



St. Joseph River Basin Commission
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Upcoming Meeting

June 7, 2016 at 10:00am
 Elkhart County Public Services Building



Community Interest Drives Cobus Creek Study



*Cobus Creek at Cobus Creek County Park
 Elkhart County, Indiana*

Cobus Creek is a winding, scenic creek that flows south from southern Cass County, Michigan through Elkhart County before draining into the St. Joseph River, near the Elkhart Conservation Club. The majority of the residents in the watershed live adjacent to the creek or one of several lakes located in Cobus Creek's headwaters. The creek and its tributaries are held in high regard by watershed stakeholders given its natural meandering appearance, extensive wetland complexes, and diversity of sport fish species, including a natural producing population of brown trout. These are just a few reasons why there has been a significant interest among landowners and other stakeholders of Cobus Creek to better understand the health of their watershed and how they can better preserve Cobus

Creek's resources. As a result, the St. Joseph River Basin Commission (SJRBC) has partnered with nearly a dozen different organizations to help stakeholders achieve this goal.

In 2015, SJRBC received an Indiana Department of Natural Resources Lake and River Enhancement program grant to complete a watershed diagnostic study on Cobus Creek watershed. The study will provide a better understanding of surface water quality in Cobus Creek watershed. It will be important not only for conservation of the creek and its wildlife, but it will also benefit the surrounding communities by providing information on how to maintain the health and natural beauty of the creek and its associated surface waters. The beginning phases of the study are already under way, and the final report will be made available to the public in early 2017. For more information on the watershed and to stay up-to-date with this study, visit the Cobus Creek Watershed Diagnostic Study webpage www.sjrbc.com/cobuscreek.

Thank you to our supporting partners

- Friends of Cobus Creek
- Elkhart Conservation Club
- City of Elkhart
- Ontwa Township, Michigan
- Greater Elkhart County Stormwater Partnership
- St. Joseph River Valley Fly Fishers
- Cleveland Township, Indiana
- Eagle Lake Improvement Assc.
- Elkhart Community Schools
- Elkhart County Parks Dept.
- Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Friends of the St. Joseph River
- Indiana Senator Joseph Zakas
- U.S. Senator Joseph Donnelly
- U.S. Congresswoman Jackie Walorski

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Save the Date

16th Annual Indiana-Michigan St. Joseph River Basin Symposium

WHAT: An opportunity to network with others from the entire St. Joseph River Basin and share successes and lessons learned from the many projects and programs across the basin.

WHO: Water professionals & enthusiasts

WHEN: May 20th, 2016

WHERE: Fernwood Botanical Gardens, Niles, MI

Interested in Presenting?

Are you working on a project in the St. Joseph River Watershed and want to share your successes with others? At this year's symposium the SJRBC will offer "ignite" style (5-10 minute) presentations on current or recently completed water resource projects in our watershed. If you are interested in presenting on a project at this year's symposium or have questions about this event, contact the SJRBC at sjrbcdir@macog.com. We hope to see you there!

IWLA Sponsorship

This year marks the first year the SJRBC has been able to sponsor a water resource professional in the St. Joseph River Basin to attend the 2016 Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy (IWLA), sponsored by Purdue University. The Academy runs from January through May 2016 and includes a combination of online distance learning modules, as well as in person workshops to assist professionals in Indiana in developing watershed management skills.

After careful consideration by the review committee, the SJRBC awarded sponsorship to Randolph A. Sexton, PS, CFM, the County Surveyor in Noble County. Randy has been a Professional Surveyor since 1984 and has an extensive background in surveying and drainage. He also has turned a large portion of his family farm within the St. Joseph River Watershed back to nature through the Conservation Reserve Program. Randy has a passion for nature and is confident that the education he receives through the Academy will further assist him in improving drainage and water quality management in our watershed.

The SJRBC is excited to sponsor a professional in our watershed to attend the Academy and hopes to continue sponsoring individuals to attend this program in years to come.

Interested in receiving Basin Bites electronically?

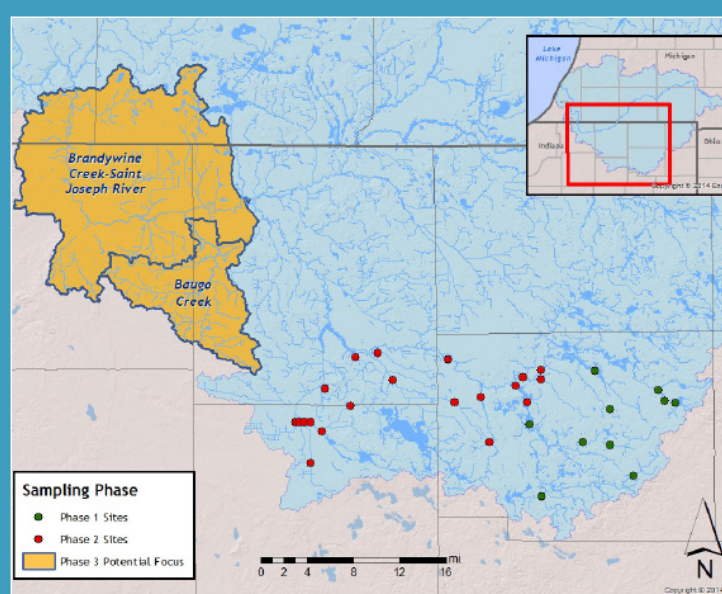
Scan here, send us an email, or visit
www.sjrbc.com/resources/basinbites/
to sign-up!



Water Monitoring Program

This spring, the SJRBC will finish up the first year of sampling Phase 2 sites; twenty sites located in the south central portion of the St. Joseph River Watershed. While the first few months of data pulled from Phase 2 sites indicate that water quality in this portion of the watershed is looking better than our ten Phase 1 sites, located in southeastern portion of the watershed, a full year's worth of data is still needed to draw final conclusions. Phase 1 data has already proven helpful in identifying water quality issues related to non-sustainable agriculture practices, and the SJRBC is confident that continuing to build a robust database of water quality data will help organizations in our watershed make better-informed decisions on where and how to focus their water quality efforts.

We are currently in the process of selecting twenty sites for Phase 3 to be sampled monthly between April 2016 and March 2017. After an extensive review of historic water quality data in our watershed, we are considering focusing our Phase 3 water monitoring efforts in the Baugo Creek and Brandywine Creek – St. Joseph River subwatersheds. If you have a specific tributary or site in the St. Joseph River Basin you would like to see sampled this coming year, let us know by emailing sjrbcdir@macog.com. All water quality data and complimenting data analysis can be found on our website, www.sjrbc.com under the "Resources" section.



The SJRBC samples for 13 different parameters at each of our sample sites. Sites are sampled monthly for our year and are revisited every three years. The goal of our monitoring program is to build a database of historic water quality data for surface waters in the Basin.