

Iowa Current Developments

April 2012



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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May is Wetlands Month!

Photo by Jennifer Anderson-Cruz

A Message from the: **State Conservationist**



Richard Sims, State Conservationist

Field Office of the Future

Earlier this year national conservation leaders asked each State to develop a Field Office of the Future plan that best addresses their unique partnerships and situations. Just a few months from now, we will have a final plan for Iowa's "Field Office of the Future." A team of 15 members of the Iowa conservation partnership began meeting in April. They will complete their final plan by September 1.

Their plan will address five key questions:

- » How can we best meet the needs and expectations of our customers?
- » How should the field office of the future look and operate?
- » How can we focus our resources to get the most from our nation's conservation investments?
- » How can we design the most efficient and effective delivery system at the local level?
- » How can we best prepare for any potential budget constraints?

Team members include: Jon Hubbert, Damarys Mortensen, Lori Althiede and Shaffer Ridgeway (NRCS), Jim Gillespie and Vince Sitzman (DSC), Harold Whipple and Bob Lynch (SWCD Commissioners), Darrell Weems and Jim Frederick (CDI), Kelly Tobin (SSCC), Sean McMahon (TNC), Sarah Carlson (PFI), Rick Robinson (IFB), Dixie Baker (Union County SWCD). This group will carefully consider the types and levels of service provided by future field offices as well as opportunities to increase operational efficiencies.

Iowa Current Developments

Current Developments is a product of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Des Moines, Iowa, published bimonthly by the Iowa NRCS Public Affairs Staff in cooperation with NRCS and partner agency employees from across the state.

Current Developments Stories and Photos

Please submit your Current Developments story ideas and photos to State Public Affairs Specialist Laura Greiner at laura.greiner@ia.usda.gov.

Past issues can be found at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/currentdevelopments.html.



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Who's Your Favorite? Meet the Whobuddies!

Iowa NRCS newest children's conservation education tool is based on a series of six cartoon characters called the "Whobuddies". Each owl-based character represents and specializes in a particular basic natural resource including soil, water, animals, plants, air, and energy.

Similar to other super heroes, the Whobuddies have two sides to them. As their everyday selves, they teach kids and parents what they can do to help

protect natural resources. As super heroes (pictured below), they combine powers to solve natural resource problems.

The first Whobuddies Adventures comic book, "The Mystery of the Sick Stream" is available in wide release. Contact Tara Kinyon-Anderson at tara.kinyon-anderson@ia.usda.gov or 515-284-4262 to request copies.



CDSI Update: Upcoming Training

Field staff will receive an overview of the Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative (CDSI) during five meetings during May. Jennifer Dubendorf is the Iowa point of contact for the CDSI process.

This foundational training will provide more details on the various CDSI components, including the "Client Gateway" and the "TA Desktop". These tools will be loaded to Iowa NRCS computers by Oct. 1, 2012.

The May training will also discuss how the CDSI components will provide a stronger connection between the NRCS computer-based conservation planning and contracting activities.

Training Dates

Here is a list of dates for the Foundational Training for CDSI.

- **May 1**, Area 3, Edgewood.
- **May 3**, Area 2, Webster City
- **May 9**, Area 5, Lake Darling
- **May 22**, Area 1, Storm Lake (Buena Vista University Campus)
- **May 24**, Area 4, Corning or Creston

Earth Day: Planting Shrubs in Farnhamville



Prairie Valley Elementary/Middle School, located north of Farnhamville, planted 350 shrubs on April 24 along the school's north and west side to form a hedge and protect their playground.

The Webster and Calhoun County Soil and Water Conservation Districts donated the shrubs. Every student at the school, from preschool through sixth grade, planted a small shrub with assistance from local experts from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), and Webster County Conservation Board.

Jeremy Viles, a resource conservationist with NRCS in Rockwell City, helped organize the shrub planting. "This is a newer playground, and the winds really blow hard through here, making

it almost unbearably cold in the winter," said Viles. "The (Soil and Water Conservation) Districts felt this was a good opportunity to use some of their trees from an annual tree selling fundraiser." Students planted eight different varieties of shrubs, which will eventually grow to about 10 feet high. Calhoun County Conservation Board and John Field, a school board member, pre-dug the holes for students to plant into.

Viles says the entire project is a partnership effort. "Swanson Hardware provided tree tubes at their cost, Lumberjack Knicknacks from Carroll provided mulch for the cost of transporting it to the school, Farmer's Coop will water the trees for the next year, and Calhoun and Webster County Pheasants Forever covered all expenses other than trees," he said.

Conservation Celebration: **Soil and Water Conservation Week**



On April 20, Iowa Governor Terry Branstad signed a proclamation recognizing April 29 – May 6th as Soil and Water Conservation Week. This week recognizes the ongoing work by farmers, land-owners and urban residents to protect the state's soil and water resources.

"Iowa's soil and water, along with the efficiency of our farmers, is what makes our state so productive. It is vital that we preserve these resources that are responsible for such a significant part of our state's economy," Iowa State Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey said. "Soil and Water Conservation Week is a great opportunity to highlight the important work being done to prevent soil erosion and protect water quality in Iowa."

Find more info at <http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/conservationweek.asp>.

DIVERSITY DAY 2012



Retired Pastor Rev. Greg Smith, Ph.D.

The 2012 USDA Diversity Day was held March 27 at the Federal Building in Des Moines and shared via webcast across the state.

This year's theme was "Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Communities within the Workplace."

Two speakers shared their separate experiences of supporting their gay sons.

If you missed the program, it can be viewed on a DVD. To get a copy of the Diversity Day DVD please contact Laurel Foreman, GLBT SEPM, at laurel.foreman@ia.usda.gov.

Summer Students: Office Locations

Our first summer students begin arriving in early May. Stay tuned for the June issue of Current Developments which will include more information about each of our students.

Area	Office	Student	Supervisor
1	Carroll	Shelby Erikson	Clint Miller
1	Ida Grove	Heidi Dittmer	Lorne Miller
1	Orange City	Lynn Khuat	Gregory Marek
2	Ankeny	Kelly Mercier	Paul Miller
2	Hampton	Jaime Sandoval	Lawrence Green
2	Jefferson	Ava Haun	Kevin Kordick
2	Marshalltown	Corey Harris	Dana Holland
3	Waukon	Bryce Gonzales	LuAnn Rolling
4	Atlantic	Elyssa McFarland	Dan Pulido
4	Atlantic	Aris Harris	Dave York
4	Corydon	Amanda McNees	Mark Fehseke
4	Leon	Andrew Koehlmoos	Kevin Reynolds
4	Malvern	Emily Creech	Brian Gross
5	DeWitt	Merle Jaster	Bruce VanLaere
5	Wapello	Gabriele Frerichs	Drew DeLang



Happy 150th
USDA!
May 15, 2012

Same Faces: Congratulations on your New Places!



Lane Collins, New Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Area 5

Lane begins his new position as assistant state conservationist for field operations in Fairfield on May 7. Lane has worked for the agency for 30 years. He first worked in Harrison, Monona and Boone counties.

After graduating from Iowa State University with a degree in Agronomy he worked as Soil Conservationist in Mills County before becoming District Conservationist in Wright County, Sac County, Sac/Calhoun Management Unit and the Harrison Management Unit. Collins is married to wife, Barbara, and has two daughters (Lauren, 24, and Jessica, 22).



Kevin McCall, New Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Area 2

Kevin starts his position as assistant state conservationist for field operations in Fort Dodge on June 3. McCall is currently serving as District Conservationist in Page County.

During his 30-year career, McCall has also worked as a soil conservationist in Red Oak and Wapello. He then became the district conservationist in Donnellson before moving to Page County. Last year he served a six month detail as an ASTC-FO in Montana.

He served three summers as a student trainee in Osceola, Waukon and Greenfield before graduating from Iowa State. Kevin has participated on many committees and provided training at the state and national levels. He has a daughter who lives in Minneapolis and a son who lives in Idaho.



Jeff Zimprich, New State Conservationist, South Dakota

Jeff, a native of South Dakota, grew up on a small farm on the east side of the state and began his 29-year conservation career in Montana. He started working for the Soil Conservation Service in 1983 as a Student Trainee while attending the University of Montana.

After graduating with a degree in Rangeland Management, he worked in 3 Montana field offices as a Soil Conservationist and District Conservationist. He transferred to Iowa in 1988 and worked in two area offices and the Des Moines State Office.

He has had several opportunities to serve in Washington D.C. in National Head Quarters. The most recent was on detail to the Legislative Affairs Division in 2010.

Save the Date: NRCS Golf Tournament

The 2012 Iowa NRCS Golf Tournament is scheduled for Friday, August 24th at 9am. This year's tournament venue is The Preserve on Rathbun Lake in Moravia, located at the Honey Creek Resort. This is one of the best public golf courses in Iowa, and accommodates golfers of all skill levels.



The format will be 2-person best shot. More details, including signup information, are coming. Contact Stacy Wickman and Jason Johnson with questions.

Remembering: Jim Cooper

Jim Cooper, former Iowa RC&D coordinator, died Jan. 12, 2012.

Two local events will celebrate Jim's life: **Saturday, May 12**, 10 a.m., at Faith United Methodist Church, 115 East Northumberland Street, Russell. **Sunday, May 13**, 12:30 p.m., in the space on the east side of Wheatsfield Cooperative Grocery, Main Street and Northwestern Avenue, Ames. An optional bicycle ride on one of Jim's favorite training routes will follow.

Deadlines and Special Dates: Coming Up in May

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 CSP08 NWQI EQIP Deadlines	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 Memorial Day	29	30	31		

June Dates

June 1
EQIP Deadlines

June 7
*EQIP Wildlife Initiative
Deadline*

June 15
*CSP08 Final Deadline
NWQI Deadline*

Changes In: NRCS Personnel

In order of Effective Date

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Drechsel, Matthew A.	Asst. State Conservationist-FO	PROMOTION	2/26/12	West Union AO Area 3
Wordlaw, Randall V.	Soil Conservationist	PROMOTION	2/26/12	Manchester FO Area 3
Birks, Cristine A.	Soil Conservation Technician	REASSIGNMENT	2/26/12	Iowa Falls FO Area 2
Rohrer, Deanna M.	Soil Conservationist	REASSIGNMENT	2/26/12	Fort Dodge FO Area 2
Trautman, Bruce W.	Asst. State Conservationist-FO	RETIREMENT	3/2/12	Fairfield AO Area 5
Byers, Ann M.	District Conservationist	PROMOTION	3/11/12	Rock Rapids FO Area 1
Parry, Terri K.	Soil Conservation Technician	PROMOTION	3/11/12	Tipton FO Area 5
Seago, Jeffrey R.	Soil Conservationist	PROMOTION	3/11/12	Elkader FO Area 3
Timmerman, Katherine L.	Soil Conservationist	REASSIGNMENT	3/11/12	Anamosa FO Area 3
Goemaat, Justin D.	Soil Conservation Technician	PROMOTION	3/25/12	Anamosa FO Area 3
Chapman, Craig D.	Soil Conservation Technician	RETIREMENT	3/31/12	Ankeny FO Area 2
Hutson, Edward W.	Soil Con Tech	RETIREMENT	3/31/12	Onawa FO Area 1
White, David L.	District Conservationist	RETIREMENT	3/31/12	Fairfield FO Area 5
Wolfe, James A.	Soil Conservationist	RETIREMENT	3/31/12	Decorah FO Area 3
Knutson, Richard L.	Civil Engineer	RETIREMENT	4/3/12	State Office, Design Team
Casper, Michael D.	Contracting Officer	TRANSFER to VA	4/7/12	VA
Cibula, Christina A.	Soil Conservationist	PROMOTION	4/8/12	Vinton FO Area 3
Corey, Patrick W.	Resource Conservationist	PROMOTION	4/8/12	Denison FO Area 1
Jones, Aquanda C.	Asst. State Conservationist-FO	REASSIGNMENT	4/8/12	State Office, Athens, GA
Jaehrling, Valerie M.	Soil Scientist	RESIGNATION	4/20/12	Atlantic Soils, Area 4
Niceswanger, Justin	Purchasing Agent	PROMOTION	4/22/12	State Office, Contracting
Collins, Lane	Asst. State Conservationist-FO	PROMOTION	5/6/12	Fairfield AO Area 5
Lohafer, Andrea M.	Resource Conservationist	PROMOTION	5/6/12	Sibley FO Area 1

Changes In: DSC Personnel

In order of Effective Date

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Connie Cummings	Secretary	Retirement	3/30/2012	Jefferson SWCD
Jamie Lowrey	Secretary	Left Employment	4/16/2012	Clarke SWCD
Kent Holmgaard	Technician	Retirement	4/26/2012	Hardin SWCD

District Office Address Change:

Harrison SWCD

2710 Hwy 127

Logan, IA 51546-6089

Grassland Grants: For IFGC Members

The Iowa Forage and Grassland Council is offering \$100 grants to reimburse expenses of forage-based educational activities in Iowa.

To be eligible, the person or organization must be a member of IFGC and be approved prior to attending event. Funds can be used to reimburse expenses for materials, refreshments, speaker expenses or similar items.

If IFGC provides a grant, they request:

- to be recognized as an event sponsor
- to distribute IFGC membership applications to all attendees
- to display IFGC trifold brochure
- to be provided names and addresses of meeting attendees.

Contact Mark Fehseke, IFGC Education Committee, at 641-872-2259 or dibbi-kim@yahoo.com for more information.

