



Sycamore Trail Blazer



A Publication of Sycamore Trails Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

Serving Clay, Fountain, Montgomery, Owen, Parke, Putnam, Sullivan, Vermillion & Vigo Counties in West Central Indiana

(This newsletter is available on our website to read or download in color .pdf format.)

www.sycamoretrails.org

Spring 2006

The Invasives Are Coming!

*(and so is a workshop
on how to deal with them)*

Just what are “invasives”?

Invasives are plants or animals/insects which are usually non-native to North America and which displace native species. Invasive species affect each of our lives, and all regions of the U.S. Stimulated by the rapid global expansion of trade, transport, and travel, invasive species and their costs to society are increasing at an alarming rate.

Both the Sycamore Trails RC&D Education and Forestry Committees are making efforts to combat these threats.

Our Forestry Committee has had extensive discussions on the top eight “industry killers”--invasive plant species especially detrimental to Hoosier woodlands. They have included in their list: Bush and Japanese Honeysuckle, Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) Asian Bittersweet, Garlic Mustard, Kudzu, Japanese Stilt Grass, and Multiflora Rose.

They have met with Ron Rathfon of Purdue, who is focusing research on Bush Honeysuckle, as well as Ellen Jacquart of The Nature Conservancy to discuss invasives in general. The Forestry Committee has plans to collect educational information for landowners to help them become aware of problems they may not even know they have, before it gets beyond remediation.

Our Education Committee has planned an “*Invasive Plant & Insects Workshop*” for **September 30, 2006 at Turkey Run State Park**. Collaborators on the workshop include Purdue University Cooperative Extension, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, IDNR/ Turkey Run State Park, Friends of Turkey Run & Shades State Parks, and Parke/Vermillion Master Gardeners.

The day will include presentations from

- Ellen Jacquart of The Nature Conservancy on invasive plants to avoid
- Jodie Ellis of Purdue on invasive insects;
- Keith Ruble, Superintendent of Vigo County Park

& Recreation Dept., on Bush Honeysuckle and methods of control.

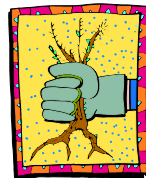
- After lunch, the State Park will explain their invasive plant control program, including an optional field tour of the invasive species affecting Turkey Run.

Advanced Credit for Indiana Master Gardeners is offered for this training, as well as PARP Credits and Commercial Applicator Category 2 - Forest Pest Control CCH Credits.

Pre-registration is required, and the size of the workshop is limited. Cost will be \$20.00 per participant, which includes lunch and publications. (Additional fees for Applicator credits).

If you are interested in attending, contact the office and a registration form will be sent to you when it is finalized.

A New Committee? - There is talk of forming a new Committee under the Sycamore Trails RC&D Council whose focus would be the invasives issue. If you have an interest and would like to investigate this opportunity further, contact the Sycamore Trails office.



Help for Abandoned Mine Lands

Wet weather can reveal old mine subsidences and sags in the fields and wood lots across our counties. This is the time to pay very careful attention to these areas as you work the ground in preparation for crops. Some of these holes encountered may be fifteen to twenty feet in depth and width. A farm implement in one of these is not a pretty sight, even if no one gets hurt. Damaged equipment could be very expensive; injuries can be disastrous.

In addition, highwall failure and water seeps increase with the rain. Old haul roads leach more acid water and erosion increases in old gob piles.

If you are a landowner in the Sycamore Trails counties and have old mine property that has problems you would like to see addressed, the Sycamore Trails RC&D Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Partners for Reclamation program would be glad to assess these sites to determine if the program might assist you in a solution for the problems. Contact the RC&D office for assistance.

Submitted by Mike Wilkinson, Project Mgr.

Down the Trail...

~ Dates below are subject to change -
Always check our website calendar for current info ~

July, 2006

- 10 6:00 PM - Forestry Committee meeting - RC&D office, Greencastle
- 11 6:00 PM - Land Trust Committee meeting - Brazil USDA Service Center
- 11 7:00 PM - Fish & Wildlife Committee meeting - Brazil USDA Service Center
- 31 6:00 PM - RC&D Council Board Meeting at the Wallace Highway 341 Café in Fountain County

August, 2006

- 7 6:00 PM - Forestry Committee meeting scheduled
- 9-20 Indiana State Fair
- 24 Putnam County Conservation Expo, co-sponsored by Putnam County SWCD, Indiana Conservation Tillage Initiative & Sycamore Trails RC&D
- 25 9:00 AM - Education Committee meeting - RC&D office, Greencastle
- 28 10:00 AM - Indiana League of RC&D Councils - Indianapolis/NRCS State Office

September, 2006

- 8-9 Advanced Prescribed Burn training - see article on Page 4.
- 23 Fins, Feathers, & Forest workshop - see article on Page 4.
- 28 Environmental Cleanup Precautions workshop - see article to right
- 30 Invasive Plants & Insects Workshop at Turkey Run State Park (see article on page 1)

October, 2006

- 30 6:00 PM - RC&D Council Board Meeting in Owen County

Indiana Master Naturalist Coming to Montgomery County this Fall

Jim Luzar of Montgomery County Cooperative Extension has invited our Education Committee to co-sponsor our second Master Naturalist course this year, sometime after Labor Day.

The Indiana Master Naturalist program can provide you with many hands-on opportunities to learn about our Hoosier natural resources. It also provides a way for you to share that knowledge, along with your life experiences, through volunteer service.

Details will be finalized soon, so if you are interested, please contact the Sycamore Trails office, and we will forward information to you as it is available.

Workshop on Precautions for Environmental Clean-up Projects

Groups will often adopt a road-side or stream, or a community park to help clean-up the trash that accumulates.



These days, there can be hazards in the trash collected, especially remains of methamphetamine labs. A workshop is being offered on Thursday evening, September 28th, to help train these group leaders

(Scouts, 4-H, Community Service organizations, etc.) on what to watch out for when doing these types of projects.

West Central Solid Waste District has asked our Education Committee to help sponsor the workshop, to be held at the Putnam County Courthouse Annex. Speakers from law enforcement and the WCSWD will offer insights, and prizes will be given. There will be a nominal fee for the workshop. Contact the RC&D office for more info.

17th Annual Conservation Expo August 24 in Putnam County

Putnam County will be hosting their 17th annual Conservation Expo on August 24, 2006 beginning at 3 PM and lasting until 6 PM. Sponsors include the Putnam County Soil & Water Conservation District, Indiana Conservation Tillage Initiative, and Sycamore Trails RC&D.

The hosts for this event are Cedar View Farm. This farm gives a state-of-the-art look at long term no-till, manure and nitrogen management. Soil quality, cover crop management, and pest management will also be addressed. We will have discussion on cost-saving strategies for energy management. Take a new look at crop rotation with utilization of narrow row corn. A large number of continuous no-till acres have been set aside for conservation demonstrations. Special thanks to this year's hosts for their outstanding cooperation.

In addition to the tour stops, there will be commercial and machinery exhibits. We will conclude the day with a complimentary dinner served at 6:30 PM with time to visit exhibitor booths following the meal. Please contact the Putnam County SWCD office at 765-653-7454 for more information.

Submitted by Sue Crafton, Putnam SWCD

Forestry Committee News

Annual Award Banquet - This year's banquet was held on Friday, March 17 at the United Church of Christ in Centerpoint, IN. Keynote speaker Scott Morlock of the U.S. Geological Survey Office in Indianapolis, talked on forests and water quality.

Top honor for achievement in woodland management for 2005 was awarded to Dr. Beverly Pestel and Bill Cary, who own woods in Vigo County. Second-place honors went to Burch and Mars Harlan for their work in several woodlands in Vigo County. Certificates of recognition were also awarded to Don Grumme of Putnam County and Larry Nash of Sullivan County.



Bev Pestel (left) receiving top award plaque from IDNR District Forester Jeremiah Lemmons. She also received a hand-made wooden bucket, crafted by Keith Ruble.

Committee Assists Fountain County SWCD

Portland Arch in Fountain County is the site for an annual school field day sponsored in part by the Fountain County Soil & Water Conservation District. A request came to Sycamore Trails Forestry Committee to be presenters for the forestry stations along the tour. Brian Gilmartin and Raoul Moore volunteered a day each to educate the students on forestry issues.

Thanks to Raoul Moore (L) and Brian Gilmartin (R) for volunteering their time in Fountain County at Portland Arch Field Days.



Bob & Betty Miller Win IFWOA Deam Award

Congratulations to Bob Miller (Sycamore Trails Board Member and long-time Forestry Committee activist) and wife Betty for winning the 2005

Deam Award from the Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association. A Deam award judging team toured the properties of the five district finalists to determine the winner of the 2005 prize.



Bob and Betty Miller (seated) with son Bill and District Forester Jeremiah Lemmons

Judges included Carl Diehl, Deam Award chairman and IFWOA board member, Ron Rathfon, Purdue Extension Forester, Bob Koenig, forester and former board member, and Tim Martin, Indiana Division of Forestry.

After judging, the Millers were selected as the winner. They received a plaque, property sign, and a check for \$100.

- ✦ Nominated by Jeremiah Lemmons, District Forester
- ✦ 362 acres in Clay, Greene, Parke Counties, managed since 1992
- ✦ 331 native forest
- ✦ 21 acres planted hardwoods
- ✦ 10 acres wildlife plantings
- ✦ Classified Forest and Tree Farm
- ✦ Past IFWOA Director
- ✦ Active member of Sycamore Trails RC&D Forestry Committee, including past chair and received Sycamore Trails RC&D Forest Stewardship Award
- ✦ Hosted two forestry field days and has attended many workshops, field days, and training sessions
- ✦ Manages for timber and land investment, personal enjoyment, and environmental benefits
- ✦ He and son Bill enjoy doing TSI and trail maintenance

Fish & Wildlife Committee Spearheads Cooperative Conservation

Sycamore Trails' very active Fish & Wildlife Committee recently spearheaded a clean-up day at Fairbanks Landing Fish and Wildlife Area. Located in Sullivan and Vigo counties, this is a relatively new 8,000 acre recreational area, now managed by the Indiana Dept. of Natural Resource (IDNR)-Division of Fish and Wildlife. It was long an area where illegal dumping occurred on a regular basis, but now that the area is heavily used by outdoor enthusiasts, it was time to do some major tidying up. John Gettinger, board member of Sycamore Trails from Sullivan County, was a volunteer worker at the clean-up. He expressed confidence that "Once we get this cleaned up, the dumping will stop."

This effort brought 58 local citizens, ages 7 to 73, together to clean up this piece of public ground on Saturday, March 4, 2006. Work teams included folks from Sycamore Trails RC&D Fish & Wildlife Committee, Sullivan County American Indian Council, Life in Fairbanks Township (LIFT), Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission, Indiana Horse Council, Outdoor Obsessions Hunting Club, IDNR, and Indiana Michigan Power (I&M). After an invigorating morning of cleaning up 150 cubic yards of trash, the volunteers were served lunch courtesy of I&M, prepared by the LIFT crew.

In addition to the volunteer work, a number of organiza-

tions made significant contributions to this cleanup. The Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service staff in Sullivan assisted in the recruitment of local volunteers and support. The IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife contributed equipment for the removal of large discarded items. Sycamore Ridge Landfill and Jamax Corporation provided assistance for the disposal of all materials collected from the area. Indiana Michigan Power, owner of the property, provided financial



support for supplies and lunch.

Ron Ronk, IDNR Property Manager at Fairbanks Landing, considered the day "a huge success." He stated, "The property appearance is greatly improved, benefiting our many property users, and more importantly discouraging additional dumping."

This great cooperative effort will provide a cleaner and safer environment in which to enjoy the natural resources in this Hoosier haven!



George Seketa (L) of our Fish & Wildlife Committee presents plaque of appreciation to Jim Butcher of Indiana Michigan Power

"Prescribed Fire" Training Offered

On June 3, 24 people completed "basic" training on Wildland Fire Management and Suppression at Fowler Park Barn in Vigo County. This qualifies them to take the Advanced course which will be sponsored by our Fish & Wildlife Committee, and IDNR on Sept 8 and 9. The first day will be classroom instruction at the Sullivan County 4-H building. Weather permitting, the second day will be an actual burn on a property to be determined. If you are interested in attending, contact the office.

Get Smart & Celebrate National Hunting & Fishing Day Sept. 23rd

Learn what you can do to promote Fish & Wildlife Habitat on your property at a "Feathers, Fins & Forestry Field Day" on Saturday, Sept 23, 2006. Conservation Professionals will offer an educational, informal, walking tour of properties in Sullivan County, highlighting a variety of fish, forest, and wildlife management practices.

Sponsors include our Fish & Wildlife and Forestry Committees, Purdue's Dept of Forestry & Natural Resources, IDNR Divisions of Fish & Wildlife and Forestry, and Sullivan County Chapter of Quail Unlimited. The workshop is free, and lunch will be provided - just bring a lawn chair! Contact the office for a flyer with details.

**Sycamore Trails RC&D Council
Board of Directors**

<u>County</u>	<u>Soil & Water Conservation District</u>	<u>Cooperative Extension Board</u>	<u>Board of County Commissioners</u>
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Vermillion	Arthur Mayes	Bill Hartman	Robert Yoder
Vigo	(vacant)	Steve Herbert	(vacant)
City of Terre Haute - Charlie Lee, <i>Secretary</i>		At Large - Dave Burns, <i>President</i>	
West Central Indiana Business Innovations - Bill Henderson			

Meet Your Board Members

Bill Henderson has joined our board representing West Central Indiana Business Innovations, one of our newest Committees. He has been married to wife Sandra for 25 years and they have two sons, Josh and Joey. Sandra was born in Iowa and Bill in Tennessee, but they met in Indiana and have lived in Montgomery County ever since, currently in Crawfordsville. Sandra runs the family business and Bill is Executive Director of Montgomery County Economic Development. Prior to that he was president of Plastic Innovations for six years.

He is serving as regional trustee of Ivy Tech Community College, is on the Montgomery County Sewer District Development Board, and is a Character Counts in Montgomery County board member.

His hobbies are music and adventure hiking, with two summits of Mt. Kilimanjaro, one Mt. Fuji summit, one Pike’s Peak summit and two Mt. Washington summits.

Glen Summers represents the Parke County Purdue Cooperative Extension. He is married to Lisa, and has two children, Sarah and Ian. Glen is a self-employed carpenter/woodworker/forester. He is also active in the Friends of Turkey Run & Shades State Parks group.

Jim Coffing has been appointed as the representative from the Fountain County Soil & Water Conservation District. He is married to Lynda, and has two daughters, Sarah and Stephanie. He is a self-employed drainage contractor. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, hunting, and maple syrup production.

**STRC&D Dry Hydrant Work
Featured in National Publication**

Sycamore Trails RC&D Council was honored to have its dry fire hydrant program recently featured in a report funded by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Research Foundation. “Regional Strategies for Environmental Stewardship: Successfully Merging Environmental Protection with Regional Development” highlights efforts of regional development organizations across the nation to promote economic development and environmental sustainability. The report may be viewed on-line at www.nado.org/pubs/misc

Our dry hydrant program, funded by a \$60,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service, runs through Fall 2006. The program requires a 50% match in value, which is normally met by assigning a value to the volunteer labor for the installation of the hydrants. Local fire departments need to be brought in as partners in the planning and installation of these facilities.

Non-pressurized (“dry”) hydrants can save time, fuel, property, and even lives in areas that are not served by rural water lines. They also do not require treated water, reducing the load on water treatment plants.

This grant will soon be drawing to a close. If you are interested in installing dry hydrants in your county, contact the Sycamore Trails office soon.



Testing a newly installed hydrant in Owen County

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Our Vision: *Local citizens cooperating to maintain a healthy, vibrant, and diverse environment and economy in the Sycamore Trails RC&D area.*

Our Mission: *To motivate, assist, enable, and coordinate local citizens in the conservation and development of natural, human, and economic resources.*

All meetings of the Sycamore Trails RC&D Council are open to the public. Anyone who wishes to attend, suggest projects, or assist with current activities will be welcome. For assistance with new projects or activities, please contact an RC&D Council Board member to have your name and project placed on the agenda.