

Conservation Conversation

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CREP is Coming to Fayette County

By Tony Pals

Good news! The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is coming to Fayette County. CREP has been around in the 53 counties of Illinois that make up the Illinois River basin. This fall it is being expanded to include the Kaskaskia River watershed as well. \$10 million was released on June 14th for signup in both watersheds. CREP is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water.

What is CREP, and how is it different than CRP? As the title says, it is an enhancement over the regular CRP program. You have the option to sign up for 15 year, 35 year and permanent easements on the CRP

land. You maintain ownership of the land and can use it for hunting, fishing, and many other recreational activities. You can charge a fee to allow others to use the property in CREP for hunting. Annual payments on the CREP are 20% or 30% more than the regular CRP payment, depending on what you signed up for. There is also a one-time lump sum payment for the easements

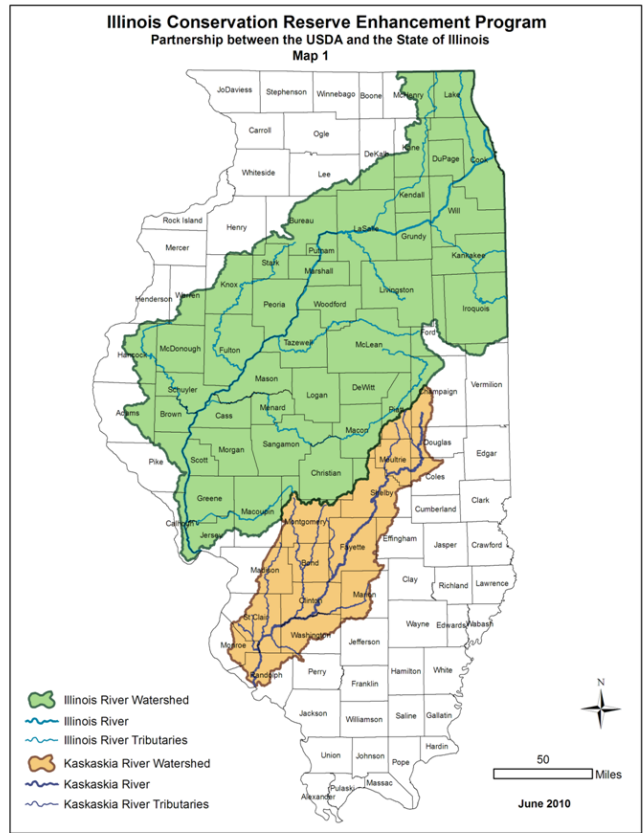


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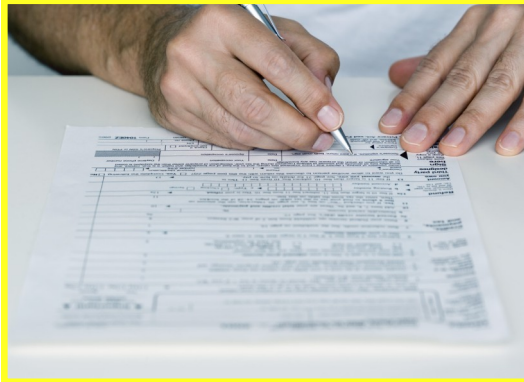
NEW PROGRAM

Watch the Farm Magazines for more information!!

CREP is Coming to Fayette County

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determined by the length of the easement and the soil rental rate for the land signed up. Another benefit, as I understand it, is 90% and 100% cost share on the cost of establishment of the practice. You will sign up next door at FSA like for CRP and the practices you will be eligible for will be determined by NRCS.

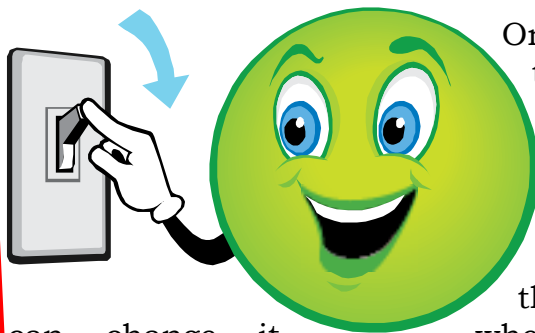


The district will be responsible for the easements.

It sounds like a really good program. Sign up is expected to start in October or November, so watch the farm magazines and ag newsletters. You can also Google "CREP" and get much more information on the topic.

Website Update

By Karen Sanders



One good thing about doing the website is that we can change it when we want too. The bad thing is having a boss that always seems to have a new idea every time I turn around. I really couldn't complain about this change, but next time we'll see. This time I think we had a combined effort idea. Our idea was adding a page on recycling, and another on saving energy and the tax credits for doing it. So, a new page was added to the website. It is on Energy Conservation - I have put about as many quick fix ideas as I could find on the page to help: improve the Heating (which I don't think we will need for a while) and Cooling your house, insulating your house, plus a lot of ideas on how to conserve energy. Almost all of the ideas have a link that will further explain the idea if you need more information. Do you have any idea what your carbon foot-

print on the world is? You can find out by clicking on the link I have provided. There is also information on a Solar Cooker - where they came from, how to use one, and even how to make your own. I also try to keep information on the website for any possible tax credits available to homeowners, such as the tax credit for Energy Star Appliances. Just click the link and it will take you to the website for the form to fill out. If you know of a credit that others can use that I don't have listed on the website let me know and I would be happy to post it. No one deserves to save money more than working people do. So, click on the Energy Conservation Link on the right side of the website page and check it out and let me know what you think. I get my work criticized all the time, one more person will not hurt my feelings.

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Nelsie's News

By Nelson Torbeck

How about this weather we're having? We had more rain the other day than we usually get the whole month of July. The crops really like the rain. There is an old saying, "Corn knee high by the 4th of July, we'll have a good crop." Most corn was tasseled by then! We should have an early harvest this year. The beans are looking better now; it was sort of wet for them at planting time. There's lots of spraying and mowing being done now. Jordy graduated from the 8th grade, and is headed for high school. He signed up for basketball and soccer; so he's practicing that this summer. His aunt is taking him to Europe next week for ten days. He ought to get a kick out of that. Jaron is getting ready to start his third year of college. He got a new apartment closer to the school (and his girlfriend, I

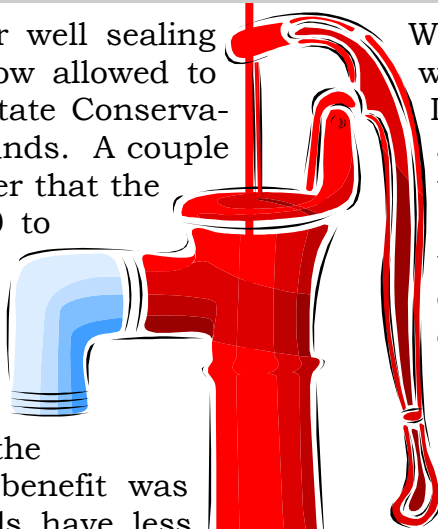


might add). He's two blocks from the campus. Travis got a new job; he's working in Edwardsville now. Tim's still at Taylorville, and his new bride, Amanda got a job at the 1st National Bank in Vandalia. My boys and their wives are doing the same thing - working. My knee is doing fine; I'm doing therapy here at home, about ten different things. I'm down to three times a week. Granny makes sure I do them. No varmints again this newsletter, unless you count mole's, I did get two of them. Well, can't think of anything else to write about, guess I'll quit. The question for the day is this, "Why is abbreviated such a long word?" The old saying, "Middle age is when it takes longer to rest than it did to get tired."

Well Sealing Funds Available

By tony pals

We've been offering funds for well sealing for several years. We are now allowed to fund up to 8 per year with state Conservation Practice Program (CPP) funds. A couple years ago, you might remember that the County Board gave us \$2000 to dedicate to well sealing also. The major reason for the push to seal abandoned wells was for water quality – the well opening was a direct route for pollutants to enter the groundwater. A secondary benefit was safety since a lot of the wells have less than a safe cover or no cover at all. A recent tragedy in Montgomery County where a young child fell in a well and drowned brings the safety issue to the forefront.



We have sealed a lot of wells and when I go out to measure them I always try to take someone along because of the issue of the safety of the well cover. Several times I was glad I had the extra person with me because of a rotting plywood cover over a less than obvious well site.

We cost share at 60% and most wells can be sealed for less than \$400, so if you have an abandoned well on your farm please don't put off sealing it – not just for water quality, but for safety also.

Recycling Update

By Karen Sanders

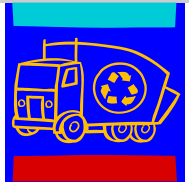


As most of you are already aware the district has a recycling day on the 2nd Saturday of each month, where we accept paper, cardboard, plastic, books, magazines, etc. Every Wednesday from 1:00-5:00 we except electronics' at the eRecycling drive that we hold at the office. This includes just about anything that you can plug in, except for large appliances. For those we can give you information so you can make arrangements to have them either picked up or told where you should drop them off. Since we have been holding the drop off location for a few months I thought it might be interesting for everyone to find out just how much stuff is **not** going into the landfills now.

The monthly paper recycling drop-off has taken in approx. 78,226 lbs or 39.113 tons. Now that is a lot of paper and cardboard to be



handling! If you don't believe me, come volunteer for a Saturday morning and try it! We not only take in a ton (I know, what a pun) of recycling on Saturday but we manage to back-up traffic on Randolph Street for 3 hours. I think it may have irritated a few people in the beginning, but everyone has seemed to learn not to use Randolph Street on that morning if they don't have recycling.



The weekly eRecycling that's held at the USDA Building also seems to be going over very well. We have taken in approx. 25,224 lbs. or 13 tons of electronic stuff. Sometimes I don't think that sounds like a lot but, though the HUGH TV's



we get weight a lot, we also get light bulbs, computer keyboards, computer mice, cell phones and a lot of stuff that doesn't weight much, so it has been a lot of items.

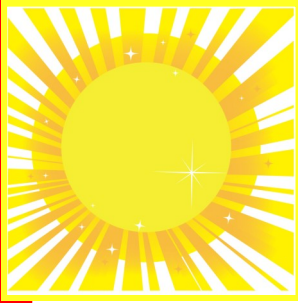
So, thanks to all of you that are recycling. It takes a little effort, but it really does make a difference. In some of my presentations to the schools, I tell them that big problems can be solved by a lot of people doing little things.



The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, age, marital status, veteran status, or disability. This policy covers all programs, services, and procedures of the district, including employment.

FACING THE FACTS

Della Moen, Earth Team Volunteer, NRCS/Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District



The great systems in place that keep our earth fit for life on its surface have functioned for millions of years.. Earth is a 'spaceship'– the only object so far observed

in our universe that has an atmosphere supporting life as we know it.

The greenhouse gases in our atmosphere are in one of these great systems. Some amount of greenhouse gases is necessary for life to exist on Earth – trapping heat in the atmosphere, keeping the planet warm and in a state of equilibrium. This is a basic science fact restated on the Climate Change website of USEPA. Human activities are increasing the amounts of these gases in the atmosphere leading to changing climate around the world and increasing global temperatures.

Climate change refers to any distinct change in measures of climate lasting for a long period of time. In other words, "climate change" means major changes in temperature, rainfall, snow, or wind patterns lasting for decades or longer. Global warming can be considered part of climate change along with changes in precipitation, sea level, etc

Climate change is not just about predicting possible future changes. Climate change is happening now. The evidence is clear that the earth's climate is warming: Global surface temperatures have risen by 1.3 degrees F over the last 100 years; worldwide the last ten years has been the warmest on record; the rate of warming across the globe over the last 50 years is almost double that of the last 100 years.

Evidence of climate change, observable

and measurable, shows changing precipitation patterns; melting ice in the Arctic; melting glaciers around the world; increasing ocean temperatures; rising sea level around the world; acidification of the oceans due to elevated carbon dioxide in the atmosphere; and responses by plants and animals, such as shifting ranges.

On their website www.climatechange.gov, the USEPA reports facts from The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report (2007). The United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations World Meteorological Organization formed the IPCC jointly in 1988. The IPCC brings together the world's top scientists, economists and other experts, synthesizes peer-reviewed scientific literature on climate change studies, and produces authoritative assessments of the current state of knowledge of climate change.

Human activities producing greenhouse gases include burning fossil fuels for trans-



portation, using electricity commonly generated from fossil fuels, cutting down forests, and developing land for farms, cities and roads,

If you haven't already, it is definitely time to face the facts of changing climate and global warming. You can choose to ignore these facts. Or you can choose to examine your own daily activities and make an effort to lessen your contribution to excessive greenhouse gases. Even then you will have to adapt to the changes already in evidence.