

Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District
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Charleston, IL 61920

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November/December 2006

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Seedling ID Guide
for Native Prairie Plants
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Illinois Forestry Workshop

Illinois woodland landowners, foresters and outdoorsmen who want to see our woodland acres grow and improve, are invited to a forestry workshop on Nov 16th. The workshop will begin with registration at 9:30 a.m. and conclude by 2:30 –3:00 pm. Pre-registration is required by Nov 13 to ensure that materials and accommodations are available to all participants.

The workshop agenda will cover the Illinois Forestry Association's goals and plans for forestry in the state along with instruction on how to develop a forestry management plan. Presentations will include a segment on exotics and invasive species, their impact on our native woodlands, and recommended eradication methods. There will also be a discussion on developing a directory of regional forestry businesses that provide landowners with various services such as logging, hauling, sawing, milling, timber stand improvement, planting, and exotic plant removal.

The morning presentations will be held at the Midway Tavern, which is located five miles south of Sigel and five miles north of Effingham on Route 45. After lunch at the Midway, the group will drive two miles north to Heartland Woods where Mark Willenborg will conduct a tour of the facility and demonstrate the making of wood products in their shop.

The Illinois Forestry Association will be accepting new memberships during the morning registration which enables participants to take advantage of a reduced workshop fee. Workshop registration is \$8 for IFA members and \$12 for non-IFA participants. This event is being sponsored by the Illinois Forestry Association, the Lincoln Heritage, Post Oak Flats and Wabash Valley RC&Ds, the Embarras River Management Association, IDNR and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Pre-registration can be made by calling: Lincoln Heritage RC&D at 217-253-5466 or Embarras Valley River Management Association at 217-849-3762.

Josh Budde is Leaving

After a year and a half in the Charleston Field Office, Josh Budde is moving to the NRCS office in Breese, IL. Josh has been a wonderful addition to the field office staff and we hate to see him leave. His last day in Coles County will be November 17.

Green Alternatives

To protect our environment, you might want to consider these alternatives to commercial household cleaners.

Glass Cleaner:

Fill and 8- or 16-oz spray bottle with plain club soda. Spray on windows and mirrors and wipe dry with a lint-free cloth.

Furniture Polish:

Fill a 16-oz spray bottle with 2 t of olive oil, 1/4 cup of white distilled vinegar, 20 drops of lemon essential oil (opt, if you want it to smell "lemony"), and fill the rest of the bottle with water. Shake well. Spray directly on furniture or on a rag and then wipe furniture dry.

Tub and Tile Cleaner:

Mix 1 2/3 cups baking soda and 1/2 cup liquid soap in a bowl. Add 1/2 cup water and then 2 T white distilled vinegar. Stir to remove lumps and fill a 16-oz flip-top bottle.

Disinfectants:

cutting board— rub salt and water into it and rinse.

Counter top, toilet bowl, doorknob, (anything you would normally disinfect with bleach— Fill a 16-oz spray bottle almost full of water and then add 3 T of liquid soap. Add 20-30 drops of tea tree oil and shake well.

Source: *ISEN newsletter*

COLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
...WORKING FOR US

The economic reality in Coles County is that agriculture is the leading industry. Farm products from the county generate over \$83 million annually. These agricultural products are dependent on 245,389 acres of soil on cropland plus adequate fresh water. Although it is not a regulatory agency, the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is the only local government entity whose assigned duty is to assist landowners in protecting the soil and water in this county.

During the past year, the Coles County Board has supported the SWCD with \$19,855 of county funds or about 12.88 percent of the SWCD budget. Although no fees are charged for technical assistance in planning conservation practices for landowners, local support in the form of tree, fish and prairie plant sales, rental fees, interest earned, and some other fees provide another 47.18 percent. The remaining 40.44 percent comes from the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

What do you get for the \$19,855 (\$.79 per tax bill) invested by the county? A District budget of \$160,360 sustains two full time and one part-time professionals and gives support to the education efforts of the Coles County schools. An annual investment by the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides personnel, office space, utilities, and some of the equipment that is shared by the SWCD staff. The NRCS staff (presently four professionals) work cooperatively to supply technical assistance free of charge to agricultural producers and all landowners in the county. These services bring another \$250,000 into the County from the Federal government.

During the 2005 year, some of the activities of the SWCD and NRCS working in cooperation with landowners...

- Brought more than \$98,501 into the County from conservation contracts, grants, and programs.
- Supported the cities of Coles County with Land Evaluation and Site Assessments and Natural Resources Inventories for use in decision-making regarding proposed development sites.
- Instructed 60 landowners at two Controlled Burn Workshops and offered equipment for prescribed burning.
- Instructed 50 farmers about the details of the new developing Conservation Security Program so they will be ready to apply when the program is made available in our watersheds.
- Arranged cost-share funding for sealing eight abandoned wells.
- Assisted livestock producers in receiving Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) cost-share dollars to provide practices for raising livestock in a way that is healthy for the animals and for the environment. Landowners provided a 40-50% match (\$60,000) for the grants.
- Enrolled over 6,100 acres within the County in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) cooperating with Federal Agencies resulting in annual payments for local farmers.
- Participated in the Lake Paradise Watershed organization that is addressing issues pertaining to soil, erosion, water quality, education, garbage and recreation within the Lake Mattoon Watershed. Consulted with interested individuals and groups requesting technical assistance to protect water and soil. The SWCD staff distributed seed for Quail Unlimited and Pheasants Forever and wrote grants for new equipment (which is now available to our landowners and operators) for Pheasants Forever and provided technical assistance information for planting habitat.

In addition to the funds generated by the efforts of the SWCD and NRCS staff identified above, approximately \$14.8 million dollars flow into the county from the USDA through the landowners and farm operators. Yes, agriculture is big business in Coles County.

The work of the SWCD in Coles County is so widespread that there is hardly a farmer or landowner who, over the years, has not benefited from SWCD assistance. We all benefit from applied conservation practices. Let your County Board members know that you appreciate the investment by the County in the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Rollie Spaniol, Chair
Coles County SWCD

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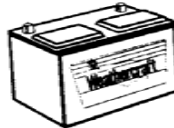


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