

Town & Country

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2016

Join Us— 2016 Annual Meeting & Winter Workshop

The 2016 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 2015 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. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged by February 11th.

Education Sessions: (descriptions on page 2)

Improving Sprayer Efficiency with Capstan Technology

(CCH and CCA credits applied for)

David Annis, Capstan Ag Systems, Inc. Education Specialist

Urban Wildlife- Creating Habitat and Avoiding Conflict

Megan Dillon, DNR Urban Wildlife Biologist

Grain Bin Safety

(CCA credit applied for)

Michael Williams, Co-Alliance

Urban Soil Health and Garden Cover Crops

Kevin Allison, Marion County SWCD Urban Soil Health Specialist

Thursday February 18, 2016

Registration: 8:30-8:55

9:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

Hamilton County 4-H

Exhibition Center

2003 Pleasant St. Noblesville, IN

\$10 per person (includes lunch)

Registration Form (due by Friday Feb. 11)

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



CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Board of Supervisors

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John South
District Engineer-Manager

Mark McCauley
Resource Conservationist

Claire Lane
Office & BYC Coordinator

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.

1717 Pleasant St. Suite 100
Noblesville, IN 46060
317-773-2181
soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov

Annual Meeting Session Descriptions

Improving Sprayer Efficiency with Capstan Technology (CCH and CCA credits applied for)
David Annis, Capstan Ag Systems, Inc. Education Specialist

David will be speaking on how Capstan's technology can enhance a sprayer's ability to perform by reducing overspray and increasing the efficiency of self-propelled sprayers. Capstan is a technology based company who specializes in creating new proprietary systems for the agricultural industry, particularly with chemical and fertilizer applications.

Grain Bin Safety (CCA credit applied for)
Michael Williams, Co-Alliance

Michael will be discussing grain bin safety, including a live demonstration using a grain bin prop. His presentation will include a discussion on: the primary reasons for grain entrapment, the force associated with grain engulfment, the time it takes to become engulfed, and the properties of grain. The live demonstration will engulf a participant in corn, allow audience to interact with participant in regard to the experience, and then remove grain from the bin and allow participant to exit the corn. The rescue portion of the demonstration will introduce a grain rescue tube to rescue team, instruct the rescue team how to use the rescue tube, utilize grain rescue tube to extract victim from the corn, and review with rescue team how the rescue was accomplished. An open discussion with audience, participant, and/or rescue team will wrap this session up. According to researchers at Purdue University, more than 900 cases of grain engulfment have been reported with a fatality rate of 62% in the past 50 years. In 2010, at least 26 U.S. workers were killed in grain engulfments – the highest number on record.

Soil Health and Conservation in Your Garden

Kevin Allison, Marion County SWCD Urban Soil Health Specialist

Indiana is on a soil health kick! Mimicking natural ecosystems with biodiversity, minimal disturbance and continuous living roots brings life to our agricultural soils. Kevin will be taking a holistic look at soil health and offer strategies to achieve it in your own garden through sharing of grower experiences with cover crops and soil conservation.

Urban Wildlife Habitat

Megan Dillon, Indiana DNR Urban Wildlife Biologist

During this talk, we will discuss the Indiana DNR's brand new Urban Wildlife Program and what it can do for you. This program was created to assist urbanites with their nuisance wildlife conflicts, encourage natural resource planning, and to create wildlife habitat in urban spaces. This is a great opportunity to learn about common wildlife conflicts that you may already be experiencing, both how to handle them and how to prevent them in the future. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and have them answered by your local Urban Wildlife Biologist.

2016 SWCD Board Of Supervisors Election Candidates

- Amy Jo Farmer
- Dustin Forrer

Join us at the annual meeting to place your vote!

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

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 2015 newsletters

Hickory Member \$300+

- 4 tickets to the Annual Meeting
- *Medium* ad in all 2015 newsletters
- Vendor spot at the Annual Meeting

Walnut Member \$500+

- 4 tickets to the Annual Meeting
- *Large* ad in all 2015 newsletters
- Vendor spot at the Annual Meeting
- Business logo featured on our website with a link

Affiliate Membership

_____ Dogwood \$25 +

_____ Maple \$100 +

_____ Hickory \$300 +

_____ Walnut \$500 +

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____

☐ Use my business name in print materials.

Send your membership form along with your check payable to:

Hamilton County SWCD

1717 Pleasant Street, Suite 100

Noblesville, IN 46060

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

As allowed by law, this donation is tax deductible.

Backyard Conservation Spotlight

Claire Lane, Backyard Conservation Coordinator



2016 Cost Share—Now Accepting Applications

Do you have an erosion issue on your property? Lack of tree cover or wildlife habitat? Poor soil quality? Are you just interested in seeing how you can improve water quality in Central Indiana from your property? The SWCD can help AND we are accepting applications for cost share assistance of up to \$2,000 for approved projects. Contact the SWCD today to see how you can participate and get financial assistance to get your project going. Application deadlines are in April.



Heartland Backyard Conservation Program

Sustainability Conference Coming April 2nd

The Backyard Conservation Program will be sponsoring a Hamilton County Sustainability Conference on April 2nd, 2016. Covered topics will include backyard conservation, beekeeping and pollinators, food preservation, extending your growing season, backyard chickens and more. More info will be posted soon on the SWCD website.

New This Year— Spring Plant Sale!

The SWCD will be offering plant kits this spring. These kits take all the guesswork out of creating a pollinator friendly garden at your home. Rain garden, prairie, and short stature kits will all be available featuring native plants that are excellent for pollinators like butterflies, birds, and bees. Order will be accepted in March. More info will be available soon online.

Indiana Grown Program Highlights Local Foods and Products

Indiana farmers, producers, processors and artisans, as well as retailers, grocers and restaurants are invited to join the re-vamped Indiana Grown program. Developed by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) and backed by some of Indiana's biggest names in the industry, Indiana Grown is a statewide, all-inclusive and collaborative program promoting Indiana-produced agricultural products. Producers can learn more about how to apply for membership on the Indiana Grown website. Consumers can locate Indiana Grown products with an online mapping tool for by looking for the Indiana Grown logo while shopping.

Learn more and find products here: www.indianagrown.org



Subsidized Rain Barrels for Noblesville Residents Offered Again This Spring

Details are being finalized for the 2016 Noblesville subsidized rain barrel program. Noblesville residents will be able to purchase a rain barrel at reduced cost through the SWCD. Expect program details to be posted to our website and shared through the City of Noblesville media channels soon. Program will likely start around Earth Day (mid-April) and will be while supplies last.

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*If one person can make a difference,
think what thousands of us can do, working together!*

Waitt

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Buying Land- Do You Know What You're Getting?

By John South, Conservation Engineer

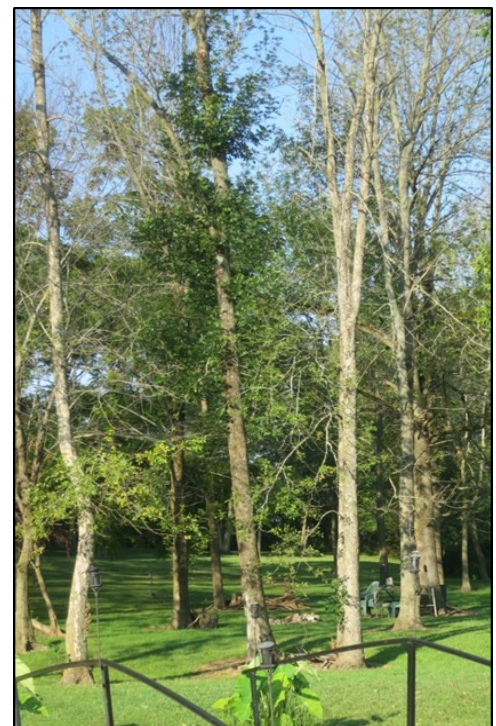
At the request of a potential lot buyer, I went to look at a nice wooded lot near Geist Reservoir. A small stream runs along its border, the lot is wooded and slopes nicely to the creek. Full utilities are available and soil conditions are good for building a home. The future owner had concerns about stream bank erosion. His concerns were justified. The tight creek bend and increased flow has caused raw bank erosion about fifteen feet high. The bank erosion will need to be corrected before the home is built. Access for construction equipment gets difficult or impossible after a lot is developed. After reviewing the site to determine what was causing the erosion I provided some stability options, estimated cost, needed permits and a list of engineering contacts to do the design. This additional cost to build a home may not be a deal breaker but my second observation might be. The lot buyer also placed high value on the tree cover. We discussed the potential for emerald ash bore to kill many of the trees on the lot. I suggested that he have an arborist identify the ash trees on the lot and be prepared to remove them prior to building a home.

I'm not a realtor and am poorly prepared to answer the "location, location, location" question, but I can help people better understand natural resource issues that affect future use of the land. Soils, flooding, forestry and drainage can be reviewed prior to buying property instead of fixing issues after you bought it.

Since the land is heavily influenced by soil conditions that's a great place to start. The **Web Soil Survey** (<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>) is accessible on the internet. Through this website you can locate your site, determine what the soils are and research the limitations and potential uses of the soil. Poor drainage is a common problem in the county. Twenty- five to thirty percent of the county consists of very poorly drained soils. These soils can have negative impacts to basements, septs, hay crops, gardens, tree planting, riding arenas and cause localized flooding but are often good sites for farm ponds. If you're purchasing a developed lot the drainage should be improved but the soils are likely to be heavily modified. Using the Web Soil Survey will give some clues about the underlying soil but won't accurately describe the current soil conditions. After problems are identified it may be necessary to get help from knowledgeable professionals. We have contact lists for soil scientists, drainage contractors, foresters and engineers. Buying land is a major expense. Seek out professional help to make good decisions. Utilize the services of the Soil and Water Conservation District to get a good start.



Stream bank erosion can be a liability
and expensive to repair.



Numerous dead ash trees have changed
the appeal of this property.

Wildlife, Forestry and Wetlands Development Field Day Planned

Ten years ago, twenty five acres of marginal farmland was converted to wildlife habitat by Joe Hilfiker. Using the planning and financial benefits from the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Joe was able to develop five wetlands, tree planting, native ground cover and food plots. The field day will tour the different practices lead by knowledgeable professions. This field day is scheduled for mid-June. Watch in our spring newsletter for additional information about the time and date. Interested people can sign up on the website or contact the SWCD office to be notified. (Call 317-773-2181 or email soil.water@hamiltoncounty.in.gov)



A natural wetland in Fall Creek Township

INfield Advantage Program Helping Local Farmers

In 2015, INfield Advantage program (INFA) was successfully launched as a rebranding of the Indiana On-Farm Network program. 2014 had seen the conclusion of the USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) under which the Indiana program was introduced in 2010. Indiana On-Farm Network was built using the model developed in Iowa a decade earlier and shared Iowa's program name. While our program still works closely with Iowa, the rebranding gives our program its own identity.

INfield Advantage continues to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the country after Iowa, and in 2015 we continued growing. In 2015 Indiana added eight new local groups, bringing our total number of active groups to 29. State-wide, over 800 fields, or nearly 60,000 acres, were monitored using the INfield Advantage tools.

The Hamilton County group continued working in 2015. Our group was formed by local growers to improve their nitrogen use efficiency in corn. This year, we had 13 local growers participate in INFA. Our local group is part of the state-wide program coordinated by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). More information about the program and previous years' results can be found at: www.INfieldAdvantage.org

INFA uses aerial imagery and the Corn Stalk Nitrate Test (CSNT) to determine nitrogen use efficiency in each field enrolled. Producers are not restricted on tillage, rotation, nitrogen form, timing or rate and may enroll multiple fields. The basic participation level of the program is called Guided Stalk Sampling (GSS). Growers may also use INFA to conduct more detailed on-farm research using Replicated Strip Trials (RST). At the end of the year, INFA supplies each grower with the aerial imagery and CSNT results from each field. Any fields with a Replicated Strip Trial will also have an RST report. Each grower also receives a regional report, with each field assigned an anonymous ID number.

Our local 2015 working group consisted of 25 GSS fields. INFA costs are funded through Indiana Corn Marketing Council/Indiana Soybean Alliance (ICMC/ISA) checkoff funds and is offered free of charge to producers. The total value of the imagery and lab work to our Hamilton County producers in 2015 was \$6900 (\$276 per GSS field). Our program is possible due to the coordination and support of local Indiana Conservation Partnership staff. Our group also received additional support from ISDA's INFA State Coordinator and ICMC/ISA. This in-kind support is roughly valued at \$4,000.

2016 INFA registration forms will be available by April 1. If you are interested in enrolling fields as either GSS or RST, please contact the Hamilton County group leader, Mark McCauley at 317-773-2181 or mark.mccauley@hamiltoncounty.in.gov.



Visit our website!
www.hamiltonswcd.org

“Like” us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/hamiltonswcd

Youth Leaders Create Positive Change in Carmel— You Can Too!

The Carmel Green Teen Micro-Grant Program is accepting applications for youth-led environmental projects!

Created, developed, and administered by teens, this nonprofit program empowers young people to take action by funding youth-driven projects that reduce pollution, conserve natural resources, and/or save energy.



Kids of all ages are encouraged to submit applications to receive funding. Previously funded projects include crayon recycling programs, tree plantings and community garden plot creation, reusable cup and shopping bag initiatives, butterfly gardens and more!

Learn about past projects and get ideas for your project at www.carmelgreenteen.org.

Applications are due by February 29th, 2016

If you are receiving this newsletter and wish to be removed from our distribution list, to make name or address change, or to switch to email newsletters, please call 317-773-2181.

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.