



BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

3216 THISTLEDOWN DRIVE • WATERLOO, IOWA 50702 • PHONE (319) 296-3262

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

John Marsau, CH
L. Jeanette Winegarden, VCH
H. Arnold Harting
Jon Mixdorf
Marilyn Schuchhardt
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
Quinter Lichty

STAFF

John Schuler, DC
Elaine Hammer, SCT
Julie Falcon, SC
Carol DeWolf, SS
Larry Weigle, Dist. Employee
Ellen Rogers, Dist. Employee
Lloyd Simester, VOL

Newsletter

EQIP SIGN UP

Now through March 3rd, the USDA Service Center will be accepting applications for 60% cost share on waterways, terraces, structures, etc. Two years ago, the Miller Creek Watershed became a priority for EQIP funds, so if you farm in this 41,000 acre watershed, your chances of funding are higher than other parts of the county. Miller Creek received an allocation of \$24,000 and the rest of the county will compete statewide for \$1 million dollars.

CONTINUOUS CRP SIGN-UP

Since emphasis began in July of 1998 on Continuous CRP programs, the Natural Resource Conservation Service for Black Hawk county reports approximately 120 farmers have signed up 900 acres in streamside filter and buffer strips alone. Almost 90% of the farmers who have enrolled grass strips have chosen native grasses -- switchgrass becoming the more popular because of its very reasonable price. The native grasses provide more cover for wildlife along with good soil holding capability. Continuous CRP filter and buffer strips must be enrolled for ten years thereby giving the grass ample time to establish itself and do its job of improving water quality, holding soil and providing cover.

The Pheasants Forever organization in Black Hawk County has steadfastly tried to help farmers by offering to assist in planting native grasses and provide incentives for the creation of wildlife habitat. Habitat projects include wildlife food plots, nesting cover, shelterbelts and protecting existing wildlife habitat.

Yearly per acre payments to farmers are figured by soil type and most often are as good as or better than today's cash rent, not bad for a one-time expense for seed and seedbed preparation of which USDA pays 50%. Protecting our natural resources should be a priority for landowners. In Iowa, local, state and federal government and non-profit organizations are at work to provide assistance.

WELCOME, JOHN!

John Schuler became our new district conservationist last June. He and his wife Karen and daughter Megan are from Illinois.

THE 1999 OILSEEDS PROGRAM

"The 1999 Oilseeds Program (OP) payments will be based on the higher of the 1997 or 1998 planted acreage of each specific oilseed, or, for new producers, the 1999 crop planted acreage of each specific oilseed," stated Bob Soukup, State Executive Director of the Farm Service Agency.

Only 1997, 1998, and 1999 oilseed acreage reports that have been filed by February 18, 2000 will be accepted for the purpose of determining acreage for the Oilseed Program. Acreage reports of oilseeds may be accepted from producers who planted eligible oilseeds in 1999, but did not report all their acreage of those oilseeds in 1997, 1998, or 1999. Producers reporting acres not previously reported must provide acceptable evidence of the existence and disposition of the oilseed acreage, such as seed purchase and sales of the crop.

Soukup encourages producers, operators, or landowners to report all acres planted to oilseeds in 1997, 1998, or 1999 to the FSA County Office by February 18, 2000. Oilseed acreage reports submitted after that date may not be accepted and benefits of this program may be lost.

WATERSHED RESOURCE PLANNING UNDER WAY

The flooding this last summer has actually produced something positive! The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District is facilitating two unique watershed projects which will produce total resource plans for No Name and Virden Creek Watershed as well as the Southwest Branch of Dry Run Creek.

In September, we met with some stakeholders (farmers, county officials, city officials from Waterloo and Cedar Falls, the University of Northern Iowa, etc.) to determine if they wanted to pursue a project that would produce a resource plan involving urban and rural areas and if it was feasible. The stakeholders voted to pursue the projects and asked the Black Hawk SWCD to facilitate them. Currently, we have had the first meeting of the technical committee and the six-month process of inventorying the 35,000 is beginning. The resource plans will be a key tool in applying for funding this time next year.



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**BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT
1999 ANNUAL REPORT**

1M BUDGET

July 1, 1998 to June 30, 1999

Total Allocation	\$ 4,300.00
Commissioners Expenses	1,931.25
Office Supplies, postage & dues	<u>1,865.83</u>
Balance	\$ 502.92

3M BUDGET

Cost Share Ledger 1998-1999

Original Allocation	\$17,201.00
Projects Completed	16,953.03
Project Still in Progress	<u>.00</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/99	\$ 247.84

REAP Practices Ledger 1999

Original Allocation	\$ 7,026.00
Projects Completed	<u>4,532.11</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/99	\$ 2,493.89

REAP Forestry Ledger 1999

Original Allocation	\$1,811.00
Projects Completed	<u>1,811.00</u>
Recalled to Dept. 12/99	\$.00

COMMISSIONERS REVOLVING FUND

Balance 7/1/98	\$ 452.61
Deposit	6,548.02
Expenditures	<u>6,789.01</u>
Balance 6/30/99	\$ 211.62

CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

New Cooperators	29
Filter Strips (Acres)	439
Terraces (Feet)	15,500
Tree Planting (Acres)	8
Waterways (Acres)	25.3
Windbreaks (Acres)	14

All programs and services of the Soil Conservation Service are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

**HIGHLIGHTS OF 1999 DISTRICT
ACTIVITIES**

- The commissioners participated in the Iowa Carbon Storage Project by attending the satellite downlink on February 16th and completing the questionnaire on April 9th.
- Pheasants Forever, Iowa DNR and the district have provided funds enabling Larry Weigle, District Employee, to contact farmers regarding signing up filter strips for the continuous CRP program.
- Marsau, Winegarden, Harting and Schuchhardt attended the Region 4 Spring Regional Meeting held on April 1st in Edgewood, Iowa.
- The Mercantile Bank again sponsored the district's booth at the Hawkeye Farm Show that was held at the UNI dome on March 15th, 16th, and 17th. A downing display showing backyard conservation was used in the booth.
- Winegarden chaired the Planning Committee for the NACD North Central Regional Meeting that was hosted by Iowa and held in Cedar Rapids July 11th — 14th.
- The Cedar River Festival was held July 18th at the Cedar River Park and the commissioners had a booth there again this year.
- Winegarden, Schuchhardt, Mixdorf, Harting and Schuler attended the 53rd Annual Conference held in Des Moines September 1st and 2nd.
- The Black Hawk SWCD sponsored a teacher for the Food, Land, & People Teacher Workshops.
- The commissioners held a conservation tour for legislators, county supervisors and city council members on November 20th.
- Winegarden, Harting, Mixdorf and Schuchhardt attended the fall regional meeting on December 10th in Dyersville.
- The district was notified that their application for No Name/Virden and Dry Run Creek Watersheds was selected for funding this year through the Watershed Protection Development Grant.

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.