

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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Annual Meeting Featured Tour of the Upper Watershed

The St. Joseph River Watershed Annual Meeting on July 26, 2004, featured a tour of the Michigan portion of the watershed, a dinner and video presentation at the Camden Community Center, as well as a short business meeting and election of officers.

Joe Draper and Bill Word organized this year's meeting and tour of the upper watershed. The 3:00 p.m. tour, with bus service, provided by *Two Ladies and A Bus, Inc.*, was conducted by Bill Word, Hillsdale County Drainage Commissioner, Dennis Haskins, NRCS Michigan, and Joe Draper of The Nature Conservancy. The tour included the headwaters area of the watershed, Cub Lake, and the Cambria Mill Pond. A stop at Dan Easterday's dairy operation near Camden highlighted the benefits of a new manure separation system. A walking tour of The Nature

Conservancy's two-stage ditch project on the Joseph St. John property in Hillsdale County conducted by Draper and Word, demonstrated the positive drainage and water retention capabilities of this design. Participants of the tour were able to view specific areas of conservation tillage, grassed waterways and other conservation practices in the area, as well as forested property along the West Fork of the St. Joseph that has been restored by Bill McKarn.

The tour was followed by a delicious picnic-style supper at the Camden Community Center, and a video presentation of the construction of the Two-stage Ditch Project.

During the Initiative's business meeting that followed, outgoing chairman of the Board Tom Crowe welcomed new chairman Dr. Robert Gillespie, vice-chairman Bill Word, and Treasurer Mary

Jane Slaton. Joe Draper was re-elected secretary of the Board.

This year's Executive Committee includes the four officers plus Marvin Dietsch (Ohio), Tom Crowe (Indiana) and Dan Easterday (Michigan).



Dan Easterday explains the operation of the new manure separation system at his farm near Camden.



4th Annual Tri-State Tillage Expo Set for March 15

Plans are underway for the 4th Annual Tri-State Conservation Tillage Expo. The event will be held again this year at the Kruse World War II Victory Museum at I-69 and CR 11A near Auburn, Indiana, on March 15, 2005.



A presentation by Precision Planting attracted strong interest at the 2004 Tri-State Tillage Expo last year.

Last year's event was hailed as the biggest and best so far, and

Expo planners aim to improve upon that event. Programming will again include exhibitors of machinery and seed, an opportunity for private and commercial pesticide applicators to earn continuing education credits, and an outstanding lineup of speakers. The program includes refreshments during morning registration, and a luncheon. After the program, attendees will have an opportunity to tour the Victory

Museum and Kruse car collection that are housed in the museum.

The Expo is sponsored by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative with its partners from the six-county area Soil and Water Conservation Districts and The Nature Conservancy.

Watch for more information on the 2005 Expo in your mail soon.

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From the Executive Director...

Thanks to all of you, our watershed partners

As we look back on calendar year 2004, it's easy for all of those months to become a blur of routine activity. But I'd like to take a few minutes to note some very important events and accomplishments from this past year, and to thank our dedicated partners for their strong and effective support over the last twelve months.

In 2004, our 3rd annual **Tri-State Conservation Tillage Conference** was the biggest and best ever.

In 2004, we completed our 9th year of weekly water sampling across the watershed, building upon one of the most extensive and comprehensive water quality databases in the region.

In 2004, we coordinated activities supported by at least **five different grants**.

In 2004, we proposed and received **two new grants**, one for agency support and one for sediment reduction in the watershed.

In 2004, we received preliminary approval of **two additional new grants**, one for conservation tillage support and one for watershed planning.

In 2004, we completed research and released a seminal report on Bacteria Source Tracking in this watershed.

In 2004, we completed our third year of working with the Purdue Soil Erosion Laboratory on the Source

Water Protection Initiative project near Waterloo, maintaining nine automated samplers and collecting and processing thousands of water samples.

In 2004, we hosted our first *Hoosier Riverwatch* training.

And what's on the horizon for 2005?

In 2005, we'll be working with stakeholders to complete the watershed management plan for the Cedar Creek and to begin implementation of the plan.

In 2005, we'll be co-sponsoring *The Drain Game*, a day-long conference on drainage issues in the tri-state area on February 7 in Kendallville, Indiana.

In 2005, we'll be hosting the 4th Annual Tri-State Conservation Tillage Expo on March 15.

In 2005, we'll be working with stakeholders to create a watershed management plan for the Lower St. Joseph and Bear Creek (Indiana) sub-watersheds.

In 2005, we'll try again to outwit the weather and sponsor a canoe trip on the Cedar Creek or St. Joseph River.

In 2005, we'll be sponsoring several volunteer watershed monitoring training workshops for citizen volunteers.

In 2005, we'll be working with all six county conservation districts to increase conservation and reduce sedi-

ment across the watershed with funding from the Great Lakes Commission.

In 2005, we'll be testing the quality of the St. Joseph and its tributaries for the 10th year in a row, thanks to solid support from the City of Fort Wayne and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

In 2005, we'll continue support for conservation tillage efforts in the St. Joseph Watershed.

The really exciting thing about looking forward to these and many more challenges is the existence of such a strong and effective partnership among the many interested and dedicated stakeholders. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all of you folks who generously contribute your time and resources to make our watershed a better place to live and work. The Initiative is really quite unique as far as watershed organizations go. Our organization is a true public partnership – it belongs to all of us and its success in the coming years depends upon all of us!

We're looking forward to another busy spring, summer and fall in one of the most beautiful and productive areas of the Great Lakes – the St. Joseph River Watershed. Thank you for your support in 2004, and keep us on your calendar for 2005!

Jane A. Loomis
Executive Director

The final report on the Bacteria Source Tracking Project
is available on our website www.sjrwi.org.

319 Cost-Share Assistance Program for the St. Joseph River Watershed Still Available for Landowners and Producers

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative is still taking applications for its cost share assistance program supporting conservation tillage in the St. Joseph River watershed. The Section 319 grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has been extended until September 30, 2005 and includes all watershed land, including tributary watersheds. The grant promotes conservation tillage in order to reduce the amounts of sediment, nutrients and pesticides that enter the tributaries of the St. Joseph River which supply the drinking water for Fort Wayne.

The cost-share program is designed to assist those producers who are practicing a more conventional tillage system to move towards some type of conservation tillage system. The cost-share money can be used to defray

the cost of light bars, yield monitors, and planter attachments. Payment can also be applied toward the purchase of equipment such as a new no-till planter or an in-line ripper. The guidelines set up for the EQIP program will be used to determine eligibility for land that will be eligible for this program.

The Initiative also has conservation tillage equipment available for rent, including Phoenix harrow, To The Max roller chopper, McFarlane Reel-Till and Kale Blu-Jet In-line ripper. We also have tractors leased for horsepower for these units if needed. If you have questions about this program or would like to apply for cost-share assistance, please contact Jeremy Palmer at the SJRWI (260) 484-5848 x3.

Cost-Share Program Guidelines

Maximum of \$3,000 cost-share assistance per participating producer

Requirements for \$3,000 cost-share

(less than 100 acres, payments will be based on a percentage of 100 acres)

- 100 acres committed for 5 years to a No-Till or modified No-Till system
- No-Till/Modified No-Till systems include the following:
 - In-line ripper followed by a harrow such as:
 - Phillips, Phoenix, Turbo-till, To The Max or McFarlane Reel-till
 - Strip-till
 - Spring harrow, same as above

Work Continues on the Cedar Creek Management Plan

The Cedar Creek Watershed Management Planning Task Group has continued work on the plan throughout the fall with the aim of completing a final draft of the plan early in 2005. The Section 319 grant which supports the creation of the plan was originally set to expire December 31 of 2004, but negotiations between the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative have resulted in an extension of that grant until April 30, 2005. The extension is needed in order to complete a SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment Tool) model as a component of the plan.

The SWAT model will calculate reduction of pollutants for various Best Management Practices (BMP) that could be installed on the ground, thus allowing the community to focus on practices that will result in the most improvement for dollars spent. The Initiative, IDEM and the National Soil Erosion Research Laboratory at Purdue in West Lafayette are cooperating to build the model.

A copy of Draft B of the Cedar Creek Watershed Plan is available on the web at www.sjrwi.org. Revisions to this draft are underway and Draft C will appear on the web in January.

Fall Conservation Tillage Efforts

Fall of 2004 was a busy time for conservation tillage equipment rentals in the St. Joseph watershed. Our equipment was used on more than 950 acres. Included in that usage are the Brillion grass seeder, 55 acres; the Kale Blu-Jet ripper, 657 acres; and the DMI Strip-till, 258 acres. The seeder is owned by the Initiative and provides a small amount of unencumbered income for our organization. The Blu-jet and the DMI unit are leased with funding from our conservation tillage grant. Any income from these pieces of equipment must be used for educational outreach or other programming related to our conservation tillage grant.



Ariel Miller, Beth Williams, Kathy Latz, Julie Knudson and Rev. Paul Rowe discuss water quality testing results at the July 30 Hoosier Riverwatch training in Auburn. Additional trainings will be scheduled for 2005 across the watershed.

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. If you would like more information about the SJRWI, have you or someone you know added to our mailing list, or if you would like to help support the work of the SJRWI with a tax-deductible donation, please complete the information below, clip out this section of the newsletter and mail it to the SJRWI.

Name _____ Phone and/or e-mail _____

Address, City, State, Zip _____

Please add me to your newsletter mailing list.

I am interested in becoming a SJRWI partner, board member, technical advisor, or volunteer (we will contact you with details!)

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

Workshop on Drainage Scheduled for February 7

A workshop on Drainage Education and Innovation will be held February 7, 2005 at Kendallville Banquet & Conference Center in Kendallville, Indiana. This day-long event is sponsored by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, Wood-Land-Lakes RC&D, area county Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Hoosier Environmental Council, IDEM, City of Fort Wayne and other local groups.

The conference will include presentations on the local physical history of northern Indiana, southeastern Michigan and northwestern Ohio. Participants can learn how water drains from the ground, who is responsible for controlling the drainage, how planning can reduce drainage and creative approaches to dealing with drainage. Everyone will receive handouts and have an opportunity to visit exhibits.

The workshop is open to everyone because drainage affects

everyone—decision-makers, farmers, developers and homebuilders and homeowners.

Speakers include Shane McBurnett, NRCS soil scientist; Brad Johnson, planner from Ground Rules, Inc.; Bob McCormick, Purdue University *Planning with Power*; Christopher Craft, Indiana University, Bloomington, School of Public and Environmental Affairs; Joe Draper, The Nature Conservancy and Bill Word, Drainage Commissioner, Hillsdale County MI; John Law, St. Joseph Co., Indiana; Joe Tutterow, Indiana Land Use Resources Council.

Register before January 21 for \$20 or at-the-door for \$25. Get your packet from your local SWCD, Wood-Land-Lakes, or online from www.sjrwi.org.

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3718 New Vision Dr.
Fort Wayne, IN 46845

Tel: 260-484-5848 x3
Fax: 260-484-5080
Website: www.sjrwi.org

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