

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!



We Need Your Help

SWCDs are an important link to deliver state and federal source funds that directly benefit the local and state economy. The economic benefit the SWCDs provide is far greater than the amount of money that is appropriated for their use by the General Assembly.

Please support legislation that includes funding for the SWCDs



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Strong Winds Show Need for Conservation

The newspapers have recently provided accounts of accidents and road closures due to blowing dust and snow. In one instance, several miles of State Rt. 108 were closed for a period of time on January 24th due to dust from adjacent farm fields blowing across the road and reducing visibility to near zero. The blowing dust was blamed for two accidents.

Even though the ground was frozen, bare soil will dry and become airborne under the right conditions. Those conditions apparently existed on the 24th.

On January 25th and 26th blowing snow was the problem in northern Illinois. Winds of 25 to 30 miles an hour caused snow from adjacent lands to blow across most north-south roads including Interstates 55, 57 and 39. The snow reduced visibility but more significantly, it also drifted across the south bound lanes and in some areas, across the north bound lanes as well. Traffic, moving from clear, protected areas into areas not protected from the wind, encountered the sudden drifts and slick spots causing traffic to slow suddenly resulting in many drivers ending up in the ditch while trying to avoid a collision.

It is amazing how much difference the untilled corn stalks made in the road conditions. Where the stalks were left in the fields adjacent to the highway, both travel lanes were completely clear. Where the fields had been tilled, however, the

blowing snow covered the south bound lanes and in some cases drifted across the median and into the north bound lanes.

Traffic encountering the drifted snow was forced to slow because of poor visibility and slick road conditions. The sudden slowing caused many drivers to hit their brakes and slide on the slick pavement, often resulting in the vehicle leaving the road.

I don't know if there were any serious injuries but I'm reasonably certain there was damage to many of the vehicles.

Why did some of the farmers choose not to till their corn stalks? The answer is, they most likely have a conservation plan prepared and approved by the soil and water conservation district.

The SWCDs work hard year round to help farmers and rural and urban landowners make informed decisions regarding the care of the natural resources under their control.

Because of significantly reduced funding levels over the past several years, the SWCDs do not have sufficient staff to adequately address the workload of assisting those in control of the natural resources to manage those resources in a way that will protect them now, and for the future.

We need your help to be able to hire and train SWCD staff to help landowners protect their land and water resources.



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 educational assistance to urban and rural decision makers so that they can make wise choices that will protect people and property in the future
- Through education and the various programs they administer, and the technical assistance they provide, SWCD's encourage the protection, conservation and wise use of our environmental 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.

Your efforts as a member of the General Assembly, have resulted in a \$515,000 increase for soil and water conservation districts in the FY14 state operating budget.

THANK YOU!

PROTECT & CONSERVE

Districts' Spotlight

Highlights of Legislative Day 2014:

More than 60 soil and water conservation district directors, their employees and partner organizations made the trip to Springfield on February 25th to talk with legislators and explain why it is important to support soil and water conservation efforts.



Some of our participants pose on the Capitol's west wing stair case.



Shelly Seman - Sangamon, Tiffany Hanson - Rep. Poe's Secretary and Representative Raymond Poe.

The Senate Appropriations II Committee.

Your attentiveness and concern for our needs is greatly appreciated.

We hope you will feel free to call on the Association or on the individual SWCDs at any time you have questions regarding issues related to conservation of our natural resources.

Thank you.



Jami Mowen - Schuyler, Kara Downin - Knox, Abbie Sperry - Hancock, Representative Michael Unes and Joan Whitney - Knox SWCD.

We had a great day visiting with legislators and an enjoyable reception following the visits. Below are some pictorial highlights the day's activities.



Representative Wayne Rosenthal, Melissa Cauble and Kris Reynolds - Montgomery SWCD.

Our sincere thanks to the legislators who made time to talk with us, especially those members of the House and Senate Ag and Conservation Committees, the House Appropriations - General Services Committee and



Everyone seemed to enjoy the reception at Boone's Saloon.

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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