



942 West 15th Street · Auburn, Indiana · 46706-2031 · (260) 925-5620 x3

"Leadership in Soil and Water Conservation"

DeKalb SWCD Updates

Fall

Wildlife Habitat Workshop

This past September district staff attended a Grassland Management field day put on in a concerted effort by pheasants forever, DNR and NRCS staff. These staff members have been working with Scott Kimmel, a land owner in DeKalb County for the past few years to develop grassland management demonstration plots to showcase some commonly promoted practices. These plots allowed for a direct comparison of management techniques spanned over several growing seasons to provide staff with more knowledge when making recommendations to landowners enrolled in USDA Programs and functions as a great example for landowners wanting to do something similar.

The property toured was roughly 6 acres broken into 10 sections by management type, including; spraying, varying degrees of disking, burning, interseeding, and other combinations of those practices. As staff we got to see the results of these management techniques and discuss with The Landowner, DNR and Pheasants Forever staff on what they think of the results, what they would have done differently, future management moving forward, the conditions under which these practices were implemented, and more. Overall, the field days promoted meaningful conversation between agency and partnership staff on how to better serve our communities in terms of conservation and land management and, gave staff a chance to see the recommendations they make in action and to hear about what went well and what did not work.

A huge thank you to all agencies involved in making these field days happen! And, thank you to all agency staff and landowners for coming out and making a successful field day!

Annual Weed Wrangle 2021

On a cold and drizzly Saturday morning in November, a dozen volunteers and district staff took to task the removal of Amur Bush Honeysuckle from the Hague Nature Area. Amur Honeysuckle, one of several very similar species collectively known as Asian Bush Honeysuckles,

is a prolific invasive ornamental shrub known to invade fields and forests from coast to coast in the United States.

While the sale of these invasive plants has been outlawed in some states, including Indiana, they have thrived since their introduction in 1897 and were even promoted as a tool of conservation to inhibit soil erosion and benefit wildlife. We now know that was a disastrous mistake as millions of dollars are spent each year to mitigate the damage, they cause to timber growers and native ecosystems. While they produce copious amounts of red berries that are prized by birds, the fruit provides virtually no nutrition as they are lacking the fats and proteins needed by our native birds.

These plants are native to China, Korea, and Japan have no natural competition and are therefore spread unchecked throughout the country.

We sincerely thank those who gave up their time to battle this invasive species in the cold wet conditions. The impact these volunteer conservationists made in a two-hour span is incredible. We'll be anxiously awaiting the inevitable return of the native herbaceous plants and the rejuvenation of young native trees that were absent in the dense thicket where previously only the Honeysuckle grew. If you are interested in participating in future Weed Wrangles, contact our office to sign up!

2021 Rain Barrel Workshops

DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District along with the City of Auburn Stormwater Pollution held two rain barrel workshops in 2021. The first was in the spring with a total of 30 barrels constructed and ready for use. The second workshop was held on October 9th. We had a great response however, limited number of barrels were available. Only 13 barrels were constructed at our fall workshop. Because of the limitations we now have a "waiting" list of over 20 people interested in our next workshop. We are hoping to finalize a date in the spring of 2022.

The rain barrel workshops are popular because of the fact that the power tools, fixtures and catch basket along with the barrel are provided at no cost to the individual. The attendees are shown how to put the barrel together and then let loose! When everything is fitted into place the individual is ready to head out with a fully functional rain barrel.

This workshop is free to the public but because of the limited amount of barrels available registration is required. If there are any spots available after contacting the existing wait list for our spring 2022 workshop, a notice will be posted on this website and on our Facebook page.

Upcoming Dates

- * Office Closed - January 17, 2021
- * January Board Meeting - January 20, 2021
- * Office Closed - February 21, 2021
- * February Board Meeting - February 17, 2021
- * Annual Meeting - March 15, 2021
- * March Board Meeting - March 17, 2021

Looking Ahead...

Annual Meeting

All are welcome to the DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District 74th annual meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 5pm. The meeting will take place at Country Heritage Winery located at 185 CR 68, LaOtto, IN 46763. Appetizers and soft drinks will be provided.

The DeKalb SWCD Board of Supervisors will hold a brief business meeting which will include a financial statement and an update on the District's 2021 activities. An election will be conducted by all land occupiers present to elect one supervisor to serve a three-year term on the DeKalb SWCD Board.

Nominations can be made from the floor by anyone eligible to vote in the election. Anyone who attends the Annual Meeting, is of legal voting age, occupies land in DeKalb County, and represents a firm, company, or corporation that occupies land located in DeKalb County is eligible to vote in the SWCD supervisor election. Eligible individuals also include the owner and tenant of the same land or property; as well as any owner's or tenant's spouse.

To hold the position of elected supervisor, an individual must be an occupier of a tract of land within DeKalb County, must maintain permanent residence within the district, and must be qualified by training and experience. Judy Strock is a candidate running for re-election, who has served as an SWCD supervisor for the past 17 years.

A copy of the annual report will be presented at the meeting and, upon request, to any other individual or entity that requests a copy of the annual report.

Please contact the DeKalb County SWCD office at (260) 925-5620 x3 or register on our website at www.dekalbcountyswcd.com if you plan to attend. Thank you for your continued support and hope to see you there!

SWPPP Review Fee Schedule

As of January 10, 2022, The DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District implemented a brand-new fee schedule for Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWP3) reviews. With the addition of a full-time district staff member to be solely dedicated to SWPPP reviews and on-site inspections we have created a fee schedule for SWP3 reviews based on the acreage disturbed by the project. Our hope with this fee is to further fund our increasingly popular Cost Share Program and implement additional conservation practices in DeKalb County. With our cost share program, the district is able to perform invasive tree replacements, fund native tree plantings, install pollinator gardens, provide rain barrels and assist with funding septic replacements. We encourage all to visit our website to check out the fee schedule and to read all updates regarding the switch from permit by rule to a Master General Permit for Construction Storm Water. www.dekalbcountyswcd.com

District Cost Share Program Highlight

The DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District offers the community a cost share program designed to help non-agriculture landowners conserve the natural resources in DeKalb County. This past year we added Garden Soil Testing to our list of cost share practices! Soil sampling will allow gardeners of all skill levels to gain a deeper knowledge of what's going on in the soil. A soil test will analyze organic matter present, several main nutrient levels, CEC, pH and buffer pH. Our hope is to give gardeners another tool to improve soil quality, garden yield, and understand proper nutrient application. Feel free to check out our website for all the details on how to participate in our cost share program and conserve the natural resources in DeKalb County! www.dekalbcountyswcd.com/district-cost-share-program

"Do Nothing About these Invasive Plants"

Follow the link below to read about observations, made by a Cornell Professor, on what happens to garlic mustard when left undisturbed.

<https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/43550/20210409/do-nothing-about-invasive-plants>

Staff Directory

Board of Supervisors

Sarah Delbecq Judy Strock

Steve Watson Jeff Conrad

Steve Provines

SWCD Staff

Nellie Peffley Bill Ward

Julie Knudson Cameron Bell

NRCS Staff

Derek Thompson

Partners

IASWCD • The City of Auburn • FSA • Pheasants Forever • USDA • The Nature Conservancy •
NRCS • DeKalb County Community Foundation • ARS • Purdue Extension • ISDA • St. Joseph
River Watershed Initiative • IDNR • DeKalb County Indiana • IDEM

DeKalb County Soil & Water Conservation District

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