

2008-2009 CHEROKEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

314 Lake Street
Cherokee, Iowa 51012
Phone 712-225-3769

The Commissioners of the Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District are pleased to present this Annual Report of conservation accomplishments. It reflects the efforts of many individuals and groups working together to improve our environment through conservation programs. We hope our cooperative working relations continue as we work to protect our natural resources. The District is always ready to assist you with any conservation problem you may have.

Along with the landowners and operators in the county, we would like to thank the government agencies, news media, schools, businesses, and individuals that have assisted in the promotion and application of soil and water conservation.

Cherokee County District Commissioners



From Left to Right: Tom Oswald, Cleghorn; Joe Hueser, Marcus; Randy Husman, Aurelia; Pam Pierce (assistant commissioner), Cherokee; Tom Bindner, Marcus; and Jason Titcomb, Cherokee. Not pictured: Assistant commissioners Linda Bindner and Ginger Walker.

Continuous No-till – Soil erosion Insurance that pays every year!

Every year somewhere in Cherokee County, a rain storm event causes soil and water movement. Stormy weather concerns have been a part of farming in this region for as long as anyone has been farming here. We have to manage around the things we cannot change.

The land I farm is gently rolling and not classified as highly erodible. But I still have issues with water and soil movement should a strong storm hit. To help manage this, I have used continuous no-till practices on our farm for the last ten crop years and have seen the numerous benefits.

Substantially less fuel is used as heavy tillage is eliminated. Not doing tillage in the spring means I focus my time on planting. When the combine leaves corn fields in the fall, I don't have to worry about working down corn stalks. Yield records are showing my yields are competitive and continue to increase over time.... Just like my neighbors who are still doing a lot of tillage see.

The soil is clearly benefiting from no-till. Soil quality benefits begin once full width tillage is eliminated but it takes a couple years to visually see that a change has really occurred. Now, earthworm activity is evident. Crop residues seem to naturally break down and maintain an equilibrium level. Soil is crumbly, not hard, and doesn't seem to crust so easily.

However one benefit is hard to put a dollar value on but is important to me. That is, when heavy rain is forecast, I don't worry about water movement and soil loss. I have seen that it takes a terribly strong down-pour before water runs in my long term no-till fields. I use hail and crop insurance to protect my bottom line from storm related crop losses. Now I have continuous no-till protecting my soil as well. I call it soil erosion insurance that pays back every year.

For more information on integrating no-till into the cropping system on your land and how Cherokee SWCD has programs to get you started, call or stop by our office.

Tom Oswald, Chairman Cherokee SWCD

PERSONNEL

Commissioners

Tom Oswald, Chairman	Cleghorn
Randy Husman, Vice-Chair	Aurelia
Tom Bindner, Co-Treasurer	Marcus
Joe Hueser	Marcus
Jason Titcomb	Cherokee

Assistant Commissioners

Linda Bindner	Marcus
Ginger Walker	Aurelia
Pam Pierce, Co-Treasurer	Cherokee

Field Office Staff

Renee Braun	District Conservationist
Julia Gubbels	Soil Conservation Tech.
Randy Jipp	State Technician
Michelle Harman	District Technician
Tracy Rasmussen	State Secretary
Jason Beckler	AmeriCorps Employee



Back row left to right: Renee Braun & Julia Gubbels. Front row left to right: Michelle Harman, Randy Jipp, and Tracy Rasmussen.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions are the primary source for financing educational and promotional activities. We would like to thank the following contributors who donated money from October 2008 through September 2009. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Bruce & Donna Amundson - Larrabee
Dale & JoAnn Backhaus - Aurelia
Mike & Pam Cronin - Cleghorn
Farmers State Bank - Marcus
Heritage Bank - Holstein
Jenness Farms - Omaha, NE
Sand Seed Service, Inc. - Marcus
Stalcup Ag Service - Storm Lake
Western Cherokee Mutual Insurance - Marcus
Russell & Beth Winterhof - Aurelia
Wyatt Yon Trust—Storm Lake

In Kind Contributions \$5993.07
Financial support for program delivery
\$15,040.00
at the District level.

Cherokee County Soil & Water Conservation District And Natural Resources Conservation Service Accomplishments

(October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009)

Brush Management	146 ac
CNMP	5 no
Conservation Cover	89 ac
Conservation Crop Rotation	3856 ac
Contour Farming	1961 ac
Forest Stand Improvement	4 ac
Grade Stabilization Structure	1 no
Grassed Waterway	40 ac
Nutrient Management	287 ac
Pasture & Hay Planting	24 ac
Pest Management	137 ac
Prescribed Burning	265 ac
Residue & Tillage Mngt, Mulch Till	3272 ac
Residue & Tillage Mngt, No-Till/Strip Till/ Direct Seed	1762 ac
Restor/Mngt of Rare & Declining Habitats	137 ac
Subsurface Drain	43,271 ft
Terrace	30,929 ft
Tree/Shrub Establishment	2 ac
Underground Outlet	3022 ft
Upland Wildlife Habitat Mngt	1055 ac
Waste Storage Facility	7 no
Water & Sediment Control Basin	21 no
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	545 ft

Rain Gardens

The Cherokee SWCD is now offering REAP cost share for rain gardens and other urban conservation practices. This past year District employee Michelle Harman received training in rain gardens and bioretention cells for managing stormwater quality. Rain gardens are depressional areas landscaped with perennial flowers and native vegetation that soak up rainwater. They are strategically located to capture runoff from impervious surfaces, such as roofs and streets. Rain gardens fill with a few inches of water after a storm and then water filters into the ground, rather than running off to a storm drain. For more information call 712-225-4151.



2009 DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

January

- * Officers were elected: Tom Oswald - Chair, Randy Husman - Vice-Chair, Tom Bindner and Pam Pierce - Co-treasurers.
- * Ginger Walker, Linda Bindner, and Pam Pierce were appointed Assistant Commissioners.
- * Committee representatives were appointed.
- * A potluck supper was held honoring retiring commissioner Pam Pierce.

February

- * Assistant Commissioner Ginger Walker visited the Aurelia, Cherokee, and MMC schools to go over the poster contest. She also did a presentation on this year's theme - "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil".

March

- * The Cherokee SWCD hosted the Northwest Iowa Regional Envirothon which is an environmental competition for high schools.
- * Tom Oswald, Tom Bindner, Randy Husman, and Jason Titcomb attended the Spring Regional meeting at Ashton.
- * Scholarship applications were reviewed and a winner was selected.
- * Tom Bindner and Randy Husman attended a Little Sioux Works Committee Meeting in Cherokee.

April

- * District tree sales profit benefited the Education Fund.
- * 4th Grade Posters were judged.

May

- * Poster Contest Awards Program was held at the Cherokee County Conservation Board location. Winners from each school received cash awards, ribbons, and certificates.
- * Watershed inspections were completed.
- * Scholarship was presented to Jacob Lehnhoff of Marcus.
- * The Ross Pinkerton Memorial Scholarship Fund was established.

June

- * 4th grade posters were on display at the Sanford Museum.
- * The commissioners looked at some of the degrading structures in the county.
- * The commissioners reviewed Civil Rights & Harassment Prevention.

July

- * Conservation Tour was held.
- * District received new state cost share funds.
- * District paid CDI dues.
- * Annual Work Plan was approved.
- * Set aside \$2500 state cost share funds for first time no tillers.
- * Field office staff attended "Residue Matters" meeting.

August

- * Cherokee SWCD was host of CDI Fall Regional Meeting in Cleghorn. Tom Oswald, Tom & Linda Bindner, Jason Titcomb, Joe Hueser, and Tracy Rasmussen attended.
- * District Audit was performed.
- * The commissioners reviewed the new Cooperative Working Agreement between NRCS, the State of Iowa, and the Cherokee SWCD. They also reviewed the 1996 Mutual Agreement between the same entities.

September

- * The District received Supplemental State Cost Share funds of \$6746.15.
- * The District joined the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce.
- * CDI Resolutions were reviewed and votes were cast.

October

- * District employee Shelly Harman was a presenter at the 6th Grade Science Field Day at Silver Sioux Park.
- * The District received Supplemental REAP Practice funds of \$2461.32.
- * The District provided pencils, tattoos, and origami kits for the Chamber's Trick or Treat Parade.
- * Tom Oswald attended a Little Sioux meeting in Woodbury County.

November

- * REAP/Tree Sales postcards were sent to landowners in the county.

December

- * Contribution letters and Annual Reports were sent out.

Rain Barrels

Beginning in the spring of 2010 the Cherokee SWCD will be selling rain barrels. If you're looking for a way to conserve water and help reduce your water bills a rain barrel could be the answer. Stored rainwater is a super choice for watering your garden or lawn. It doesn't have all the calcium, lime, and chlorine that tap water has. Rainwater is also less harsh than tap water for washing your car. For more information about purchasing a rain barrel call 712-225-4151.

STATE FUNDING

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

IFIP 2008-09 Fund (Cost-Sharing)

Allocation + carryover	\$ 100,773.65
Total cost-share paid	92,892.02
Total approved & pending	<u>7,881.63</u>
Balance 6/30/09	0.00

REAP Practices Fund 2009

Allocation + carryover	\$ 48,304.51
Total cost-share paid	27,715.22
Total approved & pending	<u>20,589.29</u>
Balance 6/30/09	\$ 0.00

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses Fund 2009

Allocation + carryover	\$ 5114.33
Total cost-share paid	1050.00
Total approved & pending	<u>204.00</u>
Recalled 6/30/09	\$ 3860.33

Management Practices 2009

Beg. Balance	\$ 911.00
Total cost-share paid	411.00
Total approved & pending	<u>500.00</u>
Balance 6/30/09	\$ 0.00

* The funds listed above are restricted to particular farm practices or land treatments.

I-M Budget

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

(Funds appropriated by the legislature to reimburse commissioners for traveling expenses as well as pay for district office supplies)

Allocation	\$ 3000.00
Expenses	\$ 3000.00
Balance 6/30/09	\$ 0.00

Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District

Cherokee SWCD

314 Lake Street

Cherokee, IA 51012

Phone: 712-225-4151 or 225-3769

Fax: 712-225-6090

Contact us about any of your conservation concerns.

Little Sioux Flood Prevention Watershed Maintenance Funds

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

(Funds collected in prior years to be used for maintaining existing structures in the county)

Balance carried forward	\$181,923.67
Income (Interest)	\$6380.76
Expenses	<u>\$511.79</u>
Balance 6/30/09	\$187,792.64

General Fund (Revolving)

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

(For District Functions)

Balance carried forward	\$30,564.85
Income	\$30,766.96
Expenses	<u>\$41,694.13</u>
Balance 6/30/09	\$19,637.68

Ross Pinkerton Memorial Fund

(July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009)

Balance carried forward	\$0.00
Income	\$455.00
Expenses	<u>\$0.00</u>
Balance 6/30/09	\$455.00

FEDERAL FUNDING

Little Sioux Funds

(October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009)

These funds were obligated by the federal government for projects in the Little Sioux Watershed area which is nearly all of the county. \$133,217.35 was approved for Terraces and a Water & Sediment Control Basin.

EQIP Funds

(October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009)

Funded EQIP contracts in the amount of \$131,419.00. \$3780.00 was for Livestock Resource Concerns, \$43,857.00 for Soil & Water Resource Concerns, \$25,248.00 for Wildlife Resource Concerns, and \$58,534.00 for Organic Farming.

WHIP Funds

(October 1, 2008—September 30, 2009)

Funded WHIP contracts in the amount of \$17,031.00.

The Cherokee SWCD is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Cultural Resources of Cherokee County

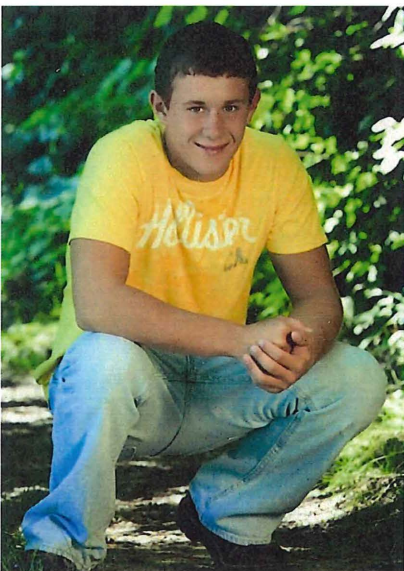
Cultural resources are probably not the first thing that comes to mind when talking about soil and water conservation. However, cultural resources are just as important as our county natural resources. A cultural resource is defined as any material remains left by humans that are over 50 years old. In Cherokee county, our cultural resources date back in time over 10,000 years! Aside from the importance of these resources, federal legislation such as the National Historic Preservation Act requires agencies like the NRCS to take into account cultural resources when implementing conservation practices. From a conservation standpoint, archaeological resources are quite often threatened by the same problems as our natural resources.

As previously stated, Cherokee boasts over 10,000 years of human settlement. On the conservation tour this year participants were able to see two very important archaeological sites in the county. One of the unique features of Cherokee county is that on a short tour through the countryside one can travel through time while looking at locations where ancient peoples hunted bison, raised crops, and created portable art. The local archaeology not only has some of the oldest in the state, but evidence for continuous occupation of the Little Sioux Valley up to European settlement can be seen. If you are a long-time resident of the county you might be familiar with the Mill Creek Culture or know about excavations that took place near the city of Cherokee. The research conducted over the last 50 plus years in the area has contributed greatly to our understanding of human settlement and environmental changes for western Iowa. The Mill Creek culture, for example, is an archaeological culture defined by archaeologists. These people formed organized villages in the county (and other parts of northwest Iowa) often times built with fortifications for defense. The people that lived in these villages were primarily corn agriculturists, but also grew other crops like beans, squash and sunflower. Additionally, they relied on numerous other resources such as fish, deer and bison. These villages were formed probably as a result of increased dependency on corn as a food staple. The communal effort provided an opportunity to farm more land as well as being able to share the workload. These communities had established trade networks that gave them access to a variety of non-local materials. For instance, it is quite common to find shell that is from the Gulf coast. These villages date to almost 1000 years old, and while corn arrived in the Midwest a few hundred years earlier these villages really represent the earliest corn farmers in Iowa. The development of corn agriculture in the Midwest is interesting. Corn originated in tropical regions. For instance, archaeological research has found domesticated maize that dates back to 9,000 years in the Yucatan area of Mexico. It took some time before maize agriculturists developed varieties that were suitable for more northern latitudes. However, once varieties of corn were adapted for a shorter growing season the crop rapidly expands into areas where it had not been grown before. It allowed pre-historic populations to grow a reliable food resource that could be stored all year.

We can probably all agree upon the importance of corn in our economy today, and it is interesting that we can go back a 1000 years in Cherokee County and see that same importance. That is why it was stated previously that cultural resources are just as important as the natural resources. Without the success of these early farmers, corn might not be a part of our economy today.

Jason Titcomb, Commissioner

Scholarship Awarded



Jacob Lehnhoff

MMC's Jacob Lehnhoff was the recipient of our 2009 District Scholarship. Jacob is the son of Tom and Shari Lehnhoff of rural Marcus. While in high school Jacob participated in Student Council, Football, Wrestling, Track, Golf, and Baseball. Jacob has volunteered his time at church and helped with Youth Wrestling, Baseball, and Football. He has also participated in the Siouxland Community Sleep Out to raise money and collect food for the homeless. Jacob is currently attending Iowa State University in Ames where he is pursuing a degree in Agriculture Studies and a minor in Horticulture/Turf & Soil Management.

Conservation Education 2009 : Students Learn about Soils

In 2009, the National Association of Conservation Districts again offered elementary students the opportunity to learn about conservation through a nationwide poster contest. Each year, NACD proposes a new theme. Their choice for 2009 was "DIG IT! The Secrets of Soil." The Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners offer the contest to all of the county's fourth grade classes. In 2009, Aurelia, Cherokee and Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn elected to participate.

To introduce the contest, Assistant Commissioner Ginger Walker traveled to each school bearing educational handouts, poster board, contest rules and a lively presentation for the kids. The students found that all of their meals exist because of soil and that soils in Iowa are made up of various particles, as well as air, water and living and dead organisms. Some of those organisms are critical to plant growth and a bit mysterious, since they live beneath our feet where we cannot see them. Nematodes, for example, are microscopic worms important in decomposition that can number 5000 or more in a teaspoon of healthy soil!

Fourth graders were fascinated by the many creatures, both familiar and unfamiliar, that contribute to healthy soil, good for growing plants. They learned about the bad things that can happen to good soils, especially erosion, pollution and compaction. Students discussed ways to conserve soils by improving and protecting them for the future.

Students produced colorful posters with the contest theme illustrated by whatever inspired them most. Cherokee SWCD Commissioners rated the posters that best met the goals of the contest, voting on the top three posters from each school district. While all of the posters were displayed at the Sanford Museum in June, the top students and their families and teachers were invited to an awards reception where the winning poster for the county was also announced. This poster goes on to a regional competition for a chance at the state and final, national levels. The 2009 winner for Cherokee County was Emma Kaskey, a 4th grader at Aurelia Community School. Congratulations, Emma!

Ginger Walker, Assistant Commissioner

Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn 4th Grade Poster Winners

1st Place – Payton Leavitt

2nd Place – Jamie Theisen

3rd Place – Bryan Schlinz

Jan Brown and Missy Utesch, Teachers



Pictured from left to right: Payton Leavitt, Jamie Theisen, and Bryan Schlinz.

Aurelia 4th Grade Poster Winners

1st Place – Emma Kaskey

2nd Place – Jared Weiland

3rd Place – Skylar Solko

Kate Westphal & Mary Ann DePuma, Teachers



Pictured left to right are: Emma Kaskey and Skylar Solko. Jared Weiland was not available for photos. Kaskey was also the Cherokee County Overall Winner.

Cherokee 4th Grade Poster Winners

1st Place – Olivia Dagel

2nd Place – Kelsey Hockenson

3rd Place – Noah Kremer

Vicki Freed, Kim Miller, and Meribeth Adams, Teachers



Pictured left to right are: Olivia Dagel, Kelsey Hockenson, and Noah Kremer.

Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District

712-225-4151 or 712-225-3769

2009-2010 Trees For Sale

NEW

Deciduous Trees	Bundle	Type	Size	Price/Bundle	Quantity	Total
Red Splendor Crabapple	25	S	2-3'	\$37.00		
Silver Maple	10	S	5-6'	\$30.00		
Sugar Maple	25	S	2-3'	\$48.00		
Red Oak	10	S	4-5'	\$27.00		
Hybrid Willow	25	S	2-3'	\$45.00		
Shrubs	Bundle	Type	Size	Price/Bundle	Quantity	Total
Common ChokeCherry	25	S	2-3'	\$37.00		
American Cranberry	10	TR	2-3'	\$30.00		
Red Dogwood	10	TR	3-4'	\$22.00		
Common Purple Lilac	10	TR	2-3'	\$19.00		
Common Ninebark	10	TR	2-3'	\$23.00		
Bare-root Evergreens	Bundle	Type	Size	Price/Bundle	Quantity	Total
Techny Arborvitae	10	TR	12-18"	\$22.00		
Black Hills Spruce	10	TR	12-18"	\$19.00		
Norway Spruce	10	TR	7-15"	\$13.00		

NEW

NEW

S (Seedling) - TR (Transplant)

Hurry Now! All Orders Received By January 11, 2010 will be entered in a drawing to win a 25% cash discount

		Subtotal	_____
		7% Sales Tax	_____
50% Deposit _____		Grand Total	_____
Name _____		Phone _____	
Address _____			
City _____	State _____	Zip _____	

All Orders Subject
To Availability!
Order early for best selection!

Please make checks payable to Cherokee County SWCD - 314 Lake Street - Cherokee, Iowa 51012

Profit from tree sales is used for conservation education projects

Other varieties may be available upon request - please give us a call

No survival guarantee on stock sold at these prices.

All orders are subject to availability, quantities are limited.

Please be sure to order early to insure your best selection.