

2017 annual report

DUBOIS COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2017 Soil & Water Conservation Accomplishments

by Judi Brown

Thanks to great teamwork, the Dubois County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) wrapped up another successful year in 2017, our 73rd year!

The Dubois County SWCD is a subdivision of Indiana state government, and works to reduce soil erosion and promote clean water. The SWCD identifies natural resource concerns, and provides technical, financial, and informational assistance to conserve our resources for future generations. To fulfill its role, the Dubois County SWCD partners with local government agencies, citizens' groups, and individuals.

SWCD leadership is provided by a board of five local residents called supervisors. In 2017, the supervisors were Brenda Sermersheim, Alan Smock, Glenn Menke, John Jackle, and Glenn Goepfner.

The continued financial support of the Dubois County Commissioners and Council allows for a qualified and experienced SWCD staff. They are Judi Brown, Executive Director, Radius Weisman, Technical Specialist, Patti Schroeder, Program Assistant, and Melissa Ruschau, Project Manager of the VUJC Land Stewardship Initiative. The newest staff member is Resource Specialist Justin Bary, who joined the SWCD early in 2017. Watershed Coordinator Julie Loehr, funded via an EPA 319 grant, rounds out the SWCD staff.

The SWCD receives funding through several sources. A major source is an appropriation from Indiana State Gov-

ernment, in addition to supplemental funds from the State in the form of grants. Dubois County Government also provides operating funds to the SWCD.

A significant partner to the SWCD is the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The NRCS provides the SWCD with office space and supplies, including computer equipment. Further, the NRCS offers the opportunity to earn grant funds in exchange for assistance with the Farm Bill Program implementation.

In 2017, SWCD staff assisted in the creation of 30+ new EQIP and CSP contracts for County landowners. Through these contracts, 2,381 acres were impacted, and \$322,316.11 was allocated for improvements on this land. A total of \$832,705.86 was paid to landowners for the completion of their practices in 2017.

The SWCD also helps to administer contracts from previous years, in addition to the applications for 2018. The improvements, completed by the landowners, will decrease soil erosion, improve water quality, and improve the soil health on the acres involved. Other benefits of these improvements are the addition of cash flow to the local economy through the hiring of contractors and the purchase of materials. At the end of the day, these improvements will improve the farmland, help provide food and fiber for county residents, and through the taxes paid by the landowner, help the bottom line for Dubois County government.

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