

SOUTHWESTERN
ILLINOIS
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION &
DEVELOPMENT, INC.
Year in Review 2004

Introduction

The Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed in 1989 to address regional natural resource concerns to help find ways to solve regional issues and also to assist in the development of the natural resources for the betterment of the community.

In 1991, the Secretary of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) designated the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. to receive technical and financial assistance to work on the issues identified in Southwestern Illinois RC&D's application.

Since 1989, the Council has worked on many and varied projects. Accelerated assistance occurred with the establishment of the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. office in Mascoutah in 1991. The accomplishments highlighted in this report are as a result of countless hours of volunteers and of the office support of the Southwestern Illinois RC&D.

The Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation as classified by the IRS. All donations made to the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. are charitable contributions. The Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. has its IRS 990 Form and audit available for public review during normal business hours.

Technical assistance is provided to the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. through USDA-NRCS.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Offices

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.

Corporate Headquarters
406 E. Main
Mascoutah, IL 62258
618-566-4451
618-566-4452 fax
swircd@swircd.org
www.swircd.org

Southwestern Illinois GIS Resource Center

406 E. Main
Mascoutah, IL 62258
618-566-9493
618-566-4452 fax
gis@swircd.org
www.swircd.org

The Land Conservancy (TLC)

406 E. Main
Mascoutah, IL 62258
618-566-4451
618-566-4452 fax
tlc@swircd.org
www.swircd.org



Cover: Bond County Mural Project

L-R: George Luber, Bond Co. At-Large, George Gobberdiel, Bond Co. Board Rep.

Photo by: Greenville Advocate

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Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2004			
		December 31	
		2004	2003
Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents		646,268	621,946
Accounts Receivable		113,844	186,478
Total Current Assets		760,113	808,424
Property and Equipment		71,461	63,150
Less Accumulated Depreciation		54,287	38,347
Total Property and Equipment		17,174	24,803
Total Assets		777,287	833,227
Liabilities and Net Assets			
Accounts Payable		5,522	74,590
Accrued Expenses		829	15,796
Deferred Revenue		374,749	357,342
Total Current Liabilities		381,100	447,728
Net Assets			
Unrestricted		251,068	247,500
Restricted		145,119	137,999
Total Net Assets		396,186	385,499
Total Liabilities and Net Assets		777,287	833,227

Chairman's Report

by Stephen E. Gonzalez



We are an organization of influence.

The Southwestern RC&D has become an organization of influence. I have spent a lot of time dwelling upon our vision statement which is to develop and support partnerships to assist in the protection and sustainability of the natural resources for the betterment of the region. If you stop and pick that statement apart I come up with one key word – Partnerships. To me that word describes why the RC&D is such an influential non-profit organization. When an organization puts people in their equation as part of the solution, success surely follows. The old saying ‘no one achieves alone what he can do when partnering with others’ is true.

We are truly leaders among RC&D Councils in the Country. Each and every one of the staff and council members has contributed to us being a leader. My interpretation of a leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others see. Your appointment as an RC&D Council member and participation in meetings and projects is a testament to a job well done. Your individual uniqueness and experiences guide the Council and it is evident in our many successes. It has always been my goal to meet with each of the Council members to know a little about you and the county you represent. Usually one of the “Eds” or George bends my ear before and after the meetings.

I look at the seven counties comprising the Southwestern Illinois RC&D as my back door. A two hour drive puts me just about anywhere in the region. There is a lot of significant cultural history and natural beauty that abounds in this area. Things most of us take for granted because we’ve grown up here, others travel great distances to come and experience. Urban sprawl was identified as a major concern in the RC&D a few years ago and our council has responded by giving people options other than development. My hat goes off to Steve Black and The Stewardship Committee for forming The Land Conservancy.

Our GIS Resource Center is another service we have to offer the region. A geographic information system is a digital tool used to store geographic locations of features such as boundaries, natural resources, roads, and infrastructure. The potential for graphic overlays is unlimited. Julia Cole, Sharie Heller and Jenny Reiman pride themselves on accuracy, knowledge, and experience. Their work is a great asset not only to the projects of this RC&D but as a tool to be used by local governments and municipalities.

This year was marked by great accomplishments. Our RC&D is working at a level other RC&D’s dream of. Ed, Dave, Yvette, The Land Conservancy, and the GIS staff are truly playing on the top of their game. Ed always refers to that drive time to work from Waterloo as time to surface new ideas. We in the organization are humbly thankful for that time.

In closing, I have enjoyed being your chairman. Many challenges lay ahead of us and I am confident we will meet them with even greater determination. We have been referred to as a library of information - that in of itself is a valuable resource. But perhaps the greatest resource is the people involved in the Southwestern Illinois RC&D.

Coordinators's Report

by Edward J. Weilbacher

Technical Assistance - PRICELESS

RC&D Councils are formed to work on problems and issues in a region. They seek 'authorization' from USDA to receive technical assistance. Technical assistance may not be as flashy as a grant for a conservation project, park or other capital project.

Technical assistance is however very valuable since it can provide the needed information, techniques, training, and assistance from others to make many different kinds of projects become a reality.

Technical assistance is often the help that is provided that enables volunteers to get the grant or find the resources to be able to build the project that is near and dear to them.

The technical assistance that is provided to the Southwestern Illinois RC&D Council, through USDA NRCS, is the Coordinator and the Program Assistant along with minimum base support. Every 'authorized' Council in the country receives the same basic technical assistance. How a Council uses the assistance separates each Council from one another. The Southwestern Illinois RC&D Council has taken this 'gift of technical assistance' and added to it. The old parable applies, "Give a man a fish, he can eat for a day, teach a man to fish, he can eat for a lifetime". The Area Plan developed by the Council identifies the needs of the region. This document has demonstrated a need for additional technical assistance. As a result the Council has employed 4 full-time staff and 3 part-time staff. In addition, there are several volunteers that have provided additional service to the region. This technical assistance team from the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, (NRCS and SWI RC&D staff), have been helping people and communities work on issues and needs in the region that are making this place a better place to live and prosper.

The technical assistance from the SWI RC&D office has helped the region secure several large grants this year and have positioned the region for other opportunities like the Forest Legacy Program. You can't measure the benefits of this technical assistance from the size of the grants received because it is much more than that. Technical assistance empowers individuals and communities with the knowledge and information to be more effective in the work that they need to accomplish. The value of technical assistance is in its ability to link people with people, provide guidance, and encourage people that a positive change can occur. One local beneficiary of this technical assistance commented on how linking up with the SWI RC&D was like "plugging into a vast network of talent and contacts."

2004 was a year where the technical assistance from the Council Staff was given in new areas. Assistance is being provided to regional interests along the Mississippi River south to Cairo, to the Kaskaskia Watershed Assn., and to the Confluence Greenway, just to name a few. It is hard to place a value on empowering others. As in a famous commercial, the technical assistance provided by the SWI RC&D is, let's say, PRICELESS.

There are still a few areas in Illinois that are not privileged to receive the technical assistance provided as a result of an 'authorized area' by USDA. Those areas are seeking this technical assistance so that they too can benefit from this 'priceless' asset.



Operations & Administration

by David C. Eustis, Operations Manager & Roberta J. LaSalvia, Accountant

“Driven to do more with less” and “making do with the bare minimum” are two descriptions commonly associated with not-for-profit organizations. An underinvestment in our organizational infrastructure, including training, technology and support, will only result in a reduction in our capacity to deliver programs. As I close my fourth year with the organization, I look at the investment that the Board of Directors has made in qualified staff, state-of-the-art equipment, and operational support, and it is clear that this organization differs greatly from those described above.

In 2004, the RC&D passed an important milestone, 15 years of operations. The organization also surpassed two additional thresholds; most revenues ever generated in a one-year period, (\$1.24M), and the largest foundation grant ever awarded to the RC&D (\$525,000, Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation). The continued growth of the organization, as witnessed this past year, is in large part due to the commitment of the Council and staff in focusing on, and implementing the mission and vision of the organization:

Mission Statement: *Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed to address regional natural resource concerns and to improve the quality of life within Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington Counties, in Illinois.*

Vision Statement: *Southwestern Illinois RC&D, inc. will develop and support partnerships and advance programs to assist in the protection, development and sustainability of the natural resources for the betterment of the region. Program efforts will be directed towards:*

<i>Agriculture</i>	<i>Natural Resource Management</i>
<i>Economic Development & Redevelopment</i>	<i>Outdoor Recreational Opportunities</i>
<i>Education & Outreach</i>	<i>Regional Growth Management</i>
<i>Environmental Resource Areas</i>	

Mission and vision statements are a reflection of an organization, describing who we are, what we do and how we accomplish it. Not only do they provide direction to the Council and staff, they also provide a picture for project partners and funders, allowing a greater understanding of what our organization strives to accomplish.

To be a successful organization we must continually plan on how to implement our programs more efficiently and effectively. No mission and vision statements are effective without well defined goals that drive activities. In that end, I have personally adopted two specific goals for 2005, which I hope will strengthen our organization as well as increase our ability to implement programs:

1. Provide increased reporting to our sponsors as to our programs, individual projects and capacity; and
2. Develop a comprehensive volunteer program.

When implemented, these goals should dramatically increase our ability to guide our programs, thereby increasing our ability to protect the natural resources and increase the quality of life within the region, without taking on additional staff and unnecessary resource commitments. More talent through volunteers, and more support through sponsors, an effective plan to sustain the organization over the next fifteen years.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. staff will work with NRCS, as well as other organizations/agencies, to develop Operations that are responsive to the needs of our program areas, & are capable of supporting these programs in a sustainable manner.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001

Administration: Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. utilizes an accrual accounting system, incorporating MIP Fund Accounting Pro, a Best software product, to accurately account for all revenues and expenses for the organization. MIP Fund Accounting Pro is also used to create all necessary reports for daily, monthly and yearly reporting requirements. While grants are managed as a whole through two primary bank accounts, the MIP software allows for independent tracking of individual grants.



Roberta LaSalvia
Accountant

Dave Eustis
Operations Manager

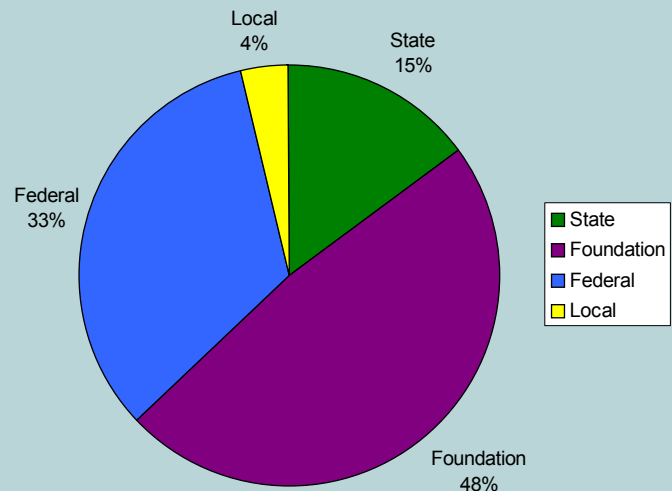


The organization requires an annual independent audit, which in FY 2004 was performed by Schmersahl Treloar & Co. of St. Louis, Missouri. The audit includes an assessment of the accounting principles used, as well as an analysis of the overall financial position of the organization. A copy of the FY 2004 Independent Audit is available by contacting Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.

Urban & Community Forestry: In late 2004, the RC&D and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources agreed to support a position which will assist central and southern Illinois communities in their urban forestry needs. Paul Wierzbicki (WIU Graduate Student) has been retained by the SWI RC&D as an intern through the Peace Corps Fellows Program. He will be working as the Urban Forestry Coordinator for central and southern Illinois, which includes the following counties: Alexander, Bond, Calhoun, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Crawford, Cumberland, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Greene, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Lawrence, Macoupin, Madison, Marion, Massac, Monroe, Montgomery, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, St. Clair, Saline, Shelby, Union, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, and Williamson.

Paul's primary responsibilities are to inventory and monitor municipal forestry programs, to provide technical support for Tree City USA applications, Arbor Day programs, tree inventories, tree ordinances, forest management plans, grant applications, and public education programs and training. Contact Paul for more information about services and support. paul.wierzbicki@rcdnet.net or (618) 566-4451.

Sources of Funding for Year Ending 2004



Program Activities: Agriculture

Good Neighbors, Run Off, Animal Waste,
Farmland Preservation, Private Property Rights

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is currently working on three Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Section 319 grants within the region. The Section 319 program is in-place to address water quality that is impacted by non-point source pollution. The first project, **Lake Branch Watershed Animal Waste Project**, has been implemented over the past two years, and will be completed in early 2005. This project is incorporating \$500,000 worth of federal funds on animal waste facility improvements within the Lake Branch Watershed in Clinton County. Producers will contribute an additional \$333,000 to this project in cash or in-kind labor. Fred Gallagher, a retired USDA NRCS Technician has overseen the implementation of this project. Improvements include filter strips, stack pads, curbing, guttering, settling basins, concrete pads and manure pumping equipment. Producers that participate in the project must also participate in a waste management plan, ensuring that nutrients are spread on fields in a responsible manner.

In December, the SWI-RC&D completed another Section 319 contract from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, which constructed three animal waste facilities termed **LIVESTOCK WINTER FEED STATIONS**. This pilot project was focused on impaired (IEPA 303d listing) streams within Bond, Clinton, Madison and Washington Counties. This type of facility has been successfully demonstrated in North Carolina and Kentucky and it is hoped that their implementation here will lessen nutrient and sediment loads from entering waterways during the winter months. As a result of this pilot project, USDA NRCS has developed a set of approved plans for the State of Illinois, and the practice has been approved for future inclusion in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The final report for this activity, including a set of construction plans, is available for viewing and download at www.swircd.org.

The RC&D received a third grant within the Section 319 program in 2004, which will analyze the extent of the nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) that are exiting the Kaskaskia River and contributing to the **hypoxia** phenomenon in the Gulf of Mexico. Staff will collect and review previously collected water quality and quantity data to more closely determine what portions of the Kaskaskia River are contributing to the nutrient loading, and to what degree.

The Land Conservancy, a division of Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is reviewing the potential to work with the Farmland Protection Program as a mechanism for protecting farmland that is threatened by regional growth. The first step in protecting farmland will be to identify what land is truly "strategic", or the most valuable. In 2005 staff will begin reviewing criteria to identify strategic farmland, including prime soils, likelihood of conversion over the next thirty years, ecological, cultural or historic significance, and market-based value of products produced. The identification of the most valuable lands will allow limited farmland protection dollars to be wisely invested.



“Agriculture efforts will be directed towards preserving the family farm, protecting prime farmland, diversifying farm enterprises and redeveloping the rural economy.”

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



Funding provided by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, as well as landowner contributions, have allowed over \$800,000 in improvement to dairy operations with the Lake Branch Watershed.

60-head Livestock Winter Feed Station, Madison County. Illinois USDA/NRCS has now approved this practice for EQIP. This practice reduces non-point source pollution by reducing the washing of sediments and nutrients into waterways.



Southwestern Illinois - Agriculture at a Glance (2002 Census of Agriculture – County Data)

	Bond	Clinton	Madison	Monroe	Randolph	St. Clair	Washington
Farms	668	915	1,152	531	823	811	756
Ave. Size	374	278	257	334	308	333	440
Acres of Cropland	168,843	227,552	262,487	147,814	205,706	249,638	301,724
Market Value of Products - (average per farm)	\$61,678	\$153,809	\$67,878	\$72,589	\$47,644	\$83,773	\$105,380
Cattle & Calves Inventory	11,378	36,849	15,809	9,846	17,967	6,985	26,581
Hogs & Pigs Inventory	10,810	177,880	29,844	42,551	10,034	30,188	62,113
Layers Inventory	597	514,945	NA	560	182	790	396
Corn (bushels)	5,712,899	8,725,448	11,275,816	3,627,708	3,615,877	9,772,839	6,590,657
Wheat (bushels)	792,629	1,382,141	1,002,086	1,332,025	1,466,483	1,287,758	2,573,492
Soybeans (bushels)	13,169,533	3,904,424	4,898,902	4,473,595	6,302,470	6,578,045	4,292,012

Program Activities: Economic Development/Redevelopment

Brownfields, Environmental Clean-Up, Tourism, Agricultural & Eco, Historic Preservation, Agricultural Industries, Agri & Natural Resource Economics, Healthy Small Towns, & Infrastructure

In June, the RC&D assumed a greater role in the Green Communities Program in St. Clair County. The St. Clair County Health Department received a Green Communities Development Grant through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. This program allows residents to participate in an environmental visioning process that leads to a vision as well as a sustainable plan for building a healthier future for residents within the county.

Once a series of public meetings were held and information was collected and analyzed, the RC&D was engaged by the St. Clair County Health Department and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments to develop a final report for the project. The report, which captured public input in several areas, including: environment, regional planning, redevelopment, transportation, economy, quality of life and public involvement, starts the process of implementation of the Green Communities Program in St. Clair County. Findings of the project will be used to engage cities, villages and townships in reviewing policies, amending ordinances, and to develop programs that will enhance the natural resources within a community and add to the long-term quality of life its residents.

Council member George Luber finalized two years of work with the public unveiling of a mural on a previously unimproved railroad underpass on Academy Street, outside of Pocahtontas. With funds from the Illinois Arts Council, National Road Association (Bond County Chapter) and the Boeing Employees Community Fund, George, with the assistance of many volunteers, created a mural which focuses on three main themes, community, history and farming. Fifteen students were recruited to develop sketches for the proposed mural, and under the direction of a local artist, the sketches were enlarged and painted on the overpass. In total, over 550 volunteer hours were associated with this project. (See cover.)

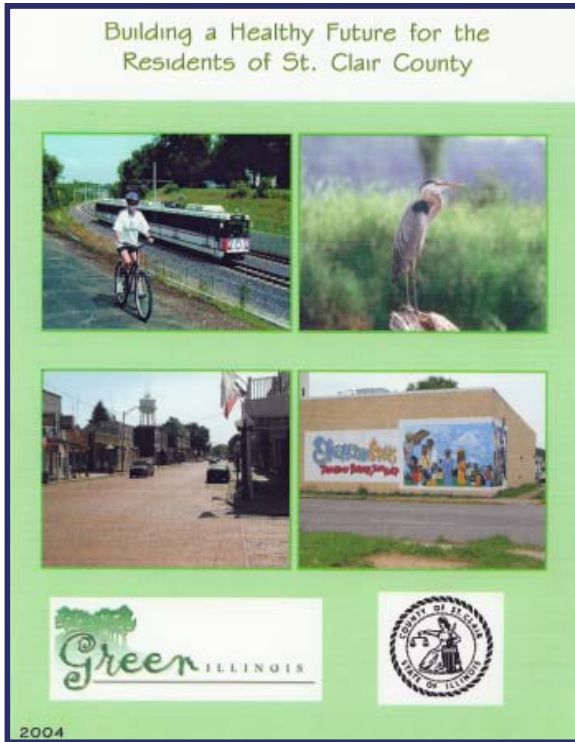
In September, Dave Eustis presented the lead remediation project that was completed by the RC&D in East St. Louis at the National Brownfields Conference in St. Louis. The session, which focused on alternative remediation activities, featured our small inner-city project (two acres) along with several large-scale smelter restoration projects which covered hundreds, and in some cases thousands of acres.



Dave Eustis, right, presents at the 2004 National Brownfields Conference in St. Louis

Economic Development/Redevelopment efforts that are focused transcend social and economic class, address both rural and urban areas and are sensitive to the natural resources.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



The St. Clair County Green Communities Program is used to engage cities, villages, and townships in reviewing policies, amending ordinances, and developing programs that will enhance the natural resources within a community and add to the long-term quality of life of its residents.

The Bond County Mural Project utilized students and community volunteers to “dress up” a previously unimproved railroad underpass.



Program Activities: Education & Outreach

Conservation/Natural Resources, Agriculture & Civic Engagement

Every project that the RC&D undertakes includes a public outreach and education component. Over the years our outreach efforts have been successful, and as a result other agencies and organizations have requested the RC&D to assist with engaging the public in their programs.

Staff continues to assist the Kaskaskia Watershed Association, Inc. (KWA) and the Lower Kaskaskia Stakeholders in both the Kaskaskia Watershed Summit, the premier meeting focused on the entire watershed, and the Watershed Showcase, which allows for the public to see first hand the projects that have been completed in the watershed. Each year the KWA rotates the Showcase event to feature a new segment of the watershed. As a result of the successful public engagement efforts, the US Army Corps of Engineers has featured the KWA in their 2004-2009 Strategic Plan, as a model of outreach and education in a watershed for other Corps projects to model after.

The Lower Kaskaskia River watershed was selected as one of two watersheds in the state to participate in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP). The RC&D worked with 10 counties to produce a mailing targeted to the 5,000 potential eligible recipients. This coordinated mailing saved time and was a more efficient way of getting the message out on this new program.

Engaging the public in the dialogue to look at the future continued with the Gateway LEAM - Dialogue for Gateway Futures and the Southwestern Illinois Resource Planning Project. These projects engaged not only the general public but also included elected officials and professional staff from local governments. Valuable resource information is being collected for future use in making local decisions. Participation in the project is free and local communities are encouraged to participate.

The RC&D sponsored the public engagement process to secure the designation of the area as a Forest Legacy eligible area. Forest Legacy is a voluntary program that works with landowners to protect significant timbered areas for future forest resource use. The idea of the area being designated as a forest legacy eligible area was considered several years ago by the RC&D. After careful consideration, and with input from others, the RC&D held a public meeting to gather input and to allow the landowners to ask questions concerning the pros and cons of the Forest Legacy Program. The entire seven counties of the RC&D area are now eligible to participate in this working forest resource protection program.

The RC&D assisted the Urban Forestry Committee with a Tree Board Workshop that was held in Highland. This workshop targeted communities with tree ordinances and established tree boards. Participants were able to talk with experts working with volunteers and leaders in the community on how to be more effective in their roles as a tree board commissioner.

The RC&D continues to convene the monthly Metro-East Greenway Alliance (MEGA) meetings. This forum allows for the exchange of ideas and provides a mechanism for regional coordination on trails and greenway projects.

The web page for the RC&D saw its first comprehensive update since it was created. This tool continues to be a very powerful way of getting the message out to the general public regarding the work of the RC&D.

Education and Outreach efforts will be directed to engage youth, concerned citizens, project partners, agency staff as well as elected officials in the development of all programs undertaken by Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



The Kaskaskia Watershed Showcasing event educates the public on the diverse aspects of the watershed.

Left: Annette Ambuehl leads a tour highlighting agriculture in the watershed.

St. Clair County Community leaders meet with RC&D, IDNR, and University of Illinois staff to discuss resource issues within the county.



Program Activities: Environmental Resource Areas

Karst/Sinkhole Plain; Mississippi River Corridor, Flyway & Bluffline; Kaskaskia River Corridor

The RC&D has been retained by the Middle Mississippi River Partnership to develop a Vision Document, which will guide the future direction and activities of the Partnership. In total, 15 members representing several state and federal agencies, not-for-profit organizations and a university have come together to discuss how their various activities within this section of the Mississippi River corridor could be coordinated to assist in the protection and or creation of additional native habitat.



Steve Black has coordinated the planning and outreach components of the project, while Jenny Reiman has contributed both her GIS and planning skills. The final document will define partnership goals, activities, a proposed management structure, as well as a significant amount of technical data that will assist partners in determining their future restoration efforts.

In November 2004, The Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation provided financial support to the RC&D to acquire land from willing sellers on Rockwood Island. With the assistance of the American Land Conservancy, a total of 722 acres were acquired, which will eventually be turned over to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for restoration and long-term management.

Rockwood Island is a 2,506-acre unprotected area containing a 300-acre forested island and a 2.5-mile active side channel of the Mississippi River. Rockwood Island and Liberty Chute (the side channel running along the island); offer the opportunity to re-establish hydraulic connectivity between the river and its historic floodplain, and to create semi-permanent wetlands. The forest contains hardwoods such as native oak, elm and cottonwood. The remaining portion consists of forested wetland and about 725-acres of frequently flooded cropland. The valuable side-channel habitat adjacent to Rockwood Island is critical to native river fish such as the endangered pallid sturgeon, channel catfish, shovelnose sturgeon and paddlefish. The forested sections of the island are equally critical, providing much needed soil stability, wildlife cover, perches for birds of prey, and shading for the side-channel (which helps reduce water temperatures and oxygen depletion during hot summer months).

GIS staff is also working to develop a planning tool for natural resource managers. The Plant Community Mapping project is utilizing soils information to determine the likelihood of specific species to grow within a specific area. If proven successful, this tool will allow managers to utilize GIS as another tool to assist in restoration planning efforts.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. continued to provide assistance to three C2000 Ecosystem Partnerships in 2004, American Bottom, Kaskaskia River/Silver Creek and Kaskaskia River/Shoal Creek. Each of the partnerships has met a minimum of four times, and submitted multiple applications through the IDNR C2000 Ecosystem Partnership Program. While funding for the program has been limited over the past two years, partners continue to meet and discuss issues related to the protection of their watershed.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. will assist in the planning and protection of the region's significant Environmental Resource Areas, through programs such as the IDNR C2000 Ecosystem Partnerships.

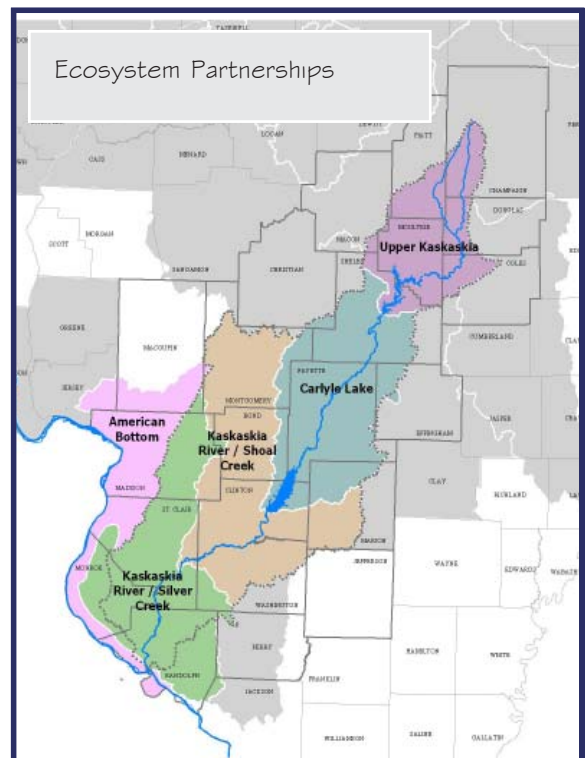
Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001

Ed Weilbacher discusses areas for potential restoration activities with members of the C2000 American Bottom Ecosystem Partnership.



Acquisition efforts on Rockwood Island will provide the opportunity for significant wetland restoration, as well as the restoration of Liberty Chute, a crucial area for native river fish.

The RC&D provides administrative support to three ecosystem partnerships, as well as, the Kaskaskia Watershed Association, Inc.



Program Activities: Natural Resource Management

Water Quality/Quantity, Fish & Wildlife,

Forest Fragmentation & Urban Sprawl, Carbon Sequestration

The RC&D continues to work on a number of projects designed to improve the natural resources within the region. The Lower Kaskaskia River Wetlands Restoration Project involves the restoration of 94 acres of shallow emergent wetland habitat along the Lower Kaskaskia River. Restoration work will take place at four separate sites, and will include low levee construction, installation of water control structures, and development of pumping capabilities at the four sites, each of which is managed by IDNR. Project partners include Ducks Unlimited, IDNR, Dynergy, Inc. and Martin Marietta Aggregates. Funding for this project has been provided by the US Fish & Wildlife Service, through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

The US Fish & Wildlife Service has also provided funds to complement the Hole in the Doughnut Project within the contiguous forest from Fayetteville to Carlyle. As the Hole in the Doughnut Project will provide tree and grassland restoration, Fish & Wildlife funds are being utilized on wetland restoration activities. Two wetland sites in Washington County were created in 2004 with the assistance of these funds.

Approximately 50 acres of habitat was protected through the Hole in the Doughnut Land Conservation Program in 2004. In this program, the RC&D is offering landowners a payment, similar to CRP, in exchange for a 15-year conservation restriction on an approved parcel. The RC&D will also pay a significant portion of the restoration costs. In a related project, the RC&D will provide 100,000 hardwood seedlings for planting in conservation programs this year. All of the seed for this project was locally collected and the species were selected to be tolerant of the needs of the bottomland areas within the Kaskaskia River. Both of these projects were funded through the IDNR C2000 program.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. has worked with the Chouteau Island Coordination Team and the US Army Corps of Engineers towards the development of a comprehensive habitat restoration effort within the Chouteau Island complex. Preliminary plans call for the restoration of 670 acres of grasslands, 880 acres of woodlands, 430 acres of wetlands and over three miles of reestablished sloughs. These restoration projects will provide enhanced habitat, additional natural water purification, soil stabilization, increased recreational opportunities, create living classrooms, increase interpretive learning, enhance biodiversity and improve views and vistas.

The RC&D is also working with the IDNR towards the restoration of remnant hill prairies along the bluffs in Monroe, Randolph and St. Clair Counties. Funding has been provided through the C2000 Ecosystem Partnership Program to restore up to fifty acres on at least six high-quality natural areas within the area. Work performed will include brush and tree removal as well as the removal of exotic species.

The RC&D was the recipient of IDNR Habitat funds which were utilized to acquire equipment to perform prescribed burns. Drip torches, flappers, fire rakes, blowers and trimmers are now available for qualified individuals to utilize in managing the prairies and forests.

The Natural Resource Base, including fish, wildlife, & associated habitat, is maintained and restored as needed to protect desirable population levels.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



Funds from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the US Fish & Wildlife Service have been utilized in restoring prairie grass, bottomland hardwood trees, wetlands and vernal pools along the Kaskaskia River from Carlyle Lake to Fayetteville.



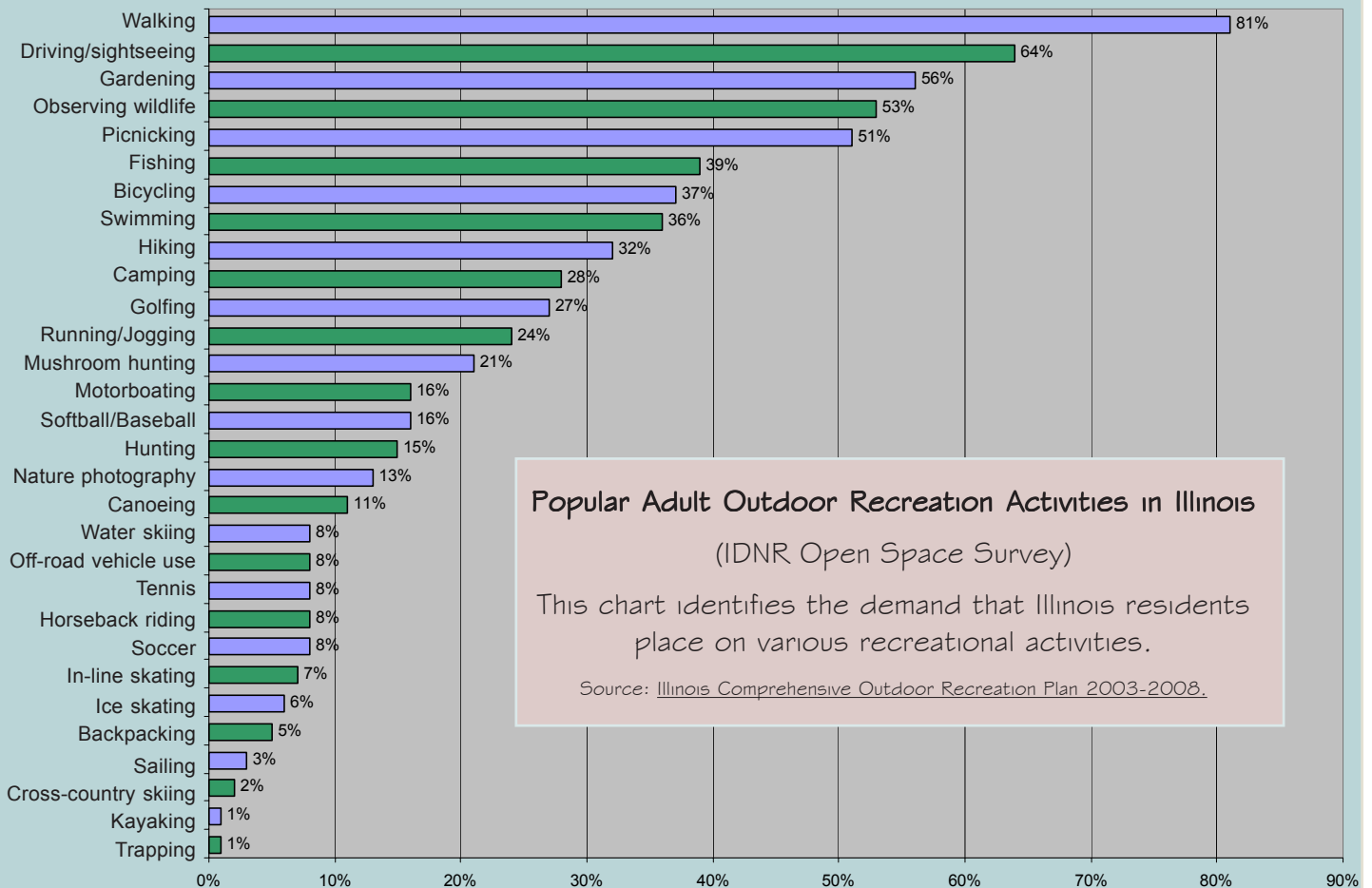
Program Activities: Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

Natural Areas, Parks, Greenways, Cultural/Historic Attractions, & Scenic Areas

The RC&D continues to work towards the implementation of the Chouteau Island Master Plan, as well as continuing to provide support to the overall Confluence Greenway effort. Over the course of this year, the RC&D has worked on the development of proposals to:

- ❖ Facilitate a Park & Recreation Lease between IDNR and the US Army Corps of Engineers, which would give INDR management rights on federal property on the island, and
- ❖ Facilitate the naming of the island-complex as a State Park, and
- ❖ Develop a formal multi-purpose trail on top of the federal levee.

Working with Trailnet, Inc. as well as James Pona and Associates, the RC&D assisted the City of O’Fallon in the development of a comprehensive bicycle facilities plan, which addresses both recreational and transportation needs within the city. This study, which was initiated in April by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Department of Public Works, examined existing roadway and park conditions and also examined the potential for new facilities along riparian and rail corridors. The results of the effort are presented in a Bicycle Facility Plan, which identifies and prioritizes a series of trail and on-street improvements to facilitate bicycle usage and to meet present and future needs.



Popular Adult Outdoor Recreation Activities in Illinois

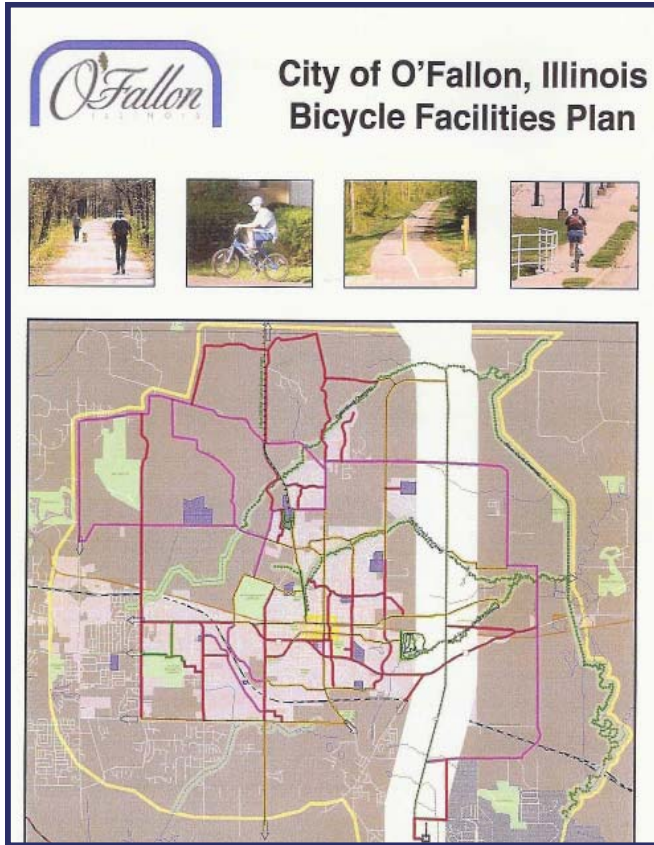
(IDNR Open Space Survey)

This chart identifies the demand that Illinois residents place on various recreational activities.

Source: Illinois Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2003-2008.

Outdoor Recreational Opportunities are increased throughout the region through the development of parks, greenways, conservation easements & the overall protection of open space

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



The O'Fallon Bicycle Facilities Plan examined existing on and off road connections, and also examined the potential for new trail facilities along riparian and rail corridors.

The implementation of the Chouteau Island Master Plan, and continuing support to the overall Confluence Greenway effort, continues to be a major focus of the RC&D.

The map at right was prepared by the Chouteau Island Coordination Committee for a promotional brochure to increase the public's awareness of Chouteau Island and the overall Confluence Greenway Project.



Program Activities: Regional Growth Management

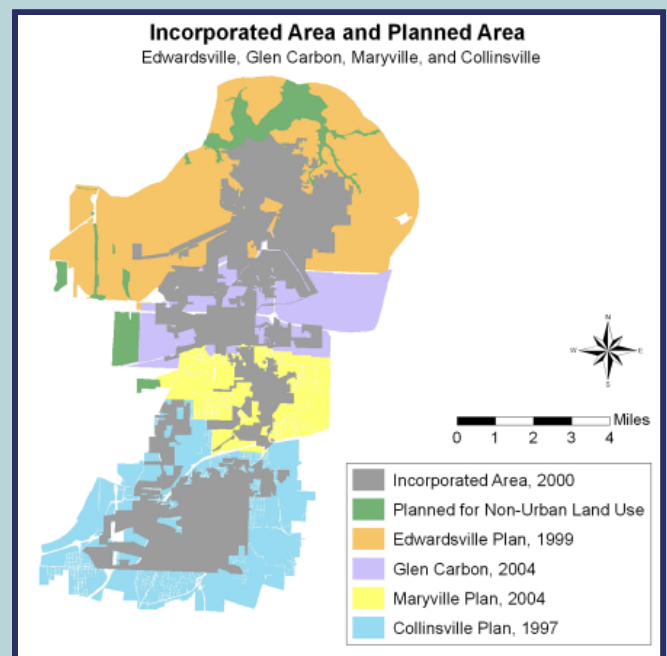
Encourage public involvement & develop proposals/programs to address urban sprawl

Southwestern Illinois RC&D continues to address regional growth management through the development of innovative tools and partnerships. In cooperation with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the University of Illinois, and local communities, the RC&D is piloting a “system of plans” – a new planning tool for Madison, St. Clair, Monroe, and Randolph counties. An extensive inventory of natural, cultural, and agricultural resource data has been compiled. Planning documents such as community comprehensive plans and transportation improvement plans have been gathered and brought into a spatial database by the staff of the GIS Resource Center. The resource data and the plans will be compared to each other to determine the potential impacts of planned land use in the region. The University of Illinois will combine the “system of plans” with their land use forecasting model (Land Use Evolution and Impact Assessment Model - LEAM) to look at the potential impacts for natural resources, critical farmland, and cultural resources. A Resource Plan will be developed that identifies threats to resources and strategies that can be adopted by various local governments that protect these resources. Furthermore, the end result of this project will be more than a Resource Plan; it will also be a new and innovative planning tool that local decision-makers and citizens can use to examine many growth issues beyond land use impacts.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D is taking the lead in developing another tool to address regional growth through the identification and digital mapping of areas of natural resource concern. This project is designed to help The Land Conservancy, as well as a host of other organizations and agencies, to identify the lands that are most threatened within the St. Louis Metro East Region. The GIS information is developed through extensive, direct stakeholder input. Specific areas of concern include:

- Mississippi River Corridor, Flyway and Bluff line
- Sinkhole Plain/Karst Topography
- Kaskaskia River Corridor
- Agricultural Lands

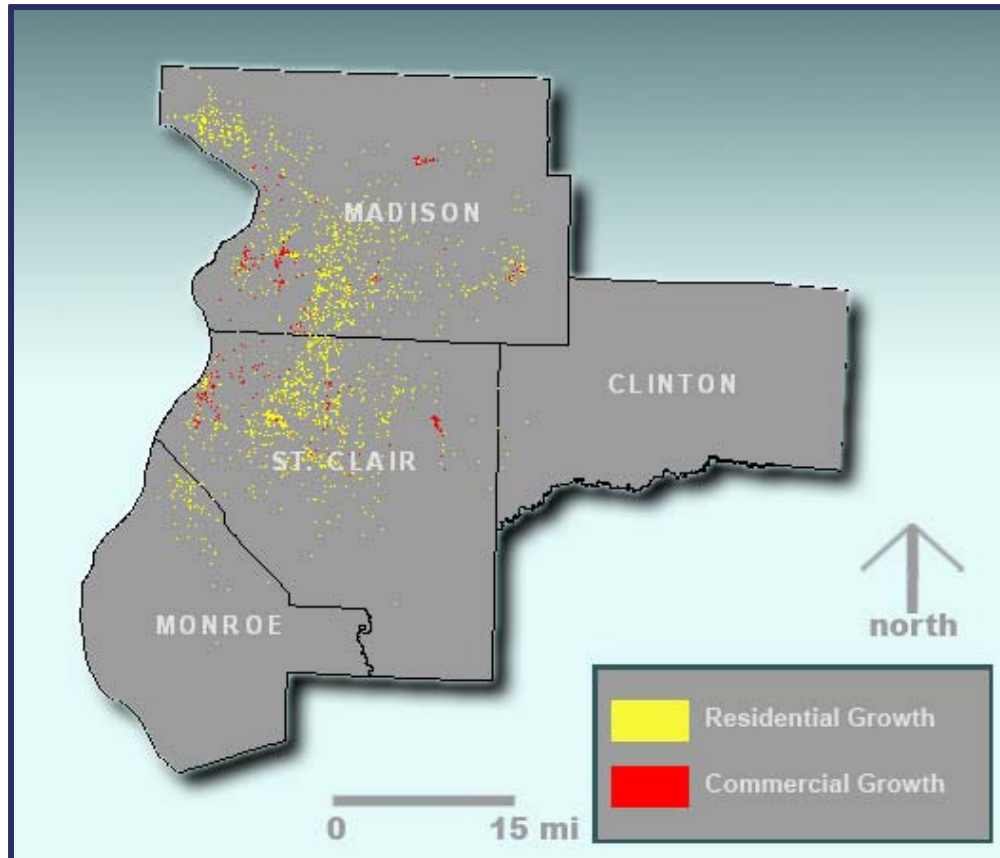
Upon completion, these data sets will serve as a tool for planners and managers of the region to better maintain the significant natural resource inventory and also to raise funds that will assist in the long-term protection of these resources.



Southwestern Illinois communities are growing at a fast pace. In this section of Madison County, community plans indicate a desire to attract development and expand services to surrounding areas, potentially resulting in a solid block of urbanized land. Planning for agriculture and conservation land uses and implementing strategies to shape urban growth can preserve community identity, improve quality of life, and ensure the long-term viability of the region.

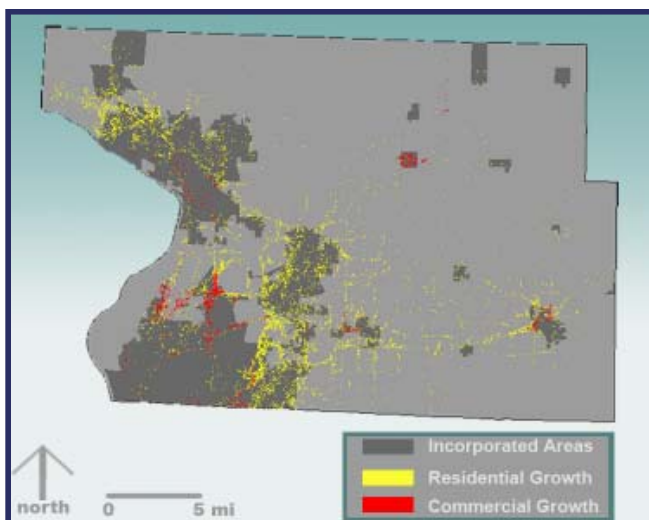
Southwestern Illinois RC&D will participate in the research and dialogue on Regional Growth Issues, & encourage public involvement and develop proposals/programs to address urban sprawl.

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Long Range Plan, 2001



Projected Development for 2030

The University of Illinois has refined the LEAM model to include local input factors influencing development and land use. This map shows where new residential and commercial growth is likely to occur if current regional development trends continue for the next 25 years.



Madison Co. Projected Development 2030

Much of the projected growth occurs in unincorporated areas. The LEAM model, in conjunction with the resource data and the system of plans, gives planners a tool to visualize potential development patterns. Using this tool, planners can develop strategies to shape future development and protect natural, cultural, and agricultural resources.

Southwestern Illinois GIS Resource Center

by Julia Cole, GIS Coordinator

The focus of the past year within the Southwestern Illinois GIS Resource Center has been relationship building. In meeting the mission of the RC&D, the GIS staff supports a variety of regional programs and organizations in their mapping needs. We continue to focus on the importance of matching our ever-expanding digital library and GIS capacity with the needs of our many project partners. Our circle of partners has grown from a select few, who fostered our initial projects three years ago, to a wide variety of federal, state, regional and local entities. Our ability to provide technical capacity improved this year through the addition of new equipment and staff, (Jenny Reiman, GIS Planner).

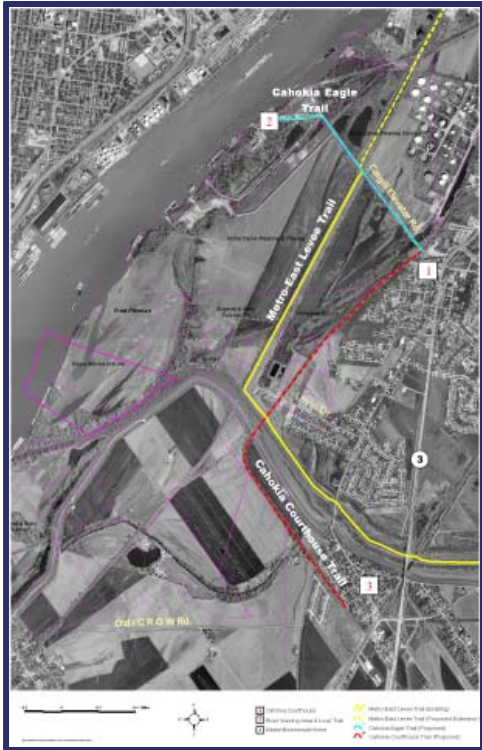
Our most expansive project this year, in terms both of geography and partners, has been our involvement with the Middle Mississippi River Partnership. Our staff, with the assistance of Steve Black, has facilitated a technical committee that is looking at modifications to the ecosystem since pre-settlement, along the Mississippi River from St. Louis south to Cairo. GIS data has been collected from a variety of sources, processed and presented in a uniform fashion that allows stakeholders to review the region with a broad perspective. The technical committee includes staff of USGS, NRCS, USFWS, MDC, US Forest Service, SIU-C, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, American Land Conservancy, and others.

Ongoing opportunities to interact with natural resource agencies at the state and federal level include USACE, USDA NRCS, IDNR, IEPA, and the University of Illinois - Champaign (*Conservation Practice Mapping, Plant Community Mapping, LEAM*). Several individuals within these agencies rely on the GIS Resource Center for project support, with a range of requests from regional analysis to displaying specific locations. Our contact with the US Army Corps of Engineers has been vital to multiple projects. We have been able to exchange data with Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan and Regional Planning Commission and many local planners (*The Southwestern Illinois Resource Plan*); support Illinois projects of East-West Gateway Council of Governments (*Illinois Green Communities*); and provide site specific mapping support for regional greenway development (*Confluence Greenway*). We have also helped organizations with their own progress reports by providing maps that display geographic achievements (Trust for Public Land, Confluence, and American Land Conservancy). We continue to work with the tireless advocates of the Kaskaskia River watershed by providing map displays for their annual Summit and Showcasing events. This type of program support is possible because of ongoing development of our GIS database and communications with these groups throughout the year.

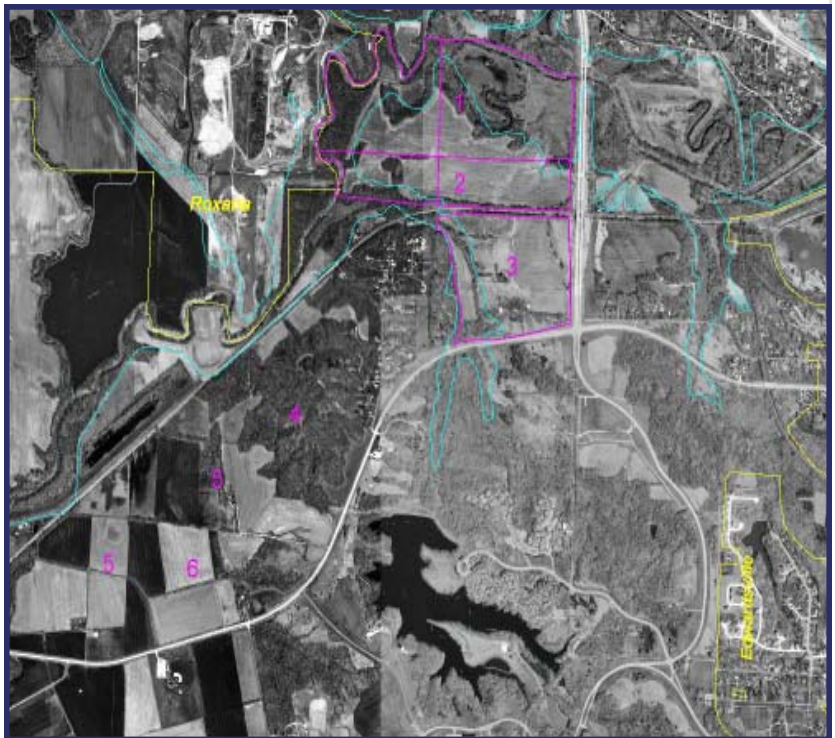
A local focus of our project work has been to reach out to individual communities within the region. The *SW IL Resource Plan*, mentioned above, has allowed us to talk with many local decision makers and gather their input. Several projects were completed in this calendar year, while in some cases the work is ongoing. The GIS staff has taken several opportunities to present information about our center and services, specific projects and GIS in general, during the year. We have spoken to the Illinois River Watershed Conference (Peoria), Conservation Day participants (Highland), the Missouri Community Development Society (Powder Valley Nature Center), Post Oak Flats RC&D GIS workshop (Effingham), the Monroe Co. tourism committee (Columbia), and the Southwestern Illinois City Managers Assoc. (Lebanon). We continue to look for new opportunities to serve our local and regional community and to enhance the use of technology in natural resource planning.

Mission of the Southwestern Illinois GIS Resource Center:

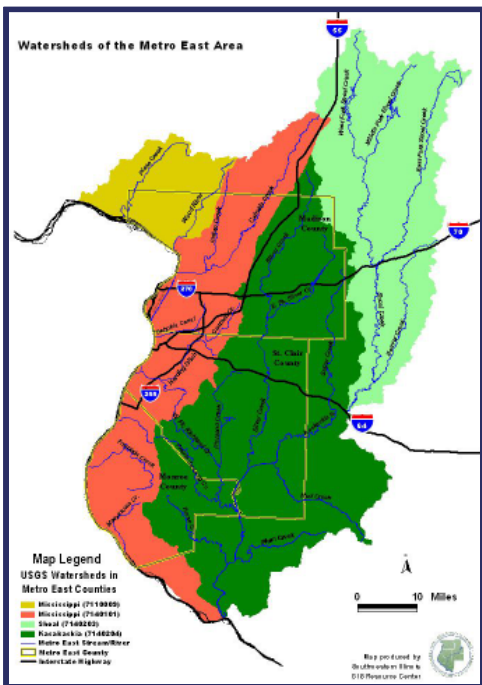
To provide geographic information system services & education in support of the RC&D vision.



Left: GIS Staff provided trail alignment and ortho photography to support Trailnet, Inc. in Cahokia.



Above: Photography and floodplain data is used interactively to help identify valuable resource areas.



Left: Graphics are provided regularly to groups working in the region's watersheds.

The Land Conservancy (TLC)

by Steve Black, Land Conservancy Coordinator



The Land Conservancy (TLC), in its sophomore year, focused on information and outreach efforts as well as fundraising activities. Informational meetings were held in Bond, Clinton, Washington, Randolph, and Monroe Counties, where Steve Black, Land Conservancy Coordinator, and Paul Evans, attorney, provided general information on the TLC program as well as specific information on donated conservation easements. Individual contacts were made throughout the year with a number of landowners interested in more information on the program, and several small local group meetings were held in the Edwardsville area, where development is rapidly replacing farmland and open space.

A booklet entitled *Southwestern Illinois Lands at Risk* was developed this year to support the fundraising efforts associated with this program. This 12-page document highlights important natural resource areas in the region, as well as the benefits of protecting those resources from residential and commercial development. Copies have been distributed to potential donors in the area and additional copies are available in the office upon request, or can be viewed and downloaded at www.swircd.org.

In July 2004, the RC&D Council provided significant support to the program through the donation of \$10,000, which is being utilized to sustain staff and operational expenses. Grant proposals to provide additional financial support for the TLC have been submitted to a number of corporations, foundations, and other organizations throughout the year, with several of the requests still pending. A number of significant donations have been made in support of The Land Conservancy, including Ms. Elizabeth Crown, \$10,000, Wetlands Forever Company, \$500, and Judge John DeLaurenti, \$300.

The Madison County Board, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, landowner George Wilaredt, and the RC&D signed a conservation easement to protect 39 acres in Madison County in July. The TLC will hold the easement on this parcel to preserve, restore, and maintain natural features, wetland resources, and ecological values of the property to provide wildlife habitat, maintain water quality, and control water runoff. This property is an important component of the stormwater management plan for Madison County. The TLC now holds a total of four conservation easements on approximately 250 acres in Madison and St. Clair Counties.

Linda Wegrzyn, a new volunteer from Belleville, started helping the TLC in October and has provided outstanding assistance to the program. She developed the first *Land Conservancy Newsletter*, which was released in early 2005, and will also be updating the web site to better meet the needs of those searching for conservation easement and land protection options on the internet. Linda also prepared a grant proposal to the ASC Foundation that was submitted in January. Our thanks also to Sally Brown for development of the new logo for the TLC, that is featured above.

Conversion of our farms, forests, and natural areas to urban uses continues at an alarming rate in the Metro-East region. We need to act now to protect these resources before it becomes too late to make a significant impact on maintaining open space and agriculture within the region. Once land is converted the benefits that we enjoyed from its past use are lost to present and future generations.

Mission of The Land Conservancy (TLC)

To work regionally to protect agricultural, forest, & other natural lands in order to provide for open space, landscape diversity, sustainable agriculture, wildlife habitat, & conservation benefits for present & future generations.

Stewardship Committee

Sally Brown
Ralph Buettner
Mark Badasch
Dave Eustis
Mike Fruth
Philip J. Harris
Glen Schuetz
Barb Taylor
David Tiedemann
Steve Black, Coordinator
Linda Wegrzyn, Volunteer



LOSS OF FARMLAND & OPEN SPACE

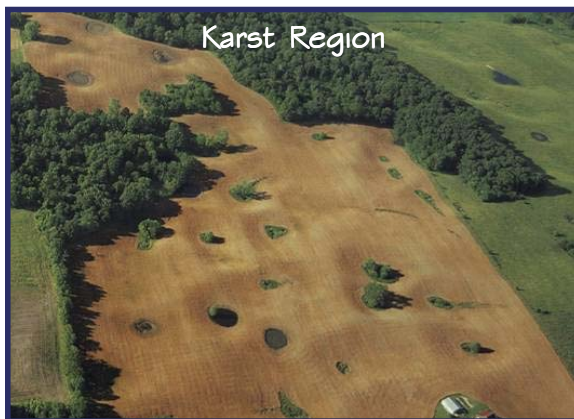
Illinois

- We lose nearly two townships or 50,000 acres every year to urban sprawl and development
- This is equivalent to a loss of 140 acres per day

Southwestern Illinois

- 4,130 acres per year converted to urban land from 1992 to 1997
- Rate of conversion from 1997 to 2001 has increased from previous five-year period

Lands at Risk in Southwestern Illinois



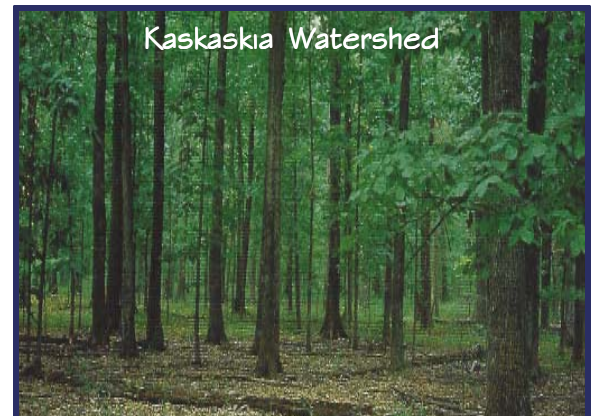
Karst Region



Strategic Farmland



Natural Areas



Kaskaskia Watershed

2004 Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Council

B o n d

George Gobberdiel, Bond Co. At-Large
George Luber, Bond Co. Bd.
Richard Sharp, Bond Co. SWCD

C l i n t o n

Darrell Brink, Clinton Co. At-Large (Treasurer)
Mark Pingsterhaus, Clinton Co. Bd. - alt.
Brian Guthrie, Clinton Co. Bd. - alt.
David Lampe, Clinton Co. Bd.
Edwin Varel, Clinton Co. SWCD

M a d i s o n

Richard Schrupf, Madison Co. At-Large
Hal Patton, Madison Co. Bd.
Zane Schneider, Madison Co. SWCD

M o n r o e

Marvin Ries, Monroe Co. At-Large
Dale Haudrich, Monroe Co. Bd.
Ralph Buettner, Monroe Co. SWCD - alt.
Harvey Hoffmann, Monroe Co. SWCD

R a n d o l p h

Ed Crow, Randolph Co. At-Large (Secretary)
Kyle Guebert, Randolph Co. Board
Stephen Gonzalez, Randolph Co. SWCD (Chair)

S I M A P C

Kevin Terveer, SIMAPC

S t . C l a i r

Jonathan McLean, St. Clair Co. At-Large
C. David Tiedemann, St. Clair Co. Bd.
Patricia Watkins, St. Clair Co. SWCD

W a s h i n g t o n

David Droste, Washington Co. At-Large
Larry Unverfehrt, Washington Co. Bd.
Roy Bergmann, Washington Co. SWCD
Gary Hongsermeier, Washington Co. SWCD - alt.

S t a f f

Ed Weilbacher, Coordinator *
ed.weilbacher@il.usda.gov
Yvette Dulle, Program Assistant *
yvette.dulle@il.usda.gov
Dave Eustis, Operations Manager
dave.eustis@rcdnet.net
Roberta LaSalva, Accountant
roberta.lasalvia@rcdnet.net
* NRCS Staff

S p e c i a l P r o j e c t s S t a f f

Steve Black, The Land Conservancy
Coordinator
steveblack@swircd.org
Linda Wegrzyn, The Land Conservancy
Volunteer
lindawegrzyn@swircd.org
Fred Gallagher, Lake Branch Watershed Ag Waste
Technician
fredgallagher@swircd.org

G I S R e s o u r c e C e n t e r S t a f f

Julia Cole, Coordinator
julia.cole@rcdnet.net
Shane Heller Technician III
shane.heller@rcdnet.net
Jenny Reiman GIS Planner
jenny.reiman@rcdnet.net

U r b a n & C o m m n i t y F o r e s t r y (I n t e r n)

Paul Wierzbicki, Urban Forester
paul.wierzbicki@rcdnet.net

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc.
406 E. Main Street
Mascoutah, IL 62258
618.566.4451 fax 618.566.4452
swircd@swircd.org
www.swircd.org

Partners in Resource Conservation & Development

Producing results required partnership with individuals, foundations, businesses, nonprofits, and public agencies. Special thanks and appreciation to all of our partners for our conservation success of 2004.

State/Federal Government

- ❖ Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- ❖ Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- ❖ USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- ❖ US Environmental Protection Agency
- ❖ US Fish & Wildlife Service
- ❖ US Forest Service

Local/Regional Government

- ❖ Collinsville Area Recreation District
- ❖ East West Gateway Council of Governments
- ❖ Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan and Regional Planning Commission
- ❖ Bond County Board
- ❖ Bond County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ Clinton County Board
- ❖ Clinton County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ Madison County Board
- ❖ Madison County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ Monroe County Board
- ❖ Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ National Road Association of Pocahontas
- ❖ Randolph County Board
- ❖ Randolph County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ St. Clair County Board
- ❖ St. Clair County Soil & Water Conservation District
- ❖ Washington County Board
- ❖ Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

Income from Services/Programs

- ❖ Confluence Greenway
- ❖ Dubois Center
- ❖ Kaskaskia Watershed Association
- ❖ Madison County Stormwater
- ❖ National Foundation for Ectodermal Dysplasias (N.F.E.D.)
- ❖ The Trust for Public Land
- ❖ Trailnet, Inc.

Corporate Donations

- ❖ Elizabeth Crown
- ❖ Monsanto Fund
- ❖ Wetlands Forever Company

Foundation Grants

- ❖ Boeing Employees Community Fund
- ❖ Grand Victoria Foundation
- ❖ Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation
- ❖ The McKnight Foundation
- ❖ St. Louis 2004

Personal Giving

- ❖ Steve Black
- ❖ Kent Boyles
- ❖ Diane Chappel
- ❖ Kenneth Childerson
- ❖ John & Betty De Laurenti
- ❖ George & Kimberly Dempsey
- ❖ Theresa Duricek
- ❖ Richard & Shirley Federer
- ❖ Berry & Karen File
- ❖ The Gilomen Family
- ❖ George & Susanne Lubber
- ❖ William Mudge
- ❖ Bill & Joan Sackett
- ❖ Dennis & Rebecca Yarbrough

REMEMBERING

In Memorium of John “Jack” DeLaurenti (1933-2004)

Retired Judge John L. DeLaurenti, 71, of Pocahontas, and Chairperson of the RC&D Stewardship Committee, passed away on August 28, 2004.

Judge DeLaurenti was active with the RC&D program for the last several years and was instrumental in the establishment of The Land Conservancy division that was created in 2003.

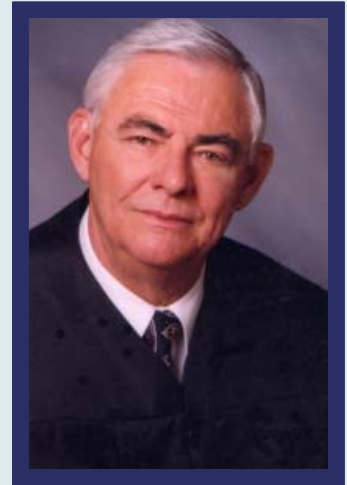
He had a deep interest in conservation programs and was dedicated to conserving our farms, forests, and open space in this region. He continued to emphasize the need to use smart growth policies and provide for land conservation along with meeting the needs for urban expansion.

He was the first individual contributor to The Land Conservancy program. The RC&D and all those interested in conservation of our natural resources will miss his enthusiasm, dedication, and leadership.

Judge DeLaurenti grew up in Highland, where his father was superintendent of schools. From 1956 to 1959, he served in the Air Force. He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a law degree from Valparaiso University in Indiana.

After a stint in private legal practice, he was elected Bond County state's attorney in 1968.

In 1974, Judge DeLaurenti was elected to his first term as judge in the circuit that includes Bond and Madison counties.



The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people.

-Aldo Leopold