

**STATE of ILLINOIS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Robert F. Flider, Acting Director



**ILLINOIS**  
**CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2011**



**Illinois**  
Department of  
**Agriculture**

**BUREAU OF LAND AND**  
**WATER RESOURCES**



Pat Quinn, Governor  
Robert F. Flider, Acting Director

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**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

State Fairgrounds • P.O. Box 19281 • Springfield, IL 62794-9281 • 217/782-2172 • TDD 217/524-6858 • Fax 217/785-4505

Dear Friend:

The conservation and wise use of our natural resources is paramount to achieving and maintaining the high standard of living that most Americans enjoy today. Illinois is blessed with extraordinary natural resources that include some of the most productive soils in the world and large amounts of high quality water resources that make our neighbors in the western United States envious. However, these world class natural resources are not limitless and all of us need to take steps to protect our soil and water resources for current and future generations.

I am very proud of the work carried out by the Members of Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Partnership shown in this annual report. This document provides a synopsis of current work being implemented and highlights the progress Illinois landowners have made in preserving the State's priceless natural resources. The Partnership works hand-in-hand with rural and urban landowners on developing and implementing conservation practices that benefit the environment.

While today's strained budgets present numerous challenges, be assured that the Illinois Department of Agriculture and our conservation partners remain committed to providing effective natural resource management assistance to Illinois' citizens. To learn what you can do to help with the conservation of our finite natural resources, feel free to contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District, the Illinois Department of Agriculture, or any of the other conservation partners listed on the inside of the back cover of this report.

Please join me in taking action to protect and enhance our precious natural resources. Together, we will definitely make a difference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert F. Flider". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "F".

Robert F. Flider, Acting Director

Illinois Department of Agriculture

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## WELCOME / INTRODUCTION

Information has been compiled for the Illinois Conservation Partnership Annual Report from programs carried out in 2011. Partners include the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land and Water Resources, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, 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, 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 nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."*  
-Theodore Roosevelt



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 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 BUREAU OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES

*The Bureau of Land and Water Resources (BLWR) implements the Department's natural resource conservation programs, including the Erosion and Sediment Control Program, the Soil and Water Conservation District Grants-In-Aid Program, the Partners for Conservation Fund (PFC) Program (formerly the Conservation-2000 Program), the Farmland Protection Program and the Mined Land Reclamation Program.*

### SWCD GRANTS-IN-AID

In Fiscal Year 2011, the BLWR distributed over \$12.5 million in funds to Illinois' Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) for programs aimed at reducing soil loss, enhancing agricultural productivity and protecting water quality. The SWCDs provide valuable technical assistance to rural and urban customers on a variety of natural resource issues, such as soil conservation, water quality protection, nutrient management, wetlands management, flood control, soil erosion control at urban construction sites, stream bank stabilization, land use, and site suitability for various uses and conservation education.

### PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION

The Partners for Conservation Fund Program is a long-term, state-supported initiative to protect natural resources and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities throughout Illinois. Several state agencies share responsibility for the administration of the PFC Program. The Illinois Department of Agriculture oversees the agriculture resource enhancement portion of the program, consisting of sustainable agriculture grants, conservation practices cost-share, stream bank stabilization and restoration, water well decommissioning and nutrient management.

The following conservation projects were completed across Illinois under the PFC Program in Fiscal Year 2011:

- 1006 Conservation Structures
- 19 Sustainable Agriculture Projects
- 150 Water Well Decommissioning Projects
- 31,440 Linear Feet of Stream Bank Stabilization

In February of 2011, the Department conducted a Statewide Conservation Tillage Seminar in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, University of Illinois Extension and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The seminar provided practical information that agricultural producers can apply to farming practices to not only protect the environment, but to also enhance profitability.

### FARMLAND PROTECTION

The BLWR administers Illinois' Farmland Protection Program under the auspices of the Illinois Farmland Preservation Act. The Act requires state agencies to provide written notice to the

Department of Agriculture of development projects (e.g., highways, airports, facility planning areas, enterprise zones, and wildlife habitat acquisition proposals) that will lead to farmland conversion. The Department works with the sponsoring agency to minimize the anticipated farmland conversion impacts. During the year, 228 projects were reviewed for compliance with the Farmland Preservation Act.

The BLWR continued to develop Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreements (AIMAs) with various utility companies for oil and natural gas pipeline construction projects that affect agricultural land. AIMAs minimize adverse impacts to agricultural land and farm operations associated with the future construction of pipelines. In addition, the BLWR continues its efforts to develop AIMAs with energy corporations when the construction of new electric transmission lines is being planned in, or traversing through, Illinois.

The BLWR also provided technical assistance to landowners and local units of government wishing to develop farmland protection programs. Local farmland protection programs are critical to farmland protection success across Illinois. Specifically, the Department assists with the development of Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Systems (LESA) and Agricultural Areas under the Agricultural Areas Conservation and Protection Act, both of which can help to guide non agricultural development in a manner that protects farmland from needless conversion. There are a total of 38 approved county LESA Systems and 55 Agricultural Areas in 23 counties throughout Illinois comprising 117,092 acres.

#### **MINED LAND RECLAMATION**

As provided by an agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Office of Mines and Minerals, the BLWR reviews coal mining permit applications to help facilitate the reclamation of agricultural land affected by coal mining operations. The Department also tests crop yields at reclaimed agricultural land sites to ensure that pre-mining productivity levels have been restored. A total of 10 coal mine permit applications were reviewed and 183 fields covering 3,016 acres of reclaimed ground were tested for crop yield success during the year.

#### **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

The Community Garden, located in the interior of the State Fairgrounds' mile race track, continued to be a major success in 2011. It was sponsored by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois State University, Komnick Excavating, Jacksonville FFA and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Department offers the opportunity for gardeners to obtain up to two 15 foot x 12 foot plots for \$10 each to use for the season. The Department supplied approximately 2,000 seed samples for gardeners' use, the needed water, compost and hand tools to help contribute to the success of the garden.

The Community Garden opened again in early April 2011. There were a total of 174 plots requested by over 100 gardeners. Many of the gardeners signed up for the Plant a Row for the Hungry Program. The most exciting aspect of the garden has been the community spirit and cooperation demonstrated by many of the gardeners sharing seeds and tools, helping others with their plots when they experienced problems, and teaching and information sharing from Master Gardeners and other experienced gardeners. Another inspiring outcome was multiple generations of families working and learning together for a positive outcome and seeing the rewards of their efforts in the food that was produced.

The Department continued a large scale composting project in 2011 adjacent to the Community Garden. Manure from the animal stables and livestock shows held on the Fairgrounds throughout the year were composted. Compost material is used in the Community Garden, the Farmer's Little Helper area and the various flower gardens on the Fairgrounds. The composting project is a cooperative effort with Illinois State University, University of Illinois Extension and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The compost allows the Department of Agriculture to recycle valuable nutrients and improve soil tilth/organic matter in the Community Garden plots. Additionally, money will be saved by reducing the amount of manure transported off the Fairgrounds.

The Community Garden had many visitors throughout the year from individuals and groups including schools, media, the Master Gardener's Garden Walk and participants of a composting demonstration.

## EDUCATION

Education is an important component of all of the Department's programs and the services offered to constituents. When discussing education, it is often assumed that educational programs are designed exclusively for youth. Actually, the Department offers programs to all Illinois citizens.

The Department's Henry White Experimental Farm near Belleville offers numerous education opportunities. The farm essentially serves as an outdoor laboratory for sustainable agriculture and the conservation of natural resources in general. The farm has 94 acres containing agricultural crops, wetlands, evergreen and deciduous groves, restored prairie and wildlife habitat. Research conducted on the farm involves conservation projects for corn and soybeans, prairie, wetlands and woodlands. Sixty-five of the farm's 94 acres are devoted to the cultivation of crops, mainly corn and soybeans, which demonstrate various sustainable agriculture practices. In addition to providing valuable research information for farmers, the site also hosts an annual field day event where specialists explain how practices showcased at the farm benefit the environment. A total of 247 individuals attended the September 17, 2011 field day event.

The Bureau provides public educational opportunities at Watershed Park, located at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. Watershed Park is an interactive educational exhibit on water quality protection. Featured in the park are numerous exhibit stations where the public learns about water quality issues in a watershed. Watershed Park is open during the Illinois State Fair and by appointment at other times during the year. In 2011, 4,865 individuals visited Watershed Park.

## ILLINOIS SOIL CONSERVATION TRANSECT SURVEY SUMMARY

Results of the 13<sup>th</sup> statewide Soil Conservation Transect Survey conducted in the spring and early summer of 2011 indicate Illinois producers performed more tillage to plant their corn and soybean crops than in 2009, which was the last year the survey was conducted. Intensive tillage practices can bury crop residue and leave the soil surface more susceptible to 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 tillage trends that correlate to 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 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 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 97 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.

The 2011 Transect Survey results show 84.2% of the points surveyed were at or below "T". Although the 2011 results show less acres are being farmed below "T" than in 2009, this is only about 2% below the highest level of 86.5% recorded in 1998.

<b>TABLE 1</b>				
RELATIVE SOIL LOSS BY "T" VALUE				
YEAR	< "T"	1-2 "T"	>2 "T"	UNKNOWN
2010	84.2	10.9	4.9	0
2009	85.4	10.2	4.4	0
2006*	85.8	10.2	4.0	0
2004*	84.9	10.7	4.4	0
2002*	85.0	10.8	4.2	0
2001*	85.0	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 2010.

\*THE REVISED UNIVERSAL SOIL LOSS EQUATION (RUSLE) WAS USED TO ESTIMATE SOIL LOSS.

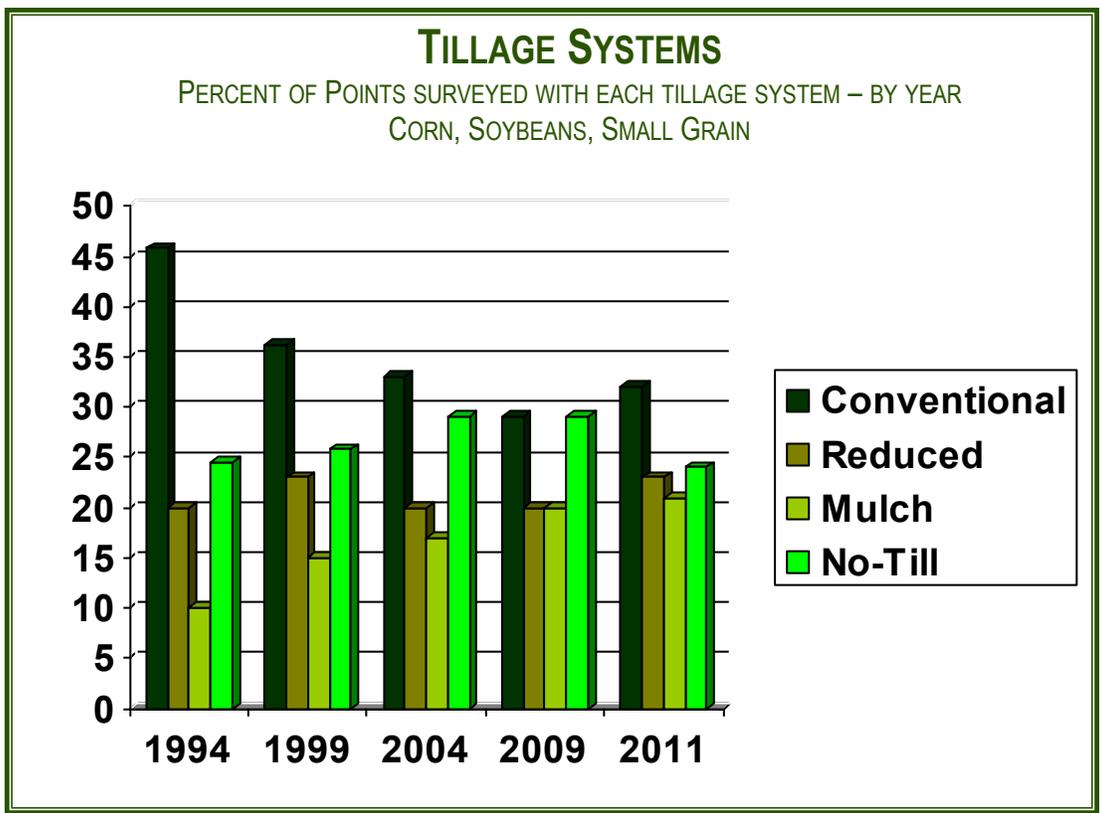
As previously mentioned, farmers did more intensive tillage in 2011 than in 2009 and in 2006, the last two years the survey was conducted. This increase may be a result of wet planting seasons over the past couple of survey years that have resulted in producers making extra tillage trips across their fields to prepare them for planting.

The percent of soybean fields planted by no-till had increased every year from 28% in 1994 to 51% in 2006. Although the number of no-till soybean fields had declined 10% to 41% in 2011, it appears a large percentage of this reduction was attributed to a switch to mulch-till as there was a 6% gain from 19% in 2006 to 25% in 2011. Still, when the acres of mulch and no-till are added together, two-thirds of all soybean fields in 2011 were planted to a tillage system that leaves more than 30% residue, which is the definition of a conservation tillage system.

Surveyors also identify fields in which ephemeral (gully) erosion has been observed in areas of concentrated surface water flow. Controlling this type of erosion requires structural conservation practices, such as grassed waterways or sediment retention basins in addition to conservation tillage. The 2011 survey recorded 19.7% of the fields experiencing ephemeral erosion, which was 1% less than amount observed in 2009.

**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. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the Bureau of Land and Water Resources or the local SWCD.



## PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM

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The Partners for Conservation Fund (PFC) Program is a long-term, state-supported initiative to protect natural resources and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities throughout Illinois. Several state agencies share responsibility for the administration of the PFC Program. The Illinois Department of Agriculture oversees the agriculture resource enhancement portion of the program, consisting of sustainable agriculture grants, conservation practices cost-share, stream bank stabilization and restoration, water well decommissioning and nutrient management.

The Legislature appropriated \$4,146,750 in FY 2010 for the PFC Program and \$2,612,500 from the Bond fund for the Agriculture Resource Enhancement component of the PFC Program (SWCDs have 2 years to complete the installation of conservation practices). 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. The following provides a description of the PFC Program components.

The **Conservation Practices Program** 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 practices cost shared on a cost per acre basis. Local SWCDs may have varying priorities and rates for certain practices.



84,084 tons is the amount of soil that was saved from the assistance of the PFC Program. That's 4,204 loaded semi tractor-trailers!!

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.

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 residential well and \$750 for a high capacity 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 \$3,113,163 from the PFC Program was spent on Erosion and Sediment Control Practices, Nutrient Management, and Well Decommissioning during July 1, 2009 through December 31, 2011. The accomplishments for the Erosion and Sediment Control Practices (ESC) are shown in Table 2A and 2B. In addition to the state’s cost for installing these practices, the remaining 40% of the cost of most practices was provided by the landowner. Projects were completed in 95 Illinois counties.

The practices installed from FY 2010 PFC Program and FY 2010 Bond funding through the ESC benefited a total of 34,273 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 2.4 tons/acre/year. The average cost to the state for reducing or maintaining soil loss to tolerable levels was \$78.87/acre. The cost to the state for soil saved was \$36.45/ton.

There were a total of 159 wells sealed through the Well Decommissioning Program with FY 2010 PFC Program funds. The state’s cost to seal the wells was \$280 per well for a total amount of \$44,520.

PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT COMPONENTS	FY 2010 DOLLARS	FY 2010 BOND ALLOCATIONS
Erosion & Sediment Control, Nutrient Management and Well Decommissioning Programs	1,851,120	2,254,959
Soil and Water Conservation District Grants	1,389,544	0
Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program	289,551	0
Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program	616,535	357,541
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,146,750</b>	<b>\$2,612,500</b>

**TABLE 2A****FY 2010  
PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM**

July 1, 2009 – Dec 31, 2011

<b>CONSERVATION PRACTICE</b>	<b>PROJECTS</b>	<b>ACRES BENEFITED</b>	<b>TONS SAVED</b>	<b>SEDIMENT REDUCTION</b>	<b>\$/ACRE</b>	<b>\$/TONS</b>	<b>CLAIMS SUMMARY *</b>
<b>COVER &amp; GREEN MANURE CROP</b>	18	925	1,686	462	21.53	11.81	19,915.75
<b>CRITICAL AREA PLANTING</b>	22	73	783	215	350.07	32.84	25,730.13
<b>DIVERSION</b>	9	55	435	132	182.05	23.00	10,012.63
<b>GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURE</b>	68	2,087	5,383	1,449	82.27	31.90	171,713.75
<b>GRASSED WATERWAY</b>	219	8,091	17,568	5,157	74.71	34.41	604,498.74
<b>RESIDUE MANAGEMENT</b>	40	2,186	12,552	3,340	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>PASTURELAND AND HAYLAND PLANTING</b>	20	519	2,604	707	99.05	19.77	51,480.23
<b>TEMPORARY COVER</b>	14	8	38	9	601.61	126.65	4,812.87
<b>TERRACES (VEGETATIVE OUTLET)</b>	37	765	4,837	1,721	248.69	39.33	190,275.36
<b>WATER &amp; SEDIMENT CONTROL BASINS</b>	221	6,685	13,940	4,112	114.98	55.14	768,656.74
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>21,394</b>	<b>59,826</b>	<b>17,304</b>	<b>\$86.33</b>	<b>\$30.87</b>	<b>\$1,847,096.20</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.

## TABLE 2B

### FY 2010 PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION BOND FUND PROGRAM

July 1, 2009 – Dec 31, 2011

CONSERVATION PRACTICE	PROJECTS	ACRES BENEFITED	TONS SAVED	SEDIMENT REDUCTION	\$/ACRE	\$/TONS	CLAIMS SUMMARY *
CRITICAL AREA PLANTING	1	1	7	2	742.50	106.07	742.50
DIVERSION	3	11	53	14	100.17	21.41	1,152.00
GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURE	52	1,240	1,175	321	109	115.90	136,221.67
GRASSED WATERWAY	142	5,417	9,969	2,685	79.70	43.31	431,743.12
RESIDUE MANAGEMENT	19	1,284	4,161	1,068	0.00	0.00	0.00
TEMPORARY COVER	15	75	80	22	77.09	72.27	5,782.37
TERRACES	35	1,082	2,452	909	145.24	64.08	157,160.81
WATER & SEDIMENT CONTROL BASINS	131	3,769	6,361	1,996	128.74	76.29	485,318.06
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>12,879</b>	<b>24,258</b>	<b>7,017</b>	<b>\$94.58</b>	<b>\$50.21</b>	<b>\$1,218,120.53</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.

## Partners For Conservation Fund Program

### Special Projects



The Special Project component of the Partners for Conservation Fund Program was first made available to SWCDs in FY 2008. This initiative was created for SWCDs to be able to cost-share projects unique to a limited area or region of the state that would either provide for piloting new practices not on the state-wide docket or target specific practices or initiatives that are local priorities.

The Special Project Fund allows the Department and SWCDs to address these needs without adding a long list of practices to the statewide docket that may only be used by a few SWCDs. Urbanizing SWCDs have emerging issues they deal with on a regular basis that are not addressed by the existing regular program which addresses rural soil erosion needs.

The cost-share rate for most Special Projects is 60% unless the sheet and rill erosion is greater than twice the tolerable soil loss for the land on which a project has been installed. Projects installed on these higher soil loss sites could receive up to 70% cost-share. The maximum total cost-share amount available for an individual project is \$10,000. However, there is no limit on the number of individual projects that SWCDs could apply for in a fiscal year.

Examples of potential pilot projects that SWCDs could apply for include, but are not limited to: stream crossings, shelterbelts, windbreaks, ecologically sensitive area protection – karst, urban gully restoration, retention pond buffers, rain gardens for storm water control, shoreline protection/restoration/stabilization, and heavy livestock use area protection

In FY 2010 10 project applications were submitted to the BLWR by SWCDs of which 8 were approved for cost-share assistance totaling \$35,583. The approved projects and the amount of cost-share provided for these projects are listed on below.

SWCD	Type of Project	Cost-share Dollars
Cass	Targeted Well Sealing's	\$3,200
Champaign	Cover Crop Initiative	\$2,935
Ford	Cover Crop Initiative	\$4,756
Jefferson	Stream Crossings	\$7,521
LaSalle	Cover Crop Initiative	\$8,676
Piatt	Cover Crop Initiative	\$267
Piatt	Shoreline Protection	\$6,702
Sangamon	Cover Crop Initiative	\$1,356
Tazewell	Cover Crop Initiative	\$170

## STREAMBANK STABILIZATION & RESORATION

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.

A total of 62 projects were constructed through the Illinois Department of Agriculture's SSRP by SWCDs. Streambank stabilization practices constructed with 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 can not exceed 75%. The remaining 25% was the obligation of the landowner. Table 3 shows a summary of streambank projects completed.



**TABLE 3****STREAMBANK STABILIZATION & RESTORATION PROGRAM**

Summary of Projects Completed with FY 2010 SSRP Funds

SWCD	Number Projects	Sediment Reduction	Nitrogen Reduction	Phosphorus Reduction	Feet of Bank	SSRP Fund Cost-Share	Bond Fund Cost-Share
Adams	4	293	587	293	900	\$14,339	\$17,836
Boone	1	177	354	177	750	\$23,625	
Carroll	1	26	51	26	500	\$12,476	
Cass	1	53	106	53	500	\$13,187	
Champaign	4	132	264	132	450	\$11,466	\$4,000
Clark	3	586	1,108	586	1,200	\$23,175	\$8,228
DeKalb	1	28	56	28	350	\$7,155	
Douglas	2	90	180	90	500	\$5,700	\$1,725
Edgar	1	66	111	66	360	\$7,420	
Effingham	1	68	115	57	150	\$3,596	
Henderson	2	57	114	57	500		\$12,952
Jefferson	1	122	244	122	365	\$11,051	
JoDavie	7	580	1,149	580	4,775	\$15,054	\$36,019
Kane-DuPage	2	162	323	162	1,960	\$17,437	\$12,276
Kendall	2	32	64	32	450	\$15,885	
Knox	1	682	1,364	682	500	\$15,750	
LaSalle	4	523	974	523	2,125	\$23,694	\$28,234
Marion	1	179	357	179	1,200	\$15,193	
Marshall-Putnam	2	46	92	46	400	\$5,500	\$1,748
McLean	3	55	110	55	1,860	\$15,058	\$5,441
Menard	1	9	18	9	400		\$2,891
Monroe	2	76	151	76	390		\$13,042
Pike	2	189	378	189	1,275	\$18,259	\$13,337
Pulaski-Alexander	1	476	952	476	700	\$22,050	
Richland	1	284	482	241	400	\$8,821	
Rock Island	1	184	367	18	860		\$24,000
Shelby	1	145	290	145	620	\$19,530	
Vermilion	1	408	816	408	1,200		\$10,000
Washington	1	74	149	74	250	\$7,875	
Whiteside	4	756	1,513	756	4,548	\$18,337	\$10,200
Will-South Cook	1	18	36	18	200		\$7,305
Woodford	2	138	272	138	1,000	\$18,780	\$3,286

## WATERSHED PARK



Watershed Park is an interactive and educational exhibit with an emphasis on water conservation and protection. Approximately one acre in size, Watershed Park is located on the Illinois State Fairgrounds. The Department broke ground on May 3, 2001 to build Watershed Park. The Park opened on August 10, 2001 during the Illinois State Fair. Over 20,000 people visited Watershed Park the first 10 days it was open!

Featured in Watershed Park are thirteen exhibit stations where the public can learn about water quality issues in a watershed. Soil conservation, urban storm water management, farm and home health and safety, integrated pest management, streambank protection, pasture management, wetlands and wildlife are among the topics covered. Visitors can enjoy a leisurely walk through the exhibits or sit under the shade trees. A new pervious pavement area of sidewalk was added in 2009.

In 2011, the Department coordinated 31 interactive presentations for the public during the Illinois State Fair with the emphasis on “sustainability”. Discussions and demonstrations included local food systems, rain gardens, sustainable living, community gardens, pervious pavement, honey bees, vermi-composting, green roofs, backyard composting, corn plastics, invasive species-emerald ash borer, backyard gardens, rain barrels, farmer’s markets, renewable fuels-biodiesel, green jobs, water conservation at home, farm and home health and safety, solar/wind energy and conserving our soil.

Watershed Park is a cooperative effort between the **Illinois Department of Agriculture** and the **Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**. Additional major sponsors of Watershed Park include: the **University of Illinois, Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Partners for Agricultural Literacy, Archer Daniels Midland, Caterpillar, Monsanto and Syngenta**.



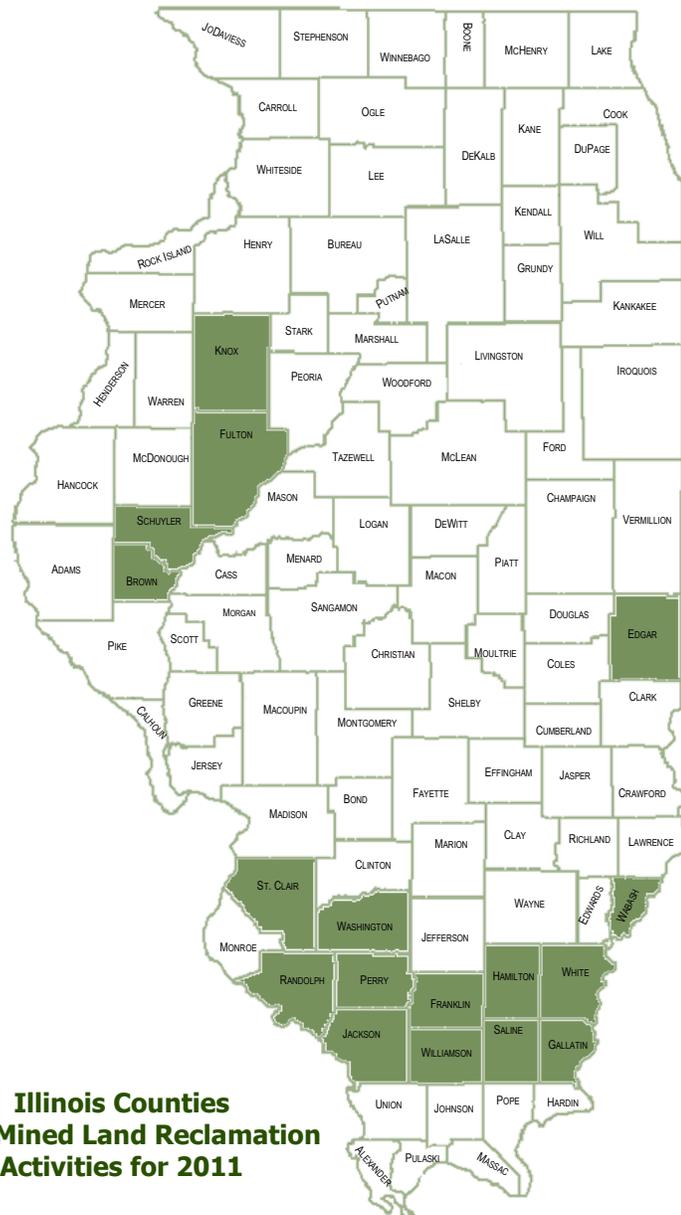
## MINED LAND RECLAMATION PROGRAM

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 2011, IDOA, in cooperation with enumerators from the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service, sampled 60 corn fields (853 acres), 22 soybean fields (758 acres), 42 wheat fields (509 acres) and 59 hay fields (896 acres) for a total of 183 fields (3,016 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. Three permit applications and 8 permit revisions were reviewed in 2011.



## FARMLAND PROTECTION PROGRAM/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

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is authorized to administer the Farmland Protection Act (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.). The Act also requires the IDOA 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.

Table 4 contains the Illinois Department of Agriculture's Fiscal Year 2011 Farmland Conversion Annual Report as mandated by the Act (505 ILCS 75/1 et seq.). The Act requires state agencies to consider farmland conversion in the planning and execution of their programs and projects.

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.

## Farmland Conversion



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 2011 FARMLAND CONVERSION ANNUAL REPORT**

Land Purchased or Affected Due to Actions of State Agencies

July 1, 2010 — June 30, 2011

STATE AGENCY	TOTAL ACRES	CROP- LAND	PATUR E LAND	FOREST LAND	OTHER*
<b>CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>					
A. Schools	176	176			
<b>COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>					
A. DCEO/Com. Development Grants	104	104			
B. Enterprise Zones	6,296	5,680			616
C. HIB Wind Energy	1,215	1,215			
D. "Illinois Jobs Now"	0				
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY</b>					
A. Facility Planning Area Boundary	11,329**	11,329**			
<b>DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES</b>					
A. Office of Mines and Minerals	0				
B. Office of Realty & Environmental	2,863		568	58	2,237
C. Division of Grant Administration	412	220	77	41	74
<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</b>					
A. Division of Aeronautics	153+ (17)	77 + (17)	27	47	2
B. Division of Highways	717+(4)	668+(4)	16	26	7
C. Division of Public and Intermodal Transporta-	55	55			
<b>GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF</b>					
	0				
<b>ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION</b>					
	6,703	4,929			1,774
<b>DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b>					
	0				
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	<b>30,023 + (21)</b>	<b>24,453 + (21)</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>4,710</b>

( ) Indicates total 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 or industrial, 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 (IDOA), pursuant to the *Agricultural Areas Conservation and Protection Act (505 ILCS 5/20.1)*, is required to prepare an annual report to the Illinois General Assembly on the location and size of all agricultural areas (also known as ag areas) created, modified, or dissolved during the past year. A copy of the complete Act is available at our web site listed below.

The Agricultural Areas Summary lists the 23 counties with local county board approved ag areas. This chart itemizes the total number of agricultural areas in participating counties, along with their respective acres, and summarizes the total number of acres in approved ag areas throughout the state.

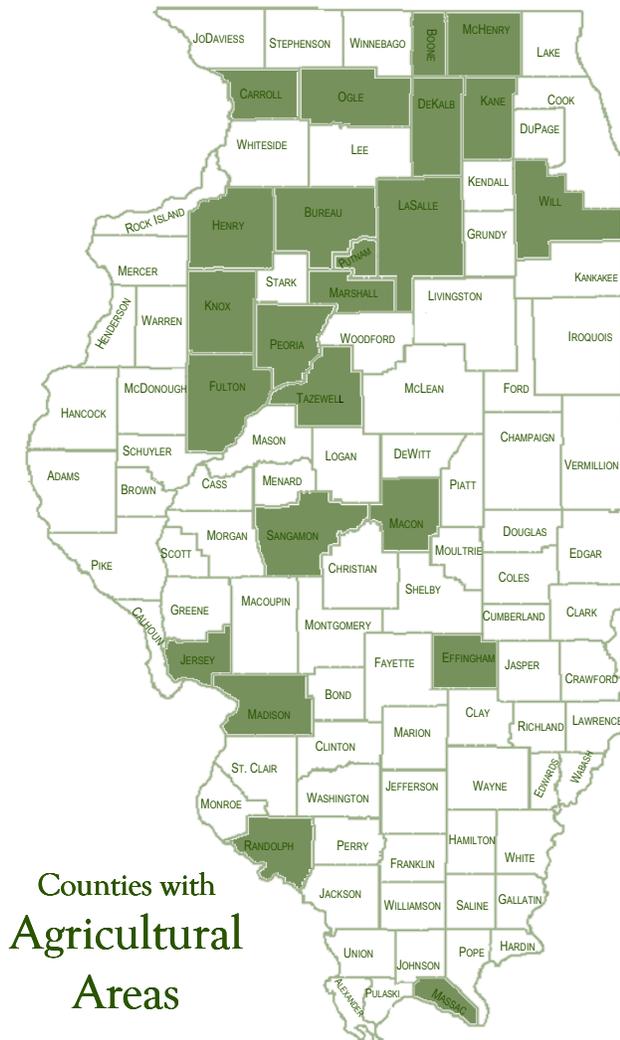
Carroll County established its first ag area in 2011. The ag area contains 1,698 acres involving 5 landowners.

Currently, a total of 117,092 acres are enrolled in 55 ag areas in Illinois. A compilation of maps delineating the 55 ag areas in the 23 counties can be obtained by referring to the IDOA's Agricultural Areas Annual Reports, available from the IDOA website at [www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater](http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater).

For additional information, contact the Bureau of Land and Water Resources at 217.782.6297.

**TABLE 5  
SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN ILLINOIS  
Calendar 2011**

COUNTY	# OF AG AREAS	TOTAL ACRES
Boone	2	7,280
Bureau	2	3,931
Carroll	1	1,698
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	7,208
Randolph	1	6,903
Sangamon	1	377
Tazewell	1	3,620
Will	1	469
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>117,092</b>



# VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIP ASSESSMENT LAW

## CALENDAR YEAR 2011 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 for calendar year 2011 related to implementation of the Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law, as reported by SWCDs, as well as the period for 1997 through 2011. It includes information that represents the final report submitted to the Illinois General Assembly by March 1, 2012, as directed by the Act.

- ◆ 70 Landowners Certified
- ◆ 12 SWCDs providing Certification
- ◆ 175 Vegetative Filter Strips Certified
- ◆ 427.69 Acres of Vegetative Filter Strips Installed

### 2011 Activities

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

- ◆ District Newsletter – 28 SWCDs
- ◆ Direct Mailings to Landowners - 7 SWCDs
- ◆ Media Promotion – 15 SWCDs
- ◆ One-On-One Landowner Contact - 55 SWCDs
- ◆ Other - 11 SWCDs

The following table provides a comprehensive overview of activities for the establishment of vegetative filter strips under Public Act 89-606.

ESTABLISHMENT OF VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIPS – PUBLIC ACT 89-606 (1997-2011)											
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002-1997	TOTAL
<b>SWCD</b>											
<b>CERTIFIED</b>	12	15	21	20	24	28	33	48	51	356	596
<b>OWNER</b>											
<b>CERTIFIED</b>	70	85	157	318	142	236	554	740	496	5983	8,711
<b>FILTER</b>											
<b>STRIPS</b>											
<b>INSTALLED</b>	175	142	207	317	280	361	672	990	758	8,704	12,431
<b>ACRES</b>											
<b>INSTALLED</b>	427.69	415.84	1,322.8	1,420.66	1,536.5	1,848.3	3,791.2	3,772.7	5711.3	54,216.3	74,035.6

## SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

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***The purposes of the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture program listed in the 1990 Sustainable Agriculture Act:***

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

Sustainable Agriculture Grants funded the following 9 competitive projects in FY11 totaling \$94,258.

◆ ***On-Farm Research and Demonstration***

*FRESH Gardens.*

◆ ***Education/Outreach***

*Learning To Grow and Market Local Foods; Composting Demonstration Garden; LaVista Farmer Apprenticeship Project; Parkland Community College Demonstration, Outreach, and Education Innovative Sustainable Agriculture Techniques; Your Local Sustainable Agriculture Healthy Living Buying Locally Class for K-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers; Farm Beginnings Expansion to Southern Illinois; Midwest Composting School.*

◆ ***University Research***

*Vermicomposts for Sustainable Vegetable Production.*

The Sustainable Agriculture Program was a co-sponsor and served on planning committees for the Illinois Composting Symposium held in Springfield; Earth Stewardship Day held in Springfield; and the Ag Day Awards luncheon held during the Illinois State Fair. Funding was provided to support the community garden on the State Fairgrounds which hosted over 100 gardeners and 174 garden plots in the second year. The Department also continued large scale composting on the state fairgrounds and composted manure generated on the grounds which is being used in the community garden.

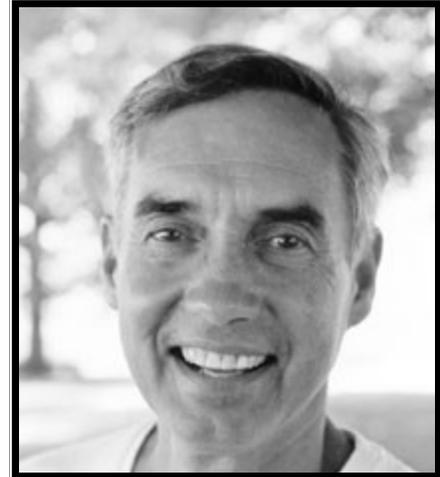
BLWR staff served on the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Committee, Sustainable Agriculture Grant Review Committee, Illinois Forestry Development Council, Illinois Grassland Conservation Initiative Board, Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Committee, and the Soil & Water Conservation District Advisory Board.

## R.J. VOLLMER SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AWARD

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The Illinois Department of Agriculture R.J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture award is presented annually to farmers who demonstrate outstanding efforts in implementing and promoting sustainable agriculture systems in Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Program is pleased to announce the 2011 “R.J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture Farmer of the Year” is Jack Erisman from Pana, Illinois in Christian County. Crop rotations are an important part of the organic grain and livestock system on Jack’s farm. It is a controlled diversity, a carefully planned sequence of cash crops, cover crops, hay, pasture and livestock that strives to balance biological and geographical resources. He sees the soil as a resource instead of a growing medium. He has experimented extensively and developed a farming philosophy that seeks to build soil quality while minimizing off-farm inputs.



By 1968, Jack had initiated conservation tillage, By 1970, he had ceased using anhydrous ammonia and insecticides, using lower rates of nitrogen—in liquid form—and cutting chemical rates in half. He spent the 1980s cutting back more on chemicals, learning more about the soil and perfecting the use of sustainable agricultural practices. In 1988, Jack tried converting one 40-acre field of wheat. In 1989 another 40 acres. In 1990, he treated the entire farm—2000 acres—as if he were farming organically and by 1996 the whole farm was certified organic. Jack himself does not necessarily recommend this approach to others. He runs a diverse operation using a seven-year rotation including corn, cover crops, soybeans, small grains and grass/legumes. About one seventh of Jack’s land is idle every year.

Jack also has a 200+ head cow/calf herd that he keeps mostly on pasture except for a few steers that are on feed. The animals are there to complement the system. “If we can successfully keep the animals on grass, it enables us to use longer rotations,” Jack says.

Jack and a group of other producers involved in organic agriculture founded the Illinois OCIA (Organic Crop Improvement Association) Chapter. He was instrumental in the formation of the earliest sustainable agriculture organization in the state—the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Society (ISAS). He also played a leadership role in the creation of CFAR (Council on Food and Agriculture Research) and served on the board. He is considered a driving force in the Illinois sustainable farming movement.

He sells his organic grain into the national and international markets, and certification allows him to capture the premiums that make organic profitable. He almost always goes for food-grade quality on all his crops. If he doesn’t get food-grade, he looks to sell into the feed market.

Congratulations – Jack Erisman 2011 R.J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture Farmer of the Year!

## HENRY WHITE EXPERIMENTAL FARM & ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - ZELL FARM

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### HENRY WHITE EXPERIMENTAL FARM

The 94- acre Henry White Farm, 4 miles southwest of Belleville, 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.

In 2011 approximately 4,300 people were provided educational presentations or visited the farm to view the crop research, tree research, wetlands, prairie, forests, conservation practices, herb garden, vegetable garden, children's garden, and farmstead and field windbreaks. Ecology students come to learn about agriculture and scouts can earn merit badges. Randy Meyer is the contract farmer. Dr. Bill Becker is conducting cropping research for the IDOA. A total of 65 of the farm's 94 acres are devoted to mainly corn and soybeans. Farming provides research opportunities and revenue to offset operating expenses.

Prairie plants, such as Black-eyed Susan, Rattlesnake Master, Alumroot and Blazing Star, are interspersed with several kinds of grass, including Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, Side-oats Grama, and Switch Grass, on 4.3 acres of restored prairie. A controlled prairie burn was held in March. The burn was observed by landowners who wanted to learn more about burning their own 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. Classes were held to train University of Illinois Master Naturalists about wetlands.

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 evergreen grove. As the wooded areas mature, they offer researchers a unique opportunity to observe the natural succession of plant and animal life. A Master Naturalist from the U of I Extension is working on a Tree Identification program on the Farm.

Gardeners from the Madison – St. Clair Unit of the University of Illinois Extension have gardens for every age group to use for field day activities and trials. Types of gardens include: Kids Garden, Prairie Garden, Native Plant Garden, Butterfly Garden, Ornamental Grass Plot, Herb Garden, Kitchen Garden and Small Fruits. In 2011 a total of 3,473 pounds of produce were donated to local food pantries. Weather played a major roll with a very wet

spring coupled with a long period of no rain resulting in a poor tomato crop. In the sweet potato plot a application of 12-0-12 fertilizer resulted in an increased yield of 30% over the control row. Crimson clover was planted as a cover crop in the garden.

The Bellville Rose Society has planted a Earth Kind Rose Garden. The program was developed at Texas A&M to find roses that would thrive with no pesticides, fertilizers or pruning. Greater use of the farm has been made possible by the Lindenwood University Science Teacher class and McKendree University. Southwestern Illinois college has worked with us in furnishing plants for our gardens.



As more people visit the Farm we are seeing a growth in the interest of using the Farm as a outdoor classroom and learning experience.



### **ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - JACK ZELL FARM**

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

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 habit. 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.

A wet spring and favorable weather contributed to average corn yields in 2011 with an average of 163 bushel per acre while a warm and dry August helped the soybeans average 40 bushel per acre.

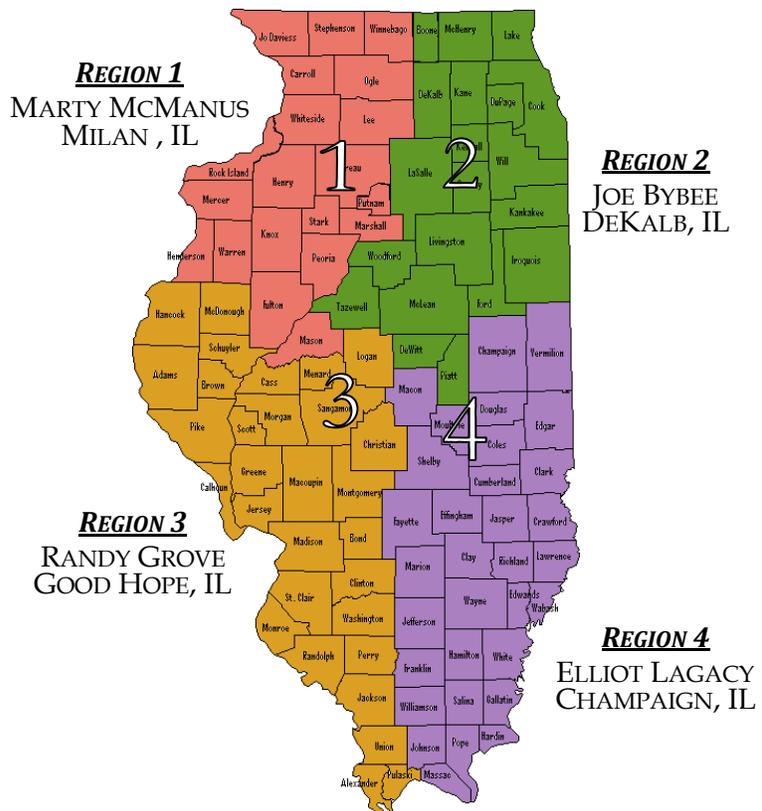
## PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

The success of the soil and water conservation programs in Illinois results from the close working relationship of all partners. Illinois has a strong history and legacy of soil and water conservation. Numerous local, state and federal agencies have conservation program responsibilities that complement each other to collectively achieve the goal of protecting/conserving our soil and water resources. Other program benefits also include areas of farmland protection, sustainable agriculture, nutrient management, watershed planning and protection, forest management, wildlife habitat protection and environmental education. Partnership activities summarized in the report can only be achieved through cooperative efforts of all the conservation partners.

The chart located on the next page provides a snapshot of outreach and education efforts for the 97 SWCDs reaching both rural and urban constituents. Additional pages follow outlining program accomplishments from other partners including county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

For more information on local programs and activities or technical assistance, contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District. If you have an opportunity, please thank these partners for all their dedication and hard work!

**THE BUREAU OF LAND AND WATER RESOURCES HAS DIVIDED THE STATE INTO 4 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	29	1,242	Newsletters	170	162,315
Conservation Tours for Students (K-12)	38	5,906	Teacher Newsletters	50	4,440
Conservation Tillage Meetings	15	632	Newspaper Articles (# of papers)	648	86,725
Watershed Meetings	152	2,300	Radio Spots (stations)	321	71
TMDL Meetings	95	1,162	T.V. Spots (stations)	32	18
Watershed Tours	8	146	Websites (# of hits)	40	115,246
Annual Meetings		5,190	Conservation Speaking Engagements (# attendees)	60	2,660
Forage/Pasture Demo	1	20	<b>Products and Services</b>		<b>Customers</b>
Woodland/Windbreak Wildlife Demo	8	390	Tree Sales	93	4,277
Soil Stewardship Meetings/Programs	161	9,876	Plant Sales	19	324
Lady Landowner Meetings/Tours	18	585	Fish Sales (# of annual sales)	148	3,674
Meetings with Special Interest Groups	294	5,927	Conservation Seed (report in acres)	3,646	2,429
Agronomy Days	12	3,450	Equipment Rental		
Contractor Workshop	17	603	Drill/Planter/Seeder (report in acres)	40,218	1,988
Displays at Fairs, Banks, etc	67	40,277	Scraper	-	128
Field demonstrations plots (number of plots)	16	-	Tree Planter (report in acres)	4,484	222
Classroom Presentations			Other	17,498	572
K-8 Grade	2,030	55,009	Used Oil Collection (report in gallons)	3,372	3,595
9-12 Grade	84	2,761	Used Tire Collection (report in tires)	16,583	803
College	26	952	Aerial & GIS Maps / Plat Books	11,289	3,739
Educator Workshops	52	1,268	Other	28,959	1,983
Conservation Education Days	349	36,080	<b>Land Use Activities</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Arbor Day Programs	229	14,217	Natural Resource Reports	376	7,374
Earth Day Programs	124	7,444	Land Evaluation Site Assessments (LESA)	179	3,462
Conservation Education Contest			Soil Erosion Sediment Control Plan Reviews	294	7,221
Poster	90	5,843	Soil Erosion Sediment Control Inspections	1,324	-
Photo	5	140	Soil Borings/Mapping	312	168
Other	16	1,318	Facility Planning Area Reviews	144	-
Provide Scholarships	41		Flood Related Reviews	149	-
FFA Soils Judging Contest	46	2,992	Mining Activities	4	-
Other	869	27,411	Pipeline/Utilities Activities	11	-
	<b># of Schools</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	Other	129	-
Envirothon	326	2,621		# of Activities	# of Attendees
Provide School Projects	128	-	SESC Tours/Workshops	12	934
<b>TOTAL OUTREACH</b>		<b>235,762</b>	Land Use Meetings/Hearings	122	2,258
			Farmland Protection Events	29	116
			Ag Areas Meetings	10	20
			Flood Related Meetings	54	847

# ILLINOIS NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



## Who Are We

Inspired by a shared vision of agriculture as a valued component of the landscape, NRCS works in partnership with farmers, ranchers and many others to improve, restore and protect the Nation's natural resources. Working side-by-side with these partners, we work to sustain and improve the quality of our soil, water, air and wildlife habitat, and we develop conservation plans that work for the land and for farmers and ranchers. Farm Bill programs help with the cost of putting conservation on the ground, which benefits the farm, the watershed and the community. Conservation easement programs, also in the Farm Bill, help to protect the agricultural and natural resource values of the land over the long-term.

With our help, Illinois is balancing economic goals with a high quality environment—ensuring productive lands to supply food, fiber, forest and energy products for the Nation and the world.

## Taking Control of Nitrates

The Mississippi River Basin's Healthy Watershed Initiative is a new venture that caught the attention of Illinois ag producers in 2011. What's different about this effort? It's more focused, uses dedicated funds, targets more local action and measures results each farmer achieves. Illinois producers in Indian Creek Watershed are in full stride.

Indian Creek watershed encompasses 82 square miles--about 52,000 acres--that feed the Vermilion River's South Fork. Agriculture dominates the area, with 95% tillable ground in corn-soybean rotations, a community of 4,000 and a sprinkling of livestock operations. The primary resource concern here? Water quality, nitrates in particular. These facts make Indian Creek a perfect test site to show the powerful impact voluntary conservation solutions can achieve.

The project goal is to show what happens when 50-75% of ag operators within a defined area adopt popular, common conservation solutions and stick with them. "We're engaging every producer who farms ground here," explains District Conservationist Eric McTaggart. Resource Conservationist Terry Bachtold is the lead partner in this effort; the project's heart and soul.



*(L to R) Illinois Dairyman Paul Kilgus, District Conservationist Eric McTaggart, and Livingston County Resource Conservationist Terry Bachtold in Indian Creek Watershed.*

According to Eric, here's how it works: With financial assistance, technical support and leveraging other funds, we help farmers use and install conservation practices designed to stop erosion and improve water quality. After using the practices on their own farm, they see first-hand how well they work and they notice crop yields are good--if not better. Once they see the value of those changes, they tell friends, neighboring farmers, and all their

relatives how great things worked out. That’s when the conservation ‘fire’ starts to spread.

The goal is to show all farmers in this watershed that conservation practices work. We show them how to reduce any negative contributions of excess nutrients into the water--that’s the best feeling of all! At present, the young project includes work with 38% of local producers. The rest will be contacted this winter in order to involve others and put more work on-the-ground this spring and summer.

### Managing Nutrients

#### Issue: Tile Systems With A Dual Function: DWM.

##### What NRCS IL is doing:

Adoption and use of a technique called Drainage Water Management or “DWM” expands in Illinois as an ideal conservation solution to address excess nutrients that impair local and regional waters. Primary nutrients of concern?

Nitrates and phosphorus, both which contribute to hypoxic conditions found in the Gulf’s “Dead Zone.” For ten years, Illinois NRCS and University of Illinois researchers tested and perfected the practice on flat, tile drained agricultural land. Working with farmers, NRCS and partners promote the concept, monitor data, and encourage wider use of this simple practice everywhere it’s suitable. How does it work? DWM manages the timing and amount of water discharged from farm drainage systems with a small device attached to the tile. With a customized plan and technical and financial assistance, operators simply raise and lower riser boards to hold water and nutrients in root zones when crops need it or drain the water when there’s too much. One farmer said, “It makes my tile and the water work for *me* on *my* terms.”

Program used: (EQIP)

*Water quality improvements to Illinois water bodies and beyond can be achieved with practices that allow tile water to be held and denitrify naturally. The concept can improve productivity and profitability on the farm.*



### Illinois, the Great Lakes & “Uninvited” Guests

#### Issue: Invasive species control is key to Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

##### What NRCS IL is doing:

Although Illinois only touches a small portion of Lake Michigan, there is work to do with the Lake County Greenbelt Forest Preserve. The task? Treat 17 acres overtaken by *Honeysuckle* and *Buckthorn* as well as 12 acres invaded by *Common reed* and *Teasel* plants. Once invasive plants are removed, the site regenerates naturally with good native species. On another site NRCS and the Chicago Park District are restoring 17 acres overtaken by woody species in Lake Michigan’s Rainbow Park, 104-acres of beachfront property that offers recreational services to South Chicago residents. Onsite issues here involve invasive plants and trees that took root to out-compete desirable soil-protecting plants. The result? Erosion, damaged property, and restricted visitor use/access. NRCS is re-establishing science-based practices and management techniques to control and reduce impacts of invasive trees and stabilize the area. Successful urban projects like these open doors and opportunities for future urban-based natural resource ventures.

Programs used: (CTA)



*With successful NRCS restoration projects so close to Chicago, ecologic solutions are highly visible and seen by the public. Improvements to urban environments like these offer another chance for city dwellers to interact positively with nature.*

### Cover Crops are “Hip” High

**Issue: Science of conservation is constant in a changing agricultural world.**

**What NRCS IL is doing:**

A hot trend for more local and natural food production on small farms is exploding nationwide and right here in Illinois. Producer experience and research data confirm scientific data behind NRCS conservation practices offer ag producers reliable solutions. Many farmers, partners, and grant/research projects reaffirm the value of some rather ‘old-fashioned’ farming ideas like residue management, no-till, soil quality improvements, and cover crops. What was once common knowledge--that cover crops effectively recharge soils and supply high quality nutrients at low cost--has been ‘rediscovered.’ Not to worry. IL NRCS has technical guidance on *Cover Crop Conservation Practice standards* in use for more than 40 years. NRCS options keep pace with trends, including organics, seasonal high tunnels, grass-based livestock, and air quality practices that work for Illinois farmers.

Programs used: (EQIP, CSP)

*Production tactics and conservation solutions are available to specialty crop growers and natural food farms across Illinois. NRCS programs, assistance, and guidance are available for producers -- large and small.*



## Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

*is simply about helping people help the land. NRCS has used CTA successfully for more than 75 years to reach out to American farmers, ranchers, and other private landowners and managers.*

*America’s farmers and ranchers invest in conservation with help from CTA to care for the more than 70 percent of our land, water and other natural resources that are in their hands. In FY2011 Illinois received \$16.4 million in CTA funds.*

*NRCS employees work with customers to identify natural resource problems, inventory resources, develop conservation alternatives and help individual farmers, ranchers, Tribes, local governments and urban land-owners with their conservation decisions. This prepares the way for using Farm Bill and other conservation funding.*

### Watershed and Communities:

Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) —undertakes emergency measures in watersheds where there are imminent threats to life and property resulting from fire, flood and other natural disasters.

### Stewardship:

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)—encourages long-term comprehensive conservation by maintaining and improving existing conservation measures.

**Environmental Improvement:**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)—promotes agricultural production, forest management and environmental quality as compatible goals.

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)—promotes water conservation and quality through partnered efforts.

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)—improves wildlife habitat on private agricultural, forest and Tribal lands.

**Conservation Easements:**

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)—restores wetlands and wetland habitat on marginal agricultural land.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)—restores and protects grassland, rangeland and pastureland, and helps maintain viable ranching operations.

Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)—helps keep farm and ranch land in agriculture.

**Illinois in The National Landscape  
Restore It, Turtles Will Come**

In northern Illinois, a unique area called the Piskasaw Fen is restored through cooperation of Illinois NRCS and the Boone County Conservation District. Piskasaw Fen includes a 40-acre savanna and a 40-acre wetland along Piskasaw Creek.

Savannas are the rarest type of habitat found in Illinois—even rarer than wetlands. Invasive species took over the site. Successful restoration efforts used hands-on employee removal of invasives followed by the use of goats. Yes, goats. Goats enclosed within a solar-powered electric fence graze/eat all remaining invasive species, including multiflora rose, thistle, and garlic mustard. When the goats are done, land managers and volunteers finish the job. The best news of all? Blanding’s turtle, considered endangered in Illinois, were recently discovered on the site.



**A Good Year:**

2011 was a productive year for Illinois farmers, both in crop yields and in the success of addressing resource concerns on the land. Many areas, however, experienced weather extremes--both drought and flooding during 2011.

And although economic hardships hit many families and businesses across the state, Illinois’ agricultural base remained strong. Producers and partners who work with NRCS made excellent progress establishing conservation practices and conservation systems on the land.

Composting facilities built.....	12 projects	
Cover crops established.....	2,251 acres	
Fences planned /established.....	542,675 ft	
Forage & biomass plantings.....	2,804 acres	
Grassed waterways.....	5,752 acres	
Integrated pest mgt.....	2,002 acres	
		Mulch-till.....
		2,918 acres
		No-till, Strip-till.....
		2,846 acres
		Nutrient Management.....
		18,596 acres
		Prescribed grazing.....
		12,127 acres
		Terraces built.....
		358,539 feet
		Trees & shrubs established .....
		5,838 acres

## Back To Basics

Illinois developed banner stands to promote conservation solutions for farmers and their resource-based issues. NRCS' goal is not to push programs but to encourage protection of natural resources on the farm. NRCS staff display the banners at meetings, workshops, and conferences across the state to engage producers in a new "conservation conversation" that benefits farmers and Illinois' precious land.



## 2011 Farm Bill Program Funding\*

\*Financial Assistance (FA) is provided directly to producers. Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) funding is used by NRCS for professional planning and expertise to help carry out conservation activities. Data source: Foundation Financial Information System Status of Funds Report October 2011.

NRCS Program	Number of Contracts	Financial Assistance to Producers
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	221	\$3.68 Million
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	928	\$11.9 Million
Farm & Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)	0	\$3,000.00
Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)	2	\$40,000
Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)	20	\$6.83 Million
Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)	20	\$266,000

# ILLINOIS URBAN MANUAL PROJECT

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The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) has been leading the effort to update the Illinois Urban Manual (“IUM”) with assistance from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency’s Section 319 funding and funding from Grand Victoria Foundation of Elgin, IL. The update process has garnered much interest in Illinois and from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The IUM Coordinator was recently asked to present at NACD’s annual meeting in Nashville, TN. A two-person team including Jim Nelson (IUM coordinator) and Kelsey Musich (Kane-DuPage SWCD) presented the need for, history, process, and progress of the IUM update initiative to an attentive crowd on the last day of the conference. The participants mentioned their interest in having AISWCD present again next year.

The standards in need of updating and development (from scratch) are slowly but surely being marked off the list as completed. There are officially three brand new and 4 revised standards currently in the IUM with four old standards that have been deleted due to advancements in erosion and sediment control since the last version of the IUM was published. Below is a table describing the current status of all standards under development

## IUM STANDARDS UNDER DEVELOPMENT—2011 STATUS REPORT

### ◆ **Completed and Added to Illinois Urban Manual**

- Erosion Control Blanket 830
- Temporary Concrete Washout 954
- Stabilized Construction Entrance 930
- Dewatering 813
- Mulching for Seeding and Soil Stabilization 875
- Erosion Blanket: Turf Reinforcement 831
- Material Specifications 805 Turf Reinforcement
- Inlet Protection Impervious Areas 861

### ◆ **Near Completion**

- PAM for Soil Stabilization 893—Public Review—Awaiting Steering Approval
- PAM for Sediment 894—Public Review Complete—Awaiting Steering Approval
- Temp. Stream Diversion 976—Public Review Complete—Awaiting Steering Approval
- Ditch Check (Manufactured) 814— Draft
- Compost Blanket 804—2nd Draft
- Compost Filter Sock 805—2nd Draft
- Silt Fence 920—4th Draft
- Temporary Sediment Basin 957—3rd Draft
- Coffer Dam 803—4th Draft

**Status of Draft Documents**

- Bioretention Facility 800—1st Draft
- Dry Detention Basin 809—1st Draft
- Extended Detention Basin 810—1st Draft
- Silt Curtain 917—2nd Draft
- Permeable Pavement 890—1st Draft
- Open Channel 878—1st Draft
- Stone Lined Vegetated Channel 931—1st Draft
- Soil Bioengineering 926—1st Draft
- Lined Channel or Outlet 872—1st Draft
- Compost Filter Sock 805
- Compost Blanket 804

# Urban Erosion Control



Erosion Control Blanket



Silt Fencing



Extended Detention Basin



Concrete Washout Area

## ILLINOIS ENVIROTHON

The Illinois Envirothon program combines classroom learning with hands-on field experiences focused around five major topics—Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a Current Environmental Issue. 2011’s current issue was “Fresh and Salt Water Estuaries”. The five member student teams rotate through five outdoor testing stations, where their knowledge is evaluated and scored through written examination. Additionally, the competition includes an oral presentation component that challenges students to effectively apply and communicate a solution to a complex environmental issue.

The Illinois SWCD’s, Association of Illinois SWCD’s, the Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois SWCD Employees’ Association, Illinois Department of Agriculture and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency are instrumental in compiling the written examination and conducting the statewide contest.

### 2011 Illinois Envirothon State Winners



### Taylorville High School, LUC 9 -Christian County

#### Student Team

Eric Winans

Zibin Zhang

Matthew Hooper

Skye Fisher

Louis Cella

Advisor: Ms. Mary Dawson





**2nd Place**

**Triad High School  
LUC 12 - Madison Co.**

L to R - Zachary Hemann, Michelle Maloche,  
Ryan Mehallow, James Konsky, and Alexandra Colombara  
Advisor: Ms. Sandy Perkins



**3rd Place**

**Midland High School  
LUC 2 - Marshall-Putnam Co.**

L to R - Dan Scoon, Mitch Dunphy, Hans Vik, Evan Koehler,  
and Carlie Toepper  
Advisor: Ms. Rachel Baker-Christophel

***Teams Participating in the 2011 Illinois State Envirothon***

**LUC 1 - Carroll SWCD**  
West Carroll HS

**LUC 2 - Marshall-Putnam SWCD**  
Midland HS

**LUC 3 - Grundy SWCD**  
Morris HS

**LUC 4 - Hancock SWCD**  
Hamilton HS

**LUC 5 - Mason SWCD**  
Illinois Central HS

**LUC 6 - Ford SWCD**  
Paxton-Buckley-Loda HS

**LUC 7 - Edgar SWCD**  
Shiloh HS

**LUC 8 - Cass SWCD**  
A-C Central HS

**LUC 9 - Christian SWCD**  
Taylorville HS

**LUC 10 - Cumberland SWCD**  
Neoga HS

**LUC 11 - Edwards SWCD**  
Edwards County HS

**LUC 12 - Madison SWCD**  
Triad HS

**LUC 13 - Clinton SWCD**  
Carlyle HS

**LUC 14 - White SWCD**  
Grayville HS

**LUC 15 - No Representative**

**LUC 16 - Kane Du-Page SWCD**  
Wheaton North HS

**CATEGORY WINNERS:**

**SOILS :** Shiloh High School

**FORESTRY & CURRENT ISSUE WRITTEN TEST:** Taylorville High School

**AQUATICS & CURRENT ISSUE ORAL PRESENTATION TIE:** Midland High School

**WILDLIFE:** Grayville High School

**TEAM SPIRIT:** Midland High School

**BEST T-SHIRT:** Edwards Co High School

The 2011 current issue was:  
**Fresh and Salt Water Estuaries**

## 2011 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY WINNERS



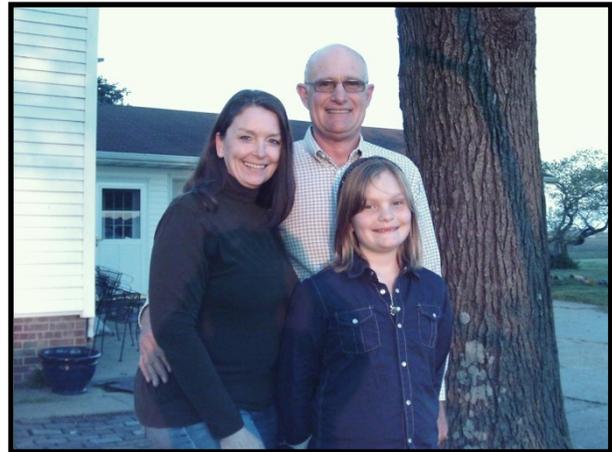
**Governor's Award Winner**  
**Tennis Family Farm**  
 LUC 11, Lawrence SWCD



**Elbert Family Farm**  
 LUC 2, Livingston SWCD



**Lane Farms**  
 LUC 16, DeKalb SWCD



**Hess Farm Family**  
 LUC 4, McDonough SWCD

### *Special Thanks to our Conservation Farm Family Sponsors*



# 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 63TH ANNUAL MEETING IN 2011.**

## Outstanding District Employee Award



**Terry Bachtold**  
Resource Conservationist  
Livingston County SWCD

The ISWCDEA awarded Terry Bachtold, Resource Conservationist for Livingston County as Illinois' 2011 Outstanding District Employee. Terry manages the Livingston SWCD's Conservation Practices Program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, spearheads the MRBI (Mississippi River Basin Initiative) project, develops field days, public meetings, tours and other public education events and does survey work along with all of the other duties and activities associated with a high workload district program. When he is not on the district's clock, Terry participates in the Illinois Sustainable Farming Network, Stewards of the Land, Livingston County Chapter of Pheasants Forever, Illinois Beef Association, Livingston County Farm Bureau, Prairie Central FFA Alumni Association and as a member of the First Baptist Church of Fairbury; where he serves as Deacon, Sunday School Teacher, Group Leader, and as a member of the church's fellowship committee, discipleship committee and as Grill Master for many functions both church and district related.

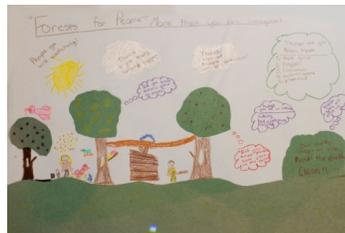
## Legislative Awards

<i>FRIEND OF CONSERVATION</i>	<i>LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR</i>
	
<b>Representative</b> Cynthia Soto (D) 4th District	<b>Representative</b> Chapin Rose (R) 110th District

## Poster Contest Winners - Sponsored by AISWCD Auxiliary



**Grade K-1 State and National Winner**  
Dominick Alber  
Whiteside County



**Grade 2-3 Winner**  
Alayna Palmer  
Stephenson County



**Grade 4-6 Winner**  
Aiden Iocca  
Menard County

**Grade 10-12 State Winner, National Honorable Mention**  
Patrick Price  
DeKalb County



**Grade 7-9 Winner**  
Cristin Pollard  
White County

## SWCD PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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The **Adams County SWCD** assisted with the Annual Western Illinois/ Northeast Missouri No-Till Seminar. More than 150 people attended the event.

The **Adams County SWCD** co-sponsored Earth Day Celebration with John Wood Community College, U of I Extension, **Pike** and **Brown County SWCDs**. The Earth Day celebration reached over 700 5th grade students. These area students participated in activities from learning about Soils and Wildlife Winter Survival to participating in a Recycling Relay.

The **Bond County SWCD** held its Annual Conservation Education Day in conjunction with Earth Day activities. The SWCD spearheads this multi-agency program that focuses on water & natural resource conservation education through experiments, games, speakers and hands-on learning stations. All 5th grade students in the county were invited to participate.

The **Bond County SWCD** worked with NRCS in coordinating its second annual locally-led meeting. This event draws from those in local government and education to share the needs of the community and prioritize the focus of local conservation education and implementation efforts.

The **Boone County SWCD** conducted its second annual unused medication collection event. This is a collaborative effort with Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful, Belvidere Township and other sponsors. A large part of the effort is outreach and education on the problems with improper disposal of unused medications that make their way into our surface and groundwater. Outreach activities included sending flyers to churches, schools, media outlets and businesses in Boone County regarding the collection. Twenty five volunteers collected four barrels full of medication from approximately 150 families.

**Boone County SWCD** The Boone County Board challenged the Water Preservation and Protection Alliance with collecting and combining existing regulations regarding water preservation and protection into a comprehensive and cohesive document which showcases how water is presently protected and preserved in Boone County and the surrounding areas. This multiyear project was completed in June of 2011. Members of the committee included the County Board Chairman, representatives for the Boone County Health Department, Conservation District and **Boone County SWCD** as well as citizens from each of the three County Board Districts and others.

The **Brown County SWCD** Arbor Day was very successful with the county third graders spending the day at Moore Memorial Park. They learned how to plant a tree properly and about tree characteristics. After making tree cookie necklaces and pinecone birdfeeders, the students participated in games of Arbor Day soccer. NRCS personnel assisted students taking them on a trail walk and introducing them to the many species of trees located in the Park.

Brown County 6th Graders participated in a Scavenger Hunt at Moore Memorial Park, sponsored by the **Brown County SWCD**. Clues were provided to teams to find the items in the questions. Most clues centered on the State symbols and conservation measures at the Park.

District board directors and staff from the **Brown County SWCD**, were joined by staff of the USDA-NRCS; USDA-FSA; Brown County Farm Bureau; Brown County FFA; and University of Illinois Extension, to present the Ag Awareness- Dr. Seuss Days. Presenters read a book from the Dr. Seuss library and then related it to an area of agriculture. SWCD Directors shared "The Cat in the Hat" book and

discussed the various "hats" a farmer must wear when farming. The District staff shared the "Oh Say, Can You Seed" book and students each made a "Garden in a Glove" or a "Bean Book" which depicts the layers of the bean seed. "The Lorax" was shared by staff, along with a demonstration of the Enviroscope model.

**Bureau County SWCD** hosts a Conservation Day for area 5th graders at their Warnecke Woods Natural Area. The District had approximately 350 students in attendance with many teachers and volunteers as well. Children spent the day at several different learning stations listening to presentations about topics on wildlife animal rescue, snakes, bees, electrical safety, streambank erosion, and many other topics. After lunch the students participated in a recycling relay race, craft station, and water jeopardy.

**Calhoun County SWCD**, Ag InThe Classroom and Calhoun Co. Farm Bureau held "A Day With A Farmer." Seventy 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders attended at a local farm. The students learned about different farm equipment and their uses. The host farmer explained to the students about how farmers protect the land by using waterways and no-till equipment. The book titled, "Seed Sun Soil" was read. The book describes the process by which air and water combine with seed, soil and sun to create all the food we eat.

**Calhoun County SWCD**, Calhoun Co. Farm Bureau, Two Rivers RC & D, McCully Heritage Project, NRCS and University of Illinois Extension sponsored an Energy Innovation Workshop. Over 60 people attended the event. Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative brought their "Energy Wall," and there were presentations by the Center for Renewable Energy, Illinois Wind, and U of I Extension on solar, wind and biomass energy.

**Carroll County SWCD** hosted a Conservation Tillage Expo. The Expo demonstrated various tillage systems, and was held at the Nuemiller Farm in Thomson. Six dealers from the area attended the event to demonstrate their equipment, including a Case True-Tandem 330 Turbo, Salford RTS, Landoll 7430 VT Plus, McFarlane Reel Disk, HCC Smart-Till and Great Plains Turbo-Till. The attendees had the opportunity to view areas previously tilled by each piece of equipment, and later in the day measured crop residue for comparisons. Each dealer then gave a presentation on the equipment they were featuring. After the demonstrations a meal was provided for those in attendance.

The **Champaign County SWCD** St. Joseph Wetland consists of 67 acres of wetland restoration located within an oxbow of the Salt Fork River that was cut off when the river was straightened as a drainage district project in the 1920's. The district restored 40 acres of the site and has plans for the remaining 27 acres. A base of clay for a 90' x 180' parking lot and viewing area was established when clay from a sewer improvement project in the village became available. The site is used by many individuals for bird and wildlife viewing and classes from the St. Joseph/Ogden High School and the University of Illinois. The district is searching for funds to complete the parking lot and viewing area.

The **Champaign County SWCD** is working with NRCS and the Champaign County Board to update the Land Evaluation Site Assessment tool that guides the county in reviewing applications for zoning changes that remove agricultural property from production. A committee was appointed by the County Board including the District Conservationist from NRCS and the Resource Conservationist from the District. The LESA system was developed to evaluate sites so the best farmland can be preserved for agricultural production and development is done on less productive land.

**Christian County SWCD** participates annually with the University of Illinois Dudley Smith Cow-Calf Day. The meeting was held in June at the Dudley Smith farm, located north of Pana, Illinois. This is a 226 acre research site located in Christian County. The field-scale research site is utilized for work done through the Dudley Smith Initiative. In 2011, plans included producing more seed, producing bulk plots

with promising hybrids, finalizing plans to provide biomass for making pellets and co-firing for thermal energy. The Dudley Smith Initiative also offers grants of up to \$1,500 to middle school and high school teachers, to fund innovative projects that create knowledge about agriculture and its impact on the community.

One of the most rewarding events sponsored by the **Clark County SWCD** is the fall Fifth Grade Ag/Conservation Expo. Since the summer of 1993, the SWCD has worked with partners from the U of I Extension, Farm Bureau and Natural Resources Conservation Service to plan the event for Clark County schools. The Expo takes place on a local farm, where students are presented information on various topics relating to agriculture and conservation. These topics include farming 101, renewable energy, water quality, forestry, wildlife, crop production, livestock production and farm safety. The Expo provides the students with a 'hands on' learning experience. Also, in conjunction with the Expo, the SWCD sponsors a conservation poster contest. The contest theme is related to the Ag/Conservation Expo.

The **Clark County SWCD** annually partners with the **Cumberland County SWCD** as well as other local, State and Federal Agencies to sponsor an Ag Expo. Speakers are secured to discuss a range of current topics relating to Agriculture. In addition to informational presentations, a Marketing Panel from WILL AM 580 share their views and opinions regarding commodity price outlooks for both grain and livestock. The Ag Expo has been held for the past eighteen years.

The **Clay County SWCD** purchased a new Torex 9-yard scraper to rent to area farmers for construction and maintenance of conservation practices. The scraper rental rate is \$200 per day and was used by 20 individuals in 2011.

The **Clay County SWCD** continued to provide custom seeding of warm season grasses for CRP participants. The district ordered the seed, leased two tractors, and drilled 408 acres of warm season grasses for 43 different individuals. Since the program was started in 2008, the District has established over 1,400 acres of CP-33 field border strips.

**Clinton County SWCD** is one of several counties included in the Kaskaskia River CREP watershed, where eligibility included the entire county. In February, 2011 the SWCD provided an informational meeting addressing issues concerning the CREP signup. The information included details on Federal signup, State easements, additional acres and a declaration of a producer's view of the processing of his ground. Additional meetings are being planned to develop interest with landowners in Clinton County.

The **Clinton County SWCD** assisted the Carbondale soil survey office with preparation in a two day geology/soils Field Conference Tour. The tour consisted of ten stops around the Kaskaskia region to view various geological or soil anomalies, one of which is how sodium affects surface soils. Clinton County has been identified as a county with sodium soil acres or slick spot soils. The office was able to locate a farm near Carlyle Lake with potential sodium soils. The site proved to have sodium soils. In May, the Carbondale soil survey office, brought 95 geologists and soil scientists to view the soil borings, farming practices and the mapping of the sodium affected soils showing relationships with Relict Patterned Ground.

In September **Clinton County SWCD** assisted in the development of a Farm Safety Day that included various agencies and organizations within the County. The focus was on activities associated with the farming community and rural living. Over 200 students participated.

The **Cumberland County SWCD** assists the Lincoln Heritage RC & D with a quarterly electronic recycling program throughout the County. The District collects computers, printers, TV's, microwaves, copiers,

typewriters and other electronics. The equipment is either donated to schools or broken down for parts. This has been a great effort to keep electronics out of the landfills and as of January 1, 2012 it is the law.

The **Cumberland County SWCD** and NRCS conduct a conservation field trip for the 4th grade students from the county. The students are taken by bus around the county to see conservation practices and tillage methods being used to protect our Natural Resources. A presentation is also given with the rainfall simulator to show how conservation tillage protects the natural resources.

The **Cumberland County SWCD** gives a presentation and a free tree to all 3rd graders in the county for Arbor Day. The District assists kids in planting a tree giving them an example to follow and explaining how trees benefit our environment. A tree sale is conducted every year. The district also rents out several pieces of equipment, including a No-till Drill for soybeans and wheat, a Great Plains No-till Drill for prairie grass seeding and pasture seeding, a Fabric Plow to use in waterways, a root plow and a tree planter.

The **Cumberland County SWCD** Board, along with the County Board, is active in the Lincoln Heritage Resource Conservation & Development area. The organization has provided dry hydrants for fire protection districts, has held several electronic recycling days, promotes good forestry conservation practices throughout the area/state and is working on a revolving loan program to help the small local economies grow.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** teamed up with the DeKalb County Farm Bureau to offer a summer class for area teachers. Teachers were given college credits for the course from Northern Illinois University. The SWCD gave a classroom presentation on conservation in DeKalb County. Tours were set up which included visits to the State Conservation Farm Family's Farm for a meal and presentation on their conservation efforts. The group then visited a rock riffle project, a wetland site and a prairie planting. The day concluded with a visit to the Shabbona Lake State Park where SWCD Director (NIU Soil Scientist) Mike Konen spoke to the group on soils and later the group was shown the dam that was designed by NRCS that created Shabbona Lake.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** NPDES/Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Seminar was held in the spring. Presenters conveyed what inspectors are looking for during site inspections. A case study of a successful Soil Erosion Sediment Control plan and an Illinois Urban Manual update were also discussed. The session concluded with IEPA effluent limitation guidelines and polymer treatments. Contractors, Engineers, Developers, and SWCD staff attended the program.

The **Douglas County SWCD** Rainfall Simulator Unit (RSU) was at the Illinois Amish County Cheese Festival and the Strawberry Festival both held in Arthur, IL. In total over 40,000 people from across Illinois were at these two Festivals. The RSU was also at two Festivals at the Rock Springs Conservation Area in Decatur, IL. The District also gave rainfall presentations at the Kaskaskia Watershed Association's Show Showcase, the Dive event at the Nature Institute, Alton, IL, and the Environmental Education Association of Illinois at Pere State Park.

**Ford County SWCD** Two Prairie Walks were held with Don Gardner as the host. He has worked on restoring his prairie in Kempton, IL for several years. He began with a power point presentation in the restored barn explaining how he got started and how he maintains the prairie garden. Dr. Ken Robertson with the University of Illinois led the group through the garden pointing out the various forbs and grasses.

**Ford County SWCD** was the host in September for the Section FFA Soil Judging Contest held at Jeff and

Rita Glazik's farm outside of Paxton. Ford County schools took first and second place.

The residents of the City of White Hall, contacted the **Greene County SWCD**, early in 2011, concerning flooding problems on the North-West corner of the city. Runoff from adjoining farm fields was causing flooding to several homes and roads, including public housing. The SWCD and NRCS staff, contacted landowners in the area of concern, along with the residents and White Hall officials. Working together, all parties began the process of correcting the flooding situation. The **Greene County SWCD** staff worked with the Illinois Department of Agriculture to secure dollars for cost-sharing on WASCOD Structures in the adjacent farm fields. The structures were installed later in 2011.

The **Grundy County SWCD** along with several other sponsors hosted a Farm Safety Workshop Series held in August and September for all First Responders. Two workshops focused on anhydrous ammonia and a third was on farm equipment ID. Often the firemen and police that show up first at a scene have had limited experience working with anhydrous ammonia and have little or no experience around farm equipment.

During the last week of April, the **Grundy County SWCD** celebrated Arbor Day by presenting Colorado Blue Spruce Seedlings to all 3rd grade students in the county. The District also visited each school and provided a 45 minute presentation about the day and why we celebrate it each year. The students were given information about trees and planting and care instructions for their seedling.

Every year 1,500-2,000 people attend the EARTH Expo in Grundy County. District staff have served as the Chair of the planning committee for the last six years. The Expo focuses on the Environment, Agriculture, Rescue, Technology, and Health as well as having many different presentations such as a raptor show and Starlab. For many years the **Grundy County SWCD** has had a booth and provided information about our various programs and activities throughout the year.

In September, the **Grundy County SWCD** hosted its annual Natural Resources Tour for all 5th grade students in the county. While it is a three day event, the various schools each attend one day and visit twelve different learning stations about natural resources. Some examples are Conservation Police, Entomology, Groundwater, Build Illinois, and the Wheel of Energy. There are approximately 1,000 students, teachers and parents that attend each year.

In Observance of Arbor Day, celebrated in April, the **Hancock County SWCD** purchased 300 white pine seedlings for area 3rd graders. District staff, area teachers, and the Ag Literacy Program Coordinator, provided presentations with classroom activities, as learning opportunities for those 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in attendance. This program's purpose is to allow students the experience of planting a tree and its importance to our environment.

The **Hancock County SWCD** announced recipients of the 2011 Glen Smiddy Memorial Scholarships: Anna Ryan of Dallas City and Drew Dickerson of Carthage. The Glen Smiddy Memorial Scholarship is awarded to Hancock County students or residents majoring in agriculture, agri-business, conservation, natural resources, or other ag-related courses. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of exceptional scholastic ability and/or financial need. The applicant's character and personality traits such as: maturity, motivation, intellectual interest, moral character, and demonstrated leadership are additional criteria considered. The \$500 scholarship is sent directly to the student's school for tuition and fees. Congratulations to Anna and Drew.

The **Hancock County SWCD** staff, conducted a demonstration for 300 area 5th graders at the Kid's Conservation Day in May pertaining to the movement of water through a watershed and the pollution that runoff can cause. The combined effect of pollution from many small sources can have a real

impact on the quality of our water resources. Students were encouraged to take the necessary steps in helping prevent environmental contamination.

The **Hancock County SWCD** held their 4th Annual Conservation Tillage Field Day on the J. L. M. Farms, Inc. The purpose was to address natural resource concerns as prioritized by the Greater Bear Creek Area Watershed planning committee, as well as, promoting understanding and encouraging participation of tillage and residue management by landusers. Over 200 attendees heard discussions and watched field demonstrations of twelve pieces of conservation tillage equipment. NRCS staff measured the remaining crop residue after tillage equipment passes, discussing what is required for compliance, how to measure residue, and equipment usage and timing.

The **Henderson County SWCD** worked with several landowners addressing streambank erosion. Due to the heavy rains over the last couple of years, landowners were experiencing large scale stream-bank erosion problems. The SWCD funded four projects protecting 1,025 ft of eroding banks. Practices included stone toe protection, stream barbs, and rock riffles. This effort prevented 555 tons of soil from eroding into local streams on an annual basis.

The **Henderson County SWCD** was asked to help with flooding issues within a local community. The SWCD and NRCS held meetings to help find a solution to the problem. Several programs were discussed and a Wetland Reserve Program meeting was held. Since that time several landowners around the community have completed drainage projects and enrolled farms around the community into conservation programs.

**Henry County SWCD** held their annual meeting on January 25. The program for the evening was "Raptor Awareness with the Birds of Prey". This is an excellent program with the audience learning about endangered species, habitat management and wildlife rescue. The following day, the program was presented to various Henry County Schools for children in 1st through 6th grades.

**Henry County SWCD** held a tour in August with Congressman Bobby Schilling of Illinois' 17th Congressional District and member of the House Ag Committee attending. Tour stops included a dry hydrant, no-till, buffer strips, terraces, filter strips, waterways, grade stabilization structures, and a pond. Practices were funded through NRCS programs.

**Iroquois County SWCD** held an EQIP Local Led Work Group Planning Meeting . Eleven agribusiness/ producers and other interested residents attended the meeting led by the Resource Conservationist and District Board Chairman to identify local concerns for EQIP applications. Flooding, energy conservation and soil and water conservation continued to be the chief concerns of the Locally Led Group for Iroquois County. These identified concerns were written into FY2011-12 EQIP Applications at the NRCS area level.

**Iroquois County SWCD** held its Annual Meeting on February 21 with 110 in attendance. Chad Pregracke of Living Lands and Waters was the Guest Speaker. Plaques were handed out to the Conservation Farm Family Award Winner, FFA Section Land Use Judging Contest and Envirothon. There were PowerPoint presentations featuring these winners plus the SWCD Conservation Poster Contest winners.

The **Jackson County SWCD** hosted a Conservation Tour in October. The approximate 40 attendees traveled by tractor and wagon to different stops along the tour property. The owner/operator of the property, explained the type of equipment he used for planting his food plots. The River to River Cooperative Weed Management Specialist, gave demonstrations on invasive species control. Also, the District Conservationist, talked about the different type of grasses used for wildlife habitat.

The **Jackson County SWCD** participated at the 21st Conservation Fair held three days in September. The fair is a hands-on conservation educational event for students in grades K-6th. It is sponsored by the **Jackson, Perry, Williamson, Randolph, and Franklin County SWCDs**. This year, over 3,000 students traveled to the Du Quoin Fairgrounds to learn about topics including: soil conservation, water quality, wildlife and wildlife habitat, forestry, fire prevention, electricity, gun, boat and farm safety, rocks, minerals, mine reclamation and more.

The **Jasper County SWCD** co-sponsored an e-recycling collection event with Lincoln Heritage RC&D. The collection was a 2 day event held in early December. Area residents provided enough recyclable commodities to fill an 8'x24' trailer.

The **Jasper County SWCD's** Quail Buffer Seeding Program was again a success for the District and landowners. The District purchased seed, leased a tractor and hired part-time help to seed 211 acres of CP33 on 43 tracts throughout the county. Another 40 acres of seed was sold to customers planting their own. This program has helped the District to maintain its financial stability.

The **Jasper County SWCD** awarded two \$1,000.00 scholarships to a graduating senior at Newton Community High School and one to a current college student. The scholarship criterion includes majoring in a natural resource or ag related field.

The **Jefferson County SWCD**, in conjunction with the **Franklin, Marion and Wayne County SWCDs**, had a booth at the Mt. Vernon Teachers Conference. Approximately 2,800 teachers, aides, etc. were in attendance at the 2 day event. Districts handed out free information regarding various natural resources with a focus on the stewardship theme of "Forests for People". Over 400 informational CDs of activities were prepared for the event and handed out to those who were interested. Four bundles of tree seedlings were given out for door prizes.



The **Jefferson County SWCD** held its annual county Soil Judging Contest. This contest helps prepare the FFA students for the Sectional Contest, which typically occurs the following week. The contest was held on a recently combined corn field that belongs to an SWCD board member. The site represented various soil types, with 4 pits dug for the students to judge. The contest was attended by 93 students from 5 high schools (4 from Jefferson County and Centralia High School from Marion County). The **Marion County SWCD** Resource Conservationist, judged the pits and reviewed the pits with the students. Overall, it has been a well attended event from local schools, and

both the students and teachers, appreciate the opportunity to climb into a soil pits get hands on experience.

The **Jersey County SWCD** continues to do field inspections for the IEPA on new NPDES Construction sites in the county to do onsite investigations to determine if the contractor and developer are following all design criteria as stipulated in the plans. The investigations are conducted before, during and after all construction phases. All findings are then recorded and sent to the regional IEPA office.

**Jersey County SWCD** continues to provide services under their agreement with the Jersey County

Board. This is designed to improve compliance with current and future stormwater, erosion and sediment control ordinances and regulations. The district is responsible for reviewing stormwater plans and assuring these plans are implemented by the builders. The agreement also addresses the district's involvement with the Ag Area Protection work and 22.02a projects completed for the County Board's subdivision committee.

The **Kane DuPage SWCD** held a Watershed Workshop to discuss comprehensive watershed planning and explain to residents what a watershed plan can do for them, as well as, to give municipalities the tools they need to learn about and encourage low impact development in their communities. The workshop took place in West Dundee, IL within the watershed that the District is currently writing a plan for. The workshop lasted from 10 am to 3 pm and included presentations from the District staff and two municipalities within the watershed. There were informational speakers from consultants about environmental stewardship and urban impacts of streams. The day wrapped up with practices discussed such as permeable pavement, rainwater harvesting, and smart growth. The workshop had 35 attendees.

The **Kankakee County SWCD** Board and staff continue to lead the local "Kids Day at the Farm" with presentations on the importance of water conservation and protection of both soil and of farm land.

The **Kankakee County SWCD** Resource Conservationist (RC) helped organize a local rain garden workshop and served as a presenter to encourage local landowners to reduce the amount of stormwater that leaves their property. The RC also had the opportunity to reach out to urban landowners and showcase products and services the SWCD offers while reminding the landowners of the District's mission of showing the public a better way to manage our natural resources.

The **Kendall County SWCD** Education Program worked cooperatively with other education entities in the county including the Outdoor Education Center, Forest Preserve, and an Experiential Educator from the Oswego School District to host a workshop for county teachers focusing on environmental activities, games, and lessons. Teachers from each of the four major school districts in the county attended this workshop and had very positive feedback.

The **Kendall County SWCD** Education Program donated books to each of the elementary schools in the county in honor of National Agriculture Week. This book was entitled "Who Grew My Soup." In addition to the book, schools were given a lesson packet created by Illinois Ag in the Classroom that they could utilize for activities.

The **Kendall County SWCD** Education Program hosted its Natural Resource Tour for nearly 800 4th & 5th graders in the county. This tour was held at a local forest preserve and included 7-9 stations where students could learn about soil, water, native plants, animals, composting, and conservation. Each of the four school districts in the county had schools in attendance at the tour. It was held over a 4 day period in May.

The **Kendall County SWCD** Education Program hosted free children's activities at the Kendall County Fair. These activities included a trivia game to test player knowledge of agriculture and natural resources. Children and adults alike could participate in the game. In addition to the game, an exploration table was set up for students to feel and experiment with different crops such as corn, soybean, wheat, and cotton, in addition to, farm machinery and livestock. These activities were offered all four days of the fair in the Family Fun Tent.

**Knox County SWCD** conducted a CPP Special Project with the Galesburg Sanitary District. The first phase of the project was bank stabilization using vegetation and recycled plastic fibers. The vertical

bank was graded back and Fiber Bond was anchored to the bank. Native plantings, using plugs and tubers, were installed through the mat to increase soil stabilization. The second phase of the project was water quality improvement in Cedar Creek. A Floating Island was installed. This product utilizes recycled plastic fibers to serve as a floating planting medium within a water body. Plugs/seeding was installed on the floating island. To protect the island from UV rays, sod was placed over the surface of the island until plants become established. These plants are native vegetation that is suitable to root inundation. The roots of the plants will extend down and through the floating island into the channel. These plants will filter water flowing in the channel through sediment accumulation and the uptake of nutrients from the water course. This installation is the first of many that are proposed for Cedar Creek as funds become available.

What does a Little Tykes tractor, a swimming pool, a swing-set slide, bicycles and a shopping cart all have in common? These items were just a few of many “treasures” found in Galesburg’s Cedar Creek during the Chamber of Commerce Environmental Task Force sponsored Clean Up! The landfill reported the total weight of the “treasures” was around 3,000 lbs! The Task Force volunteers that were present include staff and/or management from: Chamber of Commerce, Koppers, **Knox County SWCD**, and Galesburg Sanitary District. The event was a huge success! A total of 38 men, women and children collected trash from Cedar Creek. Also contributing to the successful event were additional area sponsors: Knox County Landfill, Knox County Health Department, Fox Portable Restrooms, Hy-Vee, and City of Galesburg.

**Livingston County SWCD** The Indian Creek Watershed takes in approximately 50,000 acres of land that covers 82 square miles. There are 150 producers in this watershed. The Indian Creek Steering Committee was formed in February 2012 to provide direction to the SWCD on a proposal for NRCS’s Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI). This group, made up of local farmers and agribusinesses and representatives from local, state and federal cooperating agencies and conservation groups has been an integral part of every project and event that has transpired. The first event was a watershed-wide producer meeting to introduce the MRBI project. The event was attended by 80+ producers. At this meeting, participants were introduced to USDA programs that could be implemented to improve the water quality within this watershed. The highlight of the meeting was a producer panel that spoke on their experiences of working with the SWCD and NRCS. In addition to NRCS & the SWCD, other partners in this project are the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC), IEPA and many ag-based organizations and businesses.

**Madison County SWCD**, along with **St. Clair, Monroe and Jersey SWCDs**, sponsored their 8th annual erosion and sediment control seminar. The event was held at the Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. The target audience for this event included: developers, contractors, public works officials, village inspectors, professional engineers and IDOT inspectors. This year there were 225 in attendance. The purpose of this event is to provide information concerning proper erosion and sediment control methods and products on urbanizing/developing sites. It provides continuity to SWCDs that are doing NPDES stormwater inspections for IEPA. The SWCD plans each year to alternate the format between having a seminar or an outdoor field day.

The **Marion County SWCD** continues to assist local landowners and the Kell Fire Department with Prescribed burns. The District brings together local landowners enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program having warm season grass plantings and the Kell Fire Department. The fire department trained in prescribed burns can now complete this required mid contract management practice of CRP contracts. The department continues to use the District’s George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station for the hands on training for the Wildland Fire Fighter Type II national certification.

The **Marion County SWCD** George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station continues to expand and increase its education efforts through tours and training. The Soren Eriksson's, Game of Logging (GOL) has once again been scheduled for this late winter/early spring. This hands-on training is offered to professional loggers, foresters, college students, forest landowners, city-park utility workers and anyone interested. The GOL is widely acknowledged as the premier timber harvesting training program in the country. With a combination of demonstrations and participation, 10 students will be taught safety, productivity, conservation and cutting techniques.

**Marshall-Putnam SWCD** held a Lady Landowner Tour for 50 ladies. They visited the Galena wineries to view conservation practices and to learn how wine is made. They were taught about each step of the process and how vineyard farmers use conservation methods. The group was taken into the city of Galena to explore the history and the dam in town. They learned how the dam was located to save the town from flooding and save the river from erosion.

**Mason County SWCD** continues to provide irrigation evaluations for producers in Mason, Tazewell, Cass, Menard and Logan Counties. This service provides valuable water distribution information to producers and helps measure the efficiency of an irrigation system. Based upon recommendations, the producer is able to make adjustments, which in turn conserves water and energy.

**Mason County SWCD** hosted the 10th Annual Mason County Discovery Day for third graders. This is a day long outdoor learning event that takes place in September. There were 274 people involved in this event and students learned about several topics including conservation, ecology, recycling and natural and cultural history. This program remains available through grants received from Lower Sangamon River RC & D, Dynegy Midwest Generation and Cargill Meat Solutions.

**McDonough County SWCD** has entered into an agreement with City of Macomb and IEPA to implement conservation practices within the Spring Lake Watershed. Spring Lake Watershed is the Macomb community's water supply source.

**McHenry County SWCD** For the past year the District has been working with the Delta Institute (Grant from Victoria Foundation), the Land Conservancy of McHenry County and the Environmental Defenders of McHenry County to create a map which shows possible natural resource threats by proposed transportation expansions. The District was hired as the GIS consultant. Throughout the process, Federal, State and local agency/groups met and ranked different resources on a 1 to 5 scale, with 5 being the most important. The rankings were then added to existing GIS layers to create a mosaic of the county which identified those areas with the lowest, moderate, high and highest environmental concern. Proposed transportation expansion routes were then overlaid on the map to identify those routes with the highest environmental impact potentials. Currently, the group is evaluating three of the routes and are working on alternatives and best management practices with transportation officials to limit impacts on our resources.

**McLean County SWCD** sponsored a public meeting at the Franklin Experimental Farm near Lexington to demonstrate newly designed equipment for seeding cover crops. The Nature Conservancy obtained an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to do research for cover crop/nutrient uptake and later release. There was discussion promoting the benefits of cover crops for various uses and applications. In addition to the District and The Nature Conservancy, other participants included Western Illinois University, University of Illinois, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Soil and Water Conservation Districts from six counties.

**McLean County SWCD** received an NRCS EQIP Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) in the amount of \$75,000 to cost share construction of a two-stage ditch. The purpose of the practice is to demonstrate

the reduction in nutrient loading to a stream by the vegetative uptake in a two-stage drainage ditch. After construction and vegetative establishment, monitoring will be conducted during the contract period to gather data on channel stability, sedimentation and the nutrient content of harvested vegetation. Partners in the project include the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for rock riffles and additional streambank protection in the amount of \$144,000 as well as the City of Bloomington for grading, seeding and excavation with a \$500,000 match for their CIG.

**Menard County SWCD** The District coordinated a Soil Judging competition in 2011. The Resource Conservationist worked with the county FFA Chapters and an NRCS Soil Scientist, to conduct the one-day event. Approximately 75 students participated in the competition.

The **Menard County SWCD** holds an annual Ag Discovery Day every fall for all of the fifth grade students in the county. This year, approximately 200 students met at the Menard County Fairgrounds, where they rotated through seven different educational stations. Presenters taught the students about Entomology (U of I Extension), Recycling (IEPA), Streamtable and Erosion (U of I Extension), Farm Machinery and Safety (Ag in the Classroom), Illinois Wildlife (IDNR), Rocks and Minerals (IDNR), and Soils (NRCS). After lunch, a Trivia Tournament was held to test each classroom's knowledge on the topics that were covered during the morning. The highest scoring class from each school district won a large potted tree (and bragging rights) to take back with them.

The **Ogle County SWCD** Outdoor Stewardship Days is a two day event in the fall, in partnership with the **Lee County SWCD**, approximately 1,250 3rd grade students attend a variety of conservation education sessions in Lowell Park, near Dixon, Illinois.

The **Ogle County SWCD** Ag Awareness Day is a one day event in the fall, in partnership with the Ogle County Extension Service, approximately 350 students in 4th or 5th grade attend a variety of Agricultural and Conservation education sessions at the Ogle County Fairgrounds, near Oregon, Illinois.

The **Ogle County SWCD** Spring Tree Sale is a two day event in April. Approximately 25,000 trees are sold to around 350 customers in northern Illinois for the promotion of conservation. Bird and bat houses, rain barrels, composters, and tree care products were also offered.

The **Perry County SWCD** held a locally led meeting this year. The District invited local concerned landowners to attend and help identify priorities to work on in natural resource programming in the county.

The **Peoria County SWCD** continued its annual Prairie Burn Clinic, offering landowners classroom and field experience, showcasing techniques and equipment that help to provide safe and effective prairie burns. For the third year the District had cooperation from the Brimfield Volunteer Fire Department, both for logistical support of the burning, as well as in class support, sharing real life experiences of good and bad burns.

**Peoria County SWCD** In an effort to combat a growing number of CPP sign-ups with an ever decreasing level of program funding, the Peoria Co. SWCD Board began our Non-Cost Shared Design Program. The program offers landowners an alternative to either waiting on a list indefinitely or hiring a contractor without the oversight of technical assistance. For a \$200 fee to cover time and mileage, the staff supplies them with the same design they would receive in a cost-shared situation. The design is then built at the landowner's expense but also in their respective time frame.

**Piatt County SWCD** worked with Lincoln Heritage RC&D to host 6 e-waste collections. The events collected enough material to fill a 12ft enclosed trailer each time.

**Piatt County SWCD** is now on the web at [WWW.PiattCountySWCD.com](http://WWW.PiattCountySWCD.com).

The **Randolph County SWCD**, in cooperation with IDNR and USFWS, managed an invasive species control project, with funds from the Landowner Incentive Program. The completed project helped improve 114 acres of timber and wildlife habitat in northern Randolph County.

The **Richland County SWCD** held a Pond Demo in August at a landowner's property. Approximately 40 people were in attendance to listen to the presentation given by the DNR fisheries biologist. He answered any questions that were asked and identified a few problem weed samples brought in by pond owners. The pond was shocked to identify fish species, health, and stages of growth to insure the fish are multiplying and thriving.

**Rock Island County SWCD** was a contributor and sponsor along with several other agencies and partners of the Interstate RC&D Forestry Management Workshop that was held in September at the Kreiter Tree Farm. Many forest management and wildlife enhancement practices were discussed throughout the day. Breakout sessions included Tree Identification; Tree Planting / Maintenance; Wildlife Habitat Management; Emerging and Reoccurring Forest Health Issues; Growing Quality Walnuts; Pond Management; and Portable Sawmill Demonstrations. Approximately 90 people attended.

The **Saline County SWCD** held its annual meeting and election of directors in January. The dinner and program are sponsored by several banks and businesses within the county. Trophies, certificates and monetary awards for the two contests that were sponsored by the District and local business included the 4 elementary and 4 high schools in the county.

Each year the Administrative Coordinator and Resource Conservationist from the **Saline County SWCD** go to the 4 elementary schools in the county and present an education program and poster contest for the 5th graders.

The **Saline County SWCD** staff volunteer two days to help at the Soil Stewardship Week event held at Dixon Springs each year. The District also presents a program and a seedling tree to each of the 3rd graders in Saline County.

An essay contest each year is held by the **Saline County SWCD** for the county's high school students. The program rotates between 4 topics which includes a tour. The students write an essay to show what they learned on the tour. The 1st and 2nd place winner is chosen out of each high school as well as 1 county winner from the 4 high schools

The **Sangamon County SWCD** provided a tour in March of the 170,000-acre Lake Springfield Watershed for members of the Illinois Section of the American Water Works Association, who were holding their annual convention in Springfield. A presentation about the Watershed to 80+ attendees at their meeting, was followed by a tour. Stops were made at 3 locations--the 113-acre Schnirring Farm adjacent to the Lake. This farm has been taken out of crop production and planted to trees with warm and cool season grasses and forbs. The 2nd stop was to the 120-acre Nipper Wildlife Sanctuary. This prime farmland was taken out of production in 1992, planted to warm season grasses and trees, and has several restored wetlands. It was also designated to be open for educational purposes to naturalists and wildlife groups. The 3rd stop was the Robert Komnick Farm west of Springfield. This 400-acre farm is a showcase for effectively applied and maintained conservation practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, a grade stabilization structure, a CREP riparian buffer, and SAFE acres for northern bobwhite quail, CP-33 field borders and a farm pond. The Komnick Farm and the Schnirring Farm have been donated to The Sangamon Conservancy Trust as agricultural conservation

easements, preserving them in perpetuity.

**Sangamon County SWCD** was selected to designate and prepare a spot for the Section 14 FFA Land Use Judging Contest in October. The Resource Conservationist studied and visited possible sites for the event, secured a landowner willing to provide a farm field which displayed the tendencies for variable soil types, and was accessible for the participants. Six pits were dug, including six different soil types. An NRCS Soil Scientist served as the judge for the contest, prepared the pit for judging and completed the score card for each pit. Nine of the eleven eligible schools (65 students) participated in the event.

The **Stark County SWCD** holds a “Women in Conservation Seminar” every summer. The theme varies each year, and the past few years the District has used the Soil and Water Stewardship Week theme. This popular event draws women from all across the county, with a few attending from neighboring counties. The agenda includes a variety of topics with featured speakers that present programs. Also included is at least one “hands on” activity and an afternoon tour.

**Stephenson County SWCD** Directors delivered and presented copies of “Rachael and Sammy visit the Prairie” and “Rachel and Sammy visit the forest” to 15 elementary school libraries.

**Stephenson County SWCD’s** Resource Conservationist participated in the University of Illinois Extension Joy’s of Gardening event and continued outreach with rain barrels and composters.

**Stephenson County SWCD** Associate Director Della Moen writes a Weekly Conservation article that is published in at least 2 publications in Stephenson County. It is also printed in many NRCS and SWCD publications.

**Stephenson County SWCD** Directors and Staff wanted to recognize people doing conservation throughout the County. An awards ceremony was held, plaques and a farm sign we’re given out for Farm Family, Legacy, Conservation Horizon Award and other special awards.

In the past, the **Wayne County SWCD** has awarded one \$500 annual scholarship to a County High School Senior to further conservation awareness in Wayne County. In 2011, the District expanded the scholarship award and gave out three \$500 scholarships, one for each high school in the county. Each school was required to have three applicants to be eligible. The goal was surpassed at each school and they had great essays describing what each student could do to contribute to the conservation of our natural resources.

The **Wayne and Clay County SWCD's** entered into an agreement to share a Resource Conservationist. The RC spends at least 2 days in Wayne County and the remainder in Clay County. This agreement has worked out very well for both counties. Wayne County has been able to procure the services of a veteran RC, and it has been a win/win financially for both districts. It promotes camaraderie, and sharing and implementing of ideas between two neighboring counties, all for the good of conservation. Wayne County now offers a custom seeding program which has met with great interest from area landowners/producers.

**White County SWCD** was the primary contact for the WREP partnership, entering into an agreement with the Indian Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and The Nature Conservancy partnered to promote a Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) project along the Wabash River in White, Gallatin, and Wabash Counties. The WREP is a program offered by USDA to return lands with flooding problems in a special project area to natural floodplain conditions.

The **White County SWCD** and the fourth graders from across White County participated in a

conservation day at the Hamilton County Fish and Wildlife Area, also known as Dolan Lake. The students learned about forestry, wildlife, soil erosion, and water quality, and experienced a special treat with Wayne – White County Electric Cooperative’s live line safety demonstration. The sessions were taught with the help of employees from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the **Saline County SWCD**, and the Wayne / White County Ag Literacy Program. Approximately 175 students from Wells Elementary School, Crossville Attendance Center, Booth School, and Norris City – Omaha Elementary School participated in the fun-filled conservation day.

A "Growing Cover Crops" workshop was coordinated by the **Will-South Cook SWCD** in February at Joliet Junior College’s Wietendorf Agricultural Education Center. Producers from Will-South Cook, Kendall, Grundy and LaSalle Counties were invited to attend the workshop. Approximately 70 individuals participated in discussions on Soil Quality Indicators and Cover Crops, with the USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Scientist presenting. Using Cover Crops on the Farm was also presented by the McLean County SWCD Resource Conservationist. Following the presentations, the workshop concluded with discussions by local producers on their experiences with Cover Crops in Northeastern Illinois. All in attendance commented on the timely information that had been provided.

**Will-South Cook SWCD** completed Installation of a stream bank stabilization practice was along Hickory Creek in New Lenox. The creek has an estimated drainage area of 3.8 sq. miles. The landowner was provided with technical and financial assistance from the **Will-South Cook SWCD** office in the form of planning, design, and installation of the project. Installation included the use of native plants to solve an erosion concern, an approach that provided a more natural and visually appealing outcome for the landowner. To provide additional protection for the channel bank the landowner chose to install rock riprap material at the toe of the bank. An Army Corps of Engineers permit was issued under the Corps Regional Permit Program due to Hickory Creek being a water of the United States. A drain tile was also installed in the creek bank to collect water coming out through the bank. Up to 75% of cost was provided by the SWCDs Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program.

The **Winnebago County SWCD** is a member of the Winnebago County Watershed Improvement Plan Steering Committee. The committee is in the process of developing a watershed plan for two watersheds on the southern and eastern portions of the City of Rockford. The District is helping to collect base line data, which will be used in watershed models, to identify Best Management Practice and placement locations to address water quality and runoff.

The **Winnebago County SWCD** held their 70th annual meeting, and was recognized by the State of Illinois 96th General Assembly for its work. In the spring of 2011, the District was also selected as the Atwood Award winner, which is given to an individual or organization that demonstrates outstanding contributions in the field of public conservation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Illinois Department of Agriculture  
Bureau of Land and Water Resources  
217/782-6297  
[www.agr.state.il.us](http://www.agr.state.il.us)

In compiling this report, information was provided by the following agencies that work through or in conjunction with soil and water conservation districts.



Association of Illinois Soil and Water  
Conservation Districts  
217/744-3414  
[www.aiswcd.org](http://www.aiswcd.org)



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  
[www.epa.state.il.us](http://www.epa.state.il.us)