

# SOIL & WATER NEWS

402 N Kays Drive, Normal IL 61761 309-452-3848 extension 3  
www.mcleancountyswcd.com



## Celebrating 25 Years of Service to McLean County, Sally Breese

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." ~ Elizabeth Andrew. Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or SWCD's, are a political subdivision of state government authorized under the SWCD Act to provide assistance to the public in conserving and protecting soil, water, and other natural resources. There are 97 county based SWCD offices serving all 102 counties in the state. SWCDs are non-taxing, non-regulatory, volunteer led, local government entities. The McLean County SWCD board and staff are grateful for Sally's leadership for conservation delivery. Sally and her husband John reside near Lexington on their row crop and livestock operation. Active conservationists with prairie restoration, woodland habitat and grazing rotations throughout their farm. Thank you Sally for your continued service to the SWCD board of directors!



## Welcome McKinley Morris, Soil Conservationist, Normal NRCS Office

McKinley Morris is the new soil conservationist at the Normal Illinois NRCS office. She graduated from Penn State with a Bachelor of Science in forest ecosystem resource management with a minor in soil science. She was a member of the Penn State soil judging team and worked at Dr. Matchinger's veterinary entomology laboratory studying the relationships between insects and wildlife or livestock. NRCS soil conservationists offer conservation planning and technical help to agricultural producers, helping them implement practices that sequester carbon, mitigate against climate change and conserve other natural resources. This assistance helps producers who apply and are funded for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Regional Conservation Partnership Program, and others. You can contact McKinley at our office by calling 309-452-3848 ext 3 or emailing her at [mckinley.morris@usda.gov](mailto:mckinley.morris@usda.gov).



## The McLean County SWCD Board Of Directors

The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District board wishes all a safe and successful harvest season! Your local board is made up of farmers and landowners throughout the McLean county area. Each director brings a unique background and conservation ethic to lead our district's delivery of state and federal programs through many partnerships. Pictured here are your elected board members, Left to Right: Sally Breese, Lexington IL, Mike Kelley, Lexington IL, Jeff Mathews LeRoy IL, Irvin Bane, Bellflower IL, and Howard Heatherwick McLean IL. You can learn more about the history of McLean county and our board of directors at [www.mcleancountyswcd.com/board-members/](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com/board-members/).



### SWCD Office Hours

Monday-Friday  
8:00am to 4:30pm

### SWCD Board of Directors

Mike Kelley - Chairman  
Sally Breese - Vice Chairman  
Irvin Bane - Director  
Howard Heatherwick - Director  
Jeff Mathews - Director

### SWCD Staff

Brett Irwin  
Resource Conservationist/  
Administrative Coordinator  
Jackie Kraft  
Watershed Coordinator  
Ross Fogle  
Watershed Conservation Specialist

### NRCS Staff

Adam Wyant  
District Conservationist  
Matt Bell  
Soil Technician  
McKinley Morris  
Soil Conservationist

### Pheasants Forever

Zach Stephenson  
Farm Bill Biologist

Visit our Website!



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



Find us on Facebook!

The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status or disability. This policy covers all programs, services and procedures of the District, including employment.

The USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

## Zach Stephenson, Central Illinois Farm Bill Biologist Pheasants Forever

The Normal USDA service center welcomes Zach Stephenson as our newest Farm Bill Biologist for Pheasants Forever. Prior joining PFQF, Zach was working in Colorado as a Plant Health Care Technician and worked at Nelson Land Management and Jim Edgar State Park. Zach and his wife are transiting to living back in Illinois. Zach has already hit the ground running in his new role with PFQF. Inquire about your **CRP Burn Plans and Permit Applications** for Mid Contract Management. If your CRP contract contains burning as a mid contract management requirement you must begin the process at least 90 days before burning. The approval time frame for a EPA Permit and Burn Plan is easy to apply for, however there are multiple layers of approval to insure you meet your requirements for the Farm Service Agency. To learn more contact Zach Stephenson.

Serving: Peoria, McLean, Woodford, Livingston, Tazewell, and DeWitt counties

Phone: 217-691-0922 or Email: [zstephenson@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:zstephenson@pheasantsforever.org)



## Jim Rutherford Conservation Scholarship 2023 Award Winners



**Evan Kraft**, son of Mark and Jackie Kraft, is a Towanda IL native at Normal Community High School planning to pursue an Agri-Business Major at Illinois State University. Evan is active in FFA as both a member and leadership team officer. He is a National Honor Society member, and athlete in Cross Country and the boy's track and field team. Evan has been a state record book winner in wildlife management and has earned his State Degree. Agricultural instructor, Jennifer Stone writes "Evan has been a critical leader in our department." Congratulations Evan!

**Payton Wiltz**, son of Brian and Mandy Wiltz, is a Lexington IL native at Lexington High School planning to pursue an agricultural degree at local junior college program. Payton is an active member of the FFA and has served officer roles including sentinel, reporter, secretary and vice president. He is a National Honor Society member, earned his state FFA degree and active on his family farming operation. McLean County Farmer and owner of SDM Farms, Dave Stutzman writes "Payton has a good attitude and is an honest and conscientious person." Congratulations Payton!



**Austin Russow**, son of Eric and Cara Russow, is a Heyworth IL native at Heyworth High School planning to pursue an Agri-Business Major at an Illinois College program. Austin is active in FFA both as a member and chapter officer. He is a National Honor Society member, 4-H member, Track team member and Livestock Judging team member. Eric Updegraff, Cross Country and Track and Field Coach writes "His work ethic is unrivaled and makes it easy to root for him." Congratulations Austin!

## Thank You Soil Conservationist Ben Wilson !

On behalf of the McLean County SWCD board and staff we thank Ben Wilson for his commitment to McLean County Conservation programs, farmers and landowners. Ben's career began here with the Normal USDA as a Farm Bill Biologist for Pheasants Forever. Helping landowners in a six county area surrounding McLean County with the Conservation Reserve Program and prairie restoration projects. He later took his current role as a Soil Conservationist at NRCS in 2020 and since then has been an important part of our conservation delivery system, and friend of the Soil and Water Conservation District. Ben has taken a new opportunity in his home state of Tennessee with the NRCS. We wish Ben the best, and are grateful for his time with us in McLean County!



## 2023 Jim Rutherford Conservation Golf Outing Fundraiser



The Jim Rutherford Scholarship was established by the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District to assist outstanding agricultural students at any Illinois College. The students awarded the scholarship demonstrate superior agricultural academic achievement, commitment to soil and water conservation and innovation. The Jim Rutherford Scholarship is awarded in the fall semester of the academic year. This scholarship fund is made possible by generous donations from local donors. Each year an annual Golf Outing is held to raise the necessary funds. The McLean County SWCD held the annual Jim Rutherford Conservation Scholarship Golf Outing, at Crestwicke Country Club on Tuesday August 8, 2023. Thirty six golfers participated in the event this year and many donors helped make this event possible. Special thanks to the following donors and individuals that make this event possible!

### Thank you 2023 Scholarship Underwriters

**Compeer Financial**  
**Richard Farms– Mike & Kay Richard**  
**Hughart Family Limited Partnership**

### Thank you 2023 Scholarship Donors & Sponsors

**Arlene Rutherford, McLean IL**  
**Compeer Financial**  
**Richard Farms– Mike & Kay Richard**  
**Hughart Family Limited Partnership**

### Thank you 2023 Scholarship Donors & Sponsors

**Dan Kelley, Normal IL**  
**Beverly J Miller, Danvers IL**  
**Mark & Cindy Gillis, Danvers IL**  
**Steve Anderson, Saint Charles, IL**  
**McLean County Pheasants Forever**  
**Pioneer– Jeremy Wilson**  
**Mikel Fonger, Bloomington IL**  
**M & M AG Inc, Lexington IL**  
**Arin Ziebarth, Lexington IL**

Since 2015, we have awarded 20 local students with scholarships amounting to \$10,500. The McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District Awarded three scholarships this year including (1) \$1000 scholarship, and (2) \$500 scholarships. The proceeds were received through the generous donations of our community, and the annual Golf Outing fundraiser. Special thanks to Hughart Family Limited Partnership and Richard Farms for unwriting two of our scholarship awards in 2022! If you would like to help us award future applicants, please consider making a donation or joining us for the 2024 outing! Additional details and future registrations can be found at [www.mcleancountyswcd.com/jimrutherford/](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com/jimrutherford/).

## McLean County Cover Crop Aerial Demonstration

Join the McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District for an informational meeting and aerial application demonstration. Speakers will discuss current cover crop cost share programs, the nutrient loss reduction strategy, and cover crop aerial application information.

### Speakers and Topics Include:

- **Cover Crop Programs and Cost-Share Opportunities:** Taylor Clark, NRCS Soil Conservationist
- **Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy:** Trevor Sample, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- **Sustainable Elements of Cover Crops:** Dr. Shalamar Armstrong, Purdue University
- **Aerial Application and Demonstration:** Kris Peterson, Pontiac Flying Service



### Location Details

**When: September 6, 2023 9:00am**  
**Where: 20478 N. 2900 East Road**  
**Lexington, IL 61753**

**Registration Required: 309-452-3848 ext 3**



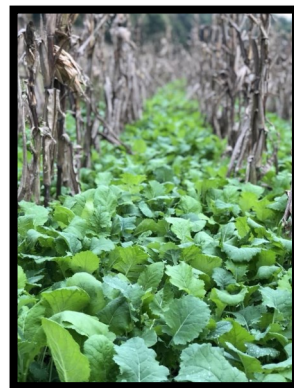
## Pond Shocking Demonstration Near Downs IL

Join us for an evening at a private local pond near Downs IL on **September 7, 2023 at 6:00pm** to see a pond shocking demonstration. Learn more about fish species identification, population impacts, pond management goals and more. Electrofishing is a technique that uses direct current electricity flowing between a submerged cathode and anode. This affects the movements of nearby fish so that they swim toward the anode, where they can be caught or stunned. Electrofishing is a common scientific survey method used to sample fish populations to determine abundance, density and species composition. Registration is required and the location details will be shared with individuals after registration.



## Conservation Cost-Share Opportunities through McLean County SWCD

Partners for Conservation funds are available for conservation installation that will conserve soil and benefit water quality. This funding pool is available on behalf of the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District. The funds can be used for projects outside of current practices enrolled in an active government contract. Cost share is based on a practice component list that sets expectations for average costs of installation. Cover crop cost share is capped at \$3200 per applicant or 75% of total costs, whichever amount is less. It is important to note that applications must be filled out and approved before seed or other project costs occur as payments cannot be made retroactively. Conservation practices include but are not limited to: cover crops 75% cost share up to \$40/ac-3 year maximum, grassed waterway construction 75% cost shared, water well decommissioning 75% cost shared and new adoption of no-till or strip till 75% cost shared. Learn more or make an application with Brett Irwin. Sign-up before October 1, 2023.



## No-Till Drills, Broadcast Seeders, and Tree Planter Available for Rent

Three no-till drills, a three-point broadcast seeder, a tree planter, and multiple hand/UTV broadcast seeders are available for wildlife habitat installation in McLean County. Some of these pieces of equipment were purchased in cooperation with Illinois DNR through Habitat Stamp funds raised by Illinois Hunters. Reporting of habitat installation is required to maintain records of the acres installed. Equipment is owned by the McLean County Pheasants Forever Chapter. A rental agreement, and Pheasants Forever membership is required.

### Rental Agreement Details:

- \$250 Security Deposit
- \$150 Daily Charge for Native Seedlings with Drills & Tree Plantings
- \$200 Daily Charge for Drill operation on Waterway Seedlings
- \$250 Daily Charge for Three-Point Broadcast Seeder
- All Equipment includes a \$100 Weekend charge if not returned by COB Friday
- \$35 Pheasants Forever Current Membership required
- Copy of Current Seed Tag is Required when equipment is returned

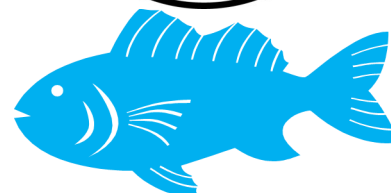
### Equipment Requirements/Specifications:

- Minimum 50 horsepower tractor
- Drills have pioneer ends and 2 hydraulic lines for raising/lowering
- Three Point attachment for broadcast seeder or Tree Planter required
- PTO required for broadcast seeding
- Trailer or pick-up bed required to transport of Three Point Broadcaster
- A hitch pin for drill transportation required (45mph max speed)
- A 2" ball for transport (35mph max speed) of Tree Planter, already on a trailer
- Tree Planter is capable of planting up to 4-5' bare root trees
- Drill is 8 feet wide and does 5 feet of planting
- Drills include three seed boxes, capable of planting native & pollinator habitat or food plots



# McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

## 2023 FALL FISH SALE



All fish are sold in quantities as advertised and cannot be broken down.

Send Order and  
Payment to:  
McLean County SWCD  
402 N. Kays Drive  
Normal, IL 61761

Accepting credit cards  
4% surcharge

Phone: (309)452-3848 ext. 3  
www.mcleancountyswcd.com

**Payment & Order DEADLINES**  
**Grass Carp - SEPTEMBER 13**  
**All Other Orders - SEPTEMBER 20**

### PICK-UP

Thursday, September 28  
9:00am  
McLean County SWCD Office

Description	Quantity	Price	Total Amount
Fathead Minnows		\$14.00 per pound	
Channel Catfish 6-8"		\$65.00 per 50	
Albino Catfish 5-8"		\$4.00 per fish	
Hybrid Sunfish 1-2"		\$100.00 per 250	
Hybrid Sunfish 3-5"		\$65.00 per 50	
Bluegill 1-2"		\$100.00 per 250	
Bluegill 3-5"		\$65.00 per 50	
Black Crappie 2-4"		\$140.00 per 100	
Redear 1-2"		\$100.00 per 250	
Largemouth Bass 3"		\$75.00 per 50	
Largemouth Bass 5-8"		\$180.00 per 50	
Triploid Grass Carp		\$15.00 per fish	
HB Black OR Blue Pond Dye		\$20.00 per quart	
Triton High Protein Fish Food 50 lb bag		\$47.00 per bag	
Texas Hunter Automatic Fish Feeder (75 lb capacity)		\$1,059.00	
Porcupine Fish Attractor		\$60.00 for 1 Or \$100.00 for 2	
(Newsletter Version)		<b>TOTAL</b>	

Disclaimer: All Catfish will need coolers filled with pond water in order to pick-up.

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

INFORMATION BELOW REQUIRED BY IDNR IF PURCHASING GRASS CARP:

Township \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Size of pond (Acres) \_\_\_\_\_

## FISH DESCRIPTIONS

**Fathead Minnows:** Stock in new ponds prior to stocking Largemouth Bass so that they have the opportunity to spawn and provide plenty of feed for the young Bass.

**Channel Catfish:** Outstanding food and sport fish. The species is compatible in lakes and ponds with all fish and works well with Hybrid Sunfish and Largemouth Bass. Growth rates average 1 lbs. per year if fed a commercial feed.

**Albino Catfish:** Identical to Channel Catfish except white skin and pink eyes.

**Hybrid Sunfish:** Produced by crossing a male Bluegill with a female Green Sunfish. This hybrid cross produces a 90% male, 10% female population, which makes the Hybrid Sunfish an excellent pond fish as it will not overpopulate. The Hybrid Sunfish readily accepts artificial feed and grows to a much larger size than either parent. Growth rates average  $\frac{1}{4}$  -  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per year.

**Bluegill:** Fit much of the description of the Hybrid Sunfish except they do not grow as quickly as Hybrid Sunfish. Grows up to 1/2 pound per year.

**Black Crappie:** Excellent for food and sport fishing. Very prolific and not recommended for ponds under 5 acres. Schooling fish that like lots of structures and hiding places; excellent at controlling insects. Can grow up to 1/4 pound per year.

**Redear:** Recommended for deeper ponds and can be stocked along with Bluegill or Hybrid Sunfish. They are a deep water fish, feeding on snails or clams, and are usually harder to catch except during spawning season when they are in the shallows. Can grow up to 1/3 pound per year.

**Largemouth Bass:** One of the most popular fish in America. They are predators and help control stunted Bluegill and Crappie populations. Can grow up to 1/2 to 3/4 pound per year.

**Triploid Grass Carp:** Eat aquatic vegetation, but not algae. This fish will not reproduce. These Carp eat most aggressively in the hot, summer months. Good results are usually seen after a second season. They will eat up to 2-3 times their weight each day.

**HB Black or Blue Pond Dye:** Can be used to limit sunlight penetration and help limit algae & vegetation growth. We recommend 1 quart of blue and 1 quart of black per acre.

**Triton High Protein Fish Food:** This is a 45% protein (fishmeal based) fish food that can be fed to fish to increase growth rates and enhance the overall health of the fish.

**Texas Hunter Automatic Fish Feeder:** A premium fish feeder with a 75 lb capacity that is operated by a programmable timer and powered off of a 12v battery and solar panel (all included).



**Porcupine Fish Attractor:** Improves spawning habitat while providing valuable structure for all species of fish. Works great everywhere in small ponds and around docks, creek channels and flats in larger ponds. Kit comes complete with sphere and 2' PVC fittings.

Questions about stocking? Contact our IDNR Fish Biologist, Mike Garthaus at [mike.garthaus@illinois.gov](mailto:mike.garthaus@illinois.gov)

## PICK-UP INSTRUCTIONS

All fish **BESIDES** Channel/Albino Catfish will be bagged with water at the time of pick up.

**Please bring coolers/garbage cans with pond water if you ordered Catfish.**

Please bring coolers, Rubbermaid totes, boxes, etc. to place your bags in for the trip home so that bags do not roll during driving.

# McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

## 2023 FALL TREE SALE

(Newsletter Version)



**ORDER DEADLINE:**  
**October 6, 2023**

**Send Order and Payment to:**

McLean County SWCD  
402 N. Kays Drive  
Normal, IL 61761

\*Credit cards subject to 4% surcharge.

**PICK-UP**

October 12, 2023  
8:00 am — 4:30 pm  
McLean County SWCD Office

**Phone: (309)452-3848 ext. 3**

**[www.McLeanCountySWCD.com](http://www.McLeanCountySWCD.com)**

**NOTE:** The District cannot accept responsibility for sizes and/or the viability of plant materials as stated by the nursery. All planting material requires commitment to assure survival. Putting plants under stress (i.e. lack of water, planting too deep or too shallow, or a delay in planting) will weaken the plants and lessen survival rates. Do not plant larger trees too close to buildings, sidewalks, driveways or utilities. It is your responsibility to learn proper planting techniques and to select appropriate planting sites. The District cannot be responsible for replacing stock that do not survive.

Larger Trees and Shrubs ( 5 GALLON pots)			
*Slightly branched whips 4-5 feet tall			
Description	Quantity	Price	Total
Ohio Buckeye		\$50.00	
Autumn Blaze Maple		\$50.00	
Crimson Sunset Maple		\$50.00	
Red Oak		\$50.00	
Swamp White Oak		\$50.00	
Fruit Trees (5 GALLON pots) 4-6 feet tall			
Fuji Apple - use another variety as pollinator		\$55.00	
SnowSweet Apple - use another variety as pollinator		\$55.00	
Sweet Cherry Pie - self fertile		\$55.00	
Evergreens (1 GALLON pots)			
Eastern White Pine 15-18"		\$11.00	
Colorado Spruce 12-15"		\$11.00	
Norway Spruce 15-18"		\$11.00	
Black Hills Spruce 10-12"		\$11.00	
Shrubs and Plants (1 GALLON pots)			
Black Chokeberry 12-18"		\$10.00	
Red Osier Dogwood 10-12"		\$10.00	
Kentucky Coffee Tree, 18-24"		\$10.00	
Japanese Tree Lilac 30-36"		\$10.00	
The Monarch Mix, per acre		\$165.00	
Tree Protector, 2ft Vinyl sheet w/zip ties		\$2.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>			
Name: _____			
Address: _____			
City _____ Zip _____			
Phone: _____			
Email: _____			

## Fall 2023

## DESCRIPTIONS

Although these plants are for conservation purposes only and shall not be used as ornamentals or for landscaping (SWCD Act), landowners living in urban areas are encouraged to plant these species as they can provide wildlife habitat, shade, windbreaks, or erosion control.

### TREES & SHRUBS

**Ohio Buckeye:** Medium growing rounded deciduous broadleaf tree. Greenish yellow flowers in spring turn into brown nuts in fall, leaves turn yellow orange to red. H:30-40' W:20-30' Full sun.

**Autumn Blaze Maple:** Rapid growing pyramidal deciduous broadleaf tree. Dazzling red fall color. H: 50-60' W: 30-40' Full sun.

**Crimson Sunset Maple:** Medium growing upright/oval broadleaf tree. Great maroon foliage all summer. H: 30'-35'; W: 20'-25' Full sun.

**Red Oak:** Rapid growing spreading deciduous. Turns red-orange in fall. H: 75-90' W: 40-60' Full sun.

**Swamp White Oak:** Medium growing rounded deciduous. Turns golden yellow in fall. Tolerates wet soils. H:40-50' W: 30-40' Full sun.

**Eastern White Pine:** Grows in average, medium, well-drained soil. Prefers full sun, fertile soils and cool, humid climates. Rapid growing, long-lived, needled evergreen. H:50-80' W:20-40'

**Colorado Blue Spruce:** Grows in average, acidic, medium moisture, well-drained soils in full sun. Tolerates some light shade. Medium to large, narrow, pyramidal conifer. H:30-60' W:10-20'

**Norway Spruce:** Large, evergreen coniferous tree. Prized for blue-green needles color and excellent landscape form. H:50-125' W:20-45'

**Black Hills Spruce:** Slow growing pyramidal coniferous evergreen tree. Dark green color. Stays tight and neat. H: 15-20' W: 8-15'

**Black Chokeberry:** Slow growing spreading deciduous broadleaf shrub. Dark red fall colors, black berries in fall. H: 6-8' W: 4-6'

**Red Osier Dogwood:** Medium growing upright deciduous broadleaf shrub. White to bluish berries in late summer, brilliant red twigs glow in winter. H: 5-6' W: 5-6'

**Kentucky Coffee Tree:** Medium growing oval broadleaf tree. Drought resistant and tolerant of a variety of soils. H: 40-50' W: 25-35'

**Japanese Tree Lilac:** Slow growing upright broadleaf tree. Fragrant creamy white flowers in late spring. Very hardy with few pests. H:15-20' W:10-12'

**Monarch Mix:** Contains 29 flowering species. For full details on this mix, go to [mcleancountyswcd.com/monarchs](http://mcleancountyswcd.com/monarchs)

**Tree Protector:** This is a 2ft vinyl sheet tree protector that wraps around the base of the tree with included zip ties.



APPLE	AVG RIPENING	POLLINATION	FLAVOR	TEXT.	FRESH EATING	PIES	SAUCE	BAKING
Fuji - Dwarf	Mid Sept.	Another apple	Sweet	Crisp	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
SnowSweet -Dwarf	Late Sept.	Another apple	Sweet	Crisp	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
CHERRY	AVG RIPENING	POLLINATION	FLAVOR	TEXT.	FRESH EATING	PIES	SAUCE	BAKING
Sweet Cherry Pie	Mid July	Self-fertile	Sweet/sour	Juicy	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent



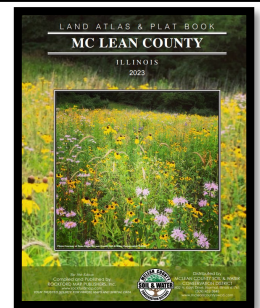
## Before you Tile, Before you bring it into production, 1026

Farm Bill program participants who perform new activities on their land must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions to maintain eligibility with USDA programs. New activities/projects that have not been evaluated by USDA may include, but are not limited to: Bringing land into production (woodlands, pastures), Combining and/or dividing fields, Installing and/or conducting new or modifying existing drainage activities. Such as Pattern Tile. Participants who plan to perform any of the above activities could affect their program benefits and are required to file a Farm Service Agency (FSA) AD-1026 form to certify eligibility. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will then issue a Certified Wetland and/or HEL Determination in areas where one does not currently exist.



## 2023 McLean County Plat Books Coming Soon!

The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District will soon be distributing the 2023 McLean County plat book again this year. The cost per plat book is \$35 cash or check. Credit cards are accepted for \$40 per plat book. All checks are made payable to: McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District. If you would like to be notified when this edition is made available please contact our office at 309-452-3848 ext 3 or email us at [mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com](mailto:mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com). We estimate that they will be made available by October 1, 2023. Shipping can be made available for an additional fee.



## Prairie Restoration Projects Underway

The North Park Prairie restoration project began in the spring of 2022. A combination of prescribe fire, chemical control, and managed mowing were applied to the site to develop a 10 acre habitat area. That summer a mix of pollinator habitat species and native grasses were planted. The partnership was made possible by the McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District, Pheasants Forever and the City of Bloomington. Three additional locations at Lake Bloomington were later selected for habitat conversion and have been planted in 2023. Evergreen Lake's Equestrian and interpretive nature trail was also chosen as a restoration site. Funding from the Illinois Habitat Fund, through Pheasants Forever, and the Illinois Monarch Rt66 project were contributed towards the efforts. To learn more about active projects, habitat conversion information, and equipment information you can visit our website at [www.mcleancountyswcd.com](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com).



## McLean County Contractors & Services List

McLean County contractors can provide conservation services to you for the installation of practices and programs. For a full list of contractors and their services, visit [www.mcleancountyswcd.com/new-contractors/](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com/new-contractors/). If you would like to be added to our contractors list we have an application also available at our office or on our website. Applications can be returned to our office at 402 N Kays Drive, Normal IL 61761 or to [mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com](mailto:mcleancountyswcd@gmail.com). This is not an inclusive page for all McLean County Contractors and by no means is an endorsement of these companies. McLean County SWCD only provides this information as a resource to the public.



## Conservation In Action: Our Next Generation

One of the key components to protecting the land and resources of McLean County is our next generation of conservationists. The McLean County area is fortunate to have high quality Agricultural programs in our local community and even higher education opportunities through Illinois State University and Heartland Community College. The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District assisted with multiple events in 2023.

The Illinois Envirothon is part of a continental environmental competition for high school students. Envirothon is a unique approach to educating high school students about the natural world around them. The participating schools have teams made up of 5 students who work together to take written tests, as well as to develop and present a problem solving oral presentation. The students are learning about the areas of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife and a current environmental issue, which changes each year. Congratulations to Olympia FFA for their 1st place finish and the Normal FFA 2nd place award at the Land Use Council Envirothon held in Clinton, IL. Olympia FFA advanced to the state Envirothon held in Monticello, IL.

Illinois Extension 4-H and the AISWCD Forestry Committee created a statewide tree planting initiative for 2023. This effort utilized the strengths of the statewide network of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the educational and youth development of University of Illinois Extension programs to create an oak recovery and tree planting educational program. Funding was provided by: Illinois Forestry Development Council, \$7,500, Illinois Extension 4-H Foundation, and AISWCD, \$2,000, to purchase four-foot-tall potted oak trees. The 2023 planting year goal is to plant 850 Oak trees throughout Illinois communities. The purpose of the tree planting project was to educate students and their communities on: 1. The value of native oak forests and trees to Illinois natural history; 2. Oaks as a keystone species in Illinois forests; 3. Tree planting techniques, and 4. Oak tree identification. The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded this grant. Members of the Hudson Ag 4-H Club helped plant 25 oak trees near Lake Bloomington, laying the groundwork for a 6-acre natural savanna. Members of the youth agricultural organization teamed up with the McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District and the City of Bloomington's Public Works Department to plant the oak saplings.



**Olympia FFA**



**Hudson 4-H Club Members**

## State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement- SAFE Enrollment

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 and general signup criteria, depending on the practice and cover being established. McLean County is now a SAFE area that allow landowners and producers to qualify for a range of wildlife practices that can be enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program SAFE CP38.

### LAND AND LANDOWNER ELIGIBILITY

- 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
- Fields must be a minimum of 10 acres or greater
- Contracts begin October 1st of a program year. Contracts can be pro-rated.

### ELIGIBLE PRACTICES

Wildlife Habitat (CP-4D) (CP-2): Native grass plantings that may include tree & shrub plantings, and wildlife food plots  
Habitat Buffers for Upland Birds – Field Borders (CP 33): Establish Native Grasses and Forbs that Average 60-120 ft. Around the Edges of Ag Fields With a Minimum Acreage Requirement. Field entrances remain open for equipment crossing



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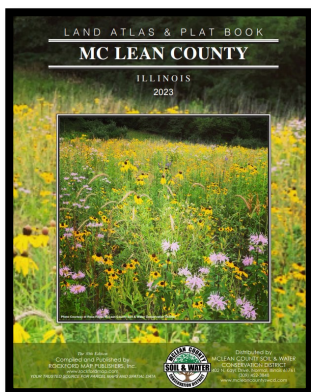
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**TREE, FISH AND 2023 PLAT BOOK SALE INFORMATION INSIDE!**

## Upcoming Events & Conservation Sales

- **Aerial Cover Crop Demonstration, Lexington IL September 6, 2023**
- **Pond Shocking Demonstration, Downs IL September 7, 2023**
- **Fish Sale Order Deadline September 20, 2023**
- **Tree Sale Order Deadline October 6, 2023**

**Learn More about these upcoming events and registration details inside this newsletter. You can also visit our Website at [www.mcleancountyswcd.com](http://www.mcleancountyswcd.com)**



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