



Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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<http://www.colescountyswcd.org>

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Volume 64 Issue 1

Coles County SWCD's 2023 Conservationist of the Year: Clay Weber

Clay Weber of rural Ashmore was chosen as the Coles County SWCD's Conservation Farmer of the Year for 2023. As an SWCD participating farmer for the last several years, Clay has implemented soil and water conservation practices like grassed waterways, field borders, and has been experimenting with cover crops. More recently he has been involved in numerous programs through the district and partner agencies to increase his conservation efforts with new practices, particularly in his cattle operation. Clay began farming full time just a few years ago. We love to see folks hit the ground running with conservation!

The object of this award is to provide recognition to an outstanding conservationist in the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District that exemplifies Total Resource Management. Recipients are selected based on their use of best management practices, implementation of new and innovative technologies, demonstrations of commitment to conservation and stewardship, participation in educational programs and community involvement, and leadership in community, government, and non-profit or grassroots groups to further their work.



The Coles County SWCD presented Clay Weber of rural Ashmore with the 2023 Conservation Farmer of the Year Award at the SWCD's annual holiday party and award ceremony. Pictured (left to right) are Justin Thomas (vice chairman), Bill Janes (chairman), Todd Easton (secretary/treasurer), Clay Weber, and J.C. Doty (board member).

Notice of Election of Directors

To All Owners and Occupiers of Lands Lying Within the Boundaries of Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District: Notice is hereby given that an election will be held on the 8th day of February, 2024 from 7:00am to 5:30pm at 6021 Development Drive, Ste. 2, Charleston, IL 61920. Three (3) Directors will be elected to serve the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District of the State of Illinois. All persons, firms or corporations who hold legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of the said district are eligible to vote at said election, whether as lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise. Only such persons, firms, or corporations are eligible to vote.



Upcoming Events:

<u>January:</u>	<u>February:</u>	<u>March:</u>
1st—New Years Day (Office Closed)	8th —SWCD Board Election	12th—Board Meeting
9th—Board Meeting	13th—Board Meeting	15th—Fish Sale Orders Due
15th—MLK Day (Office Closed)	19th—Presidents' Day (Office Closed)	22nd—Tree Sale Orders Due
31st—STAR 2023 Field Forms Due		

Sponsors Sought for Arbor Day

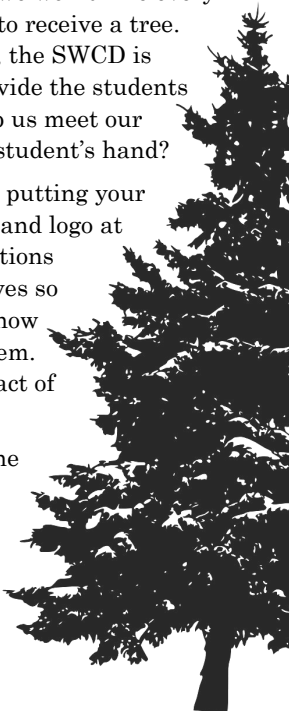
Although it may not feel like spring outside, we are anticipating warmer weather and that means gearing up to teach Coles County's third graders all about trees this Arbor Day! Every third grade classroom that we visit will be presented with the history of Arbor Day, a discussion of the importance of trees, and each student will take home their very own white pine seedling.

Each tree costs about \$1 and we would like every third grader in Coles County to receive a tree. Due to budgetary constraints, the SWCD is seeking donations to help provide the students with their trees. Will you help us meet our goal of placing a tree in each student's hand?

We will recognize your gift by putting your name or your business' name and logo at the bottom of the care instructions sheet that each student receives so they and their families will know it was you who invested in them. Here's an example of the impact of your gift.

- \$40 will purchase trees for one classroom
- \$1000 will purchase trees for all Coles County 3rd graders

Donations may be mailed to the office or delivered in-person during regular business hours.



Your 2023 STAR Field Forms are due January 31st!

Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (STAR) is a FREE nationwide tool to assist farm operators and landowners in evaluating their nutrient and soil loss management practices on individual fields. The goal of STAR is to encourage the continued adoption of conservation practices, and recognize farmers for their commitment to sustainability.

The STAR evaluation system assigns points for management activities on an annual basis. Participants answer a series of simple questions about their crop rotation, tillage, nutrient applications, and use of conservation practices to generate their overall field score. Scores are converted to a STAR rating of 1 to 5 STARs, with 5 STARs indicating commitment to a suite of practices proven to improve soil health and water quality.

There are several ways to complete a STAR evaluation—Complete and return the PDF form via email, mail, or in-person, or use the STAR Web App that launched in 2021. The web app has the ability to work on both large and small screen devices, and is the fastest option for tech-savvy folks. It provides users with immediate, clear, concise evaluations of their field management. Additionally, it automatically identifies practices to increase a field's STAR Rating, providing a clear path to improved STAR Ratings with resources and local technical assistance.

The Coles County SWCD is looking forward to increased participation in the free and confidential program for the 2023 crop year. If you're interested in participating, would like more information, or would like help filling out the form, please visit <https://starfreetool.com/> or give our office a call and schedule an appointment with Lauren.

Safety and Woods Worker (SAWW) Level 1 & Level 2 Training Offered

Grand Prairie Friends will be hosting SAWW Training Programs on Thurs., Feb. 29th and Fri., Mar. 1st, 2024 at Warbler Ridge Conservation Area. The SAWW Training Program provides professional and recreational chainsaw users with highly effective, hands-on training programs delivered by certified safety trainers who are experts in their field. SAWW Training promotes safe and efficient chainsaw use and oversees the development of training curriculums and the training of trainers.

Level 1 (Thursday): Overview of the SAWW Training Program. OSHA regulations and requirements. Sessions on body mechanics, personal protective equipment, necessary tools, saws, tree felling, and limbing, bucking, and topping. Felling practice.

Level 2 (Friday): Level One review. Maintenance, hands-on filing, limbing techniques, precision felling assessment, and precision at the stump, including notching, hinge, species differences and terrain. Felling practice.

Registration in advance is required. Your registration fee will include a lunch both days. Register early— Only 14 seats are available! For questions or more information, call 217-621-6299 or email sarah@grandprairiefriends.org.



Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

Coles Co. SWCD Board of Directors	Coles Co. SWCD Employees	NRCS Employees
<p>Bill Janes: Chairman Justin Thomas: Vice Chairman Todd Easton: Secretary/Treasurer William Tapella J.C. Doty</p>	<p>Bryson Gibson Administrative & Education Coordinator</p> <p>Lauren Oertling Resource Conservationist</p>	<p>Andy Brantner: District Conservationist Stephen Head: Soil Conservationist Matt Dasenbrock: Area Engineer Kerry Bushue: Civil Engineering Tech.</p>

As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodations to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Carzella Pritchett, Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager, at (217) 353-6651 directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. USDA-NRCS/SWCD are an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Spring 2024 Sales

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Email: _____

New pond? Suggested stocking rates:

- Largemouth Bass: 30-50 per acre
- Bluegill: 150-250 per acre
- Redear Sunfish: 200-250 per acre
- Fathead minnows: 4-10lbs per acre
- Channel Catfish: 25-100 per acre



Call our office or the IDNR fisheries biologist for restocking guidelines!

Recommendations are for new ponds 1/2 acre or more

FISH SALE

Fish Species	Size	Price	Qty.	Sub-total
Channel Catfish	4-6"	\$1 ea.		\$
	6-8"	\$1.25 ea.		\$
Largemouth Bass	3-4"	\$1.75 ea.		\$
Bluegill	1-3"	\$1 ea.		\$
	3-5"	\$1.25 ea.		\$
Hybrid Sunfish	1-3"	\$1 ea.		\$
	3-5"	\$1.25 ea.		\$
Red Ear Sunfish	3-4"	\$1.25 ea.		\$
Black Crappie	3-4"	\$1.50 ea.		\$
Fathead Minnows	1-3"	\$12/lb		\$
Triploid Grass Carp	8-11"	\$12.50 ea.		\$
*See table below for info about pond location				
Total				\$

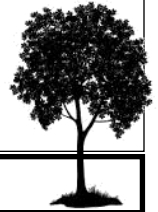
Important Dates:

Fish Orders Due: Friday, March 15th
 Fish Pick Up: Wednesday, April 3rd, 11:00am
 Tree Orders Due: Friday, March 22th
 Tree Pick Up: Friday, April 5th by appointment

Please remind me prior to pick up via:

Phone

Email



TREE SALE


Conifers	Sold in bundles of 10 trees		Qty.	Sub-total
White Pine	8-14"	10 for		\$
<i>Pinus strobus</i>	3-0 seedlings	\$30		
Concolor Fir	10-18"	10 for		\$
<i>Abies concolor</i>	2-0 seedlings	\$30		
White Spruce	12-18"	10 for		\$
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii glauca</i>	2-1 transplants	\$30		
Deciduous Broad-leaves	Sold in bundles of 5 trees		Qty.	Sub-total
Chinkapin Oak	2-3'	5 for		\$
<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	1-0+ liners	\$25		
Northern Pecan	6-12"	5 for		\$
<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	1-0+ seedlings	\$15		
Black Maple	6-12"	5 for		\$
<i>Acer nigrum</i>	1-0+ seedlings	\$15		
Paw Paw	6-12"	5 for		\$
<i>Asimina triloba</i>	2-0 seedlings	\$20		
White Flowering Dogwood	18-24"	5 for		\$
<i>Cornus florida</i>	1-0+ seedlings	\$20		
New This Year: Theme "Packs"	Sold in assorted bundles of 10		Qty.	Sub-total
Pollinator Pack	12-18"	10 for		\$
<i>2 each of Red Osier Dogwood, Choke Cherry, American Plum, Meadowsweet, Pasture Rose (All Native!)</i>		\$50		
Wild Berry Pack	6-12"	10 for		\$
<i>3 Elderberry, 2 Shadblow Serviceberry, 3 Native Flowering Raspberry, 2 Red Mulberry (All Native!)</i>		\$35		
Tree Guard		Each 4" diameter tube speeds photosynthesis by trapping moisture, thereby raising relative humidity and ambient temperature inside the tube. Also protects the tree from animals, wind desiccation, small rodents, and insects. Includes a 48 inch wood stake. .Note: Tubes recommended for deciduous trees only.		\$
			\$3 Each	
Total				\$

TABLE MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL GRASS CARP ORDERS:

County	Township	Range	Section	Pond Size (Surface Acres)	Water Name	# of Fish
Ex: Coles	T11N	R9E	16	12 ac.	Pond	4

Return order form with payment to: Coles County SWCD, 6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920



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