



CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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AISWCD Staff:

Richard Nichols
Executive Director

Sherry Finn
Administrative Specialist

Kelly Thompson
Program Coordinator

Matthew Hanauer
IUM/Watershed Coordinator

Gina Bean
Office Assistant

CREP Resource Specialists

Catherine Dunn
Sheryl Philips
Jeremy Pruden
Timothy Royer
Dan Sahn
Jake Vancil

A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR AISWCD

Thank you to everyone that attended Rich Nichol's retirement party. We welcome Kelly Thompson as the new Executive Director of AISWCD starting September 16, 2014. Kelly's old position as the Program Coordinator at AISWCD, has helped prepare her in her new position and we expect a smooth transition. If you need to get ahold of Kelly, her email address has not changed, kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org.

Below are a few pictures from Rich Nichol's retirement party:



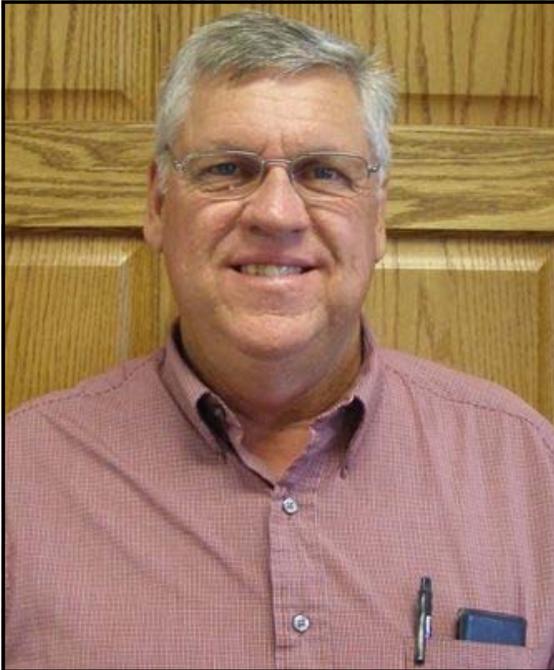
Top Right: Rich Nichols and Kelly Thompson
Bottom Left: Larry Shelts, RC from Schuyler County SWCD visits with David McCormick, Brown County SWCD Chairman
Bottom Right: Guests converse at the Sangamon County Farm Bureau.

Thank you to the Sangamon County Farm Bureau for allowing us to host Rich's party in their facilities. It truly is a beautiful building.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - MYRON KIRBY

kirbyfarms@yahoo.com



Since being elected it has been a busy time which started out going to the Regional Stewardship Challenge. What a great experience to see the teams from nine states compete. Big thanks to all who were involved. Everyone that was there learned a lot and made many good friends.

The next week I attended the Illinois State Fair Ag Day luncheon. I celebrated it by being on stage with the Farm Family of the year, Doll's Dairy and the 9-12 Teacher of the Year Julie DeSutter from Mason County. I was then off to the Department of Agriculture at 2:00 pm to meet with the Governor's Advisory Board. There was representation from four state agencies, the Department of Agriculture, and the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and was chaired by Terry Davis.

The topic being discussed was the Nutrient Reduction policy. They covered, at this time, finalizing the rough draft to be reviewed by all of us at a later date for our input. It is my hope and the Association's hope that the Districts will be the delivery system for these new policies bringing more challenges and hopefully more money into the Districts.

There is a plan in place for cover crop demonstrations and in the next couple of years each District will be involved with their own plan.

Thank you to the AISWCD immediate past president, Lonnie Wilson, all past presidents, and Districts for their support. It is an honor to be the President of the Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts. I will try to represent the Districts and the Association to the best of my ability.

Along with getting ready for Rich Nichol's retirement, our new Executive Director, Kelly Thompson, coming on and an executive board meeting planned, September looks to be another very busy month.

And always remember...

The Association works for the Districts so they may do their job of conserving our soil and keeping our water and air clean.

-Myron



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - *RICH NICHOLS*

rich.nichols@aiswcd.org

This will be my final article for the Conservation Catchall as your Executive Director and I want to take some space to express my gratitude for a forty-year career that has been as good as I could have ever hoped. I gave a short good-bye at the Annual Meeting in July but would like to add some things here for those who were in attendance and to tell those who were not in attendance how much you all have done for me.

I don't consider myself to be deeply religious. I certainly believe in God and have accepted Jesus as my savior but I want to tell you how I ended up spending 40 years working on behalf of soil and water conservation.

In June of 1974 God sent a messenger to knock on my door - literally. The messenger came in the form of Ray Smith. I doubt that anyone out there remembers Ray - maybe Terry Bogner or a few who have been around as long as he has will remember, but that isn't important. Ray worked for the Department of Agriculture as a field rep. He had been temporarily assigned to a task force on flood control that Governor Walker had created but he had decided to retire. I knew Ray, but not well. Through a mutual acquaintance Ray was made aware that I was looking for a job. It was to tell me that he was retiring and leaving an opening that Ray came to see me. I applied and was accepted for the position. I began working for the Illinois Department of Agriculture as their representative on Governor's Taskforce on Flood Control October 16, 1974.

When I started my new job, I didn't know what a soil and water conservation district was - let alone what they were supposed to do. It didn't take me long to figure it out. My new job was to work with the SWCDs on PL-566 small watershed projects. We didn't get many watershed projects built because of new NEPA rules that altered construction requirements and raised project costs to the point of making the most of the projects cost prohibitive. But, I did learn about SWCDs and came to the realization that they were an organization that could make a difference. The Flood Control Taskforce ended June 30, 1975 and my position was returned to the Department of Agriculture where I was able to expand my knowledge of the SWCDs and all that they are able to do. I continued to work with the SWCDs on the small watershed projects until SCS was forced to close them out because of lack of sponsorship or the inability of the sponsor to raise the required local share of the cost or because the sponsor chose to end the project for any number of reasons.

By that time other initiatives were being considered, among which was the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control amendment to the SWCD Act. The Federal Clean Water Act, which Congress had passed and President Nixon signed in 1972, set a goal to make all waters fishable and swimmable by 1983. To achieve that goal, soil erosion and sedimentation would have to be reduced to tolerable levels on all agricultural lands. Illinois chose to use the SWCDs as the local entity to help meet that goal. The Erosion and Sediment Control amendments to the Act were the vehicle that would be used. I spent a great deal of time working with SWCDs to educate directors about the proposed amendment to the Act. We were successful in getting the amendments passed which gave us the leverage to go back to the General Assembly to request funding for SWCD staff to help get the job done. We did get that funding and we also got funding for a cost share program to implement the new "T-2000" program.

Over the years I have come to know many SWCD employees and directors and consider them friends. Most have been very supportive and I am grateful for that support. Others, on occasion, have pointed out some of my shortcomings, and I have been grateful for that - perhaps not at the time but the humbling experience encouraged me to try to do better.

(Continued on page 5)



Meet Our New IUM/Watershed Coordinator!

matt.hanauer@aiswcd.org

August began a new career for me here at the Association. So to everyone I have yet to meet, hello! If you happen to stop by our office on the north side of Springfield, be sure to stick your head in the back office and I'll be sure to introduce myself. I look forward to meeting a lot of new people and hearing new perspectives as I learn and begin in my new position of IUM and Water Quality Coordinator.

First, a quick bio for myself. My name is Matthew Hanauer and I was born in Springfield, Illinois, though my family moved to Southern Indiana when I was only 5. I'm a 2013 graduate of Purdue University with a degree in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences with a concentration in water quality. After graduating, I returned to Bloomfield in Southern Indiana to work full time on a Watershed Management Plan for a 319 grant that I had a hand in setting up as an intern the summer before. I enjoyed testing water and working with the various landowners that would be affected by an implementation phase of the grant. Upon the near completion of that work, I applied for the open position back in Springfield and was interviewed and accepted in June of this year. The grant period in Indiana wasn't up until August, however, so I spent July travelling between the two locations. I moved and began working here full time on August 1st.

On the IUM side of things, I gathered some experience as I transitioned between jobs in July, traveling between Illinois and Indiana. My first day was spent at a meeting in Yorkville with the Technical Review Committee. Since that flurry of the first few days, we've sent out and reviewed proposals to write the standards for Temporary Stream Crossings and Sediment Forebays. Task Order Groups for these standards will be formed at the next meeting, scheduled for the first full week in September. We've also been working on getting the basin standards updated. Those are being worked on by Rick McAndless and should be ready to be open for public comment in the near future. Other Task Order Groups working on standards are for Soil Bioengineering and Inlet Protection- Monofilament Fabric Barrier Fence Standard. The Soil Bioengineering standard will be ready for public comment as soon as the basin standards are completed.

My duties as water quality coordinator are a little less defined, though it's kept me busy thus far. I've attended meetings in Sangamon and Madison Counties, both of which are at different stages of a 319 grant. Madison is just beginning ground work in the Upper Silver Creek watershed and I look forward to seeing the progress made and helping in any way I can. In the end of August, I was contacted by Jen Filipiak to help with collecting information to put together a full proposal for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) which will bring money to five priority watersheds throughout Illinois to hopefully gain a better understanding what practices work best to alleviate the loads of the problem pollutants currently entering streams and rivers all over the state. This project will be a great stepping stone as Illinois moves toward the future of environmental protection. This project is still in the planning phases, but is competing with a large group for this grant available to environmental groups across the nation. I will be working closely with Jen during this process to put together the best proposal we can to bring this project to Illinois.

My first full month has been fast-paced and filled with meeting conservation-minded people across the state. I hope to continue to get acquainted with this position and that I can help county SWCD offices and other watershed groups write and complete 319 and other water quality grants from now into the future. Thank you for the opportunity and I look forward to working with you!

Matt Hanauer



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

sherry.finn@aiswcd.org

As it was reported in Rich Nichols' weekly report, after September 30, 2014, Sherry Finn will no longer be with AISWCD. If you have any questions after that date, you may address them to Kelly Thompson or Gina Bean. We wish Sherry the best and she will be truly missed.

Executive Director's Notes (Continued from page 3)

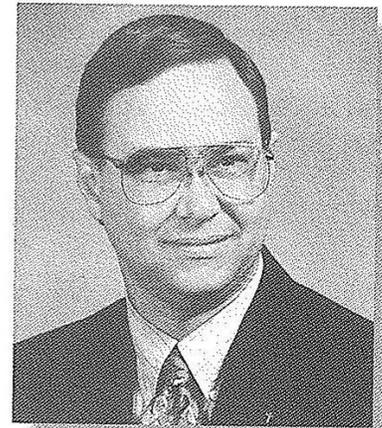
You all have done much to teach me many things. You have taught me to be a good steward of the finite things God has provided. Our air, our water, our soil and all of the things that depend on those basic resources can't be replaced once they are gone. You have taught me to have a sense of humor, to never take myself too seriously, and to use my words carefully with thought. But, of all the things you have taught me, perhaps the most important is to respect and admire those who have a passion for conserving and saving what we have for future generations.

Many of you have been my inspiration to do more, to do better, to work harder, to care more and to respect all that is done for a worthy reason. For all that, all I can say is thank you and keep on doing what you are doing.

Our next big challenge will be reducing nutrient losses and their contributions to our waters. I have no doubt that the SWCDs are up to the task and I do expect that financial and other support will follow your lead. I have learned that the SWCDs are capable of doing about anything they set out to do. Because of that knowledge and the experience I have gained, I am certain that Illinois will, in the years to come, be a better place because the 97 soil and water conservation districts are at work!

Rich

To the right is a blurb we found in an old award booklet. It summed up Rich and his dedication to the SWCDs so well we thought we had to share. Please enjoy.



Rich Nichols
*Illinois Dept. of Agriculture
Springfield, Illinois*

Rich Nichols has worked for the Illinois Department of Agriculture for 30 years. His entire career has been spent promoting conservation by building strong SWCDs. Thirty years ago there were few SWCD staff. Rich pioneered efforts to increase funding to provide local staff. He helped secure secretarial positions, and then multi-county Administrative Aides in the early 1980's. By 1985, workload required county Resource Conservationists and Rich was instrumental in getting RC positions funded. He has been an active member of the Turnover Taskforce, working to improve employee benefits.

Rich responded to needs of a growing staff by providing guidance and training. He created and continually updated the District Operations Handbook to be a readily accessible administrative and policy manual for SWCDs. His efforts have helped launch SWCDs into the computer age and improved the financial programs available. Rich is a pivotal part of the AISWCD's Summer Conference and Winter Training.

Rich Nichols has been a true "Ambassador for Conservation." Without his efforts, the face of the partnership would be much different in Illinois!



Office Assistant's Information - Gina Bean

gina.bean@aiswcd.org

Well August was a very *EVENTFUL* month for me at the office. It started with the Stewardship Challenge in Woodstock, IL which was a very enjoyable time. The office attended Ag Day at the IL State Fair on August 12 and the month ended with helping to plan Rich Nichol's retirement party. Thank you to everyone that attended! I know it meant a lot to Rich to have a warm send off into retirement. We wish him well!

The cooler weather has most definitely put me in the *FALL* mood. I love to give tips on crafts you can do that repurposes items instead of throwing them in the trash. Here are two ways you can decorate for Halloween this year using everyday trash.

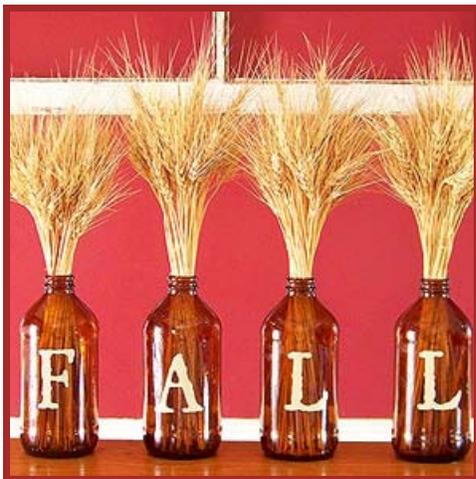


HAPPY FALL!

For more information and directions on the Halloween crafts above, visit:

<http://spoonful.com/crafts/spirit-jugs>

<http://www.rustandsunshine.com/2012/10/glowing-eyes.html>



<http://rustic-crafts.com/?p=8136>

Gina Bean

Nitrate in well water: What is it, and what do you do?

Nitrates are nitrogen-oxygen compounds that serve as essential nutrients for plants, which absorb them from the soil. The largest source of nitrates are fertilizers used on crops. Animal and human waste also contains nitrogen in the form of ammonia.

Nitrate also is generated by:

- Decomposing plant and animal materials
- Sewage
- Septic systems
- Industrial effluent Landfills

What are the health risks?

The greatest health concern is "blue baby syndrome" or methemoglobinemia. The syndrome is seen most often in infants exposed to nitrates from drinking water used in baby formula. Infants ages 0 to 3 months are at highest risk. The syndrome affects the ability of the baby's blood to carry oxygen to body tissues.

Other children and adults can withstand higher levels of nitrates than babies. However, exposure to higher levels of nitrates has been associated with increased incidence of cancer and other issues in adults.

How is health risk measured?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a maximum contaminant level for nitrate of 10 parts per million (milligrams per liter) as nitrogen.

How can nitrates reach my water supply?

Excess nitrates not used by plants can be carried through the soil to groundwater in a process called leaching. Nitrates are very soluble and do not bind with soil.

Is my private well at risk?

Nitrate is tasteless and odorless. The way to know if your well water is at risk is to have it tested for nitrate. You may be at greater risk if:

- Your well system is shallow
- It's near a septic system, agricultural land or animal feedlots. Nitrates have entered the soil due to heavy rains, flooding, chemical spills or sewage system failures.

Why type of treatment solutions are available?

The U.S. EPA has approved certain methods for removing nitrates, including:

- Reverse osmosis: This works best on point-of-use systems, which generally are used in places such as the kitchen sink where water is used mostly for drinking and cooking.
- Ion exchange: Along with a water softening system, an ion exchange system can provide a whole-house solution for nitrate contamination.

To learn more about water testing and treatment, visit www.WellOwner.org.



National Ground Water Association
601 Dempsey Road
Westerville, OH 43081
800.551.7379 / 614.898.7791
www.NGWA.org



ISWCDEA CORNER - *STEPHEN MILLER* *ISWCDEA REGION FOUR REPRESENTATIVE*

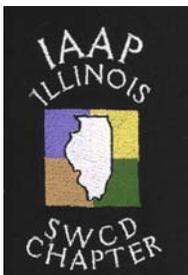
website: iswcdea.org

The ISWCDEA will be recognizing an outstanding SWCD employee at the ISWCDEA Annual Meeting this December and at the AISWCD Annual Meeting next summer. Outstanding District Employee nominations are currently being accepted until October 17th. If you missed the award application that was emailed out; or if you have any questions about the application, please contact one of your ISWCDEA district reps. There are a lot of enthusiastic employees all around the state who go above and beyond their required duties, so we are hoping to receive several applications.

Although we haven't had any breaks from the summer heat yet, we are thinking ahead to this year's ISWCDEA Annual Meeting / Winter Training. The ISWCDEA is looking for suggestions and recommendations for a motivational speaker who would be able to present at Winter Training this December. If you know any speakers who would be a good fit for this event, please let one of your ISWCDEA reps know.

As always, remember that the ISWCDEA website is full of great resources for employees and feel free to contact your ISWCDEA representatives any time with questions, comments, or concerns. We are always happy to hear from you!

Stephen



ILLINOIS CHAPTER - IAAP - *SALLY FERGUSON, PRESIDENT*

As we've shared, the SWCD IAAP chapter will be dissolving December 15, 2014. Thanks to those who completed the survey regarding the future of an AC group. Please contact me if you have input on forming a formal or informal AC group after IAAP's dissolution—even if you are not an IAAP member, we want to hear from you!

Administrative Tip for all Windows 7 Users: Did you know you can “Pin” shortcuts to frequently used programs and folders to your taskbar at the bottom of the screen? Programs I have pinned include: Acrobat, Word, Excel, OneNote, Publisher, QuickBooks, and Calculator. When the program is open, simply right-click the Icon in the Taskbar and choose “Pin this program to Taskbar”. As a bonus, a list of frequently used or recently used files will be available when you right-click the icon. Check out this 1:13 video <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows7/pin-a-program-to-the-taskbar> to see it.

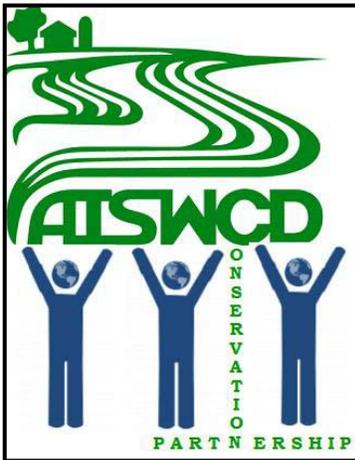
You can also “Pin” Files and Folders you need often, but not often enough to stay on the recent list. I pin: Monthly travel expense (Excel), District letterhead template (Word), Website Administration webpage (Mozilla), IDOA Survey of Activities (Excel), Next Board Meeting (Folder). First, pin the program as described above. Then, drag and drop files, shortcuts, and folders you want to pin on top of the applicable icon in your taskbar at the bottom of the screen.

Sally



TODAY!

BECOME A MEMBER



*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!

Affiliate Members:

**Marc Anderson
Sheryl and Richard Philips
Sue Davis
Della and Charles Moen
George and Cathy Hypke**

Lifetime Members:

L&J Enterprises

Corporate Members:

Patten Cat

District Members:

Warren County SWCD

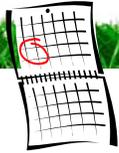
Affiliate Membership Reminder!!!!

Please remember that the money raised through the Conservation Partnership will go towards education activities and the Illinois State Envirothon.

Since Districts pay dues to AISWCD, they are given the discounts at cost at the rate of \$12. This \$12 is given directly to NAC who handles the discounts. AISWCD makes no profit off of a District's \$12. Once a District becomes a member, they will be able to use the discounts for office purposes.

The \$12 fee must be paid yearly to be eligible to receive discounts.

**Please consider joining today and support our Education activities!
Thank you!**



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Protect Your Groundwater Day - September 9, 2014
- First Day of Fall - September 23, 2014
- Columbus Day - October 13, 2014—AISWCD Office Will Be Closed
- Happy Halloween! - October 31, 2014

2014 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- December 2014 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 8 and 9, 2014
- Christmas Party - December 8, 2014



You can be a promotional partner of the national [Protect Your Groundwater Day](#) within minutes by taking three easy steps:

- 1) Write one sentence stating what you'll do to promote the day and groundwater protection (i.e., web or social media content, news release, newsletter, public event; feel free to borrow from our PYGWD web site).
- 2) Indicate whether you are a national, state or local organization.
- 3) Paste the above information into an email to ctreyens@ngwa.org.

That's all there is to it. Partner now with the National Ground Water Association on PYGWD web page and we'll link to your organization from our web site.

If you've already re-upped or become a new partner, THANKS! If not, do so now and be a part of something good!

NGWA Public Awareness Director Cliff Treyens

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

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