

# THE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

ISSUE 42  
QUARTER 3



@allen\_swcd



@AllenSwcd

www.allenswcd.org

260.484.5848 ext. 3

## WE'VE BEEN BUSY!

### SWCD Board Members

Tom Crowe - Chairman  
Tom Miller - Vice Chairman  
Jeff Steiglitz - Treasurer  
Don Rekeweg - Secretary  
Chad Shaw - Member

### Associate Supervisors

Dick Crawl  
Dave Voors  
Dan Wire

### County Council Liaison

Bob Armstrong

### SWCD Employees

Greg Lake  
*District Director*

Mikila Cook  
*Office Manager*

Courtney Taylor  
*Watershed Project Manager*

Joelle Neff  
*Watershed Project Manager*

Mike Werling  
*Conservation Programs  
Specialist*

Sharon Partridge  
*Assistant Program  
Coordinator*

NRCS  
Tim Bomba  
*District Conservationist*

Brooke Rudicel  
*Soil Conservationist*

ISDA  
Lindsey Bluhm  
*Resource Specialist*

The Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District has had a lot going on lately! Check out a few of the things we have been up to!

### **Trips to Lake Erie**

August 17th-19th the Allen County SWCD took several groups to South Bass Island on Lake Erie to learn about the research being done on the island and to discuss how agriculture can make a positive impact on our lakes. The different groups participated in a variety of activities including several collaborative discussions, a historical tour of the island, a tour of the OSU Stone Labs Aquatic Visitor's Center, a tour of the lake with charter boat captains, and a fish trawl with OSU researchers. They learned about past and current research, different aquatic life, and how that life is impacted by harmful algal blooms within the lake. All in attendance gained a fresh perspective on the role they play on water quality.

### **Annual Soil Health Field Day**

With over 150 attendees, the Annual Soil Health Field Day at Roemke Farms on September 8th was highly successful! A panel of various companies shared information on what to look for in a carbon credit contracts. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff demonstrated the impact (or the lack there of) that cover crop roots have on drainage tiles, as well as how different management practices impact soil health. Local farmers, Allen Dean and Mike Werling, demonstrated interseeding cover crops into standing corn and terminating cover crops with a crimper-roller. The day ended with an excellent panel of farmers sharing about their experience with soil health practices.

### **Rivers Summit III**

Rivers Summit III took place Sept. 15-16, 2021. Rivers Summit III was held to bring together leaders, innovators, and community members to discuss the fluid economics of good water, local and regional impacts of water quality, creating partnerships that succeed, and turning challenges into opportunities. Attendance over 2 days was nearly 200 people. We were honored to be joined by keynote speakers US Congressman Jim Banks, Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch, Indiana State Representative Dave Heine, NRCS State Conservationist Jerry Raynor, Dr. Chris Winslow, Richard Batiuk, Jeff Reutter, Jason Anspach, Jim Stouffer, Jordan Hoewischer, and Carrie Volmer-Sanders.

# Urban AGRICULTURE

The Allen County SWCD continues to offer the Urban and Small Farms Program to small, rural, and urban farmers and gardeners within areas of the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) in Indiana. Use this website to determine if your property is in the WLEB: <https://bit.ly/3aCqCSQ>.

In the last few months the program has provided 25 scholarships to local Burmese farmers to attend a hands on workshop. It has hosted 4 water tours of Fort Wayne's Rivers, and it has supported several local initiatives such as the Maumee Watershed Alliance and the Northeastern Indiana Local Food Forum. We are excited to continue partnering with local groups and aiding farmers as best we can.

If you are interested in free soil testing, guidance on obtaining/implementing a nutrient management plan, site visits, farmer mentorship, or scholarships for attending educational events, give us a call at 260-484-5848 ext. 3, and check out our website by scanning the QR code with your phone.



SCAN ME

## AUGLAIZE-FLATROCK WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Steering Committee and Allen SWCD asked Rodney Renkenberger, Executive Director of the Maumee River Basin Commission, to study and comment on the flooding problems in the Auglaize/Flatrock WMP project area. Rodney attended the July Steering Committee meeting and presented his findings, "Profiling the Flatrock – Floodplain Analysis."

He began his study by establishing the amount of fall (grade change) in Flatrock Creek from the headwaters to where it enters the Auglaize River. Rodney suggested that the Steering Committee identify the need for a complete FEMA study in the action table of the WMP and reach out to federal legislators and other officials and request to elaborate on the study. A detailed study would provide a profile of the bottom of the channel and the different flood frequency elevations.

### His findings:

**1)** Flatrock Creek only has 0 .02% grade in Paulding County. **2)** The static water level at the Indiana/Ohio state line is 4-4.5 feet. The static water level impacts the land area from the State Line bridge to Lincoln Hwy. **3)** There is a 2.4 feet hydraulic jump in the channel near Lincoln Hwy. Further studies should be conducted to determine why the hydraulic jump is present.

## EQUIPMENT RENTAL



**Contact our office to rent equipment:  
260.484.5848 extension 3**

.....

Phillips Harrow: \$6/acre

Salford 522 Air Seeder: \$16/acre

Cover Crop Interseeder: \$6/acre + \$55/tach hr.

Great Plains Turbo Max with Valmar Seeder:

*Implement only:* \$11/acre; *With tractor:*  
\$16/acre

Remlinger 8 row Strip-Till Unit: \$8/acre

*\*\$1/acre discount if invoice is paid within 10 days*

## USDA ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS TO HELP COVER COSTS FOR ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that organic producers and handlers can apply for USDA funds to assist with the cost of receiving and maintaining organic certification through the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP). Applications for eligible certification expenses paid between Oct. 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2021, are due **Nov. 1, 2021**.

OCCSP provides cost-share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products for the costs of obtaining or maintaining organic certification under the USDA's National Organic Program. Eligible producers include any certified producers or handlers who have paid organic certification fees to a USDA-accredited certifying agent. Producers can be reimbursed for expenses including application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement and arrangement requirements, travel expenses for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

For 2021, OCCSP will reimburse 50 percent of a certified operation's allowable certification costs, up to a maximum of \$500 for each of the following categories or "scopes:"

- crops
- wild crops
- livestock
- processing/handling
- State organic program fees

Organic farmers and ranchers may apply through an FSA county office or a participating state agency. To learn more about organic certification cost share, please visit the OCCSP webpage, visit [usda.gov/organic](https://usda.gov/organic), or contact the FSA office at 260.484.5848 ext. 2.

## EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT

### Mikila Cook - Office Manager



Mikila joined the Allen County SWCD team in May of 2021. Mikila brings to the District over 20 years of administrative experience in office management, human resources, editorial, and marketing. Since coming to the District Mikila has focused her efforts on day-to-day administrative functions, event organization, and creating processes and procedures that align with the District's goals. Mikila is passionate about the work that Allen County SWCD does and is looking forward to contributing her skills and knowledge to the benefit of the District.

Outside of work Mikila enjoys gardening, the great outdoors, traveling, cooking ethnic vegetarian cuisine, and spending time with her family and three dogs, Arlo, Dupree, and Ziggy.

*Save the Date*

# FORT WAYNE

# FARM SHOW

## January 18-20, 2022

Allen County War Memorial Coliseum

### Upcoming Events

#### SWCD Board Meetings:

October 27; 8am  
November 24; 8am  
December 22; 8am

Coffee and Tillage  
October 26; 8:30-10:30am

Coffee and Integrated Pest  
Management  
November 16; 8:30-10:30am

Fort Wayne Farm Show  
January 18-20

**All events pending the current  
regulations related to COVID-19.  
Contact our office for updates.**



## FARMER REPORT - WHY MOW WHEN YOU CAN GARDEN?

In an interview with the Allen County SWCD, Marissa Renz, the founder of Plant Happiness LLC, shared about her journey in developing her 4,000 sq. ft. market garden. Marissa married her love of native plants to her gardening business, and the result has been phenomenal! Not only does she provide food for her family, customers, and beneficial wildlife, but she also educates others on incorporating conservation practices in their growing spaces. Plant Happiness LLC continues to make a positive impact on the environment and the Fort Wayne community.

The market garden grows dozens of plant varieties including vegetables, fruits, leafy greens, and native plants that provide habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects. Crops are grown using sustainable practices such as cover cropping, composting, integrated pest management, and companion planting.



Marissa's garden shows that no matter what size your lot, garden, or farm is, you can make a big difference on the environment around you. Adding native plants to your landscaping or garden can increase water infiltration into the soil and can provide habitat for beneficial insects and pollinators. Keeping your soil covered with biodiverse plants, mulch, or cover crops keeps soil intact and can build organic matter.

**Scan the QR code with your phone to watch the whole interview!**

Learn from gardeners like Marissa about how to make a big impact in your community and in your home! Visit the Plant Happiness LLC's website here: [planthappinessfw.square.site/](http://planthappinessfw.square.site/)



Want to learn from Marissa directly? Check out some of her upcoming classes: <https://www.enrole.com/pfw/jsp/instructorDetail.jsp?instructorId=83CE1F68>



*Allen County*  
**Soil & Water  
Conservation District**

For more information on the Allen County SWCD, our programs, and how to become involved visit [www.allenswcd.org](http://www.allenswcd.org), email [info@allenswcd.org](mailto:info@allenswcd.org), or call (260)0484-5848 ext. 3