
WETLANDS

Project results in home for fowl, other wildlife

Continued from page D1

the backs of their properties.

Boeck's wetland is within an 80-acre parcel enrolled in the federal Conservation Reserve Program. CRP pays property owners to keep land out of crop production, thereby lifting prices by limiting supply. The program also is viewed by many as beneficial to the environment, because it fosters projects like Boeck's wetland.

The land is enrolled in CRP through 1999. However, if the program is slashed by Congress' budget ax, the wetland he worked five years to build could be turned back to cropland.

"If CRP goes, there could be corn rows down this dike," Boeck said. "That would break my heart, (but) I still have to find income from the ground to make the payments."

The CRP payment he receives "nearly takes care of" his loan payment, Boeck said.

There is a possibility that he could

earn an income off the wetland, by leasing it to hunters, or to a conservation club, but it would take a considerable amount of work, Boeck said. While he does want to share the wetland with the public, he would like to be aware of the users. Anyone interested in visiting the wetland can contact him at (319) 266-4101.

Dettman does not expect the uncertainty over CRP to discourage potential wetland restorers. Participation requests are running far above available funds, largely due to economics. Farmland that is vulnerable to flooding can be restored to a wetland rather than risking a crop on it, he said.

Ultimately, Boeck and his wife hope to build a home on the property and enjoy the wetland as part of their backyard.

"I had a little bit of a difficult time convincing my wife that we had to build the wetland before we built the house," he said.

Until he gets the house built, Boeck plans frequent evening and weekend commutes to the wetland from his Cedar Falls home.

"I'm liable to put my lawn chair on that dike and kick back with my binoculars and love it," he said.