

Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI) Funded in the Wildcat Creek

Everyone is too aware today that the Gulf of Mexico is in critical need of our help. And, while most of us can not directly help clean-up the massive oil spill threatening so many of our resources, we can limit the amount of sediment and nutrients that we are contributing daily to the hypoxia in the Gulf.

The Mississippi River basin is a critical ecosystem in the U.S. - equaling 41% of the country. The basin drains to the Mississippi River which carries an average of 436,000 tons of sediment each day to the Gulf of Mexico. Nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus, are carried down-stream with the sediment and cause water quality issues both locally and within the hypoxic zone of the Gulf.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed the MRBI to address these water quality problems. The goal is to encourage producers to voluntarily implement conservation systems that avoid, control, and trap field runoff; protect, restore, and enhance wetlands; maintain agricultural productivity; and improve wildlife habitat. Nationally, \$50 million was available in financial assistance through the MRBI-CCPI (Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative) to eligible partnership projects in 41 focus areas. The Greater Wabash River Resource Conservation & Development Council (GWRRC&D) partnered with the Carroll, Clinton, Howard, Tipton, and Tippecanoe County SWCDs and a host of others to submit an application to bring **2.25 million dollars** to our counties over three years.

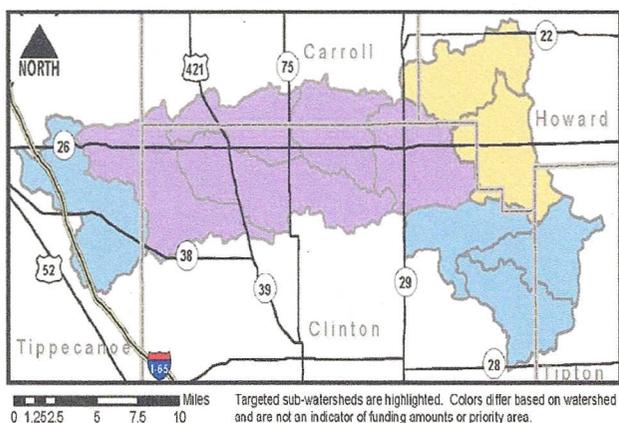
Through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), producers will be able to apply for funding to install conservation practices that will benefit both them and the environment. In the targeted watersheds this year, \$367,500 is available through the EQIP program to install practices such as: Residue and Tillage Management, Waste Utilization, Cover Crops, Grassed Waterways, and Nutrient Management. Through the WHIP program, \$75,375 will be available in 2010 to install practices to enhance wildlife habitat such as wetland creation and restoration and wildlife plantings.

What makes the MRBI-CCPI EQIP and WHIP different? The planning committee worked hard to make the MRBI-CCPI attractive so that as many conservation practices as possible could be installed by our producers at a low cost. Instead of applications competing against others in the state, you'll only be competing against others in the Wildcat Creek focus area (making the likelihood that you'll receive funding higher). Additionally, the partners involved in the initiative are committed to making the application process easier for you by assisting participants in meeting local, State, and Federal regulatory requirements; assisting with Conservation Planning; and even assisting you, the producer, during the application process.

When you look out across the bountiful fields of Carroll County each morning as you prepare to begin an honest day's work, it's difficult to imagine that the management activities you're doing here impact other people's livelihoods in the Gulf. But, the fact is that it does. And, the MRBI-CCPI is a great opportunity to make a change to your management practices that will help preserve your land for future generations, maintain and improve your productivity, and be economical to you while lessening our impact downstream. Interested in participating in this exciting new opportunity? Contact us today!

Don't miss out on this great opportunity! All of the MRBI-CCPI funds for 2010 must be allocated by August 6th!

Wildcat Creek MRBI-CCPI Focus Area



PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING

When: Thursday, July 29th, 2010
8:30 a.m.

Where: Bennett Center
50 E. North St. Rossville, IN 46065

If you own or operate land within this focus area, please plan to join us for our first public outreach meeting !!

For further information:
Call 765-564-4480 x3