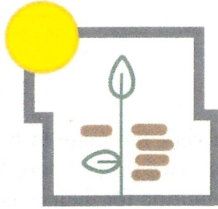


APRIL 2017



BLACK HAWK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT 2017 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: 1-855-246-1553

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.***

Thank You Paula Even!

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District congratulates Paula Even for her eight years of service as a District Commissioner. Even represented the District on the Dry Run Creek Watershed Improvement Advisory Board, served as Region 4 Conservation Districts of Iowa Director, managed the District's scholarship/poster contest winners and offered invaluable advice and counsel during District meetings. So that we do not lose Paula's knowledge, she is appointed Assistant Commissioner beginning in January 2017. We thank Paula Even for her continued service to the cause of conservation here in Black Hawk County.



Office Staff

Shaffer Ridgeway, District Conservationist
Elaine Hammer, Soil Technician
Chad Gilles, Soil Conservationist
Leslie Carey, Conservation Assistant
Shane Wulf, Watershed Coordinator
Joshua Balk, Watershed Coordinator

Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners

Jeri Thornsberry, Chair
Sherman Lundy, Co-chair
Lee Bader, Treasurer
Jennifer Trent, Co-Treasurer
Dustin Sage, Commissioner
Tolif Hunt, Assistant Commissioner
Vern Fish, Assistant Commissioner
Lanny Schwartz, Assistant Commissioner
Paula Even, Assistant Commissioner

Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District Honored

The Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District received recognition for leadership in the Water Quality Initiative program efforts on August 30, 2016 at the 70th annual Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners conference in Altoona.



The past three years, the district has been leading the Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project, one of the eight originally funded watershed based demonstration projects.

The Miller Creek project has brought together a diverse group of partners to implement multiple demonstration efforts through the project.

The Black Hawk SWCD and partner organizations have continued to advance the implementation of cover crops, saturated buffers and bioreactors, as well as, other key nutrient reduction focused practices.

Did You Know....

- Wetlands publicly funded through 2015 treat more than 99,000* acres of Iowa Land. That's more than 75,000 football fields!
- In four years of the initiative, 9,440+ farmers have tried water quality practices that have protected more than 932,000 acres of farmland.



Message From the Chair

Jeri Thornsberry

2016 has been a very productive year for the District. In Black Hawk County we are very fortunate to have two projects—one primarily urban (Dry Run Creek) and the other rural (Miller Creek.) Our two project coordinators, Josh Balk, Dry Run Creek and Shane Wulf, Miller Creek, are receiving state-wide recognition for their outstanding work in their respective watersheds.

In August at the 70th Annual Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners Annual Conference, the District received an award from IDALS for “**Exemplary Efforts Towards the Water Quality Initiative.**” This award recognized our leadership in the Water Quality Initiative (WQI) program.

The past three years, Black Hawk SWCD has been leading the Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project, which is one of 16 watershed based demonstration projects out of the 45 total projects currently funded through the WQI. The Miller Creek project has brought together an active and diverse group of partners to implement multiple demonstration efforts through the project. This project was able to leverage their early success, along with Benton SWCD, to begin the Middle Cedar Partnership Project Funded by NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Project (RCPP), and more recently, the Midwest Ag Water Quality Partnership RCPP. The District along with key partner organizations have continued to advance the implementation of cover crops, saturated buffers and bioreactors, as well as, other key nutrient reduction focused practices as part of improving the water quality and soil health in the Middle Cedar River basin.

Miller Creek project has been extended for another three years and during this time focus will transition from a demonstration project to implementation. The extension for Dry Run Creek has been submitted and is waiting funding.

Due to the hard work of our two project coordinators as well as other conservation efforts within the District, Black Hawk county has 20% of our cropland acres protected with Conservation Funded Practices. Incidentally the average for the state is only 8.9%

We were recently award the Water Quality Initiative Urban Project. This is a very novel approach as we propose to work with Cedar Falls schools, University of Northern Iowa and Hawkeye College. Both Dry Run Creek and Miller Creek watersheds are involved. We are quite pleased that the State recognized the uniqueness of this effort.

We have a great team. Two of our commissioners were reelected on November 8, 2016, Dustin Sage and myself. Sherman Lundy ran again as Paula Even chose to step down as commissioner, she will now serve as an Assistant Commissioner.

Josh Balk was selected to serve on regional board for Iowa Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society and he was instrumental in bringing their annual meeting to Iowa generally and Black Hawk County specifically.

Shane Wulf volunteered to serve on Region 3's Quality Steering Team. Given his experiences in administering the Miller Creek grant, he is able to offer suggestions for improvements.

Through the work of Commissioners Jenny Trent and Sherman Lundy, we are very active in three Watershed Management Authority groups: Upper Cedar, Middle Cedar and the Upper Wapsipinicon.

Both Dustin Sage and Lee Bader offer vital counsel during our meetings with concrete suggestions for future action. It is so important to have producers serving as commissioners and we are very grateful for these two.

Our assistant commissioners contribute in a variety of ways. We recently appointed Kristi Hefflemeier, one-half of last year's Conservation Farmer of the Year winner and Mike Henning, retired from John Deere and who works with students at Orange Elementary.

Continued on page 3

continued from page 2..

Vern Fish, recently retired from the County Conservation Board, will be more active now that he has more time. We so appreciate his wealth of knowledge about the land here in our county.

Assistant Commissioners Lannie Schwartz and Tolif Hunt continue to provide key insights on various District projects.

The support of our NRCS staff is priceless. District Conservationist, Shaffer Ridgeway provides an atmosphere of "can do" in the office. His capable leadership supports everyone in the office not only his staff but also the commissioners. Elaine Hammer and Chad Giles have a depth of knowledge that supports the District's efforts with excellence.

Emory Davis represents a new liaison for the District. Through Pheasant's Forever, he working in our county to preserve wildlife habitat and improve water quality.

We could not do the work that we do without Leslie Carey, our Conservation Assistant. She is the glue that holds our organization together. Her knowledge and experience helps us get what needs doing on time and with quality.

With our collective teamwork, the District is able to accomplish so much more. Our reputation has spread statewide. Black Hawk is known as the District that can get it done.

I am grateful to serve as Chair and with the continued support of the producers in Black Hawk County, we all will continue to progress to the goals of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy to improve our soil health and water quality.



State Money For Conservation

State cost share funds are available for permanent and management practices to control erosion and reduce sediment such as terraces, grassed 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 Board of Commissioners. The cost share rate is approximately 50% of the actual cost or the estimated cost, whichever is less, with a maximum amount of \$5000 that a person can receive. Applications are at our office and are also available online. Please call our office at 319-296-3262 if you have any questions about this and we will be happy to help you.



Welcome Kristi Heffelman, New Assistant Commissioner

Kristi Heffelman is a 5th generation farmer. Before devoting herself to farming full time, she taught middle school in Texas. Even though she grew up around the family farm south of Waterloo and graduated from Iowa State, Kristi never imagined she would move back to a small town or become a farmer herself. She started farming full-time with her dad in 2014. In her spare time, she is a substitute teacher and helps her husband raise performance Labrador retrievers at the family's century farm.

Welcome Mike Henning, New Assistant Commissioner

Mike grew up on a farm in Western Iowa. He attended Iowa State and UNI and is a retired engineering manager from John Deere Waterloo Operations. Below is some information regarding Mike.

- I am especially interested in Soil Health, Wetlands, Wildlife and pollinator habitat, Water Quality, air quality, prairie projects, and similar efforts.
- I am a trained IOWATER sampler for streams and lakes. I have helped with the spring and fall water snapshots that Josh leads on Dry Run Creek in Cedar Falls for several years.
- I have implemented several conservation measures on our approximately 18 acres of farmland in Buena Vista County in western Iowa. Currently have land in regular CRP, CP42 Pollinator Habitat, and put in a new waterway to stop erosion.
- Helped lead Conservation projects at the new Waterloo Orange Elementary School since it opened. We have planted over 200 trees, shrubs, birding habitat, vegetable gardens, butterfly habitat, etc. We also worked with the UNI Tall Grass Prairie Center and put in a small pollinator prairie area. We have built and installed two successful chimney swift towers over the past two years and six successful Blue Bird houses. Several more projects are in process now.
- Barbara and I provided periodic housing in the last year for a University of South Carolina PHD student. Bri Farber was doing her field research on the water quality problems in Iowa. I attended many related events with her like Nutrient Reduction Strategy meetings, field days, tours of places like Des Moines Water Works, etc..
- From an advocacy perspective I participate in various lobbying efforts on-line and at the State Capitol. This includes things like the work of the Iowa Environmental council, Buena Vista County Farm Bureau, National Farmer's Union, NE Iowa Sierra Club Executive Board, NE Iowa REAP Committee, ICC, and other groups.

Welcome Chad Gilles, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Hi, my name is Chad Gilles and I am the Soil Conservationist with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for Black Hawk and Bremer counties. I am a native of Waterloo where I attended St. Edward and Columbus Catholic. I studied Natural Resources & Ecology Management earning a bachelor degree from Iowa State University.

In 2007 I relocated to scenic Decorah, IA and worked as a watershed project coordinator with the Allamakee Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). There I assisted farmers and landowners located in the Yellow River watershed with conservation planning. In 2011 I began work for the Howard County SWCD as the Lake Hendricks Watershed Project coordinator and later transitioned to a position managing federal conservation funding for the NRCS in 2013.

My wife Dalin and I have been married for eight years and we have two children, Belle- 5 and Liesl- 2. We enjoy outdoor activities, attending community events, and are excited to call the Cedar Valley our home. I look forward to working with you to restore the health of our soils and preserve our natural resources.



Conservation and Your Operation in a Watershed

Jim Gillespie, Division Director, Division of Soil Conservation

Everyone lives and works in a watershed and everyone has a responsibility to take care of the resources in that watershed. I am going to give you some simple tips on how you can assess and get help treating the resources in your watershed.

The first thing you need to do is a visual assessment of the land you own and/or operate and see if there are some issues or problems (i.e. erosion, gulley's, flooding, water quality, poor seeding) that need addressed. After identifying the problem, can you determine what is causing the problem? What should or can I do to help solve the problem or do I need some technical assistance?

If you need help with these situations, there are resources available at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation District, ISU Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa Learning Farms and other conservation service providers. You may have other landowners and farmers in your area that host field days and do demonstrations that may help you understand what can be done. It does not make any difference if you live in town or in the country, there is great technical assistance available and there may be some financial assistance as well.

A good conservation plan with scientific technical assistance can get you started down the road to protecting your resources and concerns. If we work together on the issues in our watersheds, we will not only protect and improve our land and water but make sure that we are preventing any impacts on resources around us.

Iowa has always been a leader in conservation of our natural resources and watershed protection. Thank you for what you do, do not ever hesitate to ask for assistance and always be looking for opportunities to make improvements because we have some of the best natural resources in the world and we need to take care of them.



Have we been ignoring Water Quality in Iowa?

***Vincent Sitzmann, Field Services Bureau Chief
Division of Soil Conservation***

Over the past couple of years we have heard a lot about water quality in Iowa. Even more so now than I can ever remember in my 18 year career with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. And rightly so. Water quality is and should be important to Iowans, all Iowans. But just because we never used to talk about water quality doesn't mean we've been ignoring it.

In 1971, Iowa legislature passed the sediment control law that establishes soil loss limits for every soil type in the state, making it the first of its kind in the nation. In 1973, Iowa was the first state to appropriate state cost share funds to work with landowners to address soil erosion. In 2013, Iowa was the second state in the Mississippi River Basin to develop a nutrient reduction strategy for the entire state. Not once in the three examples listed above was the word water quality mentioned, however all of these programs have had a major impact on the Iowa's water quality.

So what's the relationship between reducing soil erosion and protecting water quality? Every ton of soil we keep in the field helps keep it out of the stream. Sediment is also a major transporter of phosphorus. If you stop the sediment, you stop much of the phosphorus too. Keep in mind that reducing soil loss doesn't solve all our water quality concerns we have in the state, but it's a great start, particularly in fields that have highly erodible soils. We need to continue looking for more and better ways to address both phosphorus and nitrogen losses from our fields, but solving these issues requires multiple approaches. Some areas of the state are very susceptible to nitrogen losses while others phosphorus. Addressing water quality issues across the state will require a diverse use of management practices such as no-till and cover crops, structural practices such as terraces and waterways, and edge of field practices such as bioreactors and saturated buffers. New and emerging technologies that have yet to be refined will also be a key if we are to continue making improvements.

So have we been ignoring water quality in Iowa? No, water quality just wasn't the buzz word at the time, soil erosion was. The real question is can we do more? I believe the answer to that question will be coming soon. The governor's office, legislature, ag groups, and others have gone on record in support of additional funding for water quality. What that level of support ends up being has yet to be determined. As a lifelong Iowan, I'm looking forward to being part of the future efforts to protect our soils and continue to improve water quality in Iowa.

Young Black Hawk County Pig Farmers, Ben and Anna Bader, Are State's Top Environmental Stewards

Pork Progress Media

The Iowa Pork Producers Association has presented its 2016 Iowa Environmental Steward Award to a young Black Hawk County family.

Ben and Anna Bader of Jesup received a trophy and \$2,500 cash reward during the 45th annual Iowa Pork Congress Banquet in Des Moines in January.

The Baders are part owners and operators of Bader Farms with Ben's parents: Lee and Debra. Ben's current portion of the family-farm consists of a 1,000-head feeder-to-finish swine barn and 600 rented row-crop acres. Sows are owned and managed through a co-op shares arrangement in conjunction with other producers.

Ben began his farming career in 2007, taking out an operating loan and renting 56 acres while still attending school. He graduated from Iowa State University in 2008 with a degree in ag systems technologies and returned home to farm full-time and buy into the family hog farm. He has since grown the grain and swine enterprise, engaged in a sow-shares arrangement, built a feed mill with his father, and started custom farming additional acres to offset equipment costs. He credits much of his success to maintaining a great working relationship with his landlords.

Ben has used his college degree to implement precision technology for fertilizer application and increased farm data analysis. Recently, half of Ben's acres were enrolled in the Pioneer Encirca program that provided data to make more informed decisions on side-dress fertilizer application. Ben collects his own soil grid samples and completes prescription mapping for nutrients.

Animal care is taken very seriously and Bader ensures the farm stays up-to-date on packer audit requirements, including PQA Plus and TQA certifications. He also completes a routine environmental review of the farm, ensuring a proper environment in the barn for pig comfort and growth.

Since Ben returned to the farm, the Baders no-till nearly all their soybeans and some corn. They have planted many grassed waterways, buffer strips and terraces to preserve water quality and improve soil health. They have enrolled acres in the Conservation Stewardship Program and are participating in pollinator programs. Ben also has begun experimenting with cover crops, noting exceptional germination from oats aerially seeded last fall.

Ben has assumed active roles in community and association efforts. He has served as a local parish council member, coop board and county Farm Bureau President. Ben was recognized through Iowa Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Achievement award program in 2015. He also has traveled to Washington, D.C. and to the Iowa Legislature to discuss farm policy.

Anna, a nurse by trade, now enjoys staying home with their 10-month old daughter, Molly, who represents the fourth generation to live on the original family farmstead. This young farm family demonstrates the opportunity to continue improving Iowa's already sustainable and efficient livestock and grain production system.

"When Ben made the decision to come back to us, it was truly one of the best days of our farming career," said Ben's father, Lee. "I feel that Ben's enthusiasm for farming and conservation is the catalyst that keeps our operation on the forefront of being environmentally friendly."

The Environmental Steward Award was established in 2007 by the IPPA Environmental Committee to recognize pork producers who go above and beyond in environmental stewardship. The selection committee judges nominees on the producer's manure management, soil and water conservation practices, air quality strategies, wildlife habitat management and environmental management innovations.

The selection committee consists of the IPPA Board of Directors, the IPPA Environmental Committee and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Pheasants Forever officials.

BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNOUNCES 2017 AWARD WINNERS

Black Hawk SWCD is pleased to recognize this years award winners for their outstanding contribution to conservation in Black Hawk County...

- Stacey Snyder, Teacher of the Year Award, Orange Elementary
- Terri Rogers, Teacher of the Year Award, Hawkeye Community College
- Jason Lang, Teacher of the Year Award, Cedar Falls High School
- Maria Perez Gonzalez, Teacher of the Year Award, University of Northern Iowa
- Jon & Kelly Bachman, Urban Conservationists of the Year
- Henry & Meri Kay Shepard, Conservation Farmers of the Year



Stacey Snyder, Terri Rogers, Jason Lang



Dustin Sage, Kelly Bachman, Jon Bachman



Dustin Sage, Meri Kay Shepard, Henry Shepard

Did You Know....

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) currently funds 45 demonstration projects: 16 watershed projects, 7 practice demonstration projects, and 22 urban conservation projects.

These multi-year projects are designed to implement, display and monitor the effectiveness and adaptability of conservation practices highlighted in the NRS.

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!* The Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District recently submitted a grant application to extend the Dry Run Creek Project for another two years. We are currently looking for interested partners concerned about water quality and willing to implement conservation.

Since 2004, the Dry Run Creek Watershed Improvement Project has sought partnerships with local landowners to help protect our soil and water. Through these efforts, rural conservation practices have helped to reduce over 1,000 tons of sediment, 4,000 pounds of phosphorus, and 400 pounds of nitrogen from negatively impacting the stream each year. Urban stormwater practices have helped to infiltrate over 53 million gallons of stormwater annually. Although these are profound accomplishments, there is still much work to be done to achieve the Project goals of improving water quality and increasing the biological health of the stream.

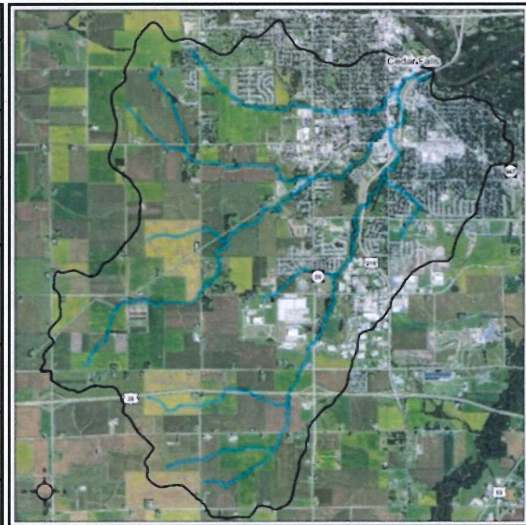
A major issue currently facing the Dry Run Creek Watershed is the contribution of rapid runoff from urban hard surfaces connected to the storm sewer system. This causes storm surges in the stream which can wash out habitat, erode banks, and contribute to flash flooding. Stormwater runoff can also carry sediments, nutrients, heavy metals, trash, and other pollutants to the stream, negatively impacting stream health. Infiltration based practices have proven to be successful in managing runoff and improving water quality. These practices 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.

Rural conservation practices are equally important and also needed to help improve water quality. Rural conservation practices can prevent sediment and nutrients from entering the creek which make it more habitable for our local aquatic creatures. Extensive research from various organizations have monitored these practices to ensure that production is not negatively impacted. Some of these practices can improve yields, reduce time in the field, and increase your bottom line, all while having a positive impact on our local environment.

If you are interested in learning more about cost share opportunities please contact Josh Balk at (319) 296-3262 or joshua.balk@ia.nacdnet.net. Technical and financial assistance will be provided. A no-cost property assessment is available to determine the best option for your land.

Conservation Practices Eligible for Cost Share:

	Practice	Cost Share Rate
R u r a l	Cover Crops	\$30/acre/year for 3 years
	Reduced Tillage	\$10/acre/year
	Grassed Waterway	75% of project total/ estimate
	Prairie Strips	75% of project total/ estimate
	Additional Practices: Wetlands, Oxbows, Filter Strips, Bioreactors, Saturated Buffers, Streambank Stabilization	
U r b a n	Soil Quality Restoration	75% of project total/ estimate
	Permeable Driveways	75% of project total/ estimate up to \$8,000.00
	Rain Gardens	75% of project total/ estimate
	Rain Barrels	50% up to \$50.00



UNI Students Implementing Conservation

A major highlight for the Dry Run Creek Project in 2016 was a new partnership with the University of Northern Iowa through their Conservation Corps initiative. The goal of the Conservation Corps is to put knowledge into action and implement positive change for the community with environmental conservation. A generous donation from the Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust provided grant dollars towards students, faculty/staff, or community partners for their conservation program. Through our partnership, 37 UNI students were educated on water quality, trained on how to construct infiltration-based stormwater practices, and helped install three residential rain gardens with volunteer labor. Together these rain gardens effectively eliminated 1,200 square feet of impervious surfaces, helped infiltrate over 15,000 gallons of stormwater annually, and utilized 90 hours of volunteer work. A big thanks to Eric Giddens, Kamyar Enshayan, Laura Verden, Maria Perez, and the UNI students for their efforts to make this program a success. We are excited to announce that, given the positive response from the first round, we are planning to implement this program again this spring semester and in to the future as funds are available. If you are interested in participating, please contact Josh Balk for further information.



REAP Money Available

Considering that winter is hopefully nearing the end, now is the time to think seriously about planting a windbreak, adding to an existing windbreak, planting a few acres to trees, make improvements on your timber or establish some habitat for the wildlife we like to have here in Iowa.



We can assist you with any of the following practices:

Farmstead Windbreak – Must be a minimum of 3 rows – 2 rows conifer trees and one row shrubs or 3 rows conifer trees. Cost share is 75% of actual cost not to exceed an actual cost of \$25/tree and \$4/shrub. The maximum amount of cost share is \$1500/windbreak.

Field Windbreak – Minimum of one row trees or shrubs. Cost share is 75% of actual cost not to exceed \$450/acre.

Tree Planting – There is a 3 acre minimum for this practice. Cost share is 75% of actual cost not to exceed \$450/acre which includes establishing ground cover, trees and tree planting operations, weed and pest control and mowing, disking and spraying.

Timber Stand Improvement - This has a 5 acre minimum. Cost share is 75% of actual cost not to exceed \$120/acre for thinning, pruning crop trees, releasing seedlings or young trees.

Conservation Cover – 75% of eligible or estimated cost, whichever is less. It can include preparation costs.

If you have considered doing any of these practices, now is the time to give our office a call and we will be happy to assist you in planning your project. Applications for cost share are available at our office or on line at

<https://idals.iowa.gov/FARMS>.

2016 National Cattle Congress



In September 2016 for the first time ever Black Hawk and Bremer SWCD displayed information at the National Cattle Congress Fair. Look for us in September 2017 also!

Welcome Emery Davis, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

My name is Emery Davis and I work for Pheasants Forever as a Farm Bill Biologist. Typically I work out of the NRCS office on habitat projects where I assist landowners with habitat projects by identifying goals and finding information or programs that will help them meet their habitat goals. I really enjoy meeting with landowners and working together to come up with a plan that will improve wildlife habitat. Right now water quality and pollinator habitat are both very hot topics and I enjoy planning projects that address both of these concerns.

In my free time I enjoy being out in nature hunting, hiking, or taking my dog for long walks. I also help out on the home farm where I grew up.

If anyone wishes to discuss habitat projects or knows others who are interested, please contact me at the information below.

Emery Davis | Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist
Pheasants Forever, Inc. and Quail Forever |
NRCS 891 62nd St. | Marion, IA 52302
p. (319)377-5960 ext. 305 | c. (319)212-0916 |
edavis@pheasantsforever.org |



Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project by Shane Wulf, Project Coordinator

The Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project has made vast strides in conservation practice implementation and raising awareness of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy since its launch in January of 2014; thanks chiefly due to the involvement of Miller Creek stakeholders and partners. We are excited to announce that Secretary Northey and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship have recognized our success by extending the Miller Creek project through December of 2019! 2016 was a particularly exciting year for the Miller Creek project in terms of conservation practice adoption and our involvement in numerous outreach and education activities.

Of the six cost-shareable practices offered through the Miller Creek project, cover crops have been by far the most popular with nearly 3,600 acres approved and applied in 2016. You may have noticed the many green fields across the watershed late this winter. More than likely these fields are planted with a winter hardy cereal rye crop. Other varieties of cover crops producers experimented with in 2016 include oats, radish, rapeseed and turnips. Other popular management practices this year included fall applied nitrification inhibitors and strip-till/no-till with over 1,000 acres approved and applied of each. We are also pleased to share that one saturated buffer and one denitrifying bioreactor were installed in 2016. We look forward to utilize these projects for research and outreach opportunities.



Sharing our message of the importance of improving soil health and water quality and its link to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy is vital to the success of the Miller Creek project and 2016 provided us with many opportunities to do so! A Cover Crop Workshop at Hawkeye Community College on February 25, 2016 featured presentations from Iowa State University staff and nearly 70 attendees of whom were predominately producers. The District was excited to partner with Lanehaven Farms to welcome Lt. Governor Reynolds to the Miller Creek Watershed. The event started with presentations on conservation activities from Blake Hollis, Shane Wulf, Shannon Moeller and Jason



Gomes. Following the presentations was a tour of area conservation practices including a denitrifying bioreactor and saturated buffer. In November 2016, we shared our story with a statewide audience by conducting interviews with the WHO Big Show, Iowa Public Radio, Iowa Agribusiness Radio Network and KCRG. You may have also noticed some familiar Miller Creek faces on one of the Iowa Farm Bureau "Iowa Minute" commercials. Utilizing these opportunities will continue to demonstrate to both rural and urban stakeholders on the progress we are making Black Hawk County!

In moving forward with the Miller Creek Water Quality Improvement Project, the District intends to focus on increasing adoption of conservation practices in high priority locations while continuing our outreach and education campaign. These high priority locations have been determined from our in-stream monitoring data, a watershed management plan developed by the Iowa Soybean Association, and the USDA developed Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework tool. Our outreach campaign will target a higher precedence on one-on-one interactions with area stakeholders.

On a closing note, the District would like to thank all of its partners, advisory council members, and Miller Creek stakeholders who have contributed to the project's success. We look forward to continue building our momentum and moving towards achieving the goals of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Our continued progress will serve as a model the state can replicate in other watersheds for the future.

2016 Poster Contest Winners

Congratulations to our 2016 poster contest winners! The theme for the posters was "We All Need Trees"! The winners received a \$25 award.



**Jaryn Gomez, 5th Grade
Orange Elementary**



**Lillie Wrobel, 8th Grade
Union Middle School**



**Maria Guiterrez, 11th Grade
Columbus High School**

2016 Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to our 2016 scholarship winner, Wyatt Samuelson from Union High School. Wyatt received a certificate and \$100.00!



Fiscal Year 2016 Financial Report: July 1, 2015—June 30, 2016

BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF REVOLVING FUNDS JULY 1, 2015—JUNE 30, 2016 <u>REVOLVING FUNDS</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2015</td> <td align="right">11706.61</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">+25617.15</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td align="right">(27806.37)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$9517.39</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	11706.61	Receipts	+25617.15	Expenses	(27806.37)	Balance June 30, 2016	\$9517.39	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF DRY RUN CREEK FUNDS JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2016 <u>DRY RUN CREEK</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2015</td> <td align="right">16355.62</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">128.28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$16463.90</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	16355.62	Receipts	128.28	Balance June 30, 2016	\$16463.90		
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BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF 319 FUNDS JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2016 <u>319 Grant</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2015</td> <td align="right">5835.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">+61794.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td align="right">(57170.26)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$10459.14</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	5835.05	Receipts	+61794.35	Expenses	(57170.26)	Balance June 30, 2016	\$10459.14	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF 1M FUNDS JULY 1, 2014 – JUNE 30, 2015 <u>1M FUNDS</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2015</td> <td align="right">5.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">+2172.81</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td align="right">(850.00)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$1328.01</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	5.20	Receipts	+2172.81	Expenses	(850.00)	Balance June 30, 2016	\$1328.01
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BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF TECHNICAL FUNDS JULY 1, 2015 – JUNE 30, 2016 <u>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2015</td> <td align="right">15389.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">+27601.20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td align="right">(12581.91)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$30409.27</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	15389.98	Receipts	+27601.20	Expenses	(12581.91)	Balance June 30, 2016	\$30409.27	BLACK HAWK SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT OF MILLER CREEK WQI FUNDS JULY 1, 2015—JUNE 30, 2016 <u>MILLER CREEK</u> <table> <tr> <td>Beginning Balance July 1, 2014</td> <td align="right">5478.73</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Receipts</td> <td align="right">+66038.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Expenses</td> <td align="right">(57347.28)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Balance June 30, 2016</td> <td align="right">\$14169.80</td> </tr> </table>	Beginning Balance July 1, 2014	5478.73	Receipts	+66038.35	Expenses	(57347.28)	Balance June 30, 2016	\$14169.80
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Demonstration Projects Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship currently funds 45 demonstration projects: 16 watershed demonstration projects, 7 practice demonstration projects, and 22 urban conservation projects. These multi-year projects are designed to implement, display, and monitor the effectiveness and adaptability of conservation practices highlighted in the NRS.	Urban Conservation Practices Urban conservation practices focus on measures in towns and cities that capture and allow stormwater to be absorbed into the ground. The state has awarded \$1.63 million and an additional \$5.02 million has come from partners and landowners to complete practices like bioretention cells, permeable pavers and stormwater wetlands.																

REASONS TO GIVE

After working with landowners on projects, sometimes we are asked if there is a charge or fee or they are very happy with the assistance we have given them and would like to show their appreciation. Any services that NRCS staff provides are free because we are a government agency but there is a way that people can show their appreciation. Donations can be made to the Black Hawk Soil and Water Conservation District which is located in the same office as the NRCS. They are a group of five elected commissioners and six assistant commissioners that work to provide educational programs, conservation tours, displays at local events, office equipment, newsletter, annual awards to local producers and much, much more. This is a great way to support your local conservation programs and show appreciation for what our staff loves to do -make our customers happy and conservation a success!

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

Jeri Thornsberry, Chair
Sherman Lundy, Vice-Chair Jennifer Trent, Co-Treasurer
Lee Bader, Treasurer Dustin Sage, Commissioner

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

- Jeri Thornsberry
- Orlando Schwartz



I want to support the **Black Hawk Soil & Water Conservation District**. I have enclosed a check to join the **2017 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.