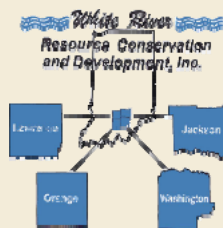


# WHITE RIVER RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

*Serving as a catalyst to nurture, promote, and develop volunteer efforts in providing local solutions for local concerns.*



## 2010 Annual Report



White River RC&D  
801 Anson Street  
Salem, IN 47167

P: 812-883-3704  
[www.whiteriverrcd.org](http://www.whiteriverrcd.org)



## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

2010 has brought about exciting new challenges for White River RC&D. The Council is starting to focus its attention on several diverse projects regarding land management, land conservation, water management and community development. These new projects have introduced the Council to new partnerships and we look forward to continuing those partnerships in the many years to come.

The White River RC & D Forestry and Education Committees remain very active. Forestry Committee activities include a very popular spring Wildflower tour, a fall Stump to Product Tour, tree ID classes, and a Fall Forest Fun Day. The Education Committee continues to sponsor the very popular South Central Regional Envirothon. They began their rotating Butterfly Habitat workshop series which was introduced in Washington and Jackson County in 2010 and will be rotating to Lawrence and Orange Counties in 2011. In 2010, the Energy Committee was formed by a group of excited individuals. This committee initiated its first Farm Energy Audit Tour and Workshop in August of 2010 and has great plans to continue educating the community on energy conservation throughout 2011.

New projects have been submitted and approved in 2010, including a White River RC&D Farmer's Market Grant and Lawrence County's Grid Sampling program, Lawrence County Historic Walking Trail Brochures and several others. Likewise, in November of 2010, White River RC&D was awarded an IDEM 319 Grant for the development and implementation of a Mill Creek-Blue River Watershed Project. With this grant, the council was able to hire our newest employee—Whitney Sauerheber. We are excited to have her aboard and look forward to the many wonderful programs she puts on in 2011.

When you are finished reviewing this copy of our annual report, pass it on to a friend, neighbor, or local community leader that you hope has an interest in our community and our natural resources. The White River RC&D Council is always open to new ideas and opportunities to partner with like-minded organizations in our communities. The White River RC&D Council has enjoyed 2010 and hope you will join us in an even better 2011.

### 2010 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### CONSERVANCY DISTRICTS

Springs Valley - Howard Allen (VP)

#### COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Orange County - Lyndel Manship (M)

Washington Co. - David Walker (T)

#### SOIL & WATER CONS. DISTRICTS

Jackson Co. - David Abner (S)

Lawrence Co. - Gene Mundy (M)

Orange Co. - Open

Washington Co. - David Hoar, (P)

### STAFF

Kris Vance, NRCS RC&D Coordinator

Mary Jane Deel, NRCS Program Asst.



Sincerely,

**David Hoar**

White River RC&D President

The White River RC&D Council meets on the second Thursday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. If you would like to attend one of these meetings, please contact the office at: 812-883-3704 ext 5 or [council@whiteriverrcd.org](mailto:council@whiteriverrcd.org)

*All programs and assistance of the White River RC&D Council are available without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientations and marital or family status.*





## HISTORY OF WHITE RIVER RC&D

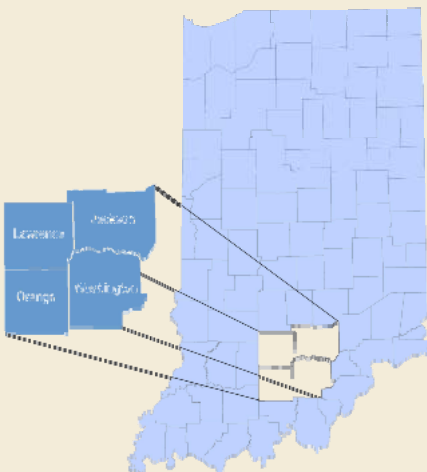
Over 40 years ago, Congress established a unique program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture that empowered rural people to help themselves. USDA's focus was to assist local people by providing tools and technical support to stabilize and grow their own communities while protecting and developing natural resources. Thus, the resource conservation and development (RC&D) concept was initiated.

White River RC&D (WRRCD) was established in 2001, making it the youngest RC&D council in Indiana. Its council delivers coordinated resource conservation and rural development assistance throughout the four county regions of Jackson, Washington, Orange and Lawrence. By working together with the White River RC&D council; communities, all levels of Government, and grassroots organizations can work together to develop and implement solutions to widespread problems and to develop opportunities that will help sustain our rural communities, local economies, and natural resources.

White River RC&D can assist local organizations with their community-wide projects and programs. WRRCD serves as a support system for our communities by providing technical, administrative, and financial assistance to community-wide projects and programs. WRRCD supports projects which focus on the environment, community development, historical renovation, and economic impact issues.

Kris Vance, NRCS-RC&D Coordinator, and Mary Jane Deel, NRCS-RC&D Program Assistant, are available to assist your group in developing and initiating your project. In 2011, WRRCD hired their newest employee, Whitney Sauerheber, to launch the Mill Creek/Blue River Water Quality Program. Stop by the office and visit White River RC&D today!

## WHITE RIVER RC&D REGION



The heart of the area is approximately 1 hour north of Louisville, Kentucky and 1 1/2 hours south of Indianapolis, Indiana. In 2000, the total population for the area was 133,786. The estimated population in 2006 increased to approximately 136,538. Washington County is currently the fastest growing county in the area, and it was estimated to grow about 3.1 percent from 2000-2006. Lawrence County is the slowest growing county in the area with an estimated 1.1 percent from 2000-2006. The area is generally rural in nature, with no major metropolitan areas. Average population density ranges from a low of 48.3 persons per square mile in Orange County to a high of 102.3 in Lawrence County. Over half the population of the region (52 percent) is rural. Seymour, population 18,101, is the largest town in the area. Because of rapid and largely uncontrolled residential development, mainly in the south eastern part of the county, the rural population in Washington County is growing, with only 32.4 percent of the population in towns. The rapid urbanization of the county results in a significant burden on the county infrastructure, a decrease in farm and timberland, and resource degradation.



*Greenhill Cemetery Carvings*

### COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKSHOP

On Thursday, April 15, 2010 service organizations and local residents interested in learning more about the community garden concept were invited to attend a luncheon workshop at the Jackson County Library in Seymour, Indiana. Kris Vance, WRRC&D Coordinator met with 15 interested community members to review the community garden concept. Attendees received information on why community gardens are important, who should start a garden, and key tips on developing community gardens. Kris was also available to lend assistance to organizations wishing to start their own garden.

### CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The White River RC&D Council assisted the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and several other charitable organizations throughout the county in this year's "Christmas Assistance program". Donations from churches, the Salvation Army and many other organizations were sorted and placed into large gift bags. These gift bags were then distributed to families throughout Washington County. In 2010, the program assisted approximately 800 economically disadvantaged children living within Washington County during the holiday season by providing clothing, toys and other important necessities.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

RC&D Councils help create jobs and sponsor training and skills development programs. Councils also work to develop natural resource-based industries such as agritourism.



### LAWRENCE COUNTY WALKING TOUR BROCHURES

The WRRC&D Council is assisting the Lawrence County Tourism Commission in finding funding sources to revise and reprint five walking tour brochures. The plan is to print 5,000 new, re-designed copies of each of the brochures for a total of 25,000 brochures. These brochures include two for downtown Bedford, one for Mitchell, and two for the unique stone carvings of Greenhill Cemetery in Bedford. These brochures are needed to help us convey the importance and interpret the history of our Limestone Heritage. They will provide a new way for visitors and locals alike to experience the essence of the Lawrence County brand of 'Limestone Country' and to appreciate the distinctive architectural styles, historic homes, and the unique carved limestone art of the region.



## FARMERS MARKET ASSISTANCE

The WRRC&D Council continued their grant opportunity aimed at helping local farmers' markets located with Jackson, Lawrence, Orange and Washington Counties. Developed and dispersed by White River RC&D, the "White River Farmers' Market Grant" was created to help improve local farmers' markets located within the four county region. The grant is targeted to help improve and expand domestic farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture programs, agri-tourism activities, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities. The following markets received assistance from this program:

### *Washington County Farmers Market*

The White River RC&D assisted the Washington County Farmers Market in 2010 by providing a Farmer's Market grant in the amount of \$500. This grant was used by the organization to purchase 500 reusable market bags to be distributed to customers. Using reusable eco-friendly bags will lessen our demand for plastic bags, in theory reducing the production of them and the associated pollution and oil consumption.



*Chef Demonstrations*

### *Orange County HomeGrown*

Orange County HomeGrown used their \$500 WRFMG award towards fun family events at their farmers market. They used the money for the following events: Farm to Fork Chef Demonstrations; Make-Your-Own Scarecrow Contest; Farmers Market Bingo; Farmers Market Walking Club; Customer Appreciation Day; Farmers Market Scavenger Hunt; Farmers Market Jammers; Yoga Classes; and Kids Art Day. Orange County HomeGrown continues to notice an increase in the number of visitors to their farmers market, in large part, because of the fun family events that take place each Saturday. Many of the visitors bring their children and grandchildren and spend most of the morning taking part in the events that are scheduled. Having these events encourages visitors to stay longer which in turn increases sales of locally produced goods. Orange County HomeGrown has, just this season, begun accepting SNAP Tokens (Food Stamps) and have seen an increase in the number of low income families visiting the farmers market. These low-income families are delighted to find that they can bring their children and have fun participating in these events at no cost.



*Make-Your-Own Scarecrow*



*Jam Session*



*Local Honey Sold*



## LAWRENCE COUNTY GRID SAMPLING

The White River RC&D is partnering with Lawrence County SWCD to initiate a grid soil sampling project for all of Lawrence County. Using GPS technology, a field is GPS mapped and systematically soil sampled. Samples are taken on a 2.5 acre grid. Mapping software is then utilized to display field variability on a printed report. The result is a comprehensive report showing nutrient deficiencies and suffices, acidity and alkalinity, salt load and a reflection of the soil's water holding capacity. This vital information can impact farm/field management decisions and help improve your economic efficiency.



*2010 Envirothon*

## SPRING AND FALL BUTTERFLY HABITAT WORKSHOPS

The WRRC&D Education Committee, with assistance from the Jackson County, Washington County, and Orange County SWCDs held a Spring and Fall Butterfly Habitat workshop to introduce local residents about the values of pollinator gardens. Roger Purkhiser, Purdue University Master Gardener and Newspaper Columnist, established two small wildflower gardens – one for spring and one for fall – and provided tips on the establishment and care of each garden. Participants learned what plants are most appealing to butterflies and how they should be cared for; what plants should be used for winter shelter; the types of butterflies seen in Indiana; and were given information to take home to help start their own butterfly garden. Approximately 40 people attended these workshops.

## LAND CONSERVATION

RC&D councils conserve the land through projects that improve soil quality, reduce soil erosion, keep sediment out of water supplies and help us adapt to climate change. Projects may also include environmental education programs.



## ENVIROTHON

The White River RC&D Education Committee was once again sponsors of the South-Central Envirothon. Twenty-three teams from fifteen schools participated in the event, with each team consisting of five members and one alternate. Five stations were set up where professionals provided instructions in the fields of Wildlife, Forestry, Soils/Land Use, Aquatic Ecology, and a current environmental issue. The teams rotated between the stations where they were provided with information they could find on their exam at the end of the session. Each participant received a certificate for their participation, and medals were awarded to the members of the top three scoring teams. Plaques recognizing their accomplishment were presented to the schools of the winning teams. Taking the honors at the 2010 South-Central Envirothon was 1<sup>st</sup> Place, Salem FFA – Team 1; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place, Salem FFA – Team 2; and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place, NE Dubois.



## SOUTHERN IN COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA

2010 was a breakout year for the Southern Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area (SICWMA). In our second full year of operation, we went beyond the important organizational challenges to complete several meaningful projects and pass several important milestones:

- We completed a survey project that looked for aquatic invasive plants at 103 boat ramps on lakes and rivers in Southern Indiana. This project was part of a broader initiative undertaken in 3 states by the Central Hardwoods Invasive Plant Network (CHIP-N).
- We helped organize 2 new local invasive species organizations which cover 8 counties in Southeastern Indiana. Such organizations are now operating in 10 of SICWMA's 35 counties – and are undertaking valuable educational and control activities that will help reduce invasive species in their local communities.
- We obtained a substantial grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop and implement an Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) process in Southern Indiana. We designed and developed this process from scratch in 2010.
- We hired a Project Director, Eric Eubank, to refine, implement, and expand the EDRR process. Eric has an office at the Jackson-Washington State Forest due to the generous assistance of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry.
- We recruited dozens of Expert Verifiers who will do verification and mapping of new invasive species infestations that are uncovered through our EDRR process. In December, 2010, we held a training workshop attended by about 50 potential expert verifiers. As of yearend, 2010, 43 volunteers have committed to doing expert verification and mapping visits in 33 of our 35 counties!
- We began recruiting "Weed Watchers" to report new and dangerous invasive species infestations. These Weed Watchers will be the key to generating EDRR reports. As of yearend, 2010, we have 78 individuals from 31 different counties committed to being Weed Watchers.

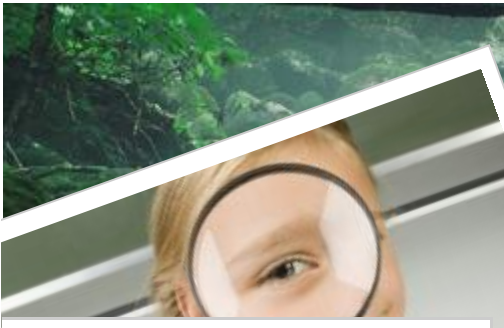


*Stump to Product Tour*



## STUMP TO PRODUCT TOUR

White River RC&D's Forestry Committee sponsored a Stump to Product Tour on September 30<sup>th</sup>, that featured a tour of the Indiana Handle Company property. Following the IHC tour, the group visited the Bruce and Helen Atkinson tree farm. The Atkinson family moved back to the farm in 1951. After their retirement in 1970, they returned the open acreage to woodland. The Atkinsons now have 243 acres enrolled in the Classified Forest and Wildlands and Tree Farm programs. During the tour of this tree farm, participants learned what to expect during a harvest, how to properly manage trees before and after a harvest, and management practices to make the best of the harvest. The group moved from the tree farm visit to a Fat Buddies BarBQ catered dinner at the Paoli Community Center where they listened to Mike Seidl (Hardwood Economic Development, Indiana Department of Agriculture and Division of Forestry) and Jeff Settle (Indian Division of Forestry) give presentations on the status of the hardwood industry in Indiana and export market development for Indiana hardwoods.



## MILL CREEK/BLUE RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

Coordinated by White River RC&D and funded by a 319 Management Plan grant from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Mill Creek-Blue River Watershed Project (MCBR) is an exciting program designed to create public awareness of watershed issues which result in responsible environmental actions.

The proposed watershed project will support the production of a watershed management plan, addressing the causes, sources, and prevention of point and nonpoint source pollution. A watershed coordinator has been hired to manage the development and dissemination of the management plan. The management plan, and pollution prevention program within it, will serve as a guide and itemize the problems, priorities, and activities to be addressed to improve and protect the watershed.

In addition to developing the plan, the watershed coordinator will develop and implement an education and outreach program to keep the public informed about the project's findings and its progress. This program will provide a structured opportunity for participation by the stakeholders in the Mill Creek-Blue River watershed. This program will also increase public awareness of local water quality issues. Increasing public awareness will occur through print and broadcast media, e-mails, newsletters, word of mouth and presentations to targeted audiences, tours, field days, education days, and fact sheets. Project feedback will be encouraged and sought as part of the evaluation process.

Furthermore, a service program will be implemented to engage young adults and community members in actively addressing nonpoint source pollution and other water quality issues. This program will address these issues by engaging volunteers in storm drain marking, volunteer water quality testing, and community clean up days.

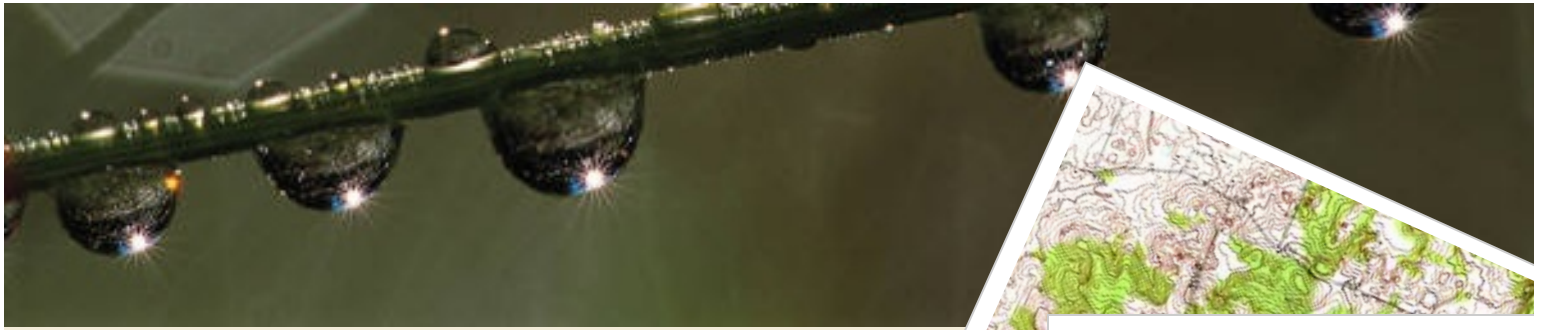
In December of 2010, the White River RC&D Council hired Whitney Sauerheber as their watershed coordinator. To learn more about the Mill Creek-Blue River Watershed Project or to serve on the committee, please contact Whitney at: [whitneyhand@yahoo.com](mailto:whitneyhand@yahoo.com), call Whitney at: 812-883-3704 ext 5 or stop by the office for a visit and talk one-on-one with Whitney.



*Salem High School Students performing water testing*

## WATER MANAGEMENT

Many RC&D council projects protect water resources by promoting wise water use, controlling flooding, and improving the quality of local water supplies



## LOST RIVER WATERSHED PROJECT

With assistance from White River RC&D, the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring the Lost River Watershed Project as part of their mission to provide leadership, assistance, and education in the proper use and management of soil, water, and related natural resources in Orange County. The Lost River Watershed Project is funded through Indiana Department of Environmental Management under a Environmental Protection Agency 319 Grant of the Clean Water Act. The project watershed crosses the boundaries of Dubois, Martin, Lawrence, Orange, and Washington Counties. Ginger Korinek was hired as the Lost River Watershed Coordinator to oversee the production of a Watershed

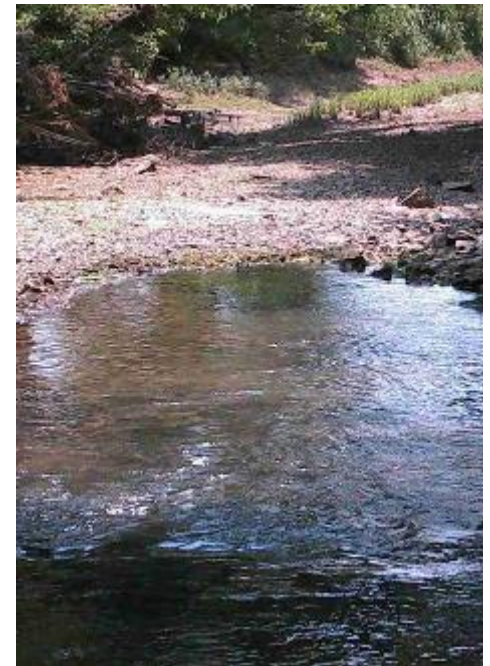


Management Plan, coordinate education and outreach programs, and work with the community to address ways to protect and enhance the natural resources and waters of the area. With the diverse landscape in the Lost River Watershed a coordinated effort from all facets of the community are being assembled to direct the mission and goals of a watershed management plan. The project will include programs such as Field Days, Service-Learning Group Activities, Storm Drain Marking and

Community Clean-Up Events! Ginger will be encouraging landowners to get involved with the Lost River Watershed Management Plan, and looks forward to working with the community on this plan.

## CONSERVANCY DISTRICT SUPPORT

Several years ago, many conservancy districts throughout Indiana signed 50-year agreements with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These conservancy districts have been extremely beneficial to their communities in their multi-purpose structures and stream channel work. Several of these conservancy districts will be hitting their 50-year anniversary soon and will be closing in on the maturity of these agreements. Because this is new territory for the conservancy district, many are not aware of their options with NRCS to extend their agreements. The Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) sees a real need to inform local conservancy districts of their options prior to the expiration of these agreements. The White River RC&D Council is assisting the Washington County SWCD in hosting a meeting to bring to together board members of all conservancy districts to inform them of future direction and opportunities between NRCS, SWCDs and the Conservancy Districts.



*Lost River*



*Farm Energy Workshop*

## FARM ENERGY WORKSHOP

Over 50 farmers, agency personnel and landowners interested in learning more about increasing energy efficiency attended the White River RC&D's one-day workshop on farm energy conservation. The program was held Wednesday, Aug. 25th at Maple Hill Farm in Salem, IN. Professional energy auditor and company president Andy Susemichel, from Louisville-based E-Max, and Chad Martin, Purdue Extension Renewable Energy Specialist, met with interested farmers and community members to review the process and findings of an energy audit recently completed for Maple Hill Farm. They discussed best practices already in use, as well as recommendations for achieving additional energy savings. Attendees received information on how to find energy savings on their own farms, how to use online tools to determine energy savings, and how to determine whether they may benefit from a full energy audit of their own farm business. In addition to energy audits, Mr. Susemichel and Mr. Martin discussed typical conservation measures and equipment upgrades that can save energy, and answer questions regarding how farmers can reduce energy costs in their businesses. After lunch, Brian Wolka, Jackson County REMC, and Mark Belcher, Orange County REMC led participants through a discussion on understanding current electric bills. This session included information on understanding demand, single vs. 3-phase systems, and minimum charge. The day wrapped-up with discussion from a panel of energy funding experts. Marcia Comer, USDA Rural Development, Tracy Soliday, Farm Services Agency, and Wes McFarland, Hoosier Energy, discussed funding opportunities and incentives available to help implement changes on the farm.

## LAND MANAGEMENT

RC&D environmental projects improve natural resources for agriculture and other uses such as tourism, fish and wildlife habitat, energy conservation and production, and environmental education.



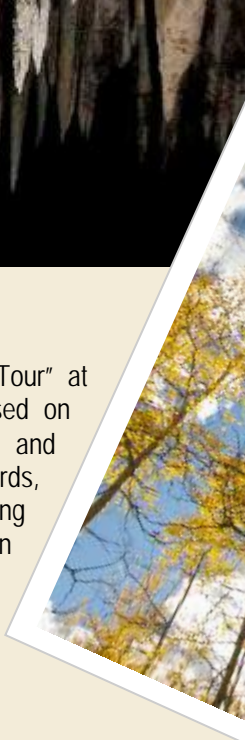
## TREE ID WORKSHOP

A fall Tree ID Workshop was sponsored by White River RC&D and the Sycamore Land Trust. The workshop was conducted at the 'Touch the Earth' preserve, located in Bartholomew County. Led by Rob McGriff, IDNR District Forester and White River RC&D volunteer, participants were instructed on how to identify trees after the leaves have fallen and many other clues have disappeared. About twenty people attended this weekend event.



## KARST TOPOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

The WRRC&D Education Committee held a "Mysteries of Karst Tour" at Bluespring Caverns on Thursday, June 24<sup>th</sup>. This event focused on providing information in a fun and unique way about the caves and sinkholes that are prevalent in this area. In addition, Jim Richards, proprietor and life-long caver, hosted a guided walk to the neighboring Boulton sinkhole entrance and answered questions regarding caves in southern Indiana. About 15 people attended the workshop.



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## FAMILY FOREST FUN DAY

The second annual 'Family Forest Fun Day' was co-sponsored by the White River RC&D Forestry Committee and Sycamore Land Trust in Lawrence County on October 8<sup>th</sup>. The event was graciously hosted by the Bedford Park Department at Murray Park. Volunteers provided educational entertainment centered on the family forest. Session topics included orienteering, plant identification, wild animal calls, invasive species, raptors, old fashioned crosscut bucksaw demonstrations and tree height calculations. Carol Payton, Orange County SWCD District Coordinator and White River RC&D Education Committee member assisted attendees in a nature's craft project. More than 150 people attended this full-day event.

*Cave River Valley, 2009*

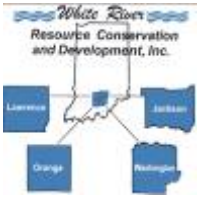


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## WILDFLOWER HIKE

Thirty-one enthusiastic folks turned out for another successful annual wildflower hike put on by the White River RC&D Forestry Committee. This year's event took place at Beck's Mill, near Salem. The hike leader was Kay Yatskievych of the Missouri Botanical Gardens with Carroll Ritter assisting. Seventy species of wildflowers were seen and identified. An extraordinary country meal was provided by the Friend's of Beck's Mill. Mill tours added to the enjoyment of all on this sunny and splendid day in nature. This is an annual event that is sponsored by the White River RC&D Forestry Committee and the Sycamore Land Trust.





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## LOOK INSIDE FOR THE 2010 WHITE RIVER RC&D ANNUAL REPORT!

### ORANGE COUNTY MAIN STREET

Main Street Orange County kicked off the holiday season with a county-wide 'Twelve Days of Christmas' Extravaganza. Discounts were offered by participating merchants and drawings were conducted for donated prizes at the end of the celebration. A two night stay at the West Baden Hotel includes dinner each evening and a visit to the spa. The Twelve Days of Christmas program brought in roughly \$27,500.00 to participating businesses located throughout Orange County.

Orange County Main Street also sponsored a third grade coloring contest during the Twelve Days of Christmas Extravaganza. Area students from Orleans Elementary, Throop Elementary, and Springs Valley Elementary Schools were asked to reveal their artistic talents by joining in the fun and coloring a picture that reflected the Twelve Days of Christmas theme. Old National Bank donated a \$100, \$75 and \$50 Savings Bond for the winners from each school. The pictures will be placed at local businesses around town.

In addition to the Twelve Days of Christmas Extravaganza, Orange County Main Street was involved with this year's Block Bash, held in French Lick. The Block Bash was held from September 17 to September 19 in downtown French Lick and showcased eight chainsaw carvers competing for top carving awards. Along with the chainsaw competition, artists filled the streets demonstrating such talents as glass blowing, hand carving, bowl turning, jewelry making and much more. Orange County Main Street had a booth which highlighted the great things going on with Orange County businesses.



*1st Annual Block Bash Flyer*