

 **JEFFERSON COUNTY SWCD**
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CONSERVATION NEWS

Summer 2014



Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District



Pasture Walk Thursday, August 28th

Bill Miller Farm
 (13289 W. Blake Rd. Deputy, IN)
 5:00pm

Light dinner will be provided by Gaffney's Grocery and Crop Production Services.

Theme: "This is what I have, what can I do to fix it?"

Come and join us as speakers discuss all aspects of improving your pastures.

Topics include alternative watering systems, pasture renovation, stream crossings, forage quality, interior fencing, rotational grazing, cost-share funds that are available through federal, state, and local programs, and chemicals to control weeds in your pastures.

Please bring your own lawn chair and be prepared to walk as we take a look at the areas that may need conservation practices installed.

Please RSVP by August 21 @ Jefferson County SWCD (812)265-7609.

Cost-Share Money Available

The Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings and Scott County SWCD's have joined together and were awarded a Clean Water Indiana Grant that focuses on the Muscatatuck Watershed. This grant is for \$20,000 per year over a 3 year period for the 4 county area. The incentive program will be similar to Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) in respect to the conservation practices included for incentives but with an emphasis for those producers that are not qualified for the Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) due to cropping history or other prerequisites that might deem the land ineligible.

Incentive payments will be for the following conservation practices: Hardwood tree planting, riparian buffers, bottomland timber planting, native grass planting, wildlife habitat plantings, filter strips, and establishments of grasses/legumes. These practices have been selected for their ability to alleviate high nonpoint source sediment, nutrient, pesticide, and herbicide losses from land by restoring buffers and wetlands to improve water quality.

If you are interested in applying for this grant please stop by the office to fill out an application or visit our website at www.jeffersoncountyswcd.com.

In an effort to conserve our resources the SWCD would like to update our newsletter database and move towards sending our correspondence via email. If you would like to receive the districts newsletter electronically please email jeffswcd@yahoo.com and put Email Newsletter in the subject line. Or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletters or other information please notify our office and we will remove you from our database. We thank you for help.

Wildlife Food Plot Seed still available

The essential requirements for virtually any wild animal needs are the same; food, water, and shelter. Managed food plots greatly improves wildlife habitats by providing larger quantities of nutritious foods, usually in the form of managed herbaceous openings or cultivated plots. Generally, food plots should be irregular in shape (preferably linear) and strategically placed throughout an area to provide diversity and edge. As you consider your proposed site, give some thought to the size of your food plot. Your plot can be any size, but it should be large enough to be functional for wildlife. To be effective, your plot should be at least 1,000 square feet. No more than 1/4 to 1/2 acre of food plot is usually needed for each 20 acres of land. If your food plot is expected to provide winter cover, then plots of an acre or more are necessary. The SWCD sells wildlife food plot seed; a variety mix of buckwheat, millet & milo. Each bag covers roughly ¼ acre at a cost of \$5 per bag.

Don't forget the SWCD has moved

The Jefferson County SWCD has moved to the Jefferson County Fairgrounds with Purdue Extension. Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Our phone numbers stayed the same. Here are some addresses and phone numbers that may help:

Jefferson County SWCD
 3767 W. State Rd. 256
 Madison, IN 47250
 (812) 265-7609

Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 3382 W. State Rd 56, Ste 3
 Hanover, IN 47243
 (812) 273- 2070 ext. 2

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
 3382 W. State Rd. 56, Ste. 3
 Hanover, IN 47243
 (812) 273- 2070 ext 109

For maximum benefit, mix it up, cover crop expert recommends

There's a reason most farmers who start with single species cover crops eventually move to mixes.

"Some of the most innovative cover crop users have continued to experiment with as many as 8-15 different cover crops in mixtures on their farms, to see what each contributes to their system," says David Lamm of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). "These farmers are breathing new life into their soils, with no-till and cover crop mixes, and they're telling us they're getting all kinds of benefits. A universal result is increased nutrient cycling and in many cases a reduction in supplemental fertility is achievable."

Lamm, the leader for the NRCS National Soil Health and Sustainability Team in Greensboro, North Carolina, points to three of the top advantages to using mixtures:

1. No one species can deliver all the advantages multiple cover crops deliver in combination. Some fix nitrogen, some are very good at scavenging leftover nitrogen in the soil, and some have deep roots that extend benefits deeper into the soil profile. Still others help control specific weeds or attract beneficial insects, etc.
2. Each plant species offers a different chemical signature to the soil through the rhizosphere, which provides a different food source for bacteria and fungi in the soil. More variety in the food source creates the habitat for a greater variety of soil organisms-most of which have a positive impact within the soil.
3. Organic matter production is put on the fast track. A diversity of plants above ground creates underground habitat with a healthy balance of predator and prey organisms in the soil. The balance results in improved nutrient cycling.

"We need to think about the organisms in the soil that cycle nutrients," Lamm says. "Adding a diversity of roots to a soil that has seen only monoculture crops can awaken and ignite those organisms."

For more information on how to "Unlock the Secrets in Your Soil," call or visit your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.



2014 Summer Internship



My name is Mariah Carnes. I was raised in Madison, IN. I have always loved all animals and working with animals in any way I can. Working with horses is my major passion but I still love to work with almost any

animal. I also love being outside working on something or just enjoying the beautiful outdoors. I didn't grow up on a farm so it wasn't until high school that I became interested in agriculture. I was heavily involved in the agriculture program at my high school. My love of being outdoors and involvement in the agriculture program sparked my interest in soil and water conservation. I am currently a student at the University of Kentucky in the hopes of one day becoming a large and small animal veterinarian. Go Cats!

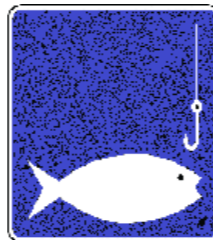
Fall Fish Sale

The Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has started taking orders for its Annual Fall Fish Sale. The SWCD will be offering quality stock from Clear Creek Fisheries.

For the fall sale fish will be sold by the 100 fish.

If you need a smaller request that order can be filled as well. Fish available for the fall fish sale:

- Large Mouth Bass—\$105 per 100
- Redear Sunfish—\$60 per 100
- Bluegill—\$50 per 100
- Hybrid Bluegill \$55 per 100
- Channel Catfish—\$50 per 100
- Albino Catfish—\$85 per 100
- Fathead Minnows—\$9.50 per pound
- Triploid Grass Carp—\$17 each (6 minimum and \$35 delivery)
- Water Lilies—\$10 each
- Koi—\$5 each



Fish orders are being taken now thru September 12.

Fish will be available for pickup September 18 at 10am.

All fish must be paid for prior to delivery.

Call the office to get a copy of the order form.

State Conservationist Shares Important Farm Bill Information and Dates for Hoosier Farmers

*Indianapolis, IN, -*We have a new Farm Bill and Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) wants farmers to know important information about the Conservation Title and what to expect here in Indiana over the next few months.

The 2014 Agricultural Act was signed by the president on February 7th and since that time USDA agencies have been busy writing rules and developing guidance. Information is now beginning to be released to states.

Nationally, the new bill provides \$3.4 billion for conservation programs this fiscal year – \$18.7 billion in conservation over the next five years.

According to Hardisty the new bill marks the first time in history that conservation is at the centerpiece. "This bill is a strong investment in the nation's agriculture and conservation effort, and here in Indiana NRCS and our conservation partners are in a great position to assist farmers who want to improve and sustain their land."

Hardisty explains that farmers will find many positive changes in the bill, including consolidation of several programs under the categories of financial assistance, easements, and partnerships. "Consolidation of programs gives NRCS an opportunity to streamline our administrative processes and reduce burden on the public and our field staff," she said.

For Indiana farmers, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a key program to improve soil health and address soil erosion, air and water quality, wildlife habitat, and other resource concerns on cropland, forestland, pastureland, and livestock areas. The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is now rolled into EQIP and does not lose its intent to provide private landowners with opportunities to address wildlife habitat resource concerns.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is an excellent opportunity for Hoosiers to improve land stewardship on their farm. The program encourages participants to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation activities and undertaking additional conservation activities. Nationally, CSP is reauthorized to enroll 10 million acres annually. Indiana currently has 311,261 acres enrolled in CSP.

Landowners who have a long-term interest in protecting their land may participate in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) which provides assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands. ACEP consolidates the former easement programs (Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and Farm and Ranchland Protection Program), with the exception of Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP). ACEP is divided into two categories, Agricultural Land Easements (ALE) and Wetland Reserve Enhancements (WRE).

ALE protects the agricultural use and conservation values of farmland. NRCS provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing easements and those partners will work directly with farmers to permanently protect their *working* agricultural land. Partners may also protect grazing uses and related conservation values by conserving grassland, including pastureland.

Through WRE, NRCS will continue to help farmers and other landowners to protect, restore and enhance wetlands. WRE incorporates the purposes of the former Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).

The new Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) consolidates existing programs into one that will support projects that improve soil health, water quality, water quantity, air quality, and/or wildlife habitat in a specific area or region. Here in Indiana those programs include: Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), and Great Lakes Basin Program. With this new focus on regional conservation priorities NRCS will have the opportunity to work with partners to obtain additional technical assistance and target resources to areas of greatest environmental concern.

The Farm Bill re-links conservation compliance provisions to crop insurance premium subsidies. In addition to identifying crop insurance as a covered program, the Farm Bill defines special timelines and mitigation authority. NRCS also has a new opportunity to assist farmers with wetland conservation compliance issues on their farms by establishing mitigation banking opportunities for program participants.

For more information on conservation programs in the Farm Bill, visit your local district conservationist <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/> or the Indiana NRCS website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/farbill/>.

