

BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

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STAFF

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Elaine Hammer, SC Tech
Sindra Jensen, SC
Carol DeWolf, Secretary
Tammy Schnock, WAE
Ben Clausen, WAE

Newsletter

COST-SHARING FOR CONSERVATION

The 1997 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

May 19 begins the 1997 application period for the USDA's new cost-share program, EQIP. Applications will be taken until August 20, or until all funds are obligated. There will be an evaluation of these applications on June 20, and again on July 20 and August 20 if funds are available.

A key element to the program is that priorities have been established, and producer applications will be ranked according to how well the conservation work they plan to carry out will solve resource priority problems at the most reasonable cost to the USDA. The 1997 Iowa EQIP funds will be allocated to eight priority areas and one area with three statewide resource concerns. The funds will be directed primarily at controlling soil erosion, improving water quality, development of better animal waste and nutrient management systems, and improving grazing lands.

Practices will include, but are not limited to, grass waterways, filter strips, terracing, capping abandoned wells, manure management facilities, pasture management, and integrated pest management.

Producers will be asked to enter into contracts that specify the type and amount of conservation work to be done. The EQIP contract, when accepted, provides for cost-sharing and incentive payments to the producer for applying the needed conservation practices and land use adjustments within a specified time schedule. Payments are then made to the producer when the conservation practices specified in the contract are satisfactorily established.

Applications are being taken by employees of the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District.

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STATUS REVIEWS

As spring and the 1997 cropping season approaches, the Natural Resources Conservation Service will begin preparing for the yearly status review of county producers Food Security Act Conservation Plans. Letters will be sent to the producers whose names appeared on the random list of producers to be checked in May.

The status review will consist of an NRCS employee meeting with the producer at the farm to 1) Review for compliance with HEL, 2) Review for compliance with CRP and CRP early out, and 3) Determine any wetland violations since December 23, 1985.

The status review will take anywhere from thirty minutes to three hours depending on the amount of acres involved.

CONGRATULATIONS TO POSTER CONTEST WINNERS!

Soil and water conservation begins at home through backyard stewardship and is the message of the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) annual poster contest and the national Soil and Water Stewardship Observance this year.

The Black Hawk SWCD sponsored a poster contest for students in Black Hawk County to express their concerns and opinions on backyard stewardship. We had Union Community Schools and Dike-New Hartford Community School submit posters this year. The posters were judged by the Black Hawk SWCD Commissioners and a winner was chosen in each division.

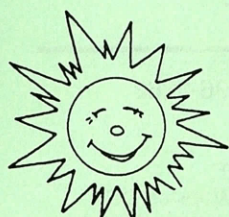
Division III - Erin K Dirks, Union Middle School, Grade 6

Division IV - Sarah M Greiner, Dike - New Hartford Community School, Grade 8

Division V - Dusty Bengston, Union High School, Grade 10

Each winner received a Certificate of Recognition, a \$20.00 check and their posters will be sent to the regional competition.

Congratulations to the winners and we look forward to having more schools participate in the poster contest next year.



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BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 1996 ANNUAL REPORT

1M BUDGET

July 1, 1995 to June 30, 1996

Total Allocation	\$ 3,750.00
Commissioners Expenses	1,421.71
Office Supplies, postage & dues	<u>2,328.29</u>
Balance	\$.00

3M BUDGET

Cost Share Ledger 1995-1996

Original Allocation	\$16,983.00
Projects Completed	13,723.91
Project Still in Progress	<u>2,013.25</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/96	1,245.84

REAP Practices Ledger 1996

Original Allocation	\$11,538.00
Projects Completed	<u>7,349.20</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/96	\$ 4,188.80

REAP Forestry Ledger 1995

Original Allocation	\$2,693.00
Projects Completed	<u>1,907.58</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/96	\$ 785.42

COMMISSIONERS REVOLVING FUND

Balance 7/1/95	\$ 529.28
Deposit	6,705.24
Expenditures	<u>6,896.14</u>
Balance 6/30/96	\$ 338.38

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

New Cooperators	35	25
FSA Plans Revised (Number)	20	
Conservation Cover (Acres)	109	331
Conservation Crop Rotation (Acres)	2,641	6307
Conservation Tillage (Acres)	2,941	5710
Contours (Acres)	387	26
Filter Strips (Acres)	109	280
Tree Planting - REAP (Acres)	22	
Terraces (Feet)	11,660	
Windbreaks (Acres)	12	
Waterways (Acres)	157	
Wildlife Wetland Habitat Mgmt (Acres)	203	
Wetland Determinations	473	

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1996 DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

--The Krsnak-Runyan-Ward Memorial Scholarship of \$400 was awarded to John Cliff Denson of Ames this year. He is a junior at ISU majoring in Environmental Engineering.

--The commissioners held their fourth Urban Erosion Seminar at the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center on March 14 with 43 in attendance.

--The Mercantile Bank sponsored a booth for the district at the Hawkeye Farm Show that was held at the UNI dome on March 19, 20, and 21. *Planning for the Total Conservation Picture* was used on the commissioners downing display and they also demonstrated their newly purchased EnviroScape.

--*Food, People and Land - A City Slicker's Guide to Farming* session began with a lecture at the Grout Museum and then a field trip to a local farm. One was held each season. It was hoped the program would help inform the urban population on what's happening in agriculture.

--The theme for the 1996 Soil and Water Stewardship Week was *Harmony - People and Places* and was observed April 28 - May 5. The district furnished materials to over 150 churches in Waterloo and the surrounding area.

--The district sponsored a tour for the Midwest Environmental Education Conference that was held in Cedar Falls at UNI on August 15 and 16.

--Winegarden, Haugebak, Harting and Schmitz attended the 50th Annual Conference for SWCD Commissioners held in Des Moines at the Savory Hotel on September 4-5.

--The commissioners had a booth in the Flower and Garden Building at the National Cattle Congress Exposition held September 13-22.

--Winegarden, Haugebak, Schmitz, and Harting attended the Fall Regional Meeting held on Tuesday, December 3 in Dyersville.

This report is published not only to show the conservation work completed, but gives us the opportunity to say thank you to everyone supporting conservation programs in the county. We especially appreciate every landowner and operator who applied a conservation practice during the past year, the local media for publicity throughout the year and everyone who helped to make our district's program a success.

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