

## **White County Soil and Water Conservation District Freedom of Information Policy**

The White County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) was chartered by the State of Illinois on August 10, 1945, as a public body corporate and politic in accordance with the Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District act (Ill. Compiled Statutes, Ch. 70, Par. 405/1 et seq.). As such, the White County SWCD is required to implement the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 ILCS 140) and the Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120).

White County SWCD believes that an open and honest government is essential to American democracy, and it can only be achieved through the free exchange of information between the government and its citizens. The Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act are critical tools in shining light on government actions and ultimately strengthening our democracy. (adapted from “A Message from the Attorney General” Lisa Madigan, Attorney General, State of Illinois, September, 2004.)

### **Description of the White County SWCD**

**Purpose:** The General Assembly declares it to be in the public interest to provide:

- For the conservation of the soil, soil resources, water and water resources of this State,
- For the control and prevention of soil erosion,
- For the prevention of air and water pollution, and
- For the prevention of erosion, floodwater and sediment damages, and thereby to conserve natural resources, control floods, prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs, assist in maintaining the navigability of rivers and harbors, conserve wildlife and forests, protect the tax base, protect public lands, and protect and promote the health, safety, and welfare of the people of this State.

**Budget:** The total operating budget for FY24 is \$134,545. Funding sources are grants, sales of conservation related equipment, materials, and services, and donations.

**Location:** The SWCD operates one office located at 1105 West Main Street, Carmi, IL 62821

**SWCD Board of Directors:** The White County Soil and Water Conservation District exercises control over policies and procedures and meets monthly on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month. The Board consists of five elected officials:

Bryan Tomm, Chairman  
Laura Whitsitt, Vice-Chairman  
Brandon Barbre, Secretary/Treasurer  
Mark Colbert, Board Member  
Kent Williams, Board Member

**Employees:** Presently, White County SWCD has two full time employees; Jewel Brooks, Administrative Coordinator, and Heidi Uselton, Resource Conservationist.

**Reporting:** We are required to report and be answerable for our operations to the Illinois Department of Agriculture and Bureau of Land and Water Resources, State Fairgrounds, Springfield, Illinois.

**Requesting Information:** The White County SWCD established the following rules and regulations for information requests pursuant to Section 3(g) of the FOIA. This policy was approved at the board meeting and is reviewed on an annual basis.

You may request information and records available to the public in the following manner:

- You must use the attached request form.
- Your request should be directed to:

**White County Soil & Water Conservation District  
Attn: Jewel Brooks, Administrative Coordinator  
1105 W. Main Street  
Carmi, IL 62821**

- You must specify the records requested to be disclosed for inspection or to be copied. If you desire any information certified, you must specify which ones.
- All fees shall be paid prior to delivery of any records. To reimburse us our actual costs for reproducing and certifying (if requested) the records, you will be charged the following fees:

\$0.25	per employee copied page
\$3.00	large drawings, maps
\$1.00	certification fee
Actual cost	any items which need sent out for reproduction must be prepaid.
- The White County SWCD office will respond to a written request within seven (7) working days or sooner, if possible. An extension of an additional seven (7) days may be necessary to properly respond.
- Records may be inspected or copied. If inspected, a White County SWCD employee must be present throughout the inspection.

You may appeal the decision regarding your request to the Chairman of the White County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors.

The place and times where the records will be available are as follows:

White County SWCD office (located within the Carmi USDA Service Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service office.)  
1105 West Main Street, Carmi, IL 62821  
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

**Types of Information:** Certain types of information maintained by the White County SWCD are exempt from inspection and copying. However, the following types or categories of records are maintained under our control:

Monthly financial statements  
Annual receipts and disbursement reports  
Budget  
Audits  
Minutes of White County SWCD board of director open meetings  
Policies  
Annual reports

Issued by: White County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors

Date issued: December 4, 2006

Date revised: September 26, 2023

Dates reviewed: May 3, 2010 \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Request for Information Under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Illinois **FOIA** provides for access to public information. If all or any part of the information requested is denied, the specific exemption(s) will be provided. You have a right to appeal the denial. Appeals should be directed to the Chairman of the White County SWCD board of Directors, 1105 W. Main St, Carmi, IL 62821.

**All fees shall be paid prior to delivery of any records.** The fees for copying requested records are as follows:

<b>\$0.25</b> per employee copied page	<b>\$3.00</b>	large drawings/maps
<b>\$1.00</b> certification fee, if requested	<b>actual cost</b>	for records sent out for reproduction

The White County SWCD responds promptly and within seven (7) working days allowed by the FOIA to requests for information. After notification that the requested records are available, they will be held for one week (5 business days, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.) If the records are not collected or viewed within that time, a new **Request for Information** must be submitted. All **Requests for Information** under the FOIA must be submitted directly to the White County SWCD office. **The information required by this form is MANDATORY in order to comply with SILCS 140/1. Failure to provide may result in this form not being processed.**

Requestor's Name (printed) \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number with area code \_\_\_\_\_ Date of request \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Information Requested (include pertinent address, dates, names):

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### ***White County SWCD Response (Requestor does not fill in below this line.)***

#### Approved

- The documents you requested are enclosed.
- The documents will be made available upon payment of copying costs of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- You may inspect the records at the White County SWCD office during business hours from dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

#### Denied

- The request creates an undue burden on the public body in accordance with Section 3(f) of the FOIA, and we are unable to negotiate a more reasonable request.
- The materials requested are exempt under Section 7 of the FOIA for the following reasons:

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Individual(s) that determined request to be denied: \_\_\_\_\_

- Request delayed for the following reason(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
You will be notified by \_\_\_\_\_ as to the action taken on your request.
- The White County SWCD does not have the records you requested.

District Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Reply \_\_\_\_\_