

Sunday Driving? Tour Pine Lake Watershed

15-Mile Trip Shows Soil Conservation

ELDORA — For a Sunday drive that's both pleasant and educational, you might enjoy the "Drive-It-Yourself" tour planned by the Hardin County Soil Conservation District.

The tour is designed to show some scenic areas of the land that acts as a watershed for Pine Lake and examples of work being done by farmers in the area to save the soil on their land.

ONE OF the requirements for funds to be appropriated by the state legislature for the enlargement of Upper Pine Lake was that at least 75 per cent of the land in the watershed be under a soil conservation program. Now 80 per cent of the nearly 10,000 acres in the area in Hardin and Grundy counties have been signed for conservation practices.

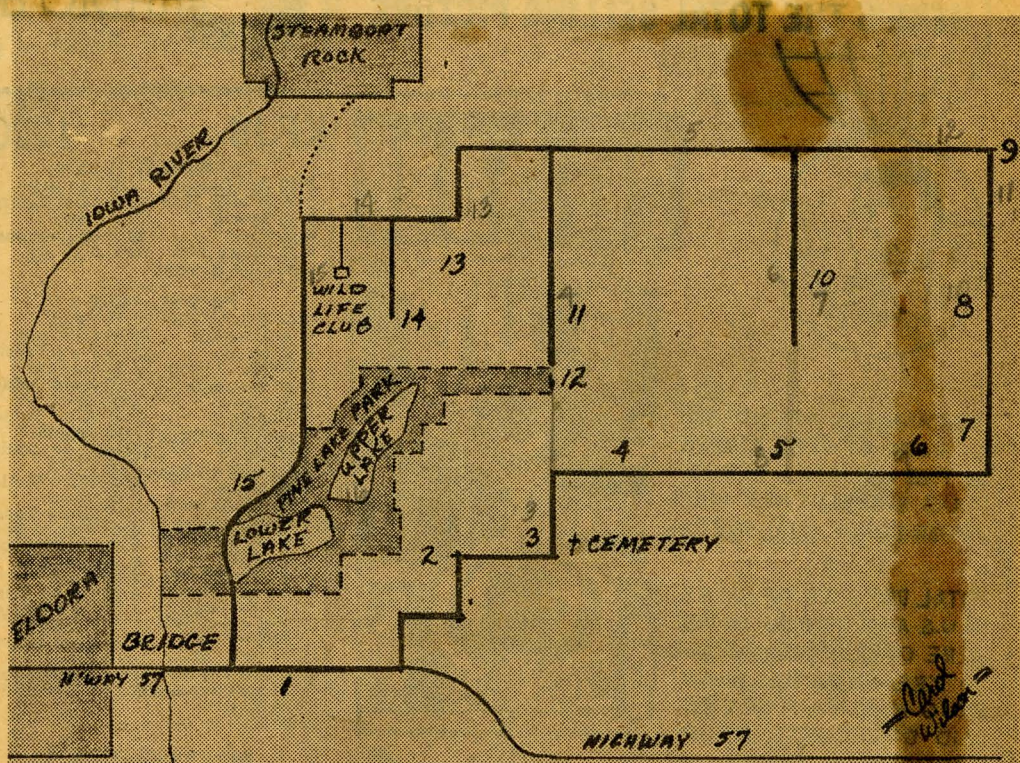
The tour is about 15 miles long. Points of interest described below are a combination of information prepared by Cal Moore, Hardin County soil conservationist, and personal observation. Numbers refer to outline map.

The tour starts as you leave the bridge at Eldora going east on Highway 57. On the right side of the road you will see terraces and grassed waterways on the Ed Wiesner farm (1). Terraces are low ridges which go around a slope to break it up into a series of shorter slopes. This practice slows the water as it runs down and diverts it into grassed waterways where it is carried off the field with a minimum of erosion. Some of these terraces were constructed during the 1930's.

TURN LEFT at the gravel road just before the highway starts the big curve. At approximately the third corner, you can see additional terraces in a hay field on the Guy Morris farm (2).

Continue following the road until you come to a well-kept little cemetery. Turn left here. On the Lewis Crosser farm at the left (3) is a large field with alternate strips of corn, oats and hay planted on the contour. This practice of strip cropping slows the run-off of water to help prevent erosion. Contouring is the planting in a level line around and across slopes.

Turn right at the next corner. The road divides a small grove of trees and continues east. Examples of contouring visible in fields along the north side of this road are on the farms of Ivan DeWit (4), Henry Peters (5) and Dick Freese (6). At the latter, a contour line is used as a field division between the corn and oats field east of the buildings. A straight field division cutting across the contour lines would have result-



Route for soil conservation tour of pine lake watershed.

ed in many short rows and more work for the farmer.

TURN LEFT when you get to the stop sign. Contouring and new grassed waterways are visible on the M. Q. Reynolds farm operated by Don Balvanz (7). This waterway provides for the runoff of water without gullyng. At another part of the farm (8) there are newly constructed parallel terraces and waterways in an oats field.

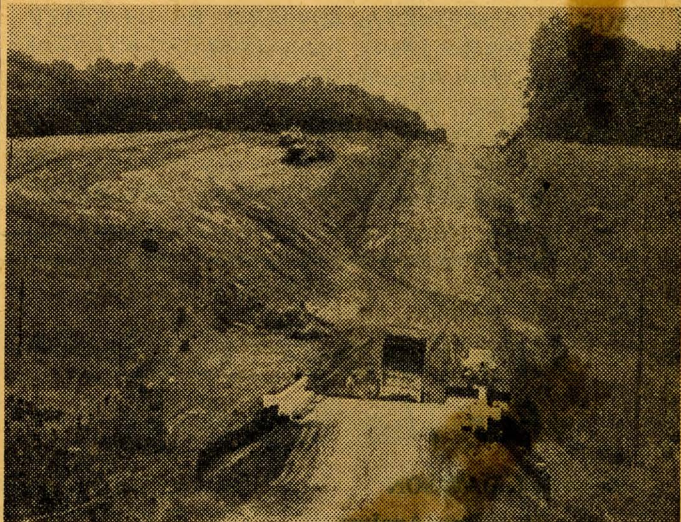
Continue north on this road. If you stop at the top of the hill under the heavy power lines you can get a good view of several of the fields at the left.

At the next hill, stop near the George Primus mailbox. Here you'll get a good view east of terraces, contouring and grassed waterways on that farm (9).

TURN LEFT at the next corner and continue west past a large oat field and some alfalfa. Turning left at the corner where you see a house with red trimming, will give you a side trip for a look at parallel terraces and a contour field boundary on the Lee Lundy farm operated by Marlyn Eilers, (10). The terraces constructed low and broad to permit use of four-row equipment were finished this spring.

Turn around in a convenient driveway and come back to the original road. Continue west and then turn left at the next corner. This side trip will show you strip cropping, grassed waterways and contouring on the Joe Beach farm (11) and the new bridge over Pine Creek (12). Again come back to the original road.

There are several large fields of red clover in this area so take time for a long sniff. As the road turns a corner you will see strip cropping on the Bill Schuneman farm, (13). Another side trip down a dead end road will show you strip cropping on the John Snapp farm, (14). The original road connects to Highway 118 and brings you around the northwest edge of Pine Lake. Contouring is evident north of



CONSTRUCTION OF A BRIDGE over Pine Creek has recently been completed in Hardin County. Shown above are workmen moving earth from nearby hillsides to bring the road up even with the bridge, a 55-foot prestressed concrete structure. (T-R Staff Photo)

the golf course on the Butler farms operated by Paul Primus, (15).

THESE PRACTICES are only a sampling of the many in the area, Moore said. Other good examples were located in fields not visible from the road and the tour was designed so that no guides would be necessary.

"All or parts of 49 farms in Hardin County drain into the lake," he continued. "All the farmers have been encouraged through the years to develop soil conservation practices. As you can see, a large majority have responded."

"Although keeping up the terraces and contours may occasionally take more of the farmer's time, he will find that the moisture is held in his land longer, and his crop yield is greater," Moore added.

ON A SUNDAY, things along the tour may be rather quiet. On a weekday, you will find farmers cultivating corn, spraying weeds and whole families putting up hay — for good practices or bad, no farm is productive without a lot of hard work.