



Stephenson County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Spring 2009

STEPHENSON SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

66th ANNUAL MEETING & Luncheon

The Stephenson Soil & Water Conservation District Board wishes to recognize several people who have done outstanding conservation work in the county. The awards were presented at the Stephenson SWCD 66th Annual meeting held at 12:00 noon on Monday, February 2, 2009 at the 4-Seasons in Freeport. The meeting began with a luncheon followed by the business meeting, election of two directors, awards presentations and presentation of Antarctica Expedition: Lake Untersee & Untersee Oasis by Sindy Main, a teacher at Freeport Junior High School.

Sindy was part of an international team of distinguished scientists, teachers and explorers from the United States, Russia, Austria, and New Zealand. The team spent six weeks in Antarctica, where they studied the icy ecosystems of the Untersee Oasis, including the perennially ice-covered Lake Untersee. Sindy hopes to use her experience on the ice to create project-based activities with the students of Stephenson County and surrounding areas.

Sindy has taught for more than 25 years in Dakota, Lena, and Freeport public schools. Sindy has been recognized as an Illinois Master Teacher.

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New Pickup Date Set for 2009 Tree-Sale...



Please make a note that the 2009 Tree Sale pickup date has changed to Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at Stephenson Co. Fairgrounds on South Walnut Road.

NEW DIRECTORS

The following individuals have been voted in to serve two terms for the Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District:



Barb Klinger seeks another two-year term. She has served on the Board for one term as Director. She and her husband, Mark, farm 500 acres and milk 150 cows in the Pecatonica area. They raise all their heifers and grow corn, soybeans and hay to feed the animals. Barb and Mark have two daughters, Rachel, 18 and Stephanie 15. Rachel is in her first year at Highland Community College studying in agriculture. Stephanie is a sophomore at Pecatonica High School where she plays volleyball and basketball. So when not doing chores, Barb a sports mom.



Bruce Baumgartner is seeking his first two-year term on the board, for the Stephenson County Soil & Water Conservation District. Bruce and his wife Kathy farm 900 acres southwest of Lena, Illinois. They grow corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. Bruce has practiced ridge tillage for many years and will be converting to strip tillage starting in the spring of 2009. They have steers on their pastureland and finish them in their feedlot. Bruce and Kathy have three children: Brian, who is involved in the family farming operations, Kera presently working at the Rachuy House in Stockton, Illinois, and Jodi, employed with the Ogle County Extension Service.

2008 SPECIAL AWARD: FRIEND OF THE DISTRICT **Shelia Hooper**



Shelia Hooper. Born 9/27/1939. Just say **“older than dirt,”** which is a good thing because **SOIL** is more than ***“just dirt”***. **Right?**

Shelia is a proud graduate of Aquin High School. Continuing her education at Rockford College, she obtained Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees. She also continued on with post-graduate education courses.

She taught for many years in public and private schools. In 1973 she became the first woman to be elected to the Freeport City Council. Since 1977 she has been as Freeport Township Supervisor, and found herself serving for many years on the Illinois State Board of Township Supervisors.

One of her proud achievements has been to write and establish the first Workfare and Community Work and Training Programs for the State of Illinois.

For five years Sheila has served her community on the Stephenson County Board. During this time she became acquainted with the Conservation District, which asked her to serve as a liaison between it and the County Board. She has been part of the County Planning and Development Committee, advocating the recognition of agriculture and conservation in Freeport and in Stephenson County as a whole. At County Board meetings she has championed the causes and goals of the Soil & Water District.

Shelia states, “I am grateful for the opportunity to serve the cause of conservation and agriculture. In my county position I have come to know and work with the Board & District staff.”

Please join me in thanking the “young at heart” Sheila Hooper for furthering the mission of the Soil & Water District.

2008 Special Award “Voice for Conservation”

Brad Hart

The Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District presents an award to an individual or group who had a positive impact on the conservation efforts of the Soil & Water District. We need to note their support and dedication in promoting agriculture and conservation in Stephenson County.

This year’s special award is given to Brad Hart, the news director for Big Radio’s WFPS-92.1 FM & WFRL-1570 AM.

Brad a native of Chicago. He graduated from Western Illinois University in Macomb, obtaining a degree in mass communication with a minor in political science. Brad moved to Freeport in 1981 and began his radio career area with WACI. In 1983 he accepted a broadcasting job in Rockford, later moved to suburban Milwaukee, and finally returned to this area in 1986. Brad has survived a number of ownership changes over the years in the Freeport area broadcast business.

Brad has always been supportive of the Soil & Water District. Whenever the District has asked Big Radio to promote activities and programs, Brad has never hesitated to do on-air sound-bites, interviews, and follow-up news stories. He has faithfully covered previous District annual meetings, interviewing audience member to get their feelings on agriculture and conservation in Stephenson County.

As you might hear our award winner say at the end of his daily news broadcasts: “I’m Brad Hart, Voice of Stephenson County, Kickin Country: K-92.” Now we can add Brad Hart-Voice for Stephenson County conservation.

CONSERVATION POSTER CONTEST



*Pictured Left to right:
Jesse Toepfer; Carly Neubauer*

The Conservation and Agricultural Partners Foundation coordinates the poster contest for the SWCD. The students were encouraged to design a poster with the theme, “Dig It-Secrets of Soil”. Poster topics included: the importance of soil in food production, soil availability, soil composition, prevention of soil erosion, formation of soil, and how the benefits of soil conservation have improved the lives of people in Stephenson County.

290 posters were submitted from 19 classrooms of seven different Stephenson County schools. Each student who participated in the contest will receive a white pine tree seedling in April.

The first place contest winners will have their posters submitted to the State Association for Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District’s Summer Conference Poster Contest this coming July.

This year’s winners are:

<u>Division</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Student</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
A (Kindergarten & Grade 1)	1 st place	Carly Neubauer	Open Bible	Mrs Wilkinson
	2 nd place	Starr Bertram	Open Bible	Mrs. Wilkinson
	3 rd place	Samantha Baumgarten	Open Bible	Mrs. Wilkinson
B (Grades 2 & 3)	1 st place	Jesse Toepfer	Tri County	Mrs. Bush
	2 nd place	Colton Lane	Tri County	Mrs. Bush
	3 rd place	Kelaiah Johnsey	Tri County	Mrs. Bush
C (Grades 4, 5, & 6)	1 st place	Marissa Baptiste	Aquin Elementry	Mrs. Johnson
	2 nd place	Brianna Kuberski	Pearl City	Mrs. Visel
	3 rd place	Clayton Lieb	Pearl City	Mrs. Byers

CONSERVATION HORIZON AWARD

Rick & Wendy Auer



Rick, Wendy and Thomas Auer

The Conservation Horizon Award is given to individuals who have had the courage to make changes to their farming operations, furthering the cause of good conservation. This year's recipients are Rick, Wendy, & Thomas Auer.

Rick began farming with his parents, Mary and the late Wallace Auer. In 1978 Rick went to a full-time farming schedule, involving 1,600 acres of corn and soybeans and a wean-to-finish hog operation that produces 7,000 market hogs annually. Rick constructed a mortality composting unit that is state-of-the art. He uses no-till in his crop production, and follows a certified nutrient management plan for efficient and safe use of animal waste. The Auer's are good stewards to the environment.

Son Thomas is 19 and a freshman at the University of Wisconsin-Platteville. On his college breaks and weekends he returns home to help with the farm operations.

The District is proud to name Rick, Wendy, & Thomas Auer as this year's winner of the Conservation Horizon Award..

Become an Earth Team Volunteer

As an Earth Team Volunteer, you'll work with professionals on conservation activities in your community. Whatever your talents or interests, there is a volunteer opportunity for you.

- Technical assistance is needed to plan, lay-out, and design conservation practices; to make natural resource inventories; and to improve wildlife habitat.
- Schools and community groups benefit from the conservation tours and exhibits that volunteers can organize.
- Taking photographs, writing articles, speaking to community groups, and producing artwork and publications are some of the opportunities available.
- Office support services include computer data entry, typing, filing, computer programming, and providing conservation information.

There are opportunities for everyone. Contact our office for more information on how you can become a volunteer.



Hello....

My name is Lorna Chezem and I am the new Administrative Coordinator at the Stephenson SWCD.

I am native of Stephenson County; and currently live in Ridott with my husband Kirk. I have one daughter, Kristina a registered nurse and a son-in-law Michael in law enforcement. I am the co-chair for the survivor committee of the Stephenson County Relay for life.

When not working or in meetings I enjoy spending time with family, cooking, antiquing, reading and taking the dogs for long walks.

CONSERVATION LEGACY FARM AWARD

ALVIN & DOROTHY WIRE



The Stephenson County Soil & Water Conservation District annually presents the Legacy Farm Award to landowners who dedicate their lives to conserving natural resources for future generations. The 2008 winner is Alvin & Dorothy Wire.

In the early 1940's Alvin's father Ira Wire became interested in conservation. He planted birdsfoot trefoil in permanent pasture, walnut and ash trees on land not suited for crops. In 1944 he was asked to be a part of the U.S.D.A.'s conservation promotional film "In Common Cause." Ira started the first official conservation plan for the farm in 1946. He established strip-cropping in the early 1960s, continuing until 2004 when it was replaced by minimum till and no-till.

For many years, Ira was a director of the Stephenson Soil Conservation District, which name later added the words County & Water to its official title.

Also in the mid 1960's, Alvin expanded the conservation program to include the non-crop land. He removed cattle from the forty acres of forest. A forestry plan and a wildlife plan were established in 1980. The Wire family received the Conservation Farm Family of the Year Award in 1984, and in 2005 they received the 25 year Forest Participation Award from the Illinois Tree Farm Association.

As for the third generation, all four of Dorothy's and Alvin's sons did forestry and wildlife projects in 4-H and F.F.A.. Brian received a wildlife scholarship for college. Dustin received the Youth Conservation Award from the Highland Chapter of Pheasants Forever. He is currently employed by Applied Ecological Services in Brodhead, Wisconsin. On weekends he works on the family farm, maintaining the forest and one acre of native prairie.

Phillip is a conservation police officer in the LaSalle County-Starved Rock area. He is currently on furlough to the Illinois National Guard and stationed in Afghanistan. Stephen is an avid hunter and fisherman. He has a goal of building a pond on the farm's bottomland.

For the Wires, the legacy of practicing conservation helps maintain the value of another legacy: their forty-acre farm known as Grand View, which has been in the Wire family since it was first purchased from the government. Considering the family's interests in the farm, the out-of-doors, nature, and wildlife, there is little doubt that conservation practices will continue to be carried out by the next generation.

We are pleased to present the 2008 Conservation Legacy Farm Award to Alvin and Dorothy Wire



CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR MACOMBER FAMILY



We are pleased to present the 2008 Conservation Farm Family of the Year award to David, Karen, Michael & Domoni; the Macomber Family.

The 2008 Farm Family of the year is presented to the Macomber Family: David & Karen, son Michael and his wife Domoni.

David's great-great-grandfather, Norman Phillips homesteaded the Macomber Family farm in 1837. David's father Vernon and mother Winifred began farming with Winifred's father Harry Phillips in 1951.

In 1961 David bought out his Grandmother Phillips and began farming with his father. Also in 1961, David's father retired as a school teacher after 26 years and became a full-time farmer. After graduating from the University of Illinois in 1962, David began farming full time. David and Karen purchased the dairy farm from David's parents in 1976. There are 348 acres owned and 120 acres rented. Michael and Domoni became part of the operation after graduating in 1990 from the University of Illinois.

Soil and Water conservation has been a part of this farm for many years. In the late 1930's and early 40's, David's grandfather Harry Phillips cooperated with the Civilian Conservation Corp and put in a cement dam to control a large ditch, and also built terraces to control erosion. In the 1960's and 70's, David walked his land with Soil Conservation technician Ray Carpenter, laying out contour strips. These original contour strips continue to be maintained today.

Recently, the Macomers wrote a waste management plan. This plan tracks their past 40 year's worth of liquid waste handling, and plans for future applications. On the cutting edge of new technology, in 1965 the Macomers constructed storage pits. A slurrystore was added in 1979 to contain all the waste from their dairy cows.

Their built their milking system was in 1966, and designed to handle 110 cows. The Macomber farm continues to maintain this herd size, while increasing milk productivity per cow.

Dave has always believed the dairy cow to be one of the greatest recycling machines. She is very compatible to soil and water conservation. The dairy cow can take lush alfalfa, a good crop for our hilly ground, and turn it into a wonderful food product, milk. The waste from this process, dairy manure, is added back to the soil in a responsible manner to provide nutrients for the crops. The Macomers purchase very little commercial fertilizer for their land.

Presently, Mike, with Domoni's help, makes the day-to-day decisions necessary to run the operation.



REQUEST SOIL & WATER TO:

The Stephenson Soil & Water District is asking their newsletter readers to contact the SWCD office to indicate if they wish to receive future newsletters via e-mail or a hardcopy snail-mailed to your mail box.



In an effort to reduce paper consumption and stay abreast with today's technology, the District will be polling readers to give us your ideas.

Call the SWCD office at **1 (815) 235-2161, ext. 3** and let us know what you think and your preference.

Waterway to Go!

By Terry Kerchner

It seems like every year, at about this time, I get on a kick about the lack of waterways on the sloping fields of our county farms. After a good heavy rain in the spring, it is very apparent where concentrated flows of runoff occur. Reduced stand of the planted crop is probably the first thing I notice, then gullies through the field, then sediment where the slope starts to taper off or perhaps the fence line or road ditch. Through out the growing season, until the corn gets too high, the area of erosion is quite noticeable. I cannot help but think, where have the waterways gone?

You may be wondering what it costs to reestablish a waterway on your farm. Are there programs to assist with the construction costs? As has been the case for many years, technical assistance is available to survey and design your project. Cost sharing may be available through the Soil and Water Conservation District or the Farm Service Agency. See your local office for details.

Grassed waterways are an important component in any conservation plan. Make sure this critical practice gets implemented on your farm!

2009 FARM SERVICES DIRECTORY

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Please keep this directory with your telephone book.*

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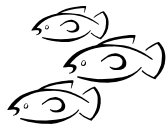
demolition, trucking, welding, lathe work, press work.

John Tautz - 815-244-9435 or Karl Tautz - 815-244-8004/238-3510

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

2009 SPRING FISH SALE

The spring fish sale was a success with 33 fish orders picked up on a very rainy day (the fish did not mind). Thanks to everyone that ordered and participated!



SPRING TREE SALE

Pick-up your tree order at Stephenson County Fairgrounds on South Walnut Road, Freeport IL.



Tuesday April 7th
9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M.

Contact the SWCD office with questions 815-235-2161 ext. 3

2009 FALL FISH SALE

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

SEPTEMBER 28, 2009

11:00 A.M.

Watch the Summer Newsletter for more information and order form.



PRAIRIE GRASS BURN PLAN/PERMITS

Available at SWCD/NRCS Office

1620 S. Galena Ave; Freeport IL
Please visit our office and ask for Jim Ritturbusch for more information.

WOMEN AND THE WILD: A BASIC SKILLS WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 9, 2009

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Oakdale Nature Preserve

\$30 per person before April 17, \$40 after that date

This workshop will be presented to rekindle old outdoor interests and learn new ones and to meet others with similar interests. Choose from any of the following hands-on sessions.

- Tiling Basics
- Fire Craft
- Wheels of Time
- Meditation & Movement
- Basic Home Maintenance
- All-Terrain Workout
- Native Spring Wildflowers
- Shelter Craft
- Old Fashioned Candle Dipping
- Defense Without Harm
- Photography in Nature
- Introduction to Mat Pilates
- Outdoor Cooking

Coordinating agencies University of Illinois Extension – Freeport office; Freeport Park District/Oakdale Nature Preserve; and the Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District.

Call 815-235-6114 ext. 0 with questions or to register.

We would like to thank the sponsors that are advertising in this newsletter and in the enclosed Farm Services Directory. Please contact Lorna at 235-2161 ext. 3 for more information on how you too can include your ad in our newsletter that is mailed to more than 3,000 subscribers quarterly.

\$500 Scholarship Available

The Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District is offering a scholarship to help outstanding students of soil, water, and related natural resources to complete their education at any accredited college or university.

To be eligible for this scholarship you must: be a resident of Stephenson County and at least a junior in college, attend an accredited college or university, major in soil and/or water conservation or a related natural resource field, and be a full-time student who is carrying at least 12 credit hours.

Application forms can be picked up at our office, 1620 S. Galena Ave. Freeport, IL. They are also available on our website www.stephensonswcd.org.

Return the completed application form along with a copy of your most recent transcript to our office by 3:00 p.m., June 12, 2009.

The Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law

The SWCD reminds landowners who have filter strips on their land that they may file for a property tax reduction for these areas. Legislation passed in 1997 allows for **vegetative filter strips, seeded areas adjacent to creeks, streams, rivers or other wetland areas** to be assessed at the reduced rate of approximately 1/6 the cropland rate.

Qualifying vegetative filter strips must follow NRCS specifications for width (based on soil type) and must contain vegetation that has a dense top growth, forms a uniform ground cover, has a heavy fibrous root system, and tolerates field pesticides. Landowners who have established filter strips on their land as of January 1, 2008 may stop by the SWCD office for filter strip certification. Landowners should bring the property tax ID numbers for each filter strip area, and the SWCD will complete the necessary forms to certify the filter strip. Landowners will then take the completed certification forms to the county courthouse.

SWCD RENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR SPRING PLANTING

All SWCD rental equipment requires a completed contract prior to renting the equipment. The contracts are available on the SWCD website, or come into our office at 1620 S. Galena Ave, Freeport to fill one out.

There is a \$50 additional fee to equipment that is delivered to your farm – **not all equipment can be delivered**. Call our office for more information – (815) 235-2161 ext. 3.

Nut Planter

\$2/acre

Nut Picker

\$10/day - \$100 refundable deposit

Nut Huller

\$20/day - \$100 refundable deposit

Tree Planters

\$2/acre

Tree Spades

\$25 refundable deposit

750 No-Till Drill

\$8/acre - \$100 minimum charge

Grass seed attachment

7 1/2 inch row spacing

1560 No-Till Drill

\$8/acre - \$100 minimum charge

Soybeans only

10 inch row spacing

7200 4-row Planter

\$9/acre for conventional till

\$7/acre for no-till

38 inch row spacing

Dry fertilizer, residue managers

Insecticide attachments

Requires minimum 60 horsepower

JD 6 X 4 Trail Gator & Sprayer

\$25/acres – \$50 minimum charge

6' LandPride Disc

Good for waterway clean up

\$50/day

JD 5220 Tractor/mower

6' rotary mower

\$25/engine hr. – \$50 minimum charge

Burn Equipment

\$25/day

Burn Equipment with Gator/Sprayer

\$50/day



HUGE SUCCESS..... RAIN BARREL/RAIN GARDEN GRANT

The Stephenson County Soil and Water Conservation District received a grant to launch a Rain Barrel/Rain Garden Education Project. Rain barrels were offered to residents that live within a municipality in Stephenson County for only \$20. A packet on building and maintaining a home rain garden was distributed with each rain barrel.

Rain barrels are an excellent way to help the environment in urban areas because they reduce storm-water runoff which can carry pollutants and sediment directly to creeks and rivers. Rain barrels are an excellent way to conserve resources and reduce the amount of well or municipal water being used. In the past few years, we've heard more and more about the environmental movement to "Go Green," and rain barrels help this movement by conserving water. In addition, rain water has no calcium or lime buildups, less sediment and dissolved salts, it infiltrates better and is naturally warmer than tap water. All of these reasons help make stored rainwater a perfect choice for watering a garden.

A rain garden allows about 30% more water to soak into the ground therefore reducing stormwater runoff. While an individual rain garden may seem like a small thing, collectively they produce substantial neighborhood and community environmental benefits. Rain gardens increase the amount of water that filters into the ground, which recharges local and regional aquifers; helps protect communities from flooding and drainage problems; helps protect streams and lakes from pollutants carried by urban stormwater – lawn fertilizers and pesticides, oil and other fluids that leak from cars, and numerous harmful substances that wash off roofs and paved areas; enhance the beauty of yards and neighborhoods; and provides valuable habitat for birds, butterflies and many beneficial insects.

We are proud to say our program was a huge success and all of our 125 rain barrels were sold! If you are interested in a rain barrel please contact our office we have started compiling a list of people interested in the rain barrels. If we have enough interest we will re-apply for the grant and possibly make this one of our spring events Please call our office and ask for Craig or Lorna at 815-235-2161 ext 3 or send an email to info@stephensonswcd.org if you want to be added to this list.

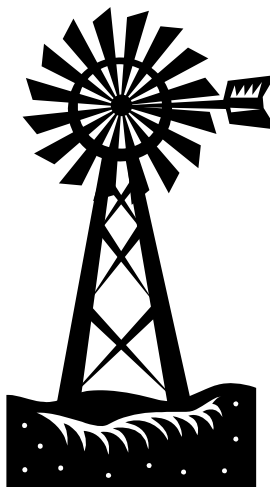
Stephenson SWCD Offers Conservation Practice Cost-Share Program

Local landowners who are interested in improving the soil and water conservation practices on their farms may be eligible for cost-share assistance through Illinois' Conservation Practices Program (C.P.P).

Practice eligible for cost-share include: contour farming, contour strip-cropping, no-till farming, cover crops, critical area planting, well decommissioning, erosion control structures, diversions, grassed waterways, pastureland and hayland plantings, filterstrips, terraces, water and sediment control basins. Cost share rates may be as high as 60% depending on the practice. All projects must be constructed/installed according to Natural Resources Conservation Service specifications and maintained for ten years.

Interested individuals should contact the Stephenson Soil & Water Conservation District office at 235-2161 ext. 3 to determine eligibility for the program.

2007 WELL DECOMMISSIONING PRACTICE (*Abandoned Well Sealing*)



The District is participating with the State of Illinois Department of Agriculture to seal abandoned wells. This cost-share amount is not to exceed \$300 or 60% of the actual cost, whichever is less.

Applicants must file a Request for Cost-Share Funds to Abandon a Water Well with the Soil & Water District to be eligible for cost-share assistance. The well must not be sealed prior to approval by the SWCD Board of Directors

to receive these funds. Highest priority will always be assigned to private water wells posing the greatest risks. The wells are sealed with the cooperation of the Stephenson County Environmental Health Department.

Interested individuals may contact the SWCD office for an application and details.