

SALT FORK RIVER WATERSHED IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

A sub-committee of the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
2110 Park Court, Suite C
Champaign, IL 61821 (217) 352-3536 ext. 3

Minutes from the Implementation Committee Meeting of June 3, 2010 – 3:30 PM
Champaign County Farm Bureau Auditorium – 801 N. Country Fair Drive, Champaign

Present:

Brad Bennett – City of Urbana Eleanor Blackmon – CCSWCD & City of Champaign Clark Bullard – Prairie Rivers Network Richard Cooke – UIUC Mallory Dolan – UIUC Lloyde Esry, Drainage District Commissioner Courtney Flint – UIUC Kenneth Kesler – CCSWCD	Kent Krukewitt – Drainage District Commissioner Paul Terrio – USGS Trent Thomas - IDNR Brad Uken – Champaign County Farm Bureau Dennis Wandell – Salt Fork River Partners Al Wolfe – Salt Fork River Partners Renee Weitekamp – CCSWCD Staff
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Eleanor Blackmon called the sub-committee meeting to order.

No agenda changes were requested.

Champaign County SWCD staff recreated the contact sheet from an old paper copy since the original, up to date version was lost with along with all other data on the server. CCSWCD Staff asked committee members to review the contact sheet and provide updates and corrections.

Water Quality Monitoring Sub-committee - A written report from Tim Bachman is attached. Courtney Flint and Richard Cooke were present to provide an update on the USDA CSREES project. Dr. Cooke is still looking for sites in the Upper Salt Fork Watershed for the tile drainage modification portion of the project. One to three cooperators with at least 40 acres of tile drained land willing to try modifications & water table management are still needed. In addition to the agriculture engineering and water quality monitoring components of the grant, Dr. Flint is working on the research component. The research component is to learn about the attitudes of producers and what affects their decision making. A survey is being prepared, so Dr. Flint asked for feedback on the draft survey and also asked the group to provide input on the timing of mailing the survey and ways to increase responses. Based on the feedback, they may add a note indicating why personal questions are asked. The survey serves as a general indicator of attitudes while the interviews conducted with any and all willing landowners and producers are where the details come in.

Nutrient Management Sub-committee – Currently, the group is trying to finalize the brochure. CCSWCD staff will provide a written update on the Mississippi River Basin Initiative.

During committee reports and information sharing, Dr. Courtney Flint discussed the Suburban Pond Class that will be taught at Robeson Meadows this fall. Brad Bennett mentioned the feasibility study underway for the cities of Champaign and Urbana on a stormwater utility service fee, which would be based on impervious surfaces.

The next meeting was scheduled for September 2, 2010 with the chairman of the sub-committees meeting at 3:00 pm and the sub-committees meeting at 3:30 pm, at a location to be announced.

Eleanor Blackmon adjourned the meeting and the attendees broke off into groups with the rest of their sub-committee for independent discussion.

Submitted by Tim Bachman

Here is an update with respect to the Water Quality Sub-Committee activities:

1. We continue to collect bi-weekly samples and update the data base.
2. Funding is now in place to maintain the two gaging stations through September 30, 2011.
3. Letters to drainage districts in the watershed area are scheduled to be sent out later this month providing background information on the watershed implementation plan and encouraging them to contribute to the funding of these gaging stations.

If you or any of the other members of the committee have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Tim



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2010

For More Information Contact:

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**American Farmland Trust Receives \$750,000 Grant
Through USDA's Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative**
—Project Will Bring Cleaner Water to Upper Salt Fork Watershed in Illinois

Washington, D.C.— “American Farmland Trust (AFT) is embarking on a strategic, three-year project to reduce nutrient runoff in the Upper Salt Fork watershed, and engage agriculture leaders and groups to leverage the work throughout the state,” says Anita Zurbrugg, co-director for AFT’s [Center for Agriculture in the Environment](#) in DeKalb, Illinois. “We hope to achieve between 10-20 percent reductions in nutrient runoff on participating farms in Champaign County, and create a plan to scale-up this approach to the state and basin levels.”

AFT has been awarded just over \$750,000 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) to support work on [the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative \(MRBI\)](#), beginning in FY2011. AFT has consulted with key stakeholders from across Illinois, will use a strategic partnership and AFT’s [Best Management Practices Challenge](#) to reduce nutrient runoff.

“The grant will allow us to direct funds to producers to accelerate the adoption of conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff while maintaining crop yields” adds Zurbrugg. “We’ll also be looking at the environmental benefits that can be provided when farmers adopt advanced nutrient management practices, including shifting from predominantly fall to spring fertilizer applications and side dressing fertilizer.”

A primary partner with whom AFT will be working is the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District. “The Mississippi River Basin Initiative provides an opportunity for us to focus our efforts on a watershed to work with producers helping them adopt water quality improving practices on their farms,” says Bruce Stickers, resource conservationist with the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District. “This effort brings the added dimension of agricultural industry personnel as advisors to enhance the adoption of these conservation practices in the whole Mississippi River Basin. And, we’ll be able to actually measure the effectiveness of these practices through the field monitoring.”

“Water quality issues and concerns have been around for quite a while. This project will help us highlight some of the practical conservation practices which maintain and improve water quality but remain practical to the farmers and address their resource concerns,” adds Kevin

Donoho, USDA/NRCS district conservationist, Champaign, IL. “This is a great opportunity to make a positive impact on water quality in the Mississippi River Basin.”

Donoho notes the strong federal commitment to conservation of natural resources through the NRCS and says “I believe this type of commitment is in the hearts and minds of all private landowners, farmers and those who make natural resource conservation decisions. With the support and commitment of USDA agencies, partners and related groups, the dreams of those people who live and work with the land, can be realized through projects like this.”

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American Farmland Trust is the nation’s leading conservation organization dedicated to saving America’s farm and ranch land, promoting environmentally sound farming practices and supporting a sustainable future for farms. Since its founding in 1980 by a group of farmers and citizens concerned about the rapid loss of farmland to development, AFT has helped save millions of acres of farmland from development and led the way for the adoption of conservation practices on millions more.

AFT’s national office is located in Washington, DC. Phone: 202-331-7300.

For more information, visit www.farmland.org.