

# THE REPORTER

June 2018

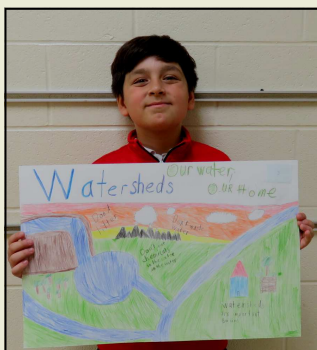
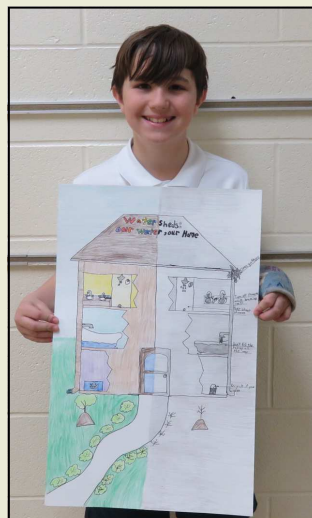
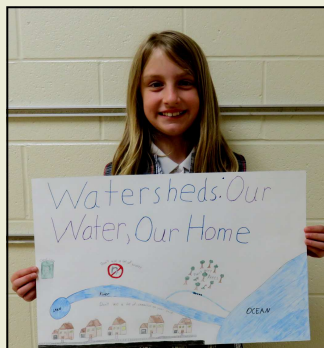
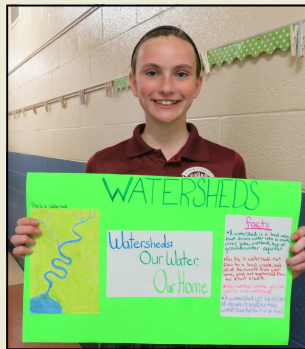


## Kids' Poster Contest Illustrates the Importance of Watersheds

Students in St. Charles County were invited to illustrate a poster with the title: Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home. They researched the topic and shared facts such as:

- No matter where you live, you are in a watershed
- Your yard drains rain runoff into a nearby water feature like a creek
- Pollution in your yard can reach local water sources
- Many people get their drinking water from the Missouri and Mississippi rivers

Among the students receiving recognition were: (right, from top) Brooke Prinster, Ashley Brennan, and Ryan Willard; and (below) Caleb Quezada.



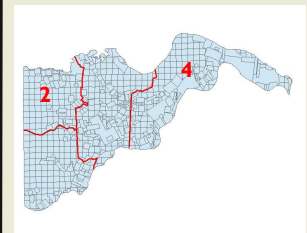
## News & Notes

### SWCD Board Supervisor Elections Approaching

Agricultural producers in the county who are actively participating in the cost-share program are eligible to run for a position on the board of supervisors for the soil and water district. Two positions are up for election this year: Area 2 (northwest portion of the county), and Area 4 (eastern section of the county). The positions are currently held by Sam Harris (Area 2) and Adam Bonderer (Area 4).

Duties for board supervisors include approving cost-share plans, signing cost-share contracts, and managing district employees and operations.

Nominations are being sought for the election which will take place in the fall. Interested parties should contact the SWCD at 636-922-2833,





## Curtis Hoeft Retires from NRCS

NRCS Soil Conservationist Curtis Hoeft is trading 6 a.m. commutes to the office, for long relaxing mornings, hunting trips, traveling, and dabbling in horticulture.

Curtis began his career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service 16 years ago, following four years of service to our country in the United States Navy.

His NRCS work included completing wetland and HEL determination processing, performing contract development for the EQIP and CSP programs, and off-site monitoring for the WRP program. He has served as the Missouri Disability Emphasis Program Manager and was a member of the State Civil Rights Advisory Committee. He has worked in the state office and in six Missouri counties

It's Monday again...



Oh wait, I'm retired!!!

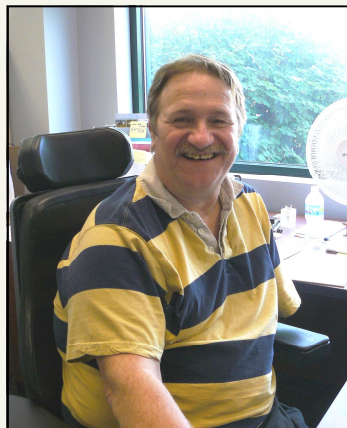


including Warren, St. Charles, St. Louis, Lincoln, Franklin and Jefferson.

In addition to his regular duties, Curtis has assisted with the St. Louis Regional Envirothon competitions nearly every year of his employment with the NRCS.

He has provided training to district staff and has always been willing to assist coworkers with any task.

Curtis will be missed around the office, where he has consistently been a friendly and positive energy. Congratulations Curtis, and best wishes in the years to come!



Curtis Hoeft

## District Hires Summer Intern

The Soil and Water Conservation District has hired Hunter Dowell as a summer intern. Hunter is the son of Terry Dowell of Troy, and Jackie Berger of St. Charles; and is attending the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where he is studying biological engineering.

Hunter is assisting District Technician Charlie Perkins and will be visiting farms conducting cover crop checks and learning basic surveying. He is also lending a hand at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center, and will have opportunities to work alongside employees of the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

"I've always been interested in natural resource conservation, and I'm enjoying learning about agricultural conservation," he said. "I think it's exciting to

discover ways to improve our planet and to save energy and resources for future generations." Hunter enjoys spending time outdoors. "I love to deer hunt in the fall, especially with a bow."



If he's not hunting, he said he likes to fish, and hang out with his friends and girlfriend.

Hunter applied to the district to gain field experience in resource management.

Hunter said, "I am thankful for the St. Charles County SWCD for giving me the opportunity to get a head start in my career, and giving me the opportunity to experience all the different branches of resource management."

## Intern Joins NRCS Staff

Capri Charleston from Alton, Illinois, has joined the local NRCS team as a student intern. Capri is in her third year as a Plant and Soil Sciences major at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. She



also works for iBREED which is the plant genetics lab for student research. After graduation, she is considering graduate school.

In addition to her interests in natural resources conservation, Capri enjoys being a part of the Golden Voices Concert Choir at her university.

"This will be my second summer interning with the NRCS," she said. "Last summer, I worked in Belleville, IL. This summer I am looking forward to learning more about conservation practices and the NRCS."

# Waterways & Terraces: A Good Year for the County

The St. Charles County SWCD Board and staff would like to express their thanks to all the landowners, operators, contractors and vendors who have helped make this a successful cost-share year. By the end of the fiscal year (June 30), the district will have completed over \$76,000 in payments on conservation practices on county farms. The majority of the work was done on terraces systems and grass water ways:

\$19,518.11 was spent on concrete drop boxes and water and sediment control basins.

\$26,243.22 was spent constructing grass waterways.

Farmable terraces on land slope greater than 8% are difficult to construct due to the volume of earthwork required. Rather than constructing a broadbase terrace, landowners can choose to use steep backslope terraces or narrow base terraces. Steep backslope terraces are farmed on the front



slope and grassed on the back. Narrow base terraces are completely covered in grass.

Call the district office at 636-922-2833 if you would like to learn more about agricultural conservation systems.

**Technician Charlie Perkins completing a check on a concrete dropbox.**

**Far left: a newly constructed and seeded waterway;**

**Left: a concrete dropbox**



# Why You Should Love Your Soil

Soil, while seemingly abundant, is a resource that can become exhausted. The precious life-giving qualities of topsoil are not abundant in the lower layers, so erosion by wind and water means the loss of fertility.

It's much more than just sand, silt and clay. Productive soil is only 45% mineral matter; the rest is 25% air, 25% water and about 5% organic.

Focusing just on that 5% organic portion, it is amazing to realize that in a shovel-full of healthy soil there are more living things than all the people ever born on Earth. That shovel-full of productive, life-giving soil has approximately 10 billion bacteria, a billion protozoa, 5 million nematodes, 100,000 mites, 50,000 springtales, 10,000 rotifers, 10,000 tardigrades, handfuls of worms, centipedes, ants, grubs, pill bugs, beetles,

etc..., and various forms of fungi.

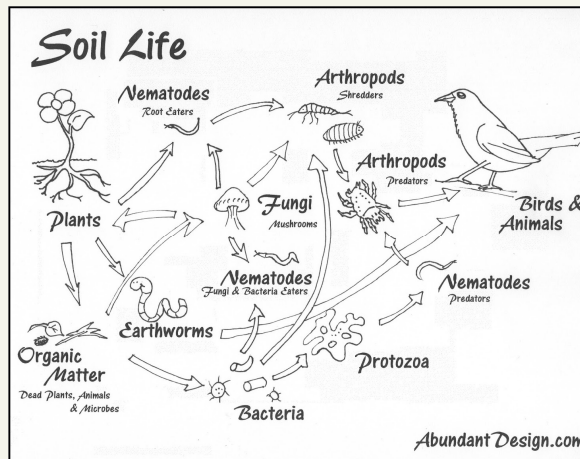
This dynamic mix of living things has many functions, most still undiscovered, but among them: decomposing dead animals, shredding plant material, making soil nutrients available to plants, and maintaining soil porosity and structure.

Only 1/32 of the Earth's surface is suitable for growing food, and that small amount of land has to feed all the people in the world.

In addition to food, almost every single thing we have can be traced back to a healthy soil: clothes, medicines, make-up, building materials, etc...

This remarkable resource also stores carbon, stores and recharges water in the aquifers, filters stormwater runoff, and provides us the nutrition we need to survive.

Love your soil by keeping it covered, disturb it as little as possible, encourage plant species diversity and feed your microbes by letting grass clippings, plant parts and crop residues lay where they fall.



# Water Matters: June is National Ocean Month

Over 70% of our world is covered by water, connecting mankind over time and great distances. The creeks, rivers, lakes and oceans that were our first "highways", a source of food, and our destinations of relaxation and recreation....are rapidly becoming our giant trash repositories. June has been declared National Ocean Month and it is a great time to put the spotlight on oceans and discuss how to protect them.

Water: intricate to our survival: beautiful, refreshing, powerful...it is as much a part of us as our skin and eyes and organs. It is amazing to think that all the water that we have on Earth is all the water that ever was...and all the water that ever will be. We're not getting "new" water. It is recycled in the hydrologic cycle, and the water that you drink today may have been enjoyed by a dinosaur or a samurai many years ago.

Oceans collect water from rivers around the world, and unfortunately they collect trash as well - especially plastics. This is the ocean problem of our lifetime. Bottle caps, plastic shopping bags, straws, cigarette lighters and plastic packaging that

we discard on land can find its way to the ocean quite easily. A plastic bottle cap tossed out on a mountaintop needs only a light rain to deposit it into a stream. If a fish or bird doesn't eat it, the bottle cap may wash into another stream, and then a larger river.

Perhaps that bottle cap will be pulled into a municipal water supply before it makes it to the ocean. In that case, it will be caught in the grating that filters the drinking water, and hopefully be set aside for recycling. If the bottle cap makes it past all the cities and towns, it will make its way to the mouth of a river and be deposited into a gulf or a bay. Tides and wind will float it along where it can join the trillions of pieces of trash floating in the oceans, many of which make up "garbage patches", swirling masses of debris held together by the gyrations of ocean currents, and floating freely in the great waters.

Plastic doesn't decay. It eventually breaks down into tiny pellets becoming indistinguishable in clouds of plankton, thus becoming "food" for many fishes. Shore birds also mistake plastic for tidbits of food, and will even feed it to their chicks.

Ocean Conservancy, a nonprofit that organizes an annual coastal cleanup event in more than 150 countries worldwide, said plastic debris makes up around 85 percent of all the trash collected from beaches, waterways and oceans.



According to the World Economic Forum, if we keep producing and using plastics at the current rate, plastic in the ocean will outweigh fish pound for pound by 2050

You can help by recycling plastics, choosing not to use certain plastic products, and picking up plastic debris....especially in streams and rivers. Another great way to help is to become aware of the problem and spread the word. Pick up trash wherever you go... every bottle cap counts!

## Women in Agriculture to Hold Fifth Annual Event

OMG Agripride Women in Agriculture presents Raised Up Down Home on Thursday, September 6, at the White Mule Winery in Owensville, Mo. This annual event brings together the women of Missouri agriculture to share experiences and learn new things.

Registration begins at 3 p.m., and a dinner of beef brisket and pork loin will be served at 6 p.m.

This year, the workshop choices are Heritage Homesteads: Buildings or our Past and Cast Iron

Cooking.

Area vendors will be set-up to allow the ladies to sample local products.

The featured speaker is Cynthia Crawford—"Declutter Your Life." Cynthia will give advice on both physical and psychological clutter, and explain how you can have rich rewards once you conquer the cycle of a cluttered life.

T-shirts commemorating the event are available and orders are preferred with pre-

registration. They are \$15 and are 3/4 sleeve baseball tees.

Advanced registration is required, and seating is limited. Admission is \$10 for pre-paid attendees, and \$15 at the door. Payment can be sent to the Maries County SWCD-WIA at 105 Parkway, Vienna, Mo.; or you can call the office at 573-422-3342. Information can also be found by emailing Sandy Stratman: sandy.stratman@swcd.mo.gov

### The SWCD Board of Supervisors are:

Adam Bonderer

Paul Kamphoefner

Sam Harris

Jim Boorgman

Secretary, Vacant

### The SWCD Staff are:

Frankie Coleman, Manager

Charles Perkins, Technician

Theresa Strunk, Information/Education

### The NRCS staff are:

Renee Cook, District Conservationist

Shawn Keller, Soil Conservationist

The Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation District are equal opportunity providers and employers.