

# Town & Country

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Spring 2014



The SWCD is partnering with the Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society (INPAWS) to establish the Go Green, Grow Native program in Hamilton County and Central Indiana.

**Go Green, Grow Native** is a program that encourages retailers to sell native Indiana species and avoid invasive varieties. By identifying participating retailers, you know where to go for native plants that are not only beautiful, but adapted to Indiana climate and soils.

Look for the **Go Green, Grow Native** logo at these merchants:

**Allisonville Nursery** ☀

11405 Allisonville Rd. Fishers, IN 46038  
[www.allisonvillenursery.com](http://www.allisonvillenursery.com)

**Madeline F. Elder Greenhouse**

**Indianapolis Museum of Art**

4000 Michigan Rd. Indianapolis, IN 46208  
[www.imamuseum.org](http://www.imamuseum.org)

**Native Plants Unlimited** ☀

**(annual spring plant sale at Geist Nursery)**

9890 Mollenkopf Rd. Fishers, IN 46037  
[www.nativeplantsunlimited.com](http://www.nativeplantsunlimited.com)

**Sullivan Hardware & Garden**

6955 N. Keystone Ave. Indianapolis, IN 46220  
[www.sullivanhardware.com](http://www.sullivanhardware.com)

**White's Ace Hardware**

Carmel- 731 S. Rangeline Rd. Carmel, IN 46032 ☀  
Geist- 10941 E. 79th St. Indianapolis, IN 46236  
Nora- 8502 Westfield Blvd. Indianapolis, IN 46240  
[www.whitesacehardware.com](http://www.whitesacehardware.com)

#### Native plants are:

- Hoosier friendly - adapted to our local soil and climate
- Easy care, needing less water and fertilizer than many non-native plants
- Good habitat for native wildlife
- Not invasive, so they won't damage natural areas



#### Not sure what native plants to choose?

Visit the INPAWS website ([www.inpaws.org](http://www.inpaws.org)) or call Claire Lane, Hamilton County SWCD Backyard Conservation Coordinator, for suggestions!



Indiana Native Plant & Wildflower Society

Don't see your favorite retailer on the list? Tell them you are looking for more native plants and have them contact us about the Go Green, Grow Native program!

☀ Retailers right here in Hamilton County!



**Board of Supervisors**

Rodney Rulon, *Chair*  
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Warren Sarber, *Member*

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Mark McCauley  
*Resource Conservationist*

Claire Lane  
*Office & BYC Coordinator*

Leslie White  
*Fall Creek Watershed Coordinator*

Angie Garrison  
*NRCS District Conservationist*

Sarah Lake  
*ISDA*

**Town & Country**

Published quarterly and distributed to landowners, farm operators, teachers, local agencies, public officials, conservation organizations and other interested individuals.

**Invasive Plant Survey- We Need Your Help**

Invasive plants have been introduced to our county, like multiflora rose, reed canary grass, callary pear and autumn olive. These plants were believed to be a benefit and serve a good function. Other plants like kudzu were introduced elsewhere and are slowly making their way into Hamilton County. Kudzu was thought to be in Kentucky or further south but it has been found in Johnson and Hendricks counties. The Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring an invasive plant survey this summer. We are hiring a person to spend time this summer making an inventory of invasive plants and where they are most prevalent. The inventory will include public lands but we would like to inventory private lands as well. If you would like to include your property in the survey, please contact the SWCD to be included in the list of participating landowners. If you would like to volunteer and help with the inventory, please let us know as well. You may contact us at 317-773-2181 or [soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov). You can learn more about Indiana invasive plants through the Indiana Invasive Species Council website or Google Indiana invasive plants.



Asian bush honeysuckle is a prevalent bush in central Indiana. It grows in dense clusters that inhibit other plants from growing and releases toxins into the soil that prevents other plant growth. The berry is eaten by birds but is not a good food source.

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**Thank you sponsors!**

The SWCD would like to thank our 2014 Affiliate Member business sponsors. The support of these businesses and organizations helps us produce and deliver diverse programming and educational events throughout the year. We invite you to view our sponsors on Page 5 and to take advantage of their services and programs!

If you or your business would like to become an Affiliate Member, it is not too late! Visit the Affiliate Member page of our website or call the office to learn how!



# Hamilton County Farmers Participate In Two Environmental Studies

Farmers in Hamilton County are being proactive in their intent to be good stewards of our natural resources, and that benefits us all. Two studies began in 2013 are ongoing which involve the monitoring of several aspects in the farming operation. These include studying the use of nitrogen in corn, the effects of using cover crops, measuring biological activity in the soil, collecting data on water holding capacity, measuring

overall soil health, and several other factors. One study is being done under the Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative and the other is through the On-Farm Network Program. While the first study is being completed at a single location for three years, the second study involves several farmers and properties spread throughout the county. In just the first year farmers are learning more about how efficiently their nitrogen programs are in terms of use by their corn crops, and this could potentially save them money in the long run.



One of the technical aspects of the program is the testing of corn stalks at harvest to measure nitrogen levels not utilized in producing the grain. This would appear to indicate that the corn crop had more nitrogen than needed to produce that years crop, so a reduction in the amount applied might be a wise decision. Additionally, unused nitrogen does have the potential to move off the field in storm water runoff, and farmers do not want that to happen either. The bottom line is that applying nitrogen at rates close to what the crop uses not only saves money but helps improve and protect the environment as well. We are encouraged by famers in Hamilton County for taking proactive steps that benefit us all on several levels. If you are a farmer or know of a farmer interested in participating in a study like this, please call us at 317-773-2181 and we can discuss this with you further. There is no cost to the farmer, but there is a great deal of site specific valuable information provided back to him for use in his operation. Let us know if you are interested.



# 2014 Conservation Award Recipients

The Hamilton County SWCD was proud to recognize the following individuals for their outstanding support and partnership in SWCD programs and initiatives.

Rodney Rulon, SWCD Board Chairman presented the awards at the 2014 Annual Meeting.



### Outstanding Supporter of the Backyard Conservation Program

Tim Stottlemeyer  
City of Noblesville Stormwater



### Partner in Conservation

Nate Lichti  
Hamilton County Area  
Neighborhood Development (HAND)



### Friend of Conservation

Hamilton County Farm Bureau, Inc.



### Outstanding Supporter of the Backyard Conservation Program

Peggy, Noah, and Levi Box



### River Friendly Farmer 2013

Jeff Stewart

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## Board of Supervisors Update

Jared Kakasuleff was re-elected to the Hamilton County SWCD's board of supervisors by vote of Hamilton County residents in attendance at the Annual Meeting. His was sworn into his office by Paul Ayers, Hamilton County Council.

Board members roles were decided during the February board meeting. Rodney Rulon will serve as Chairman, Jared Kakasuleff as Vice-Chairman, and Doug Roberts will continue as Treasurer.

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think what thousands of us can do, working together!*



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zach.murphy@e-farmcredit.com    rhahn@e-farmcredit.com  
**4985 N State Road 9**  
**Anderson, IN 46015**  
Ph: 765-644-7172 or 800-878-0195



Hamilton County Area Neighborhood Development

www.handincorporated.org  
317-674-8108

**Ron Dixon**  
Natural Resource Consultant &  
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## Backyard Conservation Blog

Claire Lane, BYC Coordinator

This spring we have some blog entries from Jen Heidorn, a gardening and native plant enthusiast in Fishers. Jen's butterfly garden was part of her first Backyard Conservation Plan and she has added other conservation practices since. This spring, pollinator gardens are cost share practices so you can get financial assistance to start your own and Jen's blog will show you how!



### Seedlings or Weedlings?

In June of 2011, I was watching my pollinator garden grow. I had one problem: I didn't know what was growing! Sure, I knew the sweet bay magnolia, the pincushion phlox, and the annual french lavender, but what about those other things?

I had broadcast a pack of native plant seeds the previous fall after creating the bed. (I'll show you how to do that later.) In spring, things were growing, but I wasn't sure which was a seedling and which was a weedling. (We'll learn this, too.) Turns out, those pretty velvet-leafed plants are nasty weeds. So are the horse nettle, horse mantle, and ragweed that I am standing in between. Moral of the story folks: before you stand in your bed, make sure you know what lies in it! Luckily for me, after I identified and pulled the nasty weeds, the native seeds began sprouting into luscious native plants. Then, I had much prettier things in my pollinator garden to photograph. This was only two months later! (8/11/11)



Jen with her new pollinator garden in Spring 2011.

### Pollinator gardens are now cost share practices!

Contact Claire at 317.773.2181 to learn how you can get financial assistance to create a pollinator habitat at your home, school, common area, or church!



Some of Jen's pollinator visitors (8/2011)

### Making your Bed the Easy Way

Congratulations! You have decided to create a home for native plants and pollinators. Time to grab that shovel and rip up some sod. Changed your mind? I don't blame you. That's a lot of work! Let's learn an easier way to create a bed for your pollinator plants.

**Step 1. Cover the grass with a thick layer of wet paper.** Here, I was extending an existing bed to include the winterberry holly I had planted in the spring. An old soaker hose outlines the area to be made into a garden bed. Inside, 5 or 6 layers of paper are soaked into place.



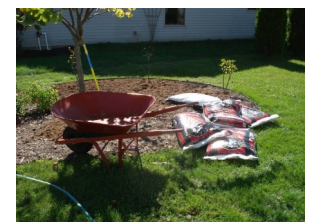
**Step 2. Cover the paper with about 3 inches of top soil.** Simply spread and level it with your garden rake.



**Step 3. Rake peat moss into the top soil.** I used half the bag here (one cubic foot.)



**Step 4. Cover with about 2 inches of mulch.** Use mulch without added dye, please.



That's all there is to it. The layers of paper, soil, peat, and mulch will turn that sod into soil. This will take a season or two. Remove your outline, then either add edging or trench the edge of the lawn. Ideally, you create this bed in fall to seed. By the time spring arrives, the soil can be planted as well. If you are making a bed in spring and want to plant it this season, choose small plants that can be placed above the layer of paper. If you just can't wait to plant a shrub or other deep rooted plant, be sure to remove the sod in that area and tuck in the edge with a bit of extra paper. Go get your bed ready. We'll discuss the planting options next time. Happy Gardening! ---jen

## Streambank Erosion Study

The SWCD gets requests to help solve streambank erosion. It's difficult to predict how fast the erosion will progress and how frequently it will occur. Recent climate changes and urbanization seem to cause more channel erosion. Having some long term survey information will enable us to provide better advice to land-owners struggling to make wise decisions. We would like to set up at four sites in the county to measure channel erosion. Surveys would be conducted twice a year with additional surveys after major channel flows. We would install a permanent marker to enable accurate surveys that can be repeated in the future. I would like to have two urban and two rural sites. A site that is near a stream gaging station and or weather station would be preferred. Please contact John South at 317-773-2181 or [john.south@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:john.south@hamiltoncounty.in.gov) if you are interested in participating in the study.



Landowners enjoy living close to streams but rapid erosion can eat away valuable land and threaten homes.

### “Like” us on Facebook!

Like us to stay current on SWCD initiatives, workshops, and cost-share opportunities!

“Share” our page with your friends to promote conservation in Hamilton County!

[www.facebook.com/hamiltonswcd](http://www.facebook.com/hamiltonswcd)



### Soil Testing Available

#### **Basic Test** - \$30

Analysis includes organic matter, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, CEC, pH, and buffer pH.

#### **Complete Test**- \$40

Analysis includes Basic Test plus conductivity, boron, copper, iron, manganese, sulfur and zinc.

Collect your soil sample (instructions available on Soil Testing page of our website-[www.hamiltonswcd.org](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org) or call office) and bring it to the office. SWCD staff can collect your soil sample onsite for a \$70 service fee.

Visit our website!  
[www.hamiltonswcd.org](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org)

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A bioswale can be a great way to manage a low or consistently wet area in your yard. Bioswales can be attractive additions to your property and eliminate wet, difficult to maintain areas.

### Financial Assistance Available

Financial assistance is available to help you implement backyard conservation practices that improve water quality, limit runoff, and create wildlife habitat.

Free site visits and project planning assistance is available.

Contact Claire Lane at [claire.lane@hamiltoncounty.in.gov](mailto:claire.lane@hamiltoncounty.in.gov) or 317.773.2181 to learn how!

- Rain Gardens
- Bioswales
- Wetlands for Wildlife
- Water/Pond Edge Enhancements
- Filter Strips
- Prairie Plantings
- Pollinator Gardens
- Invasive Plant Removal
- Porous Pavement/Pavers
- Tree Plantings

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