

# *Big Pine Creek Watershed Project*

## *Best Management Practices Fact Sheet*

### *Oak Woodland Restoration*



Oak woodlands graced the banks of Big Pine Creek and the major tributaries at the time of European Settlement. The wide branches and widely spaced trunks provide attractive shade for people as well as wildlife.

Oak Woodlands are defined as oaks composing greater than 60% of the mature trees in the stand and having an open canopy (50-75% canopy closure).

Purposes of restored oak woodlands include, but are not limited to:

- Habitat for wildlife including deer, turkey and red-headed woodpeckers.
- Food sources for pollinators.
- Water retention and nutrient and sediment reduction.

Many of our oak woodlands are being lost, due to excessive grazing or the gradual conversion of woodlands to sugar maples or invasive species. But luckily, this trend can be reversed with some sweat equity put into your woods.

*Contact Info for the Soil & Water Conservation Districts in the Big Pine Creek Watershed*

*Benton County: Jon Charlesworth    765-884-1090 x3    jon.charlesworth@in.usda.gov*

*Warren County: Deb Lane            765-762-2443 x3    debra.lane@in.nacdnet.net*

*White County: Sharon Watson    574-583-5962 x3    sharon.watson@in.nacdnet.net*

Available financial assistance:

The Big Pine Creek Watershed group will be offering cost-share incentives to help producers adopt best management practices (BMPs) aimed at reducing the amount of nutrients, sediment and bacteria entering our surface waters. **Oak woodland restoration** is one of the BMPs we want to encourage. The financial incentive for nutrient management will come in the form of reimbursement of 75% of the total prairie restoration costs not to exceed \$600/acre.

- Applications for cost share assistance are available from the Soil & Water Conservation District offices in Benton, Warren and White counties.
- Closing dates for ranking periods are still to be determined. Please check the watershed group's webpage which can be accessed via the Benton County SWCD website [bentoncountyswcd.org](http://bentoncountyswcd.org)
- Applications will be ranked based on merit. Pairing Oak Woodland restoration with other conservation practices such as no-till/strip till, filter strips or cover crops will increase the ranking score of the application.
- Successful applicants will sign a contract outlining the terms of the cost-share agreement.
- Assuming the restoration work meets NRCS practice standards, and the area passes visual inspection, the applicant will be mailed a reimbursement check.