St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative

Jane Loomis, Executive Director
St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative
The St. Joseph River Watershed

- 694,400 acres
- Includes six counties in three states
  - 56% in northeast Indiana
  - 22% in south central Michigan
  - 22% in northwest Ohio
- Land Use
  - 64% cropland
  - 15% pasture or forage
  - 10% woodland
  - 11% urban, farmsteads, rural residential, golf courses, airports, other land uses
History of the Initiative

- 1995 “Weed Killers by the Glass” report
- 1996 Conference on the Three Rivers
  - Initiative partnership began
  - Strategic plan, by-laws
- 1999 Designated NFP 501(c)(3) status

Tests of Fort Wayne’s tap water found up to nine pesticides or metabolites in a single sample of water. (sampled June 1, 1995)
SJRWI Board of Directors

- 3 Conservation district representatives, one each from IN, OH, MI
- 3 Local business firms, including farms
- 3 Organizations (at least one representing environmental and one agricultural)
- 3 Corporations
- 3 Local governmental units
- 6 At-large, two from each state
SJRWI: Our Mission

to develop partnerships to promote economically and environmentally compatible land uses that improve water quality in the St. Joseph River watershed.
SJRWI: Focus of Activities
1. Water Quality Monitoring
Water quality monitoring program

- 10th year: Water Sampling Program continues
- Support research, maintain WQ database
- Identify sources of pollution
  - Understanding the problem
  - Targeting efforts
- Identify critical areas for intervention
  - Getting the most from dollars spent
2. Placement of Best Management Practices (BMP)
- Support conservation efforts
  - Conservation Tillage
  - Manure management
  - Filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways
  - Landscape management
- Assist with watershed management planning and coordination
  - Rural, urban, suburban issues
3. Public Outreach & Education
Public outreach and education

- Share information on the watershed
  - Maintain accessible database of WQ info
- Sponsor public educational forums
  - Drainage conference
  - Tri-State Conservation Tillage Expo
- Support volunteer stream monitors
  - Hoosier Riverwatch training workshops
- Facilitate public comment and concerns
SJRWI: Current Projects
Cedar Creek Watershed Management, WQ monitoring and Bacteria Source Tracking project

- Supported by CWA Section 319 grant
- Products
  - Watershed Management Plan for the Upper and Lower Cedar Creek sub-watersheds
  - Final report of research on BST
  - Annual water quality reports
  - SWAT model of the Cedar Creek
St. Joseph Sediment, Pesticide and Nutrient Reduction Project

- Supported by CWA Section 319 grant
- Encourages adoption of conservation tillage practices
  - Equipment leased and rented to farmers at reduced rate
  - Cost-share dollars available for 5-year commitment to no-till or modified no-till acreage
- Outreach education and support, including field events and newsletters
- Production of annual outcomes reports
St. Joseph Sediment Reduction Project

- Supported by Great Lakes Commission
- Farmer-to-Farmer effort
- $$ for filter strips, riparian buffers, grassed waterways, innovative sediment reduction BMPs
- Partnering with county SWCD offices
  - What works best in each county is determined by locals
  - Local non-fed match dollars can be utilized
Lower St. Joseph-Bear Creek Watershed Management Plan

- Supported by a Sec. 205j grant to the City of Fort Wayne
- Beginning late Spring-early Summer 2005
- Supports development of a watershed management plan for 2 subwatersheds immediately upstream of the City of Fort Wayne
- Looking for critical needs to support water quality protection
DeKalb and Allen counties
Cities of Fort Wayne, Leo-Cedarville, St. Joe, Grabill, Spencerville and Newville
2 reservoirs
2 county comprehensive plans
Issues: Septic-sewer, recreation, rapid urbanization, drainage, logjams, industrial growth, transportation, increases in rural residential land use

St. Joseph River Watershed & HUC-11 Subwatersheds
Source Water Protection Initiative

- One of two such projects nationally
- Research on pesticide, sediment entry into water from ag fields on a watershed scale
- Located near Waterloo, Indiana
- Partners:
  - America’s Clean Water Foundation
  - Agricultural Research Service
  - SJRWI – partners DeKalb and Allen SWCD
  - NRCS
SJRWI as the *local partner*

- Gather daily samples (April – November)
- Routine maintenance for automated samplers
- Preliminary laboratory processing of samples
- Contract for local utility services
- Connect with landowners, with help from partners DeKalb SWCD & NRCS
- Gather field data from producers
Gathering Field Data

- Built GIS map layer of each watershed
  - Farm #, Field #, Tract #
  - Owner/operator name and address

- Data collection for each production year
  - Farm, field, tract, crop, plant date, prev. year’s crop
  - Seed: brand, treatment, variety, rate/ac.
  - Fertilizer: date, application method, analysis, rate/ac.
  - Herbicide: date, application method, type, rate/ac.
  - Field operations/tillage: date, type, # trips
Information collection

- Individual contact with producers
- Incentive payments for field information
  - Data collected annually by field
  - Began with year 2004
- Payments to date
  - 10 operators
  - 181 fields - $3,620
  - Most data for 2004; some 2003 and 2002
Water is the resource that brought us together in 1995

- Concerned Citizens
- Fort Wayne City Utilities
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Allen, DeKalb, Noble, and Steuben (IN) and Williams (OH) and Hillsdale (MI) counties
- The Nature Conservancy
- Maumee River Basin Commission
- Cedar Creek Watershed Alliance
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Maumee Watershed Conservancy District
- Michigan Department of Agriculture
- Cooperative Extension Service, Purdue and MSU
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- T-by-2000 Education Program
- Williams county Engineers Office
- Wood-Land-Lakes Resource Conservation & Development
- Hillsdale County Drain Commission
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil Conservation
Water quality in the St. Joseph River remains our priority
St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative
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