Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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http://www.colescountyswcd.org **facebook.com/ColesCountySWCD**

Volume 61 Issue 1

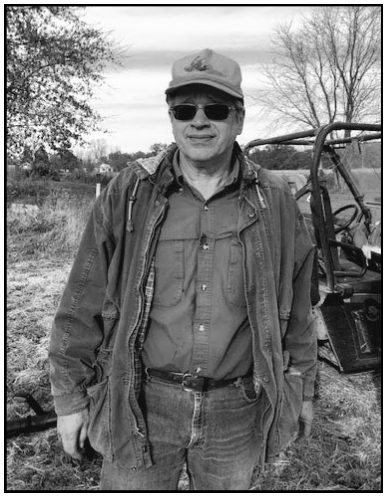
Have You Submitted Your 2020 STAR Field Forms?

This free tool was designed by the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to motivate those making cropping decisions to use the "best management practices" that will ultimately meet the goals of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy by evaluating their nutrient and soil loss management practices. In 2018, 180 farmers used the program on an accumulated 438 fields for a total of 27,418 acres. In 2019, the program grew to 214 participants, 1,175 fields, and 83,592 acres! STAR has been adopted in 70 Illinois counties and three states that are curious to rate their conservation practices to see how many stars their fields score.

Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) has endorsed the program as well. Farmers applying for IDOA conservation programs are now required to participate in S.T.A.R. (Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources), although no specific S.T.A.R. rating is required. A new incentive program that will pay up to $2000/farmer for implementing practices that raise their STAR score on a specific field will be offered in 2021. The funds are limited and available on a first-come first-served basis.

The Coles County SWCD is looking forward to increased participation in the free and confidential scoring portion of the program for the 2020 crop year. If you're interested in participating, would like more information, or would like help filling out the form, please visit starfreeform.com or give our office a call and schedule an appointment with Lauren.

Coles County Conservationist of the Year: Kenton Macy



Kenton Macy of Charleston was chosen as Coles County SWCD's 2020 Conservationist of the Year. Since his retirement from NRCS in 2017, Macy has been volunteering for several local, grass-roots conservation organizations including the Embarras Volunteer Stewards, Grand Prairie Friends, Lincoln Heritage RC&D, and the Lincoln Heritage chapter of Pheasants Forever. Through these organizations he has assisted many landowners with habitat restoration projects such as invasive species removal and prescribed burning. He has also served as a presenter at numerous SWCD events. In addition to his volunteer service, he's been enjoying more time to travel with his wife Dorothy, at least prior to 2020! He's spent some time visiting his children—Nathan is an environmental health and safety officer in Texas, Aaron just completed his PhD in marine ecology from University of South Alabama, and Stacia is a deputy game warden in Wisconsin. Congratulations to Kenton Macy!

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 nonprofit or grassroots groups to further their work.

Upcoming Events:

January:	**February:**	**March:**
1st—Holiday: Office Closed	1st—S.T.A.R. 2020 Field Forms Due	1st—Fish Orders Due
12th—Board Meeting	4th—Election of Directors	9th—Board Meeting
18th—MLK Day: Office Closed	9th—Board Meeting	19th—Tree Orders Due
	15th—Presidents' Day: Office Closed	31st—Scholarship Applications Due

Conservation Reserve Program General Signup Ends February 12

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4, 2021 – Agricultural producers and private landowners interested in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) can sign up for the popular program until Feb. 12, 2021. The competitive program, administered by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provides annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

"This signup for the Conservation Reserve Program gives producers and landowners an opportunity to enroll for the first time or continue their participation for another term," FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce said. "This program encourages conservation on sensitive lands or low-yielding acres, which provides tremendous benefits for stewardship of our natural resources and wildlife."

Through CRP, farmers and ranchers establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Farmers and ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to their local region and the nation's environment and economy. CRP general signup is held annually and is competitive; general signup includes increased opportunities for wildlife habitat enrollment through the State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) initiative.

New cropland offered in the program must have been planted for four out of six crop years from 2012 to 2017. Additionally, producers with land already enrolled but expiring on Sept. 30, 2021, can re-enroll this year. The acreage offered by producers and landowners is evaluated competitively; accepted offers will begin Oct. 1, 2021.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. The program marked its 35-year anniversary in December 2020. Program successes include:

- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, which is enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks.
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95% and 85%, respectively.
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road.
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, which is enough to go around the world seven times.
- Benefiting bees and other pollinators and increasing populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows, and many other birds.

All visitors wishing to conduct business with FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Our program delivery staff will continue to work with our producers by phone, email, and using online tools when possible. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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 4th day of February 2021 from 7:00am to 5:30pm at 6021 Development Drive, Ste. 2, Charleston, IL 61920. Two (2) 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.

Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

Coles Co. SWCD Board of Directors	Coles Co. SWCD Associate Directors	NRCS Employees
Bill Janes: Chairman	**Larry Coutant**	**Andy Brantner:** District Conservationist
Todd Easton: Vice Chairman	**Coles Co. SWCD Employees**	**Stephen Head:** Soil Conservationist
Pat Harrington: Secretary/Treasurer	**Terina Coffey** Administrative & Education Coordinator	**Bridget Ragan**: Soil Conservation Tech.
William Tapella		**Kent Macy**: Technical Biology Specialist
Justin Thomas	**Lauren Spaniol** Resource Conservationist	**Matt Dasenbrock**: Area Engineer
		Aaron Pryer: Agricultural Engineer
		Kerry Bushue: Civil Engineering Tech.

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 2021 Sales

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Please remind me prior to pick up via:

☐ **Phone** ☐ **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

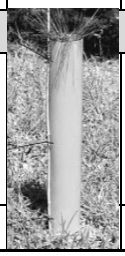
Recommendations are for new ponds 1/2 acre or more

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

TREE SALE

Tree Orders Due: Friday, March 19th

Tree Sale Pick Up: Friday, April 9th, by appt.

Tree Species	Size	Price	Qty.	Sub-total
Deciduous				
Black Maple *Acer nigrum*	18-24" 2 year	5 for $15		$
Bur Oak *Quercus macrocarpa*	12-18" 2 year	5 for $15		$
Red Oak *Quercus rubra*	12-18" 1 year	5 for $15		$
Persimmon *Diospyros virginiana*	6-12" 1 year	5 for $15		$
Redbud *Cercis canadensis*	6-12" 1 year	5 for $15		$
Shrubs				
American Hazelnut *Corylus americana*	6-12"	5 for $15		$
Am. (Black) Elderberry *Sambucus canadensis*	12-18"	5 for $15		$
Tree Guard				
4" diameter x 36" tall tube. Includes a 48 inch wood stake. Note: Tubes should be buried a minimum of 2" into the soil. Recommended for deciduous trees only.		$3 Each		$
		Total		$

Note: Due to nursery supply issues, we are unable to offer evergreen trees this spring. We hope to have them available again in 2022! Bare-root seedlings. Not for re-sale. Species selected for conservation plantings as windbreaks, hedges, and wildlife habitat and food sources.

FISH SALE

Fish Orders Due: Monday, March 1st

Fish Pick Up: Thursday, April 1st 8am

Fish Species	Size	Price	Qty.	Sub-total
Albino Catfish	4-6"	$1.50 ea.		$
Channel Catfish	4-6"	$1 ea.		$
	6-8"	$1.25 ea.		$
Largemouth Bass	3-4"	$1.25 ea.		$
Bluegill	2-3"	$1 ea.		$
	3-5"	$1.25 ea.		$
Hybrid Sunfish	2-3"	$1 ea.		$
	3-5"	$1.25 ea.		$
Red Ear Sunfish	3-4"	$1 ea.		$
Black Crappie	3-4"	$1.25 ea.		$
Fathead Minnows	1-3"	$12/lb		$
Triploid Grass Carp *See table below for info about pond location	8-11"	$12 ea.		$
		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*

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A picture is worth 1000 words!

Photo Contest Open Until May 5th

The Coles County SWCD's annual photo contest is back! Photographs can be entered in several categories. Complete rules and entry forms are available on the Coles Co. SWCD website.

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