

Conservation Courier Newsletter



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February 2010

Ag Appreciation Night Planned

Come join us Thursday night, February 18, 2010, at the Oak Grove Civic Center for an evening of ag information, awards, conservation conversation, good food, and entertainment as we celebrate farming in Jackson County! The event will recognize the positive impact of soil and water stewardship on agriculture.



Program highlights for this third annual event of its kind in our district include:

- ◆ **Redneckers Ruckus**
Keith "Red" Allen, Branson
- ◆ **Conservation farmer of the year award**
- ◆ **Conservation photo contest awards**
- ◆ **Educational displays and information**
- ◆ **District supervisor election**
- ◆ **Dinner**

Ag Appreciation Night is scheduled at the Civic Center at 2100 South Broadway in Oak Grove. The district supervisor election will run from noon to 6:30 p.m., educational displays may be viewed from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. as well as after the program, and the dinner with program following will begin at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free although an RSVP is required by February 12, 2010, as seating may be limited. E-mail linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov for your reservation or call 816-228-1836, extension 3, for a reservation and directions if necessary.

Soil and water conservation practices like no-till, terraces, waterways, ponds, etc. have added measurably to the conservation and wise use of soil and water resources in Jackson County. *Ag Appreciation Night* is designed to recognize the efforts of farm owners and operators who have installed and maintained these practices on the land.

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Jackson County Conservationists Honored



Henry Twiehaus (photo upper left) of rural Sibley recently received the 2009 state *Cooperator of the Year* award sponsored by the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The award, in the form of an engraved plaque, was presented at the association's annual training conference in Osage Beach, Missouri.

Henry is a life-long farmer, first with his father, Elmer Twiehaus, and now with son, Kurt. Together they farm 850 acres of soybeans and corn in no-till systems. In addition to no-till farming, Henry has an impressive record of installing conservation practices, like terraces and waterways, to protect the land. Many of the fields he farms pose the conservation challenges of highly erodible upland. Henry tries to tailor the practices on each field to do what's right for the land with respect to soil and water conservation. He is truly a conservation role model in his farming community.

Henry and his wife Corrine enjoy being with family including Kurt, Emily, and their two daughters as well as daughter Christine, Albert, and their four daughters.



Also honored (in absentia due to illness) at Osage Beach was the Envirothon team from Pembroke Hill High School, Kansas City. The team (right) earned fifth place among 52 teams in the 2009 Canon Envirothon, an international environmental education competition held in North Carolina.



District and NRCS Blue Springs Field Office employees were recently recognized at an awards ceremony for northwest Missouri employees held in Kansas City (three photos at lower left). J. R. Flores, NRCS State Conservationist, presented *Individual Performance Awards* to Scott Slusher (top), NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, and Greg Stegner (center), NRCS Resource Conservationist. Flores also presented a *Conservation Partnership Award* to district employee Bill Bohnert, Jr. (bottom), District Manager and Conservation Education Director.



Bohnert, Jr. was also recognized at the Osage Beach conference with a state managerial award presented by the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation District Employees Association (lower right).

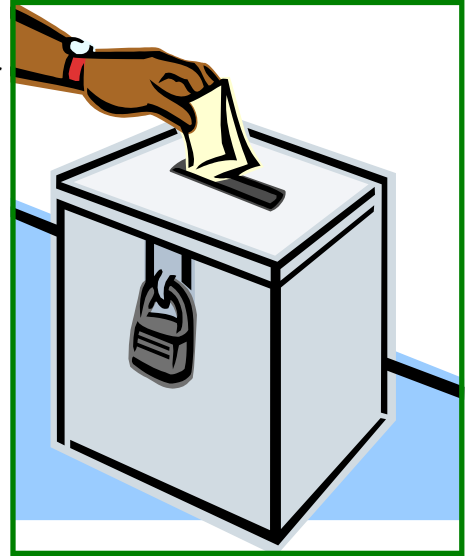


Election 2010

It's an important election year nationally and on the local level too. Our district will conduct an election in two of four areas of the county including Area 1 (northeastern Jackson County) and Area 3 (southeast corner of the county). Every other year, the district holds an election to select supervisors from one-half of the county for a four-year term.

A district supervisor election will be held on February 18, 2010, in conjunction with *Ag Appreciation Night* at the Oak Grove Civic Center, 2100 South Broadway, Oak Grove. Polls will be open from noon to 6:30 p.m.

Nominating committees for the election have submitted names of the following qualifying candidates: Area 1, Melvin Dickmeyer, Buckner, and Area 3, Rob Montgomery, Lone Jack. Any qualifying candidate not nominated by the committee may have their name added to the ballot if they secure 10 signatures on a petition and submit the petition to the district office at least 10 days before the election.



The volunteer service of supervisors is invaluable for the efficient administration of district programs, services, personnel, and funding. By Missouri statute, our board is composed of four elected members, representing specific geographic areas of Jackson County, plus one individual appointed by University of Missouri Extension. Current supervisors include Melvin Dickmeyer of Buckner, Chairman; Rob Montgomery, Lone Jack, Vice Chairman; Lala Kumar, Blue Springs, Secretary; Don Hicks, Lee's Summit, Treasurer; and Dan Stock, Buckner, Board member.

To increase election participation and improve transparency, the state Soil and Water Districts Commission has implemented new procedures including newspaper advertising and extended poll hours. Contact the district office at 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov for more details on election procedures including candidate and voter eligibility.

Thank You Jackson County Legislature!



Sincere appreciation is expressed to the **Jackson County Legislature** for assistance in funding Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District technical and information/education programs. With the Legislature's help, valuable programs are conducted which protect the natural resources of the county and further the missions of the county and our district. Several specific programs include:

- ◆ **Technical and State cost-share assistance to secure conservation practices on the land, protecting county soil and water resources and infrastructure**
- ◆ **Natural resource education classes for *X-Stream Green* and *Jacomo Day Camp* programs at the Kemper Outdoor Education Center**
- ◆ **Sediment and erosion control and watershed hydrology training workshops**
- ◆ **Technical assistance with natural resource expertise for the Jackson County Master Plan Steering Committee**

Protecting Urban Soil and Water Workshop Slated



Contractors, developers, builders, and others take advantage of sediment and erosion control training organized by the district and our conservation partners.

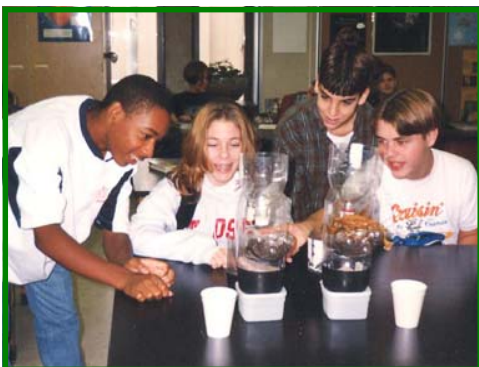
like *low-impact development*, cost/benefit analysis and return-on-investment, and new technology implementation are on the agenda.

Each participant will receive a copy of a *Protecting Urban Soil and Water Resource CD* with presentation notes and useful technical information on sediment, erosion control, and water quality. A certificate for 3.5 hours of continuing education credit will be offered to participants. Additionally, the workshop may help participants comply with mandatory training requirements of some local jurisdictions.

The workshop is sponsored by the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Jackson County Public Works, and the Mid-America Association of Conservation Districts. Workshop presenters will include staff from Patti Banks Associates, the Missouri Department of Transportation, and Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

A registration fee of \$20.00 per participant will be charged to help cover workshop costs including handout material and breakfast. For more information and a registration form, call 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov.

Erosion Experiment Fun and Fundamental



Are you looking for a science fair project, classroom demonstration, or maybe a Scout or 4-H activity? Try making *watershed models* to demonstrate good soil conservation practices like no-till farming, mulching, or planting trees and grass. Easy to construct models made of 2-liter soda bottles can demonstrate the devastating effects of erosion on soil and water quality. Three bottles are needed for each watershed model. Separate models can be used to evaluate bare soil versus different types of cover simulating good conservation practices to use on farms as well as in home grounds and gardens. Experiment instructions are readily available including at: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/pdf/level1/PubsErosioninabottle.pdf>.

Knowledge for Crop Profits

❖ **Conference to Present Crop Management Strategies for Maximum Profit:**

Crop producers should reserve Wednesday, February 17, 2010, for the West Central Missouri Regional Winter Crop Conference near Wellington. The event, entitled *Crop Management Strategies for Maximum Profit*, will provide research-based data and information to aid in making crop management decisions. University of Missouri Extension specialists with expertise in economics, fertility and nutrient management, pest management, and weather forecasting will present the newest research and outline strategies growers can use in 2010. The information presented may help producers reduce risks, increase production, improve fertilizer efficiency, and protect crop yields.



Achieving optimum yield potential is a challenging task, especially given the year to year variability. Growers will benefit from discussions on topics such as:

- ◆ **Nitrogen loss and strategies to optimize yield**
- ◆ **Status of glyphosate resistance in Missouri waterhemp and ragweed populations**
- ◆ **Conducting on-farm phosphorus and potassium tests**
- ◆ **Early-season pest control with seed treatments**
- ◆ **Trait selection for insect control**
- ◆ **Weather outlook and long-range projections**
- ◆ **Effect of variety selection on soybean cyst nematode**

The all-day conference will be held at New Oak Vineyards located approximately six miles southeast of Wellington and will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. The registration fee of \$30.00 includes all handouts, conference manual, refreshments, and a noon meal. For more conference and registration details, e-mail University of Missouri Extension Regional Agronomist Julie Abendroth at abendrothj@missouri.edu or call 816-776-6961. You can also go to www.extension.missouri.edu/ray to download the conference brochure and registration form. Registration is required by February 12, 2010.

❖ **Private Pesticide Applicator License Re-Certification Classes Offered in March 2010:**

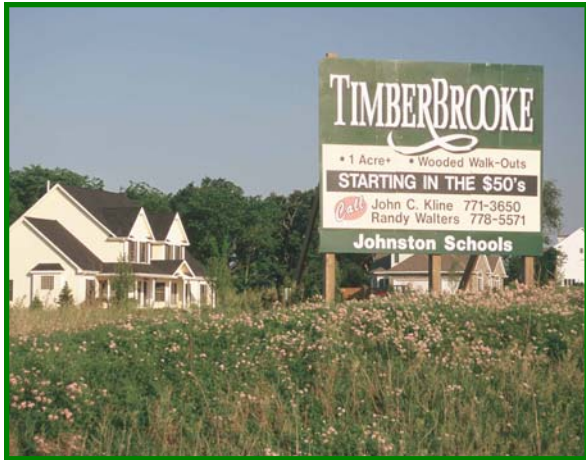


For applicators needing to renew their private pesticide applicator license, classes will be offered by University of Missouri Extension at several locations in west central Missouri. Current pest and crop management topics will be discussed, along with updates regarding pesticide laws, safety equipment, and environmental protection. Attendance at one of the 3-hour classes will fulfill the requirements necessary for recertification, as well as initial certification.

In Jackson County, private pesticide applicator training will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2010, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. at Burr Oak Woods Nature Center in Blue Springs. For more information and to register, please contact the Ray County Extension Office at 816-776-6961. Registration is required. If unable to attend this session, classes are also available in north Kansas City, Higginsville, and Richmond in early March.



Your Dream Home in the Country?



Recent real estate bargains have encouraged thoughts of buying a home or acreage in rural Jackson County. If you are planning to buy or build a home in the country, or just dreaming of one, there's a useful tool you should know about. The *Jackson County Soil Survey* could help ensure that your plans are on solid ground! This tool is available, in its most convenient form, online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>.

The soil survey for Jackson County, created by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, is the most comprehensive source of local soil information available. It contains data on numerous soil properties that are critical when planning the construction of your *dream home* in the country or when purchasing an existing home.

Soil features that are important to consider when looking for a home site are soil texture, permeability, soil depth over bedrock, internal drainage, runoff from surrounding land, and flooding. By using a county soil survey, you can compare the soil limitations that may occur at various sites. This will help to determine the sites with the least limiting factors for construction. The publication also identifies *prime farmland*—good sites to avoid in the interest of saving our best Jackson County soils for food and fiber production.

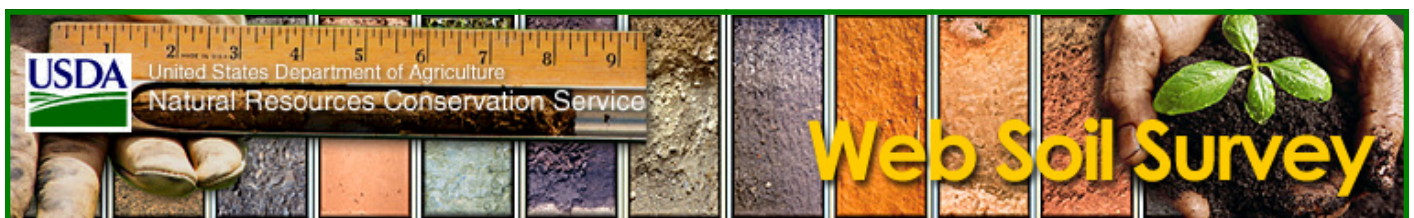
Texture and permeability, two physical properties of the soil, are important in determining whether foundation walls may crack. They also provide valuable information regarding the selection of a suitable on-site sewage treatment system, such as sewage lagoon or septic tank absorption fields, for the property. These properties are important also in the success of plantings in home grounds and gardens.

Soil depth over bedrock is also detailed in the soil survey. If your house plans include a basement, the depth of the soil material over bedrock is an extremely important feature to consider.

Indications of internal drainage and runoff from surrounding land can be determined from the soil survey. In many north Missouri soils with high clay content, the seasonal high water table is within two feet of the ground surface. In selecting a home site, avoid soils that have seasonal water tables near the surface for long periods of time. In other areas a sump pump with a system of subsurface drains can lower the water table helping to reduce basement moisture problems.

Flooding is always an important consideration in selecting a home site. Being forced from your home during a flood is the ultimate nightmare for homeowners. A valuable feature of the soil survey for Jackson County is a rating of each soil for its flooding frequency and duration.

Call the District office at 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov for more details and assistance in using the Web Soil Survey.



Stewardship Builds Healthy Habitats

Just as we all live in a watershed, we all live in a habitat as well. To focus attention on this concept and to stress the importance of protecting habitats through natural resource conservation, *habitat* has been chosen as the theme for *Soil and Water Stewardship Week* celebrated April 25th through May 2nd.

In its simplest form, habitat is the place where something lives because it has adapted to find food, water, shelter, and space. People, plants, animals, and even small organisms need these basic requirements to live and thrive. The quality of these habitat elements is largely determined by the quality of our natural resources like soil, water, and air.

Many of the conservation practices used by farmers and homeowners help to protect natural resources thus ensuring quality habitat. Practices like planting trees, reducing soil erosion with terrace systems and conservation tillage, and using buffer strips along streams help build healthy habitats. Practicing good natural resource conservation and environmental stewardship should become a *habit* for each of us.



Every year conservation districts throughout the country join to promote the observance of *Stewardship Week* to focus attention on conservation and natural resources. Several information/education items are available locally to support the habitat theme in schools, churches, and organizations. Call the district office at 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov for suggestions of ways to join in celebrating *Stewardship Week*.

Hoop House Hoopla



Much interest has been generated recently in the concept of growing farm crops in *high tunnels*, also called *hoop houses*, thanks to a new USDA initiative. The program is designed to increase the availability of healthy, locally grown vegetables and specialty crops in a conservation-friendly way.

The 3-year, 38-state high tunnel effort will provide financial assistance to farmers as well as evaluate the effectiveness of reducing pesticide use, keeping nutrients in the soil, extending the growing season, and providing other benefits to growers. To showcase the concept, high tunnels have been installed in the White House garden.

High tunnels are easy to build, maintain, and move. They are typically over six feet tall and are constructed of metal or plastic bow frames covered with a single layer of polyethylene plastic. Generally, the end walls are framed to create a door and ventilation areas.

Use of high tunnels may extend the growing season in our area, providing a steadier income to farmers—a significant advantage to owners of small farms, limited-resource farmers, and organic producers. High tunnel production may also improve produce quality, increase yields, and protect soil and water quality.

For more details on financial and technical assistance available through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, call 816-228-1161, extension 109, or e-mail greg.stegner@mo.usda.gov.

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JACKSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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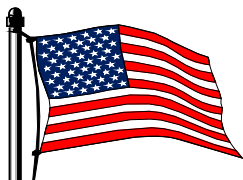
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The Conservation Courier Newsletter carries the message of natural resource conservation to rural and urban Jackson County. To receive a quarterly e-mail notice listing new topics, just e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov with your request.



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

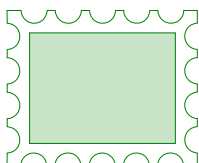
The Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



**Conservation Districts
Conserving America**

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