

Resource Conservation Planning

Individual resource conservation plans for farms or other areas are the basis of the SWCD program. This plan gives the landowner or operator a look at their soil and water resources and offers alternatives for their management. It points out needed land use changes and suggests practices for application.



Included in the Conservation Plan is a map of the property. It shows the kinds of soils and capability of each soil for various uses. Technical field personnel are available at the District Office to explain ways each soil type can be used and managed. Recommendations are made for various agricultural management practices by a soil conservationist to overcome soil erosion losses and keep the land productive.

Services Available Through the District Office

- * Conservation Planning and Tillage Information
- * Land Use Planning
- * Soils Information
- * Erosion Control Practices
- * Water Management
- * Forest Management and Tree Planting
- * Conservation Education
- * Wildlife Area Establishment
- * Flood Prevention Assistance
- * Assistance to local government agencies in planning resource development.

District Sales

The Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District sells bare root tree seedlings each spring for conservation or windbreak use by rural and urban landowners. Orders are taken from January through March each year and distributed in April. Also, the District offers a fish sale each spring and fall. Some available species include; Catfish, Grass Carp, Hybrid Redear, Bluegill and Bass. Each spring, the District also sells native plant plugs from a local nursery, repurposed rain-barrels and aerial photo services. Year-round, the District offers Rachel and Sammy books, soil testing kits, Plantskydd, and water sample bottles from the Knox County Health Department. For further information on sales, please call

“Conservation means harmony between men and land. When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land; when both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation. When one or the other grows poorer, we do not.... It is the individual farmer who must weave the greater part of the rug on which America stands.”

The Farmer as a Conservationist, Aldo Leopold



Knox County Soil and Water Conservation District



{ Established 1944 }

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What is a Soil and Water Conservation District?



Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) are legal subdivisions of state government charged with the leadership and

responsibility, under state law, for conservation work within their boundaries much the same as school districts are responsible for education. The purpose of a District is to focus attention on land, water, and related resource problems, to develop programs to solve them, and to enlist and coordinate help from all public and private sources that can aid in accomplishing the District's goals.

When did the District Start?

Congress passed a law in 1935 declaring soil and water conservation and wise land use, a national policy. In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt wrote to the governors of all the states recommending legislation allowing land owners to form soil and water conservation districts. That same year, the General Assembly in Illinois passed the Soil and Water Conservation Districts Act.

The Knox County SWCD was established in 1944 and serves all landowners and users within its boundaries, both rural and urban. The District is a central clearinghouse for technical assistance and information dealing with soil, water and related resource concerns which affects the quality of the local environment.

How does the District work?

The District is governed by a Board of local citizens familiar with local resource problems. The Board members, known as Directors, are elected for two-year terms at an election by land owners and occupiers within the District's boundaries. District Directors serve as public officials, however they are not public employees and receive no salary. Districts do not have powers of taxation, however, funds are provided to the District by the State of Illinois, and through fundraising programs. Technical assistance for conservation work is provided through the District, by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and through other state and federal agencies.

Cooperating Agencies

The Knox County SWCD, along with its cooperating agencies, provides technical assistance for conservation planning and agricultural management practices as well as other resource related problems with no charge for these services.

Originally, the District worked with farmers to protect agricultural land, however, the District now provides services to all the public, including city-county planning commissions, engineers, real estate developers, and urban homeowners.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture, through the Bureau of Land and Water Resources, administers the soil and water conservation district act and allocates state appropriations to the Districts.

The United States Department of Agriculture is the only Federal Agency that received federal funds earmarked by Congress for direct technical assistance from the NRCS to Districts, and for financial assistance for conservation projects through the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

A memorandum of understanding between the District and NRCS provides the technical field personnel to you... the cooperators... through the District. Field personnel such as soil scientists, agricultural engineers, and other specialists at the NRCS area, state and national levels assist the District Conservationist in his or her work.

