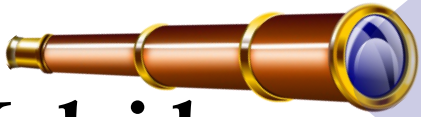


# Conservation

# Kaleidoscope



Today's Visions for  
Tomorrow's Future

Volume 26, Issue 4

July/August 2024

## Meet Your Farmer!

On Thursday, June 27th, we hosted our first Meet Your Farmer gathering at long-time conservation farmer, Scott Laidig's farm. Sarah Longenecker, our District Conservationist, began the evening with a talk about the benefits of cover crops and the importance of soil health. With assistance from guests, she did soil health demonstrations that show the distinct difference between healthy and unhealthy soil.



We next got to hear about Scott and his wife, Sheila's, journey toward healthy soil. **"Six inches of soil feeds the world,"** stated Scott. Their discussions of the importance of microbiomes, from both a human and a soil perspective, were inspiring.

Our goal for the Meet Your Farmer gathering was to bring the community to the farmer. We were pleased to see such a diverse group of attendees!

Legislators, large-scale and small-scale farmers, partner organizations, and concerned community members came together to learn about why we care about What's Going On Under The Covers! Thanks to each one of you for coming! And thank you to WNIT's Nathan Krebs for taking the time to join us. Watch for our segment on Education Counts later this month!



## Be a Voice for Soil.

2903 Gary Drive  
Plymouth, IN 46563

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

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(574)936-2024 ext. 4

# Recruitment Cookout!

**We are looking for community members that are passionate about conservation!**

The St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District is looking for engaged individuals interested in **soil health** and **water quality**. Ideal candidates are farmers, foresters, conservationists, educators, and volunteers who are familiar with land and water conditions in their district and have a strong desire to protect and conserve these resources. You'll have the opportunity to influence local soil and water conservation initiatives, connect with like-minded individuals, and make a lasting, positive impact on our natural resources.



We're hosting a **Recruitment Cookout** at Rum Village. Join us to talk one-one-one with Supervisors, Associate Supervisors, and District Staff to learn more about what we do, our plans for the future, and how you could fit in!

**Tuesday, July 23rd ~ 5:30 pm**  
**Rum Village Park ~ Shelter #2**

**RSVP through our website:**

<https://www.stjosephswcd.org/events/recruitment-cookout>



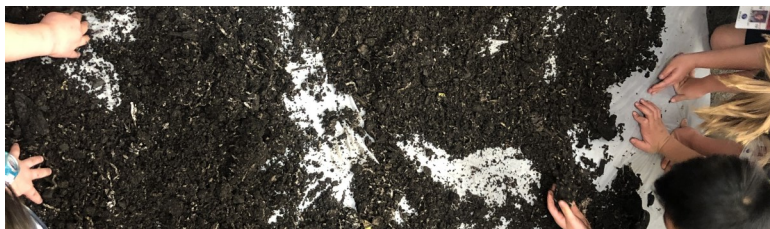
## Environmental Education Programs

Shelley Chaffee, our new Environmental Education Coordinator, is up and running! She's got some great programs for students of all ages - kindergarten to adult. Topics include:

- Watersheds & Water Quality**
- Soil Health**
- Native & Invasive Plants**
- Pollinators**
- Backyard Conservation**



We offer in-class programs, field trips, teacher workshops, and more! Contact the office for more information! [info@stjosephswcd.org](mailto:info@stjosephswcd.org), 574-936-2024 x4



## In Memory



Honorary board member, William Millar, passed away on May 25, 2024. Bill was a lifelong farmer in North Liberty. He became a board member for the District in 1971 and for over 20 years, he served as a supervisor or associate supervisor.

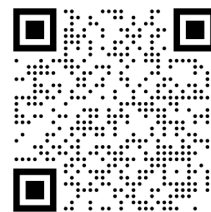
While on the board, Bill was instrumental in helping to develop and implement the SWCD conservation tillage program. He was also a valuable member of many committees. We appreciate his many years of service to the District.

We send our deepest sympathy to Bill's family and friends. May he rest in peace.

## Native Plant Kits

Thanks to everyone that participated in our Spring Native Plant Sale! Fall Plant Kits are now available! Order deadline is July 31st; pick up will be the week of September 2nd. Visit our website for more information and the order form!

[www.stjosephswcd.org/native-plant-kits](http://www.stjosephswcd.org/native-plant-kits)



## No-Mow May the Right way!

Many of us have heard of the trend "No-Mow May". While it may sound like a good thing at first, many wildlife habitat experts think that it really depends. "No-Mow May" started in Europe with the goal to raise awareness of bees and other early pollinators and the need for early season pollen and nectar producing plants. Refraining from mowing at that time



period (in Europe) allowed more lawn weeds to go to flower and provide some of the needed food for these early pollinators. Again, while this initially seems like a good idea, there can be issues. If your lawn doesn't have many dandelions or clover in it to begin with, you may just end up with long, thick turf grass which doesn't provide the quantity or quality of resources needed for the pollinators. Many cities and counties have ordinances in place that don't allow certain types of vegetation to get too tall. Letting the lawn grow may put you at odds with code enforcement and risk of getting a fine (or at risk of upsetting your neighbors)! If you create this early habitat and then mow after May, you risk physical harm to any pollinators or other wildlife that thought they had a safe place to nest. These are just a few potential negative impacts.

So, what can you do to help provide for these early pollinators? Many early pollinators actually get their food from trees so planting or maintaining trees will provide benefits all year long! You can mow high to allow the clover and dandelion to bloom but not let the turf grass become an overgrown issue. You can also replace some of the grass area that you



mow with some native habitat. Planting some early blooming natives will give those bees and pollinators some quality food and a safe place to nest.

Planning your planting to have flowers blooming throughout the growing season will provide resources for an even wider variety of wildlife.



St. Joseph County  
**Soil & Water**  
Conservation District

2903 Gary Drive  
Plymouth, IN 46563

www.StJosephSWCD.org

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## July

2nd - Natural Resources Day at the Fair  
4th - Independence Day - Office Closed  
16th - Board Meeting  
23rd - Recruitment Cookout  
26th - Hoosier Riverwatch  
31st - Fall Native Plant Sale Deadline

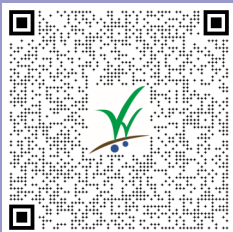
# Upcoming Events

## August

20th - Locally Led Meeting  
20th - Board Meeting

# Go Green!

Contact us to choose  
to get your newsletter  
by email!



Visit our website & watch Facebook for info on events and more!

### St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership

#### St. Joseph County SWCD Partnership Staff

Sarah Longenecker, SWCD  
Misty Sorchevich, SWCD  
Shelley Chaffee, SWCD  
Debbie Knepp, NRCS  
Jorge Lozoya, NRCS

#### SWCD Honorary Members:

Keith Lineback

#### SWCD Supervisors:

Chris Matthys, Chairman  
Marty Lappin, Vice Chairman  
Dave Vandewalle  
Joe Gregory  
Ryan Lee

#### Farm Service Agency Staff

Gideon Nobbe, CED  
Devan Harrell  
Aldona Martin  
Diane Stichter  
Michael Cuff

#### SWCD Associate Supervisors:

Dave Craft  
John Dooms  
Chuck Lehman  
Randy Matthys  
Richard Schmidt  
Dave Straughn  
Dru Wrasse  
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