

Porter County Soil & Water
Conservation District
Five Year Business Plan
2012-2016

A Look At Our District

The Porter County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a local unit of state government and was established in 1952. The Porter County SWCD is responsible for the conservation and development of our soil, water and related natural resources through education, public information, leadership, technical assistance and development of innovative programs.



Porter County is a different place than it was more than 50 years ago when the District began in 1952. Initially the majority of conservation work was completed by farmers. Today developers, homeowners, school children and more benefit from conservation activities conducted in conjunction with the District.

This long range business plan has been developed to guide our programs over the next five years, clearly setting forth resource issues, statements of intent and priority actions that are designed to meet our mission.

Porter County Soil and Water Conservation District Business Plan

Who We Are: The Porter County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a subdivision of state government. It is a public body which exercises public powers. It is governed by five supervisors, each a resident of Porter County. Three supervisors are elected and two are appointed. The district receives its statutory authority from Indiana District Law (Indiana Code IC 14-32-5-1) The District's daily operations are conducted by two county employees, a District Engineering Technician and a District Program Coordinator.



What We Do: The Porter County Soil and Water Conservation District provides information, education and technical assistance to the public on soil, water and related natural resource concerns. The District also connects land users to other sources of education, technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices and technologies.



Our Mission:
To promote the wise use
of our soil, water and
related natural resources.



Core Values:

- ** Providing excellent customer service
- ** Accomplish goals through voluntary in lieu of regulatory programs whenever possible
- ** Open to partnering with other agencies and interested parties

Critical Natural Resource Issues:

1. Degraded surface water quality in streams, rivers, ponds and lakes

Contributing Factors:

Sediment

Failing Septics

Nutrients and Organics

Urban Run-Off

Combined Sewer Overflows, Storm Sewer Overflows

2. Degraded soil quality including the loss of soil structure, loss of organic matter, soil balance, permeability and infiltration

Contributing Factors

Soil erosion

Excessive Cropland Tillage

Lack Of Crop Rotation And Cover Crops

Excessive Earthmoving Activities During Construction

Failure To Preserve Existing Vegetation On Construction Sites



3. Land use fragmentation resulting in:

Loss Of Prime Farmland

Spread of Noxious And Invasive Species

Excessive Costs To Provide Infrastructure and Service

Lack Of Proper Maintenance On Tile Drainage Systems



To address these critical issues in the next five years our goals are:

On Agricultural/Forest/Wildlife Land:

***Encourage an increase of 10% in the number of corn and soybean acres produced under no-till**

***Increase buffers (i.e. filter strips, riparian buffers, water ways) by 75 acres**

***Increase the number of acres of cropland utilizing nutrient and pest management plans which meet Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) standards and specifications by 5,000 acres**

***Encourage the development of 5 additional grazing plans**

***Increase the use of cover crops by 2,500 acres**



***Encourage the development of 10 additional invasive species management plans**

***Increase tree planting by 100 acres**

***Encourage the development of 100 additional acres of upland and floodplain wildlife habitat**

On Developed/Developing Land:

Cooperate with local government to assist as needed in the review of Storm Water Protection Plans.

Cooperate with area watershed groups (Salt Creek, Kankakee River Basin Commission and others) to encourage best management practices such as retention areas and rain gardens.



Cooperate with the Porter County Health Department to increase awareness of failing or inadequate septic systems.

Our Goals For Working With Other Entities And General Public:

Cooperate with local entities to encourage conservation practices on commercially developed lands.

Cooperate with other entities to work with owners of small tracts of land to implement conservation practices.

Cooperate with all city and county government agencies to incorporate conservation practices and technologies into all land use activities.

Key Strategies

The District will provide conservation information and education utilizing:

Technical Assistance To Landowners (site visits)

In-School Conservation Education Programs

Brochures And Other Publications

County Website

Annual Meeting

Field Days

Technical Workshops

Customer Service (daily contacts, phone calls, soil survey, planning specifications, advice on natural resources related topics)



Demonstrations

Long term no-till

Best Management practices

Pond Management

Filter Strips

Fence Building



Marketing/Outreach

Promoting Conservation Programs

News Releases

Presence/Display At Large Scale Events

i.e. County Fair, Earth Day



Technical Assistance

**One on one conservation planning and application assistance
Survey, design and installation assistance by
District Engineering Technician
Conservation equipment systems
Urban conservation**



Financial Assistance

**Federal conservation programs (i.e., Farm Bill programs)
State conservation cost share/incentive programs**

Funding

**County appropriations
State grants including Clean Water Indiana grants
Other grants, foundations etc.
Affiliate Memberships
NRCS (i.e., phones, computer networking services)**

Partnership Collaboration

**IDNR education programs (i.e., Project
Wild, Project Learning Tree)
Supporting partner grant applications
Northwest Territory RC & D Council- Ag Day
United States Fish and Wildlife Service-no-till
wildlife seeding
United States Army Corps of Engineers- wetland/ drainage consultation
City of Portage, City of Valparaiso, Town of Hebron, Town of Kouts-
MS4, erosion control and drainage consultation
Kankakee River Basin Commission- consultation on best management
practices for the Kankakee River Watershed
Save the Dunes- Salt Creek and Dunes Creek Watershed Projects-
consultation on best management practices**



Our Key Partners and How They Assist

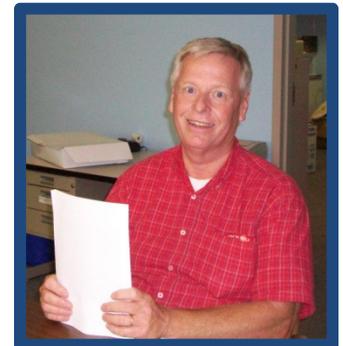
Porter County Government--
Financially supports the District through staff and administrative program funding



Indiana State Department of Agriculture, (ISDA) Division of Soil Conservation--
Financial and administrative support through the District Support Specialist and the Clean Water Indiana Program

Purdue Cooperative Extension-
Educational assistance with public meetings, field days and special events

Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA)-
Educational, technical and financial assistance through federal Farm Bill programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program or the Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Farm Service Agency (USDA)-
Financial support through cost-share and incentive payment programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Neighboring Soil and Water Conservation Districts-
Educational, technical and financial support through programs in partnership

Desired Outcomes:

***Economically and environmentally compatible land uses that maintain or improve water quality throughout the county**

***Soil erosion levels at or below the tolerable soil loss on all agricultural land**

***Sedimentation from all land disturbing activities reduced to levels that do not have an adverse off-site impact**

***Water quality that supports the presence of native wildlife and aquatic species in their natural habitats**

***Pathogens, agricultural chemicals and nutrients within acceptable levels for safe drinking and full human body contact**

***Wildlife habitat that supports diversity in species native to northern Indiana**

***Aesthetically appealing river corridors that improve the quality of life**



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This plan was developed by
The Porter County Soil & Water Conservation District

District Board of Supervisors-2011

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All services provided without discrimination.