

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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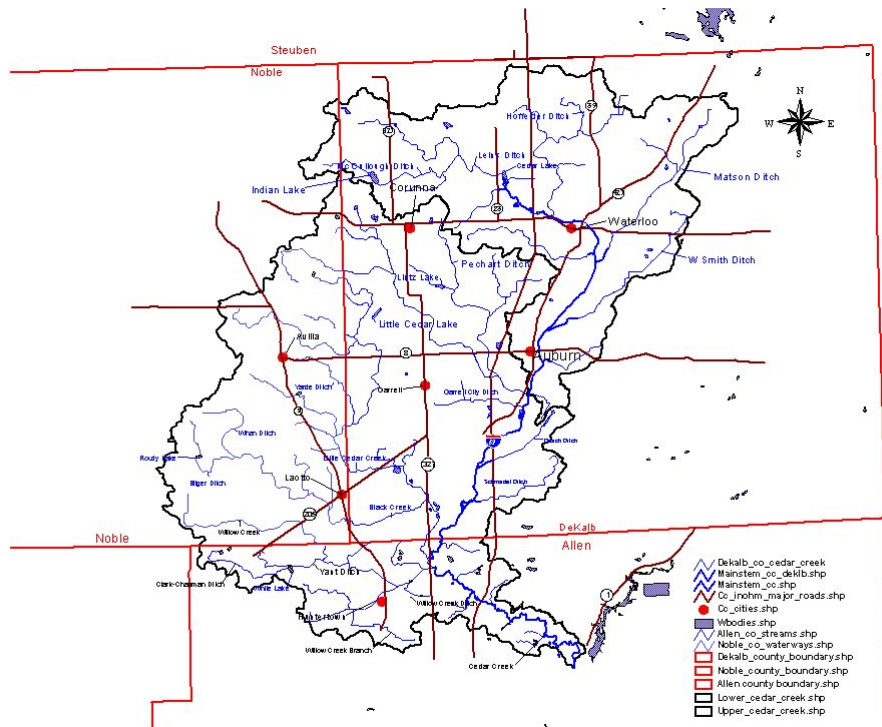
Spring, 2006

Cedar Creek Septic System Replacement Help

Cost Share Program

The Septic System Replacement Cost Share Program is available to homeowners living in the Cedar Creek sub-watershed (with a failed septic system.) The cost-share program will provide cost share funds up to 75%, not to exceed \$3000.00, for the total cost of repair or replacement construction, including materials and labor. Eligibility requirements are the existing home and property must be located in the Cedar Creek sub-watershed with a failed septic system. The home must be owner-occupied. Homes needing new systems are not eligible.

The program begins on April 25, 2006 and will end October 21, 2007 or when funds are exhausted. Cost share applications will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis.



Cedar Creek Watershed Boundaries

The cost share program is provided by the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, and is part of the Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan Implementation Phase I project funded by a Section 319 grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. If you are interested in applying for the program, please contact the Initiative office at 260-



Permission to come on land

Do you live along the Cedar Creek or have a wadable stream leading to the Cedar Creek or the St. Joseph River? Would you be willing to let a citizen volunteer come onto your property and evaluate the stream? If you answered yes to these questions, here's what will happen: A volunteer will come onto your property two to four times a year and check the chemistry and biological habitat of a 200-foot section of the stream. Your support in this area would help the Initiative continue its mission of improving the quality of the St. Joseph River. Anyone interested should contact Tina Puitz at the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, 260-484-5848 x117 and give your name, address, phone number and brief description of how to get to your property and where the stream is located on your property. Of course we will call and set up each visit before entering your property and share with you the results of our tests. We very much appreciate your support of the Initiative. Thank you! ■

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Lower St. Joseph-Bear Creek Subwatershed



Become a Stream Volunteer

Hoosier Riverwatch
Training set for June 3

A Hoosier Riverwatch basic training for volunteer stream monitors will be offered again on Saturday, June 3 at the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative office located in the Allen County USDA Service Center building, 3718 New Vision Drive, Fort Wayne. Volunteers are provided classroom education and training about water quality. In-stream practice on the nearby Cedar Creek is included as part of the learning experience where participants look for biological indicators such as benthic macroinvertebrates to determine water quality.

For more information about becoming a Volunteer Stream Monitor, call the Initiative office at 484-5848 x3 or look for more information on our website. www.sjrwi.org

It's time for some spring cleaning!

River cleanup kits are available through the Initiative courtesy of Tom's of Maine. Gloves and trash bags are included, along with a DVD featuring a tale of three rivers plus how you can make a difference for your waterways.



SJRWI Lending Library

Fate of a River: Revisited video explores the water quality improvements in the last 37 years and the new challenges of the Maumee River.

After the Storm—A Citizen's Guide to Understanding Storm Water video focuses on the interconnections between water supply, water quality and the economic vitality and quality of life in our communities.

To reserve a kit for your group, contact Tina at the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative at 260-484-5848 x117.

You may adopt a 1/2 mile section of a stream or river and receive recognition for it by participating in the Adopt-A-River program through the DNR. For more information, visit their website at www.in.gov/dnr/riverwatch/adoptariver ■

Stakeholder Meeting Has Visions of the Future

The Lower St. Joseph-Bear Creek quarterly stakeholder meeting was held on Wednesday, March 29 at the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative office located in the Allen Co. USDA Service Center building. Ten people attended and formed a core task force to work with the Initiative to create the Lower St. Joseph-Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan. Participants crafted a vision statement to give focus to the project. The next stakeholder meeting will be June 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Allen County USDA Service Center, 3718 New Vision Drive. New participants are most welcome. Future meetings are scheduled for September 14, December 14, March 8, 2007 and June 14, 2007 ■

“Our vision is to improve and protect the Lower St. Joseph and Bear Creek sub-watersheds to ensure fishable, swimmable water by the year 2030. The river and its adjacent green space will be accessible to the general public

The State of Lake Erie

By Sandy Bihn. Reprinted with permission from the *Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat News, Early Spring Edition 2006*

The fire on the Cuyahoga River, a Lake Erie tributary, got needed national attention in the 60's – some of the same signs and new ones are showing up in the research now. Then, phosphorous from wastewater plants and pollution were the major issues. Great progress was made to bring the lakes back. But Lake Erie is again showing signs of the past.

How serious is it? Why Lake Erie? Lake Erie is the warmest and shallowest of all the Great Lakes with the highest percentage of agricultural and residential development in all the Great Lakes. Lake Erie's basin is but 21% forested while Lake Superior is 91% forested.

The western basin of Lake Erie, with an average depth of twenty four feet, requires one million cubic yards to be dredged annually from the Maumee River and Maumee Bay (with an average depth of but five feet) to maintain the Toledo shipping channel. It is the most dredged area in the Great Lakes. The root of this problem is the Great Lakes largest watershed – the Maumee with sediments from draining the old Black Swamp pouring into the ditches, creeks, rivers, bays and ultimately the lake. Draining the swamp, dredging, introduction of invasive species, wastewater discharges, non-point sources and toxics are all contributing to warning signs for Lake Erie and particularly for the western basin.

What are the issues causing concern? They include algae blooms, growing percentages of phosphorous and nitrates in the waters, nonnative white perch dominating the fish population in the Basin and invasive species. The dominant fish in the western basin of Lake Erie are for the first time, the white perch, which are known to eat walleye larvae. Many believe the white perch will significantly reduce the walleye population. White perch began to overtake Lake Ontario until a cold winter that froze the lake for two months and killed the white perch. Such a scenario in Western Lake Erie to control the white perch population seems unlikely.

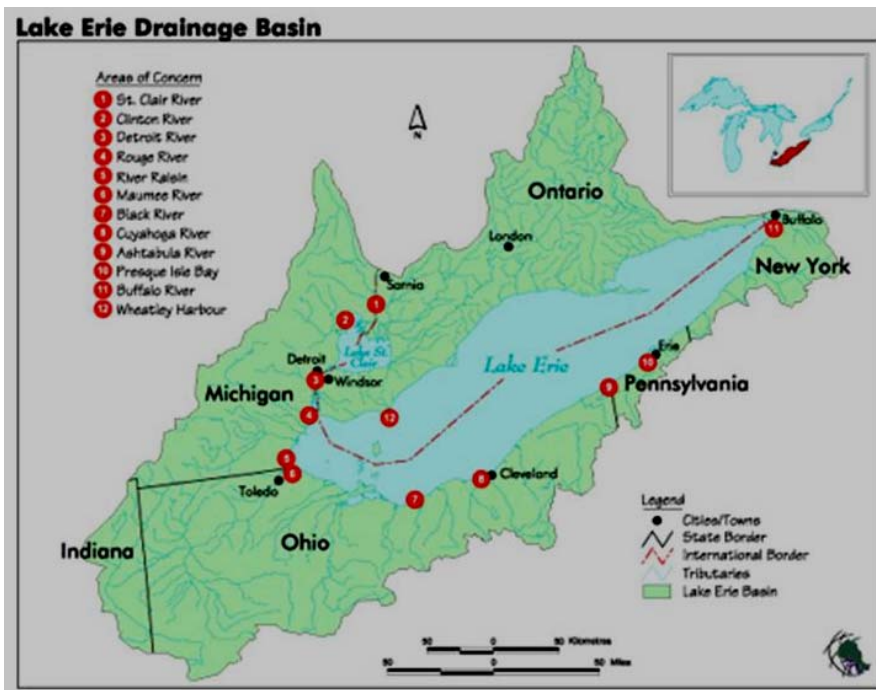
Lake Erie is the most biologically productive Great Lake and produces more fish than all of the other Great Lakes combined. It is very important to watch Lake Erie to know what may be in store for the other Great Lakes.

Phosphorous was key to turning around Lake Erie in the 60's. Ongoing studies by Heidelberg College show that dissolved phosphorous has been increasing in western Lake Erie tributaries since 1995. Now ten years later, with the phosphorous problem again growing, Lake Erie is experiencing dead zones (a lack of oxygen) in Sandusky Bay and the central basin of Lake Erie. The source of the phosphorous may be wastewater plants, zebra mussel excretions, and non-point sources including 'factory farms.'

Researchers also believe that Lake Erie's 'warning signs,' in addition to those already mentioned stem from water level fluctuations, global warming, and dredging (increasing flows and decreasing the normal water flow patterns into marshes and wide dispersion patterns). In the extreme western basin there are three coal-fired power plants that use about three billion gallons of water a day. Two of the plants discharge the heated waters into the very shallow Maumee

Bay. The three plants entrain an estimated ten billion fish per year and impinge hundreds of thousands fish. The cumulative impacts of heating the water and killing these fish, in the shallowest and warmest area in the Great Lakes are unknown.

Lake Erie is the only Great Lake above sea level with waters turning over every two to three years. The clock is ticking on the Great Lakes and Lake Erie with the 'warning' signs: phosphorous, pollution, algae, dead zones, large fish kills, heated waters from power plants, and invasive species. Great Lakes restoration funding was needed yesterday. Every day we wait increases the vulnerability and future of all the Great Lakes, but particularly Lake Erie. The burning of the Cuyahoga will not happen again, but will it take another Lake Erie major event to motivate congress, states, and local governments to provide the resources necessary to clean up and preserve the world's greatest fresh water supply? The wake-up call is before us. The only question is will we respond quickly enough?



Did you Know...

- ◆ the St. Joseph River is the largest tributary of the Maumee River?
 - ◆ in Indiana, the Maumee River basin's estimated population is 349,523?
- ◆ the Maumee River basin in Indiana consists of 88% agricultural land, 7.5% urban land, nearly 4% forest and water/wetlands and barren land the remaining .5%? (1981) Since 1981, urban land has increased and agricultural land acreage has decreased.
- ◆ the Maumee River watershed which encompasses areas in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan is the largest watershed in the United States portion of the Great Lakes Basin?
- ◆ the Maumee River is Lake Erie's largest tributary?
 - ◆ the Maumee River begins at the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Marys Rivers?
- ◆ the Maumee River travels 134 miles to Maumee Bay which is a 15 square mile embayment of western Lake Erie?
 - ◆ there are 3,942 stream miles draining into the Maumee River?
- ◆ in addition to the Maumee River's source tributaries, the St. Joseph and St. Marys Rivers, the Maumee's principal tributaries are the Auglaize River and the Tiffin River which join it at Defiance, OH?
 - ◆ in honor of General Anthony Wayne's victory on the banks of the Maumee River, the primary bridge crossing the river near Toledo is the Anthony Wayne Suspension Bridge?
- ◆ historically, the Maumee River was known as the "Miami" River?





St. Joseph Sediment, Pesticide, and Nutrient Reduction Project

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative received word last March from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management of the award of funding for the Initiative's proposed Phase II of the St. Joseph River Watershed Sediment, Pesticide, and Nutrient Reduction Project. The Initiative will receive \$270,000 to continue the work

begun with Phase I of the project, specifically to encourage conservation tillage methods within the watershed through cost-share assistance, outreach education and equipment rental.

The cost-share program will help to support modification of planting, tillage and/or harvesting equipment to allow farmers to effectively implement conservation tillage and/or nutrient and pest management on their farms. Modification may include planter attachments to manage previous crop residue, attachments for inline deep rippers to allow producers to employ a zone-tillage system, installation of yield monitors to better determine crop nutrient need and application rate, and GPS systems, including auto-steer. Cost-share is also available for professional agronomic crop consulting to help participating farmers make changes necessary when switching from conventional tillage to conservation tillage.

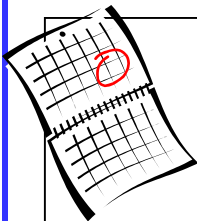
Conservation tillage equipment available for rent from the SJRWI for Spring 2006 include a John Deere 9520 tractor equipped with global positioning system (GPS) auto guidance, and a Brillion Zone Commander zone tillage unit.

Several educational programs, including summer field days and winter meetings, will also be held during the year to help support farmers using conservation tillage methods.

This grant program will end on March 31, 2009. For more information on the equipment rental and cost-share program, contact Jeremy Palmer at the Initiative Office (260) 484-5848 x112.

Also available for rent from Williams County SWCD: 2 John Deere 1560 no-till drills, a Sukup drill for warm-season grasses. Call Tom Traxler, (419) 636-2349

Available for rent from Allen County SWCD: Phillips Harrow, Great Plains Turbo-Till, To-The-Max Roller Harrow, Kale Blu-Jet Sub-Tiller (5-leg), 12' Brillion Grass Seeder. Call Jeremy Palmer, (260) 484-5848 x112. ■



Upcoming Events

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

- **June 3** *Hoosier Riverwatch Volunteer Stream Monitoring Basic Training*, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (See page 2)
- **June 6** *SJRWI Board of Directors Meeting* (See back page)
- **July 25** *St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Annual Meeting*. Watch for more information on our website at sjrwi.org
- **August 19** *Hoosier Riverwatch Volunteer Stream Monitoring Basic Training*

Other workshops to note

- **June 26-30** *Conservation Camp, Izaak Walton League of America, Fort Wayne Chapter*. For more information call 260-637-6735 or visit their website at iwlafw.org
- **August 8-10** *Northeast Indiana Conservation Camp*, Camp Whitley. For more information contact Julie Knudson at (260) 925-3710 x3. ■

New!
on
SJRWI.org

The Water Quality Report

for 2005, containing an analysis of the water quality sampling data for the 2005 sampling season is complete. The report summarizes the findings and general trends throughout the watershed and at sites of historical concern. The report is based on sampling at 24 sites and it may be viewed at our website at www.sjrwi.org.



Please visit our website to view the following documents.

St. Joseph River Watershed Plan

Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan

Bacteria Source Tracking final report

Native Freshwater Mussels in the Rivers of Allen County Report
by Warren Pryor



to the following organizations

- Hoham, Smith & Co., Inc. for their donation to the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative.
- The City of Fort Wayne Water Utilities Department for a \$9,500 grant to help support outreach education in the upper watershed.
- And to all our volunteers and partners who help promote the work of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative.

I would like to help by volunteering.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone and/or e-mail _____



Board of Directors Meeting

The public is invited to attend the Board of Directors meetings for the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative on the first Monday of Feb., Apr., June, Sept. and Dec. The next meeting will be June 5 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the DeKalb County Annex Building at 215 E. 9th Street. ■

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Take Action
to protect our
precious
water
resources

Support the
St. Joseph River
Watershed
Initiative
TODAY!

SJRWI is a non-profit organization formed by local citizens, agencies, and organizations. Our mission is to improve water quality throughout the St. Joseph River watershed through the promotion of economically and environmentally compatible land uses.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____ made payable to The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRWI).

- Please accept my unrestricted gift to be used to support the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative
- Please accept my gift to support _____
- Please accept my gift
 - In Memory In Honor
 - of _____
- I do not wish to have my name publicized.

Please send notification of gift to:

Name _____

Address _____

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative is a 501(c)3 organization. Your gift to support the Initiative is tax-deductible.

My Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Please make checks payable to
SJRWI and send to:
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St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

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