



KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER Conservation District

CONSERVATION Quarterly

JANUARY 2018

NEW OFFICE HOURS:

M, T, W, & F 7:30am-4:00pm
Thursday 7:30am-3:00pm

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Regular board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the District office and are open to the public. The Kankakee SWCD prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Resource Conservationist Report

By Emilie Janes

Reflecting back, 2017 was a year of change, for myself as well as the Kankakee County SWCD. I started as the district's Resource Conservationist (RC) in March. With a background in zoology and minimal agricultural experience, the past ten months have been a whirlwind of new faces, learning curves, growing pains – and a lot of fun! I graduated from Olivet Nazarene University in 2016. After graduation, I worked part-time as an adjunct professor in ONU's biology department and part-time for the district, before starting my fulltime position as RC this January. I bring with me a background in education, research and a love for the outdoors. Growing up a neighbor on the outskirts of Peotone, Kankakee County and its exceptional natural resources are close to my heart.

With a fulltime RC, the district plans to experience growth in many areas. In the coming year, the district will focus more attention on community outreach, in area schools as well as one-on-one with producers. One of the first experiences I had as RC was out in the field, walking through cereal rye with farmers and pulling cover crop samples for nutrient analysis. Since then, Kankakee County SWCD has presented on the importance of pollinators in agriculture, given a soil health workshop for young adults in Chicago, and provided ONU students with first time experiences on a farm. The district intends to continue to reach out to the community and become a go-to educational resource for Kankakee County.

The district's primary concern has always been the protection of our natural resources and prime agricultural farmland. With the recent influx of solar in the county, the development of solar fields and community solar projects is at the top of the district's list of concerns. As part of the process, I produce Natural Resource Inventory reports (NRIs) for developers seeking permits through the Kankakee County Regional Planning Department. NRIs provide the applicant, officials of the local governing body and other decision-makers with natural resource information. The report details present site conditions, natural

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resources and the potential impacts that the proposed change may have on the site and its resources. The NRI report also contains a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) score, used to evaluate the viability of agricultural lands. As I write this, I have five solar reports that I'm working on with many more on the way. *For more information on solar in Kankakee County, see page 8.*

The Kankakee County SWCD's website, www.kankakeecountyswcd.org, has been overhauled. The website includes district activities, information about programs, producer resources and educational tools for teachers and the community. On the website, information about the Spring Pond Stocking sale and Spring Tree & Shrub sale have been posted. We continue to sell pollinator seed through a partnership with Pheasant's Forever, with a percentage of seed sales going to our district.

Standing at the starting line for 2018, I look forward and see a year of challenge and opportunity. Jeff O'Connor, district chairman, has told me multiple times that growth happens when you step outside of your comfort zone. In this new position as RC, I've felt out of my element more often than not. I have stared blankly at CRP documents, looked incompetent trying to open the door of a combine for the first time and have said "I don't know, let me check on that" to countless producers who have walked into the office. But, looking back, I have learned so much in the past ten months about a county that I thought I knew well. This year I will welcome the feelings of uncertainty as I push myself and the district out of the comfort zone.

Here's to cultivation and growth in 2018!



A Message from the Chairman

By Jeff O'Connor

I'm not sure where most people fall, but I like reading or looking at a little bit of history when the opportunity arises. Many times, it's easy to see the lessons learned by reviewing historical items and in other instances the lesson is rather obscure. In my opinion the best kind of lesson is when you can recount a personal experience and see the value gained. Best yet is when you can revisit that same experience many years later and validate the lesson learned.

Several months ago, I found myself going through a box of "stuff" that had belonged to my grandfather. He was notorious, in my eyes, for keeping everything. When he died in 1993 we found boxes of owner's manuals and product literature from farm shows he had attended. Amongst all of this was a single sheet of paper promoting a 1970 farm demonstration he was hosting. The date was for February 16th with a snow date of February 17th. What they were demonstrating was grain drying.

I don't recall much from 1970 but from this flyer I can gather that grain drying was an innovative and new practice. This would've been the era where ear corn harvest was well on its way out and shelled corn firmly established as the new way to harvest corn. Sorting through this box of farm show material showed an assortment of new grain dryers, both portable and in-bin. How the on-farm demonstration turned out, I'll never know. Who he partnered with, I can only imagine.

What is known is that grain drying was not a fad. 48 years later, on farm grain drying is almost as common as the combines themselves. I'm not sure what the neighbors thought at the time, but MD, as my grandfather was locally known, was on to something. So, what is the lesson learned from 1970 that applies to today? Innovation always seems rather drastic at first, but if the change is grounded in solid values it can one day become accepted and commonplace.

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A Message From the Chairman

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My role with the SWCD has not changed much since I started writing these once a year recaps. What has changed is the increasing importance conservation plays in ALL walks of life. In our current culture words such as sustainability, water quality, soil health and environmentally friendly are more likely to be spoken by the average citizen as they are to come from an actual farmer. Our role at the K3SWCD is to advocate conservation and the wise use of all our natural resources for all the residents of Kankakee County.

I am very excited when I see the role that our District can play in the coming years. Much is changing and there is much to be learned. If you haven't stopped by in recent years, please do so. Ask about some of the opportunities that exist to learn what's changing. Better yet, give us some of your thoughts about what you would like to see happen in farm conservation.

Your idea may lead us to the next grain dryer demonstration!



NRCS Annual Report

By Trenton Rader, District Conservationist

The NRCS office had a very busy 2017 and we are hoping for the same or better in 2018. July marked the 5 year anniversary of me being the District Conservationist for Kankakee County. I am pleased with the progress and steady increase in Farm Bill Program participation that I have seen. The two most popular programs are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). EQIP has maintained a comfortable and consistent level of contracts and there seems to be more interest now than ever. CSP recently went through some major changes in how the program is administered. There were changes to the evaluation process that allowed for a more consistent ranking process throughout the nation. There were also some major changes to the types of conservation enhancement activities being offered. The program has become more transparent and over time these improvements will be easier for both NRCS and the producers to manage. I am very pleased with the amount of interest I have seen from local producers to implement conservation activities into normal farming operations.

Soil health is a main focus of our conservation efforts as of late. Many of the conservation practices that we promote through our programs deal directly with improving the overall condition of our soils. Managing your operation for soil health is one of the most effective ways to increase productivity while also improving the environment. There are four basic principles you can follow to improve soil sustainability and health: Increase plant diversity (additional crops in rotation), keep soil disturbance to a minimum (decrease tillage), keep plants growing throughout the year (cover crops), and keep soil covered as much as possible (residue/tillage management, cover crops, rotations). In addition to specific soil health improvements these types of conservation measures also provide additional environmental, economic, health, and societal benefits. Producers can save energy by using less fuel for tillage and maximizing nutrient cycling. Healthy soils are more resistant to pests and disease problems, and are more tolerant of drought conditions. NRCS can assist producers in a variety of ways concerning soil health; from technical assistance to cost-share payments for implementing some of these conservation practices through the EQIP and CSP programs.

For more information about integrating some of these practices into your farming operation please contact Trenton Rader at (815) 937-8940 x 3.



Kankakee County Farm Bureau Report

By Chad Miller, Farm Bureau Manager

The growing season for 2017 brought about some pleasantly surprising crop yields despite what seemed to be less than ideal growing conditions. Early on in the growing season there were reports of significant replant acres due to heavy spring rains. There were also reports of hail damage. The 2016 corn crop set records for some Kankakee County farmers and several farmers reported that the 2017 corn crop was just as good, if not better. That came as a surprise to some being that there was little to no rain in August and September.

In hindsight, the saving grace was the unseasonably cool weather for portions of the summer which meant there wasn't as much heat stress for the corn as it developed. Do you remember bundling up on the Friday of the Kankakee County fair? That's the only time I can ever remember seeing winter jackets during the county fair. The cooler weather allowed the corn plenty of time to fill out the ear despite the dry weather. Although commodity prices have been depressed for several years, the high corn yields allowed some farmers to generate a small profit. With larger yields in 2017, the fear is that this could keep corn prices from improving much in 2018.

It should be pointed out that the wheat harvest also brought some pleasant surprises with better than expected yields. Compared to corn and soybean acres, there aren't a lot of acres of wheat grown in Kankakee County, but those who grew it generally were pleased with their yields.

Not all was positive though as the damp spring caused production challenges to specialty crop growers. That wet weather translated to large losses for some specialty crop growers unless they could successfully treat the soil borne diseases that the persistent dampness brought about. The soybean yields in 2017 were about average, most likely held back from their full potential by the dry weather over the summer. Overall, soybeans turned out to be a little more profitable than corn which may cause more acres to be devoted to soybean production for the 2018 growing season. As anyone who follows commodity prices knows, all of these factors have an effect on the market . . . and every year is different.

Since 1912 when the Kankakee County Farm Bureau was formed, the organization has conducted work on behalf of agriculture and our farming community. In 2017, many of the issues the County Farm Bureau was engaged in related to the protection of private property rights. One such issue was the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation (GLBT) rail project. This project, proposed by a private company, would have traveled from Wisconsin to Indiana with 41 miles of the

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Kankakee County Farm Bureau Report

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route traveling through the northern tier of Kankakee County. As a part of the proposal, the GLBT company was seeking to create a 15,000 acre rail port in the county, consuming the majority of Sumner Township.

Chief among the list of negative impacts from this project is that it could have removed a significant portion of our County's farm land from production. The annual economic output from that amount of agricultural land in Kankakee County is nearly \$69 million dollars (calculated from USDA Ag Census data). That sort of loss would have been tough for our local economy. Another major concern of the Farm Bureau is that if the rail project would have been permitted to be constructed, the private company would have been able to use eminent domain to acquire land. Other concerns included the impact to drainage, transportation infrastructure, rural safety, and farmland values. Rural residents would have been displaced and the rail project would have brought unwelcome noise and pollution. In August of 2017 we had a major victory as the federal agency which oversees such developments denied the application from GLBT to construct and operate a rail line. Along with the Farm Bureau, there were several other local organizations, including the Kankakee County Soil & Water Conservation District, and many dedicated individuals who worked tirelessly to oppose this project. Congratulations on this victory.

Another local priority issue for the County Farm Bureau in 2017 involves a large portion of the eastern side of Kankakee County where the United States Fish & Wildlife Service proposes a 28 square mile wildlife refuge. The Farm Bureau strongly supports local conservation and the protection of our natural resources. However, such a massive 28 square mile (nearly 18,000 acres) federal project in Kankakee County could have serious impacts to our community. Concerns with this project include negative impacts to agriculture, our local economy, and residents. The project could bring about a disruption of established drainage, changes to access and recreation on the Kankakee River, and loss of property tax base for schools and municipalities as property acquired by the federal government is removed from the property tax rolls. The removal of farmland by this project could translate into a loss of over \$43.6 million lost annually to our local economy (USDA Ag Census data). The loss of this revenue along with the loss of property tax base could make our community unsustainable. The establishment of a 28 square mile wetland also may bring about other health implications including the increased spreading of mosquito-borne illnesses such as West Nile virus.

We feel that our local landowners are better stewards of our local natural resources compared to the federal government trying to manage our natural resources from afar with unpredictable funding. Ultimately, this proposed refuge would use federal tax dollars for a project that our local community, by and large, does not want. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is a branch of the federal government. Contact your elected officials to let them know you support local conservation efforts and are opposed to the federal government using your tax dollars to establish a wildlife refuge in our community. This refuge will continue to be a priority issue for the County Farm Bureau.

Other land use issues that your Kankakee County Farm Bureau is monitoring include wind farm projects and a multitude of solar energy developments. There seems to be a never ending list of issues affecting our local landowners. In Kankakee County, agriculture accounts for almost 17% of the county's economy. When large areas of farmland are removed from production, it could translate to a large economic loss to our local community. In February, our Farm Bureau leaders will be meeting with the County Board and County government department heads to discuss these issues and many other topics important to agriculture. Working with our county officials is just as critical as working with our state and federal legislators.

The Kankakee Soil & Water Conservation District has been a great leader in the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) efforts and the County Farm Bureau has worked to support these initiatives. The main idea of the NLRS is to improve our local environment through the use of best management practices on the farm. With profit margins being very narrow or nonexistent, using your farm inputs wisely can also help your bottom line. In 2018, it will remain a priority to continue these efforts which will include promotion of cover crops and conservation practices, improved management of farm inputs, and testing of farm field water and cover crop biomass.

The State of Illinois is scrutinizing all avenues of possible revenue as the State's fiscal crisis continues. A critical aspect of the State's economy will continue to be a strong agricultural sector. The Farm Bureau will continue working to improve the financial well-being of our farm economy. An important state priority for 2018 includes maintaining key agricultural tax policies. Other state priorities for the Farm Bureau include working to create statewide standards for solar energy developments. And, as always the Farm Bureau will continue to educate our legislators about the importance of having a strong, profitable, and efficient agriculture industry in our state.

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Kankakee County Farm Bureau Report

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National priority issues include working to protect and promote international trade for our agriculture commodities. One in three bushels of US corn is exported which accounts for 31% of annual farm cash receipts. More than 60% of our US soybeans and soybean products were exported last year which were valued at over \$28 billion (US Census Bureau). This substantiates a large part of the demand for our commodities and our international market must be protected.

We will also be working on the details of a new farm bill to protect crop insurance and promote conservation efforts. Greater federal investment in rural infrastructure to upgrade roads, bridges, and freight rail service is also a national priority of the Farm Bureau. Another national priority is to work to address escalating health insurance premiums that burden farm families. The Farm Bureau is also engaged in regulatory reform legislation that increases transparency and science-based rulemaking.

You will notice that USDA Ag Census data has been cited as a source for several calculations in this article. This data collection takes place every five years and the 2017 Census of Agriculture is taking place currently. If you produce or grow any agricultural products, including field crops, fruits, vegetables, floriculture, and livestock, regardless of the size of your operation, complete and return your 2017 Census of Agriculture by February 5, 2018. The Farm Bureau relies on the Ag Census data to be accurate, so please complete yours.


Educating youth and the non-farming public about the importance of agriculture is another main focus for the Kankakee County Farm Bureau and is accomplished by working effectively through our many dedicated volunteers. The County Farm Bureau would not be as successful if it weren't for our board of directors and the countless others who contribute their time and efforts. Without our members being engaged, we simply would not be effective. It also needs to be said that we often effectively accomplish our objectives by collaborating with other organizations such as the Soil & Water Conservation District and the University of Illinois Extension. These partnerships are invaluable.

The County Farm Bureau supports youth education through the Kankakee County Farm Bureau Foundation. To date, \$76,500 has been awarded in agricultural scholarships to Kankakee County students from the Kankakee County Farm Bureau Foundation. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the Kankakee County Farm Bureau Foundation to support the Ag in the Classroom program and the educational scholarship program. Your financial contributions are important to allow this educational support to continue and to grow.

We had another strong year at the County Farm Bureau in 2017 serving our members and the agriculture community. We have a great deal of work ahead of us in 2018 in protecting our agriculture industry, private property rights, our rural communities, and our natural resources. Maintaining a strong legislative voice for our agriculture community is extremely important to the Kankakee County Farm Bureau.

Organized in 1912, the Kankakee County Farm Bureau has a rich heritage. The Farm Bureau remains progressive by realizing that as issues change and evolve, so will the goals and objectives of the organization. Our County Farm Bureau is governed by 17 local farmers and we pride ourselves as being accessible and responsive to comments and suggestions from our membership. Please let us know if we can improve our service to you and your farm family. We appreciate your membership support. There are some great things on the horizon again for 2018, so keep in touch and participate in any activities and events that interest you.

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Farm Service Agency—A Look Back At 2017

By Ed Brown, County Executive Director

The year began with one of the mildest winters in Illinois history. In fact, a new record was set with 15 days above 50° in February. Temperature highs exceeded 60° on 7 of those days. Snowfall received for the winter was 10 inches below the normal seasonal snowfall rate of 28.1 inches. Winter wheat condition remained good to excellent.

We had a change in administration with the inauguration of President Donald Trump. A new Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, was appointed. Perdue has a strong agricultural background, having grown up on a farm and earned a doctorate degree in veterinary medicine. He now heads an agency with a \$155 billion annual budget and close to 100,000 employees.

Sign up for the Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) – Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs began in early winter and continued throughout the spring and summer. These programs provide financial assistance whenever commodity prices and/or revenues fall below certain levels.

Corn planting began the second week of April and progressed at a modest pace, however rains in May delayed field work. Producers reported some ponding and flooding in low lying areas. Replanting was required in a few fields, but most farmers were able to finish prior to the end of the month. Corn planting was considered 98% complete on June 5th. Soybean planting followed close behind reaching 93% completion on June 12th, slightly ahead of the 5-year average.

Agriculture demands working capital. During 2017, FSA provided credit, either directly or guaranteed through commercial lenders, to several farm families in the county. Loans for operating expenses, farm purchases, and other purposes helped many producers stay in business and in some instances allowed a new generation of farmers to get their start.

Rainfall throughout the summer varied greatly, but most areas received abundant precipitation. Temperatures remained on the moderate to cool side with an average high temperature of 82.6° during the months of June, July, and August. There were only 9 days during that period where temperatures exceeded 90°. This led to ideal growing conditions. Area producers were very optimistic regarding the potential for above average yields. Unfortunately, high yield prospects had a negative impact on commodity prices.

Continuous sign up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was open for most of the year to anyone interested in protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. However, the 2014 Farm Bill imposed a statutory cap of 24 million acres on CRP enrollment nationwide. Current enrollment is about 23.5 million acres. For that reason, FSA temporarily suspended accepting new requests for CRP in October. The suspension will continue until later in the 2018 fiscal year while the agency reviews allocation levels. Under CRP, farmers plant grasses and trees in crop fields and along streams or rivers. The plantings prevent soil and nutrients from washing into waterways, reduce soil erosion that may otherwise contribute to poor air and water quality, and provide valuable habitat for wildlife.

Harvest was delayed due to late maturing crops. Combines didn't start rolling until the third week of September. Early expectations of high yields proved to be true as many farmers reported record production. Soybean harvest was considered 92% complete on November 6th and corn harvest reached 95% complete on November 20th.

The USDA projected the 2017 U.S. corn crop to be 14.6 billion bushels, down 4% from the last year. The 2017 U.S. soybean crop was projected to be 4.43 billion bushels, up 3% from a year ago. The average U.S. corn yield was pegged at 175.4 bushels per acre and the average U.S. soybean yield came in at 49.5 bushels per acre. Commodity prices fluctuated during the year, but there was an overall decline from \$3.45 per bushel for corn and \$9.85 per bushel for soybeans at the beginning of the year to approximately \$3.25 per bushel and \$9.30 per bushel respectively at the end of the year.

On a bitter-sweet note, we bid farewell to one of our most valued staff members this year when Sue Clark retired after 32 years of service. Sue will truly be missed, and we wish her good luck and much happiness as she begins this new chapter in her life.

We are now in the final year of the current Farm Bill. As we plan for the New Year, it appears the workload in the FSA county office will be quite heavy in 2018. As in years past, the Kankakee County FSA will work closely with NRCS and the SWCD to provide the necessary support to enhance farm profitability and to conserve our natural resources.



Solar Flare in Kankakee County

By Emilie Janes

Chances are, you've heard about the solar boom spreading through Kankakee County. Whether you have been approached by companies looking to lease your land for development, live near an area with incoming solar projects or have heard news through the grapevine—we all have questions and concerns about the incoming solar flare.

Why so much solar all of the sudden? At the end of 2016, the Illinois legislature passed the Future Energy Jobs Bill (SB 2814). The State of Illinois has pledged to move to 25% clean energy by 2025—the bill requires a minimum of 3,000 megawatts of new solar power and 1,300 megawatts of new wind power to be built in the state by then. Kankakee County is seeing the result of this legislation first-hand. According to the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) website, the act will create thousands of new clean energy jobs, preserve low energy rates for residents and businesses, and attract new investment and companies to Illinois.

A new type of solar that I hadn't heard of until recently is "Community Solar". Companies like Microgrid Energy are bringing this opportunity to Kankakee County, where local municipalities, businesses, schools and residents can "subscribe" to the solar energy produced from a local solar garden. According to Liz Reddington, Project Development Manager for Microgrid Energy, subscribers contract for an allocated percentage of the energy produced, and receive bill credits on their electricity account. Community Solar offers an opportunity for residential and commercial customers to participate in solar without the upfront costs or required maintenance.

Although it boasts many benefits, we all have questions and concerns surrounding solar and how it will indirectly affect us. The district is particularly concerned with how solar gardens and community solar projects will impact the county's natural resources and prime ag land. I recently spoke with Liz Reddington, and she addressed many of the district's concerns about solar. Specifically, the district was curious about the equipment used and installation processes, maintenance of existing drainage, storm water runoff and the impact of solar gardens on prime ag land. The following information was provided by Ms. Reddington, on behalf of Microgrid Energy, in response to our inquiry.

Solar fields are comprised of low profile modules that use non-reflective technology to absorb sunlight and transform it into usable energy. The arrays are equipped with tracking motors that track with the sun from east to west. The arrays sit atop driven pile foundations placed directly into the soil, eliminating the need for concrete footing. Multiple string inverters are located throughout the array, communicating between panels and the transformer. There will be one equipment pad installed on site, no larger than the size of a parking space, housing equipment like the transformer. In the weeks during construction noise can be expected. Once operational, there is minimal noise that cannot be heard outside of the project area.

To address storm water runoff, low-growing native vegetation and pollinator habitat is planted beneath the panels. The habitat is visually appealing, attracts and supports important pollinator species and actually benefits the solar companies by cutting maintenance costs in the long run. Native grasses and forbs have deep root systems that break up the soil, increasing its porosity and water holding capacity. By planting native vegetation and pollinator habitat in place of turf grass or gravel, sites become more resilient to droughts and intense downpours.

Solar project design attempts to avoid any impact to current drainage systems or tiles within the project area. There will be underground cables that run from the array to adjacent distribution lines. If drainage to other nearby parcels is impacted, the developer and landowner will include in their lease agreement who is to be responsible. Once operational, some maintenance of the solar farm is required, including occasional mowing of native vegetation and 2-4 visits per year to clean modules.

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Solar Flare in Kankakee County

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For the life of the solar field, which is estimated to be between 30-40 years, the land under the panels within the fenced in project area can not be used for agricultural purposes. If the solar developer has planted native grasses and forbs underneath the array, the soil would benefit from constant cover—decreasing erosion and increasing soil health. After the lease is up, the developer will restore the land to its original condition and reseed the area with a native seed mix. Land can be converted back to prime farmland after the solar field is removed.

The information above was provided by Microgrid Energy, only one of several solar developers seeking to bring solar to Kankakee County. It is important to note that not all solar companies operate under the same guidelines. Regardless of your opinion on solar—it's here, and will remain for the foreseeable future. Whether a supporter or opponent, it is important to consider the impacts that solar development will have on our county. Solar holds potential for our county, but we must make sure to protect our valuable resources and prime ag land in the process.

Leasing Your Land to Solar? Some Thoughts to Consider —

By Emilie Janes

Chad Miller, manager of the Kankakee County Farm Bureau, has advice for those dealing directly with solar developers. The Farm Bureau is a strong proponent of private property rights. With that being the case, the Farm Bureau neither supports nor opposes solar developments as the decision to pursue such a development should rest with the landowner. Chad Miller stated that if you are approached by a solar developer seeking to lease your land, it is strongly suggested you consult with a qualified attorney to review the terms of the contract. To avoid being locked into a contract that is written heavily in the company's own favor, discuss the fine print with your attorney before making an educated decision. An attorney may be able to improve the contract in the landowner's favor, and help negotiate the best agreement in regards to compensation and protection.

Chad also encourages landowners to consider impacts to their property and neighboring properties, including property values, new restrictions, aesthetic changes and fire protection. If you plan to continue to farm the area around the fenced in solar field, ask concise questions about impacts on established water drainage, storm water runoff and even particulate matter generated from agricultural activities. Kankakee County SWCD also advises those seeking to lease their land to identify unproductive farmland for solar development, as opposed to prime farmland. Information about prime farmland is outlined within the Natural Resource Inventory report the district provides to the county.

Chad also urges landowners to consider the duration of the contract. With some solar development contracts lasting two decades or more, the landowner must carefully evaluate any possible future land use opportunities they would forgo by signing the dotted line. It is hard to know what opportunities there will be in the future, but as in other dilemmas, the decision must be made with the best information available at that time.



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Calendar Corner

Visit www.kankakeecountyswcd.org/events-calendar to view our online calendar and learn more about the following events! You can find tree & fish order forms on our website as well.

- Jan 23** **Conservation Cropping Seminar** at Quality Inn & Suites, Bradley, 8am-4pm
- Mar 15** Spring pond stocking grass carp permit deadline
- Mar 23** Spring pond stocking order deadline
- Apr 3** **Pond stocking order pick-up** 7am @ office
- Apr 6** Tree & shrub order deadline
- Apr 20** **Tree & shrub order pick-up** 7:30am-3:30pm @ office
- Sep 6** **Pond Management Workshop** with Rob Miller, 6pm



Regular Board Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the district office, and are open to the public. For updated information about Board Meeting times, please visit our website.

A Kankakee Treasure

By Emilie Janes

Have you visited Langham Island? No, the island isn't a tropical destination in the middle of the ocean—it's in your backyard. Langham Island is a 20 acre blip of land located in the Kankakee River. Turns out, it's home to the one of the rarest flowers in the world, the Kankakee Mallow (*Iliamna remota*), native only to the small island. I had the opportunity to visit Langham Island for the first time in October, on a canoe trip hosted by the ONU Zoology Club.

Until 2015 the Kankakee Mallow hadn't been seen for over a decade, and was thought to have disappeared. Thanks to groups of volunteers like Friends of Langham Island, a healthy population of the mallow has been reestablished. Continued efforts by volunteers are necessary to keep the mallow protected from invasive species.

Take a canoe trip along the river and stop to see the mallow, or get involved with volunteer efforts! We have a treasure at our doorstep—and along with it the opportunity to help protect something unique to our county.



Kankakee Mallow in Bloom

*Photo taken by Shannon McLaughlin,
ONU Zoology*

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www.proharvestseeds.com

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www.kankakeecountyswcd.org/newsletters



Kankakee County SWCD Seventieth Annual Meeting

February 13, 2017

The seventieth Annual Meeting of the Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District was held on Monday, February 13, 2017 at the Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District office in Bourbonnais with 10 people present.

Chairman Jeff O'Connor opened the business portion of the Annual Meeting at 6:05 P.M. Board members and staff present: Directors Jeff O'Connor, Larry Kirchner and Alan Wissmiller, Associate Director John Settle, Resource Conservationist Kymber Nakaerts and Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle.

The agenda was presented; a motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Larry Kirchner and seconded by John Settle.

Linda Settle reported the minutes of the 69th Annual Meeting were provided for everyone and are being published in the Annual Report. A motion was made by Jeff O'Connor to approve the minutes as printed; it was seconded by Ed Brown. Motion passed.

Linda Settle reported the financial statement that was provided for everyone and is being published in the Annual Report. A motion was made by Alan Wissmiller to approve the report as printed; it was seconded by John Settle. Motion passed.

Alan Wissmiller reported for the nominating committee and presented the names of Jeff O'Connor of Otto Township and Tim McCorkle of Manteno Township in nomination for 2-year terms each. He then asked for nominations from the floor and when none were received he moved to accept the nominated candidates as duly elected, it was seconded by Linda Settle. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Jeff O'Connor and seconded by Michelle Pearion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 6:10 P.M.

Annual Report FY 2017

INCOME

State of Illinois	\$ 39,126.41
NRCS Admin	\$ 5,250.06
NRCS CRP	\$ 3,608.00
CREP Enrollment	\$ -
Newsletter Ads	\$ 1,315.00
Sales	\$ 138,493.80
NRI Production	\$ 400.00
E & SC Plans	\$ 700.00
Interest	\$ 165.72
Reimbursement - Retired Employee Health Insurance Premium	\$ 2,706.00
Total Income	\$ 191,764.99

EXPENSES

Staff	\$ 10,564.46
Contract Labor	\$ 15,483.15
Promotional Activities	\$ 306.56
Sales	\$ 106,717.92
Travel and Training	\$ 1,203.37
Office Operations	\$ 1,114.39
Dues and Subscriptions	\$ 1,183.79
Insurance	\$ 381.51
CPP Projects/Well Sealing	\$ -
CREP Enrollment Expense	\$ -
Reimbursed Expense - Retired Employee Health Insurance	\$ 2,706.00

Total Expense **\$ 139,661.15**

NET INCOME

\$ 52,103.84

6/30/2017

2018 Spring Pond Stocking

Do you need to stock your pond? Kankakee County SWCD is having our Spring Fish Sale on Tuesday, April 3rd at 7am. If you would like to place an order, send me an order form, swing by the office or give me a call at 815-937-8940 Ext. 3.

WINTER KILL? If you've experienced a winter kill, Rob Miller, Fisheries Biologist, has some advice. Rob cautions that restocking is far from an exact science, and that it's best to call him with specific questions. If you cannot get in touch with your county biologist prior to the fish sale, a general suggestion is to restock the following, all at the smallest available size: **50 largemouth bass** per acre, **250 bluegill or less** per acre, **300 redear sunfish** per acre, **40-100 channel catfish** per acre (optional) and about **5 lbs. of fathead minnows** per acre. Larger bluegill (3-5") can be stocked in the fall if you want to wait and confirm whether or not they have survived the winter. It is important to stock your pond the following spring with another 50 bass per acre, but this time at the larger size (5-7"). If bass fry are not observed the summer of the following year, it may be wise to stock more. Grass carp should only be restocked if vegetation was a concern before the kill. We do not advise restocking crappie or hybrid sunfish without first consulting Rob Miller for suitability or timing.

Rob Miller, District 8 Fisheries Biologist
rob.miller@illinois.gov

For more information about stocking and restocking your pond, as well as order forms for the upcoming fish sale, visit our website at www.kankakeecountyswcd.org/fish-tree-sales.



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**KANKAKEE COUNTY SWCD
SPRING POND STOCKING SALE
DELIVERY DATE APRIL 3, 2018
7:00AM**

Order # _____

Species	Size	Qty	Each	Total
Channel Catfish	4"-6"		\$0.75	
	6"-8"		\$1.00	
	*8"-10"		\$1.25	
	* requires pond water			
Albino Catfish	4"-6"		\$1.65	
Hybrid Sunfish	1"-2" (250/bag)		\$75.00/bag	
	3"-5"		\$1.00	
	5"-7"		\$1.60	
Largemouth Bass	2"-3"		\$1.00	
	5"-8"		\$3.00	
Crappie	2"-3" (100/bag)		\$70.00/bag	
Straight Bluegill	1"-2" (250/bag)		\$75.00/bag	
	3"-5"		\$0.95	
Red Ear	1"-2" (250/bag)		\$75.00/bag	
Triploid Grass Carp	8"-11"		\$12.50	
Fathead Minnows	150 per lb.		\$12.50/LB.	

POND DELIVERY CHARGE \$100.00 PER DELIVERY 1000 FISH MINIMUM OR 250 POUNDS OF CATFISH

TOTAL

Orders must be accompanied by payment in full. Triploid Grass Carp must be ordered by noon on Thursday, March 15, 2018. All other orders and payments must be received in the office on or before noon Friday, March 23, 2018. Fish will be delivered on Tuesday, April 3, 2018 at 7:00AM at the SWCD office. If ordering Grass Carp, the following information is needed for the permit:

Pond Located in _____ County. Pond size _____ acres.

Township _____ Range _____ Section _____

All sizes are as stated by the fishery. All fish are guaranteed to be delivered live and in good condition. Fishery guarantees to replace for the FIRST TWO WEEKS. Fish will be replaced at next sale delivery. KANKAKEE COUNTY SWCD IS NOT RESPONSIBLE. For more information or additional order forms contact Kankakee County SWCD 685 Larry Power Rd. Bourbonnais, IL 60914 or phone 815 937-8940 ext. 3.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____ E-MAIL: _____

K3SWCD SPRING 2018 TREE AND SHRUB ORDER FORM

Order # _____

Large container grown whips with some branching

Trees are 4'-5' and delivered in a 5 gallon container

	Price	Quantity	Total
Birch			
Whitespire-Single-Stem	\$45		
Kentucky Coffeetree	\$45		
Maple			
Autumn Blaze	\$45		
Oak			
Bur	\$45		
Red	\$45		
Swamp White	\$45		
Poplar, Siouxland	\$45		
Total			\$

Small container grown trees

Trees are between 18-24" unless noted, and are delivered in a 1 gallon container

Cherry, Mazzard	\$8		
Hackberry, Common 24-30"	\$8		
Hornbeam, American 24-30"	\$8		
Maple			
Fall Red	\$8		
Oak			
Bur	\$8		
Red 15-18"	\$8		
Swamp White 12-15"	\$8		
Serviceberry, Laevis 24-30"	\$8		
Walnut, Black 24-30"	\$8		
Total			\$

Container grown hedge plants

Shrubs are between 12 and 24" unless noted, and are delivered in a 1 gallon container

	Price	Quantity	Total
Cherry, Nanking	\$8		
Dogwood, Bailey's Red Twig	\$8		
Lilac, Common Purple	\$8		
Serviceberry, Canadensis 24-30"	\$8		
Sumac, Glabra Smooth	\$8		
Viburnum			
Chicago Lustre	\$8		
Total			\$

Container grown evergreens

Trees are between 12 and 18" tall unless noted, and delivered in a 1 gallon container

Fir, Concolor 10-12"	\$8		
Pine, Eastern White	\$8		
Spruce			
Black Hills	\$8		
Colorado	\$8		
Norway	\$8		
Total			\$

Perennial Plants for the Garden

Perennials are delivered in a 1 gallon container, and should only be used for gardening; not suitable for restoration purposes.

Coreopsis, Zagreb	\$9.50		
Echinacea, Coneflower (purple)	\$9.50		
Hemerocallis, Daylily			
Red	\$9.50		
Stella D'Oro	\$9.50		
Happy Returns	\$9.50		
Hosta			
Blue Leaf	\$9.50		
Green & White Variegated	\$9.50		
Green Leaf	\$9.50		
Rudbeckia, Black-eyed Susan, Goldstrum	\$9.50		
Salvia, Purple	\$9.50		
Sedum, Autumn Joy	\$9.50		
Total			\$

Order Deadline: Friday, April 6th, 2018

Order Pick-up: Friday, April 20th, 2018, 7:30am-3:30pm

685 Larry Power Rd, Bourbonnais

The District cannot accept responsibility for size and variability. Sizes and descriptions are as stated by the nursery. Trees and shrubs are for conservation purposes only. Perennials are to be used for gardening; not suitable for restoration purposes.

Name _____

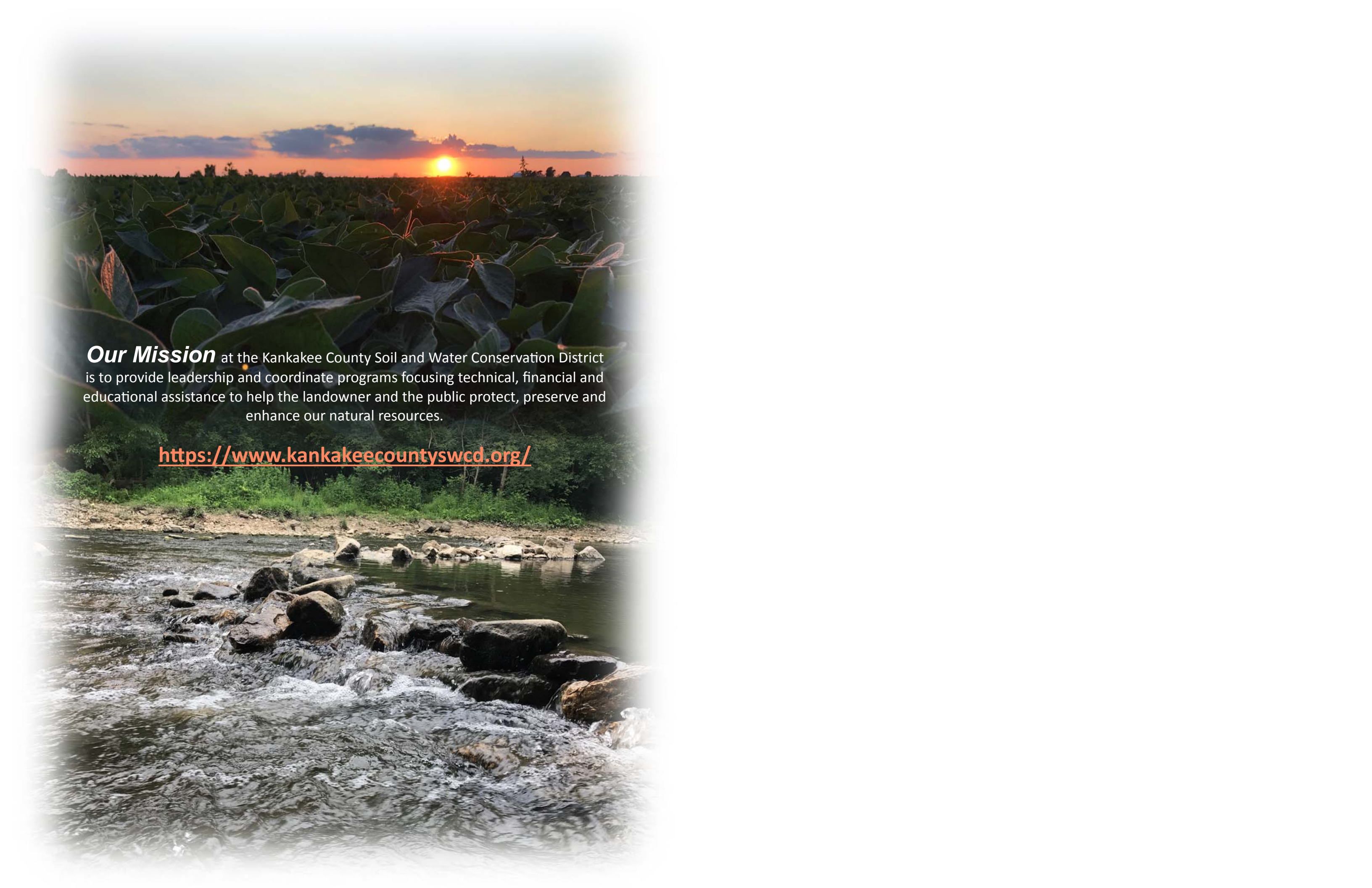
Address _____

Total \$ _____
50% down (non-refundable) \$ _____
Amount Paid \$ _____
Amount Due \$ _____
Check # or Cash _____

Please make checks payable to:

Kankakee County SWCD
685 Larry Power Rd.
Bourbonnais, IL 6914

All programs and services are available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, age or national origin.



Our Mission at the Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide leadership and coordinate programs focusing technical, financial and educational assistance to help the landowner and the public protect, preserve and enhance our natural resources.

<https://www.kankakeecountyswcd.org/>