

Town & Country

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2017

Join Us — 2017 Annual Meeting & Winter Workshop

The 2017 Annual Meeting and Winter Workshop is upon us. A variety of educational sessions will be offered this year to appeal to all. A short business meeting will cover the success of 2016 and allow Hamilton County residents to vote for a new supervisor to the SWCD board. Visit the vendor tables to learn about new products and services from our sponsors and enjoy a delicious buffet lunch. Please pre-register by February 9th.

Education Sessions: (descriptions on page 2)

- Session 1 **Pest Management in Cover Crops**
John Obermeyer, Integrated Pest Management Specialist
Purdue Entomology Department
- Intro to Urban Agriculture**
HCSWCD Urban Conservation/Agriculture Staff
- Session 2 **Updates on Indiana Plant Parasitic Nematodes**
Jamal Faghihi, Research and Extension Nematologist
Purdue Entomology Department
- Seed Starting Basics for Home Gardeners**
Jennifer Boase, Hamilton County Master Gardener

- Session 3 **PARP Regulatory Meeting & Wrap Up**
(Optional) (Required for PARP Credits)

Thursday February 16, 2017

Registration: 8:00-8:30

8:30 A.M. – 1:00P.M.

Hamilton County 4-H
Exhibition Center
2003 Pleasant St. Noblesville, IN

\$12 per person (includes lunch,
PARP credits extra)

Registration required by Feb. 9

We will be accepting donations of new, jarred spices for the Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank. Learn more on page 2.

Registration Form (due by Thursday Feb. 9)

Name(s): _____

Email: _____

Please mail this form and payment to:

Hamilton County SWCD
1717 Pleasant St. Suite 100
Noblesville, IN 46060

Make checks payable to Hamilton County SWCD.

Online registration and payment at:
www.hamiltonswcd.org/workshops--events.html

Questions? Call 317.773.2181 or
visit www.hamiltonswcd.org

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NRCS District Conservationist

Cara Culp & Andy Fritz
Urban Agriculture Associates

Town & Country

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

1717 Pleasant St. Suite 100
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Annual Meeting Session Descriptions

Pest Management in Cover Crops

John Obermeyer, Integrated Pest Management Specialist with the Purdue Entomology Department, will be discussing the interaction of “bugs” with a changed environment as it relates to cover crops. Discussion will include, field scouting, increased residues/plants equals increased diversity of organisms, good/bad/decomposers, challenge of slugs, seed-applied insecticides, armyworm/cutworms/seedcorn maggot, management considerations, terminating cover crops, protecting pollinators.

Education Credits Anticipated: CCH (1), CCA (1), PARP (must attend all sessions)

Updates on Plant Parasitic Nematodes in Indiana

Jamal Faghihi, Research and Extension Nematologist with Purdue Entomology Department, will be discussing current issues and concerns with parasitic nematodes, especially as they affect agricultural crops. Dr. Faghihi’s research has centered mostly around new and innovative management strategies for soybean cyst nematode. His extension responsibilities include diagnosis and making recommendations for a variety of plant parasitic nematode problems in Indiana.

Education Credits Anticipated: CCH (1), CCA (1), PARP (must attend all sessions)

SWCD Urban Agriculture Program Intro

District staff will provide an introduction to the new Urban Agriculture Program at the SWCD. Learn about our efforts to promote urban ag across the county and our innovative methods to connect gardens and food pantries to help alleviate food insecurity in Hamilton County. Our new programs and partnerships will be highlighted as well as info on how you can be involved or access our free technical assistance for urban agriculture. The new Hamilton County Garden Network will also be unveiled.

Seed Starting Basics for Home Gardeners

This session will cover the basics of seed starting for home gardeners. Learn about the advantages of seed starting, supplies, timelines, lighting, maintenance, and more. You’ll be prepared to start your own plants for the 2017 gardening season after this session!

Spray Drift Control

This session will be presented by Diane Turner, Purdue Extension Educator, and will discuss the Fieldwatch / Driftwatch / Beecheck programs. These voluntary communication tools enable crop producers, beekeepers, and pesticide applicators to work together to protect specialty crops and apiaries through use of mapping programs. The intended outcome is to promote awareness and stewardship activities to help prevent and manage drift effects.

Education Credits: PARP (must attend all 3 PARP sessions for credit)

2017 SWCD Board Of Supervisors Election Candidate

Jared Kakasuleff

Nominations from the floor can also be accepted. Join us at the annual meeting to place your vote!

Spice up the Food Bank— Spice Donation Drive at Annual Meeting

Help us launch our urban agriculture program and spice up the HC food bank!

Learn about our new initiative and help us support a new partner, the HC Harvest Food Bank, with a spice/seasoning drive. Bring unopened spices or seasoning packets for donation at the annual meeting. These spices will help local food insecure families add some flavor to the table! *Preferred: Italian seasoning, garlic powder, salt, pepper*



Support Your SWCD, Become an Affiliate Member

Each year the SWCD offers a wide variety of programs, workshops, educational talks, event displays, and publications on diverse conservation subjects. This is in addition to the valued conservation technical assistance and cost share programs available through the SWCD. To offer the most robust program possible, we invite you to support your SWCD by becoming an Affiliate Member. Your important financial contribution will help the SWCD continue to improve our work with agricultural, rural, suburban, youth, and other customers, protecting and enhancing our natural resources every day.

The funding received from affiliate memberships will be used to produce literature and publications, hold workshops, establish demonstration sites, and support our programs. The SWCD's current programs will be able to continue and hopefully expand and improve as we gain more support.

Donations of any level are greatly appreciated.

Who are SWCD Affiliate Members?

Affiliate members are concerned about the conservation and proper use of our natural resources.

Members include:

- Farmers
- Landowners
- Businesses
- Homeowners
- Teachers & schools
- Those who care about our environment.
- Community leaders

Membership Levels

Dogwood Member \$25

- 1 ticket to the SWCD Annual Meeting
- Recognition on website, brochure, & 1 newsletter

Maple Member \$100+

- 2 tickets to the SWCD Annual Meeting
- *Small* ad in all newsletters

Hickory Member \$300+

- 4 tickets to the Annual Meeting
- *Medium* ad in all newsletters
- Vendor spot at the Annual Meeting

Walnut Member \$500+

- 4 tickets to the Annual Meeting
- *Large* ad in all newsletters
- Vendor spot at the Annual Meeting
- Business logo featured on our website with a link to your website

Affiliate Membership

_____ Dogwood \$25 +

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Use my business name in print materials.

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Or pay online at: <http://www.hamiltonswcd.org/donateaffiliate-membership.html>

As allowed by law, this donation is tax deductible.

Drinking Water Quality & Your Well — Who is Responsible?

Ginger Davis, Conservation Administrator

Drinking water within Hamilton County can come from many different sources. If you live in an urban center, you may be receiving your water from municipal water lines to your home. Many people in our county rely on well water to provide water to our homes. This includes both homes in urban centers along with most people living in rural areas of the county. The water resources that provide us with our drinking water either come from a reservoir or from the water underground. Both sources can become contaminated causing us undo harm. If you rely on water from water lines, your water has a water treatment facility with an operator that keeps a close eye on what is in the water. You can still have issues with copper and lead from plumbing within your house if your house was built prior to 1986. Look for blue green staining from leaks or below the taps, this often is a sign that the copper is getting into your treated water.

If you live in a house that depends on a water from a private well, you are your own water operator. It is completely up to you to ensure that your home is equipped with safe water. Most people believe that groundwater is safe to consume, and often times it is. However, there are many things that can be in water that can make it unsafe. Many of those are from human impacts (spills of chemicals, old oil, and gas wells, leaking underground storage tanks) but many problems can come from natural sources too. Arsenic is a natural mineral found in rocks that can get into your well water.

It is important to have your water tested regularly to ensure your water is safe and remains safe over time, but what should you test for? And once you get the results of the test, how are you supposed to know what all those numbers mean? What if something is too high, how do you know what treatment options you have? Wow, owning a well can be a job in itself!

The SWCD offers a variety of assistance to encourage the proper management of soil and water resources in our county. As part of our mission we help to provide resources to prevent soil erosion. We provide soil tests and reports with results. Additionally, we provide resources to help control water runoff and protect surface water quality. We are currently expanding our services to provide more personalized assistance to well owners through water resource reports for your well.

There are several steps to becoming your own private well owner operator. The first step, is to assess the water resources and potential sources of contamination to your water supply. Step two, armed with the well assessment report, have your well tested once every five years for a baseline and annually for a select few contaminants of concern. Step three, have a report generated from your well testing results by the soil and water conservation district that gives resources for protection and treatment of your well water. Step four, take all the available information and manage your system and land. Step five, maintain the system and your land for the best protection of your resources.

With funding provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, in partnership with the University of Illinois, National Ground Water Association, National Environmental Health Association, and Water Systems Council, the Great Lakes Rural Community Assistance Program (RCAP) is now helping homeowners with their drinking water wells. Cindy Brookes with Great Lakes RCAP has been visiting homeowners in Indiana including Hamilton County along with several other states to conduct well assessments at no charge. Assessments include a visual, in-person inspection of the well for proper sanitary seals, well cap screens, casing condition, source water vulnerability, and other items related to well performance. The assessments are intended to provide homeowners with feasible solutions for identified issues, and can also help homeowners access federal, state, and other funding available for well construction or repair. For more information regarding these programs visit the RCAP website at www.glracap.org. Contact Hamilton County Soil and Water at soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov or call us at 317-773-2181 for further information or to get started in the program.



Calling all Hamilton County Well Drillers and Treatment Suppliers

Are you a well water resource professional who provides products or services to Hamilton County well owners? We want to hear from you. We are putting together a list of resources for our communities and need to know you are out there. Contact us at soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov or call us at 317-773-2181.



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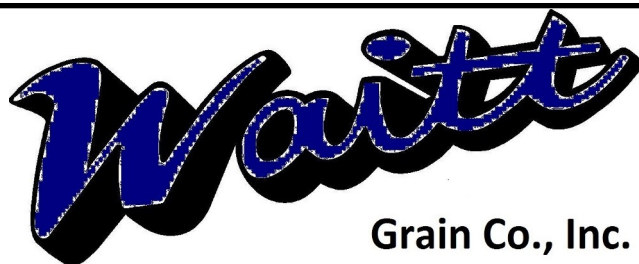
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Urban Conservation Spotlight

Claire Lane, Urban Conservationist



2017 Cost Share Deadlines—Free Assistance Available

The SWCD cost share and Heartland cost share programs will have 2017 deadlines of April 4th and August 3rd. These programs offer financial assistance on a variety of conservation practices that promote clean water, healthy soil, wildlife habitat, and pollinators. A site visit and coordination with SWCD staff is typically required before submitting an application so contact the district well in advance if you are interested. As always, free site visits and technical assistance on a variety of conservation practices are available from your SWCD. Learn more about practices covered and the details of the programs at www.hamiltonswcd.org.

Hamilton County Garden Network Launch

We are excited to announce the upcoming inaugural meeting of the Hamilton County Garden Network! Representatives and managers of community gardens in the county are invited to join us on Wednesday, February 22 at 6:30pm at the 4-H Grounds Annex Building (2003 E. Pleasant Street in Noblesville.) The HCGN will meet on a quarterly basis. The meetings will include special speakers and information, technical assistance and advice, networking time with other community garden managers, and more. If you would like to attend the meeting or if you have questions, please call (317) 773-2181 or email cara.culp@hamiltoncounty.in.gov.

Free Technical Assistance for Urban Gardens

The HCSWCD's new urban agriculture initiative offers free technical assistance to all urban gardens within Hamilton County, whether it is a container, backyard, community garden, or urban farm. The free technical assistance offers consulting for new and existing gardens with site planning, pest, weed, nutrient, soil, and irrigation management, and other needs as they relate to urban agriculture.

Urban gardens have the potential to increase biodiversity while also enhancing soil and water quality, making it a vital component of Hamilton County's conservation hopes. In addition, like in many towns and cities across America, urban gardening has played an important role in community health through an increase in relational capital and an increased sense of place.



Urban agriculture conservationist, Andrew Fritz, at a garden site visit with David Allen, community manager at Carmel Woods Apartments

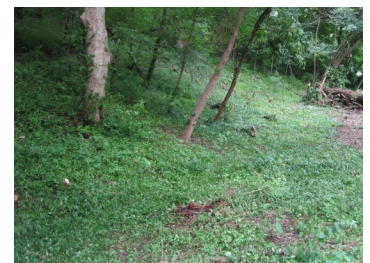
We don't offer to pull your weeds! However, an initial site visit at your garden will allow us to develop a plan or strategy to address the goals and challenges you may have. Additional follow-up site visits can be scheduled to ensure success of the strategy. Technical assistance is available now through the end of July and can be done even, and especially, through the winter months! To schedule a site visit, please contact Andrew Fritz at andrew.fritz@hamiltoncounty.in.gov or by calling our office at (317) 773-2181.

Urban Agriculture program featured in WFYI public radio story

In November, our urban agriculture program was featured in a state wide radio news story by Jill Sheridan of Indiana Public Broadcasting/WFYI. The story highlighted food insecurity across Hamilton County and Indiana and the district's unique approach to combating this issue through connecting gardens to pantries to increase donations of fresh vegetables. You can read or listen to the story online on the urban ag page of our website or at: <http://www.wfyi.org/news/articles/garden-to-pantry-indianas-fight-against-hunger-evolving>.

Invasive spotlight: Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

Wintercreeper is an aggressive perennial woody vine/groundcover that spreads prolifically in sun, shade, and many soil conditions. Winter creeper is native to Asia and was introduced to the US via the landscape trade. It damages natural and suburban areas by out competing and eliminating native ephemerals and other flowers. The vine can kill mature trees and shrubs. Wintercreeper is an evergreen so it is easily identified even in winter. Control is no easy task. Hand cut vines at the base and apply a Glyphosate herbicide to the cut stump in late winter. Hand control via pulling for small infestations can be effective but left roots will re-sprout. Learn more about wintercreeper and control methods on the Invasive Species page of our website: www.hamiltonswcd.org/invasive-species.html.



Reducing the Maintenance Cost of Ditches with Two Stage Ditches

Ginger Davis, District Administrator

Would you be willing to sacrifice some land on each side of a stream or drainage ditch to ensure that the stream did not erode away your land? Often these areas would be lost from streambank erosion during floods. There is a way to design a drainage ditch using a conservation practice known as a two-stage channel that can alleviate the need for constant dredging, help to filter the water by giving nutrients more time and space for removal, provide access to wildlife habitat, and stabilize the channel so that massive land losses during floods are reduced.

Agricultural and drainage channels are often constructed or maintained as traditional trapezoidal ditches using maximum holding design techniques. These ditches are generally channelized and disconnected from their floodplains, which results in unstable banks, and high sediment and nutrient export. In addition, natural ecological functions are normally not a consideration in the design of standard drainage channels. This two-stage channel system incorporates benches that function as flood plains and attempts to restore or create some natural alluvial channel processes. These natural processes will slow the water erosion, but increase the capacity along the benches allowing for floodwaters to be contained. However, these two-stage channels are not an exact copy of natural streams, as the width of the benches is often small due to the confining geometry of the constructed channel and the sacrifice of the landowner.

The way we manage our lands can often cause the nutrients in drainage tiles, ditches, and in streams to increase. But often these are necessary to combat other issues with plant growth, establish vegetation as erosion control, or because we use the wrong treatment when we can't figure out what is causing the plant's stress. Reduction of nutrient runoff through prevention is always the best first approach to reducing the amount of nutrients to leave the land. Installing two-staged channels have been shown to reduce nutrients from tile drains during low flow periods while increasing the sedimentation by allowing particles to settle out on artificial floodplains during rains with higher flows.

Two-stage channels are designed to mimic the natural system in a smaller area than natural channel with floodplain. At the first stage, a small channel allows for enough velocity to minimize sediment deposition during normal or lower flows. The second stage provides bank stability, an outlet for subsurface drains, and capacity to drain the flow from larger storm events (see image). This approach can be considered one type of in-stream best management practice and, if properly designed, should require little or no maintenance. Improvements in ditch stability are projected to reduce the frequency and cost of periodic cleanout and maintenance of the channel. The reduction of cleanout and maintenance will improve wildlife habitat and cover and restore the ecological balance found in and around streams. The two-stage design likely will improve conveyance capacity, leading to lower water levels in the channel and less frequent out-of-bank flooding.

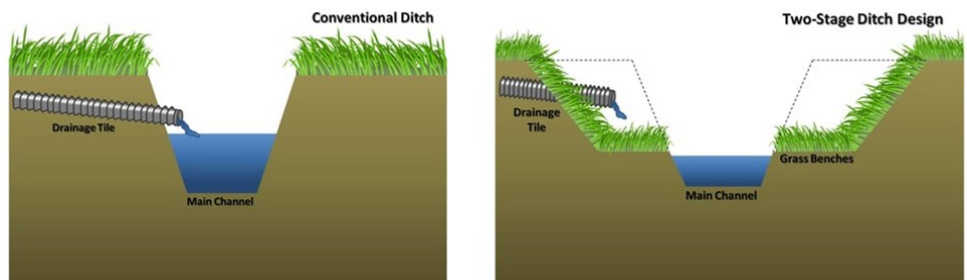


Image provided by: Indiana Watershed Initiative (IWI): A project funded by the USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

What's That Bug? What's That Weed?

Ever wondered what a certain weed is? Or what is eating your cabbage? Well now you can find out. The Purdue University Plant and Pest Diagnostic Laboratory is a central facility for receiving both physical samples and digital images submitted for identification of insects, plants, and plant diseases or diagnosis of plant and pest problems. This service is provided for the specialists and county extension educators of the Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service and Purdue University's research faculty, staff, and students as well as for private businesses and citizens of Indiana. For a small fee, that pest that has been hurting your production can be identified. For more information visit www.ppdl.purdue.edu or stop by the soil and water conservation district office.

Visit our website!
www.hamiltonswcd.org

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter
[@hamiltonswcd](https://www.facebook.com/hamiltonswcd)

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

Mission Monarch- Habitat Creation Workshop

Monday February 6th, 6pm at Cool Creek Nature Center

Learn how you can create a habitat for Monarch butterflies in your yard, church, business or neighborhood. Planning, maintenance, financial assistance and first hand experiences will all be shared. This is a collaborative series offered by the SWCD, HC Parks Department, and HC Urban Conservation Association.



Annual Meeting and Workshop

Thursday February 16th, 8am at HC Fairgrounds, Noblesville

More info pages 1 & 2

Get all the latest events
info on our website!

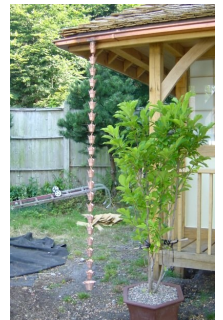
Hamilton County Garden Network Kickoff Meeting

Wednesday February 22nd, 6:00pm at HC Fairgrounds Annex Building, Noblesville

More info page 6

Conservation Creations Workshop—Build a Rain Chain

Monday March 27th, 7pm at HC Fairgrounds Dining Room— Join us to create a rain chain! Rain chains can replace a downspout and are beautiful, create calming white noise, ionize the air, reduce soil erosion and prevent damage to the foundation of your home. FREE and fun for all ages. All materials provided. Questions, contact Amy Shankland at 317-773-2181.



SWCD and Heartland Cost Share Program Application Deadline

Tuesday April 4th

More info page 6

If you wish to be removed from our distribution list, to make a name or address change, or to switch to email newsletters, please call 317-773-2181 or email soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov.

All programs and services of the Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, marital status or disability.