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○ DECEMBER | ○ 2021 |

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217-352-3536 ext 3

Champaign County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District

# SOIL & WATER *focus*

WORKING TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES  
BUILDING ON THE PAST - PRESERVING FOR THE FUTURE

## ANNUAL MEETING AND DIRECTOR ELECTION—FEBRUARY 4TH, 2022

Please join us virtually on **February 4, 2022** for Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District's 79th Annual Meeting!

In lieu of a traditional meeting, the District Board of Directors opted to host a virtual event. We hope you will join us as we feature presentations from our speakers and highlight our accomplishments from the past year. Keep an eye on your email for a Zoom invitation from us!

This year's theme is Make Your Farm Green: Profitability in Conservation. Abigail Peterson, the Director of Agronomy for the Illinois Soybean Association, will be delivering a presentation about how conservation and profitability go hand in hand. Pete Frey, District Conservationist for NRCS, will also provide an update on how you can apply to receive program payments in the upcoming year.



The general election will also be held on this day at the CCSWCD Office, located at 2110 W. Park Court, Suite C; Champaign, IL 61821. Three directors will be elected to serve the SWCD. The polls will be open from 7am-5pm. All persons, firms, or corporations who hold a legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of Champaign County are eligible to vote.

Once you arrive at the office, give us a call at (217) 352-3536 ext. 3. Please stay in your vehicle; we will bring the ballot out to you. Please note that staff will be taking safety precautions and wearing masks.

### SWCD Board Members

Joe Rothermel, Chairman  
Steve Stierwalt, Vice-Chairman  
Eric Suits, Secretary-Treasurer  
Eleanor Blackmon, Director  
Lennie Heiser, Director  
Kenneth Kesler, Associate Director

### SWCD Staff:

Erin Gundy, R.C.  
Morgan Cauble, C.C.  
Amanda Robinson, Survey Aide  
Bruce Henrikson, STAR Coordinator  
Clay Bess, PCM Ops. Manager  
Aidan Walton, PCM Specialist

### NRCS Staff:

Peter Frey, D.C.  
Wallace Arnold, S.C.  
Nick Schneider, S.C.  
2110 W Park Court, Suite C,  
Champaign, IL 61821  
217-352-3536 ext 3 www.ccswcd.com

## SPRING FISH SALE

The Fall 2021 Fish Sale was a success! We appreciate all of those who placed an order. Plans are underway to hold a Spring 2022 Fish Sale with Andry's Fish Farm on **March 24, 2022**. More information and the order form is on our website and will be mailed to customers in the new year. Due to an increase in supply costs, prices will be slightly higher this year. We appreciate your understanding.



## Organic Grain Conference & Trade Show 2022

The Land Connection is thrilled to bring the Organic Grain Conference & Trade Show back to the i-Hotel in Champaign, IL on **February 9 & 10, 2022**! After a fallow year, we are energized and excited to welcome back all of our farmer friends for two days of organic grain education and networking.

The 2022 conference kicks off on Wednesday, February 9 with a half day of workshops. Choose to explore the organic certification process, crop rotation planning, and more! We'll finish day 1 with a local beer and spirits mixer to help us digest all that we've learned.

Thursday, February 10 will be a full day featuring three concurrent presentation tracks, roundtable discussions, plenary and keynote addresses, curbside consulting, and a full trade show. Sessions will dive into soil health innovations, novel cropping systems, markets, and more! Consultations will be available to discuss troubleshooting in organics, funding mechanisms, and conservation programs.

### Registration:

FULL CONFERENCE | February 9-10 | \$110 (price increases to \$135 after January 19)

1 DAY | February 9 OR 10 | \$65 (price increases \$85 after January 19)

Keep an eye on our website for updated conference information: <https://thelandconnection.org/event/ogc2022/>

## BONEYARD CREEK COMMUNITY DAY—APRIL 9TH

The 15th annual Boneyard Creek Community Day is scheduled for Saturday, **April 9th, 2022**. This event allows local residents to join forces and protect the waterways of Champaign County and beyond. Volunteers will remove litter and naturalize streams while learning that healthy streams are vital for a healthy community. Litter not only looks bad; it clogs storm drains, which causes local flooding. It also travels into receiving streams and harms aquatic life. This event serves as a reminder to be a responsible citizen and take pride in the natural resources of our community. Sign up for the Boneyard Creek Community Day and help put trash in its place!



For more information, please visit [boneyardcreek.org](http://boneyardcreek.org). In the event of rain, the event will be held on Saturday, April 23rd, 2022.

## WELCOME NEW EMPLOYEES!

**Morgan Cauble** is the new Conservation Coordinator at CCSWCD. Morgan is from Ramsey, IL, and she graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in May 2021 with a degree in Agricultural & Consumer Economics. She became familiar with conservation methods by seeing them in practice on her family's farm, and she is looking forward to working with landowners in Champaign County!

**Amanda Robinson** is the new Survey Aide at CCSWCD. Amanda is from Dearborn, MI. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in December 2019 with a BS in Environmental Geography. Amanda has been working in Nevada and Texas learning and implementing different conservation practices. She is excited to be back in the Midwest and learning about conservation practices in the agriculture field!



**CONSERVATION CROPPING**  
**2022**  
**SEMINAR**

*Managing your inputs for healthy soils...*  
**JOIN US VIRTUALLY**  
9AM - 12 NOON (CST)  
Thursday, February 3rd

**KEYNOTE: Russell Hedrick - 1st Generation NC Farmer**  
**CARBON MARKETS: American Farmland Trust**  
**AGROFORESTRY OPPORTUNITIES: Savanna Institute**  
**FARMER PANEL: Cade Bushnell (Ogle County), Jerry Seidel (Jefferson County), & Rick Kaesebier (Logan County)**

 Register **FREE** Today!  
[www.ccswcd.com](http://www.ccswcd.com) Earn  
Soil & Water CEU's

## DRAINAGE DISTRICT MEETINGS

In collaboration with the Champaign County Farm Bureau, CCSWCD will host a series of drainage district meetings on **February 8 and 22, 2022** at Champaign Co Farm Bureau. One meeting will cover portions of drainage law, drainage district officials' roles and responsibilities, resources, and more. The other will highlight good management practices, such as nutrient management, burning & brush control, bank maintenance, and more. Stay tuned for more details!

# REGENERATIVE GRAZING EDUCATION– RECAP AND UPCOMING

In the spring of 2020, the CCSWCD Foundation received a Lumpkin Family Foundation grant titled “Building Capacity, Cooperation, and Momentum for Regenerative Grazing in the Embarras Watershed.” The CCSWCD, The Land Connection, U of I Extension, and The Pasture Project planned and facilitated regenerative grazing education for conservation professionals and farmers/landowners throughout the watershed that consisted of three major learning components. The first was a limited-capacity intensive online series for agricultural advisors and educators followed by a similar (though larger capacity) online series for farmers. Our final activity was a successful in-person field day on the edge of the Embarras River Watershed demonstrating regenerative grazing practices attended by farmers and agricultural advisors alike.



*Photo: Elisabeth Spratt, Gays, IL*

Through this project, a network of Illinois conservation professionals who are interested in further regenerative grazing education was established. Additionally, farmers were offered and attended a nontypical Eastern Illinois field day that brought livestock together with soil health principles.

All participants received many resources, one of which is the Regenerative Grazing Guide from the field day that is open access: <https://thelandconnection.org/resource/regenerative-grazing-guide/>. Check out the following websites to join regenerative grazing communities to keep learning!

Midwest Grazing Exchange: <https://www.midwestgrazingexchange.com/>

Regenerative Ag Idea Network (REGAIN): <https://regenerativeagideanetwork.org/>

**Upcoming:** The CCSWCD recently was awarded a North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) grant for the project, "Building Deeper Connections: Advanced Regenerative Grazing Training For Agriculture Advisors in Eastern Illinois." This project will continue and enhance the base created from the Lumpkin grant, including field days at two ‘to be determined’ locations in the summer of 2022. If you’d like to be ‘in the know’ of these upcoming trainings, send Erin an email: [erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net).

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## PCM UPDATE: WELCOME FRANK RADEMACHER

My name is Frank Rademacher, and I’m a new specialist at Precision Conservation Management covering Piatt, Douglas, Champaign, and Dewitt counties. As many of the PCM farmers have heard, Luke Rund recently left PCM. The whole team appreciated working with him, and wish him the best.

I graduated from the U of I with a degree in Crop Science, with a focus on Pest Management. Following graduation, I started farming with my dad, Eric, near Gifford, IL. In that time, I’ve helped our farm incorporate no-till, cover crops, input reduction, and specialty crops.

As both an agronomist and a farmer that’s slowly implemented different practices on my own farm, I think I’m uniquely positioned to be a resource not only with the funding/economic aspects of conservation, but the practical agronomic challenges as well. If you have any questions about PCM, don’t hesitate to reach out at (309) 336-0765 or [frademacher@precisionconservation.org](mailto:frademacher@precisionconservation.org).

# NRCS CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR FARMING OPERATION

New staff have been assigned to the Champaign Field Office – Please give us a chance to assist you!

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides cost-share for projects, practices or the development of comprehensive activity plans associated with row crops, specialty crops, grazing operations, confined livestock facilities, forest lands and more! Some common practices around Champaign include Forest Management Plans and Implementation, Pollinator Habitat, High Tunnels, Nutrient Management, Cover Crops, Waterways, Terraces, Grade Stabilization, CNMPs for Confined Livestock Operations and Implementation, Ag Energy Plans and Implementation, Fence, Livestock Pipeline, Heavy Use Areas, and much more!

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides cost incentives to agricultural producers to adopt new strategies, make temporary changes to their operation, or enhance existing conservation cover that could potentially improve their footprint in retrospect to shared environment in which we live. The program is a 5-year commitment and provides annual payments each year not to exceed \$200,000 over the life of the contract.

Enhanced conservation activities include multispecies cover crops, use of precision application technology to apply nutrients, modifications to nutrient management, establish pollinator habitat for monarch butterflies, conversion to no-till or strip-till, make soil health modifications, expand or enhance existing field borders, filter strips, pollinator plantings and numerous other practices.

The application deadline **January 7th, 2022** . Submitting an application does not commit you!

Please visit [www.NRCS.USDA.gov/](http://www.NRCS.USDA.gov/) for more information.



Contact Champaign County NRCS for one-on-one assistance or to complete an application.

Wallace Arnold, Soil Conservationist  
(217) 352-3536 ext. 131 - [Wallace.Arnold@usda.gov](mailto:Wallace.Arnold@usda.gov)

Nick Schneider, Soil Conservationist  
(217) 352-3536 ext. 123 - [Nicholas.Schneider@usda.gov](mailto:Nicholas.Schneider@usda.gov)

Pete Frey, District Conservationist  
217-352-3536 ext. 114 - [Peter.Frey@usda.gov](mailto:Peter.Frey@usda.gov)

As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodation to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodations for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Carzella Pritchett, Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager at (217) 353-6651 directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## BARNHART PRAIRIE

### Visit the Prairie Field Day

This event was held in August 2021. Guests were invited to take a self-guided tour through the prairie and read plant identifica-



tion stakes to learn along the way. Several local experts were present as a resource for guests to ask questions and learn more about the ecosystem.

Around 12 people attended this event, and one family brought their daughter who learned how to safely catch, identify, and release butterflies. It was great to see how the prairie can act as an educational resource for future generations.

### Keepers of the Prairie Membership Program

If you would like to visit the prairie at your leisure, consider joining the membership program! The prairie is open to members from 7am-7pm during the months of May through October. Please visit [barnhartprairie.com/membership](http://barnhartprairie.com/membership) for more information.



## HEADWATERS INVASIVE PLANT PARTNERSHIP (HIPP)

HIPP serves landowners in several ways to manage invasive species in East Central Illinois. Learn which invasive plants threaten your area, and how you can control them! Additionally, NRCS financial assistance is available for forest management and invasive species management.

USDA NRCS RCPP Financial Assistance Programs  
Sign Up by January 7, 2022



Invasive species identification and management education

HIPP is housed in the Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District Office but covers 11 counties in Illinois: Champaign, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Piatt, and Vermilion.

**Want to learn more? ▶▶▶ (217) 352-3536 ext. 3, [hippcwma@gmail.com](mailto:hippcwma@gmail.com), [www.ilhipp.org](http://www.ilhipp.org)**



@ChampaignCSWCD  
@STARfreetool



@STARfreetool

## THREE UNIQUE FIELD DAYS UPCOMING THIS SPRING

Thanks to a grant from Mississippi State University, CCSWCD will host three field days in the spring highlighting cover crops, nutrient management, and tillage practices that contribute to nutrient loss reduction and watershed protection. Dates are to be determined given the nature of the practices highlighted, so stay in touch and keep an eye out for the field days to be scheduled! If you'd like to be added to an email list to be notified about field day dates, contact Erin: [erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net).

### Field day hosts, locations, topics:

#### Joe Rothermel, Broadlands, IL - March

Joe has been a site host for research for many years. Over the last couple years, Dr. Shalamar Armstrong of Purdue University has studied cover crop seeding rates and application methods. He will present results, interpretations for making management changes, and explain the importance of the study. Additionally, a strip till rig, air seeder, and roller crimper will be on site and explained how they're used!

#### Eric Miller, Monticello, IL - April

Stay tuned to see what will be highlighted on this field day.

#### Eric & Frank Rademacher, Potomac, IL - May

This field day will not be your typical two hour event. Instead, stay in touch with the District's Facebook and Erin's email list to know where Eric and Frank will be roller crimping winter hardy cover crops and planting their cash crop. We will have a table with resources available as you 'come and go' throughout the day to ask Frank and Eric questions about their cover crop termination methods.

## STAR Growth and Impact on Conservation

**Is STAR helping YOU?** Is STAR helping Champaign County, Illinois, and the rest of the World? The primary purpose of this initiative, which started in Champaign County, is to provide a free, simple, and confidential method for farmers and landowners to measure the impact of their field-level practices in improving water quality, reducing soil and nutrient losses, and improving soil health. STAR is used by conservation professionals in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Colorado to help develop conservation plans with their clients. It is very exciting to see an idea born here become a method for farmers to help meet the goals of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy for Illinois. In addition, STAR provides a roadmap to suggest changes in practices that help meet those goals.

**STAR Growth:** Growth has been huge in the last year, with an increase in the number of participants and the number of acres evaluated, as well as new county Licensees and State Affiliates creating STAR for their local resource concerns. That growth has been the result of an increased recognition of STAR as a unique approach to identify conservation concerns and to educate participants about their contribution to solving environmental problems.

**What is new with STAR?** In the last year, STAR has been officially recognized by the National Association of Conservation Districts as a viable method of identifying methods to improve conservation. In addition, the Illinois Department of Agriculture has gone beyond their official support of STAR by requiring its use for all who apply for Partners for Conservation funds. Last February, American Farmland Trust sponsored its first Pilot Incentive Program that offered participants an incentive payment for increasing their STAR Rating from year to year. 39 participants were allocated a total of \$66,000 to assist and thank their conservation efforts, many receiving the maximum

\$2,000 payment. Additionally, STAR is piloting a Pay for Performance model with a supply chain partner in Macon and Douglas counties that pays farmers for improved STAR Ratings, or consistent 5-STAR Ratings. We hope that such incentives will grow and be available for more geographic areas in the future as we develop partnerships. We hope all farmers participate in STAR now to establish a baseline for potential incentives in the future! In addition to the traditional field form used by participants, new this year is the STAR Web App ([app.starfreetool.com](http://app.starfreetool.com)). It offers farmers and landowners an efficient way to evaluate multiple fields seamlessly on their phones, desktops, or tablets. The STAR Web App allows users to create customized field improvement plans, connect with local resources and technical assistance, and share their STAR Ratings with their online communities with a few simple clicks.

Although STAR is based on practices, the **Annual Report** shows the outcomes of using those improved practices. That report reflects the positive impact you and others are having on Champaign County, Illinois, and the world! The report, other STAR news, and much more information is available at [www.STARfreetool.com](http://www.STARfreetool.com). That website also provides the methods available to receive your 2021 Crop Year STAR Ratings. If you prefer, call the office (217) 352-3536 ext. 3 or email [info@starfreetool.com](mailto:info@starfreetool.com)! Participation must occur by **January 31, 2022!** As before, participants are eligible to receive a FREE field sign for every field evaluated.



**Cover Crops  
Water Well Decommissioning**

**Grassed Waterways  
Conservation Cover (Pollinators)**

Contact Erin about potential incentive payments.

# IL STAR – 2021 Field Form

“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” - Peter Drucker

For office use:

Points: \_\_\_\_\_

STARs: \_\_\_\_\_



## Farmer/Owner Information:

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Street/City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Field name: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. 2021 Crop: \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Acres: \_\_\_\_\_

5. County: \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Sec/Township/Range: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Is this field tile-drained?  Yes  No

I understand this field may be randomly selected for verification. To the best of my knowledge, this information is correct. I also agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy, as posted on the [www.starfreetool.com](http://www.starfreetool.com) website.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **IMPORTANT** - Before proceeding, please review these instructions. Accurate responses will help ensure your field is awarded the correct point total and STAR Rating.

- This form documents field activities beginning immediately after harvest in 2020 and concluding with 2021 harvest.
- Read every item under each category. More than one selection is possible, but sometimes no items will be selected.  
*Example of multiple selections from the Cover Crops section- You planted a cover crop mix of cereal rye and tillage radish. You would select “Winter hardy- single species” and “Winter kill- single species.”*
- Completely read each statement. Several have more than one qualifier that needs to be met.  
*Example from the Spring Tillage section- “Any full width operation, limited to a single pass, where no fall tillage was performed.”*

## First, tell us a little bit about the field you have selected.

### 9. Conservation and Management Practices- (check all that apply on this individual field):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturated Buffer                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Plan that reduces sheet/rill erosion to “T”                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bioreactor                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Nitrogen rate study conducted   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Constructed Wetland                    | <input type="checkbox"/> You attended a soil health or nutrient management meeting or field day within the last year |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terraces/Contours/WASCOBs              | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient management plan and/or field is under CCA advisement                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass Filter Strip/Riparian Buffer     | <input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled in Federal/State/Local Conservation Program  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grass Waterway                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Completed the 2020 STAR form for this field   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pollinator Planting (a ½ acre minimum) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Windbreak                              |  |

## Now let’s establish a crop history for this field.

### 10. Crop Rotation- use an “X” to indicate the 5-year crop history on this field.

Crop	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Corn					
Soybean					
Small Grain: _____					
Hay/Forage: _____					
Other: _____					

**Example:** A field has been in corn/soybean rotation for over a decade. In 2021 it was planted to corn. Place an “X” adjacent to corn for the years 2021, 2019, 2017. Soybean would have an “X” for 2020, 2018. If your crop is not listed, i.e. Grain Sorghum, write your crop on the line and mark “X” in the year(s) planted. Do not record cover crops here.

### 11. Cover Crops (Summer 2020-Spring 2021)- Established with NRCS guidelines (must have some growth):

- Winter hardy- single species
- Winter hardy- 2 or more species
- Winter kill- single species
- Winter kill- 2 or more species
- Cover crop was terminated AFTER spring 2021 cash crop planting

**Discussion:** Time period varies slightly here. Any cover crops established in 2020 either prior to harvest or after a summer crop was harvested count. Examples: aerial application into standing corn or drilling after wheat harvest. Wheat is not considered to be a cover crop.

**Continue to Page 2**

## 12. Soil Sampling- Use the previous 4-year field history:

- Not sampled in the last 4 years
- Sampled every 4 years or less
- Spring or Summer sampled
- Fall sampled
- GPS sampled (by grid or zone)

**Discussion:** Here is a great example of why you should read every item in each category. If a respondent simply marked "Sampled every 4 years or less" they may have missed points if they didn't indicate when the field was sampled or if GPS was used.

**Almost done. The next category is tillage practices broken down into Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 categories.**

## 13. Fall Tillage- Starting after harvest of the 2020 crop:

- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Strip tillage on field classified as non-HEL
- Shank type fertilizer bar and no other tillage performed
- Any full width operation not exceeding a 3" depth
- Any full width operation exceeding a 3" depth
- Any full width operation on soybean stubble

**Discussion:** With numerous possibilities for soil preparation, we elected to keep the options fairly simple. No tillage and strip tillage are easily definable. Full-width tillage can be tricky. In the fall, focus on the depth of machine operation and also note if soybean residue was tilled. In the spring, how many passes were made and was fall tillage performed?

## 14. Spring Tillage- 2021 field operations:

- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Strip tillage or Strip freshener on non-HEL field, or shank type fertilizer bar, and no other Spring tillage
- Any full width operation, limited to a single pass, where no fall tillage was performed
- Any full width operation, two or more passes, where no fall tillage was performed
- Any full width operation, one or more passes, where fall tillage was performed

**Finally, your nutrient management strategies are a large component of your overall score. Like tillage, we've broken these into two sections defined by specific time periods. A third section reviews activities that may have occurred at any time during the crop year being reviewed.**

## 15. Nutrient Management (Fall 2020 – February 2021):

- No Nitrogen was applied in this time frame other than MAP or DAP  
Wheat topdress
- MAP or DAP was applied before December 1<sup>st</sup>
- NH<sub>3</sub> was applied when the soil temperature was below 50 degrees, and amounted to no more than 50% of the total Nitrogen program, and included an inhibitor
- Manure/Biosolid injected or applied and incorporated when soil temperature was below 50 degrees.
- Manure applied, not incorporated

## 16. Nutrient Management (March 1st - Summer 2021):

- No Nitrogen was applied in this time frame AND no prior Fall 2020-February 2021 Nitrogen other than MAP or DAP
- Spring/Summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to 50% - 74% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- Spring/Summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to at least 75% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- In-season N application (top or sidedress) was at least 25% of the total N Program (from all sources)
- Manure/Biosolid injected or applied and incorporated
- Manure applied, not incorporated

## 17. Additional Nutrient Activities:

- Total Nitrogen applied on corn that followed a different crop was 181 to 200 lbs./acre,  
OR corn-on-corn was 201 to 220 lbs./acre
- Total Nitrogen applied on corn that followed a different crop was 180 lbs. or LESS/acre,  
OR corn-on-corn was 200 lbs. or LESS/acre
- Phosphorus and/or Potassium application based on removal rates and/or soil samples (may mean zero applied)
- At least 50% of total applied phosphorus was banded subsurface
- Used Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0)
- Used Variable Rate Technology application
- Any fertilizer source containing Nitrogen or Phosphorous was broadcast on **frozen** or **snow-covered** ground

## STAR IS HIRING!

Are you passionate about protecting and improving soil and water resources?

Two exciting positions within the STAR Initiative, **IL STAR Coordinator** and **STAR Operations Manager**, are open for applications. The Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources (STAR) tool allows farmers to evaluate their current production system, identify areas for improved management, document their conservation progress, and share their successes. Find both job descriptions and apply today: [www.STARfreetool.com](http://www.STARfreetool.com).



## COVID-19 Update

As you may know, the CCSWCD is still working to get conservation on the ground through the pandemic. Even though some employees are working from home some days, we are still able to be reached. Here's how to contact us!

Erin Gundy, Resource Conservationist: 815-317-6410, [Erin.Bush@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:Erin.Bush@il.nacdnet.net)

Morgan Cauble, Conservation Coordinator: 217-352-3536 ext. 101, [Morgan.Cauble@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:Morgan.Cauble@il.nacdnet.net) or [info@ccswcd.com](mailto:info@ccswcd.com)

Amanda Robinson, Survey Aide: 217-352-3536 ext. 3, [Amanda.Robinson@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:Amanda.Robinson@il.nacdnet.net)

## St. Joseph Wetland Update

Over the summer of 2021, the CCSWCD held an iNaturalist challenge as a fun activity to involve partners and the community in identifying species, both good and bad, at the St. Joseph Wetland. We had great results, with over 190 observations!

The challenge led up to our Wetland Event on July 10 where we displayed the results, conducted an ecology, bird, and wetland walk, made water quality crafts, and even looked at wetland microorganisms through the microscope!

Thank you to everyone for participating in community science, and to those who attended the event! See our website for more wetland information.



## Partners for Conservation Cost Share

*Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District*

*Are you planning a new conservation or best management practice?*

**District Staff are developing a list of interested producers!**

**Apply by contacting the office:**

217-352-3536 ext. 3  
[erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:erin.bush@il.nacdnet.net)



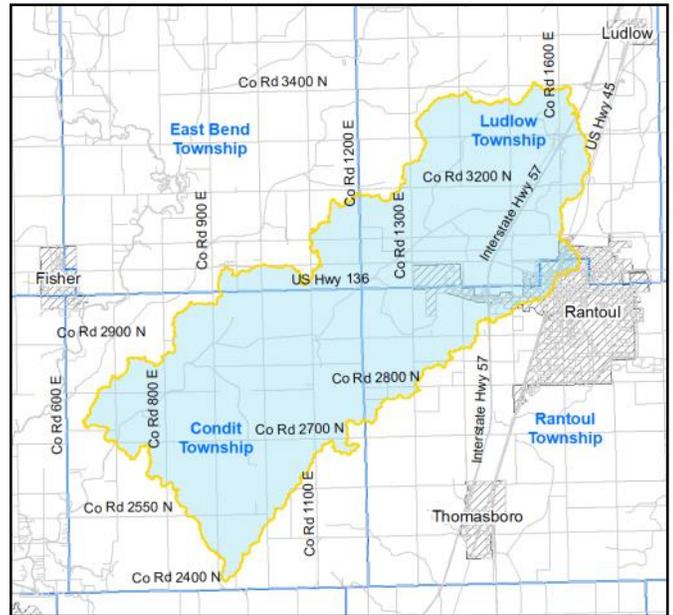
### Conservation Practices include:

- **Cover Crops** 75% up to \$40/ac (3 yr max)
- **Water Well Decommissioning** 75%
- **Grassed Waterways** 75%
- **Conservation Cover (Pollinators)** 75% (10 acres max)

# BIG DITCH WATERSHED

Financial and technical assistance is available to landowners and operators in the Big Ditch Watershed through an Illinois EPA319 grant. The goal is to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the Big Ditch Implementation Plan that reduce sediment, phosphorus and nitrogen loads and improve water quality.

Eligible BMPs include: Cover Crops, Grassed Waterways, Nutrient Management Plans and other structural BMPs, including WASCObS and Streambank projects.



BMP	Cost-share
<b>Cover Crops</b>	60% of the actual costs for seed, application and termination up to a max of \$40/acre; more information on technical and financial assistance on the cover crop program handout
<b>Grassed Waterways</b>	60% of the actual costs
<b>Nutrient Management Plans</b>	No cost for this guide to help you manage your fertilizer applications
<b>Structural BMPs, (Streambank projects, two-stage ditches, WASCObS, etc)</b>	60% of the actual costs

Requirements are minimal but do include:

- Landowner/operator agreement form.
- Completion of STAR form.
- For Cover Crops and Structural BMPs, submit copies of your bills.
- Structural practices must be designed and constructed to NRCS Standards.
- Installation of a temporary field sign.

Frank Rademacher is assisting the CCSWCD and will be available to provide free, no-obligation technical assistance consulting covering everything from cover crop planting to cash crop planting.



**Champaign County**  
**Soil & Water Conservation District**  
 2110 W Park Court, Ste C, Champaign, IL 61821  
[www.ccswcd.com](http://www.ccswcd.com) (Under Programs)  
 Office: 217-352-3536 ext 3  
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