

2017-2018 CHEROKEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNUAL REPORT

Cherokee County Soil and Water Conservation District

314 Lake Street
Cherokee, IA 51012
Phone: 712-225-4151 or 225-3769
Fax: 855-233-1296

Annual Report of our Conservation Progress

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

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

Cherokee County District Commissioners



From left to right: Scott Osborn (Assistant Commissioner), Cherokee; Linda Bindner (Assistant Commissioner); Marcus; Ramona Nitz, Cherokee; Russ Winterhof, Aurelia; Keith Glienke, Aurelia; Tom Bindner, Marcus; and Brian Mugge, Cleghorn. Assistant commissioners Nathan Anderson, Pam Pierce and Daryl Ducommun are not pictured.

The Cherokee SWCD is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

PERSONNEL

Commissioners

Russell Winterhof, Chairman	Aurelia
Brian Mugge, Vice Chairman	Cleghorn
Tom Bindner, Co-Treasurer	Marcus
Keith Glienke, Co-Treasurer	Aurelia
Ramona Nitz	Cherokee

Assistant Commissioners

Nathan Anderson	Aurelia
Linda Bindner	Marcus
Daryl Ducommun	Larrabee
Scott Osborn	Cherokee
Pam Pierce	Cherokee

Field Office Staff

Justin Boersma	District Conservationist
Nick Livermore	Soil Conservationist
Autumn Pierce	Soil Conservation Tech
Tracy Rasmussen	Conservation Assistant
Mike Henderson	Area Agronomist



From left to right: Mike Henderson, Autumn Pierce, Nick Livermore, Justin Boersma, and Tracy Rasmussen.

Check out our Facebook page under
Cherokee Swcd

2018 DISTRICT ACTIVITIES

- 15 Regular Meetings
- Organizational Meeting to Approve District Policies, elect officers, and establish committees
- Booth at the Cherokee County Ag Show
- PL 566/534 meeting
- Poster Contest Presentations
- CDI Spring Regional meeting
- Hosted Northwest Iowa Regional Envirothon (environmental competition for high schools)
- Reviewed scholarship applications
- District Tree Sales
- 4th Grade Poster judging
- Hired summer intern
- Scholarships presented at High School Awards Programs
- 4th grade posters displayed at the Sanford Museum
- Submitted nominations for conservation awards
- Photo contest at Cherokee County Fair
- Conservation tour & meal
- CDI Annual Conference
- Paid CDI and NACD Dues
- Hosted Chamber Coffee
- District Audit
- Sent out contribution letters and annual reports



Susan Kozak

Acting Division Director

Iowa Dept. of Agriculture & Land Stewardship
Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality

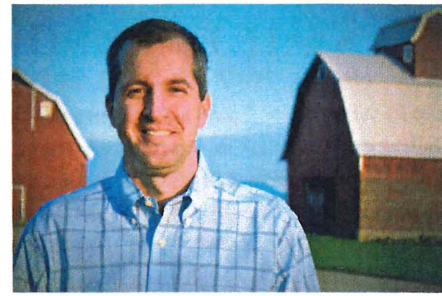
Director's Thoughts

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

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

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

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



Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture

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

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

For example, just in the last year we saw:

- 2,800 farmers signed up to invest an estimated \$9 million in funding to match \$5 million in state cost share funds to adopt cover crops, no-till or strip till, or use a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer

- 760,000 acres of cover crops in Iowa in 2017, an increase of 22 percent from the year before

- \$420 million in funding for programs with a water quality benefit, a \$32 million increase from the prior year

- 64 demonstration projects located across the state to help implement and demonstrate water quality practices

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

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

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

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

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

STATE FUNDING

(July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)

Cost Share and REAP Practice Funds are used to provide up to 50% cost share for installing practices such as waterways, terraces, and water & sediment control basins. Management Practice Funds are used to provide a one time incentive payment to try no-till, strip-till, or planting cover crops. REAP F/NG Funds are used to provide up to 75% cost share for planting windbreaks.

Cost Share Fund

Allocation + Carryover +	\$ 71,804.94
Supplemental Received	
Total cost-share paid	49,820.14
Total approved & pending	21,977.96
Recalled 12/31/17	<u>6.84</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$ 0.00

REAP Practices Fund

Allocation + Carryover +	\$ 63,868.41
Supplemental Received	
Total cost-share paid	40,051.97
Total approved & pending	<u>23,816.44</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$ 0.00

REAP Forestry/Native Grasses Fund

Allocation + Carryover	\$ 3,151.67
Total cost-share paid	1,646.55
Total approved & pending	<u>1,202.27</u>
Recalled 6/30/18	\$ 302.85

Statewide Water Quality Initiative Funds

Approvals made	\$ 18,423.43
Total cost-share paid	9,206.40
Total approved & pending	0.00
Slippage/Cancellations	<u>9,217.03</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$ 0.00

Little Sioux Flood Prevention Watershed Maintenance Funds

(July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)

These funds were collected from the original landowners in the Little Sioux Watershed many years ago. These funds are used to pay for repairs, maintenance, and inspection of existing watershed structures.

Balance carried forward	\$176,791.97
Income (Interest)	\$ 2,311.20
Expenses	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$179,103.17

General Fund (Revolving)

(July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018)

These funds are generated through tree sales, donations, and coop agreements. They are used to pay District expenses that are not covered by 1M Funds and to hire employees.

Balance carried forward	\$59,671.14
Income	\$46,145.49
Expenses	<u>\$39,044.94</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$66,771.69

Commissioner Expense Fund

(July 1, 2017– June 30, 2018)

These are funds appropriated by the legislature to reimburse commissioners for traveling expenses as well as pay for district office expenses.

Allocation + supplemental	\$ 2,200.00
Expenses: Mileage reimb.	\$ 909.18
Postage	\$ 99.00
Office Supplies	\$ 19.82
Dues	\$ 1,100.00
Regional meeting	<u>\$ 72.00</u>
Balance 6/30/18	\$ 0.00

FEDERAL FUNDING

(October 1, 2017 - September 30, 2018)

Funded 10 new EQIP contracts totaling \$78,877.00
11 CRP Contracts approved

Cherokee SWCD Awards Scholarships

Each year the Cherokee SWCD gives one or more scholarships to high school seniors who will be pursuing programs of study in conservation or agriculture and who show leadership and scholastic achievement. This year the District awarded a \$500.00 scholarship to Leah Henderson, a \$400.00 scholarship to Sydney Woltman, and \$200.00 scholarships to Tyler Whited, Jaden Ducommun, and Wyatt Tuttle.

Leah Henderson is a 2018 graduate of MMCPU High School. Leah maintained an impressive 4.0 G.P.A. in high school and was involved in many activities including Cross Country, Basketball, Archery, Track, Band, Madrigal, Speech, National Honor Society, FFA, and 4-H. Leah is attending Iowa State University where she is pursuing a degree in Horticulture. She would like to study plant breeding and genetic modification to work towards developing new plants to make it possible for more food crops to be grown in adverse environments.

Tyler Whited is also a 2018 graduate of MMCPU. Tyler was involved in Baseball, Football, Track, Skills USA, FFA, Agsplorations, 4-H, and was Homecoming King. Tyler is attending Iowa State University where he is majoring in Ag Studies. After college he plans to get a job in agriculture, but spend most of his time working on the family farm.

Wyatt Tuttle is a 2018 graduate of Alta-Aurelia High School. Wyatt was involved in Trap Shooting, FFA, and Art Show in high school. Wyatt is attending Iowa Lakes Community College for Agriculture Production Technology. He plans to return to the family farm and have a cow calf operation.

Sydney Woltman is a 2018 graduate of Washington High School in Cherokee. She maintained a 3.8 G.P.A. in high school and was involved in Tennis, Band, Quizbowl, National Honor Society, 4-H, County Council, and FFA. Sydney is attending South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD where she is majoring in Chemistry and minoring in Accounting. She plans to become a chemical analyst testing the quality of natural resources.

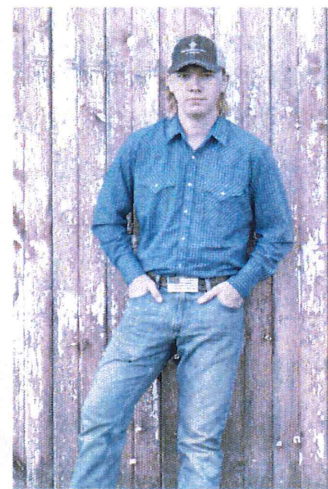
Jaden Ducommun is also a 2018 graduate of Washington High School in Cherokee. Jaden participated in Football, FFA, Agsploration, and the Silver Cord Program. Jaden is attending Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, South Dakota. He is majoring in Farm/Ranch Management and Animal Science. He plans to return to the farm after college.



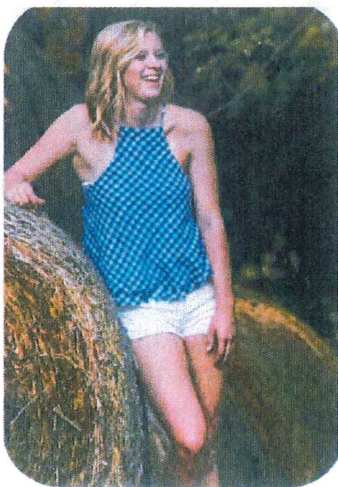
Leah Henderson



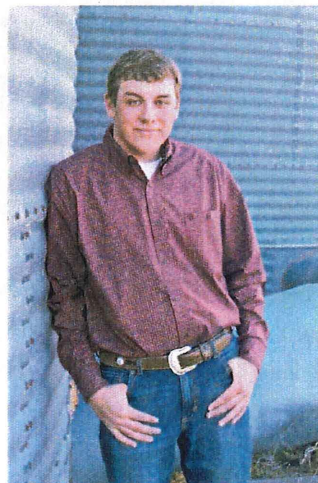
Tyler Whited



Wyatt Tuttle



Sydney Woltman



Jaden Ducommun

Conservation Education 2018: Students Learn About Watersheds

Earlier this spring, 4th grade students from Cherokee, MMCRU, Aurelia, and River Valley had an opportunity to participate in the Cherokee County Soil & Water Conservation District's poster contest.

The theme of this year's contest was "Watersheds: Our Water, Our Home". Mike Henderson, Area 1 Agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Laura Jones, Cherokee County Naturalist, spent time in each 4th grade classroom explaining the poster contest, as well as conducting a program on watersheds. Mike and Laura defined a watershed and then used an Enviroscape to show the students what a watershed is. The Enviroscape is basically a river town that has been replicated with plastic. There are hills, valleys, streams, housing developments, farms, a golf course, and a factory. They used it to show the flow of water to the lowest spot and also introduced the negative results of pesticides and too much soil erosion and discussed ways to prevent those same negative things from happening. Since we all drink water and the same water has been cycled around since the dinosaurs, Laura and Mike encouraged the kids to be conscious of their watershed and what they put into it. We all live in a watershed.

Posters were judged on the following criteria: 50% for conservation message, 30% for visual effectiveness, 10% for originality, and 10% for universal appeal.

Cherokee SWCD Commissioner Ramona Nitz presented the first, second, and third place winners from each school with ribbons, certificates, and Dairy Queen gift cards from the Cherokee SWCD.

From Aurelia the winners were Dayn Simonsen – First Place, Gabriel Olsen – Second Place, and Jayden Booher - Third Place. Cherokee's winners were Macy Gravenish – 1st place, Abryl Mongan – 2nd place, and Sophie Thorson – 3rd place. From MMCRU the winners were Emma Erickson – 1st place, Riley Groves – 2nd place, and KaLeigha Dreckman – 3rd place. River Valley's winners were Ella Mathers-Hansen – 1st place, Gage Berning – 2nd place, and Adlyr Redenius – 3rd place.

Macy Gravenish was chosen as the overall winner for Cherokee County and her poster was sent to the Conservation Districts of Iowa Regional Director for the regional competition.

All the participating students' posters were on display at the Sanford Museum during the month of June.

Aurelia Poster Winners



(left to right) 3rd place winner Jayden Booher, 2nd place winner Gabriel Olsen, and 1st place winner Dayn Simonsen.

Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn Poster Winners



(left to right) 1st place winner Emma Erickson, 2nd place winner Riley Groves, and 3rd place winner KaLeigha Dreckman absent.

Cherokee Poster Winners

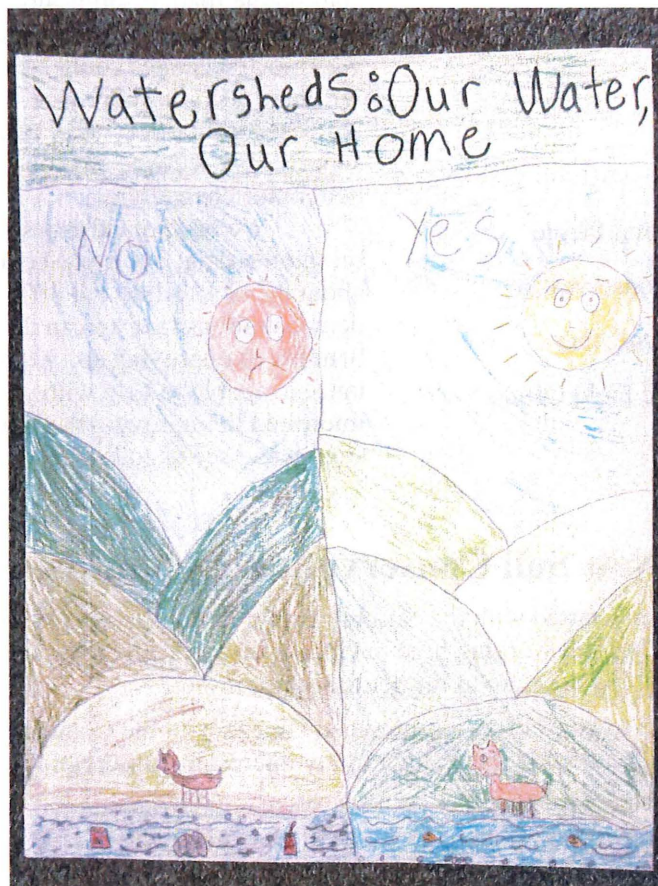


(left to right) 2nd place winner Abryl Mongan, 1st place winner Macy Gravenish, and 3rd place winner Sophie Thorson absent.

River Valley Poster Winners



(left to right) 3rd place winner Adlyr Redenius, 2nd place winner Gage Berning, and 1st place winner Ella Mathers-Hansen.



Macy Gravenish's poster was chosen as the overall winner for Cherokee County.

Contributions

Contributions are the primary source for financing educational and promotional activities. We would like to thank the following contributors who donated money from October 2017 through September 2018. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Soil & Water Sustainers

Timothy and Angela Cronin
Farmers State Bank - Marcus
John and Ramona Nitz
WHJ LLC
Russell and Beth Winterhof

Soil & Water Stewards

Tom and Linda Bindner
Mike and Pam Cronin
Sharon Nelson
Schmillen Construction Inc.
Scott and Sally Wilkie

Soil & Water Savers

Filmore and Darlene Gustafson
Duane and Lucille Kent
Tom and Susanne Oswald
Roger Winterhof

Soil & Water Supporters

Mark and Janice Carlson
Barbara Esch
Dale and Janice Grell
Phyllis Kabisch
McGuire Auction Company Inc.



Autumn Pierce
Soil Conservation
Technician
Cherokee Field Office



Justin Boersma
District Conservationist
Cherokee Field Office

Soil Health

If you've spent any time in or around the NRCS offices in the last few years, chances are you've been hearing a lot about Soil Health. While it's not necessarily a new concept, we've learned a lot about the science behind it in the last few years. There are five main principles of Soil Health:

- Cover your soil
- Minimize soil disturbance
- Plant diversity
- Continual living plant roots
- Livestock integration

While it's a tall order to jump into all five principles at once, there are some simple improvements that can be made to start on the road to soil health. A couple minor changes could include reducing tillage or trying a cover crop. A series of these small changes could have significant benefits on your farmland and your operation. Just a few of the benefits include: increased infiltration rates, better water holding capacity, weed suppression, reduced erosion, increase in organic matter, and better nutrient cycling.

We understand that some of these changes are a little bit intimidating, but if you're interested in learning some more about them, stop into our office and ask. We have a series of demonstrations that we can do in the office to illustrate the benefits of improving soil health. We also have financial assistance available to help with practice adoption. So, if you're interested in improving the health of the soil in your operation stop in and see us today.

New Soil Conservation Technician

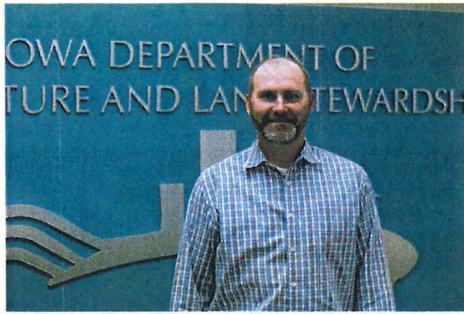
Hello, my name is Autumn Pierce and I started with the Natural Resource Conservation Service in June as a Soil Conservation Technician. I'm excited to be living and working here in Cherokee with such enthusiastic staff members and producers. For the individuals I have not met yet, I would like to further introduce myself.

I grew up on a cattle farm in the small town of Fries (pronounced "freeze"), in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Here I developed my love for agriculture and the great outdoors, leading to my interest in conservation.

While in Virginia I attended Grayson County High School, then Wytheville Community College receiving an Associate Degree in General Education. With degree in tow, I attended Radford University where I received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology - Environmental Concentration and Geology - General Concentration.

Before moving to Iowa, I worked with New River Soil and Water Conservation District in Virginia as a Total Daily Maximum Load Technician, then later as a Conservation Technician. With New River SWCD I was coordinator of New River Hill Farm daily operations and No-Till Drill Rental Program, along with other conservation planning duties within Grayson and Carroll County.

I'm delighted to be working with producers and other staff members in Cherokee promoting conservation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact the Cherokee USDA office or stop in. I look forward to meeting and working with you in our community.



Vince Sitzmann

Field Services Bureau Chief

Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship

Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality

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

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

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

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

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

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

2018-2019 Tree Price List

Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District

314 Lake Street, Cherokee, IA 51012 PH: (712) 225-4151
FAX: (855) 233-1296 EMAIL: Tracy.Rasmussen@ia.nacdnet.net

Species	Size	Type	Trees Per Bundle	Price Per Tree	Price Per Bundle or Pot	No. of Bundles	No. of Trees	Total Price
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If you are looking for a species not listed below, give us a call. Other varieties may be available.

Deciduous Trees

Male Cottonwood (seedless)	4-5'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$3.00	\$75.00			
Silver Maple	4-5'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.60	\$26.00			
Sugar Maple	18-24"	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.00	\$50.00			
Bur Oak	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.30	\$23.00			
Red Oak	3-4'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$3.20	\$32.00			
Hybrid Willow	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.10	\$52.50			

Shrubs

Arrowwood	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.30	\$23.00			
Nanking Cherry	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.00	\$50.00			
Common Chokecherry	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.10	\$52.50			
Cranberrybush	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.40	\$24.00			
Redosier Dogwood	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$1.90	\$47.50			
Common Purple Lilac	18-24"	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$1.60	\$40.00			
Amur Maple	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.00	\$20.00			
Common Ninebark	2-3'	Seedling	Bundles of 25	\$2.25	\$56.25			
American Plum	3-4'	Seedling	Bundles of 10	\$2.30	\$23.00			

Evergreens

White Pine (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$19.00		NA		
Black Hills Spruce (2 Gal)	24-30"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$21.00		NA		
Meyer Spruce (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$19.00		NA		
Norway Spruce (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$19.00		NA		
White Spruce (2 Gal)	18-24"	Potted	Any Quantity	\$19.00		NA		

Special Order	Size	Type	Trees Per Bundle	Price Per Tree	Price Per Bundle or Pot	No. of Bundles	No. of Trees	Total Price

All Orders Subject to Availability!

50% Deposit Required on all orders.

Please make checks payable to Cherokee SWCD

No survival guarantee on stock sold at these prices.

Trees will be available the first or second week in April for pickup.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

SUB TOTAL

7% STATE & LOCAL OPTION TAX

GRAND TOTAL

CASH/CHECK#

AMOUNT PAID

BALANCE DUE

No cash or credit/debit cards accepted

Dear Soil & Water Conservationist:

For over 74 years the Cherokee Soil & Water Conservation District has been helping producers conserve two of our most valuable resources, our soil and water. We believe that soil and water conservation is an easy task that everyone can do and we need your help. We invite you to join our local conservation efforts by becoming a Conservation Club Member for 2019. All Conservation Club funds collected are used specifically for projects like: scholarship awards for high school seniors, Lunch 'n' Learn meetings with area youth, conservation education materials, 4th grade poster contest prizes and materials, and our yearly Conservation Tour in which the public views newly implemented conservation practices. We also provide technical assistance in the local office by paying for part-time employees.

As Iowans, we all share similar concerns for soil and water quality as well as protecting these resources for future generations. Iowa is faced with challenges that will impact conservation programs. By donating to the Cherokee SWCD, we can continue to promote, educate, and implement these important conservation practices. Any support you can give to the SWCD is greatly appreciated. And remember, your contribution **is tax deductible**. If you would like to make a contribution, please complete the membership form below and mail it with your donation, made payable to the Cherokee SWCD.

With Sincere Thanks,

Cherokee SWCD Commissioners

Please make your donation payable to:

Cherokee SWCD



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Name: _____

Address: _____

Cherokee SWCD
314 Lake Street
Cherokee, IA 51012
712-225-3769

Levels of Support

Soil & Water Supporter	\$20 - \$49.00	Soil & Water Saver	\$50 - \$99.00
Soil & Water Steward	\$100 - \$149.00	Soil & Water Sustainer	\$150.00 and above

Donation enclosed: _____ **Any Amount Welcome**



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2018 Conservation Tour By Ramona Nitz - Commissioner

The Cherokee County Soil and Water District (SWCD) held its annual conservation tour on July 24th. Guests were welcomed by Chairperson Russ Winterhof who also introduced special guests which included County Board of Supervisors Dennis Bush, Gary Lundquist, and Duane Mummert. Also in attendance were representatives from the offices of Senator Chuck Grassley and Representative Steve King, and CAEDC director Bill Anderson.

Our first stop took us to Pitcher Township to land owned by Roger Winterhof and farmed by Jim Hinkeldey. Jim spoke about the waterways and the water and sediment control basins on the land.

We then traveled north to Afton Township to the place of Randy Husman where Nick Livermore, soil conservationist with NRCS, described the beautiful new windbreak we saw there.

Further travel north, to Spring Township, found us guests of Wayne Stewart. There Matt McClanahan showed us an excellent example of land placed in IHAP (Iowa Habitat Access Program). As always, Matt's presentation was both informative and entertaining.

Our final stop of the evening took us to the Grainery Lodge where we viewed the soil health tunnel before enjoying a delicious meal prepared by Mary Bierman. We want to thank Duane Mummert for donating the use of his facility.

The summer tour is an annual event and we will start planning our 2019 tour soon. If you'd like to participate in next year's tour, call Tracy at 712-225-4151 ext. 3 and she will send you more information.



Winterhof's Waterway



Husman's Windbreak

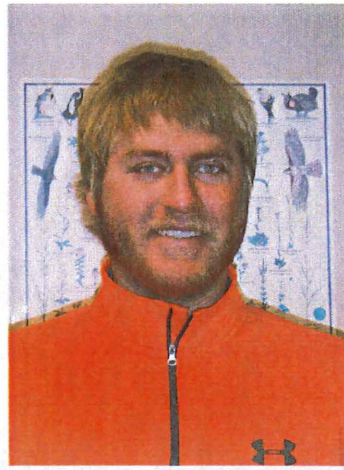


Stewart's IHAP site



Soil Health Tunnel

Nick Livermore
Soil Conservationist
Cherokee Field Office



A Quick Guide to Improving or Beginning Your Windbreak

By Nick Livermore

Using trees and shrubs as a method to reduce the effects of wind around buildings and homes is not a new concept. However, the way in which we plant the trees, as well as the species we choose to plant is constantly changing. One of our early methods was to plant 5 to 10 acres of ash, elm, silver maple, basswood, and assorted shrubs around a homestead. This is arguably the most effective method for protecting a home from wind, as well as providing tremendous habitat for wildlife. Although there are many advantages to these kinds of shelterbelts, the practicality of them has diminished over the years because most of them are sitting on highly productive soil. The next method was to tear the grove out and plant a few rows of evergreens on an area roughly $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the old shelterbelt. This freed up those extra acres for more yard, more pasture, or in most cases more tillable ground. This low diversity method had a lot of popularity because it was fast, effective, was esthetically pleasing, and did not have a very large footprint compared to the previous method. After 25 years or so the disadvantages of single or two species windbreaks showed themselves substantially. Single trees then whole windbreaks would begin to die off, causing the landowner to have to tear the trees out and start over again. Diseases such as rhizosphaera, stigmina needlecast, and cytospora canker are to blame for our evergreens dying off, mainly because these tree rows consisted of a high percentage of Colorado blue spruce. So, what can we do to address the issue of our evergreen windbreaks declining? Unfortunately, the options are limited. Any treatments for the trees themselves prove to be expensive, time consuming, labor intensive, and not always effective. In most cases of a disease impacted windbreak, the best suggestion would be to remove the evergreens, and start over with a more diverse species selection and proper plant spacing. If you did not want to tear out the whole windbreak, you could remove the dead and dying limbs from each tree, as well as remove dead trees in a timely matter so they do not spread the disease further, although this method is merely a 'band-aid' to the real issue.

Determining the best windbreak design can be done in your local field office. These designs are done on a case by case basis taking into consideration soil type, location, and the overall goals of the individual seeking help in implementing a well-planned windbreak. We are more than happy to answer any questions or concerns that you have with your current windbreak, and if you wish to put in a new windbreak, cost share is many times available.

Cost share is currently 75% of a \$5.00 shrub. (\$3.75/shrub cost share) 75% cost share on trees as well, with up to \$30.00 cost share on a \$40.00 tree. There is a limit of \$1500.00 cost share per windbreak per year.





Rye flown onto standing corn.



Rye drilled into silage ground.