



Conserving the Natural  
Resources of Steuben County  
for Future Generations!

# The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

VOLUME 37, ISSUE 3

SUMMER, 2014

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Check them  
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## NE Conservation Day Camp Fun...

*Katie and Cera Stroh, Fremont, build bird feeders with assistance from DeKalb Co SWCD's Julie Knudson and Steuben Co. SWCD's Zachary Martin at the LaGrange County Conservation Day Camp at Dallas Lake. The girls also attended the Steuben County Day Camp at the Trine Recreational Facility. For more pics and field day news see page 4.*



## Start Planning for Conservation Projects...

With summer hastily passing us by, we would love to meet with you to discuss any resource concerns you are having on your farm or property. Whether you are interested in adding cover crops to your rotation or planting trees to reforest your property, we can be of assistance.

Over the past year and a half, the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) worked with several partners and Northwater Consulting of Springfield, Illinois, to complete a Revision of the 2006 Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan (PCWMP). Northwater completed a final draft version in March, but since the project is being funded through an Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) Section 319 Grant, the Plan also needed approved by IDEM. Recently, we have received final approval of the 2014 PCWMP, and we are excited to not only offer the plan to the

public, but also begin Phase Three Project Implementation in the watershed.

We felt an update to the PCWMP plan was necessary because so many changes had taken place in the watershed since 2006. There have been land use changes, several years of water monitoring by the Steuben County Lakes Council, updates to wastewater treatment, and the implementation of numerous conservation practices and other projects. We felt it was time to take inventory of these changes and take another in-depth look at the watershed; to build upon the successes in the watershed and continue to seek funding resources for further improvement.

To complete the 33 elements in IDEM's required management plan checklist, Northwater completed a detailed watershed assessment using a data-driven approach.

*(Continued on page 2 - See Pigeon Creek funds available)*

Scan this symbol with your  
smartphone to link to our website.



## Pigeon Creek implementation funds available

(Continued from page 1)

They worked with our Board of Supervisors and office staff, as well as several other individuals, groups, and departments, including the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Steuben County District Conservationist, Brian Musser, the Steuben County Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Coordinator, Chad Hoover; The City of Angola/Trine University's Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Coordinator, Eric Henion; The Steuben County Lakes Council; Aquatic Enhancement and Survey, Inc. Aquatic Biologist, Scott Banfield; The Pigeon Creek Watershed Steering Committee; Steuben County Surveyor Larry Gilbert; Steuben County Government; City of Angola; and The Nature Conservancy to gather data and information about the watershed.

Methods comprised the latest technology such as GIS and computer modeling to evaluate pollution causes and sources, along with conventional techniques such as direct observations of the watershed through a windshield survey and meetings with landowners. Northwater consultant Jeff Boeckler drove the entire watershed, and independent assessments were made of water quality data, local soils, hydrology, landuse, precipitation, geology, and biology. A land-based pollution load model was developed to estimate annual and storm-event bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment loads.

After this data was compiled, areas of the watershed were prioritized as critical areas, and conservation practices were recommended that would improve their condition. Several site-specific practices were also recommended in the watershed after the one-on-one landowner meetings, Pigeon Creek Watershed Steering Committee, and public meetings.

If you are interested in viewing the 2014 PCWMP, please give us a call at (260) 665-3211, ext. 3, or stop in the office at 1220 North 200 West, Angola. You can look at a hard copy or take home and keep a copy of the plan on CD. The plans are also available for review at the Carnegie Public Library in Angola and the Fremont Public Library in Fremont.

The Steuben SWCD is excited to begin our next step of implementing the recommendations from the plan. We have already started this process, and would love to work with you on improving your property in the Pigeon Creek Watershed. Through the IDEM grant, we also have project implementation funds to assist landowners in the watershed with improving the overall quality of their property, and the watershed as a whole. If you stop in or give us a call, we can work with you to see if there are any natural resource concerns on your property, and what practices may help to alleviate these concerns. We can then use the grant funds to provide cost-share in helping you with installation of these practices. Conservation practices, such as planting cover crops, installing a grassed waterway or grassed buffer strip, and tree plantings, among others are eligible for assistance. These practices all help improve the quality of our soil and water.

Please stop by the office sometime so we can share some of the exciting projects we are working on and their benefits. At the Steuben County SWCD, we are fortunate to be able to use public resources for a better, healthier tomorrow.

*At the Steuben County SWCD, we are fortunate to be able to use public resources for a better, healthier tomorrow.*



**FSA Updates:** Quick updates, call the office (260-665-3211, X2) for more details:

- ◆ **CERTIFICATION:** If you haven't completed your annual crop certification for CRP or planted crops, please do so now.
- ◆ **LETTERS BEING SENT TO PRODUCERS:** In preparation for signup for new farm bill programs, farm owners and operators were recently sent letters that discuss specifics about your farm(s). These letters are a bit confusing, so if you have any questions, please call our office to make an appointment.
- ◆ **2012 PASTURE LOSSES:** We are currently taking applications for the LFP program. This program covers losses incurred on pastures in 2012 due to the drought.
- ◆ **CRP EARLY OUT OPPORTUNITY:** It was recently announced that there are some provisions to allow producers to cancel out of CRP contracts early without penalty. There are numerous eligibility criteria that must be met before an "early out" will be approved.

# Upcoming Workshops - Exciting Fall Events:

## Septic Workshops:

### Flushing into the Future:

The Steuben County Health Department, Steuben County SWCD, and the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRWI) are pleased to be able to host septic workshops in Steuben County this summer through a Nonpoint Source Pollution grant awarded to the SJRWI from IDEM. At the workshop, participants will learn how septic systems work, the limitations of our soils to process waste and how to maintain septic systems for optimum performance. The first workshop will be held on August 21st from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at the Hamilton Fish and Game Club (110 W Railroad Street), and the second workshop will be on October 23rd from 6:30 to 8 pm at the Steuben County Community Center. Please call our office for more information or to register.

## Cover Crop Field Day:

Details are just starting to come together, but DeKalb and Steuben County SWCD's are planning a Cover Crop Field Day on the evening of Thursday, September 11th, from 6 to 8 pm at the Andersons' Inc. Waterloo Facility, located at 4743 County Road 28, Waterloo, IN 46793. If you are interested in this field day, please give us a call and we will make sure you receive an agenda.



## 4th Grade Youth Conservation Field Day:

On Tuesday, September 9th, we will host our annual 4th grade Youth Conservation Field Day at Pokagon State Park. The fun-filled day includes presentations on wildlife, soil health, entomology, fish management, conservation officers and what they do, and water quality. In an encore presentation, the Dumpster Drummers will be back to entertain the children. If you are interested in assisting or just observing for the day, give us a call.



## Lake Life Class:

Now entering its third year, the Lake Life Series is back. Beginning Tuesday, September 23rd, the class meets once a week, from 6 to 8:30 pm, for six weeks. New this year will be class field trips. We are planning to hold one class at the Trine Recreational Facility, another at Lake James, a third in Orland, and our final class at Caruso's Restaurant on October 28th. Two sessions will still be held at the Angola Community Center in the Auditorium. Don't miss this awesome opportunity to learn all about the wonderful Natural Resources we have in Steuben County. Cost of the class is \$15 for returning students, and \$50 for new students. This class is sponsored by the SWCD, The Steuben County Lakes Council, and Purdue Extension. Please call our office to register, or for more information.

## Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2014 Affiliate Members. The donations received from these individuals and businesses help support the Information and Education programs of the District. If you or your business would like to become an Affiliate Member, please contact our office.

### Platinum (\$100 and above)

- Angola Seed & Supply  
Angola, IN
- City of Angola/Trine University MS4  
Angola, IN
- Farm Credit Services Mid America  
LaGrange, IN
- North Central Co-Op  
Wabash, IN
- The Nature Conservancy  
Angola, IN
- CM Holman Farms  
Angola, IN

### Gold (\$75 - \$99)

- Aquatic Enhancement Survey, Inc.  
Angola, IN
- Tom Green Engineering  
Angola, IN

### Silver (\$50 - \$74)

- Edon Farmer's Co-Op  
Edon, OH
- Kevin Northup Excavating  
LaGrange, IN
- Noll Bros. Oil, Inc.  
Hudson, IN

### Bronze (\$25 - \$49)

- Carper Farm Supply, Inc.  
Ashley, IN
- Caruso's Restaurant  
Angola, IN
- Daft Erosion Control, LLC  
Ada, OH
- Stroh Farm Supply  
Stroh, IN



## Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

Peachtree Plaza 200

1220 N 200 W

Angola, IN 46703

260-665-3211 x3

[www.steubenswcd.org](http://www.steubenswcd.org)



[facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD](https://facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD)

**Conserving the Natural Resources of  
Steuben County for Future Generations!**

You can help us go green by subscribing to the newsletter via e-mail. Visit our website and click on the Newsletter tab or call the office to change your subscription at any time. You may change your subscription to *The Conservator* at any time.

*All programs and activities of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and its Partnership Agencies are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.*

## Upcoming Events...

Aug. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Septic Workshop 6:30 PM @ Hamilton Fish and Game Club
Sept. 1 <sup>st</sup>	Labor Day - (Office closed)
Sept. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Sept. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Youth Conservation Field Day 9:00 am at Pokagon State Park
Sept. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Sept. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Cover Crop Field Day 6pm at The Andersons' Waterloo facility
Sept. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Lake Life Classes begin 6:00 pm @ Steuben Co. Community Center
Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup>	Lake Life Class 6:00 pm @ Trine Recreational Facility
Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Oct. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Lake Life Class 6:00 pm @ Steuben Co. Community Center
Oct. 8 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 pm @ USDA Service Center

*\*\*For more events and updates please check the website.\*\**

*Times and places of meetings are subject to change due to unforeseen issues.*

## REMINDER:

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would like to remind landowners and operators who may be thinking about signing up for the USDA Farm Bill programs in the spring to please contact our office now to schedule a site visit and begin planning.

Phone numbers :        NRCS - (260) 665-3211, X3  
                                      FSA - (260) 665-3211, X2

*Steuben County Conservation Camp at the Trine Recreational Facility on July 8th. Thanks Fred Wooley and Majorie Hersman from Pokagon State Park!*



**From:** Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts <emily-neitzel@iaswcd.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 10, 2014 4:19 PM  
**To:** Hart, Kayleen - NRCS-CD, Angola, IN  
**Subject:** Conservation Update: \$328 Million for Conservation, ACEP Informational Meeting, and more!

Youth Cons. Field Day article on Back

## Conservation Update

August 28 - September 10, 2014



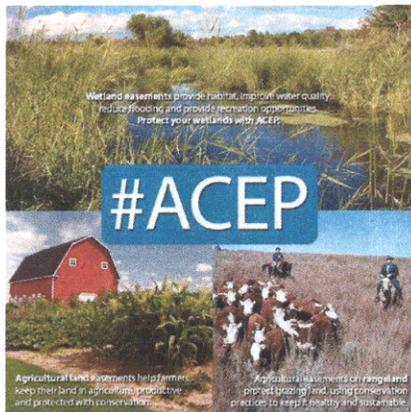
INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF  
soil and water conservation  
DISTRICTS

### Top News

#### NRCS Announces \$328 Million for Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said yesterday that the Department of Agriculture is investing \$328 million to help private landowners protect and restore key farmlands, grasslands and wetlands. \$3.4 million of this will be available in Indiana. The 2014 Farm Bill created the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) to protect critical wetlands and keep lands in farming for the future.

"Conservation easements help Hoosier farmers protect valuable agricultural lands from



### Contact Us

[info@iaswcd.org](mailto:info@iaswcd.org)  
317-692-7325  
[www.iaswcd.org](http://www.iaswcd.org)  
[www.ccsin.org](http://www.ccsin.org)

Find your [Region Director](#)



### Upcoming Deadlines

**September 19:**  
*-Proposed Resolutions due (scroll to the bottom of page at link for past resolutions and forms)*

## District Spotlight

*Once a month, we'll be featuring recent successful activities and projects put on by different districts from around the state. If you'd like to share a success story from your county, please write us at [info@iaswcd.org](mailto:info@iaswcd.org) to be included in a future District Spotlight!*

### **Steuben County Youth Conservation Field Day**

On September 9, the Steuben County SWCD hosted a successful Youth Conservation Field Day for 306 local fourth grade students at Pokagon State Park.

The children took part in many activities throughout the day, including talks on wildlife, water safety, job duties of conservation officers, entomology, fish management, soils, water quality, and more! The purpose of the day was to provide a foundation of knowledge about natural resource conservation.

One of the big hits of the day for the students was a performance by the Dumpster Drummers of Fort Wayne. The Drummers are a musical group who teach about recycling by using recycled materials and dumpsters to create music.

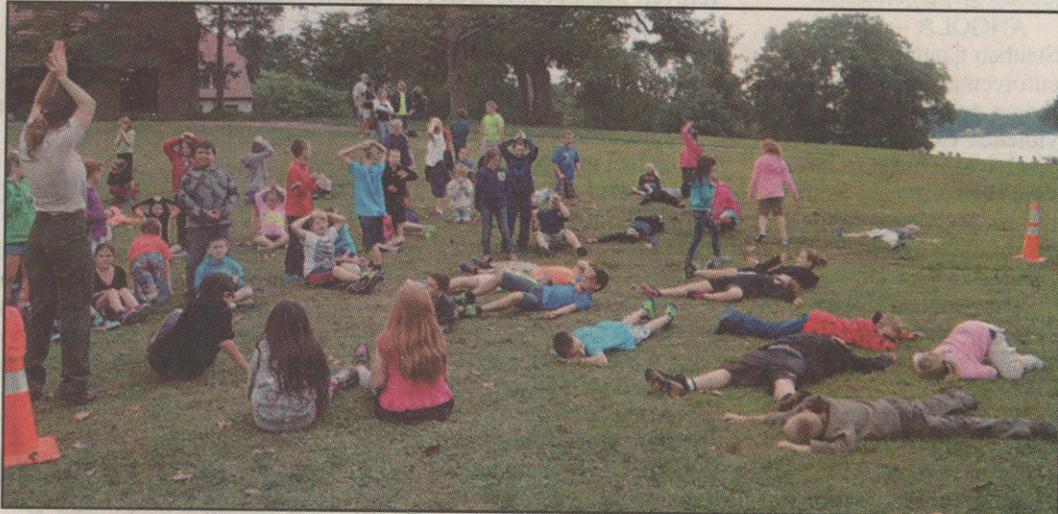
Kayleen Hart, the SWCD administrative coordinator, said, "The children love it. They think they are 'awesome.' The first year, The Northeast Solid Waste District (NESWD) sponsored them for the field day performance, but this year our office received a SARE Youth Educator Grant which will assist with half the cost for the next two years. The NESWD still picks up the other half."



*The Dumpster Drummers entertain while teaching about recycling.  
Photo: Kayleen Hart*

The teachers also see value in the conservation activities for their students. In particular, they enjoy the soils sessions because of the visual demonstrations about erosion and keeping the soil covered, as well as the tie-in with subjects included on the ISTEP test.

The Steuben County SWCD thanks their partner agencies for their help in putting on the event, donating time, and educational materials.



FRED WOOLEY

**Fourth-graders play Oh Deer on the Potawatomi Inn lawn during a Youth**

**Conservation Field Day last Tuesday at Pokagon State Park.**

# 4th graders get a day outside

**BY AMY OBERLIN**

aoberlin@kpcmedia.com

LAKE JAMES — The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District held its annual field day for fourth-graders last Tuesday at Pokagon State Park.

The 29th Youth Conservation Field Day was hosted in cooperation with Purdue University Extension Service.

“We had a beautiful day,” said Kayleen Hart, SWCD administrative coordinator. “The rain held off until Wednesday, so the 306 children who attended from MSD and Fremont school corporations were able to spend most of the day outside at six different sessions focusing on our natural resources.”

The youths attend Fremont Elementary School and the Metropolitan School District of Steuben County’s four elementary schools.

Sessions included:

- Wildlife and its management with Pokagon interpretive naturalists Fred Wooley

*“We had a beautiful day.”*

**Kayleen Hart**

Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District

and Majorie Hershman;

- Water safety by Indiana Department of Natural Resources Conservation Officer Jake Carlile;

- Fish management by IDNR fisheries biologist Larry Koza;

- Water quality with the Steuben County Lakes Council’s Janet Bohney;

- Soil conservation by Zac Martin from the SWCD; and

- Entomology, presented by Tami Mosier, Purdue Extension Educator.

Just before lunch the students were treated to a performance by The Dumpster Drummers, a musical group

from Fort Wayne, promoting recycling and its benefits to the environment.

“We were able to bring this group back for the second year because of a generous donation by the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste Management District and a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Youth Educator Grant the SWCD received,” said Hart.

Students also were given educational activity books donated by the SWCD, Steuben County Lakes Council and City of Angola/Trine University MS4 Department. The NISWMD donated pencils and bracelets for the children. Every participant received a T-shirt.

“I am so happy to be able to be a part of this event. It’s a fun, inspirational day watching the children grow in their environmental awareness,” said Hart. “It would not be possible without all the generosity of our partners and helpers for the day.”

# SOUNDINGS

Steuben County Lakes Council, Inc.  
317 South Wayne Street, Suite 2A  
Angola, IN 46703 Phone (260) 665-1730

E-mail office@lakescouncil.org  
Volume #41

Web www.lakescouncil.org  
Fall 2014

**S•C•L•C**



**STEBEN  
COUNTY  
LAKES  
COUNCIL**

*Steuben County Lakes Council  
"Protecting Our Lakes Today, For Tomorrow"*

## **President's Live Box**



### **WATER WATER EVERYWHERE OR NOWHERE TO BE SEEN**

Narrated by Tom Hazelett, SCLC President  
Written by Dr. Susan Mitchell



Many, maybe even all of us, like to be near water. We remember fondly our family vacations at the lake, or the seashore, or camping in the woods by a favorite river. We remember swimming and playing in the water.

Water can be very soothing whether we are sitting at the edge of a lovely lake in the woods as mist rises in the morning, or paddling quietly along. We can have a great deal of fun on the water when we go fishing in our favorite lake or stream, when we go sailing or boating, or when we jump waves in the ocean. The site of a waterfall, be it as magnificent as Niagara Falls, or as tall and narrow as a stream tumbling over rocks on the side of a mountain, can fill us with awe at its power and mesmerize us as we gaze at it.

We know that it is important for us to keep our water clean and free from bacterial contamination, harmful chemicals and pharmaceuticals, and microscopic plastic. We know that it is important that we keep invasive plants and other species from clogging our waterways. This requires our constant vigilance and care.

In this era of climate change we are beginning to see the devastating effects of too much water from storms and floods in some areas and too little water, even very serious and long-lasting droughts, in other areas. As a result of

*(Continued on page 2)*

## YOUTH CONSERVATION DAY

Submitted by Janet Bohney, President Elect, SCLC

Steuben County has some great natural resources, and it also has some dedicated organizations that work diligently to preserve those natural resources. When you have four of those organizations with a lot of volunteers working together, you get exciting results. That's just what the fourth graders from two of the Steuben County school districts got on September 9<sup>th</sup> of this year.

It was the Youth Conservation Day sponsored by the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District with help from the Purdue Extension Office, the Steuben County Lakes Council, and Pokagon State Park. Fourth graders from Fremont and MSD of Steuben County, their teachers and some parent volunteers spent a day outside learning about our great natural resources along with how to protect and conserve them. They participated in hands-on experiments, heard expert speakers, saw interesting displays and got to eat lunch at Pokagon. As one of those volunteers, I got to experience first hand how much there is to learn about our environment.

The day was beautiful, the park was wonderful, the volunteers were enthusiastic, and the Dumpster Drummers with their recycling lesson were great. With activities like this, learning can certainly be fun! Congratulations to all involved, especially to Kayleen Hart of the Conservation District who organized the fun day. Be sure to read Kayleen's article, *ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADER!*

### ARE YOU SMARTER THAN A 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADER?

Submitted by Kayleen Hart, Administrative Coordinator for the S&WCD

This year's fourth grade Youth Conservation Field Day on September 9<sup>th</sup> included some new items. As part of a grant requirement, the children took a pre-test and a post-test to gauge how much they had learned throughout the day. Our pre-test included seven multiple choice questions, one question about each of the sessions that the children rotated through. They were given the test immediately after getting off the bus at the Potawatomi Inn in Pokagon State Park, and then given the same test after the last session at the end of the day. So, are you smarter than a fourth grader?

- 1) How can we reduce soil erosion?
  - A) Keep soil covered with plants, B) Increase amount of water runoff, C) Remove vegetation to expose bare soil, D) All of the above.
- 2) What State Department do Conservation Officers work for?
  - A) Department of Conservation, B) Department of Natural Resources, C) Department of Interior, D) Department of Wildlife

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

- 3) Which of the following animals are considered Indiana wildlife?
  - A) White Tail Deer, B) Tree Frog, C) Red Tail Hawk, D) All of the above
- 4) What does an Entomologist do?
  - A) Study fish, B) Study plants, C) Study rocks, D) Study Insects
- 5) What are the responsibilities of State fishery biologists?
  - A) Enforce fishing regulations, B) Monitor and improve fish populations, C) Care for sick fish, D) All of the above
- 6) Why is water monitoring important?
  - A) Makes water clean, B) Helps keep pollution out of water, C) Allows people to know the condition/quality of the water, D) All of the above
- 7) Who should recycle?
  - A) Kids, B) Adults, C) Cities, D) All of above

**(Answers: A, B, D, D, B, C, D)**

A total of 306 students from the MSD and Fremont Community School Districts attended the field day and took the test. Here are their results:

Question 1: Before, 130 correct, after, 168  
 Question 2: Before, 111 correct, after, 213  
 Question 3: Before, 138 correct, after, 104  
 Question 4: Before, 78 correct, after, 229  
 Question 5: Before, 59 correct, after, 112  
 Question 6: Before, 24 correct, after, 34  
 Question 7: Before, 273 correct, after, 291

This year was the 29<sup>th</sup> Youth Conservation Field Day that the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and Purdue Extension have hosted and we had a beautiful day. The rain held off until the next day, so the children who attended were able to spend most of the day outside at seven different sessions focusing on our natural resources. The sessions included:

- Wildlife and its management with Fred Wooley and Majorie Hershman, Pokagon State Park Interpreters
- Water Safety and Conservation Officers presented by Jake Carlile
- Fish Management by IDNR Fisheries Biologist, Larry Koza
- Water Quality with Janet Bohney, Steuben County Lakes Council.
- Soil Conservation by Zac Martin from SCSWCD
- Entomology by Tami Mosier, Purdue Extension Educator
- The Dumpster Drummers, promoting recycling - drum style

Students also received educational activity books donated by SWCD, SCLC, and City of Angola MS4. They also received pencils & bracelets and all participants received a T-shirt promoting the day. It is a pleasure to watch the children grow in their environmental awareness, which would not be possible without the generosity of all our partners and volunteers.

## **Meyer, Janel - NRCS, Angola, IN**

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**From:** Meyer, Janel - NRCS, Angola, IN  
**Sent:** Friday, September 11, 2015 8:02 AM  
**To:** Jim Measel (jim@wki.com); Amy Oberlin  
**Subject:** 30th annual Youth Conservation Field Day at Pokagon  
**Attachments:** 2015 press release.docx; 2015 YCFD fisheries Larry Koza.jpg; 2015 Dumpster Drummers cropped.jpg

Please see attached press release regarding the Youth Conservation Field Day on September 8<sup>th</sup>.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

I apologize for the picture quality; you may or may not be able to utilize them.

Thanks, have a good weekend.

*Janel S. Meyer*

*Administrative Coordinator*

Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District

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[www.steubenswcd.org](http://www.steubenswcd.org)

## 2015 Youth Conservation Field Day

On Tuesday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, nearly 300 fourth graders from the Fremont and MSD School Districts spent the day at Pokagon State Park for the annual Youth Conservation Field Day hosted by The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and The Steuben County Cooperative Extension Service. This event provides students with the opportunity to learn about several areas of conservation.

“The first fourth grade Youth Conservation Field Day was held in 1985, which makes this our 30<sup>th</sup> year,” said Tom Green, Chairman of the Board of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District. “This educational event gives these students a better understanding and appreciation of our natural resources and the need for conservation.”

This year’s topics included a wildlife interactive session with Marie Laudeman from Pokagon State Park; a forestry presentation by Jacob Hougham with Crowe Forest Management LLC; a demonstration on fish management by Fisheries Biologist Larry Koza from Fawn River State Fish Hatchery; entomology and 4-H natural resource projects from Extension Educator, Tami Mosier; soil education from Brian Musser, District Conservationist with The Natural Resources Conservation Service; water safety with Indiana Conservation Officer Jacob Carlile; and a general session about Recycling right before lunch with the Dumpster Drummers, an environmental educational group from Fort Wayne who use recycled materials to create music.

The Northeast Indiana Solid Waste District (NESWD) and a SARE Youth Educator Grant sponsored the Recycling session with the Dumpster Drummers.

Educational materials and Activity Books were sent to the schools to use as a follow-up on this field day education. The Soil and Water Conservation District, City of Angola/Trine University Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Committee, Steuben County Lakes Council, Purdue Extension office, and the Northeast Indiana Solid Waste District sponsored these materials.

The Steuben County SWCD thanks their partner agencies for their help in putting on the event, donating time, and educational materials. We would also like to thank all of our volunteers and the Potawatomi Inn and staff for their continued support of the Youth Conservation Field Day.



Conserving the Natural  
Resources of Steuben County  
for Future Generations!

# The Conservator

Steuben County, Indiana Soil & Water Conservation District

VOLUME 38, ISSUE 4

FALL 2015

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## Travis Fifer honored as River Friendly Farmer

Steuben County resident Travis Fifer was among 48 farmers from around the state, who received the River Friendly Farmer award on August 19th at the Indiana State Fair. This award recognizes individuals who utilize farm management practices that help to protect Indiana's rivers, lakes, and streams.

The Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Travis for the award based upon his management practices including conservation tillage, cover crops, and nutrient management which reduces sediment and nutrient runoff into area waterbodies.

Travis farms and raises cattle on land that has been owned by his family for generations. He feels it is his responsibility to care for everything, including the environment, in order to be a good steward of the land.

In 2014, Travis worked with the United States Agriculture Service's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the SWCD to install a waste storage facility where manure can be stored prior to field application. Waste storage facilities help in reducing/eliminating runoff.

The award is sponsored by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD), Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) Division of Soil Conservation, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Travis and the other farmers who received the River Friendly award at the ceremony were congratulated by Lieutenant Governor Sue



*Don Villwock, President of Indiana Farm Bureau, left, and Lieutenant Governor Sue Ellspermann, right, present Travis Fifer and his family—wife Cathrine, and sons, Matthew and Eric— with the River Friendly Farmer Award during the Indiana State Fair in Indianapolis. Photo by Kris Vance, NRCS*

Ellspermann, ISDA Director Ted McKinney, President of Indiana Farm Bureau Don Villwock, NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty, and IASWCD President Mike Starkey.

This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River Friendly Farmers in Indiana since the award's beginning in 2000 to 809. Annually, each county Soil and Water Conservation District may nominate up to two farmers who do an outstanding job of protecting their rivers, lakes and streams through their everyday conservation management practices on the farm. Watershed organizations also may nominate farmers for the award by submitting an application to a county SWCD.

Please feel free to stop in or call about our many programs available to assist you with putting conservation on the ground and helping improve your property.

Scan this symbol with your  
smartphone to link to our website.



## Staff Changes at the Steuben SWCD

At the end of August, the District lost an incredible asset that has been with the SWCD for 12 years. Kayleen Hart, Administrative Coordinator, accepted a new position as a Program Technician for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Her new position offers her a career advancement, as well as many new and exciting challenges. Those of you who worked with Kayleen know that she is a dedicated employee who worked with many landowners in the county to implement both agricultural and urban best management practices (BMPs). She brought in over \$1.2 million dollars in grant funds, which offered financial incentives to assist Steuben County landowners with adopting BMPs. She will be greatly missed, but you are still likely to see Kayleen in the USDA Service Center since she only moved to the FSA office next door. We thank Kayleen for her public service, dedication, and passion to "Make a Healthy Watershed". Janel Meyer replaced Kayleen as the Administrative Coordinator. She started with the District

as the Resource Conservationist in April. Janel has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Fisheries & Aquatic Science from Purdue University and brings over twenty years of experience working in natural resources to her current role. Our new Resource Conservationist, Tara M. Lee, joined the team at the end of October. Tara has a Bachelor of Science Degree from Trine University and comes to us from FSA.

Janel and Tara are both passionate about resource conservation and education, and look forward to meeting and working with the many landowners of Steuben County. Remember, regardless of where we live, **everyone** can make a healthy watershed.

Former SWCD Administrative Assistant Kayleen Hart (right) is now a Program Technician for FSA.



### Grant Updates...

## Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan 319 grant

In August, the SWCD was granted an amendment to our Pigeon Creek Watershed Management Plan grant agreement. Our original end date of January 16, 2016 was extended to January 16, 2017. The extension was granted due to personnel changes, which created delays in completing the implementation task in the time allotted by the original grant term.

So what does this mean? This means we are still able to assist with funding Conservation Best Management Practices, such as tree plantings, buffer/filter strips, hay plantings, or cover crops, in priority sub-watersheds throughout the Pigeon Creek Watershed. If you live in this area and are interested in seeing if you are eligible to participate, please call the office. We would love to work with you to improve the quality of the soil and water on your property.

Now is a great time for planning those 2016 projects. If you are thinking about adding conservation practices, we can meet with you to complete conservation plans

and associated forms. Waiting until the last minute could result in funding not being available for your project.

Pigeon Creek



## ★ Conservation Workshop Success ★

The Steuben County SWCD held a successful Conservation Workshop with Moody Farms and Moody & Crew LLC on August 19, 2015 in a partnership with the LaGrange County SWCD, Indiana Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative, USDA, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, and Purdue Extension with 90 farmers from the tristate region attending.

Keynote speaker Dr. Ray Weil, University of Maryland, shared Soil Health practices that Great Lakes farmers can use to voluntarily reduce effects of agriculture on the environment. Key conservation practices for Soil Health included repetitive use of No-Till called Never-Till, enhanced nutrient management to ensure the right source of nutrients are applied at the right rate in the right

place during the right part of crop production, and cover crops to build soil organic matter, structure, and cycle nutrients.

Indiana farmer Dan DeSutter of DeSutter Farms discussed the economics of using Soil Health practices as a systems-approach to farming. The payback of this approach can lower input expenses including fertilizer, pesticide, and herbicide application, through the cycling of nutrients, weed suppression, and improving soil biology; all benefits that can be achieved through the use of a Soil Health system.

Farmers were able to see Soil Health practices in use by visiting Moody Farms fields planted with cereal rye and oilseed radishes. Tyson Franks of Moody & Crew LLC discussed the challenges and benefits their operation has faced using cover crops.

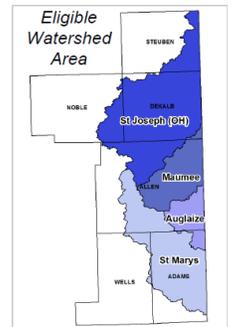


Approximately 300 area 4th graders spent the day at Pokagon State Park September 8th learning about conservation. Stations included sessions on wildlife, soil, forestry, fish management, 4H natural resource projects, and water/water safety. Above, a group of students learn about fish management from Fisheries Biologist Larry Koza.

### **Free Phosphorus Soil Sampling Program for Producers in Western Lake Erie Basin**

The Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) in partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a new program available providing **FREE Soil Sampling** to producers in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Soil sampling for this program will only be done on agricultural fields, which includes pastures.

For more information, contact Jill Krause, Resource Specialist ISDA Division of Soil Conservation at (260) 417-1313 or [jikrause@isda.in.gov](mailto:jikrause@isda.in.gov).



## Affiliate Members

The District Board gratefully acknowledges its current 2015 Affiliate Members. The donations received from these individuals and businesses help support the Information and Education programs of the District. If you or your business would like to become an Affiliate Member, please contact our office.

### Platinum (\$100 and above)

**Angola Seed & Supply**  
Angola, IN

**Farm Credit Services Mid America**  
LaGrange, IN

**The Nature Conservancy**  
Angola, IN

### Gold (\$75 - \$99)

**Aquatic Enhancement Survey, Inc.**  
Angola, IN

### Silver (\$50 - \$74)

**Edon Farmer's Co-Op**  
Edon, OH

**Kevin Northup Excavating**  
LaGrange, IN

**Noll Bros. Oil, Inc.**  
Hudson, IN

### Bronze (\$25 - \$49)

**Carper Farm Supply, Inc.**  
Ashley, IN

**Caruso's Restaurant**  
Angola, IN

**Daft Erosion Control, LLC**  
Ada, OH

**Hoham Feed and Seed**  
Auburn, IN

**Stroh Farm Supply**  
Stroh, IN

**Sue A. Myers**  
Angola, IN



## Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

Peachtree Plaza 200

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Angola, IN 46703

260-665-3211 x3

[www.steubenswcd.org](http://www.steubenswcd.org)



[facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD](https://facebook.com/SteubenIndianaSWCD)

**Conserving the Natural Resources of  
Steuben County for Future Generations!**

You can help us go green by subscribing to the newsletter via e-mail. Visit our website and click on the Newsletter tab or call the office to change your subscription at any time. You may change your subscription to *The Conservator* at any time.

*All programs and activities of the Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District and its Partnership Agencies are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.*

## Upcoming Events...

Nov. 26 & 27 <sup>th</sup>	County Offices Closed Happy Thanksgiving!!
Dec. 5 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben County Lakes Council Meeting 8:30 am at the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Angola
Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Dec. 24 & 25 <sup>th</sup>	County Offices Closed Merry Christmas!!
Jan. 1 <sup>st</sup>	County Offices Closed Happy New Year!!
Jan. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Steuben SWCD Board Meeting 7:15 PM @ USDA Service Center
Jan. 14 - 15 <sup>th</sup>	IASWCD Annual Conference in Indianapolis Office Closed
March 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Steuben SWCD Annual Meeting Planning underway - Stay tuned for more details

*\*\*For more events and updates please check the website.\*\**

*Times and places of meetings are subject to change due to unforeseen issues.*

## FSA Updates - Quick updates,

call the office (260-665-3211, ext. 2) for additional details:

- 1) **ARC PLC payments:** Payments have recently come in, and should be released soon.
- 2) **CRP General signup:** The CRP is a long term (10-15 year) program which takes cropland out of production and devotes the acreage to conservation or wildlife uses. There has been a general CRP signup period announced that runs from **12-1-2015 through 2-26-2016**. The general signup includes practices such as grass/legume plantings and general tree planting practices, wildlife habitats, pollinator habitats, wildlife food plots and others. Feel free to contact us ahead of the signup if you have questions about the program.
- 3) **Grain Loans:** Price support loans will again be available this year for corn, soybeans, and wheat. Once your grain is harvested, you can apply for a 9 month loan using the grain as collateral for the loan. Interest rates are usually lower than what is available from commercial sources.
- 4) **2016 wheat certification:** The deadline to report fall seeded 2016 wheat is **12-15-15**.

*By: Thomas R Saggars,  
County Executive Director, Steuben County FSA Office*