

Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs)

There are 97 soil and water conservation districts making a difference in your community. No matter how big or small, each of the 102 counties is represented equally. From educating homeowners on practical utilization of water to helping rural landowners save soil and improve water quality; it takes everyone working together to protect our soil and water! Without these vital resources our communities cannot thrive!



During the 2012 spring session, the Illinois General Assembly will have the opportunity to address a number of issues that have had devastating effects on many downstate conservation programs.

Proposed legislation such as SB3616 will help fund SWCDs, HB5366 if amended will help cost share recipients deal with prevailing wage issues and the gaming bill will provide stable funding for the SWCDs. We respectfully request that members of the House and Senate give careful and positive consideration to supporting these measures.



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Soil and Water Conservation District Funding Still a Major Problem

As the tempo begins to pick up for the final stretch of the spring session, funding is still an issue for the soil and water conservation districts. During the next few weeks, members of the House and Senate will begin debating the fiscal Year 2013 State Budget.

Budgeteers in both chambers will be looking at the various programs and making adjustments to funding lines based on the most current available information of need vs. projected revenue.

We hope that the members responsible for assembling the final budget proposals will not forget the needs of the only Illinois unit of local government that remains entirely at the mercy of the General Assembly for its ability to continue to function. The SWCDs do not have the ability to tax to generate operating funds and must rely on the state for their continued existence.

With constitutionally mandated programs now usurping nearly all of the general revenue funds, SWCDs are suffering the undeserved consequences of being tied to a single funding source.

Illinois' soil and water conservation districts have seen steady declines in funding since 2002. General revenue source funding has been reduced by 65% since 2010 and the proposed \$2,485 million for FY13 is nearly 70% less than the 2002 appropriation.

Illinois' Soil and Water Conservation Districts have been carrying out the State's core

function of protecting our soil, water, and air for more than seventy years.

Less staff means less federal farm program funds and less rural economic activity. Illinois receives approximately \$225 - \$240 million federal program dollars every year. At any given time there is approximately \$450 million tied to individual contracts for conservation programs available to help boost the economy.

SWCD employees spend the majority of their time assisting individuals who participate in federal programs. Without the assistance provided by SWCD employees, a significant amount of that money will not be able to be used and will eventually be reallocated to other states. The result will be a loss in jobs and a loss of taxes from the sale of goods and services that help support local economies and economic gain for the state.

The soil and water conservation districts are one of the very few, if not the only, local governmental units that return more money to the State than is spent by the State for their operation.

In fact, soil and water conservation districts administer programs that return more than \$26 to the State in economic benefits from the sale of goods and services for every \$1 the State provides for their operation.

More than one-third of the SWCDs are nearing the point of losing functionality. When that point is reached, there will be no ability to utilize dollars for some programs in those counties.



Soil and Water Conservation Districts Assist Agricultural and Urban Citizens by Providing Access to Limited Use Equipment

- The 97 SWCDs are continually involved in assisting local interests to maximize use of available resources while also protecting these essential environmental resources.
- SWCDs provide tools and equipment for urban and rural landowners when those tools would be too expensive to buy for small property owners.
- Through cost sharing and rental programs, SWCD's encourage the protection, conservation and wise use of our natural resources to assure sustainability for future generations.



NOTE: SWCDs DO NOT have taxing authority and must rely on state source funding to employ staff to administer programs.

Gaming expansion being considered by the 97th General Assembly has the potential to create thousands of jobs and fund SWCDs at a sustainable level.

PROTECT & CONSERVE

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Districts' Spotlight



The Brand New Coles County SWCD Website Has Been Launched

www.colescountyswcd.org

The new website contains information on:

Upcoming Events

Education Materials & Events

Sales: fish, prairie plants, trees, rain barrels, books, marking flags

Rentals: no-till drills, tree spades, burn equipment

State & Federal Programs

Electronic Newsletter Sign-up



Conservation Funds Available

Each fiscal year the Coles County SWCD has cost-share funds available for various conservation practices on farm land. Practices included in the program are Filter Strips, Field Border Strips, Grassed Waterways, Critical Area Plantings, Terraces, and Grade Stabilization Structures.

Contract sign-up is typically in July at the beginning of the SWCD fiscal year, although notification of your interest in the program can be discussed at any time of year. The SWCD will prioritize the applications received based on tons of soil saved, acres benefited, cost per acre of practice, and cost per ton of soil saved. Practices must be installed in the Fall or Spring of that Fiscal year.

To be eligible, landowners need to have a conservation plan approved by the SWCD. To receive cost share, the land upon which the landowner intends to install the practice must be experiencing a required amount of erosion. The amount of cost share assistance is based on a cost share list where the district will provide up to 60% of the cost of the practice.

Partners for Conservation (PFC) funds are available through the Conservation 2000 legislation to help landowners achieve the T by 2000 goals set by the state of Illinois. Achieving tolerable soil loss levels on cropland will assure productive agricultural lands for the future as well as help improve water quality.

Please contact our office with any questions 217-345-3901 ext. 3.

New Drill

The Coles County SWCD now has a 5' Truax Flex II Grass Drill for rent. This drill is perfect for planting grass waterways and filter strips. The Truax can only be used to plant cool season grasses. We also still have our 15' John Deere no-till drill available. Effective January 1, 2012; a drill rental agreement must be signed when a drill is rented from the SWCD. This helps ensure that our equipment remains in the best possible condition for our producers.

Copies of the rental agreement are available at our office or on our website, www.colescountyswcd.org, under the rental tab.



New Disc Harrow

The District now has a 6ft disc harrow for rent. Disc harrows are designed specifically for homes, small farms, and nurseries requiring a durable tillage tool that adds productivity to a tractor. This disc is perfect for creating burn breaks. The specifications for this disc are at right. The new disc harrow can be rented for \$75.00 per day. Contact our office about the disc or other burn equipment.



Width	72"
Disc Diameter	18"
Disc quantity	20
Disc spacing	7 - 1/2"
Approximate weight	818 lbs.
Tractor hitch	Cat. 1
Tractor engine hp	32 - 70 hp

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YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER, YOUR ILLINOIS

association of illinois

SOIL &
WATER

conservation districts

4285 North Walnut Street Road
Springfield, IL 62707
217.744.3414 ph
217.744.3420 fax
www.aiswcd.org