FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Mary Vandevord, President & CEO
HeartLands Conservancy
(618) 566-4451 x 20 | mary@heartlandsconservancy.org
https://heartlandsconservancy.org

Funding Available to Help Farmers and Landowners
Reduce Erosion and Protect Water Quality in Madison, Macoupin, and Jersey Counties

Godfrey, Illinois - Streambank and gully erosion hits farmers and private landowners hard in Madison, Macoupin and Jersey counties. Our rich soil, which is some of the best in the world for growing crops, is also at high risk of washing away in heavy rain events.

HeartLands Conservancy wants to maintain the quality of our soil and streams and these are tied closely together. When a big rain comes through, streambanks and gullies that are unprotected can erode away causing loss of acreage for farmers and potentially cause damage to structures nearby. That same soil when washed away into a stream or river can cause drainage and water quality problems for counties and cities downstream.

We know that farmers and landowners are very aware of the problems they face from erosion but stabilizing stream banks and putting in structures to limit erosion can be expensive, so these problems get put off until the next season.

A Grant to help preserve valuable land

HeartLands Conservancy received grant funding from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to help private and public landowners address erosion, sediment runoff, and soil loss in portions of the Wood River watershed region.

Through this voluntary program, eligible landowners can receive reimbursement for 50% of engineering design and construction costs for qualified water quality improvement projects completed during the grant period.

Eligible projects may include grassed waterways, ponds, water and sediment control basins, cover crops, shoreline stabilization, stream channel stabilization, and streambank stabilization.

Voluntary and Landowner First

The program is designed to help farmers, rural landowners, municipalities, and other property owners install practical conservation projects that improve local water quality, reduce soil loss, and help protect nearby lakes, streams, and rivers.

This is a voluntary program and does not come with restrictions on how to farm or manage the land. Our focus is on preserving soil and protecting water quality.

Funding Details

Funding is available for a limited time. The grant ends in May 2027, and projects must be reviewed, approved, designed, and completed before the grant closes. Interested landowners are encouraged to contact HeartLands Conservancy soon to allow enough time to move eligible projects forward.

The funding area includes portions of northwest Madison County, southern Macoupin County, and part of Jersey County, including areas in or near Alton, Bethalto, East Alton, Godfrey, Brighton, Moro, and Rosewood Heights. Landowners are encouraged to review the project area map to determine whether their property may be eligible for assistance.

“This program is a practical opportunity for landowners to address erosion concerns while also improving the health of local creeks,” said John O’Donnell, Water Programs Manager for HeartLands Conservancy. “Because the funds expire in 2027, now is the time for interested landowners to reach out so we can review potential projects and help move eligible projects forward.”

Participation is voluntary, and projects must meet program eligibility requirements. HeartLands Conservancy will work with interested landowners to review potential project ideas and determine next steps.

Landowners interested in learning more or signing up should contact:

John O’Donnell
Water Programs Manager, HeartLands Conservancy
john.odonnell@heartlandsconservancy.org
618) 566-4451 ext. 14

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About HeartLands Conservancy

HeartLands Conservancy, based in Belleville, Illinois, is a nonprofit conservation land trust serving Illinois’ southern 36 counties. Its mission is to conserve open spaces, farms, and natural lands and enhance the community’s connections to nature in southern Illinois. Since 1989, the organization has conserved more than 11,500 acres of land - an area larger than Pere Marquette State Park.