

HORIZONS

VOLUME 52, ISSUE 3

SUMMER 2025

Cover Crop Field Day

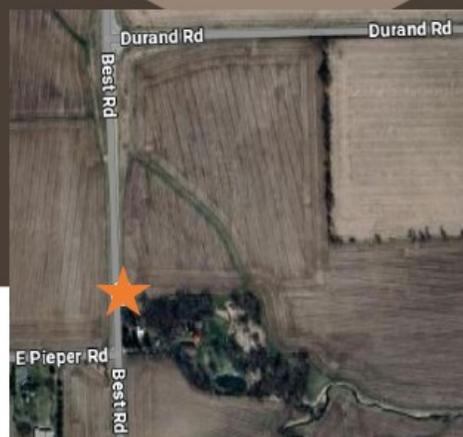
Wednesday
September 10th
10am-1pm

Lunch
Provided

Location:

Southeast corner of
Best Rd & Durand Rd

42.433950, -89.380316



Door Prizes

CCA Credits available

Cover crop topics covered: overview • species & selection
• drone application demonstration •

RSVP by 9/1 → 815-965-2392 ext.3248 or kwalswcd@comcast.net



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



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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TREE SALE BROCHURES

December

evergreens, shade trees & shrubs

SPRING FISH SALE

February

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

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.

Applications are available on our website or in the office.

Apply today!

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



| Popular Projects | Average Cost to Install* |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Grassed Waterways | \$4,029.17-\$4,990.07/ac |
| Pollinator/Monarch Planting | \$308.77-\$1,206.26/ac |
| Cover Crops | \$61.13-\$105.40/ac |
| No-Till/Strip-Till | \$40.00/ac |
| Well Sealing | \$11.32-\$108.95/ft |



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

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.



Est. 2021

TRACTOR TREK



Drive for Ag Education

Saturday, September 13, 2025

Antique tractor enthusiasts are invited to join us as we enjoy a leisurely ride through the rolling hills of Northwest Winnebago County and Northeast Stephenson County. Enjoy a lunch break at Lake Summerset.

Registrations received by Friday, August 29th will be eligible for a cash drawing of \$100.00. Drawing will be held the day of the event.

For more information, visit:
winnebago-boonefarmbureau.org/foundation-events



VOLUNTEER

Whether you're looking for community service hours or just want to help out, we've got the perfect opportunity for you!



Rockford Recycle Center
4665 Hydraulic Road
Rockford, IL 61109

Volunteers help unload cars and sort recycle materials into proper receptacles. This is an outside facility, so please dress for weather.

This location is open on Tuesdays from 2pm to 5pm; and on Saturdays from 9am to noon. Volunteers are needed 30 minutes prior to the center opening.

Contact Roxanne • 779-210-8656 • roxanne@knib.org



Fall Clothing Drive

Saturday, September 6, 2025
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

We accept the following (all items must be clean):
(wearable or not), pillows, bedding, fabric, purses, shoes, belts,
soft-sided luggage and stuffed toys.

This program is in partnership with Goodwill Industries of Northern IL.

Locations:
Our Savior's Church
3300 Rural St. - Rockford

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



www.knib.org



2025 Transect Survey Results

In late May and early June, staff from the Winnebago County SWCD and USDA – NRCS office conducted the County transect survey. This is the first time we have conducted the survey since 2018. Prior to that, we had done it annually or semi-annually since 1995. The transect is done by taking the same specific route through the County and look at specific points in a field. During the initial survey, the soil type, site-specific slope and slope length, and other soil information were documented. During the survey, we documented the current crop, the type of tillage done and corresponding residue level, and the previous crop. We also look for any signs of ephemeral erosion, and if a cover crop had been planted. This is done to monitor local and statewide tillage trends and resulting soil loss predictions. There was a total of 696 points in either corn, soybeans, small grains or hay, with some points in the CRP program.

Some highlights from the survey since 2018

- There were 386 points that were planted to corn, which is about the same as in 2018. The number of points planted with no-till practices increased from 33.7% to 40.9%. This mostly came from mulch till acres, which fell from 29.5% to 19.8%. Fields planted with reduced or conventional tillage was about the same. The average soil loss for fields planted to corn was 2.6 tons/acre. If all the corn fields were planted with conventional tillage, the soils loss would have been 5.1 tons/acre. That means that conservation tillage and residue management is cutting soil loss by half!
- Soybeans did not see many changes. There were less points this year (214 compared to 250 in 2018). No-till and mulch till accounted for about 85% of the points surveyed. The average soil loss for fields planted to soybeans was 1 ton/acre. If all the soybean fields were planted with conventional tillage, the soil loss would have been 3.9 tons/acre, so no-till, vertical tillage and residue management is reducing soil loss by almost 75%!
- The number of small grain fields went up, as there were 25 points noted, and it was assumed that most of these points were planted with no-till practices, with soil lost <1.0 ton/acre
- We tried to identify if a cover crop was utilized last fall. It was noted on almost 9% of the corn and soybeans points. This compares to just 1.5% of the points in 2018, a 600% increase.

Regarding overall soil loss and erosion

- Most of our soils have what is called a “Tolerable” soil loss of 5 tons/acre. We do have soils that are shallow to bedrock where that tolerable level is only 1 or 3 tons/acre.
- This year we maintained a “tolerable” soil loss level on 91% of the points
- About 7.3% of the point had a soil loss in the 1-2 “T” level.
- There were 11 points (about 1.7%) having erosion >2 “T”. It is assumed these points were ones that were farmed with conventional tillage on sloping ground, or on soils that are shallow to bedrock and have that very low tolerable soil loss. Those points will require increased conservation practices, such as the use of cover crops, or adding small grains or hay to the rotation, to get to the “T” level.
- The use of cover crops on 9% of the points was not calculated in the soil loss equation (based on the formula used), so that benefit is not reflected in the results
- The number of sites that had signs of ephemeral erosion was 3%, compared to 6% in 2018

Below are some tables showing the trends for the last 15 years

| Corn | | | | | Soybeans | | | | | | |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|----------|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Tillage Type | 2009 | 2011 | 2015 | 2018 | 2025 | Tillage Type | 2009 | 2011 | 2015 | 2018 | 2025 |
| No-Till | 13% | 11% | 25% | 34% | 41% | No-Till | 58% | 48% | 55% | 53% | 48% |
| Mulch Till | 40% | 27% | 10% | 30% | 20% | Mulch Till | 22% | 25% | 27% | 36% | 36% |
| Reduced Till | 33% | 32% | 40% | 27% | 29% | Reduced Till | 17% | 18% | 16% | 10% | 15% |
| Conventional | 14% | 30% | 11% | 10% | 11% | Conventional | 4% | 9% | 2% | 1% | 1% |
| # of points | 431 | 411 | 400 | 386 | 394 | # of points | 188 | 200 | 226 | 250 | 214 |

| | | Erosion Levels – Meeting T | | | | |
|---------|--|----------------------------|------|------|-------|------|
| T Level | | 2009 | 2011 | 2015 | 2018 | 2025 |
| Below T | | 91% | 90% | 91% | 92.5% | 91% |
| 1-2 T | | 7% | 8% | 7% | 5.9% | 7.3% |
| > 2T | | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1.6% | 1.7% |

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| No-Till – Corn | >40% following soybeans |
| Soybeans | >80% following corn |
| Mulch Till | 30-50+% residue remaining |
| Reduced Tillage | 15-30% residue remaining |
| Conventional Tillage | <15% residue remaining |

HORIZON SPONSORS - 2025

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



**WINNEBAGO-
BOONE
FARM
BUREAU®**

Ann Marie Cain, FBCM
Farm Bureau Manager
(815) 962-0653
wbfbmanager@winnebago-boonefarmbureau.org
www.winnebago-boonefarmbureau.org
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**SOLUTIONS
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A better idea. A better *Solution.*

Brett Frederick
Executive Vice President
- Lending

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

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 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**



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

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ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR - Melisa Long
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RESOURCE CONSERVATIONIST - Katie Peterson
kwalshswcd@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

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

NGRREC STAFF

National Great Rivers Research Education Outreach

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

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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.