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○ JANUARY | ○ 2020 |

www.ccswcd.com  
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

## HIPP RCPP: OPEN FOR ENROLLMENT SOON



The Headwaters Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) will soon have funding available for forest management, habitat restoration, and invasive species control through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

RCPP funds will be available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The funds are only available for properties in HIPP's 11 counties in east central Illinois: Champaign, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Ford, Iroquois, Livingston, Piatt, and Vermilion. If you own forest land, ungrazed prairie, or riparian buffers that you would like to conserve or restore, this program could provide financial and technical assistance to help. The limited region for this program paired with the focus on natural areas greatly increases your chances of obtaining funds.

If you are interested in this program, contact the HIPP Program Coordinator, Kaleb Lukens, at [hippcwma@gmail.com](mailto:hippcwma@gmail.com) or 224-858-6882 with questions, or talk to your local NRCS office.

## ERIC SNODGRASS TO SPEAK AT THE 77TH ANNUAL MEETING

We are excited to announce Eric Snodgrass, Principal Atmospheric Scientist for Nutrien Ag Solutions, will be our featured presenter. Eric's strong background in Meteorology coupled with his charismatic speaking are sure to make this a standout event. He will focus on climate change and how it could affect agriculture in East Central Illinois, and what farmers can do to make their farms more resilient.

This is a great opportunity to network with conservation friends and leaders over a free buffet lunch, made possible by our sponsors. For more information on the annual meeting, including the date and time, please see page 4.



### SWCD Board Members

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

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Hannah McDonald, C.C.  
Renee Weitekamp, A.C.  
Bruce Henrikson, S.T.A.R. Program Coord  
Clay Bess, PCS  
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# S.T.A.R. (Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources)

S.T.A.R. is a FREE tool designed to assist farm operators and landowners in evaluating their own nutrient loss management practices and to promote better conservation management practices. The S.T.A.R. evaluation system assigns points for each cropping, tillage, nutrient application and soil conservation activity used on individual fields. The total points are then used in a scale to determine a rating of 1 to 5 Stars for each field based on the management practices being used.



Since the program started in 2017, S.T.A.R. has added 52 counties in Illinois into a license agreement. The Illinois Department of Agriculture is utilizing the S.T.A.R. form for their cost-share program. In addition, the state conservation associations for both Iowa and Missouri have signed a memorandum of understanding to begin to offer the program! S.T.A.R. is a valuable educational tool for farmers, landowners, land managers, and

conservation districts to use to evaluate and teach about conservation.

We continue to seek methods to get the supply chain firms to accept the advantage of S.T.A.R. for their sourcing of commodities and to consider how they can encourage farmer participation. ADM, Bunge elevators and the Kellogg company are all promoting S.T.A.R. ADM, in the Tuscola area, has set specific S.T.A.R. goals for their farmers. Kellogg provided \$5,000 mini-grants to six of the counties, including Champaign, to promote the program.

Our next task in Champaign County is to get more participation from local farmers and landowners and to expand the recognition of the program by the agriculture businesses in the area. Farm Credit of Illinois has provided \$1,000 to pay for field signs and have committed to providing more money for additional signs in 2020. We continue to seek additional funds to help with the costs of operating S.T.A.R.



## LUC7 ENVIROTHON COMPETITION

The LUC7 Envirothon is a local competition for high school students to test their knowledge in 5 science and environmental areas. Teams compete against schools from our 6 county region, and last year, 7 of the 42 teams were from Champaign County. The district is very proud of the FFA and Science teams from Mahomet-Seymour, Unity, and Heritage! Mahomet-Seymour FFA Team 1 won the FFA division and participated in the Illinois Envirothon. This year's event will be March 12, 2020 at Lakeland College; please encourage your schools to bring a team.

## FISH DESCRIPTIONS

**Channel Catfish:** They are excellent for food and sport fishing. They are compatible with all pond species and can grow 1 lb. per year if fed with commercial feed.



**Black Crappie:** Excellent for food and sport fishing; however, they can quickly overpopulate and are not recommended for small ponds.

**Straight Bluegill:** An excellent sport fish that grows a little slower than sunfish.

**Largemouth Bass:** One of the most sought after game fish. The average size is 20 inches and they may live up to 23 years.

**Fathead Minnows:** These are especially important when stocking new ponds. They are also good for ponds prior to stocking largemouth bass. Young bass use them for food.

**Red Ear Sunfish:** Excellent in deeper ponds and with Bluegill and Hybrid Sunfish.

**Hybrid Sunfish:** They come from crossing a male bluegill with a female

Green Sunfish. They produce 90% males so they do not over populate a pond. They are a good choice for small ponds and will grow 1/4 to 1/2 lb. per year. They can reproduce with bluegills if they are present in the pond.

**Triploid Grass Carp:** They eat many weeds, but not algae, and do not reproduce.

# Champaign County SWCD Spring 2020 Fish Sale



Last day to order Fish: **Friday, March 20th**  
 Grass Carp must be ordered by Monday, March 9th

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Information for Grass Carp Orders Only: (GRASS CARP MUST BE ORDERED BY MARCH 9TH)**

Pond Acreage: \_\_\_\_\_ Township: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

**To Place an Order:**

Complete order form and mail along with your check:

Champaign County SWCD  
 2110 W. Park Ct, Suite C  
 Champaign, IL 61821  
 217-352-3536 ext 3

Please make checks payable to: Champaign County SWCD  
 Or pay by credit card from our web site: [www.ccsxcd.com](http://www.ccsxcd.com)

Fish Type	Size	Bag or Pound Quantity	Price	Quantity Ordered	Price
Channel Catfish	4-6"		\$ 0.65 each		
Channel Catfish	6-8"		\$ 0.80 each		
Channel Catfish	8-10"		\$ 0.95 each		
Albino Catfish	4-6"		\$ 1.05 each		
Black Crappie	2-3"	100 per bag	\$ 60.00 per bag		
Fathead Minnows		100-150 fish per lb	\$ 10.50 per lb.		
Hybrid Sunfish	1-2"	250 per bag	\$ 70.00 per bag		
Hybrid Sunfish	3-5"		\$ 0.75 each		
Hybrid Sunfish	5-7"		\$ 1.05 each		
Largemouth Bass	2-3"		\$0.80 each		
Largemouth Bass	5-8"		\$ 2.50 each		
Red Ear Sunfish	1-2"	250 per bag	\$ 70.00 per bag		
Bluegill	1-2"	250 per bag	\$ 70.00 per bag		
Bluegill	3-5"		\$ 0.75 each		
Triploid Grass Carp	8-11"		\$ 10.50 each		
Pond Delivery available on orders over 1,000 fish			\$ 100.00	Yes___ No___	

**Total Cost**

Fish Pick-up will be:  
 Monday, March 30, 1-2:30 p.m.

Office Use Only  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Amt pd: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Payment: \_\_\_\_\_



## MORE ON THE 77TH ANNUAL MEETING

Please join us for the 77th Annual Meeting on Friday, February 7, 2020 at 12:00 pm

This year's event will spotlight Lowell Gentry as our Conservation Innovator, and Senator Scott Bennett as our Friend of Conservation. Both have done so much for conservation and agriculture in our area. We hope you will attend and help us honor these two outstanding gentleman.

The annual meeting will include a short business meeting and election of 3 CCSWCD directors but should conclude around 2 pm.

Every year, the CCSWCD directors work hard to develop a theme for the event and this year is no exception. With the anniversary of the moon

landing, thinking about technology over the year, advancements in our society, and our own S.T.A.R. program, "Revolutionizing Conservation - Shooting for the Stars" rose to the top. Our featured presenter, Eric Snodgrass, is a natural fit as he is a local expert in understanding how weather impacts yields in the US. As stated in his biography, "he provides logistical guidance and solutions to weather sensitive financial institutions, farmers, commodity traders, and other stakeholders". We are excited for his view on climate change will affect agriculture around us.

We hope to see everyone at the Round Barn Banquet Center (1900 Round Barn Rd, Champaign, IL) and don't forget to RSVP to 217-352-3536 ext 3 by January 30<sup>th</sup>.

## COST SHARE FUNDING

Are you planning a new conservation or best management practice for 2020?

Please contact our office at 217-352-3536 ext 3 if you are interested in potential incentives.

District staff are developing a list of interested producers while we await the release of state funding.

Our goal is to simplify and improve our process to better serve our producers and distribute incentives more efficiently once funding is available.

### Examples of eligible practices:

Cover Crops	Strip Till	Well Decommissioning	Grassed Waterways (acres)
-------------	------------	----------------------	---------------------------

## THANK YOU CCSWCD SPONSORS

Arends Hogan Walker LLC	Franzen Construction Group LLC	Noel Farm Management
ASM (Agricultural Soil Management)	The Gifford State Bank	Premier Cooperative
Berns, Clancy and Associates	Gordon Farms Seed Company	Rick Wolken Tiling
Busey Ag Services	Grussing Construction	Round Barn Banquet Center
Capital Agricultural Property Services	Illini FS	Saddle Butte
CF&H Insurance Agency, Inc	Johnson Trailer Sales	Suits Ag Services
Day Drainage	Kitchen Seed Company	Sun Prairie Seeds
Dewey Bank	Koeberlein Drainage LLC	The Andersons
Ehler Brothers Fertilizer	Longview Bank	Trés Posh Décor
Farm Credit Illinois	Magsamen Backhoe & Farm Drainage	United Prairie
Fasprint	Martin Equipment	Waibel Farmland Services



# Saving Tomorrow's Agriculture Resources

## About S.T.A.R.

- S.T.A.R. is a **FREE** state-wide tool to assist farm operators and land owners in evaluating their nutrient and soil loss management practices on individual fields. The ultimate goal is to meet the goals of the Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy.
- The S.T.A.R. evaluation program assigns points for each cropping, tillage, nutrient application, and soil conservation activity on individual fields. The S.T.A.R. Science Committee, made up of experts and university researchers, reviews practices to determine the points and ranking system. Higher point values are assigned to those practices that align best with the NLRs science assessment and goals and will be updated annually to reflect the most current research. The star rating for a field can be anywhere from 1 to 5 stars.



## Potential Benefits of Using This Program –

- Increase net farm income
- Inspire other farmers and landowners to take action in helping to meet nutrient loss reduction goals for Illinois
- Promote a positive image of farmers and agriculture in the local community
- Reduce crop insurance premiums
- Decrease nutrient loss
- Promote producers for new farmland leases
- Assist producers in securing local conservation cost share
- Assist producers in securing market incentives for growing crops using conservation cropping practices and thus “sustainable”
- Assist producers in obtaining documentation in support of water quality issues



Listed are some practices used in the rating system and the points that may be assigned:\*

Use of a winter hardy cover crop, no tillage in fall or spring, rotation that includes small grain or forage

**5-7 points**

No nitrogen applied in fall or spring, low nitrogen rate, at least 50% of phosphorus applied banded & subsurface

**4 points**

Strip tillage on non-HEL and/or shank type fertilizer bar if no other tillage

**3 points**

At least 75% of nitrogen applied in spring, winter kill cover crop, VRT, filter strips, waterways, etc.

**2 points**

MAP or DAP applied, full-width tillage (shallow), written nutrient plan, or other

**1 point**

*\*Some practices reduce the total points! Not all management practices considered are listed above.*



### Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District

2110 W. Park Court, Suite C  
Champaign, IL 61821

P: 217-352-3536 ext. 3

[www.ccsxcd.com](http://www.ccsxcd.com)

ChampaignCSWCD

If you want to learn more about the S.T.A.R. program, go to our website, or email [star@ccswcd.com](mailto:star@ccswcd.com), or call us.

For access to our portal that can be used for entries by phone or computer, go to [star.precisionconservation.org](http://star.precisionconservation.org).

**S.T.A.R. - Field Form – 2019 Crop Year** (*after harvest in '18 through harvest of '19*) **Farmer/Owner Information:**

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street/City/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Crop \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Field name & number/tract \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Acres \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. County \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Township & Range \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Section \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Owner \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions: Check ALL THAT APPLY in each category, and were used on this individual field.**

**9. Cover Crops (Summer 2018 – Fall 2018)- Established with NRCS guidelines (must have some growth):**

- Annual ryegrass \*
- Clover
- Oats
- Tillage radish
- Cereal rye \*
- Winter wheat \* (*even if intended for harvest*)
- Other species \_\_\_\_\_

\* Was a winter hardy cover crop terminated AFTER spring 2019 planting? Yes No

**10. Soil Sampling- Use the previous 5-year history:**

- Not Sampled
- Sampled every 4 years or less
- Spring or summer sampled
- Fall sampled
- GPS sampled (by grid or zone)

**11. Nutrient Management (Fall 2018 – February 2019):**

- No nitrogen was applied in this time frame (other than MAP or DAP or February top-dress on wheat fields south of I-70)
- No more than 50% of the total Nitrogen Program (from all sources) was applied as NH<sub>3</sub> with an inhibitor and when the 4-inch soil temperature was below 50 degrees
- MAP or DAP was applied before December 1<sup>st</sup>
- Manure/Biosolid injected or incorporated after Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>
- Manure applied, not incorporated

**12. Nutrient Management (March 1<sup>st</sup> – Summer 2019):**

- No nitrogen was applied in this time frame (and no prior Fall through February nitrogen other than MAP or DAP)
- Spring/summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to 50% - 74% of the total Nitrogen Program (all sources)
- Spring/summer nitrogen application(s) amounted to at least 75% of the total Nitrogen Program (all sources)
- A nitrogen side-dress (or top-dress) application was at least 25% of the total Nitrogen Program (all sources)
- Manure/Biosolid injected or applied and incorporated
- Manure applied, not incorporated

**13. Additional Nutrient Activities:**

Nitrogen on corn after other crop = 181 to 200 lbs./acre  
 OR on corn after corn = 201 to 220 lbs./acre  
 Nitrogen on corn after other crop = 180 lbs. or LESS/  
 acre OR on corn after corn = 200 lbs./acre or LESS  
 At least 50% of actual phosphorus was banded  
 subsurface Fall or Spring  
 Used Triple Super Phosphate (0-45-0)  
 Phosphorus and/or potassium rates applied based on  
 removal rates or less and/or soil samples (may be zero)  
 Used Variable Rate Technology application  
 Any fertilizer source containing nitrogen or phosphorus  
 was broadcast on **frozen** or **snow covered** ground

**14. Crop Rotation- use an "X" to indicate the crop history of this individual field for each year:**

Crop	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Corn					
Soybean					
Small Grain: _____					
Forage: _____					
Other: _____					

**15. Tillage Practices- Starting after harvest of the 2018 crop:**

- Fall- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Fall- Strip tillage on non-HEL field and/or shank type fertilizer toolbar, and no other fall tillage performed
- Fall- Any full width operation not exceeding a 3" depth
- Fall- Any full width operation exceeding a 3" depth
- Fall- Any full width tillage operation on soybean stubble
- Spring- No tillage or low disturbance fertilizer toolbar
- Spring- Strip tillage or Strip Freshener on non-HEL field, and/or shank type fertilizer bar and no other spring tillage
- Spring- Any full width operation, limited to a single pass, where no fall tillage was performed
- Spring- Any full width operation, two or more passes, where no fall tillage was performed
- Spring- Any full width operation, one or more passes, where fall tillage was performed

**16. Conservation and Management Practices:**

**(check all that apply on this individual field):**

- Saturated Buffers
- Bioreactor
- Constructed Wetland
- Terraces/Contours/WASCOBs
- Grass Filter Strip/Riparian Buffer
- Grass Waterway
- Pollinator Planting (½ acre minimum)
- Windbreak
- Conservation Plan that reduces sheet & rill erosion to "T"
- Nitrogen rate study
- Attended soil or nutrient management meeting/field day
- Have a written nutrient management plan and/or farm is under CCA advisement
- Enrolled in a Federal, State, or Local Conservation Program
- Completed S.T.A.R. Form in 2018



I understand my field may be randomly selected for verification. To the best of my knowledge, this information is correct.  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ST. JOSEPH WETLANDS UPDATE

Many years ago, the base for the parking and viewing area at the St. Joseph Wetland Restoration and Education site was created. Lack of funding has stopped the CCSWCD from completing the education component of this project, but we are hoping for new opportunities in this new year!

In the coming year, the brick and engraved pavers will finally be installed on the site. After that, a pathway around the perimeter will be made. While our overall goal is for a brick or concrete path, woodchips will be used until funding is secured. Once that is complete, the covered seating benches made by students at St. Joseph Ogden High School will be brought in and placed and viewing binoculars will be purchased and erected through a grant from the

Illinois Clean Energy  
Community Foundation.

We are currently working on a grant to fund the construction and materials for the educational portion of the site, which includes signage for visitors to learn about wetlands and their associated plants and animals.

Your patience, volunteer efforts, and financial support are all greatly appreciated and are vital to completing this project. Thank you.



**Come see us at the Midwest Ag Expo on January 29th-30th!  
Gordyville USA Arena, 2205 CR 3000 N, Gifford IL  
Doors open at 8am!**

## HEADWATERS INVASIVE PLANT PARTNERSHIP (HIPP)

### ABOUT HIPP

HIPP is a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)—a partnership between local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, private landowners, and university groups in east central Illinois. HIPP's mission is to address the threat of terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants across jurisdictional boundaries. By sharing limited resources, CWMAs can improve effectiveness and efficiency of control and outreach efforts. HIPP's 11 counties are home to the headwaters and much of the watersheds of the Embarras, Kaskaskia, Little Vermilion, Mackinaw, Sangamon, and Vermilion Rivers.

### OTHER HIPP PROGRAMS

Another option to get assistance is HIPP's invasive removal workday program for private lands. If interested property owners help out on a few other workdays, a trained technician and the volunteer group will come to their land and remove invasive plants. This is available in the previously listed 11 east central Illinois counties. Workdays are typically in March-April and October-December. This is a great opportunity to network with other landowners with similar problems and learn invasive ID and removal techniques.

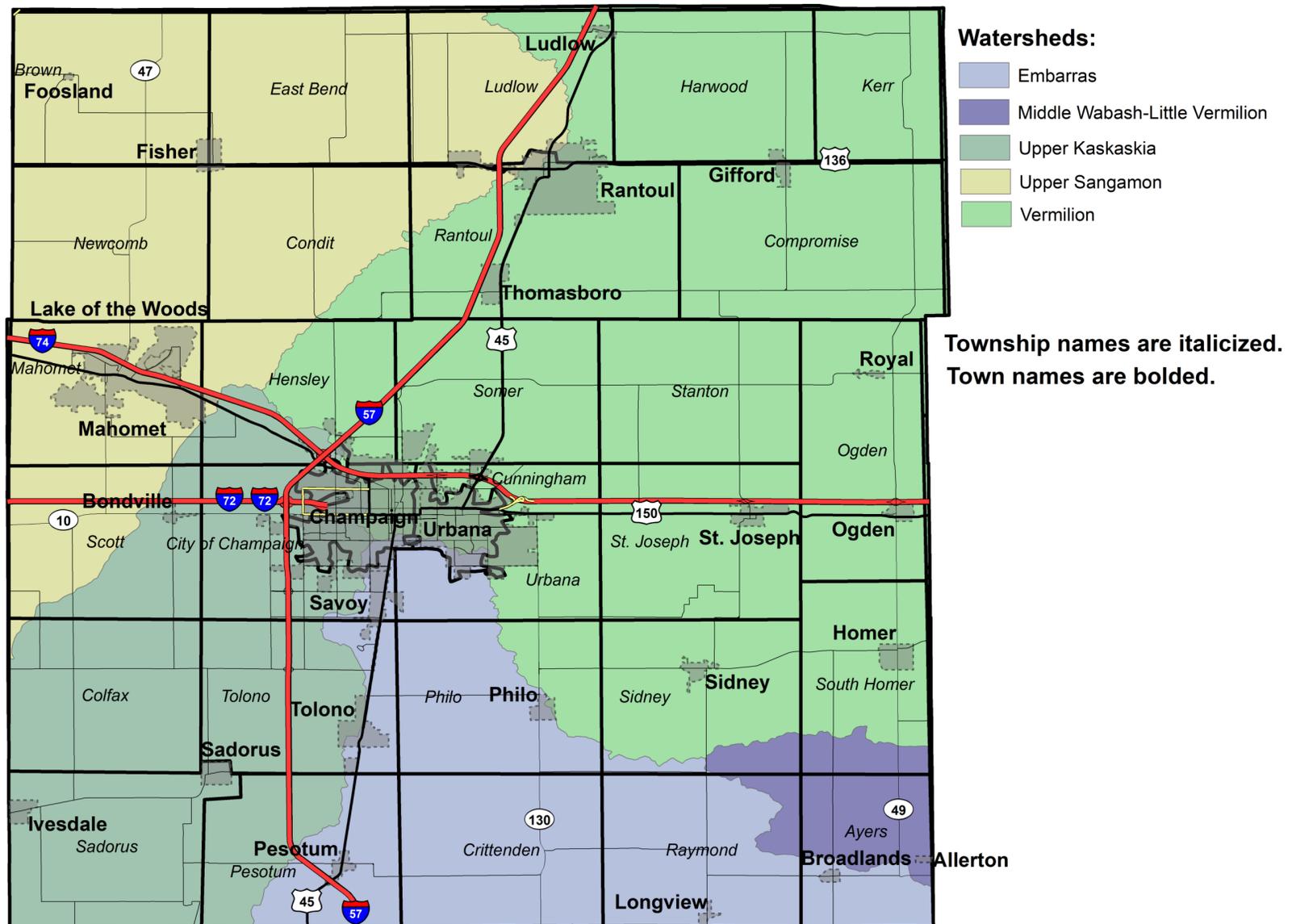


\*Before and after invasive bush honeysuckle removal



# EMBARRAS RIVER WATERSHED FARMER MEETING

## Champaign County



## Do you farm or own ground in the Embarras River Watershed?

We want your input to identify resource concerns and solutions in the watershed to aid with an update of the 2011 Embarras Watershed Plan.

**What to expect:** Group discussions of your water quality concerns, and the opportunity to identify locations for voluntary conservation practice implementation in the watershed.

**When:** Thursday, January 16, 2020 from 3:30 - 5:30 PM (meal provided)

**Where:** Champaign County Farm Bureau - 801 N Country Fair Drive, Champaign IL 61821

**Who:** Farmers and landowners in the Embarras River Watershed in Champaign County

**Register online at [extension.illinois.edu/cej](http://extension.illinois.edu/cej) or call Jennifer Woodyard (University of Illinois Extension) at 217-347-7773; Erin Bush (Champaign County Soil and Water) at 217-352-3536; or Brad Uken (Champaign County Farm Bureau) at 217-352-5235**



# PRECISION CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT (PCM) UPDATE

PCM farmers prove financial benefit of conservation, take advantage of cost-share and PCM collaboration with supply chain.

Now with 300 farmers in Illinois and five years of agronomic data, Illinois Corn's premier water quality program, Precision Conservation Management released data showing strip-till is as profitable as conventional tillage, cover crops are economically feasible especially when using cost share programs through PCM, SWCD, and others, and Nitrogen rates closer to the University of Illinois' MRTN and spring applied are returning more favorably.

PCM captures whole farm, whole field agronomic data and combines that set with the economic analysis of Farm Business Farm Management to offer farmers the financial understanding and consultation from Conservation Specialists to make conservation decisions with confidence. "I use PCM to help inform the decisions I'm making on each acre to make sure my farm is profitable," one PCM farmer, Dirk Rice, said of PCM. Lead Conservation Specialist, Clay Bess who is working with the PepsiCo (Frito Lay/Bunge) subproject said of his conservation interactions, "We're ok knowing cover crops and no-till aren't going to work on EVERY acre. But if a farmer and I can figure out which acres they will work on from a financial perspective, it's a win-win scenario. Then PCM can take the aggregated, anonymized data back to the supply chain, or Illinois Corn can take it to the policy table, and we can promote the efforts of our farmers and make sure everyone at that table understands the capabilities of agriculture."

To learn more, enroll in the program (\$500 incentive), or RSVP for Champaign/Vermilion County's March PCM meeting, visit [precisionconservation.org](http://precisionconservation.org) or call Clay Bess at 309-445-0278.



## NEW ENTRANCE GATE AT THE BARNHART PRAIRIE

Through the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation Amenities Grant, the Barnhart Prairie has a new entrance gate. The Barnhart family and CCSWCD hope people visit the prairie and



walk the paths to explore the flora and fauna during the day. In an effort to protect the habitat, we ask for no visitors at night and we are hopeful the gate will assist us in protecting and preserving the property. The Barnhart Prairie Committee is planning a community event in 2020 to showcase

the prairie. We truly appreciate the support from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation!



## HIPP ANNUAL HERBICIDE TRAINING & CERTIFICATION

Do you have undesirable plants that are taking over your land or waters? Join HIPP at its annual herbicide training to learn about invasive plant identification & control, herbicide safety & application methods, and alternative methods of control. You can obtain certification to spray herbicides on public lands maintained by our partner organizations. You'll also get updates from conservation experts on invasive control research and how drones are being used to survey invasive plants.

JANUARY 25<sup>TH</sup>

9am-noon

University of Illinois Extension Office, Champaign

801 Country Fair Dr. Champaign, IL 61821

Register for free at: <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=21385>

# CONSERVATION CROPPING 2020

## SEMINARS

***Managing your inputs for healthy soils...***

- ✓ Soil Health
- ✓ Cover Crops
- ✓ 1-Day Seminars

Our 7th  
Year!

ONLY  
**\$20**

For seven years we've talked to & learned from innovative farmers who use science, stewardship, and courage to create sustainable operations. For 2020, we offer Rick Clark, IL/IN Farmer; Bryan Young, Weed Scientist @ Purdue; and Hans Kok, Soil Health Consultant, IN. These three will motivate and amaze you with knowledge and evidence of success. Don't miss the 2020 event near you.

Listen, learn, and talk to people who KNOW it will work on your land. The time to wait is over. It's time to take action! Join us - join the movement. Bring YOUR soil back to life!

**REGISTER ONLINE** and reserve your seat at one of these events. Call 217-352-3536 Extension #101 or visit [www.ccsxcd.com](http://www.ccsxcd.com) and pay a \$20 registration fee by check or credit card.

Lunch  
Included!

**January 21, 2020  
Mt. Vernon, IL**

**January 22, 2020  
Bloomington, IL**

**January 23, 2020  
Rochelle, IL**

*Conservation Cropping Seminars  
Coordinated by:*

Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts  
Illinois Department of Agriculture  
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Illinois Stewardship Alliance  
American Farmland Trust  
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

## CCSWCD IS A COVER CROP CHAMPION FOR 2020

The National Wildlife Federation started the Cover Crop Champion grant program in 2013 and Champaign County SWCD is proud to say we will be a Cover Crop Champion for 2020. In December, we were notified that Erin Bush, CCSWCD Resource Conservationist will represent the district as she participates in the 2020 program. Sarah Hastings who graciously agreed to partner with the district, will be our Farmer Champion. Sarah keeps a very busy schedule and we are honored to have her onboard!

Part of the champion program is an in-person training focused on better communication skills. For the other part of the program, the CCSWCD will be hosting two events before next winter. Please be watching for more information on a soil health family night as well as a lady farmer/landowner event. Great food and collaboration to come in 2020 as part of this grant.



## CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM 2020 - WHY CRP MATTERS

There is no question that the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has been one of the most successful private lands programs over the last 35 years. Whether you're a local producer, an absentee landowner, a recreational landowner, or hunter / fisherman, there is a good chance you've heard of CRP and hopefully had a chance to see the many benefits of the program.

Soil health. Water quality. Wildlife. Pollinators. Revenue. Economic development in rural communities. Hunting heritage. These are all reasons to consider enrolling acres into CRP. There are currently 8 million new and expiring acres open for enrollment.

There are a few different options for the 2020 Signup. CRP continuous practices such as filter strips, wet spots in fields, prairie strips, and pollinator habitat are now open. The CRP General Signup is another option that targets highly erodible ground and big acres (areas that might not be eligible for continuous practices). The General Signup ends on February 28th so it is vital to visit your local USDA office and / or Pheasants Forever biologist as soon as possible to enroll acres.

Whether you're a local farmer trying to maximize productivity, an absentee landowner trying to benefit wildlife, or an avid outdoorsman after a whitetail buck or ringneck pheasant, the CRP program will help you achieve your goals while providing a nice source of income.

If you are interested in learning more about the program, please contact your local USDA office or one of our Pheasants Forever biologists. CRP MATTERS AND THE TIME IS NOW!

Written by: Jason Bleich, Pheasants Forever Conservation Specialist (jbleich@pheasantsforever.org)



Champaign County SWCD  
 2110 W Park Court, Ste C  
 Champaign, IL 61821

Presorted  
 Standard  
 US Postage Paid  
 Monticello, IL  
 Permit No 70

**PLEASE LOOK  
 INSIDE**

- Spring Fish Sale  
Order Form
- Embarras River  
Watershed  
Meeting - Jan 16th
- Conservation Cropping  
Seminars  
Jan 21 (Mt. Vernon)  
Jan 22 (Bloomington)  
Jan 23 (Rochelle)
- S.T.A.R.
- Cost-Share
- And More

Please Join Us!  
**CCSWCD ANNUAL MEETING**  
**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2020**  
**AT NOON**  
**ROUND BARN BANQUET CENTER**



We are proud to announce our guest speaker will be local expert Atmospheric Scientist, **Eric Snodgrass!**

Come for a free buffet lunch and stay for an interesting presentation. Event should conclude around 2 and will include a short business meeting. Eleanor Blackmon, Joe Rothermel and Steve Stierwalt are up for re-election, and a couple of outstanding people will be honored this year:

**Lowell Gentry** as our Conservation Innovator of the Year  
**Senator Scott Bennett** is our Friend of Conservation

Please RSVP to 217-352-3536 ext 3 by January 30, 2020.