

Montgomery County SWCD
2036 E Lebanon Road
Crawfordsville, IN 47933



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

The Montgomery County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

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Annual Meeting Recap

The Montgomery County SWCD held the 84th Annual Meeting a few weeks ago at Stone Creek Lodge. Folks from all over came together and enjoyed an evening of conservation fellowship.

We heard from speaker Chad Evans about the importance of Soil & Water Conservation Districts and his career and experiences in weather broadcasting. Swick's Kitchen and Emporium provided a delicious BBQ meal for the meeting. During our business meeting and election, board member Raoul Moore was sworn in to his 3rd term as Board Supervisor.

To cap off the night we honored Shari McCollough as the 2025 Conservationist of the Year!



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Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- April 2: SWCD Board Meeting, 8am, USDA Service Center
- April 3: Office closed
- April 10: War of the Weeds, Bachner Nature Preserve, 10am-1pm, 1pm-4pm
- April 22: CGMC Q2 Meeting, 11:30am, The Table Spoon
- April 30-May 1: Purdue Extension Ag Days
- May 2: Master Gardener's Plant Sale and Garden Show
- May 5: Office closed
- May 7: SWCD Board Meeting, 8am, USDA Service Center
- May 13: CISMA Q2 Meeting, 4:00 pm, USDA Service Center
- May 25: Office closed
- June 4: SWCD Board Meeting, 8am, USDA Service Center
- June 19: Office closed

2025 Conservationist of the Year: Shari McCollough

The Lye Creek Prairie Burn



The Montgomery County SWCD awarded Shari McCollough as the 2025 Conservationist of the Year Award! This award is given annually to someone who exemplifies land stewardship at its highest level. The Conservationist of the Year goes above and beyond to conserve our natural resources for future generations.

Shari McCollough is the owner of the 83-acre Lye Creek Prairie Burn or "The Burn". Since coming into ownership of it she has spent a lot of time and energy into improving the habitat present there.

She helps the prairie by spraying for invasive plants and performing prescribed burns to promote new growth of native plants. Shari's passion is birds and she's planted this prairie with the intention to give habitat and plentiful food sources for migratory and nesting birds. She hosts field trips, birding surveys, and much more. Shari encourages people from all over to come out to The Burn and enjoy what nature has to offer. Visitors can walk along trails that Shari has laid out, spot birds from her custom-built viewing platform, or simply enjoy the beauty nature has to offer. Shari inherited The Burn from her friend and mentor, Clint Murray, who was the pioneer for this project. Clint sadly passed away in February 2024. Shari would like to credit this award to her birding buddy, Clint.



Like them on Facebook!

@FriendsofLyeCreekPrairieBurn



Follow them on Instagram!

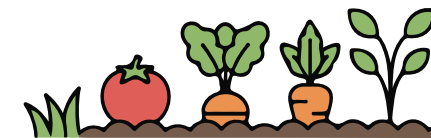
@lyecreekprairieburn

Spring Garden Planning

March is here and with it comes the promise of spring. We've already had a few warm days here and there and we've even found a few early spring ephemerals growing in the woods. At the time of writing this article, there are snow flurries seen out the window after a thunderstorm rolled through last night! Spring weather can be unpredictable; as much as we may want to get out and start working outside, it pays off to be patient. However, that doesn't mean we have to sit around doing nothing.

Knowing the predicted final frost date is a good first step to planning out your garden and helps you avoid planting in the ground too early. Some hardy vegetable crops can be planted up to a few weeks before the final frost date like cabbage, spinach, and turnips (to name a few). Some like rhubarb and asparagus once established will come back up each year and will be some of the first things you can harvest. Using the final frost date can help you plan out when to start seedlings to later transfer into your garden beds. Vegetables all have variable levels of cold hardiness so you should start them accordingly inside to reduce your risk of failure.

Another thing to consider is how well insulated your garden beds are. If the ground is kept adequately covered by vegetation or mulch it will maintain its temperature and moisture longer throughout the growing season and cut back on the amount of weed pulling you need to do. But, if fresh mulch is applied too soon then your garden beds may not be warm enough once it is time to plant. There is a lot to consider when gardening but the best way to learn is just to go out and get some dirt under your fingernails!



War of the Weeds is back!

It's that time of year again where we team up with NICHES Land Trust to fight back against invasive garlic mustard in Montgomery County! This year we will be back at Bachner Nature Preserve on beautiful Sugar Creek on April 10th.

You can sign up for one of two shifts at the QR code or look at other spring volunteer opportunities that are available.



Native Plant Sale

SWCD Staff will be at the Master Gardener's Plant Sale and Garden Show on May 2nd selling native shrubs and trees!

Scan the QR code to place your pre-order today!

