

Coming Together

S.W.C.D.

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VANDEBURGH COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
921 NORTH PARK DRIVE ❖ EVANSVILLE, INDIANA 47710

VOL. XLVI No. 1

CELEBRATING 84 YEARS

SPRING 2024

Vanderburgh County SWCD 83rd Annual Meeting was a success!

The 83rd Annual meeting was held on February 21st, 2024 at the Vanderburgh 4-H, Banquet Hall. This is our open to the public, mandatory annual meeting with election of supervisors and recap of the year's activities and financials. A meal was catered by the Carriage Inn this year. We also like to take this opportunity to highlight local producers and educators with several awards. Of course there is a guest speaker to wrap everything up.

This year our emcee were the supervisors of the SWCD, they each had a part for the meeting. The election of a supervisor was done by a show of hands for Ron Adler as he was the only name on the ballot. Megan Ritterskamp was re-appointed for another term and both Megan and Ron were sworn in by Commissioner Justin Elpers.

With the election out of the way, Pat Bittner gave an invocation and dinner was served; a buffet of fried chicken and with sides, and 2 fabulously decorated cupcake cakes in the shapes of a hippo and turtle that were donated by Donut Bank.

After dinner the awards were passed out. George Seib/Geo Farms was this year's River Friendly Farmer Award recipient. The Urban Conservationist Award was presented to Sharon Sorenson for all her hard work of promoting native plants for pollinators.



The guest speaker for the night was Paul Bouseman with Mesker Park Zoo. He spoke on the subject of zoo conservation and even had a few special animals with him. After his presentation the door prizes were given away, including a necklace from Turley, Mfg. Jewelers, a battery operated hedge trimmer from Straub Outdoor Power, fire extinguishers by Chris Will-First Advantage Insurance, 2 gift certificates to Camilla's Closet, 10 gift certificates to Mesker park Zoo, Buckets with landscaping tools and craftsman battery powered weed eater and leaf blower, Rural King, O'Reilly Auto Parts, American Honey, Ansell, ADM with with a gift certificate for \$1,000 in cover crop seed and Donut Bank sponsored the amazing sheet cake decorated below for the meeting.



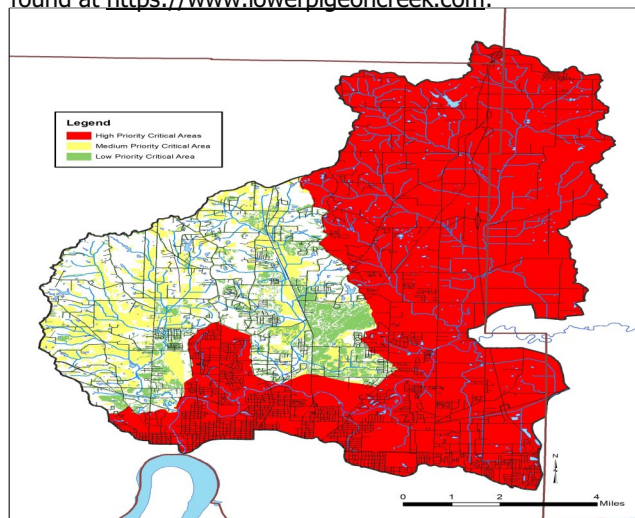
Thanks to everyone that attended the Annual Meeting this year!

Lower Pigeon Creek Project Announces Cost Share Funding

The Lower Pigeon Creek Project, in partnership with the Warrick and Gibson Soil and Water Conservation Districts, City of Evansville, Vanderburgh County and other partners announce the availability of funding from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Section 319 program and our local partners to directly enhance portions of the Lower Pigeon Creek Watershed. The grant will provide funding for agricultural producers within the Bluegrass Creek drainage or along the mainstem of Pigeon Creek to improve water quality on their property. Additionally, funding is available to residential, governmental commercial or industrial entities to implement conservation practices to address stormwater runoff.

The Lower Pigeon Creek Project will use \$180,000, by providing up to 75% of the costs for qualified agricultural projects. To receive funding, projects must meet three criteria: 1) Be located within the target area (mapped in yellow on the enclosed figure); 2) Be a project type listed on the fundable projects list; and 3) Be approved by project's technical committees and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. Application will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis. The first round of applications are due May 15th. To learn more about the project, view details of the qualifications and/or to apply for cost-share funding, visit <https://www.lowerpigeoncreek.com/costshare> or contact your local soil and water conservation district or Sara Peel at speel@arionconsultants.com or (765)337-9100.

Additional information about the project's progress can be found at <https://www.lowerpigeoncreek.com>.



FRIENDS OF NORTH WOODS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Looking for volunteers to assist in the removal of invasive vines and plants in North Woods/IgleheartPark. We've made major improvements in the woods, allowing native plants and wildflowers to thrive without the aggressive domination from the non-native species.

Contact Steve Heeger at friendsfnwds@gmail.com for information on helping at one of our work sessions. No experience necessary. (Phone 812-499-0177)



New CED in Vanderburgh County FSA

“With the retirement of long time Vanderburgh CED Dave Sturgell, the FSA County Committee recently hired Tessa Chambers to be the Vanderburgh FSA County Executive Director. Tessa was previously a Program Technician in the Vanderburgh office and completed the County Executive Director Training program. Tessa grew up on a farm and before joining the Farm Service Agency in 2022 had worked in the seed industry for several years. She is excited and grateful for the opportunity to serve Vanderburgh County’s producers. Tessa resides in northern Vanderburgh County.”



New PT in Vanderburgh County FSA

Jenna is from Southern Gibson County where she grew up in an agricultural community. Prior to joining the Farm Service Agency in 2023 she worked in the Healthcare field. Jenna is excited to meet and help producers in Vanderburgh County!



Invasive Tool Share Program

The Vanderburgh County SWCD in partnership with Pike, Posey, Gibson and Warrick Counties are finishing a Clean Water Indiana Grant this year. Each county has a list of invasive tools that citizens can rent to help remove invasives on their property. Each county will have different tools available to the public for rent. To see which tools your county has to offer, please contact the Soil and Water Conservation District in your county.



The Vanderburgh County SWCD has a pullerbear tool to help remove invasive shrubs that are difficult to remove by hand. The SWCD also has 2 battery operated mini-chainsaws to aid in removing thicker invasive vines that are too difficult with loppers. We also have loppers for rent to remove smaller vines and shrubs. The SWCD has a battery operated weed trimmer also available for rent. We also have a backpack sprayer for areas needing chemical treatment. These tools are available for rent with a deposit and a waiver form that needs to be filled out before you leave the office with any tools. If you are interested in renting any of these tools please contact Erin Shoup at 812-423-4426 x3.



Gibson + Pike + Posey + Vanderburgh + Warrick

2018 Plat Books on Clearance for \$10

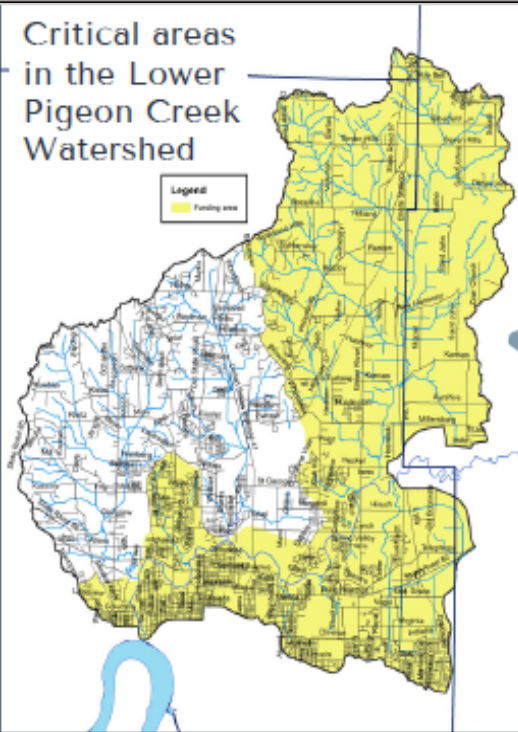
The Vanderburgh County SWCD is selling the 2018 Plat Book for half off. We are in the process of having new ones printed and they will be ready spring 2024! The books can be picked up at the office during normal business hours M-F from 8:00-4:30 p.m. Please call ahead before making the trip to the Office as we are sometimes absent from the office due to the nature of our work. You may reach us at 812-423-4426 ext.3. These books are non-refundable and all sales final. We accept cash or check only, and exact cash is preferred. Thanks

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OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE
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RESULTING IN A HARMONIOUS BALANCE
BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCES,
SOCIAL CHANGE
AND ECONOMIC HEALTH WITHIN
VANDERBURGH COUNTY
BY FOSTERING INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS



Critical areas in the Lower Pigeon Creek Watershed



THE 319 COST-SHARE PROGRAM IS COMING TO THE LOWER PIGEON CREEK

DO YOU OWN LAND WITHIN THE LOWER PIGEON CREEK WATERSHED?

THEN YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR UP TO 75%

COST-SHARE FUNDS.

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE? YOUR LOCAL SWCD/NRCS OFFICE CAN HELP.

WHAT IS COST-SHARE?

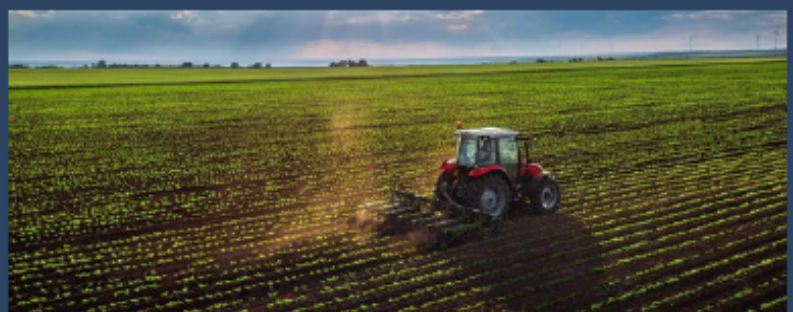
The voluntary cost-share program is intended to provide landowners with the financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices (BMPs). The program will provide up to 75% of the actual cost of Best Management Practice (BMP) implementation in the critical areas of the watershed. These BMPs provide lasting benefits for soil and water quality.

BMPs THAT MAY BE FUNDED...

- Cover crops
- Forage & biomass planting
- Nutrient/Pest Management
- Rain Barrels & Rain Gardens
- Filter strips, fencing, permeable pavement, and others that address the water quality
- Concerns outlined in the Lower Pigeon Creek WMP



NO-TILL & COVER CROPS: GET FUNDING TODAY!



FARMING PRACTICES IN ACTION

ALL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF THE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ARE OFFERED ON A NONDISCRIMINATORY BASIS, WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS OR HANDICAP.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SWCD OFFICE FOR ASSISTANCE.

Vanderburgh Co. - Evansville: [\(812\) 423-4426](tel:(812)423-4426) x 3
 Warrick Co. - Boonville: [\(812\) 897-2840](tel:(812)897-2840) x 3
 Gibson Co. - Princeton: [\(812\) 385-5033](tel:(812)385-5033) x 3



Written by Robert Bruner of Purdue Extension
 Submitted by Vanderburgh Cooperative Invasive Species
 Management Area (CISMA)
 Email Vanderburgh.cisma@gmail.com

January 12, 2024

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — While earthworms in the spring are a happy sight for gardeners, an invasive worm species is wreaking havoc for landowners and gardeners in southern Indiana.

Robert Bruner, Purdue Extension's exotic forest pest specialist, describes jumping worms, an invasive species to North America in the genus *Amyntas*: "Traditionally, when we see earthworms, they are deep in the ground and a little slimy. The jumping worms are a little bit bigger, kind of dry and scaly, and tend to thrash around much like a snake does."

While worms have a reputation as a helpful species found in the soil ecosystem, invasive jumping worms do not live up to that standard, Bruner explained. Jumping worms will consume all organic material from the top layer of soil, leaving behind a coffee ground-like waste with no nutrients for plants or seeds.

Since jumping worms stay within the first few inches of topsoil, they are not creating channels for water and air the way earthworms do, disrupting water flow to plant roots.

"So basically, they're just very nasty pests that ruin the quality of our soil, and the only thing that can really grow in soil like that are essentially invasive plants, or species that are meant to survive really harsh conditions," Bruner said.

However, we have gotten reports from several counties throughout the state, and those sightings are typically associated with compost piles and mulch. There is still much to learn about jumping worms, making eradication efforts difficult. One thing that is known, Bruner said, is they aren't a migrating species.

"This is the kind of invasive pest that is moved almost entirely through human activity. They don't crawl superfast," he explained. "So, when they move, that means they're moving because we're transferring soil, say, from someone's plants or someone's compost and we're bringing them to a new area."

Bruner recommends that gardeners should not share ground soil or compost and avoid potted plants from unknown sources. If you suspect jumping worms are present in your own soil, Bruner suggests a process called solarizing to eliminate unwanted pests. Gardeners should lay down a black or dark-toned tarp on a sunny day and sprinkle a thin layer of soil on top, allowing it to reach a temperature over 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Bruner cautions that jumping worms can escape during the solarizing process, "so you need to completely wrap the soil up in the tarp, essentially making the world's worst sandwich, and allow it to heat up and kill whatever is in there."

Any invasive species sightings should be reported to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources at depp@dnr.in.gov or by calling 1-866-663-9684.

For the full release:
<https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/releases/2023/Q1/gardeners-asked-to-be-vigilant-this-spring-for-invasive-jumping-worms.html>

8 Wintercreeper Pulls

January and February are designated months for Vanderburgh CISMA to pull Wintercreeper vines at North Woods in Igleheart Park. Mother Nature certainly cooperated this year by giving us warm weather and damp soil for easy pulling of vines. Besides the work, we enjoyed discovering some Crane's Fly orchids sprouting, flocks of juncos nearby, and a determined Pileated Woodpecker looking for insects. An outstanding total of 88 hours were accrued, on a record-setting 8 work days, by 18 volunteers! Thanks to the many members of the community who helped. We estimate that the pulled



Please join us for the first

Southwest Indiana Native Plant Symposium

May 15, 2024

5:30–8:15 p.m. CT

— Griffin Center —

University of Southern Indiana

Local experts will be speaking about the following topics:

- Gardening & Patio Landscaping with Natives
- Local Native Plant Projects
- Native Landscape Design
- Sourcing Native Species

This is a FREE event, but registration is required.

Scan the QR code and register now or call 812-423-4426 (Ext 3) for more information.



<https://tiny.cc/NativePlantSymposium>



With Your Help, We're Banning the Indiana Dirty Dozen in 2024!



Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)
Sweet autumn clematis (*Clematis terniflora*)
Burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*)
Glossy buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*, aka *Rhamnus frangula*, including all cultivars)
Moneywort (*Lysimachia nummularia*)
Chinese maiden grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*)

Wild parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*)
Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)
Lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*)
Spreading hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*)
Japanese hedge parsley (*Torilis japonica*)
European Highbush cranberry (*Viburnum opulus v. opulus*)

Sign our petition to
make it happen!



VANDEBURGH COUNTY SWCD

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 Davie Sue Wallace Litov, Business Owner
 Steve Helfrich, Retired USI Facilities Director
 Eldon Maasberg, Retired Farmer

Board Meetings are held on the fourth Monday at 4 p.m. of each month Unless otherwise advertised. The public is invited to attend all meetings

OFFICE STAFF:

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD)

Megan Klenck, Water Quality Specialist
 Erin Shoup, Administrative Assistant

NATURAL RESOURCE, CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)

Kellyam ValleCancel, District Conservationist

INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ISDA)

Linda Voglund, Resource Specialist

OFFICE LOCATION

VANDEBURGH COUNTY SWCD
 921 North Park Dr.
 Evansville, IN 47710-3629
 http://www.vandswcd.org
 TELEPHONE: (812) 423-4426 X 3
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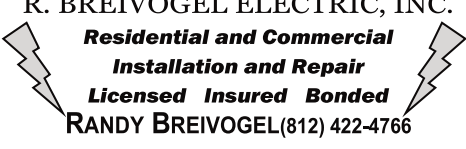
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 BANNING THE INDIANA DIRTY DOZEN

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