

May 30, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

See How a Smart Wetland Reduces Excess Nutrients from Illinois Waters

Marshall County, IL -- Two years ago, this Marshall County farm field looked like most of Illinois' 12 million acres of tile-drained cropland. But, in September 2021, a local contractor moved over 6,000 cubic yards of earth here to create a Smart Wetland. You are welcome to see the resulting tile-treatment wetland at a field day on Thursday, June 29, and learn about the wetland's naturally occurring processes that break down the nitrate in the ag tile drainage before the water flows into nearby water bodies.

Smart Wetlands are specifically located and custom-designed constructed wetlands to fit within today's farming operation to remove nutrients. MK Farm Drainage Specialists built the 1.83-acre wetland at McCuskey Farms under the direction of the Marshall-Putnam Soil and Water Conservation District (M-P SWCD) and the Wetlands Initiative (TWI) through their Smart Wetlands program. Martin McCluskey owns the farm, and Rex Newton has farmed it for over 30 years.

The free field day is co-hosted by TWI, McCuskey Farms and M-P SWCD. Rex Newton, staff from M-P SWCD and TWI, along with other organizations that support sustainable ag and conservation practices will be on hand to answer questions. The public, especially farmers, farmland owners, and agribusiness professionals, are invited to visit the site between 11 am and 2 pm on June 29. A free lunch will be served at noon along with presentations on various sustainable concepts and an update on the US Farm Bill.

In addition, there will be an event later in the day from 4–7 pm for the public, conservation professionals, and hunters interested in seeing how this practice with native marsh vegetation can provide habitat for wildlife, waterfowl, and pollinators and recreational opportunities for landowners on their property. M-P SWCD and TWI staff, along with other conservation professionals will be on hand to answer questions. Snacks and drinks will be served.

The Smart Wetland installation site is located west of Henry, IL, near the intersection of Marshall County Road 500 East and County Road 1400 North, along the Scholes Branch Creek.

Media Advisory: To arrange interviews with Rex Newton, farmer; Jill Kostel, wetland designer; or Jill Ketter, M-P SWCD, please get in touch with Jean McGuire, TWI Field Outreach Specialist, 515-520-3036, or Stacy Williamson, Marshall-Putnam SWCD Administrative Coordinator at 309-364-3913 x3. In addition, details about the field day will be available at: <https://www.smartwetlands.farm/smartwetland5>

SMART WETLANDS
A Program of the Wetlands Initiative



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