



CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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CHILDREN'S AUTHOR PUBLISHES THIRD BOOK IN THE EDUCATIONAL 'RACHEL AND SAMMY' SERIES



Author and Stark County SWCD Resource Conservationist Jannifer Powelson has been writing for almost ten years. What began as a master's thesis on raccoons evolved into a wonderful series of books used to provide educational programs for youth and adults. Ms. Powelson is currently working on writing and taking photographs for her next book in the Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk series.

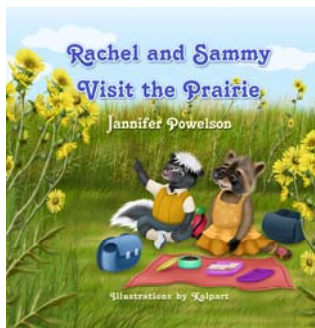
Rachel and Sammy Learn About Trees is the third and latest book in the Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk series. Rachel and Sammy, along with their classmates, their teacher, Mrs. Doe, and Doc Opossum, take a field trip to the forest, where they discover all kinds

of interesting tree facts.

This beautifully illustrated book will help children learn about tree identification, parts of trees, the importance of trees, photosynthesis, and much more!

This fun story teaches children tree information and features 14 realistic illustrations as well as 41 colorful photographs. The photos were taken by the author and will help readers learn more about the great variety of trees.

Join Rachel, Sammy, and their friends as they hike through the woods, and learn right along with them!



Meet Rachel and Sammy for the first time in *Rachel and Sammy Visit the Prairie*, the first book in author Jannifer Powelson's Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk series, is an exceptional tool for teaching children about life on a Midwest prairie. With an entertaining and educational storyline, vivid photos taken by the author, plus realistic illustrations, the book encourages readers to dive into the great outdoors and learn more about the natural world.

This little story on the prairie teaches children all about prairie plants. Rachel Raccoon and Sammy Skunk meet near a prairie and explore it together. Rachel is a very smart raccoon and teaches Sammy to identify 20 common prairie plants.

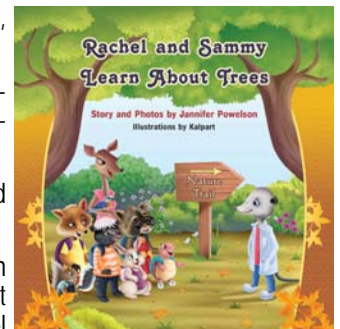
The book serves as a junior field guide for children interested in learning about the prairie in a fun way.

Rachel and Sammy Visit the Forest is the second in this delightful series. The beautifully illustrated book will help children learn about 15 common spring woodland wildflowers.

This fun story can also be used as a junior field guide to aid students in identifying the plants in the story, as each plant in the book features realistic illustrations and colorful photographs. The photos were taken by the author and will help readers learn more about the great variety of wildflowers.

Join Rachel and Sammy as they frolic through the woodland wildflowers, learning as they go!

Congratulations on your third book Jannifer!





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JAMES TODD

jtoddfarm@gmail.com

My crops were in early this year and are up and looking pretty good so the crops and I are now waiting for some rain to help them along. I'm hoping things will be able to take care of themselves for the next month or so as I will be going to several meetings and events during June and July.

I plan to leave May 30 for a CTIC meeting in Mississippi with a tour of the Delta area which promises educational field visits, technology demonstrations and opportunities to speak directly with growers about their on-farm solutions to natural resources issues. The Delta hosts the United States' largest fishery, by weight, and its port activity rivals those worldwide. The region also generates a significant portion of the United States' energy and provides critical wildlife habitat. Natural resource issues include soil erosion, water quality and habitat loss. The tour appears to be very interesting and I hope to learn more about the area and its unique problems and opportunities.

Lonnie and I will be going to Washington D.C in July for the NACD Legislative Conference and Workshop. While there, we hope to be able to visit with Illinois' Congressional Delegation. This year's meeting will be a bit different from those I have attended in previous years. We are scheduled to have a briefing at the White House and we are also signed up for a field trip to the Chesapeake Bay area to observe farming practices and learn how US EPA's regulatory approach to nonpoint source pollutants has affected agriculture in the bay area states.

I am particularly looking forward to learning more about what the regulations are doing to agriculture. I am concerned that we may be facing similar issues here in Illinois if we can't get some control over our nutrients and sediment that end up in the waters of the Midwest. It seems that US EPA is taking a harder look at agriculture that we have ever experienced in the past and with the environmental activists added to the mix I fear we may end up with similar rules that now govern the Chesapeake Bay states.

Of course, the Summer Conference and Annual Meeting are July 23-24 and I will wrap up my official duties as your president. I have enjoyed my last four years and my main goal has been able to obtain stable funding for the SWCDs. I think we are as close as we have ever been with SB1849. Hopefully we will see the bill

advance to the Governor where we will again be calling on districts to urge the Governor to either sign the bill or allow it to become law. It has sometimes been a painful experience to work hard with legislation and legislators to try to get more funding for the SWCDs only to have those efforts fail. It is my hope that this time we will succeed.

We appear to be having some legislative success with HB5315. The bill provides the opportunity for Drainage District Commissioners and Soil and Water Conservation District Directors to take Open Meetings Act training in a group setting rather than electronically as is now required. The bill is one third reading in the Senate and conversations with Don Harmon, the chief sponsor indicate that the bill will be called before the Senate is scheduled to adjourn May 31st.

We have also been working on funding issues for the AISWCD to help maintain the office in the face of the reduction in funding for SWCD and the subsequent reduction in income from dues. One of the possible funding sources is the CREP grant that has been approved for 2013. The AISWCD was to receive about \$15,000 in administrative funding for a one year grant to provide for CREP Coordinators to work in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River Basins. IDNR has decided to add \$600,000 of their CREP money to the total and extend the grant for another year. The total \$750,000 will be used to fund a program that differs quite a bit from what is out there now. The new program will employ up to seven field people to work within Land Use Council boundaries. The employees will be working on CRP, CREP and watershed planning within their respective Council. The new program will provide a substantial increase in administrative funding for the AISWCD. It will also increase the workload substantially. We are looking at ways in which we can address the workload and will decide within the next few weeks so that the new grant will be able to begin July 1.

We will be selecting a new slate of candidates for the AISWCD's officers at the June Quarterly Board Meeting. If you have any recommendations, please contact your AISWCD board member before the June 11th and 12th meeting.

James H. Todd



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - *RICH NICHOLS*

rich.nichols@aiswcd.org

This is being written before the end of the Illinois General Assembly's 2012 spring session so there is still plenty of time for things to happen...or not happen, depending on the will of the majority or the timidity of those seeking re-election this fall. I have learned through observation that when the collective membership of both chambers wants to get something accomplished, they can move very fast! We'll see if that is the case this session.

As of this writing, the AISWCD is three for five if you count HB5539 and the probability that HB5315 and SB1849 will be passed.

Win: HB5539 passed in both chambers and is now on the Governor's desk. It creates the Nutrient Research and Education Council (NREC) for the purpose of pursuing nutrient research and providing educational programs to ensure the adoption and implementation of practices that optimize nutrient use efficiency, ensure soil fertility, and address environmental concerns with regard to fertilizer use. It also assesses tonnage fees to support those activities and SWCDs may be able to be paid for educational efforts aimed at encouraging farmers to adopt nutrient management plans.

Probable Wins: SB1849 passed out of the House on May 23rd and will be returned to the Senate for concurrence with House Amendments 2 and 3. It is expected that the Senate will pass the bill and send it to the Governor for his consideration and further action. The Governor has threatened to veto the bill because it allows slot machines to be placed at Illinois' five horse race venues. However, he has softened his comments about the bill during the past few weeks.

Bill sponsors have indicated that they will attempt to overturn any veto action by the Governor during the fall veto session.

HB5315 passed the House and is now in the Senate awaiting the third reading and a vote. Deadline for action in the Senate is May 31st. The bill allows drainage district commissioners and district directors to take their required Open Meetings Act training at a group setting rather than electronically.

Loss: HB5366 has ended the session assigned to a sub-committee of the House Labor Committee where it will quietly die, another victim of good intentions running afoul of the power of the labor unions. The bill would have exempted the state cost share program from the Prevailing Wage Act requirements.

Unsure: IDOA's Budget Bill - The Senate has passed two bills, SB2455 Amendment. 2 and SB2404 Amendment 2, that provide funding for SWCDs at levels proposed in the Governor's 2013 budget for Operations but less than the Governor proposed for PfC funding. We have spoken with the House leaders, made the necessary requests and provided the requested documentation for an additional \$1 million in PfC funds to be used for cost share and operations. We can only hope that our requests will be considered as the final bill is crafted.

It appears, at this point in time, that budget bills may be negotiated up to the last minute while the General Assembly struggles with a \$2.7 billion discrepancy between anticipated revenue and anticipated expenditures for fiscal year 2013.

They have already enlisted all us retired folk to help them out by paying a portion of our health insurance premiums and reducing any cost of living increases to our retirement. It is unclear if that legislation will stand. A group of judges is considering filing a law suit contending that paid health insurance COLAs were part of the retiree benefits package provided for by the Illinois Constitution. If the judges file the suit, I expect they will win - after all, they do hear the case.

For those who are not yet retired, it looks like there will be some major changes to the retirement package. Some of those changes include paying a greater share of employee health coverage, paying a larger percentage of their paychecks into the retirement system. Makes me kind of glad I got out when I did.

Regardless of the outcome of the spring session, the AISWCD will be back for the fall veto session to try to repair any damages done to SWCDs, do what we couldn't get done this spring and leverage more funding for SWCDs.

In the meantime, keep in touch with your legislators over the summer. It makes a really big difference in the way things happen in Springfield. The more contact you have the more credibility you develop. It helps a lot when we tell members of the General Assembly what effects their proposed actions will have on the state's natural resources and on SWCD's ability to protect and conserve those resources.

May we always remember those who gave much that we may have much!

Rich



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

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MAY Activities

CREP COORDINATOR GRANT:

- Organized and mailed April/May CREP Coordinator Invoices with each participating Districts' vouchers and receipts after tallying all submitted info
- Sent database showing funds used to IEPA for update; CREP Agreement (contract) with IEPA completed after January voucher totals; amended agreement completed and receiving signed contracts from Participating Districts.
- Forwarding signed amended CREP contracts to IEPA to show Districts participating.
- Had another meeting with IEPA and IDNR to discuss 2012-2013 CREP Coordinator Contracts; new program being implemented which does not include CREP Coordinators
- Sent Amended CREP Contract Sub Agreement Balances to participating Districts to update them on remaining balance of their amended agreements.

JUNE QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING:

- Organized June Quarterly Board Meeting Packet for Board Members; e-mailed and mailed packets to Members and Partners the middle of May
- Following up on Action items from FAC, taskforces, and AISWCD & Foundation meetings
- Waiting for QB meeting reservation information; will updated info with Hotel for rooms and meals
- Compiling Annual Meeting Award apps, poster and photo entries, and judges for Farm Family and Employee of the Year
- Will send June QB meeting information update to il.all listing after the meeting with Dot Point Highlights.
- Still compiling Gaming Bill Coalition Contact database.

OTHER DUTIES:

- Phone calls, mail and e-mail correspondence
- Compiled expense reports for Credit Cards
- Timesheets
- Maintain Patio Paver and Rain Barrel Database
- Maintain SWCD Dues Paid (FY '12 Databases)
- E-mailed Monthly Financials to Officers and other requesters
- Updated Records Retention, Mgmt. & Destruction Folder
- Forward to Rich the monthly SWCD/LUC agenda and meeting minutes that are e-mailed to me; file these after seen by Rich
- Proofread Conservation Catchall and Legislative Newsletter; made changes and posted to website; copied link and forwarded to il.all.
- Completed Monthly Office Supply Inventory and placed order
- Maintaining Earth Stewardship Bank Account, compiled invoices and paid expenses; did income/expense sheet.
- Will update FY '12 Dues Database; will send delinquent notices to District Directors for FY 2012 dues after June 4, 2012; will send same notice to AISWCD Officers, Area VPs, and SWCD Districts per Board request.
- Sent e-mail notice to all Districts requesting LUC articles for upcoming Legislative Newsletters.
- E-mailed link to Districts & Board Members for Legislative and CC newsletters; mailed copies to non-email participants

FY 2011 Audit:

- Making any audit changes; Waiting for audit summary
- Helping to complete 990 for AISWCD & Foundation; received approval for extension in filing of forms.

IL ENVIROTHON:

- Posted & deposited checks for Registration fees, volunteer meals, and additional donations sent to AISWCD office
- Inventoried all IL Envirothon tubs, bags, and boxes after returned from event.
- Posted 2012 IL Envirothon winners status on AISWCD Website; e-mailed link to il.all

64TH AISWCD ANNUAL MEETING/SUMMER CONFERENCE:

- Worked on McKibben Scholarship denial letter (sample); worked on winner letter (sample); RSVP letter (sample).
- Worked on Poster & Photo Participation Certificate and letter (sample); worked on Poster & Photo Winners Certificates and letters (sample).
- Worked on Farm Family invitation letters (sample), RSVP form (sample); worked on Outstanding District Employee sample forms
- Still working on sponsors or grants for funding awards and expenses.

ACCOUNTING/OFFICE ADMIN:

- Completed Payroll and Payroll Taxes for May; will mail items.
- Will reconcile all bank accounts for May
- Completed bookwork for All AISWCD & Insurance Accts
- Prepared Deposits for SWCD Dues and Receivables
- Completed Checks for Payables; Completed Deposits for Receivables; Completed Monthly Financials
- Filed all Completed Payables & Receivables Documentation
- Wrote checks for SWCD various insurance premiums; had Rich sign; mailed; e-mailed copies to Debbie Holsapple; contacted SWCD worker's comp agent to update insurance premium payment and remove monthly fee.
- Completed Semi-Monthly IL Lobbyist Expenditure Data for IL Secretary of State for May.
- Will complete Deposit for CREP Coordinator March 2012 voucher; will write checks, have Rich sign, and mail to participating Districts for reimbursement
- Posting FY '12 SWCD Dues payments to database, making deposits, and sending thank you letters to Districts via e-mail by end of May.

LOOKING AHEAD:

- June QB Meeting
- CREP 319 & 608 Grant Programs
- Annual Meeting

REMEMBER: If you don't like something, change it; if you can't change it, change the way you think about it!!!

TO ACT: Remember that sometimes the smallest gesture can change the world!!!!

Happy Father's Day!!!!!!

Sherry



PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - KELLY THOMPSON

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Welcome! Summer, you have arrived; however, not officially until June 20. It seems like only yesterday cool, wet and unpleasant weather burdened our weekly routines. Now warm (or should I say HOT) weather is here to stay, for several months at least.

Provided below is the monthly update on the Illinois Urban Manual and Post Development Stormwater Runoff Standards Work Group.

-IUM-

The Illinois Urban Manual Steering Committee (SC) met on Wednesday, May 23 via conference call. The agenda was quite large but the information was addressed in a timely manner. Thank you to everyone who was able to participate! The next SC meeting is scheduled for late July to early August. The Technical Review Committee (TRC) meeting is scheduled to take place on June 4. The TRC will have a lot to accomplish in a short amount of time as September 1, 2012 is soon to approach. This is the first of three grant deadlines in which 6-7 urban standards are required to be updated.

Currently, urban standards *Lined Channel or Outlet 872* and *Open Channel 878* are featured on US Army Corps of Engineer (USACE) website under public review. The public comment period runs from May 15 to June 15, 2012. If you have any questions regarding the two standards posted on public review, please email or call and I will be glad to assist in answering your questions. Here is the public review site for both standards: <http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/co-r/currpn.htm>

***UPDATE:**

A new urban standard was approved by IEPA and has been updated on the IUM website. Go check it out: [Silt Curtain - Floating 917](http://aiswcd.org/IUM/standards/urbst917.html) along with associated drawings [617A](http://aiswcd.org/IUM/urban_drawings/IUM-617A.pdf) & [617B](http://aiswcd.org/IUM/urban_drawings/IUM-617B.pdf).

Website: <http://aiswcd.org/IUM/standards/urbst917.html>; http://aiswcd.org/IUM/urban_drawings/IUM-617A.pdf; http://aiswcd.org/IUM/urban_drawings/IUM-617B.pdf

-PDSWRS Work Group-

April 26th meeting:

During the last PDSWRS work group meeting group members welcomed three newly invited members: City of Peoria-Public Works Department; Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago; Madison County Planning and Development. Presentations were given by Hal Sprague of Center for Neighborhood Technology; Kurt Woolford of Lake County SWMC; Cindy Skrudrud of Sierra Club; Tom Ripka of IDOT. Presentations are posted on the [PDSWRS](#) work group website under *Presentations & Handouts*. Work group members engaged in a brainstorming activity to determine important components and criteria to be incorporated into the performance standards. Brainstorming outline can be found on the PDSWRS work group website under *Meeting Notes* then *Brainstorming Results*. Following the meeting, the group participated in a 'survey monkey' survey to rank criteria listed from the brainstorming session. Results will help to determine which criteria should be considered for the performance standards. All meeting proceedings can be found on the PDSWRS website under *Meeting Notes*.

May 31st meeting:

As always, if you have any questions regarding the IUM update initiative or the PDSWRS work group, feel free to email or call!

Look forward to seeing you at the AISWCD quarterly board meeting on June 11 and 12 in Springfield, IL at the Northfield Center!

Have a great month of June!

Kelly

ISWCDEA CORNER - KARA DOWNIN, ISWCDEA RC VICE CO-CHAIR AND REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE

website: <http://www.il.ncdea.org>



By now you should have all received your Field Office of the Future meeting schedule. Unless your Area Meeting has already passed, please plan to attend this very important meeting. SWCD Board Directors (past or present for that matter) are also strongly encouraged to attend. Washington is asking the states what they want instead of dictating orders, so be proactive and let your voice be heard!

Have you chosen your sessions for Summer Conference? Deadlines are soon approaching. Registration is requested prior to June 30th to avoid a late fee. ISWCDEA will be hosting a 50/50 raffle beginning shortly and ending at Summer Conference. To get started, the minimum prize will be \$100.00.

The ISWCDEA plans to have license plate order forms available during Summer Conference. An order form and \$25 are needed to fulfill a commitment. 1500 commitments are needed before any plates will be made. The \$25 will go to Envirothon even if the full commitment is not realized. Can each District secure 16 commitments? I'll bet between each county's board, staff and Power of 10 contacts, this need could be met. Help us reach this goal and raise over \$37,000 for Envirothon!



ILLINOIS CHAPTER - IAAP - JANE BRANGENBERG, PRESIDENT

website: <http://iaap-swcd.tripod.com>

The International Association of Administrative Professionals is celebrating 70 years as an association! To celebrate, the dues have been reduced now through December of 2012 for new members. When you sign up this year, dues are only \$70 plus a one-time \$15 processing fee (\$85 total)! Join today to take advantage of the world's best networking and education for administrative professionals. That's a deal you can't refuse and this is something that has never been done before.

Our July meeting will be held at Summer Conference on July 23rd from 10:30-12:00. The short IAAP business meeting will be followed by our sponsored session, "Business Etiquette, The new rules in a digital age". Guidelines on digital protocols in the workplace, find out what executives say about etiquette in the workplace, learn how to tend to your network in just five minutes a day, and gain a better insight into the social networking style. This session is open to anyone interested in attending.

For more information you can e-mail me at jane.brangenberg@il.nacdnet.net. Make sure to check out our updated website!



Natural Area Guardians-Debra Carey

demydoidea@gmail.com

Bluebirds

Six long Midwestern summers had slowly faded into fall before the old man's patience was finally rewarded. He remembered, with perfect clarity, flipping through the newsprint pages of the farming magazine, then suddenly stopping on page 49 to gaze at a simple blueprint for a bluebird house. A warm flood of boyhood memories washed through his mind; his dusty, cracked hands unconsciously clasped an imaginary hammer handle as he dreamed of constructing a home for his very own bluebirds.

As a young man growing up in northern Illinois, bluebirds were a common sight for Hank; their azure wings and rosy breast a welcome harbinger of spring. But declining livestock operations meant fewer acres of pasture and this meant fewer bluebirds. Sweet, grassy meadows were replaced by a monoculture of straight and rigid rows of corn. Crooked hedge posts not only offered some stability to a tangled, rusty maze of barbed wire that encircled these pasture but also provided cavities and crannies where bluebirds could successfully nest. Certainly no farm, in his day, was complete without an apple orchard where Jonathans and Winesaps stretched their gnarled arms to the sky while their well-worn trunks, streaks with jagged frost cracks, fledged many a bluebird. And an upsurge in the number of non-native starlings competed for, and won, the few remaining nest sites.

Retired from farming, and seemingly relegated to the immobility of life in a small town, the possibility of attracting these gems of blue to his somewhat shabby back yard seemed, to Hank, an impossibility. But each night after Annie fixed his supper, his felt-slipped feet would shuffle across the worn linoleum and his hands would fumble for page 49. As the furnace kicked on to warm those bitter January nights he eagerly devoured each measurement and instruction. Hank's mind was on March and May.



Though his back yard may not have won the "Yard of the Month" award, its attributes actually provided excellent bluebird habitat. Located on the east edge of town, his one acre adjoined the land of an urban family who had fled the city lights in order to raise Paint horses. A spring-fed creek, choked with emerald watercress, slipped crookedly through the horse pasture. Hank's yard was a mess of flowers and grasses, loving tended by Annie, and mowed at least every couple of weeks, whether it needed it or not.

February found Hank sawing, drilling, hammering and chipping away at the ice and snow as he set the wooden posts at intervals around his yard. Topping the posts were his three treasured bluebird houses.

Then he waited, and waited, and waited. He almost gave up during the fifth year. He almost caved in to the repeated nesting attempts of those pesky English sparrows. But his stubborn German heritage made him continue to snatch those dirty sparrow nests out of his beloved bluebird houses; better empty than filled with sparrows!

The seventh spring found Hank methodically plodding around his rain-drenched yard checking his bluebird houses. Number One - empty; Number Two - empty; Number Three - what's this? The beginnings of a neatly constructed cup of dried grasses, amber and brown, rust and yellow! Carefully hollowed to hold a future family, Hank believed that this was, indeed, a bluebird nest. He was jubilant and carefully penciled the following notation in his seed corn pocket notebook; "March 26, 1995, Box Number Three, a bluebird nest (I hope and pray)".

And it was! Subsequent days found Hank firmly seated in his wicker porch rocker watching his bluebirds. First one egg, then two more, finally a fourth blue oval nestled cozily in the circle of grasses. Pulling out his now tattered page 49, Hank checked incubation times and was rewarded with four baby bluebirds on the proper day. Few persons living in the small town were unaware of Hank's success; he gave daily reports to anyone who professed the slightest interest and even to those who didn't!



Tragedy struck on a warm evening as mosquitoes dive-bombed everyone in town. Slaps and smacks got rid of a few of the pests but aerial spraying by the Mosquito Squad wiped out the entire bug population including butterflies and honeybees - innocent victims of human intolerance to annoyance.

Hank found another innocent victim Friday morning. the male bluebird, his brilliant feathers now dulled with dust, was crumpled on the grass, dead in Hank's back yard. The female was never seen again and Hank hoped beyond reason that she had a premonition of disaster and had flown away before the deadly loads of insecticide laced the village air.

Continued on page 8



Bluebirds

Continued from page 7

Heartbroken and unsure of what to do, Hank talked to a neighbor who suggested contacting a federally licensed wildlife rehabilitator. By Sunday, two baby bluebirds were still clinging tenaciously to life as Hank piloted his '73 Chevy forty miles to deliver his much-loved babies to me.

Literally hundreds of birds have passed through my wildlife rehab center. Some have lived to once again beat the blue sky with strong wings; some have not. Hank's babies were lucky. He had valiantly kept them warm and fed them canned cat food which is not at all a bad emergency ration for nestlings.

As the birds matured, fluff became sleek blue feathers and babyish peeps turned into sweet and pure warbles. Both birds thrived on a diet high in protein and fruit. Hank called for regular bluebird reports and was pleased at their progress. He had grave concerns with releasing the birds in his backyard since he could not be sure that additional insect spraying would not occur. It was decided that I would take the birds to my farm for their grand re-entry into the real world.

Does any parent not feel concern when their child enters the arena of adulthood to search for fame and fortune? Well, I can definitely tell you that this surrogate mother worries about a hundred different calamities that might befall her adopted wildlife. And yes, for a creature raised in captivity, no matter how scientifically and how lovingly, nothing can match the devotion and instruction of a real mother. How does a human teach a bluebird that he must find a safe spot to roost each evening before the great-horned owls begin their supper forays? How do you teach a bluebird that he must search diligently for bugs and fruit?

Fortunately the Creator-installed ability called instinct kicks in when surrogate parenting fails. When a licensed rehabilitator releases an orphan, we rarely see the creature again. Did it survive the first night? Can it find enough to eat? Does it have enough sense to come in out of the rain?

Hank's bluebirds proved to be models of sensibility and success. After releasing them one morning, I returned home some eight hours later to be greeted by a bluebird serenade from their lookout posts near my horse barn. Immediately I chopped up some fresh peach and offered the dish to the birds. They flew to me and greedily attacked the fruit. They remained in the area for many weeks, and even though they enjoyed my daily offerings of a bit of fruit, they had obviously learned correct foraging habits.

What better reward for helping the helpless than to drive down my lane, open my truck door and be dazzled by flying gems of blue. Thanks, Hank, for caring.

SWCD LICENSE PLATES NEED TO BE ORDERED!

Have you ordered your SWCD license plate yet? For many years, since the "Environmental" license plate first appeared, soil and water conservation districts have been talking about getting a specialized plate to promote soil and water conservation efforts in Illinois. With the passage of HB 4966, sponsored by Representative Chapin Rose, that discussion idea became reality. Public Act 96-1377 was signed July 29, 2010 allowing any Illinois resident to request a soil and water conservation district license plate for their automobile or light truck. **That law will expire September 28, 2012 unless 1,500 plates are ordered.**

We hope that since most of the crops are planted farmers and their families will have a little time to think about other things and we hope they will think about supporting soil and water conservation in Illinois. The money from the orders and \$25 from the sale of renewal plates will go to support the Illinois Envirothon, a very worthy cause.

To order a plate, interested persons need only complete a short form and mail it along with a nonrefundable \$25 deposit to secure their order. The funds will be used for the Illinois Envirothon whether there are sufficient orders to print the plates or not. In order for the Secretary of State to make the first printing, 1,500 plates must be ordered. Once that number has been reached, the Secretary of state will ask for a design to be submitted and if it is found to meet legal requirements then the first run of plates will be printed.

Only sixteen plates need to be ordered in each of Illinois' 97 soil and water conservation districts to meet the minimum so be sure to get your plates ordered now and ask your friends and customers if they will consider supporting soil and water conservation in Illinois. They are going to have to buy a plate or sticker anyway. They might as well make it a plate that supports a great cause **AND** promotes soil and water conservation.

You can obtain an order form at: http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/vsd702.pdf. Print out a bunch and give them to your friends and neighbors or anyone else who might have an interest.

The name of the specialty plate is "**Soil and Water Conservation.**" Complete the rest of the form, sign it and mail it with a **\$25 check** to the Springfield office of the Secretary of State. Orders will not be accepted without the payment.



Illinois Envirothon

2012 Winners!

Congratulations!

1st Place - Triad HS
Madison SWCD

•

2nd Place - Midland HS
Marshall-Putnam SWCD

•

3rd Place - Morris HS
Grundy SWCD

Category Winners

Aquatics - Paris Cooperative HS, Edgar SWCD

Forestry - Triad HS, Madison SWCD

Soils - Midland HS, Marshall-Putnam SWCD

Wildlife - Tie: Dongola HS, Union SWCD;
Midland HS, Marshall-Putnam SWCD

5th Category - Tie: El Paso-Gridley HS,
Woodford SWCD;

Glenbrook South HS, North Cook SWCD

Oral Presentation - Morris HS, Grundy SWCD

Team Spirit Award - Morris HS, Grundy SWCD

T- Shirt Award - Auburn HS, Sangamon SWCD



The Triad Team: From left to right are: Advisor, Sandy Perkins; Christian Vanhooser; Kelly Kries; Ryan Mehallow; Joe Bednara; Lindsey Roberts; and Chaperone Jim Perkins.



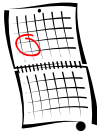
Second Place Winner: LUC-3: Midland HS, Marshall-Putnam SWCD

Team Members: Damion Schierer, Drew Herridge, James Dunphy, Emma Schoepke, and Evan Koehler

The advisors are Mr. Brad Stork and Mr. James Sroka

Third Place Winner: LUC-3: Morris HS, Grundy SWCD
Team Members: Kevin Wendling, Micayla Post, Anna Pfaff, Kevin Burling, and Rachel Neuhalfen
The advisors are Mr. Rob Wallon and Ms. Carolyn Dow





MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Memorial Day - May 28th, Office closed
- Flag Day - June 14th
- Father's Day - June 17th
- Independence Day - July 4th, Office Closed
- 2012 Annual Meeting and Summer Conference - July 23 - 24, Northfield Inn and Conference Center



2012 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- June 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - June 11th/12th, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- September 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - September 11th, Teleconference 8:00 am (Only if Needed)
- December 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 10th/11th, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL

June is:

- Candy Month
- Dairy Month
- Fight the Filthy Fly Month
- National Adopt a Cat Month
- National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month
- Rose Month



June dates of note:

- National Doughnut Day - June 1st
- National Bubba Day - June 2nd
- Fishing Week - June 3rd - 9th
- Hug Your Cat Day - June 4th
- World Environment Day - June 5th
- National Chocolate Ice Cream Day - June 7th
- Red Rose Day - June 12th
- Fresh Veggies Day - June 16th
- Summer Arrives - June 20th
- National Catfish Day - June 25th
- Sun Glasses Day - June 27th
- Meteor Day - June 30



July is:

- National Blueberry Month
- National Anti-Boredom Month
- National Cell Phone Courtesy Month
- National Hot Dog Month
- National Ice Cream Month



July dates of note:

- World UFO Day - July 2nd
- National Fried Chicken Day - July 6th
- Chocolate Day - July 7th
- Cheer Up The Lonely Day - July 11th



AISWCD Mission: *To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs*

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