



THE STEWARD

Bartholomew County Soil and Water Conservation District

Volume 10, Issue 2

October 2016

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Points of Interest:

- ♦ SAFETY
- ♦ Pathway to Water Quality
- ♦ Avoid Wetland Violations
- ♦ Snirt
- ♦ Harvest Residue

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Exposure to Grain Dusts and Molds

If you produce corn, soybeans, or other crops in Indiana, dust exposure while working is inevitable. Breathing in grain dust can affect the health and overall comfort for grain producers and others who work in the grain industry.

Exposures can occur:

- ♦ In the combine
- ♦ While unloading
- ♦ During drying and processing
- ♦ In bins
- ♦ In an area near any of the above situations
- ♦ While grinding/mixing grain and other feed products



Controlling Exposure Risks. Grain dust exposure and the associated problems and health symptoms are complex. Here are some specific things you can do to control your risk:

Have the correct and clean air filter in place when operating the combine. Use the appropriate setting on the blower in the cab whether you are using the heater or A/C. This will minimize dust concentrations in the cab. When replacing filters, make sure all gaskets are intact and that the air is being well-filtered.

Avoid direct exposures to dust whenever possible, regardless of your sensitivity. Stay in the cab when unloading. Use the wind to your advantage rather than standing directly in a cloud of dust any time grain is being moved.

Properly adjust your combine to minimize grain damage. This will help to also minimize the amount of dust being generated.

Wear a NIOSH- approved and certified “N- 95” dust mask (respirator) that fits you properly. Especially, if you find yourself working in a very dusty situation that cannot be avoided. CAUTION: Wear a respirator only if you are free of health problems, particularly with your heart and lungs. Respirators are only effective if you are cleanly shaven. Local health professionals can be a great source of information and can recommend the type of respirator that can be safely worn.

Avoid dust exposure if you have any chronic respiratory health issues, including asthma or other existing respiratory infections or conditions. Individuals who have these conditions should be alert for symptoms, even when working in a relatively clean environment like the cab of a combine, and should minimize their exposure to dust.

If feeling sick, call your health care provider. If you find yourself working in a very dusty situation (like loading or cleaning out a bin or getting a heavy, prolonged exposure near a combine in the field) and end up feeling sick a few hours later, call for medical advice.

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Get Down and Snirt-y about Soil & No-Till

“Snirt”- The combination of snow mixed with dirt. Most people see this piled high in the corner of parking lots. However, in the cold winter months, ‘snirt’ can also be prevalent in your farm fields.


In conventionally tilled fields, snow drifts and leaves behind bare soils in some areas and larger mounds of snow in others. This allows moisture to leave the soil in areas and over-accumulate in others. The higher piles of snow can delay crop growth. This can also cause problems in the spring with more wet patches in the spring. This blowing snow around the conventionally tilled soils collects dirt, turning it into “snirt”, and when those large snow piles melt, soil erosion is promoted.

In no-till fields, the taller residue, whether it be in the form of tall corn stalks, bean stubble, or fresh cover crop growth, keeps snow uniformly in place and insulates the soil from water evaporation. This aids in higher yields and reduces the amount of valuable soil being removed from your fields.

Harvest Residue

Proper residue management on crop fields is an important factor during planting. You may think it is too early to start thinking about the soil and ground condition of next year’s planting season but it’s never too early. As combine headers have increasingly gotten longer, upgrading to a different spreader may be required to get a good start on next year’s crops. It is important that the residue that is spread out the back of the combine is spread equally over the field. The residue that is left after harvest plays an important role in proper germination and nutrient distribution on your crop fields which can directly affect yields. Evenly distributing residue is

especially important to producers that practice no-till since they only have one chance for proper distribution. It is important to take the time to monitor the amount of residue being spread making sure it is being spread evenly and at your desired thickness.



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How can we help?

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Cummins Volunteers Plant Over 500 Native Plants at the Fairgrounds

On Wednesday, September 28, Cummins Volunteers came out to help plant over 500 native plants in the bioswales at the Pathway to Water Quality at the Bartholomew County Fairgrounds.

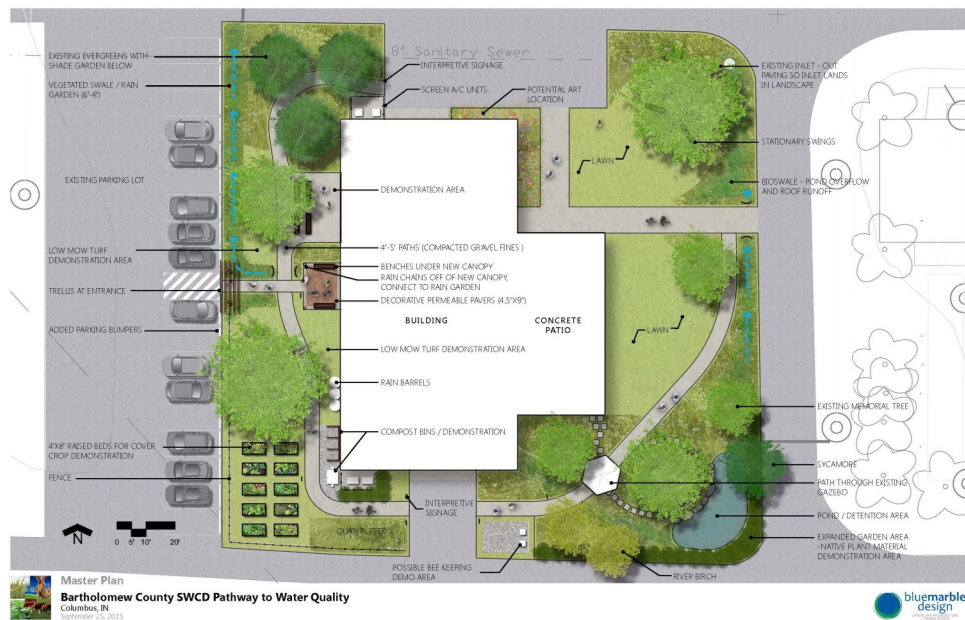
A Bioswale is a storm water runoff conveyance system that can provide an alternative to storm sewers. They can help slow the runoff from heavy rains and help the soil absorb the rain before it enters the storm drains. Bioswales improve water quality by infiltrating and filtering pollutants from storm water runoff. Native, thick plants and grasses help filter out the grasses. The Cummins employees planted many sedges, grasses, milkweed, and other pollinating plants.

Native plants are important to plant, because they need less water and no fertilizer. They are adapted to Indiana rainfall patterns and are more resistant to local pests and disease. Native plants are also extremely important to pollinators and other local Indiana wildlife.

The Pathway to Water Quality is a watershed demonstration that, when completed, will walk residents through practical displays and information about how proper management practices at home, on the farm, and in business can protect our soil and water resources. We want the public, both non-agriculture and agriculture-based, to understand how they can implement best management practices on their own land, such as native plants and bioswales!

If you, or a group or business you are with, is interested in volunteering your time, expertise, and/or funds for the project, please contact the district at the number or e-mail below. Your name will be added to the list of donors at the completion of the entire Pathway Project!

We look forward to involving the community with all stages of this project!





Clearing Wooded Areas or Bringing New Land Into Production



Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before breaking out new ground for production as doing so without prior authorization may put a producer's federal farm program benefits in jeopardy. This is especially true for land that must meet Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions.

Producers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan. Land determined to be a wetland has significant use restrictions.

Participants should ensure they are aware of any existing technical determinations for acreage they own or operate.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees, woody vegetation, or improve drainage to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not risk your eligibility for benefits.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary.



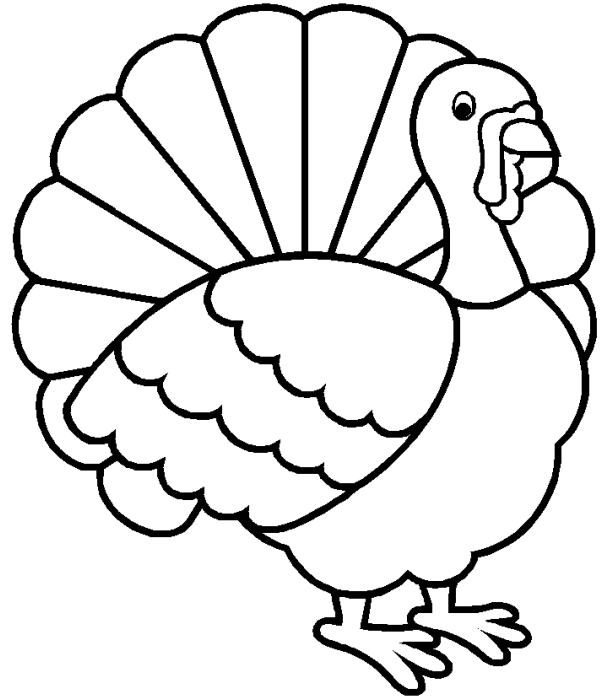
Bartholomew County Soil and Water Conservation District

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The district holds its monthly meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at 5pm at the district office located at 1040 2nd Street in Columbus, Indiana. The meeting is open to the public.



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