



Lower Salamonie River Watershed Cost-Share Program



Funded by a Federal 319 Grant through the Indiana Department of
Environmental Management and by Watershed Partners

Wells County Soil and
Water Conservation District
Grant # 68451

Executive Document Summary

In January of 2013, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) awarded the Huntington County SWCD a \$260,900 Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Grant. The funds were utilized to develop and implement the Lower Salamonie River (LSR) Watershed Management Plan (WMP) which included water quality monitoring and education and outreach programs, as well as a cost-share program. A total of \$100,000 was allocated as cost-share to provide technical and financial assistance to landowners in Tier 1 sub-watersheds with the implementation of eligible best management practices (BMPs)

The Huntington County SWCD and conservation partners completed the LSR Watershed Management Plan in July of 2015. Through an extensive watershed assessment, the LSR watershed management plan revealed wide-spread water quality issues associated with excess nutrients, sediments, and *E.coli* throughout two 10-digit HUCs (051201203, Black Creek-Salamonie River and 0512010204, Salamonie River). Priority subwatersheds were identified and ranked relative to their contributions to non-point source (NPS) pollution within the LSR Watershed. HUC12 watersheds were designated as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3. Tier 1 subwatersheds were considered to be the most degraded and represented areas where implementation of BMPs would have the greatest effect on improving water quality issues.

In February of 2018 the Huntington County SWCD received another 319(h) IDEM grant for a second phase of implementation. Through this grant, \$154,000 of cost-share was implemented which resulted in 77 best management practices that reduced sediment by 5,680 tons/year, phosphorus by 8,014 lbs/year, and nitrogen by 16,037 lbs/year.

In January 2023, Wells County SWCD received a \$141,000 319(h) IDEM grant for a third phase of implementation. Grant funds will be used to continue water quality monitoring and education and outreach programs, as well as a second phase of the cost-share program. The grant includes \$94,000 in-kind/match and \$130,000 for cost-share to provide continued assistance to local landowners and producers in Tier 1 & Tier 2 critical areas with the implementation of BMPs. By assisting landowners with the implementation of BMPs, the LSR watershed cost-share program will promote soil health and improve water quality issues within the LSR watershed.

This cost-share program has been developed to guide the continued implementation of the Lower Salamonie River (LSR) watershed management plan. Land-use in the LSR watershed is dominated by agriculture and issues with excess sediment, nutrients, and *E. coli* contamination are extensive. The LSR watershed management plan provided a technical evaluation of critical areas based on their contributions to these issues and revealed sub-basins of greatest conservation concern. To direct implementation in the LSR watershed, HUC12 watersheds were designated as Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 areas (Figure 1). Critical areas can be found in section 7.3, pg. 122-123 of the watershed management plan. Tier 3 watersheds are considered to be in the best condition while Tier 2 watersheds are in intermediate condition. Tier 1 watersheds are described as the most degraded and are leading contributors to NPS pollution in the watershed. This cost-share program will target Tier 1 and Tier 2 watersheds where implementation dollars are expected to have the most significant impact on conservation (Table 1; Figures 2-9). Priority will be given to Tier 1 BMPs. However, it should be understood that watersheds in all three tiers may benefit from BMPs to improve water quality and protect and enhance existing natural resources.

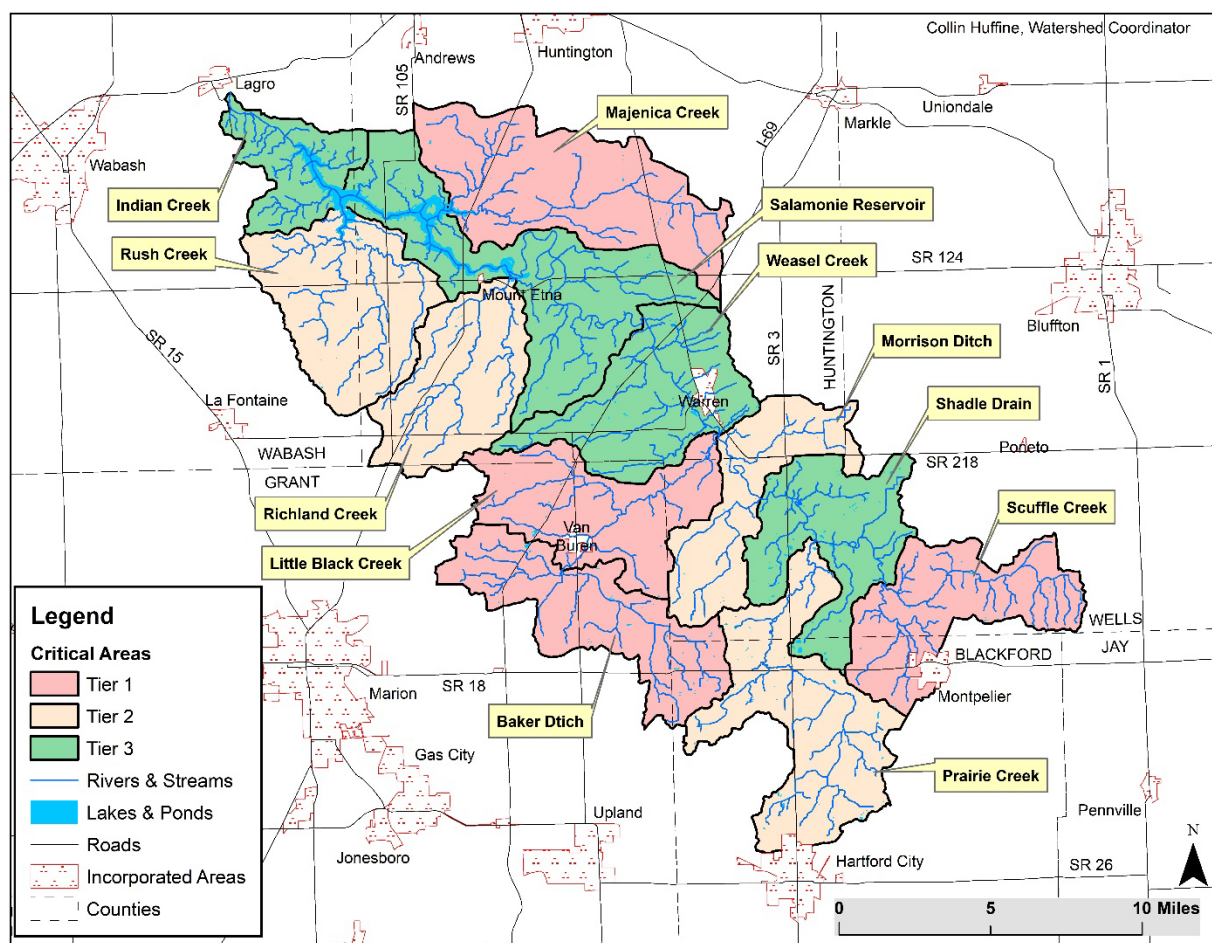


Figure 1. Critical Areas in the Lower Salamonie River (LSR) Watershed

Table 1. Target watersheds designated as Tier 1.

| HUC 12 | HUC 12 Name | Acres | % of total Tier 1 area |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------|------------------------|
| 51201020403 | Majenica Creek | 22,245 | 31.76 |
| 51201020305 | Little Black Creek-Black Creek | 15,961 | 22.79 |
| 51201020304 | Baker Ditch- Black Creek | 16,363 | 23.36 |
| 51201020301 | Scuffle Creek- Salamonie River | 15,468 | 22.09 |
| | Total | 70,037 | 100 |

Table 2. Target watersheds designated as Tier 2

| HUC 12 | HUC 12 Name | Acres | % of total Tier 2 area |
|-------------|----------------|--------|------------------------|
| 51201020404 | Rush Creek | 17,598 | 27.18 |
| 51201020402 | Richland Creek | 14,148 | 21.85 |
| 51201020306 | Morrison Ditch | 12,324 | 19.03 |
| 51201020302 | Prairie Creek | 20,682 | 31.94 |
| | Total | 64,752 | 100 |

Nearly 80 percent of land-use in the LSR watershed is agricultural. Therefore, this cost-share program will focus on local farmers and producers throughout the LSR watershed. Property owners in Tier 1 & Tier 2 watersheds will be targeted for implementation funds with priority given to Tier 1. Eligible best management practices (BMPs) were selected based on conservation needs, such as reducing sediment, nutrient, and *E. coli* contamination in local waterways, as well as cost to pollutant load reduction ratio, and likelihood of landowner acceptance as determined by the LSR watershed steering committee. Eligible BMPs were ranked 1 through 5 representing a gradient of high to low priority for LSR watershed cost-share dollars and are listed in Table 3.

Table 3 Eligible Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Cost-Share in LSR Watershed

| NRCS Conservation Practice Codes | Conservation Practice | Target Pollutant | NRCS average cost | Project Life Span | Priority for LSR Watershed Cost-Share Dollars |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 40 | Cover Crop | Sediment, Nutrients | \$30/Acre -single species \$45 – multi species(\$15,000 cap) | 1 year | 1 |
| 393 | Filter Strip | Sediment, Nutrients | Approx. \$598/Acre (Varies) | 10 years | 1 |
| 329, 345, 585, 590 | Equipment Modification (Conservation Tillage, Cover Crops, Strip Cropping and/or Precision Nutrient Application) | Sediment, Nutrients | Varies (\$20,000 Cap) | Life of Equipment (5 year minimum) | 1 |
| 329 | Residue and Tillage Management No-Till/Strip Till | Sediment, Nutrients | \$16.84/Acre | 5 years | 1 |
| 345 | Residue and Tillage Management Reduced Till | Sediment, Nutrients | \$20.80/Acre | 5 years | 1 |
| 590 | Nutrient Management | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | Varies \$7/Acre; \$15/Acre (with Manure) | 5 years | 1 |
| 104 | Nutrient Management Conservation Activity Plan | Sediment, Nutrients | Varies \$1,766-\$5,004 | 5 years | 1 |
| 412,484 | Grassed Waterway (Mulching if Necessary) | Sediment, Nutrients | Varies with width \$3,330-\$3,987/Acre, Mulching- Varies \$366-\$8,969/Acre | 10 years | 1 |
| 342 | Critical Area Planting | Sediment, Nutrients | Varies \$231-\$594/Acre | 10 years | 2 |
| 638, 606 | Water and Sediment Control Basin with Subsurface Drain | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | \$2.91/CuYd, Subsurface Drain-Varies with size. \$1.83-\$11.64/foot | 10 years | 2 |
| 390 | Riparian Herbaceous Cover | Sediment, Nutrients | Approx. \$523/Acre | 5 years | 2 |
| 512 | Forage and Biomass Planting | Sediment, Nutrients | Varies \$175-\$513/Acre | 5 years | 2 |
| 472 | Access Control: Animal Exclusion from Sensitive Areas | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | \$53/Acre | 10 years | 3 |
| 614 | Watering Facility | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | \$1021 | 10 years | 3 |
| 382 | Fence | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | \$1.78/foot | 20 years | 3 |
| 561 | Heavy Use Area Protection | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | \$1.17/sq. foot | 10 years | 3 |
| 391 | Riparian Forest Buffer | Sediment, Nutrients | \$1075/Acre | 15 years | 4 |
| 528 | Prescribed Grazing | Sediment, Nutrients, E. coli | Varies \$23-\$51/Acre | 5 years | 4 |
| 580 | Stream Bank and Shoreline Protection | Sediment, Nutrients | \$53/foot | 20 years | 5 |
| 582 | Two Stage Ditch | Sediment, Nutrients | \$9.17foot(\$35,000 Cap) | 15 years | 5 |

Note: Other BMPs may be added to the approved list if they are found to be beneficial in the watershed, or if new practices are approved by IDEM during the cost-share program implementation

Maximum Cost-Share: Cost-share will not exceed 75% of the actual cost of the practice, with a cap no more than 75% of the average cost per NRCS guidelines (excluding tax). IDEM does not compensate at a flat rate per acre for best management practices. Landowners will be responsible for at least 25% of the cost-share practice cost.

Advertisement & Outreach: The Cost-Share program will be advertised through media releases, LSR watershed and SWCD newsletters, LSR watershed and SWCD websites, County SWCD and NRCS offices, Salamonie River Watershed Facebook page, word of mouth, public meetings, and other community events.

Review Process: Cost-share applications will be ranked by the SWCD and Lower Salamonie River Steering Committee in cooperation with local NRCS and ISDA staff. Input will be obtained from the steering committee when necessary. A point system will be used for ranking and is included on the Ranking Form (Table 3; WMP pg. 124-125). Each project is unique and site specific conditions or situations may impact the final ranking of a project. In addition, priority will be given to projects in Tier 1 critical areas. Funds for projects will be allocated based on the scoring systems indicated in Table 3 until cost-share funds are exhausted. Applicants not funded through the project will be referred to other available cost-share programs if they are interested.

Administration of Cost-Share Program: The Wells County SWCD will be responsible for the administration of the Cost-Share Program.

Funding Caps: For all projects, the maximum cost-share is 75% of actual cost or average costs, whichever is less. There is a \$15,000 cap on cover crops. Additionally, there is a \$20,000 cap on equipment modifications and a \$35,000 cap for 2-Stage Ditch installation with up to \$35,000 for multiple practices per life of the grant, will be implemented. These caps may be modified as necessary by the Technical Committee. One of the goals of the cost-share program is to leverage funds to help landowners who have never installed conservation practices to consider doing so. The committee will balance these considerations when making final funding decisions.

Field Equipment Modifications: Landowners operating within critical areas may apply for equipment modification cost-share funds that will allow for precision application of nutrients and/or conservation tillage. Maximum cost-share will be \$20,000 for equipment modification. If equipment modification is for no-till, development of both a nutrient management plan and pest management plan are required. Additionally, if cost-share is for precision nutrient management, a nutrient management plan must be submitted.

Review and Approve BMPs: The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Technical Team based in Huntington County has agreed to review and approve any BMPs installed under

the Lower Salamonie River Watershed Cost-Share Program to ensure that practices meet NRCS standards. The Tech Team will also work on engineering plans that may be necessary depending on the BMP to be installed. Payments will be made to landowners in arrears once approved BMPs have been installed and inspected. For equipment modifications, payment will be made once the equipment has been used to carry out the planned conservation activity.

All Agricultural BMPs will be installed based on NRCS standards.

Permits for BMPs: Any required permits will be the responsibility of the property owner where the practice will be applied.

Maintaining BMPs: The cost-share recipient will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of all BMPs. Maintenance of BMPs will follow IDEM standards such that vegetative practices shall be maintained for 5 years, with the exception of cover crops which will be maintained for 1 year, while structural BMPs will be maintained for 10 years.

Deadlines: The cost-share program ends when all cost-share funds have been allocated, or the deadline of December 31, 2025 has been reached. All landowners who have been approved for cost-share funding must have practices installed and their invoices delivered to the Wells County SWCD on or before December 15, 2025. Applications for cost-share funds will be accepted no later than October 1, 2025.

Practice Geolocation: At a minimum, practices will be located via township, range section, or by a specified georeferenced point on a map.

Pollutant load reduction estimation: The Region 5 Load Estimation Model will be utilized to estimate pollutant load reductions associated with each installed BMP.

Table 4. Lower Salamonie River (LSR) Watershed Cost-Share Program Ranking Sheet

| Written Conservation Plan Required | Yes | No | Maximum Possible Points | Actual Points |
|---|--|----|--|---------------|
| Watershed Criteria | | | | |
| Tier 1 Sub-watershed* (Majenica Creek, Little Black Creek, Baker Ditch, Scuffle Creek) | | | If yes, proceed to BMP Ranking Criteria | |
| Tier 2 Sub-watershed* (Rush Creek, Richland Creek, Morrison Ditch, Prairie Creek) | | | If yes, proceed to BMP Ranking Criteria | |
| Tier 3 Sub-watershed (Indian Creek, Salamonie Reservoir, Weasel Creek, Shadle Drain) | STOP HERE, NOT ELIGIBLE FOR COST-SHARE | | | |
| *Please circle associated sub-watershed and provide location information below: | | | | |
| | | | | |
| BMP Ranking Criteria | | | | |
| Priority Ranking 1 | | | 60 | |
| Priority Ranking 2 | | | 40 | |
| Priority Ranking 3 | | | 20 | |
| Priority Ranking 4 | | | 10 | |
| Priority Ranking 5 | | | 5 | |
| Location and Project Elements | | | | |
| Project Area: | Yes | No | Maximum Possible Points | Actual Points |
| Less than 500 feet from waterbody | | | 40 | |
| 500 to 1000 feet from waterbody | | | 20 | |
| Greater than 1000 feet from waterbody | | | 10 | |
| | | | | |
| Highly Erodible Soils: | | | | |
| Slopes 5% to 10% | | | 20 | |
| Slopes greater than 10% | | | 40 | |
| | | | | |
| Not Highly Erodible, but serious erosion present | | | 20 | |

Table 4 continued: Lower Salamonie River Watershed Cost-Share Ranking Sheet

| Cropland | | | | |
|---|--|--|----|--|
| Does the project convert cropland to permanent hay land, pasture, woodland, or wildlife habitat? | | | | |
| Slopes less than 5% | | | 10 | |
| Slopes 5% to 10% | | | 20 | |
| Slopes greater than 10% | | | 40 | |
| | | | | |
| Does the project propose a conservation tillage system that leaves greater than 30% residue? | | | | |
| Slopes less than 5% | | | 10 | |
| Slopes 5% to 10% | | | 20 | |
| Slopes greater than 10% | | | 40 | |
| Cropland Continued | | | | |
| Does the project include using winter cover crops? | | | | |
| Slopes less than 5% | | | 10 | |
| Slopes 5% to 10% | | | 20 | |
| Slopes greater than 10% | | | 40 | |
| Does the project establish grass filter strips or herbaceous riparian buffers along streams on your farm? | | | | |
| 30 foot width | | | 20 | |
| 90 foot width | | | 40 | |
| Livestock | | | | |
| Does the project restrict livestock access to waterbodies? | | | | |
| Perennial or Intermittent Streams | | | 40 | |
| Other Waterbodies | | | 20 | |
| Does the project address a pasture with inadequate ground cover to protect against erosion? | | | 20 | |
| Does the project include renovation and maintenance of the pasture as a managed grazing system? | | | 40 | |

Table 4 continued: Lower Salamonie River Watershed Cost-Share Ranking Sheet

| Feasibility and Economics | | | | |
|---|--|--|----|--|
| There are no other conservation programs that are available for the proposed project. | | | 20 | |
| Necessary permits are in place if needed. | | | 10 | |

To apply for the cost-share program you must:

- 1) Fill out and return the 319A Agricultural Cost-Share Form to the Wells County SWCD. Forms may be turned in to the local SWCD and forwarded to the Wells County SWCD.**
- 2) Fill out and return the W-9 Taxpayer Identification Form.**

Cost-Share applicants will be ranked by the Wells County SWCD in cooperation with local NRCS and ISDA staff. If approved for cost-share funds, you will be notified by letter. Cost-share funds are paid to you in arrears after installation of the practice is complete, or equipment has been purchased and used in the critical areas identified in the cost-share application form. Installed BMPs will be inspected by local NRCS or SWCD staff. In addition, all invoices need to have been received by the Wells County SWCD District Coordinator. Reimbursement takes approximately 6-8 weeks once all paperwork and invoices have been received.

Contact Information

If you have questions please don't hesitate to contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District, or District Conservationists.

Wells County

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