

Howard County Highlights Howard County Soil & Water Conservation District

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ISSUE 6

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Nadine Aspinwall - Program Technician

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SWCD Mission Statement

To provide leadership and administer programs to help the people of Howard County improve and conserve the county's environment and natural resources.

District will hold annual tree sale in April

Start thinking about spring and be on the lookout for the "Bright Green" order form that will arrive in your mail in January!

We will offer a variety of evergreens, deciduous, and flowering, trees along with native plants and grasses. Orders will be accepted until March 25, 2011. The pick up and sale will be on Saturday, April 16, 2011 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Jackson-Morrow Park.



PLANT TREES THIS SPRING !!!



SAVE THE DATE!

Mark Tuesday February 22, 2011 on your calendars and plan to join us for the 52nd Annual Meeting of the Howard County SWCD.

This year we will offer something for everyone. The meeting will be held at Indiana University, Kokomo Campus in the Kelly Student Center beginning at 5:00 with a dinner. During dinner reports will be given for the SWCD and the Howard County Stormwater District. Following the supervisor election there will be three sessions available for you to attend. **Session 1:** Tiles and drainage presented by Greg Lake, Deputy Surveyor. **Session 2:** Cover Crops presented by TBA, and **Session 3:** Backyard Conservation presented by TBA. Sessions will run concurrently and will be repeated once so you will have the option of attending 2 of the three sessions presented. Make plans to attend. We have a great program planned and think you will enjoy it. For more information and to make a reservation, please contact the SWCD office.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

Comes to the Upper Wabash River and Middle Wabash Deer Watersheds

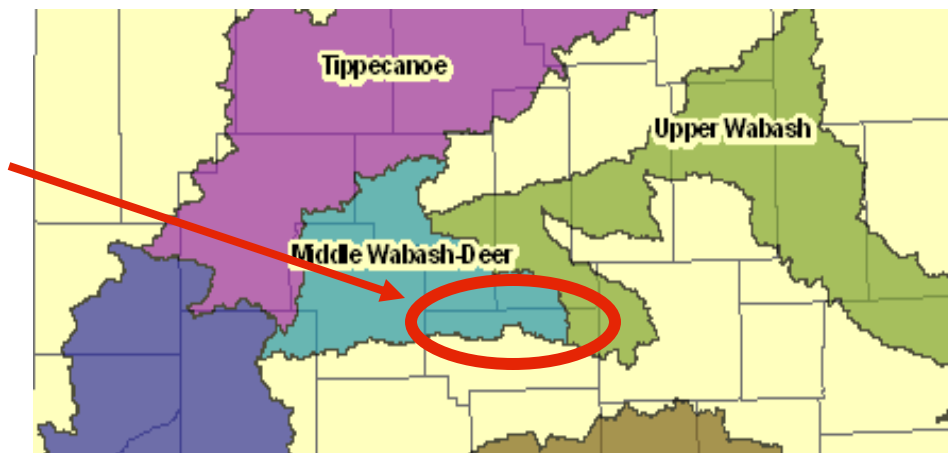
What is CREP? The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary federal and state natural resource conservation program that addresses water quality and wildlife issues by reducing sediment and nutrient runoff and enhancing wildlife habitats. This program is designed to help alleviate some of the concerns of high nonpoint source sediment, nutrient, pesticide, and herbicide losses from agricultural lands by restoring buffers and wetlands to improve water quality.

CREP was first announced in 2005 and had an enrollment goal of 7,000 acres within three watersheds in the state of Indiana. The program has now been expanded to include an acreage enrollment goal of 26,250 acres within eleven watersheds in Indiana, covering a total of 65 Indiana counties. Two of these 11 watersheds are the Upper Wabash watershed which covers portions of 11 counties: Adams, Allen, Cass, Grant, Howard, Huntington, Jay, Miami, and Wabash, Wells, and Whitley counties. The second is the Middle Wabash Deer watershed which covers portions of 6 counties: Carroll, Cass, Howard, Miami, Tippecanoe, and White.

Through CREP, program participants receive financial incentives from the USDA, Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to voluntarily enroll in the program and implement conservation practices on environmentally sensitive land. Eligible practices through the CREP include Permanent Native Grasses, Hardwood Tree Planting, Wildlife Habitat, Riparian Buffers, Filter Strips, Wetland Restoration, and Bottomland Timber Establishment.

Landowners in the watershed can receive annual rental payments, cost-share assistance, and incentive payments from the FSA similar to and above the incentives that are part of the FSA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In addition, the ISDA will pay incentive dollars for applying the conservation buffers and/or wetlands. The ISDA will pay one-time incentive payments of \$100.00 per acre for grass practices, \$400.00 per acre for tree practices, and \$950.00 per acre for wetland practices. For more information on program requirements or details on the eligible practices, visit or contact your local Farm Service Agency office or local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office. You can also contact Sarah Lake, the ISDA Upper Wabash Watershed CREP leader at slake@isda.in.gov or by phone at 765-465-2114 x3.

Sign-up for CREP began on August 27, 2010 and will continue until enrollment goals are attained or until incentive dollars are fully allocated, whichever comes first. If you are a landowner or producer located in one of the counties listed above in the Upper Wabash River or the Middle Wabash Deer watershed and are interested in participating in CREP, please contact one of the offices above or the ISDA CREP leader.



NRCS Offers Environmental Cost-Share Programs

Below are a few of the programs offered by NRCS to address environmental concerns on farm ground. If you have a situation on your farm and think one of the programs would fit your needs, please contact the office to set up an appointment.

The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that optimize environmental benefits on working agricultural land. EQIP is re-authorized through the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill).

The **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)** is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed.

WHIP has proven to be a highly effective and widely accepted program across the country. By targeting wildlife habitat projects on all lands and aquatic areas, WHIP provides assistance to conservation minded landowners that are unable to meet the specific eligibility requirements of other USDA conservation programs.

Both EQIP and WHIP sign up deadlines for fiscal year 2011 funding is December 22, 2010.

The **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving and maintaining existing conservation systems. CSP provides financial and technical assistance to help land steward conserve and enhance soil water, air, and related natural resources on their land. CSP pays participants for conservation performance – the higher the performance, the higher the payment. It provides 2 possible types of payments. An annual payment is available for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices. A supplemental payment is available to participants who also adopt a resource conserving crop rotation. NRCS makes CSP available on a nationwide basis through continuous sign-up, with announced cut-off dates.

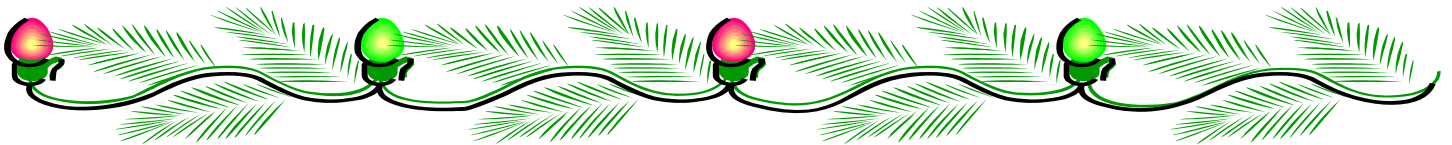
CSP sign up deadline for fiscal year 2011 funding is January 7, 2011.

Please contact Kerry Smith, District Conservationist for Howard and Tipton Counties at 765-457-2114 x3.



*****LAST CHANCE FOR WELL CAPPING*****

This is the last opportunity to receive cost-share on closing an abandoned water well. The Clean Water Indiana Grant that we received for cost-share will end on March 31, 2011. If you or anyone you know has an abandoned water well that needs to be capped, please contact our office. We will cost-share 75% up to \$500.00 to assist in the proper closure of these wells. We must have all bills into our office no later than **March 15, 2011**. This will allow us to process the paperwork and make payments before the closing date of the grant. Time is running out on this great opportunity. Call us today!



HILARY TAKES POSITION IN GREENSBURG

Hilary Barnhart, Soil Conservationist will be taking a position beginning January 3, 2011 with the Southeast Conservation Implementation Team (CIT) in Greensburg Indiana. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Hilary for all of the work she performed during the 2 1/2 years she spent in Howard and Tipton Counties.

We have planned an open house for her on December 21 from 1-3 p.m. Please plan to stop by and wish Hilary good luck on her new position. She will be missed but the staff would like to wish her all the best in this new adventure.



**December 21, 2010
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**



NEWS FROM THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY: **2011 DCP/ACRE Signup**

The enrollment period for the 2011 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) and Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) runs from Oct. 1, 2010 – June 1, 2011.

The ACRE program provides eligible producers a state-level revenue guarantee, based on the 5-year state Olympic average yield and the 2-year national average price. ACRE payments are made when both state and farm-level triggers are met. By participating in ACRE, producers elect to forgo counter-cyclical payments, receive a 20-percent reduction in direct payments and a 30-percent reduction in loan rates. The decision to elect ACRE binds the farm to the program through the 2012 crop year.

Planted crops considered eligible for ACRE payments In Indiana include: wheat, barley, oats, grain sorghum, corn, pulse crops (dry peas, lentils, chickpeas or garbanzo beans), soybeans, and other oilseeds (canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sesame seed).

CCC-927 or CCC-928 Must Be Sent To IRS

Producers who participated in 2009, 2010, or 2011 programs subject to adjusted gross income limitations (AGI) are required to certify compliance with AGI rules. The average AGI verification process for 2009, 2010 and 2011 payment eligibility requires all program participants to provide written consent to IRS for the disclosure of certain information to FSA.

On October 6, 2010, a letter was mailed to 2009 and 2010 participants who have not submitted:

CCC-927: “Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Individual Form”

CCC-928: “Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Legal Entity”

Individuals and legal entities, including members of legal entities, that certified to average AGI compliance for 2009, 2010 and 2011 payment eligibility must submit a completed CCC-927 or CCC-928 to IRS regardless of whether they received program benefits directly or as a member of a joint operation or entity. These forms must be submitted to IRS in order to avoid a demand for refund of program payments and benefits received.

Continuous CRP

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll environmentally sensitive acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

The Continuous CRP program 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 Continuous CRP. Landowners may enroll in the program at any time during the year.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments, please contact the FSA office.

WE NOW HAVE BLUEBIRD HOUSES.

PREBUILT - \$9.00/EA

KITS - \$5.00/EA (Sold Out)

We are currently sold out of the kits but hope to have some ready soon. Check back with us. Prices are subject to change without notice.

**2011 HOWARD COUNTY
PLAT BOOKS ARE
HERE!
\$15.00 EACH**

Flags for Sale!

**Fluorescent Orange,
lime, and Pink marking
flags. \$8.00 per bundle
of 100 w/36" wire staff.**

For address corrections or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact the office. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, please send request to swkoko@att.net.



The Howard County SWCD and USDA NRCS prohibit discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status

HOWARD COUNTY
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED