

Fayette SWCD

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FAYETTE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION ANNUAL REPORT



Victor Steege began Soil Conservation on his land in 1966, which son Jon and wife Kathy continue today. The Steege land was entered into an FFA soil and water contest, winning second place at state.



2010 Field Office Employees-

The 2010 West Union Field Office employees included (front, l-r) Ray Drewelow, Erin Hanson, Matt Frana; (back) Carrie Davis, Jody Peek, and LaVonne Koch. Not pictured are Michelle Schaefer and Lori Kohlmeier.

2010 SWCD Commissioners-

Pictured are the 2010 Fayette County Soil and Water District Commissioners (front, l-r) Richard Jensen, Rozann Dallenbach, John Grafenberg; (back) William Bennett, and Paul Hoeger. The 2010 Assistant Commissioners are: Judy Bennett, William Dallenbach, Deb Dessel, Dorothy Jensen, Rod Marlatt, and Joyce Trotter.



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Identification Statement

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Report

Published by the Fayette SWCD, Hwy. 150,
120 N. Industrial Pkwy. West Union IA 52175.

Issue No. 12

2010 Accomplishments

Practice	Amount	Number
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan	1	Acres
Contour Buffer Strips	56	Acres
Contour Farming	141	Acres
Conservation Crop Rotation	10,272	Acres
Critical Area Planting	7	Acres
CRP Continuous	1,879	Acres
CRP SAFE Gaining Ground	806	Acres
CRP SAFE Neotropical Migratory Birds	79	Acres
CRP General	1,282	Acres
Fencing	1,938	Feet
Filter Strips	132	Acres
Forage Harvest Management	108	Acres
Grassed Waterway	64	Acres
Nutrient Management	399	Acres
Residue Management Mulch Tillage	117	Acres
Residue & Tillage Management No-Till	184	Acres
Streambank & Shoreline Protection	1,324	Acres
Terraces	13,134	Feet
Timber Stand Improvement	187	Acres
Tree/Shrub Planting	88	Acres
Underground Outlet	825	Feet
Waste Storage Facility	1	Number
Water & Sediment Control Basin	8	Number
Wetland Restoration	2	Acres
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	2	Acres

FINANCIAL REPORT OF STATE FUNDS

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

IM Budget Allocation	\$2,400.00
Supplemental Allocation	\$500.00
Commissioner Expenses	\$1,905.73
Office Expenses	\$994.27
FY 2010 State Cost-Share Funds	\$45,281.34
Obligated	\$5,516.94
Spent	\$36,717.39
Balance	\$3,047.01
REAP Forestry/Native Grasses Allocation	\$19,355.70
Supplemental	\$9,830.70
Obligated	\$1,575.00
Spent	\$26,694.90
Balance	\$916.50
REAP Practices Allocation	\$17,347.36
Supplemental	\$891.51
Obligated	\$2,267.75
Spent	\$16,190.73
Balance	\$265.12
Mink Creek WSPF Funds Allocation	\$105,539.50
Obligated	\$27,363.00
Spent	\$47,592.07
Balance	\$30,584.43
Nutting Creek WSPF Funds Allocation	\$30,000.00
Obligated	\$6,101.25
Spent	\$2,378.58
Balance	\$21,520.17

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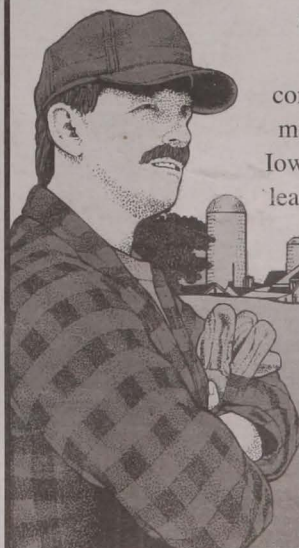
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FAYETTE SWCD ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010

District Revolving Fund	
Beginning Balance	\$1,897.74
Receipts	
Money Market Transfers – IM Funds	\$2,900.00
Money Market Transfers	\$16,650.00
Total Receipts	\$19,550.00
TOTAL	\$21,447.74
Expenses	
ATV	\$1,596.29
Checks Printed	\$11.50
Donations	\$500.00
Education	\$3,660.02
GPS	\$35.98
Houg Property	\$1,601.50
IM Commissioner	\$1,905.73
IM Office	\$994.27
Meeting Expense	4508.18
Nutting Creek	4184.53
Office Supplies	\$2,315.28
Postage	\$794.91
Sales Tax	\$371.40
Water Quality Monitoring	\$ 6,152.00
Total Expenses	\$20,631.59
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$816.15

FAYETTE SWCD ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010

Money Market Savings	
Beginning Balance	\$45,983.15
Receipts	
CD Interest	\$2,571.81
Donations	\$11.81
Farm Bill 8 Funds – CDI	\$6,532.08
Farm Bill 9 Funds – IDALS	\$3,712.12
Fish Kill Restitution Funds	\$1,241.17
IM Allocation & Supplemental	\$2,900.00
Interest	\$783.26
Nutting Creek Advanced Payments	\$54,740.00
Nutting Creek Office Reimbursement	\$184.53
Soils Disk	\$5.35
Supporter Club	\$9,169.00
Technical Account Funding from Supervisors	\$2,000.00
Transfer from Watershed Account	\$8,000.00
Tree Sales(plant skyyd)	\$227.97
Water Quality Monitoring	\$2,500.00
Total Receipts	\$94,579.10
TOTAL	\$140,562.25
Expenses	
IM Transfers to Checking	\$2,900.00
Transfers to Checking	\$21,650.00
Transfers to Technical Account	\$6,000.00
Transfers to Watershed Account	\$53,740.00
Total Expenses	\$84,290.00
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$56,272.25

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From left, Ag Specialists: Mark Moser, Dianne Schneberger, Brent Tapper, Brian Reichter and Carolyn Breuer.

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FAYETTE SWCD ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010

Watershed Account	
Beginning Balance	\$4,303.10
Receipts	
Nutting Creek Section 319 Funding	\$54,740.00
Money Market Transfers	\$4,000.00
Total Receipts	\$58,740.00
TOTAL	\$ 63,043.10
Expenses	
Accounting Services	\$225.00
Federal Taxes	\$10,323.64
Health	\$4,209.60
IPERS	\$4,575.75
Payroll	\$31,200.00
State Taxes	\$1,216.00
Transfers to Money Market Saving	\$8,000.00
Travel/Training	\$191.55
Total Expenses	\$59,941.54
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$3,101.56

FAYETTE SWCD ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010

CD 1	
Beginning Balance	\$22,896.51
Receipts	
Interest	\$705.94
Total Receipts	\$705.94
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$23,602.45
CD 2	
Beginning Balance	\$20,926.60
Receipts	
Interest	\$645.21
Total Receipts	\$21,571.81
Expenses	
Transfer to Money Market	\$2,571.81
Total Expenses	\$2,571.81
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$19,000.00
CD 3	
Beginning Balance	\$10,536.61
Receipts	
Interest	\$185.10
	\$185.10
Total Receipts	
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$10,721.71

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Continued on next page



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Renee Voshell
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Irvin Bateman
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Tom Bloom
Ronald Bodensteiner

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CM Bowling Farms
Bowling Heraty Hudson Farm
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Brehme Construction
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Eugene Franzen
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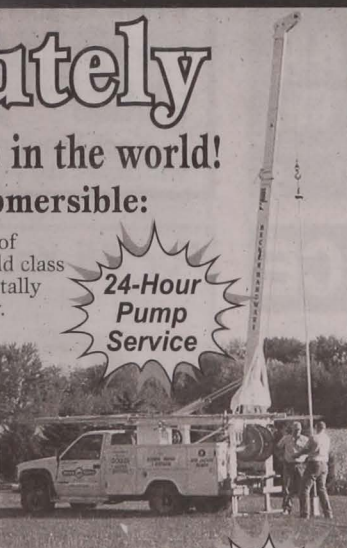


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Continued on next page

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(cont. from previous page)

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DRM Family Partnership	Myron Nagel
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Grimm Farms	Doug/Leslie Poppen
Gross Low Farm	Reliable Agency Crop Insurance
Halstead Bros	Dan Rosburg
Matt Hamlett	Kathryn Roys
JDF Farms Inc	Sandra Lynne Schwan
Lorraine Jeckel	Hans Siemers
Collin Jensen	David Smith
Margaret Jespersen	Darrel Steggall
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Alice Koempel	Rick/Joyce Trotter
Gerald Kuennen	Gary Wilson
Larry Leyh	Jon Woltz
Lone Pine Inc	Don Woods Trust
D A Martin	Mary Beth Ziegler
Maynard Savings Bank	
Dennis McElree	

FAYETTE SWCD ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2009 - JUNE 30, 2010

Technical Account

Beginning Balance	\$9,700.88
Receipts	
Transfer from Money Market Account	\$6,000.00
Total Receipts	\$6,000.00
TOTAL	\$15,700.88
Expenses	
Accounting Services	\$100.00
Checks Printed	\$10.69
Federal Taxes	\$2,443.60
IPERS	\$663.68
Payroll	\$10,413.11
State Taxes	\$272.00
Total Expenses	\$13,903.08
Ending Balance 6/30/10	\$1,797.80

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Great Crop Production Year, Not Great News for Conservation

Richard Sims

Iowa NRCS State Conservationist

After several difficult cropping seasons with record rains and difficult growing conditions, 2010 was also a record-breaking year—but for very different reasons. The 2010 growing season began earlier than the year before, with three straight weeks of great planting weather. In fact, during the last week of April, USDA's National Ag Statistics Service reported Iowa corn planting was further along than any time in recorded history.

This followed with a speedy harvest. Earlier planting dates led to earlier crop maturity and an early harvest. By Oct. 25, 86% of the Iowa corn crop was harvested according to the USDA. Harvest was 35 days earlier than in 2009 and 25 days ahead of the five-year average.

And harvest was less expensive because of the extremely low grain moisture. By mid-October, grain moisture averaged 14%. Unfortunately all this great news wasn't so great for conservation.

With harvest complete in record time, this left plenty of remaining good weather to spend out in the fields—doing what I would call "recreational" tillage.

In October, my wife and I visited South Dakota. We took many county roads from

Des Moines, weaving our way up to the northwest corner of Iowa. And I was surprised and disappointed by what I saw—many, many fields were tilled. And staff from across Iowa reported similar sights in all four corners of the state.

Was this recreational tillage included in the conservation plans of all these farms? Most likely not. So what affect will this have on these operations?

Any benefits gained from previous no-till farming will be lost. Gone with one pass of the chisel. These producers will be starting from scratch to regain the soil quality benefits generated by their previous investments in no-till.

And there is the compliance issue. It's hard to believe that after such widespread tillage that more Iowa fields won't be found out of compliance. When the winter snows melt, and spring arrives, the results will reveal themselves. And so will the mandated consequences.

If we are fortunate to have a similar crop production year in 2011, it is my hope that the tractors remain in the shed and the tillage equipment off the fields. That would be a banner year for conservation.

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Steve Hildebrand, Adjuster
Judy Ehler, April Hamilton
& Charity Kuboushek, Agents

Kelly & Miller Agency,
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Kerndt Brothers Agency,
Lansing (563) 538-4207
kbia@kerndtbrothers.com

Leslie White Agency,
Clermont (563) 423-5913
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Matt Hamlett	Kathryn Roys
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Lorraine Jeckel	Hans Siemers
Collin Jensen	David Smith
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Checks Printed	\$10.69
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IPERS	\$663.68
Payroll	\$10,413.11
State Taxes	\$272.00
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Great Crop Production Year, Not Great News for Conservation

Richard Sims

Iowa NRCS State Conservationist

After several difficult cropping seasons with record rains and difficult growing conditions, 2010 was also a record-breaking year—but for very different reasons. The 2010 growing season began earlier than the year before, with three straight weeks of great planting weather. In fact, during the last week of April, USDA's National Ag Statistics Service reported Iowa corn planting was further along than any time in recorded history.

This followed with a speedy harvest. Earlier planting dates led to earlier crop maturity and an early harvest. By Oct. 25, 86% of the Iowa corn crop was harvested according to the USDA. Harvest was 35 days earlier than in 2009 and 25 days ahead of the five-year average.

And harvest was less expensive because of the extremely low grain moisture. By mid-October, grain moisture averaged 14%. Unfortunately all this great news wasn't so great for conservation.

With harvest complete in record time, this left plenty of remaining good weather to spend out in the fields—doing what I would call "recreational" tillage.

In October, my wife and I visited South Dakota. We took many county roads from

Des Moines, weaving our way up to the north-west corner of Iowa. And I was surprised and disappointed by what I saw—many, many fields were tilled. And staff from across Iowa reported similar sights in all four corners of the state.

Was this recreational tillage included in the conservation plans of all these farms? Most likely not. So what affect will this have on these operations?

Any benefits gained from previous no-till farming will be lost. Gone with one pass of the chisel. These producers will be starting from scratch to regain the soil quality benefits generated by their previous investments in no-till.

And there is the compliance issue. It's hard to believe that after such widespread tillage that more Iowa fields won't be found out of compliance. When the winter snows melt, and spring arrives, the results will reveal themselves. And so will the mandated consequences.

If we are fortunate to have a similar crop production year in 2011, it is my hope that the tractors remain in the shed and the tillage equipment off the fields. That would be a banner year for conservation.

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Fayette SWCD tree sales

The Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is sponsoring their annual tree sales program. Trees are hardy, bare root seedlings with healthy root systems. No guarantee is given for seedlings or transplants sold at these prices.

There are no stipulations as to who can purchase the trees and where they are to be planted. Orders will be accepted until March 31, 2011.

These trees are sold in bundles of 25 only for \$45 per bundle. The species available are: American Arborvitae, Black Hills Spruce, American Cranberry, Black Cherry, Black Walnut, Colorado Blue Spruce, Common Purple Lilac, Northern Red Oak, Norway Spruce, Red Osier Dogwood, Silver Maple, and Swamp White Oak.

One gallon available containers are: American Arborvitae, Black Hills Spruce, Colorado Blue Spruce, Norway Spruce, and White Pine. These are sold individually and sell for \$14 per tree.

If you are interested in placing an order, please contact the Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District at (563) 422-3868 Ext.3 for an order form.



Regenerating Oaks with Fire

By: Dick Jensen

Consider this very brief writing on the benefit of fire in your woodland as an invitation to come into the NRCS offices for more information and encouragement.

Prescribed fire is a tool utilized under very specific and predetermined conditions such as weather, fuel load, and season to manipulate the environment and achieve a desired outcome. Historically, fire was used by Native Americans to clear forested under stories of saplings and shrubs to promote open park-like savannas dominated by grasses. This combination of trees and grass increased both overall game populations and access for hunting. Fires helped to control unwanted pests like mosquitoes, biting flies and ticks; but also to increase safety around the living areas by increasing the visibility. Learning from the past, land stewards now use prescribed fire in forests to manage vegetation, improve wildlife habitat and control pest problems.

Removing undesirable trees and invasive plants can be a time consuming and expensive task. In most cases, treatments must be repeated for several years in order to control root sprouting and persistent seeds that are dormant in the soil. In con-

junction with mechanical removal techniques, herbicide use is often needed to kill unwanted or invasive plants. However, if fire is used properly, it can greatly reduce unwanted vegetation, without the need for extensive follow-up treatments. When using fire to control invasive species, it is crucial that the fire be timed to coincide with a specific growth stage of the target species. Plants are usually most susceptible during the early stages of the growing season. Burning during the proper season might also mean burning prior to seed dispersal or when the non-desired tree is young and lacking a thick protective bark. The temporary disturbance caused by fire can reduce competition, increase available nutrients and moisture resources; along with promoting vegetation such as wildflowers, native prairie grasses, forbs, and shade intolerant trees such as oak.

The specific effects of fire: controls thin-barked, non-fire adapted woody vegetation, promotes increased light levels at the ground level, decreases below ground competition and increases rooting space, increases water infiltration, reduced litter layer allowing for increased seed germination.

Burning the understory of certain forest types and rangeland or savan-

na areas can improve forage quality and quantity by returning important nutrients to the soil that were locked in the litter layer. Increased light and soil nutrient levels can stimulate growth of plants that have higher nutritional values and are easier to digest. Fire also promotes flower, seed, and fruit production, which can be a vital food source for wildlife throughout the growing season, and the fall and winter months. Changes to vegetation's composition can promote insect diversity and overall insect populations, and can provide critical food resources in the spring and summer months for many game and non-game bird species and their young. Ongoing work shows the benefit of having a diverse, healthy prairie type grass system for young pheasant chicks to feed in.

Because of the complexity of the forest, fire exclusion has given shade tolerant species of trees and invasive shrubs, brush and weeds the advantage over the oak/hickory desired stand. Without some management intervention in our forests, oak regeneration will be hindered or completely non-existent.

If you are interested in upgrading or restoring your forest, stop in to the Natural Resource Conservation District (NRCS) office for more information.

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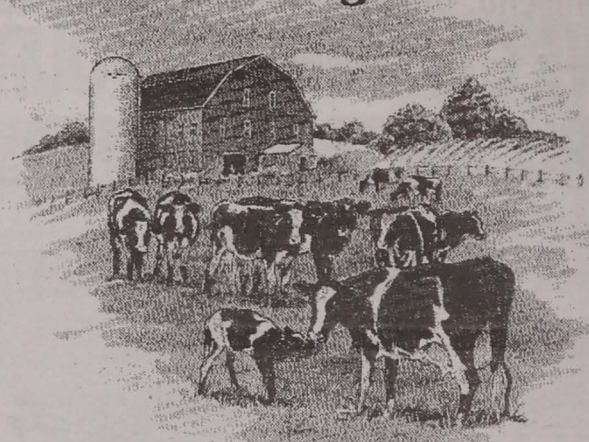
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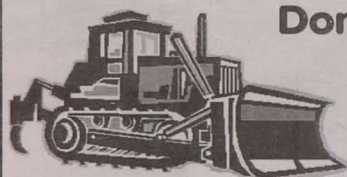


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Report on 2010 CDI Annual Meeting

By: Bill Bennett
Fayette SWCD

Conservation Districts of Iowa held their annual meeting September 8th & 9th in Des Moines. Commissioners from across the state attended to learn about new ways to better serve the people and resources in their districts. Each year at these annual meetings the commissioners have the opportunity to attend concurrent sessions, visit with experts at their displays and visit with other commissioners to learn more. They also met with state and federal officials. This year Natural Resource Conservation Services state conservationist, Richard Simms, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey, and Director of the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation, Chuck Gipp were among those in attendance.

Among those honored at award presentations was North Fayette Middle School teacher Sean Singewald as Conservation Teacher of the Year, Ron & Carol Fullenkamp of West Point as woodland owners of the year, and Gary Beyer retired DNR forester for all his work improving our forest resources.

One of the things that commissioners got to see demonstrated was a CAD (computer aided design) program that uses GIS, GPS & LIDAR to design ponds, waterways and other conservation practices. This is a program that the Fayette SWCD has purchased to do a faster and better job of designing these conservation practices.

A soil scientist and two ladies in attendance put on another demonstration that was very interesting. The scientist had two pails of soil that he had taken from a tilled field and an untilled field. The first thing he asked the ladies to do was to pick up a clump from their pail. One lady asked if her pail had rocks in it since it was hard and wouldn't crumble. The other lady's clump crumbled easily, she had the no-till pail. Next two large beakers were nearly filled with water and a netting was placed part way down in the water in each beaker, then the ladies placed a clump of soil from each ones pail on the netting. In one of the beakers, instantly fine soil particles started drop into and turn the water brown. In the other the soil stayed intact and the water stayed clear, this was the untilled soil. Then came another eye opener, when two sets of two glass pans each were set up. The top pan in each had a screen type bottom and was then fill with soil from the pails, next water was poured onto the soil. The results were astounding. In one the water went right through and stayed clear (the untilled soil), in the other one the surface sealed over and no water went into the lower pan. It certainly made it easy to see one of the reasons we have had so many floods lately when people continue to till the soil.



Darby and Linda Jellings of rural Fayette won the Izaak Walton League Windbreak award this year. The developed windbreak provides the family with a scenic view.

Jellings' are Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award winners

Darby and Linda Jellings of rural Fayette were selected as the Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award winners last fall.

The intended purpose of the windbreak was to promote energy savings in their own home as well as improve the wildlife habitat around them.

Jellings utilized the Pheasants Forever entity to plant their windbreak of Ninebark, Highbush Cran-

berry, White Spruce, and Arborvitae on the west side of their property in exchange allowing for the release of pheasants on their land in the coming years.

On the north side of the Jelling's property, the windbreak is comprised of Nanking Cherry, Grey Dogwood, White Spruce and Arborvitae.

During the establishment years of the windbreak, the couple mulched

and mowed around the trees. As the years have gone by, nature has been allowed to take its course as the grass remains unmowed and the weeds are spot sprayed only as needed.

Although there has been minor deer and rabbit damage to the windbreak, the Jellings family experience few problems with rodents and the family dog aids in keeping the larger animals at bay.

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Frieden wins Woodland Owner of the Year

Seventeen years ago Charles "Chuck" Frieden set out to build a hillside house outside of Elgin. Set back just far enough off the road, the house now sits surrounded by trees.

"In just 10 seconds I can be right in the woods," Frieden noted of the strategically placed house.

In 2005, Frieden purchased more timbered property. Of the 235 acres owned by Frieden, 63 are timber.

"I've always been interested in forestry," Frieden said.

Because he sells timber for fire wood, "I always had the thought of replacing them."

When he bought the extra property in 2005, Frieden moved the cattle off the land, and began a conscious effort to replenish it with trees. The previously pastured land began a transformation when Frieden sought professional advice.

Because of Frieden's many efforts, he was awarded the Woodland Owner of the Year award by the Fayette Soil & Water Conservation District.

"I am humbled by this award. I know there are several people out there who do much more than I do."

Frieden credits several friends with inspiration, design, and support. Among the many who helped Frieden achieve his goals were District Forester Gary Beyer, Mark Webb, Louis Christen, and Bill Bennett.

Also responsible for Frieden's inspiration were previous owners of adjoining property. Earl, Helen and Hazel Rothlisberger lived on the farm south to Frieden.

"They were very conservation conscious. I hope to honor their efforts. They influenced me a little bit on this."

Once a plan was in place, Frieden seeded nearly 17 acres over the last 3-4 years. He planted mixed hard woods including oak, walnut, cherry, and ash. He also added in a few cedar trees.

To keep the deer from ruining the growth of the oaks, Frieden put up several tree shelters.

Frieden has attended many forestry field days to keep up to date on forestry practices. He said it is hard to put a number on the amount of time he's worked on his land.

"I just find myself going out to look around or do one thing, and just get caught up in it for hours at a time," the dedicated man said.

Although Frieden's efforts have been successful and well-received, mother nature isn't always so kind. In July 2009 the devastating hail storms that swept through northeast Iowa left nearly 150 mature trees damaged beyond repair. Frieden had 50 acres of salvage harvest from the storm.

The Emerald Ash Borer has Frieden a little worried as well.

"I've seeded a lot of ash, and anticipate it will eventually be overtaken."

With woodland surrounding the Frieden house, seeing wildlife up close is something of a common nature.

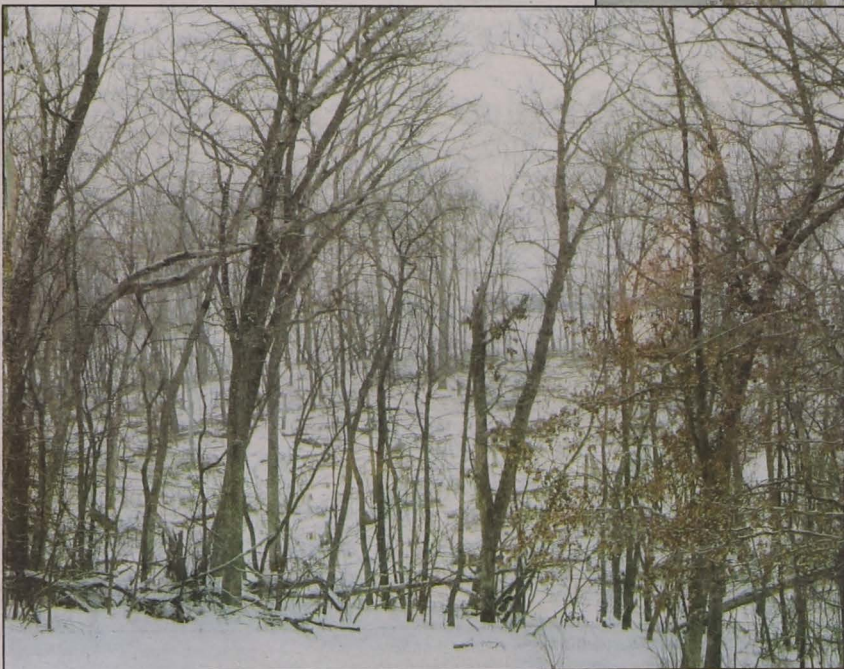
Woodland Owner
cont. on page 22



Chuck Frieden received the Woodland Owner of the Year award after dedicating the last five years to forestry on his property outside of Elgin.



This timber surrounds the Frieden house. Recently finishing a five-year written plan to develop the woodlands, Frieden hopes to enjoy the fruits of his labor.



Youth celebrate earth's land and water

One-third of the earth is land, and two-thirds of it is water.

To educate children on how important water and soil are to the survival of mankind, the Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District took it upon itself to hold a Field Day for elementary kids. That was 20 years ago.

Soil and Water Commissioners Bill Bennett and Dick Jensen are charter members of the FCSWCD that had \$50 in its pocket for the promotion of what they were trying to do. The group was formed 26 years ago, long after soil and water conservation came to the national forefront after the "dust bowl" in the 1930s.

"We've come a long ways since

then, and so has the Field Day," said Bennett. "West Union and Valley were the first two schools, and last year we had no less than 14 schools show up. It takes us three days to be able to get the children through all the learning stations."

North Fayette, Valley, Starmont, Oelwein, Postville, South Winn, Prottin Catholic, Turkey Valley, West Central, Fairbank, Sumner-Fredricksburg, Oelwein Sacred Heart, and Postville third-graders attended this year.

Jensen explained, "We picked third-graders because the schools told us that's the age when the minds of boys and girls are most open to new things. You know, as we get old-

er we get a little stubborn, thinking there's only one way to do something. Kids aren't like that and are better listeners."

Bennett and John Olds presented a program on forestry. Dick taught the kids how to prevent soil erosion and how important land is to the growing of food.

Bob Fassbinder spent three days teaching children the importance of bees to growing things that have blossoms. Joe Wingert gave a wildlife presentation, and Eric Boehm was on hand as a soils scientist.

The sixth presenter was from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, who taught the children about fisheries.

Bennett added, "We can't begin

to thank all the people who volunteered their time to make the three days a learning experience for more than 500 boys and girls.

"From state SWCD secretary Lori Kohlmeier on up, without their help the event couldn't take place. All five soil commissioners and assistants were on hand to help."

Jensen also added, "Doug and Jane Easton of Easton Water Conditioning made water available to all the children. Randy Helgeson barbequed a lot of pork burgers as we fed all the children, too."

Bennett pointed out that the FCSWCD Cooperators Club paid for all the meat and also paid for the required transportation costs of the schools, including bus driver salaries.

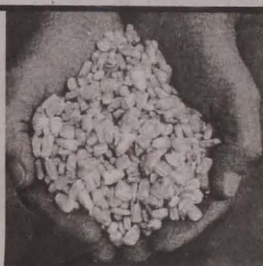
Jensen continued, "You can't put a price tag on caring for the land. Soil and water are the most important resources we have.

"It's our objective to give children a joyful and emotional experience out there and to make them better stewards. I receive much more than I give by seeing all their smiling faces."

He ended, "People must have an affection for where they live, whether it be here or in another state. If we can instill that affection at an early age, our land and water will be the benefactors."

It is estimated that the Field Day has instructed more than 6,000 youngsters in its first 20 years.

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Dick Jensen watches as West Union Elementary third-graders chase a tire, which represented a raindrop washing down a hill. It was their assignment to stop the rain and the erosion that occurs when land isn't tilled properly. The raindrop never had a chance as the boys and girls caught it before erosion could occur.



Beekeeper Bob Fassbinder (left) was one of six presenters at the 2010 Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District Field Day on the Dick Jensen farm.

Steeeges named Conservation Owners of the Year

By Rich Holm

Elgin Echo News Writer

The Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District has presented Jon and Kathy Steege of Maynard its Conservation Owners of the Year Award for 2010.

The couple started farming in 1972, two years after they were married. Kathy was from Castalia and graduated from Valley. Jon was a 1966 graduate of West Central.

It was the same year Jon's parents Victor and Dorothy started practicing contour farming on the 160 acres Jon's grandfather settled nearly a century ago.

Victor's contouring was so impressive it was entered into a FFA soil and water contest, winning second place at state. The Steege land has been a winner ever since.

Like father like son, Jon Steege has carried on a family tradition of caring for the land. As a young boy John had a vision of farming an entire section of 640 acres.

That dream never came true, but more importantly, his vision for

four out of the five farms now on the square mile came into focus. Those four farms practice what Jon's dad started with contour and buffer strips.

Jon was humbled by the county award saying, "At one time I was the only farmer that contoured and stripped farm off the blacktop from Hawkeye all the way to Highway 3.

"Now I am proud to say that I can't say that anymore."

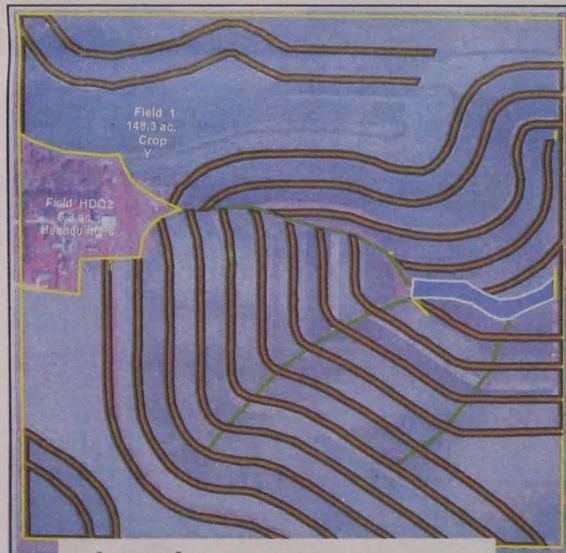
The Steeges have no trouble going to asleep at night because they rest assured knowing that their land will continue to practice conservation methods long after they are gone.

Jon and Kathy placed their farm into an Irrevocable Trust in 2002. That guarantees the Steege homestead will be farmed on the contour using set-aside or CRP programs when available and following conservation plan with the FCSWCD as overseers.

Steeeges
cont, on page 20



Jon and Kathy started farming in 1972. They were awarded the Conservation of the Year Award for 2010.



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Jon and Kathy placed their farm into an Irrevocable Trust in 2002. That guarantees the Steege homestead will be farmed on the contour using set-aside or CRP programs when available and following conservation plan with the FCSWCD as overseers.

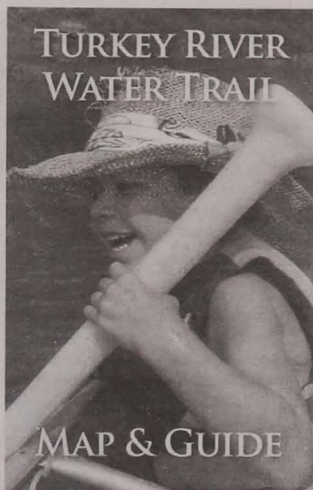
Northeast Iowa RC&D Busy in All of Northeast Iowa

Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) has been busy with over fifty projects during the past year. Those projects include natural resource and economic development projects that benefit Fayette County and the entire region. Some of the ongoing RC&D projects include the Turkey River Water Trail Project, for which the RC&D secured funding, developed a signage plan, and designed the Turkey River Water Trail Map and Guide in partnership with the Fayette and Clayton County Conservation Boards. In 2010, the RC&D also partnered with the Fayette and Clayton County Conservation Boards, Clermont, Elgin and Elkader and other partners on the Turkey River Recreational Corridor Project. The RC&D was able to help these partners by writing and securing over \$1.2 million in Statewide Enhancement and Vision Iowa funding for land trail development in the Turkey River Recreational Corridor.

The RC&D also continued to work on improving the water and land resources in the region through water quality monitoring and GIS analysis. In 2010, the RC&D part-

nered with Fayette SWCD and several other partners to secure funding for the Turkey River Watershed Project. More specifically, NE IA RC&D secured a grant from a private foundation to monitor water quality at forty-five sites in the Turkey River and its tributaries in 2011 and 2012. The RC&D will also coordinate the project, use Geographic Information Systems to analyze the watershed, and provide assistance to the Fayette County SWCD to use the results of the projects in future federal and state grant applications.

Northeast Iowa's forest resources have always been important to



The results of these studies were made available at public meetings and through community presentations. In January of 2011, the RC&D, in partnership with the US Forest Service and the Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau, began working on two new forestry projects, the eight-county

the RC&D. In 2010, the RC&D continued to provide technical assistance with monitoring and control of invasive species in the region, including monitoring for Gypsy Moth and Emerald Ash Bore and assisting with research studies to control garlic mustard and Japanese knot weed. The Forest Stewardship Project and a four-county Call Before You Cut Initiative. The Forest Stewardship Project was started in response to research that documented thousands of landowners participating in Iowa's Forest Reserve did not have Forest Stewardship Plans but were responsive to education and information. The research documented as many as 38% of those woodland owners responding positively to outreach about the benefits of managing their forest and having a plan to reach their goals. The Call Before You Cut Initiative was developed as a result of research that documents woodland owners bull dozing or high grading timber without consulting a public or private forester. Both practices can cost the woodland owner money in the short and long term as well as degrade forest health at a time when Northeast Iowa's woodland resources are highly susceptible to invasive species.

The RC&D is very active in several regional tourism initiatives. They facilitate the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association, of which Fayette County Tourism is a member. Over the past few years the RC&D

has been helping this six-county group develop a new regional brochure and website. The RC&D secured grants and facilitates the process. The RC&D is also working with dozens of partners on the River Bluffs Scenic Byway Project. The River Bluffs Scenic Byway is a State of Iowa Scenic Byway that meanders through Fayette and Clayton counties. The RC&D leads this initiative in partnership with the Iowa DOT. In 2010 a River Bluffs Scenic Byway (RBSB) Board was developed. Through this project, the RBSB Board, as well as dozens of stakeholders, helped develop new River Bluffs Scenic Byway signs that will be installed in spring or summer 2011. They also secured professional photographs of the byway and began development of a new web-site, outreach materials and a Corridor Management Plan that will help the stakeholders secure National Scenic Byway Grants. Given the fact that Iowa Welcome Centers report that the number one request for information is for information about Iowa's Scenic Byways, this project is expected to help Fayette County's tourism industry.

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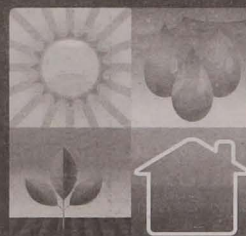
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Invasive pests threaten NE Iowa trees

Two invasive insect species, the emerald ash borer and European gypsy moth, are threatening all of northeast Iowa's trees, public and private, rural and urban. The 2008 US Forest Service Forest Inventory Assessment estimates Fayette County has 5,968,063 trees that may be impacted. Both insect's main methods of movement are via human transport of infected firewood and nursery stock, or hitching a ride on vehicles.

The by now well-known emerald ash borer was first identified in 2002 in southeastern Michigan, and discovered on a Mississippi River island near New Albin in Allamakee County in May, 2010. The emerald ash borer infests and kills all species and sizes of ash by larval tunneling under the bark, eventually girdling the tree and cutting off its water and nutrients. There are currently no effective controls for an infestation except annual treatments of individual trees.

State-wide monitoring for the emerald ash borer has been conduct-

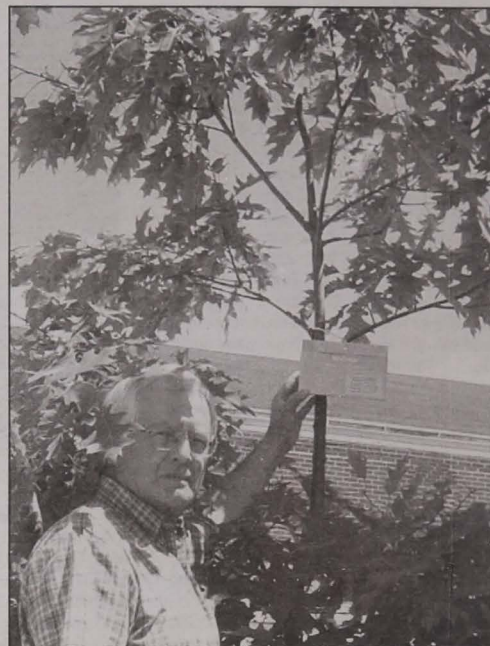
ed in Iowa for several years. Visual surveys of ash in public & private parks, sawmills, and firewood producers, large purple traps hung in ash trees, and "sentinel tree traps"* were all negative for 2010. Because of the closeness to Fayette County of the New Albin find, Northeast Iowa RC&D, partnered with IA DNR Forestry Bureau, established sentinel trees in Fayette County parks for the first time in the fall of 2009. In the fall of 2010 the sentinel trees were cut down, bark peeled, and inspected for borer larva. No emerald ash borers were found, and new sentinel trees were prepared for fall of 2011. The European gypsy moth was introduced in Massachusetts in 1869 in an attempt to improve native silk worms for the silk industry. The gypsy moths escaped and have been spreading west, south and north ever since. It is the caterpillar stage that is destructive. The caterpillars feed on the leaves of over 300 species of trees, shrubs, and plants. They have a preference for oaks, but will feed on whatever is available. When

present in large numbers, the caterpillars can defoliate trees over several years, weakening the trees and allowing other diseases and pests to invade and kill the stressed trees.

Gypsy moth monitoring has been ongoing in Iowa since the 1990s, including Fayette County. Northeast Iowa RC&D has worked on the monitoring since 2006. Recent expansion of the moth into western Wisconsin and western Illinois has placed eastern Iowa on the leading edge of the gypsy moth invasion. In 2009, less than 90 male moths were captured statewide. In 2010, 2,260 male moths were captured, the majority in Northeast Iowa, 3 times the next highest yearly total. Though several were captured in Fayette County, the highest numbers were in a band from Decorah to Waukon. Approximately 65,000 acres in Winneshiek and Allamakee counties will be treated with female pheromone flakes in May-June in an attempt to disrupt the moth's mating cycle and reduce the population before it reaches destructive levels. 2011 trapping will begin in late May with the placement of the traps which will be picked up and inspected for captured moths in September.

If you think you've found one of these pests or for more information on these and other pests that threaten our woodlands check the Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau and ISU Forestry Extension websites, or contact Richard Kittelson, NE IA RC&D Forestry Outreach Coordinator at 563-864-7112, kittelson@northeastiowarc.org.

*"Sentinel tree traps" are usually 4-8 inch diameter ash trees, lo-



cated in public or private parks close to campgrounds. Larger or smaller trees may be prepared if no 4-8 inch trees are available. The trees are girdled in the fall by removing 6-8 inches of bark, tagged with a notice stating the purpose of the girdling, and GPSed. If present in the area, the emerald ash borer adults emerge from their winter feeding in late May to mate and lay eggs. The female borers are attracted to the girdled/

stressed trees first and lay 60-80 eggs in bark crevices. When the larva hatch, they burrow to the cambium layer of the tree and begin to feed in S-shaped galleries that eventually go completely around and kill the tree in 2-3 years. The sentinel trees are cut down the following fall and the bark is carefully peeled with a draw knife. All larva found are collected and sent to IA DNR for identification.



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Funding Awarded for the Nutting Creek Watershed Project

Carrie Davis
Project Coordinator

Nutting Creek is a 17,246 acre watershed located in northern Fayette and southern Winnebago counties. A watershed is the area of land that drains into a particular stream, lake, river, or ocean. This project is designed to be a three-year project intended to improve the water quality of Nutting Creek. Landowners and operators in this special watershed may be able to take advantage of increased cost share, up to 75%, and incentive programs to improve water quality by implementing certain conservation practices.

Nutting Creek has been listed on Iowa's 2004 303(d) list of Impaired Waters for aquatic life impairment. Recent studies conducted by the DNR TMDL staff indicate that aquatic life is not longer a limitation in the watershed; however E. coli levels have been documented as high as 730,000 colony forming units/100 ml of water after rain events. This is significantly higher than the EPA's recommendation for body contact.

The goal of the watershed project is to improve the water quality of the stream and reverse the negative impact that fecal coliform bacteria and sediment is having on the ecosystem. The District believes these can be accomplished by promoting several cultural and

structural best management practices (BMPs) that contain livestock runoff and reduce or trap sediment and manure from entering the stream.

Cultural BMPs include no-till farming, rotational grazing and nutrient management while structural practices include animal waste structures, terraces, and grade stabilization structures. These practices can reduce bacteria and sediment loads by slowing down and filtering sediment and manure laden runoff from crop fields before it reaches streams.

The Nutting Creek Watershed Project is supported in part by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation, through funding from the Watershed Protection Fund and by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Federal Non-Point Source Management Program (Section 319 of the Clean Water Act). Technical assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Individuals interested in the Nutting Creek Watershed Project can contact Carrie Davis at the Fayette County NRCS Office, 563-422-3868 ext 3.

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Walker joins Departement of Natural Resources

On September 13, 2010 the Charles City district of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources gained a new District Forester. Jason Walker has replaced longtime district forester Gary Beyer, who retired this past spring.



Jason Walker

Jason is a native Iowan, having

grown up in Jefferson, and graduated from Iowa State University in 2004 with a Bachelor of Science degree in forestry. Prior to his Iowa DNR employment, Jason spent 6 years employed as a forester with the Minnesota DNR, and worked just across the border from the Charles City district in SE Minnesota.

Jason will be spending much of his time assisting private landowners in the management of their property. Jason, his wife Laura, and 3 year old son Bryce reside in Charles City.

Nutting Creek Water Quality Monitoring

By Rick Klann
Upper Iowa University

Upper Iowa University has completed two years of water quality monitoring on Nutting Creek as part of a Fayette SWCD project to improve the water quality in the watershed. Monitoring occurred from March through October. Samples were collected monthly from three sites along the creek. Additionally, samples were collected immediately following significant rain events (more than 0.6 inches of rain in a 12 hour period).

Each sample was analyzed for the following physical and chemical parameters of water quality: temperature, pH, conductivity, dissolved oxygen and turbidity are measured on site; while samples returned to the lab are analyzed for suspended solids, fecal coliform bacteria, ammonia, total nitrogen and total phosphorus.

Twice a year (May and September), each site was sampled for benthic macroinvertebrates (primarily aquatic insects and other small organisms that live on the bottom).

Since different species of benthic macroinvertebrates vary with respect to their ability to tolerate pollution, they can be very useful as indicators of water quality.

The monthly sampling regime provides a snapshot of the water quality at that one point in time, while the benthic invertebrates live in the stream year round and are thus exposed to water quality conditions throughout the entire year. There are some interesting conclusions that can be drawn from the two years of monitoring.

First, while Nutting Creek may appear to be a fairly pristine stream between periods of rain, the water quality is greatly impacted following rain events. A tremendous amount of sediment and organic pollution (nitrogen and phosphorus) is introduced into the stream by runoff. It is not unusual for levels of ammonia and phosphorus to quadruple following a significant rain event. Fe-

cal coliform levels tend to be high throughout the monitoring season and increase to stratospheric counts following significant rains. Only rarely are bacteria counts within the range acceptable for primary contact (swimming). The physical and chemical parameters of water quality all indicate a stream that is degraded by sediment and organic pollution.

Of course, this is the reason Fayette SWCD has initiated a project to improve water quality in the watershed by working with landowners to implement land-use improvement practices that would reduce the input of sediment and organic pollution into the stream. The second year of monitoring indicates that this project may be having an impact on the water quality of Nutting Creek. At all three sites, analysis of the benthic invertebrates indicates that there are more mayflies and caddisflies (which are relatively intolerant of organic pollution) and fewer midges and blackflies (which are much more tolerant of pollution). However, there is still a relative scarcity of organisms that are very intolerant of pollution. Hopefully, the data from a third year of monitoring will indicate whether this improvement is an actual trend or just natural variation in the benthic invertebrate community.

It appears that the climate in Iowa is changing, and we are seeing more intense rains that deliver a large amount of precipitation in a short period of time. Light rains allow the water to percolate through the ground. This water is filtered before it returns to the surface at a spring or seep. Heavy rainfalls saturate the ground. Any rain that falls after the soil is saturated will not be able to percolate and be filtered. Instead, it flows directly into streams as runoff. Runoff from bare ground strips topsoil (and the chemicals it contains) and carries it to the stream. Buffer strips are so valuable because they can perform the function of filtration, limiting the amount of sediment carried by runoff. Ponds can also trap this sediment.

Heavy rains led to a tremendous amount of sediment introduced to Nutting Creek by runoff. Many organic pollutants (nitrogen and phosphorus) were washed in, as well as fecal coliform bacteria from livestock and septic systems.

Land-use improvement practices are the key to improving the water quality of Nutting Creek. While there are tentative indicators this may be occurring, it is clear that additional efforts are needed to reduce the sediment load carried by runoff and to make sure that runoff is filtered of organic pollutants.

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The Big Bad Wolf is coming!

Greg Heidebrink
Iowa Department
of Natural Resources

By now many of you have heard of the many new threats facing North East Iowa's forests. First it was the Gypsy moth, now we have the Emerald Ash Borer and Bur oak Blight and in the future it may be 1000 Cankers Disease on walnut. I thought it would be a good time to give you an update on where we stand on all of these forest health issues today.

Gypsy Moth-
The Gypsy moth was introduced to the United States in 1869. It was first brought to Boston for silk production and has been working its way across the United States ever since. The gypsy moth is a great hitchhiker. It lays its egg masses on boats, camper, nursery stock etc. These items are then moved around the United States and the moth spreads.

The state of Iowa has been surveying for the Gypsy moth since 1972. Up until recently it has not been a big threat to Iowa's forests. Before last year, the most moths ever caught in Iowa traps were around 600. During the 2010 season however, over 2200 moths were caught state wide, with the bulk of them caught in North East Iowa.

What does this mean to North East Iowa's Forests? The Gypsy moth feeds on the leaves of many different tree species but oak is by far its favorite. Repeated defoliation

along with many other stresses like pasturing, oak tatters and drought make the trees susceptible to other insects and diseases. This multi faceted attack eventually kills the trees. Currently about 26% of Iowa's forests are grouped into the white oak, red oak, hickory group. This group of trees has declined from 37% in 1990 to 29% in 2003 and as I mentioned above, it now stands at about 26% today.

This decline is a result of many different things (succession, Oak wilt, grazing etc.) but adding another pest into the mix will only make it worse. This is why an area between Decorah and Waukon and a small portion of Yellow River State Forest will be treated with pheromone flakes (small pieces of paper that smell like female Gypsy moths) this summer. There will be some informational meetings on this process later this spring. Locations and dates are yet to be determined.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)-

The EAB was found in the Detroit area in 2002. It is thought that it came to the United States in shipping crates from China. Since it was found, it has spread to Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Virginia and most recently Iowa. In May of 2010, a larva of this beetle was found on an island in the Mississippi River in Allamakee County.

Allamakee County. Allamakee County is now under an Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and USDA-APHIS-PPQ quarantine. This quarantine prevents the movement of firewood, ash nursery stock, ash timber, or any other article that could further spread EAB.

You would think that this beetle is a great flyer due to the fact that it has invaded all of the states listed above since 2002, but this is not the case. In an average year the adult beetle will only fly a few miles, but like the Gypsy moth, EAB is a hitchhiker and usually moves in firewood. With this type of movement in mind, a new Administrative Rule was passed requiring specific labeling on firewood sold in Iowa.

As of January 1, 2011, all packaged firewood for sale, sold or distributed in Iowa must include the harvest location of the wood by county and state. This rule also includes bulk firewood, requiring the harvest location to be included on the delivery ticket. For questions on the new firewood rule, contact Robin Pruissner at the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship, 515-725-1470.

Bur Oak Blight (BOB)-

Bur Oak Blight or BOB is a newly named leaf spot disease in Iowa. This leaf disease causes V shaped brown sections between the veins on the leaves in late summer. These infected leaves then hang on the tree

through the winter and infect the newly emerging leaves the following spring.

Unlike some similar leaf spotting diseases, BOB affects enough of the leaf to cause decline, branch die back and eventually mortality. Not a lot is known about BOB at this time but there are many different agencies working on this disease.

1000 Cankers Disease-
Black walnut trees have been dying in the western states since the early 1990's form a walnut trig beetle that carries a fungus on its body. This is very similar to the relationship that the Elm Bark Beetle has with Dutch elm disease. The beetle's larva bore under the bark in the cambium which then spreads the fungus throughout the tree. The initial thought was that this was only on stressed western walnut trees, but it has been recently found in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Iowa is currently not known to have this disease, but introduction would be devastating to Iowa's wood products industry. Iowa has some of the best walnut trees in the world. Currently there is no control for this disease but as with BOB and

all of the other disease and insect problems out there, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Forestry Bureau, Iowa State University and the United States Forest Service will continue to try to find solutions to these problems. If you are interested in learning more about these insect and disease problems, please take a look at "Iowa's Forest Health Report, 2010" at www.iowadnr.gov/forestry/files/fhr2010.

With so many old and new pests out there, I can't stress enough how important it is to properly manage your woodlands. Trees that are overcrowded and stressed are going to be much more susceptible to disease and insect damage. It is important to develop a management plan for your woodlands that looks at your long term goals, the current conditions of the woodlands and what you can do to improve your woodlands. Your District Forester can help you develop this plan. There are also many cost share programs out there to help cover some of the costs of these management activities. If you are interested give your District Forester or county Natural Resource Conservation Service a call.

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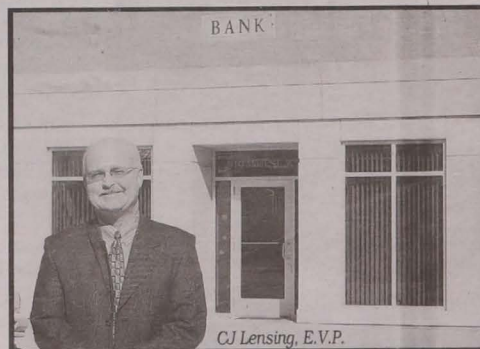
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Steegees (continued from page 14)

The Trust ends when Steege's grandson turns 60. At the same time the Trust was established, the family entered into a conservation easement with the FCSWCD.

Kathy said, "We wanted to protect the agricultural integrity of the

land, prohibit certain practices and large livestock confinement buildings. This allows us to farm in a manner consistent with our soil conservation plan, our wildlife goals, and objectives."

The Steegees continue to farm on

the contour with contour buffer strips seeded to mixed natives. Jon has experimented with no-till but is not equipped to do so.

Jon uses mulch tillage in the spring allowing more residue after planting. Some of his waterways are enrolled in the CRP program.

The Steegees saw a problem controlling runoff from their yard and building. It was solved when they constructed a water and sediment control structure. They currently have a Tier III Conservation Security Program contract.

In 1986 the Steegees planted a new windbreak to replace the one his grandfather planted. In 1995 the family planted a backyard wildlife habitat consisting of Ninebark, Siberian crabapple, Midwest crabapple, Nanking cherry and American cranberry bush.

Many songbirds enjoy the security and available food in addition to using the Steege birdfeeders. Pheasants regularly roost in the trees and two years ago four wild turkeys wintered on their property despite living quite a distance from timbers.

Kathy watches her husband outside saying, "Jon's biggest challenge is the upkeep and repair work on waterways. He loves to be outdoors and do as much work himself. He maintains good fences around the farm and keeps the weeds controlled in the fence line. Without a large timber nearby, Jon's windbreak is habitat for wildlife."

In addition Jon is a big promoter of wildlife in the county, making sure the CRP acres are planted to mix natives and maintained for the contract years.

The Steegees have two children. Son Paul and wife Kaye reside in Cedar Rapids. Daughter Larissa and husband Troy Rassmussen are at home in Jackson, Minn. Jon and Kathy have two grandchildren.

The couple together has been stewards of the land for 41 years. It was by chance when they first met, and Jon was glad a buddy of his didn't know his way around Waterloo.

Jon explained, "My friend wanted to visit his girlfriend in Waterloo but didn't know the city, but I did. He asked me to drive him there."

"Kathy happened to be this girlfriend's roommate, so when we got there we were introduced, and I guess the rest is history. Kathy was attending Gates Business College at the time."

Kathy Steege has been employed with the Fayette County Extension Service in Fayette since 1981.

After selling his dairy herd in 1989, Jon Steege began working for the Fayette County Conservation Board as the roadside vegetation manager.

But Jon Steege is much more to the people who know him best. He was one of 15 charter members elected into the Pheasants Forever Hall of Fame. For the past 25 years he has been Pheasants Forever Habitat chairman.

He has been an Iowa Hunter safety instructor for 31 years. His list of conservation activities includes State Preserves Advisory Board, Section

208 Clean Water Planning Committee, member of the three county wide conservation clubs, certified backyard habitat planner, and Volga Valley Conservation Club tree committee member.

Community activities include past AMPI district 75 chairman, and past 4-H Safety Education Shooting Sports leader.

Kathy Steege is a past Dynamite Clover Kids 4-H club co-leader, past Harlan 4-H Club leader, and she volunteered for the SWCD when Belva Bauer retired.

Together Jon and Kathy hosted a clergy breakfast for Soil Stewardship Week, handed out bulletin inserts for Soil Stewardship Week, and were Fayette County Farm Bureau Environmental Resources chairpersons.

And for the people who awarded him his latest honor, Jon Steege has served the Soil and Water Conservation District as a commissioner for six years. He also initiated both the Soil & Water Stewardship Week and Tree Sales Program for the SWCD.

When the Steegees received their award, Jon stated, "Kathy and I are doing what we feel is necessary to ensure a future for generations of farmers to come."

"The value of soil and water conservation is something my father taught me at a young age. It's a message that all of us have to pass on to the generations of boys and girls today who will be caring for our land in the future."

He ended, "And our practices are working. Look around the county and you will see. There are many more landowners out there doing what Kathy and I are doing, and they should be saluted too."

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- Frank Lloyd Wright



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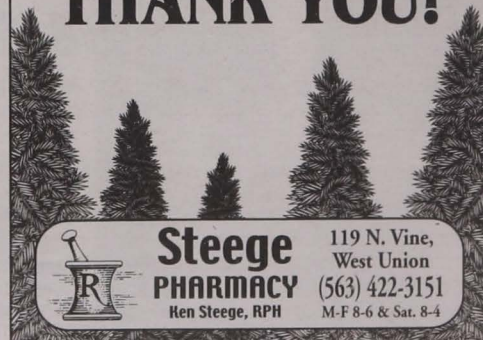
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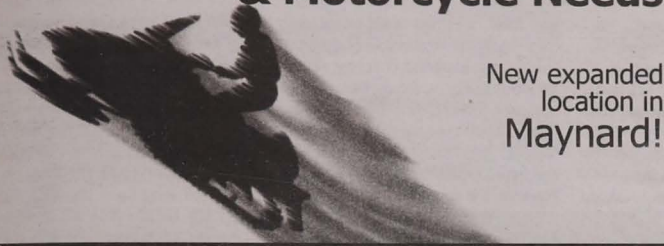
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Can conservation wait?

By Jim Gillespie

In this ever changing world and state, what does the future hold for conservation and agriculture? Commodity prices are high, land values are high, rents are high, inputs are high, and the list goes on.

But can conservation of the soil and water wait? That has to be a good question everyone should be thinking about. With more demands being placed on soil and water resources to produce more food for an ever growing population in the world and with changing technology and genetics to allow different forms of production in agriculture CONSERVATION CAN NOT WAIT.

Every land owner and farm operator should take the time to contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office to see what they can do for conservation on their land. Look at this as an opportunity to protect the land that is the basis of your farming business. Everything that comes from your operation depends on the land that you own or operate. You are left to manage your land as well as you can to be as productive as possible. But you will need the soil and water resources that you have for a long time, so protect them so they can support your operation well into the future.

Consider practices such as residue management, structural practices, and nutrient management to protect the productivity of your operation as well as protect water quality. Keep your valuable soil in place to maintain good soil quality that will enhance and maintain production. Control the water that falls on your land by reducing compaction and try to absorb as much as possible to reduce runoff. Water is valuable to production and protection, so try to use it so that it will be available when needed by the plants.

When you look at the definition of "Conservation" in the Webster's Dictionary it states "a careful preservation and protection of something; esp: planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect". That says a lot and gives us all a large responsibility.

Accept that responsibility and put CONSERVATION at the top of your business plan. Be the best land and farm operator you can be and conserve your soil and water resources so your agricultural operation will maintain itself for a long time.

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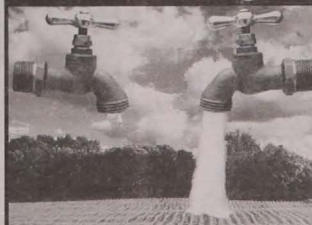
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Woodland Owner continued from page 12

"We have deer and turkey walk right through the back yard."

As for hunting, Frieden has allowed some friends access to the land, hunting deer, squirrel, and raccoon.

Frieden has recently completed all the plans outlined in his written management plan. However, for a forester, the work is never quite done.

"The work is always on-going."

While Frieden says he doesn't have immediate plans to take on more woodland endeavors, "The thought is always in the back of my mind."

Frieden enjoys his time in the woodland he's help create.

"I enjoy just being outside and discovering new trees growing. Hopefully I'm leaving something for future generations."

As Frieden and his wife Deb sit in their sun room, the couple merely has to glance out to see how all the handwork has paid off.

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Dirt cheap

By Richard Jensen

Dirt, soil, ground, call it whatever you want, it is everywhere we go. It is the very root of our existence; supporting our feet, our farms, cities and homes. Unfortunately we are running out of dirt and far too few folks are concerned about it.

So what is dirt? We try to keep it out of sight, out of mind and out of our image of clean. We spit on it, denigrate it, and kick it off our shoes. In our speech we often use this word to describe something disgusting or disgraceful; but in the beginning all things come from it and at the end, all things return to it. If that doesn't earn dirt a little respect, consider how profoundly soil fertility and soil erosion has shaped the course of human history.

For thousands of years, our hunter-gatherer ancestors were able to thrive by living from the land that was within their walking distance. Little wonder that the land occupied such a central spiritual spot in their lives, but as populations grew

and food resources were exhausted these early civilizations evolved into tillers and planters, enabling them to grow food for themselves. This soil-man-food relationship was born nearly 10,000 years ago. Fertile soil was the most fundamental resource that would determine the failure or future of the human race. In order to

still continues today. Land use practices were accelerating soil erosion beyond the replacement rate. Exposed to rain and wind these fertile virgin soils eroded bit by bit slowly enough to be ignored in a single lifetime but fast enough over centuries to limit the lifespan of a civilization. Many well developed societies did

fail; in part due to hunger brought about by impaired food production from the abused land.

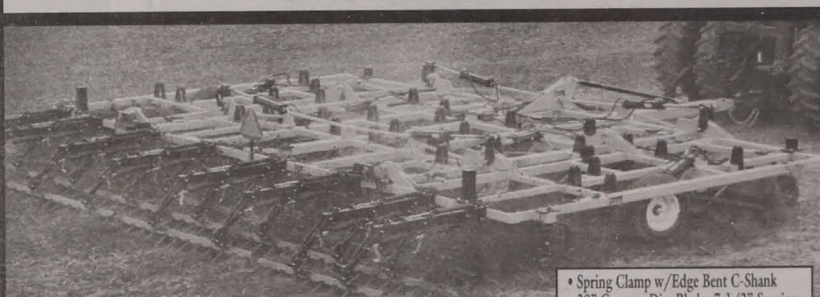
The human suffering that results from soil exhaustion in regions that long ago committed ecological suicide is regularly seen on the nightly news. Environmental refugees, driven by hunger and in search of food or productive soil to grow it on are not uncommon. Regrettably they are victims of generations of humans who failed to appreciate or value the essential natural resource under their feet called dirt.

Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "A nation that destroys its soils, destroys itself." Global history proves this to be true but in our land of excessive goods and groceries, folks are not much concerned about a vanishing resource called dirt. Are you?

satisfy the increasing number of food consumers of each civilization additional land had to be found. These early village dwellers could and would easily pack up the necessities and move to soil-rich sites, leaving behind damaged and depleted soils. With hoes, spades, and the overgrazing by goats, man was leaving his signature on the landscape. That



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Henn bestowed 2010 District Conservation Scholarship

Jonathan Henn was awarded the Class of 2010 District Conservation Scholarship. Jonathan, the son of Rob and Jean Ann Henn of Hawkeye, is a North Fayette graduate.

"Jonathan has been involved in many projects over the years," said SWCD Commissioner Bill Bennett during the annual banquet in September. "He has already contributed so much and we expect to see a lot more from him in the future!"

Jonathan said that the \$500 scholarship would go toward his NICC tuition.

"I am greatly appreciative of the scholarship," said the college freshman. "In addition, I would like to thank Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District for the work that the entire staff does in promoting conservation practices."

"They (commissioners and staff) played a special part in helping with the development of the North Fayette Conservation Area in West Union, while I was attending high school."

A Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) student, Jonathan is currently participating in the local



Jonathan Henn, a Northeast Iowa Community College student and a 2009 North Fayette graduate, was the recipient of the 2010 Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District scholarship. Henn was bestowed the honor by SWCD commissioner Bill Bennett during the annual banquet in September.

community college's John Deere Ag Tech program. He plans on pursuing a career in the ag implement field following college graduation.

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NF teacher provides next generation lessons in enhancing the environment

By Bill Bennett

Iowa Conservation Teacher of the Year Sean Singewald, a teacher at North Fayette Middle School, was singled out this past year for the outstanding way he is teaching our next generation.

Mr. Singewald uses a hands-on approach in his classroom, whether it is an indoor or outdoor classroom. He makes learning a fun experience, and his students take part in the activities in a way that they retain much more of the lessons. He is teaching his students to think of what to do to be successful not only today and tomorrow, but during their entire lifetime.

I have watched him work with his students and have seen him display dedication to the profession that doesn't come from just doing the job. You can see him instill in his classes the tools students will need to live good, responsible lives.

Students learn to care for not only themselves, but for each other, and that is something that many young people today do not see. All around them these young people see adults taking, but see very little giving; in Mr. Singewald's class they see giving, not only to them, but also to future generations.

In addition to working alongside his students in enhancing the North Fayette Conservation Area in West Union, Singewald developed the first-in-the-state Trout in the Classroom program at the local school.

The hands-on educational experience began in January 2010 and culminated with the release at Echo Valley State Park in May.

The class received an estimated 180 trout eggs from the Manchester Fish Hatchery on Jan. 11, 2010, and the educational process began almost immediately.

The students used math exercises to predict the hatching date, which was correctly identified as Jan. 19. Following the hatching, it was further calculated that 20 percent of the eggs were not fertilized.

Environmental science skills were utilized daily to test if the fish tank was at its opportune temperature of 59-62 degrees Fahrenheit. Meanwhile, water quality was monitored every other day.

While studying the life cycles of trout, the students utilized their anatomy lessons to investigate the cause of death of fingerlings.

This year's students can count on similar experiences. In addition to continuing Trout in the Classroom,

Singewald intends to incorporate more plant studies, raising prairie grass/flowers from the seed, and possibly other restoration activities into his curriculum.

If you have not had a chance to watch Mr. Singewald at work, it would be great if you could, as long as it doesn't interfere with his classes. We can all learn so much from him. Maybe we, too, can do a better job of setting a good example for young people to follow.

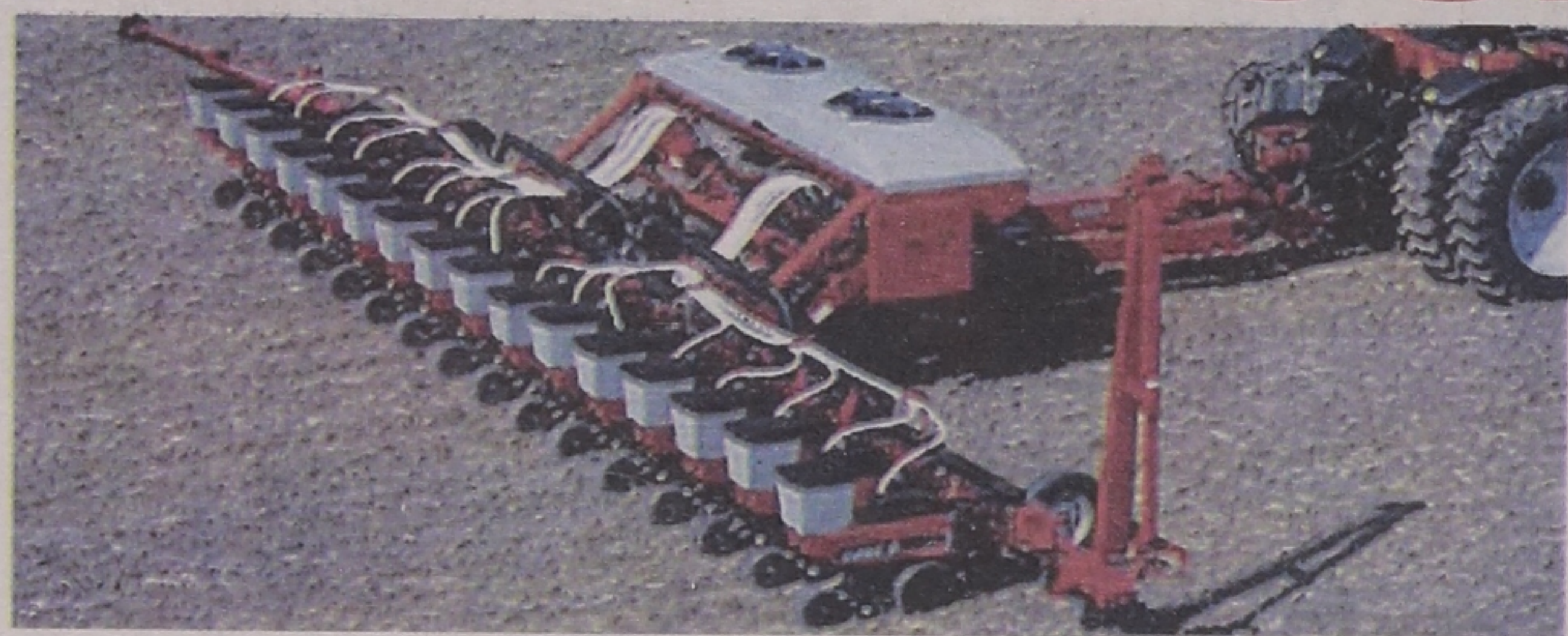
When you see Mr. Singewald, join me, Bill Bennett, in saying "thank you" for what he is doing.



North Fayette science teacher Sean Singewald identifies plants and seeds to students (l-r) Jenna Bemiss, Chloe Johansen, and Kasandra Rosenbush while the sixth-grade class collected seeds in the school's conservation area in West Union.

8th Annual

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