

Conserve Our Land...



DICKINSON COUNTY Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Report 1992-1993

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FOREWARD

Dickinson County SWCD Commissioners present this 1993 Annual Report, with appreciation to the landowners who have worked closely with the District staff to accomplish another successful year of conservation.

We, the Commissioners of the District, also would like to acknowledge the many organizations for their cooperation in the conservation effort in Dickinson County: ASCS, County Extension Service, Soil Conservation Service, DNR, County Board of Supervisors, County Newspapers, Contractors, State of Iowa, Iowa State University Extension Service and County Engineer. Also radio stations KUOO, KICD and KILR who make our regular and special news items available to the public, and the local soil districts bordering the county.

Activities of the District are accomplished through funding appropriated by the Iowa State Legislature, and allocated through the State Conservation Committee to Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

We hope that this report will remind you as landowners or users of the responsibility we all have to treat our land with care; and let you become familiar with the service offered by our Soil and Water Conservation Office.

District Activities

JULY 1992

Commissioner's Summer Picnic at Cutty's Resort.

District Sign purchased for the Lake Park and Milford Centennial Parades.

AUGUST 1992

Clean Lakes Lawn Care Seminar is held at the Spirit Lake Public Library.

SEPTEMBER 1992

Outdoor Classroom held at Hogsback area.

Fall Regional Meeting in Pocahontas attended by Orville Berg, Tim Hemphill, Mark Ingwersen and Leo Preston.

Recording of the Dickinson County Resource Conservation Plan at the Courthouse.

Commissioners participate at the Clay County Fair.

1993 1M Budget was presented for approval and signing.

Wetlands Celebration at Village East Sept. 29-30.

OCTOBER 1992

Introduction of Damarys Maya, Soil Conservationist, from Puerto Rico.

NOVEMBER 1992

IDALS Annual Conference held in Des Moines attended by Mark Ingwersen, Orville Berg, Tim Hemphill and Leo Preston.

Water Quality Incentive Project meeting held at Community Center.

DECEMBER 1992

Commissioner's Christmas Party at Pete's of Okoboji.

JANUARY 1993

Election of officers: Mark Ingwersen, Chairman; Chris Hoffman, Vice-Chairman; Tim Hemphill, Secretary.

Short Course in Ames attended by Orville Berg and Mark Ingwersen.

No-Till limits set for State Cost-Share.

FEBRUARY 1993

NACD National Convention in Orlando, Florida attended by Orville Berg.

Five County Contractors' meeting held in Spencer.

MARCH 1993

Spring Regional Meeting at Ruthven attended by Orville Berg, Mark Ingwersen, and Leo Preston.

IASWCDC Scholarship Applications Submitted.

APRIL 1993

Soil & Stewardship Week (April 26-May 3) Proclamation set by Mayor Eric Nielsen.

Soil & Stewardship Week materials donated to churches, libraries and schools.

District Trees Distributed to Co-operators.

Trees given to 6th Grade students in Dickinson County.

MAY 1993

The District observes Earth Day May 8th at the Lutheran Lakeside Camp.

JUNE 1993

Summer Tour on "Quality for IGL", Orville Berg assisting.

New Environmental Specialist, John Wills, starts.

Summer picnic at Cutty's.

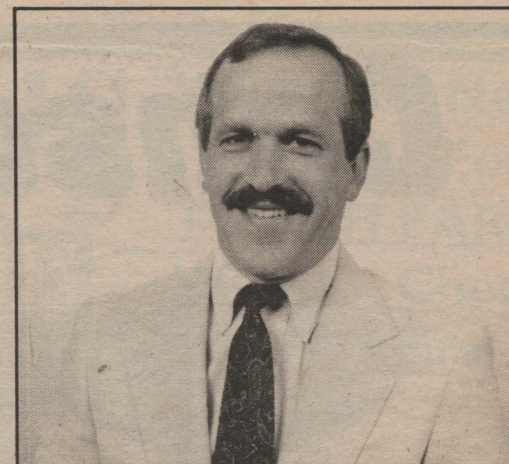
Iowa Crop Producers Environmental Law Guides made available at the SCS office.

"Hands of Healing" Is Theme Of Soil And Water Stewardship Week

Emphasizing that the greatest influence on the environment comes from individuals doing ordinary, thoughtful tasks in their neighborhoods, the Dickinson County SWCD encouraged individuals and local school, camp, church and organization leaders to join the nationwide observance of Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 25-May 2, 1993. Emphasizing everyone's role in protecting soil and water resources for future generations, the Commissioners of the Dickinson County SWCD provided material to churches in the county for this observance.

Church bulletin covers, program inserts and children's educational supplements were provided free to the churches. The Commissioners also furnished educational materials and posters to the area schools and libraries, to create a larger awareness of our responsibilities for stewardship of the natural resources that sustain us all.

The conservation district, which works throughout the year on soil and water conservation measures, is providing literature and educational material. The local district is one of nearly 3,000 conservation districts nationwide that works with the National Association of Conservation Districts to encourage the wise use of natural resources through the annual week-long observance.



IOWA FARMERS MAKE CONSERVATION

PROGRESS by Jeffrey Vonk, State Conservationist, USDA Soil Conservation Service--The amount of conservation applied on the landscape across Iowa reached an all-time peak in 1992 and will continue to rise until all Iowa's highly erodible land is treated for erosion control. The conservation provisions of the 1985 and 1990 farm bills required farmers to reduce erosion on the most fragile land to remain eligible for USDA benefits. So far, Iowa farmers have met the challenge - nearly half the land is completely treated, and on the remaining 6 million acres, good progress has been made by partial protection of cropland.

Crop residue management is by far the most popular practice and acres farmed with higher residues is increasing at record rates. No-till acres are more than 10 times what they were five years ago. Better equipment and improved pest control are credited with much of the increase, but economics is becoming a driving force in the move to higher residues as well.

Other conservation practices are being widely used too. Comparing average practice application per year from 1989 to 1991 to the conservation planned for application in 1994 shows the tremendous progress made in curbing erosion in Iowa. The following table illustrates the trend.

Practice	1980-1984	1994
	Avg/Yr.	Estimate
Terraces	34,000	86,450
Grassed Waterways	2,250	80,000
Field borders	87	12,800
Contouring	135,000	1,009,000

Everyone benefits from farmers implementing conservation practices - less erosion means less sediment and nutrient runoff in the road ditches, rivers, streams and lakes and more productive topsoil in the crop fields.

In addition to curbing soil erosion, farmers across the state are increasing the use of conservation practices to improve water quality.

The Soil Conservation Service, and Iowa's soil and water conservation districts have joined with numerous partners to promote more than 125 projects across the state to encourage landowners who have a direct impact on water quality to apply practices that reduce sediment and nutrient runoff.

Iowa farmers should be congratulated for the strides they've made in soil conservation and improved water quality.

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Clean Water Alliance For The IGL
by Karmin Blunt, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation



KARMIN BLUNT, IOWA NATURAL HERITAGE FOUNDATION, receiving Distinguished Service Award by Dickinson County SWCD Commissioners.

This summer the heavy rains put the wetlands, which Clean Water Alliance members have restored and protected, to the test.

Draining water that first had a chance to be slowed down and filtered through a wetland was remarkably clean and clear as it flowed into the lakes.

On the other hand, there are many points around the lakes that have no protective wetlands for the water to first drain through. At those points, sediment-laden water could be found entering the lakes and causing large chocolate-brown plumes of siltation to degrade the quality of the lake water.

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and other Clean Water Alliance members are working hard to create a protective "emerald Necklace" of wetlands around each lake to first filter the water and slowly release it.

Recently, a conservation easement was placed on 73 acres that encompass a large natural wetland and two smaller basins. This area is just one-fourth mile east of Lower Gar Lake and will help to enhance and protect the water quality in that lake.

The Foundation and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District will hold the easement and ensure that the wetlands are permanently protected; owner Larry Braby continues to own and manage the land.

This was truly a cooperative effort as funds to purchase the easement came from INHF, the soil district, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dickinson County Conservation Board, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, University of Okoboji Foundation, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

That is just one example of the land protection projects Alliance members have completed and more like it are currently underway.

The Alliance also works to educate lake residents and visitors about the importance of protecting the lake water.

A slide program called "Protecting the Legend" was unveiled this summer at the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum. This is the cornerstone of the Alliance's educational efforts and addresses soil and water conservation, fertilizer and pesticide reduction, and the importance of wetlands.

Alliance members and supporting organizations include: Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service; Berkley, Inc.; Dickinson County Conservation Board; Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District; Dickinson County Board of Supervisors; Ducks Unlimited; East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation; E. T. Meredith Foundation; Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; Iowa Department of Natural Resources; Iowa Electric Light & Power Company; Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum; Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation; Jackson County Soil & Water Conservation District; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Okoboji Protective Association; Okoboji Yacht Club; Pheasants Forever; Spirit Lake Protective Association; University of Okoboji Foundation; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; U.S. Soil Conservation Service.

For additional information on the Clean Water Alliance and its activities, contact the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation at 515-288-1846.



JOHN WILLS, ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIALIST Demonstration on Clean Water in IGL at Outdoor Classroom.

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM IS A HUGE SUCCESS-- The annual sixth grade outdoor classroom September 23rd had 200-plus participants. Each year, during the fall, the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Soil Conservation Service sponsor the outdoor classroom. The classroom is held at the Kettleson-Hogsback area, west of Spirit Lake. This area provides facilities for indoor classrooms and a variety of outdoor situations. What makes the annual event such a success is the location and all the people that are involved.

The instructors included volunteers, paid speakers, District staff and Department of Natural Resources employees. This year the program included presentations on Orphan

and Injured Wildlife, Soil Conservation, and Indian Lore. Hands on adventures included a Nature Trail and Upland Wildlife, Wildlife Birds and Hunting Dogs, Fish and fisheries, Wild Geese, and a segment was featured on the Iowa Great Lakes (water quality).

The day was filled with education, entertainment, fun and a beautiful setting. The children and everyone involved enjoyed the day very much.

Conservation Tillage & Erosion Control

By Damarys Mortenson, Soil Conservationist SCS

Conservation Tillage is defined as a tillage system that leaves enough crop residue to protect in an efficient manner the soil from erosion throughout the year. The soil surface is covered at least with 30% of residue. If your field is reasonably flat it must be protected by 10%-20% residue. If your field is highly erodible land (HEL) you need a full implementation of Conservation Tillage. It may be required to leave at least 50%-60% crop residue in the field surface.

There are three main types of conservation tillage that you can choose to save soil and water in your fields.

No-Till

The soil in this system is undisturbed from harvest to seeding and from seeding to harvest (except for nutrient injection). No-till planters and drills must be able to cut residue and penetrate undisturbed soil. Weed control must be applied pre plant (pre-emerge or post-emerge). Cultivation may be used for emergency weed control.

Ridge-Till

The soil in this system is left undisturbed from harvest to planting, except for fertilizer injection. Crops are planted and grown on ridges formed in the previous growing season. The ridge may be built and reformed annually at cultivation, or with furrow irrigation, at hilling or ditching. If you are starting a ridge till system it is recommended to form the ridge after harvest or when wet soil prevents forming ridges at cultivation. Ridge height at harvest should be 6"-8". For highly erodible land (HEL), ridges must be at least 3" higher than the furrows after planting.

Mulch-Till

It includes any Conservation Tillage System other than no-till and ridge-till. The soil is disturbed prior to planting (spring or fall tillage). Implements used for mulch-till includes chisel plows, field cultivators, disks, sweeps or blades. The number of operations must be limited to assure the adequate residue cover remains for erosion control.

Conservation Tillage is the best manner to help protect our resources of soil and water. The combination of your conservation tillage with other conservation practices (terraces, grass waterway, field borders etc.) make it most effective.

Contact your local Soil Conservation Services (SCS) for assistance in planning and establishing a conservation tillage system on your farm. Remember **RESIDUE** is the single most important factor to help protect our soil. Use the conservation tillage system that works for you.

*References: Conservation Tillage Job Sheet; Conservation Tillage System and Management ISU handbook

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SCS STAFF: Front row left to right--Leo Preston, District Conservationist; David Kohlhaase, Conservation Technician; John Wills, Environmental Specialist; Back row--Deirdre Braband, WAE; Jo Groves, District Secretary; Damarys Mortenson, Soil Conservationist.



SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS: Front row, left to right--Orville J. Berg, Tim Hemphill, Jared Herbert. Back row; Chris Hoffman, Mark Ingwersen, Maurice Dougal.

**DICKINSON COUNTY SWCD FINANCIAL REPORT
FISCAL YEAR 1993**

Expenditures of funds provided by the State of Iowa for District Commissioner's Mileage, Meals and Hotel Expenses, Office Supplies & Equipment.

DISTRICT 1M FUNDS BUDGET (92-93)

Allocation from State	\$2,500.00
Supplemental Allocation	816.00
Commissioner Expenses	1,861.49
Office Supplies & Expenses	1,200.83
Printing	260.50
Supplemental Allocation	6.82
Released to DSC	-0-

3M BUDGET - IOWA FINANCIAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM

The 3M Budget provides cost-share assistance to landowners for installing permanent soil and water conservation practices.

1992-1993 Allocation	\$17,718.00
Amount Obligated or Spent	17,039.13
Unobligated Amount	678.87

REAP (RESOURCE ENHANCEMENT & PROTECTION PRACTICES)

1992-1993 Allocation	\$5,220.00
Amount Obligated or Spent	3,580.60
Unobligated Amount	1,639.40

REAP (FORESTRY/NATIVE GRASSES)

1992-1993 Allocation	\$1,345.00
Amount Obligated or Spent	539.43
Unobligated Amount	805.57

WATER PROTECTION FUND

1992-1993 Allocation	\$53,400.00
Amount Obligated or Spent	16,272.00
Unobligated Amount	37,128.00

COUNTY FUND CONTRIBUTUION (Tree Plantings)

1993 Allocation	\$500.00
Unobligated Amount	104.59
Balance Carried for 1994	604.59

DISTRICT GOVERNING BODY

Office Address:
Jct. Highway 9 & 71 RR Box 5783
Spirit Lake, Iowa 51360 • (712) 336-2604

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS:

(Elected for a 6-year term at general elections)

Mark Ingwersen, Chairman	Superior Township
Chris Hoffman, Vice-Chair	Lakeville Township
Tim Hemphill, Secretary	Okoboji Township
Orville J. Berg	Center Grove Township
Jared Herbert	Silver Lake Township
Maurice Dougal (Assistant Commissioner)	Westport Township
Karmin Blunt (Assistant Commissioner)	Center Grove Township

SPIRIT LAKE FIELD OFFICE STAFF:

Leo J. Preston, SCS District Conservationist	Field Office, Spirit Lake
David L. Kohlhaase, SCS Technician	Field Office, Spirit Lake
John Wills, Environmental Specialist	Field Office, Spirit Lake
Damarys Maya, SCS Soil Conservationist	Field Office, Spirit Lake
Jo Groves, District Secretary	Field Office, Spirit Lake
Deirdre Braband, WAE	Field Office, Spirit Lake
Clarence Call, EARTH TEAM Volunteer	Field Office, Spirit Lake



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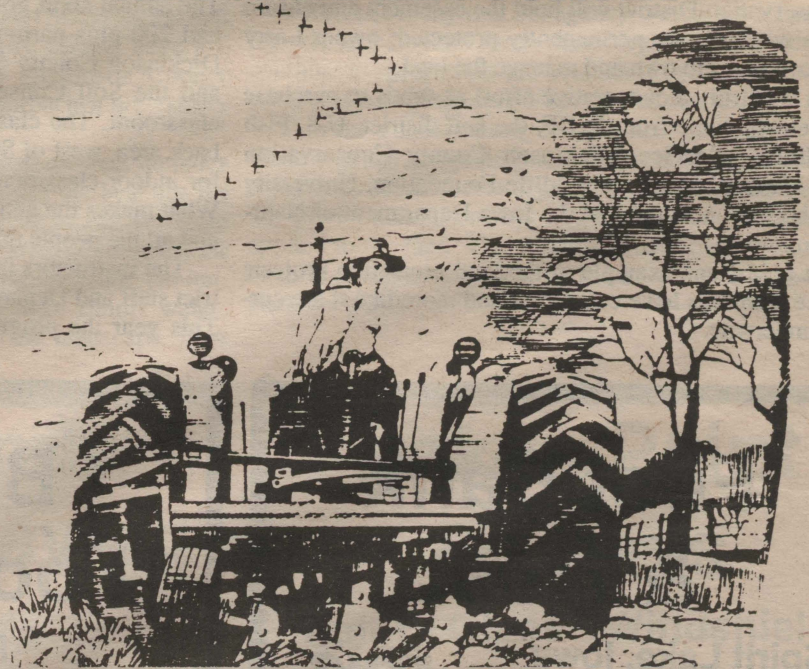
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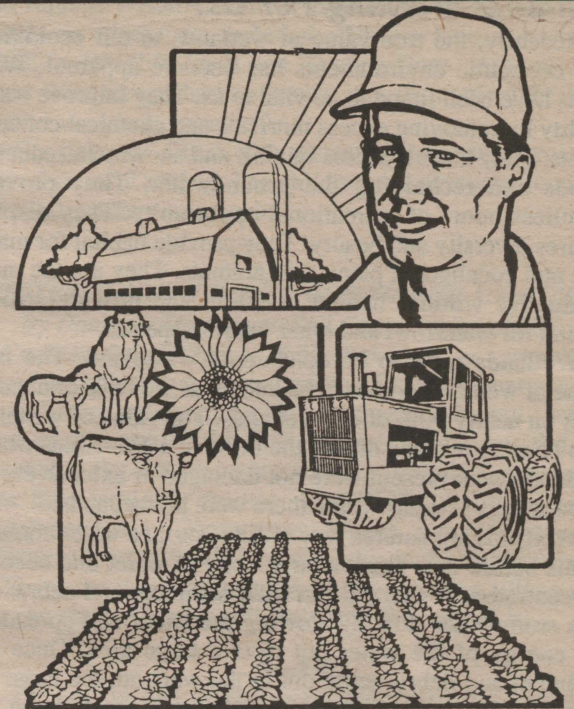
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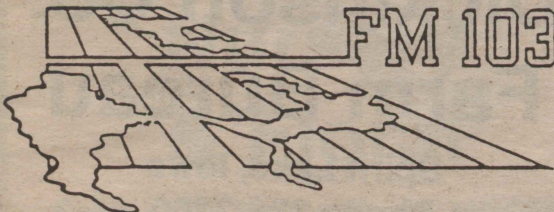
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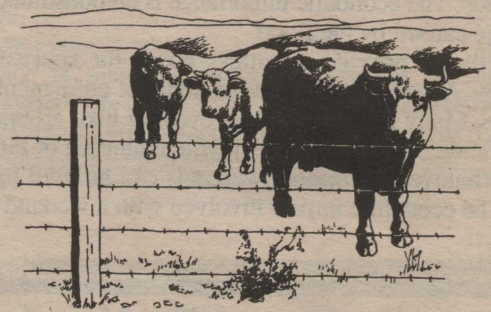
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Wetlands Working For Us?

Recently, the true value of wetlands to our ecological and economic environments has become apparent. Wetlands have been found to be vital to us. They improve water quality by removing excess nutrients and chemical contaminants. They absorb excess rainfall and snowmelt, reducing floods and recharging the groundwater. They provide countless hours of recreational opportunity. They display nature's diversity and beauty. They provide habitat for many rare and endangered plants and animals. They are the most productive wildlife habitat on Earth and provide critical habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species.

Wetlands used to be considered wasteland. The true value of wetlands comes to be known as we have drained or built on nearly 90% of our wetlands. The value of wetlands also became realized during the flood of 1993. Areas where wetlands were present were not damaged as extensively by flood waters as areas where there were no wetlands.

Wetlands are nature's way to filter surface water contaminants before they reach a large body of water and become concentrated. A wetland can filter sediment and debris out of a stormwater flow by slowing the water and spreading the energy of the water out over a large area. Once the sediment and debris settle out in the wetland, the large diversity of plants and microbes can use or break down the pollutants such as nitrogen, phosphorous, and various toxins.



Many grasses and waterways were damaged this spring and summer due to the excessive rainfalls.

During the past summer, we have been able to see firsthand the wetlands ability to slow flood waters. While the wetland may not be able to stop all floods, it will slow the waters causing the flood to be less severe. The importance in wetlands as a buffer can be seen, especially, along the Mississippi River where a plan has been devised to buy land that is habitually flooded and restore these lands to wetlands. The economic importance is demonstrated by less damage caused by the flood.

Wetlands provide countless hours for sportsmen and women. A wetland can provide hours of enjoyment for everyone. Many people enjoy an evening hike around a wetland. Some enjoy hours of enjoyment hunting or birdwatching. Whatever the reason, wetlands can be used by everyone. The economic impact involved with a wetland must be

considered when talking about recreation. People traveling to the wetland need to buy gasoline, food, lodging, and sporting goods.

Wetlands are a good place to go to see nature. Wetlands provide open space in urban and non-urban environments. A trip to the nearest wetland can provide many aesthetic benefits important to our peace of mind. A wetland is very soothing and peaceful, especially in the early morning or the evening as the sun sets or rises.

What Can You Do?

If you would like to help preserve the few wetlands we have left, or restore a drained wetland, there are many things you can do.

You can:

1. Buy federal and state duck stamps and state habitat stamps. The money from these stamps goes directly for the purchase of critical wildlife habitat.
2. Support local and state conservation organizations that are involved in the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture.
3. Become a major donor and join with others to buy a wetland in your name.
4. Educate others about wetlands, and wetland restoration.
5. Talk to or write to your Iowa Congressman and legislators and support legislation that benefits wetlands.
6. Develop wetland fund raising projects in your community.
7. Invite your employer to match money raised for wetland acquisition by you and fellow employees.
8. Contact John Wills the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project Coordinator at 336-2604 to discuss your options on a wetland or upland area. We have many options available to landowners and operators.

Protection of the Iowa Great Lakes can only be done through a concerted effort from all. Restoration of wetlands in the Iowa Great Lakes is one step in improving the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes. With the many ways that wetlands act to preserve the environment, a new outlook on the value of wetlands has evolved. If you are interested in protecting the Iowa Great Lakes in any way, call John Wills for information.

On The Cutting Edge

By Leo J. Preston, District Conservationist

Many big challenges are facing agriculture right now, both economically and environmentally. As we become more aware of how human actions affect the world we live in, the challenge becomes using an environmentally sound operation that is profitable to the operator.

Nowhere in the world is that challenge being addressed to a greater extent than right here in the United States and specifically here in the Midwest. Many cutting edge approaches are being implemented by Dickinson County Farmers. Three of these beneficial approaches are clearly seen right here, right now.

The first is Total Resource Management. This includes looking at the whole farm and identifying the best use for each area, rather than trying to force peak production from fence row to fence row. Windbreaks are being installed for energy efficiency, erosion control and wildlife habitat. Wetlands are being restored to help filter runoff water, improve water quality, and diversify the landscape. Low

producing, steep erodible areas are being seeded to high producing, low maintenance native prairie grasses. Highly productive soils are being managed to optimize returns and conserve soil. These are just a few examples, but the concept is clear, to use each area of the farm for its optimum value considering both economics and the environment.

The second is called Integrated Crop Management (ICM). This is closely evaluating what inputs need to be applied to the land for best economic returns, not just highest yields. Consideration is given to soil potential, production goals, and environmental impact. The days of indiscriminate application and the attitude of "if a little is good, a lot is better" are coming to an end. Rather, fields are scouted, soil samples are taken and then only limited application of nutrients and pesticides are used. ICM when managed properly, increases profitability and reduces non-point agricultural pollution.

The third is the utilization of sound soil conservation practices. Soil erosion not only robs land of its productivity, but adds to off site sedimentation and pollution problems. No-till, conservation tillage, crop rotations, contouring and grass waterways are just a few of the key practices being used to keep erosion in check. With the heavy rains of 1993 there was a lot of soil erosion. But without the conservation practices that are currently being used, much more erosion would have occurred.

Many Dickinson County farmers are on the cutting edge in cooperation with one another, ag organizations and agencies. Their efforts are an investment into the future for their families, our families and this great country we live in.

Guidelines Issued For Conservation Compliance On Wet & Flooded Tracts

The unprecedented rains and flooding that wreaked havoc on Iowa farmland have caused widespread delays in the schedules Iowa farmers have made to protect their soil. The delays are justified, officials of the U.S. Department of Agriculture said, as they announced guidelines for Iowa producers to follow to "catch up" on their conservation work.

"Heavy rains across Iowa this year have made it virtually impossible for many landowners to stay on schedule with their conservation work," said Jeff Vonk, State Conservationist with the USDA Soil Conservation Service. "There has been widespread damage to the conservation practices, stunted crop growth and reduced the amount of crop residues available. Besides that, cold weather destroyed many forages, throwing crop rotation patterns off."

Vonk said today that the agency would use a "variance" for wet and flooded farms that would allow producers to continue to receive USDA benefits if they agree to revised schedules for completing conservation work.

Current conservation compliance guidelines require landowners to complete conservation practices according to a planned schedule, making steady progress until December 31, 1994 when all needed conservation practices are to be applied to the land. The variance would extend the amount of time producers affected by Iowa's weather have to complete the work.

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DNR Wetlands, Wildlife Projects Progress Despite Weather

By Doug Harr, DNR Wildlife Biologist

Heavy rains, flooding streams and record-high lake levels took their toll on many activities of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources this year, but progress on the conservation scene was still possible. Once again, DNR has worked to carefully coordinate a number of its projects with the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

One of the most exciting projects in 1993 has been the receipt of a North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) grant for watershed and wetland enhancement in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed. The region scored a first-in-the-nation project with its proposal for land acquisition, private land conservation easements and related conservation work in a watershed crossing state boundaries. Minnesota DNR and Iowa DNR made the joint application, and received a NAWCA grant in the amount of \$450,000. This will be matched with another \$480,000 raised by the two state agencies, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, and several "partners," in the form of local conservation organizations and lake protection groups.

While the Dickinson SWCD will administer a portion of the \$930,000 total to acquire easements on wetlands and other critical uplands or drainage areas into the county's beautiful lakes, Iowa DNR will use most of its allotment to purchase critical lands within the watershed. These lands will add to existing lands open to the public for hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreation. But their primary function will be to protect the area's lakes from pollution by controlling runoff. Wetlands will be restored, enhanced or created wherever possible on newly acquired lands, and most upland areas will be permanently seeded to grassy cover. Minnesota DNR proposes to use its NAWCA share for acquisitions and easements in the Loon Lake area of the larger watershed.

Outside the watershed, Iowa DNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service continue to acquire new additions to existing complexes of public wildlife lands. The Spring Run Wetlands Complex, east of Arnolds Park, has been expanded with five recent acquisitions, bringing the area to approximately 2,400 acres in size. Twelve wetlands have been restored on these tracts, with at least 11 more planned in 1994, including a large, 42 acre marsh along County Highway A-31.

Farther west in the county, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acquired a 438-acre addition to 160 acres already owned by the agency two miles southeast of Lake Park. Iowa DNR will manage the new Dugout Creek Waterfowl Production Area, and, with the assistance of Ducks Unlimited, is constructing a steel sheet piling water control structure to reflood 94 acres of marsh to a depth of four feet. This is one of the largest natural marsh restoration projects ever undertaken in northwest Iowa. With another eight small wetland restorations planned above the main basin, this project promises to be a boon to waterfowl production, while improving water quality in a tributary to the Little Sioux River.

The Department of Natural Resources continues to consult closely with the Dickinson SWCD staff to assure all DNR projects meet strict soil and water conservation criteria. The agency also continues to lend its expertise on wetlands and wildlife to the SWCD upon any request. It's a cooperative venture that can only lead to better conservation of all the county's natural and agricultural resources, as well as to our local quality of life.

THE IOWA GREAT LAKES CLEAN WATER PROJECT by John Wills, IGL Clean Water Project--The past year for the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project has been one of the best ever. Many great things have been accomplished in the last year. The Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project has educated and encouraged people to treat the Iowa Great Lakes with care. In the past year, several large accomplishments have been made with respect to the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes. The Water Quality Incentive Project has been active in the Iowa Great Lakes since this spring. Several wetland easements have been granted in the past year. Many rural and urban citizens have been taught about how to best use fertilizers and pesticides on fields and yards. Many school children have been educated about how to improve the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes.

Some of the various projects which we have helped with in the past year include cost share for structural practices such as sediment basins and diversions. We have cost shared permanent vegetative cover and given additional incentive for CRP sign-ups. We can give additional incentives for WRP sign-ups as well. The District has also helped with a slide presentation at the Maritime museum, called Protecting the Legend, for public education.

The Water Quality Incentive Project is a progressive project which offers incentives to farmers located inside the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed to switch their farming practice to a more conservation minded practice. The Water Quality Incentive Project involves the cropland, pasture, and feedlots which a farmer operates. We can only give incentives to approximately 10 farmers. Many of the participants will continue the new practices after the project is over. Once other farmers see the advantages associated with the new practices, it is hoped they will switch as well.

The wetland easements that have been done are beneficial to the Iowa Great Lakes because the wetland will filter out the pollutants before they enter the Iowa Great Lakes. Each easement that has been done adds a great deal of protection for the lakes region as well as add to the beauty of the Iowa Great Lakes.

Technical Assistance Available For Waterways

By David Kohlhaase, Conservation Technician

The Soil Conservation Service is available to assist you in the establishment of new grassed waterways that are needed on your farm.

Small grassed waterways with drainage areas 30 acres or less can be designed, constructed, seeded and maintained by you. Informational job sheets to help you do this are available at the SCS office. Also ask for a short video segment, "Controlling Small Gullies with Grass." It's part of a video series called "Conservation On Your Own" and shows you how to seed waterways.

Design charts for waterways in larger drainage areas are available from the SCS to allow design and layout of larger waterways.

Either small or large waterways the SCS can help you establish or reconstruct your grassed waterway.

Proper maintenance will protect your investment in a grassed waterway. The following tips will help ensure longevity of the waterway:

**** Lift implements out of the ground before crossing the waterway.**

**** Bring row crop patterns into the waterway nearly level, or use it as the turn area. Do not plant end rows along the side of the waterway -- they contribute to failure.**

**** Fertilize periodically.**

**** Inspect the area frequently for places needing re-seeding and eroding areas. Repair any problems.**

**** Maintain the width of the grassed area when tilling and planting surrounding fields.**

**** Do not let herbicide spray continue into the waterway.**

**** Do not use the waterway as a road. Vehicle tire tracks can lead to the formation of a gully.**

**** Do not mow the grass until a good sod is established. Once it is, the waterway should be mowed. To benefit wildlife nesting, delay mowing until July 15.**

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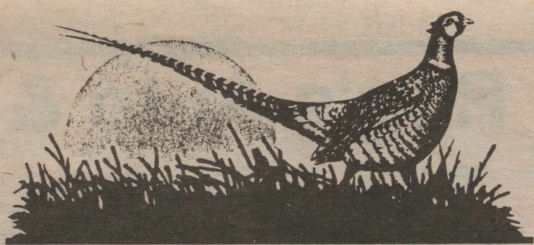


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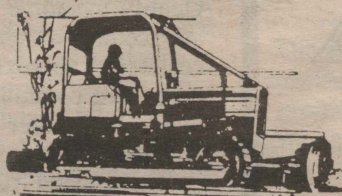
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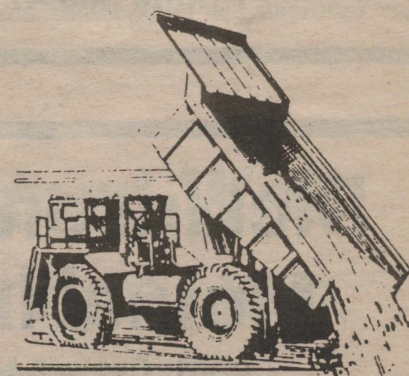
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