



# CONSERVATION FOCUS

## Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District

823 S. Round Barn Rd., Suite 1  
Richmond, IN 47374-4717

Phone: (765) 966-0191 Ext. 3  
www.waynecountyswcd.org

April 2017

VOLUME L ISSUE 1

### DISTRICT SUPERVISORS:

Eric Snyder, Chairman  
Cathy Becker, Vice Chairwoman  
Steve Hayes, Jr., Secretary  
Brad Bihl, Member  
Scott McCarty, Member

### OFFICE PERSONNEL:

Mindy Jordan  
District Coordinator/Treasurer  
(SWCD)

Raquel Baker,  
District Technician (SWCD)

LuAnne Holeva,  
Conservation Education Coordinator  
(SWCD, SWMD, & City of Richmond  
Sanitary District)

Zachary Lee,  
Watershed Coordinator (SWCD)

Mike Birchler,  
District Conservationist (NRCS)

### DATES TO REMEMBER:

Apr 22—Family Earth Day  
Celebration @ Cope  
Environmental Center

May (TBD)-Tox -A-Way Day

May 20th— Pond Clinic @  
Hayes Arboretum

June 17-24—Wayne County  
4-H Fair

Aug - Sept—Fall tree sale

From start to finish; laughter, smiles, great food and fellowship covered the Kuhlman Center back in February for the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. On that evening the SWCD Board & staff honored while recognizing just a hand full of Wayne County's outstanding land owners and youth, voted on a new Supervisor and said a farewell to a Supervisor. Over 200 Wayne County residents gathered to honor our award winners. We recognized Willard Newman as he humbly accepted the Outstanding Conservation Farmer of the Year Award while surrounded by family and friends. The 2016 River Friendly Farmer Award was presented (at the local level) to The Ward Family (Kristen, Jason, Weston & Barrett); Weston was super proud of his folks!

Ed & Nancy Pollock were honored with the Conservation Merit Award for the many years of generously donating of their time and aren't slowing down any in 2017. Wayne County's own Alex Logue earned the 4-H Conservation Achievement Award again, he is proof that hard work pays off. This year's Conservation Communications Award was presented to Dennis Brown. While wearing many hats, he is always there to assist with his knowledge. Steve Gettinger received the Goodyear Conservation Award for his accomplishments of conserving natural resources. Western Wayne was recognized for the Top Soil Judging Team of Wayne County.

Our captive speakers that evening were none other than Wayne Counties local FFA Chapters. Hagerstown, Northeastern Wayne and Western Wayne dazzled the crowd with a recap of all of their amazing achievements! We would also like to thank our evermore supporting award sponsors; Schrader Real Estate & Auction Company, Crop Production Services, RMD/Patti Ins. & Financial Services, Harvest Land Co-op, Greens Fork Alignment, Farm Credit Mid-America and The Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts. And to you who listen to the calling of preserving these lands for those who will come after us.



Russ Turner & Alex Logue



Joe Nocton & Steve Gettinger



Cathy Becker, Ed & Nancy Pollock

## East Central Regional Envirothon Contest—March 15th at Hayes Arboretum

It was a sunny, yet bracing cold day when 10 teams came to participate at this year's regional contest representing Connersville FFA, Hagerstown HS, Indiana Academy, Seton Catholic HS, Western Wayne FFA, and Zionsville HS.

In the morning, teams interacted with 5 speakers to learn more about natural resources and the environment. Jayson Waterman, District Forester with IN DNR helped students learn to use tree measuring sticks and diameter tapes. Stephanie McCurdy, IN DNR, took the students on a hike to learn more on wildlife. Zach Lee, Watershed Coordinator with Wayne County SWCD, presented on aquatics and showed off some macroinvertebrates. Raquel Baker, District Technician, Wayne County SWCD and Dena Anderson, Soil Scientist with USDA-NRCS worked on a presentation that covered both soils/land use and this year's current issue of Agricultural Soil and Water Conservation Stewardship. After rotating through the presentations the students ate lunch and then took five tests, one on each resource area.

The results of the scores on those tests produced the top three teams: Indiana Academy Team Turtles took 1<sup>st</sup>, Indiana Academy Team Squirrels took 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Hagerstown High School took 3<sup>rd</sup>. Due to having a small regional contest with under 12 teams only the top two placing teams are eligible to attend the Indiana Envirothon State Contest on April 26<sup>th</sup> at Camp Illiana in Washington, Indiana.

Programs like this are only possible with the help from folks that volunteer and sponsor these educational events for our future leaders and decision makers. Thank you for being a part of this great educational opportunity for them! *LuAnne Holeva, Conservation Education Coordinator*



Please SAVE the DATE!

**\* May 20, 2017 \* POND CLINIC**  
9:00 a.m. to noon *Rain or shine*

Hayes Arboretum will host the event at one of their beautiful pond sites. Speakers and topics to include Jonathan Ferris, Purdue Extension Educator, *Fish Stocking & Management*, and Brendan Hastie, Aquatic Control, Biologist/Applicator, *Pond Health & Maintenance*. Additional speakers and topics to be added. Light refreshments will be served, and please bring your lawn chairs. Watch for flyers to be mailed out the end of April.



*Pond site at Hayes Arboretum*

As we are in the spring rainy season, it seemed the right time to share this article once again, as the office will begin to receive increased inquiries on drainage, from agricultural concerns to the private home owner. During wet weather periods, the problems seem to magnify and tempers may or may not rise along with the water levels! Solving a drainage issue can be an easy fix, or become very time consuming, costly, and unfortunately, some issues only settled in court.

Locally, various Wayne County agencies may be of assistance when planning a project or answering drainage questions: County Surveyor, County Highway Department and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), among others. The SWCD will assist landowners with drainage issues by providing necessary contact information for permits when working in floodplain, stream or wetland areas, aerial maps, topography maps, and/or conducting site visits.

County Drainage Boards are another local contact to help in solving drainage issues. In Wayne County, the Board consists of the County Commissioners, with the County Surveyor, Gordon Moore, serving as the primary contact. The Drainage Board is responsible for the maintenance and proper function of all *regulated drains*, open and tiled, in the county. The Drainage Board will hear valid disputes brought forth by landowners, following proper contact procedure. The Wayne County Drainage Board meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month, at 1:30 p.m. If you are considering a project that involves a water body in Indiana (lake, pond, river, stream, creek, drainage ditch, and wetlands, including groundwater) you may



need a permit from a federal or state regulatory agency. The three agencies that have regulatory jurisdiction over Indiana's waters are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). For agricultural producers intending to work in wetland areas, the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) must be contacted for wetland determinations and compliance issues prior to work beginning. For additional information on drainage, and for agency contact information, please visit the Technical page on our Wayne County SWCD website at:

<http://waynecountyswcd.org/technical/drainage/>. Raquel Baker, District Technician

**SWCD MISSION**

*Dedicated to assisting and educating our citizens in conservation management through proper use of the soil, water, and natural resources of Wayne County for all generations.*

Check out our website!

[www.waynecountyswcd.org](http://www.waynecountyswcd.org)



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# Riparian Buffer Zone-The Protectors of our Streams and Rivers

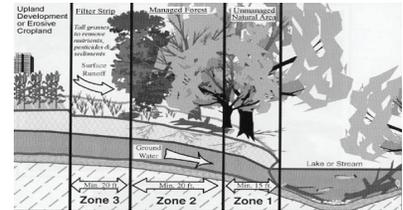
## **What is a Riparian Buffer?**

A riparian buffer zone is the most important component of a river ecosystem. It is an area of land that catches any sediment, nutrients, and pesticides that are running off of the surrounding area. This zone acts as a shield or the last protection for a river or stream. If a stream, river, or even ditch does not have an adequate buffer zone the water quality for that area will deteriorate. These riparian buffer zones can serve various functions not only for your farm, but also the environment.



## **Parts of a Riparian Buffer Zone**

A true riparian buffer zone has three zones, the third zone is a strip of grass that will serve as runoff control. It will absorb water and nutrients running off from the fields. The second zone will be a managed forest, the forest will dramatically slow down the runoff water and absorb any remaining nutrients and sediment that escaped the third zone. Lastly, the first zone is an undisturbed forest. This undisturbed forest will be composed of mature trees and understory plants. These plants will have an extensive root structure to stabilize the bank and absorb any remaining pollutants. They will also provide debris in the river that will serve as fish habitat. The mature trees also provide shade to keep the water from heating up. The cooler the water the better the water quality and the less likely for algae growth.



## **What can Riparian Buffer Zones do for your Farm?**

Most people tend to think a riparian buffer is just a strip of trees, but it is definitely more than that. A riparian buffer can not only help the environment but also your farm. A buffer zone can help with flood waters by soaking up water and slowly releasing the water as groundwater. This is important because the more water that soaks into the ground the less likely surface runoff will occur. The less surface runoff you have the less likely you are going to lose your topsoil. These riparian buffers can also provide habitat for game animal such as deer, quail, rabbit and other woodland animals. As you know all of these animals play a certain role in the success and failures of your land. Riparian buffers also play a big part in bat habitat. One brown bat can eat between 640-1840 mosquitoes in a single night. The more bat habitat we have the more bats will be attracted to the area. As a result, we will have less mosquitoes and other insects that could potentially cause harm to us or your crops. The best reason to keep or implement a riparian buffer is the aesthetics it brings to the area. Everyone likes a nice forest with a river or stream flowing through it. These are only a few of the many benefits that a buffer zone can have. When somebody takes out a riparian buffer it looks unnatural. If you are able implement a buffer zone that is 50 to 100 feet next to a stream you will see a difference not only on your land, but also in the environment.



## **A Local Problem!**

Taking care of a riparian buffer zone is one thing that we do not do very well in our watersheds. I see crop ground that is greatly impacted by floods and I just do not understand why farmers continue to throw money away because there is no way that they are going to gain anything from a portion of the field that frequently floods. If you have an area that frequently floods talk to Farm Service Agency or FSA and they will pay you a rate for implementing a riparian buffer zone. If you are interested in implementing a buffer zone contact the FSA, NRCS, and the SWCD for more information. We are located in a very important part of a river system we essentially set the quality of the water as it flows off our lands and into the Mississippi River. The water quality will not magically get better, but will only get worse as it flows down to the Mississippi River and into the Gulf of Mexico. The biggest thing to remember that are actions are not only affecting ourselves, but also the people downstream.

*Zach Lee, Watershed Coordinator*



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# Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District

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## Welcome and farewell of supervisors and staff



Brad Bihl

The Wayne County SWCD Board of Supervisors welcomes their newly elected member, Brad Bihl. The election committee collected, counted and reported to the attendees at the 69<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting back on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The close race was won by Brad, of Richmond. Also, that evening, Cathy Becker took another Oath of Office to serve on the Board of Supervisors as an appointed member for three more years.



Cathy Becker

## **We also want to wish Pam Earlywine and Zach Lee all the best!**



Pam Earlywine

Pam served on the Board of Supervisors for six years and has made a huge impact with her countless hours of volunteer work, and continues to give to the conservation community since serving her last term on the board.

Zach has been our Watershed Coordinator for the last two years. During that time, Zach focused on the Whitewater River Initiative, implementing Best Management Practices (BMP's) to generate better water quality in the West Fork of the Whitewater River Watershed.



Zach Lee