

LOCAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS RECEIVE STATE AWARDS!

The District is proud to announce that we have received notification that two of its nominations for state conservation awards have been chosen to receive honors! The River Friendly Farmer award is given every year to producers that have shown a commitment to using conservation practices on their land that reduce erosion and improve soil health, helping keep Indiana's rivers, lakes, and streams clean. Producer Jesse Reichert from Bourbon was given the award for Marshall county this year and attended the award ceremony, which was held on Agriculture Day at the Indiana State Fair on August 7th and met Lt. Governor Suzanne Crouch, who heads up the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. The award is sponsored by the Indiana Farm Bureau and the Indiana chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Jesse received a sign from the ISDA that he will be installing on his property. Watch for these signs as you travel throughout the state!

The Friend of Conservation award for 2024 was given to the Potawatomi Wildlife Park! This prestigious honor recognizes those individuals or entities who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to conservation and sustainability. The park received the award in the not-for-profit category and they will be recognized at the IASWCD Annual Conference in January, with the award being sponsored by Brownfield Ag News. Director Lacey Pfeiffer and her team work diligently to promote conservation and environmentalism through events, FB page posts and newsletters, working with the community and local schools and partnering with the District. The Park has participated in several conservation programs to install habitat and is working hard to manage invasive plants on the property to restore health to its riparian woodlands. We are so proud of the residents of the county that have participated in conservation and are being recognized. Congratulations!

ADDITIONAL CWI FUNDS HELPED TO FUND PRACTICES

Thanks to an increase in funding through the state's Clean Water Indiana budget, which was strongly encouraged and lobbied for by conservation partners in the state, Soil and Water Conservation Districts received additional monies to address local resource concerns in 2024. Clean Water Indiana is administered by the State Soil Conservation Board in conjunction with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's Division of Soil Conservation. Not only did the Marshall County District receive a CWI grant to help landowners manage invasives plants in their woodlands, they (along with most of the 92 districts in the state) received additional funds for the next two years. This past year the Marshall County board of supervisors chose to continue with a cost share grant to help producers fund no-till, and cover crops on their farms, in addition to offering cost share for pollinator habitat. We hope to continue this cost share in 2025, and are looking for additional projects to invest in. We have some ideas, but are anxious to hear from county residents like you!

SPREADING CONSERVATION MESSAGE TO LOCAL YOUTH

The District continues to help educate local youth about conservation. A display and a short talk about native plants was given at the Triton Ag Days in May, the students learned about their root systems compared to those of non-native plants. In conjunction with the Arrow Head RC & D, the Marshall County District assisted in two very big activities for high school students in a 9 county area. Envirothon is an academic competition held at Camp Buffalo in Monticello, where teams compete by studying resource problems in five different environmental areas. The River Rafting Expedition is held at Tippecanoe River State Park for five days in September. During the expedition, there are demonstrations on watersheds and forestry. The rafts are then launched and the students stop along the way to learn about water quality and macroinvertebrates, and finish up with talks about freshwater mussels and otters. It is always a worthwhile effort to educate the youth of the county and part of our job here in the district, a part we really enjoy!



Marshall County

soil and water conservation
DISTRICT

2903 Gary Drive Plymouth IN 46563

574-936-3026 ext. 3

www.marshallcountyswcd.org

CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

319 GRANT— A SUCCESS!

The Marshall County SWCD just successfully completed a 319 Implementation Grant for Conservation in the Headwaters Yellow River Watershed! The grant included \$170,000 for a cost-share program, funds to hire a Watershed Coordinator, and support for outreach and education. The goals guiding the implementation were crafted when the SWCD completed a Watershed Management Plan in December of 2017. Since 2017, the SWCD has been working toward completing these conservation goals, but this was the largest grant they had obtained to date.

The cost-share program was very successful and will result in long term conservation results. Conservation Practices or Best Management Practices (BMPs) included cover crops, filter strips, prairie plantings, tree plantings, conservation cover, stream bank stabilization, and shoreline protection. In addition, funds were available for farmers to make modifications to their equipment to include more conservation in their farming operation. Modifications included changes to planting equipment to move from conventional tillage to no-till and strip till, and to incorporate precision nutrient management tools to cut down on fertilizer use. These BMPs impacted 11,497 acres and resulted in reduced sediment and nutrients in rivers and streams within the headwaters Yellow River watershed. Reductions were calculated and these BMPs resulted in an estimated savings of 4,763 tons of sediment, 6,500lbs of phosphorus, and 78,780lbs of nitrogen.

Efforts in education and outreach allowed the SWCD to get the conservation message out to a wide variety of stakeholders from both urban and rural areas. Nine workshops/field days were held over the past two years covering a variety of topics. Outreach efforts included the following: Cover Crop Field Day, Pasture Walk Field Day, Septic System Workshop, Landscaping with Native Plants Workshop, Workshop on the Effectiveness of Application of Different Forms of Nitrogen, Invasive Plant Workshop, Pond Workshop, Lake Water Quality and Citi-

zen Action Workshop, and an Agricultural Irrigation Workshop. In addition, a special RiverWatch training was held to teach volunteers to: collect stream water quality data, collect and identify aquatic insects to evaluate stream quality, and to evaluate stream habitat quality. Graduates of this program will be of great future value as we evaluate our progress in conservation and expand our planning efforts into other watersheds.

The Marshall County SWCD will continue to strive to improve the conservation and wise use of the natural resources within Marshall County and beyond. The board and staff continue to obtain grants and get involved in efforts throughout the county that ultimately result in a better quality of life for Marshall County residents.



INVASIVE PLANT EDUCATION

The District continues its efforts to educate and inform county residents about the serious natural resource concern of invasive plants. This year's display at the Marshall County 4H fair focused on the plants that are introduced through the landscape industry, commonly used ornamental plants that are still sold in box stores and nurseries throughout the state, such as Burning Bush, Japanese Spirea, Miscanthus and Fountain grasses, and groundcovers Myrtle and English Ivy. Much of the public remains unaware that invasive plants are affecting our woodlands, reducing biodiversity and destroying habitat for our native insects and wildlife. Handouts with plant lists, a calendar of control, and resources for more information were on the table, along with some tools of the trade. Information about the local invasives working group, SMIPP (St. Joseph/Marshall Invasive Plant Partnership) was also included. This group continues to grow, with 3 Weed Wrangles being held this year at the Plymouth Greenways Trail, Potato Creek State Park and Rum Village Park in South Bend, along with several educational meet and greets. We ask you to join the fight in '25!



USDA and the Marshall County SWCD prohibit discrimination in their programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.

SPECIAL SPEAKER AT THE 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

SAVE THE DATE!!!

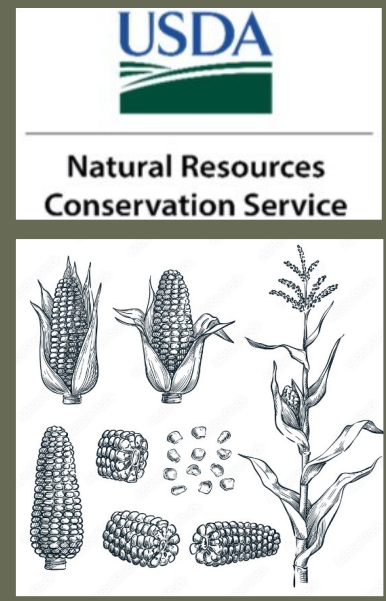
The Marshall County Soil and Water Conservation District is excited to announce that Mr. Larry Clemens, state director for the Nature Conservancy in Indiana, has agreed to speak at this year's annual meeting, which will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday evening January 24th, 2025 at the Gallery on West, located at the Marshall County Fairgrounds in Argos. Mr. Clemens grew up in Argos and is happy to be "back home"! He will be giving a talk entitled "Restoration of Our Lands and Beyond". In addition to this interesting talk, we will be conducting our annual elections. The nomination committee has nominated Craig Hawley for re-election. Craig's bio can be read on page 3 of this report. 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 17** if you are planning to attend. 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 be showing a brief Power Point presentation about the activities that the District has been involved in this past year and there will be some cool door prizes! Our Annual Financial Report will be posted 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 conservation efforts in Marshall County!

2024 NRCS REPORTING YEAR

CONSERVATION PRACTICE	PLANNED AMT.	APPLIED
Brush Management (314) (Ac)	1013	334
Brush Management to improve wildlifehabitat (E314A) (Ac)	0	47
Conservation Cover (327) (Ac)	20	21
Cover Crop (340) (Ac)	947	2452
Early Successional Habitat Development-Mgt (647) (Ac)	11	0
Existing Activity Payment - Land use (E300EAP1) (Ac)	134	113
Existing Activity Payment -Resource Concern (E300EAP2) (No)	10	11
Filter strip (393) (Ac)	20	10
Firebreak (394) (Ft)	0	2822
Forest Management Plan (106) (No)	0	1
Forest Management Practice Design (165) (No)	0	1
Forest management to enhance understory vegetaiaon (E666D) (Ac)	14	0
Forest Stand Improbement (666) (Ac)	81	47
Grassed Waterway (412) (Ac)	4	0
Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) (Ac)	28	9
High Tunnel System (325) (SqFt)	6480	960
Livestock Pipeline (516) (Ft)	0	2647
Nutrient Management (590) (Ac)	1163	0
Pasture and Hay Planting (512) (Ac)	0	22
Pest Management Conservation Sustum (595) (Ac)	1163	0
Pest Management Conservation Systyem Design (161) (No)	1	0
Prescribed Grazing (528) (ac)	0	157
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till(329) (Ac)	1210	1209
Roof Runoff Structure (558) (No)	0	1
Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580) (Ft)	60	0
Structure for Water Control (587) (No)	2	0
Subsurface Drain (606) (Ft)	4590	0
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) (Ac)	22	11
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) (Ac)	531	220
Waste Storage Facility (313) (No)	0	1
Waste Transfer (634) (No)	0	1
Watering Facility (614) (No)	0	2
Wetland Restoration (657) (Ac)	24	1
Wildlife Habitat Planting (420) (Ac)	57	99
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation (380) (Ft)	1561	0

FARM BILL PROGRAM	\$ for 2024 Fiscal Year
EQIP	\$284,862.14
WRP/WRE	\$49,140.96
CSP2018	\$8,000.00
CREP	\$63,340.00
CRP	\$487,763.00
TOTAL	\$893,106.10



MCSWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Mike Large

Mike Large has served on the board since 2016, was re-elected in 2018, 2021 and 2024. 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

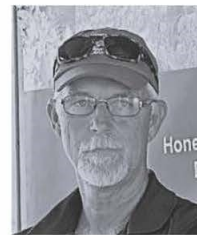
Connor, Caden, Colton and Camden. Mike is the treasurer of the Camp Creek Church and is also the Vice-Chairman of the Marshall County REMC Board of Directors.



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 up for re election in 2025.



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, over-

seeing 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 was re appointed in 2024.

Board meetings are normally held the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at 8:30 a.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 '25!

A NEW ALLIANCE FOR CONSERVATION

Earlier in 2024 efforts were made by the Indiana Farm Bureau to "gather up" professionals in the ag industry within the county. Members of the Farm Services Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Purdue Extension ag educator, Conservation Cropping Services Initiative (CCSI), State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM), Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Urban Soil Health, and the director of the Plymouth farm market, Tom Keb, were invited to brainstorm on events and activities to build a stronger ag network in the county. The group met several times during the year and decided upon their first activity! This

event will be held on January 22nd, at the Gallery on West in Argos (at the Fairgrounds), starting at 9:00 a.m. and running until 3:30 with lunch included, sponsored by the Marshall County Farm Bureau. This first "Aggie Gathering" will be a specialty crop growers meeting, with a focus on high tunnel production. Speakers will talk on equipment and programs available through the NRCS, crop disaster assistance programs, maximizing high tunnel production for profit and soil health, and then there will also be a growers panel. If you or anyone you know are interested in growing in high tunnels, this is the event for you! Come network and meet the folks that are anxious to help you in 2025!

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