

# Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District



## Winter 2013



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 due to field work and staff training. Please call ahead before visiting.*

### **District Supervisors:**

Michael T. Schwab – Chair  
David R. Hartman – Vice-Chair  
Louis E. Schwegman – Secretary  
John J. Selm - Supervisor  
Darin R. Hodapp – Supervisor

### **Associate Supervisors:**

Roger Bommer  
Lance Cox  
Clinton McNally  
Eugene Meyer

### **Conservation Staff:**

Clint Harrison – NRCS  
Chris Fox – SWCD



Join the Franklin County SWCD for their **50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Dinner February 20, 2013 beginning at 6pm in the Franklin County High School cafeteria.** Please **RSVP** for tickets.

### **The drought of 2012 continues?**

With the arrival of the holiday season and New Year, many people have long forgotten about the drought of 2012. However, the fact is much of the country is still dealing with the effects of this recording breaking year. Many of the Great Plains states are still in the grips of this wide spread drought and though we have received much needed rainfall we are still in a moderate hydrological drought evident by the low levels in many local ponds, lakes and rivers. In fact the exceptionally dry summer throughout the Midwest, coupled with the relatively mild winter last year, has created an almost unbelievable situation...the mighty Mississippi River may be shutdown. Water levels along the largest river in the US, and the worlds 4<sup>th</sup> longest, have already dropped below those of the historic 1988 drought. "The Mississippi River is the lifeblood of the Gulf and Midwest, so a shutdown of traffic on the river -- whether at the mouth, the middle, or the headwaters -- is a great concern," noted Rep. Jeff Landry, R-La., whose district sits in the lower portion of the river. "If we shut down the river to commerce, we will see higher prices in basic commodities such as food and

electricity and fewer jobs for hard-working mariners." Nearly 500 million tons of cargo (including over 60% of the nation's grain) move up and down the river on barges, these goods are worth an estimated \$180 billion, according to the American Waterways Operators. As the water levels drop, the river channel narrows. In some places, the navigable channel is so narrow the river has slowed to one-way traffic. The navigational hazards of the low water levels are compounded by last year's flooding, which resulted in tons of soil and silt being washed into the river, altering and raising the riverbed. In response, the Army Corps has begun a 24-hour operation dredging the river. Many barge companies have had to lighten their load by about 25 percent so the barges ride higher in the water, reducing what's known as the barges' "draught." Recent rains and snowfall in the Upper Midwest will help improve the situation...but what the future of commerce on the mighty river holds; only time will tell.



## NRCS ADVISES KEEPING CROP RESIDUE TO AVOID EROSION PROBLEMS

Indianapolis, IN,—This year’s devastating drought not only robbed crops of valuable moisture, it reduced plant growth and protective cover for the soil. Conservation officials warn that the drought made our soil resource vulnerable to erosion and any tillage will only make conditions worse.

Soil Quality Specialist Barry Fisher with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Indiana says if a producer reduces tillage, or increases surface residue, they can increase infiltration rates. “When we do get rain, there will be more water going into that soil profile,” says Fisher. “Surface residue will reduce erosion. And, by using residue to keep water in the soil, there will be more organic matter in the soil development as well as macro pore development.”

Fisher says even conservation tillage this year can be more damaging than usual because the crop residue is very fragile. “If producers do tillage out there this fall, a greater portion of that residue will get buried,” he says. “When residue is buried, rather than left on the soil surface, farmers open themselves up for wind and water erosion.”

By eliminating disturbance (tillage), Fisher explains that the soil will be better able to absorb any moisture when it returns. “Raindrops falling on bare soil dislodge soil particles resulting in water erosion,” he says. “Residue from decomposing plants catches the force of the raindrops letting more water infiltrate the soil profile instead of becoming runoff.”

Standing residue is also important for anchoring the soil. Fisher advises farmers to be thinking into the future on how to keep residue cover on their fields. Some of the worst wind erosion occurs in March and April. Standing crop residue slashes the force of strong winds during these months. Producers can protect their fields by eliminating fall tillage. “Soil is the foundation for next year’s crops and keeping soil healthy is the first line of defense in battling damage from wind and rain,” he says.

Conservation assistance is available for anyone through NRCS field offices located in USDA Service Centers across Indiana. Visit [www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/field\\_offices.html](http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/field_offices.html)



Ag-Day for Franklin County 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders will take place on April 9, 2013 at the Franklin County fairgrounds.

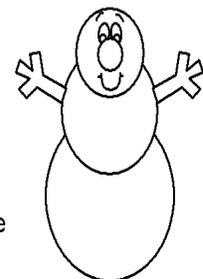


As part of the 2013 Agriculture Appreciation celebration in March, six Hoosiers students will be selected for their winning essays in the 3rd Annual Ag Essay Contest titled “Our Food, Our Farmers: Nourishing Generations of Hoosiers.” All winners will be recognized during a special ceremony at the Indiana Statehouse on Tuesday, March 5. First place winners will receive an Apple iPad. The deadline for entries is February 1, 2013. For info: [indianafamilyoffarmers.com/essay.html](http://indianafamilyoffarmers.com/essay.html)

## Winter Word Search

F S N O W M A N Y P V W R U E  
X I U E I L I G O F I A R H T  
U C R C T U O L D N G K L I A  
C S E E G I A Z T S O R F B R  
C N O N P R H E O M H Q C E G  
H M E P B L R W C Y P K M R I  
I P O E E K A L F W O N S N M  
L O A G T O Q C I Z U C P A U  
L R Z A K O C P E I J J D T Z  
Y T H O T C H O C O L A T E J

chilly  
fireplace  
frost  
hibernate  
hot chocolate  
migrate



penguin  
polar bear  
snowflake  
snowman  
white  
winter

*Riddle: Where does a snowman keep his money? A snow bank!*

# Mark your Calendar!

## Upcoming Winter Conferences:



**21<sup>st</sup> Annual National No-Tillage Conference** --January 9-12  
Hyatt Regency, Indianapolis, IN.  
<http://www.no-tillfarmer.com/>

**Southern Indiana Grazing Conference** – February 6<sup>th</sup>  
Simon Graber Community Center  
Odon, IN. For more info  
contact the Daviess Co. SWCD at  
812-254-4780 Ext. 3, or go to  
<http://daviesscoswcd.org>

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Food and Growers Seminar**—February 9<sup>th</sup> 9-2pm  
Batesville Intermediate School.  
\$20/per person includes lunch.  
<http://foodandgrowers.org/>



**34<sup>th</sup> Annual Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association Conference**—  
February 16-17; Granville, OH  
<http://www.oeffa.org/>



**24<sup>th</sup> Annual Organic Farming Conference** – February 21-23;  
La Crosse, Wisconsin.  
<http://mosesorganic.org>

# Citizen Science

## You can make a difference

"Citizen Science" is a fairly new term but an old practice. Prior to the 20th Century, science was often the pursuit of amateur or self-funded researchers such as Isaac Newton, John James Audubon and Benjamin Franklin. Modern citizen science differs from its historical forms primarily in the access for public participation; technology is credited as one of the main drivers of the recent explosion of citizen science activity. Opportunities for participation range from butterfly counts to water quality monitoring. A couple projects available during the winter months that you can participate in from the comfort of your home are Project Feeder Watch (Nov-April) and the Great Backyard Bird Count (Feb 15-18, 2013).

The largest and longest-running citizen science project is the Audubon Christmas Bird Count (CBC). The CBC has grown from 27 participants in 1900 to over 63,000 counters at 2,200 locations last year. Each CBC count is conducted in a 24-hour span between December 14 and January 5, covering an area 15 miles in diameter. The CBC data has been instrumental in monitoring avian population trends and shifts in wintering ranges. The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Oldenburg CBC will take place on Saturday, December 29<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:30am at Michaela farm. To register for the Oldenburg CBC contact Annette Swain at 933-6437 or [center@oldenburgosf.com](mailto:center@oldenburgosf.com)

## Dates to Remember

**December 19:** SWCD monthly meeting & dinner at the **Brau Haus beginning at 6:00pm.**

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



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



**December 29:** Christmas Bird Count. Oldenburg 7:30am-1pm. See article to the left for more info.

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

**January 7-9:** IASWCD Annual Conference in Indianapolis. Limited staff available.

**January 16:** SWCD monthly meeting at 7:30pm.

**January 21:** Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday! *Office Closed.*



**February 18:** Presidents Day! Observed holiday. *Office closed.*

**February 20:** SWCD 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting & Dinner at **Franklin Co. High School cafeteria at 6:00pm.** RSVP.

**March 20:** SWCD monthly meeting at 7:30pm.

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Brookville, IN 47012-9414



Greensburg, IN  
Grassed Waterways (NRCS Certified) - Septic  
Farm Drainage - Grass Seeding - Ponds  
**Roger: 812-593-1148**  
**Kevin: 812-528-6512**



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