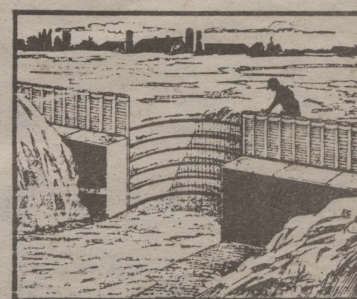


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Keith VanKlee



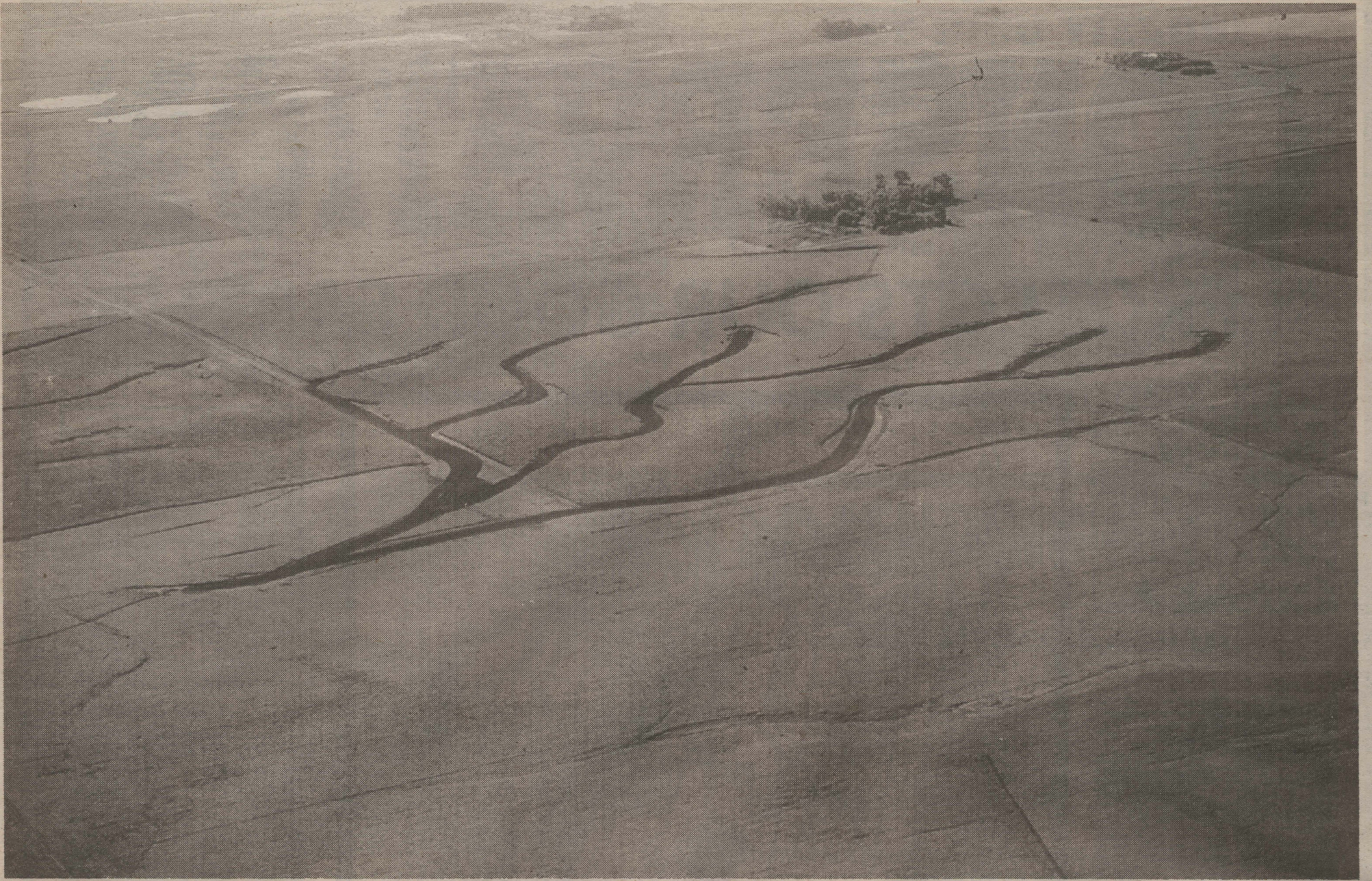
DICKINSON COUNTY

Soil and Water

Conservation District

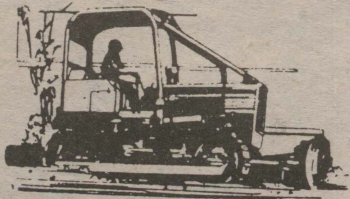
Annual Report 1995 - 1996

Published by Lakes News Shopper, Ph. 338-2232



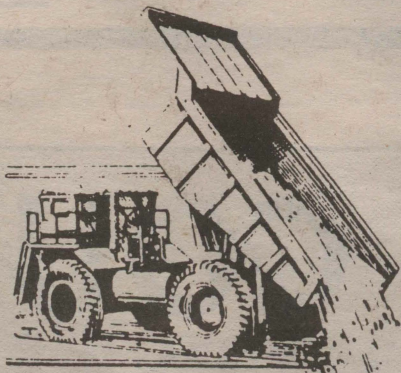
Grassed Waterways constructed in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed

Practice Conservation –

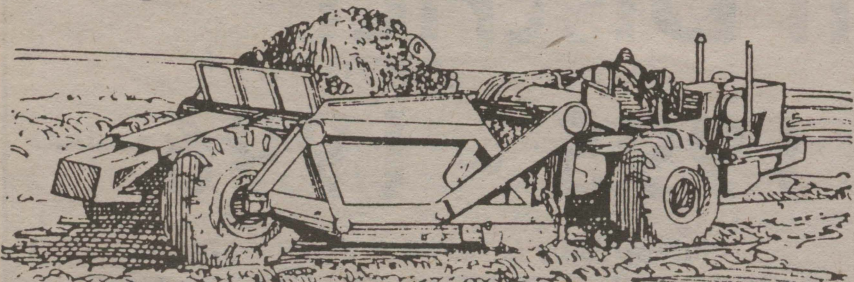


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Wetlands: Worthless Pieces of Ground?

by John Wills, Environmental Specialist

Many times we hear questions like 'what importance does a wetland play in today's environment?' As people change the environment, in the name of progress, a wetland may look pretty worthless to them. A wetland is not a worthless piece of ground, wetlands are the most productive areas in the world. A wetland serves as home to almost 98% of all animal species at one time or another in their lifetime. They provide good, clean water for ground water recharge and surface water as in the case of the Iowa Great Lakes.

It has been found that a wetland can remove up to 99% of all pollutants that enter them before the pollutant reaches the lake or river. With that in mind, you can see the importance that wetlands play in the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project. Wetlands are one of the things that we look to in protecting the Iowa Great Lakes.

The Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project was designed to be an innovative leader in conservation. This year a new development has taken place -- the Iowa Lakes RC&D Project has been funded. An RC&D Project demonstrates ways to make money while remaining environmentally conscious. The Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project and the Iowa Lakes RC&D are teaming up to bring new and innovative ways to make money on wetlands.

If you would like more information in crayfish production, please contact John Wills at (712)336-2604. There will be other projects that will show the profitability of wetlands in the future, for instance, did you know that a bushel of cattails can produce as much alcohol as a bushel corn? Food production in wetlands can be a very profitable commodity. Wetlands can be a big money making opportunity if the possibilities are explored. With the help of the Iowa Lakes RC&D we hope to show people there are possibilities that exist. It is hoped that we will not hear those words "that is a worthless piece of ground" to explain a wetland in the future.

Dickinson SWCD Forestry Program

Trees for Kids Program

Each year in the Spring the District Commissioners present all interested 6th grade students

in the County with a Green Ash tree. This 'environmental gift' is a follow up to the Outdoor Classroom where the importance of trees is emphasized to the students. This program has been going on for over 15 years; many parents have beautiful reminders of their child's sixth year in school in their front yards or windbreaks.

Windbreak Cost-Share Programs

Funds are available from the State and Local governments for cooperators who receive technical assistance in planning their windbreaks. The trees and shrubs used in the windbreaks can be purchased from any source the applicant chooses, but the amount of reimbursement per tree/shrub is limited according to the State's cost-share guidelines. If you are considering adding a new windbreak to your farmstead, field or acreage contact our office at (712) 336-2604 for more information.

Soil & Water Stewardship Week

"Harmony: People and Places," the theme of the 1996 Soil & Water Stewardship Week observance, was reflective of a classic definition of conservation given by Aldo Leopold, an early American conservation leader. He said, "Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land."

The Soil & Water Stewardship Observance is celebrated in the United States to help remind all people of their individual responsibilities to care for our soil and water resources. By its very nature, the observance is one to be joined in by everyone (regardless of religious beliefs) who shares a sense of personal responsibility to care for our natural resources. Since the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s, countless individuals have adopted a stewardship ethic and have

applied conservation practices that have reduced soil erosion dramatically. The observance is celebrated each year between the last Sunday in April and the first Sunday in May.

The Dickinson SWCD works with many partners throughout the year on conservation practices such as waterways, windbreaks, as well as educational and promotional activities. The Commissioners provided church bulletin covers, litany inserts, and worship resources with this year's theme emphasized to all interested churches in the County at no cost. They also provided educational materials to schools and libraries within Dickinson County.

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Norway Spruce 15-18"
Scotch Pine 18-24"
White Spruce 15-18"

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\$7.00 each
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\$7.00 each

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1995-1996

Accomplishments

- 313 Individuals and groups assisted
- 22 Individuals and groups applying practices
- 57 Resource management systems planned
- 3780 Cropland acres treated
- 8 Farmstead/field windbreaks installed
- 27 Grassed waterways installed
- 5 No-Till Incentives made

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Natural Resource Care in the Hands of Private Landowners

by Leroy Brown, NRCS State Conservationist

When the 1985 Farm Bill was passed, many people doubted whether America's farmers could meet the challenges posed in the bill's conservation provisions. Among other things, those provisions called on producers to develop and carry out a conservation plan to protect all highly erodible cropland against soil erosion, in order to stay eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture programs.

Iowa's agricultural producers passed that test convincingly. They adopted tillage methods on millions of acres of cropland that left crop residues from the previous year's crop on the soil surface to protect against erosion. They established grasses and trees, on thousands of acres of the most erodible and fragile croplands. They established wildlife habitat, and began using a number of practices to improve water quality. Iowa landowners have reversed the trend in wetlands losses, and become the nation's leaders in wetlands restoration programs. They cut soil erosion by more than a third. In short, in the past decade, Iowa farmers built the most impressive record of natural resource care on agricultural land of any period in history.

Now, 11 years later, another Farm Bill has been passed, and there are again doubts about the agricultural community's commitment to conservation. The 1996 Farm Bill puts natural resource care more squarely on the shoulders of agricultural producers than the previous bills. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation Districts, state conservation agencies and others will be there to help, as in the past. But the primary responsibility to make



and carry out decisions to care for the land and natural resources rests with farmers.

The 1996 Farm Bill keeps the conservation compliance provisions of the 1985 and 1990 bill, but offers more flexibility in which crops can be grown and in the protection of the resources used to grow those crops. It's been dubbed the "freedom to farm" bill; it's a freedom and responsibility that most farmers wanted.

Voluntary conservation, with incentives, has worked well to promote widespread use of conservation measures by farmers in Iowa. The 1996 Farm Bill offers the opportunity to prove that it will continue to work.

Iowa landowners have proven over the past 10 years as a group to be very responsible stewards of the land. But caring for natural resources is a never-ending task. It will be up to those closest to the land, those who farm it, to continue to take the lead in caring for it.

Which segment of the population can do the most for the future of our natural resources? In Iowa, there's no question. There is financial and technical help from a handful of state and federal agencies, and private groups, but by and large, the care of natural resources is in the hands of the thousands of private landowners, most of whom are farmers.

When this Farm Bill expires, I hope farmers across the state will be the first to look back with satisfaction that we sustained the gains made in natural resource care from 1985 to 1995, and better yet, improved on that record.

Conservation... do it for the Future!

Forward...

The Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners present the 1996 Annual Report with appreciation to the landowners and producers who have worked closely with the District staff to accomplish yet another successful year of conservation.

Activities of the District are accomplished through funding appropriated by the Iowa State Legislature and allocated through the State Soil Conservation Committee to the 100 Soil & Water Conservation Districts in Iowa.

Dickinson SWCD Financial Report Fiscal Year 1996

1M Budget — District

Expenditures of funds provided by the State of Iowa for District Commissioner's mileage, meals, and hotel expenses; office supplies and equipment.

Allocation	\$ 2,500.00
Supplemental Allocation	\$ 1,305.00
Commissioner Expenses	\$ 2191.95
Office Supplies & Expenses	\$ 1233.26
Printing	\$ 379.79
Returned to State	\$ -0-

3M Budget — IA Financial Incentives Program

The 3M Budget provides cost-share assistance to landowners for installing permanent soil & water conservation practices and offers 30% of the allocation for tillage incentives.

Allocation	\$13,586.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 5,020.50
Unobligated Amount	\$ 8,565.60

REAP (Resource Enhancement & Protection Practices)

Allocation	\$11,538.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ -0-
Unobligated Amount	\$11,538.00

REAP (Forestry & Native Grasses)

Allocation	\$ 2,693.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 2,124.09
Unobligated Amount	\$ 568.91

Organic Nutrient Management

Allocation	\$16,566.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ -0-
Unobligated Amount	\$16,566.00

Water Protection Fund

Allocation	\$53,400.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$51,985.75
Unobligated Amount	\$ 1,414.25

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Purpose...

Government interest in better management of our natural resources began during the Depression with Franklin D. Roosevelt's conservation programs. Since that time a great deal of concern for soil and water conservation has come about, from the Dust Bowl Days of the 30s to Flood of 1993, and the District has played a significant part along the way. The Soil and Water Conservation District is in its 51st year of service and is available to help solve resource management problems, so whether you live in the city or county and are a landowner or not, you are invited to contact our office for assistance in conservation related practices.

Iowa Lakes RC&D
Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist

The application for the development of the Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation and Development Association was approved by the USDA last October. The counties of Dickinson, Emmet, Clay, Buena Vista and Palo Alto will be served by the Iowa Lakes RC&D.

Many long hours of work over several years were donated by the Iowa Lakes RC&D Association council members and USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service staff. Orville Berg, Dickinson County SWCD Commissioner, serves as the Iowa Lakes RC&D Chairperson and was a leader in establishing the Iowa Lakes RC&D.

Resource Conservation and Development Associations are non-profit corporations that combine people and rural development needs and direct action toward meeting these needs. RC&D's provide assistance by working "with" people rather than "for" people. RC&D projects range from assisting groups in creating parks, community facilities or tourist attractions, promoting local agriculture and industry, and assisting with soil & water conservation projects.

RC&D councils are locally governed by volunteer directors from local sponsoring units of government or other groups. RC&D council members set goals and work with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in directing the activities of the RC&D coordinator. RC&D's receive financial support and staffing from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Iowa Lakes RC&D Association welcomes your ideas for potential RC&D projects. If your project request is approved by the RC&D council, assistance will be provided to you by local citizens, the RC&D council and cooperating agencies.

Please feel free to contact me at (712) 336-2604 or Jeff Kestel (acting RC&D Coordinator) at (712) 732-3096 for more information about how the Iowa Lakes RC&D Association can assist you with your project idea.

**Dickinson County
Soil & Water
Conservation
District Awarded
the Goodyear
Conservation
Award**

The Goodyear Conservation Award was awarded to the Dickinson SWCD at the Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners Annual Meeting which was held in Des Moines in September. Mark Ingwersen, Commissioner and State Vice President, was in attendance representing Dickinson County and accepted this prestigious award.

This national award is sponsored by the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company and the National Association of Conservation Districts. It takes a wide range of district activities into consideration when determining the state's winners. The districts that are actively working to promote land stewardship to both rural and urban residents of the County, as well as providing valuable education opportunities on current, innovative topics are looked to for such awards.



1996 ENVIROTHON — The first Iowa Envirothon was held at the 4-H Camp near Boone, IA on April 29, 1996. This competition challenges students to utilize their critical thinking skills in hands-on test dealing with natural resources. The contest focuses on five main areas: aquatics, forestry, wildlife, soils and current environmental issues.

Carisa Solberg and Jenny Yeager of the Terril High School put their aquatics knowledge to practice during a pond water testing at the Iowa Envirothon.

This new program for Iowa students was organized by the Iowa Association of Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners. All high school students in Iowa were encouraged to participate and 70 teams showed an early interest, but due to timing challenges there were 13 teams at the competition. The Dickinson County SWCD, along with the Environmental Education Committee, offered to sponsor any team from Dickinson County interested in competing. The Terril High School chose to participate in this year's event and took fifth place in the competition!

We look forward to sponsoring teams again in the 1997 competition. If your group is interested please contact Ann at the district office (712) 336-2604 for more information.

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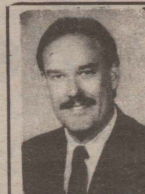
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Partnerships key to DNR work by Doug Harr, DNR Wildlife Biologist

With today's emphasis on smaller government and fewer regulations, Iowa Department of Natural Resources is attempting to do whatever it can to accomplish this desirable situation. But with an increasing amount of public lands to manage, plus the stresses that population growth in Dickinson County place upon natural resources, it becomes necessary to work more closely with other agencies and society's private sector. Only through cooperation by many different interests can the job of preserving our region's soils, water, and wildlife be accomplished efficiently.

DNR is pleased to work closely with the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District. The partnership of these two agencies goes back many years and continues to be strengthened by continued working relationships. The Department greatly appreciates time given by SWCD staff in assisting with planning and surveying for wetland restorations on both public and private lands. In return, local DNR personnel welcome the chance to offer time, equipment and expertise for project with which the SWCD may need help.

Partnerships with private landowners are key elements in the larger conservation picture for Dickinson County. Besides assisting with wetland restorations, other land and habitat conservation practices are available through DNR and its partner agencies. Easements on private lands are available from several sources. These allow installation of conservation practices by giving up certain uses of the property. Cash payments are made for such easements while ownership remains in private hands. Detailed information on different easement possibilities may be obtained by contacting either the Dickinson SWCD or Iowa DNR.

Also playing an important role in conservation

partnerships are several private organizations. Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, local lake protective associations and other groups interested in Dickinson County's wealth of natural resources all have pledged both money and verbal support for a wide variety of conservation projects. The combined efforts of these groups have helped DNR and other agencies secure numerous grants for lake protection and other conservation purposes.

Total Quality Management

The employees of the Iowa Department of Agriculture - Division of Soil Conservation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service attend training for Total Quality Management (TQM) in 1996. Ann Ditsworth and John Wills were two of the 26 facilitators (trainers) for this statewide training effort. TQM is a management principle that emphasizes a focus toward meeting the customers needs and empowering the employees to do so.

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Highlights from Fiscal 1996...

January

- ✧ Election of Officers: Keith Van Kleeck, Chair
Chris Hoffman, Vice Chair
Tim Hemphill, Secretary
Orville Berg, Treasurer
- ✧ Lance Heikens re-appointed as Assistant Commissioner
- ✧ Bi-monthly newsletter published
- ✧ TQM facilitating begins for Ann Ditsworth and John Wills
- ✧ Ag & the Environment attended by John Wills
- ✧ Clean Water Alliance meeting
- ✧ Capacity Building Workshop attended by Mark Ingwersen and John Wills

February

- ✧ Northwest Iowa Tillage Expo in Spirit Lake
- ✧ TQM training attended by John Roths
- ✧ Conservation Poster Contest co-sponsored by SWCD and MHR Insurance the first place local winner was Darren Hein an Okoboji 4th grade student from Mrs VanDonslear's class
- ✧ IDOT Partnership meeting - Hwy 71 planning

March

- ✧ Spring Regional meeting at Estherville attended by Mark Ingwersen and Keith Van Kleeck
- ✧ IA Commissioner's Auxiliary Scholarship applications submitted
- ✧ Five County Contractor's meeting
- ✧ REAP Assembly Mtg in Spencer
- ✧ Capacity Building workshop attended by Mark Ingwersen & John Wills
- ✧ Goodyear Award application submitted
- ✧ Bi-monthly newsletter published
- ✧ Silver Lake Watershed Project pre-proposal prepared
- ✧ Quarterly Environmental Education Committee meeting held

April

- ✧ Soil & Water Stewardship Week — materials donated to schools, churches and libraries
- ✧ District Trees distributed to cooperators
- ✧ Dickinson County 6th Grade students receive green ash trees from Commissioners
- ✧ IA Envirothon attended by Terril High students, sponsored by SWCD
- ✧ Clean Water Alliance meeting

May

- ✧ Okoboji 3rd & 4th Grade Outdoor Classroom
- ✧ Iowa Department of Agriculture - Division of Soil Conservation Employee's meeting attended by Ann Ditsworth and John Wills
- ✧ Bi-monthly newsletter published

June

- ✧ Annual Plan submitted
- ✧ County Tree Reserve funds received from the County Conservation Board

July

- ✧ Clean Water Alliance meeting
- ✧ Commissioner/Partners Summer Picnic
- ✧ CRP...Options for the Future Tour
- ✧ Bi-monthly newsletter published

August

- ✧ Carroll Oskvig joins staff as District Conservationist

September

- ✧ Annual Conference attended by Mark Ingwersen
- ✧ Dickinson County receives 1996 Goodyear Conservation Award
- ✧ Commissioners assist with Clay County Fair SWCD Booth
- ✧ SWCD Annual 6th Grade Outdoor Classroom held at Kettleon Hogsback Area
- ✧ IGL Clean Water Project Annual Review
- ✧ 1997 1M Budget presented for approval
- ✧ Farm Show filmed for Lakes Cable 37 by Orville Berg, Carroll Oskvig and Ann Ditsworth
- ✧ State Wetlands Committee mtg

October

- ✧ Clean Water Alliance meeting
- ✧ Master Gardener participants sponsored by SWCD
- ✧ Bi-monthly newsletter published
- ✧ IA Lakes RC&D received approval

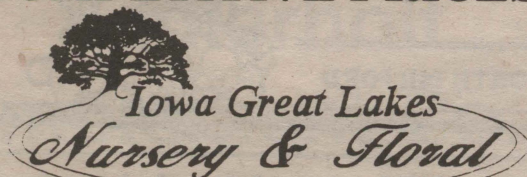
November

- ✧ Mark Ingwersen & Chris Hoffman re-elected as SWCD Commissioners

December

- ✧ Annual Report sent to owners/operators
- ✧ Tree Sale begins

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Dickinson County Farm Service Agency

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1996

October 1, 1995 through September 30, 1996

The Dickinson County Farm Service Agency (FSA) has completed it's fiscal year 1996 in the area of conservation by assisting with the cost of several conservation practices that were installed in Dickinson County throughout the year. These practices ranged from the seeding of a Permanent Vegetative Cover Improvement to the establishment of the Water Quality Incentive Program (WQIP) to assist in implementing the necessary management practices on a farm. Below is a report of monies that were disbursed during our fiscal year by practice:

Agricultural Conservation Program - Annual Funds

Permanent Vegetative Cover Improvement	\$ 378.00
Sod Waterways	9272.00
	\$9650.00

Agricultural Conservation Program - Long-Term Agreements

Integrated Crop Management	\$1099.00
Sod Waterways	8051.00
Water Quality Incentive Program	23728.00
	\$32878.00

Total of all disbursements \$42528.00

With the passage of the Farm Bill last spring the programs and practices listed above are no longer in existence and once all monies that were allocated to practices are paid the ledgers for these programs will be closed. All funds allocated prior to October 1, 1996, have been committed to practices and they will be honored and paid as procedure calls for not to exceed the amount approved. The funds for these projects cannot be transferred to other practices so it is important to ensure these practices are completed as planned.

With the passing of fiscal year 1996 as of October 1, 1996, this begins a new fiscal year and in turn a new program that was brought into play with the passing of the Farm Bill last spring. The new

program titled Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is designed to combine all of the previous programs of conservation into one total based program that will be handled through Long-Term Agreements from no less than five years to no more than ten years. Another feature of this new program is that applications may be taken by almost any USDA agency, such as the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Service, ISU Extension Service, to name a few. Once all procedures and funds are in place this program will be put into action promptly. Please watch for any upcoming informational newsletters or other correspondence for information on this new program.

Larry D. Lago, County Executive Director
Dickinson County Farm Service Agency

1996 SWCD 6th Grade Outdoor Classroom

In September the Outdoor Classroom was held for 230 sixth grade students from the schools in Dickinson County. Each fall the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District sponsors this event which is held at the Kettleston-Hogsback Area just west of Big Spirit. This area provides a variety of outdoor settings as well as indoor classrooms in the event of rain. The unique geological features of the area and environmentally focused speakers are what makes the annual event such a success.

This year the program included hands on adventures including a Nature Trail walk with Tim Waltz and Maury Muhm as guides, viewing the Wild Geese and Trumpeter Swans with Bryan Hellyer and Doug Chafa, checking soil textures with Carroll Oskvig and Heath Dodge, and Ann Ditsworth helped them to create a watershed to better understand humans effects Water Quality. Students also had the opportunity to learn more about Recycling with Marilyn Hawn, Hazardous Chemical Spills in the Environment with Bryon Whiting, and the importance of trees with Rich Leopold. To conclude the days events, a group presentation was given on Orphan & Injured Wildlife by Linda Hinshaw.

The Soil & Water Conservation District recognizes the importance of educating youth about the environment and makes environmental materials available to each school in the County.

Environmental Education Committee

One of the District Commissioner's goals is to assist in educating both urban and rural people about caring for the environment. Educational materials had been provided to the schools in the past, but the Commissioners weren't certain that they were 'the right kind of materials' that the teachers were looking for in their classrooms. With this in mind, it was decided to establish an Environmental Education Committee (EEC). We contacted each of the schools in the County and asked the administrators to 'nominate' a maximum of 3 teachers with environmental interest to serve on a steering committee. In October of 1995 the District hosted the organizational meeting for the group, and in one evening of brainstorming a framework and list of goals was established. The group meets three times per school year to discuss projects in their classrooms and have an environmental presentation.

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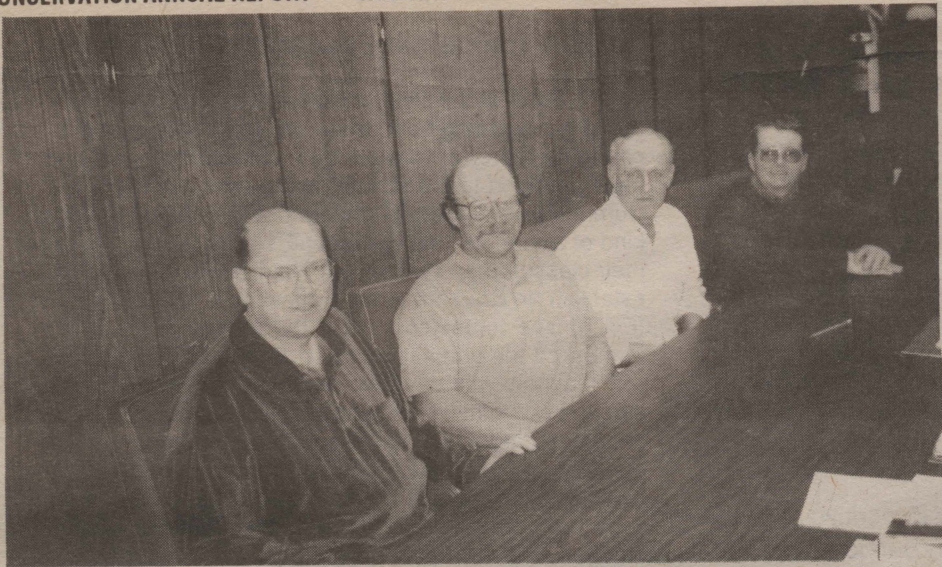
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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS — Show above, left to right: Orville Berg, Center Grove Township; Chris Hoffman, Lakeville Township; Tim Hemphill, Okoboji Township; Keith Van Kleek, Chair, Lloyd Township. Not pictured: Mark Ingwersen, Superior Township and Lance Heikens, Silver Lake Township.



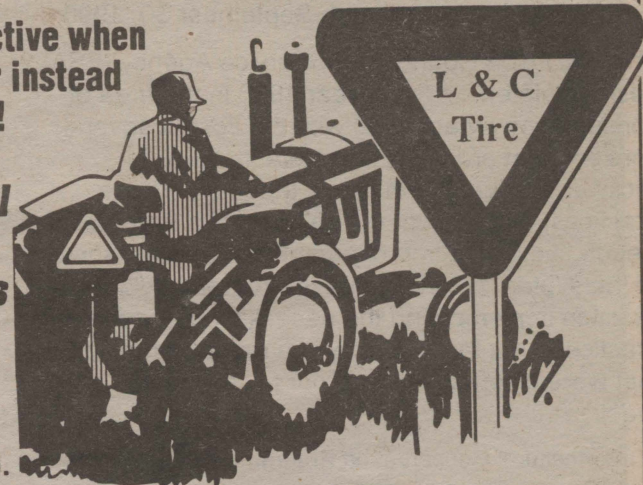
SPIRIT LAKE FIELD OFFICE STAFF — Left to right: Heath Dodge, Ann Ditsworth, John Wills and Carroll Oskvig.

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