



Protecting Land For Future Generations



Newsletter Volume 9 Winter 2007

Conservation Easements In Monroe & St. Clair Protect 65 Acres

Southwestern Illinois RC&D Council

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A conservation easement was signed in December protecting the Milles Fleurs Preserve consisting of 15 acres in Monroe County. The site is home to 473 species of existing and introduced flora that have been established and maintained. The timbered portion is secondary growth oak-hickory on steep karst terrain. There are two sink hole ponds and a karst hidden valley complex of wooded hollows with exposed limestone conduits which dominate the wooded landscape.

This area will be protected from urban development for perpetuity and will serve as a preserve for plants native to this region.

The landowners have a strong conservation ethic and wanted to protect the flora and fauna on this land for future generations.



William and Christine Boardman signed a conservation easement protecting 50 acres of farmland in St. Clair County just west of Millstadt. This site contains prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance that is being threatened by encroaching urban development. The area also contains some wooded wildlife habitat along a stream corridor that serves as a travel lane for various species. These areas will be protected from urban development in perpetuity and will serve as farmland, open space, and wildlife habitat. The site is within one-half mile of the Stemler Cave Nature Preserve and on the boundary of the karst area of the county.

Thanks to TLC Supporters

A special thanks to the following contributors: John and Virginia McCall, Miriam Huelsmann, Glen and Linda Schuetz, Mike and Rebecca Fruth, William and LaVonne Mohr, Carl and Pen Daubach, Melvin Feig, Nancy Larson, Melvin Balsters, Zane and Connie Schneider, Stephen E. Gonzalez, and Fred and Maren Stein, William and Christine Boardman, and Mary Biernot.

**Nationwide,
the total
amount of
land protected
by land trusts
was 37 million
acres in 2005.
This is a 54%
increase from
24 million
acres in 2000.**

Woodlands Management Workshop

Learn the latest strategies for protecting wooded areas on your property at a free informational session sponsored by CLIFFTOP (Conserving Lands in Farm, Forest, Talus or Prairie). Topics of discussion will include the benefits of maintaining healthy, productive woodlands; identification and control of invasive and exotic plant species; financial resources for forestry management; and the benefits of conservation easements for landowners.

Saturday January 27th, 2007
1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
SWIC Red Bud Campus Auditorium



Jim Rhodes

Presentations will be made by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission, and The Land Conservancy. Admission is free. Preregistration is required. Those wishing to attend please contact CLIFFTOP at CLIFFTOP@htc.net or call 618-458-4674 by January 20, 2007.

Information Meeting on Tax Incentives for Easements

Recent legislation expanded the tax deduction incentives for conservation easement donations. A landowner can now deduct up to 50% of their income from federal income tax for up to 16 years. A qualifying farmer can deduct 100% of their income from federal income tax for 16 years. Hear more about these incentives and how to develop a conservation easement at the upcoming information meeting.

Wednesday, January 31, 2007
10:00 – 11:30 am,
University of Illinois Extension Office
900 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, Illinois

Cost is \$5.00 and on-line registration is at www.extension.uiuc.edu/madisonstclair. Or you can contact the Extension Office at 618-650-7050 and ask about the Voluntary Conservation Easements meeting. Registration deadline is January 29, 2007.

Hill-Prairie Conference

A Hill-Prairie Conference was held on October 27-28 at Principia College in Elsah. The conference focused on preservation and management of the few remaining hill prairies along the Mississippi and Illinois River bluffs. Steve Black, Ralph Buetter, and Carl Daubach from The Land Conservancy attended the conference.



Dennis FitzWilliam, Carl Daubach,
& Ralph Buetter

Taxpayer Costs for Urban Development

Many municipalities and local governments encourage urban development in their area as a means of increasing local property tax revenues. Although urban development will increase revenues, the payout in government services in the long term is greater than the revenue generated on residential lands. Over 100 local studies conducted throughout the nation by the American Farmland Trust have been completed up through 2006 and the results summarized in their booklet "The Cost of Community Services".

For residential lands the median cost per dollar of revenue raised was \$1.15. In other words the cost for government services such as fire, police, schools, etc., was \$1.15 for every \$1.00 generated from property taxes on residential areas. The costs were \$0.28 for each \$1.00 of revenue for commercial land. Agricultural lands cost \$0.36 in government services for every \$1.00 generated in property tax revenue.

Cost To Maintain (per dollar of revenue raised)	
Residential property	\$1.15
Commercial property	\$0.28
Agricultural/open space	\$0.36

These costs do not show up immediately and can take up to five to ten years to reach their peak. Communities need to consider these long term costs when making decisions on their future expansion plans. A balance of land uses can help to meet the economic needs of a community and help to maintain a quality of life for the residents.

National Land Trust Census Report

The Land Trust Alliance recently released a national census report on the status of private land conservation efforts nationwide. The following are some highlights from that report.

In Illinois:

The number of land trusts increased from 28 in 2000 to 35 in 2005. Illinois land trusts had 7,532 acres under conservation easements. Illinois land trusts owned 7,708 acres of land that is being protected.

In the Nation:

Total acres conserved by land trusts were 37 million acres in 2005, a 54% increase from 24 million acres in 2000.

The number of land trusts grew to 1667 in 2005, a 32% increase over five years. Land trusts conserved an average of 1.1 million acres per year from 2000 to 2005. Voluntary easements were in place on 6.2 million acres in 2005.



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MISSION OF THE LAND CONSERVANCY

To 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.

The Land Conservancy is a member of the national Land Trust Alliance www.lta.org

Changes In Tax Law Encourage Charitable Giving Through IRA's

On August 17, 2006, President Bush signed into law new tax incentives for charitable gifts from donors who are 70 1/2 or older. The Pension Protection Act of 2006 encourages financial support of the good work done by charitable organizations in the United States.

Under the new law, you can use funds from your IRA to make a lifetime charitable gift free of tax obligations. Prior to the law, you would have to report any amount taken from your IRA as taxable income, then take a charitable deduction for the gift, but only up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income.

Fortunately, now these IRA gifts can be accomplished simply and without tax complication. Plus, you can make the gift now—while you are living and able to witness the benefits of your generosity. Please contact Steve Black at (618) 566-4451 if you would like your IRA to help protect land in Southwestern Illinois.

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