

1971

TWENTY - NINTH

Annual Report

TAMA COUNTY SOIL
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

TOLEDO, IOWA

PHONE 484-2702



Tile outlet terraces on the farm of Ross Sharp, Carlton township.



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FOREWORD

Ted Hall - District Conservationist

Conservationists waged a lonely battle for a long time until the pollution scares of recent years finally began to make people aware of our environment. The threat that we could ruin our place to live and endanger human life through careless waste and squandering of our natural resources, became one of the popular causes.

Now the conservationist doesn't have quite the struggle getting people to listen when he promotes erosion control and practices needed to make it work. One of the big problems now is stretching conservation dollars and people to get the most work accomplished.

Tama County is blessed with some of Iowa's prime cropland that has potential to feed future generations. The long gentle slopes have lulled some into thinking erosion isn't a problem there in comparison to some steeper areas.

Erosion is a threat on all soil unless it is protected by grass, a protective mulch or other practice. If you help decide how land is to be used, add conservation to the list of things considered in your planning process.



Commissioners: Left to Right - Harold Higgins, Ken Bruene, Welby Dixon, Harry Scurr and Lester Lenhart, Absent was Joe Lyon.

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER VIEWPOINTS

Willingness to change farming operations in order to keep pace with economic demands, has made it possible for operators to stay in the business of farming.

In the past forty years we have witnessed change from the horse drawn two row equipment to multi-row tractor equipment, rotation cropping systems to continuous row crops, increased use of commercial fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides.

All of these innovations have created increased erosion problems and some soil saving practices of the past are now as outdated as the walking plow.

We as district soil conservation commissioners are advocating the use of a more enduring soil conservation practice, namely the modern tile outlet terrace to replace the old style "hairpin turn" standard terraces. These new terraces not only eliminate point rows but also eliminates many waterways and at the same time reduces erosion to a minimum.

Harold Higgins

We find that we have perhaps two kinds of friends in this world, some are old, tried and true friends that we have known for many years and find easy to live with and enjoy. There also are the new friends that one meets as you go along that can be exciting and interesting and challenging. There is a place for both types and to have a full life we must cultivate both types.

Soil conservation can be likened to this. On one side we have the old friends so to speak, such as grassed waterways, contouring, stripcropping, good rotations and so on and on. It adds up to good management and common sense. Occasionally a new friend or practice shows up. In our area the tile outlet terrace is becoming more popular and has much promise for the man that is in a continuous rowcrop situation.

We, as commissioners, urge you to use this new friend to help you conserve your soil and water, but let's not forget the value of the old friends that are still around.

Ken Bruene

We, as individuals, are always prone to resent government interference in our business or with our so called freedoms to do as we please. History shows that we maintain our freedom as long as we act responsibly in our relation to the society in which we live. When we fail to do this the government then steps in and sets up regulations in an effort to protect the rights of others. This is true of soil conservation. If we, as individuals, accept our responsibility to society in protecting our most valuable resource, our soil, then government will have little reason to intervene. If we do not act responsibly then we must expect more and more government regulation in this regard. The choice is ours. The District office stands ready to assist you.

Joe Lyon

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1971

July 1, 1970 — June 30, 1971

	(unit)	(amount)	(total on the land)
New Cooperators	No.	29	868
Basic Conservation Plan	No.	28	570
Revised Conservation Plans	No.	5	
Farms Serviced	No.	412	
Sod Waterways	Ac.	149	5,213
Farm Ponds	No.	3	275
Grade Stabilization Struc.	No.	7	188
Contour Farming	Ac.	1,354	79,413
Stripcropping	Ac.	505	11,540
Diversion Terraces	Lin. Ft.	7,000	105,547
Terraces-Parallel	Lin. Ft.	1,425	29,835
Tile Drainage	Lin. Ft.	296,496	2,681,199
Open Drainage	Lin. Ft.	10,565	204,209
Dike	Ft.	835	9,765
Tree Planting	Ac.	20	109
Pipeline	Ft.	2,109	13,341
Windbreak	Ac.	4.1	20

STATE BUDGET OF THE
TAMA COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

1M BUDGET

Commissioners Mileage	99.23
Office Supplies	157.18
Office Expense	243.59

1M-A BUDGET

Commissioners Mileage	16.65
Office Expense	84.42

2M-BUDGET

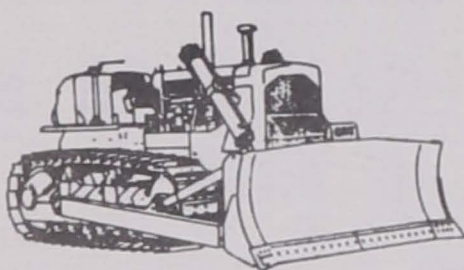
State Clerk and Planner Aide	\$12065.00
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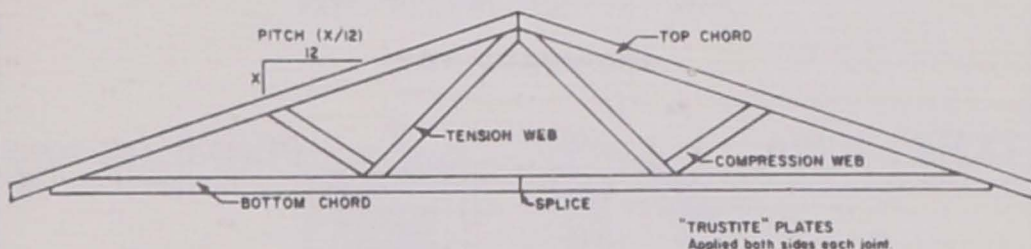
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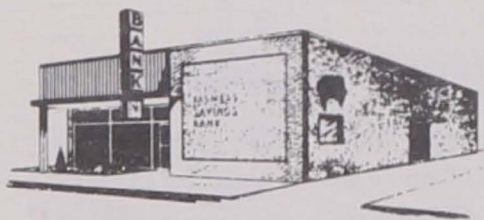
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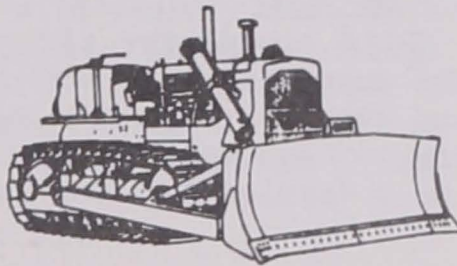
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Pictured above is Marilou Bruene, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Bruene, Gladbrook, winner of the District speech contest.

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G. Gress Rogers, County Extension Director

Not long ago, farmers had few choices in tillage tools. Most everyone used some combination of a plow, disk and harrow. Now an implement dealer can show you an array of tillage machines and power sources. Which is best for you?

In broad terms, you can think of tillage systems as conventional and nonconventional. Conventional tillage involves plowing in fall or spring, one or more diskings, one or more harrowings and surface planting. Nonconventional tillage includes most systems that don't involve moldboard plowing. Each system has advantages and disadvantages:

CONVENTIONAL TILLAGE

Advantages: Produces smooth, firm seedbed, resulting in good stands and yields. Equipment is readily available. System is flexible and provides opportunities for correcting errors. Makes it easier to incorporate fertilizer and to control weeds, diseases and insects.

Disadvantages: Time-consuming. Involves a large number of separate operations and implements. Soil conditions are not best for water intake and erosion control.

NONCONVENTIONAL TILLAGE

Advantages: Has potential for lower cost field operations because of fewer trips over the field. Fewer trips give you more time to get your spring work done on schedule. Produces good stands and yields if used properly. Creates conditions favorable for water intake and erosion control.

Disadvantages: Reduced flexibility. Fewer operations must be more carefully timed. The closer a method approaches a one-pass operation, the more rigid the total system becomes, and the more judgment the operator must use. A rigid system may not be desirable for all conditions that occur on a farm or for year-to-year climatic variations.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

In looking at tillage alternatives, a farmer must take a hard look at basic tillage principles. First, he must recognize the needs of his crop. Second, he must make sure the seedbed is adequate for germination, uniform emergence and seedling growth. Third, he must keep in mind the principles of soil and water conservation to make maximum use of water and to reduce water and wind erosion.

With no-plow systems, fertilizer is not incorporated deeply in the soil. A good manager may find it wise to moldboard plow his ground every 3 to 5 years to get deep placement of fertilizer, particularly phosphorus and potassium. These materials may also be applied deeply through chisel type applicators. If soil tests indicate medium to high levels, the need for deep placement may not show up immediately, especially if timely rains keep the surface soil moist. The need will show up when the surface dries out and the plants begin to draw water and nutrients from the subsoil. In systems where surface residues and wet soil conditions prevail, row fertilizers should be used to compensate for lower soil temperatures and slow early growth. Moreover, planting equipment must be adjusted to assure firm contact between seed and moist soil. And where surface residues are present, planters should be equipped to adequately cut through or push these residues from the row area.

Another important consideration is timeliness. It is vital to be able to till the soil at optimum moisture condition and to plant as early as conditions permit. Timely tillage is especially important on heavy-textured and imperfectly drained soils. Timely chemical and mechanical weed control is important with all systems. Crop residues can interfere with herbicide action and in addition can provide protection for certain insects. When chemicals fail to produce the desired results, it is essential that corrective measures be taken in time. A farmer should be alert to the need to add or modify operations when unexpected difficulties arise because of unfavorable weather and soil conditions.

Finally, tillage must be considered an integral part of the total crop production system. A tillage system must be compatible with other production factors such as fertilizer and pesticide application, row spacing, and harvesting and drying operations. The keys to success with any tillage system are the proper management of all related inputs - time, machinery, capital and labor - and the ability to fit the system to prevailing soil and weather conditions.

There are a number of no-plow systems being used successfully. In general these do reduce soil and water movement, and trips over the ground.

Examples of the no-plow systems include listing, ridge planting, till planting, chisel planting, rotary tillage, slot or "zero" tillage, sweep tillage and disk tillage. Each system has advantages and disadvantages. Some may be for you, some not.

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Conservation Education Committee, left to right - Mrs. Joyce Myers, Darrell Hayes, Mrs. Edythe Hill, Dick McMullin and Harold Higgins.



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Standing: Betty Thompson, A.C.P. Clerk; Russell Lyon, Office Manager.

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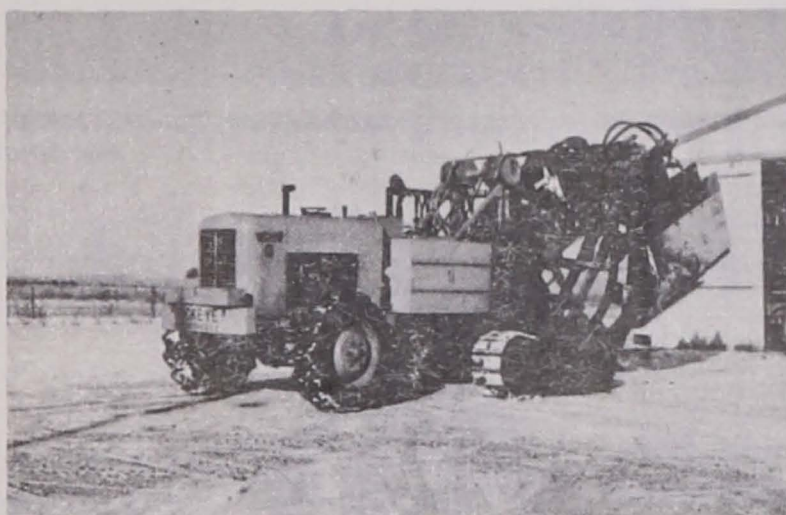
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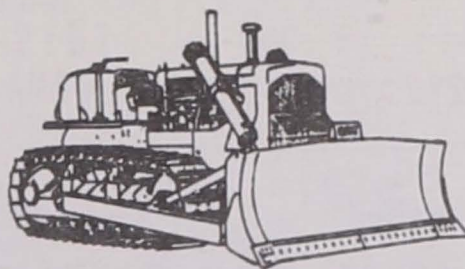
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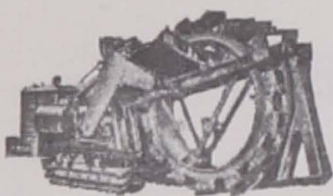
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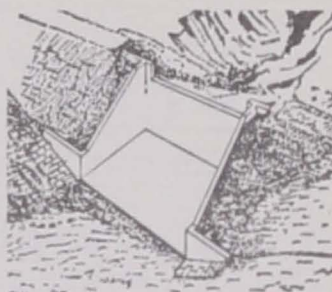
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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS ACTION FOR 1971

JANUARY

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Higgins were dinner hosts for the commissioners and staff at their home in honor of Dean Vint who was winner of the Goodyear Tire Company award for northern Iowa. Harold and Dean presented slides of their trip to Litchfield Park, Arizona. Commissioners attended short course at Ames.

FEBRUARY

A special meeting was held with federal, state and county agencies interested in conservation to complete the recreation inventory. Soil Stewardship material was ordered for use in the churches of Tama County.

MARCH

An awards dinner was held at the Double D. Restaurant in Tama for the winners in the Register & Tribune Conservation Achievement Contest. Winners were: Louis Paustian in the new cooperator division and Mrs. Edythe Hill in the teacher division. Commissioners went on a terrace tour in Hardin County.

APRIL

The District staff planned and helped plant 2 outdoor classrooms at the South Tama and Geneseo Attendance Center. The project was a cooperative project with the Educational Committee, Soil Conservation Service and State Conservation Commission. Soil Stewardship material distributed to interested ministers in the County.

MAY

The Educational Committee for the District held a Teacher's Workshop at the Harold Higgins farm in Geneseo Twp. Twenty-six teachers attended with every school in the county represented. Over forty interested people were involved with the event.

COMMISSIONERS ACTION (cont.)

JUNE

Workbooks were checked by Educational Committee and prizes awarded to Judy Benda of Toledo and Nancy Linhart of Clutier. Marilou Bruene presented her speech to the Commissioners and represented Tama County at the regional contest. Plant materials were ordered. District winners in the Register and Tribune Achievement Contest were announced. Dick Bruene from Gladbrook area was selected in the owner-operator division and LaVern Eckhart from the Union Grove Lake area was the new cooperator winner. Mrs. Joyce Meyers from the South Tama School was awarded outstanding conservation teacher.

JULY

The Commissioners attended the Regional meeting at the Amanas. Pictures of conservation practices throughout the county were on display at the Gladbrook Corn Carnival. Pictures were taken by Commissioner Ken Bruene of Gladbrook. Litter bags were distributed to each person visiting the booth.

AUGUST

The local District contributed toward the expense of the soil conservation display at the Progress Show at Van Horne.

SEPTEMBER

The Commissioners attended the Annual Conference in Des Moines where Harold Higgins was re-elected President of the Iowa Association of District Commissioners. The annual planning picnic and meeting was held at the Tama park with Commissioners, Past Commissioners, Education Committee and Work Unit Staff and families in attendance.

OCTOBER

Seven teachers attended the Teachers Conservation Workshop at Luther with the tuition and mileage paid by the Commissioners. Teachers were: Mrs. Shirley Franklin, Sister Helen Sherrard, Mrs. Phyllis Eldred, Marg Groff, Mrs. Wilma Bode, Mrs. Eleanor Holst and Barbara Allen.

NOVEMBER

Letters were sent to every school in the County offering them free conservation workbooks for use in the 5th and 6th grade levels.



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Roy G. Hatcher, District Forester

Every year thousands of trees and shrubs are planted in Iowa for wildlife cover, erosion control and reforestation. In 1971 farm land owners and conservation groups planted 20,550 trees and shrubs in Tama County from the State Conservation Commission Nursery in Ames. A large variety of trees and shrubs were planted such as several kinds of pines, black walnut, ash, honeysuckle, ninebark and other wildlife shrubs.

The benefits derived from these plantings are not always completely appreciated or understood by everyone. In 1971 we heard a lot about Environment and Ecology. Environment can be defined one way as the total of all natural conditions that surround and affect all living things, both plant and animal. Ecology on the other hand can be called the total relationship of plants and animals (including humans) to their environment. Protection of the environment primarily relates to prevention of air, land and water pollution and control of shorelands and solid waste disposal. Trees are extremely helpful in the protection of the environment. Trees are known to improve the soil structure which allows better water absorption and retards and controls soil and water erosion. Trees slow air currents and causes solid pollutants and dust particles to settle out of the air thus helping to purify the air. Trees also absorb carbon-dioxide and produces oxygen back into the air, also helping to purify the air. Trees help to reduce noise levels in our communities. These are but a few

"TREES AND OUR ENVIRONMENT" (cont.)

of the benefits that trees give us that many of us never realize. Planting a tree may not seem like an important step towards helping our environment or ecological balance, but without the trees we can never hope to overcome our pollution problem.

Free technical assistance is available to anyone wanting to plant trees through the District Forester of the Iowa Conservation Commission. Roy G. Hatcher is the forester for Tama county. He can be contacted by writing to him at Box 681, Marshalltown or by contacting the local Soil Conservation District office in Toledo. Assistance is also available in the management and the marketing of existing stands of timber.



Roy Hatcher, District Forester, identifying various kinds of trees at Teachers workshop.

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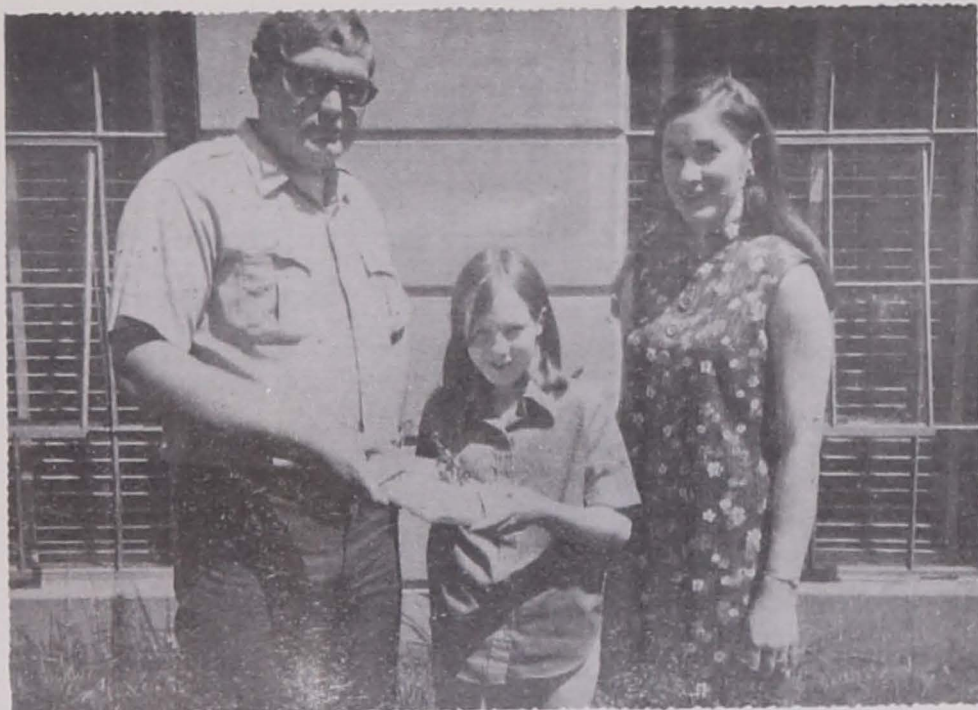
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Art Roseland, wildlife biologist, presents an award to Judy Benda, Toledo, for her outstanding workbook. Included in the picture is her teacher Mrs. Joyce Meyers, a Register & Tribune award winner for outstanding teacher for 1971.

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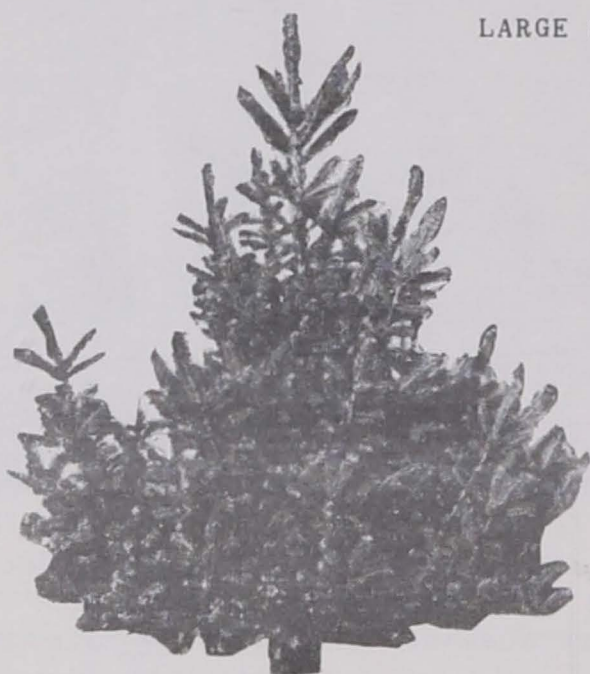
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Mrs. Joanne Yuska, Office Assistant, Toledo, Iowa



Jean Prior, Geologist, showing various rock formations found in Iowa, at Teachers workshop.

REAP (ACP)

Russell Lyon, ASCS Office Manager

We were reflecting on the changes in philosophy of REAP (formerly ACP) in the past three to five years. First the trend is away from short term practices toward more enduring practices. The 1972 program for Tama County has completely dropped one year seeding practices, and liming, except in connection with long term seeding. The funds for contour stripcropping and contours are limited by National regulations. Tiling on cropland has been dropped. The only tile cost sharing approved is that placed in a waterway.

Manure storage and diversion practices along with sediment and chemical runoff control practices have been added to the program. We think these changes are due to the big push to improve the ecology. Everyone talks about anti-pollution, a few do something about it including some Government funds appropriated to help clean up our environment.

They tell us the soil is the largest pollutant as far as water is concerned. Those of us who have been interested in soil conservation

REAP (ACP) cont.

have been long aware of this. We think an increase in REAP funds, instead of a cut, will accomplish more anti-pollution than starting a new government agency.

The new Iowa Soil Conservancy Law can force the installation of conservation measures on a farm where erosion is damaging a neighbor. This may help promote increased emphasis on the more enduring practices. I read the other day that Illinois is studying a law to limit the per ac. application of Nitrogen to prevent accumulation of nitrates in the soil. More permanent soil conservation measures could make this move unnecessary.

These movements indicate the concern of city folks, and legislators with the ecology. This seems like a good time to take a look at soil conservation on our own farm and our community and do all we can to conserve soil voluntarily or face the alternative of doing it by force. The REAP can help pay the cost of soil conservation. We invite you to come to the ASCS office and apply for cost shares on the conservation work needed on your farm.

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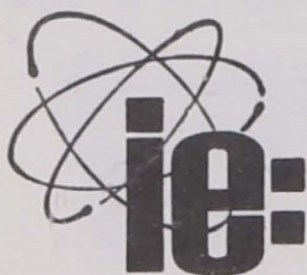
Loren Nestrud, soil scientist, describing soil sample at Teachers workshop.

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Sylvan Runkle, Biologist, identifying edible and poisonous plants at Teachers workshop

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