

ST. JOSEPH RIVER REVIEW

A PUBLICATION BY THE ST. JOSEPH RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative - 3718 New Vision Drive, Fort Wayne, IN 46845, 260-484-5848
www.sjrwi.org

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**Board positions are open
for new partners. See
back page to learn how
to become more involved
with SJRWI!**

SJRWI Has a New Home!



On October 1st, the Saint Joseph Watershed Initiative began working from their new location on the north side of Fort Wayne. Over the past several months the Allen County Farm Service Agency (FSA), Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have been working in conjunction with Howard Properties to construct this new field office.

This new building is easily accessible from I-69 and I-469, and provides the public and staff with a state-of-the-art facility that allows better access to information, top equipment for presentations, and an outstanding conference room with ample space for large meetings!

Another new feature of this facility is a voice mail system. When you call our new number at 260-484-5848, simply by dialing their extension you can directly contact Jane Loomis, our Executive Director (ext 120) or Kirby Thompson, Natural Resources Program Administrator (ext 117). If no one is available, you can leave a message and we will be sure to return your call.

The facility is the new "Area Office" for the NRCS serving all of Northeastern Indiana, and will also house the offices of the SJRWI, the Allen County SWCD, FSA, the Allen County Partnership for Water Quality, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) – Division of Soil, and the Purdue University, Conservation Program. The SJRWI is pleased to part of this new office and excited for the opportunity to work with so many dedicated professional in the fields of Conservation and Environmental Protection.

The next board meeting of the SJRWI is Monday, December 8th, from 6pm to 8pm in the conference room of our new office. As always this meeting is open to the public. Please feel free to be present at the meeting or stop by anytime and visit us at our new facility. See page 4 for detailed directions to our office.

Welcome to Our New Board Member

On July 28, 2003 the SJRWI Board nominated and unanimously approved Ms. Valerie Richardson as a new member. Ms. Richardson has a Masters Degree in Business from Indiana University and is employed at IPFW as a Research Associate for the Community Research Institute (CRI), conducting research on social and economic issues in northeast Indiana. Valerie and her husband, Kevin, are the proud parents of three children: Alan, sophomore at I.U.; Ann, a freshman at the University of Tennessee; and Aileen, a freshman at Summit Middle School. Valerie has also been a member for the Three Rivers Literacy Alliance, and a Board member at St. Joseph Church. Welcome to Valerie and thank you for serving on our Board.

COMMUNITIES of the St. Joseph River Watershed

INDIANA

Altona
Ari
Artic
Auburn
Avilla
Butler
Butler Center
Cedar
Cedarville
Cold Springs
Concord
Corunna
Ege
Fairfield Center
Fort Wayne
Garrett
Grabill
Hamilton
Huntertown
Hursh
Laotto
Leo
Metz
Newville
Newville Center
Orange
Sedan
Spencerville
St. Joe
St. Johns
Steubenville
Summit
Swan
Waterloo

MICHIGAN

Bankers
Cambria
Camden
Frontier
Hillsdale
Montgomery
Osseo
Ransom
Reading
OHIO
Angier
Berlin
Blakeslee
Bridgewater Center
Columbia
Cooney
Edon
Edgerton
Montpelier
Nettle Lake
Pioneer
West Jefferson

What's causing **Stress** to the Cedar Creek ?

That's the question being asked by stakeholders of the Cedar Creek watershed as they continue to work together to craft a management plan for this important tributary to the St. Joseph River. Monthly meetings began last April and will continue through the winter and next spring. Topics of discussion have included identification and prioritization of problems that cover drainage issues, log jams, excessive erosion and declining water quality. Most recently the group outlined a vision for the creek, identified critical areas of concern as well as environmental stressors in those critical areas, and looked for possible solutions to watershed problems. Other portions of the plan yet to be completed address inventory of the land in the watershed, monitoring of the water resources, and analysis of the data.



The waters of the Cedar Creek and some of its tributaries have been identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) as impaired due to bacterial contamination. Bacteria counts often exceed the State standard for full-body contact. Other problems in Cedar Creek and its tributaries cited by IDEM include impairments of biotic community, habitat, excessive nutrients, organic enrichment, and algae.

The Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan, when fully crafted and approved by IDEM, will serve as a dynamic guide to human activities that affect the creek and surrounding land. The plan will identify the community's vision for the creek and will support cooperation and communication among all stakeholders living and working in the watershed.

All meetings are open to the public. Additional members are always welcome to join in! For further information on the Cedar Creek Watershed Plan, see our website at www.sjrwi.org/projects, or call the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative at 484-5848 x 120.

IDEM scholarship helps Fort Wayne watershed planner sharpen skills for St. Joseph River conservation projects

Reprinted from an IDEM State -wide E-News Release!

A Fort Wayne watershed advocate dedicated to helping local farmers protect their land while also preserving the environment has received a state-funded scholarship to further her work of improving Indiana's lakes, rivers and streams.

Jane Loomis, executive director of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRWI), is currently putting federal grant money issued from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) to work through local watershed education and outreach projects.



Jane Loomis, Executive Director of SJRWI

By providing cost-share assistance to farmers, the SJRWI is enabling them to implement resource protection measures such as conservation tillage; nutrient management and pest management that will help protect the St. Joseph watershed. SJRWI is also implementing a water-monitoring project that will help determine sources of E-coli contamination in the watershed, as well as developing a watershed management plan for the Cedar Creek sub-watershed.

IDEM's scholarship enabled Loomis to attend the national Watershed Partnerships Seminar Sept. 29 through Oct. 10 in Shepherdstown, W.Va. The two-week program focused on community-based environmental planning, partnership building and decision making within regional watershed locations.

With this training Loomis will build upon her skills by continuing to implement successful monitoring, education, and outreach programs within the watershed to help educate Hoosiers about watershed health, and work with local stakeholders to facilitate the development of the Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan.

Evaluating Our Work in the Watershed

by Jane Loomis, Executive Director, SJRWI

The St. Joseph River Watershed Geographic Information System Development grant, which was sponsored by the Fort Wayne City Utilities Administration and contracted to the Initiative, funded work to review our water quality monitoring data (1996-2002) and place it into an *Access* database. This database, along with *Arcview* Geographical Information System (GIS) and *Sigma Plot* graphing and analysis software is housed on a computer at the SJRWI office. A large format printer was also purchased to facilitate printing of maps and graphs up to 13x19 inches in size.

The goal behind all this work is to facilitate analysis of water quality data – in this case, our monitoring data – on a sub-watershed scale. In short, we're looking for the "hot spots" located in our watershed. If we see spikes of atrazine in a certain area, for example, or if we find high numbers of *E. coli* in a specific sub-watershed, we can take a look at those numbers spatially - that is on a map. We can find out what the land uses are in that sub-watershed: Is this a residential area? Are we in the middle of agricultural fields? Is this urban land? We will be able to produce a map so that we can see which ditches and streams are contributing water to the site. We can determine if buffer strips have been installed in the area, or if livestock are near the stream. We can look for proximity to combined sewer overflows. We can see what roadways and highways are nearby and calculate areas of impervious surfaces.

All of this information can help us to determine where pollutants are originating, evaluate any management practices that are being used on the land, locate and organize residents of the sub-watershed, and begin to formulate a plan for water quality improvement.

As we are now entering the final quarter of this grant, we will be extracting information about each of the St. Joseph's sub-watershed areas and making formal presentations of that information to county Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), planning committees, and local health departments. Since our database of information for many sites dates back to 1996, we can track trends in water quality as well as look carefully at what happened during the summer of 2003. We will be asking the local representatives in each of the areas for input about what is happening in their watershed, and we will begin working with those representatives to develop ways to improve the water quality in their corner of the state.

Eventually, each of the communities in the St. Joseph River watershed will develop a watershed plan that will guide human activities in a way that protects our water. The Initiative is available to help by offering data, analysis and organizational support. If you would like to host a presentation in your area, please contact us at (260) 484-5848.

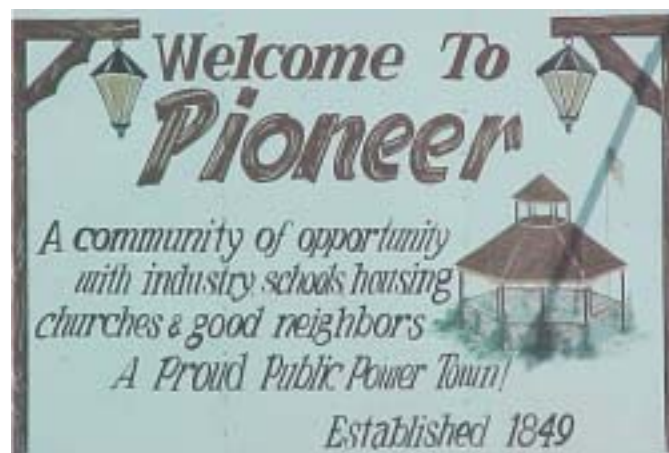
Focus on the Watershed:

Our second in series on communities that lay within the St. Joseph River Watershed, the Village of Pioneer, Ohio is small town with a lot to offer. The following is reprinted from the village website www.villageofpioneer.com

Welcome to the Village of Pioneer. Pioneer was established in 1849 by P.W. Norris who later became the second Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park and to whom the Norris Basin is named after. Pioneer has a statutory form of government made up of a mayor and six council members. We are a community of approximately 1,400 residents and are located at the intersection of Stat Rt. 20 and State Rt. 15 which is four miles north of the Ohio Turnpike.

Pioneer is served with excellent utilities including our own municipal owned electric distribution system. As members of American Municipal Power, we are able to boast of some of the lowest electric rates in the state of Ohio. We have a strong industrial nucleus with ample room to grow.

Pioneer has several parks for children and has an excellent summer recreation program for the youth. There are several 18 hole golf courses within close proximity from Pioneer. If you like hunting, the 2,280 acre Lake La Su An wildlife area can provide you with some of the best hunting in Northwest Ohio. For the fishing enthusiast, Nettle Lake, the largest natural lake in Ohio, is approximately a fifteen minute drive from Pioneer or take advantage of the many lakes in this tri-state area. Pioneer is located 15 miles from the state of Indiana and borders the Michigan state line. Come and visit us and see what we have to offer.



St. Joseph River Watershed

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 # (optional) _____

Check all that apply:

Please add me to your newsletter mailing list. (2003 back issues will be sent right away!)

Please send me more information about the SJRWI (includes Strategic Plan and info on all current projects)

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

Directions to the new office!

Our new offices are located in the Tokiem Office Park on 3718 New Vision Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46845. The Tokiem Office Park is also home to Parkview North Hospital. To get to our office take Interstate 69 to Exit 116 (Dupont Rd. / SR1), turn EAST and go 1/4 mile to Parkview Plaza Drive (first stoplight) and turn NORTH, go to the stop sign at the end of this road and turn right on New Vision Drive. Our office is located at the second entrance on the right.

!FALL TILLAGE EQUIPMENT REMINDER!

Through the remainder of this season (and next Spring & Fall) the SJRWI and the Allen Co. SWCD is renting conservation tillage equipment thanks to grants from IDEM. You can rent Phillips & Phoenix Rotary Harrows, a To-The-Max Roller Harrow, the McFarland Reel-till (roller-chopper-harrow), a Great Plains Turbo-till, a Blujet in-line Ripper, a DMI Strip-till Unit, and/or a 12' Brillion Grass Seeder. Call our office anytime at 260-484-5848 to learn more about conservation tillage and to take advantage of this outstanding program!

St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

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website: www.sjwri.org



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