Volume IV 2009, Spring

ALLEN COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

the conservation chALLENge

SWCD Board Members

Dick Crowl—Chairman
Ray Melcher
Tom Crowe
Dave Voors
Matt Schlatter

Associate Supervisors

Brian Roemke
Don Rekeweg
Ellis McFadden
Paul Felger

SWCD Employees

Greg Lake—Director
Bridget Witte—Administrative Assistant
Matthew Jones—Water Resources Education Specialist
Clint Nester—Program Manager

NRCS

Sherman Liechty—District Conservationist
Tony Tate—Soil Conservationist

ISDA

Cassandra Vondran — Resource Specialist Team Leader



Equipment available for Rent



The Allen County SWCD has two Phillips Rotary Harrows available for rent again this year. This tool can be used in the early spring to lift and fluff crop residue to provide aeration which helps the soil warm earlier. The 2009 rental rates are the same as last year at $6.00/acre for the first 200 acres with a discounted rate of $4.50 per acre for all acres over 200.



Available this year for the first time, a Truax No-till drill which can plant warm & cool season grasses, legumes & soybeans. This rents for $9.00 per acre. Call (260) 484-5848 Ext 3 for more information or to schedule your rental.

The St Joseph River Watershed Initiative has a Brillion seeder that can be rented for $6.00 per acre with a $50.00 minimum charge that includes delivery to your site. An additional discount of $1.00 per acre is applied to all these equipment rentals with payment within 10 days of invoicing.





The Allen Co SWCD also has a Case IH MX-285 tractor available, equipped with a RTK auto guidance unit, for use in conservation tillage. Rental fee for the tractor is $60.00 per hour.

Indiana Joins Midwest Cover Crop Council

The vision of the ***Midwest Cover Crops Council*** is to significantly increase the amount of continuous living cover on the Upper Midwestern agricultural landscape. This transition in the landscape will produce numerous ecological benefits, including improvements in water, air and soil quality. In an era where the Mississippi River Basin and Great Lakes watershed suffer from serious environmental degradation, this shift in agricultural systems can play a significant and positive role in revitalizing and restoring our lakes, rivers, fields, and communities.
Some of the Council's objectives are to identify priorities and roadblocks to the implementation of cover crops, to open communication of new ideas and to unify the message from academia, non-profit, and industry sectors concerning cover crops and other green initiatives, and to make more funds available for research.

For more information contact Barry Fisher, NRCS, E-mail: barry.fisher@in.usda.gov

Managing Your Cover Crops

Erosion Control: Cover crops reduce soil erosion in several ways. They protect the soil surface from raindrop impact, increase water infiltration, trap and secure crop residues, and provide a network of roots which protect soil from flowing water.

Improve Soil Quality: Cover crops have the potential to increase soil organic matter. This increase is greater where less tillage is used to establish the cover crop and more growth is allowed prior to spring termination. Studies show that tillage prior to seeding or as a part of seeding may cause a greater net loss of carbon than the cover crop can regain. Increased bio diversity from cover crops can increase populations of beneficial organisms such as earthworms and fungi which greatly increase nutrient cycling, aeration and improve soil structure.

Weed Suppression: Cereal Grains, especially cereal rye, are very effective in providing a mulch that will create a weed barrier by blocking sunlight and producing natural chemicals which suppress weed growth.

Supplemental Forage Production: Cover crops can be used in a grazing management system to provide additional grazing or forage for livestock as well as increased protection from soil erosion and compaction when crop fields are needed for supplemental grazing.

Termination

For most cropping systems, it is not desirable to allow the cover crop to produce seed and should not be intended for a grain harvest.

Use of Herbicides: If the cover crop is to be terminated with herbicides, assure that timing and selection of herbicides achieve a complete kill. Translocated herbicides will normally perform better under conditions that are ideal for active growth. A minimum daytime temperature above 50° and night time temperature above 40° is needed for good translocation. During cool weather periods, application should be made during the warming time of day (i.e. 9:00am-3:00pm). Avoid tank mixing herbicides that are antagonistic to translocation. Follow all federal, state, and local guidelines as well as the manufacturer's label rates and guidelines when applying non-selective herbicides. For additional information on herbicide controls, contact your local Ag retailer or Certified Crop Consultant.



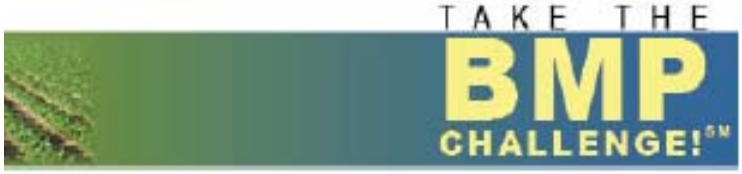
Maumee River Basin Commission (MRBC) Updates Website

The MRBC website now features live River Gage readings to keep residents updated on the latest river levels; links to the National Weather Service Advanced Hydrologic Prediction Service website for more specific information regarding the River Gage network; a link to MRBC's Master Plan Update; links to both FEMA and IDNR for downloading the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map Information; and a photo gallery depicting photos of past flood events. The website also features "Am I in a flood area?" where users can submit a request to MRBC regarding the designation of their property. The updated website is very user friendly and a great improvement from the Commission's original website.

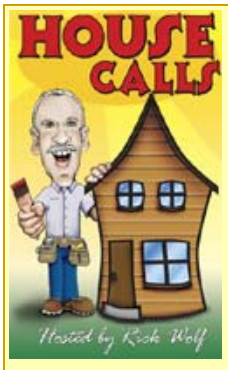
For more information, contact Rod Renkenberger at (260) 449-7226 or by e-mail at rod@mrbc.org.



Photo of Spencerville Bridge during the 2009 spring flooding courtesy of Maumee River Basin Commission.



The BMP CHALLENGE programs work to give farmers an opportunity to test reduced nutrient and tillage rates on their fields, without worrying about income loss. This successful program is spreading—the program is currently open to farmers in 15 states including Indiana and Ohio. To participate, farmers must be eligible for the EQIP program and must grow corn for grain or silage. A producer sets up a side-by-side comparison – a check-strip containing their normal practice and the remainder of the field using either state recommended rates for nutrients or reduced tillage BMP's. At harvest time an SWCD technician or a Certified Crop Advisor and the producer will do a yield assessment on the check-strip and adjacent rows to determine if there is any yield loss. If the corn yield is reduced, your payment will be based on yield loss minus reduced tillage savings.
Enrollment forms and information about this program can be found online at http://www.bmpchallenge.org. The program also requires that producers who see a net profit on their BMP acres with either the reduced tillage or reduced nutrients BMP agree to pay the program 33% of their fertilizer or cost savings with a maximum payment of $6.00 per acre.
To get more information on this program contact the Allen County SWCD at (260) 484-5848 Ext 3.



Allen SWCD 2nd Annual Tree Seedling Sale a Success

The recently completed 2009 sale had gross sales totaling just under $14,000 from almost 200 orders!
The Salomon Farm Park was the site of the tree order pickup again this year, and Rick Wolf was on hand to broadcast his "House Calls" radio show during the morning. A big Thank You to all who purchased trees.



EQIP Sign-up Ongoing

Currently Indiana has received its allocation of 2009 EQIP monies. EQIP is the NRCS program that pays for structural projects on farm land as well as incentive type payments.
Outlined below is an example of what EQIP can do for you. Please note that the rates used in the example below are from 2008 and the rates are expected to be higher for 2009.

500 acre maximum, 3 year contract

No-till/Strip-till..... 20.00/acre
High level Nutrient mgt (VRT)..... 20.00/acre
Cover crops..... 22.50/acre
Bundling fee (Bonus)..... 20.00/acre
Pest mgt (opt.)..... 4.00/acre

$ 86.50/acre for 3 years for 500 acres
500 acres x 86.50/acre = $43,250.00
$43,250.00/year x 3 years = **$129,750.00!!**

This is just one example of what you can earn. There are many other options available. For specifics on how this could work for you please contact the office and ask for Sherman, Tony, or Cassandra. We can schedule a time to meet with you and cover the entire EQIP program.

News Bites

Part time position available

The Allen County SWCD has a part-time contract position open for an individual to assist in promoting the EQIP Energy Bundle program. If you are interested, contact Sherman Liechty or Greg Lake at (260) 484-5848 for more information.

Cover Crop Demo Plot



The Allen County SWCD would like to put out a demo cover crop plot and is looking for a producer who would like to host the plot. If you are interested or would like to get some additional information, please contact Greg Lake at (260) 484-5848 Ext 3.



Allen Co SWCD Annual Awards Presented

At the 2009 Annual meeting, several people were recognized by the Allen County SWCD Board of Supervisors for their efforts and dedication to helping the Allen Co SWCD in their conservation efforts.



Ray Melcher, Jane Hardisty & Dave Voors

Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist and Rick Wolf, owner of Brueggemann Lumber were honored with "Friend of the District" Awards.



Kevin Breit, Jane Loomis & Tina Puitz

Three "Distinguished Service" awards were presented to the following employees who left during 2008. Jane Loomis, SJRWI Director, Tina Puitz, Administrative Assistant for SJRWI and Kevin Breit, SWPI Lab Technician were all on hand to accept their awards.

The final award presented was to Roy Buskirk, Allen County Council President, for his outstanding service as the liaison to the Allen County Council.



Dick Crowl, Roy Buskirk & Dave Voors

2009 Supervisor Election Results



Matt Schlatter

Terms expired for one elected and one appointed board position this year. Greg Kneubuhler and John Felger, did not seek re-election or re-appointment to their seats. Tom Crowe, of Leo was sworn in as the appointed supervisor and Matt Schlatter of Woodburn, won the elected position.



Tom Crowe

a WATERSHED mentality

When I joined the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality, I was already aware of the localized impacts of non point-source pollution. However, I didn't recognize sediment as one of the contaminants. One of my first duties as Water Resource Education Specialist was to create a relevant and interesting documentary on soil erosion and sedimentation in conjunction with our local PBS station.



The goal of this video was to communicate water quality issues, specifically sediment and erosion, to non-traditional audiences.

By explaining some of the physical aspects of sedimentation, we hoped to bring the science of sedimentation back into the conscious mind of the audience.

Although the Maumee River basin served as our documentary example, the video focuses on the processes of sedimentation and erosion that are relevant to any place it can occur. As long as there is water running over land, there will be sediment and erosion and it's not just human activity causing it. However, it is the human activity that has altered the natural process. The creativity and problem-solving of humankind is vital to the repair of this situation in all habitats.

In conclusion, this video was made to convey the challenges and economic impacts of impairments of soil erosion and sediment on jobs, recreation and quality of life in general. Along with the challenges, the documentary demonstrates that this effort is not a "lost cause", there are successes every day and the willing participation of every individual is integral to those successes.

"A Watershed Mentality" has been cited by the Great Lakes Commission as the "new standard on sediment and erosion education." and has won the International Videographers Association's videography award and the Indiana Governor's Award for Environmental Excellence in Outreach or Education

For more information about this documentary, contact Matt Jones at (260) 484-5848 Ext 111 or by e-mail at matt.jones@one.usda.gov.

St. Marys River Watershed Management Plan

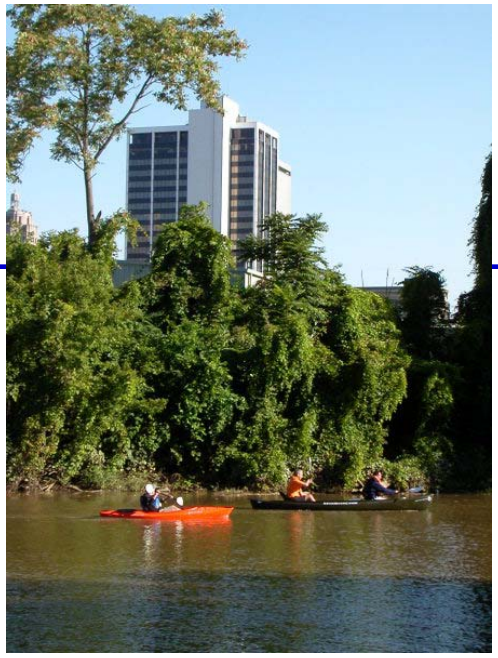


The St. Marys River Watershed Project Steering Commiettee continues to make strides towards finalizing the St. Marys River Watershed Management Plan. Once completed, the plan will identify pollutants and their sources, select, prioritize, and map the significant non-point source pollutants, and identify Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce these pollutants. "Right now the bulk of the plan is complete; we are just working out some minor details with IDEM. Hopefully early this spring we can get it finalized - We are really close!" stated Clint Nester, Project Manager for the St. Marys River Watershed.

Once finalized, the implementation phase of the project can begin. "The grant we are currently working under has a limited number of implementation dollars. However, we are very hopeful that a larger implementation grant will be funded in late 2009", stated Greg Lake, Executive Director of the Allen County SWCD. If approved, the program will provide cost share for the following components:

- Modifications of planting, tillage, and/or harvesting equipment to allow farmers to effectively implement conservation tillage and/or nutrient and pest management on their farms. Purchase of yield monitors, precision spraying systems and GPS systems so producers can better their nutrient and pest management plans.
- Assistance to producers who want to utilize a Certified Crop Advisor in making conservation wise farm management decisions.
- Assistance to install conservation buffers to reduce sediment and nutrient loading.
- Cost-share to producers who utilize alternative agricultural BMP's (e.g. cover crops) to decrease erosion, improve soil structure and soil quality.
- Installation of a two-stage ditch to demonstrate an alternative ditch design that improves water quality through nutrient and pesticide uptake and sediment deposition.
- Construction of livestock exclusion fencing along streams, alternative water supply systems, or stream crossings.
- Installation of an alternative animal waste system (e.g anaerobic digester, composting facility)
- Restoration or construction of wetlands to improve water quality, hold floodwaters, and improve wildlife habitat.

For more information on the St. Marys River Watershed Project contact Clint Nester at 260-484-5848 Ext 115.



St. Marys River Watershed Project

The St. Marys River Watershed Project will hold a public Steering Committee meeting on April 29 2009 at 6:00pm. The meeting will be held in the Adams County Extension Office (Suite 213), located in the Adams County Annex Building. Items on the agenda include an update on the progress of the Watershed Management Plan as well as a report on the status of the implementation grant application.

Spring Fingerling Fish Sale

Item	Price	Number Ordered	Total Cost
Channel Catfish 4-6 inch	100/45.00		
Large Mouth Bass 2-4 inch	100/105.00		
Redear Sunfish 2-3 inch	100/55.00		
Bluegill 2-3 inch	100/45.00		
Hybrid Bluegill 2-3 inch	100/$50.00		
Fathead Minnows	1lb/$8.50		
Triploid Grass Carp	17.50 ea *		
Jumbo Tadpoles (Northern Jumbo Bullfrogs) X-large	100/$30.00		
Koi	$5.50 each		
		Sub-Total	
		Tax	
		Total Due	

Minimum order of 6 Grass carp. An additional $30.00 Delivery fee will apply ($135.00) Triploid Grass Carp will be delivered directly to you home along with any other fish you may order. **Someone must be at your delivery address to take delivery of the fish.**

Allen County SWCD, in conjunction with Clear Creek Fisheries, is conducting a Spring Fish Fingerling Sale. Orders can be placed by phone at (260) 484-5848 Ext 101 or by returning the order form at left along with your payment to Allen County SWCD, 3718 New Vision Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46845. Please include your address, phone number and e-mail address with your order.

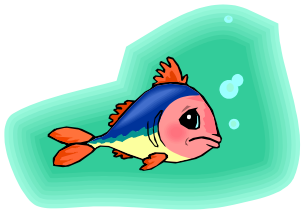
All orders and payments must be received in the Allen Co SWCD office by 4:00 pm Thursday, May 14th. Orders will be available for pick-up between **9:00 AM and 12:00 noon** on **May 19th** at the Allen County SWCD office, 3718 New Vision Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46845.

To find us:

Take Dupont Road East from I-69 (Exit 116), turn north on Parkview Plaza drive (1st stoplight east of I-69). Continue to the stop sign, turn right on New Vision Drive. Turn right at the 2nd entrance, go to the end of the building on the right (Building #3). Our office is located in the USDA Service Center.

Allen County SWCD will only be responsible for the condition of the fish until noon on the day of delivery.

Please call the office at (260) 484-5848, ext 101 with any questions.





Assistance and programs of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation, and Purdue Cooperative Extension Service are available without regard to race, religion, color, sex, age or disability.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE
Field Day

"Energy is an issue in every part of a farm operation."-Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist.

The Allen County SWCD in conjunction with NRCS and the ISDA Dept of Ag hosted a workshop on March 4th at Advanced Grain Farms to highlight some of the conservation tools and programs available to local producers.

Barry Fisher, NRCS State Agronomist, began the day by reviewing the components of the EQIP Energy Bundle, and examining the NRCS Energy Estimators for Tillage and Nitrogen. The Tillage Estimator compares fuel and production costs between conventional and alternate tillage methods. The NRCS Energy Estimator for Nitrogen calculates the cost of various nitrogen products and their application. Both of these Estimators are available online at http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov/.

Sherman Liechty, Allen Co NRCS District Conservationist, presented the conservation incentives available to producers thru NRCS who are employing conservation BMPs.

The BMP Challenge program was the final presentation. Jim Lake, District Support Specialist for ISDA, Division of Soil Conservation, explained how the program could benefit local producers while allowing them to try various conservation practices.



The ACRE Program

The Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) is a new program authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill that begins in crop year 2009. Through ACRE, USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers producers an alternative to Direct and Counter-cyclical (DCP) payments. The ACRE alternative provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price.

ACRE payments are made when both state-level and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments. Producers also elect to receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. ACRE sign-up begins on April 27, 2009. A decision to elect ACRE binds the producer to the program through the 2012 crop year, the last crop year covered by the 2008 Farm Bill. For more details contact your local FSA office at (260) 484-5848 Ext 2.

Banking Changes?

If you have changed banks and not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

Acreage Reporting

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date.

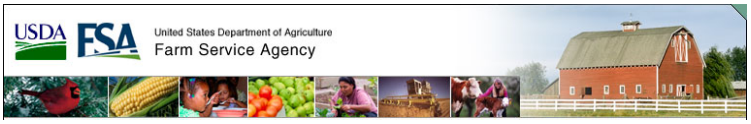
Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the July 15, 2009 deadline on all crops.

Allen County Soil and Water
Conservation District

3718 New Vision Drive
Fort Wayne, IN 46845
Address Service Requested

Phone: (260) 484-5848 X-3
Fax: (260) 484-5080
E-mail: bridget.witte@IN.nacdnet.net

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Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Farmers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

1. Pay a $100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is $300 per county, per producer, not to exceed $900 for multi-county producers.
2. In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.
3. In the case of each non-insurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Those who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For non-insurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the buy-in fee.