



## WREC Wire

January 2022

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### **A change in course (but not a goodbye) A note from our Watershed Coordinator, Shannon Stanis**

I have accepted the position as Executive Director of NICHES Land Trust and will be transitioning to their staff full time in January. I am very excited for this opportunity but it is with a heavy heart that I say I will no longer be the watershed coordinator for the Region of the Great Bend of the Wabash River. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve the community through my role at the Wabash River Enhancement Corporation (WREC) over the last four years.

Rivers connect us in the most beautiful ways. Like many people, I moved to Lafayette because of the Wabash River and did not know it at the time. In 2015 I started a graduate program at Purdue University. I lived in the north end of Lafayette and biked over the Wabash to Purdue's campus every day. I fell in love with the Wabash on these rides. Every day I would tell the Wabash something- exciting news, disappointments, motivational pep talks, etc. Anything I had to share, the Wabash was there. I would listen to what the river had to share with me. I could feel the river's resilience while watching the water flow. The Wabash took care of me and I wanted to take care of the Wabash. I became involved in local environmental efforts and started volunteering with WREC and NICHES Land Trust. The more I explored the watershed, the more I loved this river and the more invested I became in this community. When I decided to stay after graduation, I knew it was because of the Wabash.

Thank you to everyone that has made this journey at WREC so fulfilling by attending events, following us on social media, volunteering, celebrating at Wabash Riverfest, partnering on projects, enjoying the river, advocating on the Wabash's behalf, supporting this work, and so much more. Together, we have accomplished great things for the river. I have greatly enjoyed working with all of you to improve conditions in and increase access to the Wabash River.

I was not looking for new employment but this opportunity came about to use my skills to help the Wabash and this community in another impactful way. By leading NICHES Land Trust, I will oversee care for 4,000+ acres of the Wabash River's watershed and ensure these natural areas are accessible to all. NICHES has always been an important partner to WREC and the watershed group; and that collaborative partnership will be strengthened under my leadership.

I am so grateful our journey together continues and for our bright future ahead.

Wishing you a happy holiday season,

Shannon

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## WE ARE HIRING

### **Watershed Coordinator**

**Full Time Position working to improve the  
Wabash River through education, land  
management, and riverfront development.**

**Learn more and apply:**

**<http://www.wabashriver.net/job-opportunities/>**

[Learn More and Apply](#)

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## Cover Crop Field Day Equipment Demonstration

WREC and our partners are planning a Cover Crop Field Day focused on Equipment Demonstration. Tentative Date is February 15th and will be confirmed soon.

This field day has 3 stops and is for anyone that grows food! If you have a backyard food garden, grow row crops at a large scale, or anywhere in between, this field day is for you! Cover crops are important at any farm level. Learn from your peers how they incorporate cover crops, the equipment they use to do so, and how they help your farm/garden. Conservation staff will cover funding opportunities to help bring these practices to life. Attendees will see cover crops growing at each location.

9am- 10:30am: Wildcat Valley Farms. Get an up close look at equipment used to install and terminate cover crops in large scale agricultural production including a roller crimper and air seeder.

11am-12:30pm: Ivy Tech Agricultural Fields. See a variety of cover crop demos and learn about seeding with drones at a midsized farm.

1pm-2:30pm: Grow Local's Powerhouse Lane Farm. View cover crops in vegetable beds and the equipment used for this important practice on small farms and backyard gardens.

More information to come to the WREC Website soon. Free Event. No RSVP required. Attendees are welcome to attend all or part of the sessions as their schedules allow.

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## Happy New Year!

Whether you're a New Year's resolutions person, or just someone that's dreaming of warmer weather, winter is a great time to start planning projects that won't kick off until spring time. Take this time to research, plan, sketch, and prep for your spring projects. Here's a list of ideas and resources to help make 2022 a more River-friendly year:

- [Start a compost pile](#) or utilize the [Food Waste Drop-off](#)
- [Plan your native plant garden](#)
- [Find a new-to-you natural area to visit](#)
- [Plan your attack on invasive plants](#) and utilize [WREC's tool library](#)

Our own public libraries in Tippecanoe County have several native plant books available that could be great winter reading:

- Native Plants of the Midwest by A. Branhagen
- Midwest Native Plant Primer by A. Branhagen
- Birdscaping in the Midwest: a guide to gardening with native plants to attract birds by M. Nowak
- Natures Best Hope: a new approach to conservation that starts in your yard by D. Tallamy
- An Indiana Landowners Guide to Native Prairie Plants by N. Benage
- The Midwestern Native Plant Garden: native alternatives to flowering nonnative plants by C. Adelman

Find Books at our County  
Library

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## Composting Through the Winter

Decomposition slows down or sometimes freezes to a halt in the winter. Composting is still possible in colder temperatures, it just happens in slow motion. If you have a back yard compost pile, here a few tips to keep your food scraps out of the landfill and keep your compost pile happy all winter long.

- Insulation: Increase the amount of browns, or carbon, in your pile. This is typically in the form of fallen leaves in the winter. If you have excess leaves in the fall and you want to add them to your pile slowly over the winter, just keep them in another pile to the side and add leaves as needed.
- Keep it fluffy: Decomposition needs air, and small air pockets also act as insulation like in a down jacket. Be sure to toss your pile when it's not frozen to keep your microbes warm and active.
- Dig while it's soft: If you use the ultra-easy way of composting and just bury your food waste straight in your yard or garden, dig a few holes or a trench while the ground is soft in preparation for the winter freeze. That way you can just toss your food waste in the hole and pile some frozen dirt on top.
- Utilize the West Lafayette Food Waste Drop-off: If you don't or can't have a compost pile at home, you can always bring food scraps to the West Lafayette Street Department food waste drop-off. Food waste is sent to the Waste Water Treatment Plant to be bio-digested. The off-gassing methane is used to power the plant and the bio-solids are given to Tippecanoe farmers to use as fertilizer.



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source: <http://confessionsofacomposter.blogspot.com/2019/01/winter-compost-blues.html>

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### Riverfront Development Updates

**CSO Project:** Have you noticed the construction site in the Wabash Avenue neighborhood just south of the South St. Bridge as you cross into Lafayette? Lafayette Renew has been constructing a combined sewer overflow holding tank there on WREC and City owned property. The project is in its final stages, and anticipated to be finished in January/February of 2022. The combined sewer overflow tank will allow storm water and sewage to be contained during heavy rain events while it waits to be processed at the waste water treatment plant. The project also includes a solar field that will help to power the waste water treatment plant! This project also gave the opportunity to remove invasive species from the banks of the Wabash, opening up a beautiful view of the floodplain and water. Once the project is completed WREC's river front plans call for extending the Wabash River Heritage Trail through the site to connect the Wabash Avenue neighborhood to downtown Lafayette and West Lafayette and create additional green space in our urban center.

**Environmental Cleanup:** WREC is working with the US Environmental Protection Agency and IN Dept. of Environmental Management to clean up 40 Chestnut St. a 14 acre river front property located in the Wabash Ave neighborhood in Lafayette. The former Lafayette Boxboard Paper Mill site, now owned by WREC, has contaminated soil from its previous operations as a paper mill and WREC and its partners are in the final stages of assessing the site and developing a remediation plan for the property. WREC is working with both the EPA and IDEM to obtain funding to clean it up in preparation for converting the area to public greenspace per WREC's Two Cities, One River corridor master plan for the Lafayette and West Lafayette urban riverfront.

**READI Grant:** 30 million dollars in State READI funds (a regional economic development program), were awarded to our six county region of the state. The application plan for these funds included pilot projects for the 5-County multi-use Wabash River Greenway (WRG) being planned by WREC. Other READI projects included improvements to the Purdue University Airport and increasing broadband internet access in the region. Allocation of READI funds will be finalized beginning in January, 2022. If funded, the READI WRG Pilot Project in Tippecanoe County will develop a North River Road Trail Head on the west side of the road under the Sagamore Parkway Bridge, connector trails up to the Sagamore Parkway Bike Bridge on both sides of the river, and a Canoe/Kayak Put in/Take Out facility on the west side of the river under the bridge. Learn about the Wabash Greenway Project and take the public input surveys here. [Learn about the greenway project and take the public input surveys here.](#)

**Next Level Trail Grant:** WREC applied for a trail grant (Project) through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Next Level Trail Grant Program. This Project would fund a connector trail from the east landing of the existing Sagamore Parkway Bike Bridge and extend east along the south side of Sagamore Parkway to North 9th Street. The Project will link to the Tippecanoe County READI Pilot Project if it is funded, and a City of West Lafayette connector trail project, to connect both cities to each other and to the Wabash River Heritage Trail and the Wabash River corridor Heritage. The award notification of this grant application is in February or March!

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During the month of December 2021 and January 2022 Tippecanoe residents will be able to drop off broken string lights to be recycled for free! There are drop-off bins in the lobby of the County Government Building, in the lobby of the south entrance to Lafayette City Hall, and in the lobby of the West Lafayette City Hall. Big thanks to Oscar Winski e-Recycling, Tippecanoe County, the City of Lafayette, and the City of West Lafayette for collaborating to host these drop-off sites and get your string lights recycled! If your string lights are attached to plastic decorations, please remove those and put the plastic in your trash. We are unable to recycle plastic decorations, only string lights!

Learn More at the Recycling & Solid Waste website



The second newsletter for the Greater Lafayette Climate Action Plan was released in November. Click the link below to read the newsletter in English or Spanish. If you haven't taken the survey yet, it can be found in [English or Spanish on the website](#).

Second Climate Action Newsletter

Segundo boletín en Español



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