

Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District

February Newsletter 2011

Johnson Co. SWCD Soil Commissioners

- Edward Ruppenkamp
- Alex Schmidt
- Delores Sedlacek
- Kelly Putman
- Nathan Moore

Assistant Commissioners

- Jason Grimm

Iowa City Field Office Staff

- Wendell Jones, *District Conservationist*
- Joy Koch, *State Secretary*
- Ruth Izer, *Soil Conservationist*
- Stephen Jerkins, *Soil Technician*
- Amy Bouska, *Urban Conservationist*
- Kate Giannini, *Soil Conservationist*
- Leiah Zimek, *Soil Technician*
- Tom Stoeffler, *Conservation Assistant*

Contact us at:

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 51 Escort Lane
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 (319)337-2322 ext. 3 (office)
 (319)351-2997 (fax)
 www.jcswcd.org



Find us on
Facebook!

It's Planting Time!

Orders due March 25th

Annual Sale Begins!!

Our annual tree and plant sale fundraiser is starting and we have just what you need to spruce up your yard, acreage or farmstead. Check out our brochure inserted in this newsletter for a listing of the bare root trees, native wildflowers, prairie grasses, rain barrels, and compost bins available.

If you've been contemplating planting a windbreak, rain garden or prairie, stop procrastinating! There is no better time than the present. Planting a windbreak can save on energy costs during the winter months by protecting your home, lane, buildings, or livestock from prevailing winds, drifting snow, and wind erosion. You can improve the water quality that leaves your rooftop or driveway and attract wildlife with a rain garden or native landscaping.

Don't miss out on investing in this opportunity. We can assist you in choosing the trees and plants to suit your needs — just give us a call at (319) 337-2322 ext. 3 or visit our website and order online at www.jcswcd.org.

What is Rainscaping Iowa?

By Amy Bouska

Rainscaping Iowa offers landscaping options for yards and businesses. It is a state-wide educational campaign that promotes urban storm water management practices to protect water quality and reduce runoff with the help of

its partners. For more information, go to www.rainscapingiowa.org

Contact Johnson Co. SWCD to see what options are available to you!

Some Rainscaping Practices

Include:

- Rain Gardens
- Green Roofs
- Native Landscaping
- Bioretention Cells
- Bio Swales
- Native Landscaping
- Permeable Paving



USDA Programs & Financial Incentives

By Ruth Izer

USDA has several financial incentive programs available to help producers and/or landowners install conservation practices on agricultural land (cropland, pastureland, and woodlands) that meets basic USDA eligibility guidelines. Some of these include the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

There are other programs authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill that offer payments for specific conservation uses and/or long term conservation easements. These programs would include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), and the Emergency Watershed

Protection Program (EWP). Another newer program is the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). This program rewards producers for farming in a sustainable manner. All these programs have a continuous signup and are then ranked for enrollment once or twice a year. The 2008 Farm Bill also set aside a portion of its conservation funding to assist socially disadvantaged farmers, beginning farmers, and limited resource farmers. For more information on eligibility, programs and practices go to Iowa NRCS website at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov

Additionally, our local USDA/NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) Service Center, in partner-

ship with the IA Department of Land Stewardship and the Johnson County Conservation District, staff can provide clients with technical assistance in the assessment, recommendation, and design of many conservation practices to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. Our local staff is also knowledgeable on available State Financial Incentive Programs for conservation application including some urban practices.

Also see the Johnson County Soil and Water Conservation District website at www.jcswcd.org

Johnson County Landowner Awarded

Phil & Karen Winborn of Sharon township are winners of the 2010 Southeast Regional Iowa Soil Conservation Awards Program. Farming operations receiving this awards are judged on the basis of conservation practices installed, amount of land considered adequately treated, community service, and general farm husbandry. The farming methods used by Phil & Karen exemplify a total resource conservation system approach to address soil erosion,

water quality, wildlife and energy conservation. Numerous conservation practices are used on the land they own and operate including: nutrient management, terraces, basins, grassed waterways, contour buffer strips, cover crops, no-till farming, and riparian buffers. Phil & Karen are both active members of their church and Phil has held several positions on local and regional boards & committees. Congratulations on a job well done!

FREE!!! Food Plot Seed

The Johnson County Pheasants Forever Chapter has once again donated FREE food plot seed.



Please stop by the USDA-NRCS office for pick-up in April.

Clear Creek Flood Study Completed

By James Martin

In 2009 the Iowa and Johnson SWCD's were awarded an I-Jobs grant to develop a flood control plan for Clear Creek with the help of The University of Iowa Hydro-science and Engineering department. The goal was to quantify how much water runs off land in the watershed during a 100-year (6.75 inch in 24 hour) rainfall event and propose solutions.

First, Clear Creek's 65,000+ acres were broken into 21 smaller water-

sheds. The runoff was calculated considering land use, soils etc. Elevation data helped calculate the "bank full" capacity of the tributaries and main channel of Clear Creek. Then scenarios were proposed to help lower the volume of runoff including; increasing no-till or converting cropland to grassland. We learned that the increase in no-till or grassland can have huge benefits for



water quality during the small, frequent rains, but they are less effective in reducing flooding from the 100-year event. As a result, the research team has recommended 15 flood structures in key locations in the watershed to reduce flood damage in both rural and urban areas. For comments, please contact James Martin at the Iowa Co. office 319-668-2359 or james.martin@ia.nacdn.net



By Kate Giannini

The Rapid Creek Watershed is 25 square miles located NE of Iowa City. It is a major subshed of the drainage area that flows into the segment of the Iowa River between the Coralville Lake Dam and the Burlington Street Dam. This area of the Iowa River is listed on the impaired list for excessive indicator bacteria.

In 2010 Johnson Co. SWCD received grant funding from Iowa DNR to continue efforts of assessment, water monitoring, education & outreach, & to develop a Watershed Management Plan. Also, a Water-

shed Board has been developed consisting of interested stakeholders.

Goals for 2011 are to finishing developing the Watershed Management Plan in hopes to receive future EPA funding. This would provide for more cost-share opportunities for watershed stakeholders. Interested in getting involved? Contact Kate Giannini at 319-337-2322 x. 3

Or
Kate.Giannini@ia.nacdn.net

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary USDA program that encourages agricultural and forestry producers to address resource concerns by: undertaking additional conservation activities and improving and maintaining existing conservation systems.

CSP provides financial and technical assistance to help land stewards conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. CSP is available to all producers, and eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie, improved pasture, and nonindustrial private forestland. CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

NRCS makes CSP available through continuous sign-up, with announced cut-off dates for ranking and funding applications. For more information about CSP, visit your local NRCS office. CSP information is also available online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp

JCSWCD says farewell to Cindy Asmussen



Cindy Asmussen has served as a Soil Commissioner since 1999. A born conservationist, Asmussen was a natural fit for JCSWCD.

JCSWCD would like to thank Cindy for her time, efforts, hard work, environmental concern & input. Best wishes, you will be missed!

Welcome Sedlacek, and re-elect Ruppenkamp

Delores Sedlacek lives on a farm near Swisher. As a child Sedlacek grew up on the farm, & is now fifth generation to Selacek Century Farm. For 34 years she has taught elementary grades in Cedar Rapids, and now continues with substitute teaching. Sedlacek looks forward to serving her first term as a SWCD Soil Commissioner. She has a strong interest in protecting Iowa's most precious resources; our soil & water. Welcome aboard!



Edward Ruppenkamp is serving his second term with JCSWCD. Ruppenkamp farms west of Iowa City with his wife Kathy, and three children. Ruppenkamp is an active member of his community, has a keen interest in agriculture and conservation and brings leadership to the table.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

By Tom Stoeffler

It's been a busy year for the Conservation Reserve Program! Despite the short advertising period in August, the CRP General Sign-Up 39 was very successful. The CRP General sign-up offers producers the opportunity to enroll larger areas (i.e. whole fields) of environmentally sensitive land. If your offer is accepted, landowners enrolled in CRP convert these acres by planting long-term, resource-conserving covers to control soil erosion, improve water and air quality, and develop wildlife habitat. Producers can offer land for CRP General Sign-Up enrollment only during designated

sign-up periods. For information on upcoming sign-ups (March 2011) and eligibility requirements contact your local FSA office.

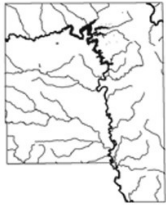
Don't Forget Continuous!

Continuous CRP is similar to General CRP in that it offers annual rental payments and cost-sharing, but is designed for the smaller/more concentrated areas in need of soil erosion control. Continuous CRP was developed to protect these areas and to provide a sediment filter around water sources near crop fields. There is no bidding process and producers can enroll at

any time. Farmers with eligible land may install practices such as grass waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, field windbreaks, contour grass strips and shallow water areas for wildlife. In addition to the yearly rental payment and 50% cost-share, most practices qualify for an additional 40% cost-share and some even include a one-time signing incentive of \$100/ac!

Interested landowners should contact their local FSA office or call the Johnson County Soil & Water Conservation District office at 319-337-2322 ext. 3.

USDA



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US POSTAGE



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Also Available from JCSWCD...

Technical Services Available to Aid in Conservation Practice Planning,
Windbreaks, Ponds, Wetlands, Prairies and More!

<p>For Rent:</p> <p>Tree Planter (3 point hitch type) \$25 per use + \$.01 per tree + tax</p> <p>Waterway Shaper (Hurricane Ditcher brand)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$25.00/hour + tax \$107.00 minimum charge <p><i>**Ask about custom operators**</i></p> <p>Call Tom at (319) 337-2322 ext. 3 to schedule equipment rental.</p>	<p>For Sale:</p> <p>Prairie Seedling Guide - \$6 each Tree & Shrub Guide - \$6 each Prairie Pocket Guide - \$6 each Invasive Species Guide - \$6 each (Buy 2 or more @ \$5 each/tax included)</p> <p>MARKING FLAGS 100 @ \$15 / 25 @ \$4 / 10 @ \$1.50 (tax included) TILE PROBES-\$24.95 + tax HAND LEVELS-\$19.05 + tax</p> <p>CD's on sale for (includes tax)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Rain on Your Roof \$2.00 How to Build a Rain Garden \$2.00 Soilview Johnson County \$5.00 <p>TREE TUBES by TREE PRO 48" @ \$5 ea (plus tax) Protects your trees from deer & rabbits (Stakes not included)</p>	<p>Upcoming Events:</p> <p>3/7-8 Iowa Stormwater Conference—Ames, Iowa</p> <p>3/8 Prairie Preview –Parkview Church—Iowa City www.jcht.org</p> <p>3/25 Annual Sale orders Due</p> <p>4/15 Tree/Barrel Pick-up</p> <p>5/20 Plant Pick-up</p> <p>July Johnson County Fair</p> <p> Check out our Facebook page to keep current on upcoming events!</p>
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JCSWCD now sells - Rain Barrels & Compost Bins -
see Annual Sale brochure to order.