

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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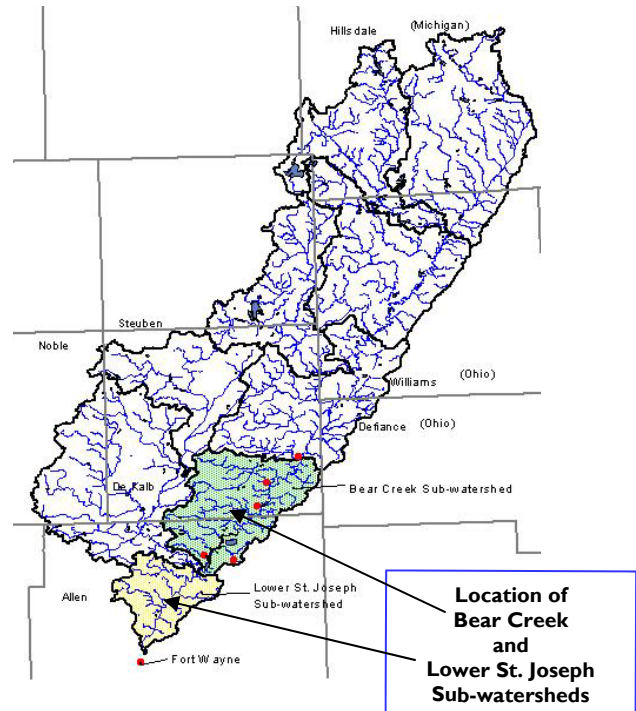
Summer, 2005

Lower St. Joe-Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan Work Begins

Funding for a second sub-watershed planning effort, the Lower St. Joseph-Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan, has been secured through a Section 205(j) grant awarded to the City of Fort Wayne, which has subcontracted the work to the Initiative. The two entities worked together to research and write the grant. Scheduled to begin in late summer, 2005, this planning effort will focus on diverse land uses and will cross political boundaries: the two sub-watersheds involved include urban areas (Fort Wayne and Leo-Cedarville), suburban subdivisions and rural residential areas (northern Allen County) and agricultural lands (southern DeKalb County). Additionally, the sub-watersheds encompass the two Fort Wayne reservoirs, Cedarville and Hurshtown. The Initiative has recently completed a watershed management plan for the Cedar Creek.

The large amount of water quality monitoring and land use data that has been compiled over the years by the Initiative and its partners is one essential element in watershed management planning. It's a picture of where we are and where we've been. The other thing needed is that sense of vision: where we want to go. For that, we need input and involvement from the various stakeholders of the watershed, from experts to novices: landowners, land users, businesses, industry, institutions, government agencies – in short, the public. Three stakeholder meetings have been scheduled for the month of September.

- September 7 at 2 p.m. at the park pavilion in Leo-Cedarville;
- September 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Good Hope Parish at 7215 Saint Joe Road;



- September 12 at 6 p.m. at Concordia Lutheran High School at 1601 St. Joe River Dr. in the cafeteria;
- September 15 at 6 p.m. at Riverdale Elementary School, St. Joe, Indiana.

Our water is a public good and we, the public, get to determine how best to manage our collective resource. All interested parties are encouraged to attend. ■



Chairman Bob Gillespie presents Dennis Haskins with an award for commitment to the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative.

Annual Meeting Highlights Mussel Study

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors was held on July 26 at the farm of Marvin Dietsch near Edgerton, Ohio. Fifty people attended, arriving early enough to meet and greet one another and then sit down to a delicious

picnic supper prepared by Dutch Heritage. Marvin Dietsch shared the history of his barn, which had originally been built by his father to store apples. The walls of the barn feature murals that had been made by students at the local high school for a prom. When the school was going to discard them, Dietsch said he would

take them and now has them decorating his barn walls.

Jars of pickles donated by Sechlers Pickles in St. Joe, Indiana, were used as table decorations and awarded as door prizes.

Framed photos of the St. Joseph River scenes were presented to Larry Clemens from The Nature

See Annual Meeting on page 2

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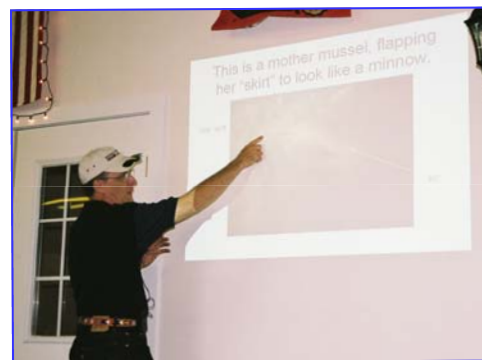
Administrative Assistant

Annual Meeting continued from page 1

Conservancy and Dennis Haskins of NRCS Hillsdale County Michigan in appreciation of their outstanding contributions to the success of the Initiative. Clemens was instrumental in the organization and launch of the SJRWI. Haskins, newly retired, was commended for his work with farmers in implementing programs for the Initiative. Haskins encouraged everyone to keep up the hard work in the watershed because it is crucial to clean water and productive land. Following the awards presentation, there was an election of officers and a review of the past year for the Initiative.

Warren Pryor, Assistant Professor of Biology at the University of St. Francis gave a lively, informative presentation on the "Mussels of Allen County." In his research between 1997 and 2004, Pryor has found evidence of 30 species of mussels in Allen County. "That's more than in the entire continent of Europe. And just as significant might be what I have not found in the county, the zebra mussel," noted Pryor.

The evidence of mussels indicates generally clean water, and that is good for the St. Joseph River. Pryor's research results will be published on the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative's website later this year. ■



Warren Pryor, Assistant Professor of Biology, University of St. Francis, talks about mussels in Allen County.

St. Joseph Watershed and SWPI are Focus of NACD Tour

The annual meeting of the North Central National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) was held July 10-13 in Fort Wayne. The North Central region includes Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri.

Featured on the program for Tuesday, July 12, was a tour of the St. Joseph River

watershed. Jane Hardisty, Indiana State Conservationist, and Mary Jane Slaton, Ft. Wayne City Utilities, each addressed the group at the Hilton Hotel prior to boarding buses for the tour.

The first stop was the Terry Garman farm located in Allen County along the Cedar Creek. Mr. Garman, a participant in the CSP program, gave an update on

the impacts of the program on his farm. The CSP rewards agricultural landowners for implementing conservation practices on their property.

On the road again, the

buses passed Aaron Wartenberg, Water Resource Specialist for the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, in action at a sampling site along DeKalb CR 427.

After lunch and an opportunity to tour the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, the buses proceeded to the Source Water Protection Initiative (SWPI) project near Waterloo. Agricultural Research Service personnel gave an overview of the research, as well as a guided tour of the newly constructed depressional drainage site on the Don Hamman Farm.

The tour reviewed the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) projects in DeKalb County before returning to Fort Wayne. ■



Touring the SWPI project during the NACD Bus Tour.

Hoosier Riverwatch Training Offered in Hamilton

The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative, with support from the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District, hosted a Hoosier Riverwatch volunteer stream monitoring workshop in Hamilton, Indiana on July 16th. Meeting space was donated by the Hamilton Fish and Game Club. Volunteers were provided classroom education and training about water quality, as well as in-stream practice in monitoring biological indicators such as benthic macroinvertebrates. Participating in the training session: Nancy Moore, Carol Bloom, Ruth Graft, Bill Arnold, Ron and Carol Alter, Denver and Ida Hamman, Mary Houser, MaryLu Snyder, Chris Bickel, Leroy Johnson, Kathy Pierce, Michele Duzan and Mary Beth Wahl.

The Initiative is continuing its effort to get citizens involved in the waterways that flow through their communities. We offer trainings through Hoosier Riverwatch, and have monitoring equipment for volunteers trained through Hoosier Riverwatch. ■



Hoosier Riverwatch volunteers take part in biological and habitat evaluation along the inlet for Ball Lake near Hamilton, in Steuben County.

Twilight Tour Continues into the Night

A twilight tour was held on the Advance Grain Farms of Dave & Roger Melcher on June 29. The tour was sponsored by the Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District and the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. A brat and hot dog supper was served, complete with homemade ice cream made by Max Delagrang. There were approximately 80 people in attendance and interested participants were still asking questions late into the evening. The tour featured Ray Rawson and Rich Recker from Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, and Jon Cavanaugh from New Haven, Indiana.

Ray Rawson presented the Rawson Technique which has been very successful in producing exceptional yields. Pits dug in the soybean and corn fields afforded an

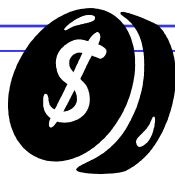
opportunity to show root structure, plant growth and the effects of different tillage methods.

Marvin Dietsch, a participant of the tour, found the information presented by Rawson and Recker very beneficial. "I found Mr. Rawson to be very helpful with answering specific questions but I was most impressed with his availability to each individual," commented Dietsch.

The high level of interest in this tour has prompted organization of a carpool to the Rawson field day in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, on September 8. Interested persons should contact Jeremy Palmer at 484-5848 ext. 3. Another twilight tour which will bring Rawson back to Allen County this fall is under consideration ■

Cost Share Money Still Available for Corn Acres

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) has announced a change in policy which allows us to use Section 319 grant cost share funding across state lines within the St. Joseph River watershed. Funding for conservation tillage planter attachments, yield monitors, light bars, etc., is available for Indiana, Michigan and Ohio farmers through the cost share program provided by the St. Joseph Conservation Tillage Grant. For more information, contact Jeremy Palmer as soon as possible at 484-5848 ext. 3. The grant ends December 31, 2005. ■



Cedar Creek Management Plan Update

A SWAT (Soil and Water Assessment Tool) model has been developed to help identify critical areas and determine possible pollutant load reductions in the Cedar Creek watershed. Open meetings at the Eckhart Library in Auburn on August 24 from 3-5 and 6-8 p.m. will feature a review of the completed Watershed Management Plan (WMP) and discussion of implementation of the plan. The final draft of the WMP has been published on our website at www.sjrwi.org ■

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 _____
Address, City, State, Zip _____

___ **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!



Thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their donations to the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative.

Sechlers Pickles for donating pickles for the annual meeting

Marvin Dietsch for donating the use of his barn

Be RiverSmart: Minimize Pavement

Nationwide, pavement covers 50% to 75% of most urban areas. Where does rainwater go? Either into the ground or into our rivers. How it gets there makes all the difference to water quality. Surfaces such as asphalt, concrete and rooftops, prevent water from seeping into the ground. Instead they force it to flow along the surface, picking up dirt and contaminants. The water then flows into storm drains under streets, which usually dump directly into rivers, pollution and all. This runoff degrades water quality and makes it hard for fish to breathe. It also increases the risk of flooding downstream, as more and more water is directed into rivers instead of into the ground.

Take the RiverSmart Pledge at www.riversmart.com

Board of Directors News

The newly elected officers for the Board of Directors of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative are Bob Gillespie, Chairman; Bill Word, Vice Chairman; Valerie Richardson, Secretary; and Mary Jane Slaton, Treasurer. **The next meeting of the board of directors is scheduled for Monday, October 3 at the Steuben Community Center in Angola, Indiana, at 6:00 p.m. Indiana time, 7:00 p.m. OH/MI time. Meetings are open to the public. ■**

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

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