



The Conservation ChALLENGE

WINTER IS THE TIME FOR PLANNING

While the ground rehabilitates overwinter, we use this time to plan the conservation practices for the coming season. NRCS practice standards give guidance on what you can do to save your topsoil and, at the same time, keep fertilizer out of the ditches and streams.

Did you know that NRCS provides a list of over 220 practices? Search the web for "conservation-practice-standards", or call our office.

Here are commonly used practices to kick-start — or add to — your plan:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| • Cover crop | • Low tunnels |
| • Composting | • Nutrient management |
| • Fencing | • Phosphorus removal |
| • Filter strips | • Wetland |
| • Grass waterways | • Wildlife Habitat |

Each of these lets you save hard-earned money while building your future soil.

Please join ACSWCD as you **promote the wise use of soil, water and related natural resources.**

NEW DISTRICT STAFF

With the return of funding, we have old projects to finish and new opportunities to pursue. See pages 2-3 for current projects, and look for our new staff (page 6) as they lead projects focused on large and small farms, outreach, and water quality in the St. Marys and St. Joseph rivers.

WATER QUALITY FOCUS: ST. MARYS WATERSHED

In late 2024, we learned that an application to IDEM (from EPA) had been accepted to revise the 2008 Watershed Management Plan. Adams County, Allen County, and the City of Fort Wayne Utilities join in this effort. We will conduct public meetings and data analysis for a new plan for designing improvements in that watershed. For more info, see page 4.

Never hesitate to reach out to our office or to attend monthly Board meetings. If you have conservation questions or resource concerns, please contact Julie Good directly at (260) 702-8426.



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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Chad Shaw**, Chairman (elected, term ends 2027)
- Tom Miller**, Vice Chair (appointed, term ends 2028)
- Jain Young**, Treasurer (elected, term ends 2028)
- Tom Crowe** (appointed, 2027)
- Tyler Stieglitz** (elected, 2026)

Associate Supervisors

- Don Rekeweg**
- Dick Crowl**

Each year one elected position of the Board is decided at our Annual Meeting in a rotating 3-year term; two others are appointed.

Please consider running for election as Supervisor!

STAFF

- Director: **Julie Davis Good**
- Office Manager: **Suzi Eloph**
- Grants Mgr.: **Courtney Taylor**

Watershed Project Managers:

- **Ron McQueen**
- **Maiya Rizzo**
- **Autumn Straessle**
- **Tori Kidd**
- **Michael Ryan**
- **Grace O'Hara**

Conservation Technician:

- **Jason Hartenstein**
- **Mitchel Lemon**
- **Lydia Ade**

RETURN TO FUNDING: Technical Assistance in the Western Lake Erie Basin and also specific to Fort Wayne

In spite of the uncertainty in Federal funding nationally, Allen County SWCD has benefited from several reinstatements to our work. While we lost one funding source focused on urban growers, we were surprised by another that focuses on soil health in the south and central Fort Wayne area. This *temporary* funding ends in March 2026, but permits us to move into several zip codes where fresh produce is not readily available and soil health has not been a priority.

Titled "Flourish Fort Wayne", this effort boasts an energetic group of individuals joining the staff this summer, and brings a wide variety of skills. Recruitment of interested parties has not been a problem! A number of groups — including churches, community gardens, and individuals — have signed up for macronutrient soil tests that will lay the foundation for technical assistance in their gardens. For more details on "Flourish FW", see page 3.



Additionally, our service to growers with focus on small-scale products or smaller land footprint will be enhanced by a Federal contract titled "Small Farms Technical Assistance" agreement. These efforts are funded by NRCS and cover a close partnership with the Indiana Association of SWCDs (IASWCD) to target specialty crop production on small farms throughout Indiana. Our role in that agreement is to focus on land that drains to the Great Lakes. The goal of this state-wide project is to improve water quality and soil health through support of and recruitment of small farms to NRCS conservation practices.

A major focus of our work:
SOIL HEALTH feeds your crop and keeps water from running off the field, retaining needed nutrients.



BCS 2-wheeled tractor is available with either a flail mower or a rotary harrow for shallow cultivation.



Does your church or civic group need equipment to prepare beds for Spring? Use our Equipment Trailer!

Your SWCD is busy in the community.



Tori Kidd, Autumn Straessle, Maiya Rizzo, and Grace O'Hara welcome guests to Dave Thomas'.



Dave Thomas' high tunnel garden



Flourish event at the Community Garden at St. Henry's to promote soil health.

EDUCATION FOR CONSERVATION

A major effort of the District is contact with the community. We connect with them at Fairs, Festivals, Field Days, camps, and our Annual Meeting.

This fall we hosted a series of educational sessions at local community gardens. Focused on healthy soil and conservation gardening, our hosts included Brett Bloom (Dirt Wain), Chris and Vonda Walker (Bloomingdale Garden), Dave Thomas, and Paul Gerardot (St. Henry's Community Gardens). THANK YOU!



Summer flowers at Bloomingdale Garden



Low Tunnel hoops after the threat of frost on peppers

FLOURISH FORT WAYNE: PROMOTING COMMUNITY GARDENING

This initiative focuses on the importance of establishing healthy soil to start growing food where we live. Urban soils, in particular, need this support.

Technical assistance is available with no cost to growers and includes: soil testing, start-up equipment bundles, compost, and access to our small farm equipment trailer for more gardening equipment.

Partners in this active project include Dirt Wain Composting, Dave Thomas Urban Farm, Bloomingdale Garden, and St. Henry's.

Are you interested in learning more? Please take the survey at the



QR code, and determine how our "Flourish Fort Wayne" team can assist you!



Supporting Junior Achievement: Allen SWCD wows high school students at JA Job Spark

On November 4-5, 2025, the local Junior Achievement hosted "Job Spark", a massive career event aimed at high school students in the tristate area to aid their career planning.

Over 3,000 students converged on the Allen Co. War Memorial Coliseum to experience careers from construction to health-care. ACSWCD staff taught students about watersheds, municipal and rural septic systems, soil health, and drone imaging!



We used this event as a hands on learning experience for young people to be exposed to the world of agriculture and conservation as they start to consider schooling and careers.



JA Job Spark 2025 was a huge success!



Mission of the Allen County SWCD: to promote the wise use of soil, water, and related natural resources

UPCOMING: Join us for the foundational work to revise the St. Marys Watershed Management Plan

In Fall 2024, EPA funding administered by IDEM (Indiana Department of Environmental Management) was awarded to revisit the 2008 Watershed Management Plan for the St. Marys River. Extending from Ohio into Adams and Allen counties, this waterway is critical to health, recreation, and agriculture. We joined with Adams County SWCD, the City of Fort Wayne (City Utilities), and Surveyors from both Adams and Allen counties to apply for the funding. We learned that our application was awarded in late 2024, and the funds should be released in early 2026.

As soon as those funds are available, we will initiate a public campaign to bring together groups representing a wide spectrum of land uses, including rural and agricultural, urban, suburban, and commercial. All types of land uses must be considered as we develop a plan that can make change in the water quality of the St. Marys River. Everyone has a stake in this project! Please join us develop this plan for the health of our rivers.





THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



River Summit IV

One Basin. One Mission.

December 11, 2025

The Rivers Summit is a one-day conference hosted by the Maumee Watershed Alliance in partnership with the Maumee River Basin Commission and the United States Department of Agriculture that occurs every 5 years for our region.

Fort Wayne is situated in six watersheds, including the Upper Maumee River basin. The River Summit focused on the importance of water quality in the Maumee River, the main tributary to the Western Lake Erie Basin.

Passionate speakers from across Indiana and Ohio highlighted the importance of reducing the input of phosphorus (P) into the Maumee River:

- Dr. Christopher Winslow, Director of Ohio Sea Grant, spoke about past trends and necessary trajectories to mediate harmful algal blooms in the Western Lake Erie Basin.
- Dr. Tanja Williamson, research hydrologist for the US Geological Survey shared her expertise on sediment and P sources in the Maumee River.
- Mark Williams, research agricultural engineer from USDA Agricultural Research Service, clearly outlined the differences between new and old P.
- A panel of experts shared their ideas and opinions on the panel discussion, including Dan Kaminisky (Adams County SWCD), Megan Bourns (Purdue University), and Joe Nester (Nester Ag LLC). They weighed in on execution and feasibility of nutrient management implementation.
- Ben Wicker (Executive Director of Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance) and Aaron Heiler (Director of Nutrient Management & Agricultural Policy at the Ohio Agribusiness Association) tag teamed a discussion of priorities for P management, including the 4 R's of nutrient management: Right place, Right time, Right source, and Right rate.

For more information about the organization and their continued efforts to sustain healthy watersheds throughout the Maumee watershed, please visit:

<https://maumeewatershedalliance.org/>



partnerships for healthy rivers

NEW DISTRICT STAFF: 4 Watershed Project Managers and 2 Conservation Program Technicians

TORI KIDD

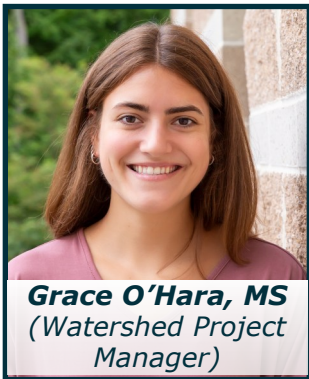
At Indiana University, Tori earned a BS in Earth Science and a minor in Biology. Her academic focus included sedimentary structures, water systems, and geomorphology which she applies to USGS work at the District. She also leads the "Flourish Fort Wayne" project to improve soil health within Ft. Wayne.



Tori Kidd
(Watershed Project Manager)

GRACE O'HARA

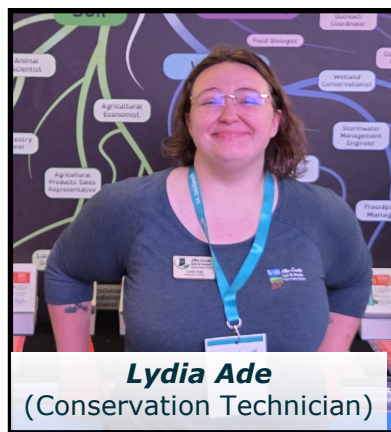
Coming to Indiana from the East Coast, Grace completed her BS in Environmental Science at Union College. After college, Grace earned her MS at University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) in Frostburg, MD where her thesis focused on evaluating the functionality of green stormwater infrastructure using stable isotopes of nitrate in stormwater within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Grace coordinates the "On-Farm Demo" project in the Western Lake Erie Basin alongside work on District communications.



Grace O'Hara, MS
(Watershed Project Manager)

LYDIA ADE

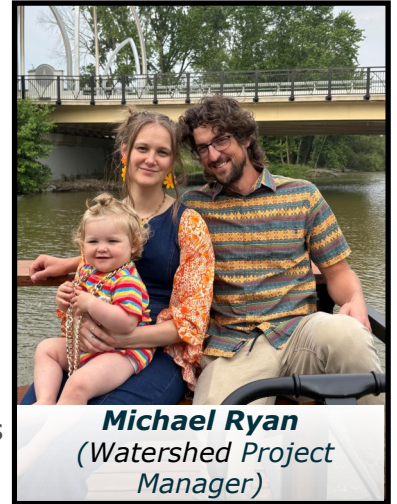
A current student at Oregon State University studying Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Sciences, Lydia has expertise in field sampling, ecology, vertebrate biology, and GIS mapping. She serves as a conservation technician at ACSWCD to help develop and promote educational programs centered on soil and water health for the community's food production.



Lydia Ade
(Conservation Technician)

MICHAEL RYAN

Michael was born and raised in Fort Wayne and then spent 7 years in the Navy as a helicopter aircrewman. After military service Mike graduated from Colorado State University in 2024 with a bachelors in Soil Science. He leads the NRCS "Small Farm Technical Assistance" agreement in the Great Lakes eastern IN region.



Michael Ryan
(Watershed Project Manager)

AUTUMN STRAESSLE



Autumn Straessle
(Watershed Project Manager)

Autumn is a Purdue University alumni, earning an AS and BS with a major in Biological Sciences. After graduation, Autumn pursued an MS in Ecology and Conservation at Purdue University Fort Wayne. Her Masters thesis focuses on connectivity patterns and movement ecology of wood turtles in Michigan. This research will

be used to create a suitable framework for continued conservation attempts of endangered wildlife. At SWCD, Autumn plays key roles in projects requiring data analysis and mapping.

MITCHEL LEMON

Mitchel has two certificates from Ivy Tech, one in Agribusiness Management and the other in Plant Production. He brings ag experience from his family farm and prior positions managing machinery, equipment, and technology. Mitchel will be assisting with technical conservation implementation to commodity agriculture.



Mitchel Lemon
(Conservation Technician)

FARM SHOW 2026: ANNUAL EVENT AT THE COLISEUM

January 13th, 9 am - 5 pm | January 14th, 9 am - 8 pm | January 15th, 9 am - 4 pm

In the midst of “planning season”, Fort Wayne Farm Show is placed perfectly to showcase new equipment, cutting edge management tools, and conservation perspectives. All of this is designed to improve YOUR bottom-line while also building our soil and cleaning up our water.

Join us at BOOTH 62 (Main Exhibition Hall) to speak with NRCS and FSA officials and **bring your farm into a conservation program with the support of key experts in soil, engineering, production, and conservation.**

As in the past, ACSWCD joins with Purdue Extension to organize the outreach seminars during the show. Seminars are focused on timely topics, as listed below. One time change from earlier advertisements: POET (bioethanol producer) will discuss Vomitoxin (or “DON”) at 1:30pm, moving the Indiana Board of Animal Health’s (BOAH) presentation on “Biosecurity” to 3:30pm. Purdue U.’s

EDGE Team “CODE RED” will stay at 5:30pm Wednesday afternoon.

As in 2025, we will offer a “walking job fair” for attendees to find companies who were actively hiring.

We plan to see you there!

Come Visit Us @ Booth 62!

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

Moderator: Elysia Rodgers

**10 AM
MARKET AND WEATHER OUTLOOKS**
Rob Winters, David Kohli, & John Cavanaugh
Ryan Martin (weather)

**12 PM
BARNYARD MIRROR: HOW ANIMALS REFLECT OUR OWN HEALTH**
Elysia Rodgers, Purdue Extension Educator

**2 PM
PESTICIDE APPLICATOR AND ANHYDROUS AMMONIA SAFETY**
Office of the Indiana State Chemist
Ann Kline, Purdue Extension Educator
James Wolff, Purdue Extension Educator

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

Moderator: Bill Horan

**10 AM
PURDUE MARKET OUTLOOK**
Michael Langemeier, Director of the Center for Commercial Agriculture, Purdue University

**11:30 AM
FARM BUREAU LUNCHEON: WATERS OF THE U.S.**
Indiana Farm Bureau sponsored lunch
Brianna Schroeder, Attorney with Janzen Schroeder Agricultural Law LLC
Lunch is in Appleseed B
Lunch is limited seating and first come, first served.



Indiana Farm Bureau®

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

Moderator: James Wolff

**10 AM
PESTICIDE EXAM TRAINING**
James Wolff, Ann Kline, & Brad Kohlhagen
Purdue Extension Educators

JOB FAIR



WE'RE HIRING!

ASK HERE FOR OPPORTUNITIES

**1:30 PM
MANAGING VOMITOXIN: THE PATH TO CLEAN CORN**
Andy Vickers and Aaron Kuhn, POET

**3:30 PM
BIOSECURITY ESSENTIALS FOR LIVESTOCK OWNERS**
Dr. Jennifer Strasser, BOAH

**5:30 PM
CODE RED: A PRACTICAL TOOL FOR YOUR FAMILY AND FARM CONTINGENCY PLAN**
Purdue EDGE in Ag Team

PARP SPONSORED BY




You are invited:

The **ANNUAL MEETING** of the Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District will be held on

THURSDAY, MARCH 5 at **SALOMON FARM PARK** from **6:30pm - 8:00pm.**

You will review the annual financial report and elect one new Supervisor.

Please join us on for a delicious dinner and reports on our conservation projects!

2026 FORT WAYNE FARM SHOW
JANUARY 13 14 15
Indiana's Largest Indoor Farm Show
ALLEN COUNTY WAR MEMORIAL COLISEUM™
FREE ADMISSION
Tuesday: 9am-5pm, Wednesday: 9am-8pm
Thursday: 9am-4pm

UPCOMING ON-FARM DEMO:

MUNTZINGER FARMS — Cover Crop Field Day
3/26/26, 9:30am—3pm, 9720 Homestead Rd, Roanoke

Western Lake Erie Basin
On Farm DEMO
Conservation through Education

Allen County Soil and Water Conservation District

2720 Dupont Commerce Court,
Suite 101
Fort Wayne, IN 46825

Phone: (260) 484-5848
Extension 3 (NRCS also)

YES! Phones are working!

email: allenswcd@gmail.com
web: www.allenswcd.org

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE



REMINDER OF OUR ANNUAL MEETING:

As directed by IN Code, we will elect a new Supervisor and review the Annual Financial Report after a tasty dinner.
~ **Salomon Farm Park, Thurs., March 5, 6:30pm** ~