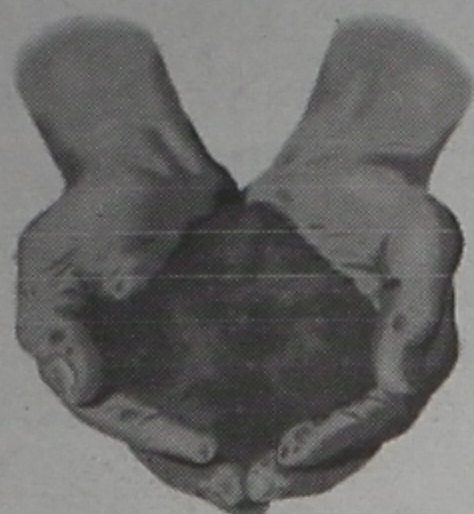




1000 School Street
(641) 332-2812

Guthrie County Soil & Water Conservation District 2018 Annual Report



Guthrie Center,
Iowa 50115

The Guthrie SWCD meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m.



2019 Guthrie SWCD Commissioners

From the left: Bryan Coffman, Cletus Steensen, Steve Roe, Dennis Hoover and David Deardorff.

2019 Guthrie SWCD Assistant Commissioner:

Jamie Patrick



State Funds

(State funds provided to the District by the Iowa General Assembly are allocated to the District by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship)

Commissioner Expense Allocation	\$2,000.00
Commissioner expense/mileage	\$ 944.06
Association Dues	\$1,740.00
Office supplies/postage/printing	\$1,097.90
Expenses covered by District fundraising	-\$1,781.96
Balance	\$ 0.00

IIIM State Cost Share Funds

2017-2018 Funds	\$88,834.30
Spent	\$62,736.63
Obligated	\$25,120.75
Recalled	-\$ 976.92
Balance	\$ 0.00

REAP Practices Fund

2017-2018 Funds	\$ 8,524.59
Spent	\$ 2,262.50
Obligated	\$ 0.00
Recalled	-\$ 6,262.09
Balance	\$ 0.00

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses

2017-2018 Funds	\$ 2,424.87
Spent	\$ 906.75
Obligated	\$ 0.00
Recalled	-\$ 1,518.12
Balance	\$ 0.00

(Period 7/1/17 - 6/30/18)

District Revolving Funds Account

1/1/2018 Balance	\$35,063.15
Total Income	\$20,058.01
Total Expenditures	\$24,417.74
12/31/2018 Balance	\$30,703.42

District Payroll Account

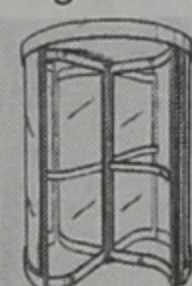
1/1/2018 Balance	\$20,814.66
Total Income	\$ 8,639.00
Total Expenditures	\$14,748.51
12/31/2018 Balance	\$14,705.15
Certificate of Deposit	\$ 6,442.64
Certificate of Deposit	\$10,695.50

State of Iowa, Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality provides a Conservation Assistant, state support staff, training, and cost-share funds and reimburses commissioner meeting and office expenses. NRCS (USDA) provides office space, training, equipment, expertise, and staff to administer conservation programs.



2019 Guthrie Field Office Staff:

Below, from the left: Jon Tesdell-NRCS Field Technician, Kevin Crees-State Field Technician, Cathy Sheeder-State Conservation Assistant, Amanda Shetler-Acting NRCS District Conservationist for Guthrie, Dylan Rague-NRCS Soil Conservationist



Revolving Door in Guthrie Field Office

Calendar year 2018 and early 2019 saw lots of folks coming and going in the Guthrie field office. Guthrie SWCD technician **Robert Taylor** left us in June 2018 to return to Adair County as a Watershed Coordinator.

Dylan Rague - NRCS Soil Conservationist

In August of 2018 **Dylan Rague** filled the Soil Conservationist position that had been vacant for a couple of years. Dylan grew up on a farm in Carroll County. He graduated in May 2018 from Iowa State University with a degree in Agricultural Studies. He is a welcome addition to the office! Stop in and say hello. Dylan will be happy to help you with your conservation planning needs.



Chrissy Rhodes had been the Private Lands Wildlife Specialist in the Guthrie and Greene county field offices since April of 2016. She left us in October 2018 to head to a new job in Sterling, Colorado.

Kevin Crees - State Technician



Kevin Crees joined the ranks in October 2018 as a State of Iowa technician. This new position, created by Iowa Department of Agriculture, Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality, will help districts needing additional technical staff. It is considered a temporary position with the possibility of re-newal. Kevin has been allotted 780 hours to work during the October 2018 start date and the June 30, 2019 end date. We are glad to have Kevin on board with us!

Matt Judkins filled the Federal Technician spot left vacant when Rick Robson retired. Matt joined us in October of 2015. Fast forward to October of 2018 and he headed out to Beatrice, Nebraska for a Soil Conservationist position in an NRCS field office there.



Carolyn Schwartz, Civil Engineer Technician

Carolyn Schwartz started in the Guthrie Field Office as a Civil Engineer Technician on March 4th. She previously worked in the Guthrie field office as a federal technician from 1987 to 1999. She then transferred to the Greene County NRCS office where she has worked up until now. Carolyn is married to Don Schwartz and lives in Bayard, IA where they farm and run a cow/calf operation. Welcome Carolyn!

NRCS District Conservationist, **Jeff Collins**, started work in the Guthrie Field office in April 1989 and retired effective January 3, 2019. Jeff's career spanned 38 years in field offices in Keosauqua, Denison, Webster City and the last 30 of those years in Guthrie Center. We thank Jeff for his service to this county and his conservation efforts over the years. We wish him all the best in his retirement!



Amanda Shetler, NRCS District Conservationist from Dallas County, is providing support to the Guthrie Field office until a new District Conservationist is hired. We appreciate her guidance and support during this time of transition.

- District Activities -

Spring Regional Meeting

Guthrie SWCD commissioners Hoover, Steensen and Coffman, attended the Spring Regional meeting in Oakland in March 2018. They met with commissioners and staff from other districts in Region 5. Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff were also in attendance.

Annual Guthrie SWCD Scholarship

The Guthrie SWCD commissioners offer a \$500 scholarship annually to a high achieving student who wishes to attend college to pursue a degree in an agriculturally based career. Unfortunately, due to a lack of applications, no scholarship was awarded this year. We hope to inform our readers about this scholarship and keep it in mind in case anyone you know out there might be interested in applying for this scholarship in the future.

Poster Contest

Guthrie Elementary School submitted posters for the District's poster contest for a total of 146 posters. The theme in 2018 was: "WATERSHEDS: OUR WATER, OUR HOME!". Winners were selected in grade categories 2nd-3rd and 4th-6th. Kiera Boals' poster was the overall winner. This year was also a first since Kiera's poster was sent on to a regional contest and was the first-place winner in that competition. She and her 2nd grade class joined commissioners for a pizza party on Friday, April 14, 2018.



Commissioners David Deardorff and Cletus Steensen with Over-all Poster Contest Winner Kiera Boals.



Kids and Commissioners enjoying pizza and fixin's!



Commissioners Steve Roe, Cletus Steenson and David Deardorff with Grades 4-6 winners Gracie Hodges (3rd), Max Trujillo-Garcia (1st) and Angel Martinez (2nd).



Fourth Grade Foresters

The 8th annual trip to all 5 of the Guthrie County schools to distribute Norway spruce trees took place the week of April 23, 2018. Guthrie SWCD handed out over 180 trees to 4th graders in Coon Rapids-Bayard, Adair, Stuart, Guthrie Center, and Panora.



Commissioner Bryan Coffman with 4th graders at Coon Rapids-Bayard Elementary.



Cathy Sheeder and Robert Taylor visited West Central Valley 4th graders and handed out Norway spruce trees in honor of Arbor Day.

Iowa Environmental Farm Leaders Honored in 2018

The Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award is a joint effort between the Governor, Lt. Governor, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to recognize the efforts of Iowa's farmers as environmental leaders committed to healthy soils and improved water quality. Guthrie SWCD nominated Jerome and Janet Dickson for this award in 2018. They received their award during the 2018 Iowa State Fair. Congratulations to Jerome and Janet!



Left to right: Jim Gulliford, Regional Administrator with the Environmental Protection Agency; Bruce Trautman, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Acting Director; Jerome and Janet Dickson and grandchildren, Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds; and Iowa Agriculture Secretary Mike Naig.

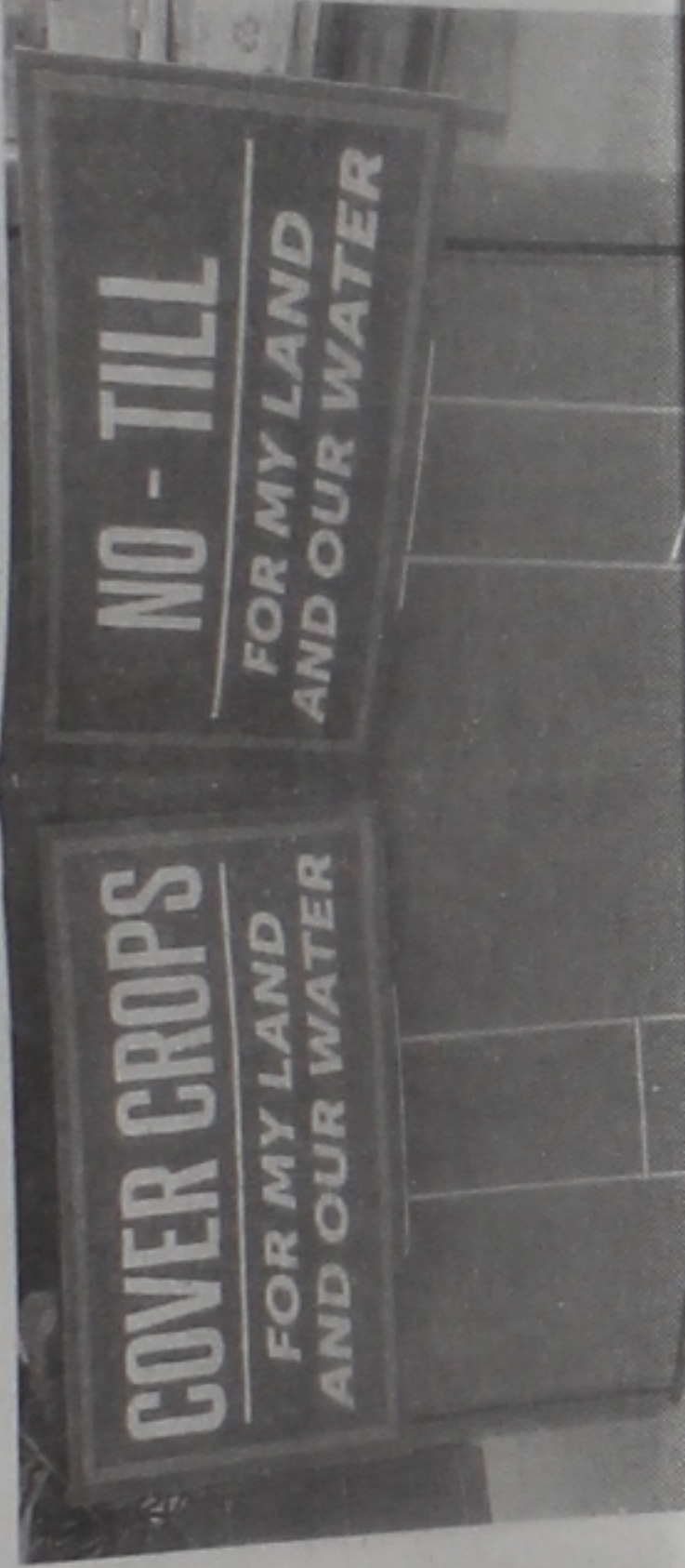
CDI Annual Conference

The 72nd Conservation Districts of Iowa Annual Conference was held at the Airport Holiday Inn on September 10-11, 2018. Commissioners Steensen, Hoover, Coffman and Roe attended the event and shared ideas and concerns regarding conservation efforts.



Commissioners Steve Roe, Cletus Steensen and David Deardorff with Riley Robson 3rd place winner Grades 2-3.

The District secretary, Cathy Sheeder joined with FSA personnel in a Farm Safety Week event May 2-3, 2018 at the Guthrie County Fairgrounds in Guthrie Center. 195 3rd Graders from the county schools learned of the dangers associated with electricity, grain, augers and power take off equipment, ATVs and time spent in the sun without the proper protection.



Signs of Conservation

In 2019, Guthrie SWCD commissioners are implementing their new "Seeing Signs of Conservation" campaign. They have signage available to place next to a field to inform the public about conservation practices farmers implement to show their commitment to soil health and water quality. The signs identify a Best Management Practice like cover crop or no-till and includes the byline "For My Land and Our Water".

STEM Outdoor Day At GC Elementary

This was Guthrie SWCD's 4th year to share information about conservation with 262 students and their teachers. Commissioners shared pictures and informational material about watersheds and why they are so important to us all.



GC Elementary kids and Guthrie SWCD commissioners talking about watersheds.



Commissioners Steensen, Deardorff and Hoover and a group of budding conservationists!

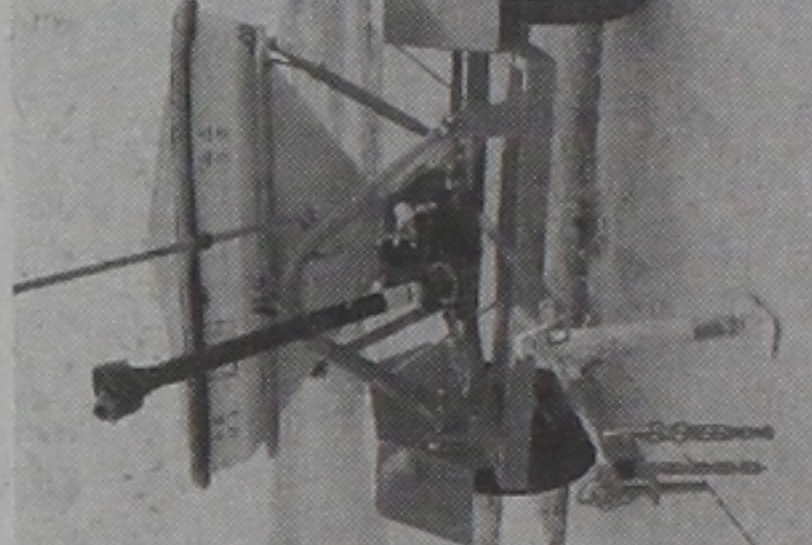


Hard to tell who has more fun-kids or commissioners!

Fundraising

The Guthrie SWCD sells native grass seed as a fundraiser. If you are looking for seed for the next CRP sign up or have inter-seeding of native grasses as part of your Mid Contract Management on an existing CRP contract, we can put together a seed mix that meets the necessary criteria.

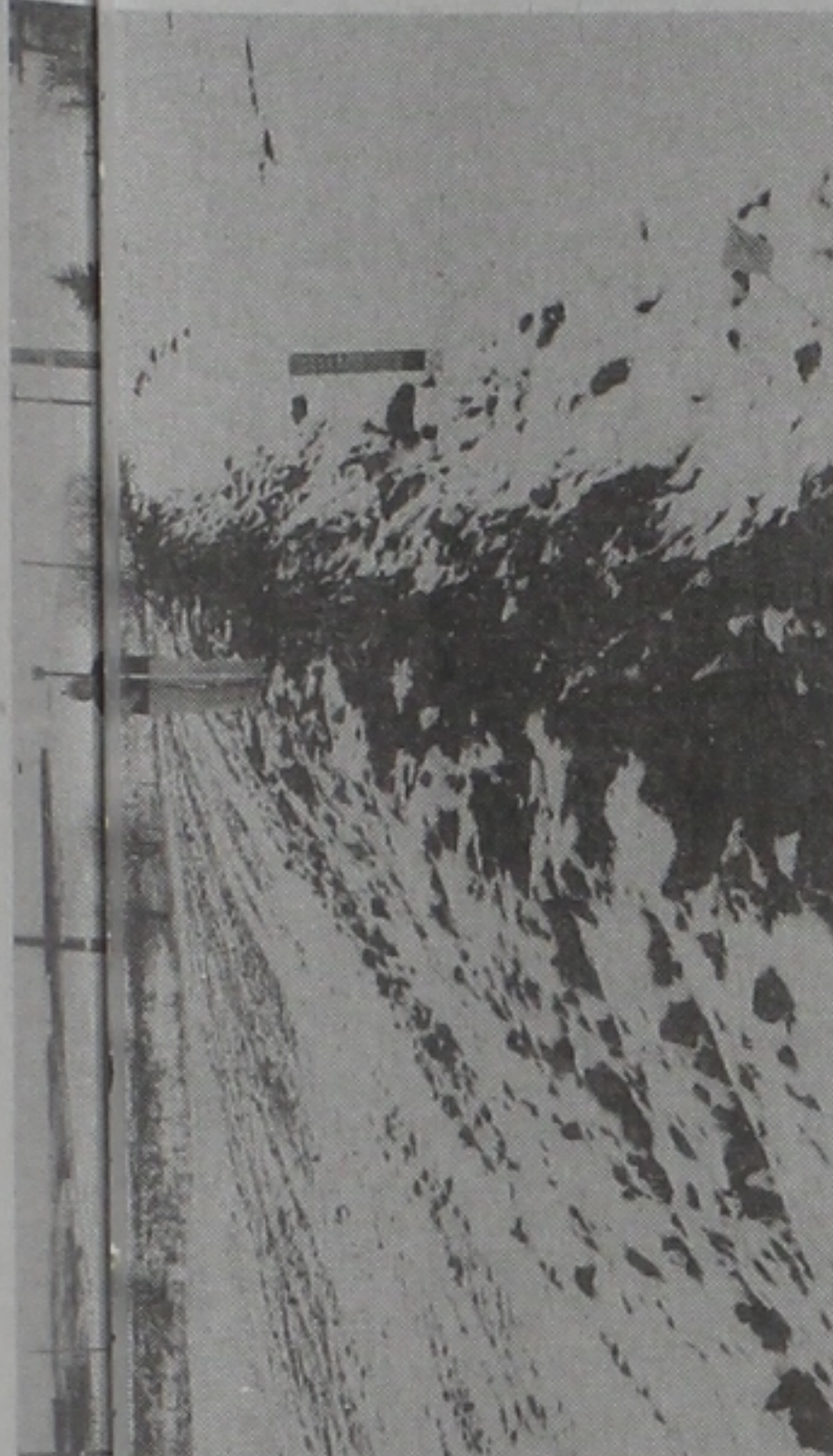
The District also has a Vicon broadcast seeder that is available to rent to producers who wish to do their own seeding. It fits on a 3-point hitch and has a 15 foot spread.



Guthrie SWCD offers Curlex Blankets in 8' x 90' and 16' x 90' rolls for sale. This erosion control matting is an excellent tool to help maintain waterway stability in newly built waterways as well as a multitude of other uses.

Programs -

State Cost Share and REAP funding may be available to qualified landowners to implement conservation practices such as waterways, terraces, certain structures, windbreaks and some seedlings. The cost share rates may be up to 50% of the cost of the project. Total project cost share may not exceed \$7,000.00. Windbreaks are limited to \$1,500 per windbreak. In Fiscal Year 2018, the District received funding through REAP totaling \$3,169.25 and included 2 windbreaks (1.5 acres) and a Rain Garden. State Cost Share funding was approved for applications totaling \$62,736.63. These applications were for 25,433 feet of terraces and 5.64 acres of grassed waterways.



Kevin Crees checking out State Cost Share terrace

Loan Programs Available

The State Revolving Loan Program is a source of low-interest (3%) financing available to landowners. This opportunity is available specifically to assist and encourage landowners to address non-point source pollution of lowa streams and lakes. Loan terms are for \$5,000 to \$500,000. Terms can go up to 10 years. Applications are accepted throughout the year. These loans may be used in conjunction with available cost share programs and can be considered the owner's share or may be used as a stand-alone source to pay for 100% of the cost of the project. All practices eligible for State Cost Share/IFIP, REAP, and EQIP are eligible for a low interest loan. Such practices include terraces and grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins, waste storage structures, pasture and hayland planting, grassed waterways, filter strips, field borders, windbreaks and riparian forest buffers. These loans are available through a lender of your choice.

Conservation Funds Available

In FY2018 (7/1/17-6/30/18), the State Iowa Water Quality Initiative Program once again offered funding on a statewide basis for 3 specific water quality practices. Funding of \$25/ac for up to 160 acres was available for producers trying Cover Crops for the first time. This program also offered a lower rate of \$15/ac for folks who had used cover crop before. Guthrie County had 28 applications totaling \$40,2385.00 and 2,603.4 acres that received funding through this initiative. Cost share funding was also available for Nitricification Inhibitor or No-Till/Strip-Till practices that were being implemented for the first time by a producer.

The Buffer Initiative incentives program continued in FY2018. Eligible producers could receive \$200 per acre for Contour Buffer Strips, Shallow Water Areas for Wildlife, Contour Buffer Strips on Terraces, Cross Wind Trap Strips and Bottomland Timber as they are approved on a continuous CRP contract. Non-CRP practices that were also eligible were Contour Buffer Strips, Filter Strips and Field Borders. Producers were eligible for \$300/ac. This program also offered \$50/ac for a new Pollinator Habitat enrollment or \$150/ac for a re-enrollment.

NEED FUNDING TO HELP BUILD CONSERVATION PRACTICES? CHECK OUT OUR NO (0%) INTEREST AND LOW (3%) INTEREST LOAN PROGRAMS!

The No Interest Loan Program provides 0% interest loans to eligible land owners for the construction of permanent soil conservation practices contained in a conservation plan. Practices that may be funded include waterways, terraces, and some structures. Land owners may borrow up to \$20,000 and can be used in conjunction with other public funds like REAP, State Cost-share, or EQIP. These are Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality (DSCWQ) funds that are administered through the District. The sign-up period is continuous.

2018 District Windbreak Award

Brock and Laura Robson were awarded the District's Established Windbreak Award in 2018. Their windbreak is established in sections to protect the house, the outbuildings, and their access to both. The bonus is that it is beautiful to look at as well!



One portion of Brock and Laura Robson's windbreak



USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) 17 contracts and \$338,724.88 in funding was awarded to producers in Guthrie County in 2018. Five of those contracts were for Beginning Farmer/Ranchers. Within those 17 contracts, 3 were for cover crops only, 3 more included cover crops and additional practices like waterways or sediment control basins. There were 8 contracts for livestock practices including written nutrient management plans, forage and biomass plantings, fence, brush management, and water development practices like water facilities, pipeline, well, pumping plant, stream crossings, and heavy use protection. There were also 3 Wildlife contracts for practices like firebreaks, prescribed burning, and brush management as well. This program is locally led and geared towards providing financial assistance to treat high priority erosion and water quality problems. Livestock manure management, grazing land management, soil erosion control, and water quality improvement practices are eligible for cost-share.

EQIP Conservation Practices Completed in 2018:	
Brush Management	18.0 ac.
Comprehensive Nutrient Mgmt Plan-1	Conservation Crop Rotation-158.0 ac.
Cover Crop	740.0 ac.
Critical Area Planting	5.0 ac.
Fence	17,113 ft.
Forage & Biomass Plantings	195.0 ac.
Firebreak	1,868 ft.
Grassed Waterway	5.0 ac.
Heavy Use Protection	6020 sq/ft.
Livestock Pipeline	12,374 ft.
Mulching	1 ac.
Prescribed Burning	57.0 ac.
Prescribed Grazing	145.0 ac.
Pumping Plant-2	Stream Crossing-1
Subsurface Drain	9,319 ft.
Terraces	750 ft.
Underground Outlet	1,368 ft.
Water Well	3
Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	9.0 ac.
Watering Facility	12

The Conservation Security Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that supports ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural lands by providing payments to producers who maintain and enhance the condition of natural resources. CSP identifies and rewards those farmers and ranchers who are meeting the highest standards of conservation and environmental management on their operations. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis with periodic cutoffs for ranking and awarding of contracts.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. The former Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) and Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) now fall under the provisions of this agricultural and wetland easement program.

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) was created to help reduce erosion, increase wildlife habitat, and improve water quality through the application of conservation plans. (Landowners set aside cropland for annual rental payments.) Practices that may be funded include tree planting, grass cover, small wetland restoration, prairie restoration and others. Eligibility for this program varies by soil type and crop history. For general signups, land is accepted into the program if the offer qualifies. There was no general sign up in 2018.

Continuous CRP Signups were open for buffers, waterways and numerous other environmental practices in 2018. Contracts may run 10-15 years depending on the type of practice. Contracts are transferable with change in ownership.

A total of 165 contracts and 1,335.53 acres included the following practices:

Filter Strips- 1,058.24 ac.
Farmable Wetlands- 82.68 ac.
Farmable Wetlands Buffers- 82.68 ac.
Grassed Waterways- 112.93 ac.

Technology and Research Lead to New Practices

By Vince Sitzmann, Field Services Bureau Chief
Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality (DSCWQ)



When I was a kid growing up on the farm I remember mom and dad used to take us kids for an evening drive around the countryside. At the time I never really understood the purpose, but I enjoyed them none the less. My dad was in his own little world, arm out the window, commenting once in a while how great Jim's beans looked or what a great stand of corn Roy had. Mom even seemed to get a little peace and quiet during these drives as my brothers and I were mesmerized by the cool breeze and the orange glow of the sunset in the horizon. On one of these excursions I remember asking my dad what those grass lines in the field were. "Those are terraces" he replied without hesitation. At the time, his explanation of why they were out there didn't make much sense to a 10-year old, but he was my dad and he knew everything.

Now that I'm older and work in the conservation field, I've seen lots of new technologies that make farming and livestock production much more efficient and productive. Technology and research has led to the development of new practices such as bioreactors, saturated buffers and nitrogen mitigating wetlands, but technology and research has also confirmed that many of the practices that farmers and landowners were building back in the early forties are still effective today.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship has partnered with farmers and landowners for more than four decades to support the adoption of proven conservation practices. Recently, the Department partnered with Iowa State University, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Nutrient Research and Demonstration Council, Iowa Nutrient Research Center, and the National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment to complete a statewide effort to identify and map six types of common conservation practices. The study is the most comprehensive inventory of conservation practices in the nation. An analysis of the results shows the value of this public and private investment in conservation would be 6.2 billion in today's dollars. Additional analysis work is underway to quantify the water quality impacts these practices are having in terms of reduced sediment and phosphorus loads to Iowa's lakes, rivers and streams.

The initial number of practices identified throughout the state by the mapping project include:

- 114,400 pond dams
- 327,900 acres of grassed waterways
- 506,100 terraces stretching 88,874 miles
- 246,100 water and sediment basins stretching 12,555 miles
- 557,700 acres of contour buffer strips
- 109,800 acres of strip cropping

These numbers reflect a tremendous amount of conservation work that has been completed on Iowa's productive farm ground. Today, as I'm driving down the highway with my kids, I'm always quick to point out the cover crops and conservation practices I see in the countryside, particularly the newly constructed ones. I'm not sure if I do it to educate my kids about agriculture and conservation or if it's more for my gratification knowing that conservation work is still being done. I suppose it's a little of both.

Director's Thoughts

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land
Stewardship Acting Division Director Susan Kozak



Hello again! This almost year of "acting" Director has moved quite quickly. I have enjoyed getting to know all the IDALS employees and partners that I don't usually interact with in my typical Mines and Minerals world. It has been a busy year of project expansion and I love getting out in the field to see new ideas implemented on the ground. I want to thank all our staff for their hard work and commitment to our conservation ethic.

There have been some big announcements this year, including the new funding for water quality. The Iowa legislature committed more than \$280 million for water quality efforts in Iowa over the next 12 years. Funding to IDALS will ramp up over the next two years, reaching \$15 million annually through 2029. With more than 250 partners already involved, this dedicated, long-term funding will help attract even more partners and outside funding. The Division has been preparing for this new funding by putting some strategic staff in place. We have a new edge of field coordinator and 3 new watershed implementation coordinators ready to expand water quality efforts – primarily targeting the North Raccoon, Middle Cedar and South Skunk watersheds.

We also have some exciting changes revolving around our Field Representatives and delivery of services to field offices. The better part of this year was spent evaluating how to update the position, including going through a LEAN process improvement event which included many partners for input. As a result, we have hired one new Field Representative and rearranged the response areas. Additionally, IDALS is in the process of hiring 2 financial reviewers to alleviate some of the responsibilities that had been expected of the Field Representatives.

As I write this, I find myself reflecting on the year and how challenging it has felt. Earlier this year, I attended a FarmHER event. One of the takeaways from the conference that has stuck in my head is to "force yourself out of your comfort zone". While that isn't always easy, I think great things come from the challenge. With the water quality initiative expanding dramatically in the next few years, we all need to be open to new ways of doing business. Myself, I will look forward to the challenge and am excited to tackle it with all our great partners.

We Are on the Right Path But There is More Work to Do

By Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture



As I travel the state I see Iowans both on the farm and in town who take being good stewards of the land very seriously. Iowans in communities across the state care deeply about protecting our state's natural resources. They want to leave the land better for their children and grandchildren.

I'm proud of the work of our team at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the many partners across the state committed to soil conservation and improving water quality.

For example, just in the last year we saw:

- 2,800 farmers signed up to invest an estimated \$9 million in funding to match \$5 million in state cost share funds to adopt cover crops, no-till or strip till, or use a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer
- 760,000 acres of cover crops in Iowa in 2017, an increase of 22 percent from the year before
- \$420 million in funding for programs with a water quality benefit, a \$32 million increase from the prior year
- 64 demonstration projects located across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices

We are seeing improvements within the small watersheds that have been a focus of our efforts and now moving beyond demonstration projects to focus on implementation efforts within larger targeted watersheds.

We are also looking at new ways to expand adoption of proven practices such as cover crops. Last year we began a three-year demonstration project that provides a crop insurance premium reduction for farmers who use cover crops. We are pleased by the initial response and are working toward continued expansion of cover crops across in the state.

Thanks to the hard work of the Legislature and Governor Reynolds, we are fortunate to now have long-term water quality funding in place. The legislation that was passed and signed into law commits more than \$280 million to water quality efforts in Iowa over the next 12 years.

The Department will receive \$2 million this year, \$4 million next year and then \$15 million annually through this legislation. We are targeting this new funding towards conservation infrastructure practices such as wetlands, saturated buffers and bioreactors.

We are on the right path but have more work to do. I look forward to continuing to work with our incredible farmers and hundreds of partners throughout Iowa to make even more significant water quality improvements in our state.

Another Record Year for Conservation

State Conservationist Annual Report Column (January 2019)

By Kurt Simon, Iowa NRCS State Conservationist



For the second consecutive year, Iowa farmers and landowners substantially stepped up their commitment to conservation through Farm Bill programs. In fiscal year 2018, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) obligated more than \$63 million to Iowa farmers and landowners, a 35 percent increase from FY 2017.

Last year, Iowa farmers received \$46.4 million in USDA assistance to implement conservation practices on their land through Farm Bill programs administered by NRCS. This was a 20 percent, or \$10 million, increase. These financial investments help support ag community economies because more dollars are spent at local coops, paid to contractors and invested in fencing, trees and seed. But more importantly it also reflects the growing investment in private lands conservation by Iowa's farmers and landowners.

More than 450,000 acres, an area the size of Webster County, will be treated by Iowa landowners and farmers through FY 2018 Farm Bill contracts. To put this in perspective, this area is equal to all the cropland acres in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire combined.

Record-Setting Year for EQIP: Through EQIP, NRCS obligated a record \$30 million through 1,414 contracts. Nearly one-third of Iowa's EQIP funding went to grassland-based practices such as watering facilities, fence, and pipeline to support livestock grazing systems. In July, NRCS announced special EQIP funding to support livestock grazing systems in drought-stricken areas of southeast Iowa. Through the special funding, livestock producers signed 362 EQIP contracts totaling more than \$3.6 million that will treat natural resource concerns on about 38,800 pasture acres.

This funding came at a crucial time for southern Iowa livestock producers. Ponds were drying up and grazing conditions were worsening after consecutive years of low rainfall in that part of the state. We felt if we could provide extra assistance for water well access and rotational grazing, it would help to improve forages and natural resource issues.

Expanding Conservation Assistance: According to the 2017 Ag Census, there are about 88,000 farmers in this state. That is about 300 farmers for each NRCS field office staff person. Even with 100 field offices across the state, and our team of dedicated conservation professionals, we know we can't fully support conservation efforts with NRCS staff alone. To help bridge this gap, Iowa NRCS annually invests in the Iowa Partners for Conservation (IPC) Awards to encourage collaboration in addressing some of Iowa's most pressing natural resource concerns. NRCS identifies potential projects for leveraging NRCS and partner resources to build conservation technical capacity to develop and implement effective project outcomes. This year up to \$5 million will be awarded to conservation partners through IPC. Projects may be farm-based, multicounty, small watershed, or Statewide in scope. Collaborative projects that provide on-the ground support for Iowa NRCS Field Offices are highly encouraged.

A New Farm Bill: After many months of hard work, Congress passed a new Farm Bill which was signed by President Trump on December 20, 2018. According to USDA Secretary Sonny Purdue, this Farm Bill is "more evolutionary, rather than revolutionary." It bolsters farm safety net programs, protects federal crop insurance, and maintains strong rural development and research initiatives.

As with all new Farm Bills, there will be much more info in the weeks and months to come as rules are developed and programs are rolled out. We look forward to working together with Iowa farmers and conservation partners as we strive towards another record-breaking year in 2019.