

## **SUGAR CREEK WATERSHED: PUBLIC INPUT MEETING**

The Sugar Creek Watershed Management Planning Meeting sponsored by the Hancock County Soil and Water Conservation District/IDEM 319 Grant will be held on February 13<sup>th</sup> at the Hancock County Public Library located at 900 West McKenzie Greenfield, IN 46140 (Phone: 317-462-5141). Time is set for 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. **Scott J. Brejcha and Ed Belmonte**, of V3 Companies, and our Sugar Creek Watershed Coordinators, will be leading the meeting. Input is needed from landowners within the Sugar Creek Watershed on their resource concerns including both positive and negative.

### **The Importance of Watershed Planning**

When water flows across the land during rainfall events, it can carry fertilizers, loose soil, litter and other pollutants into streams and other surrounding water bodies. As a result, everything we do on the land affects the quality and quantity of our water resources and the natural systems that surround us. Therefore, the natural resources and the quality of life in our communities are directly affected—positively or negatively—by the way we plan for and manage the land we use.

Community watershed management planning is a way to consider a wide range of environmental, economic, and social issues along with the community's vision for the future of the watershed under a single framework. Working within physical boundaries rather than political boundaries, the watershed management planning process provides opportunities to address water quality and habitat issues beyond the scope of single jurisdictions. It provides a means to ensure environmental protection, to support quality of life issues, and accommodates economic development using the watershed as the planning framework. Any kind of planning allows you to put a single action into the context of a larger vision—watershed management planning allows for that vision to include healthy natural resources and waterways.

Many local agencies and citizens are playing an essential role in understanding Hancock County's water resources through the protection of our local water bodies and habitat. In our watershed planning process it is hoped that protection, preservation, restoration and other land use decisions can now be made using technical and financial resources as efficiently and effectively as possible in order to improve water quality, habitat and the quality of life for all residents.

Watershed management planning is a process that involves many steps and includes a variety of stakeholders as well. Watershed groups often start by building public support and then move through a planning process. The planning process does not always move in one direction and the various steps are interrelated. Information gained at one step may lead the group to move to another step in the process. For example, information gained during the inventory step may lead the group back to seeking new stakeholders. The planning process after completion will give us the result in the development of an actual watershed management plan.

Go to [www.hancockswcd.org](http://www.hancockswcd.org) , click on Watershed for more information and also a map of the watershed. If you have any questions, you can also stop by the office or call the office at 317-462-2283 Ext 3 or email at [cindy.beckner@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:cindy.beckner@in.nacdnet.net) for more information.