

CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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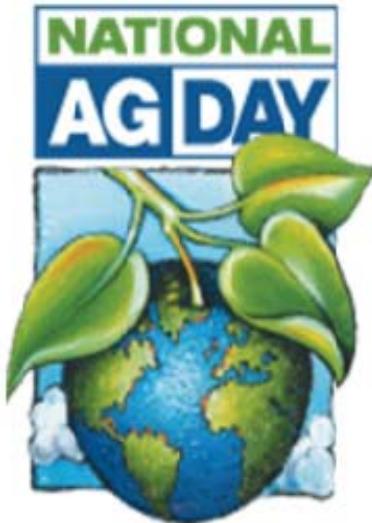
Jeremy Pruden

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CELEBRATE NATIONAL AGRICULTURE DAY! MARCH 25, 2014



Ag Day is a day to recognize and celebrate the abundance provided by agriculture. Every year, producers, agricultural associations, corporations, universities, government agencies and countless others across America join together to recognize the contributions of agriculture.

The Agriculture Council of America hosts the campaign on a national level. However, the awareness efforts in communities across America are as influential - if not more - than the broad-scale effort. Again this year, the Ag Day Planning Guide has been created to help communities and organizations more effectively host Ag Day events.

The National Ag Day program encourages every American to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced.
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy.
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products.

Why Celebrate Agriculture?

Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis. But too few people truly understand this contribution. This is particularly the case in our schools, where students may only be exposed to agriculture if they enroll in related vocational training.

By building awareness, the Agriculture Council of America is encouraging young people to consider career opportunities in agriculture.

Each American farmer feeds more than 144 people ... a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. Quite simply, American agriculture is doing more - and doing it better. As the world population soars, there is an even greater demand for the food and fiber produced in the United States.

What Can I Do to Help?

Put simply, get involved! Your participation in Ag Day is critical in helping us spread this positive message about agriculture. If you are interested in planning an event, download your Planning Guide today. Of course, there are other ways you can lend your support, including sending a letter to your local newspaper, calling your Congressional representatives or simply sharing information about agriculture with youngsters in your community.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Contact the Agriculture Council of America at (913) 491-1895.

Source: www.agday.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LONNIE WILSON

lonnieewilson@gmail.com

Furthering our education is very important. We can all benefit from learning something new as well. Below are a few upcoming opportunities that have been presented to the Association that may be of interest to you.

Watershed Academy Webcast on March 25 on Cover Crops

Register at: www.epa.gov/watershedwebcasts

Join us for a Watershed Academy Webcast on March 25 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern on "[Improving Water Quality by Using Cover Crops and Other Conservation Systems](#)." This Webcast will provide basic information on how cover crops and other conservation systems can be used to provide environmental benefits in watersheds across the U.S. Cover crops are plants that are used to protect and improve soil on farm fields. The webcast will explain how cover crops can reduce nutrient losses to watersheds by scavenging nitrates that would otherwise be lost to leaching. In addition, cover crops reduce sediment and phosphorous losses to nearby waterways by acting as a vegetative buffer to slow down surface erosion and increase water infiltration. By using cover crops, farmers can provide environmental benefits while also providing other on-farm benefits. [Register for the Webinar](#) to learn more about cover crops.

Wetland Delineation Training Class

Wetland Delineation Training Class offered at the University of Northern Iowa's Tallgrass Prairie Center June 9-13, 2014, in Cedar Falls, Iowa. The Corps of Engineers and the USDA – Natural Resource Conservation Service will again team up to teach the Corps 1987 Wetland Delineation Manual with the Midwest Regional Supplement. This week long class will teach the basics of what a wetland delineation is, vegetation, soils and hydrology indicators, how to fill out data sheets for a delineation submitted to the Corps, how to tackle difficult sites and much much more. This class is ideal for those who deal with the Corps Regulatory Program or are tasked with the identification of wetland boundaries and delineation. This class has daily field trips and appropriate field attire is required. Cost will be approximately 250.00.

For more information, please contact Albert Frohlich with the Rock Island District Corps of Engineers Regulatory Branch at 309-794-5859, or email at Albert.J.Frohlich@usace.army.mil

Precision Aerial Ag Show

Progress City USA - Decatur, IL

July 9-10, 2014

<http://www.paas2014.com/>

See: Flight demonstrations and UAV digital output.

Hear: Authorities talk about UAV uses in agriculture.

Learn: Regulations, liability, and about UAV options.

Tour: Exhibits and listen to UAV vendor presentations

For questions regarding attending or exhibiting call AgEngage at 1-800-728-7511





EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - RICH NICHOLS

rich.nichols@aiswcd.org

As I write this, the Illinois General Assembly is in recess for the Spring Primary Election. They are due back on the 19th and things will start to move and will continue to do so up to their scheduled adjournment at the end of May. Up to this point the spring session has been calm and somewhat boring with very little controversy. That will probably change after the Governor's Budget message on March 26th. After that, I imagine there will be plenty of discussion on the budget and other issues such as gaming.

I did learn late last week that Representative Robert Rita has drafted two amendments to SB 1739, the gaming bill that was passed by the Senate at the end of the 2013 session. The bill could not muster enough votes to make it out of the House but since that time, hearings have been conducted sporadically to gather input on what an acceptable gaming bill might look like. Apparently Representative Rita is still not sure what an acceptable bill might look like. The two amendments he has proposed differ in the number of gaming positions they allow. Both amendments provide for a Chicago Casino and both allow slots at racetracks. The amendments also direct more money to education. Neither of the proposed amendments includes downstate initiatives that would provide money for Extension and SWCDs. Apparently Representative Rita believes that a scaled back bill that emphasizes education will sway downstate legislators to support it. I do not believe that to be the case. It is my belief that money will need to be added for both Extension and the SWCDs before enough votes will be garnered for passage. I guess we will see if that is the case or not.

Another issue that may generate some excitement as it nears completion is the nutrient reduction strategy for Illinois. The drafts of the plan are already generating some stronger comments from the various organizations represented on the policy group. Three of the environmental groups, Prairie Rivers Network, Illinois Environmental Law and Policy Center and the Illinois Chapter of the Sierra Club, have written a letter to the chairs of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy Policy Work Group asking that laws be passed and regulations be adopted. While it is unlikely the letter writers will get the kind of action they are requesting, there is little doubt that if nutrient contributions to waters are not reduced the USEPA will impose standards for nutrient content in waters.

What that may mean is that Illinois' agricultural industry, waste treatment facilities, urban stormwater managers and others will be forced to change the way they are used to doing business. As we have observed in the Chesapeake Bay area, any activity that produces or utilizes nutrients will be affected.

In Illinois, the priority areas for the time being are those agricultural areas that utilize subsurface drainage to remove excess water. Nutrient reduction strategies will include a number of practices that can be implemented to reduce the potential for nutrients to enter water bodies. Such practices as cover crops, bio filters at the end of tile lines, wetlands, fertility management (which can include split applications, use of inhibitors, use of soil tests, etc.) and others that will force drainage water to move over or through a medium that will "scrub" nutrients from the water leaving the site, will need to be applied on nearly every acre of cropped land.

These same practices will also be needed on many other sites to reduce Illinois' nutrient contribution load by 45%. The implementation of these practices will not be a quick nor easy process, but it will be inexpensive. Estimates made by the Science Assessment Team are as much as \$700 million per year until such time as the 45% reduction goal is met.

There are other practices the Science Assessment Team has left on the table stating that there is not sufficient research to document their effectiveness. The AISWCD is of the opinion that nothing can be left on the table. We must be able to utilize every practice available to address the differing management skill levels, farming practices, soil limitations, geography and other variables that are present on the Illinois landscape. We have written our own letters expressing our concerns regarding the need for consideration of all reasonable methods of reducing nutrient loading.

The nutrient reduction strategy must be completed by the end of May. We hope the final product will be as comprehensive as possible to allow for the greatest acceptance possible from the farming community, the waste treatment facilities and urban stormwater managers.

Rich



PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - KELLY THOMPSON

kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org

I know many districts are hosting Erosion and Sediment Control workshops through the end of the month. Keep up the good work!!!

I wanted to pass along a potential opportunity for many of the districts who work with the urban landscape. This workshop is being held in St. Louis, MO at the Botanical Gardens. I would encourage any and all districts interested in the urban landscape to attend this **FREE** workshop! The only cost you will incur is travel to/from the event plus lodging and meals.

Always check the IUM website to see a list of workshops being offered in your area.

Save the Date!

First Midwest Urban Conservation Workshop

April 29th – May 1st

St. Louis Missouri Botanical Garden

This is a conference that is designed by you for you, to learn from you and to learn from each other. We will be discussing what cities all across the Midwest are doing to promote and capitalize on Urban Conservation initiatives. We envision a world where humans, wildlife, and native ecosystems in the Midwest are co-existing in healthy vibrant urbanized areas. The mission of the workshop is to share experiences, technical knowledge, and successful approaches to urban conservation – a true networking opportunity with other officials from cities and towns, NGOs, and researchers committed to urban conservation. This will increase the capacity for your organization, the public and decision makers to engage in responsible, creative, collective-impact-focused solutions and build upon already existing urban conservation efforts.

Please fill out the [questionnaire](#) so we can establish topics and gauge interests by March 14th. If you are interested in more information or would like to register for the event please visit the [eventbrite for this event](#). There is no registration fee and hotel information will be sent out once you have registered. Please register by April 1st.

If you would like to spread the word about this conference please send their contact information to midwest.urban.conservation@gmail.com.

This conference is an initiative of the Eastern Tallgrass Prairie Big River Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative, Chicago Wilderness, Butler University Center for Urban Ecology, Purdue University, Conserving Indiana, Missouri Botanical Garden, Empower Results, Illinois Natural History Survey.

For any further questions or inquiries feel free to contact Kristin Shaw, Landscape Conservation Specialist, ETPBR LCC.

email: kristin_shaw@fws.gov, midwest.urban.conservation@gmail.com

phone: cell [\(712\)294-4585](tel:(712)294-4585) office [\(812\)334-4261 x1209](tel:(812)334-4261x1209)

Have a great month!!!

Kelly Thompson, Program Coordinator



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - SHERRY FINN

sherry.finn@aiswcd.org

Greetings! from Sherry

*Reminders for 66th AISWCD Annual Meeting-July 28-29, 2014:

Award Applications (fillable):

Farm Family Award Application Link-

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Farm-Family-Award-App-2014-fillable.pdf>

McKibben Scholarship Link-

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-G-McKibben-Memorial-Scholarship-fillable-3.pdf>

Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award Link-

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Outstanding-Forestry-Contribution-Award-2014-fillable.pdf>

Photo Contest Application Link-

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Photo-Contest-2014-Fillable.pdf>

Poster Contest Application Link-

<http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Poster-Contest-2014-fillable.pdf>

Poster Contest Title: "Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil"

***Forms (fillable):**

Auction Item Form Link-

http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/auction_2014-District-Form-Fillable.pdf

Director Service Award Form Link-

http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/director_service_2014-template-form-Fillable.pdf

Voting Delegate Form Link-

http://www.aiswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Voting_delegate_2014-template-form-Fillable.pdf

***Reminder for Resolutions:**

All **Resolutions** to be considered for the **2014 AISWCD Annual Meeting** must be submitted to **Tom Beyers**, AISWCD Vice President and Legislative FAC Chairman or to the **AISWCD office** and **e-mailed** or **postmarked by Saturday, May 31, 2014**. All **Resolutions** submitted must be in **Word-format**, if submitted by e-mail and if mailed, a word-format copy must be e-mailed to the **AISWCD office** by **Saturday, May 31, 2014**.

***Reminder for other forms and reservations:**

The **Draft Agenda** will be available by **March 24, 2014**; the **2014 AISWCD Annual Meeting Registration forms (meals & sessions)** will be available by **April 11, 2014** and **hotel reservations** will be available to reserve as of **April 15, 2014**.

***Note:** There **will not** be a **Conservation Tour** this year because all avenues have been investigated, and there is not a District within a reasonable distance that has availability for a tour. Other options for entertainment are being checked.

(Continued on Page 9)



Legislative Corner - Mike Hoffmann

Next Up: Fiscal year 2015 budget address

This being a big election year – the Governor and all the state-wide offices are on the ballot, along with all of the House of Representatives and a third of the Senate – the 2014 legislative session is off to a slow start. Although a lot of bills have been assigned to committees, few have been called for a vote so far. We expect the pace will pick up, however, after this Tuesday's primary elections, after which the Governor and everyone else will know who will be running against them in November.

That is when the appropriations budget process will begin. The State of Illinois' fiscal year 2015 budget must be in place when the new fiscal year begins on July 1, but will probably be approved by the General Assembly before their scheduled adjournment on May 31. Although the House and Senate have been holding hearings on fiscal "pressures and mandates", consideration of the specifics of the next budget begins when the Governor offers his budget recommendations and makes his budget address on Wednesday, March 26. We have already been to a hearing of the House's Appropriations-General Services Committee, where AISWCD President Lonnie Wilson and Executive Director Rich Nichols did a nice job laying out the fiscal pressures on SWCDs (especially with regard to the U.S. EPA's interest in nutrient management plans) and the effects on us of recent budget constraints. Director Bob Flider of the Dept. of Agriculture testified as well, focusing on the regulatory missions and needs of the Department while also offering helpful comments about SWCDs and what they do for the State of Illinois.

Once the Governor's budget is public, the House and Senate will begin holding hearings on his recommendations for each of the departments and agencies of state government. We will be following this process closely (along with the less-public discussions that take place outside of those hearings).

As we said at the beginning of the year, budget decisions will be dependent on the whether the income tax surcharge is extended. I'll repeat what I said at the beginning of the year:

In January of 2011, the state's personal income tax rate was raised from 3 to 5% and the corporate rate went from 4.8 to 7%. Without legislative action, those rates will fall to 3.75% and 5.25%, respectively, at the end of this year. The resulting decline in state revenues would force big cuts in the budget for the next fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2015. So there will be some heavy discussion in the legislature this year about extending the tax vs. cutting the budget.

How does this affect SWCDs? Soil and water conservation is now funded solely through the Partners for Conservation Fund (PFC). The revenue from both the personal and corporate income taxes is deposited into the state's General Revenue Fund (GRF). However, the money in the PFC Fund comes directly from the GRF via a statutory, inter-fund transfer. So any decline in GRF revenues could affect the PFC Fund and funding for soil and water conservation.

Gaming & Ag funding

Discussions continue (as they have for years) on a possible expansion of casino gaming in Illinois to Chicago, the five horse racing venues, and possibly several other locations (Waukegan, Rockford, south Cook County, and Danville). Rep. Bob Rita, the sponsor of the bill ([SB1739](#)), has held hearings on the issue in recent weeks and has indicated that he intends to offer some different options to the bill – one of which would eliminate the dedicated funding for Agriculture programs that has been a part of the bill for several years. We continue to monitor this process, which may or may not result in a bill this spring – and while we applaud the sponsor's interest if finding an alternative that can pass and be effectively implemented, we are skeptical that enough votes for a gaming bill can be mustered without that support for Agriculture.

Our goal continues to be to move away from dependence on the state's general funds. Our best chance of doing that is still a possible gaming bill.



Office Assistant's Information - Gina Bean

gina.bean@aiswcd.org

Legislative Day 2014 Photos!



Photo Credits: Sue Davis, Lisa Leigh, and Keith Livesay...Thank you for sending in photos!

The following individuals joined us for Legislative Day 2014:

AISWCD Staff (4)

SWCD Directors (23)

SWCD Employees (26)

Lobbyist

Mike Hoffman

Partners:

Jake Hendee, National Great Rivers Research & Education Center
Debbie Fluegel, Trees Forever
Shannon Ramsay, Trees Forever
Barb Grabner-Kerns, Trees Forever
Bob Flider, IDOA
Lara Mbayed, DNR
Mike Zirl, EPA

The following Legislators joined us for the reception at Boones Saloon:

Representatives (12)

John D. Anthony, District 75, R
Mike Bost, District 115, R
John D. Cavaletto, District 107, R
C.D. Davidsmeyer, District 100, R
Norine Hammond, District 93, R
Josh Harms, District 106, R
Chad Hays, District 104, R
Charles E. Meier, District 108, R
Donald L. Moffitt, District 74, R
Martin J. Moylan, District 55, D
Wayne Rosenthal, District 95, R
Brian W. Stewart, District 89, R

Senators (5)

Thomas Cullerton, District 23, D
Michael W. Frerichs, District 52, D
Darin M. LaHood, District 37, R
Sue Rezin, District 38, R
John M. Sullivan, District 47, D

Support Staff (5)

Dave Winters
Eric Murphy
Ray Watt
Ron Wade
Jami Owens



ISWCDEA CORNER - STEPHEN MILLER ISWCDEA REGION FOUR REPRESENTATIVE

website: iswcdea.org

The ISWCDEA lent a helping hand to make this year's Legislative Day a success. The Employees Association assisted the AISWCD by providing the green ribbon pins and post cards, butter mints, and plastic bags. Members also volunteered their time to update Legislator's handouts, promote attendance, work the welcome table at the reception, and gather feedback to help improve next year's event. The AISWCD along with ISWCDEA members Kara Downin, Sondra Baker, Abbie Sperry, and Insurance Rep Melissa Cauble all deserve thanks for organizing the event.

The NRCS elimination of fax machines from the field offices and the transition to the Fax to Mail system is causing some headaches for SWCDs. Since many SWCDs receive Illinois Funds transaction notices via fax, the transition will slow down these notifications. Rather than utilize the new system, where all faxes are routed through the NRCS area office, it appears that most SWCDs are opting to receive hard copy transaction notices through the regular mail. If your SWCD is using another fax to mail system with good results, let one of your ISWCDEA reps know and we will share the information.

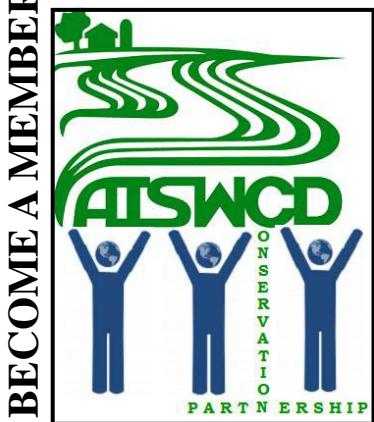
If you liked the "Team Conservation" T-shirts that were worn by ISWCDEA members at Winter Training a few months ago, you will soon be able to purchase one for yourself. Several positive comments on the T-shirts were received in Springfield so the ISWCDEA will be making them available to everyone. Watch for an upcoming email with more detailed ordering information.

The ISWCDEA wishes to thank Ivan Dozier for taking the time to meet in person with ISWCDEA reps. The meeting was a great opportunity for SWCD employees have questions answered and to learn more about the proposed NRCS restructuring. We know that Ivan is extremely busy so we appreciate that he was able to find the time to speak with the ISWCDEA. Notes from this meeting were emailed to all SWCD employees, so if you have not received the notes and would like to read them please let us know.

As always, feel free to contact your ISWCDEA representatives any time with questions, comments, or concerns.

Stephen

TODAY!



*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
wwwaiswcdorg/donatembership/*

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

*Other AISWCD updated Information available:

Employee Personnel Status Form Link-

<http://wwwaiswcdorg/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/SWCD-Personnel-Status-Form.pdf>

Subscribe to il.all e-mail link and directions-

il.all-subscribe@aiswcd.org

When the e-mail pops up to subscribe, all you have to do is type "subscribe" in the Subject or Memo line and then send. You will receive a confirmation back from our provider, Tiger Tech that will confirm your subscription to the il.all listing.

To unsubscribe from the il.all link-

il.all-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org

Follow the same directions above, but type "unsubscribe" in the Subject or Memo line.

Subscribe to Director's e-mail link - Directors-subscribe@aiswcd.org

To unsubscribe from Director's email link - Directors-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org

*Other AISWCD updated Information available (continued):

FOIA/OMA link-

<http://foia.ilattorneygeneral.net/default.aspx>

(All new Directors must complete within 90 Days of being elected to office.)

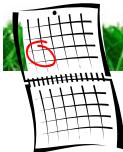
***Plea for applications:**

The **Forestry Committee** was unable to select someone for the **Outstanding Forestry Contribution Award**, so they are asking for any District to submit an application for someone in their area. Please help out the **Forestry Committee** and contact **David McCormick, Forestry Chairman at Brown County SWCD office-(217) 773-3993-Ext 101 or Gina Bean, AISWCD Office Assistant-(217) 744-3414** if you have someone you can submit.

***We hope that you plan to attend the 2014 AISWCD Annual Meeting-theme is "All roads lead to conservation"!!!

A time to think: Never Regret: If it's good, it's wonderful!! If it's bad, it's an experience.

To Act: Never think of failing!!!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- First Day of Spring - March 20, 2014
- National Agriculture Day—March 25, 2014
- National Agriculture Week—March 23 to March 30, 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

Focus on SWCDs - Vermilion County SWCD

First off, a big thank you goes out to all the SWCD employees and directors that attended Legislative Day 2014 in Springfield!

Vermilion County SWCD brought with them two employees (AC Lisa Leigh and RC Jon Felix) and two directors (Chris Elliott and Dwight Bohlen). Thank you to Vermilion County for sending both employees and directors! Below are some of the photos that Lisa Leigh sent to the AISWCD office.

Also pictured: Dan Doedtman, Director from Effingham County



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

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