



SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION UPDATE

A Newsletter from the Dickinson County SWCD

March 1997

"Backyard Stewardship"

1997 Soil and Water Stewardship Observance

"Backyard Stewardship" suggests that one of the best places to practice individual stewardship responsibility over natural resources is right in our own backyards. Organizers of the event say there is great potential good if each of us takes care of the immediate surroundings where we work or live. They note that good backyard stewardship practices extend far beyond the backyard to the neighborhood, region, continent, and world.

To promote beneficial conservation practices in backyards, the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District is encouraging all interested individuals and organizations to join in celebrating the annual Soil and Water Stewardship observance, April 27 - May 4, 1997.

This "Backyard Stewardship" theme will have special appeal to an estimated 78 million adult Americans who are active gardeners. Some common gardening practices can be considered sound conservation practices as well. For example, backyard gardeners can terrace or contour their gardens, use drip irrigation, mulch bare soil, add trees and shrubs for windbreaks or protection from the sun, and add a small pond for the benefit of wildlife.

Stewardship Observance

April 27 - May 4, 1997



To learn more about conservation practices that can benefit your backyard, just as similar practices benefit farm land, stop in at the Dickinson Soil and Water Conservation District during business hours at the intersection of Hwys 9 & 71 in Spirit Lake or call (712) 336-2604

Conservation Staff

Carroll Oskvig — District Conservationist
John Wills — Environmental Specialist
Ann Ditsworth — State Secretary
Heath Dodge — Conservation Aide
Jim Bell — Earth Team Volunteer
Clarence Call — Earth Team Volunteer

Did you know...

- ▲ National Agriculture Week is March 16-22
- ▲ Earth Week is April 20 - 26 including National Arbor Day on Friday the 25th
- ▲ Stewardship emphasizes responsibility and reminds that individuals do not own resources but are managers of resources and are responsible to future generations for their conditions
- ▲ The Soil & Water Conservation District will be selling trees and shrubs for windbreaks and landscaping until March 15, 1997 with order pick-up days scheduled for April 18 & 19 at Tim & Linda Hemphill's farm west of Milford

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Conservation Reserve Program

During March 3 - 28, 1997 a general sign-up session for CRP will be held. Many people have asked questions about the next sign-up. More than 50% of the County's CRP contracts will expire this fall, and many of these CRP contracts are in the Iowa Great Lakes watershed. These landowners are eligible for this sign-up, however these existing CRP contracts will receive no priority over ground that is currently not in CRP. In other words, all land is on an even playing field.

The focus of the new CRP sign-up will be the land that is 'environmentally sensitive.' The priorities are to ensure water quality, soil erosion control, and wildlife benefits. Many of the expiring contracts meet some if not all of these priority measures. Dickinson County has received a National Priority Area status because this is a 'prairie pothole' region. That simply means that landowners in Dickinson County may receive additional priority points for the sign-up.

Those wishing to sign-up for one of the continuous sign-up CRP practices may do so at any time. The continuous sign-up practices are: grassed waterway, filter strips, riparian buffers, field windbreak, shallow water wildlife areas, shelter belts, and living snow fences. In many instances there is a sign-up bonus and a possibility of a 15 year contract.

If you have further questions about the CRP sign-up for this year, contact the USDA Farm Service Agency at (712)336-3782 or you may call the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service with any technical questions at (712)336-2604.



— John Willis
Project Coordinator

Backyard Stewardship

Word Search

H	R	I	N	P	E	O	P	L	E	N
A	W	V	B	I	R	D	O	L	H	D
A	C	P	U	J	F	C	N	R	O	L
L	W	E	T	L	A	N	D	I	S	T
M	I	F	T	T	E	R	R	A	C	E
O	L	Y	E	E	S	J	L	J	F	Q
P	D	R	R	U	O	T	N	O	C	Z
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Y	F	R	Y	O	C	A	M	O	L	E
Q	E	I	P	S	F	C	L	G	U	I
G	E	M	S	H	R	U	B	S	L	O
Y	O	H	A	H	X	O	I	T	R	E
C	A	F	H	I	E	P	J	U	Q	A

Things you can do
to practice good
backyard
stewardship:
compost
contour
pond
shrubs
terrace
tree
wetland

Who or what
benefits from good
backyard
stewardship:
air
bird
butterfly
fish
frogs
people
wildlife

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides technical, financial and educational assistance on a voluntary basis to producers to help them address natural resource concerns. The development of EQIP begins with input from local people who assess conservation needs through the EQIP core group and the local work group who advise them.

The Dickinson County local work group met on February 10 with the core group following up on February 18 to discuss the recommendations received from the local work group. The Silver Lake, East Okoboji, and Spirit Lake watersheds along with an area one mile on either side of the Little Sioux River were selected as priority areas.

A priority area assessment report will be submitted for approval for each of the priority areas in April. These reports will include information on land use, farm demographics, natural resource data and concerns, goals, staffing needs and funding resources available.

We welcome any input as we prepare the assessment reports for each of these priority areas.

—Carroll Oskvig
District Conservationist