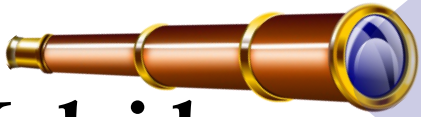


# Conservation

# Kaleidoscope



Today's Visions for  
Tomorrow's Future

Volume 26, Issue 3

May/June 2024

## Growing Together



Have you seen our signs? Have you visited our website? Did you read about our signs and the Benefits of Cover Crops in our last newsletter? If so, you know we've been putting in a lot of effort to talk about the impacts of cover crops on the soil health of agricultural fields and water quality for nearby waterways.

Our cover crop campaign has a twofold purpose. First, we are always on a mission to inspire farmers not currently using cover crops to give them a try.

Our second purpose is to bring awareness to the community that farmers are not the only ones who benefit! By planting cover crops and keeping living

roots in the ground all year, there are community benefits including:

### **Less Wind and Water Erosion**

Cover crops help hold the soil in place, so less soil is picked up by wind and blown across the roads, or picked up by water flowing toward the waterways.

### **Improved Water Quality**

Waterways by agricultural fields flow into streams, lakes, rivers, many of which communities use for recreation or other water usage, so runoff from the fields can eventually impact these waterways too.

### **Decreased Flood Risk**

The living roots of cover crops increase the ability of the soil to absorb water, even in intense rains, and the ability to hold onto water.

## **Meet Your Farmer!**

We want to bring the community together! One of our conservation farmers is graciously allowing us to use his space, so join us for dinner on **June 27th, 2024, from 5:30 to 7:30**. Come talk to farmers who are utilizing conservation practices on their land, and members of our board and staff who are putting in the effort to make conservation practices widespread throughout St. Joseph County.

Let's come together to talk about what's growing and how it impacts the natural resources in St. Joseph County!

Registration for this event is required by June 18th. Please register using this QR code, or by visiting our website at [www.stjosephswcd.org/events/meet-your-farmer](http://www.stjosephswcd.org/events/meet-your-farmer).



2903 Gary Drive  
Plymouth, IN 46563

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

[info@stjosephswcd.org](mailto:info@stjosephswcd.org)

(574)936-2024 ext. 4

## A New CWI Grant: Invasives Control

The St. Joseph County SWCD is partnering with the Marshall County SWCD on a new Clean Water Indiana grant for 2024! We were awarded a CWI grant for Invasive Plant Management in woodland areas in our counties and we are excited to get started!

Do you have any forested areas that are being overrun with invasive plants? We will be assisting landowners with 75% cost share to begin removal and management of damaging invasives. We will be taking applications for this program *until May 15th for properties over 10 and up to 20 acres.*



*Tree-of-Heaven*

For *properties less than 10 acres*, applications will be taken up to and after that date and ranked according to date submitted. All applications will be assigned points based on requirements similar to those found on an application through NRCS for their EQIP programs. Notification of award will be made and, upon acceptance of a contract, technical assistance will begin through the District Forester, the District Conservationist and the regional invasive plant specialist from the State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM).

Call the office for details. We want to help you in the fight against invasive plants in your woodlands!



*Autumn Olive*

## The Newest Members of the Indiana Conservation Partnership!



### **Emily Clark, Indiana Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Pheasants Forever**

I grew up in a small town in Northern Michigan and spent most of my time outdoors, frequently riding horses for fun and competitively with my sister. My education background includes an associate's degree from a performing arts college in Los Angeles and a B.S. in Biology from Ball State University, which is where my love for conservation grew. Last year, I began my career with Pheasants Forever to restore habitat for greater prairie chickens and sharp-tailed grouse in the Sandhills of Nebraska, and I'm excited to bring my work to Northern Indiana!

When I'm not working, I love hiking, reading fantasy novels, bird watching, kayaking, and attending music festivals. My husband and I have a passion for American history, so we enjoy traveling to national monuments and museums.

### **Shelley Chaffee, St. Joseph SWCD Environmental Education Coordinator**

Hi! My name is Shelley Chaffee and I'm the new Environmental Education Coordinator. I've worked for St. Joseph County for 13 years. Most of that time was spent working for St. Joseph County Parks. I've also worked for the Health Department. I'm excited to be back at a job where I can "play in the dirt" and I'm especially looking forward to teaching kids again.

I enjoy hiking and doing a variety of crafts (when I can find the time!). I have a 5 year old daughter and a 2 year old son, a husband who puts up with all my craft projects all over the house, and a crazy cat who thinks she's a dog.



## Conservation Successes

"I want to make sure that the general public knows that farmers and ranchers are stepping up to the plate to voluntarily protect our shared natural resources and mitigate climate change."

Terry J. Crosby, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief



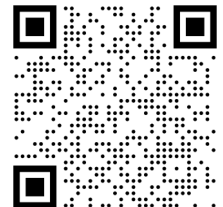
The numbers from 2023 are rolling in and are looking good! The NRCS reports that 2023 saw more than 45,000 conservation contracts nationwide, more than any year in its 89-year history. This totaled to over \$2.8 billion in financial assistance to producers. Through the Inflation Reduction Act, NRCS received the largest conservation funding opportunity in its history. Through programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), 99.8% of the funds went to assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners across the country. And the demand for conservation assistance is high. Total demand for climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices was millions of dollars more than the available funding.

The St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation district, along with NRCS, works as part of the Indiana Conservation Partnership to encourage and implement conservation practices throughout St. Joseph County. Every spring, NRCS and the District travel the county to take a survey of the agricultural land to see what agricultural practices are being performed. This is the Conservation Transect. Field office staff traveled St. Joseph County in March this year and found that approximately 52% of corn and soybean fields had living cover.

We offer technical assistance in getting started. If you're interested, contact the office at [info@stjosephswcd.org](mailto:info@stjosephswcd.org) or 574-936-2024 x4.

## 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)



# Natural Resources Day!

## at the St. Joseph County 4-H Fair



**Join us as we celebrate the natural resources St. Joseph County!**

# Tuesday, July 2nd ~ 1 pm to 6 pm

**By the Nature Center ~ Activities and demonstrations for the whole family!**



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

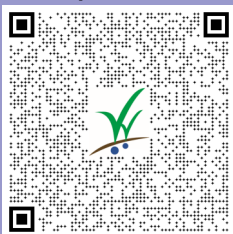
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www.StJosephSWCD.org

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Contact us to choose  
 to get your newsletter  
 by email!



## May

- 4th - SMIPP Weed Wrangle
- 7th - Primary Election Day - No County Staff
- 16th - SCRAP Deep Dive - Nutrient Management
- 18th - Wild Ones Native Plant Sale
- 21st - Board Meeting
- 27th - Memorial Day - Office Closed

## Upcoming Events

### June

- 18th - Board Meeting
- 19th - Juneteenth - Office Closed
- 25th - SCRAP Quarterly Meeting
- 27th - Meet Your Farmer

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
- William Millar

**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
- Mike Burkholder