

Winter 2006

Soil and Water News



Progress with the Finley River 319 Grant

Since April 2006, when it was officially awarded by the Department of Natural Resources to the Christian County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), the Finley River 319 project has been progressively working toward its goals of improving the water quality in the Finley River Watershed.

The four year project is designed to assist 3 to 40 acre landowners in addressing issues such as excessive sedimentation, nutrient loading, and inadequate buffering of streams within the watershed. It has an initial focus of producing a comprehensive watershed management plan (WMP) and then proceeds to an implementation phase where landowner participation will be encouraged.

Progress toward completion of the WMP has begun with a 23 member committee being formed,

and two meetings having already been conducted. Once the WMP is completed in the spring of '07, progress will continue with notifying landowners, ranking, and choosing those who will qualify to address resource concerns regarding



water quality improvement through technical assistance, cost-share and incentive funding. At least 25 demonstration sites for resource management plans will be selected and incentive funding will be provided to address targeted concerns. Cost share is built in for stream bank stabilization, well decommissioning, use exclusion, sinkhole protection, and riparian corridor establishment for landowners within the water-

shed as well.

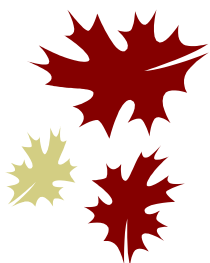
In conjunction with the planning and implementation phases, education will be pursued earnestly to improve landowner understanding of useful techniques that will improve overall water quality in the watershed. Goals including education through workshops, field days, web site development, news releases, newsletters, informational mailings, and attendance at public events will be highlighted throughout the length of the project.

The project has already had local newspaper coverage, a newsletter publication, an informational mailing to over 300 people, and a workshop for equine owners, as well as booth attendance at the Christian County Fair and Farm Fest in Springfield, MO.

For more information, contact Justin Jenkins at 417-581-2719 ext 107.

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- ★ Envirothon Winners ★
- ★  ★
- ★ First Place: ★
- ★ Pleasant Hope #15 ★
- ★ Second Place: ★
- ★ Kickapoo #1 ★
- ★ Third Place: ★
- ★ Extreme 4-H Club # 12 ★
- ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Pleasant Hope Wins 8th Annual Southwest Regional Envirothon

One-hundred and ten high school students representing nine schools and one 4-H club from across southwest Missouri converged on to Doling Park in Springfield Wednesday, November 1st for the 8th Annual Southwest Regional Envirothon Competition.

Each year teams comprised of five students grades 9-12 compete in the areas of aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and on a current issue topic.

The top three placing teams are eligible to go on to state. Pleasant Hope High School took home the top honors placing first with the highest overall score, with Kickapoo High School taking second, and the Extreme 4-H Club taking third.

The southwest regional competition is the largest regional competition in the state and has grown to become larger that the state competition it-

self. There were twenty-two teams competing this year for top honors and a chance to go to the state competition this spring in Mexico, MO.

The regional competition is sponsored by area businesses, the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), area Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), and the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), and volunteers from these organizations and from throughout the region provide the man power that makes this event possible.

If you or anyone you know are interested in taking part in the Southwest Regional Envirothon, please contact Kat Allen Info-Ed Specialist with the Christian Co SWCD at 417-581-2719 ext. 3

Participating Christian County Schools

Sparta High School—Advisor: Becky Mitchem

Team # 13: Joseph Morgan, William Griffin, Erin Goodermuth, Jacob Hein

Team # 14: Anthony Manuel, Taylor Griggs, Leanna Lawson, Mindy Kinyon

Team # 17: Reed Smith, Joell Garcia, Colton Bezemer, Patrick Long

Spokane High School—Advisor: Jessica Schober

Team #9: Josh Meese, Nathan Maples, Kellsey Howerton, Patrick Gideon, Shelby Gray

Team # 10: Caroline Hoffmeyer, Dannielle Roberts, Shawn Bilyeu, Taylor Ellis, Amanda Shoopman



Christian Co SWCD'S Info—Ed Project up and Running Sparta High School Students take a Trip to Talking Rocks Cavern

Thanks to the Christian County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and its' newly emplaced Information-Education Grant thirty-five Sparta high school students and their teacher took a fieldtrip Wednesday November, 15 to Talking Rocks Cavern in Branson to get some hands on learning experience with caves.

This was the first of two annual fieldtrip opportunities to be available to Christian Co high schools put on through the SWCD's Info-Ed Grant. The Information-Education Project directed by the

districts new Information-Education Specialist Kathryn (Kat) Allen was designed to provide teachers, primarily high school students, and landowners with educational opportunities that will help to create responsible future

"This was the first of two annual fieldtrip opportunities to be available to Christian Co high schools put on through the SWCD's Info-Ed Grant."

landowners and land users who have respect for our natural resources.

The bottom line for these activities within this project is to get students outdoors in order to better teach them about natural resources by going beyond the classroom and providing on-site environmental education opportunities.

The SWCD's goal is to ignite an interest in more than just conservation but also action through participation in contests such as Envirothon, Grassland Evaluation, and a new and up coming photo contest that will take place this spring. Details on the photo contest will be released in the next issue of this newsletter so feel free to get out and start capturing the beauty of our Ozarks.



Sparta High School students at Talking Rocks Caverns

Elections for Board of Supervisors to be held in Spring 2007

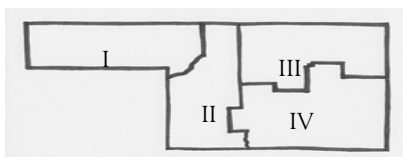
Elections for the Board of Supervisors for the Christian County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) are going to be held this spring for territories I and III. The seats are currently held by Joe Peebles-territory I and Gary Braden-territory III.

The Christian County SWCD is funded by one half of the 1/10% Parks and Soils Sales Tax. The District board con-

sists of five supervisors. One supervisor is an ex-officio member and must be the county agricultural extension agent. The other four are elected for 4 year terms and each represent one of the four territories within the county. District representatives

receive no monetary compensation for their services and must be a legal land representative and cooperator in Christian County.

If you or anyone you know are within the nominating territories and are interested in running for a seat on the board please contact us at 417-581-2719 ext. 3 and we will notify the nominating committee of your interest.



The SWCD is divided into four territories.



New Face In the Office



Kathryn (Kat) Allen began her duties as the new Information-Education Specialist for the Christian County Soil and Water Conservation District in September.

Kat is a Missouri native born and raised in Sedalia and received her undergraduates degree in Wildlife Conservation and Management from Missouri State University in Springfield.

Kat and her fiancé, Aaron, live in Springfield. She looks forward to meeting and serving all the residents of Christian County.

Current SWCD Board of Supervisor Members

Territory I—Joe Peebles

Territory II—Lynn Goodall

Territory III—Gary Braden

Territory IV—Joe Rozell

University of MO Extension
Gordon Carrier



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Disking for Wildlife

By Larry Martien, MDC Private Lands Conservationist

Disking is a land management practice that can improve habitat for wildlife. Almost all farms have odd or idle areas that are not being used for production. These are good areas to improve habitat for wildlife.

The removal of strips of sod-forming grasses such as bluegrass and fescue will promote seed producing plants that are important for quail and other wildlife. This technique can be applied to old fields where vegetation has grown up and provides less plant diversity.

If fescue is the major grass component it should be treated with an

herbicide to kill the fescue before disking occurs. Lightly disking these areas can increase plant diversity, reduce plant litter or duff and stimulate the growth of desirable plants that produce wildlife food and cover. The new shorter vegetation also attracts insects that are important for quail chicks.

Disking strips in alternate years will also add plant diversity to the area. Strips should be at least 25-foot wide, as long as possible and follow the contour of the field to prevent soil erosion. You should

only disk 2 - 4 inches deep and leave about 50% of the residue on the ground surface. The best time of the year to disk for wildlife is between October 1 and March 30.

Studies have shown that disking in winter (December) produces heavy-seeded quail foods such as ragweed and partridge pea while the peak production of important grass seed results from disking later in the spring (April). June disking will produce a number of plants that attract insects plus seed producing plants.

These strips will need to be re-disked every few years to keep the important food plants from being crowded out by less-desirable plants. If you have odd areas or old fields, disking can be a beneficial tool to improve your wildlife habitat.

