

PARTNERING WITH LANDOWNERS FOR HEALTHY RIVERS, WILDLIFE, AND COMMUNITIES



AGRICULTURAL LAND IN ILLINOIS

Flowing along Illinois' borders and through its interior are more than 87,000 miles of rivers and streams. Many, if not most, of these waterways exist within or adjacent to agricultural land. This is not surprising, as agricultural land covers approximately 76 percent of Illinois' surface area, with slightly more than 60 percent of this land planted in soybeans and corn.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Farmers and landowners have tremendous opportunities to create wildlife habitat and contribute to the well being of all Americans.
- Once wet prairie, bottomland floodplains, and hilltop prairie or savannah, nearly 76 percent of Illinois' total land area is now managed by farmers and ranchers. These lands are the breeding grounds for migratory birds from all over the world.
- The majority of remaining habitat for threatened and endangered species in the U.S. exists on private land.
- Retaining topsoil, stabilizing streambanks, and creating buffers and wetlands on and adjacent to agricultural land can mean economic and ecological gain for land owners. Environmentally degraded lands cannot support the production of healthy crops or livestock. Nor can they continue to support wildlife and water resources that exist on or adjacent to farmlands.

COLLABORATING CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

By working with the local farming community, you can do your part to help reduce soil erosion, improve property values, and increase and improve wildlife habitat. By combining efforts and sharing resources, watershed groups can meet the goals set in their watershed plans, reduce pollutants, and address the needs of landowners.

There are numerous cost-share programs available for Illinois landowners that reduce the loss of valuable top soil, protect streams, and provide cover and food for wildlife.

Under the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Farm Service Agency offer voluntary cost-share and loan programs designed to help residents conserve and protect soil and water quality and to restore and improve wetlands, grasslands, and wildlife habitat on agricultural lands.

For possible partners in your area visit: www.aiswcd.org or www.dnr.state.il.us/OREP/pfc

For more information, visit:

www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or www.fsa.usda.gov/

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp/

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP): www.dnr.state.il.us/orc/conservation_programs/crep/

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP): www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp/

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/