

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District  
68th Annual Meeting  
Tuesday, March 15, 2019 @ 6pm  
Rolling Hills Shrine Club  
Program—Brendan Kearns  
"Species of the Wabash River in 1818 and 2018".

## 5<sup>th</sup> Graders attend Natural Resource Field Day

Even though it was raining outside, it didn't stop all the 5<sup>th</sup> Graders of Jennings County from attending the Selmier State Forest Natural Resources Field Day. The only difference was it was held inside the Community Building at the Jennings Co. Fair Grounds instead of Selmier State Forest because of thunder storms and rain.

For the past 25 years, various speakers teach 5<sup>th</sup> grade students about the importance of good water quality, wildlife of Jennings County, who lives (animal species) in the forest, how pollinators feed people and the life of a honey bee and all the different uses of corn and how popcorn pops!

The children really have a lot of fun learning, eating popcorn, drinking Kool-Aid, and asking lots of questions. Also, they are always well behaved.

This event really runs smoothly thanks to the cooperation of Panda Hardwick, School Corp Office, the principals, and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers. It could not happen without our presenters, Ralph Cooley, Richard Winegarden, Rob McGriff, Kamille Brawner, and Sandy Derringer, who give their time and talent for two days.



## Forestry and Wildlife Field Day at SEPAC

In August, Purdue University Extension, the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Indiana DNR Division of Forestry collaborated to host a forestry and wildlife field day at the Southeast Purdue Agricultural Center. Participants learned about food plots for wildlife and blending forest management for wildlife and timber production. Speakers were from Purdue Extension and included Jarred Brooke (Extension Wildlife Specialist), Don Carlson (Extension Forester), Dave Osborne (Ripley County Extension Educator), and Cody Widner (Extension Wildlife Intern).

In the morning, speakers discussed what species mixtures to plant in food plots for wildlife, best practices for food plot establishment and management, and viewed recently planted food plots. Participants were then treated to a pulled pork lunch provided by the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District. Following lunch, participants toured forest management demonstration sites at SEPAC and discussed prescribed fire, forest management for wildlife, invasive species control, and conducting a timber harvest to benefit wildlife and provide timber income. Be sure to check the Purdue Forestry and Natural Resources website (<https://www.purdue.edu/fnr/extension/>) for future forestry and wildlife events .





## Indiana NRCS Announces EQIP Application Deadline for Initiative

Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist for Indiana's USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that NRCS is accepting producer applications for Conservation Activity Plans. The application deadline is November 16, 2018.

"These conservation activity plans are vital for conserving and protecting our natural resources here in Indiana," said Vogel. "They address critical resource concerns that will impact the health of Indiana's soils and waterbodies."

**Conservation Activity Plans (CAP):** EQIP offers financial assistance for payment of practices and conservation activities involving the development of plans appropriate for the eligible land. A CAP is the conservation practice associated with the development of a plan by a certified technical service provider. CAPs are a tool to help producers make decisions on which conservation measures they want to implement. Examples of CAPs include Forest Management Plans, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP), Nutrient Management Plans, Integrated Pest Management Plans, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plans, Organic Transition Conservation Plans, and Agriculture Energy Management Plans, and Drainage Water Management Plans.

Through this special initiative, NRCS and its partners can effectively coordinate the delivery of assistance where it will have the most impact, accelerating the benefits of voluntary conservation programs, such as cleaner water and air, healthier soil and enhanced wildlife habitat. These projects will assist agricultural producers in improving the environment while maintaining productive land.

Producers interested in this initiative should submit a signed application to their local NRCS field office. Applications submitted by the November 16 deadline will be evaluated for this funding period. Participants in EQIP must meet eligibility requirements. NRCS staff will work with producers to determine eligibility and complete necessary worksheets and rankings for the applicant to compete for funding.

For more information about EQIP and other technical and financial assistance available through Indiana NRCS conservation programs, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/financial/eqip/> or contact Jenny Vogel at 812-346-3411 ext. 3

## High Tunnels

High tunnels are a popular tool used to extend the growing season by an additional 90-120 days, particularly for organic vegetable, flower, and fruit growers (Pool and Stone, 2014, 2015). Their popularity is no surprise given increased yield and quality for many kinds of produce, in addition to a price premium for fresh, local products outside of the typical growing season. Construction expenses for high tunnels can be prohibitive for some growers, but beginning in 2009, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) has funded a cost-share initiative for high-tunnel construction through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) that has resulted in over 10,000 new high tunnels since the start of the program (USDA-NRCS, 2018).



## Indiana NRCS Accepting Applications for Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Indiana's agricultural producers who want to improve natural resources and address concerns on their land are encouraged to apply for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Jenny Vogel, NRCS District Conservationist, announced that while the future of the Farm Bill is uncertain, Indiana NRCS is still accepting applications for future funding rounds.

"We still don't have a definitive word on Farm Bill funding, but we don't want that to discourage our farmers and forestland owners from taking action. NRCS accepts EQIP applications throughout the year. I encourage producers with resource concerns on their land to submit an application in preparation for future deadlines," Vogel explains.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve soil health, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

Many applicants are interested in using funds to address soil erosion and water quality issues on their land; however, funds are also available for pasture and grazing land, confined livestock operations, organic producers, high tunnels, drainage water management, invasive plant control, and wildlife habitat improvement. Also included are several state and national initiatives that utilize EQIP funding including:

**National Organic Initiative:** NRCS provides financial payments and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation measures in keeping with organic production. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers may obtain additional assistance.

**National On-Farm Energy Initiative:** NRCS provides agricultural producers with technical and financial assistance that quantifies how energy can be used more efficiently to reduce input costs, increase productivity and reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. This initiative only offers assistance for 128 Conservation Activity Plans-Ag Energy Management Plans (AgEMPs) and certain energy conservation practices.

**Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Initiative (EQIP):** The Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project is a multi-state effort focused on increasing monarch habitat on private lands through plantings of milkweed and nectar producing forbs as well as managing pesticide use in proximity to monarch habitat.

**Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative 2.0 (EQIP):** One goal of this initiative is to convert tall fescue and other non-native forages to native grasses and forbs and develop prescribed grazing plans to address the habitat needs of bobwhite quail and other grassland/shrub land species. This category is available statewide on land which overlaps one of the Indiana DNR C.O.R.R.I.D.O.R.S. priority areas.

**Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) projects:** RCPP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through the following program contracts or easement agreements.

Grasslands for Gamebirds and Songbirds ([Benton, Clay, Daviess, Dekalb, Fountain, Gibson, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Jennings, Lagrange, Newton, Noble, Pike, Ripley, Scott, Spencer, Steuben, Sullivan, Warrick, White](#) Counties)

Southern Indiana Young Forest Initiative

Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies Partnership (statewide)

"Targeted projects allow us to address specific natural resource concerns and provide a less competitive option for producers in these areas. Applicants don't have to compete with all of the statewide EQIP applications for these projects, just those applying for each specific Initiative," said Vogel.

Due to the uncertainty of the Farm Bill, there are limited EQIP initiatives that will be announcing application deadlines. Producers interested in future funding rounds of EQIP are encouraged to apply at their local NRCS field office. Participants must meet EQIP eligibility requirements. NRCS staff will work with producers to determine eligibility and complete necessary worksheets and rankings for the applicant to compete for funding.

For more information about EQIP and other technical and financial assistance available through Indiana NRCS conservation programs, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/financial/eqip/> or contact Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist 812-346-3411 ext. 3

## Ladies Night Focuses on Starting a Specialty Farm

Calling all female farmers: Have you ever wondered about starting a specialty farm, but didn't know how to start? Maybe you aren't comfortable asking questions in a large group or you're not even sure what a specialty farm is. Make plans now to attend Ladies Night on November 8, 2018 to learn about the ins and out of specialty farms.

To reach the growing number of women landowners interested in farming practices, Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District is hosting a series of conservation discussions for women farmland owners and operators called Ladies Night. These are informal meetings that include a women-only discussion about various farming topics.

"Women farmland owners and operators may not be aware of all the resources available to them," says Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). "Our goal is to connect the growing number of women landowners with each other and with the resource professionals who can help them with their stewardship goals."

Kim Shatto of *Poseys and Pumpkins* and Darla Ortman of *Ortman Beef* will join us this month to share how they started their own successful specialty farm, their ups and downs, and future plans for their operations. Female conservation professionals will also be on hand to answer questions and share resources.

Ladies Night will be held on November 8 at the Jennings County Public Library. The program starts at 6 PM with a pitch in supper followed by the presentations and discussion. The program will end by 8 PM. Table service and drinks will be provided to participants. We invite all participants to bring a dish to share and a friend. Interested women landowners can RSVP by contacting Jenny Vogel at 812-346-3411 extension 3. If you need accommodations, please notify us when you RSVP.



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**Jennings County SWCD**  
**2600 N. State Hwy 7**  
**North Vernon, IN 47265**

## **YOUR JENNINGS COUNTY CONSERVATION TEAM**

### **SWCD Staff**

*Andy Ertel, Executive Director*  
*Kelly Kent, Administrative Assistant*

### **SWCD Supervisors**

*Brad Ponsler, Chairman*  
*Dan Megel, Vice-Chairman*  
*Jerry St. John*  
*Matt Branham*  
*Tom Schneider*

### **Associate Supervisor**

*Don Biehle*  
*Rob McGriff*  
*Bob Steiner*

### **NRCS STAFF**

*Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist*

### **Calendar of Events**

**Oct. 23, 2018 Board Meeting 6:30 pm @  
USDA Service Center**

**Nov. 27, 2018 Board Meeting 6:30 pm @  
USDA Service Center**

**No December Board Meeting**

**Jan. 22, 2019 Board Meeting 6:30 pm @  
USDA Service Center**

**The SWCD Office will be CLOSED for  
the following dates: Nov. 6, 9, 22, 23 and  
Dec. 24, 25, 31**

**Check out our website for added events  
[www.jenningsswcd.org](http://www.jenningsswcd.org)**

***Jennings County Soil and Water  
Conservation District***

***Office Hours***

***Monday—Friday***

***8:00 am until 4:00 pm***

***Phone (812) 346-3411 ext. 3***

***Fax (855)496-7857***

***Website [www.jenningsswcd.org](http://www.jenningsswcd.org)***

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