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FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

ANNUAL REPORT

2014



**FAYETTE SOIL AND
WATER CONSERVATION**

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hands...

Volga Lake's needs are crystal clear

By Mike Van Sickle

The camping, canoeing and summer fishing season is nearly upon us, and with an average of more than 80,000 household visits per year, Volga Lake at the Volga River Recreation Area continues to grow in popularity as a destination site.

Unfortunately, high algae and turbidity levels have increasingly impaired the recreational opportunities for those who have close contact with the water of Volga Lake. At the same time, conservationists understand the lake's potential to be a clear, blue body of water.

Adam Grim, Fayette County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Watershed coordinator, explained that the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) identified phosphorus in 2013 as the culprit in the high levels of algae growth and murky water. Grim noted phosphorus is the determining factor in regard to algae growth on the 138-acre lake.

"The source of high phosphorus levels may be from in the lake itself or coming from the surrounding watershed," he added.

In addition to poor water visibility, Grim reported that potential issues due to the high phosphorus levels include surface scum bloom, swimmer's itch, smells, and/or toxic concerns.

To help in taking the first steps

to beautify the lake water, Fayette SWCD recently received funding as part of a six-month development grant. These funds will be utilized to assess potential sources of phosphorus throughout the 6,038-acre Volga Lake watershed area.

"This effort will take voluntary participation from local landowners, who will work with the (SWCD) district to identify potential sources of phosphorus," Grim stressed. "The participants will be strongly encouraged to provide input on potential solutions to alleviate the high phosphorus levels."

The goal of the grant and related study is to provide an informational foundation for best management practices (BMPs) funding opportunities that may arise in the future.

"It (study) may also help determine what practices would be appropriate to reduce phosphorus," he added.

While compiling data, the local SWCD will also develop a lake restoration/management plan, which will open the door to potential funding for any future in-lake conservation efforts. The additional funding would be dependent on if the majority of high phosphorus is from the watershed and if it is minimized and maintained at a suitable level for an extended period of time. Grim praised the past efforts of Volga Lake area



Adam Grim, Fayette County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Watershed coordinator, examines Volga River Recreation Area's Volga Lake and the surrounding area on a Fayette County map. High algae and turbidity levels have increasingly impaired the recreational opportunities for those who have close contact with the local lake. Fayette SWCD recently received funding to be utilized to assess potential sources of phosphorus throughout the 6,038-acre Volga Lake watershed area. (Mike Van Sickle photo)

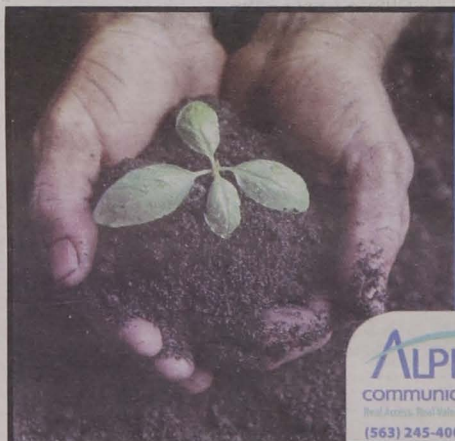
landowners, most notably in the '80s and early 2000s, who implemented terraces, grade-stabilizing structures, "gully plugs," etc.

"A lot of good work has already been done in the watershed by landowners implementing BMPs,"

Grim closed with a smile. "The 36-year-old lake would be worse for wear if it wasn't for existing BMPs that landowners have already implemented. You could say this development grant will help set the stage to put the icing on the

'lake.'"

For additional information about the watershed and/or to participate in the project, call Grim at (563) 422-3868, ext. 3.



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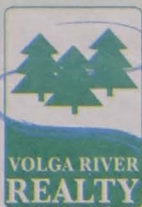
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Otter Creek flood reduction project update

Adam Grim
Fayette County SWCD
Watershed coordinator



The Otter Creek Flood Reduction Project is getting closer to putting practices on the ground with the goal of reducing the impact of flooding downstream. The practices eligible to landowners in Otter Creek include: water and sediment control basins, grade stabilization structures otherwise known as gully plugs or ponds, wetlands and on-road structures.

The cost share rate is roughly 90 percent (landowner pays 10 percent of final design estimated cost). The Otter Creek watershed encompasses the cities of West Union and Elgin. These structures are beneficial for flood reduction because they help slow the movement surface runoff through water retention and slow release. They also are beneficial for sediment retention and erosion control.

The Iowa Flood Center has information online for real-time flooding information for Otter Creek. The IFC has instruments that measure rainfall, stream levels, soil moisture and soil temperature in real time for areas throughout the watershed. This information is available online at <http://ifis.iowafloodcenter.org/ifis/sc/ottercreek>.

If you have questions about the watershed, the project or are interested in implementing a practice contact the Fayette SWCD at 120 N Industrial Pkwy #2 West Union, IA 52175 or call 563-422-3868 Ext. 3.



Conservation practices at work in Otter Creek Watershed.

Searching for the best

By Richard Jensen

Recently thousands of folks watched anxiously as Chris searched earnestly to find his perfect farmer's wife. The image created of Fayette County appeared to be utopia if not the horn of plenty to all who viewed the farm, the fun, and the fancy lifestyle of our country heritage. Television sometimes characterize farmers as despicable devils of doom and another time as master physicians giving care and comfort to their ailing land. In reality it is a matter of an individual's perception of what is decent land use. Hopefully you

share my sense of duty toward the landscape and assist me in a search for Fayette County's 2015 Steward of the Land Award. Based off the search for a perfect farm wife but with a smaller budge and much less romance. The only shown affection will be applied to the care of the land.

Anybody and everybody can nominate anybody and everybody



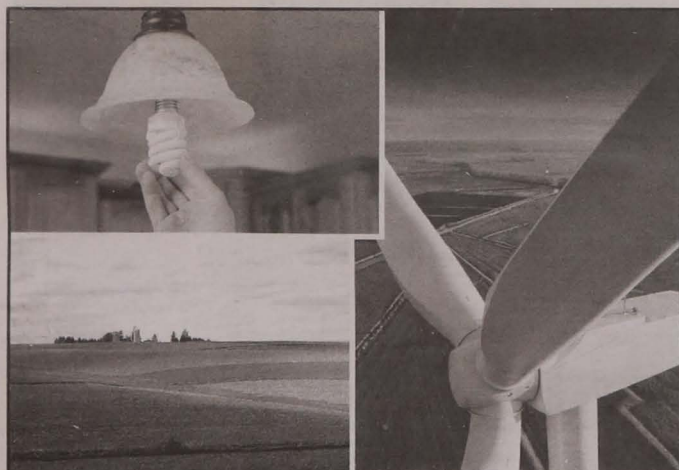
who grows living plants nourished from the soil. No restrictions, no exclusions, and no limitations on who, when, where, or what as long as they grow something green in Fayette County.

Identification Statement

The Fayette County Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Report

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Devin Brincks (l) and Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District watershed coordinator Adam Grim look over terracing and waterway plans for an upcoming project. Brincks recently began working as a soil conservation technician for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. (Zakary Kriener photo)

Brincks takes reins as soil tech

By Zakary Kriener

A northeast Iowa native assumed the reins as NRCS conservation technician in early October 2014.

Twenty three-year-old Devin Brincks of Ossian, who began working for the NRCS on a part-time basis in July 2014, is excited to get started this spring.

In his new position, Brincks works with Fayette County farmers and landowners to design terraces, waterways, and ponds that are environmentally friendly and promote proper land stewardship practices.

"I am excited to see the projects that I have designed and worked on all winter begin construction," noted Brincks, who spent the past two summers interning in nearby counties. "When I was interning, I was not around long enough to see the projects be built. I am now looking forward to seeing my hard work pay off."

Brincks received his degree in civil engineering from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in 2014 and notes his farming background as an asset to his work.

"I think that having knowledge of farming practices will make it easier to work with area

farmers to fulfill their needs," he added. "The goal is to make the farmer happy while meeting proper engineering standards."

The 2010 graduate of South Winneshiek High School replaced Lavonne Koch, who retired in fall 2014.

Brincks most looks forward to using his engineering skills and his passion for agriculture and the environment to help area farmers succeed and become more productive while encouraging land stewardship.

What is a Conservation Plan?

By: Aaron Anderson, District Conservationist

While harsh winter wind has transitioned to cool spring breeze; now is an opportune time to think about how the resources on your farm are managed. What problems or opportunities do you face? What is your objective moving forward? Perhaps that terrace needs to have a tree or two removed. Perhaps that waterway is in great shape; but just needs some seeding maintenance before crops are planted. Or, it may just be time to establish or update the conservation plan on the entire farm.

A Conservation Plan is a written record of your management decisions and the conservation practices and systems you plan to use, develop, and maintain on your farm. Carrying out your plan will help achieve the goals of protecting the environment and your natural resources. After soil, water, air, plant, and animal resources are inventoried and evaluated, the planner will review and offer possible alternatives for you to consider. The alternatives you decide are recorded in a conservation plan, which becomes the road-map to help you achieve your goals and maintain the resources of your land.

Producers can develop these voluntary conservation plans at any time. These plans can serve as a catalyst for those interested in participating in USDA financial assistance programs. By following and implementing your conservation plan timely; you are ensured that your financial assistance contract will remain in good standing.

Conservation plans can assist landowners and operators to do the following:

- Maintain and improve private lands and their management
- Implement better land management technologies
- Protect and improve water quality and quantity
- Maintain and improve wildlife and fish habitat
- Enhance recreational opportunities on their land
- Maintain and improve the aesthetic character of private land
- Explore opportunities to diversify agricultural operations and
- Develop and apply sustainable agricultural systems

Conservation of natural resources is important to the future of Fayette County. For assistance in developing or updating your conservation plan; contact our office at 563-422-3868.

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Water Quality Monitoring on Otter and Glovers Creeks

Submitted by Rick Klann, Upper Iowa University

2014 marked the fourth year that Upper Iowa University has conducted water quality monitoring on Otter Creek and Glovers Creek. Most of the sampling has occurred in the upper reach, around West Union. The purpose of this monitoring has been to evaluate the impact of efforts to improve land-use practices on the water quality of these streams.

Many Iowa streams suffer from runoff carrying nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment into the stream, and Otter and Glovers are no different. Improving land-use practices can limit the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment entering these streams, improving the water quality and creating an environment that is more supportive of species like trout. Following the 2014 monitoring season, an analysis of all four years of data was conducted in order to identify any trends regarding the water quality of these streams.

When physical and chemical parameters of water quality are compared among the different sample sites over this four year period (four on Otter Creek and one on Glovers Creek), the one factor that stands out is a spike in total phosphorus lev-

els at one of the sites on Otter Creek. Much of the phosphorus in Iowa streams is attributed to runoff carrying human or animal waste. While the impacted site is situated downstream of the West Union wastewater treatment plant, additional investigation will be required in order to determine whether or not this point source is indeed the source of the excess phosphorus. Regardless, there is still too much phosphorus entering the streams from non-point sources (primarily agriculture).

Comparisons of parameters based on year (2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014) provide more encouraging news. Levels of suspended solids (and therefore also turbidity) have declined over the life of this project. Despite the higher levels of phosphorus noted at the one site on Otter Creek, overall, levels of total phosphorus have declined over time. Counts of fecal coliform bacteria, also found in runoff carrying human and animal waste, have declined as well. However, there has been little change in total nitrogen levels.

At the request of the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, UIU commenced water quality monitoring on another Otter

Creek, this one in the southern half of Fayette County. This Otter Creek is impounded to form Lake Oelwein, and samples from the lake were analyzed in addition to samples from four stream sites above and one stream site below the lake.

The water quality of this Otter Creek is fairly good, despite the fact that there is more intensive agriculture throughout its watershed. Total phosphorus levels were highest at a site within the city limits of Oelwein, and again, this site is downstream of the Oelwein wastewater treatment plant.

Lake Oelwein had a significant impact on water quality in the stream below the lake. The water at the stream site below the lake was warmer, more turbid and contained more suspended solids than any of the upstream sites. Algae blooms (indicators of too much nitrogen and phosphorus in the water) in the lake actually depleted some of the nitrogen and phosphorus resulting in lower levels downstream. The trade-off is those algae blooms reduce the amount of dissolved oxygen in the lake, negatively impacting fish and other organisms living in there.

TAKE THE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

By James Gillespie, Director,
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship

I don't know you personally and you probably don't know who I am, but more than ever we need to come together, as landowners, farmers, and urban folks, and challenge ourselves to do something more for conservation this year. It seems that there are lots of challenges out there like getting fit and healthy, taking the ice bucket challenge, running or walking for different causes, taking a pie in the face, kissing a pig or things like that. Well, my challenge for you is to do something new this year for soil and water conservation, and together we will make environmental improvements in Iowa.

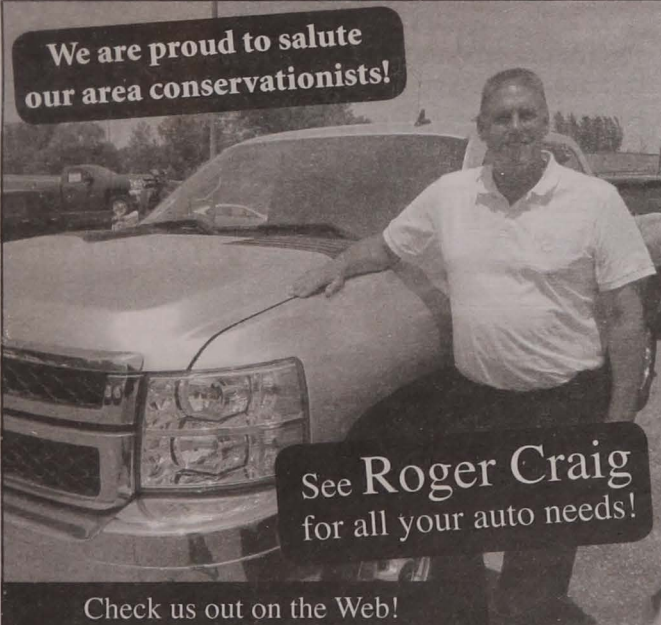
When you have done your new thing this year, share it. Post it to Facebook, Twitter (using hashtag #1newthingforwater) or other social media accounts. Tell your friends and neighbors. Show others what you are doing and encourage them to do something as well. Sharing your conservation efforts will get others involved in the challenge.

There are numerous reasons to participate in this challenge. We have so many valuable resources in Iowa to protect. We demand a lot from our resources; to produce food, fiber, recreation and a great place to live and work. We choose to live in Iowa because it provides the quality of life we are looking for. Don't we want to insure that it is going to be preserved for future generations of Iowans?

What I personally plan to do in this challenge is to seed down some areas on my property to native grasses and forbs, use cover crops in my garden (I don't farm any ground), and talk to everyone I can about the importance of soil and water conservation.

Thank you for considering this challenge and if you have questions or need technical assistance please feel free to contact your local field office. You are also welcome to contact me at jim.gillespie@iowaagriculture.gov.

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A picnic at Echo Valley

Adam Grim, Fayette County SWCD Watershed coordinator

Have you picnicked at Echo Valley lately? If you have or if you are planning that first picnic of spring, you should take a look at Otter Creek or Glovers Creek, which flow through the park. Or maybe you're a trout angler enjoying the treasures of the stream, or a farmer who enjoys driving around and looking at fields, take notice.

The Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District has been working for the past several years to enhance the water quality of Otter Creek through voluntary action of local landowners in the watershed. The Upper Otter Creek watershed project is funded through WIRB. One of the goals of the project is to reduce the amount of sediment that is delivered to the stream by 3,900 tons of sediment/year.

To date there have been eight

waterways, two basins, and one terrace project completed along with 103 acres of cover crop, 114 acres of strip till and an additional 61 acres of hay, which have reduced the amount of sediment delivered to Otter Creek by 839 tons of sediment/year. There are additional projects planned to be constructed this spring that include waterways, terraces, and basin which will bring the watershed project closer to its goal.

If you're a landowner in the Upper Otter Creek Watershed and are interested in waterways, terraces, water & sediment control basins, grade stabilization structures, pasture management, or animal waste control structures, stop by the Fayette SWCD office today!

If you have interest in these BMPs talk to Adam Grim Upper

Otter Creek Project coordinator, 563-422-3868 Ext 3 or Fayette SWCD 120 N Industrial Pkwy #2 West Union, IA 52175, as soon as possible because this is the last opportunity to try to utilize this funding.

Planning for these practices will take place this spring in preparation of the state cost share allocation. The state cost share allocation happens in June. The dollar amount of that allocation is unknown and may limit the number of practices that could be funded.

Ideally, the state cost share allocation would be combined with WIRB funding to offer 75 percent cost share for these BMPs. Construction/implementation of these practices, dependent upon funding and being approved, would take place in the fall of 2015.

Local partnerships setting an example for entire state

Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) has been excited to work with several Fayette County entities and partners this past year including the Fayette County SWCD, Fayette County Conservation Board, TRRC Board, the River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board, Turkey River Watershed Management Authority (TRWMA) and the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association.

RC&D Executive Director, Lora Friest, notes, "One of the most powerful forces for action is collaboration and over the past year Fayette County's capacity to work with local, state and federal partners has increased exponentially. Fayette County leaders and residents are setting an example for the rest of the state in several areas including flood reduction, river corridor recreation and interpretation of the landscape. It is a pleasure for our RC&D team to work with Fayette County on several projects."

The RC&D is assisting Fayette SWCD with administration of the Otter Creek Project to model flood control practices. Otter Creek was nominated for the funding by the TRWMA Board who recognized that the landscape in Otter Creek is smaller version of the landscape found in the Turkey River Watershed.

RC&D Watershed Planner Ross Eversizer noted, "Northeast Iowa RC&D is working with the 23 communities, seven SWCDs and five counties involved in the TRWMA to develop a plan for flood reduction, so the more we can learn from the Otter Creek Project the better."

The Iowa Flood Center conducted modeling for Otter Creek and the Turkey River watersheds to help producers, communities and leaders understand how their actions can and will reduce flooding. The modeling shows placement of only 14 structure in Otter Creek could reduce discharge by as much as 37 percent at the mouth of Otter Creek in Elgin.

In 2014, with financial assistance from the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Fayette SWCD began working with producers to put conservation on the ground that will test the modeling.

More information is available at www.turkeyriver.org.

Working with the River Bluffs Scenic Byway (RBSB) Board, the RC&D, NRCS and Fayette SWCD are helping residents and visitors understand the conservation practices that Fayette County producers and the Fayette SWCD have implemented. Producers will be hosting kiosks that interpret conservation practices along the RBSB. Their efforts will be repeated by producers on scenic byways across Iowa as part of an Iowa League of RC&D and NRCS project.

Jared Nielsen, the RBSB Coordinator from the RC&D explains some of the reasoning behind the project.

He noted, "An Iowa Tourism survey conducted in 2014 found that 58 percent of tourist are looking for Iowa's byways, over 54 percent are interested in outdoors and parks and another 22 percent are looking for information on agriculture. This project gives them a little of everything. When they travel our byway, we want them to understand the conservation practices our producers are using to protect our soil and water and benefit wildlife."

A local committee toured potential sites for the kiosks in 2014. Kiosks are expected to be placed in 2015. Northeast Iowa RC&D has contract Iowa artist Mark Muller to help with illustrations for the project.

Information about these, and many other projects and partnerships that Northeast Iowa RC&D is involved in, can be found at www.northeast-iowa-rcd.org or by calling the RC&D at (563) 864-7112.

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NRCS: A Conservation Planning Agency, remaining free to farmers

Submitted by Jay Mar, State Conservationist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa

Although the 1996 Farm Bill introduced conservation financial assistance programs to the list of services that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides, long before then – since 1935 to be exact – and still today, the agency's focus is providing free conservation planning assistance to Iowa's farmers and rural landowners.

NRCS has at least one office in every Iowa county, located at USDA Service Centers. With conveniently located offices comes local knowledge of local resource concerns. NRCS employs soil conservationists, engineers, biologists, and even specialists in grasslands and wetlands, to assist landowners through the conservation planning process.

One of the best things about conservation plans is their flexibility. We know goals change, markets change, and weather is always a factor. We recognize that it's your farm, so it's your plan to change.

Our number one priority is to provide high quality conservation planning and technical assistance

that effectively addresses resource concerns.

• **Conservation planning is the first step in managing all natural resources on your farm.** Natural resources include soil, water, air, plants, or even animals, energy efficiency, and people. To protect the resources, NRCS works one-on-one with landowners to plan and install conservation practices to reduce soil erosion; improve soil health and air and water quality; create and restore wetlands; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; improve pasture and woodlands; and reduce flooding.

• **A conservation plan is a record of a farmer's decisions in managing the natural resources on the land.** The plan can include a land use map, soils information, inventory of resources, and engineering notes – all based on the landowner's goals.

Landowners are encouraged to walk their land and take a visual resource assessment. Look around and see what's going on. If you have a gully problem, go out while it is raining and observe nature in action.

Watch conservation practices to see if they are working as designed. If the practice isn't working,

figure out why and try to fix it or request technical help to solve the problem.

That's exactly what Iowa landowner Denny Busch of Winterset, Iowa, did with local NRCS District Conservationist Wayne Shafer.

"When I inherited my mother's farm, it was in pretty bad shape and I wanted to improve it," said Busch. "I knew that my first step to fixing it was working with Wayne to get a plan and learn more about our options."

Busch's land is now undergoing a makeover thanks to a long-term conservation plan for protecting the resources on his entire farm. He has already removed overgrown brush to shed light on newly seeded pasture and added fence to the pasture. He plans to add more fences and a pond to pump out water for livestock in a rotational grazing system.

• **Good conservation planning also strategically combines practices to maximize environmental benefits.** David Petersen, who runs a 175-head dairy cattle farm in Muscatine County, worked with NRCS to install a grassed waterway and a filter strip to keep runoff from entering the water.

"Our property forms the confluence of two major water drainage areas," said Petersen. "It is our responsibility to maintain the water quality in those streams."

Petersen's plan also included a concrete manure storage structure that forms a pit under slotted dairy cow flooring. The manure storage structure can store up to 500,000 gallons of dairy liquid manure.

"I inject the manure into fields for crop nutrients," he said. "That was a really nice project to get completed with NRCS."

• **Good conservation planning can also combine experienced farming skills with NRCS science-based knowledge.** Veteran row crop farmer

Tim Smith in Eagle Grove experienced that firsthand. Smith farms in the Boone River Watershed, where the water flows downstream to the Des Moines River, then to the Mississippi River, and eventually to the Gulf of Mexico.

When NRCS recommended he consider changes to his nutrient management plan, tillage activities, and add cover crops to his farm to prevent sediment and nutrients from leaving his property, he trusted their knowledge and experience.

"What I learned from working with NRCS is that these conservation practices are not only helping to improve water quality, but they are also improving soil conditions and producing more dependable row crop yields through challenging weather conditions," said Smith.

To initiate the conservation planning process, call or visit your local NRCS office.

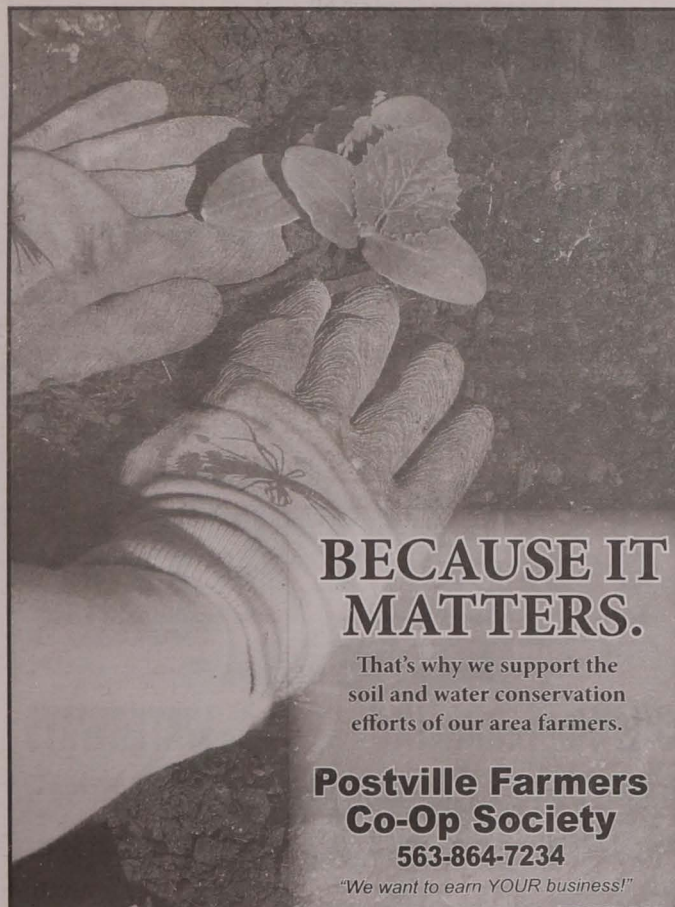
Conservation Planning Fundamentals

• **Know your soil.** Soil types vary widely. Different soils require management, and support different types of plants.

• **Know your plants.** Which plants will survive? Use native plants as often as possible.

• **Think about topography.** The size of the drainage area, slope, and cover will determine how much runoff water to expect and how fast it will move.

• **Know how conservation practices work.** Grass, trees, downed logs, and rocks are all obstacles that slow down or reduce the forces of nature. Conservation practices work the same way. If erosion from water is the problem, the objective is to slow the moving water. If wind erosion is the problem, the objective is to slow the wind at or near the soil surface.



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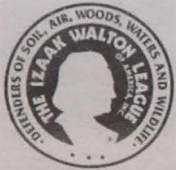
IZAAK WALTON WINDBREAK HONOR

David Fox is the recipient of the Izaak Walton League Windbreak Award for the seven-row windbreak, located on his Clermont property.

In addition to two rows of Norway spruce and highbush cranberry, Fox's field shelterbelt includes a row each of ninebark, red cedar, and flowering crabapple.

The intended purpose of the windbreak is to control wind erosion and provide wildlife habitat through a mixture of conifers and shrubs.

Weed control for the award-winning project is obtained through mowing two to three times per year. Chemical applications for potential weeds are applied in the spring. To further maintain health of the plants, pruning dead, injured, or diseased wood is carried out as required.



Summary Conservation Practices	Planned	Applied
Apply controlled release nitrogen fertilizer (WQL06) (ac)	548	548
Apply split applications of nitrogen based on a pre-sidedress nitrogen test on cropland (WQL08) (ac)	889	889
Brush Management (314) (ac)	9	2
Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written (102) (no)	1	3
Conservation Cover (327) (ac)		3
Conservation Crop Rotation (328) (ac)	2,525	1,092
Conservation System Plans (no)	132	144
Conservation System Acres (ac)	12,400	17,398
Continuous no till with high residue (SOE01) (ac)	198	357
Contour Buffer Strips (332) (ac)	197	55
Contour Farming (330) (ac)	1,642	574
Controlled traffic system (SQL01) (ac)	380	380
Cover Crop (340) (ac)	3,799	3,323
CRP Continuous Expiring		158 = 744.5 ac
CRP General Expiring		14 = 104.2 ac
CRP New Contracts		30 = 188.0 ac
Critical Area Planting (342) (ac)	29	41
Extend existing filter strips for water quality protection and wildlife habitat (ANM04) (ac)	79	79
Farmstead Energy Improvement (374) (no)	4	4
Fence (382) (ft)	8,455	6,115
Field Border (386) (ac)	8	
Forage and Biomass Planting (512) (ac)	39	162
Forest Management Plan - Written (106) (no)	4	2
Forest Stand Improvement (666) (ac)	24	4
GPS, targeted spray application (SmartSprayer), or other chemical application electronic control tec (AIR07) (ac)	1,375	1,626
Grade Stabilization Structure (410) (no)	1	3

	Planned	Applied
Grassed Waterway (412) (ac)	8	31
Harvest hay in a manner that allows wildlife to flush and escape (ANM10) (ac)	216	216
Heavy Use Area Protection (561) (ac)		1
High level Integrated Pest Management to reduce pesticide environmental risk (WQL13) (ac)	629	626
Lighting System Improvement (670) (no)	1	
Livestock Pipeline (516) (ft)		2,700
New Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) contracts (no) / dollars obligated	15 = \$231,361	
New Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) easements (no) / acres enrolled		1 = 94.4 ac
Nutrient Management (590) (ac)	431	
Plant an annual grass-type cover crop that will scavenge residual nitrogen (WQL10) (ac)	41	41
Plant Tissue Testing and Analysis to Improve Nitrogen Management (WQL04) (ac)	2,666	4,192
Precision application technology to apply nutrients (WQL11) (ac)	914	914
Prescribed Burning (338) (ac)		9
Prescribed Grazing (528) (ac)	42	277
Pumping Plant (533) (no)		1
Renovation of a windbreak or shelter belt, or hedgerow for wildlife habitat (PLT06) (ac)		1
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329) (ac)	609	676
Residue and Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345) (ac)	2,351	861
Resource-Conserving Crop Rotation (CCR99) (ac)	14	14
Rotation of supplement and feeding areas (WQL03) (ac)	397	397
Split nitrogen applications 50% after crop/pasture emergence/green up (WQL07) (ac)	915	1,166
Subsurface Drain (606) (ft)		2,500
Terrace (600) (ft)	15,390	17,010
Tree/Shrub Establishment (612) (ac)	23	31
Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490) (ac)	33	58
Underground Outlet (620) (ft)		120
Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645) (ac)	2,510	2,453
Use deep rooted crops to breakup soil compaction (SQL05) (ac)	160	160
Use drift reducing nozzles, low pressures, lower boom height and adjuvants to reduce pesticide drift (AIR04) (ac)	1,677	1,929
Waste Storage Facility (313) (no)	1	3
Waste Transfer (634) (no)		1
Water and Sediment Control Basin (638) (no)	1	1
Watering Facility (614) (no)		2
Wetland Creation (658) (ac)		7

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soil conservation:

noun: the preservation of soil against deterioration or erosion, and the maintenance of the fertilizing elements for crop production.



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**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 through JUNE 30, 2014**

Checking Account

Beginning Balance \$ 1,518.01

Receipts

Money Market Transfers – IM Funds \$ 2,800.00
Money Market Transfers 5,167.00
Watershed Transfers 1,138.00

Total Receipts \$ 9,105.00

TOTAL \$ 10,623.01

Expenses

ATV 16.00
Donations 500.00
Education 818.47
Houg Expense 184.00
IM Commissioner 2,800.00
Meeting Expense 292.95
Office Supplies 2,116.71
Payroll 785.00
Postage 365.58
Transfer to Payroll Savings 346.78
Water Quality Monitoring 1,000.00

Total Expenses \$ 9,225.49

Ending Balance 6/30/14 \$ 1,397.52

**FINANCIAL REPORT
OF STATE FUNDS
July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014**

IM Budget Allocation \$ 2,000.00
Supplemental Allocation \$ 800.00
Commissioner Expenses \$ 2,116.21
Office Expenses \$ 683.79

FY 2012

State Cost-Share Allocation \$ 31,543.00
Supplemental \$ 12,057.54
Obligated \$ 16,544.40
Spent \$ 27,038.61
Balance \$ 17.53

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses Allocation \$ 13,500.00
Obligated \$ 6,488.29
Spent \$ 5,853.00
Balance \$ 1,158.71

REAP Practices Allocation \$ 6,653.13

Obligated \$ 2,364.00
Spent \$ 4,230.00
Balance \$ 59.13

Otter Creek WIRB

Obligated \$ 100,000.00
Spent \$ 26,001.85
Balance \$ 73,998.15

**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 through JUNE 30, 2014**

Money Market Savings Account

Beginning Balance \$ 30,092.89

Receipts

IM Allocation & Supplemental 2,800.00
Interest 173.61
Transfers from Watershed Account 1,354.24
Upper Otter Creek – WIRB Funds 30,293.69
Water Quality Monitoring Funds 2,750.00

Total Receipts \$ 37,371.54

TOTAL \$ 67,464.43

Expenses

IM Transfers to Checking 2,800.00
Transfers to Checking 5,167.00
Transfers to Watershed Account 44,707.44

Total Expenses \$ 52,674.44

Ending Balance 6/30/13 \$ 14,789.99

**FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 through JUNE 30, 2014**

Technical Account

Beginning Balance \$ 3,925.57

Receipts

Transfers from Watershed \$ 785.00
Farm Bill 12 Funds - CDI 561.15
Farm Bill 13 Funds - CDI 1,749.60

Total Receipts \$ 3,095.75

TOTAL \$ 7,021.32

Expenses

Payroll 785.00
Transfers to Payroll Savings
State Taxes 67.00

Total Expenses \$ 852.00

Ending Balance 6/30/14 \$ 6,169.32

**FAYETTE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT (SWCD) FOUNDATION
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 – JUNE 30, 2014**

Checking Account

Beginning Balance \$11,319.86

Receipts

Biannual Report Refund \$ 45.00
Cover Crop Receipts (1/2 paid by participant) \$24,432.50
Money Market Transfer #42000 \$10,000.00
Supporter's Club \$10,686.00

Total Receipts \$45,163.50

Total \$56,483.36

Expenses

ATV Repairs \$ 130.71
Conservation Tour Expenses \$ 362.87
Cover Crop Spraying-Klinkenborg Aerial Spraying \$26,822.84
Donations (RC&D) \$ 4,000.00
Education Field Day
Bus Transportation \$ 1,874.92
Supplies \$ 766.51
Houg Property \$ 1,391.60
Insurance \$ 400.00
Office Supplies \$ 198.76
Personnel \$ 880.00
Post Office (Permit and Mailings) \$ 1,868.08
Sales Tax \$ 427.00
Supporter Club Printing \$ 999.00
Tree and Cover Crop Reimbursements \$ 46.75
Water Quality Monitoring \$ 2,750.00

Total Expenses \$42,919.04

Ending Balance as of 6/30/14 \$13,564.32

FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 through JUNE 30, 2014

Payroll Savings Account

Beginning Balance \$ 4.10

Receipts

Interest .59
Transfers from Checking Account \$ 346.78
Transfers from Technical Account 67.00
Transfers from Watershed Account 7,289.14

Total Receipts \$ 7,703.51

TOTAL \$ 7,707.61

Expenses

Federal Taxes 4,252.90
IPERS 2,826.69
State Taxes 628.00

Total Expenses \$ 7,707.59

Ending Balance 6/30/14 \$.02

FAYETTE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT
JULY 1, 2013 through JUNE 30, 2014

Watershed Account

Beginning Balance \$ 10,674.51

Receipts

Transfers from Money Market Acct \$ 44,030.32
IPERS Tax Reimbursement 371.28

Total Receipts \$ 44,401.60

TOTAL \$ 55,076.11

Expenses

Accounting Services \$ 225.00
Health 1,186.96
Office Supplies 241.66
Payroll 12,710.00
Return WIRB Funds to IDALS 25,947.88
Transfers to Checking Acct 1,138.00
Transfer to Money Market Acct 677.12
Transfers to Payroll Savings Acct 7,824.14
Transfer to Technical Acct 785.00
Water Quality Monitoring 2,750.00

Total Expenses \$ 53,485.76

Ending Balance 6/30/14 \$ 1,590.35

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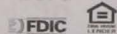
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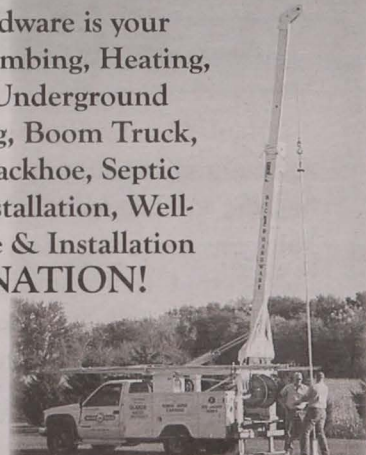
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Fayette County Soil and Water Commissioners and Staff



Among the Fayette County's SWCD Commissioners are (front, l-r) Rozann Dalenbach of Arlington, Paul Hoeger of Maynard, Richard Jensen of Elgin; (back) Bill Bennett of Elgin, Dave Drilling of Waucoma, and Eric Boehm of Wadena.



Assisting the public on a daily basis at the Fayette County SWCD field office are (l-r) Lori Kohlmeyer, IDALS state secretary; Aaron Anderson, NRCS district conservationist; Devin Brincks, NRCS soil conservation technician; Adam Grim, District watershed coordinator; Tamara Buitenwerf, NRCS soil conservationist.

A 30 Year Partnership

Rod Marlatt, President
Fayette County Pheasants Forever

The year was 1985, the beginning of CRP in the face of declining farm economies and wildlife habitat. This was the preface of what would ultimately become a 30-year partnership between the



Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District, NRCS, FSA, the Fayette County Conservation Board and Fayette County Pheasants Forever.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was met with unparalleled enthusiasm. It was a way for producers to set aside lower production acres with erodible soils or other vulnerable problems. This would not only provide good soil conservation practices, but would help stabilize commodity prices, and provide a bonanza of wildlife habitat.

A mere two years before CRP, a fledgling organization was started in Minnesota whose mission was to aid in the recovery of a crashing pheasant population. This organization realized that the loss of upland habitat was the most contributing factor of this decline. Thus, was born Pheasants Forever. The model for PF was and remains unique to all other wildlife conservation organizations. Local chapters are formed to raise funds and subsequently expand those funds in that chapter's county.

In 1985, the Fayette County Conservation Board recruited concerned citizens, and Fayette County Pheasants Forever, the 48th Chapter in the United States was hatched (excuse the pun). Either the timing was impeccable or we were just plain lucky, but it all came together at the right time.

Producers enrolled hundreds of acres into the CRP, and those acres needed to be seeded to nesting cover grasses and preferably native grasses. The task of implementing these practices is daunting as these seedings require specialized seed and equipment. The Fayette County Conservation Board, Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District, NRCS, FSA and Fayette County Pheasants Forever created a partnership to provide a user-friendly system for this implementation. That partnership remains strong 30 years later. Producers and landowners are encouraged by all the partners to include CRP and other conservation practices on their land. Design work for these practices is provided by NRCS, cost share and payments by FSA, labor and project coordination by the Fayette County Conservation Board, and economically priced seed, equipment and labor by Fayette County Pheasants Forever. This great partnership has been the vehicle for Fayette County to be a leader in the State of Iowa for most all conservation practices, including CRP, filter strips, tree plantings, shelterbelts and pollinator practices.

Over the past 30 years, Fayette County Pheasants Forever has planted over 800,000 trees and shrubs, thousands of acres of upland habitat cover, provided youth education resources, and assisted in the acquisition of over 700 acres of permanently protected public land.

Your Pheasants Forever chapter has expended over \$1,250,000 for Fayette County wildlife habitat. Fayette County Pheasants Forever ranks in the top 1% of all PF chapters nationwide and in 2014 was ranked #6 out of 741 chapters. None of this would have come to fruition without the partnership between the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District, NFCS, FSA, and the Fayette County Conservation Board. It is our vision that these partnerships will continue for at least another 30 years.

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hard-surface road
3.12 Acres • See Deb!



MLS #20151193

11201 280th Street
- West Union -
Secluded hunting ground
with living quarters
44 Acres • See Janet!



MLS #20151307

18745 230th Street
- Hawkeye -
4 bedroom acreage on
hard-surface road
3.25 Acres • See Lisa!



MLS #20151000

22445 X Avenue
- Sumner -
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lots of space
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Succession

Greg Heidebrink
Iowa DNR Forester

What is succession? According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia- *Ecological succession is the observed process of change in the species structure of an ecological community over time. The community begins with relatively few pioneering plants and animals and develops through increasing complexity until it becomes stable or self-perpetuating as a climax community.* There, that clears that up! Ok maybe not.

Here is how I would explain it. Take that acre and a half up on the "north forty"; the area is too small to farm with today's equipment so you just leave it "as is". At first other than a few weeds (Plant stage), it looks like it always has. Then we start to see some small woody plants like shrubs and cedar trees take over (Pioneer or Shrub stage); we can thank the birds for this! Next, trees like walnut and oak (mature forest) take over the area and start to shade out the shrubs and smaller trees; we can thank the squirrels for this. Finally, the area is so shady that the oak and walnut (shade intolerant species) can no longer get started and species like maple and basswood (Climax forest) take over. Now this can take 100's of years, but in a nutshell, that is succession.

Why does this matter? If we leave our forests "as is" in North East Iowa they will all eventually end up as climax (maple / basswood) forests. Is this all bad? Maple and basswood trees make very pretty forests; they produce breathtaking fall color, dense forest cover for interior forest birds and a beautiful area to recreate in, but they do have some downsides. The diversity in this forest type is much lower than in an oak forest. In many cases they can produce so much shade that the forest floor is bare and the mid-story is very thin. Each layer in a forest holds a different set of critters including insects, birds and other creepy crawlies. It is very important to maintain these layers for species diversity.

Why wasn't all of north east Iowa hard maple and basswood then? The natural process of succession was interrupted by fire before we showed up. Now that we are here, we have stopped fire and typically only selectively harvest our forest. This type of harvesting only opens up the understory a little bit. This is not enough sunlight to allow the shade intolerant species like oak and walnut to get started. To get enough sunlight for oak and walnut you need to really open up the overstory. This usually involves a clearcut harvest.

Now, I will admit that a clearcut is not the prettiest thing in the world, but I think it is all in how you look at it. You have just created a brand new forest for people to enjoy for the next 100 to 200 years. For the first 15 years of the cut you have created very thick cover for many different species of critters. Wildlife and insects included! This heavy cover can be a hunters dream. This is where the game is going to hang out. If you are successful at getting oak back on the site you have also just provided a food source for over 80 different species of wildlife for the next century or two.

I understand that a clearcut is not for everyone; it is a very drastic change in your forest. But keep in mind that there are many other options that we can look at. If you are interested in managing your forest and would like some help, we would love to take a look and give you some ideas. Give us a call @ 641-228-6611.



Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation chose Chuck Klima, who owns 95 acres of woodland between Clermont and Elgin, as the 2014 Woodland Owner of the Year. Klima, who lives near Waterloo, uses the property as a getaway spot and for hunting. The property features a cabin and pond, which his grandchildren enjoy. (submitted photo)

Klima awarded Woodland Owner of Year

By Zakary Kriener

The Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation 2014 Woodland Owner of the Year is Chuck Klima from Waterloo. Klima owns 95 acres of woodland between Clermont and Elgin, which he purchased in 1999. He has been active in promoting the condition of his property, including planting nearly 20 acres of trees through direct seeding, underplanting, and oak interplanting.

The 68-year-old also removed nine acres of weed trees in 2010, which helps promote the growth of young plants and trees.

In addition to seeking professional forestry advice and recommendations to help formulate his stewardship and project plans, he has also begun doing some of the planning on his own.

Klima uses much of the property for hunting getaways and for camping. The property is home to a cabin and pond, which Klima enjoys with his family, including his grandchildren.

"I am honored to receive the award," noted the honoree. "There are so many people that have taken steps to promote land stewardship for future generations; I think they all deserve some recognition, too."



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SWCD Scholarship winner

Gabriel "Gabe" Hamlett, a 2014 graduate of Starmont High School and the son of Randy and Suzy Hamlett of Arlington, has been named the 2014 Fayette County Soil and Water Conservation District Scholarship Award winner.



Gabriel Hamlett

Gabe is in his first year of the John Deere TECH program at Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC) in Calmar. Upon graduating, Hamlett plans to become a fifth-generation farmer.

"I believe my knowledge within the mechanical field is a huge asset to my family," noted Hamlett in his scholarship application. "I believe my ability to learn the ins and outs of current and future farming equipment is much-needed training in order to be competitive in present-day farming practices."

"My decision to forego a foot-

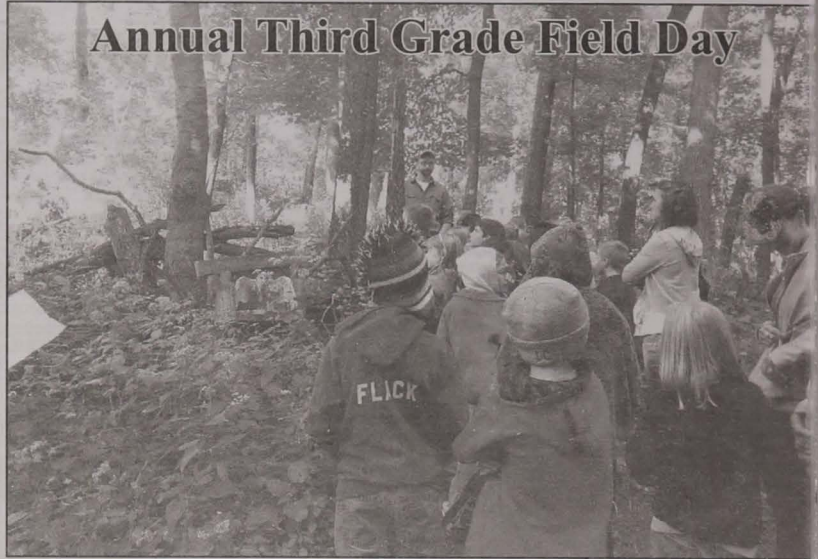
ball scholarship in order to pursue my career choice was no easy conclusion," noted the former All-District football player. "Family farms are a dying breed in the United States. This is not an easy path; however, I believe with passion, hard work, and leadership, I will succeed."

During his time at Starmont High School, Hamlett was active on Student Council (four years), football (four years), track (two years), wrestling (one year), National Honor Society (three years), and speech (one year).

Outside of school, he participated in American Red Cross blood drives, highway clean-up projects, Meals on Wheels, church dinners, cleaning of the Ronald McDonald House once a year, and has been a church server/altar boy.

Hamlett, who enjoys the outdoors by hunting, fishing, and snowmobiling, was on the 3.5-4.0 Honor Roll all four years of high school and was crowned 2013 Homecoming King at Starmont.

Annual Third Grade Field Day



by Tamara Buitenwerf

Each year the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) hosts the third grade field day. This year was no exception. It's an exciting few days where people cross their fingers and pray that the weather holds out so the third graders can stomp around the Dick Jensen farm and enjoy the outdoors.

This year there were 13 schools in attendance which included Fairbank, Fredericksburg, Oelwein, Scared Heart, Postville, South Winn, Starmont, Sumner, Trinity Catholic-Protivin, Turkey Valley, Valley, West Central, and West Union. Of those 13 schools represented, there were 483 students and 22 teachers that participated. Imagine 160 students

each morning bouncing around in a hay rack as they head down the narrow tree-lined, dead-end road on a brisk September morning. That's only the beginning.

Throughout the morning and early afternoon, students visit a variety of stations. The honey bee station is run by Mr. Bob Fassbinder of Fassbinder Apiaries in Elgin. Students learn about honey production, and what they can do to help the honeybees. The wildlife station was run by Adam Grim, district watershed coordinator for the Fayette SWCD. As the kids wander down a path through the timber, they learn about a variety of critters they might see out on the landscape. The soils station is run by assistant commis-

sioner, Eric Boehm, and gives the students an opportunity to look below the surface on which they're standing. They get their fingers dirty learning about the common soils in Iowa. At the erosion station Dick Jensen of the Fayette SWCD allows the students to experience how erosion occurs first hand. Kids are always amazed with the things they learn at the pond station which was run by Theresa Shea from the Decorah Fish Hatchery.

The third grade field day doesn't happen without the help of many volunteers to staff the stations, schedule the schools, send out invitations, and much more. Thanks to those who help make the field day success each year.



Dendb Woods, chair of the RC&D Employee Giving Fund presents a donation to SWCD Commissioners (l-r) Bill Bennett and Dick Jensen.

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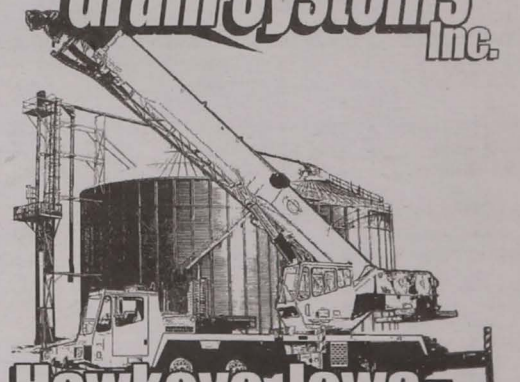
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Take a stand to save the land

by Dick Jensen

I must confess I am a persistent conservationist. I celebrate the remarkable richness of nature. I realize that not everyone shares that affection for the land. Most land use decisions today are governed wholly by economic self-interest. However, we all have one objective in common. We all need to generate a financial benefit from the land we use. To calculate if a profit is earned is difficult and inaccurate if all costs are not factored into each bushel or ton that is produced. There is a volume of services, forms, education, experts, and financial expounders that have all the details and methods necessary to determine if a profit or a loss is generated in your farming operation.

I think one vital loss has yet to be considered. See if you agree. The dictionary meanings of loss are: no longer has, taken away, death, unable to find, fail to keep, cease to have, destroy, ruin, lost, wasted, be worse off, without, and stolen - EROSION. The word erosion is added by myself due to the fact again our culture puts no value on dirt loss. An acre of dirt costing \$10,000 and its owner allows tons of it to slide into the waterways creating additional loss along the way is a cost! The brightest and the best can't even calculate the cost of lost topsoil flowing helter skelter downstream to the Gulf of Mexico. Does this mean that the soil isn't important, so trivial that it doesn't matter, or that no one really cares? If you eat food or drink water maybe you should be concerned. To my knowledge, erosion isn't treated the same as depreciation, theft, wear, rot, rust, death, or depletion and carried to the bottom line as a minus from the profit. Maybe it could be called a loan uncollectable. Erosion must be on a dirty word list and shouldn't be used in accounting the consequences of no consequences.

Other than paying the taxes, there are no hard roles expressed or implied that mandate decent

land use. Since civilization began, rules and taboos were implemented to maintain order and prevent self-destruction. For violating these rules, a penalty was connected and acted as a deterrent or a consequence for bad behavior. A few such rules today are: hunting, fishing, trapping, boating, littering, dumping, burning, noise, dust, odor, disposal, weed laws, animal neglect, sanitation, zoning, tire tread, speed, slow-moving, weight, length, width, manure management, tobacco, unsightly junk, and more. Try to visualize a football game without any rules or penalties. We need rules to maintain order and safety. To assist and support in the compliance of rules and regulations the concerned public gets involved through TIP - turn in poachers, MADD - mothers against drunk driving, whistle blowers, stream keepers, storm watchers, crime stoppers, and more. A force of good people demanding consequences for bad behavior. It may not be utopia but it isn't bedlam. Thanks to rules.

Many folks say we need additional education to bring about more ethical land use. More get-togethers and more meetings is where I meet some of the best conservationist in the country. They aren't the ones in need of more education. From the seat of my old truck, it appears to me that about 20 percent of our producers are causing 80 percent of the destruction to the beauty and diversity of our landscape.

I don't care what method is used to remedy the problem, the carrot or the stick, but the land shouldn't suffer to the consequences due to the bad behavior of its master. That would be an injustice. The apathy of the public shares the blame by remaining mute.

A big thank you to all our supporter club members

You are so important in keeping our food supply plentiful and drinking water safe. You provide the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District with funds to deliver cost-share money for protecting our soil and water. Your contributions help the district provide equipment, people, supplies and educational programs in Northeast Iowa. The Conservation District cannot levy any taxes on anyone or any property, so you are the only way we can provide services to you.

We (Natural Resource Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Soil Conservation, and Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District) keep getting directed to do more with less money and fewer people. Just a few years ago, we had three state employees working in the office, we now have only one, who is expected to do at least twice, if not three times as much as was expected from any one employee in the past. Last year we had two NRCS technicians, now we have one. Your contributions are helping the District provide one full-time and one part-time person and their training.

You are also helping pay for the third grade field trip for all students that live in Fayette County, for equipment that is used to deliver service to county residents, to do water testing, to provide college scholarships, to provide educational opportunities for people of other ages and many other needs in the district.

The Fayette SWCD Foundation board of directors includes the five elected SWCD Commissioners and two non-commissioners. The present non commissioners serving are Rick Klann and Leon Deutsch. All serve without compensation.



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The Iowa Corn Growers Association (ICGA) is a membership organization lobbying on agricultural issues on behalf of its 8,000 members.

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We are now accepting new members! For more information, please visit us online at www.iowacorn.org.

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Fayette County Corn and Soybean Association

Crop Insurance-USDA Reminds Producers of Conservation Compliance Filing Requirements

If you receive a crop insurance premium subsidy, you've probably heard a lot about conservation compliance. The 2014 Farm Bill added eligibility for crop insurance premium subsidy to the list of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) benefits that are subject to conservation compliance. USDA knows that you have questions about what this means for your business, and so we have outlined some of the basics below. USDA is committed to ensuring that you have the tools you need to meet this requirement, and we encourage you to work with your local FSA office before the June 1 deadline to help navigate conservation compliance requirements.

What are the Conservation Compliance Requirements?

In 2014, Congress re-linked crop insurance subsidies to conservation compliance, meaning you have to comply with certain conservation requirements in order to be eligible to receive the Federal crop insurance premium subsidy. These requirements are called Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Provisions. The connection between conservation compliance and crop insurance premium subsidy serves two purposes; one is for USDA to apply consistent rules to all producers receiving USDA benefits; and the other is to ensure a certain level of land stewardship for the most sensitive cropland and wetlands in exchange for receiving the subsidy. These conservation requirements help protect erosion-prone land (HEL) and wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide, like improving the quality of our water, protecting wildlife habitats and preventing flooding downstream.

Who Is Affected?

The conservation compliance requirements provide that for a person to be eligible for Federal crop insurance premium subsidy on any Federally reinsured crop insurance policy, including specialty crops, livestock, and pasture, the person must certify compliance with HELC and WC by filing form AD-1026 (www.fsa.usda.gov/AD1026form) with the local USDA Service Center's Farm Service Agency (FSA) by June 1, 2015. If a person does not have form AD-1026 on file with USDA by June 1, 2015, or is not in compliance with the requirements as outlined on the form, the person will not be eligible for premium subsidy on any crop insurance policy that has a sales closing date on or after July 1, 2015. These requirements do not affect the ability to purchase a crop insurance policy. However, absent the Federal premium subsidy, the full cost of the insurance will be borne by the producer.

How Does this Apply to "Affiliated Persons"?

The requirement to file form AD-1026 to certify compliance with HELC and WC provisions also applies to any "affiliated person" that is an owner, operator or other producer on agricultural land. An "affiliated person" is an individual or entity who has a specific connection (as explained in the AD-1026 Appendix) to the individual or entity completing the AD-1026. Although "affiliated person" provisions may seem to be similar to Federal crop

insurance SBI provisions, they are totally separate provisions and should not be confused.

If you, and any affiliated persons to you, have already filed form AD-1026, perhaps because you participated in programs administered by FSA or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and you and any affiliated person to you are still in compliance with the HELC and WC provisions, the filing requirement is met and no further action is necessary. We encourage you to visit with the FSA in your local service center well in advance of June 1, 2015. The FSA staff will be able to answer your questions and assist you in completing the form. To find your local office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

What If I Don't Have Highly Erodible Lands or Wetlands?

Although many of you, depending on your location, will have neither highly erodible land nor wetlands on the lands that you farm, you must file form AD-1026 to be eligible for USDA benefits subject to the compliance provisions, including crop insurance premium subsidy. Even persons who only grow perennial crops must file the form. For those of you who only grow perennial crops USDA has simplified the certification process by providing a simple check box where you can identify yourself as a producer who fits this category. If this is your first time filing form AD-1026, in addition to filing the form, there are additional basic data needs for establishing a file for you with FSA, including general contact information and a tax identification number. www.fsa.usda.gov/affiliationfact

How Can USDA Help?

USDA has a long standing mission of helping people help the land. In addition to providing assistance to producers with farm level natural resource assessments and conservation planning; and providing financial and technical assistance through a variety of voluntary conservation programs, we provide the technical services necessary to implement the conservation compliance provisions. These services include assisting producers with the identification of highly erodible lands and wetlands and providing planning services for addressing producer issues associated with compliance requirements.

Determining whether you have highly erodible land is a simple process based on soil types; determining whether you have wetlands on your property is a bit more complicated using a method that considers soil type and hydrology. If you would like to know more about how this process works please contact your local NRCS office.

For those of you who have not utilized the FSA or NRCS programs or services, USDA encourages you to visit with our local staffs to see what opportunities may be available through our service center to address your natural resource or other agricultural needs. Our staffs are geared up to give you priority technical assistance and develop longstanding relationships for addressing your resource concerns in a manner that ultimately helps you help your land.



During the opening day of the Fayette County Fair on Tuesday, July 29, Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Watershed coordinator Adam Grim (left) and SWCD Commissioner Dick Jensen congratulated Sydney Baker on being named the Conservation District Region 4 Poster Contest winner. The Durant Elementary student is pictured displaying her award-winning entry "Dig Deeper." The contest included entries from the 11 county region.

WATER QUALITY INITIATIVE

Vince Sitzmann

Field Services Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship -
Division of Soil Conservation

In the U.S., Iowa ranks number one in the production of eggs, pork, soybeans, and corn, and number two in beef. If Iowa were a country, it would be the third largest producer of corn in the world. That's pretty amazing considering Iowa is only 36 million acres in size with only 25 million acres dedicated to row crop production. These are impressive numbers by any standards, but equally important is the conservation ethic Iowa farmers subscribe to. Farmers throughout the state spend millions of dollars annually out of their own pockets to install conservation practices on their land, which makes them leaders in conservation implementation as well as leaders in ag production.

Two years ago, Iowa unveiled the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (NRS). This was the first plan of its kind in the nation, aimed at reducing nutrient losses to the Gulf of Mexico. The strategy was pioneered by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University, and the Iowa DNR. It incorporates the best science and research we have available and it was built for Iowa. Shortly after the Nutrient Reduction Strategy was released, implementation of the plan was launched and is known today as the Water Quality Initiative (WQI).

Over the past two years we continue to see exciting momentum for the WQI. Iowans are engaged, new partnerships are expanding, and farmers are implementing conservation practices they've never tried before. The Nutrient Research Center at ISU has been established with the purpose of pursuing a science based approach to nutrient management research. The Iowa Agriculture Water Alliance (IAWA) partnership between the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa Soybean Association, and the Iowa Pork Producers has been established, each committing one million dollars annually over the next five years to advance the implementation of the WQI. The Iowa Legislature has also committed 16.8 million dollars over the last two years to support conservation and water quality improvements both in special project areas and for statewide practice implementation.

We have made great strides through the voluntary approach to conservation, but we have to keep the momentum growing by exploring more and different types of conservation practices on the landscape. We have new and emerging technologies in addition to our traditional conservation practices that will improve our nutrient management efforts. I would encourage everyone to evaluate their farming operation and ask yourself if there is more you can do on your farm. Solving water quality issues is something everyone has to be a part of if we are to continue our leadership role in ag production and conservation implementation.

If you are interested in learning more about the NRS or the WQI you can visit www.cleanwateriowa.org or stop into your local SWCD to learn how you can be part of this important initiative.

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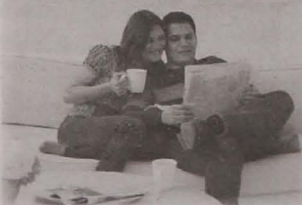
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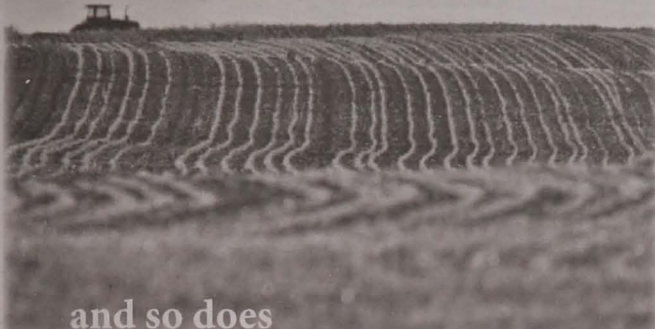
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Conservation a way of life on Boehm farm

By Brian Smith

In recent years, conservation of our land, water, and other natural resources has become increasingly important to those living in the state of Iowa. Taking the responsibility to be actively involved in conservation is a step that many, including Eric and Cindy Boehm of rural Wadena, have been willing to take.

"There is an old Native American adage that encourages looking seven generations into the future to determine whether what you are doing now will be beneficial to that generation. That is more or less the philosophy I have adopted toward conservation," explained Eric, who is dedicated to the concept of conservation.

Part of the decision to embrace the proponents of conservation can be traced to a 1999 flood. The Boehm farm sits at the end of a watershed and thus receives the brunt of such events. As a result, the Boehms decided to take a crop field out of production and do a stream bank restoration. They also did some native seeding and created some wetland areas on their acreage.

The Boehms didn't stop there, however. Approximately 300 of their 500 acres have been placed into Timber Stand Improvement (TSI), which is a program designed to improve the health, habitat, and financial return of woodlands.

"This means that we are doing some active management of our timber that will allow more trees to grow and in the long run will lead to healthier and more profitable stands of timber," noted Boehm.

The environmentally minded farmer also uses the no-till method while raising both corn and soybeans on his farm in alternating years. Using no-till decreases the amount of erosion that can occur while it increases organic matter retention and cycling of nutrients in the soil. In short, it makes the soil more resilient.

"We have also been very diligent about planting new trees, native grasses and flowers, and cover crops. It's all about not treating our land like a commodity and starting to treat it more responsibly so that something will be left for future generations," added the conscientious farmer.

In 2012, Eric and Cindy hosted a conservation field day on their farm, inviting others to view firsthand some of the things they have been doing over the past several years. They created multiple stations for visitors to peruse, including creek restoration, native planting, nut planting, valuing timber, and protection of the endangered Pleistocene snail.

"There has also been a loss in butterfly

habitat, and we hope our planting of more native grasslands and flowers will help to reestablish some of that. We are also involved in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) and have plans to establish another wetland area on our farm," said Boehm.



A small pond was helped along by the caring hands of Eric Boehm. The water source now houses a large variety of wildlife amidst a beautiful landscape. (File photo)

In 2012 Eric and Cindy Boehm hosted a conservation field day on their rural Wadena farm, inviting others to view firsthand some of the things they have been doing over the past several years. The Boehms plan to continue to lead by example, showing others how to utilize conservation methods, which they have shown to be successful on their own land. (File photo)



In the future, the Boehms hope to host a kiosk on their property that will include a walking trail. They hope it will allow those who visit to see the difference that is being made by making responsible decisions regarding Iowa farmland. The Boehms are working with Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development to make the kiosk and the trail a reality in the near future.

Cindy has been active in employing conservation strategies on the landscaping around their home and, along with Eric, has been involved in extensive dialogue with the Iowa DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better understand their natural resources. Eric is a member of the county conservation board, is the assistant commissioner for Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and is Wadena's representative for the Turkey River Watershed Management Authority.

The Boehm farm is considered to have one of the best examples of stream bank stabilization in the area, and Eric regularly speaks to politicians about the benefits of stream bank restoration and upland treatment. These are practices which, if used properly, could help reduce flood damage.

The Boehms plan to continue to lead by example, showing others how to utilize conservation methods which they have shown to be successful on their own land. They hope their passion for conservation will inspire others to do their part to protect Iowa's land, water and other natural resources for many future generations.

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Fayette County Contractor Meeting

By Devin Brincks

On March 5, 2015 the Fayette Soil and Water Conservation District and Fayette County NRCS Field Office hosted a contractor meeting to inform and educate our area contractors. Approximately 18 people attended representing over a dozen different businesses. The meeting started with a welcome by the Aaron Anderson, District Conservationist and an introduction of office employees. Devin Brincks (the New Federal Soil Conservation Technician)

presented the changes to the requirements for submitting bills for cost share projects.

Recently, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship released new guidelines for cost share invoices which was shared in Devin's presentation.

The meeting continued with Angie Freilinger-Mohs presenting on project specifications and things contractors need to be look for. She also talked about what our office will be requiring for contrac-

tor check outs. Aaron Anderson then touched on wetland compliance and the regulations for working around wetlands. Adam Grim gave a quick update on the Otter Creek watershed and Iowa Flood Center projects.

This meeting allowed the field office and the contractors to have a discussion on what is expected with cost share projects and what needs to be staked and prepared for contractors before they start.

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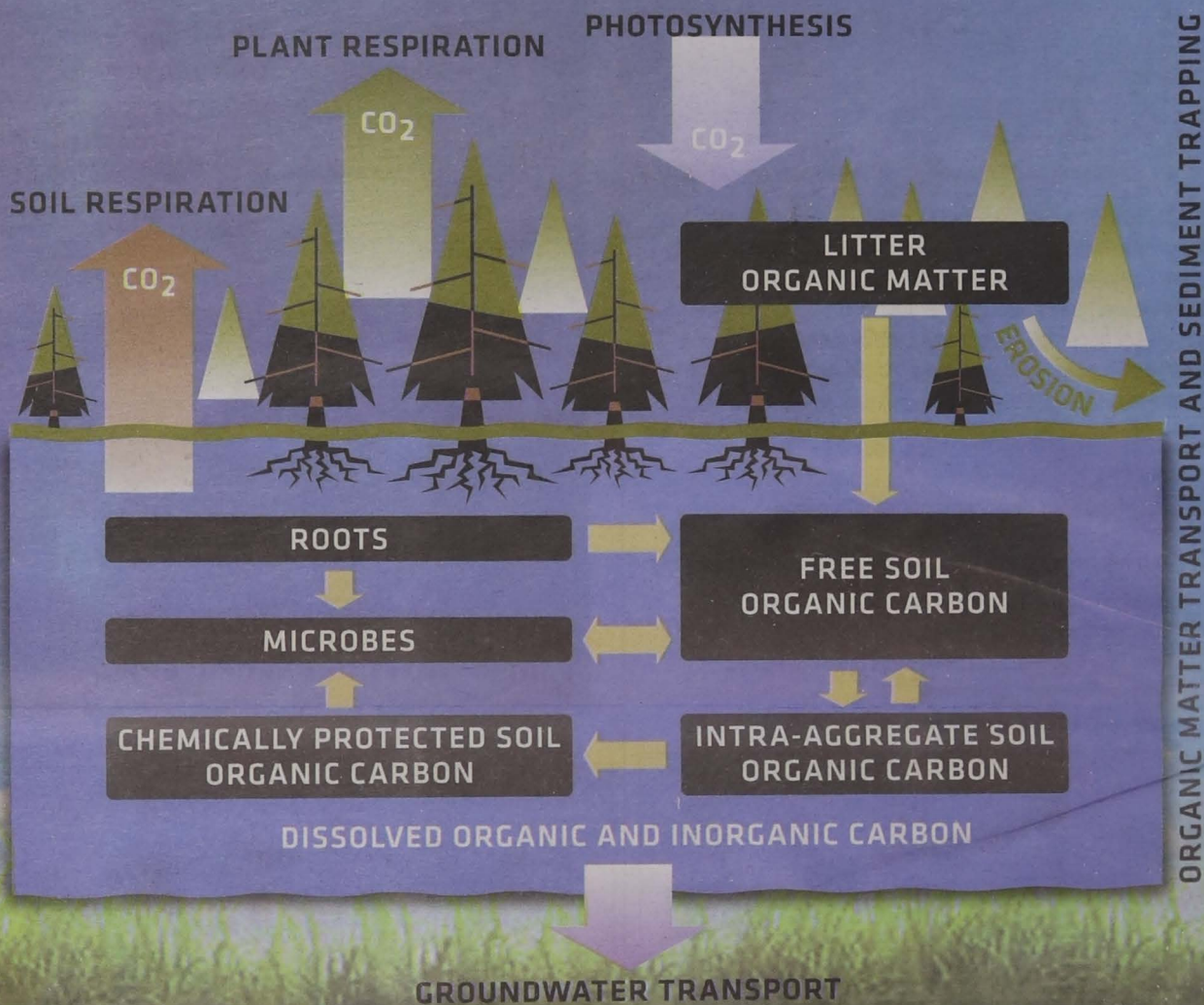
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