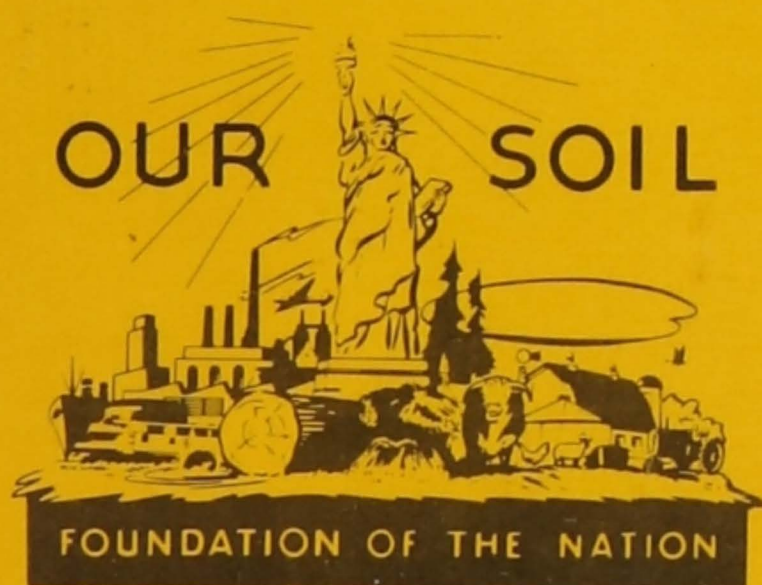


Tama County Soil Conservation District



ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1978

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FOREWARD

We are pleased to present our 1978 Annual Report of conservation accomplishments of the District during 1978.

God's precious gifts of soil, water and other associated factors make up our environment. It is men's responsibility that the right steps are taken to protect our soil and water resources to meet the needs of our people. The Soil Conservation Programs is a major factor in the effort to keep America productive and beautiful. We must work together to manage and protect these natural resources for our own good and for future generations.

Tama County has a favorable balance and working cooperative between the Soil Conservation Service, the Extension Service, the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service, and Farmer Home Administration. We wish to thank these agencies and all our cooperators for their interest and support for the District soil and water conservation program.

THE COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICE STAFF



DISTRICT ACCOMPLISHMENTS 1978 Fiscal Year

	UNIT	AMOUNT
District Cooperators	No.	27
Conservation Plans Prepared	No.	18
Farm Services Provided	No.	241
Farms Applying Practices	No.	125
Contour Farming	Ac.	1,597
Minimum Tillage	Ac.	3,147
Farm Ponds	No.	4
Structure for Water Control	No.	6
Terrace Parallel	Lin. Ft.	28,125
Sediment & Water Control Basin	No.	72
Farmstead and Feedlot Windbreaks	Ac.	54
Grassed Waterways	Ac.	61
Contour Stripcropping	Ac.	373
Subsurface Drain Systems	Lin. Ft.	153,457
ACP Referrals Serviced	No.	161

An early spring and a good fall helped to make a successful 1978 ACP program. The regular allocation was \$87,900. In addition, \$25,000 was received for the Otter Creek Watershed special project. These funds were allocated to 143 farms to carry out the following practices:

Practice	No. Farms	Acres Treated	Cost-Shares
Conservation Tillage	25	1118	\$ 8,386
5 Year Seeding	18	416	\$10,276
Windbreaks	34	115	\$13,177
Sod Waterway	43	2017	\$74,474
Contour	8	501	\$ 2,505
Stripcropping	7	257	\$ 2,570
Terraces	3	35	\$ 4,135
Pond	1	10	\$ 2,500
Wildlife Habitat	3	360	\$ 352
Tree Planting	1	2.5	\$ 157

The Otter Creek Watershed Special Project came about due to the silt deposited in the channel of the Otter Creek Marsh. A 500' wide channel constructed when the marsh was developed 10 years ago has filled with silt to a depth of 4 to 5' except for a 20' channel that Otter Creek flows through. A second concern is the silt washing into the County Conservation Lake. Observation of these problems prompted the ASCS Committee, SCS, and Extension to investigate how farmers could be encouraged to install conservation practices on their land. Discussion with producers in the area revealed considerable interest in Conservation.

ASCS has funds available for areas with unusual problems. The Otter Creek proposal was submitted to the Iowa State ASCS Committee with a request for funds to cost-share conservation with farmers in the watershed. The State ASCS Committee allocated \$25,000.

Regular 1979 funds allocated for Tama County are \$63,700. Otter Creek project has been approved for another \$25,000. There is also a good possibility of considerable additional funds to be used in the Four Mile Creek Watershed. Four Mile Creek runs southeast from Lincoln to Wolf Creek. The Environmental Protection Administration is considering allocating funds to allow Iowa State University to continue research in the watershed to determine how conservation practices effect water quality. ASCS has agreed to allocate needed cost-share funds for the area. Final approval is pending.

ASCS - Russel Lyon

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Bob Kurtt
Wildlife Management Biologist
Iowa Conservation Commission

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

Wildlife habitat is still the key for survival of wildlife. All birds and animals need places to raise their young, food to eat, and necessary cover to endure Iowa's harsh winters.

Nesting cover is probably the biggest limiting factor in Tama County at this time of soaring land prices. Row crops dominate the landscape in most areas and offer little or no cover for pheasants and ground-nesting birds and animals that are trying to establish a nest.

For pheasants, brome-alfalfa is the best nesting cover you can provide in most areas. Alfalfa starts growth early in the spring, and combined with the old brome stalks from the year before provides excellent nesting cover if left undisturbed through July. Odd areas, hillsides, pond areas and field borders can be seeded with this combination to make better habitat for pheasants and other wildlife.

Set-aside acres are very important areas where wildlife benefits can be realized. Oats seeded at 2½ bushels or more per acre before April 20 and left undisturbed as long as possible (July 15 or later) will provide fair nesting cover on annual set-aside acres. Any number of plant species or grass-legume combinations, if left undisturbed, will be superior to oats on fields that are set-aside for more than one year. Brome-alfalfa has been proven as the most productive nesting cover on retired fields.

Fields or small odd areas that are left totally undisturbed for a number of years are much more productive than those mowed or grazed periodically.

Switchgrass, a native or warm-season grass, can play an important role in wildlife and pasture management. It offers good nesting cover for wildlife and also stands up well as winter cover. Switchgrass can also be used very effectively in a pasture rotation program because it provides excellent forage during July and August when cool-season pastures are dormant. If you desire more information on this program, contact the Soil Conservation Service for literature.

Another important application of switchgrass is for grass waterways, where atrazine carryover is a common problem. Switchgrass is tolerable of atrazine and will do a good job in waterways. This can make waterways attractive to wildlife and also provide needed soil conservation benefits.

I would like to thank the staff of the Soil Conservation Service for their help in past years. Also, thanks to the landowners who put their concern for wildlife into action and really did something about it. Whether it be switchgrass or grass-legume combinations for nesting cover, or tree and shrub plantings for winter cover, habitat improvement is still the key to wildlife conservation.

Robert Kurtt
Wildlife Biologist
203 W. High St.
Toledo, Iowa 52342

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT ON TAMA COUNTY

An intensive study to determine the effect of farming practices on stream quality will be located in the Four Mile Creek watershed in north Tama County.

This will be the most extensive research project of this nature anywhere in the United States up until this time.

The primary purpose of the research is to obtain data to provide a better understanding of the processes which are involved in the transport of sediment, nutrients and pesticides from field to stream.

This project has been described as a five year study which will probably start during the 1979 crop year. The study is financed by the Environmental Protection Agency but will actually be carried on by the Agricultural Engineering Department at Iowa State University.

The Tama County Soil Conservation District, the local S.C.S. technicians, the County Extension Service and the local A.S.C.S. office will all have important roles in various phases of the project.

A three year study was initiated on a smaller scale in 1976 and considerable data has been collected in those three years. Relatively little in the way of conservation practices has been done in the watershed.

Now, one of the major objectives of the project is to establish as much conservation farming as possible in a relatively short time. Some of this will emphasize certain practices in certain selected areas where farmer cooperation is possible.

In order to get conservation practices established rather rapidly, special cost share funding will be made available to farms in the watershed. While final details have not been announced at this writing, it is anticipated that 90% cost sharing may be quite common and there is the possibility that the entire watershed may be put into a "pooling agreement" so that there will not be the usual \$3,500.00 annual cost share limit per farm.

Farmers in the area have shown considerable interest in adopting new conservation practices under this program.

Once a high percentage of the watershed has received conservation treatment it will be possible to measure the effects of the practices on water quality. The findings will be used as a guide in future efforts to establish appropriate programs to control sediment, nutrient and pesticide pollution throughout the midwest.

The project is an extremely important one. We're all affected by stream pollution. We all have a stake both in conservation of soil and in keeping water clean.

Within the watershed itself, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity for landowners and operators to do whatever is necessary to stop excess soil losses and apply practices that will maintain or improve the productivity of their land for decades.

The conservation spotlight is on Tama County.

Dick Pulse
County Extension Director

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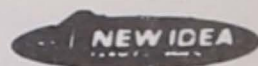


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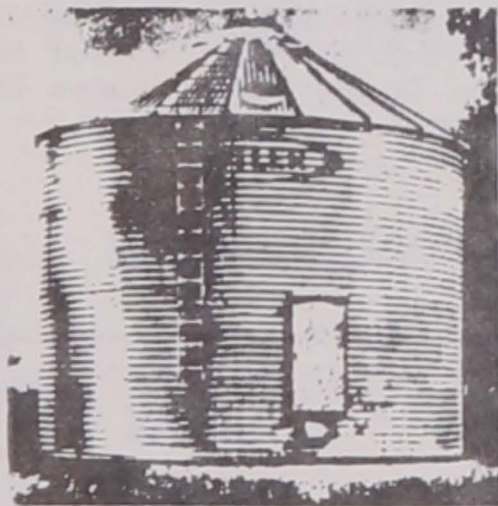
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LAND USE

Tama County is fortunate in having much diversity in land use. Parts of the county can boast some of the nation's most productive farmland. In other sections of the county, the greening,* grassed hills are among the first signs of spring. The Iowa River and its valley provide water, recreation, and wildlife habitat. Tama County still has nearly 20 thousand acres of woodlands, with four active sawmills to utilize the wood produced.

Yet the balance between agriculture, water quality, recreation, wildlife and forests is extremely fragile. In twenty short years between 1954 and 1974, Tama County timber was cleared at a rate of 500 acres per year. More land was pushed into rowcrop production as corn reached \$3.00/bu. and soybeans reached \$10.00/bu.

But the bulldozers were working on land never meant to be cropland. As trees fell and plows turned the sod, the green hills changed to a clay-yellow color. The river ran full of silt that had been held in place by the trees. Heavy snows fell on the cleared land, condemning many gamebirds to death by freezing and suffocation. Gone are the days of judicious timber harvest or gathering one's own winter fuel supply. Gone are the family recreation days—hunting mushrooms, picnics in the woods, squirrel hunting, or driving for a look at the fall beauty.

With current grain prices, you might expect that land clearing is no longer popular. With a USDA program encouraging land set-aside, it would seem only prudent to assume that new lands should not be brought into production. Not so. Many landowners still feel that every acre must produce, and that an "improved" farm is one with no trees.

Help is available to look for alternatives to land conversion. Perhaps you have a good, healthy, productive oak-hickory timber; perhaps that "brush" consists of young walnut trees planted by the squirrels. Perhaps your woodland is growing ginseng, worth about \$10 per ounce! None of the multiple benefits will continue, however, if domestic livestock run the timber, or if bulldozers clear the ground. Cost-share money for timber stand improvement is available through the ASCS office. Professional assistance is available through the SCS, Extension Service, and the Iowa Conservation Commission. Do your part to preserve Tama County's land-use diversity for future generations.

Bob Hibbs
District Forester
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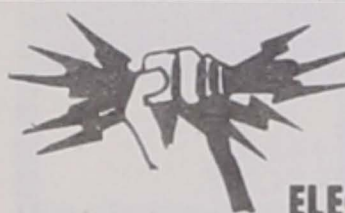
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Ted Hall	District Conservationist
Paul Bruns	Conservation Technician
Audrey Wheeler	State Clerk

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And we need to continue to develop new generations of agriculturalists prepared to lead, feed and succeed.

Like the farmer who plants in hope and cultivates in faith, we are as optimistic about America's agricultural future as we are proud of her past.

Welby Dixon, Commissioner

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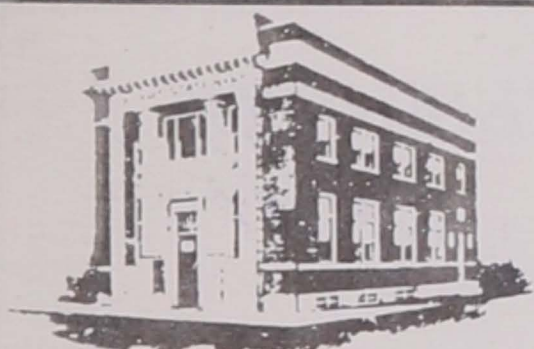
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STATE BUDGET OF THE TAMA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1M BUDGET

Commissioners Mileage	\$ 942.48
Office Supplies	268.73
Office Expense	189.83
Prizes for Contest	82.90
Meeting Expense	139.13

2M BUDGET

State Clerk Salary & Travel Expense	\$ 9,738.60
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3M BUDGET (State Cost-Share Funds)

Allocation	\$56,000.00
23 Agreements were approved	50,519.57
Returned to the Dept. of Soil Conservation	5,480.43

When land is scarce people often go hungry. When soils are depleted and crops are poorly nurtured, people are often undernourished as well.

In 1950 the world population was 2.5 billion people. In 1975 the population had expanded to 4.0 billion. By the end of the century there will be 6.3 billion if current projections materialize.

Growing populations demand more land not only for food production but for other purposes as well. Increased world food needs have necessitated the use of marginal lands for food production. Natural soil fertility is now declining on and estimated one-fifth of the world cropland.

A valuable national resource, cropland is the foundation not only of agriculture but of civilization itself.

Land use surveys by the USDA in 1967 and 1975 indicated that some 2.51 million hectares of prime cropland were converted to urban and transportation uses during the eight year span.

The 200 million tons of topsoil lost from Iowa's cropland each year, for example, simply can not be replaced within our life times or those of our families.

Due to cuts in funding, the soil conservation Districts have lost the equivalent of one technician per conservation district since 1967.

Conservation services which should help and encourage people to take proper care of the land has dwindled despite the fact land users need it more.

There are state funds for cost sharing projects and also ACP funds for conservation work. Stop in the SCS office and talk over your conservation problems with the office staff. They will be glad to help when possible. Let's make soil and water conservation the concern of everyone.

Harry Scurr, Commissioner



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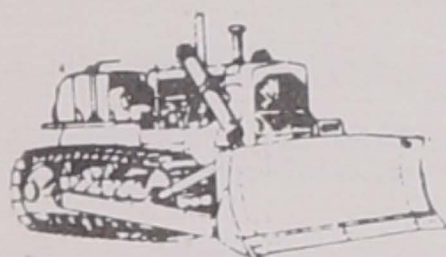
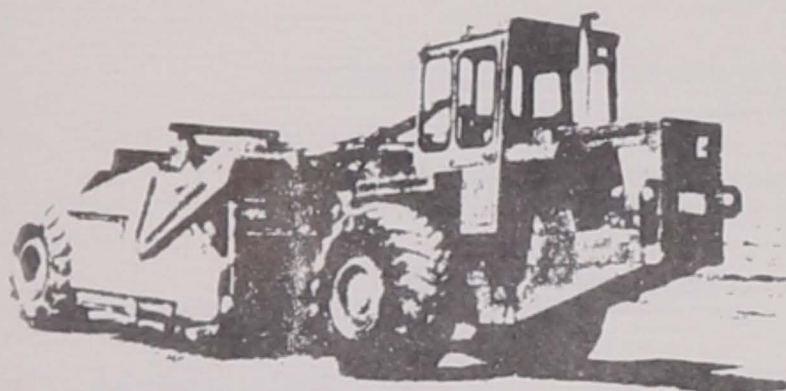
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HOW DO YOU RATE?

- | | |
|-----|--|
| Yes | I care about the future welfare of my family and friends. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I value the resources given in trust to me. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I enjoy the beauty of a clean lake. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I enjoy fishing a clean pure stream. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I value the respect of my friends and neighbors for a job well done. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I like to see the value of my land increase. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want waste areas used as wildlife habitat, etc. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to help eliminate the costs of flooding. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to help conserve and save fuel and energy resources. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to see my net profit rise. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to be open to new management and production methods. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I wish to help keep windblown soil out of the air. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want the voluntary method of conservation to work. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I wish to plant on fertile, well-drained soil. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to continue eating and enjoying a high standard of living. |
| No | I do not. |
| Yes | I want to be a conservation-minded person and use my SCD to the fullest. |
| No | I do not. |

This is a self-help test. Score yourself honestly, then step back and look at the picture. Do you like what you see?

Kenneth Bruene, Commissioner

IT'S A FACT

- *On sloping soils, half the topsoil has been lost in the past 100 years.
- *Farmers are losing two bushels of topsoil for each bushel of corn produced on unprotected sloping land.
- *Only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the original acreage of 7 million acres of trees remain in Iowa.
- *Intensive rowcrop farming has sharply reduced the amount of wildlife habitat in Iowa.
- *Sediment is Iowa's greatest water pollutant by volume.
- *At present rates, by the year 2000, 2.4 counties of cropland will be converted to another use.

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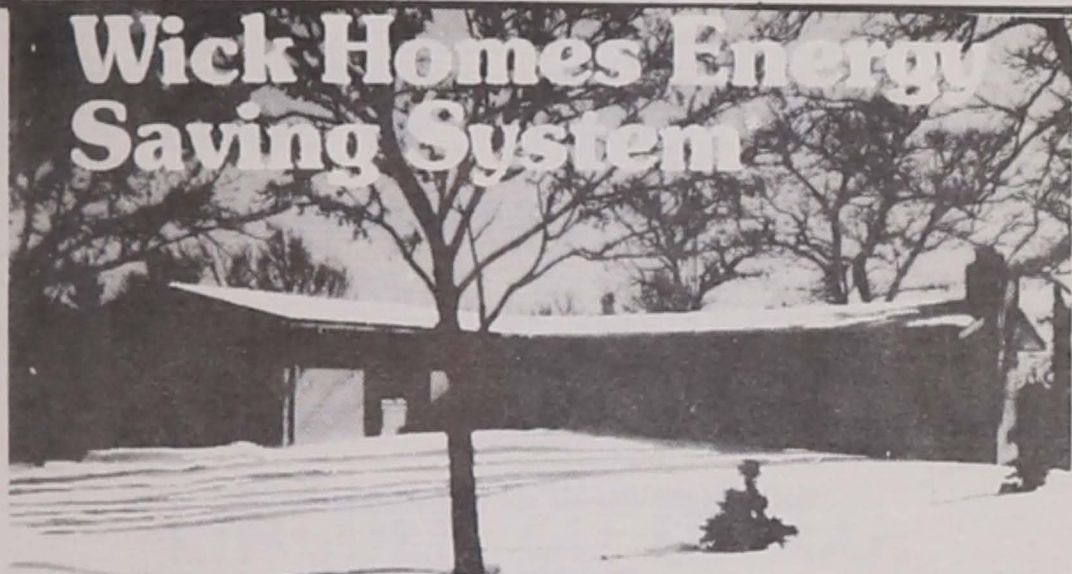
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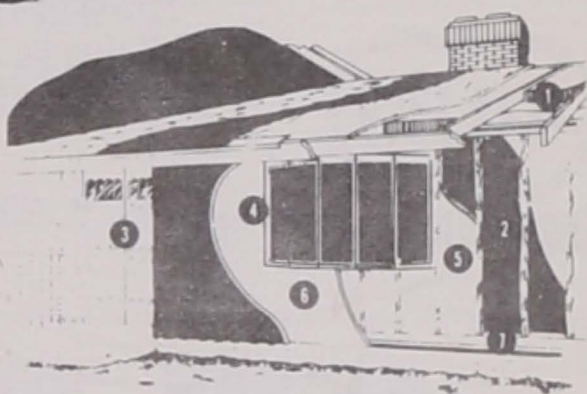
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Windbreak Pictures



Ray Rinnan Farm, Highland Twp. 1979



Ken Strohehn Farm, Windbreak Drifting 1977

Workbook Winners



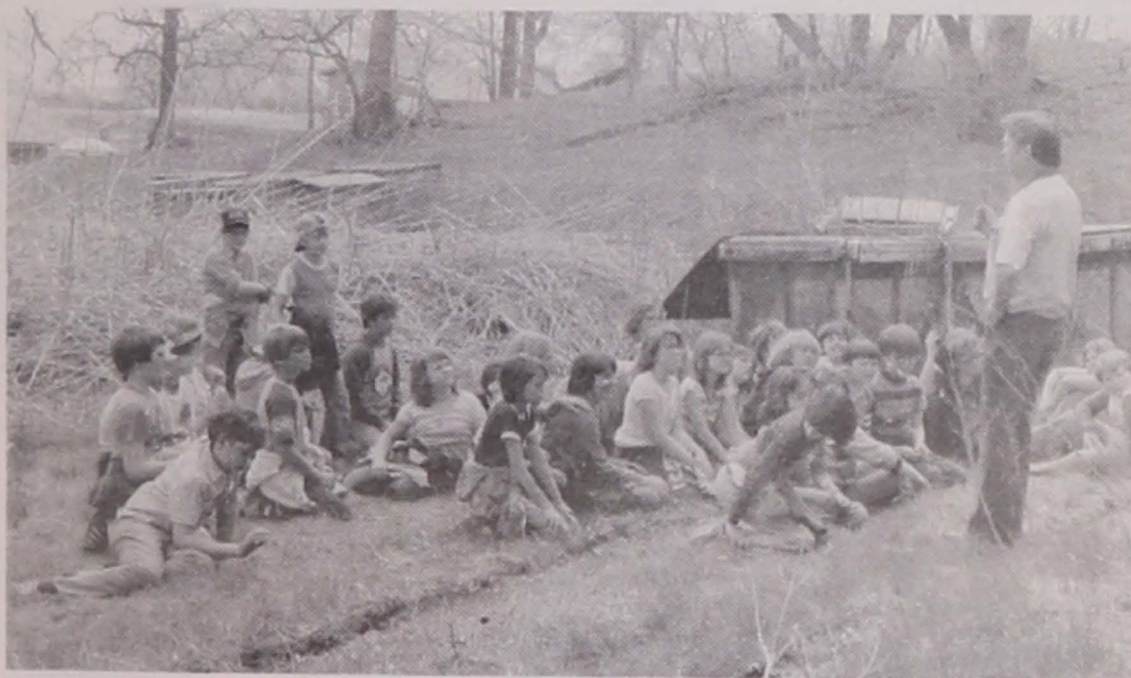
L. to R.: Sharon Fulster, 1st; Jodi Bruene, 2nd; Dorothy Laufer; 5th-Rita McCreery, 1st; Dennis Clapp, 2nd; First place-pen set, Schaffer; 2nd-paper weight.



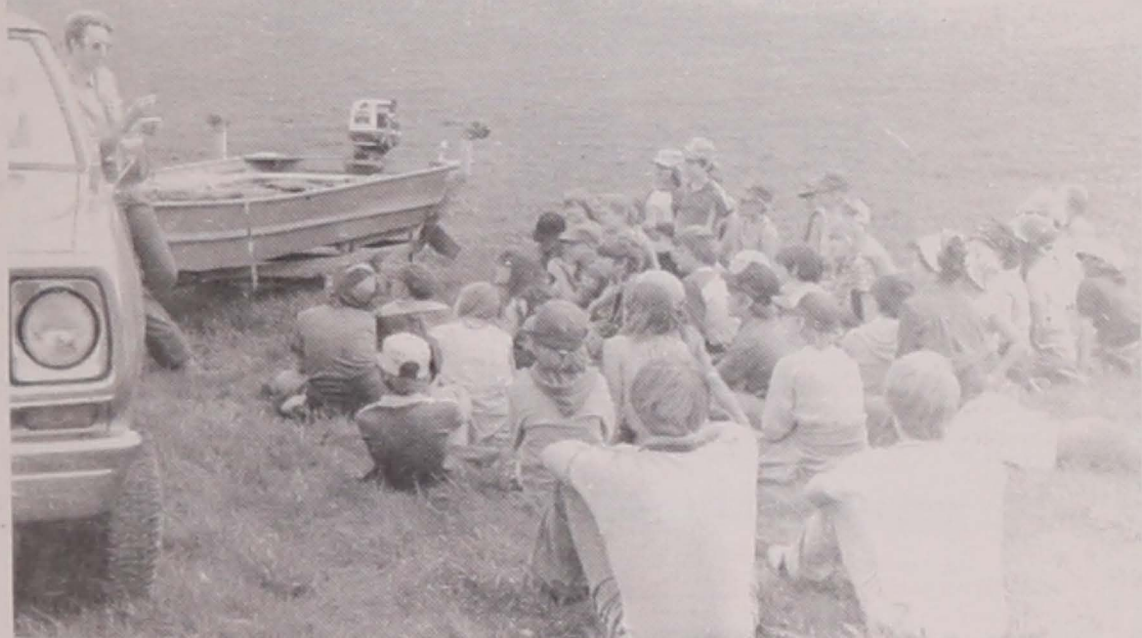
Tama County Conservation Education Committee

Conservation Field Day

Each year in late April or early May The Tama County Conservation Education Committee and the Tama County Soil Conservation District host all fifth graders at a conservation field day held at Otter Creek Lake Park. The day is spent studying various aspects of nature. Following are a few photos of the instructors, topics and some of the fifth graders attending.







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