

Soil Health Week 2025

March 3rd - 9th

*Celebrating our state's most
precious resource*



**Soil is the foundation of all life.
It performs several vital functions in the natural environment:**

- sustains diverse plant life, from crop ground and pasture to woodlands, prairies, savannah's and wetlands
- supports diverse wildlife habitat, fungi and bacteria, both above and below the ground surface
- regulates water flow through the soil, dependent on soil composition, soil structure and the plant community
- stores and cycles nutrients through cation exchange; and earthworms, nematodes and various microorganisms in the soil
- it is a natural filter of pollutants, providing microbes a home to perform the natural degradation and immobilization of pollutants before they can get into our groundwater resources
- provides support to homes, roads and other buildings and infrastructure

For more information about soil health week, or soil health in general, go to our Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation District's website at www.aiswcd.org or the USDA website at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/soils/soil-health>.

Conserving Our Land Today For Tomorrow

The Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District is a locally operated unit of government functioning under Illinois Law.
Our purpose is to promote the protection, maintenance, improvement and wise use of the soil, water and related resources within the District.
Est. 1940



Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), established in 1937 under the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District Act, are local units of government. The Act gives SWCD'S the responsibility to provide technical information to individuals and groups on methods of soil and water conservation and to provide natural resource inventory information on properties slated for zoning changes. The Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation was formed in 1940 and is a locally operated unit of government functioning under Illinois Law. Our purpose is to promote the protection, maintenance, improvement and wise use of the soil, water and related resources within the District.

Who develops the policies of the Winnebago County SWCD?

The Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District is a public body made up of citizens concerned with the protection of our natural resources. It is governed by a five-member board of directors elected by District landowners and residents. This Board of Directors, along with the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) develop annual and long range plans that direct the activities of the District and NRCS.

Who funds the SWCD?

Districts have no taxing authority. Funding is provided by the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA). Districts offer several programs and services which supplement IDOA funding. The additional funding is utilized for operation expenses and education programs.

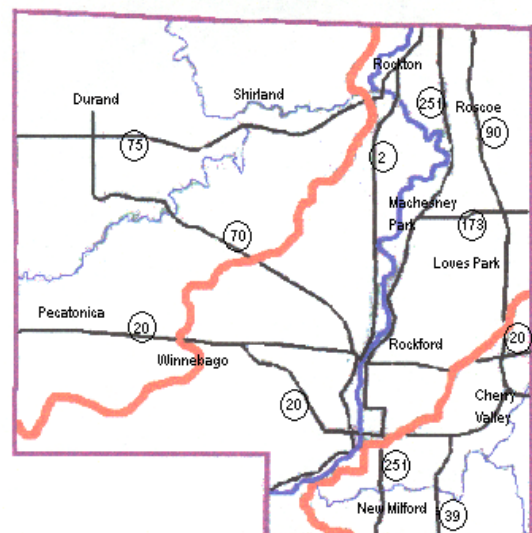
Melisa Long
Horizons Editor

Inside this Issue	Page
Soil Health Week 2025	Cover
Director Election Results	2
Fish Sale/Tree Sale	3
FY 2024 Financial Report	4
IDOA Launches New I-Cover Program	5
PFC - Cost Share Funds Available	6
Seed Mixes Available	7
National Groundwater Awareness Week	8
Home Compost Bins	9
WCSWCD - Poster Contest	10
Horizons Sponsors	11
Rain Barrel Sale	11

Director Election Results

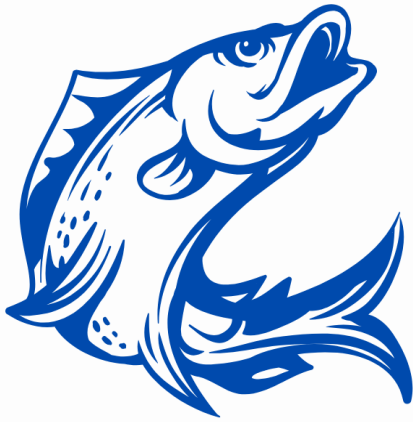
On Tuesday, January 14, the Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District held its District Director election.

Suzanne Bates of Rockton and Jim Morrison of Winnebago were on the ballot. Each were elected for a two-year term on our board of directors and will begin their term on March 3, 2025.



Pond Stocking

Fish Sale



*regular bluegill, hybrid bluegill, redear, channel
catfish, black crappie, largemouth bass,
fathead minnow & triploid grass carp*

ORDER DEADLINE - April 4

Call the office at (815) 965-2392, Ext. 3 or
go to www.winnebagoSWCD.org for a brochure.

Order pick-up - April 24 at 8:00 a.m.

TREE SALE

ORDER NOW
Supplies are limited!

SHADE TREES, EVERGREENS AND SHRUBS
TREE ACCESSORY ITEMS
RAIN BARRELS
CONSERVATION BOOKS

BROCHURES AVAILABLE AT:

WWW.WINNEBAGOSWCD.ORG

(815) 965-2392, EXT. 3



Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District

FY 2024 Financial Report

ASSETS	
Cash	\$323,274
Accounts Receivable	\$37,345
Fixed (building, land & vehicles)	\$182,813
Total Assets	\$543,432

LIABILITIES	
Liabilities	\$6,556
Total Liabilities	\$6,556

RESTRICTED PROGRAMS	
Partners For Conservation (PFC)	\$57,223
<i>(State cost-share program - FY23 & FY24)</i>	
WC Conservation Fund	\$27,089
<i>(scholarships, education & easement protection)</i>	
Total Restricted	\$84,312

GENERAL OPERATION INCOME	
State Government Support	\$87,010
Local Government Support	\$45,000
Interest	\$1,970
Sponsorship (Horizons)	\$1,820
Rentals (building)	\$68,719
Sales (trees, fish, PF seed & other sales)	\$38,794
Technical Service Agreements with other agencies	\$81,694
Reimbursements (pass-thru funds, trees)	\$47,413
Special Events	\$2,850
Other	\$321
Total Revenues	\$375,591

COST OF GOODS SOLD	
District Sales (trees, fish, PF seed & other sales)	\$26,307
Total of Cost of Goods	\$26,307
Gross Profit	\$349,284

GENERAL OPERATION EXPENSE	
Administration	\$221,459
Education & Promotion	\$6,469
Office Expenses	\$11,326
Professional Services	\$1,200
Membership Dues	\$5,186
Building Maintenance	\$81,580
Travel	\$1,783
Conferences/Training/Meals	\$1,667
Vehicle	\$2,942
Bank Charges	\$1,000
Insurance	\$4,860
Rent (copier)	\$4,201
Reimbursements	\$1,390
Program Expenses	\$3,065
Total Expenses	\$348,128
Net Income	\$1,154

SWCDS DELIVER



TRUSTED RESOURCES



SUSTAINERS



IMPLEMENTORS

SWCDs are local, trusted resources that provide a wide variety of services in rural and urban settings that include technical expertise and assistance towards natural resource management, conservation planning, outreach and education.

SWCDs work to protect Illinois' greatest assets - the rich, fertile soils and water resources of the state through strategic conservation efforts.

SWCDs implement conservation practices, project groundwater resources, conserve and restore wetlands/habitat and work with the other levels of government, homeowners and developers to manage Illinois' land in an environmentally sensitive manner.

IDOA LAUNCHES NEW I-COVER PROGRAM

SPRINGFIELD, IL – The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) secured a \$7 million USDA grant to launch I-COVER, the Infield Conservation for Operationalizing Vital Ecosystem Resilience Program, which offers cost-share/financial incentives to producers and landowners who are new adopters of cover crops or who utilize new techniques for earlier establishment of cover crops.

The multi-state USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant between Illinois, Indiana and Iowa establishes a three-year program for cover crops planted in 2025, 2026 and 2027.

"Research shows that cover crops improve soil health, reduce erosion, increase drought resistance, and reduce pests, weeds and diseases," said Jerry Costello II, Illinois Director of Agriculture. "Illinois is home to some of the most fertile soil in the world, and I encourage farmers to participate in this important new program to conserve and protect it."

Pre-enrollment and applications are available online. Visit the IDOA website at <https://agr.illinois.gov/> and select the I-COVER Program link on the home page. A couple of highlights of the program include:

- You must put cover crops on the same fields for 3 years
- The fields can NOT be enrolled in any other State or Federal Program (CSP, EQIP, or Fall Covers for Spring Saving); or private programs that may include federal support
- The fields must be "new" fields not previously planted to cover crops – OR – fields that had been cover cropped previously, but will be utilizing new techniques or methods of planting, to get earlier establishment (drones, robots, etc)
- NO full-width tillage can be done for cover crop termination in the fall
- The payment is 100% of the scenario costs, of the acreage planted. The scenario rates vary, based on the species number and type.
 - \$61.13/acre for one or more cover crop species, winter killed
 - \$85.65/acre for single cover crop species, spring terminated
 - \$105.40/acre for one or more cover crop species, spring terminated
- Applicants will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis program
 - Pre-enrollment is already underway (This is similar to the fall covers for spring savings program to allow the paperwork to get entered prior to the official program opening)
 - The program opens for submittal at 8 a.m. on March 3, and will take applications thru March 14
- If your application is selected, it will be forwarded to the District for all contracting and conservation planning
 - A copy of the CCC-902, FSA Subsidiary Report and Producer Farm Data, or proof of control of the land will be needed
 - Job sheets will be filled out and supplied, including the: seed species, seeding rates and dates, methods of establishment and termination dates and methods
 - verify practice implementation in the fall, and assist with payment and reporting documents
- Program viability is subject to federal funds

If you have any questions, contact our office at 815-965-2392, Ext. 3.

Partners For Conservation (PFC) Cost Share Funds Available for YOUR Project



The Winnebago County SWCD is offering up to **75% cost-share assistance** to eligible county residents, organizations and businesses to complete conservation project on their property.

Funding is limited and funding decision will be based on ranking criteria. Filling out a S.T.A.R. (Saving Tomorrow's Agricultural Resources) form is also a requirement to receive funding for most practices.

Applications are available on our website or in the office.

Applications for spring projects are due March 28. Apply today!

For questions or to learn more, contact the Winnebago County SWCD by phone at (815) 965-2392, Ext. 3.



Popular Projects	Average Cost to Install*
Grassed Waterways	\$3,784.11-\$5,555.83/ac
Pollinator/Monarch Planting	\$253.59-1,014.95/ac
Cover Crops**	\$53.33-\$80.00/ac
No-Till/Strip-Till**	\$40.00/ac
Well Sealing	\$9.45-\$93.90/ft
Denitrifying Bioreactor**	\$79.46-\$95.22/cubic yard



Prices are subject to change
and limitations to
cost share may apply

** NLRS related practice

All projects must be completed in Winnebago County to be eligible for cost share.
For a complete list of eligible project, please contact the office.

SEED MIXES

AVAILABLE



- IL CRP Tallgrass (\$100/ac)
- IL CRP Shortgrass (\$100/ac)
- IL CRP Wet Shortgrass (\$110/ac)
- IL CRP Wet Tallgrass (\$115/ac)
- IL CRP HEL 5% Slope Shortgrass (\$130/ac)
- IL CRP HEL 5% Slope Tallgrass (\$130/ac)
- IL CRP Wildflowers Only (\$65/ac)
- IL CRP Plateau Tolerant Shortgrass or Tallgrass (\$115/ac)
- IL CRP CP21 Native Filter Strip (\$95/ac)
- IL CRP CP1 (\$41/ac)
- IL Wildlife Firebreak Mix (no grass) (\$40/ac)
- IL Wildlife Firebreak Mix (with grass) (\$41/ac)
- IL MCM Forb Only Inter-seeding (\$42/ac)
- IL MCM Grass and Forb Inter-seeding (\$42/ac)
- IL Basic Pollinator (\$125/ac)
- IL Pollinator Plus (\$175/ac)
- IL HEL Pollinator (\$210/ac)
- IL Wet Pollinator (\$235/ac)
- IL Monarch Pollinator (\$155/ac)
- IL MCM Pollinator Forb Only Inter-seeding (\$42/ac)
- Various Food Plot Seed Mixes

For additional seed mixes and a list of species in each mix visit www.PFHabitatStore.com.
To place an order, contact Katie Peterson at 815-965-2392, Ext. 3248 or email kwalswcd@comcast.net.





NATIONAL GROUNDWATER AWARENESS WEEK

March 9-15, 2025

More resources at www.wellowners.org



This annual observance is to highlight the responsible development, management and use of groundwater. It is a platform to promote policies impacting groundwater quality and supply. Groundwater advocates across the country also use this week to highlight any local water issues in their communities.

As more than 44% of the population depends on groundwater as a primary water source, developing an interest in the groundwater is of vital importance to both the health and economy of the country.

This week also serves as a reminder for water well owners to annually test, tend and treat their private water systems. It also encourages the inspections of all private water system components by a certified water well contractors, to ensure systems are operating correctly and producing safe and healthy water.

- ◆ According to the U.S. EPA, The average household's leaks can account for nearly 10,000 gallons of water wasted every year. In addition, 10 percent of homes have leaks that waste 90 gallons or more per day
- ◆ Of the estimated 29 billion gallons of water used daily by households in the United States, nearly 9 billion gallons, or 30 percent, is devoted to outdoor water use, according to EPA's WaterSense program. In the hot summer months, or in dry climates, a household's outdoor water use can be as high as 70 percent.
- ◆ The United States uses 82.3 billion gallons per day of fresh groundwater for public supply, private supply, irrigation, livestock, manufacturing, mining, thermoelectric power and other purposes, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Ten ways to protect and conserve groundwater

- 1) Go native - Use native plants in your landscape. They look great, and don't need much water or fertilizer. Also choose grass varieties for your lawn that are adapted for your region's climate, reducing the need for extensive watering or chemical applications.
- 2) Reduce chemical use - Use fewer chemicals around your home and yard, and make sure to dispose of them properly — don't dump them on the ground!
- 3) Manage waste - Properly dispose of potentially toxic substances like unused chemicals, pharmaceuticals, paint, motor oil and other substances. Many communities hold household hazardous waste collections or sites — contact your local health department to find one near you.
- 4) Don't let it run - Shut off the water when you brush your teeth or while shaving, and don't let it run while waiting for it to get cold. Keep a pitcher of cold water in the fridge instead.
- 5) Fix the drip - Check all the faucets, fixtures, toilets and taps in your home for leaks and fix them right away, or install water conserving models.
- 6) Wash smarter - Limit yourself to just a five-minute shower, and challenge your family members to do the same! Also, make sure to only run full loads in the dish and clothes washers.
- 7) Water wisely - Water the lawn and plants during the coolest parts of the day, and only when they truly need it. Make sure you, your family and your neighbors obey any watering restrictions during dry periods.
- 8) Reduce, reuse and recycle - Reduce the amount of "stuff" you use and reuse what you can. Recycle paper, plastic, cardboard, glass, aluminum and other materials.
- 9) Natural alternatives - Use all natural/nontoxic household cleaners whenever possible. Materials such as lemon juice, baking soda, and vinegar make great cleaning products, are inexpensive and environmentally-friendly.
- 10) Learn and do more! - Get involved in water education! Learn more about groundwater and share your knowledge with others.

Information from the National Groundwater Association



and



are selling

Home Compost Bins



\$65 each

Online Orders Only

Limited quantities available

www.KNIB.org

Proceeds further advance the missions of both organizations: protecting land, air and water and promoting environmental education and recycling

Order online beginning March 17, 2025

LOCAL PICK UP available after April 24;

pick-up instructions and class opportunities will be emailed after purchase

- Large capacity: 17 cu. ft./ holds 125 gallons
- Dimensions: 30" h x 32" diameter
- Wide opening at the top - easy to add, view, and manage materials
- Tight, well-vented lockable lid; deters pests and won't blow away
- Sliding doors on each side to monitor and harvest compost
- Made in North America of sturdy, lightweight, 100% recycled plastic
- Not sold in retail stores
- High-quality, two-piece construction of sides allows for easy transporting (fits in most trunks/back seats)
- SIMPLE to set up, EASY to use, empty and move
- Includes Home Composting Cookbook

Questions? Email: Corinne@KNIB.org



WINNEBAGO COUNTY SWCD

2025 POSTER CONTEST

Submit by May 9, 2025 Must be a resident of Winnebago County and meet the following perimeters:

Theme: "Home is Where the Habitat is"

Digital Poster

Age Groups

- 7th - 9th Grade
- 10th -12th Grade

The poster must be a digital design and can be created in any platform. The design should be 8.5 X 11 in size and at least 300DPI. Files should be in JPEG or PNG format.

Hand Drawn Poster

Age Groups:

- K - 1st Grade
- 2nd - 3rd Grade
- 4th - 6th Grade
- 7th - 9th Grade
- 10th - 12th Grade

Any media can be used (paint, crayons, stickers, etc.) to create a flat poster. Hard copies can be dropped off or mailed to the office and digital pictures or scans should be PDF format.

Additional Assistance Poster

Additional assistance posters follow the same guidelines as hand drawn posters with the same age groups. This category supports students who may need extra assistance, promoting creativity and advocacy for natural resource conservation.

Braille Poster

The Braille posters contest is available for blind and low-vision students in K-12. Braille labels or elements can be used & can be added with a Braille embosser or Braille typewriter.



What makes a good poster?

- Attracts attention
- Is simple & concise - Don't try to include too many ideas
- Uses colors & white space effectively
- Text is large enough to be easily read
- Don't use all words or all illustrations
- Research the theme topic & brainstorm ideas

Judging will be based on conservation message, visual effectiveness, originality and universal appeal.



For more information visit: <http://nacdn.org/news-and-events/stewardship-week/>

Winners will have a chance to compete in the state competition and possibly the national competition!

Respective release forms and applications must be filled out. Contact the Winnebago County SWCD for application forms or more information at 815-965-2392 Ext. 3248 or kwalswcd@comcast.net.

HORIZON SPONSORS - 2025

The following businesses are sponsoring your Soil and Water Conservation District.



Ann Marie Cain, FBCM
Farm Bureau Manager
(815) 962-0653

wbfbmanager@winnebago-boonefarmbureau.org
www.winnebago-boonefarmbureau.org

Like us on Facebook!



Phone: 815.248.2101
Direct: 815.650.2765
Mobile: 815.985.4518
Fax: 815.248.2972

Brett Frederick

Executive Vice President
- Lending

1005 Cameron Drive
Durand, IL 61024

bfrederick@solutions.bank

solutions.bank

TO BECOME A "HORIZONS" SPONSOR CONTACT THE DISTRICT OFFICE AT (815) 965-2392, EXT. 3



Rain Barrel Sale



55 gallon (recycled) - plastic rain barrels
colors available: terra cotta, black & grey



ORDER TODAY

\$75 each or 2+ for \$70 each
(815) 965-2392, Ext. 3246

Save money & precious groundwater supplies!






Winnebago County SWCD

4833 Owen Center Rd.
Rockford, IL 61101-6007

Office Hours
Monday - Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Follow us 

www.winnebagoswcd.org

SWCD STAFF

Soil & Water Conservation District

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Dennis Anthony
danthonyswcd@comcast.net

ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR - Melisa Long
mlongswcd@comcast.net

RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST - Katie Peterson
kwalswcd@comcast.net

NRCS STAFF

National Resource Conservation Service

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST - Josh Franks
josh.franks@usda.gov

SOIL CONSERVATIONIST - Colton Asche
colton.asche@usda.gov

IDOA STAFF

Illinois Department of Agriculture

CONSERVATION PLANNER - Hunter Cejka
hunter.cejka@il.nacdnet.net

NGRREC STAFF

National Great Rivers Research Education Outreach

LAND CONSERVATION SPC. - Heather Herakovich
hherakovich@lc.edu

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Justin Krohn - Chairman
Paul Beuth - Vice - Chairman
Jim Morrison - Secretary/Treasurer
Mike Leick
Larry McPheron

ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS

Judy Barnard
George David Mullen
Dwayne Proctor
Harlan Tipton

Monthly board meetings are held the last Tuesday of the month at the Soil & Water Conservation District Office. Call the office for meeting times and dates.

Meetings are open to the public and interested citizens are encouraged to attend.

Additional details on the SWCD District can be found on our website www.winnebagoswcd.org.

PF STAFF

Pheasants Forever

FARM BILL BIOLOGIST - Lucas Wilson
lwilson@pheasantsforever.org

NWTF STAFF

National Wild Turkey Federation

FORESTER - Connor Evans
cevans@nwft.net

Follow Us on Social Media

Stay Connected for Our Latest News & Updates



on facebook @winnebagoswcdil



webpage: winnebagoswcd.org



All Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Natural Resource Conservation Service programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap. The Winnebago County SWCD operates in accordance with the USDA policy. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against should write to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250.