

Source Water Protection Initiative St. Joseph River Watershed Project

Project Description:

The Source Water Protection Initiative (SWPI) is a five-year agricultural water quality and pesticide monitoring project under the national leadership of America's Clean Water Foundation and under the local leadership of three local watershed associations in Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri. The SWPI will:

1. Design and implement sound voluntary, incentive-based, watershed-scale projects to accelerate the adoption of key pesticide best management practices (BMP's) at the watershed level on sufficient cropland acres to permit proper evaluation,
2. Objectively monitor and evaluate the effects on pesticide loading and water quality of the BMP's using generally recognized and accepted scientific techniques, and
3. Report those results to the general public.

Agencies Involved:

In Indiana, the project is under the local leadership of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (Initiative). The Initiative is working with researchers from the USDA – Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Allen and DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), Purdue University, and the City of Fort Wayne.

Study Area:

The St. Joseph River watershed (located in the Lake Erie basin) was selected for the project because of it being the sole water source for the City of Fort Wayne and nearly 250,000 citizens. To further define the project, the Initiative with guidance from the ARS and NRCS, selected the 11,200-acre Matson Ditch watershed and the 12,000-acre Walter Smith Ditch watershed for the study area. The study area lies in north central DeKalb County.

Agricultural producers in the Matson Ditch watershed will be encouraged to implement voluntary incentive-based best management practices (BMPs) that reduce the risk of pesticides reaching nearby waterways. The Walter Smith watershed was selected as the control watershed, therefore no special effort will be made to contact agricultural producers to encourage BMP adoption.

State-of-the-art automated water samplers will closely monitor the amount of pesticides leaving the study areas to evaluate the effectiveness of the BMPs that were installed in the treatment watershed (Matson Ditch).

For more information contact the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative at (260)426-4637, ext. 3

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Source Water Protection Initiative Study Area

