

47th Annual Report



Rock Creek Conservancy District

The Rock Creek Conservancy District (RCCD) was established in 1966 with the support of more than 60% of the watershed landowners. The District was formed to manage the reconstruction of the Rock Creek channel that began in the spring of 1969 and was completed in 1975; and to maintain the works of improvements within the watershed following the completion of construction. The district is managed by five Directors who are residents within the Rock Creek watershed and are acquainted with drainage matters.

RCCD Directors

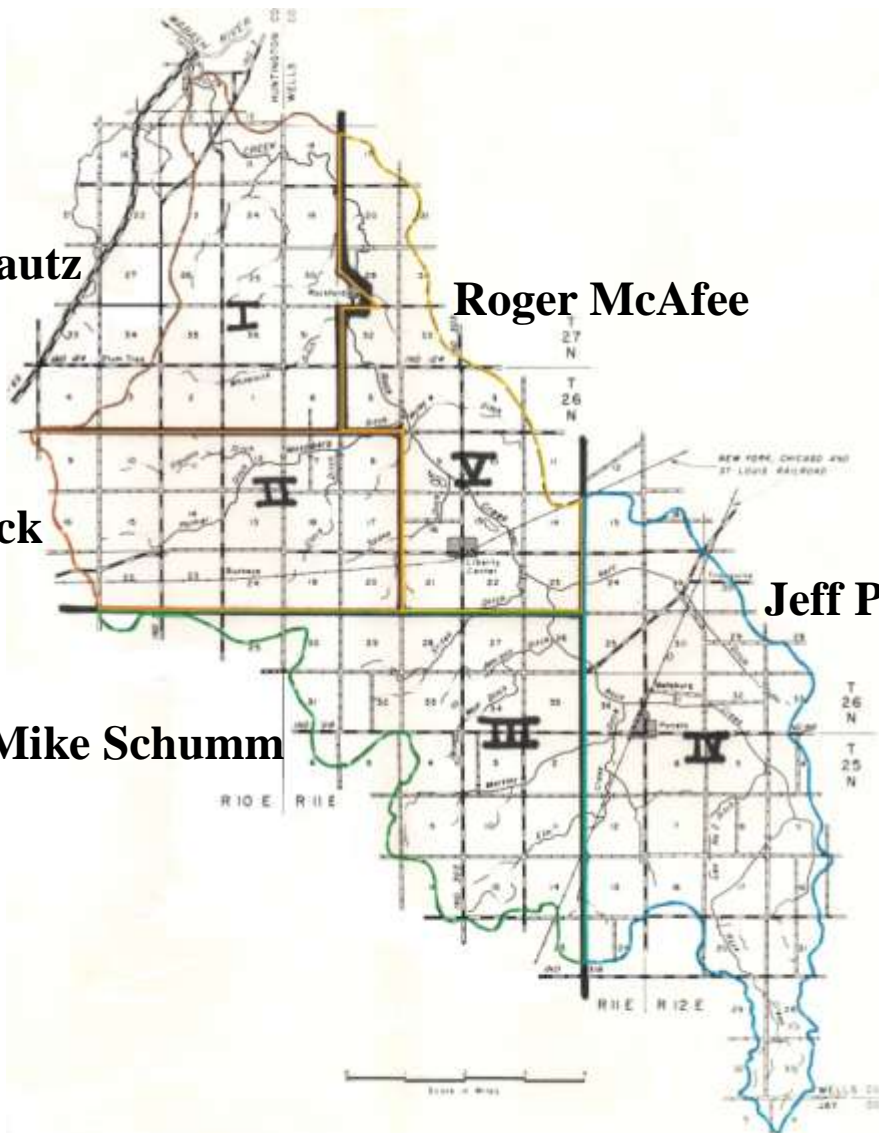
Robert Mautz

Roger McAfee

Roger Irick

Jeff Prible

Mike Schumm



RCCD MEETINGS

The Rock Creek Conservancy District meets quarterly in March, June, September, and December on the second Monday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the RCCD office, at 117 West Harvest Road, Bluffton. Meetings are open to the public. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted at the meeting location.

Report to the Public of 2013 Activities

The Rock Creek Conservancy District performed a variety of maintenance measures on the Rock Creek channel and tributaries in 2013.

- Rip-rap was added to a drop-pipe structure on the Mossburg Ditch and the area was leveled and seeded. (*Ron's Bulldozing and Noble Enterprises*)
- Leveling and seeding was completed on the Whitelock Ditch where surface pipes were replaced. (*Ron's Bulldozing*)
- A rock approach was added at the Liberty Center railroad trestle and brush was removed. (*Ron's Bulldozing and Noble Enterprises*)
- In cooperation with the Wells Co. Surveyors office an outlet was installed for the Stinson tile project near CR 400 W, between CR 100 & 200 S. (*Eads & Son Bulldozing*)
- In cooperation with the Huntington Co. Surveyors office the Whitelock Ditch was bottom dipped and leveled from the Huntington-Wells Co. Line to the Rock Creek main channel, and a new tile outlet was installed. (*Tri-County Excavating*)
- The annual spray program was completed on Unit 2 of the Rock Creek channel, from CR 100 S to CR 1000 S. Additional spray was applied in the Rockford and Hoosier Highway areas in an effort to control brush and trees. (*Right of Way Management Co.*)
- Downed trees in the main channel were removed from CR 300 S to Hoosier Highway and south of SR 218. (*Al Grogg*)
- A new tile outlet pipe was installed near Poneto, west of CR 100 E. (*Ron's Bulldozing*)

Landowners are encouraged to report maintenance needs to:

Contracting Officer - Kevin Brubaker (cell) 260/820-2322

or Financial Clerk - Stacia Henderson (cell) 260/273-0972

Easements and Right-of-Ways

The Rock Creek Conservancy District has a permanent easement and right-of-way of 75 to 125 feet on each side of the Rock Creek, measured from the center of the main channel; and on some of its tributaries. This easement and right-of-way is for the purpose of construction and maintenance by contractors of the Rock Creek Conservancy District. The easement and right-of-way area is private property and landowners retain possession and control of their land. Anyone other than contractors of the Rock Creek Conservancy District entering the right-of-way must contact the Landowner for permission to use the area.

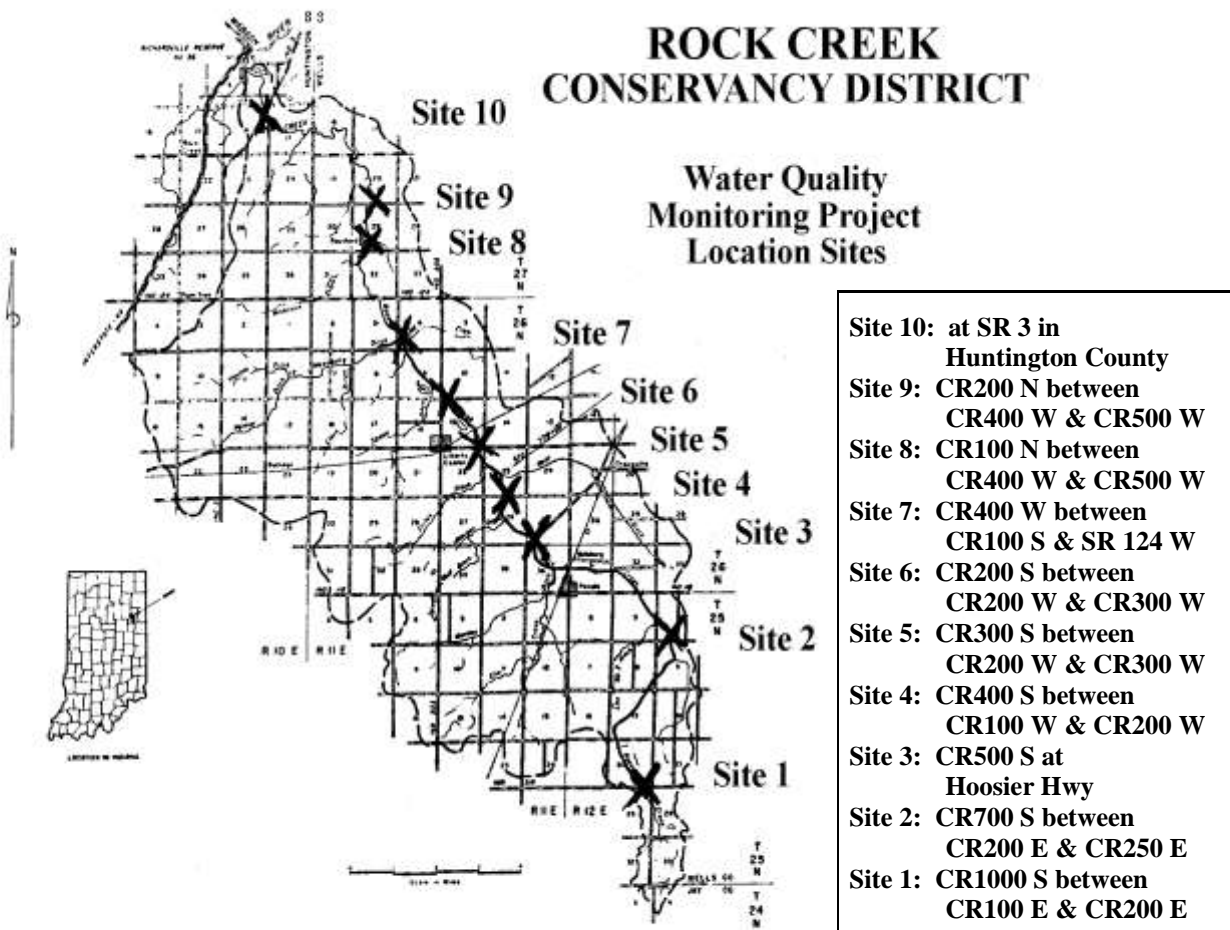
RCCD Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Rock Creek Water Quality Monitoring Program began in 1999 under the direction and guidance of Water Quality Program Coordinator, Mark Grimm. Student volunteers collected water samples from 10 sites along the Rock Creek and the samples were taken to a lab for chemical analysis for possible contaminants to the creek.

In 2002, biological monitoring (the collection of benthic macro-invertebrates and habitat assessments) was added to the program. Biological stream monitoring is based on the fact that different species react to pollution in different ways. Unlike chemical monitoring, which provides information about water quality at the time of measurement; biological monitoring can provide information about past and/or episodic pollution.

In an effort to make the program more cost effective, the RCCD stopped the lab testing for chemical pollutants in 2006, but continued the biological monitoring and added some field chemical tests to the program.

Over the years, the sites on the Rock Creek have been rated from excellent to poor, which is very common for streams and rivers in Indiana that have a primary use as drainage for cropland, small towns, and rural housing. It has been noted that fish and wildlife in and around the Rock Creek appears abundant, even during periods of low flow.



RCCD Water Quality Monitoring Program

The Rock Creek Conservancy District did not conduct water quality monitoring in 2013 due to the resignation of coordinator Mark Grimm; however, the RCCD has contracted with Neil Ainslie, of Meadow-Wood Environmental Labs to coordinate the monitoring program in 2014. Quarterly monitoring will be conducted at the 10 Rock Creek sites during the months of March, May, July, and September. Student volunteers are being recruited to assist with the monitoring events.

The field measurements that will be collected are: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, percent dissolved oxygen saturation, turbidity, conductivity, and flow. Biological monitoring will include macro-invertebrate investigations and completing the Citizens Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index. Laboratory analysis will be added to the program in 2014; testing for *E. coli*, total phosphate, nitrate-nitrite, and Nitrogen as nitrite.

The water quality data that was collected in the past will continue to be used to evaluate changes to the water quality in the Rock Creek. Past reports are available by contacting Financial Clerk, Stacia Henderson at 260/273-0972.

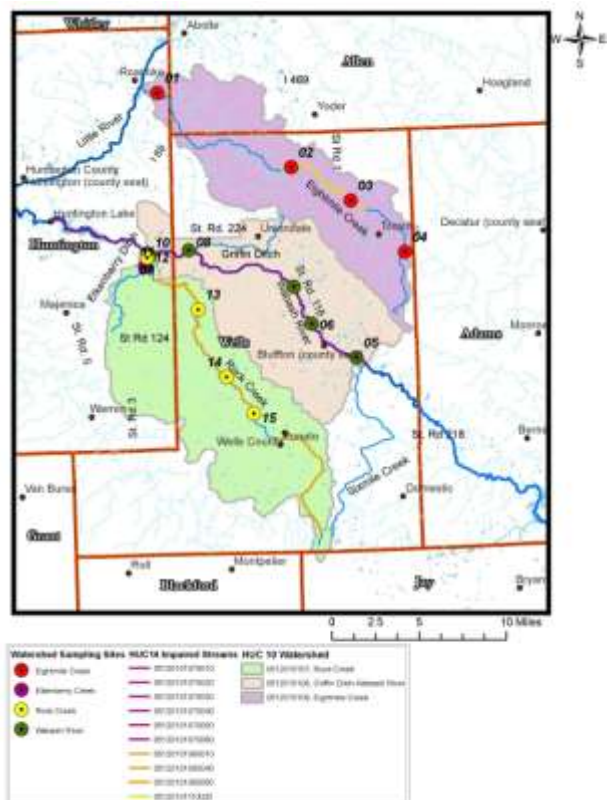
Watershed Management Planning

The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is currently working on a Watershed Management Plan for a portion of the Wabash River. The project area includes the Rock Creek watershed, in addition to the Wabash River-Griffin Ditch and Eight Mile Creek watersheds.

The planning process includes investigating and inventorying the watershed characteristics; conducting water quality monitoring activities, analyzing the findings, and indentifying the water quality problems; and setting goals and proposing future actions to address non-point source pollution in the watershed.

The Upper Wabash River Basin Commission is seeking input from landowners and land users for the development of the plan and will use that input to help determine future watershed management projects. This planning effort connects the community's decision making to data collection and defensible analysis of the issues. Recording this information in the watershed management plan increases the probability that the problems will be addressed, and provides a way to track progress with measureable results.

Rock Creek watershed landowners are encouraged to participate in this planning effort by contacting the Upper Wabash River Basin Commission Watershed Coordinator, Stacia Henderson at 260/273-0972.



Staff Changes



Mark Grimm

RCCD Water Quality Project Coordinator

1999 - 2013

Mark Grimm resigned in 2013 as the Water Quality Project Coordinator after 14 years of overseeing student volunteers in the collection of water samples, conducting the biological monitoring activities, compiling the data, and creating the yearly water monitoring project newsletter.

Neil Ainslie of Meadow-Wood Environmental Labs has been contracted as the Watershed Coordinator to continue the program in 2014.

William Elliott

RCCD Contracting Officer

February 1, 1975 - December 31, 2013

Bill Elliott began working on the Rock Creek project in 1969 when he was employed by the Soil Conservation Service. From 1969 to 1975 he actively participated in the reconstruction activities during his employment. In 1975, Bill was asked to serve as the Contracting Officer, and has been in that position for almost 39 years.

Bill resigned effective December 31, 2013, but will be assisting the new Contracting Officer, Kevin Brubaker, who was selected to fill the position.



Thank you to Mark and Bill for their commitment and years of service to the Rock Creek Conservancy District.

RCCD Directors and Staff

Roger Irick (*Huntington Co.*), Chairman

Robert Mautz (*Huntington Co.*), Vice Chairman

Jeff Prible (*Wells Co.*), Member

Mike Schumm (*Wells Co.*), Member

Roger McAfee (*Wells Co.*), Member

Contracting Officer: Kevin Brubaker 260/820-2322

Water Quality Program Coordinator: Neil Ainslie 260/273-0089

Financial Clerk: Stacia L. Henderson 260/273-0972

Rock Creek Conservancy District
Financial Report January 1 - December 31, 2013

CHECKING ACCOUNT

BEGINNING BALANCE – January 1, 2013		\$70,332.02	
RECEIPTS			
Huntington County Tax Income	3,184.00		
Wells County Tax Income	16,828.39		
Interest Income – Checking	14.57		
Interest Income – CD	162.77		
Miscellaneous Income - Sale of pipe	424.80		
Reimbursements & Refunds	6.21		
Sales Tax Collected	29.74		
Payroll Liabilities - 2013 Withholding	154.63		
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$20,805.11	
Sale of Investments		\$65,000.00	
EXPENDITURES			
Directors	1,000.00		
Financial Clerk	2,500.00		
Contracting Officer	2,500.00		
Legal Services	475.00		
Postage	476.00		
Travel	255.00		
Legal Notices	270.07		
Bond	138.00		
Liability Insurance	600.00		
Maintenance	32,967.70		
Contingency	1,823.26		
- Sales Tax Paid to IN Dept. of Revenue	12.44		
Payroll Liabilities - 2012 Withholding	127.24		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$43,144.71	
Purchase of Investments		\$95,000.27	
<u>CHECKING - ENDING BALANCE – December 31, 2013</u>			\$17,992.15

INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS

<u>CD (12mo. - x2639) - BEGINNING BALANCE January 1, 2013</u>		\$65,000.00	
RECEIPTS			
Interest added to investment	0.27		
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$0.27	
EXPENDITURES			
Interest transferred to Checking	0.27		
Sale of Investments	65,000.00		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$65,000.27	
<u>CD - ENDING BALANCE - December 31, 2013</u>			\$0.00

SAVINGS - BEGINNING BALANCE January 1, 2013 **\$15,017.26**

RECEIPTS			
Purchase of Investments	95,000.27		
Interest	106.70		
TOTAL RECEIPTS		\$95,106.97	
EXPENDITURES			
None	0.00		
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$0.00	
<u>SAVINGS - ENDING BALANCE - December 31, 2013</u>			\$110,124.23

TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS DECEMBER 31, 2013 **128,116.38**

This Financial Report is true to the best of my knowledge.
 Stacia L. Henderson, Financial Clerk, RCCD

General Information

The tax rate for 2013 was \$0.0005 per \$100 of assessed valuation, which resulted in a \$10.00 minimum tax statement for the majority of landowners within the District. The tax rate for 2014 has been set at \$0.0004 per \$100 of assessed valuation. The Rock Creek Conservancy District has no outstanding debts.

The Rock Creek Conservancy Districts purpose is to maintain the works of improvement. Maintenance will be done as needed on a continuing basis. The tree plantings, fish pools, filter strips and right of way markers were just as much a part of the project as the constructed channel. Landowners were not permitted to farm the area between the channel and line of right of way markers or block access to these areas. Any damage caused while performing maintenance activities to crops or other obstructions that are within the easement and right of ways are not recoverable from the District.

Historical Information

Poor drainage outlets and flooding had long been a problem in the Rock Creek watershed. In 1962, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the County Commissioners of Wells and Huntington Counties made application to the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) under Public Law-566 for assistance with the Rock Creek watershed problems. The request for assistance was approved by the SCS in 1963.

The SCS made a preliminary study and presented a favorable report in 1964. At that time it was decided to proceed with the plans for development to improve the Rock Creek watershed. The next step was to form a Conservancy District according to the Indiana Conservancy Act. The Rock Creek Conservancy District was officially established through court proceedings in 1966, with more than 60% of the landowners signing the petition for establishment of the district. The Rock Creek Conservancy Directors have the powers to act, and to construct, and to maintain the works of improvements within the district.

The final work plan for the works of improvement on the Rock Creek was completed by the SCS in 1966 and accepted by the local people. Easement and rights of way for construction and maintenance were obtained by court order following applicable court procedures. Court appointed appraisers established amounts to be paid to the affected landowners to purchase the necessary easements and rights of way and all were paid and obtained by 1972.

CONSTRUCTION

For construction purposes, the total 24.3 miles of planned open drain reconstruction was divided into three units. Unit 1 consisted of 9.6 miles of channel excavation and included all the rock excavation. Unit 2 consisted of 14.7 miles of channel excavation. Unit 3 included minor clearing and log jam removal on the Mossburg Ditch from the Rock Creek main channel to the junction of the Palmer and Stevens drains in Huntington County.

UNIT 1 included that part of Rock Creek from State Road 3 in Huntington County to CR 400 W in Wells County, plus the Whitelock open drain from the Huntington-Wells County Line to the junction with the Rock Creek. Construction began early in 1969 and was completed in the first part of 1973. The total cost of work on Unit 1 was \$830,015.64. Of this amount, \$806,349.89 was paid by federal funds through the PL-566 program. The remaining \$23,665.75 was paid from local funds.

Historical Information

UNIT 2 included that part of Rock Creek in Wells County between CR 400 W in Liberty Township to CR 1000 S in Nottingham Township, plus the lower 2,100 feet of the Mossburg Drain, a total of 14.7 miles. Work on unit 2 began in early 1973, and was completed and accepted on September 16, 1975. The approximate total cost of Unit 2 was \$1,053,142.82. Of this amount, \$889,715.73 was paid by federal funds, and \$163,427.00 from local funds.

UNIT 3 included minor clearing and debris removal on 13,370 feet of the Mossburg Ditch. The work began in February and was completed and accepted in July 1974. The total cost was \$7,485.00. Of this amount \$5,613.75 was paid with federal funds, and \$1,871.25 was paid with local funds.

CHALLENGES

The National Environmental Act of 1969 (PL-19-190) created many problems for the Conservancy District. This act necessitated a new study and revised plan for Unit 2 of the Rock Creek watershed plan, as well as portions of the completed section of Unit 1. The revised work plan was approved in May 1972, and included limiting construction to one sided clearing, replanting of approximately 52 acres of trees and woody plants for wildlife habitat enhancement, construction of silt traps, deflectors and fish pools, stream bank stabilization measures, and less steep side slopes to improve overall quality of the watershed project.

COST OF THE PROJECT

The original work plan forecast a starting date of 1969 and a completion date of 1972. The project was actually started on March 10, 1969 and completed on September 16, 1975. The revised work plan of May 1972, estimated the total construction costs of the works of improvement to be \$1,678,890. Of this amount \$1,473,600 was PL-566 federal funds and \$205,290 was local funds. No engineering service fees were included in the cost, as the Soil Conservation Service provided all engineering services.

The construction costs for the Rock Creek improvements on the main channel upstream from SR 3 in Huntington County to the junction of the Rock Creek and the Neff Drain in Liberty Township, Wells County was paid 100% from PL-566 federal funds. The remaining construction costs from the junction of the Rock Creek and Neff Drain to CR 1000 S in Nottingham Township, Wells County was on a 75% PL-566 federal funds - 25% local funds cost share basis.

The actual costs of all of the construction work on the Rock Creek was \$1,980,487.34. Of this amount, \$1,701,679.37 was PL-566 federal funds and \$279,807.97 was local funds. Of the local funds, \$91,327.38 was used to purchase the necessary easements and rights of way.

CONSERVANCY DISTRICT FUNDING

During the construction of the Rock Creek, the Conservancy District obtained loans for the local cost share funds. Since 1970, the Rock Creek Conservancy District has received funding from a special benefits tax that is assessed through the local tax structure, similar to property taxes. Landowners are taxed according to the assessed valuation of their holdings located within the Rock Creek watershed.

From 1970 through 1976 the tax rate was \$0.42 per \$100 of assessed valuation. The rate has fluctuated over the years, and was lowered as the loan obligations from the construction project were retired. However, major maintenance needs in 1986 required the District to obtain a loan and the tax rate was increased to pay for the maintenance work. Since that time, the tax rate has gradually been reduced. All loan obligations of the Rock Creek Conservancy District were paid in full at the end of 1991, and the District relies on the yearly tax collections to fund maintenance projects.