

We asked the three Supervisor Candidates the Following Questions:

1. What do you see as the most important conservation challenge currently facing La Porte County?
2. What type of leadership experience will you bring to the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)?
3. How could the SWCD better engage the residents of La Porte County with respect to Soil and Water conservation?
4. A SWCD Supervisor, what will be your approach toward balancing the county's various conservation priorities? (Eg. Agriculture, wildlife, water quality etc.)

Candidates Responses and Bios

Brian Breidert began working for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 1980, after graduating from Iowa State University with a degree in Fisheries and Wildlife biology. He will be retiring Feb. 22nd after being with the Division of Fish and Wildlife for 39 years. For the past 6 years, he's served as the Chairman of the Lake Michigan Technical committee. As the lead biologist at the Michigan City office, he works cooperatively with partners in the community on environmental issues, watershed groups, public access acquisitions and fisheries work projects. He has been recognized for outreach activities by receiving the Gillie award for work with Penn High School agriculture classes when they began rearing fish in the classroom, and been recognized as the Biologist of the year for the Division in 2006.



1. Clean drinking water and surface water. Having improved water quality through wise land use practices will have an impact on all of us. This is critical to each resident as well as the aquatic organisms that reside within the surface waters.

2. Over my 39 year career with the IDNR, I have served as the leader of the LM fisheries station which has three different divisions with competing interests, Law Enforcement, Water and Fisheries. I managed the Fisheries staff and also when I was the Hatchery manager I had staff to manage. I serve as the Chairman of the Lake Michigan Technical committee for the past 6 years. This has required close work with our NGO and Federal partners. I have organized our winter and summer meetings, Planned the agenda and speakers, worked towards keeping the meetings on schedule.

3. Public outreach to our urban citizens is an important first step. Many of the local communities and schools are involved in the water quality events held by SWCD. Including these youngsters in the programs have given them a much better understanding of some of the issues. Invasive species, ecosystem management, the river in your backyard and the ability to meet and work with professionals has gained them a better understanding of the environment around them. Evening programs can be a good way to share information about general topics such as septic system management, clean water and herbicides and pesticide use. Additionally,

mailings focusing on such topics but also sponsored through the county wide recycling programs can also reach a large portion of the residents.

4. This is certainly going to be the biggest challenge for me. I live in the rural area and have had little interaction with the Ag community. Balancing these various priorities will take a careful understanding of the needs of all the parties and a work towards compromise. All parties need to look towards common goals and towards the improvement of quality of life within the county. The improved quality of life impacts those that come to visit our county and recognize what is to offer.

Christopher Throgmorton is a local advocate for citizen lead initiatives promoting urban agriculture, eco-tourism and responsible urban development, as well as transparency and accountability in government practices. He is a Master Recycler and intensive gardener who can be spotted assembling and installing various objects on Pine Lake from March to November. Chris lives in Laporte, with his better half, Karyssa, and their two dogs on a city lot he is transforming into a sustainable food resource. In service of this position, he will pursue the fostering of educational conversations with the community about evolving methods of personal approaches to conservation and supervision of the District. In his spare time, Chris enjoys birdwatching, hiking, bicycling, kayaking/canoeing and carpentry.



1. As someone who is not from La Porte County, yet has chosen to reside here for the past 10+ years of my life, I do not believe this wonderful patch of Indiana is given the credit it is due. From the numerous parks and lakes to the abundance of observable wildlife, in my opinion, there is much to take sight of that remains unseen by even some of the lifelong residents. Many people, oftentimes, already having little time to even enjoy these beautiful spaces, are unable to “Track Down “ ways to participate in conservation and events and programs that provide information on ways to do so. Furthermore, many are discouraged by a fee, or payment, for obtaining educational information, if applicable. As a further obstacle, many would prefer to learn at their own pace.

2. In my advocacy for governmental transparency, as well as, disability inclusion (due in part to my own diagnosis of “ Asperger’s Syndrome “ and “ P.T.S.D.”), I am passionate about issues centered around community engagement and encouraging participation in all practices. My interests oftentimes require an assessment of community participation, in addition to “ Public Notice “ and other legal requirements of governmental entities and their staff .I am very familiar with the potential for creation of awareness of topics through online methods such as social media having assisted in the daily functioning of pages with up to 25k followers, as well as, maintaining a “ You Tube Channel “ with a current 10 day average of around 24k views a day. I am also a graduate of the “ Master Recycler “ program through the La Porte County Solid Waste District, which significantly furthered my understanding of how much I was able to contribute by merely relaying my learnings in the daily social interactions with my neighbors and community, as well as, best practices fo common house hold items and their disposal.

3. I think that an informed La Porte County will make for a proud La Porte County, and a proud La Porte County will be lined up to be a participating La Porte County. As with most things, education is the key. I believe that efforts put toward online engagement are not in vain, moreover, strategic focus on creation of educational and more programs centered around empowered education, similar to the “ Master Recycler” program at the La Porte County Solid Waste District, which educates volunteers, who reciprocate the funding of class materials and the general time and efforts of the classes with further promotion of the program,< * COUGH* , educating the public about recycling practices when possible and participating in community

events with the collection of recyclable waste materials. Every resident in the District should be informed on how to conserve and practice environmentally conscious habits and it's up to this board to help them find a way to use that education to participate in its efforts in a personal manner.

4. I believe that my lack of formal education in many areas contributes to an insatiable thirst for knowledge that will manifest into constant research and desire to learn the aspects of this position that I am not immediately trained or certified in. With my inexperience in these areas comes a fresh perspective and constant exposure to recently discovered methods and practices that may be overlooked by someone who isn't as immersed in the research as myself. I love to learn and read and would call myself a "constant student". Though, my experience in installation of docks and boat lifts on Pine Lake does give me appreciation for learning the personal practices we all can do to prevent ecological damage and many opportunities to discuss the matter with the many visitors, as well as, pride in the natural resources here. My general love of all things nature, from observation to the various physical activities that can be enjoyed in La Porte County, cannot be put into words. That being said, my foremost concern is promoting and appreciation of the beautiful place I chose to call home, to those here and to those we wish to share it with, while ensuring that the public is able to openly learn about and engage with the nature and wildlife they are surrounded by.

Mike Tuholski teaches biology at La Porte High School. In addition to his work at Tuholski Farms, Inc., Mike and his wife Becca established Tuholski Produce LLC in 2018, through which they proudly serve locally and sustainably grown produce at the La Porte Farmers' Market. He says, "Growing up on a large family farm has afforded me the opportunity to learn much about conservation and the environmental impacts of agricultural land use. I continued to follow this interest at Indiana University, where I studied biology and graduated with honors. I then studied genetics at the University of Wisconsin and received a master's degree for my work on the genetic architecture of several traits in maize and its wild ancestor teosinte.



1. As an agricultural county, I think it is important to educate those involved in agriculture on the latest developments and techniques which minimize impacts of farms on the surrounding environment. The destruction of natural habitats in less-efficient soils to convert the land to agricultural use, for example, has likely had an impact in many areas of our county.

2. As a teacher, I have developed the organizational and motivational skills to lead students every day. During college I was also involved in many clubs and committees, including acting as an undergraduate representative alongside several professors and graduate students on the Biology Curriculum Committee at Indiana University.

3. As an educator, I obviously think that education is a key component to provoking action in communities. I think direct interaction with our schools is a key resource that has not been adequately explored.

4. With my scientific training, I think it is essential to follow an evidence-based approach to maximizing the efficiency of our agricultural land use while maintaining a minimal impact on wildlife and water quality. The evidence clearly shows that the biggest environmental impact of farming comes from land-use itself so by maximizing the efficiency of land use while also controlling for runoffs and contamination, we can approach a balance between these two seemingly contradictory goals.