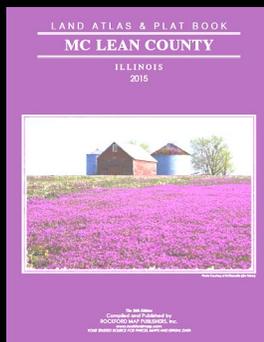


MCLEAN COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



SWCD Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at our office.
Call for any changes or details.



2015 Plat Books

The 2015 Plat Books are available! There is a charge of \$35. Credit Cards are now accepted, a 2.75% surcharge will be applied to card charges.

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2016 Pipeline Cover Crop Incentive Program

The Pipeline Cover Crop Incentive Program is available again for 2016. Last year, McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District partnered with Syngenta and The Nature Conservancy to aid those affected by the pipeline construction with the introduction of cover crops. This program offered a \$35.00 per acre incentive payment to install cover crops on any land affected by the pipeline construction.

The McLean County SWCD is excited to announce a change in this year's program. Those affected by the pipeline construction are now eligible to enroll acres at a 3:1 ratio. For example: 1 acre affected by the pipeline, allows for cost share on 3 acres planted in cover crops. The cost share rate will remain the same at \$35.00 per acre. This increase will hopefully give those an opportunity to increase the amount of cover crops on their farm, improve soil health, and in some cases square up areas making it more convenient.

Applications are available online at www.mcleancountyswcd.com and will be taken on a first come, first served basis. Other required documentation includes: proof of acres affected from Enbridge, map of area affected from Enbridge, seed and seeding bills. For more information on the program, please contact the McLean County SWCD at (309)452-3848 ext. 3.

2015 McLean County Conservationist of the Year



Congratulations to Scott Clement, the recipient of the 2015 Outstanding Conservationist of the Year. Scott was born and raised on a small grain and livestock farm in western Illinois. He started farming in 1996 and implemented his first conservation practices of filter strips with Joe and Robert Kelley in the Lake Bloomington watershed. In 2008, Clement introduced strip till to his farming practices with the aid of the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). In 2009 nutrient incorporation was added to increase plant availability and keep surface run off to a minimum. Through the years, Clement has participated in many nutrient programs and has experimented with form and timing to get the most use of the least possible input. Scott is also in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to allow for more testing and experimentation and is working on Nitrogen rate and Nitrogen timing. Scott's goal is to leave the land in better condition than he received it.

Watershed News

Recently, several wetlands have been constructed in the Lake Bloomington Watershed. Water quality monitoring is taking place at each wetland location as part of a Conservation Innovation Grant.



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

The USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

Illinois Effort Will Aid Monarch Butterflies

Effort makes available \$4 million to help producers establish habitat in Midwest, southern Great Plains



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently launched a new conservation effort to help agricultural producers in Illinois and nine other states provide food and habitat for monarch butterflies. This targeted effort in the Midwest and southern Great Plains by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

will invest \$4 million in 2016 to help combat the iconic species' decline. Producers are already signing up. "There's a strong interest in the Ag community to address issues facing pollinators and this Monarch Butterfly effort will propel landowners even more," says Illinois State Conservationist Ivan Dozier.

"These once-common butterflies are growing less familiar, and we know private lands will continue to play a crucial role in aiding the recovery of this species that serves as an indicator of ecosystem health," Dozier said. "America's farmers and forest landowners are stewards of the land, and this effort will help them make voluntary improvements that benefit working lands and monarchs."

Just look around as you drive this summer. Illinois' land is productive and covered with growing crops. "Let's leave some areas for Monarchs and key pollinators. Whether it's a field border, a waterway or a roadside ditch, let's fill these gaps with the precise habitat and plant species they need. If we help them, they'll help agriculture," Dozier said.

The orange-and-black butterflies are known for their annual, multi-generational migration from central Mexico to as far north as Canada. Monarch populations have decreased significantly over the past two decades, in part because of the decrease in native plants like milkweed – the sole source of food for monarch caterpillars.

Through this monarch conservation effort NRCS can provide technical and financial assistance to help producers and conservation partners make butterfly-friendly improvements to farms. Land in every county is potentially eligible. In Illinois, NRCS is focusing on integrating milkweed and high-nectar plants along field borders, in buffers along waterways or around wetlands, in pastures and other suitable locations.

Assistance is available to producers in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas and Wisconsin. "Illinois is key to this

effort," Dozier said. "Our farm land lies at the heart of the monarch migration route. We have a real opportunity here to turn this issue around."

Special funds have been allocated for 2016. Illinois NRCS will have \$220,000 with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and \$715,000 for use on existing Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easement sites. Additionally, NRCS is offering support for related enhancements through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to establish monarch habitat. These enhancements are available nationwide. NRCS accepts EQIP and CSP applications from producers on a continuous basis. Producers interested in participating should contact their local USDA service center to learn more.

These conservation improvements not only benefit butterflies, they also strengthen agricultural operations, support other beneficial insects and wildlife and improve other natural resources. Appropriate buffer habitats and better pasture and grazing land management practices reduce erosion, improve soil health, inhibit the expansion of invasive species, and provide food and habitat for insects and wildlife.

This NRCS effort contributes to a multi-agency, international strategy to reverse the monarch's population decline in North America, estimated to have decreased from one billion butterflies in 1995 down to about 34 million today. The Obama administration, through the National Strategy to Protect Pollinators and Their Habitat, has a goal of increasing the eastern population of monarchs back up to 225 million by 2020.

Producers not in the regions targeted by this effort are also eligible for assistance to make conservation improvements to their land that can benefit monarch butterflies and many other pollinators, such as honeybees and native bees. More than three dozen conservation practices offered by NRCS can provide benefits to pollinators. Additionally, this effort works hand-in-hand with a three-year-old NRCS honey bee conservation effort in the Midwest and Northern Plains.

Learn more about the Monarch Habitat Development Project and other pollinators. For more on technical assistance and financial resources available through NRCS conservation programs, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted or a local USDA service center.

Source: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/il/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSSEPRD116806>

Priority Illinois Watershed Selected: Clinton Lake Watershed

The USDA announced the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is investing \$30 million in 73 projects to improve water quality in high priority watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin. Projects will reduce loss of nutrients and sediment to waters that flow into the Gulf of Mexico. "This offers a huge opportunity for local landowners and operators who can step up and get involved in addressing these resource concerns," said District Conservationist Eric McTaggart.

The strategy NRCS uses targets small priority watersheds, like the Clinton Lake Watershed, within the Mississippi River Basin. Projects offer incentives for local landowners and add partners to join forces for a more powerful impact. NRCS is interested in ideas, practices, and improvements to improve water quality for landowners, the local community, and everyone in these watersheds.

NRCS funds projects through the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI). MRBI uses several Farm Bill conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), to help farmers adopt conservation systems that improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and restore wetlands. Since

the initiative's start in 2009, NRCS works with more than 600 partners and 5,000 farmers to make conservation improvements on more than 1 million acres in the region. Last year, Illinois NRCS secured 21 MRBI contracts on 1,782 acres, putting more than \$550,000 in EQIP conservation practices and solutions on the ground in the next few years.

NRCS will work with partners and landowners in the Clinton Lake Watershed to inventory resource concerns, identify practical and science-based solutions, and find farmers who commit to put conservation practices on the ground where they are needed most. "We know voluntary conservation works," adds McTaggart. "With added support from local partners and dedicated NRCS funding, we can make a difference here." Given recent news about Illinois' Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy and concerns about water quality issues, McTaggart feels using EQIP to solve problems in a voluntary manner is the best option available. For more information about MRBI and the Lake Clinton Watershed project, call your local NRCS office or visit www.il.nrcs.usda.gov today.

Source: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/il/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSSEPRD415242>

Planting Natives to Increase Butterfly Habitat



BUCKEYE



MONARCH



TIGER SWALLOWTAIL

Planting a Native Plant Butterfly Garden or Monarch Waystation

1 Preparation: Evaluate your site and choose a spot with at least six hours of sunlight. Simply add native plants to an existing garden or replace a patch of lawn. If replacing a lawn, start with a clean planting bed and remove non-native vegetation if necessary. Select plant species that match the light, soil, pH and moisture conditions of your garden plot. See: wildones.org/learn

2 Design Considerations: To be visually appealing, select native plant species of varied heights that bloom at different times. These will provide nectar for adult butterflies throughout the season. Don't forget to include native grasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) not only for contrast, but also to help keep the blooming forbs upright. Enhance your garden with least two types of milkweed for monarchs and additional host species for caterpillars of other butterfly species if you would like. For some species, enhance your garden by adding a butterfly puddling spot and small brush pile for over-wintering species like mourning cloak butterflies. Take a "before" photo of the site.

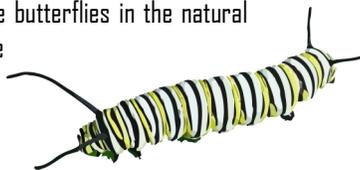
3 Plant Selection: Make a sketch of the planting plan and color-code bloom times for early, mid-season and late flowers. Fall-blossoming, nectar-rich plants are particularly important to migrating monarchs. Make a list of your plant species and check the number needed. Allow for sufficient room between plants as they mature, typically 12" on center. Mulch to provide a weed barrier. Find a reputable native plant nursery that carries plants and seeds from your area (local genotype) and uses best management practices appropriate for sensitive ecosystems. If seeding, use a nurse crop of annual rye or oats to reduce weed growth.

4 Maintenance: At first, water regularly, remove weeds and keep mulched until the garden is established. Be pesticide free since this garden is wildlife food. Some butterfly gardeners cut back some stalks of summer milkweed (late June or early July) to force new leaves for monarch caterpillars—be sure to transfer any eggs or larvae to plants that you don't cut back. Later in the season (August-September), practice benign neglect! In the fall, leave some dead leaves and stalks to provide overwintering sites for pollinators. Update your garden plan. Take an "after" photo of your garden.

5 Register your Waystation through MonarchWatch.org or NABA.org. If your Waystation or butterfly garden is planted with at least 75% native species, please contact Wild Ones for additional recognition.

6 Monitor: Keep records of monarchs observed. MonarchJointVenture.org provides contacts for several monitoring programs. Each week or two, keep track of your observations, such as which plants are preferred by butterflies and other pollinators as host plants and nectar or pollen sources. Take photos of the garden throughout the season and share your favorites on the Wild Ones website. www.wildones.org/learn/wild-for-monarchs or email monarch@wildones.org.

7 Share your seeds or divisions of plants to help start another butterfly garden! Invite others to visit your garden or Waystation to enjoy the beauty of the butterflies in the natural landscape you have created.



MONARCH CATERPILLAR

Illinois Native Plants for Common Butterflies

NATIVE WILDFLOWERS AND GRASSES

Common Name	Scientific Name
asters	Aster spp.
blazing-stars	Liatris spp.
black-eyed susan	Rudbeckia hirta
Bonesets	Eupatorium spp.
butterfly-weed	Asclepias tuberosa
cardinal-flower	Lopelia cardinals
Coneflowers	Echinacea spp.
Dogbanes	Apocynum spp.
Goldenrods	Solidago spp.
hill's thistle	Cirsium hillii
Ironweeds	Vernonia spp.
joe-pye-weeds	Eupatoriadelphus spp.
little bluestem	Schizachyrium spp.
Milkweeds	Asclepias spp.
mountain mints	Pycnanthemum spp.
New England aster	Aster novae-angliae
Phloxes	Phlox spp.
prairie clovers	Dalea spp.
prairie dropseed	Sporobolus heterolepis
rosinweed	Silphium intergrifolium
side-oats grama	Bouteloua curtipendula
swamp thistle	Cirsium muticum
tickseeds	Coreopsis spp.
vervains	Verbena spp.
wild bergamot	Monarda fistulosa

SHRUBS AND TREES

buckeyes	Aesculus spp.
cherries	Prunus spp.
dogwoods	Cornus spp.
hawthorns	Crataegus spp.
New Jersey tea	Ceanothus americanus
plums	Prunus spp.
privets	Ligustrum spp.
redbud	Cercis canadensis
spicebush	Lindera benzoin
spiraeas	Spiraea spp.
sumacs	Rhus spp.

Source: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/publications/documents/00000130.pdf>



McLean County Soil & Water Conservation District

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REGISTRATION DEADLINE: August 18 to (309)452-3848 EXT. 3

AUGUST 31, 2016 • 8 AM - 1 PM

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FARM - LEXINGTON, IL