

Soil Scoop

Spencer/Perry County Soil and Water Conservation Districts

March, April, May 2007
Volume 1, Issue 1

* * * * *ATTENTION* * * * *

2007 Summer Intern Needed

The Spencer County Soil & Water Conservation District is seeking a person to work as a summer intern. This position is funded by Spencer County. The applicant must be a high school senior or college student seeking to gain work experience in natural resources conservation, agriculture, or environmental science and/or engineering. Job duties will include: computer entry, field survey assistance using a level and rod, conservation education, office duties, and other duties as assigned. On the job training will be provided. This position includes field work on farms in Spencer County. Applicants should be in good physical condition and capable of walking and carrying surveying equipment in extreme summer temperatures. Resumes are being accepted now until April 20th. Contact Trish Dugas at 812-649-9136, Ext 3 or email to trish.dugas@in.nacdnet.net for more information. Resumes should be submitted to: Spencer County Soil & Water Conservation District, Attn: Trish Dugas, 996N State Road 66, Suite 102, Rockport, IN 47635. The resume should include any prior work experience/training and three (3) personal references.

OFFICE RELOCATION

Just a reminder: The Spencer County SWCD, NRCS, RC&D, and FSA have relocated our offices. We are East of Rockport next to Spunky's Restaurant.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 6—Good Friday—office closed
April 8—Easter
April 14—Forestry Field Day
April 17—Anderson River Data Meeting
May 28—Memorial Day—office closed
June 23—Adventures with Nature
July 4—Independence Day—office closed

Perry County SWCD
125 S 8th Street, Room 6
Cannelton, IN 47520
812-547-4686

Board of Supervisors
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Spencer County SWCD
996N State Road 66, Suite 102
Rockport, IN 47635
812-649-9136; Ext 3

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Ray Kern
Roy Raider

SWCD Staff
Trish Dugas, SWCD Director
Stephanie Litherland, SWCD Administrator

Upcoming Board Meetings

March 26th—Spencer County
April 10th—Perry County
April 23rd—Spencer County
May 8th—Perry County
May 21st—Spencer County
June 12th—Perry County
June 25th—Spencer County

NRCS Field Office Staff—Perry/Spencer
Rita Schaus, District Conservationist
(Located in Rockport)



ADVENTURES WITH NATURE

The Fifth Annual Adventures with Nature will be held June 23, 2007 at Tipsaw Lake in Perry County from 9:00am-1:00pm. Presenters will include: Return to the Wild, Snakes Alive, Bats, Fish, Insects, and ATV Safety. Exhibits/Activities will include: wood carving, tree id, frog houses, Smokey Bear, leaf rubbing, blue jean quilt, and other hands-on activities. This is a great opportunity for families to learn more about nature and our natural resources. Door prizes will be given away every 1/2 hour.

If you would like more information about this event, please call Betsy Wilkinson, Lincoln Hills RC&D at 812-649-9136; Ext 5 or Stephanie Litherland, Spencer County Soil and Water at 812-649-9136; Ext 3.

Master Naturalist Program

The Master Naturalist Program is being held in Spencer, Perry, Crawford, and Harrison Counties! The Indiana Master Naturalist program provides many hands-on opportunities to learn about our Hoosier natural resources. It also provides a way for participants to share that knowledge, along with life experiences, through volunteer service.

The Lincoln Hills RC&D Education Committee and Perry County Purdue Extension Office are offering a 10 week course that begins on Monday, April 2, 2007 through Monday, May 21, 2007. The Spencer and Perry County SWCDs have assisted with the planning of this program. Sessions are being held at different locations throughout Spencer, Perry, Crawford, and Harrison Counties with core curriculum topics covering zoology, botany, geology/soils, water quality, people and natural resources.

What are the benefits? Of course the participant gains new knowledge of Indiana's plants, wildlife, geology and geography. Participants meet others with similar interests and gain personal satisfaction from "giving back" to the local community through service.

Participants are required to complete at least 8 of the 10 offered sessions. They must complete volunteer service with a local or state natural resources organization at a ratio of 1 hour of service per 1 hour of coursework. Other requirements include completing a quiz covering the course content and paying the registration fee. Those individuals who complete their service hours receive a certificate of completion; an Indiana Master Naturalist pin; and a one year subscription to the Indiana Master Naturalist newsletter.

As of this date, the class is underway and registration is closed. However, if you are interested in attending a future Master Naturalist program in this area, contact Betsy Wilkinson at Lincoln Hills RC&D at 812-649-9136; Ext 5.



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS) NEWS RELEASE

Digital Soils Information Now 100%

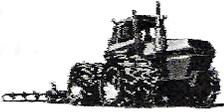
Indianapolis, January 31, 2007—On January 19, 2007, 105 years after the first soil survey was published in Indiana, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) crossed another threshold by posting a digital soils coverage for Indiana to 100%. The 1902 Posey County soil survey report was the first one published in Indiana.

“Now anyone with access to the internet can quickly get to digital soils data for all 92 Indiana counties,” says Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist for NRCS. “Over the years, we have crossed several important thresholds with the soil survey, but this one is particularly exciting because it has such a dramatic effect on the availability of soils data. As an agency we are trying to make scientific and factual data as widely available as possible. We want to make the process of getting it as transparent as we can, and put the data and information into the hands of all parties who can use it.” In addition to traditional uses by farmers and conservation planners, soil survey information now has many other uses. Homeowners, realtors, county officials, universities, students, consultants and others are utilizing the data. “From farmers to homeowners to developers, understanding your soil is important. Soil serves as a foundation, a medium for growing trees, crops, or lawns, and as a basis for sustaining everything,” says Hardisty. “Because we are all affected by soil, this is data everyone needs to be able to access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.”

What does digitizing do to make the info more available? The soil maps and information look the same on the screen of your computer as it did when you opened the printed soil survey. The digital copy makes it available using a computer, and you can get to it from your desk at home or at work. If you don't have access to the internet, you can still visit your local Soil and Water Conservation District to get your soils information. Digitizing the survey also saves public funds, as it costs much less to put the soil survey on a CD than to print it.

For those with access to the internet, digital soils information for all 92 Indiana counties is now available, anytime, through the Soil Data Mart <http://soildatamart.nrcs.usda.gov/> and the Web Soil Survey at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>.

In the past, soils information was available in soil survey reports which cover an entire county or in some cases multiple counties. Now, in addition to full coverage, an “area of interest” can be identified, and soils information for only the selected area is included in the map and report that is created on demand. Contact: Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, (317)290-3200; Michael McGovern, Public Affairs Specialist, (317)290-3200; Ext 324.



Spencer/Perry County News

Spencer/Perry County FSA

996N State Road 66, Suite 101
Rockport, IN 47635
812-649-9136, Ext 2 (phone)
812-649-4796 (fax)
www.fsa.usda.gov/

Hours:

Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

County Committee:

Marty Williams, Chair
Jeff Vogel, V-Chair
Danny Kleaving, Member
Luke Lubbehusen, Member
Judy Sigler, Member

County Committee meets 4th
Thursday of each month

Staff:

Liz Franz, PT
Kim Hensley, PT
Dona Stevenson, PT
Mary Anne Schriever, PT
Julie Spencer, CED
Vince Lueke, Reporter

Mandatory Review of all Eligibility Forms for all Persons Receiving Payments

We are currently reviewing all eligibility forms (CCC-502, CCC-526 AGI and AD-1026) for all producers that receive payments to ensure that they are complete and accurate. **As part of this process we are also reviewing all signature authority including FSA-211 (Power of Attorney) forms.**

We recently received new instructions on proper completion of the FSA-211 so many are going to have to be redone. This process must be done before we can issue any payments to a producer.

Please call to get an appointment to complete this process prior to making an appointment for DCP, CRP, or Price Support Loans.

We are sorry for the inconvenience and time that this will take but we are required by the National Office to complete this process.

DCP Contract Reminder

To participate in DCP, producers are required to designate shares and sign the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program contract (CCC-509) on a yearly basis.

The annual DCP sign-up period runs from October 1 to June 1 of the applicable program year. To be considered enrolled timely, the CCC-509 must be submitted by June 1 of the applicable program year. In cases where a farm is reconstituted, all resulting farms will need to enroll (signatures obtained) if the producers intend to participate. CCC-509s with signatures obtained after June 1, but by September 30, will be accepted, but the farm will be assessed a late-filed sign-up fee of \$100.

All supporting documentation, such as CCC-502, AD-1026, and CCC-526, must be submitted before payments can be issued. Annual acreage reports indicating uses of all cropland on a farm must be filed by the applicable established reporting dates. Acreage reports filed after the applicable final reporting date may be accepted if all requirements are met and a late-filed fee is paid.

Advanced Direct payments will be issued on 22% of total as opposed to 40% or 50% we have had in the past. You will receive the rest of the Direct Payment in October 2007.

Changes in Requirements for General Partnerships

Recent changes in our handbooks now require that all general partnerships must provide our office with one or both of the following: Articles of Partnership or IRS Form 1056K-1 (for all members of partnership). The good news is that the above mentioned will also serve as proof of signature authority for your partnership.

Record Changes

If you have bought, sold, or are renting different land, make sure you report the changes to the Farm Service Agency office as soon as possible after they occur. For farm ownership changes you will need to provide a recorded deed or recorded land contract. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and fines if you are participating in our program. August 1, 2007 is the last date to request changes such as dividing or combining a farm (Reconstitution).

Acreage Reporting

The timely filing of an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage, can prevent loss of benefits for a number of programs, including Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance, as well as marketing assistance loans and loan deficiency payments. **To be timely, you must file an FSA-578 by July 15, 2007 for all crops except small grains (including wheat) which must be certified by May 31.** To be considered timely, prevented planted acreage must be filed no later than 15 calendar days after the final planting date for the applicable crop (ending planting dates are as follows: Corn-June 5, Soybeans and Grain Sorghum-June 20); and failed acreage must be filed before the disposition of the crop. We will accept crop certifications from farm operators, farm owners, persons authorized by power of attorney and tenants and sharecroppers, for which they have a share.

CRP Continuous Sign-Up

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private land environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources. The Continuous CRP is a voluntary enrollment program. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost-share for establishment. To be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP, participants and acreage must meet certain requirements. Provided the eligibility requirements are met, FSA will automatically accept enrollments of acreage into the Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year. For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), availability, please contact the FSA office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/crpcont03.htm>.

Conservation Compliance

All participants in USDA programs are required to have a conservation system in place on all highly Erodible land (HEL) that they operate. Several areas where problems can arise with complying with a conservation system are: renting new cropland, purchasing new land, breaking out additional cropland, planting different crops such as soybeans, and changing or removing existing conservation practices. It is very important that you contact the FSA office before modifying—tiling, draining, dredging, filling or leveling—any wetland or drainage ditch. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in loss of all Federal payments and eligibility. If spring tillage is required due to the wet spring and fall of 2006, please contact the NRCS office so they can document in your files to cover you if your farm is picked for spot-check.

Dates to Remember

May 31—Final date to report all small grains including wheat

June 1—Final date to timely sign up for 2007 DCP Program

July 15—Final certification date for all crops, CRP, and hay land, except small grains

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM,
CONTRACT RE-ENROLLMENTS, & EXTENSIONS**

Q: What is Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) “re-enrollment and extension” (REX)?

A: USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) provided holders of CRP contracts set to expire during 2007-2010 the opportunity to re-enroll or extend their contracts. (The contracts are USDA Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) contracts. FSA administers CRP on behalf of CCC). FSA allowed for enrolled land to be re-enrolled under new 10 or 15 year contracts, or to have the CCC contracts extended by 2, 3, 4, or 5 years, depending on environmental benefit index (EBI) scores. FSA divided the CCC contracts into quintiles, and offered new 10 or 15 year CCC contracts for those contracts scoring in the highest EBI quintile. FSA offered five year extensions for CCC contracts scoring in the next highest scoring quintile. Contracts in the third highest quintile received offers of four year extensions, and so on. Contracts enrolled under continuous CRP and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sign-up provisions are eligible to be re-enrolled as contracts expire and are not part of REX.

Q: How did USDA conduct REX?

A: FSA conducted REX offers in two parts. The first part was for CCC contracts expiring in 2007 and was held in spring of 2006. The second, for 2008-2010 expiring contracts, was held in summer of 2006. FSA requested that holders of 2007 expiring CCC contracts make their intentions known by September 30, 2006. It also requested that contract holders of 2008-2010 expirations make their intentions known by December 31, 2006.

Q: How many acres were eligible for REX?

A: Eligible acres included 15.7 million of the 16.0 million acres under 2007 expiring CCC contracts, and 12.1 million of the 12.5 million acres under CCC contracts expiring in 2008, 2009, and 2010. FSA did not offer REX for acres enrolled under CRP’s continuous and CREP sign-ups. These acres will, in general, be eligible for re-enrollment during the final year.

Q: How did contract holders make their intentions known and how are REX approved?

A: First, contract holders had to schedule, pay for, and pass a compliance review of their CRP land. The fee was between \$45 and \$500 per CCC contract, depending on the number of acres under contract. Following the review, FSA county committees approved or disapproved REX offers. Additionally, for those CCC contract holders with contracts in the top EBI quintile, FSA required new conservation plans because new 10 to 15 year contracts will be in effect.

Q: What was the compliance fee for and what did a compliance check entail?

A: In order to ensure CRP land met the goals and objectives of the program, FSA conducted a compliance review on each CCC contract proposed for REX. Eligible land had to be in full compliance with the contract including the cover requirements and the control of weeds, including noxious weeds, insects, and pests. FSA charged producers between \$45 and \$500 for the compliance review. This covered travel and time to review the site. Most producers paid less than \$100.

Q: What are the results of REX offer for 2007 expiring contracts?

A: For contracts expiring in 2007, contract holders paid compliance fees on about 13.9 million acres. As of January 2007, FSA county committees approved REX and began entering the data in CRP automated contact files on 13.1 million acres. This number is still subject to change.

Q: How many acres will expire on September 30, 2007? What will be the net change in enrollment then?

A: CCC contracts on 16.0 million acres were originally set to expire on September 30, 2007. Of the 16 million acres, 15.7 million acres were eligible for REX. FSA has approved re-enrollments and extensions for 13.1 million acres. This means an estimated 2.9 million acres in CRP contracts are now set to expire in 2007. The 2.9 million acres is made up of 2.6 million acres in contracts that declined REX and 300,000 acres of continuous sign-up practice that were ineligible. The 2.9 million acres set to expire in 2007 is an estimate, because FSA is still processing the CRP contract data files.

Upper Anderson River Project

The Upper Anderson River Project hosted its final meeting on Thursday, March 22, 2007. The final Watershed Management Plan will be presented to the public.

The project was started two year ago when the Indiana 15 Regional Planning Commission received a grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. During the project period, water quality data was collected in Blackhawk Creek, Ferdinand Run, and Hurricane Creek to establish base-line data.

The Anderson River Improvement Association was the core group of concerned citizens who put in many volunteer hours to help develop a plan that researched, cataloged, analyzed, and published data to develop problem areas, concerns, and measures to achieve target goals.

The Watershed Management Plan will be the guide to help planners work towards a healthier environment.

For further information contact Tom Mosley at 812-367-8455 or tom@ind15rpc.org.

FORESTRY FIELD DAY

The Forestry Field Day will be held on April 14, 2007, 9:30am to 1:30pm at the Ewbank Demonstration Forest. Come spend the morning with a host of forestry and natural resource experts. Topics to be addressed will include regeneration openings, under story release, invasives, timber marketing, conservation easements and more. There will also be ample time for open discussion and questions. And to top it off, it's FREE! Lunch will be provided, so please call in to let us know you plan to attend! To RSVP, contact Lincoln Hills RC&D at 812-649-9136; Ext 5.

Field Day Sponsors: IDNR-Division of Forestry, Indiana State Dept of Agriculture, Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association, and Lincoln Hills Resource Conservation and Development Committee. The Indiana Demonstration Forests program highlights private landowners who demonstrate exemplary forest management practices. With the assistance of foresters and other natural resource professionals, we believe landowners teaching and sharing their experiences with other landowners will lead to scientific management of many more forested acres throughout Indiana.

Directions: From Corydon, take SR 337 to SR 11; Take SR 11 east to Rosewood Rd; Take Rosewood Rd to Rabbit Hash Rd and turn south. Property is a short distance on the right down a long lane. The Nature Conservancy office is on the property. Watch for signs.

Anderson River Data Meeting

Perry, Spencer, Dubois & Crawford counties joint project for the Anderson River Watershed Diagnostic Study is nearing completion. A final public meeting will be held Tuesday, April 17th at 6:30pm at the St. Meinrad Community Center in St. Meinrad. Data from the study will be presented by Edward Belmonte, Project Manager, V3 Companies.

Summer Intern

The Perry County SWCD Board selected Chris Newton of Tell City as the new summer intern. Chris will be a senior at University of Southern Indiana, Evansville and is a geology major. He has had training in soil science, chemistry, environmental geology, forestry, stratigraphy and geography. He feels the natural resource experience will benefit his career.

TIMBER STAND IMPROVEMENT

The Perry County SWCD Board of Supervisors organized a Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) as an educational activity. This year the Perry Central Band Boosters, FFA and Perry Central High School Football team, along with other volunteers completed a TSI to earn money for their organization. Volunteers gathered on Saturday, March 3rd at the Harding Brothers property in Perry County to complete TSI on 70 acres. The 75 experienced and non-experienced volunteers worked together to complete the project in less than 2 hours. Less desirable trees and vines were deadened to enable the residual crop trees to grow quicker and larger and to produce a better quality wood for high-grade lumber.

Perry County SWCD has been conducting TSI projects since 1983. In 2001, the biggest TSI project was 93 acres completed in 3 hours with the help of one organization. The amount of TSI acres determines if other organizations are needed to complete the project, which the net profit is divided among the organizations helping. Always, immediately following each TSI, a meal and drinks are served at the site giving everyone a chance to rest and enjoy a conversation with others.

TSI projects are selected on properties of landowners within the county who receive government cost-share. For more information contact the SWCD office at 547-4686.



Perry Central FFA: Front Row—left to right: Harding kids, Georgia Rees, Megan Nies, Sarah Harding
Middle Row: Charles Thompson, Steven Cassidy, Tiffany Alford, Anthony Rennie, Jody French, Danny Kleaving, Kristen Gogel, Alex Rees
Back Row: Robert Harding, Duane Cassidy, Adam Deom, Logan Gehlhausen, Jediah French AJ Rees



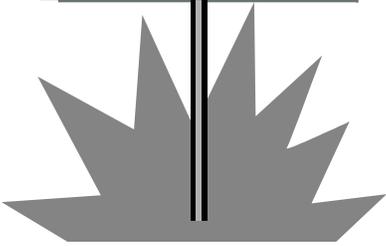
Perry Central Football Team: Front Row: Danny Toothman, Wes Rudd, Jordan Esarey, Ethan Wheatley, Dakota Huff, Mike Wilkerson, Mary Lee Smith, Houston Smith
Back Row: Sarah Harding, Megan Nies, Jeff Etienne, Dane Ransome, Allen Wheatley, Andrew Harpenau, TJ Hall, Kevin Hall, Tracy Schroeder, Brian James, Duane Schroeder, Isaac Schroeder, Paul Hagman, David Edwards



Perry Central Band Boosters & Other Volunteers: Left to right: Darlene Fischer, Tom Sanders, Sarah Harding, Ron Schneider, Megan Nies, Emily Poehlein, Teresa Rennie, Anthony Rennie, Ed Denning, Donielle James, Randy Rennie, Joseph James, Garth Steckler, Robert Harding, Roger Flamion, Gavin Steckler, Mark Saalman

Other volunteers not pictured: Dave Niehaus, Danny Fischer, Greg Hagedorn, Vince Hagedorn, Ray Hagedorn, Bruce Miller, Kayla Miller, Ronnie James, Jim Fiedler, Don Champion

Ad Space Available



Looking for ways to get your business more exposure in the county and help the environment at the same time? Advertising space is available on this district newsletter, which is sent to all program participants and affiliate members of the Spencer/Perry County Soil and Water Conservation Districts. 1/8 page is \$25.00 each edition, or \$60.00 for year; 1/4 page is \$50.00 each edition, or \$120.00 for year. Other packages are available to fit your need. Stop by and see Stephanie Litherland, District Program Administrator, or email at stephanie.litherland@in.nacdnet.net, or (812) 649-9136; Ext 3 for details.

Perry County Soil & Water
Conservation District
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Email: darlene-fischer@iaswcd.org

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