



Sand Creek Watershed Update

Volume 2

A Publication of the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District

Issue 1

Landowners Workshop To Be Held On March 13

“Improving Your Home’s Water Quality—Landowner’s Workshop” is the theme for a program to be presented on March 13 at 6 PM at the Jennings County Public Library. Sponsors for the event include the Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, Jennings County Health Department, Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Sand Creek Watershed Steering Committee. The workshop will cover various topics related to evaluating, maintaining and improving the quality of our drinking water as well as maintaining the safety and health of our home and farm environments.

One of the topics of discussion will be septic waste systems. Information will be provided regarding planning for septic systems, how they work, maintenance and proper use, and evaluating the condition of septic systems. Other topics will include testing for soil nutrients and testing well water.

Those attending may also get copies of Home-A-Syst and/or Farm-A-Syst, publications that help evaluate environmental risks and concerns around the home or farm. It will be shown how this information can help evaluate such items as managing hazardous materials on the farm or in the home, managing storm water on your property, drinking water well management, yard and garden care, air quality in the home, managing cropland and pastureland for water quality and several other topics.

Businesses that sell environmentally friendly products or services have been invited to set up displays and be available to talk to those attending. These products will include items that conserve energy or reduce waste.

This program promises to be of interest to both the rural and urban landowner. Reservations are not required but would be appreciated in order to plan for handout material and snacks. Please RSVP to the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District at 812-346-3411 X3. There is no charge for attending.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326 W Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202)720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cost-Share Rates Increased For 2007

The steering committee for the Sand Creek Watershed Project recently made a decision to raise the amount of cost-share available for conservation practices on agricultural land in the watershed. Farmers may receive up to 75% of the cost of installing conservation practices with a maximum of \$7500 per contract when utilizing the watershed grant funds. Emphasis will remain on practices that enhance water quality. These include erosion control practices such as no-till planting, cover crops, and filterstrips. Nutrient and pest management on cropland is also encouraged. Various livestock management practices are eligible such as fencing to exclude cattle from streams, fencing for pasture management, water systems, heavy use areas, and seeding and nutrient management on pasture land.

The state of Indiana has also set aside Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) funds for the Sand Creek Watershed. These funds can be used for many of the same practices and in some cases can be added to the grant funds to provide extra incentives for some practices. An example is the filterstrip practice, where LARE provides an incentive of \$650 per acre for newly installed filterstrips.

The continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is available to help pay for practices such as grassed waterways, filterstrips, and quail buffers. In addition to helping pay the installation cost of these practices, landowners may enroll these areas to receive annual rental payments for 10 to 15 years for maintaining these practices.

Other possibilities for cost-share assistance include USDA's Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). These programs provide assistance for a variety of conservation practices and may provide special incentives to beginning or disadvantaged farmers.

Landowners in the Sand Creek Watershed have the advantage of having several choices for cost-share assistance. To help sort out the choices, Bob Steiner, Watershed Coordinator, is available to make farm visits and help develop a conservation plan to meet a landowner's objectives. Call the SWCD office at 812-346-3411 X3 for more information or to make an appointment for assistance.

SWCD Has Planting Equipment For Rent

The Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District has equipment for rent to help with various seeding needs. Available are two no-till drills and a Brillion seeder. The drills include a 10 ft. model and an 8 ft. model with attachments for planting warm season grass. These drills can be used for no-tilling soy beans or various grass and clover crops. They work well for incorporating clovers into existing grass pastures.

The Brillion seeder is used for planting grasses and clovers into tilled seedbeds. All three of these machines can be rented for \$8.00 per acre. Check with the SWCD office for scheduling and information regarding minimum rates.

Improve Fescue Pasture by Interseeding Clover

Tall fescue is one of our more common pasture grasses but lacks the feed value of other cool season grasses. One way to improve overall quality of the pasture is to interseed a clover with the fescue. This improves feed value and also helps offset some of the problems associated with the endophyte fungus which usually infects fescue plants. Another advantage is that the clover, being a legume, will help produce nitrogen to increase production of the grass.

Red or white clovers can be no-tilled into existing pastures. To ensure a healthy clover stand, soil pH should be over 6. When no-tilling, the seeds need to be placed no more than ¼ inch deep into the soil.

Seeding rates are 6 to 8 pounds per acre for red clover or 1 to 2 pounds per acre for white or ladino clover. Soil tests are recommended to check soil pH and other available nutrients. If your pasture is showing signs of soil erosion, you may qualify for cost-share assistance for this practice.

Consider Heavy Use Area For Bale Feeding

When winter temperatures stay above freezing one thing is for certain, there will be plenty of mud in areas where cattle are being fed. This leads to wasted hay, problems getting hay to the feeding area, and, many times, less efficient weight gains for cattle.

This problem can be overcome by construction of a “heavy use area” for the bale feeding area. The process of constructing such an area is fairly simple. Topsoil is scraped away and the area is smoothed, then a heavy fabric is laid over the area. A layer of crushed stone is placed on top of the fabric and then a layer of ag lime is put on the crushed stone. The fabric prevents the stone from being pushed into the ground and the stone and lime provides a solid, dry surface on which the bales can be placed for feeding. The overall size can be adjusted based on the number of bales to be fed, or the same setup can be built for feed bunks.

The principal of heavy use areas can be used anywhere that animal traffic leads to problems with soil stability, such as around water troughs, stream crossings, or pond access areas. Contact the SWCD for further information. This is another practice that may be eligible for cost-share assistance and is one of those practices people say they should have done sooner.

Jennings County SWCD

2600 North State Highway 7

North Vernon, Indiana 47265-9109

Return Service Requested

Jennings County

Soil and Water Conservation District

Office Hours

Monday– Friday

8:00 AM until 4:00 PM

Phone: 812-346-3411 Extension 3

Training Available for Water Quality Monitoring

A training session will be held on April 21 for those interested in doing water quality monitoring in local streams. The session will be held at the Visitor's Center in Muscatatuck County Park and will begin at 8:30 AM and end at 4:00 PM. Plans call for the morning part of the training to be held indoors and then go to the river near the Vinegar Mill site for in-stream training during the afternoon. Participants should bring their own lunch. Leanne Whitesell of Columbus will be leading the training, which will include testing for both chemical and biological indicators of water quality.

Class size is limited to 12 people and will be filled on a first come, first served basis. If there is enough demand, there is a possibility of another class at a later date. Anyone interested should contact Bob Steiner, Watershed Coordinator, at the Jennings County SWCD office by calling 812-346-3411 X3.

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement C9975482-03 to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use