

Water quality partnerships conference May 28, Madison, WI Illinois SWCDs

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“A down in the dirt conservationist”



What are SWCDs and their challenges

- **Soil Conservation Act of 1935**
- **Locally led conservation by volunteer elected boards**
- **Chartered by state government**
- **Vary from state to state and district to district**
- **Illinois we are neither a unit of state or county government**
- **No taxing authority**
- **Rely on federal, state and county grants; some cases reimbursable work**
- **Limited resources (i.e., staff for technical help**)**

Farmers, according to Dean...

Farmers like to talk to their neighbors who farm similar soil in similar weather. Then they like to talk to local SWCD, Extension agent or NRCS.

They are reluctant to talk with environmentalists.

Family business with a great deal invested in current equipment and practices.

Keeping the family farm profitable is critical.

Many times, have to deal with land lords. Illinois 76% farmland is rented primarily with cash rent.

**“Today we fight for oil. Tomorrow,
we will fight for water.”**

President George W. Bush