

**PURPOSE: WORK REGIONALLY TO PROTECT AGRICULTURAL, FOREST AND OTHER NATURAL LANDS IN ORDER TO PROVIDE FOR OPEN SPACE, LANDSCAPE DIVERSITY, SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND CONSERVATION BENEFITS FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.**

## CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE

We're fortunate in southwestern Illinois to enjoy a wealth of very unique natural areas, including the American Bottom along the Mississippi River, the karst-sinkhole plain region in St. Clair, Monroe and Randolph counties, the Kaskaskia Bottom, which includes remnants of the nearly depleted post-oak flatwoods, as well as over 1,000,000 acres of prime farmland.

Our **CONSERVATION OF OPEN SPACE** program area is in place to provide the tools necessary for landowners, local units of government, conservation partnerships, and state-federal agencies to meet their land conservation goals. Tools may include land acquisition, conservation or agricultural easements, or enrollment in any of a number of state or federal programs.

Beyond land protection, this program also encourages stewardship of these important resources, as well as long-term monitoring of these sites; ensuring that ecological values

are maintained in perpetuity. Often we must also work on policy issues with other national or Illinois-based land trusts to ensure that land conservation programs remain funded during these trying economic times.

We must cultivate opportunities directed at getting more individuals actively engaged in these wildly important resource areas. As such, we've developed **QUARTERLY TREKS** and invasive species removal events, and are currently working on developing a series of "signature sites" within the region. These sites will be open to the public and will also thoroughly interpret the resource(s) found within the location. Sign up for our newsletter and e-updates in order to be kept up to date on all of these events.

Visit [www.swircd.org](http://www.swircd.org) to view upcoming events and volunteer opportunities!

Cover Photo: A pileated woodpecker feeding her young (Tom Rollins, Thomas Rollins Photography)

## 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

**1.** The High Valley property, owned by the Village of Shiloh, is a 13-acre conservation easement near the busy intersection of Frank Scott Parkway and Green Mount Road. Surrounded by development, this property provides an important buffer to the headwaters of Richland Creek, offering home to a wide variety of plant and animal species. As funding allows, the Village will incorporate a trail on the site.



about a year, White Rock Nature Preserve will be opened to the public for foot-traffic only.

Photos: Top - High Valley Easement in Shiloh, IL (Mari Castello). Bottom: Shelf fungi at the White Rock Tract (Tom Rollins, Thomas Rollins Photography)

## FOSTER LIVABLE & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



Photo: Fayetteville Float Trek on the Kaskaskia River (William Freeman)

As a society, we've placed more pressure on our air, land and water resources over the past 50 years than at any other time in recorded history. Unfortunately, with a growing population and unpredictable outcomes for phenomena such as climate change, if not addressed soon our situation may grow worse.

Recognizing this need, Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development has taken the initiative to develop and grow our **FOSTER LIVABLE & SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES** program area.

Photo: William Freeman

Projects in this program area generate a regional, science-based understanding of the economic and ecological values of our environmental resources.

Executing this understating through innovative planning tools allows us to create better alternative transportation routes and local food initiatives, restore native habitat, provide educational products for all interest levels, and directly address air, land and water concerns.



www.pedbikeimages.org/Dan Burden

**PURPOSE: FURTHER THE PROTECTION OF OUR RESOURCES THROUGH THE UTILIZATION OF GIS TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATIVE PLANNING PROCESSES, THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ON-THE-GROUND AND EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS THAT RESTORE AND PROTECT HABITAT, AND PROMOTE THE USE OF PRACTICES THAT MITIGATE THE POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.**

## 2010 HIGHLIGHTS

- Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development has been selected to facilitate a working group to develop a **water supply plan for the Kaskaskia River Watershed**. This is the third such water supply study within the State of Illinois (Northeastern; Mahomet Aquifer) and will focus on projected supply data (through 2050) provided by the Illinois State Water Survey, and demand forecasts provided by SIU Carbondale.
- In September 2010, the RC&D finalized the **Carlyle Lake Trail Plan**. This long-term plan provides many exciting opportunities for future users, such as interaction with many of the lake's unique environments. The large scale of this project presented many challenges, with numerous stakeholders required to work together towards implementation. The plan will bring much needed access, connections and tourism dollars to this growing and vibrant region.
- Looking for a new place to go birding, or perhaps for a scenic drive? The new **Birding the Bottomland Map**, developed by the Middle Mississippi River Partnership, offers both. This map, which begins at the Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge division office in Rockwood, IL, takes visitors south for 60 miles to the Cape Bend State Fish & Wildlife Area. The map highlights over 50 stops, both in Illinois and Missouri, and each site is identified by a brown Mississippi Kite marker. The map can also be viewed at: [www.midmiss.org](http://www.midmiss.org).
- The RC&D was selected as a member of a regional consortium of 11 organizations led by East West Gateway Council of Governments to analyze existing land use, natural resources, transportation and housing conditions, and develop a **regional sustainability plan**. The RC&D will focus on stormwater, alternative transportation, growth management, open space conservation, and community outreach for the Metro-East. The funds were awarded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development under a first of its kind 'Partnership for Sustainable Communities' including HUD, US Department of Transportation, and the US Environmental Protection Agency.