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Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- March 22nd: FOSC Weed Wrangle at Old Coke Plant 9 AM-12 PM
- March 26th: Compost Crusaders Activity Carnegie Museum 1 PM-3 PM
- April 3rd: Board Meeting, USDA Service Center, 8 AM
- April 9th: 2nd Quarterly Cisma Meeting, USDA Service Center, 4 PM
- April 11th: War of the Weeds, Bachner Nature Preserve 10 AM-1 PM and 1 PM-4 PM
- April 18th: Office Closed
- May 3rd: Board Meeting, USDA Service Center, 8 AM
- May 5th: Native Plant Presale Opens!
- May 21st: 2nd Quarterly CGMC Meeting, USDA Service Center, 10 AM
- May 26th: Office Closed



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

The Montgomery County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

SPRING 2025 | VOL 5 ISSUE 1

In this newsletter:

Annual Meeting Recap
Page 1

Brickyard Park Prairie
Get to Know Us!
Page 2

Spring Weed Wrangles
Congratulations Marc!
Page 3

Upcoming Events
Page 4



Annual Meeting Recap

In February we held our 83rd annual meeting of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District! Following a delicious meal from the Juniper Spoon, we learned how to manage woodlands and invasives from Purdue Extension Forester Lenny Farlee. Radio broadcaster Dave Peach was live and interviewed folks from around the county. Conservationist of the Year honors went to Tom Gillespie. Tom has gone above and beyond in his stewardship of his land and taken his invasives management to the next level. He signed up for EQIP through our NRCS office. Tom took these funds and did all the invasives work himself, refilling his backpack sprayer on countless trips back into his woods.

We honored board member Marc Roberts for 12 years of service to our district as he steps down. Southmont FFA received a sponsorship from the board for their upcoming national soils judging competition. We want to thank everyone in our community who supports the district and are looking forward to doing even more this year!

Above: Sam presents Conservationist of the Year Tom Gillespie with his plaque.

Brickyard Park Prairie

For the past few months we have been planning and preparing with Parks and Recreation to install a native warm season grass prairie in the new Brickyard Nature Park. With help from the NRCS we devised a mix of dozens of species of flowers and grasses to plant. Before we could convert this old farm field into a lush prairie, we needed to burn off the weeds that had come up over the last year. With help from the Crawfordsville Fire Department, the 6 acre field got a crispy makeover.

By the time we publish this we will have already planted our seed mix and moved on to the waiting game. Native prairies take time to grow and establish themselves. This year it won't appear showy but in time it will become a spectacular sea of plants that will support countless critters.



Prescribed burn of the Brickyard North Field and future prairie site.

Spring Weed Wrangles

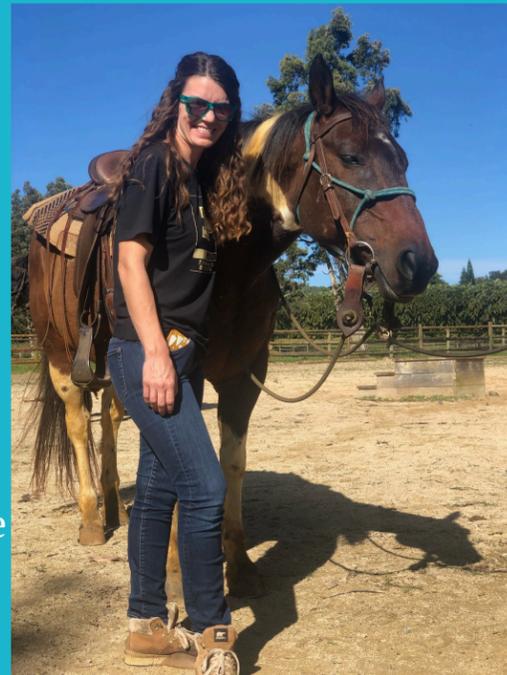
We will soon be kicking off a busy spring full of Weed Wrangles! Weed Wrangles are volunteer events that bring groups together in parks and natural areas in our community to work on removing invasive plants. Our forests are in trouble and without our help the plants and animals that call our Montgomery County forests home will be pushed out. Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, and Autumn Olive are just a few of the plants causing problems around here and across the state.

The CISMA has been busy planning with groups and businesses around town to do some Weed Wrangles at some of our city parks, but we are always looking for more. With even a handful of people cutting for a couple of hours we can make a serious dent in the issue. Last year we were able to make significant progress at the Sugar Creek Nature Park with just a couple Wrangles. If you have an itch to get out and hack down some plants and help the environment in doing so, then keep an eye on our socials! Coming up in April we also have the Bachner War of the Weeds! Signup is on NICHES Land Trusts website. This is their biggest volunteer event of the year, with wrangles going on at 15 properties around this part of the state. To schedule a Weed Wrangle of your own all you have to do is email or call us. We bring all the tools and the know how so all you need to bring is your energy and a sturdy pair of gloves!

Get to Know Us!

Rachel Stine, Supervisor

Rachel Stine is our newly elected board supervisor! Rachel grew up on a small grain farm in Huntington County and holds a degree in Agricultural Communications from Purdue University. Together, she and her husband Matt are grateful to grow corn, soybeans, pumpkins, and Christmas trees on MRS Farms and Oak Hill Tree Farm in Crawfordsville. They strive to optimize soil health for their current crops and steward farmland for the future. A nature enthusiast, she enjoys hiking, traveling, and paddle boarding on Sugar Creek. The Stines have four children, ages 7-14.



Congratulations Marc!

Associate supervisor Marc Roberts was recently elected as President of the Executive Board of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD). Marc will be working closely with the Association staff to support districts all over the state. As President Marc will be a huge advocate for funding for conservation and promote training for supervisors and staff across the state. We are proud Marc calls Montgomery County home!

