

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

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YOUR JENNINGS COUNTY CONSERVATION TEAM

SWCD Staff

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

NRCS STAFF

Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist

SWCD Supervisors

*Brad Ponsler, Chairman
Dan Megel, Vice-Chairman*

Jerry St. John

Matt Branham

Tom Schneider

Associate Supervisor

Don Biehle

Rob McGriff

Bob Steiner

Calendar of Events

**Jan. 26, 2016 Board Meeting 7pm @
USDA Service Center**

**Feb. 23, 2016 Board Meeting 7pm @
USDA Service Center**

**Mar. 15, 2016 Annual Meeting 6pm @
Rolling Hills Shrine Club**

**Mar. 22, 2016 Board Meeting 7pm @
USDA Service Center**

**Check out our website for added events
www.jenningswcd.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

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Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District

2600 N State Highway 7 North Vernon, Indiana 47265-9109
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www.jenningsswcd.org Email: info@jenningsswcd.org

1st Quarter Edition Newsletter January 2016

*****Mark Your Calendars!*****

The Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District's **65th Annual Meeting** will be **March 15, 2016, 6 PM** at the **Rolling Hills Shrine Club**.



This informative, yet fun filled event will include socializing and dinner, conservation and community service awards, officer elections, an overview of the previous year's accomplishments, and guest speaker **Scott Ham**, past Indiana State Soil Conservation Board President and retired Indiana National Guard. Scott delivers the importance of water conservation from a third world perspective. Come and journey with Scott and the rest of us, to the country of Afghanistan during the Afghanistan War, as various U.S. troops were sent over to help improve relationships and build infrastructure. Scott retired as a Command Staff Sargent with 27 years military experience. He is the man-

ager of Silver Creek Water Corporation where he has worked for 26 years. Scott's energy will keep you on the edge of your seat, and his information will make you appreciate the U.S.A. Please join us for food, fun, and conservation.

2016 Annual Conference of the Indiana Soil and Water Conservation Districts was well attended with several of our board supervisors and our conservation team. The Conference was held in Indianapolis on January 14-15, 2016.

The theme was "soil health" with several keynote speakers talking about building organic matter, carbon building, cover crops, etc.



Front row: Kelly Kent, Brad Ponsler, Jenny Vogel.
Back row: Matt Branham, Dan Megel, Jerry St. John, Andy Ertel

SHARE SOME SPACE, the Community

Pollinator Project continues to grow!!

The Jennings County School Board votes “yes” to planting a Pollinator Habitat! At a school board meeting in November (2015), the board signed an agreement with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which has a Wildlife Pollinator Program. Funding from the program will provide ground preparation and seed. The Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District is supplying the drill needed to plant the seed.

The area is located across the road, back in a field adjacent to the Middle School. An educational sign will greet you at the entrance of the pollinator area for those that choose to visit and watch the butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds at their work. This will save time and money since the mowing will be reduced. The School Board also discussed other properties that maybe good pollinator areas of the future.

Bee stings? You stand a much greater chance getting stung by yellow jackets or wasps that locate around buildings and homes, than you would from native and honey bees from a pollinator patch. Those bees are out there to find nectar and collect pollen to take back to their hives to feed their young and store for winter.



Another Partner of our Community Pollinator Project --

Big Oaks National Wildlife Refuge

Planned Burnings on 2500 acres of grassland areas are done to re-establish the natural flowering plants that provide spacious habitat to several pollinators as well as a variety of wildlife.

“If these areas were not burned, they would slowly revert back to a wooded forest,” according to Joe Robb, Big Oaks Refuge Manager. There is plenty of forest located throughout the 50,000 acre refuge, different species of wildlife need different habitats.



One way to stop the declining Monarch Butterfly population and keep it from being listed on the Endangered Species list is to create habitat. Habitat provides food, shelter and captures rain water. The goal is simple, increase pollinator habitat and enjoy the services that all pollinators provide to the food chain. Joe Robb (pictured right), is also a member of the Share Some Space, Pollinator Committee.





The Pollinator Committee is working on providing a “potted plant” flower sale designed to attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, while adding a colorful mix of flowers around the house or in an odd area.

Some people don’t want to wait on seeds to grow, so why not get your hands dirty and get the flowers earlier this summer. The potted plants can be ordered individually and/or in small design kits of 5 by 5 foot or 5 by 10 foot or 10 by 20 foot areas. A brochure will be available within three

weeks with a variety of plant species to select from, each with a short narrative and a picture.

Placing an order is easy, there will be a simple form on the back of the brochure and the orders can be placed at the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District. Or you can visit our website at www.jenningswcd.org to download an order form.

Another Pollinator Patch – Selmier State Forest

Next summer, when you drive on Selmier Road you’ll see a variety of wild flowers on the left just before the cemetery. That 1/3 acre patch will bring in pollinators to the forest, which will create more hives in the forest, which will keep our pollination process going.

Rob McGriff, District Forester and Manager of Selmier State Forest, is a committee member of the SHARE SOME SPACE Community Pollinator Project, and says the



pollinator area will be beneficial and educational for all Selmier visitors.

Bob Steiner, also a Pollinator Committee member, volunteers his time at Selmier’s Pollinator Area. The site was ready and seeded in December.



Thanks to our Newsletter Sponsor



HABITAT SOLUTIONS
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12875 W Sawmill Rd
Columbus, IN 47201

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Would you like to have your business card featured here? Contact the SWCD office for more info.

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Be Part of the Community Project -- Share Some Space

If you think about it, moths, beetles, bees and butterflies are rather small so planting an 8 foot by 10 foot area of flowers, full of nectar, would look like a large paradise to them. Today's yards are often sprayed out for weeds, like dandelions, and turned into a golf course appearance. To a pollinator, that is a green desert with no food, no shelter, and no place to be. However, you can still create that win/win situation, by keeping the yard and planting a small area somewhere around the house.

Once again, the Jennings County Soil and Water Conservation District will be providing **"free seed"** from the Burpee Seed Company. These seed packets are for small areas as mentioned above (80 square feet.) The seeds range in sizes, most are very small, but they are beautiful when they flower. Last spring and summer we had several Jennings County residents come in and get the seed. Some elderly people told me they were converting the garden to pollinator, and were going to watch the bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.



EQUIPMENT & SERVICES

Our Equipment Program has assisted several operators, contractors, and landowners in getting conservation practices on the ground at an affordable rate.

Straw Blower: \$ 100 Per Day
(plus refuel tank after use)



Great Plains Drill:
\$8 / Acre
(\$75 minimum)

Brillion Seeder: \$8 / Acre (\$75 minimum)



Soil Testing - \$12 per sample

Water Testing Kits – cost is based upon what you want tested.

Erosion Control Blanket - \$2 / linear foot. (15 feet wide)

HELP NEEDED! Just like before, anyone who plans on using the No-Till Drill will need to be ready to plant and pass the drill along to the next person. We have a lot of ground to plant coming this spring, between the soybeans and pollinator mixes. This process has worked well in the past, thanks to the many of you in making it work!

AGENCY PARTNERS PAGE

NRCS - Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist

Environmental Quality Incentive Program Changes

“The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change” as the philosopher Heraclitus stated, so is the case with the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). This program available to all landowners to assist with their resource concerns, has made a few changes for 2016.

Many people plant cover crops through EQIP and receive payments each year for 3 years. One of the changes in EQIP is that producers can now receive 5 years of payments, at \$45 per acre, for cover crops if a conservation cropping system is being used. The full conservation cropping system consists of crop rotation, conservation tillage, enhanced nutrient management and buffers along all water bodies.

Something new this year in EQIP is the addition of the silvopasture establishment practice. This practice assists producers who want to plant trees in pastures to use for shade for livestock. Trees will be planted on 5% of the planned acreage. This is not an option for pastures where trees are already present.

Producers can sign up for EQIP at any time. Applications are available online or at the office. Contact Jenny Vogel at 812-346-3411 ext. 3 for more information.

FSA - Lacie Deputy, CED

Farm Service Agency Program Updates

ARC and PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

A list of noxious weeds can be found on the following website: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxiousDriver>.

Clearing Wooded Areas or Bringing New Land Into Production

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan. Land determined to be a wetland has significant use restrictions. Participants should ensure they are aware of any existing technical determinations for acreage they own or operate.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees, woody vegetation, or improve drainage to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

It is also imperative that anyone purchasing or operating land for the first time make an effort to obtain the history of HEL/WC activities on the farm.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.