

A Quality Environment

DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA 51360 712-336-3782, EXT. 3

MARCH 2003

UPDATE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a continuous sign-up conservation program. The goals of EQIP are to address local resource concerns identified by the local work groups, promote agriculture production and environmental quality as compatible goals while optimizing environmental benefits. EQIP assists producers to meet local, state, and federal regulations. The local resource concerns identified by the local work group can be greatly improved by the individual land-managers (the farmer) through use of EQIP. EQIP was one of the largest programs in the 2002 Farm Bill. The soil and water conservation districts will receive a large portion of the funds to address resource concerns. The current resource conservation priorities identified are livestock, water quality, and soil quality.

No contracts can be started until EQIP funds are received and rules are published. We are all hoping that this will all happen as soon as possible. All finalized information will be placed on the USDA website. This will include: a description of how EQIP will operate in each district, eligible practice lists with cost-share rates, incentive payments, life span of a practice, and a evaluation or ranking worksheet. There will be a cut off date for rankings once local allocation of funds is received. To avoid a rush of applications with limited processing time and staff, we suggest that any landowner that wishes to address a resource concern(s) on their land to come in and see us. This will help our office process information in a more timely manner and potentially decrease the amount of time it will take to get conservation on your ground. Begin-

ning the planning process early can also help us accommodate your resource needs whether EQIP accomplishes your goals or another conservation practice. EQIP activities are carried out according to an EQIP plan of operations developed in conjunction with the producer. Contracts for confined livestock feeding operations, for instance, require the development and implementation of a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP), approved by the local conservation district. EQIP applications are accepted throughout the year. Priorities are given to landowner applications that optimize environmental benefits, encourage the use of cost-effective conservation practices, and address conservation priorities.

TREES AVAILABLE THROUGH YOUR LOCAL SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOUNDATION

Are you or anyone you know planning to plant trees or shrubs this spring? The Dickinson County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD) Foundation still has some trees available. The district manages the money raised through tree sales and uses it to fund employees, buy new equipment, and provide scholarships.

Bare root stock trees and shrubs are available in bundles of either 10 or 25, with prices ranging from \$15.00 to \$31.25 per bundle. Deciduous trees still available include: green ash, red oak, hackberry, sugar maple, black walnut, and hybrid willow (austree). Shrubs species still available consist of common lilac, late bloom lilac, amur maple, common nine bark, caragana, nanking cherry,

chokecherry, and cotoneaster. Potted conifers trees are also available; with the cost per tree \$11.00 for 18" - 24" Black Hills spruce and Colorado spruce. Red cedar is available at \$8.00 per tree approximately 12" - 15" in height.

When you buy trees through the District you are eligible to use their tree planter, purchased with monies raised from the sale of trees. The Kaylor three-point hitch tree planter is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact Mark Ingwersen at 336-3616 to put your name on the tree-planter waiting list.

WILDLIFE HABITAT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (WHIP)

Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) is a conservation program aimed to assist landowners in enhancement, protection, and development of wildlife habitat on their land. Three main habitat types that are targeted include riparian areas/fens, grasslands, and woodlands.

The goal of WHIP is to increase and enhance these wildlife habitats for wildlife use. Threatened and endangered species will have special priority.

Iowa's priority areas include forestry, grassland, riverine, wildlife management, and education. Right here in Dickinson County, the Little Sioux River Valley is a priority for grassland enhancement and improvement. NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop riparian, upland, and aquatic habitat on their land. Public ground will be eligible for

Many tree and shrub varieties still available.

**Contact the
SWCD office at
336-3782, ext. 3
or
Mark Ingwersen
at 336-3616**

District Commissioners

Mark Ingwersen, Chairperson Scott Mitchell, Secretary
Chris Hoffman, Vice Chair Orville Berg, Treasurer
Bill Northey

Assistant Commissioners

Tom Koster Curt Smith Keith Van Kleek

District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

Contact us by e-mail at: DickinsonSWCD@iaspiritla.fsc.usda.gov

Visit the following web site for information on Dickinson County SWCD and other area offices:
www.theconservationstation.org

10% of the general WHIP funds. Federal cost-share will be available for approved listed practices at a 75% rate. Contracts are for five or 10 years depending on the practice and practices are limited to \$25,000.

Implementation of practices such as shelterbelts, prairie reconstruction, planting native vegetation, enhancing woodlands and streambank restoration are available. Existing management plans receive added points in the application process.

We are encouraging anyone interested in improving habitat and receiving incentives to do so, to set up an appointment with NRCS to start the planning process. Planning ahead of time may be beneficial for acceptance into WHIP, EQIP, and other conservation practices to come.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) offers eligible landowners, as a financial incentive, appraised agricultural value of their land, to convert current ground into wetlands. This program is aimed to help eligible landowners protect, restore, and enhance the original hydrology (water flow), native vegetation, and land topography. Restoring wetland functions helps improve water quality by filtering sediments and chemicals while increasing wildlife habitat. One program emphasis is migratory birds and wetland dependent wildlife, including threatened and endangered species.

Cost-share and technical assistance is provided to restore and protect wetlands and uplands. WRP easements are either permanent, 30 year easements, or 10 year restoration cost-share agreements. WRP pays 100% of land value and restoration costs for permanent easements, 75% of the land value and restoration costs for 30 year easements.

Landowners retain land ownership and access control; they are able to hunt, fish, trap and pursue other appropriate recreational uses. Landowners may also choose to sell the WRP easement to interested parties at non-agricultural value.

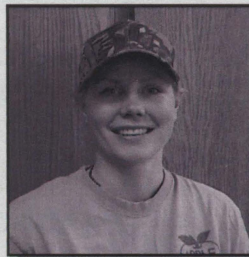
A requirement of the WRP easement program is one-year ownership, prior

to applying for WRP. Eligible land includes: cropped wetlands, farmed wetlands, prior converted wetlands, riparian areas that link other protected wetlands, and non-cropped areas where the hydrology has been degraded and can be restored.

Contact the USDA Service Center at (712) 336-3782 for more information.

NATURAL RESOURCE AIDE, HERE TO HELP YOU!

I am extremely excited to be an addition to the Dickinson county NRCS office as a Conservation Aide. I recently graduated from Texas Tech University with a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Management. My decision to enter the natural resource field and my overall passion concerning Iowa's environment is something I believe is a direct result of my childhood. I grew up on a small acreage east of Iowa City where my three brothers and I enjoyed a few miles of a creek and its wooded banks. My parents kept us busy camping, fishing, and hunting throughout the year, this was not only fun but also educational.



I have been an Americorps member for the last two years, working throughout Northeast Iowa with the Americorps-DNR program in 2001 inventorying state owned woodlands. I enjoyed the Americorps program very much and wanted to be more involved with the private lands sector. My interest lead me to the Palo Alto NRCS, again as an Americorps member, I worked mainly with conservation reserve program (CRP) and dabbled with the wetland reserve program (WRP). I discovered working with farmers / landowners implementing CRP on their land was very gratifying and I wanted to continue doing so.

I am anticipating a busy year working with several different programs. I will be promoting the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP), Conservation Security

Program (SCP), and Farmland & Ranch Protection Program (FRPP). Reviewing existing CRP, WRP, WHIP, and EQIP contracts will be another priority.

If I could stress one point to farmers and landowners it would be, if you are interested in doing conservation on your farm or a farm that you operate, come in and visit with us. Do not wait until the program is up and running. When the rules and dollars are finalized with some of these programs, we are anticipating a large number of interested participants. If we could get some of the planning process done ahead of time, it will decrease the time it takes to get the practice on the ground. Remember there are some great cost share, incentives, and easement programs available to create and enhance pastures, build wetlands, control sediment runoff, increase wildlife habitat. There is also cost share and incentives available to help manage your crop residues, nutrient applications, or pests for better control of chemical applications for optimum management.

Contact Christine at the NRCS office at (712) 336-3782, Ext. 3 or by e-mail at christine.evans@ia.usda.gov

CLEAN WATER ALLIANCE COORDINATOR CALLED TO ACTIVE DUTY

Steve Anderson, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator has been notified that his National Guard Unit has been activated and he will report for duty on March 15, 2003.

Steve is a Sergeant E-5 with the Sioux Falls Unit HHS First Battalion 147th Field Artillery in fire directions control. The 147th specializes in the Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, which can shoot up to 12 rockets in one minute and destroy an area of approximately a square mile.



We wish Steve well and eagerly anticipate his return to the Iowa Great Lakes area and our office.

NRCS Staff:

Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist
Tim Moran, Soil Conservation Technician

IDALS-DSC Staff:

Maxine Butler, State Secretary

District Staff:

Steve Anderson, CWA Coordinator
Christine Evans, Soil Conservation Aide

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