



Protecting Land For Future Generations



Newsletter

Volume 6
Spring 2006

Illinois Association of Land Trusts Formed

Southwestern Illinois RC&D Council

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Ed Crow - Randolph
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Jonathan McLean - St. Clair
Patricia Watkins - St. Clair
C. David Tiedemann - St. Clair
Glen Bowers - Washington
David Droste - Washington
Roy Bergmann - Washington
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Stewardship Committee

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

The Illinois Association of Land Trusts was recently established to assist land trusts, landowners, and communities in their efforts to protect Illinois land and water resources. An initial meeting was held in Bloomington, IL on February 1st to determine the priority issues in the state facing local land trusts and to outline some strategies and activities to help address those concerns. Steve Black, Coordinator for TLC, attended the meeting to represent TLC. The top priority projects included:



- Develop a legislative strategy to provide information on land trust issues to legislators and to actively support specific legislation affecting land trusts in the state.
- Create and implement a marketing campaign to educate the public and other audiences on the value of land protection and concept of conservation easements.
- Expand coverage of land trusts in the state through expansion or creation of new groups.

The Land Conservancy joined the Illinois Association of Land Trusts and plans to help support the overall objectives and activities that will help to improve communication and strengthen local land protection efforts. Keeping legislators informed of land protection issues and needs and improving communications with landowners are two items that are critical to the success of our programs.

Thanks to TLC Supporters

A special thanks to new members contributing to The Land Conservancy: Barry & Deborah Newman, Paul Evans, Edna Grench, Glen & Linda Schuetz.

**The USDA's
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service reports
that between
1997 and 2001,
2.2 million acres
were lost to
urban
development
each year.**

Sinkhole Plain & Karst Area St. Clair County

Landowners in the karst area of St. Clair County are receiving additional information on the environmental benefits of the karst topography and the advantages of conservation easements in protecting the conservation values in the region. This outreach effort is being sponsored by a grant from St. Clair County through their Property & Recreation Committee. Mailings were made to over 200 landowners who own at least 10 acres of land in the karst area. Additional information meetings will be held in the area this spring and summer to provide further information on the advantages and benefits of a conservation easement in long-term land protection.



RC&D Assisting Communities With Conservation

The Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. is creating a guidance document that encourages the use of conservation subdivisions for the long-term protection of natural assets in the region. Conservation subdivision design protects open space and reduces infrastructure costs by clustering housing units and leaving a large percentage of the site undisturbed. Once the guidance document is developed, it will be presented to community and county officials to encourage the adoption of its recommendations.

Woodland Property Tax Put on Hold

Woodlands, woodlots, wooded pasture, or timber tracts that are not part of a farm were being evaluated by local assessors under directives from the Illinois Department of Revenue. Wooded acreage that did not qualify for a preferential assessment was to be assessed at 33 1/3 percent of market value according to its highest and best use. That highest and best use could be considered residential use in some cases.

The Illinois House and Senate recently adopted a resolution (HJR 95) calling for a two-year freeze on assessments and for a task force to find a new way for Illinois counties to tax forested land. The Illinois Department of Revenue will abide by the resolution.

The resolution call for the creation of a 12 person task force with members from several state agencies, including the Department of Natural resources and the Department of Revenue, and others appointed by the Legislature and the governor. The task force would have until December 31, 2006 to make recommendations on how to rewrite part of the state's property tax laws.



A conservation easement is still an effective and long-term method of protecting woodlands and keeping property taxes lower. A conservation easement was one of four methods previously specified by the Illinois Department of Revenue as an opportunity to keep a preferential tax rate for woodlands.

Calendar of Events

Earth Day Event at the Watershed Nature Center

Saturday, April 29, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., 591 Tower Avenue, Edwardsville IL 62025

Join TLC at the Earth Day celebration at the Watershed Nature Center. The event will include fun activities for all ages, and information booths from area environmental organizations. Explore the spring wildflowers and the wetland area. From St. Louis Street, turn north onto Elm Street, turn left onto Randle, turn right onto Terry. Terry turns into Tower Avenue and Watershed Nature Center will be on the left.



Wildflower Walk in Washington County

Sunday, May 7th, 1:00 p.m.

Join others interested in land conservation on a hike in Washington County. See the ephemeral magic of Larkspur, Beardstong, Buttercup, and other wildflowers. Also tour a prairie restoration project on the property of Glen Schuetz. Meet at 1:00 at intersection of IL Route 177 and Venedy Road (county highway 12) which is 4 miles west of Okawville or 12 miles east of Mascoutah. There is a gravel parking lot at the intersection, we will meet there and then car-pool to Glen's. Box lunch will be provided. Please RSVP at (618) 566-4451 or steveblack@swircd.org.



Join The Land Conservancy!

Join us in protecting land for future generations. Your membership dues will help us reach more people in the community about the tax advantages of conservation easements, preserve more land through donations, and provide a voice to policy makers about the importance of land conservation.

As a TLC member, you will receive a quarterly newsletter, invitations to exclusive outings to some of the most beautiful private land in this area, and numerous social opportunities.

Yes! I want to become a friend of The Land Conservancy.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student/Retired | \$25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Friend of Open Spaces | \$40 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Prairie Guardian | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Wildlife Patron | \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Forest Benefactor | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Land Steward | \$1,000+ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | \$_____ |

Mail to:

The Land Conservancy

406 East Main Street
Mascoutah, IL 62258

The Land Conservancy, a division of Southwestern Illinois RC&D, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) land trust organization and all donations are tax deductible.



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



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The Land Conservancy

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Protecting land and water resources in Bond, Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties.

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Are You Interested in Land Protection?

Would you like to help with land protection in your community? Let us know if you would like to volunteer to assist with any of our activities in promoting conservation of our natural resources. We can use your help in distributing information, setting up group information meetings, writing stories for news articles, making contacts with local officials, talking to interested landowners, etc. Help us to increase our visibility and protect more land by volunteering today! Contact Steve Black at (618) 566-4451. You will be contributing to protecting our resources for current and future generations.



Protecting Nature On the Web

www.farmland.org/upper_midwest/illinois.htm

Farmland protection in Illinois.

www.grownative.org

Purchasing and growing native plants.

www.smartgrowthamerica.org

Information on the impacts of unplanned urban growth and the benefits of smart growth.

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