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ST. JOSEPH RIVER WATERSHED INITIATIVE WORKING TO CREATE A PATH FOR A CLEANER CEDAR CREEK

FORT WAYNE, IN: The City of Fort Wayne Utilities received a passthrough grant for the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (Initiative) from the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's Clean Water Act Section 205(j) grant program in the amount of \$125,625. These funds will be used to implement the *Lower Cedar Creek Watershed Management Plan Assessment and Education Program*. With land use changes, population growth, and sediment loading from the Cedar Creek, a Watershed Management Plan will be a guiding document to help improve water quality within the Cedar Creek and its tributaries.

The Cedar Creek watershed is comprised of 174,733 acres of land in Allen, Dekalb, and Noble Counties. Through the 205(j) grant, the Initiative will be able to conduct a thorough study of current water quality and land use conditions in the watershed to determine critical areas to implement best management practices to lessen our impact on water quality. An action register will then be created which will provide guidance to local government, developers, and landowners to ensure Cedar Creek has the highest water quality. All this will not be possible without the guidance of a diverse steering committee comprised of individuals representing government, industry, and environmental groups within the watershed. The Steering Committee will meet quarterly through February 2025 to develop a comprehensive Watershed Management Plan.

In addition to developing the watershed management plan, the grant provides funding to offer education and outreach opportunities throughout the project area. The goal of this outreach is to inspire behavior changes of residents within the Cedar Creek watershed to reduce their impact on water quality. Events included rain barrel workshops, promotion of the Where my River Runs State accredited educational program, water quality workshops, and Hoosier Riverwatch Citizen Science training. To learn when and where these outreach events will occur follow the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative's social media page.

A survey has been created to gather input on the public's concerns regarding the Cedar Creek Watershed. Your input is very important. The Initiative is asking the public to

complete the survey which can be found at this address
<https://form.jotform.com/231223841763150> or by using the below QR code.

Doug Fasick, Executive Director with the Initiative stated “we are excited about the impact we were able to have on water quality within the watershed. Our hope is that this project will guide land use and development in a way that minimizes our impact on the quality of the water in the Cedar Creek watershed, but also forge great partnerships to further the impact we can have on our water resources as a community”.

If you are interested in learning more about this project or how you can have an impact on our water resources contact Doug.Fasick@cityoffortwayne.org.



The St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative serves a six-county area in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan. The Initiative works to develop partnerships that promote economical and environmentally compatible land uses that improve water quality in the 694,400-acre watershed. The Initiative’s office is housed with Fort Wayne City Utilities at 200 E. Berry Street, Suite 250, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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