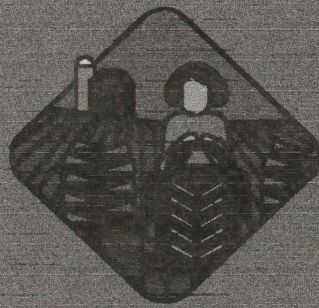




Soil & Water Conservation Update

Dickinson SWCD ~ Spirit Lake, IA

712-336-3782 Ext. 4

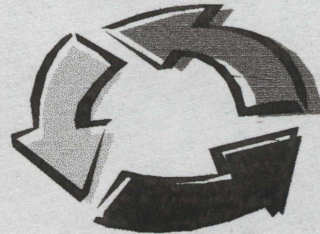
July-August 1999

**Timely Maintenance of your CRP project may help save you time,
and money in the long run.**

Management is the Key.

In addition to establishing your trees and grasses quickly to achieve:

- ◆ Wind, Soil and Water erosion control
- ◆ Improve the natural beauty of the area
- ◆ Develop a better wildlife habitat
- ◆ Just as importantly – you will improve your chances of not having to replant trees or reseed grass cover at a later date.



Starting from the beginning.

Site preparation the year before the practice is put on the land is vitally important. It gets you going on the right foot.

Looking at Tree planting practices first, examples include:



- ◆ Shelterbelt around a farmstead
- ◆ Field Windbreak for wind protection
- ◆ Riparian Tree and Shrub Buffer along a stream or beside a wetland
- ◆ Wildlife Habitat Area for nature

District Commissioners

Mark Ingwersen — Chairperson
Bill Northey — Vice Chair
Keith VanKleek — Secretary
Orville Berg — Treasurer
Chris Hoffman — Commissioner
Lance Heikens — Assistant Commissioner
Tom Koster — Assistant Commissioner

District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve it's customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

The Key to success is prevention. When planning these and other tree planting practices it is ultimately important to control competing vegetation. Established Reed Canarygrass and Bromegrass are probably the most serious competitors. Reed Canarygrass forms a solid mass, grows very tall and increases coverage by tillers. Characteristics which are detrimental to young trees and shrubs. Bromegrass is a sod former and much too competitive for available moisture.

Due to previous experience our office would recommend that areas with heavy Canarygrass stands are not suitable for tree planting. Eradication will not be easy and may take 2 or 3 years to complete. Bromegrass and other cool season grass covers should be killed in 3 to 4 foot strips for trees prior to planting.

Some hints on tree planting include:

- ◆ If you will be using a tree planter, seedlings with smaller roots will go through the planter easier.
- ◆ If you purchase older trees with bigger root systems, it is best to hand plant them.
- ◆ Be sure to fill in the planter trench around the roots (exposed roots will die)
- ◆ A light mulch cover 2 inches deep, of wood chips will help hold moisture in and cut down on weeds

After planting you will need to perform other maintenance procedures for a better tree survival rate.

- ◆ Keep an area 3 or 4 foot around the trees black and weed free.
- ◆ Mow grass and other competition next to the trees often to reduce shading and moisture loss.
- ◆ Herbicides may be necessary to control some noxious weeds.
- ◆ Watering may become necessary if dry conditions develop.
- ◆ Another serious threat to tree planting projects is our dense deer population in Dickinson County.

Although repellent products are on the market for deer, gophers, rabbits and moles, at this point there are no success stories on keeping deer from doing damage. One of the best ways to deal with them is to plant quite heavy and expect the deer to cause some loss.

By implementing these practices, the first few years especially, it will help your trees become established quickly and reduce replanting expense.

It is equally important to do Site Prep. on grass and legume cover practices such as:



- ◆ Waterways
- ◆ Filterstrips
- ◆ Native Grass Establishment

Lately with increased interest in native grasses some advice on establishing them may be helpful.

- ◆ Chemical control of the existing cover prior to seeding will help develop a good seedbed.
- ◆ Drill the seeding when soil conditions are appropriate and to the correct depth. Native grasses in particular, will need to be mowed often the first year or two. (Up to 5 or 6 times the first year) (1 or 2 times the second year)
- ◆ Native Grasses should be clipped no lower than 8 inches. Cool season grasses (Bromegrass and Orchardgrass for example) no lower than 4 inches
- ◆ Using a rotary type mower instead of a sickle mower will shred the grass or weeds better and reduce excess cover of the seeding underneath.
- ◆ Burning is an excellent management tool. Burn early in spring the second or third year of establishment to help get native grasses established. Be sure to request a burn plan from your NRCS office.

It is important to know that native grass seedings may not look good for the first year or two. It will take time and effort to establish a strong stand. Thusly it is important to implement an effective management plan.

In closing we urge you to utilize the NRCS office for technical advice in planning and maintaining your CRP project.

Tim Moran, Willard Punt and Greg Villegas

Escape into Your Own Backyard of Tranquility

Whether you live in the city or the country, a moment of peace and tranquility could be as close as your own backyard.

A backyard is the perfect escape - a private place where you can relax after a hectic day and let nature compose a soothing lullaby that calms your nerves.

Imagine walking out your back door and into a tranquil garden where flowers bloom, butterflies hover, birds sing and water softly trickles. As the sun goes down, you

can illuminate your favorite corner with a soft spotlight and continue to unwind as night approaches.

Sound too good to be true? Not if you learn about Backyard Conservation. Your backyard can easily be transformed into a natural haven for birds, blooms and beauty - a place of tranquility.

That's the latest advice for homeowners and urban residents throughout the country. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) are offering a free 28 page "Backyard Conservation" booklet that showcases 10 simple conservation practices for the backyard - terracing, tree planting, composting, mulching, wildlife habitat, wetlands, ponds, water conservation, nutrient management, and pest management.

You don't have to do a lot or spend a lot to make your yard a more inviting place for birds, nature and your family. The right plants or trees and a few simple conservation practices can make a huge difference.

Whether your backyard is measured in flower pots, feet or even acres - no matter how vast or cosy - there's room for backyard conservation. These same practices have been beautifying and protecting the American countryside for decades, thanks to the conservation work of our nation's farmers and ranchers. Now you can enjoy the same benefits right in your own backyard.

All you have to do is call 1-888-LANDSCARE or call our office at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3, and ask for the booklet.

If you have any suggestions of topics you would like to address concerning Backyard Conservation, please give us a call at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3, as we would like to compile a list of topics that we might be able to address.

Volunteers,

Madge Voss, Clarence Call, Keith Van Kleek, Greg Villegas, Jim Bell, Maurice Dougal, Robert Warrick, Tom Koster, Robert Herbert, Leon Goodell, and Don

Goodell. We thank you for your help. Producers in these three Priority areas can find out more about the EQIP by calling the USDA Service Center at 712-336-3782.

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