



Protecting Land For Future Generations



Newsletter

Volume 7
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Floodplain Acquisition in Madison

Southwestern Illinois RC&D Council

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Patricia Watkins - St. Clair
C. David Tiedemann - St. Clair
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David Droste - Washington
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Stewardship Committee

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

Funding of \$95,000 has been received from the Illinois DNR C2000 program for acquisition of 23 acres in Madison County for the purposes of flood control and wildlife habitat development. Madison County will contribute \$30,000 toward the purchase of the property which is located in the Mississippi River floodplain southwest of Edwardsville. The land is within the footprint of the East St. Louis Interior Ecological Restoration project of the US Army Corps of Engineers and is also habitat for an Illinois listed threatened species, the Illinois Chorus Frog.

The Land Conservancy will hold the conservation easement on the property. This provides an additional level of long term land protections in that conservation values will be designated in the conservation easement and TLC will ensure those values are protected for perpetuity.



Although wetlands cover about only five percent of the land surface in the lower 48 states, they are home to 31 percent of plant species (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

Conservation Design Forum

Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. will host a regional forum to discuss conservation subdivision design and related topics. Conservation subdivision design is an approach to developing a parcel of land for residential use while protecting resources and open space. The Conservation Design Forum will include presentations covering topics such as legal and municipal issues, open space preservation, the home builder's perspective, and the potential for reduced stormwater impacts through conservation design. The forum is tentatively scheduled for September 29. More details will be posted at www.swircd.org.

Thanks to TLC Supporters

A special thanks to new members contributing to The Land Conservancy: Dorothy Faitz and Linda Wegrzyn. TLC also thanks the Monsanto Fund for a grant of \$25,000 to expand marketing and conservation easement outreach activities.

Middle Mississippi River Partnership Summit

The Middle Mississippi River (MMR) Partnership Summit will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. on July 12, 2006 at the American Legion Hall in Chester, Illinois. The session will feature Lt. Governor Pat Quinn as the luncheon speaker. The day program will focus on opportunities within this section of the Mississippi River including conservation, recreation, education, agriculture, transportation, and economic development. The MMR Partnership recently received some additional support from the US Army Corps of Engineers. This funding will result in development of a more detailed plan for conservation and other resource needs in the river corridor from St. Louis to Cairo. Seating is limited to 250 individuals. If you are interested in attending please contact Yvette at the Southwestern Illinois RC&D at 618-655-4451 for registration information and directions.

Expansion of Conservation Areas

In May, the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. Council was successful in assisting the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the Trust for Public Land in adding 89 acres of open space on Chouteau Island in Madison County. Funding for this effort was provided by the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, as well as the State of Illinois.

Chouteau Island is actually a complex of three islands in the Mississippi River. A group of not for profit organizations and state/federal agencies, collectively known as the Chouteau Island Coordination Team, has been working for a number of years to acquire, restore, and create passive recreational opportunities within the 5,500 acre island-complex. To date, over 80% of the property has been placed into public ownership.



Earlier this year, with funding provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation, the Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. assisted the American Land Conservancy, in acquiring 142 acres, on Rockwood Island in southern Randolph County. This property will 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 at southern Randolph County. 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. Due to its natural features and its high potential for restoration and habitat enhancement, the tract is a very high priority acquisition for the USFWS, and is the proposed location for a headquarters and interpretive center for the recently established Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge (MMRNWR).

Interest in Conservation Easements Continues

The Land Conservancy staff is currently working with four landowners in St. Clair, Monroe, and Bond Counties who are pursuing development of conservation easements on their lands. This will add close to another 100 acres to lands that will be protected for perpetuity in the region. Many landowners continue to call the office or visit the web site to get further information on how they can ensure long-term land protection.

Forest Owners Prepare for Another Pain in the Ash

Our native ash trees are about to endure their biggest challenge yet. The Emerald Ash Borer is an extremely destructive little pest, which has already managed to wipe out large populations of ash trees in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Illinois is on red alert, as the borer was identified in northern Illinois last week. The state has prepared and is implementing an Emerald Ash Borer action plan, which includes cooperation between the USDA, IDOA, U of I Extension, and municipal leaders.



Adult Emerald Ash Borer, 1/2 inch L x 1/8 in W, visible June-August

Why should you care? This 1/2 inch long, metallic green insect can destroy a mature healthy ash tree within 1-3 years. It attacks every native ash tree in southern Illinois and can be transplanted through a single piece of infected firewood. Take a few minutes to check out the facts at www.emeraldashborer.info. Learning about this serious pest can save you a great deal of forest loss and expense. If you suspect you have an Emerald Ash Borer infestation or would like to see a sample, contact your local University of Illinois Extension office. Last, but not least, do not bring back ash firewood from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, or Northern Illinois.

Stewardship Committee Guides TLC

The RC&D Stewardship Committee consists of volunteers who provide leadership and direction to The Land Conservancy program. The committee meets every other month to provide ideas, oversight, and assistance with program activities.

Fundraising, outreach, information/education, and easement approval are just some of the activities that Stewardship Committee members are involved with. We want to take this opportunity to recognize this group for their dedication and commitment, and to thank them for their involvement. The enthusiasm of this group of volunteers has made this program successful. Other volunteers not pictured are Penelope Daubach, Mark Badasch, Mike Fruth, Dave Tiedeman and Sally Brown. Thanks for all of your great work!



Bottom row from left: Carl Daubach, Dave Eustis, Barb Taylor, Ray Nitzsche. Top from left: Mitze Nitzsche, Glen Schuetz, Ralph Buettner, Phil Harris, and Steve Black, Coordinator.

Karst/Sinkhole Plain Meeting



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

An information meeting on land protection options in the karst/sinkhole plain area will be held in St. Clair County on July 13 from 7-9 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Henry White Experimental Farm in the Education Center at 4747 Centerville Avenue (Route 158 east of Millstadt).

Information will be provided by Steve Black, Land Conservancy Coordinator, on the benefits of protecting lands in the karst area and the opportunities of a conservation easement for private landowners. Topics will include the process of developing an easement, the long-term impacts, and the tax benefits available to private landowners. Anyone interested in finding out more about conservation easements is welcome to attend. Please contact our office at 618-566-4451 Ext. 20 or e-mail us at black531@charter.net if you plan on attending.



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The Land Conservancy

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