

# Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District



## Winter 2015



Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
10165 Oxford Pike  
Brookville, IN 47012  
(765) 647-2651, ext. 3

[www.franklincountyswcd.org](http://www.franklincountyswcd.org)

*\*Due to the nature of our work there will be times the office must be closed. Please call ahead before visiting.*

### **District Supervisors:**

Michael Schwab – Chairman  
David Hartman – Vice-Chairman  
Louis Schwegman – Secretary  
Darin Hodapp – Supervisor  
Tim Hofer – Supervisor

### **Associate Supervisors:**

Roger Bommer  
Lee Giesting  
Clinton McNally  
Eugene Meyer  
John Selm

### **Conservation Staff:**

Evan Divine – NRCS  
Chris Fox – SWCD

The SWCD Board of Supervisors meets on the third Wednesday of each month starting at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

**Jan 21      Feb 11\*      Mar 18**

### **Need to test your well water?**

The SWCD has bottles for collecting water samples to test for various pollutants. The cost for tests start at \$25. For more information contact the SWCD office.



*Healthy soils for a healthy life*

This year marks a milestone for soil enthusiasts – an international year-long celebration of soils. The member countries of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) designated 2015 the International Year of Soils to recognize the importance of soil sustainability and to raise awareness of the limits on our soil natural resource. The FAO formally launched the Global Soil Partnership (GSP) in 2012 to generate a new momentum for intensive international cooperation and more effective regional and national action in order to reverse soil degradation and make sustainable soil management the norm. In the face of mounting challenges such as a growing global population (expected to surpass 9 billion by 2050) and extreme weather events, soil health is critical to our future. Join us this year in celebrating our remarkable soils.

*“The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all...without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.”*

*--Wendell Berry*

## SAVE THE DATE

Join the Franklin County SWCD for their **52<sup>nd</sup>** Annual Meeting and Dinner, **February 11, 2015** held in the Franklin County High School cafeteria. A catered buffet meal by Chef Adam Israel will be served at 6pm. The keynote presenter will be **Scott Ham**, Chairman of the State Soil Conservation Board and manager of Silver Creek Water Corporation in southern Indiana. Mr. Ham has also served multiple tours of duty overseas during his 20+ years of service in the Indiana National Guard. As part of his service he has assisted in building schools and drilling wells to provide clean water for the local villagers. Following the presentation there will be an election, awards ceremony and a recap of the SWCD activities for the 2014 year. At the conclusion of the meeting, door prizes will be handed out. Tickets are \$9 per person. Please **RSVP** by **February 4** to the SWCD office at 647-2651 ext.3





## The Science behind Healthy Soil: NRCS Launches Soil Health Literature Review Project

USDA NRCS Soil Health Literature Review Project, developed to support the science based approach to NRCS' soil health initiative, was recently launched and made available to both the public and USDA employees. "As world population and food production demands rise, keeping the nation's soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance, said Dave Hoover, National Leader for Soils Business Systems. "So much so that we believe improving the health of our Nation's soil is one of the most important conservation endeavors of our time." NRCS efforts on behalf of healthy soil result in an increase in crop production and profitability while improving the environment. Positive results are often realized within the first year of implementing soil health management systems and last well into the future. NRCS' Soil Health Literature Review Project provides the scientific underpinning for the Agency's soil health initiative by providing more than 180 peer-reviewed journal articles focused on the impact of conservation practices on soil's physical and chemical properties important for soil health. While the literature review project currently addresses soil physical properties and to a limited extent, chemical properties, biological properties and economic impacts are targeted for future summary and inclusion in the project. The peer-reviewed articles are not exhaustive, and the USDA employee SharePoint provides the ability for staff to submit a journal article to be included in the literature review. The Literature Review Project involves both a public Web site and the USDA employee SharePoint. The sites provide access to a searchable database of journal references related to physical and chemical soil health properties and conservation practices. All literature review users, whether public or USDA, are provided access to short summaries of each article and an interactive matrix for displaying journal article citations sorted/filtered by common conservation practices, soil properties, irrigated or dry land management, moisture and temperature regimes, and other items. USDA employees have access to peer reviewed papers on the USDA employee SharePoint. The 2014 Soil Health Literature Review Project is a collaborative project involving NRCS' Soil Science and Resource Assessment and Science and Technology Deputy Areas. The public can access the *Soil Health Literature Review Project* at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/soils/home/?cid=STELPRDB1257753>

## Cover Crop Benefit-Cost Study

We all know that economic benefits and costs are on everyone's minds when it comes to cover crops or no-till vs more conventional farming systems. A lot of cover-crop/no-till farmers are positive that the economic returns are very strong. Yet, there are many who question or disagree with this premise. Dr. Wally Tyner, Purdue University, is working on several projects that we hope will provide some answers to these questions. Dr. Tyner is looking for individuals that would be willing to share their farming experiences to help with this research. This is a chance for you to help advance our understanding of soil health. If you are interested in participating contact the Franklin County SWCD/NRCS office for more information.

## Web Soil Survey Workshop

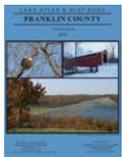
The NRCS, SWCD and Purdue Extension are hosting a Web Soil Survey (WSS) workshop on Wednesday, January 21<sup>st</sup> at 6 p.m. in the Franklin County Government Center. Web Soil Survey is an interactive online tool that can be used to produce soil maps for specific areas of interest, as well as, tell you the suitability for building sites, septic systems, crops and many other land uses based on the characteristics of those soil types. This will be a hands-on workshop where participants will use computers to better learn the capabilities of WSS. Computers will be provided or you can bring your own laptop. This workshop is free of charge but due to limited space we ask that participants RSVP by January 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Farm Service Agency

FSA is saying goodbye to 2 members of its staff. Mike Kohlsdorf has retired after over 27 years of service with the agency. Molly Schwab has accepted a new job with Bath State Bank and will be leaving at the end of the month. They will be missed but we all wish them well in their new endeavors.

### *Good Luck Mike & Molly!*

In other news, the deadline for farm owners to update their yield history for crop years 2008- 2012 and/or reallocate base acres is February 27, 2015. This needs to be completed before choosing which new program best serves their risk management needs. Signup is also underway for making the one-time election of either ARC or PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years. The deadline to complete this is March 31, 2015. Please contact the Franklin County Farm Service Agency for more details.



**NEW  
PLAT  
BOOK**

The 2013 Franklin County plat book is full color and includes aerial photos of each township. The books sell for \$25 each, cash or check only.

## Did you know?

In 2012, Indiana had 58,695 farms with the average size of 251 acres. The average age of an Indiana farmer is 55.8 years old compared to 49.1 years old just 30 years ago.

## Mark your Calendar!



**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual National No-Tillage Conference** --January 14-17 Cincinnati  
<http://www.no-tillfarmer.com/>

## For the birds!



Like many of you, I enjoy watching the birds at my feeders each winter. Though our “non-feeder” friends may not understand us, we are not alone. In fact, over 55 million Americans share this hobby, spending over \$3 billion a year on bird feed alone. Scientists are now capitalizing on this potential information by creating several ‘citizen science’ projects that allow volunteers to participate in real life science. Project Feeder Watch is one such citizen science project that is providing valuable data on the state of birds across North America. By following a couple easy steps and recording the birds at your feeder you are able to help scientists track the movement and population trends of our feathered friends. Although I enjoy counting all the birds that visit my feeder, I am especially excited when a rare guest arrives. Recently, I heard that Pine Siskins had been reported visiting feeders in the area. Within a couple days, I too was greeted with a small flock of Pine Siskins at my feeders. These nomadic northern finches are easily overlooked as they look very similar to the female House Finch and the American Goldfinch. Winter movements of the Pine Siskin are erratic and depend partly on the state of pine cone crops in northern North America. About every other year, Pine Siskins irrupt, or move into central and even southern regions of the continent, but the timing and extent of these movements are extremely variable. Pine Siskins are able to adapt to cold temperatures by ramping up their metabolism rates—typically 40% higher than a similarly sized songbird. They also put on more winter fat than their American Goldfinch relatives. So keep your eyes peeled for these rare winter visitors and consider joining one of the citizen science projects to help scientists protect our feeder guests.

## Dates to Remember

**December 24:** Christmas Eve!  
Observed holiday. **Office closed.**



**December 25:** Christmas Day!  
Observed holiday. **Office closed.**

**December 26:** Please call before visiting. *Limited staff available.*

**2 0 1 5**

**January 1:** New Year’s Day!  
Observed holiday. **Office closed.**

**January 12-13:** IASWCD annual conference in Indianapolis.  
*Limited staff available.*

**January 19:** Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday! **Office Closed.**

**January 21: 6pm:** Web Soil Survey workshop in the Government Center. *Please RSVP.*  
**7:30pm: SWCD monthly meeting at the SWCD office.**

**February 7:** 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Food & Growers Conference. Batesville Intermediate School 9am-3pm.  
<http://foodandgrowers.org/>

**February 11: 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual meeting & dinner at 6:00pm in the FCHS cafeteria.** *Please RSVP.*



**February 16:** Presidents Day!  
Observed holiday. **Office closed.**

**February 21:** Alternative Energy workshop. *More details TBA*

**March 14: 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conservation Tillage Breakfast & Workshop (PARP)—8:00am** at Zimmer Tractor.

**March 18: SWCD monthly meeting at 7:30pm.**



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**Wenning Farms, Inc**  
Roger Wenning  
Cover Crop Specialist  
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rwenning@etczone.com

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Grassed Waterways (NRCS Certified) - Septic  
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**Roger: 812-593-1148**

**Kevin: 812-528-6512**

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