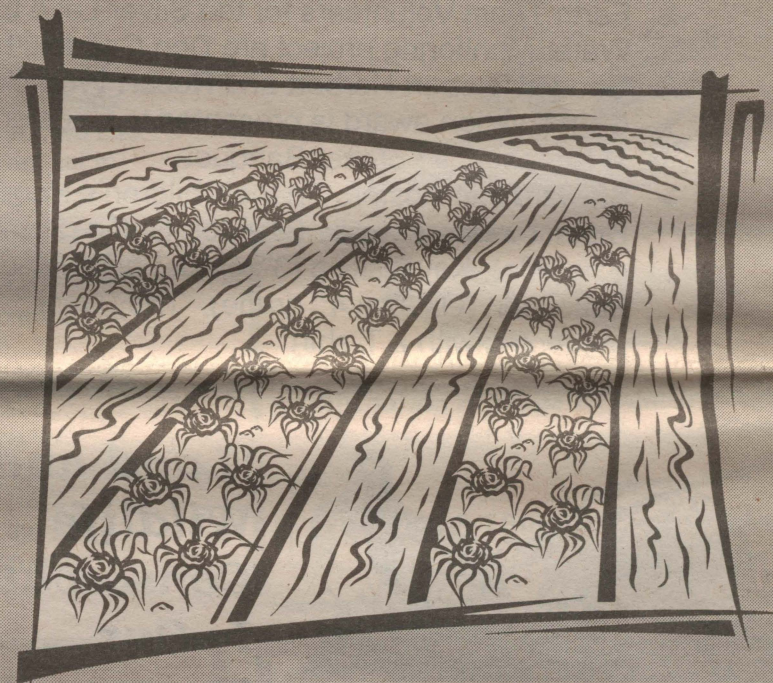
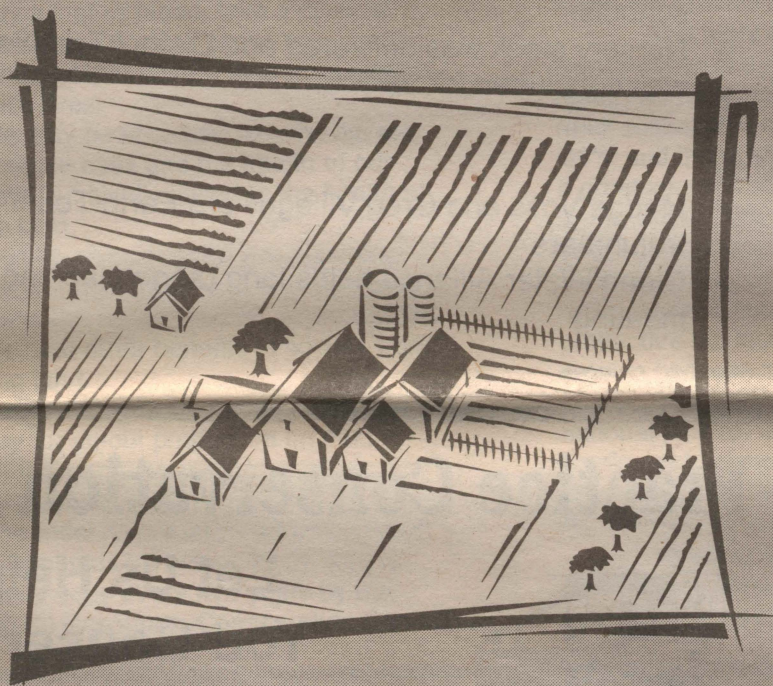


Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District 1999 Annual Report

Published by Lakes News Shopper (712) 338-2232



Dickinson SWCD, 2412 17th St. Spirit Lake, IA 51360
Ph. (712) 336-3782 Ext. 3 E-Mail swcd@rconnect.com

Highlights of 1999

January

- Election of officers:
 - Mark Ingwersen, Chair
 - Bill Northey, Vice Chair
 - Keith Van Kleek, Secretary
 - Orville Berg, Treasurer
- Lance Heikens is re-appointed Assistant Commissioner
- Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship is established
- District Newsletter published

February

- Carbon Storage Project initiated
- Backyard Conservation Marketing Plan submitted for competition
- Dickinson approved for EQIP Water Monitoring project for Silver Lake
- Pools of Thought Newsletter published

March

- Backyard Conservation Marketing Plan receives \$500 prize
- Earth Team Volunteers for the Silver Lake EQIP Water Monitoring project are Don Goodell, Leon Goodell, Robert Herbert and Robert Worrick
- Conservation award is presented to Chester Miller at Pheasant's Forever Banquet
- Stewardship Posters "In the Children's Hands" District winners were: Brandon Griffin (Spirit Lake 1st grade), Kay Oskvig (3rd grade) and Maggie Simonson (Okoboji 4th grade). They were presented with a T-shirt

- Retiring Okoboji 4th grade teacher, Mrs. RuthAnn VanDonslear, also received an "In the Children's Hands" T-Shirt for her support of the yearly contest
- Regional Envirothon attended by 2 teams from Terril School which were sponsored by the SWCD
- Sarah Wickman, Milford, is the recipient of the Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship for \$500
- Jerrod Wallace, Spirit Lake, is the recipient of the District Scholarship for \$500
- Tom Koster is appointed an Assistant Commissioner, directing the Backyard Conservation Program
- Mark Ingwersen and Chris Hoffman named Board Appointee and At-Large Appointee for Iowa Lakes RC&D

April

- A new District sign is placed in front of the USDA building
- Commissioners delivered Green Ash trees for each 6th grade student in Dickinson County to the schools
- Nursery stock was delivered and District Tree Sale was concluded for 99

May

- Madge Voss and Greg Villegas are Earth Team Volunteers
- Clean Water Alliance holds long range planning meeting



"Land and Wildlife Conservation Is Our Top Priority."

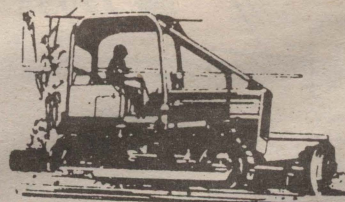
Dickinson County Pheasants Forever

This past year we spent \$50,000 cost sharing with the D.N.R. for land acquisition. One of those projects is the orchard property at the north end of Lake Okoboji. This area will provide excellent wildlife habitat as well as a filter system for the lake. We also spent \$19,000 for trees and shrubs which were planted on private farm land.

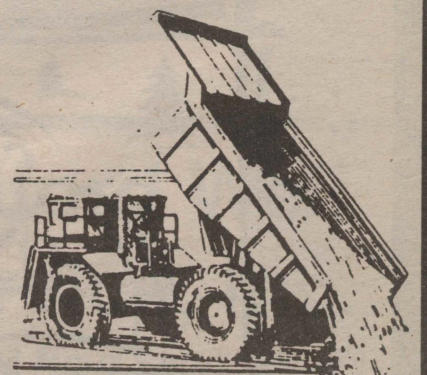
County Farmers... Call us for information on your 2000 Wildlife Foodplot Acres. Call 338-2654 or 338-2232 for information. Call 338-4919 for trees and planting information.

Practice Conservation -

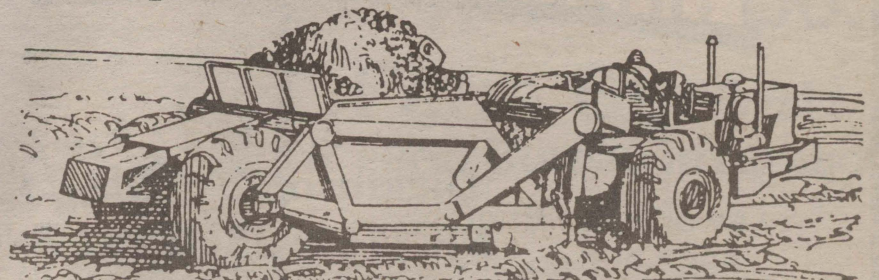
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Highlights of 1999

May (continued)

- Bill Northey attends Wetland Roundtable in Washington, DC

June

- Maxine Butler accepts position of State Secretary to replace Ann Ditsworth
- Conservation Milestones at the Millennium Art Contest is announced

July

- District Newsletter published
- EQIP Pasture Walk at Randy Magg's

August

- Corbet Butler, 5th grade, Spirit Lake, is awarded first place at State level for K-8 in "A Conservation Farm is a Thing of Beauty" Art Contest, sponsored by Conservation Milestones at the Millennium, receiving \$125 and a commemorative medallion
- Donated items to help fund Conservation Districts of Iowa Scholarships

September

- Annual Outdoor Classroom was held at Kettleson Hogsback with 176 6th graders in attendance from Spirit Lake, Okoboji and Terril School Districts
- Commissioners and staff assisted with Clay County Fair SWCD Booth
- Clean Water Project Annual Review was held at Lakeside Lab

- Mark Ingwersen is awarded 1999 Outstanding Regional and State Commissioner of the Year at Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting
- Orville Berg receives Watershed Achievement award at Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting

October

- Clean Water Alliance Annual Meeting is held at Lakeside Lab. The Long Range Plan is approved
- Tim Wilson is an Earth Team Volunteer
- Pools of Thought Newsletter published
- District Newsletter published

November

- Poster Contest Winners: Brandon Griffin, Spirit Lake (1st grade), Kay Oskvig, Milford (3rd grade), are notified that they are first place winners for Region 2 and receive \$35 prize
- Randy Magg is presented with Milestones at the Millennium Century Conservation Farmers' awards of certificate, jacket and a waterfowl print

December

- SWCD Foundation Tree Sale begins
- Fall Regional is attended by Mark Ingwersen, Tom Koster and Carroll Oskvig in Pocahontas
- National Summit on private land conservation in Ames is attended by Keith Van Kleek
- Tim Terrill accepts position of Environmental Specialist to replace John Wills and will begin work in January, 2000

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UCB's Ag Team Left to Right:
Matt McHugh, Steve Feld, Dick Packebush & Dan Hummel

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Dickinson SWCD Financial Report

Fiscal Year 1999

1M Budget – District

Funds provided by the State of Iowa for printing costs, office supplies and equipment, District Commissioner's mileage and associated travel expenses

Allocation	\$ 3,000.00
Supplemental Allocation	\$ 1,735.00
Commissioner Expenses	\$ 1,263.90
Office Supplies & Equip.	\$ 2,189.77
Printing	\$ 1,046.14

3M Budget – Iowa Financial Incentives Program

Funds provided for cost-share assistance to landowners for installing permanent soil and water conservation practices and offers 30% of the allocation for tillage incentives.

Allocation	\$13,760.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$12,408.30
Unobligated Amount	\$ 1,351.70

Resource Enhancement & Protection (REAP)

REAP – Practices

Allocation	\$ 7,026.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 2,722.29
Unobligated Amount	\$ 4,303.71

REAP – Forestry & Native Grasses

Allocation	\$ 1,811.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$ 1,418.76
Unobligated Amount	\$ 392.24

REAP – Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project

Allocation	\$69,575.00
Amount Obligated/Spent	\$27,273.76
Unobligated Amount	\$42,301.24

2000 Tree Sale



This is just a partial listing of the trees and shrubs available.

Bundles of 10

Green Ash	\$2.00 per tree
Common Lilac	\$1.00 per shrub

Bundles of 25

Red Oak	\$1.75 per tree
Dogwood	\$1.00 per shrub

Potted Evergreens

Black Hills Spruce 18-24"	\$10.00 each
Eastern Red Cedar 12-15"	\$7.00 each
Norway Spruce 15-18"	\$7.00 each
Scotch Pine 15-18"	\$7.00 each

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1999 Soil and Water Conservation Accomplishments

by Carroll Oskvig
District Conservationist

The Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners provided leadership in directing many soil and water conservation activities in 1999.

Soil and water conservation practices such as farmstead windbreaks, no-till, grassed waterways, terraces, sediment basins and wetland restorations were installed using state cost-share funds and/or Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project funds.

Farmers continued to gain interest in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Practices such as forest riparian buffers, filter strips, waterways, contour buffers, field windbreaks and farmstead windbreaks were developed with the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

A long-range plan was developed with the Clean Water Alliance for water quality project goals in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed.

Assistance was given to the four municipal water plants located in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed as the municipalities began working with DNR in developing a Source Water Assessment for the Iowa Great Lakes.

Restoration planning for both uplands and wetlands for two Wetland Reserve Program contracts was started.

Pasture, pond, nutrient and pest management were major practices implemented by farmers enrolled in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. These funds were used to co-sponsor a pasture walk and special speaker at the Integrated Crop Management conference sponsored by the Dickinson County Extension Service. Four Earth Team Volunteers began water quality monitoring on Silver Lake. The Silver Lake Watershed in Dickinson and

Osceola Counties is included in an Environmental Incentives Program Priority Area. The Iowa Environmental Council and the Iowa Lakeside Lab provided training to the Silver Lake Water Quality volunteers.

Conservation compliance requirements for USDA farm program participants resulted in many highly erodible land plans and certified wetland determinations.

Special thanks are given to the Farm Service Agency. Our partnership with FSA provides technical and financial assistance to producers for implementing soil and water conservation practices throughout Dickinson County.

Special thanks are also given to the Earth Team Volunteers who have assisted with a variety of efforts in the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District office. These volunteers include: Jim Bell, Clarence Call, Maurice Dougal, Don Goodell, Leon Goodell, Robert Herbert, Paula Koster, Tom Koster, Keith Van Kleek, Greg Villegas, Madge Voss, Tim Wilson, Robert Worrick and the Retired Senior Volunteer Program Volunteers.

Working Trees

By Willard Punt,
Conservation Technician

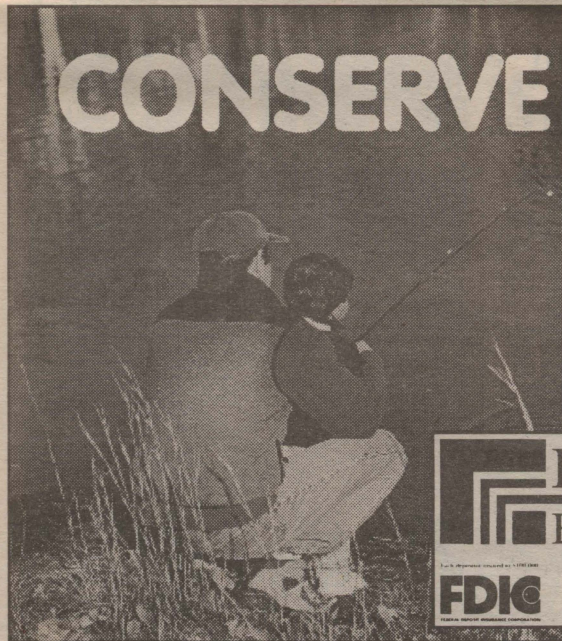
'Benefits attributed to farmstead windbreaks range all the way from aesthetics to economics. Farm and ranch windbreaks conserve energy, provide snow control, improve working and recreational environments, enhance wildlife populations, provide visual screenings and dust control and increase the production of various wood and food products. Well designed windbreaks can cut energy costs as much as 20 to 40 percent in the winter, and when combined with additional shade tree planting, reduce summer cooling costs between 15 and 35 percent,' states an article from the NRCS office in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Aesthetics often also become an economic benefit by increasing the value of the property. The economic benefits can often be attained with a minimal investment. For example because there is a 50-75% cost share available through the Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District, one could expect to get a very adequate windbreak of up to 6 rows 500 feet long for \$185.00 to \$300.00 out-of-pocket cost, when utilizing the 75% cost share, and purchasing the trees from the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District Foundation. Trees and shrubs may also be purchased from any nursery or private individual to qualify for cost share.

An established windbreak slows wind on the downside of the windbreak for a distance of 10 times the height of the tallest row of trees in the windbreak to the area needing protection. For example, if the expected height of a row of trees at maturity is 40 feet, the windbreak should be planted 80 to 200 feet upwind from the area needing the most protection. Also sufficient space must be provided to store snow. Several factors cause this required space to vary. However, an expected range might be 100 to 200 feet, measuring from the furthestmost windward row of trees or shrubs.

A well planned farmstead windbreak is just one of a number of available conservation practices to consider while pursuing the goals of a healthy agricultural economy.

Along with the conventional windbreaks, a shelterbelt practice through the CRP program is available. If this practice fits your needs, it is an excellent way to add on to an existing windbreak, giving the new windbreak a chance to grow before destroying the old one. Also, other benefits can be appreciated with this application, such as an increased wildlife habitat and a 15 year rental rate.



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SWCD-DNR Resource Partnership Strong

By Doug Harr,
DNR Wildlife Biologist

If you think that different government agencies can't get along, think again. Over the years, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has forged a strong partnership with the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and its local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff. All the acronyms for these agencies may look like alphabet soup, but if the soup is a good blend everyone will want the recipe. That's exactly what has happened here. This working partnership, built through years of mutual concern about soil, water and wildlife conservation in Dickinson County has become a model for others to follow both inside and outside of Iowa.

In the past year, Iowa DNR has assisted the SWCD and NRCS with reviewing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) plans and helped to implement native plant seedings and wetland restorations on CRP contract lands. CRP is one of our most important tools in limiting soil losses on erosive sites, and many of the approved practices to protect these soils hold multiple benefits for fish and wildlife resources. For this reason, local DNR staff has been available when called upon to help with these and other important conservation practices.

The SWCD and NRCS return the favor by assisting with plans for state and federal public wildlife lands managed by DNR's Big Sioux Wildlife Management Unit. In 1999, NRCS engineers designed wetlands for a crucial DNR property enrolled in the federal Wetlands Reserve Program, and the SWCD helped seek DNR's required project approval by local

drainage district trustees. Currently, the agencies are in early planning stages for what could be the most critical watershed project yet developed for West Okoboji Lake, Iowa's most important recreational lake and a source of safe drinking water for some area communities. While much planning remains to be done and approvals sought from county officials, the project has high intentions. Wetland restoration within lower reaches of a large sub-watershed north of West Okoboji should prevent sediments and many contaminants from entering the big lake. These marshes and associated permanent seedings also will provide hundreds of acres of important wildlife and recreations land open to compatible public use. Citizen response to the plan so far predicts this partnership project, involving the United States Fish & Wildlife Service as chief landowner, may have the largest support of any conservation project ever mounted in Dickinson County.

Solid, working partnerships like this one forged long ago between DNR and the Dickinson SWCD makes it much easier to accomplish critically important conservation objectives. This benefits local farmers, urban dwellers and tourists, while also helping meet the nation's overall soil and water conservation goals. People living as far away as southern Louisiana will reap the benefits of cleaner water coming down the Mississippi River and its tributaries. Conservation on such a national scale might be considered a jigsaw puzzle, but every part of that puzzle is important to completing the picture. The strong DNR-SWCD-NRCS local partnership very well may be one of the most important parts of the puzzle.

Dickinson SWCD Forestry Program

Each year in the Spring, all interested 6th grade students in Dickinson County are

presented with a Green Ash tree by the District Commissioners. This 'environmental gift' is a follow-up to the Outdoor Classroom where the importance of trees is emphasized to the students. This program has been in existence for more than 20 years and many parents have beautiful reminders of their child's sixth year in school growing in their yards or windbreaks.

Native Grass Drilling Service Available for CRP Seedings

By Jeff Kestel

Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation & Development

If you have native grasses or forbs that need to be planted on CRP acres you will be pleased to know that a service will be available to do just that. Also, if preferred by the landowner and/or operator the planting service will work directly with the NRCS office to get seeding requirements, order needed seed and certify completion with NRCS when seeding is completed.

The service is being provided jointly by the Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) and Ann & Dick Nelson from Emmetsburg. For each acre seeded by the service \$2.50 will be contributed back to the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to be used on local conservation efforts.

For more information about this native grass planting service contact the Iowa Lakes RC&D at 712-262-2083 or email jeff.kestel@ia.nrcs.usda.gov. You can also contact your local Dickinson County SWCD/(NRCS) office at 712-336-3782, ext. 3.

THANK YOU

to the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District for letting us publish your 1999 Annual Report.

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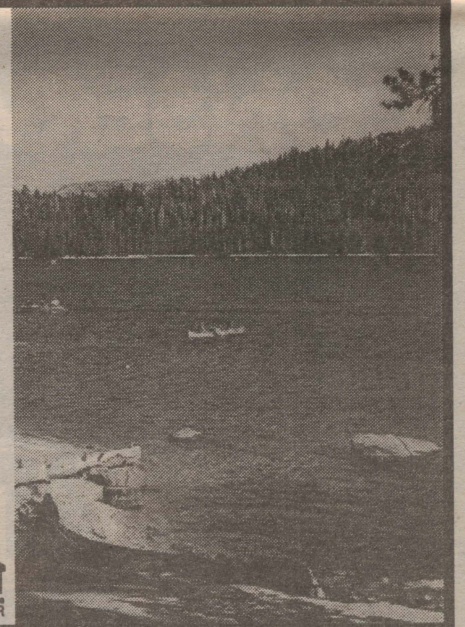


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Help Conserve our Working Land

By Leroy Brown, State Conservationist,
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

It's right under our noses. Dependable. There for us every day. The kind of thing you could take for granted. So dependable, doing its job for us day after day, that people refer to it as our working land.

It's our privately owned land in this country, and it is, in fact, taken for granted.

You ask most people what the word conservation means to them and they will talk about our national parks and forests. They call these public places of grandeur our national treasures. And that they are.

But if you think about it, our working land, the privately owned land that produces most of our food and fiber, provides habitat for our fish and wildlife, filters our water and helps purify our air— that land and the people who care for it are important national treasures as well.

Seventy percent of the American landscape is in private hands. Almost 90 percent of the rain and snow that eventually makes its way to us for our use as water falls first on private land. More than 70 percent of the wildlife in this country gets food and shelter from our working land.

We've come to realize that this land produces much more than food and fiber. Every time we buy a loaf of bread, take a drink of water, and watch a flock of geese head south, we are reminded that private land is interwoven into our daily lives.

We may be an urban society, but our natural resource base and the health of our environment is critically linked to the health of our private land.

If we're going to have a sustainable society, we have to continue to work toward a more healthy soil, cleaner water, abundant fish and wildlife, and other benefits to society from this working land.

We've found through the years there's a price to pay for all-out production on our farmlands, for overharvesting forestlands, for neglecting grasslands.

The most recent information from the National Resources Inventory (NRI), a land health survey done every five years by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service,

has both positive and negative news on our private land.

You can't grow food or filter water on land that's paved, and there's no question we are paving America's agricultural land at a record pace. NRI information shows we've developed more ag land into urban uses in the five year period from 1992 to 1997 than we did in the previous 10 years. The average annual rate of conversion nationally over the five year period ending in 1997 was a little over three million acres a year, an area about the size of nine Iowa counties. That's more than double the rate in the 1982 to 1992 period. In Iowa, about 20,000 acres a year have been converted since 1992, a rate 4 times as high as the 5,000 acres a year from 1982 to 1992.

Agricultural land conversion used to be thought of as happening only around Atlanta, Chicago or Los Angeles, but now we're talking about smaller cities like Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, Iowa City, and Des Moines.

We can expect continued dialogue on wetlands, because nationally we have not yet reached the goal of no net loss on wetlands. But we have been coming closer with the hundreds of thousands of acres of wetlands farmers and other landowners are restoring through USDA's Wetlands Reserve Program. In Iowa, the tide in wetlands losses has turned as more than 50,000 acres of wetlands have been restored.

The story on erosion and soil conservation is a good one—to a point. As a nation we focused on slowing erosion on our most susceptible soils in the 1980's and early '90's, and those efforts paid off. In fact, we had a great success story in the 38 percent cut in erosion from 1982 to 1995. But we've seen overall soil erosion rates remain level since 1995. And in focusing our resources on those most sensitive soils, thousands of acres of more productive but less erosive soils increased in erosion because of lack of attention.

The story in Iowa is very similar to the national picture. In Iowa, farmers have continued to slow the flow of soil into our waterways, with about a 50 percent cut in sheet, rill, and wind erosion in 1997 from 1982.

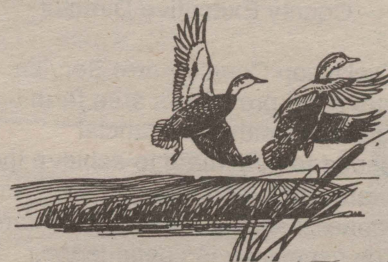
Keeping topsoil in place is the first fundamental step towards protecting water quality, improving fish and wildlife habitat, and

maintaining farm and forest production. It's critical for addressing the hypoxia issue in the Gulf of Mexico, water quality issues in the Chesapeake Bay, and to restore salmon to the rivers of the Pacific Northwest and New England. Despite the progress made on working land, we still have hundreds of thousands of acres of land eroding at environmentally damaging rates.

The truth is, despite all the progress we've made over half a century of conservation, we still have a mixed bag when it comes to the health of our private land. We take private land for granted, yet the health of private land will determine our own health and well-being.

Paving over farmland, fragmented forests, mud in our streams, new pressures for water, deteriorating grasslands, converted wetlands— these serious issues amount to a quiet crisis on the American landscape.

In Iowa, with more agricultural land than most, we are at the center of agricultural production. The people of this state have long been a leader in the conservation movement. We will be judged by future generations not on how much we produced and consumed from our private lands, but by how well we conserved the natural resources on those private lands. We must continue to lead in taking care of the land that takes care of us.



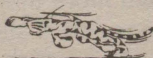
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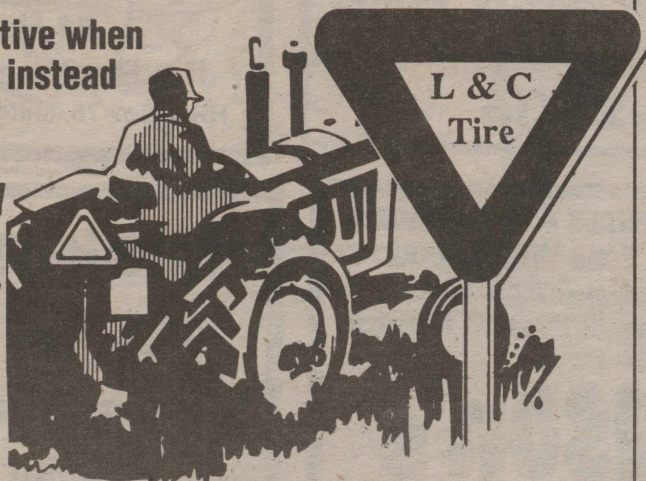
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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS--Front, left to right, Bill Northey, vice chair, Superior Township; Mark Ingwersen, chair, Spirit Lake Township; Orville Berg, treasurer, Center Grove Township. Back row, left to right: Chris Hoffman, Lakeville Township; Keith Van Kleek, secretary, Milford Township. Not present: Lance Heikens, asst. commissioner, Silver Lake Township; and Tom Koster, Center Grove Township.



SPIRIT LAKE FIELD OFFICE STAFF-- Left to right: Willard Punt, conservation technician; Tim Moran, conservation aide; Maxine Butler, state secretary; and Carroll Oskvig, district conservationist.

Farm Service Agency Annual Report

By Larry D. Lago
County Executive Director

The Dickinson County Farm Service Agency has strived to provide its area farm owners and operators with the financial assistance needed to help them to achieve their main goal, to farm their land in an efficient and productive manner that also provides their family with the income necessary to continue their dream.

Through the vast USDA programs that the Farm Service Agency administers it has contributed to making these dreams become a reality through program benefits, services and financial support. Such programs are:

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that provides producers an incentive to take land out of intensive row crop production and maintain it in a conservation status that will ultimately provide the local community with improved water quality and enhance the wildlife habitat in the area. In the past year there have been over 2,000 acres enrolled in this program in Dickinson County alone, providing over \$221,000 for cost-share assistance and annual rental payments for the past year.

We will begin the year 2000 with another opportunity for area farm owners and operators to participate in a 10 year Conservation Reserve Program signup. We will be

accepting applications and administering the 20th General CRP signup beginning January 18 and running through February 11, 2000. This is an opportunity for farmers and landowners to offer land into the CRP Program. Again individuals offering land will be made aware of the maximum rental rate available for the land they are considering enrolling once they have completed the signup process with the FSA office and before they submit their enrollment application. Once again the signup is competitive with only the most environmentally sensitive land being accepted nationally. Also the Continuous CRP signup program is ongoing for those individuals who have specific conservation concerns on their farm. For additional information or assistance on conservation programs, please feel free to contact us at the Farm Service Agency.

The Production Flexibility Contract (PFC) that was established in 1996 through the Agricultural Marketing Transition Act (AMTA) provides the farming community with financial payments that are based on their crop contract acreage. The contract acreage was established from historical crop acreage reports, of which will be available and the amount of payment will slowly decline until the crop year 2000 when the program is scheduled to end. This program alone has provided the local community with more than \$3.5 million dollars in financial

assistance not including the additional Market Loss Assistance Payment that was authorized by Congress late this fall.

Another one of the programs that FSA administers is the Loan Deficiency Payment (LDP) and Marketing Gain programs that become available when the sales market price for crops falls below the county level loan rate that is available to producers on an ongoing basis. This program is designed to ensure that producers are guaranteed not to receive less than the loan rate for their grain. Through the LDP program producers can receive the difference between the loan rate and what the Posted County Price (PCP) is for a given day. This assists producers in marketing their grain and knowing what their return will be. Without this program many producers would be forced to forfeit their grain that they have put under loan with the FSA Office due to the inability to repay the loan. For those producers not wishing to put their grain under loan it provides that assurance of the amount that they will receive based on the day that they want to market the grain the LDP amount for the day they apply for the payment. This program has provided our local community with more than \$4.1 million dollars over the past year and is still available to producers with 1999 grain in which they have beneficial interest.

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