

Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District
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Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District
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Volume 47 Issue 2

217-345-3901-Ext. 3

March/April 2007

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www.colescountyswcd.org

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Volume 47 Issue 2

Mar/Apr 2007

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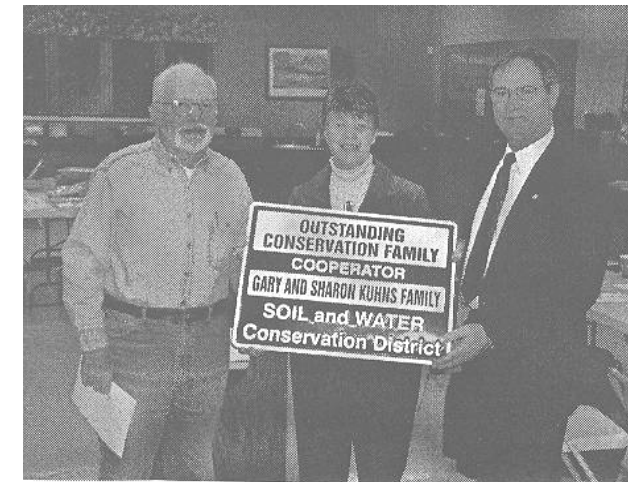
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Outstanding Conservation Farm Family

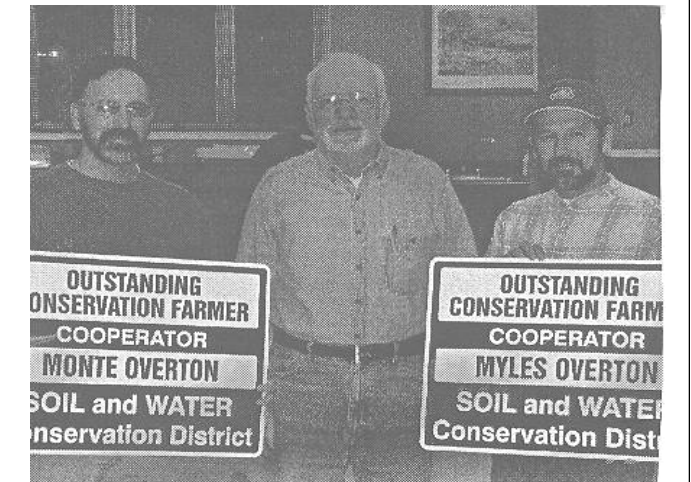
Gary, Sharon, Andy and Nick Kuhns were selected as Outstanding Conservation Farm Family for the past year.

Nick is head loan officer at Litchfield National Bank and Andy is working for the Natural History Survey at U of I while he completes a doctoral degree. Sharon is County Executive Director for the U of I Extension. Gary is a trust officer at Mid-Illinois Bank and Trust in Mattoon and farms on a part-time basis.

Gary served on the Cumberland County Development Corporation Board and the Illinois Economic Development Corporation Board. Cumberland County recognized his major contributions and honored him as Economic Development Citizen of the Year. He was also elected Lake Land College Trustee.

Sharon was a member of "Reshaping Coles County" and has served on the "Women and Children First" campaign. She has received special recognition for her outstanding work. She received a special Team Award for Diversity in Programming based on her work with women in agriculture and also has been honored with a Distinguished Service Award.

In the 1980's, a federal conservation program for the Lake Paradise Watershed was funded by NRCS with additional funding from the City of Mattoon. Gary's farm was in that watershed and he immediately signed up for the program. He was one of the first in the county to plant switch grass for wildlife cover. They have invested in conservation practices resulting in 4,000 ft of grass borders, 22 PTO terraces, 8 grass waterway terraces, 12,100 ft of waterways, and a dry dam. Gary built 3 terraces, 1100 ft of terraces and the dry dam himself. They use minimum tillage on the corn and no-till the soybeans.



Outstanding Conservation Farmers

Coles County SWCD selected brothers Monte and Myles Overton as the Outstanding Conservation Farmers for the past year.

Thirty-one years ago, Monte joined his father, Jerry, in the family farming operation. Five years later, Myles began farming with them. The three of them farmed together until 1999 when Jerry retired. During the early years, Monte and Myles worked at other jobs until they got enough land to support their families. Both of them say they never wanted to do anything else but farm.

They began using conservation practices 15 years ago when they tried no-till beans; they didn't like it. They tried different methods until they heard about a farmer in southern IL who had built a cutter disk and they decided to give that a try. They built their own cutter disk, tried it on their no-till beans, and were pleased with the results. They said their yields were as good as or better than conventional beans. Today, all of their beans are no-tilled.

They are always looking for ways to save passes across the field and three years ago, they started using strip-till on their corn. All of their corn is strip-till these days.

On their rough ground, they leave a 15-30' strip of grass to control erosion. They also have waterways, tile, terraces and diversions.

They have livestock and use rotational grazing. They had one of the first EQIP contracts in the county which included fencing, water tanks and pasture establishment. They took productive farmland out of production and converted it to pasture.

Fish and Tree Sales

Fish species available this year are Channel Catfish, Hybrid Sunfish, Largemouth Bass, Bluegill, Redear, Fathead Minnows and Triploid Grass Carp.

Grass Carp orders are due March 13 and all other fish orders are due March 23.

Pickup is April 2 at 8:00 a.m

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Trees available this year are White Pine, Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir, Fraser Fir, Concolor Fir and American Red Pine.

Tree orders are due March 23.

Pickup is April 6.

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Pickup for both fish and trees is at our office building located at 6021 Development Drive in the Coles Business Park at the corner of Route 16 and the Loxa Road.

For information, order forms or direction to the office, call us at 345-3901 (3).

Bob Houk

The directors and staff of Coles County SWCD extend their sympathy to the family of former SWCD director, Bob Houk, who passed away in February.

Bob served on the SWCD board of directors from 1966 until 1980 and was an active participant in the programs and activities of the District during these years. After resigning from the board of directors, Bob remained active in conservation projects on his farm.

Bob will be missed as a conservation farmer and a supporter of SWCD activities but also as a kind man with whom we always enjoyed visiting when he stopped in the office.

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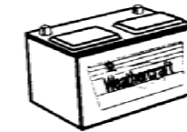
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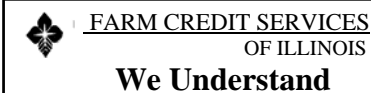
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