

INDIANA GUIDE

FINDING ANSWERS TO YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES QUESTIONS

This publication is a quick guide for who to call and where to look when you have questions about natural resources and conservation on your land in Indiana.

Whether you have owned your land for a lifetime, or are a new Indiana landowner, you may have questions when it comes to land use and conservation.

There are several local, state and federal agencies and organizations that can be very helpful to you in addressing natural resource issues on your land. If you're not sure who to contact, give any one of the groups listed in this publication a call. They will gladly refer you to the appropriate agency or organization.



COUNTY RESOURCES

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) were created to provide local leadership in carrying out programs that conserve Indiana's land and water resources. They are the primary delivery system for Indiana's soil and water conservation programs.

Their connection to county government gives them an understanding of local land and water resource problems and solutions. That's why they're an excellent source for conservation assistance and planning.

A selection of services offered by SWCD's:

- Coordinate county's land and water conservation program with federal, state and local agencies.
- Provide technical assistance for implementation of best management practices.
- Deliver information and education programs to promote effective soil and water resource management.

You can find contact information for any of the 92 Soil and Water Conservation Districts around Indiana at <http://www.in.gov/isda/2370.htm#> or your local telephone directory blue pages.

FEDERAL RESOURCES

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the federal agency that provides technical and financial assistance to help private landowners make management decisions that sustain ecological systems and agricultural operations. NRCS works closely with our conservation partners to provide direct assistance to landowners helping them plan and manage for natural resources.

A selection of voluntary programs that NRCS administers:

- The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. ACEP consolidates three former programs - Wetland Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and Farm and Ranchland Protection Program.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns.
- The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers and/or landowners may receive financial and technical help with conservation practices on agricultural land.
- The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. RCPP combines the authorities of four former conservation programs – the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program, the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative and the Great Lakes Basin Program.

For more information contact your District Conservationist at your local USDA Service Center. USDA Service Center locations can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>. Additional information about programs or technical services is available at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>.

USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA)

The FSA administers and manages farm commodity, credit, conservation, disaster, and loan programs through a network of federal, state and county offices. FSA oversees a number of voluntary conservation-related programs. These programs work to address a large number of farming and ranching related conservation issues including:

- Drinking water protection,
- Reducing soil erosion,
- Wildlife habitat preservation,
- Preservation and restoration of forests and wetlands,
- Aiding farmers whose farms are damaged by natural disasters.

A selection of programs administered by FSA includes:

- Conservation Reserve Program,
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program,
- Emergency Conservation Program,
- Emergency Forest Restoration Program,
- Farmable Wetlands Program,
- Grassland Reserve Program.

For more information contact your local County Executive Director at your local USDA Service Center or go to www.fsa.usda.gov or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/stateoffapp?mystate=in&area=home&subject=landing&topic=landing>.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) acquires land or conservation easements on site of sufficient importance to set aside as National Wildlife Refuges. Priority goes to sites that protect endangered species, are large enough to support significant segments of a biotic population, or are contiguous to property already within the refuge system.

Among the priorities of the USFWS are:

- Partners for Fish and Wildlife program
- National Wildlife Refuge System
- Landscape conservation
- Migratory birds
- Threatened and endangered species
- Aquatic species
- Connecting people with nature

To learn more about the services and programs of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, contact the State Private Lands Coordinator at 812-334-4261, x212 or visit <http://www.fws.gov>.



STATE RESOURCES

Purdue Extension

Each of Indiana's 92 counties is home to an office of the Purdue University's Extension Service. Through Purdue Extension, all Indiana people can access university resources and engage in lifelong learning, wherever they live and work. Purdue Extension provides educational programs and access to current research on:

- Crop and livestock production,
- Farm management, including markets and financial risk management,
- Energy production and conservation on the farm,
- Enhancing fish and wildlife habitat,
- Forest stewardship for production and preservation of benefits for the future,
- Managing invasive species,
- Water quality protection and the sustainable use of aquatic resources.

Purdue Extension's Education Store (<https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/>) provides access to more than 2000 free or affordable publications. To locate the Extension office in the county where you own land, visit <https://extension.purdue.edu/pages/countyoffices.aspx> (this will take you to a listing of all 92 county Extension offices in Indiana).

Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA)

The ISDA supports growth in Indiana agriculture by serving as an advocate at the local, state and federal level; defining and nurturing economic opportunity in the food, fuel and fiber sectors; and enhancing the stewardship of natural resources on agricultural land. ISDA:

- Serves as an advocate for Indiana agriculture at the local, state and federal level.
- Enhances the stewardship of natural resources on agricultural land in a manner that creates value-added opportunity for producers and assists agriculture stakeholders with current and future regulatory challenges.
- Defines and nurtures economic opportunity, including technology development, in the food, fuel and fiber sectors (Hardwoods, Entrepreneurship, Livestock, and International Trade Initiatives).

ISDA's Division of Soil Conservation employs Resource Specialists to directly assist land users. The Resource Specialists work through regional Conservation Implementation Teams to help land users assess specific soil and water resource problems, as well as develop and apply appropriate solutions. Services available to agricultural land users include:

- Provide up-to-date information to create or revise conservation management plans,
- Evaluate on-site erosion and nutrient problems,
- Help landowners identify specific conservation practices,
- Supervise installation and maintenance of selected conservation practices.

Contact the Indiana State Department of Agriculture at 317-232-8770 or find additional information at <http://www.in.gov/isda/index.htm>.

Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)

One of the biggest challenges Indiana's rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands face does not come from the end of pipe. It's pollution that can come from our construction sites, our parking lots, our farms, our roads, and even our own backyards. It's called nonpoint source pollution and it's a big deal. The IDEM helps Hoosiers understand this complex issue, find out what programs are working to clean up our waters, and what each person can do to help. The goal of IDEM is to make measurable improvements in water quality by addressing nonpoint source pollution through education, planning, and implementation. Every Hoosier can play a role in reducing pollution and protecting Indiana's watersheds.

Contact the Watershed Planning Branch at 317-233-8488 or find additional information at <http://www.in.gov/idem/nps/>.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is dedicated to the preservation, protection, effective management and maintenance of Indiana's natural resources. The agency is responsible for coordinating the many disciplines and programs necessary to provide a clean environment and a full range of outdoor recreational opportunities for Indiana citizens and visitors.

A selection of services offered by DNR:

- Environmental protection,
- Licenses, permits and registrations,
- Forestry, wildlife and wetland technical and financial assistance,
- Outdoor recreation,
- Forest and wildlands tax law programs,
- Lake management (aquatic invasives, lakeshore restoration, wetland protection, rain gardens, etc.).

For more information about how the Indiana DNR assists with natural resources issues can be found at www.in.gov/dnr. Lake enhancement information can be found at: www.lare.dnr.in.gov. Contact your local District Forester: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/4750.htm>. Additional Division of Forestry program information is available at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2845.htm>. Contact your local District Wildlife Biologist <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2716.htm>. Additional Division of Fish and Wildlife program information can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/2352.htm>.

OTHER RESOURCES

Many other organizations and groups have a keen interest in helping private landowners protect and enhance our natural resources. This is just a **partial listing** of groups that may help as you explore your options:

Indiana Wildlife Federation

Indiana Wildlife Federation promotes the conservation, sound management, and sustainable use of Indiana's wildlife and wildlife habitat through education, advocacy, and action. <http://www.indianawildlife.org/>.

Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever is dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. Visit their website at www.pheasantsforever.org.

Wild Turkey Federation

The Wild Turkey Federation works to conserve the wild turkey and preserve the nation's hunting traditions. Local chapters and much more are listed at www.nwtf.org.

Ducks Unlimited

Ducks Unlimited conserves habitat in Indiana to meet the lifecycle needs of waterfowl. Indiana is part of the Mississippi Flyway, providing important migration, breeding and wintering areas. Visit their website for more information at <http://www.ducks.org/indiana>.

Center For Absentee Landowners

The Center for Absentee Landowners hosts a website designed for people who own agricultural land, but do not live on or operate their land. It's for landowners who are interested in natural resources conservation and who want to learn more about available programs, resources and support. A selection of services offered include:

- Thorough explanation of conservation programs and practices,
- Self-guided decision guide to determine most appropriate practices for desired outcomes,
- Listing of landowner resources,
- Discussion of specific local projects related to natural resources conservation,
- Glossary of natural resources terms,
- Toll-free hotline.

Contact: 866-792-6248 (toll free) or visit their website at www.absenteelandowners.org.