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Tribune

YOUR GUIDE TO THE TANNERS CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT

Local Cost-share Program Assists Landowners

Nonpoint source pollution has been identified by the Tanners Creek Watershed Project as the primary source of degradation of Tanners Creek and its tributaries. The approach taken by the Tanners Creek Watershed Project for addressing the non-point source water pollution problem is to encourage voluntary participation by the community. This approach is supported by financial incentives, technical and educational assistance, and research programs.

Financial incentives are provided through the Tanners Creek Cost-Share Program. This program is administered by the Dearborn County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and funded by a generous Indiana Department of Environmental Management Section 319 Grant. It

has been applauded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and has received wide support from the general public, as well as the agricultural community.

While the Tanners Creek Watershed Project has the statutory responsibility to create, implement, and supervise the cost-share program, it is primarily delivered by the Dearborn County SWCD Technician/Educator, Vickie Smith.

Participating landowners receive up to 75% of predetermined average costs of installed conservation practices, with the remaining cost paid by the landowner directly or through in-kind contributions. The Tanners Creek Watershed Project allocates cost-share funds to landowners based on water quality protection priorities.

In 2006, there were 12 contracts approved for installation of conservation practices within the Tanners Creek watershed, paying out more than \$13,656.00 to these local landowners. **It has been estimated that an average of 1,049 tons of sediment, 885 pounds of Phosphorus, and 1,774 pounds of Nitrogen have been saved annually from entering Tanners Creek during 2006.**

The cost-share program was authorized in 2004 as a pilot program to address nonpoint

source problems in the nutrient-sensitive waters of Tanners Creek and its many tributaries located within Dearborn County. Due to the program's success, it has been extended until June of 2008. In addition to Tanners Creek Cost-share program, there are other cost-share programs available to help enhance and develop your land.

If you would like more information about this or any other cost-share program, contact Dearborn County SWCD at: 812-926-2406 x 3.



Fourth Grade Water Festival Scheduled for May

Partnering with the Hogan Creek Watershed Project, the Tanners Creek Watershed Project is announcing this year's Water Festival. This three-day event promotes hands-on learning about water issues and will be offered to all of Dearborn County's fourth grade students and teachers for the 2006-2007 school year.

Local natural resource professionals will provide engaging activities and exhibits on water, wetlands, human health, recycling and wildlife. The goals of the festival are to teach students about the value of clean water and healthy habitats; and to provide teachers with materials and lessons they can use for years to come.

"Educational field days are so important for students" said Kris Vance, Tanners Creek Watershed Coordinator. "Not only are students able to enjoy a day outside, but the activities involve so much participation from students, they can't help to learn while having fun."

This year's Water Festival will be held from May 1 - 3 at the Lawrenceburg Fairgrounds. There will be four, thirty-minute sessions with topics including: Incredible Journey, Wheel of Water, Recycle Mania, and Life Below the Waterlines. In addition, an hour-long assembly will wrap up the day as the Silly Safari live animal show featuring Safari Steve will educate students on the important role wildlife plays in each of our watersheds.



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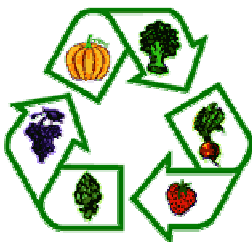
Composting enriches soil and improves environment

Composting is the decomposition of plant remains and other once-living materials to make an earthy, dark, crumbly substance that is excellent for adding to houseplants or enriching garden soil. It is the way to recycle your yard and kitchen wastes, and is a critical step in reducing the volume of garbage needlessly sent to landfills for disposal. It's easy to learn how to compost.



*Picture Courtesy of Montgomery County, MD
Department of Environmental Protection*

There are a tremendous number of options for containing your compost. Some people choose to go binless, simply building a compost pile in a convenient spot on the ground. Others build bins from materials such as recycled pallets, or two-by-fours and plywood. And, of course, there are many commercial bins on the market.



Composting is not a new idea. In the natural world, composting is what happens as leaves pile up on the forest floor and begin to decay. Eventually, the rotting leaves are returned to the soil, where living roots can finish the recycling process

by reclaiming the nutrients from the decomposed leaves. Composting may be at the root of agriculture as well. Some scientists have speculated that as early peoples dumped food wastes in piles near their camps, the wastes rotted and were terrific habitat for the seeds of any food plants that

sprouted there. Perhaps people began to recognize that dump heaps were good places for food crops to grow, and began to put seeds there intentionally.

Today, the use of composting to turn organic wastes into a valuable resource is expanding rapidly in the United States and in other countries, as landfill space becomes scarce and expensive, and as people become more aware of the impacts they have on the environment. In ten years, composting will probably be as commonplace as recycling aluminum cans is today, both in the backyard and on an industrial scale. Many states in the USA have stated goals or legislative mandates to drastically reduce the volume of waste being sent to landfills. Utilizing yard and kitchen wastes (which make up about 30% of the waste stream in the USA) is a big part of the plan to minimize waste overall.

You can contribute to the 'composting revolution' by composting your own yard and kitchen wastes at home. If you have a large yard, you might prefer the ease of composting in a three-bin system out by the back fence. Cities and towns can promote composting through home composting education efforts and the collection of yard wastes for large-scale composting. Whatever your style of composting, there's plenty of room to get involved!



*Picture Courtesy of Montgomery County, MD
Department of Environmental Protection*

If you would like more information about composting, please contact the Dearborn County SWCD at: 812-926-2406 ext 3.