

### REAP Water Quality Protection Practices

- Purpose: Provide cost-share to landowners for practices to protect water quality in Iowa by targeting and preventing off-site sediment, nutrient and livestock waste pollution problems.
- Practices: SWCDs set priorities for practices including traditional erosion control practices, tree planting, forestry and native grasses, buffers, streambank stabilization, urban stormwater management, livestock waste management, individual ag drainage well closure.
- Eligibility: Producers on agricultural land who are SWCD cooperators are eligible.
- Contract: Voluntary agreement with SWCD to install practices with up to 75% cost-share and up to a 20-year maintenance agreement.
- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

### REAP Water Quality Protection Projects

- Purpose: Bring landowners and other partners together within a watershed to protect the state's water resources from point and non-point sources of contamination by targeting and preventing off-site sediment, nutrient and livestock waste pollution problems.
- Practices: SWCDs set priorities for practices to fund including terraces, waterways, erosion control structures and other conservation practice applications.
- Eligibility: SWCDs
- Contract: Funding for conservation practices is administered through contracts with local SWCDs.
- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

### Small Wetlands Program

- Purpose: To help permanently protect habitat for North American waterfowl and other migratory birds.
- Practices: Wetland and grassland restoration and acquisition.
- Eligibility: All private landowners may receive technical and financial assistance.
- Contract: Voluntary participation for land acquisition or easements.
- Contact: FWS, Doug Helmers, 515-994-3400

### State Revolving Fund (SRF) Low-Interest Loan Program

- Purpose: Make available low-interest loans for a variety of water quality projects in an effort to reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients, and pesticides negatively impacting Iowa streams and lakes.
- Practices: Terraces, grade stabilization structures, water and sediment control basins, waterways, filter strips, buffers, field borders, windbreaks, erosion control structures, pasture and hay land planting or prescribed grazing, waste storage facilities,

deep bedded building or other roofed manure control structures, urban storm water management, and other conservation practices.

- Eligibility: Landowners who are able to secure the loan and capable of repaying the loan; federal guidelines stipulate that loan funds cannot be used for projects in concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFOs).
- Contract: Loans with private lenders from \$5,000- \$500,000 with terms up to 15 years.
- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, DNR, NRCS, Private Lenders

Note: DSC funds are administered through local SWCDs.

### State Watershed Protection Practices

- Purpose: Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds and Iowa Watershed Protection Program (WSPF) provide cost-share or incentives to address local water quality protection needs.
- Practices: Each SWCD sets priorities for practices. Examples include tree plantings, timber stand improvement, windbreaks, land use conversion practices, and traditional erosion control practices.
- Eligibility: Landowners who are SWCD cooperators and enter into voluntary agreements with the district to install and maintain approved conservation practices contained in a conservation plan.
- Contracts: Up to 75% cost-share and up to a 20-year maintenance agreement.
- Contacts: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

Note: DSC funds are administered through local SWCDs.

### Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB)

- Purpose: Award grants to improve water quality in Iowa which may include agricultural runoff and drainage, streambank erosion, municipal discharge, storm water runoff, unsewered communities, industrial discharge and livestock runoff.
- Practices: A wide array of water quality improvement practices and activities.
- Eligibility: SWCDs, local watershed improvement committees, counties, county conservation boards public water supply utilities and cities.
- Contract: Agreement with WIRB
- Contact: DSC

### Watershed Protection Program

- Purpose: Award "Development Grants" to SWCDs to inventory, assess, and develop implementation strategies for watershed management resulting in efficient and productive expenditure of program funds; award "Implementation Grants" to SWCDs to provide technical and financial assistance for the implementation of local watershed initiatives to reduce soil erosion, protect municipal drinking water supplies, provide flood control, restore wildlife habitat, and protect water, soil and other natural resources.
- Practices: Variety of traditional and innovative conservation practices that provide erosion control, water quality and flood reduction benefits.
- Eligibility: SWCDs
- Contract: Funding for conservation practices is administered through contracts with local SWCDs.
- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

### Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

- Purpose: To develop and implement a conservation plan for restoration of wetlands previously altered for agricultural use.
- Practices: Wetland restoration and wildlife habitat establishment.
- Eligibility: Land that has been owned for seven years and that could be restored to wetland conditions.
- Contract: Landowners may restore wetlands with permanent easements, 30-year easements or 10-year contracts. Permanent easements pay 100% of the easement value of the land and 100% cost-share for restoration; 30-year easements pay 75% of the agricultural value and 75% cost-share for restoration; 10-year contracts pay 75% cost-share of restoration only. Permanent or 30-year easements are recorded with property easement deeds.
- Contact: NRCS, SWCDs, DNR

### Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)

- Purpose: To develop or improve fish and wildlife habitat on privately owned land through the application of a conservation plan.
- Practices: Seeding, tree and shrub plantings, fencing, instream structures, and prairie restoration.
- Eligibility: Private agricultural land, non-industrial private forestland or Indian land.
- Contract: Usually 5 years to install and maintain the habitat. Financial assistance may be available for restoration costs, to a maximum of \$30,000. Other organizations may provide additional financial assistance.
- Contact: NRCS, SWCDs, DNR

## Where to get help

*The NRCS, DSC, FSA and local SWCD staff are located at the local USDA Service Center in every county in Iowa. They provide free technical assistance on a voluntary basis to landowners to help them conserve and protect the soil, water, wildlife, and other natural resources on their land.*

*The Iowa DNR Wildlife Bureau has 18 private land specialists located in NRCS*

*offices statewide who provide free technical assistance to landowners for conservation and habitat planning. Contact the DNR help desk for a specialist near you: 515-281-5918.*

*The Iowa DNR Forestry Bureau has 13 district forestry offices that provide free technical assistance for establishing new tree and riparian buffer strip plantings and in woodland management planning and timber stand improvements. Landowners may purchase select seedlings at cost from the State Forest Nursery at 800-865-2477.*

*Numerous other organizations and agencies provide conservation assistance or programs, including local Pheasants Forever Chapters, Ducks Unlimited, the Nature Conservancy, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa State University Extension, and Resource Conservation and Development offices. Contact your local USDA Service Center office for ideas and local contact information.*

# Iowa Conservation Program Guide



Division of Soil Conservation (DSC)  
www.iowaagriculture.gov



Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)  
www.iowaagriculture.gov



Iowa Department of Natural Resources  
www.iowadnr.gov



www.fws.gov

## Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation

- Purpose: Work with private landowners to reclaim eligible abandoned mined land sites selected from a ranked inventory of over 200 Iowa sites based on environmental problems as well as potential hazards to public health, safety, and general welfare.

- Practices: Elimination of dangerous high-walls, acid mine drainage, clogged streams, and hazardous water bodies; ridges of acid-forming shale are also graded and vegetated. Priority is given to eliminating health and safety hazards, restoring impacted land and water resources, and eliminating off-site environmental impacts.

- Eligibility: Landowners on inventory of abandoned coal sites that were mined prior to 1977.

- Contract: Contract with landowner for reclamation and DSC enters contract with private company for construction work.

- Contact: DSC , U.S. Office of Surface Mining

## Ag Drainage Well Closure

- Purpose: Provide cost-share to protect groundwater aquifers by closing high priority ag drainage wells and developing alternative drainage outlets to surface streams.

- Practices: Well closure and development of alternative outlets.

- Eligibility: Private landowners or drainage districts.

- Contract: Contract with landowner for reclamation and DSC enters contract with private company for construction work.

- Contact: DSC

## Coal Mining

- Purpose: Regulate coal-mining activities in Iowa and insure that proper reclamation is completed for restoration of the site and achievement of the intended post-mining land use.

- Practices: Elimination of dangerous high-walls, acid mine drainage, clogged streams, and hazardous water bodies; ridges of acid-forming shale are also graded and vegetated. Priority is given to eliminating health and safety hazards, restoring impacted land and water resources, and eliminating off-site environmental impacts.

- Eligibility: Licensed coal mine operator.
- Contract: If bond forfeiture is necessary, the DSC will contract with private construction company to perform reclamation

- Contact: DSC

## Conservation Practices No-Interest Loans

- Purpose: Make loans available to eligible landowners at no interest for the con-

struction of permanent soil conservation practices.

- Practices: SWCDs set priorities for practices to fund including terraces, waterways, erosion control structures and other conservation practice applications.

- Eligibility: Producers on agricultural land who are able to secure the loan and capable of repaying the loan.

- Contract: Loans up to \$10,000 for a 10-year period with repayment in 10 annual payments equal to 10% of the initial loan amount.

- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

## Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) Constructed Wetlands

- Purpose: Work with landowners to develop and install wetlands which are strategically located and designed to remove nitrate from tile-drainage water from cropland areas.

- Practices: Wetland restoration and adjacent buffer establishment.

- Eligibility: Enrollment on a continuous basis to landowners within the 37-county prairie pothole region of north central Iowa; eligible sites must be in landscape position to intercept significant tile flow while not obstructing normal drainage.

- Contract: Landowners will enter a 15-year contract with USDA-FSA as under the Continuous CRP. DSC funds are used for additional, one-time, up-front incentive payment to encourage participating landowners to enter into a required additional 15-year agreement or permanent easement; FSA and DSC funds will provide for 100% cost-share.

- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, FSA, NRCS

## Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Purpose: To reduce erosion, increase wildlife habitat, and improve water quality through the application of conservation plans (landowner sets aside cropland with annual rental payments).

- Practices: Tree planting, grass cover, small wetland restoration, prairie restoration, and others.

- Eligibility: Varies by soil type and crop history. For general signups, land is accepted into the program if the offer qualifies. Continuous signup is open for buffers, waterways, and environmental practices at all times. The living snow fence practice is now paying for 100-foot wide snow catch area with a match for areas near state highways, non-floodplain wetlands restoration initiative, and northern bobwhite quail habitat initiative.

- Contract: 10-15 years depending on the type of practice. Transferable with change in ownership.

- Contact: FSA, NRCS, DNR

## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- Purpose: To reward farmers and landowners for past conservation work and provide technical and financial assistance to help implement conservation plans that address specific natural resource concerns and complete more conservation work.

- Practices: Existing and new stewardship practices and enhancement activities.

- Eligibility: Private ag land and non-industrial forest land planted, except for land in WRP, CRP and GRP. Signup is continuous.

- Contract: 5-year contracts; annual payment is based on contract details.

- Contact: NRCS, SWCDs

## Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA)

- Purpose: To assist land users to plan and install resource management systems that will improve and protect natural resources on their land.

- Systems: Includes many different practices to reduce soil erosion; improve soil, water, and air quality; improve and restore wetlands; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; improve pasture and rangeland; reduce upstream flooding; and improve woodlands.

- Eligibility: All land users may receive technical assistance from the NRCS. Land users are encouraged to work through their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to become district cooperators.

- Contract: Contracts vary by programs and practices.

- Contact: NRCS, SWCDs

## Cooperative Soil Survey

- Purpose: Develop and maintain reliable soil resource information for landowners, developers, government officials and others dealing with water and soil quality, crop production efficiency and farm profitability, urban and suburban development, and land use planning, value and taxation.

- Practices: Application of reliable soil resource information.

- Eligibility: Iowa's 99 counties

- Contract: Contract between ISU, NRCS, DCS and county for duration of soil survey.

- Contact: NRCS, DSC, ISU, Iowa's 99 counties

## Debt Cancellation Conservation Contract (Debt for Nature)

- Purpose: To provide opportunity to cancel a portion of indebtedness in exchange for a conservation contract.

- Eligibility: An eligible person must be obligated to FSA under farm loan program, which is secured by real estate, and have marginal croplands or other environmentally sensitive lands for conservation, recreation, and wildlife purposes.

- Contract: 10, 30 or 50 years.

- Contacts: FSA, FWS

## District Initiatives

- Purpose: Develop and implement locally-led initiatives which prioritize and target sensitive areas by providing funds and resources where they do the most good, to accelerate the implementation of federal programs to protect water quality and fragile land. The statewide Buffer Initiative is one very successful example.

- Practices: Practices include buffer strips, waterways, riparian buffers, contour buffer strips, shallow water areas for wildlife, well-head protection, etc.

- Eligibility: Landowners with land that qualifies for federal conservation programs.

- Contract: Financial assistance available through voluntary agreement with SWCDs.

- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

## DNR Watershed Improvement Program

- Purpose: To provide funding for local groups to develop a Watershed Management Plan, which identifies water quality problems and proposes solutions.

- Practices: DNR Watershed Implementation Grants provide funding and technical resources to implement the plan. U.S. EPA funding for these grants is made available through Section 319 of the Clean Water Act.

- Eligibility: SWCDs, County Conservation Boards, RC&Ds, cities, counties, utilities, colleges, solid waste agencies and other non-profits.

- Contract: Funding for planning and/or conservation practices is typically administered through contracts with IDALS Division of Soil Conservation, local SWCDs or other agencies.

- Contacts: Iowa DNR Watershed Improvement Program, EPA

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Purpose: To provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to develop and implement conservation plans that address specific natural resource concerns.

- Practices: Livestock manure management, grazing land management, soil erosion control, and water quality improvement practices are eligible for financial assistance statewide.

- Eligibility: Agricultural producers on agricultural land are eligible. Projects are selected based on environmental benefits.

- Contract: Up to 10 year contracts.

- Contact: NRCS, SWCDs, FSA

## Farm Pond Program

- Purpose: To provide quality fishing opportunities for licensed anglers.

- Eligibility: DNR will provide fish at a cost of \$25 per acre if ponds meet the following criteria: new or renovated and free of fish; surface area of at least 1/2 acre; maximum depth of at least 8 feet; fenced to exclude livestock with a 60 foot minimum buffer between pond edge and fence.

- Contract: Landowner signs agreement to follow recommendations regarding management of the pond and adjacent wildlife area.

- Contacts: DNR

## Fish Habitat Restoration

- Purpose: Restore streams and make improvements in a few priority watersheds.

- Practices: DNR sets priority watershed streams where select practices could be funded, including fish habitat, bank stabilization, oxbow restoration, removal of fish barriers, erosion control structures and other conservation practices. These practices must be part of a watershed plan.

- Eligibility: Producers on agricultural land within the boundaries of priority watershed (Boone River and selected tributary streams to Boone River and selected trout streams).

- Contract: Voluntary agreement with DNR to install practices with up to 50% cost-share and up to a 20-year maintenance agreement.

- Contact: SWCDs, NRCS, DNR, Iowa Soybean Association, The Nature Conservancy

## General Non-Point Source Program (Low-Interest Loans)

- Eligible Projects (not limited to): restoration of wildlife habitat, stream bank stabilization, urban stormwater management, remediation of storage tanks, water conservation and reuse, and wetland flood prevention areas.

- Contact: DNR ([www.iowadnr.com/water/srf/nonpoint.html](http://www.iowadnr.com/water/srf/nonpoint.html))

## Integrated Farm and Livestock Management

- Purpose: Demonstrate statewide the effectiveness and adaptability of proper agricultural inputs of tillage, fertility, and pest management to optimize production and minimize potential impacts of sediment, nutrients and pesticides on the state's soil and water resources; Iowa Learning Farm is an example.

- Practices: Practices that result in water quality benefits and/or other environmental benefits.

- Eligibility: Producers on agricultural land.

- Contract: Agreement with DSC for project administration.

- Contact: DSC

## Iowa Financial Incentives Cost Share

- Purpose: Provide cost-share or financial incentives to private landowners for the implementation of permanent and management soil and water conservation practices in Iowa to control erosion and reduce sediment.

- Practices: SWCDs set priorities for practices to fund including terraces, waterways, erosion control structures and other conservation practice applications.

- Eligibility: Agricultural producers on agricultural land who are SWCD cooperators are eligible.

- Contract: Voluntary agreement with SWCD to install practices with up to 75% cost-share and up to a 20-year maintenance agreement.

- Contact: DSC, SWCDs, NRCS

## Minerals Mining

- Purpose: License limestone, sand, gravel, gypsum and clay mine operators; and bond and register mining sites in Iowa.

- Practices: Observation certain setbacks from buildings, dwellings, property line and public right-of-ways; stabilization and vegetation of overburden piles and prevent damage from occurring offsite as a result of mining activity; removal of debris, grading and vegetation of disturbed overburden; prohibition of practices that bury or destroy topsoil.

- Eligibility: Limestone, sand, gravel, gypsum and clay mining activities.

- Contract: Licensor and registration with DSC.

- Contact: DSC

## On-Site Wastewater Assistance Fund

- Purpose: To provide low interest loans to repair or replace existing on-site septic systems.

- Eligibility: Landowners must be able to secure the loan, be capable of repaying the loan, live in an unincorporated area and be approved by the county.

- Contracts: Landowners may borrow amounts beginning at \$2,000 for up to 10 years.

- Contacts: County, DNR

## Partners for Fish and Wildlife

- Purpose: To provide cost share and technical assistance for landowners to restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat on private lands.

- Practices: wetland restoration, native prairie restoration, stream restoration, migratory bird habitat, endangered species habitat and invasive species control.

- Eligibility: All private landowners with priority given to watersheds located in national wildlife refuges.

- Contract: Voluntary participation with 10-year agreements.

- Contact: FWS, Doug Helmers, 515-994-3400