

Ties to the Land Newsletter

July –September 2011



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**Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee
FSA Office**
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262-878-3353

GOODBYE FROM EVELYN



On May 3rd I retired from Farm Service Agency. In 1978 my neighbor knew Elmer Strassburg, the County Executive Director of Kenosha County at the time. She told me he was looking for a temporary person for that summer. I was hired and was a temp for 8 years. The office was combined with Racine County in 1986 and I was put on as a permanent employee. Now in 2011, I turned 66 years old and decided to retire from this job and stay at home for awhile. I have many fond memories of both co workers and you the farmers of these 3 counties. I have enjoyed the last 32 years. I intend now to pay more attention to my home and family. I have 4 children, 2 grandchildren and a husband that I like to spend more time with. My 2 daughters live away in Albuquerque, NM and Minneapolis, MN so I don't see them as much as I would like. I hope to volunteer at the office as needed so may see you there again. Thanks so much for your patience and good humor. It's been a joy.

NO MORE NEWSLETTERS... FOR NOW

Unfortunately, the budget woes have affected us here in Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee County. We will be unable to mail the Ties to the Land newsletter each quarter for the time being. We will continue to publish the newsletter quarterly, but it will only be available

by email or by visiting the Kenosha County at <http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/plandev/conservation/newsletter.html> or by visiting the Racine County website at <http://www.racineco.com/landconv/Newsletter.aspx>

At this time, our goal is to continue to mail one paper copy of a newsletter each fall, which will include tree order forms for Racine and Kenosha County. If you would like to receive the newsletter by email, please call the FSA office at 262-878-3353 and ask to be added to the newsletter mailing list.

WANT AN E-NEWSLETTER?

Producers utilizing e-mail now have the opportunity to receive the Wisconsin Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Newsletter electronically. Beginning March 1, 2011, producers wishing to receive an electronic copy of the newsletter may do so by subscribing to the Wisconsin FSA e-mail news. To subscribe to the electronic delivery service, visit the Wisconsin FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/wi. Click on "Subscribe to Wisconsin FSA E-mail News" on the right side of the Wisconsin FSA homepage in the "I Want To...." box. Individuals will be prompted to enter an email address, then after clicking the "Submit" button; choose which e-mail notifications to receive, including the Wisconsin Newsletter.

For questions or information about signing up for FSA newsletter e-mail alerts, producers can contact the FSA office at 262-878-3353.

COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) ELECTION

The election of agricultural producers to the FSA County Committee (COC) is important to all farmers. It is crucial that eligible producers participate in the elections because the COC is the link between the agricultural community and USDA. COCs help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on COCs help with decisions necessary to administer programs in the county.

The Townships in Local Administrative Area 4 (LAA4), which are up for election are: Paris, Somers, Bristol, and Pleasant Prairie. Producers

who participate or cooperate in FSA programs and reside in LAA4 may be nominated for the COC from June 15 through August 1, 2011. Eligible individuals may nominate themselves or others as a candidate. Request a nomination form from your FSA office. Ballots will be mailed to eligible voters on November 4, 2011 and must be returned by December 5, 2011. Newly elected COC members take office January 1, 2012.

ATTENTION YOUTH OF RACINE, KENOSHA AND MILWAUKEE COUNTIES!

Money management and responsibility are two very important lessons for you to learn before beginning life on your own.



The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Entrepreneurship Loans are available to young men and women ages 10-21 that are participating in 4-H, FFA or similar organizations. Loan funds may be used to finance a modest, income producing, agriculture-related project. These loans provide an opportunity for rural youth to acquire experience and education in agriculture-related skills.

The project must be part of an organized and supervised program and must produce sufficient income to repay the loan. Youth may borrow up to \$5,000 to pay for livestock, equipment and supplies. Through the management of your project, you can learn the value of working hard and the reward of realizing how they can profit from that work.

Please contact your local FSA office for more information about Entrepreneurship Loans.

Program (DCP). With spring planting several months away, signing-up now will ease the potentially long wait times and scheduling conflicts that arise as the June 1 deadline approaches.



DATES TO REMEMBER

- * **Aug. 1** - Last day to request a 2011 Farm Reconstitution
- * **Aug. 1** - Last day to submit a nomination for COC election
- * **Aug. 1** - CRP Primary Nesting Season ends
- * **Sept. 1** - 2010 ACRE production deadline (extended from 7/15)
- * **Sept. 1** - NAP 2012 deadline for value loss crops (Sod, Christmas trees, aquaculture)
- * **Oct. 31** - 2011 LIP and ELAP application deadline
- * **Continuous** - CRP Continuous Sign Up, Farm Storage Facility Loans

FARM CONSERVATION MAINTENANCE

Participants in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are reminded of their maintenance responsibilities.

Participants should control noxious weeds, volunteer trees, and rodents. Annual mowing of CRP is prohibited. CRP acreage should not be used to store farm machinery, bales, cars, permanent hunting stands, etc.

Producers should refrain from maintenance activities during the Primary Nesting Season. The Primary Nesting Season is May 15, 2011 to August 1, 2011. If special treatment is needed for small areas during the Primary Nesting season, requests should be written to the FSA County Committee for approval. After approval the participant may do maintenance activity.

2011 LIVESTOCK INDEMNITY PROGRAM

Producers that suffer immediate livestock deaths due to adverse weather conditions (such as floods, lightening, extreme hot/cold) may be eligible for the 2011 Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). Livestock deaths must have occurred between January 1, 2011 and September 30, 2011.

Producers must provide a Notification of Loss within 30 days of the date of animal death. LIP

will only compensate on deaths in excess of normal mortality. Producers will be required to provide verifiable documentation of all animal deaths including those died of normal mortality. Pneumonia is not an eligible payment loss. The deadline to apply for LIP is October 31, 2011.

5th Annual Southeastern Wisconsin Rural Landowner Workshop

**Saturday, November 5th, 2011
8:00 am to 3:05 pm**

Kenosha County Center
Hwy 45 & Hwy 50

A day-long program designed for rural landowners, existing small farmers and/or individuals who are thinking about getting involved in a farm enterprise.

KEYNOTE: Turning Green into Green \$, Tim Baye, University of Wisconsin Extension

Entrepreneurship

Session 1- Growing Grapes and Starting a Vineyard
Session 2: Growing Hops
Session 3: Brewing Beer and Wine
Session 4: The Good, Bad, and Ugly of Running a Winery Business

Small Farm Tract

Session 1: Raising Chickens, the Basics
Session 2: Raising Ducks and Geese, the Basics
Session 3: Raising Beef, the Basics
Session 4: Raising Pigs, the Basics

Conservation Tract

Session 1: Invasive Species Identification Including Plants and Insects
Session 2: Prairie Restoration
Session 3: Vermiculture: Composting with Worms
Session 4: I Own Rural Land, Now What?

For more information about the workshop contact:

Rose Skora, 262-857-1945, rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu



PHRAGMITES ??



Phragmites (aka Common Reed Grass) is a tall, warm-season perennial grass with featherlike plumes at the top of its stems. It can reach heights of 8-12 feet. In Kenosha, *Phragmites* is most commonly found in disturbed areas with altered hydrology or sedimentation such as roadside ditches, wetlands downhill from active farm fields, and farmed wetlands that have been left fallow. *Phragmites* spreads rapidly on exposed, moist soils, but does not appear to spread readily on sites that have dense, established vegetation.

The name *Phragmites* is derived from the Greek term *phragma*, meaning fence, hedge, or screen. Invasive *Phragmites* is a subspecies known as *Phragmites australis* subsp. *australis*, and is closely related to the native subspecies *americanus*. Even wetland professionals have difficulty using a morphologic key to distinguish native and non-native *Phragmites* and, due to the potential for hybridization, some question whether visual form and structural characteristics can accurately differentiate the two subspecies.



Exotic *Phragmites* stems are tough and dull with ridges (top). Native *Phragmites* stems are smooth and shiny and have dark spots (bottom).

Invasive *Phragmites* is an aggressive plant that easily out-competes native species for water and nutrients. Invasive *Phragmites* thrives in disturbed habitats, and is often among the first species to colonize a new area, commonly growing into large monoculture stands in a short amount of time. Invasive *Phragmites* also secretes toxins from its roots into the soil which impede the growth of and even kill off neighboring plant species. While invasive *Phragmites* prefers areas of standing water, the roots can grow to extreme lengths, allowing the plant to survive in areas with lower water levels by reaching groundwater that is deep below-ground.

Management options for the control of invasive *Phragmites* include mowing, mechanical excavation, flooding, herbicide application, and prescribed burning. None of these methods are fully effective when used alone and when used improperly may actually worsen the problem. The most effective management plan for most situations includes a combination of herbicide

application, cutting/rolling, and prescribed burning, following very strict timelines. The success of the control options used depends on a number of factors and complete eradication of invasive *Phragmites*, particularly in well-established stands, is rarely achieved after one treatment. Depending upon the site, annual visits and touch up control work will likely be required for a few years after initial treatment takes place. After treatment, the residual seedbank of native plants is usually able to repopulate the area, and regeneration of native plants should be seen in the subsequent growing seasons. Some sites may require seeding or planting of desired vegetation post-treatment, particularly if plant diversity before the establishment of *Phragmites* was depressed due to the presence of other invasive plants or other factors.



If herbicide application and/or prescribed burning strategies are used it is very important that all necessary permits are obtained and regulations followed. NOTE: The chemical control of aquatic plants requires a permit from WDNR. When controlling or removing invasive *Phragmites*, care should always be taken to minimize disturbance, and cause as little damage as possible to native vegetation and wildlife.

The Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium (SEWISC) will be conducting a roadside invasive species survey this summer in Kenosha County to collect baseline information on the location and stand size of three invasives Common & Cut-leaved Teasel (*Dipsacus* spp.), Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), Common Reed Grass (*Phragmites australis*) All three of these species are spreading rapidly throughout Southeastern Wisconsin. This information will guide future eradication efforts.

PHRAGMITES, ONLINE RESOURCES

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/greatlakes/Phragmites2007.pdf>
<http://www.wisconsinwetlands.org/WWA%20Phragmites%20Report.pdf>
<http://www.invasiveplants.net/phragmites/>
<http://www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/>
<http://mipn.org/Phragmites%20BMPs.pdf>
http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-og1-Guide-Phragmites_204659_7.pdf

NRCS Staffing Update

Hello Landowners and Producers in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties. In the last news letter I Introduced myself as the Acting District Conservationist (DC) in our Union Grove Field Office. Since then I have applied for and been offered a voluntary reassignment to the permanent position as DC.

So, one more time, my name is Brandi Richter. I've been with NRCS since 2001 and the DC in Waukesha County since 2007. I live with my husband, Eric, and two sons, Cullen (12) and Dane (3), in Burlington. I am very excited for the change and look forward to working with you.

On the same topic of staffing changes, Veronica Alba, Soil Conservationist (SC), in Union Grove and Waukesha will be moving on to the Sparta, WI office. Veronica has been with NRCS since her internship began in 2008 in La Crosse County. I'd like to wish her well as she continues to advance her career in the hills of Southwest WI. Veronica's position here will be filled by Meagan Duberstein who is currently the SC in Waupaca, WI.

Fiscal Year 2011 NRCS Program Update

NRCS accepts program applications on a continuous basis with one ranking and contracting period per fiscal year (Oct. 1 –

Sept. 30). Our programs are all competitive programs to ensure that NRCS is using program money to fund the most environmentally beneficial projects. Therefore all applications are ranked and then accepted for contracting with the highest scores being funded first. Typically ranking and contracting are done through the winter months so that projects are ready to be implemented in the spring.

For fiscal year 2011 we received a total of 25 applications for 3 different programs. These applications resulted in 13 new contracts. The Conservation Stewardship Program, or CSP, is our newest program. There were 3 applications resulting in 2 new contracts totaling \$32,000.00. For the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS received a total of 20 applications. Eleven of these applications became contracts for a total of \$147,000.00 obligated. Finally, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, or WHIP, had 2 applications. This program is a wildlife specific program that receives limited funding. Because of this our National Office mandates ranking priorities for specific species. This makes it difficult for applications from this part of the state to rank high enough to compete well against the other applications. For these reasons there were no WHIP applications accepted for contracting.



In the next newsletter watch for information on our Fiscal Year 2012 program signups.



Racine County Land Conservation
14200 Washington Ave.
Sturtevant, WI 53177
262-886-8479

<http://www.racineco.com/landconv/>

Staff Contributions by:
Chad Sampson, Jon Grove, & Krystal Freimark

Tree Sale Re-cap

This April, we wrapped up the 2010-2011 tree sale with over 27,000 trees and shrubs sold. Sales were down a bit from previous years, but it was still a successful program as conservation demands were met. The 2011-12 tree and shrub order form will be available in the fall via mailings or our website (see above). Please contact this office if you would like to be included on the mailing list. Please note if you purchased items from the 2010-11 sale you will be sent this year's order form. Thank you for your support and promoting conservation in Racine County.

Maintain the Drain

Subsurface drainage systems improve timeliness of field operations, enhance growing conditions of crop production, increase crop yields on poorly drained soils and reduce yield variability, but only if drain tiles are maintained, properly installed, and are unobstructed.

Tips for Maintaining the Drain:

- Clear obstructions from tile drain outlets.
- Install and inspect rodent guards (if applicable)
- Monitor drains at times of peak outflow.
- Properly install and maintain tile outlets above drainage ditches.
- Ensure proper functioning of air vents. Repair animal burrows, blowouts, and/or sink holes immediately.
 - Call this office for blowouts, sink holes, and gullies; we may be able to provide technical assistance regarding the repair.

Grassed Waterways & CREP

Have spring rains and winter melt left your fields with areas of gully erosion? How do you plan to remedy the problem?

- 1) Do you bring in fill material and fill the gully?
- 2) Do you attempt to reshape it by plowing through it?
- 3) Do nothing and hope that it repairs itself?
- 4) Do you call the Racine County Land Conservation Office to work with the gully and reshape it into a grassed waterway that will create a more permanent solution to a problem?

(The correct answer is D.)

We will discuss what programs are available, funding options, and practical solutions to the problem of gully erosion. To aid in the ease of installation, we recommend planting winter wheat on the field where the grassed waterway is being proposed for installation.

If you are actively working lands along a river or stream you may also be eligible for CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program). CREP pays landowners to install filter strips and riparian buffers in shoreland areas while leaving the remainder of adjacent lands in production. Financial incentives include cost sharing of conservation practice installation, up front incentive payments, and annual soil rental payments for all 15-year or perpetual contracts.

Back to the Fair

With the return of summer comes the return of the Racine County Fair. From July 27-31, Racine County Land Conservation staff will be on site at the fair to answer general conservation questions, discuss programs and project installation procedures. Conservation photos will be available for viewing.

The 2010-2011 winning Environmental Poster will also be on display. Thank you to all participants and congratulations to this year's winner.

Don't forget to sign up for the 2011-12 tree program mailing list at our booth. See you at the fair!

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Article Submitted by: Rose Skora
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Kenosha County Household Hazardous Waste

Collection: The last collection for 2011 will be held on Saturday, September 11 at the Pleasant Prairie Municipal Center, at 8600 Green Bay Road in Pleasant Prairie from 8am to 1pm.

This free collection give residents the opportunity to dispose of various hazardous wastes including aerosol cans, cleaners, batteries, gasoline, oil (oil is not accepted through the city program as other alternatives are available for city residents), household chemicals, poisons, fluorescent light bulbs, pesticides and fertilizers, moth balls and oil and lead based paints. Unacceptable items include infectious or biological waste, commercial waste, explosives or radioactive waste, Freon, tires, appliances and latex paint.



Latex paint is not accepted at the collections because it is not considered a hazardous material. Alternatives for disposal of latex paint including drying the paint and disposing of it through a general garbage collection (a recommendation for drying latex paint includes putting sand or kitty litter in a box and spreading the paint over the top and allow it to dry). Another suggestion would be to donate the paint to a local charity that may need it.

The Kenosha County Hazardous Waste Collection is sponsored by Pheasant Run Recycling and Disposal Facility and Kenosha County.

State Law Requires Owners of Livestock to

Register: The Wisconsin Premises Registration Act is a state law that took effect on November 1st, 2005. This law requires registration by anyone who owns and houses livestock in Wisconsin. This law is in place so that the state of Wisconsin can track and identify livestock within the state of Wisconsin.

Because of the goal of being able to track animal diseases quickly and efficiently, the state law does require that all individuals who own and house livestock register with the state of Wisconsin. This includes both full-time farmers, hobby farmers who have a few animals, 4-H or FFA members who house animals, as well as events where animals might come together, such as fairs, sales, shows etc. Animals included in the definition of "livestock" under WLIC rules include aquaculture (fish farming), bovine (bison and cows), camelids (llamas and alpacas), cervidea (deer, elk, moose, caribou, reindeer), equine (horses, donkeys, mules), goats, pheasants, poultry (chickens, turkeys, geese, ducks, guinea fowl), quail, ratites (rheas, ostriches, emu), sheep and swine.

Individuals have several registration options. You can register online through the Premise Registration System at <http://www.wiid.org/>. Additionally, you can contact WLIC at 1-888-808-1910 and request the Premises Registration form. Forms can also be downloaded from the website. Any individual who has questions about the new law is encouraged to call the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium directly.

