



# Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District

Rock Island County SWCD Early Summer 2015 Newsletter

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

*Photos above shows how the critical habitat milkweed provides at each stage in the monarch butterfly lifecycle.*

## POLLINATORS IN PERIL- WHAT CAN YOU DO?

“Three-fourths of the world’s flowering plants depend on pollinators to reproduce. Most fruit, vegetable, and seed crops—and other plants that provide fiber, medicines, and fuel—are pollinated by animals. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators. Pollinators visit flowers in their search for food (nectar and pollen). During a flower visit, a pollinator may accidentally brush against the flower’s reproductive parts, unknowingly depositing pollen from a different flower. The plant then uses the pollen to produce fruit or seed. Many plants cannot reproduce without pollen carried to them by foraging pollinators.” The monarch butterfly and honey bee have drawn special attention. Developments in seed genetics and herbicide have allowed for greater weed control, but what we view as weeds could be critical habitat for monarchs, honey bees, and other insects.

What can you do to help? You can create a positive environment with plants that provide a good habitat for our pollinating friends. Using a variety of native plants not only helps the pollinators, but will create beautiful landscape features that you can enjoy and share with others. The most effective plantings for pollinators will have at least 3 different types of plants in each part of the growing season (early, Mid and late) with as many colors as possible to attract a diversity of pollinators. Convert 500 square feet of your yard to pollinator habitat. RISWCD sells a 500 sq. ft. pollinator seed mix for \$25 and free technical assistance.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Call for Contact and Registration Info

**John Phipps Speaking (Page 12)**

June 10, Jumers, Rock Island, IL

**QC Pollinator Conference (Page 12)**

June 10 & 11th, Jumers, Rock Island, IL

**Illinois Extension Youth Summer Camps (Page 2)**

June and July, Location Varies

**Illinois Extension Local Food Tours (Page 2)**

June—October, Location Varies

**Organic Certification Meeting (Page 4)**

July 14th, 10AM, Prime Steak House, Hillsdale, IL

**Crop Acreage Certification Deadline**

July 15th, Farm Service Agency Office

**Rock Island County Fair**

July 15-19, Fairgrounds, East Moline, IL

**Agrichemical Container Recycling**

August 3, 1-3pm Aledo and August 4, 9-11am Galva

**Women, Food, and Agriculture Annual Conf.**

November 6 & 7, Davenport, Radisson

### POND MANAGEMENT FIELD DAY PLANNED FOR PORT BYRON AREA

The Rock Island SWCD is working on details for another pond management field day late summer in the northern part of Rock Island County. Included in this event will be personnel from the IL DNR office and NRCS / SWCD staff to discuss stocking rates for ponds, aquatic vegetation control, and dry fire hydrants for rural fire districts. Photo shows dry fire hydrant demo at 2012 pond day near Reynolds.

The event will be held late this summer. Watch for future news releases or call the SWCD office to be added to the notification list.



## PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION- *RISWCD PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS*

### LOCAL CONSERVATION NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT REQUEST STATE AND COUNTY LEGISLATORS SUSTAIN PARTNERSHIP WITH RISWCD

Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District's is *"Your resource and ally for soil and water stewardship."* **To accomplish this mission, operating expenditures for RISWCD in FY2013 totaled \$105,000. This includes salary and benefits for 2 full-time employees.**

Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District has a great reputation as a reliable and hardworking partner. Our partnerships allow us to leverage our strengths while working with others on common goals. Our strengths include being local, responsive, flexible, and team oriented. We also have unique connections and rapport with landowners and talented and knowledgeable staff.

**Two of our most important partners are the State of Illinois and Rock Island County. They provide grants that cover 65% of RISWCD's annual expenses—\$51,000 (state) and \$21,500 (county) respectively.** The state grant also funds employee-only health insurance. SWCD employees are NOT part of the state or county benefit and retirement systems. RISWCD generates incomes through tree, fish, and seed sales, drill rental, contract work for NRCS, resource reviews, grants, NPDES reviews, donations, and sponsorships. SWCDs do not have taxing authority.

**Since 2008, state operating grants have decreased from \$84,000 to \$51,000. Due to a state budget shortfall, the state withheld \$17,000 of the \$51,000 annual grant.** RISWCD has a reserve fund, so there will not be immediate impacts, but this is a critical issue for soil and water conservation in Rock Island County. **We need you to be our partner today.** Call state legislators and explain the importance of soil and water conservation and SWCD's. Request they release the withheld funds. RISWCD typically requests the county grant in August. Please remind county representatives you support soil and water conservation in Rock Island County by funding RISWCD at \$21,500/year. Legislators are elected by you and serve you; please share these concerns.

### ILLINOIS EXTENSION SUMMER CAMPS and LOCAL FOOD TOURS

#### **Ecology Camp \* June 15-17 \* 9-Noon \* Ages 7-12 \* QC Botanical Center \* \$35**

Ecology Camp allows kids to explore their own interests in nature and science through hands-on discovery. Campers will explore ecosystems and watersheds, learn about the importance of soil health and insects, and discover the all-important human/plant connection by planting gardens at the Botanical Center. Having fun with new friends, exploring the gardens, discovering through hands-on experiments, enjoying a daily snack and creating treasures to take home each day, makes this a summer day camp your child won't want to miss!

#### **Summertime Explorers Day Camp \* June 22-25 \* 8:30-12:30 \* Grades 3-6 \* Blackhawk Historic Site \* \$40**

Campers entering 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade, explore something new and different each day at Summertime Explorers — scavenger hunts & trail hikes, to science explorations with earth, wind, fire and ice projects; from fitness fun to, arts, & drama.

#### **Outdoor Adventure Camp, June 29-July 2 \* 8:30-3:30 \* Ages 10+ \* Rock Island Conservation Club \* \$80**

We will have special guests from Living Lands & Waters, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nahant Marsh, and the Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District! Experience hands-on adventures during this outdoor camp with activities including archery, arts & crafts, outdoor cooking, water testing, nature hikes, games, and much more!

**Food Connection AgriTours—** Connect with experienced local growers and producers. Learn about sustainable growing methods and why local agriculture is so important to our health and economy. Both limited to 30 attendees.

- Thursday, June 25, 5-7, Toohey Achers, Viola, IL— Originally truck farmers, Toohey Achers now sets up at Farmer's markets in Aledo and Galesburg, providing a huge variety of fresh, locally grown produce throughout the growing season.
- Thursday, July 23, 5-7, Health Harvest Urban Farms, East Moline, IL— Started by Chad and Nieko Summers, they wanted to raise awareness on what we eat and how it directly influences overall health. Their mission is to share what they've learned with anyone and everyone—so this tour is a perfect opportunity to connect! They offer in-season organic produce and other organic foods from area farms.

**More AgriTour Dates August– September. Call University of Illinois Extension at 309-756-9978 to register.**

## CONSERVATION SUCCESS STORIES

### 33 Attend Cover Crop Field Days

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, a field day was held at RISWCD's cover crop demonstration site at Bob DePauw's in Port Byron. Close to two dozen farmers were in attendance. Donuts and coffee were served at the beginning. The informal meeting opened with Rich Stewart, RISWCD Resource Conservationist, speaking on the advantages of planting cover crops and varieties. Bob DePauw also shared his experience with cover crops. Dean Oswald, Illinois Council on Best Management Practices, answered questions and provided information on management and species selection. Following the speakers, attendees walked over to the demonstration plots. The plots provided a close-up look at the successes and failures of various species including crimson clover, oats, radish, annual rye, cereal rye, winter oats, and triticale. and planting dates. The site also feature two seeding dates. Many benefits of cover crops come from the root growth, but in terms of top-growth—cereal rye came out ahead. Seeding dates also appeared to be very influential in the success of the crops.

A 2nd cover crop field day was held the following day at the RISWCD cover crop demonstration plots near Sherard. Twelve attended this event. Most attendees had attended previous cover crop field days and meetings. Many had tried cover crops on their farm. Rich Stewart asked farmers to share their experiences with cover crops, so farmers could learn from each other. Cereal rye again produced the best top growth at this plot.



Farmers look at the Winter Oats plot. Winter oats are a great option. Oats are easy to manage because they winter kill. Winter oats die at a lower temperature than spring oats, to provide a slightly longer growing season. Every week counts with cover crops!

### Cover Crop Success After Wheat

Check out these pictures of successful cover crop stands following wheat in Bowling Township at the Derrer farm. Half acre plots were seeded following a wheat harvest. Multiple mixes were used: Bristol, Indy, Dover, Charlotte, Fridge Triticale, Talladega, Awnless Triticale, and Cereal/Winter Rye. Each mix was seeded in August after the silage was taken off.



### Rockridge Takes 3rd Place at Envirothon

Two teams from Rock Island County competed at the Envirothon competition on March 18, 2015 at the Black Hawk East Campus in Galva, IL. The top team from Rock Island County for 2015 was the Rockridge. Members included: Matt Bolt, Cody Dirck, John Bradley, Evan Robinson, and David Eddy. **The Rockridge Envirothon coach is Lei Thorton. Congratulations!!!**



## 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, x2 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 Rock Island NRCS at 309-764-1486, Ext. 3.



### NEW NO-TILL DRILL FOR COVER CROPS AND NATIVE SEED INCLUDING POLLINATOR MIXES



RISWCD purchased a 7 foot Great Plains No-Till Drill, with help from Pheasants Forever. The drill has received great reviews. It has native grass, grain and small seed boxes. Rental is \$100/day and \$12/acre\*.

**Call 309-764-1486, Ext. 3 To Reserve**

Requires Pin Hitch, min. 50 hp front wheel assist, and 2 way hydraulics  
\*\$10/acre for Pheasants Forever members, daily fee applies

### ORGANIC CERTIFICATION MEETING July 14th, 2015 \* 10 A.M. \* Hillsdale, IL

An organic certification informational meeting will be held this summer. The event will be held:

**July 14th, 2015  
10:00 A.M.**

**Prime Steak House in Hillsdale, IL**

Topics to be covered are the certification process, requirements, soil fertility, marketing, and a farmer panel. This meeting is offered for the purpose of answering any questions a farmer may have concerning organic certification. For information, contact: Bob DePauw 309-737- 9379 (cell) or 309-523-3921 (home) or Keith Landis 815-499-4118.

NRCS will be at the meeting to explain and distribute materials on the EQIP organic initiative. The initiative provides incentives for organic transition planning and implementation.

## UNDERSTANDING ILLINOIS' NUTRIENT LOSS REDUCTION STRATEGY

“Nutrient pollution is a major threat to water quality. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus carried in runoff from city streets and farm fields or flowing out of wastewater treatment plants can fuel algae blooms that decrease oxygen needed by aquatic plants and animals. In the Gulf of Mexico, nutrients washed down by the Mississippi River have created a "dead zone" that stretches for thousands of square miles. At home, nutrient pollution can also lower property values, hinder recreation, and degrade drinking water quality. To help protect local streams and the Gulf, Illinois and 11 other states in the Mississippi River basin have pledged to develop strategies to reduce the nutrient loads leaving their borders. These strategies are part of a national plan developed by the Mississippi River, Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force.”- *From Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Website*

Researchers identified the major nutrient sources and their proportional contribution to nutrient loss to the Mississippi River. See the table to the right for the breakdown. Researchers then identified best management practices (BMP's) that are effective at reducing nutrient losses. The targets are 25% reduction of phosphorous loss and 15% reduction of nitrogen loss by 2025. Reductions will be achieved through voluntary implementation of BMPs. The national hypoxia working group set the eventual target reduction of N and P flowing into the Gulf of Mexico at 45%.

Nutrient Source	Proportion of Nutrient Loss to Mississippi River	
	Nitrogen	Phosphorus
Agricultural Runoff	82%	48%
Point Source (wastewater treatment, etc...)	16%	48%
Urban Runoff	2%	4%

The agricultural reductions will be realized through voluntary conservation practices. “The focus is on reducing nutrient losses to the environment—not on reducing nutrient uses by Illinois agriculture,” said Laura Lurkins, Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) director of natural and environmental resources in IFB's December 8th issue of Farm Week.

## PRODUCERS RECEIVE FUNDS TO REDUCE NUTRIENT LOSS

The effects of nutrient loss have been in the news for years. More so since the Midwest flood of 1993 led to unprecedented expansion of the hypoxia zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Illinois agriculture has a great opportunity to reduce the amount of nutrients that leave crop fields and enter the Mississippi River. Not only can producers reduce an environmental problem, they can also improve their bottom line. Producers in Illinois are using existing voluntary conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and Partners for Conservation (PFC) to apply conservation practices that protect water quality. These existing conservation programs are the centerpiece of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Strategy. A good place to start is with developing a nutrient management plan for your farm. Funds are available to help pay for the cost of hiring a qualified technical service provider to develop a custom plan for your operation. The plan will outline ways for you to fine tune your nutrient management strategy by selecting the best nutrient source, rate, timing, and placement. Other conservation and management practices including filter strips, nutrient management, split applications, high efficiency fertilizers, N stabilizers, precision application, plant tissue testing, and cover crops are also eligible for funding with existing programs. You can submit applications for these programs at any time. Just visit the NRCS/SWCD office or give us a call if you would like more information. *By Joe Gates, NRCS District Conservationist*

## WILDLIFE HABITAT PRIORITIZED WITH EQIP PROGRAM

*Contributed by Brandon Bleuer, edited by Sally Ferguson*

The 2014 Farm Bill provides landowners with programs and opportunities to add and enhance quality wildlife habitat on their property. One of these programs is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The EQIP legislation requires 5% of funding go towards wildlife practices. A priority of EQIP is for the promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation. The Wildlife Habitat Conservation funding pool is available to Illinois producers who will restore, develop, or enhance wildlife habitat.

The EQIP program is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. Through new legislation written in the Farm Bill the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) was merged into EQIP which ensures that EQIP will support wildlife related projects. This is crucial because it provides landowners with funding and a plan to increase the value of their land to wildlife. The contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural and pasture land.

Who can apply for EQIP? Any landowner who has ground in agricultural or forest production or persons who are engaged in in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land. Also, landowners who have a natural resource concern on the land may be eligible for EQIP.

Program applications are required to be supported by an NRCS approved conservation plan which provides documentation of the practices that could be used to address natural resource concerns. The conservation plan will identify which practices will be used to benefit wildlife and the identified natural resource concern. Wildlife related practices that are eligible for funding under EQIP include:

**Conservation Cover, Early Successional Habitat Development/Management, Brush Management, Field Border, Filter Strip, Forest Stand Improvement, Herbaceous Weed Control, Prescribed Burning, Tree/Shrub Establishment, Wetland Restoration and Pollinator Habitat.** There are a variety of other practices that are eligible for EQIP funding that emphasize water quality and soil health. Pheasants Forever has a Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist who works closely with NRCS and specializes in wildlife practices who can write a conservation plan for landowners. To learn more about EQIP and to get a conservation plan contact the NRCS office at 309-764-1486, Ext. 3.



EQIP practices, like Forest Stand Improvement, Herbaceous Weed Control, and Tree/Shrub Establishment can help make your timber a better habitat for Illinois' beloved wildlife!

## SIGN UP ANY TIME FOR CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Eligible land may be enrolled in continuous CRP at any time. To be eligible, the cropland must have a cropping history for at least 4 years during 2008 through 2013. Consider these great practices below:

- 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. Pictured right.
- CRP Field Borders- Fields greater than 5 acres may be eligible for a field border to provide food and cover for upland birds in cropland areas. Border widths range from 30 to 120 feet and are planted to low growing native vegetation for quail and pheasant habitat. This is an excellent practice next to woods and hard to farm areas.
- CRP Grassed waterways - Areas that constantly washout and are subject to ephemeral erosion may be eligible for enrollment as CRP Grassed waterways. In addition to a general Soil Rental Rate, landowners can recover close to 90% of the cost to reshape and seed the area. A simple field visit is the first step to determine what is eligible.
- Pollinator Habitat- This can be a good option if you're looking to take a small field out of production! See Page 2 for more details.
- Additional CRP practices include shallow water areas, farmstead and feedlot windbreaks, living snow fences, riparian buffers, wetland restorations, and more.
- Nutrient management, drift-reducing nozzles, GPS spray application, cover crops, forestry, and more are available through NRCS programs under EQIP or CSP. NRCS also has livestock opportunities, including fencing, stream crossing, forage planting, livestock pipeline, feeding station, watering facility, access road, brush management, windbreak, waste storage facility, animal mortality facility, and more. If you have a conservation need, call our office, and we will find a solution that fits your operation and your land! Call 309-764-1486 Ext. 3.



Sign Up for CRP Filter Strips Soil Rental Rates are as high as \$363/acre and CRP provides for recovery up to 90% of the cost of installing the filter strip.



The CRP shallow water wetland area at the back of this picture was excavated in Spring 2015. Moments after the picture, a pair of ducks landed in the water.

## RISWCD NEEDS 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.

## COPPERAS CREEK WATERSHED UPDATE

RISWCD had several meetings and visits with Copperas Creek Watershed landowners over the past two years. Two sites were surveyed for potential stream bank stabilization work, surveys for dry dams and grassed waterways have been completed. Cover crops have been planted on additional acres of cropland to reduce soil erosion and nutrient loss.

Additional sites for streambank work are planned. RISWCD is reaching out to the IEPA, Army Corp of Engineers, IDOA, NRCS, the Rock Island Highway Department, and other potential partners for funding and/or support for a cooperative effort to address the concerns. Contributions from landowners will also improve chances of funding.

August 2013- RISWCD applied and was not funded for an IL EPA 319 Grant for Plan Implementation for \$245,000.

Summer 2014- RISWCD hired Doug Hessman to follow-up on resource concerns provided at the June 2013 stakeholder meeting. Doug met with several landowners and documented the need for conservation practices and estimated the cost of those practices.

August 2014- RISWCD applied and was not funded for an IL EPA 319 Grant for Plan Implementation for \$241,000.

September 2014- RISWCD applied and was not funded for an RCPP Grant for \$180,000.

December 2014- RISWCD partnered with Augustana College to take the Land Resources class on a field trip through Copperas Creek to show them conservation practices in place on the land. The class evaluated the watershed for water quality monitoring sample sites, and presented their findings as a culminating class project.

**Where do we go from here?** RISWCD is researching the pros and cons of hiring an outside firm to update the Copperas Creek plan to improve eligibility for grant funding. Illinois EPA has a 5 year rotation for prioritizing all watersheds in the state. Copperas Creek is a priority watershed for watershed planning for Illinois EPA in FY2017. It is a priority watershed for watershed plan implementation in FY2019. There is also an opportunity to apply for dedicated EQIP and/or CSP funding through NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

In Summer 2015, Alyssa Clarida, an Augustana student, will be an intern at RISWCD. Alyssa's primary focus will be Copperas Creek Watershed. A dedicated staff person to focus on the watershed will be a great asset to drive plan implementation. Read Alyssa's bio on page 9.

Initial research has been completed for watershed monitoring. Augustana students evaluated the watershed and recommended sites for monitoring. Monitoring is a time-consuming endeavor, so we want to ensure we are taking the right steps before we begin sampling. Alyssa will be working with RISWCD staff and landowners to formalize a watershed monitoring plan. The goal of the monitoring data is to support the need for funding for the watershed.

**What can you do in the meantime?** RISWCD is emphasizing CRP filter strips in Copperas Creek this year. Sign-up to install filter strips along Copperas Creek and the tributaries that feed into it. Soil Rental Rates for filter strips are at a new high with some rental rates going for as high as \$363 dollars per acre. Landowners also can recover close to 90% of the cost to seed the area to cool-season or native grasses. Continuous CRP, EQIP, and CSP are existing programs for which can apply for any time. See Pages 4-7 for more information on practices available.

Reducing sedimentation and nutrients entering the creek will improve the quality of water and aquatic life in Copperas Creek. Taking an active part to install conservation on the land shows other groups and organizations that the landowners are interested in being part of the solution. See Page ? On Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy to learn why voluntary conservation to reduce nutrient pollution is so important. Let's make Copperas Creek Watershed a showcase watershed of what is possible with landowner, operator, and SWCD partnerships!

## NEW FACES AT RISWCD– AUGUSTANA INTERNS

### JOSH KUKLA, SPRING 2015, 8 HOURS/WEEK



Hi! My name is Josh Kukla, and I was the intern here at RICSWCD for Augustana College's spring term. I am currently a senior on the path to graduate at the end of May 2015. I will graduate with an Environmental Studies major and Geography minor. Here is a little more about me:

I am an avid outdoorsy person. I spent most of my childhood playing outside and running around in the forest next to the first home I lived in. I enjoy golfing and fishing (catch-photo-release only!) as much as I can in my off time.

I wasn't too concerned about the environment until I started taking classes that discussed it. I came into college thinking I would go the "easy" route and get a general business degree. Only after taking macroeconomics did I realize that business was *way* over my head. I then took a few geography and geology courses, which peaked my interest. I started taking more classes, including other variations of geography/geology (GIS, water/land resources, land resource management, etc.), ecology, and zoology. I then declared my Environmental Studies major in my sophomore year, and that eventually led me to be here!

This past summer, I completed my Senior Inquiry Project, which involved looking at water quality of ponds located on and off golf courses. I sampled three ponds of each type, once a week for five weeks, and had the samples analyzed for total phosphorous and nitrate-nitrite. As it turned out, there wasn't a significant difference in the water quality of the two ponds types. Although there was no significant data, it was still a neat experience to go through the process of writing and carrying out a complete scientific study.

Through Augustana, I have had the opportunity to travel to a few cool places. I have been to the University of Illinois Middle Mississippi River Wetland Field Station, where we visited or were near the Trail of Tears State Forest and Shawnee National Forest. I have also helped complete a GIS project with one of the faculty at Augustana, measuring stream types for Blackhawk State Park.

I enjoyed my time working with everyone at the SWCD office, and was able to learn a lot! I am thankful for the opportunity to have worked here, and will be able to use it as a building block for my future.



RISWCD Spring 2015 Augustana Intern, Josh Kukla, assisting with the fish sale pick-up. He is pictured loading 8-10" channel catfish into pond water. Josh has been a great help in the office! Good Luck in the future, Josh!

### ALYSSA CLARIDA, SUMMER 2015, 40 HOURS/WEEK

Like most Augustana College students, I was born and raised in the Chicago suburbs. And like most suburban kids, I am more than pleased to have escaped them. I fell in love with the Quad Cities due to the more urban atmosphere and the proximity to farmland and the river. I am pursuing majors in Geography and Environmental Studies and I am currently finishing up my Junior year at Augie. My specific academic interests lie in agriculture, resource management, forestry, and land use planning. For the past two summers, I worked on a 30 acre fruit and vegetable U-Pick farm as a farm hand and greenhouse manager. I am thrilled to be working with the RISWCD this summer and perhaps beyond! I will be working on the Copperas Creek Watershed management plan as the Watershed Coordinator Intern. This means that I will be working with stakeholders in the watershed as well as the folks at the RISWCD and NRCS to develop and implement various watershed conservation measures. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to the summer ahead!



## FIFTEEN RISWCD NEWSLETTER SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE

In January 2015, Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District (RISWCD) began a newsletter mailing program. RISWCD is seeking sixteen sponsors to help offset the printing and mailing costs. A newsletter sponsorship costs \$200 per year, and you will be recognized in three or more newsletters for your support. In appreciation of your sponsorship, RISWCD will feature Your Recognition Stamp (3.875" by 1.25") on this page. Design your own stamp or work with RISWCD to design. Sketch your design in the blank stamps at the bottom. Double size spots are also available.

The newsletter is mailed to 1800+ recipients. Mailings are timed to promote RISWCD events, sales, and conservation news. Sponsors will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis. Mail a \$200 check to RISWCD to sponsor 2016 newsletters. RISWCD will recognize you in remaining 2015 newsletters for FREE! Please consider sponsoring this important resource for conservation in Rock Island County.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Efficient Pond Management</b>  <b>Consultations - Aeration - Mapping</b></p> <p>We manage ponds for lasting improvements and long term enjoyment</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://www.efficientpondmanagement.com">www.efficientpondmanagement.com</a></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rock Island County Soil &amp; Water Conservation District</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <p style="text-align: left;"><b>Your resource and ally for soil and water stewardship</b></p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Technical Assistance * No-Till Drill Rental * Tree Sales</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">309-764-1486 Ext. 3</p>
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<p><i>Sketch Your Recognition Stamp in the Space Below.                  Need more room? Try a double-size stamp to the right. Mail it to RISWCD and we will format it in the computer and work with you to make adjustments.</i></p>	

Thank you to our RISWCD newsletter sponsors. Their support makes this publication possible.

## FOR SALE

5' Tile Probes: \$30

Flags (multiple colors): \$.15 each or 100 for \$12

Specs: 36" Wire Staff. Flag measures 2.5" x 3.5"

Native Grass Seed and Pollinator Mixes

Call office at 309-764-1486, Ext. 3 for pricing.

## FOR RENT

Call 309-764-1486, Ext. 3 To Reserve

7' Great Plains No-Till Drill: \$100/day & \$12/acre

Pheasants Forever member rate: \$10/acre, \$100/day

Boxes: Grain, Small Seed, Native Grass

Pin Hitch, min. 50 hp front wheel assist

2 way hydraulics

Great for Cover Crops and Native Grasses

6.5' Tye No-Till Drill: \$100/day & \$8/acre

Boxes: Grain, Small Seed, Native Grass

Pin Hitch, min. 50 hp front wheel assist

2 way hydraulics

Great for Waterways

ATV Broadcast Seeder \$25/day

Tree Planter (Seedlings): \$50/day

Ball Hitch, min. 50 hp front wheel assist

Recommended for plantings over an acre

Dibble Bar/Tree Bar: \$10/day

Recommended for plantings over 50 seedlings

## Donations

Cash or property donations to RISWCD are tax deductible under IRS Code 170(c)(1).

## NEWS YOU WANT

The RISWCD/NRCS print newsletter is mailed as budget allows. Stay informed between newsletters by email. You choose your subscription preferences so you only get the news you want! Email newsletters are computer and smart-phone friendly. Please provide your email and preferences using the tree sale order form (no purchase necessary).

FSA discontinued paper mailings due to budget constraints. Stay informed with email newsletters. Subscribe in the Aledo office subscribe at:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USFSA/subscriber/new>

## Rock Island County SWCD & NRCS

3020 1st Ave E, Milan, IL 61264 • 309-764-1486, x3

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

Monday - Friday • 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. • Closed Federal Holidays

Please call ahead, as staff are frequently in the field.

The Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service work in a unique partnership to promote, protect, maintain, improve, and wisely use our county's irreplaceable soil, water, and related natural resources.

The Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District was established February 10, 1942 under the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act of 1937. Each District is classified as a "local unit of government"; SWCDs are NOT a branch of federal, state, or county government. The Act gives SWCD's the responsibility to provide technical information to individuals and groups on methods of soil and water conservation. The District is governed by an elected five-member board of directors. Board meetings are held monthly on the first Tuesday at the USDA Service Center. You are invited and encouraged to attend. Please call ahead to confirm meeting date and time.

Districts have no taxing authority. Funding is provided by grants from the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and Rock Island County. Additional resources are provided by NRCS, based on a Memorandum of Understanding. Revenues from District programs, services and sales also support the district mission.

### Rock Island County District Directors:

Gary Blanchard ..... Chairman  
Bill Parchert ..... Vice-Chairman  
Jim Mueller ..... Treasurer  
Twila Cederstrom ..... Secretary  
Brian Parkinson ..... Director  
Bob Westpfahl ..... Associate

### Staff:

Rich Stewart ..... Resource Conservationist, SWCD  
Sally Ferguson ..... Administrative Coordinator, SWCD  
Joe Gates ..... District Conservationist, NRCS  
Wyatt Junis ..... Soil Conservationist, NRCS  
Ed Griffin ..... Soil Conservation Technician, NRCS

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. To file a complaint of discrimination write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250- 9410 or call (866) 632-9992. Rock Island County SWCD operates in accordance with the USDA policy.

## Farm Service Agency

308 SE 8th Avenue, Aledo, IL 61231 • 309-582-5153, x2

**APPOINTMENTS REQUIRED:** Beginning April 2013, the Rock Island FSA office was converted to a part-time office, with Mercer County as the headquarters office. Customers can conduct their business 5 days a week in Mercer County, by appointment. Appointments can be made for the Rock Island County office on select Wednesdays. FSA records are in Aledo.



Rock Island County  
Soil and Water Conservation District  
3020 1st Ave E  
Milan, IL 61264

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## Early Summer 2015 Newsletter

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- Pollinators (p. 1, 4, 12)
- Financial Assistance (p. 4-7)
- Copperas Creek Watershed (p. 8)
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- Conservation Success Stories (p. 3)
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- Local Food AgriTours (p.2)
- Newsletter Sponsors (p. 10)
- Local Conservation Funding Pinch (p. 2)
- Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (p. 5)

### QC Pollinator Conference

**Pollinators: In the Backyard & On the Back Forty  
June 10-11th, 2015 \* Jumers, Rock Island, IL**

Habitat loss, disease, parasites, and environmental contaminants have all contributed to the decline of many species of pollinators. Pollinators are necessary to ensure our food supply. Of the 100 crops that make up 90% of the global food supply, 71 are dependent on bees. Honey bee pollination alone adds more than \$15 billion in value to agricultural crops each year in the U.S.

Agriculture Session Speakers Include: United Soybean Board, Bayer Advanced, Iowa Farmer, Iowa State University, University of Illinois Extension, Pheasants Forever, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and NRCS. Beekeeping and Urban Conservation sessions are also available. Full conference registration includes all sessions and keynote address and dinner (see right). The full conference fee is \$80. Post-conference farm field trips are an additional \$10.

Visit [www.qcpollinatorconference.org](http://www.qcpollinatorconference.org) or call Nahant Marsh at 563-323-5196 for information or to register.  
**Registrations required by June 1st.**

### US Farm Report Commentator John Phipps to Speak at Jumers June 10th Register by June 1st

John Phipps, U.S. Farm Report Commentator will speak at Jumer's, Rock Island, IL on June 10th.

#### Tickets are \$50 and includes:

- 5-6 PM Cocktail Hour (cash bar)
- 6-7 PM Dinner
- 7:10-9 PM John Phipps Speaks

John will be offering a keynote address as part of the QC Pollinator Conference. The keynote address title is "Shades of Grey: Communicating Science to an Anxious Public"

**Call Nahant Marsh at (563) 323-5196 by June 1st.**

Learn about the relationship between agriculture and pollinators with a \$30 upgrade to a full-conference registration. See left for speakers and topics.

