



THE STEWARD

Bartholomew County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Clifty Creek Watershed Project

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Points of Interest

*2010 Farm Bill Conservation Programs

*Conservation in your own backyard

*What is a rain garden?

*We all live downstream

*Conservation Farmer of the Year

2010 Farm Bill Conservation Programs By Adam Heichelbech, District Conservationist

The 2010 Farm Bill conservation Programs contain some significant changes that make them more appealing than in previous years. Programs with major changes that affect this county include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) The EQIP program is the premier working lands program that provides financial assistance to farmers and ranchers to address natural resource problems on their land. This program provides payments to landowners for practices such as:

Conversion to no-till

Cover crops

Strip Cropping

Watering systems for livestock

Manure management and storage

Precision nutrient management

Forest Stand Improvement

Conversion to Organic Farming

In 2010, EQIP payment rates will be raised to a 75% cost-share level. In previous years EQIP payment rates were 50%. EQIP will also offer assistance to remove invasive species from ag land and forest land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) The WHIP program will continue to offer assistance to treat invasive species on wildlife habitat as well as developing land that is currently ag land into wildlife habitat.

WHIP will assist with the removal of invasive species such as Japanese Honeysuckle, Asian Bush Honey Suckle, Autumn Olive, Japanese Stiltgrass, and others.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) (previously the S stood for Security), is now a program that offers a continuous sign up and all areas of the country are eligible to put in an applications. The NRCS has simplified the sign-up process and will fund applications once per year.

CSP offers payments for land operators who have achieved a high level of conservation on their land and want to go even further to enhance their conservation practices. If you think you are at a high level of conservation on your farm, you should consider applying for this program.

Contracts are for 5 years and payments are based on the amount of money approved by Congress and the number of acres in applications. Current CSP participants may sign up new ground that is not currently in a CSP contract. Another new aspect of CSP is that non-industrial private forest land is now eligible for CSP. It must also meet minimum conservation criteria and current CSP contract holders may enroll forest land, under their control, for a new CSP contract.

If you would like more information about any of these programs, please contact Adam Heichelbech at the local NRCS field office at (812) 378-1280 x3.

Conservation in your own backyard, rain gardens and more! By Cheryl Wright

Farmland is usually what comes to mind when most people think of areas where conservation is practiced, but urban areas are also significant when it comes to conservation. In a world of limited natural resources, conservation is important for both urban and agricultural land. In order to maintain our quality of life and the health of the environment, even the smallest actions to conserve soil and water and improve wildlife habitat can make a big difference.

Many conservation practices can be installed right in your backyard and provide many benefits including: beautifying the landscape, providing wildlife habitat, controlling soil erosion, conserving water and improving water quality. There are many urban conservation practices that are available to landowners in Bartholomew County, including rain barrels, vegetative swales, permeable pavement, and roof runoff structures such as rain gardens. The Clifty Creek Watershed Project is able to cost-share on these urban conservation practices and more. Contact Christine Goldstein for more information on (812)378-1280 ext. 3.



WE ALL LIVE DOWNSTREAM



Everyone lives in a watershed! A watershed is the total area of land that drains into a particular water body such as a wetland, stream, river, lake, or sea. The choices that you make at our home do affect the rest of the watershed. Think twice about dumping oil into storm drains that may reach our drinking water supply or affect the wildlife in a near by water source. Think twice again about fertilizing your yard without testing your soil for its needs as the extra fertilizer can wash into your local stream. Consider planting trees or bushes along a stream or pond habitat if they occur in your yard to reduce soil washing into the stream and provide animal habitat. Or even consider building a rain garden of natural plants to help reduce the runoff from your roof and yard. Every choice you make affects the watershed, so make wise choices for your watershed today. Bartholomew County has two watersheds that make up the majority of the counties land; Clifty Creek and Flatrock-Haw Creek. If you are interested in helping to improve our watersheds, please call Heather Siesel at 812-378-1280 ext 3.

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What is a rain garden - by Cheryl Wright

A rain garden is a shallow landscaped area in your yard. Usually planted to wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and other native plants, a rain garden is an attractive option for many homeowners because it allows them to beautify their lawns while reducing rain runoff. It can be planted in a variety of styles, from flowering plants to attract insects and wildlife to lower maintenance shrub designs.

A rain garden can be designed to capture rain water from your roof, lawn, sidewalks or driveway. By catching storm water, filtering it and allowing it to slowly soak back into the soil, rain gardens help prevent pollutants from entering storm drains, ponds and streams. Rain gardens not only remove pollutants from storm water but also decrease the volume of storm water itself, helping to improve water quality in your watershed.

Conservation Farmer of the Year - Is your neighbor doing a good job of conserving the natural resources on his or her farm? The Bartholomew County SWCD is accepting nominations for the Conservation Farmer of the year award. The SWCD uses these nominations to recognize farmers who utilize conservation practices to protect their soil and water. If you know someone who has been a good steward in the last year please stop by the office to fill out a short nomination form so that they can be recognized for their good stewardship.



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Cover Crops Can Help Your Farm Operation – by Christine Goldstein

Cover crops are a great practice that has had increased participation over the past 3 years. Common cover crops used in this area include annual ryegrass and winter wheat. They are beneficial by decreasing compaction and increasing water infiltration and organic matter. Though it may take more than one season to see all of the benefits over time they also can help improve crop yields. One way to seed cover crops is aerial seeding. This method has been shown to be a successful way to plant cover crops and helps when it is too wet to seed them with other methods. Also, the cost of aerial seeding is similar to the cost of drilling in most cases. If you live in the Clifty Creek Watershed we can help you with your practice costs. EQIP funding is also available to implement this practice through the local NRCS office.

Not only can we cost-share on cover crops the Watershed Project has a wide variety of practices that can be cost-shared on including both rural and urban practices. With most conservation practices the Watershed Project can pay 75 percent of project costs up to \$10,000 per practice. Some potential agricultural practices include cover crops, nutrient and pest management plans, pasture and hay planting, variable rate equipment modifications, and several livestock practices. Potential urban practices include rain barrels, rain gardens, and tree/shrub establishment along a stream section.

Conservation practices are techniques that are used to reduce the potential damage to natural resources from human activities. The program is available to residents and communities located in the Clifty Creek Watershed and all segments of the community are encouraged to participate. Examples of potential participants include farm operators, livestock owners, and urban and suburban residents.

If you would like more information about these or other projects please contact Christine Goldstein. Christine can be reached at (812)-378-1280 ext. 3 or christine.goldstein@in.nacdn.net. You can also visit our website: www.clitycreek.org.

Conservation Reserve Program By Adam Heichelbech, District Conservationist

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) offers financial assistance in the form of cost share and rental payments for eligible land to be enrolled in conservation buffers, grassed waterways, and wildlife habitat, and wetlands. CRP is one of the most popular conservation programs in Bartholomew County as it is used to install 20-40 grassed waterway projects, and hundreds of acres of filter strips, riparian buffers, upland bird habitat, and marginal pasture buffers.

In 2009, Bartholomew County saw its first CRP project that assisted with installing a conservation buffer along a stream in a pasture. In addition to assisting with the seed for the buffer and paying a rental payment for the lost production on that ground, CRP paid 90% of the cost of an alternative watering system for the livestock. This included a gravity fed watering tank, fence to keep cattle out of the buffer area, a stream crossing and a heavy use pad for the water tank.

One new practice that CRP will offer beginning in 2010 is a constructed wetland. Have any ground that was damaged in the 2008 flood? A CRP bottomland hardwood planting may be a good solution to getting an income off of the land and preserving it for wildlife habitat. CRP will share the cost of the tree planting and pay a rental rate for 15 years. If you would like more information on the CRP program please contact the USDA Service Center at (812) 378-1280.

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Bartholomew County Soil & Water Conservation District

We are committed to providing our customers with quality service through effective communication, professional integrity, and mutual respect.

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Reminder: The district holds it's monthly meeting on the fourth Thursday of each month at 5:00 pm at the district office located at 1040 Second Street in Columbus, Indiana.. The meeting is open to the public.

Annual meeting—Tickets are now on sale for the annual meeting—this years meeting is catered by The Rolling Pin bakery, the speaker will be Colonel Brian Copes with the Agribusiness Development Team in Afghanistan speaker and the Gilman O'Neal Conservation Farmer of the Year award will be presented. The meeting will be on February 4, 2009 at the Bartholomew Co 4-H Fair grounds, tickets are \$10.00 each and are available from the SWCD office and the Purdue Extension Office, along with any board member from each office. Doors open at 6:00pm, meal is served at 6:30pm and program starts at 7:00 pm.

If you would like to receive our newsletter by email please send us an email at : barth@bartholomewswcd.org and we will gladly add you to our email list.

☞ bartholomewswcd.org. SWCD website

☞ The district has 2009 plat books for sale at a cost of \$20.00 each. These are available at the district office.

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