



Commonfields

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
SOUTHWESTERN ILLINOIS RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT
-SUMMER 2011-

“RESPECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT, GROWING OUR FUTURE”

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With Change Comes Opportunity

On April 14th, 2011, both the US House of Representatives and the Senate passed legislation, which in part terminated funding to the Resource Conservation & Development program. Authorization and funding for this program, which originated under the Kennedy administration nearly fifty years ago, provided technical assistance to regional nonprofit Resource Conservation & Development Councils.

Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development received its authorization as a Resource Conservation & Development Council in 1991 and achieved nonprofit status in 1989. Since that time, the organization has implemented over 375 individual projects, protected 4,750 acres of open space, and invested over \$17 Million in conservation within southwestern Illinois.

“Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development will continue to operate as a nonprofit corporation, utilizing the same mission and vision that it has been operating under for the past several years. Work will remain focused on the organization’s two program areas, the **Conservation of Open Space** and **Fostering Livable & Sustainable Communities**”, Dave Eustis, Executive Director.

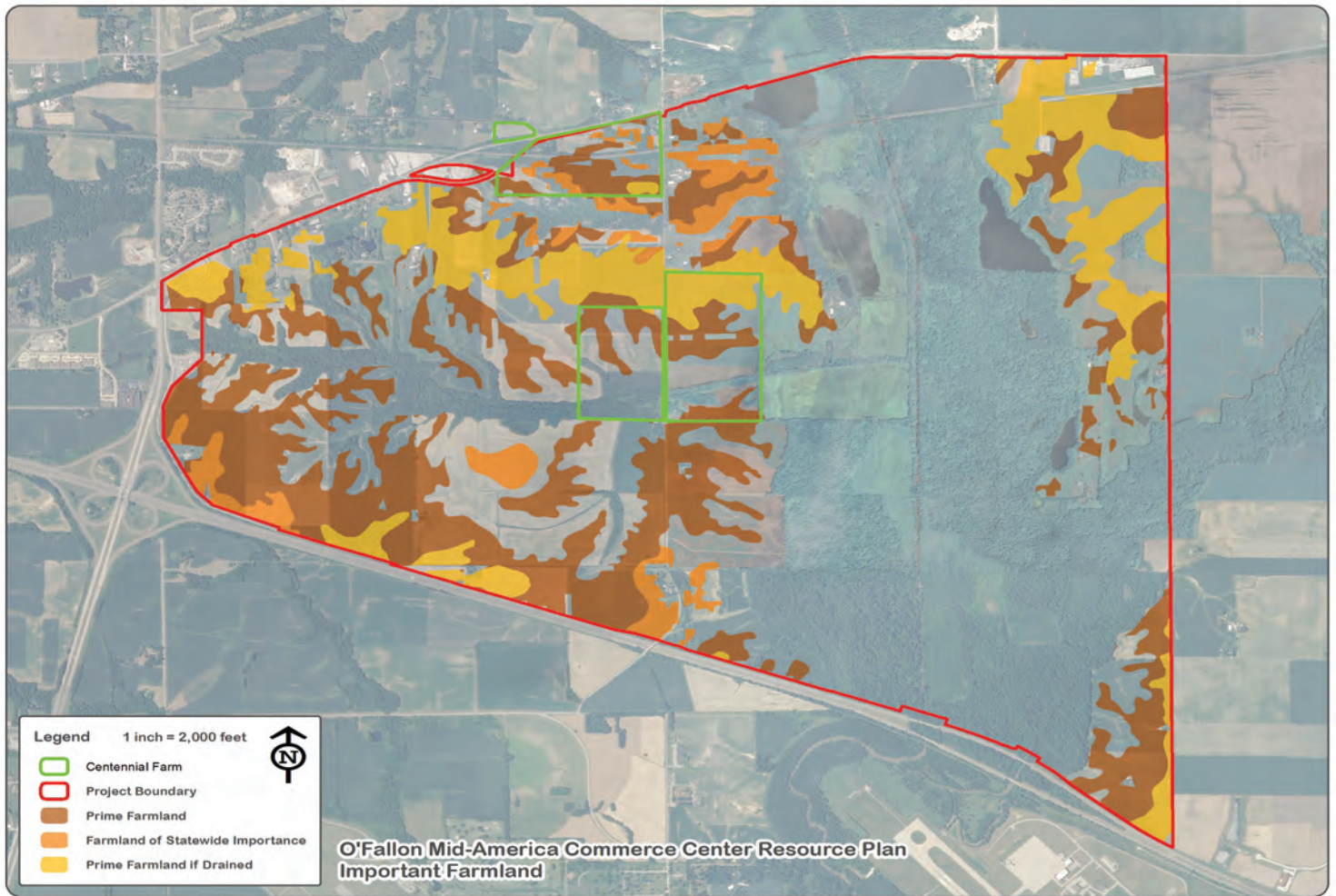
With change comes opportunity. Being associated with an unwieldy federal program was somewhat confusing for both members and partners, and at times has limited the organization from fully blossoming. We look forward to addressing these issues in the upcoming months, and re-branding a more resourceful and effective organization that will be capable of continuing to lead environmental conservation in southwestern Illinois.

On behalf of the organization’s Board of Directors and staff, we would like to thank all of our partners, sponsors, and volunteers for the tremendous support that you’ve provided over the past twenty-two years. We look forward to building upon this energy in our effort to create a more sustainable region in which to live, work, and play.

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O'Fallon Resource Assessment



The City of O'Fallon, Illinois has tasked the RC&D with analyzing the area known as the MidAmerica Commerce Center (MACC) for potential resource impacts should development occur. With the plan to create a new exit north of Scott Air Force Base, and the area north of I-64 between the new exit and the existing Exit #19, may become a desirable location for new development.

This analysis was done using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), with data provided by the City and data made available by the State. The overarching goal of this study was to reduce any future negative resource impacts from development of the MACC. A solid knowledgeable foundation of the area's resources will assist policymakers and developers in avoiding future problems that may be compounded should these resources be lost or degraded. The City of O'Fallon will benefit from incorporating the findings of this report into their future planning efforts. By identifying all vital resources and charting a course to mitigate, protect, enhance and preserve these resources, the resulting product will be enhanced—both environmentally and economically.

Mechanisms for preservation of these spaces while allowing desired development on the site include: cluster development, conservation easements, stream buffer ordinances, corridor parks, a conservation zoning overlay, Farm Bill Program (CRP, CREP, WRP, etc.), green infrastructure, such as rain gardens and bioswales, common ground with passive recreation amenities, such as trails & picnic tables, permeable pavement in parking lots or sidewalks, and roadways designed at 90 degree angles to streams and drainageways.

Mounds Trail Update

The Mounds Heritage Trail is gathering more steam. With support from IDNR the Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development was able to continue the planning and implementation of the trail under the leadership of the Confluence Partnership. Trail signage to mark the route has been ordered and will be available for communities along the route to install.

In addition, the National Park Service awarded a Lewis and Clark Planning Grant to the Confluence Partnership to look at the trail comprehensively in both Illinois and Missouri. Ralph Rollins, Greenway Network and a Confluence Partner, has prepared the DRAFT Master Plan and supporting materials. Public Open Houses are planned for the first week of August. One will be on Thursday, August 4th at the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site and Museum. The other will be on Tuesday August 2nd at St. Louis City Hall. Both open houses will be held from 4-7 PM. The general public is welcome to provide input.



Great Rivers Greenway has also embarked on a Planning Study that includes part of the Mounds Trail. The South Riverfront Trail will incorporate the Mounds Trail that extends to Sugar Loaf Mound next to I-55. The goal of the study is to create a trail from the Gateway Arch to the River de Peres Greenway. This leg of the project will be a wonderful connector to the entire system.

Kaskaskia Basin Water Supply Planning



With all of the rain and flooding in the region over the past few months it's hard to imagine a group coming together to plan for water supply during drought conditions. However, with certainty, sustained droughts will return and members of a special steering committee within the Kaskaskia Basin are coming together to plan, for future water shortages.

This comprehensive planning process will review demand forecasts through 2050, as well as estimates of water supply availability. The group is representative of, and giving full consideration to, all significant uses of water within the basin, including power generation, public water supply, industrial and commercial, and irrigation. The group is also includes interests in recreation, business and the environment.

For updates on the project, please visit www.swircd.org/KBWSP.html, or by contacting Dave Eustis, 618-566-4451 ext. 28, dave.eustis@swircd.org. This site contains a listing of committee members (including contact information) reports, presentations and meeting minutes.

Conservation of Open Space - The Land Conservancy



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

Ralph Buettner, Mark Badasch, Carl DauBach, Penelope DauBach, Dave Eustis, Philip J. Harris, Lester Harnetiaux, Ronda LaTina, George Obernagel, C. David Tiedemann, Chad Stafko, Scott Harding

Property Donated to IDNR

On May 20th, 2011 Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development (SWIRCD) executed the agreements necessary to donate 94.5 acres within the Kidd Lake Marsh complex to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). This donation will add to the 445 acres already owned by the IDNR at the Kidd Lake Marsh State Natural Area.

Kidd Lake Marsh State Natural Area is located in Monroe County, along Bluff Road, near the Village of Fults. It sits adjacent to the Fults Hill Nature Preserve, a National Natural Landmark. Both sites are listed within the Illinois Natural Area Inventory, a listing of our most ecologically significant sites throughout the state. Kidd Lake Marsh State Natural Area is an extremely important breeding and stop-over site for waterfowl and shorebirds within the Mississippi River flyway.

SWIRCD acquired this site in January, with the intention of donating the property to the IDNR. Funding for the project was provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Grand Victoria Foundation - Vital Lands Illinois Program, and The Nature Conservancy.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR MEMBERS, CONTRIBUTORS & VOLUNTEERS:

Carl & Lori Belknap, Licia Black, Glen & Dianna Bowers, Darrell Brink, Ralph & Karen Buettner, Barb Castello, Sarah Coffin, The Cupcakery, Donald Dahlmann, Pen DauBach, Lawrence and Linda Davis, Matthew Duller, Environmental Operations, Tamara Eustis, Steve Gonzalez, Lester Harnetiaux, Jennifer & William Howland, Judith Joy, Doris Keller, Lisa Koerkenmeier, Ted & Linda Krauskopf, Roberta LaSalvia, Ronda Latina, Mary Ann Lopez Drake & Mark Drake, Daniel Monti, Jr., Stephen & Brenda Mudge, Mitze Nitzsche, Rustin Parker, David Riechmann, Megan & Brad Riechmann, Dean Schmitt, Glen & Linda Schuetz, David & Lisa Tiedemann, Julie Weems, Ed & Kathi Weilbacher, Elizabeth Weilbacher, Diann Wensing, Wetlands Forever - Michael Thompson, and Windy Bluff, L.P. - Thomas & Marian Rollins

White Rock Property Designated

On May 3rd, 2011, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission designated 168 acres of the White Rock complex as a Land and Water Reserve. The reserve is part of the Potato Hill Illinois Natural Areas Inventory Site and provides permanent protection of limestone glades, mesic and dry-mesic upland forest, state threatened and endangered species, and a large forest block for forest-interior birds.

In December 2010, SWIRCD partnered with Clifftop www.clifftopalliance.org in acquiring and jointly-owning the White Rock Property. Funding for the acquisition was provided by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the Grand Victoria Foundation - Vital Lands Illinois Program, and the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. The two groups are currently working to implement a long-term management plan for the site.

Lands and waters of Illinois that support significant natural heritage or archaeological resources may qualify as a Land & Water Reserve. The agreement to register an area as a Land and Water Reserve determines allowable uses and stipulates management objectives. Further information on Land & Water Reserves may be found at www.dnr.state.il.us/INPC/protection.htm. Special thanks to Debbie Newman, INPC, for her assistance in obtaining Land and Water Reserve designation for this site.

New Faces

Environmental Programs Technician



Ms. McCreary joined the organization in June 2011, as our Environmental Programs Technician, to assist other personnel with mapping, preparing reports, creating informational materials and other project tasks. Prior to this, Allie has provided public recreation and educational opportunities through her work with national forests and outdoor education centers. She brings experience with geographic information systems (GIS), resource-management partnerships, and public outreach. Allie recently graduated with a Master of Science in 2010 in Human Dimensions of Natural

Resources from the Forestry Department at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale where she also obtained her Bachelor of Science in Forestry in 2008.

Sustainability Planner



Mr. Ibendahl, ASLA, RLA joined the organization in June 2011, as the Sustainability Planner, and has over 14 years of professional experience as a registered landscape architect. He is an advocate for walkable communities and sustainable design. Prior experience includes a wide range and diversity of projects such as master planning, park and trail design, streetscape design, site development, landscape design, transportation enhancement, and public involvement. Stephen is a board member for the St. Louis Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architect

(ASLA) and a past president. He also sits on the Lafayette Park advisory board and is a member of the American Planning Association. Stephen received his Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from the University of Illinois; Urbana-Champaign in 1997 and his Advanced Certificate of Nonprofit Management from Washington University in 2003.

Special Projects



Mr. Weilbacher accepted the Special Projects position in June 2011. Ed previously worked for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service for 36 years and the last 22 years as the Coordinator assigned to assist Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development (SWIRCD) until his retirement in June of 2011. In his capacity as Coordinator he assisted many groups and organizations to solve local natural resource problems. He helped form groups and sought consensus on contentious issues. Significant projects include the Kaskaskia Stewardship Plan,

Kaskaskia Watershed Association, Chouteau Island Master Plan, City of Edwardsville Comprehensive Open Space, Parks & Trail Plan, Carlyle Lake Trail Plan and many others.

Mr. Weilbacher is a member of the Confluence Partners for SWIRCD which is a collaborative of five nonprofits working toward an improved region from the Gateway Arch to the Confluence with the Missouri and Illinois Rivers. He also serves on the Bike-Pedestrian and the Water Resources Committees for East-West Gateway Council of Governments and assisted with the facilitation of three Ecosystem Partnerships. He provides support to the Gateway Cooperative Weed Management Area that includes 14 counties in two states and serves as the facilitator for the Mounds Heritage Trail and the Metro-East Greenway Alliance.

Know Your Invasive Plants: Bush Honeysuckle



Bush honeysuckle is an exotic, invasive species that grows as a stout shrub. In Illinois, Morrow's and Amur honeysuckle are the most common bush honeysuckles. Morrow's honeysuckle originated in Japan and Amur honeysuckle is native to eastern Asia. Both species were brought to North America in the late 1800s and 1900s as ornamental shrubs and wildlife habitat.

- Height: 6-15 feet & Width: 5-10 feet.
- Stems are light gray brown, leaves are smooth, green and opposite.
- Will produce white, tubular flowers in May that yellow with age.
- Small red berries appear later; June-August for Morrow's and September-November for Amur.

A distinctive indicator of bush honeysuckle is their early spring leaf out, before most native plants, and a tendency to hold their leaves later into the fall. They most commonly establish on disturbed sites, such as old fields, forest edges, roadsides, and open woods.

Because of their dense growth and extended growing season, bush honeysuckle shade and outcompete native shrubs and perennials. Their extensive root system reduces water and nutrient availability to other plants. Over time, bush honeysuckle can diminish the seed bank of native species and limit the variety of wildlife an area may serve.

To eradicate smaller stands or individual occurrences of bush honeysuckle, a spring burn, in fire-adapted communities, can be effective. Repeat burns, in the following fall or spring, may be necessary. Another alternative is mechanical removal with Pulaski or "weed winch." For removal of larger species or dense stands of bush honeysuckle mechanical (chainsaw or hand tool) cutting should be immediately followed by a 20% solution of glyphosate herbicide using either a hand sprayer or sponge applicator. Glyphosate may also be injected. Chemical injections are less labor intensive, work quickly, can be used in wetland areas, and reduce herbicide exposure to operator and nontarget species. Foliar treatments using a 4% glyphosate solution should be applied in fall when bush honeysuckle foliage is still intact. Only trained herbicide operators should use chemicals. You can contact our office for more information or to find a professional. Cutting honeysuckle shrubs without removing or treating remaining stems with an herbicide will result in increased vigor of the plants. In one study, stem density actually increased by nearly 275% after four years of clipping.



Harvest Hike



Soon, the hot summer will melt away and the crisp cool air of autumn will return. The leaves will change shades of burnt amber and harvest gold, the busy activities of the farmers in the fields will slowly come to a halt, and pumpkins and mums will line the landscape. Take this time to enjoy the beautiful "in between" weather in southwestern Illinois, that we briefly get to experience with the change of the seasons, before it is gone. Join us on October 22 at Patriots Park in Greenville, IL for the Harvest Hike. You can find out more information by visiting www.swircd.com or contacting maryann.lopez@swircd.org.



Field to Fork
"A unique culinary experience in local cuisine"

Saturday, July 16 at 5:30 PM

*Pre-purchased tickets
for the five-course dinner are required.

Contact maryann.lopez@swircd.org or 618-566-4451
www.swircd.org/Field_to_Fork.html

Upcoming Meetings & Events

DATE	TIME	EVENT	CONTACT
July 16	5:30 PM	SWIRCD - Field to Fork	maryann.lopez@swircd.org
July 19	6:00 PM	SWIRCD Board Meeting	dave.euis@swircd.org
July 24	10AM - 2PM	Renewable Energy Fair and Workshops	http://illinois.sierraclub.org
July 31	7:30AM	Tour of the Hills	www.trailnet.org/events
August 6	12 - 4PM	Great River Rendezvous Kayak Race & Social Paddle	cfavilla10@sbcglobal.net
August 14	10AM - 4PM	SWIC Electronic Recycling	www.swic.edu

Support Our Efforts

The Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development delivers environmental and conservation programs specific to the needs of this region - your investment stays where you live, work & play!

YES! I want to become a friend of Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development

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 406 East Main Street
 Mascoutah, IL 62258

**Southwestern Illinois RC&D is a non-profit 501 (C)(3) and your donation is fully tax deductible*

Where Did Ed Go?



Mr. Weilbacher has been with Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development (SWIRCD) for over 22 years. He formerly served as our USDA NRCS Coordinator until June 2011 when the federal government cut funding for the Resource Conservation and Development program. During his tenure the organization achieved Level II Circle of Diamonds certification within the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils. In 2003 SWIRCD was recognized as the Outstanding Council of the Year out of 385 Councils nationwide. We want to thank Ed Weilbacher for his many years of support and dedication.

With the recent changes taking place to our program on a national level, and affecting us locally, we have utilized this opportunity to make changes and reassess our programs needs.

We will continue to keep you updated on the latest changes with our organization and share the news as we grow. To learn more about our newest employees, how Ed is enjoying retirement, and continued progress, turn to page five of our newsletter or visit our website at www.swircd.org.

Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development is an equal opportunity employer and provider.



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