Dubois County Soil & Water Conservation District

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812-482-1171 x3 • www.duboisswcd.org

Fall, **2016**

The Conservation Conversation

Greener Pastures Field Day

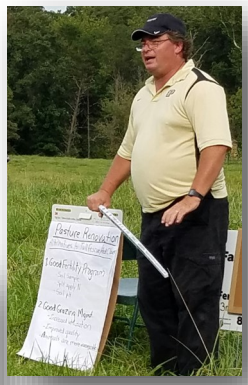
The Dubois-Perry-Spencer Greener Pastures Field Day was held on August 23rd, 2016 in a idyllic location north of Holland, Indiana on the Marion McMurtrie Trust Farm.

The temperatures and rain clouds were kind to the participants as they listened to four different speakers. Dr. Jeffrey Lehmkuhler, from University of Kentucky came back to his home county to talk about alternative feed sources, annuals, cover crops, and crop residues. Robert Zupancic, USDA-NRCS, spoke about livestock watering systems. The topic of pasture renovations was given by Bret Winsett from Hood River Seed. Heavy use area protection construction was Susannah Hinds' topic. Hinds is also with USDA-NRCS.

A catered meal followed the speakers. Susan Kruger was the final speaker for the day. She is the granddaughter of Marion McMurtrie and led the group through the property's history and conservation efforts.

The hosts for the evening were the SWCD and Purdue Extension offices of Dubois, Perry, and Spencer Counties.

Bret Winsett, Hood River Seed, *"Pasture Renovations"* →



← Dr. Jeffrey Lehmkuhler, University of Kentucky, *"Alternative Feed Sources"*

Robert Zupancic, USDA-NRCS, *"Livestock Watering Systems"* →

← Susannah Hinds, USDA-NRCS, *"Heavy Use Area Protection Construction"*

Susan Kruger, *Landowner* ↓

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SWCD Staff

4-H Fair Week and Huntingburg Community Connect

This year, the theme for the Dubois County SWCD's 4-H display was 'Pollinators' with posters, informational sheets, and related giveaways.

Dubois County SWCD's booth at the 4-H Fair

Wednesday night of 4-H Fair Week was an event called *Family Fun Night*. Judi Brown, Patti Schroeder, and Morgan Devine are pictured preparing for the 'Pollinator' game. Butterfly shaped treats were given to each child who helped 'pollinate' flowers.

Fall Pollinator Garden—Fall is often thought of as a time when the busyness of the natural world around us starts to go quiet. When it comes to insects, however, there is a plenty of action to be found, especially on and around fall-blooming native plants; such as, goldenrods and blue asters. People concerned with pollinators will grow pollinator friendly flowers, protect bee nests and butterfly host plants, avoid pesticides, and spread the word about the importance and benefits of pollinators.

For more 'Pollinator Papparazzi' pictures, go to our website at www.duboisswcd.org

A young boy plays the 'Pollinator 'game at Huntingburg's *Community Connect Back to School Event* on Tuesday, August 9th at Central Christian Church.

Grain Dust Combustion

Any combustible material can bun rapidly when in a finely divided form. If such a dust is suspended in air in the right concentration under certain conditions, it can become explosive. A wide variety of materials that can be explosive in dust form exists in many industries; especially in agriculture.

"On average, there are 10 grain dust explosions every year in the United Stated causing damage, injury, and death," said Kingsly Ambrose, assistant professor in Purdue University's Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering. "Our goal is to raise awareness of the perils of grain dust explosion and reduce this number."

Grain handling facilities may receive, store, process and ship bulk raw agricultural commodities; such as, corn wheat, oats, barley, sunflower seeds, and soybeans.

Grain dust explosions are often severe, involving loss of life and substantial property damage. Over the last 35 years, there have been more than 500 explosions in grain handling facilities across the USA, which have killed more than 180 people and injured more that 675. Grain dust is the main source of fuel for explosions in grain handling. Grain dust is highly combustible and can burn or explode if enough becomes airborne or accumulates on a surface and finds an ignition source (hot bearings, overheated motor, misaligned conveyor belt, welding, cutting, and brazing). OSHA Standards require that both grain dust and ignition sources must be controlled in grain elevators to prevent these often deadly explosions.

For more information, read the OSHA Standard for grain handling facilities (29 CFR 1920.272)

To prevent grain dust explosions and fires, employers must:

1. Develop and implement a written housekeeping program with instructions to reduce dust accumulations on ledges, floors, equipment, and other exposed surfaces.
2. Identify "priority" housekeeping areas in grain elevators.
3. Belts for inside bucket elevators must have regular maintenance and cleaning.
4. Implement a preventative maintenance program with regularly scheduled inspections for mechanical and safety control equipment which may include heat producing equipment; such as, motors, bearings, belts, etc.
5. Minimize ignition sources through controlling hot work (electric or gas welding, cutting, brazing, or similar flame producing operations).
6. Install wiring and electrical equipment suitable for hazardous locations.
7. Design and properly locate dust collection systems and filters to minimize explosion hazards.
8. Install an effective means of removing ferrous material from grain streams so that such material does not enter equipment.

River Friendly Farmer Awards

Out of 58,000 farms in the state of Indiana, two farms in Dubois County received the statewide award for River-Friendly Farmer at the Indiana State Fair on Farmers' Day on August 17th.

Duane Hopf and Randy, Betty, and Aaron Mehringer of Mill Creek Farms and Ronnie and Matt Lueken were among the 54 farmers who received the River Friendly Farmer award from the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) for the work they do on their land to protect Indiana's natural resources.

Duane Hopf representing Mill Creek Farms with ISDA Director, Ted McKinney (left) and Indiana Farm Bureau President Randy Kron (right).

Mill Creek Farms and the Luekens have been using conservation management practices for many years. Some of these practices include no tilling, wetland restoration, using cover crops, improving wildlife habitat, using filter strips, WASCOBs, and grassed waterways, rotating crops, and building grade stabilizing structures. Using these conservation practices, they are doing everything they can do to maintain and protect the soil from eroding which results in cost savings and better yields.

Matt and Ronnie Lueken with ISDA Director, Ted McKinney (left) and Indiana Farm Bureau President Randy Kron (right).

Indiana State Department of Agriculture Director Ted McKinney, President of Indiana Farm Bureau, Randy Kron, along with State Conservationist, Jane Hardisty, IASWCD President Mike Starkey, and Meghan Grebner from Brownfield Ag News presented the awards to the winning farmers.

The River Friendly Farmer Award has been presented by the 92 local SWCDs and Indiana Farm Bureau, Inc. This year's group of award winners brings the total number of River Friendly Farmers in Indiana to 863 since the award began in 1999.

Patoka Cleanup Day

The Patoka Cleanup Day was another successful endeavor. Despite the threat of rain, more than 125 people worked together to pick up 2,060 pounds of trash plus 15 tires and 273 pounds of recyclables including plastic, aluminum, and other metals.

Group picture of volunteers

Trash loaded into trucks.

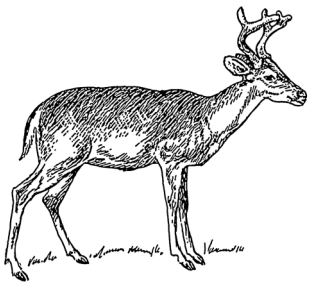
The volunteers were sent to ten different locations around the lake. Armed with safety vests, trash grabbers, latex gloves, trash bags, insect repellant, and water, they sorted the trash as it was being collected. Many people depend on Patoka Lake for clean drinking water; as well as, recreational activities. Patoka Lake Regional Water and Sewer District provides water to eleven southern Indiana counties affecting more than 100,000 people and the lake receives over 500,000 visitors annually.

Judi Brown, Dubois County SWCD Executive Director and Dave Howell working together on trash detail.

The Clean Up Day coordinators were greatly appreciative of the sponsors, donors, and volunteers.

Deer Damage to Crops

Deer can be very destructive. Deer damage is a natural hazard of the farming profession and should have the same consideration as insects and disease problems. It has been estimated that in the USA deer damaged a total of $100 million of agricultural crops and $750 million of forest regeneration. The landowner's goals and values influence their choice of deer control options.



Deer hunting is the best way to reduce the size of the deer herd and the amount of damage being received. Herd reduction requires the removal of does and cannot be achieved only through the harvesting of bucks. Large acreage that are not hunted offer refuge to deer and may aggravate the problem on adjacent lands. In general, deer herd reduction will occur when the number of antlerless deer removed on the property exceeds the number of bucks removed.

Wildlife damage permits are another option available to the landowner. If the herd cannot be reduced during the regular hunting season through sport hunting, provisions are available for obtaining permits from the DNR to removed deer which cause damage.

Fencing is an efficient method of controlling deer damage particularly in high value crops; such as, gardens, Christmas Tree plantations, fruit trees, and truck crops. There are many good electric fence designs including the simple one strand electric fence, poly-wire tape fencing, and high tensile electric fencing. The choice depends on the degree of protection needed. Fencing should always be applied before the damage problem in anticipated. Deer are excellent jumpers so permanent fences need to be at least 8 feet high to keep dear out of an area.

Tree shelters and wire cages have been successfully used in recent years to protect seedlings from deer browsing. The plastic tube type tree shelters come in 5-6 foot heights and provide protection from deer browsing during the first 2 or 3 years which allows the tree to become established. Wire cages can also be used to protect high value trees; such as, fruit trees. These cages can be made of concrete wire or other welded wire and reused after the seedling is no longer susceptible to deer browsing.

Repellent are often used when damage control is needed on a short term or limited area basis. Repellents may temporarily reduce the damage that deer cause to vegetation but will not eliminate it completely. Many home remedies; such as, human hair, soap, bloodmeal, and moth balls work on an intermittent basis and offer a smaller degree of control. Commercial repellents offer better control but often much be reapplied every 3 to 4 weeks or after heavy rains. Repellents usually have a displeasing taste or a disagreeable odor.

Other control devices and changes in farming practices which may be effective in controlling deer damage; such as, **barking dogs, flashing lights, and noise devices** can offer short term protection from deer damage. Christmas tree producers may find species; such as, Scotch pine and Norway spruce are less susceptible to deer damage. Full size fruit trees are less susceptible than the semi-dwarf tree. It is difficult to change deer feeding habits after they have begun, so it is important to anticipate when problems may occur.

Excerpts taken from DNR Wildlife Resources, 2003

High School Soil Judging Contest and Home Expo

Every September, the Dubois County SWCD hosts the annual Soil Judging Contest for high school students. The Soil Judging Contest educates students how to evaluate the soil and land use for both rural and urban applications. Four soil pits are dug 48" deep and 48" wide so a team of 4 students can individually judge the pits. Teams are required to evaluate each pit site for agricultural purposes and determine slope erosion, soil texture, depth, and drainage. Teams also evaluate the site for flooding hazard, soil stability, and depth to seasonal high water table and depth of bedrock.

Jeff Woodward was this year's soil scientist. The site was located west of Ireland on Darryl and Tricia Schmitt's farm. And the holes were dug by Terry Gress.

This year's team winners were: 1st) Gibson Southern; 2nd) White River Valley; 3rd) Gibson 4-H Green; and 4th) Jasper FFA Gold. The individual winners were: 1st-tie) Adrianna Mann, Gibson Southern and Deven Pohl, Gibson Southern; 3rd) Isaac Mordock, White River Valley; 4th) Kate Bloodworth, Gibson 4-H; 5th) Conner Sullivan, White River Valley; 6th) Joseph Loehr, Gibson 4-H; and 7th) Alexa Hopf, Jasper FFA .

Students judging the soil at Hole #4

Judi is shown setting up the display for the Home Expo which was held on September 16 & 17th at St. Joe's Parish Hall.

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*Check out the new '**Pollinator Papparazzi**'*

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