SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF PERRY COUNTY

1003 North Main
547-4077
Extension 3

Perryville, MO 63775
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OUR SOIL ★ OUR STRENGTH

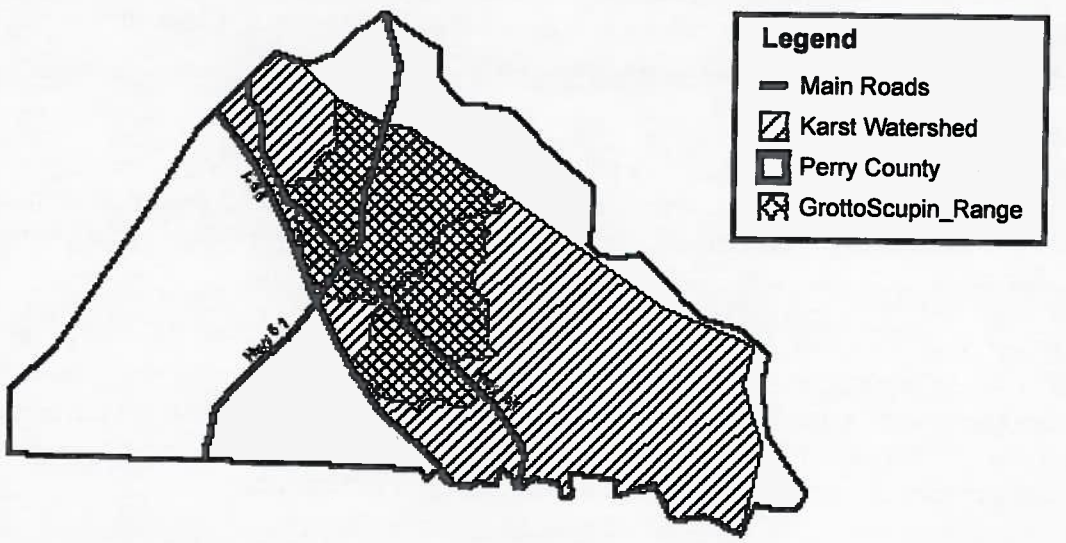
NEWSLETTER

Helping People Help the Land
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

For information on programs, sign-up deadlines and more, check out the Perry SWCD Website at http://www.swcd.mo.gov/perry/index.html and the Missouri NRCS Website at http://www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/

Funds Available for Best Management Practices

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has obtained a three year US Fish and Wildlife Grant to implement Best Management Practices in the Perry County Karst Watershed.



Approved practices include sinkhole cleanouts, sinkhole buffer areas, streambank tree establishment, and alternative livestock watering. Landowners will be required to maintain a practice for 10 years. Practices will be cost shared at a rate of 50-90%. Landowners can receive up to a maximum payment of $6,000/year. However, landowners may apply for cost-share in multiple years. In addition, practices converting or taking lands out of production will be awarded $500/acre. Cost-shared practice signups will be on a first come first serve basis. The signups for practices in year one will expire on June 1, 2014.

For more information, contact Jason Crites, MDC Fisheries Management Biologist at 573-290-5858 ext. 4435.

New Cost-Share Practices Available

The District is adding additional cost-share practices to assist producers in meeting operational needs on their farms. If you are interested in any of the below practices, feel free to stop by the office or give us a call. We are more than willing to sit down and answer any of your questions and explain how these practices could help meet some of your goals or help address some of your problem areas. These new practices will start with FY2015 (July 1, 2014) allotment.

N312 Animal Waste Management

This practice helps livestock producers construct a roofed manure storage area with a concrete floor and walls adjacent to hay or feed bunk area to store manure while still allowing livestock access to pastures. Studies have shown that cattle have fewer hoof problems and maintain and/or increase weight gain in winter months when fed in this type of building as opposed to standing in mud. An additional requirement for this practice is a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for the farm where the building is built. This CNMP will need to be developed a private Technical Service Provider (TSP). NRCS has EQIP funds to assist with the CNMP document costs. This cost-share practice is a 2 step process over 2 years. There is a $25,000 per landowner cap. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N554 Drainage Water Management

This practice helps crop producers with stream or river bottomland fields install a sub-surface drainage/irrigation system with water control structures to actively manage the water table to improve water quality. Studies have shown yield increases in fields with sub-surface irrigation during normal rainfall years and in some cases no loss in yields during drought years. The field must have a crop history for 3 of the last 5 years. Records must be kept to verify adherence to nutrient, pest, and water management plans for the duration of the maintenance life of the practice. The field must have a Certified Wetland Determination by NRCS before any designs or work can be done. The landowner must have the field GPS land leveled prior to the start of this practice. This cost-share practice is planned the year before installation. The $8,500 landowner cap does not apply to this practice. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N472 Woodland Livestock Exclusion

This practice helps livestock producers construct fencing to exclude livestock grazing from woodland areas. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N386 Field Border

This practice helps crop producers establish a vegetative buffer around the perimeter of fields. Field borders can be hayed or mowed. The maximum width for the incentive is 60 feet and the minimum is 30 feet. Field borders can be utilized for minimal equipment use when conditions allow. In addition, there is a one-time out of production incentive of $600 per acre. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N391 Riparian Forest Buffer

This practice helps crop and livestock producers establish a tree planting along streams to protect eroding stream banks with a maximum width of 180 feet. Cost-share assists with the development of watering source(s) for livestock, exclusion fence, and tree planting. In addition, there is a one-time out of production incentive of $1,200 per acre. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N393 Filter Strip

This practice helps crop and livestock producers establish permanent vegetative cover to areas situated below cropland, hay land, or grazing land. The filter strips can be hayed or mowed. The maximum width is 100 feet and the minimum is 50 feet. In addition, there is a one-time out of production incentive of $1,000 per acre. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 5 years.

N574 Spring Development

This practice helps livestock producers develop a clean and dependable watering source where livestock currently have free access to a spring or seep. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

N725 Sinkhole Treatment

This practice helps livestock producers exclude livestock from sinkholes while still providing shade. Cost share is available for the cost of the fence and there is a one-time out of production incentive of $300 per acre. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

Wq10 Stream Protection

This practice helps livestock producers exclude livestock from areas immediately adjacent to permanent, losing, or intermittent streams that have a defined stream. The excluded area on each side of the qualifying stream must be a minimum of 25 feet up to a maximum of 150 foot wide from the high bank. Mowing within the buffer area is prohibited except for fence maintenance and should be limited to a single swath along the fence. Cost-share assists with the development of watering source(s) for livestock, exclusion fence, and stream crossing(s). There is a one-time out of production incentive of $500 per acre. Maintenance lifespan for this practice is 10 years.

Are You a Good Steward of the Land? If So, CSP is for You!

Authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, CSP is a voluntary program that offers payments (**$$$ per acre**) to producers who exercise good land stewardship and want to improve their conservation performance on their **crop, pasture and/or forest land**. With CSP, producers get credit (**$$$ per acre**) for conservation measures they have already implemented and for new measures they agree to add.

Applicants must be listed as **"operator"** on FSA records. CSP involves a five-year contract (i.e. five years of payments). Your only way to see what payment may be available to you is to apply.

If you are interested in learning more about CSP, please call the NRCS office (547-4077 Ext 3). **Applications for 2014 funding are due January 17, 2013. Please do not wait until the last minute to inquire or apply!**

Don't Till It – Cover It

Written and produced by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service

Expert: Cover crops key in preventing yield losses when converting to no-till

Most farmers with experience in improving soil health have converted from conventional tillage to no-till farming, then over time, added cover crops into their farm operations.

But many farmers have experienced yield drops, at least in corn, in the transition years to no-till. However, that doesn't have to be the case, and there's no need to master no-till before you use cover crops with no-till, says Jim Hoorman, an assistant professor and Extension educator for Ohio State University.

"No-till corn yields typically lag conventionally tilled fields by as much as 10 to 15 percent for five to seven years until the microbial populations recover in the soil," Hoorman says. "That's because in the transition years, as microbes increase in numbers and build organic matter and humus, the corn crop has competition for nitrogen—microbes take up nitrogen faster than plants, so if nitrogen is limiting, the crop will suffer."

But farmers can shorten – or eliminate – a yield drop in the short term while you're on your way to increasing yields long term by using cover crops from the start with no-till, he says.

"The literature says there are 1,000 to 2,000 times more microbes associated with living roots than in soil without live roots," Hoorman says. "If you want to build soil, you need to leave it undisturbed and keep it covered with living plants as much of the time as practical."

For more information on how to "Unlock the Secrets in Your Soil," call or visit your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

Protecting Perry County Water

Frank Wideman, MU Extension Engineer

You may have heard that the grotto sculpin has been listed as a threatened or endangered species. However, due to the information presented in the draft community plan, Fish and Wildlife Service (F&WS) did not attach a critical habitat designation, which is almost unheard of. The community plan also helped the F&WS decide that the best measure of improvement was water quality, not fish numbers. The community plan is in the process of being finalized. What is your role in the community plan? Implement best management practices (BMPs) on your farm to improve water quality in the county. This will not only improve the grotto sculpin habitat, but surface water and your drinking water as well.

I have been a long time promoter of the role of the Perry County SWCD as an advocate of water quality. The programs that have been sponsored by the soil and water conservation district have primarily been sold as soil conservation tools. And in truth, they have done that. But if we save the soil is that the ultimate benefit of those programs? It may be the easiest to see. Gullies in the fields and sediment in road ditches are hard to ignore. That mud in the road ditches has been a little harder to see in our karst (sinkhole) part of the county. Sometimes it is even ignored. The sediment disappears down the sinkhole, and there is a disconnect with the resulting muddy spring that is downhill from the sinkhole, perhaps miles away. The grotto sculpin has put our focus on what is happening in our fields, sinkholes and caves. The soils in the karst area are very erodible and must be protected. In most cases it will take combinations of practices to do the job.

When soil erodes from our fields, we lose more than just the soil. We lose fertility that we have available in the field. Along with the fertilizer losses, we lose other important materials, like ag chemicals and organic matter.

The soil sediments are the number one pollutant of our surface water. Since our surface water in the karst areas must go through the cave system to get into the streams, that sediment must go into the caves, too. Any farming or grazing practices that produce mud slicks from our fields across any buffer or filter area into steams or sinkholes will not give us the results we need. We must use those best management practices (BMPs) that keep that soil on our fields. As you can read about in the other articles in this newsletter, there are funds to help get these practices on the ground.

We have used no-till farming in Perry County to have a big impact on reducing soil movement. It often takes more. Research and use of cover crops in other areas of the state have shown they help keep the soil in place. Cover crops have also relieved compaction and conserved nutrients. They will also increase yields of the crops that follow, to more than offset their costs. Buffers and filters will be our last line of prevention. We must all work on all of our farming practices to have the best impact on water quality.

Thinking About Purchasing a Different Tillage Tool? Remember This!

When determining compliance on highly erodible (hill) crop fields required for FSA payments, it doesn't matter what type of tillage tool you use. What really matters is the amount of residue left on the surface after completing the tillage pass, especially if you are doing any type of fall tillage. Crop residues protect the soil from erosion, especially after heavy rain/snow events. Residues also improve soil organic matter. The worst time to complete tillage is in the fall after a full season soybean crop due to the low amount of residue left after soybeans are harvested. The best residue producing crops are wheat and corn. Before you head out to the field to do routine tillage, ask yourself this: "Will there be residue left on the surface to protect the soil?"

Start Small Challenge

If you are currently using tillage, designate a small field to try continuous no-till. Also a challenge to continuous no-till producers, designate a small field to experiment with cover crops. EQIP has incentives for both no-till and cover crops. Build up your soil for a productive future!

Attention Landowners: Demand the Best for the Future of Your Farm

If you have looked at a farm magazine lately, you probably saw articles about cover crops. While cover crops are great, the bigger picture is soil health. The soil on your farm is a resource that needs to be preserved for the future productivity of your farm. Eliminating, or at the very least, reducing tillage helps to protect the precious soil that keeps your land producing at high levels. While everyone wants the best yields possible, this change may cause some drop in yield to occur. However, if soils continue to deteriorate from continuous tillage, future yields will definitely be reduced. Producers want to farm your land. Make sure the producer you have selected has your same "preserving mentality" and is maintaining your farm in a way that leaves it productive for future generations.

2014 ANNUAL MEETING DECISION

A hard decision has been made regarding the Perry County Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meeting. Increased costs associated with annual meeting costs and decreased state funding required the Soil and Water District Board to take a closer look at the practicality of having an annual meeting every year. The original purpose of the annual meetings was to promote the district and after 40+ years of annual meetings, the board feels that goal has been achieved. Therefore, they have decided not to have an annual meeting this year but plan on having one every other year in conjunction with the Perry Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor's election. Discussion was held about future possibility of having field days or tours. Continue to watch our newsletter for future soil and water conservation events.

NEW DRILL

The District ordered a new Great Plains No Till Drill. Hopefully it will be available for the Spring 2014 planting season. Schedule early — we will only have one 10ft. drill available!

TAILGATE MULCHER

Trailer mounted, ideal for yards, conservation practices and road cuts.

$75.00 - ½ Day • $100.00 - 1 Day

To schedule call Karen at
Perry County Soil & Water Conservation District
547-4077

$$ - EQIP - $$

Find out what financial opportunities are available for you!

The sign-up deadline for Environmental Quality Incentive Program will be announced soon. The EQIP program has brought financial assistance to many landowners and producers in Perry County.

EQIP funds are available for a wide range of conservation practices including: Cover Crops, No-Till, Fencing out woods/creeks, Watering Facility Development and Cross-fencing associated with Grazing Systems, Erosion Control Practices, Forest Stand Improvement, Wildlife Enhancements and Nutrient Management, to name only a few.

Don't miss out on the technical and financial opportunities that EQIP can provide to help you achieve your conservation goals! Watch the local newspapers for EQIP sign-up deadline announcement. Contact the local NRCS office at 1003 N Main in Perryville, MO (Phone: 573-547-4077, ext 3.) to apply or for more information.

PERRY COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
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