

Russell Winter Chair 2015

2014-2015 CHEROKEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District

314 Lake Street
Cherokee, IA 51012
Phone: 712-225-4151 or 225-3769
Fax: 855-233-1296

Annual Report of our Conservation Progress

The Commissioners of the Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District are pleased to present this Annual Report of conservation accomplishments. It reflects the efforts of many individuals and groups working together to improve our environment through conservation programs. We hope our cooperative working relations continue as we work to protect our natural resources. The District is always ready to assist you with any conservation problem you may have.

Along with the landowners and operators in the county, we would like to thank the government agencies, news media, schools, businesses, and individuals that have assisted in the promotion and application of soil and water conservation.

Cherokee County District Commissioners



From left to right: Brian Mugge, Cleghorn; Scott Osborn (Assistant Commissioner), Cherokee; Russell Winterhof, Aurelia; Gary Otto, Cherokee; Ramona Nitz, Cherokee; Tom Bindner, Marcus; and Linda Bindner (Assistant Commissioner), Marcus. Assistant commissioners Nathan Anderson and Pam Pierce not pictured.

PERSONNEL

Commissioners

Russell Winterhof, Chairman	Aurelia
Brian Mugge, Vice Chairman	Cleghorn
Tom Bindner, Co-Treasurer	Marcus
Gary Otto, Co-Treasurer	Cherokee
Ramona Nitz	Cherokee

Assistant Commissioners

Nathan Anderson	Aurelia
Linda Bindner	Marcus
Scott Osborn	Cherokee
Pam Pierce	Cherokee

Field Office Staff

Michael Henderson	District Conservationist
Julia Gubbels	Soil Conservation Tech.
Tracy Rasmussen	Conservation Assistant
Sam Thomas	Civil Engineering Tech.
Amy Crouch	TNC Member



Back row (left to right): Sam Thomas, Michael Henderson, and Amy Crouch. Front row (left to right): Julia Gubbels and Tracy Rasmussen.

We're now on Facebook under Cherokee Swcd

Cherokee County Soil & Water Conservation District And Natural Resources Conservation Service Accomplishments (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015)

Access Control	1,115 acres
Brush Management	96 acres
CNMP's Written	1 no
Conservation Cover	1,060 acres
Conservation Crop Rotation	3,385 acres
Cover Crop	2,194 acres
Critical Area Planting	20 acres
Filter Strip	21 acres
Grassed Waterway	38 acres
Herbaceous Weed Control	1 acre
Integrated Pest Management	80 acres
Prescribed Burning	16 acres
Residue & Tillage Mgmt, No Till	499 acres
Residue & Tillage Mgmt, Reduced Till	81 acres
Subsurface Drain	33,702 ft
Terrace	32,835 ft
Underground Outlet	25,342 ft
Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt	10 acres
Water & Sediment Control Basin	23 no
Wetland Restoration	223 acres
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	7,706 ft

2015 DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

- 14 Regular Meetings
- Organizational Meeting to Approve District Policies, elect officers, and establish committees
- Conservation Partnership Legislative Day
- New Commissioner Training
- Booth at the Cherokee County Ag Show
- Poster Contest Presentations
- CDI Spring Regional meeting
- Northwest Iowa Regional Envirothon (environmental competition for high schools)
- Reviewed scholarship applications
- District Tree Sales
- 4th Grade Poster judging
- Stewardship Week - gave Activity Sheet/Placemats to restaurants/groups
- Watershed inspections
- Scholarships presented at MMC High School Awards Program
- 4th grade posters displayed at the Sanford Museum
- Paid CDI and NACD Dues
- Conservation Tour
- Soil Health Workshop
- District Audit
- CDI Annual Conference
- REAP Assemblies
- Sent out Annual Report & Contribution Letter

Conservation Tour

The Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) held its annual Conservation Tour on Tuesday evening, July 21st. Around 45 people participated in the tour this year, which began at the Cherokee County ISU Extension Office at 4:45 p.m. After introductions, Cherokee SWCD Commissioner Ramona Nitz gave a presentation on cover crops. She talked about the many benefits of cover crops and why she and her husband have started planting cover crops.

Next the group headed to the Mill Creek Bridge in Cherokee 23, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. District Conservationist, Mike Henderson, and his daughter Dawn gave a demonstration on water testing. They tested the water's clarity, temperature, pH, and levels of nitrate, nitrite, chloride, phosphate, and dissolved oxygen. Mike also gave a quick overview of the projects the Cherokee SWCD has been working on in the Gere Creek Watershed. Conservation Districts of Iowa provided participants with their own nitrate test kits to take home.

The next stop was in Pitcher 4 to view some Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices at Randy and Nathan Anderson's place. Nathan talked about the filter strip and wetland restoration practices he and his dad installed and gave tips on getting CRP established.

Finally the group headed to Aurelia where the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Rainfall Simulator was set up in the parking lot to the north of the Aurelia Community Center. Patrick Chase, Area Resource Soil Scientist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, gave an interesting demonstration showing the effects of rainfall on 5 different samples of soil from Cherokee County (native prairie, rotationally grazed pasture, traditional pasture, a conventionally tilled field, and a no tilled field). It was really an eye opener to see the difference in the water runoff and the water infiltration especially between the conventionally tilled and the no tilled fields. There was a lot less runoff on the no tilled soil and the water penetrated deeper into the no tilled soil.

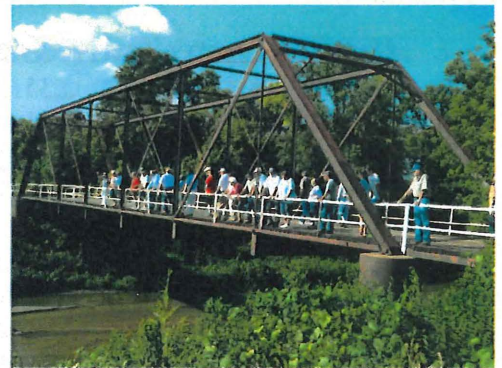
Following the tour, a delicious meal was served at the community center courtesy of the Cherokee SWCD. The Cherokee SWCD commissioners and staff would like to thank all of the landowners, presenters, and participants for making our conservation tour a success.



Ramona Nitz doing cover crop presentation.



Leah & Dawn Henderson taking water samples from Mill Creek.



Tour participants gathered at the Mill Creek Bridge for a demonstration on water testing.



Nathan Anderson talking about CRP practices.



Conservation Station Rainfall Simulator.



Comparison of water runoff on various soil samples

STATE FUNDING

(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

Cost Share and REAP Practice Funds are used to provide up to 50% cost share for installing practices such as waterways, terraces, and water & sediment control basins. Management Practice Funds are used to provide a one time incentive payment to try no-till, strip-till, or planting cover crops. REAP F/NG Funds are used to provide up to 75% cost share for planting windbreaks.

Cost Share Fund

Allocation + Carryover +	\$ 119,864.90
Supplemental Received	
Transferred to Management	7,386.00
Total cost-share paid	83,267.54
Total approved & pending	<u>14,211.36</u>
Recalled 6/30/15	\$ 15,000.00

Cost Share - Management Practices

Transferred from cost share	\$ 7,386.00
Total cost-share paid	7,386.00
Total approved & pending	<u>0.00</u>
Balance 6/30/15	\$ 0.00

REAP Practices Fund

Allocation + carryover	\$ 23,327.13
Total cost-share paid	20,022.82
Total approved & pending	<u>3,304.31</u>
Balance 6/30/15	\$ 0.00

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses Fund

Allocation + carryover	\$ 3,351.87
Total cost-share paid	3,335.40
Total approved & pending	<u>0.00</u>
Recalled 6/30/15	\$ 16.47

Gere Creek WIRB Grant

Allocation	\$ 239,942.00
Total cost-share paid	25,367.87
Total approved & pending	<u>51,876.37</u>
Balanced 6/30/15	\$ 162,697.76

Commissioner Expense Fund

(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

These are funds appropriated by the legislature to reimburse commissioners for traveling expenses as well as pay for district office expenses.

Allocation + Supplemental	\$ 2,250.00
Expenses	<u>2,250.00</u>
Balance 6/30/15	\$ 0.00

Extra commissioner expenses of \$354.55 incurred, but not reimb.

FEDERAL FUNDING

(October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015)

Funded 12 new EQIP contracts totaling \$141,720.53

140 CRP Contracts approved

Little Sioux Flood Prevention

Watershed Maintenance Funds

(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

These funds were collected from the original landowners in the Little Sioux Watershed many years ago. These funds are used to pay for repairs, maintenance, and inspection of existing watershed structures.

Balance carried forward	\$190,950.90
Income (Interest)	\$1,870.60
Expenses	<u>\$16,708.40</u>
Balance 6/30/15	\$176,113.10

General Fund (Revolving)

(July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015)

These funds are generated through tree sales, donations, and coop agreements. They are used to pay District expenses that are not covered by 1M Funds and to hire employees.

Balance carried forward	\$43,051.67
Income	\$63,915.95
Expenses	<u>\$56,064.26</u>
Balance 6/30/15	\$50,903.36

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are the primary source for financing educational and promotional activities. We would like to thank the following contributors who donated money from October 2014 through September 2015. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Dr. Mark & Janice Carlson - Cherokee

Cherokee State Bank - Cherokee

Donna L. Anderson Trust - Aurelia

Farmers State Bank - Marcus

Foundation Analytical Laboratory Inc. - Cherokee

Duane & Lucille Kent - Aurelia

Lundell Construction Co. Inc. - Cherokee

Lloyd & Jan Mattoon - Pierson

McGuire Auction Co. - Holstein

John & Ramona Nitz - Cherokee

Tom & Susanne Oswald - Cleghorn

Sand Seed Service, Inc. - Marcus

Schmillen Construction, Inc. - Marcus

Smith Insurance Services, LTD - Marcus

Stalcup Ag Service - Storm Lake

Western Cherokee Mutual Insurance - Marcus

Scott & Sally Wilkie - Cherokee

Cherokee SWCD Awards Scholarships

Each year the Cherokee SWCD gives one or more scholarships to high school seniors who will be pursuing programs of study in any field of conservation or agriculture . Scholarship applications are judged according to scholastic achievement, involvement, leadership, character, career, and conservation message. The District forwards the top scholarship application to the Conservation Districts of Iowa regional director for a chance to compete for regional and state scholarships.

On May 14th the Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) awarded two MMC graduates with scholarships. Dawn Henderson received a \$300 scholarship and Austin Whited received a \$200 scholarship. In addition, Dawn was awarded a \$600 scholarship as the Regional Winner of the Conservation Districts of Iowa Scholarship.

Dawn is the daughter of Mike and Eva Henderson of Marcus. Dawn was ranked 3rd in her class and had a GPA of 3.945. In high school she was involved in many activities including jazz band, pep band, marching band, pit orchestra, AGsplorations, large group speech, play, basketball, track and field, softball, FFA, National Honor Society, student leadership team, 4-H/County Council, Senior High youth group and was volleyball manager. Dawn is attending Iowa State University in Ames where she is majoring in Environmental Science.

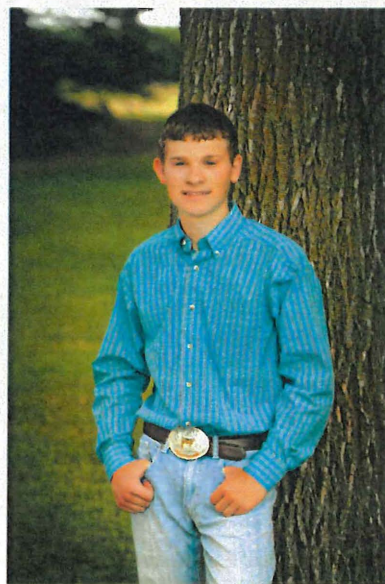
Austin is the son of David and Becky Whited of Marcus. Austin was ranked 12th in his class and had a GPA of 3.496. Austin was involved in 4-H/County Council, Iowa Youth Beef Team, AGsplorations, Catholic Youth Organization, Basketball, Golf, Track, Baseball, National Honor Society, Cherokee County Youth Committee, Homecoming skit, Ironman Volleyball, and was a Teacher Aide. Austin is attending Iowa State University where he is majoring in Animal Science, more specifically Ruminant Nutrition and Reproduction, and minoring in Agriculture Business.

Together, Conservation Districts of Iowa and the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Iowa, fund and implement the scholarship program as part of their mission to protect and enhance soil, water, and other natural resources valuable to our state.

If you know of any high school seniors residing in Cherokee County who are planning to pursue programs of study in agriculture or conservation please encourage them to apply for the District's 2016 scholarships. For more information they should talk to their guidance counselor or call our office at 225-4151. This year's application deadline is February 26, 2016.



Dawn Henderson



Austin Whited

The Cherokee SWCD is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Conservation Education 2015: Students Learn About Pollinators

In the spring, 4th grade students from Cherokee, MMC, Aurelia, and River Valley had an opportunity to participate in the Cherokee County Soil & Water Conservation District's poster contest.

The theme of this year's contest was "Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators". Mike Henderson, District Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Laura Kohn, Cherokee County Naturalist, spent time in each 4th grade classroom explaining the poster contest, as well as conducting a program on pollinators. Mike and Laura explained what pollinators do and why they're important. Most of the students didn't know how much of our food comes from pollinators: watermelon, pineapple, chocolate, bananas, blueberries, nuts, and more. Laura and Mike showed the students a picture of typical picnic foods and what they would have to eat without the pollinators' hard work and there wasn't much left! The students were able to imitate a pollinator by using a pipe cleaner "bug" to move chalk between Styrofoam cups "flowers". While you and I can be accidental pollinators while walking our dogs or hiking through a field or forest, the real heroes are the hummingbirds, bats, and bugs that crawl into flowers to get the nectar, pollinating various flowers to create fruits (i.e. cocoa, fruits, and various vegetables). Pollinator populations are currently at an all-time low due to habitat destruction, pesticide use, and disease. Hopefully, students left with an understanding that flowers in pots, gardens, fields, and ditches could improve the populations over time.

The first, second, and third place winners from each school received cash prizes, ribbons, and certificates from the Cherokee SWCD.

Posters were judged on the following criteria: 50% for conservation message, 30% for visual effectiveness, 10% for originality, and 10% for universal appeal.

From Aurelia the winners were Cade Ahnemann – First Place, Kayla Ward – Second Place, and Tyler Erpelding – Third Place. Cherokee's winners were Hanna Mummert – 1st place, McKenna Paeper – 2nd place, and LaKynn Mitchell – 3rd place. From MMC the winners were Landon Schoer – 1st place, Jaidyn Ballard – 2nd place, and Avery Schlenger – 3rd place. River Valley's winners were Klaudia Pry – 1st place, Jackie Todd – 2nd place, and Halee Reimers – 3rd place.

Landon Schoer's poster was chosen as the overall winner for Cherokee County and was sent to the Conservation Districts of Iowa Regional Director for the regional competition.

All of the students' posters were on display at the Sanford Museum during the month of June.

Aurelia 4th Grade Poster Winners



From left to right: Cade Ahnemann (1st), Kayla Ward (2nd), and Tyler Erpelding (3rd)

Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn 4th Grade Poster Winners



From left to right: Landon Schoer (1st), Jaidyn Ballard (2nd), and Avery Schlenger (3rd).

Cherokee 4th Grade Poster Winners

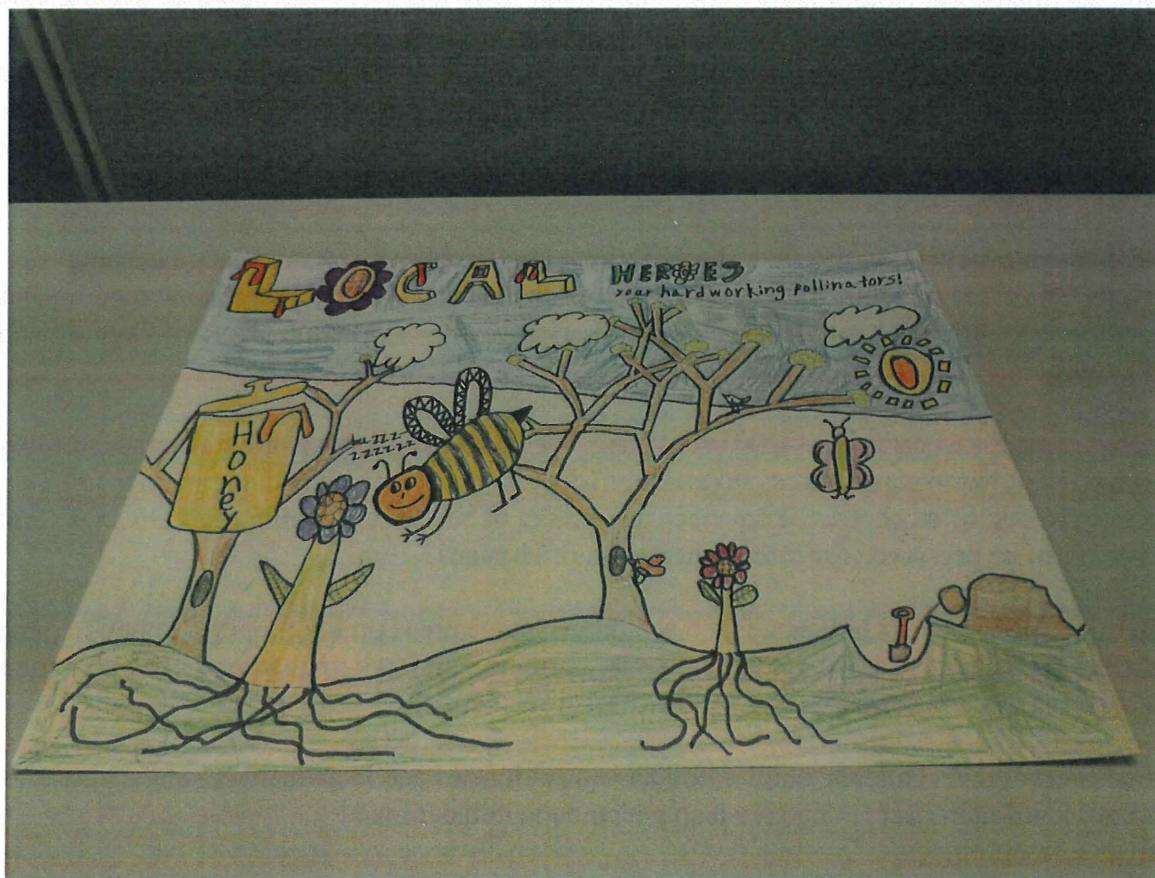


From left to right: Hanna Mummert (1st), McKenna Paeper (2nd), and LaKynn Mitchell (3rd).

River Valley 4th Grade Poster Winners



From left to right: Klaudia Pry (1st), Jackie Todd (2nd), and Halee Reimers (3rd).



Landon Schoer's poster was chosen as the overall winner for Cherokee County.



TAKE THE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

By James Gillespie
Division Director

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality

I don't know you personally and you probably don't know who I am, but more than ever we need to come together, as landowners, farmers, and urban folks, and challenge ourselves to do something more for conservation this year. It seems that there are lots of challenges out there like getting fit and healthy, taking the ice bucket challenge, running or walking for different causes, taking a pie in the face, kissing a pig or things like that. Well, my challenge for you is to do something new this year for soil and water conservation, and together we will make environmental improvements in Iowa.

When you have done your new thing this year, share it. Post it to Facebook, Twitter (using hashtag #1newthingforwater) or other social media accounts. Tell your friends and neighbors. Show others what you are doing and encourage them to do something as well. Sharing your conservation efforts will get others involved in the challenge.

There are numerous reasons to participate in this challenge. We have so many valuable resources in Iowa to protect. We demand a lot from our resources; to produce food, fiber, recreation and a great place to live and work. We choose to live in Iowa because it provides the quality of life we are looking for. Don't we want to insure that it is going to be preserved for future generations of Iowans?

What I personally plan to do in this challenge is to seed down some areas on my property to native grasses and forbs, use cover crops in my garden (I don't farm any ground), and talk to everyone I can about the importance of soil and water conservation.

Thank you for considering this challenge and if you have questions or need technical assistance please feel free to contact your local field office. You are also welcome to contact me at jim.gillespie@iowaagriculture.gov.



Nutrient Reduction Strategy/Water Quality Initiative

By Vince Sitzmann

Field Services Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality

In the U.S., Iowa ranks number one in the production of eggs, pork, soybeans, and corn, and number two in beef. If Iowa were a country, it would be the third largest producer of corn in the world. That's pretty amazing considering Iowa is only 36 million acres in size with only 25 million acres dedicated to row crop production. These are impressive numbers by any standards, but equally important is the conservation ethic Iowa farmers subscribe to. Farmers throughout the state spend millions of dollars annually out of their own pockets to install conservation practices on their land, which makes them leaders in conservation implementation as well as leaders in ag production.

Two years ago, Iowa unveiled the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS). This was the first plan of its kind in the nation, aimed at reducing nutrient losses to the Gulf of Mexico. The strategy was pioneered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University, and the Iowa DNR. It incorporates the best science and research we have available and it was built for Iowa. Shortly after the Nutrient Reduction Strategy was released, implementation of the plan was launched and is known today as the Water Quality Initiative (WQI).

Over the past two years we continue to see exciting momentum for the WQI. Iowans are engaged, new partnerships are expanding, and farmers are implementing conservation practices they've never tried before. The Nutrient Research Center at ISU has been established with the purpose of pursuing a science based approach to nutrient management research. The Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance (IAWA) partnership between the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Soybean Association, and the Iowa Pork Producers has been established, each committing one million dollars annually over the next five years to advance the implementation of the WQI. The Iowa Legislature has also committed 16.8 million dollars over the last two years to support conservation and water quality improvements both in special project areas and for statewide practice implementation.

We have made great strides through the voluntary approach to conservation, but we have to keep the momentum growing by exploring more and different types of conservation practices on the landscape. We have new and emerging technologies in addition to our traditional conservation practices that will improve our nutrient management efforts. I would encourage everyone to evaluate their farming operation and ask yourself if there is more you can do on your farm. Solving water quality issues is something everyone has to be a part of if we are to continue our leadership role in ag production and conservation implementation. If you are interested in learning more about the NRS or the WQI you can visit www.cleanwateriowa.org or stop into your local SWCD to learn how you can be part of this important initiative.

2015-2016 Tree Price List

Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District

314 Lake Street, Cherokee, IA 51012 PH: (712) 225-4151 or
FAX: (855) 233-1296 EMAIL: Tracy.Rasmussen@ia.nacdnet.net

Species	Size	Type	Trees Per Bundle	Price Per Tree	Price Per Bundle or Pot	No. of Bundles	No. of Trees	Total Price
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If you are looking for a species not listed below, give us a call. Other varieties may be available.

Deciduous Trees

Male Cottonwood (seedless)	4-5'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.72	\$68.00			
American Linden	4-5'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$5.40	\$54.00			
NEW Autumn Blaze Maple	3-4'	Seedling	Bundles of 5	\$16.00	\$80.00			
Silver Maple	5-6'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$3.70	\$37.00			
Sugar Maple	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.24	\$56.00			
Bur Oak	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.10	\$21.00			
Red Oak	3-4'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.90	\$29.00			
Hybrid Willow	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$1.92	\$48.00			

Shrubs

Nanking Cherry	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$1.84	\$46.00			
Nannyberry	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.20	\$55.00			
Common Chokecherry	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$1.88	\$47.00			
American Cranberrybush	2-3'	Transplant	Bundles of 10	\$3.20	\$32.00			
Redosier Dogwood	2-3'	Transplant	Bundles of 10	\$2.30	\$23.00			
Common Purple Lilac	2-3'	Transplant	Bundles of 10	\$2.30	\$23.00			
Amur Maple	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$1.80	\$18.00			
Common Ninebark	2-3'	Transplant	Bundles of 10	\$2.60	\$26.00			
American Plum	3-4'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.10	\$21.00			

Evergreens

White Pine (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$16.00		NA		
Black Hills Spruce (2 Gal)	24-30"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$19.00		NA		
White Spruce (1 Gal)	15-18"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$10.00		NA		
Colorado Spruce (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$16.00		NA		

Special Order	Size	Type	Trees Per Bundle	Price Per Tree	Price Per Bundle or Pot	No. of Bundles	No. of Trees	Total Price

All Orders Subject to Availability!

50% Deposit Required on all orders.

Please make checks payable to Cherokee SWCD

No survival guarantee on stock sold at these prices.

Trees will be available the first or second week in April for pickup.

SUB TOTAL	
7% STATE & LOCAL OPTION TAX	
GRAND TOTAL	
CASH/CHECK#	
AMOUNT PAID	
BALANCE DUE	

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Dear Soil & Water Conservationist:

For over 70 years the Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District has been helping producers conserve two of our most valuable resources, our soil and water. We believe that soil and water conservation is an easy task that everyone can do and we need your help. We invite you to join our local conservation efforts by becoming a Conservation Club Member for 2016. All Conservation Club funds collected are used specifically for projects like: scholarship awards for high school seniors, conservation education materials, 4th grade poster contest prizes and materials, and our yearly Conservation Tour in which the public views newly implemented conservation practices. We also provide technical assistance in the local office by paying for part-time employees.

As Iowans, we all share similar concerns for soil and water quality as well as protecting these resources for future generations. Iowa is faced with challenges that will impact conservation programs. By donating to the Cherokee SWCD, we can continue to promote, educate, and implement these important conservation practices. Any support you can give to the SWCD is greatly appreciated. And remember, your contribution **is tax deductible**. If you would like to make a contribution, please complete the membership form below and mail it with your donation, made payable to the Cherokee SWCD.

With Sincere Thanks,

Cherokee SWCD Commissioners

Please make your donation payable to:

Cherokee SWCD



Name: _____

Address: _____

Cherokee SWCD

314 Lake Street

Cherokee, IA 51012

712-225-3769

Levels of Support

Soil & Water Supporter	\$20 - \$49.00	Soil & Water Saver	\$50 - \$99.00
Soil & Water Steward	\$100 - \$149.00	Soil & Water Sustainer	\$150.00 and above

Donation enclosed: _____ **Any Amount Welcome**



One Year Left on WIRB Grant for Gere Creek Watershed

Landowners and operators in the Gere Creek Watershed have one year left to take advantage of the higher cost share rates offered through a Watershed Improvement grant the District received in November 2013. The Gere Creek watershed is right Northwest of Cherokee, and includes 17,590 acres with Gere Creek and the lower reaches of Mill Creek. The grant provides cost share for conservation practices to improve the water quality flowing through the watershed, while reducing sediment and nutrient loss.

Landowners and producers interested in certain conservation practices in the watershed are eligible for up to 75% cost share on most practices, and up to 100% cost share on new acres of cover crops and reduced tillage through the Gere Creek funding. We still have funding available for cover crops, reduced tillage, terraces, waterways, water & sediment control basins, and improved grazing management practices.

For further information, please contact the Cherokee Soil and Water Conservation District, or the local Natural Resources Conservation Service office at (712) 225-4151 or (712) 225-3769.

