

Tama County Soil & Water Conservation District -2017 Annual Report



Steve & Erin Murty, Soil Health Award: In 2014, Tama SWCD combined its traditional Conservation Tillage Award with the renewed concept of soil health and presented its first Soil Health Award to encompass many farm management practices. The Murty's farm operation in rural Gladbrook includes a commercial cow herd. In 2014 they used EQIP funding to build a monoslope building so they could begin feeding their own calves to market weight. Steve says, "With the heavy influence of livestock in our farming operation, we found that forage crops were a necessity for us. With limited acre resources we needed to develop a forage plan to pull as many feed tons and products off of all the acres for the cattle operation." The Murty's began planting cover crops when they began row cropping in 2011 and quickly saw the benefits that cover crops bring to a corn and soybean rotation. They've been able to achieve their goal of harvesting 40 tons/acre of forages. In Fall 2017 approximately 40% of the Murty's acres were planted to cover crops, a combination of winter rye and winter wheat. They'll harvest forages for silage needs this spring and then no-till corn and soybeans into the balance of their acres. Their operation uses a combination of no-till, strip till and minimum tillage.

State Cost-share Programs and Accomplishments Tama Soil & Water Conservation District State Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Iowa Financial Incentives Program: Cost Share

SFY 16 Obligated Carryover	\$60,509.46
SFY17 Allocation	\$43,016.00
Transferred/Recalled	-\$20,231.76
Spent/Obligated	-\$83,293.70
Balance as of June 30, 2017	\$ 0.00

Resource Enhancement and Protection Program: Forestry/Native Grasses

SFY 16 Obligated Carryover	\$1,857.41
SFY17 Allocation	\$3,363.80
Transferred/Recalled	-\$455.43
Spent/Obligated	-\$4,765.78
Balance as of June 30, 2017	\$ 0.00

Resource Enhancement and Protection Program: Practices

SFY 16 Obligated Carryover	\$10,862.59
SFY17 Allocation	\$10,091.41
Transferred/Recalled	-\$7,091.41
Spent/Obligated	-\$13,862.59
Balance as of June 30, 2017	\$ 0.00

Cost-share expended also included state-controlled funding: \$32,847.50 of Water Quality Initiative-Statewide and \$36,545.44 of Water Quality Initiative-Demonstration Projects.

Practices Applied to the Land- All Cost-share Sources

Cover Crop	2,764.34	ac
Grassed Waterway	12.5	ac
Mulch Till	69.79	ac
Nitrogen Spring Pre-Plant	406	ac
Nitrogen Inhibitor	442.7	ac
No-till/Strip Till	932.4	ac
Windbreak	4	ac

ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT Tama Soil & Water Conservation District State Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Revolving Fund

Balance on hand July 1, 2016	\$141,838.38
Receipts	\$165,581.61
Expenditures	-\$179,585.67
Balance on hand June 30, 2017	\$127,834.32

District Employee Fund

Balance on hand July 1, 2016	\$15,653.93
Receipts	\$4,363.65
Expenditures	-\$8,382.71
Balance on hand June 30, 2017	\$11,634.87

Certificates of Deposit

Balance on hand July 1, 2016	\$18,387.39
Interest Accrued	\$23.11
Expenditures	-\$0.00
Value June 30, 2017	\$18,410.50



George & Lorraine Vileta and Ryan & Allison Vavroch, Landowner/Tenant Award: This award is presented annually to landowners and their tenants who exhibit an outstanding partnership in utilizing conservation practices on rented properties. 2006 was the first year the Viletas rented their farm ground near Elberon to young Ryan Vavroch. Ryan farms with his father, and they utilize a combination of conservation practices in their operation including minimum tillage, no-till and cover crops.



5th graders got up close and personal with macroinvertebrates from Otter Creek Lake at Tama SWCD's 2017 Outdoor Classroom. 278 fifth graders from six Tama County school districts attended Tama SWCD's 5th Grade Outdoor Classroom at Otter Creek Park last May.



Tama SWCD hosted two Women, Land & Legacy (WLL) events in 2017, including this April 6 Learning Session of beekeeping in Gladbrook. WLL's August 22 event for landowners and renters alike featured how to incorporate conservation practices into a farm lease. This local WLL project has hosted 32 events since it began in 2007, serving 311 women and men from in and around Tama County. Watch for upcoming details on Tama County WLL's June event at Adolphs Produce near Traer.



Jane Knoop, Buffer Initiative Award: The District's Buffer Initiative Award isn't presented every year, but rather when excellent examples of vegetated streamside buffers are established to improve water quality. The 2017 Buffer Initiative Award was presented to Jane Dinsdale Knoop of Traer. Jane's property in Buckingham Township became a Century Farm in 2009. Jane says, "Larry and Jon Winkelpack began farming it in 2001. They have been very helpful in what I have done for the land!" Twelve Mile Creek flows through the farm. CRP buffers protect the creek and a tributary by filtering sediment and other contaminants from overland flow and slowing the runoff to non-erosive velocity. These buffers and other conservation practices partner to protect the Dinsdale family farm from erosion while improving the quality of water draining to Twelve Mile Creek, and ultimately to the Cedar River.

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Each Soil & Water Conservation District in Iowa is governed by five volunteers who are publicly elected to four-year terms. These commissioners direct local soil and water conservation efforts, provide outreach for all ages and help administer state and federal conservation programs. They also partner with landowners, farm operators, agencies and local groups to conserve Tama County's soil and improve its water quality. It was with deep sorrow that Tama SWCD said goodbye to Commissioner Lou Ellen Brown in June 2017 after her long battle with cancer. Former Commissioner Dean McKenna of rural Dysart is graciously filling her board vacancy until the 2018 General Election. Tama SWCD's other Commissioners include Jan Wobeter of rural Toledo, Jack Boyer of rural Reinbeck, Al Schabbusch of Dysart and Jennifer Vazquez-Koster of rural Tama.



Grocery Sack Contest-

Tama SWCD's overall contest winner was South Tama fourth grader Estrella Fonseca.



Each year, Tama SWCD recognizes Tama County Fair projects in the categories of crop production, agriculture/natural resources, and environment/sustainability. Seven 4-H youth completed qualifying projects in 2017. Left to right: (front) Jay Bru and Lillian Bru; (back) Brooke Robison, Jabari Woodbury, Wyatt Jackson, Frances Jackson, and Thomas Hulme.



Sam Mattingly Family Trust, Windbreak Award: In most years, Tama SWCD recognizes both outstanding newly-established and more mature windbreaks, but 2017's winning windbreak offered a little of both. The Mattinglys planted most of the windbreak on the west and north sides of Kyle's family's farmstead north of Toledo in Spring 2013. Rows of Austrees, Black Hills Spruce and white pine protect the west side while white pine and Arbor vitae shelter the north sides of the house and cattle lot. Rows of strategically-placed big round bales also provide protection from north winds. 2013 was a dry year, and the Mattinglys carefully watered their new trees all summer and fall. This paid off, as the trees have nearly doubled in size. In Spring 2015, the windbreak was extended east to help protect cows in the pasture. That addition consists of two rows of Austrees and one row each of Arbor vitae and Norway spruce. The Mattingly family has established several new windbreaks on its properties in recent years, but the family's windbreak along US 63 in Howard Township is also an outstanding example of windbreak design and placement to protect both the farmstead's two-footed and four-footed occupants.



Local Production Award: 2016 was the inaugural year for the District's Local Production Award to recognize Tama Countians involved in farm-to-table production. Winners of Tama SWCD's 2017 Local Production Award were Ken and Carolyn Adolphs of rural Traer.

Their farm includes about 40 acres of permanent pasture, of which 20 acres are in timber reserve. They use grassed headlands, waterways and contouring on most of the cropland and have oats and hay in rotation with corn and soybeans. The Adolphs have also had five acres of garden and orchard for the past 37 years.

Ken and Carolyn offer fruits and vegetables including apples, raspberries, green beans, lettuce, beets, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, peppers, radishes, spinach, squash, zucchini, sweet corn, leeks, sweet potatoes, muskmelons, pumpkins, popcorn and carrots. They also sell bedding plants, flowers and a variety of baked goods. A hoop building that extends their production season was funded through EQIP. The Adolphs market at the Waterloo and Cedar Falls farmers markets two days per week, May through October. They also provide fresh produce for local care centers and grocers, the University of Northern Iowa and restaurants such as Rudy's Tacos in Waterloo. Ken and Carolyn also work a cow/calf operation and feed out their own calves.

Tama Soil / Water Conservation photos

RIGHT- These students discovered what lies under their feet in the soils course at 5th Grade Outdoor Classroom. Here they examine the core from a soil probe. Groups of students rotated through courses on fishing and boating safety, water quality, wildlife, soils, woodland physics, forestry, nature walk, wildlife populations, and benthic macroinvertebrates.



Meskaki Nation, Wildlife Award: Tama SWCD's Wildlife Award is presented annually to recognize outstanding efforts in establishing conservation practices to improve wildlife habitat. The 2017 recipient of the Wildlife Award was the Meskwaki Nation. The Red Earth People own property in Tama and Palo Alto Counties with approximately 32% of their land holdings in the Conservation Reserve Program. CRP tracts include about 250 acres of native grass and forb plantings, 90 acres of switchgrass blocks, and over 20 acres of wildlife food plots. The native seedlings and mixes chosen target Iowa's Pheasant Recovery Program. In 2017 the Meskwaki Nation also began a multi-year project of residential windbreak establishment. 13 windbreaks covering almost 7 acres have been established already with about 6,000 shrubs and almost 11,000 trees. Their species choices were partly based on tribal needs and the tribe's commitment to use native varieties. Natural mulch is being used to control weeds and to retain moisture for plant use. Eventually over 34 acres are destined to be planted to residential windbreaks.



John & Kathy Weber and Brian & Deb Weber, Friend of Conservation Award: The Friend of Conservation Award is presented annually to Tama Countians who make over-the-top efforts to promote the stewardship of our county's soil and water resources. The Webers farm in the Benton/Tama Project area in rural Dysart. They have implemented a variety of conservation practices including grassed waterways, terraces, CRP including buffers, cover crops and a saturated stream buffer system and continually modify their tillage systems to help conserve soil while trying to maximize yields. They have hosted numerous conservation events on behalf of the Benton/Tama Project and been strong advocates for the conservation practices they use in their operation. John adds, "I am a strong supporter of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy, as well as a participant in the Middle Cedar River project with Tama and Benton Counties. In farming, every year is a learning experience. It is important that everyone does his part to keep nutrients and soil in place for the future generations."

Since 1981, Tama SWCD has donated tree seedlings to the county's sixth graders each spring. 298 sixth graders received Arbor Day seedlings in April 2017. Tama SWCD also donated 170 seedlings to the Tama County Conservation Board for use in its public areas through the county.



Marshall & Diane Mussig and Chad & Karen Mussig, Owner/Operator Award: Tama SWCD's Owner/Operator Award is presented each year to Tama Countians who reflect their love for their land and serve as tremendous examples of stewardship to others. The Mussig family's close association with the District began decades ago with the first terraces constructed by Elmer Mussig and his son, Marshall, on their property in rural Gladbrook. They became very active with the Union Grove Lake Watershed project and constructed miles of terraces on their farms. Now Marshall and Diane work along with the next generation—Chad and Karen—to continue the family's conservation legacy. Immaculate terrace maintenance is partnered with other practices such as no-till and vegetated waterway strips to protect their land for the next generation.