

# **AISWCD**

## **Executive Director's Bi-Monthly Report**

Friday, February 6, 2015

Greetings all!

The first month of the New Year is now behind us. What great things are in store for your district this year? I'd like to hear from districts on what they are planning for 2015...new partnerships...new projects...upcoming events. Let me know and I'll feature them on the AISWCD website, in my bi-monthly report and on AISWCD Facebook page.

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### **AISWCD OFFICE UPDATE**

Gina is busy preparing for the AISWCD & Partners Legislative Day event on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> in Springfield. She is also finalizing the details for the March Quarterly Board meeting.

Matt is diligently working on the IUM practice standard updates. He is also participating in workshops throughout the state and working with districts who are in need of watershed planning services. Please contact him if your district has recently developed a watershed group or is interested in developing such a group.

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### **NACD ANNUAL MEETING**

The NACD Annual Meeting was held in New Orleans, LA on January 30<sup>th</sup> – February 4, 2015. Illinois had great representation at the event: Myron Kirby, Tom & Judy Beyers, Lee & Marie Bunting, Terry & Coleen Bogner, Lonnie Wilson, Tara Hopkins and myself all attended. The event featured some great session topics and many tours were offered for those not interested in sessions. AISWCD donated an Armalite M-15 rifle to the auction and it brought \$1400.00! Overall, it was a great conference!

I attended the Executive Director's breakfast on Sunday and sessions on both Monday and Tuesday. All three events were very useful. I met several Executive Directors from throughout the nation: Maine, Maryland, Montana, Indiana, Ohio, Delaware and many more. Each state Association is set-up and funded very differently. We all gathered information and new ideas to bring back to our state.

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### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The legislative session is in full swing. The committees have been appointed, Governor has given his State of the State Address and we are diligently working with Mike Hoffmann (AISWCD Lobbyist) to set-up meetings with legislators. Committee assignments have been made. You can find committee assignments pertinent to SWCDs listed on our website here: [http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Committee-Assignments\\_020515.pdf](http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Committee-Assignments_020515.pdf)

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Mike and I have set-up a meeting for Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer to meet with the SWCDs within his district on Tuesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to the SWCDs for agreeing to participate and to the employees for helping get Directors present. More information on the outcome of this meeting will be listed in my next report...perhaps a photo or two as well!

**Remember, you can never over inform your legislators.** The more they know about SWCDs and your activities the more helpful it is when Myron, Mike and I meet with them at the Statehouse. They will also be more likely to support legislation for funding if they know the importance of an SWCD!

**Legislative Day 2015 is Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> from 10:30am – 6:00pm.** In addition to our afternoon Legislative visits, we will again have a reception at Boone's Saloon from 4:00pm-6:00pm. Last year as Legislators came into the reception the main question that was asked, "Is there someone here from my area?" While we had a fairly good turnout of participants, there were very few Legislators that were able to talk directly to their constituents due lack of SWCD representation at the reception. We would really encourage each district to have a least one representative present for the reception from 4:00pm-6:00pm. We understand that, for most, it's a long drive to and from Springfield. However, having a constituent present from the Legislator's district is key to having them understand what Districts do and why they are important. Please consider sending a representative to this year's event!

**Envirothon Resolution** was passed yesterday by the House. The Resolution designates April 30, 2015 and April 28, 2016 to be recognized as "Envirothon Day" in Illinois. We are also working with Mike Hoffmann to have one of the sponsors or co-sponsors present the Resolution at the event. Stay tuned!

**\*\*\*LAST CALL ... Legislative Book – There is still time to submit one or two pages of information highlighting your SWCD activities.** I have received information from only 20 SWCDs! If you have not submitted information please do so NOW!!! I need the information **no later than Friday, Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>**. If you have already completed a similar report that has the above information listed, please forward it to me along with photos. A Legislative Book filled with text will not be as appealing as one filled with photos of district activities. If you have any questions on what is needed, please give me a call or send me an email!

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### ILLINOIS AGRICULTURE LEGISLATIVE DAY

This event has been set for March 5, 2015. Each year AISWCD donates tree saplings to place in the baskets that get distributed by FFA students to the legislators. This year we intend to do the same. If any district is interested in attending this event please contact the office. We make legislative visits, similar to the AISWCD Legislative Day. It never hurts to make multiple visits within the same month. The more they hear "SWCDs" and understand districts the more funding opportunities become available.

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### SWCD ANNUAL MEETINGS

I would like to thank districts for the invitation to participate in your local Annual Meetings. Unfortunately I cannot attend every event but will attempt to attend as many as possible. Over the past few weeks Gina and I attended Livingston SWCD meeting on Thursday, Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> and Gina, Myron and I attended Champaign SWCD meeting on Friday, Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>. Both SWCDs put on fantastic events!

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### AISWCD ANNUAL MEETING

Planning for the AISWCD Annual Meeting and BLWR Summer Conference is underway. The taskforce met last week to discuss the newly proposed schedule as well as the logo for this year's event. Some exciting changes are coming to this year's event! We want everyone to learn something new, meet someone new and bring new ideas back to your district. We hope your district can attend this year! Be sure to read the upcoming Conservation Catchall as it will have registration, award and form submission deadlines.

**NEW THIS YEAR** ... An **Exhibit Hall** will be added to this year's event. If you know of a company or vendor that is interested in joining the Exhibit Hall direct them to the AISWCD Annual Meeting webpage. The Exhibit Hall will be open on both Monday and Tuesday of the conference. A **Sunday Tour** will be offered for those who like to travel to Springfield a day early. The tour is still being planned but as information becomes available it will be added to the Annual Meeting webpage. The **Hospitality Rooms** will once again be offered during the conference.

**Live Auction Update:** AISWCD is seeking auction items for this year's event. Donate a local item, specific to your county. We are placing the auction items on the website this year and creating an auction booklet so be sure to get your district's auction item submitted early so we can advertise and place the item in the booklet.

Bring your spouse and family to this year's Annual Meeting & Summer Conference. There will be plenty of activities for the whole family!

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### PARTNER MEETINGS

Within the past few weeks I have been approached by several groups who are interested in partnering with districts on small-scale, local projects. The Illinois Soybean Association is interested in partnering with local districts to host landowner-led informational meetings. They want to enlist in the help of SWCDs to select the location for the meeting and send invites. IL Soybean will compensate SWCDs for their time and effort to host the event along with a meal for the meetings. If your district is interested or

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would like more information please contact me at [Kelly.Thompson@aiswcd.org](mailto:Kelly.Thompson@aiswcd.org) or by phone (217) 744-3414.

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### **FARM PROGRESS SHOW 2015**

The FPS is scheduled for September 1-3 in Decatur, IL. AISWCD and partners will once again have the Partners in Conservation Tent. Planning is already underway. Jody Christensen and I are co-chairs and are working diligently to secure tent space, invite interested partners to attend and much more. The next FPS meeting will be held in Tuesday, March 17 in Decatur at the USDA/SWCD Service Center. If you are interested in participating please let me know.

As always, if you have any questions or comments at all, don't hesitate to call the office! Remember, AISWCD works for Districts...without SWCDs, the Association would not exist!

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Remember to **INFORM** your Legislators! You can never send them enough information on activities taking place in your district!

Have a Fantastic February!



*Kelly Thompson*