

**STATE of ILLINOIS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
Robert F. Flider, Director



**ILLINOIS**  
**CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2012**



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



Pat Quinn, Governor  
Robert F. Flider, 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 Illinois Department of Agriculture is pleased to provide this annual report for your review. It shows the very important work being carried out by the Members of Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Partnership. It also highlights the significant progress Illinois landowners have made in preserving the State's precious natural resources. The Partnership works closely with rural and urban landowners on developing and implementing conservation practices that benefit the environment.

The conservation and wise use of our natural resources is essential to achieving and maintaining the high standard of living that most Americans enjoy today. Illinois possesses extraordinary natural resources that include some of the most productive soils in the world and high quality water resources that are the envy of many other states. However, these world class natural resources are not limitless and all of us need to engage in protecting our soil and water resources for current and future generations.

The conservation community continues to experience obstacles, such as reduced funding and staff, in accomplishing its natural resource conservation mission. In addition, the reduction of nutrient runoff from agricultural land and from other nonpoint sources is clearly an issue that is gaining a great deal of momentum. The Illinois Department of Agriculture and our conservation partners will continue to work diligently to provide needed assistance to Illinois' citizens to protect the environment. To learn what role you can play, please 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.

The protection of our natural resources is a quality of life issue that touches all Illinois citizens. I invite everyone, whether you live in rural or urban areas, to be a part of this important effort.

Sincerely,

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

Robert F. Flider, 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 2012. 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, mined land reclamation, 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 2012, the BLWR distributed over \$7 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. 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, streambank stabilization and restoration, water well decommissioning and nutrient management.

The following conservation projects were completed across Illinois under the PFC Program in Fiscal Year 2012:

- 297 Conservation Structures
- 12 Sustainable Agriculture Projects
- 121 Water Well Decommissioning Projects
- 9,629 Linear Feet of Streambank Stabilization

In February of 2013, the Department partnered with other agencies and organizations to hold a statewide conference on cover crops. The conference provided practical information that agricultural producers can apply to farming operations on the use of cover crops.

### FARMLAND PROTECTION

Part of the BLWR's effort in 2012 was devoted to working with various utility companies on construction of large crude oil, natural gas pipelines, and electric transmission lines across agricultural land. Specifically, the Department worked with these utility companies to ensure

that the Department's standards for those projects were followed to protect farming operations and agricultural land from unnecessary damage.

IDOA successfully negotiated an Agricultural Impact Mitigation Agreement (AIMA) with the Ameren Transmission Company of Illinois (November 2012) for construction of the upcoming 345 kV Illinois Rivers electric transmission line project across 19 counties in central Illinois. The Department also finalized an AIMA with the Enbridge Pipelines FSP, LLC, regarding the construction of a 36-inch crude oil pipeline across agricultural land in 8 counties from Flanagan, Illinois westward through Adams County and into Missouri to tie into the Cushing Pipeline. The AIMA document contains the Department's construction standards and restoration policies companies will execute in order to minimize construction impacts on agricultural land and operations. These AIMAs also provide that the affected land will be restored to pre-construction conditions to the greatest extent possible.

Bureau personnel also provided technical assistance to landowners and local units of government wishing to develop farmland protection programs. Since most projects that convert agricultural land are private sector actions, local farmland protection programs are critical to farmland protection success across Illinois. Specifically, the Department helps on 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. As of December 2012, there are a total of 38 county LESA Systems and 55 Agricultural Areas in 23 counties throughout Illinois with 117,146 acres. Two existing LESA Systems in Kendall and Will Counties were updated with soils information and modified site assessment factors.

### **MINED LAND RECLAMATION**

As provided by an agreement with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources-Office of Mines and Minerals, the BLWR reviewed 6 (3 new and 3 revised) 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. In 2012, 2,649 acres of reclaimed ground were tested for crop yield success.

### **COMMUNITY GARDEN**

The Community Garden, located in the interior of the State Fairgrounds' mile race track, continued to be a major success in 2012. It was sponsored by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois State University 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 a variety of 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 2012. There were a total of 174 plots requested by 107 gardeners. Many of the gardeners signed up for the Plant a Row for the Hungry Program.

The Department discontinued a large scale composting project in 2012 adjacent to the Community Garden because the equipment to turn the compost rows was not available.

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

## 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 local groups where specialists explain how practices showcased at the farm benefit the environment.

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 2012, 4,919 individuals visited Watershed Park.

## 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, streambank stabilization and restoration, water well decommissioning and nutrient management.

The Legislature appropriated \$4,157,225 in FY 2011 for the PFC Program for the Agriculture Resource Enhancement (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, Cover Crops, Temporary Cover, Critical Area Plantings, Filter Strips, Diversions, Grade Stabilization Structures, Grassed Waterways, Pasture and Hayland Planting, 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.

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 trained 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.



15,892 tons is the amount of soil that was saved from the assistance of the PFC Program. That's 795 loaded semi tractor-trailers!!

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 \$736,830 from the PFC Fund Program was spent on Erosion and Sediment Control Practices, Nutrient Management, and Well Decommissioning during 2010 through June 30, 2013. The accomplishments for the Erosion and Sediment Control Practices (ESC) are shown in Table 2. 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 2011 PFC Fund Program through the ESC benefited a total of 12,516 acres. Soil loss on these acres has been reduced to the tolerable soil loss level, saving soil productivity and protecting water quality. The average cost to the state for reducing or maintaining soil loss to tolerable levels was \$90.13/acre. The cost to the state for soil saved was \$43.96/ton.

There were a total of 121 wells sealed through the Well Decommissioning Program with FY 2011 PFC Fund Program. The state’s cost to seal the wells was \$316 per well for a total amount of \$38,231.

PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT COMPONENTS	FY 2011 DOLLARS
Erosion & Sediment Control, Nutrient Management and Well Decommissioning Programs	736,830
Soil and Water Conservation District Grants	3,088,841
Sustainable Agriculture Grant Program	97,308
Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program	235,053
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,157,225</b>

## TABLE 2

### FY 2011 PARTNERS FOR CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM

CONSERVATION PRACTICE	PROJECTS	ACRES BENEFITED	TONS SAVED	SEDIMENT REDUCTION	\$/ACRE	\$/TONS	CLAIMS SUMMARY *
COVER & GREEN MANURE CROP	13	518	1,355	388	29.10	11.12	15,068.93
CRITICAL AREA PLANTING	10	68	310	90	168.33	36.98	11,446.31
DIVERSION	6	42	311	86	158.93	21.44	6,675.15
GRADE STABILIZATION STRUCTURE	28	843	1,721	490	73.03	35.77	61,562.95
GRASSED WATERWAY	95	3,983	4,252	1,166	50.10	46.94	199,589.51
RESIDUE MANAGEMENT	8	149	514	137	0.00	0.00	0.00
PASTURELAND AND HAYLAND PLANTING	14	368	2,760	827	84.37	11.25	31,059.58
TEMPORARY COVER	1	0	0	0	0.00	0.00	303.02
TERRACES	21	4,133	1,227	471	19.30	65.00	79,747.20
WATER & SEDIMENT CONTROL BASINS	101	2,412	3,443	1,237	121.54	85.15	293,144.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>12,516</b>	<b>15,891</b>	<b>4,892</b>	<b>\$55.82</b>	<b>\$43.96</b>	<b>\$698,596.82</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 control 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 2011, 5 project applications were submitted to the BLWR by SWCDs of which 3 were approved for cost-share assistance totaling \$10,611. The approved projects and the amount of cost-share provided for these projects are listed on below.

SWCD	Type of Project	Cost-share Dollars
<b>Jefferson</b>	Heavy Use Area	\$1,925
<b>Knox</b>	Articulated Block Chute	\$8,299
<b>Will-South Cook</b>	Bioswale	\$387

## 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 25 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 2011 SSRP Funds

SWCD	Number Projects	Sediment Reduction (tons)	Nitrogen Reduction (lbs.)	Phosphorus Reduction (lbs.)	Feet of Bank	SSRP Fund Cost-Share
Adams	1	100	200	100	300	\$3,566
DeKalb	3	374	1,123	314	1,685	\$31,499
Effingham	2	13	27	13	675	\$5,021
Ford	1	81	162	81	455	\$13,188
Henderson	5	355	709	355	1,117	\$32,335
Iroquois	1	7	15	7	66	\$1,888
JoDaviess	3	65	131	65	980	
Kendall	1	1	2	1	26	\$321
Knox	2	101	202	101	760	\$19,769
Marshall-Putnam	1	4	2	4	100	\$2,596
Massac	1	8	16	8	40	\$1,140
Pike	1	153	306	153	900	\$17,868
Sangamon	1	46	91	46	500	\$6,109
Union	2	431	862	431	2,125	\$20,799

## 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 2012, the Department coordinated interactive presentations for the public during the Illinois State Fair on the green roof for 25 people on top of the Department administrative building. A total of 4,973 State Fair goers enjoyed the Watershed Park interactive rainfall simulator and stream demonstrations, digging in the sand with toy backhoes and cheering on their duck in the duck races.

The 21st annual Earth Stewardship Day was held May 2, 2012 on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. This year's event included 926 fourth grade students from 45 classes and 18 Sangamon County schools that registered. A total of 38 presenters provided six to seven scheduled interactive, hands on learning sessions on topics related to conservation, resource management, recycling, wildlife, water quality and others. Several of the stations were conducted in Watershed Park.

Watershed Park is open on an appointment basis for groups and schools to visit from April 25 through October 1, weather permitting. Please call (217) 782-6297 to schedule a tour of Watershed Park. We will need at least two weeks' notice to schedule groups of 25 or less and four weeks advance notice to schedule groups larger than 25.

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**.



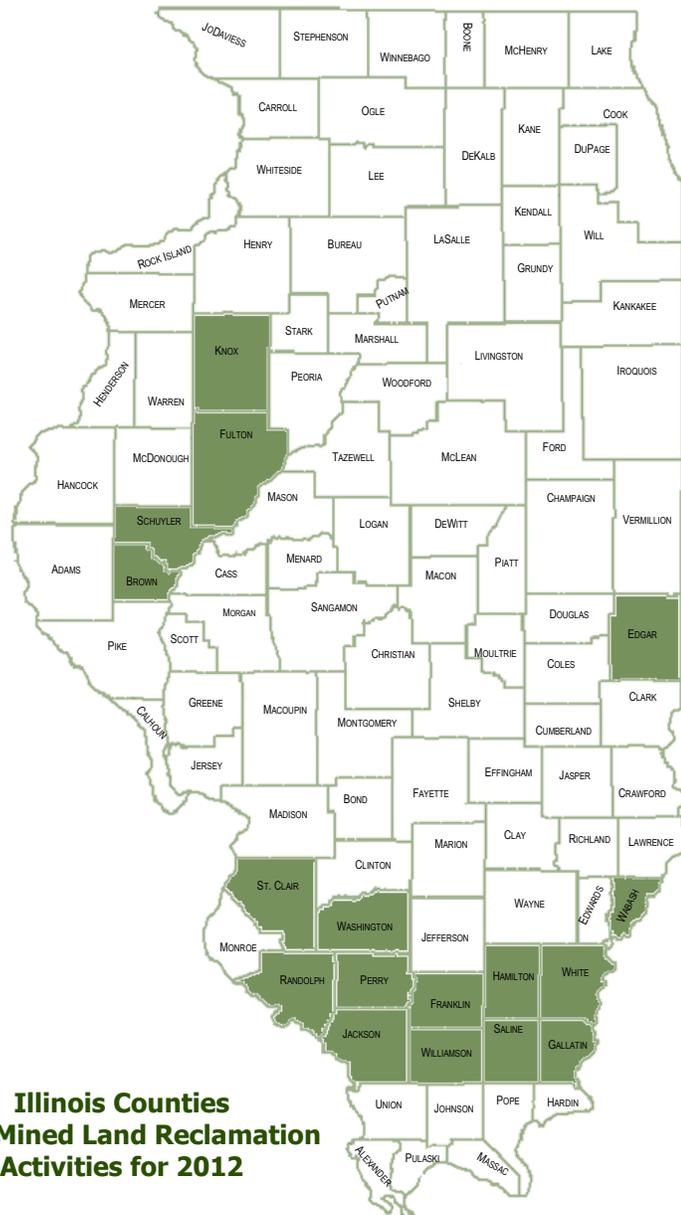
## MINED LAND RECLAMATION PROGRAM

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 agriculture 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 2012, IDOA, in cooperation with enumerators from the Illinois Agricultural Statistics Service, sampled 34 corn fields (961 acres), 32 soybean fields (290 acres), 21 wheat fields (451 acres) and 59 hay fields (947 acres) for a total of 146 fields (2,649 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 3 permit revisions were reviewed in 2012.



**Illinois Counties  
With Mined Land Reclamation  
Activities for 2012**

## 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 Preservation 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 2012 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 2012 FARMLAND CONVERSION ANNUAL REPORT**

Land Purchased or Affected Due to Actions of State Agencies

July 1, 2011 — June 30, 2012

STATE AGENCY	TOTAL ACRES	CROP- LAND	PATURE LAND	FOREST LAND	OTHER*
<b>CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD</b>					
A. Schools	537	457			
<b>COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY</b>					
A. DCEO/Com. Development Grants	104	104			
B. Enterprise Zones	7,535	4,959	39	239	2,298
C. HIB Wind Energy	261	261			
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY</b>					
A. Facility Planning Area Boundary	2**	2**			
<b>DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES</b>					
A. Division of Grant Administration	396	267	5	113	11
B. Office of Realty & Environmental	293		21	224	48
<b>DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION</b>					
A. Division of Aeronautics	220	208	3		9
B. Division of Highways	336+(3)	229+(3)	23	10	4
C. Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation	0				
<b>GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET</b>					
	0				
<b>ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION</b>					
	4,620	4,250			370
<b>DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE</b>					
	0				
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	<b>14,304+(3)</b>	<b>10,807+(3)</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>2,820</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.

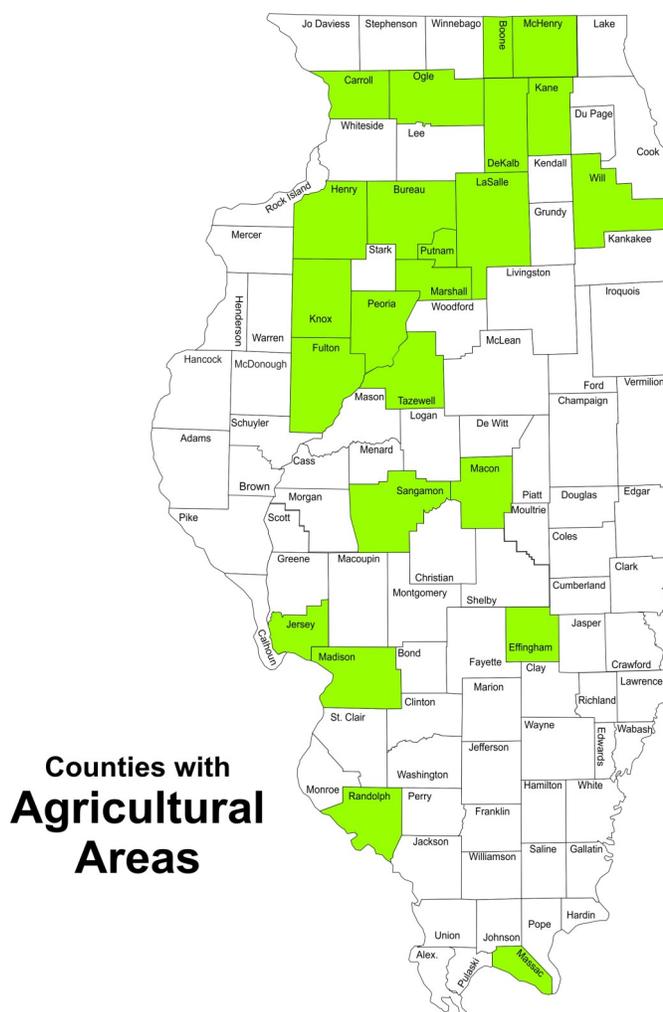
The Agricultural Areas Summary lists the 23 counties with local county board approved ag areas. This chart itemizes the total number of agricultural areas in participating counties, along with their respective acres, and summarizes the total number of acres in approved ag areas throughout the state.

In late December 2011, Effingham County added 54 acres from one landowner, bringing its Bishop Township Ag Area total to 615 acres.

Currently, a total of 117,146 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).

**TABLE 5  
SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN ILLINOIS  
Calendar 2012**

COUNTY	# OF AG AREAS	TOTAL ACRES
Boone	2	7,280
Bureau	2	4,374
Carroll	1	1,698
DeKalb	1	710
Effingham	1	615
Fulton	1	1,915
Henry	8	22,735
Jersey	3	14,279
Kane	1	575
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	2	7,208
Randolph	1	6,903
Sangamon	1	377
Tazewell	1	3,620
Will	1	469
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>117,146</b>



# VEGETATIVE FILTER STRIP ASSESSMENT LAW

## CALENDAR YEAR 2012 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 2012 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.

- ◆ 74 Landowners Certified
- ◆ 10 SWCDs providing Certification
- ◆ 119 Vegetative Filter Strips Certified
- ◆ 449 Acres of Vegetative Filter Strips Installed

### 2012 Activities

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

- ◆ District Newsletter – 19 SWCDs
- ◆ Direct Mailings to Landowners - 5 SWCDs
- ◆ Media Promotion – 8 SWCDs
- ◆ One-On-One Landowner Contact - 41 SWCDs
- ◆ Other - 6 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 (1997-2012)											
	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003-1997	TOTAL
<b>SWCD</b>											
<b>CERTIFIED</b>	10	12	15	21	20	24	28	33	48	407	596
<b>OWNER</b>											
<b>CERTIFIED</b>	59	70	85	157	318	142	236	554	740	6,479	8,711
<b>FILTER</b>											
<b>STRIPS</b>											
<b>INSTALLED</b>	119	175	142	207	317	280	361	672	990	9,462	12,431
<b>ACRES</b>											
<b>INSTALLED</b>	417	428	416	1,323	1,421	1,537	1,848	3,791	3,773	59,928	74,036

## 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 competitive projects in FY12 totaling \$68,000.

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

*LaVista Farm Demonstration Project; Biochar Application on Low Organic Matter Soil.*

◆ ***Education/Outreach***

*Sustainable Living, Understanding Sustainable Agriculture and What it Provides for Healthy Living, K-12m grade Teachers; Manure Nutrient Management Training toolbox; Growing the Southern Illinois Small Farm Network; Forestry, Small Farm Acreage, Fruit and Vegetable, Locally Grown Educational Workshops.*

◆ ***University Research***

*Green Roof Vegetable Production in Urban Agriculture; Cover Crop Stabilization of Nitrate Following Fall Applied Nitrogen for a Corn and Soybean Rotation.*

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 107 gardeners and 174 garden plots in the fourth year.

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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This year the winner of the 2012 Illinois Department of Agriculture R. J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture Farmer Award is actually a partnership. Garrick Veenstra of Veenstra's Vegetables and Andy Heck of Heck's Harvest (from Rochester and Williamsville, Illinois, both in Sangamon County) were honored for their outstanding efforts in implementing and promoting sustainable agriculture systems in Illinois during the Illinois State Fair.

If sustainability means taking advantage of opportunities that present themselves then Garrick and Andy certainly have done that. The farm is a unique partnership between Veenstra's Vegetables and Heck's Harvest. Garrick met his business partner, Andy Heck, at the Old State Capitol Farmers' market, where they had competing nearby booths. They decided to combine their knowledge and resources to the benefit of both!

Veenstra's Vegetables and Heck's Harvest provide organic, fresh, nutrient-rich produce to central Illinois families. They specialize in a large variety of vegetables, herbs and melons. On-farm egg sales are also available.

According to Garrick and Andy "We continue the traditional practices of nurturing the soil through natural, biological methods". Their sales strategies include: On farm sales April through November; a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) initiative whereby 40 (or so) customers pre-buy their whole or half-share of the harvest and also share in the risk; Farmers' Markets; and sales to retail/restaurants (from the Central Illinois Buy Fresh Buy Local directory)

It is interesting to note at one time Garrick was an intern with the 2009 Sustainable Ag Farmer of the Year Henry Brockman. Andy on the other hand was a high school teacher and farmed part-time in the summer.

Congratulations – Garrick Veenstra and Andy Heck 2012 R.J. Vollmer Sustainable Agriculture Farmer of the Year!

## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE HENRY WHITE EXPERIMENTAL FARM & JACK 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. The will stipulates the land be used for agricultural experiments. In 1993 a plan was adopted setting aside areas for field crops, prairie, wetlands and a woodland. These areas have matured and the ecology has changed over the last 20 years. The trees in the woodlands have grown so that a canopy has formed. It is now possible to plan a woodland garden using native plants. This will help to control the invasive plants and to control poison ivy. A study of Persimmon trees have been planted as understory trees. These trees are being evaluated as to fruit size, number of seeds per fruit and possible use as a fruit crop. Ecology students come to learn about sustainable agriculture. Randy Meyer is the contract farmer. Dr. Bill Becker provides cropping research testing new methods and treatments of farm crops.

Educational opportunities continue to be expanded as we work with Lindenwood University, McKendree University and this year Southern Illinois University. Students from these schools have visited the farm and showed interest in helping with programs on the farm. Teachers from these schools have visited the farm to learn how to use the outdoors in teaching science.

A 4.3 acre parcel of restored prairie provides a study of native grasses, including Big Bluestem, Little Bluestem, Indian Grass, Side-oats Gama, and switch grass. A controlled prairie burn was held in January. Prairie plants or Forbs may be observed among the grasses. Plants include Black-eyed Susan, Monarda, Milkweed, Sunflower, Coneflower and Penstemon.

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. University of Illinois Master Naturalists have used the wetlands to study the plants, animal and insect life in the impoundments.

Stacia Novy, a student at McKendree University, conducted a bird census on the farm in spring 2012. She observed 119 species of birds on the farm. Her report noted the wide range of habitat that is on the farm. Stacia conducted a bird walk and made plans for more walks. The comments from the walk were well received and requests have been received to expand this program with regular walks. She recommended a bird blind be built for visitors to use to observe and photograph the birds. A Boy Scout, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, has built such a blind in the wetlands. A copy of her census is on file in the Educational Building.

The Belleville Rose Society maintains an Earth Kind Rose Garden which is a field trial to find roses that would thrive with little or no care. The plants receive no pesticides or fertilizers. The plants are not pruned or deadheaded. Each year the plants are evaluated as to growth and overall appearance. This project follows guidelines from Texas A&M University.

University of Illinois Master Gardeners maintain a demonstration garden on 2 acres at the entrance to the farm. The gardens were planned to demonstrate ideas of garden planning and maintenance using IPM methods. IPM (integrated pest management) is a comprehensive approach of controlling insects, weeds and plant pathogens with environmentally and economically sound practice and to encourage experimenting with new plants and techniques. Trial gardens have been established to evaluate new cultivars and a means to test plants under regional climate conditions. In 2012, Master Gardeners volunteered 1,142 hours which produced 8,400 pounds of vegetables which were donated to food pantries in the area.



The past year has seen a greater interest in programs on the farm. Some 4,800-5,000 people have received information or toured the farm. The outreach has been made through Scouting, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Kaskaskia Audubon Society and conservation groups in southern Illinois. Thanks must be extended to the Southwestern Illinois College greenhouse for providing plants, St. Louis Composting for furnishing mulch and Ball Seed for the seed and plants for the trial gardens.

## **HENRY WHITE EXPERIMENTAL FARM RESEARCH REPORT—2012**

There were three research plots at the HWEF in 2012. Field 1 and Field 5 were soybean plots and Field 4 was a corn plot. The yields were reduced in this drought year, but according to HWEF's research farmer, Randy Meyer, the yields were well above neighboring farms. The soybeans in the Field 1 plot averaged 45.1 bushels per acre. The soybeans in the Field 5 plot averaged 46.5 bushels per acre. The corn in the Field 4 plot averaged 105.9 bushels per acre.

The research data for Fields 1 and 4 are not completed. The grain analyses and nematodes assays are pending. When they are finished, this report will be amended. The research data for Field 5 is complete.

The research objective for Field 5 was to investigate the soil, plant, and grain factors that contribute to quantity and quality of soybeans.

### **Background:**

According to the Illinois Soybean Association (ISA) press release of January 8, 2013: "The downward trend in soybean protein and oil levels continues in Illinois and across the United States, even after years of efforts to raise awareness about the importance of soybean composition. The trend contributes to lower elevator prices and declining Illinois soybean market share, as buyers seek greater value elsewhere."

In a graph showing the downward trend, the average protein content of Illinois soybeans in 2011 was less than 35% and the oil was less than 19%. The ISA has set a minimum standard of 35% protein and 19% oil for Illinois soybeans to be competitive in the processor markets.

Contrary to the state trends, the soybeans at the HWEF have shown an upward trend in protein for the last four years. In 2011, oil testing was begun. In 2011, the soybeans from Field 1 showed an average protein content of 36.2% and an average oil content of 16.3%. It is generally known that as the protein level goes up in soybeans the oil content comes down. The new goal for the HWEF is to maintain and/or exceed the ISA standards for both protein and oil.

The plot design for Field 5 was a simple paired comparison containing 4 replicates of treatments and controls. Soybean seeds treated with a combination of the new strains of Bradyrhizobium, Azospirillum (a free-living nitrogen-fixing bacterium), humic acid, and liquid chitin were planted in the treated strips. The soybean seeds in the control strips did not have any seed treatments. During the growing season, tissue samples were collected in every strip. At harvest time, the yield for each strip was measured using a certified weigh wagon. Soil tests were taken in each strip after harvest. Samples of soybeans from each strip were sent to the lab for analyses. Soil was also collected from each strip for nematode assays and soybean cyst nematode counts.

**Field 5 Quantity results:**

There were no significant differences in yield between the treated and control strips. The treated strips had significantly higher levels of soil sulphur and soil iron.

**Field 5 Quality results:**

The soybeans in Field 5 averaged 37.0% protein and 19.7% oil. Both of these values are above the standards. The control strips had significantly higher protein than the treated strips. Conversely, the treated strips had significantly higher oil than the control strips.

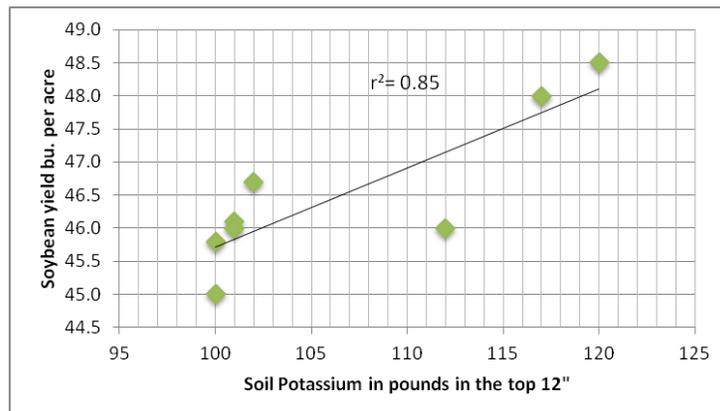
The treated strips had higher nematode indices (BNI). The control strips had higher tissue nitrogen, magnesium, sulphur, boron, zinc.

**Field 5 Correlations:**

All the data was examined for significance with 1428 correlations. The range of data for each soil factor, each tissue value, each grain value, and yield were compared with every other factor in an effort to pinpoint a set of components that would explain any differences noted between the control and treated strips. There were 99 significant correlations observed from the data. The three items of most interest are the yield, protein, and oil.

The yield had a good positive correlation (.85) with the soil potassium (Graph No.1), a negative correlation (-.83) with the seed aluminum, and a negative correlation (-.81) with the seed phosphorus.

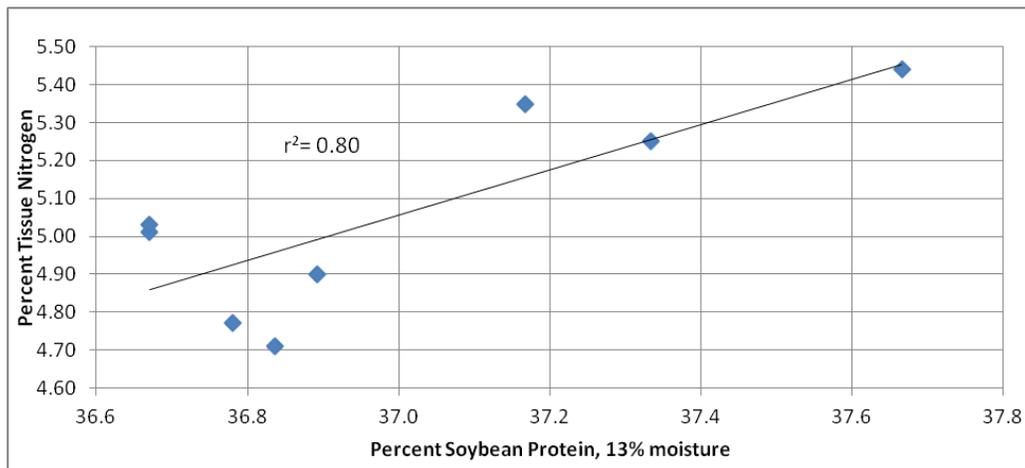
Graph No. 1: Correlation of soybean yield with the soil potassium



The soy protein had a good positive correlation (.80) with the tissue nitrogen (Graph No.2).

Graph No. 2: Correlation of Tissue Nitrogen with the Seed Protein

Soy protein contains both nitrogen and sulphur and the ratio of nitrogen to sulphur is determined by the different amino acids that make up the proteins. The total amount of nitrogen and sulphur in the tissue will also influence the make-up of the different amino acids and their transport into the seed. In the comparative analyses, both the soy tissue and the soy seed had higher N:S ratios than expected, mainly the result of below average values for the sulphur (tissue at 95.0% and seed at 87.2%) and above average values for the nitrogen (tissue at 106.5% and seed at 106.2%). The seed N:S ratio had a positive and significant correlation with the soil magnesium to potassium ratio (0.85).



There were no significant correlations with the soy oil (> + or - .80), although the best negative correlation was close with the tissue boron at -.74.

### Discussion:

It is interesting that the tissue nitrogen did not correlate well with the soil organic matter. The soil organic matter, both living and dead, would be a significant source of nitrogen for the soybeans. The release of the nitrogen is dependent upon moisture, temperature, and biological activity. In a drought year, these processes are negatively affected. Since the tissue nitrogen did not correlate well with any other soil factor, it is suspected that the nitrogen came from the fertilizer nitrogen that was applied pre-plant to the whole soybean plot. The significant correlation between the tissue nitrogen and the soybean protein indicates that the nitrogen is being exported out of the leaf tissue and into the seed. When the trend line is extrapolated back to the 35% protein level, the leaf nitrogen is 3.83%.

The treated strips had a higher nematode index indicating something was negatively affecting the root mass. Perhaps in this drought year, the microbes in the seed coatings were too competitive for available nutrients in the root zone resulting in the lower uptake of several of the essential nutrients. However, even the lowest protein level in the treated strips was above the standard value of 35%.

During the tissue sampling in late August, it was noted that the soybean stems were fully loaded with soybean pods. Normally the soybean nodes will hold 3 to 4 pods each on at least 10 of the 14 or more nodes. The soybeans in Field 5 had 7 to 8 pods on at least 10 of the nodes. Unfortunately, the dry weather resulted in many pod abortions and yield loss.

The results from Field 5 are very exciting in terms of understanding the soy protein and oil issues facing Illinois soybean growers. Several significant positive and negative correlations between the different soil, tissue, and seed values need to be matched to those in a year with adequate rainfall and less stress than the conditions in 2012. Future research plots can be designed to investigate these correlations. Managing and balancing the fertilizer inputs will continue to be a major concern, especially the nitrogen and sulphur.



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

In 1999, Jack Zell bequeath 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.

The drought of 2012 greatly impacted the areas of Effingham and Fayette Counties. Corn yields were down sharply, with a average of 26 bushels per acre in Effingham County and 20 bushels per acre in Fayette County. A late tropical storm system in August allowed the soybeans on the Zell Farm in Effingham County to yield almost 44 bushel per acre.





# ILLINOIS NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



## CONSERVING NATURAL RESOURCES IN ILLINOIS

### NRCS National Funding FY 2012 \* (in Millions)

#### Discretionary funding:

Conservation Technical Assistance	\$762
All Other Conservation Operations	
Programs	<u>\$116</u>
Total, Conservation Operations	\$899

#### Mandatory funding:

Total, Farm Bill Programs	<u>\$3,648</u>
<b>Total, NRCS Programs</b>	<b>\$4,547</b>

\*rounded to the nearest million



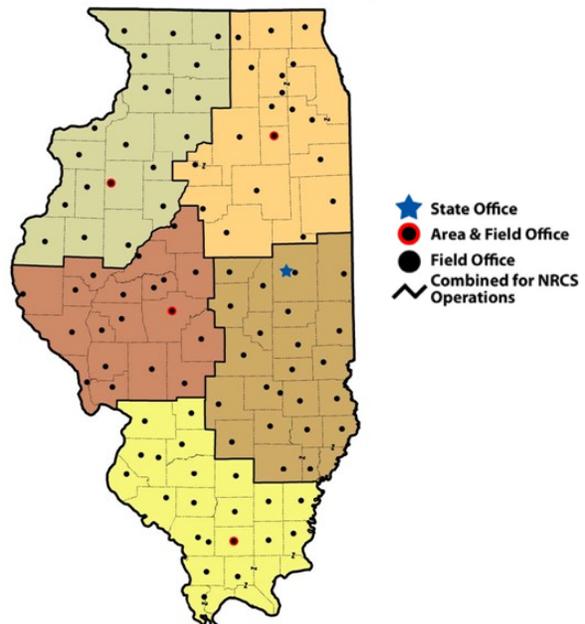
A winding grassed waterway on State Soil, Drummer silty clay loam safely transports water in Champaign County, Illinois.

Private citizens own 70 percent of the land in the United States, making stewardship absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment. Farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are making daily decisions about natural resource use and management that impact soil and water quality. With NRCS help, many are creating more productive lands while maintaining healthy ecosystems.

NRCS offers the technology, technical and financial assistance needed to address resource concerns on forest and working lands. Those who work in partnership with NRCS staff to create a conservation plan to achieve their goals for the operation. Producers who develop conservation plans do not pay for this technical assistance. Discretionary funds provided through the Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA) or CTA line item pay for staff, vehicles, computers, and on-farm conservation planning to identify resource concerns.

Producers can choose to move forward without further NRCS assistance or work with us to install recommended conservation practices. Those who decide to work with NRCS sign a contract documenting their intent to implement their plans. Mandatory Farm Bill funds are then used to carry out the provisions of the contract. These funds cover the costs of the detailed planning needed to implement identified practices under a specific conservation program (technical assistance). They are also used to provide financial assistance to help defray some of the costs of installing the conservation practice.

### Illinois NRCS Service Centers



### Illinois Quick Facts:

- Number of NRCS Employees = 314
- Number of NRCS Field Offices = 94
- Acres of Cropland = 24 million or 65% of the state
- Acres of Forestland = 4.4 million or 12% of the state



Producer Daniel Steidinger shares his success using cover crops on his Central Illinois farm. With such noticeable results, this conservation farmer and his son will use cover crops again.

Conservation Stewardship Program addresses resources on this Illinois farm.

### Illinois Trending Cover Crops

Radishes, oats and annual rye grass have one thing in common – producers use them as cover crops to improve their most valuable farm asset, soil. More and more Illinois farmers have heard this and want to learn more.

Illinois has seen many producers try cover crops, and they like what they see. With assistance from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, cover crops are sprouting up all over the state.

Cover crops offer many benefits, including reduced wind and water erosion, increased soil organic matter content, improved air and water movement through the soil, reduced soil compaction, capture of recycled nutrients in the soil profile, and well-managed soil moisture, which promotes biological nitrogen fixation and reduces energy use.

By reducing nutrient loss from agricultural runoff, conservation farmers in Livingston County, Illinois can improve water quality. These environmental benefits reach even further, since local streams feed into both the Illinois and Mississippi River Basins—extensive watersheds that affect millions of people, communities and water sources across Illinois and the Midwest.

Producers realize the impact their farms have on their communities and beyond. That is why they experiment with new practices: to find ways to make farm operations more sustainable and build healthy soil and water.

Producers see value in cover crops. Once they determine exactly what they need the cover crop to do, they select the ideal species or mix to address those issues.

Illinois Producer Daniel Steidinger read a newspaper article on cover crops four years ago and thought he would try it. He planted radishes, a good fit for his operation, which successfully increased water infiltration in areas where water previously flowed across and off the land. The radish root depth aerated the area, pulling water further down into the soil profile instead of running off the surface.

“There was a 100 bushel difference in my field with cover crops and with a year like we had, that speaks for itself.”



Illinois producer Ron Farris discusses his wetland project with NRCS District Conservationist Dannette Cross. This Southern Illinois landowner has faced flooding issues but has turned those areas into valuable wetland jewels.

Wetland Reserve Program has transformed damaged land on this Illinois farm.

### Wetlands: 20 Years in the Making

Today along the Mississippi River in southern Illinois you can find diverse woodland landscapes, beautiful open wild areas and farmland. But that wasn't the case 20 years ago. Back then, most land was row cropped for corn, soy-beans and wheat. Even so, land in Alexander and Pulaski Counties regularly experience frequent flooding that damages crops, requires replanting and reduces yields and income. But nothing caused damage like the Great Flood of 1993, which ravaged the area.

According to local District Conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Danette Cross, "After floodwaters receded in 1993, this area looked like a moon scape." The force of water from the 1993 flood created a lake on one farmer's property that was about 60-feet deep when full. It was then NRCS offered landowners access to an easement program designed to do two things: 1) help landowners who lost crops to floods year after year, and 2) restore those areas back to fully functional wetlands.

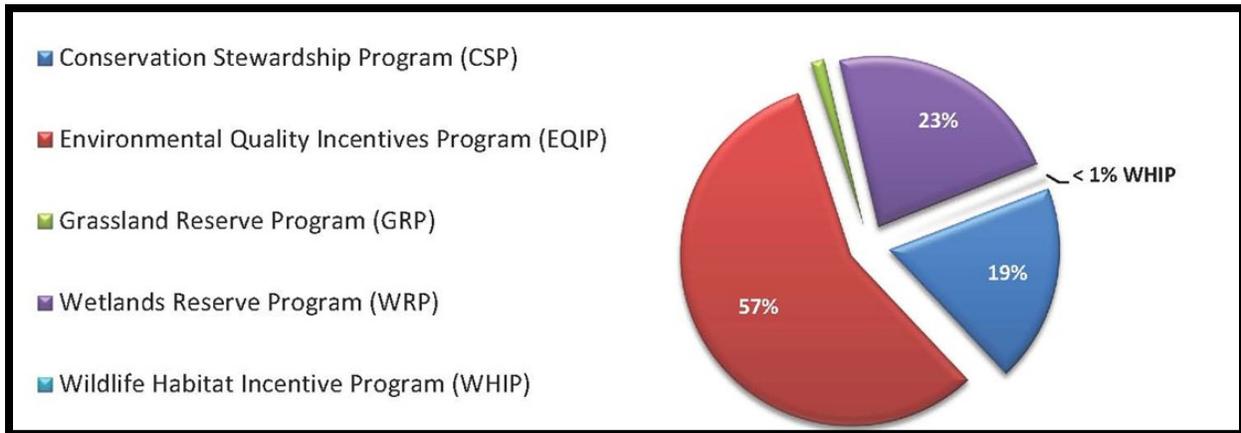
That easement program was the Emergency Wetlands Reserve Program (EWRP). Landowners at Illinois' southern tip enrolled seven easements covering more than 3,000 acres which now forms a contiguous piece of Mississippi River floodplain with the intent of returning the land back to a more natural state.

Each of those wetland easements connect, forming a larger area that gives migrating birds a place to rest and feed before traveling on. This locale is now a major migration staging area for Illinois. Another tract became a conservation easement in 2003. This 233-acre wetland supports newly planted oak and cypress trees. The rolling terrain invites a variety of plants and habitats where wildlife can flourish.

Wildlife isn't the only beneficiary of these 20-year old wet-lands. These diverse and resource-rich environments offer research and demonstration opportunities as well. These restored wet areas reaffirm that successful partnerships between private landowners, state and federal agencies and conservation organizations can bring back value to both floodplains and wetlands and all their benefits.

In recent years, more Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easements in Alexander County restored another 2,367 acres. Union and Jackson Counties also enrolled several easements equaling thousands of acres in EWRP and WRP. Wetland Biologist Dave Hiatt compares these wet-lands to a beautiful "string of pearls along the Mississippi," pearls that give the wetlands the opportunity to do what they do best, serve as the cleanser of water and home for native flora and fauna that we can all enjoy for years.

### NRCS FY 2012 Percentage of Financial Assistance to Illinois Participants by Program



### FY 2011 and FY 2012 Contracts and Financial Assistance to Illinois Participants by Program

Program	Number of Contracts/Agreements		Financial Assistance to Producers	
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2011	FY 2012
CSP	221	329	\$3,680,000	\$4,708,000
EQIP	928	692	\$11,868,000	\$14,264,000
GRP	2	2	\$40,000	\$323,000
WRP	20	12	\$6,828,000	\$5,667,000
WHIP	20	1	\$266,000	\$50,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>1,036</b>	<b>\$22,682,000</b>	<b>\$25,012,000</b>

Discretionary funds through the Conservation Technical Assistance for Illinois in FY 2012 was \$13.6 million.  
Sources: FMMI, ProTracts 10/2/2012 and NEST 10/4/2012

NRCS strives to provide current and correct information in a timely manner. Please contact your state conservationist or an NRCS legislative specialist if you need assistance. You can reach NRCS Legislative Affairs Division at (202) 720-2771.



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# ILLINOIS URBAN MANUAL PROJECT

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The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) continues to lead the effort to update the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM) with assistance from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's Section 319 funding. The update process has garnered much interest in Illinois and continued interest from the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). The IUM Coordinator was recently asked to present for the NACD Urban and Community RPG's monthly webinar. A four-person team including Kelly Thompson (IUM coordinator), Rick McAndless (North-Cook SWCD), Candice Jacobs (Kane-DuPage SWCD) and Megan Andrews (Kendall SWCD) presented on history, standards, and processes of the IUM update initiative to an attentive online audience.

The standards are continually being updated and completed. The committees are currently working on 12 newly developed standards. The committees have also been tasked to develop an IUM Field Manual which is currently being worked on, as well. Below is a table outlining the current status of the 12 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
- Silt Fence 920
- Silt Curtain-Floating 917
- Open Channel 878
- Lined Channel or Outlet 872

### ◆ 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
- Temporary Sediment Basin 957—3rd Draft
- Coffer Dam 803—4th Draft
- Rain Garden 897—Awaiting Public Review
- Wetland Restoration 999, Wetland Enhancement 998 & Wetland Creation 997—Public Review
- Pervious & Porous Pavement 890—Awaiting Public Review—Awaiting Steering Approval
- Soil Bioengineering 926—1st Draft
- Post-Construction Standards 800, 809, 810, 811 & 812—1st Draft
- Temporary Sediment Basin 957—1st Draft

**Status of Draft Documents**

- Bioretention Facility 800—1st Draft
- Dry Detention Basin 809—1st Draft
- Extended Detention Basin 810—1st Draft
- Permeable Pavement 890—1st Draft
- Stone Lined Vegetated Channel 931—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. 2012’s current issue was “Low Impact Development and Nonpoint Source Pollution”. 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.

## 2012 Illinois Envirothon State Winners



### Triad High School, LUC 12-Madison County

#### Student Team

- Ryan Mehallow
- Christian Vanhooser
- Kelly Kries
- Lindsey Roberts
- Joe Bednara
- Advisor: Mrs. Sandy Perkins





**2nd Place**

**Midland High School**  
**LUC 2 - Marshall County**

L to R - Damion Schierer, Drew Herridge, James Dunphy,  
 Emma Schoepke and Evan Koehler  
 Advisors: Mr. Brad Stork and Mr. James Sroka



**3rd Place**

**Morris High School**  
**LUC 3 - Grundy County**

L to R - Kevin Wendling, Micayla Post, Anna Pfaff, Kevin Burling  
 and Rachel Neuhalfen  
 Advisors: Mr. Rob Wallon and Ms. Carolyn Dow

***Teams Participating in the 2012 Illinois State Envirothon***

**LUC 1 - Lee SWCD**  
 Dixon HS

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

**LUC 3 - Grundy SWCD**  
 Morris HS

**LUC 4 - Fulton SWCD**  
 Spoon River Valley HS

**LUC 5 - Woodford SWCD**  
 El Paso-Gridley HS

**LUC 6 - No Representative**

**LUC 7 - Edgar SWCD**  
 Paris Cooperative HS

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

**LUC 9 - Sangamon SWCD**  
 Auburn HS

**LUC 10 - Cumberland SWCD**  
 Neoga HS

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

**LUC 12 - Madison SWCD**  
 Triad HS

**LUC 13 - Jefferson SWCD**  
 Woodlawn Community HS

**LUC 14 - Johnson SWCD**  
 Vienna HS

**LUC 15 - Union SWCD**  
 Dongola HS

**LUC 16 - Cook SWCD**  
 Glenbrook South HS

**CATEGORY WINNERS:**

**SOILS :** Midland High School

**FORESTRY:** Triad High School

**AQUATICS:** Paris Cooperative High School

**WILDLIFE:** Midland High School & Dongola High School

**CURRENT ISSUE:** El Paso-Gridley High School & Glenbrook South High School

**CURRENT ISSUE ORAL PRESENTATION:** Morris High School

**TEAM SPIRIT:** Morris High School

**BEST T-SHIRT:** Auburn High School

The 2012 current issue was:  
**Low Impact Development  
 and Nonpoint Source Pollution**

## 2012 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY WINNERS



**Governor's Award Winner**  
**Ridgely Farm Family**  
 LUC 11, Richland SWCD



**Burgweger Farm Family**  
 LUC 16, DeKalb SWCD



**Ford Farm Family**  
 LUC 3, LaSalle SWCD



**Tarter Farm Family**  
 LUC 10, Fayette 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 64TH ANNUAL MEETING IN 2012.

## Outstanding District Employee Award



Bruce Stickers, Resource Conservationist for Champaign County was selected as Illinois' 2012 Outstanding District Employee.

Bruce came to the Champaign SWCD R.C. position from the agricultural chemical business, thus he had a strong agricultural technical background and knew an extensive network of people. In his 13 years in the District, he has built upon that background to become an expert in conservation and is acquainted with everyone active in conservation in Central Illinois.

Bruce's background has made him an effective leader for the District with cooperators, agencies, and organizations. Bruce is effective in individual communication, speaking to groups, or participating in media interviews. He is active in educational efforts and public outreach for the District and is also active as an individual for conservation groups outside of his work time. His professional and personal lives often blend together because of Bruce's dedication to conservation and resource management in the area.

Coupled with his strong technical knowledge of conservation practices, Bruce's network of associates and acquaintances allows him to connect people with similar interests to develop programs, prepare grant applications, and assemble volunteers to implement conservation on the ground.

## Legislative Awards

FRIEND OF CONSERVATION

LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

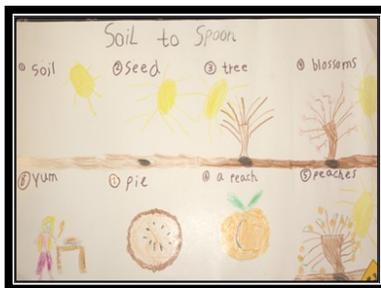


Former State Conservationist  
Bill Gradle



Representative  
Lisa Dugan  
(D) 79th District

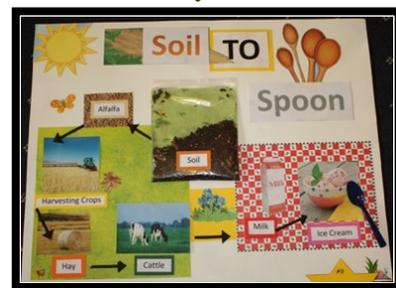
## Poster Contest Winners - Sponsored by AISWCD Auxiliary



Grade K-1 Winner  
Anna Woods  
Stephenson County



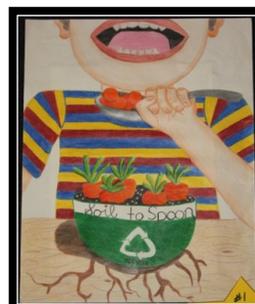
Grade 2-3 Winner  
Gale Leonard, III  
Livingston County



Grade 4-6 Winner  
Breanna Price  
Mason County



Grade 7-9 Winner  
Kamryn Fehr  
Livingston County



Grade 10-12 Winner  
Samantha Saccianoce  
DeKalb County

## Years of Service Awards



Darrell Roegge, Director, Morgan SWCD  
 Special Recognition - 40 Year Service Award  
 Pictured above are Darrell and AISWCD President James Todd



Terry Bogner, Director, Marshall-Putnam SWCD Special Recognition - 40 Year Service Award  
 Pictured above are Terry and AISWCD President James Todd

## Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award Winner



### *Forestry Award Winner*

Dave Bishop  
 Retired Resource Conservationist  
 McLean County SWCD

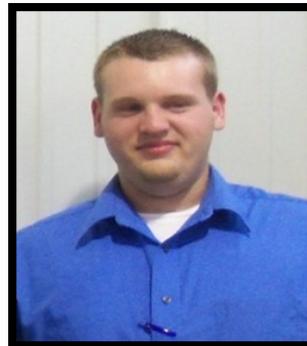
## AISWCDEA Scholarship Winner



### *Employees Association Scholarship Winner*

Danielle Brachman  
 Henry County

## George McKibben Memorial Scholarship Winner



### *Scholarship Winner*

Edward Joseph Ehrhardt  
 Emington, IL in Livingston County

# PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS—2012

Sponsored by AISWCD Auxiliary



**Close Up Conservation:  
Youth**  
Morgan McCulloch, McHenry/Lake  
County  
"RUSTED BARRIER"



**Ag/Conservation Across  
America: Youth**  
Audrey Harrod, DeKalb County  
"JUST BUZZIN"



**Conservation In Action:  
Youth**  
Mary Kate Harrod, DeKalb County  
"MOMMY"



**Close Up Conservation**  
Debra Slade, Ford County  
"BERGAMOT & BUTTERFLY"



**Ag/Conservation Across America**  
Jane Donoho, Champaign County  
"MORNING SUNRISE"



**Conservation in Action**  
Debra Slade, Ford County  
"BABY COW WITH ATTITUDE"



**Conservation Practices State and National Winner**  
Debra Slade, Ford County  
"WATERWAY"

## SWCD PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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**Adams County SWCD** assisted with the Annual Western Illinois/Northeast Missouri No-Till Crop Management Conference with 160 people attending the event.

The **Boone County SWCD** conducted its third annual unused medication collection in collaboration with Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful, Belvidere Township and other sponsors. The collection prevented improper disposal of 5 barrels of medication from 254 families. Twenty-eight individuals volunteered with outreach and collection.

**Boone County SWCD**, as a member of the Boone County Agricultural Conservation Easement and Farmland Protection Commission, accepted its second agricultural conservation easement under the County ordinance developed by the Commission to permanently protect farmland in the county.

**Bond County SWCD** expanded their equipment rental program by adding a Great Plains Turbo Max to their fleet of equipment in 2012. The tool is a vertical tillage tool which allows producers to minimize the impact of fall tillage on their crop fields. The tool was used extensively on standing corn stalks and in preparation for drilling wheat.

The **Bond County SWCD** Soil Sampling Program continues to be a great success. The custom soil sampling program allows the technician to pull samples, submit them to a certified lab for analysis, with the SWCD preparing maps and results for the producer. The SWCD has shared our data services with Technical Service Providers that are writing CNMPs for several of our customers. We continue to have more producers requesting VRT fertilizer application, and as a result, they are utilizing our data to develop those plans with their local VRT service providers.

**Bureau County SWCD** hosts a Conservation Day for area 5th graders. The District had 400 students in attendance, with many teachers and volunteers as well, at Warnecke Woods natural area. Children spent the day at several different learning stations listening to presentations about topics such as streambank erosion, snakes, bees, streams, fish and many other topics. After lunch the students got to participate in a recycling relay race.

**Bureau County SWCD** participates in the Farm Bureau's Ag. Fair. The District has a display and directors and staff spend the day playing a water jeopardy game with the county's 4th graders. The children really love the day and the Directors enjoy participating.

Two Forestry Field Days were co-hosted by the **Calhoun County SWCD**, one being for 6<sup>th</sup> graders from 5 schools. Topics included tree id, tree measurement, tree planting, forest wildlife, wetlands and journaling. The second day was held for high school students on similar topics.

The **Calhoun County SWCD** co-hosted a Pond Management workshop at the McCully Heritage Project in Kampsville. Sessions included fluctuations in temperature and oxygen levels, oxygen and aeration affects on fish, aquatic plant id and control, permits and construction, and stocking for new and existing ponds.

**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. The equipment that was demonstrated included 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. The areas were tilled earlier in the day and measured for crop residue. This gave attendees the unique experience of comparing the levels of crop residue left after each tillage tool. Each dealer then gave a presentation on the equipment they were featuring.

Throughout October and November of 2012 the **Carroll County SWCD** did a biomass grass harvest. Grass was cut, dried, weighed and a harvest report was produced.

The **Champaign County SWCD** sponsored a burn awareness training class with help from NRCS, University of Illinois, and Lincoln Heritage RC&D. The class was offered because acres of habitat are being planted, maintenance on some sites is minimal. Prescribed Burning training is difficult for most people to obtain. A notebook with laws, plans and presentations was included for future reference for our participants. The class was also offered in another county using the materials developed.

**Christian County SWCD** participates each year with the University of Illinois Dudley Smith Cow-Calf Day held at the Dudley Smith Farm located north of Pana, Illinois. This is a 226 acre field scale research site used for work done through the Dudley Smith Initiative (DSI). The DSI supports innovative research and outreach that advances its fundamental goal of invigorating the agricultural system in Illinois and intends to make agriculture sustainable over the long term.

The **Clay County SWCD** awarded Jake Klein Memorial Conservation Scholarships for the third year. Three \$500.00 scholarships were given to students attending Clay City, Flora, and North Clay High Schools.

**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 301 acres of warm season grasses for 15 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** partnered with Trees Forever, providing an informational meeting addressing issues relating to the CREP sign up. Information presented included details on federal sign up, state easements, additional acres, and a declaration of a producer's view of the process. The SWCD's original contract for CREP sign up was finalized in November, 2012.

**Clinton and Washington County SWCDs** entered into a multi-county work agreement, contracting technical services from the Clinton SWCD RC. The agreement permitted the RC to assist Washington SWCD in completing its Partners For Conservation (PFC) fund programs for landowners. The agreement is in our third contract year. Clinton SWCD RC's assistance includes: eligibility determination, survey, design and construction, and practices check out of state program funded jobs.

**Clinton and Marion County SWCDs** entered into an agreement to contract book keeping and clerical assistance provided by the Clinton SWCD AC.

**Clinton County SWCD** was successful in completing two Habitat Stamp Grants for a 6' Great Plains no-till grass drill and a Plot Master. The equipment is used by landowners in establishing CRP acres, wildlife acres, waterways, and cover crops. The district also owns a 10' and a 6' Great Plains no-till grass drill, a root plow, Fabric Machine, and a 15' John Deere No-till Grain Drill which helps landowners meet current conservation land needs.

**Clinton County SWCD**, partnering with the Heartlands Conservancy, was awarded a 319 Clean Water Act grant, to address water quality issues within Shoal and Sugar Creek Watersheds in western Clinton County. The third grant awarded to Clinton SWCD since 2004, will implement projects on 16 livestock operations. These projects have collectively removed thousands of pounds of sediments, nitrogen and phosphorous from entering local streams. The SWCD provides the primary contact for coordination with livestock producers, initial planning assistance alongside Heartland's staff, who offers expertise in livestock waste system and nutrient planning. The partnership has two years to complete projects within the above mentioned watersheds.

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 planning to implement a burn program to help IDNR with CRP and forestry burns.

**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, and a Fabric Plow to use in waterways, a root plow and a tree planter.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** hosted an informational meeting dealing with the county's Agriculture Stormwater and Drainage Regulatory Requirements. Speakers from the county, IEPA, and the ACOE discussed drainage ditch maintenance, work performed in or near streams and wetlands, and soil disturbing activities on Ag land greater than 1 acre. The program concluded with an open forum and panel discussion.

The **DeKalb County SWCD** initiated a program with the County to work with agricultural land owners to simplify soil erosion/sediment control requirements within the County's Stormwater ordinance. For a

fee, the District provides oversight on projects, which allows the landowner to receive a waiver from the ordinance. The landowner and the District work cooperatively until the project is successfully completed.

**Edgar County SWCD** teamed up with **Coles and Clark County SWCDs**, Lincoln Heritage RC&D and NRCS to host a cover crop meeting in which 54 local producers attended. Attendees learned about cover crops and were able to interact with experienced producers using cover crops.

The **Edgar County SWCD** hosted the Lincoln Heritage RC&D E-Recycle trailer. The trailer is parked in SWCD parking lot, allowing the public to bring in electronics to recycle all year long. A total of 36, 12-foot trailers were filled.

The **Fayette County SWCD** has been involved in working with 28 federal contracts for permanent easements through the IDNR CREP program.

**Fayette County SWCD** offered E-Recycling every Wednesday from 1:00 - 5:00 for all the residents in the County.

The **Ford County SWCD** treated 1,900 feet of severely eroding streambank on Dickerson Slough using stone toe protection. A total of 1,360 tons of rock was used. The project was funded by the IL Dept. of Agriculture's Streambank Stabilization and Restoration program (SSRP).

This year the **Ford County SWCD** celebrated its 70 Anniversary. In honor of this milestone, a local seed distributor was contacted for a contribution of a wildflower mix. Header cards were made with information about the District and the seed was bagged for distribution. They were handed out to customers at the office, the county fair booth, Buckley Ag Days and the Pheasants Forever banquet.

The **Gallatin County SWCD** provided a Conservation Mini-Fair at the Ridgway Park. The 9 presenters talked to 9 groups of students on topics such as soil erosion, underground coal mining, FFA, etc. Over 259 students and adults participated.

During the last week of April, the **Grundy County SWCD** celebrated Arbor Day by presenting Colorado blue spruce seedlings to all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in the county. District staff visited each school and provided a 45 minute program on trees, care and planting.

**Grundy County SWCD** hosted an annual Natural Resources Tour for all 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in the county. Schools visited 12 natural resource stations some of which included Conservation Police, Entomology, Groundwater, Build Illinois and Wheel of Energy during the day. Approximately 1,000 students participate during the 3 day event.

**Hancock County SWCD** Arbor Day was celebrated April 27, 2012, with the District providing 300 white pine seedlings for area 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. The SWCD Resource Conservationist, area teachers, and the Ag Literacy Program Coordinator, gave presentations and classroom activities, allowing students to experience planting a tree and learning of its importance to our environment.

Kirby Fecht of Carthage and Kayden Guymon of Burnside, were the **Hancock County SWCD** Glen Smiddy Memorial Scholarship recipients selected by the SWCD. This scholarship was established, to

honor Smiddy's contributions to soil conservation. The \$500 scholarship is awarded to students or residents majoring in agriculture, agri-business, conservation, natural resources, or other ag-related courses, annually.

The 5th Annual **Hancock County SWCD** Conservation Tillage Field Day was held July 17, 2012 on Luella Spees farm, operated by Mark and Joe Carlisle. More than 225 attendees discussed and observed field demonstrations of fourteen pieces of conservation tillage equipment, along with measuring crop residue after each tillage pass, learning how to measure crop residue, equipment usage and timing, and learning what are the requirements for meeting conservation compliance. The event implemented the informational and educational component addressing natural resource concerns of the Greater Bear Creek Area Watershed.

The **Hancock County SWCD**, Kid's Conservation Day was held May 4, 2012. The Resource Conservationist demonstrated; the movement of water through a watershed and the pollution that runoff may cause, from non-point sources; to 300 area 5th graders.

**Henderson County SWCD** held a very successful Annual Meeting. There were 65 people in attendance for our event. The Resource Conservationist gave a power point presentation highlighting the SWCD's accomplishments for the year. The presentation included several photos of projects during the construction phase. Following this presentation the Henderson County Conservation Farm Family Award was presented and the receiving family gave a nice thank you and words of encouragement to other landowners present. The evening was then capped off with "Lessons in Laughter" a humorous performance reminding us of the importance of laughter.

**Henry County SWCD** Dorothy and Carlos Brown are the representatives for the Rock River Trail Initiative. Dorothy and Carlos are instrumental in the Rock River Trail Initiative by attending meetings and delivering over 900 trees to people living along the Rock River. The Goal of this program is to establish and designate a recreation water trail on the Rock River through the river communities to focus public attention on recreational use. This will increase river access and provide safe use of the water trail with improved dam portages and enhanced paddle craft access, boat launches, wildlife viewing sites and camping sites.

**Henry County SWCD** held their annual meeting with 150 registered individuals. The program was "Bees to Honey" by Terry Brock of Cambridge, Illinois. The District also held a well attended conservation tour at the Tom and Margaret Hitzhusen Farm.

**Iroquois County SWCD** had over 100 in attendance at their Annual Meeting held in Woodworth. The Resource Conservationist presented a slide show of "Conservation Thru the Years", which depicted the many accomplishments and changes over time. Awards were presented for Poster Contest winners, Soil Judging, Envirothon, and Conservation Farm Family of the Year.

A Lady Ag Seminar was held by the **Iroquois County SWCD** with over 100 guests in attendance. Presentations were made by SWCD and NRCS staff with guest speaker Sheila Schmidt presenting on "The latest and Greatest Perennial Plants, New Introductions of Old Favorites." Sponsors, donations and a small fee were used to defray program costs.

**Jackson County SWCD** and the University of Illinois Extension Service, co-hosted a Grazing Seminar on March 7, 2012. Eighty interested participants listened to speakers, Terry Taylor, a lifelong farmer from Geff, IL; John Pike, Ag Educator with the University of Illinois Extension; and Mike Plumer, retired U of I educator and consultant, spoke on the benefits of cover crops.

**Jackson, Perry, Williamson, Union, and Pulaski-Alexander County SWCDs** hosted their annual Envirothon competition. The event is an environmental competition between high schools in these five counties. Nineteen teams participated in the event. Each five member team answered questions regarding wildlife, aquatics, forestry and soils.

**Jackson County SWCD** had twenty people attend a training session on invasive threats to forests, presented by Chris Evans, Coordinator of the River to River Weed Cooperative.

**Jackson County SWCD**, NRCS, and the River to River CWMA, held a field day on private woodland in Murphysboro. Presenters included the NRCS Conservation Forester and the River to River Cooperative Manager. Attendees saw firsthand the impacts of invasive plants, as well as demonstrations of control techniques. Discussion centered on management guidelines to keep woodlands healthy and not impacted by invasive plants.

**Jackson County SWCD**, NRCS, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, and the Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, sponsored a two day grazing school. Day one attendees (25) heard from experts addressing topics, "Matching Livestock Needs & Nutrition" and "Fencing Systems". Day two attendees went on a field visit to the Rosie and Gary Wece farm, where the group observed practices and techniques of grazing that had been taught the on day one.

The **Jasper County SWCD** co-sponsored an E-Recycling collection event with Lincoln Heritage RC&D. Area residents provided enough recyclable commodities to fill an 8'x24' and an 8'x16' 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 to seed 38 acres on 12 tracts throughout the county.

The **Jasper County SWCD** awarded two \$1,000.00 scholarships each 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.

**Jersey County SWCD** continues to do field inspections (since 2009) for the IEPA on new construction sites in the county. Provisions of the contract allow the SWCD to do on-site investigations, determining if contractor and developer are complying with all design criteria 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.

The **Jersey County SWCD** and the county board continue their Memorandum of Understanding, establishing certain services the SWCD will provide to the Jersey County Board. The MOU is designed to improve compliance with current and future storm water, erosion and sediment control ordinances and regulations. The SWCD is responsible for reviewing storm water plans and assuring these plans are

implemented by the builders. Additionally, the MOU addresses the SWCD's involvement with the Ag Area Protection work and projects completed for the subdivision committee.

The **Kane-DuPage SWCD** organized and held "Watershed Wanderings" as an educational effort of the EPA 319 grant that was received to create a watershed plan for Jelkes-Creek Fox River Watershed. Watershed Wanderings was held in conjunction with Elgin's Green Expo. Sixty people attended, with sessions focusing on what municipalities are doing to address water quality issues.

Soil erosion and sediment control inspections were conducted by staff of the **Kane-DuPage SWCD** on the Red Gate Bridge in St. Charles. Periodic inspection reports were provided to the United States Army Corp of Engineers and the Illinois EPA to ensure that best management practices were in place and being maintained. As a result of the coordination, natural resources in the Fox River and nearby tributaries were protected.

The **Kankakee County SWCD** is working with local stake holders to begin a pilot project to remove sand and sediment from the Kankakee River in the Upper Pool section above the Kankakee Dam. The purposes of the pilot are to determine if there is construction, agricultural or horticultural uses for the material and to observe impacts on the areas dredged.

The Resource Conservationist from the **Kankakee County SWCD** worked with the U of I Extension Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs in presenting information regarding soils, natural resources and ecosystems.

The **Kendall County SWCD** hosted its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Natural Resource Tour at the Hoover Forest Preserve. The event was held for over 800 fourth and fifth grade students, and was co-sponsored by the SWCD, Kendall Co Forest Preserve and the Kendall County Outdoor Education Center. Students learned about soil science, water conservation, tress, composting, animals, and Native American life.

The **Kendall County SWCD** was a member of the Kendall Co Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee with other members representing municipalities and organizations within the county. The group developed the Kendall Co Stormwater Management Ordinance, which was recently approved by the County Board.

**Knox County SWCD** held a forestry field day in conjunction with the SWCD annual meeting. It was held at the John Seiboldt farm. A total of 100 people attended to learn about the basics of forestry management. There were several different stations; ranging from tree identification, invasive tree species, crop tree management, heavy site preparation and planting, and chainsaw safety. During lunch there was a sawmill demonstration, and a shiitake mushroom demo. There has been an increasing interest in forestry management, because landowners are interested in plans for wooded land to maintain a lower tax rate on their acreage, and some landowners simply desire to enhance the hunting and timber production capabilities. For John Seiboldt, he is passionate about both. He cares about trees, their identification, and their purpose on the family land.

To promote awareness of water quality, the **Knox County SWCD** held a grazing plan presentation and a well sealing demonstration at the Harland Farm near LaFayette, Illinois. The grazing presentation, given by Mr. Hall, included planning for fencing, a watering system, and pasture management, among other topics and the impact of each on water quality. He also discussed available cost share through

the EQIP program to implement the practices within a grazing plan. Ms. Hendrickson spoke on the well sealing permitting process and, along with Knox County Health Department staff, discussed appropriate sealing procedures and answered landowner questions.

The **Livingston County SWCD's**, Project Pail (Promoting Agriculture In Literature) provided elementary classrooms with an opportunity to experience agriculture through reading, listening, and participating in hands-on activities that complimented a factual agricultural based book, Seed – Soil – Sun by Chris Petersen. Materials were carried in bright red pails to 80% of the second grade classrooms in the county. In addition to activities of seed sorting, id and kernel germination, an activity booklet was developed to extend the experience to home. The District was assisted by FFA students and the Farm Bureau manager.

**Livingston County SWCD** held a Conservation Bus Tour of the Indian Creek Watershed, with 101 people in attendance. Participants learned about nitrogen use efficiency, application and stabilization. A winter meeting followed with topics including the test plot results, cover crops, and a bio mass project with Argonne National Lab. The goal of the watershed project is to improve BMPs on land operated by 50 % or more of the producers.

The **Macon County SWCD**, as a partner in the Heart of the Sangamon Ecosystem Partnership, hosted a Resource Conference in Decatur. The whole day conference featured academics, farmers, and industry leaders speaking on the advantages of nutrient management, cover crops, and reduced tillage systems in which 60 participants were offered .5 Continuing Education Units to Conservation Crop Advisors (CCAs). There were 20 CCAs that took advantage of the credits.

In April, the **Macon County SWCD** participated in Richland Community College's "Auction" Days. Over the span of 3 days, all 5th graders in Macon County (roughly 500) came to the Richland campus to learn about the wide range of careers in the agriculture field.

The **Marion County SWCD** George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station continues to expand and increase its education efforts through tours and training. In 2012 the SWCD, in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, NRCS and IDNR sponsored a Woodland and Wildlife Tour. The 22 landowners attended to learn methods and toured practices to improve and increase the wildlife habitat on their lands. The field breakout sessions covered Forest Management for Wildlife, Timber Sales/Marketing/Improvement, Native Prairie Establishment and Management, CRP Mid-Contract Management Practices, PMC Test Plots for Wildlife, Stream bank Stabilization Practices, and Pond & Wetland Construction and Management.

The **Marion County SWCD** continues to work with Kell Fire Department and the Illinois Fire Service Institute with Prescribed burns. The District's George P. Irwin Conservation Education Station is used for the hands-on training for the Wildland Fire Fighter Type II national certification. This certification program is attended by mainly rural fire protection districts. The class of 2012 graduated 22 trained wildland fire fighters. These trained fire fighters can now assist landowners with prescribed burns on their CRP acres established in warm season grasses, forbs, and legumes. One of these graduates, Jason Timm is now a certified prescribed burn manager, a director on the Illinois Prescribed Burn Council, and an instructor with the Illinois Fire Service Institute Wildland Fire Program.

The **Marshall-Putnam SWCD** educational tour for lady landowners is sponsored every year by the District in conjunction with the Marshall-Putnam River Conservancy District. On September 20, forty-five ladies, boarded their bus to suburban Chicago. The first stop was at the Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL. The 1700-acre park was established by Mr. Joy Morton of Morton Salt Company fame in 1922. Many of the park's 27,000 species were highlighted during the 10-mile tram tour. The afternoon was spent in nearby Geneva, IL. Historic Geneva is the home of many unique shops and opportunities.

**Mason County SWCD** hosted the 11th annual Discovery Day for third graders. This event is a favorite for teachers and students alike. There were 275 people involved in this event. Students learned about several topics including soil and water conservation; wildlife; ecology; and natural and cultural history. This program is funded through grants from Lower Sangamon River RC & D and Dynege Midwest Generation.

**Mason County SWCD** provided irrigation system evaluations for producers throughout Mason, Tazewell, Cass, Menard and Logan Counties. This service provides valuable water distribution information and helps determine the efficiency of an irrigation system. In addition, having an irrigation evaluation is a requirement to qualify for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, Irrigation Water Management, through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

**Mason County SWCD** was the only county selected to partner with Illinois Department of Natural Resources to provide an additional \$700 per acre to landowners who enrolled qualified acres into CRP as wetland restoration. The purpose behind the incentive was to protect and preserve habitat for the Illinois Chorus Frog, a state threatened species, found only in Mason, Tazewell, Cass, Morgan, Scott, Monroe, Madison and Alexander Counties. There were a total of 149.5 acres enrolled in the program resulting in payments to landowners in excess of \$104,000.

**McDonough County SWCD** completed a two year EPA 319 water quality grant for projects in the Spring Lake Watershed, a public water supply and local recreational resource. The project included, a phosphorus study conducted on specific points outlined in the final report and installation of 65 best management practices on private lands. Twelve landowners within the watershed participated in a cost share program to install: 59 water and sediment control basins; 2,850 Feet of terrace systems and 6 acres of waterways. Implementation resulted in the pollutant load reductions of *911 tons of sediment per year, 1,354 lbs of phosphorus per year, and 522 lbs of nitrogen per year.*

**Menard County SWCD** held the annual Ag Discovery Day for all of the fifth grade students in the county. Approximately 200 students rotated through seven different educational stations, where presenters taught the students about Entomology, Recycling, Streams and Erosion, Farm Machinery Safety, Illinois Wildlife, Rocks and Minerals, and Fish. A trivia tournament was held to test each classroom's knowledge on the topics that were covered during morning presentations. The SWCD partnered with University of Illinois Extension, Farm Bureau, IEPA, and IDNR to conduct the event.

**Menard County SWCD** worked with the Lake Petersburg Homeowners Association and Presidential Estates landowners, assisting, attending informational meetings, conducting a RAP-M watershed assessment, and providing resource planning assessment, to those living within these watersheds.

**McLean County SWCD** co-sponsored a demonstration field day at the Franklin farm in Lexington, IL. One hundred participants had the opportunity to learn about soil conservation practices, wetlands, prairies, savannah restoration, and aquatic and stream life. Other participants included NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, U of I and the City of Bloomington.

The **McLean County SWCD** developed a two stage ditch to show a reduction of nutrient loading and other positive solutions for urban erosion issues. The project includes future water monitoring and field events planned.

The Evergreen Lake Tributary 3 Project by the **McLean County SWCD** is funded by a NRCS conservation innovation grant, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation and the City of Bloomington. Rock riffles and stone toe protection have been installed to protect the stream and flood plain. Sedimentation will be monitored, with a 1 acre wetland to be installed as well as a 1.3 mile, 26 station interpretive trail for educational purposes.

**Mercer County SWCD** introduced a program in 2010 to provide for custom seeding of native grass on CRP and private projects. With this program the District has stayed within its mission of putting conservation on the land, supported landowners with specialized expertise in seeding of native grasses and generated revenue for the District during difficult financial times. Over the past 3 years the district has seeded over 1,200 acres of highly erodible land. The District recently received approval for an additional 1,000 acre grant through the Farm Services Agency for the SAFE CRP program. Under this grant the district will seed an additional 1,000 acres of native grasses in the County over the next 5 years, along with acres enrolled in the continuous and general CRP programs.

The **Moultrie County SWCD** sponsored a raptor assembly for 3 of the county schools. The Illinois Raptor Center from Decatur, IL provided a program for K-8 students in Lovington, Bethany and Findlay.

The **Ogle County SWCD** spring tree sale is a two day event in April with approximately 25,000 trees sold to around 350 customers in Northern Illinois for the promotion of conservation.

**Ogle County SWCD** has an Ag Awareness Day event in the fall, in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension Service, where over 350 students in 4th and 5th grade attend a variety of Agricultural and Conservation education sessions at the Ogle County Fairgrounds, near Oregon, Illinois.

**Ogle County SWCD**, in partnership with **Lee County SWCD**, held their Outdoor Stewardship Days (two day event) with 1,250 third grade students attending a variety of conservation education sessions in Lowell Park, near Dixon, Illinois.

**Ogle County SWCD** sells bird and bat houses, rain barrels, composters, and tree care products offered as a conservation effort.

**Peoria County SWCD** is very proud of the county wide Prairie Burn Clinic held each March. We begin with classroom instruction at our office discussing the tools and techniques that make for a safe burn. We then head to a nearby farm and perform several burns offering attendees practical experience conducting a prescribed fire. Local police and volunteer fire departments take part which reinforces the community aspect of the event.

**Perry County SWCD**, the Egyptian Cattlemen's Association, and the University of Illinois Extension, co-hosted a pasture/hayland meeting in March. All Cattlemen's Association members plus other interested parties were invited. The event was well attended and included some great discussions, including how to get a meat broker license in Illinois.

**Perry County SWCD** hosted a honeybee workshop this past year. The 15 participants attending received valuable information from our presenters and learned much about beekeeping.

The **Piatt County SWCD** worked on the Anderson farm and the City of Monticello to upgrade tile and terraces that drain into the city. The project reduces flooding by managing the runoff from the farm while providing a safe outlet through town.

The Heart of the Sangamon Ecosystem Partnership is growing and working closely with the **Piatt County SWCD** to promote cover crops and strip till in both Piatt and Macon Counties through informational workshops and other educational programming.

The **Piatt County SWCD** is representing 16 SWCDs through their Resource Conservationist on the Regional Water Supply Planning Committee. The focus of the committee is in the development of plans for the Mahomet Aquifer.

The **Piatt County SWCD** provided valuable natural resource input and review to the Piatt County Board with their Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan.

**Randolph County SWCD** assisted in planning and presenting at the Du Quoin Conservation Fair and the Randolph County 5th Grade Conservation Day. Over 3,200 students learned about conservation and the outdoors at these two events.

The **Randolph County SWCD** was awarded an Illinois Habitat Fund Grant to purchase a new 7 ft. no-till drill. The Great Plains drill was used to plant 30 acres of habitat in FY12.

**Rock Island County SWCD** Eco Camp is a school field trip for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd graders held at the Loud Thunder Forest Preserve. The event is coordinated by the Regional Office of Education and made possible with many partners and volunteers, including the District. Fall Eco Camp consists of programs on prairie heritage, prairie management, wildlife, wood utilization, tree identification, and forest management. There is also a Spring Eco Camp with different educational topics. Providing an educational opportunity for kids to experience and enjoy a local natural area is a great way to foster an appreciation of soil conservation and nature.

**Rock Island County SWCD** sponsors a "Quad Cities Garlic Mustard Challenge". This 2.5 hours challenge asks volunteers to pull invasive garlic mustard plants from various sites throughout the Quad Cities. The noxious plants are collected in garbage bags and weighed, so that groups and sites can compete for the most pounds pulled, if they choose. The District assisted with planning and coordinated the volunteers at Blackhawk State Historic Site. At the end of the morning, all volunteers are invited to experience one of the sites as a large group and enjoy a hot dog roast. The event is great for bringing various volunteer groups together to focus on an environmental issue. The publicity also helps educate the general public on the threat that garlic mustard poses to our forests, natural areas, and wildlife habitat.

**Sangamon County SWCD** secured a grant through the IDNR, funded by the USDA, for the IL Recreational Access Program (IRAP). This new initiative goal is to provide more public and youth access to outdoor recreation opportunities by implementing a new public access program for hunting and fishing. IRAP is available to landowners in the Illinois River and Kaskaskia River watersheds. In its first year, over 10,000 acres were leased to IRAP by 47 landowners on 60 different land parcels in 21 different counties. The average IRAP lease was about 200 acres. A total of 261 *youth turkey hunting sites*, 78 *outdoor naturalist sites* (bird watching, outdoor photography, etc.), 33 *private pond fishing sites*, 22 *river access sites for non-motorized boating* and 20 *river fishing sites*, were made available to the public under these IRAP leases during its first year. The program is planned through FY 2014.

**Sangamon County SWCD**, the Lake Springfield Resource Planning Committee and stakeholders, are endeavoring to revise the 1989 Lake Springfield Watershed Plan in the 170,000 acre watershed. The first plan focused primarily on Atrazine reduction in the lake. Nitrogen levels were discussed in that plan, but no formalized course of action was outlined. The first meeting of the group was held in January, 2012, with forty-one *stakeholders* attending. The group identified concerns the plan should address, along with a list of conditions that were contributing to these concerns within the watershed. Agricultural and urban interests were represented on the planning committee. The group's goal is to develop a new plan that adequately addresses both Atrazine and nutrient concerns in the watershed.

**St. Clair County SWCD** continues to work closely with St. Clair County on erosion and sediment control. The SWCD entered into an agreement with the county to provide pre-construction and construction period services, for the repair and rehabilitation of an existing terrace system on the county owned Engelmann farm.

**Stark County SWCD** holds a "Women in Conservation" seminar every summer. The District uses the annual Soil and Water Stewardship week theme. This popular event draws women from all over the county, with a few attending from neighboring counties. The District includes at least one hands-on activity and an afternoon tour. The refreshments also go along with the theme. It's a great way to educate a new audience on the importance of soil and water conservation.

**Stark County SWCD** held a Land Improvement Contractor Seminar in February. Not only do the contractors enjoy a home cooked breakfast, but they also receive a day full of pertinent training and information. In addition to reviewing conservation programs, billing issues, deadlines, standard design questions, etc., we also bring in outside speakers to present information on conservation topics. This year the featured speaker discussed drainage water management.

**Stephenson County SWCD** no longer holds an annual meeting but directors and staff feel the importance of recognizing people that are conservation minded throughout the county. An annual awards ceremony is held with plaques, a Farm Family sign and ribbons handed out to recipients for Farm Family of the year, Legacy Award, Conservation Horizon Award, Friends of the District Award and Poster Contest winners.

**Stephenson County SWCDs** Della Moen, Associate Director writes a weekly conservation article that is published in at least 2 publications in Stephenson County and also distributed throughout NRCS and published in many state-wide publications. Della's articles are also used by many other SWCD's in Illinois in their newsletters. The Stephenson SWCD Resource Conservationist participated in the

University of Illinois Extension “Joy's of Gardening” event in an educational outreach effort with covered rain barrels and composters.

**Union County SWCD** administered the Cypress Creek National Wildlife “Friends of the Cache Watershed” grant for landowners in and around the national refuge in Union county. The project worked on reducing sediment in streams directly affecting the Refuge flood plain. More than 5,000 tons of soil were saved in protecting the valuable resource of the wetlands in the Refuge.

**Union County SWCD** administered a “Backyard Conservation” grant program in 2012. The SWCD conducted a sign-up for individuals to apply for a backyard conservation project. The mini grant had a \$500 limit per person, with funding derived from administrative work completed by the SWCD on Federal projects. These small grants allowed the SWCD to provide a service to many new customers, enhance the SWCD image in the county, and highlight quality work performed by the SWCD for urban, as well as, rural constituents.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** co-sponsored a Cover Crop and Nutrient Management Workshop in February with 30 producers in attendance. The workshop featured Dan Schaeffer from the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices and Terry Field from Pro Harvest Seeds. Several local producers addressed the group and discussed their field experiences. Topics discussed included cover crops, split nitrogen application, nitrogen sampling, controlled release nitrogen, and the 4 R's of nutrient stewardship: using the right source at the right rate at the right time and in the right place.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** continues to work with Invenergy LLC in the development of their new California Ridge Wind Energy Project. The SWCD provided a Natural Resources Information (NRI) Report for the 104 wind turbines and the associated ancillary facilities constructed in the county. In addition to Invenergy, the NRI Report was also presented to the Vermilion County Board. The wind farm is now operational, and construction crews have taken extensive measures to minimize erosion throughout the project area. The SWCD is continuing to advise Invenergy on ways to protect their structures from erosion.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** works closely with other local conservation groups. Our office is the meeting place for the Lake Vermilion Water Quality Coalition, which meets monthly and co-sponsors several events with the SWCD throughout the year. One such event is the annual Cleanup Day at Lake Vermilion. 2012 marked the tenth consecutive year for the cleanup. The SWCD procures funding for this event through the IEPA's SCALE Grant program. We partner with the local Pheasants Forever (PF) Chapter to promote their habitat seeding program in the spring, and PF has generously supported our Envirothon Competition. The Vermilion County Conservation District and Prairie Rivers Network also are key members in the Water Quality Coalition.

The **Vermilion County SWCD** participated in an Agricultural Career Fair for local high school students in February. The event is a great opportunity to promote the importance of conservation best management practices to students considering a variety of agricultural careers. Students were very interested to learn the techniques used by SWCD staff to design structural practices and to learn about the practices that are being utilized around the county.

For 2012, the **Wayne County SWCD** awarded three \$500.00 scholarships to students in the county. One scholarship was given to a student from each high school in the county. Over 30 students from the county applied.

**Wayne County SWCD** helped to sponsor a Cover Crop Field Day at the Terry Taylor farm at Geff, Illinois. Over 150 people attended the event. Producers heard presentations from various speakers and also visited several sites in the field to view different cover crop mixes and examine soil pits to see the benefits of long term cover crop use.

The **Wayne County SWCD** continued to offer its custom seeding service to CRP participants in the county. The district seeded 186 acres of cool and warm season grasses that included filter strips, quail border strips, and a cover crop for a hardwood tree planting. The **Wayne** and **Clay County SWCD's** work together leasing a tractor. The Districts supply the drill and labor to seed CRP acreage. There were 15 landowners in the county that utilized this service.

**White County SWCD** was the primary contact for the WREP partnership, extending an agreement with the Indiana Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. SWCDs, 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 plan is to expand into Lawrence, Crawford and Clark 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** sponsored the fourth graders from across the County to participate in a conservation day at the Hamilton County Fish and Wildlife Area, also known as Dolan Lake. The students learned about soil erosion, water quality, forestry and wildlife including a special experience with the Wayne/ White County Electric Cooperative's live line safety demonstration. The sessions were taught with the help of employees from the IDNR, the **Saline County SWCD**, and the Wayne/White County Ag Literacy Program. A total of 175 students from Wells Elementary School, Crossville Attendance Center, Booth School, and Norris City – Omaha Elementary School participated in the fun-filled conservation day.

The Resource Conservationist from the **Will-S. Cook SWCD** made a presentation at the 2012 NACD Annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada to 100 attendees. The Illinois Urban Erosion Control Manual development, history, partnerships, manual use and content was presented.

A streambank restoration project was funded and overseen by the **Will-S. Cook SWCD** for the New Lenox Park District. A plan was developed and cost share of \$7,000 was provided to restore 250 feet of bank in the Stonebridge Park.

The **Will-S. Cook SWCD**, helped to reduce erosion by providing assistance for critical area planting, a rock lined channel and walk paths at Heritage Park in Lockport. The project provided \$11,400 on the 1.5 acre site to stabilize the historic site and improve water quality of the I & M Canal and Des Plaines River.

The **Will-S. Cook SWCD** provided direct assistance in the development of, and subsequent adoption of, a Will County native plantings ordinance – a set of minimum standards for the design, installation, and maintenance of native landscaped areas within unincorporated Will County. The ordinance outlines

acceptable uses, possible exemptions, and set back requirements. The ordinance includes a provision dealing with invasive and exotic plant species.

The **Winnebago County SWCD** partnered with teachers from Barbour Language Academy to provide an Arbor Day Program to 400 fourth and fifth graders in conjunction with a citywide Arbor Day Celebration involving Rockford Public Schools, hosted by Klehm Arboretum. The fourth graders sang an Arbor Day tune while the fifth graders planted two Red Bud trees on school grounds. After the students helped plant the trees, ribbons with messages were tied to the branches.

Prior to the event, Barbour Language Academy students learned about trees in their community and how to protect them through weeklong educational activities in the classroom. Overall, numerous arborists, naturalists, environmental educators and other tree experts helped to provide educational tree lessons to 25 Rockford Public Elementary Schools and planted 30 trees. The week-long celebration concluded with a Tremendous Arbor Day at Haskell Elementary School where attendees including dignitaries, civic leaders, sponsors and volunteers celebrated and planted a tree with students.

**Winnebago County SWCD** high school students at Rockford Christian School participated in a Groundwater Field Day that was sponsored by the Northern Regional Groundwater Protection Planning Committee. This is an Illinois EPA regional groundwater protection planning program involving SWCDs, municipalities, health departments and other water agencies from Boone, McHenry and Winnebago Counties. Over 100 students participated in geology and groundwater programs provided by staff from both the Illinois and United States Geological Survey. The program concluded with students touring a newly constructed City of Rockford well station.

The **Woodford County SWCD** participated in the Woodford Farm Bureau's Ag Extravaganza. Over 500 fourth graders from the county learned about agriculture and conservation at the event. They all participated in the District's Conservation Jeopardy game to test their knowledge on conservation topics.

The **Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Employees Association** set up a display booth in the Conservation Partners Tent at the Farm Progress Show. Employees from several SWCD's volunteered to staff the booth, which included pictures of SWCD projects and events, and soil stewardship materials from past years. The show drew over 100,000 visitors and 600 exhibitors.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual **Illinois State Envirothon** contest was held in Monticello on May 10 – 11<sup>th</sup>. There were 15 high school teams that participated along with 8 FFA teams totaling 23 teams and 115 students. Teams listened to presentations about 5 category areas of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and a current topic (nonpoint source pollution and low impact development). Each team was also given a scenario on the current topic. Each team then prepared and presented a 15 minute oral presentation. Triad placed 1<sup>st</sup>, Midland placed 2<sup>nd</sup> and Morris took 3<sup>rd</sup> place. East Richland FFA was the highest placing FFA team and will go to the national FFA convention in October. Triad will represent Illinois in the National Envirothon competition.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

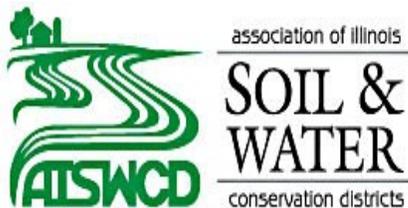
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The information in this report was compiled by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land and Water Resources along with our conservation partners highlighting the conservation accomplishments for fiscal year 2012.

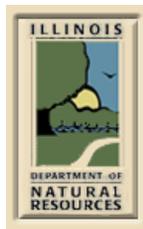


Illinois Department of Agriculture  
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217/782-6297  
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In compiling this report, information was provided by the following agencies that work through or in conjunction with soil and water conservation districts.



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



Illinois Environmental  
Protection Agency  
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