



Coffee Creek
Watershed
Conservancy, Inc.

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Lori Sumner

Phone: (219) 395-5300

New Urbanism Explored at HHRCD Land Use Sustainability Tour

Approximately thirty people enjoyed the Hoosier Heartland Resource Conservation Development (HHRCD) Council's Land Use Sustainability Tour on June 4th to see Coffee Creek Center, an innovative planned community located in Chesterton, Indiana. The tour featured quite an array of concepts including: new urbanism, neo-traditional town planning, unique water quality design, innovative ecological-based land planning and design, advanced energy systems, restored native ecosystems and habitats. The event was sponsored by the Hoosier Heartland RC&D Council, Inc.; Central Indiana's Soil and Water Conservation Districts; the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Soil Conservation; the Indiana Planning Association; and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Research, by the Urban Institute, has shown that approximately 60% of the people who buy a home on a golf course do not play golf. They just prefer open space that a golf course provides. At Coffee Creek Center, open space has been conserved by protecting the area along Coffee Creek with a watershed preserve without the cost of developing a golf course. The development also has several more features that focus on land sustainability.

For example, a new innovative underground water collection system for surface water collection called "level spreaders" or "leaky pipes" has been designed and installed to absorb peak runoff from the commercial and residential areas in the development. These pipes allow runoff to seep through the soil before it enters the creek. This system helps control flooding and also improves water quality. The underground water collection system also cools the water by having it seep through the soil before it enters the stream as an alternative to direct runoff from large parking areas during high temperatures in the summer that discourage cold-water fish species like trout from living in the local creek.

Parking lots themselves are even surfaced with pavers instead of solid concrete or asphalt so rain water can seep into the ground where it lands instead of adding to direct runoff volumes. The open space along the stream has been restored as natural prairie areas with deep-rooted native plants and wetlands, again to help absorb runoff and encourage water to seep into the soil and decrease surface water runoff. The Coffee Creek stream in the center of the 200 acre watershed preserve has been

restored to its natural meandering as a prairie stream as it flows toward Lake Michigan. These activities and practices have helped to restore the land's natural hydrologic cycle. Biological monitoring of the stream has shown biodiversity and water quality have continued to improve in the area since initial development started.

Many of the innovative homes in the area have only one-car garages. The thought is to encourage development of shopping and commercial (work) areas within walking distance to residential areas, so most of a family's daily tasks do not require a car for transportation. Having only one car payment also, ideally helps the family to have more money that can be used for other family needs.

"Rain gardens" are encouraged at home sites. A rain garden consists of a shallow depression to collect roofs runoff and allow water to soak into the ground instead of directly running off of the site. These areas are also landscaped with native plants appropriate to the area and consistent with the restored communities within Coffee Creek.

For more information about Coffee Creek Center visit <http://www.coffeecreekcenter.com> , phone them at 800-606 SAND or visit them at 1010 Sand Creek Drive South, Chesterton, IN 46304. Dennis Slaughter, HHRCD Urban Committee, moderated the session. Steve Barker, Executive Director, Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy, Inc. (www.coffeecreekwc.org) and Dustin F. New, Ecological Consultant, JFNew (www.jfnew.com) were speakers and tour guides for the event. For more information about the activities of the Hoosier Heartland RC&D visit their website at www.hhrcd.org or phone: Rebecca Fletcher at 317-290-3250. Hoosier Heartland intends to have a presentation of the tour available on their web site in the very near future.