

CONSERVATION IN ACTION

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 4

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Have Something to Share?

Shawnee RC&D wants to help you promote your environmental or conservation related event or project! If you have an article or event that you would like us to include in an upcoming issue of our newsletter, or would like us to feature on our website, please send it to info@shawneercd.org along with contact information. Content should be limited to the RC&D Area which includes the lower 16 counties of Illinois. Please include author and photographic credits as necessary.

Upcoming Regional Events

November

1—[Illinois Stop the Spread! Tree](#)
Planting (Attucks Park,
Carbondale)

1—[Green Earth Annual Potluck](#)
(Unitarian Fellowship,
Carbondale)

2—[Haunted Hallow](#) (Touch of
Nature Environmental Center)

7-9—[4th Annual AEE Student](#)
[Summit](#)

13—[Environmental Justice](#),
(Shawnee Sierra Club)

15—[Green Earth Work Day](#)
(Location TBA)

December

11—[Acoustic Ecology](#)
(Shawnee Sierra Club)

January

8—[Union County History](#)
(Shawnee Sierra Club)

13—Shawnee RCD Council
Meeting (USDA, Marion)

February

12—[Woodland Restoration](#)
(Shawnee Sierra Club)

21-22 Maple Festival (Touch
of Nature Environmental
Center)

NEW PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT!

CWMA AND SIPBA PARTNERSHIP

By Karla Gage, CWMA Coordinator

Shawnee Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc. (RC&D) has been awarded a grant from the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry program to implement restoration of Oak-Hickory forests on private lands in Southern Illinois through prescribed fire and invasive species control. Through the RC&D, the Southeastern Illinois Prescribed Burn Association (SIPBA) and the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) will expand the SIPBA boundaries to the southwestern counties, effectively doubling the size of the association, while incorporating the CWMA's expertise and workforce in invasive species control, thereby offering the private landowner a more comprehensive forest management effort. Additional partners are Illinois Department of Natural Resources and the University of Illinois Extension.

This collaboration will address the declining numbers of Oak trees in privately owned forests, the overall decline of forest health, and will support forestry professionals in Southern Illinois. Invasive species control and prescribed burning will increase the effectiveness of additional activities needed to restore and maintain healthy forests.

Assistance in prescribed burning and invasive plant control will be focused on individual land owners, neighborhood associations, and volunteers, and will create a Forest Restoration Support Team (FRST) to educate and train landowners in management on their own land with the help of volunteers to establish long-term results. If you would like to volunteer to restore Oak-Hickory forests or would like to learn more about the program, please contact SIPBA (Jesse Riechman, jesseriechman@gmail.com, 618-967-4213) or River to River CWMA (Karla Gage, rtrcwma@gmail.com, 618-303-6603).

Want to Get Involved?

Shawnee RC&D is looking for dedicated professionals and enthusiastic community members to join our Council. Meetings are held four times per year in Marion, IL. Council members are responsible for helping find new projects or conservation opportunities, networking with community and government leaders to accomplish conservation goals, and informing others about the work we do. For more information about joining our council, or to submit a project or grant idea, please contact: Tabitha Ayres, Executive Director, (618) 944-1736, or email info@shawneercd.org.

Can You Help?

On January 21, 2014 the Shawnee RC&D Council voted to begin a 2-year fundraising campaign to help secure the future of the RC&D Area and is now going public with this important fundraising project.

The overarching mission of Shawnee RC&D is to assist and support regional conservation and environmental projects. These projects are funded, in part, by federal and state grants. Due to reimbursement requirements, the RC&D Council's ability to take on new projects is directly related to its Cash On Hand. While all projects are fully funded prior to commencement, without the ability to cover necessary project costs and supplies, while waiting for state or federal reimbursement, the project cannot be approved.

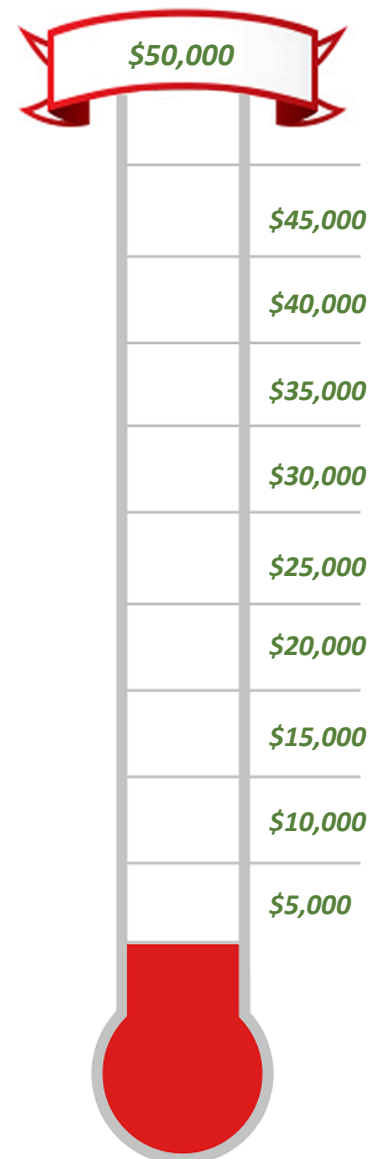
That's why we're looking for donors who want to make a difference now, and long into the future. By contributing to the Shawnee RC&D Revolving Fund, donors who are concerned about environmental issues and concerns can ensure that their money addresses the issues they hold dear, and that it continues to do so.

The way it works is simple—We raise \$50,000 to be used as a temporary source for project payments that are eligible for reimbursement. As project expenses are accrued, money from the reserve fund will be used until reimbursement is submitted. At the end of the period, We send in request for reimbursement to the appropriate organization. After reimbursement is received, the Revolving Fund is immediately reimbursed and available for other reimbursable project costs.

The Shawnee RC&D Revolving Fund is a unique opportunity for donors to make a perpetual gift in the area of environmental conservation. Because funds are always being replenished and reimbursed, they can continue to benefit our area year after year.

About Shawnee RC&D

Shawnee RC&D was founded in 1967 and since then, has been a key force in regional environmental conservation, with projects throughout the lower 16 counties of Illinois. It is a registered 501(c)3 charitable organization, and all donations to this or any campaign are tax deductible. For more information, or make a gift, contact Executive Director Tabitha Ayres at 618-944-1736 or email info@shawneercd.org.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: BOAT RAMP SURVEY

By Karla Gage, CWMA Coordinator

Shawnee Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) assisted the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in surveying 75 boat ramps across the southern 11 counties of Illinois for aquatic invasive plant species. Aquatic invasive plant species are exotic or non-native aquatic plants that spread into new areas or countries beyond their native or historic range. These plants or animals may harm native ecosystems or human health, or commercial, agricultural, or recreational activities.

The goals of the survey were to detect high priority species which cause severe damage to aquatic ecosystems such as Hydrilla and Brazilian elodea. These boat ramps were surveyed for the first time during a period from 2008 to 2010. During this initial survey, Brazilian elodea was detected at Devil's Kitchen Lake and eradicated. Brazilian elodea was not found during the 2014 survey. Hydrilla has never been found in Illinois; however, the plant exists only 50 miles from the Illinois state line in Kentucky at Land Between the Lakes and in Indiana along the Ohio River. Hydrilla is a threat because it grows in water up to 15 feet or deeper. Hydrilla shades native plants, may harm fish and other aquatic organisms, changes water chemistry, and interferes with recreation. Eradication is unlikely or very expensive if not found early; an infestation at Lake Waccamaw in North Carolina is estimated to cost \$450,000 per year for 5 years for the control of a 600 acre infestation.

Wilson Fogler and David Hunter, students from the Department of Forestry at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, were trained in survey protocol and aquatic invasive species identification through efforts of the Illinois Wildlife Action Plan Invasive Species Campaign. Project oversight was provided by the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA). The species that Wilson and David found, in order of most to least common, were: Eurasian watermilfoil, creeping water primrose, brittle naid, Phragmites, and purple loosestrife. No records were reported for: water hyacinth, Hydrilla, parrotfeather milfoil, water clover, Brazilian elodea, curly pondweed, alligatorweed, and reed canarygrass. In the future, the River to River CWMA would like to coordinate with IDNR to re-survey these sites every two years so that new infestations may be detected early. Early detection makes eradication more likely and significantly less costly than if infestations go undetected for many years.

Aquatic recreational users can help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by cleaning off any visible plants or plant pieces on equipment, draining water from boats and equipment before leaving the site, and drying or allowing boats and equipment to dry before entering a new body of water. For more information about how you can help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species, please visit <http://iiseagrant.org/ais/transportzero.html>. To learn how to identify and report suspected Hydrilla sightings, please visit the *Hydrilla Hunt!* program at <http://www.niipp.net/hydrilla>.



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