



## MARSHALL COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### Landscape Level Wetlands Functional Assessment (LLWFA)

#### LLWFA

Incorporating wetland protection into the local watershed planning process can help minimize impacts to wetlands and identify priority wetlands to be conserved.

Thanks to an EPA grant, Marshall County SWCD is in the process of conducting a LLWFA to create a better tool for wetland mapping in the Yellow River Watershed.

For more information on the Landscape Level Wetlands Functional Assessment feel free to contact:

#### **Tom Estrem**

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#### **Marshall County SWCD**

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#### USDA Seeks Project Proposal to Protect and Restore Critical Wetlands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing up to \$15 million in technical and financial assistance to help eligible conservation partners voluntarily protect, restore and enhance critical wetlands on agricultural lands. Restored wetlands improve water quality downstream and improve wildlife habitat, while also providing flood prevention and recreational benefits to communities.

Funding will be provided through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership (WREP), part of the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), a Farm Bill conservation program. The partnership is administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the leading federal agency for wetland conservation on private lands. Through WREP, states, local units of governments, non-governmental organizations and American Indian tribes collaborate with NRCS through cooperative and partnership agreements. These partners work with tribal and private landowners who voluntarily enroll eligible land into easements to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their properties.

"These strong, locally led partnerships help improve water quality, prevent flooding, enhance wildlife habitat and provide landowners the financial resources needed to voluntarily conserve our lands," Young said.

Easements enable landowners to adopt a variety of conservation practices that improve the function and condition of wetlands. The voluntary nature of NRCS' easement programs enables effective integration of wetland restoration on working landscapes, providing benefits to farmers and ranchers who enroll in the program, as well as benefits to the local and rural communities where the wetlands exist.

This year, NRCS is encouraging partners to propose projects that focus on improving water quality as well as habitat on working landscapes in high-priority areas, ranging from the sagebrush of the West to the Chesapeake Bay. A number of at-risk species rely on wetlands, including the American black duck, bog turtle, wood turtle, spotted turtle, Blandings turtle and greater sage-grouse as well as a variety of mussel and fish species.

Proposals must be submitted to NRCS state offices by April 24, 2017. More information is available on the ACEP webpage.

If you would like to talk to your local USDA NRCS District Conservationist about this program or any other conservation program, please call Troy Manges at 574-936-2024 x 3.



# Headwaters Yellow River Watershed Planning Project

Spring 2017

## Nutrient Management

### Upcoming Events

#### Steering Committee Meeting

Date: March 30, 2017  
Time: 2:00pm EST  
Location: Plymouth Public Library (201 N Center St, Plymouth, IN 46563)

The Draft Headwaters Yellow River Watershed Management Plan is currently available for review. Please visit the [Marshall County SWCD](#) webpage to download a copy of the document.

For more information on the Headwaters Yellow River Project feel free to contact:

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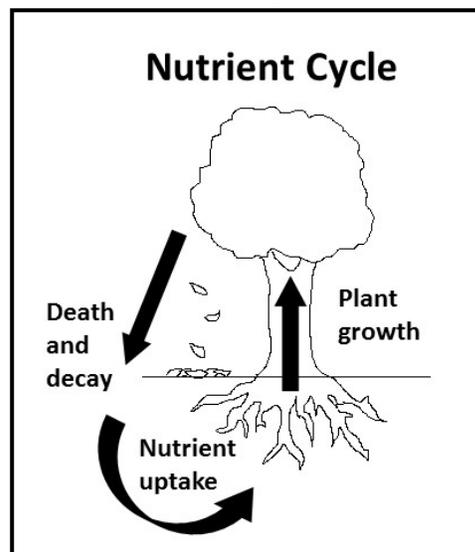
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This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement (A305-5-9) to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

In a natural ecosystem nutrients are typically available in the soil and are sourced from the decomposition of organic material as organisms die and decompose into the substrate. In this scenario the nutrient cycle provides a perpetual and recurring system of plant germination, maturation, death, and decomposition.



In agricultural situations much of the plant material is harvested and removed from the immediate environment, thus breaking the nutrient cycle and resulting in soils that become less and less fertile over time. To overcome this issue, farmers supplement the soil with nutrients through the spreading of fertilizer and manure. Common nutrients include nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

While beneficial to crop production, applied nutrients have the potential to be washed off site during heavy rainfall events. This increased flush of nutrients in a body of water ("nutrient loading") can result in unusually high levels of algal and plant growth.

When these organisms die, bacteria break down the decaying material, and in doing so, consume a proportionately large amount of oxygen in the water. The result is hypoxia—a decrease in the dissolved oxygen available in the water, which can result in the die offs of fish and other aquatic organisms.

Agricultural management practices such as conservation tillage, conservation buffers, and crop nutrient management can be implemented to reduce nutrient runoff. Conservation tillage techniques generally involve leaving crop residue from earlier harvests on the soil surface. This technique helps reduce surface flow and erosion, and can reduce nutrient runoff. Conservation buffers such as grass strips located along waterways also can reduce nutrient loss by capturing nutrient runoff before it reaches the adjacent body of water. In addition to these two techniques, managing and monitoring the amount of nutrients applied to fields during and between years can help prevent over application and excessive nutrient buildup in soils. Establishing distances between the application area and water ingress points like wells, drainage inlets, and sinkholes can also help reduce nutrient runoff.

Using one or more of these techniques can help keep nutrients on the fields where they are used for their intended purpose—to benefit crops. These practices also go a long way in making the waters of our district clean and healthy, and that's something we can all appreciate.

For more information on nutrient management techniques, contact the Marshall County SWCD at 574-936-2024, ext. 3, or at [info@marshallcountyswcd.org](mailto:info@marshallcountyswcd.org).

# CONSERVATION CONVERSATIONS

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF  
MARSHALL COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
2903 GARY DRIVE PLYMOUTH IN 46563  
574-936-2024 X 3



March 2017

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

Spring

## ONLINE CONSERVATION

Do you ever get in the house on a Sunday afternoon after checking the fields and say to yourself “Don’t forget to contact the USDA office tomorrow” and then promptly forget to call the next day? Now you don’t have to wait. You can go to Client Gateway right when you are thinking about it and request assistance.

Conservation Client Gateway enables farmers and private landowners to:

- Request NRCS Assistance
- Review and Sign Conservation Plans and Practice Schedules
- Complete and Sign an Application for a Conservation Program
- Review, Sign and Submit Contracts and Appendices for Conservation Programs
- Document Completed Practices and Request Certification of Completed Practices
- Request and Track Payments for Conservation Programs
- Store and Retrieve Technical and Financial Files, including Documents and Photographs



You can log in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you would like to know more about Conservation Client Gateway please talk to Troy at your Marshall County NRCS office or visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway).

## RAIN GARDENS— Plant One and *Slow the Flow*

**Cost Share Available!**



Rain gardens are an attractive, landscaped area slightly lower than ground level, designed to capture rain water run off from impervious surfaces.

New development continues to replace green space with impervious surfaces like rooftops, paved streets, driveways, sidewalks and parking lots.

Impervious surfaces don’t allow water to soak into the ground so more water is flowing into the storm sewers at a very fast rate, carrying various forms of pollution.



## GO GREEN!

By scanning the QR code to the left with your smart phone you can send us an email letting us know you would like to help us save money on printing costs and postage by receiving your newsletter via email.

## WETLANDS—Natural Pollution Control

The cleansing power of wetlands provides natural pollution control. Historically, wetlands were thought to be valuable only as sources of peat and fossil fuels, as sites for fishing and hunting or as places to drain for farmland. However, wetlands are the kidneys of the natural world. They remove nutrients, pesticides and sediment from surface water. Wetlands buffer shore lands against erosion and provide habitats for wildlife. For more information about design, restoration or mitigation of wetlands please call your local SWCD office.

### MARSHALL COUNTY SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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**Debbie Palmer**  
District Coordinator

**Troy Manges**  
USDA NRCS  
District Conservationist

## Upcoming Events

**Demonstration Rain Garden**—Centennial Park— We are looking for volunteers to help with the planting.

**Hoosier Riverwatch Training**—Summer 2017. Please visit <http://www.hoosieriverwatch.com/> for more information on the program. We are looking for Citizen Scientists to learn how to help monitor water quality.

**Tread in the Shed**—Summer 2017—Informal walk in Centennial Park highlighting features of a healthy watershed.

All three events are in the planning stages.

Please visit [www.marshallcountyswcd.org](http://www.marshallcountyswcd.org) or call 574-936-2024 x 3 for more information.

The County Highway Department is asking for your cooperation when planting corn. Please allow an adequate area for visibility at intersections. Thank you—your cooperation is appreciated.

*USDA and the Marshall County SWCD prohibit discrimination in their programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status.*

Conservation: the careful maintaining and protection of something valuable especially in its natural or original state

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