

**STATE of ILLINOIS**

PAT QUINN, GOVERNOR

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

THOMAS E. JENNINGS, DIRECTOR



# ILLINOIS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2008



**BUREAU of LAND and  
WATER RESOURCES**





Pat Quinn, Governor  
Thomas E. Jennings, Director

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**Office of the Director**

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Dear Friend:

As a longtime employee and now Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture, I have worked with many of you over the years. Today, agriculture, like many other sectors of our state and national economy, faces a host of challenges. Volatility in the commodity markets, controversy over “voluntary” livestock premises registration, changes in CAFO standards, always-shifting guidelines for genetically modified agriculture products—and more—make it important for agriculture producers, suppliers and employers to remain vigilant. It also makes it critical for us at the Illinois Department of Agriculture to stay on top of current events and developments so that we can assist you as you react to these dramatic shifts in the industry.

I am proud of the commitment and technical assistance provided to implement new conservation practices. The Department’s Bureau of Land and Water Resources acts as a liaison with soil and water conservation districts and federal agency staff, as well as University and private industry, to provide Illinois landowners with conservation technical assistance. This document provides a synopsis of current work being implemented and highlights the progress Illinois landowners have made in preserving the state’s valuable natural resources.

Let me assure you of one thing as we move forward this year: The focus of the Illinois Department of Agriculture will not change. We are here to serve the agriculture community – big and small – through promotion, enforcement of sensible regulatory standards and – just as importantly – providing timely and accurate information. We look forward to the continued cooperation with Illinois commodity organizations and the promising future of Illinois agriculture around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Jennings", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas E. Jennings

Director

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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Welcome/Introduction .....	5
Illinois Department of Agriculture – BLWR .....	6
Illinois Soil Conservation Transact Survey .....	7-8
Conservation 2000 Program (C-2000) .....	9-11
Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program .....	12-15
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) .....	16
Watershed Park .....	17
Watersheds .....	18
Mined Land Reclamation Program .....	19
Farmland Conversion Report .....	20-21
Agricultural Area Summary .....	22
Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Report.....	23
Sustainable Agriculture Program .....	24
R. J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture Award .....	25
Henry White Experimental Farm .....	26
Illinois Department of Agriculture Zell Farm .....	27
Protecting Water Quality Grant Program .....	28-29
Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service.....	30-32
Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) .....	33
Illinois Conservation and Climate Initiative (ICCI).....	34
Illinois Envirothon .....	35-36
2008 Conservation Farm Family .....	37
AISWCD Awards .....	38
Special Recognition Contest Winners.....	39
Partnership Activities .....	40-41
SWCD Program Highlights .....	42-56
Acknowledgements.....	57

## WELCOME/INTRODUCTION

Information has been compiled for the Illinois Conservation Partnership Annual Report from programs carried out in 2008. Partners include the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land and Water Resources, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 98 county soil and water conservation districts, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Partner programs provide benefits in the areas of soil conservation and water quality in rural and urban communities, agricultural nutrient management, farmland protection, sustainable agriculture, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and watershed planning and protection. Efforts also provide youth and adult environmental education and outreach, research and demonstration, and public information. Programs are generally directed to landowners and land managers using incentive based, voluntary approaches.

For more information on conservation programs and activities, contact your local soil and water conservation district.

*"The wealth of Illinois lies in her soil and her future in its intelligent development"*

In 1937, the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act was passed. It states, *"The General Assembly declares it to be in the public interest to provide (a) for the conservation of soil, soil resources, water and water resources of this State, (b) for the control and prevention of soil erosion, (c) for the prevention of air and water pollution, and (d) for the prevention of erosion, flood water and sediment damages and thereby to conserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams, reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, conserve wildlife and forests, protect the tax base, protect public lands and protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of this State."*



## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - BLWR

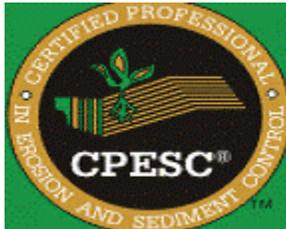
The **Bureau of Land and Water Resources** (BLWR), within the Illinois Department of Agriculture provides technical support, educational and financial support to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in carrying out their legally mandated responsibilities through the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District (Act). The following identifies the assistance that has been provided to the 98 Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District boards of directors, staff and partners by BLWR staff.

### Training

BLWR staff conducted orientation for new District employees, as well as a 1-day New Director Training session in Springfield. Training was also provided to directors and staff during the 3-day Summer Conference and Annual Meeting. Additional training was held for District employees during a 2-day Winter Training event. The BLWR provided funding for District employee technical training through NRCS as well as for testing costs for Certified Professionals in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC).

### What is a CPESC?

A CPESC is a recognized specialist in soil erosion and sediment control. The certification program, sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Society and the International Erosion Control Association, in cooperation with the American Society of Agronomy, provides the public with evidence of professional qualifications. This designation is given to specialists who have met established standards of expertise, experience and knowledge.



### Meetings

SWCD board meetings, annual meetings and special events are regularly attended by BLWR staff as well as quarterly Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) Council meetings and Board meetings. BLWR staff are represented on more than 25 statewide and regional partner committees. Staff provide reports, updates and share program and policy information at each of the preceding events listed.

### Administration

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is responsible for providing oversight regarding certain SWCD programs and activities through State law and grant agreements. BLWR staff reviewed and certified 2,055 cost-share claims through the Conservation 2000/Partners For Conservation Fund Program along with training and general assistance on these programs. Additionally, staff review and collection of documents regarding SWCD elections, financial reporting, conservation plans of work and other program areas were carried out by the BLWR.

### Education and Outreach

Resource conservation awareness activities were provided in 2008 at the Illinois State Fair, DuQuoin State Fair, Farm Progress Show, Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Show and Earth Stewardship Day held at the State Fairgrounds in Springfield. BLWR staff participated in the State and Council level Envirothons and in other local District educational events.

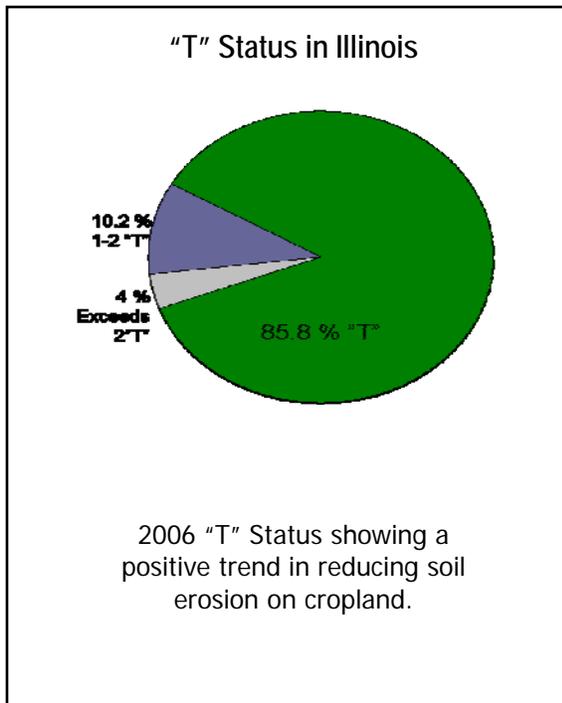


During Earth Stewardship Day, IEPA staff provide middle school students with a close-up and personal look at live macro invertebrate from Illinois rivers and streams.

## ILLINOIS SOIL CONSERVATION TRANSECT SURVEY SUMMARY

Results of the 11<sup>th</sup> statewide Soil Conservation Transect Survey conducted in the spring and early summer of 2006 indicate Illinois producers are continuing to manage their cropland to minimize soil erosion. The survey, initiated by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), involved Illinois' 98 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The survey measures progress in reducing soil erosion to "T" or tolerable soil loss levels statewide. The tolerable soil loss for most soils is between 3 and 5 tons per acre per year. This is the amount of soil loss that can theoretically occur and be replaced by natural soil-building processes. Reducing soil loss to "T" is essential to maintaining the long-term agricultural productivity of the soil and to protecting water resources from sedimentation due to soil erosion. The survey will be conducted again in Spring 2009.

The Transect Survey provides a snapshot of the current status of soil conservation efforts in Illinois. Survey results provide data on the presence of conservation practices in each county and an estimate of remaining land treatment needs.



Information on tillage systems and crop residue amounts is collected at more than 50,000 points across the state. Surveyors collect data on sheet/rill and ephemeral soil erosion.

After the survey is completed for each of the 100 counties in Illinois that conduct a cropland survey, the data is sent to the IDOA for analysis. Data for each county and the entire state is available on soil loss relative to "T", the presence of ephemeral erosion and tillage systems used to plant crops.

2006 Transect Survey results show 85.8% of the points surveyed were at or below "T" and also show a positive trend in reducing soil erosion on cropland to "T" levels. The first Transect Survey in 1994 estimated 74.1% of the points surveyed were meeting "T". The 2006 results indicate that 14.2% of the points surveyed were exceeding "T" levels, about the same result as the 2000 survey, see Table 1, below.

**TABLE 1**

RELATIVE SOIL LOSS BY "T" VALUE

Year	< "T"	1-2 "T"	>2 "T"	Unknown
2006*	85.8	10.2	4	0
2004*	84.9	10.7	4.4	0
2002*	85	10.8	4.2	0
2001*	85	10.6	4.1	0.3
2000*	85.7	10.4	3.6	0.3
1999*	85.7	10.5	3.6	0.2
1998*	86.5	9.9	3.4	0.2
1997*	86.2	9.8	3.7	0.3
1996	76.2	14.8	6.4	2.6
1995	76.7	15.3	6.3	1.7
1994	74.1	16.7	7.1	2.1

Percent of points surveyed with relative soil loss by "T" values from 1994 thru 2006.

\*The Revised Universal Soil Loss Equation (RUSLE) was used to estimate soil loss.

The survey also provides information on tillage systems used in planting corn and soybean crops in the spring and small grain crops in the fall.

Statewide, the survey shows 33.1% of corn, soybean and small grain fields surveyed in 2006 were farmed using no-till practices, which leave the soil virtually undisturbed from harvest through planting. This is a 4% increase over no-till in 2004, and represents the biggest increase from a previous survey since it was first conducted in 1994. The large increase means, for the first-time, no-till is now used to plant more fields than any of the other tillage systems that the survey tracks (conventional, reduced-till or mulch-till).

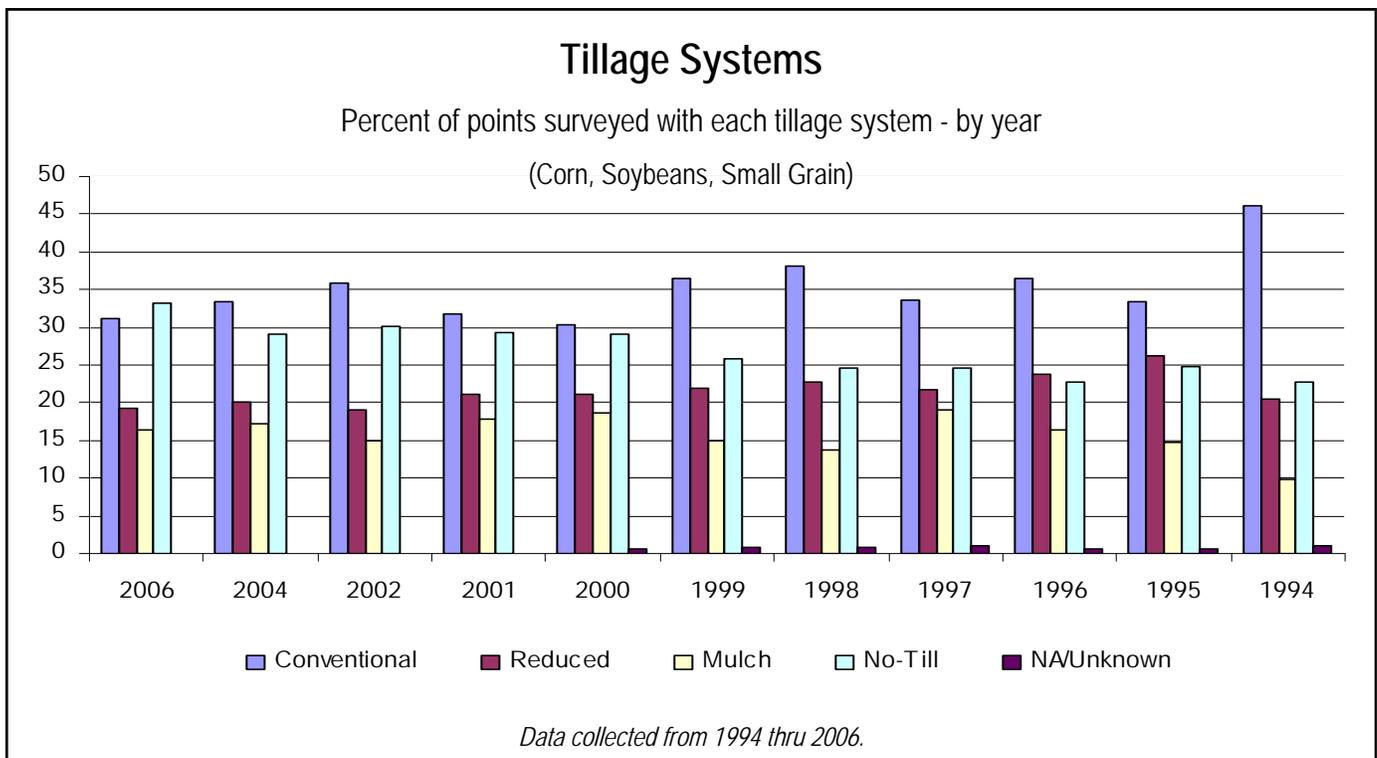
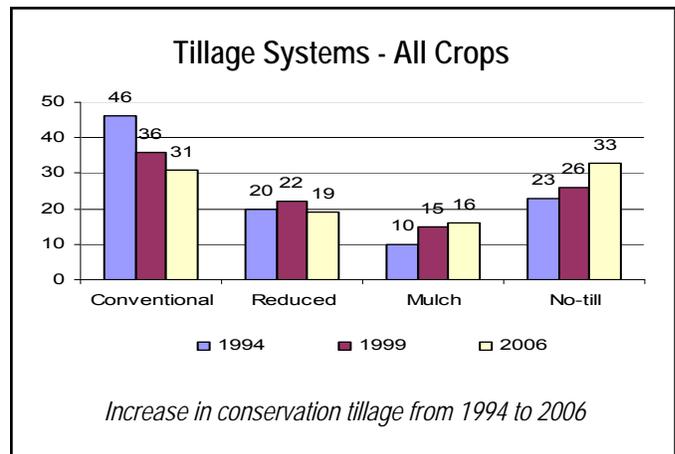
Another first for the survey results is that no-till soybeans were planted on a majority of the state's acres in 2006. Soybean fields planted by no-till increased from 45.6% in 2004 to 51%. This continues an upward trend in no-till planted soybeans that has continued to grow from the 28.6% first recorded in 1994.

Since 1995, surveyors have collected data on ephemeral or gully erosion in surveyed fields. Surveyors identify fields in which ephemeral erosion has occurred or is likely to occur in areas of

concentrated surface water flow. This type of erosion requires structural conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, in addition to tillage or other cultural erosion control practices. The 2006 survey recorded 24.9% of the fields experiencing ephemeral erosion, which was 1% less than 2004.

**Summary**

Data received from this survey will assist in planning future conservation efforts. This information will be vital in helping Illinois' goal of reducing soil erosion and sedimentation and improving water quality to the extent possible. The entire 2006 report can be found at <http://agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater>.



## CONSERVATION 2000 PROGRAM (C-2000)

In 1995, the Illinois General Assembly passed a bill creating the Conservation 2000 Program (C-2000), a program established for the development of a comprehensive and long-term approach to conserving, protecting and managing Illinois' natural resources. During the 1999 Legislative Session, the General Assembly authorized the continuation of C-2000 through June 30, 2009.

The Legislature appropriated \$7,212,500 in FY 2007 for the Agriculture Resource Enhancement component of C-2000. These funds are allocated to SWCDs through the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Land and Water Resources. SWCDs promote the cost share programs and along with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, provide technical assistance to landowners and managers. Assistance includes site inventorying, conservation planning, surveying, as well as design and practice layout. SWCDs prioritize cost share applications based on conservation benefits to include cost/benefit considerations. Following is the total statewide allocation in the four program areas.

Conservation 2000 Agriculture Resource Enhancement Programs	FY2007 Dollars
Erosion & Sediment Control, Nutrient Management and Well Decommissioning Programs	\$3,764,941
Soil and Water Conservation District Grants	\$2,434,059
Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program	\$287,500
Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program	\$726,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,212,500</b>



108,743 tons =  
4,350 loaded semi tractor trailers

108,743 tons is the amount of soil that was saved in 2007 from the assistance of the ESC program. This soil savings will continue in the future.

The **Erosion and Sediment Control Program (ESC)** assists land users with sheet and rill erosion exceeding "T" (tolerable soil loss level) or with ephemeral/gully erosion with the construction of conservation practices which help conserve soil, protect water quality and reduce flooding. Practices eligible include No-Till / Strip-Till, Contour Farming Establishment, Contour Buffer Strip Establishment, Cover Crops, Temporary Cover, Critical Area Planting, Filter Strips, Diversion, Grade Stabilization Structures, Grassed Waterways, Pasture and Hayland Planting, Contour Strip Cropping, Terraces, and Water and Sediment Control Basins. Structural practices have a cost share rate of 60%, with agronomic type practices cost shared on a cost per acre basis. Local SWCDs may have varying priorities and rates for certain practices.

The **Nutrient Management Program (NMP)** provides incentives to eligible land users for nutrient management projects that minimize the transport of nutrient and pollutant load to surface and groundwater. Projects include soil testing, developing a nutrient management plan and implementing the plan for four years. SWCDs prioritize applications while considering geographic location, watersheds and soils. Technical Service Providers or SWCD staff may write the plans. Benefits may include a reduction in nutrients leaving the farm into nearby waters, better utilization of nutrients, a reduction in input costs and, in some cases, increased yields.

**FY 2007**  
**Well Decommissioning Program**  
**Summary**  
 235 Total Projects Completed  
 Claims Summary - \$56,198.37

The practices installed through the ESC benefited a total of 15,424 acres. Soil loss on these acres has been reduced to the tolerable soil loss level, saving soil productivity and protecting water quality. The average soil loss reduction per project was 7.48 tons/acre/year. The average cost to the state for reducing soil loss to tolerable levels was \$225.13/acre. The cost to the state for soil saved was \$28.90/ton.



**Well Decommissioning educating citizens on the importance of this program.**

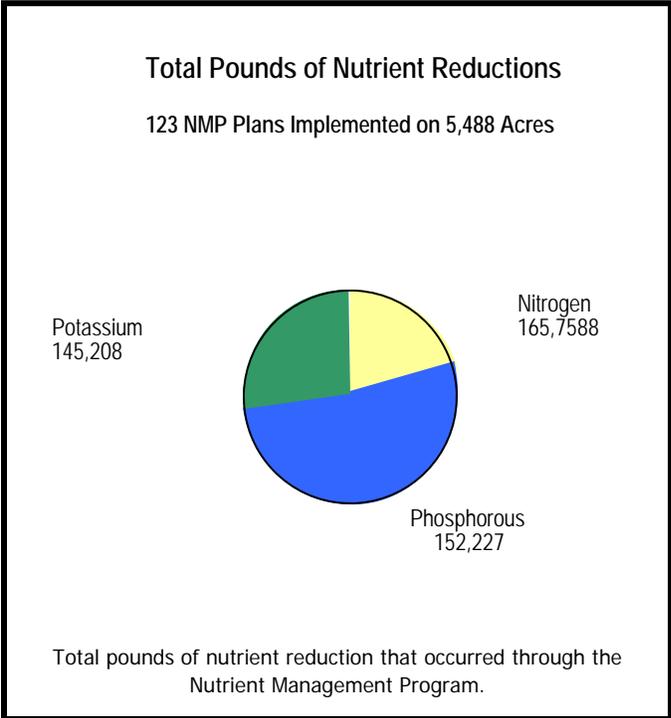
Through the NMP, a total of \$9,535 of C-2000 funding was distributed to Technical Service Providers for developing 100 nutrient management plans covering more than 4,000 acres. In addition to the new plans that were written, a total of 123 plans were implemented by producers on 5,488 acres. The total incentive payments paid to producers for implementing these plans was \$43,271.00

The producers that implemented these plans reduced their average per acre application of fertilizer by 30 pounds of nitrogen, 28 pounds of phosphorous and 26 pounds of potassium. While the reductions in fertilizer applied to the land saved the producer an average of \$36 per acre, the pollutant loading in waterbodies was also reduced.

The **Well Decommissioning Program (WDP)** provides incentives to owners of abandoned water wells to properly decommission and seal the wells to reduce or eliminate the potential for groundwater pollution. Abandoned wells also pose health and safety concerns. Cost share dollars are available at a 60% cost share rate, not to exceed \$400 per well. SWCDs prioritize applications based on the risk potential posed by the well. Wells must be sealed according to applicable standards set forth by the local health department.

**Summary of Accomplishments**

A total of \$3,339,722.28 from the C-2000 program was spent on ESC, NMP and WDP during July 1, 2007 through December 31, 2008. The accomplishments for these components of the C-2000 Program are shown on the pie chart to the right and in Table 2. In addition to the state's cost for installing these practices, the remaining 40% of the cost of most practices were provided by the landowner. Projects were completed in 95 Illinois counties.



**TABLE 2****FY 2007  
CONSERVATION 2000 PRACTICE SUMMARY**

July 1, 2007– Dec 31, 2008

Conservation Practice	Projects	Acres Benefited	Tons Saved	Sediment Reduction	\$/Acre	\$/tons	Claims Summary *
Cover & green manure crop	6	120	954	255	\$9.77	\$1.23	\$1,172.00
Critical area planting	27	25	1,552	426	\$919.14	\$14.80	\$22,978.41
Diversion	20	N/A	395	106	N/A	\$49.86	\$19,697.77
Grade stabilization structure	170	102	5,821	1,556	N/A	\$60.57	\$352,607.14
Grassed waterway	401	421	31,258	8,547	N/A	\$33.57	\$1,049,492.52
Residue Management	146	7,075	33,334	9,119	\$4.47	\$.094	\$31,459.76
Pastureland and Hayland planting	100	1047	11,894	3,290	\$147.40	\$12.97	\$154,333.11
Temporary cover	15	47	311	86	\$145.04	\$21.92	\$6,817.16
Terraces (Vegetative Outlet)	105	1,391	7,737	2,760	\$262.20	\$47.14	\$364,724.48
Water & sediment control basins	417	5,196	22,139	7,231	\$236.23	\$55.44	\$1,227,436.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>15,424</b>	<b>115,395</b>	<b>33,376</b>	<b>\$209.46</b>	<b>\$27.99</b>	<b>\$3,230,718.43</b>

\*The **Claims Summary** represents total cost share dollars spent for practices. Additionally, for most practices landowners contribute a minimum of 40% of the total cost of projects.

## STREAMBANK STABILIZATION & RESORATION PROGRAM (SSRP)

Streambank erosion is a natural process in all streams as water wears away the soil and rock that form their banks. Streams naturally and slowly establish a meandering course. Streambank erosion in Illinois has, however, been accelerated by land altering activities such as stream channelization and straightening, removal of stream side vegetation, construction of impervious surfaces and other activities that increase water flow and water velocity.

Streambank erosion is a serious threat to the land, water, plant and animal resources along many streams in Illinois. Streambank erosion can be contributed to loss or damage to valuable farmland, wildlife habitat, buildings, roads, bridges and other public and private structures and property. Streambank erosion is a major source of sediments deposited in Illinois lakes, streams and backwater areas. It may contribute to as much as 30-60% of the downstream sediment load. Sediment reduces stream channel capacity which may increase flooding and streambank erosion and reduce the depth and holding capacity of lakes and reservoirs.

The Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program (SSRP) has three primary objectives.

1. Distribute education materials on the affects of streambank erosion along with the practices available to stabilize the erosion through SSRP.
2. Provide funding to construct effective, low-cost practices, such as rock riffles, stream barbs or stone toe protection at suitable locations.
3. Provide technical assistance to landowners interested in stabilizing an eroding streambank.

The program provided cost-share funding assistance to qualified Illinois landowners for stabilizing or restoring severely eroding streambanks.

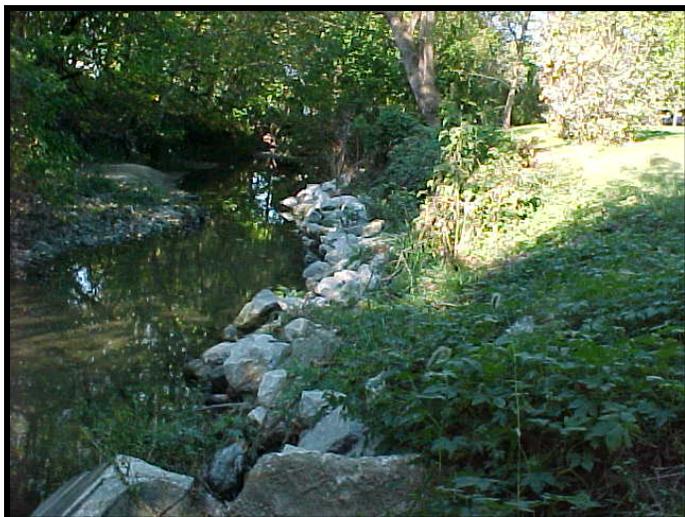
In FY 2008, \$726,000 was appropriated through the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) for SSRP. Streambank stabilization practices constructed with FY 2008 cost-share funds included bendway weirs, rock riffles, stream barbs, stone toe protection and vegetative techniques.

Cost-sharing for all eligible and approved construction expenses was 75%. The remaining 25% was the obligation of the landowner. Table 3, on pages 11 through 13 shows a summary of streambank projects completed with FY 2007 funds.

### Streambank Stabilization Project



**These are before and after photos of an Adams County streambank stabilization project. The photo above shows major erosion along the bank resulting in loss of valuable land.**



**The photo shows the same site after stone toe protection was installed for bank stabilization.**

**TABLE 3**

STREAMBANK STABILIZATION & RESTORATION PROGRAM  
Summary of Projects Completed

COUNTY SWCD	STREAM SEGMENT	COST-SHARE	LINEAR FT OF BANK TREATED	SEDIMENT (Tons)	NITROGEN (lbs.)	PHOSPHORUS (lbs.)
Adams	Beebe Creek	\$4,245	250	85	170	85
Adams	Beebe Creek	\$2,208	110	28	56	28
Adams	Pigeon Creek Tributary	\$6,098	360	168	337	167
Adams	McCraney Creek Trib	\$3,116	157	45	90	45
Adams	Mill Creek	\$8,745	1200	567	964	482
Adams	Walker Branch	\$3,473	350	119	238	119
Adams	Mill Creek	\$4,755	500	85	170	85
Bond	Hurricane Creek	\$3,622	175	16	33	16
Brown	Keyes Creek	\$3,471	230	16	31	16
Bureau	MasterCreek	\$12,735	550	58	117	58
Bureau	Dugosh	\$6,265	360	61	122	61
Bureau	East Bureau Creek	\$3,952	250	16	27	13
Calhoun	Kampsville Hollow	\$4,959	900	34	69	34
Clark	Trib Mill Creek	\$13,698	760	39	78	39
Cumberland	Mill Creeek Trib	\$7,087	400	48	95	48
Douglas	N/A	\$2,704	125	13	26	13
Edwards	French Creek	\$21,736	2000	213	425	215
Effingham	Salt Creek	\$16,748	925	27	54	27
Fulton	Stuart Creek	\$3,386	175	48	95	48
Fulton	Stuart Creek	\$2,539	100	27	54	27
Gallatin	Weber Creek	\$5,250	300	80	153	80
Henderson	Ellison Creek	\$16,995	500	300	600	300
Jackson	Cox Creek	\$14,906	1818	139	278	139

Continued on next page

Table 3 - Continued

COUNTY SWCD	STREAM SEGMENT	COST-SHARE	LINEAR FT OF BANK TREATED	SEDIMENT (Tons)	NITROGEN (lbs.)	PHOSPHORUS (lbs.)
Jasper	Embarrass Trib	\$6,866	162	79	181	90
Jackson	Cox Creek	\$7,584	475	202	404	202
JoDaviess	Plum River	\$18,734	775	148	296	148
JoDaviess	Irish Hollow Creek	\$6,562	250	32	64	32
JoDaviess	Unnamed	\$4,936.00	450	57	115	57
JoDaviess	Davis Creek	\$25,805	2750	146	292	146
JoDaviess	Plum River Fork	\$4,213	175	56	112	56
JoDaviess	Little Rush Creek	\$9,159	686	93	187	93
JoDaviess	Plum River	\$6,051	388	33	66	33
JoDaviess	Plum River	\$2,922	187	16	32	16
JoDaviess	Brnch of Hells	\$5,400	750	32	64	32
JoDaviess	Irish Hollow Crk	\$16,853	2275	232	464	232
JoDaviess	Rush Creek Trib	\$3,265	300	19	38	19
JoDaviess	Mud Run	\$16,504	2816	239	479	239
JoDaviess	Trib E Frk Galen	\$4,273	525	56	112	56
JoDaviess	Rush Creek	\$23,012	1475	157	313	157
JoDaviess	Rush Creek	\$0.00	240	41	82	41
JoDaviess	Camp Creek	\$10,633	165	11	21	11
JoDaviess	Camp Creek	\$0.00	365	39	78	39
Kendall	Unnamed	\$1,589	100	5	9	5
LaSalle	Little Indian Crk	\$4,687	250	15	29	15
Macoupin	Wood River Crk	\$6,435	300	249	497	249
Madison	Unnamed	\$4,515	172	197	395	197
Madison	Rocky Branch	\$6,775	300	48	96	48
Madison	Rocky Branch	\$4,849	275	35	70	35
Massac	Clifty Creek Ditch	\$9,444	1571	60	120	60
Massac	Clifty Creek Ditch	\$9,148	1571	60	120	60
Massac	Weaver Creek	\$4,473	250	19	37	19
McDonough	E Frk Lamoine	\$9,428	600	71	143	71

Continued on next page

Table 3 - Continued

COUNTY SWCD	STREAM SEGMENT	COST-SHARE	LINEAR FT OF BANK TREATED	SEDIMENT (Tons)	NITROGEN (lbs.)	PHOSPHORUS (lbs.)
McLean	Sugar Creek	\$30,377	1200	1530	3060	1530
Menard	Rock Creek	\$12,002	1030	175	350	175
Mercer	Edwards River	\$1,250	500	519	1037	519
Peoria	Kickapoo	\$9,810	450	96	191	96
Pike	Spring Creek	\$2,235	270	20	40	20
Pike	Blue Creek	\$3,900	700	180	361	180
Pulaski-Alexander	Sexton Creek	\$9,047	500	638	1275	638
Randolph	Dry Creek	\$5,158	300	26	51	26
Richland	Trib to Bonpas	\$4,049	220	7	14	7
Richland	Unnamed	\$3,778	578	18	37	18
Rock Island	Hills Creek	\$1,968	75	5	10	5
Rock Island	Coal Creek	\$5,200	200	136	272	136
Rock Island	Copperas Creek	\$3,814	85	33	65	33
Rock Island	Copperas Creek	\$11,444	2000	298	595	298
Saline	Long Branch	\$22,987	2600	416	832	416
Shelby	Richland Creek	\$19,060	1100	187	374	187
Stark	Indian Creek	\$7,875	350	56	112	56
Stephenson	Rock Run Creek	\$5,400	300	51	102	51
Stephenson	Honey Creek	\$17,114	950	129	258	129
Tazewell	Mackinaw River	\$9,257	550	200	389	200
Tazewell	Makinaw River	\$6,925	350	144	300	144
Union	Big Creek	\$12,772	750	77	153	77
Union	Big Creek	\$22,228	850	173	347	173
Union	Dutch Creek	\$5,206	450	18	36	18
Union	Dutch Creek	\$5,206	450	18	36	18
Warren	S Henderson Crk	\$4,814	350	12	23	12
Warren	S Henderson Crk	\$5,777	400	13	27	13
Whiteside	Woodland Creek	\$6,525	400	9	18	9
Williamson	Little Saline Crk	\$10,944	750	128	255	128
Williamson	Trib of So Fork	\$5,625	325	24	32	24
<b>TOTALS</b>			<b>52,126</b>	<b>10,015</b>	<b>19,851</b>	<b>9,939</b>

## CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)

The Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a local/state/federal program created in March 1998 between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Commodity Credit Corporation and the State of Illinois

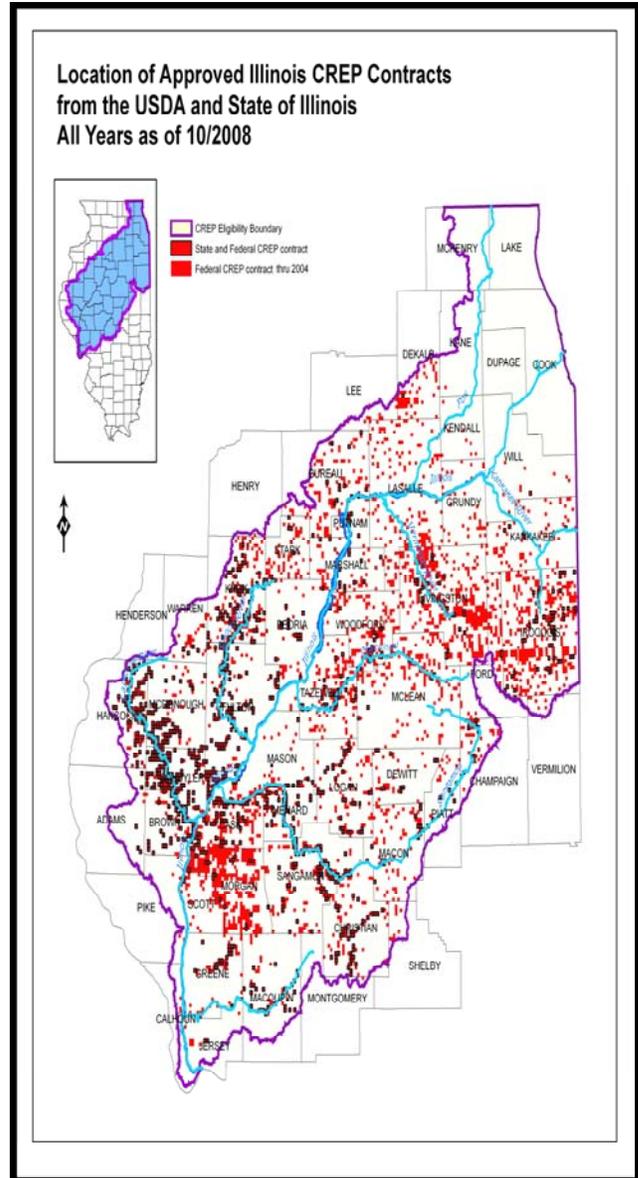
CREP is restoring and protecting large stretches of floodplain corridors both on the main stem of the Illinois River and along its major tributaries. It is also helping landowners who have only been able to produce crops in the area once or twice in the last decade to retire these lands from agricultural production.



Aerial view of the Illinois River.

Since the beginning of CREP on May 1, 1998, through the end of the current reporting period (September 30, 2008), CREP has restored and/or protected 126,951.4 acres of land either in existing native vegetation or in a previous CREP sign-up.

Of the 48,709.39 federal acres enrolled in the state option, 7.65% of landowners selected the 15-year extension, 5.26% selected the 35-year extension and 87.09% selected the permanent easement option. In Illinois, 39% of the 126,951.4 acres enrolling in the federal CREP also enrolled in the state enhanced option.



Additionally, CREP activities are directly contributing to, or complementing, the objectives of the Illinois Fish and Wildlife Action Plan and the Landowners Incentive Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Agency. The ability of CREP to achieve or contribute to other program objectives make it an attractive program for continuation.

The complete 2008 CREP Annual Report can be viewed in full a [www.ilcrep.org](http://www.ilcrep.org).

## WATERSHED PARK



Watershed Park is an interactive and educational exhibit on water protection. Approximately one acre in size, Watershed Park is located on the Illinois State Fairgrounds.

On May 3, 2001 the Illinois Department of Agriculture broke ground to build Watershed Park. The Park opened to the public on August 10, 2001 during the Illinois State Fair. The project is a cooperative effort between the IDOA and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. Additional major sponsors of the project include the University of Illinois, Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Partners for Agricultural Literacy, Archer Daniels Midland, Caterpillar, Monsanto and Syngenta.



Aerial photo of Watershed Park

Featured in the park are thirteen exhibit stations where the public can learn about water quality issues in a watershed. Soil conservation, urban stormwater management, farm and home health and safety, integrated pest management, streambank protection, pasture management, wetlands and wildlife are among the topics covered.

As visitors walk through the exhibits, they can enjoy the flowing stream, benches and drinking water. The park is open during the State Fair, during special events such as Earth Stewardship Day and to school groups during the year.



Children learning about the Stream Table

In 2008, Watershed Park was closed for most of the summer undergoing stream repair and maintenance. It was reopened and the Department hosted 5,997 visitors during the Illinois State Fair. During the Fair, additional activities are provided and volunteers from SWCD's, NRCS, IEPA, University of Illinois and others generously donate their time and expertise to help educate the public on protecting water quality.



Duck races at the park

## WATERSHEDS

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Over the years, the quality of some Illinois lakes, rivers and streams has been impaired by pollutants from a variety of sources. Since the signing of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972, water quality has improved primarily through the regulation of point source discharges. Restoring the quality of water bodies that are still impaired involves maintaining a healthy environment and ensuring the sustainability of these waters.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) Program sets the pollutant reduction goals necessary to improve impaired waters. It determines the amount of a particular pollutant that can be allowed in a specific water body.

Water quality can best be improved on a watershed level. A watershed is all of the area above and below the surface of the landscape that drains into bodies of water (lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands) and groundwater. Activities in a watershed directly affect the quality of the water resources. Understanding the sources of a pollutant in the water and developing best management practices to implement in the watershed to reduce that pollutant can improve the water quality in that water body.

Currently, ten watershed plans are being developed through the IEPA and the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) joint effort. Salt Fork Vermillion of Champaign County and Clinton Lake of DeWitt County watershed planning committees have successfully completed their plans and will soon be receiving approval from Illinois EPA. The remaining eight watershed planning groups (Lower Part of the Upper Sangamon River of Macon County, Evergreen Lake of McLean, Bear Creek of Adams, Big Bureau Creek of Bureau, Eagle Creek of Gallatin, Lake Bloomington of McLean, North Fork Vermillion of Vermillion, and Spring Lake of McDonough County) have nearly finished their draft plans.

Each planning group has relied heavily on data collected to form their resource inventories.

This section of the plan spells out all of the science related to water quality for each watershed. Several of the watershed planning committees used grant funds to hire subcontractors to complete inventories. Other groups used their money to update existing inventories. All watershed planning grants will be completed by June 2009.



Stream north of Spring Lake during flood of 2007



McDonough County grassed waterway north of Spring Lake

## MINED LAND RECLAMATION PROGRAM

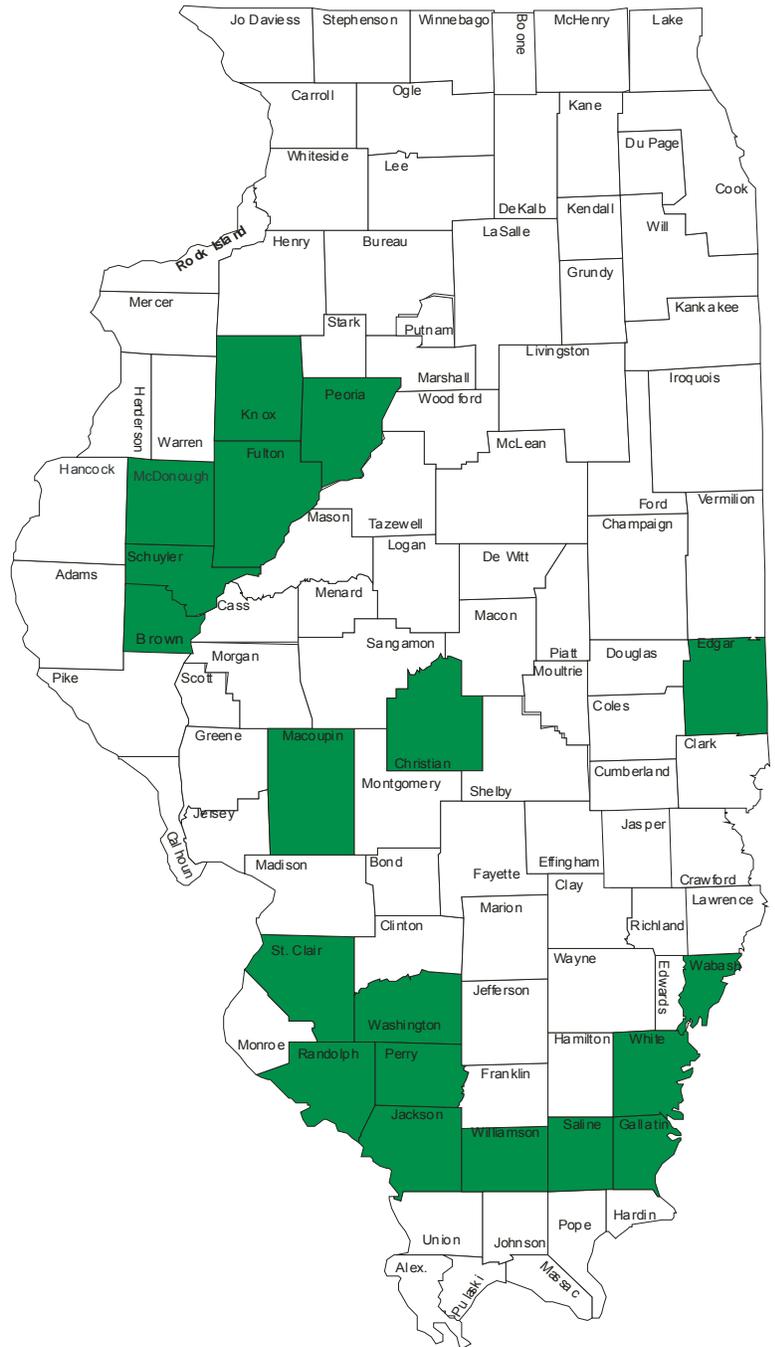
Under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, the coal mining industry is required to replace prime farmland soils to their pre-mining productivity levels. The Illinois Department of Agriculture is responsible for assessing the productivity capacity of reclaimed mine land.

The Agricultural Lands Productivity Formula was adopted in 1986. The formula is used on prime farmland soils, high capability land soils and soils that do not meet the criteria for either prime or high capability lands. The formula produces a yield standard that coal mine operators must achieve as evidence that mined land has been restored to pre-mining productivity levels.

In 2008, IDOA, in cooperation with enumerators from the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service, sampled 52 corn fields (1,163 acres), 43 soybean fields (844 acres), 38 wheat fields (633 acres) and 119 hay fields (1,427 acres) for a total of 4,067 acres sampled as part of the proof of pre-mining productivity process. Hay fields are normally sampled multiple times during the growing season, thus each hay cutting is not counted as additional acres.

IDOA also reviews new mine permit applications and revisions to existing permit applications that affect agriculture. Two permit applications and 7 permit revisions were reviewed in 2008.

### Illinois Counties with Mined Land Reclamation Activities for 2008



Restored mined land

Map highlights those counties that have mined land reclamation activities for fiscal year 2008.

## FARMLAND CONVERSION REPORT

“The natural resources of Illinois - land, minerals, water and air – are both finite and fragile. In the absence of wise use and consistent management practices, these resources are threatened by irreversible damage or loss. Protection of Illinois’ natural resources is essential to guard the public health, safety, and welfare, and to assure an adequate natural resources supply and quality for use and enjoyment by future generations.”

Farmland Preservation Act, P.A. 82-945, § 5, effective August 19, 1982

Table 4 contains the Illinois Department of Agriculture’s Fiscal Year 2008 Farmland Conversion Annual Report as mandated by the Farmland Preservation Act (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.). The Farmland Preservation Act requires state agencies to consider farmland conversion in the planning and execution of their programs and projects.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is authorized to administer this Act and to report annually to the Governor and General Assembly on the amount of farmland converted to non-agricultural uses as a result of state action. The Farmland Conversion Annual Report identifies the number of acres of land purchased, converted or possessing the potential to be converted from agricultural uses on a fiscal year basis.



Farmland conversion to a housing development project



Service station in Sangamon County is a good example of Farmland Conversion

This report does not reflect the total land converted by actions of state agencies during that fiscal year. Certain activities that converted agricultural land are exempt from the IDOA’s review and, therefore, are exempt from farmland conversion reporting for purposes of the Farmland Preservation Act. The actual timing of the conversion is at the discretion of the state agency that has acquired the land or it may indirectly occur as a result of state agency regulatory functions.

Copies of the Farmland Conversion Annual Report can be found on the IDOA website at [www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater](http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater) or for additional information, call the Bureau of Land and Water Resources at 217-782-6297.

## TABLE 4

### FY 2008 FARMLAND CONVERSION ANNUAL REPORT

Land Purchased or Affected Due to Actions of State Agencies

STATE AGENCY	TOTAL ACRES	CROPLAND	PASTURE-LAND	FOREST-LAND	OTHER*
<b>CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>					
A. Schools	0				
B. Prisons	0				
<b>COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>					
A. DCEO/Community Development Grants	124**	124**			
B. Enterprise Zones	7,200	5,062		7	2,131
C. ILLINOIS <i>Opportunity Returns</i>	0				
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY</b>					
A. Facility Planning Area Boundary Changes	67,068**	67,067**			
<b>DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES</b>					
A. Office of Mines and Minerals	0				
B. Office of Realty and Environmental Planning	1,003	175		441	387
C. Division of Grant Administration	235	68		88	79
<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</b>					
A. Division of Aeronautics	35	20	9	6	
B. Division of Highways	421+(3)	249+(3)	112	52	8
<b>GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT &amp; BUDGET</b>					
	0				
<b>ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION</b>					
	10,946	8,404		224	2,318
<b>DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b>					
	0				
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	<b>87,032 + (3)</b>	<b>81,170 + (3)</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>4,923</b>

( ) Indicates acres of land purchased as permanent easements.

\* Other includes old fields, urban land, water bodies, wetlands, brushland, prairie, farmsteads, mined land, abandoned railroad, embankments and ditches; use can be residential, commercial, etc.

\*\* A break down by acres of cropland, pastureland, forestland and other land was not provided for this report.

## AGRICULTURAL AREAS SUMMARY

The Illinois Department of Agriculture is required to prepare an annual report on the location and size of all agricultural areas (also known as ag areas) created, modified or dissolved during the past year under the Agricultural Areas Conservation and Protection Act (505 ILCS 5/1).

There was a 760 acre decrease in ag areas as shown by the 2008 Summary of Agricultural Areas total acres in Table 5 below. The Kendall County Board was petitioned by landowners to dissolve two agricultural areas within the 120 days prior to their

tenth anniversary as specified by the Act. Their petitions were accepted and the areas dissolved.

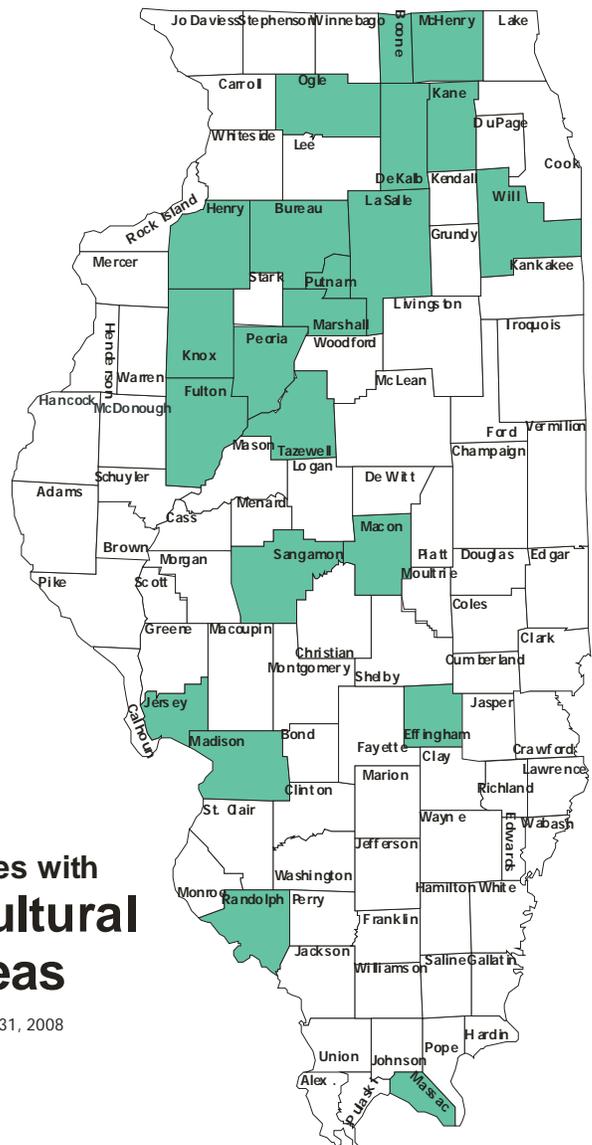
The Agricultural Areas Summary below lists the 22 counties with local county board approved ag areas. Table 5 itemizes the number of agricultural areas in participating counties, respective acres, and the total number of acres in approved ag areas throughout the state. Maps delineating the 55 ag areas can be obtained at IDOA's website [www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater](http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater)

### TABLE 5

#### SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN ILLINOIS

Calendar 2008

County	# of Ag Areas	Total Acres
Boone	2	7,263
Bureau	2	3,931
DeKalb	1	710
Effingham	1	561
Fulton	1	1,915
Henry	8	22,735
Jersey	3	14,279
Kane	1	600
Knox	1	1,735
LaSalle	5	5,396
Macon	1	1,693
Madison	2	2,677
Marshall	5	5,414
Massac	2	3,699
McHenry	9	20,796
Ogle	1	429
Peoria	3	2,549
Putnam	3	7,328
Randolph	1	6,903
Sangamon	1	377
Tazewell	1	3,620
Will	1	469
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>115,079</b>



**Counties with  
Agricultural  
Areas**

December 31, 2008

## VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIP ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law (35 ILCS 200/10-152) became effective on January 1, 1997. Under the law, qualifying property used as a vegetative filter strip is eligible to be assessed at a reduced rate. Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) have been given the authority for certifying that a parcel of property meets the requirements for a vegetative filter strip established under the law, for determining the size of the vegetative filter strip and for creating a conservation plan for the area occupied by the strip.

This report summarizes activities reported by SWCDs for calendar year 2008 related to implementation of the Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law, for the period of 1997 through 2008. It includes information that represents the final report submitted to local SWCDs and other conservation partners.

Table 6 below summarizes filter strips established between the period of 1997 to 2008.

### 2008 Activities

- 20 SWCDs providing Certification
- 318 Landowners Certified
- 317 Vegetative Filter Strips Certified
- 1,420.66 acres of installed Vegetative Filter Strips

### SWCDs reported advertising the Act to landowners in one or more of the following ways:

- District Newsletter - 36 SWCDs
- Direct Mailings to Landowners - 12 SWCDs
- Media Promotion - 13 SWCDs
- One-On-One Landowner Contact - 51 SWCDs
- Others ( listed below ) - 6 SWCDs
  - \* Web Page
  - \* Landowner to Landowner
  - \* District Website
  - \* Website
  - \* Displays at Events
  - \* CRP Filter Strip contracts

### TABLE 6

#### ESTABLISHMENT OF VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIPS - PUBLIC ACT 89-606 Overview of Activities

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001-1997	TOTAL
<b>Certifying SWCDs</b>	20	24	28	33	48	51	53	303	560
<b>Landowners Certified</b>	318	143	236	554	740	496	635	5,348	8,470
<b>Vegetative Filter Strips Installed</b>	317	280	361	672	990	758	1,006	7,698	12,082
<b>Acres of Vegetative Filter Strips</b>	1420.66	1,536.5	1,848.30	3,791.20	3772.7	5,711.3	6,030.40	48,185.90	72,296.96

Overview of activities for the establishment of vegetative filter strips under 35 ILCS 200/10-152.

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

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### The purposes of the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Program listed in the 1990 Sustainable Agriculture Act:

- 1) *to identify Ag practices that maintain productivity and minimize environmental degradation;*
- 2) *to relate overland runoff, sediment transport, stream flow quality and quantity, and groundwater quality and quantity to specific Ag practices;*
- 3) *to integrate and coordinate experimental field and on-farm research and educational efforts of cooperating individuals, agencies, institutions, and organizations;*
- 4) *to test and refine alternative approaches to organizing and conducting on-farm research and demonstration projects;*
- 5) *to test the organizational approach of joint farmer specialist development of a computerized decision support system as an approach to fostering sustainable agriculture;*
- 6) *to Develop an expert system to identify what tillage and crop management system should be used in a particular field;*
- 7) *to test the usefulness of the existing conservation tillage knowledge base in making tillage system selection, implementation, and management decisions, and*
- 8) *to identify the most critical needs for research and education programs related to sustainable agriculture.*

Sustainable Agriculture Grants funded in FY08 totaled \$252,625 in competitive projects. A list of projects follows.

### Education/Outreach

- Midwest Organic Production and Marketing Conference
- Central Illinois Farm Beginnings
- Stateline Farm Beginnings
- Positive Environmental Impacts of Sustainable Agriculture for K-12th Grade Teachers

- Locally Grown in the Two Rivers Area
- Farmer Training and Field Guide for Post Harvest Handling and Packaging
- Buy Fresh Buy Local Illinois

### University Research

- Research-based Program to Sustain Illinois Organic and Alternative Farms
- Sustainable Vegetable Crop Production Using Earthworm Castings and Animal Manure Composts
- Treatment for Controlling Internal Discoloration of Horseradish Root
- Cover Crops for Sustainable Pumpkin Production in Northern Illinois

### On-Farm Research and Demonstration

- Growing Home's Urban Organic Garden

The Sustainable Agriculture Program was a co-sponsor and serves on planning committees for the Illinois Organic Production Conference held in Champaign, the Illinois Vermicomposting Symposium held in Springfield, Earth Stewardship Day held in Springfield and the Ag Day Awards luncheon held during the Illinois State Fair.

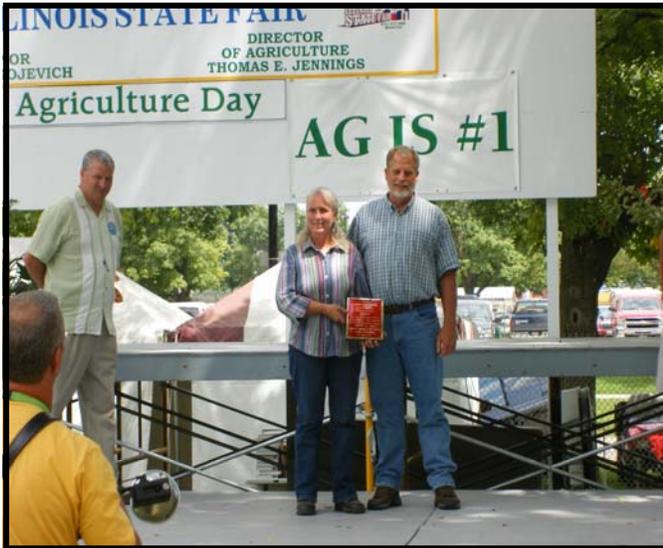
BLWR staff serve on the University of Illinois Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program Advisory Committee and the Agro-Ecology Sustainable Agriculture Program Advisory Committee.

In addition, staff representatives serve on the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Committee, Sustainable Agriculture Grant Review Committee, Agri-Tourism Partners of Illinois Board, Illinois Forestry Development Council, Illinois Grassland Conservation Initiative Board, Earth Stewardship Day Committee, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Committee, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Landowner Incentive Program Advisory Committee and the Soil & Water Conservation District Advisory Board.

## R.J. VOLLMER SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AWARD

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Gary and Marie Hoffman of DeKalb County were honored as the 2008 R.J. Vollmer Sustainable Ag Farmer of the Year recipient. This award recognizes leaders and innovators involved in sustainable agricultural production in Illinois.



Agriculture Director Tom Jennings awarding Gary and Marie Hoffman the 2008 R. J. Vollmer Sustainable Ag Farmer of the Year Award at the Illinois State Fair.

In the late 1980's, Marie started training horses professionally and teaching horseback riding. This began the transition from a typical row crop farm with a 2,000 head hog operation. When brother Dan left the operation in 1999, Gary and Marie decided to downsize and convert to a total equine operation.

The Hoffman farm consists of 180 acres that are farmed to below the tolerable soil loss standard. Gary uses conservation practices such as waterways, terraces, windbreaks, filter strips and a grade stabilization structure to control soil erosion on his land. He has seeded all tillable acres to alfalfa, grass, hay and pasture. He also established dry lot runoff control practices and developed a comprehensive nutrient management plan for the farm.

According to Gary, "Our reasons for switching include concern for the natural resources of the land I own, land expenses and a shortage of labor. By specializing and protecting our resources, we are able to provide a living for our family with no outside jobs which makes us sustainable both environmentally and economically."

### Previous Award Winners

- 1991- Robert J. Vollmer
- 1992 - Mike Strohm
- 1993 - Nick Robertson
- 1994 - Ralph Upton Jr.
- 1995 - Ken Heinzmann
- 1996 - Dean Larson
- 1997 - Tom Hortin
- 1998 - Marvin and Carol Manges
- 1999 - Kevin and Juli Brussell
- 2000 - Louis Reuschel
- 2001 - Larry Kennel
- 2002 – David Jordan
- 2003 - Joel Rissman
- 2004 - Paul & Aaron Butler
- 2005 - Adrian and Myron Plapp
- 2006 - Marty and Kris Travis
- 2007 - Don and Enid Shepherd

## HENRY WHITE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

The 94-acre Henry White Experimental Farm is located 4 miles southwest of Belleville, Illinois. The farm was bequeathed to the Illinois Department of Agriculture in 1985 when the last ancestor of Henry White passed away. The will stipulates the land be used for agricultural experiments. The farm provides many opportunities for natural resource conservation research and educational activities.

Sixty-five of the farm's 94 acres are primarily devoted to mainly corn and soybeans. Farming provides conservation research opportunities and revenue to offset operating expenses. Mr. Randy Meyer is the contract farmer. Dr. Bill Becker is conducting research for the IDOA.



Families fishing at Henry White Farm during the Annual Field Day.

The farm contains prairie plants, such as black-eyed susan, rattlesnake master, alumroot and blazing star which are interspersed with several kinds of grasses, including big and little bluestem, Indian grass, side-oats gamma, and switch grass on 4.3 acres of restored prairie.

The farm's 6.3 acres in three wetland impoundments support fish, amphibians and a variety of plants. A dock extends over the largest impoundment so plant and animal life at various depths may be observed. Research into the growth and reproductive rates of fish will assist biologists in estimating the length of time needed to achieve optimum populations.

Planted in 1994, the 4.4 acre deciduous woods contain oak, maple, pecan, dogwood and other species of trees and shrubs. White pine, spruce and other evergreens grow in the 1.1 acre grove. As the wooded areas mature, they offer researchers a unique opportunity to observe the natural succession of plant and animal life.



Members of the local White Farm Committee accepted the 2007 TreeMendous Award of Merit from Forest ReLeaf Award during the ceremony held April 25 in conjunction with the St. Louis area Arbor Day/Tree City USA celebration.



One of many gardens at the White farm tended by Master Gardeners from University of Illinois Extension.

In 2008, approximately 3,600 people were provided educational presentations or visited the farm to view the crop and tree research, wetlands, prairie, forests, conservation practices, herb and vegetable gardens, children's garden, and farmstead and field windbreaks. Ecology students come to learn about agriculture while scouts can earn merit badges.

## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - ZELL FARM

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In 1999, Jack Zell bequeathed 240 acres in Effingham and Fayette counties to the Illinois Department of Agriculture so it would remain as agricultural land and not be developed for other purposes.

The Department's long-term plans are to develop these two tracts into educational and research labs with the primary goal toward maintaining good stewardship of the land through conservation and other means possible.



There are five active wells on the farm.

The farm consists of two parcels. The 160-acre parcel in Effingham County is mostly cropland and relatively flat with 15 acres of trees. The 120-acre parcel in Fayette County is very rolling to relatively flat in areas. On this site, there are 48 acres of cropland with the remaining 72 acres in trees and grass areas. There are now 5 active oil wells on the property.

The Fayette County parcel offers many opportunities in the future for outdoor education and training purposes in areas of agriculture research, forestry management, and wildlife habitat. There is a small area that has brine damage from previous oil activities (less than an acre).

The Effingham County tract also will provide opportunities for demonstration and research on a relatively large acreage to promote conservation practices and to generate income for both parcels.

In 2008, survey and designs were completed for 2 new waterways to be constructed in 2009 and plans were prepared to install approximately 8 acres of quail habitat around forest acres on the Effingham County tract. Also, over 2,300 feet of fence was installed on the Fayette County tract to help control access on the farm. A Forestry Management Plan was developed by IDNR for the farm with plans to start implementation in 2009. Over an acre of brine damage was remediated in 2008. During 2008, a steering committee of local residents provided recommendations and proposals to the Department of Agriculture to further utilize the Fayette tract which included installing new wetlands.

In 2008, the farm generated income that will go into the development and maintenance of both tracts. A wet spring and favorable weather contributed to above average corn yields in 2008 with an average of 194 bushel per acre, while a cool August helped the soybean average to 48 bushels per acre.



Mature "hedge rows" provide wildlife habitat and protection from winter winds.

## PROTECTING WATER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM

### Protecting Water Quality in Urban Centers Mini Grant Program

In cooperation with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the AISWCD was able to offer mini grants of up to \$10,000 each to soil and water conservation districts to enable them to conduct activities in urban areas that promote water quality protection or improvement. **SWCDs** receiving grants and the project names are as follows:



Illinois Environmental  
Protection Agency

#### **DeWitt: Rural Meets Urban Best Management Practices**

The goal of the project was to educate developers, contractors, county and municipal officials, planners, etc. in DeWitt County and surrounding areas and counties on urban erosion and proper installation of Best Management Practices through a workshop. By increasing the understanding of the erosion process in an urban setting and proper installation of more BMPs, development is taking place properly to control erosion and improve water quality.

#### **Kendall and DeKalb: Natural Solutions: A How-to Workshop on Rain Gardens**

In 2008, an educational workshop was conducted in both DeKalb and Kendall counties, which provided information on rain gardens to show a natural solution to urban water pollution. Workshop attendees were educated by experts covering rain garden function, design, construction and community program opportunities and received a resource packet of related materials. A project team collaborated, at two planning meetings for the seminars, to confirm the session topics/speakers and compile resource packet materials. The first meeting took place three months before the workshop series. The second planning meeting was one month after the first meeting. The seminars were conducted during the summer in each county.

**Lake:** Worked with Tallgrass Restoration Inc. to install a rain garden. Tallgrass provided the design, excavation of the rain garden, soil amendments, plants and mulching. Volunteers did the planting and maintenance throughout the summer. Lake County SWCD staff provided oversight to the project to ensure it was done according to all acceptable standards. Lake County SWCD worked in close collaboration with Karen Schmidt, trustee for the Village of Long Grove.

#### **Lake: Installing a Rain Garden (23' x16') in the Village of Long Grove**

The Village of long Grove installed a demonstration rain garden to promote water quality protection within the watershed. The site will be used to inform citizens about using rain gardens as a low impact BMP to improve water quality that they can implement themselves.



Rain Garden in Lake County

#### **Sangamon: Urban Best Management Practices Tour**

The goal of this project was to supply an educational tour for representatives of the city and county agencies, engineering and construction firms that will introduce the utilization of urban BMPs which reduce runoff from impervious surfaces, collect sediment so that it is contained on-site, maintain or restore infiltration, and remove or provide on-site storage of runoff containing harmful pollutants. All of these actions serve to reduce sedimentation, enhance water quality, and protect wildlife habitat.

The **Urban BMP Tour** was conducted by using a tour bus to visit several sites in or near Springfield, Illinois. The sites were either undergoing construction or had recently been completed. SWCD staff served as tour guides for the event. At each site, a Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control (CPESC) discussed potential BMPs that could be incorporated into urban construction sites and into the city's/county's ordinance on storm water control. Representatives from two local construction material companies were present to answer questions on the type, cost and amount of materials necessary to implement each of the proposed BMPs. Tour attendees received a flyer depicting the site during construction with a detailed description of each BMP that was required to be installed by the NPDES Permit and opportunities to exceed NPDES permit requirements. This flyer was developed by the SWCD staff and approved the Grant Proposal Advisory Committee.



Urban BMP tour at Southwind Park in Sangamon County.

### **Stephenson: Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Education Project**

The goal of this project was to reach out to a new group of people within the urban areas of the County and to introduce them to who the SWCD is by educating them on how to protect and improve water quality in their neighborhoods. This was accomplished by placing 135 rain barrels in use throughout Stephenson County. 125 barrels were offered to the public for \$20 each and 10 rain barrels were donated to schools in the county.

The SWCD coordinated and participated with the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners in a session on Rain Barrels/Rain Gardens at the Joys of Gardening workshop. A packet containing information on building and maintaining a home rain garden was distributed with each rain barrel.



Rain Barrels distributed at the Garden Education Project

### **Vermillion: NonPoint Source Pollution Workshop & Tour**

The project coordinated and implemented two half-day workshops for approximately 50 individuals. The workshops consisted of a variety of hands on urban nonpoint source pollution demonstrations. In addition, a tour was conducted as a portion of the half-day workshop. The tour showed urban Best Management Practices (BMPs) that have been put into place and are effective to reduce nonpoint sources of pollution.

The first workshop targeted members of the Vermillion County Board (approximately 25 individuals). The second workshop was geared toward emerging community leaders identified by Vermillion Advantage through their leadership tomorrow program (approximately 25 individuals). The planning committee identified the 50 individuals and conducted a mailing to invite them to the workshops. The workshops were made available to other individuals who are responsible for natural resource conservation decision-making such as those serving on drainage district boards as well as township and county road commissioners, developers, and contractors.

# ILLINOIS NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



## United States Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) 2008 Report.

NRCS funding levels for providing financial assistance to conservation-minded landowners last year were record-breakers. In 2008, NRCS dedicated \$16.2 million in conservation cost-share dollars to put EQIP solutions on the ground in Illinois. In WHIP, NRCS' popular but sparsely funded habitat program, 2008 fund levels hovered around \$1 million. With crop prices rising and yields at their second highest level in years, IL NRCS stated with confidence that American--and Illinois--Agriculture is strong.

### Environmental Quality Incentives Program

**Cost-share \$16.9 million**  
**New Contracts 1,755**

This year offered the largest EQIP cost-share funds ever as nearly \$16.2 million was awarded to EQIP applicants in Illinois. With strong interest and activity in all three EQIP areas--general conservation, grazing livestock and confined livestock--nearly every IL applicant with a resource problem was able to tap into EQIP funds and NRCS technical assistance for solutions. In 2008, NRCS emphasized implementing forestry management plan contracts established in the last two years. NRCS also focused on developing and implementing 73 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans, or CNMPs. With benefits in operational and input cost savings as well as water quality benefits on and off the farm, CNMPs are an option and investment that pays off in many ways. Local Technical Service Providers have helped Illinois NRCS reach this goal.

### Wetlands Reserve Program

**Easements: 16 (permanent)**  
**Acres: 1942**  
**Financial Assistance: \$1.4 Million**

Using WRP and a host of other USDA conservation programs, Illinois landowners created 220 new wetland acres, enhanced 2,659 acres, and restored 9,622 acres into wetland habitat during 2008. WRP also underwent a major overhaul to significantly simplify the easement and land appraisal process

that determines values and payments. In addition, NRCS placed a renewed emphasis on helping Illinois landowners better use WRP for smaller wetland projects. While large wetlands are valued, maintaining numerous small but quality wetlands at locations across the state is critical if wetlands are to fulfill their valuable and necessary functions.

### Emergency Watershed Protection

**FY08 Projects: 49**  
**Construction Costs: \$650,000**

Illinois experienced two major storm events in 2008, for which the EWP program was authorized in counties declared as federal disaster areas. In March, 10 counties in southern Illinois were affected. June storms created flooding on the east and west sides of the state. Many drainage districts on the west side of the state are only now pumped out enough to see damage, so EWP activities from these events are still ongoing. Primarily, FY08 projects involved sediment and debris removal from channels, stabilization of eroded channel banks, and repair of small agricultural levees. In addition to repair of infrastructure, Illinois NRCS collected information from landowners interested in putting flood-damaged cropland into floodplain easements with NRCS, essentially restoring floodplains to their natural state, to provide future flood protection and wetland wildlife habitat benefits.

### Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

**Contracts: 47**  
**7,000 Acres Improved FY08**  
**Cost-share: \$1.56 Million**

Through improvements to upland habitat, restoration of wetland wildlife habitat and rare and declining habitat management, brush management, stream bank and shoreline practices, field borders, forest stand improvement, and wind-break establishment, Illinois producers used WHIP practices to accomplish much in FY08. Extra funds allowed an unprecedented amount of cost-share in this increasingly popular program. Practices to establishment, Illinois producers used WHIP practices to accomplish much in FY08. Extra funds allowed an unprecedented amount of cost-share in this increasingly popular program.

### **Conservation Security Program** **Lower Cache Watershed for 2008** **21 Contracts: \$142,640**

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) recognizes and rewards true stewards of the land. CSP identifies the "best of the best" -- conservationists who demonstrate a lasting commitment to soil and water conservation on their land. During 2008, CSP participants were rewarded for commitments to on-farm soil, pest control, nutrients, habitat and energy management techniques. The area included parts of Union, Johnson, Alexander, Pulaski and Massac Counties. Under the new Farm Bill, CSP's name has changed to Conservation **Stewardship** Program. Plans are to broaden eligibility within all watersheds in all states across the country. More details on how the new CSP will work and who is eligible will be offered later.

### **Rapid Watershed Assessments** **6 Reports Developed in 2008**

This was the first year we applied for special funds to develop a number of Rapid Watershed Assessments, or RWAs. RWA Reports contain digitally generated maps, data, and trends that profile the natural resources, land use trends, development activities and other natural- and community-based information needed to evaluate, diagnose and prescribe needed conservation practices and solutions within a defined watershed area. The reports can be used as a tool for locally led or state-initiated planning or restoration projects and get motivated teams off to a good start in their research and work. Watersheds profiled during FY 2008 included Macoupin Creek, Green River, Shoal Creek, Upper Kaskaskia, Saline River and Vermilion River. By combining the tools, programs and knowledge of a number of NRCS specialists, the RWA Team produced six complete reports in a short time-frame. All reports are posted online and can be viewed at [www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/rwa/index.html](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/rwa/index.html)

### **Soil Survey** **804,267 Acres Updated** **11 Soil View CDs Posted Online**

Thirteen county soil survey reports were made available on the web in FY 2008.

With these, 100% of Illinois soils mapping data is available digitally and can be accessed online for use with GPS technology tools. More and more engineers, developers, builders, farmers and community officials rely on NRCS soils data to conduct business and manage their workloads. To experience how the national electronic Web Soil Survey works, visit [www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov). Nationwide, Illinois maintains the most progressive digital soils database. Visit [www.soils.usda.gov](http://www.soils.usda.gov) for a list of NRCS soils products.

### **Resource Conservation & Development** **Created 54 New Local Businesses** **75 New Agritourism Sites Developed**

Again in 2008 NRCS Illinois' 10 authorized RC&D areas remained vigilant in support of mainstream NRCS conservation programs. While recent budget limitations require elimination of RC&D Program Assistant positions, our Coordinator positions hold fast in all Illinois RC&D Councils. RC&Ds continue to support local community needs, economic development, and natural resource protection. A total of 629 jobs were created (non-farm), 7 farms/ranches were certified 'USDA Organic,' and more than 2.2 million citizens were served/assisted by RC&D efforts. Three Illinois RC&D areas remain unauthorized and have not yet been approved for federal funding, however they continue to operate and make progress on important local projects and goals. Formation of a new RC&D in northeastern Illinois, Headwaters RC&D, is progressing at a good pace. This area will include Ford, Iroquois, Grundy, Kankakee, Kendall and Will Counties. Stay tuned for more details on this developing RC&D Council!

### **Farm and Ranchland Protection Program** **New Contracts: 4 Farms** **Acres: 392** **Cost-share: \$1.79 Million**

Kane County saved more valuable sections of land from development through the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP). With this conservation easement program, these highly productive agricultural acres will remain as such. More counties in Illinois still seek revenue sources to mirror Kane County's success. Visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs) for more facts, FRPP goals and requirements.

# 2008 Successes

NRCS specialists have been busy meeting the demands of Illinois' conservation-minded landowners. Here's a snapshot of a few accomplishments....

CNMPs written	55 plans
CNMPs applied	73 plans
Conservation Plans written	461,122 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation	298,633 acres
Contour Farming	4,566 acres
Dikes	40.405 feet
Drainage Water Mgt.	2,967 acres
Fence planned, established	628,657 feet
Field Borders established	1,898,087 feet
Firebreaks established	47,965 feet
Grassed Waterways	1,970 acres
Grazing & Forest protected	38,703 acres
Hedgerows planted	700 feet
Irrigation Water Mgt.	3,854 acres
Manure Transfer systems	22 systems
Mulch-Till Residue Mgt.	147,934 acres
No-till or Strip Till Systems	117,691 acres
Nutrient Management	65,711 acres
Pasture & Hay Plantings	5,143 acres
Pest Management	10,154 acres
Prescribed Grazing	8,231 acres
Riparian Forest Buffers	2,949 acres
Stream banks protected	22,721 feet
Stream Crossings	10 crossings
Terraces	399,241 feet
Trees & Shrub Establishment	4,668 acres
Upland Habitat Mgt.	71,285 acres
WASCOBs	2,050 basins
Waste utilization	14,192 acres
Watershed Plans developed	22 plans
Wetlands created	220 acres
Wetlands enhanced	2,659 acres
Wetlands restored	9,622 acres
Wildlife habitat improvements	5,187 acres
Windbreaks established	29,658 feet



Residue



Wildlife Habitat



Drainage Water Management

## LANDOWNER INCENTIVE PROGRAM (LIP)

### Landowner Incentive Program

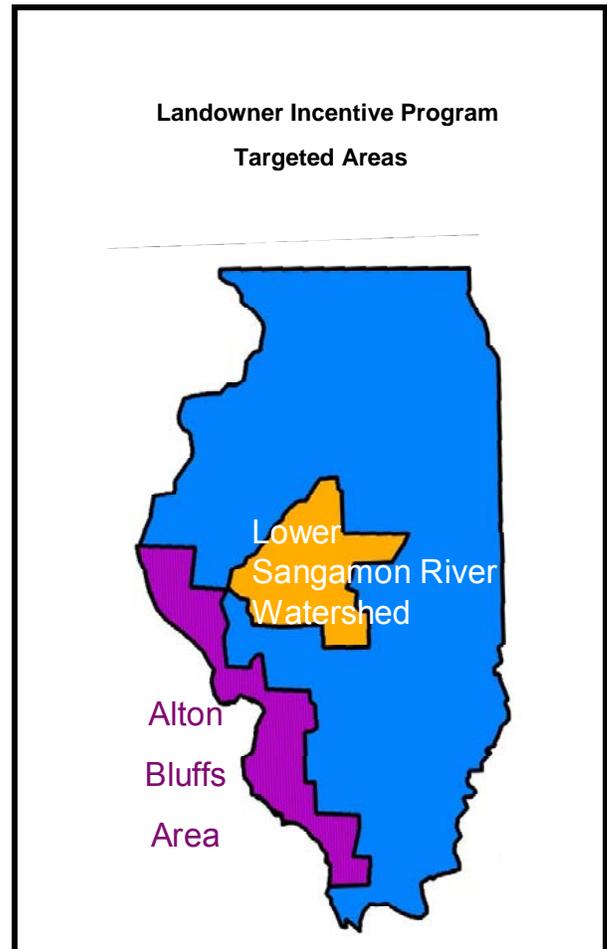
(LIP) is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Program administered by the local soil and water conservation districts with the following goals: to protect and restore habitats on private lands, to benefit federally-listed, proposed or candidate species or other species determined to be at-risk, and to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners for habitat protection and restoration. Illinois is using LIP funds to help implement the IL Fish and Wildlife Action Plan (IFWAP) which highlights species at risk and the habitat enhancements needed to benefit these species.

The Landowner Incentive Program Coordinator and the LIP Resource Specialist are employees of the Sangamon County Soil and Water Conservation District. They work closely with the IDNR Farm Programs Manager and the 23 Soil and Water districts in the designated LIP areas to find willing land owners with potential projects. Projects are then developed and ranked by the LIP Technical Committee consisting of IDNR and LIP staff. Funding is approved by the LIP Advisory Committee which is made up of representatives from various agencies, conservation groups and the agricultural community.

Currently, there are 29 projects underway in the Lower Sangamon River Watershed including hill prairie restoration, wetland enhancement, oak/hickory forest enhancement, sand prairie restoration and sand forest enhancement. Management practices for these projects include brush clearing, non-native/invasive species removal, forest stand enhancement, prescribed fire and supplemental seeding/stocking with native plant material. These projects will enhance or restore over 900 acres of unique habitats in this watershed. There are also additional projects in the Lower Sangamon River Watershed that are being developed by IDNR and LIP staff.

A second focus area for LIP called "Alton Bluffs" is an 11-county area that stretches along the Mississippi River from Adams County in the north to Alexander County in the south. This area hosts many unique habitats including hill prairies, barrens, glades, quality oak/hickory timber in the uplands and bottomlands, as well as a variety of wetland habitats along the Mississippi River and its tributaries. There are 23 approved projects in these counties which will restore or enhance over 900 acres once management plans are completed and landowner contracts are signed.

While the program was not renewed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in FY 2008 and will 'sunset' in September of 2010, funds are still available for projects that can be completed within this time frame.



## ILLINOIS CONSERVATION & CLIMATE INITIATIVE (ICCI)

The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD), as a registered verifier for the Chicago Climate Exchange, conducted verification of 49 contracts in 28 Soil and Water Conservation Districts for producers enrolled as carbon credit providers through the Illinois Conservation and Climate Initiative (ICCI). These producers have agreed to use continuous no-till or grass management practices to sequester carbon dioxide. The verification program conducts desk audits and field inspections of selected contracts equal to at least 10% of the acres in a given pool to verify that the contracted carbon sequestering practices have been implemented and to confirm the acreage enrolled in the program.

Each verification investigator has been trained and is experienced in planning, designing and monitoring installation of the practices being verified. Field verification procedures included;

- A. Confirmation of contracted acreage
- B. Confirmation of vegetative condition and affirm crop type

- C. Assess evidence of field tillage practices including the following;
  - Indications of soil disturbance, including “clean” or bare soil, broken surface, ridges, and/or furrows.
  - Presence of surface vegetation litter from previous seasons/years.
  - Soil condition.
- D. Take digital photographs of field conditions.
- E. Maintain a record of all field observations and measurements with comparison to recorded data of appropriate contract information to assure consistency

Of 142 contracts aggregated by the Delta Institute for the ICCI during FY 2008, 49 contracts were selected for verification. These contracts represented slightly more than 15% of the contracted acres. The AISWCD verified 5,200.87 no-till acres and 1,061.74 grassland acres.

**TABLE 7**  
ICCI PROGRAM ENROLLEMENT INFORMATION

As of December 2008

Acres	ALL	POOL I End Dec 06	POOL II End May 07	POOL III End Dec 07	POOL IV End may 08	POOL V End Dec 08
<b>Total</b>	<b>169,826</b>	<b>52,394</b>	<b>60,044</b>	<b>30,399</b>	<b>15,628</b>	<b>9,634</b>
Grass Acreage	27,070	4,441	14,155	4,047	3,337	954
Tillage Acreage	124,532	44,968	40,197	20,499	11,090	7,591
Forestry Acreage	16,923	2,985	5,692	5,853	1,201	1,089

Contracts Submitted	ALL	POOL I End Dec 06	POOL II End May 07	POOL III End Dec 07	POOL IV End May 08	POOL V End Dec 08
<b>Total</b>	<b>875</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>50</b>
Soil	538	123	240	77	65	28
Grass	312	60	155	40	42	13
Tillage	87	36	24	14	9	2
Grass & Tillage	139	27	61	23	14	13
Forestry	332	42	145	89	31	22

## ILLINOIS ENVIROTHON

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The 14th Illinois Envirothon was held May 2-3, 2008 at the 4-H Memorial Camp (Allerton Park) in Monticello, Illinois. Eighty students and over 25 advisors from across the state to participate in the Illinois Envirothon for the chance to represent Illinois at the Canon Envirothon in Flagstaff, Arizona, July 28 -August 2, 2008. They competed against 54 teams from the U.S. and Canadian provinces.

On the first day of the Illinois Envirothon competition, the five-member teams listened to resource professionals speak on the 4 major category areas: soils, forestry, wildlife, aquatics and on the 5th category, "Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources."

After testing, students received the scenario for the oral presentation and worked together the rest of the evening preparing for this section of the competition. Wednesday night students had the opportunity to meet other students during an ice cream social which was enjoyed by all. Thursday morning, the teams finished competition by presenting their oral presentation to a panel of judges.

Financial sponsors of the Illinois Envirothon include Canon Envirothon, Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts Employees Association, the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Auxiliary, along with various individual Soil and Water Conservation Districts.



### Participant Listing (Winning LUC Teams)

LUC	COUNTY	HIGH SCHOOL	TOTAL SCORE
9	Christian	Taylorville	450.75
12	Madison	Triad	390.75
2	Rock Island	Rock Island	381.5
15	Jackson	Murphysboro	380.25
16	Cook	Rolling Meadows	347.75
6	Ford	Paxton-Buckley-Loda	343.25
3	Livingston	Prairie Central	336.25
11	Edwards	Edwards	333.75
1	Whiteside	Morrison	329
7	Edgar	Paris	325
13	Clay	Flora	312.5
10	Effingham	Altamont	287.5
8	Brown	Brown	262.25
4	Hancock	Illini West	260.25
5	Woodford	El-Paso-Gridley	247.5
14	Johnson	Vienna	247.5



The winning Illinois team in Flagstaff, Arizona

The Canon Envirothon continues to be a dynamic force within the Environmental Education arena. Envirothon's hands-on, team-based approach and combination of in-class curricula and outdoor training make it unique. Since its inception, the Envirothon program has reached millions of high school students (grades 9 through 12) across North America with unbiased, science-based natural resource and environmental education that's relevant and fun.

The Canon Envirothon hosts the winners of state and provincial Envirothon competitions at a weeklong North America-wide event. The 2008 Illinois Envirothon Team, Taylorville High School (Christian Co.), represented Illinois this past year in Flagstaff, Arizona. Illinois was one of 54 teams, 45 from the U.S. and 9 Canadian Provinces, involving 255 students. The team placed 4th overall in the Aquatics category at the Canon Envirothon competition. Travel expenses and registration were sponsored by the Illinois Envirothon.

## 2008 Competition Results

14th Annual Illinois Envirothon  
May 2-3, 2008  
Monticello, Illinois



**1st Place Team**

Taylorville High School Christian County

Advisor Mary Dawson, Jessica Stout, Cody Bailey, Abbey Mead, Eddie Kahle and Chris Burnett



Triad High School

Jimmy Konsky, Jessie Thompson, Clayton Sharp, Bethany Rosenthal, Ryan Young and Advisor Sandy Perkins.



Rock Island High School

Amelia Schoeneman, Jerome Dehnel, Ryan Noe, Emily Young, and Ryan Wolber. Not pictured, Advisor Nancy Wolber



Murphysboro High School

Alyssa Arwady, Nate Harmon, Kelly Zahorski, Kyle Klein, Gordana Rasic. Not pictured Advisors Laine Gurley and Alan Galatte.



Vienna High School

L to R - Christina Faith, Caroline Bremer, Ethan McGinnis, Melanie Oliver, Daniel Butts. Not pictured, Advisor John Giffin & Cindy Sherwood.

2008 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY WINNERS



# 2008 Conservation Farm Family Winners

Special Thanks to  
our Sponsors



LUC 1 - JoDaviess County & Governor's Award Winner

## Tony & Connie Berning Family

Left to Right: Tony, Kyle, Connie, Kalli, and Meggi Berning

**Special Thanks To:**  
*John Deere for donating a X304 lawn tractor to the Berning Family.*



Prairie View Farms - LUC 3, Livingston County



Robbins Farm - LUC 16, Will-South Cook



Pickens Farm Family - LUC 10, Jasper County



Hopkins Farm Family - LUC 4, Knox County

## AISWCD AWARDS

The Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts recognizes individuals and organizations for their continued efforts in supporting conservation and preserving our natural resources. The following are the awards that were given out at the 60th Annual Meeting 2008.

### Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award



#### Congratulation to Rollie & Lois Spaniol of Coles County!

Rollie began planting trees in 1973 and was still planting trees a quarter of a century later. In 1972, he purchased 40 acres of HEL which had 8 tillable acres. He contacted the District Forester, had a timber plan written and agreed to put 30 acres in Timber Stand Improvement. In 1974, the entire Spaniol family worked on weekends planting trees on those 30 acres.

Over the years, Rollie and Lois have planted almost 100 acres of trees in addition to maintaining an additional 100+ acres of trees that were already planted when they bought the land.

Rollie & Lois have hosted many workshops, tours and meetings on their farm. In 2004 they were recognized as the Outstanding Tree Farmer in Illinois.



#### Legislative Achievement Award

**Senator John M. Sullivan**

### George McKibben Memorial Scholarship

**Jack Fombelle** from Atwood, Illinois in Douglas County is this year's winner of the \$500 scholarship. He is currently enrolled at Illinois State University and plans to graduate in 2009 with a Plant Science degree.

Jack stated his desire to be involved in the field of agriculture can be summed up with the words by Charles Dudley Warner, "To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch their renewal of life-this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do." Growing up on a farm, Jack has found the world of agriculture very exciting. Each day is a new experience and a challenge.

Jack has been able to take on an active role in their family farming operating working along side his father. Many of the farming aspects they use are ones to help improve the conservation of the land. Waterways, buffer strips, no-till and nutrient management plans are just a few of the conservation practices on the Fombelle farm ground.



Jack is involved with the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, Illinois State Student Ag Association, Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, Alpha Zeta Agricultural Honor Society, ISU Redbird Recruiter, and ISU Intramural Sports. He is also a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, AGR and Moultrie-Douglas County Fair. Jack's parents are Reed and Joann Fombelle.

### AISWCD Officer Team for 2008 - 2009

#### JAMES (JIM) TODD - PRESIDENT

29953 Sweetwater Ave. • Greenviue, IL 62642  
(217) 445-2535 • jtoddfarm@speednet.com

#### AARON FERGUSON - VICE PRESIDENT

Route #2 Box 228 • Sumner, IL 62466  
(618) 947-2997 • apf@sumner-il.com

#### JOHN BECKHART - SECRETARY

1154 N. State Hwy 32 • Cisco, IL 61830  
(217) 669-2147 • beckhart@dishmail.net

#### ROLLIE SPANIOL - TREASURER

17590 E. 550N • Charleston, IL 61920  
(217) 345-6266 • cfrds@eiu.edu



Outgoing President Terry Davis (left) hands the gavel over to newly elected President James (Jim) Todd during the 60th Annual Meeting.



### AISWCD Color Guard

#### Special Thanks:

Terry Bogner, Marshall-Putnam Co.  
Richard Reynolds, Iroquois Co.  
Myron Kirby, DeWitt Co.  
Lee Bunting, Livingston Co.



**SPECIAL RECOGNITION CONTEST WINNERS**

*Auxiliary Photo Contest Winners*



Landscapes Winner  
 "Sunset at Lake Springfield"  
 Stephen Warren, Sangamon Co.



Conservation Winner  
 "Overgrown Quarry"  
 Scott Mood, Edgar Co.



Youth Winner  
 "Frozen In Time"  
 Amanda Rollins, Knox Co.



Wildlife & Overall Winner  
 "Three Ladies"  
 Clifford Pennington  
 Vermilion Co.

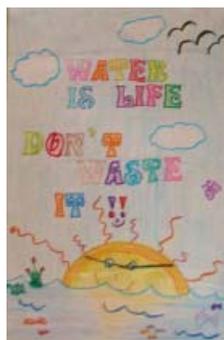


Trees & Plants Winner  
 "Grow Where Your Planted"  
 Sandra Schulz, Vermilion Co.

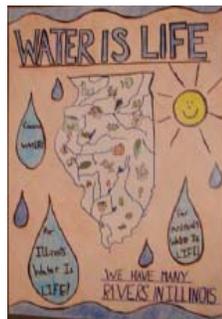
*Auxiliary Poster Contest Winners*



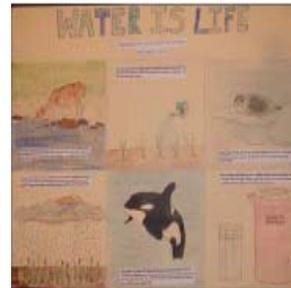
K-1 WINNER  
 HENRY CO.  
 CHIARA HENDRIX



GRADE 2-3 WINNER  
 DEKALB CO.  
 JESSICA ZNAMENSKI



GRADE 4-6 WINNER  
 MASON CO.  
 ZACKERY WHITLOW



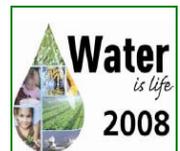
GRADE 7-9 WINNER  
 LIVINGSTON CO.  
 TAMI STEFFEN



GRADE 10-12 WINNER  
 DEKALB CO.  
 JOSE GARCIA

*Water is Life*

Become aware of water quality and quantity in your community. Understand how watersheds work. We all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and where we play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What you and others do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water and our other natural resources. Healthy watersheds are vital for a healthy environment and economy. Our watersheds provide water for drinking, irrigation, farming and industry. Many people also enjoy lakes and streams for their beauty and for boating, fishing and swimming. Wildlife also needs healthy watersheds for food and shelter. Everything that is done in a watershed effects the watershed system. The watershed where you live is a dynamic and unique place. It is a complex web of of natural resources—soil,water,air,plants and animals. Yet, everyday activities can in-impact these resources, ultimately impacting our well-being and economic livelihood. Managing the water and other natural resources is an effective and efficient way to sustain the local economy and environmental health.



## PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

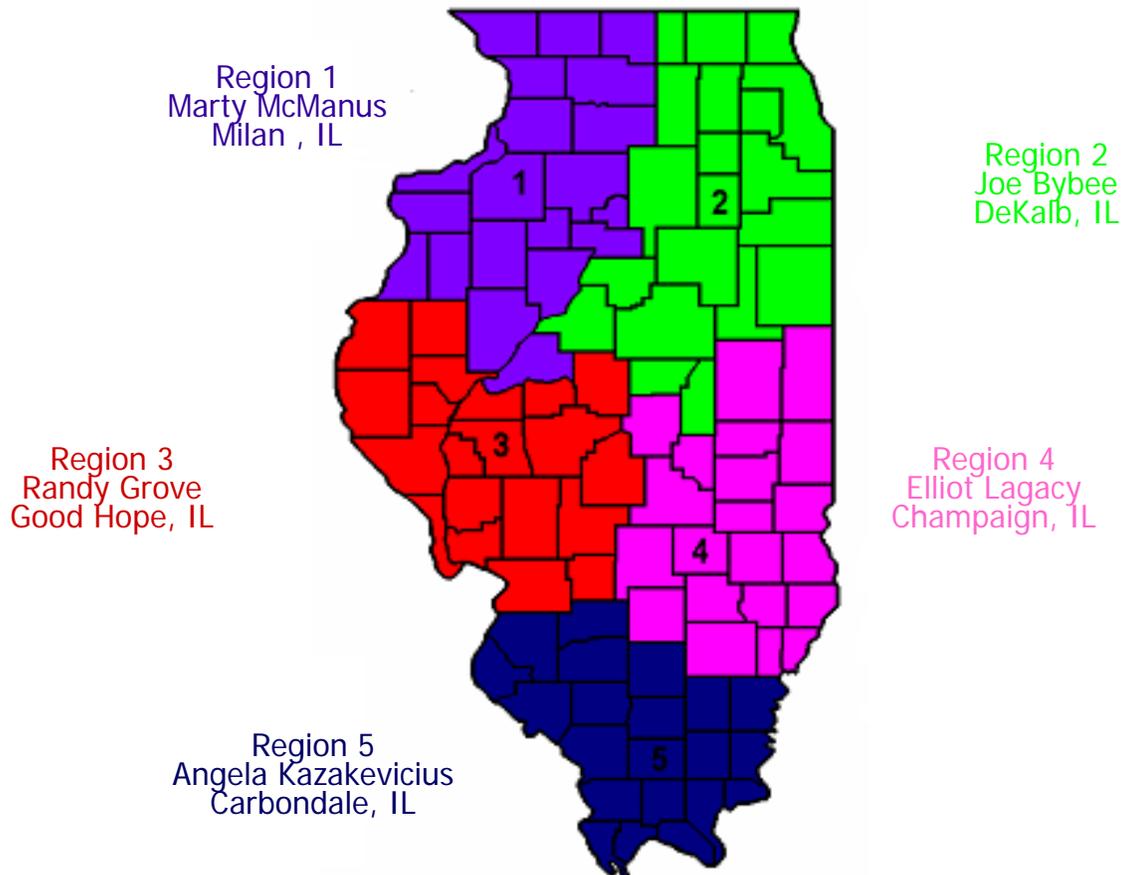
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Information has been compiled for the Illinois Conservation Partnership Annual Report from programs carried out in 2008. Partners include the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land and Water Resources, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 98 county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Partner programs provide benefits in the areas of soil conservation and water quality in rural and urban communities, agricultural nutrient management farmland protection, sustainable agriculture, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, and watershed planning and protection.

Efforts also provide youth and adult environmental education and outreach, research and demonstration, and public information. Programs are generally directed to landowners and land managers using incentive based, voluntary approaches. The chart located on the next page summarizes the outreach and education efforts for all 98 SWCDs reaching both rural and urban communities.

For more information on local programs and activities, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.



The Bureau of Land and Water Resources has divided the state into 5 regions for administrative purposes. Every region has an assigned Bureau Regional Representative that works with each SWCD locally to implement the state soil conservation programs.

## Outreach and Education Efforts

Conservation Information/ Education Outreach	# Activities	# Participants	Public Relations	#	Distribution
Conservation Tours for Adults	43	2,557	Newsletters	213	249,493
Conservation Tours for Students (K-12)	40	7,335	Teacher Newsletters	146	13,945
Conservation Tillage Meetings	19	1,209		#	# Papers
Watershed Meetings	307	4,185	Newspaper Articles	701	2,713
Watershed Tours	15	454		#	Stations
Annual Meetings	-	9,785	Radio Spots	189	54
Forage/Pasture Demo	14	623	T.V. Spots	28	15
Woodland/Windbreak/Wildlife Demo	11	675		Yes/No	# of Hits
Soil Stewardship Meetings/ Programs	146	22,585	Websites	33	142,456
Lady Landowner Meetings/ Tours	28	1,362		#	# Attendees
Meetings with Special Interest Groups	329	6,482	Conservation Speaking Engagements	90	4,873
Agronomy Days	13	2,439		#	Customers
Contractor Workshop	32	1,345	Tree Sales	85	5,253
Displays at Fairs, Banks, etc	115	152,829	Plant Sales	23	780
Field demonstrations plots (number of plots)	22	-	Fish Sales (# of annual sales)	145	3,606
Classroom Presentations	-	-	Conservation Seed - report in acres	5,762	1,209
K-8 Grade	2,895	77,843	Equipment Rental	-	-
9-12 Grade	155	4,312	Drill/Planter/Seeder - report in acres	67,818.45	3,352
College	21	413	Scraper	-	116
Educator Workshops	80	1,456	Tree Planter - report in acres	1,140.7	143
Conservation Education Days	159	26,211	Other	28,659	2,160
Arbor Day Programs	253	19,301	Used Oil Collection - report in gallons	6,546	2,692
Earth Day Programs	152	9,021	Used Tire Collection - report in tires	101,400	400
Conservation Education Contest	-	-	Aerial & GIS Maps / Plat Books	7,744	4,743
Poster	99	6,421	Other	14,391	3,512
Photo	5	209		Number	Acres
Other	20	1,864	Natural Resource Reports	1,021	16,495.1
Provide Scholarships	48	-	Land Evaluation Site Assessments (LESA)	229	3,887.97
FFA Soils Judging Contest	51	3,362	Soil Erosion Sediment Control Plan Reviews	449	3,705
Other	627	25,917	Soil Erosion Sediment Control Inspections	3,417	-
	# of Schools	# of Participants	Soil Borings/Mapping	458	285
Envirothon	288	2,442	Facility Planning Area Reviews	29	-
Provide School Projects	192	-	Flood Related Reviews	316	-
<b>OUTREACH TOTAL</b>		<b>392,637</b>	Mining Activities	16	-
			Pipeline/Utilities Activities	46	-
			Other	148	-
				# of Activities	# Attendees
			SESC Tours/Workshops	19	1,010
			Land Use Meetings/Hearings	185	2,558
			Farmland Protection Events	37	394
			Ag Areas Meetings	45	866
			Flood Related Meetings	46	30,276

## SWCD PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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**Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)** each have a unique program to meet the conservation needs of the people and natural resources in their district. These are only a few of the diverse activities carried out by the SWCDs and their many local partners.

### Region 1

**Bureau, Carroll, Fulton, Henderson, Henry, JoDaviess, Knox, Lee, Marshall-Putnam, Mason, Mercer, Ogle, Peoria, Rock Island, Stark, Stephenson, Warren, Whiteside and Winnebago Counties**

**Bureau County SWCD** organized a day of learning about nature for 500 fifth graders at Annawan School in Henry County. The event was held at Warnecke Woods, one of the county's natural areas. Each class attended 9 activities throughout the day including fish, wildlife, trees, crafts, erosion, soils, American Indians, recycling, birds, electrical safety, bees, wind power, prairies, and more.

**Bureau County SWCD** held a Covered Wagon Ride for 100 participants who imagined what it was like to travel across Bureau County 150 years ago. Staff, in period costume, identified the native plants and set the mood of a pioneer settlement. Other attractions included a Trading Post that sold buffalo burgers and homemade pies, a pioneer school, a wagon wheel maker, calf roping, a snake oil salesman, a circuit rider minister, a trapper with assorted furs and the opportunity to test your skill at throwing a tomahawk.

**Bureau, LaSalle, and Lee County SWCD** developed and began implementing a Big Bureau Creek Watershed Plan based on a recently completed study of the watershed.

**Carroll County SWCD** identified forest land owners as traditionally underserved clients. The goal was to build new and strengthen existing relationships with forest landowners in Carroll County. They researched and disseminated information on the new managed forest carbon credit program. The information was presented at the annual farm tour,

attended by 75 individuals, including U.S. Representative Don Manzullo.

**Carroll County SWCD** conducted forestry activities for all 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. Free tree seedlings were delivered to all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in the county.

**Carroll County SWCD** assisted the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service with the implementation of 32 Environmental Quality Incentive Program forestry contracts covering over 1,200 acres.

The **Carroll County SWCD, neighboring SWCDs** and the Black Hills RC&D helped to plan and conduct two forestry workshops for 80 landowners in the area.

**Henderson County SWCD, neighboring SWCDs,** and the Illinois Department of Agriculture sponsored a pesticide clean sweep program. Individuals in the county disposed of chemicals and pesticides properly. This program helped keep wells, streams, and water bodies in Henderson County pesticide free.

**Henderson County SWCD** installed 2 rock riffles and treated 740 feet of streambank with stone toe protection with funds from the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program. These two projects kept 682 tons of sediment out of the stream.

**Henderson County SWCD** completed irrigation system evaluations on 18 irrigation pivots in Henderson and Mercer Counties, covering 1,825 acres. Management plans on each pivot helped landowners more uniformly apply water, chemicals, and repair systems as needed. Mason County SWCD provided the training.

The **Henry County SWCD** published 4,100 bi-monthly conservation education newsletters for teachers and students in the kindergarten through sixth grades. "Conservation Trail" covers subjects like soil, water, trees, birds, fish, mammals, and other agriculture, conservation, and environmental topics.

**Henry County SWCD, Henry County Farm Bureau,** and Henry County Cooperative Extension Service sponsored Earth Day Camp for third graders to learn about soil, trees, recycling, and vermi-composting.

**Henry County SWCD** provided 650 White Pine seedlings to celebrate Arbor Day. Students also received a tree information sheet on the state tree of Illinois, the importance of trees, and facts about trees.

**Henry County SWCD** operated a booth at the Henry County Fair, including a section where children played "Water Trivia", "Fishing for Fish Facts" and "What Fish is This?". Children also made "fish bait" using gummy worms and ground up Oreo cookies for soil. A variety of brochures, activity books, activity sheets, bookmarks, and temporary tattoos were available.

After receiving many inquiries from landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) signed up since 2007, **Knox County SWCD** held a CREP meeting to help answer landowner questions and to continue to generate interest in the program. The meeting featured office staff from United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and a panel of CREP landowners.

**Knox County SWCD** and the **Lake County SWCD** held a successful spring rain barrel sale. The sale helped reach urban landowners that may not otherwise know about their local soil and water conservation district.

**Knox County SWCD** was approved for a C-2000 Special Project for the installation of streambank mats and an in-stream floating island. This project will address water quality impairments in an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Total Maximum Daily Load Watershed.

**Marshall County SWCD** and the Prairie Rivers RC&D were presented a check for \$10,000 from Archer Daniels Midland Company 2008 Community Partnership Grant for the Marshall-Putnam Conservation Education Initiative Project. The project will strengthen and expand conservation education in both counties.

**Marshall-Putnam SWCD** held a Lady Landowner tour for 55 ladies. The first stop was Mitsubishi Motors in Normal, IL where they watched a video on the history of Mitsubishi. The ladies were split in four groups. Then each group toured the production line

watched dashboards assembled, and saw vehicles inspected after assembly. Ropp Jersey Cheese in Normal was the next stop. One group toured the gift shop while the other group toured the farm and cheese-making facility. They learned how Jersey cows are raised and how they locally market their cheese. The whole group toured the USDA Agriculture Research Laboratory in Peoria, IL, which is the largest and lead facility of the four USDA Federal Laboratories transferring new technology to the marketplace. The laboratory researches new industrial and food uses for agricultural commodities, develops new technology to improve environmental quality, and provides technical support to federal regulatory and other agencies. This is also the facility where the first mass production of penicillin was developed.

The **Marshall-Putnam SWCD** and the University of Illinois Extension Service sponsored the Marshall-Putnam Conservation Camp at Lake Thunderbird in Putnam, Illinois. The group sessions included time to talk to Conservation Officer B. Tapley from Hennepin and tour the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Conservation Trailer which contained taxidermy native animals. Certified Falconers Rich Borquist and Linda Kirby showed their peregrine falcon and red tailed hawk. After the group sessions, kids were able to participate in three 45 minute sessions which included a conservation stream walk, mammal tracks, garden stepping stones, butterfly feeders, fishing, GPS scavenger hunt, and wind toys.

**Mercer County SWCD**, the Interstate RC&D, Mercer County Board, Mercer County Hospital and Nursing Home and Community Unit School District 201 are working on a wind turbine project to construct a single 1.5 MW turbine to provide electricity to these tax supported groups. A \$14,000 grant was received to complete a feasibility study.

**Rock Island SWCD** Natural Area Guardians constructed a 2,000 sq ft rain garden at Black Hawk Historic Site in Rock Island. Volunteers planted over 1,300 native plants on the berms and seeded the basin with native species. This garden will capture runoff from the west parking lot and help Watchtower Lodge control storm water runoff, plus filter contaminants which pollutes the Rock River Watershed.

**Stark County SWCD** and the Stark County Farm Bureau held a, "Women in Agriculture" and

Conservation Seminar”, titled “Beef It Up”. Topics and food all reflected the theme for the day long event. This annual seminar is full of educational sessions, as well as a few fun activities and lots of fellowship for women of all ages from both farms and Stark County’s small towns.

Residents from **Stark County SWCD** and surrounding counties attended the annual Summer Prairie Walk at a state managed site and a restored prairie. The walk was led by a Illinois Department of Transportation Landscape Architect. In addition to the prairie walk, attendees viewed a prairie plant photo display, received a photo handout of prairie plants seen during the walk, and had the opportunity to purchase native plants and field guides.

**Warren County SWCD** promoted abandoned water well sealing by supplementing the states 60% cost share program with an additional 30% cost share from the soil and water conservation district. Since 1989, 123 wells have been sealed.

**Whiteside County SWCD** and the Hilltop Meadows Hunt Club hosted a 5-Stand Sporting Clays Tournament Fundraiser in support of the Education Foundation’s Conservation/Environmental Programs. The event helped raise funds and the District established valuable relationships with new contacts.

**Whiteside, Jo Davies, Carroll and Stephenson County SWCDs**, and the Blackhawk Hills RC & D sponsored a two day forestry workshop for 100 landowners on topics to help them improve their woods and learn sustainable practices. The hardwood timbers of northwestern Illinois are an under managed resource and land owners were anxious to get information from these workshops.

The **Whiteside, Jo Davies, Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Stephenson SWCDs** formed a wildlife habitat group to meet the growing need for land owner education.

**Whiteside, Jo Davies and Carroll SWCDs** sponsored a conservation education day to give 400 fourth grade students, teachers, and parents, 5-7 presentations from natural resource professionals. Students had the opportunity to see, hear, touch, and in some cases taste the natural resources right in their back yard.

Nancy Anderson, Education Coordinator for the **Whiteside SWCD** developed a class room project on rural and urban watershed conservation practices in the Sterling-Rock Falls area that was to assist several hundred Hispanic students in these two

school districts. Bilingual materials were developed for students with English as a second language.

**Winnebago County SWCD** participated in the Pecatonica River Watershed Summit, a gathering of landowners, stakeholders and interested parties to discuss habitat and wildlife management. Speakers from Illinois and Wisconsin gave professional advice and presented suggestions that participants could use when implementing conservation practices on the land. The advantages and implementation of controlled burns for habitat management were presented.

**Winnebago County SWCD** implemented a Rain Barrel Program that encouraged urban residence to reduce pollutants and sediment into creeks and streams by reducing stormwater runoff from buildings. The program included providing 100 rain barrels at a reduced cost, and demonstrating their use and maintenance.

### Region 2

**Boone, DeKalb, Dewitt, Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, Kane-DuPage, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, Livingston, McHenry, McLean, North Cook, Piatt, Tazewell, Will-South Cook, and Woodford Counties**

The **Boone County SWCD** accepted its first donation of development rights on 260 acres of agricultural land from Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Stennerson’s Centennial Farm in Manchester Township. While the **Boone County SWCD** accepted and will hold the perpetual easement, it is the culmination of the efforts of the Boone County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, the Farmland Protection Project, the Natural Land Institute, and several governmental agencies.

The **Boone County SWCD** acted as the local lead in the Beaver Creek watershed planning process coordinated by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning and the Kishwaukee River Ecosystem Partnership. This 1.5 year long project brought together stakeholders in Boone County including landowners, municipalities, and elected officials. Stakeholders learned about the condition of the Beaver Creek Watershed, what can be done to protect or improve the quality of the stream, and the services of the district.

**Boone County SWCD** prepared 150 primarily agriculture students at three county high schools for

the Soil Judging Contest. The students learned about slope and landscape characteristics, land use and management issues, soil structure, texture, percent organic matter, and indicators of soil wetness.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** and the DeKalb County Government co-sponsored the "Go Green Environmental Initiative." The Water Conservation Management Conference was attended by approximately 130 participants and provided several environmental professional speakers. The district kicked off its rain barrel program at this event. They have sold over 200 rain barrels and have given away several rain barrels at special programs and shows.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** and the Lake Holiday Home Owners Association completed a 2 year assessment of the Somonauk Creek watershed. This study was conducted by using the Rap-M Watershed Assessment Method created by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Two summer interns were hired to collect data from Somonauk Creek and conducted an inventory of erosion occurring on the land within the 44,000 acre watershed. This information will be used to promote and evaluate future Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program (SSRP) projects in the Somonauk Creek watershed.

**DeKalb County SWCD** and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency contracted to conduct erosion and sediment control inspections on construction sites that require NPDES ILR10 permits. Contractors and developers have learned the benefits of installing soil erosion and sediment control practices. A meeting with the board of the DeKalb County Home Builders Association prompted the district to hold the contractor's seminar.

**DeWitt County SWCD** received a \$784,000 grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to implement the Clinton Lake Watershed Plan. The bulk of the grant funds will be used for the installation of Best Management Practices

**DeWitt County SWCD** received a \$43,398 grant from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to complete a Social Indicator Study in the Clinton Lake Watershed.

**DeWitt County SWCD** and the DeWitt County Board hosted a Used Oil & Used Tire Collection that assisted residents in disposing of items that can do harm to our environment if not disposed of properly.

**DeWitt County SWCD**, as a member of the DeWitt County Plat Review committee, reviews soil erosion and sedimentation plans for all development projects before they are brought to the county.

The **Ford County SWCD** set up a temporary display and assisted with the grand opening of the new County Historical Museum. The museum has asked for a permanent display showcasing the Illinois state soil (Drummer) which originated in Ford County, the headwaters of the Mackinaw River near Sibley, and our seven watersheds (Ford county holds the distinction of the most watersheds per county in the state).

The **Ford County SWCD**, the USDA Farm Service Agency, and the Ford-Iroquois Extension office re-established a lady landowners group. This group met monthly with presentations on several topics such as crop insurance, farm leases, USDA paperwork, land assessment & taxes, conservation programs, and a tour of a local greenhouse. These meetings address topics of interest and give the participants an opportunity for fellowship with other women.

**Ford County SWCD** continued to provide educational opportunities to the local schools and county landowners – Conservation Day for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders (with neighboring counties), Envirothon competition for high school students, Arbor Day presentations, and a Local Conservation Work Group meeting with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Displays were set up at the county fair, local ag day, and Pheasants Forever banquet.

**Grundy County SWCD** and the Grundy County Farm Bureau held a Natural Resources Tour at Goose Lake Prairie for more than 800 fifth grade students, teachers, and parents. Students participated in 11 learning stations covering topics on forestry, groundwater, wetlands, prairie plants, Build Illinois, web of life, conservation police, Traveling Science Center, streams, habitat, and local history. Volunteers from Illinois Department of Agriculture, Office of Solid Waste, Land Use Department, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Lyondell Basell, University of Illinois Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Illinois Natural History Survey, and neighboring soil and water conservation district employees, assisted by speaking at the stations during the three day event.

**Grundy County SWCD** distributed 1,175 Colorado blue spruce seedlings to third grade students

throughout the county in celebration of Arbor Day. Since 2000, we have provided over 6,800 trees free of charge to the local third graders.

**Grundy County SWCD** cost-shared a stone-toe practice through the Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Project (SSRP) for the first time in several years. This project protected 350 feet of streambank and saved three tons of soil from being washed away each year to the Illinois River.

**Iroquois County SWCD** participated in the Illinois Conservation Climate Initiative by developing 25 additional contracts (for a total of 85) through Delta Institute/ Chicago Climate Exchange. Over 10,000 grassland, forestland and conservation tillage acres in Iroquois County are now enrolled.

**Iroquois County SWCD** staff performed field eligibility determinations on 95 expiring Conservation Reserve Program contracts; 30 of these were re-enrolled; 25 were new contracts. 434 total acres were enrolled.

**Iroquois County SWCD**, USDA Farm Service Agency, and Illinois Department of Natural Resources signed up 10 contracts for 178 acres through the State Acres for Wildlife (SAFE) program.

**Iroquois County SWCD** took 175 students and adults to Watershed Park and also staffed the stream table during the Illinois State Fair; 120 4<sup>th</sup> graders attended the Environmental Field Day; 420 third grade students heard a presentation about Arbor Day and received a free tree; nearly 100 posters from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades were submitted for the Poster Contest.

**LaSalle County SWCD**, City of LaSalle, City of Mendota, over 150 junior high and high school students, and the Little Vermilion River Watershed Committee held a Storm Water Medallion Day. The students placed medallions on storm drains to make the community aware of storm water runoff and the importance of not dumping pollutants down drains.

**LaSalle County SWCD** held a Spring Nature Day program for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at their Rasmusen Property. Students walked through the native tall-grass prairie and identified plants, watched birds, inter-seeded native grasses, trees and shrubs in the prairie.

The **Kankakee SWCD** sent a student to the Land 4 Learning Outdoor Education Experience on the Eleven Point Scenic River in southeast Missouri.

**Kankakee County SWCD** directors, staff, and directors' families made presentations on soil conservation and water usage to fourth graders at Kids Day at the Farm.

The **Kankakee SWCD** provided grants to local teachers and a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior who will be majoring in environmental science, agriculture or natural resource areas.

The **Kankakee SWCD**, the Village of Bradley, and LRMG Consulting stabilized a portion of Soldier Creek where it passes under North Street using Illinois Department of Agriculture Partners for Conservation Fund dollars. 100 linear feet of bank were pulled back and native plants were seeded to stabilize the bank and to protect the bridge. This was a demonstration project to show the public a different and more environmentally friendly way to stabilize banks in urban settings.

The **Kendall County SWCD** Education Program hosted a Natural Resource Tour for 600 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students at Hoover Outdoor Education Center in Yorkville. Students visited 11 different stations where educators from the county and Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District staff talked about soil, water, Illinois history, animals, aquatic habitats, prairies, wetlands, and nature. Other organizations involved were the Kendall County Forest Preserve, Outdoor Education Center, Conservation Foundation, and Oswegoland Park District.

The **Kendall County SWCD**, Kendall County Health Department, Forest Preserve, Outdoor Education Center, and Kendall County Farm Bureau organized the Kendall Education Connection. This cooperative education organization's main goal is to develop and deliver high quality educational programs dealing with the environment, agriculture, health and related topics to Kendall County residents.

The **Kendall County SWCD**, local landowners, municipalities, county governments, local, state and federal agency's and other organizations participated on the project steering committee led by The Conservation Foundation to update the original Aux Sable Creek Watershed Plan and meet new watershed planning criteria established by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

**Lake County SWCD** sold a record 980 rain barrels to Lake, Cook, McHenry Counties and Wisconsin residents at their second annual sale.

The **Lake County SWCD** performed 53 NPDES inspections as part of the SWCD/IEPA program, helping dozens of contractors and developers stay in compliance with their construction permits.

The **Lake County SWCD** performed 87 soil tests on lawns, gardens, and flower beds to help landowners apply the appropriate amounts of fertilizer. Over fertilizing may result in unwanted nutrients entering streams and lakes.

The **Livingston County SWCD** was an early promoter of the Pontiac Prescription Drug Disposal Program (P2D2) that encourages people to bring unused prescription medicines to pharmacies and police stations for incineration. Drugs that are flushed cause water quality damage. The P2D2 Program was started by Pontiac Township High School Ecology Teacher Paul Ritter and his Ecology students and Illinois Studies students. Over eighty pounds of unused drugs were collected in the first month in Pontiac. The program has spread from every pharmacy in Livingston County to Florida, Washington State, Missouri, and other states. Through the Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District's efforts, the Association of Illinois of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) and the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) now promote this program nationwide.

The **Livingston County SWCD**, University of Illinois Extension, and Farm Bureau hosted the Livingston County Conservation and Ag EXPO for 1,300 first through fifth students at Livingston County 4-H Park in Pontiac. There were over seventy 25-minute long activity stations teaching about soils, water quality and conservation, forestry, recycling, wildlife habitats/adaptations, safety, and agricultural commodities. Volunteers participated from the local community, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Illinois Trappers Association, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, neighboring Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and Chuck Collins, the WMBD weatherman. The FFA groups from Flanagan, Woodland, Pontiac and Prairie Central High Schools and Pontiac Township High School Ecology class students assisted this year.

The **Livingston County SWCD** presented their Good Neighbor Award to Gary Swartz from Saunemin and the Forrest Food Bank at an award ceremony and meal provided with Farm Credit Services. The

recipients are nominated by their peers; they do an excellent job managing their farms to protect and improve the soil and water resources for future generations, they are active in the community, and they volunteer in various organizations and committees.



Gary Swartz & Chairman Lee Bunting

**McHenry County SWCD** signed an agreement with Henry County to perform erosion and sediment control inspections on all county jurisdictional projects including those municipalities that fall under the county ordinance requirements.

**McHenry County SWCD** hosted a "Contractors Workshop" to educate contractors about new erosion control products, installation of products and stormwater regulations. 80 people participated.

**North Cook County SWCD** performed soil erosion and sediment control plan reviews and site inspections for US Army Corps of Engineers permitted projects under agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers- Chicago District. The Phase I Modernization Project for O'Hare Airport is undoubtedly the most challenging project in the eleven year history of the partnership.

The **North Cook, Kane and DuPage SWCDs** started negotiations with the City of Chicago, O'Hare Modernization Project (OMP) representatives in 2004 to develop an individual application process for the Phase I Project. A separate reimbursement structure, inspection protocol, and soil erosion and sediment control review process were developed. The OMP received approval by the US Army Corps of Engineers for an overall Phase I Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Plan. Also, 22 individual project (Task Order) were submitted to the **North Cook County SWCD** for a separate review and sign-off as they were developed. Due to the size and intense nature of the project, active project sites are inspected weekly. The largest project that was reviewed and inspected

to date is the construction of a new runway (9L - 27R).

**Piatt County SWCD**, the City of Monticello, Dewitt-Piatt Bi-County Health Department, Lincoln Heritage and Heartland of Illinois RC & D, and the Monticello Rotary organized an E-Waste collection day so people could bring old electronic equipment to be recycled. A total of 71 monitors, 50 TV's, 41 CPUs, 11 microwaves and a lot of other electronics were collected.

**Piatt County SWCD**, Earth Partners, and the Piatt County Farm Bureau held the first Piatt Stewardship Day at Washington Elementary in Monticello. The 326 students that attended learned about aquatics, rain, mammals, fish, and stream restoration.

**Piatt County SWCD** and the Piatt County Farm Bureau hosted a series of meetings focused on the Farm Bill, carbon credits, and the next one is on soils of central Illinois.

**Tazewell County SWCD**, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Wildlife Turkey Federation and Pheasants Forever held a Wildlife Habitat Tour that allowed participants to learn about conservation programs, equipment, timber management, native prairie grass and wildflowers, tree and shrub plantings, food plots (annual and perennial), prescribed burning, streambank stabilization, field borders, and filter strips.

**Tazewell County SWCD** used 1,080 tons of rock to install 6 stream barbs to protect the bank on a 950 feet site on the Mackinaw River. The cost of the project was \$77,000.

**Tazewell County SWCD** and the Tazewell County University of Illinois Extension Service sponsored a pond management demonstration for 60 people. The attendees learned about pond management, aquatic weed control, and conservation programs. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist demonstrated a pond shocking.

The **Will-South Cook SWCD** hired Neil Pellman, a professional engineer, to provide engineering assistance to both the agricultural and urban communities. He provided conservation planning, soil erosion and sediment control support to developers, addressed flooding and drainage concerns for residential landowners, and performed NPDES Phase II inspections under an agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The **Will-South Cook SWCD**, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, county planners, and planning staff from local municipalities, completed an update of the Will County Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System. After 22 months of sharing knowledge and renewing and strengthening partnerships, the project has been completed and submitted to the Illinois Department of Agriculture for review. Focusing on the needs of decision makers and users, the team's goal was to develop a tool consistent and reliable in its output and that uses scientific information to develop Natural Resource Information Reports. Working collectively, the efforts put forth by the technical and review committee members have resulted in an updated LESA system that can be used with a greater level of confidence.

The **Will-South Cook SWCD** hosted a tour of the 2009 Farm Family Award winning Tewes Farm, in Frankfort for 40 people. The family talked about the history of the farm. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, University of Illinois Extension Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, agricultural chemical dealer, and a county land use committee member covered topics: managing pastures for livestock, techniques used to monitor insects in crops, creek maintenance, locating field tile using aerial photos, farm programs, and required county permits. A soils pit was dug exposing a field tile and soil horizons were identified and discussed. The event concluded with a picnic lunch and a display of farm equipment.



Tour of the 2009 Award winning Tewes farm located in Franklin, Illinois

**Will-South Cook SWCD** and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service worked with Will County government to develop and adopt a subdivision ordinance to assist in the management of soil erosion and flooding on residential and commercial development. Language that provided support for developers interested in Conservation Subdivision Design was omitted from the ordinance, but the District and the County Executive are committed to amending the ordinance to include Conservation Subdivision Design. Conservation Design calls for increased open space and natural areas within the developing lands of unincorporated Will County.

The **Woodford County** and the McLean County SWCD held their 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Wilderness Camp at Chinquapin Bluffs in Woodford County. The 34 students, who ranged from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade spent the day in the wilderness learning about trees, understory plants, GPS, fish, prairies and wetlands.

The **Woodford County SWCD** and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources provided cost share through a C-2000 grant on labor for removing invasive species such as multiflora rose and autumn olive from 270 acres of timber in the Mackinaw Watershed.

### Region 3

**Adams, Bond, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Christian, Greene, Hancock, Jersey, Logan, Macoupin, Madison, McDonough, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, and Scott Counties**

**Adams County SWCD**, John Wood Community College, Adams County University of Illinois Extension Service, Adams County government and others, co-sponsored an Earth Day Celebration.

**Adams County, Brown County and Pike County SWCDs** coordinated a field day of natural resource conservation activities for 600 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Adams County** and **Hancock County SWCDs**, and the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District completed the Greater Bear Creek Area Watershed Plan.

**Adams County SWCD** provided a Power Point presentation on streambank stabilization and restoration at John Wood Community College for their agriculture and natural science curriculum.

**Adams County SWCD** sponsored the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Western Illinois/Northeast Missouri No-Till Seminar for 160 attendees.

**Bond County SWCD** hosted its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Soil and Water Conservation Day for 200 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom for Bond County, Bond County University of Illinois Extension Service, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and local FFA Chapters provided educational presentations, workstations and interactive booths that taught the students about topics such as stream and lake formation, preventing water pollution, wildlife, fishing and water safety, conservation farming and farm safety.

**Brown County SWCD**, other agencies and agriculture partners presented Dr. Seuss Days to pre-K through 4<sup>th</sup> graders at public and parochial schools. Bruce Yingling read the book, *Cat in the Hat* and discussed different "hats" that a farmer must use in his/her farming operation. Administrative Coordinator, Charla Meyers read *The Lorax* and presented the Enviroscape Model; read the book, *Oh Say Can You Seed* and had participants dissect a bean seed and make a bean book or complete a garden in a glove, depending on age; read the book, *Oh Say, I Can Name 50 Trees* and the participants did a leaf rubbing; and Resource Conservationist, Marley Woodley read the book, *McElligot's Pool* and participants constructed a small model of underground drainage.



Dr. Seuss Days at a Brown County school.

**Brown County SWCD** hosted a scavenger hunt at Moore Memorial Park for sixth graders. Stops included demonstrating surveying equipment, searching for a white oak, looking for deer tracks, investigating conservation practices, and measuring white pines.

**Brown County SWCD** hosted an Arbor Day celebration for third graders at Moore Memorial Park where they learned about the layers of a tree, the proper way to plant a tree and the characteristics of a leaf. After a morning of learning, the afternoon was spent playing "Arbor Day Soccer", a game designed by Administrative Coordinator Charla Meyers.

The **Calhoun County SWCD** and the University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry, one of the world's leading agroforestry centers, co-sponsored an Agroforestry Workshop through a SARE Grant, "Agroforestry practices can help landowners diversify products, improve farm income, improve soil and water quality, and reduce erosion" The topics for the workshop included Biomass for Energy Production, Silvopasture, Marketing Specialty Crops, Medicinal Herbs, Alley Cropping, Forest Farming, Riparian Buffers, Windbreaks and Nut Production.

The **Calhoun County SWCD** hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Forestry Field Day Workshop/Judging for 30 students. University of Illinois Extension Service Natural Resource Management Educators Dave Shiley and Duane Friend presented sessions on tree identification, tree measurement, timber stand improvement and compass reading. Students were able to test their knowledge in a forestry judging contest.

The **Cass County SWCD** along with donors: Cargill Meat, Cass County University of Illinois Extension Service, and the Farm Service Agency in Springfield, held a two day Cass County Ag Day at the county fairgrounds in Virginia for 598 students. Volunteers are from the county's "partners in conservation" and county schools.

**Christian County SWCD** installed a stone toe protection stream bank stabilization project on 262 feet of stream bank on Mosquito Creek. The project received cost-share funding through the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Partners For Conservation Fund and the Stream Bank Stabilization Program.



Mosquito Creek Project

The **Hancock County SWCD**, the Greater Bear Creek Area Watershed Planning Committee, Hancock County University of Illinois Extension Service, Hancock County Farm Bureau, and the Prairie Hills RC&D held the "Hancock County Residue Management Field Day" for 200 growers and interested citizens to learn more about tillage and residue management. Attendees heard discussions and watched demonstrations of ten pieces of conservation tillage equipment. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service demonstrated how to measure residue after tillage. Terry Davis, Warren SWCD Director and Agronomist Barry Bewley addressed the topics of residue management, tillage options, nutrient placement, and carbon credits.

The **Jersey County SWCD** worked to establish a memo of understanding and scope of work, to do follow-up, on-site visits on NPDES Phase II Storm water permits with Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. They worked with city and county officials to write an ordinance providing for the control of storm water drainage and detention, soil erosion and sediment control, within the unincorporated and incorporated areas of Jersey County.

The **Logan County SWCD** received Illinois Department of Agriculture, Conservation Practices Program Special Project funds to install a solar powered well pump as a watering device for a livestock operation. This "green" project not only saves the landowner a sizable initial investment, but will also provide savings for years to come in utility costs.

The **Macoupin County SWCD** conducted its annual, week long Conservation Days for 700 sixth grade students at Beaver Dam State Park. The students attended six stations covering topics on forestry, water quality, recycling, plant and garden facts, conservation laws and the ecology of woodland burns. Volunteer instructors were from Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Macoupin County Soil and Water Conservation District, the University of Illinois Extension, the Ag Literacy Coordinator, and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.

The **Madison County SWCD** provided inspections on all current National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permits under an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency contract. These NPDES sites include any construction site more than 1 acre in size.

The contractors' soil erosion, sediment control and storm water management plans and installations are evaluated. They provide contractors with information on better ways to control soil erosion and minimize sediment leaving the site. This program has resulted in many more construction sites adequately controlling erosion, keeping hundreds of tons of sediment out of streams, lakes, and rivers.

**Madison County, Monroe County and St. Clair County SWCDs** sponsored a field day at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville to demonstrate some current erosion and sediment control products on the market. Product vendors exhibited and discussed some new technology in the field to over 200 contractors, developers, public works officials, professional engineers, SIUE staff and storm water officials. Many of the attendees were holders of NPDES storm water permits. These developers and contractors will be using these products and application knowledge learned at the field day to minimize soil erosion on their permitted sites.

**McDonough County SWCD**, University of Illinois Extension, and Western Illinois Regional Council sponsored the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual McDonough County 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day, with attendance by all 5<sup>th</sup> graders (350 students) in McDonough County private and public schools (5).

**McDonough County SWCD** continued to co-sponsor the Ag Literacy Program, which reaches each classroom (6 schools-grades Pre-K through 8) in McDonough County once per month.

**McDonough County SWCD** promoted the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and has seventy-two contracts.

**Menard County SWCD** assisted the public in preventing soil erosion and improving water quality through its program delivery, educational outreach, and products and services. Since 2001, it has provided over \$304,336 to landowners through the Conservation Practices Program and paid out over \$1,826,469 to landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for a total 3,081 acres. The District hosted various workshops, educational presentations in county schools and festivals. The District also has a seasonal sales program in which landowners bought 1,920 Native Trees and 5,308 fish for pond stocking. Plat pages, rental equipment, aerial maps, soil maps and reports, and other information are provided to the public on a daily basis.

After 1 ½ years, **McDonough County SWCD** completed the Spring Lake Watershed Plan with cooperation from the IEPA and the AISWCD. The plan addressed all IEPA identified water quality impairments and watershed resource concerns.

The **Montgomery County SWCD** and the University of Illinois Extension put on the 5<sup>th</sup> grade Conservation Field Day for over 250 county students.

The **Montgomery County SWCD** continued to rent conservation tillage equipment, such as the Turbo-till and the Phoenix Harrow, to 24 county producers. The tillage equipment was used on over 2,000 acres.

The **Montgomery County SWCD** received special funds, through the Partners for Conservation Fund, to seal abandoned wells located within Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's designated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) watersheds.

**Sangamon County SWCD** proposed and received approval from the USDA Farm Service Agency to allow county landowners to enroll their cropland acres in the State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE). This new program allows for the establishment of up to 2,000 acres for the Northern Bobwhite Quail habitat.

**Sangamon County SWCD** hosted an Urban Water Quality Best Management Practices Tour for key city and county zoning and planning officials, and members of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce's Quantum 5 Initiative. The tour focused on the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) rules and regulations. As a result of this bus tour, the Sangamon County Board approved a new erosion control ordinance.

**Sangamon County SWCD** held a meeting for the Springfield Area Home Builders Association (30 members) to explain the NPDES rules and regulations. These member contractors are responsible for following the NPDES rules and regulations before, during and after construction.

**Scott County SWCD** educated 500 county students with cooperation from the Envirothon, FFA, and University of Illinois Extension. Conservation product sales continued to be an important program element. While these sales do not provide much revenue, contact is maintained with constituents and served as a marketing tool of local programs offered to the public.

## Region 4

**Champaign, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Jasper, Lawrence, Macon, Marion, Moultrie, Richland, Shelby, Vermilion, Wabash and Wayne Counties**

The **Champaign County SWCD**, the City of Champaign, City of Urbana, Village of Savoy, University of Illinois and Champaign County, who make up the MS4 organization, hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual storm water forum for 150 developers, contractors, engineers and municipal personnel to learn about storm water laws, best management practices and new products for reducing erosion on urban construction sites.

The **Champaign County SWCD** used the rainfall simulator to demonstrate rainfall erosion and the role residue plays in soil erosion prevention and water quality. Presentations were given to fifth grade students at St. John's Lutheran School in Champaign, a class of college students at Parkland College, local girl scouts attending camp at Homer Lake and all the elementary students at Westview Elementary. The rainfall simulator was used at an agriculture and conservation field day which provided area home school students and their teachers the opportunity to learn about farming, animals, recycling and conservation. It was used by neighboring counties during multiple conservation expos.



Rainfall simulator

The **Champaign County SWCD**, the University of Illinois Extension, and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources held a pond meeting and a pond walk. The pond meeting provided more than 50 attendees with information on fisheries management, aquatic vegetation, pond safety, nuisance management, best management practices, including erosion and sediment control and tree selection. Fifty attended the pond walk.

Dave Shiley, University of Illinois Champaign County Extension Educator, Mike Garthaus, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist, and Bruce Stickers, **Champaign County SWCD** Resource Conservationist, led a tour of two ponds that provided a connection from the information to actual pond conditions and a forum for questions and answers.

The **Clark County SWCD** sponsored a water quality workshop at Lincoln Trail State Park for science students from Martinsville, Marshall and Casey/Westfield high schools. Students learned about local water quality issues and performed actual water-testing for nitrates, phosphates ammonia, dissolved oxygen, turbidity and pH. The students took a nature hike at Rocky Branch Nature Preserve and participated in a scavenger hunt.

The **Clark County SWCD** and the National Wild Turkey Federation co-sponsored a "Women in the Outdoors" event at Mill Creek Park. Attendees learned about outdoor cooking, plant and tree identification, nature crafting, outdoor photography, archery, and turkey calling and hunting.

The **Clay County SWCD** created a custom drilling program to help landowners establish warm season grasses on their Conservation Reserve Program field border strips. Seed was ordered and a tractor, no-till drill and labor to seed the acreage were provided. 485 acres of quail strips were established for 60 landowners.

**Cumberland County SWCD, Clark County SWCD**, University of Illinois Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA Farm Service Agency, and Cumberland and Clark Farm Bureaus co-sponsored the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Ag Expo where 200 people learned about agriculture related issues and marketing trends.

**Cumberland County SWCD** conducted a conservation field trip for all the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the county. Students are given a classroom presentation and taken on a bus trip around the county, giving them a chance to see actual conservation practices and tillage methods being used to protect our natural resources.

**Cumberland County SWCD** and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff assisted the Section 20 FFA with the soil judging contest.

Over 400 Amish Farmers attended the 2008 Spring Amish Horse Sale where **Douglas County SWCD** showed its 6 ft. No-Till Drill and Forecart. In 2008 the unit was used over 214 acres, from ½ acre to 30+acres sized fields, with over 20 farmers using the drill/forecart.

**Douglas County SWCD** took its rainfall simulator to the 2008 Earth Stewardship Day, the Moultrie County SWCD conservation day, the Edgar County conservation day, our own conservation day, and teacher workshop. Over 600 school children and 37 teachers saw the rainfall simulator demonstrate rainfall erosion and the effectiveness of residue on soil erosion.

The **Douglas County SWCD** no-till drills were used by over 70 landowners on 7,430 acres in Douglas and 7 surrounding counties. Over 560 semi loads of soil were kept from going into rivers and lakes.

The **Edgar Co. SWCD** participated in conservation programs with elementary and high school students, such as the local Conservation Day, tree, fish, plant, and wildlife seed mix sales were held for the community. Articles were published about current event, products and services. The District assisted in the FFA Soils Judging contest and took worm bins into local 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes.

**Effingham County SWCD** helped Effingham Water Authority (EWA) obtain a C-2000 Special Project to cost share on a shoreline protection project to protect unprotected bluffs located adjacent to the EWA Community Building and the children's playground on Lake Sara. These bluffs have been eroding between 0.5 and 1.5 ft/yr and are located in a highly visible area. To protect these bluffs, the EWA contracted Lake Rip Rap to place rip rap rock to create a transitional wetland riprap breakwater.

**Effingham County SWCD** offered cost share assistance to landowners in the Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem for developing forestry management plans; timber stand improvement; invasive and exotic species control; and prescribed burning through C-2000/Partners for Conservation grant. This grant has serviced 40 landowners covering 1,900 acres with \$91,000 paid in cost share assistance.

**Fayette County SWCD** published six "Conservation Conversation" newsletters that go out to 3,000 owners and operators in the county; hosted Conservation Field Days for 300 4<sup>th</sup> graders; held Vandalia Lake Appreciation Days for 150 Vandalia 6<sup>th</sup> graders; organized an assembly on snakes for 600 county 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders; held a poster contest for 300 4<sup>th</sup> graders; published a *Nuts about Nature* newsletter for 600 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders; gave nearly 40 "Ag in the Classroom" presentations; and maintained a website with 1,500 visitors.



School children making soil profiles at Conservation Field Days held in September.

The **Jasper County SWCD** awarded two scholarships, one to a college student and the other to a high school senior. Recipients had to be enrolled in an agriculture/natural resource related field and a graduate or soon to be graduate of a county high school.

The **Jasper County SWCD** held a Farm Pond Management Demonstration for 75 pond owners. Information on proper pond design and construction was presented. Illinois Department of Natural Resources fisheries biologist shocked the pond and gave pond stocking recommendations along with best management practices for controlling aquatic vegetation.

The **Jasper County SWCD** assisted 68 landowners in seeding 745 acres in the Quail Buffer Conservation Reserve Program. For a nominal fee, native warm season grass and forb seeds, tractor, drill and labor to seed these acres were provided.

**Macon County SWCD** and the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association installed a rock chute, turf reinforcement chute, and a wetland at the Farm Progress Show site. A waterway, block chute, interlocking block chute, and several urban practices such as, hydro-seeding, porous pavement and rain garden were part of the conservation tours. Most of the projects were installed with City of Decatur cost-share money.

**Marion County SWCD** was a major funder of the Marion County Agriculture Literacy Coalition. One district director, one associate director and one employee serve as Board members. The Ag in the Classroom lessons were provided to all 27 fourth grade classes. The ag literacy coordinator participated in the Children's Ag Day during the Marion County Fair. The program expanded during the 2008-2009 school year to include lessons to pre-school and kindergarten students.

**Marion County SWCD** assisted landowners with submitting over 100 Illinois Conservation Climate Initiative applications. 78 contracts were approved for a total of 5,683.1 acres and included planting of 2,907.2 acres of grassland, 1,791.8 acres of trees, and enrollment of 984.1 acres of continuous no-till enrolled.

**Marion County SWCD** Resource Conservationist Burke Davies was presented an award at the 2008 Illinois State Fair to recognize his contributions to the Illinois Conservation Climate Initiative.

**Marion County SWCD's** 385 acre learning center was used for the National Wild Land Fire Fighter II Certification training. Certified firemen from the Kell Fire Department conducted 13 prescribed burns for area residents and generated \$17,342 in donations. These funds were used to purchase a skid unit, drip torches and other fire fighting equipment.



**Kell Fire Department having a controlled burn.**

**Marion County SWCD** and the Upper Little Wabash Ecosystem Partnership were awarded three C-2000 Ecosystem grants totaling \$183,430 for habitat restoration and enhancement on 800 acres of prairie, 132 acre of forest, 85 acres of riparian buffer and 45 acres of wetlands. Soil savings is calculated to be 10 ton of soil/acre/year. Local funds used to match these projects totaled \$149,551.

The **Richland County SWCD** sponsored a pond demonstration. Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist, Mike Hooe, explained how to properly manage a pond and provided information on controlling aquatic vegetation. The pond was also "shocked" to identify the types of fish present. USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff presented information on how to select a site for a new pond and gave technical advice to current pond owners.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** provided 1,000 seedlings to students to celebrate Earth Day and Arbor Day.

The **Vermilion County SWCD**, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Vermilion County Conservation District, and the Lake Vermilion Water Quality Coalition hosted an Ag Day Workshop and Conservation Tour for 25 emerging community leaders enrolled in the Vermilion Advantage Leadership Tomorrow Program.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** and the City of Danville completed 700 feet of streambank stabilization along the North Fork Vermilion River in Ellsworth Park. A portion of the funding was made available through the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program (SSRP).

The **Vermilion County SWCD** worked with many partners and volunteers to complete the Watershed Implementation Plan for Lake Vermilion and the North Fork Vermilion River. This document outlined problems identified within the watershed and provided strategies to address those concerns.

## Region 5

**Clinton, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Massac, Monroe, Perry, Pope-Hardin, Pulaski-Alexander, Randolph, St. Clair, Saline, Union, Washington, White and Williamson Counties**

The **Clinton County SWCD** conducted a survey of interest of all producers within Shoal Creek Watershed and Sugar Creek watershed with a 20% response. These watersheds were being addressed under the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program. With the Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation and Development Council, \$300,000 had been awarded through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency 319 grant process for the purpose of animal waste facilities development in these watersheds. Reducing livestock waste will positively impact the water quality in these water bodies.

**Clinton County SWCD** provided administrative assistance to the Illinois Grazingland Conservation Initiative. This group provided education and training on maximizing grasslands for various livestock.

## Honey Bees 101

**Jackson County SWCD** and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service hosted a **Honeybees 101** class. Men, women, and children learned everything possible about bees, from how they make honey, to the construction of a bee hive. Expert beekeeper, Jess Will, brought in an observation hive so the crowd could get a first hand look at a bee colony. The crowd learned about many things made from bees' wax, the uses of honey and bee pollen, and tasted several varieties of honey. Jess then showed the adventurous crowd the proper way to open and inspect a hive. The hive, located behind the Jackson County University of Illinois Extension office, proved to be an active hive and contained lots of honey and bee pollen.

The **2008 Forage Expo** was held at the Smith Farm in Jackson County. This outdoor event included educational presentations, commercial exhibits, a quality hay contest, and a tour of the farm.

The Expo highlighted the use of rotational grazing and management of Eastern Gamma Grass. Educational topics included managing fertility costs, controlling pests, and managing forage for animal nutrition. The field demonstrations were cancelled due to wet conditions. 200 people attended both events.



2008 Forage Expo - Smith farm

**Jefferson County SWCD**, the Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, University of Illinois Extension, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Risk Management Agency, Jefferson County Farm Bureau, and Illinois Grasslands Conservation Initiative hosted two statewide forage events. Forage Institute, a classroom day covered topics to assist forage growers in the management of their hay crops. Landowners were taught how to evaluate forage for nutritional needs. Landowners were also taught how to manage weeds and brush, control fescue, and were provided information on insurance options for forage.

**Perry County SWCD**, the City of Pinckneyville, and the Shawnee RC&D Area office had a dedication ceremony for handicap fishing on a pier on Pinckneyville City Lake. The VFW Post 3959 wanted to help disabled fisherman have access to the lake. After several failed attempts, the Shawnee RC&D Council received an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grant. The site now includes a handicap accessible pier and pavilion, two handicap parking spots, an additional pavilion and some picnic tables and grills.

**Randolph County SWCD** participated in 3 conservation fairs. About 3,500 students attended these fairs which included the Randolph County 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day, the Monroe County 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Fair, and the DuQuoin Conservation Fair. Students attending these events experienced hands-on learning about conservation, natural resources, and the environment.

The **Randolph County SWCD**, University of Illinois Extension, Farm Bureau, and NRCS co-sponsored a computer training workshop for farmers that introduced 20 participants to technology and information that improves management and decision making on the farm.

**Saline County SWCD** sponsored several awards. Kevin Wintizer was recognized as the Conservation Farmer of the Year; Sydney Tate of Galatia Elementary School was recognized as the County Poster Winner with her "Wild Mammals of Illinois" poster; and Hannah Dudley of Carrier Mills High School was recognized as the County Essay Winner with her essay on "Woodland Management".

**Saline County SWCD** rented a fabric plow and no-till drill, and sold ag fabric, fish and marking flags. They also gave a Arbor Day presentation to all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes.

**Saline County SWCD** helped landowners save 3,425 tons of soil by spending \$55,273 in state CPP cost share money to help install 60 acres of pasture establishment, 825 feet of water and sediment control basin system, 13 grade stabilization structures, 10,075 feet of grassed waterways, and repaired 1,000 feet of terrace system. Those practices are in addition to assisting USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service surveying, designing and install the continuous Conservation Reserve Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program and Wetland Reserve Program projects.

**Washington County SWCD** mailed out its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual contribution letter to 2,300 landowners/operators in the county asking for financial support of its programs. The letter states that their support is for ongoing activities of the district including natural resource conservation on sensitive land, wildlife habitat enhancement, education on natural resources to county schools, assistance to cities, park boards, various organizations and individuals. It invites them to stop by the office to find about the current program. A self addressed return envelope is included.

The list of contributors and amount are printed in the annual report. \$5,000 in contributions were received in 2008.

**White County SWCD** and "Be Green Recycling" offered residents a recyclables drop-off location at the parking lot of the USDA Service Center to encourage recycling in and to improve the environment. Local 4-H groups also participated in the effort.

**White County SWCD** held a conservation day at the Hamilton County Fish and Wildlife Area, also known as Dolan Lake, for 165 fourth graders. The students learned about forestry, wildlife, oil production, and recycling, and decorated tree cookie pendants. Sessions were taught by employees from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois Petroleum Resources Board, and Kelli and Bill Chapman, owners of Be Green Recycling. The students experienced a special treat with Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative's live line safety demonstration.

**Hamilton, White, Saline, Gallatin, Williamson, Pope-Hardin SWCDs** provided presentations to area kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students on topics such as soil erosion, water quality, air, forestry, tree planting, wildlife, agriculture, conservation, and a variety of topics as a part of the Illinois Forest Resource Center's four day, 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Stewardship Week at the Dixon Springs Agriculture Center.

**Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph, Washington and Williamson County SWCDs** held their annual 3 day Conservation Fair at the DuQuoin Fairgrounds for kindergarten through sixth grade students from those counties. Presentations were made about soil erosion, streambank erosion, water quality, aquatic wildlife, wildlife, agriculture, electric safety, snakes, bugs, butterflies, forestry, farm animals, agriculture, and other natural resource topics. A new activity this year was about dairy farming and the students had the chance to "milk" a "cow."



# Acknowledgements

The information in this report was compiled by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land and Water Resources along with the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts highlighting the work SWCDs have done for fiscal year 2008.



**Illinois Department of Agriculture**  
Bureau of Land and Water Resources  
217/782-6297  
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**Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts**  
217/744-3414  
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In compiling this report, information was provided by the following agencies that work through or in conjunction with soil and water conservation districts.



**Illinois Department of Natural Resources**  
217/782-7454  
[www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us)



**USDA—Natural Resources Conservation Service, Illinois**  
217/353-6600  
[www.il.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov)



**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**  
217/524-2743  
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