



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

IOWA NRCS FALL 2023



USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

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A NOTE FROM THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST

As I finish up my detail as State Conservationist, I want to send out a big Thank You to the team in Iowa for a year well done! It has been great to see all of the conservation efforts across the state this year! Please take a

moment to refresh, relax, and reflect on a great fiscal year. Your impact on our natural resources through our voluntary conservation process is noticed and appreciated!

Jaia Fischer will serve as Acting State Conservationist until Jon Hubbert's return from his stint as Acting Regional Conservationist for the Northeast.

I have a greater appreciation for the demand and work Iowa is doing to implement conservation. We continue to have many challenges, but I believe we have the right people in place and a good plan to be successful. Good luck to everyone, and if you're in the Lincoln area, please look me up.

Sincerely,

Neil Dominy, Acting State Conservationist



On Aug. 15, Acting State Conservationist Neil Dominy (left) worked at the Iowa State Fair USDA Booth for agency Leadership Day with (L-R) Theresa Greenfield, Iowa Director for Rural Development; Matt Russell, Iowa Executive Director for Farm Service Agency; Pam Stahlke, Regional Director for Risk Management Agency.

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Current Developments

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

Stories and Photos

Please submit your Current Developments story ideas and photos to State Public Affairs Specialist Jason Johnson at jason.r.johnson@usda.gov. Past issues can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/conservation-by-state/iowa/current-developments>.

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OUTREACH REPORT: TANYA MEYER-DIDERIKSEN



Successful First Working Effectively with American Indians Training in Iowa

Iowa NRCS held the first Working Effectively with American Indians (WEWAI) training in the state September 11-15, 2023, at the Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel in Tama. The WEWAI training has been taking place across the nation for close to 30 years, although had never taken place in Iowa until now. Twenty-six employees participated in the training, including the addition of four FSA employees and one Forest Service employee from Minnesota.

The goal of the training is to share cultural and legal information with the participants, leading to a better understanding of how to implement USDA programs and assist tribes and tribal governments in a more effective manner.

In Iowa, there is one federally recognized tribe, the Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa (the

federal government's name for the tribe). The tribe calls themselves the Meskwaki Nation and are a sovereign nation that has a government-to-government relationship with the United States, not unlike other countries. Iowa NRCS has been building that government-to-government relationship with the Meskwaki for many years and found this to be a good time to work together on this training opportunity for staff.

The WEWAI formal training is very different than most NRCS trainings. The NRCS in the host state works closely with a tribe in the state to plan and conduct the training, also utilizing members of the national WEWAI cadre through the Employee Development Section (formerly NEDC). Planning for the training takes many months and involves many NRCS employees and tribal members. The host tribe has a significant role in the training, including multiple tribal presenters, Elders, the drum group, traditional dancers, and the veteran

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Kevin Washburn, Dean of the University of Iowa Law School, presented on Indian History and Law on Sept. 12. Pictured are (L to R) David Pesicka, WEWAI instructor from South Dakota; Jaia Fischer, ASTC-M&S; Dean Kevin Washburn; Loren Crank, WEWAI instructor from Utah; and Tanya Meyer-Dideriksen, State Outreach Coordinator and State Tribal Liaison.

OUTREACH REPORT: TANYA MEYER-DIDERIKSEN



color guard. The training includes two group projects that allows the participants time to work more closely on specific legal topics and tribal scenarios, utilizing the information and resources they are offered during the training.

Another goal of the WEWAI training, is to build a stronger trust relationship between USDA and the host tribe. The planning and implementation of this training created a stronger government-to-government relationship at the state and local level. The staff in the Tama County USDA Service

Center are planning future meetings and work with the Meskwaki Nation as a result.

Suzanne Wanatee Buffalo, one of the tribal presenters that also shared time after hours with some participants, said of the training, "It was an honor to have the attendees in our home and sharing their time with all of us. I pray their time here strengthened them in their important work and that they go on to have good and well-lived lives."



A group of traditional Meskwaki dancers representing different dances and age groups performed for training participants on Sept. 15.



Joan Flecksing, Meskwaki Natural Resource Department Director, shares information about the tribe's buffalo herd during the field tour on Sept. 14.



Training participants working on their group project.

RAGBRAI: 20 YEARS OF IOWA CONSERVATION TEAM OUTREACH

For the 20th time, the Iowa Conservation Team handed out bananas, water, and conservation-themed postcards to riders along the RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa) route to promote conservation.

Made up of the Iowa Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS), NRCS, the Iowa Dept. of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), and local Soil and Water Conservation

Photos by Carrie Tolzin, North Raccoon Watershed Coordinator, Storm Lake. Taken July 24, 2023, near Early, Iowa.



Districts (SWCD), the Iowa Conservation Team kept the tradition alive this year during the late July event.

Alan Lauver, Agricultural Economist with NRCS and SWCS member, drove a van Monday through Friday along the route and set up tents and tables along the road with a new team daily. He reports the group handed out nearly 6,000 bananas and 3,500 postcards during the week long ride.



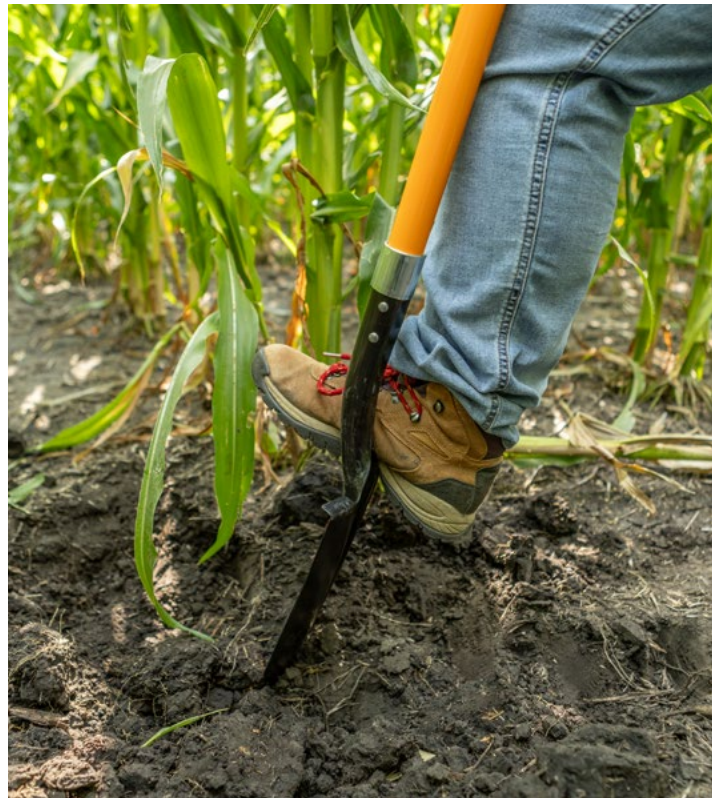
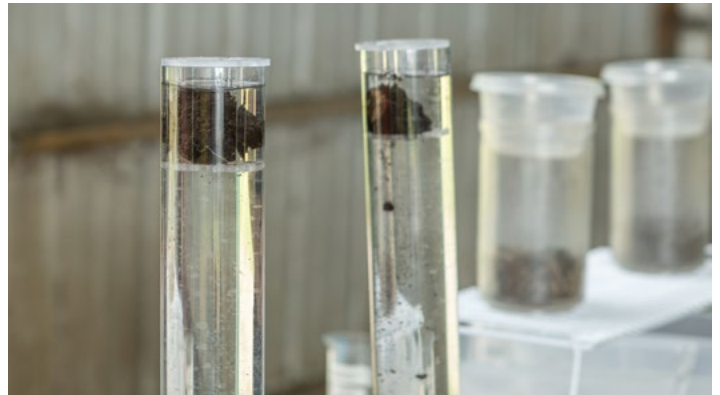
BUENA VISTA COUNTY: TIGHTY WHITEY PARTY

Submitted and photos by Carrie Tolzin, North Raccoon River Watershed Coordinator, Storm Lake

On Aug. 1, the Storm Lake field office held a Whitey Tightly party in NE Buena Vista County. Pairs of underwear were buried between 2-4" in the topsoil of eight different bean and corn fields.

These fields were either no-till/conventional tillage every other year, straight no-till, or conventional tillage. This was done for 60+ days to show the microbial activity within the different tillage systems.

To make it fun for participants, we broke up into 5 groups and had the farmer/landowner lend a hand in digging up the whitey tighties that had been buried in their field. Following the comparison of test subjects, Jeff Reichter, NW Area Soil Health Specialist, performed a slake test, a slump test, and a tabletop rainfall simulator to show difference in no-till soils vs conventional tilled soils.



MULTIPLE COVER CROP VARIETIES ADVANCE SOIL HEALTH

By Tom Doran, AgriNews, Aug. 12, 2023

Multiple cover crop mixes are touted as the next step toward advancing soil health at a more rapid pace.

Chase Brown spoke of his decade-long experiences utilizing cover crops in an Illinois Cover Crop On-Farm Network-hosted summer webinar series. He farms with his father and uncle and also operates Brown Seed Sales.

"The journey there started in the 2012 drought. We have cattle and started exploring cover crops and really enjoyed it, spent the last 10 years into cover crops, regenerative ag practices and learning as much as I can and being part of groups like we have here," Brown said.

"I don't want to sit here and dive into specific mixes and saying you need to put this species and that species in. Frankly, in my opinion, there is no right or wrong mix. That's up to you and your goals and your customers' operations of what species you think you need to be putting in.

"No-till is better than full tillage. Cover crops is better than no-till, and as we progress in a soil health journey, mixes are the next step."

Among the benefits of using a mix of cover crops is from a risk management standpoint.

"When we do a monoculture cover crop, we see some failures from time to time, whether it's due to a dry spell or we're wet. In a mix, we have multiple species to help fill those voids," Brown said.

"So, if we have a seeding problem, if we have a germ problem, we have a weather pattern, by putting in a mix we can help alleviate some of that.



"I really like it from that risk management standpoint. It sure makes our cover crops look much more successful out there when we have multiple species. It can fill in a lot of mistakes.

"One of the reasons I always say that is mixes can get very expensive. As we start adding these species in, we can get some costs on them."

Brown noted a mix he's working on that also involves a cost-share program. Seed costs for the mix range from \$35 to \$50 per acre.

"Well, when a grower is spending \$50 for seed versus \$15 for cereal rye, they want to start seeing some real response. As we all know in soil health and in cover crops, the response can sometimes be hard to see and hard to put a dollar amount on," Brown said.

"So, before we really dive into complex mixes with a grower, I want to make sure that they understand what we're doing and why we're doing it.

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“We’re blessed here in the Midwest with some unbelievable soils, and the glacier sure helped us, but the reason we have these amazing soils, high carbon soils, is the native prairies that we had here for thousands of years.

“If you’ve ever been in a native prairie patch, there is all sorts of diversity. That’s what we’re trying to mimic with these mixes.

“You see tall plants, you see short plants, you see forbs, you see legumes, you see warm season grasses and cool season grasses. We’re trying to mimic that diversity.”

Brown referred to a cover crop mix as “steroids for soil biology.”

“Not that no-till isn’t helping soil biology, not that monoculture cover crop isn’t helping soil biology, but when we put that mix in, all of a sudden we’re giving it a steroid and we can advance the soil health practices so much more rapidly,” he said.

Application

A starting point for moving into cover crop mixes is application method — aerial, drill or broadcast application — and seed size.

All seeds sizes are not the same, and a mix of very small seeds and larger seeds could create problems when, for example, a seeding drill may bury a smaller seed too deep.

Mix

When Brown selects a cover crop mix, he tries to include a grass, brassica or forb, and legume. To take it a step further, one needs to understand the plant types, root types and structures.

“I don’t want to plant sun hemp, sunflowers and sorghum sudan grass. That would check all three



of those boxes — a grass, a legume and a forb — but I don’t want to plant all three of those because they have the same type of structure. They’re very tall. They’re very upright,” Brown said.

“I like having those three in, but we need to have something a little shorter statured, a little broader leaf, to make some canopy. We want to cover all different heights, sizes.

“So, really understand the plant structure and the root structure types. Cereal rye or some of the cereal grains have a pretty fibrous root system. They complement very well with the brassica that has more of a tap root.

“It goes back to that diversity. Let’s add not only multiple, but let’s add some diversity into our plant and root structure types, as well.

“At the end of the day, we’re trying to capture sunlight, we’re trying to capture carbon. Let’s get some diversity in our types of plant structures.”

To read more, visit: <https://www.agrinenews-pubs.com/news/science/2023/08/11/multiple-cover-crop-varieties-advance-soil-health/>.

NRCS & FSA EXHIBIT AT LATINO HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Iowa NRCS collaborated with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to promote Iowa conservation at the 2023 Latino Heritage Festival in downtown Des Moines. USDA staff provided information about urban agriculture, financial assistance - including loan opportunities, and career opportunities.



Greene County District Conservationist Christine Rhodes and FSA Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM) Gabriela Thompson (right) are ready to help customers at the Latino Heritage Festival in Des Moines on Sept. 23.



FSA Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (HEPM) Gabriela Thompson (right) and NRCS Hispanic SEPM Keith Feliciano-Cortes prepare to help answer questions about USDA and FPAC at the Latino Heritage Festival in Des Moines on Sept. 23.



OCTOBER IS DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

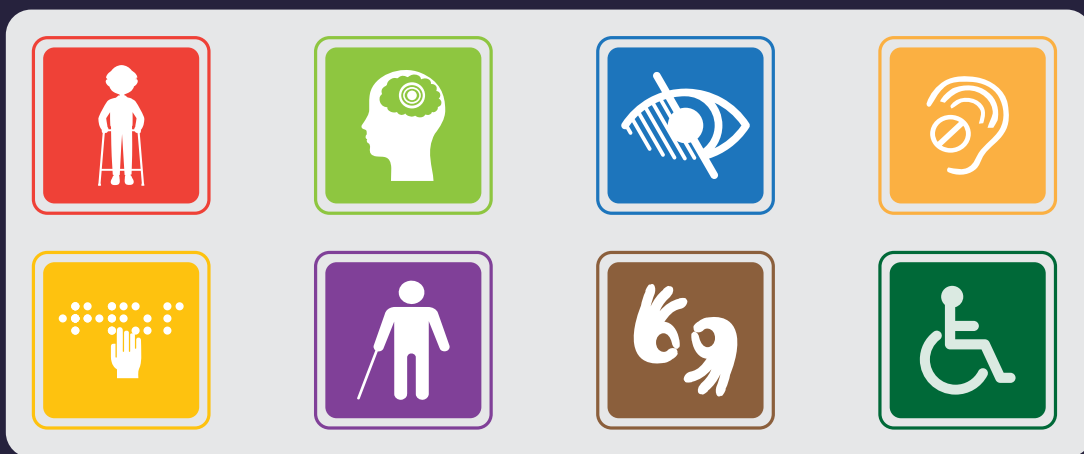
Submitted by Sam Gorbet, Design Engineer and Disability SEPM, Des Moines

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a time to honor the contributions of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and promote inclusive employment practices.

NDEAM, established in 1988, aims to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the talents of disabled workers. This year's theme, "Advancing Access and Equity," emphasizes the importance of ensuring all people have equal opportunity to contribute their skills and talents.

Throughout October, NRCS is encouraging participation in various events and activities that promote disability awareness, accessibility, and equal employment opportunities. These initiatives include workshops, seminars, and educational sessions designed to foster an inclusive work environment.

NDEAM serves as a reminder to continue fostering inclusive workplaces year-round. By breaking down barriers and providing equal opportunities, we can create a more equitable future for all, where everyone's talents are celebrated and valued.



OCTOBER IS
NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT
 AWARENESS MONTH

FABULOUS FIELD PHOTOS!



Field Photos



Iowa landscapes remained green despite a hot and dry summer of 2023. Some staff were able to get some nice wildlife shots during field days and field visits.

1. A 40-acre EQIP wildlife habitat project in Harrison County near Woodbine on the Mike Ziemba's farm. *(Jolene Bopp, Des Moines)*
2. A monarch butterfly on a goldenrod plant near Anita in Cass County. *(Jenae Waters, Atlantic)*
3. Williamsburg District Conservationist Joe Dixon at the Cedar, Johnson, Scott and Clinton Women Land & Legacy tour of Four Winds Farm in Homestead. *(Marcy McBride, CA, Tipton)*

Thank you to those who submitted photos. For the next Current Developments, submit images at: https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/sites/nrcs_iowa/PA/Shared%20Documents/Photo%20Submission?cs-f=1&web=1&e=aKVs9g.



VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

by *Jolene Bopp, Public Affairs Specialist*

Darcy Maulsby is inspiring and connecting generations and communities through her decades of conservation stewardship. For her efforts, Maulsby was selected Iowa Conservation Woman of the Year by the Iowa NRCS Federal Women's Program Committee at the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) Annual Meeting on Aug. 28 in Ames.

Sowing Seeds of Conservation

Maulsby's conservation journey began with her family's Century Farm. The family has implemented grassed waterways, windbreaks, and reduced tillage methods, creating a path of sustainable stewardship. "Our focus has been on managing soil erosion and preserving water quality," she said.

Growing up, Maulsby recalls not truly understand the impact of the conservation practices her father implemented, but as she got older, recognizing the importance and concepts of soil and water conservation. Decades later these practices are still providing benefits.

A Journey of Knowledge and Implementation

Maulsby's passion for conservation led her to Iowa State University Extension's Master Conservationist Program, which enriched her understanding of ecological systems and sustainable practices. Maulsby purchased land close to her families' and used Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funds to rejuvenate a windbreak on her own five acres. She planted native trees, including red cedars and oaks, alongside an array of shrubs, reawakening the ecosystem on her land.

"The resources that organizations, counties and our federal government provide could make all the difference for young people and those just starting out," said Maulsby. "I have written about NRCS, specifically, for years. It has been great learning more about the resources available and sharing this knowledge with landowners."



As a journalist, Maulsby's knowledge and passion for conservation increased as she spoke with farmers about their yields and how they were working hard to better the land while maintaining or increasing their return on investment.

Maulsby is not only a journalist but a published author. She continues to utilize her talent to write and share her passion for Iowa's history and conservation. "Many of the seven, non-fiction Iowa history books I've written since 2015 have included stories of conservation in Iowa," she says.

Community Involvement

As a commissioner with the Calhoun County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), she extends her commitment and passion to her community. Maulsby helps organize events like the Calhoun County Extension and Outreach's windbreak meeting, attracting participants from across Iowa, allowing her to network and engage in discussions about conservation.

Maulsby's advocacy for collaboration is evident through her leadership roles in organizations such as the Calhoun County Corn Growers and the Calhoun County Farm Bureau board. She actively participates in Ag Career Days and champions Ag in the Classroom initiatives.

WELLNESS PROGRAM UPDATE

Submitted by Megan Trout, Iowa NRCS Wellness Program Coordinator

As we kick off the new fiscal year, we want to remind everyone to make time for your overall health and wellness. While the basic principles may be the same for everyone, the degree to what is important to each individual is different as well as what that balance looks like and in what areas may need improvement in creating a healthy and happy lifestyle in the workplace and at home.

According to the [NRCS Center of Well-Being](#), there are **eight principles of well-being**. Below are the eight principles with simplified explanations of what they mean.

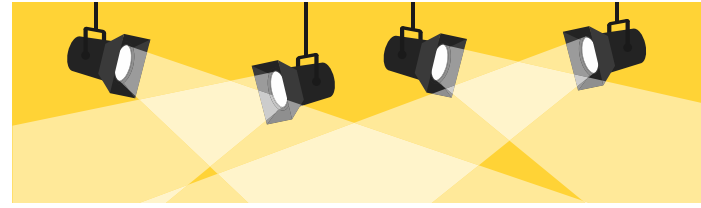
| | |
|----------------------|---|
| SOCIAL | Refers to our relationships and how we interact with others in our daily lives both inside and outside of the workplace. |
| PHYSICAL | Taking care of your entire body through movement, nutrition, sleep, health, and safety. |
| EMOTIONAL | Awareness and understanding of your emotions, ability to accept your emotions, and realizing how you react toward different challenges. |
| OCCUPATIONAL | Overall satisfaction, fulfillment, and contentment you experience in your work. |
| SPIRITUAL | Refers to exploring who you are, what your beliefs, moral, and ethics are, and nurturing your inner self connecting yourself with a sense of purpose and meaning. |
| INTELLECTUAL | The state of mental and cognitive fulfillment. |
| ENVIRONMENTAL | Creating healthy and quality spaces and valuing the relationship between ourselves and the places we occupy, i.e., our homes, work, and our planet. |
| FINANCIAL | Financial stability and security and having control over day-to-day and month-to-month finances. |

Create opportunities to work on what is important to you as an individual. Ask questions, utilize resources, do your own research. Remember, it may be overwhelming if you attempt to tackle improving on all these principles at one time. We want you to be successful and **create healthy habits**. Pick something and **make an attainable goal and commit**; remember, baby steps can lead to success in a bigger goal. When you feel comfortable, you can add something else! It is also important to **forgive yourself** if you have a bad day as well as to reflect on what you are doing well in each one of these areas and **be proud of yourself with what you are doing for yourself now**.

Resources to aid in your wellness journey:

- » [National Institute of Health Social Wellness Toolkit](#)
- » [National Institute of Health Physical Wellness Toolkit](#)
- » [National Institute of Health Emotional Wellness Toolkit](#)
- » [Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General](#)
- » [Newport News Occupational Wellness](#)
- » [University of New Hampshire Spiritual Wellness](#)
- » [Diversity for Social Impact – Top 12 Reasons Why Environmental Wellness is Important](#)
- » [United Health Care – Understanding Financial Well-Being](#)

NORTHEAST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



LORI SCHNOOR



Title: District Conservationist, Maquoketa

College: Iowa State University, Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture Education and Environmental Studies, 1997

What other positions have you had?

- » Iowa City Field Office as District Employee, 1997-2001
- » DeWitt Field Office, Soil Conservationist, 2001-2002
- » Cresco Field Office, District Conservationist, 2002-2006

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Maquoketa on a farm where I developed a love for the land and for animals. I was always outside helping with the cows and

pigs and riding horses. I guess I should've been the son in the family...I probably would be farming full-time right now!

How did you get interested in conservation?

Growing up riding horses in our timber pastures and just being out in nature.

What do you like most about your job?

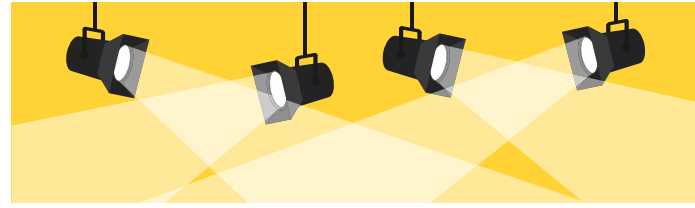
I truly enjoy helping people with conservation and being the person that can connect them with our programs and navigate through the process. I especially enjoy hosting field days and educational events and working with beginning farmers.

What do you enjoy away from work?

Raising cows, playing the guitar and singing, gardening, landscaping and reading.

Any family? I have an 11-year-old son, Myles, who is in 6th grade. I have been a single mom for 9 of those years and love being a mom and having him grow up on the century family farm that I grew up on. My dad is now semi-retired from farming but still has his own cows and makes hay. Lucky for me, I have his support and help.

NORTHWEST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



DAWN HENDERSON



Title: District Conservationist, Sibley

College: Iowa State University, Bachelor's Degree in Agronomy, 2019

What is your career background?

After graduating college, I accepted a job with ISU Extension and Outreach in Rock Rapids. I served as the Horticulture Program Coordinator for Sioux, O'Brien, Lyon, and Osceola counties for a year. In this role, I managed 3 donation gardens, the Master

Gardener volunteer program, provided horticultural programs, and answered 'hotline' questions about home gardening on the daily. In 2020, I decided to move back to my agronomy focus and came on with the NRCS in June as a Direct Hire Soil Con in Sibley. This past March I stepped into the open role of District Conservationist in the same office.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up moving around with my family and have lived in Postville- NE Iowa, Woodbine- SW Iowa, Ulysses- SW Kansas, Manchester- NE Iowa, and Marcus- NW Iowa. Mostly on small acreages, I spent all my time outside either in the gardens or with the animals we raised for 4-H. I'm the middle of three daughters and we've all ended up back in Northwest Iowa after graduating college.

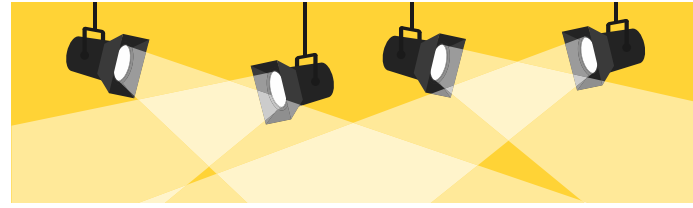
How did you get interested in conservation?

Originally, I got involved in conservation as an IOWATER volunteer with the DNR during high school. I monitored my own site for several years and helped with snapshot sampling days in O'Brien county. I also spent some time as an Earth team volunteer with the NRCS. After taking a few agronomy classes, my focus shifted from water to the soil- specifically the biological aspect of the soil. My interest in conservation stems from the question: how can we work with, rather than against, what is already happening in the soil?

What are your hobbies?

Outside of work, I have quite a few hobbies, like landscaping, cooking, hiking, traveling, reading, fishing, music, collecting etc. and I'm always finding new things that catch my interest. My favorite thing to do when I'm in a new place is to find local authentic restaurants and try new foods of all kinds- if you have suggestions let me know!

SOUTHEAST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



CHRIS HIHER



Title: District Conservationist, DeWitt

College: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, BS, 2009. Major: Wildlife Ecology, Minor: Conservation Biology

What other positions and locations have you worked prior to this?

Prior to working for USDA, I worked a short-term position with Indiana DNR banding geese and wood ducks. I was there May 2009 through November 2009. After working at Indiana DNR, I received a position with Pheasants Forever in Southern Illinois, January 2010. I covered four counties as a Farm Bill Biologist. In November 2011, I transferred from IL to IA within Pheasants Forever. I had the same position and covered Buchanan, Delaware, and Dubuque Counties. In October 2019, I started as one of the first Soil Conservationists on the Epworth Resource team.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up with divorced parents from an early age. My dad and most of the family were around Savanna, IL. When I was 10, my mom married a dairy farmer near Freeport, IL. I split my time in both places. In the summers sometimes we made hay other times I got to go fishing. The dairy had 60 cows in a station barn. In school, we were the only kids that still had a milking operation. The farm only consisted of 160 acres and fields were only 10 Acres in size rotated from corn to wheat to hay.

How did you get interested in conservation?

One of the main things that got me interested in conservation was duck hunting and spending time on the Mississippi River. We had a duck blind adjacent to a USFWS refuge, and though we didn't shoot many ducks you got to see the spectacle that is fall migration. Millions of birds lifted out of the refuge in the evening and early hours of the morning.

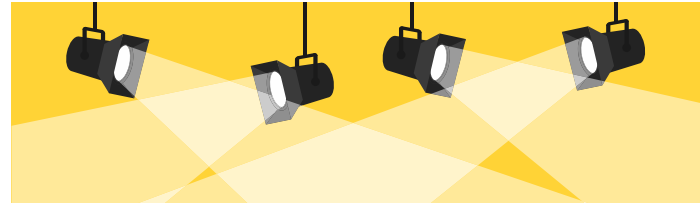
What do you enjoy most about your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is helping producers have a positive impact on the land. Providing them with something they hadn't heard or might not be aware of. Many times, this has led to me learning a thing or two from them as well.

What are your hobbies?

In my spare time, in the fall often I do a fair amount of time pheasant, duck, and light deer hunting. I have a no-till garden that sometimes looks like a train wreck. Almost every Sunday during the summer my wife and I go out with our two Labrador Retrievers (Rigby, Ackley) to the river.

SOUTHWEST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



MATTHEW SHOOP



Title: Assistant AFO, Atlantic Area Office

College: Northwest Missouri State University, bachelor's in Agronomy, 2015

What other positions have you held with NRCS?

- » Soil Conservationist Platte City, Missouri
- » District Conservationist Atlantic

Where did you grow up?

Marceline, Mo (Known for being the hometown of Walt Disney). Growing up, we had sheep, chickens, and a steer that I showed in 4-H. I won

the rooster crowing contest 2 years in a row at the local county fair.

How did you get interested in conservation?

I have always had a passion for the outdoors. During the summers in high school, I always got talked in to cutting, raking, and bailing hay. The only part I didn't like was bucking square bales each summer. The Hay Monster came in handy some days. It wasn't until college after an agronomy and plant science class that I realized I wanted to learn more about conservation and that was the path I wanted to take.

What do you like most about your job?

NRCS is a very rewarding job if you consider the benefits and flexibilities with time off. It was always fun getting out and meeting new landowners and seeing how they operated their farm. In my new position, it is still rewarding to be able to help staff provide positive customer service to our producers and getting to know everyone that works for the NRCS.

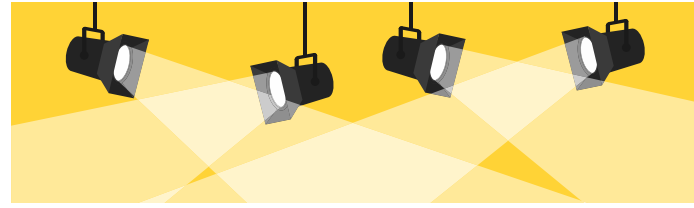
What are your hobbies?

Hunting, fishing, and wood working are my top hobbies. I like to be busy and if I don't know how to fix something, I will figure it out.

Any family?

My wife Kaysee is currently Active Duty at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, NE. She also enjoys wood working projects, so we are always busy updating things around the house. My stepdaughter Charlie is in second grade and enjoys playing volleyball. We spend a lot of time at the YMCA playing sports and enjoying the pool.

STATE OFFICE SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



NICK CAMPBELL



Title: Civil Engineer, Des Moines

College:

- » Cornell College, 2007-2011, Geology
- » Iowa State University, 2013-2018, Civil Engineering

What other positions have you held?

I worked for a farm drainage contractor after graduating from Cornell College. There, I installed drainage tile and learned about some of the engineering work around farms and conservation. After Iowa State, I started working for NRCS full-time as a civil engineer out of Creston. (December 2018 – May 2023)

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in West Liberty, Iowa.

How did you get interested in conservation?

My father was a Conservation Officer for Iowa

DNR in Muscatine County. He was always bringing me and my siblings to go fishing or hiking around several state parks. I was also very involved with the Boy Scouts of America and worked volunteered on several conservation projects around the area. Between my family outings and my scouts troops camping trips, I have spent a lot of time outdoors.

What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy the variety of engineering practices that I can work on and the fact that I can see a project from start to finish. Private sector firms often have their engineers working on a specific item at a consistent point during their projects. I feel like I would get burnt out with that style of work. Working for NRCS is not just mentally stimulating, but gratifying since we often get to see the good our work does.

What do you do in your free time?

I have competed in a variety of bicycle races over the years including: Road, Gravel, Mountain, and Cyclocross. Admittedly, it is something I have fallen out of during Covid, but now getting back into it. I also completed my first RAGBRAI this past summer. (About time)

Any personal information you want to share?

I live in Winterset with my girlfriend, Madeline. I also spend a lot of time with my awesome nieces and nephews.

I have spent a lot of time this past year studying for my professional engineering exam which I passed this July, so I am on my way to getting my Professional Engineer License. I just need to complete the application portion.

IOWA NRCS PERSONNEL CHANGES



| Name | Title | Nature of Action | Effective Date | Location |
|------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Bedwell, Gregory | Soil Conservation Technician | Resignation | 7/7/2023 | Chariton RT |
| Till, Marissa | Soil Conservation Technician | Resignation | 7/14/2023 | Epworth RT |
| Boley, Christopher | Soil Conservation Technician | Appointment | 7/16/2023 | Mt. Pleasant RT |
| Hollingsworth, Madalyn | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/16/2023 | Ottumwa RT |
| Lapham, Kevin | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/16/2023 | Decorah RT |
| Ries, Shereen | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 7/16/2023 | Charles City RT |
| Giddings, Spencer | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/16/2023 | Jefferson |
| Skiles, Michael | Civil Engineering Technician | Resignation | 7/25/2023 | Oakland RT |
| Davison, John | Soil Conservation Technician | Retirement | 7/29/2023 | Tipton RT |
| Livermore, Jon | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Newton RT |
| Macha, Shawn | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Atlantic AO |
| Parman, Grant | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Sgt. Bluff |
| Sletten, Priscilla | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Indianola RT |
| Wiest, Benjamin | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Algona RT |
| Stevens, Jess | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Cresco |
| Waltz, Mackenzie | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Wapello RT |
| Widrick, Zachary | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 7/30/2023 | Wapello RT |
| Blodgett, Kelsey | Resource Team Leader | Reassignment | 7/30/2023 | Oakland RT |
| Smith, Gareth | Engineering Technician | Resignation | 8/4/2023 | Chariton RT |
| Bollinger, Billy | Engineering Technician | Resignation | 8/11/2023 | Creston RT |
| Kleinmeyer, Levi | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | Webster City RT |
| Russell, Reed | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | Denison RT |
| Sproat, Robert | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | West Union AO |
| Watson, Cameron | Soil Conservation Technician | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | Mt. Pleasant RT |
| Scharlau, Brenton | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | Chariton RT |
| Westfall, Wyatt | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 8/13/2023 | Wapello RT |
| Blomme, Sheila | Admin. Support Specialist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Fairfield AO |
| Day, Charlton | Admin. Support Specialist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Sioux City AO |
| Decker, Brittany | Resource Conservationist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Fort Dodge RT |
| Enger, Jackson | Resource Conservationist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Sibley RT |

RT = Resource Team

| Name | Title | Nature of Action | Effective Date | Location |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Henderson, Margaret | Admin. Support Specialist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Atlantic AO |
| Holt, Jacob | Resource Conservationist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Red Oak RT |
| McMichael, Julie | Asst. State Conservationist (Compliance) | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Des Moines |
| Morrison, Don | Resource Conservationist (Agronomist) | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | Fairfield AO |
| Steffens, Teresa | Admin. Support Specialist | Promotion | 8/13/2023 | West Union AO |
| Macemore, Leigh | Soil Conservationist | Name Change | 8/17/2023 | Tipton RT |
| Biodrowski, Michelle | Wetland Specialist | Resignation | 8/25/2023 | Atlantic AO |
| Adams, Doug | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Fort Dodge RT |
| Ahders, Alex | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Sibley RT |
| Krueger, Rachel | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Williamsburg RT |
| Rouse, Ricky | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Tipton RT |
| Slifka, Kyle | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Decorah RT |
| Van Ringelestein, Katrina | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Newton RT |
| Reed, Austin | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 8/27/2023 | Indianola RT |
| Johnson-Rupe, Danna | Soil Conservation Technician | Name Change | 9/5/2023 | Ottumwa RT |
| Hefley, Sherri | Program Assistant | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Webster City RT |
| Priest, Christopher | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Red Oak RT |
| Benitez Ayala, Elisa | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Waterloo RT |
| Carter, Derek | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Newton RT |
| Cole, Amanda | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Indianola RT |
| Hill, Ky | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Creston RT |
| Luebbers, Michael | Civil Engineering Technician | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Waterloo RT |
| Wagner-Ertz, William | Soil Conservationist | Appointment | 9/10/2023 | Mt. Pleasant RT |
| Ryan-Scieszinski, Josephine | District Conservationist | Promotion | 9/10/2023 | Chariton |
| Singhurst, Sarah | Admin. Support Specialist | Promotion | 9/10/2023 | Des Moines |
| Thompson, Jacob | Resource Conservationist (Grazing Specialist) | Promotion | 9/10/2023 | Fairfield AO |
| Judkins, Matthew | District Conservationist | Reassignment | 9/10/2023 | Leon |
| Butler, Yolanda | Soil Conservation Technician | Retirement | 9/11/2023 | Waterloo RT |
| Ryan-Scieszinski, Josephine | District Conservationist | Name Change | 9/20/2023 | Chariton |

IDALS-DSCWQ PERSONNEL CHANGES



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

| Name | Title | Nature of Action | Effective Date | Location |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| Ackley, Carla | Conservation Assistant | Transfer | 7/1/2023 | Mahaska SWCD |
| Hughes, Anne | Conservation Assistant | Resignation | 7/14/2023 | Polk SWCD |
| Hallahan, Allisen | Conservation Assistant | New Hire | 7/21/2023 | Dubuque SWCD |
| Byer, Michelle | Conservation Assistant | New Hire | 7/21/2023 | Ringgold SWCD |
| Palas, Brenda | Conservation Assistant | Resignation | 8/3/2023 | Linn SWCD |
| Gifford, Corey | Conservation Technician | Resignation | 8/10/2023 | Marion SWCD |
| Walker, Ashlee | Conservation Technician | New Hire | 8/11/2023 | Adair/Guthrie SWCD |
| Sproat, Rob | Conservation Technician | Resignation | 8/11/2023 | Iowa SWCD |
| Hines, Riley | Conservation Technician | New Hire | 8/18/2023 | Madison/Warren SWCD |
| Casey, Ashley | Conservation Assistant | New Hire | 8/21/2023 | Winnebago SWCD |
| Ramey, Tyler | Conservation Technician | Resignation | 8/22/2023 | Clarke/Decatur SWCD |
| Staebler, Jen | Conservation Assistant | Resignation | 8/25/2023 | Dickinson SWCD |
| Juhl, Amber | Conservation Assistant | Resignation | 8/30/2023 | Cerro Gordo SWCD |
| Vande Lune, Cami | | Transfer | 9/1/2023 | Wayne SWCD |
| Priest, Chris | Conservation Technician | Resignation | 9/7/2023 | Page SWCD |
| Nerland, Debra | Conservation Assistant | New Hire | 9/15/2023 | Hamilton SWCD |
| Merkouris, Janelle | Conservation Assistant | Resignation | 9/21/2023 | Worth SWCD |
| Meyer, Colton | Environmental Specialist | Resignation | 9/28/2023 | Sioux SWCD |