

**Randolph County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**313 West Belmont • Sparta, IL • (618) 443-4381, ext. 3**

Contact: Resource Conservationist, Meghan Poston  
Administrative Coordinator, Cheryl Houghlan

**Cox Creek Streambank Stabilization**

Like many streams in Illinois, Cox Creek was straightened decades ago to make farming the adjacent fields easier. As a result, the water flowing through the creek moved at a much faster rate than before, and started to erode away the stream banks and bottom. In 2007 the Randolph County SWCD was contacted by a landowner who was concerned about Cox Creek's collapsing banks on his property. On a site visit, we found that the creek was 12 feet below the natural floodplain, and the erosion caused by the channelization had triggered a bank collapse, jeopardizing a nearby barn. We thought that this site was a good fit for the C-2000 Streambank Stabilization and Restoration Program (SSRP). We submitted a SSRP application to the Bureau of Land and Water Resources, and the project was approved May 2008.

With the assistance of a Streambank Specialist, a plan was devised to construct 5 rock riffles in the stream channel that would slow the erosion occurring in Cox Creek. Rock Riffles are a series of low rock dams that slow the velocity and "stair step" water down a steep grade so that bank and bottom erosion are controlled. Rock Riffles also create pools that are an ideal habitat for aquatic animals.

The Cox Creek SSRP was constructed August-September 2008. As a result of this project 459 tons of soil, 918 lbs of Nitrogen, and 459 lbs of Phosphorous are saved every year from entering Cox Creek. This is great news for aquatic life in Cox Creek and the Mary's River downstream. Both of these water bodies are on the IEPA's 303d list of Impaired Waters. IEPA suspects the cause of the impairments to aquatic life in Cox Creek and Mary's River are Phosphorous and sedimentation, which this SSRP effectively reduced.

**For more information on projects and activities with the  
Randolph County Soil & Water Conservation District  
visit us on our website at <http://www.freewebs.com/randolphswcd>**