



Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District

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3rd Quarter Edition Newsletter September 2015

Things Keep a Buzzing

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The next time you visit your Jennings County Library take a look at the New Pollinator Display. Erin Moore, Director of Educational Development and Marketing for the library and Kelly Kent, Admin. Asst. with the SWCD are pictured with the display. The Library has joined our efforts of educating the importance of Pollinators in our county. You know, there would not be apples, blueberries, watermelon



and a whole lot of other fruits and vegetables without the service of pollinators.

We often think that it's those fruit and vegetable areas in Vermont, California and Washington that need those honey bees shipped out to pollinate those flowers, which will then bare fruit for our local market. Well, yes and no. Yes, we eat that produce in the winter, however our local farmers markets, our gardens, and potted tomato plants here at home need those pollinators and supply us with a lot of food from the spring to the fall.



The Pollinator sub-committee is meeting for the third time in September to finalize their Community Pollinator Plan. That final step is to develop an action register to build more habitat, capture current activity, inform the community of our progress, and invite *you*, to **SHARE SOME SPACE** and plant some flowering seeds and milkweed. *Free Seed* is available at your SWCD for a small area around the house, barn or yard. We have already given out seed for 8 new areas in Jennings County, so come see what the buzz is about!

FSA Information

USDA Opens Enrollment Period for Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage Safety-Net Programs

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that eligible producers may now formally enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs for 2014 and 2015. The enrollment period begins June 17, 2015, and will end Sept. 30, 2015.

The new programs, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, trigger financial protections for agricultural producers when market forces cause substantial drops in crop prices or revenues. More than 1.76 million farmers have elected ARC or PLC. Previously, 1.7 million producers had enrolled to receive direct payments (the program replaced with ARC and PLC by the 2014 Farm Bill). This means more farms have elected ARC or PLC than previously enrolled under previously administered programs.

Nationwide, 96 percent of soybean farms, 91 percent of corn farms, and 66 percent of wheat farms elected ARC. 99 percent of long grain rice farms, 99 percent of peanut farms, and 94 percent of medium grain rice farms elected PLC. For data about other crops and state-by-state program election results go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc.

Covered commodities under ARC and PLC include barley, corn, grain sorghum, oats, soybeans and wheat.

For more information please contact your local FSA office <https://offices.usda.gov>.

Purple Loosestrife = Invasive Species

Sometimes all that glitters is not gold. That is an old saying and applies to the plant called “purple loosestrife.” If you drive along in the county you can see it along county roads, in pastures and even in ponds. It likes wet areas.

Purple Loosestrife is considered an invasive species. Invasive species are an organism (plant, animal, fungus, or bacterium) that is not native and has negative effects on our economy, our environment, or our health. Not all introduced **species** are **invasive**. **Invasive** plants and animals are the second greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss.

Let's break down what makes purple loosestrife a problem. It is a perennial that stands erect on a square, woody stem. It grows from a large taproot with rhizomes forming a dense mat. Each rootstock can have 1 to 50 stems emerging from it. Annually, each plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds. The seeds are the size of sand stored in a seed capsule. All of those features makes this plant prolific, hearty, and one small isolated patch can spread to cover an aquatic

and/or wet site in only one growing season. In time, it can take over an entire field.

Some management and prevention methods are digging and pulling, or releasing certain leaf eating beetles, but most effective control is using chemicals.



We want to “sweeten up” the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program both financially and environmentally!

As you may have heard, the Jennings County SWCD is leading a community effort to increase Pollinator Habitat. What would a county look like without those beautiful butterflies and bees? Not good, since they pollinate 1/3 of our fruits and vegetables.

With that said, if you are thinking about enrolling some land into the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as a filter strip or riparian buffer or the SAFE wildlife habitat, we want to “sweeten up” your decision. You get some extra cash, we get more available “nectar!”

Filter strips are grass strips 20 – 120 feet wide established on cropland *that runs off into a permanent water body such as a pond, stream or river*. Riparian buffers are strips with trees, shrubs, and grasses that are 35 – 180 feet wide on cropland *adjacent to a river, stream, or permanent water body*. The SAFE wildlife habitat program can be *part or the entire field*. We will add additional financial incentives to add flowering plants for pollinator habitat.

Let’s do the math. You will receive an **annual rental payment** (10-15 years, your choice at enrollment) that is calculated by using an assigned rental rate for the 3 predominant soils present, **plus a 20% incentive added** to the base rent, and a **\$5 per acre maintenance rate** also added in. (The 20% and 5% does not apply to the SAFE wildlife program.) Cost share is also paid at **50% of the cost to install the practice**.

The incentive payments remain in effect for this year’s CRP program. These incentives are added on to the above mentioned rental and cost share payments.

SIP is a one time up front payment that is calculated by multiplying the number of acres enrolled times the number of years of the contract times \$10. For example, if you were enrolling 1 acre of filter strips for 10 years, you would receive \$100 up front when you sign the CRP contract.



PIP is a one time incentive that is equal to 40% of the cost of installing the practice. (This is in addition to the 50% cost share that you already receive.) For example, if you were doing a filter strip and the installation cost was \$220, the standard cost share and the PIP payment would cover \$198. The landowner in this example would have a total cost of \$22.

Plus, through the Clean Water Indiana grant, we will pay you an additional \$100 per acre to sow flowering plants in your filter strip grass mix. That \$100 would cover the cost of the flowers and leave an estimated \$25 per acre in your wallet.

If you have a field that qualifies and want so “sweeten” the area for those bees and butterflies and yourself, call the office at 346-3411 ext. 3 for more information.

I didn't know you did that

On Tuesday, August 25th, an informational meeting was held at the Scipio Firehouse for the public, with a target audience of the County Council and Commissioners.

The SWCD Board was present and a program overview of the District's mission, their function, and services were presented by Andy Ertel, Executive Director. The meeting was well received with over 30 in attendance.



Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) announces new Wetland Reserve Easement program.

The NRCS Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program provides eligible landowners the opportunity to restore, enhance and/or create wetlands. This program focuses on areas where cropping is starting to become economically unfeasible due to current soil conditions. Eligible tracts of land are; locations that are hard to get to during the spring, or sites where the harvest can be challenging due to wetness. Most of these sites have soils that are hydric or are subject to flooding that makes agricultural management unfeasible. Dedicating the area for wildlife habitat purposes may be an alternative to economic losses from maintenance, site preparation, fuel, and labor on sites that are only occasionally harvested.

WRE will pay up to \$3,500 per acre on agricultural land and up to \$1,750 per acre on non-agricultural land.

To learn about WRE and other technical and financial assistance available contact Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist.

Thanks to our Newsletter Sponsor

HABITAT SOLUTIONS
WILDLIFE & FOREST MANAGEMENT

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Prescribed Burning

Would you like to have your business card featured here? Contact the SWCD office for more info.

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YOUR JENNINGS COUNTY CONSERVATION TEAM

SWCD Staff

*Andy Ertel, Executive Director
Kelly Kent, Administrative Assistant
Denise Dailey, Rule 5 Consultant*

NRCS STAFF

Jenny Vogel, District Conservationist

SWCD Supervisors

*Brad Ponsler, Chairman
Dan Megel, Vice-Chairman
Jerry St. John
Matt Branham
Tom Schneider
Associate Supervisor*

*Don Biehle
Rob McGriff
Bob Steiner*

Calendar of Events

**Sept. 22, 2015 Board Meeting 7pm @
USDA Service Center**

**Oct. 27, 2015 Board Meeting 7pm @
USDA Service Center**

**Nov. 24, 2015 Board Meeting 7pm@
USDA Service Center**

**Check out our website for added events
www.jenningswcd.org**

*Jennings County Soil and Water
Conservation District*

Office Hours

Monday—Friday

8:00 am until 4:00 pm

Phone (812) 346-3411 ext. 3

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