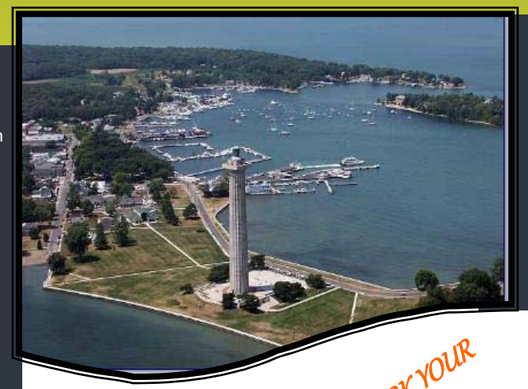
ISSUE
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Allen County Soil & Water Conservation District

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This Issue

Bus Trip to Put-In-Bay P.1
Locally Led, NRCS Update, On-Farm Network,
Farewell Sherm, Transect Results P.2
Upcoming Field Day, Watershed Updates P.3
Indiana's Top Conservation Challenge P.4



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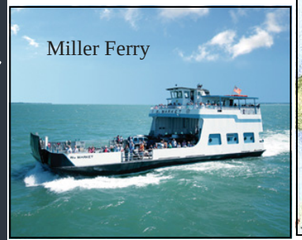
MARK YOUR CALENDAR

September 20

Bus Trip to PUT-IN-BAY



On Friday, September 20, 2013 we would like you to join us for an informative bus trip to Put-in-Bay, where we will be treated to a tour of the newly-remodeled Ohio State University Water Quality Lab. After the tour we will then board the research vessels for an informative hands-on cruise of Lake Erie. This tour is an opportunity for agricultural retailers and producers to learn about some of the valuable programs and projects that are occurring in the Maumee River Basin. You will also have the opportunity to explore and enjoy lunch on the island. If you would like to spend the night on the island, we have arranged for rooms at discounted prices, (as available) or you may choose one of the quaint bed and breakfasts. For more details or to reserve your space please call the Soil & Water Conservation District office at 260-484-5848 x 3.





Indiana's Top Conservation Challenge

(*Indianapolis, IN*), July 8, 2013—Improving the resiliency of farmland is the top conservation challenge in Indiana, says Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Resiliency, she says, is the ability of farms to remain profitable through dry and wet periods, and to bounce back after drought, flooding or other natural catastrophe.

The key to improving farmland resiliency is soil health. "A healthier soil—one that can absorb more water and retain nitrogen for plants to use—will help farmers bend, but not break when Mother Nature sends the too-much-rain or the not-enough-rain curve ball," Hardisty says.

One way to improve soil health is by building organic matter in the soil which improves both production and the natural resources ensuring farms will continue to produce food and fiber for generations to come.

"It truly is a win-win," says Hardisty.

Ways to Improve Soil Health

Barry Fisher, Indiana's Soil Health Specialist, says one of the top things you can do to improve cropland soil health is to adopt no-till. Long-term no-till has been shown to significantly increase the organic matter level in the soil. "Tillage is incredibly destructive to the soil structure and to the soil ecosystem," said Fisher. "In healthy soil you have 50 percent air and water (which is made possible by the pore space in the soil) and 50 percent mineral and organic matter. But tillage collapses and destroys that structure, making the soil vulnerable to erosion and compaction," he said.

"Additionally, studies have shown that each tillage pass can release a half an inch of soil moisture from each acre. In short, tillage tends to limit the availability of water in the soil," Fisher said. "And that could prove very costly during those long, summer dry spells."

Fisher explains that using a diverse rotation of crops that produce lots of residue will also boost organic matter levels, as well as planting cover crops. Keeping live roots in the soil as long as possible each year will help support micro-organisms in the soils.

Not only does additional organic matter and living roots improve your soil's health, they protect it from the erosive and hammering energy of raindrops. The additional pore space increases infiltration capacity so water can move more quickly into the ground, reducing flooding downstream.

In these times of extreme weather, farmers can manage their natural resources and sustain productivity. For more information about improving your soil's resiliency and production, contact your local NRCS office at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/.



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Rain Barrels For Sale—Ends July 24th

Print your order form at www.allenswcd.org



Upcoming Events

July 24
Allen SWCD Board Meeting
8:00 am – Allen SWCD Office

July 24
Rain Barrel Order Deadline
Order form available online at www.allenswcd.org

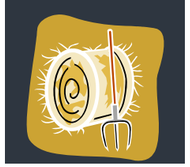
July 24
Agronomy Field Day at Waterloo Ag Center
4743 CR 28
Waterloo, IN 46793

Aug. 28
Allen SWCD Board Meeting
8:00 am – Allen SWCD Office

Sept. 5
St. Marys Field Day
Mike Werling's Farm in Decatur, IN

Sept. 20
Bus Trip to Put-in-Bay
Call the office to reserve your spot and to get the details.

Sept. 26
Upper Maumee Pasture Walk





Locally Led - We are seeking your input

NRCS will conduct its annual locally led process for identifying resource concerns at the next Allen County SWCD Board meeting on July 24th. These concerns are then ranked in order of importance to the community. NRCS uses these to help rank its conservation program funding applications such as EQIP, WLEB, GLRI and WHIP. Applications are ranked using National, State, and Local concerns. The local concerns carry the most points. If an application is ranked high enough, it is funded; then the participant can implement a host of conservation practices and get cost-share assistance.

NRCS GLRI Project

NRCS has yet to receive money for the GLRI watershed which includes the St Joe, Maumee, St Marys, and Auglaize Watersheds. However, they are taking applications for this funding and are anticipating getting funding at some point this summer. Practices include a host of items such as nutrient management, tissue testing, nitrogen plots, cover crops and other items. If you are interested in signing up please contact Sherman Liechty at 484-5848 ext. 110.

Indiana On-Farm Network Program

The Indiana On-Farm Network started in 2011 and is managed by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture in partnership with the Iowa Soybean Association and local SWCDs. The Indiana program is primarily funded through a USDA NRCS grant with matching dollars from the Indiana Corn Marketing Council, the State corn check-off organization.

The overall goal of the program is to improve nitrogen management in corn production through adaptive management, peer-to-peer learning and nutrient management. The tools used to do this include:

* Corn Stalk Nitrate Test: Fall test to determine nitrogen use efficiency for the year
* Aerial Imagery: Visual observation of fields to assess variability, nitrogen deficiency, and value of corn stalk nitrate testing as an assessment tool
* Replicated Strip Trials: Comparison of different rates, form, timing, and placement of nitrogen to assess efficiency and impact on yield

Participants have access to not only their information, but also have the opportunity to participate in small group meetings with other participating farmers to learn from each other.

The Allen County SWCD has taken the lead on organizing the 2013 Western Lake Erie Basin group. There are sixteen farmers participating in Replicated Strip Trials and nineteen farmers participating in Corn Stalk Nitrate Testing. Participants are from Adams, Allen, DeKalb and Steuben counties.

Please contact Sharon Partridge, Watershed Program Manager or Greg Lake, Director of the Allen County SWCD if you are interested in learning more about the On-Farm Network program.

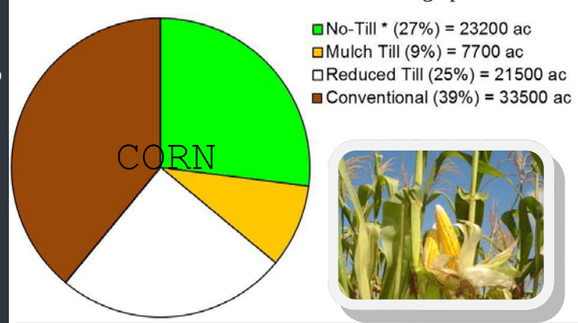
We Wish you Farewell… Sherman Liechty is moving UP & OUT!

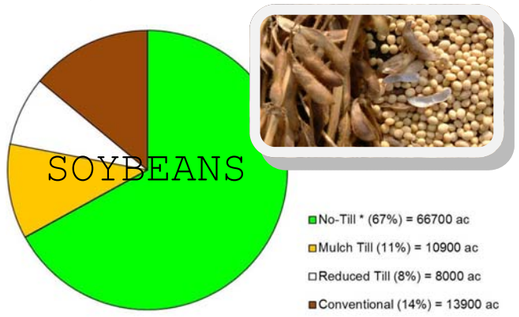
As of September 2013, Sherm will no longer be serving as District Conservationist for Allen County, IN. He has accepted the role of Area Conservationist for the entire SE Region of Colorado! Congratulations Sherm, we will miss you.



2013 Tillage Transect Results

The 2013 Tillage Transect was completed at the end of May. Data from the transect, graph below, show the use of different tillage practices across the county.





All programs and services of the Allen County SWCD are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, marital status, age or disability.

9/5/13 St. Marys Field Day - Getting the Most of Nutrient Applications

September 5, 2013 from 8am to 3 pm at
Mike Werling's Farm 10641 NW Winchester Rd. Decatur, IN 46733

Fertilizer is costly. Farmers want to make sure their nutrient inputs are in the soil profile ***when*** and ***where*** their crops can reach them, not flushed downstream. This September 5 field day, sponsored by the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI) and the St. Marys River Watershed Project, will provide a great opportunity to learn about management strategies to make the most of those nutrient inputs. The event is hosted by CCSI Farmer Mike Werling, Adams County. Werling uses a three-year rotation following corn with soybeans then wheat or oats. The biggest benefit from his no-till / cover crop mix has been an increase in organic matter in the soil, and improvement in soil life and health. Mike says healthy soil has better water infiltration, less run off, and he uses less fertilizer, and sees better yields.



Come and join us for a day of discussions and demonstrations presented by local and regional experts on nutrient management systems and techniques that are sure to maximize your resources! This event will feature a market update by Jon Cavanaugh, the Marketing Director with Central States Enterprises, Inc. and David Kohli, a Market Analyst with Allendale, Inc. Lunch will be provided, free-will donations accepted. As this event gets closer, please contact our office for the most up to date information.

New Changes in Federal Grants for Producers



St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Partnership

The SJRWI was awarded two grants from IDEM, one in September 2010, and another in February 2012, both grants provide funding to create Watershed Managements Plans (WMP). This past April, the Middle Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was approved by IDEM and is in the process of being approved by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. As a result of the WMP approval, the **project is now able to offer cost-share assistance** to those producers living in the Middle St. Joseph Watershed. The cost-share dollars are to be allotted for producers whom implement Best Management Practices, (BMP's) such as, planter attachments that allow you to implement no-till, strip-till, cover crops, grassed waterways, hay planting, filter strips, etc. Currently, we have $75,000, and we offer up to **75% cost-share assistance**, please note, this is a reimbursement program. The WMP for the Upper St. Joseph is still in the preliminary stages; the steering committee has set the water quality parameters, and set their target audience. This past month the steering committee sponsored a Hoosier Riverwatch Training as well as an urban workshop, where we discussed Natural Shoreline Restoration, led by Dan Ernst of Earth Source.

St. Marys River Watershed Project

The St. Marys River Watershed Project was awarded a grant in 2010 from IDEM to implement Best Management Practices with the assistance of cost-share dollars and offer education programs for the residents in the watershed. Recently the project committee has **increased the payment cap** for several of the Best Management Practices, including doubling the payment caps for the equipment modifications and raising the overall producer cap from $10,000 to $20,000. The BIG NEWS out of the cost-share modifications is the addition of funds for those producers that want to apply **GYPSUM** to their soil. This program has three-tiers, which is based off your tillage practices. For more information on the new payment levels and/or to sign up for the cost-share assistance, please contact Jennifer Thum in our office at 484.5848 x 121, Adams County SWCD at 724.4124 or Mike Werling - St. Marys Technician at 418.6148.

Upper Maumee Watershed Group

The Allen County SWCD in cooperation with the Defiance County, Ohio SWCD were awarded grants from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA), respectively, to help mediate the problem of pollutants entering the Maumee River, and thus, Lake Erie. At our last steering committee meeting the group discussed the water quality data. Our office also secured a GLC grant that provides funding for producers who implement BMP's such as cover crops, hay planting and install planter attachments, etc. Just like the St. Marys grant we were able to **increase** the overall producer payment cap from $10,000 to $20,000. We also **doubled the payment caps** for the equipment modifications. The big news out of the cost-share modifications is the addition of funds for those producers that want to apply **GYPSUM** to their land. This program has three-tiers, which go by the amount of residue remaining in the field.

A field day scheduled for August 7, 2013 at Greg Wonderly's farm in Ohio. The field day will feature Mr. Joe Nester whom will speak about Gypsum and a local producer will talk about how cover crops have improved his farm's overall soil health. We will also talk about the available cost-share dollars for those producers that live in the Upper Maumee. If you are interested in attending, please contact Jennifer to reserve a meal.

St Marys Project—C9975482-09 Middle St. Joseph C9975482-10 Upper Maumee Project C9975482-11 Upper St. Joseph—C9975482-12