



Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District

www.rockislandswcd.org

Rock Island County SWCD Fall/Winter 2026 Newsletter

Conservation Success Stories

Streambank Stabilization Project Completed

A streambank stabilization project was recently completed on Hill Creek in Andalusia, IL. Funding came from the State of Illinois SSRP program, which covered 75% of the cost of the rock and labor. Over 90 feet of Stone Toe Protection (STP) was installed to treat an eroding bank. STP is a method used to stabilize the base of an eroding stream or lake bank using a line of heavy rock. Besides reducing sediments from entering the stream, nitrates and phosphates were also reduced, resulting in improvement to water quality.

If you are dealing with a streambank erosion issue and would like to see if you qualify for the Illinois SSRP program, please contact our office at (309) 764-1486 x3.



The recently finished streambank stabilization project in Andalusia, IL.

Upcoming Events

Bi-CAN's 2026 conservation networking event, **Confluence: Where Community, Conservation, and Creativity Meet** will be October 15th from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM at the Credit Island Lodge in Davenport, IA.

Attendees will enjoy a presentation on Credit Island's history, interactive sessions transforming regional environmental data into mixed-media art, a guided hike, and time to connect with vendors and other conservationists.

You can register for the event at bi-can.org, scroll halfway down the homepage to find the registration link.

Breakfast will be provided!

Eco-Camp 2026

Last Spring, Rock Island County SWCD partnered with Living Lands & Waters, Illinois Extension, and the Rock Island County Forest Preserve District to organize Eco-Camp for Quad City area high school students.

This year, we decided to extend the number of days we hosted the program. Four local schools participated in the five-day program held at Illiniwek Forest Preserve, with a total of 160 students in attendance. The schools included Earl Hanson Elementary School, Riverdale High School, West Carroll High School, and Rock Island High School.

Throughout the camp, students were able to learn about the importance of soil health, prairie habitat, and watershed management. At one station, students used string to compare the root lengths of native prairie plants to those of non-native species like Kentucky Bluegrass. In another, students played a game of golf that tied in to a lesson about the importance of keeping our waterways clean. Rock Island County SWCD's station highlighted the differences in water runoff between bare fields and those planted with cover crops.

At the end of the camp, students gathered to reflect on what they had learned and discuss how they plan to apply that knowledge moving forward.

Programs like Eco-Camp help young people build a deeper connection with nature while inspiring them to appreciate, respect, and care for the environment for generations to come.



Quad City area students comparing the length of different prairie plant roots.



Middle School students watching the stormwater runoff simulator experiment.



Students feeling the different soil textures; sand, silt, and clay.

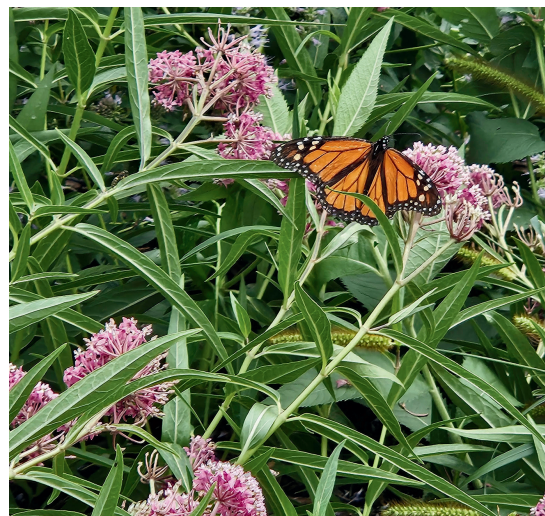
2026 Backyard Bloom Boost

Last year, Rock Island County SWCD received funding from the QC Community Foundation through the 2025 QC River Connection Grant to organize and implement the 2026-2027 Backyard Bloom Boost program. Through the program, RISWCD was able to provide 10 Monarch Waystation plant packs to Rock Island County residents who applied and were approved for the program in 2026. Those plant packs included 36 native Illinois plants, registration of their waystation on MonarchWatch.org, a waystation sign and certificate for their garden site, and technical assistance where it was needed. Residents are responsible for preparing their garden site, mulching, weeding, and overall management of the site for at least three years.

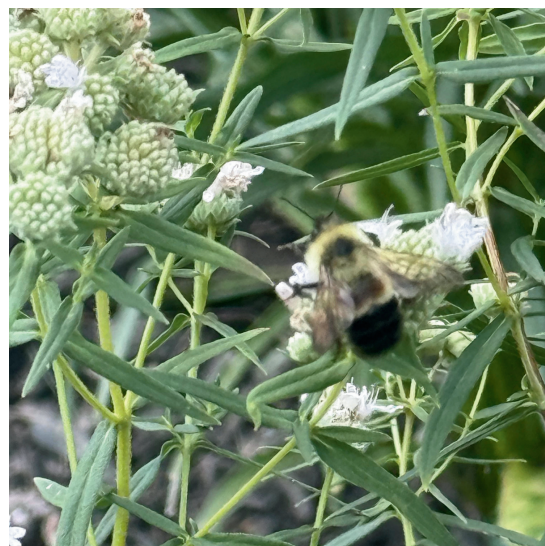
The Backyard Bloom Boost program encourages Rock Island County residents to convert their non-native grass lawns into pollinator habitat that beautifies their yards with native plant species, reduces chemical use and stormwater runoff, and provides valuable habitat for Monarch Butterflies and other pollinator species.

Rock Island County SWCD has monitored the current 10 garden sites over the summer and all have been successful! During the last site visits completed in August, we were pleased to see how large and beautiful the plants were and how happy the homeowners were! Many of them really got into the program and decided to supply some of their own plants and make their garden sites even bigger. Rock Island County SWCD witnessed tons of busy pollinators utilizing the sites including Monarch Butterflies and Caterpillars, a Common Buckeye Butterfly, a Painted Lady Butterfly, and even the federally endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee.

Rock Island County SWCD will start accepting applications for the 2027 Backyard Bloom Boost program again this January. If you are not already on



A Monarch Butterfly on Rose Milkweed in a garden site.



A Rusty Patched Bumble Bee on a Clustered Mountain Mint plant.



Backyard Bloom Boost garden in Rock Island where the homeowner expanded the garden and added additional plants.

our mailing list and would like to receive notice of the 2027 Backyard Bloom Boost program application period, please email dgillespie@rockislandswcd.org. We are grateful for the support received from the QC Community Foundation and excited to bring more blooms, habitat, and environmental education to Rock Island County in 2027!



Fireweed growing in a Backyard Bloom Boost garden site



A Goldenrod Soldier Beetle on Anise Hyssop.



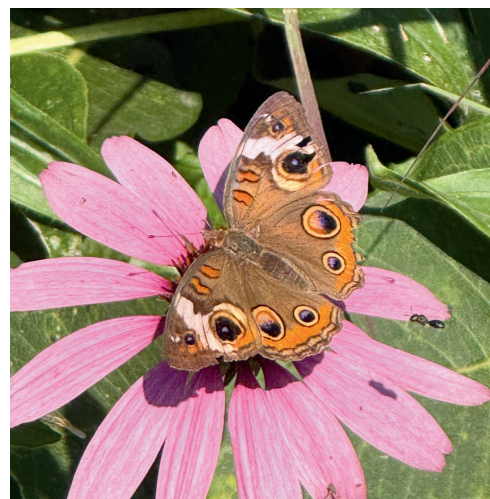
Scarlet Bee Balm blooming.



A Backyard Bloom Boost garden in Rock Island County with the program signage.



A Backyard Bloom Boost garden site in Rock Island County.



A Common Buckeye Butterfly feeding from a Purple Coneflower.



A Whorled Milkweed plant. See if you can spot the Monarch Caterpillar (he is a little blurry!)

RISWCD 2026 Fall Sales



Fish orders are due September 23rd

**Pick Up Date:
October 2nd at 10:00 AM**

**Pick Up Location: QCCA Expo Center parking lot,
2621 4th Ave. Rock Island, IL, 61201**



Tree orders are due October 8th

**Pick Up Date:
October 15th & October 16th
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
(Thursday & Friday)**

**Pick Up Location: QCCA Expo Center North Hall,
2621 4th Ave. Rock Island, IL, 61201**



Order Online at:

<https://www.rockislandswcd.org/category/all-products>



Seeding Drill Rental

Our 7.5 foot Great Plains No-Till Seeding Drill is available for rent. It can be used for grain, small seed or native grasses.

Call (309) 764-1486 to check rental availability.

Rent out drill for \$125/day + \$15/acre.

Pick-Up at SWCD office in Milan, IL.

2026 College for Kids

In July, Rock Island County SWCD had the opportunity to spend time with QC College for Kids students and explore the important role native plants and local pollinators play in a healthy ecosystem. Through hands on activities, students learned about different bee species, their habitats, the different parts of a flower, and how pollination works!

The students put their new knowledge into action by designing their own native pollinator gardens and creating insect hotels to take home. These activities gave students a fun and creative way to support pollinators in their own yards and communities. RISWCD is proud to help inspire the next generation of environmental stewards and looks forward to continuing to connect young people with the natural world around them! 🐝



RISWCD's AC giving a presentation on the parts of a flower.



College for Kids students working on designing their own pollinator gardens.



College for Kids students with their insect hotels.



Mark your calendars for the
2027 QC Stormwater Conference

Thursday, February 18th, 2027
at Bally's Quad Cities Casino & Hotel





Precision Conservation Management

Improving Farm Incomes & Environmental Outcomes

Precision Conservation Management (PCM) was built by farmers, for farmers to help you **leverage your field data for profitability.**

Our exclusive annual reports **identify the financial and environmental outcomes** of tillage practices, nitrogen management decisions, and cover crops.

With a focus on **profitability over yield**, we help farmers dial in on decisions that ensure a promising future for your farm!

Get Started with PCM

- 1 Fill out a brief interest form and connect with your regional PCM Specialist.
- 2 Your PCM Specialist helps collect your data and enters it into our secure Farmer Portal.
- 3 Start getting recommendations based on your data and available cost-share programs!

SCAN
ME!



FARMER BENEFITS



Free to Participate

Thanks to support from our partners.



\$750 Sign-Up Bonus

Compensating you for your time and data right away.



Field-Level Data Analysis

Annual ROI analysis and environmental benchmarking.



Cost-Share Programs

PCM Specialists help you identify opportunities to get paid for practices.



No Practice Change Required

We show you the data, you make the decisions.



Unmatched Data Security

Data is instantly anonymized in our Farmer Portal and never shared without your permission!