



CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY LOSS A RESULT OF SOIL, CROP DAMAGE FROM FLOODING

The Cache River Basin, which once drained more than 614,100 acres across six southern Illinois counties, has changed substantively since the ancient Ohio River receded. The basin contains a slow-moving, meandering river; fertile soils and productive farmlands; deep sand and gravel deposits; sloughs and uplands; and one of the most unique and diverse natural habitats in Illinois and the nation.

According to a recent University of Illinois study, the region's agricultural lands dodged a bullet due to the timing of the great flood of April 2011 when the Ohio River approached the record high of 332.2 feet above sea level.

"The floodwaters eventually drained back into the Ohio River and upper Mississippi River ultimately leaving approximately 1,000 acres of agricultural land flooded from a backup in the middle and lower Cache River Valley, which flooded the adjacent forest-covered alluvial soils and the slightly higher cultivated soils," said U of I researcher Ken Olson.

According to Olson, who has studied the effects of that particular flood extensively, these cultivated soils drained by the middle of June 2011 and were planted to soybeans. The floodwaters left a thin silt and clay deposition on the agricultural lands and crop residue when they receded. These coatings included significant amounts of soil organic carbon, microbes, and pathogens. After the coatings dried, they were incorporated into the topsoil layer of the alluvial soils using tillage equipment.

"Because the flooding occurred during the non-growing season for corn and soybeans, the mixing in of sediment into the topsoil prior to planting resulted in little significant loss of soil productivity, little soybean damage, or yield reduction on lands outside the levees along the Mississippi, Cache, and Ohio rivers," Olson said.

As a result of the record Ohio River flood level, floodwaters passed north through the Post Creek cut-off, then west through the 2002 Karnak breach and into the middle Cache River valley to the Diversion to Mississippi River, which was already above flood stage so the floodwaters continued west. In late April, the Ohio River floodwaters then started to flood the towns of Olive Branch and Miller City, the Horseshoe Lake area, and surrounding agricultural lands. On May 2, 2011, the Len Small levee on the Mississippi River failed and resulted in the flooding of an additional 30,000 acres of Illinois public and private lands.

Illinois agricultural statistics recorded the harvest of 4,500 fewer acres of corn and 6,500 fewer acres of soybeans in Alexander County in 2011. Soybean production was 1,200,000 bushels in 2010 but dropped to 865,000 bushels in 2011 due to flooding from both the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and crop and soil damage. The floodwaters also scoured lands in some places and deposited sand in other locations.



Escarpment ancient Ohio River valley.
Credit: Image courtesy of University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES)



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY LOSS A RESULT OF SOIL, CROP DAMAGE FROM FLOODING (Continued From Page 1)

Olson cautioned that, had winter wheat been planted outside the levees in the fall of 2010, the wheat crop would have drowned. "Illinois farmers are aware of the flooding potential, especially in the winter and early spring, so they don't plant winter wheat on unprotected bottomlands," he said. "Consequently, there was no crop loss outside the levees in April and May of 2011. Local floodwater in the lower Cache River Valley, south of the Mississippi River Diversion and Dike, could not flow back into the Ohio River. It was blocked by the Cache River levee on the south side and by the closed gate at the Ohio River levee. Instead, water backed up and flooded forested and agricultural lands along the lower Cache River and north of the Cache River levee," Olson said.

Olson said that the damage to the land could have been much worse. "Land use changes, diversion ditches and levees, loss of wetlands and flood-holding capacity, internal channelization of the Cache River and tributaries, and an ever-changing climate have altered the hydrology of the valley, redistributed soil from fields and ditch banks into the river, and transported tons of sediment during flooding events into both the Ohio and Mississippi rivers," Olson said.

As the 2011 Ohio River floodwater reclaimed its ancient floodway, Olson says that the extent of these hydrologic changes and their social, economic, and environmental impacts have become more apparent. "The Great Flood of 2011 lends urgency to the reevaluation and implementation of the Cache River Watershed Resource Plan completed in 1995," Olson said.

He cited nine resource concerns that were identified: erosion, open dumping, private property rights, water quality, continuation of government farm conservation programs, Post Creek Cutoff stream bank erosion, open flow on the Cache River, dissemination of accurate and timely information throughout the watershed, and the impacts of wildlife on farming and vice versa.

"Most of these concerns still need to be addressed," Olson said. "Since that plan was created, there have been additional compromises/breaches that need to be repaired. As the repair and rebuilding of the valley infrastructure is undertaken, there will need to be a significant investment of human and financial resources to reduce the impacts of future catastrophic events."

"The 2011 Ohio River flooding of the Cache River Valley in southern Illinois," which was co-authored by Kenneth R. Olson and Lois Wright Morton, was published in a 2014 issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation and can be found online at <http://www.jswnonline.org/content/69/1/5A.full.pdf+html>.

"Impacts of 2011 Len Small levee breach on private and public Illinois lands," co-authored by Kenneth R. Olson and Lois Wright Morton, was published in a 2013 issue of the Journal of Soil and Water Conservation and can be accessed online at <http://www.jswnonline.org/content/68/4/89A.full.pdf+html>.

Partial funding for this research was provided by the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University. Additional funding support came from National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Regional Research, Project No. 15-372 and in cooperation with North-Central Regional Project No. NCERA-3 Soil Survey; and published with funding support from the Director of the Illinois Office of Research, ACES, University of Illinois.

Source: University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES). ["Agricultural productivity loss a result of soil, crop damage from flooding." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 18 February 2014. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140218163120.htm>](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140218163120.htm).

Time for Your Annual Water Well Checkup

Just as you seasonally check your furnace or smoke detector batteries, the National Ground Water Association recommends an annual water well checkup.

Locally, contact National Ground Water Association member contractor:



National Groundwater Awareness Week
March 9-15, 2014
Find out more at www.WellOwner.org.





PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LONNIE WILSON

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North American Envirothon Update

We are not sure if you are all aware, but the North American Envirothon competition scheduled for this summer in Georgia has been canceled due to lack of funding. We as a North Central NACD Region, are working to restore this year's event. We feel it is important for the teams to experience a higher level in the competition and do not want to see the event fail this year. Some of the team members may be High School Seniors and this will be their last year competing. When details are available, we will report through an IL ALL email.

NACD Annual Meeting—Anaheim, CA

ANAHEIM, CA—Feb 5, 2014—The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) honored leaders in conservation last night during a special ceremony at the 2014 NACD Annual Meeting in Anaheim, Calif.

The NACD/Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Olin Sims Conservation Leadership Award was presented to Brent Van Dyke of Hobbs, N.M. This annual award recognizes an individual, district or organization for superior service to the conservation community in promoting and leading conservation on private lands. Van Dyke, second vice president of NACD, is a retired agriculture education teacher and FFA advisor, and has worked for the U.S. State Department/ U.S.A.I.D. for more than 15 years as a contract advisor for agriculture projects in Eastern Europe and Asia.

"Brent Van Dyke is known and respected across the Southwest for being an outstanding leader in conservation, and has shared his knowledge and experience with conservationists in Eastern Europe and Asia," said NRCS Chief Jason Weller. "Van Dyke truly is a conservationist without borders. It is an honor to recognize him with this award."

Dick Went of Foster, R.I. was honored with the prestigious NACD President's Award – one of the highest forms of recognition bestowed by the nation's largest private lands conservation organization. Went, secretary/treasurer of NACD, is a retired school teacher of 29 years, and is actively involved in conservation at the local, state and national levels.

"Went's daily service is a true testament to his commitment to the mission of NACD and its 3,000-member conservation districts across the nation," said Garber. "Since joining NACD's officer team a year ago, he has time and time again stepped up to the plate and demonstrated a willingness to learn and grow and take on new responsibilities. His volunteerism exemplifies the passion at the heart of our membership."

Jack Majeres of South Dakota was presented with NACD's Distinguished Service Award which recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the conservation of our natural resources. As a producer/client, former district employee and current district official and chairman of the Moody County Conservation District, Majeres brings a unique and broad viewpoint to the natural resources conservation movement. Even as his involvement expanded from the local level to the state and national level, Jack continues to focus on and fully support locally-led conservation. Majeres has previously served as second vice president and secretary/treasurer of NACD.

NACD's Friend of Conservation Award was presented to Friends of Wake Soil and Water Conservation District in North Carolina. In 2010, when severe budget cuts and the loss of staff threatened the very existence of Wake Soil and Water Conservation District, concerned citizens quickly established an official non-profit organization called "Friends of Wake Soil and Water Conservation District." Wake District grows stronger each day thanks to the hard work and tireless advocacy of its Friends who work by the district's side to achieve its vital conservation mission in a county with both agricultural and urban needs.

(Continued on Page 7)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - *RICH NICHOLS*

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As I write this it is a white, cold world outside the window. I thought February was supposed to be a month of moderating temperatures but then we have had a colder, wetter winter than normal. The folks who keep the records say we are just about 4.9 inches short of the snowiest winter season record for the Springfield area. We got more snow yesterday along with some ice and sleet so I'm sure we are closing in on the 45 inch record.

A lot has happened since my January article. The NACD Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA has become a catalyst for a lot of Envirothon activity. It was announced at the Annual Meeting that there would be no 2014 National Envirothon due to a lack of funds. That prompted some folks to begin looking for an alternative.

Since the announcement our office has been quite busy looking for an alternate site in Illinois and working on raising funds to support a national competition. In just a few days, we have been able to make some headway with some positive conversations with a location and with a possible funder.

As we are working on a location as an alternate site for the National Envirothon., we are also looking at the potential for an eight state North Central NACD Region Envirothon. We are pursuing that option in case the larger national effort fails. We do have a site for the Regional Envirothon and a possible funder but would much prefer to hold a national event rather than regional.

Hopefully, by mid-March we will have enough information and commitments that we can make a decision which way we will go.

This is the year for cover crops. There are quite a number of meetings and activities planned to provide information to anyone who might be interested in the soil health properties as well as the savings in nutrients afforded by the use of cover crops. While the practice is not for everyone, where producers are willing to give the practice a fair trial, I think they will be pleased with the results. It is well documented that cover crops provide a means of tying up nutrients so they do not escape during the fall, over winter and into the following spring and then making those nutrients available for the next year's crop. In addition to their value as a nutrient sink, cover crops add organic matter, provide for better water absorption by the soil, increase pore space for air and water in the soil, create a medium more conducive to plant growth, help reduce reliance on herbicides and chemical fertilizers and tend to make for a more profitable cropping operation.

With all those benefits, you'd think there would be no lack of producers wanting to convert to cover crops as part of their farming operation. Unfortunately that is just not the case. There are many who believe they don't have enough time between burn down and planting in the spring and just as many who believe the cover crops will rob the cash crop of much needed moisture in a dry year. Research and on-farm trials are showing just the opposite. Successful farming operations in North Dakota, northern Iowa, central Indiana and central Ohio highlighted at a recent Cover Crops Forum showed that cover crops in a no-till system reduced soil loss to near zero, reduced the need for chemical fertilizers and herbicides and improved all four producers' bottom line by a significant amount. In fact there are many examples of farming operations that have incorporated cover crops showing significant improvements in net returns for the producer.

One other issue that was raised was the length of time glyphosate alone takes to burn down cereal rye so that planting can occur. The northern Iowa producer said he had better luck with Paraquat dichloride and that he had actually waited until after planting to kill the rye, but he also said it was not a recommended practice due to the allopathic properties of rye. He did make mention that wet weather was the cause for his delay in getting the rye killed.

The use of cover crops will be an important tool for Illinois' farmers to use to help manage nutrients so look for more information on the topic in the future.

In the meantime, pick out one of your poorer yielding fields and try it. You might be pleasantly surprised at the benefits that can result.

Rich



PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - KELLY THOMPSON

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Spring is upon us, or at least we hope! With warm weather comes the onset of construction season. With construction season near we must be cognizant of the growing erosion concerns. Warming temperatures mean melting snow and the changeover in precipitation from snow to rain. In many cases the ground is still solid which increases the amount of storm-water runoff from precipitation. All of the above factors lead Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to hosting workshops that prepare local residents, contractors and municipalities for the upcoming construction season. A list has been compiled to show the various spring workshops that are being offered around the state.

Northern Region

CURRENT STORMWATER REGULATIONS AND POLICIES SEMINAR

March 6, 2014

8:00am – 12:00pm

Hickory Knolls Discovery Center

3795 Campton Hills Rd.

St. Charles, IL 60175

(630) 584-7961 Ext. 3

*Fee: \$20.00**

**includes continental breakfast and professional development hours*

Register by February 28th with Kane-DuPage SWCD

EROSION CONTROL WORKSHOP

March 26, 2014

8:00am – 12:30pm

Auxiliary Building

McHenry-Lake SWCD

2222 Dean Street

Woodstock, IL 60098

(815) 338-0099

Fee: \$15.00.

WINNEBAGO & BOONE COUNTY SWCD SEDIMENT & EROSION CONTROL WORKSHOP

March 19, 2014

7:45am – 12:30pm

Northern Illinois University – Rockford Campus

8500 East State Street

Rockford, IL 61108

(815) 965-2392 Ext. 3 or

(815) 544-2677 Ext. 3

We hope you can join any one of these great workshops!

*****Things to remember**

IUM Field Manual is NOW AVAILABLE on the IUM website - <http://www.aiswcd.org/ium/>

The following standards are now available online – <http://www.aiswcd.org/ium/practice-standards/>
Standard 997 Wetland Creation, 998 Wetland Enhancement and 999 Wetland Restoration

Standard 800, Bioretention Facility

Bioretention Facility Drawing 500

Have a wonderful spring!

Kelly Thompson, Program Coordinator



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

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Greetings! from Sherry

Listed below is the link to the NACD Photo Contest:

<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/photo>

To be considered for this contest, the nominee should be an amateur photographer (those who make less than 50% of their income from photography) and are Illinois residents.

Listed below is the link to the NACD Poster Contest:

<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/contests/poster>

To be considered for this contest, the nominee should be a student in public, private or home school in grades K-12 in Illinois.

****NACD Annual Meeting in Anaheim, CA:**

Award Winners from Illinois:

Posters:

Honorable Mention: Morgan Cox, Stephenson County-Grade 1

Honorable Mention: Domminick Alber, Stephenson County-Grade 3

2nd Place: Jessica Mauger, DeKalb County-Grade 9

Photos:

Youth-Ag/Conservation Across America:

1st Place: Jessica Johnson, DeKalb County

Youth-Conservation in Action:

1st Place: Molly Jacobs, Whiteside County

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL ILLINOIS WINNERS!!!!!!!

****2014 AISWCD Annual Meeting Award Applications:**

Conservation Farm Family

George McKibben Memorial Scholarship-\$500

Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award

Teacher of the Year Award

Auxiliary Photo Contest

Auxiliary Poster Contest

The 2014 AISWCD Awards applications will be available on the AISWCD website by March 10, 2014.

The 2014 AISWCD Annual Meeting Registration forms will be available by April 11, 2014 and hotel reservations will be available to reserve as of April 15, 2014.

Sherry Finn



Office Assistant's Information - Gina Bean

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We got a taste of spring last week but it sure did make a wet mess.

Legislative Day 2014 is now in the past and we are so grateful to all that joined us.

Sixty people signed up for the day. Twenty-six were Directors from SWCDs four were from the AISWCD office and 30 were SWCD employees. Four partners from Trees Forever and the National Great Rivers Research & Education Center registered for the day and went to Legislator meetings with us. Thank you to everyone that signed up and were a part of our day to tell their story to Legislators. We tried something different this year and had a reception at Boones Saloon in Springfield after our visits. Legislators were invited to attend and we had a great turn out for that event as well. Seventeen Legislators attended our reception and were very eager to talk to employees and Directors. One of the first things they would ask as they came into the room was "Who is here from my District?"

Abbie Sperry from the ISWCDEA went around and asked everyone what they thought of the day's events. If she did not get to you, or you have thought of something else, please feel free to email me. We always welcome suggestions so we can make next year's event even better.

A big "Thank You!" goes to the ISWCDEA for their support in helping us prepare for Legislative Day this year and the years to come.

Check the Catchall next month for pictures from Legislative Day 2014 and a final count of all that attended!

With the Quarterly Boards and Legislative Day behind us, we will be focusing hard on getting everything prepared for the 66th Annual Meeting. Be looking for IL ALL emails from Sherry Finn with details during the next couple of months.

Thanks for reading this month!

Gina Bean

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LONNIE WILSON (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

Other awards presented during NACD's Annual Meeting include:

- NACD/NRCS Earth Team Award: Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District, Huntsville, Ala.
- National Conservation District Employees Association Outstanding District Board Member Award: Kevin Jeffries, Oldham County Conservation District, Ky.
- NCDEA Outstanding Conservation District Employee: Carol Edwards, Davidson County Conservation District, Tenn.
- National Conservation Foundation / Presidents Association Award: Gallatin Conservation District, Mont.

To request photos of award winners, email Bethany Shively at Bethany-shively@nacdn.net. This email address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it. For more news and photos from the meeting, visit nacdn.net.

The 2014 NACD Annual Meeting was sponsored by the following partners: Case IH; Dow AgroSciences; AgriDrain Corporation; DuPont; John Deere; U.S. Forest Service; LG Seeds; Bayer CropScience; Monsanto; Land and Water magazine; Plum Creek; DuPont Pioneer; Bob Warner of Brighton, Colorado; STIHL; Proxibid; Scotts Miracle-Gro; AgXplore; and Agricen.

Source: <http://www.nacdn.net/news/newsroom/2014/nacd-honors-national-conservation-leaders>



ISWCDEA CORNER - STEPHEN MILLER
ISWCDEA REGION FOUR REPRESENTATIVE

website: iswcdea.org

The Employee's Association held its first meeting of 2014 on Thursday, February 13 in Springfield. Policies and By-Laws were reviewed and planning has begun for Summer Conference employee training sessions. Remember to contact one of your ISWCDEA Regional Reps if you have any concerns you would like to be heard at an upcoming meeting.

If you have not already done so, please take the time to fill out the online survey emailed to everyone on February 5th. The purpose of this survey is to see how many employees and directors would be interested in switching to a new email host for SWCDs. A new host would allow SWCD employees access to their work email 24/7 from any computer or other device. We would like to get feedback on this proposal from as many people as possible.

If you've got several outdated hard copy Employee Guides taking up space in your office, you should check out the online Employee's Guide on the ISWCDEA website. This guide is a collaborative effort to combine the knowledge of employees around the state. It is a fantastic resource for new employees and can help veteran employees remember exactly what needs to be done and when it needs to be done. The guide will be continually updated, so feel free to suggest additions or amendments. We hope to see many of you in Springfield for Legislative Day on February 25!

Stephen



ILLINOIS CHAPTER - IAAP - JANE BRANGENBURG, PRESIDENT

The IL SWCD Chapter held a teleconference on Wednesday, February 19th. We are starting to prepare for our 14th Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held on April 16th at the IDOA Building in Springfield. We would like to invite all to attend.

Our Illinois SWCD Chapter will be hosting two sessions at Summer Conference: Advanced Excel and Advanced QuickBooks.

If you are interested in joining the IAAP (International Association of Administrative Professionals) please contact any member of the organization or go to our website <http://iaap-swcd.tripod.com> and view what is happening.

Jane



TODAY!

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*Association of Illinois Soil and Water
Conservation Districts
Conservation Partnership*

*Business, Consumer, &
Health Service Discounts!
TireBuyer Discounts!*

Perfect gifts for family members!

*For more information visit our website ~OR~ call Kelly Thompson at 217-744-3414
www.aiswcd.org/donate-membership/*

Look who has already joined!

**District Members:
Warren County SWCD**

**Corporate Members:
Patten Cat**

**Affiliate Members:
Marc Anderson
Sheryl and Richard Phillips
Sue Davis
Della Moen**

**Lifetime Members:
L&J Enterprises**

**Focus on SWCDs -
DeWitt County SWCD**

It makes us very happy to announce that DeWitt County SWCD has been named as the new Illinois Envirothon Coordinator. We will continue to put information on the AISWCD website concerning the IL Envirothon, but if you have any questions you may also call Sondra Baker at DeWitt County SWCD, (217) 935-6504 Extension 3.

CONSERVATION CROPPING
20 14
SEMINARS
Managing your inputs for healthy soils...

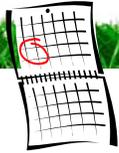
Save The Date!
Only \$20!

Spend a day with experienced local farmers & resource experts. Learn new ways to improve profitability and protect your farm's greatest asset: The SOIL!

Soil Health Improvements - Cover Crop Success - Wise Nutrient Management

January 28th, '14	February 27th, '14	March 13th, '14
Mendota, IL Civic Center	Mt. Vernon, IL Holiday Inn Center	Normal, IL Heartland College

Register online at www.ccswcd.com—just click on the Seminar logo! Fee includes lunch. CCA credits applied for—watch the website! Coordinated by local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Illinois Department of Agriculture, USDA NRCS, Illinois Stewardship Alliance, and American Farmland Trust.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Dr. Suess's Birthday - March 2, 1904
- Good Samaritan Day - March 13, 2014
- St. Patrick's Day - March 17, 2014

2013—2014 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- June 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - June 9th & 10th - Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- 66th AISWCD Annual Meeting and Conference - July 28 - 29, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL
- September 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - Executive Committee Meeting will be on September 9, 2014 at IDOA
- December 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 8 and 9, 2014
- Christmas Party - December 8, 2014



Join or renew to receive up to a \$25 gift card*

To take advantage simply bring this offer, along with proof of employment or membership with the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, to the Member Services Desk of your local club.

Visit SamsClub.com/clublocator to find a club near you.

* This offer is limited and may be terminated or changed at any time. Join or renew as a Sam's Plus™ Member and receive a \$25 gift card, or join or renew as a Sam's Savings™ or Sam's Business™ Member and receive a \$10 gift card. You must be 18 or older to purchase a membership, and membership is subject to qualifications. Gift card will be provided at the time membership card is issued. This offer may not be combined with any other offer or promotion. Only one gift card per primary member. The gift card with this offer cannot be used toward membership fees and must be claimed within 30 days of membership sign-up or renewal connected with this program. Membership cards are non-transferable and are valid at all Sam's Club locations worldwide. Walmart® and Sam's Club associates are not eligible for this offer. A Sam's Plus Membership and Sam's Savings Membership include one primary card and one spouse (or other household member 18 or older) card. A Sam's Business Membership and Sam's Plus Membership for business include one primary card, one company card and one spouse (or other household member 18 or older) card. Primary memberships are valid for one year from the date of issue. Offers are not valid at SamsClub.com or by mail. Visit SamsClub.com/privacy to view our privacy policy. Offer not valid in Puerto Rico. For a limited time only. One-time use only. Only original offers accepted. Offer valid for employees and members of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and is valid through April 30, 2014.

\$25 Gift Card: #970504 \$10 Gift Card: #263396



AISWCD Mission: *To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs*

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