



Annual Meeting

March 10, 2016 6p
Madison County
4H Building
\$5 pp (pay at the door)

Urban Wildlife:
Creating Habitat and
Avoiding Conflict

Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter

February 2016

MEGAN DILLON WILL BE SPEAKING ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WILDLIFE HABITAT

It's that time of year again, when the Madison County SWCD announces their Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing everyone. We are happy to, once again, be offering a wonderful meal catered by Carolyn Moreland.

This year, our featured speaker will be Megan Dillon, Urban Wildlife Biologist with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. She will be speaking on the importance of wildlife habitat, creating habitat and avoiding conflict with neighbors when establishing the practice.

Megan is a 2012 graduate of Purdue University with a Wildlife degree, specializing

in herpetofauna. She's worked in Indiana, Florida, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Minnesota with reptiles, amphibians, wading birds and deer. She is Indiana's first Urban Biologist with the DNR.

She started at the DNR as the self-proclaimed "Assistant Assistant Deer Biologist."

We look forward to what she can teach Madison County residents on the importance of wildlife habitat.

To reserve your spot, please contact Steve Schmidt at 765-644-4249, ext. 3.

IN THIS ISSUE

Conservation Corner

Cover Crops in CCSI Field
InField Advantage Program



Heartland Backyard Conservation





INfield Advantage Bringing Advantages to Madison County Farmers

By Meg Leader, ISDA

In 2015, INfield Advantage (INFA) was successfully launched as a rebranding of the Indiana On-Farm Network. The year 2014 had seen the conclusion of the USDA Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) under which the Indiana program was introduced in 2010. Indiana On-Farm Network was built using the model developed in Iowa a decade earlier and shared Iowa's program's name. While our program still works closely with Iowa, the rebranding gives our program its own identity.

INfield Advantage continues to be one of the largest adaptive nutrient management farmer networks in the country, after Iowa, and in 2015 we continued growing. In 2015 we added eight new local groups, bringing our total number of active groups to twenty nine. State-wide, over 800 fields, or nearly 60,000 acres, were monitored using the INfield Advantage tools.



The Madison/Delaware County group continued working in 2015. Our group was formed by the SWCD's and local growers to improve their nitrogen use efficiency in corn. This year, we had seventeen local growers participate in INFA. Our local group is part of the state-wide program coordinated by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). More information about the program and previous years' results can be found at: www.INfieldAdvantage.org

INFA uses aerial imagery and the Corn Stalk Nitrate Test (CSNT) to determine nitrogen use efficiency in each field enrolled. Producers are not restricted on tillage, rotation, nitrogen form, timing or rate and may enroll multiple fields. The basic level of the program is called Guided Stalk Sampling (GSS). Growers may also use INFA to conduct on-farm research using Replicated Strip Trials (RST). At the end of the year, INFA supplies each grower with the imagery and CSNT results from each field. Any fields with a Replicated Strip Trial will also have an RST report. Each grower also receives a regional report, with each field assigned an anonymous ID number.

Locally, our 2015 working group consisted of over forty GSS fields and two RST fields. INFA costs are funded through Indiana Corn Marketing Council/Indiana Soybean Alliance (ICMC/ISA) checkoff funds and is offered free of charge to producers. The total value of the imagery and lab work to our local producers in 2015 was almost \$13,000.00. Our program is possible due to the coordination and support of local Indiana Conservation Partnership staff. Our group also received additional support from ISDA's INFA State Coordinator and ICMC/ISA. This in-kind support is roughly valued at \$4,000.

There is a possibility of expanding our group for 2016. Check with the Madison County SWCD if interested

Another Successful Year for Madison County's CCSI Field with Shuter Sunset Farms

CCSI was launched in 2009 with funding from the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Indiana State Soil Conservation Board. Two project coordinators, Hans Kok and Dan Towery, were hired and an Oversight Committee was established. The Indiana Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) administers the Initiative. In mid-2012, IASWCD received grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant program that will fund it for the next three years. The program has secured a contribution agreement with NRCS for funding of CCSI through 2017;

The Madison County SWCD has worked with Shuter Sunset Farms the last three years with funding from CCSI to promote and research soil health through this program. The SWCD samples Shuter's field in both the spring and fall, allowing data to be collected on the overall soil health of the field, and shows the importance BMPs can make on improving the ground.

It was another successful year in the program and the data collected will help to improve things even more in the future. This was evident at the Soil Health Field Day hosted by Shuter Sunset Farms in September of 2015, which was attended by farmers across the State of Indiana.

We look forward to working with Shuter Sunset Farms another two years to improve and promote the aspect of soil health.





Heartland Backyard Conservation Program Cost Share

By now, a lot of you have heard that our Watershed Coordinator, Chanda Hiatt, has accepted a new position after seven years of working at the Madison County SWCD. Chanda was a dedicated and dependable employee of the District during her time here. Looking back, I still can't believe it had been seven years. Time really does fly when you're having fun!

It's a new era at the Madison County SWCD. We're in the process of accepting applications for Chanda's replacement. We look forward to presenting our new employee with the tasks it takes to be a successful Watershed Coordinator.

I know many residents will be curious: YES, we will continue to have our Fall Tree Sale. In fact, we're already in contact with our nurseries and one of the first tasks for our new employee, will be putting together our brochure.

On behalf of the Madison County SWCD Board of Supervisors and everyone at the Anderson USDA Service Center, we wish Chanda nothing but the best in her future endeavors.



GOOD LUCK, "TREE LADY!"



Do you have a wet spot in your yard? An erosion problem? Or, would you just like to have more trees and native plants in your yard to provide habitat? The Madison County SWCD has partnered with Hamilton, Hancock and Marion Counties on a grant that will allow us to provide cost share on urban practices.

The four counties applied in 2015 for a Clean Water Indiana Grant, and we're thrilled to be starting to take applications. This grant was formed as an extension from our previous CWI Grant to provide cost share for strictly urban practices, basically, in our own backyards.

Although this is the first year for the Heartland Backyard Conservation Program, it is continuing from a previous grant we worked on the last few years. Madison County residents have been pleased with the results so far. Working with members of the Garden Clubs, we were able to cost share on pollinator gardens, with half the cost being paid for by the grant. In another situation, we were able to cost share on native shrubs and trees for a couple who wanted to see more wildlife out their back window. Not only will these practices promote wildlife habitat, they will have a positive effect on water quality.

Some of the other cost share opportunities:



Pond/Lake Edge Enhancements



Rain Gardens



Porous Pavement/Pavers



Garden Cover Crops



Invasive Removal

Contact the Madison County SWCD for more information at 765-644-4249, ext. 3.

Madison County SWCD
182 W 300 N
Anderson, IN 46012

Return Service Requested

Standard Mail
U.S. Postage
Paid Permit No 20
Anderson, IN



We're starting to work on the 2016 Fall Tree Sale Brochures. They should be available by May 2016. We look forward to providing native, fruit and flowering trees and shrubs to Madison County.

Cover Crop Plot Demonstration Day

March 29, 2016

Nebo Road, north of Mt. Olive
Church,

Muncie, Indiana

Seeding Benefits

Compaction

Implementation

Termination

For more information or to
make a reservation:

Becky Daugherty

delcoswcd@gmail.com

765-747-5531 ext 3