



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

The Montgomery County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

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Director's Statement

What a year this has been! I feel like we say this every year but, we were so busy! The year 2023 brought many exciting events and a new Program Coordinator, Sam. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of field days out at the Cain's farm. The Cain family has been a great partner and advocate for conservation for many years so we decided to submit Cain's Homelike Farms for the Conservation Farmer of the Year award. In November it was announced that they had won. This statewide award recognizes a conservation-minded farm that has made a great impact in its community. Anyone in the county knows the tremendous impact the Cain family has and we are thankful they help to spread our mission of conserving our natural resources.

This past fall it was also announced that our district has won a District Showcase Award, presented by the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This award highlights our Clean Water Indiana grant that funded our Program Coordinator position from 2020 to 2023. Thank you to the Montgomery County Council for working with us to fund the Program Coordinator position moving forward to make your Montgomery County SWCD office a permanent two-person office. We look forward to strengthening our two working groups in the coming year and we are grateful for the support of this amazing community!

Kristen Latzke
Conservation Director

Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- Dec. 25th-29th: Office Closed
- January 1st: Office Closed
- January 4th: SWCD Board Meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 8 am
- January 15th: Office Closed
- January 18th: CISMA Steering Committee Meeting at 4pm in the USDA Service Center Conference Room
- February 1st: SWCD Board Meeting at 8 am at the USDA Service Center Conference Room
- February 19th: Office Closed
- February 21st: Community Growers of Montgomery County meeting 6:30 pm Fusion 54
- February 26th: Montgomery County SWCD Annual Meeting Stone Creek Lodge 5:30 pm
- March 7th: SWCD Board Meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 8 am
- April 4th: SWCD Board Meeting in the USDA Service Center conference room at 8 am

District Showcase Event

On November 29th we held a District Showcase at Fusion 54 to highlight the programs brought to the district by adding the Program Coordinator position. The Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD) recognizes 3-4 districts across the state each year. Districts put on a showcase presentation where members of the community and Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) hear about the projects and programs that have made those districts successful. These districts are recognized during the IAWSCD annual conference in Indianapolis in January. Folks in attendance learned about our district programs from representatives of those respective groups, as well as about the impact our contribution agreement with NRCS has had on administering the CRP program. We also learned about

In 2019, our district applied for a Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant. We were awarded the grant and were able to hire a full-time person for the position. Since that time the district has added the CISMA and Community Growers of Montgomery County, both of which are managed by the Program Coordinator. In addition to these programs, nearly 700 CRP waterways and filter strips in the county have been checked as part of the district's contribution agreement with NRCS. This year the district approached the Montgomery County Council with a budget and secured county funding for the Program Coordinator position, making us a permanent two-person office. We are truly thankful to Montgomery County for supporting us and the IASWCD and ICP for recognizing our efforts!

Conservation Farmer of The Year

At the end of our District Showcase, Cain's Homelike Farms were recognized as Conservation Farmers of the Year by the IASWCD. This award is given to one operation each year statewide and recognizes farmers who are conservation-minded and exemplary in the implementation of conservation practices. The Cain's guiding principle for their farm is land stewardship. The Cain's have been no-till farming since the 90's and rotate cover crops on all of their fields. They have also implemented many conservation programs like grass waterways and filter strips. Education is also highly important to the Cain Family. This past year we celebrated 25 years of 4th grade field days at Cain's Homelike Farms. These field days give kids from all over the county the chance to learn about conservation and see firsthand the practices that the Cain's have used to improve their farm. The Cain's will also be recognized during the IASWCD Annual Conference in January.



From left to right, IASWCD Director Liz Rice, Kenny Cain, and Marlene Cain

Annual Meeting Save the Date!

Stone Creek Lodge 2865 IN-47 Crawfordsville, IN

5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

February 26th, 2024

RSVP by calling 765-362-0405 ext. 3
or using the QR code to the right



Invasive Species Spotlight: Purple wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*)

Our spotlight species in this issue is purple wintercreeper! Wintercreeper is an evergreen vine with waxy leaves that is highly prolific and can gain a foothold in just about any soil type. Once a popular ground cover for landscaping, this plant was banned in early 2020. It escapes landscaping in yards and invades nearby woodlands where it climbs trees and chokes out native vegetation that birds and animals rely on for food. Winter is a great time of year to control it. Most all other vegetation is by now dormant so it is very easy to spot. It is recommended that after a hard frost spray on days above 50 degrees Fahrenheit with an herbicide with a high percent of surfactant to cut through the waxy leaves. If you have had wintercreeper creep into your woods and need help let us know at programs@montgomerycoswcd.com.

