



## *2025 Scholarship Recipient Chloie Riesen*

Chloie Riesen has been awarded the Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District Scholarship, in recognition of her dedication to environmental stewardship. With a passion for conservation, Chloie has volunteered countless hours with local organizations, assisting in various environmental initiatives such as habitat restoration, native plant preservation, and invasive species management. These experiences have fueled her aspiration to pursue a career as an environmental engineer at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, where she hopes to continue making a positive impact on the environment for future generations.



*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**

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## **POLLINATOR SPOTLIGHT**



### **Hummingbirds:**

Hummingbirds are only found in the western hemisphere, and they are amazing pollinators. These birds have long, slender bills and straw-like tongues that allow them to drink nectar from brightly colored flowers. Hummingbirds drink up to two times their body weight daily, and as they drink from plants sticky nectar and pollen gets stuck to their beak/their feathers, so as they move from plant to plant, they carry and transfer pollen. When doing so, they inadvertently transport seeds which stick to their feathers and fall off along their journey.

Source: [Severson Dells Nature Center](https://www.seversondells.com/blog/spring-pollinators)  
[www.seversondells.com/blog/spring-pollinators](https://www.seversondells.com/blog/spring-pollinators)

# DISTRICT SPRING SALES

**Over 3,000 trees planted  
(evergreens, shrubs & shade trees)**

**TREE  
SALE**

Each year the District sells bare root shade trees, evergreens and shrub seedlings in effort to provide energy conservation and/or habitat cover for wildlife.

In addition to energy conservation and wildlife habitat, trees serve several other purposes. Ten mature trees remove approximately 5 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere annually. Trees dilute polluted air with fresh oxygen. One hundred mature trees catch about 250,000 gallons of rainwater each year. Trees planted appropriately can save up to 25% of annual cooling costs and save 10 to 25% of energy used for heating. In 40 years, the average tree returns \$2.70 in benefits for every \$1 of investment.



**2026 TREE BROCHURES  
WILL BE EMAILED DECEMBER 2025**

**Pond Stocking**  
*Fish Sale*



829 fish sold + 63 lbs. of fathead minnows

(regular bluegill, hybrid bluegill, redear, channel catfish, black crappie & largemouth bass)

**2026 FISH BROCHURES  
WILL BE EMAILED/MAILED - FEBRUARY 2026**



# POLLINATOR PALOOZA

Severson Dells hosts free events the first Saturday of each month called “Science Saturdays” to provide a different nature themed activity for guests of all ages. The month of May they hosted Pollinator Palooza which was geared around celebrating all of our pollinators. The hundreds of attendees got to engage in crafts, games, live music, giveaways and hands on activities surrounding pollination. Winnebago County SWCD along with our National Great Rivers Research Education Center (NGRREC) partner had a table to provide bumble bee headbands and a prairie soil display. We also had a variety of handouts about pollinators for kids and adults to take home to keep learning. The event was made possible with funding from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, Nicor Gas, United for Literacy and the community partners and volunteers that shared their time, talent and activities.

BIRDS, BATS AND BUTTERFLIES ARE ALL  
SOME OF OUR POLLINATING FRIENDS.

ABOUT 75% OF ALL FLOWERING PLANTS  
AND 35% OF THE WORLD'S  
FOOD CROPS RELY ON POLLINATORS.

POLLINATORS HELP TO PRODUCE NEARLY  
\$18 BILLION WORTH OF PRODUCTS IN  
THE U.S. ANNUALLY.



## 2025

## Sediment & Erosion Control Workshop



The Winnebago County SWCD hosted a workshop on March 6 at the Northern Illinois University – Rockford campus. The purpose of the workshop was to provide technical information and resources to the development community, including engineers, consultants and construction managers. Speakers from the private and public sector covered a wide range of topics including an overview of the IEPA permit program, and the utilization of the Illinois Urban Manual. There were case studies on area bioswales projects that were constructed; and the

removal of an old railroad bridge over the Fox River. Technical information was provided on the different products available for slope stabilization; and the advancements in filter socks technology, including the material used in the socks, and the multiple usages.

# 4H

## Tree Planting Activity



The University of Illinois Extension's 4-H Program, along with the Forest Preserves of Winnebago County and Winnebago County Soil & Water Conservation District, partnered to host a tree planting event at the Laona Heights Forest Preserve on Saturday, April 12, 2025.

Winnebago County 4-H program coordinator Rob Wiener welcomed the group, and led a discussion on the benefits that oak trees provide for the ecosystem. "In the past, oaks comprised a much higher proportion of Illinois' forests than they do today. Oaks are such a valuable species for many types of wildlife, so this is an important project to take part in," said Wiener.

Forest Preserve stewardship coordinator Keith Krey demonstrated to the group of around 25 youth and parents the process for planting the three-gallon potted oak trees. Participants learned how to carefully plant the trees into pre-dug holes, and then fill with mulch and apply tree mats. The event is part of the Oak Recovery and Tree Planting Educational Project. The project, currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, has the goal of restoring oak forests and savannahs across the state, as well as providing educational opportunities.



## October is Oak Awareness Month - "Oaktober"

# HORIZON SPONSORS - 2025

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



**WINNEBAGO-  
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Durand, IL 61024  
bfrederick@solutions.bank

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



## RAIN BARRELS

*Save money & precious groundwater supplies!*

55 gallon recycled plastic rain barrels

colors available: terra cotta, black & grey



To place an order call the Winnebago County SWCD office  
(815) 965-2392, Ext. 3.  
winnebagoswcd.org



**\$75 each  
or  
2+ \$70 each**



# FREE Training

Help Your  
Community During  
An Emergency

## LEARN YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



**SATURDAY**  
**MAY 17, 2025**  
9:00AM - 4:00PM



**Winnebago County Health Department**  
555 North Court Street  
Rockford, IL 61103

**Open To All Adults In  
Winnebago County**

This training will prepare you to support  
youth during a difficult time.



**Winnebago County**



**Mental Health  
FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
MENTAL WELLBEING



**Sign-up  
Before  
May 10**



Training made possible with funding from MRC IL



Learn about the magic of compost! Create your own adventure with activities including:

- ⇒ Storytime for littles and a soil sensory activity with the South Beloit Public Library (10:00 a.m.)
- ⇒ Community compost and vermicomposting exploration with Nettle Curbside Compost
- ⇒ Compost in a bag for kids with Sustain Rockford
- ⇒ Resources for environmental engagement with League of Women Voters of Beloit
- ⇒ Demonstration of using compost in the garden with Farmers Rising

This event is free for the community - thanks to sponsorship from Batterman. Please RSVP at <http://natureattheconfluence.com/event/compost-at-the-confluence>.

Following the event, the South Beloit Public Library will be hosting games at M & M Dari Ripple from 12:00-1:00 p.m. to celebrate the start of summer reading!

## 2025 Wildflower Walkabout Series

Join Severson Dells and the Natural Land Institute staff and volunteers on an exploration of many of the local wildflower hotspot. Wildflower Walks showcase what is currently in bloom at various woodland and prairie preserves around Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties. All walks will begin at 6:00 p.m. No fee for the walks, but membership in Severson Dells and/or the Natural Land Institute is encouraged.

Registration for all of the walks will be required through EventBrite. Each walk has two leaders, and each group will allow reservations for 20 people. Please register for a maximum of five walks. For more information, please call 815/335-2915 (SD) or 815/964-6666 (NLI).

- \* Tuesday, May 13 - Piscasaw Fen
- \* Wednesday, May 21 - Pecatonica Wetlands Forest Preserve
- \* Tuesday, May 27 - Beach Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve
- \* Wednesday, June 4 - Harlem Hills Prairie Nature Preserve
- \* Tuesday, June 10 - Stephen and Deidre Nardi Equine Prairie Preserve
- \* Wednesday, June 18 - Pecatonica Ridge Prairie
- \* Wednesday, June 24 - Searls Prairie Nature Preserve







- clean clothing
- pillows
- bedding
- fabric
- purses
- shoes,
- belts
- soft-sided luggage
- stuffed toys

# Spring

## CLOTHING DRIVE

Sat. May 10 9 - noon



**Locations:**

Our Savior's Luthern Church  
3300 Rural St. Rockford

Blain's Farm & Fleet  
4725 W. State St. • Rockford  
4567 E. Rockton Rd. • Roscoe  
7300 E. Riverside • Loves Park

St. John's United Church of Christ  
401 N. Main St. • Belvidere

Our thanks to:





JUNE 21, 2025

6:30-11:00 A.M.

LUCKY DAIRY FARM

1704 Kelly Road, Caledonia, IL



TO BENEFIT: Scholarships and



Breakfast consisting of all-you-can-eat pancakes, whole hog sausage, applesauce, ice cream, milk and coffee will be served from 6:30 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Activities include horse drawn wagon rides (weather permitting), barnyard animals, children's activities and games, 50/50 raffle, antique tractor and farm machinery display, tractor drive/ride (\$5/person), The Matthew Wundrow Band and more.


Adult Ticket - \$10  
 Child Ticket - (ages 6-12) - \$5  
 Child (Ages 5 and under) - Free  
 (CASH ONLY)



## 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](http://www.winnebagoSWCD.org)

### **SWCD STAFF**

Soil & Water Conservation District

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR** - Dennis Anthony  
[danthonyswcd@comcast.net](mailto:danthonyswcd@comcast.net)

**ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR** - Melisa Long  
[mlongswcd@comcast.net](mailto:mlongswcd@comcast.net)

**RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST** - Katie Peterson  
[kwalswcd@comcast.net](mailto:kwalswcd@comcast.net)

### **NRCS STAFF**

National Resource Conservation Service

**DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST** - Josh Franks  
[josh.franks@usda.gov](mailto:josh.franks@usda.gov)

**SOIL CONSERVATIONIST** - Colton Asche  
[colton.asche@usda.gov](mailto:colton.asche@usda.gov)

### **IDOA STAFF**

Illinois Department of Agriculture

**CONSERVATION PLANNER** - Hunter Cejka  
[hunter.cejka@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:hunter.cejka@il.nacdnet.net)

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Justin Krohn - Chairman  
Paul Beuth - Vice - Chairman  
Jim Morrison - Secretary/Treasurer  
Sue Bates  
Mike Leick

### **ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS**

Judy Barnard  
Larry McPheron  
George David Mullen  
Dwayne Proctor  
Harlan Tipton  
Tom Walsh

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.

### **NWTF STAFF**

National Wild Turkey Federation

**FORESTER** - Connor Evans  
[cevans@nwft.net](mailto:cevans@nwft.net)

### **NGRREC STAFF**

National Great Rivers Research Education Outreach

**LAND CONSERVATION SPC.** - Heather Herakovich  
[hherakovich@lc.edu](mailto:hherakovich@lc.edu)

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on facebook @winnebagoSWCDil



webpage: [winnebagoSWCD.org](http://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.