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ISSUE #16

FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION **ANNUAL REPORT** 2015



SUCCEEDING IN
CONSERVATION
THROUGH
PARTNERSHIPS



FAYETTE SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION

Implementing management practices

VOLGA LAKE

Volga Lake was placed on the impaired water list in 2013 because of excessive algae blooms and turbidity negatively impacting primary contact recreation such as canoeing and kayaking or other activities that could involve considerable risk of water contact or ingesting water in quantities sufficient to pose a health hazard.

In April 2015, The Fayette SWCD was awarded a \$10,540 development grant through IDALS for Volga Lake. Through this funding the SWCD was able to conduct a range of assessments such as estimated sheet & rill erosion, classic gully erosion, stream condition, stakeholder surveys for stakeholders working and living in the watershed, and for lake users. A RASCAL (Rapid Assessment of Stream Conditions Along Length) conducted on the four tributaries that flow to Volga Lake with landowner permission, a total of 6.69 miles was assessed. Of the 6,038.3 ac watershed 4.1% is Alfalfa/Hay, 34.1% Corn, 19% soybeans, 2.2% Farmstead, 12.9% grassland, 6.7% pasture, 2.7% roads, 15.7% timber, and 2.5% water based on the 2015 wind-shield assessment. Based on the assessments conducted it is estimated that 8,625 tons of sediment/year is delivered to the lake which equates to around 11,210 lbs of phosphorus delivered.

The District held a technical meeting with the IA DNR Parks, Fisheries, Lake Restoration, ISU Extension, and Upper Iowa University on March 26, 2015. On September 22, 2015 the District held the Volga Lake kickoff Event at the lake front which was attended by twenty-one people. On November 24th, 2015 the District gave a presentation on Volga Lake and the development project to the Hawkeye Conservation Club. The District had a Volga Lake display at the Fayette County Fair and spoke to Oelwein FFA on Volga Lake and about Karst Topography.

The District collaborated with Rick Klann, Upper Iowa University for water sampling on one site for each of the four tributaries that flow to Volga Lake and four sites on Volga Lake. Turbidity, total phosphorus, soluble reactive phosphorus, total suspended solids were measured at each site. Chlorophyll-a (algae) was analyzed at three of the lake sites through the State Hygienic laboratory. The District partnered with IA DNR Lakes Restoration to fund the water sampling for 2015. Based on the 2015 water sampling the median chlorophyll-a TSI value was 66 (37ug/L). To take Volga Lake off of the impaired waters list a median chlorophyll-a TSI value of 63 (27ug/L) or less would need to be maintained for two impaired water listing cycles (7 to 8 years). TSI stands for the Trophic State index

developed by Carlson (1977) with values ranging from 0 to 100 with every increase of 10 on the scale representing a doubling of algal biomass.

The district is currently seeking stakeholder input on best management practices that would reduce sediment and phosphorus loss and fit into their operations. There is a potential funding opportunity through the Publicly Owned Lakes Programs that could allow up to 75% cost share for best management practices. The publicly

owned lakes program application deadline for the District is April 1, 2016. If there is interest and if the practices are feasible the District hopes to have a total estimated amount of funds to request before April 1. If there is interest and the District is awarded the funds those practices would be implemented in the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017.

UPPER OTTER CREEK

The Upper Otter Creek WIRB Project was completed at the end of

February, 2016. In 2015, 6.24 acres of grassed waterways, 3,892 feet of terraces, 1 grade stabilization structure and 1 water & Sediment control basin were implemented. A total of 133.9 acres of cover crop, 1 grade stabilization structure, 17.86 acres of grassed waterways, 114.6 acres of no till/strip till, 4,362 feet of terraces, 3 water & sediment control basins were implemented over three years. 340 acres of new

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
Continued on Page 3



Blue green algae bloom at Volga Lake

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Banner Year for CRP

2016 will be a banner year for CRP implementation in Fayette County. CRP contracts and acres entered into by Fayette County landowners will exceed 3,000 acres, making the county one of the highest in the state.

These acres will be seeded to diverse native grass and prairie forb mixes. These seeding mixes are designed to provide wildlife habitat, soil and water conservation benefits, and pollinator habitat. The implementation of this many acres is exciting but will be a daunting task because it takes specialized equipment and of course, the unique seed itself. So how will it get done?

The Fayette County Conservation Board in partnership with Fayette County Pheasants Forever will contract with landowners to purchase the seed at an economical price through Pheasants Forever seed contracts. Fayette County Pheasants Forever, who recently purchased a 12' native grass drill to add to their fleet of 5 other drills, will contract with the landowners to get the seedings implemented.

These partners are excited and confident that collectively, with the patience of landowners and a few stretches of good weather, that it can all get done.

The resurgence of interest in CRP, widely recognized as one of the most important conservation practices in the nation's history, will create a plethora of soil, water, and habitat benefits to Fayette County.



12' native grass drill



Newly constructed and seeded waterway with installation of a mulch blanket for erosion control.

Be Adventurous

"Be curious and try new things," those are the encouraging words of Donald Bahe, our Fayette County Conservation Award Winner of the Year. Donald has been involved in no-till management for the last 12 years. It all began when he enrolled in a Natural Resource Conservation Service program in which they were paid for three years of minimum-till or no-till farming, but they had to continue the practice for 5 years.

The first year was a disaster. The next year the Bahe family changed to strip-till farming for three years and then converted back to no-till as time progressed. Donald is now at 100% no-till farming with the use of anhydrous. In addition to his no till farming, he has also included the practice of planting cover crops. His favorite combination of cover crop seeds are cereal rye, radish, some winter peas, clover, and oats. He feels the cover crops feed the organisms in the soil which improve the soil health. It is a three to five year process. You cannot see the outcome overnight, but as time progresses you can see the soil health improve.

Donald feels that technology and new knowledge has to be incorporated into the farming practices to make it work. He is helped by his sons, Joe and Dan, who are also involved in the farming operation. They enjoy traveling to the National No-Till Conferences where they speak with other professionals about no-till and cover crop practices. "We observe the practices that others at the conference have used and try them on our farm," said Don. Our neighbors watch us and ask questions which we are happy to answer. Donald feels it is important to get the information to the public so we can protect our top soil.

His goal for the future is to turn his farming operation over to his children and be able to show them the benefits of no-till. He would like to see a three crop rotation, more cover crops and cut down the use of fertilizer.

He feels it has been an honor to be chosen for this award and wants to encourage others not be afraid to try new things. You don't have to start big, but start on a small parcel of land. Try a cover crop, no-till, strip-till or other practice that interests you. Be creative and adventurous. If it doesn't work, try something else. Don't ever give up.



Donald Bahe standing in his cover crop field

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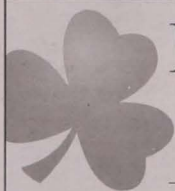


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Protecting Our Resources: The Soil and Water



Jim Gillespie

Iowans continue to make continual commitments to protecting the soil and water resources of our state. It is evident by the strong partnership between the landowners, farmers, the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, and many other partners locally working together to address soil health and water quantity and quality.

In State Fiscal Year 2015 Iowa set another record with the Iowa Financial Incentives Program (Cost Share) with a landowner/farmer contribution of \$12.8 million, a state investment of \$9.8 million with the total investment of \$22.6 million. To put in perspective what that meant in numbers for four conservation practices, it was 515 miles of terraces, 1,264 miles of waterways, 96 grade stabilization structures, and 471 water and sediment control basins. These conservation practices are effective, long term practices that trap sediment and phosphorus in the fields. This reflects a commitment of landowners and farmers making an investment with the state where they are contributing \$1.50 or more for each dollar invested by the state.

The impacts of the various cost share programs offered locally is that it continues to get more conservation practices installed. The numerous benefits of these conservation practices are that it reduces erosion, soil losses and nutrient runoff. It continues to improve soil health and water quantity and quality issues. They reduce storm water impacts on public and private property and protect infrastructure. These programs help in protecting watersheds above and water quality in Iowa's publicly owned lakes. They also help local economies benefiting local communities.

Your operations are businesses that depend on healthy soils, the water on your property is well managed and utilized, the nutrients are well managed for crop production, and your livestock operation is managed effectively. The challenges that go with these elements of your businesses are important to insure that you can operate effectively and profitably. When you evaluate these components of your business throughout the year and identify needs and opportunities to make improvements, please don't hesitate to stop in the field offices in your area to find out how we can help with your soil and water issues. These offices have great technical assistance and usually have financial assistance programs that can help put scientifically proven conservation practices on your land to help with improving your soil health, water quantity and water quality. Stop in any time and let us help you.

By: Jennifer Stoffel,
Associate Professor of Biology,
Upper Iowa University

Upper Iowa University (UIU) has had a long commitment to conservation of Iowa's natural resources. UIU partners with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to host field days at local Northeast Iowa farms for UIU students to see first-hand how conservation practices may be implemented by local farmers. Some of the students in attendance were inspired to continue their interest in soil and water conservation in internships or research projects.

The students have been encouraged by UIU to seek out Pathways internships with the NRCS or other internships with the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). During these internships students are able to integrate collegiate experiences to real world application. These experiences allow students from urban and rural backgrounds have the opportunity to learn more about conservation practices that can be used on a variety of landscapes. Students also learn about the complexity of conservation management decisions. Students in Conservation Management and Environmental Science complete research in an area of their interest while at UIU. Several students have completed research projects looking at soil changes following management practice shifts, or water quality investigations which often occur in collaboration with agencies (NRCS, SWCD, Department of Natural Resources (DNR),

Conservation Collaboration in Northeast Iowa

Iowa County Conservation Board (ICCB), and Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)) or landowners. The science faculty at UIU enjoy guiding the students in the conservation research while the students practice the fundamentals of experimental design.

The partnerships with local organizations has been cultivated by UIU's collaboration in soil and water conservation initiatives by several faculty at Upper Iowa. Faculty have assisted with watershed monitoring projects, water quality assessments, and soil research

projects. In Iowa's transformed landscape, conservation initiatives often begin with the foundations of soil and water.

As student interests in soil and water conservation issues continue to grow, we hope to continue to seek opportunities for continued collaboration. UIU is also committed to reaching out to the local community. In the past several years faculty have made trips to local school districts to talk about soil and soil and water conservation initiatives.



Some students in Ecology learn about habitat measurement techniques in a forest stand in Volga River Recreation Area.

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FAYETTE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOUNDATION
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015

CHECKING ACCOUNT

Beginning Balance \$13,564.32

Receipts

Supporter's Club \$11,473.00

Total Receipts \$11,473.00

Total Income \$25,037.32

Expenses

ATV Repairs \$ 881.00
CDI Auction Item \$ 238.00
Donations \$ 2,520.00
Education
Bus Transportation (3rd Grade Field Day) \$ 1,635.00
Supplies (3rd Grade Field Day) \$ 929.00
Scholarship \$ 500.00

Houg Property \$ 182.00
Insurance \$ 417.00
Office Supplies \$ 70.00
Personnel \$ 13,122.00
Post Office (Permit and Mailing) \$ 734.00
Printing (Supporter Club & Annual Report) \$ 1,746.00

Total Expenses \$22,974.00

Ending Balance as of 06/30/15
\$2,063.32

**FINANCIAL REPORT
OF STATE FUNDS
July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015**

IM Budget Allocation \$ 2,000.00
Supplemental Allocation \$ 800.00
Commissioner Expenses \$ 2,800.00

State Cost-Share Beginning Obligation \$ 82,285.47
Allocations \$ 44,732.18
Obligated \$ 15,163.84
Spent \$ 104,050.35
Recalled \$ 7,803.46

REAP F/N Grasses Beginning Obligation \$ 9,780.00
Allocation \$ 16,050.00
Obligated \$ 4,860.00
Spent \$ 20,680.50
Recalled \$ 289.50

REAP Practices Beginning Obligation \$ 14,010.08
Allocation \$ 10,062.58
Obligated \$ 3,504.00
Spent \$ 18,918.66
Recalled \$ 1,650.00

Upper Otter Creek WIRB
Original Allocation \$ 100,000.00
Revised Allocation \$ 75,076.00
Obligated \$ 2,718.36
Spent \$ 61,057.92
Recalled \$ 24,924.00
Total Unspent \$ 11,299.72

Volga Lake
Allocation \$ 10,540.00
Obligated \$ 4,196.30
Total Unspent \$ 6,343.70

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**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2014 through JUNE 30, 2015**

Checking Account

Beginning Balance \$ 1,513.46

Receipts

Contractor Meeting Donation \$ 50.00
Money Market Transfers – IM Funds 2,800.00
Money Market Transfers 2,098.29

Total Receipts \$ 4,948.29

TOTAL \$ 6,461.75

Expenses

ATV 32.87
Bank Charge 4.28
Education 305.18
IM Commissioner 2,846.80
Meeting Expense 62.67
Office Supplies 2,071.59
Postage 346.09

Total Expenses \$ 5,669.48

Balance \$ 792.27

IM Commissioner Checks not cleared by bank as of 6/30/15 + 671.97

Ending Balance 6/30/15 \$ 1,464.24

**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2014 through JUNE 30, 2015**

Money Market Savings Account

Beginning Balance \$ 14,789.99

Receipts

Education 1,617.90
Farm Bill 13 – IDALS 6,168.60
IM Allocation & Supplemental 2,800.00
Interest 24.52
RC & D Grant 750.00
Supervisors 2,000.00
Transfers from Watershed Account 333.00
Upper Otter Creek – WIRB Funds 13,158.85

Total Receipts \$ 26,852.87

TOTAL \$ 41,642.86

Expenses

IM Transfers to Checking 2,800.00
Transfers to Checking 2,098.29
Transfers to Payroll 333.00
Transfers to Watershed Account 26,863.68

Total Expenses \$ 32,094.97

Ending Balance 6/30/15 \$ 9,547.89

**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2014 through JUNE 30, 2015**

Technical Account

Beginning Balance \$ 6,169.32

Receipts

Farm Bill 13 Funds - CDI \$ 5,684.40
RC & D Technical Assistance 18,360.00
SWCD Foundation 12,000.00
Transfers from Money Market 2,000.00

Total Receipts \$ 38,044.40

TOTAL \$ 44,213.72

Expenses

Accounting Services 150.00
Health Insurance 1,186.96
Payroll 6,230.00
Transfers to Payroll Savings
Federal Taxes 2,459.53
IPERS 1,457.63
State Taxes 368.00
Unemployment 107.76

Total Expenses \$ 11,959.88

Ending Balance 6/30/15 \$ 32,253.84

**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2014 through JUNE 30, 2015**

Payroll Savings Account

Beginning Balance \$.02

Receipts

Interest \$.74
Transfers from Technical Account 4,392.92
Transfers from Watershed Account 8,334.22

Total Receipts \$ 12,727.88

TOTAL \$ 12,727.90

Expenses

Federal Taxes 7,200.08
IPERS 4,350.88
State Taxes 1,032.00
Unemployment 144.18

Total Expenses \$ 12,727.14

Ending Balance 6/30/15 \$.76

Protect Groundwater Sources of Drinking Water

By Jason Johnson, Public Affairs Specialist,
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Des Moines, Iowa

With about 90 percent of Iowa's public water systems using groundwater as a main source, soil and water conservation practices play a vital role in protecting drinking water source supplies and reducing drinking water treatment costs.

Landowner and farm operator decisions can impact water quality, safety, treatment costs, and even the need to find alternative sources to replace contaminated public and private water supplies.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and your local soil and water conservation district can provide assistance on how to protect groundwater from fertility and agronomic activities. Eric Hurley, nutrient management specialist for NRCS in Iowa, recommends focusing on three key strategies:

1. Use nutrient management to avoid exceeding the nitrogen needs of the crop and to optimize nitrate use efficiency.
2. Trap excess nitrogen using cover crops.
3. Build a resilient nitrogen management system using multiple conservation strategies and improve soil health.

Iowa NRCS recommends implementing the following conservation practices to protect groundwater quality while meeting your production objectives:

- **The 4R Nutrient Management Strategy.** By applying the Right nutrient source at the Right rate at the Right time in the Right place, nutrient efficiency will be improved. The crop will get the nutrients it needs and it will minimize nutrient losses to the surface and groundwater.

- **Soil Sampling.** Take soil samples annually at least six inches deep. For one sample, take 15 to 20 cores representing the sample area. A sample represents a maximum 10-acre area, smaller for precision ag. Send your samples to an Iowa certified lab, and use the results to help you make better nutrient management decisions.

- **Calibrate Equipment.** With any equipment used to apply fertilizer and manure, calibrate equipment to assure that what you intend to apply is actually applied.
- **Cover Crops.** Winter hardy cover crops, like cereal rye, scavenge nutrients, reduce soil erosion, suppress weeds, provide winter grazing for livestock, and increase soil organic matter. Winter killed cover crops, such as oats, radishes, and turnips provide many of the same benefits, though the nutrient scavenging and erosion control is reduced. NRCS promotes planting a diverse mix of cover crops for multiple benefits.

- **Conservation Crop Rotation.** Growing a perennial in the crop rotation helps reduce nitrate loss and soil erosion and improves soil health. Legume perennials fix nitrogen for future grain crops. Including small grains in your rotation helps reduce nitrogen leaching and economically diversifies a farming operation. Livestock producers can benefit from crop rotations by adding grazing to a rotation. Consecutive years of alfalfa or clover can provide essential livestock forage.

- **Integrated Pest Management.** Implement management practices that limit agricultural pests which adversely affect plant growth, crop production, human health, pollinators, and wildlife.

- **Filter Strip.** Growing vegetation next to a stream, lake, or other water body helps remove sediment, organic matter, and other pollutants from runoff and wastewater.

For more information about conservation planning to achieve your production goals, visit your local NRCS office or go online, www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.

Timber Sales- Do your Homework!

By Greg Heidebrink, District Forester, 641.228-6611

Over the last few months our phone has been quite busy with calls that sound something like this "I was just offered X numbers of dollars for 50 trees. Is this a good price?" As much as I would like to help you out and answer your question it is a little difficult for me to do. The amount you get paid per tree or per board foot is going to vary depending on species, quantity and quality. It is also going to depend on competition! An example I use a lot is if I was at the sale barn to buy cattle and I am the only person in the seats that day, I am probably not going to stop the sale and tell the auctioneer that I am not paying enough for the cows. I am going to buy cheap cows and go home feeling like I ate a win.

Timber buyers are no different. They want to run a successful business and to do this they need to spend as little for the trees they buy and sell them for as much as they can. Here is my little bit of advice for you, "If you let them, this is what they are going to do!" Do your homework! Get in touch with someone who knows what they're doing. Don't go this alone. There are people out there like me or private foresters that you can contact for help. So please do so!

Before we move on to timber sale options, we need to ask some questions about why you are selling your trees? Is it because a timber buyer stopped and told you they would like to buy some? Are you looking for some income? Are you looking to improve habitat on your property or are you interested in regenerating a new forest? You should have these questions answered before you even consider a timber sale. The best way to do this is with a management plan. A management plan is your road map to accomplishing your goals and improving the overall quality of your timber. Before you conduct a sale please get in touch with your district forester or a private consulting forester and develop a plan. This may take a while but in the long run it may keep you from doing something you regret.

There are a few ways you can sell your trees and I will briefly describe them but the best time to decide this is after you have a plan and have talked to your forester.

Grade and yield- This is where a landowner and timber buyer agrees on a price per board foot for each species. The trees are cut and skidded out to a landing. The timber buyer then scales the logs for volume and quality and the landowner is paid on the buyers scale.

Pros- Some of the pros for this method are that you can choose who you are working with. The timber buyer can see the cut logs to look for defects like iron in the tree. This system works well with small quantities of logs.

Cons- The biggest con to this system is that there is no competition. You only receive one opinion of what the trees are worth. The trees are cut before you know what they are worth and if you don't like the price it is too late. You are placing your trust in the timber buyer to tell you the quantity and value of the logs. All the risk is on you!

Logging on shares- With this system, the trees are cut, brought to the landing, cut into log lengths and sold to a mill. The landowner and the logger then split the income. Usually this is a 50%-50% or 60%-40% split.

Pros- The pros are fairly similar to Grady and yield. You can choose who you are working with. The mill can see the cut logs to look for defects and this system works well with small quantities of logs.

Cons- The cons are also very similar to grade and yield. The trees are cut

before you know what they are worth and you are placing your trust in the timber buyer to tell you the quantity and value of the logs. Once again much of the risk is on you.

Lump sum sealed bid- This is the method of timber sale I prefer. With this system the trees are marked and scaled by a forester or forestry contractor. This information is then put in a bid packet and sent out to many different timber buyers. The timber buyers then over a period of a few weeks look at the trees to be sold and give the landowner a bid. The bids are then opened at a specified time and place. If the bid is accepted the landowner signs a contract with the highest bidder and is paid anywhere from 25% to 100% down with the rest due before the logs are cut. If you do not like the bids you reject them and all your trees are still standing!

Pros- With this system you have competition! You know what your trees are worth before you sell them and you are paid before anything is cut. All the risk is on the buyer!

Cons- The biggest con is that you do not get to select who you work with. You have to take the highest bid or reject all the bids. It may also be difficult to get bidders on small sales. This system is going to take a little longer, but in the long run it will be worth it.

This is a very quick rundown of timber sale options. Selling timber is something most people may do once in their lifetime. Make sure you have someone on your side. Please contact your district forester or a consulting forester for help!

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6 Lots for sale in Spillville - See Deb!

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See Deb!



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Prairie Planting Partners

The interest and enrollment in the CRP program is bringing new conservation-minded folks into our office for the first time. We are pleased to be of service and want to assist you in every way we can. If your seeding plan includes native seeding — prairie mixes, you might have questions and concerns on how to create the best prairie possible. It is a labor of love that restores the diverse flora and fauna back onto the landscape. These types of vegetation cover provide great habitat, food and shelter for the wildlife and protects our soil and water.

Before settlement, the Iowa landscape was 70% covered by a prairie plant community composed of tall and short grasses, many various types of forbs, and a sprinkling of shrubs. Within 80 years these vast areas of prairie landscape were converted to farmland. In a general way, driven by short-term economics and apathy, the total destruction of this rich natural landscape has not ended.

My proposal is to form a local group of like-minded prairie restorers, that would assist one another to achieve a successful planting. Driven by conviction and curiosity we could use the old show and tell — success and failure — experiences, plus use advisory sources including prairie tour to teach us. Keep in mind the contract is for 10 years.

As a sign of encouragement, drive thru our corn and bean dominated countryside, and if you are observant you might spot a colorful quilt bolted onto a barn. There are numerous patchwork barn

quilts and each is boldly and beautifully displayed thanks to the efforts of a few dedicated leaders.

What has been proudly fastened to those barns could be replicated by using deeply rooted natives woven into a blanket of protection on the land. This blanket on the land has self-mending, self-regeneration, and self-color changing abilities that create a five-star bed and breakfast for all the countless numbers of tenants. At the same time, this living blanket of color governs the purity of your drink, clarity of your air, and secures your soil in the proper place!

If you feel our present "bigger is better" society should include those natural, wild, and unowned things; now is the time to display it. It matters not if you are a land baron or a squatter, a patch of prairie will make you proud.

Richard D. Jensen
Soil and Water Commissioner



Opportunities in Partnerships

Rozanna Dallenbach

We hear about the budget cuts our government is making when it comes to conservation practices. Have you ever asked yourself, "What can I do to promote conservation?" Well, now is the time. The theme this year for our annual report is "Succeeding in Conservation through Partnerships".

There are many projects in progress. Let me mention a few. There is the Volga Lake Project, the Monarch Butterfly Project, Otter Creek Project, Third Grade Field Day at the Dick Jensen Farm every fall, Turkey River Watershed Project, and many other opportunities that are asking for you to partner in.

You may be asking, now what can I do to help? Let me invite you to the watershed meetings, to be a volunteer at the Third Grade Field Day, or sow seeds for the Monarch Butterflies. You are always welcome to call the NRCS Office in West Union to get a location and time for one of the next project meetings in your area. The opportunities are endless.

Take some time to give conservation a thought. After reading the articles in this annual report, pick something that interests you and make that decision to act. Your volunteer hours can make a difference in the world of conservation. We invite you to be a partner. Attend a project meeting in your area and see where you can help. You will be glad you did!

PARTNERSHIPS WITH CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

John Finley, District 3 Field Manager for the Iowa Corn Growers Organization, agrees that we all have the same mission in mind. That mission is to protect and conserve soil and water on our land while growing a crop each year. It's like two bands marching in an annual town parade; we just need to combine the two bands to gain an improved, stronger band. Together both groups can work for improved stronger conservation results in future years.

The Iowa Corn Growers have in the past and must continue their conservation efforts plus improve and enhance future year practices to move the needle even further on the conservation meter. The conservation mission will never end and we must all work to do better each year.

Corn Growers on the local level, practice some form of conservation on their land which is where the improvements happen to land and water quality. On the state level, Iowa Corn Growers supports the Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance which promotes public-private partnerships to foster effective urban and rural collaboration for clean water in Iowa.

Iowa Corn Growers are deeply involved in Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy with individual corn farms working to reduce nutrients in water. Farmers are using cover crops, no-till, crop rotation, grass waterways and drainage water management as conservation practices on their land. They feel the need to continue to work at conservation practices which don't always work each crop year. Cover crops in northeast Iowa can have challenging results from one crop year to the next, however, they could have the largest effect on reducing nutrients in water. Cover crops long term could improve soil health more than any other farming practice if farmers continue to experiment for different methods resulting in improvements.

There is not a "silver bullet" for the best conservation practice but one huge step forward would be for every farmer to work at some type of conservation practice on their farm for the 2016 crop year. Iowa Corn Growers host meetings promoting conservation practices for town and rural collaboration. They stress the need to reduce nutrients in water and conservation for all individuals in Fayette County. We have the information and experts to provide information for improvements; however, we need interested people to attend.

Fayette County has some great conservation practices happening such as cover crops, no-till, crop rotation and grass waterways. Just drive around the rural roads to view the great effects of cover crops or visit West Union during a rain to witness their Main Street Project controlling water runoff.

The whole state of Iowa still has work to be accomplished in the area of conservation. In an instant gratification society, it needs to happen faster, however, crops get planted once a year and conservation projects need the correct planning to be completed correctly. The United States has many years of improvements ahead to accomplish all the conservation goals.

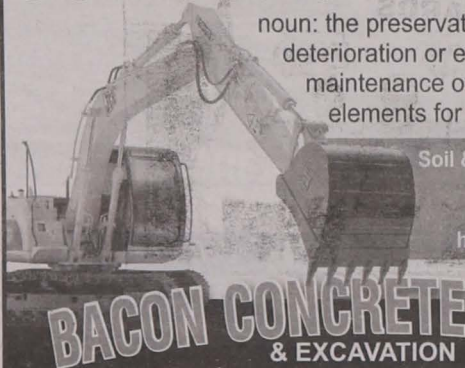
Collaboration and working together with public/private and urban/rural partners will move the conservation needle to the best position in all parts of Iowa. Partnerships are the only solid solution for success. The Iowa challenge is not just for farmers that farm since we all strive for quality drinking water.



John Finley

soil conservation:

noun: the preservation of soil against deterioration or erosion, and the maintenance of the fertilizing elements for crop production.



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Professor Klann on the left with two students taking water samples of the water

Upper Iowa Students Take an Active Role in Conservation

"Upper Iowa University has provided and can continue to provide water quality monitoring for the Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District of Iowa projects. Student interns are valuable assistants to conservation personnel and carry out many projects," states Dr. Klann, Professor of Science at Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa.

We are constantly emphasizing to the students how critical it is what they make an effort to become more and more involved in conservation. In a competitive job market, our graduates need a variety of experiences in order to be qualified for a greater variety of careers. We regularly schedule external speakers to introduce our students to different areas of conservation from the perspective of a professional working in the field. We are also investigating approaches to instill a strong conservation ethic in our students so that we can produce not only well-qualified graduates, but also good caring citizens.

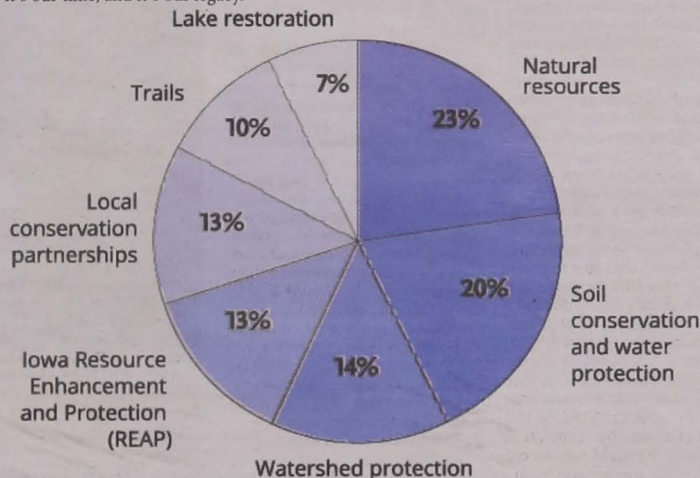
We recently finished a project looking at the water quality of the Volga Lake and its associated tributaries. Volga Lake is listed as impaired due to excessive phosphorus levels, which promote algae blooms and can lead to fish kills as an outcome of low dissolved oxygen levels. Samples were collected from all four tributaries and from four sites on the lake including near the dam and in each of the three arms. Soluble reactive phosphorus, total phosphorus, turbidity and suspended solids were measured at all sites and Secchi disk readings were obtained at the lake sites. The results identified phosphorus as a continuing problem and indicated that phosphorus input from tributaries continue to exacerbate this problem. The high phosphorus levels are promoting dense algae blooms that are putting the Volga Lake at risk for fish kills due to low dissolved oxygen levels.

Upper Iowa has had a long history of working with the Soil and Water Conservation District of Fayette County. We feel this partnership has been beneficial to both organizations. We are pleased that the University can provide value-added services to the resident of Fayette County. Our students learn new skills and gain valuable work experience when they intern with the Soil and Water Conservation District. Students can use cooperative projects to fulfill their capstone experiences. We are continually looking into the possibility of working with the conservation staff in Fayette to develop an Area Wide Conservation Plan.

Iowa's Water & Land Legacy (IWLL)

Iowa's legacy depends on clean water, productive agricultural soils, and thriving wildlife habitats so all Iowans can enjoy the splendor of our state. The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, created by an overwhelming majority of Iowa voters in 2010, is a permanent and constitutionally protected funding source to ensure these natural spaces are preserved for generations to come. Now is the time to fund the Trust. Join Iowa's Water and Land Legacy coalition today because it's our responsibility, it's our time, and it's our legacy.

The Trust Fund will provide a much-needed permanent and constitutionally protected funding source for conserving and enhancing water quality and natural areas in Iowa, including agricultural soils, fish and wildlife habitat, parks and trails. A sales tax increase approved by the legislature of 3/8 of a cent will go into this fund. It is estimated that this sales tax increase will generate over \$170 million annually. Once funded, IWLL will be distributed as follows:



Once funded, the Trust Fund guarantees that money in the Trust be allocated as shown in the pie chart above. As a constitutionally protected fund, it prevents money in the fund from being diverted for other uses; providing reliable funding for clean water and watershed protection, conservation practices, and wildlife habitat, which will grow as the

economy grows.

Please encourage your local legislators to fund this fund! Visit <http://www.iowaswaterand-landlegacy.org/getinvolved/> to find out how you can support this important fund!

Congratulations to the Dallenbachs!



The Iowa Farm Environmental Leader of the Year award for Fayette County was presented earlier this year to William and Rozann Dallenbach of Arlington at the Penningroth Center at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines.

The Dallenbachs have implemented conservation farming for a number of years and continue to be stewards of the land in the Fayette area.

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Soil conservation lands Tellins Stewardship award

By CHRIS DEBACK

cdeback@thefayettecountyunion.com

Jeanine and Dennis Tellin of Maynard were awarded "Best Steward of the Land" by the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District last September.

The Tellins were nominated by their daughter Sarah Kendall; she felt they fit the award criteria for using the land in a sound and ethical manner. Retired for two years, the couple had undertaken a number of different approaches to conservation of their 600-acre farm to mitigate soil runoff during heavy rain and flooding. The most practical approaches were creating contour strips and buffer filters between farm plots and creeks. They have about 120 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The contour strips run with the slope of a hill rather than up and down, creating small dams to trap soil when the rain falls. The Tellins follow a pattern of using 120 feet of workable ground and 30 feet of contour strips, 120 feet

of workable ground and 30 feet on contour strips. Then they use 100-foot wide buffer strips between workable land and the two creeks that run through the farm to help catch what little soil might escape during a rain from reaching the creek.

Dennis and Jeanine went to contour farming after seeing firsthand the effects a heavy rain can have on their land.

"Back in 1999 or 2000, we got 9 inches of rain on one Sunday afternoon, and it washed so bad that we knew something had to be done," Dennis Tellin said. "The next year we checked into all the conservation strips. The next year we went to the contour farming."

Another conservation technique the Tellins use, which is fairly common in northeast Iowa, is chisel plowing. It creates gullies that work as natural dams and help to save the soil. In addition, they rotate bean and corn crop, so what was beans one year will be corn the next and vice versa.

"It is like having a dam every 120 feet is what it amounts to," Dennis said about the chisel plow-



Jeanine and Dennis Tellin of Maynard stand in a contour strip that helps to mitigate soil runoff during a heavy rain or flood. The Tellins recently received the Steward of the Land award from the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District.

Dennis Tellin always joked that the pond was free because he used water that ran off the hill to fill the basin. However, he still needed to buy equipment to excavate the site.



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ing. "It leaves more trash on top, which prevents water erosion and wind erosion.

"Corn following soybeans is 99 percent of the time better because beans fix nitrogen and beans loosen the ground. You get a pound of nitrogen for every bushel of beans, and you break up the disease cycles for the corn and beans."

The two have also created a one-acre pond on what used to be slough land that was never farmed and enrolled the 1.41 acres next to the pond into a pollinator program. The pond is one of Dennis' proudest accomplishments. He joked that the pond was free because they caught water that ran off the hill, but he still needed to buy equipment to excavate the site.

These ambitious conservation efforts are the reason why the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District chose the Tellins for "Best Steward of the Land."

"It speaks well of your efforts, it truly does" Jeanine said. "You go by some fields, and you just see them washed away. When land prices went up and rental prices went up, people were taking their strips out, and I didn't think that was the best thing."

The Tellins, along with their daughter who nominated them, received a \$20 gift card to Norby's Farm Fleet in West Union.

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Northeast Iowa FORESTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Spring Field Day ~April 19, 2016

Louis Christen Property

Time	Topic/Activity
9:00 am.	Registration (Louie's House) 18292 D Ave., Elgin, IA 52141.
9:30 am.	Northeast Iowa Forestry Advisory Committee (NIFAC) -Who are we and what do we do. -Legislative update Louie's Wood Shop- -Bowl making and sooooo much more!
12:00 pm.	Lunch (Louie's Cabin) Catered by Edgewood Locker
1:00 pm.	West side walking tour- -Direct Seeding, even age management, thinning East side walking tour- -Walnut quality and value, uneven age management, weeding
3:30 pm.	NIFAC meeting for those that want to stay.

Please **RSVP to Jesse Randall by April 15th** so we can get a head count for the noon meal prepared by the Edgewood Locker. There will be a \$12 fee to cover the cost of the meal. randallj@iastate.edu (515-294-1168)

Instructors

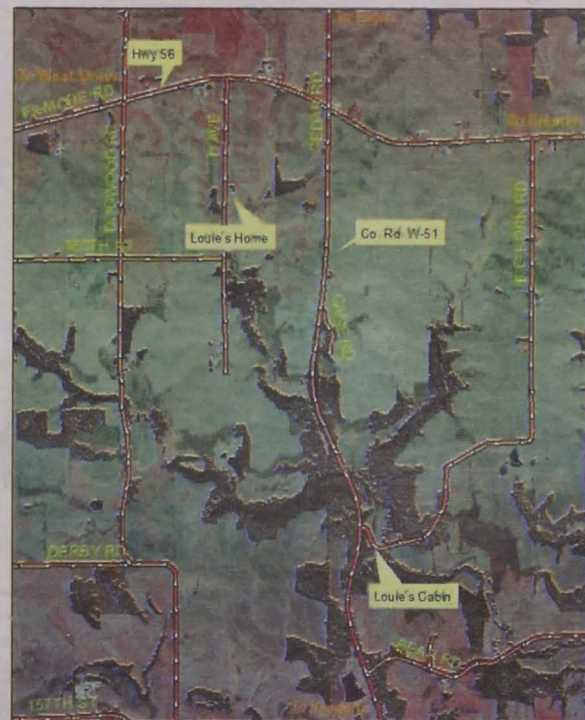
Louis Christen- Landowner and Wood shop extraordinaire
 Jim & Jody Kerns- NEIFAC Co presidents
 Todd Jones- Log buyer (Jones Logging)
 Roger Thomas- Retired Iowa Legislator
 Gary Beyer - Consulting Forester (Beyer Forestry Services)
 Jesse Randall - Extension Forester, Iowa State University
 Paul Tauke- State Forester- Iowa DNR
 Dave Asche- District Forester (Elkader) Iowa DNR
 Jeff Seago- District Forester (Elkader) Iowa DNR
 Jason Walker - District Forester, (Charles City) Iowa DNR
 Greg Heidebrink - District Forester, (Charles City) Iowa DNR

Directions- Meet at Louis Christen home (18292 D Ave., Elgin, IA 52141). From West Union Iowa, take Hwy 56 (Farmore Rd.) east to D Ave. Turn south and travel 1/2 mile to Louie's home (East side of the road). Map attached.



ISU FORESTRY EXTENSION

NEIFAC Field Day
Louis Christen Property
4-19-16
9:30 am

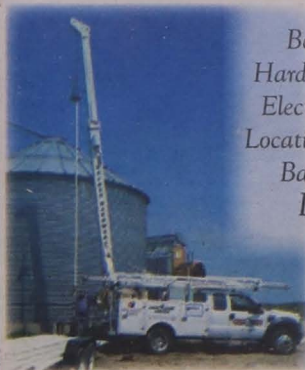


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Assisting the public on a daily basis at the Fayette County SWCD Field Office are (l-r) Aaron Anderson, NRCS district conservationist; Devin Brincks, NRCS soil conservation technician; Lori Kohlmeier, IDALS conservation assistant; and Adam Grim, District Watershed coordinator.



Fayette County SWCD Commissioners include (front, l-r) Paul Hoeger of Maynard, and Rozann Dallenbach of Arlington; (back) Richard Jensen of Elgin, Dave Drilling of Waucoma, and Bill Bennett of Elgin. Not pictured are Assistant Fayette County SWCD Commissioners Rod Marlatt, Eric Boehm, Judy Bennett, Dorothy Jensen, Rhonda Drilling and Bill Dallenbach.



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Fayette Co. SWCD staff, commissioners and board members



Members of the Fayette County SWCD Foundation Board include (front, l-r) Paul Hoeger of Maynard, and Rozann Dallenbach of Arlington; (back) Leon Deutsch of Wadena, Dick Jensen of Elgin, Dave Drilling of Waucoma, Bill Bennett of Elgin, and Rich Klann of West Union.

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Fayette County 2015 Windbreak Award Winner



Dan and Sue Winter are the 2015 Windbreak Award Winner for Fayette County. Dan and Sue began planting their windbreak on the west side of their acreage in 1998 and added on to the north and south side in 1999 when they finished building their home.

The Winters planted 94 Arborvitae along the road and to the north of their acreage, but the strong south winds killed some of their trees and they were forced to replant many of them. "It was very discouraging to see these trees die," said Dan, "but I had planted 25 extra by the creek just in case we needed to replant. We have used most of them." In 1999, they planted 55 Black Hills Spruce which surrounds the rest of their home.

The Arborvitae trees were purchased from the Fayette County Commissioners when they held their tree sales. The 55 Black Hills Spruce were two and three footers that were purchased from the Fort Atkinson Tree Nursery. They were awarded some cost share for this project.

The Winters are very proud of their trees, and would not change a thing when it comes to their windbreak. If they were to give advice to someone who was starting a wind break, they would tell them to start as soon as you can. It takes a long time after planting the trees that you get an established windbreak. They suggest that you don't plant where a strong south hot wind can hit your trees if you can help it. Dan suggests that you plant extra trees in other places so you can replace the ones that do not survive.

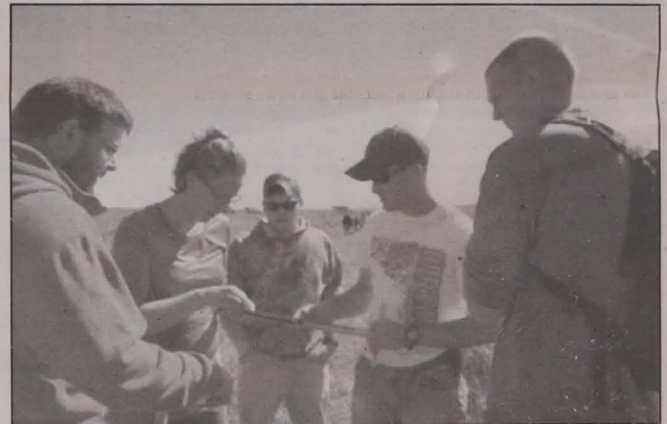
Dan and Sue made this a family project. When their children were small they would take their wagon and buckets of water to water each tree all summer long. It gave them a sense of being a part of this big project. It was a very important job.

Now the trees pretty much take care of themselves. Each year small unwanted trees have to be cut around and beneath their windbreak, but this is all the care that they require. They had a dog that kept the deer away from the trees when they were small, but since they are full grown, they no longer have to worry about the deer eating them. They are happy to see more wildlife living in their windbreak. They occasionally see pheasants and rabbits running about them.

In the future Dan and Sue plan to plant more trees. This time they will select oaks, walnuts, and other specialty trees to plant along their creek bottom. They will need to put in a fence to keep the deer away this time.



A field trip to Becky's Fen in Fayette County Iowa led by Dr. Jennifer Stoffel, Scott Figdore and UIU alum Derrick Klimesh (then a Wetland's Biologist).



Dr. Jennifer Stoffel talks with UIU students about soil characteristics for wetland delineation at Becky's Fen.



Upper Iowa soil and water conservation class learn about soil horizons from Bob Vobora retired NRCS soil scientist at Dick Jensen's Farm.

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Kaylee Koch

Fayette County Soil And Water Conservation Scholarship Winner

The 2015 winner of the Soil and Water Conservation Scholarship was Kaylee Koch of Hawkeye, Iowa. Kaylee is a graduate of North Fayette Valley High School. She is the daughter of Dwane and Roni Sue Koch and has an older sister, Stephanie, and a younger sister, Tiffanie. Kaylee now attends Iowa State University where she is majoring in Agriculture Business and working on a minor in Agronomy.

Kaylee has actively been in a partnership with her father who owns and rents land around Hawkeye. At a young age Kaylee helped her father in his corn and soybean operation. Agriculture has always been a big part of her life. As a freshman in high school she joined FFA. Through FFA, each student had a Supervised Agricultural Experience Program. Her father was kind enough to rent her 20 acres of his land on the home farm for her to manage. Through this partnership she learned record keeping for this project. She also learned a great deal about corn and soybean production as well as all the aspects that are included in the farming operation. Conservation practices are everywhere on the Koch farm. The Koch family has filter strips along creeks and major waterways to prevent soil erosion. They also practice no-till on a few fields and minimum tillage to prevent wind and water erosion. Kaylee is grateful to come from a farming family and have a background in agriculture which has inspired her to attend Iowa State and work in the industry in a few years.

Future career plans for Kaylee are open. She knows that she wants to work in the agricultural industry, but is not sure exactly where or how she will serve. She is very interested in agriculture and, therefore, is taking many classes to help her understand what is most enjoyable for her. Kaylee will serve her internship at the Heartland Coop in Prairie City this summer as an Agronomy/Sales Intern. She looks forward to learning more about conservation and farming practices.

Kaylee is thankful for the Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District Scholarship. It will help her to further her education at Iowa State. She is also grateful for the support from within the community and local agricultural companies. Kaylee hopes that one day she can give back to the community which has given her so much.



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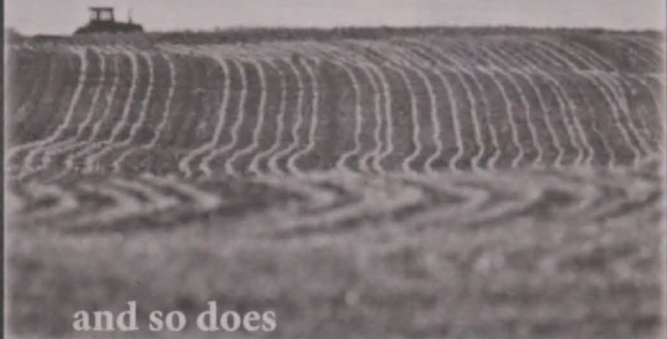
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Summary of Conservation Accomplishments

Conservation Systems Plans (no)

Planned	Applied
188	107

Conservation System Acres (ac)

Planned	Applied
9,968	9,518

Performance Summary-Field Measures

Conservation Plans Written (ac)	9,968 ac
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil quality (ac)	7,503 ac
Cropland with conservation applied to improve soil health and sustainability (ac)	3,006 ac
Cropland with an applied Soil Health Management System (SHMS) (ac)	1,295 ac
Land with conservation applied to improve water quality (ac)	8,846 ac
Grazing land with a conservation applied to protect and improve the resource base (ac)	316 ac
Grazing land with a conservation system applied to achieve a sustainable forage-animal balance (ac)	205 ac
Non-Federal land with conservation applied to improve fish and wildlife habitat quality (ac)	437 ac
Conservation applied on land being actively managed for wildlife habitat (ac)	7 ac
Forest land with conservation applied to protect and improve vegetative condition (ac)	1,392 ac
Conservation Applied to improve Environmental Quality (ac)	9,471 ac

Summary Conservation Practices

	Planned	Applied
Access Control (472)	687 ac	30 ac
Brush Management (314)	18 ac	9 ac
Comprehensive Nutrient Mgt Plans (102)	3 no	
Conservation Cover (327)	919 ac	53 ac
Conservation Crop Rotation (328)	3,084 ac	3,070 ac
Construct Wetland (656)	23 ac	23 ac
Contour Buffer Strips (332)	89 ac	101 ac
Contour Farming (330)	1,645 ac	1,341 ac
Cover Crop (340)	1,722 ac	1,589 ac
Critical Area Planting (342)	235 ac	41 ac
Farmstead Energy Improvement (374)	16 no	1 no
Fence (382)	2,595 ft	850 ft
Field Border (386)	32 ac	155 ac
Filter Strip (393)	285 ac	
Forage and Biomass Planting (512)		144 ac
Forest Management Plan Written (106)		2 no
Forest Stand Improvement (666)	354 ac	153 ac
Grade Stabilization Structures (410)	6 no	3 no
Grassed Waterway (412)	280 ac	58 ac
Heavy Use Protection (561)	1 no	
Livestock Pipeline (516)	1,815 ft	
Nutrient Management (590)	1425 ac	150 ac
Prescribed Grazing (528)	186 ac	220 ac
Residue Management, No-till (329)	2,543 ac	1,484 ac
Residue Management, Reduced-Till (345)	922 ac	1,699 ac
Riparian Forest Buffer (391)	20 ac	
Seasonal High Tunnel System	2,180 sq ft	
Streambank Protection (580)	1,675 ac	
Subsurface Drain (606)	37,839 ft	24,097 ft
Terrace (600)	47,816 ft	16,738 ft
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)	61 ac	31 ac
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490)	131 ac	87 ac
Underground Outlet (620)	16,318 ft	16,318 ft
Waste Separation Facility (632)	1 no	
Waste Storage Facility (313)	1 no	
Water and Sediment Control Basin (638)	2 no	3 no
Wetland Restoration (657)	95 ac	

Programs

Conservation Reserve Program	
Program Eligibility Determinations (no)	556 no
Status Reviews Performed (no)	291 no
Plans Developed for Emergency Grazing (no)	3 no
Plans Modified to Include Emergency Haying (no)	3 no
Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)	
Number of Contracts (no)	23 no
Dollars Obligated	\$530,565
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	
Number of Contracts (no)	8 no
Dollars Obligated	\$171,356
Acres Enrolled	3,774 ac

Major Projects for the DNR

We all are involved in projects to help conservation in many ways. The DNR has projects on the ground at this time including Iowa Habitat Access Program (IHAP). This project encourages habitat improvement as well as public walk-in hunting. The DNR is always looking for ways to promote natural habitat.

The DNR Private Lands partners with the Soil and Water Conservation Districts to provide wildlife habitat technical assistance to its employees and partners. Periodic meetings and workshops are held to inform landowners about wildlife habitat issues and the cost share programs available to assist them. Clean water projects are facing us now and in the near future. Partnerships all over the state will be formed to promote clean water programs.

One of the latest projects for the DNR Private Lands program involves giving advice and providing cost share to improve conditions for the Monarch Butterflies and other pollinators. We will be hearing more

about this in the near future.

The DNR hopes to continue its partnership with SWCDs in many counties and encourage Iowa Producers to make sound land management decisions in the improvement of wildlife habitat and clean water. The public can also help by looking for ways to improve soil health. They need to develop a conservation plan for their entire property and then implement practices that work toward sustainability.

Hunting and Conservation Camps are also sponsored by the DNR throughout the summer for boys and girls who age from 12 - 16. It is never too early to teach good conservation and hunting practices. They also have programs for adults such as Master Gardeners which encourage programs on conservation practices.

Greg Schmitt

Department of Natural Resources

Profitability and Conservation

By William Bennett

Learning to earn, earning to live, living to serve is part of the FFA motto that I learned back in 1952 when I took agriculture in school and joined the FFA. After 64 years, I have learned a little and have more to learn, because when you can't learn any more you must be dead.

We all know that when soil washes or blows away you have lost your best and most productive soil along with inputs, such as fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides and even the seed you have put into it. Another thing I have learned is that every time you disturb the soil you lose nutrients, and you have used fuel and cause more wear on your equipment, all which cost you money. Another fact is that the longer you can have something growing in your soil the better your soil health is. The more organic matter in the soil the better water soaks in and the better the soil stays in place. Conservation practices help us do all these things. An additional lesson learned is that when you have healthier soil, you can plant shorter season corn and have as good a yield and have less drying costs which means more return for less cost or more profit.

With no-till/strip-till you need to invest in fewer pieces of equipment, need less storage area for machines, and in the case of no till need less horse power, all cost savers and profit builders. Another benefit is the fewer trips over the field the less compaction, which the cover crops also help prevent. With both no-till and strip-till you disturb less soil, end up losing fewer nutrients, and bring up fewer weed seeds so less herbicides are needed.

Cover crops which are planted late summer or early fall and maybe one or many different plants, such as oats, rye, wheat, radishes, peas, rape, clovers and others help build organic matter, improve soil tilth and builds organic matter. Some of the cover crop plants also reduce insect problems, saving on insecticides.

Our young renter told me that he could tell the difference in power needed to pull his equipment on our farm over land that he rented from others that had not been no tilled and have cover crops and other conservation practice that means more profit for renter and landlord.

These are reasons that our contract with our renter require conservation practices and can be more profitable while protecting one of our most valuable resource the soil for us and future generations. It takes time for us to learn, but we must learn even more.

Partnership with Upper Iowa Student

This year's Fayette County Natural Resource Conservation Service intern is Alisha Vanderwoude from Michigan. She is currently attending Upper Iowa University and will be graduating in 2017. Alisha is double majoring in Environmental Science and Conservation Management. She was raised on a farm in Michigan where she cared for her horses and other animals. She is from a family who loves camping, outdoor sports and hiking.

Alisha is very excited to be working as an intern with NRCS. She feels she will be very helpful as she is prepared to help in the office with needed paperwork and the outdoor programs. She is ready to learn about conservation projects and she is excited to begin learning about all the different programs. She did not realize how much work went into each program and the paper work it takes to complete each project.

When she was young she loved science and math. She has always wanted to find ways to fit them together. In conservation she can see techniques that will combine the two and produce successful results.

Conservation is important to her because she loves to be outside and enjoys nature. She does not like to see people misuse the land and our natural resources. She hopes to find a conservation position in Iowa after graduation.

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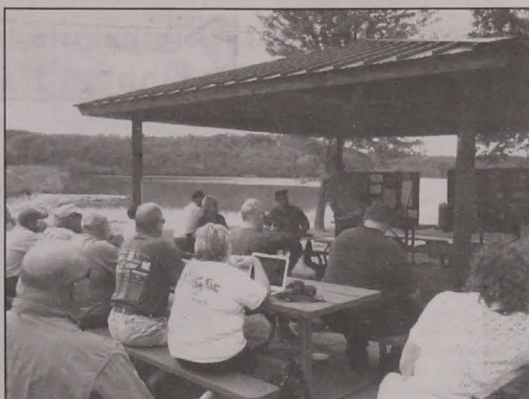


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MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Continued on Page 3

CRP was contracted during the Upper Otter Creek Watershed. From all of the practices implemented the total amount of sediment kept out of the creek totaled 1,854 tons of sediment/year. The goal of the project was to achieve 3,900 tons of sediment/year from entering the creek. Once the new CRP is implemented in the Upper Otter Creek watershed a total of 2,221 tons of sediment/year will be kept out of the creek. The Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB) contributed \$65,075.78; IFIP/REAP contributed \$81,042.19; USDA/NRCS contributed \$28,261.17; The Fayette SWCD contributed \$72,740.89 (a portion includes Iowa Flood Center funds); Land-owners contributed \$68,847.30. The total spent on the project was \$315,967.33. Decreasing the amount of sediment that enters the creek is important because currently there is no documented natural reproduction of trout in Otter Creek. Large amounts of sediment in cold water streams can increase the water temperature and make it inhospitable for trout. Sedimentation also decreases reproductive success by burying their eggs, and it negatively impact benthic invertebrate populations that trout utilize as a part of their diet.



Kickoff meeting at Volga Lake, Volga River Rec Area



Adam Grim
Fayette County SWCD
Watershed coordinator

Adam Grim Volga Lake/Otter Creek Project Coordinator, Luther College 2013 graduate majoring in Environmental Studies. I enjoy fishing, kayaking and gardening. Employed by Fayette SWCD for two years. Continue to provide technical financial and educational assistance for natural resource conservation to our land users to ecologically enhance, promote and perpetuate conservation of our landscape within the community. Improve water quality in the county and create a greater awareness of watersheds and natural resource concerns in our area.

2016 ARC / PLC Annual Contract Enrollment

Producers are encouraged to stop by the FSA office to complete their 2016 ARC/PLC contract enrollment, sign their 2016 Adjusted Gross Income Certification, and inform FSA staff of any other major changes in their farming operation.

Producers can help eliminate office congestion and long wait time during acreage reporting by completing enrollment for 2016 ARC/PLC during the winter months when the office is less busy. If triggered by commodity prices or revenue, ARC/PLC payments for the 2016 crop year will be paid after October 1, 2017. Since ARC/PLC payments are based on Market Year Average (MYA) commodity prices and actual county average yields, payments cannot be calculated until nearly a year after harvest for most crops.

This is a reminder that ARC / PLC contract enrollment is an annual task and must be completed to be eligible for any earned payment. Failure to sign an annual contract will leave you with no safety net for any year a contract is not signed. Please don't put it off. Come into our warm office and get out of the cold while you have more time to complete this task. We thank you in advance!

REPORT YOUR FARM CHANGES

If you have recently sold/purchased land, are in the process of changing your current farm ownership to an Entity or Trust, or are currently dealing with an Estate, you MUST notify your local FSA Office so your farm records can be updated. It is very important that your farm records reflect accurate information to retain full eligibility for all FSA programs. This is especially apparent in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts. Your court-house records need to match your FSA farm records.

CRP UPDATES

The Fayette County FSA office is in the process of mailing out Mid-Contract Management (MCM) and establishment cost-share packets to all CRP participants who are scheduled for 2016 activities. With spring right around the corner it is critical you start the planning process early.

CRP Mid-Contract Management Reminders

Mid-Contract Management (MCM) is a requirement for CRP. Producers, who are participating in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are reminded to complete required MCM activities as defined in your conservation plan.

Spring burning has become a popular MCM choice, but planning an alternative MCM activity is a must in case Mother Nature does not allow you to burn, or a contractor cannot get the job completed. **Extensions are discouraged and will not be addressed until all planning options have been exhausted.**

Please make the necessary arrangements to get your practice completed **BEFORE May 15 or AFTER August 1.** Absolutely no MCM activities are to be completed during the primary nesting season.

Once your MCM practice has been completed please contact FSA as soon as possible to finalize certification paperwork and turn in bills so cost-share payments can be calculated and paid.

Failure to perform planned management activities according to a conservation plan may lead to the termination of your CRP contract and the refund of all payments received to date.

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Northeast Iowa RC&D Receives \$165k Monarch Butterfly Conservation Funding



The Northeast Iowa RC&D (Resource Conservation & Development) received funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through the 2015 Monarch Butterfly Conservation Fund of \$165,000.

This fund was established to ensure the conservation of the Monarch Butterfly due to the dramatic decline in Monarch populations over the past decade. Recent surveys of Monarchs show the population has fallen to as low as 10% of their 20-year average. Multiple threats are known to impact Monarch survival and experts agree that a decline in milkweed and nectar plants in the Midwest has reduced the capacity of the population to recover to sustainable levels.

This funded project will bring together the Northeast Iowa RC&D, nine Northeast Iowa county Conservation Boards (including Fayette County), and the Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund to purchase land for establishment of a "Monarch Friendly" native seed supply that will be used to enhance and/or create Monarch habitat on thousands of acres of public land in county parks and roadsides.

The Fayette County Conservation Board and Fayette County Pheasants Forever will be working with the Northeast Iowa RC&D to utilize these funds to purchase a native prairie, enhance already existing public lands with milkweed and other Monarch critical flora, and work with private CRP acres to increase the available habitat and seed bank availability. These areas will not only provide critical habitat expansion, but will also be used to harvest seed to enhance additional acres.

Fayette County Pheasants Forever Tops \$1.5 million in Habitat Expenditures

Fayette County Pheasants Forever has eclipsed a new milestone of habitat expenditures. The Fayette County Chapter was founded in 1985. Since its inception, the organization has expended over \$1.5 million for the establishment of wildlife habitat and public land acquisition.

At the recent Pheasants Forever State Convention, Fayette County Pheasants Forever was recognized for exceeding \$1.5 million in habitat expenditure dollars. The chapter also finished and was named an Outstanding Chapter of the Year. Out of over 800 chapters, Fayette County regularly ranks in the top 10 chapters nationwide.

The Pheasants Forever organizational model is unique to all other conservation organizations. All of the funds raised by the chapter, with the exception of memberships, is retained by the chapter to be used for habitat projects in that county.

The fundraising event for Fayette County and all PF Chapters is an annual banquet. This year's banquet is March 19th, 2016. The banquet is held at Echo Valley Banquet and Reception Center in West Union, Iowa. Attendees will be treated to a prime rib or chicken dinner, followed by raffles, games, and auctions. These auctions and raffles feature guns, prints, furniture, and a vast array of wildlife related items.

Occasionally someone will



Fayette County Pheasants Forever Board Members accepting award for \$1.5 Million in Habitat Expenditures at the 2016 Statewide Pheasants Forever Convention on January 30th, 2016. Pictured Left to Right: Brett Whitchee, Rod Marlatt, George Schaefer

comment that they don't attend or support Pheasants Forever because they don't hunt pheasants. It is important to note that many of our supporters don't hunt pheasants. All wildlife species benefit locally from the habitat created by the program. In fact, deer, turkey, and multitudes of non-game species often reap the benefits before pheasants. We are known as the "Habitat Organization." The focus is on wildlife and soil and water conservation; all of which is improved as a result of these efforts. We urge all conservation-minded folks to support the

efforts of your Fayette County Pheasant Forever Chapter.

For more information, visit "Fayette County Pheasants Forever" on Facebook.



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This three day event is held each year in September at the Richard Jensen farm outside of West Union. In 2015, there were 534 kids and 27 teachers from 13 schools that attended.

The Fayette SWCD would like to thank all the volunteers that make this a successful educational event every year.



Mike Siepker, Decorah Fish Hatchery, gives students an opportunity to learn about fish.



Richard Jensen, Commissioner, uses tires to demonstrate how soil erosion happens



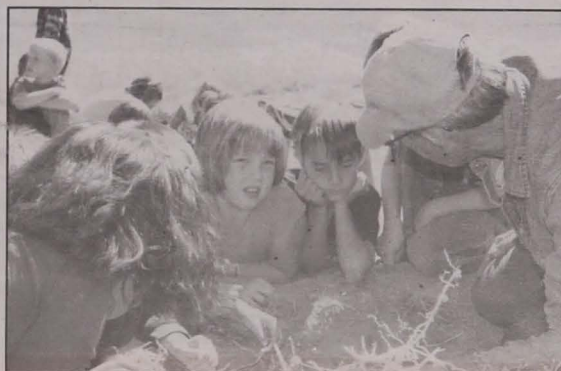
Jon Steege, Volunteer, informs students of different wildlife species and their habitats.



William Bennett, Commissioner, points out parts of a tree and talks about the value of our woodlands.



Bob Fassbinder of Fassbinder Apiaries, Elgin, teaches students about honeybees and their importance to nature.



Eric Boehm, Assistant Commissioner, discusses soil types and soil properties to third grade students.

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2015 Update on the Water Quality Initiative

The Water Quality Initiative was established during the 2013 legislative session to assist the implementation of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy which provides a road map to achieve a 45% reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters using an integrated approach of point (cities and industries) and non-point sources (farms and residential areas). The initiative seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to deliver a clear and consistent message to stakeholders to reduce nutrient loss and improve water quality.



Matt Lechtenberg
Water quality coordinator

In 2015, 1,800 farmers committed \$3.5 million in cost share funds to install nutrient reduction practices in each of Iowa's 99 counties. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer. Participants include 980 farmers using a practice for the first time and more than 830 past users that are trying cover crops

again and are receiving a reduced-rate of cost share.

In addition to statewide cost share, 16 targeted Water Quality Initiative demonstration watershed projects have been funded to help imple-

ment and demonstrate water quality practices. The state has provided \$7.4 million in funding to support these projects and has leveraged an additional \$11.7 million in additional funding from partners and landowners. More than 95 organizations are participating in these projects.

In 2015, Four additional demonstration projects focused on expanding the use and innovative delivery of water quality practices beyond an individual watershed have also received funding. These projects will receive \$3.06 million in funding through the Iowa water quality initiative over the next three years and be matched by \$2.59 million in funding from other sources. These projects include projects that will focus on expanding the use of cover crops, edge of field practices such as bioreactors and saturated buffers, and usage of water quality wetlands. A second round of funding for these projects will be awarded in early 2016.

Nine Urban Conservation Water Quality Initiative Demonstration Projects have also been funded. The state has awarded \$655,194 in funding and partners and landowners participating in the projects will provide \$2.43 million to support urban conservation efforts. A second round of funding for Urban Conservation Projects will also be awarded in early 2016.

For FY2016, \$9.6 million was appropriated by the legislature to support the Water Quality Initiative. This appropriation will allow the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to continue to provide cost share, expand programs and work in targeted watersheds to achieve measurable water quality improvements.

More information about the Water Quality Initiative can be found at www.CleanWaterIowa.org.



Will Myers - Water quality project coordinator

IMPROVE ACCESS to the TURKEY RIVER

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VOTE
March 8th - April 1



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CHALLENGE II

Social Media Voting Opens March 8-April 1- Clayton County Water Access Improvements on the Turkey River

Clayton County Conservation Water Access Improvement project has been accepted by the Isle of Capri Community Aces Challenge. The project seeks funding for 5 water access improvement projects along the Turkey River Water Trail. The public can vote for the project daily from March 8 through April 1 communityaceschallenge.com. Our community has proven in the past that social media voting can be beneficial to Conservation trail projects. We were awarded \$10,000 by the Wellmark Foundation Community Kickstart grant for land trail additions in our county parks in December through a similar social media voting. Help us receive \$25,000 which will go a long way to improving Water Trail accesses.

"The Clayton County Conservation Board is an honored recipient of the Isle of Capri Community Aces Challenge. We maintain the state designated Turkey River Water Trail portions crossing Clayton County and joining the Mississippi. Over 30,000 residents and visitors of Clayton County utilize the Water Trail annually. Unique Driftless area features along the trail heightens one's awareness and appreciation of our natural resources. Significant use of the water trail and fluctuations in the river degraded several water trail accesses. The Board will be making improvements to five water trail accesses over the next two years. Concrete boat landings, bank stabilization and streambed improvements, parking areas, restroom access, shelter houses, fish habitat, native plantings and signage utilizing the National Grid system will be assessed to maximize improvements along the Turkey River Water Trail at access #46 (Friedens Park), #38 (Turkey River Park), #32 (Motor Mill), #12 (Osterdock) and #5 (Millville)."

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