

A Drop of News

May 2023

The Maple City Stormwater Toolbox

Blogging BMP's



The following article is reprinted with permission from the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) from their May *Grass Roots for Conservation* Newsletter (author: Todd Clark, Conservationist), which discusses the Best Management Practices (BMP's) used to aid in erosion and sediment control.

“Welcome back to another edition of Blogging BMP's. Today I want to talk about Elkhart County and some statistics that I came across while putting together a presentation for the annual County Summit that is put on for the County Commissioners, County Council, all other elected officials and department supervisors and managers. The topic that we discussed was the Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership and its role in managing both water quality and water quantity.

Since 2005, the City of Goshen, City of Elkhart, Town of Bristol, and the unincorporated areas of Elkhart County have worked together to implement 6 Minimum Control Measures (MCMs) that were mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM). These measures are as follows.

1. **Public Education and Outreach** – Teach the people
2. **Public Participation and Involvement** – Have the people be a part of the process
3. **Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination** – Find pollution and clean it up
4. **Construction Site Stormwater Run-off Management** – Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
5. **Post Construction Stormwater Run-off Control** – Manage what you built for Stormwater
6. **Good Housekeeping and Pollution Prevention** – Set the example as the city or town



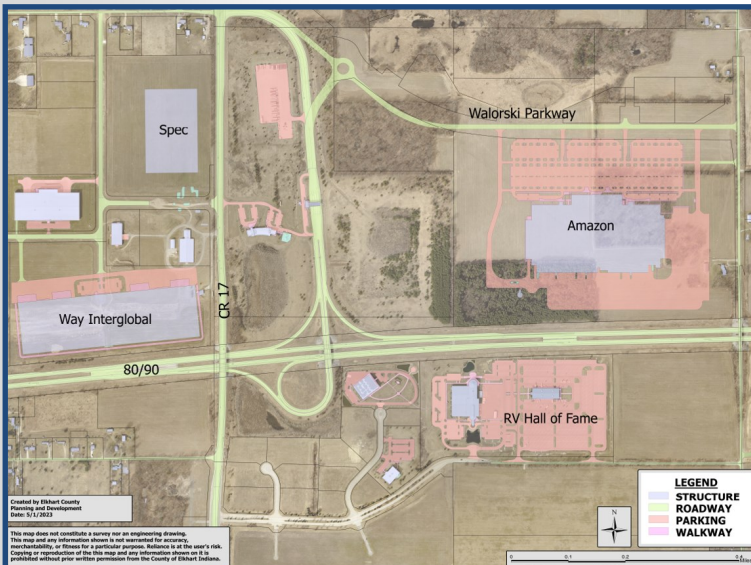
Cropland still dominates the landscape, much of which is left bare for 6 months a year allowing valuable soil to enter waterways by either wind or water erosion. This picture shows sediment on snow due the strong winds at the end of December 2022.

Now, that is the 50,000 foot view of these MCMs, but know that they are critical in ensuring the water remains clean in our county and the quality of life remains at a high standard when considering both the aesthetics and outdoor recreational activities this community has to offer.

So what are the statistics that I mentioned? Let's dive in...

Elkhart County has 467.97 square miles total of which 4.8 square miles are waterways. Why is this interesting? Well, 99% of the county drains to 1% of the area via ditches, pipes, and subsurface drainage. That is a lot of water and a little space to put it into.

Elkhart County has 36.09 square miles of hard surface which is 8% of the total land area in the county. That may not seem like much, but that number is growing at an average rate of 1 square mile per year and has started to move *(continued on back)*



Elkhart continues to increase hard surface areas by nearly 1 square mile a year!

Why are there so many words for waterways?

Welcome to a new series on the etymology of words used to describe waterways based on size and location. This month we begin with the word “River”. Credit for this idea goes to Graham Waugh, Water Resources Engineer at CBCL Limited (www.instagram.com/waterresourcesguy) and additional etymology information from www.etymologeek.com.



From the Latin root Ripa and Riparia (English: riparian) meaning “bank of a river” with subsequent Old French Riviere meaning “river” and Italian version Riviera meaning “the bank along the water”.
“Ironically it does not mean a watercourse!!”

(continued from front) further and further out of the towns. The good thing about this hard surface is that the vast majority has been designed to manage water and both hold it back and clean up with catch basins, retention basins, and controlled outlets to our waterways.

Elkhart County has 211.81 square miles of cropland that is completely controlled by the landowners of Elkhart County. This is 45% of our total land area, in various states of vegetation depending on the time of year, draining directly into our ditches, creeks, rivers, and lakes.

If you haven’t figured it out, the county as a whole is seeing growth in many different areas, but is still dominated by fields filled with corn and soybeans. When the Greater Elkhart Stormwater Partnership sits down and considers what areas to educate people on, it will always boil down to the heart of everything the SWCD has stood for since 1941, and that is the wise use of natural resources in Elkhart County. Farm fields will soak up a lot of rain, but when they are left bare for 6 months out of the year, Mother Nature will take what Mother Earth gave us and send it to Lake Michigan. *Don’t Farm Naked!*”

For more information on the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District visit their website at www.elkcoswcd.org.

Report a Pollutant

Stormwater pollutants include anything other than rain that could flow or be washed into a storm drain. If you see a pollutant entering a storm drain, please call 574-534-2201, send an email to stormwater@goshencity.com, or submit a Stormwater Report through the City’s “Report an Issue” button on the City of Goshen website, www.goshenindiana.org.

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