

NRCS Success Story

Landowner Name: **Robert P. Smith**
Address: **1697 265th Street**
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
Farm location: **2 miles SW of Mt. Pleasant**
Telephone: **319-986-6625**

acres in operation: 66.4

acres involved in conservation practices, systems: 51.4

crops, acres: 51.4

livestock, type, number: NA

Primary resource concerns: Soil Erosion, Water Quality

Programs used: Conservation Reserve Program
Iowa Financial Incentives Program

Resource condition prior to practices/enrollment in programs:

Landowner had contacted NRCS due to excessive gully erosion that had been ongoing for several years. Also concern of sheet and rill erosion.

Conservation practices in conservation plan installed:

Filter strips, terrace, grassed waterways, conservation tillage, field borders, nutrient and pest management, and conservation cover

Benefits/Results:

Due to conservation practices installed, this farm has little erosion occurring in the field. Water quality has been enhanced due to grass practices installed and to be installed to filter water prior to entering a watercourse.

Additional Information and Contacts

District Conservationist: Doug Ensminger
NRCS office address: Natural Resources Conservation Service
City, State AND Zip: 2205 E. Washington Suite 101 Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
NRCS Phone Number: 319-385-2824
NRCS Fax Number: 319-385-0173

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Mr. Robert Smith owns and operates 66.4 acres along the Skunk River in Henry County, Iowa. This farm unit consists of 15 acres of established trees with the remaining 51.4 acres in cropland. Robert has a corn and soybean rotation on his field utilizing a no-till system. He also participates in the family farm consisting of row crops, a cow/calf operation, a saw mill and collects maple sap for maple syrup production.

Robert took ownership of this farm in March of 2002. Prior to purchasing the land Robert contacted the local NRCS office in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa with concerns about excessive sheet, rill and gully erosion. This erosion was to the point of hindering production of row crops in locations as well as attributing sediment to the Skunk River adjacent to the property. Due to the sandy silt loam soil types, slope lengths of up to 400 feet and grade of 4%, this site was in desperate need of conservation. After a field visit, several practices were identified to help Robert control erosion.

He applied for USDA program assistance and installed 2.3 acres of filter strips and 2.8 acres of grassed waterways seeded with cool-season grasses through the Conservation Reserve Program. In the spring of 2002 those practices were implemented. The grassed waterways provide protection from ephemeral erosion and also provide nesting cover for upland game birds. Filter strips slow surface run-off and filter sediment, nutrients and pesticides carried by water and provide habitat for many wildlife species. Soybeans were planted no-till into the previous year's corn stalks to further reduce erosion.

Mr. Smith continues to work with NRCS and the Henry, Soil and Water Conservation District to further address environmental concerns on his farm. He was approved through the Iowa Financial Incentives Program for funding of a diversion terrace and installed that practice in August. The purpose for this structure is to collect and divert 800 feet of runoff from an adjacent highway to a pre-constructed waterway reducing erosion as the water flows through the farm. In addition, Robert has an application to enroll contour bufferstrips this fall on the property through the Conservation Reserve Program. This practice consists of grass strips alternating with cropland and works much like a terrace in slowing runoff as water flows down slope, thus allowing sediment to settle prior to leaving the farm. Another benefit is the wildlife habitat provided by the seeding.

In the first year of ownership with the help of the local NRCS and Soil and Water Conservation District, Mr. Smith has applied practices that have had an immediate positive effect on environmental concerns on his property. Robert considers good stewardship of natural resources to be a vital component in maintaining a financially sound farming operation.

**Additional Information and Contacts:
Doug Ensminger, District Conservationist
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mt. Pleasant Field Office
2205 E. Washington Suite 101
Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641
319-385-2824**