

CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE:

Awards:

Entries have been judged for the Poster Contest, Photo Contest, George McKibben Scholarship, Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award, and the Teacher of the Year. Districts that have winners have been notified.

Name Badges:

In an attempt to save money this year, we did not order lanyards for Annual Meeting name badges. They will clip onto your shirt. If you would like, you may bring last year's lanyard with you to use.

Session Time Changes:

Some registrations stated that the Advanced QuickBooks Session would be from 3:00 pm until 4:00 pm. Changes have been made and it will be from 2:00 pm to 3:00pm on Monday, July 28, 2014.

Opening Ceremonies will begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 28, 2014.

Conference Registration Times Update:

Because of the time change for Opening Ceremonies, registration will start at 6:30 am on Monday, July 28, 2014.

If you arrive on Sunday night, you may register from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm in the Continental Breakfast Room in the Northfield Hotel.

Hospitality Rooms:

Three rooms will be available this year at different times for you to enjoy snacks and beverages. *****Please clean up any mess that you make in these rooms.**

Peridot Room

(Second floor of the Northfield Hotel)
Bring your own alcohol and snacks.

Sunday, July 27, 2014
6:00 pm until ???

Monday, July 28, 2014
6:00 am until 1:00 pm & 4:00 pm until ???

Tuesday, July 29, 2014
6:00 am until 5:00 pm

Continental Breakfast Room: Northfield

Bring your own alcohol and snacks.

Sunday, July 27, 2014
8:30 pm until ???

Tuesday, July 29, 2014
1:30 pm until 5:00 pm

Jade Room

Cash Bar

Monday, July 28, 2014
Beginning of Auction until 2:00 am.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LONNIE WILSON

lonnieewilson@gmail.com

July is upon us already and wow we are sure getting our fair share of rain! Just another reason to tell the story of this great organization and the programs and practices put in place by our cooperators!

The Governor signed our budget bill! He did not veto anything out of the Ag budget, so our amounts remain the same.

- \$3,000,000 for operations
- \$4,500,000 for cost share
- \$400 for (in the SOS budget) for grant money from the sale of SWCD license plates

HB3793 also contains \$2,612,500 in cost-share capital funds, but those capital funds have not been released for year. We will have to watch this one to see what happens and when these might become available in the future to discuss those programs and the program funding potentials for SWCDs.

This is great news, but we must work on getting this money released and keep in mind that the state is facing some potential cash flow issues moving forward without the tax increase. Getting the funding early and as a one-time payment will be our goal in FY2015.

Now, this being my last time I get to address you in this forum, I would like to say THANK YOU to everyone across this state for everything you do. It has been an honor to represent you, working for you in Springfield, Regionally and in Washington DC. I have always tried my best to represent the state as a whole. Including the urban areas, the great down state agricultural areas and recreational regions we have. At times this can be a challenge, trust me. My hope moving forward is that the leadership of this organization will continue to see the importance of all these areas and continue to value their input and growth in conservation in not only to this state, but at the regional and national level also.

As for me, I am asked almost daily what and where I am going and what I am planning on doing. Well, I plan on going home and then, hey, I think somewhere in the back of that barn I left a bass boat when I took this position that I need to spend a little time with. Then I might figure out what is next, right after I get that blown over corn harvested!

Thank you everyone for everything you do. Thank you for giving me few years here to tell your wonderful story of this amazing organization. And please, keep creating more stories for many years to come. Farewell!



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - *RICH NICHOLS*

rich.nichols@aiswcd.org

Who will step up to the plate? The bases are loaded; there are two outs in the bottom of the ninth. Who will step up to the plate and do their best to help the home team win?

That question applies to more than baseball. Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Plan is complete except for the final step, a 30-day public comment period. The plan then goes to USEPA for the agency's review. The plan being submitted to USEPA calls for a 45% reduction of nutrient loads to waters leaving Illinois by 2025. That will be a monumental task. The estimated cost to accomplish that level of reduction is \$800,000,000 per year (\$8 billion total). There simply is not that much money available and there will not be that level of funding available in the foreseeable future. The plan calls for voluntary compliance at least until it is apparent that the voluntary approach is not working. State agencies do not have staff to do the work, Federal agencies will not spend their limited dollars to accomplish a state mandated program unless USEPA intervenes, which is highly unlikely. And, even then, it would take legislation at the federal level for agencies such as NRCS to be able to work on a state mandated program.

So, where do we go from here? Who will step up to the plate? My suggestion would be for the SWCDs to do just that. Some of you have been around long enough to remember the T by 2000 program and the issues it was to address. You may recall that the state water quality plan adopted in the late 1970s called for the reduction of soil erosion to tolerable ("T") levels by the year 2000. To achieve that goal, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Act was amended to include a requirement for the 98 SWCDs to develop a program with standards for controlling soil erosion on agricultural land to tolerable levels. Thus was born the T by 2000 program. The anticipated cost of achieving "T" on all cropland acres was estimated at \$1.8 billion over a nineteen-year period (1981 - 2000).

A quick calculation will reveal that SWCDs and others involved in controlling soil erosion have spent nowhere near that projected amount but we have made significant progress in bringing cropland erosion rates down to "T". I believe that is primarily because the SWCDs took ownership of the program and "stepped up to the plate".

We are now faced with a similar situation. We must somehow convince agricultural producers that they are losing nutrients (and dollars) from subsurface drainage and surface runoff. We must also convince producers that they can remain profitable with less nitrogen and phosphorous by adopting one or more practices that will help retain the nutrients already present for use by the next crop.

The use of cover crops will make a big difference but cover crops alone will not solve nutrient loading problems. Just as we learned when we recommended no till to help reach T by 2000, not all producers have the management skills or equipment to adopt the practice. We will find the same issues with cover crops and with other nutrient loss reduction practices. It will again be up to the SWCDs to step up to the plate and demonstrate the effectiveness of the various practices and the improved economics of using the entire suite of available practices to retain nutrients on site.

Also, I believe very strongly that dollars will follow when the SWCDs take action. Just as it happened with T by 2000 when SWCDs saw significant increases in funding to meet the goals, I believe it will happen with the nutrient loss reduction program. The difference here is that the state has no money. But, there are other sources. Illinois EPA and USEPA are both very interested in reducing nutrient loading. Companies that produce fertilizers are interested in reducing nutrient loading - not so much from an environmental standpoint but from the perspective of making sure the regulatory constraints placed on agriculture and the use of fertilizer in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are not imposed in the Mississippi River watershed. Lake management agencies and companies that supply drinking water are interested in seeing nutrient loading reduced. Waste treatment plants that cannot afford to construct new, improved treatment facilities in the short term are interested in nutrient trading to help them meet standards while they carry out a longer-term remediation plan. These are but a few of the possible sources for funding that will be available for the SWCDs if they decide to assume a leadership role in carrying out nutrient loss reduction strategies.

Local leadership to help solve local natural resource problems is the reason SWCDs were created in the first place. Will your SWCD step up to the plate and provide the local leadership that can make a difference and keep Illinois' agriculture productive? I hope so.

Rich



PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - KELLY THOMPSON

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CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS!

NACD Urban and Community Webinars

The NACD Urban and Community Resource Policy Group (RPG) is looking forward to continuing the monthly U&C webinars, held on the third Thursday of each month. These popular webinars have covered a variety of urban and community conservation topics with districts sharing their projects and programs and other entities sharing information and resources.

View a full list of the past webinars at <http://www.nacdnet.org/policy/urban/webinars>.

The site also provides links to PDFs of all presentations and recordings of the FY2014 webinars.

***The RPG is now seeking your input for the series beginning in October 2015.
Help NACD design webinars that help you!***

Please take a moment to:

Offer to give a presentation

- ♦ *Please send in a brief paragraph describing the program/project that you would like to showcase, and/or*
- ♦ *Tell us the urban and community conservation topics/issues and/or speakers you would like to have covered*

*Send your ideas and proposals to Deb Bogar at deb-bogar@nacdnert.org by
August 1st*

WELCOME!

AISWCD and IUM Committees would like to welcome the new
Watershed Coordinator/Specialist:

Matthew Hanauer!

Matt will begin part-time on July 10th. His schedule will vary during the month of July. He will begin full-time starting August 1st. Feel free to send him an email welcoming him to the Conservation Team!

Matt.Hanauer@aiswcd.org

Look for Matt's first Conservation Catchall Article in the August edition!

Kelly Thompson, Program Coordinator



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

sherry.finn@aiswcd.org

Annual Meeting Update: Reminder-The Opening Ceremonies is scheduled to begin at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, July 28, 2014 rather than at 8:15 a.m. Please update your information. Also, I will be available in the Hotel Breakfast Room on Sunday Night, July 27, 2014 from 7:00 until 8:30 for anyone that wants to pick up their meal and/or session tickets for the Annual Meeting/Summer Conference. The Registration area (Conference Center 1 Lobby) for Monday morning will be open at 6:30 a.m. and on Tuesday morning (Conference Center 1 Lobby) at 7:00 a.m. Also, there will be a hospitality room available for the entire conference; look for upcoming updates on this info.

TAX LEVY UPDATE: Well, it is that time of year again. I have had a few inquiries regarding premium information for the 2015 Tax Levy for Districts. This information is effective 7/1/14. Listed below is the breakdown:

Each District's share of the liability insurance (which includes the "package" policy, the "umbrella" policy, and the "business auto" coverage) is **\$428.64**. SWCDs are covered up to \$1,000,000 by the package policy and an additional \$10,000,000 by the umbrella policy. These figures were calculated by me after receiving the premium notices 7-02-14 from R W Troxell Insurance Company for the FY 2014-2015 starting July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015.

The worker's compensation policy premium will need to be calculated by your office. I can give you the figures to use, but it has to be multiplied by the salary amounts, and I do not have those figures. Worker's compensation is calculated at \$0.31 per \$100 of salary for Clerical/Office Employees (ACs) and at \$1.21 per \$100 of salary for Architect or Engineer-Consulting Employees (RCs). These figures were provided by MidWest Insurance, our Workman's Compensation provider.

FYI: The above information provided to SWCDs is about being able to levy a local tax for the purpose of paying for the SWCD's liability insurance. This is nothing new and has been done by several SWCDs for a number of years. The tax is allowed by the Tort Immunity Act amendment to the SWCD Act which occurred many years ago (70 ILCS 405/2). The Tort Immunity Act allows local governmental units to levy a tax to pay for any judgments that may be entered against the unit of government. The Act also allows local units of government to levy a tax to pay for insurance to protect the unit of government from liability in most cases. While SWCDs do not write the check for their current liability protection, the money to pay for that policy is taken from the funds allocated for the SWCDs. Therefore, it is SWCD money that is paying for the insurance and you do have the ability to recover that cost through the tax levy. The above information provided is the amount that is taken to pay for your coverage and those are the numbers that can be used to document the amount you should be able to levy. The key will be to convince your county to levy the tax on your behalf. If you have questions, we would advise you to contact the Illinois Attorney General's Office or your local State's Attorney for advice or guidance in administering or implementing the taxing provisions of the Tort Immunity Act.

Reminder: The Directors & Officers Policy needs to be carried by your own District for your coverage. You may contact a local insurance agency or contact R. W. Troxell & Company Insurance in Springfield at (217) 321-3139 to inquire about coverage.

Links for Tax Levy Info

Legislative Page Link:

[http://www.aiswcd.org/legislative/;](http://www.aiswcd.org/legislative/)

Tax Levy Info:

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/2014-2015-Tax-Levy-Info.pdf>

Civil Immunities:

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CIVIL-IMMUNITIES-TORT-IMMUNITY-ACT-info-from-2010-Annual-Meeting.pdf>

Sample Letter:

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/District-Tort-Tax-Sample-Letter.pdf>

Reminder: An ounce of Action is worth a ton of theory!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherry Finn". The script is cursive and fluid, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.



Office Assistant's Information - Gina Bean

gina.bean@aiswcd.org

66th Annual Meeting

Just a few short weeks and the 66th Annual Meeting will be upon us. This will be my second time attending and helping prepare for the event. I've been busy making certificates, award posters, tickets, reserved table signs, the program, letters to award winners, collecting auction items, and much more. And you know what? I love every second of it!

Thank you to everyone that helps put on this event year after year. We couldn't do it without you.

Please don't forget to fill out your surveys during the conference. Those surveys help us make the event even better in the years to come. If you don't write it, we won't know what to fix. There will be separate surveys for the sessions again this year that you will turn in as you exit your session. We will also have the overall survey in the back of the program. Please fill that survey out and put it in the drop box at the Registration Table.

Conserve Water!

We have gotten a lot of rain lately, and in Springfield it looks like we will be receiving more this next week. Wells, ponds, lakes, and puddles are full....for now. I'm sure there will be a time this summer when we are hoping for even a sprinkle.

I found a great site that has many useful suggestions on how to conserve water. Don't just conserve when we are in need of water, conserve everyday.

Here are a few of my favorite suggestions from the website:

When you give your pet fresh water, don't throw the old water down the drain. Use it to water your trees or shrubs.

Use a commercial car wash that recycles water. Or, wash your car on the lawn, and you'll water your grass at the same time.

Toilet leaks can be silent! Make sure to test your toilet for leaks once a year.

Put food coloring into your toilet tank. If it seeps into the bowl without flushing, there's a leak. Fix it and start saving gallons.

If you accidentally drop ice cubes, don't throw them in the sink. Drop them in a house plant instead.

While you wait for hot water, collect the running water and use it to water plants.

Source: <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/>

Gina Bean



Legislative Corner - Mike Hoffmann

Governor signs SWCD budget without cuts; funding remains level

The Governor yesterday signed into law [HB6095](#), which contains the budget for the IL Department of Agriculture, including funding for the Soil and Water Conservation Program. So the budget stays the same as passed by the General Assembly at the end of May: \$7.5 million for state fiscal year 2015. Ag's budget contains two line items for soil and water conservation: \$3 million for grants to SWCDS; and \$4.5 million for cost share and other purposes. We will have to work with the IL Dept. of Agriculture again this year on the allocation and release of those funds.

The Governor also signed [SB0274](#) to give the Governor the authority to borrow up to \$650 million from the state's dedicated (non-general purpose) funds. Though no one knows which funds will be affected, it is possible that the state's fiscal situation could affect the timing of the release of funds to SWCDs, especially later in the fiscal year. Unless the General Assembly takes action before the first of the year, income tax rates, under the law now on the books, will go down on January 1, 2015, causing budget and cash flow problems. The General Assembly could take another stab next fall or winter at extending the income tax, but, if not, the state will begin to see revenues decline in the second half of the year.

Prevailing Wage legislation goes to the Governor

[HB5606](#), which we negotiate with some of the state's labor unions in order to get some relief from prevailing wage laws, was sent to the Governor on June 6. The Governor has 60 days – until about August 20 – to act on it. [HB5606](#) stipulates that, under the Prevailing Wage Act, the term "public works" does not include work done for purposes of soil and water conservation, whether or not done under public supervision or paid for wholly or in part out of public funds, and performed directly by an owner or person who has legal control on agricultural lands. Thanks to **Rep. David Reis (R-Effingham Co.)** and **Sen. Andy Manar (D-Macoupin Co.)** for sponsoring and passing the legislation.

We have contacted the Governor's office in support of the bill, and any support coming from the districts could only help. Please contact the Governor's office and encourage him to sign [HB5606](#).

Good time to visit with legislators

Now that the legislature is adjourned for the summer and the budget has been signed, it might be a good time to go see your legislators. Legislators like to talk to people doing work in their district, get to know them, and stay on top of projects going on there. Now they will be spending a lot of time in their districts and holding regular office hours or making visits around the district. Give you legislators a call and schedule an appointment to let them know what projects or events are on the horizon in your counties and thank them for supporting our budget and our efforts.

REMEMBER: KEEP YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS EDUCATED ON SWCD ACTIVITIES

Mike



ISWCDEA CORNER - *STEPHEN MILLER* *ISWCDEA REGION FOUR REPRESENTATIVE*

website: iswcdea.org

Thank you to everyone who pre-ordered Team Conservation T-Shirts! Your support of the T-shirt sale will help the ISWCDEA to continue providing assistance to all SWCD employees. Those that pre-ordered will be able to pick up their shirts at Summer Conference. If you missed the order deadline of June 30, you will still be able to pick up order forms at Summer Conference. You can stop by the ISWCDEA table at Summer Conference to pick up T-shirts, pay your dues, buy raffle tickets, or purchase SWCD license plate frames.

We encourage all SWCD employees attending Summer Conference to attend the Employee's Forum on Monday afternoon. Take some time beforehand to think of some topics you might like to discuss. With the large number of SWCDs in Illinois, there is a lot of diversity in how we do things. Our diversity allows us to be flexible in the services that we can provide in our districts and makes it easier for employees to try new or different ways of getting our work completed. Employees from different SWCDs are always interested in hearing what works and what doesn't work for their neighbors. By sharing your successes or your "learning experiences" you can help to make the Employee's Forum worthwhile. Your ISWCDEA reps will be available to answer questions as well.

As always, feel free to contact your ISWCDEA representatives any time with questions, comments, or concerns. We are always happy to hear from you!

Stephen



ILLINOIS CHAPTER - IAAP - *SALLY FERGUSON, PRESIDENT*

I would like to thank IAAP members for electing me as their new president. I look forward to the opportunity to serve and advance the administrative profession and Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Unfortunately, my term will be cut short. All IAAP chapters across the country are required by headquarters to dissolve by the end of December. It is sad news for all members. It took a lot of work and dedication to start the chapter in 2001 and build the respected organization we know today. A big thank you to all members past and present for your contributions to the organization and profession!

Districts have benefitted from IAAP's excellent training sessions and employee leadership development. There is interest in keeping these benefits and opportunities alive through a new group. But don't say goodbye to us yet--IAAP will go out with a bang at Summer Conference and Winter Training. We will have a nice budget to bring in a motivational speaker for Winter Training; contact me if you have any ideas!

Sally



*Association of Illinois Soil and Water
Conservation Districts
Conservation Partnership*

*Business, Consumer, &
Health Service Discounts!
TireBuyer Discounts!*

Perfect gifts for family members!

*For more information visit our website ~OR~ call Kelly Thompson at 217-744-3414
www.aiswcd.org/donate-membership/*

Look who has already joined!

Affiliate Members:

Marc Anderson
Sheryl and Richard Philips
Sue Davis
Della and Charles Moen
George and Cathy Hypke

Lifetime Members:

L&J Enterprises

Corporate Members:

Patten Cat

District Members:

Warren County SWCD

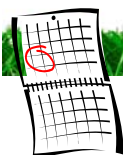
Affiliate Membership Reminder!!!!

Please remember that the money raised through the Conservation Partnership will go towards education activities and the Illinois State Envirothon.

Since Districts pay dues to AISWCD, they are given the discounts at cost at the rate of \$12. This \$12 is given directly to NAC who handles the discounts. AISWCD makes no profit off of a District's \$12. Once a District becomes a member, they will be able to use the discounts for office purposes.

The \$12 fee must be paid yearly to be eligible to receive discounts.

**Please consider joining today and support our Education activities!
Thank you!**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Fourth of July - July 4, 2014 : AISWCD office will be closed
- Regional Stewardship Challenge at Loyola University - August 3 - 5, 2014
- Ag Day at the IL State Fair - August 12, 2014
- IL State Fair, Springfield, IL - August 7-17, 2014

2013—2014 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- June 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - June 9th & 10th - Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- 66th AISWCD Annual Meeting and Conference - July 28 - 29, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- September 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - Executive Committee Meeting will be on September 9, 2014 at IDOA
- December 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 8 and 9, 2014
- Christmas Party - December 8, 2014

NACD SOIL HEALTH FORUM AND CONSERVATION TOUR

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is pleased to invite you to the Soil Health Forum and Conservation Tour, July 21-22, in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The tour and forum will be held in conjunction with NACD partners U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Participants will select from several farm tours highlighting on-the-ground conservation practices in part supported by USDA Farm Bill and EPA 319 programs, and will hear from a broad range of national and local-level speakers about practices and policies relating to soil health.

The NACD Soil Health Forum and Conservation Tour is an excellent opportunity to learn more about NACD, NRCS, and state soil health outreach efforts! For the latest information on the [agenda](#), tours, hotel, local attractions and to register, visit nacdnet.org/events/summer2014.

For questions, contact NACD Communications Director Bethany Shively at Bethany-shively@nacdnet.org.

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

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