



Issue No. 116

Whiteside County Soil & Water



July 2010

DAVE HARRISON AND THE SWCD RADIO SHOW

The SWCD office has signed a contract with WSDR to have a monthly question and answer Radio Show. you will be able to find more information on our website as it becomes available. To be able to keep having this Radio Show, we will need sponsors. Sponsors get a 30 second commercial. If anyone would like to help sponsor this show, please contact Dave or Wendy at the SWCD office at 815-772-2124 ext 3 or email wendy.roman@il.nacdnet.net.

**Please
visit the District's website @
www.whitesidecountyswcd.com**

**Whiteside County Soil and
Water Conservation District
is now on Facebook!
The link is posted on our website
www.whitesidecountyswcd.com
Visit us to see what is new in the
office.**

Earth Team Volunteers

Earth Team is a program which partners volunteers with NRCS and SWCD employees. It was created in 1985 and offers many opportunities to individuals over the age of 14 who are interested in volunteering and making a positive difference for the nation's natural resources.

Earth Team volunteers help SWCD's and NRCS conservationists provide everything from conservation technical assistance to teaching and generating awareness about conservation through the use of community projects. For more information on Earth Team, contact the SWCD office at 815-772-2124 ext. 3 and talk to Wendy or e-mail at wendy.roman@il.nacdnet.net.

WHITESIDE COUNTY NATURAL AREA GUARDIANS AND "THE STORY OF NATURE"

Whiteside County Natural Area Guardians, Woodlawn Arts Academy and the Sterling Public Library proudly present "The Story of Nature." This event combines the Sterling Storytelling Festival, a juried art show and an art fair into an exciting event on Saturday, September 4, 2010, from 11:00am-5:00 pm at the Woodlawn Arts Academy in Sterling. The Sterling Public Library will feature a storytelling tent with nationally known storytellers: Mike Lockett--Normal, Illinois <http://www.mikelockett.com/home.php> , Mike Anderson--Jacksonville, IL <http://www.dulcimerGuy.com/>, Janice Del Negro--River Forest Illinois and Maureen Korte--Des Moines, Iowa. Woodlawn Arts Academy will have a juried art show available for public viewing. It will feature local artists residing in the Sauk Valley area and will be open to all mediums: mixed media, photography, decorative arts and sculpture. The Natural Area Guardians will feature a bake sale and an art fair for local artists to sell their works of art to the public. This event is in Mae Domack's honor as she inspired the artist in all of us and taught us to appreci-

ate the natural flora and fauna in Whiteside County through her art work. Call Woodlawn Arts Academy at 815-626-4278 for more information on entry fees, booth rentals and timelines. Deadline for entries into the juried art show and booth reservations are due August 2, 2010.

"The Story of Nature" is a fundraising venture and an opportunity to showcase local artists. Many Natural Area Guardian members are accomplished artists. This event will raise money for scholarships in conservation related fields and promote awareness of remaining prairie areas in Whiteside County. One other area vendor will have food and drinks available for purchase. Please join us and support these local organizations and artists for a fun filled day at Woodlawn Arts Academy located at 3807 Woodlawn Road in Sterling (turn by McDonalds). The Natural Area Guardians hope to see you there.

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Whiteside County Soil & Water Conservation District

USDA Building

Rain Garden - Is this something new?

By Rhonda Marshang

Rain gardens are a current topic with environmentalists. What is a rain garden? It's a garden that soaks up rainwater. Sound simple? Well, its principle is pretty basic. As with many things, sometimes we overlook a natural process & try all kinds of "other" things only to find that nature can show us the best way – if given a chance. The process I'm talking of is slowing rain water & preventing related run-off, by creating a rain garden. A rain garden is much like a mini wetland – increasing the amount of water infiltrating the ground, keeping pollutants and sediment from washing off into streams and lakes, & providing valuable wildlife habitat including food and shelter for birds. The slowed infiltration helps to protect from flooding and drainage problems. You can put storm water to good use and enhance your yard with beautiful native plants at the same time!

How can you make a rain garden? First, remember to call the JULIE hotline before doing any digging. Choose a spot in the normal drainage pattern of your yard or an area that receives run off from your roof. The booklet "Rain Gardens" is available from the UW-Extension, 45 N. Charter St., Madison, WI 53715, and (608)262-3346. General guidelines to consider- no matter where you get your construction plans include: Stay 10 ft. away from any building foundation & place near a downspout. Do not place near ditches or big trees (due to roots). Your garden spot should be modified until it is flat. It is important to choose an area that does not tend to "pond" for more than 2 days (to prevent increasing mosquito population). A simple soil test should be done using the ribbon

method (instructions are included in the Wisconsin DNR booklet cited below). You may have to add soil material to make the soil "better" if needed (mulch, sand, etc.). Replacement soil mixes and Erosion Control Mix are available from local garden centers. Create with a water depth of 3-7" in mind. A depth greater than 8" could create a "ponding" problem. A good size for an average homeowner would be in the range of 100-300 sq. feet. Ideally the rain garden should be twice as long as it is wide, with the longer side on the upslope. A 200 sq. ft. or under rain garden can be dug by hand – otherwise you may want to get some help by renting a machine to do the digging. Start with native plants with a developed root structure (i.e. "plugs"), and plant at 1 plug per sq. ft. Pay attention to height, color, & bloom time to maximize the beauty of your rain garden. Aggressive plants should be planted sparingly so they do not take over & reduce the color contrast. Two very useful websites are: BlueThumb.org (to help calculate cost); & <http://dnr.wi.gov/runoff/pdf/rg/rmanual.pdf> which offers a great manual that can be printed for the builder's use.

Overall, once plants mature, the maintenance of a rain garden is very low. Watering is important during the first growing season, and some weeding is necessary after planting. As the garden matures, some of the perennials may need to be divided if plantings become too crowded.

After construction - spread the word that you plant native plants and rain gardens to improve the world you live in. Tell others that not only can a rain garden capture runoff and hold not only thousands of gallons of rainwater that can be used in your own garden and yard, but pollutants are prevented from entering our waterways. These pollutants will cause a problem if combined with pollution from your neighbors and the rest of the community. When someone asks you "why plant a rain garden?" you can tell them that you are doing it to help keep clean, fresh rainwater out of the sewer system and you are doing your part to reduce pollution and preserve our water systems. You can improve your little piece of the world!

References:
 Rain Garden Network @ www.raingardennetwork.com;
 Portland Water District @ www.pwd.org/news/publications.php;
 Jim Nelson, Urban Storm Water Specialist, Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation Districts (AISWCD)
 Della Moen, Earth Team Volunteer, NRCS/Stephenson County SWCD in Freeport, IL



Illustration by Taina Litwak, concept by Anoka Conservation District

Rain Barrels are HERE!!!

In anticipation of the hearty vegetables and fragrant flowers, have you thought of a more conservational or economical way to water your plants?

The Whiteside County Soil and Water Conservation District is selling rain barrels. Our rain barrels are 60 gallon plastic barrels that are 100% recycled. The barrels have a perforated, screen mesh top to stop contaminants from entering. They also have top overflows and bottom drains along with a plastic spigot that can thread a hose. Also available will be wooden pedestal risers to raise the rain barrel 12 inches off the ground. This helps with adding a little bit of gravity caused pressure. And, if you don't really like the look of the barrels, we will now offer plastic barrel netting with clips. Now you can have your favorite vine plant growing around your barrel to camouflage it.

The Whiteside County SWCD will have a range of colored rain barrels, now offered will be black, grey, blue, terra-cotta and brown colored barrels. If those colors don't appeal to you, you can always paint them. Lightly sand with a 220 grit sand paper, wipe down with ammonia based cleaner and paint with a plastic spray paint.

These rain barrels are food quality high density poly ethylene that were recycled and previously used for food. They have been cleaned and rinsed with rain water and PH neutral soap so you don't have to worry about harsh contaminants.

To illustrate how important and how limited a resource freshwater is in our world, consider the following. More than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water, but only 2.5% of this supply is considered fresh water. The rest is found in the form of salt water in the oceans. Of the fresh water that exists, most is locked up in glaciers and ice caps. Water can also be found in the form

of clouds and humidity in the soil. That leaves us 3/10 of 1 percent found in the form of lakes, rivers and streams. Unfortunately, much of this small amount of freshwater is in danger of drying up or becoming so contaminated that it cannot be used for human consumption. Changing our habits of water use can help this growing problem. Picture a 4x8 piece of plywood. With a 1/4 inch of rain, your rain barrel would have about 55 gallons of rain water.

Are you curious of some benefits of having a rain barrel?

Rain barrels help:


1. Divert water from storm drain system and reduce pollutants and the velocity of water entering local rivers and streams;
2. Store high quality water for gardens; harvesting rainwater with rain barrels to use for watering your landscaping, the rainwater can help to improve the health of your gardens, lawns, and trees. Rain is a naturally soft water and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. For this reason, plants respond very well to rainwater. After all, it's what plants in the wild thrive on!
3. Direct overflow water away from building foundations to more desired locations;
4. Reduce water and sewer bills, as well as electrical bills from sump pump usage. After the first year of use, your rain barrel could pay for itself.

With purchasing recycled barrels, you are keeping them out of area landfills.

For more information on any of these products, please contact the Whiteside County SWCD at 16625 Liberty Street, Morrison, Illinois 61270, call (815)772-2124 ext 3, email Wendy at wendy.roman@il.nacdnet.net or visit our website at www.whitesidecountyswcd.com.

CONSERVATION

CONSERVATION



Mark Kaiser
District Conservationist

After 2 very wet, challenging crop growing years, 2010 was a welcome return to more normal conditions. From the soil conservation perspective, it was a welcome relief also, since 2008 and 2009 showed an increase in soil erosion from well above average rainfall. Many producers took advantage of the opportunity this spring to reshape and reseed grassed waterways where they are needed. Some did it on their own resolve, and others used either state or federal cost-share programs. Either way, it was great to see the effort put forth. Other producers need to make this a priority, since grassed waterways are required for conservation compliance on highly erodible land (HEL). The last 2 wet years showed exactly where grassed waterways are needed, as the gullies and deep rills are testament of why grass waterways are needed in areas of the cropped fields with concentrated water flow. Non-highly erodible land (NHEL) fields are not immune to needing grassed waterways, as several of them also showed deep rills from concentrated water flow. Check with our office on program options for funding your grassed waterway needs.

Also, conservation compliance spot checks showed a good improvement this year. Several producers got their no-till programs back on track this year. Remember the 3 basic conservation cropping systems on HEL fields are corn-soybeans, corn-corn-soybeans, and continuous corn. Corn and soybeans need to be no-tilled following each other, and any system with corn following corn needs a minimum crop residue of 50% after planting. I've seen several good looking no-till fields this spring. A few producers feel that they need to make a tillage pass on their soybean stubble, and this will NOT meet conservation compliance guidelines on HEL fields! USDA payment reductions will apply in the same year that HEL fields are found to be out of compliance. If you are one of these few producers still making an extra tillage trip and like to spend extra money on diesel fuel, please check out your neighbors no-till fields. There are several to look at!

Congratulations to all those producers sticking to their no-till program. It takes a lot of patience and good management to make it work successfully. Keep up the good work! It is very important that you continue to lead the way in land stewardship and show the general public that production agriculture can go hand in hand with controlling soil erosion and improving water quality. Nothing is more disappointing to me than driving by a tilled crop field after a heavy rainfall, seeing sedimentation filling the road ditch, and knowing that we have the technology, knowledge, and skills available to us to avoid the whole situation.

**WHITESIDE COUNTY SWCD
FALL 2010 FISH SALE ORDER FORM**

**Whiteside County SWCD
2010 Fall Tree Order Form**

SPECIES	SIZE	PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Channel Catfish	4-6"	\$.56 each		
	6-8"	\$.68 each		
	8-10"	\$.86 each		
Hybrid Sunfish	1-2"	\$57.50 for 250		
	3-5"	\$.72 each		
Largemouth Bass	2-3"	\$.76 each		
	5-8"	\$1.74 each		
Bluegill	1-2"	\$57.50 for 250		
	3-5"	\$.74 each		
Crappie (Black or Hybrid)	2-3"	\$47.50 for 100		
Redear	1-2"	\$57.50 for 250		
Hybrid Redear	2-4"	\$.45 each		
*Triploid Grass Carp	8-11"	\$9.50 each		
Fathead Minnows		\$9.50 per pound		
*Triploid Grass Carp orders are due by September 1st . All other fish orders must be received by September 10th .			TOTAL	

Red Pine Transplants 3 Year 10-15"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
White Pine Transplants 3 Year 10-18"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Colorado Blue Spruce Transplants 3 Year 10-18"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Norway Spruce Transplants 3 Year 10-18"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Red Osier Dogwood Shrubs Seedlings 10-18"	5 for \$8.40 25 for \$31.50	
white Oak Seedlings 5-10"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Red Oak Seedlings 5-10"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Black Walnut Seedlings 6-12"	5 for \$10.50 25 for \$36.75	
Orange Marking Flags	15 each or 100 for \$10.00	
Biodegradable tube w/bamboo stake	\$1.50 each	
Peach Colored Tree Shelters 4' mini greenhouse with stake	\$3.25 each—no stake \$4.00 each with stake	
Tree Finder Booklet Black and White	\$3.50 each	
Conservation Trees ID Book Color Pictures	\$10.00 each	
Tree Mats and 5 staples Keeps weeds down around the tree	\$1.00 each	

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER!

Please make checks payable to: Whiteside County SWCD
16255 Liberty Street, Morrison, IL 61270

Questions? Call 815-772-2124 x 3
Fall Fish Sale Pick-Up will be Friday, September 17th @ 8:00 am

Important Information: 8-10" and larger Channel Catfish CANNOT be bagged. Please bring a clean container with POND water to transport these larger fish. Plastic trash cans work well.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ Zip Code: _____ Day Phone: _____
If ordering Triploid Grass Carp:
County: _____ Township Name: _____
Section: _____ Twp#: _____ Range#: _____

Total Enclose

Name: _____
Address: _____
Street, Box No. City State Zip
Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____
E-mail address: _____

Special Orders of other species and larger planting stock are available upon request.

Please call (815) 772-2124, The trees we offer are Nursery quality. **Trees will be sold as is, no refunds and/or replacements will be offered. They will be available for pick up about the third week of October 2010.** Orders are accepted in multiples of 5 and 25 per specie. **Deadline to order is September 17, 2010. Check or money must accompany order form. Please make check payable to:**

Whiteside County SWCD, 16255 Liberty Street, Morrison, IL 61270.

Coming Soon. . . .

The winter newsletter, we will now be selling AD space. If you would like to have an AD in our winter newsletter, keep an eye out for more information. We will be sending information about the Ads and the Farm Service Directory. Ads will be \$25 and the Farm Service Directory will be \$25, If you want to be in both, it will be \$40.

**Hilltop Meadows
Hunt Club LLC**

7737 Long Rd Fulton, IL 61252
www.hilltopmeadowshuntclub.com
815-535-1056

5 Stand Sporting Clays
2010 Spring and Summer
Schedule
Saturday & Sundays @ 9:00 am

Fun 5 Stand Sporting
Clays Tournaments
Saturday June 12th,
July 10th and August 14th



RC RANTS AND RAMBLINGS

Well here I am again, still here after 22 years (I think). As some of you recall and care, this column has appeared in the now defunct Morrison Post as a question and answer forum. The office staff and Directors have come up with the idea to go multi media. We are working with WSDR to come up with a monthly phone in show to answer questions on conservation. I would attempt to bring in an expert in the conservation field each month to answer questions in their field of experience. We are attempting to get sponsorship at the rate of \$125 per month, stay tuned we will be on the air soon!

For those of you that have done wetland restorations or ponds with berms please check the berm for muskrat burrowing. In a very short time they can create a burrow that will breach the berm in short order. Muskrats are part of the animal life that is attracted to these projects but in certain situations can be very destructive. How you get rid of them is up to you and the Illinois Wildlife Code. If you have a problem muskrat population, contact an IDNR Wildlife Biologist or Conservation Police Officer.

Just a couple of observations: first the Bull Frogs are really sounding off the last week. Before that Leopard Frogs and American Toads have been very noisy. Lastly I am starting to see young duck and pheasant broods, hopefully these heavy rains won't ruin a very good nest and brood season. * With this last point in mind please refrain from mowing your road ditches for at least another month. *

I hate to end this column on a depressing note but as I write this morning the well in the Gulf of Mexico is still gushing and drifting into those valuable coastal marshes. I really feel sorry for the people in south Louisiana whose families have made a living working with nature down there for hundreds of years. Their lives just got turned upside down with no relief in sight. Those of you that work on the land know that there is an attraction that is hard to explain, having that ripped out of your life has to be devastating. Nature has remarkable way of recovering from injury but this one may take awhile.

I am tired of writing and getting grumpy so have a good summer, a safe fall, and as always call us with any questions or concerns you might need to have answered.



Whiteside County

PHEASANTS forever

Chapter 811

Website: whiteside.pheasantsforever.org

2010 Whiteside SWCD's BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Pictured left to right: Michael Jacobsen, Tres/Sec; Jeff Melton, Director; Paul Young, Director; Dave Cook, Chairman; Tim Keller, Vice-Chairman

Highlights of SWCD Education Program for January - June, 2010:

By Rhonda Marshang

Here we are in June & I'm near making a full year in my new position as Education Coordinator. I said it would take a full year's rotation to understand the position. I am more comfortable with my job duties than I was last summer - & I don't worry as much. That is progress!

Just before the start of this year I visited all 34 schools in Whiteside County. I met with many of the principals & teachers of the schools and promoted the SWCD Education Program. Offers of the SWCD Photo Contest and the SWCD Education Grant were emphasized during the visits. I disbursed handouts covering these events and a survey to learn what Whiteside County teachers wanted in the way of a teacher workshop hosted by Whiteside SWCD.

The beginning of the new calendar year was devoted to research for the Council 1 (Jo Daviess, Carroll, Stephenson, Ogle, Lee, & Whiteside counties) high School Envirothon competition held in March. What an eye opener when I realized the duties of an Envirothon committee member! Who would have guessed that we were responsible for the study resources and questions for the Envirothon competition - along with the event planning! I guess I thought the Canon Corporation did some of the work. I have a new respect for the SWCD offices of each county. The hours paid to the Envirothon committee are ultimately the responsibility of each county district office. Thankfully, the importance of this event for high school students is realized, but the cost and time given by employees of all of the districts is really quite a commitment. With Morrison bowing out close to competition - we ended up with **35 students** competing from Whiteside County. Newman High School had a great showing of 4th place out of 35 teams this year, but the #1 team for Council 1 came from Dixon High School of Lee County.

In the beginning of 2010 I visited

the preschools in the Sterling/Rock Falls area a 2nd time. Interacting with preschool age children is always interesting & often hilarious. I've thought of writing some of the comments down, but I'm not sure the moments could be captured effectively on paper. I worked with preschool children in multiple classrooms at both Thome School in Rock Falls (January) & Wallace School in Sterling (February): **Thome School @ 38 students, Wallace School @ 200 students.**

The first annual SWCD dinner I attended as an employee took place on February 4th. I created a huge visual display with pictures covering the many facets of SWCD including the SWCD Education Program, Natural Area Guardians (NAGS), as well as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Much of February was spent getting ready for the March 16th Envirothon - including contacting sponsors. Dave, Wendy, & I attended a local Rotary Meeting on Feb. 10th. Dave & I talked of what SWCD has to offer to the region in promoting natural resources. I branched off & talked of our education goal of reconnecting young people to the outdoors to experience unstructured time spent in nature. In another act of promotion Dave, Wendy, & I were guests on a live radio spot for WSDR radio on Feb. 26th. We hoped to create an appreciation of what we do in reaching the audience of Ken Hines' Ag show.

March brought our much prepared for Envirothon on the 16th. As in the past it was a great success for Council 1 due to the hard work and dedication of the Envirothon committee - especially the work of chairperson, Jessica Edwards. Arbor Day program letters were mailed to all 3rd grade teachers in Whiteside County inviting their classrooms to participate in our Arbor Day Program for 3rd graders. I created displays to place in 4 local banks (in Morrison, Fulton, & Rock Falls) in appreciation of Whiteside County farmers during Ag Week. The Whiteside County SWCD Education Board selected 4 Education

Grant winners at the March Board Meeting. Winners were 3rd grade teacher Shauna Smith of Fulton Elementary School (for environmental classroom material including a digital microscope), Val DeSpain of Fulton Middle School (equipment for Mississippi Mile Clean-up), Ranae Rickels of Morrison Jr. High (7th grade field trip to Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque, IA), & Margaret Nickrent of Washington Elementary School of Sterling (3rd grade class trip to Severson Dells in Rockford). March also included 2 trips to Prophetstown Elementary School with the district's Envirothone display to demonstrate the effect of pollution to our watershed. The 4th grade students took on the roles of either rain or a pollutant in this very effective visual demonstration. **PES students reached = 50 students.**

April brought more school visits for Earth Day, our annual Poster Contest, and the first half of Arbor Day visits. For Earth Day, I talked of the responsibility of all of us in caring for our environment and used an interactive approach with a recycling kit from the Ill. Bureau of Energy & Recycling. Earth Day students reached were 2 kindergarten classes & 2 - 1st grade classes at Montmorency School, and 3 - Grade 2 classes at Northside School in Morrison = **142 students reached total.** I attended a meeting on April 23rd in honor of Earth Day hosted by the Blackhawk Area RC & D supporting the Driftless Area Initiative. Jessica Edwards, Chairperson of our Council 1 Envirothon committee gave a presentation on Envirothon 2010. Poster contest material was disbursed to all schools in Whiteside County. I also gave a Poster Contest presentation to 2 classes at Prophetstown Elementary School (PES) & 2 at East Coloma School for a total = **78 students.** A PES preschool class invited me to visit where I presented my Introduction to Birds & their Habitats. Char Knudten of the Natural Area Guardians (NAGS) assisted me and we reached **20 students** on April 28th.

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WHITESIDE COUNTY SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
~ A Unit Of Local Government ~
16255 LIBERTY STREET
MORRISON, IL 61270
PHONE: (815) 772-2124 x 3 Rain Barrels
*Please call the District office for information
regarding state cost-share programs, children's
educational programs, & equipment rental

FAX: (815) 772-7973

ITEMS FOR SALE

Marking Flags	Tree Sales
Deer Repellant	Tree Mats
Native Grasses	Tree Shelters
Tree ID Books	Tree Finder Books
Filter Fabric	Rain Barrels

are planning a family trip to the Colorado Rocky Mountains.