

# THE MORGAN COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST

*The Newsletter for the  
Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District*

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## ENROLL NOW!

Please check our website for ongoing and new cost share programs for cover crops and conservation farming!

Morgan County SWCD is participating in 2 different Clean Water Indiana Grant Programs in 2021 to assist farmers who are interested in trying cover crops and conservation tillage to prevent erosion of precious topsoil and build the health of their soil. Contact the office if you are interested or would like more information on these farming practices!

## INVITATION

# Morgan County SWCD Annual Meeting

The Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District invites you to join us online this year for a "virtual version" of the 2021 Annual Meeting!

Date: March 10, 2021

Time: 6:00 pm

Register: [www.morgancountyswcd.org](http://www.morgancountyswcd.org) or  
contact us via email or phone.

Due to COVID 19, the Meeting will be held via Zoom. Computer or Smartphone login preferred, however call in lines will be provided for those without internet service. Annual SWCD and Conservation Partnership Reports will be given, and election for Board Supervisor will be held. Annual meeting will be followed by the monthly board meeting.



# 2020...What a year!

Submitted by Lisa MacPhee, SWCD Staff

The year 2020 sure ended up being one for the books! For some, it was a difficult year and for others, it was a time to flourish. In the SWCD office, we learned how to work remotely at times, meet virtually, and keep conservation moving forwards any way we could. This year has catapulted us towards some of the SWCD goals, quicker than expected.

Instead of conservation education being delivered by SWCD staff in person, online programs and lessons were created to provide teachers with the knowledge and tools that they needed to teach the lessons themselves. Tool kits are now available from the SWCD office for teachers to borrow for their classrooms and items are disinfected in between classrooms. Online lessons cover water quality, recycling, and stormwater topics. Using the format that many teachers already use, makes integration into the classroom easy for the teacher. Lessons are all on our website.

Another goal of the Morgan County SWCD is to increase assistance to landowners installing conservation practices. In 2020, we worked hard to get funding for conservation programs at a local level. The first program was funded through Clean Water Indiana and focused specifically on cover crop use on farm land and conservation tillage. Program recipients received payments for installing these practices and it prevents soil erosion, improves soil health and reduces sediment load into local streams and waterways. The second program was funded locally through our budget approved by the Morgan County Council. We are fortunate to live in a county where local leaders recognize the importance of protecting our natural resources. Information on these programs can be found on our website and throughout this newsletter.

*For many of us, the benefit of working towards a goal is seeing the results!* At the end of 2020, through tracking and reports, the SWCD board was overjoyed to see some of the results of our effort. *Due to the availability of our online lessons to Morgan County teachers, nearly 1000 students were still able to receive exposure to conservation based lessons during a year that education was tumultuous to say the least.*

Data generated from our cover crop grant programs was also reported to the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. It was then compiled with other data from the Indiana Conservation Partnership and sediment and nutrient load reductions were calculated. These calculations take into account factors such as location, acreage, soil type, slope, watershed, rainfall estimates, and practice characteristics to determine the load reductions. Using these calculations, it was determined that *the fields enrolled in our grant programs, 365 acres, prevented approximately 830 tons of sediment from reaching our waterways!*

FOLKS, THAT IS 100 DUMP TRUCKS FULL!



Sediment in waterways clouds the water and can settle on pond floors and waterway beds causing harm to organisms living there. Another 950 pounds of Phosphorus and 1,899 pounds of Nitrogen were kept in the fields and prevented water way pollution from these nutrients. This is very exciting news for us and for the farmers. No one wants to lose their valuable topsoil or pay for nutrients only to have them washed away!

Though we were thrilled to see the results of these programs in 2020, we are more excited to see them continue into 2021 in addition to another CWI Grant Opportunity for farmers. The new program will be a three year commitment for each field enrolled, but it will include more technical and financial assistance than previous programs. Please follow our Facebook Page and watch for announcements on our website this spring for enrollment deadlines. *We are looking forwards to keeping conservation in Morgan County moving forwards and keeping our waterways clean. Thank you to everyone who does their part to do the same!*

It is time for another White River Clean Up! The Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality is looking for volunteers to help clean up the White River. The Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality's website (<https://mcpwq.org/events>) has information and the link to register for the event. You may also email the Morgan County Partnership for more information at [swed@morgancounty.in.gov](mailto:swed@morgancounty.in.gov) Hope to see you there!


SATURDAY,  
**MARCH 13, 2021**

MORGAN COUNTY  
**WHITE RIVER  
CLEAN - UP**

**Henderson Ford, Three Rivers and Paragon  
Public Access Sites**

**9am-12Noon**

**Meet at THREE RIVERS S.R.A.**  
(4715 IN-67, Martinsville, IN 46151)  
Lunch is provided following the clean up at Gatti's Pizza  
in Martinsville, IN



CALL BILL DIALS FOR MORE INFORMATION  
AND TO RSVP  
765-342-1064  
[BDIALS@MORGANCOUNTY.IN.GOV](mailto:BDIALS@MORGANCOUNTY.IN.GOV)

YOU CAN ALSO REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER  
ONLINE AT:  
[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/FRUPNRUERDJMG3TG6](https://forms.gle/FRUPNRUERDJMG3TG6)

# *The Impacts of Invasive Plant Species: Part 1 of 3*

## By Tony Branam, USDA-NRCS

Drive around any neighborhood or even a small cluster of homes and you see lawns adorned with Japanese barberries and burning bushes, wisteria vines climbing over trellises and Bradford pears lining both sides of the driveways. In some developed and manufactured communities these are the ONLY woody plants observed with an occasional dead and dying ash trees stricken down by the Emerald ash borer.

Why are some ornamental, non-native garden and landscaping plants considered bad? For the purposes of this article I will focus on plant species using in part the U.S. Department of Agriculture's definition of an invasive plant as "... a plant species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."

So what? Humans have been moving and relocating around the globe for centuries taking with them familiar items from their homelands such as livestock, pets, plant seeds, and transplants. And sometimes these relocations are innocent and accidental if you can imagine how easily a beggar tick seed sticks to your socks and you carry them with you to a new destination. The problem, however, is when a non-native plant becomes dominant in its new location and threatens the natural, native plant community.

At first glance one or two Japanese barberry shrubs planted at the corner of one's house may not seem to pose a threat. After all it's only a couple shrubs and the landowner will insure they stay in their place, right? But what about all the berries eaten by birds as they migrate from winter and summer ranges? When birds deposit the seeds of a non-native plant in a neighboring woodlot how likely is it the landowner will understand and treat these new shrubs growing in his woods? Not likely at all.

### **Economic Harm**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is concerned with the impacts invasive species due to the threats to our food security and timber production. Kudzu, a vine known for its aggressive swallowing of old buildings and landscapes in the Southern U.S. is also an alternate host for soybean rust. Asian soybean rust, a fungus, can survive the winter among the foliage of Kudzu and can damage soybean and vegetable yields the following crop year. Changes in weather patterns creating warmer winters and longer wet springs could threaten agricultural production and affect food exports.

Threats to grain and vegetable production is not the only concern at the USDA. According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry's *2018 Indiana Forest Products Price Report and Trend Analysis* published in January 2018 Indiana exported \$32 million dollars of logs and timber products in 2016 and was expected to exceed \$37 million in 2017. The three biggest consumers of Indiana native logs are China, Viet Nam and Japan.

Both trees in the photo are Chestnut oaks (**Quercus montana**) and similar in age. The tree on the left appears healthy with dark green leaves and a full canopy. The tree on the right has yellow-green foliage with a sparse canopy and will likely be dead next year. The tree on the right is one of many oaks that have recently, one by one, weakened and died of an unknown disease.



## *The Impacts of Invasive Plant Species: Part 1 of 3* (continued)

Forest professionals along with public and private lands managers fear that Sudden Oak Disease, discovered in the mid-1990s in California and Oregon, could soon spread to the eastern United States. The loss of young and old oak trees in the Eastern U.S. would have a devastating economic impact on the timber industry, mill works and cabinet makers, home builders as well as outdoor recreation and tourism. Unfortunately, the spread of Sudden Oak Disease will likely come from the transport of ornamental trees and shrubs to box stores, nurseries and online purchases. The same means in which the emerald ash borer has been transported throughout the Midwest and Eastern United States.

In Indiana, the invasive species of concern in woodlands are Autumn olive, Tree of heaven, bush honeysuckle, burning bush and Japanese barberry. In 2017 the Indiana Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) allocated over \$640,000 to private landowners in 34 southern Indiana counties to improve forest habitats while treating invasive species. This initiative is known as the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration initiative with multiple partners including U.S. Forest Service, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and The Nature Conservancy.

Managing and monitoring trees and shrubs on our lawns, in our neighborhoods, in our parks and in your neighbor's woodlot is more critical than ever. Purchasing native plants is important, however, knowing the source of that plant and/or seed is essential. Prevention and immediate corrective action is the only way we will be able to protect our natural plant communities. Plant diseases, insect pests or seeds are too easily transported accidentally on the underside of a plant leaf or in the pot of dirt because we don't ask questions at the nursery. For more information about invasive plant species and their impacts on the natural landscape or possible funding assistance to control them see the links below.

### References Cited and Additional Information:

**Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management** <http://www.sicim.info/cisma-project/>

**Indiana USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service**

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/in/programs/financial/>

The Nature Conservancy <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/indiana/>

### ***Invasive plants induce the taxonomic and functional replacement of dune spiders***

Gomes, M., Carvalho, J.C. & Gomes, P. Biol Invasions (2018) 20: 533.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10530-017-1555-5>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10530-017-1555-5>

**Invasive Species**, June 21, 2018, By Ryan Colliton, Chief of Natural Resources & Regulatory Compliance

<http://www.metroparks.com/natural-resources-department-updates/>

### **INFORMATION ON STATE INVASIVE SPECIES LAWS, AGENCIES, AND RESOURCES**

<https://bugwoodcloud.org/mura/mipn/assets/File/StateCWMAResourcesUpdatedJune2010.pdf>

### **2018 Indiana Forest Products Price, Report and Trend Analysis, January 2018**

[https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-fall\\_2017\\_Timber\\_Price\\_Report.pdf](https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/files/fo-fall_2017_Timber_Price_Report.pdf)

### **U.S. Department of Agriculture Definitions of native, Invasive and Other Plant Related terms**

[https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ct/technical/ecoscience/invasive/?cid=nrcs142p2\\_011124](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ct/technical/ecoscience/invasive/?cid=nrcs142p2_011124)

### **Morgan County Native and Invasive Plant Partnership**

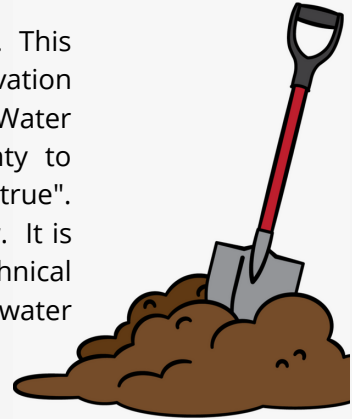
Email: [InvasivesMorganCounty@gmail.com](mailto:InvasivesMorganCounty@gmail.com)



## LOCAL CONSERVATION GRANT PROGRAM: Available Again in 2021!

There are still funds available in the Morgan County Local Conservation Grant Program. This means that landowners in Morgan County can get assistance making conservation improvement projects happen on their property! The Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District is looking for great ideas from individuals around the county to implement conservation practices. They want innovative ideas as well as the "tried and true". They are offering a 50% / 50% cost share to those projects that meet the criteria below. It is the hope of the District that Morgan County residents take advantage of the districts technical and financial aid to complete conservation projects to improve the soil health and water quality in our county. Give us a call today to see how we can help you!

***What would you like to see done on your own farm or property?***



### **Morgan County SWCD** **Local Conservation Grant Program**



**YES**



Do you have a great way to stop soil erosion or improve the water quality in Morgan County, Indiana?



Are you a private landowner or a non-governmental not for profit organization?



Would you be willing to share your idea with others in a presentation to our board?



Would you like help funding your project?

#### **Some examples of projects that would qualify:**

- Cover Crops
- Pollinator Habitat Plantings
- Invasive Plant Species Control
- Precision Ag and No-Till Equipment Modifications
- Streambank & Shoreline Protection
- Erosion Control Structures for livestock access control or prescribed grazing
- Composting Facility
- Heavy Use Area Protection
- Field Border
- Filter Strips
- Grassed Waterway
- Conservation Cover
- Upland Wildlife Habitat
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Wetland Restoration
- AND MANY MORE!

#### **For more information or an application, please contact:**

Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District  
180 S. Main Street, Suite 002 Martinsville, Indiana 46151  
Phone: 765-349-2060

Email: [SWCDoffice@morgancounty.in.gov](mailto:SWCDoffice@morgancounty.in.gov)

Information and application online at: [www.MorganCountySWCD.org](http://www.MorganCountySWCD.org)

#### **REQUIREMENTS TO APPLY**

For your application to be considered, it must meet the following criteria:

- Project must be within Morgan County
- Grant is only available to private landowners and non-governmental not for profit organizations.  
*(Organizations that are publicly funded or are a taxing body are ineligible.)*
- Project must be beneficial to the soil and water quality directly in Morgan County
- Project has not qualified for another federal grant available

If your application is considered, you will be asked to attend a board meeting to present your proposal to the SWCD board for approval. Once your application is considered for funding, a representative from Morgan County SWCD will be in contact with you to schedule a site visit of the project area to evaluate the conservation concern that funding is being requested for. Once approved, you will be asked to sign an agreement with the SWCD which states the time limit for the project completion and that funds will be reimbursed at 50%/50% rate based on receipts provided up to a maximum of \$1000 reimbursement per application/project as receipts are presented. Any work done by the landowner or a representative of the landowner, that is not a professional company, cannot be billed for more than \$25 an hour for work done on project. All funds will be reimbursed after the completion of the project and once a final site review has been completed. Structural practices such as fences, livestock watering systems, erosion control structures, etc. shall comply with USDA-NRCS technical specifications. Only native plants or USDA approved non-native vegetation species are allowed. Applicant is responsible for locating underground utility location, obtaining all permits and comply with local ordinances, state statutes

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Ongoing-Schedule an Invasive Plant Property Survey on your land-email or call us!
- March 2, 2021- MC NIPP Meeting (virtual), 6 pm
- March 10, 2021-SWCD Annual Meeting (virtual), 6 pm, followed by board meeting
- March 13, 2021 - White River Clean Up, Morgan County Partnership for Water Quality, children welcome
- March 13, 2021-Jimmy Nash City Park Weed Wrangle to control Wintercreeper- Due to Tool and Chemical use, this event will be ADULTS ONLY PLEASE
- April 6, 2021- MC NIPP Meeting. 6 pm
- April 10, 2021- Old Town Waverly Park Weed Wrangle, children welcomed
- April 14, 2021- SWCD Meeting, 6 pm
- April 17, 2021- Burkhardt Creek County Park, children welcomed
- May 4, 2021- MC NIPP Meeting, 6 pm
- May 8, 2021- Jimmy Nash City Park Weed Wrangle, children welcomed
- May 12, 2021- SWCD Meeting, 6 pm
- June 26, 2021 -Tox Away Day Mooresville, 8 am- 1 pm

Please check our website for current meeting and event information. [www.MorganCountySWCD.org](http://www.MorganCountySWCD.org)  
 Login information for meetings will be found there.

We will be giving away tree seedlings at many of the Weed Wrangle events!



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Martinsville, IN 46151

(765)349-2060

SWCDoffice@morgancounty.in.gov

<https://www.morgancountyswcd.org>

### Supervisors

Doug Peine, Chairman

Doug Johnstone, Vice-Chairman

Patricia Clark-Secretary

Debbie Carter-Supervisor

Louis Feagans-Supervisor

### Staff

Lisa MacPhee, First Deputy/Treasurer

David Mow- Invasive Species and  
Forestry Specialist