



WINNEBAGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

4833 Owen Center Road – Rockford, IL 61101-6007
www.winnebagoswcd.org

(815) 965-2392, Ext. 3
FAX – (815) 965-2447

For Immediate Release

To: All Media
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Contact: Dennis Anthony – Executive Director, (815-965-2392, Ext. 3)

HURRICANE DITCHER STILL AVAILABLE

Have your waterways silted in over the years and lost their shape? A good indicator of that would be water running down the sides of the waterways instead down the middle. Other waterways may have a berm built up along the edge of the waterway, maybe from tillage done along the waterway, or sediment and residue build-up from runoff from adjacent cropland. Cost-share funds for these types of waterway repairs are limited, so other low cost alternatives may be necessary to address small erosion problems before they become big ones.

One option may be to use the Hurricane Ditcher, which is an excellent tool for reshaping and repairing small existing waterways, by cleaning out the center or knocking down the edges. It can also be used efficiently for constructing new smaller waterways (less than 30' wide). The machine takes a 24 inch wide cut 6 to 10 inches deep, and paddles throw the material onto the adjacent cropland to a distance of 100 feet. It can be used in any soil conditions, but it is recommended to disc or chisel plow thick sodded areas to prevent plugging of the paddles. The machine can easily reshape 2,500 to 3,000 feet of waterway (30' wide) per day with good working conditions, moving 5 – 7 tons of soil per minute.

Spring is the optimal time to complete waterway projects. If you don't have time to do the work in the spring, the machine can be used in standing crops of corn up to the pollination stage (some damage may occur to corn above waist high). Another option would be to plant oats or other small grains in the area around the waterway, and complete the project after the crop is harvested (or chopped for feed).

The Hurricane Ditcher can also be used to reshape terraces, form small surface drainage ditches, or create shallow water wildlife ponds. It does require a tractor with a horsepower range of 100 to 150. The hitch weight of the machine is 1,200 pounds, so a heavy duty hitch will be needed for transport. The cost to rent the Hurricane Ditcher is \$25/hour with a \$50 minimum. Contact our office for more information, or to use.

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CONTACT:

Dennis Anthony
Winnebago County SWCD
4833 Owen Center Road
Rockford, IL 61101
PHONE: (815) 965-2392 ext. 3
FAX: (815) 965-2447

www.winnebagoswcd.org
danthonyswcd@comcast.net

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