

Reporter

ST. CHARLES COUNTY

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Elections Approaching

The St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding elections for two supervisor positions on the Board of Supervisors. Candidates are being accepted for Area II and Area IV.

Area II is in the NW corner of the county and includes Wentzville, Flint Hill, St. Paul, Lake St. Louis, and New Melle. Area IV is in the Eastern part of the county and includes St. Charles, Boschertown, Orchard Farm and West Alton.

Nominations for these positions can be made between November 1 and November 30 by contacting the district at 636-922-2833, ext. 3. A self-nomination form will be available on the district's website beginning November 1.

There will be more information in the December issue about the elections being held in February 2026.

School is in Session!

If you know a teacher or have a student, help us spread the word that St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District has educational resources for the classroom and can conduct presentations related to soil and water!



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@St. Charles County Soil and Water
Conservation District

The Power of Riparian Buffers on Your Farms

As stewards of the land, farmers play a crucial role in maintaining the health of our natural resources. One highly effective and increasingly popular practice for enhancing both on-farm productivity and environmental quality is the establishment of riparian buffers. These are vegetated areas alongside streams, rivers, and other water bodies that offer a multitude of benefits for water and soil conservation, making them a wise investment for any farm.



This Riparian Buffer was installed at the Iowa State University Bear Creek demonstration area in Story County, Iowa. It demonstrates what significant improvements can happen over a 5 year time period.

What are Riparian Buffers?

In layman's terms, a riparian buffer is a strip of trees, shrubs, and/or grasses planted along the edges of a waterway. These buffers act as a natural filter and protective zone between agricultural fields and the aquatic ecosystem. They can vary in width depending on the specific goals and site conditions, but even relatively narrow buffers can provide significant benefits.

The Unseen Heroes: How Buffers Protect Our Water

The primary function of riparian buffers is to safeguard water quality. Here's how they work their magic:

Filtering Runoff: As rainwater flows across fields, it can pick up sediment, nutrients (like nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers), and pesticides. When this runoff encounters a dense riparian buffer, the vegetation slows the flow, allowing sediment to settle out and pollutants to be absorbed or broken down by plants and soil microbes. When this happens it significantly reduces the amount of contamination entering streams and rivers.

Stabilizing Banks: The extensive root systems of trees and shrubs within a buffer firmly hold soil in place, preventing erosion of streambanks. Bank erosion is a major contributor to sediment pollution, which can cloud water, harm aquatic life, and fill in valuable habitats.

Temperature Regulation: The shade provided by trees in a buffer helps to cool water temperatures, which is vital for many aquatic species, particularly fish that are sensitive to temperature changes.

Nutrient Uptake: Buffer plants actively take up excess nutrients from agricultural runoff, preventing them from fueling algal blooms in waterways that can deplete oxygen and harm aquatic ecosystems.

See Riparian Buffers, pg. 6

Get Ready to Time Travel With The Reporter

St. Charles County SWCD is bursting with excitement to introduce a fun, new highlight in the beloved newsletter, *The Reporter*! Get ready to take a magnificent journey into the past with our latest feature: *Way Back When...*

Each newsletter will now share captivating historical and local photographs that showcase the St. Charles County SWCD's incredible journey and involvement right here in our county. As your humble writer for *The Reporter*, I've had a blast playing time traveler, digging through archives to unearth these hidden gems. It's been an incredible adventure seeing conservation practices come to life, outreach efforts create smiles, and our fantastic farmers doing what they do best, year after year.

Seriously, I can't wait for you to see these snapshots of our shared heritage. I truly hope you enjoy peeking into our local history as much as I have and I hope you recognize some of these people and places.

I invite you to share any photos that you have by emailing, Alexandria.hecht@swcd.mo.gov or calling the office, 636-922-2833, ext. 3. I would love to see and hear the story behind them, and even feature them! Enjoy your trip down memory lane!

Date: September 14, 1972

Subject: Urban Development

Photographer: Les Volmert

Location: St. Peters, Mo.

This Picture Shows: "Ervin Bruns of St. Peters stands in his feedlot and ponders the fate of his farm as the houses in Brookmont Subdivision move rapidly toward his farm headquarters."

Photo Credit: USDA—Soil Conservation Service

WAY BACK WHEN...



**St. Charles County
Soil & Water Conservation District**
330 Interstate Dr.
Wentzville, Mo., 63385
636-922-2833, ext. 3

The Reporter Newsletter is published by the St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District quarterly, in March, June, September and December.

Editor—Theresa Strunk

Writer—Alexandria Hecht

For advertising information or to submit news, call the district at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

The district is supervised by a board of supervisors made up of farmers from St. Charles County and a University of Missouri Extension representative:

Board of Supervisors

Adam Bonderer, Chairman
Jim Petersen, Vice-Chairman
Eli Isele, Secretary
Bob Feise, Treasurer
Bruce Siem, Member

SWCD Personnel

Theresa Strunk, Manager
Charlie Perkins, Technician
Alexandria Hecht, Info/Ed Specialist

NRCS Personnel

Kevin Barber, District Conservationist
Liz Hawkins, Resource Conservationist

The mission of the Soil & Water Conservation District is to conserve the soil and water resources of the county; promote the wise use of these resources through education; protect residents from undue hardship caused by erosion, sedimentation and flooding; protect the agricultural soil base to ensure continued productivity; and preserve the quality of water and water courses within the county.

St. Charles County Stream Care Guide is Online

The St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) worked with City of Wentzville Stormwater staff to produce a new county-wide Stream Care Guide. The guide is sponsored by the SWCD, the City of Wentzville and St. Charles County government.

This guide highlights the watersheds we live in and the activities within our watersheds that can harm water quality. It explains the functions of a stream and the natural and human influences that affect stream ecosystem changes. St. Charles County has made it available online to all residents. You can visit the county website's **Stormwater Management and Watercourse Protection** page to link to the new Stream Care Guide, or scan the QR code on the right.

NEW Stream Care Guide Available

Educating St. Charles County Residents
About Local Streams and How to Protect
Waterways and Private Property

To help the community better understand our impact on waterways, landscaping and stream stabilization tips, St. Charles County—in partnership with the City of Wentzville and the St. Charles County Soil & Water Conservation District—has created a unique and engaging Stream Care Guide. In this guide, residents will find out how they can:

- Prevent or minimize erosion issues.
- Avoid flooding impacts.
- Protect property values.
- Preserve water quality.
- Contribute to the survival of fish and wildlife.

As stewards of the two mightiest rivers on the North American continent, everything we do has the potential to affect our county's tourism, flooding, tax dollars, and the beauty of life's most important natural resource: water.

Scan the QR code with your phone's camera to begin reading the Stream Care Guide to learn more about the county's local waterways and what you can do to protect them and your property.



Parts of St. Charles County Included in Congress' Expansion of Radiation Compensation

By an act of Congress, St. Charles County residents will soon be able to apply for financial compensation from the federal government if they got cancer after spending time in zip codes now covered under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA). The expansion of RECA to include 21 St. Louis area zip codes, including parts of St. Charles County, was contained in the so-called Big Beautiful Bill approved by Congress and signed into law by President Trump on the Fourth of July.



Ariel view of Weldon Spring Superfund Site.

The big concern in St. Charles County is the EPA Superfund sites in Weldon Spring, where Mallinckrodt Chemical Company refined uranium during the Cold War era. The site was later

closed and abandoned. Decades later, it was remediated and capped with a mountain of rocks.

There are four St. Charles County zip codes that are covered by the law:

- 63367 (Lake St. Louis)
- 63368 (O'Fallon, Dardenne Prairie)
- 63341 (Defiance)
- 63304 (St. Peters, Weldon Spring, Cottleville)

The four zip codes were included based on known areas of contamination and patterns of illnesses. Years of studies based on heat maps where radiation was known to have existed and also where radiation-linked diseases are the highest was part of the determining factor of what areas were chosen.

Josh Hawley, U.S. Senator of Missouri says residents now living in the four zip codes should take the designation in context. By that he means, "Weldon Spring is in a very different place than the West Lake Landfill or Coldwater Creek. Those have not been remediated as Weldon Spring has. Having said that, we need constant vigilance. I'm always pushing EPA to continue to test in the Weldon Spring area to make sure the water and soil have radiation levels where they should be, and there are no spikes of concern."

Under the RECA law, people wanting to make a claim for compensation must be able to prove they were "physically present" in these zip codes for at least two years after Jan. 1, 1949, either at a place of residence, work, or school. They must show they contracted a specific disease after that period of physical presence. The disease list includes several types of cancer:

- Leukemia
- Multiple myeloma
- Lymphoma, other than Hodgkin's disease
- Thyroid
- Male or female breast
- Esophagus
- Stomach
- Pharynx
- Small intestine
- Pancreas
- Bile ducts
- Gall bladder
- Salivary gland
- Urinary bladder
- Brain
- Colon
- Ovary
- Bone
- Renal
- Liver, except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated
- Lung

People who make successful claims can get \$50,000 or reimbursement for their documented out-of-pocket medical expenses, whichever is greater. Survivors of victims can get \$25,000.

According to Hawley's office, the Department of Justice will set up the claims process, including the eligibility requirements which could take a few months. For now, people wanting to make a claim should prepare their documents:

- Proof of residence or having worked or attended school in affected area
- Proof of medical conditions
- Medical records of out-of-pocket expenses

In the future, Hawley plans to attend town hall meetings in St. Charles County to answer questions about how the program works. No date or location has been set.

Weldon Spring is one of the original Manhattan Project Locations that processed uranium for Mallinckrodt Chemical Works from the 1950's through the 1960's. The site was originally operated by the Atlas Powder Company during World War II from 1941 to 1945 to produce explosives. The Atomic Energy Commission acquired part of the property in 1955 and Mallinckrodt, Inc. processed uranium ore from 1957 to 1966 under contract. The site has been divided into several parcels, and ownership has transferred over the years. Two portions of the original property are now Superfund sites that require substantial cleanup efforts.

The surrounding community was found to have been contaminated with ionizing radiation in the 1980's. Remediation activities were initiated, resulting in a 42 acre site that contains 1.5 million cubic yards of radiotoxic materials.

MASWCD Announces Theme for Annual Conference that Focuses on Renewing the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax

Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts is planning their 81st annual meeting banquet at Margaritaville, Lake of the Ozarks. The theme for this year’s conference is “Renewing Excellence Together.” The conference will have a focus on the upcoming renewal of the Parks, Soils and Water Sales tax in 2026.

The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is a statewide one-tenth-of-one percent sales tax. It provides dedicated funding for Missouri state parks and historic sites along with soil and water conservation efforts. Missouri citizens have shown strong support for soil and water conservation and state parks by approving it in 1984, as a constitutional amendment.


The tax was reapproved by two-thirds of Missouri voters in 1988, 1996, 2006 and 2016. In 2016, the tax was approved by approximately 80%, passing in every county. The tax now appears on the ballot every 10 years to reaffirm the voters’ support of the park system and soil and water conservation efforts. The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is set to expire in 2028, if not approved by voters in 2026.

Missouri and Their Unique Sales-Tax



There are soil and water districts all over the country, but Missouri is the only state with a state-wide sales tax dedicated to soil and water conservation. SWCDs were foundationally built out of the 1930’s Dust Bowl era, when legislators realized that the future of American farming depended on the protection of healthy soil and water sources. The Midwest portion of the country is often referred to as the “bread basket” feeding most Americans, but many around the world also depend on the health of farms in that region.

SWCD Fund

SWCDs use the funds as financial incentives for landowners to implement conservation practices that help prevent soil loss, improve soil health, and protect water resources. Before the passage of the sales tax, Missouri had the second highest rate of erosion in the nation. Since then, Missouri farmers have implemented more than 288,000 structural and

1/10 of 1% of  State Sales Tax

OR

One  Of every 



Is



Split Between

State Parks and

Soil & Water

Conservation Districts





Fun & Food For All

Chapter 144, RSMo: The state's sales tax is imposed on the purchase price of tangible personal property or taxable service sold at retail. Use tax is imposed on the storage, use or consumption of tangible personal property in this state. The 4.225 percent state sales and use tax is distributed into four funds to finance portions of state government – General Revenue (3.0 percent), Conservation (0.125 percent), Education (1.0 percent), and Parks/Soils (0.10 percent)

*The above calculation is based on \$10 worth of collected sales tax revenue.
(SWCDs receive half a cent for approximately \$236.69 in sales—the tax on which would be \$10 at the current sales tax rate of 4.225%)

management conservation practices on cropland, hay land, pastureland and woodlands. Through these conservation efforts, Missouri has stopped more than 193 million tons of soil from eroding, enough to fill the lanes of I-70 from St. Louis to Kansas City over 52 feet high. These practices were supported by over \$919 million from the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax since 1984. In Fiscal Year 2024, the Soil and Water Conservation Program funded more than \$49,520,466 million worth of projects throughout Missouri.

Continue Reading on Pg. 5

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Cost-Share Practices

Cost-share is the sharing of the cost of a conservation practice on agricultural land. There are seven categories of cost-



An example of erosion on a local farm. This problem was solved by a grassed waterway.

share offered by the Soil and Water Conservation Program.

- Sheet/Rill and Gully Erosion
- Grazing Management
- Irrigation Management
- Animal Waste Management
- Nutrient and Pest Management
- Sensitive Areas
- Woodland Erosion

Each category has specific practices that apply. An agricultural producer may receive up to 75% of the cost of installing one of these

practices. A “practice” is either the physical structure that conserves soil and water (like a terrace or waterway), or it is a behavior that brings about the desired conservation outcome like managing grazing, following a nutrient application plan, or decommissioning a well.

Program Benefits All Citizens

Farm conservation not only benefits the farmer by improving the productivity of their land, but it also benefits the entire community and the lives of all future Missourians. Benefits to the farm include:

- Keep valuable topsoil in place
- Enhance the use of natural water systems and protect them from pollutions
- Improve efficiency of grazing and protect local streams
- Recycle animal waste for use on the land

- Control runoff into streams and enhance plant health with proper amounts of water and nutrients
- Protect groundwater on farms

Benefits to the Community

- Fresh, local foods available
- Cleaner drinking water resources
- Cleaner recreational water features
- Less sediment in storm water runoff
- Less nutrients in storm water runoff
- Protection of aquatic animals in creeks and rivers
- Preservation of productive soil for future generations

Maneuvering Through Cost-Share

Cost-share practices are developed by the State Soil and Water Conservation Program Commission. The Commission is a seven-member board consisting of farmers and landowners from around the state. They are appointed by the governor and serve a three-year term. They rotate out at different intervals and there is equal representation from both major political parties. With that being said, they do not have any political influence, but are tasked with making decisions for the state program based on input from the 114 SWCD local boards.

Each local board consists of four farmers/landowners from that county, and a University of Missouri Extension representative, who usually holds a degree in agronomy. While the Commission, determines practice specifications and other business operations; the local boards review and approve local requests for cost-share and manage local employees.

Any landowner wishing to access the cost-share program needs to contact an SWCD employee in their local district. A technician will visit with the landowner to determine needs and explain specific practices. The practice is then designed by either the SWCD technician or one of the NRCS staff, and is presented for approval by a board before work begins. Landowners can arrange to complete the work themselves, or hire any contractor to do the job.

Call today to find out more: 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

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Soil's Best Friend: Benefits for On-Farm Land

Beyond water quality, riparian buffers offer significant advantages for the soil on your farm:

Reduced Soil Loss: By intercepting runoff and slowing its velocity, buffers prevent valuable topsoil from washing away. This preserves the fertility and productivity of your fields.

Improved Soil Health: The perennial vegetation in buffers contributes organic matter to the soil, enhancing its structure, water-holding capacity, and overall health.

Enhanced Biodiversity: Buffers create valuable habitat and corridors for wildlife, including pollinators and beneficial insects that can aid in pest control on your farm.

Windbreaks: Denser buffers can also act as natural windbreaks, reducing wind erosion on adjacent fields and protecting crops.

Establishing Conservation Buffers

Establishing riparian buffers does not have to be a daunting task. Contact your local conservation district for more information on technical assistance and financial incentives to help farmers implement these practices. Considerations for establishment include:

Species selection: Choose native plants that are well-suited to your local climate and soil conditions.

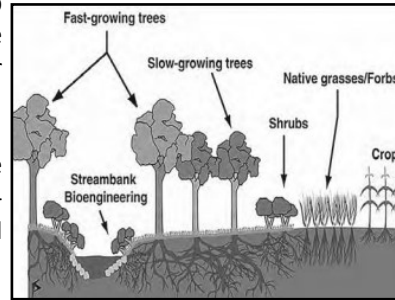
Width: While wider buffers generally provide greater benefits, even a narrow buffer can make a difference.

Maintenance: Initial maintenance may involve weed control, but once established, buffers require minimal upkeep.

Additional land management: Riparian buffers are most effective when used with sound land management systems that

include nutrient management and sediment control systems.

A Win-Win for Farm and the Environment

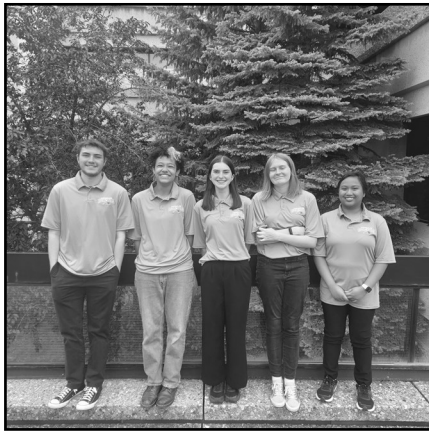


Selecting the appropriate species for a riparian buffer will help ensure its success and longevity.

By integrating riparian buffers into your farm management plan, you're not only contributing to cleaner water and healthier ecosystems, but you're also protecting your most valuable asset, your land. These natural filters are a testament to how

sustainable agricultural practices can benefit both the bottom line and the environment. Consider exploring the possibilities of riparian buffers on your farm; it's a step towards a more resilient and sustainable future. Contact Charlie Perkins for more information on riparian buffers at 636-922-2833, ext. 3.

STL Region Envirothon Team Back From Calgary



Local team from Parkway North High School had a great time in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. They were in Calgary for a week in July studying hard for the NCF International Envirothon competition. The competition is comprised of 52 states and provinces including Canada and China.

The week long event included tons of hands-on activities and excursions. The team started the trip off with a meet and greet trade event where they trade items that represent their state with other states and provinces. It's a great way for the kids to socialize and meet new people. The next day was spent all day studying because the following was testing day. The halfway point through the trip was a celebration day, the kids spent all day outside. They spent the day at Banff in Sunshine Village. They hiked up a beautiful mountain to see even more beautiful 360 views!

Then they traveled to Banff Avenue where they did a little bit of shopping and eating on the River Walk. They finished their free day off with dinner at Mount View BBQ. They were met with picturesque views of mountains and pine trees. They spent the evening playing lawn games, meeting birds of prey that they could hold, and learning new line dances while listening to a great live band.

After relaxing, the next day was spent prepping for Oral Presentations which highlighted their new knowledge on this year's Envirothon theme: *Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change*. The last, full day spent in Canada was presentation and award day! The team placed 39th out of 52. The team is super thankful for the experience and represented Missouri very proudly. Congratulations!



Free Prescribed Burn Workshop Offered

A free public burn workshop is being offered by MDC on Tuesday October 21, 2025 at Bethel Hills Event Center in Dutzow, MO., from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Upon registration, participants will be given a link to the virtual/online portion of the prescribed burn course. The online course is a mandatory prerequisite. Please bring your certificate of completion to the demonstration burn. Weather permitting, there will be a prescribed burn so please dress accordingly with leather boots, leather gloves, cotton pants, cotton long sleeve shirt, and safety glasses. Participants will learn about burn equipment, burn line installation, safe weather parameters, ignition operations, and other techniques to safely conduct a prescribed burn. Register at MDC.com/events.

Annual Meeting to be Held in November

The Annual Meeting of Cooperators of the St. Charles County Soil and Water Conservation District will be held Thursday, November 20th at the University of Missouri Extension location, 260 Brown Rd., St. Peters.

Once again, the District will be hosting a Thanksgiving-style buffet dinner for friends and cooperators of the district's conservation cost-share program. This is our way to say 'Thank you'. Watch for a postcard invitation in the mail with more details!



Office Closures

9/1/25: Labor Day

10/13/12: Columbus Day

11/11/25: Veterans Day

11/27/25: Thanksgiving Day

12/25/25: Christmas Day

1/1/26: New Years Day

DID YOU KNOW?

In ancient times, certain trees were worshipped and in Greek mythology, the oak was sacred to Zeus. It was believed that touching one of the sacred trees would bring good fortune. Thus, "*knocking on wood*" became an action to bring good luck.



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Reporter

Tractor Tales: Preserve Your Piece of American Farm History!

There's just something so special about a tractor. Since John Froelich fired up the first gasoline-powered tractor in the U.S. way back in the 1892, these magnificent machines have been the unsung heroes of American farms. Whether they're painted an iconic green, vibrant red, classic blue, or bright orange, you can't deny their vital role in American agricultural heritage. They're more than just a machine; they are a symbol of hard work, innovation, and the enduring spirit of farming.

Preserving American agricultural heritage has been made very simple. The American Tractor Club is collaborating with the University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Farm Bureau, to celebrate these enduring symbols of American agriculture. The folks at the MU Center of Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) have been instrumental, setting up a user-friendly data base for the club. As Chris Barnett, CARES director, puts it, they're "using the technology of today to help preserve and share the technology of a century ago."

This is where you come in! Do you have a century model tractor that has been passed down through generations, brimming with family stories? Or maybe a more modern

machine that is still making history on your farm? The American Tractor club would love to hear about it! You can contribute to this online collection and help keep the history and stories behind these iconic machines alive which is the heart of the American Tractor Museum's mission.



Participating in the club is easy. Just head over to the American Tractor Club website and fill out a simple online form. If you prefer, there's a printable version you can mail in. The form lets you share all the fascinating details about your tractor including its make, model, and history. Plus, you can include photos or videos to showcase your pride and joy on the club website. Once you submit, the team at the American Tractor Museum will review

your information, and then, voilà! Your piece of farm heritage will be a part of this growing online collection!

If you are passionate about preserving the rich history of tractors in America, then contribute by visiting the American Tractor Club website at www.americantractorclub.com to submit your incredible piece of farm heritage today!