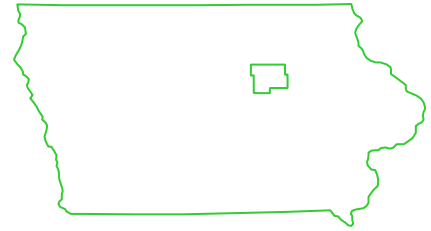




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A Newsletter provided by the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District

A Culture of Conservation

Spring 2018

The Grundy Soil & Water Conservation District is planning another workshop on Wednesday July 18th at the Grundy County Fairgrounds. This workshop will start at 9 am following the Tri-County Marketing Club meeting with ISU Economist Steve Johnson which starts at 7:30 am. These two meetings are being held during the Grundy County Fair, so there's more to see and enjoy at the fair.

Here's a short preview of our speakers we have lined up for July 18th workshop at the Grundy County Fair.

Mitchell Hora graduated from Iowa State University in 2017, he started his consulting business while at ISU. Continuum Ag is an agriculture consulting and data management company with a focus on soil health. Utilizing top technologies, growers can learn to better allocate resources in order to optimize every acre and improve return on investment. It is important to farm smarter and Continuum Ag is leading the way. Continuum Ag was started by Mitchell Hora in early 2016. They are based out of Washington, Iowa but serve growers, consultants, and agribusinesses throughout Iowa, the Midwest, and the world.

Doug Adams is a 6th generation farmer from Humboldt County, Iowa. He started using no-till on his soybean acres and strip till for his corn acres 18 years ago with a goal to improve water infiltration on his farm. This also allowed him to be more efficient on his farm, and allowed him to become Soil Conservation Technician at the Humboldt County NRCS office. Six years ago he started using cover crops on his farm to learn more about them and be able to discuss them with clients at the NRCS office to help other reduce nitrate loss, recycle nutrients, improve soil health, and reduce soil erosion.

Chris Henning of Cooper, Iowa grew up on a farm and since 1992 has been managing her own farmland in Greene County, Iowa. Chris has implemented numerous conservation practices on her farm including buffer strips along streams, wetlands, conservation on highly erodible land, CRP pollinator habitat cover crops and 3 year crop rotations. She also plants non GMO soybeans and edible crops such as beans, potatoes and other veggies. Protecting her farms soil and water resources are the reasons why she began using conservation and still uses them today. She will talk about landlord tenant relations as to how she has gotten her current tenant to go along with her ideas of good stewardship on her farm. legumes in the pastures,

Seth Watkins of Clarinda, Iowa is a 4th generation farmer practicing good stewardship on the family farm. In 1994 Seth took over the operation of the family heritage farm that was established in 1846. The influence of his grandmother and 4-H Founder Jessie Field Shambaugh played a role in Seth coming back to farm. Seth's farm consists of 600 cows, hay, and corn to feed his cowherd and calves. Seth demonstrates agricultural land conservation for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED certification. And runs a outfitting business for hunting. Seth has numerous conservation practices in place on his farm such as rotational grazing, restricted wildlife areas, riparian buffers, ponds, shallow water habitats, integrated pest management, prescribed burning of CRP acres, windbreak restoration, no-till, cover crops, tile, terraces, inter-seeded legumes in the pastures, prairie restoration/CRP, late season calving (calving around natures cycle), and row crops integrated with prairie strips. He's being provided with technical assistance from NRCS and ISU on the prairie strips. Seth put many of these conservation practices in place in 1998 when he decided the cows should work for him not the other way around. Cows should eat grass and their calves drink milk. He's calving when grass is getting going in the spring so cows and calves can better utilize the growth. Seth conserves fossil fuel, protects the land and works with mother nature to improve ecology, these 3 things improve the success of his farm.

Stewardship is what life is all about.

A meal will be served to all attendees following the workshop. Please RSVP to Denise Freese, Conservation Assistant, at denise.freese@ia.nacdnet.net so we know how many to serve for the meal. Deadline to RSVP is July 11, 2018.

Inside this issue:

Conservation Club Members
Pg. 2

Director's Comments Pg. 3

**Vince Sitzmann, IDALS-
DSCWQ Bureau Chief**
Pg. 4

**Grundy Appreciation Ban-
quet** Pg. 5

Water Rocks! Pg. 6 & 7

Meet Michael Pittman Pg. 8

Nicky Williams, DC Pg. 8

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

**2017 Conservation Club Members**

Calvin Staudt	Shellstead Farm	Jim & Melinda Smoldt
Barbara & Ron Hupman	Jim & June Morrison	Del & Nancy Jungling
Leonard & Marlene Oelmann	Mike & Karen Freed	Jack & Joan Fogt
Bonnie Beving	James & Colleen Miller	Twin Oaks Stock Farm
Jim & Cindy Richtsmeier	Owen Corporation	Mel & Janet Schildroth
Jon Keninger	Marilyn DeLange	Storjohann Farms
Rosemary Sicard	Margie Reynolds	Brad Ohrt
Dennis & Sheila Harms	Marcia Heronimus	Darwin & Janet Heltibridle
Rodney Hartman	Merle & Mary Lynch	Phil & Diane Schildroth
Leo & Helen Kopsa	Freese Farms	Foxdale Farm Ltd.
William Kitzman	Charles Smoldt	Wayne & Carol Aukes
Art Bine	DeeGene & Linda McMartin	Donald Heikens
Jerry & Sue Green	Mark & Nancy Buskohl	Darrell & Kristen Sents
Jim Allen	Laura Brown	Leon & Sharon Harms
Dick Lynch Inc.	Elmaru Farms	Noel & Dottie Rewerts
Mary Katzer	Harlen Persinger	Harvin & Esther Meyer
Grain Farms Inc.	K & A Acres	Jim Ahrenholz
Kadner Farms Inc.	Bob & Pat Abels	Dr. & Mrs. Robert Morrison
Gallentine Land Co.	Shawn & Rhonda Samo	Frazer Farm
Zern Farm Corp.	Wayne & Judy Eilers	Prosser Farms Inc.
Wayne & Shirley Holland	James & Jean Doorley	LaDonna Brunk
Goodman Agri-Co. Inc.	Jim & Brenda Everts	
Hogle Farms Inc.	Mark & Dixie Schildroth	
	Owen & Ehrig Corporation	

Membership Form (clip and return to our office to make a donation)

The SWCD Commissioners would like to thank everyone who donated to the district. Your funds are used to help with the district's activities and programs in education, classroom activities, scholarship, Envirothon, field days, and Stewardship Week, etc. Remember all donations are tax deductible.

2018	MEMBERSHIP	2018
GRUNDY COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION CONSERVATION CLUB		
Name _____	Donation Amount _____	
CONSERVATION CLUB MEMBER		
Address _____		



Director's Thoughts

By Jim Gillespie, Retired 1/2/2018

A lot of Soil and Water Conservation Districts are celebrating their 75th Anniversaries around the state. What great accomplishments they have to share with the farmers and landowners in their counties. It is definitely something they should be proud of and take time to reflect on what has been done.

It is a time to think back to when the district was organized and why. We were just coming out of a serious economic depression and were in the midst of World War II. The Iowa Experiment Station, now Iowa State University Extension had done a study that showed that we had eroded 25% of our top soil on average across the state. Something needed to be done to stop this erosion and start improving our agriculture management in order to reverse this unsustainable degradation. Iowa has been blessed with some of the richest soils in the world and they have been very productive.

Along came the Soil and Water Conservation Districts that started organizing in 1940 and the last district organized in 1952. The leadership of those first commissioners that set the stage for how the districts could help farmers, landowners, and everyone in the county and the state took off. If you fly over the state on a clear day, look out the window of the plane or as you drive around the state you will see the practices (marks on the land) that the districts have helped those farmers, landowners and others install to protect and improve all of our natural resources. Isn't it a beautiful tapestry to behold? That leadership by the districts and the commissioners and field office staff continue to this day and I believe our for-fathers and mothers would be proud of what has been done.

Is our job done? I don't think so. We continue to utilize and need those precious resources every day and will into the future. We should be of a mindset that we are going to be in an ever improving process for those resources. More than just protecting them but making them better.

Yours and my challenges are what can we do every day to improve our soil health and water quality? So what are we (there is no "I" in team) going to do to take care of the resources we have been blessed with and how are we going to make them better for those who will follow us, like those who organized the Soil and Water Conservation Districts years ago? I believe they were thinking about us and this great state when they organized the districts. We can't let them down!



Hello from the Acting Director

By Susan Kozak

Let me introduce myself: I am Susan Kozak and I am currently the Acting Director for the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality. I have about 12 years of experience in the Division (20 in conservation and mining) and am happy to be asked to step up and take a leadership role until a new director is in place. My usual job is Mines and Minerals Bureau Chief and I love the reclamation work we do in that program. I have a geology degree from the University of Iowa and am originally from Ottumwa.

Enough about me! I want to take this opportunity to thank Jim Gillespie for all his years of commitment to our mission of conservation. He was a great mentor to all of us and he will be missed. I loved reading his Director's Thoughts and the history of why the Districts were organized. It is wonderful to see all the 75th Anniversary celebrations and to appreciate all the dedicated people in the field getting the work done. It makes me wonder what our work and structure will look like in the next 75 years. An article I read this morning said: this is the season to focus on projects that serve the greater good and to ask yourself "What am I doing to help the collective?". While the article was not focused on conservation, I think in light of all the water quality talk in the news, this is a good way to frame our conversations for the future and what we want to accomplish. I look forward to working with everyone in the months to come to make sure the Division remains a leader in conservation.

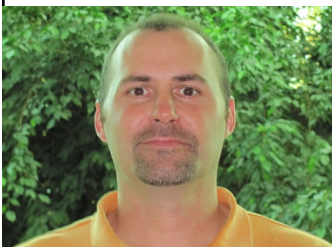
There is nothing as grateful as the earth; you cannot do too much for it; it will continue to repay you ten-fold for the pains and labour bestowed upon it.

*William Jennings Bryan
(1860- 1925)*



From the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality

By Vince Sitzman, Field Services Bureau Chief



State Fiscal Year 2017 was another successful year for getting conservation on the ground. Staff was able to complete lots of plans, surveys, and designs and Mother Nature chipped in which made for productive spring and fall construction seasons. Each year, when the state fiscal year wraps up, we evaluate our programs and find out what kind of a year it's been; and each year, when the evaluation is complete, I'm always surprised at how much money is spent on conservation. I'm not just talking about how much money the state contributes through our programs, I'm talking about your investment in conservation. Even when margins are as tight as they are today, the demand for conservation outweighs supply.



The dollars reflected above represent the state's contribution to our programs only, not the landowners share. Keep in mind that these figures only represent a small portion of the overall investment in conservation across the state. The graph does not take into account any federal programs such as CRP or EQIP, nor does it take into account the work that is done by private landowners without state or federal assistance.

I want to take a moment to highlight the State Revolving Fund (SRF) in the bar chart above as it is our most popular program in terms of funding utilized by landowners. SRF is a loan program that can fund 100% of a practice or can be used in conjunction with other state or federal programs. Farmers are borrowing an average of \$10 million annually to install conservation practices on their farms. These low-interest loans can be used for a number of different conservation practices; however our most common include terraces, ponds and livestock facilities. Loan amounts can range from \$5,000 to \$500,000 and must be paid back over a 10-year period. If you have been thinking about installing a practice on your farm I would encourage you to stop into your local Soil and Water Conservation District office and talk to the staff. As always, thank you for your conservation and land stewardship efforts.



Grundy SWCD Appreciation and Award Banquet—2018

The Grundy County Soil and Water Appreciation Banquet was held on March 22, 2018 at PT Grillers Event Center near Reinbeck. Approximately 40 Conservation Club members, commissioners, and office staff attended the event. A delicious meal was served.

Following the meal, a presentation was given by Clark Porter, a local landowner who has spearheaded the Black Hawk Creek Water and Soil Coalition. He has been instrumental in getting people and businesses interested in helping make the Black Hawk Creek an improved body of water in Grundy County. The Black Hawk Creek is currently on the DNR impaired waters list.



Jack Boyer of Reinbeck, told us about his trials and costs of implementing different cover crop species on his land. He has tried different seeding methods and types of seed to see what works and what doesn't. Economics and soil health are important to farmers and Jack has been a leader to others about cover crops.



Windbreak award winners L-R: 2017 Field Windbreak, Glen, Vicki, & Alice Draper; 2017 Farmstead Windbreak, Wally & Sue Kitzman; 2016 Field Windbreak, Brad Ohrt; 2016 Farmstead Windbreak, Dean Bakker; 2016 Newly-established Windbreak, Jim & Shelley Campbell.



Water Rocks!

The “Water Rocks” is an educational and outreach program to reach out and teach the school youth about Various Water Quality Issues. An assembly was held at Grundy Center Elementary on January 30, 2018. There was also an program at AGWSR schools in February

Todd and Jack ,the presenters, reached out to K-2 and 3-4 grades in two different sessions. Through group participation, music, and song, the groups became educated to what a watershed is and some of the issues involved with water quality.

There were demonstrations and songs about a watersheds and that everyone lives in a watershed. All the water we have is recycled over and over and that we need to keep our water as clean as possible.

Different water pollution was discussed which included, soil, chemicals, fertilizer, oil products, animal and human waste, dumped or trash items. Just picking up after dog was also mentioned.

The program seemed to be well received with lots of enthusiasm and participation. This “Water Rocks!” program is strongly supported and sponsored by the Grundy County Soil and Water Conservation District. The program has been presented to other county schools and was well received there. If you’ve had children or grandchildren attend one of these programs, ask them about it!

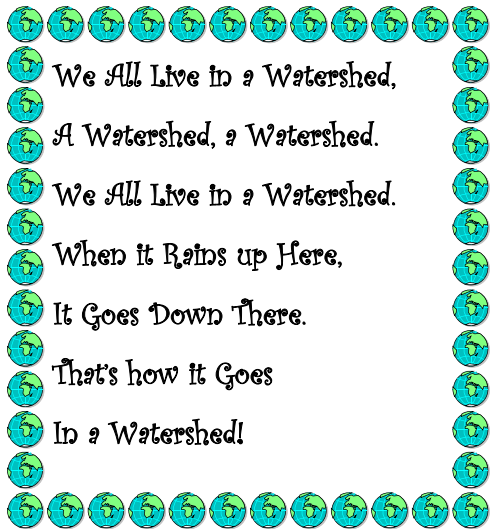
If you want further information on “Water Rocks!” go to their website www.waterrocks.org and view different information and videos listed. You won't be disappointed.

Jim Everts – Commissioner





More Water Rocks! Pictures



Grundy County Soil & Water Conservation District

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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.

All programs, services and information in "Partners in Resource Management" are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or family status.

Periodically the newsletter will publish guest articles and editorials regarding resource management topics. The Grundy

County SWCD does not accept any liability from the use of the views, services and/or products expressed in these articles.

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

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.

WEBSITE

www.grundyiaswcd.com

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Michael Pittman (Dist. Tech)

New DC in Grundy County!



Grundy County has a new District Conservationist, Nicky Williams. Nicky started as the DC on September 5, 2017. You may have seen her in the office before then, as her previous position was the Resource Conservationist based out of Grundy Center. Nicky has worked for the NRCS for 13 years and has worked all over Iowa. She lives south of New Providence on the

family farm with her husband, Scott, and two children, Savannah and Collin.

New District Technician in Grundy County!



Michael Pittman has been hired as a district technician for Grundy SWCD. He grew up on a farm in Jamaica, IA. Recently, he completed my degree in Ag Business Management from Hawkeye Community College and previously a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Communication Studies from the University of Northern Iowa. Last summer he completed an internship with Abundant Design, a Des Moines company focusing on edible and sustainable landscaping. He lives in Waterloo and spend most of his free time with his partner Jenna and their two dogs and two cats. His hobbies include playing guitar in multiple bands, being outside, and camping and canoeing.