



# Silver Creek Droplets

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## Last Newsletter of Project

This edition of Silver Creek Droplets will be the last one produced for the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project. Grant funds for educational activities have been expended, however cost-share dollars still remain. For more information on applying for cost-share assistance to install conservation practices on your land, please see the article on the back page of this newsletter. Project updates and information will continue to be posted on the web site [www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com](http://www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com).

## Funds Available to Assist With Pasture and Hay Re-Seedings

With the summer of 2012 behind us, thankfully, producers may want to evaluate their hay and pasture stands at this time. While the drought of the past summer nearly wiped-out many stands of grain crops, forage stands were severely impacted as well. However, late fall rains have caused these fields to "green-up" but, only after walking those fields can we determine if this "green-up" is desirable forage plants or just weeds.

This is a good time to check hay and pasture fields, evaluate stands, pull soil samples for testing and determine if stand improvements are needed. If stands are primarily grass species with a scattering of weeds, then renovation may be the

answer to your forage concerns. Just as the name suggests, "renovation" means to renew and improve stands.

Hay and pasture renovation usually involves suppressing the current stand (something the drought already did for us), applying lime and fertilizer as needed based on a current soil test, and planting a good forage legume like red or ladino clover. Some of the benefits of renovation include: higher forage yields, improved forage feeding values, nitrogen fixation by the legumes (thus reducing fertilizer costs), and providing more summer forage growth. After inspecting current forage stands it may be decided that these are so weak that a completely new forage seeding is more appropriate. Again, the benefits of adding legumes to the seeding mix will far out-weigh the actual costs.



Either way, now is an excellent time to evaluate stands, make lime and perhaps fertilizer applications, control troublesome weeds and make plans for the 2013 growing season. If property is in the Silver Creek Watershed, there are cost-share funds available through a federal water quality improvement grant that can assist you with up to 60% of the costs of re-seeding or renovating existing fields or establishing new fields.

Contact David Trotter at 812-256-2330 ext.110, or at [david.trotter@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:david.trotter@in.nacdnet.net) to learn more about these funds and practices. Producers can check-out the watershed improvement website at [mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com](http://mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com) for new posts about pasture renovation, pasture and hay seedings, forage management, cover crops, and upcoming educational/informational sessions about forages.

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## 2013 Stewardship Week Theme Announced

The National Association of Conservation Districts has announced the theme for its 2013 Stewardship Week celebration, April 25-May 5, 2013—**Where Does Your Water Shed?** Or, in other words, where does your water go after you are finished using it?

A **watershed** is the land that water flows across or under on its way to a stream, river, or lake. Landscape is made up of many interconnected basins or watersheds. Within each watershed, all water runs to the lowest point such as a stream, river, or lake. On its way, water travels over the surface and across farms, fields, forest lands, suburban lawns, and city streets; or it seeps into the soil and travels as groundwater. Large watersheds like the ones for the Mississippi River, Columbia River, and Chesapeake Bay are made up of many smaller watersheds across several states.

Watersheds come in many different shapes and sizes. A watershed can be affected by many different activities and events. Construction of cities and towns, farming, logging, and the application and disposal of many garden and household chemicals can affect the quantity and quality of water flowing from a watershed.

Everyone lives in a watershed, and we are a part of a watershed community. The animals, birds and fish are, too! People influence what happens in watersheds, good or bad, by how the natural resources – the soil, water, air, plants, and animals – are treated. The quantity and quality of water draining from a watershed are



dependent upon the climate, vegetation, soils, geology, and development of that watershed. Activities that change the vegetation and surface characteristics of some watersheds will affect the quantity and quality of water contributed to a stream. For example, a greater volume of water, perhaps of poorer quality, will flow from a parking lot than from a forest or pasture. This volume of water from a parking lot may result in increased flooding in a watershed because the greater volume exceeds the natural ability of the stream to transport the water. What happens in small watersheds, such as pollution, also affects the larger watersheds downstream.

There are three different types of watersheds:

**Underdeveloped watersheds** are drainage basins that have no development affecting the quality of quantity of water in that watershed.

These watersheds are primarily on public-owned lands in national forests, national parks, and wilderness areas. Underdeveloped watersheds provide scientists with areas to study the natural processes of a watershed.

**Planned Watersheds** are drainage basins that contain planned development.

Planning the development within a watershed requires consideration of the entire drainage basin. Planned actions consider the effect on the natural resources of the watershed and help preserve the quality and quantity of water flowing from the watershed. Actions such as controlling surface runoff and protecting stream channels help preserve the quality and quantity of water flowing from a watershed.

Limiting the number and type of structures on a flood plain is one method of preventing loss of property from floods. Placing parks, golf courses or farmland on a flood plain can reduce property loss caused by floods.

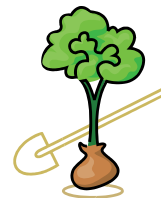
**Unplanned Watersheds** are drainage basins that do not contain planned development.

Unplanned development within a watershed has the potential for degradation of water quality and increased loss of property from flooding. Runoff from city streets improper farms and logging techniques, poor residential and industrial chemical disposal practices can all affect water quality. Locating homes and businesses on flood plains greatly increases the chance of damage from flooding. Levees or dams may need to be put in place to protect development already located on the flood plain.

The Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project is pleased to participate in this celebration. Educational materials will be available for schools and religious organizations in early 2013. Please contact the Clark County SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3, if you are interested in obtaining materials free of charge.

## SWCD Tree Sale Coming Soon

The Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will begin taking orders for its' Spring Tree Sale in late January 2013. Quality stock from Forrest Keeling Nursery, MO, will be offered. These trees are 3-gallon, Grade 1 (nursery stock) container trees. Perennial plants are also be offered in the sale, as well as Tree-Mate-O "Tree Success Kits" (tree support, guard, and stake), and wildlife nest boxes. For more information, or an order form, contact the Clark County SWCD office at 256-2330, ext. 3. Forms also available at [www.clarkswcd.org](http://www.clarkswcd.org).





## Sources of Nonpoint Source Pollution

Most nonpoint source pollution occurs as a result of runoff. When rain or melted snow moves over and through the ground, the water absorbs and assimilates any pollutants it comes into contact with (USEPA, 2004b). Following a heavy rainstorm, for example, water will flow across a parking lot and pick up **oil** left by cars driving and parking on the asphalt. When you see a rainbow-colored sheen on water flowing across the surface of a road or parking lot, you are actually looking at nonpoint source pollution.



Motor oil and other oil-based chemicals can be recognized by a characteristic rainbow-colored sheen

Pesticides typically enter a waterbody through surface water runoff, often from a farm field or from neighborhoods where they are applied on lawns. Pesticides can also enter a waterbody as a result of **"spray drift."** This occurs when the pesticide is sprayed over an area, and the wind blows some of the spray into a nearby waterbody. Pesticides are designed to be toxic to a target organism, but they often kill other organisms as well. The insecticide azinphos-methyl, for example, is used to control insects such as biting mites and aphids. It is also very toxic to fish and birds, however.



Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) provides vital habitat for aquatic organisms, produces oxygen and traps modest amounts of sediment.

Runoff from agricultural fields, urban areas, and construction sites can carry away soil, producing cloudy or muddy water. Soil in the water, called suspended sediment, blocks out the sunlight that bottom-dwelling plants in lakes and rivers need to survive. If these plants, called **submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)**, are deprived of sunlight for extended periods, they will die. SAV is an important component of the ecosystem because it provides a habitat for aquatic organisms, produces oxygen, and traps sediment. If hypoxic conditions occur - a state where the level of oxygen in the water is very low - the aquatic organisms living there must either move or die. Often, suspended sediments and excessive nutrients are both present, creating a harmful combination of eutrophic conditions - when there is an overproduction of organic matter - and cloudy water. Suspended sediments can also clog the gills of fish and other aquatic organisms.



Pesticides applied to agricultural fields and lawns can end up in a waterbody as a result of "spray drift".

### Here's a Drip Tip(s) For You!

- Choose shrubs and groundcovers instead of turf for hard-to-water areas such as steep slopes and isolated strips.
- Plant in the fall when conditions are cooler and rainfall is more plentiful.
- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk and save water every time.
- Check the root zone of your lawn or garden for moisture before watering using a spade or trowel. If it's still moist two inches under the soil surface, you still have enough water.
- Install a rain sensor on your irrigation controller so your system won't run when it's raining.
- Water your plants deeply but less frequently to encourage deep root growth and drought tolerance.
- Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- Wash your car on the lawn, and you'll water your lawn at the same time.
- When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.



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

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**To view this newsletter electronically, visit [www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com](http://www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com)**

## Cost Share Dollars Available

The Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project currently has agricultural and urban cost-share dollars available to implement best management practices (BMPs) on land within the watershed in order to improve 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.

The cost-share program provides 60% match of the allowed actual costs of implementing approved BMPs. Technical assistance is provided. Some of the practices that may be funded include: livestock exclusion from streams, cover crops, streambank stabilization, riparian buffers, critical area planting, water & sediment control basin, and alternative watering systems. If you are an agricultural producer, homeowner, organization, or entity and are located within the Silver Creek Watershed you may be eligible to apply.

For more information about the cost share program, contact David Trotter at 812-256-2330, ext. 110, or [david.trotter@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:david.trotter@in.nacdnet.net).

## Video Release!

Watch the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project video on nonpoint source pollution at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=042jTJBChac>. This video was produced by Silver Creek High



School Mass Media students and Thriving Iris Productions. This is the same team that produced the winning video in the Lady Antebellum video contest, which awarded an appearance by the country music group to Henryville High School for their 2012 Senior Prom.

***Get involved in the planning and zoning process in your community. That's where the decisions are made that shape the course of development and the future quality of our environment.***