

# Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## Farmers—Help the SWCD Spend Cost-Share Money in St. Charles County

In FY 2011, the Soil & Water District was allocated \$28,589 and was able to spend \$4,918 on 2 practices, saving 580 tons of soil over the life of the practices.

The cost-share program is funded by one-tenth of one percent sales tax revenue, administered through the Department of Natural Resources. St. Charles County residents, due to the density of population, support a large portion of the cost-share revenue pie, much of which is distributed to other parts of the state. This is understandable when you look at the urban aspect of our county and shrinking farm acres, but we need our farmers to speak up and come forward and help us get this money back into the county and onto the lands of our local farmers.

Funds allocated to the district from the tax revenue are designated to certain resource concerns. These categories were established based on a needs survey distributed to the agricultural community in 2009. The FY 2012 Allocation is as follows:

Sheet and Rill/Gully Erosion	\$9,000
Sensitive Areas	\$9,000
Woodland Erosion	\$3,500
Grazing Management	\$4,000

Since the district has been unable to spend all funds allocated in previous years, DNR has limited the amount of money coming to our county. **We must increase cost-share interest among the farming community so the dollars are spent to save soil on the land in St. Charles County, and not returned to the state to be allocated elsewhere.**

If you have an erosion problem on your land and are an agricultural producer, call the district office and make an appointment with our technician, Charlie Perkins, to see if there is a practice that can solve that erosion problem. Funds will be spent based on eligibility and on a first-come, first-served basis. When funds run out in a particular category, the farmer will be put on the cost-share list and will be considered during the next funding round. Funds are allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year (July 1), but a second round of funding is often made available mid-year.

Call 636-922-2833, ext. 3, for more information.

## FY12 Cost-Share Dollars Available

The Soil & Water Conservation District still has funds available for cost-share in the following areas:

**Woodland Erosion:** Soil erosion and water quality are addressed through three practices in this category.

**Forest Plantation** is designed to protect the soil and encourage the conversion of marginal soils to less intensive use by planting trees and shrubs and excluding livestock.

**Woodland Protection through Livestock Exclusion** is the construction of fencing to exclude livestock from wooded areas susceptible to excessive erosion due to livestock grazing.

**Use Exclusion** is the installation of fencing to protect areas where vegetative establishment, soil condition and water quality are in need of protection.

**Sensitive Areas:** There are four practices available to address areas of agricultural land where current management has impacted erosion, surface water and ground water such as streams, sinkholes and springs.

**Well Decommissioning** involves treating, filling and sealing a well that eliminates the direct contact that the open well has with ground water, and addresses the safety hazard presented by an open well.

**Field Borders** is the practice of establishing permanent grass buffers along the edges of crop fields to trap pesticide and fertilizer runoff.

**Stream Protection** is the practice of excluding livestock from stream corridors to allow revegetation with grasses and trees on the stream bank.

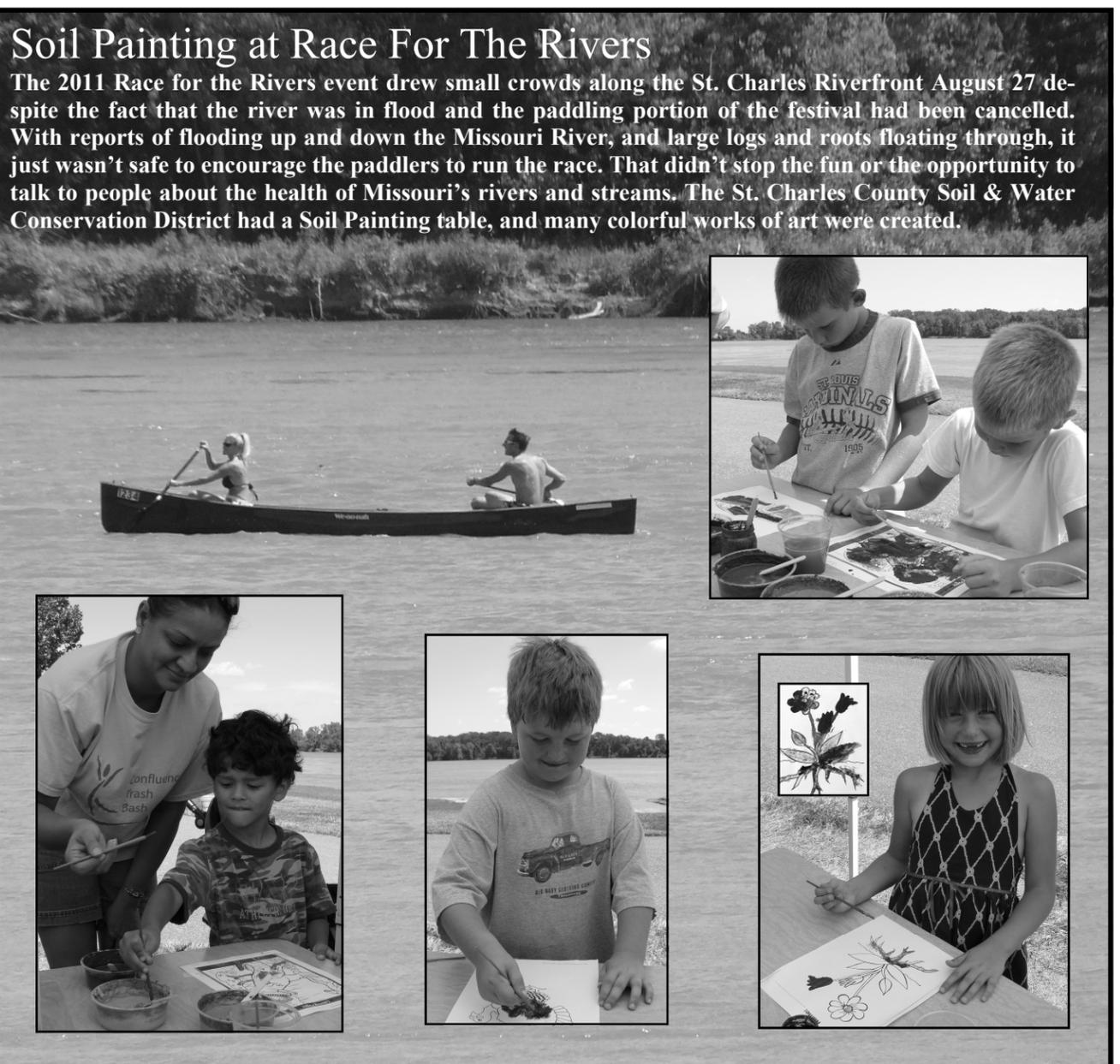


**Are You Losing Productive Soil???**  
Read this article and then call the Soil & Water Conservation District!

See Cost-Share, page 3

## Soil Painting at Race For The Rivers

The 2011 Race for the Rivers event drew small crowds along the St. Charles Riverfront August 27 despite the fact that the river was in flood and the paddling portion of the festival had been cancelled. With reports of flooding up and down the Missouri River, and large logs and roots floating through, it just wasn't safe to encourage the paddlers to run the race. That didn't stop the fun or the opportunity to talk to people about the health of Missouri's rivers and streams. The St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District had a Soil Painting table, and many colorful works of art were created.



## SWCD and NRCS Host Foreign Visitors



Members of the group took a closer look at the soils in the pasture. Above, landowner Paul Kamphoefner, left foreground, looks on, as Doug Peterson of NRCS, far right, points out specific soil characteristics.



The Soil & Water District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service were among several area hosts for a group of Russian visitors on August 15. Many of the visitors were farmers or farm company owners in their country, and were visiting the United States to observe farming methods, research projects, conservation efforts and more. After a brief visit in the office, the group traveled to Paul Kamphoefner's cattle farm near Defiance, Mo. They expressed interest in beef cattle, and were curious about prices for organic beef. Doug Peterson, NRCS Grassland Conservationist, spoke about soil fertility and grazing pastures. Kamphoefner was able to explain the benefits of a managed grazing system. The group posed in front of the beautiful rolling hills that surround the farm (above). Pictured second from left is Mark Scott, SWCD Board Chairman; fourth from left is Doug Peterson, NRCS; eighth from left is Paul Kamphoefner, SWCD Board Member; next to him is Renee Cook, NRCS District Conservationist; Far right is SWCD Technician, Charlie Perkins; and just to his right is SWCD District Manager Frankie Coleman.



## Who Invited the Clod??

No one likes a clod, right? No...we're not talking about that distant cousin who stumbles around at the family reunion telling distasteful and dirty jokes. The unwelcome clods we're talking about are the ones hanging out in your pasture or crop field.

What is a clod?? Well, first of all it is a man-made structure, and usually does not occur naturally. Think of a clay brick and how it is formed in a process of heating and drying the clay. Clods are formed the same way, only the mechanism to create the clod isn't your hands, but your farm equipment. Tilling is especially efficient at giving birth to clods because when the soil is turned and exposed to sunlight, the moist clay particles clump together and then heat and dry, becoming as hard as a brick.

One of the materials in the field that help prevent clods, organic residue, is greatly reduced by tilling. The organic residue can keep the clay particles from binding together, and will also help cushion the soil under the movement of heavy equipment.

Basically—clods are like bricks that resist water absorption and make soils hard and compacted. Organic residues are like sponges that absorb the water and soil nutrients and cushion and protect the soil.

In undisturbed productive soil, there is a whole world of activity and a distinct and necessary food chain. Plant roots, water, air and organisms are all important to the health of the soil. The largest contributor to organic matter in the soil in an agricultural field is decaying plant roots. Even the decaying plants on top are extremely important to the health of the soil because a number of small animals and insects carry plant debris down into the topsoil. The living microbes within the soil will

then do their job—changing plant material into humus.

In clods, another missing ingredient is microbes—the millions of microscopic plants and animals such as bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes and algae. They are the builders of humus and their building process releases nitrogen, which is essential to plant health.

An agricultural system that provides a continuous living cover with continuous long-term no-till is a system that will most closely mimic a natural system.

It is the cycling of nutrients, including nitrogen, that insure healthy plant growth; and one way to promote that cycling is to maximize the amount of legumes in the crop rotation. An agricultural system that provides a continuous living cover with continuous long-term no-till is a system that will most closely mimic a natural system.

Using cover crops and no-till, and having that continuous cycling of nutrients, will protect the soil from compaction and eliminate the uninvited clod. The soil surface will act



like a sponge and help absorb some of the weight of equipment traffic. Plant roots will create voids and pores that allow air and water to move through the soil. Plant roots also supply

food for the microorganisms that work to keep the soil from compacting. Organic residues that are created by decaying plants and animals are less dense than sand, silt and clay and will make the soil less dense. All of these factors work together to eliminate hard, clumpy clods.

So the short answer to eliminating clods—Use no-till and plant cover crops. Call the Soil & Water District or the Natural Resource Conservation Service at 636-922-2833, ext. 3, to learn how to improve your soil health!

## News



### Free Rain Garden Workshop Offered in O'Fallon

The Fleur de Lis Garden Society is hosting a free Rain Garden Program Saturday, Oct. 15, from 1-4 pm., at the Renaud Spirit Center in O'Fallon.

Those in attendance will learn why rain gardens are important, and how to build their own rain gardens. They will discover how rain gardens help keep waterways and local drinking water clean, how to help prevent neighborhood flooding from storm water, how to stop erosion in their yards, and how their gardens will provide food and shelter for many birds and butterflies.

Other sponsors of the event include Greenway Network Inc., St. Louis Composting, St. Charles County SWCD, O'Fallon Parks and Recreation; Nature's Melody; The Gateway Gardener; Pizzo; 4-H, National Garden Clubs Inc., Girls Scouts of Eastern Missouri, Hillermann Nursery and Florist, and Native Landscape Solutions, Inc.

There will be attendance prizes and booth displays. Seating is limited, so register for the workshop by calling 636-462-3025, or online at [www.fleudelisgardensociety.org](http://www.fleudelisgardensociety.org).

### District Annual Meeting Planned for November 17

The 67th Annual Meeting of the Cooperators of the St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District will be held November 17, 2011, at the University of Missouri Extension Center. Agricultural landowners and district cooperators are invited to attend for a Thanksgiving style buffet dinner, and update on the programs, door prizes and entertainment.

This year's guest speaker is Master Gardener Connie Alwood, a co-author of the book "Birds in the St. Louis Area: Where and When to Find Them". Alwood specializes in the relationship between plants and birds in the landscape. His presentation, "Birds in the Garden" will help you learn how to identify birds common to your backyard, give you quick reference tips, song characteristics and ways to entice them to your garden.

If you would like to attend, call Frankie or Theresa at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

### Missouri Ruralist Online

The Missouri Ruralist magazine can be found online at:

<http://magissues.farmprogress.com/MOR/morindex.html>

### Seeking Donations to Increase Scholarship Fund

The Mary S. Burt Envirothon Scholarship Fund annually awards a college scholarship to a high school senior who has participated in the Envirothon.

The fund is named in memory of Mary Burt, the St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District Manager for many years, and an organizer of the Envirothon program in Missouri. The Envirothon is a hands-on, environmental and conservation-related competition with three levels: regional, state and international. Teams of five students each compete in various natural resource categories. The Burt family established this scholarship fund in honor of Mary because Mary believed that many of the children participating in this program would eventually go on to seek conservation-related jobs.

Donations to the Mary S. Burt Scholarship Fund can be mailed to Theresa Dunlap, 160 St. Peters Centre Blvd., St. Peters Mo., 63376.

## Boulevard Park to Feature Storm water Control Structures; Serve as Demonstration Site

The City of Lake St. Louis is installing a rain garden and bio-retention facility at the Boulevard Park on Lake St. Louis Boulevard. The purpose of these structures is twofold: Not only will they help address storm water runoff coming off a parking lot on the site, but they will also serve as demonstration practices for future development in the city. Homeowners and business developers will be encouraged to incorporate storm water control practices on new building sites. Established homeowners will also see how they can



build a smaller version of the rain garden to address runoff from areas in their yards, such as from roof gutters. A ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled for September 24, at 9:00 a.m. The public is invited to help finish installing the plants in the rain garden, and learn about improving water quality. Refreshments will be provided, but please bring your planting trowel, spade, and/or rake.

### Cost-Share, from page 1

**Sinkhole Treatment** protects groundwater springs from pollutants by improving drainage of surface water and protecting those groundwater inlets by establishing buffer and exclusion areas to trap sediments, chemicals and organic matter.

**Grazing Management:** Practices in this category are designed to address erosion and water quality problems due to the steady use of an area by livestock. Rotational grazing is used to establish the best use of the land's soil and water resources.

**Permanent Vegetative Cover Enhancement** improves the vegetative cover on pastures by introducing legumes into the grass base using no-till technology.

**Planned Grazing System Water Development** identifies and establishes water sources such as ponds, springs and wells for livestock watering.

**Planned Grazing System Water Distribution** involves the use of pipelines and watering tanks to make water available in each grazing area.

**Planned Grazing System Fence** helps the landowner install fencing to control the movement of the livestock.

**Planned Grazing System Lime** is aimed at managing the pH of soil for optimum fertility.



**Planned Grazing System Seed** involves the interseeding of legumes in an established grass pasture to improve plant health and diversity and protect soil from erosion.



The district may fund up to 75 percent of the cost of the installation of a practice. Call District Technician Charlie Perkins at 636-922-2833, ext. 3, for more information, or to schedule a consultation on your farm. Perkins can help identify places on your land where the Soil & Water District may be able to help with soil erosion issues and water movement.

### **Practices completed in FY11 include two sediment retention control structures.**

Pictured below is a crop field that was washing out along a ditch. The installed practice is an earthen dam built across the ditch to slow and capture moving water, and eliminate erosion. These are cost-shared on through the gully erosion cost-share category.

At right is a photo taken during the installation of a sediment control practice. A trench was dug in the low area going downstream and a tile was buried so that when water collects in the terrace it can be redirected below ground to a stable outlet.

**Call the Soil & Water Conservation District to learn more: 636-922-2833, ext. 3.**



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ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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St. Peters, MO 63376-1695

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## Soils and Composting is Topic of Class

The St. Charles County Extension Center offers a large variety of classes and workshops for all aspects of living. There are health and physical fitness classes, financial planning and money management workshops, child care discussions and much more.

A popular series of workshops centers around gardening. Whether you are a new homeowner just beginning to plan next year's vegetable garden, or a veteran landowner/grower, the extension center can provide you with information that will make gardening easier and more productive. The fall season will come to an end with an important workshop for anyone working the land: Soils and Composting.

Soils and Composting will teach the participant about soil classifications, soil amendments, soil testing, fertilizing, changing soil Ph, and composting materials and techniques. The instructor is Master Gardener David Barylski. This session will be held Oct. 11, 2011, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., at the St. Charles County Extension Center: 260 Brown Road, St. Peters Mo., 63376.

Registration is required, and there is a fee of \$20, with additional family members from the same address attending for half price. Call 636-970-3000 to register.

To learn more about the extensive educational opportunities from University Extension, visit the website at <http://extension.missouri.edu/index.aspx>

**In the United States, sedimentation is the #1 pollutant of streams and rivers—threatening aquatic life, increasing flood potential and clogging utility inlet and outlet pipes.**

### Products Made with Soybeans Include:

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## St. Charles County Offers Fall Hayrides at Broemmelsiek Park

Enjoy an old-fashioned hayride with family and friends at Broemmelsiek Park, 1615 Schwede Rd., just south of O'Fallon, beginning Sept. 16 through Nov. 20.

Two wagons, which are pulled by tractors, take guests on a 45-minute ride through tree-lined fields of the park. Afterwards, participants can enjoy sitting around a glowing bonfire for an hour to roast their own hot dogs and marshmallows. Groups may also bring non-alcoholic beverages and snacks, but glass containers are prohibited on the wagons or at the campfire site.

Advanced reservations are required by contacting the St. Charles County Parks Department at 636.949.7535.

The cost is \$125 a wagon with a maximum of 20 people per wagon. Hayrides may be reserved for 6, 7, and 8 p.m. on Fridays and 5, 6, 7, and 8 p.m. on Saturdays/Sundays.

In addition to the group hayrides, individual families and small groups can also join in the fun of a *Hayride Hoedown* on Saturday, Oct. 22. Guests will experience a 45-minute wagon ride through the park, along with a light dinner, s'mores, and a foot-stomping, knee-slapping performance by *Babaloo*, a one-man musical comedy act suitable for all ages.

Cost for this special event is \$8.50 per person, and advanced reservations before Oct. 14 are required. Sessions are offered at 6, 6:45 and 7:30 p.m., and are limited to 40 participants per session. To register your family or small group to participate in the *Hayride Hoedown*, call 636.949.7535 or visit [www.stccparks.org](http://www.stccparks.org).

St. Charles County  
Soil & Water Conservation District  
160 St. Peters Centre Boulevard  
St. Peters, MO 63376-1695  
636-922-2833, ext. 3

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Charlie Perkins, District Technician  
Theresa Dunlap, Info-Ed Specialist

#### NRCS Personnel

Renee Cook, District Conservationist  
Shawn Keller, Soil Conservationist  
Curtis Hoeft, Soil Conservationist  
Larry Farris, Soil Conservation Technician  
Deb Frazier, ACES

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.