

IDEM 319 GRANT - HELP FOR THE YELLOW RIVER

The Marshall County 319 Implementation Grant for the Headwaters Yellow River Watershed is heading into its third and final year. Coming up are more educational activities, field days, and of course, there are some remaining funds for conservation practices both urban and agricultural. Some of our successful educational activities thus far have included a septic system workshop, RiverWatch volunteer water-quality monitoring training, cover crop field day, and a talk on invasive plants. In the works this year are another cover crop field day, a workshop on using native plants in the landscaping, a talk on nitrogen application for row crops, and more! Our cost share program for conservation practices include many fields planted to cover crops: equipment modifications to move from conventional tillage to no-till or strip till, or for precision nutrient application; filter strips; grassed waterways; conservation or prairie plantings; tree plantings; stream bank and shoreline protection. Do you have own land in the Headwaters Yellow

River Watershed, and would like to participate in our cost-share program? Do you have some down time this winter and are considering altering existing equipment to do some sort of conservation tillage? We can help fund those projects. Do you live on a lake and have a failing seawall? (specifically Lake of the Woods, which falls into the watershed) Another good winter project would be to reface that seawall with glacial stone...a project we can help with as well. In addition, if you live in town and want to install a rain barrel or rain garden to help treat runoff from your roof and property, we can help with that too! This grant is a good opportunity for residents within the watershed to help improve the water quality of our beautiful Yellow River. There is more information on our website about the grant, or please reach out to Watershed Coordinator Tim Kroeker at his mobile number 260-766-1104. You can also email us at info@marshallcountyswcd.com or call us here at the office 574-936-2024.

POLLINATOR EXHIBIT & NATIVE PLANT GIVE-AWAY

Every year the Soil and Water Conservation District has a presence at our county fair, and this year we were able to have a flat of native wildflowers donated by our friends at Stantec Native Plant Nursery in Walkerton to raffle away. We talked about pollinators and why native plants are so important to them, and we had a wheel set up so that the kids could spin and then answer a question about them to get a small prize. Educating the public is part of what your Soil and Water Conservation District does and we look forward to every opportunity to reach out. We also want to thank our partners at the Recycle Depot for sharing their booth with us. Their environmental educator River Watson was talking about macroinvertebrates (a tiny animal lacking a backbone, large enough to see without a microscope, often an indicator of water quality) this year, stopping by the river to get some fresh ones every day! We had a great time, hope to see you again in 2024!



Conservation: the careful maintaining and protection of something valuable especially in its natural or original state

SMIPP - Look out, Invasives!

SMIPP update for '23! SMIPP—St. Joseph and Marshall Counties Invasive Plant Partnership - has been hard at work! Invasives plant management is a serious resource concern in our state and our working group was very busy this year! Our CISMA (Cooperative Invasives Management Area) hosted two Weed Wrangles®, one in the spring at the Marshall County Memorial Forest and one in the fall at Potato Creek State Park. A Weed Wrangle® is an event held at on public property and involves the actual removal of invasives. In addition, two educational hikes were held, at the Plymouth Greenways Trail and at Rum Village Nature Center in South Bend. . Not only can you learn about destructive invasives at these hikes, but also about beneficial native plants that help insects and wildlife. Joining SMIPP is a GREAT way to participate in local conservation. Follow our Facebook page [facebook.com/SMIPP.CISMA](https://www.facebook.com/SMIPP.CISMA) or if you aren't on FB, check the invasives section on either St. Joseph or Marshall County webpages for information.

NATIVE PLANT SALE!

The District held a native plant sale in the spring of 2023 and has plans to do it again in 2024! We were able to offer flats of reliable native plants that are appropriate for four different situations....a rain garden kit, a shade garden kit, a prairie wildflower kit and a prairie grassland kit. These flats have 50 plants each and cost \$150. That's more than a flat of annual flowers cost, we know, but these well-started plants will take right off and grow quickly, re-seeding the area in the future and filling in quickly. This is an investment in native habitat, and the birds and the bees will thank you! Watch for future details!



Marshall County
soil and water conservation
DISTRICT
2903 Gary Drive Plymouth IN 46563
574-936-3026 ext. 3
www.marshallcountyswcd.org

CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

CLEAN WATER INDIANA-CWI

One Grant Ends, Another Begins

Clean Water Indiana grants are the talk of Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout the state....a great deal of the work that is done in conservation locally is funded by these competitive grants, which are awarded by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture with the guidance of the State Soil Conservation Board. These grants run in 3 year cycles, and this district has had a cost share for farming conservation practices with their neighbors to the north in St. Joseph County (the grants can be applied for and shared by several counties working together) for 2 grant cycles for a total of 6 years. During that time, over \$100K was spent to help producers with cover crops and no-till practices, along with installing several large pollinator habitats in our counties. For several reasons, the District opted not to re-apply for that particular grant and chose to address another resource concern in our county, that of managing invasive plants in our woodlands. There are federal funds available for this practice through a program

called EQIP but they are ranked and often not funded. The new grant will help landowners identify and manage invasives on their properties with help from the districts and the professionals from the Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division and also from the state organization SICIM—State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management. Details of this new grant will be released early in 2024. Clean Water Indiana saw a historic increase in the State Biennium Budget for '24 and '25 because of the efforts by dedicated conservation professionals in the Indiana Conservation Partnership, which is the delivery infrastructure for conservation on working lands in Indiana. This district will be working on programs to bring solutions to conservation concerns within our county. Watch for new programs and practices by following us on Facebook or signing up for our newsletter. With your help, we hope to put these CWI dollars to good use in Marshall County! CWI— *Next Level Conservation for Indiana's Working Lands!*



SUPERVISOR ELECTION AT ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 25, 2024

The Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District will elect one supervisor and appoint one supervisor during 2024 Annual Meeting to be held at the Gallery on West located at the Marshall County Fairgrounds on January 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. The nomination committee has nominated Joe Skelton for re-appointment and Mike Large for re-election. Joe has served on the board since stepping up to replace Rance Glinge in 2022 after serving as an associate supervisor for several years. Mike was elected chairman this year after serving on the board since 2016. (see both of their complete bios on page 3). Outside nominations may also be made at the Annual Meeting and voting will then take place. An eligible voter is a person of voting age, a representative of a firm, company or a corporation that owns or rents a tract of land properly located within the District. All parties of jointly held property may vote. We request that you either call in to our office at (574) 936-2024 ext. 3 or email us at info@marshallcountyswcd.org by **January 19**. Tickets will be \$10 for the event. This fee will go toward a fabulous meal, catered by the Log Cabin Restaurant in Argos. We will also be having a great speaker this year, Mr. Bob Barr, from the

Center for Earth and Environmental Science at the Department of Earth Sciences at IUPUI. Mr. Barr will be speaking on the subject **Why are We Talking About Watersheds? Landscape Modification, Climate Change, and Water Resources** There will be a brief Power Point presentation about the activities that the District has been involved in this past year and we will be giving away some cool door prizes! We will also be posting our Annual Financial Report on our website www.marshallcountyswcd.org for the public to view. It may also be picked up at our office at 2903 Gary Drive, sent by request, or viewed at the Annual Meeting. We encourage producers and interested homeowners in Marshall County to attend our Annual Meeting and meet our supervisors and staff. It will be an opportunity for you to express your interests and concerns for conservation in our district and to hear about the new programs and projects that the district will be introducing and implementing in the coming year. We sure hope to see you at our Annual Meeting, nothing would make us happier than connecting with county residents and telling them about the conservation efforts in Marshall County!

2023 NRCS REPORTING YEAR

Conservation Practice	Planned Amount	Applied Amount
Animal Mortality Facility (316) (No)	1	0
Brush Management (314) (Ac)	0	262
CNMP Design and Implementation Activity (101) (No)	0	1
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (102) (No)	0	1
Conservation Cover (327) (Ac)	122	15
Conservation Crop Rotation (328) (Ac)	0	37
Cover Crop (340) (Ac)	3239	343
Early Successional Habitat Development-Mgt (647) (Ac)	131	14
Existing Activity Payment - Land use (E300EAP1) (Ac)	237	100
Existing Activity Payment -Resource Concern (E300EAP2) (Ac)	25	10
Filter strip (393) (Ac)	1	0
Firebreak (394) (Ft)	23294	3700
Forest Management Plan (106) (No)	1	0
Forest Management Practice Design (165) (No)	1	0
Forest management to enhance understory vegetation(E666D) (Ac)	47	0
Forest Stand Improvement (666) (Ac)	0	42
Grassed Waterway (412) (Ac)	0	0
Heavy Use Area Protection (561) (SqFt)	1800	0
Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) (Ac)	2	0
High Tunnel System (325) (SqFt)	3880	10040
Mulching (484) (Ac)	2	1
Nutrient Management (590) (Ac)	3174	0
Pasture and Hay Planting (512) (Ac)	0	10
Pest Management Conservation System (595) (Ac)	3174	0
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329) (Ac)	3280	106
Roof Runoff Structure (558) (No)	2	0
Subsurface Drain (606) (Ft)	1090	0
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) (Ac)	2	22
Underground Outlet (620) (Ft)	1350	0
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) (Ac)	13	143
Waste Storage Facility (313) (No)	1	0
Waste Transfer (634) (No)	2	0

Farm Bill Program	\$ for 2023 Fiscal Year
EQIP	\$117,542.50
WRP/WRE	\$650.00
CSP 2018	\$4,018.31
CRP	\$495,492.00
TOTAL	\$609,238.59

The block features the official logo of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Below the logo is a detailed illustration of corn plants, showing the stalks, leaves, and several ears of corn in various stages of growth and harvest.

MCSWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Mike Large

Mike Large has served on the board since 2016, was re-elected in 2018 and 2021 and is up for re-election this year. He was also elected Chairman early in 2023. Mike graduated from Bethel College with a BS in Accounting and owns and operates Large Farms LLC with his wife Terri and

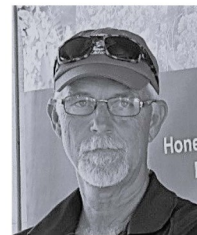
their four boys, Connor, Caden, Colton and Camden. Mike is the treasurer of the Camp Creek Church and is also the Vice-Chairman of the Marshall County REMC Board of Directors.



Craig Hawley

Craig resides in Bourbon Township with his wife Serena and their five daughters, Cheyenne, Sierra, Savannah, Sabrya and So-roya. The Hawley family enjoys their days spending time outside on their family farm while raising horses and pigs. For 20 years, Craig has successfully operated his construction business, specializing in

new home construction, pole barns and frame work. He is an owner of Farmer's Drainage, LLC, which actively provides all tiling and farm drainage needs throughout the community. Craig is in his 3rd term as an elected supervisor.



Tim Gochenour

Tim is a 1992 graduate of Purdue University with a B.S. in electrical engineering. He is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force where he achieved the rank of TSgt. With his wife Stacha, they currently farm 800 acres in Bourbon and Tippecanoe Townships where they employ soil conservation practices such as

no till- and cover crops. They also have a farm seed business selling a variety of seeds including corn, soybeans, wheat, cover crops, deer/wildlife food plot and bee/butterfly and wildflower pollinator mixes. Hobbies include traveling to visit his grandchildren, hunting, fishing and riding his motorcycle. Tim was appointed in 2016 to fill a term and was re-appointed in '20 and '23.



Joel Fisher

Joel Fisher was elected in 2023, replacing outgoing Chairman Tyson Edwards and currently serves as Vice-Chairman. Joel served on the board for the SWCD a number of years ago and agreed to serve again because of his passion for conservation. Joel lives in Culver with his wife Angie and works for Stantec Native Plant Nursery in Walkerton, IN, serving as

their assistant business unit manager, overseeing the container stock and seed production. Joel also works on his 80 acre family farm and is restoring it back to native habitat. He and his family enjoy hunting, fishing and his favorite, golfing!



Joe Skelton

Joe has served as an associate supervisor for a number of years and moved up in '22 as an appointed supervisor to replace Rance Glinge. Joe and his wife Carol moved to Lake of the Woods after he retired as a Captain of the fire department in Calumet City. He is the treasurer of the Lake of the Woods Property Owner's Association and is also past President of the

Lake of the Woods Regional Sewer District. He is currently the vice President of both the Marshall County Lakes and Waters Council and the Arrow Head Country Resource Conservation and Development Area. Joe firmly believes in protecting and preserving the environment and says he is honored to be serving on board of the Soil and Water Conservation District. He is up for a regular 3 year appointment at this year's election.

Board meetings are normally held the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m., times can vary depending upon the month. Meetings are open to the public and are generally held at the USDA Service Center at 2903 Gary Drive in Plymouth. Check our website to determine exact location and times. We hope to see you in '24!

SUCCESSFUL FIELD DAYS

This past September, the District held a cover crop field day with the St. Joseph SWCD in a field near Nappanee. Producer Brent Reed, who is a participant in our 319 Headwaters Yellow River Grant, provided the field and was able to dig a soil pit. Soil conservation agronomist Bryan Overstreet, through the assistance of CCSI (Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative) showed us exactly how far those cover crop roots penetrate the soil, holding it in place, and improving aeration, water infiltration and bacterial activity. Sarah Longenecker, St. Joseph County SWCD's technician, did several demonstrations to show how water filters through the soil and how roots affect the clarity and amount of soil lost through erosion. Lunch was served and net-

working among attendees was very valuable. We are happy to be participating in field days again after a few years off because of the pandemic. These events are invaluable and plans are being made to hold another field day in 2024. We were also able to attend two very informative events sponsored by our neighbors to the east in Elkhart County. Their 'Pay Dirt' series featured the well known speakers Ray Archeleta, Rick Clark, Jason Mauck and the cover crop coach, Steve Groff. We will help them promote their new spring educational event and will be in attendance. Our Headwaters Yellow River grant extends into Elkhart County and we made a few good contacts! We appreciate the opportunity to participate and thank our SWCD neighbors.

OFFICE STAFF



Jodie Overmyer
SWCD District Coordinator



Timothy Kroeker
SWCD Watershed Coordinator



Troy Manges
NRCS District Conservationist



Chris Gardner ISDA Resource Specialist
CREP Leader
Tippecanoe CREP