

**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 has the services of a SWCD. 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!



The 2013 State Budget contains funding levels for the 97 SWCDs that are \$739,500 (more than 10%) less than 2012 levels, an amount that is sure to see many SWCDs falter and cease providing services during the 2013 fiscal year. Without further action by the General Assembly it is likely that 31 SWCDs will be unable to function by January 1, 2013.

**THIS ISSUE**

**Planning is an Important Part of
What SWCDs Do P. 1**

**FY13 State Budget Hard on
SWCDs P. 1**

Districts' Spotlight P. 2

**SWCDs Provide Many Kinds
of Services and Assistance P. 2**

PLANNING IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT SWCDs DO

Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) assist with the development of many kinds of plans for improvement and protection of Illinois' environmental resources.

The most basic plans are those that the SWCDs develop for landowners who want to protect their soil from the damaging forces of erosion and improve their water quality by implementing practices that help filter pollutants from stormwater runoff.

The districts have been preparing these kinds of plans since they were first created in the late 30s and early 40s. As practices used to control soil erosion and improve water quality became more sophisticated and the science of practice application improved, the districts increased the training and skill levels required of their employees.

In the late 60s and early 70s people began to realize that soil erosion and water quality were not just a rural problem and the soil and water conservation districts began to work in urbanizing areas.

The practices called for in these more congested areas were different from the large structures and practices used on agricultural lands. These urban practices needed to be more compact and in many cases, more aesthetically designed to fit in with the urban landscapes. This called for more training and greater skills to adapt effective agricultural control measures to the urban area.

To help in that effort, Illinois soil and water

conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service developed the Illinois Urban Manual (IUM). The IUM began as a series of guidance documents that were used, at first, sporadically by rapidly developing areas in the north eastern counties surrounding Chicago. As time passed and village, city and county governments became more aware of the issues created by development, the demand for the IUM as a tool to help protect storm sewers, development sites and existing roads and other infrastructure increased. Several municipal and county planning and zoning offices began passing ordinances requiring developers to utilize the soil and water conservation districts and the control measures contained in the IUM.

Today most of the larger metropolitan areas in Illinois have some kind of ordinance requiring developers to follow best management practices in controlling on-site and off-site soil erosion and protecting water quality during and after construction.

The soil and water conservation districts are central to developing plans to accomplish the goals of the ordinances and to work with developers and local government to assure that proper maintenance is carried out after the development is complete.

The SWCDs will continue to assist with planning efforts in both rural and urban areas no matter what the problem may be.

With more than 70 years of successful planning experience, there is no better entity to trust with that task.



Soil and Water Conservation Districts Provide Many Kinds of Services and Assistance.

- The 97 SWCDs are continually involved in implementing the most up-to-date conservation practices to maximize use of available resources while also protecting these essential environmental resources.
- SWCDs provide needed information for urban and rural decision makers so that they can make wise choices that will protect people and property in the future
- Through the various programs they administer and the technical assistance they provide, 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 legislation being considered by the 97th General Assembly has the potential to create thousands of jobs and fund SWCDs at a sustainable level.

PROTECT & CONSERVE

PROTECT & CONSERVE



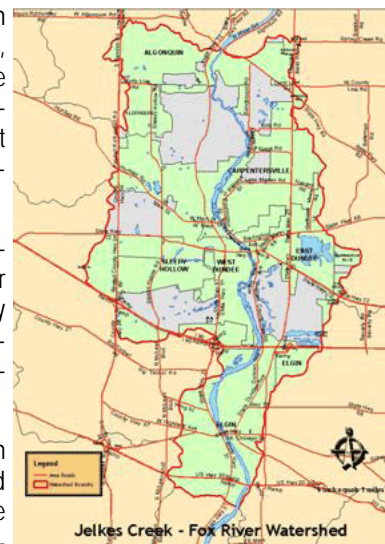
Districts' Spotlight

Kane-DuPage SWCD: The Fox River-Jelkes Creek Watershed is located mainly in northern Kane County but also includes small portions of McHenry, and Cook Counties. The Fox River segment flows through portions of Elgin, Carpentersville, East Dundee, West Dundee and Sleepy Hollow.

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency recently awarded a Section 319 grant to the Kane-DuPage Soil and Water Conservation District, (KDSWCD) to organize planning and technical committees to aid in the writing and implementation of a watershed based plan for the Fox River-Jelkes Creek Watershed. In conjunction with the watershed plan, nonpoint source education efforts will be developed to insure that the public understands the importance of protecting water quality within the watershed.

The watershed planning process gives community members an opportunity to share information and ideas to address local water quality and water resource issues. Once completed, the watershed plan will identify priority projects to improve water quality within the watershed. Illinois EPA approved watershed plans are then eligible for state and federal grants including Clean Water Act, Section 319 nonpoint pollution grant funding.

In order to create a comprehensive watershed plan for the area, input from citizens, agencies, organizations, businesses, resource professionals and elected officials will be needed. The district welcomes stakeholders in the watershed to attend the initial planning meeting as well as follow-up meetings to create a Fox River-Jelkes Creek Watershed Plan.



LaSalle SWCD: Natural Resource Inventory reports are provided to inform officials of the local governing body and other decision makers with natural resource information. This information may be useful when undertaking land use decisions concerning variations, amendments or relief of local zoning ordinances, proposed subdivision of vacant or agricultural lands and the subsequent development of these lands. Reports are required under Section 22.02a of the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act.

The NRI reports present the most current natural resource information available in a readily understandable manner. Reports contain a description of the present site conditions, the present resources, and the potential impacts that the proposed change may have on the site and its resources. The natural resource information is gathered from standardized data, on-site investigations and information furnished by the petitioner. Each report must be read in its entirety so that the relationship between the natural resource factors and the proposed land use change can be fully understood.

The NRI report, when used properly, will provide the basis for proper land use change decisions and development while protecting the natural resource base of the county.

Each NRI report contains:

- Parcel Location
- Site specific information on nearby Ag Areas, Cultural Resources Information, Drainage and Runoff
- Watershed Characteristics
- Location of parcel on the Flood Insurance Rate Map. The FEMA map would indicate if the property is located in a floodplain.
- Location of the parcel on the Illinois State Geological Survey. This map would indicate the topography of the site.
- Location of Wetlands on the parcel. Wetlands are identified by the U.S. Department of Fish & Wildlife Service.
- Woodlands situated on the property.
- Geological information of the parcel.
- Soils found on the parcel. Soils are derived from the Soil Survey of LaSalle County. Information on the soils, Building Site Development Limitations, and Limitations for Sanitary Facilities is also taken from the Soil Survey of LaSalle County.
- Threatened and Endangered Species information.
- Land Evaluation and Site Assessment System (LESA) Report.
- Information regarding stormwater management and water quality impacts, soil erosion and sediment control.

Issue 12 Vol. 3 • December 2012

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