

Town & Country

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Summer 2016



Rain on Main Returns for a Second Year

The SWCD has again partnered with Carmel Utilities and the Carmel Stormwater Program to bring Rain on Main, a painted rain barrel art competition and silent auction, to Hamilton County. 20 local artists have volunteered their talents to paint urn style rain barrels. These barrels will be displayed along Main Street in the Arts and Design District in Carmel

from August 13-19. On August 20th, join us at the Carmel Farmers Market from 8-11 a.m. to place the winning bid in the silent auction and take one of these beautiful and functional art pieces home!

View the barrels and learn more about the artists at www.RainOnMain.com. "Like" the Rain on Main Facebook page to vote for your favorite barrel in the People's Choice competition. Cash prizes will be awarded to the winner as well as the winning selections from the judged art competition.



The 2015 winning barrels

People's Choice Winner: Lori Mc Donough (left)

Art Competition Winner : Kathy Garnes

Did you know?

Nationwide, landscape irrigation is estimated to account for nearly one-third of all residential water use, totaling nearly 9 billion gallons per day. As much as 50% of that outdoor water use is wasted from inefficient watering methods. Curb your water waste with a rain barrel! The average homeowner can save around 1,300 gallons of water using a rain barrel.

Carmel residents are eligible for a \$50 rebate on their stormwater utility bill per installed rain barrel. Learn more at:

www.RainOnMain.com

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Claire Lane
Urban Conservationist

Amy Shankland
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Angie Garrison
NRCS District Conservationist

Town & Country

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

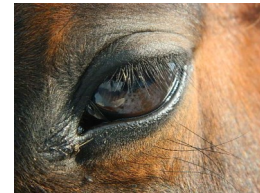
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Photo Contest Brings Numerous Entries from Around the County

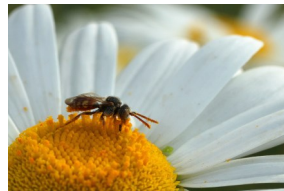
The third annual photo contest had an amazing 57 entries from both adults and children. The 2016 categories were farm animals and pollinators. Photos were displayed at the HCSWCD booth at the Hamilton County 4-H Fair. Each winner received \$50 per category. Special thanks to judges Doug Arnholter, Amy Jo Farmer, and Jessica Paullus. All photos can be viewed on the SWCD website and Facebook page.



Adult farm animal winner, taken by Kristin Kile



Youth farm animal winner, taken by Miaya Owen



Adult pollinator winner, taken by Kyle Schmidt



Youth pollinator winner, taken by Matayia Owen

John South Retires, Hamilton County SWCD Welcomes Ginger Davis



District Administrator John South Retired on Thursday, June 30 after 38 years of service to Hamilton County Soil and Water. Numerous guests stopped by to wish him well at an open house held at the Annex at the Hamilton County Fairgrounds that afternoon.*

Supervisors and staff members presented John with a clay drainage tile painted by local artist Kathy Garnes and donated by Claude Spurgeon. The tile featured aspects of John's life, both personal and professional, including him conducting a survey and riding a bicycle as a youth.

We wish John the best as he begins his retirement and hope to see him out and about in the community!

New administrator Ginger Davis started working at Hamilton County SWCD on Monday, July 25th. Ginger brings with her extensive Master's training in Civil Engineering and Hydrology, vast work experience with various SWCD's around the state, a great deal of training through NRCS, and varied leadership experience.

Among her many accomplishments, Ginger is a former hydrogeologist with the Indiana DNR, an Earth Science Adjunct Professor at Ivy Tech, and a past watershed coordinator for the Lost River Watershed Project in Orange County, IN.

Look for more information about Ginger in our fall newsletter!

* Thank you to Richie Hall, Hamilton County Reporter, for the open house photos

Hamilton County SWCD Secures \$50,000 Urban Agriculture Conservation Initiative Grant from National Association of Conservation Districts

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) has awarded a \$50,000 grant to the Hamilton County SWCD to hire two part time urban agriculture program associates. One employee will provide on-site technical assistance on how to develop and sustain an urban food plot or community garden. This person will prioritize conservation strategies including soil health, nutrient and pest management, cover crops, no till, conservation irrigation, and more. The other associate will focus on education and developing partnerships within the county to encourage established or developing community gardens, as well as individual gardeners, to donate part of their yield to local food banks.

Additionally, these associates will create a “Hamilton County Community Garden Network” to increase communication between gardens and with local food pantries.

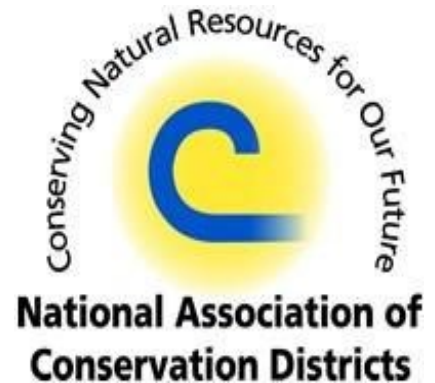
Other benefits of the project include incorporation of conservation practices such as storm water infiltration, wildlife and pollinator habitat creation, tree plantings, and the opportunity to connect with new groups on conservation. Community engagement and development of partnerships with non-traditional partners will broaden opportunities for conservation across the county.

“We’re excited about this program, which couldn’t have happened without the NACD and multiple local partners,” said Claire Lane, Urban Conservationist, “We’re grateful for the grant and support we’ve already received for this project.”

Local partners include The Good Samaritan Network, Purdue Extension, Project Eden, Carmel Green Initiative, Plots to Plates Community Garden, the Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank, and Hamilton County Area Neighborhood Development HAND.

The Good Samaritan Network in Hamilton County is a network of food pantries, churches, schools, hospitals, and other agencies that collaborate to connect residents in need to services. Purdue Extension will help identify potential sites and participants through nutrition and public assistance programs. Their Master Gardener program offers an opportunity for increased longevity of the program through long-term technical or educational assistance. HCSWCD’s established conservation partnership with HAND offers an opportunity to connect with individuals of the town of Sheridan, a pronounced food desert. Through HAND’s low income housing developments, the district will target low income families and aging populations who have limited local access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Look for more updates in the months ahead about this great new program!



Add Your Business to Our Contractor List *by Kyle Heath, Intern*

We now have a link on our website where you can list your business and the products and services (related to conservation, natural resources, drainage, erosion, ag, etc.) it provides. We will use this information to better aid county residents who need a company that can help them with their conservation projects. We also have a section that you can list any discounts you would like to offer to customers who are participating in our cost share program. This is a great opportunity to get your information out to residents and also help with conservation in our county.

To add your information visit www.hamiltonswcd.org/contractor-lists.html



Drainage Issues Got You Down?

Mark McCauley, Resource Conservationist, CPESC

It seems like a timely topic to talk a little about drainage issues, since we have had a good number of calls this spring for assistance. We try to visit this topic at least once each year in our newsletter. A typical call might go something like this: “We have noticed standing water in our yard that didn’t used to be there. It would sometimes be there shortly after a rain, but then eventually went away. Now it just stays soggy all the time and is difficult to mow, and likely encourages the mosquito population. Is there anything we can do to get rid of the water?” The stories might vary a little, but this is the general call, at least concerning water issues outside the house.

As a first step I typically pull up the property on the Hamilton County GIS Mapping system and look at several different things. Different information layers can give clues as to what is present at the site, such as soil type, elevation points and topographic lines, legal drain locations, etc. I will also view the property as it was over several different years. Currently the county GIS site has 24 different years of aerial photos. I look for evidence of field tiles (which sometimes are fairly obvious from aerial photos), I look for changes to the landscape (e.g. new developments/structures can sometimes affect existing drainage), and I also look at things like tree growth, evidence of drowned out spots, etc. It’s hardly ever a straight forward case when looking for the cause and potential remedy to drainage issues. It’s more of an issue of pulling all the information together, evaluating it, and making some educated assumptions, doing some site investigations, etc., and coming up with a recommendation.

It seems like we have encountered almost every situation possible, but here are a couple of real life examples:

Situation 1: A customer recently purchased a home that was a few years old. They soon noticed during spring weather that their crawl space was constantly wet. There were no surface signs, at least from ground elevation. I did a quick search and soon found the home site was located in Patton soil type (a typically wet and difficult to drain soil). I also noticed from old aerial photos that there was a potential drain tile heading right toward their house. Upon further site investigation I was able to locate an old 8 inch clay tile that had been cut right at the edge of the house when it was constructed. The tile had continued to function somewhat, but delivered most of its water load directly to the house crawl space. The only solution was to intercept the tile upstream and route it around the home using a new tile, then connect back into the original tile downstream. Although this didn’t fix the issue 100% (Patton soil type is a bad building site no matter what) it did greatly improve the situation and made it workable.

Situation 2: A customer had a fairly new home with a basement, located in a Crosby soil type (a pretty typical building site). However the home owner had three sump pumps that ran almost constantly and were burning up every few months. This was unusual even for a Crosby soil, plus the home was built with a footer drain to address these issues. Upon a site investigation I was able to locate the drain tile route and noticed it headed in a northwest direction, toward a stone drive that allowed access to a farm field. The tile passed under the drive, but was not very deep and could not withstand the traffic of the heavy machinery entering and exiting the field. As a result it had become crushed in that area and was blocking the exit route for the water being discharged by the sump pumps. The water was just pooling in the soil around the home and re-entering the footer drain, causing the sump pumps to run continually. The remedy was to replace the drain tile under the stone drive with a reinforced drain pipe for that section.

Although we can’t always help every customer with a private drainage issue, we will give it our best effort. Give us a call at 317-773-2181 if you need assistance and we will be happy to complete a site visit and review your situation.



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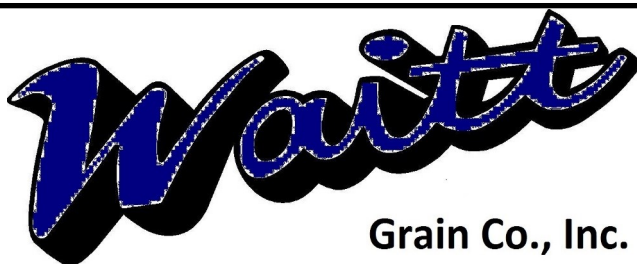
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Backyard Conservation Spotlight

Claire Lane, Urban Conservationist



Pollinator Garden Planted at Sand Creek Elementary

In mid-May, the SWCD joined Dan McCord of the Hamilton County Urban Conservation Association to create a pollinator garden at Sand Creek Elementary in Fishers. Second grade students and teachers were hands on— literally! They assisted with preparing the site for planting and took an active role in planting, mulching, and watering the garden. This project supplemented classroom work where students learned about the monarch butterfly and even raised butterflies in their classroom for release into the wild. The kids asked great questions, were excellent helpers, and have a beautiful garden that will grow with them as they move through Sand Creek Elementary and leave a legacy behind.



Events:

811 Block Party—Thursday August 11th 4pm-7pm—221 W. Main St. Carmel (next to Monon Trail)

Every six minutes an underground utility is damaged because someone didn't call 811. August 11 serves as a convenient reminder to always call 811 prior to any digging project to have utility lines located and marked. Several underground utility stakeholders have joined forces to host an 811 Day Block Party in Carmel, Indiana to provide valuable information about 811 and pipeline safety. This free event is open to the public and includes interactive and educational activities, free prizes and other giveaways as well as dessert and refreshments. More info: <http://www.811blockparty.com/Indianapolis/>

Create Habitat for Monarchs and Other Pollinators: Replacing grass with pollinator habitat Monday August 15th from 6-8PM at St. Peters United Church of Christ, Carmel, IN

Learn how you can create habitat for Monarch butterflies and other pollinators in your yard, church, business or neighborhood common area.



Creating a pollinator habitat provides a beautiful addition to your property, gives threatened pollinators a place to rest, refuel, and reproduce, and can even reduce property maintenance costs. Join us to learn about how to plan your project, maintenance considerations, financial assistance that may be available, and to hear first hand experiences from a church that has converted turf grass areas to pollinator habitat.

Pre-registration preferred. Register by calling 317-774-2500 or emailing

cool.naturecenter@hamiltoncounty.in.gov

White River Clean Up—Saturday September 10th—Noblesville and Carmel/Fishers Locations

Volunteers are needed to help remove trash from the banks and water of one of Hamilton Counties most precious water resources— the White River! Learn more at www.whiterivercleanup.org



Indiana Native Plant and Wildflower Society (INPAWS) Annual Conference—Sat. November 5th—Carmel

Don't miss this great conference for INPAWS members and the public! Learn more at www.inapws.org

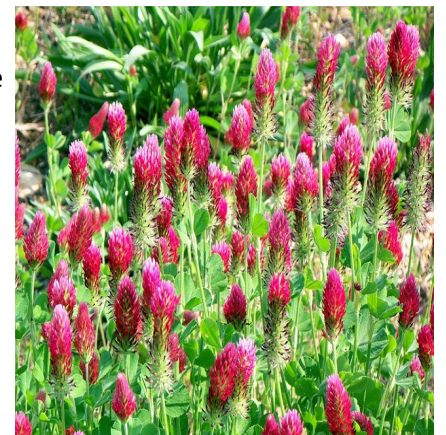
Scenes from the SWCD Fair Booth

The Hamilton County SWCD had a booth once again at this year's Hamilton County 4-H Fair, which was held July 21—15. Thank you to Conner Prairie and the Westfield Historical Society for their contributions!



Garden Cover Crops by Kyle Heath, Intern

When our garden has given us all of its amazing bounty and it's done for the year, we want to give it something back. I like to give my garden a cover for winter. You might think your garden is too small for a cover crop but its soil is no different than a larger piece of land. It still desires the benefits provided by cover crops such as weed control and better soil health. A great time to spread the seed is in the fall when your garden is done. There are many types of cover crops. Choose one that suits your garden and its needs best. I will be using crimson clover this year. Our frost date is around October 10 so I will seed it in late August. The easiest option for you is a winter kill crop. This saves you the effort of having to manage it later. If you are not afraid of a little extra work than there are many more options. Use this tool or contact our office to help figure out what's best for you. w.mccc.ms.edu/selector/INTRO.html. If you plant a cover crop in your garden this year share with us your victories and failures. Especially your failures. Remember people, don't farm naked! Use a cover crop.



**The SWCD will be offering free cover crop packets for urban/residential garden plots this fall!
Check online or call to inquire.**

Visit our website!
www.hamiltonswcd.org

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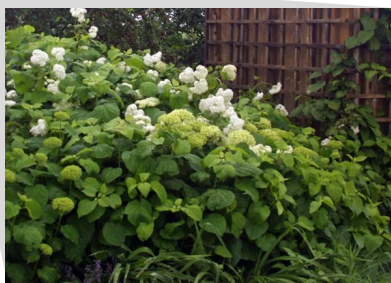
Fall Native Tree Sale



36 Species Available

New this year:

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Orders Due: September 3rd

Pick up: to be confirmed (likely Sept. 16th 2-6 pm)

Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds Lama Barn

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