

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. 4 *CELEBRATING 84 YEARS* WINTER 2024

Weed Wrangle was a Success!

Vanderburgh CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) sends a big THANK YOU to everyone who helped make the Weed Wrangle a huge success on Saturday, November 2, 2024!

It was a fantastic, warm, sunny day! 18 volunteers removed Privet, Wintercreeper, Multiflora Rose and other invasive plants from North Woods at Igleheart Park. After 3 hours of work there were piles of pulled/cut invasives dotting the hillside. A special THANK YOU to our team leaders, Larry Caplan, Steve Heeger, Donna Herum, Jim (Mel) Lodato, Carol Pettys, and Andy Thieneman for guiding us.

If you are interested in more conservation work at Igleheart Park, "Friends of North Woods" work at Igleheart Park throughout the year. You may volunteer to fit your schedule. Contact Steve Heeger at: friendsofnwds@gmail.com if you are interested

Again, thank you for making a difference.
 Diane Mason
 SWIMGA Member
 CISMA Volunteer



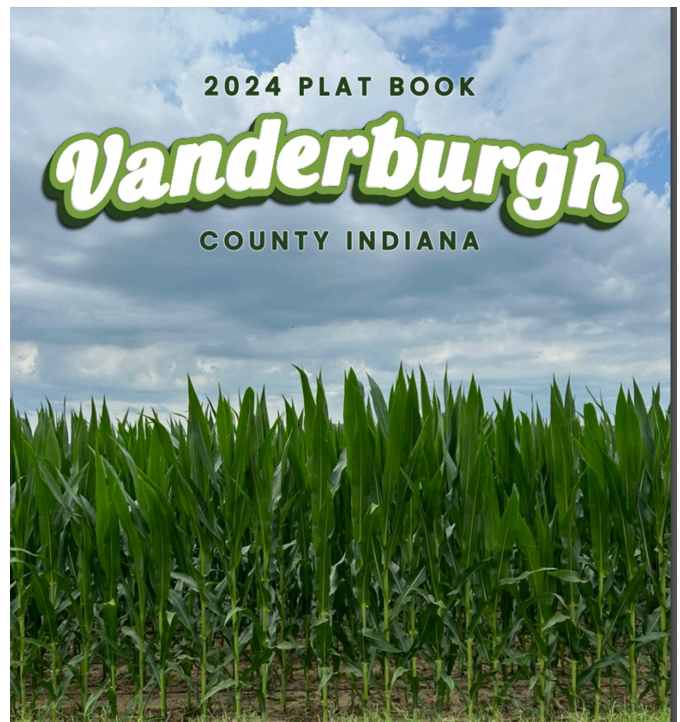
New Technician in SW Indiana

Sydney Hassfurther is the southwest Resilient Indiana technician, covering Spencer, Warrick, Vanderburgh, Posey, Gibson, and Pike counties. She was raised in Spencer County, where she was heavily involved in agriculture, 4-H, and FFA. Sydney graduated from Heritage Hills and went on to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Animal Science - Pre Veterinary Medicine from Southern Illinois University. In her free time, she enjoys fishing and spending time with her 2 Cor-gis. Sydney looks forward to working in Vanderburgh County and getting to know local farmers and growers while moving conservation forward!

New 2024 Plat Books are here!

The new 2024 Vanderburgh County Plat Books are at the SWCD office and ready for purchase.

The price of the new books are \$25 and can be paid with cash or check only. Please be sure to call the office at 812-423-4426 x3 before you stop by, as we are frequently out of the office.

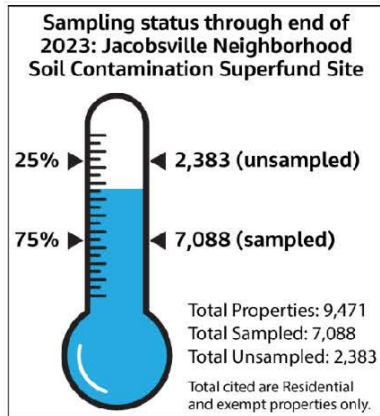


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OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE
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 BETWEEN NATURAL RESOURCES,
 SOCIAL CHANGE
 AND ECONOMIC HEALTH WITHIN
 VANDERBURGH COUNTY

EPA would like to sample your yard

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been working since 2004 sampling and cleaning up residential properties in Evansville, within the site boundary, that were contaminated with unsafe levels of lead and/or arsenic from past industrial operations.



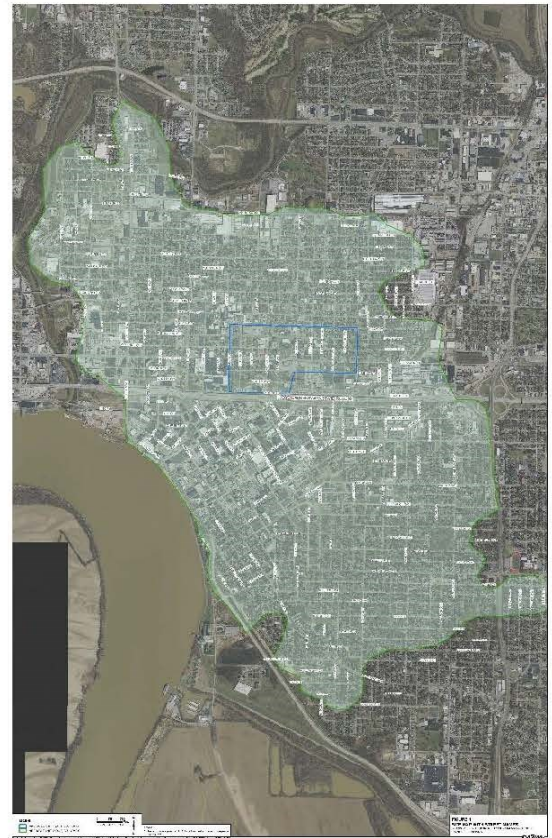
To date, over 7,000 properties in Evansville have been sampled. **EPA is looking to have the remaining 2,000+ properties sampled.** It is important to find out if there is any contamination as exposure to lead can seriously harm children. The good news is that lead poisoning is 100% preventable!

The sampling process is easy. EPA needs to get permission from the property owner to sample their yard. If the

samples test above EPA's threshold for lead and/or arsenic, then the property will be placed on the cleanup list. **All sampling and cleanup are done at NO COST to the homeowner.** Over 4,000 residential properties have been cleaned up and restored so far.

If a property needs to be cleaned up, EPA will meet with the property owner and will explain the soil cleanup process which includes excavation of contaminated soil, backfilling with clean soil, restoration of lawn areas including vegetation and landscaping items. Yards look great afterwards!

The area shaded in green on the map highlights the site boundary. You must live within the site to be eligible for sampling and/or cleanup.



To sign up your property for sampling, contact one of the EPA staff below:

Natalie Romain

Community Involvement Coordinator
312-353-3659
romain.natalie@epa.gov

Beth Reiner

Remedial Project Manager
312-886-0170
reiner.elizabeth@epa.gov

Brandon Pursel

Remedial Project Manager
312-353-9229
pursel.brandon@epa.gov

To learn more about the sampling and cleanup process, visit EPA's Jacobsville Neighborhood Soil Contamination Site at www.epa.gov/superfund/jacobsville-neighborhood-soil or scan the QR code.



How Birds Survive the Winter

Sharon Sorenson

Many of our summer nesting birds leave for the winter, facing the arduous hazards of migration. But the birds that stay, while avoiding the hazards of migration, face another serious hazard: surviving winter. The long, cold nights paired with short daylight hours put birds on a knife edge to find adequate food every day that will generate enough energy for them to survive the night. How can birds weighing no more than an ounce or two stay warm in subfreezing weather? Here's what they do:

Most birds seek protected overnight roost sites in dense foliage or cavities to guard against cold, wind, and wet. However, only birds that nest in cavities roost in cavities.

Since fluffed body feathers create dead-air pockets (think down jacket), fluffed feathers significantly reduce loss of body heat. Birds can also tuck their heads into their shoulder feathers and/or tuck one foot at a time into belly feathers. Fluffed sufficiently, body feathers can cover both feet at the same time.

Some birds huddle together, shoulder to shoulder, along branches or inside cavities, thus conserving heat together. Downy Woodpeckers, bluebirds, titmice, and chickadees often huddle with their fellow kind in nest-boxes-turned-roost-boxes.

Some species fatten up in late summer and fall, adding an extra layer of fat for warmth. Chickadees and finches may put on 10 percent additional body fat, but obviously they must never get too fat to fly.

We all know exercise warms us up. Likewise, birds grow warmer by shivering. They can also increase muscle mass in winter and so shiver more effectively. As an Audubon.org site notes, "This [shivering] isn't the familiar tremble that mammals use to generate heat. Birds shiver by activating opposing muscle groups, creating muscle contractions without all the jiggling typical when humans shiver." Amazing, yes, but in this manner, birds can effectively stay warm.

No matter birds' roosting habits, they must eat an abundance of high-fat foods--every hour of the day! Birds don't have to worry about high cholesterol. They just have to have enough fat to generate enough body heat to survive long, cold nights. Of course, the search for adequate and appropriate food is hindered by the very short winter days.

Large birds actually grow more feathers for better winter insulation. Given that birds' feathers comprise the greatest portion of their weight, however, tiny birds can't add too many weighty winter feathers without reducing their ability to fly.



Maybe the most astounding feat is many birds' ability to adjust body temperature. Typically, they have an average body temperature of 105 degrees. But they have two amazing abilities. First, to conserve energy, they can adjust temperatures in various parts of their body. Again, according to Audubon.org, many species have "the ability to keep warm blood circulating near vital organs while allowing extremities to cool down." Gulls or ducks usually stand on ice, their feet surely near freezing. Still, those birds' body temperatures are per-

fectly regulated.

Second, some birds, like chickadees, undergo something called regulated hypothermia, a phenomenon less extreme than torpor (something akin to overnight hibernation), but in this case body temperatures drop no more than about 22 degrees.

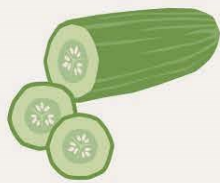
So, let's take a message from these strategies. It becomes fairly obvious how we can help overwintering birds: Provide adequate shelter by planting dense-foliaged conifer trees and shrubs, leaving dense frost-killed vegetation in place, and/or creating artificial dense foliage with brush piles. Add a few nest/roost boxes, the vents closed for winter warmth. Offer high-fat black-oil or nyjer seeds and suet in feeders kept clean from disease.

Farm Vitality Workshop Featuring Jesse Frost was a huge success!

Sponsored by: PUSH-IT (Promoting Urban Soil Health in Towns)

On November 16th 2024, Over 100 people joined us in Evansville, at "City View at Sterling Square" for the Farm Vitality Workshop and Networking event. Jesse Frost, author of the Living Soil Handbook (the no-till growers guide to ecological market gardening) was our main speaker. After Jesse spoke we held breakout sessions featuring topics such as cut flower farming, marketing, livestock, orchards, soil contamination, vegetable growing and much more. Lunch was catered by Pangea and featured a menu of locally sourced ingredients. We included built in time for networking and visiting resource tables featuring NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service), FSA (Farm Service Agency), and PUSH-IT. The feedback from this event was excellent, and we hope to recreate this event in the future. Be sure to follow all the local SWCD's Facebook pages and Instagram for upcoming events!

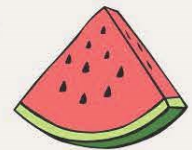




Free Soil Test & Site Visit



If you have a small garden where you're growing vegetables, fruits, and/or flowers and live in the following counties, you're eligible for a free soil test!



Posey Vanderburgh Spencer
Warrick Pike Gibson



1. Contact your local Soil & Water Conservation District



2. Schedule a site visit with us to come take the soil sample



3. When your results come in we'll follow up to discuss your soil results and how to better improve your soil health!



The Lower Pigeon Creek Watershed Project is now accepting applications for cost share projects including equipment modifications. Modified equipment must be used to implement a best management practice within the Lower Pigeon Creek Watershed. Projects approval is required in advance of equipment purchase. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out with questions!

COST-SHARE IN THE LOWER PIGEON CREEK WATERSHED



Potential Equipment Modifications:

- Auto Steer/Auto Trac
- GPS systems and displays/monitors in conjunction with NM & VRT
- Cover Crop related modifications
 - Seeder boxes
 - Seeder carts
 - Air seeder carts
 - No-till drill modifications to improve planting with certain cover crop species
- Exact rate planter attachment
- Soil probe and software – only in conjunction with VRT
- No-till, Strip-Till, or Reduced-Till Equipment Modifications
 - No-till; no-till coulters
 - Row cleaners/upgrades
 - Closing wheel upgrades
 - Spiked Closing Wheel

*Nutrient Management (NM)
**Variable Rate Technology (VRT)

Potential BMPs (Best Management Practices):

- (340) Cover Crop
- (590) Nutrient Management
- (329) Residue Management, No Till
- (345) Residue Mgmt., Mulch Till
- (472) Access Control
- (620) Blind Inlet
- (412) Grassed Waterway
- (410) Grade Stabilization Structure
- (327) Conservation Cover
- (595) Pest Management
- (468) Lined Waterway or Outlet
- (512) Forage/Biomass Planting
- (528) Prescribed Grazing
- (578) Stream Crossing
- (612) Tree Establishment
- (391) Riparian Forest Buffer
- (582) Two Stage Ditch
- (390) Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- (342) Critical Area Planting
- (386) Field Border
- (316) Animal Mortality Facility
- (317) Composting Facility
- (554) Drainage Water Management
- (747) Denitrifying Bioreactor
- (558) Roof Runoff Structure
- (313) Waste Storage Facility
- (332) Contour Buffer Strip
- (362) Diversion Structures
- (367) Waste Facility Cover
- (393) Filter Strip
- (395) Stream Habitat Improvement
- (484) Mulching
- (561) Heavy Use Protection Area
- (570) Stormwater Runoff Control
- (574) Spring Development
- (575) Animal Trails & Walkways
- (580) Streambank Protection
- (585) Strip Cropping
- (587) Structure for Water Control
- (633) Waste Utilization
- (635) Vegetated Treatment Area
- (638) Water/Sed. Control Basin
- (657) Wetland Restoration
- (658) Wetland Creation

To learn more or apply, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District office or the Project Manager:

Vanderburgh County SWCD

Evansville
(812) 423-4426

Warrick County SWCD

Boonville
(812) 897-2840

Gibson County SWCD


Princeton
(812) 385-5033

Sara Peel, Arion Consultants

speel@arionconsultants.com
(765) 337-9100

To see if you fall in the qualifying area, visit our interactive map at bit.ly/LowPigeonDrainageMap





We are Bugging Out For

The Vanderburgh County SWCD's 84th Annual Meeting

Please join us Wednesday, February 19th 2025

Join us to hear from Kevin Weiner
"All Bugs go to Kevin"

Free meal catered by Carriage Inn with reservation, or \$10 at the door with no reservation.

Feb 19th



6 pm

Vanderburgh County 4H Banquet Hall
201 E Boonville New Harmony Road
Evansville, IN 47725

Please RSVP by Feb. 12th
@ 812-423-4426 ext.3
or by emailing megan.klenck@in.nacdnet.net

VANDEBURGH COUNTY SWCD

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Ron Adler, Chairman, Farmer
 Kevin Rexing, Vice-Chair, Farmer
 Joe Schalasky, Treasurer, farm manager at Seton Harvest
 Pat Bittner, Member, Farmer
 Misty Minar- Botanical Curator, Mesker Park Zoo

ASSOCIATES:

Kay Hoffherr, Retired Teacher, Central High School
 Linda Freeman, County Surveyor
 Heath Hamilton, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Biologist
 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)
 Christian Jimenez, District Conservationist

INDIANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (ISDA)
 Megan Ritterskamp, Resource Specialist

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 VANDERBURGH COUNTY SWCD
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 Evansville, IN 47710-3629
 http://www.vandswcd.org
 TELEPHONE: (812) 423-4426 X 3
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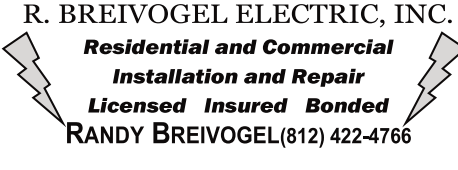
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