



# CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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## *AISWCD Staff:*

### **Kelly Thompson**

*Executive Director*

### **Gina Bean**

*Administrative Coordinator*

### **Matthew Hanauer**

*IUM/Watershed Coordinator*

### *CREP Resource Specialists*

### **Sheryl Philips**

### **Richard Rappley**

### **Timothy Royer**

### **Dan Sahn**

### **Sarah Still**

## How to Recycle Halloween Pumpkins for Wildlife

Source: <http://blog.nwf.org/2014/10/how-to-recycle-halloween-pumpkins-for-wildlife/>  
Written by: Dani Tinker 10/30/14—National Wildlife Federation



Squirrel in a pumpkin by *National Wildlife* Photo Contest entrant Katherine Flickinger.

## Compost Your Pumpkins

If you've carved a jack-o-lantern, it may already be decomposing. Pumpkins are 90% water, which means they easily and quickly break down. This makes them a great addition to your compost pile. Prevent unwanted pumpkin plants by removing the seeds first (set seeds aside for #3 and #5). If you don't have a compost bin or pile, check your local government, nearby farms, or community gardens to see if they collect old pumpkins.



Pumpkins can make a great addition to compost bins or piles. Photo by Karl Steel.

## Make a Snack-o-Lantern

This is one of the most creative ideas I've seen to recycle pumpkins. You can turn your jack-o-lantern into a snack-o-lantern for wildlife! It's fairly easy to make, and the squirrels and birds will love it.



Nuthatch eats pumpkin seeds by Kurt Bauschardt.

## Leave Seeds for Wildlife

Large birds and small mammals will eat pumpkin seeds if you offer them in your yard. Collect seeds from your pumpkins, before composting them, and let the seeds dry. Please don't add salt or seasoning. Place seeds on a flat surface, tray, shallow bowl, or mix in with existing bird seed in your garden.

## Cut it into Pieces for Animals

Many backyard animals will eat pieces of pumpkin flesh. You can cut it into pieces and leave it out. This porcupine doesn't even need it cut into pieces!

## Plant Pumpkin Seeds

The squash bee is one of many insects to pollinate pumpkin flowers. If you have room in your yard, you can save seeds for a harvest of pumpkins next year.



Bee pollinating a pumpkin flower by *National Wildlife* Photo Contest entrant Paul Gardner.

**Please keep in mind this applies to non-painted pumpkins, as the toxins in paint can be harmful to wildlife.**

Source: <http://blog.nwf.org/2014/10/how-to-recycle-halloween-pumpkins-for-wildlife/>  
Written by: Dani Tinker 10/30/14—National Wildlife Federation



## ***PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - MYRON KIRBY***

[kirbyfarms@yahoo.com](mailto:kirbyfarms@yahoo.com)

I hope everyone had a pleasant harvest and those seasonal allergies did not get the best of you. I would like to thank our SWCD Directors and Employees for reaching out to Legislators and working so hard during these unknown times in the state of Illinois. We are working very hard but there is still no news with the state budget. We are staying in contact with our Legislators as we hope everyone else is. This impasse needs to be stopped and a budget passed for Illinois. In these times we must remember to keep conservation going and that the Earth's natural resources depend on it. Thank you for all that you do.

I wish everyone an enjoyable Holiday Season and look forward to seeing the AISWCD Board Members in December.

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

**-Myron**

### **TREE PLANTING CEREMONY AT THE IL STATE FAIRGROUNDS**

If we learned anything from this year's Envirothon it was that the Emerald Ash Borer was destructive. This past summer that information became relevant to the Illinois State Fairgrounds. If you visited the fair this year you may have noticed that there were several trees that were not there from the years past. The IDOA Bureau of Environmental Programs identified 73 trees that were impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer. A total of 41 trees were removed for safety reasons with the fair quickly approaching. IDOA Buildings and Grounds crew continue to work on this situation daily.

Thursday, November 5, 2015, AISWCD attended a tree planting ceremony at the Illinois State Fairgrounds. IDOA has partnered with the Illinois Green Industry Association (IGIA) to replace dozens of trees in the upcoming years. The IGIA has done an amazing gesture securing donated trees from tree farmers across the state to help replace the ones that were lost. While the event was small in size, its impact will be huge for years to come.





## *EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - KELLY THOMPSON*

[Kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org](mailto:Kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org)

# Happy November Everyone!

The holidays will be here very soon! It is truly amazing how time fly's by so quickly these days. Here is a quick update on what has been taking place over the past month and what is up coming.

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## **OCTOBER**

October was busier than ever, between taking my vacation, attending several meetings, working on the general liability insurance invoicing and the Illinois River Conference in Peoria. I have been making some good connections to non-traditional partners and advocating for each and every District. One thing that struck me during the month of October is this...with the talk about a FY16 budget and consolidation of Districts, we have begun to move away from the mission and purpose of our organization...protect and conserve the natural resources of Illinois. It's a very simple mission statement but has a very big impact. I understand the hardship facing many Districts and the employees worrying about whether or not they'll have a job in the next several months. We can't lose hope and we all need to come together to get the job done. This budget crisis is not only affecting Districts but other organizations all across the state of Illinois. Try to stay strong during these unprecedented times.

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## **UPCOMING LUC AND DISTRICT MEETINGS**

When your District is planning its upcoming District meeting or Land Use Council meeting let's get back to the basics and remember to discuss the following items:

### **District and LUC Meeting Discussion Points**

- **NLRS** - Should the AISWCD guide and assist in developing a plan for Districts to follow in order to reach the goals listed in the document? Example goals: Develop 50 new Watershed groups within the next year; Introduce 2000 new acres of cover crops within the next year; Host a minimum of 30 roadshows by June 2016; Install 150 new rain gardens per county by next fall; etc.
- **BUDGET SHORTFALL** – In the event the State passes a budget and Districts receive less than \$7.5 million, develop a plan for each LUC and District on how you'll operate with less funding. Please share this plan with AISWCD.
- **NLRS ROADSHOWS** – Develop a list of items that your District needs in order to host a mini-Roadshow within the next several months. What can AISWCD provide, other than funding, for the meetings?
- **2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION** – List all of the items your District or LUC would like AISWCD to work on during the upcoming legislative session. Please be specific when developing the list. Example items: Seek Environmental partnerships; Introduce a fee or tax; Introduce a tax credit for conservation practices in return for a fee for services; Seek corporate partnerships for funding; Educate and inform the General Assembly about NLRS, Watershed planning, Conservation BMPs, etc.
- **ANY OTHER ITEMS OF CONCERN**

[Continued on Page 4](#)

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## AISWCD DECEMBER BOARD MEETING

AISWCD will be holding the **December Quarterly Board meeting** on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. **Please provide the AISWCD office and your LUC Representatives a list of items for the AISWCD Board to discuss at this meeting.** There are very pressing issues that need to be discussed before the next Legislative Session. We look forward to hearing from every District!

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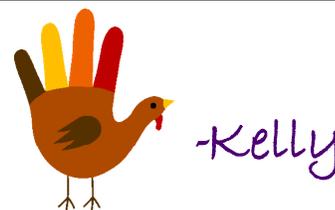
## THANK YOU!

I have heard of several employees departing from Districts, either because they have found other employment, the financial state of their District or because they need steady income and benefits. Whatever the reason may be, I wish all of the departing employees the best of luck. **Thank you for your time and dedication to conservation in Illinois. Best of wishes!**

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## HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Have a great Thanksgiving and we'll see most of you in early December either at Winter Training or the Quarterly Board meetings.



## *IUM/Watershed Coordinator—Matt Hanauer*

[matt.hanauer@aiswcd.org](mailto:matt.hanauer@aiswcd.org)

Hello all! As the weather cools and harvest comes to a close, this gives some districts time to start focusing on water quality grants for the next year. 319 grant proposals are due in August, but can take some time to put together. If you haven't already, the time to start talking to your boards is now! And with a water quality focus like the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, there is plenty of info to get started.

319 grants are a great way to bring federal money in for districts and I want to help with that in any way I can. Districts that already have watershed groups are ahead of the curve and I hope, in the next year, to help more of those groups get formed. In my experience, there have always been a few conservation-minded landowners that are willing to motivate their neighbors to think about preserving their land. These are the people that are already involved with their conservation districts! All we need to do is give those few people some direction and a little supervision and the group begins to run itself!

If you or your board members have questions about starting a watershed group, what goes into writing a 319 grant, what watershed in your district should be focused on, or where your watersheds are, please let me know. I'm keeping an open door for anyone to ask questions or to discuss whatever water quality needs/goals they have.

In the coming months, I'll be reaching out to some districts that are in priority watersheds this year to get a status check of the resources in your district. I'm excited to start working closer with you as we move to improve runoff and sedimentation in our streams. Let's make Illinois an example for the rest of the nation to follow! Thanks and good luck!

-Matt



## Administrative Coordinator Information - Gina Bean

[gina.bean@aiswcd.org](mailto:gina.bean@aiswcd.org)

# How to MARKET Your SWCD One Tip At a Time

This will be a new segment of the Catchall that I hope most will find beneficial. Please know that this is in no way telling you what you have to do. I (Gina) have a degree in Communications and would simply like to share some tips throughout the next few months on how to get that SWCD name out there. Whether it be SWCDs as a whole or as individuals.

## This month's topic: *Email Signatures*

Signatures are a great way for people to quickly identify who is emailing them. How many emails do you send a day? If you put your SWCD name and logo in your signature, you are spreading that SWCD name even quicker. Signatures should also include your name, title, phone number, address, and website address if you have one. The design has endless possibilities!

### Examples:



association of illinois  
**SOIL & WATER**  
conservation districts

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association of illinois  
**SOIL & WATER**  
conservation districts

### How To:

This website will list step by step how to make a signature in Microsoft Outlook. For those not using Outlook, a simple google search asking "How to make a signature in ....." should get you results. If you ever need assistance with this, I am willing to help.

<https://support.office.com/en-ca/article/Create-and-add-an-email-message-signature-Outlook-2010-95cce669-d370-43fe-afbe-4e79361dfc12>



## ***Legislative Corner - Mike Hoffmann***

### **Fiscal Year 2016 budget impasse – still no end in sight**

We are four months into fiscal year 2016, and the State of Illinois continues to operate without a budget. Because of on-going contracts and court decrees, state employees are still being paid, and 90% of the state's programs (in terms of dollars) are being financed. (Unfortunately, Soil and Water Conservation is not one of those programs under a court mandate.) A lot of statehouse observers expected that the crisis atmosphere generated by the lack of a budget would force the Governor and legislative leadership to come to a resolution by now - as occurred in past budget-related stalemates. However, because most of the budget, including elementary and secondary education, are funded, that crisis atmosphere has been abated.

So Governor Rauner continues to call for action on his "Turnaround Agenda" (most notably diminution of collective bargaining laws) before discussing budget issues, while the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House repeat their calls for budget talks first. Neither side is budging at this point; both seemed to be focused on finding candidates and funds for next year's election. It may take an election to decide this issue.

Meanwhile, the state's backlog of unpaid bills continues to grow; today the backlog stands at \$6,749,359,640, according State Comptroller Leslie Munger. And, of course, essential state programs like Soil and Water Conservation are left to our own devices.

### **Related Developments**

A couple of developments in the last week give a glimmer of hope, but skeptics doubt that they will make much difference. First, after getting some public pressure from several civic organizations, Governor Rauner has scheduled a meeting with the four legislative leaders for November 18 in Chicago – the first time all five will meet together since the middle of May. The meeting will be public, and streamed over the internet. The four leaders have indicated that they will attend, but the President and Speaker are asking to see the agenda first - and the Governor is downplaying expectations that the meeting will be productive, saying that public meetings generally are not.

A second development is the introduction of [HB4320](#) by Rep. David Harris, a suburban Republican. The bill would allow for non-General Revenue funds that do not have appropriations for fiscal year 2016 – like our Partners for Conservation Fund, presumably – to be distributed to programs at the level of their fiscal year 2015 appropriations. The Governor is opposed to the bill, however, so it remains to be seen if it can get the support it needs to pass. Even if it did, it's not clear the money would be released because the Governor's Office of Management and Budget continues to hold our funds in "suspension".

I wish I could be more optimistic about the state budget. We do have optimism, though: it lies in the efforts that the SWCDs and their employees in concert with the AISWCD continue to put forth to keep your doors open and serve the State of Illinois.

***MEANWHILE, PLEASE REMEMBER: MORE THAN EVER IT IS NECESSARY NOW TO KEEP YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS UP-TO-DATE ON THE STATUS OF YOUR SWCD AND YOUR ONGOING ACTIVITIES.***

*-Mike*



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

website: [iswcdea.org](http://iswcdea.org)

Across Illinois harvest is wrapping up, cover crops are growing, and temperatures are dropping. That means that Winter Training is right around the corner. The ISWCDEA realizes that travel budgets for many employees have been cut to the bone, but we still hope to see as many attendees in Springfield as possible. It is more important now than ever for employees to remain up-to-date on the rapidly changing environment in which we operate today.

Mission: Possible is this year's Winter Training theme and we've got sessions planned to cover a variety of topics. There will be sessions to discuss nutrient management planning, nutrient regulation in the Chesapeake Bay, accounting basics, the Pheasants Forever seed program, meth awareness, responsibilities of the SWCD Act, marketing using social media, retirement planning, and resume building/unemployment. Please take time to review the draft agenda. If you have any questions that you would like the speakers to answer in any of the sessions, please pass them along to your ISWCDEA representative. This will help the speakers be prepared and ensure that more questions get answered in a timely manner.

**Please have your registration turned in by November 20<sup>th</sup> if you plan to attend.**

As always, feel free to contact your ISWCDEA representatives any time with any comments or concerns. We are always happy to hear from you and we hope to see you in Springfield on December 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> for Winter Training!

**Winter Training  
2015**

**MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE IS NOT A POSSIBILITY**

## Agenda

Tuesday, Dec. 1, 2015

9:00-10:00 am	Registration	Lobby
10:00-11:00 am	Welcome & Partner Reports (IDOA, AISWCD, NRCS, FSA, IDNR, IEPA, FWS, RD)	Diamond & Emerald
11:00-12:00 pm	Chesapeake Bay	Diamond & Emerald
12:00-12:30 pm	Regional Photos	Diamond & Emerald
12:30-1:30 pm	LUNCH ON YOUR OWN	
1:30-2:25 pm	Nutrient Loss Inventory & Monitoring	Diamond & Emerald
2:30-3:25 pm	Breakout Sessions	
	• Basics of Accounting (Not Quick-Books)	Onyx
	• Pollinator, Natives and Pheasants Forever Seed Program	Jade
3:30-4:25 pm	Meth 101	Diamond & Emerald
7:00 pm	Painting	
8:00 pm-12:00 am	Hospitality Room - Music Trivia Night (Games, Chair Massage, etc.)	Onyx

**Reminders:**

- Toys for Tots and Eyeglass drop offs are located in the hallway.
- Region 5 is having a Bake Sale in the lobby.
- ISWCDEA dues are payable at the registration table or see Vicki Heath.
- Linda Byrd will be providing chair massages in the Hospitality Room for a small fee of \$1 per minute.
- Bring Your Own Refreshments to the Hospitality Room.
- Bring a Door Prize

~ Have Fun!

TOP SECRET

**Agenda**

Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2015

8:00—8:30 am	Registration & Hotel Checkout	Lobby
8:30—9:25 am	Rules and Responsibilities of the District Act	Diamond & Emerald
9:30—10:25am	Breakout Sessions	
	• Marketing Using Social Media	Onyx
	• Resume Building and Unemployment	Ruby
10:30—11:25 am	Individual Retirement Planning	Onyx & Opal
11:30—2:30 pm	Lunch	Diamond & Emerald
	ISWCDEA Annual Meeting	
	Officer Election / Induction of Officers	
	Service Awards Presentation	

*Have a wonderful Holiday Season and a safe trip home.*

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

-ISWCDEA

# Soil And Water Hosts Soil Judging



Thursday, Oct. 22, was the pits for three of the four Montgomery County FFA Chapters, plus two other schools from Section 15, as the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted the Montgomery County/Section 15 land usage/soil judging contest on Dave and Tammy Stieren's land near Farmersville.

"Soil and Water has always done a county contest and that was to prepare the schools for the section contest," Kris Reynolds of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District said. "Between our time and budget constraints and the schools not being able to travel as much, we've combined them in the past. Nokomis wasn't able to be here, but we've got the Section 15 schools, which is the west half of Montgomery County (Lincolnwood and Litchfield) and Hillsboro's here competing. We'll take the three county teams that are here and decide on the county winner.

The team scores were made up of the top five individual scorers from each school, with Lincolnwood beating out Litchfield and Hillsboro for this year's title. Lincolnwood FFA finished with 2316 points, while Litchfield FFA had 1715 and Hillsboro had 1105. Lincolnwood also won the Section 15 contest, beating out Highland, Jerseyville and Litchfield.

Individually, Lincolnwood students finished with six of the top ten scores in the county contest, while Litchfield had the other four.

To provide different experiences for the students, the contest usually rotates through different areas of the county.

"Last year we had to reschedule a couple times. You never know what you're going to get this time of year," Reynolds said of the contest, which was held near Fillmore last year. "If it's too early, the crops aren't out and you have trouble finding a location to host it."

According to Lincolnwood FFA advisor Kelli Black, the students evaluated the soil on such things as slope, organic material present, texture, structure and the way water is absorbed or runs off. The point of the judging is something at the forefront of the minds of most farmers - to see what is the value of the land.

Reynolds said that the contest also provides the students an opportunity to be more hands on with one of the most important aspects of farming.

"It's just good to get down and look. A lot of farmers don't take a look at what their soil actually looks like," Reynolds said. "There are six pits here and every one of them is just a little bit different than the other and we're within a half mile of each other."

Soil evaluations like these could also save farmers money when it comes to tiling land. Reynolds said that some landowners don't take into account the type of soil they have before determining the spacing of tile, just putting as much in the ground as possible.

"A lot of people need to look at soil types to determine spacing," Reynolds said. "We have a lot of charts and drainage calculators (at the Soil and Water District). All of the soil has been mapped. Dana Grantham was here earlier. He's a retired soil scientist from Butler and did a lot of the original mapping in the 60s all over Illinois. He'll tell you that they're pretty close on a lot of stuff."

Ultimately, the soil maps, the drainage calculators and the land usage contests are all part of the district's mission to preserve the land and help farmers in Montgomery County.

In January, the district, the sixth Soil and Water Conservation District to form in Illinois, will celebrate its 75th anniversary with its annual meeting, where they will recognize the top finishers from Thursday's land usage contest as well.

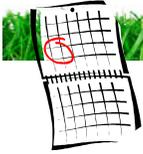
**Written by: Kyle Herschelmann—The Journal News**

[http://www.thejournal-news.net/news/local\\_news/soil-and-water-hosts-soil-judging/article\\_7e0bbb18-7dde-11e5-bd96-eb5c666f1c5c.html](http://www.thejournal-news.net/news/local_news/soil-and-water-hosts-soil-judging/article_7e0bbb18-7dde-11e5-bd96-eb5c666f1c5c.html)



## *Soil Judging, Land Use*

Members of the Lincolnwood, Hillsboro and Litchfield FFA Chapters joined students from Jerseyville and Highland on Thursday, Oct. 22, at the Section 15/Montgomery County soil judging/land use competition, presented by the Montgomery County Soil and Water District. Above, from left are Litchfield's Ty Durbin, who finished tenth in the Montgomery County standings, Lincolnwood's Bryce Webb and Lincolnwood's Lindsay Hendricks.



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- **Veterans Day**—November 11th—AISWCD Office Closed
- **Thanksgiving Holiday**—November 26th and 27th—AISWCD Office Closed

### 2015 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- **December 2015 Quarterly Boards** - December 7th and 8th
- **Christmas Party** - December 7th

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## IL ALL Email

It can not be stressed enough on how important it is for SWCD employees and directors to be on the Illinois All email system. Many important emails come through this system daily. We understand that directors do not want all of the emails and that is why a Director email was set up.

Please, as a courtesy, remember to not “reply all” when responding to emails on IL ALL. This email system has members from AISWCD, SWCDs, Directors, and Partners.

If you are a director please consider signing up for either email.

Please share this information with any new staff or directors that come to your SWCD.

#### **Benefits of IL ALL:**

- Emails from ISWCDEA
- Emails from NACD forwarded by Kelly Thompson
- Dues invoices are sent out through this email and you would know when they are expected back to AISWCD.
- Annual Meeting information
- Legislative Day information
- Quarterly Board updates and board packets

#### **Subscribe to IL ALL email:**

[il.all-subscribe@aiswcd.org](mailto:il.all-subscribe@aiswcd.org)

When the email pops up to subscribe, all you have to do is type “subscribe” in the subject or memo line and send. You will receive a confirmation email back from our provider.

#### **To Unsubscribe from IL ALL email:**

[il.all-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org](mailto:il.all-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org)

Follow the same directions as above but in the subject line type “unsubscribe.”

**Subscribe to Director Email:** [Director-subscribe@aiswcd.org](mailto:Director-subscribe@aiswcd.org)

**Unsubscribe to Director Email:** [Director-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org](mailto:Director-unsubscribe@aiswcd.org)

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

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