Silver Creek Droplets

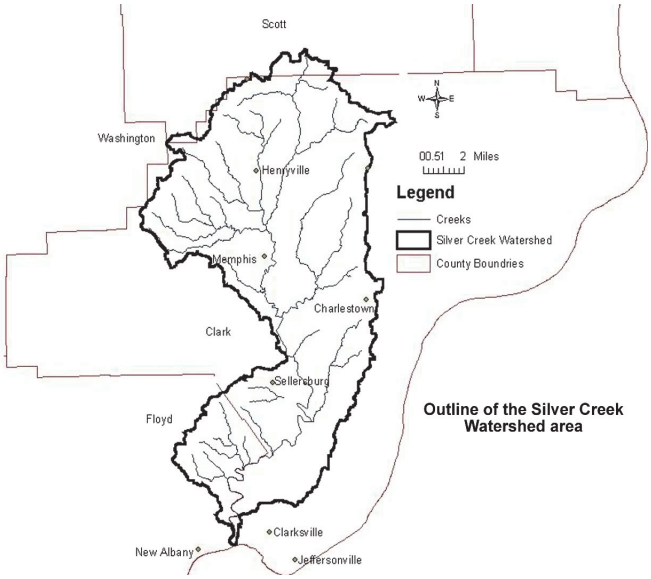
Volume 1 Issue 1
Spring 2011

Clark County SWCD Awarded an EPA 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grant for Silver Creek Project

In October of 2010, the Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded an EPA 319 Nonpoint Source Management Grant for the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project. The grant was requested and obtained to implement the Silver Creek Watershed Management Plan, which was completed in 2009. The grant funds awarded were $405,995.00 and include matching funds of $270,663.00 for a project total of $676,658.00.

Through this grant, residents of the watershed community will be encouraged to implement water quality improvements through the installation of Best Management Practices. Public education and outreach activities will be conducted to raise awareness of water quality issues and action will be taken to address those issues within the Silver Creek Watershed.

A healthy watershed is the ultimate goal. Check out our Events and Opportunities section within this newsletter to find out how you can participate in or support this project!



Inside this issue:

SWCD Welcomes New Watershed Coordinator

The new Watershed Coordinator for the Silver Creek Implementation Project is Renae Smith. Renae, a graduate of North Dakota State University, holds a B.S. in Natural Resources Management. Renae joins the SWCD after having worked for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a Plant Health Specialist. Renae is currently residing in Louisville, KY.

As the Watershed Coordinator, Renae will guide the SWCD in implementing the watershed Management Plan for the Silver Creek Watershed. The SWCD Board of Supervisors welcomes Renae and looks forward to working with her to complete the implementation phase of this project.

Renae may be contacted at 812-256-2330, ext. 110, or via email at renae.smith@in.nacdnet.net

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement number C9975482-10 to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.

Getting to Know Silver Creek Watershed

Beginning just to the north of the Clark County line in Scott County, Silver Creek flows south through Clark County to its confluence with the Ohio River located in Floyd County; the majority of the watershed lies within Clark County. Silver Creek watershed is part of the larger Silver-Little KY watershed that encompasses the majority of Clark County. The watershed includes approximately 97,000 total acres of widely diverse land use and soil types. Of these acres, about 28% is urban/suburban land, 36% forest, 25% crop and livestock; the remainder is in miscellaneous use. The existing farmland is comprised of a mixture of average (80-100 acres) and small (<25 ac) tracts. Many of these tracts contain horses or cattle on pastures or small lots with some water runoff concerns.

Soils in the watershed vary from frequently flooded alluvial sites to windblown loess upland areas. According to the Clark Soil Survey, over 90 % of the soils in the watershed are problematic for onsite waste disposal due to restricted permeability, depth to bedrock, flooding, or depth to saturated zones. These conditions, when combined with poor system maintenance, often lead to failure of septic systems.

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) Unified Watershed Assessment (UWA) characterized this watershed as having level 4 (of 5) concerns related to the presence of critical biological resources, as well as vulnerable aquifers, while having a high density of septic systems. In addition, the Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS) for the Silver-Little Kentucky Watershed confirms these concerns, and also identifies stream bank erosion and channel stability as a major concern for this watershed. There are multiple tributaries identified as impaired within the watershed.

Upcoming Watershed Events and Opportunities:

Do You Want to Get Your Feet Wet?
Become a certified Hoosier River Watcher. A Riverwatch training session will held in the Silver Creek Watershed to train volunteers to help monitor water quality throughout the watershed or even in your own backyard. Trainees will be invited and encouraged to participate during 2 biannual volunteer monitoring events throughout the Silver Creek Watershed. Space is limited so call for information on the date and location if you are interested in participating.

Do You Want to Be Part of Guiding the Solution?
The Silver Creek Steering Committee is a group of volunteers who work together with coordinating agencies to ensure that the implementation of the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project reflects the ideas expressed in the watershed plan. Committee members are vital to the improvement of the watershed. The group meets at least quarterly and more often as needed. Call for more details if you would like to become an important part of the improvement project.

Are You Interested in Digging in the Dirt to Help PLANT New Ideas Into Your Watershed?
A demonstration rain garden is being installed in The Town of Clarksville's Lapping Park. Rain gardens help reduce water pollution by collecting and filtering rain from storm events. Help is needed in the following areas; plant donations, labor for planting, design, and education at the event. Call for more information.

Now Accepting Demonstration Site Location Proposals
The Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project is looking for a location to install a demonstration site to showcase livestock exclusion from a stream and alternative watering systems. The installed practice will be 100% funded (up to the allowed dollar amount) and must meet plan criteria. We are now accepting proposals; please contact us for more information.

What's the Point of Non-Point Source Pollution?

When we don't know exactly where pollution comes from, we call it non-point source (NPS) pollution. Nonpoint source pollution is the largest water quality problem in the United States today. NPS pollution results from rainfall or snowmelt contacting with and carrying contaminants over and through the ground, eventually entering our creeks, rivers, lakes and even our underground drinking water sources.

Examples of non-point source pollutants include fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides as well as oil, grease and other chemicals. When sediment is not properly managed from construction sites, crop and forest lands, or eroding stream banks, it's considered NPS pollution too! Bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems are also forms of non-point source pollution. Because nonpoint source pollution can come from so many places, we all can help prevent it.

Everyone can do their part to help prevent NPS pollution at home. Carefully using fertilizers and pesticides on our lawns and gardens is a good start. We should all keep our cars in good working condition. If we fix oil leaks and are careful not to spill things like antifreeze, we can keep these pollutants out of our water. Protecting storm drains can also help and we can do this by keeping leaves and litter away from them and by keeping our pet waste picked up. Maintaining our home septic systems by having them regularly pumped out can also protect the quality of our water. Agricultural land owners can install Best Management Practices (BMP's) to prevent non point source pollution. Conservation practices like cover crops, riparian forested buffers, stream bank stabilization, livestock exclusion or alternative watering systems are just a few examples of

Best Management Practice - Forested riparian buffers protect water quality.
Photo courtesy USDA-NRCS

BMP's that protect our water bodies from a variety of contaminants.

Our everyday actions can have a huge impact on what gets washed into our local creeks. By doing our part to protect Silver Creek and the Ohio River, we are doing our part to improve water quality in Indiana and for those who live downstream.

The Silver Creek Watershed covers three counties: Clark, Floyd, and Scott

Here's a Drip Tip For You!

Did you know that improper Nutrient Management on the farm and in your yard not only costs you extra money but can also pollute our watershed. Over applied nutrients not utilized by plants have the potential to leach into groundwater or enter nearby surface water via overland runoff. Too much nitrogen or phosphorus can impair water quality by decreasing the levels of oxygen available to fish and other stream life. By properly applying fertilizer we can protect water quality and our bottom line.

Cost-share dollars will be available (see the article on the last page) soon to conduct proper soil testing to develop a proper nutrient management plan for your farm.

Check out our next newsletter for more ***Drip Tips*** that will help protect our **watershed** and your **wallet**!

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For additional information or details on the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project or this newsletter contact:
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Cost-Share Program Funds Available Soon

The Silver Creek Watershed Improvement project will be providing agricultural and urban landowners with cost-share dollars to implement best management practices (BMPs) on their land that improve water quality throughout the Silver Creek Watershed. But what are BMPs (also known as conservation practices) and how can they help improve our water quality? BMPs are effective and practical methods which prevent or reduce the movement of sediment, nutrients, pesticides and other pollutants from the land to surface or ground water. See the article "What's the Point of Non-Point Source Pollution?" which discusses the effects of non point source pollution on our watershed and tips on how it can be reduced.

Best Management Practice - Excluding livestock from streambank access
Photo courtesy of Prairie Hills Resource Conservation

The cost-share program will provide **60% match** of the allowed actual costs of implementing approved BMPs. Technical assistance will also be provided. Some of the practices that may be funded include; *livestock exclusion from streams, cover crops, streambank stabilization, riparian buffers and more*. Visit www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com for more examples. If you are an agricultural producer, homeowner, organization or entity and are located in the Silver Creek Watershed district, you may be eligible to apply. See the map of the Silver Creek Watershed on the cover page.

Mike Johnson, a resource specialist team leader with Indiana State Department of Agriculture, states "Because this cost-share program is only available to those in the Silver Creek Watershed boundaries, it is not as competitive as some of the other programs out there. This may be the best opportunity to get funded for implementing conservation practices on your land."

For more information about the cost share program contact Renae Smith at 812-256-2330 ext 110 or renae.smith@in.nacdnet.net.