

Soil & Water Conservation Districts

There are 98 soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) making a difference in your community. No matter how big or small each of the 102 counties is represented equally. From educating homeowners on practical utilization of water, to helping rural landowners save soil and improve water quality; it takes everyone working together to protect our soil and water! Without them our communities could not thrive!



Yearly Rainfall Totals

Average Rainfall in

Springfield = **35.56 inches**

- 2007 - 31.72 inches
- 2008 - 53.70 inches
- 2009 - 52.62 inches
- 2010 - 21.72 inches as of June 13th.



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Money Drowning in Illinois

Rain costing everyone money? Illinois' wetter than normal weather during the past two years and so far this year, has created a multitude of runoff and pollution problems, particularly for soil and water conservation districts.

Abundant and often heavy rain fall events have caused significant soil erosion on farm fields that would not normally experience such erosion rates. The same can be said for developments where massive soil movement from stormwater runoff has overwhelmed conservation measures that would normally retain the eroded soil on site.

State and federal funds used to help share the cost of soil conserving practices are tied up in contracts, but are going unspent because contractors can't do the earthwork necessary to construct the practice due to excessively wet conditions.

Weather statistics show October 2009 as the wettest October on record for Illinois with more than 11" of rain. See totals in left hand column. In 2008, Springfield alone had 11.48" of rain during April, May and June (spring). During October, November and December (fall) there was 11.34" of rain. These six months are typically when conservation practice construction takes place. Again in 2009, the two wettest periods were the spring and fall months with more than 15.3" in the spring period and 16.8" in the

fall. Not only has the abundant rainfall delayed planting of crops but it has effectively stopped any earthwork for conservation practice installation.

Rain costing everyone money. With reduced funding levels and an eleven month delay in payments to the SWCDs, layoffs and reduced hours have led to a severe shortage of available staff to plan the timely installation of practices. Lack of available staff means that there may be no one to oversee the construction that is already backlogged due to the weather. Therefore, contracts that have been in effect since 2008 for which work has not been able to be completed, will have to be cancelled under the requirements of the Grant Funds Recovery Act (30 ILCS 705/). Once the funds have been returned to the state, they are lost for conservation purposes.

Loss of these funds for conservation purposes creates a problem for Illinois since erosion problems can not be addressed and also for the landowner since problems not being addressed will continue to worsen.

Did You Know? From start to finish it takes SWCD personnel 15 to 20 hours to delineate, design and approve an average best management practice.



Erosion in Urban Areas

Urban areas contribute a disproportionately higher amount of sediment and pollutants per acre, than other land uses.

Soil erosion from a construction site without proper soil erosion and sediment control practices in place can average between 20-200 tons/acre/year. This is 10 to 20 times greater than the typical soil losses on agricultural lands.



One acre is 43,560 ft which is equivalent to the size of a football field

Illinois Supported by Soil

Soils produce our food, fiber and paper; are used for our parks, wildlife preserves, lawns and play areas; support plants; and serve as foundations for our homes, highways and airports. Illinoisians are very dependent on soils. Soils are one of our most basic natural resources and are indispensable to the support and growth of a strong and prosperous state.

PROTECT & CONSERVE

Districts' Spotlight

• Kendall County SWCD

The Kendall County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), encourages students in the county to go outside and get dirty through hosting a large outdoor learning event. While at this event, 4th-5th grade students discovered different textures found in soil through feeling different soil samples, picked invasive plants, went on an interpretive hike, toured a Native American village, discovered the value of worms, and learned about a variety of other topics including water conservation, animal habitats, prairie food chains, recycling, and petroleum. Approximately 500 students and 25 teachers definitely got their hands dirty and learned a lot while participating!

While this event is always a great learning event for students in the county, it's also a great opportunity for collaboration between several different local and state entities. This year's event was free of cost to all participants with special thanks to: the Kendall County Forest Preserve, Kendall County Environmental Health Department, County Outdoor Education Center, Oswego School District's Hands-on Science Program, Illinois Conservation

Police, Grundy County SWCD, Illinois Bureau of Land and Water, and Illinois Petroleum Board.

• Your Local SWCD

Do you know what your local SWCD is doing to help your constituents protect and improve our soil and water? Take a moment to access our website at www.aiswcd.org, and look for the red starburst to find out what is happening in your back yard!



Piece of pervious concrete

Pervious concrete is a special type of concrete with a high porosity that allows water from precipitation and other sources to pass directly through, thereby reducing the runoff from a site and allowing groundwater recharge.

See it in action!!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_z0xRPbExY

• Chicago's Green Alley Program (source: Green Alley Handbook)

With approximately 1,900 miles of public alleys, Chicago has one of the most extensive and important pieces of infrastructure of any city in the world. If all of the alleys were "green" up to 80% of the rainwater falling on these surfaces throughout the year could pass through permeable paving back into the earth, thereby reducing localized flooding, recharging groundwater and saving taxpayer money that would otherwise be spent treating stormwater.



Students have the opportunity to get their hands dirty while learning about soil.

There are over 600 soil series in Illinois, all having their own characteristics. Different locations have different soils which erode differently.

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YOUR LAND, YOUR WATER, YOUR ILLINOIS

association of illinois

SOIL & WATER

conservation districts

4285 North Walnut Street Road
Springfield, IL 62707
217.744.3414 ph
217.744.3420 fax
www.aiswcd.org