

MORGAN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



2017 - 2020
LONG RANGE PLAN



The Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District constitutes a governmental subdivision of the State of Indiana, and a public body corporate and politic exercising public powers, (IN Code 14-32-5)

OUR PURPOSE

1. To maintain current and relevant information about the soil, water, and natural resources, of Morgan County;
2. To identify and prioritize soil, water, and natural resource concerns within Morgan County.
3. To provide education and educational materials about the soil, water, and natural resources of Morgan County;
4. To connect landowners and users with sources of technical and financial assistance for implementing conservation practices.
5. Provide local leadership in identifying natural resources needs and developing comprehensive plans and programs to address those needs.

OUR MISSION

To sponsor educational opportunities for people of all ages and interests concerning the importance of our natural resources, and to encourage and promote voluntary conservation practices in the present and in the future.

OUR VISION

Clean streams and watersheds, healthy woodlands and eco systems, restored soil health and nutrient reduction for sustainable agriculture and sustainable urban greenspaces.



OUR CRITICAL RESOURCE GOALS

Watershed Enhancement
Soil Health Improvement
Woodlands Preservation
Increased Urban Conservation

In order to realize the goals set forth in our five year plan, we have determined a set of strategies needed to achieve those goals. Of these strategies, some may be better accomplished with the skills of an *Environmental Conservationist*. For this reason, securing the addition of one employee to our staff is essential and will be our continuous goal until concluded.

Other strategies may require the skills and participation of both staff and supervisors. As a body we understand this, and pledge our collective effort toward the completion of these strategies. Following each strategy, the roles, in order of importance, best suited for its achievement will be noted;

Note: (S=Supervisors, E=Educators, C=Conservationist)



WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT

Morgan County has abundant water resources. However, protecting our watersheds from soil silt and other contaminants is becoming increasingly important. Biological diversity in streams and the recreational use of them, such as fishing, boating and wildlife viewing are at risk. Presenting the connection between water and the quality of life is fundamental to our mission and educating landowners and users about this is the best way to help our waterways.

In order to promote good stewardship and enhancement of our waterways, our strategy is to;

- Annually conduct one or more of the following workshops; *Project WET, Aquatic Wild, Healthy Water-Healthy People* and *WOW-Wonder of the Wetlands*. (E, C)
- Co-host a pond management workshop, with the Purdue Extension. (S, C and E)
- Work with our local Building and Zoning Board on watershed concerns. (S, C and E)
- Collaborate with Upper White River Watershed Alliance concerning public outreach and education messages for healthier watersheds. (S, C and E)
- Annually provide watershed education for all 4th grade students in Morgan County. (E, C)
- Include the following topics for Indiana Master Naturalist classes such as erosion prevention, soil health, watershed and water quality testing. (C, E)
- Work with Natural Resource Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency to provide educational programs to reduce sediment and nutrient loads in Morgan County waterways. (S, C)
- Collaborate with Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality to manage the Federal and State mandated storm water Rule 5 and 13 Public Outreach and Education component. (S, C, E)
- Promote local well water testing for the health of local residents as well as watersheds.
- Collaborate with partners for expertise and funding to install a two stage ditch within Morgan County. (S, C)
- Update promote and sell Morgan County Plat Books that include watershed boundaries. (C, E and S)



SOIL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Soil is one of our most important natural resources. When conventionally tilled soils are bare and unprotected, they are subject to water erosion and the loss of essential nutrients, carbon, and organic matter. For the protection and health of our soils, an increase in conservation cropping operations is absolutely necessary. With education and financial assistance, we hope to see a 10% increase in no-till operations by the year 2020.

In order to accomplish this, our strategy is to;

- Publish and distribute a quarterly SWCD newsletter with attention to soil health improvement and sediment/nutrient reduction practices applicable to agricultural producers as well as urban growers. (C, E)
- Develop and maintain an agricultural information data base for SWCD office. (C)
- Partner with NRCS to co-host seminars, workshop or events concerning soil health improvement and sediment/nutrient reduction. (S, C and E)
- Display and distribute soil conservation information at public events such as: Community Foundation's Annual Farmers Breakfast, Morgan County Fair, and Farmers Day. (S, C and E)
- Host a variety of classes such as: cover crops, soil types and soil health classes for high school youth, conservation clubs, FFA clubs or Young Farmers Association. (S, C and E)
- Assist Natural Resource Conservation with producer cost-share programs and information. (C)



WOODLANDS PRESERVATION

Our forests and woodlands have always been a significant part of Morgan County. Protection and improvements to this resource is vital for its many eco systems, its wildlife, recreational opportunities and our economy.

To teach the importance of trees and proper woodlands improvement, our strategy is to;

- Host a *Project Learning Tree* workshop for educators every two years. (E)
- Co-host workshops with Purdue Extension and District Forester on woodland management, tree maintenance and pond management every other year. (S, C)
- Annually recognize *Arbor Day* by staging education events with schools. (E, C)
- Host invasive species events or workshops and invite Southern Indiana Cooperative for Invasive management (SICIM) to speak and seek membership. (S, C)
- Continue partnership with the Morgan-Monroe State Forest and Fire Headquarters staff to host educational field trips and programs within the forest. (E, S)



INCREASED URBAN CONSERVATION

With the growth of urban areas and neighborhoods, the effects of chemical and waste runoff are ever increasing. We also know that informed and concerned citizens are the best line of defense against those types of pollution. One way to involve them with conservation efforts is to encourage the building of garden plots and greenspaces.

To encourage urban conservation, our strategy is to;

- Collaborate with Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality to host workshops or seminars concerning watersheds, storm water education and water quality. (S, C and E)
- Co-host with Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality to host workshops, seminars about watershed *Best Management Practices (BMP's)* for private landowners and construction sites. (S, C)
- Distribute information to public and private landowners concerning runoff pollutants. (S, C)
- Collaborate with creative partners and co-host Earth Day events wherein SWCD will provide educational information promoting earth friendly stewardship practices. (E, C and S)
- Assist Solid Waste Management District with public events to collect and properly dispose of hazardous materials such as: household hazardous waste, electronics, and medications. (E, S)
- Partner with NRCS to inform event attendees about best conservation practices at public gardening or outdoor oriented events. (E, S)
- Co-Host workshops or distribute educational information for better understanding of native and invasive flora and fauna, permaculture growing methods and healthy pollinator habitat etc. (C, E and S)
- Educate urban and back yard best practices to protect and increase healthy pollinator habitat. (C, E)



ONGOING ROLES TO PROMOTE CONSERVATION

- Membership and support for: *Woodland Steward Organization, Indiana District Employee Association Membership, Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and National Association of Conservation Districts*
- Use various forms of media (both traditional and social) for outreach and public education concerning watershed enhancement, soil health improvement, woodlands preservation, and to improve and increase urban conservation practices
- Continually secure new SWCD Board and Associate Supervisors and encourage active participation
- Promote and lease the Truax no-till seed drill to landowners
- Promote water conservation by offering rain barrels for sale
- Promote and celebrate *Soil & Water Stewardship week*

OFFICE & STAFFING OPERATIONS

- Update and maintain cooperative working agreement with:
 - Morgan County Solid Waste Management District (MCSWMD)
 - Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality (MCPWQ)
 - Morgan County Parks and Recreation District (MCPRD)
 - USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS)
 - USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 - State Soil Conservation Board
 - ISDA – Division of Soil Conservation
 - Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service
- Secure funding to increase part-time educator to a full time conservationist position.
- Continue to promote the need for a full-time conservationist.
- Continue education opportunities for staff via workshop and courses for training and certification.
- Continue to request from the county an updated e-mail system
- IT support and education for software, Technology and Website
- Maintain three year rotation of technology and computer equipment
- Continue use of various forms of Social Media



OUR RESOURCES PARTNERS

County Public and Private Schools
USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service
USDA - Farm Service Agency
ISDA - Division of Soil Conservation
State Soil Conservation Board
Indiana Department of Environmental Management
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Indiana Association of SWCD's
State, Federal, & local Legislators
Morgan County Council & Commissioners
Morgan County Solid Waste Management District
Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality
Morgan County Zoning and Planning Commission
Morgan County Purdue Extension Service & 4-H
Morgan County Schools & Libraries
Morgan County Parks Department
Morgan County Master Gardeners
Morgan County FFA groups
Morgan Monroe State Forest & Resource Service Center
National Association of Conservation Districts
Community Foundation of Morgan County
The Nature Conservancy
Indiana Farm Bureau Inc. - Ag in the Classroom
Future Farmers of America
Indiana Wildlife Federation
Bradford Woods
South Central Indiana REMC
Southern Indiana Cooperative for Invasive Management (SICIM)



ADOPTION STATEMENT

2016-2020 Business Plan was completed by the Morgan County SWCD supervisors and staff, and was adopted on **June 8, 2016**.

	Signature	Date
Pat Clark, <i>Chairman</i>	<u>Pat Clark</u>	<u>7-13-16</u>
Warren Waymire, <i>Vice Chair</i>	<u>Warren Waymire</u>	<u>7-13-16</u>
Lou Feagans, <i>Board</i>	<u>Lou Feagans</u>	<u>7-13-16</u>
Darrell French, <i>Board</i>	<u>Darrell French</u>	<u>7-13-2016</u>
Doug Johnstone, <i>Board</i>	<u>Doug Johnstone</u>	<u>7/13/2016</u>