

Iowa Current Developments

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, 693 Federal Bldg., Des Moines, IA 50309

Fall 2005



Richard Van Klaveren
Iowa State Conservationist

What's inside.....

Survey Says: On the webPage 2
RC&D NewsPage 3
Web Updates of Note.....	Page 3
2006 CSP Signup SuggestionsPage 4
Employees in the News.....	Page 5
Personnel Actions.....	Page 6

2005 CSP Contracts are Signed

This July, about 80 farmers, partners, conservationists, and friends witnessed Chief Bruce Knight and four farmers sign the first of many Iowa 2005 Conservation Security Program agreements rewarding farmers for



Chief Bruce Knight and Mike Natvig, a fourth generation Howard County farmer sign 2005 CSP contracts July 25, 2005 on the Jim Andrew farm near Jefferson. Natvig qualified for a Tier 3 due to all the conservation practices and good stewardship on their land.

their conservation efforts. These were the first of 1,973 contracts that were offered in Iowa. They were offered because their farm operations met CSP standards, they demonstrated good stewardship and, frankly, because of the hard work and dedication of NRCS employees across the state.

Our employees helped farmers get the right information, interviewed them, assisting them every step of the way and then entered all the information into our computer systems.

The end result is we are truly rewarding the best and motivating the rest with CSP. Those long

hours spent serving our customers are making our environment better.

I applaud your hard work and I thank you for your dedication.

As we start to put the 2005 CSP signup behind us, we need to look ahead at 2006. We have two new watersheds entirely in Iowa and one we share with Wisconsin. There is now a renewable energy component to consider. Eligible producers will receive compensation for a number of practices including converting to renewable energy fuels and for recycling 100 percent of on-farm lubricants.

I thank each member of the NRCS team for your efforts with CSP 2005. We served our customers very well and did a lot of good conservation work. I encourage each employee to take what has been learned in the past two signups and start to prepare for the 2006 season.



Survey Says: On the web!

Dale Ceolla, Assistant State Soil Scientist with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Iowa, holds the Calhoun County Soil Survey and a computer cable signaling the on-line availability of the Calhoun County Soil Survey along with 60 other Iowa counties at:

<http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/>. A team of cartographers in the Ames Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) office work to remove the distortion of aerial photographs and then coordinate them with latitude, longitude, elevation and with updated soils maps. The resulting soil maps are then linked with data tables that allow internet users to zoom in on tracts of land to see what uses that soil will best support. Standing with Ceolla are Cartographic Technicians (left to right) Cynthia Page, Brenna Knepper, Patrick Corey, Michelle Wall, Lisa Baker and Rita Patterson. They expect to have all Iowa soil surveys on-line by early 2007.



CSP Sparks Fashion

The staff of the Carroll County District pose for a group photo in their new Iowa 2005 Conservation Security Program Team shirts. In the front row are Darlene Wittrock, Volunteer, Deb Vonnahme, NRCS SCT, Karen Grote, State Secretary, and Hank Potthoff, District Employee. In the back row are Lois Behrens, State SCT, Weston Dittmer, SC, and Dave York, DC. The shirts were given to staff that was involved in the 2005 CSP signup.

NRCS at the Iowa State Fair

Julie Watkins, SCT from Toledo, answers a question from a fair-goer in front of the NRCS display in the USDA booth at the Iowa State Fair. Watkins was one of 20 employees, from across the state that worked a shift at the fair. The booth was located on the second floor of the Agriculture Building in the southwest corner.



Apply Now for the 2005 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards

Iowa businesses, organizations and public sector facilities are invited to apply for the 2005 Governor's Iowa Environmental Excellence Awards. This premier environmental awards program, sponsored by Governor Vilsack and the State of Iowa, recognizes leadership and innovation in the protection of Iowa's water, land and air.

Awards will be given for overall environmental excellence and special recognition in water quality, waste management, energy efficiency/renewable energy, air quality and habitat restoration/development. Categories include: community/local government, business and industry, agriculture, civic organizations, public sector facilities, and more.

The application deadline is November 4, 2005. To obtain an application, go to www.iowadnr.com/other/ee/index.html

Soil Conservationist is Published

Joe Smith, SC in the Woodbury County SWCD office, has been published in a scientific journal. A paper written while Smith was a graduate student at South Dakota State University has been included in an issue of *The Prairie Naturalist*. Titled "History of Greater Sage-grouse in the Dakotas: Distribution and Population Trends," the paper draws on Smith's three years of experience studying sage-grouse in the Dakotas.

RC&D News

Southern Iowa RC&D--A plan to raise one-half million dollars to develop the first ever rural water grid system in Iowa, has been approved and funded by all eight participating Iowa county boards of supervisors served by the Southern Iowa RC&D Office in Creston. The new system will allow the Southern Iowa Rural Water Association (SIRWA) to move water, at will, through its service area.

SIRWA and the Creston RC&D office came up with the idea of implementing the grid water system using the same basic concepts that make up the electrical grids that are in place across the nation.

The importance of having a grid system was revealed a couple of years ago when a tornado nearly hit the water treatment plant at Creston. If the plant had been damaged or destroyed nearly 30,000 people would have been without water until the plant was repaired.

Dennis Hilger is the Southern Iowa RC&D Coordinator, Judith Weese is the Program Management Assistant and Erica Hatfield is the Special Projects Assistant.

The Chariton Valley RC&D and Alliant Energy Corporation held a ribbon cutting and an open house at the Ottumwa Generating Station August 31. It was attended by agriculture and energy officials, news media, producers and environmentalists.



Dora Guffey,
Chariton
Valley RC&D
Coordinator

The event highlighted the economic and environmental benefits of burning switchgrass together with low-sulfur coal to generate renewable energy. It also featured the dedication of a new switchgrass processing facility.

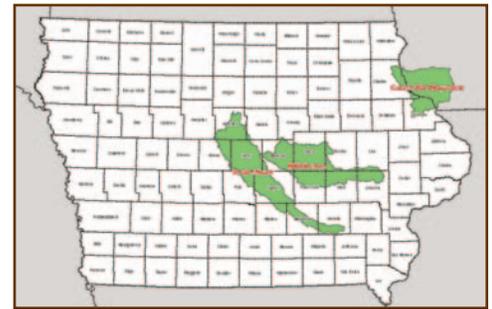
Established in 1995 by the Chariton Valley RC&D, this biomass project will potentially use up to 50,000 acres of marginal agricultural land — the majority of which has already been set aside in the federal conservation reserve programs of southern Iowa and northern Missouri. Besides giving farmers a new environmentally friendly cash crop, another major benefit of burning switchgrass is improved air quality--especially lower carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

The Chariton Valley RC&D Coordinator is Dora Guffey and Angela Hendricks is the Secretary.

New CSP Watersheds

The USDA announced in August two watersheds entirely in Iowa and one watershed in both Iowa and Wisconsin will be included in the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP).

The two watersheds entirely in Iowa include the South Skunk Watershed in central and southeast Iowa and the Middle Iowa Watershed in central and eastern Iowa. The Grant-Little Maquoketa Watershed is located in parts of two northeast Iowa counties, but lies mostly in southwest Wisconsin.



2006 CSP Watersheds

The South Skunk Watershed sits in 13 Iowa counties. It includes an estimated 3,039 farms on approximately 1,049,000 acres. The Middle Iowa Watershed lies in ten Iowa counties, and includes 2,781 farms on 908,299 acres.

Nationally, 110 watersheds, with at least one in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico, will be eligible for the 2006 CSP. These watersheds represent more than 120,000 of the nation's potentially eligible farms and ranches, covering more than 46 million acres that are evenly split between cropland and grazing land.

Now Showing

at a Web Page Near You!!

The Iowa NRCS Web page at www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov has a few new resources available to you and your clients. Click on each link to visit:

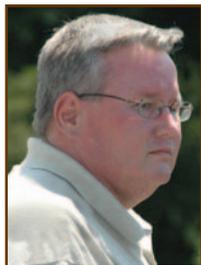
- [Ambassador Kit - Resource for NRCS employees for use as outreach to students and teachers](#)
- [Tillage Equipment Pocket Identification Guide](#) (Download--be patient)
- [2006 Conservation Security Program Information and Maps](#)
- [RUSLE2 Information and Links](#)
- [Iowa Technical Service Providers Initiative \(TSP\)](#)
- [Web Based Soil Survey](#)

2006 CSP Signup Suggestions

With the 2005 CSP signup now behind us, three employees that were heavily involved in the signup effort were asked to offer advice on how to make the 2006 signup go better. Here is what Kevin Kordick, DC in Jefferson, Jaia Fischer, SC in Spencer, and Mike Webster, Area 3 Wetland Specialist suggest:

Farmers(Producers) should:

- Get aerial maps from FSA
- Make sure soil tests are up to date and have maps attached to them with corresponding fields highlighted.



Kevin Kordick
DC Jefferson

- Get with their agronomist and local coops or ag service providers to start getting their records together. This includes soil tests, fertilizer bills and pesticide application info.

- Document all records and tillage practices using maps, tract and field numbers from FSA.

- Attend local CSP meetings even if they have busy schedules. The meetings will discuss program requirements, needed records and the organization they need to be in.

- Producers need to encourage their landlords to attend the meetings with them. Cash rent farmers must have permission from their landlords before enrolling in the program.

- Bring in to the local field office all necessary documentation

including: records, maps, and tillage information three days before an interview



Jaia Fischer
SC Spencer

NRCS staff should:

- Set up the scheduling system on the field office shared drive

- Do not make appointments for the last two weeks of signup

- Train field office staff on the sign up process and office procedures

- Bone up on information in the Field Office Tech Guide including
 - Nutrient Management
 - Pest Management
 - RUSLE2

- Spend time with Toolkit and ArcGIS

- Be as knowledgeable about CSP as you can be.

- Be patient as it will take time to accumulate all of this information

- Local office staff need to attend producer meetings in their counties

- Call producers to get their records together and set up appointments early in the sign up process

- Organize the field office for the quantity of paperwork that will be processed

- Consider using an assembly line approach. It offers consistent and an efficient output, but it can be boring

- Color code your form

- Save your RUSLE2 worksheets so they can be modified later if needed

- Give their cell phone numbers to district staff so they can easily be reached if questions arise during the review process

- BE PATIENT WITH FIELD OFFICE STAFF!

- Use technology to assist with the process including conference calls, Net-Meeting and Net-Conferencing.

- Set up a computer in the interview room so information on RUSLE2 and ArcGIS can be accessed through the customers' files on the shared drive

- Make sure all employees in the office go through an interview together, so that all information being discussed in the interview is consistent. The first interview one district had was with one producer and five NRCS employees

- The first week of interviews should be light. Make sure you stay on top of interviews as the applications come in. The last few weeks of sign-up are very busy and it's crucial to keep up-to date.

- Build confidence with the program and interview process, stay positive while working in the office.

One final thought:

Be complete and clear with producer folders and documentation.

Over the next five to ten years, everyone that picks up the producers' folders

needs to be able to figure out what is eligible and included in each contract. If the contract must be modified, your teammates must be able to understand what was done in the past.



Mike Webster
Area 3 Wetland Specialist

Iowa Current Developments



State Agronomist Barbara Stewart holds a copy of the new Tillage Equipment Pocket Identification Guide that will be distributed to the field in the month of September. The 78 page book, filled with pictures and drawings, is designed to help field employees and farmers identify commonly used farm equipment and tie its use in with RUSLE2 and CSP requirements. [An electronic version of the guide is available for download now](#) on the Iowa NRCS website under the "Information for Iowa NRCS Employees" page.

Helping People Help the Land

Brad Harrison, District Conservationist in the Adel Field Office, recently sent a note to Chief Knight suggesting NRCS adopt "Helping People Help the Land" as an agency slogan. Chief Knight saw the note and liked the idea. As a result, Chief Knight has asked all state conservationists, public affairs specialists and everyone else in the agency to use the phrase to imprint our identity and our conservation focus in the minds of those we serve.

Dubuque Conservation Tour

Dubuque, Iowa – NRCS District Conservationist Theresa Weiss lead a farm tour of conservation practices for a select group of students and teachers from 20 schools and five states as part of the "Rivers to the Sea" Student Ocean Conference held May 18 and 19 at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium.

Weiss and local landowner Ken Schmitt of Sherrill, Iowa showed the group several conservation practices, including contour strip cropping, terraces, ponds, grassed waterways, and no-till farming. They discussed how nutrient management issues on farmland tie into water quality issues in the Mississippi River.

"The tour showed students and teachers what happens in their watershed affects the river, and eventually the gulf or ocean into which it drains," said Weiss. "It related rural and urban problems in soil erosion and water quality with potential solutions."



Sign builders Jim Wolfe, SC Decorah, Lori Harris, DC Cresco, Richard Jensen, landowner, Duane Miller, SWCS volunteer and Neil Shaffer, Howard County district employee, stand in front of a conservation sign they erected in Fayette County along the RAGRAI route. This sign is one of 14 designed to draw attention to conservation practices used to benefit the environment.



Angela Biggs, SC from Buchanan County, readies bananas while Lori Harris, DC from the Cresco Field Office, talks with bicyclists in Jackson Junction during the last day of RAGRAI 2005. Biggs and Harris were among the many NRCS and SWCS volunteers that helped raise awareness of private lands conservation measures and NRCS during the annual bike ride across Iowa. During the week long event they handed out more than 2,000 pounds of bananas, water and stamped conservation postcards riders could use to write of their adventures and spread the conservation message.

Field Day for Kids

In early May, the Greenfield office of the Adair County Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service sponsored a "Conservation Field Day" for 100 students from Orient Nodaway Valley West School. The students and their teachers/chaperones were able to visit sites of interest for a "hands on" view of conservation practices.

Kevin Kuhn, District Conservationist talked about how Iowa has some of the best soils in the world and that our soil is used to feed the world. They also learned the importance watershed awareness and the effects pesticides and fertilizer can have in our streams and lakes.

Personnel Actions

Name	Title	Grade	Action	Eff Date	Location
Anderson, Sarah M	Agri Engr	09	Reassignment	5/15/05	Area 5 AO FAIRFIELD 1805 W JEF
Boozer, Demitrice	Spec Asst to State Consvst	13	Reassignment	5/29/05	DES MOINES 210 WALNUT ST 693
Brinkman, Steven	Nutrient Mgmt Spclst	11	Career-Cond Appt	5/15/05	ECOLOGICAL SCIENCES STAFF
Brommel, David P	Easement Programs	12	Reassignment	5/29/05	WETLAND RESTORATION TEAM
Campbell, Roy R	Res Consvst	12	Promotion	5/29/05	Technical Services Staff
Cibula, Christina	Soil Consvst	07	Name Chg from Hayek	6/26/05	Area 5 FO MALCOM 405 MONTEZUMA
Davidson, C.L.	Soil Consvst	07	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	5/29/05	Area 5 FO BURLINGTON 3625 FLIN
Dietrich, Lanette	Soil Consvst	11	Reassignment	8/7/05	Area 1 FO SERGEANT BLUFF 206 F
Ehley, Alan M	Asst State Consvst (FO)	13	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 3 AO WEST UNION 120 N IND
Eischeid, Scott A	Soil Consvst	09	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 1 FO DENISON 141 N 7TH ST
Fedler, Gary L	Soil Consv Tech	05	Career Intern	8/7/05	Area 5 FO DONNELLSON 507 ELM S
Gatlin, Cynthia R	Soil Consv Tech	05	Career Intern	6/26/05	Area 4 FO WINTERSET 815 E HWY
Gerlich, Ryan L	Soil Consvst	09	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 2 FO ANKENY 1513 N ANKENY
Griem, Jennifer D	Soil Consv Tech	07	Reassignment	5/15/05	Area 5 FO DAVENPORT 8370 HILL
Gundlach, David	Soil Scntst	07	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	5/29/05	Area 4 Soils ATLANTIC
Hathcock, Ronda	Civil Engr	07	Reassignment	5/15/05	Area 2 AO FORT DODGE 531 29 ST
Hayek, Christina	Soil Consvst	07	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	6/12/05	Area 5 FO MALCOM 405 MONTEZUMA
Hobbs, Lisa A	Secy	05	Reassignment	7/24/05	Management Staff
Horihan, Karla M	Soil Consvst	05	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	6/12/05	Area 4 FO LEON 303 SW LORRAINE
Houk, Curt M	Soil Consvst	07	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 2 FO JEFFERSON 1405 N ELM
Johnson, Jason R	Public Aff Speclst	11	Promotion	7/24/05	Public Affairs Staff
Johnson, Valorie R	Soil Consvst	07	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	5/29/05	Area 1 FO ROCK RAPIDS 301 1/2
Kavan, Joseph J	Civil Engr	09	Promotion	7/10/05	Engineering StaffSO DES MOINES
Klinkel, Kimberly I	Secy	05	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 3 RC&D, CHARLES CITY 619
Larsen, Randall B	Soil Consv Tech	05	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 4 FO ATLANTIC 503 W 7 ST
Leichtman, John J	Soil Consv Tech	06	Promotion	7/24/05	Area 3 FO ANAMOSA 300 CHAMBER
Lousias, Christine	Soil Consv Tech	07	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 5 FO WAPELLO 514 ISETT ST
Mathis, Todd J	District Consvst	11	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 5 FO DONNELLSON 507 ELM S
Moran, Tim K	Soil Consv Tech	06	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 1 FO SPIRIT LAKE 2412 17T
Murphy, Christina	Civil Engr	09	Name Chg from Mattingly	6/21/05	Natural Resource Plng Staff
Myers, Courtney L	Soil Consvst	07	Name Chg from Davidson	6/26/05	Area 5 FO BURLINGTON 3625 FLIN
Reed, Teresa A	District Consvst	11	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 5 FO TIPTON 205 W SOUTH S
Schaefers, Patrick	District Consvst	12	Promotion	8/7/05	Area 2 FO ALGONA 605 E STATE S
Schlader, Stacy L	Soil Consv Tech	05	Reassignment	7/24/05	Area 5 FO ALBIA 1701 S B ST
Slagle, Cindy S	Secy	07	Reassignment	7/24/05	Engineering StaffSO DES MOINES
Sperry, Wyatt N	Soil Consvst	05	Career Intern	7/10/05	Area 5 FO CENTERVILLE 501 N 12
Stewart, Jennifer L	Soil Consvst	07	Career Intern	5/15/05	Area 5 FO OSKALOOSA 2503 TODD
Sweeney, Paul	AS C (Opers)	13	Promotion	5/29/05	DES MOINES 210 WALNUT ST 693
Taylor, Robert E	Soil Consv Tech	07	Promotion	5/15/05	Area 4 FO GREENFIELD 0750 NE 6
Vondra, Paul J	Soil Consvst	09	Promotion	5/29/05	Area 3 FO EPWORTH 210 BIERMANN
Webb, Nichole L	Soil Consvst	07	Conv to Career-Cond Appt	6/12/05	Area 1 FO LEMARS 1100A 12TH ST
Zimmerman, S M	Soil Consvst	09	Reassignment	6/12/05	Area 4 FO INDIANOLA 909 E 2ND

Participants of the annual District Conservationist Meeting held recently in Marshalltown pause for a group picture.



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