

# Conservation Conversation

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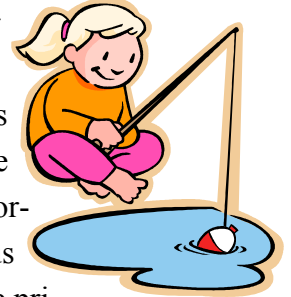
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## **IDNR to Roll Out New Program**

*By Jamie Elmore*

The Illinois Recreational Access Program (IRAP) will soon begin enrolling landowners. With a grant from the USDA's Farm Service Agency, the IL Department of Natural Resources is coordinating this new public access program. Land will be leased from private landowners and made available to the public for specific activities. This is a win-win situation for all. The IRAP program provides land and water access to outdoor recreationalists and immunity from liability to landowners. In addition, landowners will have the opportunity to better manage their lands for habitat.

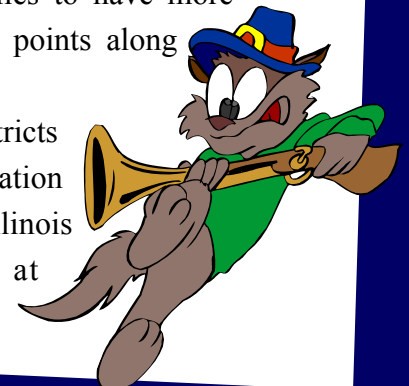


DNR Director Marc Miller said that the program is part of the recently enacted federal farm bill. "We were one of the few new programs awarded this opportunity." Miller noted Illinois is the fifth most-populous state in the country, but 96 percent of Illinois lands are privately held.

"As we move further away from our agricultural roots and that ancestor who owned land, we are losing that opportunity to fish, hunt and go outdoors," he said. "We simply cannot hold steady with the land we have in our fish and wildlife areas and hope that will be enough. We are going to have to go out and find willing landowners. This will be a voluntary, incentive-based program."

The program will be available in the 68 CREP counties in the Illinois and Kaskaskia River watersheds and is slated to encourage family outdoor activities. IRAP is providing for more places for turkey hunters, under 16, to hunt on private land; leasing ponds for families to have more places to fish; and opening additional access points along public rivers for non-motorized watercraft.

The county Soil and Water Conservation Districts will be the point of contact for more information and for sign up, when available. Or contact Illinois Department of Natural Resources at [www.dnr.il.us](http://www.dnr.il.us)



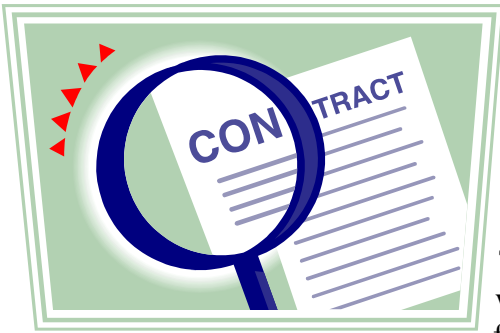
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## CREP in Fayette County

By Jamie Elmore



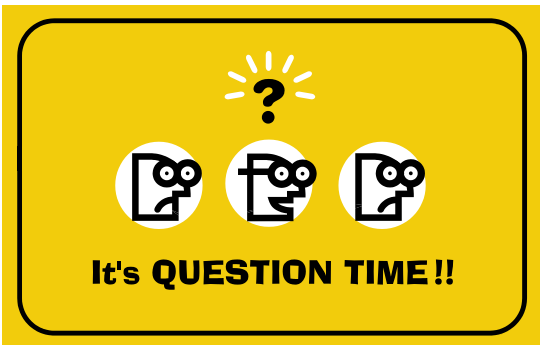
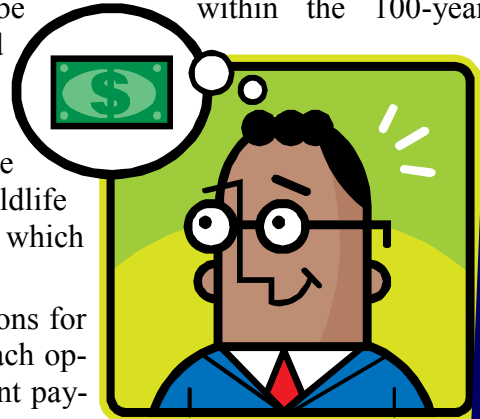
After eight months of open enrollments, the Illinois Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) continues to receive new interest in Fayette County. In fact, there have been over 1600 acres (made up of cropland and adjacent timber) offered in at least the federal program with roughly 1200 of those acres also moving forward with state easements as well.

This program targets landowners in the Kaskaskia River watershed, which encompasses nearly all of Fayette County, and in order to qualify for the program, the property must be within the 100-year

floodplain (or adjacent HEL), have been owned for at least one year, and have a cropping history of 4 out of the 6 years between 2002 and 2007.

CREP is a voluntary, incentive-based land retirement program targeted at improving water quality by establishing conservation practices to reduce sedimentation, soil erosion and excessive nutrients, while enhancing wildlife and fish habitat. There are several practices, determined by NRCS staff, which may be established on these acres to achieve these goals.


With both a federal contract and state easements, there are different options for landowners to choose from. Each option will carry with it a different payment scenario.



Implementation at the local level has made the Illinois CREP one of the most successful in the nation. Having a CREP Coordinator in our county is also a perk because it means there is always a local person to help landowners through the process and answer any questions. If landowners want more information, they are encouraged to call or come into the SWCD office and find out more.

## Used Oil Drop off Site

By Karen Sanders

 In the past several weeks I have received phones calls asking various questions about what we accept, as far as recycling. Well, I just learned of another business in town that is assisting with the recycling efforts. NAPA Auto Center will allow you drop off your used oil. I spoke with a member of the staff at NAPA and the following are the requirements to be able to drop-off your oil:

1. They accept all truck or auto oils, including transmission and hydraulic oils.
2. They accept clean oil, so, please put a lid on your oil container after you change it to prevent vermin from getting into the container.



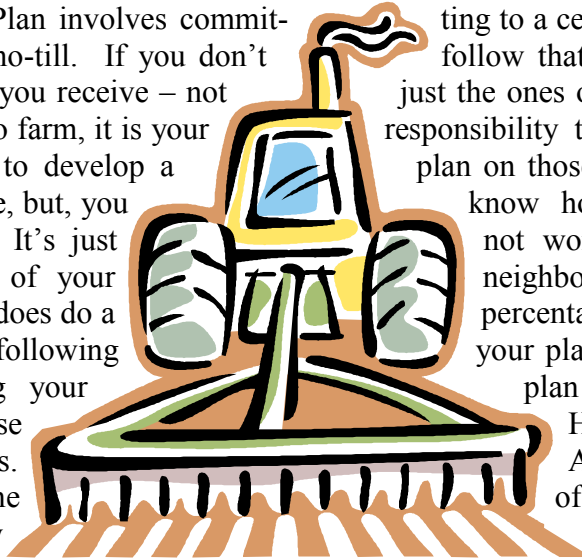
3. They prefer a limit of 5 gallons per customer at a time.
4. NO DROP OFF AFTER HOURS, they need to be open for the drop-off!!
5. When you bring in your oil please go inside to let the staff know you have oil and they will let you know where to leave the oil. DO NOT TAKE IT IN WITH YOU. There is a location outside the store designated for drop-off.

Those sound like pretty easy requirements to me. So, there really isn't much of an excuse not to recycle oil.

**Conservation Plans**

*By Tony Pals*

This is just a reminder. The 1985 Farm Bill defined Highly Erodible Land (HEL). Fields with over a third having the soil type, slope and slope length to have the potential for serious erosion were given the classification HEL. Every field that met that criteria then had to have a conservation plan developed on them. If you didn't follow that plan you could lose farm program payments. Those rules still apply today. You still need to have a conservation plan on all of the highly erodible land that you farm. You also need to be following that plan. An HEL Plan involves committing to a certain rotation and tillage system, usually at least one year of no-till. If you don't follow that plan, you could jeopardize all of the farm program benefits you receive – not just the ones on that particular farm. Also, if you pick up additional land to farm, it is your responsibility to check with our office about which fields are HEL, and to develop a plan on those fields. I don't want to sound like I'm giving a sermon here, but you know how much money you receive through the USDA office. It's just not worth taking a chance on losing that. Yes, I know a lot of your neighbors may not be following their farm plan either, but NRCS does do a percentage of spot checks on farms every year. You want to be following your plan if your farm gets pulled. It's important to be following your plan anyway, because that plan keeps the soil loss on those HEL fields at (or at least close to) the tolerable soil loss limits. Also, if you are planning on clearing any land, stop by the office to make sure it's not HEL or wetland. If you have any questions, please give us a call.



**Recycling Update**

*By Karen Sanders*



As most of you are already aware the district does eRecycling every Wednesday from 1:00-5:00. We except about any electronic products, such as computers, monitors, ink cartridges, etc that you need to get rid of. All you have to do is put them in the eRecycling trailer located in the parking lot. We don't take large appliances like refrigerators or stoves, but if you call me I can give you the information necessary to make arrangements to have it picked up so it can be recycled. But the one question that keeps getting asked is **"Do you still take glass?"** And the answer is **"NO"** we do not have anywhere to dispose of it anymore, so please do not leave your glass. There is a drop-off location in Effingham behind the Kluthe Center to leave your glass.

When it comes to all the paper, plastic, cardboard and office paper the solution is easy. Fayco is working with Vandalia residents, as well as, several other surrounding towns to set up recycling areas. If there is not a location in your town just take it to the Fayco Building at 1313 Sunset Drive in Vandalia. They have several bins set up and all you have to do is sort your recycling into the bins. If you have any questions about your eRecycling call Karen or Tony at the SWCD Office at 618-283-1095 ext. 3 or if you have paper recycling questions call Fayco at 618-283-0638.



So, thanks to all of you that are recycling. It takes a little effort, but it really does make a difference. I keep telling everyone that big problems can be solved by a lot of people doing little things. Please keep recycling so our youth will have a better natural resource experience with each passing year.

## 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.

## Farm Safety in the Workshop

*By Karen Sanders (taken from safetek.net)*

**Perhaps more than any other occupation, agriculture involves a broad cross section of skills. Farmers and farm workers routinely perform workshop tasks that in other industries would be done by a variety of skilled trades people.**

Repairs and maintenance of farm machinery, and associated workshop jobs, are among the most frequent causes of farm injuries. Identify potential hazards and develop safe procedures for all workshop tasks, in particular training and supervision for young and inexperienced workers.

### Spot the hazard

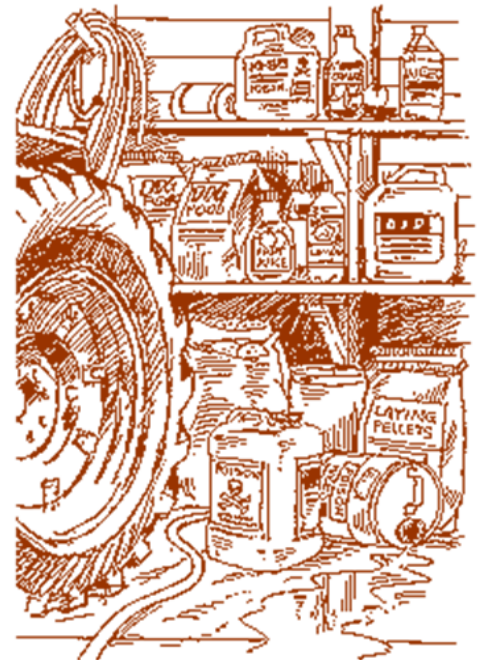
Check potential hazards in the structure of farm buildings, electrical fittings and fixtures, power tools and equipment, ladders and trestles, welding equipment and procedures, safe storage of hazardous materials and equipment, accessibility to children, and in procedures for lifting and carrying heavy and awkward weights.

### Assess the risk

Check each potential hazard for the likelihood of it resulting in injury or harm. Make the highest risk items top priority for safeguarding. Assess possible risks in alternative safety measures.

### Make the changes

- Ensure adequate working space for each job.
  - Provide and use personal protective equipment where appropriate.
  - Check there is sufficient lighting and ventilation.
  - Keep walkways and exits clear.
  - Update fire fighting and first aid equipment to meet current needs.
- Ensure fuel, compressed air, steam, electrical or other services are safely installed and maintained.



*(Continued on page 5)*

## Farm Safety in the Workshop

By Karen Sanders (taken from saftek.net)

(Continued from page 4)

### Tools and equipment

- Read the manual before using new tools and equipment.
- Follow instructions on safe procedures.
- Ensure power tools and equipment are properly guarded.
- Use angle grinders only for grinding and not for cutting. Safer power cutting tools are available.
- Ensure all guards and shields are kept in place during use.
- Use clamps and vices where possible to hold job items.
- Store tools safely to prevent damage and unauthorized use.

### Ladders and trestles

- Before climbing, place a ladder's feet about a quarter of the ladder's length from the wall or top support.
- Before working high on a ladder, secure it to prevent it slipping sideways.
- Never place a ladder in front of a doorway unless the door is locked or guarded.

Avoid standing ladders on drums, boxes or blocks.

### Electricity

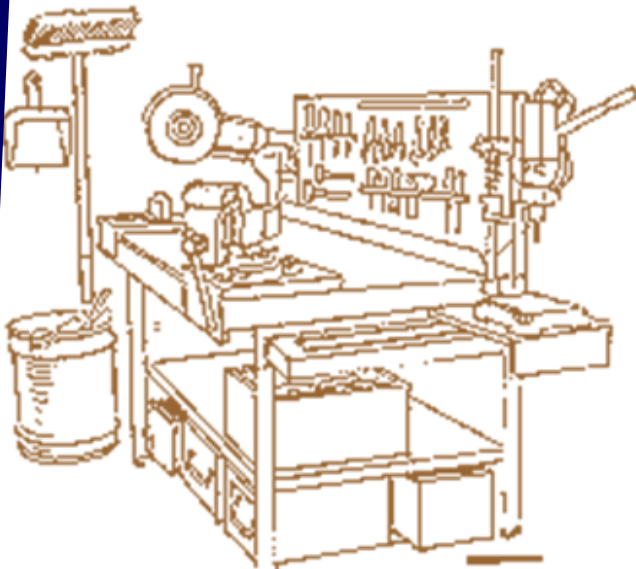
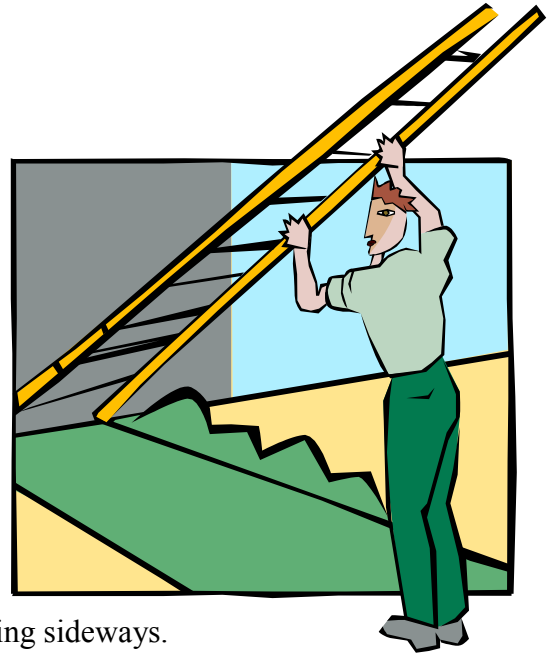
- Replace old fuse boxes with an RCD board that protects the whole building.
- Or, fix portable RCDs at power points where power tools are connected.
- When someone gets an electric shock and "locks on" to a live component, the power must be turned off before the person is handled.
- Check all power cords regularly to ensure insulation is intact, and that inner cabling is not exposed.

Get rid of old, worn or faulty power cords.

### Welding

- For maximum protection against eye injuries, wear goggles with side shields, as well as a welding shield or helmet.
- Protect skin areas from radiation burns, preferably with woolen or flame resistant canvas clothing.
- Never wear thongs or open footwear when welding. Shoes or boots should be rubber soled for non-slip and electrical protection.
- Obtain and follow safety guidelines on welding.

For additional safety tips please go to [http://www.saftek.net/worksafe/index\\_fs.htm](http://www.saftek.net/worksafe/index_fs.htm)



## Green Your Summer Travel

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



In Northwest Illinois you don't have to travel far to relax and enjoy outdoor recreation. But you probably will take a car or recreational ve-

hicle to get to your favorite spot. Illinois EPA in the Summer 2011 Citizen's Bulletin reminds you that you can be "green" when you travel by car. They suggest the following quoted from *Earth911.com*:

1. **Prepare to picnic** – Grabbing fast food on the go takes a toll on the planet's resources from the paper and plastic packaging to the emissions from trucking a load of French fries. Taking along food – or stocking up at a grocery store en route – is generally healthier and cheaper, too.

2. **Recycle on the go** – Invariably, you'll pick up snacks and drinks along the way, so plan for all that packaging waste. Stash a grocery bag under the seat to collect paper, plastic and glass, then recycle at your destination.



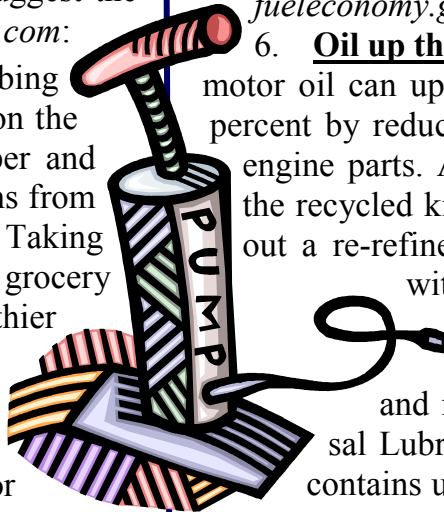
3. **Take the open road** – Stop and go traffic is as wasteful as it is annoying, while idling (that's zero miles per gallon) is worse. Avoid both and con-

serve fuel with a bit of planning.

4. **Go car camping** – Now that it's warm, consider car (tent) camping instead of checking into a motel. Many camping sites cater to motor home folks, so you can expect plenty of amenities such as bathrooms with showers or WiFi. Even with such extras, camping uses far fewer resources than a hotel room with air conditioning,

5. **Lose the extra weight** – Loading up the car with too much stuff could reduce fuel efficiency. Every extra 100 pounds shaves up to 2 percent off your miles per gallon, according to *fueleconomy.gov*.

6. **Oil up the car** – The proper grade of motor oil can up your gas mileage by 1 or 2 percent by reducing friction between moving engine parts. And while you're at, make it the recycled kind: Valvoline recently rolled out a re-refined motor oil called NextGen with 50 percent recycled content for do-it-yourself oil changers. Or look for auto dealers and repair shops that use Universal Lubricants's Eco Ultra oil, which contains up to 70 percent recycled content.



7. **Check tire pressure** – It's a good idea to check tire pressure frequently, but especially before a long trip and along the way. According to *fueleconomy.gov*, gas mileage improves up to 3.3 percent with properly inflated tires.

8. **Slow down** – Observe the speed limit for better fuel efficiency. Anything above 60 mpg reduces your mileage, according to *fueleconomy.gov*. Sudden starts and stops from aggressive driving waste gas, too.

Or what about a bike trip instead? Zero gas, zero emissions. Plan out a route on back roads and smaller highways.