



State Conservation Agencies Assist Missouri Landowners

The following column is the eighth in a series intended to benefit woodland owners.

In addition to the federal agencies that help Missouri landowners conserve and manage natural resources on their land, Missourians are fortunate to have two, nationally acclaimed state agencies that also provide assistance. The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Soil and Water Conservation Program play pivotal roles in helping land users conserve and manage natural resources on the more than 90 percent of Missouri land that is privately owned.

MDC helps landowners implement forestry, fisheries, and wildlife activities. Much of the help offered by MDC is on-site technical advice and service. MDC also partners with other agencies to provide the most effective, efficient assistance. In addition, MDC has programs that offer financial incentives to landowners who wish to adopt conservation practices.

The Soil and Water Conservation Program within DNR is administered through locally established soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) that work with landowners on a countywide basis. A number of landowner-focused programs are available to the state's residents through DNR's Soil and Water Conservation Program. Here is a brief description of each program:

The Cost Share program makes funds available to landowners to pay the cost of putting soil conservation practices on the land.

The Loan Interest-Share program refunds a portion of the annual interest costs on bank loans for erosion control practices and conservation equipment such as no-till drills and planters.

The Special Area Land Treatment (SALT) program is a watershed-based program in which SWCDs direct technical and financial assistance to landowners within prioritized watersheds to reduce agricultural, non-point

source pollution. Various forms of financial and technical assistance are available to landowners for implementation of water quality practices and incentives.

The Soil Survey program employs DNR soil scientists who work along with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to map different soils and make interpretations for those soils. The information gathered is produced as part of a soil survey that lets landowners know how specific sites could best be utilized and whether they have any usage limitations. The soil survey maps are available on a county-by-county basis. They are available in printed form and through online services.

For more information about MDC and DNR and the services they provide, contact MDC at <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/> (573) 522-4115, and DNR at <http://www.dnr.mo.gov/> (800) 361-4827. The federal agencies that provide natural resources assistance to Missouri's private landowners were the focus of a previous article in this series. Here is how to contact them: NRCS at www.mo.nrcs.usda.gov/ (573) 876-0900; Forest Service at www.fs.fed.us/r9/forests/marktwain/ (573) 364-4621; Farm Service Agency at www.fsa.usda.gov/mo/ (573) 876-0925; Rural Development at www.rurdev.usda.gov/MO/ (573) 876-0976; Fish and Wildlife Service at www.fws.gov/midwest/ColumbiaES/ (573) 234-2132.

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