



Conservation Matters



Inside this issue:

Understanding NPDES	1
Rain Barrels: a Natural Choice	2
Conservation Plant/Tree Sale	2
Conservation Tillage Continues to Increase	2

Understanding NPDES

What is NPDES? The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II, among other things, requires a permit for all land development and/or demolition that disturbs 1 acre of land or greater. With the permit from Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) comes strict nonpoint source pollution guidelines for construction professionals.

Why is it important? When permittee's are in compliance, NPDES prevents hundreds to thousands of tons of soil and other pollutants from entering our public waters. This prevents further degradation of our public water supplies and recreation areas.

How does it affect Illinois? Compliance with NPDES results in lower costs to Illinois residents for purifying public water supply streams and reservoirs.

Why is it important that SWCDs are involved? Soil and Water Conservation Districts play an important role by educating the construction industry on how to avoid permit violations. This results in better environmental stewardship by, and less financial penalties to, the construction professionals.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) has made a significant impact on the improvement of our nation's water quality. The program, created in 1972 under the Clean Water Act, is responsible for controlling and regulating point sources of discharge of pollutants to waters within each state to maintain, protect, and restore the water quality of streams, lakes, and rivers. Point sources are discrete conveyances such as pipes or man-made ditches.

In 2003 Phase II of the NPDES Stormwater program went into effect. This regulation builds upon the existing Phase I program by requiring that stormwater be treated to the maximum extent practicable. Illinois NPDES program requires all construction sites disturbing one acre or more, industrial sites, and all designated Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) to obtain permit coverage.

Fact: SWCD's help many urban communities by reviewing and providing suggestions on their stormwater ordinances! Contact the DeKalb County SWCD for more information.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District is one of 98 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD's) making a difference in your community. No matter how big or small, each of the 102 counties is represented equally. From educating homeowners on practical utilization of water, to helping rural landowners save soil and improve water quality; it takes everyone working together to protect our soil and water!



Construction site in DeKalb County that is not meeting the requirements of NPDES. Violation Notices and substantial fines from the Illinois Environmental Agency can occur if sites are found to be out of compliance.



Soil and Water Conservation Districts Work With Many Different Groups, Organizations and Agencies

- Illinois SWCD's assist county and municipal governing bodies with zoning, flood prevention, facilities planning and many other functions.
- Illinois SWCD's work with state agencies to protect natural resources, deliver programs, monitor resource concerns, protect water quality, control erosion and more.
- Illinois SWCD's work with federal agencies to protect natural resources, implement programs, plan for improvements and help reach greater numbers of clients.
- Illinois SWCD's work with landowners and citizens to help them protect their property, educate their children and learn to take care of and appreciate our environment.

"The Wealth of Illinois lies in her soil and her future in its intelligent development."

Andrew S. Draper

DeKalb County SWCD
1350 West Prairie Drive
Sycamore, IL 60178
815-756-3237 X 3
www.dekalbilswcd.org

Directors:
John Begun
Joe Gulotta
Scott Pumroy
Mike Konen
Ralph Boesche

Rain Barrels: a Natural Choice

Rainwater harvesting is always beneficial, whether the water is used to water one houseplant or an entire garden. Also, the act of collecting rainwater can be an inspiration to find other ways to conserve water around the home.

The DeKalb County Soil and Water Conservation District sells 55 gallon rain barrels that were made from food-grade drums that use to carry food products such as olives and pickles. These barrels are small enough to fit on most residential or commercial lots.

Although these rain barrels may not provide all the water needed to sustain your plant matter, it can certainly supplement your current watering schedule. Planter bed, vegetable or flower gardens and potted plants can easily be irrigated with the water from a rain barrel.

The water savings from using stored rainwater rather than municipal or well water can be substantial over a period of time. A rain barrel can also help reduce the amount of water that may



settle around the foundation of your home.

Order forms available online at www.dekalbilswcd.org

Annual Conservation Plant/Tree Sale

Once a year, the DeKalb County SWCD offers area residents an opportunity to contribute to the preservation of their community. By purchasing these conservation trees and shrubs, you will be supporting your local Soil and Water District and contributing to the natural re-

source programs in DeKalb County. There is a wide variety of species available to enhance your property by providing shade, blocking costly winter wind, and reducing traffic noise. Conservation plants also provide soil erosion control, groundwater recharge and protection. Trees and

shrubs provide food, cover, and nesting habitats for wildlife.



Conservation Tillage Continues to Increase

A new study from the Illinois Department of Agriculture indicates the state's farmers increasingly are using tillage practices that protect the environment.

According to the 2009 Illinois Soil Erosion and Crop Tillage Transect Survey, nearly half (49.9 percent) of the state's cropland was farmed with a conservation tillage system this year, the highest percentage since the department began tracking use of crop tillage systems in 1994.

"Conservation tillage is good for the environment because it prevents soil erosion and improves water quality," Agriculture Director Tom Jennings said. "It also is good for farmers because it preserves fertile farmland and ensures our agricultural production is sustainable for generations to come."