



Dubois County Soil & Water Conservation District

1486 Executive Blvd. Suite A • Jasper, IN 47546
812-482-1171 x3 • www.duboisswcd.org

Spring, 2013

The Conservation Conversation

Rain Barrel Sale

The Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the City of Jasper are sponsoring a rain barrel sale this spring. Rain barrels collect rain water as it runs off a home's roof and stores it for lawn and garden use.



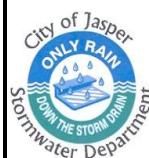
The 55 gallon rain barrel and base.

The barrels not only promise to reduce water bills, but also help reduce water run-off that contributes to stream and river pollution.

The SWCD is offering a \$30 cost share on the barrels. After the cost share, a kit including a 55 gallon barrel, downspout diverter, and barrel base will cost \$70. The 55 gallon barrel alone sells for \$20.

There is a limit of one cost share per household, but a person can order as many barrels as they need.

For more information or to order a rain barrel, contact the SWCD at 482-1171, Ext. 3 or email Mike Smith at msmithswcd@gmail.com



Or
City of Jasper
Storm Water Department
at 482-4255
or email
stormwater@ci.jasper.in.us

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New Staff Member, VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative, & Online Private Well Class

Mike Smith joined the SWCD staff as a project technician in late February, 2013. He will assist with the VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative; as well, as other SWCD projects. Mike, studied English and Environmental Science at Franklin College and is glad to have the opportunity to work toward what he considers a meaningful goal. He feels that his set of skills is a natural fit for encouraging area farmers to implement conservation farming practices.



VUJC Land Initiative Update

The VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative is beginning its second growing season. The Initiative is a partnership between Vincennes University's Jasper Campus and the Dubois County SWCD. Individuals from partner agencies including the NRCS, ISDA, IDNR, and many others have also lent their support to manage the property. Last year, the Initiative completed several projects guided by its three goals of improving natural resources, developing a research and education center, and developing ongoing programming.

At the beginning of the project, the soil health of the Initiative fields were tested. Throughout the rest of the project, these results will be compared to the health of the soil now being farmed under a conservation cropping system; as well as, the soil from a strip still under conventional tillage.

The WASCoB system that had been in poor repair has been reconstructed. The new system will further reduce erosion, in keeping with the Initiative's goal of improving natural resources. Keeping sediment in place improves the field's soil health and keeps water leaving the field clean. To further reduce erosion, borders of blended grasses are being planted around each field.

Last Fall, the Initiative fields were aerially seeded with a mixture of cover crops consisting of cereal rye, crimson clover, and Daikon radish. Cereal rye acts as a nitrogen scavenger, holding nitrogen left by the previous crop that would otherwise evaporate or wash from the soil. Crimson clover fixes nitrogen. Daikon radishes break up compacted soil with their large roots. All three crops build organic matter in the soil, improving its health. The corn grown this season will be tested throughout the year to allow the comparison of crops grown in conventional and conservation systems.

In the coming year, the Initiative will continue to work toward its three goals. Some of the projects already underway include: implementing the use of precision ag equipment, establishing an inventory of the property's forests, and installing a rain garden on the campus. The project is large, but so is its potential to benefit the community.

Do you have a well? Then you may be interested in the **free online Private Well Class** available to you on your home computer. The Private Well Class is designed to help a homeowner better understand how to properly care of their water well and to ensure their water remains safe to drink. By understanding the basic science of water wells and following best practices to maintain and protect your water supply, this class will provide the tools you need to ensure a safe water supply and help extend the life of your well. The following topics will be covered in the ten-part email course:

- Understand how groundwater moves and gets into your well.
- How water gets from your well to your faucet.
- Basics of well construction and the type of well you have.
- How groundwater and wells get contaminated.
- Common operations issues for well owners.
- How to care of and maintain your well, pump, and infrastructure.
- Testing your well water and ensuring water is safe to drink.
- Understanding test results and fixing water quality problems.
- Understand regulations that affect you.
- What to do in an emergency or equipment failure.
- Where to find help and get questions answered locally.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program—EQIP

To help farmers implement conservation practices; such as, nutrient management, reduced tillage, cover crops, and rotational grazing systems, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced in January over \$26 million available funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The first round deadline was January 18th, 2013 at the local NRCS office.

“The EQIP program offers farmers and forestland managers a variety of options to conserve natural resources while boosting production on their lands, “ Acting State Conservationist Kimberly Neumann said. “This \$26 million investment in conservation protects water quality and other resource concerns, and help the economy of Indiana’s rural communities.”

EQIP provides financial assistance to treat natural resource concerns on the land through a variety of conservation practices; such as, irrigation water management, reduced tillage, cover crops, field buffers, rotational grazing systems, and much more.

“Our District Conservationists are trained to help producers incorporate conservation systems into their operations for optimal soil health, productivity, and sustainability, while protecting natural resources,” said Neumann.

Additionally, NRCS offers special initiatives through EQIP, including:

- On-Farm Energy Initiative which helps producers conserve energy on their operations.
- Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative which helps producers install high tunnels designed to extend the growing season into the cold months, increase productivity, keep plants at a steady temperature, and conserve water and energy.
- Organic Initiative which helps producers to install conservation practices on certified organic operations or those working toward organic certification.
- Air Quality Initiative which helps producers address air quality concerns through establishing conservation practices; such as, cover crops, windbreaks, nutrient management, and other conservation measures that mitigate and prevent air quality problems.



Family Nature Fest Held at the Ferdinand State Forest on April 6th, 2013



Michael Crews of Lincoln State Park Nature Center, with a snake on his arm allowing kids and adults the opportunity to see and touch one of the different snakes that he brought with him.



Adam Dumond, Indiana District Forester, taking a group on a Forest Management Walk.



Enjoying the pancake breakfast which was prepared by the Boy Scouts Adventurers #185.



Ron Rathfon, Extension Forester, checking his Wildflower Man-

Family Nature Fest Sponsored by SWIASCD, cont'd



Fishing Buddies.



Radius Weisman, with the Patoka Valley Bassmasters, advises the group on fishing techniques



Let's go fishing!



Dan Werner explains how to grade logs and how to get the most lumber out of each log.

Invasive Plant Species Information

Southern Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area is a partnership between several federal and state agencies, organizations, and universities aimed at coordinating efforts and programs to address the threat of invasive plants.

The 37 counties in the southern 1/3 of the state of Indiana are within the CWMA area. Southern Indiana is known for its natural resources, recreational resources, and beauty. Invasive plants are a serious threat to all of these.



An invasive plant is one that is not native to the area, but has been introduced, is starting to spread, and is causing damage to the natural environment. Since these plants are in a new environment, free of natural predators, parasites, or competitors, they often spread quickly. These large populations can out-compete and displace native species, or can reduce wildlife food and habitat. Some species can also disrupt vital ecosystem functions like a nutrient cycling or soil decomposition. Other invasive plants cause economic damage to agriculture. They can harm or kill crops, clog equipment, and contaminate produce. Some invasive plants can even cause direct harm to humans or domestic animals.

The simplest thing anybody can do to get involved is to be aware of the issue and not plant or spread invasive species. Learn to identify the major invasive plants in your area. Check to see if a plant is invasive before purchasing or planting it. Do not empty aquariums or dump house plants into the wild. Be sure to clean your shoes, brush off your clothes and remove any dirt from equipment after being in an area with invasive plants. Start a control program on your land. And talk to local groups, communities, or government officials about invasive plants.

It's important to think through a plan for managing invasive plants on your land before you start the attack. Without a plan, it's easy to underestimate the time and resources it will take to control a species and end up being overwhelmed, giving up in frustration. An important part of planning is to prioritize the work ahead of you, deciding what species you should start on first, and where you should attack first. That way at least you'll know that what you have accomplished was more important than what you didn't have time or resources to complete.

Before you start prioritizing, though, you need to know three things:

- 1) First, know what you have. Use a good field guide or a knowledgeable botanist friend to double-check that you've identified a real invasive plant, rather than an innocent look-a-like.
- 2) Know how much you have. Map the invasive plants, circling each area of infestation and estimating what percent within the circled area is invasive species versus native.
- 3) Know what you want. This may be very easy for you or very difficult. Decide what you want most to protect on your land.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- www.invasivespecies.in.gov—has information on what's happening in Indiana.
- www.inpaws.org - INPAWS website has brochures on invasive plants in Indiana and landscaping alternatives.
- www.sicim.info - Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management
- <http://www.btny.purdue.edu/weedscience/> - Purdue Weed Science website

Upcoming Spring Events

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

PURDUE EXTENSION

GRAZING 102

June 7th & 8th, 2013

Southern Indiana Purdue Ag Center, Dubois, IN

What is Grazing 102? It is a program designed to help producers understand important concepts needed to make a management-intensive grazing program work for their own operation.

What will be discussed in Grazing 102?

Understanding Plant Growth and Development, Fencing Systems, Soil Fertility, Forage Identification and Use, Watering Systems, Forage Economics, Extending the Grazing Season, and Determining Forage Needs. There will also be hands-on activities, pasture walks, and field tours.

What are the program times of Grazing 102?

Friday, June 7th at 1-6pm EDT and Saturday, June 8th at 8am-4:30pm EDT

What is the cost of attending Grazing 102?

\$50 will cover the cost of reference materials, speaker notes, management tools, drinks, snacks and lunch on the second day. Additional individuals from the same operation may attend of \$25 but will not receive reference material or management tools.

Questions? Contact Jason Tower, towerj@purdue.edu, 812-678-4427

The 2013 Garlic Mustard Pulling Challenge has Begun!

Garlic mustard is an invasive species that accidentally spread from settler's gardens in New York state in the early years of our country. It spread prolifically and starves native species of light and nutrients. The garlic mustard plants can have viable seeds for up to 5 years.

The 13th Annual Garlic Mustard Pulling Challenge is a volunteer competition held by The Stewardship Network. For more information, contact Alex Wardwell at www.sicim.info or awardwell@dnr.in.org. You don't have to weigh the bags but just report the number and size of the bags pulled! Now is the perfect time to pull Garlic Mustard as the rosettes are up and getting bigger by the day and the second year plants are flowering. It is important to pull Garlic Mustard before it begins to produce seeds since you might further spread the seed as you pull and move the plants.

To learn how to identify and remove Garlic Mustard, visit www.StewardshipNewtork.org/2013Challenge.

So get outside, have fun, and start pulling!

Surface Mining Soils & Reclamation Field Day

Thursday, June 27th, 2013

8:30am—4pm EST

Solar Sources, Inc.

Shamrock Mine, Ireland, IN

Join us and make plans to attend this very informative event geared to helping producers get the most out of their reclaimed mine land. Included in the day's agenda is a Panel Discussion. This panel is for encouragement of interaction among presenters and attendees in order to find answers to questions old and new, solutions for problems old and new, and to pose new questions, too!

For further information contact:
Bob Jones, IN Division of Reclamation
at 812-665-2207

Or

George Boyles, Solar Sources, Inc.

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 22-27 Earth Week Activities (VUJC)

April 26 Arbor Day

May 21 Dubois County Speech &
Demonstration Contest (Bretzville)

July 14-20 Dubois County 4-H Fair
(Bretzville)

August 2-18 Indiana State Fair
(Indianapolis)

September, Tree Care Workshop
(more information will be coming at a
later date)



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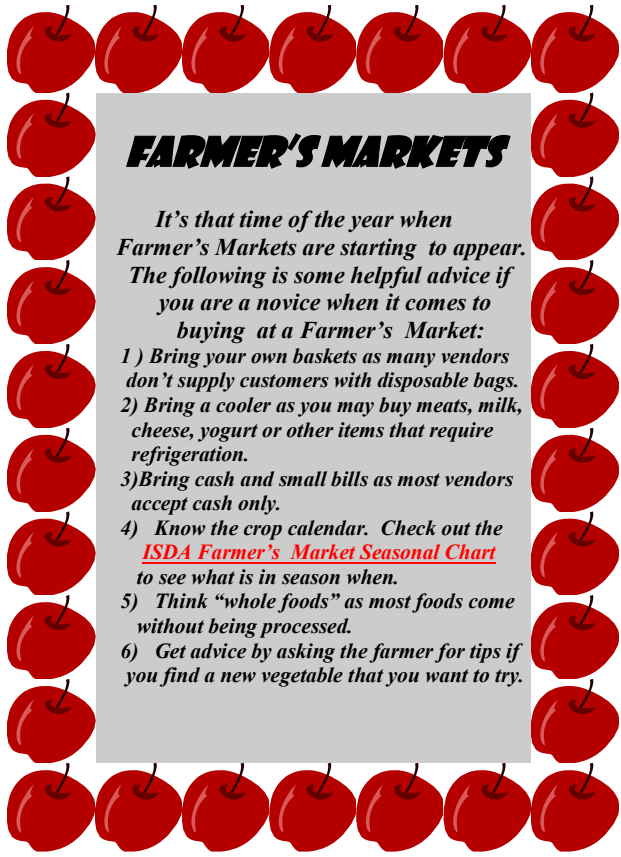
The Conservation Conversation

OFFICE HOURS: MON-FRI 8 AM TO 4 PM

OFFICIAL BUSINESS NEWSLETTER

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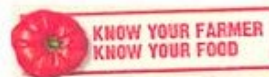
FARMER'S MARKETS

It's that time of the year when Farmer's Markets are starting to appear. The following is some helpful advice if you are a novice when it comes to buying at a Farmer's Market:

- 1) Bring your own baskets as many vendors don't supply customers with disposable bags.
- 2) Bring a cooler as you may buy meats, milk, cheese, yogurt or other items that require refrigeration.
- 3) Bring cash and small bills as most vendors accept cash only.
- 4) Know the crop calendar. Check out the [*ISDA Farmer's Market Seasonal Chart*](#) to see what is in season when.
- 5) Think "whole foods" as most foods come without being processed.
- 6) Get advice by asking the farmer for tips if you find a new vegetable that you want to try.

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack spoke at the Maine Medical Center on March, 14th, 2013:

"We have been very much involved in expanding farmers markets. . . There's been a 68 % increase in farmers markets since I became Secretary in large part because myself and the Deputy, Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, have worked on a program called *Know your Farmer, Know Your Food*. It is designed to create and help promote local and regional food systems. This is an important component of rebuilding a rural economy. Not everyone can sell their wares on the commodity market and make it. Some of these smaller producers have to have the ability to sell directly to a consumer that they can see. Farmers markets provide that opportunity."



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