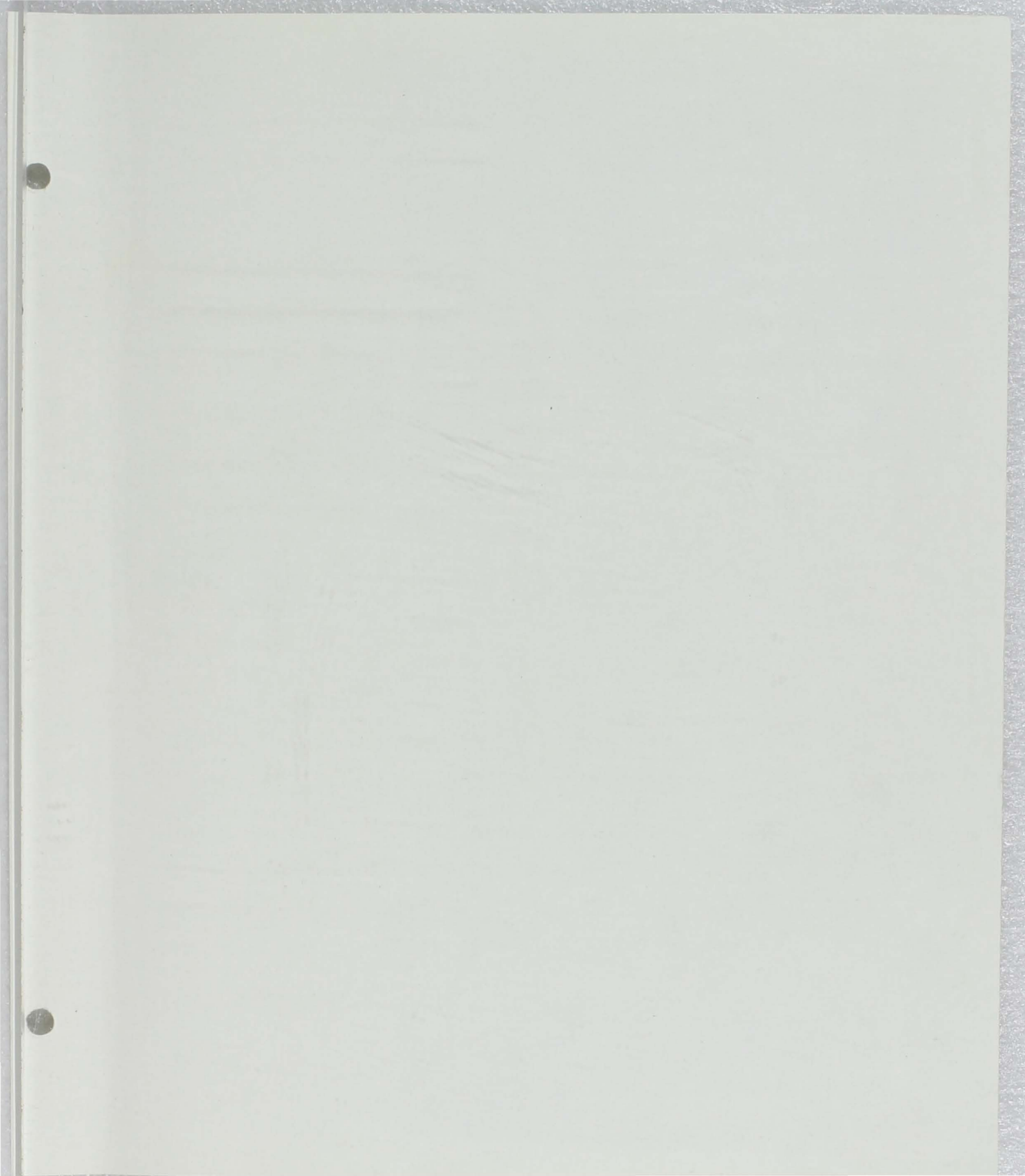


Scrapbook





DARREN HEIN, A FOURTH GRADER AT OKOBOJI ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, won the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation poster contest sponsored in conjunction with Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company. Presenting Hein with his award are Keith Van Kleek (left) of Terill, the chair commissioner of the Conservation District and Jim Rohlfen from the Dickinson County Mutual, M-H-R Insurance office in Milford. (photo by Meredith Daggett)

Captain Steve sails home

DCN 2-27-02

Lakes area mourns the death of a hero

The Iowa Great Lakes area has lost a true friend. Stephen Kennedy, lifetime area resident, historian and honorary captain has lost his two-year battle with

cancer.

Steve passed away at the age of 56 on Saturday, Feb. 23 in his home on the shore of his beloved lakes with family and friends at his

side.

Kennedy served as curator of the Iowa Great lake Maritime Museum since 1991, when the museum was first established. His love for the lakes and his efforts to preserve the history were contagious for those who have been fortunate enough to spend time with him.

Steve especially enjoyed working with school children, giving them tours of the museum and instilling in them the importance of history. His compilation of photos, tapes and artifacts enhanced his storytelling to the thousands of people he was in contact with each year.

Known to many as "Captain Steve," he helped spearhead the effort to bring the Queen II excursion boat to West Lake Okoboji in 1986, created the museum in 1991 and was an essential part of the "Save the Park" effort in 1999.

Services will be held Wednesday, Feb. 27 at 1:30 p.m. at the Spirit Lake United Methodist Church. The family requests that memorial gifts be made to the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum or Dickinson County Hospice.

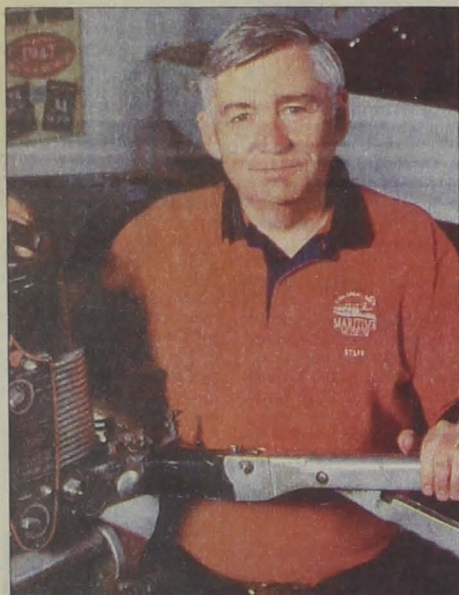


photo by David Thoreson

Stephen Kennedy was a beloved member of the Iowa Great Lakes community. He passed away Feb. 23 in his home after a two-year battle with cancer.

The race is still on for computer recycling

By Mike Jordan
Staff Writer

Two years ago, Jeff Kestel of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) had an idea to start a recycling operation for computers. His goal was to keep computers out of area landfills by dismantling them, refurbishing those that could be refurbished, and recycling those computers that were not refurbishable.

Kestel found that non-profit groups, especially schools, could use extra computers for their students. So with a place to put them, and an endless supply of computers available, Kestel applied for, and received, a grant from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), to help fund his project. Other funding help was sought, and received, from county supervisors as well.

The new business, incubated out of the Spencer NRCS office, was tagged RACE or Refurbishing Available Computers for Education.

Tom Koster was hired as project coordinator for RACE and volunteers were sought to dismantle and refurbish the machines.

Not knowing the response RACE would get from the counties served by the NRCS office, the fledgling business actively sought donations of computers and system parts.

What has been the results of this enterprise's efforts has been just short of overwhelming.

Koster explained, "Basically we've downsized a bit since our first year. We are not taking in as much computer equipment. We are not taking in

COMPUTER RECYCLING

Continued on Page 3

COMPUTER RECYCLING

Continued from Page 1

everything like we did in the past. We have also initiated a deposit fee for monitors. We have been forced to pay a fee to the places we recycle them, basically for the dismantling work involved. So now we have to collect one here as well, to offset that cost to us."

According to Koster, the monitors have to be dismantled because of the materials they contain. Those materials have to be disposed of properly because of their potential risk to pollute.

Computers are 100 percent recyclable. They are made up of plastics, metals and chemicals... everything from gold, copper and iron, to lead, silver and mercury. In fact, electronic computer boards can contain as many as 21 different materials.

A 15-inch monitor can carry as much as six to eight pounds of lead within them, according to Koster. The new flat screen monitors are laden with mercury as well - stuff that Koster and Kestel want to see kept from landfills.

But is there really a problem with computer waste? Why should a person bother to recycle their computer. Are there that many computers trashed that anyone should be concerned?

Consider this information compiled by RACE, just for the 16 or so counties they have received computers from since starting up - RACE has refurbished 500 computer systems and donated over 430 of them to area schools and non-profit organizations. They recycled 600 CPUs, 750 monitors and 400 printers, keyboards and mice as well.

Over 3,750 pounds of lead has been recycled by RACE from monitors; and the business has kept some 45 tons of solid



This semi, being loaded with pallets of computers for recycling from RACE, is the second semi to be loaded with the machines for transport to a recycling center in Red Oak this year. RACE or Refurbishing Available Computers for Education has been in operation about two years.

DCN photo by Mike Jordan

waste out of area landfills.

That last figure, according to Kestel, represents an estimated less than 10 percent of all the computers needing to be recycled... just in those 16 counties. This is a potential 450 tons of computers needing to be dealt with... and growing.

If that figure is not overwhelming enough, consider this... in a study recently done by the National Safety Council it was predicted that in the next four years over 300 million personal computers will need to be recycled. That figure includes 150 million obsolete personal computers now in storage. So where will all those computers end up? According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 80 percent of all discarded computer systems find their way to a land fill.

And that brings us back to RACE. "We've been educating people on the impact recycling has on our landfills and how they can recycle their computers," Koster added. "There is

still no legislation talking about recycling computers. At all landfills they still collect any computer materials."

Schools, who have been the largest recipients of refurbished computers, are also the largest contributors of computers for recycling at RACE. The AEA four schools this last year contributed about 1,000 computers to the cause.

RACE has two recyclers they deal with for recycling computers. One is Midwest Computer Recyclers in Cedar Rapids, and the other is the Recycling Bin in Red Oak.

Polaris Industries of Spirit Lake has gotten on board with RACE, donating, not only their old computer systems, but electronic waste as well.

"Polaris is a safety minded industry that is also environmentally conscious," Kestel declared. "They have also contributed in-kind type services to help us in our recycling efforts."

At this point, RACE is at a

cross roads. They know that there are tremendous numbers of computers out there needing to be recycled, but they also are now facing the prospects of their funding running out.

"Our grant with the DNR is about to run out," Kestel stated. "We have put in another grant application with the DNR to help us set up a route in each county. In that program, we would send a truck to a recycling center in each county to pick up computer equipment for recycling. We would take those items directly to the recyclers. Refurbishing would be done only on the good computers, which we would continue to donate to the non-profits. With a larger volume of machines, we would choose between the ones to refurbish and those for recycling."

Kestel hopes eventually to see the computer recycling business become a viable enterprise. For now it remains non-profit. But the potential for profitability is obviously there.

"Work activity places could afford to do this," Kestel said. "They could tear apart the computers, separating out the plastics and metals."

Restrictions on what goes into landfills in regard to computer systems and tipping fees for computers would help, Koster indicated. Those fees could help with salaries and trucking costs incurred in recycling the computers.

"This is an opportunity to address the computer recycling problem before it becomes a large, large problem," Kestel concluded. "Right now we have a chance to point this issue in the right direction."

For more information on RACE and how you might help call them at (712) 262-2083.

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Pacific Grove, Calif. and Mission Viejo.
Helen is survived by her two daughters, Vicky Collins of

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband Alvin in 1968 and brother Herman Brandtetter.



SLATORS: Concerns are aired

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Also on the agenda was discussion of boating issues in the Iowa Great Lakes, including noise standards, speed limits and numbers of boats and other watercraft on area lakes. CWA representatives told the lawmakers that noise pollution controls, daytime and nighttime speed limits and crowding ordinances are all obsolete.

In light of crippling cutbacks in the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) fund, Stevens and Johnson were asked how those monies could be renewed and protected. REAP funds, originally projected to infuse \$10 million annually into environmental projects statewide, have been robbed to help balance other areas of the state-starved budget. Both legislators agreed that there is no legislative act that can absolutely guarantee the protection of such funds, but each expressed the optimism that conservation funds can be generated in other creative ways to address natural resource issues in the state.

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Iowa Great Lakes:

01-11-03

Sensitive environment concerns aired

Clean water advocates meet with Representative Greg Stevens of Milford and Senator David Johnson of Ocheyedan

By GREG DREES

Correspondent

SPIRIT LAKE — Poised on the brink of the newest session of the Iowa Legislature, Representative Greg Stevens of Milford and Senator David Johnson of Ocheyedan met with members of the Iowa Great Lakes

Alliance this week to hear the environmental concerns of the conservation group.

Stevens, the third-term congressman, and Senate-elect Johnson, attended the meeting at the Iowa Lakeside Lab on West Okoboji at the invitation of the Clean Water Alliance (CWA), an umbrella organization comprised of a union of lakes area

conservation groups and protective associations.

Steve Anderson, the coordinator of the CWA, presented several environmental concerns to the legislators for their questions and comments. Johnson suggested at the outset that the CWA seek non-binding resolutions of support from Dickinson County municipalities on many of its crusades.

"Such signs of unity are impressive to legislators," Johnson said.

Anderson expressed to Stevens and Johnson the CWA's desire to see a state law banning all invasive aquatic species from entering Iowa's water-

Please turn to **LEGISLATORS**, Page 2

LEGISLATORS: Concerns are aired

Continued from Page 1

ways. Currently, Iowa code specifies Eurasian milfoil as an invasive species, but environmentalists have long desired legislative language to include all aquatic macrophytes, and to make the transportation of these species a matter of legal enforcement and not a voluntary effort.

A popular conservation practice growing in the midwest — the use of non-phosphorous fertilizers — was another issue discussed at the meeting. Johnson and Stevens concurred that public education of the benefits of zero-phosphate plant additives should become a statewide campaign. Anderson explained that test plots in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed illustrated comparable growing rates between non-phosphate and phosphate-based sites.

With the issue of large-scale hog confinements gaining public notoriety in the Iowa Great Lakes in recent months, the CWA representatives queried Stevens and Johnson on the standards that will be applied in the forthcoming matrix system that will largely govern such operations. The matrix is a ranking system that can be adopted by county boards

of supervisors to determine local control of the location and make-up of confinement facilities.

A proposed 4,000 head start-finish hog facility southwest of Milford by Dutch Creek Farms of Fairmont, Minn., has caused a cinder box of controversy since last summer, and clean water advocates have given rise to a wave of public outcry that such an operation could be granted a permit by the DNR in such an environmentally sensitive region.

Stevens and Johnson both expressed the complexity of the legislative process in such areas, citing the desires of both politicians and lobbyists to search for grounds of compromise between agricultural and conservation interests. Both, however, said they are sensitive to the unique ecological status of the Iowa Great Lakes, and vowed to make those expressions known in agricultural and conservation committees.

Given the intensity of public outcry surrounding the Milford area confinement site, both legislators said they felt that fine-tuning the matrix system before its implementation in March will

find public commentary as a weighting factor on the matrix's ranking process.

Also on the agenda was discussion of boating issues in the Iowa Great Lakes, including noise standards, speed limits and numbers of boats and other watercraft on area lakes. CWA representatives told the lawmakers that noise pollution controls, daytime and nighttime speed limits and crowding ordinances are all obsolete.

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BEHIND TH

Dickinson

Minnesota hog producer to set story near Milford.

Naturally, the prospect of stink and pollution produced swell of opposition from neighbors, residents, visitors, and, of course, folks who give so much of their protect and improve the quality natural resources — our and air.

Deliberately plunking down story in the middle of the Lake ing neighbors and environme the impression that these m don't give a fig for the well-bz enizens or their county's econo

READERS

the hog lot issu

SL church plans for new wetland and prairie along trail

01-29-03

The Spirit Lake United Methodist Church has completed agreements with local environmental groups to create a new wetland and restored prairie just west of Orleans, and along the new extension of the Iowa Great Lakes Trail.

The church received title to a 38-acre field, formerly farmland owned by the late Gus Walrath, under terms of Mr. Walrath's will. The United Methodist board of trustees has placed the land in two conservation programs of the United

States Department of Agriculture.

The Walrath acreage is located east of Highway 327, south of the Reed's Run tile outlet ditch.

Beth Will, chairman of the Methodist board of trustees, reports that 27.8 acres has been placed in the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP) of the USDA's Conservation Program (CRP), and the other 10.3 acres has been entered into a Habitat Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The wetlands acreage is to be restored with wetlands vegetation, and the upland part of that acreage will be seeded with a native prairie grassland mix.

The USFWS acreage will also be seeded with the prairie mix.

Earlier the United Methodist Church had given an easement to the Dickinson County Trails Association to build part of its Big Spirit trail segment through the western part of the Walrath land. That trail was completed a year ago. As the plantings

mature they will add a scenic view to the trail.

Wetland restoration projects such as this improve water quality of the lake, reduce soil erosion and provide habitat for wildlife. Partners in this special project include Iowa Department of Natural Resources Private Lands Program, Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Dickinson County Natural Resources and Conservation District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Pheasants Forever.

NRCS encourages landowners to review compliance plans

Winter is the ideal time for landowners to review conservation compliance plans, according to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Department of Agriculture's lead conservation agency.

The NRCS encourages landowners to review their compliance plans for highly erodible land and wetlands now, while making plans for spring planting.

"Reviewing compliance plans now will allow landowners to ensure they have practices in place to maintain eligibility for USDA programs," says Leroy Brown, State Conservationist for the Iowa NRCS.

Local NRCS staff can provide landowners with information on acceptable conservation practices included in their compliance plans or alternatives necessary to achieve and maintain compliance. Landowners considering changes to their farming operation on highly erodible or wetland areas should contact the local NRCS office at (712) 336-2604.

Spring Run dedicated as Bird Conservation Area, 2nd in state

Dedication means big things for birds and bird lovers



By GREG DREES
Correspondent

ARNOLDS PARK — In contrast to the wintry winds that have prevailed through the autumn, a warming southwesterly breeze rustled the ocean of prairie grasses surrounding a small crowd of spectators. They had gathered together on Tuesday afternoon on the Spring Run Wetlands Complex east of Arnolds Park for a special occasion. Officials from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) were on

hand to officially designate the area as Iowa's second Bird Conservation Area (BSA).

America's neotropical songbirds continue to suffer devastating losses to their flocks as their annual navigation south becomes more imperiled with every passing season. In a crusade to turn the tide of decline, the nation's non-game biologists have sought vestiges of suitable habitat for the 150 species of songbirds that follow the rite of passage each autumn.

Long known for harboring

Pictured above, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Doug Harr speaks to the crowd during the dedication ceremony at Spring Run in Arnolds Park on Tuesday, Nov. 12. Pictured left, a new sign at Spring Run denotes the area as a Bird Conservation Area.

Photos by Greg Drees

11-16-02

migrating waterfowl, upland birds and other game birds and animals, Spring Run fits a long list of criteria established to define suitable habitat for a BSA. Doug Harr, who for many years developed and managed public lands in the county for the DNR and now serving as the agency's chief biologist and coordinator for the state's Wildlife Diversity Program, told the crowd at Tuesday's dedication that the new Spring Run designation

Turn to BIRDS, Page 2

Water Quality Commission approves projects

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission (DCWQC) recently approved ten water quality improvement projects for the 2004 fiscal year.

The DCWQC approved grants for nine new projects totaling \$161,500. They also provided \$38,500 for half of their remaining commitment to a water quality project approved last year. The DCWQC received 14 grant requests totaling \$379,000. The DCWQC only has a potential of \$200,000 available for the 2004 fiscal year.

Orville Berg Chairman of the Clean Water Alliance stated that "One dollar of local money will be bringing in \$12 of state, federal and private money to be used in projects to protect the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed."

The DCWQC was formed and is funded by a cooperative agreement

among all the communities of Dickinson County — and the county itself. In what may become a model of other watershed around the state, Dickinson County is the first Iowa locale to use a 28-E agreement on a county-wide basis to raise funds for the sole purpose of protecting the water quality. Local communities each contribute funding to support joint water quality programs. These funds can be used anywhere in the watersheds of Dickinson County Lakes, which extends into Jackson County, Minn.

Projects that were funded for 2004 include:

- \$75,000 to Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation to help purchase an addition to Spring Run Wetlands Complex, which provides wildlife habitat and protects the Great Lakes watershed. A portion of this addition will be known as the Larry Wilson

area of the complex.

• \$21,000 to Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District to support a staff position for the Clean Water Alliance.

• \$20,750 to Iowa Lakeside Laboratory to support ongoing water monitoring programs for Dickinson County (2nd year of project).

• \$20,750 to Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District to finish conservation easements that were not completed from the Clean Water Project.

• \$9,000 to Dickinson County Conservation Board and Friends of Lakeside Lab to hire an intern who will work with both organizations to promote water quality and the IOWA-TER program.

DCWQC PROJECTS

Continued on Page 2

DCWQC PROJECTS

Continued from Page 1

- \$5,000 to Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District to support a staff position to help establish conservation practices in Dickinson County watersheds in Minnesota
- \$5,000 to Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District to reduce sediment and phosphorus from entering the lakes by altering the tile intakes.

- \$2,500 to the Clean Water Alliance, Dickinson County Conservation Board and Friends of Lakeside Lab for professional creation of clean water promotion materials.
- \$2,500 to Iowa Great Lakes Resource Conservation and Development to help promote phosphorus-free fertilizers around the lake.

- (carried over from 2003)

\$38,500 to Iowa Department of Natural Resources to pay half the DCWQC's remaining pledge for Southern Tall Grass Prairie Wetland Initiative. DCWQC funds will match the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) funds.

Funding from the DCWQC provided matching dollars for \$1,348,650 in outside funding

for the nine new projects. The DCWQC's multi-year pledge of \$100,000 to the Southern Tall Grass Prairie Wetland Initiative is being matched by more than \$2.3 million in state, federal and private funds.

The Water Quality Commission will meet again on Monday, Nov. 25 to receive comments on the screening criteria and scoring procedure.

DNR schedules meeting on Lower Gar development

By Anitra Wolf
Editor

What: Meeting on Lower Gar Dock Development

When: Tuesday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

Where: The Maritime Museum

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has scheduled a meeting to discuss a development of boat docks currently planned for Lower Gar Lake. The meeting, to be held at the public's request, is planned for Tuesday, March 4, at 7 p.m. in the Maritime Museum.

DNR District Enforcement Officer Dennis Phillips says individuals in the area have requested a public hearing with regards to the docks that Jim Nodland has planned for Lower Gar Lake. Nodland, who is building a housing and marina project on the lake, has planned for 40 new docks.

"If the public requests a hearing, the DNR is required to have it," Phillips said. He was unsure of the agenda for the upcoming meeting, but said he expects several officials from the DNR, as well as the Attorney General's office to be in attendance.

"The number of docks appears to be the concern of the opponents," said Phillips. "I would assume that they will request the DNR deny the permit."

The matter has fallen into the hands of the DNR after discussion with the Milford City Council.

"The council denied a key-holding ordinance," said Milford

City Administrator Brian Read. "The land below the high water mark is under DNR control. It's out of our jurisdiction."

Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Anderson said there are several reasons clean water groups have protested the building of more docks on Lower Gar Lake.

"I can't speak for all the different lakes associations, but most of them do not seem to be in favor of allowing more docks and more boats into the Okoboji Chain of lakes at this time," he said. "All of the lakes associations are seriously concerned about several existing boating issues."

Anderson said that Lower Gar Lake is currently on the Iowa Impaired Waters List and that means special care should be taken to reduce further impairment.

"Lower Gar Lake has been impaired due to the amount of phosphorus entering and in the lake itself," he said. "Further studies that may come about in the near future need to be done to try and determine how much re-suspended of phosphorus

LOWER GAR

Continued on Page 2

Burnmeister - Anderson

Sara Kay Burnmeister and Steven Ray Anderson, along with their parents, Joel and Susan Burnmeister of Sherburn, Minn., and Thomas and Lynn Anderson of Estherville, announce their engagement and forthcoming wedding on March 14, 2003 at St. Luke's Catholic Church in Sherburn.



Steven and Sara

SERVICE: Great Lakes Clean Water Alliance

Continued from Page 1

fiance, Sara Burnmeister, have little of, so they will also act with immediacy. Planning all along for a late summer wedding, the couple will now take their vows on Friday, and Anderson will head for the unknown as a newlywed.

Growing up in Estherville, Anderson shared the same affinity for the outdoors as his grandfather and, after an initial stint with the National Guard in 1994, pursued a secondary education that would put his love for the natural world to good use. While pursuing degrees in biology and environmental management from Iowa Lakes Community College and South Dakota State University, Anderson spent summers working in an interesting diversity of employment that would eventually lead to his dream job. Among those capacities was work at the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery and with the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) Eurasian milfoil program.

During this formative time Anderson met Steve Kennedy at the Maritime Museum in Arnolds Park who befriended him and acquainted him with the many lakes protective associations and their players. Kennedy, who lost his battle with cancer in the autumn of 2002, shared his friendship and love of the lakes area nautical history with Anderson, who now acts as assistant curator at the museum.

It was also during these summers that Anderson began to nurture a love for prairie ecosystems that serves him well in his capacity with the CWA.

Beginning in 2000, Anderson did a stint as a naturalist intern for the Dickinson County Conservation Board and then did ground work for a wetlands research project for Dr. Van Der Valk of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. Fedders Seed Company in Blue Earth, Minn., then came calling in the autumn with an offer to harvest native prairie grass seeds and work with area landowners. Ever anxious to expand his resume, Anderson accepted.

Early the next year, a transient Anderson took a leave of absence from Fedders to work with the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to study the Silver Lake

watershed, where he established a solid rapport with landowners in that area. Back in Blue Earth, Anderson fueled his knowledge of prescribed prairie burnings by supervising such efforts with Fedders that spring.

Meanwhile, officials with the Dickinson SWCD and others were crafting grant monies to bring Anderson into the position as coordinator of the Clean Water Alliance (CWA), an umbrella of what was then about 35 conservation groups and agencies working for clean water projects in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed. Anderson accepted the position and came into his own under the permanency of the position.

Some of the landmarks of Anderson's tenure as head of the CWA is the work being done in cooperation with the Jackson County, Minn., SWCD in the northern half of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed, the formation of the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission (DCWQC), the expansion of Gull Point State Park on West Lake Okoboji and the increase of the CWA's membership to 65 groups and agencies. The DCWQC, for instance, is a first-in-the-state organization that was formed with a 28-E agreement with Dickinson County and its municipalities that is a funding mechanism for clean water projects in the county. This year, the DCWQC granted \$200,000 in projects that realized an astonishing twelve-fold match in local, state and federal monies, resulting in \$2.6 million in total project costs.

The Gull Point State Park project was Anderson's first with the CWA, and one in which he coordinated with individual and group movers to add a large parcel of land to the park that will enhance and protect the lakeside watershed. "I can't wait to come back and see the wetland and prairie grass restorations on that parcel," Anderson said.

Anderson has become a well-traveled advocate for a head-spinning number of clean water campaigns, and as the CWA spokesman he makes appearances and speaks on a wide circuit of public meetings. He has,

Send-off Reception:

A send-off gathering of friends and associates will be held for Anderson on March 11 at the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation's District office at 2412 17th St. in Spirit Lake from 3-4:30 p.m. A second gathering will take place that evening at the Maritime Museum in Arnolds Park from 5-7 p.m.

essentially, taken the CWA from figurehead status to a motivational agency of action.

One of Anderson's goals is to set in stone a long-range plan for the management of natural resources in the Iowa Great Lakes. "For instance, I think we're going to see a lot more public meetings up here involving the DNR," Anderson said, "because we have gotten the attention of director Jeff Vonk. We need to determine the direction we need to take to manage our lake resources as wisely as we can."

Anderson feels that all of the projects initiated under his leadership will continue to mature during his absence. "There are a lot of really qualified and motivated people in this area dedicated to all kinds of environmental work in the watershed," he said. "The momentum will continue, I'm certain."

From the days of innocence when as a youth he would catch countless bullheads and watch the waterfowl at the Sand Bar Slough bridge near Big Spirit Lake to the trepidation he must now feel as a soldier poised to defend his country, two powerful forces have fashioned Anderson's life. The natural world has become his guidepost and the National Guard his stability. "The military has instilled discipline and guidance in my life," Anderson said, "and my work has provided the passion." Servitude, however, is not the only ardor in Anderson's life. He will take with him the compatriot love of his new wife, family and friends.

"I'm prepared, mentally and physically, for wherever our battalion may be ordered, and whatever the mission" Anderson said. "Of course, we all hope that our active duty is not long-lived."

After all, he wants to return home to see the fruits of his labor beginning to show upon the Iowa Great Lakes landscape.

Clean water advocate answers call

03-08-03

By Greg Drees
Journal correspondent

In just a year and a half he has fashioned an Iowa Great Lakes environmental group into a big-time player. Now he must answer the call to a greater challenge.

Steve Anderson, the 27-year old wunderkind of the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Alliance, has been called to active duty in the South Dakota National Guard. With an ultimate destination unknown, Anderson will ship out on Saturday for Fort Sill, Okla., with the 1st Battalion of the 147th Field Artillery from Sioux Falls, which specializes in the launching of rockets and missiles.

"The inevitable has happened," Anderson said. "As a nine-year member of the Reserves, and war in Iraq imminent, it was just a matter of time."

And time is just what Anderson and his fiancée, Sara Burnmeister, have little of, so they will also act with immediacy. Planning all along for a late-summer wedding, the couple will now take their vows today, and Anderson will head for the unknown as a newlywed.

Growing up in Estherville, Anderson shared the same affinity for the outdoors as his grandfather and, after an initial stint with the National Guard in 1994, pursued a secondary education that would put his love of the natural world to good use.

While pursuing degrees in biology and environmental management from Iowa Lakes Community College and South Dakota State University, Anderson spent summers working in diverse areas that eventually led to his dream job. Among those capacities was work at the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery and with the Department of Natural Resource's (DNR) Eurasian milfoil program.

During this formative time, Anderson met Steve Kennedy at the Maritime Museum in Arnolds Park who befriended him and acquainted him with the many lakes protective associations and their players. Kennedy, who lost his battle with cancer last fall, shared his friendship and love of the lakes area's nautical history with Anderson, who now acts as assistant curator at the museum.

Anderson joined the Iowa National Guard in Estherville in 1994 after high school because, in his own words, he "needed some direction in life." While attending SDSU in Brookings, he transferred to the South Dakota National Guard in Sioux



Steve Anderson talks to a well-wisher earlier this week during a sendoff at the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District office in Spirit Lake. (Photo by Greg Drees)

Falls.

Sioux Falls is the home of the HQ/HQ Service Battery of the 1st Battalion of the 147th Field Artillery, and is the command-and-control element for the entire battalion which covers the eastern part of South Dakota. The soldiers are trained and equipped to deploy and engage the enemy with maximum firepower. The battalion also has medical, maintenance, logistics, food services and personnel sections to ensure the battalion is self-sustaining in a field/combat environment.

Anderson is trained in the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), a rocket artillery system.

The MLRS is a high-mobility automatic system based on a weapons platform that fires surface-to-surface rockets. The MLRS launcher contains a fire control computer that integrates the vehicle and rocket launching operations.

Anderson has earned accolades as coordinator of the CWA.

Some of the landmarks of his tenure are: Work being done in cooperation with the Jackson County, Minn., SWCD in the northern half of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed; the formation of the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission (DCWQC); the expansion of Gull Point State Park on West Lake Okoboji, and the increase

of the CWA's membership to 65 groups and agencies.

The DCWQC, for instance, is a first-in-the-state organization that was formed with a 28-E agreement with Dickinson County and its municipalities that is a funding mechanism for clean water projects in the county. This year, the DCWQC granted \$200,000 in projects that realized a 12-fold match in local, state and federal funds, resulting in \$2.6 million in total project costs.

One of Anderson's goals is to set in stone a long-range plan for the management of natural resources in the Iowa Great Lakes.

"For instance, I think we're going to see a lot more public meetings up here involving the DNR," Anderson said, "because we have gotten the attention of Director Jeff Vonk. We need to determine the direction we need to take to manage our lake resources as wisely as we can."

For now, though, his conservation work has been placed on hold. His military callup marks the first time Anderson has been called to active duty.

From the days of his youth when he caught countless bullheads and watched the waterfowl at the Sand Bar Slough bridge near Big Spirit Lake to a soldier poised to defend his country, two powerful forces have fashioned Anderson's life. The natural world has become



Steve Anderson and his fiancée, Sara Burnmeister, will be married today, then Anderson ships out on Saturday for Fort Sill, Okla.

his guidepost and the National Guard his stability.

"The military has instilled discipline and guidance in my life," Anderson said, "and my work has provided the passion."

Service, however, is not the only ardor in Anderson's life. He will take with him the compatriot love of his new wife, family and friends.

"I'm prepared, mentally and physically, for wherever our battalion may be ordered, and whatever the mission" Anderson said. "Of course, we all hope that our active duty is not long-lived."

Local Call-up

Steve Anderson called to serve with National Guard

By Anita Wolf
Managing Editor

A lot of things are changing for Steve Anderson in the next week.

He's wrapping up dozens of projects. He's working on wedding plans. And on Saturday, March 15, he'll begin active duty with South Dakota National Guard.

"I'm not scared, but I am unsure," said Anderson, who was notified of his activation on March 1.

Anderson is one of hundreds of men and women to receive the call on Saturday from the South Dakota National Guard. In January, Guard members were put on pre-alert, and last Thursday, they were put on alert.

"We had a feeling we'd be activated that weekend," said Anderson. Saturday when they arrived at the base, Guard members learned of their activation.

On March 15, Anderson and his troop will report to Sioux Falls. Soon after, they will be on their way to Fort Sill, Okla.

"Fort Sill is a report station," said Anderson. "From there, I don't know if we'll be going overseas, staying in the states or filling a vacancy at Fort Sill."

Anderson admits that even if he did know spe-

RECEPTION

Tuesday,
March 11

- 3 to 4:40 p.m. at the USDA Service Center
- 5 to 7 p.m. at the Maritime Museum

ANDERSON

Continued on Page 3



Steve Anderson, Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Alliance Coordinator and Assistant Curator at the Maritime Museum, has been called to active duty with the 1-147th Field Artillery out of Sioux Falls. Anderson has been a member of the National Guard since 1994 and a member of the Iowa Great Lakes community for nearly two years.

DCN photo by
Anitra Wolf

LOCAL CALL UP

Continued from Page 1

cific plans for his unit, it's likely he wouldn't be able to make them public.

Not being able to inform the public of his location is a difficult thing for Anderson, who has quickly become a public figure in the Iowa Great Lakes.

In just two years in the region, Anderson has compiled a list of acquaintances spanning throughout the region.

Last weekend, he sent a note on his call-up to more than 250 e-mail contacts.

"It's amazing how many people I've gotten to know through my jobs," said Anderson, who serves as Clean Water Alliance Coordinator and Assistant Curator for the Maritime Museum.

A reception in his honor will be held on Tuesday, March 11,

ANDERSON IN THE GUARD

Steve Anderson joined the National Guard in Estherville in 1994 at age 17. He transferred to the Sioux Falls 1-147th Field Artillery Unit when he enrolled in college at South Dakota State University. The 1-147th is a Multi-Launching Rocket System (MLRS) unit. Anderson, Sergeant E5, works with fire direction control, which he defines as "telling the launchers where to shoot."

John Parsons, another Lakes area water quality advocate, served with the 1-147th during his service in WW2. "If I end up going overseas, I'll be following in his footsteps," said Anderson.

where he will again be reminded of how many people know and care about him. But attending his own reception is just one of many things Anderson has on his schedule next week.

Though plans are still tentative, next Friday, Steve may be

getting married.

Anderson and his fiancée, Sara Burmeister, were engaged last February. They were planning an August wedding.

"I don't know where I'll be in August," said Anderson. "We had the choice to either get

married now or to wait until I get back."

Plans were still unsure at presstime, but Anderson said they were leaning towards a wedding next week.

Planning a wedding and packing for active duty are enough to keep anyone busy, but Anderson is also trying to get things organized at his jobs.

As coordinator of the Clean Water Alliance, Anderson has been the one to keep communication going among water quality groups and projects. He hopes that in his absence, the groups will continue that collaboration with current efforts.

"Just because one spoke is missing, it doesn't mean the wheel can't keep moving," said Anderson. "It just means the other spokes have to work a lit-

tle harder."

Anderson is also Assistant Curator of the Maritime Museum and will be handing some of those projects to Museum Director Tom Kuhlman.

Anderson is hoping projects will stay in motion during his absence and expects to come home to a lot of new development in the region.

"The rate of development here is amazing," he said. "It will be interesting to see what the area will look like when I get back."

Anderson will serve a maximum of two years with the Guard before returning home to the Lakes region.

"We're called up for a year, with the maximum being two years," he said. "It will likely be shorter than that."



Anderson named operations manager for Queen II and Maritime Museum

By Anitra Wolf
Managing Editor

An attachment to history and ties to former Maritime Museum Curator Steve Kennedy has brought the museum its new manager.

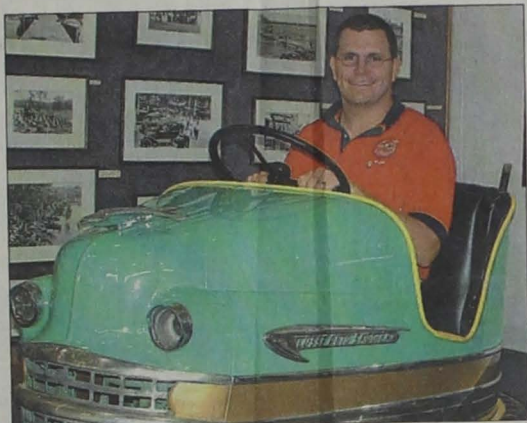
Estherville native Steve Anderson accepted a position at the museum earlier this month. His official title is Operations Manager of the Queen and the Maritime Museum.

"I've always enjoyed history," said Anderson. "It's really nice to be a part of its preservation here with the museum and the Queen."

It wasn't just a love of history that lured Anderson to the Maritime Museum. He also has a passion for fulfilling Steve Kennedy's legacy.

"Ever since Steve and I met in 1996, we were really good friends," said Anderson. "We always talked about the future of the museum."

Anderson said that Kennedy gave him a key to the museum in 1997, and gave him full access to the



Steve Anderson

ANDERSON

Continued on Page 10a

ANDERSON

Continued from Page 1a



DCN photo by Anitra Wolf

Steve Anderson is the new operations manager for the Queen and the Maritime Museum. He spends much of his time right now working with the Queen and its captains.

facility and its resources. Kennedy also took Anderson under his wing, hoping to pass on his passion.

"Throughout the years, Steve would introduce me to people as his prodigy or the next generation for the museum," said Anderson.

At that time, Anderson did not know how true it would be.

"When Steve passed away, there were a lot of people asking me if I was going to take over the museum," he said.

At that time, in February 2002, Anderson was serving as Clean Water Alliance Coordinator and assistant curator of the Maritime Museum. Earlier this year, Anderson was called to serve with the South Dakota National Guard.

He arrived home in late May and was offered the job at the museum.

"I knew if I was ever going to leave the water quality stuff,

there had to be a break and a transition period," Anderson said.

Although he will no longer serve as Clean Water Alliance Coordinator, Anderson still plans to be very active in the protection of the area's lakes.

"I'll still be active in the water quality efforts because I feel it's everybody's responsibility to take care of our waters," said Anderson. "It's also a part of the museum's mission statement to be leaders in protecting the environment."

Aside from environmental efforts, Anderson has a full agenda of things to do as operations manager of both the museum and the Queen.

"We are working on a lot of things in the museum," he said. "We're trying to do better archiving, and we're also working on improvements: developing a research room, updating the theatre system, and creating

more flow to the museum."

Directing the Queen is more of a set schedule. "Right now, I'm spending most of my time on the Queen," he said. "My main purpose with the Queen is to make sure it's up and functional." Anderson also schedules the captains, helps with boat needs and makes the calls when weather docks the boat.

He's not doing any boat captaining himself yet, but he's learning how to drive.

"I remember being out on the Queen with Steve Kennedy," said Anderson.

Even when he learns to drive the boat, Anderson said there will still only be one true "Captain Steve."

"I can't do half the stuff Steve Kennedy did," said Anderson. "But I should be able to help fulfill the ideas and dreams he had for this place."

Water, soil projects saved despite gambling impasse

Measure will help tide programs over until casino tax issue is settled

By David Johnson
State Senator

The Iowa Legislature has stopped a train wreck that could have gambled away important water quality and soil conservation programs around the state. The situation required immediate action in order to keep private contractors in business and honor commitments to farmers and landowners.

Both the House and the Senate last week approved transferring \$16.5 million from the state's cash reserve fund to tide over environmental programs until the close of the fiscal year ending June 30.

The programs rely on revenues from taxes on the gambling industry. Continued uncertainty over the state's gambling tax collections jeopardized funding for the programs. State government has been shorted more than \$24 million in gambling tax revenue since the Iowa Supreme

Court ruled in June 2002 that racetrack casinos in the state shouldn't have to pay higher taxes on revenue than riverboat casinos. Under the court ruling, both racetracks and riverboats are now taxed at 20 percent. Previously, racetracks had been taxed at an escalating rate that stood at 32 percent last year and was to be capped at 36 percent in 2005.

As part of the ruling, the state also was ordered to pay \$112 million in tax refunds to the racetracks for taxes in excess of 20 percent that had already been paid to the state. However, Iowa appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court. The nation's highest court accepted the case and is scheduled to hear arguments this month. Along with a number of legislators, I believe the state is in a strong position to win the appeal.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court announced it would review the case, lawmakers offered racetrack casino executives a fair compromise that would settle the issue out of court. But the industry failed to reach consensus on the agreement. The gambling industry's unwillingness to compromise meant that Iowa stood to run out of funding for the water quality and soil conservation programs on April 1.

In other action last week, lawmakers overwhelmingly approved a bill that solidifies Iowa as a leading producer of

renewable energy. The legislation, approved by both the House and Senate, will increase Iowa's wind energy output by allowing MidAmerican energy to build and own the world's largest land-based wind project in Iowa.

According to MidAmerican, the wind project will generate 310 megawatts of wind energy and will consist of 180 to 200 wind turbines, each generating approximately 1.5 to 1.65 megawatts of electricity. The project will be built in three phases on different sites, including north-central and northwest Iowa.

According to the Department of Natural Resources, Iowa is already home to more than 400 wind turbines that are powerful enough to generate electricity for more than 130,000 homes per year and avoid more than 1.3 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually. The 310 megawatts of wind capacity that MidAmerican plans to generate will provide enough electricity on average to power approximately 85,000 homes.

MidAmerican's proposal also includes an electric rate freeze through 2010, which is an extension of the current rate freeze due to expire in 2005. That means MidAmerican customers will see stable electric rates for at least another eight years.

Under the legislation, the Iowa Utilities Board will over-

see the project to ensure that rates are reasonable to customers and nondiscriminatory to alternative energy producers and small hydro-producers. The legislation also allows the Iowa Utilities Board to approve the rate freeze request.

During the debate in the Senate, an amendment was offered to allow smaller wind generation projects to be paid by investor-owned utilities for excess electricity generated. I have received several calls from northwest Iowans who want to generate electricity for their farms, but in order to make the investment work a buyer is needed for the excess generation.

Even though the amendment failed to pass, debating it raised interest from a number of senators. I'm returning to Des Moines early this week to further explore with other legislators what types of incentives we can create to spark small-scale wind energy projects.

Your questions and comments are always welcome. You can reach the Iowa Senate by calling (515) 281-3371 or by e-mail at david.johnson@legis.state.ia.us

David Johnson of Ocheyedan represents Iowa Senate District 3 --- all of Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien, and Osceola counties, and part of Sioux county.



TERRIL HIGH SCHOOL RECEIVES AWARDS AT ENVIROTHON-- Terril High School won two awards at the eighth annual Iowa Envirothon held April 23 at Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center.

Terril received the Wildlife and Forestry Awards. Team members are (back row, from left): Brian Mehan, Steven Sawyer, and Coach Marc Benedict. Front row, from left: Armin Schnelle, James Johanson, and Katrina McGranahan.

Students participating in the contest were challenged to sharpen their critical thinking skills while exploring environmental issues pertaining to aquatics, forestry, wildlife and soils. In addition, the teams gave an oral presentation on "Agricultural Land Conservation and Preservation" as part of the competition.

04-25-03

NRCS office adds water quality specialist

By Russ Mitchell
News Editor

Ike Petersen gets a little restless if he spends too much time with a roof over his head. That quality makes the longtime farmer a natural fit at the Dickinson County Natural Resource Conservation Service office in Spirit Lake.

"I've always been an outdoors person," he said. "I spend the majority of my day outside, whenever I can."

Paperwork comes with Petersen's role as a water quality specialist at the United States Department of Agriculture agency, but he will be on site to help ag producers with runoff issues and the spring progresses.

The NRCS is a United States Department of Agriculture office designed to give landowners and government agencies technical assistance regarding land use issues. The agency also provides financial incen-

tives for landowners who set aside segments of property for conservation purposes.

Petersen helped with a Pheasants Forever project through the Emmet County NRCS for three months before joining the Dickinson County staff April 1. He has also farmed his family's land near Graettinger for the past 27 years.

Much of his 320 acres of land is enrolled in the CRP program. He has about 140 acres of hay that he actually farms.

The 47-year-old will focus on improving water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes at the NRCS office. He hopes he can help other producers and landowners implement



Ike Petersen

their Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practices.

CRP is a voluntary program that rewards producers and landowners for removing highly erodible and environmentally sensitive land from production through 10- to 15-year contracts. About 2 million acres of land are enrolled in Iowa.

Petersen said landowners tend to underestimate the benefits of buffer strips, the grassy pieces of land that filter out ag chemicals before they reach a waterway. Petersen said Dickinson County landowners and leaders have been especially conscious of water quality issues since his arrival.

"I think a majority of farmers have good, common sense," he said. "They are really trying as hard as they can to protect the watershed."

Petersen and his wife, Deb, have three grown children, John of Graettinger, Keri of Milford and Ben of Random Lake, Wisc.

04-26-03

Dickinson County Conservation Board
And the
Dickinson County Soil and Water
Conservation District

PRESENT



Saturday,
April 26th, 2003

9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

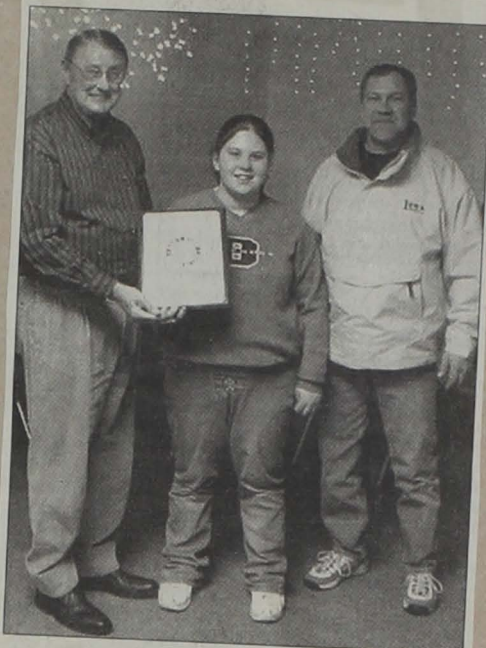


Lakes Art Center
Hwy 71
Okoboji, Iowa

When we
see the land
as a
community
to which
we belong,
we may
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it with love
and
respect.

~Aldo Leopold

Youth honored for service



contributed photo

Keith Oostenbrug (left) and Max Lundt (right) of Center Lake Association presented an appreciation plaque to Ashley Egeland of the Lakeview Open Bible Church Youth for placing Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance "Don't Dump - Drains into Lake" badges on street drains and storm waterways. The youth posted 80 locations and secured the very visible badges to remind people of waste that may contaminate the Lakes area.

DCN 05-07-03

Terril students earn awards at Envirothon



contributed photo

Terril High School won two awards at the eighth annual Iowa Envirothon held April 23 at Springbrook State Park near Guthrie Center. Terril received the Wildlife and Forestry Awards. Team members are (front from left) Armin Schnelle, James Johanson, Katrina McGranahan, (back) Brian Mehan, Steven Sawyer and Coach Marc Benedict. Students participating in the contest were challenged to sharpen their critical thinking skills while exploring environmental issues pertaining to aquatics, forestry, wildlife and soils.

DCN 05-10-03



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION DONATES TO CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE--

Tony Weber and Bill Eich, representing the Home Builders Association of Northwest Iowa, presented a \$1,000 check to the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners for Clean Water Alliance projects. The Clean Water Alliance is made up of local environmental and protective organizations and individuals who work in both Iowa and Minnesota to protect the water quality in Dickinson County.

Pictured above, left to right, are: Scott Mitchell, Orville Berg, Mark Ingwersen, Bill Northey, Bill Eich, Chris Hoffman and Tony Weber.

NOV 4 2003

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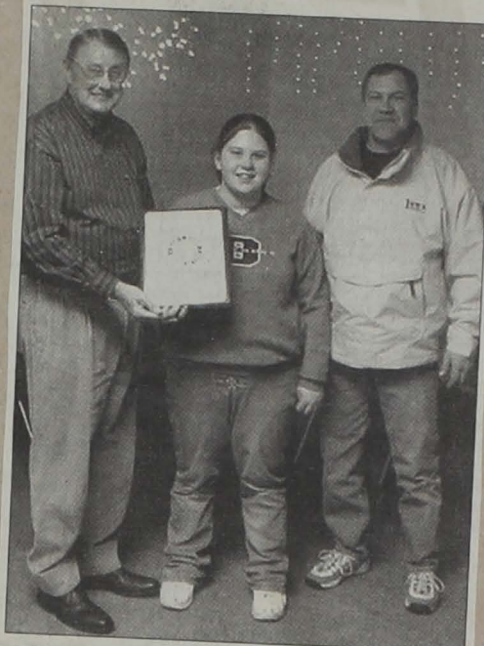


Lakes Art Center
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Nov 4 2003

WELCOME TO

Earth Day 2003

Environmental Learning Fair

Earth Day Lecture Schedule

10:00 am	"Low Impact Development—protecting water quality as we grow" Wayne Peterson, NRCS With rapid urbanization, we have concerns about maintaining the integrity of the natural beauty and resources within our community. Learn how we can incorporate green development alternatives to reduce storm water run-off, control erosion and develop urban-rural coalitions for our watershed protection.
11:00 am	"BioDiesel: Clean, Efficient, and Made in America" Marc Franke, U of I Learn about this new and exciting technology for manufacturing clean, environmentally friendly fuel using organic renewable resources that has the potential to help us reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.
1:00 pm	"IOWATER: Volunteer Watershed Monitoring" , Brian Soenen This citizen volunteer water quality-monitoring program is making waves across Iowa! Get information about the program and how you can get involved.
2:00 pm	"Falconry" , Dr. Ross Dirks, DVM This is a natural history lesson on Raptors and Falconry with a live Prairie Falcon to help tell the story.
3:00 pm	"Drug Free Landscaping" , Tom Koster, RC and D Have a green lawn without promoting green lakes! Get the info on phosphorous free fertilizer and other environmentally friendly alternatives for lawn and garden pest and weed control.

All lectures will be held in the upstairs classroom

Wayne Petersen is a life long resident of Iowa. Wayne has his degree in Agronomy with a minor in Environmental Studies from ISU. Since 1976, he has worked with the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). His career includes: Conservation Technician in northern Iowa, Soil Conservationist for Polk County and District Conservationist for Clinton and Johnson County. In 1996, Wayne became the Urban Conservationist for the NRCS working throughout the State of Iowa helping local Soil and Water Conservation Districts develop services for the urban sector.

Marc Franke is the Director of Campus Services at the University of Iowa. His life long interest in energy and science included a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and a 17-year career with General Motors. Marc was raised on an Ohio dairy farm and has lived in Iowa since 1985. His interests include passive solar housing, solar power, wind energy and BioDiesel.

Brian Soenen began work for the Water Monitoring Section in March 2002. He earned his bachelor's degree in Natural History Interpretation in 2000 from the University of Northern Iowa. Prior to coming to the IDNR, Brian worked as a project interpreter for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Coralville Lake in Johnson County. In addition to IOWATER data interpretation, Brian's focus is the development and facilitation of IOWATER Advanced Workshops, specifically the Water Ecology and Secondary Educators' Workshops.

Ross Dirks has been a Veterinarian in this area for four years and is the owner of the Dickinson County Animal Clinic. Prior to coming to the Iowa lakes region, Dr. Dirks practiced in the Davenport area. While there, he worked on small animals and was the Veterinarian for a couple of small zoos- the Fejvary and the Niabi Zoos. He also worked as a Wildlife Rehabilitator. Dr. Dirks has been involved with Falconry for eighteen years.

Tom Koster is a Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District Assistant Commissioner. He is also the Dickinson County Backyard Conservation /Help-A-Habitat Coordinator and the Special Projects Coordinator for the Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation and Development office in Spencer, Iowa. Current projects Tom is involved with are: refurbishing computers to be donated to schools and nonprofit groups. Lake'n Lawn Saver phosphorous free lawn fertilizer and solar energy technology for farm, home and boating applications.

Young People's Program Schedules

9:00-9:45 am	"Fish Prints", Tom Koster
10:00-10:45 am	"Herps— Reptiles and Amphibians", Dorrie Franke
11:00-12:00 pm	"Birdhouse Building", KINSHIP
12:30-1:45 pm	Movie: "Microcosmos"*
2:00-2:45 pm	"Falconry", Dr. Ross Dirks**
3:00-3:45 pm	"Nature Journal Making and Hike", Dorrie Franke

Young peoples' programs will be in the downstairs classroom

* The movie will be shown in the theatre

**This program will be in the upstairs classroom

DNR Mobile Education Trailer

9:00- 4:00 P. M. "Your Town, Your Choice, Your Future!"

The trailer will be located on the southwest corner the LAC building in the parking lot.

Informational Displays

Backyard Conservationist	(712) 262-2083
Iowa Lakes RC & D	(712) 262-2083
CLAMP	(712) 337-3669, ext 3

Dickinson County Conservation Board

Director	(712) 338-4786
Naturalist	(712) 338-4238
Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County	(712) 336-3362

IDNR

Fish Hatchery	(712) 336-1840
Wildlife Bureau	(712) 336-1485
Law Enforcement	(712) 336-1840

ICALL

Iowa Prairie Lakes Audubon	(515) 309-3152
Iowa Lakeside Lab	(712) 336-5199
Friends of Iowa Lakeside Labs	(712) 337-3669
IOWATER	(712) 337-3669
ISU Extension	(515) 281-4476
Natural Resource Conservation Service	(712) 336-3488
Soil and Water Conservation District	(712) 336-3782
Dickinson County Landfill	(712) 336-3782, ext 3
The Prairie Flower- Native Plants	(712) 336-2700
Protective Associations of the Lakes Region	(712) 262-5864
Expedition Co.	(712) 332-9220
Sierra Club	(712) 332-9001

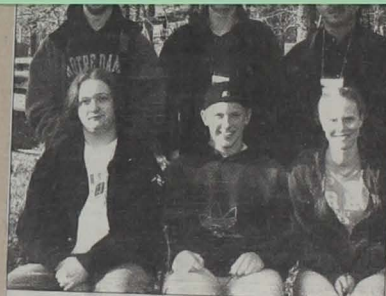
This event is a Dickinson County Conservation Board and Dickinson Co. Soil and Water Conservation District program



HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION DONATES TO CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE-- Tony Weber and Bill Eich, representing the Home Builders Association of Northwest Iowa, presented a \$1,000 check to the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners for Clean Water Alliance projects. The Clean Water Alliance is made up of local environmental and protective organizations and individuals who work in both Iowa and Minnesota to protect the water quality in Dickinson County.

Pictured above, left to right, are: Scott Mitchell, Orville Berg, Mark Ingwersen, Bill Northey, Bill Eich, Chris Hoffman and Tony Weber.

NOV 4 2003



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DCM 05-10-03

"It was hard work, and it took the whole family.
... We lived off what we farmed."

Allen Arnold, 80, of West Des Moines

Couple receives Century Farm award

FARM, from Page 1

Iowa State Fair.

Arnold said he has worked the land, which was "swampy, weedy and rocky," much of his life. But the family was self-sufficient as a result, he added.

"We farmed it and we lived off what we farmed," he said. "You had all the food you needed."

Arnold took over the farm in 1946. He continued to work the land even after moving to the Des Moines area in 1980.

In addition to growing corn and beans, Arnold is in the process of transforming the pasture into a game refuge. He is also hoping to pass the farm on to his son, who lives in Davenport, he said.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship presented Century Farm awards this year to 347 recipients in 88 counties.

"It was impressive seeing how many were there," Arnold said. "It's neat that they've had it that long."

The Century Farms Program started in 1976 to honor families that have owned the same farm for 100 years or longer. It has certified 14,683 farms since its inception.

"The Century Farms Program acknowledges these farm families by honoring century-long ownership and stewardship of Iowa farmland, and recognizes the sense of responsibility that comes from working the land," said Patty Judge, Iowa secretary of agriculture.

"The program honors a way of life, which has enriched our communities, and provides a unique understanding of Iowa's past while giving insight on how agriculture will continue to play a major role in our state's exciting and productive future."



Mary J. and Allen Arnold of West Des Moines hold the Century Farm award they received with their family at the Iowa State Fair last month. At right is Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge. Allen Arnold worked most of his life on the Dickinson County farm.

Statewide lakes protective association emerges

11-05-23

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR
AND DANA LARSEN
STORM LAKE PILOT-TRIBUNE

At a meeting in Storm Lake this week, organizers from various lake communities around Iowa quietly voted into being the Iowa Lakes Association. They hope the organization's resulting tidal wave of influence can be a powerful incentive for lawmakers to go with

the flow.

Members of the new organization elected Iowa Great Lakes resident Steve Anderson of Spirit Lake to serve as president. Anderson, a former Clean Water Alliance Coordinator, is a member of several Iowa Great Lakes area water quality organizations. He represents the East Okoboji Improvement Association on the statewide board.

"We haven't had much

impact on the legislature as separate lakes organizations," said Anderson. "This organization should give us a stronger voice in the state government."

Anderson said there are a lot of lobbyists fighting for things that may have a negative impact on the environment in Iowa.

"There wasn't a voice out there specifically trying to protect our lakes," he said. "We're going to fight for things that

have never been fought for before."

Lake lovers from all around the state immediately found that they spoke the same language and shared many mutual concerns.

Gary Lalone of the Lakes Preservation Association in Storm Lake was elected as treasurer of the new group.

IOWA

continued on page 8A

ty group

"The biggest thing we found in common is worry over funding of the Environment First program. This is paid for out of gambling revenue, and whenever dollars run tight in the state budget, it seems to be the first place the legislature looks to cut," he said. "The Environment First fund also happens to have the money for lake restoration programs within it, as well as Resources Enhancement and Improvement (REAP) funds that can be used for State Parks and other projects that may directly relate to lakes."

Aquatic nuisance species control is another shared issue.

"If we are not careful to control and promote awareness to clean our boats, species can be transferred from one body of water to another where it can do major damage in the ecosystem," said Lalone.

The association expects to bring issues such as water quality, boating laws, and protective funding to the legislature. They also hope to promote green spaces around Iowa's lakes, bike trails and low impact development.

The Iowa Lakes Association is classified as a social welfare organization (501-C4). This means that investments in the association are not tax deductible. However, unlike the non-profit (501-C3) organizations, a social welfare organization may fund lobbying.

"We probably aren't going to be hiring a lobbyist in our first year," said Anderson. "We are, however, going to do our research by having a lobbyist



PHOTO BY LYNN LAWS • DCN STAFF

The new statewide Iowa Lakes Association plans to make an impact in the Des Moines legislature regarding water quality issues in Iowa's lakes. The Kettleon-Hogsback nature area near Spirit Lake is just one of numerous areas that stands to be impacted by the group's actions.

come talk to our group about the logistics and how we go about getting our voice heard in Des Moines."

There are approximately 25 lakes protective associations throughout the state of Iowa. More than half of these organizations have expressed an interest in being part of the new Iowa Lakes Association.

Three charter organizations donat-

ed \$1,000 to get the association on its feet: the Okoboji Protective Association, the Clear Lake Protective Association and the Storm Lake Protective Association. Membership dues are still being structured for other organizations and individuals who wish to be part of the effort.

Other officers elected for the orga-

nization's first term of existence include vice president Mike Hood, Orleans, representing the Spirit Lake Protective Association and secretary Marcia Cory, Clear Lake, representing the Clear Lake Enhancement and Restoration Association.

The Iowa Lakes Association will meet quarterly. Its next meeting is scheduled for January.

A Classroom Without Walls

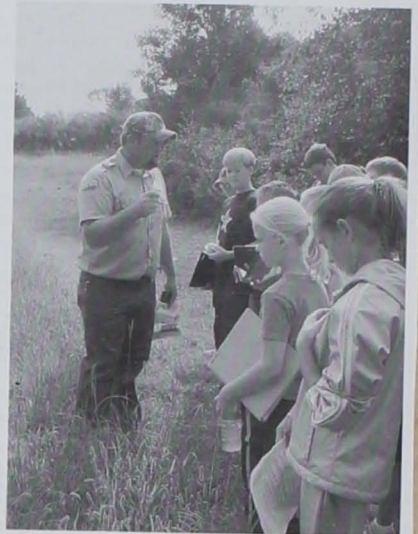
-Kettleson-Hogsback Offers Sixth Graders a Great Place to Learn

Sixth graders from Spirit Lake Middle School, along with sixth graders from Okoboji and Terril Community Schools, enjoyed a day of outdoor education at Kettleson-Hogsback Wildlife Area. This annual event featured eight stations and presenters. The students learned about waterfowl, cultural resources, retriever dogs in the field, wildflowers, backyard

conservation, orphaned and injured wildlife, nature walks, IOWATER testing, soybean/corn by-products, and soils.



The presenters did an excellent job at each station and the students returned with a wealth of knowledge. Sixth graders were asked to prepare a report about their experiences at Hogsback and turn it in for grading. The students would like to thank all of the volunteers and sponsors that helped.



WDM couple accepts award for century of work on family farm

Stat

By AMY LAMAR
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

BY A Century Farm award presented to a West Des Moines couple brought back strong memories for Allen

Arnold, 80, who has farmed the land since he was a child. "It was hard work, and it took the whole family," he said. "Young people today would just die if they had to do it."

Arnold's grandparents purchased the farm, located near Lake Park in Dickinson County, in 1903 because his grandfather "had an itching to move west" from Hubbard. They

paid \$5 an acre.

When Arnold's grandfather died, the land was divided among four children. A parcel belonging to Arnold's mother, Christine Wiechman, is all that

remains in the family.

Allen and Mary J. Arnold received the family's Century Farm award in August at the

See FARM, Page 3

At a meeting this week, organizers from various lake communities around Iowa quietly voted into being the Iowa Lakes Association. They hope the organization's resulting tidal wave of influence can be a powerful incentive for lawmakers to go with

Water Alliance Coordinator, is a member of several Iowa Great Lakes area water quality organizations. He represents the East Okoboji Improvement Association on the statewide board.

"We haven't had much

of lobbyists fighting for things that may have a negative impact on the environment in Iowa.

"There wasn't a voice out there specifically trying to protect our lakes," he said. "We're going to fight for things that

Gary Lalone of the Lakes Preservation Association in Storm Lake was elected as treasurer of the new group.

IOWA

continued on page 8A

ty group

"The biggest thing we found in common is worry over funding of the Environment First program. This is paid for out of gambling revenue, and whenever dollars run tight in the state budget, it seems to be the first place the legislature looks to cut," he said. "The Environment First fund also happens to have the money for lake restoration programs within it, as well as Resources Enhancement and Improvement (REAP) funds that can be used for State Parks and other



LACT presents 'Over the River and Through the Woods'

Nick Cristiano (Joe Brown) struggles to tell his four Italian grandparents that he has been offered a promotion in company.

"L'engo famiglia," or "I have family" is a phrase being affirmed from the stage at the Lakes Art Center this weekend. And according to the Lakes

A CLOSER LOOK

WATER SUMMIT

Ag secretary says farming can be an environmentally friendly business.



WATER QUALITY

Floods of 1993 brought nutrients in water to devastating levels.

"I agree that water quality does belong delegated to each state. That's the best place for management framework to be implemented. There is a backstop however: where consensus, courage and change don't work - our states should not underestimate our will to implement (the Clean Water Act.)"

- JIM GUILFORD, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FOR REGION 7



PHOTOS BY LYNN LAWS - DCN STAFF

Water quality is a key pillar of life in the Iowa Great Lakes region. Whether boating, fishing or simply enjoying the scenery, residents and tourists understand the importance of keeping the area's lakes clean.

Residents act to clean up IMPAIRED WATERS

Governor's Water Quality Summit opens talks about issues

BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Iowans are coming to the disquieting revelation that life-sustaining, clean water can no longer be taken for granted. Dickinson County residents are among the Iowans who are pining to find realistic solutions to return Iowa's polluted waters to their once drinkable, fishable and swimmable condition.

"As I talk to lake-based communities, people there are demanding that the state do a better job leading and supporting them in their efforts," said Jeffrey Vonk, Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, in his opening remarks at the Governor's Water Quality Summit, held Monday, Nov. 24, in Ames. Over 450 Iowans, including Governor Tom Vilsack, filled Scheman Auditorium to participate in addressing water quality issues. They hope to eliminate impaired waters in the state by 2010.

But forces outside the state are also driving change. Iowa is required by the federal Clean Water Act to identify polluted waters, to calculate just how much daily pollution its impaired streams, lakes and rivers can handle and still meet water quality standards and to clean up its impaired waters.

In 1998, Iowa had 159 waterbodies on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources impaired waters list. These included Milford Creek, Little Spirit Lake and Lower and Upper Gar Lakes. The Iowa DNR's final impaired waters

list for 2002 contained 188 waterbodies with 257 impairments. Nine bodies off water and 13 impairments were removed from the list. The DNR added 38 waterbodies and 55 impairments to reach the total in its 2002 list. The DNR decided not to include Upper Gar Lake on the 2002 impaired waters list, "based on flaws in the original analysis, including the lack of any water quality data or water quality criteria upon which to base an assessment of aquatic life uses of this lake."

Vilsack told summit participants, in order to make progress on water quality "we need consensus and change. And if we are going to make a difference, we're going to have to make changes in the way we think and in the way we do things."

SUMMIT

continued on page 2B

Water quality top priority to area residents

BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Early on a recent Friday morning, a dozen people gathered on a screened porch in Milford to have coffee and talk about water quality conservation in the Iowa Great Lakes.

Longtime area residents compared today's Lakes water quality with lake quality in the 1960s, before a sewage system was in use. Many find the water to be in much better condition comparatively. Others lament the increased presence of blue-green algae, which they say is due to agricultural and urban run-off and removal of shoreline vegetation.

They fear water quality is declining in the Iowa Great Lakes. They fear for the recreation industry as well as their families' health. And they feel called to defend their beloved lakes from further degradation.

Ken Lang, a specialist in the study of the life and phenomena of fresh water, was invited to attend. Lang is the associate director of Lakeside Laboratory, a

research and teaching facility located in Wahpeton. Scientists and volunteers there are collecting water quality data for a long-term study of area lakes, which began in 1999. Lang and other scientist there say, because of annual weather variances, it will take several more years of data collecting before the numbers will reveal accurate conclusions about the health of our lakes and the effect human activities are having on that health.

In the meantime, observations over time by area residents and visitors, while not scientific, provide a valuable snapshot of how the lakes have changed.

Lang, a resident of Iowa in his youth, attended classes at Lakeside Laboratory and enjoyed area lakes until leaving for a job in California in 1970. After an 18-year absence, he returned in 1988 to do research and teach at Lakeside Lab.

"It was shocking how much it had changed," Lang said. "The riparian (edge) vegetation around the lakes and creek beds were gone. I used to hunt in that area. It was 50- to 100-foot-wide and was full of

game. Now you can see the bank of every creek. The wood lots are gone."

"The corn looked strange, too," Lang added. "The only corn I knew had leaves that bent over. Now the corn leaves were standing straight up. For about two hours I thought they were pineapple plants. Then someone set me straight."

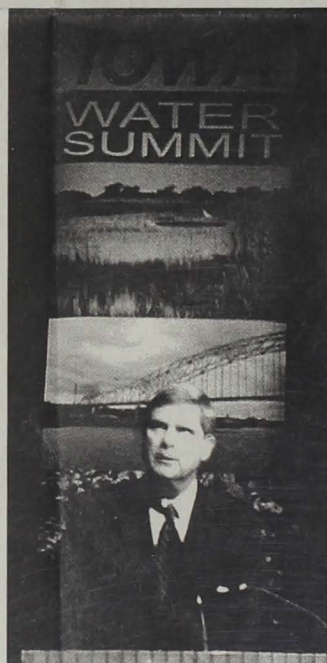
Bee Zeigler, who lives on Big Spirit Lake, said, "And you could walk through the corn rows then; they were wide enough."

"Oh yeah," Lang said, "We used to hunt in the corn fields, too. And coming back in 1988, there were many more beans - soybeans, too. Then that fall, I never saw so many big combines to harvest crops."

"But I remember that spring was so dry and windy I remember dust in the air and not a cloud to be seen on any day," continued Lang. "Well, the first day I went out on West Lake Okoboji to conduct the usual water monitoring tests I was amazed."

QUALITY

continued on page 2B



Governor Vilsack's Water Quality Summit drew interest from water quality advocates throughout the state. Several Dickinson County residents attended the event representing several different water quality organizations.

GOVERNOR'S REMARKS

■ To see and hear opening remarks from the Governor's Water Quality Summit, by Governor Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture Patty Judge, DNR Director Jeffrey Vonk, and EPA representative Jim Guilford, go to: www.governor.state-ia.us/video/2003/index.html.

Dickinson SWCD Foundation Scholarships

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation announces the availability of two \$500 scholarships that will be presented to Dickinson County Graduating High School Seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies and in addition, this application will be forwarded to compete in the Conservation Districts of Iowa's (CDI) Auxiliary Annual Scholarships. CDI funds 6 regional awards of \$200 each and state level awards in the amount of \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$800. The applicant needs to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the 2004 application form.

The Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study. The applicants need to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the same CDI 2004 application form.

High school seniors must submit their applications to the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District no later than Friday, February 27, 2004. Both scholarships will be judged on leadership, scholastic achievement and need.

Applications can be obtained from the High School Counselors at Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake or Terril High Schools, or by contacting the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake at 712-336-3782, ext. 3.

Meeting set to formalize Clean Water Alliance

BY DONNA BUELL
SPECIAL TO THE DCN

A re-organizational meeting of the Dickinson County and Jackson County Clean Water Alliance will be held at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 15, at the Milford Community Building, 806 N Avenue, Milford.

The Clean Water Alliance began in the early 1990s to bring governmental and non-governmental organizations together to improve communication and coordination on water quality improvement projects. In 1998, the Clean Water Alliance developed its first Long Range Water Plan — with goals, objectives and lead organizations to implement those objectives. The plan was updated in 2000 and will be updated again in 2004.

At present, the Clean Water Alliance has over 60 partners, but no formal membership, dues, structure or committees. Yet there is an ever stronger push from environmental agencies and granting sources to demonstrate collaboration and strengthen coordination of expertise and resources to be eligible for funding. At the Jan. 15 meeting, attendees will discuss if and how the Clean Water Alliance should formalize to meet this demand, as other watershed groups across the state are doing.

The meeting will be hosted by the Dickinson County Soil and Water District. Numerous agencies and non-governmental groups and

citizens will be on hand, and EPA community facilitators will help gather input. Coffee and cookies will be served. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting will begin promptly at 7 p.m.

Buell is the Dickinson County and Jackson County Clean Water Alliance Coordinator.

DCN 1-24-04

FROM THE FISHERIES CORNER

New technology helps analyze watershed

BY MICHAEL HAWKINS
SPECIAL TO THE DCN

The Iowa Great Lakes has long been recognized as one of the state's most valuable natural and economic resource areas. Various government and community organizations have worked hard to protect areas within our watershed in an attempt to preserve or improve water quality.

It has often been difficult to assess or quantify the success of these past efforts. New developing technology will help communities and natural resource professionals measure the success of past efforts and help prioritize future watershed improvement work.

This new technology includes Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and major advances in watershed modeling. A GIS has the ability to allow the incorporation and analysis of many layers of geographical data.

Modeling inputs include components from soils maps, elevation data, land-use and tillage practices, precipitation information, and others. Rainfall events can be simulated; potential soil erosion can be estimated; and nutrient inputs and sediment delivery to the lakes can be predicted.

These tools will allow us to identify problems and focus watershed protection efforts and money into projects that will have the most significant water quality impacts. To date, soil erosion and sediment delivery to the lakes have been modeled.

The next step in this project will be to start modeling nutrient inputs from around the watershed and begin modeling and monitoring urban/residential areas. The recent land-use assessment portion of this project indicated a 22 percent increase in urban residential area since 1994. Much of this development is within just a few

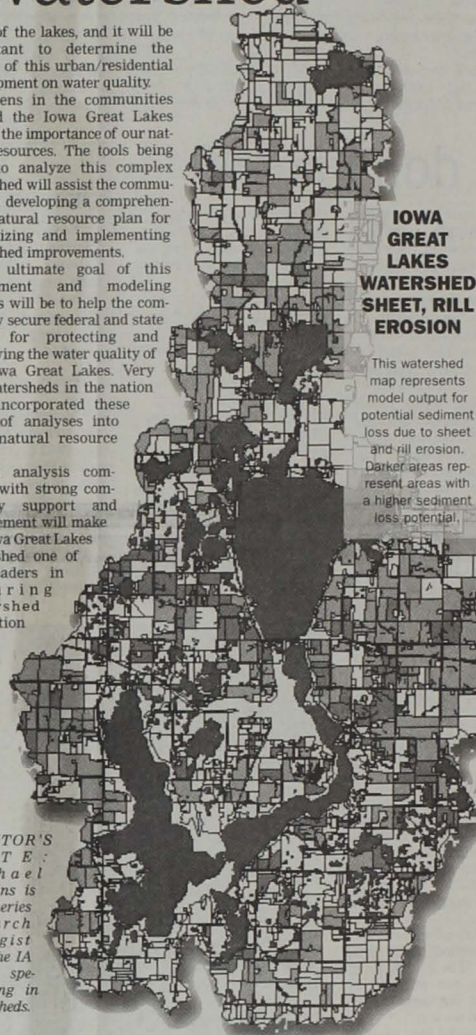
miles of the lakes, and it will be important to determine the impact of this urban/residential development on water quality.

Citizens in the communities around the Iowa Great Lakes realize the importance of our natural resources. The tools being used to analyze this complex watershed will assist the community in developing a comprehensive natural resource plan for prioritizing and implementing watershed improvements.

The ultimate goal of this assessment and modeling process will be to help the community secure federal and state funds for protecting and improving the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes. Very few watersheds in the nation have incorporated these types of analyses into their natural resource plans.

This analysis combined with strong community support and involvement will make the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed one of the leaders in securing watershed protection funds.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Michael Hawkins is a fisheries research biologist with the IA DNR specializing in watersheds.

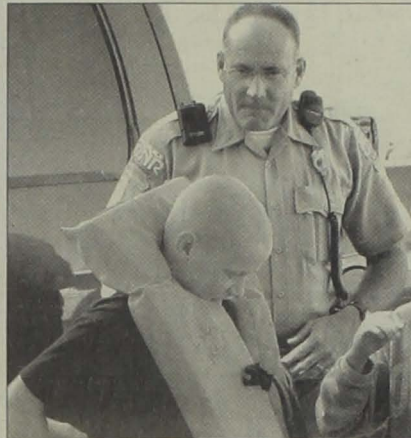


This watershed map represents model output for potential sediment loss due to sheet and rill erosion. Darker areas represent areas with a higher sediment loss potential.

Environmental Education

PHOTOS BY ANITRA WOLF • DCN STAFF

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored its annual outdoor classroom Thursday for Dickinson County sixth-grade students. The event is held each year at the Kettleson-Hogsback nature area where students learn about the importance of wetlands, boating and water safety, waterfowl, falconry, soils, scuba diving and snorkeling, wild flowers, soybean and corn byproducts, retriever dog filed trails and the Kettleson-Hogsback area itself.





Group touts urban development that mimics Great Lakes nature

BY LYNN LAWS
SPECIAL TO THE DCN

As cities grow, more people find jobs, shopping and social opportunities multiply, and, in the case of the Lakes Area, more people from inside and outside of Iowa get to enjoy water sports activities in beautiful, blue lakes. But with all the good that urban growth brings, comes responsibility and the hard work of maintaining the health of the natural areas within and around the cities — the health of the trees and other plants, the soil, the animals (including humans) the air and, of course, the water.

"There's no place in Iowa where the economic health and life of the community is more dependent on water quality than the lakes region," says Wayne Petersen, Urban Conservationist for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. "Low impact development focuses on water quality. So we figure this region is a logical place to bring this concept to Iowa. If we can't make it work here, it will be difficult to make it work anywhere else in Iowa."

Petersen is the driving force behind a local seminar series on low impact development (LID), which began in June, with a tour into the agricultural lands in the lakes watershed and featured the conservation work that farmers are doing to protect water quality.

Petersen says the low impact development practices, highlighted in the seminar series, mimic the way nature used to do the work of filtering pollutants from our water.

"Before European settlement, the landscape absorbed the vast majority of pollutants. As the prairies were plowed, the soil degraded, and impervious surfaces added, like parking lots, we created a run-off hydrology that carries pollutants into the receiving waters, like streams and lakes."

An example of a city construct that is part of a "run-off hydrology" is a parking lot. Oil and other petroleum products from cars and trucks move across the impervious surface of the parking lot and directly into the city's storm water drains and, from there, untreated, into the lakes.

"Storm water run off goes directly into the lake. A lot of people don't know that or don't think about that," said Petersen. "Oils and grease, antifreeze — any petroleum-based products can either enter directly into the lake or be handled by the soil. We want to get them infiltrated into the soil to let the soil handle them. Microbes in the soil will gobble them up."

Microbes like carbon." One of the key features of low impact development (LID) is to include into storm water management practices that are aimed at protecting water quality.

"Historically we have focused on flood control as the number one hazard and rightly so — this is important. But we need to add water quality into storm water management — managing frequent, lower-intensity storms," said Petersen. "Historically we have managed the large catastrophic type events that cause flooding. Now we have to manage little storms, the half-inch rain falls. The vast majority of pollutant loads are delivered in the first flush of big storms and in frequent small storms. This is what really impacts water quality."

Orville Berg, West Okoboji, Soil District Commissioner and Chair of the Clean Water Alliance attended the first seminar in June and registered for the September 17 workshop.

"I want to see the new ideas for protecting our environment," said Berg. "It's



PHOTO BY LYNN LAWS - DCN STAFF

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— WAYNE PETERSEN, URBAN CONSERVATIONIST FOR USDA
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

had numerous projects in past through state and federal grants and they have all been aimed at agriculture. There is virtually no program aimed at urban areas — until now. We really need to figure out how we can get something significant done for our urban areas."

Seminar organizers have received 50 registrations to date and hope to sign up many more. They want to attract city decision-makers, private contractors, developers, design professionals, landscapers and interested citizens to the series of workshops.

"First, is municipal officials that set policy and regulations," said Petersen. "If they don't know about these approaches, and don't understand how they provide economic and environmental opportunities, then anything that looks contrary to existing rules, they're likely not to approve. So they are a key audience."

Berg says people should attend for the outstanding presenters.

"Normally people would have to go to a national convention to obtain this caliber and quality of information," said Berg.

The Sept. 17 session will review original land survey notes and provide a picture of the pre-settlement landscapes around the lakes and how this information can be used to design natural water filtration systems. The day will conclude with visits to woodland areas on the east shore of West Lake. For more information on this seminar and monthly workshops to follow, call (712) 336-3782, extension 3.

The seminar series is provided by the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners with funds from a grant through the Environmental Protection Area and additional grants from the Dickinson Water Quality Commission and the Farm Bureau Federation. Seminar series organizers include Dickinson County Conservation Board and Foundation, Iowa State University Extension, Friends of Lakeside Lab, Spirit Lake Protective Association, East Okoboji Lake Improvement Corporation, Okoboji

Department of Natural Resources Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Agriculture — Division of Soil Conservation, Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District and the Clean Water Alliance.

MORE INFO

■ "The Historic Landscape of the Great Lakes Region," a one-day workshop for professionals and members of the general public who are interested in supporting the creation of lake-friendly development practices, will be held Friday, Sept. 17, at the Village West Convention Center. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the workshop running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information and to pre-register, call Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District at (712) 336-3782, extension 3.

10-13-04

Rain garden expert to speak in Spirit Lake

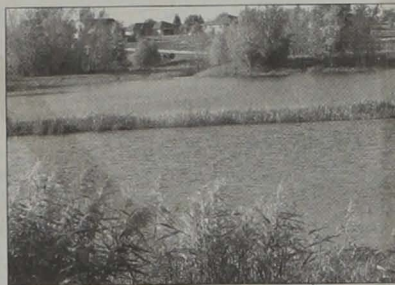
BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

On Friday, Oct. 15, Lakes Area property owners, city planners, builders and others will have another opportunity to learn how to protect the lakes and their drinking water, while allowing for urban development.

Larry Coffman, Associate Director of the Prince George's County, Maryland's Department of Environmental Resources, will be the presenter for this third of 10 Low Impact Development workshops, being sponsored by the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District and the Dickinson Clean Water Alliance.

"Larry is truly recognized as a national leader on low impact development. I'm really glad we could pluck him out of the sky for a day. He will be in L.A. all week and then Minnesota, then us and then Maryland," said Wayne Petersen, Urban Conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. He is one of the experts spearheading this series of workshops on low impact development.

Coffman has over 30 years of experience in storm water management, flood control and comprehensive watershed planning and restoration. He has authored numerous papers and articles on storm water management



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Low Impact Development practices mimic nature to provide water quality and economic benefits. This water retention area for Lakes Business Park (top) in Spirit Lake mimics a natural area near Lake Park in Dickinson County (bottom).

LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT 101'

FRIDAY, OCT. 15

Village West Convention Center
Highway 86, Spirit Lake
Continuing Education
Credits are available for all workshops in this series. Call (712) 336-3782, ext. 3 to register.

Next workshop in the series:
Friday, Nov. 19
"Better Site Design"
Call (712) 336-3782, ext. 3 for more information

Design Manual."

His manual "was the first publication that I found that put some legs under this idea that there are new alternatives to managing storm water that also provide water quality and economic benefits," Petersen said.

Friday's workshop will provide information on rain gardens and other low-impact development techniques, case studies, cost considerations, upkeep and lessons learned. Workshop planners say there is still space available for anyone interested in attending this workshop.

"This series is low impact development 101, so people don't need to be an expert," Petersen said. "With each session their knowledge base grows."

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NEXT LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP

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past times.

"I spent the early part of my life destroying; straightening streams," Coffman said to over 50 Iowans gathered to hear him speak in Spirit Lake in late October.

Coffman says his destructive work began early, at the age of 12. That's when he got his work permit and joined his father's contracting business, constructing storm drain pipes, in Prince George County, in Washington State. When Coffman graduated from college in 1974, his degree and his early work with his father led him to a job with the Washington Sanitary Commission, which also managed storm water by piping it off the land and into surrounding waters. Along the way, he watched and

new development technologies. As we urbanize, we can systematically destroy the physical systems that protect our waters - plants and soils and with them their ability to purify and absorb water. Or, we can integrate them into our designs, Coffman says.

Coffman is well known for encouraging the use of rain gardens, "a water quality practice in which plants and soils remove pollutants from storm water. Planted in low-lying areas, rain gardens contain specific layers of soil, sand and organic mulch. These layers naturally filter rain water, which can be polluted by oil and chemicals built up on our lawns and driveways. Rainwater can also pick up pollutants as it passes through our atmosphere on its way to the ground."

NEXT STEPS

Some suggested next steps for the Iowa Great Lakes Area:

- Develop and publish home-owner guidelines specific to the Lakes Area
- Create a web page for specific users with lots of information and voluntary implementation guidelines
- Make Low Impact Development required learning for builders and other development professionals
- Look at the entire

watershed and make regional plans; research regional differences

- Provide meetings on implementation issues related to these new techniques and ideas
- Implement residential and commercial demonstration projects
- Urge government agencies to set an example with their capital improvement programs for government buildings and grounds and redevelopment codes.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, polluted runoff is the No.1 water quality problem in the U.S.

Rain gardens are abundant in Maplewood, Minn., a city that has created a rain garden incentive program for home owners.

In attendance at the October seminar sponsored by Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District and many lakes associations, were developers, citizens, consultants, scientist, municipal and state government workers, developers, and landscape architects.

"I'm an exact stereotype of what he presented. He was talking about how public works have been trained to get rid of storm water, rather than use it," said Dickinson County Engineer Dan Eckert.

Eckert calls the new development technologies "permanent solutions perfect for the lakes area."

The new low impact development technologies provide creative ways to design buildings, malls, parking lots, yards, driveways, and other urban structures in

a way that holds water on site for as long as possible.

"All our storm sewers eventually lead to a lake, and, my goodness, if we can filter the heavy metals and chemical fertilizers through bio-retention cells (rain gardens), we're really addressing both issues of quantity (flood control) and quality," Eckert said.

Coffman talked about celebrating and utilizing rain water, rather than thinking of it as something we have to move to the nearest storm drain.

"We can't keep using old thinking and technologies that were developed 40 years ago for different purposes and reasons. As Einstein said, 'you can't solve today's problems with the same thinking that created them.'"

11-10-04
DCN

10-13-04

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BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

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His work is his penance

BY LYNN LAWS
AND JANE SHUTTLEWORTH
DCN CONTRIBUTORS

NEXT LOW IMPACT WORKSHOP

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Larry Coffman says his work is his way of atoning for past sins. Though Coffman brings much passion to his work and uses such words as "mission" and "sin," his is not a religious campaign. Coffman is the associate director of Prince George County Department of Environmental Resources. Encouraging others not to make the same mistakes he made early in his career is his "way of making up for past sins."

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learned.

Now he says he knows for certain that "the conventional way of handling storm water will guarantee loss of our recreational waters."

"If we don't change our ways, it's just a matter of time before we lose the waters that give so much to our quality of life ecologically, socially and spiritually," says Coffman.

Coffman emphasizes that the issue is not about urban growth. Discussions about growth only polarize people and dilute good solutions. Instead, city planners and others need to be talking about new development technologies. As we urbanize, we can systematically destroy the physical systems that protect our waters - plants and soils and with them their ability to purify and absorb water. Or, we can integrate them into our designs, Coffman says.

Coffman is well known for encouraging the use of rain gardens, "a water quality practice in which plants and soils remove pollutants from storm water. Planted in low-lying areas, rain gardens contain specific layers of soil, sand and organic mulch. These layers naturally filter rainwater, which can be polluted by oil and chemicals built up on our lawns and driveways. Rainwater can also pick up pollutants as it passes through our atmosphere on its way to the ground."

NEXT STEPS

Some suggested next steps for the Iowa Great Lakes Area:

- Develop and publish home-owner guidelines specific to the Lakes Area
- Create a web page for specific users with lots of information and voluntary implementation guidelines
- Make Low Impact Development required learning for builders and other development professionals
- Look at the entire

watershed and make regional plans; research regional differences

- Provide meetings on implementation issues related to these new techniques and ideas
- Implement residential and commercial demonstration projects
- Urge government agencies to set an example with their capital improvement programs for government buildings and grounds and redevelopment codes.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, polluted runoff is the No.1 water quality problem in the U.S.



Rain gardens are abundant in Maplewood, Minn., a city that has created a rain garden incentive program for home owners.

In attendance at the October seminar sponsored by Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District and many lakes associations, were developers, citizens, consultants, scientist, municipal and state government workers, developers, and landscape architects.

"I'm an exact stereotype of what he presented. He was talking about how public works have been trained to get rid of storm water, rather than use it," said Dickinson County Engineer Dan Eckert.

Eckert calls the new development technologies "permanent solutions perfect for the lakes area."

The new low impact development technologies provide creative ways to design buildings, malls, parking lots, yards, driveways, and other urban structures in

a way that holds water on site for as long as possible.

"All our storm sewers eventually lead to a lake, and, my goodness, if we can filter the heavy metals and chemical fertilizers through bio-retention cells (rain gardens), we're really addressing both issues of quantity (flood control) and quality," Eckert said.

Coffman talked about celebrating and utilizing rain water, rather than thinking of it as something we have to move to the nearest storm drain.

"We can't keep using old thinking and technologies that were developed 40 years ago for different purposes and reasons. As Einstein said, 'you can't solve today's problems with the same thinking that created them.'"

11-10-04
DCN

Water quality commission funds clean water projects

BY GREG DREES
SPECIAL TO THE DCN

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission on Monday night granted funds totaling \$133,732 to seven of 10 applicants seeking money for clean water projects.

"The commission funded a wide diversity of water quality applications that will enhance the natural resources of Dickinson County," said acting chair Darryl Halling.

The commission, which begins with an annual funding pool of \$200,000 through assessments made in a 28E agreement with the municipalities and the county, accepts project applications each year and grades them on a ranking system. The seven projects that the commission approved on Monday range in diversity from a lakeside prairie restoration and water quality monitoring to infiltration-based storm water management. Two dredging projects and an infrastructure project were denied funding because they failed to meet the commission's minimum ranking standard.

The Dickinson County group is a one-of-a-kind water quality commission in the state. It is designed as a funding mechanism to preserve and enhance water quality in the county. The commission was established in 1999 and is comprised of 18 voting members. To date, the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission - when considering the matching moneys that project applicants have received from federal, state and local sources - has funded literally millions of dollars in clean water projects throughout the county.

OK'D PROJECTS

In the FY06 funding cycle, the commission on Monday night approved the following projects:

■ **DICKINSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT** - \$52,175 for demonstration sites of infiltration-based storm water management practices that protect water quality.

■ **DICKINSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT** - \$24,352 for the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Alliance project to manage the CWAs strategic plan by coordinating, educating, communicating, funding and prioritizing watershed projects.

■ **IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES** - \$38,000 for a Iowa Great Lakes watershed light detection and ranging project, a system that produces a dense network of elevation data use to improve watershed modeling efforts.

■ **SILVER LAKE PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION** - \$1,250 for startup resources for a protective association to formulate plans for water quality projects in the Silver Lake watershed.

■ **FRIENDS OF LAKESIDE LAB** - \$7,325 for water quality monitoring in nine Dickinson County lakes to develop a database of in-lake nutrient levels.

■ **DICKINSON COUNTY CONSERVATION BOARD AND FRIENDS OF LAKESIDE LAB** - \$7,185 for a graduate student to serve as joint intern for environmental education for both entities.

■ **TRIBOJI BEACH BETTERMENT ASSOCIATION** - \$3,445 for a prairie restoration project at the north end of West Lake Okoboji. The commission denied funding for the following projects based on the failure of the applications to meet minimum ranking standards:

■ **WAHPETON CANALS PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION** - \$40,000 for a Wahpeton canals dredging project.

■ **EAST OKOBOJI BEACH, INC.** - \$30,000 for a drainage and infrastructure project.

■ **LAKES AREA WATER TRAILS, INC.** - \$120,000 for a dredging restoration project at Turtle Lake.

Dickinson Co. News

12-15-04

Farm Bureau recognizes Nielsen



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Phyllis Nielsen of Milford (left) received the Dickinson County Farm Bureau recognition award at the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) annual meeting in Des Moines Dec. 1. Craig Hill, IFBF vice president, made the presentation to Nielsen, who is the county Farm Bureau past-president.

Dickinson County Farm Bureau received gold star recognition for its 2004 programs in membership, policy development, policy implementation, county action, public relations, ag in the classroom, rural and community development, leadership development and political effectiveness.

Gold stars recognize outstanding achievement while silver stars show above average achievement.

Clean Water Alliance to hold quarterly meeting

The next quarterly meeting for the Dickinson Clean Water Alliance will be held at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 2, at the Milford Community Building, 1009 9th Street in Milford.

The Clean Water Alliance is in the process of updating the long-range watershed strategic plans for the Iowa Great Lakes and Silver Lake.

The Clean Water Alliance watershed plan is a strategy for effectively

preserving and restoring the Lakes area's native aquatic ecosystem. The plan serves to guide the coordinated efforts of the Dickinson Clean Water Alliance and its partners for the years 2005 through 2008. The plan also serves as an evaluation tool for the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission and other current and potential funding partners.

Among the items to be discussed

at the upcoming quarterly meeting is a proposed watershed ethic of environmental sustainability, i.e., that current economic or recreational activity within the watershed leaves an undiminished and unimpaired stock of environmental goods for future generations. Also proposed are watershed goals relating to native biological diversity, infiltration practices, impaired waters and high quality waters.

Dickinson Co News 12-15-04

New Laser Technology for Iowa Great Lakes

BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Mike Hawkins, a research biologist, with Iowa DNR, Fisheries Bureau, in Spirit Lake, is already looking forward to spring, when an airplane and laser will provide a missing piece to the puzzle of how to keep Iowa Great Lakes pristine.

Hawkins is one of several area professionals who have been attending the monthly Low Impact Development seminars in Spirit Lake. Hawkins says they have been learning new, natural ways to manage storm water, a major source of pollution for lakes. Participants have been anxious to put their new knowledge to work, but haven't had the local data they need.

"The data layer holding us up to make decisions or try to represent our watershed on a smaller scale was our watershed data - the data we can get with the LIDAR technology," Hawkins said.

An advanced, highly accurate system called LIDAR (light detection and ranging) involves laser pulses of light shot to the ground from an airplane. As the light hits the ground, the technology returns highly accurate and detailed elevation information, says Hawkins.

"LIDAR takes millions of data points off the ground and keeps track of that information. That allows us to represent the landscape in the computer. We will be able to see where water accumulates and flows over a street, or a slope of land and the length of the slope. So we'll have precise information of how water flows on the landscape," Hawkins said.

Hawkins says that, along with aerial photos, this information will let planners and others know how much land flows to each storm sewer outlet, how much of that is grass versus pavement, how much is made up of roof tops, and more. This kind of detailed information is what developers, planners, builders, architects and other professionals need to know in order to determine where rainfall is being filtered through soil and plant roots before entering the lakes and where it is going directly into the lakes without being fil-

tered.

"Everyone has limits on time and money - So if a community decides to pursue new development techniques, this will help us prioritize what areas will benefit most," Hawkins said.

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission is providing \$38,000, half of the funds for the LIDAR mapping. The other \$38,000 will come from a combination of state and local funding. Many details must still be decided. But Hawkins is hoping for the fly-over to occur in early spring, when there is no crop cover or leaves on trees to block the laser beams.

Hawkins will present more information about the new LIDAR technology and new aerial photographs of the Great Lakes Area at the next Low Impact Development Workshop, Friday, Dec. 17, at the Village West Convention Center, Highway 86, in Spirit Lake.

Hawkins has attended all but the first Low Impact Development (LID) seminar and is on the LID coordinating committee.

"They (LID seminars) have been fantastic. I am thoroughly impressed. Urban planning is not my job, but it's an important part of the process. I see the other people - county, landscaping firms, city, etc. really enjoying the process. It makes sense to them. Everyone knows how important our water is in the Iowa Great Lakes. These seminars help them know how they can do their jobs better. These presentations have shown how low impact development makes sense economically. Everyone has limited time and money. These practices will bring costs down. That turns peoples' heads. We are all looking at the bottom line," Hawkins said.

In addition to Hawkins presentation, Avery Patillo, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services, will present about "Green Infrastructure."

■ For more information about this and other upcoming workshops, call the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District at 712-336-3782, extension 3.

Composting garbage saves soils, money and protects waters

BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Failure to control run off and erosion at construction sites after a rain storm, is costly for land developers and construction companies. It also pollutes receiving waters, like lakes and streams, with sediment.

In fact, sediment is the number one pollutant of U.S. waters, says Jay Michels, with Minnesota Erosion Control Association.

An extreme example of sediment pollution is the case of the Mississippi River, where rain waters, having washed over construction sites, agricultural fields and other land disturbances in the watershed have released sediments, either directly into the Mississippi or into storm sewers which drain into the Mississippi. These sediments have moved into the river's receiving waters at the Gulf of Mexico and have caused a 9,000 square mile dead zone. But all waters, including the Iowa Great Lakes, are threatened by sediment and even the smallest of construction sites can cause havoc to water bodies.

Experts believe that at least part of the solution literally lies in our home trash bins and the trash bins of food producers, paper producers and some other manufacturers.

Stacie Johnson, with Organic Matters of Cedar Rapids, who boasts she has made a career out of garbage, shared her expertise with northwestern Iowa citizens, professionals and municipal and county leaders at Low Impact Development seminar, Friday, in Spirit Lake.

Johnson says that rather than sending organic by-products from these trash bins to landfills, they can be made into quality compost, through a controlled and accelerated decomposition process, which kills weed seeds and disease-causing agents. In turn, two inches of this compost, applied on soil, even if the soil is compacted or frozen, will slow storm water run-off, trap sediments, reduce erosion, encourage the quick growth of seed plantings and suppress weeds in the subsoil.

Johnson shared the results of a three-year study, conducted at Iowa State University which showed, compared to conventionally seeded post-construction slopes of land, composted and seeded post-construction slopes will have 80 percent less storm water run-off, 99 percent less sediment

loss, 99 percent less nutrient run-off and 75 percent less weeds. Conventional seeding involves planting seed directly into the compacted subsoil that's left after road construction or putting down a layer of top soil before seeding. Conventional seeding often requires workers to return to sites to reseed and apply herbicides.

The \$189,000, three-year study was funded by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and cosponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation. The DNR was attempting to divert waste from landfills and find more customers for the com-

audits for individual homeowners, businesses, churches, etc. Audits determine a land area's capacity to retain its moisture and its soil.

Johnson is also working with a policy group that is addressing incorporating soil-saving practices into municipal standards.

Iowa compost producers and information on Iowa companies with specialized compost applications equipment can be found at the Iowa Department of Resources web page at www.muh.chiowa.com.

"A composted and seeded post-construction slope will have 80 percent less storm water run-off, 99 percent less sediment loss, 99 percent less nutrient run-off and 75 percent less weeds."

post, says Tom Glanville, associate professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering and a project leader for the research project.

Iowa currently has close to 80 facilities, handling 350,000 tons of organics per year and turning that material into a compost product, say experts.

The DOT had its reasons for supporting the project, too, Glanville said.

"Their motivation is to reduce erosion and water-quality impacts following new road construction. They have to meet federal erosion control requirements set forth by the Federal Highway Administration," Glanville said in a 2001 interview.

But a new phase of the Clean Water Act now expands the definition of who must control erosion on construction sites to include anyone involved in construction which disturbs an acre or more of land, said Johnson.

This creates a need for trained contractors all over the state. To this end, Johnson provides a clinic to help contractors adopt practices that control erosion, including installation of compost blankets. In addition, she provides rainwater

Budget debate begins: Cut spending, raise taxes or both?

03-09-05

BY DAVID JOHNSON
STATE SENATOR



"State government needs to throw away the credit card."

That was the message last week from State Auditor David Vaudt, a certified public accountant and a voice that's needed in the executive branch. He spoke with Senate Republicans just days before the governor submits his budget proposal for next fiscal year. Vaudt also is meeting with key Democrats in the equally divided Senate.

Once Governor Vilsack's budget is presented, the various legislative appropriations committees can begin to work in earnest comparing his spending and tax priorities with theirs. During those discussions, we should keep in mind what could be called the state auditor's Condition of the Budget message.

Let's start with the red ink. As of June 30, 2004, Vaudt said, state government is holding a past-due note of \$550 million. That's the amount of money that is obligated to be repaid under law after being borrowed from the Senior Living Trust, the Tobacco Trust, the Economic Emergency Fund, and other reserve and special accounts. Another \$930 million has no repayment plan. And more than \$400 million of surplus cash has been spent not to

Add it all up, and the state has spent \$1.9 billion more than revenues collected over the past four years.

Spending is the issue, Vaudt said. The growth in spending is not sustainable. The state lacks a long-range financial plan. Without tough decisions by lawmakers this session, he said, the pain from the consequences of the spending spree will only worsen.

If tax increases are proposed, and many believe they will be included in the governor's budget plan, legislators must also take into account the consequences of higher taxes, Vaudt said.

His recommendations: Don't spend more than is taken in. Stop borrowing from reserve funds set aside

for other purposes. Consider a two-year budget process, rather than setting budgets a year at a time. Develop a repayment plan for borrowed funds - now. And be up front with the taxpayers of Iowa on which borrowed funds will not be repaid - and the consequences of those decisions.

Among some legislators, there's anticipation that after we adjourn in late April or early May, the state gaming commission will approve new casino licenses that will provide tax revenues needed to start new programs, or even to finance borrowing up to \$800 million for the Grow Iowa Values Fund. Such a view is anything but a long-range financial plan.

Since more casinos in Iowa are a sure bet within the next two years, it would be much sounder to cancel the credit card and use new gambling taxes to begin erasing the debt, especially the millions owed to the Senior Living Trust.

CONSERVATION FUNDS RESTORED

At the start of the session, I introduced legislation to restore funds to provide reimbursements for expenses, including travel and training, for soil and water conservation district commissioners. Agriculture Secretary Patty Judge last year took away those funds for commissioners' mileage costs. The bill to correct that action was unanimously passed last week by the Senate Agriculture Committee, which I co-chair.

Each soil and water conservation district in Iowa is managed by five commissioners who are elected by local voters. Commissioners receive no salary and serve as volunteers. They work with landowners to promote sustainable agriculture practices

that protect our soil and water. Commissioners deserve to have some expenses reimbursed. The Legislature thanks them for their service.

I also thank the northwest Iowa commissioners who contacted me about this issue, and the Conservation Districts of Iowa and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for working out an agreement to resolve the issue.

BUILDING BRIDGES

The International Relations Committee assists in building communication between the Iowa Legislature and foreign governments. Members of the committee meet with foreign government officials to provide information about state and local democratic institutions, and help the development of trade and foreign markets.

Recently I was asked to join the committee and have hesitated in agreeing to serve. It's truly an honor and a responsibility to be seriously. Iowa has a long tradition of sharing our renowned hospitality with people from other nations. Farm exports are at record levels, and Iowa benefits that increase in trade.

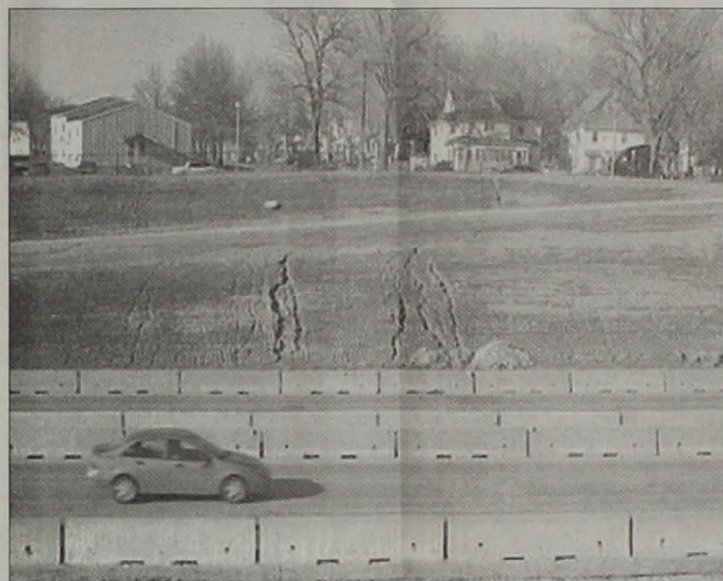
My first opportunity to serve the committee will be next week when we host a delegation from the State Assembly of Sabah located in Malaysia in southeast Asia. This international exchange is the first of its kind between a state legislature in the United States and a predominantly Muslim country.

Your questions and comments are always welcome. You can reach me in the Senate by calling (515) 337-1371 or by e-mail: david.johnson@legis.state.ia.us.

David Johnson represents Senate District 3 - all of Clay, Dickinson, O'Brien and Osceola counties, and part of Sioux County.

THE DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS

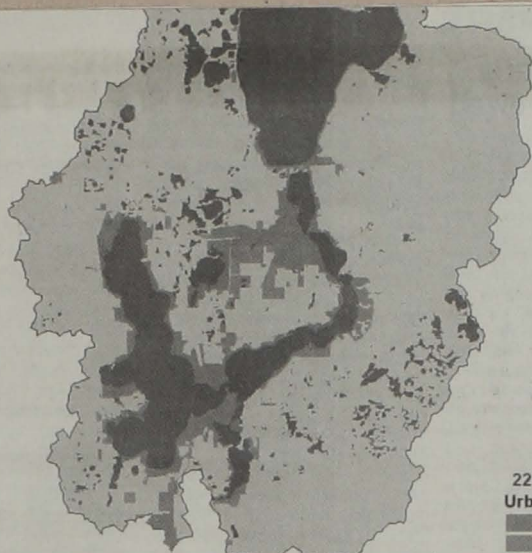
2-23-05



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An Iowa State University study has shown that using compost after construction will have better results and cost less in the long run, than using traditional methods of revegetating post-construction areas. The lush, green slope is a result of using compost, mixed with seed. The seeds sprout in just five days and the area is fully vegetated in six weeks. The weedy slope resulted after the traditional seeding and mulching. Photos taken in Des Moines and provided by the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

03-09-05



22% increase in
Urban / Residential
1994
2002

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dickinson County's population grew 22 percent between 1994 and 2000. A Spirit Lake seminar will focus on lake-friendly residential growth.

Lake-friendly residential development on tap for March seminar

BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

The desire to preserve the good health of the Iowa Great Lakes has been the driving force behind monthly Low Impact Development (LID) seminars held in Spirit Lake, over the last seven months. Experts from around the country have shown how linking natural resource conservation, smart urban design and innovative storm water management techniques are working to protect water resources.

On March 18, seminar participants will hear from an expert closer to home. Urban Conservationist Jay Riggs heralds from Farmington, Minn., a city of 6,600, located approximately 20 miles south of Minneapolis. Two branches of the Vermillion River run through it. Like towns in Dickinson County, it has been facing typical development pressures. Residents, professionals and officials in his county have worked to balance the needs to protect water quality and natural resources with the rights of private property owners.

Riggs will share Low Impact Development (LID) case studies and photographs from areas which have climate and rainfall patterns similar to Dickinson County's.

Unlike previous presenters, Riggs will focus on residential controls, storm water treatment at the lot level.

"The predominant land use in any community is residential... we will fail to protect water quality unless we adopt better practices to manage storm water at the residential level," said Wayne Peterson, LID seminar organizer and Urban Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Coralville.

Water quality in the Iowa

Great Lakes is impacted by urban runoff. Storm water from parking lots, roads, roofs, and residential lots rushes off the landscape into storm sewers that convey urban runoff directly to the lakes. Storm water does not receive treatment to purify it, like waste water does. Sediment, oil, grease, antifreeze, lawn fertilizers, pesticides, heavy metals, and bacteria can all be delivered to a lake in storm water runoff," Peterson said.

Riggs and Peterson say an old solution has been to retain storm water in detention basins.

"Piping storm water into a pond will not, in most cases, protect receiving waters," Riggs said.

Peterson agrees. "Detention basins control the rate that storm water is released to receiving waters. Controlling the rate of release keeps peak flows down to minimize flooding. But detention basins don't capture much of the pollutant loads and they don't do anything to reduce the volume of runoff that is shed," Peterson said.

Peterson says a new era of storm water management techniques focus on "low intensity rains, which constitute over 90 percent of annual precipitation." The new techniques have the goal of absorbing storm waters on site.

"If we infiltrate more and shed less runoff we will put pollutants into the soil profile where microbes will break them down. Instead of shedding dirty runoff to the lakes, the goal is to make most rainfall infiltrate and move to the lake as clean groundwater flows," Peterson said.

"This course will provide individuals insight about residential approaches we are taking in Minnesota," said Riggs.

Riggs says city engineers,

planning and zoning professionals, site designers, the planning and development community, DNR employees, water quality activists and others will find his workshop interesting and informative.

Seminar organizers are encouraging regular attendees to bring a friend to the seminar on Friday, March 18, to be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Village West Convention Center in Spirit Lake. A \$10 fee for newcomers will cover the cost of the one-day seminar and lunch. But registrants must pre-register by Monday, March 14; otherwise the fee is \$15 at the door and lunch will be available only as quantities permit.

Riggs is an urban conservationist with the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District. At the Dakota SWCD, Jay is responsible for the

Urban Erosion and Sediment Control Program. As part of this program he reviews site plans, provides technical assistance to local municipalities, conducts construction site inspections, and coordinates enforcement activities. His other duties include coordinating land protection efforts, designing and installing stream bank and shoreline stabilization projects, promoting low impact development, providing technical assistance about innovative storm water management practices, and conducting erosion control trainings.

• For more information, or to register for this or other upcoming seminars, call Maxine at the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District office, at (712) 336-3782, extension 3.

02-09-05
You live in an area of the state that is
growing.

**Don't wait to see how
others will develop it.**

**Join a group of caring
citizens, professionals and municipal
and county leaders who are learning
how to grow beautiful,
lake-friendly communities.**

**Attend the next
Low Impact Development
Seminar**

**Take part in visioning
how your community will grow!**

**Seminars held third Friday
of every month,
at Village West in Spirit Lake
For more information
Call 336-3782, extension 3**

Sponsored by
Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance
www.cleanwateralliance.net

03-09-05
**Lake Friendly
Residential Design**

The 7th in a series of seminars on
Low Impact Development

**Friday, March 18
9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Village West Conference Center
Spirit Lake**

**Special Sale Price
*\$10, includes lunch**

To register
Call (712) 336-3782, ext 3


Sponsored by
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Conservation District and
Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance
www.cleanwateralliance.net

***Must pre-register by Monday, March 14;
otherwise the price is \$15
and lunch will be provided only if quantities permit.**

USDA announces sign-up for grassland reserve program

March 23, 2005

Sign-up for the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP) is underway in field offices across the state. This voluntary program helps protect valuable grasslands from conversion to other land uses, thus helping to ensure this national resource is available to future generations.

Grasslands make up the largest land cover on America's private lands. Privately-owned grasslands and shrublands cover more than 525 million acres in the United States. For the first time, the U.S. Department of Agriculture will direct financial resources and technical expertise to help landowners protect and restore these lands.

Applications for participa-

tion will be accepted on a continuous basis at local USDA service centers. All applications received prior to March 25, 2005, will be ranked and from those applications funds will be allocated according to ranking. Once funding has been exhausted, eligible applicants will remain on file until additional funding becomes available.

The Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Forest Service are coordinating implementation of GRP, which helps landowners restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland and certain other lands and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands. The program

will conserve vulnerable grasslands from conversion to cropland or other uses and conserve valuable grasslands by helping maintain viable ranching operations.

GRP may offer producers several enrollment options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, rental agreements (10, 15, 20 or 30-year duration) and restoration agreements. For permanent easements, USDA makes a payment based on the fair market value of the property less the grazing value. For 30-year easements, USDA pays 30 percent of what would be paid for a permanent easement. For rental agreements, USDA pays 75 percent of the grazing value in annual payments for the length of the

agreement.

For restoration agreements, USDA pays up to 90 percent of the restoration costs on grassland and shrubland that has never been cultivated and not more than 75 percent on restored grassland and shrubland (land that once was cultivated).

To participate in GRP, offers must be private land that includes at least 40 contiguous acres. Additional eligibility criteria are available at your local USDA Service Center.

For more information about GRP and other conservation programs, contact your local USDA Service Center at (712)336-3782, or online at <http://offices.usda.gov/>.



Conservation Board announces Earth Week activities

April 13, 2005

The Dickinson County Conservation Board, Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County present Earth Week 2005 April 18-23.

The week-long celebration includes a new kick off event this Sunday.

"A new event added to our calendar this year is on Sunday, April 17th," said Dickinson County Naturalist Barbara Tagami.

"Friends of Lakeside Lab will have a Spring Hike and Lakeside Lab Tour starting at 2 p.m. with Jane Shuttleworth."

Other Earth Week activities

include a bird watch, an Earth Day evening celebration and an Environmental Learning Fair.

"This year's environmental learning fair has great speakers," said Tagami. "Some of the lectures will emphasize

LID (Low Impact

Development) practices

in an effort

to support and

continue to

educate the

public about

how to

incorporate

more envi-

ronmentally

friendly prac-

tices."

• For more details

about the Earth Day

activities and the new

Dickinson County Nature

Center, see next week's edition

of the Dickinson County News.



Final Low Impact seminar planned

April 13, 2005

Municipal approaches to stormwater management have shifted many times, and according to Andrew Reese, will continue to do so. Reese is one of the leading stormwater engineers in the United States and will speak at the April 15 Low Impact Development Seminar in Spirit Lake. He has more than 25 years experience in stormwater management. Reese will show how some communities are establishing stormwater utilities to help fund efforts to protect water quality, and explain how existing codes and policies often contribute to water quality degradation.

Pat Sauer, Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities, will also present at the seminar. She will provide a review of updates to the Statewide Urban Design Standards and Specifications Manual.

Civil engineers, municipal public works personnel, the planning and development community, DNR employees, landscape architects, local officials, politicians, regulators, and water quality activists will find this workshop interesting and informative.

The seminar is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, April 15, at the Village West Convention Center in Spirit Lake.

This is the last educational workshop in a series that began in June 2004.

• For more information, or to register for this seminar, call Maxine at the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District office, at (712) 336-3782, extension 3.

Earth Day

Environmental learning fair this weekend

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

It's time to celebrate the Earth, according to members of the Dickinson County Conservation Board, Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District, and the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County.

The Environmental Protection Agency says Earth Day, April 23, is a time to celebrate accomplishments, to unite behind environmental efforts, to act ecologically, and to anticipate environmental progress. Members of the Dickinson County environmental organizations believe Earth Day is a very valid event - but they think an Earth Week fits better in Dickinson County.

Earth Week 2005 runs April 17-23. The week-long celebration opens with a Spring Hike and Lakeside Lab Tour on April 17 and a bird watch on Tuesday. Additional activities are planned Friday night and Saturday.

"Earth day is like any other holiday we celebrate," said Barbara Tagami, Dickinson County Naturalist. "This should be an official holiday to celebrate the Earth. We need to

take time to focus in and pay attention to the environment - land, air, and water - and make ourselves more aware."

Tagami said celebrations that help educate people about the environment are especially important in the Lakes area, where the both the population and the tourism industry are tied so deeply into the region's environmental treasures.

"We need to be aware of the fact that we need to continue an ongoing vigilance as far as protecting and caring for our environment," said Tagami.

Upcoming events include an Earth Day Celebration and environmental learning fair.

The Earth Day Celebration will be held a firelight event with "good company" and homemade hors d'oeuvres from 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the Gull Point State Park Lodge. This will also be the kick-off event for the Nature Center Capital Campaign. The keynote speaker is Rich Leopold, Executive Director of the Iowa Environmental Council addressing the gathering at 6 p.m.

The environmental learning fair runs from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. on Earth Day, Saturday, April 23.

"This year's environ-

mental learning fair has great speakers," said Tagami. "Some of the lectures will emphasize LID (Low Impact Development) practices in an effort to support and continue to educate the public about how to incorporate more environmentally friendly practices."

Environmental lectures and children's activities are scheduled throughout the day. Informational displays will be provided by the following organizations: Iowa DNR, Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District, Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County, Dickinson County Conservation Board, Prairie Lake Audubon, Iowa Lakes Resource Conservation & Development, ISU Extension, Friends of Lakeside Lab, Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund/Iowa Roadside Vegetation Management Program, Trees Forever, East Okoboji Lake Improvement Corporation, IOWATER, Iowa Environmental Council, Alliant Energy, Spirit Lake Protective Association, Dickinson County Nature Center Display, Ferguson Landscape and Design and more.

EARTH WEEK 2005 EVENT SCHEDULE

Friday, April 22

5:30 - 8:30 p.m. - Earth Day Celebration at Gull Point State Park Lodge.

Saturday, April 23

9 a.m. - 4 p.m. - Earth Day Environmental Learning Fair sponsored by the Dickinson County Conservation Board and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Gull Point State Park Lodge.

Environmental Lecture series and times

10 a.m. - "Buffers, Filters, and Good Looks with Natives" with Steve Holland, Iowa Living Roadside Trust Coordinator
11 a.m. - "The ABC's of Composting" with Stacey Johnson, Organic Matters, sponsored by the Dickinson County Landfill Commission
1 p.m. - "The Power of Wind Energy" with Jan Boles, Strategic Accounts Manager for Alliant Energy
2 p.m. - "Fascinating Birds of Prey" with Ross Dink, DVM, Dickinson County Animal Clinic

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Recycle "Smiley Train," Al Buehman, sponsored by Iowa Landfill Commission

1 p.m. - Frog Hike, Jane Shuttleworth, sponsored by Friends of Lakeside Lab

Ongoing event: Worms Eat My Garbage activity center, sponsored by the Dickinson County Conservation Board

Ongoing event: Live Animal Displays

For more information, please contact Dickinson County Conservation Board at (712) 338-4238

The birth of Earth Day

At the start of the 1960s, birds occasionally dropped dead out of the sky, and no one knew why. Then biologist Rachel Carson published her 1962 bombshell "Silent Spring," which attacked America's reliance on "elixirs of death," and explained how pesticides and other toxic chemicals, such as DDT, can move through the food chain.

Ironically, at the same time, Americans were testing a new tactic of defoliation, Agent Orange. In the wild, scientists soon linked the pesticide DDT with the thinning of eggshells in osprey eagles, and pelicans. Suddenly, it seemed that what we were doing to wildlife we were also doing to ourselves.

The modern era of environmental awareness was launched. In 1969, one of the century's most important pieces of environmental legislation was passed, The National Environmental Protection Act. The law set up a comprehensive national policy for environmental protection, and for the first time, it required federal agencies planning major projects to file environmental impact statements.

A tragic reminder of the need for such efforts came in the form of a catastrophic offshore oil spill in 1969, when two blowouts at a Santa Barbara oil platform coated beaches in a blanket of crude. Countless coastal animals died. A few months later, the oily garbage-choked Cuyahoga River burst into flames and a burning slick of kerosene and oil floated downstream through the city of Cleveland.

On April 22, 1970, Gaylord Nelson, State Senator from Wisconsin with the help of Grassroots Activists held the first Earth Day event. The occasion drew crowds of concerned citizens to festivals, workshops and demonstrations in communities across the nation.

In July, responding in part to public pressure, President Richard Nixon established the Environmental Protection Agency to consolidate and strengthen federal environmental laws. Almost two dozen major environmental laws were passed in the 1970s, including the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974, designed to safeguard all waters actually or potentially meant for drinking use.

Nature Center fund drive kicks off

April 20
2005
BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Enthusiasm is growing for a new Dickinson County Nature Center, now the funds are needed to sprout more progress.

The Earth Day Celebration on April 22 is also the kick off for the Nature Center's capital campaign.

"We'll have a short presentation to make people aware of the progress taking place on site," said Dickinson County Naturalist Barbara Tagami. "We're hoping to raise enthusiasm at this event and get some donations."

Architects Rachelle Schoessler Lynn and Michael Fischer of LHB in Minneapolis plan to merge history, nature and technology into the Nature Center master plan. Landscape architect Matthew Fair Jones will aid in outdoor planning. The trio has already made several visits to the Lakes area for fund-raisers, information gathering and public events and will continue to visit the region throughout the Nature Center's development.

The floor plan includes both indoor and outdoor displays, walk and learn opportunities, and spaces for nature programming. Drawings also include an exhibit space, a large classroom, office facilities, a catering kitchen, a library, and a gathering room.

Estimated price tag on the Nature Center project is \$4 million.

"There are opportunities for everyone interested in contributing to the building of this nature center," said Tagami. Opportunities range from volunteering to monetary donations to building spon-



Plans for the new Nature Center includes areas for learning about our Earth.

sorships for naming rights on rooms, pillars and informational kiosks.

The building for the nature center is the former Back Porch restaurant facility and was donated to the conservation board in 2001. Later that year, the building was moved to its current location at Kenue Park.

In 2002, the Association of Nature Center Administrators sent a team to provide consultation regarding the nature center's development. Earlier this year, the conservation board contracted the help of LHB Architects from Minneapolis to assist with the initial planning stages for the nature center. Grants are also being written to help fund the project.

Low impact development: A fleeting fancy or a lasting vision?

May 04, 2005
BY LYNN LAWS
DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Ideas are swimming about in the heads of participants of the Low Impact Development series of seminars, which began last May with a tour of water-filtering practices on agricultural lands near Spirit Lake and ended Friday, April 15, with a talk on storm water utilities.

Over the past several months, seminar participants and owners, professionals, public officials and others, learned of the natural history of the Iowa Great Lakes area.

One hundred and fifty years ago the landscape was mostly wet and dry prairies, with a few scattered oaks. They were taught that prairies absorb and evaporate as much moisture as they receive. Prairies provide natural flood control and are the reason why the Iowa Great Lakes Area experienced very little flooding in its early history. Our lakes were naturally recharged by wetlands, which purified water before sending it down the watershed and into the lakes, unlike what occurs now.

Now rainwater falls on thousands of crops, roofs, driveways and parking lots and into storm drains, which then pipe the unfiltered water to the lakes. Experts told participants that the first 10 minutes of a rain event contains the most pollutants. Just one yard and driveway could include lawn fertilizer, dog poo, oil, grass clippings, radiator fluid, soil and more. Multiply that by 40,000 residences and you've got a lot of pollution running into lakes.

"In the United States, annual run-off from backyard oil changes is equal to 13 Valdez spills," said Andrew Reese, a storm water engineer and seminar presenter.

Experts challenged and encouraged seminar goers to use the natural landscape as a model for rethinking storm water management. They cautioned participants to stop piping rain water run-off directly into lakes. Participants were advised to adopt subdivision and individual lot designs, as well as associated codes and ordinances that support retaining the first few inches of storm water on the land, filtering out pollutants naturally through soils and plants.

Participants met the enemy and it is "Impermeable Surfacing." But today, said the experts, roof systems, roads, driveways and parking lots can all be designed to slow, or hold and filter water. Participants saw slide after slide of lake-friendly, urban practices at work in other communities.

To top it off, they learned that green-designed properties cost developers less and sell for more.

ACTION PLANS

Susan Clark attended the seminars and plans to begin implementing changes on her business property. Clark owns Oaks Motel and says she will restore her lakefront property to native vegetation.

"I have to look at this investment-wise. Eco-tourism is a big thing now. People don't want cultivated lawns," said Clark.

Clark says she'll handle the cost by implementing the changes in a series of steps. Clark says she won't stop with her own property. She is a member of East Okoboji Lakes Improvement Corporation and will work with others to support community-wide adoption of low impact development practices.

Steve Anderson is a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Spirit Lake. He attended the seminars "to learn how to incorporate low impact development practices into existing codes so we can make our rules and regulations work to better protect our lakes."

Anderson says now, when he's looking at plats, he naturally thinks of ways the properties could benefit from green designs and he shares that with the property owners.

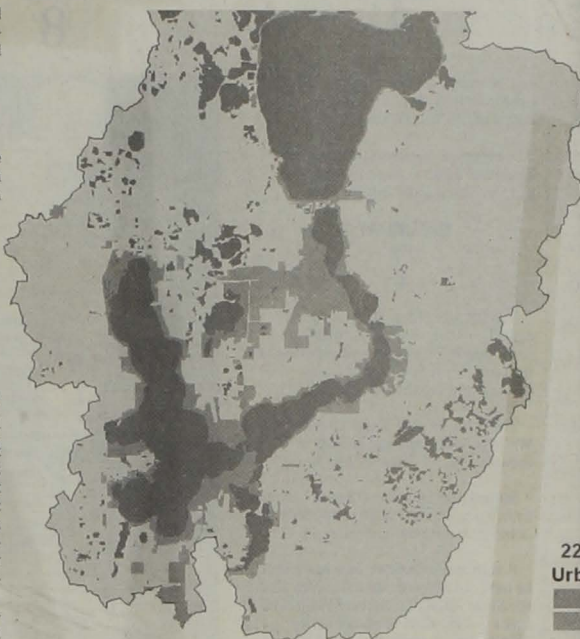
"I like bringing it up to make people aware there are things they can do to increase water quality and make the area look a little bit better at the same time," Anderson said.

Anderson purchased a home last summer and says he is looking at ways to implement lake-friendly practices in his yard and garden.

"I have a drainage concern regarding what's coming off my roof, so I'd like to try to implement a flower box that would do some water retention. Also, between the city street and city walk, the right of way, it does the exact opposite of what we learned should be done. The land is raised about a foot and half about over the curb and sidewalk. I want to grade it out for water retention," Anderson said.

Brad Beck, with Beck Engineering, attended the seminars.

"We're involved with design of new developments and other clean water projects and this has been a good way to get up to date with the new trend. I think rain gardens seem like a real good idea, a good way to filter water before it enters the lake," Beck said.



22% increase in
Urban / Residential
1994
2002

Beck thinks rain gardens and permeable brick pavers are "what will catch on the most," but he is skeptical about porous pavement.

"It will be interesting to see how that holds up. I have a little bit of doubt about freeze-thaw resistance and keeping the gravel base under it, if it is gravel, from washing out," Beck said.

Barbara Mendenhall attended three of the seminars. She is a homeowner on West Lake Okoboji and serves on the Okoboji Planning and Zoning Commission.

"We're going to create a rain garden on our property, along Lakeshore DR, to catch rain and absorb it - keep it out of the storm sewer," Mendenhall said.

With the help of expert Wayne Peterson, urban conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Mendenhall says she and other commissioners will consider making changes to existing codes and ordinances.

Barbara Woodley, secretary for Dickinson County Planning and Zoning, is beginning at home, too. She's shopping for a rain barrel and plans to plant more prairie flowers and grasses in her yard this spring.

"Prairie plants are more natural and will be better at holding the soil in place. An added bonus is it will come up year after year," Woodley said.

David Olson is a landscape architect, with Del's Garden Center in Spencer. He attended six of the workshops "to become a bit more knowledgeable about what is being done to protect water quality

and how we could contribute proactive things we can do in our residential designs."

Olson says he'll "utilize more opportunities to do rain gardens." When he gets opportunities to lay-out driveways and courtyards, he'll "be a lot more conscientious of opportunities to retain water before it runs off into the storm water sewer system."

"I really appreciate the investment in bringing nationally recognized people with expertise on the cutting edge. It was a marvelous first step. For me, it was helpful to see practical, measurable results of LID in terms of cost benefits, as well as environmental benefits. It was encouraging to see the salability of those subdivision and lots that were built with that philosophy. The numbers were pretty convincing. I hope I can pass that along to different parties that I interact with," Olson said.

"I attended because I think it's a good idea," said Dan Eckert, Dickinson County Engineer. "Knowing that there is tremendous development going on in the area and knowing that run off has been a big issue, it was important to learn about these issues."

"The ability to hold water on individual sites was new thinking for me. I'm from the engineering school of piping and retaining. I've looked at this on a city-wide and county-wide basis. But now I see we can have an impact at the micro level. Each individual property owner can hold it in their yard and that will help,"

Eckert said.

"Also, I was interested in the idea of controlling sheet run off from driveways and parking lots. This type of run off has such a big impact; it was eye opening to me," said Eckert.

Eckert says he was moved by the experts who pressed participants to involve all stakeholders in the process of bringing low impact development practices to the Lakes Area.

"That had a big impact on me. I thought of how people are still bitter since the hospital was put in, about people not working together. This has to be a philosophical thing of coming together and saying as people, whose livelihoods depend on water, we're going to do what we can to protect it," Eckert said.

Eckert envisions political leadership bringing people together through a concept suggested by one of the seminar presenters: a Council of Governments. He says this kind of lake-region leadership group could help manage a lot of issues.

"There's a big group that wants to do trail planning, a big group of people trying to do clean water and one about burning bans and a landfill/green waste group and more. All these people say there should be consistency throughout the county. But really there should be a lake region where things are consistent. Many of these issues will be handled differently in rural areas," Eckert said.

"A lakes district makes so much sense," continued Eckert. "I hear so many issues that are lake-driven and not a problem for the

rural part of the county. For example, people call about dogs running wild in Echo Beach and want a county-wide leash law. But we can't do that countywide because then we'd be saying that the farmers have to put their dogs on leashes. The lake areas have such major differences from the back 40."

"We need to start recognizing that there's a core lake area that should be working together on lake-related issues. It seems like we need to address the lakes watershed. I've always been a believer that you shouldn't be able to do anything on your property that negatively affects other people in your watershed."

"The Council of Governments has to come together with the Board of Supervisors because I may see the need for working together and other engineers may be willing to do it, but unless our bosses tell us we have to start working together, it's not really going to happen," Eckert added.

Olson agrees. "The next step is to find central leadership for all the different stakeholders."

Mendenhall hopes that seminar organizers will put together a presentation that can be taken "on the road" to service groups and other interested people.

Beck says the "only stumbling block so far" is not having design standards and specifications for the low impact development practices.

"I don't feel like engineers have all we need yet. We need urban design standards and specifications manuals. I'm told this is in the works, though," Beck said.

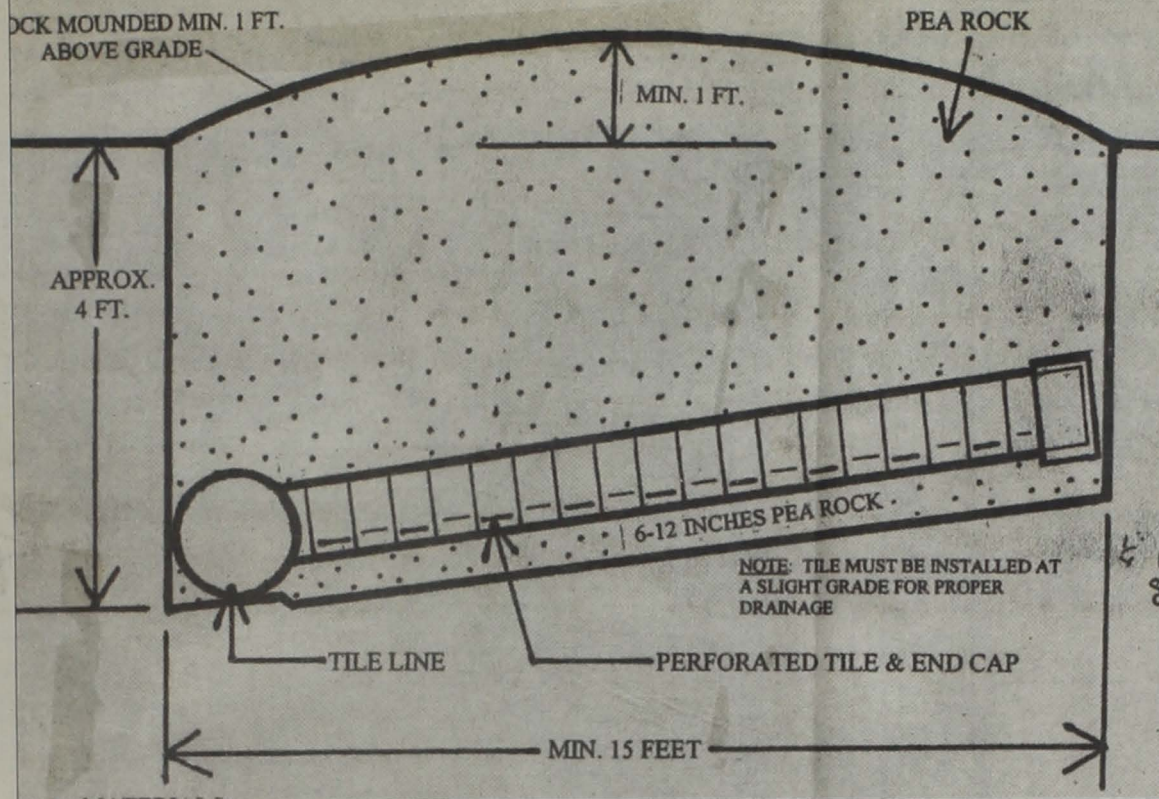
Beck believes the next step is to implement the practices and "show the public the benefits of these projects."

Participants believe a compelling case can be made for low impact development practices, but that change will still be difficult.

"With the seminars behind us, we just have to figure out what works for Spirit Lake. With new areas going in, we should be able to implement good practices. But retrofitting will be a challenging part. We have a system that's been in place for 50 years," Anderson said.

"Getting people past the fear factor is our biggest challenge. Change is difficult for people. Once past the fear factor, people will start seeing the benefits and it won't be an issue anymore," Anderson said.

Several seminar participants say they have signed up to continue working together to educate themselves and others and "to keep the momentum going" towards lake-friendly development solutions.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This graphic illustrates how the rock tile intakes work in farm drainage systems. Cost sharing is available for farmers in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed.

Cost share offered for rock tile intakes

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Dickinson County farmers may see some improvements in their farm drainage should they choose to implement a new practice called rock tile intakes.

In the practice, drainage intakes for farm tiling are surrounded by rock to help filter the soil out of the water being drained off a field.

"It does two things to benefit

farmers," said Steve Anderson, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator for Dickinson County. "Farmers don't have to dodge their drainage intakes with their equipment and they don't have to clean them [the intakes] out when it rains."

Because the rock system filters out soil, it keeps tiling from getting clogged with sediment.

Not only is the practice beneficial to farmers, it is also environmentally friendly.

"It keeps the soil from getting into the drainage system," said Anderson. "This means there will be less phosphorus in the lakes and less algae blooms."

Because of its ecological benefits, the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District is offering cost share of up to 75 percent of the actual cost for the intakes within designated watersheds. The maximum is \$200 per intake. There are no maximum

number of intakes per cooperator.

Anderson said several farmers in the county have already implemented the rock tile system and have reported they are quite pleased with the results.

■ For more information, questions or to sign an application for cost share, call Clarence Call at 336-3310.

Anderson accepts Clean Water Alliance Coordinator position

Steve Anderson began working as Clean Water Alliance Coordinator on Monday, July 11. The Clean Water Alliance is the collection of governmental agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals who have been interest in and are working with the environmental issues to protect the water quality of Dickinson County. The main goals of the CWA Coordinator are to communicate, educate and coordinate. The CWA will be clearing house for water quality projects and concerns for Dickinson County.

The CWA Coordinator administers the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission grant process. The WQC has a 28e agreement with the 10 municipalities located in Dickinson County and the County government to protect the water quality of Dickinson County Lakes by providing funding as a local match to grant proposals. The Water Quality Commission project proposal period will be opening soon and all interested groups can contact the Steve for more information at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3 or by

e-mail at coordinator@cleanwateralliance.net.

Steve worked the last two years for the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum and Queen II. Steve stated that, "For someone like me who loves history and the environment I had the best opportunity with both positions. Now I will be working full time for water quality and also helping when possible to preserve our area's history."

Steve and his wife, Sara, make their home in Spirit Lake.

DCN 7-27-05

Dickinson SWCD Foundation offers scholarships

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation announces the availability of two \$500 scholarships that will be presented to Dickinson County Graduating High School Seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies and in addition, the winning application will be forwarded to compete in the Conservation Districts of Iowa's (CDI) Auxiliary Annual

Scholarships. CDI funds six regional awards of \$200 each and state level awards in the amount of \$1,500, \$1,000, and \$800. The applicant needs to submit two typed copies of their applications and must use the 2006 application form.

The Jo Groves Memorials Scholarships, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study. The applicants need to submit two typed copies of their application and must use the same CDI 2006 application form.

High school seniors must submit their applications to the Dickinson Soil & Water

Conservation District no later than Monday, Feb. 27, 2006. Both scholarships will be judged on leadership, scholastic achievement and need.

Applications can be obtained from the High School Counselors at Harris Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake or Terril/Graettinger High Schools, by contacting the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake at 2413 17th Street or by calling 712-336-3782, ext. 3, or can be downloaded from www.cdiowa.org/education2.htm



Deadline ne quality ince

The sign-up deadline for the initial allotment of funds for the 2006 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) will end on Jan. 27. Producers who plan to sign up for EQIP should make application well before this date to ensure their application be processed by the deadline.

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PHOTOS BY KEVIN SANDERS • DCN STAFF

Ashlyn Nitzschke, 14 months old and Jennifer Schietinger, both of Spirit Lake, pet a 12-day-old Holstein Hereford calf at the Life on the Farm festival at Kenue Park last Sunday.

and repeatedly hitting the tops of the charts.

he Beach Boys formed in California in the early 1960s. Original members were brothers Brian, Dennis, and Carl, their cousin Mike, and friend Al Jardine. In the form, the Beach Boys

The Beach Boys Band that will be arriving in Arnold's Park features Mike Love, who has licensed the Beach Boys' name for his 2005 tour. He is joined by Bruce Johnston (a Beach Boy since 1965) as well as Randell Kirsch, John Cowsill,

EARTH: Fund-raiser kicks off

Continued from page 1A

We've got a long way to go (in air quality), but we're making strides," Leopold said. "We've done quite a bit for wildlife... We've got the endangered species act, the AP, and prairie and wetland restoration projects. That's a reason to smile." Leopold ended the speech by pointing out his environmental report card resulted in a 1.444 grade point average, a 4 point scale.

We've got a ways to go," he d.

Friday night's nature cele-

bration also marked the kick off of the Dickinson County Nature Center's capital fundraising campaign.

"The theme for the nature center is 'If the land could talk,'" said Barbara Tagami, Dickinson County Naturalist. "It's an ideal location for education."

The Nature Center plan includes both indoor and outdoor displays, walk and learn opportunities, and spaces for nature programming. Drawings also include an exhibit space, a large class-

room, office facilities, a catering kitchen, a library, and a gathering room.

Estimated price tag on the Nature Center project is \$4 million. Three project phases are planned, and organizers hope to begin construction this fall if funding allows.

For information on how to become involved with the Nature Center project or to learn about summer nature programs, contact the Dickinson County Naturalist's office at 338-4238.

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OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, May 1 • 2:00 - 4:00 pm

LEGANT NEW HOME just blocks from West Walpole State Sp. try ceilings, French doors, jaw-dropping detail, possible built-in fireplace! **PRICE REDUCED!** Please join us Sunday, Off Hwy DIRECTIONS - 1008 Lakeshore Dr. Walpole, Off Hwy

OPEN HOUSE
Sat. & Sun. April 28 & May 1 • 12:00 - 4:00 pm



RETREAT AT STONE FOUNTAIN New condo project located between Oak Hill Marina & West Chubbuck 2, 3, or 4 BR units. Underground parking, elevators, pool, hot tub, decks. Please join Lori on Sat. or Sun. 12-4-8:30. DIRECTIONS - 213 S. Chubbuck Green Road, Arncliffe Park. Directly across from Oak Hill Marina.

OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, May 1 • 2:00 - 4:00 pm



GREAT NEW DESIGN, 3 generous bedrooms, 3.5 baths, master suite to die for, and deeded lake access to West Chubbuck. Full finished lower level. Great new spot! Please join Dori on Sunday. DIRECTIONS - 1016 Lakeshore Dr., Walpole. Off Hwy

OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, May 1 • 2:00 - 4:00 pm



NEW LISTING

SEMI-DETACHED surrounds this beautiful brick duplex located within walking distance of many of Arncliffe Park's attractions. Gas fireplace and side-by-side car just two of the many perks in this Mike Home built duplex. Please join Amanda on Sunday. 1967 DIRECTIONS - 155 Reed Drive East, On Street Drive, just east of Cabot Tree Golf in Arncliffe Park.

OPEN HOUSE
Sunday, May 1 • 2:00 - 4:00 pm



CRAFTED LIVING & GREAT VALUE - This 1300 sq. ft. single level home will help you work from home, or entertain! Hills Golf Course, please join Angie on Sunday. 1990 DIRECTIONS - 225 Emerald Meadows Dr. Arncliffe Park. Turn a Oak Hill

Sarah Spaulding's first look at a diatom was by accident. "I was an undergrad in science starting work on an acid rain study, when I stumbled into an old friend in the research lab. I asked him what he was up to, and he invited me to take a look into the microscope he was hunched over."

That moment would change Sarah's life forever, and eventually earn her nickname as the "Diatom Queen," for what she saw through the microscope was her first diatom. "It took my breath away. I had never seen anything so intricate and beautiful."

Now Sarah invites Winter Games attendees to have their breath taken away at Lakeside's Winter Games Open House from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 28. A summer Lakeside faculty, he will be arriving from

Andersc Alliance

Steve Anderson began as Clean Water A Coordinator on Mond 11. The Clean Water A is the collection of i mental agencies, nor mal organizations and indiv who have been interest are working with the em tal issues to prote water quality of Dick County. The main got the CWA Coordinator i communicate, educate coordinate. The CWA w clearing house for water ty projects and concern Dickinson County.

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also on duty that night. "I could hear a power boat that did not seem to have run- ning lights. Within minutes I didn't survive the crash. was "absolutely amaz when all 13 passengers w alive and helped to safety. Mitchell said once arrived on the scene he he feeling that some passen



BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Earth Day

teaches environmental responsibility

April 27, 2005

Attendees at last week's Earth Week events not only had the opportunity to celebrate nature, but also gained valuable knowledge on how to better preserve the precious environment.

Earth week events opened with a Spring Hike and Lakeside Lab Tour. A nature celebration was held Friday night. Earth Week events wrapped up with an environmental learning fair on Saturday, featuring environmental lectures, children's activities and informational displays.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD

Keynote speaker for Friday night's Earth Day celebration was Rich Leopold, executive director of the Iowa Environmental Council. Leopold is a former Dickinson County Naturalist, and focused his speech on giving Iowa and the U.S. report card grades on environmental efforts since the first Earth Day in 1970.

Leopold graded nine areas of environmental activity: water

REPORT CARD

Water quality	C-
Air quality	A-
Energy Efficiency	D+
Global Climate Change	F
Soil Conservation	D+
Sustainable Land Use	D
Waste reduction	D+
Transportation	D-
Wildlife preservation	B

quality, air quality, energy efficiency, global climate change, soil conservation, sustainable land use, waste reduction, transportation and wildlife preservation.

The speaker gave a "C-" to water quality, the first area of inspection.

"When you look back to 1970, we have made some improvements, but we've still got a lot of problems out there."

The lowest grades went to global climate change (F), transportation (D-), sustainable land use (D), waste reduction (D+), soil conservation (D+) and energy efficiency (D+).

Leopold expressed disappointment in the federal government



PHOTO BY ANITRA WOLF - DCN STAFF

This youngster enjoyed an exhibit called "Worms eat my garbage" at last week's Earth Day activities.

in its "efforts" to help global climate change, also known as the Greenhouse Effect.

"Our federal government is an embarrassment to the world in global climate change," Leopold said. His comment received an applause from the lecture attendees. "We go through stages of denial... In the U.S., states are

starting to do something about it. Be watching what we do here in Iowa, I've got some ideas."

Environmental efforts for air quality and wildlife preservation got the highest grades from Leopold.

EARTH

continued on page 2A

Deadline nears for environmental quality incentives program sign-up

The sign-up deadline for the initial allotment of funds for the 2006 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) will end on Jan. 27. Producers who plan to sign up for EQIP should make application well before this deadline to ensure their application can be processed by Jan. 27.

The initial allotment of EQIP funding to Dickinson County is 38 percent higher than last year.

Some of the conservation practices included in the 2006

sign-up include:

- Livestock waste practices - waste storage facilities, composting facilities, waste treatment lagoons, closure of waste impoundments, anaerobic digester, waste facility cover, pond sealing, filter strip, diversion, animal mortality facility, roof runoff management, manure transfer.

- Livestock grazing practices - prescribed grazing, pumping plant, pasture planting, water well, watering facility.

- Erosion control practices - grade stabilization structure,

water and sediment control basin

- Land management practices - nutrient management, pest management, drainage water management, residue management (No-Till, Strip Till, Ridge Till).

Producers who are interested in these and other EQIP practices are encouraged to call 712-336-3782, ext. 3, or stop in at the National Resources Conservation Service at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake.

Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Assessment begins first stage

03-08-06

BY ERIN GOLDEN
DCN STAFF

In the next year to 18 months, the area's most valuable resource will be put under close scrutiny in an in-depth watershed assessment. Jim Frederick, who worked with the National Resource Conservation Service for 35 years, has been brought in to coordinate the project in conjunction with the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

According to Frederick, the assessment will provide an opportunity to analyze data already collected and to work with the community to improve and enhance water quality in the area.

"We are compiling everything from the last few years into a living and working document," Frederick said. "We'll try to get a feel for what we can do locally to help ourselves and find alternatives to protect the lakes."

The project is currently in an "education" stage. Frederick and his partners on the project, including Clean Water Alliance coordinator Steve Anderson and Mike Hawkins of the Department of Natural Resources, are working to present their plan to groups and individuals in the area and to identify any problems in the old data.

The assessment is one of the first of its kind in Iowa, and will provide a model for similar projects around the state. The Iowa Great Lakes, however, does differ from other areas in that the water quality is generally good.

"This area is a little different than almost every county in the state," Anderson said. "Other lakes are trying to

improve, but our main goal is to protect. In general, our water quality is excellent."

Dickinson County is also unique because of a high percentage of urban land use. The assessment will inventory that land use and develop solutions to related problems, including storm sewer use and runoff. Agricultural land use will also be examined, with attention to stream erosion and livestock waste's effects on water quality.

The end result of the assessment will be a "living document," which will be accessible to the public in print and possibly on the internet.

"We call it a living document because we've been ahead of the technology curve on protecting water quality," Anderson said. "We want to continue to be ahead and be able to incorporate new technology into the plan as time goes on."

Frederick and Anderson stressed that the project will be a community-driven effort. In the next year, the team hopes to educate the public on how to minimize pollutants entering the lakes. In turn, the assessment will reflect the needs of the area's businesses, agricultural producers, and individuals.

"We will get the assessment done with the help of local people," Frederick said. "Then we will be able to use it to bring in outside federal, state, and private money."

A new watershed plan will be drafted in the late fall and is scheduled to be completed early next year. In addition to the print versions of the assessment, the projects coordinators will present it in a public meeting at the time of completion.

SOIL SURVEY

continued from p

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Dickinson County to update soil survey

02-01-06

First in state to use state-of-the-art technology

BY TRACY SCHLATER
DCN STAFF

The Dickinson County Conference Board voted to partially fund a new soil survey of Dickinson County that will use advanced technologies to map the soils of the county.

The Conference Board approved putting \$22,200 toward the project, to be paid over a five year period. Total estimated cost of the project is about \$795,000 at

\$3.08 per acre of the 258,000 acres in Dickinson County. The State of Iowa, along with the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will contribute the remaining funds needed for the project.

The last soil survey was done in the 1960s and is insufficient for the current uses.

"The current aerial photographs are very poor quality," said Jim Gertsma. "The photos we have now are much better and show us a lot more."

Light detecting radar or LIDAR is state-of-the-art

SOIL SURVEY

continued on page 2A

DCN 4-5-06

Northey files petitions for Secretary of Agriculture

Bill Northey, Republican of Spirit Lake, has filed his petitions with the Secretary of State, which places him on the June 6 Republican primary ballot for Secretary of Agriculture. Northey was joined by Sen. Jim Hahn - Muscatine, Sen. David Johnson - Okeyedon, Rep. Royd Chambers - Sheldon and Rep. Mike May - Spirit Lake.

Northey collected over 1,900 signatures from more than 45 counties. Northey is the first to file petitions for the Secretary of Agriculture position. Northey's

campaign has raised more money from more donors statewide than the other Republican candidates combined, according to the most recent campaign disclosure filings.

"We've been working hard for the past six months to get to this point. I'm excited about our progress. Our campaign has the broadest depth of support, and we have a message that is resonating with voters. I am grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from legislators and other leaders," said Northey.

Bill and his wife, Cindy, reside in Spirit Lake, where Bill actively farms. The Northey's have three children, Jessica and Emily who are currently attending Iowa State University and Katie, who is in high school.

Northey served as President of the National Corn Growers Association in 1995-1996. He served on the Commission for 21st Century Production Agriculture and was President of the Iowa Corn Growers Association in 1990-1991. He is a member of the Bennett

Roundtable of the Farm Foundation and has served on the Iowa State Committee for the Farm Service Agency of the USDA. He is a Commissioner on the Dickinson County Soil & Water District and is on the Board of Directors of AgVentures Alliance. Bill was President and Co-Founder of Innovative Growers, LLC.

construction in Okoboji to apply low impact development principles after a 36-month phase-in of the requirements. New construction of subdivisions will be immediately required to implement the principles.

"Low impact development is aimed at basically toddling surface drainage water from the lake into settling areas

ZONING

continued on page 7A

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THURSDAY
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FRIDAY
High 56 Low 36

SATURDAY
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4-19-06
DCN

03-08-06

In the next year to 18 months, the area's most valuable resource will be put under close scrutiny in an in-depth watershed assessment. Jim Frederick, who worked with the National Resource Conservation Service for 35 years, has been brought in to coordinate the project in conjunction with the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

According to Frederick, the assessment will provide an opportunity to analyze data already collected and to work with the community to improve and enhance water quality in the area.

"We are compiling everything from the last few years into a living and working document," Frederick said. "We'll try to get a feel for what we can do locally to help ourselves and find alternatives to protect the lakes."

The project is currently in an "education" stage. Frederick and his partners on

improve, but our main goal is to protect. In general, our water quality is excellent."

Dickinson County is also unique because of a high percentage of urban land use. The assessment will inventory that land use and develop solutions to related problems, including storm sewer use and runoff. Agricultural land use will also be examined, with attention to stream erosion and livestock waste's effects on water quality.

The end result of the assessment will be a "living document," which will be accessible to the public in print and possibly on the internet.

"We call it a living document because we've been ahead of the technology curve on protecting water quality," Anderson said. "We want to continue to be ahead and be able to incorporate new technology into the plan as time goes on."

Frederick and Anderson stressed that the project will be a community-driven effort. In the next year, the team hopes to educate the public on how to minimize pollutants

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

The Okoboji City Council is on the brink of an environmental protection milestone.

At Tuesday night's meeting, the council discussed final revisions to the city's restatement of the city's zoning and subdivision ordinances. Final changes will be made by the planning and zoning board, and the issue is expected to come before the council for adoption in May.

The newly rewritten ordinances will require all new construction in Okoboji to apply low impact development principles after a 36-month phase-in of the requirements. New construction of subdivisions will be immediately required to implement the principles.

"Low impact development is aimed at basically toddling surface drainage water from the lake into settling areas

continued on page 7A

continued from page 1A

imaging technology and will be used for the first time in Iowa with this soil survey project. LIDAR will create a 3-D view of the entire county.

"We're using a lot of new technology," said Dan Pulido, soil scientist with the NRCS and manager of the Dickinson County soil survey. "We've got new tools, and we can get much better results."

Pulido will work out of the Storm Lake NRCS office and two other people will be working on the project full-time.

The biggest reason for the survey is to improve water quality.

"We'll be able to detect erodible soils to help keep them out of the lakes," said Gertsma.

In addition, the soil survey will provide with accurate information on the best place for wetlands and future developments by showing wet areas that would make for poor development areas.

Farmers will also benefit from the new soil survey. "A lot of farmers are trying to save on hydrazides," said Gertsma. "Some soils are rich in lime and others are not."

The soil survey will allow farmers to practice precision mapping, where they apply hydrazides and fertilizers to balance those nutrients already found in the soil. A more accurate soil survey provides for more adequate applications.

"It's going to modernize the survey," said Gertsma.

The team will start by sampling the watershed areas of the Iowa Great Lakes and move on to other areas in the county.

The project will get under way in July and will take three years to finish.



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Topics for this year's awareness week include NOAA Weather Radio on Monday, April 3; severe thunderstorms on Tuesday, April 4; tornadoes/statewide drill on Wednesday, April 5; extreme heat on Thursday, April 6 and family preparedness on Friday, April 7.

Ehret says the most important thing individuals can do during severe weather awareness week is to get mentally prepared for storms.

"First of all, think about what you're going to do in the event that we have severe weather or tornadoes," said Ehret. "I will be in the area for the support and I have received a lot of support from the business community and other leadership. I will be in the area for the support and I have received a lot of support from the business community and other leadership."

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4-19-06
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Inside:



Legislature seeks to limit eminent domain, Page 8



Today:

Area churches hold Ash Wednesday services. Check page 6 for times.

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DAILY NEWS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2008

Making space for wildlife



Photo submitted

Soil Conservation Technician Tim Moran (left) of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Spirit Lake worked closely with Dr. Bill Moreau (right) in restoring more than 20 acres of wetlands through the Wetlands Reserve Program. (Photo by Jason Johnson, NRCS)

Moreau, Beardsley restore 112 acres in Dickinson County

By JASON JOHNSON
Public Affairs Specialist,
USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service

After a realtor's tip, two outdoor-minded friends purchased Dickinson County farmland with the intent of bringing most of it back to wetlands.

"Our realtor was the first to mention conservation programs to help with both the technical aspects and cost of restoration," said Dr. Bill Moreau, a chiropractor from Estherville. "In fact, the realtor marketed this property as a potential site for recreation activities, even though it wasn't being used for that at the time."

In 2002, Moreau and longtime friend Bill Beardsley of Estherville purchased



Dr. Bill Moreau



Bill Beardsley

160 acres of mostly suspect cropland and pastureland in eastern Dickinson County, north of Superior. But after receiving assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) through several conservation programs, they restored the land to wetlands, native grasses and wildflowers.

CRP Wetland and Buffer

Moreau and Beardsley purchased the property with recreational activities, such as pheasant hunting, in mind. They

Quick Fact

Restored Wetlands in Iowa since 1992

Since 1992, more than 130,000 acres of wetlands have been restored or are in the process of being restored in Iowa under all NRCS wetland easement programs. The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) funded the purchase of 623 easements and agreements (contracts) in Iowa for a total of 68,426 acres during that same period.

In 2005, wetland projects were funded on 4,367 acres in 23 Iowa counties with assistance from the WRP, and restoration practices and improvements were performed on over 2,800 acres. Total WRP funding in Iowa exceeded \$10 million in 2005.

Please turn to RESTORE, Page 3

National Park.

In 1904, bandleader Glenn Miller was born in Clarinda, Iowa.

In 1932, 20-month-old Charles A. Lindbergh Jr., the son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh, was kidnapped from the family home near Hopewell, N.J. (Remains identified as those of the child were found the following May.)

In 1954, Puerto Rican nationalists opened fire from the gallery of the U.S. House of Representatives, wounding five congressmen.

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RESTORE: Providing benefits for whole community

Continued from Page 1

found the most economically- and environmentally-friendly way to restore the land was to work closely with the USDA and the Iowa DNR.

After the purchase, one of the first things the pair did was visit the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake to explore their options. They began the restoration process by utilizing the Conservation Reserve Program, administered by the USDA's Farm Service Agency.

CRP allowed Moreau and Beardsley to receive cost-share funds to restore the functions and values of the wetlands which had been farmed. It also put a buffer around the wetland to keep sediment, nutrients, and pollutants from impacting the wetland and wildlife habitat.

Permanent Easement Through WRP

In 2003 Moreau and Beardsley visited the USDA again to place a permanent

easement on 112 acres of the property through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

The WRP is a voluntary program administered by the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that offers payment, based on the agricultural value, for restored wetlands that have previously been drained and converted to agricultural uses. The WRP pays up to 100 percent reimbursement for restoration costs and allows the landowners to retain ownership of the land.

Wetlands provide benefits for entire communities, including improved water quality, enhanced habitat for wildlife, reduced sediment delivery, reduced flooding and improved water supply.

"There isn't a landowner in Iowa who can be happier than I am with the Wetlands Reserve Program," said Moreau. "The Hanbys (the previous owners)

are good conservationists in their own right. But we're not farmers, so the WRP was the perfect program to help us restore this area the way we wanted."

As part of the WRP easement, NRCS assisted in restoring 23 acres of wetlands, completing a one-acre enhancement to an existing wetland, seeding 47 acres with local ecotype native grasses and wildflowers, and planning three WRP food plot areas. Most of the WRP work on Moreau and Beardsley's land was completed in the summer of 2005.

Landowner Incentive Program (LIP)

On the land adjacent to the 112-acre WRP permanent easement area, Moreau and Beardsley incorporated the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) through the Iowa DNR. The LIP provided cost-share funds to interseed local eco-

type native grasses and wildflowers. The purpose of the program is to encourage landowners to improve existing habitat that host rare species, thereby assisting in species recovery and/or preempting the listing of declining species. LIP is designed for rare and often unnoticed plants, insects and reptiles.

Positive Results

Overall, Moreau said he and Beardsley are happy with the results of the restoration.

"We love what has been done. This land means so much to our families. I don't intend on ever selling it," he said. "Our wives really get into identifying the native plants and wildflowers and my son loves to camp out here in the summer."

To learn more about the WRP or other USDA conservation programs, visit your local USDA Service Center or go online to www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.

National Park

In 1904, bandleader Glenn Miller was born in Clarinda, Iowa.

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John David Cul

Actor George E. Actor Javier Bar Rock musician f (Nickelback) is Mark-Paul Gosse Actor Jensen Ackl host Donovan P. Rock musician Woolstenhulme Rhythm-and-blue Sammie is 19.

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"People are trapp and history is them." — Jame American author (

ZONING: Ordinance to be revisited in May

continued from page 1A

where there can be rain gardens, bio swales or other low impact development techniques," said City Attorney Mike Chosen. "The idea is to restore the hydrology of the Lakes area back to its natural state."

The rewrite of the city's ordinances has taken approximately a year.

"We're at the point in the process where the Okoboji Planning and Zoning board has completed a restatement and amendment of the entire zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance," said Chosen. "At the last planning and zoning meeting, the board unanimously approved the ordinances to submit to the council."

While the council agreed on Tuesday with the bulk of the ordinance rewrite, council

members found some minor clarification changes needed prior to adoption. A vote on the ordinance adoption is expected at May's regular council meeting.

The innovative ordinance change will help protect the waters of the Lakes area and will serve as an example for other area governmental entities.

"I encourage you to implement these ordinances," said Phil Petersen of Okoboji. "Essentially, low impact development is a way to keep rain water on the property and not let it escape to the lake... it's a way to keep the water quality of our lakes as good as it is now."

Many meeting attendees expressed their satisfaction with the new ordinance.

"I'm very proud of what the

planning and zoning board has done," said Jane Shuttleworth of Okoboji. "Many other communities are looking to us as an example."

In other business, the Okoboji City Council agreed to allow Forbes House Moving to relocate some city stop lights during the move of the former Rusch house located directly east of the Lakes Art

Center. Donna Muilenburg purchased the home and intends to create a bed and breakfast with the building near her other business, The Wash House in West Okoboji. The home is scheduled to be moved this spring, and traffic along Highway 71 may be slowed for approximately an hour and a half during the move.

Iowa Current Developments

Soil Scientists Assist Homeland Security

Soil scientists are at the forefront of national disaster planning. This unlikely group is helping the nation be better prepared in the event it becomes necessary to dispose of large numbers of animals killed as a result of natural disaster, disease or terrorist attack.

Given the task by Homeland Security through a national headquarters bulletin, NRCS soil scientists are examining soil survey data for land areas where large numbers of animals can safely be buried without danger to the environment or human population.

State Soil Scientist Mike Sucik says all 17 of Iowa's NRCS soil scientists are involved in the project. He adds, "I expect it will require one or two staff-years of time to complete."



Five of the Iowa soil scientists working on the Homeland Security Project are Richard Lensch, Dan Pulido, Ryan Dermody, Doug Oelmann and Leland Camp.

New Employees Attend Orientation Training



Steve Brinkman, Nutrient Management Specialist, looks through a dumpy level as part of the hands on training at new employee orientation. The dumpy level is one of five pieces of surveying equipment they examined.

Tangela Luhmann, a Soil Conservation Technician from Clarion, and Rubyana Grimmus, a Soil Conservationist from Adel, look on as Resource Soil Scientist Rick Bednarek demonstrates the use of a soil quality test kit.



Twenty-five new NRCS employees attended "Orientation for New Employees" training Feb. 6-10 in Nebraska City, Neb. The all-Iowa class gave students an overview of the agency's history, mission and customers. They learned the conservation planning process and examined a number of conservation practices.

Attending were: (Row One) Instructor James Johnson, Betty Romero, Valorie Johnson, Tangela Luhmann and Steve

Brinkman. (Row Two) Rubyana Grimmus, Meghan Walter, Julie McMichael, Christina Cibula, Peggy Wohlgemuth, Peggy Rash Daniels, Joanne Bruce, Melissa Johnson and Mary Roberts. (Row Three) Joshua Sieren, Jacob Groth, Jack Bucklin, Andrew Focht, Jesse Wegner, Lynn Kluver, Randal Welshhons, and Connie Zitritsch. (Row Four) David Gundlach, Hani Nguyen, David Carter and Instructor Jim Lansford.

Romero joins NRCS office

BY TRACY TUCKER
DCN STAFF

Coming from Massachusetts, Betty Romero assumes a position as a Soil Conservation technician with the local Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office.

Romero spent the past summer working at the Salem Maritime National Historic Site in Salem, Mass. While there she gave tours on a three-masted ship called "The Friendship."

After graduating from Jetmore High School in Kansas, Romero attended Trinidad State Junior College in Colorado. She was a cosmetology student the first year and a sociology student her second year.

"I wanted to go into forestry," said Romero. "My counselor told me it wasn't place for a woman."

She spent a semester at St. Mary of Plains in Kansas before transferring to the University of Southern Colorado, now Colorado State University in Pueblo. She got married with only six credits to graduate and is currently taking classes to earn her bachelor's degree.

Between her junior and senior year, the National Park Service came to campus in search of seasonal help. Romero saw it as opportunity to do what she had always dreamed.

"I had to take a test the day they were on campus," said Romero. "So I had my roommate pick up an application for me."

She applied and took a job at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado. Since then she has worked at Ft. Larned National Historic Site in Kansas, Mt. Rushmore National Memorial in South Dakota, Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and Little Bighorn National Battlefield in Montana.

For the past two years, Romero worked as a buffer coordinator with the Kansas Conservation Service through a 319 federal grant. When her grant was completed in May, she accepted the position in Massachusetts. Her time with the Salem Maritime National Historic Site has proven its value after



PHOTO BY TRACY TUCKER - DCN STAFF
Betty Romero recently joined the staff at the NRCS office in Spirit Lake.

coming to the Iowa Great Lakes area.

"The biggest body of water I grew up around was a creek," said Romero.

Romero's work in Massachusetts has taught her about bodies of water and given her a vocabulary that will provide useful in this area.

She moves to Spirit Lake on her own as her three children, Chastity, John and Patrick are attending colleges in Kansas. Her husband died in an accident in 1962.

Romero says the people are the biggest thing she has noticed about moving to Iowa from the east coast.

"It's always open arms here," said Romero. "You may be from the outside, but people open their arms to you anyway. Other places may close you out because you're an outsider. Not here."

Romero has long-term

plans to stay with the NRCS office. Eventually she would like to move into a Resource, Conservation and Development position to work with organizations and groups to develop specific areas.

Yields high for

BY TRACY TUCKER
DCN STAFF

As the weather gets colder and the snow threatens to fly, farmers are trying to finish the fall harvest.

While there is still corn to be harvested, most of the soybeans are out.

"There may be a few low lying areas that were wet where there are small patches [of soybeans], but for the most part they're out," said Larry Lago, of the Farm Service Agency.

The heavy rainfall earlier this month saturated lower elevations, and farmers could not get through those areas with a combine.

Another reason the corn harvest is a little late this year is due to the record yield.

"Simply drying the quantities of grain that is being harvested is really what is slowing down the corn harvest," said Lago. "People are handling a lot of grain this fall and they are having to wait for it to dry down."

Lago estimates the majority of the corn crop will be harvested in the next week to two weeks.

Although some of the corn crop is still in the fields, yields remain high.

"Corn probably had a crop and a half," said Fred Morfit, local manager of the Farmer's Coop in Milford.

"The corn was a little wet, but the quality was good. Two hundred bushel was pretty common and 50-60 bushel of beans were coming."

Not only is the corn yield

making records this so is the quality of grain.

"The quality of excellent this year Lago. "Soybeans in corn to corn did not high. It remained cool and the soybean develop as significant the corn crop."

This year's soybean yielded less than last. However, soybean yield still above the national average.

The record yield lower prices.

"We had \$10 beans planting time and now \$5.34," said Morfit. "It was \$3 and is \$1.64 now."

It's simple supply and demand.

"It is in direct relation to the national prediction what the overall crop are in the United States Lago. "With high yields, we're seeing prices."

The only significant amount of reduction this year was due to cold conditions expected in the latter part of the growing season.



Open Tues-Sat 10-8
Thurs 10-8

WHITROCK: Pet matchmaker

continued from page 1A

Whitrock explains her job as that of a matchmaker.

"I'm here to put pets and people together," she says, accepting kisses on the cheek from a Rottweiler puppy. "We look for chemistry and we match people with what they

to answering any questions people may have - from puppy-proofing the kitchen cabinets to how to handle the loss of a long-term family pet.

"I want the Humane Society to be the first place people call for non-medical

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04-12-06

Area environmental organizations plan Earth Week celebration

BY ERIN GOLDEN
DCN STAFF

Thirty-six years ago this month, Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin was at the helm of a frenzy of activity. The first-ever Earth Day celebration was in its final days of planning, and a young staff was working long hours to put together educational programs and environmental demonstrations across the country.

Nearly a decade earlier, in November 1962, Nelson had taken his concern about the state of the environment to President John F. Kennedy. The senator persuaded Kennedy that the best way to raise awareness about the protection of the Earth would be on a national conservation tour. In 1963, Kennedy embarked on a multi-state tour, but the crusade failed to attract national attention.

By 1969, American attention was turned towards an increasingly unpopular war in Vietnam. Nelson continued a series of conservation speaking tours across the country, but the environmental movement had failed to pick up steam. After observing a particular type of student protest - a "teach-in," in which activists educated students on political and social issues - the senator realized that adopting a similar grassroots style of activism could breathe new life into his cause. He set to work, gathering support from students, scientists, and a diverse array of

EARTH WEEK ACTIVITIES

Tuesday, April 18 - Prairie Lake Audubon Society lecture at the Dickinson County Nature Center

Thursday, April 20 - low impact development demonstration

Saturday, April 22 - Earth Day celebration at Gull Point State Park

Americans.

On April 22, 1970, Nelson's dream became a reality as nearly 20 million people around the country participated in a variety of rallies, teaching sessions, and environmental fairs. Today, one year after Nelson's death, the holiday is observed every April 22 by more than 200 million people in the United States, Canada, and over 140 countries around the world. Most observances of the holiday include volunteerism, with groups picking up trash, planting trees, or cleaning up bodies of water. The day is also marked with educational programs on diverse subjects such as energy conservation, recycling, wildlife habitat preservation, and air pollution.

Locally, the Dickinson County Conservation Board plans to mark the celebration with events stretching across an entire "Earth Week," beginning April 17 and ending on Earth Day, April 22. According to County Naturalist Barbara Tagami, the board is inviting individuals and

organizations to host events during the week.

First on the current schedule of events is a lecture hosted by the Prairie Lakes Audubon Society on Tuesday, April 18 at 7 p.m. in the Nature Center. Lee Schoenewe of Spencer will give a presentation on the ivory-billed woodpecker.

An explanation and demonstration of low-impact development principles is scheduled for Thursday, April 20 at the Maritime Museum in Arnolds Park. The event will be led by members of the Clean Water Alliance. According to Tagami, a Friday, April 21 event at the Hale Slough is in the works, but had not yet been confirmed at press time.

The week will conclude with a full slate of events on Saturday, April 22 at Gull Point State Park. The day's events are co-sponsored by the Dickinson County Conservation Board, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and the Conservation Foundation of Dickinson County.

Saturday's celebration includes a number of family-friendly events, including programs for children on recycling, as well as interactive discussions on seed-planting. Spirit Lake Girl Scouts will be creating recycled art and children will be able to take a ride on the "smiley recycling train," a vehicle made with recycled materials.

Visitors will also be invited

to take in any of a number of educational programs on a variety of environmentally-themed topics. Linda Hinshaw will present information on wildlife rehabilitation, while Wayne Peterson will discuss stream erosion. Gary Phillips will provide a seminar on landscaping with prairie plants, and people interested in new watershed-related technology will be able to listen to a presentation by Mike Hawkins. The event's keynote speaker will be Rich Leopold, Executive Director of the Iowa Environmental Council.

According to Tagami, the day will provide something for everyone interested in caring for the environment.

"There will be informational displays from state, regional, county, and city organizations," Tagami said. "Saturday evening, from 5:30 to 7:30, we will have the Earth Day Celebration. Everybody is invited and encouraged to come enjoy an evening by the fireplace."

The Saturday celebration will be both an educational and social event, said Tagami.

"Everyone can bring an hors d'oeuvre or dessert, and wine will be served," she noted. "It's a nice time for people to get together and meet each other, especially because we're all working for the same thing, to take care of the environment."

■ For more information on Dickinson County Earth Week, contact Naturalist Barbara Tagami at 338-4238.

10 tips on how to celebrate Earth Day:

1. Get off to a clean start: Take a shower with soaps and shampoos made with organic ingredients. Then, serve someone special an organic breakfast in bed with certified organic orange juice, coffee, fresh fruit, cereal, yogurt and eggs.

2. Create a celebratory meal that's as close to 100 percent organic as possible. Invite friends and family to enjoy and help cook. It can be an organic picnic, pizza party, barbecue or high tea! Try Organic Valley's Earth Day Creativity Cards for a fun dinner table game (www.earthdinner.org).

3. At the peak of the season (May through October), go to your local farmer's market and buy from your favorite organic farmer. Approximately 40-60 percent of all farmer's market growers are organic.

4. Building healthy soil is a key tenet of organic farming. A great way to guarantee rich, organic soil is to start composting! Contact your local

library or Cooperative Extension office for composting information.

5. Release "beneficial insects" (good bugs which keep away the bad bugs) in your organic garden. Ladybugs don't just bring good luck; they also serve as natural defenders for your garden's plants. Green Lacewing Larvae (considered the "garbage disposal bug" of the insect world) are hardworking and hungry. If they're not available at your local garden supply, you can get a list of garden suppliers by visiting The Organic Pages Online at www.theorganicpages.com.

6. Kids can celebrate with color! Get hold of OTA's great activities and Coloring pages on The O'Mama Report web site (http://www.theorganicreport.com/pages/65_o_kid.cfm). Play the Environmental Game on www.organicearthday.org.

7. Be a big "softie" and treat yourself (or someone special) to a pair of 100 percent organic cotton socks or

anything made with snugly organic fleece. Studies have shown that in the U.S., it takes about one-third of a pound of chemicals to grow enough non-organic cotton for one T-shirt.

8. Remember your Pooch. Give your furry friend an organic dog wash and treat him or her to an organic doggie biscuit.

9. Raise a toast to organic. Whether you enjoy a glass of organic wine, lemonade or tomato juice, there are numerous organic libations and refreshments to wet your whistle.

10. Slumber soundly and organically-sip organic chamomile tea and slip under your organic cotton sheets.

The Earth Day Network and Organic Trade Association (OTA) have teamed up to draw attention to the ways organic products support a healthy environment and lifestyle with the Go Organic! for Earth Day national campaign.



04-26-06

Low Impact Development embrace Arnolds Park

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

The parking lot at Arnold's Park Amusement Park is getting an ecologically-sensitive face-lift this summer.

Concerns over parking lot rainwater runoff draining into and causing water quality problems for West Lake Okoboji drove the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum board to look into alternatives for a new lot to comply with city requirements.

The solution was low impact development (LID), an ecologically-friendly design approach that imitates natural water drainage and storage. LID incorporates bioswales, rain gardens, bioretention cells, level spreaders, native landscaping and pervious paving to manage storm water runoff. The project is expected to be completed by mid-summer.

Beck Engineering of Spirit Lake is in charge of construction for the project. Kenny Beck and sons Chris and Brad have donated their efforts.

"It's the biggest project of this type and

magnitude," said Brad Beck.

The program is expected to catch 90 percent of Iowa rainfall events.

"The system was designed to handle the runoff from about 1.25 inches of rain," said Iowa State University civil engineer Steve Jones.

Rains of this size are also considered to be the dirtiest in terms of silt, oils, petroleum and other contaminants carried by runoff.

Landscape architect Matthew Fair Jones of Minneapolis has donated his talents in the designing of the plaza, which will be located in the northwest corner of the space. A 1,000-gallon tank will be located below the plaza to hold and recirculate water.

Monitoring equipment to be overseen by Steve Jones is planned in order to record the quality of the water coming out of the rain garden and pervious concrete areas. Over the next two years, the water will be sampled and analyzed with the test results posted on-site for public viewing.

IMPACT

continued on page 2A

ing lot runoff



PHOTO BY CAROLINE RUSK

Beck Engineering dig a trench for

that native plants are often thought of as weeds and take awhile to fully grow in, but they are what is best for the soil.

Pervious concrete will be used throughout the project. According to Steve Anderson, the concrete is similar to a Rice Krispy bar—only it can hold 3,500 pounds per square inch.

A drop of rain falling on the old parking lot design would

Coordinator for the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance.

If the water would flow into the pervious concrete, it would filter down into a rock chamber, where the sediment carried by the water would stay. The water would cool down and bacteria growing on the rocks would break down chemicals from the pavement runoff.

The pervious concrete areas

cheduled for May 1 at 1:30 p.m. Those interested can contact Steve Anderson at (712) 336-3782. A pervious concrete pouring educational day for contractors and concrete workers will be held May 4.

Funding for this project came from grants and gifts from several sources including the Okoboji Protective Association, University of Okoboji

Foundation, Dickinson County Water Quality Commission, EPA 319 Water Quality Funds, Iowa State Revolving Funds (a low-interest loan), Vision Iowa Program and private contributions.

"There are a lot of things coming together to make this all possible," Anderson said.

Four additional demo sites in the area are coming up over the next two years with new and similar projects.

Earth Day Celebration at Gull Point State Park

04-26-06



Two live
snakes
were
available
for partic-
pants to
handle.



A local girl
scout troop
takes a ride
through the
park.



IMPACT: Rain Garden to clean parking lot runoff

continued from page 1A

"Within 72 hours of a rain, all the water will be drained from the parking lot," Steve Jones said.

An educational kiosk will be constructed on-site to better educate the public about low impact development and how the Arnolds Park site works. It will house the information recorded from the monitoring equipment.

The soil mixture used for the project for maximum efficiency is 50 percent sand for permeability, 25 percent loam topsoil for removing pollutants and 25 percent high-quality compost for organic material.

In an urban setting, native plants are not always popular, which is why the project will utilize a combination of both native and turf-style grasses. Jane Shuttleworth of Friends of Lakeside Laboratory warned that native plants are often thought of as weeds and take awhile to fully grow in, but they are what is best for the soil.

Pervious concrete will be used throughout the project. According to Steve Anderson, the concrete is similar to a Rice Krispy bar—only it can hold 3,500 pounds per square inch.

A drop of rain falling on the old parking lot design would

land on asphalt, pick up dirt, oil and other particles as it traveled to the curb, flow west with the slope of the lot, spill into the street and pour into the storm sewer before spilling into the lake—polluting the water.

With the new design, the water would either flow into the rain garden or the pervious concrete. In the rain garden, the water would either be absorbed by the top compost layer, be used by the plants or evaporate into the atmosphere. If the rain garden is fully saturated, the water would go into the rock reservoir before entering the tile line, storm sewer and then flowing into the lake.

"The water that's going through the rain garden will be cleaned by the plants and soils and cooled down before it enters the lake," said Steve Anderson, Coordinator for the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance.

If the water would flow into the pervious concrete, it would filter down into a rock chamber, where the sediment carried by the water would stay. The water would cool down and bacteria growing on the rocks would break down chemicals from the pavement runoff.

The pervious concrete areas



PHOTO BY CAROLINE RUSK

Construction workers from Beek Engineering dig a trench for the LID project.

will be paved starting April 27 and a funding meeting is scheduled for May 1 at 1:30 p.m. Those interested can contact Steve Anderson at (712) 336-3782. A pervious concrete pouring educational day for contractors and concrete workers will be held May 4.

Funding for this project came from grants and gifts from several sources including the Okoboji Protective Association, University of Okoboji

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Earth Day Celebration at Gull Point State Park

04-26-06



A man with a plan

Watershed management project will aid Iowa Great Lakes grant writers in clean water efforts



Jim Frederick is writing a watershed assessment plan for the Iowa Great Lakes. (Photo by Greg Drees)

By Greg Drees
Journal correspondent

ARNOLDS PARK, Iowa — He has a plan for each

cial to write a watershed assessment plan for the Iowa Great Lakes.

"There is already a wealth of information existing about the natural resources in the lakes area," Frederick said. "My job is to bring it all together into one document."

Frederick is giving a Power Point presentation about the watershed plan to city councils, community-based organizations and partners that are members of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance. The next steps involve conducting an agricultural

Bridges Bay resort and waterpark set to open in 2006

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Site developers for Bridges Bay Resort and Indoor Waterpark report the construction continues along the shores of East Lake Okoboji.

"Construction is moving quickly, and we anticipate [72] residence condos to be ready by July 2006," said Jon Broek, President of Equity Homes.

He plans for the 48 resort condos, 20,000 square-foot indoor waterpark, arcade, and fitness center to be open by Christmas. Other anticipated resort amenities will include an outdoor pool, sheltered

picnic area, children's fishing pond, children's playground, and boat rental.

The development, originally approved by the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors in 2005, is now under consideration for annexation into the City of Arnolds Park.

"They have submitted a petition, and we're still working through the agreement," said Ron Walker, Arnolds Park City Administrator. "It is a three way agreement between the developers, the city and Clay Regional Water."

PARK

continued on page 2A



CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC

Bridges Bay Resort is under construction near Arnolds Park. Many of the condos are expected to be ready for occupancy by this July with completion of the waterpark slated for December.

A man with a plan

Watershed management project will aid Iowa Great Lakes grant writers in clean water efforts



Jim Frederick is writing a watershed assessment plan for the Iowa Great Lakes. (Photo by Greg Drees)

By Greg Drees
Journal correspondent

ARNOLDS PARK, Iowa – He has a plan – a far-reaching plan – and when finished it will define a community's commitment to water quality.

While studying a map of the Iowa Great Lakes watershed, Jim Frederick summarized the goal of a two-year project to write a management plan in Dickinson County to serve as a tool for winning grant funds for clean water initiatives.

"Sometimes it seems like a daunting task," he said. "But when it is completed the plan will be a living document that demarcates the Iowa Great Lakes natural resources and the goal to preserve them."

Frederick, who grew up near Strawberry Point in eastern Iowa and was drawn to the outdoor life along the Mississippi River, spent 35 years with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. After retiring last winter, Frederick was asked by top DNR offi-

cials to write a watershed assessment plan for the Iowa Great Lakes.

"There is already a wealth of information existing about the natural resources in the lakes area," Frederick said. "My job is to bring it all together into one document."

Frederick assisted in a similar project in the Lake Rathbun watershed, the result of which has enabled resource managers there to acquire grants for water quality protection projects. The Iowa Great Lakes management plan will be the second of its kind in the state.

The document will be written in sections, with Frederick consulting with experts in areas such as Low Impact Development (LID), storm water management, tourism, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies, invasive species prevention and sediment and erosion control. Once the plan is complete in the fall of 2007, grant writers can key on specific sections of the document.

"When grant applications are reviewed by government entities and foundations, for example, they want detailed information about why the applicant deserves the money," Frederick said. "This plan will provide that information."

Frederick is giving a Power Point presentation about the watershed plan to city councils, community-based organizations and partners that are members of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance. The next steps involve conducting an agricultural cropland assessment, evaluate urban runoff conditions and work with the DNR, NRCS and Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District offices in developing alternatives for improving water quality in the watershed.

"We want all the planners and the whole community to buy into the final document," Frederick said. "Illustrating unity and showing you have worked hard to write the management plan plays huge dividends in the grant writing world."

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission fund the project.

"There are a lot of movers and shakers here in terms of protecting the natural resources and the water quality of the lakes," Frederick concluded. "This coalition of conservationists makes my job much easier."

For information about the watershed assessment plan, contact Frederick at iglcoordinator@gmail.com

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open in 2006

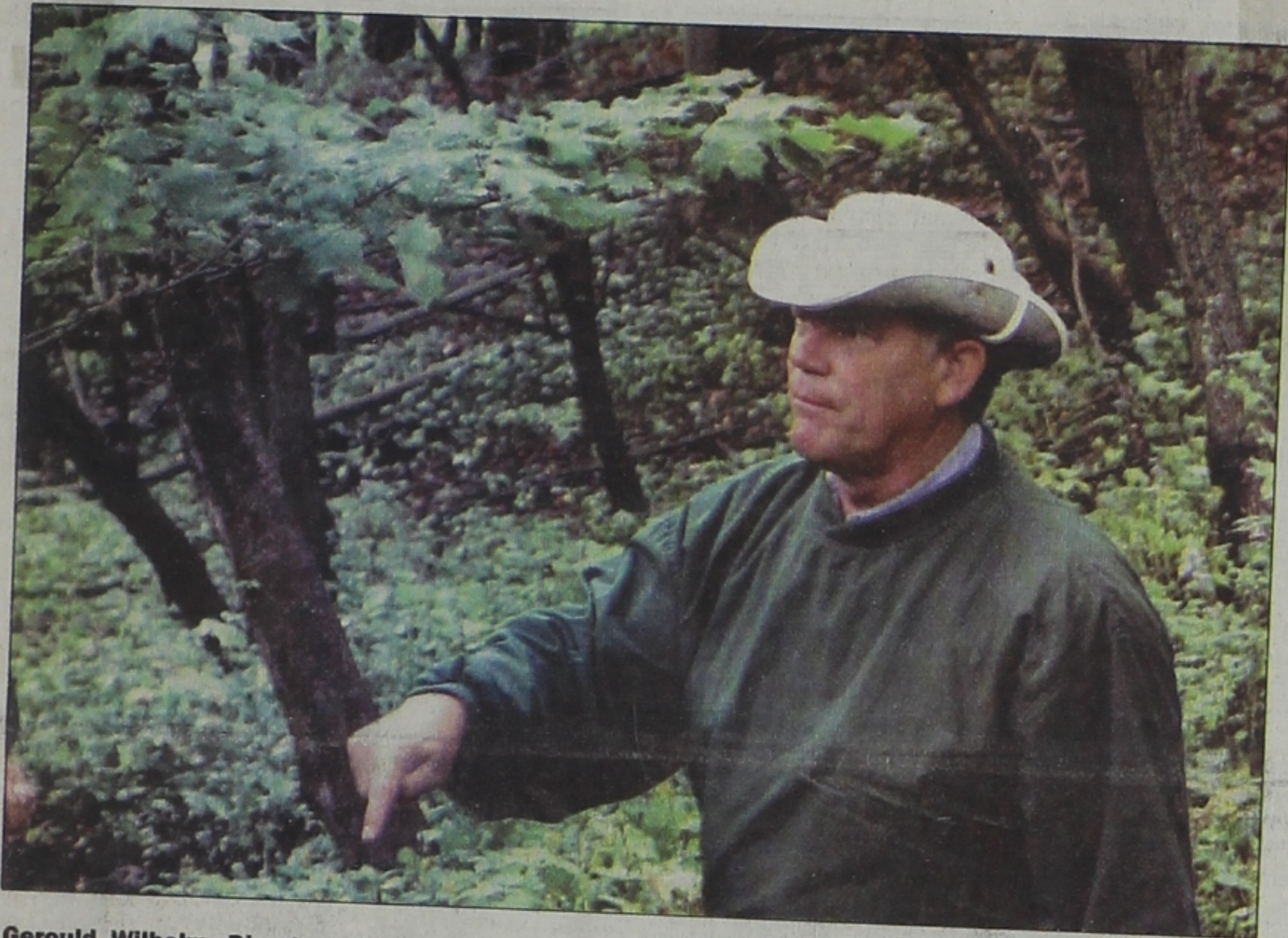


CONTRIBUTED GRAPHIC

Park. Many of the condos are completion of the waterpark

Lessons from the past

Sep 22-04



Gerould Wilhelm, Director of Environmental Services for Conservation Design Forum in Elmhurst, Illinois, tells workshop participants many area woodlands must be thinned to allow in light, without which, plants and insects have died, soil has been washed away, and tree roots have been exposed and will soon cause the trees on slopes to fall.

PHOTO BY LYNN LAWS • DCN CONTRIBUTOR

Observations 200 years ago can aid planning today

BY LYNN LAWS
SPECIAL TO THE DCN

The town of Okoboji "has 6 houses, one store and a sawmill" and Spirit Lake "is a nice, beautiful town, growing rapidly," a survey commissioned by the federal government in 1861 said. The government was looking to sell land for agriculture and other development in the Iowa Great Lakes area.

The 1861 survey notes were the basis of a presentation by Chris Bair, Director of The Land Stewardship Program in Williamsburg, on Friday, Sept. 17, at Village West in Spirit Lake.

Bair provided a snapshot of the landscape of the Great Lakes Region prior to development, for an

audience of 50 land owners, developers, city planners, and others gathered to learn about sustainable urban design and development strategies that mimic nature and native practices from 200 years ago.

DEVELOPMENT

continued on page 11A

INSIDE



Experts say viewing water as a waste product, rather than a resource, has been a recipe for disaster and suggest ways to treat it as a resource.

PAGE 11A

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**n Forum in Elmhurst, Illin
good urban planning.**

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MANAGING WATER

Patchett, President of Conservation Forum, offered the following ideas

aging water on site.
minimize impervious surfaces
oid concentrated points of dis-
ge
ffuse, absorb water where it falls
apture and infiltrate runoff on site
eserve natural drainage features

and systems; promote ecological
restoration of remnant wet and dry
prairies

- avoid soil disruption and restore soil health
- AVOID SOIL COMPACTION
- celebrate water as a precious resource that you want to keep versus send away
- Roof top gardens
- Porous paving systems
- Level spreader systems that allows water to migrate to rooted plant beds
- Bio-swells
- Rain gardens
- Art that is rain water driven
- Cisterns

in the morning.

Part of the reason the oaks were scattered and sparse is the tree roots didn't do well in the wet soil. But regular prairie burns were the primary reason, says Bair.

"Most fires occurred in autumn and were usually Native American set. Now, due to fire suppression, the woods are dense; so there are few ground plants and no oaks. If we don't open up our woods and start burning again, this is the last of our

everywhere it fell, into the wonderful mix of organic carbon, water remained a constant temperature and chemistry, so it could have lots of living things. The prairie, on June 15, especially after burn, starts to bulk-up, whereas, urban grasses start to brown, unless watered," Wilhelm said.

Prairies absorb and evaporate as much moisture as they receive, so they're natural flood control and the reason

University, once had a yard in Illinois with all of these modern inventions. But he was encouraged to rethink his ways when his son left home to join the Marine Corps and he and his wife decided to do an "archaeological dig" in his son's room. Among the ruins, they found an 8th grade assignment his son had forgotten to turn in, entitled: Plants: Prisoners of War. In the story, young Mr. Wilhelm described plants as neighbors with no children. The only "free tree" in the neighborhood was an old cottonwood tree, that

Anglers Bay project awarded \$1.5 million

Organizers of the Anglers Bay project on Big Spirit Lake are pausing to celebrate the project's first major public funding before digging into the larger fundraising task ahead.

As the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation (INHF) and other project supporters hoped, Anglers Bay was awarded a \$1.5 million appropriation by the 2006 state legislative session for the purchase of "unique and treasured land in Iowa."

Located on the northeast shore of Big Spirit Lake, the Anglers Bay project protects 3,500 feet of natural shoreline. It's lined by the area's largest bulrush bed, which provides critical habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife.

INHF is purchasing the site on contract for eventual transfer to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Once transferred, the 93-acre site will become a public area for wildlife habitat, low-impact recreation and bike trail access. Between land acquisition and initial resto-

ration, the total project cost is \$6.67 million.

"We're thrilled that the legislature recognized this project's value not only to the area's native plants and wildlife, but also to water quality, public recreation and tourism," said Mark Ackelson, INHF president. "We're particularly grateful to the local legislators Senator David Johnson and Rep. Mike May for their tenacious efforts to educate their colleagues about the site's importance and to secure this critical funding."

The \$1.5 million award is part of a \$5 million public funding goal. The IDNR has pledged \$2 million from its budget, payable over its next three fiscal years. Project supporters will request another \$1.5 million appropriation during next year's legislative session.

Meanwhile, INHF has begun raising the remaining \$1.67 million from private sources locally and throughout the state.

"We need a lot more dollars before our final payment

falls due in July 2007, but this project has already generated huge public and private support," noted Ackelson. "I can't say I never lose sleep over raising this kind of money, but I'm very optimistic. Once people find out what's at stake here, their next question is usually How can I help?"

Formerly slated for development, the site contains the area's most diverse aquatic plant population. The extensive bulrush bed is only the most visible of its varied plants. According to researchers, these plants provide critical nursery sites and habitat for many of the lake's game and nongame fish species. Their seeds provide a feast for migrating birds.

Future management plans for the site include restoring prairie and wetland areas and building a trail that links to the Dickinson County Recreational Trails system. Meanwhile, the site adjoins and buffers natural resources at Hale's Slough, a state-owned wetland and hunting area.

Current owners Don and Nancy Yarnes had considered building 35 or more houses on the site, which many local residents and researchers had feared would destroy the bulrush bed and its benefits.

"We are forever grateful to Don and Nancy for not only reconsidering their building plans, but then selling their land at a bargain price for public use and preservation," noted Ackelson. "It took their flexibility to get the project started. With additional vision and support from the Iowa DNR, state legislature, local supporters and so many others, we're well on the way to saving this piece of the lake's natural heritage for future generations. Maybe one day our great-grandkids will think of us while enjoying a quiet day of fishing here."

Project contributions, designated "Anglers Bay," can be sent to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation at www.inhf.org or 505 Fifth Ave., #444, Des Moines, IA 50309.

Sept. 13-05



Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Anderson uses a toy model to illustrate the impact of fertilizers, dirt and runoff on the area's watershed.



Dickinson County sixth graders learned to identify Iowa's roadside plants and flowers during the outdoor classroom event.



The 28th annual outdoor classroom at Kettleon-Hogsback taught students the process of a soil survey.

Outdoor Classroom

Area sixth graders receive environmental education

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

What better way to get the attention of a sixth grader than bringing out the butterflies, hunting dogs and life jacket games? Then, once you've got their attention, what better way to teach them about nature and the environment?

On Thursday, Sept. 7, the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District sponsored its 28th annual Sixth Grade Outdoor Classroom at Kettleon-Hogsback Nature Area north of Spirit Lake.

Area sixth graders from Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake and Terril attended the event. They learned about soils, clean water, boating and water safety, waterfowl, scuba diving and snorkeling, wild flowers, retriever dogs, orphaned and injured wildlife and the Kettleon-

Hogsback area.

Instructors for the day welcomed the opportunity to help the students discover nature's magnificence.

It's interesting. A lot of kids anymore don't get out and enjoy nature, said Betty Romero, Soil Conservation Technician for the Natural Resources Service. Romero taught the students about roadside plants and flowers during her session. What I'm doing is wetting their appetite. Maybe this can become a hobby - something for the family to do together.

At another session, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Anderson illustrated through a toy model how fertilizers, soil runoff and other pollutants can affect the lakes and groundwater. Dickinson County Naturalist Barbara Tagami asked them to wish on a released butterfly after learning about the creature's migration habits, and students met Thunder, an eight-year-old retriever, and were educated in how to begin training a hunting dog.

The classes were conducted by members of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District, Iowa



Department of Natural Resources, the Dickinson County Conservation Board, the Iowa Great Lakes Water Safety Council, Blue Water Divers Scuba and Snorkeling and Linda Hinshaw.

The goal of the outdoor classroom is to provide a unique learning experience and an increased understanding of the environment.

It's fun to get out and experience things hands on instead of reading it out of a book, said Jason Schneider, Spirit Lake sixth grade teacher. The kids have learned a lot about nature, different plants and flowers and boating safety.



Sixth graders at the annual outdoor classroom event learned the importance of having and wearing life jackets while spending time on the area's waters.

Low Impact Development Day features new sites

DET 18-06

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

Last Wednesday's Low Impact Development (LID) Day in the Lakes area featured two new sites in Arnolds Park and Spirit Lake. Project Engineer Jeff Rose of Jacobson-Westergard and Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Andersen walked a small crowd through the various steps intended to improve water quality at both the Arnolds Park Baseball Diamond and Spirit Lake High School's new parking lot.

LID is a new, comprehensive land planning and engineering design approach with a goal of maintaining and enhancing the pre-development hydrologic regime of urban and developing watersheds.

"The rain garden between the parking lots [behind Allen's Hardware] and the retaining wall [at the baseball diamond] will protect the investment of the ball field," said Rose. In addition to the rain garden,

future improvements of the baseball diamond include a retrofitted sediment basin as well as an infiltration trench.

"All the water north of the field will drain into the infiltration trench and then into the retention area," Rose said. "Before, it just drained into the storm sewer and into the lake."

A new concession stand is also in future plans for the field. Thus far, the city has spent an estimated \$70,000 on the project.

Rose estimated a project completion date for the baseball diamond of Nov. 15.

The second site toured, Spirit Lakes High School's new parking lot, has planned for it a rain garden that is part of an all over project that will come as funding is available for the school.

Another recent LID project in the Lakes area includes the parking lot of Arnolds Park Amusement Park, which was completed this summer and includes a 1,000-gallon tank located below the plaza that holds and recirculates water. Over the next two years, the water will be sampled and analyzed by monitoring equipment with the test results posted on-site for public viewing.



PHOTO BY CAROLINE RUSK, DCN STAFF

Project Engineer Jeff Rose of Jacobson-Westergard explains the benefits of low impact development in the Arnolds Park Baseball Diamond to a small crowd during last Wednesday's presentation.

Force" leaves it all on the field.

1D EDUCATION

Spirit Lake Park

Oktoberfest ride ushers in fall.

1B LIFE

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SECTION
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DICKINSON COUNTY NEWS

VOLUME 5 NO. 219

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NEWSTAND
64¢
SUBSCRIPTION

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2006



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The Iowa Attorney General's office is now investigating a series of construction violations at the Bridges Bay site in Arnolds Park. The accusations include water quality violations as a result of dysfunctional silt fences and soil erosion practices.

Attorney General to investigate Bridges Bay violations

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Construction practices at the Bridges Bay Resort water park/condominium complex are now under investigation by the Iowa Attorney General's office following a meeting of the Environmental Protection Commission last week.

According to the Iowa Department of Natural

Resources, site construction has violated silt fence ordinances on several occasions, broken the open burning law and failed to exercise proper erosion control.

Throughout the past year, DNR officials have been gathering evidence regarding water and air quality violations at the 70-acre Bridges Bay site, where construction includes 72 residence condos, 48 resort

condos, a 20,000 square-foot indoor water park, an arcade, and fitness center.

"The reason we were out there was for routine storm water compliance inspections and complaint investigations for down silt fencing," said Tom Roos, DNR environmental specialist. "Our first visit was Oct. 4, 2005. We met with a site engineer from Jacobsen

Westergard many times to go over some of the problem areas that they had with their silt fencing. We documented two known water quality violations that we've visually observed and sampled, as well as an air quality violation for open burning of construction waste."

BRIDGES

continued on page 2A



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Larry Peterson lost more than 300 pounds and says he has been able to keep the weight off thanks to the support of his TOPS group. Today, he presents behavioral management seminars nationwide to help others in their weight loss battles.

Sliming down, staying healthy

Weight loss guru invites public to 'Take Off Pounds Sensibly'

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

When Lakes area resident Larry Peterson finally found a way to shed 300 unneeded

put the weight right back on. This time, he swore it would be different. And three and a half years later, he continues to declare success in his weight loss battle.

Nov 1 - 2006

Water Quality Commission funds project proposals

At its meeting on Monday Oct. 23, the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission approved funds for five water quality projects for Fiscal Year 2008 (July 1, 2007 - June 30, 2008). The Water Quality Commission was created by a 28-E agreement between the all the cities in Dickinson County and the county to allocate \$200,000 for water quality projects for Dickinson County Lakes (Swan Lake, Silver Lake and the Iowa Great Lakes). This year the Water Quality Commission received nine applications that with total requests of \$254,289.

The projects that the commission fully funded include:

1. Silver Lake Watershed Assessment Dickinson SWCD \$10,000
2. Assessment and Management Plan for IGL Dickinson SWCD \$45,000
3. Anglers Bay Project INHF \$100,000
4. Naturalist Internship DCCB \$5,100

The following project was only partially funded:

5. OPA Wahpeton Storm Water Management OPA \$15,548

The Water Quality Commission allots \$24,352

for the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District to do administrative work and that money supports the Clean Water Alliance Coordinator.

The 28-E agreement was signed with a pledge to bring in from private, state and federal source \$3 for every \$1 dollar raised locally. In the six years of the Water Quality Commission they have approved over \$1 million dollars and those funds have been matched with over \$10 million dollars to education, research, improve and protect the water quality within Dickinson County lakes.

AG: Fourth generation farmer hopes to build ethanol's future in Iowa

continued from page 1A

Northey's campaign trail leading to Des Moines took months of consideration and preparation. He announced his bid in September of 2005 at the Clay County Fair after carefully analyzing the challenges, political issues and proper campaign strategies for several months.

"I basically wrote a thesis on the job for myself," he said. "Part of doing that study was looking into how these races had been run in the past. I talked to a lot of people who had run in the past. Each political race is unique - statewide office races are unique."

Growing up in a politi-

cal and agricultural family helped prepare Northey for his campaign trail.

"It gives you a sense of reality of how important it is," he said. "It demystifies politics. These are just regular folks doing the best that they can. It's possible to be engaged [in politics], do a good job and make a difference."

Northey is a fourth-generation Iowa farmer, returning to farm with his grandfather, Sid Northey, after graduating from Iowa State University in Ag Business in 1981. In the past, Bill has served on a variety of agricultural committees and has been an

active member of both the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation and the Farm Bureau. His other grandfather, E. Howard Hill, was also very active in the Farm Bureau, serving as President of the Iowa Farm Bureau from 1947-1963. Bill Northey's father, Wayne Northey, serves as a Dickinson County Supervisor.

"This is an election victory we all share," Northey said. "Iowans from all political persuasions set aside partisan leanings and cast a vote for the vision of Iowa agriculture that we all share - one of opportunity and growth."

Throughout his campaign, Northey emphasized the importance of ethanol in Iowa.

"We are living in a very, very dynamic time in Iowa right now," Northey said. "We have a tremendous opportunity to play a significant role in the ethanol industry... I want to make sure we stay on the cutting edge of that."

Northey said he is learning more about working with both larger agricultural markets as well as the smaller family farming operations while looking for new and different diversification in Iowa agriculture.

"I'd like to expand sev-

eral parts of our local [soil] conservation practices in Dickinson County to the rest of Iowa," he said. "Dickinson County is unique. It's a great mix of recreation and agriculture and industry - that kind of balance is something we don't really see in the rest of the state."

Northey went on to emphasize Iowa's role in the future of ethanol.

"Iowa is at the forefront of the renewable energy explosion," he said. "I look forward to helping us navigate this and other exciting agricultural opportunities. Let's work together to help Iowa be all it can be."



Guy Foster of Lake Park enjoyed some fishing. Improvement Association has formed to improve the lake, located just southwest of Lake Park.

Silver Lake Park Association begins

BY TRACY SCHLATER
DCN STAFF

The Silver Lake Park Improvement Association has formed an interim board to get the association started.

The group of eight people have begun the task of writing the by-

laws and the constitution, in addition to the association and go. "I've been different people form groups. Clean Water. I've never

ns and paint

he support needed for the theatre. This community wanted the theatre, they have made this happen, and they have made sure the doors will stay open."

Burke fondly recalls many hit productions in his time with the theatre, including several performances "Our Town," "Man of La Mancha" and the 2006 season ender "The Will Rogers Follies."

"It's a thrilling opportunity to reinvest in the theatre that we have," he said. "[We're] sending a message to the community that we're continuing to be strong - and will continue for the next 50 years."

Nov 1 - 2006

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AG: For

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Growing up in

elementary.

1D EDUCATION

SECTION
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Nov 29 - 2006

Local farmer wins Secretary of Ag race

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

After a victory in a close race for Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Spirit Lake resident Bill Northey is looking forward to making a difference for agriculture in the state.



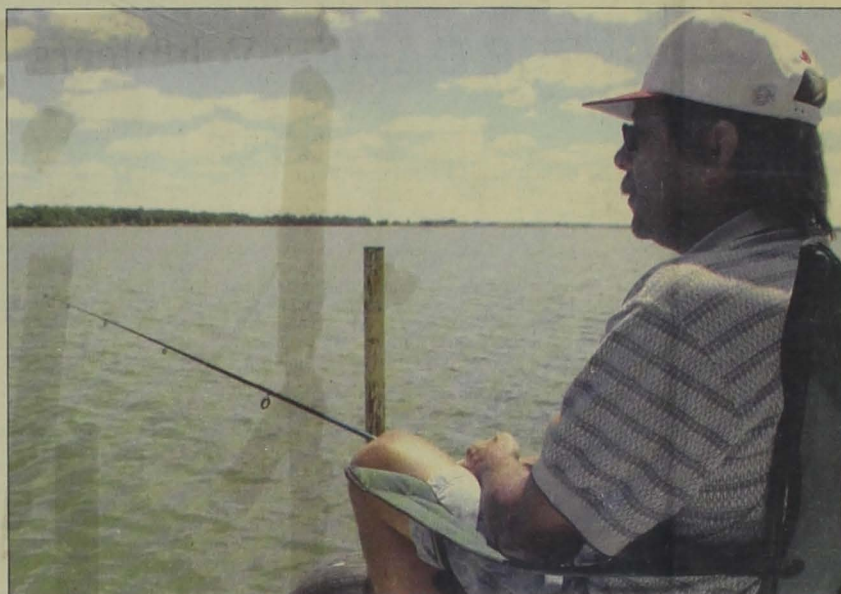
"When I began this journey in the summer of 2005, I knew I would get to know Iowa in a whole new way," he said. "I've driven nearly 90,000 miles and visited Iowa towns I didn't know existed. I've talked with tens of thousands of Iowans about Iowa agriculture. And after all that, I am more excited than tired!"

Northey said he kept track of his journey with a Global Positioning System (GPS), estimating that he made the equivalent of 14 -15 round trips to Anchorage, Alaska.

"[The campaign] was like taking a graduate class in Iowa agriculture," he said. "I spoke with everyone from people in the horse racing industry to people running vineyards, and also learned about several big changes in the bioeconomy and different opportunities in bio-agriculture. I got a chance to absorb a lot over 15 months."

AG

continued on page 2A



FILE PHOTO BY KEVIN SANDERS - DCN STAFF

Guy Foster of Lake Park enjoyed some fishing on Silver Lake last summer. A new Silver Lake Park Improvement Association has formed to improve water quality and do watershed work to benefit the lake, located just southwest of Lake Park.

Silver Lake Park Improvement Association beginning to take shape

BY TRACY SCHLATER
DCN STAFF

The Silver Lake Park Improvement Association has formed an interim board to get the association started.

The group of eight people have begun the task of writing the by-

laws and the articles of incorporation, in addition to determining the association's mission statement and goals.

"I've been around a lot of different people that have wanted to form groups," said Steve Anderson, Clean Water Alliance coordinator. "I've never been around people

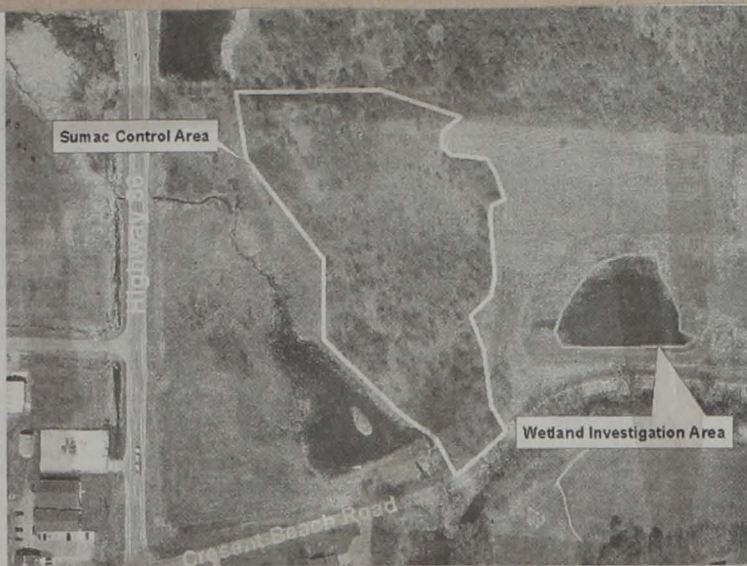
who want to get this off the ground and want to be an active participant like they have."

The first meeting, held Sept. 7, had about 25 people in attendance. Of those 20 people, 15 stepped for-

SILVER

continued on page 2A

Jan 18 - 2007



Feb 14 - 2007

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gull Point restoration continues

The restoration work on the Gull Point State Park addition continues this spring with some woody invasive species control and an investigation into better wetland restoration.

In the late summer of 2001, local residents worked with the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and the Iowa DNR to raise money to add 30 acres of land to the Gull Point State Park. The land owner had plans to sub-divide the 30-acres adjoining the state park into 11 single family lots. By December of 2001 a local group led by Irving Jensen and the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation donated the land to the State of Iowa. Now the former crop ground has been restored to native prairie and two wetlands, with more to come in 2007.

Part of the original plan was to remove the invasive woody plants from the site. This primarily consists of sumac, a shrubby plant that is native to the United States but

that is invasive to the prairie. Sumac has a beautiful deep red leaf in the fall but as a pioneering plant for the forest it slowly crowds out the native prairie. If this plant is allowed to go without control, it would eventually take over the prairie and the prairie would be replaced by a forest.

To keep the prairie, the control of the sumac is vital. Controlling the sumac will take several years but the first steps to preserve the prairie will start in 2007. Initially the sumac will be cut down, ground up and left to decompose. Following this a chemical treatment of the area will be completed in the fall on new sprouting sumac shoots. The Iowa DNR will be very selective in the type of herbicides used, due to the proximity of the wetland.

The second part of the work to be completed this year is to look at improving the wetland restoration on the western wetland. This wetland restoration is not hold-

ing water as well as could be expected, so a soils investigation will be completed this spring by Natural Resources Conservation Service. The findings by the soil scientist will help the Iowa DNR potentially increase the size of the wetland and make it so it will hold water longer through the summer. The soils work will begin shortly after the frost is out of the ground. The wetland east of this area holds water well into the summer and usually can be found with wood ducks, mallards and teal feeding and swimming.

The Gull Point State Park addition project has protected water quality, added land to a wonderful, existing state park and restored wetland and native prairie for all to enjoy. The positive progress of this project is visible and with continued improvements over the next few years to control the invasive woody plants and possible improvements to the restored wetlands will help sustain this great project.

BY RANDY M. CAUTHRON
MANAGING EDITOR

In its 23rd year, the Northwest Iowa Ag Outlook Conference and Trade Show continued to offer top level speakers in the agriculture industry, top vendors with a variety of services and equipment, and drew a sizable audience to the Clay County Regional Events Center.



Feb 28 - 2007

AG

continued on page 2A

SOME ATTENTION: David Kruse is excited about biofuels and agriculture and investment. We don't spend our time talking about political positions. We talk about what's best for the future.

He is putting together a 99 county tour with listening sessions at each stop that will continue over the course of the next year.

"It's all so intense. There's 48 hours worth of work to do in a 24 hour day."

He did note that in 2006, 70 percent of all gas sold in Iowa was 10 percent ethanol, and that E-85 use had tripled but was still not a huge number.

With the new developments in farming, Northey stressed the need to steer young people to start-up farming. "If we can't do it now, we're never going to be able to do it... That doesn't mean it's going to be easy."

Local favorite, columnist and radio agriculture broadcaster David Kruse with CommStock Investments got the morning going with a focus on alternative fuel opportunities in Iowa.

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amazing time."

SECRETARY OF AG - BILL NORTHY

Environmental Pro representatives rev source water plan

On Jan. 23, John Askew, Regional Administrator of EPA Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska) was in Milford to witness the public's response to the report presented by the Source Water Action Team (SWAT) and congratulate the Source Water Action Team on putting together the first Source Water Action Plans in the Region 7 of the EPA.

This is a coordinated effort between all the drinking water supplies - Central Water System, Milford Municipal Utilities, and the Cities of Spirit Lake and Wahpeton - that draw water from the Iowa Great Lakes to create a plan to protect water quality for drinking water pur-

poses. The group that created the plan represented the local agricultural and urban areas, local education youth, local business, and state and federal organizations such as the Iowa DNR and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Over several months, this group of broad ranged expertise looked at all potential concerns for water quality and devised a plan to eliminate or limit impacts to water quality. The Source Water Action Plan, presented to the public for comment and now approved by the public, will allow the group of volunteers to move forward with the protection of drinking water with the support of the local

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Iowa's Secretary of Ag

from CRP land that will see be available. Kruse estimated that 7.1 acres of CRP land are suitable for the commodity within corn growing states.

He encouraged farmers to build bins not buildings, suggesting a record number of livestock producers get 12 month coverage purchasing physical control of corn inventory.

Kruse also informed his audience a dramatic change is coming. "Very shortly you will call the elevator and tell them what the basis is. You the farmer are going to be in charge of the basis. You are going to have more leverage than you ever dreamed of."

Katie Hadenfeldt, senior business manager of biofuels for Union Pacific Railroad, headquartered in Omaha, Neb. discussed the importance of transportation with regards to the changing world of agriculture.

Union Pacific, which operates predominantly in a 23 state area west of the Mississippi River, is the regarded as the largest railroad in the country.

Hadenfeldt told her audience, "If



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Ag Outlook continues to grow

Secretary of Ag Northey makes midday appearance

BY RANDY M. CAUTHRON
MANAGING EDITOR

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AG

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about biofuels and agriculture and investment. We don't spend our time talking about political positions. We talk about what's best for Iowa. It's all pretty positive.

He continued, "We're seeing more interest in agriculture by folks that are not traditionally agriculture legislators. There is way more discussion about agriculture at this point in the session. That's because they can see the big picture. There are so many things happening in agriculture. It hasn't always been that way."

"It's a great time in agriculture. An amazing time."

Addressing the dynamics of \$4 corn, Northey said, "It's a heck of a lot better than the 1980's when you couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. Now we don't know which light to grab for."

Northey talking about the new programs being offered for young agriculture students and professionals, remarked, "It's hard to

remember what agriculture used to be like. These kids have always heard about ethanol. They've known about personal computers."

Northey noted that the next four months will probably be his most intense in the next four years.

He is putting together a 99 county tour with listening sessions at each stop that will continue over the course of the next year.

"It's all so intense. There's 48 hours worth of work to do in a 24 hour day."

He did note that in 2006, 70 percent of all gas sold in Iowa was 10 percent ethanol, and that E-85 use had tripled but was still not a huge number.

With the new developments in farming, Northey stressed the need to steer young people to start-up farming. "If we can't do it now, we're never going to be able to do it... That doesn't mean it's going to be easy."

Local favorite, columnist and radio agriculture broadcaster David Kruse with CommStock Investments got the morning going with a focus on alternative fuel opportunities in Iowa.

"I've never talked to a Wall Street person that's liked ethanol," Kruse said. "But it seems to be doing well without Wall Street's blessing."

The growing demand however is currently exceeding production, a problem that Kruse said is going to need to be corrected by devoting more time and acres to corn production. "The rally we've seen in the corn industry is designed to do one thing - expand production."

Kruse explained that just to get back to the level we were at last year, "It's going to take a record expansion that's never before been seen."

In the next year, 12 million additional acres of corn in the growing region needs to be created. That number needs to increase to 22 million acres by 2012 based on Kruse's

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SECRETARY OF AG - BILL NORTHEY

figures.

"Soybean prices have been lagging, but when we pull these acres for corn, some of it's going to come from soybeans. You can't take 22 million acres for corn without affecting soybeans."

Kruse stressed patience. "You're not going to have \$9 or \$10 beans tomorrow, but ultimately..."

He noted that in Iowa, 54 percent is the corn to soybean ratio. "We're best at corn. Let Brazil have the soybeans."

Kruse suggested that if farmers would move from a corn-to-soybean rotation, to a corn-corn-soybean rotation instead - that would create an additional 17 million acres alone. That would leave five million acres to be located before 2012.

Some of those acres could come

poses. The group that created the plan represented the local agricultural and urban areas, local education youth, local business, and state and federal organizations such as the Iowa DNR and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Over several months, this group of broad ranged expertise looked at all potential concerns for water quality and devised a plan to eliminate or limit impacts to water quality. The Source Water Action Plan, presented to the public for comment and now approved by the public, will allow the group of volunteers to move forward with the protection of drinking water with the support of the local

citizenry and should assist in attaining State and Federal grants.

John Askew was very pleased with the cooperation of the group and the volunteered time and efforts to protect water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes.

"What this group has done is now going to be a national model for protecting source water," said Askew. During a tour around the Iowa Great Lakes, Askew was able to reminisce about time spent in the area. He is a sixth generation farmer in Fremont County Iowa and visited the Iowa Great Lakes in the past.

Also present at the meeting were two representatives from Senator Steve Kings office.

Environmental Protection representatives review source water plan

Feb 14 - 2007



Phyllis Nielsen (right), Dickinson County Farm Bureau voting delegate, visited with Sen. David Johnson (left) during the IFBF Policy Information Conference on Feb. 26. A reception was held for the legislators at Embassy Suites in Des Moines. Dickinson County's Representative Mike May also attended the reception. The county Farm Bureau officers discussed Farm Bureau policy and current legislative issues with their representatives.

Nielsen reports from Policy Information Conference

"It was a very informative conference," said Phyllis Nielsen, Dickinson County Farm Bureau's voting delegate, as she spoke of the Policy Information Conference that was held on Feb. 26 and 27.

Of special interest to her was the session on water, presented by Robert Libra, state geologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. He reported that the last water plan for the state was written in 1978 with an update in 1985. He said that the statistics used today are outdated where water quality is concerned. No one really knows the quality of the water because there is not near

enough uniform information to be conclusive.

Nielsen said that Joe Johnson of IFBF gave a legislative update and an economist from Kansas spoke about economics and the Farm Bill. There was discussion on the price of corn and the effect on other segments of agriculture but the bottom line was that there will be adjustments made and all segments will adjust accordingly.

Many of the issues discussed by the county Farm Bureau representatives will appear in the 2007 opinionnaire that will come out early this summer.

March 14 2007

SWCD reviews development grants

April 18 2007

The reviews of the applications submitted by Soil and Water Conservation Districts for watershed protection and water quality project development grants for 1st Quarter 2007 have now been completed. Reviewers of the applications included agriculture, environmental, and conservation stakeholder organizations, as well as Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) and Division of Soil Conservation (DSC).

The time needed for completion of the review process and announcement of the applications selected has been extended because this round of development grants will also roll out the initial implementation of the new watershed planning protocol and optional use of watershed planning personnel. The goal in rolling out those

new procedures has been to give adequate planning and development here in the central office to try to minimize uncertainties and obstacles at the SWCD level in implementing these new procedures.

Proposals involving MS4 cities regulated under storm water permits are being held for further evaluations by DNR to determine what \$319 funding constraints by Environmental Protection Agency apply to assisting MS4 cities to meet storm water permit requirements.

DSC and DNR are sharing the costs of development grant planning. From the reviewers' input, DSC and DNR have selected the proposals to move forward towards funding of planning and development for a future implementation project. The following applicants are being invited to develop and submit a scope of work and budget:

• Tete Des Morts Watershed,

Jackson SWCD, Brooke Creek Watershed, Buena Vista SWCD

• Lake Geode Watershed, Des Moines SWCD, Yellow River Watershed, Winneshiek SWCD

• Compentine Creek Watershed, Marion SWCD, Silver Lake Watershed, Dickinson SWCD

• Williamson Pond Watershed, Lucas SWCD

These SWCDs will be contacted by the regional coordinator to schedule a meeting to develop the scope of work and budget for your development grant, that will then be submitted for funding. Those SWCDs whose applications were not selected are encouraged to also work with the regional coordinator to refine and revise the application for future rounds of development grant awards, now open for submittal on a continuous basis and awarded each quarter.



Lakes area engineers Brad Beck (left) and Jeff Rose (right) received honorable mention honors for their low impact development work at the Iowa Stormwater Conference. Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Anderson is pictured center.



Lakes area developer August (Auggie) Scheppmann was recently honored at the Iowa Stormwater Conference for his outstanding performance related to protecting and improving urban water quality. Scheppmann (left) is pictured here with Clean Water Alliance Coordinator Steve Anderson.



Members of the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District also received an outstanding performance award for the organization's promotion of low impact development practices.

March 14, 2007

Scheppmann, SWCD honored for LID efforts

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

It was only a few years ago when Lakes area residents became familiar with the terminology surrounding low impact development. It didn't take long for area developers, organizations and engineers to take the lead statewide with

the water quality initiatives.

This month, the efforts of local developers, organizations and engineers were recognized at the 2007 Iowa Stormwater Conference in Altoona, hosted by the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities.

Lakes area developer August (Auggie) Scheppmann was honored for his outstanding

performance related to protecting and improving urban water quality. A longtime developer in Dickinson County, Scheppmann was the first developer to look at storm water not as waste but as a valuable resource. In his first project at the Spirit Lake Industrial Park, Scheppmann used several ponds to hold storm water

run-off. Low impact development practices were also used when Scheppmann developed Silver Shores in Lake Park and his Southern Glen development.

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District also received an outstanding performance honor at the conference for being

a leader in promoting low impact development practices. In 2004 and 2005, they conducted monthly seminars educating the professionals, officials, community leaders and developers in low impact development strategies.

Dickinson County engineers were also honored. Brad Beck of Beck Engineering received

recognition for his work with Matthew Fair Jones, Fair Design LLC, for innovative ecological work done on the parking lot at the Arnolds Park Amusement Park. Jeff Rose of Jacobson-Westergard Associates, Inc. was recognized for his work with bioretention demonstrations at the City of Arnolds Park's baseball fields.

FAITH

ATTENDING CHURCH

Seifried: Why don't people attend church?. PAGE 3B

AUBREY LAFOY

DOWN MEMORY LANE

Look back at the year 1907. PAGE 4B

Earth Day celebrates Iowa Lakes ecology

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

In the Lakes area, where low impact development is becoming common vocabulary and water quality is at the top of the priority list, residents are invited to celebrate ecology this weekend at the annual Earth Day celebration on Saturday, April 21.

"We are a county that is environmentally conscious," said Dickinson County Naturalist Barbara Tagami. "We are striving to keep our water quality in the best shape that we possibly can. That's extremely important. Residents in this county are also interested in keeping the air quality and the soil quality environmentally sound. This county really practices good stewardship of land, air and water."

The 2007 Earth Day celebration is a full day affair, sponsored by the Dickinson County Conservation Board and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

"During the day, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., we're going to have the fifth annual environmental learning fair," said Tagami.

The fair includes an environmental lecture series, children's activities and informational displays.

The lecture series features Mark Muller speaking on Tall Grass Revival, Anita O'Gara discussing Angler's Bay and other Iowa Natural Heritage projects, Pat Schlarbaum talking about Osprey, and Ross Dirks giving a demonstration about fascinating birds of prey.



FILE PHOTO

EARTH

continued on page 2B

The 2007 Earth Day celebration is a full day affair, sponsored by the Dickinson County Conservation Board and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

EARTH DAY 2007

Saturday, April 21, 2007

Schedule of Events

**Earth Day Environmental
Learning Fair**

Sponsored by the Dickinson

Children's Activities

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Recycle Smiley
Train; Al Buseman, sponsored by
Iowa Landfill Commission
1 p.m. Frog Hike, Jane



April 25 2007

Attorney General alleges pollution violations by Bridges Bay construction

Attorney General Tom Miller filed an environmental enforcement lawsuit last Wednesday alleging water pollution control violations and other violations by Bridges Bay Resort, a new vacation resort on the south shore of East Lake Okoboji in northwest Iowa. Bridges Bay has a hotel, water park, and condominium housing on about 20 acres of land.

"East Okoboji is officially and fittingly designated a 'high-quality water resource' of the state," Miller said. "We all must protect such precious resources."

The lawsuit alleges that during construction and development of the resort, Bridges Bay illegally discharged sediment on repeated occasions into East Okoboji Lake and caused water quality violations. On one occasion, for example, the suit says Department of Natural Resources officials found sediment discharging "directly to the lake" after a rainfall and "observed a large cloud of chocolate-colored water in East Okoboji Lake in front of the development."

The lawsuit also says the construction site failed to comply with the terms of its permit for controlling storm-water discharges, and failed to implement its pollution prevention plan and illegally burned construction wastes at the site. Last June, DNR officials observed a large pile of construction wastes being burned, including lumber, drywall, insulation and plastic, according to the suit.

The suit was filed in Dickinson County District Court in Spirit Lake. It asks the Court to prohibit further violations and to assess civil penalties up to \$5,000 per day per violation for the alleged water pollution violations and up to \$10,000 per day for the alleged air quality violation.

LID seminar works to improve water quality, shoreline

Aug. 15-07

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

As a follow-up to a series of low impact development (LID) workshops held in 2004-2005, the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District will be presenting a two-day seminar on urban conservation for Iowa lakes Aug. 23-24 at the Pavilion in Arnolds Park.

"We've got a LID task force...that keeps LID in the forefront," said Steve Anderson, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator.

Events kick off Thursday afternoon with an interactive display project entitled "How to Build a Rain Garden in a Day," taking place at Iowa Lakeside Laboratory.

"There's a spot at the Waitt Lab where we're going to build a 100 square-foot rain garden," said Anderson. "It's in an area where there's water flow and drainage work has been done, but more is needed. Participants will be able to help and get a better idea of how rain gar-

dens are built."

Anderson estimated the process to take approximately two hours. Native prairie grasses will come from The Prairie Flower, a native seed and plant nursery and dealer near Spencer.

Registration will follow from 6:30-7 p.m. at the Pavilion. The first of five presentations is slated for 7 p.m. on LID 101 with Wayne Petersen, an urban conservationist with the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

"Wayne has been the key guy that's helped us out," said Anderson. "We wanted him to kick this (seminar) off."

Petersen will give a virtual tour of LID sites throughout Iowa, including those in the Iowa Great Lakes area. A reception will follow his presentation on the Queen II excursion boat for a sunset cruise with appetizers from Yesterday's restaurant.

LID

continued on page 2

will present on the Iowa Urban Conservation Program.

PHOTO BY CAROLINE RUSK - DCN STAFF
Venture capitalist John

Lake associations meet to discuss common goals, hear from DNR director

Aug. 24-07

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Hundreds of individuals representing several different lakes organizations gathered together for one mission Saturday morning at the Dickinson County Expo Building. That mission - to continue preserving the quality of the Iowa Great Lakes.

The first joint meeting of the Dickinson County lake protective associations was held at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 25 at the Expo Building. Leaders and members of six different lake protective associations gathered together to share concerns and to hear from Rich Leopold, director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and newly appointed Water Resource Director Bill Ehm.

"This is a great beginning to what is hoped to be an annual event for the Inter Lakes Associations," said Steve Anderson, Coordinator of the Clean Water Alliance and meeting coordinator. "The six lake associations in Dickinson County work to protect the water quality of these state resources (Iowa Great Lakes). To have the top state environmental officials answer the Inter Lakes Association questions and to take questions from the public will strengthen the Inter Lakes Association and strengthen the collaboration between the DNR and each lake association."

After introductions, the presidents of each lake association spoke briefly about their efforts and concerns relating to water quality. Common concerns were lake nutrient levels, algae blooms, natural habitat, invasive species, and funding resources.



PHOTO BY ANITRA WOLF - DCN STAFF

Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Rich Leopold (front) spoke to members of Dickinson County lake protective associations at a joint meeting Saturday morning at the Expo Building. Steve Anderson (back), Clean Water Alliance Coordinator, facilitated the meeting.

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's speech, he took questions ience before djourned. By a s, lake associa-s agreed that was beneficial y would like me an annual

Meeting attendees also celebrated the successful campaign to save Anglers Bay, an environmentally valuable area of bulrushes on Big Spirit Lake.

"We needed to raise \$6.65 million," said Anderson. "I believe we have just \$50,000 left."

DNR

continued on page 2A

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DNR

continued on page 2A

DNR:

continued from page 1A

After hearing from the six associations, Iowa DNR director Rich Leopold took the floor to discuss issues affecting the Iowa Great Lakes region. Leopold has direct ties to the area and finds himself familiar with many local concerns.

Leopold touched on many issues, including funding for natural resources, local control, invasive species, lake regulations, Lakeside Labs and impaired waters.

Leopold says he sees the

state government making an effort to provide sustainable funding for natural resources in the near future. A diverse committee has been working for months.

On several issues, including boat size regulations and impaired water repairs, Leopold pointed out the need for local involvement and social acceptance.

Bill Ehm, Water Resource Director, focused on water quality following Leopold's speech, saying the DNR and lakes associations need to look at three things regarding water quality: (1) technology, (2) finances, and (3) people to be involved.

Ehm pointed out that the

DNR's role is often in providing the technology for water quality projects. Funding can come from either government or local sources, and the thrust of any project comes from individuals wanting to make it happen.

"It's gotta happen locally," said Ehm. "The local champions are what really make things happen."

After Ehm's speech, he and Leopold took questions from the audience before the meeting adjourned. By a raise of hands, lake association members agreed that the meeting was beneficial and that they would like to see it become an annual event.

LID: Seminar scheduled

continued from page 1A

Friday events lead off at 8 a.m. with a continental breakfast and introduction. Beginning at 8:30 will be a presentation by Gary Oberts of Emmons and Olivier Resources, a leading environmental consulting firm in Minnesota, on cold weather runoff management and weather change. Oberts has published several articles on stormwater runoff and LID impact for climate change and global warming as well as presented at many LID conferences worldwide.

Following a short break, Jennifer Hildebrand of Weis Builders will speak on a contractor's view of erosion control.

Over lunch, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey will present on the Iowa Urban Conservation Program.

"There's been a push in the past to have an urban conservation program in Iowa," Anderson explained. "This last year is started gaining speed."

George Hild of Hild and Associates, growers and wholesalers of native prairie and wetland plants, will speak on alternative shoreline stabilization at 12:15 p.m. Many shoreline owners in the Lakes area currently use a 'rip-rap' system with large blocks of concrete and stones to prevent erosion, which Anderson believes only delays the inevitable.

"It's an old practice that's not a permanent fix," he said. "(Rip-rap) isn't the best, but right now it's one of the most used."

Because seasonal freez-

ing and melting slowly drags large rocks and cement blocks toward the center of the lake, Anderson recommends utilizing a system made of a 12-inch biodegradable compost sock with cord grass and natural plants.

Anderson recalled the late Queen II Captain Steve Kennedy telling him that the only shoreline on West Okoboji Lake that held during the infamous flood of 1993 was a parcel of land in Echo Bay with native plants lining the water.

"It was the only bank that held in '93," said Anderson. "Native prairie held up versus all the landscaping everyone else did."

The final event of this year's urban conservation seminar will be a bus tour of various LID sites around Dickinson County, including the baseball diamond in Arnolds Park, private residences, sites in Wahpeton, Lakeside Laboratory and others.

"Anyone interested in water quality, protecting the lakes or are concerned about development should attend this seminar," Anderson encouraged.

The Urban Conservation for Iowa Lakes Seminar is sponsored by the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District, East Okoboji Lake Improvement Corporation, Okoboji Protective Association, Iowa State University Extension (Dickinson County), EPA 319 Program, Watershed Improvement Board, Yesterday's Restaurant and Triggs Bay Resort.

Those interested in attending the urban conservation seminar should contact Steve Anderson or Maxine Butler at the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District office by calling (712) 336-3782, ext. 3. Cost for the seminar is \$25 which includes appetizers, a ride on the Queen II, light breakfast and lunch on Friday as well as a bus tour.

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links to the local DNRs, employment opportunities, schools, medical facilities and much more to give you a feel for the Okoboji area and who we are. **RE/MAX** - the real estate leader in the Iowa Great Lakes and around the world.

AMITY HOME IN EAST

richen, plenty of cupboards



PHOTO BY ANITRA WOLF • DCN STAFF
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey announced last week that the Department of Agriculture will be hiring four new urban conservationists.

Northey announces new program to improve water quality

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey was in Spirit Lake Friday to announce that the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will hire four new conservationists to focus on a new urban conservation program. The Department's Soil Conservation Division will provide one year's funding to the West Pottawattamie, Dickinson, Johnson and Polk Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

NORTHEY
 continued on page 2/

BY ANITRA WOLF
 MANAGING EDITOR

With his parents, wife and daughter in attendance last Friday, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture came home to Spirit Lake for a town meeting last Friday morning at the Iowa State Extension office.

Northey said the Spirit Lake stop was the 98th stop in his Grassleyesque tour of Iowa. He will make the 99th stop before the end of the year and will begin his tour again in 2008.

"It's kinda hard to believe it's been a year since I took office," said Northey. "I want to start off by saying thank you. Thank you for the chance to be your Secretary of Agriculture."

Northey pointed out that his upbringing in the Lakes area have played a key role in his duties with the Department of Agriculture, especially in the areas of water quality and soil conservation.

"Anything good I learned, I

learned here," joked Northey. "The other stuff, I got somewhere else."

Northey opened the meeting by explaining the role of the Department of Agriculture in the state.

"We have 400 employees and 200 of them are in soil conservation," Northey said. He touted a new program dealing with urban conservation, which includes a conservationist working in Dickinson County.

Northey then explained that the other half of the department deals with protection and regulatory activities, including weights and measures, several bureaus, and a state veterinarian, entomologist, climatologist and horticulturist.

"There are so many pieces of agriculture," said Northey. "It's really an interesting time in ag. There's a lot going on."

NORTHEY

Clean Water Alliance hosts meetings

The Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance will be holding a series of three meetings beginning at 5 p.m. on Oct. 4 in the Milford Community Room. The meetings are the 319 Annual Review, Source Water Action Team and the Clean Water Alliance Quarterly Meeting.

The first at 5 p.m. will be the annual review of the 319 grant received by the Dickinson County SWCD. This grant requires an annual review of the project that is in process. The grant received by the Dickinson County SWCD is to demonstrate Low Impact Development practices in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed.

Following the annual review for the 319 project, there will be a Source Water Action Meeting. This will be to discuss the on going work of the Source Water Action Plan. The

Source Water Action Plan is the an approved plan by EPA for the protection of drinking water sources in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed.

After the SWAT Meeting there will be a quick Clean Water Alliance meeting to for partners to discuss actives and projects in Dickinson County.

The first meeting is expected to last about 30 minuets with questions. The SWAT meeting will start around 5:30 p.m. and is planned to be over around 6:15 p.m. The Clean Water Alliance Meeting will follow that and is expected to end around 7 p.m.

• Those with questions may contact Steve Anderson (712) 336-3782 x 3.

October '07
 29

Lakes Regional Healthcare will host a Childbirth Education class for expectant mothers and her support person from 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26. Fourth of six sessions. Cost is \$30 per couple. Scholarships are available. Call (712) 336-1230 extension 1129 or visit www.lakeshealth.org to register. That same evening, a childbirth refresher course will be held from 7-9 p.m. Second of two sessions. Cost is \$10 per couple. Scholarships are available. Call (712) 336-1230 extension 1129 or visit www.lakeshealth.org to register.

On Wednesday, Sept. 26 interested community members are invited to meet at Mill Creek Restaurant in Milford for an informal gathering at 5 p.m. Main topics will be revitalizing downtown Milford and affordable housing. Call (712) 338-2625 for more information.

A Sports Injury Clinic for middle school, high school, and college athletes with acute sports injuries, provided by orthopedic surgeon John Leupold, M.D. will be held beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 29 at the orthopaedic clinic, Lakes Regional Healthcare, located on the west side of the hospital's second floor, Highway 1 South, Spirit Lake. Free. No appointment or physician referrals necessary. Athletes under age 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Call (712) 336-8708 on weekdays for more information.

University of Okoboji Oktoberfest Bike Ride will be held on Saturday, Sept. 29.

Sherburn Lake Promenaders Square Dance Club will be dancing Saturday, Sept. 29, Sherburn Elementary School. Rounds will

Water Quality Commission

Northey discusses renewable energy, animal confinement odor solutions

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ber. The Water Quality Commission received requests for \$260,000 in grants. The first time the Water Quality Commission will meet to discuss these requests is on Oct. 22 at the Arnolds Park

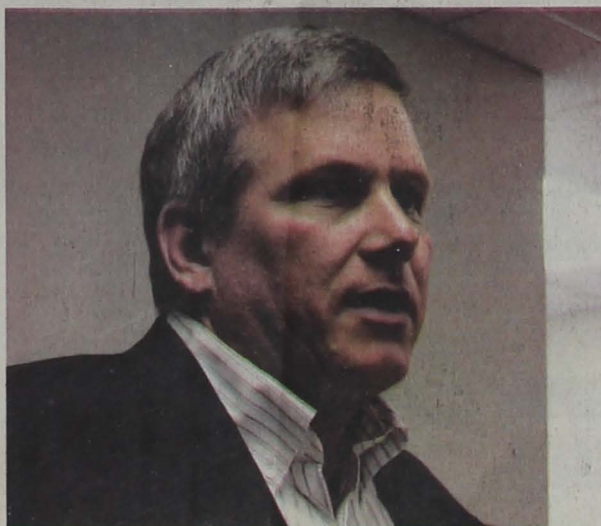


PHOTO BY ANITRA WOLF • DCN STAFF

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey held a town meeting in Spirit Lake last Friday. Northey discussed the role of the department and took questions from those in attendance.

levels w

ry important." State Rep. Mike Meyer said for his work on the NR and Iowa State University hog confinement issues, three groups presented to assist with the issue. In some ways, we've been working on this for the last 30 years for the magic pixy dust of the issue and make manure management more," said Northey. The Secretary of

OPEN HOUSE
SUN., Sept. 2nd, 3:00-5:00 PM
GORGEOUS LOCATION ON THE
POD, late access with front porch, swim-
pool, 2 BR, 2 BATH, 2nd floor, 2nd floor
Entrance, East (Oak)
#2286 DIRECTIONS
A more Large garage
3 BR, 1 1/2 BATH, 1
OKOBOJI, Great Lake
15220 Land.
fireplace, cathedral ceilings and beautiful
views, 3rd floor, 2nd floor, 2nd floor, 2nd floor
DIRECTIONS: \$205,000 Home by: Matt #2295
SUN., Sept. 2nd, 3:00-5:00 PM

NORTHEY:

continued from page 1A

"It's important that individuals in town and on the farm are both doing everything they can to protect the state's water supply," Northey said. "Often times our urban storm water system take water directly from the streets to our rivers, lakes and streams. While it's important that we effectively get our water off our roadways and keep it out of our basements, the current system often carries too many pollutants directly into our waterways."

The new conservationists will be able to provide information and technical assistance on soil and water conservation methods to land development professionals, city officials, government agencies and private landowners.

Funds from the Resource Enhancement and Protection program will fund the positions and are designed to supplement the work cur-

rently being done in the 100 soil and water conservation districts across the state that provide information and technical assistance to rural landowners.

While the new employees will be located in the rapidly developing areas around Council Bluffs, the Iowa Great Lakes, Iowa City and Des Moines, they will provide expertise to communities across the state.

"Many rapidly growing communities and the developers working there have an interest in making the investment necessary to improve water quality, but don't necessarily have the expertise. This initiative is not an effort to regulate, but is designed to provide the assistance communities need to include water quality improvement projects from the very beginning in new developments," Northey said.

The program is designed to offer local government more tools for addressing urban conservation questions and concerns. Each of the four pilot projects will respond to requests for information and

assistance, conduct training, and establish demonstration projects to showcase innovative and proven conservation systems.

As part of the soil and water conservation district, project coordinators will be able to work with both private and public landowners when dealing with watersheds that have both rural and urban land uses. In many areas, efforts are needed to protect resources ahead of development to minimize the impact on water quality and local infrastructure systems.

The projects will also promote better use of available soil survey information, and will encourage consideration of alternatives that feature reduced runoff, lower impact development, and higher priority on greenbelts, trails, stream buffers, and open space.

"Soil and water districts have the responsibility for protecting natural resources in all areas of the state, rural and urban alike," Northey said. "We hope this is just the beginning of efforts to expand our efforts to assist urban areas."

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Quality Commission to review applications

10-10-07

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commissions application deadline was on Oct. 1, 2007. The Water Quality Commission a group that was created through a 28-E agreement between all the cities in Dickinson County and the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors creates up to \$200,000 available for water quality projects within Dickinson County Lakes.

This round of applications started at the beginning of August and went through

the first of October. The Water Quality Commission has received requests for \$260,000 from six applications. The first time the Water Quality Commission will meet to discuss these applications is Oct. 22 at the Arnolds Park City Hall.



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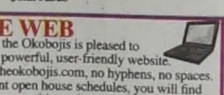
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RE/MAX

NORTHEY: Iowa to reach new levels w

continued from page 1A

Northey touched on the Iowa Power Fund, which is meant to bring renewable energy to a whole new level in the state.

"Ethanol initially started us down this road, but it's going to be so much more," Northey said. "One of the amazing things this year is that we have these kinds of [corn] prices with a crop... We have had these prices, but no crop."

Northey also pointed out the potential for wind power and

renewable fuels in the state.

After describing the role of the department, Northey took questions from his audience. Barb Mendenhall asked how much Northey gets to interface with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and its director Rich Leopold.

"By design we want to sit down every two weeks and talk," said Northey. "We try to get together at least once a month. It's very

very important."

State Rep. Mike Ma Northey for his work with DNR and Iowa State University. The three groups pr science to assist with "In some ways, we've been the last 30 years for put magic pixy dust o lem and make manu anymore," said Northey. The Secretary of

Water Quality Commission approves proposed proje

On Oct. 22, 2007 the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission met to approve projects for the 2009 fiscal year. The Water Quality Commission is a group created by a 28-E agreement to fund project that will protect the water quality of Dickinson County Lakes. The Water Quality Commission can approve up to \$200,000 annually for projects. This year they received six applications requesting a total of \$260,000. The 18 Commissioners rank the projects and then those rankings are compiled to give an overall ranking. The Commission's meeting last Monday discussed the projects, the ranking process and approved to fund the projects as ranked until they met their budget.

The first project funded was the East Okoboji Beach Road

and Drainage Reconstruction Project. The project will pay for the planning to design a low impact drainage plan for East Okoboji Beach Area. The East Okoboji Beach area is proposed to have new hard surface streets in the next few years. These impervious surfaces would create more water runoff and pollutants going into East Okoboji Lake. This project will design the drainage to minimize the water quality impacts when the new streets and drainage is installed.

The second project funded was for the Implementation of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Assessment. The assessment that has been on going in the Iowa Great Lakes over the last two years will be completed in April of 2008. This assessment is to give a working plan to address the

water quality concerns for the Iowa Great Lakes area. After the plan is completed the Dickinson County SWCD and others will be applying for state and federal grants that require local matching funds. This money will be used to do urban work according to the assessment and the Water Quality Commission funds will be used to bring in state and federal funds to protect the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed.

The third project was the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Protection Project. This is match money for the Iowa DNR to use with state and federal grants to protect pri-

ority wetland areas within the watersheds of Dickinson County Lakes.

Annually the commission sets aside money for the administration of the grant program for the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance. The Alliance works to coordinate, education and communicate water quality activities within Dickinson Counties Lake watersheds. The Clean Water Alliance Coordinator administers the funds for the Water Quality Commission.

The Water Quality Commission has one grant process annually. The next round of grants will be avail-

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This year match was for ever dollar approved locally \$13.5 dollars were matched. Over the last 8 years the Water Quality

Ethanol plant plan to discharge water appear safe Water expert urges watchful eye on surrounding environment

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

Concerned citizens have raised an alarm to a local ethanol plant's intention of releasing above-normal temperature water into the Des Moines River in Emmet County.

An informational meeting held last Thursday in Estherville between plant officials and the public eased minds, explaining the process to interested parties.

"We have a permit [from the Department of Natural Resources]

that allows us to discharge up to 91 degree water, but the actual temperature is anywhere from 60-75 degrees," said Doug Archer, general manager of the Green Plains Renewable Energy, Inc. ethanol plant located near Superior. "Plant production is scheduled for March 3."

Ethanol, which Green Plains produces from corn, is a high-octane fuel that is blended with gasoline to provide superior engine performance as well as help to reduce tailpipe and greenhouse gas emissions

that contribute to global warming. The plant is expected to produce 51 million gallons of ethanol per year once fully operational.

"The meeting with the public was to familiarize them with the process and with the plant itself," Archer said. "We wanted to engage the public with any concerns. Water temperature was one concern, the effect of the water on the river and the wildlife around the river [was another worry], and the effect of that on the public to be able to use the river for [recreational purposes

was another concern.]"

Archer said the water set to be discharged is used for cooling purposes only and does not come into contact with anything but the pipes it is sent through.

"This is not waste water being discharged," he explained. "We have spent almost \$4 million developing a water treatment process... The water will have gone through

ETHANOL

continued on page 3A

Anderson accepts position as urban conservationist



The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District recently announced that Steve Anderson has accepted the position of Urban Conservationist. Anderson is moving from the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance position to the Urban Conservation position. Both positions are located in the office of the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District.

"I'm glad that I don't have to leave Dickinson County, but I'm really excited to extend the water quality work that we're doing in Dickinson County to the surrounding communities," said Anderson. "I am truly blessed with all the local support and enthusiasm to get projects for the protection of lakes in Dickinson County completed. I look forward to continued work with you in this new position."

The Urban Conservationist position was one of four created by Iowa Secretary of

Agriculture Bill Northey last summer to start to meet the soil and water concerns of the urban areas of Iowa. The position is funded through Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and will be located in the Dickinson County USDA Service Center. This Urban Conservationist position is to work in Dickinson County 70 percent of the time with 30 percent dedicated to work with communities outside of Dickinson County.

Within Dickinson County, Anderson will continue the urban conservation work by assisting landowners with site design and working with local communities on drainage issues and ordinance changes. The work outside of the county will be similar with focus on cities and counties close to Dickinson such as Clay, Emmet, Palo Alto, Buena Vista and Osceola, but may include counties as well. Any community want-

ing assistance with Urban Conservation work can contact Anderson at (712) 336-3782 ext. 3.

As for the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance, the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District will be taking application to fill this position. The Clean Water Alliance Coordinator is responsible for coordination, communication and education of water quality activities in the lake watersheds of Dickinson County. This position also administers the funds for the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission along with other duties.

"I am grateful for all the people who are the Clean Water Alliance and have made this position such a success," said Anderson. "Many communities look to Dickinson County for what can be done for environmental protection and the Clean Water Alliance is one entity in which people look at as a successful model."

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ETHANOL: Caution

continued from page 1A

a fairly extensive cleaning process [before it is discharged.]

According to Archer, studies have been conducted by the DNR indicating minimal impact on the river by water discharge. The DNR then sets ethanol and other plant requirements based on its findings.

A one million gallon man-made equalization pond is being constructed onsite to allow the water to cool to 60-75 degrees before its release, allowing the facility to operate in a continuous fashion.

"The only effect the discharge will have on the river is at and around the discharge point the river will stay open and not freeze over," Archer assured. "There's no contaminants added to the water... It'll be clean to the point where it's nearly potable."

Even with the general manager's confidence, Clean Water Coordinator Steve Anderson encourages the public to keep a watchful eye on the discharge site.

"The people of Estherville just need to watch what's happening," he said. "It's far

enough away that if something happened it might be hard to identify an issue."

Anderson toured the ethanol plant with representatives and doesn't believe there will be any issues with the water discharge.

"Water will be tested at the end of the pipe the day it begins flowing," he said. "There will be a water monitoring station onsite with testing once a week."

As long as water levels remain constant, Anderson believes there won't be any issues. A drought, however, could change things.

"I'm not sure what would happen in the event of a drought," he said. "There could be fish kills of quality issues... We're basically trying to look into a crystal ball."

Anderson noted Green Plains Renewable Energy's history in terms of environmental impact.

"Not all ethanol plants have a good track record, but most of them so," he said. "From what I've seen they've got a pretty good record compared to others."

Anderson accepts position as urban conservationist

Castillo-Alvarez guilty on murder, kidnapping charges

Clay County Deputies transport Juan Humberto Castillo-Alvarez to the Palo Alto County Courthouse for verdict on three charges Friday. The former Estherville restaurant owner was implicated in the disappearance and death of Sky Erickson in 1997.



Bill Northey announces new staff to focus on urban conservation

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey recently introduced five new Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship employees focused on urban conservation at an event at the Iowa Capitol. The new field staff are based in Polk, Pottawattamie, Johnson and Dickinson Counties.

Northey also recognized the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District for receiving the Urban, Community and Coastal Resources Excellence Award from the National Association Conservation Districts for their urban conservation work.

"Unfortunately, in the past management of storm water in our urban areas have only

focused on preventing flooding, not protecting water quality," Northey said. "New technologies and strategies allow us to do both. These new employees will help communities install new systems and retrofit existing infrastructure in a way that will move the water off our streets while keeping soil and pollutants out of our waterways."

The urban conservationists will provide information and technical assistance on soil and water conservation methods in towns and cities to land development professionals, city officials, government agencies and private landowners.

While located in rapidly developing communities, the conservationists will provide

expertise to communities across the state. And, should any new funds become available, additional staff could be hired to focus on additional communities.

"Our goal is to have urban and rural areas working together to protect our soil and improve water quality in the state," Northey said. "The Department has years of experience working with farmers and believe this is just the beginning of efforts to assist urban areas."

Steve Anderson is the Urban Conservationist for Dickinson County in Northwest Iowa. Anderson has extensive professional and volunteer experience working in the Iowa Great Lakes area to protect

water quality and promote "low-impact development" in the area.

Most recently he was the coordinator of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance. In this position he worked with over 40 conservation groups in Iowa and Minnesota to protect water quality. He graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree in environmental science.

Other urban conservationists include Amy Bouska, Wayne Petersen, Richard Maaske and Jennifer Welch.

"These new staff members bring to the Department years of urban conservation experience and a deep passion to protecting water quality in the state," Northey said.

Input needed from residents on water quality issues

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

Even with area lakes, rivers and streams freezing over for the winter season, Dickinson County residents are being encouraged to keep water quality issues at the top of their lists by send the Iowa Department of Natural Resources information about how the Little Sioux River and Milford Creek are being used.

"The DNR wants to downgrade [classifications for] Milford Creek and the Little Sioux River. It's basically from the Silver Lake outlet to the west branch of the west fork of the Little Sioux River," said Steve Anderson, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator. "If you're fishing in them, if you're swimming in them, if you are canoeing, kayaking... Whatever you are doing on these streams they need to know so they have the tools to make the right decisions on what they are doing with stream classifications."

The DNR is currently conducting assessments and seeking information from the public to accurately determine how Iowa's rivers and streams are used. The federal Clean Water Act requires that states assume that all rivers and streams are used for swimming and other recreational activities that involve considerable contact with the water and the risk of ingesting with water. This type of

INPUT

New partnership to advance water quality in north-west Iowa

A new partnership to monitor water quality in Iowa's Great Lakes region will increase environmental testing and expand on-site educational opportunities at the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Regent Resource Center in Milford.

One of the nation's first biological field stations, Lakeside Laboratory is a 147-acre campus on the west shore of West Okoboji Lake that offers year-round research and educational programs with residential facilities. A new partnership between the University of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) will expand the use of the Lakeside Laboratory facilities for water quality analysis and monitoring.

Testing will be conducted in the Richard V. Bovbjerg Water Chemistry Laboratory in the Waitt Building, developed through funding from Friends of Lakeside Lab. Since its construction in 1968, the Waitt Building has hosted researchers who have conducted water testing and analysis on the Lakeside Laboratory campus and at Iowa State University. The facility provides students and learners of all ages with a teaching lab, a classroom and office space.

Peter van der Linden is the executive director of the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory. Lee Priell of the Hygienic Laboratory is the project manager for the new water analysis partnership. The UHL will provide administrative support for the endeavor and laboratory staff stationed on the campus to facilitate year-round educational programs and testing.

Beginning July 1, an expanded menu of tests will be performed on the campus with analytical results available in a timely manner for samples collected from northwestern Iowa.

"History is coming full circle with the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory renewing its commitment to Lakeside Laboratory and to the Iowa Great Lakes communities," said UHL Director Christopher Atchison. "This new partnership to provide comprehensive water quality testing for northwestern Iowa underscores our common mission to preserve the quality of Iowa's water."

The Lakeside Laboratory was founded in 1909 by Thomas Macbride, a former president and professor at the UI. When the laboratory was built 99 years ago, it was the only field station on the North American prairie. In 1936, the unique facility became a state institution. Today, the Iowa Lakeside Laboratory Regent Resource Center is operated cooperatively by the UI, Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa through the Board of Regents, State of Iowa.

EPA releases revised water quality standards

EPA has approved new and revised Iowa water quality standards, designating more than 14,000 additional miles of Iowa waters for recreational and aquatic life uses. The approved provisions are now effective for implementation under the Clean Water Act.

EPA Region 7 Administrator John B. Askew said, "EPA appreciates Iowa's commitment to protecting its waters by establishing water quality standards that significantly increase the environmental protections afforded waters in the state."

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources submitted new and revised Iowa surface water quality standards to EPA for review and approval in 2006 and late last year, as

required by the Clean Water Act. These standards include an update of the state's water quality criteria to be consistent with the latest science.

These newly adopted standards will protect waters for their appropriate aquatic life and recreational uses. The standards are based on the presumption that waters should be protected for aquatic life and recreational uses, unless stream assessments show that another level of protection is warranted.

EPA's Feb. 11, 2008, decision letter provides a more detailed description of EPA's review and the basis for this action. To view it, go to this release at www.epa.gov/region7 and click on the link called decision letter in the last paragraph.

SWCD Foundation offers scholarships

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation announces the availability of two \$500 scholarships that will be presented to Dickinson County Graduating High School Seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies and in addition, the winning application will be forwarded to compete in the Conservation Districts of

Iowa's (CDI) Auxiliary Annual Scholarships. CDI funds 6 regional awards of \$200 each and state level awards in the amount of \$1,500, \$1,000, and \$800. The applicant needs to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the 2008 application form.

The Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study. The applicant needs to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the Jo Groves application form.

High school seniors must submit their applications to the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District no later than Monday, Feb. 25, 2008.

Both scholarships will be judged on leadership, scholastic achievement and need.

Applications can be obtained from the High School Counselors at Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake, or Terri/Graettinger High Schools, or by contacting the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake at 2412 17th Street, or by calling (712) 336-3782, ext. 3.

Dickinson receives na

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Dickinson County's Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is already known statewide as a leader in innovative strategies and conservation efforts. Last week, the district rose to national recognition as the National Association of Conservation Districts awarded the county's SWCD the 2007 Excellence Award for Urban Conservation.

"The National Association of Conservation Districts represents 3,000 soil and water conservation districts nationwide," said Steve Anderson, urban conservationist for Dickinson County and surrounding areas. "They give out an award in eight different categories. We were chosen out of 3,000 potential districts, and we beat out potential candidates from New York, San Diego, Denver and other big metro areas. Here we are this little community of 16,000 that was considered the best work for 2007 in urban conservation work."

The Dickinson County SWCD accepted the award at the National Association of Conservation Districts' conference Feb. 10-13 in Reno, Nev.

"The award ceremony was Feb. 12," said Anderson. "We accepted the award at one of the meetings of the board in Reno and gave a 15-20 minute



THE
WOLF'S
CRY

If it bleeds...

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

I come from a small town. I still live in a small town. I guess you could say I have some "small town" ethics. While it means I may never fit in at a metro newspaper, I'm darn proud of these values.

In any journalism education, you'll run into the phrase "If it bleeds, it leads," meaning that deaths and accidents are most often the biggest stories of the week in any given community. Death, tragedy, anguish, pain. Those are the things most commonly found above the fold on the front pages of any metro newspaper.

Here in Dickinson County, we are not sheltered from our share of tragedy. It is our job as journalists to report these things to you. We feel we are accomplishing this while holding strong to our small town ethics.

At the Iowa Newspaper Association's convention this month, we watched a slide show of the winners of the photography contest. I can't tell you how many coffins, stretchers and tears we saw repeatedly being given top photo honors. Don't get me wrong. They are wonderful, wonderful crisp clear moving photos. But I can't help but wonder if some of

Representative accepted an award from Dickinson County SWCD. The award was presented to Dickinson County SWCD Commissioner Scott Mitchell.

presentation on we've done here County."

Both the press the original nom compiled by Wa urban conservat coordinator, hig efforts of the S

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded the 2007 Excellence Award for Urban Conservation by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). NACD represents the 3,000 soil and water conservation districts across the United States. Out of those 3,000 possible districts, Dickinson County was chosen for its work with the urban community. The SWCD held seminars that were in part sponsored by a Farm Bureau Non-Point Source grant, five demonstration projects and assisted with ordinance changes to protect water quality. The Dickinson County SWCD received the award in Reno, Nev., in February 2008 at the NACD national conference. Pictured are Steve Anderson, Dickinson County SWCD staff; Scott Mitchell, SWCD commissioner; John Redding, NACD president; Bill Northey, Iowa secretary of agriculture (former SWCD commissioner); and Orville Berg, assistant SWCD commissioner (former SWCD commissioner). (Picture and cutline courtesy of Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist for Dickinson County SWCD.)

Dickinson SWCD honored 03-19-08



Dickinson SWCD honored 03-19-08



The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded the 2007 Excellence Award for Urban Conservation by the National Association of Conservation Districts. The Dickinson County SWCD received the award in Reno, Nev., in February 2008 at the NACD national conference. Following the trip to Reno, the Dickinson County SWCD was recognized at the state Capitol on the Floor of the House of Representatives. A resolution was submitted by Rep. Mike May to recognize the Dickinson County SWCD for winning this national award. Pictured are Chris Hoffman, SWCD commissioner; Mark Ingwersen, SWCD commissioner; Steve Anderson, Dickinson County SWCD staff; and Rep. Mike May. (Picture and cutline courtesy of Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist for Dickinson County SWCD.) PHOTO COURTESY OF DICKINSON COUNTY.



Chris Hoffman, SWCD commissioner, Vance Hjelm State Soil Conservation committee, Mark Ingwersen Dickinson SWCD commissioner, Scott Mitchell Dickinson SWCD commissioner, Howard Johnson Osceola SWCD commissioner, Bob Waters and Cathy Graves with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship are shown during presentation of the SWCD grant check. Picture and cutline courtesy of Steve Anderson, urban conservationist for Dickinson County SWCD.

Counties receive grant for watershed assessment

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship for \$10,000 to do a watershed assessment of Silver Lake near the spring of 2008. Once the

03-26-08

Clean water alliance hires new coordinator

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Dickinson Clean Water Alliance announce the recent hiring of John H. Wills as the new alliance coordinator.

Wills is a long time resident of northwest Iowa and was previously a Clean Water Alliance Coordinator. Wills will be working in the position which was vacated Steven Anderson, who has moved into a new Iowa Department of Agriculture Land Stewardship, Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS, DSC) funded position. The position Anderson has moved into is a regional Urban Conservationist position

and will be found in the Lakes Region but has responsibilities outside Dickinson County as well.

Wills left the Alliance in November 1999 to pursue an opportunity with the Loess Hills Alliance in Western Iowa. After Sept. 11, 2001 Wills joined the Army to serve his country in the war on terrorism. He served in that capacity for over 5 years and was able to visit many parts of the world. In December of 2006 Wills found himself out of the military and located in Rock Rapids teaching high school Biology at a home school academy.

Wills is happy he had the

opportunity to come back to Dickinson County and work on a job that he loves. He is excited about the position and has already begun work. Wills started working in the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District office, in Spirit Lake, on March 10.

The Project Coordinator position is a position which is paid for through grants from IDALS, DSC, the Dickinson SWCD, and the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission. The Project Coordinator works with all the partners and interested parties to improve the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes.

04-08-08

Partners in preservation

Duo's watchwords are water, conservation

By Greg Drees
Journal correspondent

SPIRIT LAKE, Iowa — In a land where natural resources are royalty, they are enhancers. Safeguarding these wonders of nature where they are preeminent — in the Iowa Great Lakes and surrounding areas — is their calling.

Steve Anderson and John Wills — urban conservationist and Clean Water Alliance (CWA) coordinator, respectively — are protectionists in a land of plenty.

Both men work out of the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation (SWCD) office in Spirit Lake and although they often find conservation and ecological issues of common concern, there are distinctions in their roles.

Anderson, who was hired in January under an initiative embarked upon by Iowa Agriculture Secretary Bill Northey, became one of four regional urban conservationists in the state.

After beginning his conservation career as a naturalist intern for the Dickinson County Conservation Board, Anderson accepted the role as Clean Water Alliance coordinator for the county. He flourished in the job, taking the statewide lead in incorporating Low Impact Development (LID) techniques — such as managing storm water runoff with wetlands, bio-swales and rain gardens — into Lakes landscapes, often through dogged determination and sometimes by refashioning city ordinances.

Anderson's reputation served him well as he was selected to head one of the urban conservation field offices in Spirit Lake, the only rural site selected in the new program. The other three are based out of the large metro areas of Des Moines, Council Bluffs and Waterloo. The positions are funded through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), Division of Soil Conservation (DSC), and enhanced with Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) money.

Although there are no defined boundaries in the initiative, Anderson expects to work putting conservation practices on Lakes area landscapes and perhaps as far-reaching as the northwest quadrant of the state.

"Hopefully, the program will succeed and we will be able to add more urban conservationists around the state," Anderson said.

Wills, a northwest Iowa native who worked in conservation roles throughout the '90s — including as CWA coordinator — was hired in March to fill Anderson's vacancy. It is a role that has truly brought Wills full circle.



Urban conservationist **Steve Anderson**, left, and Clean Water Alliance coordinator **John Wills** often work together in the Iowa Great Lakes region on water quality and conservation issues. (Photo by Greg Drees)

After working with the Loess Hills Alliance in western Iowa, he joined the Army shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, to serve his country in the war on terrorism, a stint that lasted more than five years in different sites around the globe.

After returning home and teaching high school biology at a home school academy in Rock Rapids, Wills learned of the CWA opportunity and won the job over several other applicants.

"I couldn't believe my good fortune," Wills said, "to return to the Iowa Great Lakes and work on issues I'm passionate about."

The CWA coordinator's position is funded through grants from IDALS, the Dickinson SWCD and the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission. Wills works with the dozens of federal, state and local partners in the CWA — including agencies, organizations and individuals — to improve water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes.

"I will also seek non-traditional water partners, like developers," Wills said. "We want to work with everyone."

Wills' Iraq experience heightened his appreciation of water.

"Water is one of the most important resources we have," Wills said. "It is used as a weapon in Iraq, and I foresee wars being fought over water in the Middle East."

Wills beseeches others to appreciate water. "We are fortunate here in northwest Iowa, and we must be responsible in our use of water," he said. "One

of my messages is that we stop taking for granted the natural resources we have and use them responsibly."

Wills and Anderson, whose paths meet almost daily because of the close proximity of their office spaces, often find themselves involved in common issues.

"It's only natural that people seek us both out when dealing with water quality and conservation issues," Anderson said.

Both men expect to be consulted on such issues as LID implementation, erosion and sediment control, environmental outreach opportunities and other related challenges.

Water and natural resources are also influential in both men's lives outside of work. Each grew up in nature and outdoor experiences. Their shared passions of hunting, fishing, bird watching, swimming and beyond are rooted in water.

"My best childhood memories are connected with water resources, like a creek near Estherville where we would sneak away and catch frogs and fish," Anderson said. He now shares such experiences with his wife, Sara, and their 9-month-old son, Will.

"I immerse myself in water-related activities and challenges," said Wills, who takes along his 12-year old daughter, Mariah, on many occasions. "We're leaving a legacy for future generations."

Reconnecting people to land and water resources is in their blood. For Anderson and Wills, it is a labor of love.

Iowa Great Lakes honored for water quality projects 0416-08

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Several Lakes area individuals, businesses and municipalities were recently honored at the 2008 Iowa Stormwater Conference. The event was held in February in Coralville.

"Dickinson County received four out of seven awards at the conference," said Pat Sauer, environmental scientist with the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities. "The area kind of cleaned up on these awards."

Each year, the awards are given to recognize the efforts taken throughout the state to improve stormwater quality.

"We wanted to on an annual basis recognizing cities, groups, and individuals that are involved with practices to improve stormwater quality," said Sauer. "I'm just really proud of the efforts that are going on statewide to educate, the leadership being shown and people willing to incorporate change to improve local water quality."

In Dickinson County, four awards were given for stormwater efforts.

**BRAD BECK, BECK
ENGINEERING, INC.**

Brad owns his own firm



PHOTO BY ANITRA WOLF • DCN STAFF

Members of the Lakes area community were honored in February at the 2008 Iowa Stormwater Conference in Coralville. Pictured (front from left) Brad Beck, Pat Sauer, Dennis Daly, (back) Jeff Rose, Barb Mendenhall, Blain Andera and Steve Anderson.

and has done engineering for Okoboji for five years. He attended a series of low impact development (LID) workshops in that area and understands the issues of water quality in the Great Lakes area and statewide.

"My award was for design of a street project in Okoboji," said Beck. "We tried to put practices into place that capture the first inch and a half of rainfall - which makes up

over 90 percent of the rain per year in Iowa."

Beck designed an aggressive drainage project for the City of Okoboji's Lakeshore Drive. As part of this project, new streets, curb, gutter and more than 12 new bio retention cells were put in at strategic locations to treat storm water.

"Bioretention cells cool, filter and treat the stormwater before it enters the storm sewer and eventually goes into

West Okoboji," said Beck.

Beck believes that the project was the first city street project in the area to implement low impact development practices. He continually demonstrates to the city on any design that water quality is highest on his priority list.

**JEFF ROSE, JACOBSON-
WESTERGARD
& ASSOCIATES, INC.**

Jeff designed rain gardens at Arnolds Park Ball Field, Truse Rain Garden and two condominium projects. He is knowledgeable on all new LID practices and has been enthusiastic on every project he undertakes.

On behalf of the City of Arnolds Park, he is involved with the LID features on the Bridges Bay Resort complex, Okoboji Island and spy Glass Condominiums. Jeff is very dedicated and conscientious on all of his projects and this shows through until each project is completed.

**BARB MENDENHALL,
OKOBOJI PLANNING
AND ZONING BOARD**

Barb has been the local impetus for implementing improved storm water quality practices in the City

of Okoboji.

"Basically I led the charge with the City of Okoboji to add LID principles to the zoning ordinances," said Barb. "We are looking at stormwater as a resource rather than a waste product... Water is our most important limited resource."

With her leadership, the city adopted LID ordinances that would address new construction and preexisting construction in the Iowa Great Lakes area. She led the effort for reevaluating the entire city ordinance to include LID practices. Barb's tasks must have at times seemed impossible but she enlisted a number of key allies and persisted through long hours and many discussions to create a great environmental benchmark for this area's water quality. With the new ordinances in place the city's street project used LID practices in a major project completed last summer.

Barb has been a leader in the Okoboji Protective Association for many years and received the Ace Cory Conservation Award in 2007. She also gives her times and talents to the Friends of Lakeside Lab. Because of Barb's volunteering as a humble but persistent leader, we are the recipients of the latest techniques at improving water quality in the City of Okoboji.

CITY OF OKOBOJI

The City of Okoboji was the first community in Iowa to voluntarily adopt LID practices into their new zoning ordinances and have implemented them on the first major street upgrade project. City administrators, planning and zoning board, council members educated themselves on LID concepts during a series of educational seminars in the Great Lakes area several years ago. The city adopted LID ordinances that address new construction as well as existing reconstruction.

"Major cities across the state have used our ordinances as a model for LID principles," said City Administrator Dennis Daly.

Upon making these concepts code the embarked on a major street renovation project. The Okoboji PCC Paving/LID/Lakeshore Drive Drainage Project was completed this fall. Homeowners were educated on the project. As a result of their leadership, other communities in Dickinson County are looking into and adopting LDI ordinances on a voluntary basis.

The City of Spirit Lake and Steve Anderson were also nominated for honors this year.

Dickinson Co. Water Quality Commission Aug 26 - 08 accepts grant applications

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission is accepting grant applications for its annual water quality grant period until Oct. 1, 2008. The applications are available at <http://cleanwateralliance.net/blog/> under the Water Quality Commission Category. In addition, interested groups can contact the Dickinson SWCD at 2412 17th Street, Spirit Lake, IA and talk to John Wills, Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance Coordinator for information about the grants.

The Application timeline is

as follows: Aug. 1 - Request for Applications (RFA) begins, Aug. 26 - Water Quality Commission Help Session, Sept. 18 - Water Quality Commission Help Session, and Oct. 1 - Grant Applications due to Dickinson SWCD by 4:30 p.m.

To date, nearly \$840,000 dollars have been granted to groups and agencies in Dickinson County with a total of 40 projects being funded to protect local water bodies. That money has been matched by over 17 million dollars. The Dickinson County Water Quality

Commission is a group whose goal is to protect the water bodies in Dickinson County.

The Water Quality Commission (WQC) was established in 2001 to provide a steady funding source using local money as a match to state and federal revenues for water quality projects for lakes in Dickinson County. This one-of-a-kind organization in the state is comprised of 18 commissioners who represent the county and its 10 municipalities. The Water Quality Commission hopes to bring a minimum of

\$3 in federal, state and private matching funds to every \$1 administered by the WQC and provide an outlet for individuals and organizations in the Dickinson County communities that are looking for money to improve water quality.

• For more information about the Water Quality Grants or about the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission go to <http://cleanwateralliance.net/waterquality.html> or contact John Wills at (712) 336-3782.

Annual outdoor classroom event planned 09-03-08

Each year, sixth graders from throughout Dickinson County attend an outdoor classroom event at Kettleon-Hogback to learn about various subjects.

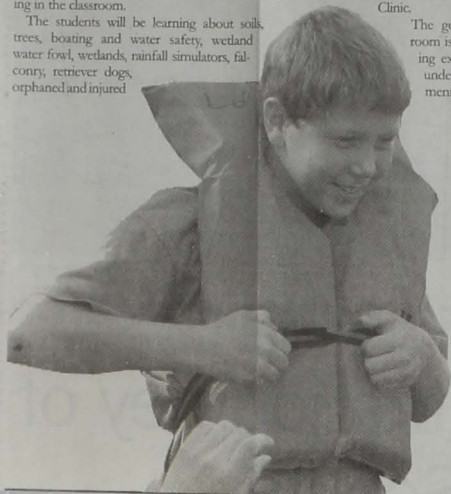
The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring its annual Sixth Grade Outdoor Classroom on Friday, Sept. 5 at the Kettleon-Hogback area. Sixth grade students from all four Dickinson County School Districts will be participating in the classroom.

The students will be learning about soils, trees, boating and water safety, wetland water fowl, wetlands, rainfall simulators, falconry, retriever dogs, orphaned and injured

wildlife and the Kettleon-Hogback area.

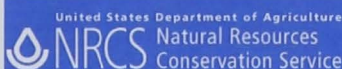
The classes will be conducted by members of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District, The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Dickinson County Conservation Board, the Iowa Great Lakes Water Safety Council, Trees Forever, Iowa Learning Farm-ISU, Orphaned and Injured Wildlife and the Dickinson County Animal Clinic.

The goal of the outdoor classroom is to provide a unique learning experience and an increased understanding of the environment.



FILE PHOTO

Each year, sixth graders from throughout Dickinson County attend an outdoor classroom event at Kettleon-Hogback to learn about various subjects.



P.O. Box 2890
Washington, D.C.
20013

National Bulletin: 230-7-

Subject: EOP - American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

Purpose. To Distribute the Poster Commemorating American Indian Heritage Month.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2008

Background. American Indian Heritage Month is observed from November 1 through November 30, 2007. The 2007 poster is entitled, "We are One Family Dedicated to Protecting Mother Earth." The artist captures the image of a Care Taker who represents American Indians and all populations as the stewards of the land. The message is clear; we are all Care Takers who are in charge of protecting and preserving the gifts of Mother Earth; water, air, wildlife, and land. The artist is LaDon Smith, a member of the Choctaw Nation, Boswell, Oklahoma.

American Indian Heritage Month is celebrated to recognize the intertribal cultures and to educate the public about the heritage, history, art, and traditions of American Indians and Alaska Natives. American Indian Heritage Month enhances our efforts to honor tribal sovereignty by working on a government-to-government basis with American Indians and Alaska Natives. We honor the rights of Indian tribes and work to protect and enhance tribal resources.

There will be many activities across the country recognizing the contributions of American Indians and Alaska Natives during the Heritage Month.

Please join me in supporting those activities taking place around the Nation in commemoration of American Indian Heritage Month.

Contact. If you would like further information, please contact your State American Indian/Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager or Mr. Gerald Rouse, National American Indian/Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager, at (509) 323-2974.

ARLEN L. LANCASTER
Chief

DIST: E

Helping People Help the Land
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

Dickinson SWCD Foundation offers scholarships 12-24-08

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation announces the availability of two \$500 scholarships that will be presented to Dickinson County Graduating High School Seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies and in addition, the winning application will be forwarded to compete in the Conservation Districts of Iowa's (CDI) Auxiliary Annual Scholarships. CDI funds 6 regional awards of \$300 each and state level awards in the amount of \$1,800, \$1,200 and \$1,000. The applicant needs to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the 2009 application form.

The Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study. The applicant needs to submit two (2) typed copies of their application and must use the Jo Groves application form.

High school seniors must submit their applications to the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District no later than March 3, 2009. Both scholarships will be judged on leadership and scholastic achievement.

Applications can be obtained from the high school counselors at Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake or Terrell/Graettinger High Schools, or by contacting the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake at 2412 17th Street, or by calling (712) 336-3782, ext. 3.

Okoboji Foundation grants funds to Discovery House, SWCD foundation 12-24-08



The Okoboji Foundation recently granted \$10,000 to the Discovery House to assist in renovating the exterior of the Hill Avenue facility in Spirit Lake. The Okoboji Foundation focuses on grants that fund culture, education, environment, history, life-saving and recreation. Pictured from left: Discovery House Pastor and counselor Rick Doe, Discovery House Director Julie Scheib and Okoboji Foundation Director Ann Ditsworth. Discovery House representatives ask residents to keep the facility in mind for holiday giving and year-end donations.



PHOTOS BY ANITRA WOLF - DCN STAFF

The Okoboji Foundation has granted \$1,600 to the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation Foundation to purchase storm water monitoring equipment for study of impacts on lakes, rivers and streams in Dickinson County. Pictured: Okoboji Foundation Director Ann Ditsworth and Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist representing the foundation.

Wetland Reserve Program offers financial, environmental benefits

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

As part of a community effort to improve the water quality of Silver Lake, a meeting was held Wednesday, Jan. 28 in Lake Park encouraging rural landowners to apply for a program to turn their farmland into wetlands.

"In the last several decades there's been a severe decline in the water quality of Silver Lake," said Ryan Ransom, Silver Lake Watershed Coordinator. "Silver Lake needs everybody's help."

After being placed on the Iowa Department of Natural Resource's Impaired Waterways list, local support to improve the water quality of the lake has been steadily climbing. Discussions have been held the last several years encouraging landowners along the lake to use eco-friendly practices for lawn and shoreline care, and the many groups working on the Silver Lake Watershed Project have also been speaking to farmers and other rural landowners about doing their part in repairing the lake.

"We feel wetlands are the most important part of the process, so that's where we're going to start," said Ransom. "Wetlands filter pollutants as they head toward the lake."

NRCS Area Easement Specialist Christine Chafa agreed.

WETLAND

continued on page 2A

Wetland options

Wetland is an agreement to store or enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

Some eligibility rules apply to the WRP. Applicants must have owned their land for at least seven years, wetlands converted after Dec. 3, 1985 are not eligible, and land must have conditions to make restoration feasible to be considered. Those interested in the program are encouraged to contact the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District at (712) 336-2604.

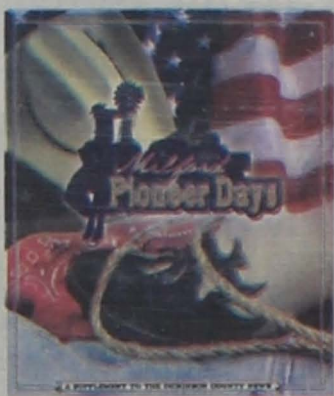


Silver Lake in Lake Park has seen declining water levels over decades, and water quality groups are encouraging their acres into a program to that would turn farmland into wetlands.

Pioneer Days

Milford hosts annual
community celebration
this weekend.

INSERT



Iowa CREP

program breaks ground on local project

BY CAROLINE RUSK

DCN STAFF

The Lakes area is about to gain another tool in the fight for clean water.

In a joint effort between several major county, state and national organizations, the Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) broke ground Monday morning on an area being converted into a three-acre wetland to treat 600 acres of farmland.

"What we do here in Iowa has a big impact on that happens elsewhere in the United States," said Chuck Gipp, Director of Iowa Department of Agriculture Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC). "What we have here is a true partnership."

The land, located just west of Highway 71 near the Dickinson/Clay border, will be known as the Peterson site.

Several attendees thanked the Peterson family for their

CREP

continued on page 2A

CREP: Wetland projects remove nitrates

continued from page 1A



PHOTO BY CAROLINE RUSK • DCN STAFF

The Iowa CREP program broke ground on a future wetland just West of Highway 71 near the Dickinson/Clay border Monday morning. Pictured are Steve Wallace, Dickinson FSA County Office Committee member; Brent Petersen, son of landowner; Chuck Gipp, Director of IDALS-DSC, Des Moines; Orville Berg, Dickinson SWCD Assistant Commissioner; and Jim Thornton, O'Brien County FSA Program Tech.

volunteer participation in the CREP program, explaining that there is no such thing as "nonproductive land" and that participation such as theirs is what makes the program successful.

"Our main goal here is nitrate filtration," said Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist. "We're really looking forward to the project."

With the increase in concern over water quality, public interest in the effects of agriculture on surface water quality has also increased.

The goal of the program is to reduce nitrogen loads and movement of other agricultural chemicals from croplands to streams and rivers. Nitrogen, which comes from the use of fertilizer, can negatively affect human health and contributes to nutrient enrichment problems in surface waters. With technological advances herbicides are considered less of a danger

than in the past, but are still a concern.

"This is a great partnership, and we're looking forward to seeing the project from inception to the final product," said Larry Lago, executive director of the Dickinson County Farm Service Agency.

Research at Iowa State University has demonstrated that strategically-sited and designed wetlands can remove 40-90 percent of nitrates and over 90 percent of herbicides from cropland drainage waters.

"We have approximately 35 CREP sites today (in the state) and approximately 30 in the design or construction phase," said Dean Lemke, Bureau Chief with IDALS-DSC. "We need to use integrated systems in the landscape to meet water quality goals while allowing farmers proper fertilization levels."

Construction is set to begin in about a month with King Construction of Wall Lake.

Following the ceremony the small group visited a nearby wetland established in 2006 known as the Welle site with a nearly 17-acre pool that treats 2,700 acres of land. A variety of wildlife was seen in the wetland area alone, including a heron, two families of ducks, red winged blackbirds, frogs and more.

The Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Farm Service Agency partnered on the project.

The Iowa CREP is a state, federal, local and private partnership that provides incentives to landowners who voluntarily establish wetlands for water quality improvement in the tile-drained regions of Iowa. Visit <http://www.IowaAgriculture.gov> for more information.

DNR shares recommendations for Silver Lake

02-25-09

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

Lake Park residents may be seeing an improvement in the water quality of Silver Lake following the release of an Improvement Plan outlined by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at a meeting held last Tuesday at the community center.

An estimated 60 residents and interested parties attended the meeting with scheduled speakers Ryan Ransom - Silver Lake Watershed Coordinator, Jeff Berckes - Program Coordinator (DNR), Charles

Ikenberry - Project Manager (DNR) and Mike Hawkins - DNR Fisheries Bureau.

"We're going to be a technical resource for you," Berckes told the crowd. "What do you guys want out of Silver Lake? Be a visionary and let's go out and create it together."

Bodies of water that have been placed on the state's impaired waterways list undergo an analysis by members of the DNR to determine pollutants and sources as well as a plan of action on how to improve water quality.

According to the DNR report, Silver Lake's main pollutant is turbidity - meaning the water appears murky and unclear - and has been primarily caused by soil erosion, synthetic fertilizer loss, livestock manure and internal phosphorus loading.

"We've done the study, we've written the plan - now it's gotta be followed by action," Ikenberry shared with the crowd.

Silver Lake is classified as one of Iowa's shallow lakes, reaching just under 10 feet at its deepest point. Because of this, internal loading is a problem - sediment and phosphorus are frequently mixed into the

water from the bottom of the lake. Factors from recreation to wildlife contribute to the internal loading.

"Rough fish aren't helping things," said Hawkins, "especially the common carp."

Several methods to improving water quality were discussed, including dredging the lake, controlling rough fish, stocking heavy predator fish, enacting boating restrictions, managing water levels and making watershed improvements.

"Dredging has some good points but it also has some negative sides," Hawkins explained. "It's costly."

An estimated \$23 million would be needed for Silver Lake to average a depth of 10 feet.

Attempting to control rough fish was explained to be a possible part of the solution, but a small one.

"The void will be refilled quickly," Hawkins said. "We need other measures to control spawning."

Recommendations from DNR officials primarily focused on controlling and limiting pollutants entering Silver Lake rather than dredging or restricting recreation.

"You need to curtail these

loads of sediment coming into the lake," Hawkins stated.

According to the DNR Water Quality Improvement Plan, the estimated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Silver Lake is just under 8,500 pounds per year. The current annual load has been estimated at nearly 20,000 pounds - a reduction of 11,500 pounds (57.5 percent) is needed to lower levels to the maximum amount for the lake.

• For more information on the Water Quality Improvement Plan for Silver Lake contact Jeff Berckes, Program Coordinator (DNR) at jeff.berckes@dnr.iowa.gov or call (515)281-4791.

UNEMPLOYMENT

continued from page 1A

Year	Dickinson Co. unemployment
*Dec. 2008	5.4 percent
2008	4.2 percent
2007	4.0 percent
2006	4.2 percent
2005	4.4 percent
2004	4.1 percent
2003	4.6 percent
2002	3.7 percent
2001	3.2 percent
2000	2.9 percent

Information taken from www.iowa.gov
*Most recent statistics available available March 11.

different things," Koonce stated. "Some people just need help with a résumé and cover letters, and some people want to make a career change. We can help people develop where their interests might be - there are programs to help with that, too."

DRAINAGE: Lawsuit possible

continued from page 1A

area have said they feel the restriction of water helps keep their water levels at a satisfactory level and protects the water quality of the lake.

"Lower Gar is on the impaired waters list," said Mark Stark, a resident of South Shore Estates on Lower Gar Lake. "Lowering the level further is going to kill the lake."

Others suspect the change in flow patterns may increase the presence of blue-green algae in the eastern lakes and an environmental and ecological study should be done prior to making such a large change in the flow pattern.

Milford City Administrator

Bryan Read requested to be on the supervisors' agenda on Tuesday and took the floor with a series of questions for the board regarding the proposed project, timeline and liability.

The supervisors reported that the proposed project is for three new culvert boxes with a July 2009 bid letting and proposed completion date of June 2010. Little was resolved on the issue of liability.

Read pointed out that although the supervisors hired an engineer for the project last week, an agreement for the shared jurisdiction project has yet to be reached.

"As of today, we still do not

have an agreement," said Read, pointing out the existing road maintenance contract requires an agreement. Read stated that a contract violation may be alleged if the supervisors continue to proceed with the project without an agreement.

Talk of a lawsuit has been circling for months as the Milford Council has gone into closed session several times to discuss pending litigation on the issue.

Earlier this week, the council again went into closed session. No action was taken, however the council set a special meeting for 7 p.m. tonight, Wednesday, Feb. 25 to further discuss the outlet issue.



04-07-09



Anderson Reception

A reception will be held for Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist with the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District, before he leaves for his military service on Thursday, April 9, from 3:00 to 5:30pm at the Dickinson County Fairgrounds Boardroom at 1600 - 15th Street, Spirit Lake.

hosts state event.

Life 1B



Lakes drainage issue remains clogged

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Lake drainage controversy between the Milford City Council and the Dickinson County Supervisors concerning the Lower Gar outlet continued this week at the supervisors meeting Tuesday morning, Feb. 24.

The supervisors believe a bottle neck exists at the Lower Gar outlet, where a road's culvert system constricts the flow of water out of the Iowa Great Lakes system.

"It is a risk to some of the landowners in Dickinson County of future flooding due to restricting the flow of water out of Lower Gar," said Supervisor Wayne Northey. "It seems prudent that we move forward to try to alleviate that risk."

Residents in the Lower Gar

DRAINAGE

continued on page 2A

Recommendations for Silver Lake

turbidity - meaning it appears murky and has been primarily by soil erosion, synthetic fertilizer loss, livestock and internal phosphorus loading.

"Once we've done the study, we've got the plan - now it's followed by action," shared with the

Lake is classified as Iowa's shallow lakes, just under 10 feet at its point. Because of this, loading is a problem and phosphorus is mostly mixed into the

water from the bottom of the lake. Factors from recreation to wildlife contribute to the internal loading.

"Rough fish aren't helping things," said Hawkins, "especially the common carp."

Several methods to improving water quality were discussed, including dredging the lake, controlling rough fish, stocking heavy predator fish, enacting boating restrictions, managing water levels and making water-shed improvements.

"Dredging has some good points but it also has some negative sides," Hawkins explained. "It's costly."

An estimated \$23 million would be needed for Silver Lake to average a depth of 10 feet.

Attempting to control rough fish was explained to be a possible part of the solution, but a small one.

"The void will be refilled quickly," Hawkins said. "We need other measures to control spawning."

Recommendations from DNR officials primarily focused on controlling and limiting pollutants entering Silver Lake rather than dredging or restricting recreation.

"You need to curtail these

loads of sediment coming into the lake," Hawkins stated.

According to the DNR Water Quality Improvement Plan, the estimated Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Silver Lake is just under 8,500 pounds per year. The current annual load has been estimated at nearly 20,000 pounds - a reduction of 11,500 pounds (57.5 percent) is needed to lower levels to the maximum amount for the lake.

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Bridges Bay developers penalized

BY ANITRA WOLF
MANAGING EDITOR

Ongoing stormwater discharge violations have resulted in a hefty fine for the developers of Bridges Bay Resort on East Lake Okoboji.

On Monday, Dickinson County Judge David Lester ordered BBR, L.L.C. of Sioux Falls, S.D. to pay a \$35,000 civil penalty for repeated release of sediment into the lake during construction of the water park resort and condominiums.

"East Okoboji is officially and fittingly designated a 'high-quality water resource' of the state," said Attorney General Tom Miller. "It is very important that developers do things right and protect this priceless resource."

The Bridges Bay resort complex includes a hotel, water park, and condominium housing on about 60 acres of land on the south shore of East Okoboji Lake. Development continues.

The project has drawn citizen concern from its launch. At a supervisors meeting in March 2005, members of several Lakes associations voiced their concerns about the developers' lack of a clear low impact development plan. As construction began, citizens observed violations and called them in to the Clean Water Alliance and Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Issues with the controversy

BRIDGES BAY

continued on page 3A

3AY: Judge orders LID

in Benton. "As a result, there was runoff from the site into East Okoboji."

An environmental protection lawsuit was filed by the Attorney General's office in April 2007 alleging that sediment was illegally discharged on repeated occasions into East Okoboji Lake. The lawsuit also alleged that the developers failed to comply with the terms of their permit for controlling stormwater discharges, and failed to implement the pollution prevention plan. DNR officials also observed illegally burned construction wastes at the site.

Judge orders low impact development

In his order, Judge Lester permanently prohibited any further violations by BBR, L.L.C. The

order also requires BBR, L.L.C. to adhere to a Low Impact Development Plan and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan for continuing work at the resort complex on the south shore of East Okoboji.

The judge's order said the Low Impact Development Plan for future work must include:

- Restoration of the shoreline of East Okoboji Lake with native vegetation.
- Installation of rain gardens, bioswales, and bioretention areas.
- Permeable/porous paver systems to allow for collection and infiltration of storm water.
- Soil quality restoration on all future disturbed areas to absorb, infiltrate and purify storm water runoff.

The state encourages low impact development practices, especially in sensitive areas. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan must include Iowa DNR-approved erosion and sediment control measures, and stabilization measures on all disturbed areas.

Bill Northey to visit Dickinson County

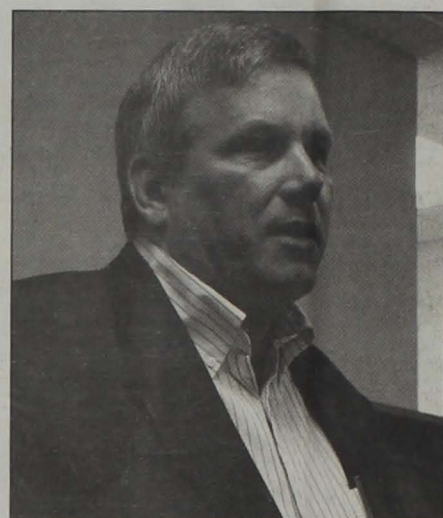
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey has announced that he will be visiting Humboldt, Pocahontas, Buena Vista and Dickinson Counties on Wednesday, July 29 as part of his effort to visit each of Iowa's 99 counties again in 2009 to meet with Iowans and discuss agriculture and the issues facing farmers in the state.

Northey will be hosting town meetings at the Farm Bureau offices in Humboldt, Pocahontas and Storm Lake. He will then visit the Dickinson County Fair in Spirit Lake.

"I've learned from the meetings I've attended in each of the counties over the past two years and I'm sure this year will be no different," Northey said. "It's a challenging time on and off the farm and I'm excited to hear from Iowans about the issues facing agriculture."

Northey will be at the Dickinson County Fair at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29.

Northey, a corn and soybean farmer from Spirit Lake,



is serving his first term as Secretary of Agriculture. His priorities as Secretary of Agriculture are the opportunities in renewable energy, conservation and stewardship, and telling the story of Iowa agriculture.

August 18, 2009

Orville Berg Receives Ace Cory Conservation Award

Orville Berg was recently honored by the Okoboji Protective Association, who awarded him the Ace Cory Conservation Award for 2009, for his pioneering accomplishments in conservation and the environment and for heightening public awareness of those issues in the Iowa Great Lakes Region.

Orville has had a long career of public service in conservation. He began farming in Dickinson County in the early 1970's. In 1978, he was elected a Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner, a position he held through 2006. He has served in an Assistant Commissioner capacity since that time. Over the last 30 years he has been a leader for Dickinson County in soil erosion control, water quality, coordinating activities, creating partnerships, providing public education for the environment and participated in the establishment of new initiatives. He has served on state committees, including the Iowa Association of SWCD Commissioners and the Ag Drainage Well Committee. Orville has been a leader in working within watershed boundaries by working with Jackson County, Minnesota, which includes the northern part of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed and the Silver Lake Watershed.

Orville was instrumental in organizing and implementing the first 319 funds to support the Iowa Great Lakes Clean Water Project that lasted for twelve years. He was also instrumental in the formation of the Clean Water Alliance. The CWA coordinates water quality activities for Dickinson County Lakes and works with over 30 private and government organizations to keep water quality a priority. Orville served as Chair for the group for several years from 1989 to 2003. He also assisted with the formation of the Dickinson Water Quality Commission. He received the Watershed Achievement Award from Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Agriculture and Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation in 1999.



SWCD announces poster winner

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) announces the winner of this year's poster contest, as Krista Kolegraff, a junior at Spirit Lake High School, a student in Mr. Proctor's art class. The contest is co-sponsored by Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI). Using this year's theme of "Dig It! The Secrets of Soil," Krista cleverly created the paint for her poster using Iron Oxide, Bentonite, Chrome OA, Iron Chromate, Dolomite and Ball Clay.

The Dickinson SWCD Commissioners presented Krista a monetary award and an Earth Day T-shirt. Her poster will now compete with other division 10-12 district winners of Iowa Region 2, which will be judged in early in June.



Krista
Kolegraff

DCN April 29, 2009

BRIDGES BAY: Judge orders LID

continued from page 1A

sial development arrived in the Attorney General's office in 2006.

"The matter was investigated by DNR Field Office 3 in Spencer and referred to our office by the Environmental Protection Commission on Sept. 19 of 2006," said Assistant Attorney General Tim Benton. "The case concerns allegations that BBR, LLC in developing its property on East Okoboji Lake violated its NPDES permit for stormwater discharges."

The permit requires that developers and contractors draft and implement a pollution prevention plan, with a goal of controlling the run off at the construction site using silt fences and other control measures.

"The basis of our case is that on several occasions in 2006, BBR was not maintaining the fences properly," said

Benton. "As a result, there was runoff from the site into East Okoboji."

An environmental protection lawsuit was filed by the Attorney General's office in April 2007 alleging that sediment was illegally discharged on repeated occasions into East Okoboji Lake. The lawsuit also alleged that the developers failed to comply with the terms of their permit for controlling stormwater discharges, and failed to implement the pollution prevention plan. DNR officials also observed illegally burned construction wastes at the site.

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Northey, a corn and soybean farmer from Spirit Lake,

is serving Secretary Agriculture

DCN
Wednesday

COMI

The Lakes Area Market will be open V and Saturday morning 7:30 a.m. - noon at the County Fairgrounds out the summer. La Farmers' Market will presentation by the Bees on July 25.

The Spirit Lake Noon would like to invite ex Kiwanis Park, 23rd & on July 22 at 6:30 help dedicate the shel in honor of Peter B N was not only one of t ers and first presidents Lake Noon Kiwanis, generous and witty hur as well as a lifelong res

The Siouxland Co Blood Bank will host drive from 1-5 p.m. W July 22 at Terner Cable in Terrell.

Career options in of biorenewable fuel reviewed at a meeting for Spencer later this The meeting will start Thursday, July 23, at the campus of Iowa Lak N. Grand Ave. The will include an overvie industry, careers availab fuels as well as data on t es which help individ pare for a career in the

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The Samaritans, a work project branch of the men's ministry at First Lutheran Church has announced plans for a Dad's Bel- gian Waffle Feed, Sunday, Sept. 6, from 8:00 AM to 11:30 AM, at the church at 1525 Three Cross Road, West Okoboji. The menu will include Belgian Waffles, cream, butter and syrup and beverages. Cost for the feed is \$7 materials for their building and fix up projects. Mark the date on your calendar: Sunday, Labor Day weekend, Sept. 6, and be sure to attend!



DCN April 29, 2009

Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation preserves, improves environmental quality

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation is organized exclusively for the charitable, educational, and scientific purposes of preserving and improving the environmental quality in Dickinson County.

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable corporation, is able to help you accomplish your conservation wishes or to help with your estate planning to place land in an easement or reduce your tax burdens by donating land to be maintained as agricultural or natural or for a special interest, such as a park.

The foundation accepts monetary gifts, which may be given anonymously, and gifts may be designated as restricted or unrestricted.

A new 2008 tax law is in effect that provides Iowa residents a generous state income tax credit for donating land or land rights to a qualified conservation organization. A donation of land or a conservation easement (or sale of either with below market-value pricing) allows you to subtract up to 50 percent of your donation's value from your Iowa state income

tax bill. The maximum tax credit per gift is \$100,000. If your credit exceeds your income tax total, the remaining credit can be carried forward for up to 20 years. You should be able to still claim your federal charitable deduction, if applicable.

The new law reduces the actual cost of donating, which allows more landowners to take advantage of the tax credit and protect farmland and natural areas in perpetuity.

For more information on the web, visit the Iowa Dept. of Revenue at : www.iowa.gov/tax/1040EI/Line/08Line53.html#Conservation.

Contact the Dickinson SWCD Foundation if you are interested in leaving a legacy. Gifts may be tax-deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes.

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation
· Has participated with the creation of Fuller Park in the Maywood area.

· Sponsors two (2) annual scholarships in the amount of \$500 each, to Dickinson County graduating seniors to be used for continuing education. The District

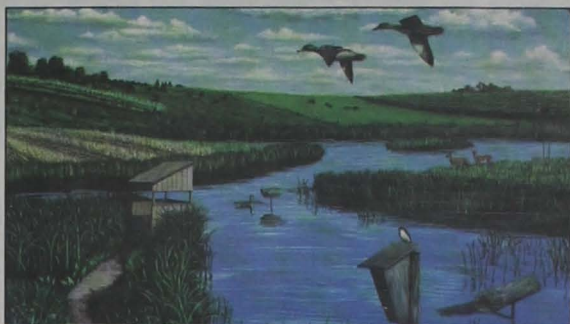


PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCS

Scholarship is agriculture or natural sciences based and the Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship may be used towards any course of study.

· Provides funds, matching or non-matching, for temporary employment opportunities through the Dickinson SWCD office.

· Provides funds to the Dickinson SWCD

to provide for educational opportunities, such as the 6th Grade Outdoor Classroom, Poster Contest, Stewardship Week, and Teacher Academy.

· Has purchased office and field equipment to provide better service to the public.

· Conducts an annual tree and shrub sale as its only fundraiser.



7-22-09

Pioneer Days
Milford hosts annual
community celebration
this weekend.

INSERT



SON news

2, 2009

Number 77

segment and Jackson trails



PHOTO BY JARED RANSOM - DCN STAFF

County Trails commemorated the opening of the first-on Friday, July 17 at Mini-Wakan State Park.

Iowa CREP
program breaks
ground on local
project

BY CAROLINE RUSK
DCN STAFF

The Lakes area is about to gain another tool in the fight for clean water.

In a joint effort between several major county, state and national organizations, the Iowa Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) broke ground Monday morning on an area being converted into a three-acre wetland to treat 600 acres of farmland.

"What we do here in Iowa has a big impact on that happens elsewhere in the United States," said Chuck Gipp, Director of Iowa Department of Agriculture Land Stewardship - Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC). "What we have here is a true partnership."

The land, located just west of Highway 71 near the Dickinson/Clay border, will be known as the Peterson site.

Several attendees thanked the Peterson family for their

CREP

continued on page 2A

DCN

Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Conservation Stewardship Program sign-up nears end

The first round of the Conservation Stewardship program (CSP) sign-up for farmers in Dickinson County will end soon.

The Conservation Stewardship Program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, is a voluntary program that encourages farm operators to maintain and add to existing conservation activities in their farming operation. Annual payments are made through 5-year Conservation Stewardship Program contracts. Supplemental Conservation Stewardship

Program payments may be earned if farm operators adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Dickinson County farmers interested in CSP can start by picking up a CSP self-screening check at the NRCS Office in Spirit Lake. Producers are encouraged to make their application for CSP now so their application can be considered for funding in the first CSP ranking period. For more information farmers can also call the Spirit Lake NRCS office at (712) 336-3782 ext.3.

Dickinson SWCD Foundation Scholarships Awarded

06-02-10

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation announces three \$500 scholarships have been awarded to graduating Dickinson County high school seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.



Adam Dreeszen

senior, Adam Dreeszen. Adam plans to study farm/diesel mechanics or carpentry at Des Moines Area Community College.



Douglas Schwaller

Two \$500 scholarships were awarded this year to Okoboji seniors, Dustin Schwaller and Douglas Schwaller. Both Dustin and Douglas plan to attend Iowa Lakes Community College to

study Ag Production Technology.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for students continuing their education in any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies.

The Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study.



Dustin Schwaller

Dickinson County Water Quality Commission sets time line

Aug 4 2010

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission started the application for the request for funds on Aug. 1. The Water Quality Commission has up to \$200,000 annually used to support water quality projects for Dickinson County lakes and their watersheds. The funds have assisted over the past several years to support water monitoring, wetland restoration, educational programs and storm water management projects.

These funds are available

to non-profit organizations that are looking to improve or project water quality for Dickinson County lakes.

All applications must be returned to the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District Office by 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 1. The projects will be reviewed by the Water Quality Commissioners and a decision should be made on the proposals no later than early November 2010.

Applications are distributed through the Dickinson County Soil and Water

District Office at 241217th Street, Spirit Lake or by contacting Steve Anderson at (712) 336-3782 x3 or by e-mail at steven.randerson@ia.nacdn.net.

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission is comprised of representatives from every city within Dickinson County and representatives from the county. The Commission was established in 2001 and their funds have been used as a local match toward state and federal water quality funds.

JUNE 11 SIGN UP DEADLINE

06-02-10

CSP payment averages \$25 per acre

In 2009, participants earned an average \$25/acre/year for their current and future conservation efforts through the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), said Carroll Oskvig, district conservationist for NRCS in Spirit Lake. CSP is a voluntary program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones. Participants agree to five-year contracts.

"Actual payment rates are affected by several factors: land use, existing stewardship activities and future stewardship activities," said Oskvig. "Crop land acres receive a higher payment. And producers who agree to more

new stewardship activities and address more than one resource concern also receive a higher payment."

To be eligible producers must be in compliance with current HEL compliance plan, managing erosion, practicing good pest and nutrient management and following good grazing management. They must also commit to additional activities like: controlling traffic in crop fields, testing stalks for nutrients, managing grazing for water quality.

Applications received by June 11 will be considered for the next ranking and funding period. CSP is offered through a continuous sign-up with announced cut-off

application dates for ranking periods.

Oskvig encourages producers to use the CSP self-screening checklist to determine if the program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local USDA-NRCS offices or on the NRCS Web site www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html.

For more information about CSP, including eligibility requirements, producers can visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html or visit their local NRCS field office.

Dickinson SWCD to offer Foundation Scholarships

The Dickinson SWCD Foundation announces the availability of two \$500 scholarships that will be presented to Dickinson County graduating high school seniors. These scholarships are to be used for the first year of education on the college or vocational school level.

The District Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is offered for any field of agriculture or natural sciences studies (this includes a broad array of studies) and in addition, the winning application will be forwarded to compete in the Conservation Districts of Iowa's (CDI) Auxiliary Annual Scholarships. CDI funds six regional awards of \$300 each and state level awards in the amount of \$1,800, \$1,200 and \$1,000. The applicant needs to submit two typed copies of their application and must use the 2010 application form.

The Jo Groves Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$500, is not limited in the course of study. The applicant needs to submit two typed copies of their application and must use the Jo Groves application form.

High school seniors must submit their applications to the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District no later than March 3. Both scholarships will be judged on leadership and scholastic achievement.

Applications can be obtained from the High School Counselors at Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji, Spirit Lake or Graettinger/Terril High Schools, or by contacting the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District at the USDA Service Center in Spirit Lake at 2412 17th Street, by calling (712) 336-3782, ext. 3, e-mail: maxine.butler@ia.nacdn.net or check the Clean Water Alliance website: <http://cleanwateralliance.net>.

Dec 8 2010

Monday, April 25, 2011

Longtime Dickinson Co. NRCS Staffer To Retire

(Spirit Lake) -- A long-time employee of the Dickinson County office of the Natural Resources Conservation Service is stepping down.

Carroll Oskvig is retiring after more than 30 years of service with the agency, which is housed with the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District office in Spirit Lake.

Oskvig has worked in the Spirit Lake office since August of 1996.

Carroll and his wife Martha live in Milford.

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners will hold a retirement open house for Oskvig this coming Friday, April 29th from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Expo Building on the Dickinson County Fairgrounds in Spirit Lake. The public is cordially invited.

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Ads by Google

04-25-11

Soil and Water Conservation week is Nov. 27 – Dec. 3

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey highlighted Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week and praised the important conservation work that has been achieved to better care for the air, soil and water in Iowa. Gov. Terry Branstad will issue a proclamation recognizing Nov. 27 – Dec. 3 as Soil and Water Conservation Week.

"Soil and Water Conservation Week is an opportunity to recognize all that has been accomplished through efforts to prevent soil erosion and protect water quality here in Iowa," Northey said. "This year marks the 72nd anniversary of the law that started our statewide conservation efforts and is a great time to see

all that has been accomplished and also recognize the work still to be done."

The severe erosion during the "Dust Bowl" years of the 1930s brought about the first efforts to prevent soil erosion, which also helped protect water resources. Iowa passed a law in 1939 to establishing a state soil conservation agency and also created the means for soil and water conservation districts to organize. This legislation declared it the policy of the state of Iowa to: preserve soil and water; protect the state's tax base; and promote health, safety and public welfare of people of Iowa.

Today, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's Division

of Soil Conservation and the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts located in each county are fulfilling Iowa's conservation mission. Other key partners in Iowa's conservation efforts include USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and Iowa State University.

The Department's Division of Soil Conservation provides state leadership in the protection and management of soil, water and mineral resources and assisting soil and water conservation districts and private landowners to meet their agricultural and environmental protection needs.

In recent years the

department has also started to work more in our towns and cities to prevent erosion and protect water quality through the capture and infiltration of storm-water runoff. The Department has added five urban conservationists that work with homeowners, land development professionals, city officials and government agencies to provide information and technical assistance on urban best management practices for sustainable storm-water management.

Soil and Water Conservation Week recognizes that the abundance of Iowa's agricultural products and the quality of life we enjoy are dependent upon the proper use and management of soil and water resources.

12-14-11

CSP applications due Jan. 13

Iowa farmers interested in signing up for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) should submit applications to their local USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office by Jan. 13, 2012, to be considered for eligibility during the first ranking period of 2012.

Through CSP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible producers who conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancements and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

"CSP continues to be a good opportunity for conservation farmers to try new practices while receiving payments for their past achievements," said Richard Sims, state conservationist for Iowa NRCS.

Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe. Participation in the program is voluntary.

An updated CSP self-screening checklist is available to help potential applicants determine if

CSP is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about CSP eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local NRCS offices and on the Iowa NRCS website at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ConservationStewardshipProgram.html.

As part of the CSP application process, applicants work with NRCS field personnel to complete a resource inventory using the Conservation Measurement Tool (CMT). The CMT determines the conservation performance for existing and new conservation activities. The applicant's conservation performance will be used to determine eligibility, ranking and payments.

Through the 2011 CSP sign-up, Iowa farmers in 93 counties enrolled more than 368,000 acres in CSP, helping to improve water and soil quality, enhance wildlife habitat and address the effects of climate change. Iowans received an average of \$29 per acre during the 2011 CSP sign-up. Average payments depend on land use, existing stewardship and new stewardship practices.

To apply or to find out more about CSP, visit your local USDA Service Center or go online to www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov.

CSP deadline approaches

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PHOTO BY RUSS MITCHELL

The USDA Service Center has a new location west of the KUOO radio station complex. They moved from their previous location near the Pronto convenience store on Sept. 1. They will be holding an open house for locals to attend from 2-4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 16.

Open house planned for new USDA building

BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

Dickinson County has a new site for landowners who want to take advantage of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Program services, state of Iowa programs, and other conservation incentives.

The USDA Service Center staff will host an open house Friday, Dec. 16, at its new location just west of the KUOO radio station along Highway 9. Hours for the event are 2-4 p.m. Services were previously located in a plaza near the intersection of Highways 9 and 71, just

north of Pronto convenience store.

"The open house is to provide the opportunity for landowners, land operators and the general public to take a look at the new center," said Larry Lago, the executive director of the USDA Farm Agency.

The new building will house the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation District under one roof.

"It will provide more ease for the farmers to have one single building to seek assistance," said NRCS district conserva-

tionist Mark Schutt. "Also, the agencies will save on expenses."

The move to its current location at the Highway 9 and 155th Street intersection was completed Sept. 1 and came on the heels of a fire that damaged the former location in the summer of 2010.

Lago thinks the new location provides better access for local residents.

"The public doesn't have to deal with the congestion of the major intersection anymore," Lago said. "There will be better access to the parking lot and the building is also more handicap accessible."

The USDA staff gained some efficiency through a practice of renting office space instead of owning a building.

"We want to provide a presence in the county — a presence which provides the county farmers and land owners immediate access to farm programs, loans and conservation practices," Lago said. "We hope to serve a broad customer base for resources and program issues."

The USDA Service Center offices are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and can be reached by telephone at (712) 336-3782.

Local conservation practices on display



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Soil and water conservationists from all over Iowa traveled to Des Moines last week for the annual Conservation Day at the Capitol. Many conservationists had information displayed in the Capitol rotunda about their watershed protection programs and were able to talk to legislators about soil and water issues facing the state. Left to right are: John Wills of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance, state Sen. David Johnson and State Soil Conservation Committee Board member S. Vance Hjelm.

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6-6-12

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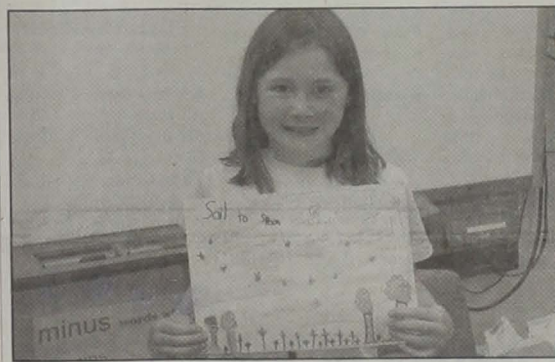


PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners are proud to announce their winner of this year's poster contest in Division 2, Grades 2 and 3. Macy Alderson, a Graettinger-Terril second grade student in Ms. Nicole Voetmann's class in Terril, was recently awarded her first place certificate and a \$10 bill. The poster contest is co-sponsored by Grinnell Mutual Reinsurance Company and the Auxiliary of the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI). This year's theme was "Soil to Spoon."

CLASS IS IN SESSION ... OUTSIDE



Area students learn the majesty of nature at Kettleson-Hogsback

learning the environment.

The students spent the morning and early afternoon rotating through various educational stations, which were set up throughout the wildlife area.

"It's good to get the kids outside and away from Facebook and video games," said Rory Martinson, a local DNR employee who works in the Kettleson-Hogsback area. "Show them what is available out here for them to enjoy. It's open to the public for all kinds of activities."

Kettleson-Hogsback is a combination of woodlands, open grasslands, lakes and wetlands all covering approximately 1,895 acres. The area has a peak of nearly 40 feet and separates Marble Lake from Hottes Lake. It is located on the rugged Altamont moraine—a hilly area with ridges scattered throughout marshes and poorly drained wetlands. The land is basically the remnants of the continental glaciers from the Wisconsin ice age nearly 15,000 years ago.

When pioneers began settling in the Dickinson County area in the late 1800s, the Kettleson-Hogsback land was considered an essential spot for nesting and migrating waterfowl as well as a large number of other wildlife.

Martinson mentioned hunters are allowed to come out to the grounds—it is a designated public hunting area.

"There are a lot of different waterfowl game here for hunters," he said. "It really is a popular place."

they require to live—grasslands, wetlands," he said. "It's fun to have the real-life, hands-on duck, I have four ducks that I release out into the wild."

Martinson will go out and set up traps to capture some wood ducks a few nights before the outdoor classroom.

"I like seeing the kids' faces light up," he said. "When I show them the wood duck there are a lot of gasps because they are so colorful."

During the lunch hour, students were treated to an always-popular falconry presentation. Mother Nature cooperated for this year's outdoor classroom experience and the students were able to enjoy all the different stations without any problems.

They all hopped on the buses around 2 p.m. and headed back to "indoor" classrooms after the fun and interesting learning experience.

"There is a diversity of all kinds of things here, I think they enjoy them all," Martinson said about the students. "I try to keep it simple and not bore them with facts and have hands-on activities."

The participating organizations included; the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Trees Forever, the County Conservation Board, Lakeside Lab, the Iowa Great Lakes Water Safety Council, the Dickinson County Animal Clinic and ISU Extension. They all donated their time and resources to help the students gain a greater appreciation of nature.





PHOTO BY BRANDON HURLEY

Center Lake watershed project set to begin in July

BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

Well over half a million dollars have been donated to the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for a project to improve water quality at Center Lake.

Coordinator John Wills hopes the upgrades will better filter runoff from Highway 71 near the 23rd Street intersection in Spirit Lake.

The city of Spirit Lake has been looking at water quality issues at Center Lake for the past four years, but a lack of funding stalled progress. Dickinson County Soil

and Water Conservation District took over efforts and the group has been able to raise \$636,555 for the project.

Businesses and traffic near the 23rd Street intersection produce heavily contaminated runoff that

CENTER LAKE
continued on page 2A

CENTER LAKE WATERSHED

continued from page 1A

found it's way into the nearby sewer system – which empties into Center Lake. The SWCD plans to use low-impact development practices – rain gardens and bio cells – to filter some of the water. Those practices and others are designed to absorb water runoff, clean it, and slowly release it to the storm sewer or other areas.

"It's going to relieve some of that pressure on the storm system. It's overtaxed and it's not able to work properly because there is too much water," Wills said. "The system was built in the 1940s and our effort is to make the sewer system function a little bit better, but to also clean that water up so that when it reaches Center Lake it is better for the lake."

Rain gardens are depressed areas, usually containing native plants. Bio Cells are essentially a larger version of a rain garden. Wills said the structures are 95 percent effective in removing pollution – they absorb the water for a 24 hour period then return it to the sewer system, according to the coordinator.

Wills also said phosphorous is prevalent in the soil it can be devastating to the vegetation of the lake – the rain gardens will help eliminate a majority of the chemical.

The Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board gave the project a \$100,000 grant in February.

"We have about seven or eight different funders

that have contributed," Wills said. "Every time we have gotten a donation or a grant it has been a sense of relief and joy that we have succeeded again and it proves that we have a good project under way."

The DNR's EPA Non-Point Solution Funding has provided \$374,000, the Iowa DNR Lake Restoration Fund has donated \$47,000, the city of Spirit Lake will put in \$54,000, the Dickinson County Water Quality Commission will donate \$50,000, and the Center Lake Protective Association has donated \$500.

Construction is set to begin on July 1. Planners want to make sure the rain gardens are attractive in addition to being functional.

"In some instances, we may put them in a front lawn of a business or a homeowner and we have to have an agreement with them to put them in," he said. "They aren't cheap, but they are very effective."

A majority of the work is expected to be completed by June 30, 2014. Work the following year will include testing to make sure the rain gardens and bio cells are working properly.

"We are pretty excited," Wills said. "It's not often that you can get funding together from that many groups. Everybody thinks it's a good project and they think we are doing good things. I'm excited to see things happen and get started."

Ace Cory Award Presented To Clean Water Alliance Coordinator



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ACE CORY AWARD PRESENTED TO CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE COORDINATOR

Wed 7-31-2013

(Spirit Lake)—The Coordinator of the Cleanwater Alliance is this year's recipient of the Ace Cory Award. The Okoboji Protective Association presented the award to John Wills at its annual meeting held this past Saturday. Wills tells KUOO news he was completely surprised by the announcement. [\(click here for comment.\)](#) "I didn't really expect that was something I would be getting and when I was at the annual meeting Saturday and they announced my name I was totally flabbergasted and honored that the fact that you know people outside my field who are seeing things happen and want to honor me for doing what they think is good things and I just think of all the people who are doing such great things in the Iowa Great Lakes and in Dickinson county and for them to choose me I was just very honored."

Wills says he has a lot of fond memories of Ace Cory and his hard work to protect the Iowa Great Lakes. [\(click here for comment.\)](#) "I just remember back in the 90's working here and Ace Cory walking in the door and saying what do you need to get done, because I'll get it done. And he would do that over and over again. And of course he came up with the slogan if the lakes are green the cash registers won't ring. So that was kind of his slogan and his reasoning for protecting the lakes and many memories he's had as a kid and his children had. So he just wanted to protect the lakes and keep them the way they are so many more can come and visit and enjoy them."

The Ace Cory Award has been presented by the OPA annually since 2006. Previous recipients of the award include John Synhorst, Barbara Mendenhall, Jane Shuttleworth, Orville Berg, David Thoreson, Phil Petersen and Mike Hawkins.



John Wills

[Return](#)

Water quality commission accepting grant applications

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission is accepting grant applications for its annual water quality grant period until Oct. 1. The grant application materials are available at the Clean Water Alliance website located at http://cleanwateralliance.net/blog/?page_id=268. In addition, interested groups can contact the Dickinson SWCD at 3302 18th Street, Spirit Lake, IA or 712-336-3782 ext. 3 and talk to John Wills, Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance Coordinator, for information about the Grants. The Application Process timeline is as follows:

- Aug. 1 – Request for Applications (RFA) begins
- Aug. 29 – Water Quality Commission Help Session from 3 p.m. to completion at the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Spirit Lake.
- Oct. 1 – Grant Applications due to

Dickinson SWCD by 4:30 p.m.

Applications will be accepted for any project from a non-profit organization or governmental agency, which improves the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes, Silver Lake, and Little Swan Lake in Dickinson County. The cities or the county governments who are members of the agreement are not eligible to apply for grant applications but groups within those entities are eligible.

To date, over \$2 million has been granted to groups and agencies in Dickinson County to protect local water bodies. That money has been matched by over \$20 million. The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission includes members from all the cities and the county government from within Dickinson County. Each city and the county contribute to the commission and have commissioners to represent them on the commission.

LAKE PARK Farmer Appreciation DAYS 2013



Community

DCN

Wednesday, September 18, 2013

Herbert named 'Conservation Farmer of the Year'



Jared and Mary Herbert of Lake Park received the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award Thursday, Sept. 5 at the 67th Annual Iowa Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners Conference at the Sheraton Hotel in West Des Moines.

Since Jared was a young man, he has always had a passion for environmental consciousness and sustainable farming. He has been a no-till bean/strip till corn farmer since 1992 and is always trying new conservation practices.

Jared has used a Winter Rye Cover Crop on his fields for the last three years and will continue using a multi-species cover crop in the future. He has enrolled over 80 acres of CRP and buffer strips for wildlife habitat and water quality.

His latest projects include installing three water and sediment control basins, bringing his total basins to six. He is planning to install a bio-reactor in his field that will outlet into a drainage ditch that leads to Silver Lake.

He also is one of the founding members of the Silver Lake Park Improvement Association and he has partnered with the Silver Lake Watershed Project to host a Cover Crop and No-Till field day and to complete conservation plans throughout the Silver Lake Watershed. Jared and Mary are acknowledged for their conservation work and they continue to be an example to lead other local farmers to adopt conservation practices.

Northey confirms third Iowa Ag Secretary bid



Spirit Lake Republican Bill Northey has announced plans to run for a third term as Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. He made the announcement Saturday at an annual barbeque fundraising event in Des Moines.

BY RUSS MITCHELL
MANAGING EDITOR

Spirit Lake Republican Bill Northey on Saturday confirmed plans to run for a third term as Iowa Secretary of Agriculture.

The Spirit Lake Republican made the announcement at the seventh "Bill's BBQ Bash," his annual campaign fundraiser at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines.

"I love the job that I have,"

Northey said. "Agriculture in this state is an amazing thing."

Northey said his office has a series of initiatives to accomplish, including volunteer efforts to improve water quality.

"We'd trying to engage producers to a much higher degree in reducing nitrogen and phosphorus," he said. Northey is calling on an expansion of programs

JULY 17, 2013



that encourage nitrate-removing wetlands.

The ag secretary said he would like to continue a practice of visiting all 99 of Iowa's counties each year as well.

Northey is a fourth-generation corn and soybean farmer who graduated from Iowa State in 1981. He won his first bid to statewide office in 2006. He was reelected in 2010.

He also gave serious consideration to a U.S. Senate campaign earlier this year. Incumbent Democrat Tom Harkin will not seek another six-year term. Northey ruled himself out of a Republican

Primary for that office. U.S. Rep. Steve King and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds also hinted at interest, but also decided not to run for Harkin's seat.

"I'm very content with where I'm at," Northey said. "My decision wasn't just based on who else might be interested."

The Green Plains Superior ethanol plant is holding an open house Wednesday (July 17) featuring Northey as the guest speaker. The officeholder said his travels allow him to listen to the needs of Iowa producers and better lead the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

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DCN

Wednesday, August 14, 2013



Clean Water Alliance Coordinator receives local Conservation Award

John Wills, Coordinator of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance, has been awarded the eighth annual Ace Cory Conservation Award. The Okoboji Protective Association (OPA) presented the award to Wills in recognition for his efforts in fashioning partnerships between organizations to preserve water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes.

Wills, a native of Sibley, has a bachelor's degree in biology, and master's degrees in political science and environmental policy and management. He came to the Lakes area in 1993 and spent seven years as an environmental specialist with the Dickinson County Soil and Water Office. Wills left to join the Loess Hills Alliance. He is currently a first sergeant in the

Mobile Cavalry Unit of the Nebraska National Guard, and has served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Wills returned to the Lakes Region in 2009 to lead the Clean Water Alliance. In this role, Wills works with more than 60 local, state and federal groups for clean water projects. He has also authored the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Management Plan, a comprehensive, 20-year plan for reducing pollution in the lakes, addressing one acre at a time. He lives in Spirit Lake with his wife and three children.

"He has really become the face of clean water projects in the Iowa Great Lakes," said Greg Drees, former OPA president. Drees added that Wills was a "natural fit" and had "flourished" in his

profession.

"I'm very proud to have been presented that award. I never in my dreams thought that that would be presented to me," Wills said. "To be presented that, I will call a pinnacle of my career, one of the things I can look back on and be proud of for the rest of my life."

The Ace Cory Award has been presented by the OPA annually since 2006 to an individual whose work in the Iowa Great Lakes area, voluntary or professional, reflects the principles of the late Ace Cory, one of the region's pioneer environmentalists. Previous recipients of the award are: John Synhorst, Barbara Mendenhall, Jane Shuttleworth, Orville Berg, David Thoreson, Phil Petersen, and Mike Hawkins.

A MEAL 'ON THE GO'

Lake Park uses goats to clear away unwanted plants

BY RUSS MITCHELL
MANAGING EDITOR

Temporary fencing and yellow caution tape kept onlookers from getting too close to Silver Lake's eastern shoreline Thursday afternoon.

City officials were on hand. A transport trailer was parked nearby and onlookers could see foot traffic going into and coming out of the brush.

Fortunately, buckthorn and leafy spurge can't file charges. Any unwanted plants were assaulted — by design — as a part of an effort to improve the view at City Park in Lake Park.

"Goats on the Go," a sustainable vegetation management business from Ames set up the fencing to direct a herd of 20 goats to munch ... and munch ... and munch ... invading plants south of the playground equipment in City Park.

Lake Park City Administrator Wade Wagoner and the city's park board brought in the central Iowa goat company to clear away noxious weeds that blocked a view of the lake.

"It's such a wonderful park with all of the oak trees and playground equipment," Wagoner said. "There's a lovely campground with a swimming pool, tennis courts and a Frisbee

golf course. We just thought of it as a great opportunity to make a really great area even better."

The Natural Resources Conservation Service serves as the watershed coordinator for Silver Lake and helped fund the project.

Goats on the Go co-owner Aaron Steele explained the benefits of goats over power tools.

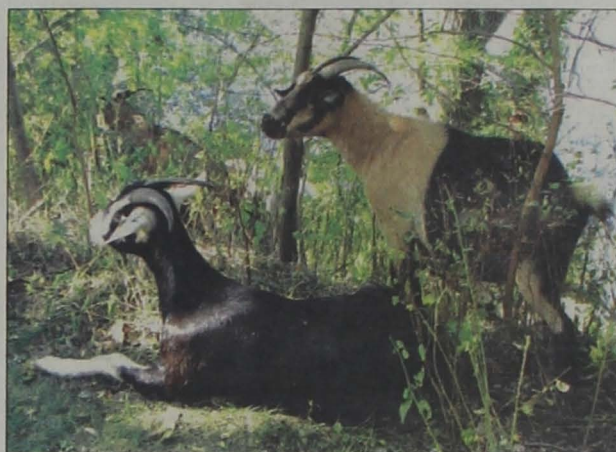
"When you use goats, you're not using gasoline-powered equipment," Steele said. "You're not putting carbon dioxide into the air and you're not causing erosion on these steep slopes because the goats are so light-footed. You are also not putting any herbicide out there."

The goats can work in places that are uncomfortable or dangerous to park maintenance crews as well.

"One of my street guys got hurt while cleaning this bank up with a chainsaw," Wagoner said of a previous effort.

The goats won't eat everything. Crews will have to clear some of the thicker branches away. The job will be easier without worries of poison ivy, poison oak, thistle, buckthorn, eastern red cedar, pigweed and buttonweed in the way. The herd's favorite menu item is honeysuckle.

Steele and co-owner Chad Steenhoek received a visit from Trent Prather's fourth-grade class



PHOTOS BY RUSS MITCHELL

Goats on the Go is an Ames-based company that brings goats on site to clear away noxious weeds including garlic mustard, autumn olive, wild parsnip, nettle and burdock.



Students in Trent Prather's fourth-grade class at Harris-Lake Park made a field trip out to City Park on the first day of "Goats on the Go." A herd of about 20 goats wandered into the brush along the east shore of Silver Lake to clear away some non-native plants.

GOATS ON THE GO

continued on page 5A

GOATS ON THE GO

continued from page 1A

at Harris-Lake Park on day one of a three-day process. Steenhoek explained the benefits of a hungry herd in the plant removal process. He also talked about another benefit of the goat operation.

"If leaves go in one end, guess what comes out the other end?" he asked the class.

"Fertilizer," a young voice correctly answered from the mass of clamoring students. The nutrients will come in handy for Lake Park's next phase of the \$5,000 project.

"Originally, if we were sitting here 100 or 200 years ago, these banks would have been prairie grass and primarily oak trees," Wagoner said. "Almost everything else here is an invasive species. The idea is to turn it into a more natural environment."

The planned prairie grass will be 2-3 feet high and folks who sit on benches near the shore can get a clear view of the lake.

"We seen this sort of thing



PHOTO BY RUSS MITCHELL

done in other parts of the country, but it is a relatively undeveloped business model here in the Midwest," Steele said. "My partner and I had a few goats. We enjoyed raising them and wanted to expand our herd. But, we didn't really have the land to expand our herd — nor the money to buy more land. We also looked around and saw a growing number of non-farm residents living on acreages and living on tim-

bered subdivision lots."

The Goats on the Go owners work with their customers to make sure the goats are a good solution to the owner's property needs.

"As you can see, goats don't leave things nicely manicured," Steele said. "They attack problem weeds and brush. They do a good job of defoliating and stressing those plants. As long as that is a primary concern for property owners, we're set.

Goats are often the best way to go."

A herd of 20 to 25 goats can clear a half-acre of dense brush in 3-5 days.

"Goats are amazing in that they'll eat stuff that other livestock won't," Steele said. "Here we are, taking a bunch of nuisance plants and turning them into feed ... We're fighting this perception all of the time that you can just take goats and use them to mow our lawns. Really we like to think of goats as bushwhackers more than lawnmowers. Sheep might do a pretty good job of clipping your lawn close, but that's certainly not what goats do."

Mr. Prather's fourth-grade students weren't nearby when Steele mentioned Iowa's growing demand for goat meat. The well-fed goats didn't hear about that part of the job either.

Besides, Steele was on the "safe" side of his solar-powered electric fence.

Zebra mussel population grows in Iowa Great Lakes

NOVEMBER 20, 2013



PHOTO SUBMITTED

BY RUSS MITCHELL
MANAGING EDITOR

It looks like an unwanted aquatic visitor is here to stay.

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources on Thursday confirmed that boat hoists in East Lake Okoboji, West Lake Okoboji and Lower Gar Lake are showing signs of an entrenched zebra mussel population.

The mussels aren't native to the Iowa Great Lakes — northwest Iowa waters became contaminated when boaters failed to properly drain, clean and dry boats as they moved from one lake to another. Known populations of zebra mussels in Iowa include Clear Lake, Lake Rathbun, the Mississippi and Maquoketa rivers, and Bluebill Lake near Mason

City, according to the Iowa DNR.

The infestation is a disappointment to Lakes protective groups. Local advocates put up "don't move a mussel" billboards, worked with the DNR to place summer staff at high-traffic docking locations and even considered mussel-sniffing inspection dogs as part of an effort to keep the species out of local lakes.

Mike Hawkins, fisheries biologist for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, expects the zebra mussel population to explode over the next couple of years. The mollusks will attach to hard smooth surfaces, including boat hoists and water intake valve systems.

"From a recreational

standpoint, these organisms can explode their numbers — at least initially," Hawkins said. "We may see some subsequent die-offs in zebra mussels. That's when their shells — washing up on shorelines and beaches — can cause some impacts to folks who want to use the water. They'll want to take some precautions to keep their feet safe because the dead shells can be very sharp."

Biologists have no way of reining in a zebra mussel population once it is established in a lake system. Hawkins said the emergence of zebra mussels will cause an energy shift in the Lakes ecosystem.

Mussels are efficient at filtering water and will remove plankton and zooplankton.

"That changes what's available for the rest of the plants and animals out there," he said. "In many cases, we have seen or have documented increased water clarity — increased water clarity sounds like a good thing, but in some cases that can be accompanied by greater blue-green algae blooms."

Hawkins and the DNR

ZEBRA MUSSELS

continued on page 5A

ZEBRA MUSSEL

continued from page 1A



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Pictures from other lakes demonstrate how zebra mussels can take over a habitat.

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Hawkins and the DNR have been watching for signs of infestation over the past year. The biologist was recently contacted Nov. 1 by a Lakes service provider who was concerned after seeing suspicious shells attached to a boat hoist. "After closer examination it became evident that many of the recently removed hoists had juvenile zebra mussels attached," Hawkins said.

"I suspected that other hoists from the area may have zebra mussels attached as well."

Hawkins also has examined boat hoists removed from Big Spirit Lake. Zebra mussels haven't established a population there, but the biologist says that body of water is in extreme danger for contamination because of its proximity to the Okoboji lakes.

"Inspection efforts are continuing on hundreds of boat hoists and should provide additional information on the extent of the infestation within the Iowa Great Lakes," he said, in a statement from the DNR.

As the infestation develops it will be important for boaters to clean, drain and dry their boats and equipment before moving from the Iowa Great Lakes to other bodies of water, according to the DNR. Boaters are legally required to remove all invasive species and to drain all water from boats and equipment before leaving a waterbody.

Hometown Farmer: Conservation Conscious

Posted: Dec 05, 2013 9:30 AM CST
By Jacob Heller, Anchor - bio | email

LAKE PARK, IA - Harvest may have ended weeks ago, but you still might see some heavy equipment in a field near Lake Park, Iowa.

Jared Herbert farms a lot of ground that drains into Silver Lake, only a few miles away.

To help keep the water clean, he's putting in something a little different: a bio-reactor.

"It's a big trench that's filled up with wood chips and the tile drainage water runs through," said Herbert. "That takes the nitrogen out of the water and turns it into a gas."

This isn't the first time Jared's dabbled in conservation, though. You can find examples all over his farm.

He no-tills all of his land and he even plants something a little extra.

"By next springs, by the time we plant, it'll just look like a green lawn out here," said Herbert, pointing to growing cover crops in one of his fields.

He has been planting cereal Rye and tillage radish seed as cover crops for a few years.

Herbert even plants around five acres of food plots, forage for deer and other wildlife.

And according to him, leaving crops in the field isn't as expensive as you might think.

"You still get maybe a half to a third of the crop off it, so there's still some salvage value to it there," said Herbert.

He's one farmer using many methods of conservation, farming the land and hoping to make it a better place.

If you know of any farmers you think would be great here on "Proud to be a Hometown Farmer," please email Jake at jheller@siouxlandnews.com.

FOX44 NEWS.COM

WG CHEERLEADERS

continued from page 1A

zeal in promoting the Iowa Great Lakes Area;

- A person who is enthusiastic about what the campus has to offer and who has a deep love and concern for its history and future development;

- A person who has spirit and devotion and who goes above and beyond the call of duty to encourage creative talents in its students;

- A person who is concerned about creating a cheerful and pleasant atmosphere for visitors and guests to our campus.

The cheerleaders were selected by vote at the most recent Winter Games planning meeting Thursday, Jan. 9 at Hedberg Theatre.

"I think it's a great group of people," said U of O Winter Games co-chair Jeremy Morrison. "It's a good mix from across the community, they are all very well-deserving."

The 2014 University of Okoboji Cheerleaders are:

JENNIFER GUSTAFSON

Jennifer Gustafson is deeply involved in the Iowa Great Lakes community. Gustafson has been continued to be a driving force behind the Blue Zones project as well as a key part in recruiting new medical professionals to the area as an employee of Lakes Regional Healthcare.

Gustafson has spent many years chairing the U of O Winter Games 5K/10K road race

and has served as an "unofficial" cheerleader for the community for years. Jen resides in Spirit Lake with her children, Drew and Meredith.

LISSA POTTER

Area artist and businesswoman Lissa Potter has been an active member of Iowa Great Lakes community as owner and operator of Kurio Kastle Pottery Painting Palace in Arnolds Park.

Many of residents remember Potter from her days at the Pearson Lakes Art Center. In

addition to Kurio Kastle, Potter is also employed by the Iowa Great Lakes Association and the Dickinson County Taxpayer's Association.

This talented artist has touched the lives of thousands with her creativity and fun-loving spirit. Potter is an Arnolds Park resident and avid fisher woman.

SCOTT PYLE

Scott Pyle has helped create lasting memories for thousands upon thousands of people each and every year for the past 11 years as General Manager of the Arnolds Park Amusement Park. Pyle's passion for the Park shows in the capital improvements, enhanced entertainment and overall success of the northwest Iowa treasure.

Pyle assists with numerous activities and is always willing and able to help with community projects. An avid outdoorsman, Pyle is a member of Ducks Unlimited and is a champion for the natural resources in northwest Iowa.

Pyle shares his love of the Park and the Iowa Great Lakes with his two fun and life-loving sons, Tyler and Ryan and wife, Stacy.

BRIAN RICHTER

Many residents know Brian Richter as a smiling face at the Three Sons, and many more know him due to his community involvement. Richter is an Okoboji Elementary mentor, assists with youth basketball skill development and has coached Okoboji boys High School basketball.

Richter is a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and a board member of Lakeside Lab. This Milford resident also helps coordinate the U of O Tennis Tournament and assists with the marathon, soccer tournament as well as any other U of O event that requires his time and talent.

GARY ROSEMORE

Volunteer extraordinaire, Gary Rosemore dedicated his spare time to various activities throughout the Iowa Great Lakes. An Iowa Navy Commodore, Rosemore is a regular volunteer at Business After 5 and ribbon cuttings for The Chamber. An avid baseball fan, Rosemore volunteered for Legion

Baseball for seven years, two of them as State Commissioner. He also delivers Meals on Wheels and groceries to the elderly in the community.

This outgoing and charismatic Spirit Lake resident is married to Linda and proud father to John and Stacy.

TERRY VELDMAN

Owner of the Spirit Lake Pizza Ranch, Terry Veldman has been involved in numerous

community activities for years. A former Chairperson of the University of Okoboji Winter Games, Veldman has unofficially served as cheerleader for decades. He sponsors a broomball team and two bean bag teams during the Winter Games! Veldman supports all area youth sports through the Pizza Ranch and is a member of the Spirit Lake Noon Kiwanis, Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever. Terry and his wife Stephanie are the proud parents of three daughters and reside in Spirit Lake.

JOHN WILLS

John Wills works tirelessly to protect the area's precious natural resources as the Clean Water Alliance Coordinator. This Spirit Lake resident serves our nation as a member of the Army National Guard and is a member of the John W. Kidd VFW Post, Friends of Lakeside Lab, Pheasants Forever and the Okoboji Protective Association.

Rain gardens throughout the Iowa Great Lakes are the result of Wills' hard work, dedication and passion for water quality.

CHRIS YUNGBLUTH

An Okoboji resident, Chris Yungbluth is Fire Chief for the Arnolds Park/Okoboji Fire & Rescue as well as Ambulance Supervisor at Lakes Regional Healthcare. A prominent figure in the community, Yungbluth and fellow firefighters volunteer their time, leave their family in times of need and put their lives on the line to keep residents safe.

Yungbluth, his wife and two young daughters volunteer with all APO Fire & Rescue events. And you'll be sure

to see him at the Winter Games Polar Plunge, an annual fundraiser for his department.

An astounding 29 members of the Iowa Great Lakes were nominated to become Winter Games Cheerleaders.

"It was definitely hard to choose 8 out of the 29 nominated and I think that shows quite a bit for those that were chosen,"

Morrison said.

At the cheerleader dinner, each member selected the letter of Okoboji that they will represent for the next week and a half. They must also come up with an original cheer together.

"Friday morning (Jan. 24) the cheerleaders will begin at the Dry Dock and then they will go on to the chili feed later that night," Morrison said. "On Saturday they will bounce around the different events. They will also get up on

stage at the Winter Games Extravaganza and do their cheer that they created."

The 34th edition of the Winter Games seems to be on track for the weekend just a week and a half away.

"Things are going well," Morrison said. "We would love some more snow though. The ice is plenty thick and everything is going on as usual. All the sponsors have helped lining up the events. We are going to have a lot of fun."

SPIRIT TIME WG 34 cheerleaders announced, event nears



PHOTO BY BRANDON HURLEY

BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

The newest batch of U of O Winter Games cheerleaders have begun working on their chants in preparation for the popular 34th edition winter festival Jan. 24-26.

The eight cheerleaders were introduced at a dinner Tuesday night (Jan. 14) at the Pearson Lakes Art Center.

The annual selection of cheerleaders acknowledges community members who are the "unsung heroes" and continue to

help the Iowa Great Lakes thrive. Cheerleaders are known to offer their support and helping hand on a daily basis and will attend many of the weekend's events as ambassadors for the games.

Winter Games cheerleader nominees must meet the following requirements:

- A person with a ready smile, a cheerful disposition and a generous heart;
- A person with a passionate

WG CHEERLEADERS

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2/19/2014



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LAKES AREA MAN ANNOUNCES CANDIDACY FOR HOUSE DISTRICT ONE SEAT

Wed 2-19-2014 (Spirit Lake)—A lakes area man has announced his candidacy for the House District One seat representing Lyon, Osceola and most of Dickinson counties. John Willis, a Sibley native, has announced his intention to run for the seat. He currently is President of the Okoboji Protective Association and serves in the National Guard.

Willis says his campaign will focus of relieving burdens on small businesses, as well as being a support of agriculture.

Willis is a founding member of Pheasants Forever in Osceola county and a member of the State Pheasants Forever Council. He also serves on the board of Lakeside Lab and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

John and his wife Cami have three adult children.

Kevin Wolfswinkel of Sibley has also announced his candidacy for the seat currently held by Jeff Smith Okoboji. Smith has indicated he will NOT be seeking another term.

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DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT WRAPS UP SOIL AND WATER STEWARDSHIP WEEK May 2014

As a part of Dickinson County for 70 years, the Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District recently reminded the public about a connection to natural resources.

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) celebrated the 59th year of Stewardship week April 27-May 4, 2014. The 2014 Stewardship Week was themed, "DIG DEEPER: Mysteries in the soil."

"Soil is an essential natural resource that all of us depend on each and every day," says NACD President Earl Garber. "The Dust Bowl of the 1930s showed our nation the importance of conservation practices. Farmers and ranchers who have experienced recent droughts know that conservation practices are critical in helping their soil endure, even in the most challenging weather events. Your local conservation district is working with local landowners to assist in a variety of projects and outreach to improve soil health both now and in the long-term."

To find out more about the soil types in your community, visit <http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov>. You can also down-

■ Additional information about the "DIG DEEPER: Mysteries in the soil" program and other natural resource education materials is available on the NACD website at www.nacdnet.org/education.

load an app for your smart devices called "soilweb" developed by the California Soil Resource Lab in collaboration with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District is a member of NACD which oversees the Stewardship Week program. Stewardship Week is one of the largest national annual programs to promote conservation. NACD represents the nation's 3,000 conservation districts, which were established to encourage resource conservation across the country.

February 26, 2014

Area families honored for land donations

More than 2,800 acres of Iowa land with an estimated value of more than \$6 million was permanently protected through many donations for conservation. The donors associated with the 20 donations of land or land value will be recognized during ceremony at the State Capitol.

The ceremony is scheduled on March 11, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., in Legislative Dining Room 15, at the State Capitol, in Des Moines. Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad is scheduled to attend. Landowners who are in attendance will

be honored individually for their donation.

The Gift to Iowa's Future recognition celebrates and honors individuals and corporations who have donated land or a conservation easement to benefit Iowa's parks, trails, fish and wildlife habitat, natural areas, open spaces and public recreation areas for other public uses and benefits.

• The Hunt Family, LLC, of Mason City, donated a 74-acre conservation easement adjacent to Kettleson-Hogsback Wildlife Management Area in Dickinson County to

the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

A high quality remnant prairie on the property is home to important plant species, including small white lady's slipper, western prairie fringed orchid and small fringed gentian.

• E.W. and Delores Maser, of Le Mars, donated a one-acre permanent easement to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources to facilitate the construction of a water control structure at Hottes Lake to manage aquatic vegetation and rough fish.

• Michael and Linda Knudtson of Milford made

a bargain sale of 35 acres in Dickinson County to the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Mill Creek flows through the property and eventually into the Little Sioux River. The Dickinson County Conservation Board has a long-term vision of developing a water trail along Mill Creek.

Dickinson County Pheasants Forever has worked with the Knudtsons to plant shrubs and improve pheasant habitat. The property will eventually transfer to the Dickinson County Conservation Board.

3/12/2014

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DICKINSON SUPERVISORS SET WHEELS IN MOTION FOR MAJOR PROJECT TO CLEAN UP SILVER LAKE

Tue 3-11-2014 (Spirit Lake)— The Dickinson county board of supervisors today (Tues.) set the wheels in motion for a long-term project to improve water quality in Silver Lake at Lake Park. The supervisors voted unanimously to approve a resolution authorizing Board Chairman David Gottsche to sign a drainage petition that will allow an engineering study to proceed on proposed improvements to a drainage district in Dickinson and Osceola counties that outlets into the Trapper's Bay area of Silver Lake. Supervisor Paul Johnson says the project is vital to the future of both Silver Lake and the city of Lake Park. [\(click here for comment.\)](#) "If you've been over to that area in the summer months and monitored it over the years it's progressively getting worse. It's not going to get better. And the option of doing nothing spells disaster for Lake Park because the smell, the living conditions, the overall health of the area will be severely compromised. It's a universal agreement amongst the hydrologists, the DNR people and the engineer will look at the problem caused by the ditch itself. So we're faced then with how do we solve this problem, and the answer is the first step is to get an engineering study."

The cost of that study is not to exceed \$26,000, with the cost being divided evenly between the county and the city of Lake Park. Johnson says the study will be intense and will take several months to complete. [\(click here for comment.\)](#) "We don't expect that to be reported on until another meeting at the board of supervisors in July or August of this year. At that time the supervisors will have the choice of what to do. They will have three options: option number one is to do nothing, and as I stated earlier that would lead to disaster. Option number two is to accept the study and put it out for bid. That would be very, very costly. Option number three is to accept the study but delay taking action to buy us time and use the study as a tool to gain and recruit support from other sources of funding: from the state, from the federal government, from the DNR, from other associations, all of whom are concerned about the preservation and improving of Silver Lake."

Lake Park Mayor John Engel described the action taken by the board of supervisors allowing the study to proceed as being "historic". [\(click here for comment.\)](#) "We're not going to get a big diamond lake like you got over here. But we do have a nice lake and a lot of people use it to fish. Last year they wouldn't even fish in it or eat fish out of it. So, the old cliché, I want to thank from the bottom of my heart, and I mean that."

Officials say that while other water quality projects have already been completed in the Silver Lake watershed, that this one is especially important.

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NRCS extends winter crop seeding deadline

Due to the late harvest of corn and soybeans this fall, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is granting a two-week extension to Nov. 1 for seeding winter hardy cover crops like cereal rye, winter wheat and triticale.

Iowa NRCS State Agronomist Barb Stewart says drill-seeded winter hardy cover crops experienced good winter survival last year, and provided adequate spring growth.

"More cover crop growth can be expected in southern Iowa, com-

pared to northern counties," she said.

"Obtaining six to eight inches of growth in the spring prior to termination is critical to meet the natural resource goals."

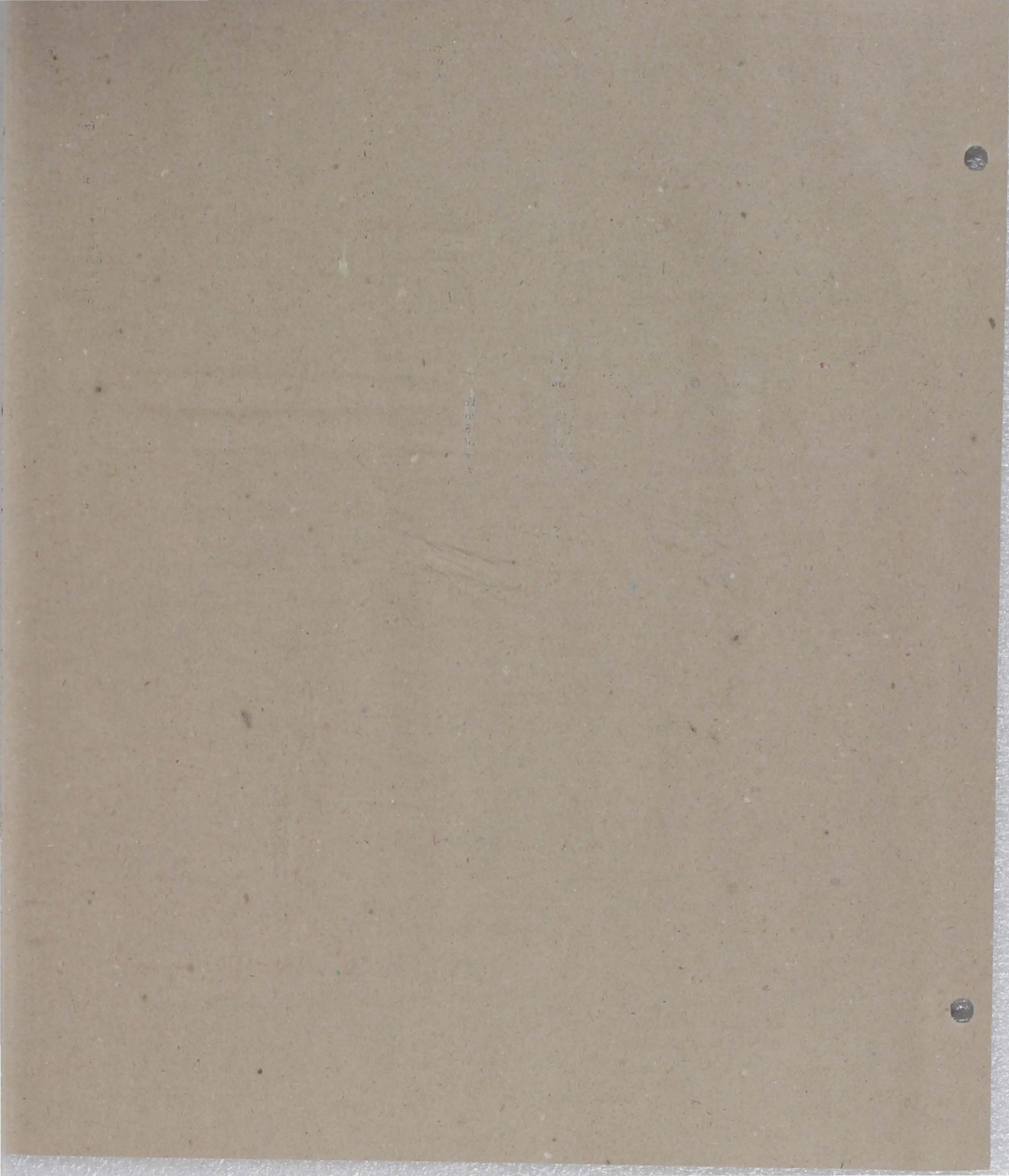
In coordination with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation, NRCS is extending the seeding deadline for cover crops previously approved for financial assistance through state or federal funding (Conservation Practice Standard

Cover Crops 340).

Oct 2014

The following applies to cover crops planted in the extension period (Oct. 16 – Nov. 1). For more information contact the local NRCS office:

- Cover crops will be seeded as soon as possible after harvest of the principal crop.
- The cover crop to be seeded must be winter hardy (i.e. cereal rye, winter wheat, triticale).
- The cover crop will be no-till drilled in crop residue to ensure good seed to soil contact for rapid germination.



Sept. 2014

Hagie Mfg. honors 88 Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award recipients

Over 88 Iowa farm families, named Iowa Farm Environmental Leader award recipients, were honored at a special recognition luncheon hosted by Hagie Manufacturing at the Iowa State Fair on Wednesday, Aug. 13.

The list includes the Scott and Jan Mitchell family of Lake Park.

Special guest speakers at the recognition luncheon included Governor Terry Branstad, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, Iowa Department of Natural Resources Director Chuck Gipp, and Alan Hagie, President & CEO of Hagie Manufacturing. The featured keynote speaker of the event was Iowa farmer, Tim Recker, whom has served as State President for the Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association and a past president of the Iowa Corn Growers Association.

In 2014, The Iowa Land Improvement Contractors Association was the first association to be named a recipient of the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader award.

"Over the years, growers have become experts in above the soil technologies in effort to achieve optimal yields," Recker said. "Now is the time for education and implementation of best practices below the soil to achieve maximum farm productivity."



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The Iowa Farm Environmental Leader award is a joint effort between the 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. It seeks to recognize the exemplary voluntary actions of farmers

that improve or protect the environment and natural resources of our state while also encouraging other farmers to follow in their footsteps by building success upon success.

"I have a huge passion for farming and can't imagine trying to provide agricultural innovative solutions without having a strong connection to the farm," Alan Hagie said.

"Our purpose in creating innovative solutions is to help our customers grow and boost their profitability, while also enabling them to be better stewards of the land."

In its third year for the program, Governor Branstad, Bill Northey and Chuck Gipp presented the Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards to the 88 Iowa farm families during a ceremony that took place prior to the Recognition Luncheon. All winners were chosen by a selection group representing both conservation and agricultural groups. To date, over 200 awards have been presented to Iowa farm families that are leading the way in proactive implementation of environmental stewardship.

Hagie Manufacturing Company, located in Clarion, optimizes its customers

growth by providing the most innovative crop protection solutions in the agriculture industry. After introducing the world's first self-propelled sprayer in 1947, Hagie Manufacturing Company has continued to be a pioneer in the industry with innovations such as front-mounted booms, hydrostatic drives and hydraulically-adjustable booms. A foundation with values built around employees, customers and innovation inspires sustained growth and success. Hagie Manufacturing is committed to providing state-of-the-art crop protection solutions while delivering a superior customer experience, yet continuing to build on family owned traditions and values.

For more information about Hagie Manufacturing Company, visit www.hagie.com.

Clean Water Alliance educational meeting planned

The Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance will host an educational meeting Oct. 22 to teach residents about Iowa's Water and Land Legacy and efforts to fund a state trust fund devoted to natural resources and outdoor recreation, which Iowa voters overwhelmingly approved in 2010.

The meeting will take place at 7 p.m. at the Dickinson County Expo Building in Spirit Lake. The Clean Water Alliance coordinates the clean water efforts for more than 80 partners in Dickinson County.

"Because of our abundant natural water resources, Dickinson County Iowans are particularly interested in learning about ways to conserve the lakes, rivers and streams that are important to our economy and our way of life," said John Wills, Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance Coordinator.

The event is open to members of the public who are interested in clean water and conserving natural resources. For more information on attending, contact John at 712-336-3782 ext 3.

Mike Shannon of Ducks Unlimited will be in attendance to describe IWILL's

efforts and the strategy to fund the trust fund. Established by Iowa voters in 2010, the trust fund would help pay for numerous water quality efforts around the state, including lake restoration, as well as other natural resources and outdoor recreation initiatives. Ducks Unlimited is one of the organizations leading IWILL's efforts to fund the trust fund.

"The Iowa Great Lakes region and Dickinson County would see numerous benefits if efforts are successful to fund the trust fund," Shannon said. "We encourage members of the community to come to the meeting to learn more about the goals of Iowa's Water and Land Legacy and how they can get involved."

Iowa's Water and Land Legacy (IWILL) is a coalition of organizations, agencies, and individuals working together to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The trust fund will provide a permanent, constitutionally protected funding source for conserving and enhancing water quality, agricultural soils, and natural areas in the state, including fish and wildlife habitat, parks, and trails.

Sholly named IGL watershed coordinator

Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently announced Jim Sholly as the watershed coordinator for the Iowa Great Lakes. A native of Spencer, Sholly earned his bachelor's degree in wetlands ecology from Bemidji State University before joining the Iowa DNR in 2007. After three years with the fisheries bureau, Sholly moved to South Dakota State University to pursue a graduate degree in natural resource management.

Returning to Iowa in April



JIM SHOLLY

2014 to work alongside Iowa DNR as an AmeriCorps member with the fisheries management and research sections, Sholly joined the SWCD in October. Partnering with the many stakeholders within the watershed, the district will work with both rural and urban communities to improve water quality and reduce sediment and excess nutrients reaching the lakes.

Sholly said he is excited to be back in northwest Iowa and working to protect those natural resources that he and so many others enjoy and depend on every day. With a wide range of water quality improvement practices offered through this project for both rural and urban areas, improvements can be made in almost any setting.

No practice or change in behavior is too small to improve water quality in our lakes. For more information contact Sholly at 712-336-3782 ext 3.

Oct 2014

INTO THE WILD



■ THE ART OF FALCONRY

Sixth grade students had the chance to learn about an interesting sport on Thursday.

Dr. Ross Dirks, a local falconer, held a presentation on falconry at Kettleson Hogsback.

"Falconry has been around for a long time," said Dr. Ross Dirks, "In different times of history falcons have been very popular."

Dirks brought with him a young peregrine falcon to show off to the anxious students. He said falcons have been used to hunt game for centuries, as a type of sport. Peregrine falcons are generally frightened by humans which leads to very few attacks. Some falcons build nests on skyscrapers in large cities.

Dirks displayed the bird for several minutes and took questions from the interested crowd. Falcons typically eat once a day, often eating prey that is twice their body weight.

Sixth graders participate in outdoor classroom



BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

Sixth grade students from Okoboji, Spirit Lake and Harris-Lake Park were able to escape the four walls of the classroom Thursday, Sept. 4 for an interesting day of learning.

Falconry, water safety, dog training, wetlands and nature hikes were the subjects of discussion for the 36th edition of the outdoor classroom at Kettleson Hogsback. The day is sponsored by the soil and water district and the Iowa DNR. Kettleson Hogsback is located off of M-49 north of Spirit Lake.

"The outdoor classroom is sponsored by the Dickinson Soil and Water Conversation Commissioners," said Maxine Butler, state secretary with DSWCD who helps organize the

event. "We've been doing it for quite awhile. The main idea is to talk to the kids about the natural resources and things that are available to them here in this county."

Butler has helped coordinate the event for the past 16 years.

"We like to do a mixture of things," she said. "We try to do some fun things and stuff that teaches them about the outdoors."

The group of 178 kids were treated to lessons on proper use of a life jacket, the importance of wetlands to the local ecosystem, how to properly train a dog, the value of agriculture and the art of falconry. Groups of 25 kids started the day at 9:30 a.m., rotating through the eight different stations. Officials from the Iowa DNR, Charles Vigdal with the nature center and Dr. Ross Dirks and his falcon were some of the guest presenters for the day. A

majority of the presenters are the same from year to year, along with the same basic annual concept, Butler said.

"I love being out here during the day, it's great fun," Butler said. "What a wonderful opportunity to get out of the office and experience sunshine and fresh air."

The day isn't just a learning opportunity either – it's a chance to show area students what Dickinson County has to offer.

"I think a lot of our kids don't know this is here," she said. "Kettleson-Hogsback is open to the public and anyone can walk the trails. They can come out here and enjoy nature."

"I don't think we do enough stuff outdoors in school as we did when I was a youngster," Butler added. "It's a great opportunity for them. The kids are usually very interested, they do a great job and are very attentive."

The outdoor classroom is nearing it's 40th year and Butler believes that continued success is due to overwhelming local support.

"Obviously we've had great support from the school districts," she said. "Without them we wouldn't be doing this. Their participation is what keeps it going. The DNR is very helpful too and they lend us the area for the day."

Butler hopes the students don't view the "field trip" as just another day at school. She is confident they were able to learn outside the four walls of an indoor classroom.

"At the end of the day, I hope the students have a better appreciation for the natural resources that are around them," Butler said. "And the waterfowl in the area that they can find out about. I hope they have a better appreciation for doing something outside. Sometimes it's good to be outside and just enjoy."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The publisher does not necessarily share the views/opinions stated in the "Letters to the Editor" published in The Lakes News Shopper.

To The Editor:

The following was an open letter to Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey on April 8, 2015

Hi Bill,

I know that you are concerned with improving Iowa water quality and demonstrating that Iowa farmers can do this by adapting new methods to limit soil and nutrient losses. On my farm I have had the opportunity to improve soil, water, and natural habitat through cooperative NRCS (EQIP), IADNR, FSA (CRP) and FWS (Partners) programs. Granted this is not a typical Iowa farm, however we still maintain a grazing program while focusing on restoration of native habitats and species. My problem is NFP has proposed a 4-400 hd hog confinement (sec31, Emmet, Emmet) about 1/2 mile south of my location. The MMP proposes about 5000gal per acre of hog manure annually spread over approximately 200 acres directly south of my farm. NFP is a Minnesota based corporate operation and really doesn't have a long term commitment to the citizens of Iowa. They use custom farmers, which would seem to be not what the typical Iowa farmer is all about. It's very frustrating to me to watch this process unfold and be seemingly put "on hold" when trying to challenge whether this operation is really in the best interest of the residents of Iowa. Of particular concern to me is the excess N & P that I will be receiving from this operation. The reaction I get from IADNR regulators is we are willing to accept the excess N & P because the law allows. I feel that you believe, as I do, that we need less N & P moving off our farms, not more. No wonder DMWW files suit when confronted by nobody seemingly wanting to address the real problems.

Gordon Garrison
Estherville, Iowa

Why use cover crops in crop rotations?

BY JOHN H. WILLS
CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE
COORDINATOR

Crop production involves many practices that compromise soil health, and therefore limit productivity. Iowa soils are more forgiving of such practices than many other regions of the country. Many area farmers are looking at ways to improve their soil health to protect their productivity and to maintain the health of their soil. Some of the management goals for which farmers use cover crops include:

- Suppressing weeds
- Protecting soil from rain or runoff
- Improving soil aggregate stability
- Reducing surface crusting
- Adding active organic matter to soil
- Breaking hardpan
- Fixing nitrogen
- Scavenging soil nitrogen
- Suppressing soil diseases and pests

The following website is part of a project that enables growers to use a broader range of cover crops to improve soil health by biological means. It will complement the chemical (fungicide) and physical (tillage) methods that are being used by fellow farmers and gardeners. The goal of using cover crops in Iowa is to provide a key component of an integrated management recommendation for growers.

A website with many recommendations and ideas is located at: http://www.mccc.msue.edu/states/iowa_ccactivities.html#USDAARSNSTL and will be available to provide information in your farming and gardening. If you have questions or thoughts about cover crops, please contact your local USDA office to seek guidance and potential cost share assistance to help with the establishment of the programs.

Feb. 11, 2015

Legislators host constituents, discuss water quality



Sen. Dave Johnson (R-Ocheyedan) and Rep. John Wills (R-Spirit Lake) met with Derek Namanny and Jim Sholly from Spirit Lake at the Capitol this week. Derek and Jim visited the Statehouse to discuss water quality issues with legislators. Pictured are Jim Sholly, Sen. Johnson, Rep. Wills, and Derek Namanny.

DNR: Iowans create water quality success

The efforts of Iowans in 2014 to improve Iowa's lakes, rivers and streams have resulted in success stories across the state and more efforts are underway for 2015. Working with groups statewide, including the Iowa DNR's Watershed Improvement Program, Iowans are making changes on the land to improve our waters.

"What we each do individually on our land, whether it's an urban yard or a farm field, has an impact on water quality — but when we come together as local groups and think strategically, we can make a big impact," said DNR Director Chuck Gipp. "This approach benefits not only water quality, but Iowa communities, as improved water quality often results in

a better quality of life. Great fishing and hunting creates tourism, kids have cleaner water to play and swim in, and improvements can help drinking water."

The DNR works with other state and federal agencies to help Iowans organize local and regional watershed improvement efforts by providing technical and financial assistance to create long-term, comprehensive plans. With watershed management plans, local groups work with landowners and residents to make changes on the land in areas that can make the largest impact on water quality.

For example, the cackle of pheasants has returned along the north and west sides of Okoboji View Golf Course in Spirit Lake after a major

watershed improvement project created wetlands and native prairie on 350 acres. The 1,700 acres of land that flow through the project site were identified as a major contributor of silt to West Okoboji Lake, sending an estimated 480 tons to the lake with each 2-inch rain.

"This was a targeted project in a targeted watershed and we knew collectively there were serious issues here," said Chris LaRue, DNR wildlife biologist.

The area became attractive to wildlife almost immediately. Wetlands planted in rye provided food and cover for ducks, and the native prairie is home to pheasants, doves and many diverse species of birds.

Part of the project included restoring two critical wetlands on the golf

course. One of the wetlands eliminated an area on the golf course that was a bit of an eyesore and often too wet. "I can't recall any negative comments, other than one or two holes are more difficult," said Curt Schnell, who owns the course with his brothers Dan and Steve. "It's been real positive."

The Iowa Great Lakes story, as well as other success stories from 2014, are highlighted in "Working for Clean Water: 2014 Watershed Improvement Successes in Iowa," a booklet available at www.iowadnr.gov.

For more information on the DNR's watershed improvement efforts, contact Steve Hopkins at 515-725-8390 or at Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov or visit <http://watershed.iowadnr.gov>.

Students, teachers learn through outdoor classroom

BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

It wasn't exactly a field trip but it may have felt like one for local sixth graders.

Their lessons were taught outside for the day, at the Kettleson-Hogsback Wildlife Management Area.

The 37th annual Outdoor Classroom took place Thursday, Sept. 10 at the DNR owned land. The event was sponsored by the Dickinson Soil and Conservation Commissioners with a goal to get students out in nature and experience what Dickinson County has to offer.

"We want the kids (to have) an increased understanding of the environment and the world that we live in," said Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District state secretary Maxine Butler, who coordinates the event each year.

One-hundred eighty-six students from Harris-Lake Park, Okoboji and Spirit Lake attended the outdoor program, learning about anything from wetlands and soil health to grasslands and local wildlife. The setting plays a big role in the annual program as well. Kettleson-Hogsback is located near county road M-49, which is a few miles north of Spirit Lake.

"A lot of kids, and I was just as guilty of it living here for 25 or so

9-16-15

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

continued on page 2A

LEGISLATORS HOST CONSTITUENTS



Reps. John Wills (R-Spirit Lake) and Megan Jones (R-Sioux Rapids) met with members of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Project at the Capitol this week. Jennifer Welch from Woodward and Derek Namanny and Jim Sholly from Spirit Lake visited the Statehouse to attend the Iowa Conservation Partnership Day on the Hill. Pictured are Rep. Wills, Jim Sholly, Jennifer Welch, Derek Namanny, and Rep. Jones.

April 2015

USDA seeking Prairie Pothole conservation applications

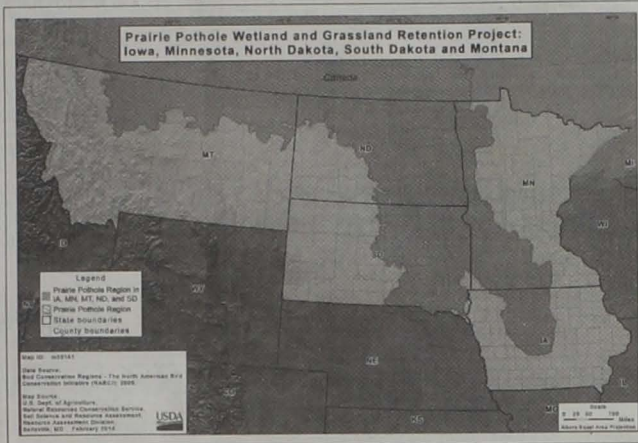
USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking additional applications from landowners in Iowa's prairie pothole region to implement conservation practices that help protect grasslands and wetlands for improved wildlife habitat.

NRCS is committing up to \$35 million from 2014-16 in the Prairie Pothole region, which includes north central Iowa. Prairie Pothole farmers in Iowa have until April 17 to sign up for the project in their local NRCS office to receive priority funding.

A combination of program offerings and partnerships will provide farmers access to a mix of technical and financial assistance opportunities to restore wetlands and grasslands and help mitigate a recent regional trend of conversion of these lands to crops.

The prairie pothole region includes much of north central Iowa as well as parts of Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Montana. The area provides critical breeding and nesting habitat for more than 60 percent of the nation's migratory waterfowl.

The region provides vital



water storage to reduce flooding and improve water quality, and has tremendous potential to store carbon in soils and biomass, which reduces the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, one of the leading greenhouse gases contributing to climate change.

Project funding will be distributed through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the agency's largest conservation program, which will help producers with expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contracts keep their lands as work-

ing grasslands or haylands through implementation of prescribed grazing and other conservation practices.

For more information about these opportunities, visit a local NRCS field office or the NRCS website.



City of Spirit Lake earns 2015 Iowa Stormwater Award

In 2012, the city of Spirit Lake hired engineer Brad Beck with Beck Engineering, Inc. to plan measures to improve a storm sewer system that was overtaxed. At the same time, they asked Beck to try and reduce the quantity of water and to improve the quality of water that reaches Center Lake.

Center Lake is a system that typically has tremendous algae blooms. The 20 LID Practices designed by Beck Engineering were found to be quite costly with an estimate of over \$1 million, but the city moved ahead

with the process regardless and forged a partnership to accomplish this task. This project treats a full one third of the physical portion of the watershed of Center Lake and stops over 72 pounds of phosphorus from entering the lake each year.

The project was completed in 2014 and included 14 bio-retention cells, 6 bio-swales, one pocket wetland, and one permeable paver section. The project took a large amount of coordination, cooperation from the public, and cooperation from the various entities who were

involved.

The project was constructed in the city of Spirit Lake right-of-way, Iowa Department of Transportation right-of-way and on private property.

The low-impact development practices capture, cool, filter and treat storm water runoff from a largely impervious watershed and helps to restore the urban landscape to its previous pervious condition before development. Project partners include many local property owners for the donation of land and the Lakes Regional Hospital,

who built a lot of these practices as part of their addition and renovation.

A large amount of sediment, anti-freeze, oils and other contaminants that used to flow directly into the lake are now filtered and treated by these practices prior to entering the lake. The city of Spirit Lake has been, and continues to prove that they are, a state-wide leader in urban conservation and protecting the environment. This project protects a lake and improves the quality of life in and around Center Lake.

DCN

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

community

Area hosts we Pedal Clean Water bike ride event

When a raindrop falls in the Iowa Great Lakes region, it can take many paths before entering one of the lakes.

The path that water takes throughout the Iowa Great Lakes watershed impacts water quality, and the public can make a difference in that process.

Take part in the We Pedal Clean Water bike ride Saturday, June 13, and learn about how local people and organizations are making a difference in water quality.

Register 7:30-9 a.m. at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji and head out on the ride 8 a.m.-noon. The approximately 20-mile ride around West Lake Okoboji will include several stops:

1. Drainage District No. 22: What is a watershed?
2. Historic Arnolds Park: How pervious pavers filter water.
3. Milford Municipal Utility shoreline: The role

native vegetation plays in stabilizing shorelines.

4. West O Beer: Sustainable water use.
5. Garlock Slough wetland complex: Wetland Restoration & Enhancement programs.
6. Emerson Bay State Park: Soil health.
7. Iowa Lakeside Lab: Water quality research and monitoring.
8. Okoboji View Golf Course: Wetland restoration project.
9. Monarch Cove: How bio-cells function.

"The educational stops along the route highlight efforts being made to protect water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes," said Iowa Great Lakes watershed coordinator Jim Sholly. "Many of the practices showcased during the event could be included into everyone's home landscaping plans."

The Dickinson County Conservation Board and Dickinson County Soil

& Water Conservation District are pleased to partner with Historic Arnolds Park's 125th anniversary celebration for the We Pedal Clean Water ride June 13.

"We're very excited the bike ride has continued for the second year and has even grown in its scope," said Karess Knudtson, Dickinson County Conservation environmental education coordinator.

"This family-friendly event serves to commend residents of the Iowa Great Lakes who have come together to promote responsible and sustainable water quality initiatives," Sholly said. "Novice and seasoned riders alike will enjoy the trip around West Okoboji designed to offer a little education along the way."

Water, donated by West O Beer, will be provided at each station, and bathrooms will be available at several stops.

Pre-register for the event at www.dickinson-countynaturecenter.com/event-registration. Pre-registration that includes a commemorative T-shirt is \$10; pre-registration is also available for free for those who do not want a shirt. Those who register the morning of the ride will not pay a registration fee but will not receive a T-shirt.

The event will conclude at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji, where riders will have an opportunity to talk with local conservation professionals. Stop inside to see a variety of exhibits and live animals and stick around for the nature center's first outdoor concert 7 p.m. that evening.

For more information on the We Pedal Clean Water ride or other Dickinson County Conservation Board events, visit www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com or call 712-336-6352.

community

8-19-15

Little Swan Lake restoration project open house

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited, and members of the Dickinson County Clean Water Alliance invite the public to a short presentation and open house from 6:30 - 8 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 25 at Little Swan Lake Winery on the south shore of Little Swan Lake. The meeting will cover the upcoming restoration project of Little Swan Lake.

Water quality and habitat in this lake has degraded over time, providing reduced benefit to fish and wildlife. Little Swan Lake is an

extremely important water body located on the east side of Dickinson County. When healthy, Little Swan Lake is an important fishery, provides wildlife habitat, and filters water before it reaches the West Fork of the Des Moines River.

This project was prompted by the failure of the existing outlet structure on Little Swan Lake, prompting the Iowa DNR and its partners to renovate the lake and install a new outlet structure. Survey and design phases of the project are in the works, with

construction scheduled to begin next summer, if all goes well.

This meeting will provide locals an opportunity to view general design criteria of similar projects and to learn more about shallow lake and wetland management, its benefits for water quality, plants, fish, animals, and public use. The renovation plan includes a drawdown which will stimulate plant growth, eliminate common carp, and compact the bottom sediments.

Little Swan Lake Winery is located at 1350 320th Avenue in Superior.

Dickinson SWCD granted \$150,000 for local water quality projects

BY BRANDON HURLEY
STAFF WRITER

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District is now accepting applicants from landowners and businesses in need of funding for water quality improvement projects.

The local organization was awarded \$150,000 for use in new projects over the next 12 months.

The Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Project, an entity of the Soil and Water Conservation District, is focused on Dickinson County water quality, continually working with small businesses, homeowners and commercial properties to improve water quality and halt pollution.

The Iowa Great Watershed is currently accepting applicants for future water quality projects. The \$150,000 grant money will go directly toward each selected project. Any resident or business in the Iowa Great Lakes is eligible to receive assistance for low impact water quality developments.

Evidence of current erosion is one of the largest determining factors. Watershed Project employees sift through a wide range of applicants.

"(The erosion) could be along a steep shoreline, a gully through a corn field, or an area of concentrated flow between homes," said Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Project Coordinator

■ IMPORTANT DATES FOR NON-PROFIT OR GOVERNMENT GRANT APPLICATION

The Dickinson County Water Quality Commission will also soon be accepting nonprofit or government applicants for water quality funding. Important application dates can be found below.

- July 31 - Request for Applications (RFA) begins
- 2 p.m. Aug. 27 - Water Quality Commission Help Session
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office, Spirit Lake
- Oct. 1 - Grant applications due to Dickinson SWCD by 4:30 p.m.

Applications will be accepted for any water quality project from a non-profit organization or governmental agency which improves the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes, Silver Lake, and Little Swan Lake in Dickinson County.

Jim Sholly. "We also work with landowners - rural or urban - who have an open area that could be used to slow down and infiltrate advancing rain water before it reaches a storm sewer intake to the lake."

Sholly hopes to help farmers become more environmentally-friendly as well.

"While many projects have focused on the urban landscape, we also work with the landowner and tenant farmers in the area who want to include water quality initiatives into their farm plans," the project coordinator said.

The Watershed Project only uses the grant money and private funding to complete local projects. They don't want to create an extra burden on a landowner or business.

"We provide free of charge our expertise and planning to ensure private investment and grant dollars are achieving the best bang for their buck," Sholly said.

Watershed experts have spent the last 10 years using \$1.2 million in grant money and \$500,000 in private funds successfully constructing several different water quality projects throughout the area.

"Within our office is a dedicated group of folks with decades of experience across a wide range of conservation centered projects," Sholly said.

Most recently, the organization funded and built the low impact development surrounding the Lakes Regional Healthcare expansion, completed in May 2014.

Researchers found run-off from everyday traffic at the hospital was flowing into the sewers and into nearby Center Lake, threatening the water quality.

The Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, in cooperation with the hospital, built several bio-retention cells, bio-swales, paver systems (brick laying) and an urban wetland. Bio-

swales incorporate vegetation or compost built into the landscape, which filter out silt and pollution from surface runoff. The structure is slightly sloped allowing it to direct the water into the vegetation. Bio-retention cells remove silt from storm water runoff as well. The LRH campus is now home to a handful of bio-retention ponds, but bio retention cells can also be a grassy area or a sand bed. Wetlands are also instrumental in improving water quality, in part due to the natural filtering ability of the native vegetation.

Outside of the hospital, the Watershed Project has worked with several lake shore homeowners as well. deteriorating shorelines increase the likelihood of private run-off polluting the lakes.

"We have been very active working with (them) to rehabilitate eroding shorelines that have become overgrown with undesirable vegetation," Sholly said. "We return them to a native prairie state. That has been met with great success and many neighbors have requested information about how that practice can be extended across their property."

For any residents interested in helping protect their lakes and the possibility for water quality assistance, Jim Sholly can be reached at 712-336-3782 Ext. 3.

DCN

Wednesday, July 29, 2015

Cost share available for conservation in Dickinson County

Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Chair, Chris Hoffman, on July 10 announced that funds are available to help local farmers and landowners install conservation practices through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) cost share program. Interested farmers and landowners should contact the Dickinson district office by calling 712-336-3782, Ext 3. Financial assistance is available up to 50 percent percent of the project cost.

"The cost share program is a partnership between the district and local landowners to help get conservation practices on the land that prevent soil erosion and protect water quality," Hoffman said. "Now is the time for farmers to plan ahead."

This year the district will also encourage cover crops and related management practices such as no-till and

nitrification inhibitors. A major portion of the district's state funds will be allocated for these practices.

Other conservation practices eligible for assistance through this program include terraces, waterways, ponds, buffers, and several other practices.

The Dickinson Staff with IDALS and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service assure the technical quality of the practices and further, help farmers develop conservation plans for their farms.

"These funds are a great investment by the state and historically, farmers contribute \$1.50 for each dollar invested by the state," Hoffman said. "There continues to be strong interest in the cost share program. Since there are funds available, farmers are encouraged to contact our office discuss various options for their farm."

IOWA FARM ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER AWARDS



'We Pedal Clean Water' ride announced

When a raindrop falls in the Iowa Great Lakes region, it can take many paths before entering one of the lakes.

The path that water takes throughout the Iowa Great Lakes watershed impacts the quality of our water, and participants in an upcoming event can make a difference in the process.

The "We Pedal Clean Water" bike ride Saturday, June 13, will showcase the efforts of local residents and organization members who are making a difference in water quality.

Registration takes place 7:30-9 a.m. at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji. The ride takes place from 8 a.m. to noon. The approximately 20-mile ride around West Lake Okoboji will include several stops:

- Drainage District No. 22 – What is a watershed?
- Historic Arnolds Park – How

pervious pavers filter water.

- Milford Municipal Utility shoreline: The role native vegetation plays in stabilizing shorelines.

- West O Beer – Sustainable water use.
- Garlock Slough wetland complex – Wetland restoration and enhancement programs.
- Emerson Bay State Park – Soil health.
- Iowa Lakeside Lab – Water quality research and monitoring.
- Okoboji View Golf Course – Wetland restoration project.
- Monarch Cove – How bio-cells function.

"The educational stops along the route highlight efforts being made to protect water quality in the Iowa Great Lakes," said Iowa Great Lakes watershed coordinator Jim Sholly. "Many of the practices showcased during the event could be included into everyone's home landscaping plans."

The Dickinson County Conservation Board and

Dickinson County Soil & Water Conservation District are pleased to partner with Historic Arnolds Park's 125th anniversary celebration for the We Pedal Clean Water ride June 13.

"We're very excited the bike ride has continued for the second year and has even grown in its scope," said Karess Knudtson, Dickinson County Conservation environmental education coordinator.

Water, donated by West O Beer, will be provided at each station, and bathrooms will be available at several stops.

"This family-friendly event serves to commend residents of the Iowa Great Lakes who have come together to promote responsible and sustainable water quality initiatives," Sholly said. "Novice and seasoned riders alike will enjoy the trip around West Okoboji designed to offer a little education along the way."

Pre-register for the event

at www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com/event-registration. Pre-registration with a commemorative T-shirt is \$10; pre-registration is also available for free for those who do not want a shirt. Those who register the morning of the ride will not pay a registration fee, but will not receive a T-shirt.

The event will conclude at the Dickinson County Nature Center in Okoboji, where riders will have an opportunity to talk with local conservation professionals. Guest are invited to stop inside to see a variety of exhibits and live animals and stick around for the nature center's first outdoor concert 7 p.m. that evening.

For more information on the We Pedal Clean Water ride or other Dickinson County Conservation Board events, visit www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com or call 712-336-6352.



education

Blake Lineweaver wins conservation scholarship

Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District announced that Blake Lineweaver of Milford was selected to receive \$3,000 as the second-place winner of the Conservation Districts of Iowa Scholarship.

Lineweaver was initially chosen for the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation scholarship in the amount of \$500. His application was then forwarded to compete in the regional and state level of the CDI scholarship.

Scholarships are awarded to students pursuing a college education in conservation and/or agriculture and who show leadership and scholastic achievement.

Lineweaver has been active in Future Farmers of America and has just been named the NW Vice President for 2016-17. A member of the Okoboji High School senior class, he has competed in cross country and music and is a member of the Thespian Society, Key Club, National Honor Society and Art Society.

He also participated in Youth in Philanthropy and St. Albans' youth group. Lineweaver will graduate from Okoboji High School on May 29, 2016, and plans to attend



Iowa State University. He is the son of Eric and Tammy Lineweaver of Milford.

Together, Conservation District of Iowa and the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Iowa fund and implement the scholarship program as part of their mission to protect and enhance soil, water and other natural resources valuable to Iowa.

LWS 5-2-16

Blake Lineweaver Is State 2nd Place Winner Of Iowa Scholarship

Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) and the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District are pleased to announce that Blake Lineweaver has been selected to receive \$3,000 as the State 2nd Place Winner of the Conservation Districts of Iowa Scholarship. Blake was initially chosen for the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Foundation scholarship in the amount of \$500. His application was then forwarded to compete in the Regional and State level of the CDI scholarship.



Scholarships are awarded to students pursuing a college education in conservation and/or agriculture and who shows leadership and scholastic achievement.

Blake has been active in the Future Farmers of America Organization and has just been named the NW Vice President for 2016-17. A member of the Okoboji High School senior class, he has competed in Cross Country and Music and is a member of the Thespian Society, Key Club, National Honor Society and Art Society. He also participated with Youth in Philanthropy and St. Albans' Youth Group. Blake will graduate from Okoboji High School on May 29, 2016 and plans to attend Iowa State University. He is the son of Eric and Tammy Lineweaver of Milford.

Together, Conservation Districts of Iowa and the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Iowa, fund and implement the scholarship program as part of their mission to protect and enhance soil, water, and other natural resources valuable to our state.

Prairie Lakes Conference coming in August



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Conservation professionals and the public attend the Clean Water Summit in Spirit Lake held in the summer of 2015. This year, the Prairie Lakes Conference hopes to have a larger impact through its theme: "Working together for water quality."

+ +

BY WILL MUSGROVE
STAFF WRITER

Three years ago, State Rep. John Wills and some Dickinson County conservation groups wanted to do something to help improve water quality in the area.

Those early Clean Water Summits have set the stage for Prairie Lakes Conference Aug. 11-12 at Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center in Okoboji.

"It kind of grew from a small seed and became a huge oak tree," Wills said. "We wanted to make something where the main idea was water quality, but you could divert to all sorts of water-related issues. We used to just talk about what we have done and what we were going to do. Now we are taking that one final step and

becoming more organized."

The theme of the conference is: "Working together for water quality." It will focus on a variety of topics surrounding water quality and the science behind it. Organizers expect the event to touch on three related topics: lake ecology, watershed treatment, and the human dimension.

"It is going to focus mainly on anything to do with Prairie Lakes systems," Wills said. "They are typically shallow lakes. They are kind of unique, so we wanted to develop something that would focus on that area. We think we have a good niche to sell."

PRAIRIE LAKES

continued on page 3A

3-30-16

Funding For Conservation Practices Available

The Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District Chair, Chris Hoffman, has announced today that funding will be available for local farmers and landowners to assist in the installation of conservation practices through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) cost-share program. Interested farmers and landowners should contact the Dickinson district office by calling 712-336-3782, Ext 3.

"The cost share program is a partnership between the District and local landowners to help get conservation practices on the land that prevent soil erosion and protect water quality. Now is the time for farmers to plan ahead," said Hoffman.

This year, the District will be encouraging cover crops in which IDALS will provide financial assistance to local SWCD offices to incentivize their use. Cover crops are extremely beneficial in reducing erosion, retaining nutrients, combating weeds, while at the same time improving water and soil quality. Related management practices such as no-till, strip till, and ridge till, are also being encouraged.

The cost-share rates are variable and depend on the practice used. Farmers should become familiar with the details by calling or visiting the district office.

Other conservation practices eligible for assistance through this program include grass waterways, grade control structures, wind breaks as well as several other practices.

The Dickinson Staff with IDALS and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service assure the technical quality of the practices and further, help farmers develop conservation plans for their farms.

"These funds are a great investment by the state in an effort to reduce erosion, improve water quality. Since there are funds available, farmers are asked to contact our office to discuss various options for their farm," Hoffman further commented.

7-19-16

PRAIRIE LAKES

continued from page 1A

David Thoreson will be the keynote speaker at the event. Thoreson is a photographer and environmentalist who uses stories from his past experiences to show the interconnectivity among people, land, and water.

Wills expects around 200 people to attend the conference. Attendees will be a mix of conservation professionals and the general public.

"I think this is going to be region wide," he said. "A lot of professional people are going to come to this and learn new techniques to

improve water quality. We are also keeping it open to everyone. You are going to see the 'average Joe' from Dickinson County wanting to attend and learn what they can do in their own backyard."

Organizers have been faced with some challenges during the planning process.

"When we first presented the idea to a number of folks, we got the feedback that it wasn't possible, that it was too small of an area and that we didn't have the facilities to do it," Wills said. "Once we cleared these

things, we started really planning it. By January 1st, we had a clear outline of what we wanted to do."

The conference coincides with Clean Water Week, which is Aug. 10-13 in the Iowa Great Lakes Area. Several activities will be held during this week, such as Soil Health Field Day and We Pedal Clean Water conservation bike ride. The week will conclude with the Blue Water Festival in Preservation Plaza in Arnolds Park.

"I was also instrumental in the Blue Water Festival,"

Wills said. "My dream has always been that they start to become one big festival, make the conference and the concert a weeklong celebration of clean water. We are starting to merge into that. I think that dream is becoming a reality."

To register, go to plciowa.com. The \$100 registration cost includes admission, meals, and an evening social on Aug. 11. For more information about the Prairie Lakes Conference, visit plciowa.com or email info@plciowa.com.

3-30-16

Understanding watersheds: we are all part of the solution

steve
weisman

OUTDOOR
EDITOR



Even at age 67, every once in a while I get one of those "Ah-Ha" moments. You know, when you suddenly get this enlightenment of something you might have already known about, but not really understood. This past week I had one of those. Mike Hawkins, John Wills and I were visiting about water clarity and how much of an impact runoff has on our Iowa Great Lakes. We discussed the immensity of the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, a total of approximately 90,631 acres! Wow!

That's when it hit me. No matter where we live in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, each of us impacts it. So, a farmer in southern Minnesota, an acreage owner a few miles from West Okoboji, a homeowner on one of our lakes or a resident in one of our communities...we all directly impact the bodies of water in the Iowa Great Lakes.

What does that really mean? If we are miles from a lake or stream, how can we have an impact on that water? What exactly is a watershed, and who cares? Here is a little background. First, there is the United States Geological Survey, a scientific agency for the United States government, that studies just this: the country's landscape, its natural resources and hazards that might threaten it.

Here is their definition of a watershed. A watershed is an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the outflow of a reservoir, mouth of a bay, or any point along a stream channel. It is further explained in this way. A watershed consists of surface water—lakes, streams, reservoirs, and wetlands—and all the underlying ground water. Larger watersheds contain many smaller watersheds. It all depends on

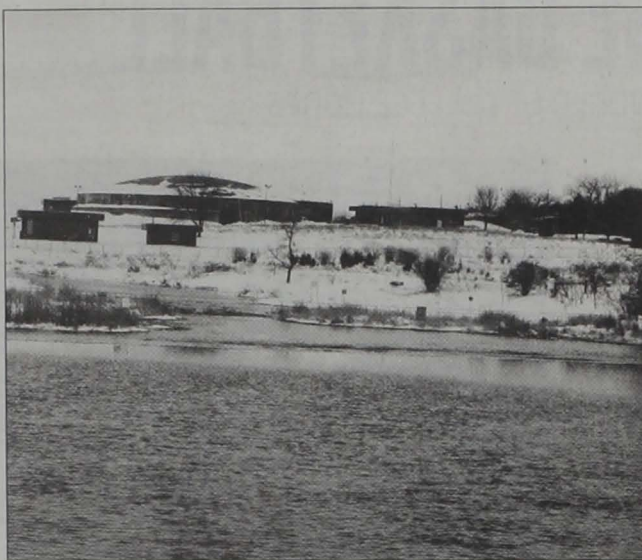


PHOTO BY STEVE WEISMAN

The Iowa Great Lakes Watershed includes 90,631 acres. Once the lakes are full, much of the excess water will exit out of Lower Gar.

the outflow point; all of the land that drains water to the outflow point is the watershed for that outflow location. Watersheds are important because the stream flow and the water quality of a river are affected by things, human-induced or not, happening in the land area "above" the river-outflow point.

Here in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed, the outflow point is where the water leaves Lower Gar. Everything uphill (mostly north) of that point to almost I-90 in southern Minnesota drains through our chain of lakes and leaves the area headed towards the Little Sioux River from that point.

Everything begins to happen when we have precipitation, whether it is rain or snow that falls on the ground. Some of that soaks into the ground, which helps support plant life. This plant life, depending on type and density, can slow down the runoff of excess water. Some water that infiltrates will remain in the shallow soil layer, where it will gradually move downhill, through the soil, and eventually enters the stream by seepage into the stream bank. Some of the water may infiltrate

much deeper, recharging groundwater aquifers. Water may travel long distances or remain in storage for long periods before returning to the surface. At the same time, whatever has been placed on the soil such as fertilizer can affect the quality of the water that runs off.

Thinking specifically about the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, sooner or later, all of the runoff from the 90,631 acres will impact our lakes! We all are part of what comes into our lakes. That is why it is so imperative that we all do what we can NOW to protect these waters. Once they reach the tipping point and become impaired waters, we may have nowhere left to go!

In 2010, the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District developed the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed Management Plan to help protect our waters. It's meant to help individuals, public and private groups and government entities as they work on water quality projects. The bottom line: clean up the water flowing into and out of the lake system.

Although there are huge challenges facing all of us

who live in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, there are so many opportunities to make water quality better. In visiting with Jim Sholly, who works for the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District as the watershed coordinator for the Iowa Great Lakes, there are so many things individuals and groups can do. Sholly says there is a wide range of water quality improvement practices for both rural and urban areas and that improvements can be made in almost any setting. No practice or change in behavior is too small to improve water quality in our lakes. These practices are important no matter if it is around the lake or miles from the lake. We all need to be part of the solution.

For more information about how you can be part of the clean water solution, give Sholly a call at (712)336-3782 ext. 3.

In a future article, we will look at what a local landowner is doing to help protect a portion of the east side of Big Spirit from agricultural runoff and to diminish the amount of sediment and unwanted nutrients entering the lake.

Looking at responsible land management

In a recent article, I discussed how no matter where we live or work, we are all part of a watershed. Watersheds can be small or large, but they all drain into a common outlet such as a lake or stream. Here in the Lakes Area the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed is huge: 90,631 acres. One way or another we all impact this watershed. Whatever runoff enters our lakes directly affects their water quality and their health!

Although there are huge challenges facing all of us who live in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed, there are so many opportunities to make water quality better. In visiting with Jim Sholly, who works for the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District as the watershed coordinator for the Iowa Great Lakes, there are so many things individuals and groups can do. Sholly says there is a wide range of water quality improvement practices for both rural and urban areas and that improvements can be made in almost any setting.

No practice or change in behavior is too small to improve water quality in our lakes. These practices are important no matter if it is around the lake or miles from nearest shoreline. We all need to be part of the solution.

For the past two years, Sholly has been working with residential home owners, businesses, lake shore owners, acreage owners and farmers to help them design plans that positively affect the runoff into the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed.

"It's really all about responsible land stewardship," Sholly said.

In reality, it's about taking care of the water on our property, not just getting it to run off and passing it on to someone or some place else. He notes that more and more people are taking the responsibility to do their part in helping improve our water quality.

Sholly finds it exciting that interest in water quality is becoming greater each year. More and more farmers are realizing the impact runoff from their land has on the area lakes and streams. The challenge becomes how to address this impact, while at the same time helping farmers continue to raise crops. That's what Sholly does.

"I'm really excited about a new practice that we are trying here in northwest Iowa. It's called an 'Edge of Field' prairie strip," he said. "In this practice, the landowner puts 10-15 percent of a field into a section of strategically placed prairie grasses. For instance, if you put the strip of

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OUTDOOR
EDITOR



grass on the downhill side of the field, the plan is to intercept and infiltrate the water into the prairie before it enters a drainage ditch, culvert, road ditch or stream that eventually drains into a river or lake."

Sholly notes that Iowa State University has done several studies on this in southern and central Iowa, and data collected shows the Edge of Field practice works very well.

"Dr. Helmers, who heads this study, is encouraged by what he has seen," he said. "The practice protects the tile intakes and helping to meet water quality goals, while at the same time meeting the needs of the farmer planting corn and soybeans."

According to Dr. Helmers, data collected has been very encouraging.

"Based on our water quality monitoring at other sites in Iowa, we see a drastic reduction in sediment and nutrient loss with runoff in areas where prairie strips have been incorporated," Helmers said.

LOCAL PROJECT

Sholly is currently working with Eric Hoiem, who owns farmland on the east of Big Spirit. Currently, the drainage leaves the land through culverts to the ditch across the road and also into the Reeds Run drainage area before entering Big Spirit.

"I am really excited about the potential that the Edge of Field practice will do for us in the Iowa Great Lakes Watershed," Hoiem said. "Sometime in 2014, I saw an article in the Des Moines Register about the STRIPS program (Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips), and it intrigued me. I then looked at videos on the Internet about these strips. The idea of Edge of Field practice is that you can put 10 percent of a field edge into prairie grasses and it will take care of approximately 90 percent of the runoff. That made sense to me."

The initial step is to take a look at the topography and see where the low spots are and where the drainage is going. On the Hoiem farm, some of those areas showed up along the road. These are areas where water might settle or run to after a large rainfall. Hoiem worked with his tenant to make sure it would be in

both of their interests to implement this practice without hampering the farmability of the land.

In November, Hoiem had the 20-plus acre tract seeded with a mix of tall grass prairie seed incorporating many wildflowers into the mix. In addition, two sites will be set up to collect data concerning runoff.

"Two autosamplers will be installed this spring, one at the leading edge of the prairie strip (as it comes off the cropped area) and the second at the exit of the prairie strip (after it leaves the prairie)," Sholly said. "This will help us determine the differences in water, sediment and nitrate/phosphorous levels before it enters the prairie and after it has gone through the prairie and then left the strip."

It will take two to three years before the prairie grasses have totally taken hold. There will also be a mid-contract prescribed burn to invigorate the grasses and forbs.

Based on the results from other Edge of Field plantings, Hoiem hopes to see a significant decrease in runoff and nitrate/phosphorous levels.

"Once established, the native prairie grass deep root structure will act as a sponge, when the water begins to run off," Sholly said. "The root structure is so massive that it will take care of a huge amount of water. As a result, much of it will never leave the field. Thus, the prairie will intercept and infiltrate the water — in this case before it ever reaches the culverts or Reeds Run."

Hoiem says this is meant to be a long-term investment for at least 10 years. After the contract is up, there appears to be the opportunity to re-enroll the land.

"For years, the typical thought process has been to get that extra water off of the property, never thinking about the consequences as it enters our lakes and streams or adjacent neighbors," he said. "It is really our responsibility to take care of the water on our property, not just pass it on to someone else."

Sholly says this is also going to act as a demonstration site where other landowners can come and witness the results.

"The landowner gets the benefit of still being able to farm the ground, while at the same time getting to protect his own land and also the watershed as it carries run-off to the lake," he said.

For more information about this program or other conservation programs, give Sholly a call at (712) 336-3782 ext. 3.

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Opinion

life

Taking flight

Local volunteer marks 20 years of airport service

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THE GREAT OUTDOORS

■ Area students discover nature at outdoor classroom

BY WILL MUSGROVE
STAFF WRITER

Sixth-grade students from around Dickinson County were taught in a different kind of classroom last week.

They traded in textbooks and walls for hands-on activities, trees, grass and blue sky.

The Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District hosted its 38th annual sixth-grade Outdoor Classroom Thursday, Sept. 8, at Kettleon-Hogsback in Spirit Lake. Students from Spirit Lake, Harris-Lake Park and Okoboji attended to gain a better understanding of the surrounding environment.

"This is a day to show the kids what is in their backyard," Maxine Butler, Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District state secretary, said. "We hope what they are learning is a better appreciation for the natural things that are available to them in this county. It is a chance to talk about some environmental and conservation things that are important to our area."

Students learned about an outdoor or environmental topic at nine different stations. They were split into groupings of around 25 and each group spent 20 minutes at each station before rotating to the next one. A teacher was assigned to each group as well.

Jeff Morrison with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources talked to the kids about how to train retriever dogs. He demonstrated some techniques, using hand signals and whistles to have his dog Smoke recover items from the brush.

The Iowa State Extension Office taught students about the multitude of rocks across the state. Students decorated an Iowa-shaped sugar cookie with a variety of fruits to represent each type of rock around the state.

Mark Schutt and Matt Welsh with the Natural Resource Conservation Service spoke with students about soil health. They used diagrams to explain the different compositions of soils found in Iowa.

Trees Forever representative Jeff Jensen lectured about Iowa trees. He pointed out the differences in the tree leaves and bark.

Students hiked around the Kettleon-Hogsback area. Iowa Department of Natural Resources officials showed the kids native plants and wildlife during the nature walk.

Dickinson County Naturalist Charles Vigdal discussed with students the importance of Iowa's wetlands and

how they affect the state's drinking water.

Students also learned about boating safety, the importance of butterflies and wetland waterfowl, such as ducks and geese.

Butler believes it is important to introduce these environmental themes at a young age, so they have a bigger impact on students in the future.

"You want to teach the kids when they are young," Butler said. "That is when they are learning the most, when they are best absorbing. It's just a great day. We have a lot of fun every year."

Butler said the outdoor classroom wouldn't be possible without the support of the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District. She highlighted the DNR and local conservation agencies as well.

The Soil and Water Conservation District consists of five elected commissioners who promote environmental conservation.

"This is our 38th year, so a lot of these kids' moms and dads probably did something like this," Butler said. "We don't do the same exact thing every year, but it always has the same framework and pattern."

This was Butler's 17th year organizing the outdoor classroom. She surveyed teachers and examined past years to decide what events to hold.

"Sometimes things change a little bit, but it normally stays the same year after year," Butler said. "We didn't do a noon program this year. It is usually ran by Dr. Ross Dirks, who talks to the kids about falconry. However, he didn't have a bird this year. Another gentleman we looked at didn't have a bird either."

Butler sets the date of the outdoor classroom before school is dismissed the year prior. She said students always get a chance to explore the outdoors rain or shine.

"The biggest challenge is the weather," Butler said. "We pretty much go no matter what. We send letters to the teachers to make sure the students dress for the weather. We have been here when it has been really hot, when it has been really cold. If it sprinkles on us, we just keep going."

Grasslands, woodlands and wetlands make up Kettleon-Hogsback's 1,895 acres. It is located on the Altamont moraine, a formation of hills, ridges and wetlands formed by glaciers more than 10,000 years ago.

Butler hopes that by allowing students to examine the outdoors firsthand that when they return to the traditional classroom it will continue to inspire them.

"I grew up on a farm," Butler said. "I now live in town, and my son doesn't really know a lot of what goes on a farm. Not that this is all about farming. We barely touch on farming, which is a big part of our state. But unless you actually experience what happens outdoors, you can't really understand it. If you see it, you smell it and touch it yourself, it sinks in a little more."



PHOTO BY WILL MUSGROVE
A group of 216 sixth-grade students from Spirit Lake, Harris-Lake Park and Okoboji attended the Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District's outdoor classroom Thursday. Students learned about environmental topics in the county.



Herberts to speak at Prairie Lakes Conference Field Day Tour

Jared Herbert and his wife, Mary, began implementing conservation practices on their Lake Park farm in the 1990s.

"It's the right thing to do as far as conservation ethics," Jared Herbert said. "It eliminates erosion from wind and water. It frees up your labor. I was really getting tired working all the time, and it cuts down on your labor."

Herbert and his son Spencer, a soil scientist with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, will speak about the agronomic practices on the family farm at the Prairie Lakes Conference Field Day Tour 5-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 10, at the farm near the intersection of 130th Ave and Ave B West (A18/130th St) on the west edge of Lake Park.

Herbert uses a variety of conservation practices in his farming, from no-till to one-pass tillage to strip till and even cover crops.

Cover crops were added to the Herberts' rotation in 2010 out of curiosity and with the hope of potential benefits.

The family seeds about 240 acres each year and have used cereal rye, hairy vetch, rapeseed and radishes.

Herbert has seen a variety of changes in the amount of time he needs to work to needing to purchase less machinery to improved nitrogen levels in the soil.

"The organic matter has gone up substantially over the years, and that's huge," Herbert said. "Your soil is able to hold more water and more nutrients."

Spencer Herbert is excited



NEXT UP: THE PRAIRIE LAKES CONFERENCE

The Prairie Lakes Conference Field Day Tour in Lake Park is a free event for all those who register at www.pcliowa.com.

The Prairie Lakes Conference will be held Thursday-Friday, Aug. 11-12, at the Arrowwood Resort and Conference Center in Okoboji. Speakers will address a variety of issues that will impact and interest professionals in the field as well as students and Iowa Great Lakes residents.

The \$100 registration cost for the conference includes the two-day conference, meals and an evening social on Aug. 11.

The annual We Pedal Clean Water conservation bike ride will be held 8 a.m.-noon Aug. 13. Registration will be held 8-9 a.m. at Ainsworth-Orleans Beach in Spirit Lake. Cyclists will ride around Big Spirit Lake and stop at five locations to learn about a variety of clean water practices and projects. Registration is available at www.dickinsoncountynaturecenter.com.

Following the bike ride, the Okoboji Blue Water Festival will take place at Preservation Plaza in Arnolds Park. Booths promoting water quality will be on hand, along with family-friendly activities and fishing clinics. Local artists will perform in the afternoon and Boz Scaggs at 9 p.m. For more information visit www.okobojibluewaterfestival.com.

to have people come out to the farm to learn about the reduced tillage and cover crop practices so they can see what it looks like on a working farm instead of just hearing or reading about it.

The Prairie Lakes Conference Field Day Tour is a free event for all those who register at www.pcliowa.com, and includes a meal as well as several other presentations by professionals advocating for soil health and farmers who can testify to what improved soil health has been to their farming businesses.

Also speaking at the field day is Doug Peterson, Natural Resource

Conservation Service soil scientist. He will discuss how managing soil health can increase a farm's potential. John Boettcher, Dickinson County farmer, will share tips for managing a corn/soybean rotation using no-till and strip-till. The field day will conclude with a cover crop seeding demonstration using a Hagie tall-boy air-seeder.

The agenda will be as follows:

5 p.m. — Welcome and introduction of sponsors/hosts/speakers

5:15 p.m. — Meal served

5:45 p.m. — "How managing for soil health will increase

your farm's potential," by Doug Peterson

6:15 p.m. — "Managing a corn/soybean rotation using no-till/strip-till," by John Boettcher

6:40 p.m. — "How this farm is being managed for water quality and the use of cover crops in rotation," by Jared and Spencer Herbert

7 p.m. — Cover crop seeding demonstration using a Hagie Tall-Boy air seeder

7:30 p.m. — Adjourn

The field day is being presented by the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with Iowa Learning Farms and the Clean Water Alliance. To register, people can also contact Iowa Learning Farms at 515-294-5429 or e-mail ilf@iastate.edu.

Established in 2004, Iowa Learning Farms is building a culture of conservation, encouraging adoption of conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and ILF team members are working together to identify and implement the best management practices that improve water quality and soil health while remaining profitable. Partners of Iowa Learning Farms are the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service and Iowa Department of Natural Resources (USEPA section 319), Conservation Districts of Iowa, Iowa Farm Bureau, Iowa Water Center and Practical Farmers of Iowa.

8-3-16

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

continued from page 1A

2015



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Pictured is Dickinson County Naturalist Charles Vigdal. He spoke with students on the importance of waterfowl in the area and what different species can be found in Dickinson County during the 37th annual Outdoor Classroom at Kettleson-Hogsback.

years — they have never been out to Kettleson-Hogsback," Butler said. "There's a lot of natural topography and there's a lot to show the kids. It's a neat area."

DNR officer Steve Reighard taught students about boating safety, complete with life jackets and the various boating regulations. Other officers took students on a nature walk through the sprawling hills and grasslands of Kettleson-Hogsback.

The lesson plans were delivered under sun-soaked skies and comfortable temperatures Thursday. The topic of soil health was new to this year's outdoor classroom. Other subjects have become annual favorites, according to Butler.

"We do move some things in and out, but we like to use the same base of things," Butler said. "Soil health was something we wanted to put in, being that we are the soil and water conservation district, so we were really happy we were able to do that

this year."

Karen Byers, with the Iowa State University Extension Office taught students about the varying geology in Iowa. Dr. Ross Dirks returned for his presentation on falconry, bringing with him a live falcon.

Butler enjoys the preparation that leads up to the outdoor classroom each fall. She recently completed her 17th year as event organizer.

"It's fun working together with all the kids, all the people and different stations," Butler said. "And when the day comes, I'm the time keeper. I'm kind of the home base for anyone that has questions or needs my help."

Butler also said the outdoor classroom's 37-year history wouldn't be possible without the cooperation of the teachers and local volunteers.

"They have been really great to work with," Butler said. "The kids are always really enthusiastic, too. We had a wonderful day."

Ag secretary commemorates soil, water conservation

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey on Friday, April 22, highlighted Soil and Water Conservation Week, which runs from April 24 to May 1.

The week is an opportunity to recognize the important conservation practices placed on Iowa's landscape and bring attention to the ongoing work by farmers, landowners and urban residents to protect the state's soil and water resources.

"Iowans in our towns and on our farms continue to engage in water quality and soil conservation efforts," Northey said. "This week is an opportunity to celebrate all the work that has been done and highlight the efforts currently underway to prevent erosion and improve water quality. It is vital that we preserve the soil and water resources that help make Iowa agriculture so productive and such a key driver of our state's economy."

On Monday, April 25, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad and Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds will visit Iowa State University to receive updates on the work being done by the Nutrient Research Center at the University. Branstad will also sign a proclamation recognizing April 24 — May 1 as Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week during the event, which will be held at the University's cover crop research site at southwest corner highway 30 and V Ave near Ames.

On Wednesday, April 27, Branstad will receive an update on the Benton/Tama and Miller Creek Iowa Water Quality Initiative Demonstration Projects and tour water quality practices installed as part of the projects. The event will be held at the John Weber farm, 3213 Highway 8, Dysart. Branstad will then visit a site of a tree planting on the Jim and Jody Kerns farm just south of Edgewood in Delaware County.

Kerns is the Tree Farming and Forestry representative on the State Soil Conservation Committee. The farm is located on County Road CTX approximately ½ mile east of Highway 3.



On Thursday, April 28, Secretary Northey will visit Storm Lake to receive an update on the water quality activities underway in the community. Northey will participate in a groundbreaking at a new Water Quality Initiative Urban project the city is undertaking to convert old lime lagoons into stormwater treatment wetlands. Northey will also attend a tree planting by Storm Lake High School students at a recently completed stormwater wetland.

Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week is in coordination with the National Stewardship Week, sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts. This year's Stewardship Week theme is "We all need Trees." More information about the activities that will be held during Soil and Water Conservation Week in Iowa can be found at www.iowaagriculture.gov/conservationweek.asp.

THE HISTORY OF CONSERVATION

During the "Dust Bowl" years of the 1930s, the first efforts to prevent soil erosion were developed. In 1939, Iowa passed a law establishing a state agency and the means for soil and water conservation districts to organize. Over 70 years later, the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state are hosting a variety of events to highlight the conservation work being done across the state.

The Department's Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality provides leadership in the protection and management of soil, water and mineral resources. The Division also works with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and

private farmers and landowners to meet their agricultural and environmental protection needs, in both rural and urban landscapes. The Department's conservation partners include USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa State University, Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) and many others.

The Iowa Water Quality Initiative was established in 2013 to help implement the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which is a science and technology based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to Iowa waters.

As part of the initiative, last fall 1,800 farmers committed \$3.5 million in cost share funds to install nutrient reduction practices in each of Iowa's 99 counties. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer. Farmers using cost share funding contribute 50 percent or more to the total cost of the practice.

There are also currently 45 existing demonstration projects located across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices through the initiative. This includes 16 targeted watershed projects, seven projects focused on expanding the use and innovative delivery of water quality practices and 22 urban water quality demonstration projects. More than 100 organizations are participating in these projects. These partners will provide \$19.31 million dollars to go with over \$12 million in state funding going to these projects.

Northey, a corn and soybean farmer from Spirit Lake, is serving his third term as Secretary of Agriculture. His priorities as Secretary of Agriculture are promoting the use of science and new technologies to better care for our air, soil and water, and reaching out to tell the story of Iowa agriculture.

DCN

Wednesday, April 27, 2016

NORTHEY UPDATE

Ag department marks Soil, Water Conservation Week

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey on Friday highlighted Soil and Water Conservation Week, which continues until May 7. The week is an opportunity to recognize the important conservation practices placed on Iowa's landscape and bring attention to the ongoing work by farmers, landowners and urban residents to protect the state's soil and water resources.

"Iowans in our towns and on our farms continue to engage in water quality and soil conservation efforts," he said. "This week is an opportunity to celebrate all the work that has been done and highlight the efforts currently underway to prevent erosion and improve water quality. It is vital that we preserve the soil and water resources that help make Iowa agriculture so productive and such a key driver of our state's economy."

On Thursday, Gov. Terry Branstad and Northey will visit a farm in the Big Creek watershed where four saturated buffers were installed last fall and a bio-reactor and oxbow restoration project will be built later this year. Branstad will also sign a proclamation recognizing April 30-May 7 as Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week during the event. The farm is located at 2155 290th Street in Madrid.

On Wednesday, there will be a field day and ribbon cutting ceremony for a number of urban water quality projects that have been installed in Rockwell City. The projects, undertaken by the city, will capture stormwater and use innovative methods to remove contaminants and improve the quality of the runoff prior to its discharge into the storm sewer system. The events will start at 9 a.m. with a tour at Featherstone Park (large camping cabin on south end) and will also include a ribbon cutting for the downtown square improvement project at 11:30 a.m. at the Rockwell City Town Square.

Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Week is in coordination with the National Stewardship Week, sponsored by the National Association of Conservation Districts. This year's Stewardship Week theme is "Healthy Soils are Full of Life." More information about the activities that will be held during Soil and Water Conservation Week in Iowa can be found at www.iowaagriculture.gov/conservationweek.asp.

During the "Dust Bowl" years of the 1930s, the first efforts to prevent soil erosion were developed. In 1939, Iowa passed a law establishing a state agency and the means for soil and water

conservation districts to organize. Over 70 years later, the 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts across the state are hosting a variety of events to highlight the conservation work being done across the state.

The Department's Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality provides leadership in the protection and management of soil, water and mineral resources. The division also works with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and private farmers and landowners to meet their agricultural and environmental protection needs, in both rural and urban landscapes. The department's conservation partners include USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa State University, Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) and many others.

The Iowa Water Quality Initiative was established in 2013 to help implement the nutrient reduction strategy, which is a science and technology based approach to achieving a 45 percent reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus losses to our waters. The strategy brings together both point sources, such as municipal wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities, and nonpoint sources, including farm fields and urban stormwater runoff, to address these issues.

The initiative seeks to harness the collective ability of both private and public resources and organizations to deliver a clear and consistent message to stakeholders to reduce nutrient loss and improve water quality.

Last fall, Northey announced that 1,800 farmers committed \$3.8 million in cost share funds to install nutrient reduction practices. The practices that were eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer.

There are also currently 57 existing demonstration projects located across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices through the initiative. More than 150 organizations are participating in these projects. These partners will provide \$25.28 million dollars to go with over \$16.09 million in state funding going to these projects.

More than \$340 million in state and federal funds have been directed to programs with water quality benefits in Iowa last year. This total does not include the cost share amount that farmers pay to match state and federal programs and funds spent to build practices built without government assistance.

SOIL HEALTH/COVER CROPS WORKSHOP

Cover Crops - Learn From Experience

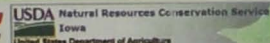
Dickinson County Expo Center, Spirit Lake:

February 7, 2017 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Please RSVP to Maxine by February 1 at 712-336-3782 x 3

- 9:00 - Michael Henderson, NRCS - Welcome
- 9:15 - Doug Peterson, NRCS - Principles of Soil Health
- 10:15 - Break
- 10:30 - Testimonials of Cover Crop Use
Loran Steinlage, Farmer, West Union, Iowa
Chris Teachout, Farmer, Shenandoah, Iowa
- 12:00 - Lunch - Provided
- 1:00 - Farmer panel: Open Discussion With Local
Farmers Experienced in Cover Crops/No-Till
Panel Members: John Boettcher, Jared Herbert
Denny Winterboer, Others Invited
- 2:30 - Michael Henderson - Wrap Up and Closing

Sponsored by North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), ISU Extension, Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Dickinson County Farm Bureau and Ida County Farm Bureau. Also supported by Area 1 NRCS and SWCD field offices.



Northey 'very early' ^{6/17} in vetting process for USDA post

BY RUSS MITCHELL
MANAGING EDITOR

Asking Spirit Lake's Bill Northey about his political future is like asking him to predict the yield for this fall's harvest.

It's just too early to tell.

Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture on Thursday did confirm that he remains in consideration for a role under U.S. Secretary of



Bill Northey

Agriculture Sonny Perdue.

"Nothing's been official at all," Northey said. "They have not announced who they're offering positions to. I think that there are a lot of folks they are looking at for different positions."

The U.S. Ag Secretary oversees a deputy secretary of agriculture and seven undersecretaries at the USDA. Northey said he could be under consideration for the No. 2 position or multiple

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NORTHEY

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undersecretary positions.

"If I do get offered — it would be something that is significant enough that I could make a difference by going to Washington," he said. "I have a great job. I love it. I have a chance to make some differences here as well. But, there would be a few jobs there as well that I think I could make a big difference in. There's a whole group of positions at levels underneath the undersecretary positions, too — administrator positions and other kinds of things. Those probably aren't the right fit for me, but we'll see how it plays out."

Any of the USDA positions directly under Perdue would require a Senate

confirmation, according to Northey.

"So, even once they announce them — and even if it's after the vetting process — it still would be a little while by the time you get a senate committee hearing," he said.

Northey would appear before Senate Ag Committee hearings before a confirmation vote by the full Senate.

"I think it's a very slow process and I think there is a lot of folks in the mix — I may well be — but we'll see how that all plays out," he said.

Northey grows corn and soybeans on his fourth-generation farm near Spirit Lake. He was first elected as Iowa's Ag Secretary in 2006. He was

re-elected in 2010 and 2014. A fourth term hasn't been ruled out.

"I haven't decided yet on that," Northey said of running again for his statewide office. "I could end up going to Washington or not going to Washington. If I don't, then at some point, I need to make a decision on running again in 2018. I think I would need to make that decision, probably, by the end of the calendar year or very, very early in 2018. And, I haven't made that decision. It absolutely could go either way. I love what I'm doing and I think there's plenty of work to do yet. But, I also think other people can do it."

Soil and Water Conservation District to host cover crop workshop ^{2/2017}

A cover crop workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 7 at the Dickinson County Expo Center in Spirit Lake. A second workshop will take place on Feb. 8 in Moville.

The program will feature local farmers along with main speakers, Loran Steinlage, West Union and Chris Teachout, Shenandoah, both of whom have extensive experience in cover crops, and have successfully integrated them into their rotations.

The meeting will cover the same material and will run from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Up to 4.5 Certified Crop Adviser Continuing Education Credits in Soil and Water Management have been applied for.

This meeting will be an open forum format in which questions will be taken and answered. The focus of this meeting is to provide an avenue for

farmers to learn from other farmers about what is working on their farms.

Soil Health has received considerable attention the last several years. Is this a new buzzword or does it have long-term relevance in modern agriculture? Soil Health is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals and humans. This definition goes hand in hand with farming — the business of growing crops and raising livestock in an economically and environmentally sustainable way. Developing a strategy to improve the long-term sustainability of the soil is critical to maintain the long-term sustainability of the farm.

Sponsored by North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), ISU Extension, Dickinson County Soil and Water

Conservation District and Ida County Farm Bureau. It is also supported by the Area 1 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and NRCS offices.

Agenda:

9 a.m. — Welcome — Michael Henderson, USDA-NRCS Area 1 Agronomist

9:15 a.m. — Principles of Soil Health — Doug Peterson, USDA-NRCS Regional Soil Health Specialist

10:30 a.m. — Loran Steinlage and Chris Teachout — How to Integrate Cover Crops

12 p.m. — Lunch — Provided

1 p.m. — Local Farmer panel that have experience with cover crops on their farm

2:30 p.m. — Final comments — Michael Henderson, USDA-NRCS Area Agronomist

If you are interested in attending the Spirit Lake workshop, please RSVP on or before Feb. 1 by calling 712-336-3782, x302 or you can e-mail to maxine.butler@ia.nacdn.net.

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PHOTO BY RUSS MITCHELL

A successful confirmation means Northey will have to resign from his statewide elected office. Gov. Kim Reynolds will then appoint a replacement to serve the rest of his term, according to the governor's office. The Secretary of Agriculture position is up for reelection in 2018.

"I am honored to be nominated by the President, and I so appreciate the support and encouragement from Secretary Perdue," Northey said. "I look forward to serving, if confirmed."

U.S. Sens. Joni Ernst and Chuck Grassley both issued statements in support of the nomination.

"Agriculture has been engrained in Bill Northey all his life," Ernst said. "As a fourth generation Iowa farmer, he has dedicated his life to helping farmers and ranchers across the state of Iowa. Bill has traveled around to Iowa's 99 counties to hear directly from folks about the issues they are concerned about and works tirelessly to identify a path forward. Additionally, he has taken part in important international trade missions and understands the need to promote our agricultural bounty abroad."

Ernst is a member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee.

"For nearly a decade, Iowa has benefited from having a Secretary of Agriculture as committed and hardworking as Bill Northey," she added. "He will be greatly missed. However, I know he is the best person for the job and will serve the American people well — along with Secretary Perdue — and will be an advocate on behalf of farmers, and not Washington bureaucrats."

Grassley said he looks forward to working with Northey in the secretary's new role.

"Bill Northey is an outstanding pick to serve President Trump in the newly-created role of Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation," he said.

The senator said Northey will oversee the Farm Service Agency which administers traditional farm safety net programs; the Risk Management Agency, which manages

more than \$100 billion of liability for the federal crop insurance program and the Natural Resource Conservation Service, which directs the nation's conservation programs.

"Whether you're a Northeast dairy farmer considering insurance options, a corn farmer in Iowa evaluating conservation enhancements for your farm, or a producer in the coastal bend of Texas dealing with disastrous losses of cotton, rice or livestock from Hurricane Harvey, Bill Northey will be responsible for ensuring the USDA is providing the appropriate assistance to your farm," Grassley said. "I've known Bill Northey for years and he has been an exceptional Secretary of Agriculture in Iowa. His leadership and passion for agriculture were proven numerous times as he advocated for renewable energy and the adoption of conservation practices like cover crops. He's an Iowa farmer with dirt under his fingernails who knows firsthand what goes into running a family farm."

The president on Friday announced Gregory Ibach as Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs and Stephen Vaden as USDA's General Counsel. Perdue oversees a deputy secretary of agriculture and seven undersecretaries at the USDA. Northey was vetted throughout the summer for a significant role at the USDA.

"If I do get offered — it would be something that is significant enough that I could make a difference by going to Washington," Northey said, earlier in the year. "I have a great job. I love it. I have a chance to make some differences here as well. But, there would be a few jobs there as well that I think I could make a big difference in. There's a whole group of positions at levels underneath the undersecretary positions, too — administrator positions and other kinds of things. Those probably aren't the right fit for me, but we'll see how it plays out."

Northey was first elected as Iowa's Ag Secretary in 2006.

"I love what I'm doing and I think there's plenty of work to do yet," he said. "But, I also think other people can do it."

Northey named to key USDA post

BY RUSS MITCHELL
MANAGING EDITOR



PHOTO BY RUSS MITCHELL

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey made an appearance Monday, July 17, in Milford as part of the city's quasiquincentennial celebration. Barring a snag in the Senate confirmation process, Northey will step down from his statewide elected position. He was nominated on Friday to serve as Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue on Friday said he was pleased with President Donald Trump's decision to name Bill Northey to one of three key positions in the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Northey is a Spirit Lake farmer and Iowa's current Secretary of Agriculture. Barring a snag in the confirmation process, he will be Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation at the USDA.

"Bill Northey will continue his honorable record of public service in leading FPAC," Perdue said. "Having served the people of Iowa for the last 10 years as their Secretary of Agriculture, and as a fourth generation corn and soybean farmer, Bill has a unique understanding of issues facing farmers across the nation. He will be an invaluable member of the team."

NORTHEY

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Northey confirmed to USDA post

■ Spirit Lake farmer will step down as Iowa Ag Secretary

Russ Mitchell
Managing Editor

U.S. Sen. Chuck Grassley said Bill Northey and his family "waited long enough." U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst said the Spirit Lake farmer's confirmation is "long-overdue."

But both senators are applauding the confirmation of Bill Northey as the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Service at the USDA. Northey will have to step down from his role as Iowa Secretary of Agriculture to fill the federal post.

"His experience as a farmer and as Iowa's Secretary of Agriculture makes him the ideal candidate," Ernst said. "I'm glad to see my colleagues recognized what folks



Bill Northey

■ Northey continued on 2A

Northey

continued from 1A

in Iowa already know: Bill Northey knows agriculture. He has worked with diligence and dedication to help farmers and ranchers across Iowa, and will continue to serve as a powerful voice for agriculture and conservation across the country."

The nomination was approved Tuesday by a Senate voice vote, according to the Associated Press. Northey's nomination had been on hold since September because U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas wanted leverage to discuss ethanol policy changes.

The former presidential candidate got his meeting — Cruz and the Iowa senators were joined by President Donald Trump and White House staff to discuss the U.S. biofuels industry. Sen. Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania, EPA administrator Scott Pruitt and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue were also at the meeting.

"I applaud Bill Northey's patience over these many months, which demonstrates what a strong leader he will be at USDA," Perdue said. "We thank everyone who worked on his confirmation. Bill will come aboard at a crucial time, as his knowledge and expertise will be immediately put to use as the new Farm Bill is formulated to address the needs of American farmers. In addition, his leadership will be key in the newly-constituted mission area, where the Farm Service Agency, the Natural

Resources Conservation Service, and the Risk Management Agency will be providing an even better customer experience. I am excited to finally have Bill on board."

Northey called the confirmation a tremendous honor.

"I want to thank President Trump for nominating me and Secretary Perdue for his support and encouragement throughout the confirmation process. I also want to thank Iowa Senators Chuck Grassley and Joni Ernst for their strong support and their tireless work on behalf of my nomination. I greatly appreciate Chairman (Pat) Roberts, Ranking Member (Debbie) Stabenow and the entire Senate Ag Committee for their bipartisan support of my nomination. I look forward to continuing to work closely with them in this new role."

Gov. Kim Reynolds will appoint Northey's replacement to serve as Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. Northey's third term was set to expire in 2018.

"I want to express my deep appreciation to the people of Iowa for affording me the opportunity to serve in this role for the past 11 years," Northey said. "Working with and learning from the men and women who make Iowa agriculture the dynamic and productive industry that feeds the world has been honor of a lifetime."

9-5-18

Lakeside Lab announces expanded wetland on campus

Iowa Lakeside Lab is pleased to announce the creation of a new wetland on its 147-acre campus. The latest addition can be seen from Highway 86 along the bike trail and is already attracting a wide array of wildlife.

Lakeside officials credit a generous donation from the Robert DeKock Family, a series of two ponds were recently completed on the northwest corner of the Lakeside property. The wetland as well as a future outdoor classroom will serve as an accessible site for students and researchers of all ages. The project was made possible due to the DeKock contribution gifted in honor of Robert's late wife Anita, who was a passionate educator and nature lover. Lakeside also wishes to thank the Dickinson County Soil and Water District and the

Natural Resources Conservation Service for their assistance with the project.

Lakeside Lab will have updates on its Facebook page as construction begins on the outdoor classroom this fall and the wetland starts its maturation process.

Iowa Lakeside Lab was established in 1909 as a biological field research station. Currently owned and operated by the state of Iowa and operated through the Board of Regents, Lakeside Lab provides science classes and research opportunities for university students. Open to the public, Lakeside also offers outreach and environmental education to the community. For more details, visit lakesidelab.org. For more information, contact Mary Skopec at 712-337-3369 Extension 5 or maryskopec@uiowa.edu.

News

NEW NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE EMPLOYEES TO SERVE YOU

FROM THE NRCS

The Dickinson and Emmet County Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) offices have been a combined management unit since the fall of 2008. NRCS is a federal agency that works with agricultural producers and landowners to promote soil and water conservation and provide technical assistance, as well as work with state and federal cost-sharing programs. NRCS offices are located in both Spirit Lake and Estherville.

Matt Welsh began working in the Spirit Lake Field Office as a Soil Conservationist in February of 2015. Matt is native to northeastern Iowa where he grew up on a small commercial beef-cow calf operation that his father and grandfather ran. His first experience with conservation was on those farms and pastures, where he learned the value of terracing, strip cropping, and establishing wildlife habitat. After graduating



From left are Clint Hain, Matt Welsh and Nick Dumke.

Photo submitted

from Iowa State University, Matt's career started in eastern Iowa where he administered locally led watershed projects for The North Fork of the Maquoketa River. In 2012 he took an opportuni-

ty with the NRCS to work in Sioux County, where he worked until he started working in his current position. He and his wife, Sarah, live on an acreage in the rural George area, where

her family farms. They enjoy spending time with friends and family and trying to keep up with their two dogs.

Clint Hain joined us as the new Soil Conservation

Technician in the Spirit Lake field office in October of 2015. A native of Mason City, Clint is also a recent graduate from the Environmental Science program at Iowa State University while also receiving a minor in Sustainability. While in school Clint worked numerous summer internships with county conservation boards, the Iowa DNR, and helped conduct research on wetlands at Iowa State before joining the NRCS team. When not at work Clint is an avid outdoorsman spending most of his time in the summer fishing while participating in many different hunting seasons Iowa has to offer during the fall and winter months.

Our newest addition is Nicholas Dumke. Nick has been working in the Spirit Lake Field Office since last May as a Pathways Intern. Nick will be transitioning to the position of Soil Conservationist in the Estherville Field Office this

summer. Originally from eastern South Dakota, Nick recently graduated from South Dakota State University with a BS in Agricultural Systems Technology. Nick lives with his fiancée on an acreage near Lakefield, MN. His fiancée, Kassy, is a biologist with Ducks Unlimited. They enjoy exploring new areas of the country and anything outdoors related.

Matt, Clint and Nick, along with other staff in the Spirit Lake and Estherville field offices, encourage agricultural and urban landowners to contact us with your soil and water conservation questions and needs. We look forward to working with you.

The Spirit Lake Field Office is located at 3302 18th Street, Spirit Lake and the phone number is 712-336-3782, Ext. 3. Estherville's Field Office is located at 2109 Murray Road, Estherville and the phone number is 712-362-2883, Ext. 3.

Wednesday, August 8, 2018 | 3A

SUNDAY
High 82 | Low 62

83. Sunny, with a high near 82.

clear, Sunday Night: Mostly clear,
with a low around 62.

Wetland field day set for Aug. 9

Iowa Learning Farms, in partnership with the Prairie Lakes Conference and Dickinson County Soil and Water Conservation District, will host a wetland, saturated buffer and bioreactor field day from 9-11:30 a.m. Thursday, Aug. 9, near the Okoboji View Golf Course, near Spirit Lake. The event is free and open to the whole family and includes a complimentary meal.

Edge of field practices like wetland, saturated buffers and bioreactors are key to reducing nitrate loss from agricultural land in Iowa. Through a natural biological process microorganisms living in the systems use the incoming nitrate for respiration and reduce the nitrates levels from incoming tile drainage. Together with in-field practices like cover crops and no-tillage, these practices will help reach the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy goals.

Field day attendees will have the opportunity rotate through three stations. One of the stations will be led by Matt Helmers, professor of agricultural and biosystems engineering at Iowa State University, and will feature the new Iowa Learning Farms Conservation Station On The Edge that includes both a saturated buffer and bioreactor model to demonstrate how these edge of field practices can reduce nitrate losses to Iowa waterways. Staff from the Okoboji View Golf Course will lead a station to discuss the wetland restoration and creation project they participated in on the grounds. The final station will be led by Chris LaRue, Iowa DNR, and Heather Jobst, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, to share details about the larger project in the area to create and restore wetlands. The meal will be held at Pub 19 at Okoboji View Golf Course following the program.

The field day will held on public land located at 1900 160th St. Spirit Lake. From Spirit Lake, head west on Highway 9 for 3 miles. Turn south on IA-86 S just west of West Okoboji Lake and travel 1.1 miles. Turn west on to 160th St. for 0.4 miles and the site will be on the south side of the road marked with a field day sign. The field day is free and open to the whole family, but reservations are suggested to ensure adequate space and food. To RSVP please contact Liz Juchems at 515-294-5429 or ilf@iastate.edu.

For more information about Iowa Learning Farms, visit iowalearningfarms.org.

