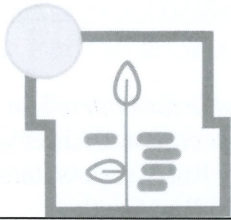


JANUARY 2013



BLACK HAWK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

In partnership with Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship,
Division of Soil Conservation, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
2950 Southland Drive, Ste. 2

Waterloo, IA 50701

Phone: 319-296-3262 Fax: 319-296-1557

Check out our website: www.blackhawkswcd.org

*The Black Hawk Soil and Water
Conservation District was founded in 1945
to promote protection,
maintenance, improvement and wise use of
our soil and water within Black Hawk
County.*



***Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation
District Commissioners***

Left to right:

Sherman Lundy, Treasurer
Lee Bader, Vice-Chairperson
Paula Even, Regional Representative
Dustin Sage, Commissioner
Jeri Thornsberry, Chairwoman

Not pictured:

Vern Fish, Assistant Commissioner; Brett Meyers,
Assistant Commissioner; Lanny Schwartz, Assistant
Commissioner; Ron McLaughlin, Assistant
Commissioner



Office Staff

Left to right:

Leslie Grundy, State Secretary
Ashley Kittle, Watershed Conservationist
Shaffer Ridgeway, District Conservationist
Julie Falcon, Soil Conservationist
Elaine Hammer, Soil Technician

Farewell to Commissioner Fred Weber

**Pictured: left: Fred Weber, Commissioner; right: Sherman Lundy,
Chairman**

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District
congratulates Fred Weber for his 4 years of service as district
commissioner. Fred's last day with the district was on
December 31st, 2012. On behalf of the staff and Commissioners,
we would like to thank Fred for serving on our board and wish
him the best in his future endeavors.



Cost Share Available!

Looking for Partners to Install Conservation Practices

Do you live in the Dry Run Creek Watershed? If so, *funding is available for both urban and rural conservation practices!* This spring, the Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District will be applying for another round of grant dollars to improve water quality in the Dry Run Creek watershed. We are looking for interested partners concerned about water quality in the Dry Run Creek Watershed.

In 2002, Dry Run Creek was designated an impaired waterway by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, citing biological concerns, abnormal flow, excess sedimentation and high bacteria levels. Since 2004, the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District has been conducting a watershed improvement project with grants received by the Iowa Division of Soil Conservation, Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. These funds are used to supplement landowners for conservation practices.

The most significant issue facing the Dry Run Creek Watershed is the contribution of rapid runoff from urban hard surfaces connected to the storm sewer system. This causes storm surges in the stream which wash out habitat, erode banks, and contribute to flash flooding. To address rapid runoff which impacts the stream we can install urban infiltration based practices.

These infiltration based practices aim to intercept or disconnect the runoff from hard surfaces from ever reaching the nearby creek. The goal is to allow the water to slowly infiltrate down into the ground and recharge the aquifer rather than reach the creek in the form of surface runoff. What is so bad with surface runoff? Runoff from hard surfaces carry sediments, pollutants, heavy metals and trash. Not only is the water entering the creek full of pollutants, it is also warmer in temperature. When rain water hits hot hard surfaces it causes the runoff to warm. Warm water can have negative impacts on water quality by impacting the amount of oxygen that is available in the water.

Rural conservation practices are equally important and equally needed. Rural conservation practices can stabilize streambanks and can prevent sediment and nutrients from entering the creek.

If you are interested in learning more about receiving cost share on a conservation practices please contact Ashley Kittle at (319) 296-3262 or ashley.kittle@ia.nacdnet.net as soon as possible. You may be eligible for up to 75% cost share on the estimate or actual cost whichever is less for water quality improvement practices. Technical and financial assistance will be provided. We will work with you to determine the best option for your location.

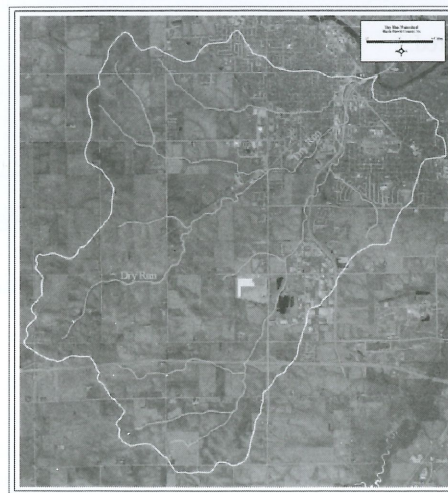
Possible Cost Shareable Conservation Practices:

Rural

- ♦ Grassed Waterways
- ♦ Filterstrips
- ♦ Riparian Buffers
- ♦ Streambank Stabilization

Urban

- ♦ Raingardens
- ♦ Permeable Pavers/Pavement
- ♦ Bioretention Cells/Swales
- ♦ Soil Quality Restoration
- ♦ Streambank Stabilization



Dry Run Creek Watershed

Spring 2013 Homeowner Workshop

-The Path to a Greener Home and Yard-

Attention homeowners! The Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District is partnering with the City of Cedar Falls, Waste Trac and Green Iowa Americorps to present a FREE event geared toward helping you save money while being more energy and resource efficient in and around your home.

From your furnace to your yard, there are several ways energy and resources can be used more economically. Topics covered will include and go beyond obtaining a home energy audit, the most economical ways to insulate your home, proper chemical disposal, the value of food waste and composting, soil quality restoration, rain garden installation and funding sources for water quality improvement projects.

Join us for an informative conversation about all of the ways you can positively affect the efficiency of your home and yard! For more information please contact Ashley Kittle at (319) 296-3262 or ashley.kittle@ia.nacdnet.net

When: Thursday, March 7th from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Where: Cedar Falls Community Center

528 Main Street, Cedar Falls

***Refreshments will be served!**

Volunteers Needed! Upcoming Water Monitoring Events!

Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is partnering with IOWATER and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) volunteer water monitoring program to gather water quality data from the four branches of Dry Run Creek.

We are planning on holding two events – one in the spring and one in the fall. Volunteers are asked to help collect water samples and data as part of this event. Locations throughout the watershed will be marked with flags and a site ID number. Sample bottles will be filled at each site. These bottles will then be shipped to the State Hygienic Laboratory where they will be analyzed for nutrients such as nitrates, phosphates and bacteria.

This event is an opportunity to learn more about our neighborhoods and our environmental surroundings. Information gathered from these events allows us to more accurately treat sources of pollutants and work toward a measurable impact on improving the water quality of all water bodies, including Dry Run Creek.

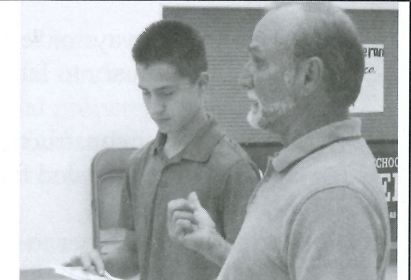
Volunteers are needed to make this a successful event! Contact Ashley Kittle today to get added to the volunteer list. For more information please contact Ashley Kittle at (319) 296-3262 or ashley.kittle@ia.nacdnet.net



Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District's

2012 Poster Contest Winner

Blake Carlson that attends Valley Lutheran School in Cedar Falls was chosen as one of our poster contest winners. He was presented with a check for \$25 from the district and his poster was forwarded on to the regional contest. Mysti Beasley, Mariah Galle, and Breck Rea we're also poster contest winners. Congratulations to you all!

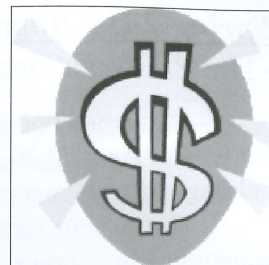


Pictured: Blake Carlson and Orlando Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner

Ethanol and new bio-diesel fuels made from corn and other grains are beneficial to the environment and promote energy security.

DOLLARS AVAILABLE

Iowa farmers need to apply at local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offices by February 10, 2013 to be considered for funding selections for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). One of USDA's most popular conservation programs, EQIP is offered through a continuous signup, but NRCS periodically makes funding selections.



Through EQIP, NRCS offers financial assistance to install conservation practices. Statewide EQIP practices include, but are not limited to, nutrient management, terraces, grassed waterways, manure management facilities, and pasture management. Here in Black Hawk County some of the more familiar practices are seasonal high tunnels, cover crops, waterways and no till.

Larry Beeler, NRCS assistant state conservationist for programs in Iowa, says completing applications early is important. "At a minimum, conservation plans must be developed for the area that is included in an EQIP contract," he said. "That's why it's important for farmers to get their applications completed early." This requirement to have a conservation plan prior to applying is a change from previous years. Actually this is a good change because it gives the landowner time for thoughtful thinking to maximize financial resources and materials as to where to install practices.

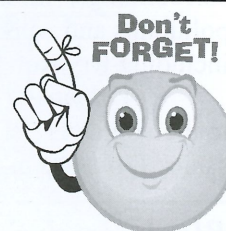
NRCS established two more signup priority dates to batch and review applications. The dates are February 15, 2013 and April 19, 2013.

Through EQIP, eligible farmers address soil, water and related natural resource concerns on private agricultural lands. Five percent of EQIP financial assistance dollars are set aside for beginning farmers, and another five percent is reserved for socially disadvantaged farmers.

In fiscal year 2012, which ended Sept. 30, NRCS provided Iowa farmers nearly \$26 million to treat natural resource concerns through EQIP. For more information or to apply for an EQIP contract, contact your local USDA Service Center at 2950 Southland Drive in Waterloo at 296-3262 or go online to www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/stateeqip.html.

SOME FRIENDLY REMINDERS:

If you're thinking about tiling this spring, remember to request a wetland determination from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) office as soon as possible BEFORE tiling.



If you just built waterways or terraces last fall and seeding didn't get done, it can be done around late February to late March.

If you're approved for construction work this spring or summer, remember to give our office a call to get on the work list and scheduled for layout and design.

Most importantly, remember to call us or stop in for any questions that you may have.

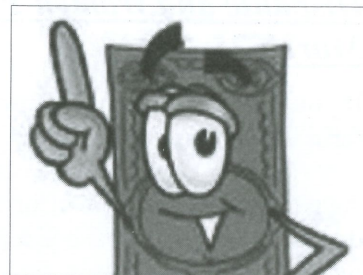
Did you Know

- Twenty two million American workers produce, process, sell and trade the nation's food and fiber. But only 4.6 million of those people live on the farms-- slightly less than 2 percent of the total U.S. Population



MONEY FOR CONSERVATION!!!

If you're thinking about building a terrace, planting a windbreak, establishing a new waterway or reshaping an existing one, or other practices, you might be eligible to receive financial assistance in getting these done.



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is a federal program that is managed by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This program provides cost share assistance for new grassed waterways, filter strips along streams or wetlands, wetland restoration, shallow water areas, riparian buffers, shelterbelts, and field windbreaks. CRP also offers additional incentives and an annual payment based on soil types. Eligibility for CRP is determined by the FSA office.

Another federal program is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This is managed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Assistance is available for livestock manure management, grazing land management, pest management, soil erosion control, and water quality improvement practices throughout the state. Other practices are available in selected priority areas only. There is a summer incentive payment available for terrace projects.

State cost share funds are available for permanent and management practices to control erosion and reduce sediment such as terraces, waterways, and structures. The local soil and water conservation district (SWCD) sets priorities for funding of these practices. These funds are managed by the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Commissioners. There is a summer incentive payment available for state funded projects.

Another source of funding through the SWCD office is the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program. Cost share is available for practices such as farmstead windbreaks, field windbreaks, tree plantings, and timber stand improvement. Technical assistance on these practices is provided by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) forester and the NRCS staff.

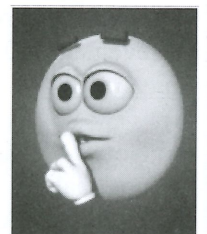
This is just a general description of cost share programs available for various conservation practices. We recommend that you establish a conservation plan with us prior to applying for any conservation projects. Our staff is available to look over your concerns on site with you to assist us in developing a plan that specifically meets your needs. To set up an appointment or to find out more specific information about this, please contact the NRCS/SWCD office at 296-3262.

Elaine Hammer
NRCS Technician

PII (Protected Information)

Landowner information is considered protected information. In order to obtain information from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the landowner must give written permission. This includes contractors, realtors, potential property buyers, banks and other organizations. The Iowa Instruction 120-380 provides the procedures that authorize the Iowa NRCS offices to release specific information as requested by program participants. That process is described below:

The form "Notification and Authorization to Release Information: is to be completed by the program participant and specifies whose information is being released, to what individual or organizations, the specific information being requested, and the date the release will expire. For example, a program participant would sign the form to allow NRCS to share his/her information at the local Soil and Water Conservation District meeting. The "Notification and Authorization to Release Information" form is available at the NRCS Office, 2950 Southland Dr, Waterloo, IA 50701.



Hispanic and Women Farmers Can Submit Discrimination Claims Until March 25, 2013

If you are an Hispanic or woman farmer who feels you were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans between 1981 and 2000, you have until March 25 to submit a claim with USDA.

As part of the continued efforts to close the chapter on allegations that discrimination occurred in past decades, USDA established a process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who assert that they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans. The maximum cash recovery is set at \$250,000. The process offers a streamlined alternative to litigation for each Hispanic or woman farmer and rancher who can prove that USDA denied their loan or loan servicing for discriminatory reasons for certain time periods.

The voluntary claims process will make available at least \$1.33 billion for cash awards and tax relief payments, plus up to \$160 million in farm debt relief to eligible Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers. There are no filing fees or other costs to claimants to participate in the program. Participation is voluntary, and the program does not preclude individuals who opt not to participate from pursuing their cases in court.

Individuals interested in participating in the claims process may register to receive a claim package, or may obtain more information by visiting www.farmerclaims.gov. Individuals can register to receive a claims package by calling the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429. **USDA cannot provide legal advice to potential claimants.** Persons seeking legal advice may contact a lawyer or other legal services provider.

Scholarship For College Bound Seniors Studying Agriculture or Natural Resources

Conservation Districts of Iowa is partnering with local soil and water conservation districts to foster the higher education endeavors of Iowa students interested in agriculture and natural resources by offering scholarships. Iowa High School class of 2013 pursuing programs of study in any field of agriculture or natural resources qualifies for the Conservation Scholarship. The scholarship must be used for the student's first year of college education.

Three scholarships are awarded on the state level; \$3000, \$2000, and \$1,500. Regional winners will receive \$500 if not selected at the state level. The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District will also be picking out a scholarship winner and awarding them with \$100 for their area.

Criteria for award: Leadership including service, character, and self-motivation (60 points), scholastic achievement (40 points). Application form and additional information is available at: www.cdiowa.org/education.html

- ♦ Note: Applicants from the previous years will not qualify. Applications filled out incorrectly will not qualify.
- ♦ Deadline: All materials must be received at the address below by March 1, 2013.
- ♦ Submit materials to: Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District, 2950 Southland Dr. Suite 2, Waterloo, IA 50701

For more information contact Leslie Grundy, State Secretary, at 319-296-3262 or via e-mail, leslie.grundy@ia.nacdnet.net.



Cover Crops Trap Residual N Following Drought

By [Jason Johnson](#), Public Affairs Specialist

This is the perfect year to plant cover crops in Iowa, according to soils and agronomy experts with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Besides the obvious negative impact on crop yields, the drought will leave residual nitrate (N) in the soil at harvest time, potentially allowing nitrate to leach out the bottom of the root zone.



If more typical precipitation returns in November through April, the amounts of nitrate lost will be much larger this year than usual, leading to nutrient loading to local waters and eventually to the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico.

That's how cover crops can help. Cover crops will scavenge residual N and recycle it through their plant biomass, says Iowa NRCS State Agronomist Barb Stewart. She says as cover crops decompose next year, some of the N taken up by the cover crops will be released for use by the next cash crop, and some will go towards building soil organic matter.

"Fall-planted cover crops would be a good investment this year, to benefit both their own farms and regional water quality," says Stewart.

The best N-scavenging cover crops include oats, cereal rye, or annual ryegrass mixed with oilseed radish. If a farmer is interested in fall grazing, then turnips or crimson clover could be mixed with the oats and cereal rye.

Stewart says cover crops will help farmers recoup part of their fertilizer N investment from last season, and will improve soil organic matter and soil biological activity. "Cover crops will also be very useful after soybeans for adding organic matter and trapping N released by decomposing soybean residues," she says.

National soils guru Ray Archuleta recently spoke to six farmer groups in four days throughout Iowa. One of Archuleta's key messages to farmers is to add living roots to the soil during more months of the year to increase organic matter and improve soil health. Along with eliminating tillage activities, Archuleta touted legume cover crops as natural fertilizers and grasses as scavengers of nutrients often lost after harvest or during winter.

"Diversity above ground improves diversity below ground, which helps create healthy productive soils," says Archuleta. "Cover crops should be an integral part of a cropping system. They help improve soil health by developing an ecosystem that sustains and nourishes plants, soil microbes and beneficial insects."

Besides helping to restore soil health, cover crops also protect soil against erosive heavy rains and strong winds. They can provide livestock producers with additional grazing or haying opportunities, and winter food and cover for birds and other wildlife.

Producers are encouraged to check with their crop insurance providers to be sure planting cover crops does not adversely affect crop insurance coverage. Additionally, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) considers grazing of certain varieties of cover crops as harvesting.

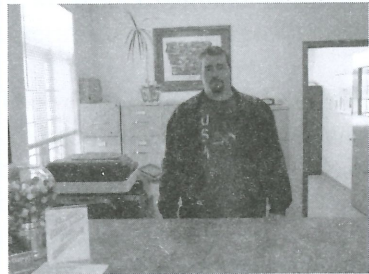
If you are interested in planting cover crops, visit your local NRCS office for more information on the best solution for you. Federal, state or local financial assistance may be available.

Meet Our Commissioners!



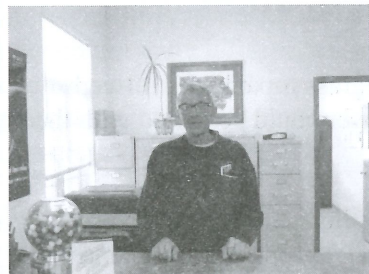
Geraldine "Jeri" Thornsberry

Geraldine (Jeri) Thornsberry is serving her second 4-year term as Soil and Water Commissioner and first term as Chair. Before moving back to the Midwest, Jeri lived in the Great Basin Region of Nevada where water was more precious than the silver mined in the area. Jeri's passion for preserving the quality of Iowa's water and protecting our soil was reignited when she returned to her childhood home. It is her wish that citizens in Black Hawk County continue to support conservation practices designed to promote sustainable agricultural practices in rural areas while also expanding conservation practices in urban areas.



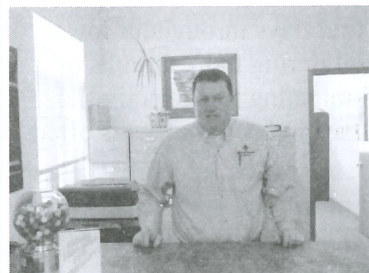
Dustin Sage

Dustin Sage is a sixth generation Iowa farmer. Graduating from Hawkeye Community College with a degree in Agricultural Business Management and Iowa State University with degrees in Farm Operation, Agronomy, and Animal Science he helps operate his families grain and cattle farm near Dunkerton, Iowa. He is currently Vice-President of the Black Hawk County Farm Bureau and looks forward to serving as a Commissioner.



Sherman Lundy

Sherman Lundy is a Geologist and Farm Manager for BMC Aggregates. He has been a Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for 9 years. He's a member of the State Soil Conservation Committee, Hartman Reserve Board, and active on several advisory boards. Sherman's interests includes many hobbies and he's also a long time scouter. Sherman's Philosophy: *"Conservation is an ethic that we implement on the land today to provide the food on our tables worldwide and to preserve and conserve the land for future generations. Good agriculture is the result of good practitioners in the field, good research and support from the business, governmental, and education sectors, along with technological innovations that improve equipment, plant and animal husbandry, and conservation practices. In Iowa, we are very proud of our Agriculture."*



Lee Bader

Lee and his wife Deb have been married for 33 years and live SW of Jesup. They have five children, two of which are married and they are expecting their first grandchild. Lee has been farming since 1979. He grows corn, soybeans, some hay and has a wean to finish hog operation. In 2009 their son Ben, joined the operation after graduating from ISU. Currently, Lee also serves as a township trustee and is also on the Black Hawk Co corn growers Board. Plus is also active with his church, St Athanasius in Jesup. Lee recognizes the need for soil and water conservation practices and enjoys being a Commissioner and working with the others on the Board.



Paula Even

Paula Even has been a resident of Black Hawk County her entire life. She and her husband, Eugene, have lived on the family farm she grew up on the past 30 years and raised their family there. She received a masters in environmental science from the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). Paula is currently employed as an adjunct instructor at UNI and as administrative assistant for Sigma Gamma Epsilon, the national honor society for the earth sciences. In addition to serving her second 4-year term as Soil and Water Commissioner, Paula is also serving as Conservation District of Iowa (CDI) Secretary and Region 4 Director.

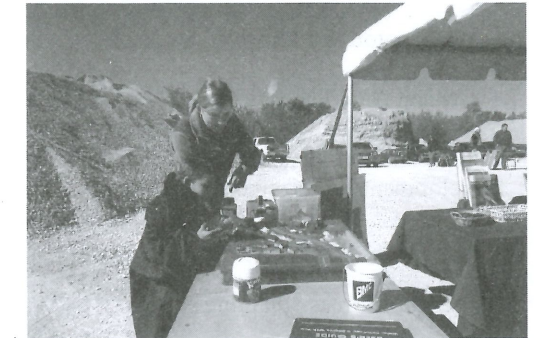
Paula is interested in water quality in Iowa's wells and streams as well as reducing sediment load and contaminants in our streams. It is her hope that through education and conservation programs, the residents of Black Hawk County, both urban and rural, can help to preserve our valuable resources of water and soil.

Sunday at the Quarry

This year's Sunday at the Quarry, held on October 7th, 2012 at the BMC's Morgan Quarry, was another success. About 900 people were in attendance.

Activities for kids on rock, mineral and fossil collecting were available as well as programs offered by the geological survey, IOWATER, UNI's Earth and Science Department, the Soil and Water District, the City of Waterloo and much more were provided.

The district supplied information about both rural and urban conservation practices. Questions were answered and many productive conversations were had! Ashley Kittle, Watershed Conservationist, even had the Enviroscape available to teach kids about watersheds and where runoff goes after it rains. This is a great hands-on activity to demonstrate how we impact our surrounding water bodies.



Boy Scout Merit Badge College

On November 3, 2012 Shaffer Ridgeway and Julie Falcon with NRCS and Ashley Kittle with the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District, partnered to present on Soil and Water Conservation at the 2013 Boy Scout Merit Badge College at Hawkeye Community College. Topics covered were soil structure, soil health, water quality concerns, urban conservation practices, what a watershed is, water quality monitoring, rural conservation practices and more! This was a very educational, productive, and challenging class.



This picture shows a hands on activity. After the scouts were trained following IOWATER monitoring standards, we applied our knowledge by testing a nearby pond.

Summary of Conservation Practices

<u>Conservation Practice</u>	<u>Planned</u>	<u>Applied</u>
Access Control (ac)	207	283
Conservation Cover (ac)	209	204
Conservation Crop Rotation (ac)	7569	6555
Cover Crop (ac)	898	251
Contour Farming	151	151
Critical Area Planting (ac)	10	27
Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (ac)	53	14
Filter Strip (ac)	15	32
Forage and Biomass Planting (ac)	57	44
Grassed Waterway (ac)	46	60
Integrated Pest Management (ac)	1128	132
Nutrient Management (ac)	989	31
Prescribed Burning (ac)	313	51
Residue Management, Seasonal (ac)	1462	915
Subsurface Drain (ft)	4800	12095
Terraces (600 ft)	6150	4850
Tree/Shrub Establishment (ac)	19	99
Upland Wildlife Habitat (ac) Management	395	96
Wetland Restoration (ac)	4	14
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (ac)	29	18
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (ft)	2965	2257

2013 Cedar Valley Contractor Conference

Erosion and Sediment Control



With recent changes in the NPDES General Permit #2 and continued pressure to comply with stormwater and construction site regulations, you don't want to miss this event! From design to installation, there will be valuable information for all industries and trades. Topics include: NPDES GP#2 Changes, Statewide and Local LID/GI Projects, Erosion and Sediment Control, Meeting post construction requirements without detention basins and more! This event is brought to you by Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation, The City of Waterloo, The City of Cedar Falls, The City of Raymond, The City of Hudson, The City of Evansdale, Elk Run Heights and Stetson. To RSVP Contact: Ashley Kittle at ashey.kittle@ia.nacdnet.net or call (319)296-3262.

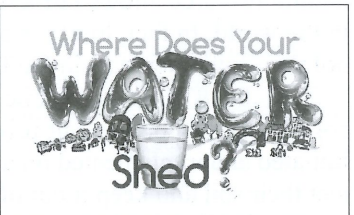
Event Details:

John Deer Supervisor's Club
3265 Dewitt Road
Waterloo, Iowa 50701
Thursday, February 14th
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Cost - FREE

Field Visits

As you wind down from the 2012 crop year and prepare for new year, are there troublesome spots on your land that you aren't sure the solution? NRCS does make appointments to have a conservationist make an on farm field visits to help solve your resource concerns about the soil, water, animals, plants and air. Give us a call for your one-on-one field visit at 319-296-3262.

2013 "Where Does Your Water Shed" Poster Contest



CDI along with the National Association of Conservation District (NACD) and local soil and water conservation districts will be offering the 2013 Conservation Poster Contest. Any child that resides in Iowa, is a public, private or home school student in Kindergarten through 12th grade with a participating SWCD can participate. Applicants must submit their poster accompanied by the poster contest entry form to the SWCD office in the county they live. Entry forms must be legible and complete, including guardian/parental signature or the poster can not be considered.

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District will present their local winners with a \$25 check and send the posters on to the regional's for a chance to win another monetary gift. Posters must be submitted by March 29th, 2013. Posters are judged based on the following criteria:

- 50% for conservation message
- 30% for visual effectiveness
- 10% for originality
- 10% for universal appeal

Visit the NACD website, www.nacdnet.or to fully understand the Conservation Poster guidelines and for great watershed education and poster creation resources!

Farm Energy Working Group By Carole Yates, Farm Energy Working Group

Iowa Farm Energy Working Group helps farmers reduce energy use.

Started in 2009, the Farm Energy Working Group (FEWG) seeks to help Iowa farmers on small to mid-sized operations find ways to reduce their energy use through energy efficiency, conservation, or renewable energy opportunities.

The FEWG consists of a diverse group of people working together to support that goal. Working Group participants are farmers, representatives from all types of Iowa utility companies, farm organizations, policy organizations, renewable energy associations, state universities, Iowa USDA, NRCS, and other interested organizations. We meet 3-4 times a year to learn from each other and learn from people outside of Iowa with expertise and interest in helping farmers reduce energy use on the farm.

Later this year FEWG will be accepting proposals for two mini-grants (\$2,000 or less) to assist farmers develop innovative ways to reduce their farm energy use. A list of former mini-grants is on our web site at www.uni.edu/ceee/farm-energy-working-group. You can also sign up there for our email list serve and receive information about upcoming meetings, webinars, and other events.

The Farm Energy Working Group is sponsored by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and facilitated through the Center for Energy & Environmental Education at the University of Northern Iowa. If you have questions about FEWG or are interested in submitting a grant proposal, please contact jeff.beneke@uni.edu or carole.yates@uni.edu.



Why Should Iowan's Strive to be National Leaders in Soil and Water Conservation? By Vincent Sitzmann, Field Services Bureau Chief, DSC

By definition, *Conservation* means to protect, preserve, manage, or care for a valued resource. To quote the great Franklin D. Roosevelt "*The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself*". Simply put, Iowa is blessed with some of the richest soils in the world. Add an adequate supply of fresh water and this fragile natural resource allows farmers to produce food that spans the globe, nourishing people from every continent in the world. In fact, Iowa's rich soils enables farmers to produce more hogs, corn, soybeans, eggs and ethanol than any other state in the US.

In 1973, Iowa became the first state in the nation to fund a cost share program to support soil conservation efforts on our private lands. Since that time, countless state and federal programs have been initiated and implemented on a voluntary basis by landowners who spend millions of dollars annually to protect their soil and keep it out of the water. In November of 2012, a new effort was launched in Iowa to reduce nutrient loading to Iowa's waters as well as the Gulf of Mexico. This effort is called the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. The strategy was developed by Iowa State University, the IDNR, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and is supported by the major Ag groups around the state. This plan is based on sound science and the implementation of voluntary conservation practices.

Why voluntary? I for one believe landowners are in the best position to determine which practices work best on their farms and in their farming operations. Iowa is a very diverse state, and regulatory policies lack flexibility needed to implement the best practice in the best location in an efficient and cost effective manner. Having said that, it's important that landowners step up to the plate and learn what they can do to address runoff from their farms and take the next step and implement these practices. Success in implementing the Strategy is critical if landowners want to continue making all their own management decisions on their land. The voluntary approach will be under the watchful eye of many around the nation and it's important that everyone do their part to reduce nutrient losses to our lakes, rivers, and streams. In closing, as one of the world leaders in production agriculture, we as Iowans should continue to be national leaders in conservation.

If you would like to view the webinar or read the most current version of Iowa's Nutrient Reduction Strategy it can be found at www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the strategy or conservation practices you can implement on your farm, feel free to contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District for technical or potential financial assistance.



LEGISLATIVE DAY AT THE CAPITOL

On Tuesday, January 22, 2013, most of your Black Hawk Soil and Water Commissioners traveled to the Capitol to speak with our Senators and Representatives in support of funding for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation.



Left to Right: Ashley Kittle, Watershed Conservationist; Representative Anesa Kajtazovic, Orlando Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner; Dustin Sage, Commissioner; Geraldine Thornsberry, District Chair; Representative Deborah Berry. Front: Paula Even, Commissioner and Regional Representative

While visiting with our elected representatives, we not only thanked them for the small increase in funding allocated last year but also asked for an additional \$1.9 million from General Funds:

- \$1.89 million to reinstate 20 state secretaries and 14 state technicians to help meet the demand for conservation practices.
- \$2.2 million for the Iowa Financial Incentive Program and the Watershed Protection Fund. Currently there is an \$18.2 million unmet need for cost share dollars within these two programs. Increased funding would begin to meet the need for projects to protect our soil and water and invest in our economy.
- \$1.55 million to close 12 Agricultural Drainage Wells (ADWs) that have been identified as direct conduits for pollutants to reach drinking water aquifers. Landowners are ready to cover 25% of all costs.
- \$1.25 million to address the increasing demand for water quality and flooding in urban areas. Currently IDALS has the only urban conservation program in the state! No funding was allocated to support urban conservation last year.
- \$1.0 million in additional funding for the Conservation Reserved Enhancement Program to support the construction of wetlands, proved to be one of the most effective conservation practices to reduce nutrients.
- \$1.0 million in additional funding for the Conservation Reserve Program to enroll and protect over 18,000 acres of sensitive lands, leveraging both local and federal dollars.
- \$225,000 in additional funding for the Integrated Farm & Livestock Management Program to allow for education and outreach necessary to promote conservation practices to farmers.

Iowa is ranked 47th in the nation in state funding for conservation. It is hard to rationalize our current conservation funding levels when Iowa leads the nation in agriculture and is # 1 in production of corn, soybeans, hogs and eggs. We rank in the top 10 states for cattle and sheep production. Over 90% of Iowa's land is used for agriculture and nearly 600 of Iowa's streams, rivers and lakes are considered impaired or highly polluted. We need more funding for conservation practices to protect our soil and clean up our water.

Not only does Iowa have fewer acres of native landscape than any other state but we also have lost half our soil organic matter. Five tons of soil is lost on every acre of land in agriculture production each year. It takes approximately 1,000 years to build an inch of topsoil and without active conservation, we risk losing our state's economic engine. Iowa's land, landowners and operators are under increasing pressure to produce more crops to meet the demands of an increasing global population.

Since we are a state of voluntary conservation efforts and if the state does not continue to financially support these voluntary efforts, Iowa could be subjected to federal regulation and law suits as has happened to other states and regions.

Let's remember that less than 2% of the state budget (from both the General and Other Fund [Environmental First Fund]) goes to agriculture **AND** conservation. And while we enjoy a current surplus of \$768 million for FY2014 (according to the Legislative Services Agency's Budget Analysis) surely protecting Iowa's economy, environment and our overall quality of life is worth an additional \$2 million dollars for our conservation work.

Please contact your State Senators and Representatives and ask them for this additional \$2 million. These dollars represent a very small portion of the state's budget but represent a huge investment in Iowa's future.

Thank you.
G.M. "Jeri" Thornsberry

Fiscal Year 2011 Financial Report: July 1, 2011—June 30, 2012

BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF REVOLVING FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>REVOLVING FUNDS</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$14,932.20</td></tr> <tr><td>Receipts</td><td>+ 71,387.24</td></tr> <tr><td>Expenses</td><td>- 31,946.76</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ 149.70</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$54,522.38</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$14,932.20	Receipts	+ 71,387.24	Expenses	- 31,946.76	Dividends	+ 149.70	Balance June 30, 2012	\$54,522.38	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF DRY RUN CREEK FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>DRY RUN CREEK</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$10,890.68</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ .84</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$10,891.52</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$10,890.68	Dividends	+ .84	Balance June 30, 2012	\$10,891.52				
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BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF 319 FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>319 Grant</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$19,573.36</td></tr> <tr><td>Receipts</td><td>+ 61168.92</td></tr> <tr><td>Expenses</td><td>- 78286.67</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ 15.30</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$11,929.93</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$19,573.36	Receipts	+ 61168.92	Expenses	- 78286.67	Dividends	+ 15.30	Balance June 30, 2012	\$11,929.93	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF DRY RUN CREEK SAVINGS FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>DRY RUN CREEK SAVINGS</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$5,272.93</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ 2.30</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$5,281.05</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$5,272.93	Dividends	+ 2.30	Balance June 30, 2012	\$5,281.05				
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BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF TECHNICAL FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$15,256.16</td></tr> <tr><td>Receipts</td><td>+ 5431.95</td></tr> <tr><td>Expenses</td><td>-14990.38</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ 58.52</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$5,756.25</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$15,256.16	Receipts	+ 5431.95	Expenses	-14990.38	Dividends	+ 58.52	Balance June 30, 2012	\$5,756.25	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF 1M FUNDS JULY 1, 2011 – JUNE 30, 2012 <u>1M FUNDS</u> <table> <tr><td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2011</td><td>\$5.27</td></tr> <tr><td>Receipts</td><td>+ 2000.00</td></tr> <tr><td>Expenses</td><td>- 1445.87</td></tr> <tr><td>Dividends</td><td>+ .97</td></tr> <tr><td>Balance June 30, 2012</td><td>\$560.37</td></tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2011	\$5.27	Receipts	+ 2000.00	Expenses	- 1445.87	Dividends	+ .97	Balance June 30, 2012	\$560.37
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Did you Know??? A recent survey of America's young farmers and ranchers revealed that 97.2 percent planned to farm and ranch for life. And 90 percent said they would like their children to follow in their footsteps. This provides strong incentive for today's farmers and ranchers to protect and preserve the natural resources on their property. Not only is the land and its resources a farmer's lifeblood today, it represents the future for his family and its business. 	Did you Know??? A recent survey of young farmers and ranchers reveals that computers are used on 83 percent of America's farms. Nearly 75 percent of today's young farmers have a cellular telephone, and nearly one-third have access to the Internet, up from 10.5 percent from last year. 																				

We Need Your Support

The Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District helps you and your neighbors conserve our most valuable natural resources—our soil and water. We believe that promoting soil and water conservation is everyone's job and we invite you to help. Although outside funding is received for certain urban and rural programs under our purview, there are several projects and activities performed by the office staff and District Commissioners that we must rely on local contributions to fund. Examples of these include conservation for schools, local conservation awards, the district newsletter, and conservation field days. Beginning this year, to further show our appreciation to those contributing, a certificate will be issued to those contributing, *Sponsorship*, *Stewardship*, and *Conservationist* levels (\$25 or more).

**PLEASE CONSIDER A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO HELP OUR LOCAL
CONSERVATION EFFORTS. THANK YOU.**

Jeri Thornsberry, Chair Lee Bader, Vice-Chairman
Dustin Sage, Commissioner Sherman Lundy, Treasurer Paula Even, Regional Representative

*We would like to thank the following individuals for last year's
contributions:*

- Orlando Schwartz
- Bob and Joyce Hansen
- Riley Family Farms LLP
- Schildroth Bros.
- Sherman Lundy
- John and Carolyn Becker
- Alice Lichty
- Jeri Thornsberry
- Ray Boots



I want to support the **Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District**. I have enclosed a check to join the **2013 Contributors Club** at the following level:

_____ *Sponsorship* Level (\$25—\$49)

_____ *Stewardship* Level (\$50—\$74)

_____ *Conservationist* Level (\$75 & above)

_____ Other amount \$ _____

Name (s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-Mail _____

Please make checks payable to: Black Hawk SWCD
2950 Southland Dr, Ste. 2
Waterloo, IA 50701

YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Black Hawk SWCD Commissioners:

Jeri Thornsberry, Chairperson
Lee Bader, Vice-Chairperson
Paula Even, Regional Representative
Dustin Sage, Commissioner
Sherman Lundy, Treasurer

Assistant Commissioners:

Ronald Mc Laughlin, Assistant Commissioner
Brett Meyers, Assistant Commissioner
Vern Fish, Assistant Commissioner

Current Staff Members:

Shaffer Ridgeway, District Conservationist
Julie Falcon, Soil Conservationist
Elaine Hammer, Soil Conservation Technician
Ashley Kittle, Watershed Conservationist
Leslie Grundy, State Secretary

Orlando "Lanny" Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner



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