



Black Hawk

Soil & Water Conservation

District Newsletter

September 2006



Rebecca Kauten named new Watershed Coordinator

Your Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to say that we recently contracted with Rebecca Kauten as the Coordinator for our two Watershed projects. Ms. Kauten received her master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa. As part of her degree, Ms. Kauten focused her studies on stormwater management and Phase II of the Federal Clean Water Act. Since the last newsletter we received two grants from the Iowa Watershed Improvement Board (WIRB) for two projects. The WIRB funds were part of the \$5 million the legislature appropriated for water quality improvements around the state. The Upper Miller Creek in southern Black Hawk County received

\$68,000 for cost share practices to reduce soil erosion. The Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors are partnering in this effort to prevent siltation in county ditches. The Dry Run Creek runs from rural areas southwest of Cedar Falls through the industrial park, UNI, several residential areas of the city and flows into the Cedar just below the CFU electric generating plant. The Dry Run Creek project received a \$500,000 grant from the WIRB board for education and demonstration projects to improve water quality. Rebecca has been traveling around the county speaking about these two important projects and meeting with key stakeholders to involve our local community in this effort. Please give her a warm welcome and ask how you can personally improve our local water quality.

Earth Science Week Open House

by Sherman Lundy
Geologist for Basic Materials and
District Commissioner

Black Hawk County Soil and Water Conservation District to participate in the Earth Science Week Quarry Dedication and Open House at the former Yokum Quarry located at the intersection of Union and Winslow Roads (1 mile east of Finchford). The District will present programs on Watersheds and Conservation. Other details are listed below:

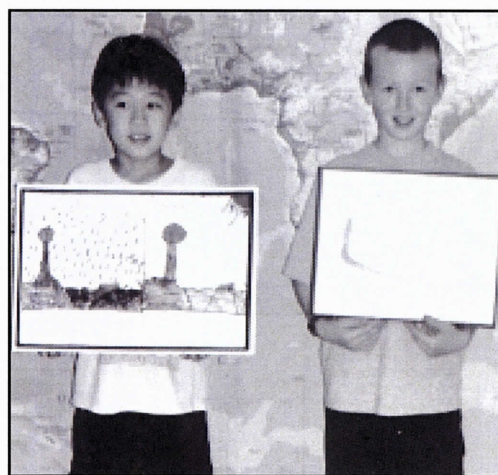
On October 1st, 2006, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Basic Materials Corp., and the Black Hawk County Conservation Board will co-sponsor an EARTH SCIENCE WEEK OPEN HOUSE at the former Yokum Quarry location at the intersection of Winslow and Union Rds., in the northwest part of Black Hawk County. Working with the Black Hawk County Conservation Board, this Quarry site is undergoing reclamation and will be donated to the Conservation Board as the newest County Park.

The theme for this year's Open House and Earth Science Week activities is "Natural Resources," with an emphasis on the idea, "Everyone's an Earth Scientist!" As part of that theme, Natural Resources, Basic Materials Corp., will be presenting the Black Hawk County Conservation Board the Deed to the former Yokum Quarry property to set aside this area for an outdoor Recreation/Conservation/Natural Area County Park to be enjoyed by the public.

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Orange Elementary School Students Win Competition

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District is pleased to announce that Riley Rodemaker has won first place in the Division 2 grade category of the B H S W C D entry in the Conservation District's Auxiliary Poster



Contest and Chongsing Lai won first place in the Division 3 grade division. Both winners are students from the Waterloo Community School District and attend Orange Elementary. Their advisors are teacher Carol Boyce and art instructor Darlene Asmus.

First place winners on the county level advance to compete on the regional level and then can advance to the state and national competition. The theme this year is "Water Wise" and is to promote conservation

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CSP: Reflections of a Participant

CSP: Reflections of a Participant

My name is Earl Canfield. I actively manage and operate a farm in northeast Black Hawk County on land within the Upper Wapsipinicon Watershed. In the spring of 2005, this area of the state was eligible for enrollment into a new US Government-sponsored program called CSP or Conservation Security Program.

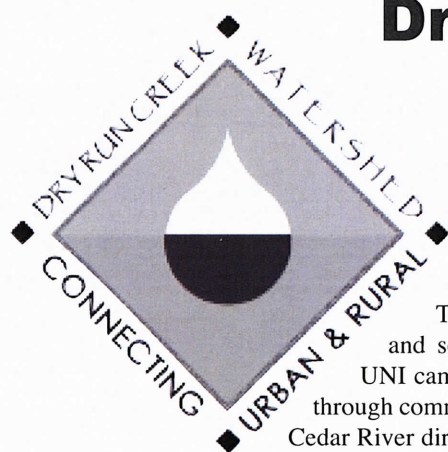
Like most other farmers, I had heard of this program, but didn't really know much about it since it was so new. The local NRCS officials held informational meetings to lay out the details and I attended one. I also had completed an assessment online before attending, which gave me a heads up

on what I would hear. The comments of farmers in attendance that night were all over the place from joy to disgust. I was pleasantly surprised to learn our operation was even more eligible than I thought, but somewhat overwhelmed by the enrollment timetable, information required, and confusion over program details.

I went home and set to work gathering my records and analyzing all the facts to see whether this was worth it or not. I determined that it was and then set up a meeting with the NRCS office to enroll. I discovered through the process that we would be eligible for Tier III thanks to several years of previously developing and maintaining a wide-

range of conservation practices in our operation.

Though we're all kind of skeptical, at first, of "something new from the government", this program has some good long-term benefits. It basically encourages farmers to start and continue a wide range of soil conservation and overall management practices that will help make sure that our land and environment is still safe and viable for productive use by future generations. In a world consumed by short-term gains, it's refreshing to be encouraged to think of the long-term and then also to be rewarded for it. My kids are worth the efforts and so are yours!



Dry Run Creek Watershed Water Quality Project

The Dry Run Creek originates in rural areas west and southwest of Cedar Falls. It flows through the UNI campus, the Cedar Falls Industrial Park and passes through commercial and residential areas before it reaches the Cedar River directly below the CFU power plant. Several years of Iowa Department of Natural Resources water sampling found a

lack of aquatic life and biological activity in the water. Subsequently the IDNR placed the Dry Run Creek on the 303d impaired water body list.

Since 2004, your Black Hawk SWCD has been working diligently to collect specific baseline data on both the creek and on attitudes of the residents that live within the watershed. Earlier this year the State of Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) granted the district \$500,000 over the next three years for a water quality project. One directive of this grant is to work with the city, county, university, state, along with home owner associations, developers and other land owners to reduce impairment loading from storm water runoff. Impairments come from a wide variety of sources. Goose droppings from parks, crop nutrients in sediment from fields and antifreeze from parking lots are a small sampling of the impairments that need to be addressed. Reducing total loadings of the impairments that impact the stream is complicated and will take time.

As part of this project innovative Best Management Practices (BMP'S) like rain gardens in back yards and other green spaces, pervious concrete in parking lots, no till planting in the fields, and constructed wetlands along the creek will be used to increase absorption and slow down storm water run off. Slowing down the run off allows time for infiltration, natural remediation and cooling by the soil before the water moves into the creek.

A creek free of impairments teeming with aquatic life and pristine for children to play in is the ultimate goal of this project. For information on the Dry Run Creek watershed project and how you can be part of the solution please call the district office at 296-3262.

Corn planted this spring in a rye cover crop in the Upper Miller Creek watershed.

Newsletter Sponsorship

Since the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation is a non profit organization we are seeking businesses to help offset publication costs. Your contribution will be greatly appreciated and your business will be recognized for your generosity. Please call the office at 296-3262 for further details.



Farmstead Assessment Available from Iowa Farm Bureau

Farm Bureau members can have a trained expert visit their farm and complete a farmstead self-assessment system developed especially for the rural community. Known as Farm*A*Syst, the program goal is to protect drinking water resources and answer basic compliance questions related to individual farms and acreages.

Individuals can tailor the program by choosing specific topics that fit their property. Topics range from assessing well conditions and household wastewater management to pesticide and fertilizer storage and emergency response planning. Related publications are also available with references to Iowa environmental laws and contact information for technical advice.

For more information or to participate in the Farm*A*Syst program contact Rick Robinson, Iowa Farm Bureau Environmental Policy Advisor, at (515) 225-5432.



As part of the Dry Run Creek watershed project, Prairie Lakes Church will have an urban erosion control project adjacent to the utility shed located in the northwest corner of their property. This photo was taken the day NRCS staff surveyed the site.

Upper Miller Creek Project offers Free Seed for Roadside Buffer Strips

Black Hawk SWCD received \$68,000 from the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) for two types of erosion control methods to be used within the Upper Miller Creek Watershed. One is a cover crop application in the fall over standing soybeans, followed by a spring corn planting. The other is a roadside buffer strip seeding program.

Both projects offer cost share incentives to participating farmers. Six producers in the Upper Miller Creek watershed are currently participating in a cover crop method of controlling springtime soil loss. Last August, cover crop seeds of rye and oats were flown over fields selected for the project. This past spring, the cover crop was sprayed prior to planting corn.

We have hosted several field days and meetings where the participating farmers have provided feedback. Much of the feedback is quite positive, and there is strong response for participation in the 2006 cover crop application also.

These same farmers have also seeded several acres of roadsides to native grasses and wildflowers as a second means of controlling erosion. The deep root systems of the native plants help keep soil from leaving the farm fields.

Seed for the roadside buffers is still available for fall planting. Land owners are encouraged to contact Black Hawk SWCD to sign up for the free seed. Property outside the Upper Miller Creek watershed may also qualify for cost share dollars. The enclosed brochure has more information on how you can participate in this project. Contact Black Hawk SWCD today to find out more.

Field border of grass and legumes offers a turn area at the end of the crop row for this Cherokee County farmer. Other benefits include erosion control, wildlife habitat, and improved water quality. (1999 NRCS Photo)



As you know the five Black Hawk SWCD commissioners are elected in the November county wide ballot. One stipulation in Iowa code is that commissioners must come from different townships around the county. We serve as non paid volunteers and work cooperatively to enhance our natural resources. In addition to the elected commissioners, four other individuals currently volunteer as assistant commissioners. Kathleen Scholl is a UNI professor in the School of Health, Physical Education & Leisure Services. Jerry Kramer is a land owner and retired school teacher. Vern Fish is the Executive Director of the Black Hawk Conservation Board. Brett Meyers is an Environmental Health Officer with the Black Hawk County Health Department.

Your commission is very fortunate to have each of these talented individuals representing your interests on the commission.



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Because I do the
Dunkerton News, I'm quite
sure Marv's Feed & Seed,
Inc. should be changed to
Landmark Ag Services and
have made that change
below. If I'm incorrect,
please let me know, and I
will change it back.

2006 Conservation Supporter's Club

*Our sincere appreciation to our 2006 Conservation
Supporters*

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Jill Ratliff	Ray Boots
Phyllis Morgan	John/Diane Hoffman
Kelly Tree Farm	James Bosier
Merlyn/Jean Platte	Creative Impact. Co., LLC
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Earth

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We cordially invite
you to participate

in this Event to help the public
focus on the importance of the Earth
Sciences and understand the many
facets of the Earth Sciences in their
daily lives. All programs and activities
will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at
3:30 p.m. Program participants include:

UNI Earth Science Department
(Geology Field Trips)

Black Hawk Gem and Mineral Club
(find a fossil find a mineral)

IOWATER (volunteer water monitoring)

Black Hawk County Soil and Water
District (Watersheds and Conservation)

IDNR Fisheries, a Fishing Derby for
Youth sponsored by the Conservation
Board

and many other fascinating programs
and activities.

This is a great way for visitors, young
and old, to learn about the Earth
Sciences, on site in an outdoor environment,
where the Earth Sciences and
Natural Resources are readily accessible.

Students

Continued from page 1

education to our youth.
Entries were judged on
how well they conveyed
the message of conservation,
visual effectiveness, universal appeal
and originality.

All schools that
received students from
Black Hawk County
were invited to send
entries. There are five
grade divisions in grades
K-12. To participate in
this program next year
or for further information,
contact your local
Soil and Water
Conservation District at
2950 Southland Dr.,
Waterloo, IA. 50701 or
visit www.cdiowa.org
for Iowa information.