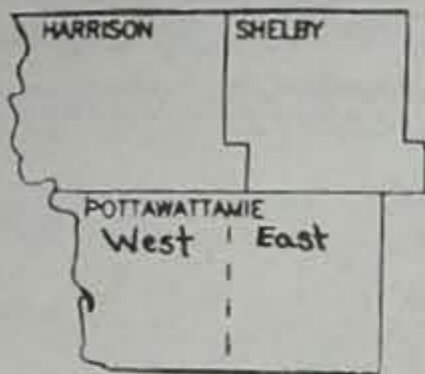




**Summer
Volume 1**

Quad-District Conservation Newsletter



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**1996
Issue 2**

First dry fire hydrants installed in southwest Iowa counties

East Pottawattamie dry hydrant sites

Dry fire hydrants are the newest tool for fighting fires in rural areas. These hydrants provide access to water sources previously unavailable to local volunteer fire departments.

A dry fire hydrant is simply a suction pipe laid underground (below frost level) from an all-weather access road to a natural or man-made source of water, eliminating the need to haul water from rural communities.

Probably the most critical element of rural fire suppression in Iowa is having water supplies in ample enough quantities to meet the fire-fighters immediate, emergency demands.

As a general rule, at a **minimum**, a fire department is required to produce **250 gallons of water per minute** within five minutes of arrival, and maintain that flow for at least two hours.

Recently, the first dry fire hydrant in East Pottawattamie county was installed at a pond site in the northeast sector.

Bruce Damgaard, who works with the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the county and serves as the dry fire hydrant coordinator, stated

"This hydrant will help the volunteer fire departments from Walnut, Avoca and Hancock cover the northeast part of the district."

The second fire hydrant was installed at a pond site located near Clayton Young's farmstead in the northwest part of the district. This hydrant will benefit the volunteer fire departments from Minden, Shelby and Hancock.

Damgaard has been a volunteer fireman for over thirty years with the Carson fire department. He points out,

"As a community, we need to thank Bruce Heyne and Clayton Young for allowing us to use their ponds; McCarthy Tranching for providing equipment to install the hydrants; Blackburn Tranching for furnishing pipe; the East Pott. Soil & Water Conservation District for using the Local Option Sales Tax funds for buying materials, and several



East Pottawattamie has two dry hydrants, and plans to install several more. The installation process is the same as shown in the above photo, where a suction pipe and strainer are being inserted in Willow Lake near Woodbine,.

people who volunteered their time to work on the installations."

East Pottawattamie has three other potential sites in mind. The lack of ponds in this district makes the dry fire hydrants more of a challenge.

Underground reservoirs supplied by tile lines are also being considered for possible dry fire hydrant sites.

Harrison County dry hydrant site

The first dry fire hydrant in Harrison County was recently installed at Willow Lake, near Woodbine.

Coordinating the installation were Dwight Mills, Harrison County SWCD Commissioner Chairman, with the assistance of Tim Sproul of the Harrison County Conservation Board and Rick Shearer of Shearer Construction.

The hydrant will benefit the volunteer fire departments of Woodbine, Magnolia and Pisgah.

Dale Michel, fire chief of the Woodbine firefighter's group said, "This dry hydrant will help us combat fires in the northwest corner of our district. We tested the hydrant and were able to

pump over 1000 gallons per minute. The hydrant will save us a lot of time driving back to Woodbine to get water."

Russ Kurth, Harrison District Conservationist, noted that the installation of the dry hydrant is rather simple. A trench is dug to a depth which will have the horizontal portion of the pipe below the frost line, and at least 1 foot below the low water level.

The pipe is assembled above ground and lowered into the trench. A strainer is positioned in the water, and the trench then backfilled. Water remains in the pipe all the way to the vertical outlet because the horizontal pipe

is below the water level.

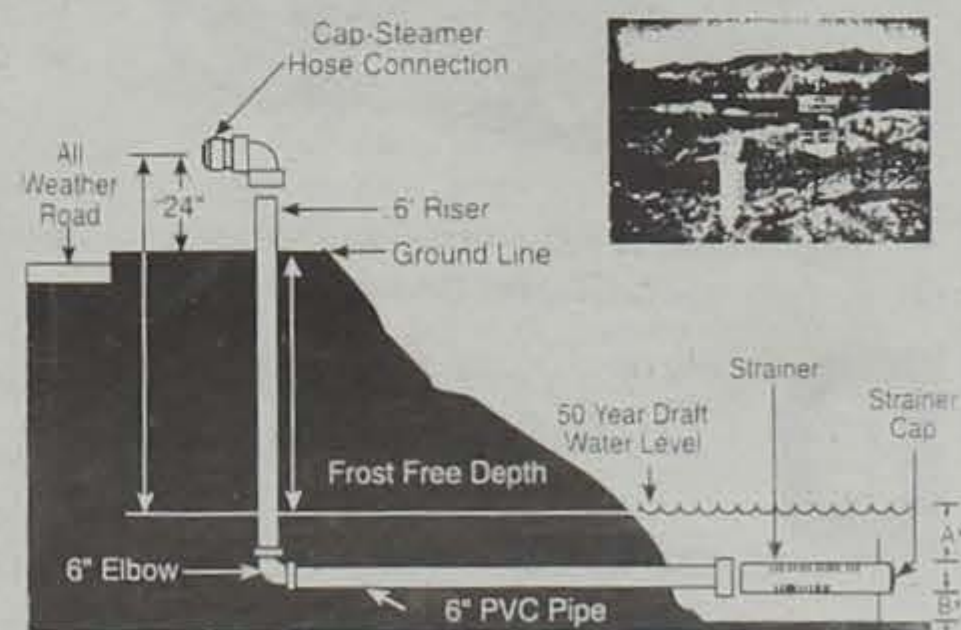
Once installed, the fire department can connect to the hydrant head and start pumping water within seconds.

The heart of the rural hydrant system is the head assembly and external strainer assembly. The head assembly provides the fire department with the appropriate NST thread connection, which allows the firefighters to connect their suction hose to the hydrant system and pump water.

The strainer is the intake device which is affixed to the end of the pipe and is positioned at the optimal location in the water source.



Bruce Damgaard, volunteer dry fire hydrant coordinator, steadies the pipe as the trench is being backfilled at an East Pott. site.



(A) 12" minimum clearance; (B) 18" minimum clearance

Crop residue management

Residue cover can greatly reduce soil loss and erosion. Crop residue management is very important for productivity and profitability.

The main purpose of crop residue is to protect the ground surface from the impact of raindrops and other precipitation.

Other benefits of residue cover include conserving soil moisture, improving soil infiltration, and providing cover and food for wildlife.

Residue cover can vary from year to year depending on weather conditions, soil type, tillage speed, tillage depth and the number of passes and type of tillage operations.

Some ways to leave more residue on the soil surface are as follows:

- do tillage in the spring
- reduce tillage passes
- do not till when it is too wet
- experiment with no-till.

With residue management, a farmer has the means to increase his profit with very little change in operation procedures.

Conservation Protects Our Good Earth

Water quality project is now approved for Harrison Co.

Tom Grau, Executive Director of the Iowa State FSA office has announced that funds have been made available to implement conservation management practices in the area.

One of the three counties approved in Iowa is the Harrison County DeSoto Lake Project, for a total of \$216,000.

The Water Quality Incentive Project (WQIP) is a voluntary project for farmers in the DeSoto Lake Watershed. It is administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and is a cooperative effort between Harrison Soil and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa State University Extension Service and FSA.

The purpose of the project is to encourage use of management practices to improve and protect water quality in areas where agricultural pollutants have been identified as a concern in priority public waters. The incentive payments give producers a good opportunity to participate.

The intent is to achieve a reduction of ag pollutants at the source. Eligible producers within the DeSoto Lake Watershed

will be encouraged to make changes on a voluntary basis.

To participate, farming operations must be contributing or have the potential to contribute through their current management system. Agricultural non-point source pollutants such as agricultural chemicals, animal wastes or sediment to surface groundwater are examples. Incentive payments will only be available for management practices.

Participants will be provided both technical and financial assistance and encouraged to change management systems so as

DE SOTO LAKE WATERSHED



to help solve resource problems associated with pollutants adversely affecting water quality.

A complete farm water quality resources plan will be developed with producers, with recommended management changes needed to provide for various practices such as nutrient management, pest scouting, conservation tillage and many others.

Applications will be accepted at the FSA office until August 30. Both owner and operator should sign the agreement.

Applications are evaluated

by a local water quality team, and ranked according to established criteria.

Those interested may contact the Harrison County FSA, NRCS or Extension office.



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GOOD DEALS...AND A GOOD DEAL MORE

Mother Nature tests effectiveness of tillage system



This photo shows a field that was spring-tilled with 30% residue cover after planting. Heavy spring rains carried away residue and soil, leaving many small ditches or rills. No-till planted fields on similar slopes had little erosion after excessive rains this spring.

by Russ Kurth
District Conservationist

Rain, rain rain, and more rain this spring tested the effectiveness of conservation tillage systems. Frequent heavy rainfall was the cause of severe runoff damage to farm fields.

Farm operators and owners therefore need to take a serious look at their fields and evaluate the effectivity of their tillage system, making plans to address problem areas, if

any.

As I have driven around the county this spring and walked the fields, I have noticed that the higher the residue cover, the lower the amount of damage caused by the heavy rains. I observed that where less tillage was done, there was noticeably better erosion control. No-till fields had the least amount of soil movement.

The Universal Soil Loss Equation predicts that no-till corn planted in soybean stubble will have only 1/3 the erosion as corn planted into spring-tilled soybean

particles from loosening and being carried away by runoff water.

Tillage, on the other hand, loosens the soil surface and breaks up the previous crop's shallow root system, which if left in place would have helped bind the soil together. That is why the same residue cover with tillage has a higher erosion rate than no-till.

As you look at your fields, a windshield survey may be misleading. You need to walk through the fields and see how much soil was moved by water runoff.

Most no-till fields I have observed appear to have ditches and gullies when seen from the road. But a closer look usually shows that runoff carried residue away, and also a little soil. But the crop is still there, and soil erosion is minor.

In comparison, most tilled fields will have the soil washed out as deep as tillage was performed, where runoff water concentrated and flowed



The field above was no-till planted. Heavy spring rains moved some of the residue, but left the soil intact.

stubble. This year's rain right after corn planting made this difference quite visible.

As you look at fields, you need to keep several things in mind: the main purpose of leaving residue on the soil surface is to provide protection from harvest until the next crop canopies; the residue on the soil surface intercepts raindrops and keeps the soil

through the loosened soil.

In areas of erosion, producers need to look for a solution to their problem. There are many ways to reduce or control water runoff damage.

Solutions range from adding a terrace or grassed waterway to reducing tillage or changing row patterns.

Contact your local SWCD office for assistance in solving erosion problems.

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Rural Fire Hydrant

Tim Sproul, County Conservation Board Director, steadies the dry hydrant access pipe, while employees of Shearer Construction prepare to fill the trench with dirt.

(Story on front page)

COST-SHARE ALLOWED FOR CRP GROUND

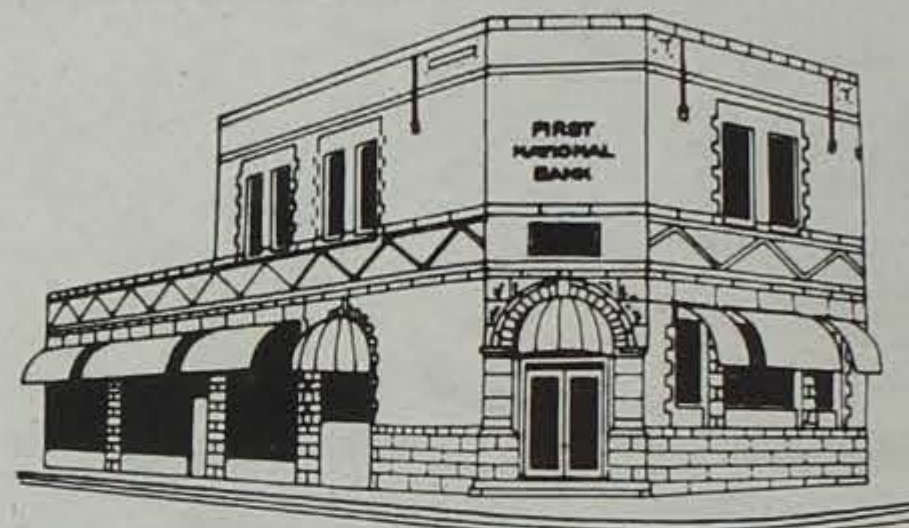
At the discretion of Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners, State cost-share funds may be used to establish practices on land coming out of CRP contracts.

Construction will be allowed during the last 90 days of the contract. This means that those whose contracts will expire September 30, 1996 can receive cost-share funds beginning July 1.

Each county has its own policy. For more information or to sign up for cost-share assistance, those interested may go to the office in the district in which their ground is located.



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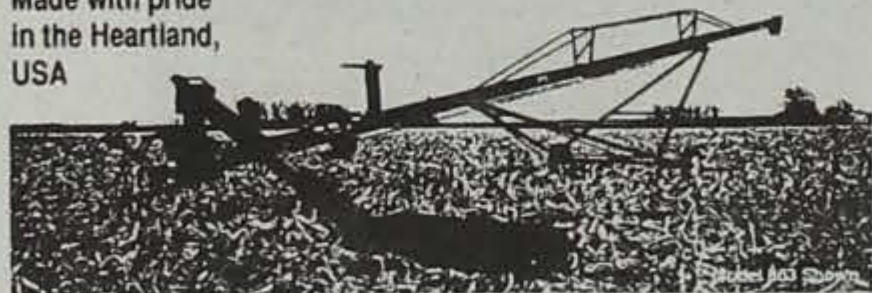
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Left to right, John Espenmiller, Mary Espenmiller and Russell Kurth, wait for the student's arrival.

Being involved in tree planting project has educated the educator

by Lou Waite
NRCS Tech Aide/PR.

Mary Lynn Espenmiller, educator, gives credit for her interest in environmental issues to her husband, John. He, while employed as an insurance agent and investment counselor, has long advocated conservation of natural resources. He currently serves as Chairman of the Harrison County Conservation Board.

Mary Lynn coordinates the Talented and Gifted program in the LoMa elementary school, teaches high school math, and is also the technology coordinator for the facility.

Two years ago, while searching for a project which would challenge the TAG students, she became interested, through John's influence, in establishing a native prairie. A site was available near the high school complex, so with permission from the school administration, and funds raised by student activities and a matching grant, that project was completed two years ago.

The enthusiasm generated by the activity and its result was inspiration for Mary Lynn to enlarge and expand upon the idea, and open further projects to students in the entire school system. When information was received from the Iowa Sesquicentennial School Forest Program the entire concept took a new direction and application was made for a grant.

The special program was developed for Iowa schools by Trees Forever and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation. It is an official program of the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission and was funded through an initial grant of \$30,000. LoMa received \$1250 of that upon approval.

Other sponsors include The National Tree Trust, Earl May Seed and Nursery, IES Utilities,

Inc., Interstate Power Company, Illinois Gas & Electric Company, Midwest Power and People's Natural Gas.

Once all the preliminaries were out of the way, the entire student body was invited to write an essay on "Why I want to help plant trees." The 60 submissions were all from first through sixth graders (20 4th & 5th.; 20 2nd & 3rd.; 20 1st).

Fourth grade student Alyssa Schumacher, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Scott Schumacher, in her essay expressed her feelings very eloquently:

"I am sorry this paper is not very good, but all I want to do is help. But if people don't get their act together, we won't have an earth, so I thought I would try and do my part and I just wish everyone will do theirs, too."

"I think it was a great idea to plant trees down by the new school. One thing is because it is kind of bare down there, and two (it would be good) for animal homes."

"Don't you think it was kind of dumb to cut down trees and not replant them? I do."

"Well, I just want to do my part of helping this world (be) a better place to live."

"Thank you for your time."

Daniel Mikels of the first grade was more pragmatic:

"Planting trees are fun for boys and girls. Planting trees helps us have more trees to make more paper. In the summer it is good to have trees to make shade. I like trees because I can climb in them and make tree swings."

"All the essays were very good," Mary Lynn said. "How do you choose?"

She solved the problem by selecting all 60 students to participate.

The trees were ordered from the Conservation Board, which offers them at "very reasonable" cost. Careful planning as to variety and placement was done by the Espenmillers and others

volunteering to assist with the project. The science teacher, particularly, expressed a desire to have certain species not readily found in the immediate area. His students then would have access to the study of leaves in particular, some of which were rarely obtainable in previous years.

Included in the order for 46 "native Iowa" trees were Schwedler Norway Maple, Silver Queen Maple, Sugar Maple, White Ash, Swamp White Oak, Red Oak, Burr Oak, White Oak, American Linden, Hackberry and Horse Chestnut.

The first tree planting was "rained out", but finally on May 1 the trees were planted by groups of exuberant, excited students, each segment supervised by an adult volunteer. These included NRCS personnel, parents, retired citizens, the Espenmillers and others.

"You know, I had been so concentrated on all the arrangements," Mary Lynn said, "that the kids reaction -- their enthusiasm and interest -- really didn't strike me until I saw them the day of the planting. They loved choosing 'their tree', selecting one of the pre-dug holes to plant it, and helping with the actual process. Some of them brought their parents back that evening or the next day to see 'their tree', and even had pictures taken standing by it! It was really an eye-opener for me."

Mary Lynn said she was reminded of the quote, "Show me a person who in youth planted a tree that has lived and flourished and we'll show you a friend of trees and forest culture" (John B. Peaslee).

"I knew tree planting was



Mike Eisele of the NRS staff, center holding tree, and some of the enthusiastic students assisting with the tree-planting project.

important," she said, "but seeing the kids so involved and becoming not only aware of how it was done, but also of the importance of it was really a lesson for me, too."

"I guess you could say the educator was being educated", she concluded.

Russ Kurth of the NRCS and one of the local project committee members, commented:

"This was a very good learning experience for the kids and the volunteers who helped."

The kids learned the proper way to plant and care for a tree. The adults learned that the kids want to do their part to make this a better place to live.

"As the trees grow, we will observe their different growth habits, shape and color of fall leaves. I am sure that some people will be asking 'What type of tree is that? I would like to plant one in my yard.' This, plus the expression on the kids faces as they planted the trees, makes it all worth the time and effort."

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Resource Planner

Corn's Comeback Cousin

Eastern gamagrass is a cousin to corn that thrives without annual replanting, withstands soggy soils, and is drought resistant. Eastern gamagrass grows in bunches up to 8 feet high, and is an excellent cover for wildlife while reducing soil erosion.

Grain from eastern gamagrass, has a nutty flavor and about a 30-percent protein content that is rich in the essential amino acid, methionine, which livestock will eat in preference to all other grasses.

It is so palatable that they will eat it off into the ground so that it cannot exist in a pasture with uncontrolled grazing. Rotational grazing among pastures with pure stands prevents livestock from overgrazing lush, new growth while leaving tall clumps of old growth.

Gamagrass should not be grazed below 10 to 12 inches. Cattle should be removed from the pastures no later than 45 days before

the first frost, to allow ample time for regrowth.

In 1974, NRCS released to plant breeders the first experimental strain of eastern gamagrass germplasm, PMK-24, developed from an assemblage of seed collections from 70 locations in Kansas and Oklahoma.

Some of the benefits to the grass farmer are that it is a warm season grass which greens up about as soon as many of the cool season grasses, yet gives the benefit of warm season grass during July and August.

It is adaptable to most of the cultivated land in the contiguous United States. PMK-24 is growing at Rochester, Minn. and Bismarck, N. D.



Darrell Stamp, chairman of East Pott. SWCD commissioners, presents award to Tom Scheffler, scholarship winner.

Scholarship award winner

by Michelle D. Zimmerman
County Resource Planner

The 1966 East Pottawattamie SWCD scholarship winner was Tom Scheffler from Hancock. The scholarship will be used to further the award winner's education at the college level.

Criteria considered for this scholarship is service, character, leadership, an interest in conservation, and scholastic achievement.

The scholarship committee views the applicants interested in agricultural related careers as a prerequisite.

Tom has volunteered numerous hours in the East Pottawattamie office, learning the technical aspects, such as measuring crop residue, laying out terraces and contour bufferstrips. Tom was raised on the family farm.

Some of his extra-

curricular activities revolved around wrestling, band (jazz, concert and marching), school plays, National Honor Society and he was a 4-H member for 9 years. He is also very active in his church.

Some of Tom's hobbies are antique tractor restoration, woodworking, drafting and reading.

He is enrolled at Iowa State University in Ames, majoring in agronomy. He was also recipient of the Iowa Association of Soil and Water District Commissioners Auxiliary scholarship.

Congratulations, Tom!

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District wins Education Award!

by Michelle Zimmerman
County Resource Planner

East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District recently received word that they have won the 1996 District Education of the Year award.

This district has an active and varied educational program for local schools. Some of the programs include providing assistance to Walnut High School for a wetland restoration project, assisting Riverside North Elementary in rejuvenating an outdoor classroom, and presenting a puppet show to lower elementary grades by demonstrating contouring and ephemeral erosion.

Another tool used by the district is the ground-water flow model, which demonstrates water quality.

Activity books showing the benefits of earthworms were provided by the district and distributed to the students.

Crock Pot Potato Soup

by Becky Lockwood
State Sec., Oakland

24 ounce frozen hashbrowns (O'Brien)
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 can cream of potato soup
2 cans condensed milk
1 T margarine
1/4 cup chopped carrots
1/4 cup chopped celery
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/2 tsp. dill
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 tsp. chives
1/2 cup (plus) Velveeta Cheese
Crumbled bacon (optional)
Combine in Crockpot and cook on low 6 hours.

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East Pottawattamie SWCD

Terms of two SWCD board of commissioners to expire

The terms of two East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners: Bernie Bolton, Belknap Township, and Terry Gleaves, Center Township, will expire at noon, January 1, 1997. Both are of Oakland.

Any qualified elector residing in the soil and water conservation district, which is all of East Pottawattamie County including cities and towns, is eligible for the office of commissioner, except that no more than one commissioner may be a resident of any one township.

Incumbent commissioners are Darrell Stamp, Lincoln Township; Marlyn Von Wiehe, Carson Township and Russ Brandes, James township. Residents of these townships, therefore, would not be eligible for office at this time.

Prospective candidates seeking the office of soil and water conservation district commissioner must file nomination petitions in the same manner as do candidates for other elective positions at the general election, except that no political

party is designated. Nomination petitions may be obtained from the County Auditor.

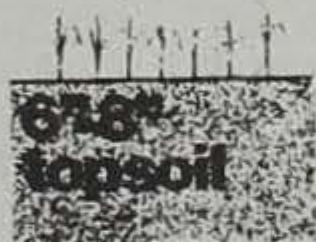
The petitions, signed by 25 eligible electors, must be filed with the County Auditor at the Pottawattamie County Courthouse no later than 5 p.m. on August 28, 1996.

Individuals elected in November will serve a term of four years, beginning January 1, 1997. Soil and water conservation district commissioners serve without salary and guide the overall soil and water conservation program in the county.

For further information pertaining to the responsibilities of the position, contact the Pottawattamie SWCD, 321 Oakland Avenue, Oakland, 482-6408.



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Today

Field Day at Botna Bend

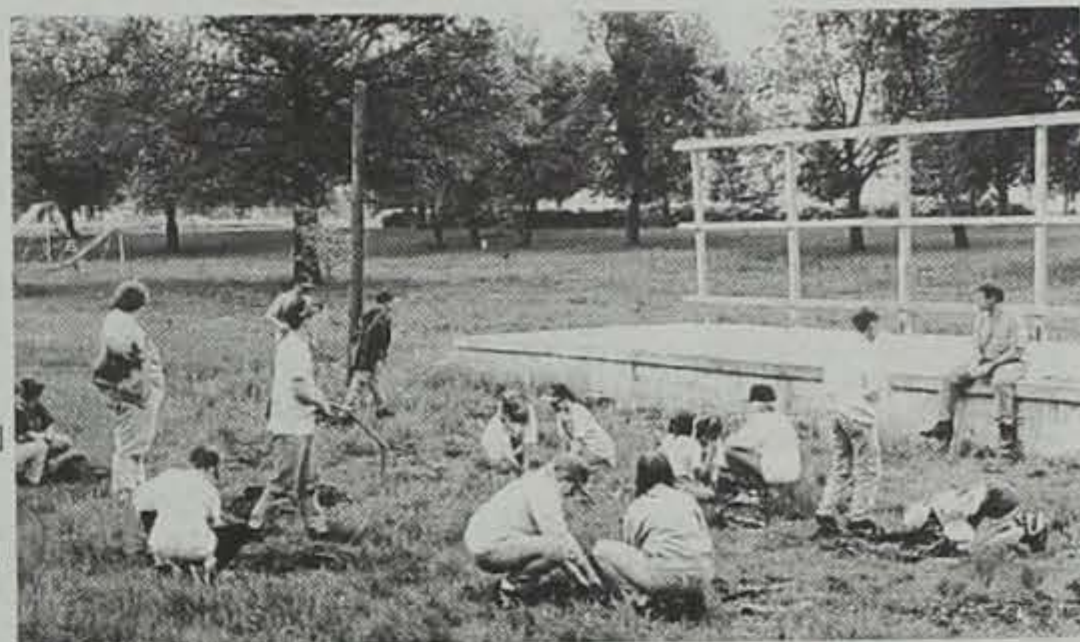
by Michelle Zimmerman
County Resource Planner

Botna Bend Park was a classroom for a day in mid-May. Sixth grade students from AvoHa and Walnut, and also 5th grade students from Riverside participated in a conservation education field day, which was held May 22.

The field day was sponsored by the East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District. Presentations were made by the Department of Natural Resources, the District Forester, East Pott. NRCS staff, and local volunteers.

Topics included were: surviving in the great outdoors, water quality, soil types/soil makeup, identification of the different fish found in rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes in Iowa, tree comparison and planting of seedlings, and the discussion of conservation and wildlife.

This field day is an annual event which increases the awareness of the environment.



Pat Schoeller, one of the instructors at Botna Bend Field Day, waiting to see which group can get their camp fire started first.



Joe Schwartz of Iowa DNR shows different kinds of fish found in Iowa streams to students during conservation Field Day at Botna Bend Park.

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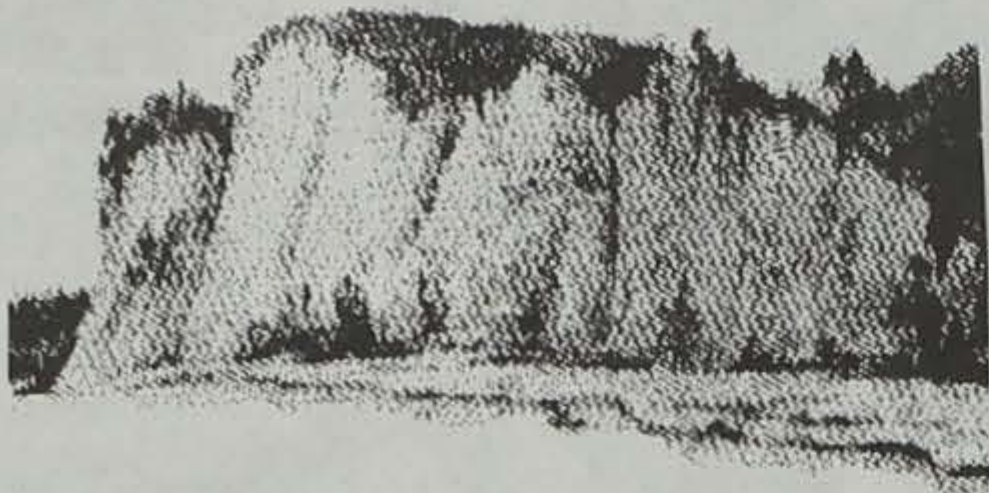
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A vision for our Loess Hills

by Chris Williams
 Pott. County Naturalist

The Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, The Black Hills, and many other national parks share many things in common: valuable natural resources, historic treasures, and a place for all to come and enjoy our country's natural beauty. The most important feature these parks share is that they have been preserved for us and future generations to enjoy. The national parks system was created through the long term vision of such great leaders as President Theodore Roosevelt and many others. These leaders knew that human activity might destroy such beauty and that everyone and every generation after them has a right to behold such national treasures.

Although, Pottawattamie County has no geysers or faces of presidents carved in stone, we are fortunate to have our own, "one of a kind", treasure in the Loess Hills. Currently, we are faced with discussions concerning how we might protect and preserve our own historic natural resources.

Though this issue can become clouded and complicated, there still remains simply one question to answer. What should our vision be? What we decide will show everyone that travels through our cities and county what we, as a community, respect, value, and cherish.

The future of these "Fragile Giants" is literally in our hands.

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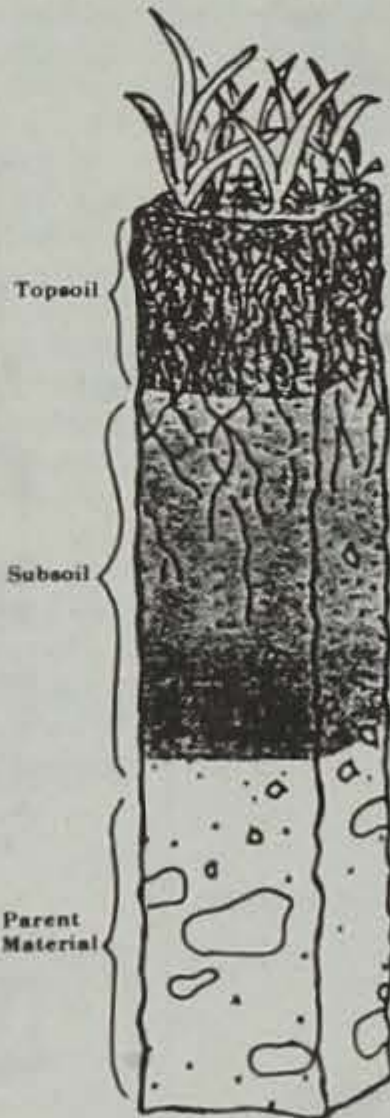


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East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District would like to announce Karen Hotze of Grove Township, and Jeff Krueger of Layton Township as the two new assistants to the board! They bring to the board many years of farming experience and new ideas.

Karen Hotze farms 1,600 acres with her brother. Karen and Keith no-till both corn and soybeans. Some other conservation practices include: terraces, field borders, and waterways. They also finish 2,400 hogs a year. Karen is an Associate Director for Farm Service Co-op, and she is also a trustee of Presbyterian Church in Carson. Some of Karen's hobbies include horse back riding, walking, biking, and just being outdoors.



Volunteers In
 Protecting Soil

New Assistant Commissioners

by Michelle D. Zimmerman
 County Resource Planner

Jeff Krueger is an avid no-tiller along with installing other conservation practices.

His livestock operations consist of hogs, sheep, and beef cattle. Jeff's family includes his wife, Leanne, Nicholas - 15, and Scott - 11. Jeff's hobbies include playing ball with his kids and snow skiing. His community activities involve Assistant Scout Master of Boys Scout, coaching little league baseball and softball, and president of the church council at Peace United Church of Christ.

An assistant commissioner is a volunteer conservation promoter in the community, helping direct such activities as field days and educational meetings. They also would help distribute conservation materials to the public by promoting conservation contests and awards programs.

As assistant commissioners, Karen and Jeff will help decide the direction of soil and water conservation programs in the county, and will have the

opportunity to influence state and national conservation programs.

Their involvement will include activities such as soil loss complaints, establishing acceptable soil loss limits, publishing an annual report, approving soil conservation plans, and assisting in the management for district funds and personnel.

Among other things, Jeff and Karen will take part in regular monthly meetings, become knowledgeable of the soil and water conservation laws and programs, develop and carry out soil and water resource conservation plans, and help direct financial incentive programs.

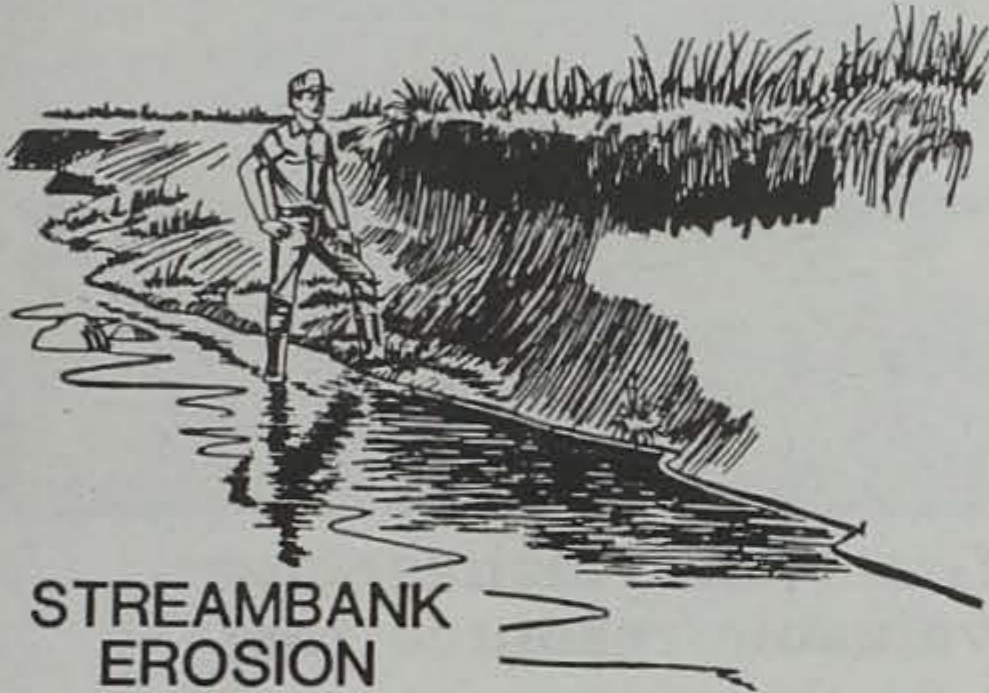
Each district is governed by five commissioners who are elected at general elections on a nonpartisan basis for staggered four-year terms. Only one commissioner may reside in any single township. Call or visit your local district office for more information about becoming a commissioner.

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STREAMBANK EROSION

Cutbacks and Overfalls

by Clair Acker
State Cons. Tech.

One erosion problem that has been increasing over a number of years is the degradation of local streams causing cutbacks and overfalls to slowly work up small watersheds.

These cutbacks, varying in size from 3 feet to some over 30 feet resulting in loss of farmland, accessibility to fields, and large quantities of soil lost.

Because of the difficulty and expense of controlling these types of erosion problems, the East Pottawattamie SWCD is putting an emphasis on helping area landowners to economically control the smaller problem areas. We will be looking at and using many different ideas and approaches that have been developed and used in different parts of the Midwest so as to best handle the problem in a cost effective manner. The Commissioners have made local option sales tax funds available to cost share on these projects or state funds may be used in some instances. Smaller structures are cost shared 50% up to \$2,000 and earthen structures with tube are cost shared 50% up to \$4,000.

We presently are working sixteen different projects ranging from cattle panel wiers on 3' cutbacks to several ponds. If you have an area that you feels needs attention and would like to do something in the next six months to a year please call us at (712)482-6408 and we will be glad to visit with you about your project.

Good news in conservation!

by LeRoy Brown
State Conservationist

More progress has been made in resource conservation in Iowa recently than at any other time in history.

That shows that Iowans are proud of their land, and are committed to conservation. Each day, the conservation efforts of farmers are more evident.

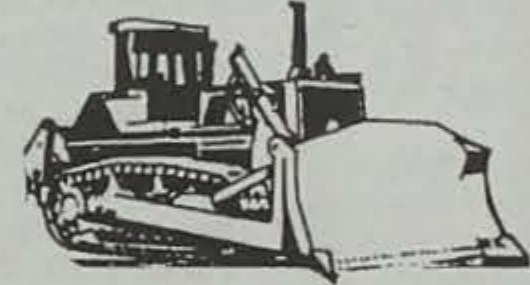
There are more trees, more wildlife habitat, more wetlands, more land protected with conservation tillage practices, more grass, more land protected with a variety of conservation measures -- in general more natural resources care in Iowa than at any time in recent history.

The progress that has been made has truly been at a record pace. Lester Brown of the World Watch Institute has said that the reduction of soil erosion may well be the most dramatic success story of this decade.

Soil erosion in Iowa has been cut 35 percent recently, the state's farmers lead the nation in many aspects of wetland restoration, and there are many, many examples of conservation progress by farmers in the state.

NRCS is looking forward to next year. There will be some challenges from the new Farm Bill, but the natural resources in Iowa continue to improve as more people get involved in conservation efforts. As conservation work on the land continues to build, it will be increasingly evident that the conservation ethic is alive and well in Iowa.

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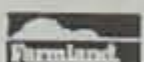
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First grade students celebrate Arbor Day

by Julia Gubbels
Resource Planner

Sixteen schools participated in the Arbor Day First Tree Program on April 26. Arbor Day is a special day set aside to show love of trees.

Approximately 1300 Black Hills Spruce trees were donated by Midwest Walnut for first grade students.

A brief presentation was made to the students prior to the distribution of the trees. Included was a history of Arbor Day, the importance of trees, and basic planting instructions and care.

Presentations were made by FFA instructors, West Pott. Extension office and Master Gardeners personnel, and members of the NRCS staff.

Thank you to those individuals who assisted with the Arbor Day program, and Midwest Walnut for donation of the trees!

Schulze receives honor

by Julia Gubbels
County Resource Planner

Congratulations, Mr. Schulze!

Robert Schulze was selected as the Secondary Conservation Education Teacher of the Year. He is instructor of vocational education and is the special projects coordinator at Iowa School for the Deaf in Council Bluffs.

Schulze has been the forerunner in establishing the twelve-acre outdoor classroom and nature center on the ISD campus. The nature center is located east of Interstate 29 on Highway 92.

"Bob" and the students have planted trees, shrubs and native prairie forbs and grasses. Included in the nature area is a two-acre wetland, an orchard, prairie seeding and an arboretum. Also, a windmill was restored to ensure a water supply to the wetland. Restoration of the windmill

was done by the students, with Bob's supervision.

Since the area is located near the Wabash Trace Trail, the public will also be able to visit the ISD Nature Center.

Some of Bob's activities and memberships include President of the Pottawattamie County Mormon Trail Association of S.W. Iowa; a member of Pheasants Forever, Quail Unlimited, Ducks Unlimited, the Iowa Mormon Trail Association and the Council Bluffs Urban Trails Association.

His conservation efforts continue at home, where he has planted numerous trees and shrubs around the family acreage.

Once again congratulations, Bob, for all your hard work and enthusiasm, and for a job well done.



Grassland management valuable resource tool

By Henry Tordoff: Soil Conservationist

The Natural Resources Conservation Service currently provides technical assistance in grassland management for farmers and ranchers in the area.

Many of the farmers requesting help have low-producing bluegrass pastures with erosion problems. They require help in controlling gullies, and need a way to produce more grass for their livestock.

Farmers also become concerned during the hot summer months when pastures with cool season grasses become dormant and fail to provide the forage needed for the livestock.

Pastures which are properly managed will usually supply forage for 20 to 30 percent more livestock than a poorly maintained system. The additional grass cover will also eliminate most erosion problems. With good management, grass will form a dense sod which literally "ties the soil together" and prevents erosion. A good example would be Smooth Brome grass, which has about 6700 pounds of roots per acre, compared to corn, which has only about 1300 pounds of roots per acre. That is why a good, well-managed pasture has very little water runoff and almost zero erosion.

Good grassland management involves several considerations, including the decision about

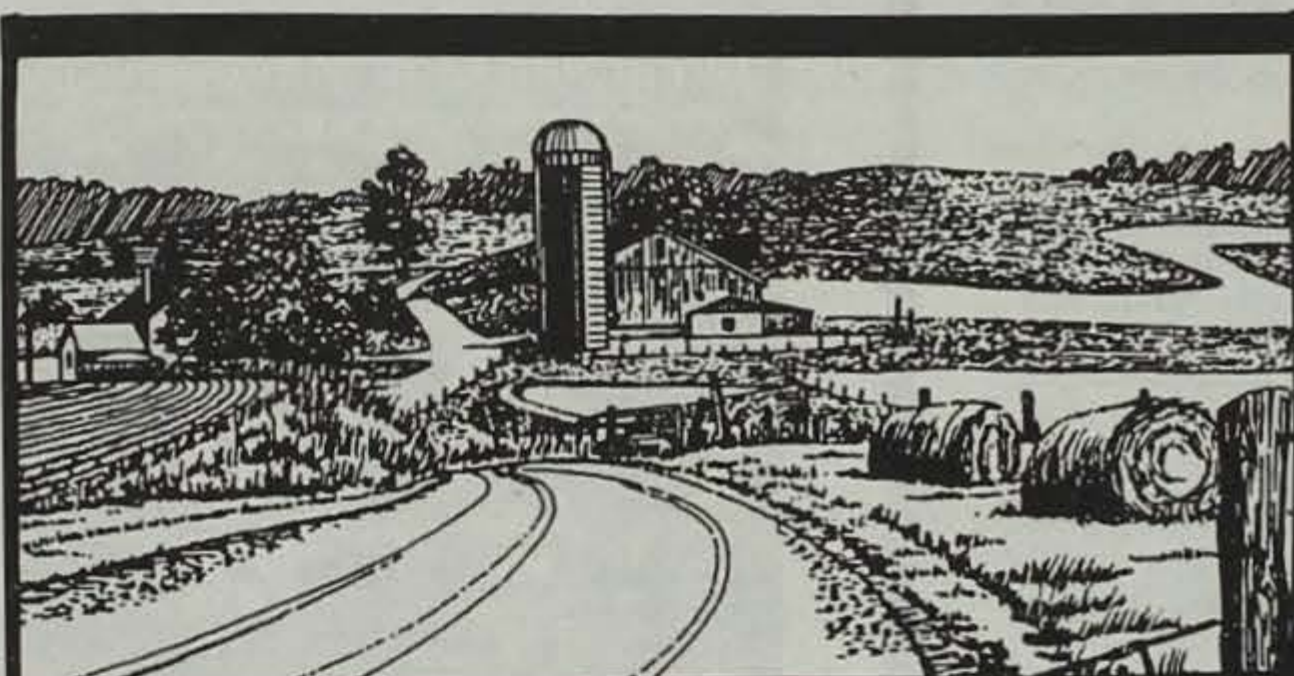
the type and species of grasses and legumes best suited for the soil, and of course, the numbers and kinds of livestock and how long they should be allowed to graze in each field.

Plants all differ in regard to their growth habits, their suitability to soils, and the time of the year during which they provide the most forage. A good grassland management plan shows which grasses to use, how many animals to put in each field, and when to move them to the next.

Some farmers will let their animals graze warm season grasses, such as Switchgrass and Big Bluestem, in hot summer months, and use the cool season grasses, such as Smooth Brome grass, in the spring and fall. Warm season grasses will provide excellent forage if managed properly and not overgrazed. Stockpiling grass for use by livestock in late fall and early winter is also being recommended and carried out by some pasture managers.

In some counties, financial cost-sharing is available, but application must be made prior to establishing a grazing system, and the plan must be approved by NRCS.

Farmers interested in receiving assistance with grassland management are encouraged to call their district conservation office.



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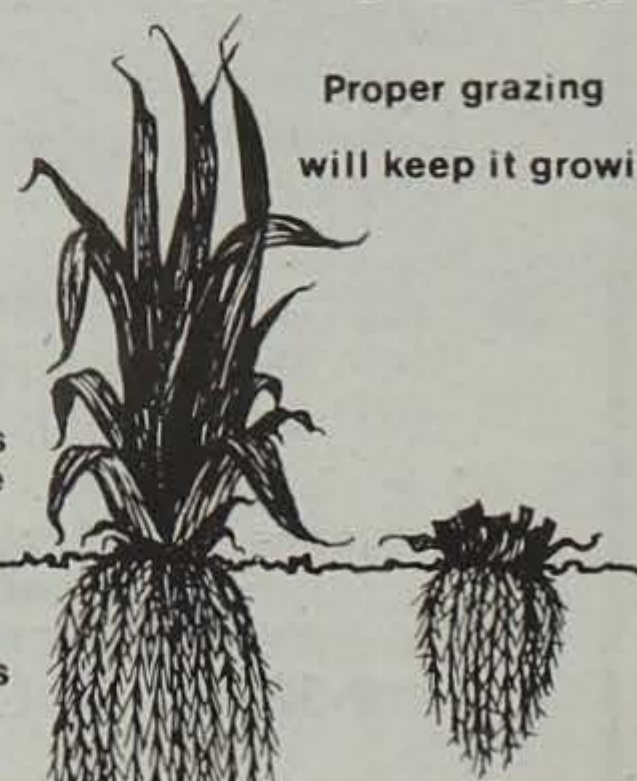
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Crop residue management

by Tom Bottoms
Soil Cons. Tech.

Residue cover can greatly reduce soil loss and erosion. Crop residue management is very important for productivity and profitability.

The main purpose of crop residue is to protect the ground surface from the impact of raindrops and other precipitation.

Other benefits of residue cover include conserving soil moisture, improving soil infiltration, and providing cover and food for wildlife.

Residue cover can vary from year to year depending on weather conditions, soil type, tillage speed, tillage depth and the number of passes and type of tillage operations.

Some ways to leave more residue on the soil surface are as follows:

- do tillage in the spring
- reduce tillage passes
- do not till when it is too wet
- experiment with no-till.

With residue management, a farmer has the means to increase his profit with very little change in operation procedures.

VIPS



Cost-share sign-up

A common misconception is that if someone signs up once for cost-share, their name will remain on the list for succeeding years. This is not the case. In order for anyone to receive cost-share, they must sign up **every** year.

Application may be made at the district office any time after January 1 of each year. The West Pott SWCD has a point system for priority approval. Those signing up January through October receive 1 point; November and December sign-ups receive zero points.

It is to the farmer or landowner's advantage to sign up, even though they do not intend to build terraces each year. The advantage is that those doing so will receive one point for signing up for the prior year.

Applications are approved in February for spring construction; in July for summer construction and August for fall construction.

Also, beginning the summer of 1996, state funds are available for terrace construction on CRP contracts which expire this year. Construction can be begun 90 days prior to the expiration date.

Tillage data survey results

Each year, districts assist the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) in collecting tillage data. This data is collected during a road survey by each field office.

The route is to be representative and include all parts of the county. It consists of approximately 6 miles surveyed in each township. Each corn and soybean field adjacent to the road along the route (both sides of the road) is included in the inventory. This tillage survey allows the counties and the states to compare the yearly results, and predict possible trends.

This year's results indicate a decrease in the number of fields planted to no-till corn and soybeans. With the decrease of no-till fields, there was an increase in mulch-till and reduced-till.

The latter, however, may be due to a wet spring last year, or other variables.

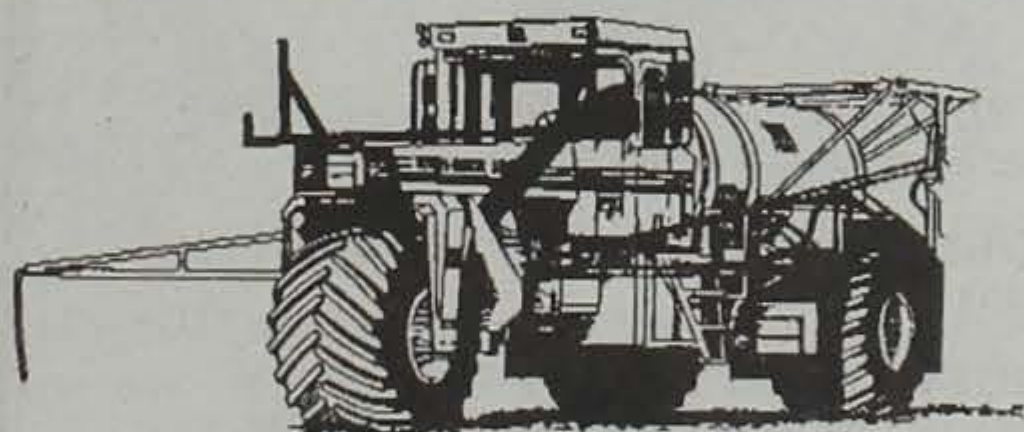


District poster winners

Division winners in the Conservation Poster Contest included, from left to right, Rebecca Lauver, grades 7-9; Melina Cohen, grades K-1; Daryn Moriss, grades 4-6; and (not pictured) Karl Wellman, grades 2-3. Moriss was also named the overall winner for the district. The entries were advanced to the regional competition.

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Some of the terraces on the Brandt farm, extending far into the distance.

Brandts build "miles of terraces" to protect highly erodible land

by Lou Waite
NRCS aide/PR

David Brandt of Keg Creek Township, West Pott. county, is continuing a tradition established by his father and grandfather before him: he is conserving the land and preserving the way of life he prefers for himself and his family.

It wasn't always the case, as David is first to admit. After receiving his degree in engineering from Iowa State, David was employed for some years by a large company in an urban area. But when his father was ready to retire, David readily agreed to come home and take over the farming operation. It was a decision he says he has "never regretted."

David's father, Jack, still enjoys "helping out" when needed, and his assistance is appreciated by his son. The farm is among a large number of tracts in the area owned by members of the same family, and is now known as the Brandt Land Company. This may be the reason that David's ties to tradition and to the soil are so strong.

David has made some changes in the operation, with his father's blessings. Once the existing "rolling hills" were covered by grasses and legumes, but now most of those areas have been sodbusted and converted to cropland. This has necessitated the construction of miles of terraces, a continuation of a terrace program begun years ago.

In 1995, 29,135 feet of terraces were completed, or a total of 5.5 miles. This was in addition to 35,000 feet of

terraces which already existed on the 560 acre farm. Also built were two dams and resulting ponds, with various other conservation measures having been installed. The recent construction was done without cost-share funds!

David follows a corn/bean rotation, using minimum-till and no-till, and Lois Crawford of West Pottawattamie NRCS said the farm is now in "complete compliance" according to FSA requirements.

Lois has worked closely with the Brandts in devising a conservation plan and she did the planning, surveying, designing and layout of the terraces.

"I have appreciated Lois's help", David said with a chuckle, "because when I first started, I sure as heck didn't know what I needed to be doing. It was indeed an adventure in planting the first time, for there are some long, long rows out there!"

David went on to state that he has always felt he had a really good relationship with everyone at the (NRCS) office. "They are always willing and able to answer my questions and provide assistance when I asked for it", he said, "and that has been a tremendous help to me."

David and his wife, Beverly, have two children: Julie 8 and Michael 7, who are students in the Treynor school system.

David and Beverly also have a unique hobby - one which perhaps does not readily relate to their chosen occupation. They both enjoy scuba diving, and travel around the world seeking new deep sea areas to explore. Among these have been the British Virgin

Islands, Belize, Australia, Micronesia and Grand Cayman Island, among others.

David commented that Castro demands a fee be paid in order for the plane to pass over Cuba to reach the Caymans, which lie off the coast of that country. "If Castro hasn't been paid," David said with a wry grin, "then the plane has to go around."



David Brandt and Lois Crawford, Soil Conservation Technician.

The Brandts also dive closer to home, and twice monthly clean the aquatic facilities at the Henry Doorly Zoo, along with other volunteer duties. David commented "We have always been interested in seeing the Zoo expand and develop, and enjoy doing what we can to help."

Future plans for the Brandts include diving in New Guinea, where they hope to find even more colorful ocean scenery and exotic sea creatures.

And back on the farm, they plan to stock their ponds with bluegill, catfish and bass; continue their dedication to conservation concerns, and enjoy the good life away from the city hustle and bustle.

David, however, gazing out over the fields he tends so

faithfully, mused that he "might find a part-time job in hydraulic engineering somewhere".

Perhaps that may be to keep in touch with another aspect of his life, but it also points out that young farmers of today are well educated, and well aware of what's going on in the rest of the world.

To the personnel of NRCS, they are also the hope of the future.



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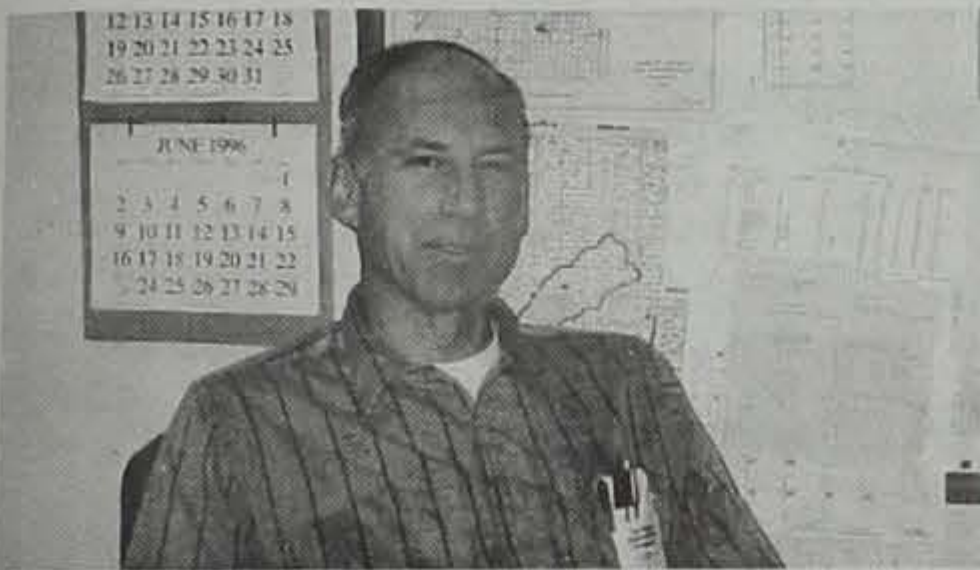


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Seidel joins NRCS staff at Harlan office

by Joann Schwery
Secretary

The Shelby county commissioners and staff wish to welcome Ed Seidel, Soil Conservationist, who joined the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Harlan on April 1. Ed is a native of Troy Missouri, and became interested in conservation when a student at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

His wife, Sharon, was indirectly responsible, for while she was serving as tutor for the son of an SCS employee, the father of her pupil suggested that Ed apply for a summer internship

with SCS. Ed did so, was accepted, and as may be said, "never looked back."

After receiving his degree in Agronomy, Ed has served the past 21 years with what was until recently the Soil and Water Conservation Service.

He was previously located in Jefferson, Osceola and Harrison counties in Iowa before his transfer to Shelby.

Ed is also an apiarist, an avid cyclist and flower gardener, along with other hobbies and avocations.

He and his wife still reside in Logan at the present time. They have two daughters: Mary, who will be a freshman at Southwest

Conservation plan is confidential, unless permission given

Question: If someone comes into the NRCS office and wants to see the conservation plan for a tract of land that they have heard is for sale or rent, can it be shown to them?

Answer: The conservation plan is confidential to the landowner and operator, unless written permission has been given by the owner or farm manager. The owner can either make the permission note specific for an individual, or a blanket approval for any interested parties.

We can show an aerial photo, a soils map and a contour map of any section of land. By studying these, a lot can be learned about a tract. Also remember that a new landowner or operator can revise the plan to fit their own needs, as long as the soil loss is down to the required level. Catalogs are available which have several

Baptist College in Boliver, MO this fall, and Cindy, who will be a senior at Logan-Magnolia high school.

Status reviews can show farmer is "doing a good job"

by Shirley Frederiksen
Shelby District Conservationist

Status reviews are done each year to compare the schedule of conservation practices in your plan with the progress you have made in actually applying those practices.

Shelby county has around 60 status reviews each year, and if 1996 is similar to other years, we expect over 90 percent of those having status reviews to be found "actively applying their conservation plans".

Status reviews provide us with an opportunity to jointly discuss your plan and farming operation. Sometimes we can offer alternatives or options which have worked for other producers.

One of the best things about my job is getting out into the country and being able to see so many different types of operations. Offering farmers different options to control erosion is what the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is all about.

Status reviews are usually done in May and June or as soon as the crops are all planted. Status reviews give the NRCS a chance to tell you what a good job you are doing, but it is also our responsibility to show you some areas with room for improvement, if any.

With over 90 percent of the farmers actively applying their plans in Shelby county, you can tell we have been saying "good job" a lot.

possible systems listed for each slope group.

We are open to helping you learn if a conservation plan on a potential new farm will work in your operation, but we can only show you so much without written

permission from the owner or farm manager.

Please obtain a letter of permission before requesting to see the actual conservation plan on a piece of land for sale or rent.

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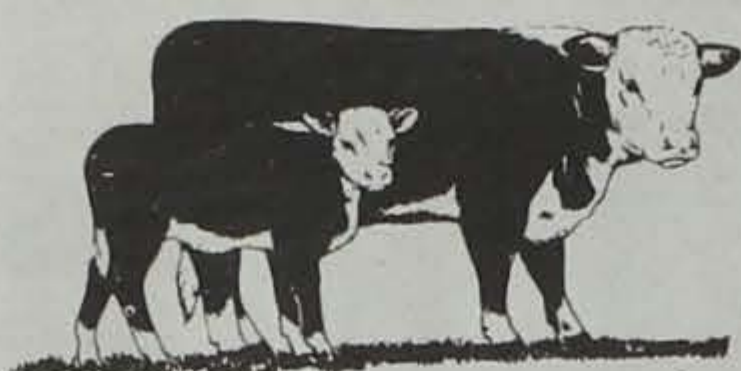
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Rotational grazing increases profit, with some planning

by Ed Seidel, Soil Conservationist

Farmers are finding that a little planning and some fence go a long way toward making their cattle operations more profitable.

With a planned grazing system, one pasture is divided with fences into two or more pastures or paddocks. Cattle are moved from paddock to paddock on a prearranged schedule, based on forage availability and livestock nutrition needs.

Planned grazing systems provide a number of benefits. Farmers who rotate their cattle from paddock to paddock improve the vegetative cover in all of the pastures. That reduces erosion and improves water quality. At the same time, it increases harvest efficiency and helps ensure adequate forage throughout the grazing season.

A planned grazing system also increases forage quality and production, which thereby improves profits. Manure is also distributed more evenly as a result of rotating the cattle.

NRCS can help farmers develop planned grazing systems. Some things to consider include the availability of good water, the mixture of grass and legumes best suited to each paddock's soil type, and management alternatives for periods of low forage production.

Some keys to making a planned grazing system work include planning a pasture rotation so the same paddocks are not grazed at the same time year after year, and planning rest periods so each paddock has time to recover and regrow during the growing season.

Farmers will also need to maintain fencing and apply nutrients according to soil tests. They also may need to mow or cut hay during heavy growth periods, and adapt to different herd sizes by updating the rotation schedule and by changing the number and size of paddocks.

District Commissioners

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Wayne Krohn, Fairview Twp.
Edward Lapke, Grove Twp.

Assistant Commissioners

Barry Deuel Wayne Hansen
Cyrus Monson Micky Leinen
Joe Reischl

Personnel

Shirley Frederiksen, District
Conservationist
Edward Seidel,
Soil Conservationist
Jeff Darling,
Soil Cons. Technician
Joni Schwery,
Soil Cons. Technician
Donna Arkfeld,
Soil Cons. Technician
Joann Schulte, Secretary
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Some of the students at the outdoor classroom listen to District Conservationist Shirley Frederiksen, left foreground, as she conducts one of the sessions of the day. Other NRCS personnel are Ed Seidel, left background, and Joni Schwery (white sweatshirt) center background.

"Conservation Days" held at Prairie Rose State Park

"Conservation Days" were held May 15 at the Prairie Rose State Park. Attending the outdoor classroom were 6th grade students and their teachers from Shelby County schools.

A total of 260 were in attendance, and participated in a variety of activities, which were set up around the park and lake.

These included a nature walk, identifying animal furs, fishing techniques, history of Prairie Rose State Park, fish identification, tree plantings, wildlife, how pollution affects the groundwater, and how to conserve the soil.

Each station had "hands-on" experience, for example, at the soil station, students had to make dirt by knocking two rocks together.

Instructors for the day were from the Department of Natural Resources, Harlan FFA Chapter, Harlan School District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Ron Pethoud, Harlan Middle School instructor, has been organizing the event for more than 25 years.

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Tips for tree care during summertime

After you have planted your new trees, there are a few things which can be done to ensure that they will thrive this summer.

1) Sometime what you don't do to newly transplanted stock is just as important as what you do. Bare root stock should **not** be fertilized at planting time. The roots are very fragile and susceptible to burning.

2) Spring planted stock can be fertilized in the fall of the first year or the next spring, with the proper fertilizer for the species.

3) If you didn't leave a ditched area around the tree to collect water when you planted it, build one and remove the sod to prevent

competition for water and nutrients.

4) Tree mats or mulch such as wood chips, grass clippings, straw or even newspapers will do to hold moisture in the ground and prevent weed pressure.

5) Tree shelters can really help get new plantings off to a quick start and will also act as protection against animal browsing and windburn.

6) A good idea anytime, but for sure the first couple of years, is to make sure your plants get one inch of water every ten days and in the late fall increase it to soaking the ground every week until the ground freezes.

Farmers do have a choice: will it be grass, or gullies?

Almost every farm has at least one -- a natural drainageway which tends to erode. But fortunately for farmers, they don't have to accept the scars inflicted by flowing water. They can choose between grass or gullies.

Shirley Frederiksen, Shelby district conservationist, said grassed waterways are an excellent method of correcting gully problems and preventing new gullies from forming in natural drainage areas.

Grassed waterways are created by grading and shaping a natural drainageway to form a smooth, bowl-shaped channel. This area is seeded to sod-forming grasses.

"Runoff water which flows down the drainageway goes across the grass rather than tearing away soil and forming a larger gully," Frederiksen said. "An outlet often is installed at the base of the area to

stabilize the waterway and prevent a new gully from forming."

She explained that the grass cover protects the drainageway from gully erosion and acts as a filter, absorbing some of the chemicals and nutrients contained in the runoff water. The vegetation also provides cover for small birds and animals.

NRCS provides assistance to farmers who would like to solve their gully problems. Conservationists and technicians help farmers plan conservation systems and also prepare the design

and specifications for them.

Some things which will be included will be finding a proper outlet for surface runoff at the bottom of the waterway, the possible need for tile drainage to help establish vegetation in the waterway, and whether other soil conservation measures will be needed to prevent siltation.

Frederiksen said that grassed waterways require only a few "courtesies" to help them keep in good shape. These include lifting farm implements out of the ground and turning off spray equipment when crossing them; not using them as roadways; fertilizing them as needed.

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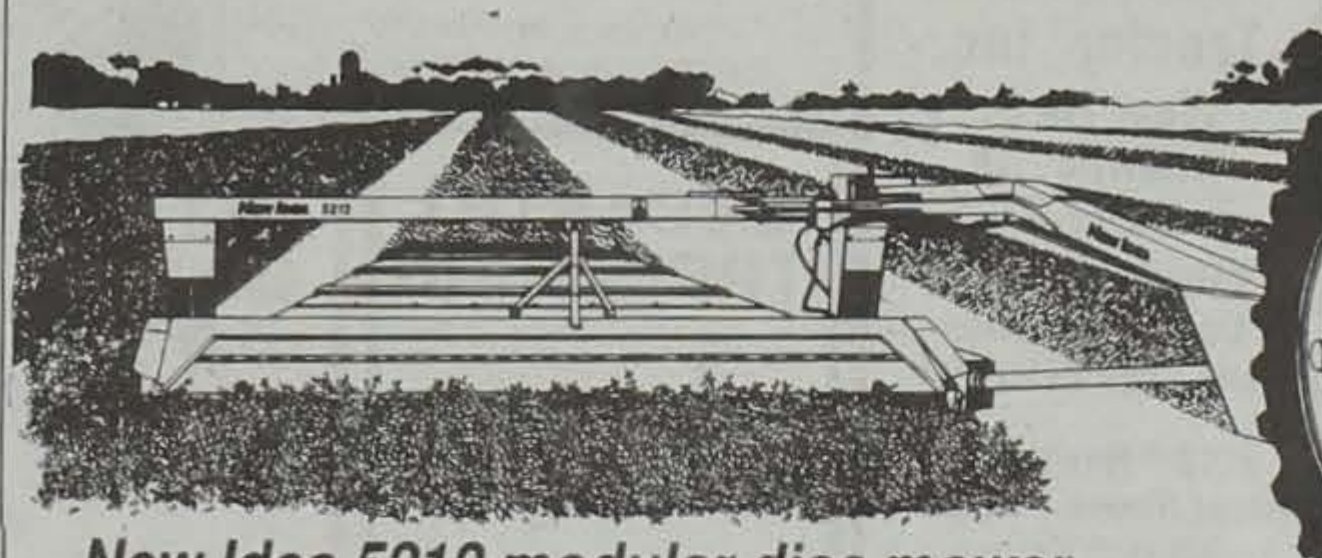
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Consider becoming a soil & water conservation district commissioner

Conservation Boards guide the Conservation District with their ideas and leadership. Commissioners attend monthly meetings and guide the conservation emphasis by setting policy and procedures.

Commissioners decide how cost-share funds are distributed and what practices are eligible for cost-share.

The Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation District is looking for individuals to join its board of commissioners.

They encourage women, minorities and non-farm producers to consider becoming an active participant in conservation issues.

Commissioners are involved with traditional conservation practices such as terraces, ponds, waterways and crop residue management, but the local commissioners also are involved with adult and youth education, farm & non-farm tours, educational tours, newsletters,



**Don Bladt, Chairman
Shelby County SWCD**

windbreaks and tree plantings, wildlife, wetlands and water quality.

Time spent at this job is in attending a monthly meeting and other occasional sessions, or a trip to the office for specific projects.

Those interested in becoming more active toward conservation interests and issues may attend one of the monthly meetings and observe what is discussed and considered by the commissioners.

"We look forward to having some innovative

ideas and input from new members," commented Shirley Frederiksen, District Conservationist.

Don Bladt, chairman of the Shelby district board of commissioners, said he has found his long tenure with the group to be "very interesting".

"I have found it interesting to have some input toward preserving and improving land and water quality for future generations to enjoy," he said, "and encouraging new farming techniques and methods by distribution and direction of funding for these purposes.

"Probably the most interesting has been getting to know more about the people and the land in the county," Bladt concluded.



Left to right, Marie Reinig, Emily Roecker, Tony Bruck.

433 students participate in district annual poster contest

The annual poster contest, sponsored by the Shelby County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Shelby County Conservation Board was judged by the wives of the SWCD commissioners on May 8.

There were 433 students participating from the Shelby County area.

First place winners were:
 3rd grade - Maria Reinig (Tom & Denise) Portsmouth, attends St. Mary's school.
 4th grade - Tony Bruck (Duane & Alice), Earling, attends St. Joseph's school.
 5th grade - Emily Roecker (Greg & Karla), Harlan, attends St. Michael's school.



Spring 1996 conservation practices accomplishments for Shelby county

Terraces - Shelby county has had a busy spring construction season; 30 landowners built 76,745 feet of terraces on their farms. Terraces are still a popular option for many area farmers in controlling soil erosion.

Windbreaks - Seventeen (17) windbreaks were planted in Shelby county. Landowners received 75% cost-share funds from the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program (REAP).

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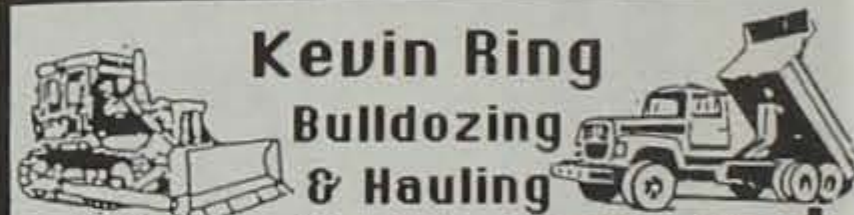
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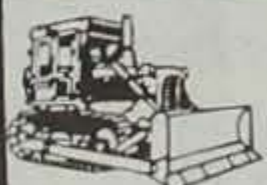
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