

Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Scholarship Fund Honors Mary Burt



With great sadness our district received the news of the passing of the long-time St. Charles County SWCD manager Mary Burt, who managed the district for nearly three decades.

Here at the district, we are confident that Mary would be extremely pleased to know that her family has requested the establishment of a scholarship fund in Mary's name.

The Mary S. Burt College Scholarship Fund will be administered by the Missouri State Envirothon Committee per the wishes of the Burt family. The scholarships will be awarded to students going to college who have participated in an Envirothon event, and who are pursuing a career related to natural resource conservation.

Anyone wishing to donate to the fund can make a check out to the Mary S. Burt College Scholarship Fund and mail it to Peggy Lemons at 1209 Biscayne Dr., Jefferson City MO 65109.

Connie Gibson is New FSA County Executive Director

Landowners visiting FSA may have already met the new FSA County Executive Director, Connie Gibson.



Gibson, who introduced herself to district cooperators at the Annual Meeting November 12, has made a point to make herself visible and available to customers.

She has over 20 years experience, having began as a Program Technician in 1983 in Lincoln County. She entered the management program in 2006 and was CED of the Cooper County FSA office until her transfer to St. Charles/St. Louis County in late October.

Contact NRCS NOW if you want to qualify for conservation financial assistance in 2010. See story, page 2



District Hosts 66th Annual Meeting and Dinner

The District welcomed more than 120 landowners, cooperators and friends to the 66th Annual Meeting and Dinner November 12, at the University Extension building in St. Peters.

The meeting is a time to visit with old friends, hear about district activities for the year, learn how the partner agencies, such as NRCS, FSA and MDC, assist and enhance district operations, and enjoy a tasty Thanksgiving-style dinner.

The district also takes this opportunity to thank farmers and other members of the community who have made significant contributions to the protection of soil and water resources. This year's Cooperator of the Year Award went to Rehmeier Farms (Rick and Dean Rehmeier), and the Urban Conservationist Award went to Maria King, Project Manager for the City of Lake St. Louis.



Musicians from the Orchard Farm High School Jazz Band provided entertainment.



Charlene Waggoner of Greenway Network, and St. Charles County Councilman Bill White



Ruth and Glennon Stelzer
Ruth is a past District Board Member



Ann and Don Johnson
Don is a District Board Member

The District presented an Urban Conservationist Award and a Cooperator of the Year Award. Greenway Network also recognized two local landowners with their Exemplary Environmental Practices for Landowners Award. See Page 3 for award pictures.



Shawn Keller, NRCS Resource Conservationist; Renee Cook, NRCS District Conservationist; Steve Specia, MDC Regional Supervisor; and Frankie Coleman, SWCD District Manager



Gene and Betty Ehlmann

Online Farming Game Draws 60 million+ Users Every Month

A virtual world of farming created by the internet gaming powerhouse, Zynga, and accessed through the online social networking site, Facebook, has become the most popular online game of all time. Millions of people of all ages and all walks of life are logging onto their computers throughout the day to manage their farms, water their crops and buy more livestock.

"That's the first thing I do when I get home from school....water my crops because they could die if I'm not paying attention to them," said one 18-year-old female who wished not to be identified. "Sometimes I have to check it at work."

Farmville is an interactive role-playing game. First-time players get a 12 x 12 acre plot of land and 100 gold coins. To earn more game money and experience, "farmers" plant and sell crops, raise livestock, and help on neighboring farms. The more one plays, the more things one can buy—new crops, farm equipment, animals, scarecrows, buildings, fencing and much more.

Another anonymous gamer is a local farm wife (for real). When asked if she didn't just get enough of farming by going out her back door, she responded that Farmville was a fun and relaxing escape.

Some fear that this type of cyber-living is damaging face to face social interaction, and that this particular game may be keeping people from going outside and really planting something. Others say its just good

Deadline for 2010 Conservation Financial Assistance Looms; NRCS sets January 29 Ranking Cut-off Date

Missouri agricultural producers and landowners interested in protecting or improving natural resources on their land are being urged to contact their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office before January 29 if they want to qualify for conservation financial assistance in 2010.

"We realize the holiday season is a busy time for everyone, but for those producers who need technical or financial assistance in the coming year, now's the time to move conservation from their 'wish list' to their 'to-do list'," State Conservationist J.R. Flores said.

NRCS administers a suite of conservation programs designed to address various natural resource issues on private and Tribal working land and private, non-industrial forest land. While producers can apply anytime for the programs, NRCS has set January 29 as the cut-off date to evaluate and rank applications for funding four programs:

- Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

In addition to its regular conservation programs, special funding pools are available for organic producers, producers affected by wildfires, and producers who will be converting expired Conservation Reserve Program land back into production.

"Whether farmers are interested in improving irrigation efficiency, improving wildlife habitat, protecting water quality or reducing erosion, we have a program that can provide both technical and financial assistance for qualifying applicants," Flores said.

Last year in Missouri, the NRCS provided more than \$116 million in financial assistance to its customers for the implementation of conservation practices and activities through its Farm Bill programs.

"Those practices produce numerous on-site and off-site benefits, including improved water quality, air quality, soil quality, wildlife habitat, and irrigation efficiency," Flores said.

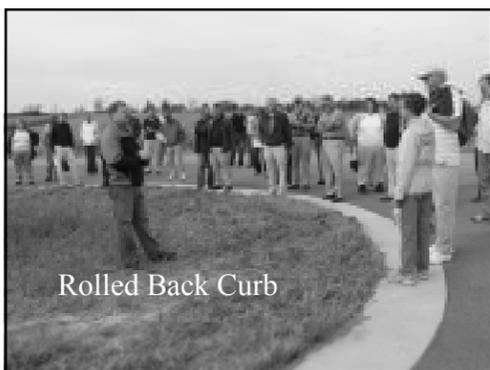
Interested agricultural producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA Service Center office or check the agency's web site at www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov for more information.

"By applying before deadline, producers can harvest numerous conservation benefits, as well as financial assistance, throughout 2010," Flores said.

Districts Host Low Impact Development Tour in St. Louis and Illinois

The St. Charles County SWCD, the St. Louis SWCD and the Missouri Department of Conservation hosted a Low Impact Development Tour October 21, visiting sites in St. Louis County and Illinois.

Low Impact Development (LID) is key to protecting natural resources in a community that is growing wisely and responsibly. LID practices include the use of rain gardens to control stormwater runoff, rain barrels to capture water coming off



Rolled Back Curb



Rain Barrels

roofs, porous pavement on driveways and sidewalks to reduce runoff capacity, vegetated swales and more.

Among the sites visited was the Rock Hill Trails subdivision in Wood River Illinois, where they have employed green space preservation, swales, wetlands, water harvesting, recessed cul-de-sac islands, and porous pavers.

John Sweet, trustee of the William A. Kerr Foundation, gave a tour of the foundation building in downtown St. Louis. Among the LID practices

demonstrated were rain gardens, a green roof (featuring live vegetation), and rain barrels. This site showed how one can retrofit an existing building with "green" enhancements.

At the John Burroughs School, participants observed an extended detention facility designed to handle 90% of the stormwater flowing from a new campus extension. This practice protects the water quality of the school's pond.

Last, the group toured an up-scale residential de-



Green Roof

velopment in Kirkwood known as Sommet at Big Bend. Bio-retention in the form of rain gardens and bio-swales were utilized in this development to help meet stormwater detention requirements.

While the Soil and Water District's main goal has always been to assist farmers and landowners in saving productive soil and protecting clean water, it is also obvious that working with urban partners is another way to truly protect these vital resources. City and county engineers, planning and zoning commissioners and other urban planners went on the bus tour.

Volunteers Needed for Operation Clean Stream 2010

On Saturday, March 27, volunteers from St. Charles County, Greenway Network, and the communities of Cottleville, Dardenne Prairie, Lake St. Louis, O'Fallon, St. Charles and Wentzville will need our help to remove trash from local streams and lakes. The last time Operation Clean Stream mobilized in St. Charles County, roughly 600 volunteers pulled over 28,000 pounds of trash from Dardenne, Perdue, Belleau, Spencer and Cole Creeks.

Once again the Stream Trash ART (START) project will run in conjunction with the stream cleaning. This project, created by Greenway Network project director Ralph Rollins, salvages metal pulled from the streams and uses it to create new works of art. Local artists will be working at some of the lunch sites to create works of art from materials found that day. Look for local works to be on display in your community.

Families, organizations and individuals can participate by calling the nearest community to register:

- Dardenne Prairie (636) 561-1718, Meet at Barat Haven Trailhead.
- Cottleville (636) 498-6565 x 203, Meet at City Hall.
- Wentzville/Lake St. Louis (636) 332-9236,

Meet at Quail Ridge Group Picnic Area.

- O'Fallon (636) 379-5408, Meet at Civic Park
- St. Charles (636) 949-3237, Meet at Fountain Lakes Park.

The day will start at 8:30 a.m. with registration at one of the five rendezvous locations listed above. Everyone is asked to dress for the weather and wear sturdy shoes or boots. Breakfast or lunch will be provided depending upon location. Register early. Space is limited. Participants registering by March 13 will receive a free T-shirt. In case of bad weather, the event will be rescheduled for April 10.

This community-wide event is sponsored by the cities previously mentioned, Greenway Network, Inc., Missouri Stream Team, Cee Kay Supply, Inc. and Walmart. Financial donations are appreciated for supplies and to defray the cost of tire disposal. Contributions can be made through Greenway Network at <http://greenwaynetwork.org>, email to greenwaynetwork@gmail.com or call (636) 498-0772.



Record Rainfall at Harvest

Farmers fought frustration as Mother Nature continually soaked and flooded the fields across the county.

On November 6, The Reporter caught Claude Boschert hard at work.

"We're usually done by now," he said. "The fields are wet and rutting."

While the Boscherts braved the mud, many other fields were still too wet for harvest, and there was worry that some corn and soybeans would be lost. Other farmers said they expected they may still be harvesting in December.

(at right, the Claude Boschert Farm)



Options for Land in the Expiring CRP Program

This article was provided to The Reporter by Missouri Department of Conservation employees: Aaron P. Jeffries and Travis Dinsdale.

Over 21 million acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contracts will expire over the next five years, but participants may want to consider options that will continue to protect resources and provide wildlife habitat on those acres

What is CRP?

The Conservation Reserve Program has resulted in millions of acres of habitat for upland and wetland wildlife. When managed properly, CRP is the greatest conservation program for wildlife in the United States. Well-managed CRP grasslands and buffers provide critical nesting, brooding and sometimes shrubby cover for quail and other wildlife.

The foundation of our nation's farmland and outdoor experience is built on diverse, high-quality and abundant natural resources such as productive waters, healthy forests, abundant fish and wildlife, and rich soils. Over the past 20 years, CRP has improved soil, water and air quality, wildlife habitat, and environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands and bottomland forests.

Of the CRP land that is expiring, most is on marginally productive land, which is the reason it was put into CRP and not agriculture.

What has been CRP's effect on hunting?

Bird hunters love CRP. Extensive use of the program in the Dakotas, Minnesota and Iowa provided for abundant grasslands perfect for pheasant and duck nesting. Losing these grassland habitats will result in fewer ducks flying through Missouri in November and December. In Missouri alone, almost one million acres of CRP will expire by 2013.

Hunting in Missouri is big business, generating over \$147 million in state and local sales tax. Hunting helps support the local economy with the purchase of hunting leases from farmers, the use of local hotels and restaurants, and the purchase of fuel at local gas stations.

Significant changes in federal policy and a drop in CRP acres will have a dramatic impact on our nation's farmland—not only for wildlife, but also soil, air and water quality. Without a strong Conservation Reserve Program, we would not have the extraordinary waterfowl and upland bird populations in the Midwest. While there may not be another general CRP signup for another year or two, landowners do have a few options:

Option One: Re-enroll...if you get the chance

The next time there's a general signup, consider re-enrolling. Don't worry if your current CRP soil rental rate payment is too low. There's a good chance the rental rate has improved since the last time you signed the CRP contract. Over the last five years the Farm Service Agency (FSA) has adjusted CRP soil rental rates.

If there is a general CRP sign up, consider converting your CRP field to a quail-friendly mix or at least native grasses. Back in the 1990s, some CRP fields were planted to a mix of "giant" native grasses and a pinch of wildflowers. Back then, more was better so many grass seeding rates were around 8 to 12 pounds per acre. We've learned a lot the last 15 years. Research has shown we can have good habitat and reduce soil erosion with much lower seeding rates (around 3 to 5 pounds per acre with 2 to 3 pounds of native wildflowers). Lighter seeding mixes are good for the landowner and good for wildlife.

Back in the 1980s and 1990s a lot of CRP fields in Missouri were planted to fescue or brome. Some were planted to a mix of orchard grass and annual lespedeza, which provided great habitat until the fescue and brome invaded. Now these fields are a pure stand of fescue or brome. These fields are difficult to manage for quail and grassland birds because of the thick sod and lack of plant diversity.

Instead of re-enrolling the current grass cover – whether it is warm-season or cool-season, consider replanting the field to a very quail-friendly mix of little bluestem, wildflowers and legumes. Most CRP fields will need 2 to 3 herbicide applications to effectively eradicate the existing cover.

During the next general CRP sign up consult with your local wildlife biologist or private land conservationist for recommended seeding mixes and conversion techniques. Converting to a quail-friendly mix may also improve your overall CRP score.

Option Two: Take Advantage of Continuous CRP

Landowners converting their expiring CRP fields into crop fields or pasture should consider leaving field borders along the field edges and wide buffers next to streams and ponds. Landowners can enroll these sensitive areas into popular Continuous CRP practices such as CP21 Filter Strip, CP22 Riparian Forest Buffer and CP33 Habitat Buffer for Upland Birds. Some areas might even qualify for popular

See CRP, pg. 4

Awards Presented at District Annual Meeting

Four individuals were presented with plaques at the Annual Meeting Nov. 12, recognizing outstanding efforts in conservation, both agricultural and urban.

Maria King, project manager for the City of Lake St. Louis, received the Urban Conservationist Award for her work on Gilmore Creek, a small creek that includes runoff from the GM Plant in Wentzville, that was experiencing extensive bank erosion and scour. Ms. King designed a project and coordinated with the Lake Saint Louis Community Association for construction. She selected stone toe protection and stream barbs for a low-cost, highly effective project. This project was also a successful collaboration between public and private entities.

Rehmeier Farms, owned by Rick and Dean Rehmeier, was the recipient of the Cooperator of the Year Award, recognizing a long-time commitment to conservation of natural resources. The Rehmeiers have included practices to protect water quality, improve soil quality and conserve soil. Among those practices were the installation of a pump and manure transfer system for hogs, nutrient management, pest management and residue management.

Greenway Network's Charlene Waggoner presented the Exemplary Environmental Practices for Landowners Awards.

James Schloeman of the Kahuna Land Company has restored 61.8 acres of wetlands in 2007 and is currently planning to restore an additional 17.9 acres of wetlands.

Rick Holten has restored approximately 50 acres of wetlands and is an active participant in conservation groups throughout the region. In addition, the Audubon Society has identified 97 species of birds using the habitat on the property and the site is used for seed collection by the Missouri Botanical Gardens, seeds that are then used in other restoration projects including some by Greenway Network.



District Technician Charlie Perkins (above) presents Maria King with the Urban Conservationist Award. District Manager Bob Sweany (below right) presents Rick Rehmeier with the Cooperator of the Year Award.



Charlene Waggoner of Greenway Network presented award to two landowners who have demonstrated best practice farming and conservation techniques: James Schloeman (above) and Rick Holton Jr. (below).



Annual Meeting Door Prizes Provided by:

Pumpkin Decoration - Shirley Robertson
2 Bags Bird Seed, 2 Pair Gloves & 2 Hats - Farmer's Elevator Coop
Bird Seed - Old Monroe Elevator
Hat & Shirt - Ward's Tool & Equipment
Apple Cider - Herman's Farm Orchard
Toy Tractor - Mordt Tractor
Books - MDC
Thermometer & 2 Rain Gauges - MFA
\$35 - Leo Straatmann Farm Service Inc.
Toy Tractor - Schweissguth Brothers Inc.
Tool Set - Schneider's True Value Hardware
Wren Bird House - Vehige Enterprises Inc.
John Deere Toy Tractor - Sydenstricker Implement Co.
John Deere Thermometer - Mark and Susan Scott
Scrusher (boot cleaner) - Charlie's Farm and Home
Cabela's Hat - SWCD
Cabela's Pocket Knife - SWCD
Tin of Cookies - SWCD
Cabela's T-shirt - SWCD
2 Dishes of Candy - SWCD
Puzzles - SWCD
Wall Hanging - SWCD
Snowman Decoration - SWCD
Indian Figures - SWCD

"Next to the air itself, land and water are our most important resources." D.A. Williams, SCS, 1967

Remember the Water Cycle???

All the water on Earth is All That There Ever Was and All That There Ever Will Be!!

Help Protect Water Resources!



The soil and water conservation district does not endorse nor recommend any of the vendors/contractors advertised in this newsletter, furthermore, any contractor/vendor that wishes to be added to the district's contractor/vendor list can be added upon request.

Christmas Tree Recycling

St. Charles County is partnering with other communities to offer free live Christmas tree recycling. Be sure to remove the tree stand, decorations, and bags or covers before leaving your used tree at one of the following locations.

St. Peters

- Laurel Park (upper parking lot)
- St. Peters Golf & Recreation Center
- St. Peters Earth Centre *Open 7:30am to 5:00pm, Monday thru Saturday, from December 28 to January 18*

Wentzville

- Quail Ridge Park (group picnic area) *Open 7:00am to 4:00pm, December 26 to January 22*
- Progress Park (parking lot) *Open 7:00am to 3:30pm, December 26 to January 18*

O'Fallon

- Civic Park (upper parking lot)
- O'Fallon Sports Park *Open from dawn to dusk, December 26 to January 17*

Lake Saint Louis

- Boulevard Park *Open dawn to dusk, December 26 to January 17*



Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

160 St. Peters Centre Boulevard
St. Peters, MO 63376-1695

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**Return Service
Requested**

MDC Private Impoundment Stocking and Management Assistance Changes

The Missouri Department of Conservation will cease production of fish for stocking in new or renovated private impoundments* and streamline the delivery of assistance to landowners. Continued support of private impoundment management will be offered in the following ways:

- As funding permits, an incentive program will be established to encourage pond owners to stock the appropriate numbers, sizes and species of fish needed to establish a quality fishery. Qualifying landowners will purchase fish from authorized dealers who have agreed to participate in the program and incorporate biosecurity measures in their operations.
- An extensive selection of literature is available to assist landowners in the diagnosis and treatment of virtually all pond management problems.



Information is available online or at Department offices where landowners may also speak with a fisheries biologist for further assistance. Literature and related materials will be revised as appropriate. Using this approach, few, if any, on-site visits will be required to assist landowners.

* Applications for the existing private impoundment stocking program will be accepted through July 15, 2010 and approved impoundments will receive department-produced fish in the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011.

Grazing Schools and Publications

Watch for Spring Grazing Schools for Managed Intensive Grazing by checking the website: <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/schools.htm>

There are two publications available at the USDA Service Center. They are "Electric Fencing for Serious Graziers" and "Watering Systems for Serious Graziers", both produced by the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Did you know?? A layer of soil one inch thick from one acre weighs about 150 tons.

CRP, from pg. 2

wetland practices such as CP23 Wetland Restoration. Landowners will still receive an annual soil rental payment and incentives for enrolling the margins of their fields. In some cases the payment is higher because of sign up incentives. If necessary, they can even receive up to 90% cost share for establishing the proper vegetation.

A recent study from the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) from the University of Missouri showed that farmers come out ahead when they enroll their crop field edges into Continuous CRP

practices such as CP33. For the complete report visit: www.fapri.missouri.edu

Planting CP33 buffers around the edges of crop fields not only provides great habitat for quail, but also takes marginally productive ground out of production. With high input costs and low yields, it makes sense to keep field edges and buffers in CRP.

Option Three: Production with Wildlife in Mind

In some cases expired CRP fields will remain in grass for hay and grazing pasture. Landowners can still take advantage of Continuous CRP practices if they plan on haying or grazing the field; however the CRP buffer will need to be fenced from livestock (if you plan on grazing the field).

Landowners should also consider other conservation programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) to help them develop better grazing systems, wildlife habitat or protect sensitive habitats. In Missouri, these programs provide cost-share for installing a variety of practices. CRP fields might also qualify for the Grassland Reserve Program or Conservation Stewardship Program. Contact your local USDA Service Center for more information on these programs.

Garden on the Contour

Home vegetable and flower gardens should be contoured to reduce erosion. Its good for your plants and good for your neighboring streams.

For information on how to keep your property safe from wildfires, log onto firewise.org

**Each ton of recycled paper can save
17 trees,
380 gallons of oil,
3 cubic yards of landfill space,
4,000 kilowatts of energy and
7,000 gallons of water!
(Resourceful Schools)**



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.

**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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