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Allamakee County Soil & Water Conservation District

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Would you like to be a SWCD Commissioner?

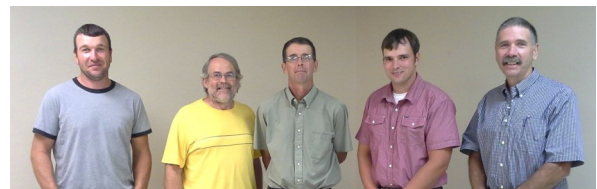
Commissioners may come from all walks of life; all you need is an interest in protecting our natural resources. If you are qualified to vote in a general election, you are eligible to be a candidate for the election to the board of the Allamakee Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). You must reside in Allamakee County. Only one commissioner may reside in any one township. Townships that are not eligible are Makee, Center or Taylor. Five Commissioners are elected at general elections on a nonpartisan basis for staggered four-year terms. There will be 2 terms culminating at the end of this year.

As a commissioner, you'll help decide the direction of the soil

and water conservation programs in the county, and have the opportunity to influence state and national conservation programs. Your involvement will include activities such as soil loss complaints, establishing acceptable soil loss limits, publishing an annual report, approving soil conservation plans, and assisting in the management of district funds and personnel.

You are reimbursed for expenses and protected from personal liability. Commissioners are expected to take part in regular monthly meetings, become knowledgeable of the SWCD

laws and programs, develop and carry out soil and water resource conservation plans, and help direct financial incentive programs. Nominating petitions can be picked up from the District office at Allamakee, Waukon, Iowa. The next general election is November 4, 2014. Nomination papers need to be signed by 25 electors and filed with the District County Auditor, Waukon, Iowa, by closing 5:00 p.m. on August 27, 2014. Questions regarding becoming a commissioner may be directed to Allamakee SWCD at (563)568-2246 ext. 3



Do you practice No-Till?

The Allamakee SWCD is looking for producers that are practicing no till and asking them to become mentors for other producers in the county considering no-till in their farming operation. The office is putting together a database to show producers the type of crops these no-till producers are planting into, the type

of planter, planter set up, their soil types, manure application, and several other important factors in deciding if no-till is an option for you.

If you are practicing no-till and are willing to be a mentor for others to help guide them please contact our office.

If you are interested in knowing who some of these people are feel free to check out our website at www.allamakeeswcd.org



Thank You Conservation Club Members For your Donations

Conservation Club Donors FY 2012-2013



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Thank you for your generous donations!

2013 Flood Damage Report

Due to the excessive rains we experienced this spring several producers experienced structural damages to terraces, ponds, and sediment basins. These structures were not designed to handle the torrential downpours experienced in the short amount of time that the rain falls occurred, resulting in blowouts and/or overtopping of structures.

As producers discovered these damages, they reported them to the Allamakee County NRCS and FSA offices. Staff went out to make an on-site assessments of damages, and were able to give producers an estimate for the repairs. These repairs may include adding needed fill to ridges/berms and intake replacements or cleanouts.

If terraces were cost shared through the local NRCS and have exceeded their maintenance agreement, cost shares may be available to reconstruct to required specifications.



2013 Conservation Award Recipients

The Allamakee Soil & Water Conservation District held their awards banquet on August 27, 2013 at the Farmers & Merchants Savings Bank. Award winners were presented with a clock and plaque made by Elliott Jewelers. The clocks were donated by Waukon State Bank, Fidelity Bank, Farmers & Merchants Savings Bank and New Albin Savings Bank. The meal was catered by Schulte's BBQ and Catering of Waukon.

The Commissioners would like to thank all of the sponsors of the awards for helping to make this year's awards banquet a success, and also to the award recipients for being leaders in conservation for others to follow.



OVERALL CONSERVATION AWARD WINNER
Left to right: Donald Elsbernd, Patricia Elsbernd



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER
Left to right: Jamie Smith from Szabo Const, Bill Huinker, Phyllis Huinker, Clinton Welsh



WINDBREAK AWARD WINNER
Left to Right: Jim Regan, Dan Headington, Fidelity Bank Representative, and Mike McCormick, Commissioner

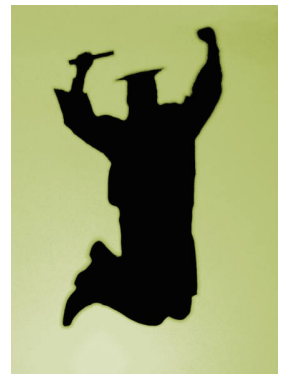


BEGINNING FARMER AWARD WINNER
Left to right: Glenn Hoff, Organic Valley Representative, Dan Byrnes Commissioner, John Palmer, Meghan Palmer, Naomi Palmer, Faith

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE!

The Allamakee SWCD plans to award scholarships to 2014 high school graduates. Applicants must reside in Allamakee County, and plan to study in the field of agriculture or natural resources in college. Applications are due on March 1, 2014 for consideration. Winners will be awarded in the spring at their awards banquet.

The Scholarship program is funded by donations to the district conservation club. Last year, the district awarded four scholarships in the amount of \$500 each. We have presented scholarships totaling \$12,500 over the last seven years!



Summer Intern Spotlight



Devin Brincks was the Allamakee SWCD's 2013 summer intern. Devin was a wonderful asset to our team this past year. He is currently a senior at UW Platteville studying Civil Engineering.

Devin learned about practical application of his engineering education by assisting the office with pond, stream bank surveys, and ag waste designs. He is very knowledgeable with the computer program Auto CADD which is a necessity in creating the designs for these projects.

The office and District Commissioners would like to thank Devin for all of his help during his summer and winter breaks.

IDALS Buffers up the Ante

Once again the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is offering an incentive payment for landowners/producers to install contour buffers including contingent field borders and filter strips on land that is not currently in the CRP or the Continuous CRP programs. Land that has these practices already in place is also not eligible for these funds. This time however, the one-time payment rate will be for \$300 an acre. The applicant will sign a five year maintenance agreement, which includes the seeding year, and develop a plan for the strips to be moved up or down the hill in the future should they wish to continue with the buffers.

Contour buffers need to be at least 15' and may extend up to 60'. In conjunction with the contour buffers a field border up to 60' wide can be included in the plan. Filter strips can be from 30' to 120' wide may also be installed for payment. These buffers may be hayed or grazed.

Buffers may be flagged out but not established (seeded) prior to proper approval from the state (IDALS). Applicants sign a form which goes to the District Commissioners meeting then on to the state for final approval of funding. Waterways are not eligible for this program.

Anyone interested in buffers or filters should stop in at the NRCS office to indicate where they may like to install some buffers. NRCS personnel may estimate probable buffer acres from a map or actually layout and GPS in the buffers for acres to be entered on the application

Don't Forget to Update your Conservation Plan!

Remember to make sure your conservation plan is up to date. This is especially important if you have recently purchased ground, switched renters, changed your crop rotation, or if your land is coming out of the CRP. Your conservation plan consists of your crop rotation, the type of tillage you will be using and other conservation practices such as waterways or buffer strips that you would like to incorporate.

Every year, five percent of our total landowners will be picked for an annual spot check. If you are one of these landowners and are not following a valid conservation plan you may be found out of compliance. If this happens, you will be at risk of losing your farm program benefits for all of the farms that you are associated with.

Please contact the office to make sure that your plan is valid and up to date. If you have any questions or would like to check and make sure that your plan is current please call the office at (563)568-2246 ext. 3



Streambank and Pasture Funds Now Available in Iowa Portion of Waterloo Creek Watershed

In addition to terraces, water and sediment control basins, and grade stabilization structures, funds are now available for streambank stabilization and pasture management practices through the Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board. The Allamakee County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is currently seeking landowners/operators who are interested in any of these best management practices (BMPs).

Eroding streambanks are a major source of sediment in streams. Streambank erosion is often accelerated due to a lack of deep roots from vegetation, which holds the soil together, and by livestock grazing, which can directly cause erosion due to cattle walking on the banks. Streambank stabilization traditionally consists of grading the slope to 2 feet horizontal to 1 foot vertical and then armor-ing the bank with riprap (various sized rocks). This process improves water quality by reducing streambank erosion and sedimenta-tion into streams and also improves habitat for terrestrial and aquatic life.

Pasture management practices that may be implemented include stream crossings, seeding/inter-seeding, fertilizer, alternative water-ing systems, winter feeding stations, brush management, heavy use protection, and fencing. These practices may be part of a pre-scribed grazing system, which controls the amount and location of grazing. It manages the number of animals, the grazing length, and timing of grazing to allow the plants to recover and meet planned objectives. Rotational grazing techniques are used to control grazing patterns and reduce the amount of bare soil due to overgrazing. Some of the goals include improving the quantity and quali-ty of forage, improving or maintaining surface and/or subsurface water quality, and reducing accelerated soil erosion.

These funds are only available for a limited time, and up to 75% cost-share is available when paired with the federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Please contact Michelle Elliott or Bob Joachim with the Allamakee SWCD at 563-568-2246 or stop by the office at 635 9th St NW in Waukon if you are interested in any of the BMPs listed above. We can meet with you on your property to discuss potential BMPs, cost-share incentives, and cost estimates.



Would you like to be a Summer Intern for 2014?

★ The Allamakee SWCD is offering a summer internship for the 2014 summer. In order to be eligible, you must be a college student and studying Agriculture or Natural Resources. The intern would work with staff from the SWCD, IDALS, and NRCS in this office in all daily activities. This job will occasionally require walking through rough terrain and carrying equipment.

- ★ -The rate of pay is \$10/hr.
- ★ -There are no benefits and no paid holidays.
- ★ -The intern may work up to a total of 480 hours.
- ★ -A workday is up to 8 hours between 7:30 and 5:00 with a 1/2 hour of unpaid lunch.
- ★ -Cannot work more than 40 hrs./week
- ★ -Must have a valid drivers license

★ If you would like more information please contact: Brianne Wild (563) 568-2246 ext. 3 or by email at brianne.wild@ia.nacdnet.net.



Developing a Conservation Addendum to your Farm Lease

The Allamakee SWCD is working on a conservation lease project that works with Allamakee landowners and tenants to include conservation requirements in their farm leases. This lease project is funded through August 2015 through grants from the McKnight Foundation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and provides a free service to landowners with land in Allamakee County to help write conservation into farm leases as a conservation addendum (or attachment) to the farm lease. We will not be writing the farm lease and will not be a substitute for an attorney, but we will work with landowners to explain lease options regarding conservation. There is a need for this project because in recent years, many waterways, headlands, and buffer strips have been removed and previously non-cropped ground has been sodbusted to maximize the amount of crop ground. Also, there is uncertainty in future farm bills and how they will affect compliance enforcement.

The basis for these conservation addendums is a revised conservation plan and plan map. Including the conservation plan in the lease allows both the landowner and tenant the opportunity to review the plan when the lease is renewed and make changes if needed. If you do not currently have a written lease, several different lease templates are available or an attorney can draft a lease document for you. Written leases are encouraged because they reduce the likelihood of a disagreement or misunderstanding regarding the lease terms. Consider how detailed leases often are for rental housing. Why should leases for land be any less detailed, especially considering the long-term productivity expected from the land?

When leasing farmland, there is often confusion about who is responsible for the conservation plan and ensuring good land management. Many landowners don't realize that they have a say in how their land is farmed once it's rented. In many cases, only the tenant provides input on what goes into the conservation plan. However, the landowner has the right to provide their input as well. We think it is very important for the landowner to understand what is in the conservation plan and how it impacts their land. Current conservation compliance requirements often represent the bare minimum conservation standards, but additional requirements can be added to the conservation plan to improve conservation on the land. For example, state law allows the tenant to remove crop residue, but because a large amount of nutrients leaves the cropland when residue is removed, the landowner can negate that in their lease document.

If you would like more information about this project, please contact Sara Berges as the Allamakee SWCD by calling 563-568-2246 extension 3, emailing sara.berges@ia.nacdn.net, or stopping by the office.

Make Sure You Have a Wetland Determination Done Before You Work!

Producers that plan to add drainage tile to their fields or remove trees must fill out a 1026 with FSA to get a wetland determination before starting the work. Wetlands may not have trees removed, be filled, or be drained by either surface or subsurface methods. Draining wetlands is a violation of USDA program rules and any producer associated with the land will be ineligible for USDA program benefits until the wetland is restored or mitigated. If a wetland is drained, the producer is ineligible for benefits starting at the time it was converted, not the year the violation is discovered. If a wetland was converted in 2010, the producer is responsible for repaying all benefits they received from 2010 until the wetland is restored. Please make sure to have this process done at least 6

months ahead of when you plan on doing the work. Due to a new process we have implemented it is taking longer to receive the results back from determinations made. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the office at 563-568-2246 ext. 3



Federal Programs available for Conservation Practices

There are currently several Federal programs available for installing conservation practices. They include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

The EQIP program is offered on a competitive basis with each application receiving a ranking score based on environmental factors. These include physical location of the practice, the potential of that practice to impact the environment and national, state, and local priorities. There are currently several EQIP initiatives including an Energy Initiative, the Driftless Initiative and an Organic Initiative. With the initiatives there is not a county pool of funds so each application is being ranked compared to other applications across the entire state or the Driftless area (8 counties in Northeast Iowa). Practices included for Allamakee County included terraces, forestry practices, livestock manure management systems, streambank stabilization and pasture practices.

The energy initiative involves a producer having an audit completed on their farmstead livestock operation and then incentives are offered to upgrade their current equipment to more energy efficient ones. The audit must be completed prior to signing up for the practices. The energy initiative does include grain drying.

The livestock manure systems may include total containment, such as a manure storage tank or a new building that replaces open feedlots. In order to be eligible for the highest cost share rates for a new building, the producer must be eliminating all of their open lots at this site. The building has to be entirely roofed with no outside access for the animals. The entire floor of the building must be concrete. Also, all of the animals have to currently be at this location (not expansions or new enterprises) to be eligible. Producers need to obtain their own engineer for design, construction inspection, and certification of the building. If the building is located near shallow bedrock and/or sinkholes, the building must also have secondary containment constructed around it to prevent any possible runoff in the event of an emergency.

The pasture practices include rotational grazing which may include fencing, planting, watering systems and lane improvements. The watering systems may include installing a fountain, a pumping plant, a well (for livestock use only) a pond or fortifying access to a limited area on a stream or a pond.

Streambank stabilization involves stabilizing the streambank at its current location utilizing rock and grading the bank back to a flatter grade. We can also do J-Weirs and other instream practices to stabilize banks and improve wildlife habitat. The NRCS will assist landowners with survey, design and installation of the practice and with obtaining all necessary permits from the Iowa DNR and from the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The CSP program involves completing an extensive tool to determine the amount of past conservation activity completed and then requires completing new activities. The payment is on either cropland, pastureland or forest. All applications are ranked on a statewide basis.

There is a continuous sign-up for both the EQIP and CSP programs. At a specified date, the applications are all gathered and ranked and funding is allocated. If a producer is interested in signing up for either of these programs they need to be contacting the NRCS office as soon as possible so cost estimates can be prepared. The funding for the EQIP program is on a flat rate basis which typically comes out to approximately 50% of the total cost. The CSP program dates will be announced before the next deadline.

SODBUST PLANS

Producers bringing land into production that has not been previously cropped need to complete a sodbust plan **before** doing any ground-breaking activity. Failure to complete a sodbust plan could jeopardize farm program payments.

A sodbust plan, to tolerable soil loss levels, needs to be completed on the area being brought into production. Rotations will be determined based on the predominant soil type of the sodbust area. The sodbust plan will include any tillage, grassed headlands, critical area seedings, and contour or strip cropping practices that would be needed to bring the area to a compliance level.

The Allamakee County District Commissioners have decided that they will **not approve** sodbust plans where the ground has been brought into production prior to completing the plan. They will **not approve** any plans if the area being sodbusted has a predominant soil with an E slope or greater.

The Allamakee NRCS office is encouraging any producers considering sodbusting acres for the 2014 crop year to contact the office as soon as possible to complete their plans. This will give the staff an opportunity to make any field visits to check slopes and gather any other pertinent information needed to develop the sodbust plan.



**Allamakee Soil & Water
Conservation District
635 9th St. NW
Waukon, IA 52172**

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Or Current Resident

JOIN THE CONSERVATION CLUB—YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Landowners and area businesses:

We hope that the Allamakee County Soil and Water Conservation District can count on your support again in fiscal year 2013-2014. We thank you for your generosity in the past. For 71 years, the District has been helping you and your neighbors conserve our most valuable resources, our soil and water.

We invite you to join in the local conservation effort by becoming a Conservation Club member.

The District has no taxing authority and the commissioners volunteer their services, which become more demanding every year. Funds for promoting soil and water conservation in our county must be raised locally through donations.

Donated dollars are used for a variety of projects including the district newsletter, scholarships, materials for the local conservation education day, CDI and NACD dues, and awards for conservation leaders.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS SLIP TO YOUR DONATION

THANK YOU!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ CHECK HERE _____ IF YOU WANT YOUR
DONATION TO GO TO THE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

RETURN TO:
Allamakee SWCD
635 9th Street NW
Waukon, IA 52172

We believe promoting soil and water conservation is everyone's job and we invite you to help. Please consider a donation.

Categories are as follows:

- SUPPORTERS \$5-25**
- SAVORS \$26-50**
- STEWARDS \$51-UP**
- SCHOLARSHIP— ANY AMOUNT**