

Jack Strawhacker Conservation Practices

General Conservation Cover

- By planting 250 acres of highly erodible fields to native grasses, Jack has saved 37,500 tons of soil from those fields which is equal to 1 ½ inches of topsoil over the last ten years

Wetlands

- Jack has always been interested in developing habitat for water fowl
- Jack placed land into the Wetland Reserve Program in the 1990s? (double check that)
- In 2000 and 2001, on his farm adjacent to the Mississippi River, Jack created 11.9 acres of shallow water for migrating birds.
- Jack collaborated with neighboring landowners in 2002 to create a complex of wetlands through the Farmable Wetland Pilot Program. Several pools of varying depths were created and native grasses were planted to buffer the pools, all totaling over 40 acres.
- In 2006, on the same farm adjacent to the Mississippi River, Jack added another 10.3 acre wetland restoration project. The restoration project went above and beyond what is required by the program. Jack planted a row of evergreen trees to protect the wetland from the gravel road and add winter cover for birds; he planted a native prairie mix rich in wildflowers and legumes increasing the food value of the seeding, and installed a water control structure that will help to keep water in the wetland during times of migration.

Pond

- In 2007, Jack constructed a 5.0 acre pond adding to the value of his farm. All drainage ways supplying the pond are protected by water and sediment control basins to trap silt before it enters the pond. The surrounding area is also seeded to grass to further protect the water quality. Jack also created a sizeable nesting island for waterfowl. The pond was funded using EQIP program dollars and a low-interest loan.

Residue

- Jack practices conservation tillage on all of his crop acres, even though they are all considered non-highly erodible.

Switchgrass Biomass (no pictures)

- In May 2007, Jack planted 44 acres of switchgrass to be used for biomass harvest. This was cost-shared through EQIP is a very new practice; Jack jumped on the chance to sign up. The fields were old hay fields, but Jack thought establishing switchgrass would improve the wildlife habitat. The cost-share also provided an incentive to keep the land in grass rather than plant it to row crops to try and capitalize on recent prices increases. Jack really took a leap of faith on this project. He worked hard to get the ground prepared and the seed no-tilled- all in a very short time frame of two and a half weeks.

Praying Mantis

- A praying mantis gingerly treads a stalk of switchgrass.