

Winter Edition

2010



SOIL AND WATER STEWARD

The Newsletter of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District



The Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

A Partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture and the State of Illinois

Commonly Asked Questions

What is the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)?

CREP is an enhanced version of the USDA Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The CREP Program is a Federal, State and Local partnership designed to retire frequently flooded and environmentally sensitive cropland in order to achieve restoration and long-term protection of those areas. In Illinois, landowners implement conservation practices in the eligible CREP watersheds to reduce sedimentation and nutrients, improve water quality, and to create and enhance critical habitat for fish and wildlife populations.

Who is Eligible?

Producers and private landowners, if they owned or have had an interest in land for a minimum of one year in the Illinois or Kaskaskia River Watershed, are eligible if the land meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Is in the 100-year floodplain;
- Qualifies as wetlands, wetlands farmed under natural conditions, or prior converted wetlands.
- Is highly erodible land (HEL) with an erodibility index of 8 or greater adjacent to the 100-year floodplain.

The cropping history requirement is 4 out of 6 years from 2002 to 2007. The eligible area includes all or a part of these 68 counties: Adams, Bond, Brown, Bureau, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clinton, Coles, Cook, DeKalb, DeWitt, Douglas, DuPage, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Fulton, Greene, Grundy, Hancock, Henderson, Henry, Iroquois, Jefferson, Jersey, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Knox, Lake, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Logan, McDonough, McHenry, McLean, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Marion,

Marshall, Mason, Menard, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Putnam, Randolph, St. Clair, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Stark, Tazewell, Vermillion, Warren, Washington, Will and Woodford.

What are the enrollment options?

- 14-15 year Federal CREP contract
- Federal CREP contract + 15-year State Conservation Easement
- Federal CREP contract + 35-year State Conservation Easement
- Federal CREP contract + Permanent State Conservation Easement

What restrictions are there on land enrolled in a State Conservation Easement?

The land may not go back into row crop production or agricultural uses unless specifically allowed in the Conservation Plan of Operation (CPO). The land may not be developed; no permanent structures or roads may be built on enrolled property. Existing roads can remain if approved by IDNR.

What activities are allowed on land enrolled in a State Conservation Easement?

The landowner retains the right to use enrolled property for recreational purposes, including hunting, fishing, primitive camping, and wildlife watching. Landowners also retain ownership of land, become eligible for reduced property taxes, are allowed to harvest timber with an approved Forest Management Plan, and are allowed to receive any future benefits derived from restoration activities such as carbon sequestration.

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For Rent or Sale From MCSWCD:

- Turbo Till:** \$5.00 acre/\$50.00 a day
- McFarlane Reel Till:** \$5.00 acre/\$50.00 a day
- Holcomb Scraper:** \$150.00 per day, 7th day free
- Tommy Silt Fence Plow:** \$35.00 per day
- Tree Planter:** \$25.00 per day/free w/tree purchase
- Marking Flags** are \$0.08 each
- Filter Fabric:** 15'=\$2.25 ft., 3'=\$0.50 ft.

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Does a State Conservation Easement grant access to the public?

No, the State Conservation Easements do not grant public access. This is guaranteed in the CREP Conservation Easement. However, the landowner may grant access or participate in the Illinois Recreational Access Program and State agency personnel and SWCD staff has the authority to access lands enrolled in CREP to perform normal duties.

The CREP Program is administered by many partners. The local USDA Service Centers house the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). These agencies work together to administer the Federal and State sides of the program. They determine eligibility for enrollment and provide technical assistance for approved conservation practices. FSA administers the Federal side of CREP as they do for regular CRP. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) administers the State side and also provides technical assistance. Many other agencies, including the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), provide support with marketing, monitoring, and program policy.

For more information or to sign up, visit your local USDA Service Center, or go online at <http://www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/CREP>

SWCD 70th Anniversary Dinner and Meeting Planned

The Montgomery County SWCD has planned and is selling tickets to its 70th annual meeting, dinner and election. The event will be held on Monday, January 17, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. at the Litchfield Community Center. The center is located at 1100 S. State Street in Litchfield and tickets cost just \$8.00 each.

It will be a fun-filled, yet informative meeting beginning with a fabulous dinner served by Milanos Catering of Hillsboro. Dinner will be followed by a short business meeting and election of two directors. Following the election results, we will be entertained by the Energy, Illinois-based acappella do-wop group Blend. Blend promises to entertain with its collection of 50s and 60 era do-wop and gospel selections. At the close of the meeting we will award some great door prizes including gift cards to local merchants, trees, live fish and equipment rental.

Tickets can be purchased at our office located at 1621 Vandalia Road in Hillsboro, or by calling 217-532-3610, extension 3.

So come take a trip down memory lane with us as we reminisce about our past 70 years of conservation excellence and look forward to new and exciting opportunities to conserve the county's natural resources.

Practice Maintenance: A few tips for keeping conservation practices in the best shape possible.

Terraces, Water and Sediment Control Basins, and Dry Dams

- Check inlets and outlets for possible damage after heavy rains. Remove debris from around risers that might impair their function.
- Remove accumulated sediment in the basin area and rebuild terrace or basin ridge.

Maintain a good sod on narrow base or grass-back terraces. Trees, brush, and weeds should be eliminated by mowing, spraying or cutting. Burrowing rodents should also be eliminated from the slopes.

Grassed Waterways

- Vegetation damaged by machinery, herbicides or erosion must be repaired promptly.
- Exclude livestock whenever possible, especially during wet periods.

- Inspect regularly, especially following heavy rains. Damaged areas will be filled, compacted and seeded immediately. Remove sediment deposits to maintain capacity of grassed waterway.
- Avoid using waterways as turn rows during tillage and cultivation operations.
- Mow vegetation to maintain capacity and reduce sediment deposition.
- Do not use as a field road. Avoid crossing with heavy equipment when wet.

Repair broken tile lines or blowouts adjacent to or in the waterway immediately.

Please contact our office if you would like to receive more information or technical assistance on how to maintain your current erosion control practices.

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2010 Land Use Contest Held

On September 20 the SWCD hosted the county wide Land Use Contest for local high school FFA students. The contest was also held in conjunction with the Section 15 contest, so there was a wide variety of students from counties including Madison, Macoupin and Montgomery. It was a beautiful fall day to be out on the Grosenheider farm southwest of Litchfield. Brad Bowles volunteered to dig the pits for us and retired Soil Scientist Dana Grantham scored each pit for us before the contest. Individual winners of the county contest were, in order from first place to last: Holly Dewerff, Gabe Dewerff, Joey Seabaugh, Caleb Niemann, Anabelle Hill, Kelsey Law, Zach Grosenheider, Kody Moore, Sam Voils, and Brett Holliday. Team winners were, in order, beginning with first place: Nokomis, Litchfield, Hillsboro, and Raymond.



Top Ten Finishers



First Place Nokomis Team

Mine Reclamation Tour

The Directors and Associate Directors for the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District recently went on a tour of the area in Macoupin County where reclamation work is currently being completed. The reclamation work is being done on the areas in Macoupin County that were subjected to long-wall mining. The directors were hosted by Macoupin Energy and contractor Gerry Spinner to look at what methods were being used to reclaim farming ground after long-wall mining has taken place. With the forthcoming long-wall mining in Montgomery County, the directors now have a better understanding of the reclamation process and will be able to offer suggestions for improved methods of reclamation here in the county.

TREE/FISH SALE FORM AVAILABLE AFTER JAN 1 AND WILL BE INCLUDED IN OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER. SEE OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.MONTSWCD.COM

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