

Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District 2000 Annual Report

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Dickinson SWCD, 2412 17th St. Spirit Lake, IA 51360
Ph. (712) 336-3782 Ext. 3 E-Mail swcd@rconnect.com

Highlights of 2000

January

- Election of officers:

Mark Ingwersen, Chair	Chris Hoffman, Vice Chair
Keith Van Kleeck, Secretary	Orville Berg, Treasurer
- Tom Koster is re-appointed Assistant Commissioner
- SWCD Newsletter published
- Clean Water Alliance Meeting held at Iowa Lakeside Lab

February

- Orville Berg and Tom Koster appointed to Iowa Lakes RC & D Board

March

- EQIP mailing to Little Sioux, Silver Lake and Iowa Great Lakes Priority Areas
- Pools of Thought Newsletter published
- Conservation award is presented to Valoris Johnson at Pheasant's Forever Banquet
- Stewardship Posters "In the Children's Hands" and "Community Waters" District winners were: Dana Potter, Okoboji (Spirit Lake 1st grade) and Kay Oskvig, Milford (4th grade). They were presented with a T-shirt and certificate.
- Regional Envirothon attended by 2 teams from Terril School which were sponsored by the SWCD
- CDI Regional meeting in Ames attended by Carroll Oskvig
- Willard Punt, NRCS Conservation Technician, is honored with 20 year service award at area meeting.

April

- Commissioners delivered Green Ash trees for each 6th grade student in Dickinson County to the schools
- Nursery stock was delivered and Foundation Tree Sale was concluded for 2000
- Clean Water Alliance Meeting held at Iowa Lakeside Lab
- Stewardship material distributed to churches
- Tom Koster distributed stewardship material to Dickinson County elementary schools

May

- Lake 'n Lawn Saver fertilizer is promoted

- Tillage survey is completed by Keith Van Kleeck, Tim Hemphill and Carroll Oskvig

June

- Municipalities, Dickinson County Supervisors and individual groups pledged funds for ES salary for Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project

July

- Clean Water Alliance Meeting held at Iowa Lakeside Lab
- Madeline Meyer, Northwest Region Rep, attends SWCD meeting

August

- IOWATER training for Silver Lake Water Monitoring Volunteers at Iowa Lakeside Lab
- NACD/Goodyear Award presented to Channing Gibson, Jr.
- Commissioner Nomination Papers have been filed for Mark Ingwersen, Chris Hoffman and Scott Mitchell

September

- Annual Outdoor Classroom was held at Kettleon Hogsback with 123 6th graders in attendance from Spirit Lake and Terril School Districts
- Commissioners and staff assisted with Clay County Fair SWCD Booth
- Clean Water Project Annual Review was held at Lakeside Lab
- CDI Annual Conference attended by Carroll Oskvig
- Terril School performed soil testing for Watershed Landowners

October

- Clean Water Alliance Meeting is held at Lakeside Lab
- Source Water Protection Meeting attended by Tim Terrill
- Pools of Thought Newsletter published
- Scott Mitchell appointed Assistant Commissioner

November

- District Newsletter is published
- Mark Ingwersen, Chris Hoffman and Scott Mitchell are elected to 4 year terms as Dickinson SWCD Commissioners

December

- SWCD Foundation Tree Sale begins
- Fall Regional in Emmetsburg is attended by Chris Hoffman and Carroll Oskvig
- Silver Lake Watershed Development Grant approved



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This past year we spent over \$60,000 cost sharing with the D.N.R. on habitat in Dickinson County! Over 19,000 trees and shrubs were planted, and we made final payment on some land acquisitions we have been involved in.

County Farmers... Call us for information on your 2001 Wildlife Foodplot Acres.
Call 338-4630 for information on trees and planting.

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Dickinson SWCD Financial Report Fiscal Year 2000

1M Budget – District

Funds provided by the State of Iowa for printing costs, office supplies and equipment, District Commissioner's mileage and associated travel expenses

Allocation	\$ 3,000.00
Supplemental Allocations	\$ 1,746.44
Less:	
Commissioner Expenses	\$ 1,375.24
Office Supplies & Equip.	\$ 591.03
Printing	\$ 1,241.88
Postage	\$ 688.29
Dues	\$ 850.00

3M Budget – Iowa Financial Incentives Program

Funds provided for cost-share assistance to landowners for installing permanent soil and water conservation practices and offers 30% of the allocation for tillage incentives.

Allocation	\$15,877.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$13,126.26
Unobligated Amount	\$ 2,750.74

Resource Enhancement & Protection (REAP)

	Practices
Allocation	\$ 7,455.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 2,852.00
Unobligated Amount	\$ 4,603.00

Forestry & Native Grasses

Allocation	\$ 1,892.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 1,445.00
Unobligated Amount	\$ 447.00

Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project

Allocation	\$43,075.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 3,088.60
Unobligated Amount	\$39,986.40

EQIP Very Successful in 2000

by: Carroll Oskvig
District Conservationist

One of the most successful conservation practices in 2000 was the Integrated Crop Management (ICM) practice offered through USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). About 1,000 acres were enrolled by Dickinson County farmers in 2000. ICM is a combination of management strategies to manage nutrients and pests as well as sustain long-term productivity. Preseason planning, soil testing, fertility recommendations, weed-insect-disease concerns, calibrations, record keeping, field scouting and cultural practices (tillage, crop rotation) are all taken into consideration.

ICM was available to producers in the following watersheds in Dickinson County: the Iowa Great Lakes Priority Area, the Silver Lake Priority Area, the Little Sioux River Priority Area (one mile on either side), the West Fork of the Little Sioux River Priority Area (one mile on either side) and the Trumbull Lake Statewide Concerns area.

Incentive payments for land located in the three EQIP priority areas in 2000 were \$8 per acre for the first year and \$7 per acre for the second and third years of a five year contract.

Producers interested in applying for EQIP ICM will need to comply with EQIP requirements, such as the following:

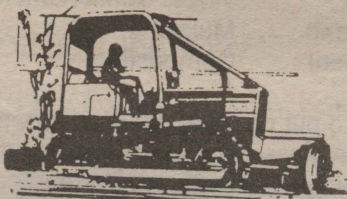
- ✓ Soil loss kept at an acceptable level ("T" or below).
- ✓ Manure applications may not be made on frozen ground.
- ✓ Soil tests taken every three years.
- ✓ Three to five crop-scouting reports made during the growing season.
- ✓ Herbicide and insecticide selections based on protecting water quality.
- ✓ Annual pre-growing season and end of the growing season reports.

Although the 2001 sign-up period has not been announced, we encourage producers to consider looking into EQIP ICM.

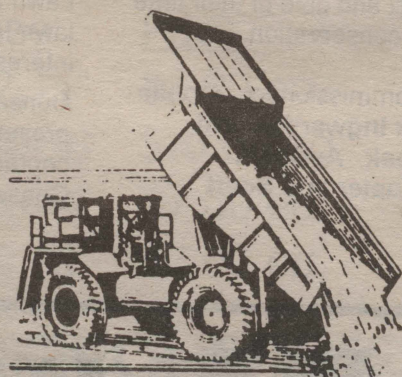
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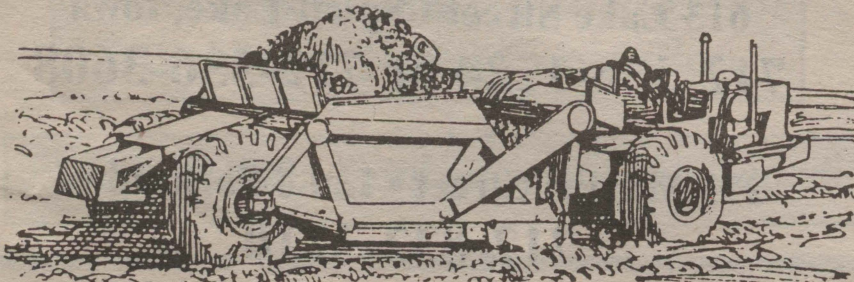
Let Us Help
You Conserve
Your Property.



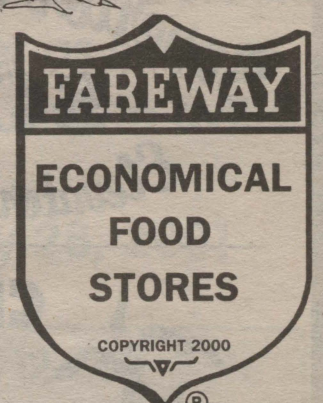
- Site Preparation & Excavation
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Increased Interest in Continuous CRP for 2000, Anticipate Even More Interest in 2001

By: Tim Moran
Conservation Aide

Dickinson County producers and landowners showed increased interest in the Conservation Reserve Program's (CRP) continuous signup practices in 2000. The practices include:

Filterstrips	Shelterbelts
Grassed Waterways	Field Windbreaks
Riparian Tree Buffers	Contour Buffers Strips
Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	

This is thanks in part to new incentives offered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and more importantly, to the continued interest of conservation minded farmers of Dickinson County. It only goes to show that our producers care about the land and take action to conserve our natural resources.

The new financial and other incentives available from FSA help provide an economical means to apply these vital conservation practices to productive cropland.

An overview of CRP incentives offered include:

- ✓ Up to 50% cost share of eligible costs to establish the practice (based on FSA component prices).

- ✓ Rental rates based on soil type values. The rental rate of Riparian Tree Buffers in marginal pastureland are a set price of \$86/acre, which is not based on soil type.
- ✓ In addition to the 50% cost share described above, in 2000, an additional practice incentive payment of up to 40% of the eligible costs to establish the practice was included and will continue in 2001.
- ✓ Also new in 2000, a one-time signup incentive of \$100 to \$150 per acre, dependent on the length of the contract.
- ✓ 20% increase in maximum widths of Filterstrips and Riparian Tree Buffers, also new in 2000.
- ✓ The fact that you may sign up anytime during the year (no signup period) and there is no bidding process. NRCS/FSA staff determines if the land offered fits the practice and meets the criteria and then the offer may be made. This greatly simplifies the process.

FSA/NRCS has also developed two new practices, one available in 2000 and one for 2001.

- ✓ Contour Grass Strips or Terraces, available now. (some conditions apply, stop in for details)
- ✓ A new practice which may make the Shallow Water Area practice more practical to producers who want to address "wet spot" problems on their land is being developed and will be available soon.

Please feel free to call or stop in at the USDA Service Center to talk with NRCS/FSA staff about Continuous CRP and the many other programs available from Federal, State and local agencies. We at the NRCS office feel strongly that Dickinson County producers will continue to put conservation on the land in 2001 and beyond. This is based on the strong conservation history of this area and the environmental and economic benefits to be achieved in the future.

Thanks to our Volunteers

Two very important elements of the NRCS-SWCD are our Commissioners and our 'Earth Team Volunteers'. Our Commissioners are the governing body of the District and give of their time and talents to the benefit of conservation.

Our special thanks to our Commissioners: **Orville Berg, Chris Hoffman, Mark Ingwersen, Bill Northey and Keith Van Kleek.** Assistant Commissioners are: **Tom Koster and Scott Mitchell.**

The 'Earth Team Volunteers' give of their time and talents to ease the workload in the District office, help out with water quality testing, present educational programs, provide expertise and just generally 'do what needs to be done'.

Our special thanks to 'Earth Team Volunteers': **Tom Koster, Madge Voss, Tim Wilson, Troylene Cooper, Leon Goodell, Bob Worrick, Don Goodell, Bob Herbert and Joanne McCullough of RSVP and the ladies and gentlemen of the "newsletter crews".**

We appreciate all that you do!

Backyard Conservation

By: Tom Koster
Backyard Conservation Coordinator

Conservation practices on nonagricultural land can help increase food and shelter for birds and other wildlife, control soil erosion, reduce sediment in waterways, conserve water and improve water quality, inspire a stewardship ethic, and beautify the landscape.

Backyard Conservation shows you conservation practices that are used on agricultural land across the country. Learn how to conserve and improve natural resources. They can be adapted for use on the land around your home. Whether you have acres in the country, an average-sized yard, or a tiny spot by the patio, you can help protect the environment and add beauty and interest to your surroundings. Conservation practices have been scaled down for homeowners and city residents to use in their yards. These practices help the environment and can make your yard more attractive and enjoyable. Tip sheets are available at the NRCS office, or on the Internet at <http://www.nhqrncs.usda.gov/CCS/Backyard.html> that offer "how to" steps and helpful hints on the following practices:

Tree Planting	Wildlife Habitat
Nutrient Management	Terracing
Backyard Pond	Water Conservation
Backyard Wetland	Mulching
Pest Management	Composting

We were able to put on a variety of programs, such as the "Outdoor Classroom" for students and adults throughout Dickinson County. We promoted conservation practices and also introducing Lake 'n Lawn Saver, a zero phosphate and 100% natural lawn fertilizer, to the area. Anyone who is interested in becoming involved in Backyard

Conservation, or if your group would like a presentation on the available practices, please contact Tom Koster, at the Soil & Water Conservation District at 336-3782, Ext 3.

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2001 Tree Sale

Dickinson SWCD Foundation

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion and demonstration.

DECIDUOUS TREES

<u>Bundles of 10</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Green Ash	5-6'	\$2.00 ea.
Red Oak	3-4'	\$2.00 ea.

<u>Bundles of 25</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Green Ash	3-4'	\$1.00 ea.
Hackberry	3-4'	\$1.25 ea.
Silver maple	3-4'	\$1.50 ea.
Sugar Maple	2-3'	\$2.00 ea.
Black Walnut	2-3'	\$1.25 ea.
Golden Willow	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Hybrid Willow (Austree)	2-3'	\$1.25 ea.

POTTED CONIFEROUS TREES

	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Scotch Pine	12-15"	\$7.00 ea.
Colorado Spruce	24-30"	\$10.00 ea.
White Spruce	15-18"	\$7.00 ea.
Eastern Red Cedar	12-15"	\$7.00 ea.

BAREROOT CONIFEROUS TREES

<u>Bundles of 10</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Concolor Fir	7-15"	\$1.50 ea.

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Dickinson SWCD Foundation

SHRUBS

<u>Bundles of 10</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Cranberry Bush	2-3'	\$2.00 ea.
Common Lilac	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Late Bloom Lilac	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Amur Maple	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Common Ninebark	2-3'	\$1.50 ea.

<u>Bundles of 25</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Price</u>
Buffalo Berry	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Caragana	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Nanking Cherry	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Chokecherry	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Cotoneaster	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Gray Dogwood	18-24"	\$1.00 ea.
Redosier Dogwood	3-4'	\$1.00 ea.
Hawkeye Honeysuckle	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
Russian Olive	2-3'	\$1.00 ea.
American Plum	3-4'	\$1.25 ea.

Tree and shrub stock is pre-ordered and is reserved/sold from this stock as orders are received. Please order as soon as possible for best selection and to avoid shortages.

Place order by February 28, 2001

QUESTIONS: Contact our Sale Coordinators, Mark & Kim Ingwersen at 712-336-3616



Native Grass Seed and Drilling Available

By: Ginger Vietor
Native Grass Coordinator
Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation and Development

Landowners and operators enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or other conservation practices will be pleased to know that the Iowa Lakes RC&D, along with Nelson's Seed and Planting of Emmetsburg, will continue to provide native seed ordering, seed drilling and tree planting for the region. This service works closely with the county NRCS office to ensure that participants have their CRP contract needs met, while

establishing a quality, desirable vegetative cover that enhances the landscape.

A portion of the profits earned through selling and planting native seed is contributed to the local Soil and Water Conservation District to be used in local conservation efforts. Since the cost of seed ordered through RC&D is the same to the consumer as seed ordered directly from the dealer, participation in our program benefits the local environment twofold! RC&D also has a tree planter available for rent or with labor to plant windbreaks and buffers.

For more information about the native planting services offered, or for practical native grass

seeding information, contact the Iowa Lakes RC&D at 712-262-2083 or email jeff.kestel@ia.usda.gov. You can also contact the Dickinson County NRCS office at 712-336-3782.

Farm Service Agency Annual Report

By: Larry D. Lago
County Executive Director

Over the years the Dickinson County Farm Service Agency has endeavored to provide area farm owners and operators with the financial assistance needed to help them operate their land in an efficient and productive manner.

The Farm Service Agency administers several USDA farm programs that have contributed to making the family dreams a reality through program benefits, services and financial support. A few of the programs offered are summarized below:

The **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** that provides producers an incentive to take land out of intensive row crop production and maintain it in a conservation status that will ultimately provide the local community with improved water quality and enhance the wildlife habitat in the area. A continuous signup for generally smaller areas: such as field windbreaks, waterways, filters strips, riparian buffers, etc., is still underway and applications can be filed at your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. Below is a list of continuous practices and the acres currently enrolled:

Practice Name	Acres
Field Windbreak (trees)	15.4
Grass Waterways	31.6
Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife	23.9
Contour Grass Strips	41.2
Shelterbelt (trees)	8.6
Filterstrip	279.8
Riparian Buffer	479.9

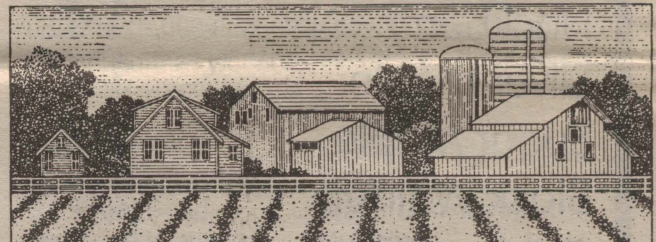
The **Production Flexibility Contract (PFC)** that was established in 1996 through the Agricultural Marketing Transition Act (AMTA) provides the farming community with financial payments that are based on their crop contract acreage. The contract acreage was established from historical crop acreage reports, of which will be available and the amount of payment will slowly decline until the crop year 2002 when the program is scheduled to end.

Another one of the programs that FSA administers is the **Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) and Marketing Gain** program that become available when the sales market price for crops falls below the county level loan rate that is available to producers on an ongoing basis. This program is designed to ensure that producers are guaranteed not to receive less than the loan rate for their grain. Through the LDP program, producers can receive the difference between the loan rate and what the Posted County Price (PCP) is for a given day. This assists producers in marketing their grain and knowing what their return will be. Without this program, many producers would be forced to forfeit their grain that they have put under loan with the FSA Office due to the inability to repay the loan. For those producers not wishing to put their grain under loan, it provides that assurance of the amount that they will receive based on the day that they want to market the grain and the LDP amount for the day they apply for the payment.

These are only a few of the programs that the Farm Service Agency administers and regulates. If you have any questions with regard to the details of any FSA program, please contact this office at (712) 336-3782, ext. 2, and we will be glad to answer your questions.

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Small Efforts Add to Big Conservation Picture

By: Doug Harr
DNR Wildlife Biologist

Natural resource conservation, especially as it relates to wildlife and watershed protection, realized a major shift in direction several years ago. Studies worldwide proved that conservation had to be practiced on a "landscape scale" if it was to have any great effect on protecting natural resources. Along with many other conservation agencies and non-governmental organizations, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) decided to focus much more attention on assembling large tracts of public land. These lands would do a better job of providing for needs of fish and wildlife, while also better controlling erosion and runoff into the state's lakes, rivers and streams.

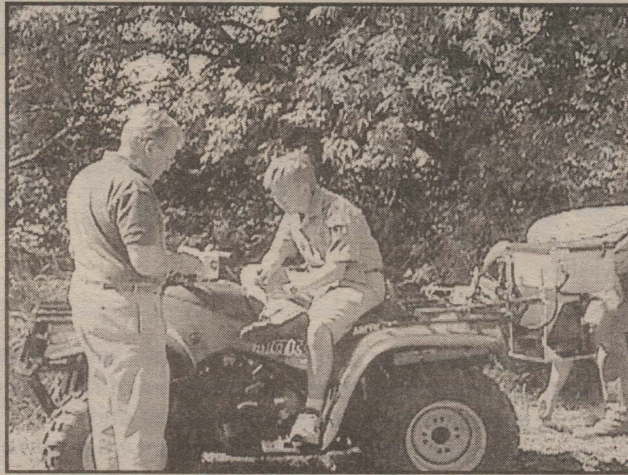
That does not mean, however, that small conservation efforts are not important. In fact, with many local resources needing improved stewardship, DNR has viewed small conservation efforts — especially those conducted by private landowners — as part of that bigger "landscape scale" picture. Working closely with professional staff of the Dickinson Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), we have found ways of assisting landowners on even the smallest sites. All of these small sites across the county add up to many hundreds of acres. When those projects are added to larger efforts of Iowa DNR and its sister agencies, we get a little closer to conserving the entire landscape.

A couple of examples might help illustrate this principle. Local DNR Wildlife Bureau staff has assisted NRCS/SWCD staff with identifying native prairie located on existing or new Conservation

Reserve Practice (CRP) Riparian Buffer Strip sites. Because native prairie may be Iowa's most endangered eco-system, identification and protection of even tiny remnant prairies is important. Planting trees and shrubs is a requirement of the riparian buffer program, but such woody cover will eventually shade out the remaining prairie. We are working together to find ways of exempting such prairie remnants from CRP tree planting requirements. As more small prairies are protected, their rare plant and animal life forms may face reduced threats of extinction. Where no prairie exists, planting CRP tree and shrub buffers along rivers and streams will continue to offer the best wildlife habitat on these farm program lands.

Small wetlands are another critical piece of the

landscape puzzle. While DNR restores or constructs many wetlands on its holdings, these wetlands are dwarfed by the potential for such restorations on private lands. NRCS/SWCD staff work closely with DNR to find landowners who will consider wetland restoration on their property. DNR and its partner organizations find money for necessary earthwork, and NRCS/SWCD staff often find appropriate CRP practices, easements and other methods of compensating the landowner for retiring crop or pasture lands. These small wetlands, when added to those on DNR properties, provide a mosaic of marshes that catch sediments, recycle nutrients and protect our water supplies. Likewise, a county landscape dotted with wetlands provides greatly improved habitat for waterfowl and many other kinds of wildlife.



These are but two examples of many small-scale projects currently underway in the county. Only through close and continued cooperation have the Dickinson SWCD and Iowa DNR been able to accomplish the beginnings of landscape scale conservation here in northern Iowa. The past year provided several opportunities for this kind of

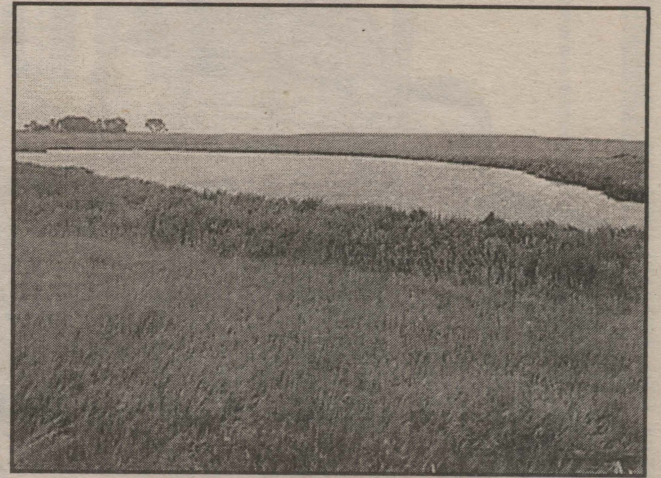
partnership. With continued cooperation, both agencies hope to see every "small effort" contribute to conservation's "big picture".

Different Wetlands, Different Functions

By: Tim Terrill
Environmental Specialist

The natural topography of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed yields to the restoration of wetlands. The purpose of restoring a wetland is determined by what job it has to perform. Wetland water depth determines how the wetland will function. Wetlands that are less than three feet deep and continuously full of water year round are great for

ducks that are in the flyways of the Midwest. Generally a 50:50 ratio of upland to water is preferred for waterfowl. A wetland that is full of soggy, wet soil that only has water in it in the spring is great for improving water quality.



Typically these wetlands encourage the growth of plants which filter and clean the water. You will most likely find a wetland of this type built in farmland areas. Most of these have a 75% buffer of water-loving vegetation and native grasses to clean the water. Another type of wetland is one that is over three feet deep. The purpose of this wetland is to work like a grade stabilization structure and capture sediment before it runs into the lakes. It is extremely useful around open confinement areas to settle out waste before it contaminates a stream. These are just a few examples of how wetlands protect the Iowa Great Lakes.

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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS — Front, left to right: Bill Northey, vice chair, Superior Township; Mark Ingwersen, chair, Spirit Lake Township; Orville Berg, treasurer, Center Grove Township. Back row, left to right: Chris Hoffman, Lakeville Township; Keith Van Kleek, secretary, Milford Township. Not present: Scott Mitchell, Diamond Lake Township; and Tom Koster, Center Grove Township.



SPIRIT LAKE FIELD OFFICE STAFF — Left to right: Tim Terrill, Environmental Specialist; Tom Moran, Conservation Aide; Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist; Maxine Butler, State Secretary; and Willard Punt, Conservation Technician.



2000 Outdoor Classroom

An early stormy morning became a beautiful fall day on September 7, 2000. The 22nd Annual Outdoor Classroom was attended by 126 sixth grade students from the Spirit Lake and Terril School Districts. This annual event is organized and sponsored by the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners who strive to provide a quality learning experience for all the County's sixth grade students. It is held at the Kettleon-Hogsback Area, just west of Big Spirit Lake.

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 make the annual event such a success.

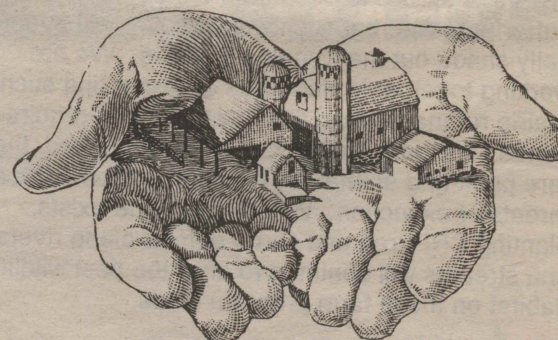
This year's program included hands-on sessions including a nature walk with Tim Waltz of the DNR, as guide; water quality testing at the water's edge with Jane Shuttleworth of Iowa Lakeside Lab; recycling with Tim Terrill, IDALS-DSC; viewing waterfowl and its habitat with Doug Harr of the DNR; learning about and even tasting exotic plants with Lindsey Anderson, DCCB; identifying wild flowers with Tim Moran, Conservation Aide, NRCS; learning conservation methods applicable to both rural and urban areas with Tom Koster, Backyard Conservation Coordinator and a slide presentation on Orphaned & Injured Wildlife with Linda Hinshaw.

It is only through the cooperation of the above named partners from the Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Lakeside Lab, Iowa Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil Conservation, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dickinson County Conservation Board, Orphaned and Injured Wildlife and the Dickinson Soil &

Water Conservation Commissioners that are we able to make this day possible.

Dickinson SWCD Forestry Program

Each year in the spring, all 6th grade students in Dickinson County are presented with a Green Ash tree by the District Commissioners. 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 in existence for more than 20 years and many parents have beautiful reminders of their child's sixth year in school growing in their yards or windbreaks.



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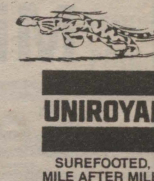


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