

February 2011



# Farmland Protection Project

*Responsible growth & maintaining Boone County's distinctive rural character requires preservation of farmland*

**Farmland Protection Project**  
**P.O. Box 5**  
**Belvidere, IL 61008**  
**[www.fppbc.org](http://www.fppbc.org)**

## Upcoming Events:

**March 26-Annual Meeting & Breakfast**  
**8:00 a.m.-Boone Co. Farm Bureau**

## Special points of interest:

- What is FPP?
- Farmland Easements
- Why Join?

## *What is Farmland Protection Project...*

The Farmland Protection Project (FPP) is local 501 © (3) nonprofit group that focuses on preserving farmland in the Boone County area. As development vastly approaches the area, FPP is committed to preserving farmland.

The Farmland Protection Project was created in 1999 after the release of Boone County's Comprehensive plan to promote the preservation of farmland in Boone County. Originating with the Flora Grange, members knocked on doors and met with government officials to promote the preservation of farmland in Boone County.

Each of the townships approved resolutions on the importance of protecting farmland. Members continue to bring the message to the public at events like the Farm Bureau dairy breakfast and Belvidere's Harvest Festival. County board candidates are asked for their views on farmland preservation and their comments are posted on our website for the November general elections.

Through the work of the Farmland Protection Project and other groups. Boone County remains one of only three groups in the state of Illinois to have protected farmland. While, others preserve open space and natural areas, FPP is focused on farmland. There are now 523 acres preserved in the county by permanent easements, and Boone County is only one of two groups in the state to do this without public funding.

Read about more ways to save farmland and our activities. If you'd like to help, become a member. We're always looking for new ideas to save farmland.

**Celebrating 10 years!!**

## *Join us for breakfast...*

**FPP ANNUAL MEETING - MARCH 26th --Join Us For Breakfast at 8:00 a.m.**

Join us for our annual breakfast meeting at 8:00 a.m. at the Boone County Farm Bureau, 702 W. Locust Street, Belvidere to learn about what FPP has been doing during the past year, and hear presentations about current efforts in Congress to make the conservation incentive legislation permanent by Anita Zurburgh of the American Farmland Trust, and the Beginning Farmer Program of Angelic Organics Learning Center. Breakfast will be provided by Flora Grange.

Please call Kathleen at 608-290-7689 to RSVP by March 15th or send an e-mail to [information@fppbc.org](mailto:information@fppbc.org).

## *Why preserve farmland....*

You may have seen one of our signs along the highway. Designed by students at North Boone High School, they encourage drivers to protect farmland in the county. Ever wonder why we should?

Every minute of every day, an acre of farmland is lost according to the American Farmland Trust. On a global scale, it is projected that there will be an extra 2 billion people to feed in forty years. The world needs the acres for food. In addition, farmland protects water resources and is a solution to climate change.

Here at home, local food would not be possible without local farms. Farmland absorbs rain water and snow melt reducing flooding along the Rock, Kishwaukee, and other rivers and streams. Farmland generates more revenue to the local tax base than the services it uses. While Residential development requires more services than it pays. Farmland keeps local taxes down.



## *Agricultural Areas*

The state of Illinois established a program that allows a county to create agricultural use districts. These are voluntary programs where the landowner commits to using the land for farming and not developing the land while the land is enrolled in the agriculture area. Similar to a bank certificate of deposit, the land is enrolled for an initial ten year period and then renewed in eight year increments.

The landowner gains protection from local restrictions that would regulate typical farming practices. Special assessments for taxes would be exempted from the landowner. The parcel is mapped as part of an area in the county that is committed to preserving farmland. Other planning agencies would take this into account in determining future land use and development.

To date the county has over 6000 acres enrolled in two agricultural areas.

## *Commission and Studies*

Every year governments and development groups pull out their maps and start planning for future growth. Is your home in one of these?

Boone County has a Comprehensive Plan and land use maps for the county as a whole. An ongoing process, the last one was completed in 1999. Other studies have included road corridors such as IL Route 173 and Interstate 90 as part of the Flora Neighborhood plan.

Belvidere, Poplar Grove, Capron, Caledonia, Loves Park all have land use plans in the county for the area around their current municipal boundaries.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has completed a plan for the Beaver Creek watershed in the county.

Newly formed, the Rockford Region Economic Development District., will focus on economic development plans for Boone and Winnebago counties.

How does one keep up with all the plans? Some will change the landscape and others will be set on the shelf. What to do if your plans for your land is agriculture? Aside from spending time at a lot of meetings, consider placing your land in an agricultural area or donating development rights.

### Charter members

The following current members have been with us since the beginning.

Larry Colver

Emalee Colver

Richard Gadke

Jack Ratcliffe

Laurel Ratcliffe

## Conservation Easements

Conservation easements are permanent means of protecting land from development. The owner keeps ownership of the land, but donates the development rights to another entity. The owner can farm the land and sell the land, but it can not be developed.

There are tax advantages for the landowner through income offsets. The assessed value of the land is placed at a value equal to farmland and not development land. This affects estate taxes and possibly property taxes.

In 2009, Bruce and Jennifer Stennerson became the first farm in Boone County to donate conservation easements.

The county now has 523 acres protected by conservation easements.



## New Zoning Ordinance

Unique to the county is a new ordinance that allows a house to be built in exchange for placing the remainder of the land in a conservation easement.

A minimum of 60 acres is required. A parcel that does not have a buildable lot, can have a house constructed if the remaining acreage is placed in the conservation easement.

The lot must still meet all the requirements for a typical lot.

In 2010, Richard and Karen Gadke became the first landowners to donate their land under this program.

## Did you know...

The Enhanced Easement Incentive was renewed by Congress through December 2011 and retroactive to January 1, 2010. Some interesting points:

- Raises the maximum deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30% of their adjusted gross income (AGI) in any year to 50%
- Allows qualified farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their AGI
- Increases the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 years to 16 years

## Upcoming Events....

March 26th-FPP Breakfast at 8:00 am at the Farm Bureau building, Belvidere, IL

**\*See page 1 for more information\***

Please RSVP by March 15 Kathleen 608-290-7689 or e-mail [information@fppbc.org](mailto:information@fppbc.org)

## Why Join?

America is losing an acre a minute of farmland! Boone County has been one of the largest growing county's in the past two decades.

It is up to us to preserve it for future generations! Whether you are a farmer, politician or simply interested in preserving farmland you are welcome! As part of the Farmland Protection Project Group you will begin making a difference locally. Please join us!

**"My hope is when I no longer can farm, another farmer can purchase my land at a more reasonable price and not a developer."**

**-Richard Gaddke**

# Farmland Protection Project

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Belvidere, IL 61008  
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Upcoming Event: March 26th Annual Meeting and Breakfast

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## Membership Application

Fill out this form and mail it to: Farmland Protection Project      or      e-mail: [newmember@fppbc.org](mailto:newmember@fppbc.org)  
P.O. Box 5, Belvidere, IL 61008



Annual Membership dues:	Price each
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Member	\$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Member	\$150

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks should be payable to Farmland Protection Project