



# Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District

[www.RockIslandSWCD.org](http://www.RockIslandSWCD.org)

Summer / Fall 2014 Newsletter



**WOMEN**  
CARING FOR THE  
**LAND**

## Women's Conservation Learning Circle Reynolds, IL, August 21st

Women Food and Agriculture Network and American Farmland Trust will be sponsoring a peer-to-peer conservation education program for nonoperator women farmland owners in Rock Island and surrounding counties. Women farmland owners come together in peer groups to discuss their goals for improving air, water and soil quality on their land. Discussions are facilitated by women conservation professionals.

*Women Caring for the Land*<sup>SM</sup> encourages women landowners to talk about their individual land stewardship goals. The unique format allows participants to raise questions, share challenges and knowledge, and get information on the wide range of resources available to them.

Lunch and a field tour of area conservation practices will follow the morning learning circle. The event will be held August 21st, 8:30-3, at the Reynolds American Legion, Reynolds, IL. Registration is free, but limited to 20 participants. Please call RISWCD at 309-764-1486 ext. 3 to for more details or to register.

## FALL SALE DATES— Proceeds Support Conservation

Tree Orders Due: October 1, 2014

Tree Pick Up: Thurs/Fri October 23-24, 7:30 AM—5:00 PM

Carp/Fish Orders Due: October 10th/October 24th

Fish Pick Up: November 3, 2014, 8:00 AM

## Rock Island High School Named Top Team from Rock Island County in 2014 Land Use Council (LUC) 2 Envirothon

Three teams from Rock Island County competed at the Envirothon on March 11th, 2014 at the Black Hawk East Campus in Galva, IL. The top team from Rock Island County for 2014 was the Rock Island High School Team. Members included: **Kylee Spurgetis, Alicia Freiburg, Ethan Hong, Andrew Pearson, & Grant Fessler**. The Rock Island High School Envirothon coach is **Nancy Wolber**.

The LUC 2 Envirothon is a competition that focuses on five environmental topics – Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a Current Environmental Issue. The five member teams will prepare for the competition by reviewing the study materials selected by local professionals in each of the fields. They will also prepare a poster and presentation on the Current Environmental Issue. On the day of the event, the professionals will present on their topic and then issue a written test to each Envirothon team. The three top-scoring teams will present their Current Environmental Issue poster and presentation to a panel of 3 judges. The oral presentation component challenges students to effectively apply and communicate a solution to a complex environmental issue.

Teams test their knowledge of the environment and compete against other high school teams from Rock Island, Bureau, Marshall-Putnam, Mercer, Henry, and Stark counties. Twenty eight teams from six counties competed at the Envirothon, this year! Envirothon is much more than a competition. It is a fun, team-based program designed to help students better understand their environment through exploration of ecology, natural resource management, and current environmental issues.

**Congratulations to Rock Island High School!**



## Conservation Teacher of the Year

Nancy Wolber is Rock Island County SWCD's 2014 Conservation Teacher of the Year. Nancy teaches Global Biology (Environmental Science) at Rock Island High School. Nancy also sponsors the Environmental Action Club at Rock Island High School.

Nancy's commitment to conservation, professional development, and education is admirable. Nancy takes learning outside the classroom by offering her students and club members many opportunities to participate in hands-on learning and environmental stewardship activities. These experiences can truly transform the way students view the environment. Nancy said, "I start the year off with a chance for students to volunteer at the XStream Clean-up sponsored by Living Lands and Waters. Typically I get between 50–70 students involved in this event. Many...find out they can have a good time helping to clean up the area that they live in if they just give it a try. Many sign up the next year or even after they graduate because they enjoyed it so much."

This is just one example of Nancy taking learning outside the traditional classroom setting. "Nancy is not only teaching her students about the environment, but she is providing a crucial part of her students' education and preparation for real-life," praised Marilyn Andress, Volunteer Coordinator for RiverBend Wildland Stewards.

"Nancy's efforts and dedication to our Environmental Action Club are truly remarkable", wrote Principal Wernentin in his Letter of Recommendation for the award. Nancy's passion for the environment is very clear, but so is her passion for the students. Mr. Wernentin also wrote, "Students know Mrs. Wolber is an advocate for them and will work tirelessly for their success."

Rock Island County SWCD is proud and thankful to have teachers like Nancy to share the message of conservation with the next generation. This award is open to any K - 12 educator who teaches full time in public, parochial or private classrooms. If you know a teacher that's making a difference, call the SWCD and let us know!

## Henry County SWCD Pond Tour and Shocking Demonstration

Giant Goose Conservation Club  
E 235th St. & Route 6  
Atkinson, IL

Wednesday, August 20th, 2014  
6-8 pm

Was last winter hard on your pond? Curious about winter fish kills, restocking recommendations, or algae management? Well come out and join the Henry Co SWCD for a pond tour & fish shocking demonstration by ILDNR Fisheries Biologist, Ken Clodfelter. Other professionals and agencies present will include SWCD, NRCS & FSA. A butterfly pork chop sandwich dinner grilled by the Henry County Pork Producers, will follow the tour (\$5 donation). Reservations required by August 15th. Call the Henry County SWCD office at 309-937-5263, x3.



### 2014 Cover Crop Plot Locations– Get Out and Have a Look for Yourself

Nine different cover crop combinations were planted on Rod Derrer's farm in Section 16 of Bowling Township. The plot is located ¼ mile east of the corner 134<sup>th</sup> Ave W and 42<sup>nd</sup> St W down a small country lane. Signs mark the location. Wheat and straw were harvested and the cover crops were seeded with a drill in late July.

A cover crop plot will be seeded this fall on the McCarthy farm ½ mile east of Sherrard High School on County Road NN or 176<sup>th</sup> Ave. W. Scott Cocquit is the operator. Different combinations will be seeded into standing soybeans. A Cover Crop plot sign marks the location.

Different combinations of cover crops will be planted this fall into a field where corn silage is chopped on the Bob DePauw farm in Section 15 of Coe Township. The plot is located one mile east of the corner of 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave N and 256<sup>th</sup> St. N.



## New Continuous CRP Practice – Pollinator Habitat

Pollinator Habitat or CP42 is a new continuous Conservation Reserve Program practice available for farm landowners. The purpose of this practice is to establish habitat to support a diversity of pollinator species. Cost-sharing will cover 50% of the seeding expenses with a not-to-exceed rate established by the FSA office. Soil rental rates for CRP range from \$168 to \$303 per acre depending on the soil type for the enrolled acres.

Eligible land may be enrolled in continuous CRP at any time. Land eligibility includes cropland that has been planted to annual crops 4 out of six years from 2008 to 2013 and is at least one-half acre or more. If the landowner does not wish to enroll a whole field, block plantings are preferred over strips with the minimum size of ½ acre per habitat block.

Land that is enrolled into the Pollinator Habitat practice will be seeded to a mixture of native grasses and forbs that area butterflies and bees can use to help their survival. A minimum of nine or more pollinator friendly wildflowers or forbs will be planted with at least three species blooming at different times of the year – from April through October.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a land conservation program administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). In exchange for a yearly rental payment, farm landowners enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. Contracts for land enrolled in CRP are 10 years in length.

Rock Island FSA can be reached at 309-582-5153 for more information or to schedule an appointment. The Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provide planning and technical assistance for CRP. For more information about pollinator and other continuous CRP practices, contact the NRCS office in Rock Island at 309-764-1486, ext. 3.



## Accepting Applications for Conservation Practice Funding

Farmers and rural landowners can apply for state funding for conservation practices through the Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District. Currently, there are more funds than applications. If you have been considering a project, now is the time to apply! ***The application is not a contract, but it will prompt staff to visit your property, design, and price your conservation solution.***

It is very important that RISWCD receives applications as the documented demand for conservation funding will serve as the evidence for our future funding requests! If your project does not meet the ranking cutoff this year, your project will receive ranking bonus points in following years—just for being on the waiting list!

Rock Island SWCD is currently promoting the cover crop practice. An application for this practice will also receive ranking bonus points. If you are considering cover crops, this program will help you get started on up to 40 acres.

Other eligible practices for cost share include Grassed Waterways, Grade Stabilization Structures, Water and Sediment Control basins, and decommissioning abandoned wells. Funding is also available for 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.

Contact the Rock Island SWCD office at 309-764-1486, Ext. 3 or email [Richard.stewart@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:Richard.stewart@il.nacdnet.net)

## Copperas Creek Watershed Project: Beyond Planning

Does it ever feel like more time goes into *PLANNING* than *DOING*? Planning is important, especially watershed planning, but we didn't write the Copperas Creek Watershed Resource Plan to file it away. It is time to implement the plan.

### Here's what RISWCD is working on:

- Submitting grant applications and seeking funding to implement conservation in the watershed
- Accepting applications, estimating the cost, and designing conservation projects
- A monitoring program to measure the effectiveness of conservation practices.

### Here's where we need your help:

- Let us help you with a conservation plan. Give us a call at 309-764-1486 x3.
- Enroll in CRP Filter Strips. Now is a great time to lock-in a 10 year rental rate. Filter strips receive a 20% bonus on the soil rental rate, making the annual rental payment as high as \$363/acre. See Picture to the Right.
- Pledge your support with cash or in-kind services—our goal is to leverage these pledges with grant funds. Most grants require at least 50% local match. Are you willing to take water quality samples? Your volunteer time would be valued at \$24/ hour.



## Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District



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

### SWCD STAFF

Administrative Coordinator Resource Conservationist  
 Sally Ferguson Rich Stewart

**Farm Service Agency**– Call 309-582-5153, ext. 2 to make an appointment.

**Rock Island County  
Natural Resources  
Conservation Service  
Open 5 Days a Week**



Joe Gates  
District Conservationist

Ed Griffin  
Soil Conservation Technician

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

Wyatt Junis  
Soil Conservationist