

# Kosciusko Urban Healthy Soils Working Group

## District Showcase Award, November 2023

### Mission

Improve soil health on Kosciusko's urban and community small-scale agricultural land (10 acres or under). Provide soil sampling, technical assistance, host workshops, and establish educational materials. Target: community gardens, home gardens, school gardens, church gardens, hospital /governmental gardens, or any other specialty growing operation.

### 4 Soil Health Principles

1. Minimize Disturbance  
*Disturb the soil as little as possible.*
2. Maximize Soil Cover  
*Keep the soil covered as much as possible.*
3. Maximize Biodiversity  
*Using crop rotation and cover crops.*
4. Maximize Continuous Living Roots  
*Keep plants growing throughout the year.*



Conservation Practices: Low-till / permanent beds, Mulching, Cover crops, Crop rotation, Compost / organic matter, Nutrient management, Native + targeted plantings for beneficial insects + pollinators, High tunnels



District Showcase Award Event tour at Warsaw Biblical Gardens, left to right: Chad Schotter (NRCS, District Conservationist), Keith Williams (NRCS, Area Con.), Jane Hardisty(State Soil Board), Jennifer Walker(NRCS, Planning Team Leader), Curtis Knueven (NRCS, Acting State Conservationist), Jewel Wise(SWCD Supervisor), Aleah Southworth(SWCD), Tashina Lahr-Manifold(SWCD), Brad Clayton (The Watershed Foundation), Terri Theisen(Urban Specialist IASWCD), Liz Rice(IASWCD Executive Director), Sandra Hoffarth(ISDA District Support Specialist), Elyssa Lewis(NRCS Soil Con.), Robert Grigsby(Local Producer), Amy Work(IASWCD Director of Member Programs & Communications), Amanda Heltzel (Kos SWCD)

### 2022 accomplishments:

- 11 New Volunteers Trained
- 17 Site Visits/Soil Samples
- 10 Technical Assistants Meetings
- 3 Educational Events
- 60 Attendees at Events
- 60,000 sq ft of free cover crop coverage

### 2023 accomplishments:

- 8 New Volunteers Trained
- 33 Site Visits/ Soil Samples
- 15 Technical Assistances Meetings
- Pierceton Tomato Festival presentation on Soil Health
- 80,000 sq ft of free cover crop coverage
- Silage Tarp give away to 8 small farms

Tashina Lahr- Manifold, Kos. SWCD Soil Health Specialist received an 2022 IASWCD award of Appreciation for the success of the program!

Aleah Southworth, before being hired by Kos. SWCD, received the 2023 SWCD award of Outstanding Volunteer for her time spent assisting the urban program!

Looking forward to 2024: Two-part workshop, cover crop give away, free soil samples/ site visits, resources & community connection through our website!

Tashina Lahr-Manifold, Kos. SWCD *Soil Health Specialist*

[tashina.lahrmanifold@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:tashina.lahrmanifold@in.nacdnet.net) 574-267-7445 x 5377

Aleah Southworth, Kos. SWCD *Conservation Program Field Technician*

[Aleah.Southworth@IN.NACDNET.NET](mailto:Aleah.Southworth@IN.NACDNET.NET) 574-267-7445 x 5383

### Working group partners:

