

80th Annual Report East Pottawattamie SWCD



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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Funding options in East Pottawattamie

This past year East Pottawattamie did a fair amount of work, but still lighter than in past years. I attribute a lot of that to covid restrictions and people slow to getting back to normal to in-person surroundings.

We still were able to obligate \$163,472 in State cost share funds. These funds were used for both terraces and cover crops with \$46,112 going to terrace jobs and \$32,560 devoted to the WQI cover crop program. The Walnut Creek/Indian Creek fly on program provided \$84,800 to cover crops in those watersheds.

Local Option Sales Tax Funds (LOST) helped us fund an additional 153,000' of terraces which took \$145,923 of cost share. These dollars help us fund many projects that would otherwise have to wait several years to get funded. We average about \$17,000 per month with LOST funds which has helped our district do special watershed funding when other sources are not secured from grants.

EQIP which is federal funding also obligated \$132,541 in project funds this past year through 7 different contracts that were selected with their ranking against other like projects statewide.

We also closed out our Slocum Creek Watershed after 7 years of funding. This was a huge success in our District and provided over \$1.4 million in funds over that timeframe. There were 205,303' of



Terry Gleaves,
District Conservationist,
East Pottawattamie Co.
Field Office

terraces completed plus 8,600 acres of cover crops done in the watershed in that timeframe.

So with that being said we have a new opportunity with a RCPP grant which is a Regional Conservation Partnership Program that will provide \$4.6 million in matching funds in the West Nishnabotna Watershed which is 681,516 acres and covers portions of 6 counties. You will see further information on this elsewhere in our annual report.

Thanks to all of you who have done work this year and I encourage you to start thinking about new projects that you would like to complete. Stop in and see us and we can help line you up with funding sources to get the job done.



East Pottawattamie Staff Members of the Natural Resources Conservation Service

Starting at the top row, and going left to right: District Conservationist, Terry Gleaves; Conservation Assistant, Susan Rush; Resource Team Lead, Earniece Young; Soil Conservationist, Laura LeCuyer; Technical Soil Conservationist, Andrew Casson; County Education Coordinator, Laura Monson; State Technician, Jessica Luke; Civil Engineering Technician, Michael Skiles; 780 Technician, Russell Hopp; Wetland Specialist, Laurel Sellers; Resource Conservationist, Brad Richardson; Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever Farm Bill Biologist, Tabitha Panas; Farm Bill Specialist, Kelsi Solheim (not pictured); Kaitlin Behrens, Contract Clerk.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Water Quality, Pottawattamie County, and East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District employees assist in the SWCD mission.

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T-77-N	Rockford	Boomer	Neola	Minden	Pleasant	Knox	Layton	
T-76-N	Crescent	Hazel Dell	Norwalk	York	James	Valley	Lincoln	
T-75-N	Lake	Garner	Hardin	Washington	Belknap	Center	Wright	
T-74-N	Lewis 'W'	Lewis 'E'	Keg Creek	Silver Creek	Macedonia	Grove	Waveland	

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NAME, TITLE	EMAIL	EXT.
Terry Gleaves, DC	terry.gleaves@usda.gov	ext. 302
Susan Rush, CA	susan.rush@ia.nacdnet.net	ext. 301
Earniece Young, RTL	earniece.young@usda.gov	ext. 311
Laura LeCuyer, SC	laura.lecuyer@usda.gov	ext. 303
Laura Monson, Ed.Coord	laura.monson@ia.nacdnet.net	ext. 308
Jessica Luke, ST	jessica.luke@ia.nacdnet.net	ext. 305
Andrew Casson, TSC	andrew.casson@usda.gov	ext. 304
Mike Skiles, CET	michael.skiles@usda.gov	ext. 300
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SWCD Annual Awards Night

This year East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District had the chance to celebrate nine very deserving award winners for their dedication to conservation.

A special thank you to our keynote speaker Drew Clemmensen from the Iowa Soybean Association, and to the Riverside FFA chapter for helping us serve supper and make sure everyone had a wonderful night.

Congratulations to all of our deserving award winners and thank you to everyone who attended to celebrate their achievements!

2022 Awards and Recipients

Educator Award:

Lindsey Henderson

Commercial Recognition Award:

Doug Welsh of Nutrien Ag. Solutions

Friends of Conservation Award:

East Pottawattamie Farm Bureau

Special Recognition Award:

Ward Luke

Pasture Award:

Dan Temeyer

Landowner – Tenant Award:

Brad Hunt, Tenant

Landowner – Tenant Award:

Jolene Hay, Rodney Fritz, & Cheryl Bald

Owner Operator Award:

Roy Bane

New Cooperator Award:

Wes Henry

SWCD Scholarship:

Abbie Willett

Ed Kleen Stewardship Memorial Award:

Brent Leighton



SWCD Scholarship - Abbie Willett



Owner Operator Award - Roy Bane



New Cooperator Award - Wes Henry



Educator Award - Lindsey Henderson



Landowner - Tenant Award
Brad Hunt, Jolene Hay



Pasture Award - Dan Temeyer



Ed Kleen Stewardship Memorial Award -
Brent Leighton



Friends of Conservation Award - East Pottawattamie Farm Bureau



Commercial Recognition Award -
Doug Welsh of Nutrien Ag. Solutions



Special Recognition Award - Ward Luke

Southwest Iowa Summer Field Day – Building Resilience in Cropping Systems

On June 29th, a soil health field day was held at the Armstrong Research Farm near Lewis, IA. The event was hosted by ISU Extension, the Wallace Foundation, and Iowa NRCS in collaboration with the Southwest Iowa Soil Health (SWISH) team. Around 50 producers and ag professionals were in attendance, and watched as speakers gave demonstrations on crop management and soil health. The day began at 10 a.m., with a corn rootworm management demonstration by ISU Extension - Erin Hodgson, Ashley Dean, and Aaron Saeugling. Attendees were then taken to a Prairie Strip and soil pit demonstration. Tim Youngquist and Cole Dutter (Iowa State University) discussed benefits of prairie strips and current research being conducted on nutrient runoff. A soil pit showcased the differences between a row crop field and the prairie plants. Laura LeCuyer, NRCS Soil Conservationist, pointed out changes in roots and soil structure from the soil pit.



Laura LeCuyer, Soil Conservationist giving Soil Pit Demo

In the afternoon, NRCS Soil Health Specialists Hillary Olson and Ruth Blomquist used a Rainfall Simulator to demonstrate soil health principles. Attendees headed out to the field research plots for the final two sessions of the day – a demo on how to interseed cover crops, and a discussion on cereal rye termination timing and options with NRCS District Conservationist Terry Gleaves.



Cover Crop Interseeding Demonstration



Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners

Front row, from left to right; Kami Willett, Commissioner; Dwight Hobson, Commissioner; Russ Brandes, Assistant Commissioner; Robert Zimmerman, Commissioner; Back row; John Thomas, Assistant Commissioner; Bernie Bolton, Commissioner; Keith Hotze, Commissioner; Chris Perdue, Assistant Commissioner

Help us Help You!

To better meet your needs, we are asking landowners to notify our office if they experience changes due to a tract sale, purchase, or change in operator. When these changes take place, it is the responsibility of the new owner or operator to update our office.

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Note from the Director

The Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality, a part of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, has been a flurry of activity over the last year. We have staff across Iowa, located in all 100 counties, to assist with natural resource conservation efforts. Our work focuses on traditional soil conservation work (which dates back to the Dust Bowl era) and newer efforts related to reducing nutrient loss to our surface waters in the state. This work can take many forms depending on the land use of the field, the geology of the area, and what the landowner is trying to accomplish. Currently, we are very focused in finding areas along field edges where a nutrient reducing wetland or saturated buffer might fit into the landscape. These practices will remain in place for many years and continue to do their job for better water quality. The Division is also encouraging more cover crop acres across the state. Cover crops are important not only to keep soil in place in between cash crops, but also to increase the soil health and organic matter for future generations.

Sometimes, we can get so focused on our day-to-day challenges, we might lose sight of the big picture. But I have been lucky this year to resume some travel and get to chat with conservation professionals from other parts of the country. The landscapes in Tennessee, Washing-



Susan Kozak,
Iowa Department of
Agriculture and Land
Stewardship - Division of
Soil Conservation and Water
Quality

ton, or Colorado might look very different to what we see in Iowa, but it is refreshing to hear that they are taking on similar challenges and looking for nature-based solutions. At a recent meeting, I heard it mentioned several times that the federal funding increases for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for conservation. That funding, combined with our dedicated state funding for water quality efforts, positions Iowa to continue to be a leader in nutrient reduction work and to construct wetlands and other edge of field practices at a pace that wasn't possible in the past. There are many opportunities, big and small, to get involved with conservation in Iowa. Reach out to your local USDA service center to find out how you can help us build upon this momentum and accelerate our progress.

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Excerpts From My Diary - by Russ Brandes

Hi, Everyone! DIRT here. We haven't talked in over a year. Actually, I am writing this excerpt from my diary from your future but from my past. Yeah, it is kind of confusing, but I thought I would talk about how it was in the year 2525. I picked that year because one of my caregivers, Russ Brandes, used to give me haircuts on certain areas of my belly using some kind of machine that had knives going back and forth real fast. The machine Russ rode on did not have walls around his seat and he had a box next to him that had sounds and words and music coming from it. I heard him call it a "radio".

One of the songs I heard coming from this box was called "In the Year 2525" and was sung by someone called Zager and Evans. The song came out in 1969 which was a very interesting time for a lot of events in the good old USA. The song starts out

"In the year 2525, if man is still alive
If woman can survive, they may find....."

Anyway, I always liked the song and it brings back a lot of memories. You should MXPLCQ it. Oh sorry- you don't have MXPLCQ yet. Trying to remember what you have... oh, you can GIGGLE it-no that's not right. You can GOOGLE it! If you remember, Russ was the great grandson of Henry Brandes, my very first caregiver. I can remember the first few, but the last twenty or so caregivers seem to run together. But again I am rambling too much.

There have been so many changes that have happened. It started with some kind of animal pulling machines across my skin, then machines pulling machines, then just single machines doing the task at hand (ie planting, spraying, gathering the crop, planting the cover crop), then some small machines flying back and forth above me, shooting seeds into my belly in perfectly straight rows and precisely placed under my skin with a uniformity unequalled ever before. And it did not hurt. In fact, it just kind of tickled me.

The newest technology being used is so different, so extreme, I can't even begin to explain it. And the way my belly feels, I just quiver with anticipation. There is no machinery bouncing on my belly. After the cash crop is harvested there are seeds planted and they are called a "cover crop". These tiny seeds germinate, emerge, grow upwards toward the sky, and push roots down into my soft belly.

This is where the magic begins.

As the tiny plants grow upwards towards that great ball of fire in the sky, they use the energy from that ball of fire to produce photosynthesis, which converts the light energy into chemical energy. The sunlight, water and carbon dioxide then produce sugars, oxygen and water. This causes the roots to get larger and drive deeper and further across my belly. Boy, does that tickle!

As the roots begin to die back they leave tunnels in my belly allowing water and nutrients a pathway to the plant itself.

Also small critters called bacteria, fungi, protozoa and others attach to these roots and to each other, feeding off of one another in a symbiotic relationship that is very similar to that of all life forms on this rock you call Earth.

Then this cycle starts all over again. Whoever created this cycle is a genius. It is so complicated but also so simple. You cover my skin at all times, you have living organisms and roots in my belly always, you don't allow scars to grow on the surface of my belly and you let that ball of fire in the sky be used by the plants to convert light energy into chemical energy which fuels the tiny critters and makes sugars and starches. SIMPLE!!

*Catch you all later.
DIRT*

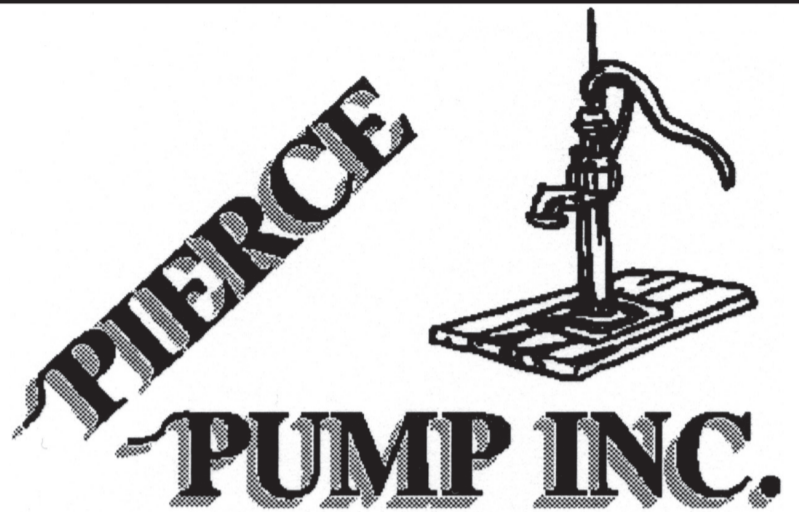
Cover Crop Diversity

by Jessica Luke, State Soil Technician - East Pottawattamie/Shelby County

We know that cover crops influence soil health and functioning. And cover crop diversity can improve root traits, which helps with factors such as the composition and nutrients. The soil's organic matter and organic carbon improves the area around the roots. Plant diversity goes hand in hand with improving the productivity of the soil, root traits, root coverage, the composition of soil aggregate-size classes and nutrients.

Cover crops are considered soil-nurturing plants. Their impacts on ag related ecosystems are very positive! When legumes are used as the cover crop, they can help increase the nitrogen nutrition of the next crop. It has also been reported that grass cover crops enhanced soil aggregation by increasing the abundance of large aggregates. There has been substantial growth in cover crop popularity, mainly to help restore and sustain soil health and productivity. This is largely due to the ever growing agricultural concentration, negatively, resulting soil degradation.

Researchers have demonstrated that cover crop diversity improved the belowground root coverage, which in return, increased its positive effects on soil properties, the composition of soil aggregate-size classes, and nutrients. Living cover crops have a positive effect on soil properties, which are essential for the health of our soil.



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East Pottawattamie County Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners meetings are held at the NRCS office at 321 Oakland Avenue in Oakland, Iowa. The meetings are normally held the third Wednesday of every month at 8:00 a.m. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please call 712-482-6408, ext. 301.

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Greetings from Lori Altheide

Greetings everyone! I hope you are doing well. When I meet and talk with NRCS staff and Partners in SW Iowa, I often ask these three questions. What is working well? What needs improvement? What opportunities are there? The responses help me know what we need to continue doing and what we should do differently. One year ago, we were still monitoring COVID-19 and taking precautions to prioritize the health and safety of our staff and customers. I'm very happy that our staff are back in the offices and our meetings no longer must be virtual, this is going well. Placing a District Conservationist in each field office is often at the top of the list of what's going well, however hiring opportunities haven't kept pace with the needs. SW Iowa is currently making selections to hopefully fill the 7 DC vacancies in the Area. I have heard often that staff and commissioners appreciated the direct hiring of Soil Conservationists in all 100 offices a little over two years ago. I'm happy to report that in SW Iowa, 18 of the 24 Soil Conservationists are still here working in our offices and Iowa NRCS has decided to advertise to hire more staff. This includes refilling soil conservationist vacancies to have a SC in every field office again. These new staff are the next generation of agriculture leaders and I encourage you to assist with recruiting efforts and inviting new staff to make visits to your farm.

We had a great fall construction season and an increase in cover crop adoption. SW Iowa NRCS Field Office staff and Partners have been busy with one-on-one conservation planning assistance to farmers and other rural landowners utilizing conservation programs to help improve the sustainability of the land through conservation practice implementation. Our field staff enjoy the opportunity to promote systems of conservation practices that help producers improve their operations, reduce production costs, and conserve natural resources. I encourage you to contact your local District Conservationist to discuss your conservation plan and conservation programs available.

We have many opportunities for funding conservation projects. Many traditional programs like CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Through



Lori Altheide, ASTC-FO, Natural Resources Conservation Service

EQIP, the NRCS provides conservation planning and financial assistance to implement conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, terraces, grassed waterways, nutrient management, manure management facilities, and pasture management. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): Through ACEP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP): Through RCP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address. Additional funding is available thru the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), Partners for Climate Smart Ag Commodities, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and a new Farm Bill. These additional funds will target climate-smart agriculture, helping farmers implement more practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon storage. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): CSP helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns.

I look forward to attending Spring Regionals and getting to see folks out in the area.

Best Regards,
Lori Altheide

Compliance reminders:

by Terry Gleaves,

District Conservationist, East Pottawattamie Co. Field Office

As we get close to spring, I want to remind all of upcoming Status Reviews. These are all computer-generated selections for review. They are based on your conservation plan and existing practices on your farm. We usually have about twenty tracts per year plus any holdovers from previous year that needed to correct something on their tract.

These are all based on conditions of the day the reviewer is present. Rotations from conservation plan are checked and any practices that are present in plan as well. Usually, it is an area that shows erosion that is called if there are any issues. Residue amounts or ephemeral gullies are the most common problems where treatment may be needed. You are given options and have until the next spring to correct.

I wanted to bring to your attention to something that we see a lot that is now on NRCS radar. That is the practice of disking around the boundaries and terraces of a field. If no-till is required in your conservation plan than you could be called out of compliance by doing so. A no-till plan means no tillage and even going around the outside of a field could put you in jeopardy of passing a review.

If you have questions on any of this, please contact the office.

2022 COVER CROPS BY TOWNSHIP

2022 Total Cover Crop Acres = 6,538 ac.

	PLEASANT 43 ac.	KNOX 0 ac.	LAYTON 1,591 ac.
	JAMES 720 ac.	VALLEY 420 ac.	LINCOLN 118 ac.
WASHINGTON 0 ac.	BELKNAP 448 ac.	CENTER 624 ac.	WRIGHT 113 ac.
	CARSON 162 ac.		
	MACEDONIA 121 ac.	GROVE 817 ac.	WAVELAND 1,361 ac.

From a Technician's Viewpoint

Helping people help the land, keeping the eye on the soil ball. Considering all factors of this past construction season late of 2022, we have had our fair share of reoccurring adversaries through a Mid-west Spring, Summer, and Fall. To that I say "simple speed-bumps" or an ole' farmable terrace if you will. Since being the former Soil Conservation Technician I have had my fair share working through a list of projects in the 2022 year of construction. In getting my eye on conservation efforts through the counties of Pottawattamie, Shelby, and Harrison; I have come across 106,163' of terrace, 10,124' of waterway, and 1,043' of basin. Some were easy and others I've come to learn a lot in a little amount of time from NRCS protocols and speculations, to farmers preference, as well as farm equipment from ole' red to the green machine.



Andrew Casson,
Soil Conservation Technician

Gaining knowledge from getting lost in steep Loess Hills, snaking along the Missouri River, slowly rolling outward to the balanced soil to slope of Eastern Pottawattamie. From moving my operations as Soil Conservation Technician to a Technical Soil Conservationist; I have begun to add NRCS and FSA programs to my field work as a technician. To have these new ideas for conservation planning is a part of my assessment as I work with (you) the producer in real time. Time is all we need, and what we have now, for the practices of conservation, so we can maintain the 2 or 3 ton of soil lost to erosion in a year, on our lands instead. Taking one step at a time as I do my part in conservation with the communities known as home.

In my short time I have worked with many great proactive producers of East Pottawattamie, looking forward to the future with many more projects with beginning and experienced producers of the area.

Informational Websites

- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – www.iowaagriculture.gov
- Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service – www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov
- Conservation Districts of Iowa – www.cdiowa.org
- Soil & Water Conservation Society – www.swcs.org
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources – www.iowadnr.gov

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TERRACE REPORT BY TOWNSHIP

	PLEASANT 6,942'	KNOX 2,958'	LAYTON 3,986'
	JAMES 22,854'	VALLEY 34,151'	LINCOLN 5,155'
WASHINGTON 7,810'	BELKNAP 2,144'	CENTER 11,354'	WRIGHT 360'
	CARSON 6,934'		
	MACEDONIA 905'	GROVE 19,561'	WAVELAND 9,733'
2022 Total Terrace Footage = 134,847'			

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2022 SWCD Annual Newsletter

Fellow Iowans,

The last several years have certainly provided some unique and substantial challenges. Yet, despite the pandemic, supply chain disruptions, inflation, and a weather whiplash (from flooding to derechos to drought), we continue to see record engagement in our state's conservation activity. There has never been more awareness, resources, partners, people, and actual conservation work getting done in the State of Iowa than we have today.

We've come a long way and I'm proud of the work we've accomplished. We know there is much more to do but we're excited and optimistic about where we are headed.

Everyone has a role to play in water quality whether you live in a rural, suburban, or urban area. As we approach the 10-year anniversary of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, we must keep our focus on scaling up, accelerating our work, and demonstrating progress.

Iowa has surpassed 350 public and private partners statewide and we are always looking for more. We only had a few thousand acres of cover crops about a decade ago, but now we've hit 3 million acres with plenty of room to grow. We know that innovative changes on the land leads to positive impacts with our water and we've accelerated the adoption of edge-of-field conservation practices like saturated buffers, bioreactors, and wetlands.

Using our traditional conservation funding processes, we were able to get a good start on demonstrating the effectiveness of saturated buffers and bioreactors. Now, using the streamlined "batch and build" model, more saturated buffers and bioreactors are planned for construction in the next 3-year period than have been installed over the last 13 years. Historically, when we only had CREP funding for water quality wetlands, we would construct 3-5 wetlands per year. Now, with dedicated water quality infrastructure funding, we are currently on pace to build 15-20 wetlands per year and the current goal is to construct 30 per year.

I want to thank the hardworking and devoted conservation professionals at the district, state, and federal levels and from our public and private partner businesses and organizations. From outreach, design, and layout, to developing watershed and community-based projects, these men and women go to work each and every day. They are the implementers and I want to extend my appreciation and gratitude to them for their passion and commitment.

Going forward, we need significant funding, technical and construction resources, and we need more municipalities, businesses, farmers, and landowners to say yes. And just as all technology evolves and progresses, so must our work to protect soil and water. We're continuously innovating, learning, testing, and driving new science-based practices – all of which can make an even greater impact on our shared resources.

There's no denying that we laid out ambitious soil health and water quality goals in the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy. We all know that these are challenging and complex tasks. We are pleased with our progress but not yet satisfied with how far we've come. We are committed to this important work because the partnerships, investments, and practices will all pay big water quality dividends long-term and that's a legacy that we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,
Mike Naig, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture



Mike Naig,
Iowa Secretary
of Agriculture

Dry Hydrant

What is a dry hydrant and why do we need them in East Pottawattamie County?

A dry hydrant is a non-pressurized pipe that is permanently installed in lakes, ponds, or streams. Typically, a dry hydrant provides a supply of water for firefighters that use a pump truck, to fill up a tanker truck to haul water to the location of the fire. In East Pottawattamie we have 5 dry hydrants, 4 are currently functioning.

In my discussion with the Pottawattamie County Emergency Management staff, rural fires are not tracked by specific jurisdictions, however they did implement three county wide burn bans in 2022, on 2/8/2022, 4/6/2022, and 10/24/2022.

One of our goals is to find some ideal locations for additional dry hydrants in East Pottawattamie and work with landowners to get them built. We are looking for locations that are next to the road and can easily be accessed by your local volunteer fire departments.

If you think you have a good location for a dry hydrant, please contact Terry Gleaves at the Oakland office at 712-482-6486 and we can work with you on possible funding options and help with a plan to get it built.



Kami Willett,
East Pottawattamie
SWCD Chair

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Strong Conservation Partnerships are the Foundation of our Programs

The late summer and fall seasons are always a busy time for conservation professionals as we work to balance the tight timelines of harvest with activities such as cover crop seeding and conservation practice construction. This past year was no exception as we again broke records in both the number of conservation practices completed and cost share dollars expended through our state programs. Working together with farmers, landowners and communities to get conservation on the land is our top priority and it takes a team effort to implement our growing programs each year. Without the cooperation and leadership from our strong partnerships with Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Department of Natural Resources and numerous other entities and organizations, we would not be able to deliver on our collective conservation goals.

To accomplish our conservation program goals our partnership staff works not only within the 100 field office locations but increasingly across county lines, broader watershed scales and throughout the entire state. This takes tremendous coordination with our partners, and we continuously plan and communicate to assess resource needs, staffing and training in alignment with work demand and program goals. We also understand the value of timeliness and strive to also create efficiencies in our delivery methods and processes in a rapidly expanding conservation program environment. Change and challenges will always be a part of this progress and growth. As such, we always welcome feedback and additional opportunities to work with our customers and partners as part of this process.

The opportunity to improve working relationships through feedback and communication is truly valuable and ultimately helps to drive progress and positive change. Thank you to not only our farmers and landowners, but also to our dedicated staff for your hard work as we look forward to more conservation practice adoption and program growth in the coming years.



Will Myers, Bureau Chief for Field Services at Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship



2023 Contractor's Meeting

On February 8, 2023, the East and West Pottawattamie County Soil & Water Conservation Districts hosted a Contractor's Meeting. We had a great turnout! It was held at the Treynor Community Building in Treynor, Iowa.

Sgt. Kirkpatrick with the Commercial Motor Vehicle Enforcement did a phenomenal job explaining the ins and outs of all aspects of the DOT spectrum. Local contractor, Ward Luke, brought his semi and trailer with a dozer loaded. This gave Sgt. Kirkpatrick a hands-on demonstration to go over with the group. It was very informative and beneficial.

Brian Holmes, Area Civil Engineer with the NRCS, facilitated a question-and-answer session with the group. The contractors also thought this was an informative piece of the meeting. They were able to get their questions answered.

Andrew Casson, Federal Technician with the NRCS, went over how to correctly fill out contractor plans, also allowing the contractors to ask questions about their work.

Overall, it was a great meeting! We plan to continue contractor meetings to get everyone together to discuss concerns, problems, changes in rules and regulations, and exchange things that go well.

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- Native Grasses & Wildflowers
- Small Grains & Clover
- Terrace & Waterway Seeding



2022 Legislative Tour

On November 18, 2022, East Pottawattamie SWCD held their 2022 Legislative Tour to showcase a variety of conservation projects in the district. Around 40 Legislators, Supervisors, and delegates were in attendance. The day began at the Oakland Riverside Clubhouse with a presentation of upcoming and ongoing projects, as well as an overview of the sites included in the tour.

After presentations, the group boarded a bus and visited the following conservation project sites:

- Applegate Streambank Stabilization project
- Taylor Farm Flexamat Structure
- Temeyer Grade Stabilization Structure
- Slocum Creek Watershed Projects
- New Terrace and Cover Crop sites
- Dry Hydrant

The tour ended back at the Oakland Clubhouse with lunch and good conversations between the tour attendees and East Pottawattamie commissioners & staff. Overall, the event was a great opportunity to promote and demonstrate the local conservation efforts we are implementing here in East Pottawattamie County.

Iowa Code 161A, FSA Form 1026 and You

By Dwight Hobson, East Pottawattamie SWCD Commissioner

Iowa Code 161 governs how Soil and Water Conservation Districts can operate and outlines their duties. IA Code 161A.62, 1 states that the District shall complete a “farm unit conservation plan” for each farm unit within the district. This has been a requirement since 1985, so every farm has a conservation plan. You as a land owner or as an operator are required to follow this plan, i.e., compliance. Landlords and tenants need to both be aware of this and agree to follow it. If you have purchased land or rented land you need to update your plan and be aware of what it requires. When you sign Form 1026 at the FSA office you are stating that you will follow your plan or will have one written by the NRCS. Cost share, ARC, PLC and subsidized crop insurance (RMA) all require you to follow your plan. If you are renting new ground or have purchased new ground, come see us. Landlords who have changed tenants make sure you have given your new tenant a copy.

WANTED-Soil Conservationists

The East Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District is looking for persons who are interested in becoming active participants in conserving the quality of soil, water and air to make our world a better place to live.

Our commissioners work towards the goal of educating all ages of legislators, supervisors, students of our schools, bankers, land owners, farm organizations, home owners, livestock producers and most importantly farm cooperators. No one is too young or too old to help plan and carry out our agenda for conservation.

We are a world of busy people with our own agendas pulling us in many different directions. There are a number of rewards from joining and becoming a part of the soil and water conservation community. Consider attending one of the monthly meetings to learn about some of the projects the board supports each year or visit with one of the staff or commissioners to learn more about the goals and ways you may be able to partner with the SWCD.

Volunteers are always welcome to join the ranks of those who work to protect our soil, water and air on a daily basis. There are many ways to be of assistance to the SWCD Commissioners. Together, our hands and hearts can make the environment better for all to appreciate. Become a partner today.

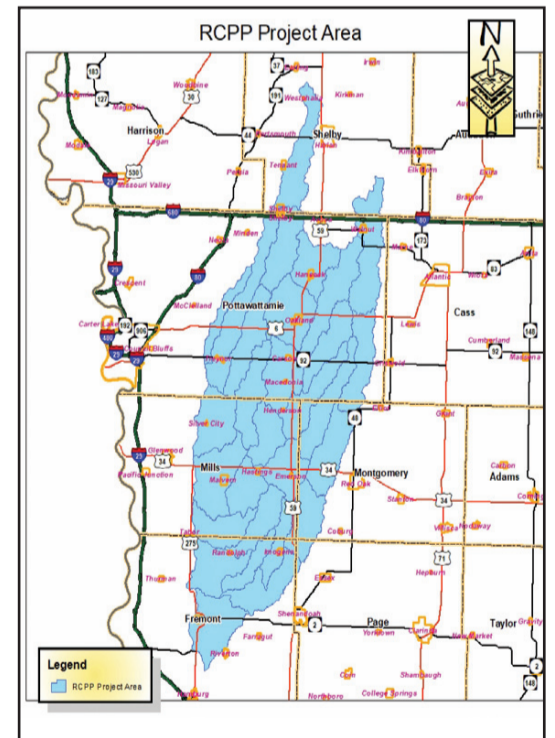


Bernie Bolton,
East Pottawattamie
SWCD Commissioner

Walnut & Indian Creek Project Expands Again!

By Dan Case, Environmental Specialist

The start of 2023 has yielded a new future for the Walnut and Indian Creek Watershed along with the West Nishnabotna! Recently a federal RCPP grant was submitted for the watershed and approved by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The new project will provide money for traditional practices such as cover crops and terraces but will also focus on Grade Stabilization Structures as well as bank stabilization for eroding rivers! The project will be coordinated by Golden Hills RC&D with the help of the local SWCD's and lies in portions of Shelby, Pottawattamie, Mills, Montgomery, Page, and Fremont counties. Producers



Completed SF512

thinking about projects should stop in and begin planning!

Last fall was a busy one with many terrace jobs being completed as well as some nice grade stabilization structures. The state SF512 program currently has great deals on ponds with the landowner share being capped at \$7,500. Planning and engineering can take a few years so don't wait to sign up!

The Eastern Red Cedar in Iowa

by Tabitha Panas, Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist with Pheasants Forever

The eastern red cedar tree (scientific name – *Juniperus virginiana*) is a common sight across the state of Iowa. Take a drive down any country road and you are likely to spot this native conifer planted in windbreaks, popping up in fencerows, dotting pastures, or planted in blocks of winter cover for wildlife. While the population of cedar trees in Iowa today is growing, it has not always been this way. What has changed to allow the population of this tree increase? Is this growth a good thing?

History of the Cedar

Prior to European settlement, trees in general were a less common sight in Iowa. Tallgrass prairie covered most of the plains and rolling hills. The first settlers, coming from more heavily timbered areas in the East, struggled to find enough timber for building log cabins in Iowa. Another hardship of early settlers on the plains were prairie fires. These wildfires were a destructive force of nature that caused concern and casualties across the plains. A single prairie fire could travel from Sioux City to Des Moines, an amazing (and terrifying) display of nature that is almost unimaginable today. These fires promoted the prairie and discouraged most trees. Some trees, like oaks, are very fire adapted and would not be harmed by most fires. However, certain trees, like the eastern red cedar, are very vulnerable to fire, especially when they are younger. Small cedars tend to burn easily and do not often resprout. It is thought that historically, cedars would have been limited mainly

to rocky areas and limestone bluffs – areas that do not contain enough vegetation to carry a fire. Today, we have a different picture of the cedar tree. They have become a common image on Iowa’s landscape, as fires are far less frequent, and as we have planted the cedar tree across the state for the number of benefits that they can bring.

The Benefits and the Drawbacks

Most anyone you might ask has an opinion on the eastern red cedar. Some speak with admiration, and some with disdain – so what are the positive and negative aspects of this tree?

The cedar tree has benefits, both to humans and to wildlife. DNR District Forester Sarah Bell says, “Eastern red cedar is western Iowa’s only native conifer, and as such is best suited to our drier conditions and local soil types. Though it has been able to run rampant due to wildfire suppression, it still has a place on our landscape and serves as an excellent tree in windbreaks.” It is true, cedars can withstand the hot summers, cold winters, and occasional droughts better than any other conifer. Due to their bulky structure, they can block wind like no other tree can. When placed correctly, they can help keep roads and farmsteads safer and clear of snowdrifts. They can even add beautification on the farm to those who appreciate their view and how they stay green throughout every season. A wide variety of wildlife may use a cedar tree. Cedars can be used



Volunteer cedar trees along a public trail in Shelby County. Photo by Tabitha Panas, Spring 2020

as winter cover for animals to stay warm on the coldest, windiest winter days where other shelter is not available. A number of different bird species eat the small blueberry-like cones that female trees produce. (Birds often tend to deposit these seeds as they perch along fencerows, thus planting more cedars.) Birds also may nest within the safety of a cedar, and a cedar thicket can provide cover for different species at different times.

What might possibly be the biggest drawback of the cedar is that it is prolific and tends to volunteer heavily in certain areas where it is not desired. This can have

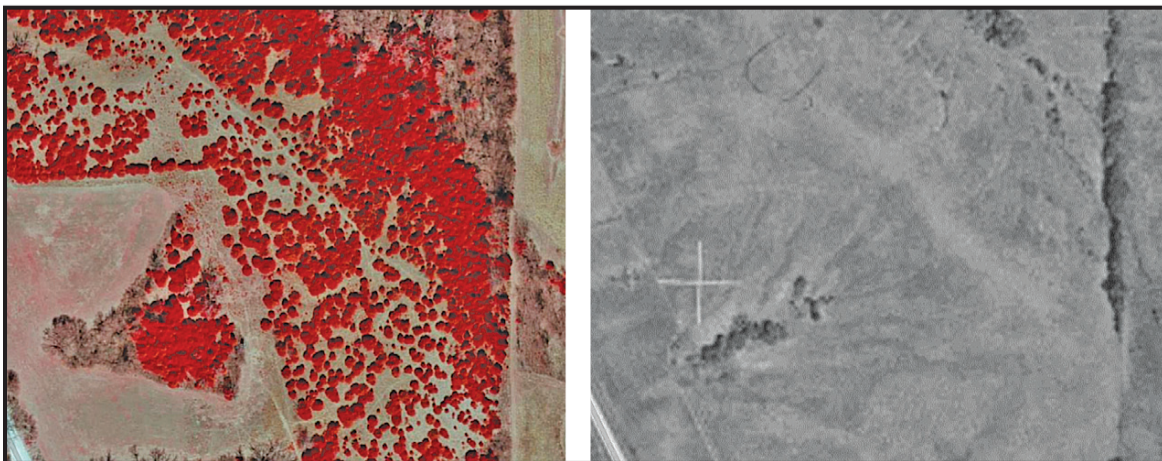
negative impacts to grasslands over time, as cedars create shade, shed layers of needles, and push out surrounding vegetation. This can provide a burdensome task to cattle farmers and ranchers who rely on the forage that grasslands provide. The cedar is not palatable to cattle, and once it starts to grow and spread, it pushes out grass and any other vegetation. It is estimated that southern Iowa pastures with cedar encroachment are shrinking at a rate of 3.1% a year (Dallas County Iowa, n.d.), which can really add up over time- both on the landscape and financially as the amount of forage available decreases.

Cedars can provide an additional headache to land managers of wildlife areas, as they can reduce biodiversity over time. While this tree can provide benefits to wildlife in certain situations, these benefits are limited, and wildlife will suffer when no other vegetation is available. Wildlife need a variety resources for food and shelter throughout the duration of their lives. The ring-necked pheasant, for example, relies on diverse grasslands for brood

rearing cover in the spring. They need a diversity of grasses and wildflowers to bring in insects for their chicks to feed, and these insects are brought in by flowering plants. If cedar trees move in, that can reduce insects and leave little to no nesting cover for pheasants, as well as numerous other grass-nesting bird species. While white-tailed deer may use cedar thickets to stay warm in winter, a dense patch of cedars can push out green browse that is a much-needed food source for deer in the spring.

When thinking about wildlife and their needs, it is important to assess the area as a whole and determine what might be the limiting factor for a species survival. If you are interested in learning more about how to improve wildlife habitat on your farm, contact Tabitha Panas with Pheasants Forever at tpanas@pheasantsforever.org.

Reference- Dallas County, Cedar Tree Control, n.d. <https://www.dallascountyiowa.gov/government/public-safety/secondary-roads/roadside-program/cedar-tree-control>.



EAST POTTAWATTAMIE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT REPORT ON ANNUAL USE OF DISTRICT FUNDS FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

DISTRICT CHECKING

Beg. Bal.	\$7,614.19
Ending Balance	\$8,292.07

RECEIPTS

Equipment Rental	\$6,201.71
State of Iowa (1M)	\$2,750.00
Donations	\$100.00
Memorial Fund	\$225.00
Project Reimbursement	\$1,164.57
Recording Fees	\$300.00
Voided Check	\$10.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$10,751.28

EXPENDITURES

1M Expenditures	\$(3,869.26)
780 Qtrly Payment	\$(454.31)
Annual Fees/Dues/Subscript	\$(85.00)
Awards	\$(320.96)
Equip. Rental/Repairs	\$(2,330.30)
Internal Transfers	\$(1,164.57)
Pheasants Forever	\$(1,500.00)
Recording Fees	\$(259.00)
Misc	\$(90.00)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$(10,073.40)

DISTRICT EDUCATION FUND

Beg. Bal.	\$81,016.72
Ending Balance	\$118,484.11

RECEIPT

County Funds Allocated	\$40,000.00
Internal Transfers	\$1,164.57
Miscellaneous	\$3,599.64
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$44,764.21

EXPENDITURES

Trees for Threes	\$(300.00)
Project Expenses/Supplies	\$(599.21)
Donations	\$(50.00)
Projects/Payroll	\$(3,076.66)
Payroll Processing Fees	\$(271.50)
Conservation Trailer	\$(384.05)
Payroll Taxes/Contributions	\$(2,615.40)
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$(7,296.82)

Beginning Balances July 1, 2021

General Checking	\$7,614.19
District Education Fund	\$81,016.72
TOTAL BEGINNING BALANCES	\$88,630.91

Ending Balances June 30, 2022

General Checking	\$8,292.07
District Education Fund	\$118,484.11
TOTAL ENDING BALANCES	\$126,776.18

STATE COST SHARE EXPENDED (FY 22)

SF512: Nishnabotna HUC 8 Project	\$137,025.00
IA Financial Incentive Program (IFIP)	\$50,526.12
Water Quality Initiative (WQI)	\$39,264.25
REAP Forestry & Native Grasses	\$2,173.50
REAP Practices	\$1,762.50
1M Funds	\$2,750.00

The East Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District thanks the Division of Soil Conservation and the Iowa Legislature for making these funds available.

COUNTY FUNDING EXPENDED (FY22)

L.O.S.T. Allocation	\$227,528.05
Expenditures	\$78,577.96

Local Option Sales Tax (L.O.S.T.) funds allow the District additional funds for cost-share and educational projects. We would like to thank the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors for their far-sighted support of soil conservation. The dollars they have invested in soil conservation these past years will pay off in benefits to county improvements and in protecting productivity of our soils.

As District Commissioners, we are proud of our conservation program and hope you are too. If the District has been a value to you in any way and you wish to be a contributor, please mail or bring your contribution to the East Pottawattamie SWCD, 16 Main Street, Oakland, IA 51560. Any amount you wish to contribute will be greatly appreciated. **REMEMBER YOUR CONTRIBUTION IS TAX DEDUCTIBLE.** Thank you in advance for your help and support in protecting the future of our natural resources.

---East Pottawattamie
SWCD Commissioners

A Year in Review:

As we look back at 2022 we had a lot of things going on with our East Pottawattamie SWCD team! It's been an honor to be a part of this Board and I am looking forward to another great year of working with fellow Commissioners, office staff and the producers of our district as we strive to advance conservation practices in SW Iowa!

We started the year out hosting a tour of the district with the newly elected State Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Matt Russell. This meet and greet was a great opportunity to showcase all the projects NRCS and FSA collaborate on in East Pottawattamie. We ended the day with a district tour stopping at our first Fleximat project, some cover crops at the Russ Brandes farm, Farm Creek project, and a bank stabilization project.

In April we said farewell to East Pottawattamie's long time Conservation Assistant (CA)– Becky Lockwood, after 35 years of service. She is enjoying "retired" life and checks in on us occasionally to make sure we are getting things done. We welcomed Susan Rush as our new Conservation Assistant in June. Susan hit the ground running, learning all the county, state and federal programs, along with the day-to-day operations of the office. Susan is doing a fantastic job and has been a great addition to our team!

In May we welcomed our new Education Coordinator, Laura Monson to the team. This Education Coordinator position is the result of a unique collaboration between East Pottawattamie SWCD, West Pottawattamie SWCD, and the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors. The district has had an educator for the county in some capacity, starting with Resource Conservation Planners back the 80's. Recognizing the positive impact this position had over the years the members of these three organizations established a 28E Sharing Agreement to assist in providing this position an option for an employee benefits package utilizing the Local Options Sale Tax (LOST) funds already allocated for conservation support, the Walnut Creek Watershed Project Grant, (written by Dan Case,



Kami Willett,
East Pottawattamie
SWCD Chair

Environmental Specialist, Montgomery & East Pottawattamie SWCD) and from local donations. A brief overview of coordinator activities would include Farm Safety Days, Earth Day Projects, Summer Camps, in-school curriculum, afterschool programs, Women Landowners meetings, watershed education, and collaboration with local FFA Chapters to support soil pits judging just to name a few. We are excited to have Laura on board and look forward to all the things planned for 2023!

In July at the East Pottawattamie County Fair the East Pottawattamie Farm Bureau and the East Pottawattamie SWCD hosted a tour with Governor Kim Reynolds. We discussed terrace projects, cover crops, Flood Control PL-566 structures, Local Options Sale Tax (LOST) funds, and grants recently awarded to the district with the Governor. This was a perfect opportunity to showcase all the great conservation practices we do here in SW Iowa. In addition, we had the Soil Erosion Table running for fair goers and the Governor to experience.

East Pottawattamie SWCD applied for one of the states IDALS "780 Hour Employee" positions and was awarded one in early summer. This position is funded 80% by Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and 20% by the local district. The position is designed to provide additional technical support to our district team and is a 1-year agreement. In July, Russell Hopp joined the team. He comes to the district with many years of experience, and he has assisted office staff with terrace layouts, Flood Control PL 566 structure inspections and with current projects going on in the district.

In August the Commissioners and one Assistant Commissioner attended the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) Annual Convention representing our county and advocating for the conservation practices and the needs of our SW Iowa Producers.

On November 18th East Pottawattamie SWCD hosted a Legislative Tour for the Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors, current and newly elected legislators of our local districts, and our Des Moines delegates to showcase recent watershed projects, pond structures, terraces, cover crops, dry hydrants, and grade stabilization projects. We started the morning out in Oakland and toured throughout East Pottawattamie County to show some key sites of the conservation practices implemented in our area. The tour ended with lunch and a question and answer session.

Although the year has come to an end, we are busy planning many events for 2023. Please join us on Facebook – East Pottawattamie SWCD for upcoming events or stop by the office in Oakland and visit the staff about conservation opportunities that will fit your farming operation!

In closure I would like to thank all the farmers, landowners, conservation partners and the residents of East Pottawattamie County who are working to help advance soil health and water quality in Iowa and downstream!

USING the NRCS Web Soil Survey: Free Public Access to the Nation's Soil Resource Data

The NRCS Soil Science has transitioned from its traditional, static soil surveys published in bound hard copy to more fluid online format that allows NRCS to continually update soil survey data as needed and from which customers can create custom soil survey reports for just their area of interest.

Check out the website:
<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov>

CHECK OUT THE EAST POTTAWATTAMIE SWCD WEBSITE



You'll find an online version of the Annual Report along with helpful resources and information from your East Pottawattamie SWCD Team.

<https://www.soilwaterconservationia.com>

Soil Health Testing

By Casey Gathje, Soil Conservationist
and Laura LeCuyer, Soil Conservationist

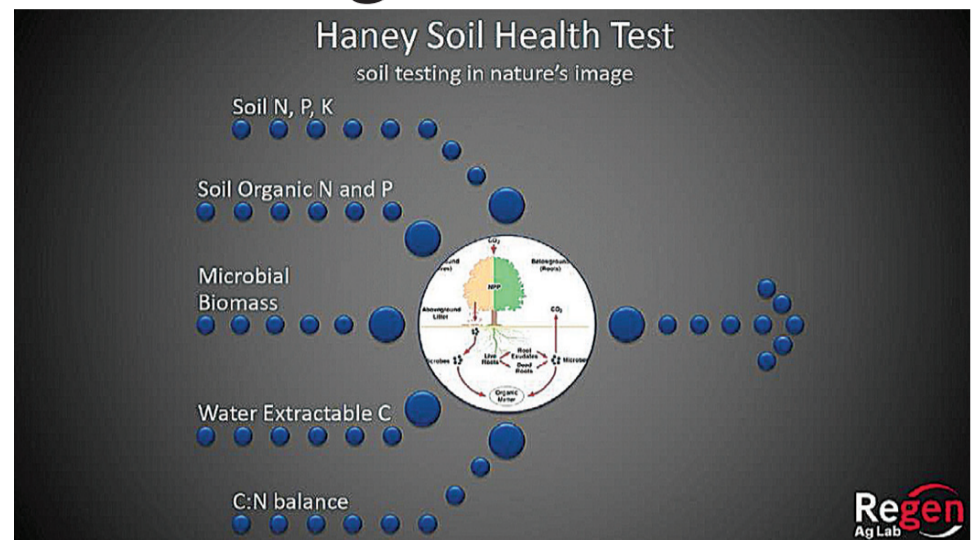
On February 1st, 2023, the Southwest Iowa Soil Health (SWISH) Team held their February meeting via TEAMS. It featured guest speakers Lance Gundersen of Regen Ag Labs and Carolyn King of Continuum Ag to speak on soil health testing.

There are three main techniques when it comes to measuring soil microbes: microscopy and culture plating, molecular (PLFA), and genomics. Each technique has its own set of advantages and disadvantages.

PLFA stands for phospholipid fatty acids, which are found in cell membranes of microbes. It represents living biomass in the soil, and they provide energy for plants and organisms. They degrade quickly upon death and are influenced by environment and land management. There is no standard ranking established for PLFA testing – instead you are looking for change over time. Higher biomass and diversity ratings are better, and results are dependent on the environment. The ideal time to pull soil samples for a PLFA test is at corn tassel, and when the soil temperature is above 50 F for a couple weeks.

Another option for soil health testing is the Haney Soil Test, which is soil testing in nature's image.

A final option for soil health testing is genomics testing. An example of this is the BeCrop test by Biome Makers. The BeCrop® Test provides a user-friendly report on soil nutrient cycling, health, and biodiversity on any field. The report is a data-driven picture of the global functions of the microbial networks. Traditional soil analyses provide information about the physical and chemical properties of the soil, like texture, pH, or concentration of nutrients, but do not



take soil microbiology into account.

Instead of measuring the amount of nutrients in the soil, BeCrop measures the microbial process involved in nutrient cycling, health, and biodiversity on any field.

Carolyn covered the five soil health principles:

1. Minimize soil chemical and physical disturbance
2. Maximize soil armor
3. Maintain living roots throughout the year
4. Foster diversity of species
5. Integrate livestock

Another key factor is the context as the principles are being implemented. Regenerative agriculture is the continual implementation of the principles of soil health.

Maximizing armor through cover crops can have major benefits when it comes to protecting the soil against rain impact, suppressing weeds, building organic matter, and controlling soil temperature.

Carolyn also brought up the importance of fostering diversity and emulating the native prairie. Diverse plants feed diverse microbes and diverse microbes do diverse functions. One example of fostering diversity is through relay cropping.

If you would like more information about any of the topics, please check out the following websites:

- <https://regenaglab.com/>
- <https://continuum.ag/>
- <https://biomemakers.com/>



Relay cropping soybeans into cereal rye:

- 60lbs rye over winter
- Full-season beans drilled in
- 30bu/ac rye harvest
- 70bu/ac soybean harvest
- Fungicide and 100lbs MAP/AMS

Secretary Naig Encourages Applications for the 2023 Century & Heritage Farm Program

Applications will be accepted through June 1, 2023

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig encourages eligible Iowa farm owners to apply for the 2023 Century and Heritage Farm Program now through June 1.

The program was created by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation to recognize families who have owned their farms for 100 years and 150 years, respectively.

“Iowa’s multi-generational farm families are the backbone of our state and the Century and Heritage Farm Program recognizes their hard work, strength, resilience and perseverance,” said Secretary Naig. “Each year I look forward to recognizing these families, hearing their stories, and celebrating their legacies at the Iowa State Fair.”

To apply, download the application on the Department’s website at iowaagriculture.gov/century-and-heritage-farm-program. Please complete the application and return it to:

Century and Heritage Farm Program, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Wallace State Office Building, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319

You may also send a written request for an application to the address above, or contact Kelley Reece, coordinator of the Century and Heritage Farm Program, at 515-281-3645 or kelly.reece@iowaagriculture.gov.

To be included in the 2023 Century or Heritage Farm Program, completed applications must be received by the Department by 11:59 pm on June 1, 2023.

This year marks the 47th anniversary of the Century Farm Program, which started in 1976 as part of the Nation’s Bicentennial Celebration. To date, more than 20,000 farms from across the state have received this recognition.

This is the 17th anniversary of the Heritage Farm Program. More than 1,600 farms have been recognized since this program began in 2006. To search for previous Century and Heritage Farm recipients, visit centuryfarms.iowaagriculture.gov/. Photos from past recognition ceremonies are also available on the Department’s website.

The ceremonies recognizing the 2023 Century and Heritage Farm families will be held at the Iowa State Fair on Aug. 17 in the historic Livestock Pavilion.



Laura Monson,
Education Coordinator for
East and West Pott SWCD

New Education Coordinator joins the Team

Hello everyone! My name is Laura Monson, and I am the new Education Coordinator for East and West Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District. I am originally from Waterloo, Iowa and I attended Iowa State University graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a minor in Sustainability. I am honored to hold a position that has existed, in some way, for over 30 years. Now, thanks to a partnership with the County Board of Supervisors, East Pottawattamie SWCD, and West Pottawattamie SWCD, I am able to be a full-time employee with the Pottawattamie Soil & Water Conservation District.

My goal is to lead a childhood education and public outreach program focused on conservation, agriculture, land stewardship, and the environment. Through my work I hope to spark a passion, curiosity, and appreciation for conservation and agriculture in students and the rest of the community. I am so excited to have joined the team at East and West Pottawattamie Soil and Water Conservation District; there are so many things I love about my job, but the number one is being able to do what I am passionate about every day, teaching people and young students about conservation and the environment!

Helping Hands in the Community

The first event I had the absolute pleasure of leading was a summer garden club with K-5 students attending the Impact Hill Summer Program. These amazing students got to plant and care for their own garden! They planted many different types of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Not only did they have fun, but they also learned about their garden, and it's benefit to the community and the planet! We talked about root structure, plant anatomy, how flowers become fruit, where our food comes from, and the importance of native plants and pollinators!



Conservation in the Classroom

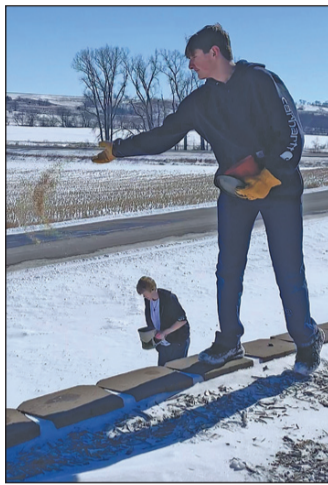


Since the school year began I have had the pleasure of leading over 100 in class presentations and lessons to over 300 students across East and West Pottawattamie, in multiple school districts. Within these lessons I have covered a wide variety of topics, the most popular being native plants and pollinators, as well as lessons based on agriculture and soil, farming operations, conservation practices, wildlife, the environment, and conservation.

Meet the Conservation Superheroes!

In addition to the in-class lessons, I also lead an afterschool program called Conservation Superheroes with 1st through 5th graders from Riverside and AHSTW, in partnership with Mason Geer, the Outreach Coordinator for East Pottawattamie and Cass County Farm Bureau. This afterschool club gives the students the opportunity to learn about conservation and the environment beyond what they would normally learn in the classroom. According to them, their overall favorite thing about Conservation Superheroes Club is learning new things, and the snacks! We have talked about how conservation relates to soil, air, energy, water, and animals; our final lesson will be about plants. In their final meeting, they will get to plant and take home their own flowers!

More photos on page 20



Make Way for Monarch Way Stations!

Outside of the classroom, I have had the opportunity to participate in the planting of multiple monarch way stations. In partnership with Milkweed Matters, Pheasants Forever, Pollinator Alliance of the Heartland, and Pottawattamie County Conservation, we have planted three monarch way stations. One at Carter Lake Elementary, one at Crescent Elementary, and one at Tri-Center Elementary. These Monarch Way Stations will not only benefit pollinators by providing additional habitat, but they will also benefit the students that planted them, by providing endless outdoor learning opportunities! The Tri-Center Monarch Way Station is an incredibly special project, as Tri-Center High School has committed to planting and caring for over half an acre of native prairie habitat. This project will greatly benefit pollinators, insects, and all sorts of animal species! A huge thank you to everyone involved in all of these projects, who have put in the work and made a direct difference that will have an immensely positive impact!



Conservation at the East Pottawattamie County Fair

On July 23rd we had the pleasure of spending the day at the East Pottawattamie County Fair! We brought the Conservation Education Trailer and set up three learning stations around it. One to discuss soil health with a slake test, followed by the Rainfall Simulator to exhibit the difference planting cover crops can have on decreasing water runoff, and more importantly nutrient run off, on agricultural ground. Our third learning station was the Stream Table, where fair goers had the chance to learn about Iowan river hydrology and the impact our rivers have on our land by designing their own river system.



Thank you to all of the NRCS, IDALS, and SWCD staff who helped lead the stations at the Conservation Education Trailer; Environmental Specialist, Dan Case - District Conservationist, Terry Gleaves - Soil Conservationist, Laura LeCuyer - Technical Soil Conservationist, Andrew Casson - State Technician, Jessica Luke - County Education Coordinator, Laura Monson. And a huge thank you to the East Pottawattamie Farm Bureau, we had the chance to meet Governor Kim Reynolds and have private time with her to talk about all the amazing conservation projects East Pottawattamie SWCD is working on. Thank you to everyone who stopped by our station!



East Pottawattamie SWCD and NRCS Host Soil Judging Practice for FFA Students

East Pottawattamie SWCD, NRCS, and the AHSTW FFA lead by Jennifer Sellner, partnered to host a soil judging practice event for local FFA Chapters. This event, and a separate event at Riverside High School with their FFA Soil Judging Team, led by Annie Wallin, were held to prepare the students for the Southwest Iowa District FFA Soil Judging Competition.

Multiple other local FFA Soil Judging teams attended the AHSTW practice, which was hosted at the Carstens 1880 Farmstead, including Griswold, Fremont Mills, Stanton, and Audubon. The students had access to two separate soil pits. For many of these students, it was their first chance to judge a soil pit in person and apply the things they were learning in a real-world setting. NRCS and SWCD Staff provided guidance on soil judging during this event; Soil Conservationist - Laura LeCuyer, Soil Scientist - Rebecca Baker, and County Education Coordinator - Laura Monson.

Of this event NRCS Soil Conservationist Laura LeCuyer said "FFA Soil Judging is a Career Development Event that motivates students to gain knowledge on land use, soil properties and surface features. Soil evaluation requires students to observe soil properties and evaluate these properties for land use. During soil judging contests, members evaluate soil pits on different properties such as depth of the profile, soil texture, agricultural management practices, and productivity for different systems."

A huge thank you to all the schools that attended, AHSTW FFA Chapter, Riverside FFA chapter, and a special thanks to Carstens Farmstead, Wayne Martin, and Riverside School District, for offering to have a soil pit on their grounds!

Farming from the 19th century Up to Now

On September 9th myself and State Technician Jessica Luke, lead a station at Carstens Farms Kids Day. Around 400 students attended this event from nine different schools in the area. They got to learn about farming, agriculture, and all the different aspects of life on a farm in the 1880s. For our station, the students learned about where soil comes from, the properties of various types of soil, where the soil in Pottawattamie County came from, and how much usable land we have on earth! To learn about this, the students got to make their own soil! They also got to feel real soil samples of sand, silt, and clay, and we did a demonstration with an apple to show them how much land we really have to live on and grow our food. A huge thank you to Carstens 1880 Farmstead for hosting such a great event, and to all the schools and other presenters that attended!



Looking to the Future

What I have included in these articles is just a glance into what we do as a Soil and Water Conservation District in terms of outreach and public education. In the upcoming months we will be hosting and attending multiple Field Days, facilitating the CDI Poster Contest for Pottawattamie, planting a Milpa inspired garden, many more in class lessons and presentations, and public events. I also want to say a sincere thank you to all the teachers, principals, and everyone who is a team member at all of the schools I have had the pleasure of visiting. You have invited me into your schools and classrooms, I cannot thank you enough for that, and for being willing to include conservation education at your schools. If you are an educator and you would like to include conservation education in your classroom or at an event, please do not hesitate to contact me! My name is Laura Monson, and my email is swcdeducation@gmail.com, or you can call me at (712) 482-6486. I would be more than happy to discuss our programs and events with anyone that is interested!