Summer 2015

Volume 1, Issue 5

Watershed Update

Fourteen Mile Creek
Goose Creek-OH River
WATERSHED
Improvement Project

Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District

Partners helping to make our project happen:

- Clark/Jefferson/Scott County Health Departments
- Jefferson and Scott County SWCDs
- IDNR Division of Nature Preserves
- Chicks on the Farm
- Indiana State Department of Agriculture
- Natural Resources Conservation Service

Clean Water Indiana Funds Now Available for Conservation

The Clark, Jackson, Jefferson, and Scott County SWCD's jointly applied for, and received, a 2015 Clean Water Indiana grant. This grant provides $75,000 to be used over the next three years in the four counties. The purpose of the grant is to reduce sediment and nutrients from non-point sources in an effort to improve water quality.

Participants of this incentive project, will be required to complete a soil test, consult with an industry professional on the soil test recommendations, utilize a no-till cropping system, and plant cover crops. Buffer practices may be installed as needed. The combination of these best management practices can have a significant impact on farming practices both in the present and future years.

Once these tasks are completed according to Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) specifications, participants are eligible for an incentive payment of $20/acre on the applied acres. Participants may receive payments for up to 100 acres (per calendar year) upon completion and verification of the practices. Contact the Clark County SWCD at (812) 256-2330, ext. 3, or visit the SWCD website at ***www.clarkswcd.org***, for an application and more information.

Inside this issue:

World Water Monitoring Day—September 19

The demands for clean water are many, yet there is no more water on the planet today than when the earth was formed. The need for water is fundamental for all living things. This need knows no boundaries, and it is critical that individuals become aware of the ways in which they can impact water quality. Recognizing the need to increase public awareness and involvement in the protection of water quality is one of the goals of the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek Watersheds Improvement Project.

World Water Monitoring Day is celebrated each year on September 19, but a broader "Challenge" encourages people everywhere to test the quality of their waterways, share their findings, and protect our most precious resource. The program runs annually from March 22 until December 31. It's easy and fun to participate in the Challenge. Visit *www.MonitorWater.org* to register and purchase a test kit, then report your data after you test. If you test the waters of Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek Watersheds, we'd love to know! Send an email to melanie.davis@in.nacdnet.net, or give us a call at (812) 256-2330, ext. 3.

Water Quality - The Horse Owners Responsibility

Picture a lush green pasture with a babbling tree lined creek running through it with horses lazily grazing the grass and drinking from the creek on a sunny afternoon. While this may bring to mind other pastoral scenes and a sense of calm and peace with nature, in reality it can be an environmental nightmare.

Conservation practices that protect water quality at horse facilities add to property values, promote horse health, build good relations with neighbors, and discourage governmental regulations. While horses contribute only a small fraction of the total pollutants entering local waterways, horse owners and facility managers have a responsibility to minimize water pollution from their operation. Initiating conservation practices doesn't have to be a costly endeavor, as a matter of fact, some practices may be as simple as applying some common sense to certain situations.

The main potential water contaminant coming from a horse operation is manure and soiled bedding. To reduce the chances of animal waste being a water quality contaminant, it is important that a few simple management steps be implemented:

~ Clean up manure and bedding regularly.

~ Store wastes on an impervious surface that is either covered or can be covered. Locate these away from waterways.

~ Have a plan, preferably with a back-up plan, to dispose of manure and bedding. Disposal plans might include land application, composting, or direct application around plants as an uncomposted mulch.

~ In the case of manure in pastures, drag paddocks to avoid manure buildup in certain areas. Where the horse facility is located can be a factor affecting water quality. Sites near streams or on steep hillsides should be avoided if at all possible. If facility already exists, in one of these locations, make some site changes that will deal with managing runoff. Changes to the facility might include:

~ Properly sized roof gutters, downspouts and drains.

~ Install grassed ditches or subsurface drains to divert rain water around barns and manure storage areas.

~ Use buffer strips to create separation between barnyards, paddocks and manure storage areas.

~ Maintain travel/traffic areas to drain away water in a non-erosive manner.

Horse pastures are unique when compared to pastures for other livestock species. In most cases, horse pastures provide an exercise area and are not the primary food source. For this reason, horse pasture management needs to focus on protecting the pasture's soil and vegetative cover. Rotating pastures to allow sufficient time for plant regrowth,

cross fencing to crate smaller paddocks, and over seeding bare spots worn by animal traffic patterns are all good management practices.

Waterways also need to be protected. Maintaining buffer strips along steams provide a structure that will filter sediments before they can enter a water course. By providing other sources of water and shade, direct access to streams by horse can be limited thus eliminating the deposit of manure into the water. Limiting stream access also protects banks and vegetative cover which will help reduce sedimentation. If animals must travel across streams to get to the other portions of a pasture, the construction of a stream crossing that minimizes erosion will be a big benefit in your work to protect water quality. Finally take steps to prevent horse wash water from draining directly into a waterway.

For more information on good management practices that horse owners can utilize to protect soil and water quality, contact the Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District at 812-256-2330, ext. 3.

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SWCD Tree Sale Underway

The Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is now taking orders for its' Fall Tree Sale. Once again the SWCD will be offering quality stock from Forrest Keeling Nursery, Missouri. These trees are 3-gallon, Grade 1 (nursery stock) container trees grown using Forrest Keeling's RPM® (Root Production Method). This method produces fast-growing, uniform trees, which can be easily removed from their containers and directly planted.

A few of the tree species offered in the sale include: Bald Cypress, Black Willow, Flowering Dogwood, Persimmon, Red Maple, Sycamore, Serviceberry, Buttonbush. Trees are $25.00 each plus tax; shrubs are $20.00 each plus tax.

Perennial plants are also offered in the sale. Grass species as well as many varieties of flowers are available. Beautiful and hardy, these native plants are perfect for low-maintenance and working landscapes. Plants are $8.50 each plus tax.

Deadline for orders is September 2, 2015. Trees will be available for pick-up between the hours of 8 a.m.-4 p.m., September 14-18, 2015, at the SWCD office. For tree order forms or more information, visit *www.clarkswcd.org* or contact the Clark County SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3.

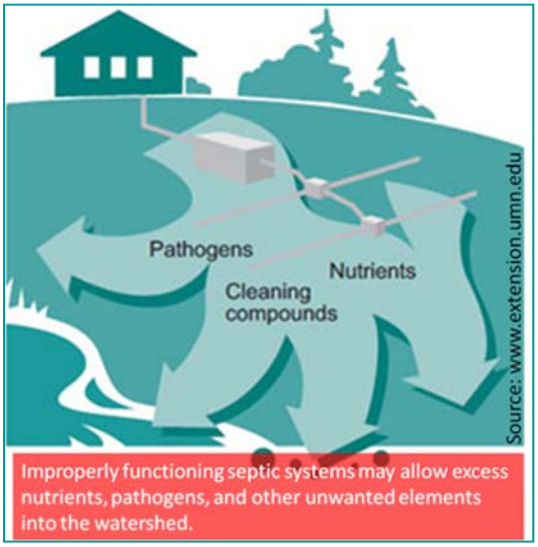
What's That Smell?

A failing septic system can reek havoc on your health, your wallet and the environment. Malfunctioning septic systems can release excess nutrients into our streams and rivers. This contamination can stimulate algae growth.

Excessive algae growth harms oxygen levels thus killing or negatively affecting fish and other aquatic organisms and reducing stream quality. E. coli can also enter our creeks and streams when a septic system is not properly functioning.

Here are 8 quick tips to properly maintaining your septic system.

- Inspect your septic system annually
- Pump out your septic system every 3-5 years, using a licensed septic hauler
- Avoid or reduce the use of garbage disposals, they can contribute unnecessary solids to your septic system.
- Avoid drainfield failures by avoiding hydraulic overloading. Install water efficient shower heads, faucets, and toilets to help limit wastewater levels and reduce the likelihood of septic system overflow.
- Obtain proper permits from the county health department before making or allowing repairs to your system.



Improperly functioning septic systems may allow excess nutrients, pathogens, and other unwanted elements into the watershed.

- Don't plant anything over your soil treatment area except grass.
- Divert roof drains and surface water from driveways away from the septic system.
- Don't use your toilet as a trash can! Chemicals can corrode septic system pipes and might not be completely removed during the filtration process. They may also interfere with the proper function of your septic system. Keep grease, disposable diapers, tampons, gasoline, oil, paint, pesticides, etc. out of your septic system.
- Watch for signs of a nonworking septic system. Signs include foul odors, wet spongy ground or puddles of water near a drainfield, lush plant growth near drainfield and fixtures that drain slowly. To report a nonworking septic system in the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek Watersheds visit *www.14milecreekwatershed.weebly.com/septic-systems-and-water-quality.html.*

Clark County Soil and
Water Conservation District

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Fax: 855-391-1921 (toll-free)

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For additional information or details on the Fourteen Mile Creek/Goose Creek Watersheds Improvement Project, contact Chelsea Tooley, Watershed Coordinator, at 14mile.watershed.outreach@gmail.com

Quick Tips to Reduce Sedimentation and Erosion at Home

- Preserve existing trees, and plant trees and shrubs to help prevent erosion and promote infiltration of water into the soil. They will absorb up to 14 times more rainwater than a grass lawn and don't require fertilizer.
- When planting new areas, choose native plants. Native plants are well suited to their area. They often have deep roots that can help stabilize the soil.
- Gutters and down spouts should drain onto vegetated or gravel-filled seepage areas- not directly onto paved surfaces. Splash blocks also help reduce erosion.
- Consider diverting your gutters into a rain garden or a rain barrel to capture storm water and reduce runoff and erosion.
- Cover bald or bare spots in your yard with mulch and get something growing there ASAP.
- If using the land adjacent to a stream consider leaving a buffer strip, a vegetated area of land adjacent to the creek that is often made up of native grasses, shrubs or trees.
- Do not mow your lawn too short. Try to keep the grass height at 2 ½ inches.
- Grow plants on slopes. Grass does not always stop erosion on slopes.

- Consider stabilizing the banks of the stream or creek in your backyard.

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