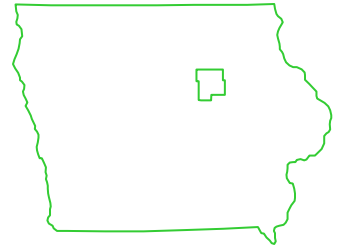


Visit our website at:
www.grundyiaswcd.com



Newsletter provided by the Grundy County Soil Water Conservation District

Pollinator Plantings with the Conservation Reserve Program

With the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress placed limits on the number of acres that can be planted to pollinator habitat (CP42) through the CRP program. Now, CP42 acres are limited to 10% of the cropland acres on each tract, and can't be more than 10 acres total. This is an excellent tool to take marginal farm ground or hard-to-farm areas out of production and add habitat to the farm.

Pollinator seed mixes are 25-50% short prairie grass and a mix of native wildflowers that bloom spring through fall. Areas must be accessible to be mowed during the summer for the first couple years to control weeds. There are mixes that will handle wet conditions, but there may be times those areas get flooded and might need re-seeded.

Many people who have planted mixes of native grasses and wildflowers over the years always comment on the amount of wildlife they see now- not just butterflies, but song birds, pheasants, and bees. Please contact the Grundy County Farm Service Agency at 319-824-5416 to see if your land is eligible for this practice.

The Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who has already donated to the SWCD Conservation Club this year. To date, we currently have 47 members who have donated a total of 3,610! We would also like to thank the Grundy County Board of Supervisors for their continued support. We appreciate the support of all of everyone!

Donated funds are used to for a variety of projects to promote and educate conservation programs such as educational material for school, stewardship materials, scholarships for a high school seniors, poster contest, Appreciation banquet and Awards program, and conservation programs and tours in the county, field days, along with our newsletter.

If you have not already donated to the Grundy SWCD Conservation Club, you can send or drop off a donation to our office at 805 W. 4th St., Ste 2, Grundy Center, IA 50638. Make your check payable to Grundy SWCD. All donations are tax deductible. Thank you all for your continuing support of conservation in our county.

Fall 2020

Inside this issue:

<i>Annual Report</i>	2
<i>Derecho Damage</i>	3
<i>Cereal Rye</i>	4
<i>Sign up for EQIP</i>	5
<i>Compaction</i>	6
<i>Meet Faith Luce</i>	7
<i>Windbreak Award</i>	8

The staff in Grundy Center urges you to call first before you come in. There may be times when no one is in the office due to field work, telework, or meetings.

TREE SALE TIME

Our tree sale last year was a great success. Thanks to all who purchased from us. We are again offering for sale this year potted conifers, bare-root shrubs, and trees. Order your trees now for Spring delivery. The order form is inserted in this newsletter. We have trees for cost-share projects such as windbreaks, and riparian buffers. If you need some trees to fill in your existing windbreak, take a look at our listing.

You may mail your order to the Grundy SWCD at 805 W. 4th St., Grundy Center 50638 or stop by the USDA office before November 20, 2020. Orders placed after this date may not be guaranteed due to limited supply and there are no survival guarantees on stock at these prices. Some trees/shrubs sell out quickly.

The proceeds provide funds for district programs, field days, and educational materials.



**Grundy Soil & Water Conservation District
Financial Report
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020**

District Funds		
Beginning Balance		\$25,740.17
*Income- DSCWQ 1M Funds	\$ 2,950.00	
Conservation Club Donations	\$ 3,820.00	
Board of Supervisors	\$ 4,000.00	
Tree Sales	\$ 7,132.58	
US Treasury/insurance refund	\$ 205.31	
Conservation Districts of IA	\$ 500.00	
Transfer from BHCWS acct.	\$ 721.60	
Interest	\$ 16.54	
Total Income		\$19,346.03
Expenses- Dues/subscriptions	\$ 1,401.00	
Commissioner Mileage/Exp.	\$ 807.22	
Tree Sales expense	\$ 3,337.53	
Newsletter/printing	\$ 2,264.05	
Postage	\$ 1,452.25	
Field Day & Meetings	\$ 1,103.85	
Employee expenses	\$ 500.69	
Advertising	\$ 419.11	
GoDaddy website	\$ 539.61	
Office Supplies	\$ 1,744.39	
Sales Tax	\$ 627.00	
Nursery certificate	\$ 25.00	
ISU Foundation-Water Rocks	\$ 1,000.00	
Miscellaneous expenses	\$ 68.41	
Total Expenses		\$15,290.11
Ending Balance		\$29,796.09
Savings Account		
Beginning Balance		\$ 3,903.26
Interest	\$ 13.83	
Transfer from CD	-\$20,449.41	
Ending Balance		\$24,366.50
CD-Beginning Balance		
Interest	\$ 449.41	
Transfer to savings	\$-20,449.41	
Ending Balance		\$.00
Payroll/BHCWS Account		
Beginning Balance		\$15,070.09
Income-IDALS BHCWS funds	\$50,434.35	
Farm Bill Allocations	\$ 171.00	
Transfer from CD	#20,449.41	
Interest	\$ 7.54	
Total Income		\$71,062.30
Expenses- Payroll & Taxes	\$52,223.97	
IDALS-refund FB funds	\$ 5,239.25	
BHCWS expenses	\$ 855.45	
Accountant Fees	\$ 250.00	
Total Expenses		\$58,568.67
Ending Balance		\$27,563.72
CD-Beginning Balance		
Interest Paid	\$ 449.41	
Transfer to Payroll Acct.	\$ 20,449.41	
Ending Balance		\$.00

State Cost Share	
Grundy County has been given allocations for use in cost sharing on permanent soil and water conservation practices. Following is a breakdown of FY2020 practices for which certifications have been submitted to the Iowa Dept. of Agriculture Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality for payment, obligated, and paid.	
<u>Iowa Financial Incentive Program</u>	
FY 2020 Allocation	\$17,716.00
Prior years obligated funds	\$.00
Obligated/Spent	\$11,095.00
Recalled by DSC	\$ 6,621.00
Balance 6/30/2020	\$.00
<u>REAP Practice</u>	
FY 2020 Allocation	\$ 6,863.02
Prior years obligated funds	\$ 2,919.06
Obligated/Spent	\$ 6,862.54
Recalled by DSC	\$ 2,919.54
Balance 6/30/2020	\$.00
<u>REAP Forestry/Native Grasses</u>	
FY 2020 Allocation	\$ 2,266.62
Prior years obligated funds	\$ 1,500.00
Obligated/Spent	\$ 3,487.50
Recalled by DSC	\$ 279.12
Balance 6/30/2020	\$.00

Gordon & Evelyn Davidson Scholarship Fund**	
Beginning Balance	\$10,320.31
Interest	\$ 447.14
Ending Balance	\$10,767.45

Petty Cash	
Beginning Balance	\$ 20.00
Income	\$.00
Expenses-postage	\$ -14.40
Ending Balance	\$ 5.60

*1M funds are provided by the State of Iowa and allocated to the District by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation. These can only be used for dues, mileage, office supplies, newsletter, postage, field days, meetings, workshops, and stewardship expenses	
**The Davidson Scholarship Fund was set up to use the interest earned for scholarships for students going into the fields of agriculture or nursing. Minimum scholarship amount will be \$500.00.	



DERECHO DAMAGE

Many fields have been ravaged by adverse weather this year in Iowa. On top of drought and hail we had a devastating derecho steam-roll a wide swath of Iowa starting in Sac County and progressing eastward along Highway 30. This included several acres in southern Grundy County. Along with the decision of how to handle this year's crop, consideration for protecting the soil and preparing for next year's crop should include cover crops. Cost share assistance is also available to help repair damaged windbreaks.





Cereal Rye

Cereal Rye with Lime



Lost Aggregate Stability

"The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all."
Wendell Berry, author of "The Unsettling of America"

Grundy County Accomplishments FY2020	
<u>Conservation Practice</u>	<u>Amount Applied</u>
No-till or Strip-till	799 ac.
Cover Crops	4837 ac.
Seasonal High Tunnel	1
Grassed Waterway	3.2 ad.
Pasture/Hay Planting	7.8 ac

The 2020 Stewardship theme is

**"Where Would We BEE
Without Pollinators"**

For several years now, the Grundy SWCD has recognized Soil Stewardship Week by providing local churches with bulletins, litanys, and church leader guides to all Grundy County churches who request the materials.



Now is The Time to Sign Up For the EQIP Program

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) can offer cost-share for many things you may be planning on your farm. EQIP is a competitive program with several different targeted environmental concerns. The 2018 Farm Bill changed how the money is spent, with a focus on livestock-related practices and projects that protect drinking water in this part of the state. No application deadline has been set, but sign-up soon if you are at all interested.

If you have cattle and are looking for manure storage and stacking areas, seeding some cropland to pasture, or are planning to graze cover crops you should look into what the program can offer. EQIP offers 3-5 year contracts. Applications are being taken now for projects that will begin in summer and fall 2021. Below are some common practices and the payments the program offers:

Practice	Regular Payment	Beginning Farmer/Historically Underserved Payment
Cereal Rye Cover Crop	\$29 per acre	\$43 per acre
Oat Cover Crop	\$17 per acre	\$26 per acre
New Pasture Seeding	\$170 per acre	\$195 per acre
High Tunnel Greenhouse	\$3.15 per square foot	
Concrete Manure Stacking Area	\$1.24 per cubic foot	\$1.85 per cubic foot
Adding a third crop to rotation	\$9 per acre	\$11 per acre
New ground no-tilled or strip-till	\$11 per acre	\$17 per acre
New or re-done grassed waterway	\$1300 per acre	\$2000 per acre

Managing for soil health is one of the easiest and most effective ways for farmers to increase crop productivity and profitability while improving the environment.

Results are often realized immediately, and last well into the future. Using these four basic principles is the key to improving the health of your soil.

1. Keep the soil covered as much as possible
2. Disturb the soil as little as possible
3. Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil
4. Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops



Compaction
By Courtney Myers, NRCS DC

This summer my dad found an old newsletter from the Grundy SWCD that dated back to the 1970s. It warned of dire consequences for losing fertile topsoil and running out of capacity to grow food unless conservation practices were implemented. Well that hasn't happened and I don't think it will happen any time soon. What has happened is that it has gotten more expensive to farm.

I would like to propose one reason it has gotten more expensive to farm is the result of compaction. We need higher horsepower tractors to pull our deep rippers, we have to hire a neighbor to run that tractor, and then we need more fertilizer, seed treatments, and fungicide because our ground stays wet and doesn't drain very well. We are always fighting compaction, even when we think it's a drainage problem.

Compaction has happened because of a loss in our soil's aggregate stability. Soil gets glued together by slime put out by earthworms and microbes. When we build a habitat for those critters, they keep making those glues. To create that underground habitat, we need to do very minimal tillage and keep the ground covered as much as possible to create a stable, moist environment.

When we do tillage and that soil sits exposed to the elements all winter, spring, and early summer, it breaks down, falls apart and settles into layers of compaction. That's why we see light-colored sediment at the edges of seed corn and soybean fields and why we complain when equipment ruts up the ground. The microbe "habitat" in those fields has been damaged and they are not gluing the soil back together anymore.

There are many testimonials from people who use no-till or strip-till and cover crops when it comes to how well their farms can handle wet conditions. During the harvests of 2018 and 2019, farmers who have been using no-till and cover crops for a few years reported being able to get in the field to combine sooner and not make ruts compared to some neighbors. Manure applicators say they can tell when they are in a no-till field because they don't sink in as much and can go faster. I've also been told by many farmers that the planting season is less stressful when they aren't chasing a soil finisher all over the place. "Farming is fun again!" is a phrase I have heard a lot when people start to pay attention the health of their soil.

There are no silver bullets when it comes to improving compaction. It will take all the things that normally come to mind- doing field work when it is dry and reducing the weight of loads. But, I encourage you to think about what might be at work under the soil that can do your work for free if you are patient. If you grow seed corn or chop silage, you have an excellent opportunity to get a cereal rye cover crop growing early in the fall. This starts the process of healing the soil, but it also helps improve the health and yield of your soybeans the following year as determined in a ten-year study released by ISU in March. Start small- try something you are comfortable with- trying no-till or planting oats as a cover crop on a few acres.



Meet Our New Watershed Project Coordinator

Faith Luce

I grew up in Clinton, Iowa right on the Mississippi River. Where I spent most of my time hunting, fishing, kayaking and camping along the river. Growing up, my grandparents owned dairy farms, as well as an asparagus farm. I enjoyed spending as much of my time helping on their farms as I could.

I went to Clinton Community College where I got my Associates in Liberal Arts. While in Community College I learned about the eutrophic zone in the

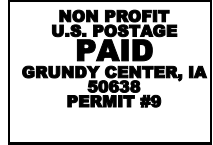


Gulf of Mexico and how Midwest Agriculture, especially Iowa's, affected that zone's growth. As someone who heavily utilizes Iowa's waterways for recreation, an outdoorsman, and being from a farming background, I felt a deep responsibility to become an advocate for water quality restoration and the preservation of Iowa's natural resources. After developing a passion for conservation in Community College, I decided to further my education. I graduated from the University of Northern Iowa this spring with degrees in Environmental Science, Earth Science and Geology. While at UNI, I was able to spend countless weeks in the backcountry doing geologic field work, I was a teacher's assistant for a few years, did undergraduate research, as well as being the president of an Earth Science honors society. But most importantly I was able to get experience doing water quality testing and a research project comparing the quality of surface water to the groundwater found within Dry Run Creek. My time spent in Dry Run Creek lead me to my goal of becoming a watershed project coordinator.

My main goal for Black Hawk Creek Watershed is to enable producers to improve their soil health and to establish Edge-of-Field practices to reduce the amounts of soil and nutrients entering the creek. Please contact me at the NRCS office and I will be happy to meet with you on your farm to discuss soil health opportunities with you.

Grundy County Soil & Water Conservation District

Return Service Requested



805 West Fourth Street Ste. 2
Grundy Center, Iowa 50638-1069
Phone: (319) 824-3634, ext. 3



Forbs in Bloom

The "Partners in Resource Management" newsletter is provided free to owners and operators of land in Grundy County, Iowa, and others interested with issues involving resource management.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits the discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20259-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Send questions or comments to:

Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District
805 West Fourth Street, STE 2
Grundy Center, IA 50638-1069
Phone: (319) 824-3634, ext. 3
Office Hours: 8:00 to 4:30, M-F

Reminder...

Please call the office to make sure someone is available before you come. Since some of the staff is shared with another county or may be in the field, there are times when staff is out of the office. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, please call the office to make an appointment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide leadership to people regarding technical, educational, and financial assistance that conserves natural resources.

COMMISSIONERS

Fred Abels (Chairman)
Jim Kadner (Vice Chairman)
Don Davidson (Treasurer)
Jim Everts
Steve Henze

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS

Harvin Meyer John Oltman

STAFF

Courtney Myers (DC)
Andy Pothoven (SC)
Dan Sears (SC)
Heather Kitzman (SC)
Yolanda Butler, (SCT)
Denise Freeseaman
(Conservation Asst.)
Faith Luce,
(BHCWS Project Coordinator)



Each year, the Grundy SWCD selects windbreaks to submit for the state Izaak Walton windbreak award. There are three windbreak categories, Newly Established (2-5 years of age), Farmstead (at least 5 years old), and Field Shelterbelt. (at least 5 years old).

The windbreak award winners for 2020 are:

Field Windbreak– Robert & Kathryn Camarata of Grundy Center. They were also at the State Field Windbreak award winner. (pictured at left).

Farmstead Windbreak– Jack & Teresa Wittgreve of Reinbeck.

Congratulations to our award winners!