

# CAPE GIRARDEAU COUNTY

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August 2011

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NRCS District Conservationist

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NRCS Soil Conservationist

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Private Lands Conservationist  
Missouri Department of Conservation

*Lend a Helping Hand to  
Conservation of Land*

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# NEWSLETTER

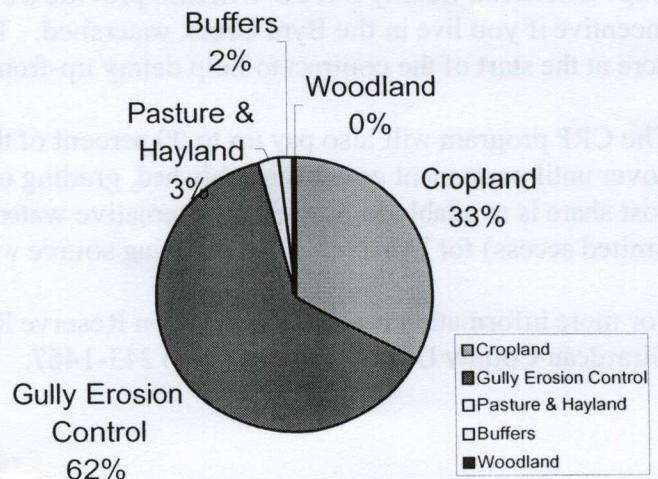
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## BYRD CREEK WATERSHED AGNPS SALT PROJECT

The graph to the right depicts the amount of cost share money spent in the Byrd Creek Watershed area between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2011

Total Dollars Spent in SALT Area \$233,877



## Conservation Reserve Riparian Buffer (CP-22) Program

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a United States Department of Agriculture program that is administered by the Farm Service Agency. This popular program pays willing landowners an annual rental payment to retire agricultural or pasture land and maintain a vegetative cover for 10 to 15 years.

Within the CRP program there is a continuous sign-up for buffer strips. This program allows a landowner to establish certain buffer on crop and pasture lands. A landowner can enroll the land into CRP at any time, without having to go through the process of submitting a competitive offer.

One part of the program that has benefited streams over the past years is the CRP Riparian Buffer (CP-22) program. This program provides a rental payment for up to 15 years and incentives to establish trees along streams. Requirements include planting trees and fencing livestock from the stream and riparian corridor if they are present.

Trees are very important to have along streams. Trees provide root systems that armor stream banks and prevent stream bank erosion; provides protection from scour erosion in nearby fields and pastures during floods; traps and filters sediment, nutrients and chemicals before they enter the stream; provides shade to modify seasonal water temperature extremes; and provides leaf litter to help feed the aquatic ecosystems.

For land to be eligible it must be immediately adjacent to a stream having perennial flow or a seasonal stream. If trees are already established on the land and functioning as a riparian buffer, the land is ineligible. The minimum amount of land to be enrolled is 50 feet from the top of the stream bank up to a maximum of 180 feet. Measurements begin at the top of the stream bank.

Crop and pasture/hay land are eligible, but not timber ground. Pasture land has a set base rental payment for each county in the state. Crop land is determined by the soil type that is located at the site to be enrolled. Because conservation buffers have a high environmental benefit, an additional 20 percent is added to the rental rate. A maintenance incentive of \$2 to \$5 per acre is also added to help offset the maintenance of the buffer through the life of the practice.

For example, in Cape Girardeau County, the rental rate is \$66 per acre for pasture land. Add 20 percent (\$13.20) for the riparian buffer practice and \$4 for maintenance (fencing) and this will equal \$83.20 per acre per year. This would be the payment that a landowner would get for pasture land annually for 15 years. In most cases crop land rental payments would be higher.

An additional incentive that is available with this program pays an up-front signing bonus of \$100 per acre. The Cape Girardeau County SWCD will also provide a \$100.00 per acre incentive that can be added to the CRP incentive if you live in the Byrd Creek watershed. This means that a landowner could receive up to \$200 per acre at the start of the contract to help defray up-front installation costs.

The CRP program will also pay up to 90 percent of the county average cost for site preparation, temporary cover until permanent cover is established, grading or shaping, seeds, trees or shrubs, and fencing. Additional cost share is available to provide an alternative watering source (pumps, piping, from exiting water source, and limited access) for livestock if the watering source was the stream.

For more information on the Conservation Reserve Riparian Buffer (CP-22) program contact the Cape Girardeau County USDA office at (573) 243-1467.

# SUMMER COVEY HEADQUARTERS CALENDAR

## JULY

Excessive June and July rains can shift peak hatching to August

Quail continue to nest and broods are foraging – resist the temptation to mow this month

Spray sericea lespedeza now through September

Mow newly planted native grass stands a second time to a height of 6 – 8 inches for weed control

Improve wildflower diversity by burning warm season grass CRP starting July 16

## AUGUST

Mow or burn fescue to prepare for fall herbicide treatment

Till firebreaks now for fall, winter, and spring prescribed burns

Burn native warm season grasses between August 15<sup>th</sup> and March 15<sup>th</sup> to stimulate wildflowers

Re-nests and second quail broods hatching – do not mow idle areas

Continue to treat sericea lespedeza through September

## What Happened to the Bobwhite Quail?

There may be no game bird more enjoyed or more studied than the bobwhite quail. Hunters, bird watchers, farmers, suburbanites – it seems everyone likes to see a covey of quail and hear the distinctive “bob...white” call. But the bobwhite population has been on a downward spiral for more than 30 years. In the past 20 years, the northern bobwhite quail has plummeted by 65 percent, according to the Southeast Quail Study Group. What happened to the bobwhite? Wildlife experts point to a degradation and loss of quail habitat as the major factors.

Farming methods began to change rapidly after World War II – fences and hedgerows were eliminated as fields grew larger and larger. Pastures that had been choice quail habitat were cleared of brush and seeded to fescue, which doesn't provide either the food or cover quail need. Herbicides and insecticides came into their own as widespread control methods for weed and insect pests on ag lands. The problem for quail and many birds like them is that the insects and weeds killed by chemical control methods are essential to their diet.

So, year by year for the past 25 to 30 years, as brush was cleared, weeds were controlled, fields became larger, and pasture makeup changed, quail lost much of their prime habitat.

Gone was much of the diversity of “early successional” (grasses and herbs, shrubs and young forest), and fringe or “edge” habitat that were once common.

The southeast study group has developed a habitat restoration plan to restore populations to 1980 levels, with a goal of improved habitat on 81 million acres to help produce 2.7 million new quail coveys.

Congress included a stipulation in the 2002 Farm Bill to improve northern bobwhite quail habitat on privately owned working lands. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is working on a study that calls for state-level evaluations of quail restoration technology and NRCS conservation practices being used on farms, forest and pasture lands. Universities in the quail range will work with the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute, Mississippi State University, fish and game agencies, Quail Unlimited and landowners on the multiyear study. For more information, check the web at [www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/animals.html](http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov/animals.html) or [www.qu.org](http://www.qu.org).

## Total Goals Met in the SALT Area to Date

The Byrd Creek Watershed Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) Project started July 1, 2008, and is scheduled to continue through June 30, 2015. This past year, July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011, the project has met the following goals:

### Erosion Control

**DWP-01 (Dry Structure, Drop Pipe, WASCORB) 6 structures completed**

**DSL-05 (Diversion) 4 structures completed**

### Nutrient Management

**N590 (Nutrient Management) 407.7 Acres of Cropland, 544.6 Acres of Pasture/Hayland**

### Sensitive Areas

**N386 (Field Border) 0.62 Acres Established**

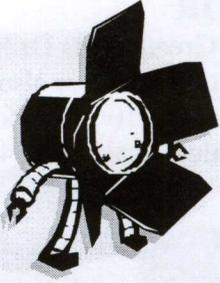
**DSP-31 (Sinkhole Improvement) 11 Sinkholes completed**

### Irrigation Management

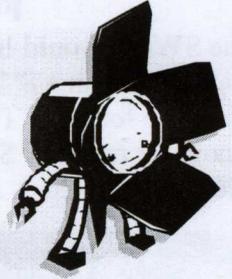
**N554 (Drainage Water Management) 59.41 Acres completed**

To date we are at 52% of our goals for the project. In the Cropland category, which consists of Nutrient Management (Cropland), Pest Management (Cropland), and Drainage Water Management, we have completed 841 Acres out of our goal of 2400 Acres. We have completed 58 of the 78 structures that we had planned for our Gully, Erosion Control Category which includes Vertical Drains, WASCORB's, Dry Structures, Drop Pipes, Ponds, Critical Areas, and Sinkhole Protection. Our Pasture and Hayland category which includes Prescribed Grazing, Pasture and Hayland Planting, and Nutrient Management on pastures had a goal of 1300 acres of which 1180 acres are completed. The next two categories have not been as active as the above categories, but there is still time to complete these goals. Buffers, which include Field Borders, Filter Strips, Riparian Buffers, and Stream Protection, has a goal of 50 acres and only 7.7 acres have been completed. We planned to complete 675 acres of Livestock Exclusion and Prescribed Forestry in our Woodland category, but unfortunately at this time have been unable to complete any acres.

Fiscal Year 2012 started July 1, 2011. The cost-share allocation for fiscal year 2012 will be \$97,500. The \$97,500 is to be spent specifically in the Byrd Creek Watershed area. The Cape Girardeau County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) operates on a first-come, first serve basis and has a waiting list for some practices. Each practice has qualifying factors to determine eligibility for cost-share assistance. If you would like more information concerning our programs or have an area on your farm that needs evaluation, please call 573-243-1467 ext. 3.



## **CONSERVATION PRACTICE SPOTLIGHT**

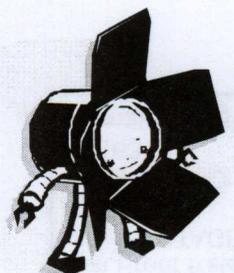
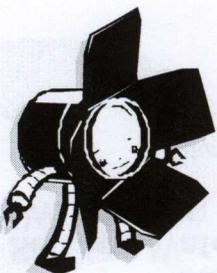


### **DFR-05 Woodland Protection through Livestock Exclusion**

The purpose of the Woodland Protection through Livestock Exclusion practice is to protect soil and plant resources from grazing by livestock. This practice applies to existing woodland areas susceptible to excessive erosion due to livestock grazing. The Cape Girardeau County SWCD offers cost-share assistance to help landowners fence livestock out of their woodlands. The program assists landowners with the cost of exclusion fence that lies within an existing functional interior or property line fence. If you have a wooded site on your farm that you are currently grazing and would like livestock excluded from the site, please contact the office at 573-243-1467 ext. 3.

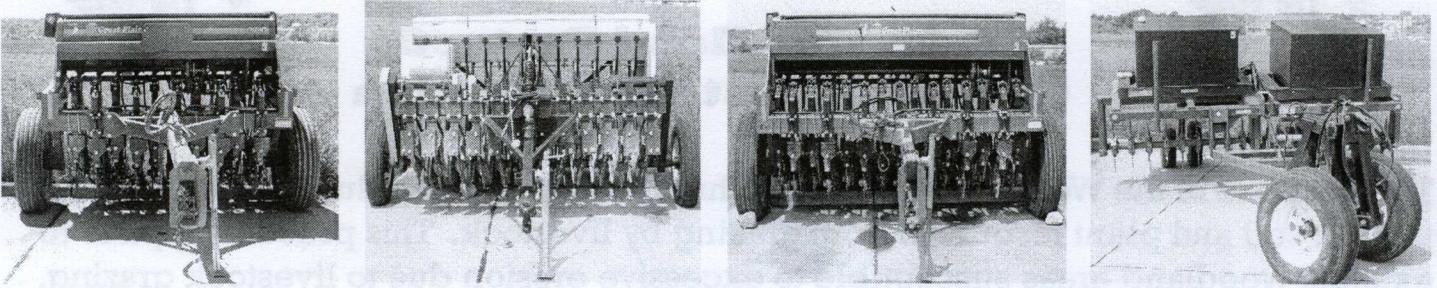
### **WQ-10 Stream Protection**

The purpose of the Stream Protection practice is to reduce excess amounts of sediment, organic material, nutrients, and pesticides in surface runoff and reduce excess nutrients and other chemicals in shallow groundwater flow with a secondary benefit of stream bank stabilization. This practice applies to areas immediately adjacent to permanent, losing, or intermittent streams that have a defined streambed where livestock have uncontrolled access for watering purposes. The program assists landowners with the costs of excluding livestock from the stream by providing cost share on the exclusion fence and developing a water source (pipeline from an existing pond or well, creating a limited access, tanks, etc.) if needed. There is also an out-of-production incentive offered for the excluded acreage. If you have an area on your farm that you would like to see if it qualifies for the WQ-10 practice, please contact the office at 573-243-1467 ext. 3.



## FOR RENT NO TILL DRILLS & PASTURE RENOVATOR

The SWCD would like to remind everyone the District has a 10' Great Plains Drill and a 7' Great Plains Drill for rent along with a 8' Truax Drill (warm season grasses). The District also has a Rhino Pasture Renovator also available for rent. The 10' drill rents for \$9/AC, the 7' drill rents for \$8/AC, the 8' drill rents for \$10/AC, and the renovator rents for \$6/AC. If you would like to schedule either the drills or the renovator, please call 573-243-1467 ext 3.



### WILDLIFE WAYS DID YOU KNOW.....

Grassland birds have declined more in the past 30 years than any other group of birds in North America.

Non Profit Rate  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Jackson, MO  
63755  
Permit No. 78

Cape Girardeau  
Soil and Water Conservation District  
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Return Service Requested