



Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District

www.RockIslandSWCD.org

SPRING 2014 Newsletter

Applications for Conservation Practice Funding Due April 1st

Farmers and rural landowners can apply for state funding for conservation practices through the Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District. The annual ranking deadline is April 1st; applications received after April 1st will be ranked the following year.

Practices eligible for cost share include Grassed Waterways, Grade Stabilization Structures, Water and Sediment Control basins, and decommissioning abandoned wells. Funding is also available for implementing cover crops, no-till and strip-till, if the practice has never been applied to that field. Severely eroded areas can be treated using Critical Area Planting. Pasture and hayland planting on cropland may also be eligible if the land meets erosion criteria and is maintained for a minimum of 5 or 10 years (depending on the seed mix). Diversions and terraces that are used to reduce soil erosion and water runoff qualify for state cost-sharing as well.

The best time to install practices such as grassed waterways is normally in the summer months; this allows seeding in early fall. A temporary cover practice is available on cropland that will be disturbed during construction of cost-shared structures; this practice receives a flat payment rate of \$160/acre.

For more information, contact the Rock Island SWCD office at 309-764-1486, Ext. 3 or email Richard.stewart@il.nacdn.net

Spring Fish and Tree Sales are Underway

The 2014 Tree Sale Pickup will be Thursday April 10th. Orders are due March 27th. Seedlings are limited; please order soon.

The 2014 Spring Fish Sale Delivery will be Friday, May 9th, 2014 at 7AM at the SWCD office. Orders are due April 30th, grass carp orders are due April 21st.

Please see our [fish](#) and [tree order](#) forms for additional details.

All sale proceeds are used by RISWCD to further its mission: Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District provides services to enhance, protect, conserve and promote the soil, water, and related resources in Rock Island County.

Flower & Garden Show

QCCA Expo Center
2621 4th Ave, Rock Island
Fri. March 21, 10am-8pm
Sat. March 22, 10am-8pm
Sun. March 23, 10am-4pm

Stop by the Flower & Garden Show to view our exhibit on "The World of Pollinators". Reference materials and staff assistance will be available on the importance of pollinators and how to attract them to your property. The native forbs pictured in the newsletter banner are great native species for pollinators. RISWCD is selling a pollinator mix for small plots. Seed mixes can be customized for larger projects. Call 309-764-1486, x3.

Volunteers Needed

RISWCD is asking for volunteers to help staff our booth at the flower and garden show. Three to four hour time slots are available each day. Volunteers receive free admission, avoiding the \$7 fee. In addition, you will receive a free Natural Area Guardians t-shirt. Visit www.rockislandswcd.org/volunteer or call the RISWCD office at 309-764-1486, x3 by March 14th.

NRCS News: Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Mid Contract Management

Mid contract management practices are required on all CRP contracts since sign up 26. The practices are intended to maintain high quality wildlife habitat on the land throughout the CRP contract period. Mid contract management practices include prescribed burning, strip disking, and inter seeding legumes. If mid contract management is included in your CRP plan and scheduled to be completed this year, now is the time to begin planning to implement it. Assistance is available from your NRCS and SWCD office staff to plan and apply the practices. Let us know if you have questions or need any assistance.

Upcoming Cover Crop Events

MERCER COUNTY COVER CROP MEETING

March 20th, Aledo, IL

The Mercer County SWCD will host a breakfast buffet at the Town and Country Restaurant in Aledo on March 20th beginning at 8:00 a.m. Representatives from the SWCD, NRCS and FSA will discuss the purpose and benefits of cover crops, available cost share programs and the required reporting and certification. Please make your reservations by March 14th at (309) 582-5153 extension 3.

MERCER COUNTY COVER CROP FIELD DAY:

March 27th, 2014, 1096 160th Aledo, IL

A Cover Crop Field Day will be held at the Bill Joseph farm on March 27th, at 10:00 a.m. Location of the field is 1096 160th Street, Aledo.

A plot of several cover crops and combinations were planted in the fall of 2013. Visitors will be able to observe the spring conditions of the plot and discuss the benefits of planting cover crops.

IL. CENTRAL COLLEGE COVER CROPS CONFERENCE

Thursday, March 20, East Peoria Campus.

Registration deadline is March 14; seats are limited.

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY COVER CROP FIELD DAY:

Wednesday, April 2nd, [Sherrard, IL](#)

The Rock Island SWCD Cover Crop Field Day will be held Wednesday, April 2nd at the plots located just east of Sherrard High School on 176th Ave or County Road NN. The event will be at 10 AM and last for about an hour. Staff from the SWCD and NRCS will be on hand to discuss the plot trials. Refreshments will be available. Call 309-764-1486, x3 or email richard.stewart@il.nacdn.net by Monday, March 31st to make a reservation.

Incidental Grazing of CRP Practices: Waterways, Filter Strips, and Field Borders

Subject to FSA approval, certain CRP practices (CP8A, CP21, CP33) may be grazed if grazing is incidental to the gleaning of the crop residue in a field. In addition, grazing shall not occur during the primary nesting or brood rearing season (April 1-August 1) and all livestock shall be removed from CRP acreage no later than 2 months after incidental grazing begins. The participant must agree in writing to accept a 25 percent payment reduction for the acreage being grazed and re-establish, at their own expense, any cover destroyed or damaged as a result of this incidental grazing by signing form [CRP-37](#). The payment reduction may be paid in advance.

Cover Crop Plot Watch

Be on the look-out for signs that will pop up soon at our cover crop field plots. The plots are located on the McCarthy- Anderson farm just [east of Sherrard High School on 176th Ave \(County Road NN\)](#). The plots highlight 10 mini-plots of various cover crops. Also, larger sections of the farm were seeded to cereal rye – part was drilled and part of was aerially seeded last fall. Signs will be going up as soon as ground thaws.

Interest in cover crops has been high this last year as studies point to the reduction of soil erosion and improved health of the soil. That improvement has demonstrated an increase in crop yields. Some cover crops are nitrogen scavengers, taking up excess nitrogen and releasing it for the next year's crop. Others reduce compaction and improve infiltration of water into the soil.

Cost-share programs exist to try cover crops on your farm. The state cost-share program (PFC) allows farmers to try cover crop on up to 20 acres. Or farmers can check out a larger acreage of cover crops using the EQIP or CSP programs administered by NRCS.



Oilseed radish can help reduce compaction. The radish mix pictured above was seeded following wheat in Rock Island County with the help of SWCD's cost share program.

New 2014 Crop Insurance Guidelines for Cover Crops

There are new rules in place for spring crops following cover crops in 2014. Producers are now able to hay and graze cover crops and insure the following spring crop, provided NRCS Termination Guidelines are followed.

From Risk Management Agency News Release SPRING-FIELD, Ill., January 27, 2014

The USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) announced updated guidance providing producers more flexibility when insuring a crop that follows a cover crop in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio.

RMA changed federal crop insurance provisions concerning cover crops as a result of increasing interest in this conservation practice. According to Brian Frieden, Director of the Risk Management Agency's Springfield Regional Office, the changes are a result of a coordinated effort with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to develop a consistent, simple and flexible policy across the three agencies. "For farmers wanting to insure their spring crop following a cover crop in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio the cover crop must have been planted within the last 12 months and terminated at, or within five days after planting, but before crop emergence," noted Frieden. "Cover crops may also be hayed, grazed or used for silage as long as the planned amount of biomass is available at the time termination." Producers using cover crops are encouraged to discuss these changes with their crop insurance agent when making decisions for the upcoming crop year.

A cover crop is a crop generally recognized by agricultural experts as agronomically sound for the area for erosion control or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement. For the 2014 crop year, crops planted following a cover crop are insurable as long as the cover crop is managed and terminated according to the Natural Resources Conservation Services' [Cover Crop Termination Guidelines](#) and Cover Crop Termination Zones Map.

No-Till Drill is Great for Cover Crops

The RISWCD No-Till Drill is available for rent at \$100/day plus \$8/acre. The drill can seed cover crops in addition to grains, legumes, and fluffy seed. To optimize scheduling, RISWCD requires interested users sign the [drill rental agreement](#) prior to being added to the waiting list. Signing the rental agreement does not bind you to use the drill.

Find Local Events on One Calendar!!

The following organizations are using technology to make it easier for you to find events of interest:

- Rock Island County SWCD (Sale and Events)
- Henry County SWCD
- Illinois Extension (Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Stark Counties)
- Rock Island County Farm Bureau

Visit www.rockislandswcd.org/allnews to view the joint calendar. Each organization modifies its own calendar, but they will all appear on one website. The view can be customized to weekly, monthly, or agenda view, and you can choose which organizations' calendars display. We hope this makes it easy for you to find events! We will continue seeking additional organizations to participate in this project.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Mark your calendars for these partner events:

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

Friday, March 21st, Jumers, Rock Island, IL
Visit www.womeninagricultureconference.com for details.

Illinois Extension Chicago Flower Bus Trip

March 18th, 2014- Register by March 15th.

Illinois Extension 100 Year Gala

April 5th, 2014, Lavender Crest Winery.

Rock Island County Fair

June 17th-21st

Election Results

Elections for Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District Directors were held Tuesday, January 7, 2014. Gary Blanchard, Twila Cederstrom, and Brian Parkinson were reelected for two year terms.

RISWCD Seeks Associate Directors

Board meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month, and are a great opportunity to understand the director's role. Interested persons can be named as associate directors, adding insight and diversity to the board. In addition, an experienced associate director makes an ideal candidate for an elected position in the future. Elected directors who are already familiar with the organization help provide stability and continuity to the conservation district. Currently, there are no elected or associate directors from the northern part of the county. If you live up north, please consider this opportunity to represent your area.

Urban Erosion Conservation Compliance

Farmers with HEL land who are in any government program including crop insurance have to comply with conservation practices on their farm. So what about the urban projects? Many construction sites can have severe erosion during the development phase of their operation. Runoff and sediment can clog city storm water drains and cover roads and neighboring properties.

The Rock Island SWCD recently entered into a contract with the IL EPA to review construction sites with NPDES permits in Rock Island County. Construction sites greater than one acre have to submit a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to the IL EPA. The SWPPP details practices they will use to control soil erosion and limit sediment movement from the site.

Resource Conservationist, Rich Stewart completed certification to review plans and perform on-site reviews of the practices. Many of the sites have practices such as silt fences, inlet protection devices on storm drains, retention basins, and seeding requirements. In addition to the practices, activity logs are required to show maintenance on a weekly basis and after significant rainfall.

USDA News- 2014 Farm Bill

On February 7th, President Obama signed the 2014 Farm Bill into law. This 5 year legislation consolidates and streamlines conservation programs to better target limited resources and continues USDA's commitment to conservation. The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are familiar programs that will continue to be available. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) is a new program that includes former conservation easement programs like the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). USDA is currently working on a plan to implement the new law. Funding decisions for current applications for conservation programs will be made when the rules and regulations needed to implement the programs are prepared.

PLEASE PROVIDE AN EMAIL

RISWCD is trying to reduce paper mailings; email and social media allow SWCD to save money while increasing contact with SWCD supporters. Please take the time to provide your email using the form on the tree sale flyer (no purchase necessary).

Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District



BOARD MEMBERS	3020 1st Ave E
Gary Blanchard	Milan, IL 61264
Bill Parchert	309-764-1486, ext. 3
Jim Mueller	Fax: 855-289-5179
Twila Cederstrom	www.rockislandswcd.org
Brian Parkinson	riswcd@rockislandswcd.org

SWCD STAFF

Administrative Coordinator Sally Ferguson	Resource Conservationist Rich Stewart
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FSA, SWCD and NRCS

New Fax Number: 855-289-5179

Rock Island County Farm Service Agency Appointments Required



Wednesdays: 3020 1st Ave E Milan, IL 61264 309-764-1486, ext. 2 Fax: 855-289-5179	Monday- Friday 308 SE 8th Ave Aledo, IL 61231 309-582-5153, ext. 2 Fax: 855-289-5179
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Rock Island County Natural Resources Conservation Service Open 5 Days a Week



Joe Gates
District Conservationist

3020 1st Ave E
Milan, IL 61264
309-764-1486, ext. 3
Fax: 855-289-5179

Ed Griffin
Soil Conservation Technician

Wyatt Junis
Soil Conservationist