

Iowa Current Developments



June 2010, Iowa Current Developments
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
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"Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service: Excellence in helping people conserve and improve our natural resources, communities and environment."

A Message from the: **State Conservationist**



*Rich Sims,
State Conservationist*

Nearly a year after the initial planning of the Mississippi River Basin Initiative (MRBI), work has begun in the 12-state initiative area.

Iowa, which is home to 18 project areas, will be working on MRBI in 16 counties. Deadline for applications is July 23. Funds must be obligated in late August.

Each office in the MRBI will receive maps highlighting areas with the greatest potential for nitrogen and phosphorous loss, based on a combination of factors. This information should be used to target areas that will provide the greatest benefit to water quality in the local watersheds and the Mississippi River Basin.

Although this initiative is not statewide, I believe we should all pay close attention to how the MRBI is implemented. The MRBI could be a precursor to how the next Farm Bill is written. It is my belief that water quality efforts will be a main focus next time around. And if MRBI is successful, future funds could be allocated using the same targeted approach involving partners through a similar Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

So take note during the next few months, we could be on the ground floor of a new structure for delivering conservation assistance to our customers. This could be the way of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Richard Sims'.

Back in the Day: The NRCS Fleet



Pictured above is one of our agency's original vehicles on display at an RC&D Meeting this year. The truck was used to help recognize our Agency's 75th year of service. This truck was used in Wisconsin in 1933 before we became the Soil Conservation Service in 1935.



FORE!: NRCS Golf Tournament Set for Aug. 27



The annual Iowa NRCS Golf Tournament is set for Friday, Aug. 27, at River Valley Golf Course in Adel. The 9 a.m. shotgun, 2-person best shot format is similar to past years.

This year's tournament is hosted by Jason Johnson (left) and Jim Phillips (right). Look for a flyer soon for sign up details.

So, find a playing partner, dust off your clubs, hit the practice range, and get some rounds in. The tournament will be here before you know it.

July 27 Field Day: At Smeltzer Farm

This annual field day will include an aerial seeding demonstration of rye grass cover crop.

Other topics include strip tillage, wildlife habitat, water quality drainage demonstration, Iowa Learning Farm's Conservation Station and various field demonstrations.

Guest speakers include Bill Northey, Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Chuck Gipp, IDALS Director of Soil Conservation and Rich Sims, NRCS State Conservationist.

The Field Day, which runs from 4 to 7:30 p.m., with a meal, will include three 45-minute educational workshops.

The Smeltzer Trust Farm is located one mile south of Otho on Nelson Ave.

To RSVP contact the Webster County Extension office in Fort Dodge at 515-576-6447.



All Aboard: The Conservation Station



The Iowa Learning Farm is traveling across Iowa with the new Conservation Station, a mobile learning center that encourages all Iowans to help protect and improve soil and water quality.

Through demonstrations, pictures, computer animations, three dimensional interactive displays, video and sound, people of all

ages can learn why Iowa's water and soils are so precious and how they can help preserve and protect these natural resources.

Visitors can see the Conservation Station for free and will learn about soil, water, crop residue, prairies and wetlands. It also has a rainfall simulator, demonstrating the affects of rainfall on the land,

collecting surface water runoff and subsurface drainage. Visit the Iowa Learning Farm Web site often for a listing of events, as events are added regularly: www.extension.iastate.edu/ilf. To request the Conservation Station for an event, call 515-294-5429 or e-mail: ilf@iastate.edu.

Iowa Learning Farm is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources; in cooperation with Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Farm Bureau.

Troubled Waters: New Award-Winning Video, Free Copies Available

A new Iowa Learning Farm (ILF) video, "Troubled Waters," explores rivers and the human relationship with them.

Winner of an Iowa Motion Picture Association (IMPA) award for excellence in educational production, "Troubled Waters" calls attention to human attitudes and treatment of rivers, both good and bad. ILF Associate Manager Jacqueline Comito and Jon Anderson produced the video.

The film highlights several Iowans who share their personal relationships with their local river or

stream. The film also talks about how humans have altered streams and the consequences from these changes.

"The river is totally different than it was when I was a kid," says Jerry Andreson, a farmer in the Wapsipicon River Watershed. "We don't leave much grass out there anymore; it's all corn and beans, very little livestock... We've built a lot of parking lots and all that water has to go somewhere, none of that seeps into the ground. The changes in society have changed the process of water moving down the channels."

"Troubled Waters" is filmed entirely on Iowa's waters and is approximately 26 minutes long. To request a free copy of this DVD, email: ilf@iastate.edu.



Celebrating Conservation Careers: **Good Luck State Retirees**



(Left to right) Paul Valin, DSC; Carolyn VanWaardhuizen, Secretary, Newton Field Office; Jim Gillespie, IDALS-DSC; Mary Everhart, Secretary, Mason City Field Office; Chuck Gipp, IDALS-DSC; Sigourney Odor, Secretary, Marshalltown Field Office; David Strom, IDALS-DSC; Carolyn Marshall, Secretary, Algona Field Office.



Front Row (left to right): Terry Morris, Technician, Keosauqua Field Office; Julie Hocker, Secretary, Williamsburg Field Office; Jay Peiffer, Technician, Sigourney Field Office; Wilma Johnston, Technician, Fairfield Field Office; Carol Brown, Secretary, Malcom Field Office. Back Row (left to right): Paul Valin, Jim Gillespie and Chuck Gipp (IDALS-DSC).

From the Archives: **Still the truth 50 years later!**

RAINDROPS . . . that went to town !



POOR LAND USE

A Chance to Meet: NRCS Summer Student Employees

This year 15 students are working in field offices across the state. They visited the State Office on June 22, as part of their conservation tour in southern Iowa.



Front Row (left to right): Mary Kate Ward (Williamsburg Engineering), Heidi Dittmer (Clarinda FO), Helen Leavenworth (Corydon FO), Karissa Merical, (Waukon FO), Katie Yule (Ankeny FO). Back Row (left to right): DeeAnn Oldsen, (Fairfield FO), Elyssa McFarland, (Fairfield Soils), Aris Harris, (Waterloo FO), Robyn Wilson, (Maquoketa FO), Corey Haris, (Sergeant Bluff FO), Darius Martin, (LeMars FO), Lance Porter, (Spencer FO), Carrington Taylor, (Ankeny FO), Meredith Albers (Fairfield Soils) and Dan Temeyer (Jefferson FO).

Western Iowa No-Till Field Day: Another Success



About 200 farmers attended the June 15 no-till field day at the Carstens 1880 Farmstead hosted by NRCS, Iowa State University Extension and Soil and Water Conservation Districts in East Pottawattamie, West Pottawattamie, Shelby and Harrison counties.

The day included breakout sessions on crop diseases in high residue areas by ISU plant pathologists and crop rotation and fertility by a representative of Ward Laboratories in Kearney, Neb.

The program also included information on waterway establishment and management and crop weather update from DTN Meteorologist Bryce Anderson.

Unlocking Efficiency: Progress Report Five— Administrative Services Update, Part II

Following is the update from Roberta Moltzen, Assistant State Conservationist for Management, on items first reported in the February issue of Current Developments.

Slow Computers and Servers

The speed of our laptop and desktop computers is interfering with our ability to use ARCVIEW, complete engineering work and other functions.

Solution: We are purchasing an additional 2 GB of RAM for faster processing for all the old computers not being replaced.

Voice Mail

Each individual's phone should be equipped with voice mail.

Solution: This is in process. We replaced 10 systems in the first half of the year and are about to order another 10 systems. An additional 10 systems will be replaced next year.

Email Organization

Sorting and reading through email takes a lot of time. A standard naming system for the subject line would be helpful for organizing and managing email information.

Solution: This is done. Instructions were sent in February. The same filing system is also used on the Statewide Shared Drive.

Customer Email

It would be helpful to revise our program applications to allow our customers to provide us their email addresses and permission to communicate with them using email.

Solution: An optional form was sent to all ASTC-FOs and AMAs with a request to share with all field offices.

Unlocking Efficiency



Supply Budgets

DCs should be allowed to make purchases for supplies, repairs and equipment as needed.

Solution: Areas have been allocated their own budgets for supplies and vehicle repairs and we have a new system for requesting equipment that has received good feedback from area staff.

Ordering Supplies

Some items could be ordered centrally to save money. Also, standards should be set for the quality of supplies for consistency of cost.

Solution: We bought tires centrally this year, but did not save much money. ASTC-FOs agreed to buy tires locally in the future. Also, now that the ASTC-FOs are responsible for the purchasing of supplies in their areas, they can purchase centrally to save time and/or money if they choose.

Employee Development Plans

A new template is needed.

Solution: All LT members and the STC certified that all employees have Individual Development Plans. However we have discovered that many do not and have discussed at several LT Meetings.

Staff Shortages

Our biggest impediment to getting conservation on the land is lack of staff to service the contractors.

Solution: All WAE requests have been approved this year.

Changes In: NRCS Personnel

Name	Official Title	Grade	Effective Date	Nature of Action	Location
ADAMS, DOUGLAS J	Soil Conserv Techncn	07	5/9/10	PROMOTION	HUMBOLDT FO
ALBERS, MEREDITH A	Soil Scntst (CIP)	09	5/17/10	EXC APPT	FAIRFIELD MLRA
ANDERSON, AARON K	Resource Conservst	11	4/25/10	PROMOTION	GRUNDY CENTER FO
CHRISTIAN, CAROLYN E	Contract Speclst	07	5/9/10	REASSIGNMENT	STATE OFFICE, CONTRACTING
COLLINS, LANE L	Soil Conservst	12	5/9/10	PROMOTION	LOGAN FO
FOLSOM JONES, SON- DRA E	Human Resources Speclst	11	6/6/10	TRANSFER IN	STATE OFFICE, HUMAN RESOURCES
FOXX, ELMER D	Adm Assistant	07	6/6/10	PROMOTION	STATE OFFICE. MGT
GALER, ROCHELLE E	Soil Conservst (CIP)	07	5/21/10	EXC APPT	INDEPENDENCE FO
HAMMITT, LARRY C	Engrg Techncn	08	4/25/10	REASSIGNMENT	ATLANTIC FO-ENGR
JAHN, GREGORY K	Soil Conserv Techncn	07	6/20/10	REASSIGNMENT	ORANGE CITY FO
KLEIN, JOHN C	Natrl Resource Mgr	12	5/23/10	PROMOTION	CARROLL RC&D
KLUVER, LYNN R	Soil Conserv Techncn	07	4/25/10	PROMOTION	THOMPSON FO
MOHN, DANIEL T	Soil Conserv Techncn	05	4/11/10	EXC APPT	DECORAH FO
MOOTZ, TRICIA A	Human Resources Speclst	11	6/6/10	PROMOTION	STATE OFFICE, HUMAN RESOURCES
NAGL, NICHOLE S	Soil Conservst (CIP)	07	5/23/10	EXC APPT	GREENFIELD FO
NEELY, RUBYANA L	Soil Conservst	09	5/23/10	NAME CHANGE FROM GRIMMIUS	ADEL FO
OLSON, HILLARY A	Soil Conservst	09	6/6/10	REINS CAREER	TOLEDO FO
RACHUT, ELIZABETH M	Soil Conservst	09	6/20/10	PROMOTION	OSAGE FO
ROHRER, DEANNA M	Soil Conservst	09	6/20/10	REASSIGNMENT	JEFFERSON FO
REED, TERESA A	Soil Conservst	09	4/25/10	CHG-LOWER GR	TIPTON FO
TURNQUIST, RYAN W	Soil Conserv Techncn	05	6/20/10	EXC APPT NTE	STORM LAKE FO
WILLIAMS, LYA S	Civil Engr	11	6/6/10	NAME CHANGE	OTTUMWA ENGR
WILLIAMS, NICHOLE L	Soil Conserv	09	6/20/10	REASSIGNMENT	MARSHALLTOWN FO
WORDEN, CHESTER W	Soil Conserv Techncn	06	5/31/10	RETIREMENT	TOLEDO FO

Changes In: IDALS-DSC Personnel

Name	Official Title	Effective Date	Nature of Action	Location
Brown, Carol	Secretary	5/27/10	Retirement	Poweshiek SWCD
Odor, Sigourney	Secretary	5/27/10	Retirement	Marshall SWCD
Darling, Jeff	Soil Technician	6/10/10	Retirement	Shelby SWCD
Gierstorf, Janice	Soil Technician	6/11/10	Retirement	Crawford SWCD
VanWaaardhuizen, Carolyn	Secretary	6/18/10	Retirement	Jasper SWCD
Beaudine, Marilyn	Secretary	6/23/10	Retirement	Delaware SWCD
Christoph, John	Soil Technician	6/23/10	Retirement	Chickasaw SWCD
Adams, Sandra	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Mitchell SWCD
Bahnsen, Arlis	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Clay SWCD
Cleveringa, Duane	Soil Technician	6/24/10	Retirement	Sioux SWCD
Everhart, Mary	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Cerro Gordo SWCD
Grimm, Marcia	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Marion SWCD
Hocker, Julie	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Iowa SWCD
Jahn, Marilyn	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Woodbury SWCD
Janssen, Diane	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Osceola SWCD
Johnston, Wilma	Soil Technician	6/24/10	Retirement	Jefferson SWCD
Marshall, Carolyn	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Kossuth SWCD
Monroe, Patricia	Secretary	6/24/10	Retirement	Allamakee SWCD
Morris, Terry	Soil Technician	6/24/10	Retirement	Van Buren SWCD
Peiffer, Jay	Soil Technician	6/24/10	Retirement	Keokuk SWCD
Gravies, Gathie	Field Representative	6/24/10	Retirement	DSC
Valin, Paul	Field Representative	6/24/10	Retirement	DSC
Illvess, Elaine	Program Planner	6/24/10	Retirement	DCS
Dittman, Brandon	Environmental Specialist	3/12/10	Left Employment	Polk SWCD
Ernst, Susania	Environmental Specialist	6/23/10	Retirement	Lucas SWCD