

ST. JOSEPH RIVER REVIEW

A PUBLICATION BY THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE

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

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See back page to learn
how to become more
involved with SJRWI!

UNDERSTANDING WATER

Over 1200 Kids Learn Importance of Water Quality During National Drinking Water Week

Allison Van Zandt, Allen County Partnership for Water Quality

During the week of May 3rd, National Drinking Water Week, the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative and the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality organized Drinking Water educational presentations that reached forty classrooms in just four days! This was the first large-scale educational effort conducted in Allen County for National Drinking Water Week.

The week long effort was sponsored by nineteen groups, including municipalities and consulting firms; several of the companies donated time to help educate in the classroom. These sponsors include **City of Fort Wayne, City of New Haven, Malcolm Pirnie, HNTB, Bonar Group, Clark Dietz, R. W. Armstrong, DLZ Indiana, Christopher B. Burke Engineering, Russell Engineering & Associates, Commonwealth Engineers, Dodzik Engineering, Donohue & Associates, Cross Road Engineers, and Triad Engineering, Inc.**

Because of the generous donations from the involved entities, 900 students and teachers received Drinking Water Week t-shirts. Five students from Anthis Career Center's IT Academy participated in the logo design contest. Garrie Burt's design was chosen as the winner and used to decorate all the t-shirts. These t-shirts were worn by the students on Friday, May 7th, which was proclaimed Fort Wayne Drinking Water Day by Mayor Graham Richard.

Other events which rounded out National Drinking Water Week included the ACPWQ's exhibit at Sol Fest and the Lowe's Saturday Series Workshop, *Our Water: Where Does it Come From... Where Does it Go?* At this workshop, residents learned about how Fort Wayne City Utilities get their drinking water to them and how that water is treated after it leaves the home.

The SJRWI and ACPWQ consider our first celebration of Nation Drinking Water Week to be a huge success. With help from our generous sponsors, we hope to include even more students in our celebration next year!



Mayor Graham Richard proclaims Fort Wayne Drinking Water Week at Bunche Elementary School

COMMUNITIES of the St. Joseph River Watershed

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Work on the Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan Continues

Jane Loomis, Executive Director, SJRWI

A dedicated group of stakeholders continues to craft the final draft of the Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan, scheduled to be completed later this year. The plan considers the natural and cultural history of the area, historical water monitoring and land use data, future development planning and most importantly, input from stakeholders regarding their concerns and local knowledge of the creek and its watershed.

The group envisions the Cedar Creek watershed as “a community-managed resource that provides diverse use, function and habitat for all that rely on it in an ever-changing landscape.” The plan reflects benchmark information on the current state of the watershed, as well as problems and issues that prevent the watershed from achieving the group’s vision.

Draft A of the plan, which includes Parts 1, 2, and 3 is currently available for review on the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative website, www.sjrwi.org. Additional sections are being posted to the website as the drafting of final language of the plan progresses. Comments from stakeholders across the watershed are welcomed and encouraged. Please email comments to Jane Loomis at the Initiative office, www.jane-loomis@iaswcd.org. Written comments can be sent to Jane at the Initiative office address.

The management planning group, under the sponsorship of the Initiative, has planned a canoe trip on the Cedar Creek on Saturday morning, June 12. Also planned for the summer of 2004 is a volunteer stream monitor training through Hoosier Riverwatch, to be held on Friday, July 30 in Auburn. See additional information on this event elsewhere in this newsletter or on the website, www.sjrwi.org.

SJRWI Receives Agency Support Grant from Fort Wayne Community Foundation

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative was awarded a \$10,000 agency support grant in May from the Fort Wayne Community Foundation. FWCF grants are made only to nonprofit organizations that have federal tax-exempt status as a section 501(c)(3) public charity or to government agencies. The nonprofit or government agency must serve the Allen County area. Preference is given to projects or programs that address priority community concerns, encourage more effective use of community resources, test or demonstrate new approaches and techniques in the solution of community problems, are intended to strengthen the management capabilities of agencies, and/or promote volunteer participation and citizen involvement in community affairs.

The Initiative’s grant proposal included funding for financial auditing, tax and bookkeeping services and consultation, board and staff development, office rent, and support for public outreach education and audiovisual equipment. The Initiative has experienced significant growth in the past few years; in 2003 the organization was administering five separate grant-supported projects. It received its permanent 501(c)(3) not-for-profit status from the Internal Revenue Service in February of 2004.

SJRWI Annual Meeting Scheduled for July 26th

This year's annual meeting of the Saint Joseph River Watershed Initiative's Board of Directors is scheduled for July 26th at the Camden Community Center, located 1/2 mile west of Michigan route M49 on Camden Road.

Activities scheduled to take place in conjunction with the meeting include a tour of Lost Nations and The Nature Conservancy's Two-Stage Ditch project. The board meeting will include dinner, election of next year's officers, a brief business meeting and presentations highlighting the varied activities and accomplishments achieved by the SJRWI during 2003-04.

The SJRWI Annual Meeting is open to the public and all are welcome and encouraged to attend. This meeting is an excellent opportunity to get information on SJRWI projects, meet with our members and staff, and find out how you or your organization can be part of this important work. To reserve your place for part or all of the meeting's activities or for more details please contact the SJRWI Office or the our website at www.sjrwi.org

Initiative Receives Grant from Great Lakes Commission

The Initiative's proposal submitted to the Great Lakes Commission for funding under the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control was approved in May by the Commission's Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Task Force.

The grant proposal, entitled "The St. Joseph River Erosion Reduction Project" is funded for \$99,940 for 18 months beginning July 1, 2004. The project is designed to address what is considered the greatest water quality environmental issue in the tri-state area, sedimentation.

Most suspended particles in the river come from erosion and runoff of soils – from fields, parking lots or the stream bank itself. Construction activities can have a large impact on the amount of sediment that enters a stream. And algae and organic particles also affect the clarity (turbidity) of the stream water. Sediment in streams damages aquatic habitat and spawning areas. Excessive suspended sediment in the water can affect both biological and chemical reactions in a stream: raise water temperatures and lower dissolved oxygen levels, clog the gills of fish and aquatic invertebrates and smother their habitat.

Economic costs of sediment are high. Nearly 800,000 cubic yards of sediment are dredged annually from Maumee Bay in Lake Erie to keep the Port of Toledo shipping channel open to navigation. Closer to home, drainage ditches fill with sediment so that they no longer function properly to drain agricultural fields and require cleaning or dredging to restore functionality. The City of Fort Wayne estimates it spends in excess of \$300,000 annually to treat high turbidity in the source of the drinking water supply, drawn from the St. Joseph River.

The erosion reduction project's goals are 1) to provide farmer-to-farmer outreach efforts in six counties to increase enrollment in conservation programs and increase buffer/filter strips in the watershed by 1,500 acres; 2) to create digitized records and GIS mapping of land use and conservation practices on the land in order to more accurately and efficiently target critical areas for conservation practices and programs; 3) to demonstrate the effectiveness of alternative and innovative Best Management Practices (BMP); and 4) to improve the rate of conservation tillage for corn by 5% across the watershed.

The Initiative will be working closely on this project with urban and rural landowners in each county through their local conservation district offices.

ST. JOSEPH WATERSHED NAMED IN CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM

The USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service announced in May that the St. Joseph watershed in northeast Indiana, western Ohio and south-central Michigan was one of nation's 18 priority watersheds that will be used in the fiscal year 2004 Conservation Security Program (CSP) sign-up to be held this summer. The Auglaize River watershed which includes a portion of Allen County in Indiana was also chosen for the 2004 CSP.

Indiana State Conservationist Jane Hardisty said, "The selection of the St. Joseph and Auglaize watersheds in this first sign-up represents a balance of resource needs, historic stewardship, potential producer eligibility, and the technology and adequate staff needed to successfully implement the program."

The CSP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life and other conservation on private working lands. Working lands include cropland, grassland, and improved pasture, as well as forested land that is an incidental part of an agriculture operation.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will administer the CSP. Only farmers practicing in the highest levels of conservation will be eligible to participate. A self assessment must be completed by farmers documenting their benchmark conservation level prior to visiting the NRCS office to apply for CSP.

Sign-up for the CSP will occur during the summer of 2004, pending publication of the final CSP rule in the Federal Register.

A series of public meetings are being held to inform farmers about the eligibility requirements and application process.

St. Joseph River Watershed

June 21, 6:30 pm - Kevin Bowman Residence
4678 County Road 22
Waterloo, Indiana

June 23, 7:00 pm - Hamilton Fish and Game Club
110 East Railroad
Hamilton Indiana

June 24, 7:00 pm - North Leo Mennonite Church
15419 State Road 1
Leo, Indiana

Hoosier Riverwatch: This is Your Chance to Become a Volunteer Stream Monitor!

By Julie Knudson, Director, DeKalb County SWCD

Before I began to work for the DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District six years ago, I was concerned about water but really didn't know much about it. It wasn't too long afterwards that a Hoosier Riverwatch Training workshop was being held in Allen County. I decided to attend because not only did it sound interesting, but I thought maybe I could learn a little more about water. It was one of the best decisions I have made in the last six years! (That may be a little exaggerated, but I really am glad I attended.)

My Hoosier Riverwatch training was a very basic yet complete workshop. It covered the parameters used in monitoring water quality, explained how to identify a watershed, and taught me how to plan a water study. I learned to monitor a body of water through habitat evaluation, site map and stream flow, and to do chemical testing. The best part of the workshop for me came after the classroom study of our manual: we were led outside and actually did hands-on testing of a nearby stream. And now I, like other participants who completed the workshop training, am qualified to test water bodies in Indiana and enter the information into a data base supervised by Riverwatch.

Last year DeKalb County SWCD was approached by the Hoosier Riverwatch Coordinator about holding a training workshop in DeKalb County. I jumped at the chance. I had enjoyed the workshop so much I wanted to everyone in the area to have the same experience. So last August we held a two-day Riverwatch training in St. Joe and used the St. Joseph River Greenway for our hands-on activities.

This year Hoosier Riverwatch has modified the program slightly, replaced the Hach chemical testing kit with one that is more user friendly, and has condensed the training to just one day.

In July, the DeKalb County SWCD is joining forces with the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative to host a Riverwatch training in Auburn. This is an introductory-level workshop in which you will discover the meaning of water quality and how to measure it. Our goal is to organize a group of citizens in the area interested in becoming Riverwatch volunteers to monitor the Cedar Creek and its tributaries on a regular basis. The volunteers will help us build up a good database of water quality information for many segments of the Cedar Creek. With the new modifications in Riverwatch training, even those of us who have been to a workshop recently are encouraged to attend.

Our Hoosier Riverwatch Training workshop is scheduled for **July 30, 2004** from **8:30am-4:30p.m.** Classroom study will be held at the Immaculate Conception Church in Auburn. We will then head to nearby Cedar Creek for our hands-on training in water quality testing.

There is **no fee** to attend the workshop, but class size is limited so you will need to register. Participants should bring their own lunch and soft drink. Coolers will be available. Call **Julie Knudson, DeKalb SWCD at 925-5620 ext. 3** or **Jane Loomis, St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative at 484-5848 ext. 120** for more information or to register. More information can be found on the web at www.sjrwi.org or www.HoosierRiverwatch.com.

Free Water Education Workshops for Teachers

Allison Van Zandt, Water Resource Education Specialist, ACPWQ

If you are a teacher, home-educator or someone who would like to learn more about water education, the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality has an opportunity just for you! *Project WET: Water Education for Teachers* is a collection of over 90 innovative, interdisciplinary activities (for K-12) that are hands-on, easy to use, and fun- and they correlate with Indiana science standards.

Currently active in all 50 states and numerous countries, Project WET promotes critical thinking and problem solving skills and helps provide young people with the knowledge and experience they will need to make informed decisions regarding water resource management.

After attending the free 6-hour workshop, attendees will receive the Project WET Curriculum and Activity Guide, and will also have access to the ACPWQ's new Water Resource Education Library full of water testing kits, videos, books and educational supplies.

If you are interested in attending one of the 6 free workshops held throughout 2004 and 2005, contact Allison Van Zandt, Water Resource Education Specialist for the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality at 484-5848 ext.111, or allisonvanzandt@iaswcd.org.

2004 Tri-State Conservation Tillage Expo Draws Record Crowd

On March 16th, 2004 nearly four hundred agricultural producers and other interested parties from Indiana, Michigan and Ohio attended the third annual Tri-State Conservation Tillage Exposition held at the Kruse World War II Victory Museum facility located southwest of Auburn, Indiana.

“We were very excited to be able to hold the Expo at this new facility,” said Jane Loomis, Executive Director of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. “With over 30,000 square feet of display space, separate presentation theaters, plus excellent heat and amenities, the benefits of this location made this year’s event bigger, better, and wider reaching with the message of conservation tillage than ever before.” As an added bonus all participants were provided access to the nationally renowned World War II and Classic Car museums located at the Kruse facility.

Participants of the Expo, which was designed and coordinated to encourage the continued reduction of pesticides, herbicides, and sediments into our local waterways through the application of conservation tillage science, principles, and practices, seemed to consider the event a valuable and much appreciated experience, many taking advantage of the opportunity to earn continuing credits for Certified Crop Advisors, Commercial Pesticide Applicators, and Private Applicators.

The conservation Tillage Expo is part of two on-going projects supported with grant funding from Federal EPA grants. The grant dollars are distributed through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the projects administered by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRWI) and the Allen and DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These grant-funded projects have the expressed purpose of reducing sediment, pesticides, and nutrient runoff into local watersheds, the same watersheds used by communities in the tri-state area for drinking water and recreation.

Many thanks to all participants, vendors, sponsors, and donors for helping to make this year’s event our best exposition so far. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year.

2004 Sampling Season on Schedule

The 2004 sampling season of the SJRW began April 6th, 2004 and will continue until Sept 28, 2004. Aaron Wartenberg, Water Resource Specialist for the SJRWI will be traveling throughout the watershed each Tuesday during this period to collect water samples and other data.

The SJRWI science committee, under the direction of board member Dr Bob Gillespie/ IPFW, decided to this year to eliminate the Diehl and Peckhart sample sites after studies showed little significant difference from these and the combined Diehl/Peckhart site. The Willow Creek and Little Cedar / Black Creek sites were added this year to gain further water quality data in the southwest portion of the Cedar Creek watershed.

As well two quality control samples are now submitted each week to verify and maintain integrity of the sampling results and procedures.

EARLY SEASON DIAGNOSTIC TWILIGHT TOUR

The Next Early Season Diagnostic Twilight tour is scheduled for June 30, 2004 at 6:30 pm. Site of the tour is Max Delagrange’s farm, 17412 Darling Rd. / 5 miles north of Woodburn, IN

Funding for this tour is provided through grants from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management to the Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District and the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative.

Featured speakers will include Joe Nester, owner of Nester Ag-Management in Bryan, Ohio, providing consulting and scouting services for over 35,000 acres in northeast Indiana and northwest Ohio; and Brian Mitchem, Independent Sales Representative for Pioneer.

Joe and Brian will discuss their observations of the various treatments that have been replicated at Max’s. They will also be reflecting of crop conditions they have found as they conducted their early season scouting.

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

a non-profit organization formed in 1995 by local agencies, organizations, and citizens; committed to clean water and a healthy environment 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 news letter and mail it to the SJRWI.

Name _____ Address, City, State, zip _____

Phone &/or e-mail _____

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

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

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What is a "Stakeholder?"

If you live, work, recreate, travel through, or otherwise use a watershed or its water, you are a stakeholder of that watershed!