

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!**

2004 CONSERVATION TILLAGE EXPO to be BIGGER AND BETTER THAN EVER

WW II Museum provides excellent location for event!

Fort Wayne, IN – On March 16th, 2004 hundreds of agricultural producers from the tri-state area will gather in a state-of-the-art facility for the 2004 TRI-STATE CONSERVATION TILLAGE EXPO. Vendors of agricultural equipment, chemicals, and seeds; non-profit organizations focused on watershed protection; and a variety of private consultants and specialists from related fields will be assembling to share knowledge and insight about equipment, supplies, and technologies related to the practice of conservation tillage.



This third year of the Expo, the event will be held at a new location; the Kruse World War II Victory Museum facility located southwest of Auburn, Indiana along I-69 just off exit 126 (CR11A). “We are 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 theaters, and excellent heat and ameni-

ties, the benefits of this location promise to make this year’s event bigger, better, and wider reaching with the message of conservation tillage than ever before.”

This event 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.

According to Jim Lake, Conservation Program Specialist with the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, “Conservation tillage, especially no-till, is considered one of the most effective practices used to reduce soil erosion and nutrient and pesticide runoff,” and “is critical to enhancing the source water quality of Ft. Wayne’s drinking water supply.”

The 2004 Conservation Tillage Expo will be held Tuesday, March 16th, from 7:00 am to 4:30pm. The event is open to the public and all interested parties are invited and encouraged to attend. The public ticket price is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. The ticket covers entrance to the Expo, coffee, doughnuts, hot lunch, and refreshments. As an added bonus to all participants, tickets will also provide access to the nationally renowned World War II and Classic Car museums located at the Kruse facility. Availability of Certified Crop Advisor, Commercial Pesticide Applicator, and Private Applicator Certification credits to Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan participants is anticipated. For more information, tickets, or to be an exhibitor please contact the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative or Allen Co SWCD at 260-484-5848 Ext. 3.

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Cedar Creek Management Plan Moves Forward

The Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan has entered the stage of “nitty-gritty work” according to Jane Loomis, Executive Director of SJRWL.

“We held a lot of public meetings last summer and fall for the purpose of gathering input from stakeholders and discussing issues, values, problems, solutions and goals, and now we’re working hard to put all the information into a workable document,” said Loomis. “IDEM and our various partners have been very supportive, and citizens and stakeholder organizations have been more than generous with their time and talents. It takes a whole lot of work and cooperative effort to put a plan together!”

“Parts of the Cedar Creek Management Plan are expected to be quite technical, since it is a pilot program. IDEM is allowing us to lead watershed-based effort to replace – or at least initiate – activities that would normally be part of a regulatory TMDL (total daily maximum load) plan to achieve water quality standards. Our plan must contain information on current pollution loads as well as predictions for load reductions based on the action items in the plan,” said Loomis.

Cedar Creek had been scheduled for a TMDL for E. coli in 2004. A TMDL is a plan of action that would include requirements for reducing loads of the pollutant of concern in the watershed. The Cedar Creek plan is a chance for citizens in the watershed to initiate the research and attempt to set their own goals and outline their own plan of action to reduce E. coli in the creek and its tributaries.

The plan must be completed by the end of December, 2004. However, the Initiative hopes to have the plan ready to submit to IDEM by this summer. Groups and stakeholders operating in the watershed will use the plan as a foundation for guiding activities in the watershed.

Combined Sewer Overflow Notification

Allison Van Zandt,
Allen County Partnership for Water Quality



Now you can be notified by the City of Fort Wayne when a combined sewer overflow event has occurred or is expected to occur. By adding your e-mail address to the City’s list, you will be notified about when it is recommended to not come in contact with CSO affected waters.

Fort Wayne, like over 100 other communities throughout Indiana, collects both rainwater runoff and sanitary wastewater in the same set of sewer pipes. These are called “combined sewers.” Sometimes when it rains, combined sewers do not have enough capacity to carry all the rainwater and wastewater or the Water Pollution Control Plant cannot accept all of the combined flow. In this situation, the combined wastewater overflows from the collection system into the nearest body of water, creating a combined sewer overflow (CSO). The main pollutants in CSOs are untreated human wastes, toxic materials like oil and pesticides, and floating debris that may wash into the sewer system. These pollutants can affect your health if you swim in CSO-polluted water or if you eat fish that have been contaminated by the CSOs.

The costs of combined sewer overflow controls may be high in some areas and low in others. The severity and frequency of the CSO occurrences and their effect on river water quality will determine the types of CSO controls and their cost. In Fort Wayne, the actual cost to control CSO is not known, but is estimated to be \$250 million over the next 25 years.

For questions about combined sewer overflow, call the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality at 484-5848 ext.111. If you would like to be notified of a CSO event, visit this website: http://www.cityoffortwayne.org/cso_list.asp

Fort Wayne Water Utilities and SJRWI Announce Successful Completion of Data Management and Geographic Information System Grant

The final days of 2003 saw the successful completion of a grant under a partnership between Fort Wayne City Utilities and the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative. The two-year, Clean Water Act 205(j) planning grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) financed the creation of a database to manage the Initiative's eight years of water quality monitoring data and the coupling of this data with an extensive geographical information system (GIS).



Since 1996 the initiative has been sampling from April to September at key points throughout the watershed in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. Now complete, the project allowed transforming of this raw monitoring data into one of the most extensive water quality databases in the State of Indiana. By combining this database with the powerful GIS, St. Joseph River water quality data can now be reviewed and analyzed spatially. It is a tool the Initiative believes can be used to better address water quality problems in future development and planning projects throughout the watershed.

Analysis of the original data and building of the digital system was contracted to the Center for Reptile and Amphibian Conservation and Management (Herpetology Center) of the Biological Sciences Department at Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne, under the direction of Dr. Bruce Kingsbury.

Completion of IPFW's work on this project was announced on April 16, 2003 at a press conference at the Fort Wayne and Allen County City/County Building where Mayor Graham Richard spoke in support of St. Joe River water quality. "Water quality has a direct impact on the growth and vitality of our community," said Mayor Richard. "The City of Fort Wayne is proud to be a leader in the efforts to improve and protect water quality in our watershed."

Initiative partners, including our six county conservation districts, The Nature Conservancy, Maumee River Basin Commission, IPFW, the City of Fort Wayne and IDEM were each provided with a 14-CD set containing the database and GIS for use in planning and evaluation projects. Updates to the database will be available with each passing year of the Initiative's successful water quality monitoring in the watershed.

Public presentations of the GIS and 2003 water quality data began in December of 2003 and are continuing this spring. Presentations have and will be given to county conservation districts, health departments and various planning groups. For information about times and dates of these presentations contact the SJRWI office or check our website at www.sjrwi.org

On behalf of the City of Fort Wayne, we would like to express our appreciation to IDEM for financially supporting this project over the past two years. The final product of this grant, the water quality monitoring database and GIS, is a powerful tool that will be extremely useful to the Initiative and to its partners for both planning and executing plans to protect and improve the surface water resources that supply drinking water to the City of Fort Wayne and its 200,000+ residents.

E.P.A. and The Weather Channel “Team Up” to Air Television Special about Watersheds

An EPA and IDEM Press Release



EPA’s Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, Benjamin Grumbles, announced the airing of a ½ hour television special about watersheds co-produced by the Environmental Protection Agency and The Weather Channel. “**After the Storm**” premiered on The Weather Channel on Wednesday, February 4, 2004. Additional showings are set for Sunday, May 9th at 8:30 and 11:30 pm EST and Saturday, June 26th at 8:30 and 11:30 pm EST.

“I encourage everyone to tune in to learn more about the threats facing our nation’s waters from polluted runoff,” said Acting Assistant Administrator Grumbles. “**After the Storm**” shows the connection between weather and watersheds and the importance of watershed protection. We all live in a watershed and we all have an impact on our environment.”

Highlighting key scientists, water quality experts, and citizens involved in local and national watershed protection efforts, the program reminds viewers that a finite amount of fresh water exists on the planet, and that everyone needs to take actions to protect water resources.

“Over the last thirty years, the nation has done a tremendous job in tacking pollution from large factories and sewage treatment plants,” said Grumbles. “Remaining threats are much more difficult to regulate. When it rains or when snow melts, pollutants from city streets, suburban lawns, and farms may runoff into our nation’s streams, lakes, wetlands and coastal waters.”

Acting Assistant Administrator Grumbles added, “EPA was pleased to team up with The Weather Channel on this educational special. Weather events like droughts, floods, and rain directly impact the quality of our water resources. They offer a perfect opportunity for meteorologist to discuss connections between weather and watersheds.” After six months, EPA owns the rights to the special.

The Agency intends to make “**After the Storm**” available to other television stations and educational organizations interested in broadcasting the show. Viewers are encouraged to visit the EPA web site www.epa.gov/weatherchannel for more information



about what they can do, including a free brochure about stormwater pollution and other materials related to watersheds and watershed protection.



Basic Training for Volunteer Stream Monitoring scheduled in Fort Wayne

Hoosier Riverwatch, a state-sponsored water quality monitoring initiative, has scheduled a **Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring “Basic” Training** workshop day in Fort Wayne, Indiana for May 15, 2004 from 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM. This training will introduce citizens and educators to water quality monitoring utilizing hands-on habitat, chemical, and biological assessment methods. Participants will gain experience and skills in the use of chemical monitoring kits and aquatic insect collection and identification. The sessions are held both inside and outdoors. After completion of this training, participants become “Certified Volunteer Monitors” and are qualified to submit data to the statewide volunteer stream monitoring database. Any interested adult is welcome to attend, and once certified, may teach students how to monitor.

The workshop is free, but *pre-registration is required*. To register, contact Mark Koschmann, Riverwatch Volunteer Instructor at 260/749-2967 or MEKosch@aol.com

Hoosier Riverwatch is sponsored by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources - Division of Soil Conservation in cooperation with Purdue University Agronomy Department. Funding is provided in part by grants from the USEPA Region 5, Clean Water Act Sections 319 and 104(b)(3), and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM).

Focus on the Watershed: **Saint Joe, Indiana:** **Where citizens are interested in their community**

Taking Indiana State Road One 6.7 miles north of the boundary line between DeKalb and Allen Counties you will arrive at the ¼ square mile town of Saint Joe, Indiana, namesake of the river it is nestled against. 2000 census data claims approximately 144 families and a total population of approximately 452. Saint Joe Indiana is a small town by any standards, but this hamlet by the river has plenty to boast about.

The land was settled in 1835 by John Blair and some years later the B&O railroad was built through the area. The railroad station was named Blair and by 1875 the post office had began using the name as well. But John Blair did not plat the actual town of St. Joe. A settler named Jacob Leighty and his son, John, laid out the town in 1875. By 1886, the name of the settlement was changed by the railroad to Saint Joe Station, presumably after the river. A shortened version, Saint Joe, became the permanent name in 1906. Incorporated as a town in 1899, Saint Joe is still governed as such today.

It was in 1914, just before the First World War, that Ralph Sechler got his start in the pickle business delivering by horse-drawn wagon to the railroad siding in St. Joe Indiana barrels of freshly picked cucumbers in salt brine to be transported by rail to Ft. Wayne, some 20 miles away. By the early '30s Ralph was selling pickles and relish in bulk in wooden kegs and barrels, some directly to restaurants. Jars for consumer sales were hand-packed by Ralph's wife Anne in her kitchen, often with the help of some neighbor ladies.



After 75 years Sechler's is still a family owned and run business, and still located near St. Joe, Indiana, with the old farm house in which Anne Sechler once hand-packed pickles serving as an office for the thriving company. A third generation of Sechlers assumed leadership roles when Frank Sechler (Ralph's son) took partial retirement in 1990.

In 1996 a community festival was held in Saint Joe. In its eighth year this summer, the Saint Joe Pickle Festival is the community event of the year. "The idea of a town festival was started to motivate the town people to be interested in their community," said Paula Roberts, 4th year chairperson for the pickle festival. The annual three-day festival charges no admission, has live entertainment, parades, a petting zoo, a teen dance, great food (including a sausage & pancake breakfast), and, of course, everything pickle; including the Pickle Carving Contest, the Pickle Derby (like pinewood only with cucumbers), and the Great Pickle Cook-Off.

Now some may scoff at the notion of a pickle cook-off. I have to admit, my first thought was "now, how many things can you make from pickles?" But I stand corrected friends. So interesting was this event and varied were the entries that the Food Network (yep, the one on cable television) sent a crew to the 2001 event, later airing a full half-hour show dedicated to this contest and the festival. I will definitely be attending this year's celebration.



"..to motivate the town people to be interested in their community" was an idea that took root in Saint Joe, Indiana. In 1998 Saint Joe residents Phil Carpenter of the local school corp., Tom Sekel of Riverdale Elementary, Mr. Frank Sechler, Rev. Paul Rowe of the local Lutheran Church, and Larry Watson of the Church of Christ, all got together and after much discussion began applying for grants to help fund a mutual idea they had about putting a walking path along the St. Joe River.

Today, running along the banks of the St. Joe River, the St. Joe River Greenway is a beautiful 1.3 mile hard surfaced walkway with scenic overlooks, foot bridges, and resting benches. Starting just behind the Riverdale Elementary school and rolling south to CR 64, the Greenway has established a bird sanctuary and seating for two outdoor classrooms. These "classrooms" now provide outdoor education and summer programs as part of the curriculum for Eastside Jr./Sr. High School Life Science and Biology departments and field trips and classroom activities for Riverdale Elementary. In 2001 these schools were selected as Northeast Indiana Outdoor Laboratory of the Year District Winners for work involving these outdoor classrooms and the Greenway.



(continued on next page)

Crossing State Lines to Promote BMP's

Farmer-to-Farmer Project Completed Successfully

The Initiative's Farmer-to-Farmer project, sponsored by a grant from the Great Lakes Commission, was successfully completed in December, 2003. The Initiative worked through two of our partner conservation districts to reach out to farmers and increase the placement of conservation buffers and filter strips in the St. Joseph River watershed.

In Williams County, Ohio, over 40 acres of land were placed into filter strips. Grant funding provided a CREP-type incentive payment which helped to encourage landowners to put the conservation practices in place. The Williams County SWCD supplied the technical assistance, handled the sign-up of the acres, and provided the required maps of the filter strip locations

In Hillsdale County, Michigan, a farmer-educator was hired to work with the Conservation District and NRCS to reach out to farmer/landowners and encourage participation in conservation programs. Success was based upon building trust with farmers, particularly in the Amish community. Throughout the summer over 50 landowners were contracted, and tracts totaling over 265 miles (nearly 977 acres) were placed into buffer or filter strips, grassed waterways, and riparian buffers. The Hillsdale Conservation District handled the technical assistance, sign-up of the acres, and provided the required maps of the filter strip locations.

The Farmer-to-Farmer project recognizes that while erosion and pollution are watershed-wide problems, solutions to these problems are often unique to each community based upon economic conditions, farming practices and social customs. What works well for one area may fail in another. Through the Farmer-to-Farmer project, both of these counties have contributed to the improvement of the entire watershed.

The Initiative would like to thank our partners in Williams County, Ohio and Hillsdale County, Michigan for their continued assistance in realizing the mission of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative: to proactively work for economically and environmentally compatible land uses that improve the water quality of the St. Joseph River.

Saint Joe, Indiana (continued from previous page)

The Greenway project began with funding from the DeKalb Co. Community Foundation and the first major section was dedicated in September of 2001. Through donations and a lot volunteer work the second major section was completed and dedicated in July 2003. In researching this project it was difficult to find who exactly was responsible for the Greenway. The Community Foundation directed me to Frank Sechler. Mr. Sechler said "Phil Carpenter, business manager for DeKalb Eastern School Corp., was "key in getting it done". Mr Carpanter's press release says: "It is especially important to credit the members of Mr. Tom Hollabaugh's Eastside Jr./Sr. High School biology and science classes.... without them, the project could not have been completed as quickly or with the quality that can be seen in the trail."

The bottom line was no one took credit for the project. Instead the overall consensus from everyone I spoke with was that the River Greenway exists because of the overwhelming support of the people of the Saint Joe community. "Many in the community have participated in the construction of the Greenway and have contributed thousands of dollars in services, materials and cash. All participants made a significant contribution either through their hands-on work and/or encouragement and support."

Getting to the Saint Joe and the River Greenway is an enjoyable drive from anywhere in the watershed and I think you'll find it is a great place to get away and see the beauty of the St. Joseph River. Mr. Frank Sechler told me in a phone conversation this week; "I walk it quite a bit when the weather's good and often run into people from other communities who have driven here just to enjoy our Greenway." He added, "It's quite gratifying."



The SJRWI wishes to thank the citizens and businesses of the Saint Joe, Indiana for the opportunity to highlight their community as part of the St. Joseph River Watershed. If you would like to suggest another town within the watershed to be featured in future newsletters, please contact our office with some details or email me directly at kirby-thompson@iaswcd.org.

Focus on the Watershed is written by Kirby Thompson
Natural Resources Programs Administrator for SJRWI

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

is 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 done by 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: 2010 Inwood Dr., Ste. 103, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46815*

Last Minute Planter Clinic Reminder!

March 3rd, 2004; 8:00am-12:30 pm with Pizza Lunch served at 11:30am

At Rory Walker's; 4275 County Road 22, 3 miles northeast of Waterloo, Indiana



FEATURED SPEAKER: Greg Myers, The Andersons, Inc., Waterloo, Indiana

Greg will show units that are not properly set up (as well as other things to look for that might need to be replaced) and will show you how to properly set up your planter for its maximum performance.

Hitch Pin to Closing Wheel

- Hitch Pin
- Unit Set Up
- Transmission Drives
- Planter Attachments
- Metering System



Contact SJRWI or the DeKalb Co. SWCD for more information

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

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