

Conservation News

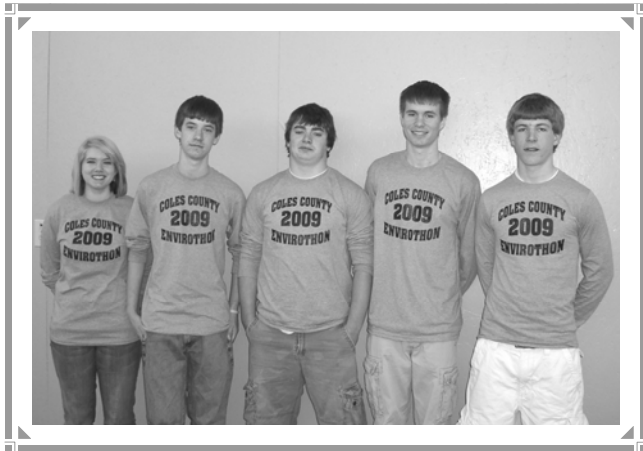
Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Oakland Team Wins County Title at Envirothon

Coles County had three teams compete at the Land Use Council 7 Envirothon held on April 1st at Rockome Gardens. Oakland High School team members Jimmy Clifton, Ross Rhoades, Austin Locke, Jesse Clifton and Stefanie Borntreger coached by , Greta Henry, took the county title and placed 2nd overall in the field of 28 teams. The OHS team had the top score in the current event category. Charleston Team #1 placed 4th overall and Charleston Team #2 came in 24th.

Teams from Champaign, Clark, Coles, Douglas, Edgar and Vermilion Counties were tested on five categories, Soils, Aquatics, Wildlife, Forestry and the Current Event, Recreational Impacts on Natural Resources.

The overall winner of the LUC 7 competition was Shiloh Team #1 from Edgar County, who will go on to the state competition in Monticello on May 14 & 15.

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Rain Gardens...

Prairie Plants....

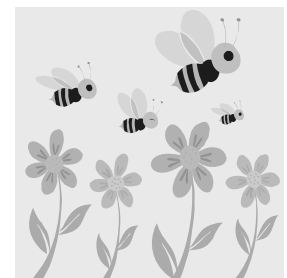
Rain Barrels.....

Rain Gardens are landscaped areas planted to wild flowers and other native vegetation that soak up rain water. The rain garden fills with a few inches of water after a storm and then the water slowly filters into the ground rather than running off to creeks or storm drains. Up to 70% of water pollution in our area is carried by storm water. Much of this pollution comes from things we do in our own yards and gardens!

Nature's original plan is for rainwater to soak into the soil then replenish groundwater supplies, be absorbed and filtered by plants and then enter our surface waters as clean water. As populations grow and replace forests and agricultural land, increased storm water runoff from impervious surfaces causes flooding, carries pollutants from streets, parking lots, and lawns into our rivers and lakes.

The Coles County SWCD has 30 different plants suitable for prairie or rain garden plantings. We are offering coneflowers, asters, blazing stars, and several sedges among our selection. They come in a rainbow of colors, from white to violet. They range in height from 6 inches to 6 feet when mature. Plants are \$2.50 each. Orders are due by May 26th. Call or stop by our office for an order form.

We are also taking orders for rain barrels at \$85 each. These make great gifts. With Mother and Father's Day coming up, these barrels would make a perfect gift for that hard to buy for loved one who already has everything. Again call or stop by the office for more information or to place an order.



Aquatic Plant Control of your Pond

Aquatic plants play a valuable role in improving water quality, providing cover, and diversifying the food web in ponds. When aquatic vegetation takes up more than 20% of the water surface areas, control may be needed. Control can be obtained by mechanical, herbicide or biological methods. Control of aquatic plants does not remove nutrients. Excessive control of rooted aquatic plants by any method promotes algae blooms and increases the chance of a summer fish kill. Proper pond location and construction coupled with nutrient control will reduce aquatic plant problems.

Mechanical—physical removal of plants can be accomplished by hand-pulling and raking. Mechanical removal can be effective in small ponds or spot treating areas such as swimming beaches. It is very labor intensive and not usually practical for larger areas.

Aquatic Herbicides—Prudent use of aquatic herbicides approved for aquatic use, can be an effective technique for controlling aquatic plants in ponds. First, accurately identify aquatic plant(s) to be treated, select the appropriate herbicide, and read and follow label directions. Aquatic herbicides should be applied before the water temperature reaches 70 degrees. Recommended herbicides that control aquatic plants may be obtained from *Aquatic Plants—Their Identification and Management* by IDNR. *Management of Small Lakes and Ponds in Illinois* is another publication available at our office.

Biological—Triploid grass carp can be stocked in man-made impoundments to control excessive aquatic vegetation if a permit is obtained from IDNR. Aquatic plant control with triploid grass carp can take up to three years or more and may not control all species of plants such as filamentous algae. Suggested regional stocking rates for grass carp are available at the CCSWCD office. For site specific triploid grass stocking recommendations contact IDNR District Fisheries Biologist at 217-345-2420. We offer triploid grass carp during our spring and fall fish sales. Contact our office to get on our mailing list for sale information,

References: Illinois Conservation Practice Job Sheet 399js

IDNR Aquatic Plants Their Identification and Management, Fishery Bulletin No.4, Springfield, IL

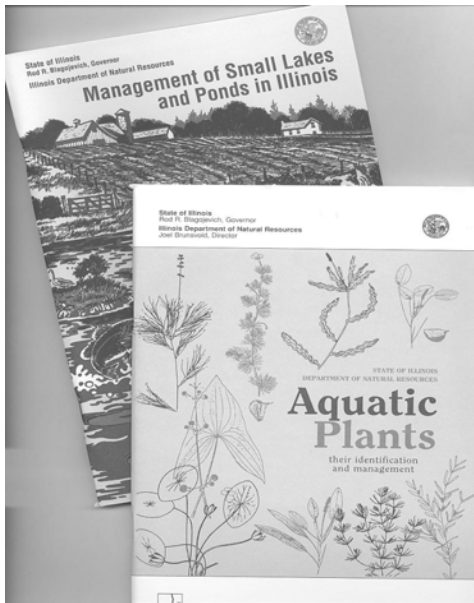


PHOTO CONTEST

We want to thank everyone who took the time to submit photos for our first Conservation Photo Contest. We had fifteen photos in all. The top photo, as judged by our Directors, was "Good Morning SWCD" by Craig Clendening. All photos are on display in the SWCD office. All photos will be sent on the compete in the Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Photo Contest in July in Springfield and then on to the national contest in Washington DC.

If you would like to be put on the mailing list for next years contest, please contact our office.

"Good Morning SWCD", by Craig Clendening

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Celebrating Earth Day with County Schools

In celebrating of Earth Day, Educational Liaison, Kristin Yager, has been visiting local schools to present water pollution demonstrations using our Water Pollution Enviroscope. The Enviroscope is a model of a typical American city with residential areas, agricultural areas, a forest, a golf course, roads, construction sites, industries, & water bodies. Pollution is simulated on the model using cocoa powder to represent soil erosion, colored sprinkles to represent the different chemicals that we release into our environment, & a cocoa/water solution to represent animal waste, industrial sludge, and oil contamination. Students enjoy helping to spread the various pollutants into the Enviroscope model and a responding "EWW!" is heard when a squirt bottle of water is used to demonstrate how these pollutants move through our environment and into our water bodies with rainwater. Once the model is polluted, Kristin & the students discuss ways that the pollution could have been prevented and the steps that individual citizens can take to improve our local water quality.

"Many people mistakenly believe that since much of the planet is covered by water, water conservation and protection are not important. The reality is that only a very small proportion of the water on Earth is available for humans & other organisms to use. The Enviroscope demonstrates the role that we all can have in polluting our water and the steps we can take to conserve & protect this valuable resource" says Yager.

In addition to the water pollution demonstrations, Coles County SWCD once again continued the tradition of providing white pine seedlings to 3rd graders in Coles County for Earth Day & Arbor Day.



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The Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District offers all programs and services without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

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Look at the trees, look at the birds, look at the clouds, look at the stars... and if you have eyes you will be able to see that the whole existence is joyful.

Everything is simply happy. Trees are happy for no reason; they are not going to become prime ministers or presidents and they are not going to become rich and they will never have any bank balance. Look at the flowers - for no reason. It is simply unbelievable how happy flowers are. ~Osho



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