

Fishers & Farmers Partnership Earth Day Webinar

**April 20, 2023
3PM CST.**

The Wetland Initiative Senior Environmental Engineer Dr. Jill Kostel and Field Outreach Specialist Jean McGuire will present on two constructed wetland sites successfully built on private farmland in north-central Illinois and how partnerships were instrumental to making them happen. Landowner Wes Lehman will also share his experience with and motivation for installing a wetland on his property.



The Wetland Initiative's Smart Wetlands program supports row-crop farmers and landowners in voluntarily reducing nutrient loss from Illinois cropland with tile-treatment (constructed) wetlands. Edge-of-field tile-treatment practices like these wetlands are highly effective but have been slow to be accepted by landowners due to several challenges. Consequently, micro- and macro-level partnerships are needed to accelerate the awareness and adoption of tile-treatment wetlands, as no one entity can bring this important conservation practice to scale.

While trusted relationships with the landowners were key in both projects, the Marshall County project centered more on micro-level partnerships with the farmer, landowner, and their local advisers. The project in Livingston County developed through macro-level partnerships at the local, state, and federal level. In addition, these two levels of partnerships led to outreach events that focused on different farm-sector audiences. TWI's collaborative partnerships and outreach strategies provide a model that can be replicated in tile-drained areas across the Midwest to increase the adoption of constructed wetlands and other edge-of-field practices to improve water quality.

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