



**Dubois County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
1486 Executive Blvd. Suite A Jasper, IN 47546  
812-482-1171 x3  
www.duboisswcd.org

# The Conservation Conversation

Winter 2024

## Annual Meeting Speaker

This year's annual meeting speaker is from The Talon Trust. Their program will be an enlightening experience with 1-3 live raptors. The program offers up-close, uncensored experiences with these magnificent predators, perfectly adapted to survival in the wild. The Talon Trust, Inc. is dedicated to conservation of native raptors through raptor rescue and rehabilitation, and public educational experiences. They are headquartered in Evansville, IN. They were founded by President Lauren Norvell in 2013 as an Indiana nonprofit organization and a 501c3 public charity.

They rescue injured, sick, and orphaned birds of prey. It is part of their mission to rescue them from danger, tend to their injuries, illnesses, or developmental needs, and rehabilitate them until they are healthy enough to be on their own again. Their ultimate goal is always to release them back to the freedom of the wild where they belong. All birds are cared for and housed on private property.

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 13th at 6pm at the Huntingburg Event Center. Arnie Welp of St. Anthony is catering, and desserts will be provided by Joyce Hopf of Pies Plus More. To RSVP call the Dubois SWCD office at 812-482-1171 ext. 3 and ask for Veronica. Tickets are \$15. Please RSVP by January 29. We look forward to seeing you there!!!



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DUBOIS COUNTY SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# ANNUAL MEETING

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13TH, 2024  
HUNTINGBURG EVENT CENTER  
110 EAST 14TH STREET, HUNTINGBURG

6PM ET DOORS OPEN  
6:30PM ET DINNER & MEETING  
8:30PM ET CLOSING REMARKS

\$15 PER PERSON  
RSVP BY JANUARY 29TH

(812) 482-1171 EXT. 3  
DUBOISSWCD@GMAIL.COM

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
THE TALON TRUST



THE TALON TRUST, INC. IS DEDICATED TO  
CONSERVATION OF NATIVE RAPTORS THROUGH  
RAPTOR RESCUE AND REHABILITATION, AND  
PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES. THEY ARE  
HEADQUARTERED IN EVANSVILLE, INDIANA AND  
SERVE THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIANA REGION.





Picture taken at Jack Welp's farm - May 15, 2021. He was planting green into a 4-way mixture of Barley, Balansa Clover, Crimson Clover and Rape. This picture focuses on the Barley and Rape and is what will be seen in the LSI fields in 2024.

# LSI - Notes From The Field

This is what you should look for this spring in the fields at the VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative fields!

This fall after the soybean harvest, a mix of barley and fixation balansa clover were drilled into the stubble that remained in the fields. 2023 is the first time this mixture has been used at LSI; our inspiration came from ideas gleaned at the spring field day "Getting to the Root of Cover Crops" that was held at Jack Welp's farm.

There were several goals we kept in mind when choosing this mix. We were looking for a shorter stature cereal grain that will easily break down in the spring after planting. Barley will grow about 3 feet tall as opposed to the 3- to 6-foot-tall cereal rye. Cereal Rye also contains the most lignin of all the cereal grains so barley will break down more quickly, releasing stored nutrient to the growing crop. Lignin is a key structural material in the support tissue of most plants. Lignins are particularly important in the formation of cell wall because they lend rigidity and do not rot easily.

The other thing we desired was a good nitrogen fixer. All clovers are in the legume family and will fix nitrogen from the atmosphere. When comparing fixation balansa to crimson clover there are a few key differences. Balansa has a hollow stem, is crimpable and has a large branchy growth above ground. It can easily grow taller than 3 feet before it falls over, however cereal crops can help support this growth. Crimson clover on the other hand has a solid stem and is earlier to mature in the growing season and contains slightly more lignin. It is important to note that once clovers begin producing flowers, they stop fixing atmospheric nitrogen and focus their energy on seed production. Crimson clover will flower 10-14 days before fixation balansa clover.

An interesting fact Melissa picked up recently during a behind the scenes tour at Byron Seeds in Rockville, Indiana, there is a different variety of balansa clover that will mature earlier. Viper Balansa clover will set flowers 10 days earlier. This may be a factor to consider if you are a farmer looking to explore new cover crops for your farming operation.



# Indiana Grazing Bites- December 2023

By: Victor Shelton

Henry David Thoreau wrote in his book *Walden*, “If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.”

It is the time of year that I like to, at least momentary, reflect back on the year. What did we accomplish, what is better, and what could we have done differently? It was a challenging year, but we made it through and none of us are the worse for wear thus far. The winter feed supply could still possibly be a concern depending on the severity of weather to come and its duration. Extra hay is always a good insurance policy.



*Cover is important year round.*

Reflecting back, the big questions for myself are always; Are the livestock, forages and soil all getting better? Could things be more efficient? Did we spend money wisely?

Every year has its own challenges. About the time you think that you have everything figured out for your operation, surprise, something unexpected comes along. Most things can be worked around or adjusted as long as you keep your eye on the forages and manage accordingly. I am reminded occasionally to keep it simple. How exactly do we keep it simple? Follow a few simple rules that I've listed before – no matter the time of year.

1. Keep the soil covered with live plants – by doing so, erosion will be kept in check and the soil will be cooler, which is better for most forages and for reduced evaporation. You don't want to see any bare soil. Bare spots allow for increased evaporation, warmer than ideal soil conditions and space for opportunist weeds.
2. Maintain a good solar panel – which means, it takes grass to grow grass. We have to try and keep enough green plant leaves for photosynthesis, converting light energy into chemical energy. If the plants have been eaten down too much, energy for new growth is forced to come from stored energy in the roots if available, which is usually slower than photosynthesis. Like you have heard me mention lots of times – don't graze or rather don't let the livestock graze closer than four inches for most cool season grasses and not closer than six to eight inches for most warm season grasses. That is the shortest forages left, not the tallest. If you are leaving at least four inches, there will be quite a bit of forage left that is actually taller.
3. Provide adequate rest before grazing again. Everything needs rest, including forages. By maintaining good residual heights, or stop grazing heights, regrowth is generally quicker especially with adequate moisture. The plant needs enough time to regrow and express itself again before the next grazing event. Multiple removals during a short time frame or continual removal weakens the plant and actually reduces production. It also reduces new root growth and
- 4 lowers drought tolerance. So, grow it, graze it, then rest it – it is that simple.

# Grazing Bites Continued

We want the forage to be growing and producing abundantly during the growing season, and as much as possible in a stage and quality that is best for the ruminant livestock grazing it. The livestock know what forage is noteworthy and will seek it out first. If it is the quality they need, they will eat it readily and without hesitation – definitely a desirable species in the eyes of the consumer. When we let these same forages mature too much, which does happen, then forage quality is reduced along with intake. A small amount of the sward reaching maturity isn't that bad. It can help to build deeper roots, increase soil organic matter from increased amounts and turnover of roots, and help bring up nutrients and water from deeper in the soil profile. This is especially valuable to soils that could use some additional organic matter.

Keeping the soil covered during the winter months is also important. This helps to reduce erosion, increase infiltration and, if enough is allowed to remain, a good place to start grazing the next spring.

Fall and early winter grazing should be approached with care. Grazing before the plants are dormant utilizes reserves that will be needed next spring. Quite a bit of the Midwest was under droughty conditions this fall and a lot of forages responded to this by going dormant a little early. Unfortunately, that also meant less forage to stockpile in many cases. Grazing crop residue, annuals, or the last hay regrowth within reasonable amounts, helps to delay that need to get back on perennial pastures. Earlier grazing, prior to dormancy, is advantageous if you are planning on frost-seeding clover by reducing its competition in the spring.

Lastly, when possible, graze the paddock in a manner that will leave nutrients in place and replace as needed. Smaller allocations tend to have less nutrient transfer than the grazing of large pastures. This is especially true when there is a long walking distance to water, mineral and/or shade. Isolated areas without one or more of the mentioned will be grazed for a shorter period and the ruminating and resting periods afterwards rarely occur unless forced to. This process therefore slowly moves nutrients from one spot to another as manure is more likely to be deposited on the more frequently used areas. Enough with that for now, grow it, graze it, rest it. Maintain cover, don't over graze it and let it grow back before grazing it again.

I'd like to hear from you. What do you find challenging about grazing management? Email me at [grazingbites@gmail.com](mailto:grazingbites@gmail.com). Remember, it's not about maximizing a grazing event, but maximizing a grazing season! Keep on grazing!

# Forest Management for the Private Woodland Owner



Forest Management for the Private Woodland Owner” series will run eight consecutive weeks on Monday evenings from February 5 through March 25, 2024 from 6-9 PM EST (except for Saturday morning field trip, which will run from 9 -12 AM), at the Southern Indiana Purdue Agricultural Center (SIPAC), 11371 E. Purdue Farm Road, Dubois, IN. Ron Rathfon, Purdue Extension forester; Purdue Extension staff; and state and private sector foresters will be the instructors for this event.

Course topics include forest resources and identification, biology and ecology, forest cultivation, managing woodland investments, timber marketing, wildlife management, and assistance for landowners. A field trip will also be included in the course. Class size is limited to 40 registrants on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The registration fee is \$50 per person, or \$30 per couple/family sharing materials. Required

registration form and course brochure are available at:

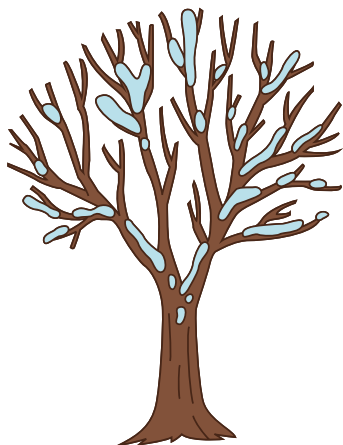
<https://extension.purdue.edu/county/dubois/forestry-short-course-brochure-2024.pdf>



*We hope everyone had a  
wonderful holiday season!  
From Dubois SWCP*



## Tour of Opportunities - October 12



Data Driven Discussions- December 4

## Upcoming Events

SWCD Annual Meeting -Tuesday, February 13th @ 6pm

Forest Management for Private Woodland Owners-  
February 5-March 25, Mondays

For More Information Visit our Website: [duboisSWCD.org](http://duboisSWCD.org)





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### Rental Equipment Available

#### Dubois County SWCD

#### **No-Till Drill- \$12 Per Acre, \$100 Minimum**

Great Plains No-Till drill has a seeding width of 7 feet, and can be used to plant soybeans, wheat, legumes, grasses, etc. It can also be used to plant native or warm season grasses.

#### **No-Till Seeder- \$12 Per Acre, \$100 Minimum**

Great Plains 9' No-Till Seeder

#### **Stapler/Staples- \$10/Rental Fee, \$50/box of 1,000 staples**

This stapler is for erosion control blankets. The plunger simply pushes the staples into the ground. Buy staples and the stapler rental fee is waived.

#### **Spinning Jenny- No Rental Fee**

Use to install high-tensile wire fences. Load with wire and set on the ground. Walk away pulling the end of the wire and it will spin, preventing your wire from tangling. Slow down gradually before stopping to prevent over-spinning and tangling. Can also be used to rewind wire in the field.

#### **Tile Flags- \$12.00/bundle of 100**

Flags on 36" wire staff can be used to mark underground power lines or surveying jobs.