

Making Connections...

North Cook County
Soil & Water
Conservation District
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Natural Resource Conservation Services
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www.northcookswcd.org
REMODELED WEBSITE COMING SOON!

District Funding

The North Cook Co. SWCD is a **non-taxing local government** formed in the public's interest.

State Contributions: The District's budget is partially funded through an annually approved grant from the Illinois Department of Agriculture. This grant makes up approximately 60-70% of the annual operating budget of the North Cook Co. SWCD.

Federal Contributions: The District receives valuable technical support and information sharing fueled by our partnership with USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service. The close working relationship of NRCS, SWCD staff, our community, and our elected board make Soil & Water Districts distinctively valuable and effective organizations. As an added benefit, by co-locating with our federal partner, both parties lessen their financial burdens by sharing some general office expenses.

Local Contributions: The District does not currently receive funding from the county, local municipalities or any other local organizations.

SWCD Program Contributions: The remainder of the District's budget is made up in fees charged for various programs and services administered by the District; such as those listed throughout this publication and at www.northcookswcd.org.

The Board of Directors

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Bob Murzyn; Vice-Chairman
Mark Toberman; Treasurer
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Leo Kinsch; Director

Associate Directors

Agnes Wojnarski
Jay Coleman

North Cook County
Soil & Water
Conservation District

Assisting Local Landowners
In Natural Resource Conservation
Since 1950

www.northcookswcd.org

Soil & Water Roots

In the early 1930s, following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away; creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. **Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority.**

Because nearly three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only **active, voluntary support from landowners** would guarantee the **success of conservation** work on private land. District-enabling legislation passed in every state. **In December of 1946**, Mr. Harold Bergman and Mr. Owen Maue secured signatures of 59% of the **1247 owners of farmland in North Cook Co.** calling for the creation of the North Cook County Soil and Water Conservation District. The list consisted of farmers who were **public spirited** and who wanted to bring the benefits of the USDA Soil Conservation Service to Cook County. **On August 30, 1950**, the State of Illinois, Office of the Secretary of State, issued a certificate of incorporation to the North Cook County Soil & Water Conservation District. The District's board was faced with **erosion damage, lack of protective cover, and depletion of organic matter in the soil.** The North Cook Co. SWCD is unique in that it has undergone a transition from a completely agricultural District to a District which is approximately 98% urban.

Although District programs have evolved with land use changes, soil erosion and sediment control are still major concerns within the District today.

Sediment deposition from water erosion results in the loss of sensitive or threatened fish species and reduced food supplies, reduced channel capacity, reduced storm water conveyance and storage functions and creates safety and nuisance issues.

Technical Service Trunk

›Natural Resource Information Reports ('NRI')

The NRI report encourages land developers to take into full consideration the limitations of the land they wish to develop by supplying valuable natural resource information. The District reviews the information submitted by the petitioners, completes on-site investigations, identifies potential natural resource concerns and makes recommendations to promote mindful resource development practices. The NRI is made available to local governing bodies, site developers, land owners and other local decision makers to support them in making well-informed development choices. Although the conclusions of the NRI reports in no way indicate the impossibility of a certain land use they should alert the petitioner to potential issues arising from a lack of knowledge regarding land capabilities. This report is required under 94 Act Ill Complied Statutes, Chapter 70 Paragraph 405/1 Et Seq. and Ill Revised Statues, Chapter 5 Paragraph 106 Et Seq.

›Soil Erosion & Sediment Control Plan Reviews ('ICA')

Construction site erosion has been identified as a significant source of pollution in Illinois lakes and streams. The Chicago District, Army Corps of Engineers ('Corps') administers a permit program under section 404 of the Clean Water Act. As a condition of permit issuance, the Corps requires appropriate soil erosion and sediment control ('SESC') measures be implemented and maintained until the construction site is stabilized. In 1997 the District entered into an Interagency Coordination Agreement ('ICA') with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Chicago Corps. The SWCD and NRCS review applicants' SESC plans and determine if the plans meet technical standards. The SWCD also performs SESC inspections throughout the length of the projects.

›Illinois Environmental Protection Agency ('IEPA') National Pollution Discharge Elimination System ('NPDES') Phase II- Site Support

In response to the 1987 Amendments to the Clean Water Act, the U.S. EPA developed the NPDES Stormwater Program. The Phase I program addressed sources of stormwater runoff that had the greatest potential to negatively impact water quality. The Phase II Final Rule requires NPDES permit coverage for stormwater discharges from certain regulated small municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) and construction activity disturbing between 1 and 5 acres of land. The District participants in an agreement with IEPA to visit construction sites and assess compliance with NPDES Phase II permit requirements. Our role is to provide program oversight and technical assistance. We help educate and inform developers to achieve the goals as set forth in NPDES Phase II regulations.

›**Technical Resources** The District is home to significant historical land use information. Visit www.northcookswcd.org for info.

Branching Out

ENVIROTHON

"Fostering Environmentally Conscious, Decision Making Young Adults"

Envirothon is an exciting, fun way for high school students to learn about the environment. It combines in-class curriculum with hands-on field experiences, while demonstrating the role people have in important environmental issues, such as forestry and wildlife management, water quality, and soil erosion. Teams use group oriented problem-solving skills and hands-on field experience while completing the 5 outdoor labs and testing. At each testing station, teams first listen to a presentation by a professional in that field, and then complete a lab and written test. Teams are tested on their knowledge in Aquatics, Forestry, Soils, Wildlife and a current environmental issue that changes each year. Past current topics include Recreational Impacts to Natural Resources, Alternative & Renewable Energy, Managing Cultural Landscapes, Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate and Biodiversity in a Changing World. Each year teams compete at regional competitions throughout Illinois. The winners of the regional events compete in the Illinois Envirothon in May. These teams compete for the chance to represent our state at the Canon Envirothon. The regional Northeastern Illinois Envirothon serves the counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Winnebago, McHenry, Boone, DeKalb, Kane and Will.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the North Cook County Soil & Water Conservation District is to provide information, education, and guidance in the conservation and wise use of natural resources within the District.