



Allamakee County Soil & Water Conservation District

770 11th Ave. SW

Waukon, IA 52172

Phone: 563-568-2246 ext. 3

Allamakee County Hosts Annual Conservation Districts of Iowa Spring Regionals

Allamakee County was chosen as this year's hosts for the annual Conservation District of Iowa Spring Regionals for Region 4. This meeting is rotated through the 12 counties that are in our Region. Conservation Districts of Iowa is made up of 500 soil and water conservation commissioners within the 100 districts in Iowa who are committed to fulfilling CDI's mission: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) informs, educates, and leads Iowans through our local soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation of natural resources.

CDI partners with several different agencies including the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality (IDALS-DSCWQ), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Each partner was in attendance and presented on the updates going on with each of their departments. There were 9 of the 12 soil and water conservation districts in our region that were represented by their board of commissioners. There were 48 people in attendance. A big thank you to Josh and Rachel Curtin for hosting us at the Old Rossville Store and for the wonderful food they provided!



SWCD Board of Commissioners

Don Elsbernd– Chairman
Jim Pladsen-Vice Chairman
Brady Kruger-Treasurer
Dean Peterson-Co-Treasurer
Scott Dougherty
Jack Knight-Assistant Commissioner

Office Staff

Ben Cottrell– District Conservationist
Eric Novey-Soil Conservationist
Sara Berges– Soil Conservationist Resource Team
Barb Hanson– Project Coordinator
Brienne Wild– Conservation Assistant

The Allamakee SWCD welcomes 2 new board members



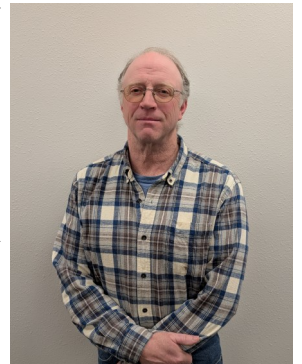
(Above pictured Left to Right: Don Elsbernd, Scott Dougherty, Brady Kruger, James Pladsen, Dean Peterson, and Jack Knight.)



This year the board had 2 newly elected members Dean Peterson and James Pladsen. Dean Peterson and his wife moved to Allamakee County a little over eight years ago. He graduated from Winona State University with a degree in Biology. Prior to moving here he lived in western Minnesota, where he worked for the USDA- Agricultural Research Service, at the North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory. Research at the lab was focused in many areas including: weed management, carbon sequestration, soil erosion, tillage and compaction, water quality issues, plant physiology, and crop diversity in terms of oil seed crops. Their work with the oil seed crops lead us to working with the MN Honey Producers and it allowed him to work at 3 of ISU's research farms in western Iowa. One highlight of

his work was that he was able to work with researchers from eight different countries. Early in his career, he worked with several conservation agencies including: the MN DNR, USFWS, WI DNR and most recently the Iowa DNR Forestry. He looks forward to working with the SWCD and the other members of the board.

James Pladsen farms southeast of Waukon along Paint Creek. Jim has a herd of beef cows and he backgrounds the calves. He raises corn alfalfa soybeans and oats, practices contour/strip cropping and crop rotation, and has started no-till planting. Jim is interested in learning more about cover crops, particularly how they might be used for grazing, and he has a lot of timber ground that he is interested in improving.



The Allamakee SWCD Board would like to thank Tom Gavin and Mike O'Hare for their combined 12 years of service on the board of commissioners. We appreciate all that you have done for our board.



Have you received a certified letter from us? If you have, this does not necessarily mean that you are in trouble or are doing anything wrong on your farm. Most letters that we are sending out are regarding our programs or Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Determinations or Wetland Determinations (WD).

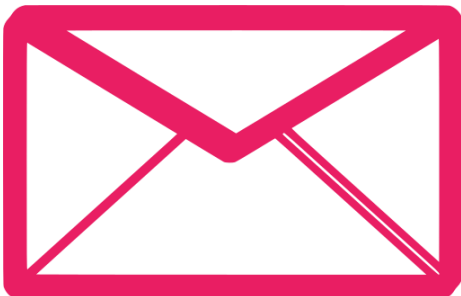
What prompts our office to send one of these determinations? The request for determination is called an AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification and the FSA office fills one out for any ground that is brought into production that was not previously recorded as being cropland. If you do any tiling, land leveling, filling, dredging, land clearing, or excavation that has **NOT** been evaluated by NRCS, a Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Determination will need to be completed on those acres. This form must be signed by either the owner or operator on the farm and should be done **PRIOR** to any of the work being done. Most of the areas found have been due to the office receiving new aerial imagery in fall of 2023 and also when producers certify their acres in the spring. If you certify an area as being cropped that did not have a previous HEL/WC on it, we will have the producer who is certifying sign an AD-1026 to begin the process of getting a determination done on those areas. A determination involving either a HEL or Wetland designation is considered adverse. Parties have 30 days to appeal an adverse decision. An adverse decision is sent by certified mail in order to establish when the 30 day appeal window begins.

If the ground is determined Highly Erodible this means that you should be following an active conservation plan with the NRCS office. If you are unsure whether a conservation plan has been developed, please stop into the office and we will work with you to review the plan that is on file or help you to develop a new one. This does not mean that you can't farm it, it just means that you need to be following an established and approved conservation plan!

If the ground is determined to be a Wetland this means that the ground has presence of hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, or wetland hydrology. If your ground is determined a wetland you can still farm the ground under natural conditions but you cannot in any way, shape, or form drain this area. This is why we urge you to have these determinations done prior to any tiling, land clearing, filling, land leveling, dredging, or excavation being completed due to major fines that are associated with performing this kind of work in a wetland area. If you have a wetland on your farm and would like to know more information regarding what you are or aren't allowed to do with a wetland, please give the office a call and we can help get you in contact with the wetland specialist for our area.

If you have any more questions regarding these letters please feel free to call our office at (563)568-2246 ext. 3 or you can stop in during our business hours to discuss in more detail.

New This Year!



The Allamakee Soil & Water Conservation District will be sending out quarterly updates by email! These emails will include information on up-coming deadlines for program sign-ups and information on any new programs available. If you did not already receive an email in March and would like to be on our email list please contact Brienne Wild at (563)568-2246 ext. 3 or by email Brienne.wild@usda.gov

Thank you to our generous donors!

Supporters \$1-\$25

Charles Cota
Dennis Eder
Dennis & Chris Soride

Soil Savers \$26-\$50

Ed & Amy Bieber
Marilyn Clark
Elmo & Sheri Hagen
Ann Klees
Diane Kraus
Jane Lamborn
Dennis Nebendahl
William & Karen Regan
Ronald & Therese Snitker
Brad & Linda Winkie

Stewards \$51– Up

Beverly Bacon
Dave & Jean Cahoon
Walter R. Hagen Family Trust
Dave & Suzanne Hahn
Jim & Jane Johnson
Clark Kerndt in Memory of
Harold Kerndt
Eric Lingford
Dennis & Sherri Lyons
Clay & Adele Monserud
Darryl Palmer
Dave & Gail Prestemon
Doug Sass
Kathy Schacht
Robert & Diane Schulte
Todd & Janet Soukup
Bob & Dave Stilwell
Dean & Mary Teslow
Tony & Joleen Vieth
Steve & Chris Weymiller

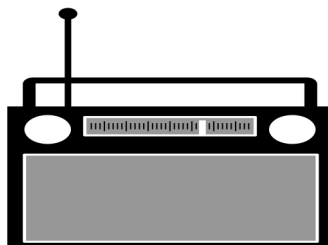
Scholarships

Dan & Traci Byrnes
Velma Huebner
Jim & Jane Johnson
Curtis Lundy
Clay & Adele Monserud
Greg Palmer
Gene & Barb Sanderman
Roger & Susan Schlitter
Robert & Diane Schulte
Gary & Connie Tilleros
Warner Enterprises LLC
Jared & Becky Winkie



To keep up to date on all of our programs and events happening

- Tune in to KNEI every Wednesday morning at 9:00 a.m.
- Visit our website at www.allamakeeswcd.org
- Get on our email list for quarterly email updates
- Find us on facebook search for Allamakee Soil & Water Conservation District



Allamakee County SWCD Commissioners Award 6 Scholarships

The Allamakee Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners made their selection for this year's Allamakee Scholarship Fund Scholarship at their March 2024 meeting.

The board awarded 6 scholarships totaling \$4.750. The scholarships were awarded to Caleb Helgerson, son of Erik and Janelle Helgerson, Mason Byrnes, son of Matt & Michelle Byrnes, Sara Stock, daughter of Lyle & Annette Stock, Mari Delaney, daughter of Jesse & Heather Delaney, Ethan Palmer, son of John & Meghan Palmer, and Ariana Menne, daughter of Jason & Sara Menne.

To be eligible for the scholarship the applicants must be living in Allamakee County, and enrolling in an agricultural or natural resource based major. The SWCD was able to present these scholarships due to the generous donations that we receive from the members of the Conservation Club.



Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) comes to an end

The Allamakee SWCD was awarded funds through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) for specific practices. These included adding a small grain to a rotation and following it with a diverse cover crop, cover crops on acres that have manure application, and grazing practices. Adding a small grain to your corn-soybean rotation diversifies the rotation (and associated in-come), spreads out work throughout the year, has reduced input costs, can help break up pest/weed cycles, and can improve soil health.

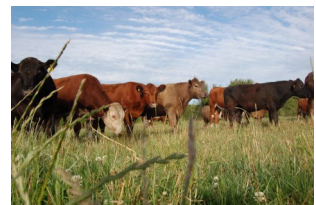
Diverse cover crops planted after small grain harvest can get substantial growth in the fall to meet many different goals including providing forage for livestock, breaking up compaction, scavenging nutrients, and reducing soil erosion. A cover crop planted on acres with manure application can help reduce nutrient loss concerns due to the cover crop extracting nutrients. Cover crops utilized with manure can be basic rye or wheat or something more diverse depending on when you are able to get it seeded.

The RCPP has spent a total of \$222,370.69 in cost-share dollars to assist with the implementation of practices. Over the last 3 years the practices that have been completed were 2,999 acres of cover crop, 25.8 acres of prescribed grazing, 8405 feet of fencing, and 21.1 acres of seeding.

The RCPP funding proved to be a great incentive to producers to start and implement cover crops and grazing practices to see the benefits.

Cost-Share Programs Available

The Allamakee NRCS and SWCD has cost-share programs available for several different practices including but not limited to; terraces, ponds, buffers, waterways, cover crops, tree plantings, timber stand improvements, windbreaks, and grazing practices. If you are interested in any of these please stop in our office today!



Conservation Reserve Program Mid-Contract Management

By: Cole Anderson

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

Do you have volunteer trees or shrubs in your CRP? Have you noticed fewer flowers or non-native grasses taking over your habitat? Your Mid-contract Management (MCM) activity can help! MCM is a required disturbance activity within your CRP to create early successional habitat to benefit wildlife. MCM must be completed outside the primary nesting season (May 15th – August 1st) and is typically planned for the 4th year of new CRP or within the first 3 years of re-enrolled acres.



Prescribed fires are one of the most effective tools we have for managing native prairies. Late-spring burns are very effective at promoting tall native grasses and combating small trees or shrubs.

The most common and highly recommended MCM practice is prescribed burning. A fire at the right time of year can benefit native flowers, suppress unwanted grasses, and stunt or kill small trees. While burning is likely the most beneficial MCM option for your prairie, burning isn't always the best or even a viable option. In some locations, a fire would be impractical, dangerous, or negatively impact future vegetation. In these situations, NRCS will work with you to find another MCM option, such as herbicide, grazing, haying and inter-seeding, or tillage to complete MCM.

Each MCM option has its' advantages and disadvantages. I highly encourage you to contact the Al-



lamakee County NRCS office (563-568-2148) if you would like to discuss your scheduled MCM to see how it will benefit your farm. We are happy to help you find an option that will fit into your operation and benefit your habitat and wildlife.

Most CRP practices allow grazing as a Mid-contract management activity. If you are interested in grazing for your mid-contract management, you must contact Allamakee County FSA and NRCS to create a grazing plan.



**Allamakee County
Soil & Water
Conservation District**

Non-Profit Org.

US Postage

PAID

Permit No. 115

JOIN THE CONSERVATION CLUB—YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Landowners, producers, and area businesses:

We hope that the Allamakee County Soil and Water Conservation District can count on your support again in 2025. We thank you for your generosity in the past. **For 82 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. We believe promoting soil and water conservation is everyone's job and we invite you to help. Please consider donating.

PLEASE ATTACH THIS SLIP TO YOUR DONATION.

THANK YOU! RETURN TO:

Allamakee SWCD
770 11th Ave. SW
Waukon, IA 52172

Categories are as follows:

SUPPORTERS \$5-25

SOIL SAVERS \$26-50

STEWARDS \$51-UP

SCHOLARSHIP— ANY AMOUNT

RETURN TO:

Allamakee SWCD
770 11th Ave. SW
Waukon, IA 52172

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____