Volume 2 Issue 2 Summer 2007

Ripple Effects

Eagle Creek Watershed: We're All in It Together

Mission Statement

To utilize a holistic approach to watershed management with the ultimate goals of improving water quality, increasing public awareness of watershed water quality, and encouraging stewardship of the watershed's resources.

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ECWA Concerns

- Lawn chemicals, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, and resultant algal blooms.
- Degradation of aquatic habitats as a result of increased sedimentation.
- Nutrient loading; harmful levels of herbicides and other chemicals.
- High levels of *E.coli* and other pathogens.
- The public's level of understanding of the watershed and its value as a natural resource.

JOIN US!

We welcome your participation. Should you have an interest in joining the ECWA, please contact John Ulmer at remlu@tds.net.

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Lawn Watering Tops the Agenda for Upcoming Quarterly Meeting

The ECWA quarterly meeting will be **Monday, June 25 6:30 p.m.** at the Hussey-Mayfield Memorial Public Library 250 N. 5th St., Zionsville IN

On Monday, June 25, the Eagle Creek Watershed Alliance (ECWA) will host its next Quarterly Meeting, welcoming Larry Houser, the owner of Woods Edge Nursery and Greenhouse in Zionsville, to engage the group in a discussion on lawn watering and landscaping practices that use water wisely.

Larry Houser

In addition to owning Woods Edge Nursery, Houser has devoted more than four decades to the horticulture industry in a wide range of roles. Working as a landscape consultant for a commercial development company, Houser developed large scale plantings that utilize efficient, low-maintenance plants. He has also served as a speaker for the Environmental Institute for Golf, the Indianapolis Flower and Patio Show, Indiana Horticulture Congress and is a guest host for Dick Crum's *Dr. Dirt* radio show. For thoughtful conversation and an update on ECWA's activities, please join us!

USDA NRCS

Watering lawn unwisely is a waste of an important natural resource.

Using Water Wisely Keeps our Watershed Healthy

Each summer, approximately 30% of all drinking water produced in Indianapolis is used to water lawns, which represents 50-75 million gallons of water a day! Here are just a few of the ways you can use water wisely, help sustain our existing water supply, and become a responsible steward of our water resources.

- Let nature take care of watering your lawn on rainy days and, if necessary, only sprinkle in the morning or early evening to prevent evaporation.
- Test your lawn before you sprinkle. Step on the grass – if it springs up, it's healthy, not thirsty.
- Be lenient with your lawn. Grass naturally goes dormant during hot, dry periods – but comes back when the rain returns.
- Incorporate native plants in your landscaping plans, which require little or no watering.
- Mulch around shrubs and small trees to help retain moisture in the soil.
- Have your soil tested and only use low/zero-phosphorous fertilizer if needed to prevent unnecessary pollutants from entering our waterways.

Meet Angie Tilton

Angie Tilton is the Chair of the Eagle Creek Watershed Alliance Education Committee. Angie works with educators of all varieties to promote the awareness, appreciation, knowledge and stewardship of water resources as the State Coordinator of the international, interdisciplinary water education program, Project WET (Water Education for Teachers), a program of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Prior to her current position with DNR, she served as the Water Quality Educator for the Tippecanoe County Soil & Water Conservation District where she participated in the Wildcat Creek and Lauramie Creek Watershed groups. Angie has a B.S. from Purdue University in Natural Resources and Environmental Science with a specialization in Water Quality. She is currently seeking her Master's Degree in Earth Science at IUPUI.

Angie Tilton

ECWA Guiding Principles

Earlier this year, the ECWA adopted seven Guiding Principles to provide a framework for a variety of decision-making processes that may impact the health of our watershed and our overall quality of life. Each newsletter will introduce one of our Guiding Principles with an accompanying picture or illustration intended to create a visual image that helps convey its meaning.

The illustration below, which was developed by the Pervasive Technology Lab at Indiana University and IUPUI Center for Earth and Environmental Science, demonstrates the importance of the first guiding principle:

The overall ecological health of the Eagle Creek Watershed includes physical, chemical, biological and aesthetic aspects of the aquatic resources. All have equal value and cannot be considered separately. Most human activities in the watershed impact one or more of these aspects to varying degrees.

Almost everything we do has the potential to impact our watershed.

What do we do?

ECWA Education Committee

The Education Committee is divided into two subcommittees in order to effectively accomplish its goals.

The Watershed Sign Subcommittee is charged with the task of designing and planning the installation of signs denoting the Eagle Creek watershed. The end goal is to have 40 attractive and easy to read signs installed in highly visible areas throughout the watershed. Keep your eyes on the road for a watershed sign in your area soon.

The Water Quality Awareness Day Subcommittee is busy planning the second Make a Splash Festival in the Eagle Creek Watershed. The theme for the October 5 event held at the new Eagle Creek Park Earth Discovery Center is "The Eagle Creek Watershed: I Can Make a Difference!" The event is designed to be an educational, fun and interactive field trip where fifth grade students can explore a diversity of water-related topics by engaging in hands-on water activities at multiple learning stations. Expert presenters will teach students the importance of clean water and the Eagle Creek Watershed.

If you would like to join the Education Committee, please contact Angie Tilton, Education Committee Chair at atilton@dnr.in.gov or 317-562-0788.