
Kevin Northup Excavating  
Robert Parker (Pleasant Lake, IN)  
Sandhill Environmental Services LLC  
John Williamson, Jr. (Angola, IN)

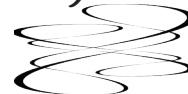
### Gold Level

Booth Farms  
Raymond Lauer (Fremont, IN)  
S & P Earthwork, Inc.  
Stoy Farms

### Platinum Level

101 Sheds  
Angola American Legion  
Post #31  
Angola Seed & Supply, LLC  
Dailey Farms  
Edon Farmers Co-Op Association, Inc.  
Farm Credit Mid-America  
Tom Green Engineering  
Holman Excavating  
Chuck & Nila Howard (Hamilton, IN)  
Lake George Conservancy, Inc.  
Parsell Farms/Jim & Jean Parsell (Angola, IN)  
Dewey & Marcia Powers (Angola, IN)  
Steuben County Lakes Council  
Steve Schroeder (Fremont, IN)  
Lynn Wernet (Angola, IN)  
Bob & Connie Wilson (Hudson, IN)  
The Wilson Farm  
Fred Wooley (Fremont, IN)

*Thank  
You*



**The District Board gratefully acknowledges our 2023 Affiliate Members.**  
If you would like to help support conservation education in Steuben County, please complete the 2024 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



## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

### Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD) is Recycling for Cleaner Water

The City of Angola/Trine University MS4 would like to remind everyone of the many types of recycling services offered by the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD). The NISWMD has provided significant solid waste reduction services and programs to the residents of Steuben, DeKalb, LaGrange, and Noble Counties for over three decades. Each year the NISWMD recycles tons of household hazardous waste, yard waste, and residential solid waste. In doing so, the NISWMD remains an important and effective partner in reducing pollutants in area waterways. It's important to remember for every item the NISWMD recycles, it is one less that has the potential to end up in our local waterways.



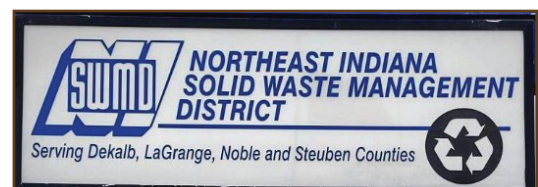
The NISWMD continues to offer a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) program. This program helps people dispose of all kinds of toxic chemicals and paints safely. The district accepts many different types of household hazardous wastes including latex and oil-based paints, used motor oils and antifreeze, thinners and strippers, oven cleaners, and aerosol cans, to name a few. In 2023, the district recycled 18.7 tons of liquid waste! This program is scheduled every Friday, except holidays, from 8AM to 12PM at the Ashley Convenience Center. The NISWMD needs all businesses, churches, non-profits, schools, libraries, and similar entities to contact the NISWMD for paperwork to be completed and to schedule a specific appointment time before bringing their items during the program's scheduled hours.

The Appliances, Batteries, Bulbs, Tires, and Electronics program operates the same way and has the same schedule as the HHW program. LED and fluorescent bulbs can be recycled, as well as all kinds of electronics including monitors, hard drives, cell phones, and TVs. The Ashley Convenience Center recycled 9.19 tons of batteries, 7.16 tons of bulbs, and 80.95 tons of E-waste in 2023! Please **DO NOT** place any household hazardous waste, battery, bulbs, or electronic items in the recycling bins!! These items must be brought during the designated schedule at the Ashley Convenience Center.

Building contractors and do-it-yourselfers may be interested to know that the NISWMD accepts many types of construction materials that are now recyclable. Items such as vinyl siding, vinyl F-channel, vinyl J-channel, vinyl starter strip, vinyl window and door casing, vinyl inside and outside corners, vinyl fencing, and vinyl composite decking are all accepted. Contact the NISWMD for additional details [(260) 587-3063].

Lawn maintenance contractors can also take advantage of the NISWMD's brush, grass, and leaf waste service by recycling their yard waste for a nominal fee of \$20.00 per load; however, for this service, contractors **MUST** use the Ashley or DeKalb composting lots. The Steuben County lot at the 4-H Fairgrounds **CANNOT**

*(continued on page 15)*



## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

*Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District (NISWMD)  
is Recycling for Cleaner Water  
(continued from page 14)*

accept these items from contractors; only residential yard waste is accepted at the 4-H location. Contractors must register at the Ashley or DeKalb lots to become an approved contractor. In 2023, the Ashley Convenience Center received 5,730 tons of grass, brush, and leaves, while the Convenience Center at the Steuben County 4-H Park received 12,560 tons of residential yard waste!! All yard waste is composted and offered for sale in the spring.

The NISWMD has recently expanded its recycling program, and, for a nominal fee, these items can now be recycled under the following conditions:

- Shredded Paper
  - Accepted in any size bag, paper or plastic, but must be unloaded by NISWMD personnel upon arrival.
  - Employees of the NISWMD kindly ask that **loose shredded paper, as well as bagged shredded paper, NEVER BE PLACED DIRECTLY IN THE RECYCLE BINS.**
- Styrofoam
  - Can now be recycled; however, **loose Styrofoam, as well as bagged Styrofoam, CANNOT BE PLACED DIRECTLY IN THE RECYCLE BINS.**
  - All types of Styrofoam are accepted AS LONG AS NISWMD employees receive the Styrofoam upon arrival.
- Plastic Boat Wrap
  - Now being accepted with the same recycling conditions as shredded paper and Styrofoam items.

Here are some helpful tips when taking advantage of the NISWMD recycling service:

- **DO NOT** fill recycle bins with unaccepted items. Please refer to the graphic on the bins for approved items. If the item is not on the graphic, it

is not accepted. Unaccepted items take up valuable space, making it difficult for others to easily recycle as intended. Placing unacceptable items in bins also takes time, energy, and money to sort them back out.

- Don't worry about sorting! Items approved for placement in the recycling bins can now go in the same bin. This is known as "single-stream recycling."
- At this time, the recycling industry is saying that lids can be left on all bottles and jars, such as milk jugs, prescription bottles and cosmetic jars. This **DOES NOT include pumps and sprayers.**
- Leave those labels! Labels no longer must be removed from plastic bottles, glass jars, or metal cans.
- Don't want to look at your junk mail? That's approved for recycling, too. Unopened junk mail is accepted and can be placed directly in the recycling bins.

### Lots of exciting things are happening at the NISWMD!

The NISWMD has partnered with WLKI for monthly podcast interviews, which can be found on WLKI's website, and the NISWMD is once again celebrating Earth Day on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Visit the NISWMD's website, [www.niswmd.org](http://www.niswmd.org), or Facebook page, [facebook.com/NortheastIndianaSolidWasteManagementDistrict](https://facebook.com/NortheastIndianaSolidWasteManagementDistrict), for more information on locations and services at each location, plus hours and fees. The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) also has an informative recycling video which can be accessed at [youtube.com/watch?v=LbFLTJlq5eM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=LbFLTJlq5eM). Please don't forget, **by participating in local recycling efforts, you are helping the NISWMD protect our local water resources!**



*Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*



## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

### Growing Green with Soil Health

by Terri Theisen, Urban Soil Health Specialist



Beneath our feet, lies a whole ecosystem that often goes unnoticed – the soil. While some may think of it as just dirt, this unsung hero is vital to our food, fiber, and fuel systems. Soil is a bustling community of plants, fungi, and animals that work together, creating a nutrient-rich layer for our plants to thrive. Soil not only supports healthier crops but also plays a crucial role in the financial well-being of farmers. Let's take a journey into the world of soil health, exploring its impact on both the environment and the wallets of farmers.

At the heart of the matter is the concept of soil health – the ability of soil to function as a living ecosystem that sustains flora and fauna, including humans. It can be challenging to quantify the financial benefits of conservation and sustainability. And, I recognize that sustainability and revenue have been at odds in the past, but it doesn't need to be that way anymore. I like to think of the soil as a farmer's savings account that can offer returns such as increased crop yields, reduced input costs, and a resilient farm ecosystem. Just like with a savings account, we are looking for those long-term gains over time. No get-rich-quick schemes here!

Now, you might be wondering, "How does soil health impact my wallet?" Well, let's get into it!

First and foremost, healthy soil acts as a source of nutrients. It provides plants with the nutrients they need and this can reduce the need for fertilizers over time. This not only cuts down on costs for farmers but also ensures that your food is grown in a more sustainable and eco-friendly manner.

The economic benefits of soil health extend beyond fertility. When soil is rich in organic matter, it acts like a sponge. It can soak up water and release it slowly back to the plants over time. This natural water management system allows farmers to spend less on irrigation, saving water, time, and money.



#### LEFT

Earthworms are abundant in this long-term no-till / cover cropped field. Cover crops rebuild organic matter and support a strong microbial community, improving soil health, increasing the number of earthworms, and improving the biodiversity in farm fields.

Photo courtesy of [ccsin.org](https://ccsin.org)

Now, let's talk about resilience. When we have healthy soils, it creates a robust defense against pests and diseases, thus reducing the need for pesticides. It's like having a superhero squad among your crops' roots, protecting them from potential threats. Again, this keeps costs down for farmers by reducing inputs, but also contributes to a safer and healthier ecosystem.

It's crucial to recognize the symbiotic relationship between the stewards of our land and the land they cultivate. Investing in soil health is an investment in the future of farming – a future where sustainable practices lead to bountiful harvests, resilient ecosystems, and thriving communities.

Next time you crunch an apple or savor a juicy tomato, remember the unsung hero beneath the surface – the soil. It's not just dirt; it's a savings account for farmers and a guardian of our food, fiber, and fuel systems. Let's support practices that nurture our soil, ensuring a greener and more prosperous future for farmers and consumers alike.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

### 2023 River Friendly Farmer



#### ABOVE

Tim Groosbeck, Steuben County SWCD's nominee for the 2023 River Friendly Farmer Award. This award program began in 2000 and is sponsored by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), the Indiana Farm Bureau, and the Indiana Corn Marketing Council/Indiana Soybean Alliance.

*Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*



#### ABOVE

A Grassed Waterway installed on Tim Groosbeck's farm. The waterway was constructed in the summer of 2023. Tim was the Steuben County SWCD's nominee for the 2023 River Friendly Farmer Award for the conservation farming practices he uses that improve soil health and reduce possible pollution of nearby waterbodies. Tim is a lifelong resident of Steuben County and lives with his family at the farm his great grandfather purchased in 1919.

*Photo courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*

On August 9, 2023, Indiana's Lt. Governor, Suzanne Crouch, addressed the 2023 Indiana River Friendly Farmers at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. This award, hosted by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), honors farmers statewide for the implementation of conservation practices that protect Indiana's natural resources, specifically waterways and soil health.

Nominated by the Steuben County SWCD, local farmer, Timothy Groosbeck was one of 42 farmers receiving this award.

Randy Kron, President of Indiana Farm Bureau, and several other Indiana Conservation Partner (ICP) leaders offered thanks and appreciation to these farmers and landowners who go the extra mile in protecting Indiana's natural resources.

The Steuben County SWCD nominated Tim for his adoption of conservation farming practices that improve soil health and reduce possible pollution of nearby waters. Tim was one of the early pioneers of conservation farming in Steuben County—being one of the first individuals to purchase no-till equipment and begin no-till farming in 1981-1982. He also experimented with planting cover crops in the late 80s and early 90s and has been implementing them on a more regular basis since 2018. The primary conservation practices he uses in his operation include grassed waterways, no-till, cover crops, soil sampling, and nutrient management.

Conservation practices are important to Tim's farming operation to improve soil health and tilth, which ultimately helps him reduce input costs and improve yields. His use of cover crops and no-till help reduce evaporation, prevent soil erosion, maintain an even soil temperature, and enrich the soil. Soil sampling helps him make more informed fertility decisions and helps to address potential issues to achieve better yields. No-till and cover crops help protect the soil from wind and water erosion, thereby reducing the amount of water runoff from the fields.

## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

### Conservation Video Series

#### Conservation Farming Legacies

[www.steubenswcd.org/conservation-farming-legacies-video-series/](http://www.steubenswcd.org/conservation-farming-legacies-video-series/)



With so many natural lakes in Steuben County, water quality is of utmost importance. Many lake residents are concerned with nutrient, sediment, and chemical loading of their local bodies of water, and they are working hard to get to the source. While there are some problem areas in the County's agricultural industry, many producers are working hard to cut input costs (fertilizer) and keep their soil on their land. The *Conservation Farming Legacies* video series has been created to showcase the stories of Steuben County producers who are taking extra measures to address water quality issues both on their land and in nearby bodies of water.

If you happen to know or meet any of the featured producers, please thank them for all that they do to further conservation in Steuben County. Keep checking back for more videos!

Know someone that might like to be featured in this series? Contact Resource Conservationist Aimee Wentworth at the Steuben County SWCD office at (260) 665-3211 ext. 3.

**The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District thanks  
all the conservation-minded farmers and landowners that do their part  
to improve water quality and other natural resources.**

#### Conservation Education

[www.steubenswcd.org/conservation-education-video-series](http://www.steubenswcd.org/conservation-education-video-series)

Don't forget about the SWCD's Conservation Education Video Series! The series is designed to educate residents about natural resources, environmental science, and conservation. Although the resources are available to the general public, they are designed with the public school system in mind. Many of the videos share lessons that pertain to Indiana State Science Education Standards; these are listed with each video.

Videos include:

- Aquatic macroinvertebrates
- Earth As an Apple
- Forests
- Invasive Species
- Native Species
- Pollinators
- Recycling
- Soil
- Stormwater
- Water Pollution
- Watersheds
- Weather Patterns



#### **ABOVE**

The Steuben County SWCD's new Weather Patterns Conservation Video outlines how weather patterns such as precipitation affect each of us and many aspects of society, including agriculture.  
*Photo courtesy of pixabay.com*



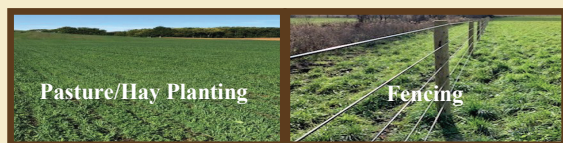
## SPOTLIGHT ON CONSERVATION

### Fawn River Watershed Cost-Share Funding Available



The Steuben County SWCD has funding **still available** in the Fawn River Watershed through a Watershed Land Treatment Project (WLTP) Grant 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 Critical Area Plantings, Fencing (to regulate livestock access to environmentally sensitive areas, convert cropland to pasture, or for proper grazing distribution), Field Windbreaks, Grassed Waterways, Heavy Use Area Protection, Pasture and Hay Plantings, Pollinator Plantings, and Tree Plantings, to name a few.

Contact the Steuben County SWCD at 260/665-3211, ext. 3 if you have an interest in this program. Practices will need to be implemented by December 31, 2024.



#### ABOVE

Examples of conservation practices eligible for the Steuben County SWCD Fawn River Watershed Land Treatment Project Grant.

*Photos courtesy of Steuben County SWCD*

### **2024 Native Plant Kit Sale!**

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is excited to partner with Riverview Native Nursery, Inc. and Stantec® to sell Native Plant Kits this spring! **Orders and payment are due to the Steuben County SWCD (cash and check ONLY) by March 25, 2024.** Excluding the Water's Edge Kit, each kit contains 50 plants for \$150.00 and pickup will be at the SWCD Office at 1220 N 200 W, Suite L in Angola, Indiana on a day to be determined during the week of June 3, 2024.



#### **Prairie Grass Kit**

The Prairie Grass kit contains plants such as Canada wild rye\* that prefer full sun and dry to partially dry conditions.



#### **Prairie Wildflower Kit**

Plants in the Prairie Wildflower kits such as the sand coreopsis\* prefer full sun and slightly dry to dry conditions.



#### **Rain Garden Kit**

Plants such as northern blue flag iris and swamp milkweed\* are meant for areas with full to partial sun and wet to moist conditions.



#### **Shade Kit**

Shade plants such as wild columbine and big-leaved asters\* prefer light shade to partial sun and moist to slightly dry conditions.

*\*Plant selection subject to change based on availability.*

#### **AND NEW THIS YEAR...**

#### **Water's Edge Kit\*\***

The Water's Edge Kit is meant for swales and pond or lake edges. This kit will include blue flag iris, golden alexander, and swamp milkweed, among others. \*\*This kit will contain 12 plants for \$50 and will be available for pickup on May 22, 2024 at the Steuben County SWCD Office in Angola.



Phone: (260) 665-3211 Ext. 3  
Email: steubenswcd@gmail.com



The Steuben County SWCD is offering five native plant kits featuring native plugs of the Great Lakes region. These pre-designed kits offer a diversity of plants featuring grasses, flowers, and sedges. The Prairie Grass Kit, Prairie Wildflower Kit, Rain Garden Kit, and Shade Kit each contain 50 plants for \$150. The Water's Edge Kit, meant for swales and pond or lake edges, contains 12 plants for \$50. **Orders and payment are due to the Steuben SWCD by March 25, 2024.** Contact the office for kit species information. No online or phone orders will be accepted.



**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.**

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ANGOLA, IN 46703  
PERMIT NO 25

*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.*

### **2024 Affiliate Membership Form**

Yes, I am interested in being an Affiliate Member of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District for calendar year 2024. 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 of 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 SWCD*

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***