

SOIL & WATER NEWS

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



Celebrating McLean County Conservationist of the Year, Mikel Fonger

Our 2023 recipient of the McLean County Conservationist of the year award goes to Mikel Fonger of Bloomington. He is a 3rd generation farmer for 53 years near McLean, that was privileged to farm his family's land for 50 years. Mikel is a devoted conservationist. He served on the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District board for 28 years. He didn't just promote conservation, he lived it on his daily operation. A no-till farmer for 32 years, strip-till for 25 years and an early adopter of cover crops for more than a decade, he understands the importance of protecting his family legacy through conservation implementation. Mikel gave his time and talent to so many other local community boards. He was on the Funks Grove Township for 20 years, McLean County Christian Church board for 40 years and the Mt Hope- Funks Grove Water Authority for 10 years. He and his wife Sherrita have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. Thank you Mikel Fonger for your example to McLean County of service and leadership! The McLean County SWCD Board and Staff are honored to induct you into this special recognition of our county's greatest Conservationists.



Welcome Devin Jefferson, Soil Conservationist, Normal NRCS Office

The McLean County NRCS welcomes our newest Soil Conservationist, Devin Jefferson. Natural Resources Conservation Service soil conservationists spend time offering conservation planning and technical assistance to farmers, ranchers, landowners, and local government officials. They suggest ways to conserve soil, improve water quality and quantity, manage nutrients, and protect and improve wildlife habitat. To help local producers implement various conservation practices, soil conservationists manage programs which provide financial and technical assistance. My name is Devin Jefferson. I grew up here in McLean County and attended Illinois State University where I studied Agronomy Management. I graduated from ISU in 2020 and have spent the last three years as the Soil Conservationist in Piatt County. I am extremely excited to be back in my home county and to start serving its producers. Please feel free to contact me with any NRCS related questions you may have. I look forward to meeting you all. Devin.jefferson@usda.gov (309)452-3848 ex.6382



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 March 29, 2024.

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.

SWCD Office Hours

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

SWCD Board of Directors

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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
Devin Jefferson
Soil Conservationist

Visit our Website!



www.mcleancountyswcd.com



Find us on Facebook!

2024 Jim Rutherford Conservation Scholarship Application Announced

Our 2024 application is now available. 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. 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. Our 2024 application can be found at www.mcleancountyswcd.com/jimrutherford/. Application Deadline is March 15, 2024.



McLean County Contractors & Services List

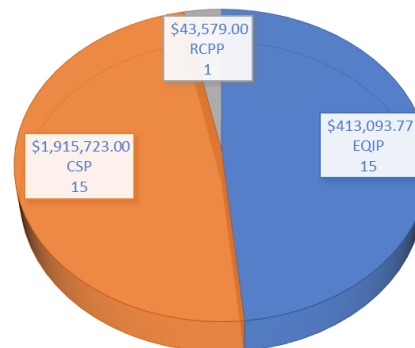
McLean County contractors can provide conservation services to you for the installation of practices and programs. For a full list of contractors and their services, visit www.mcleancountyswcd.com/new-contractors/. If you would like to be added to our contractors list we have an application also available 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. 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.



USDA NRCS Fiscal Year 2023 Financial Assistance Program Report

How about some alphabet soup? Or better yet pie? The McLean County NRCS Field Office had a successful year in conservation and financial assistance program funding in FY23. We were able to get funding for 31 new program contracts covering 26,008.4 acres in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) which totaled \$2,372,395.77 in new contract obligations. This almost double the amount of funds we received locally in FY22. The majority of the conservation practices in these contracts consist of cover crops, no-till/strip-till, reduced tillage, and nutrient management. If you're interested in getting a piece of the pie now is a great time to start developing a conservation plan with NRCS to compete for future funding opportunities. Adam Wyant is the District Conservationist at the Normal USDA Service Center and Pontiac USDA Service Center. Contact the Natural Resource Conservation Service today, to begin exploring opportunities at 309-452-3848 ext 3.

NEW OBLIGATIONS FY23



State of the Lakes: April 18, 2024, Davis Lodge– Lake Bloomington

Join the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District for "State of the Lakes" at Lake Bloomington's Davis Lodge. The evening will highlight various active projects for Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake at 6:30pm. Our keynote speaker will be Mike Garthaus, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Biologist. Learn more about the Friends of EverBloom, a 501c3 non profit volunteer organization. Friends of EverBloom's mission is to positively contribute to the overall health and function of Lake Bloomington and Evergreen Lake and their associated watersheds while using enhancement, restoration and protection of fish and aquatic species, sustainability plans for these ecosystems and associated watersheds, and enhanced public awareness of conservation issues surrounding these lakes as guiding principles. Call 309-452-3848 ext 3 to RSVP by April 15, 2024.

CRP Open Enrollment Opportunities

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is now accepting applications for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (Continuous CRP). USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages agricultural producers and landowners in Illinois who are interested in conservation opportunities for their land in exchange for yearly rental payments to consider the enrollment options available through Continuous CRP, which also includes the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) offered by FSA partners. Additionally, producers participating in CRP can now apply to re-enroll, if their contracts will expire this year. To submit an offer, producers should contact the FSA at their local USDA Service Center by July 31, 2024, in order to have an offer effective by October 1, 2024. To ensure enrollment acreages do not exceed the statutory cap, FSA will accept offers from producers on a first-come, first-served basis and will return offers for approval in batches throughout the year. Additionally, producers with acres enrolled in Continuous CRP set to expire September 30, 2024, can now offer acres for re-enrollment. A producer can both enroll new acres into Continuous CRP and re-enroll any acres expiring September 30, 2024. FSA water quality practices, such as riparian buffers, prairie strips, grassed waterways, and wetlands, will receive an additional 20% incentive. Buffer practices have a positive impact on water quality. Additionally, the Climate-Smart Practice Incentive launched in 2021 is also available in the Continuous signup. 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.

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 Seedings with Drills & Tree Plantings
- \$200 Daily Charge for Drill operation on Waterway Seedings
- \$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

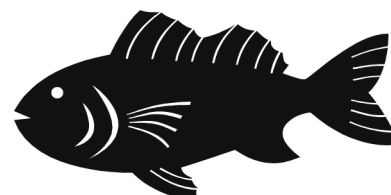
Equipment Requirements/Specifications:

- Minimum 50 horsepower tractor for equipment use
- Drills have pioneer ends and 2 hydraulic lines for raising/lowering
- 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
- A hitch pin for drill transportation required (45mph max speed)
- Three Point attachment for broadcast seeder or Tree Planter required
- 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
- PTO required for broadcast seeding
- Trailer or pick-up bed required to transport of Three Point Broadcaster



McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

2024 SPRING 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

Credit Cards 4% surcharge

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

Payment & Order DEADLINE

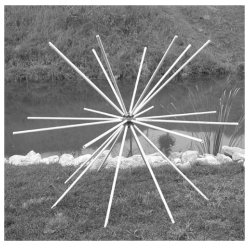
Grass Carp - MARCH 28
All Other Items - APRIL 12

Free delivery for fish orders over
\$1000

PICK-UP

Thursday, April 18
9:00am

McLean County SWCD Office

Description	Quantity	Price	Total Amount
Fathead Minnows		\$14.00 per pound	
Channel Catfish 6-8" (NB)*		\$65.00 per 50	
Albino Catfish (NB)*		\$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 (Circle one)		\$20.00 per quart	
HB All Seasons Blend Bacteria		\$11.00 per pound	
Triton High Protein Fish Food		\$47.00 per 50# bag	
Electrofishing Survey		\$975.00 per pond	
 Porcupine Fish Attractor		\$60.00 for 1 \$100.00 per 2	
*(NB) - Not bagged, requires pond water and containers			TOTAL

(Newsletter Version)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

INFORMATION BELOW REQUIRED BY IDNR IF PURCHASING GRASS CARP:

Township _____ Section _____ Size of pond (Acres) _____

McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

2024 SPRING TREE SALE

(Newsletter Version)



ORDER DEADLINE:
April 18, 2024

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

*Credit cards 4% surcharge.

PICK-UP

April 25, 2024
8:00 am — 4:30 pm
McLean County SWCD Office

Phone: (309)452-3848 ext. 3
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 containers)			
*Slightly branched whips 4-5 feet tall			
Description	Quantity	Price	Total
American Redbud		\$60.00	
Red Pointe Maple		\$60.00	
Green Mountain Maple		\$60.00	
Bur Oak		\$60.00	
American Dream Swamp White Oak		\$60.00	
Fruit Trees (#5 containers) 4-6 feet tall			
Red Delicious Apple - use another variety as pollinator		\$60.00	
Honey Crisp Apple - use another variety as pollinator		\$60.00	
Bailey Hardy Peach - self fertile		\$60.00	
Evergreens (#1 containers)			
Eastern White Pine 15-18"		\$14.00	
Colorado Spruce 12-15"		\$14.00	
Norway Spruce 15-18"		\$14.00	
Black Hills Spruce 10-12"		\$14.00	
Smaller Trees, Shrubs and Misc. (#1 containers)			
Red Osier Dogwood, 15-18"		\$12.00	
American Plum, 15-18"		\$12.00	
Dolgo Crabapple, 24"		\$12.00	
Serviceberry, Lamarckii 24-30"		\$12.00	
The Monarch Mix, per acre		\$135.00	
Tree Protector, 2ft Vinyl w/stake		\$5.00	
Tree Protector, 4ft Vinyl w/stake		\$7.00	
TOTAL			
Name: _____			
Address: _____			
City _____ Zip _____			
Phone: _____			
Email: _____			

SPRING 2024

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

American Redbud: Medium growing rounded deciduous broadleaf tree. Good fall colors, purplish pink flowers in early spring. H:15-25' W:10-20' Full sun to partial shade.

Red Pointe Maple: Medium growing broadly pyramidal deciduous broadleaf tree. Dark green leaves turn brilliant red in fall. H: 40-45' W: 25-30' Full sun.

Green Mountain Maple: Medium growing pyramidal broadleaf tree. H: 50' to 70'; W: 35' to 40'. Orange, red, and yellow fall color. Desirable drought resistance variety. Full sun.

Bur Oak: Medium growing rounded deciduous. Turns golden yellow in fall. Large stately landscape specimen. H: 50-100' W: 34-45' Full sun.

American Dream Swamp White Oak: Medium growing rounded deciduous. Good golden fall color. 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'

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'

American Plum: Medium growing rounded deciduous broadleaf tree. Native to Illinois, produces small plums in July-August that are high value to wildlife. H: 10-20' W: 15-25'.

Serviceberry, Lamarkii: Medium growing rounded deciduous shrub. Produces white flowers in the spring along with berry-like fruit in the summer. H:15-25' W: 15-25'

Monarch Mix: Contains 32 flowering species. For full details on this mix, go to mcleancountyswcd.com/monarchs



Tree Protector: This is a 2 or 4 foot vinyl sheet tree protector that wraps around the base of the tree with included zip ties and included wooden stake.

APPLE	AVG RIPENING	POLLINATION	FLAVOR	TEXT.	FRESH EATING	PIES	SAUCE	BAKING
Red Delicious -Dwarf	Mid Oct.	Another apple	Sweet	Crisp	Excellent	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good
Honey Crisp -Dwarf	Early Nov.	Another apple	Tart	Crisp	Very Good	Very Good	Good	Very Good
Dolgo Crabapple	Late Aug	Any apple or crabapple	Sweet	Crisp	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
PEACH	AVG RIPENING	POLLINATION	FLAVOR	TEXT.	FRESH EATING	PIES	SAUCE	BAKING
Bailey Hardy	Mid-late Aug	Self-fertile	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good



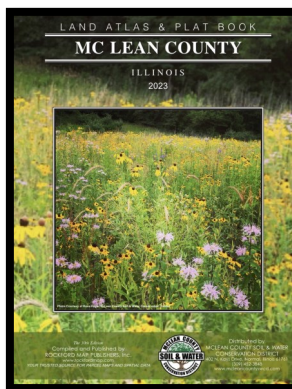
McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District 2023 Conservation Review

McLean County Soil and Water Conservation

The McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District proudly preserves McLean County's most valuable resources. Our desire to protect soil and water, and serve area producers is 81 years strong. The experienced staff and strong dedication to conservation gives landowners professional options and solutions to protect our natural resources. The past and present District Board of Directors has given this county the strong leadership and correct direction to maintain the rich agricultural integrity of McLean County.

McLean County Conservation Services

The SWCD provides many conservation services to the public. Our tree and fish sales are held annually in both the spring and fall. We work with a comprehensive list of local contractors for conservation implementation and native seed vendors for both programmatic and non programmatic projects. Farmers and landowners can apply for conservation cost-share dollars and access federal program possibilities. In partnership with the McLean County Pheasants Forever Chapter, we offer access to three no-till drills, a three-point broadcast seeder and a three-point tree planter for habitat installation. McLean County plat books are also available at our office. Subscribe to our newsletter to learn more about our most current programs and services available to you.



Our 2023 Accomplishments

The following accomplishments were executed in partnership with local partners, and the McLean County farmers and landowners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) contracts and dollars distributed in the most recent fiscal year through the Environmental Qualities Incentives Program (EQIP), Regional Conservation Program Partnership (RCPP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) in the most recent fiscal year. To learn more about these specific objectives, and additional opportunities, contact our office.

Conservation Objectives	Projects	Totals
Conservation Trees Distributed	110	2202 trees
Pond Fish Stocking	70	70 ponds
SWCD Contracts and Dollars Dispersed	11	\$40,654.54
Cover Crop Projects and Acres	10	1,036 acres
Lake Bloomington Shoreline Installation	1	925 feet
No-Till Drill Projects and Acres	20	111 acres
Filter Strip & CRP Tax Reduction Applications	2	5.1 acres
NRCS Contracts and Dollars Dispersed	31	\$2,372,395.77
		26,008.4 acres

SWCD Board of Directors

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

SWCD Staff

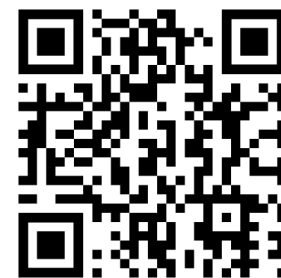
Jackie Kraft
Watershed Coordinator
Ross Fogle
Watershed Conservation Specialist
Brett Irwin
Administrative Coordinator
Resource Conservationist

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

SWCD News

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McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District 2023 Conservation Review

McLean County Conservation Cost-share Projects

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. In 2023 funding in the amount of \$40,654.54 was allocated to McLean County landowners on 11 separate projects. The following practices and projects reflect those totals. Five projects impacting 564 acres for cover crop implementation, One project for the adoption of strip till impacting 178 acres, One project to decommission a well for a total of \$400, and finally four reconstructed waterway projects for a total of \$25,098.85. Applications are available at the office with a sign-up deadline before March 29, 2024.



Conservation Restoration Projects

The McLean County SWCD continues to provide valuable conservation restoration resources to farmers and landowners. Conservation grade tree sales, and pond stocking are two opportunities that diversify and protect our valuable local resources. The district promotes two sales each year, one in the spring and another in the fall to meet weather and planting conditions. Recommendations can be made by our office and other conservation professionals to meet the needs of the landscape and customer. An annual pond shocking demonstration is held to help educate pond owners about deciding on various stocking rates, pond maintenance, and fish species. In 2023 the McLean County SWCD assisted the pond stocking of 70 local ponds, and worked with 110 projects to plant 2,202 trees and shrubs. Additionally, the no-till drills were utilized on 20 projects impacting 111 acres of conservation cover seedings.



Jim Rutherford Conservation Scholarship

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SWCD Board of Directors

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Howard Heatherwick— Director
Jeff Mathews— Director

SWCD Staff

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Watershed Coordinator
Ross Fogle
Watershed Conservation Specialist
Brett Irwin
Administrative Coordinator
Resource Conservationist

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

SWCD News

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David Fulton
AGENT

davidf@compasscoverage.com
Office: 309.962.6111
Direct: 217.871.0435

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LE ROY OFFICE


AGSurance LLC

Nathan Ehrhardt C: (309)-415-4646	Jaycie Kimpling C: (309)-287-7010	Bob Wettstein C: (309)-684-2305
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Paul Schell
CFO
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schell.paul@icloud.com
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email dkennedy250@gmail.com





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Kris Petersen
815.848.1320 (cell)
kris@pontiaclfyingervice.com

15801 E 2000 N Rd
Pontiac, IL 61764
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TREE, FISH AND 2023 PLAT BOOK SALE INFORMATION INSIDE!

McLean County Plat Books & Upcoming Events

Save the Dates for McLean County Conservation

- Scholarship Application Deadline: March 15, 2024
- Grass Carp Order Deadline: March 28, 2024
- PFC Cost-Share Application Deadline: March 29, 2024
- Fish Sale Order Deadline: April 12, 2024
- Tree Sale Order Deadline: April 18, 2024
- Fish Sale Pick-up: April 18, 2024
- State of The Lakes Presentation: April 18, 2024
- Tree Sale Pick-up: April 25, 2024

2023 McLean County Plat Books Available

The McLean County Plat Books are on sale at the SWCD office for \$35 cash or check, \$40 credit card. Checks made payable to the McLean County Soil and Water Conservation District. Mailing is available for an extra charge.

