

# CRP NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 2

March 2022



## PRIMARY NESTING SEASON DATES:

APRIL 15th - AUGUST 1st  
No mowing or disturbance  
should be completed  
between these dates.

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## Planning to Burn?

Inquire about your CRP  
Burn Plans and Permit  
Applications for Mid  
Contract Management.

### For More Information Contact:

**Brodie Eddington**  
Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist  
[beddington@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:beddington@pheasantsforever.org)  
Phone: 309-452-3848 ext 3

## McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District



The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District strongly believes in the fundamentals of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The district has collaborated information to help educate you on the program and the many resources available. Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. On behalf of McLean County SWCD Board and Staff we thank you for your dedication to conservation stewardship!

## CRP 2022 General Sign-up

Agricultural producers and landowners can sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a cornerstone conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The General CRP signup will run from Jan. 31 to March 11. Contact our office at 309-452-3848 ext 2 to begin the process.



## Reduced Property Tax-CRP

Reduce your property tax assessment under the state of IL Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law Public Act 89-606. The Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law provides for a reduction in the assessed value of cropland certified as meeting the requirements of the law to 1/6th of its productivity index equalized assessed value as cropland. CRP Practices outside of the Filter Strip practice also may qualify. Provide your CRP Contract, FSA Map, and Parcel Number to the McLean County Tax Assessors Office.

### To Apply or for More Information Contact:

#### Brett Irwin

Administrative Coordinator/Resource Conservationist  
[brett.irwin@il.nacdn.net](mailto:brett.irwin@il.nacdn.net)  
Phone: 309-452-3848 ext 3

## Did You Know?

- 22.1 million acres are enrolled in CRP
- Illinois has 825,756 acres enrolled in CRP as of 2020
- McLean County has 692,291 acres of row crops
- McLean County has 11,644 acres or 1.6% of the cropland acreage enrolled in CRP

## CRP Rules and Facts

- Individuals have a 50,000 dollar cap on funds received through CRP payments.
- Contracts last 10-15 years.
- Landowners must own land for 1 year before enrolling land into CRP.
- Taking land out of the contract requires you to pay all previous payments back to FSA.
- CRP payments are received in October each year.
- Spot mowing is allowed for weed control. Whole field mowing is prohibited, unless approved by a FSA or NRCS official. Waterways are encouraged to be mowed for long-term maintenance and improved functionality.

# Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist



Brodie Eddington

The Normal USDA office welcomes our newest employee Brodie Eddington. Brodie was raised in a small town in Hancock County Illinois, where he learned to enjoy outdoor life with hobbies such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and trap shooting. He has previously worked at Weinberg-King State Park as a summer conservation worker for the last 6 years. Brodie received his bachelor's degree in Environmental

Biology from Western Illinois University and is pursuing his master's degree in Biology. He has also aided in projects such as collaring bobcats for bobcat range studies in the western Illinois region as well as aiding the IDNR with turtle surveys on the Illinois river and their yearly goose banding events. If you're interested in more information about the Conservation Reserve Program, or technical assistance contact Brodie at [beddington@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:beddington@pheasantsforever.org) or 309-452-3848 ext 3 .

## What is a Farm Bill Biologist?

- Add wildlife technical assistance in USDA offices to assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other conservation partners with delivering conservation programs to landowners.
- Accelerate enrollment in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Bill conservation programs, like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).
- Development of prescribed burn plans for the Conservation Reserve Program Mid-Contract Management.

## Mid-Contract Management Requirements

Sourced by Natural Resources Conservation Service

CRP participants may be required to perform at least one management activity as part of a **Conservation Plan**. The most common exceptions to the rule are waterways and constructed wetlands, which require maintenance but not a contracted **Mid-Contract Management** practice. A mid contract management practice is required to ensure plant diversity and wildlife benefits, while ensuring protection of the soil and water resources. Recently managed mowing of CRP has been added as a Mid-Contract Management practice, however mowing as a stand-alone practice does not constitute annual mowing and is to first be approved by the NRCS office. The use of management practices to spot control noxious or invasive species is encouraged and expected. Mowing should be avoided during the primary nesting season of April 15th-August 1st. No mid-contract management practice can be scheduled or cost-shared in the last three years of the contract.

The majority of grass practices, such as **filter strips**, **warm season** grass plantings, and **cool season** grass plantings require one of the Mid-Contract management practices listed below:

**Strip Disking:** Strip disking is the light disking of strips of well-established grass stands, 3 years and older. This method requires 2-4 inches of disturbance that leaves 50% of the vegetation intact and exposes the other 50% of soil surface. The time frame for this practice is between October 1<sup>st</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>. You will be required to begin this practice on year 4 of your contract and will disk one third of the total acres until it all has been completed.

**Prescribed Burning:** Prescribed burning is used to remove excess litter, promote germination of seed bearing annuals and wildflowers, increase plant diversity, and control unwanted woody cover. Burns must be conducted in accordance with an **Approved Burn Plan** and IEPA (Illinois Environmental Protection Agency) **Open Burning permit**. Grassland fields must be established for a minimum of 3 years before initiating burning. No more than 1/3 of the area shall be burned during any year and should not occur more than once every 3 years on any burn unit, unless required to achieve the goals of the burn plan. To apply contact Brodie Eddington at [beddington@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:beddington@pheasantsforever.org).

**Inter-seeding:** Adding introduced legumes such as alfalfa, ladino or red clovers, or native legumes and forbs such as partridge pea, white or purple prairie clover, or tick trefoil, will add diversity and structure to an existing cover. Inter-seeding requires that existing vegetation be weakened with herbicides, mowing, and/or burning prior to inter-seeding to expose at least 50% bare soil. Current soil tests (less than 4 years old) may be required prior to seeding. Normally you are required to complete this practice in the first year of re-enrollment and then on year 4 of your contract.

## Need a CRP Contractor?

The McLean County SWCD has collected a growing list of contractors and services provided. Please visit [mcleancountyswcd.com](http://mcleancountyswcd.com) to learn more.



# Prairie Strip Program

***Reduce Erosion, Combat Compaction, Promote Wildlife Habitat***

## CRP Program Details

The Prairie Strip practice is an ideal conservation solution adjacent to wind turbine lanes, forested areas, waterways, and terrace channels. Reduce point rows and increase your ROI on highly sensitive and low yield areas through and around the field. Iowa State University reports 40% reduction in run-off, 95% less soil export, 90% less phosphorus export, and 84% less nitrogen export following practice installation.

- ⇒ Turn Row Friendly
- ⇒ Diverse native seed mix
- ⇒ \$90 - 120/ac Seed Cost
- ⇒ 10 or 15 year contract
- ⇒ Up to 50% cost share
- ⇒ 30 - 120 foot strip width



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

USDA AND MCLEAN COUNTY SWCD IS AN EQUAL  
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER AND LENDER



For more information contact the office: 309-452-3848 ext 3

## CRP Eligible Seed Mixes AVAILABLE!

CRP eligible mixes are available for purchase through McLean County SWCD. Make your orders to our office and checks payable to McLean County SWCD. The McLean County SWCD works with a wide list of vendors you may choose from. A seed vendor list is available upon request.

## McLean County Farm Service Agency

The United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency (FSA) oversees a number of voluntary conservation-related programs. These programs work to address a large number of farming and ranching related conservation issues including: Drinking water protection, Reducing soil erosion, Wildlife habitat preservation, Preservation and restoration of forests and wetlands, Aiding farmers whose farms are damaged by natural disasters. Shane Lavicka is the CRP Program Technician at the McLean County Farm Service Agency. For questions regarding your CRP contract, contact Shane at 309-452-3848 ext 2



## Food Plots


Food Plots are allowed in many of the Native and Cool season grass practices, excluding waterways and filter strips. Food plots can play an important role in wildlife management, and your CRP practice. Only 10% of the total acres, not

to exceed 5 acres are allowed to be planted into a food plot. Many different types of wildlife can benefit from this management tool and there are many different selections that can be made. Some of those examples include corn,

soybeans, wheat, clover, turnips, chicory, sorghum, sunflowers, or sudan grass. Check your conservation plan for eligibility requirements to plant a food plot.



# Invasive Species Awareness

Jan. <b>SCT</b>		<b>Teasel Control Timeline</b>
Feb. <b>SCT</b>		
Mar. <b>SCT</b>	<b>SCT</b> Scout on foot, I.D., mark locations on maps, quantify infested area locating rosette patches, teasel carpets and colonies that contain canes and rosettes. Mark on maps. Keep maps for future years to locate dormant seed re-sprouts. Add GPS units to track locations.	
Apr. <b>Spray 1</b>	<b>Spray 1</b> Spray single plants and colonies in cane bolt stage before flowering begins with aminopyralid/clopyrid/glyphosate	
May. <b>Spray 2</b>	<b>DO NOT SPRAY STALKS THAT ARE IN FLOWER, IT'S TOO LATE. FLOWERS WILL SET-SEED!!</b>	
June <b>Spray 2</b>	<b>Spray 2</b> Spray colonies and single plants that re-grow after mowing. Spraying is ok until plant flowers.	
July <b>Mow 1</b>	<b>DO NOT SPRAY AFTER PLANT HAS STARTED TO FLOWER.</b>	
Aug. <b>Mow 2</b>	<b>Mow 1</b> Mow colonies in flower, buying time to spray after re-growth.	
Sept. <b>Mow 2</b>	<b>Mow 2</b> Mowing may need to be done 2x to cut down canes that were flattened by tractor tires. Canes will re-grow with new flower heads.	
Oct. <b>Spray 3</b>	<b>Spray 3</b> Spray teasel rosette colonies and carpets missed and exposed during fall mowouts. Spraying can continue until 2nd hard frost causes damage to rosettes. During mild fall weather, spraying can continue until late November if there have been no hard frosts.	
Nov. <b>SCT Spray 3</b>		
Dec. <b>SCT</b>		

## Common Teasel

Thick rosette carpets form, killing all original turf and/or native prairie. Teasel seeds are spread far & wide by wind, water and most commonly hitchhikers on the decks of roadside batwing mowers. Mowing can and will extend the life of common teasel.



## Reed Canary Grass

Native to Europe, Asia, and North America. The European variety is particularly aggressive and it is likely that the invasive varieties are cultivars that were crossbred for fast growth. Reed canary grass is a cool-season perennial that typically invades wetlands and floodplains but it can also grow in dry soils in shaded wooded areas. It is a sod-forming grass that spreads through rhizomes (underground horizontal stems) and runners. Once it has invaded an area it can completely eliminate other vegetation because of its dense growth. It can even inhibit tree growth in floodplain forests.

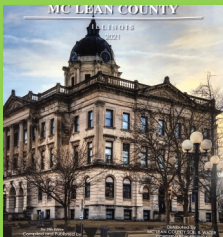


## Canada Thistle

A rhizomatous perennial grows from 1-5ft. tall. Roots can grow deep into the ground. Stems do not have conspicuous spines. Leaves are dark green and lanceolate to oblong-lanceolate. They are glabrous above, but their undersides have short, white hairs. They maybe pinnatifid and very prickly. It has male and female plants. Female flowers are flask-shaped. Female flowers are fragrant and the male flowers are not. Flowers range from purple to pink or white. It blooms from June to August. It presents a significant problem in prairie and riparian habitats.



## 2021 PLAT BOOKS



**\$35**

Credit/Debit cards  
4% Fee

**AVAILABLE Now!**

## McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

Address: 402 N Kays Drive, Normal IL 61761

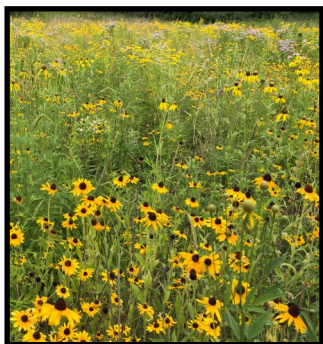
Email: [mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com](mailto:mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com)

Phone: 309-452-3848 ext 3

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



## State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement-SAFE



SAFE provides an opportunity to develop grassroots cooperative conservation projects to address high priority wildlife needs through habitat restoration. The practices must be used to address wildlife habitat that can be enhanced through the restoration of eligible cropland through CRP. Enrollment is available under continuous signup criteria, depending on the practice and

cover being established. Whole field enrollment is available for select practices. McLean County has two SAFE areas that allow landowners and producers to qualify for a range of wildlife practices that can be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program SAFE CP38. The Cheneys Grove Township, a Southern portion of Anchor township, Eastern edge of Arrowsmith township, and a southern portion of Funks Grove fall within the SAFE area.

### Cropping History

- Land with a current cropping history with the Farm Service Agency from 2012-2017
- Crop must have been reported 4 of the 6 years within this range
- Landowners must meet the Adjusted Gross Income "AGI" requirement
- Land must fall within the SAFE area
- Contracts begin October 1st of a program year

### Do you Qualify?

View our interactive map of eligible land and practices at: [www.mcleancountyswcd.com/mcleancountysafe/](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com/mcleancountysafe/)

## Equipment Rental



The McLean County Pheasants Forever chapter has made three Truax Drills available for wildlife habitat installation in McLean County. These drills were purchased in cooperation with Illinois

DNR through Habitat Stamp funds purchased by Illinois Hunters. Reporting of seeding is required to maintain records of habitat installed. The Drills are located at the SWCD office for rental.

- **Checks made payable to: Pheasants Forever**
- \$250 Security Deposit (Returned when equipment is returned in good working order. \*\*Operable and Clean) Drill inspection is made by Resource Conservationist, and must be dropped off with the employee present.

### Equipment Requirements/Specifications

- Minimum 50 Horsepower Tractor
- Drill has Pioneer ends and 2 hydraulic Lines for raising/lowering
- A truck with a hitch pin needed for transport (45mph max speed)
- Drill is pulled with a tow bar
- Drill is 8 feet wide and does 5 feet of planting
- The three seed boxes are capable of planting native seed mixes, pollinator habitat, food plots, and cool season plantings.
- \$50 per Business Day Cost. (Planter to be picked up and returned on same day. If not, an additional \$50 charge for each day utilized.
- \$100 per Business Day Cost for Waterway Seeding

The McLean County SWCD has made a three broadcaster seeders available for wildlife habitat installation in McLean County. Reporting of seeding installation is required to maintain records of habitat installed.

### **Checks made payable to: McLean County SWCD**

- \$50 Security Deposit (Returned when equipment is returned in good working order. \*\*Operable and Clean) Planter inspection is made by Resource Conservationist, and must be dropped off with the employee present
- \$20 per Business Day Cost. (Planter to be picked up and returned on same day. If not, an additional \$20 charge for each day utilized





**McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District**

402 N. Kays Drive  
Normal, IL 61761  
(309) 452-3848 ext. 3  
[www.McLeanCountySWCD.com](http://www.McLeanCountySWCD.com)

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**\*\*\*\*\*NOTICE\*\*\*\*\***

Dear Producer,

This newsletter is being provided to CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) participants and wildlife management enthusiasts within McLean County. The information within this newsletter is to help educate participants on proper management and to keep producers/landowners in compliance with their contract agreements. Enclosed you will find critical information that will keep your CRP contract from future or current contract violations. Please read and review this information and, if applicable, with your tenants to make sure you are **BOTH** in full understanding of your contract obligations. Failure to be informed of such obligations could interfere with compliance spot checks done by technical staff in both NRCS/FSA. It is also important to recognize the many resources available in McLean County for CRP participants to manage, enroll and improve the land.

Thank you,

**McLean County SWCD**