

# **AISWCD Resolution 2015-1**

## **Program and Grant Opportunities**

Whereas, landowners, urban and rural, require assistance from adequately staffed Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) across Illinois.

Whereas, the AISWCD provides services, such as program and grant opportunities, to SWCDs for opportunities to advance conservation program goals at the local level.

Whereas, costs to administer agreements for program and grant opportunities are paid by the Grantor, making assessment of dues or fees by AISWCD on these funds to subgrantees (SWCDs) inappropriate.

Whereas, SWCDs have endured repeated funding decreases, resulting in major financial hardship.

Whereas, AISWCD services should be available to assist SWCDs with every opportunity to supplement funds to continue operations and provide local conservation programs.

Whereas, services and representation of SWCDs provided by the AISWCD is necessary and valued, every effort will be made by each SWCD to pay dues.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD) shall continue to represent SWCDs collectively and be a major presence and voice for conservation at the State level regardless of an individual SWCD's payment of dues.

### **Approved By:**

White County Soil and Water Conservation District – 06/02/2015

Land Use Council 14 – 06/03/2015

### **Not Supported As Proposed:**

Association of IL Soil and Water Conservation Districts Board of Directors – 06/09/2015

# **AISWCD Resolution 2015-2**

## **NRCS Promoting Conservation via Land User Database**

Whereas, it is essential that USDA NRCS has access to up-to-date contact information for land users in order to deliver an effective conservation program.

Whereas, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices can increase conservation education and program participation by mail and email communication with customers.

Whereas, customer information linked to a tract allows NRCS to geographically target specific conservation communications with the aid of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). For example, conservation communications could be targeted to landowners in the 100 year flood plain or a watershed.

Whereas USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices do not have access to a database that includes Farms, Tracts, Owner, Operator, and Contact Information which would allow mail communications.

Whereas, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) maintains the official database of farm records and customer information, procured through Form AD-2047.

Whereas, Form AD-2047, specifies, "The information collected on this form may be disclosed to other Federal, State, Local, government agencies, Tribal agencies, and nongovernmental entities that have been authorized access to the information by statute or regulation and/or as described in applicable Routine Uses identified in the System of Records Notices for USDA/FSA-2, Farm Records File (Automated, USDA, NRCS-1, Landowner, Operator, Producer, Cooperator, or Participant Files, and USDA/RD-1, Applicant, Borrower, Grantee, or Tenant Filed."

Therefore, be it resolved that The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts and The National Association of Conservation Districts request USDA FSA Headquarters provides NRCS field offices with access to a current database to be used for mailing to promote conservation and NRCS programs. The database should provide easy conversion to a usable spreadsheet format. At a minimum, the database should contain the following information:

State Code, County Code, Farm Number, Tract Number, Operator Last Name, Operator Middle Name, Operator First Name, Operator Formatted Name, Operator Address 1, Operator Address 2, Operator City, Operator State, Operator Zip Code, Operator Phone Number 1, Operator Phone Number 2, Operator Email, Owner Last Name, Owner Middle Name, Owner First Name, Owner Formatted Name, Owner Address 1, Owner Address 2, Owner City, Owner State, Owner Zip Code, Owner Phone 1, Owner Phone 2, Owner Email.

### **Approved By:**

Rock Island Soil and Water Conservation District 04/07/2015

Land Use Council 2 06/01/2015

Association of IL Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors 06/09/2015

# **AISWCD Resolution 2015-3**

## **Wetland Reserve Easement Program and Property Tax Relief**

Whereas, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program provides public benefit by reducing flooding due to increased floodwater retention.

Whereas, USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program provides public benefit of improving water quality by the natural filtering effect of wetland areas on floodwater.

Whereas, USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program provides public benefit by providing habitat for migrating waterfowl, pollinators, and other native wildlife.

Whereas, USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program provides public benefit by establishing and maintaining a diversity of rare native grasses, forb, and tree species.

Whereas, USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program provides public benefit of improving water quality by reducing soil erosion and sedimentation.

Whereas, USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program permanently removes frequently flooded cropland from production and prohibits future farming and development.

Whereas land enrolled in USDA NRCS ACEP WRE has greatly reduced income potential.

Whereas, many landowners in multiple counties in Illinois have seen their property tax bill increase after enrolling land in USDA NRCS ACEP WRE, while some tax rates remained steady or reduced.

Whereas, consistency in property tax regulation guarantees uniform and fair treatment for land in WRE and aids in accurate program promotion.

Whereas, increased property taxes on land with permanent USDA NRCS ACEP WRE easements have reduced the number of landowners willing to enroll land in the USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program.

Whereas, precedent exists in Illinois for reduced property taxes on vegetative filter strips (35 ILCS 200/10-152) and managed forest land (35 ILCS 200/10-150).

Therefore, be it resolved that The Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts work with the State of Illinois to amend the property tax code to encourage landowners to enroll land in the USDA NRCS ACEP WRE program. Land in permanent wetland easement programs shall have the enrolled acreage assessed at 1/6 of its productivity index equalized assessed value as cropland.

### **Approved By:**

Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District 04/07/2015

Land Use Council 2 06/01/2015

Association of IL Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors 06/09/2015

# Proposed AISWCD By-laws amendment 2015-1

The following is proposed to be amended to the AISWCD's By-laws to clear-up confusion concerning the questions about when Association dues are paid in full and the determination of District "in good standing".

## **ARTICLE #1 Section #6: Dues**

The dues of the Association shall be paid in full annually by January 1.

Proposed amendment

*The dues of the Association shall be paid in full within 45 days after receipt of invoice.*

## **ARTICLE#1 Section #5 Membership**

A. Active Voting Members: Shall be the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Illinois, whose dues have been paid in full by January 1 of each year. (subject to Article 1 Section 6, B) which qualifies them to be a district in good standing. Each shall be represented by one delegate and one alternate current director appointed by the District governing body. Each District shall have one vote. A district in good standing shall have privileges of being represented by the Association and directors able to hold office, vote in Association matters, and participate in Association programs.

### **Proposed amendment**

*A. Active Voting Members: Shall be the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Illinois, whose dues have been paid in full for the previous 365 days.*

Note: This By-Law Amendment, if approved by voting delegates, will be effective immediately.

### **Approved By:**

Association of IL Soil and Water Conservation Districts Board of Directors 06/09/2015