



association of illinois

**SOIL &
WATER**

conservation districts

APRIL 2010 Volume 7, Issue 9



To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs

Conservation Habits = Healthy Habitats

conservation catchall

In 1955, the National Association of Conservation Districts began a national program to encourage Americans to focus on stewardship. Stewardship Week is officially celebrated from the last Sunday in April to the first Sunday in May. It is one of the world's largest conservation-related observances.

The program relies on locally-led conservation districts sharing and promoting stewardship and conservation activities. Districts provide conservation and stewardship field days, programs, workshops and additional outreach efforts throughout their community to educate citizens about the need to care for our resources. Many district activities extend beyond the one week observance to include an entire year of outreach.

The Stewardship concept involves personal and social responsibility, including a duty to learn about and improve natural resources as we use them wisely, leaving a rich legacy for future generations.

One definition of Stewardship is "the individual's responsibility to manage his life and property with proper regard to the rights of others." E. William Anderson suggests stewardship "is essentially a synonym for conservation."

Stewardship Week helps remind all citizens of the power of each person to conserve natural resources and improve the world. When people work together with their local conservation district, that power grows and grows. As these good deeds multiply across the nation's network of conservation districts, the results are spectacular!

When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land—when both end up better by reason of their partnership—then we have conservation. - Aldo Leopold

Stewardship Week will be officially celebrated April 25 to May 2, 2010.



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Staff:

Rich Nichols,
Executive Director

Stacy Stremsterfer,
Education Coordinator

Jim Nelson,
Urban Stormwater Specialist

Sherry Finn,
Administrative Assistant



president's message

Jim Todd, AISWCD President - jtoddfarm@starband.net

Senate Joint Resolution 0107 was adopted by the Senate on March 24th and sent to the House for its consideration. Chapin Rose has signed on as the bill's sponsor in the House and we fully expect the resolution to be adopted within the next few weeks. We welcome the opportunity to have the task force look at the various issues of funding, structure, responsibilities and other related issues. We think that the resulting report will provide documentation for the need to strengthen the districts and perhaps expand the role they now play in guarding and protecting the state's resources. As I'm sure you are critically aware, we need to do something about the districts' funding situation. We are hoping that the task force report will address that issue.

With the tough times we are going through right now, I thought this might be a good time to revisit our responsibilities as directors and elected public officials. I know that many districts are close to being forced to make a decision about what to do with staff, where expenses can be reduced or cut and what will happen if the district runs too low on cash to be able to maintain employees. The responsibilities outlined in the District Act indicate that the directors are responsible for all programs and operations that occur within the boundaries of the district regardless of whether they have employees or not. The Act does, of course, provide authority to the directors to employ such agents and staff as they deem necessary but it says nothing about what happens if the district has no staff.

As the elected officials, the directors will continue to be responsible for seeing to it that the bills are paid, and contracts and agreements are fulfilled. This does not mean that the directors will be expected to go to the field and plan and survey

conservation practices but the directors will be responsible for contacting landowners who have contracts and working with them to amend to delay the contract until such time as staff can be provided to service the contract. Last year when we were having difficulties with getting our funds released the AISWCD and ISWCDEA developed a list of things to consider when forced with the decision to suspend services. It may be worth the time to locate that information and review it. If you are unable to locate the information, please feel free to contact the AISWCD office and it will be e-mailed to the your office.

On a different note, by the time I write next month's article most of us will either be in the field and may already have planted a good portion of the 2010 corn crop (I hope!). Please be very cautious as you get your machinery ready and in particular as you move from field to field. Many accidents happen this time of year because of farmers getting in a hurry and taking shortcuts to try to get as much done as possible in the short window that we have.

Please accept my wishes for a safe and normal planting season and remember to take care of our precious soil resources. I read an article in last week's paper about "sand storms" in China. From the description of the storms, it appears to me that they are encountering the same problems that we had in this country during the Dust Bowl days. It seems that high intensity food production without the necessary concern for protecting the soil has consequences no matter where you are.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Todd". The ink is dark and the signature is written in a fluid, personal style.



executive director's notes

Rich Nichols - rich.nichols@aiswcd.org

Welcome Spring! At last, the weather is becoming more pleasant and I can actually see a hint of green on the trees and bushes. I hope you are all able to enjoy the warm weather as well. It will be nice to start thinking about planting and field work and just getting out to enjoy the sun after the long cold winter. Spring is also the time when landowners start to think about conservation practices and the need to do something to repair the gullies and rills that may have occurred late last fall and over the winter. I am proud to be part of the effort to take care of our natural resources. Those of you who caught the story that came out in late March about the sandstorms in China are aware that they seem to be having the same problems that the United States had in the 30s during the dust bowl days. I read several articles on the internet and it appears that China's urgent desire to join the world economy and become more self-sufficient has come with some unpleasant side effects. I found the report interesting enough that I thought I would copy it and provide the information here. I have included the URL if the links do not work. It is worth looking at the pictures that accompany the information on the web site. For most of us who do not remember the Dust Bowl, this provides an excellent snapshot of what it must have been like.

Analysis by [Michael Reilly](#) | Mon Mar 22, 2010 09:58 PM ET

Imagine having neighbors whose yard -- once lush and beautiful, filled with grass and trees -- became a wasteland. Every time the wind blew hard, dust rose from their torn up plot of earth and wafted into your yard, into your house. It got on your clothes, in your kitchen, in your lungs. You'd be pretty annoyed at your neighbors, wouldn't you? Well, South Koreans must be fairly ticked off just now, because their entire country is suffering from [the worst dust storm the Korean Peninsula has ever seen](#). (http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2010/03/22/201003220082.asp)

It's basically China's fault. The storm started when strong winds powered through the Gobi Desert in western China and Mongolia before turning day into night in Beijing, and then moving on to sprinkle over Japan and slam into Korea. [China's dust problems are](#)

[well-documented](http://news.discovery.com/earth/dust-storms-china.html), (<http://news.discovery.com/earth/dust-storms-china.html>) the result of deforestation and poor land use management on farms near the arid fringes of the Gobi.

Now, [dust storms whipping up](http://news.discovery.com/earth/dust-storms-slide-show.html) (<http://news.discovery.com/earth/dust-storms-slide-show.html>) from deserts and arid regions all over the world are perfectly natural, if destructive. But this storm is part of a growing trend of increasingly frequent and severe dust events in the region.

Over the weekend, the Korea Meteorological Association (KMA) issued a dust warning for all of South Korea. Warnings are issued any time dust levels exceed 800 micrograms per cubic meter of air -- enough to pose a serious health hazard to anyone breathing in the stuff. Record measurements topped out at 2,847 micrograms per cubic meter. Yuck. (See page 7 for related photo and additional information about the storm.)

The good news is these monster storms can be stopped, or at least contained. Similar "black blizzards" wreaked havoc across the American heartland during the 1930's in the infamous Dust Bowl. But the U.S. learned its lesson, and altered farming and land use practices to minimize the risk of mega storms in the future.

I am glad we addressed our dust storm problems and that the soil and water conservation districts and the work they do are the result. We still have much to do but hopefully we will never again in this country experience the problems China and Korea are now dealing with.

The Discovery Channel aired a program called "Black Blizzard" last winter. If you have not seen the program it would be worth your while to obtain a copy and view it. I think it would also be a good idea to purchase a copy and make it available to schools so that we never forget what using our natural resources without care and concern for their protection can lead to.

I hope you have a great April!

Rich



education coordinator's notes

Stacy Stremsterfer - stacy.stremsterfer@aiswcd.org

MARCH'S INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

Stacy is currently on maternity leave and will not have a report for this issue of the *Catchall*.

swcd contributions to envirothon

We wish to thank the following soil and water conservation districts and the Illinois Farm Bureau for their generous contributions to the Envirothon competition. Without your support we could not provide the rich experience and unique opportunity for high school students to participate in the state's only competitive natural resource knowledge event.

Contributors:

Thank you!

Calhoun	Henry	McLean	Sangamon
Cass	Iroquois	Menard	Schuyler
Christian	Kankakee	Mercer	Warren
Edgar	Livingston	Morgan	Washington
Ford	Marshall-Putnam	Piatt	Winnebago
Grundy	Mason	Pike	Woodford

aiswcd support

As of March 1, 2010, the following soil and water conservation districts have demonstrated their support for the AISWCD by paying their first and second quarter 2010 dues. Your support allows the AISWCD to represent your interests with the General Assembly, the Governor's Office and with our conservation partners.

Thank you!

Champaign	Madison	Ogle
DeWitt	Marshall-Putnam	Schuyler
Jackson	McLean	Shelby
Jersey	Mercer	St. Clair *
Kane-DuPage	Moultrie	Union
Kendall	North Cook	Will-South Cook

* Paid in full!



urban stormwater corner

Jim Nelson – jim.nelson@aiswcd.org

Spring is a busy time for professionals in the natural resource protection and enhancement field. Prescribed burns, prairie plantings, rain garden installations, and of course a wide menu of agricultural BMPs are, hopefully, nearing completion. Districts play a major role in all of these activities either directly or indirectly through educational programs that teach about BMPs or promote them. A little different from what many districts are accustomed to are the construction site soil erosion and sediment control (SESC) workshops hosted annually by soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) under contract with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to conduct construction inspections .

As part of their agreement SWCDs host SESC workshops that seek to educate a wide array of construction professionals in all areas of the state. The emphasis, although slightly different district to district, is to increase site protection and protect water quality. Districts' local presence is a key factor in the success of the program. Local companies look to these districts to aid them in worksite compliance. The construction community often looks to the SWCDs for guidance in keeping out of the crosshairs of IEPA's regulatory branch.

The Illinois Department of Transportation was recently fined \$100,000 for not complying with their stormwater permit in Lake County. It is circumstances like this that SWCDs help construction professionals avoid. When a district employee conducts an inspection they first determine if paperwork is up to IEPA's standards and make recommendations if not. Often, the next stop is the perimeter of the site to see if sediment is leaving the site. Inlet structures and concentrated flow areas are inspected to see if they are properly protected. Each district has their own approach yet the goals are the same; to protect the water, assure the permit is being followed and, to help developers get back into compliance before IEPA must get involved.

Unlike the site inspections, the workshops, mentioned earlier, are an added bonus that focus on prevention rather than remediation. Contractors, consultants, engineers, developers, and local community personnel are taught about products new and old and how to apply them most effectively. It is a great feeling when someone comes up after the workshop to tell us they've learned something completely new. I just hope one day I will stop hearing "I had no idea what the SWCDs did in my county!" I am very pleased that we have nearly two dozen counties covered by the IEPA agreement to conduct education inspections. It provides an additional source of income and helps protect our water.

JIM



Celebrate Earth Day!

Thursday, April 22, 2010



administrative assistant's notes

Sherry Finn - sherry.finn@aiswcd.org

MARCH'S INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

MARCH QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING Conference Call:

- Compiled QB Packets for Officers and mailed
- Prepared documentation for the additional items to the agenda under new business
- E-mailed and mailed new information to Board Members
- Set up conference call
- Took Roll call and minutes for Foundation and Board Meetings
- Checked with Hilton Hotel for Meeting Room availability for Summer Conference Training Sessions for Directors and Employees/Contacted Sheila Lane and John Beckhart
- Checked with Northfield Inn about contract for FY 2011 QB Meeting dates/Reported to Jim Todd
- Completed Draft Minutes for Foundation and AISWCD Board Meetings
- Had Minutes posted to Website

Ag Legislative Day:

- Completed registration form and paid fee
- March QB-Board Members voted not to have an item for the legislative basket

OTHER DUTIES:

- Phone Calls and Mail
- E-mail Correspondence
- Compiled expense report for Credit Card
- Timesheets
- Organized CREP Monthly Vouchers (Feb) & Forwarded Info to IEPA for reimbursement
- Maintain Patio Paver Database
- Maintain Rain Barrel Database
- Maintain SWCD Dues Paid Database
- Mailed Thank You Notes to Paid Districts
- Maintain Sponsorship Brochure Printing Fee Database
- Maintain Sponsorship Database
- Mailed Thank you Letters, cards, CC and Legislative Newsletters to all new Sponsors
- Updated Distribution List in E-mail Contacts for Sponsors to receive Conservation Catchall and Legislative Newsletter every month
- Maintain Illinois Envirothon Sponsor Database
- Emailed Weekly Reports to Officers
- Updated Records Retention, Management & Destruction Folder
- Contacted IL Attorney General's office regarding FOIA; got date of June 17, 2010 from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. (Noon) for training/compiling info for an all e-mail invitation to Districts
- E-mailed Legislative Newsletter to SWCD Districts and mailed newsletter to 4 Legislators that do not have e-mail availability
- E-mailed Conservation Catchall to Districts
- Attended second meeting for Earth Stewardship Day; handling Budget
- Attended two meetings for the existing and new CREP and CREP assistant contracts/compiling information for an e-mail update
- Acquired guest speaker, Chad Pregracke, for the Annual

Meeting/Summer Conference; completed contract and details of the speaking engagement

ACCOUNTING/OFFICE ADMIN:

- Completed Payroll and Payroll Taxes for March
- Reconciled all bank accounts
- Completed bookwork for All AISWCD & Insurance Accts
- Prepared Deposits for SWCD Dues and Receivables
- Completed Checks for Payables
- Completed Deposits for Receivables
- Completed Monthly Financials
- Filed all Completed Payables & Receivables Documentation
- Faxed Copy Count to CDS Technology
- Received CREP Payment for January; Did Deposit
- Paid Participating CREP Districts for CREP assistant reimbursement; Mailed checks
- Wrote checks for SWCD various insurance premiums; had Rich sign; mailed; e-mailed copies to Debbie Holsapple, Administrator of Ins Funds

FY 2009 Audit:

- Prepared documentation for the Auditor from the pre-audit checklist
- Copied all the Grant Contracts
- Pulled all the spot-check files for both Foundation & AISWCD
- Provided all the Foundation and AISWCD checks, deposits, bank statements and reconciliations
- Made copies of the two previous year's Federal and II 990's for Foundation and AISWCD
- Available 3 days for questions, needed documentation, and legwork

LOOKING AHEAD:

- Earth Stewardship Day
- Envirothon
- AISWCD/SWCD Sponsorships
- FOIA Training
- June Quarterly Board Meeting
- Annual Meeting/Summer Conference
- Preparation for Annual Meeting items-Auction and Trivia Night

REMEMBER:

A smile is a curve that sets everything straight!!!!

To Act:

Extend your love, give someone a smile, do a good deed.

Hope you had the LUCK of the IRISH in March!!!!

Have a Blessed Easter!!!!

Sherry

iswcdea corner

Submitted by: Debi Slade, AC Co-Vice Chair

Visit their website at: <http://www.il.ncdea.org/>



The Chairs and Vice-Chairs held a conference call to discuss training sessions for Summer Conference. We plan to hold a full day of training on Monday, July 26 prior to conference registration. We specifically want to address Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Technical training as well as any TNI AgLearn course requirements. On Tuesday, July 27, there will be opportunities for two sessions, one in the morning and another during the afternoon. We will hold our regular Employee's Forum on Tuesday at the end of the day to share concerns and achievements with each other. On the morning of Wednesday, July 28, for those who do not wish to sit in on the Business Meeting of the directors, we will have another training opportunity.

Don't forget to complete the Outstanding District Employee Award application. Please see the AISWCD website for the form. Nominations are due to LUC Chairman by April 19th and to the AISWCD by May 17th.

The ISWCDEA scholarship applications are due by June 30th. The information will be available on our website in the near future. To be eligible, applicant must be an active member of the ISWCDEA or a member of their immediate family.

Thank you to Jonathon Manuel from Piatt County for stepping up to represent the SWCD's on the State Technical Committee. He is replacing Dan McCandless.

One more reminder, make sure you complete your FOIA training by June 30th.

May you all have a wonderful Easter.

china dust storm



A man walks down a street in South Korea during the March 19 storm.

In the *New York Times*, Erik Eckholm reports that "the rising sands are part of a new desert forming here on the eastern edge of the Quinghai-Tibet Plateau, a legendary stretch once known for grass reaching as high as a horse's belly and home for centuries to ethnic Tibetan herders." Official estimates show 900 square miles of land going to desert each year. An area several times as large is suffering a decline in productivity as it is degraded by overuse.

In addition to the direct damage from overplowing and overgrazing, the northern half of China is literally drying out as rainfall declines and aquifers are depleted by overpumping. Water tables are falling almost everywhere, gradually altering the region's hydrology. As water tables fall,

springs dry up, streams no longer flow, lakes disappear, and rivers run dry. U.S. satellites, which have been monitoring land use in China for some 30 years, show that literally thousands of lakes in the North have disappeared.



Abandoned home in northern China



ILLINOIS ENVIROTHON 2010

May 14 & 15, 2009 - Allerton Park, Monticello, IL

**CELEBRATING
16 YEARS!**

natural area guardians

Submitted by Tim Keller, Whiteside Co. SWCD Director

during the 2009 aiswcd annual meeting, resolution 2009-8, natural area guardian areas was approved by the voting delegates. the main goal of the resolution is to encourage all soil and water conservation districts to form natural area guardian committees to assist in the management of natural areas within each district. this resolution was forwarded to the education focus area committee to work on. future of the conservation catchall will provide swcds with more information on the natural area guardian areas. we hope you will find this information valuable and if we can provide more information please contact the office.

earth day revisited 2010

This April 22nd is the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. As those of you who are old enough may remember, it was proposed by Senator Gaylord Nelson on Wisconsin. I attended the Earth Day Celebration at Northern Illinois University. I question if we have made much progress in protecting our environment since that time.

Driving out to the farm north of Sterling, I always notice winter's litter along the roadside, glass bottles, aluminum cans, and paper trash, most often the cups and wrappers from a visit to a fast-food place. Two years ago, I picked up all the litter along a 7-mile stretch of road. It took me ten days to do it. I separated the aluminum and glass and burned the rest.

A problem not a easily solved is that of tires. People use natural areas as a landfill, dumping anything from TVs, sofas, and refrigerators to tires. The Natural Area Guardians recently pulled over 50 tires from Spring Slough, a wetland managed by the group. In the past, the tires could be disposed of at Wal-Mart for 88 cents a tire, then it went up to \$1.50. Unfortunately, Wal-Mart no longer takes tires unless new tires are being purchased.



Natural Area Guardians pick up discarded tires at Spring Slough

Perhaps it is time for our lawmakers to pass a deposit law that would serve as a disincentive to littering. Iowa has a 5 cent deposit on containers. They had a redemption rate of 86% in 2009. Michigan has a 10 cent deposit resulting in a 97% redemption rate. Surely, something could also be figured out for tires.

It's time for action. I'm tired of picking up other people's trash! It is time to refocus on the environment.

New Incentive on SWCDs Sponsorship Brochures

Your SWCD can receive \$100 from AISWCD to be the first SWCD to turn in 25 sponsorships!! At the December QB Meeting the Board of Directors passed a motion, that the first SWCD to turn in 25 sponsorships will receive \$100 from AISWCD's 50%!

Sponsorship brochures can be obtained by contacting the AISWCD office. Due to the printing costs not being included in the FY 2009 budget we are asking that each SWCD pay \$10.00 for 50 copies of the brochure. To make sure all 98 SWCDs have the opportunity to receive their 50 copies we are only giving out one packet (50 copies) per SWCD.

When an individual/company signs up to become a sponsor the checks are to be made out to the AISWCD. To make it easier, please feel free to send them all at once or as you see fit. Keep in mind that individuals/companies can mail the sponsorships directly to us. For those of you that have not seen the brochure, there is a line for them to fill in their county name, since SWCDs will receive 50% of the donations made in their county. Checks from the AISWCD to the SWCDs will be issued on a quarterly basis (March, June, September and December).



illinois chapter iaap

By: President Susan Scott, Jersey County - susan.scott@il.nacdnet.net



The IL SWCD Chapter of IAAP will be holding their April Meeting at IDOA building in Room 66 on April 21st. The chapter will conduct their business meeting, budget review, nominations of officers and upcoming sponsorship for summer conference in the morning, followed by presentation by Jennifer Thornton from Avery Dennison on "The Key to A Greener Office" in the afternoon. Avery will also be handing out sample packs for all attendees. If anyone is interested in attending, please feel free to join us at this meeting. We can also try to make arrangements for you to possibly car-pool with our members.

2010 Administrative Professional Day Laptop Raffle



With this meeting being held on Administrative Professional Day, we will again hold our Laptop Raffle. The chapter is raffling off an HP Pavilion Laptop Computer, 14.1", AMD Turion II Ultra Dual-Core, 4 GB of DDR2 Memory, 500GB Hard Drive, Windows 7 Home Premium, Wireless Card, CD Burner/DVD Combo. Tickets are \$3 each or 5 for \$10. If anyone is interested in purchasing a ticket, please contact one of our members or myself. To learn more about our chapter, check our website at <http://iaap-swcd.tripod.com/>.

Susan

award nomination deadlines

Please be sure that all nominations for the following awards are in the Land Use Council Chairman's hands by April 19, 2010.

Auxiliary Poster Contest

Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award

Auxiliary Photo Contest

George McKibben Memorial Scholarship

Outstanding District Employee Award

Conservation Teacher of the Year

Conservation Farm Family Award

All awards nominations must be submitted to the AISWCD by May 17, 2010

mark your calendar for . . .



- Award Nominations to Land Use Council Chairman - Deadline is April 19, 2010!
- Award Nominations to AISWCD - Dealine is May 17, 2010!!
- 2010 Illinois Envirothon - May 13/14, 2010 - 4-H Camp at Allerton Park in Monticello, IL
- June Quarterly Board Meeting - June 7/8, 2010 - Northfield Inn, Springfield, IL
- Attorney General FOIA Training Session -June 17- Illinois Department of Agriculture Auditorium, Springfield, IL
- SWCD FOIA Officer Training - June 30 - Deadline for completing electronic training !!!
- 62nd AISWCD Annual Meeting & Illinois Land & Water Resources Conference - July 26-28, 2010, Hilton, Springfield
- 2010 Illinois State Fair - August 13-22, 2010, Springfield, IL

AISWCD Paver Listing

Thank you to those

individuals and SWCDs who have purchased a Paver for the AISWCD Patio.

COUNTIES:

Clay County SWCD
Henry County SWCD
Knox County SWCD
Livingston County SWCD
Mason County SWCD
McDonough County SWCD
Piatt County SWCD
Saline County SWCD
Warren County SWCD
Union County SWCD
Morgan County SWCD
Menard County SWCD
St. Clair County SWCD

Corporate:

Kraus Landscaping

PAST PRESIDENTS:

George P. Irwin, Marion CO
Terry Davis, Warren CO
James H. Todd, Menard CO
Terry Bogner, Marshall-Putnam CO
Lee Bunting, Livingston, CO
Rudy Rice, Perry CO



INDIVIDUALS:

Philip Anderson-Saline CO.
Beckhart Family-Piatt CO.
Don Condit-Marshall-Putnam CO
Robert Sloan-Marshall-Putnam CO
Terry Bogner-Marshall-Putnam CO
Rollie Spaniol-Coles CO
Roland & Lois Spaniol-Coles CO
Jerry & Pam Snodgrass-Henry CO
Diane Talbott-Henry CO
Emery Oesch-Richland CO
Kenny Vosholler-Perry CO
Phil Fossler-Ogle CO
Jake Klein-Clay CO
Charles E. Curry-Henry CO
Eldora W. Zimmerman-Winnebago CO
Dwayne Proctor-Winnebago CO
Carl & Lois Wexell-Henry CO
Elizabeth N Kraus
Terry Davis Family-Warren CO
Memorial for Jake Klein-Clay CO
Virginia M. Hayter-North Cook CO
Mason Co, Auction Donation & Bitner Family
Dick Breckenridge
ISWCDEA
Steve Stierwalt-Champaign CO

AISWCD Mission: *To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs*

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