

STORY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2021



Mission Statement

To promote soil conservation and water quality to landowners, operators, and residents of Story County by providing technical information and financial assistance.



ABOUT

The Story County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is a part of the broader Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Iowa. Story SWCD focuses on conservation education and awareness.

TEAM

Commissioners

Kayla Bergman, Chair
Alisha Bower
Selden Spencer
Mark Tjemeland
Susan Upchurch

Assistant Commissioners

Amber Anderson
Dale Farnham
Cindy Hildebrand
Erv Klaas
Jerry Radke
Mimi Wagner
Matt Woods

Partner Staff

Doug Ruopp,
District Conservationist
Derek Carter,
Soil Conservation Technician
Crystal Riggins,
Conservation Assistant and
District Secretary

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify problem areas in county and work to promote conservation practices with landowners/farmers who manage problem areas.
2. Keep abreast of progress towards spending down assistance dollars available in the county and be proactive about promoting programs with available funds.
3. Through better communication create a “culture of conservation” among citizens of the county, both rural and urban
4. Serve as a conduit of conservation program information for landowners
5. Reach out to underserved landowners
6. Enhance SWCD & Story Co. NRCS and IDALS staff networking with other stakeholders
7. Story Co. SWCD Commissioners are effective local and regional advocates for conservation

STORY SWCD CAN ASSIST PRODUCERS AND LANDOWNERS OF STORY COUNTY WITH THE FOLLOWING

- Technical assistance for resource concerns and conservation practice implementation.
- Financial assistance for implementing conservation practices.
- Conservation planning assistance to help address soil and water concerns for their land.

CONSERVATION TACTICS

COST SHARE LEVELS

Federal: Funds provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS). Cost-share is administered through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

State: Funds provided by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). Cost-share is administered through Iowa Financial Incentives Program (IFIP), Water Quality Initiative (WQI), and Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)

CONSERVATION PRACTICES ENROLLED

STATE IFIP

SWCD Commissioners set priorities for practices and field staff assure technical quality of practices

2021 — 3 Participants

Water & Sediment Control Basins
26.2 Acres | \$13,662 obligated

Grade Stabilization Structure
1.5 Acres | \$11,918.50 obligated

Waterway
0.5 Acres | \$1,301.87 obligated

STATE REAP

Practices target and prevent off-site sediment, nutrient, and livestock waste pollution

2021 — 8 Participants

Forest Stand Improvement
20.7 Acres | \$2,483 obligated

Windbreak
1 Acre | \$3,200 obligated

Conservation Cover
4 Acres | \$1,021.20 obligated

STATE WQI

Practices include cover crops, conservation tillage, and nitrogen inhibitors.

2021 — 5 Participants

Cover Crops
447.7 Acres | \$8,305.35 obligated

FEDERAL EQIP

Federally-funded practices benefit water quality, soil health, erosion control, and wildlife habitat

2021 — 10 Participants

High Tunnel
0.2 Acres | \$17,496 obligated

Prairie Pothole Initiative
13.1 Acres | \$24,414.76 obligated

Cover Crops
1,990.2 Acres | \$105,210.72 obligated

Soil Health Initiative
179.5 Acres | \$46,240.52 obligated

AWARDS & PARTNERS

STEVEN L. FALES CONSERVATION AWARD

The Steven L. Fales Conservation Award honors our late friend and colleague, Dr. Steven L. Fales (March 14, 1947 – April 24, 2017).

Dr. Fales devoted much of his life to environmental conservation. He served as department chair in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University, and later the biomass research coordinator of the Bioeconomy Institute. Upon retirement, he became a commissioner for the Story County Soil and Water Conservation District, where he served as chair for four years.

Steven was a gifted leader who had a knack for bringing diverse groups of people together to engage in developing innovative solutions for a number of issues. To honor his work, we established the Steven L. Fales Conservation Award to producers implementing cover crops for the first time in Story County.

Congratulations to our 2021 recipients

Joel Weltha, Mike Larson, Lawrence Howard, and Bob Schuler!

OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



National Association of
Conservation Districts



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

FINANCIAL REPORT

These 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 and Water Quality.

JULY 1, 2020 – JUNE 30, 2021
FISCAL YEAR 2021

DISTRICT OPERATIONS

Total Allocation	\$2,636.41
Commissioners Expenses	\$936.08
Office Expenses	\$281.70
Dues Paid	\$1,625.00

COST SHARE (WQI + IFIP)

FY21 Allocation	\$39,820.00
Carry over funds from FY20	\$16,397.72
Projects completed & paid	\$13,220.37
Obligated funds for FY21	\$18,769.00
Funds recalled	\$24,228.35

REAP FORESTRY/NATIVE GRASSES

FY21 Allocation	\$2,304.37
Carry over funds from FY20	\$2,112.00
Projects completed & paid	\$1,440.00
Obligated fund for FY21	\$2,976.37

REAP-PRACTICES

FY21 Allocation	\$6,983.91
Carry over funds from FY20	\$3,568.50
Projects completed & paid	\$2,547.50
Obligated fund for FY21	\$6,983.91
Funds recalled	\$1,021.00

DISTRICT ACCOUNTS

FY21 Allocation	\$9,106.57
Carry over funds from FY20	\$28,523.79
Projects completed & paid	\$25,531.83
Obligated fund for FY21	\$12,098.53

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

WATER ROCKS! PROGRAM



Utilizing funds provided by the Story County budget for outreach purposes, Story SWCD sponsored Water Rocks! educational assemblies in elementary schools in Story County on a rotating basis. Water Rocks! is an educational organization based out of Iowa State University that promotes watersheds, water quality, and conservation topics around the state to students and adults. They host assemblies, deliver classroom presentations, and tables at events using their conservation trailers.

Water Rocks! visited 6 schools in Story County during the 2020-21 school year.

PRAIRIE RIVERS OF IOWA

Utilizing funds provided by the Story County budget for outreach purposes, Story SWCD funded several outreach events and activities through Prairie Rivers of Iowa. The Watersheds and Waterways Program at Prairie Rivers of Iowa has provided education and outreach centered on wildlife habitat restoration and watershed improvement throughout Story County. The Story SWCD sponsored the following efforts in 2020-2021: Three field days on the topics of wetlands, pollinator habitat, and low head dam remediation. Webinars on the topics of water quality, ethnobotany, pollinators, and citizen science. Water Quality Monitoring in the Ioway Creek and Indian Creek Watersheds.



Story County Soil/Water Conservation
Assistant District Commissioner
Cindy Hildebrand

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Clark Thompson's Conservation Efforts Recognized

Just south of Story City, you will find a century farm where Clark Thompson grows corn and soybeans. Throughout the last thirty years Thompson has made dozens of small tweaks that have led to substantial changes that have not only made his farm run more efficiently, but more environmentally conscious.

When Clark first started to consider changes, he and his father both still worked on the farm. Together, they started to research their options and what would have the best return on investment both economically and for the long-term health of their land. They started small by reducing tillage and then every few years they implemented another change, including planting cover crops, no till soybeans, installing a denitrifying bioreactor, and more. Most of the adjustments the Thompsons implemented were able to have the initial financial investment offset through the cost-share programs available through NRCS and IDALS. Long-term, though, the Thompsons have found that the changes are more economical for the farm overall because of the reduced number of trips across the field, better water retention for crop health, and overall efficiency.

Now, thirty years later, Clark has implemented numerous conservation practices and was awarded a Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award by Gov. Kim Reynolds in 2021. He credits the success to years of consistently deciding to make small, achievable adjustments and utilizing resources like USDA, NCRS, SWCD, and Practical Farmers of Iowa, that make changes even more attainable. He encourages others to reach out and research which changes will work the best for them because you don't have to implement everything all at once and outside the initial effort, it often leads to less work in the long-term and a positive net profit, plus there are incentives along the way.

If you are interested in setting up a consultation, please contact our local USDA Service Center at (515) 382-2217 and take the first step in advancing your farm.

SUPPORT GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY STORY COUNTY

The Story County Soil and Water Conservation District meets virtually every third Wednesday of the month at 9:00 AM. These meetings are open to the public, and anyone is welcome to attend. If you have conservation concerns, and would like to be placed on the agenda, please contact the office prior to the meeting.

Story SWCD prohibits discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.



We would like to thank Story County residents for their efforts on behalf of soil and water conservation. Without your cooperation, our work would be impossible.

We welcome your input in helping us continue this great work. If you have any questions, suggestions or resource issues, please contact our office at:

(515) 382-2217, Ext.3 in Nevada, Iowa

ponder this *marketing*

This report has been prepared by Ponder This Marketing, LLC in partnership with the Story County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners.