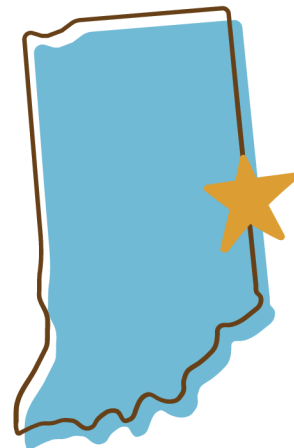




WAYNE COUNTY
Soil & Water
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**Wayne County Soil & Water
Conservation District
Annual Meeting**

Monday, February 3, 2025 @ 6:30pm
Kuhlman Building
Wayne County Fairgrounds
861 Salisbury Rd
Richmond, IN 47374

Tickets \$20
Available at the SWCD office,
RSVP by January 30th
swcdwaynecounty@gmail.com
or 765-966-0191 x3

77th Annual Meeting and Banquet

The Wayne County SWCD invites you to come
celebrate Conservation in Wayne County.

Monday, February 3rd, 2025

Enjoy dinner and fellowship as the SWCD holds their 2025
Annual meeting.

The evening begins at 6:30pm with a catered meal from The
Fresh Side followed by speaker, Megan Ayers from Urban Soil
Health. She will speak on soil health and bridging the gap
between small-scale and large-scale farming.

Award presentations and elections will follow.

Please purchase tickets ahead of time or call for
reservations.

SWCD MISSION

*Dedicated to assisting and
educating our citizens in
conservation management
through proper use of the
soil, water, and natural
resources of Wayne
County for all generations.*

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



JASON WARD, CHAIRMAN



MICHELLE WALTHER,
SECRETARY



TRAVIS FRAME,
SUPERVISOR

MAT BERGER, VICE
CHAIRMAN



LISA BIHL, SUPERVISOR



ANNUAL SUPERVISOR ELECTION

Travis Frame is on the ballot, while Mitchell Jordan has been appointed.

Join us at the 2025 Annual Meeting to welcome Mitchell Jordan to our Board of Supervisors. We will hold our annual election in which Travis Frame's term is expiring. Travis has been nominated for a second term by the election committee consisting of Jason Ward, Jim Austerman, and Kade Sheffield. Nominations from the floor will be taken during the meeting.

If you, or someone you know is interested in the Soil & Water Conservation District and would like to be involved, please notify a staff or board member. We welcome the community to join our board as an associate or volunteer as a pathway to sitting on the board or committees.



TRAVIS FRAME

Nominated for Second Term

Candidate Travis Frame is a Richmond resident where he farms along with his father. They run a complete no-till operation, with several CRP waterways, and utilize cover crops. Travis has an Associates Degree in Diesel Technology. His conservation interests include no-till and cover crops, control of erosion and nutrient run-off, CRP waterways, and general soil health improvement.

Mitchell Jordan

Appointed for First Term

Mitchell Jordan is a graduate of Purdue University, where he studied Agricultural Economics and Farm Management. Upon graduating in 2020, Mitchell returned to the family farm in Eaton, OH and is involved with the swine and grain operation. Mitchell comes from a family that is interested in conservation ag, being early adopters of no till and reduced tillage practices, as well as implementing cover crops, side-dress manure application, and drainage improvements. Mitchell is a recent graduate of the Indiana Ag Leadership Program, where he was blessed with the opportunity to travel to many different areas in the state and beyond, witnessing firsthand the variety of challenges and opportunities faced across the ag industry.

Mitchell is the youngest of 5 siblings; Kathleen, Clark, Sarah, and Joan Jordan and the son of Phil and Deborah Jordan. He attended Seton Catholic and Richmond High School, was a 10 year 4H member, and is a lifelong resident of the area. He has a passion for this community and hopes that through the SWCD that he can become more involved in making a difference in improving and preserving the natural resources that we are blessed with.



SUPERVISORS THROUGH THE YEARS

+*Forrest E. Kempton	1947-63
* William A. Litner	1947-57
* Eugene Barrett	1947-50
* Ralph Waltz	1947-52
* Eugene Lafuse	1947-53
* Elmer Wampole	1950-54
* Lloyd Burdette	1952-55
* Charles Swallow	1953-54
* James Caldwell	1954-56
* Wilbur Ripberger	1954-57
* George Klemperer	1955-61
* Herman DuGranrut	1956-62
* Wayne Williamson	1957-62
* Fred Mitchell	1957-75
+*T.J. Wright	1961-84
* Albert Hunnicutt	1962-65
* Loren Cates	1962-65
* Raymond Mendenhall	1963-65
* John C. Gilmer	1963-66
* Howard Sanders	1965-68
* Elbert Mendenhall	1965-70
* Carl Rodenberg	1966-67
* Olen McMinn	1967-70
* Stanley Gehr	1968-71
* Clayton Clark	1970-77
* Wally Pokorny	1970-73
* Jerry J. Dils	1971-80
Duane Hill	1973-76
* J. Joe Meyer	1974-84
^*Leo J. Pflum	1976-94
* Fred J. Miller	1977-82
* Russell L. Turner	1980-2004
* Joe Ryan	1982-85
John B. Cain	1984-87
Don Thurston	1984-93
George Bihl	1985-92
* E. Dale Kirtley	1987-96
* Amos Bertsch	1992-2004
* Josh Turner	1993-96
* Gerald Davis	1994-97
Duane Cates	1996-2006
* Gene Berry	1996-2002
David Williamson	1997-2006
Harold Routson	2002-11
Don Berger	2004-07
Phil Jordan	2004-10
* Tim McConaha	2006-15
David Drake	2006-11
* Duane Smoker	2007-10
Scott McCarty	2010-21
Eric Snyder	2010-18
Cathy Becker	2011-23
Pam Earlywine	2011-17
Stephen Hayes Jr.	2015-21
Brad Bihl	2017-20
Bill Brown	2019-20
Jason Ward	2020-Present
David Williamson	2020-21
Mat Berger	2021-Present *
Travis Frame	2022-Present *
Michelle Walther	2022-2024
Lisa Bihl	2023-Present ^

Richmond Service Center Staff



The USDA Service Center is located at 823

South Round Barn Road in Richmond.

Within the Service Center you will find the Farm Service

Agency (FSA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM), and the Wayne

County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD). This working relationship gives landowners of Wayne

County one place to stop for all their conservation needs.

The FSA staff administers farm commodity programs, farm bin and emergency loans, conservation and environmental programs, and emergency and disaster assistance programs.

The NRCS, SICIM, and SWCD agencies provide

educational, technical and financial assistance

for landowners looking for information on soil, water, invasive species, and related natural

resource conservation in Wayne County.

Together, these programs provide a safety net to

help farmers produce an adequate food supply,

maintain viable operations and contribute to the

year round availability of a variety of low cost, safe and nutritious foods



SWCD

LuAnne Holeva
Raquel Baker
Dakota Bertsch
Jennifer Brown

FSA

Caryn Sebring
McKinnah Harvey
Sierrah Love
Jim Austerman



NRCS

Kade Sheffield
Sean Drew



SICIM

Liz Yetter

SWCD HISTORY

Soil & Water Conservation Districts were established during the Dust Bowl to address severe erosion from intensive farming.

In Indiana, the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) serves as a governmental sub-division focused on soil and water conservation.

The Wayne County SWCD was formed on August 27, 1947, by local landowners, aiming to provide information, prioritize resource concerns, and connect land users with educational and financial assistance for conservation practices. Governed by a five-member board, including three elected and two appointed supervisors, the District addresses local natural resource issues through strategic planning and community engagement.

Deceased
Past Chairman of the State Association of Soil & Water
Conservation District Supervisors
Past Area V Chairman for the Soil & Water Conservation
District Supervisors

DID YOU HEAR?

The Wayne County SWCD was a recipient of **THREE LOCAL GRANTS** in 2024!!

IJBCA - \$500

Whitewater Valley REMC - \$700

Wayne County Foundation - \$8,000

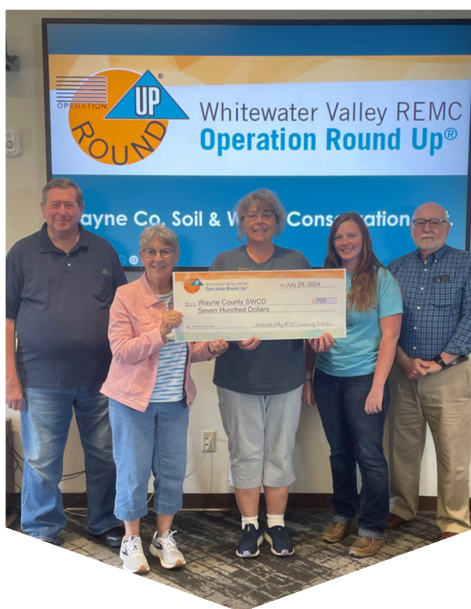
The Whitewater Valley REMC and IJBCA (Indiana Junior Beef Cattleman Association) grants were specifically allocated to cover expenses for Conservation Days 2024. Additionally, the Wayne County Foundation grant will be utilized for various initiatives, including Conservation Days, the East Central Regional Envirothon, Soil Judging Practices, Field Days, Workshops, and the Urban Garden Project. The successful completion of these projects is made possible through valuable partnerships, and the SWCD extends its sincere gratitude to all collaborators involved.



**WAYNE COUNTY
FOUNDATION**



*Thank
you*



WAYNE COUNTY URBAN S.O.I.L. GARDEN

Sustaining. Our. Indiana. Lands

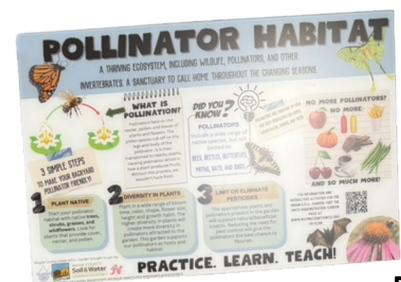


In 2022, the Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received a Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant to establish an Urban Agricultural Demonstration Garden. Over the past three years, they have developed The Wayne County Urban S.O.I.L. Garden, located at the northwest corner of the Wayne County Fairgrounds. As 2024 and the grant comes to an end, the SWCD has reported utilizing a total of \$26,223.37 in grant funding.

In addition to the CWI grant, the SWCD secured funding from The Wayne County Foundation and received supplies donated by the Richmond Sanitary District, Osborn Corp., and Miller Wood Specialties. Numerous hours of work were contributed by SWCD staff, Board Members, NRCS staff, and dedicated volunteers. Volunteer groups included WIPER, Ivy Tech's Agriculture Department led by Allison Steele, Centerville High School's Environmental Classes under Matt Osborn, and the 4-H Junior Leaders coordinated by Alicia Criswell. The total value of in-kind contributions and cash amounted to just over \$15,000.

While the grant funding has concluded, this marks just the beginning for the garden! Four workshops have already been conducted, covering topics such as vermicomposting, composting, pollinator landscaping, and small-scale cover crops. Collaborating with Urban Soil Health's Megan Ayers, the SWCD has enjoyed providing these workshops to the community and eagerly anticipates many more in the future. During the winter and early spring, the garden will receive finishing touches, including the installation of educational signage and the addition of learning tools to our website.

Stay tuned for updates on upcoming workshops and opportunities to engage with the garden!



Educator's 2024 Annual Report

LuAnne Holeva

Conservation Education Coordinator

Twenty-twenty-four has been quite a year for this Educator. Lots of things going on and the end of one of my entities. Izzi left us in January, so we interviewed a third time for the Assistant position and had 5 applicants to interview. Dakota Bertsch is now the Assistant Education Coordinator and has been doing a wonderful job. You can learn more about all she has done in her report.

I continued with my outreach opportunities as they came along, which included a presentation on the Wayne County SWCD to the Richmond Lions' Club, booths at the IASWCD Annual conference and HASTI conference promoting Indiana Envirothon, booths at the Earlham Wellness Fair, Family Earth Day Celebration, Nature Day at Middlefork Reservoir, Wayne County Employee Health Fair, Wayne & Union County 4-H Fairs, Liberty 4th of July Festival, and the Veterans' Resource Fair promoting all the entities and their missions. It is always a pleasure to reach to those in our community to answer questions and share a variety of opportunities.

On the school-side of things, we participated in Union County AG Day for 3rd grade students and Wayne County Conservation Days for 3rd/4th grade students. These programs provide a great learning opportunity for students outside of the classroom with local residents working in the "fields" they represent. Spring brings Regional Envirothon contests for high school aged students. I passed the torch to new coordinators, but helped Franklin College start up the Central Contest and Erica Oliver at Ball State University's Environmental Education Center is now holding the East Central Contest. I still continue support at the Indiana Envirothon State Contest and continue to run the scoring room to determine the top teams in the State.

Sometimes with all this work I do get the opportunity to get outside and get my hands dirty planting native and pollinator friendly plant. In February we have a large group of citizens that came out to the Union County Nature Park to spread native flower and grass seeds upon the prairie, and then "stomped like buffalo" to get the seeds secured for germinating and sprouting come spring. I also helped plant small potted native plants on the hillside next to the Union County Waterworks in the spring and additional native plants in the prairie at the UC Nature Park. The pollinator garden at the northwest corner of the Wayne County Fairgrounds also got a lot of work this summer. Most of the work I did was pulling weeds to give those natives planted the year before more room to spread and share their beautiful bounty with butterflies and hummingbirds.



TIRE COLLECTION HELD
ON OCTOBER 26, 2024



WATERSHED MODEL DEMONSTRATION
FAMILY NATURE DAY AT MIDDLEFORK
RESERVOIR

On the stormwater side of things, I attended the MS4 Annual Meeting. At this past year's MS4 meeting I ran into Kobe Walker, former intern here at the office in 2018 that now works with a construction company in the Indianapolis area and has licenses and certifications in stormwater!! By the way if you do not know what MS4 stands for, it is the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System. It is the system of storm drains (such as those you see along the curb of the street) that are there to quickly remove rainwater and snowmelt from the streets and outfalls into the Whitewater River to allow safer travel on our streets and parking lots. This water is not sent to a water treatment facility but goes directly into the river. One of the most popular outreach programs that I do is provide pet waste bag dispensers to pet owners so they will pick up their pet's doo-doo to keep it from entering the beautiful Whitewater River and instead will be properly disposed in their trash. Our biggest outreach each year is to the HELP the Animals Pet Walk, but you can also get a pet waste bag dispenser by registering your pet at the City of Richmond Clerk's Office when you get your dog tags. I also provide pet waste bag dispensers to dog obedience training groups in the City of Richmond along with a small information card about stormwater pollution from pets. This summer Charlie's Dog Obedience Training in Richmond helped spread the word at Dog's Night Out in the Depot District in August, sharing the pet waste bag dispensers and cards with attendees.

In 2024 I was granted funds from IDEM's Office of Land Quality for Waste Tire Grants, and after many hurdles was able to hold a collection on October 26, 2024. We brought in 2000 passenger and smaller tires for proper disposal and reuse. The tires that went to Rumpke are destined to be ground up and used for drainage in their landfill – even old tires may have a new job! As you may have heard or read in the Wayne County Commissioners' meetings, Wayne County is withdrawing from WUR SWMD – the solid waste district of Wayne and Union Counties. When all the paperwork is signed and approved the Wayne County Commissioners will take over the duties and responsibilities in 2025 and in 2026 Wayne and Union will separate, being responsible for just their respective county. The recycling at the schools will continue as well as the drop off recycling at the Transfer Stations through the end of the year. More information will be forthcoming with announcements and changes, but as of now there are no special collections scheduled for 2025.

Wishing you all the best in 2025!!

LuAnne Holeva, Conservation Education Coordinator

VOLUNTEERS, STAFF AND
BOARD MEMBERS AFTER
CONSERVATION DAYS.
MANY MORE WERE
PRESENT THROUGHOUT
THE WEEK.
THANK YOU TO ALL WHO
HELPED!



Assistant Educator's 2024 Annual Report

Dakota Bertsch

Assistant Conservation Education Coordinator

This is my first year working for WC SWCD. It has been a very eventful year, to say the least. There was lots of work to be done, and a lot more work to be done. I started in March and got started immediately.

In the past year, I have done a lot of work in the Urban Garden helping Jen. My husband and I started the year off by bush hogging the pollinator habitat at the Urban Garden so we could let the new growth thrive. I weeded around the beds and in the beds a couple of times (those were some strong weeds). I helped get topsoil and mulch down in the beds, helped put together the shed (the one that the wind made quick work of). I also helped Jen figure out how to do a raised bed update to make them a little more user friendly!

I also did some work in the rain garden at the beginning of the year. We did a burn down on the rain garden just before new growth broke ground. We went through and trimmed some things, took some invasive's out, as well as some trash. There was some ponding where sediment had dammed up the path of water from the parking lot. We removed some of the loose topsoil so the water could flow naturally again.

I also helped Jen pick up the orders for the native plant sale. I made brochures and order forms for the tree sale, helped Raquel with soils judging practice, and Jen and I attended the Invasive Species Conference in Brown County.

I also attended all of the workshops we had this year (I think). These workshops are full of interesting and useful information! I helped with the Conservation Focus workshop, the Cover crop workshop, soils judging, contractor/landowner workshop, and the Compost workshop that we had at the Urban Garden. Workshops like these are so important to keep the public informed and educated on the always changing conservation practices.

This year, I also did some grant writing. I wrote 3 different grants. 2 of them were for WUR, and the other one I wrote a grant for all 3 entities (WC SWCD, RSD, and WUR). This has been great experience and I look forward to helping out with this in the future.

I also attended things like the health fair, Family Earth day at Cope, Earth Day at the Senior Center, and Family Nature Day at the Middlefork Reservoir. These were all great opportunities for us to get out in the community and share some information with the public about conservation and how important it is to us as well as the environment.

Lastly, I had my first go-round with Ag Day and Conservation Days this year. I thought they were both fun and very educational. The kids really enjoyed the Incredible Journey and having some time to run around and be a little crazy while still learning things along the way for Ag Day. Conservation Days was a lot of work, but so worth it. Both of these days are so vital to the students because they learn so much while they are there.

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Technician's 2024 Annual Report

Raquel Baker

District Conservation Technician

How did we get to the end of the year so quickly? Seems like I just wrote the recap for 2023 and now it's time to focus on the 2024 writeup...time flies when you are having fun?! All in all, 2024 was a productive and busy year while I wrapped up a few months shy of twenty-two years with the SWCD.

The SWCD/NRCS Contribution Agreement continues to be a large portion of my workload. The district's five-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) technical work agreement will come to an end in early 2025, however a new agreement is in the works and no gaps in funding or work is anticipated. This past year I visited and assessed for technical compliance status review 228 individual conservation practices enrolled in the CRP program, focusing on grassed waterways and filter strips. Once field work is completed the fun really begins with paperwork and computer work for each associated practice. The SWCD is reimbursed yearly for those services completed under the agreement and will receive more than \$36,000 from my work in 2024. In addition, Christmas came early when "back-pay" from 2021 and 2022 previously completed work was received for more than \$18,000. All funds from the CA Agreement go towards district programming, training, conference fees, equipment and supplies, along with general district operations. This year the board of supervisors agreed to the purchase of a new Polaris Ranger for field work, putting the old JD Gator up for sale in an on-line auction. I can't say I was sorry to see that Gator go!! The SWCD would like to thank Rogan Equipment, Josh and Pat, for working with us to buy local and Walther Auction and Real Estate, Andy Walther for selling the Gator. We appreciate their time and efforts!

A variety of events to organize and conduct also kept me occupied in 2024, beginning with the Conservation Focus Workshop, held in March. Sponsors provided the meal for the workshop attendees, and we partnered with Purdue Extension to provide PARP continuing education credits. The New Paris Pike landfill inspection occurred in April, conducted with IDEM staff. The yearly soils judging practice for area schools was in September, a beautiful fall day to be at the Ferris Farm, just south of Milton and the Forestry & Wildlife Field Day was held in October, hosted by the Lumpkin Family just north of Losantville. I wrapped up field days/workshops with a Contractor/Landowner Workshop in December, which was well received and will be a workshop that we will continue to hold every two to three years.

2024 also brought several Construction Stormwater General Permit (CSGP) for review. The CSGP is a performance-based regulation designed to reduce pollutants that are associated with construction and/or land-disturbing activities. Other activities during the year included helping man the SWCD booth during the Wayne County 4-H Fair, presenting the beef sessions during Conservation Days, assisting at the Urban Garden, setting up a booth at the Richmond Senior Center and working a shift during the Indiana State Fair at the Pathway to Water Quality.

I am looking forward to implementing the new year's conservation work and programs. First off will be the Conservation Focus Workshop, to be held on March 20, 2025, in the First Bank Kuhlman Center located on the Wayne County Fairgrounds. We plan to partner again with Purdue Extension to offer Private Applicator Re-certification Program (PARP). Watch for updates and the mailings/flyers to be distributed late February.

Due to timing, the Drone Technology Field Day was postponed in 2024 and will be offered in 2025. This will tie in with the SWCD's new Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grant that was recently approved and funded. This particular CWI grant focuses on cover crops with incentive for drone application, along with pollinator habitat on ag lands. Please reach out to me for more information, I plan to have an informational brochure and application available by early spring. Also, in the works for 2025 will be the Pasture & Livestock Field Day and a Pond Clinic, along with the yearly practice soils judging for area 4-H and FFA teams.

Watch our newsletter, website, and Facebook page for more information on these and other upcoming SWCD events. We are looking for host sites for a few of these events, please reach out if interested.

As always, your input is valued! If you have any ideas or questions about the upcoming events mentioned above, please contact me at 765-373-9542 or raquel.baker@in.nacdnet.net.



*Landowner/Contractor Workshop
December 12, 2024*



*Regional Forestry & Wildlife Field Day
October 17, 2024, at Lumpkin Farms,
Losantville, IN*



*Area Soils Judging Practice, September
10, 2024, at the Ferris Farm, Milton, IN*



*Heavy Canada Thistle infestation observed
in a CRP Grassed Waterway during a status
review site visit.*



Non-existent CRP Grassed Waterway



Nicely Maintained CRP Grassed Waterway

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