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## Large Princeton farm embraces wetland project

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PRINCETON — Taking advantage of government environmental programs, Bonucci Farms will be the proud owners of a 4.8-acre wetland located outside of Princeton by the end of the week.

"It's a constructed wetland designed for water quality improvement," said Jill Kostel, senior project manager of the Wetlands Initiative. "The natural processes of the wetland will remove the nitrate and convert it to nitrogen gas, as well as dissolved phosphorus, too. As an added benefit, the wildlife will find it."

Wildlife anticipated to inhabit the wetlands include ducks, shorebirds, turtles and frogs. Kostel said pollinator plants will also be added to the surrounding area to attract bees and butterflies.

The wetland is being created during a four-day open to the public process, with Tuesday's showcasing a series of events to illustrate different methods to help improve the environmental impact of farming.

"The goal is to show the effects of tillage and cover crops on water quality coming through, and retention of water," Kostel said. "(We want to) introduce these other practices that farmers can do. Not everyone can have a wetland, obviously. There are other practices, in-field, out-of-field, that can be done to reduce their nutrient loss."

The Bonuccis were able to build the wetland by taking advantage the Conservation Reserve Program through the Farm Service Agency and the Environmental Quality Incentive Program through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, according to Erika Turner, district conservationist of the NRCS.

The building materials, machinery and workers to build the wetland were donated by the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association. They work with their associates to use donated time and materials to build wetlands, waterways, terraces, among other things annually, according to executive director Ryan Arch.



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**Rolland Machinery workers Steve Mitchell, Tom Elam and Mike Martin post GPS coordinates for excavators on the edge of a 4.8-acre wetland designed to capture nutrient runoff from tile drainage on Tuesday on 1500 North avenue on Bonucci Farms outside of Princeton. The event is sponsored by The Wetlands Initiative and features a demonstration and exhibition of land improvement equipment. There is no admission charge, and everyone is welcome to attend, including landowners, farmers, agribusinesses, conservationists, planners, and the public.**

*NewsTribune Photo/Scott Anderson*

The site should be finished on Thursday or Friday, and is open to the public while they are working on the build.

For more information on soil conservation, visit [illinoiscbmp.org](http://illinoiscbmp.org).