

More flood repair funds to Iowa

The Soil Conservation Service in Iowa has received another 2.5 million dollars for flood repair work. The new money, allocated to SCS in Des Moines last week, brings total funding for the agency's Emergency Watershed Protection program in Iowa to nearly 16 million dollars.

"We're happy to get the additional funding for design and contracting of more projects. We still have more requests than we have funds to pay for, but we've gone a long way towards repairing flood damages and protecting public facilities against fur-

ther damage," says SCS State Conservationist Jeff Vonk of Des Moines.

Vonk says about \$7 million has been obligated for more than 200 repair projects across the state. The projects are primarily levee repairs, debris removal, and stabilizing streambanks to protect public facilities.

Local governments from 80 Iowa counties had requested help from SCS on about 950 sites, with an estimated total cost of \$32 million.

"We know we won't get to all of them, but we feel pretty good

about the work we've been able to do in six months," says Lyle Asell, Assistant State Conservationist for SCS.

The SCS expects to have most of the levee work completed by the end of the year, and is contracting to work into the winter on parts of the repair projects.

"We hope we can haul in riprap on frozen ground and do the kinds of work that are best done this winter to be ready for earthwork next spring as soon as we can work," Asell says.

"We're trying to plan to get the work done before high water can do more damage to those public facilities," Asell says. "Our staff have been working a lot of overtime, and we've detailed about 50 people to Iowa on a part-time basis to help," he says.

The repair work that's been done has been welcome across the state. "I was worried about

whether they'd get the dike fixed before winter, but they did it fast, and did a good job," said Paul Riedesel, who farms near Wheatland in Clinton County.

"We couldn't get in the field all summer - didn't get anything planted. I know we'd have been flooded next spring again if it wasn't fixed," Riedesel said. Riedesel was referring to a project to repair 5 broken and damaged areas along a 2-mile stretch of levee that protects roads and farmland near Wheatland.

"We've also been working with farmers to repair damaged conservation practices," Vonk says. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) has allocated about \$7 million in cost-share funds for the repair of those damaged conservation practices.