



# Conservation News

Volume V, Issue 111

Summer/Fall 2011

**Dates to Note**

- 8/17/11—Soil Quality Field Day
- 9/5/2011 Labor Day—office closed
- 9/6/2011 Indiana Master Naturalist Workshop Series begins
- 9/6/2011 S. Fork Wildcat Steering Comm. Mtg. & Cookout at Camp Cullom
- 9/7/11—SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 PM Farm Bureau
- 9/10/2011 Hoosier Riverwatch Training
- 9/16/2011 Wabash/Wildcat Monitoring Blitz
- 9/17/2011 S. Fork Wildcat Stream Clean-up
- 10/5/2011 SWCD Monthly Board Meeting, 6:30 PM Farm Bureau

**Highlights:**

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**2011 Clinton County Tillage Transect Results**

Prior to 1990, no-till farming wasn't really recognized by the agricultural community. In fact, during a 1990 survey less than 10% of cropland was managed in no-tillage systems. It was actually more common to see corn being managed in a no-till system than soybeans. However, in just a few years things began to change. Beans began being recognized as a better no-till crop due to corn requiring a higher level of management and early hybrids

weren't necessarily built for a no-till system. However, producers are finding out that new hybrids and new management systems can make no-till corn work on virtually any given field. To document the adoption of no-till systems and other conservation tillage approaches (e.g. strip tillage, mulch tillage, etc.) spring surveys are completed

following planting to document planted crops and tillage systems. Approximately 496 data records are completed noting present crop, previous crop, tillage system, approximate residue percentage, and other characteristics. The tillage results for 2011 corn and soybeans are shown below.

	No Till		Strip Till		Ridge Till		Mulch Till		Reduced Till		Conventional Tillage	
	%	pts	%	pts	%	pts	%	pts	%	pts	%	pts
Corn	7%	19	1%	2	0%	0	11%	30	16%	41	65%	171
Soybeans	61%	137	0%	0	0%	0	15%	34	15%	33	9%	20

As you can see, corn is still seeing a low no-till adoption rate. This level doesn't seem to have changed much since 1990 when the Conservation Tillage Survey was started. Despite the low adoption rates of no-till corn, the majority of county soybeans are planted in no-till systems. There are numerous benefits of no-till systems such as decreased soil erosion, increased soil biology and

structure, and an increase in levels of organic matter. However, these benefits are best seen in *continuous* no-till systems where benefits can build on each other over time. This is not to say that a normal rotation of no-till beans with conventional corn is bad....but it could be better in a continuous no-till corn-bean rotation. For example, it is estimated that the average soil loss from conventionally

tilled fields is around 4.1 tons of soil/acre/year. Compare this to no-till fields which erode at an estimated rate of 0.8 tons of soil/acre/year. Quite a big difference, especially when you know that soil is the number one resource on your farm.

*Continued on page 2*

## Tillage Transect Cont.

### Clinton County's Tillage on Cropland—Impacts on Sheet/Rill EROSION in 2011:

If each Corn or Soybean site on the 2011 tillage transect in Clinton County were:

COVENTIONALLY tons of soil would be lost  
TILLED= an estimated **865,900** from sheet/rill

As a result of the actual tillage practices on Clinton County's  
 Corn and Soybean acres,

An estimated: **494,900** tons of soil in 2011 are **SAVED!**

Also, it is generally accepted that in continuous no-till systems producers are able to make less trips into the field which equates to less fuel being used. This is always welcome, especially with recent oil prices.

### Clinton County's Tillage on Cropland—Impacts on DIESEL FUEL USED in 2011:

If each Corn or Soybean site on the 2011 tillage transect in Clinton County were:

CONVENTIONALLY gallons of diesel fuel would  
TILLED= an estimated **1,051,800** be used

As a result of the actual tillage practices on Clinton County's  
 Corn and Soybean acres,

an estimated: **221,500** gallons of diesel fuel in 2011 are

For more information on the local tillage transect please contact the Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District or USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## Soil Quality Field Day—August 17th

Have you ever wondered if your tillage and management practices are impacting your soil productivity? Agriculture producers wanting to learn more about cover crops and improving soil quality in their farming operation are encouraged to attend a Soil Quality Field Day on Wednesday, August 17<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 AM with a light breakfast and will conclude at 12:30 PM. The field day will be held at the Warren Baird Farm located at 5578 S 500 W, Atlanta, IN. Pre-registration is



required and can be made by calling the Clinton County SWCD office at 765-659-1223 ext. 3.

Speakers will include Dr. Hans Kok and Dan Towery with the Indiana Cropping System Initiative, Barry Fisher and Mike Wigginton, USDA, NRCS, Eileen Kladviko, Purdue University and local producers Cameron Mills and Rodney Rulon. The agenda will include sessions on soil quality, how to get started using winter cover crops, disease and weed

issues, and the economics of cover crops.

This workshop is approved for Certified Crop Advisor Continuing Education Units (CEU's).

The Soil Quality Field Day is being sponsored by the Clinton, Howard, Hamilton, Madison and Tipton County Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Purdue Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service and funded in part by an Indiana State Department of Agriculture Clean Water Indiana Grant.

## IDNR Tree Nursery Program

The Jasper-Pulaski and Vallonia Nurseries offer tree seedlings through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The IDNR's mission is to grow and distribute to landowners high quality plant materials for conservation plantings. Conservation plantings include plantings for timber, wildlife, windbreaks, soil and

water protection, reclamation, carbon sequestering, and education.

For a complete listing of species available visit [www.dnr.IN.gov/forestry](http://www.dnr.IN.gov/forestry). A minimum order is 100 seedlings per species or 1

packet.

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The next best time is now. -Chinese Proverb*

Orders must be placed by the third Friday in October. Orders will be shipped in the spring of 2012.

## Clinton-Boone Counties Receive LARE Grant for Sugar Creek

New grants for the care of Indiana's water bodies this year totaling more than \$890,000 have been awarded through the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program, part of the DNR Division of Fish & Wildlife.

The projects involve 15 counties and were submitted by local sponsors who commit to sharing a portion of the total cost. DNR's portion comes from the Lake Enhancement fee paid annually by boat owners to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. The grants allow for the completion of projects that would have been difficult for local organizations to fund on their own.

"In a time when all spending is scrutinized for cost-effectiveness, these

boater-funded LARE grants are an important way to address problems in public lakes and river watersheds across Indiana," DNR director Robert E. Carter Jr. said.

The new LARE grants involve biological and engineering projects, including design, diagnostic and engineering feasibility studies, and construction.

"When completed, these projects should improve aquatic habitat and recreational opportunities, and provide a positive impact to the local economy where they are implemented," Mark Reiter, director of DNR Fish & Wildlife, said.

Several watershed land-treatment pro-

jects received funding to assist landowners with water-quality concerns near locally important streams. These grants are awarded to soil and water conservation districts that work with landowners to carry out practices that help keep nutrients and sediment out of lakes and streams.

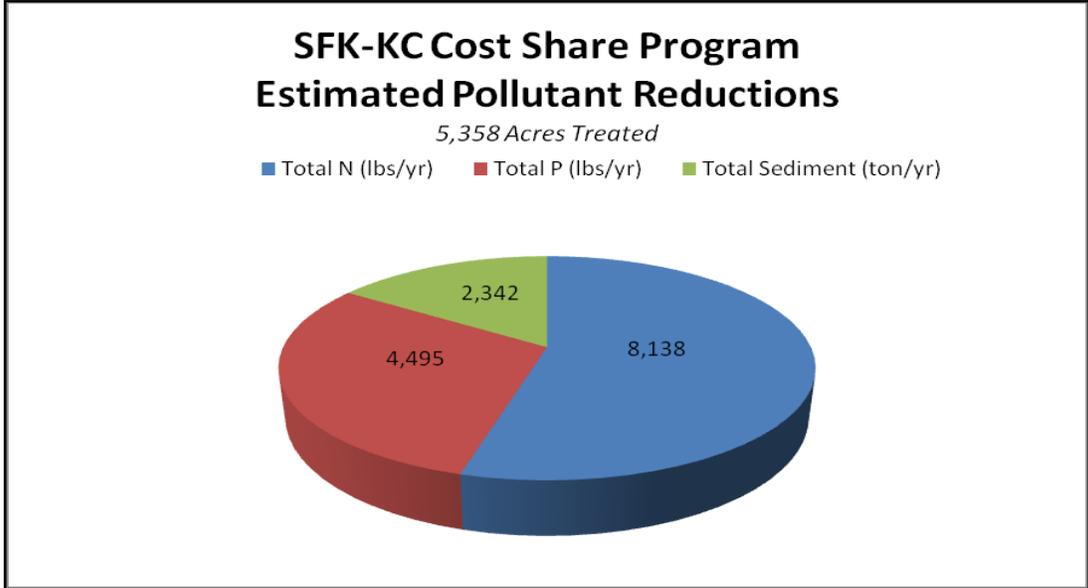
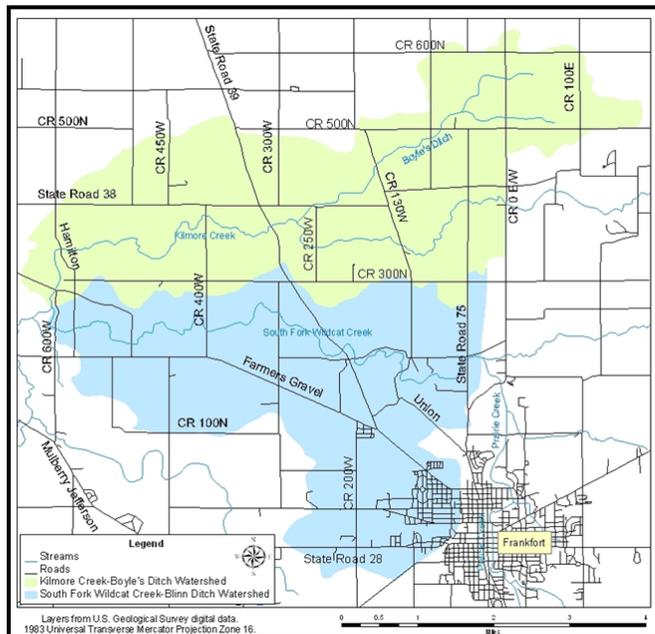
"One of the program's goals is to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution of surface waters through a variety of different projects that are locally driven," LARE biologist Rod Edgell said.

***The Clinton and Boone County Soil and Water Conservation Districts were awarded \$44,000.00 to conduct a watershed diagnostic study in the Sugar Creek Watershed.***

## Summary of the South Fork Wildcat-Blinn Ditch & Kilmore Creek-Boyle's Ditch Project

The South Fork Wildcat Creek-Blinn Ditch and Kilmore Creek-Boyle's Ditch (SFK-KC) Cost Share Program has officially ended. More than 5,000 acres were covered with various conservation practices such as implementing Pest and Nutrient Management Plans, modifications to equipment for adopting no-till practices or decreasing waste and overspray with new guidance systems and technology, and appropriate waste utilization. The most common practices were equipment modifications for no-till adoption and precision farming. One of the more interesting practices installed included the conversion of a traditional ditch into a 2-stage conservation ditch. This modification in design allows traditional ag. ditches to increase their environmental value while decreasing long-term maintenance costs for area producers and drainage boards. Overall, thousands of pounds of nutrients and chemicals, and tons of

sediment will be prevented from entering local waterways each year thanks to local producers participating in the SFK-KC Cost Share Program. Currently, planning is being completed to develop a Watershed Management Plan for the entire South Fork Wildcat Creek drainage area which would allow the Clinton Co. SWCD, with help from surrounding counties, to apply for additional grant funds to cover the installation of conservation practices in critical areas across the South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed. If you would like to find out more about how you can help please contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.



## September S. Fork Wildcat Meeting Rescheduled

The location of the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting that was originally scheduled from 2-4pm at the Clinton County Extension Office has been moved. The meeting will now take place at Camp Cullom, north of Frankfort on County Road 200 North, just east of Mulberry-Jefferson Rd. The meeting will be held at the same scheduled time but will be preceded by a lunch cookout starting at 1pm. Hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, and drinks will be served with a chance to enjoy some informal discussion on the South Fork Wildcat Creek

Watershed or take advantage of trails and activities at Camp Cullom, one of the largest publically-accessible blocks of natural area in the watershed. Then participate in the originally scheduled Steering Committee to provide comments on upcoming events, offerings, and content of the South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed Management Plan. For more information on the meeting please contact Ben Reinhart at the Clinton Co. SWCD.



## S. Fork Wildcat Cleanup II Scheduled

*By Ben Reinhart, SWCD Resource Conservation Specialist*

Last year's Salvage the South Fork cleanup was a hit! Tons and tons of trash, debris, and junk were removed from the South Fork Wildcat Creek and I for one went home extremely impressed at how much a focused group of volunteers can achieve in a single effort. It was a very good feeling know that others were also committed to protecting our local treasures.

The South Fork Wildcat Creek, one of only a handful of waters listed as part of Indiana's Scenic River System, a designated State Canoe Trail, and recognized for its outstanding environmental, recreational, and scenic importance, is truly a local treasure worth protecting. Currently, the Clinton Co. Soil & Water Conservation District, with guidance from a local Steering Committee made up of numerous local stakeholders and

partners, is developing a comprehensive Watershed Management Plan for 250 square miles of the South Fork Wildcat Creek drainage area. The South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed Management Plan



looks to identify water quality issues throughout the watershed and develop an action plan to begin addressing those concerns. As part of this planning effort, the Steering Committee is hosting another cleanup this fall to continue the good work that

was accomplished last year. With the hope of establishing a long-term annual cleanup on the South Fork Wildcat Creek, the Steering Committee will host the 2011 stream cleanup on Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Participants will be

asked to pre-register with the Clinton Co. SWCD and check-in on the day of the cleanup will start at 8am. The Steering Committee has identified the stretch of water between S.R. 75 and S.R. 39 as the target of this year's cleanup efforts. A planning and strategy meeting was held at the Clinton Co. SWCD office on

Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> to begin arranging details for the event. Anyone who may be interested in helping plan this cleanup is encouraged to attend future planning sessions; no prior experience necessary.

## A New Online Tool Helps Indiana Farmers Select Cover Crops

A new online tool to help farmers decide which cover crops will benefit their row crop rotation is now available in Indiana.

Purdue University and the Midwest Cover Crops Council teamed up to release the MCCC Cover Crop Decision Tool, which uses consolidated cover crop information by state to assist farmers in making cover crop selections at the county level.

Developing information for each state were university researchers, Extension educators, Natural Resources Conservation Service personnel, state departments of agriculture personnel, crop advisers, seed suppliers and farmers. Purdue agronomy professors Eileen Kladviko and Keith Johnson contributed to the project.

The MCCC hopes the cover crop selector tool will encourage the adoption of cover

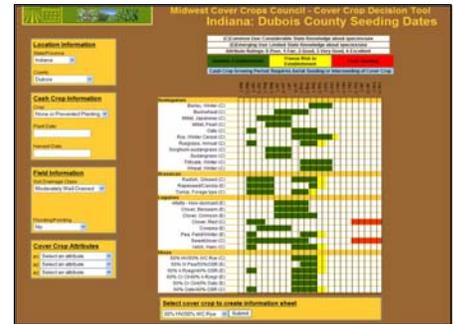
crops by providing the information and decision making help necessary for farmers to successfully integrate cover crops into their cropping systems,” Kladviko said.

Users of the tool select their state or province and county. They can also give information on their cash crops, including planting and harvest dates, field information such as the soil drainage class, artificial drainage or flooding, and desired cover crop benefits.

Designed to be user friendly, the tool allows users to immediately see how their input changes their cover crop options. Users can generate an information sheet for a selected cover crop that provides additional information and references relevant to application within the state or province.

A Natural Resources Conservation

Service Innovation Grant, Michigan State University’s Project Green—Generating Research and Extension to meet Economic and Environmental Needs—and the Great Lakes Regional Water Program funded the project.



Check out the new tool at:  
<http://mcccdev.anr.msu.edu>

## Most “Unwanted” Invasive Plants in Indiana

Purple loosestrife, known for its beautiful purple flowers was introduced to North America in the early 1800’s as an ornamental and medicinal plant, it is now found in 47 states and most of Canada.

Purple loosestrife will grow on edges of rivers, lakes, sloughs, ditches, streams and all other wet sites. Seeds will germinate in late spring or early summer. Of the millions of seeds that are produced annually per plant approximately 60-70% are viable. Seeds will remain dormant for many years. Water, animals, humans and boats all aid in dispersal of the seeds and the rapid invasion of new sites.

In optimum growing conditions, one small isolated patch of purple loosestrife can spread to cover an aquatic site in only one growing season. It crowds out native vegetation, commonly forming

monotypic stands. When diversity is reduced, native wildlife is displaced. Purple loosestrife does not provide adequate cover for animals associated with wetlands, nor does it provide a food source. The plant is capable of choking waterways and almost eliminating open water habitat.

The best time to identify and control purple loosestrife in late June to early August. This is when the plant is flowering and is easily recognizable but has not yet gone to seed.

Purple loosestrife is a perennial that grows from a large taproot with rhizomes. Stems can reach a height of ten feet. Leaves are whorled or opposite on the stem. They are lance-shaped with smooth edges. Each flower has five to six, pink to purple petals with yellow centers. Is sometimes confused with fireweed, swamp loosestrife, and blue

vervain. Control methods include digging and hand pulling when the plants are young. Another method is to cut the flower spikes before they have a chance to seed.

Alternatives: Dense blazing star, wild bergamot, cardinal flower or sweet joe-ye-weed.

***In Indiana it is illegal to buy, sell or plant purple loosestrife in all forms (variety, species, horticultural variety or cultivar).***



## Hoosier Riverwatch Volunteer Stream Monitoring Workshop

Learn basic water testing techniques at a Hoosier Riverwatch workshop scheduled for September 10, 2011 at Camp George C. Cullom. This workshop will introduce citizens and educators to water quality monitoring utilizing hands-on habitat, chemical, and biological assessment methods. Participants gain experience and skills in the use of chemical monitoring kits and aquatic insect collection and identification. Activities are held both inside and outdoors. After completion of this training, participants

become "Certified Volunteer Monitors" and are qualified to submit data to the statewide volunteer stream monitoring database. Any interested adult or high school age student is welcome to attend. Participants in previous workshops are also welcome to attend and refresh their knowledge.

Hoosier Riverwatch topics and activities are correlated to Indiana's Academic Standards for Science and educators may receive CRUs for

attending a workshop. Also, after successfully completing the workshop, individuals that work for schools, non-profits, and government agencies may be eligible to apply for a Monitoring Equipment Package of testing supplies and materials.

The workshop will take place from 8:30 AM to 4:00 pm. The workshop is free but pre-registration is required! For more information or to register, Leah Harden at 765-659-1223 extension or email [leah.harden@in.nacdn.net](mailto:leah.harden@in.nacdn.net)

## Financial Assistance Available to Plug and Cap Abandoned Water Wells

The Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District has been awarded a Clean Water Indiana grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to provide a cost-share incentive to rural landowners who have identified and would like to plug and cap abandoned water wells on their property. The SWCD may provide cost-share at a rate of 75% of

actual costs up to \$500.00 per well. Decommissioning of the well may not begin until an application has been received and approved by the SWCD Board of Supervisors.

Abandoned water wells provide a direct conduit to groundwater, which is the source of drinking water for virtually all homes in Clinton County. These wells present a potentially

serious threat to groundwater quality and some cases may present a physical safety hazard where a child or pet may fall into a well. Plugging an abandoned well can eliminate these risks on your property.

For more information about this cost-share program contact the SWCD office at 765-659-1223 ext. 3.

## Wabash River/Wildcat Creek Monitoring Blitz—volunteers wanted!

Volunteer to be part of the third annual Spring Wabash Sampling Blitz on September 16th! Join 250 volunteers to collect a snapshot of the water quality of the Wabash River, Wildcat Creek, and their tributaries. Since the fall of 2009, volunteers throughout the Region of the Great Bend of the Wabash River watershed volunteered each spring and fall to complete a snapshot of water quality throughout the watershed. This spring, we expanded to include sample sites within the Wildcat Creek watershed. Volunteers monitor temperature, water cloudiness (turbidity), nutrient levels, and pathogen concentrations. Volunteer with a friend, your family, or alone and we'll assign you a partner. Volunteer to sample your local stream, your favorite canoe spot, or try a new stream within the Wabash River or Wildcat Creek watersheds.

How it works? Each volunteer group is

assigned to a staging or starting location. Staging locations are assigned as sampling slots are available on a first volunteer, first assigned basis. Arrive with your partners to be assigned a group of sampling sites – sites are assigned based on location choice and selected access difficulty ranging from easy access (walk right in sites) to where you'll need to channel your inner mountain goat (difficult). Our staging location volunteers will provide all sample collection equipment and instructions, maps, and driving directions. They will not provide you with waders, boots, dry clothes, bug spray, ivy off, or food.

Staging locations are located north of Greater Lafayette at Beck Agricultural Center, South of Greater Lafayette at the Tippecanoe County SWCD office (18<sup>th</sup> and Veteran's Memorial Parkway), west in Independence (Fountain/Warren

County), east in Russiaville and at Cullom Nature Center near Rossville.

What now? Don your waders or knee boots and spend approximately two hours wading four stream sample sites. At each site, you will need to identify an appropriate access point. After entering the stream, wade to the center and fill your provided sample bottles. Then, measure stream temperature and water cloudiness with the provided thermometer and transparency tube. Once complete, photograph the stream and any unique or interesting features and travel to your next site. Once you've sampled all of your streams, return to your staging location to filter your samples for laboratory analysis, measure water quality with provided test strips, and download your photos.

Want more information? Visit [www.wabashriver.net/wabash-sampling-blitz](http://www.wabashriver.net/wabash-sampling-blitz) or call the SWCD at 765-659-1223 x 3.

**CLINTON COUNTY SOIL AND  
WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**860 S. Prairie Ave., Suite 1  
Frankfort, IN 46041  
765-659-1223 extension 3**

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Frankfort, IN 46041

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Ben Reinhart, SWCD

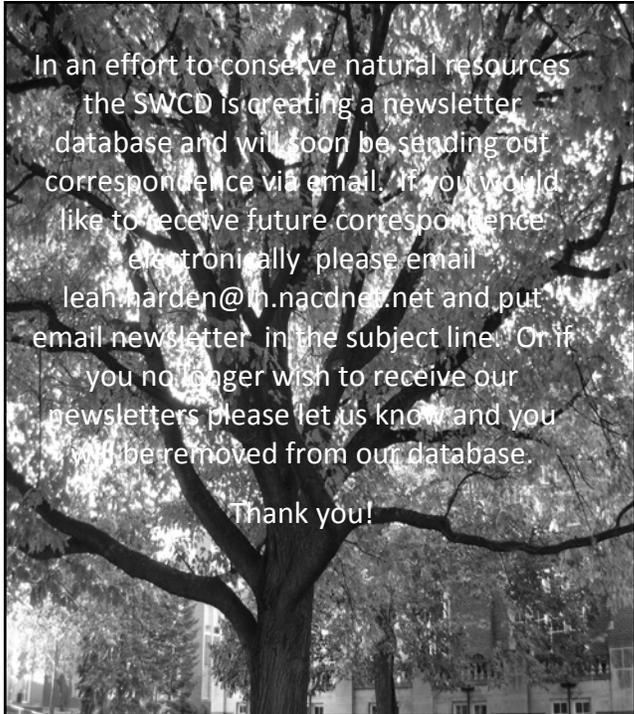
**We're on the web!**

**[clintonswcd.org](http://clintonswcd.org)**

**New Website for the South Fork Wildcat  
Creek**

**Watershed Partnership**

The South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed Partnership will soon have their new website up and running which will give local stakeholders a direct connection to what's going on in the South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed. This new site will be a part of the existing Clinton County SWCD website and can be accessed at [www.clintonswcd.org/south](http://www.clintonswcd.org/south). The South Fork Wildcat Creek Watershed Partnership website will include interesting facts and educational links regarding watersheds and water quality as well as provide a central location for stakeholders to access up-to-date information on watershed management plan drafts and local events.



In an effort to conserve natural resources the SWCD is creating a newsletter database and will soon be sending out correspondence via email. If you would like to receive future correspondence electronically please email [leah.harden@in.nacdnr.net](mailto:leah.harden@in.nacdnr.net) and put "email newsletter" in the subject line. Or if you no longer wish to receive our newsletters please let us know and you will be removed from our database.

Thank you!