

ST. JOSEPH RIVER REVIEW

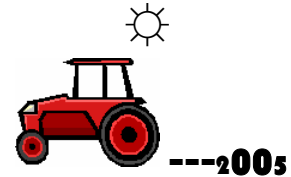
A PUBLICATION BY THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative - 3718 New Vision Drive - Ft. Wayne, IN 46845 - (260) 484-5848, ext. 3
www.sjrwi.org

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April, 2005

4th Annual Conservation Tillage Expo Wraps Up



Slightly over 300 persons attended the 4th annual Tri-State Conservation Tillage Expo on March 15, 2005 at the Kruse Victory Museum near Auburn, Indiana. A day of exceptionally nice weather insured that out-of-town presenters could travel easily, but kept some area producers in their fields on the day of the events.

Attendees were welcomed by Beth Bechdol, assistant deputy director of Agriculture for Indiana. As a native of Auburn, Indiana, she was



Barry Fisher of the Indiana Conservation Tillage Initiative explains the intricacies of conservation tillage equipment.

happy to have the opportunity to come "home" for a visit and shared her perspective on the future of agriculture in Indiana. Keynote speaker, Dr. Alfred Blackmer of Iowa State University presented his research on the evaluation and improvement of nitrogen management through the use of fertilizers and manure on farms. His research shows over-application of nitrogen does not necessarily increase yields and often results in bottom line assets. Dr. Don Reicosky of the Agriculture Research Service (ARS) in

Morris, Minnesota, spoke to the audience about carbon and the sequestration of carbon in soils. Dr. Fred Whitford of Purdue University's Pesticide Management Program spoke to a lunchtime audience about Atrazine and addressed groups later in the afternoon about the Department of Transportation regulations for farmers, and farm emergency mapping.

Other presenters included Dr. Greg Shaner, professor of botany and plant pathology at Purdue University speaking on soybean rust, Barry Fisher from the NRCS led sessions on equipment technologies that make no-till successful for almost every soil condition and Steven Engleking, Purdue Extension educator of agriculture and natural resources in LaGrange county led a workshop on organic farming and conservation tillage.

The event is sponsored by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative and its partner organizations. Attendance was down slightly from the 2004 event. "Generally we think this event will draw 300-400 people, depending upon weather and topics of discussion," said Jane Loomis, executive director of the Initiative.

Planning for the event includes Initiative partners from the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of several watershed counties, along with the Cooperative Extension Service (CES), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and Department of Natural Resources Division of Soil (DNR) agency personnel. Volunteer and members of the Initiative's Board of Directors have also pitched in to help plan and carry out the event.

Partial funding for the event was provided by Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) through monies generated by the Initiative's Conservation Tillage grant equipment rental project. Commercial exhibitors also help to fund the Expo.

"We feel very lucky to be able to bring these folks to Northeast Indiana and share this cutting-edge research about conservation tillage," said Loomis. "The Expo presents a nice opportunity for producers to gather and share knowledge and experience. In the end, it's all about the stewardship of our land and water."



Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant Tour

The public is invited to an open house and tour of Fort Wayne's Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant as part of National Drinking Water Week. Everyone will have a chance to tour the facility, view a video and enjoy a light refreshment at the end of the tour. The open house runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 30.

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Drain Game A Winner

On February 7, several groups from Northern Indiana collaborated to present *The Drain Game; A Workshop on Drainage Education and Innovation*. Approximately 100 people attended the day-long workshop, which was held at the Kendallville Banquet and Conference Center in Kendallville, Indiana. The workshop focused on topography of drainage, who is responsible for controlling the water, how land use planning can control drainage, and innovative approaches to dealing with drainage and drainage conveyances. Evaluations of the program by the audience were overwhelmingly positive and attendees were particularly happy with the meeting facility and the food served at the workshop.

Shane McBurnett, soil survey project leader for NRCS began the morning session with a presentation on the topography and soils of this region. Josh Goode of Christopher Burke Engineering spoke about the terminology of drainage and responsibilities of various local, state and federal agencies. Later in the morning Robert McCormick, director of Purdue's *Planning with Power* program, discussed planning on a watershed scale and what happens when drainage

isn't considered during land use planning.

Dr. Christopher Craft, Associate Professor for Indiana University's School of Public and Environmental Affairs in Bloomington presented research information on the value of wetland areas to drainage, retention and nutrient uptake for water protection. Joe Draper of The Nature Conservancy and Bill Word, Drain Commissioner for Hillsdale County (Michigan) teamed up to present their story of the development of a two-stage design ditch which was installed in Hillsdale County in 2004.

John Law, a survey technician for St. Joseph County, shared successes they've had with cooperative efforts on Juday Creek in South Bend, and Mary Jane Slaton, Manager of Stakeholder Relations for the City of Fort Wayne's water utilities covered the value and importance of partnership building across a watershed in order to obtain the best possible outcomes for all groups involved.

"This conference took an extensive amount of planning and preparation on the part of a lot of folks," said Kathy Latz of Wood-Land-Lakes. "It's obvious that drainage is a hot topic in this area, and this workshop was a good start at opening the dialogue on this subject."

Drainage issues touch the lives of everyone. Whether it's the farmer who installs field tile to allow access to a field, or the homeowner concerned that his property will flood if proper drainage is not considered. Drainage also plays a part in the condition of our land, aquatic habitat, and water quality.

Jane Loomis, executive director of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, noted that the group would evaluate the need for additional workshops on drainage, with the idea of focusing in more closely on specific topics. "Drainage is such a big issue," said Loomis. "We felt that we needed to start with some basics and then, based on the success of the introduction, offer follow-up conferences on particular drainage issues and options. We'll be looking for input from the communities we work with."

Planners for this conference included Wood-Land-Lakes R.C. & D., the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, the DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District, the St. Joseph River Basin Commission, and the Hoosier Environmental Council, several county surveyors and representatives from the Nature Conservancy, the Izaak Walton League and the City of Fort Wayne.

Cost Share program working for St. Joseph Conservation Tillage Grant

To date, twelve landowners are taking part and receiving over \$36,000 in cost share for purchases such as residue managers, light bars, yield monitors, moisture sensors, closing wheels and planter monitoring systems.

For more information on the cost share program, contact Jeremy Palmer at 484-5848 ext. 3.



Earth Day Plans

This year the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality is partnering with Cinema Center to bring the celebration of Earth Day to the community. On April 21 at 7 p.m., the public can enjoy a free evening at Cinema Center Tech, and view two short films about the Maumee River watershed, *Fate of a River: Apathy or Action (1965)* and *Fate of a River: Revisited (2000)*.

Fate of a River: Revisited (2000) produced by Jenny Carter and sponsored by Clear Water, Inc. and WGTE, is an updated look at the progress that has been made to improve water quality over the last 35 years in the Maumee River watershed which was the focus of the *Fate of a River: Apathy or Action (1965)* film produced by the Junior League of Toledo. This film depicted foaming detergents, raw sewage, colorful industrial discharges, gasping fish and algae-laden streams in the Maumee River watershed. Following the films, a panel of local stakeholders will take questions from attendees and discuss water quality issues in Allen County.

The Earth Day celebration will take place at Cinema Center Tech located in Andorfer Commons on the Indiana Tech campus at 1600 E. Washington Blvd. (near the soccer fields). This event is free to the public.



Great American Cleanup

Volunteers are needed for this year's Great American Cleanup. This is the country's largest litter prevention, beautification and community improvement program. Last year, more than 2,000 volunteers helped clean Fort Wayne's neighborhoods, parks and rivers.

The Great American Cleanup is from 8-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 21. All volunteers will be treated to a party at Headwaters Park complete with food, music, games and raffle prizes. The party begins following the cleanup from 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wetland Issues Seminar

Dr. Lenore Tedesco, associate professor in the Department of Geology and the director of the Center for Earth and Environmental Science at IPFW will be presenting a seminar entitled *The Starling Wetland Restoration Project: University/Corporate/Community Partnerships for watershed and water quality awareness*. The seminar will be held on Monday, April 18 from 12-1 p.m. in the Science Building, Room 185. A map of the IPFW campus can be found at <http://www.ipfw.edu/campus/maps/>.

Dr. Tedesco focuses her research on wetland restoration including evaluation of restoration strategies and wetland function. This includes studies of urban riparian reforestation, fen wetland and the distribution of anthropogenic pollutants.

SWPI Update



Initiative staff member Kevin Breit processes water samples in the SWPI laboratory near Waterloo.

Water quality sampling for the Source Water Protection Initiative, a national research project located near Waterloo, Indiana, has begun for the 2005 season. A new laboratory facility located near the project site will help to improve conditions for collection, recording and processing of water samples from the nine automated samplers located throughout the area on the Matson, Walter Smith and

David Link ditches. In 2004, Initiative staff and contractors collected and prepared over 3,500 samples for the Agriculture Research Service at the National Soil Erosion Research Laboratory in West Lafayette. More about the SWPI project can be found on our website, www.sjrwi.org.

April Meeting of the Board of Directors held in Spencerville-St. Joe area

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Board of Directors met April 4, 2005 at the Spencerville Community Club in Spencerville, Indiana. The featured speaker was Michael McKay of the architectural firm of Morrison Kattman Menze, Inc. Mr. McKay spoke on the architecture for the green buildings at the Merry Lea Environmental Center near Wolf Lake, Indiana. Before the meeting, three board members, Mary Jane Slaton, Bill Word and Jane Loomis, along with St. Joe Town Council members Steve Monroe and John Jones followed the 1.25 mile River Greenway which starts behind Riverdale Elementary School and follows the St. Joseph River.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be hosted by the Noble County SWCD on June 6 at the Dekko Room, Purdue Cooperative Extension, Court House Annex, 2090 N. SR 9 in Albion, Indiana.

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative board meetings are held the first Monday of the even months (except August). Locations for future meetings can be found on the Initiative's website, www.sjrwi.org, or by calling the office at 484-5848 ext. 3. The public is always welcome.

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

SJRWI is a non-profit organization formed in 1995 by local agencies, organizations, and citizens. Our mission is to promote economically and environmentally compatible land uses that improve water quality throughout the St. Joseph River Watershed. Please help support our work by making a tax-deductible donation.

Name _____ Phone and/or e-mail _____
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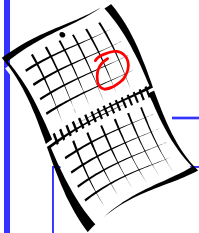
YES! I want to help SJRWI's work to improve water quality throughout the St. Joseph River Watershed.

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$500 \$200 \$100 \$50 \$20 Other \$ _____

Your contribution is completely tax-deductible and will be gratefully acknowledged.
Please make checks payable to SJRWI and send to: 3718 New Vision Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Please add me to your newsletter mailing list.
 I am interested in becoming a volunteer for the Initiative. Please contact me!



Upcoming Events

- Wetland issues seminar
IPFW Science Bldg. April 18, 12-1 p.m.
- Earth Day at Cinema Center Tech April 21, 7-9 p.m., Indiana Tech
- Water Filtration Plant Tour April 30, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- SJRWI Board of Director's Meeting June 6
- Hoosier Riverwatch trainings
Allen County May 17
Steuben County July 16

2004 Water Quality Report Available

The SJRWI water quality report on the St. Joseph River is now available. It can be found in PDF format on our website at sjrwi.org.

Water sampling begins for 2005 on April 4 and will continue through October.



Tillage Equipment Available

The conservation tillage equipment listed below is available for rental this spring from the Initiative and the Allen Co. SWCD.

- To The Max Harrow Salford RTS*
- Blu-Jet In-Line Ripper DMI Strip-Till Unit*
- Brillion Grass Seeder Great Plains Turbo-Till*
- Phoenix & Phillips Rotary Harrows*

For more information, contact Jeremy Palmer at 484-5848 ext. 3.

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