



CCSWCD COST-SHARE PROGRAMS

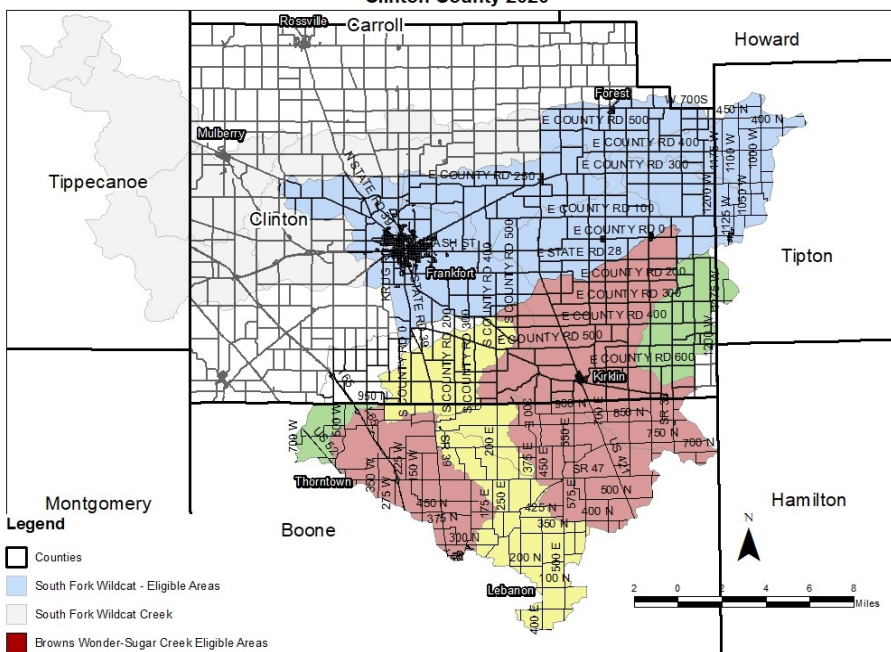
A major cause of water quality problems in Indiana is nonpoint source pollution. This type of pollution is generally caused by land runoff, precipitation, and drainage. As the water moves, it carries away natural and human-made pollutants such as sediment, fertilizers, herbicides, bacteria, and nutrients, and deposits them in lakes, rivers, wetlands, and other waterbodies. The effects of nonpoint source pollution can have harmful effects on drinking water, supplies, recreation, fisheries, and wildlife.

In response to some of these issues, many producers have incorporated conservation practices or best management practices (BMP's) into their farm operation. A few of these practices such as cover crops, no-till or conservation tillage, and grassed waterways not only reduce nonpoint source pollution, but also improve soil health. Conservation practices can also have additional benefits, such as reducing the number of passes and the cost to prepare or maintain a field for commodity crops compared to conventional methods. Continued on page 2....



The National Assn. of Conservation Districts announced the 2020 Stewardship Week theme “Where would we BEE without pollinators?” The 65th Annual Stewardship Week will take place April 26th– May 3rd, 2020. Educational materials may be downloaded at <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/stewardship-week/>

Available Watershed Cost-Share Programs
Clinton County 2020



Inside this issue

- Sign-up for Farm Bill Programs ... 2
- Cost-Share Programs cont. 2
- Conservation Practice Highlight.. 3
- Tree Seedlings 3
- Hoosier Riverwatch Training 4
- Kids Garden Month 4
- Gardening for Pollinators 5

Special points of interest

- Soil and Water Stewardship Week tree give-a-way.
- Register to attend Hoosier Riverwatch Workshop-June 6.
- CCSWCD provides cost-share assistance to landowners through grants programs. Additional funding recently awarded.

CCSWCD COST-SHARE PROGRAMS CONTINUED

While there may be a cost to implement these conservation practices whether it be equipment modification, cost of materials/seed, or application, there are volunteer incentive-based cost-share programs available that will help convert your current management to a more sustainable operation. The Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District has two watershed-based 319 cost-share programs awarded by the Environmental Protection Agency through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. These programs are in the South Fork of Wildcat Creek watershed and the Browns Wonder-Sugar Creek watershed. These programs offer cost-share on a list of conservation practices, including filter strips, blind inlets, cover crops, no-till, integrated crop management, conservation cover, riparian cover, hayland/pasture planting, fencing, livestock facility closures, heavy use protection areas, & grass waterways. If you own or operate on acres that are in the blue or red regions, they may be eligible for cost-share. If your acres fall outside those areas, you may still be eligible for the Clean Water Indiana program, which is another cost-share program that is focused on practices consistent with conservation cropping systems such as cover crops, transition to no-till, integrated crop management and gypsum application. The Natural Resources Conservation Service also offers cost-share funding through programs such as the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). For more information, or if you are interested in any of these programs, please contact our office at 765-659-1223 ext. 3.

“...PRACTICES SUCH AS COVER CROPS, NO-TILL OR CONSERVATION TILLAGE, AND GRASSED WATERWAYS NOT ONLY REDUCE NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION, BUT ALSO IMPROVE SOIL HEALTH.”

USDA Seeks Public Comment on Revised Conservation Practice Standards

The USDA, NRCS seeks public comments on 49 revised conservation practice standards that were recently reviewed as required by the 2018 Farm Bill to incorporate new technologies and additional flexibilities where possible.

As part of its review, NRCS wanted to ensure, as much as possible, that the standards used to carry out the conservation practices are relevant to local agricultural, forestry and natural resource needs, including specialty crops, native and managed pollinators, bioenergy crop production and forestry.

USDA, NRCS is accepting comments through April 23, 2020. To learn more, visit <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD1564014>

Sign-up for FY '20 NRCS Farm Bill Conservation Programs

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Services helps America's farmers conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment. **Application deadline June 1, 2020 to be considered for this funding period.**

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) helps landowners, land trusts, and other entities protect, restore, and enhance wetlands, grasslands, and working farms and ranches through conservation easements.

Contact the Clinton County USDA, NRCS to speak to the District Conservationist (John Young, Acting) for more information on program eligibility and learn how to submit an application.



CONSERVATION PRACTICE HIGHLIGHT FILTER STRIP/BUFFER

“**Crop the Best, Buffer the Rest**” has been a slogan used when promoting cropping systems that focus on both farm profitability and environmental sustainability. Cropping those marginal and sensitive areas may not be the most profitable decision. A filter strip may be a beneficial alternative for the producer, landowner, and the environment!

What is a filter strip?

A filter strip is a narrow band of grasses and forbs that reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients, and other contaminants from entering a water body. It can also increase water infiltration and provide wildlife habitat! This practice works best when established in critical, environmentally sensitive areas that need protection from these pollutants, such as alongside rivers, streams, and open ditches. Other great placements for filter strips are along wooded field borders, flood-prone or drought-prone areas, fertilizer and herbicide set-back zones, or equipment turn-arounds and access lanes.

The Browns Wonder-Sugar Creek Stewardship Initiative is a project led by the Clinton County Soil & Water Conservation District. This project is focused on increasing the amount of conservation practices being implemented within the Browns Wonder-Sugar Creek Watershed, such as grassed waterways, cover crops, fencing, livestock watering facilities, and filter strips. If you are interested in discussing conservation opportunities on your farm, please contact our office at 765-659-1223 ext. 3.

Tree Seedlings for Arbor Day

Arbor Day is Friday, April 24, 2020. In celebration, the Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District distributes free tree seedlings annually. This year the CCSWCD would like to continue the tradition of sharing the many benefits of trees by encouraging families to do something fun and positive outdoors....plant a family tree. Due to COVID-19 concerns the tree distribution is being postponed and is now scheduled for the week of May 18-22nd. Pick-up will be drive through style requiring no person-to-person contact. Trees will be individually wrapped and placed on a table in front of the USDA Service Center for easy pick-up. Each person may take up to two tree seedlings. Two native tree species are being offered—Red Oak and Hickory.

You may pick up tree seedlings at the SWCD office located at the USDA Service Center, 860 S. Prairie Ave., Suite 1, Frankfort, IN during regular business hours of 9 AM—4:00 PM, May 18-22, 2020. Planting instructions will be provided.

Save the Date!

And don't forget the CCSWCD will have its annual fall native tree and shrub sale beginning in August 2020! Trees will be delivered in late September for fall planting. Contact our office for more information or like us on Facebook to receive up-to-date news –facebook.com/clintonswcd.

Hoosier Riverwatch Volunteer Stream Monitoring Training —June 6

The Clinton County Soil & Water Conservation District will host a Hoosier Riverwatch basic training workshop on Saturday, June 6th from 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

Hoosier Riverwatch is a statewide program that supports volunteer water quality monitoring of local waterways. Workshop participants will learn about stream ecology and tools for assessing water quality through several *fun* activities both indoors and outdoors. Teachers, home school educators and Scout leaders may be especially interested in this workshop as many of the activities can be adapted for use with all grade levels and are cross-referenced with state teaching standards. The workshop is free of charge and open to individuals of high school age or older.

The workshop will be led by Hoosier Riverwatch trained facilitator Leah Harden. All activities will take place at the Camp Cullom Nature Center. There is no fee for the workshop however registration is required.

If you would like to be part of this *fun* citizen-science program, please call the Clinton County SWCD at (765) 659-1223 ext. 3 or email leah.harden@in.nacdnet.net to register.

Once certified, you may borrow a Loaner Trunk for monitoring streams in our area of the state. SWCD staff can assist in determining a sampling site. Indiana volunteer stream monitoring groups have entered data collected during habitat, chemical, and biological sampling events at over 1,800 river and stream segments across Indiana. This information can be found at the online database at: <http://www.in.gov/idem/riverwatch/>

APRIL IS KIDS GARDEN MONTH! For more activities visit <https://kidsgardening.org/about-us/>

Seed Balls

Overview:

Seed balls are small bundles of seeds, clay, and soil or compost. Although seed balls have been around since ancient times, they were rediscovered in the 1930s by the Guerilla Gardening movement as a way to covertly introduce vegetation by simply tossing the seed balls (or, on a large scale, dropping them from an airplane). They are still used today to re-vegetate areas burned by wildfires. On a small scale, seed balls are fun to make and offer an inexpensive way to sow native plants and flowers.

Materials:

- Clay (available from craft stores)
- Compost or potting soil
- Seeds (easy-to-grow or native varieties)

Approximate Time to Complete: 30 minutes

Location: Indoor or outdoor

Ages: All ages

Season: Plant in spring, summer and fall

Instructions:

1. Divide your materials so you have:
 - 5 parts clay
 - 1 part compost/potting soil
 - 1 part seeds
2. Combine the clay and compost. Add a little water if your mixture is dry. The mixture should be moist but not dripping wet; similar to the consistency of cookie dough.
3. Add the seeds to the clay and compost. Thoroughly work the materials



together with your hands.

4. Shape the mixture into balls about the size of a golf ball.
5. You can plant the seed balls while they're still moist, or allow them to air dry.
6. Find areas in your yard and surrounding community that could use a little green. Toss or place your new treasures directly onto bare soil. As long as they are watered (either manually or by rain), the clay will break down and the seeds will grow.

Choose Your Seeds:

Wildflowers are good choice of seeds for seed balls because in nature they are self-planted and their seedlings are hardy, requiring little care. Seeds of native wildflowers work especially well because they are adapted for your climate, and they also provide a food source for local pollinators.

For more activities visit <https://kidsgardening.org/about-us/>

ALERT! The CCSWCD will provide native seed packets to the first twenty individuals to contact leah.harden@in.nacdnet.net to help get you started on your activity! Seed will be mailed by USPS so please provide a postal address where seed can be mailed.

GARDENING FOR POLLINATORS

By: Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist, Purdue University



Pollinators are all the “buzz” these days with a federal proclamation designating June 22-28, 2020 as National Pollinator Week. The focus of this event is to promote the health of pollinators who are so critical to food and ecosystems.

It may surprise you to learn that the honeybee is native to Europe and was introduced to the US. But there are also numerous other pollinator species including native bees, butterflies and moths, beetles, birds and bats. Many pollinators have suffered from loss of habitat, chemical misuse, diseases and parasites.

Gardeners play a critical role in the nurturing and conservation of both native and introduced pollinators. Gardens and landscapes provide pollinators with food, water, shelter and habitat to complete their life cycles. Urban areas typically feature large areas of pavement and buildings and offer little in the way of food or shelter for pollinators – garden plantings can help bridge the gap.

Honeybees and other pollinators need protein from flower pollen and carbohydrates from flower nectar. Plan to provide a variety of different types of flowers, and aim to have three different flower species in bloom throughout the growing season. Showy colorful flowers and massed groups of flowers particularly in small gardens provide efficient feeding stations for the pollinators. Flowering trees and shrubs also provide excellent food sources.

Pollinators also need shelter from wind, scorching sun and heavy rains. Plants, garden structures such as fences, and windbreaks may make the garden more attractive to pollinators.

Pesticides can harm bees and other pollinators directly or may change their behavior or reproductive potential. Some chemicals make pollinators more susceptible to disease. You can protect pollinators by using alternative prevention and control strategies such as hand-picking pests and mulching and by being selective when it becomes necessary to use pesticides.

Read and follow all label directions and pay particular attention to timing your application to minimize impact on pollinators. Generally, bees and others are less active in very early morning or at dusk. Choose spray rather than dust formulations of pesticides to lessen potential for contact.

Avoid using pesticides in areas where pollinators are likely to forage. Maintain a buffer “no-spray area” when possible. Wait until flowers have faded (petal-fall) before applying. Mow the lawn to remove flowers of weeds before spraying.

More Resources for Pollinator Habitats:

- ◆ USDA Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/
- ◆ National Pollinator Partnership (and National Pollinator Week), www.pollinator.org

Apps for your smartphone:

- ◆ The *Bee Smart® Pollinator Gardener* is your comprehensive guide to selecting plants for pollinators specific to your area. Never get caught wondering what plants to buy again!
- ◆ *PictureThis* is capable of identifying 10,000+ plant species with accuracy of 98%, better than most human experts.

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facebook.com/clintonswcd
Website: clintonswcd.org (updated site coming soon!)

****Due to the nature of work performed by the NRCS/SWCD staff, occasionally there are times when all personnel are working outside of the office. It is recommended to call ahead to be sure that someone will be in the office.**

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