

The Conservator

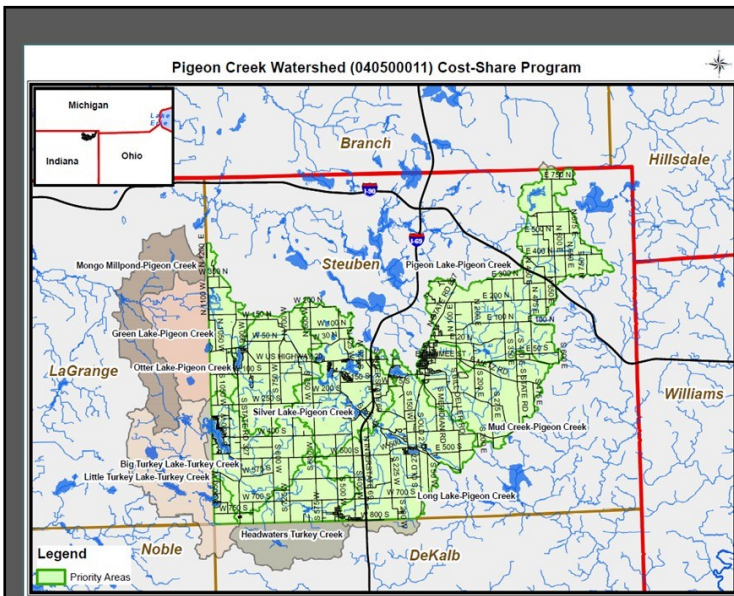
WINTER 2025
VOLUME 48, ISSUE 4



Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District
1220 N 200 W, Suite L ~ Angola, IN 46703 ~ Phone: (260) 665-3211, ext. 3

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

Pigeon Creek Watershed Cost-Share Program



The Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District is working to assist landowners with the implementation of conservation practices that reduce the amount of sediment & nutrients entering our valuable water resources.

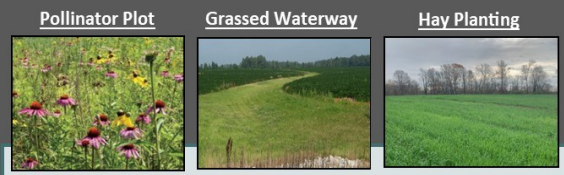
We offer cost-share assistance with the installation of:

- Buffers/Filter strips
- Critical Area Plantings
- Exclusion Fencing
- Field Windbreaks
- Grassed Waterways
- Pasture and Hay Plantings
- Pollinator Plantings
- Tree Plantings

Contact us for additional details & eligibility requirements.
Program sign-up will be on a continuous basis or until the funding has been obligated.

**additional conservation practices available*

Cost-share funds available for the installation of conservation practices in the PIGEON CREEK Watershed



The Steuben County SWCD has funding **available** in the Pigeon Creek Watershed for cost-share and incentive payments to help land users (i.e., landowners or long-term lease holders) with the implementation of a variety of conservation practices that help reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients entering area waterbodies. Contact 260/665-3211, ext. 3, if you have an interest and would like additional program details. Practices will need to be implemented by December 31, 2026.

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Protecting Steuben County's Water Resources Starts at Home

Many homes in Steuben County rely on onsite sewage (septic) systems to effectively manage household wastewater. Although these systems are often hidden from view and overlooked, they are essential in protecting your property and preventing potential sources of pollution that contribute to both public health and environmental concerns.

Most homeowners do not consider how their system operates – or need to – until an issue arises. By gaining a better understanding of how wastewater flows through the system, you can improve your maintenance practices and identify early warning signs indicating potential problems, thus saving you from costly repairs down the road.

Know Your Septic Tank

When wastewater exits your home, it enters a **sewage holding tank** through an **inlet**, where it is separated into three layers: solids that settle to the bottom (**sludge**), a middle layer of liquid (**effluent**), and lighter materials like grease that rise to the top (**scum**). Beneficial bacteria break down the solids, while the effluent liquid exits the tank through the **outlet filter**, which keeps solids from leaving the sewage holding tank and entering the rest of the system. The effluent liquid is then directed to the **distribution box** and is evenly distributed to the network of pipes or chambers that make up the **drain field**. Here, the soil further filters and treats the effluent liquid, removing harmful pathogens and nutrients before it re-enters the groundwater.

Best Maintenance Practices

- ⇒ **Regular Inspections**: Have your system inspected by a professional every 1 to 3 years to identify any issues early on.
- ⇒ **Pump the Tank**: Schedule regular pumping of your sewage holding tank every 3 to 5 years, or as recommended based on usage and household size.
- ⇒ **Mind Your Drainage**: Avoid overloading the system with excessive water by spreading out laundry loads.
- ⇒ **Limit Household Chemicals**: Use septic-safe products and avoid flushing chemicals, paints, or non-biodegradable items that can harm the system.
- ⇒ **Protect the Drain Field**: Keep heavy vehicles and equipment away from the drain field to prevent soil compaction and damage to the system.
- ⇒ **Plant Wisely**: Choose grass or shallow-rooted plants for landscaping over the drain field to avoid root intrusion, which can damage the system.

- ⇒ **Educate Your Household**: Ensure everyone in the home knows what can and cannot be flushed to prevent blockages.
- ⇒ **Keep Records**: Track your system maintenance.
- ⇒ **Address Warning Signs Immediately**: Promptly addressing warning signs can prevent costly repairs and ensure the longevity of your system.

Warning Signs

- ⇒ **Slow Drains**: If sinks, toilets, or tubs are draining slowly, or making gurgling sounds, it may indicate blockage.
- ⇒ **Backups in Fixtures**: If toilets or drains are backing up, this is a critical sign of a blockage or system failure.
- ⇒ **Unpleasant Odors**: Foul smells around the tank or drain field can signal a leak or failure.
- ⇒ **Lush Vegetation**: Noticeably greener grass or thriving plants over drain field may suggest excess nutrient discharge.
- ⇒ **Changes in Soil Quality**: If the soil around the system seems saturated or poorly draining, it could point to a problem.
- ⇒ **High Water Table**: Heavy rainfall or flooding can affect the systems' performance.

How the Steuben County SWCD Can Help You

The SWCD is excited to announce we will officially launch our **District Cost-Share Program for Residential Onsite Sewage Systems on January 1, 2026**. If you would like to learn more about the programs' eligibility requirements, available practices, cost-share rates, and application/reimbursement procedures, contact the SWCD.

Steuben County SWCD

District Cost-Share Program for Residential Onsite Sewage Systems

Financial Assistance for:

- Maintenance
- Repairs
- Replacement
- Connection to Sewer

Contact the Steuben County SWCD for more information:

- (260) 665-3211, ext. 3
- steubenswcd@gmail.com
- 1220 N 200 W, Ste. L, Angola, IN 46703

2026 IMN Workshop

STEUBEN COUNTY INDIANA MASTER NATURALIST

2026 Course



March 14 - July 25
 10 Saturday Sessions (10 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)
 1 Wednesday Session, July 8 (5:30 - 8:30 p.m.)

Birds & Birding
 Geology
 Herpetology
 Hoosier Riverwatch
 Trees & Tree ID
 Water & Wetlands
 Wild Edibles
 Wildflowers
 and More!

Registration forms will be available online at steubenswcd.org (under the "News & Events" tab) or by emailing awentworth@dnr.IN.gov. Payments must be made to the Steuben SWCD Office (cash or check only). **Registration & Payment only accepted from January 1 - February 6, 2026**

Registration OPENS
January 1, 2026
\$135
Workshop Fee

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, as well as promote natural resource volunteer service within Indiana.

Registration is \$135, and

includes class materials, field guides, and light refreshments at each session. Registration forms available at:

steubenswcd.org

or by email:

awentworth@dnr.IN.gov.

Registration will ONLY be accepted between January 1 and February 6, 2026.

Get Involved with the Steuben County SWCD

Are you passionate about conservation? Do you have an interest in helping guide conservation efforts in Steuben County? If yes, consider becoming part of the Steuben County SWCD as either a Board member or Associate Supervisor.

The SWCD meets once a month to discuss ongoing projects and assist with guiding future initiatives. Currently, we are in need of a Board member for 2026 (elected position). Our Board is a voluntary position which serves a three-year term. You can also be involved with additional aspects of the district besides the monthly meeting if you are interested in volunteering or learning further.

Not ready to commit to meeting once a month? Consider joining the SWCD as an Associate Supervisor. Associate Supervisors help the district with carrying out our numerous programs and activities to promote conservation efforts in our community.

If you are interested in becoming a Board member or Associate Supervisor - give staff a call and they can answer all your questions. Come join us - we'd love to have you onboard!!

STEUBEN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Proudly providing educational, technical, and financial assistance to help Steuben County property owners conserve soil and water resources since 1948

EDUCATION | ASSISTANCE | CONSERVATION

2025 Affiliate Members

BRONZE LEVEL

101 Sheds/Paulette Boekhout (Fremont)
 Caruso Enterprises, Inc.
 Bill & Diana Clingan (Hudson)
 Daft Erosion Control LLC
 Hoham Feed & Seed
 Niann Lautzenhiser (Hamilton)

SILVER LEVEL

City of Angola MS4
 Clear Lake Township Land Conservancy
 Crowe Forest Management, LLC
 Tom & Mary Alice Filbrun (Angola)
 James Holse (Ashley)
 Delores Howarth (Fremont)

GOLD LEVEL

Paul Longville (Angola)

Ronald L. Parker (Pleasant Lake)
 Karen Spake (Angola)
 Stroh Farm Supply, Inc.
 Janet Young (Hudson)
 Peg Zeis (Fremont)
 Judy Zinn (Fremont)

LOW McClish Lake Association
 Peter Mountz (Garrett)
 Kevin Northup Excavating
 Steve Schroeder (Fremont)
 John Williamson, Jr. (Angola)

PLATINUM LEVEL

Brian Albright (Hamilton)
 Robert Amstutz, Jr. (Pleasant Lake)
 Angola American Legion Post #31*
 Angola Seed & Supply, LLC
 Aquatic Enhancement & Survey, Inc.
 Budreau Ins. & Fin. Services Inc./
 Austin Budreau
 Booth Farms (Orland)
 Cameron Memorial Community Hospital
 Catalpa Cove Family Giving Fund
 CMR Family Farm (Fremont)
 Dailey Farms (Angola)
 Ecosystems Connections Institute, LLC
 Edon Farmers Co-Op Association, Inc.
 Farm Credit Mid-America

Tom Green Engineering
 Pete Hippensteel (Angola)**
 Howard Farms (Hamilton)
 Lake George Conservancy, Inc.
 Raymond Lauer (Fremont)
 Parsell Farms (Angola)
 Dewey & Marcia Powers (Angola)
 S & P Earthwork
 SC & R Enterprises, Inc./
 Shane & Chanda Swager (Angola)
 Smitty's Lost Acres (Hamilton)
 Steuben County Lakes Council, Inc.
 Stoy Farms (Ashley)
 Vestil Manufacturing Company
 Wilson 85 LLC/Wilson Farm (Hudson)
 Fred Wooley (Fremont)

*\$1,000 Donor; **\$300 Donor



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www.steubenswcd.org



facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD

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

Please help us **go green** by subscribing to the newsletter via **e-mail**. Visit our website and click on the Newsletter tab, or call the office to change your subscription to *The Conservator* at any time.

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and its Partnership Agencies are equal opportunity employers, lenders, and service providers.

SWCD - NRCS - ISDA CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

Soil & Water District Staff:

Janel Meyer, *District Coordinator*
Bailey Temple, *Resource Conservationist*

Board of Supervisors:

Kayleen Hart, *Chair*
Chuck Howard, *Vice Chair*
Beth Williams, *Secretary*
Brad Hamlin
Craig Holman

Associate Supervisors:

Timothy Groosbeck
Daniel Oberst
David Perkins



Scan Me!

Natural Resources Conservation Service Staff:

Arthur Franke, *District Conservationist*

Indiana State Department of Agriculture Staff:

Kate Sanders, *Resource Specialist*



Steuben County SWCD Board Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of each month, beginning at 5:00 p.m. @ the Angola USDA Service Center*
**subject to change*

Forestry Field Day

Due to the federal government shutdown, the Steuben County SWCD postponed the Forestry Field Day originally scheduled for October 4, 2025. We plan to reschedule this event for next spring. Please stay tuned - updated details will be posted on our website and Facebook page as soon as they are finalized.