

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Conservation Tillage Program

Project Description:

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Conservation Tillage Program is a two-and-one-half year agricultural conservation tillage promotion project under the regional leadership of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. The Conservation Tillage Program will:

1. Make conservation tillage equipment available to St. Joseph River Watershed producers at a reasonable rental fee,
2. Provide promotion, education, and outreach for conservation tillage systems in the lower one-half of the St. Joseph River Watershed,
3. Provide cost-share assistance to farmers for modification of their planting, tillage, and/or harvesting equipment to allow them to effectively implement conservation tillage and/or nutrient and pest management on their farms, and
4. Provide cost-share assistance to participating farmers for professional agronomic crop consulting assistance to help them manage the nutrient and pesticide management strategy changes necessary when switching from conventional tillage to conservation tillage,
5. Reduce the amount of sediment and nutrients and pesticides in the St. Joseph River and its tributaries from soil erosion and runoff from agricultural fields.

Agencies Involved:

This project is under the local leadership of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (Initiative). The Initiative is working with the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Allen, DeKalb and Noble County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and Purdue University. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management has awarded a \$233,500 EPA Section 319 Grant to the Initiative to complete this project.

Project Area:

The St. Joseph River watershed (located in the Lake Erie basin) extends from Hillsdale County, Michigan, southwest through Williams County, Ohio, into the four northeastern counties in Indiana, where the St. Joseph River joins with the St. Mary's River in downtown Fort Wayne to form the Maumee River.

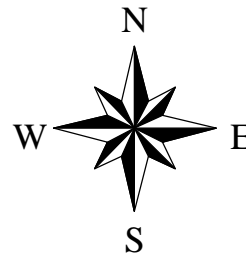
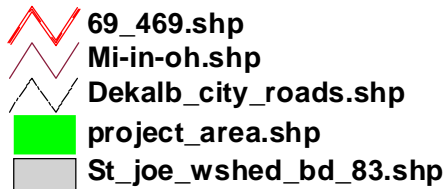
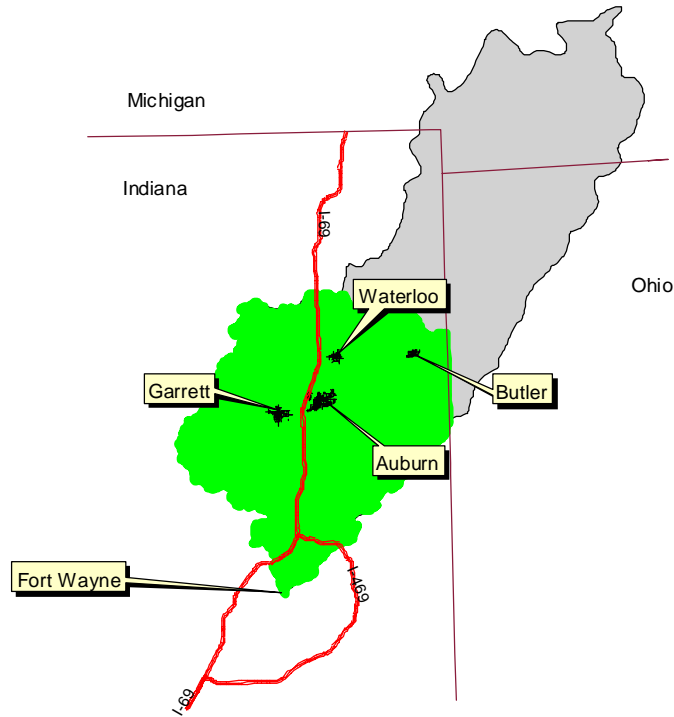
Roughly the lower one-half of the watershed was selected for this project because a similar program administered by The Nature Conservancy's Upper St. Joseph River Watershed Project covers much of the upper one-half of the watershed. Agricultural producers in the project area will be encouraged to implement voluntary incentive-based best management practices (BMPs) that reduce the risk of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides from reaching nearby waterways.

Project Period: October 1, 2002 - Dec. 31, 2004

For more information contact the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative at (260)426-4637, ext. 3

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