



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

IOWA NRCS

FALL 2024



USDA-NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

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A NOTE FROM THE STATE CONSERVATIONIST

Fiscal Year 2024 is coming to a close, and it has been an exceptionally busy one. A sincere **Thank You** to our staff, partners, and producers for helping to deliver another record year of conservation in Iowa.

To accomplish our goals, many of you overcame obstacles such as staff shortages, leasing issues, new programs and program changes, extreme weather events - including floods and tornadoes, and economic challenges for many of our producers.

Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding that is supplementing our regular Farm Bill annual program allocation, we are in the midst of consecutive years of the highest conservation implementation ever in Iowa. On one hand, it is a very exciting time. We may look back one day with envy, wishing we had the budget we have today.

But for now, we are focused on the present

because we know for the next few years funding for programs and technical assistance to our customers will be at an all-time high.

This fall, we are aggressively recruiting at Midwestern colleges through Career Fairs and other on-campus visits. Our strategy is to fill as many entry level career positions as possible. We hope our field staff will take the opportunity to visit local colleges and high schools to help promote conservation and USDA-NRCS.

Very soon, we will have a new PowerPoint presentation available for staff to use that highlights who we are and career opportunities within the agency.

Thanks for another great year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Hubbert". The signature is stylized with a large "J" and "H".

Jon Hubbert, State Conservationist

04**2024 Conservation Woman of the Year****05****Summer Intern Tours****08****'Battle of the Chefs'****09****Iowa City Pride Festival and Parade****10****Soil Ur Undies Contest****11****UTV Training in Waterloo****12****Soil Health and Sustainability Training in Polk City****14****Audubon Resource Team Meeting at Littlefield Lake****15****Fabulous Field Photos****16****NRCS Golf Tournament****18****Employee Spotlights****23****Personnel Changes****09****12****22**

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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LILLIE BERINGER-CROCK: CONSERVATION WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Third generation farmer Lillie Beringer-Crock of Cascade was named 2024 Iowa Conservation Woman of the Year at the Conservation Districts of Iowa annual meeting earlier today in Ames.

A 2018 Iowa State University graduate, Beringer-Crock took over Beringer Family Farms about five years ago. She inherited an operation with a strong beef focus, including a cow-calf herd and a 1,500-head feedlot, along with cropland with corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

Beringer-Crock is taking new strides each day to improve the operation her family has worked on for decades, says District Conservationist Addie Manternach with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Jones County. "Lillie is a young female who is super passionate about farming and the agricultural community," said Manternach. "She believes our food should tell a story – not just be a label."

Since taking over the farm, Beringer-Crock has made significant soil and water conservation improvements. For example, she converted her tilled corn-on-corn acres to a no-till corn/soybean rotation with cover crops. Each spring, she grazes about 120 cow-calf pairs on 100 acres of cereal rye during the spring calving season.

Lillie said she started using cover crops primarily for the supplemental livestock feeding benefits but has seen the soil health benefits and reduced erosion on very sandy soil. "We were farming straight corn every year and tilling it all up with no rain. It wasn't helping us make money," said Beringer-Crock. "I might have given up a little bit



Lillie Beringer-Crock, landowner and producer in Jones County, stands with her cows while they graze.

of yield on the corn side, but when I fed 200 cows for three weeks on a cover crop and didn't have to treat a sick calf, those dollars add up."

Beringer-Crock has also made recent improvements to her grazing system. With planning and financial assistance through NRCS, she converted 40 acres of cropland to permanent pasture and set up a rotational grazing system with new watering systems and fencing, creating five grazing paddocks.

She says the new rotational grazing system prevents overgrazing of forages, improves soil structure to help grass rest and grow, and creates a natural source of fertilization.

"The meaning of conservation to me, as a young woman, has changed recently. Conservation is about preserving our land for the next generation," said Beringer-Crock. "It's about making sure my son and future generations have the same opportunities to farm as I do."

[Read Full Story](#)

2024 NORTHEAST AREA INTERN LEARNING DAY

Northeast Area held a field day on July 10 for the interns representing NRCS, IDALS, and SWCDs.

The field day began at the West Union Area Office to discuss roles and responsibilities of Area Office staff, plus a rainfall simulator demonstration.

From there, the group traveled to a farm in Wadena to learn about wetlands, forestry, ponds, pasture, landscapes, soils and geology.

Former NRCS District Conservationist Roger Erickson hosted the field day at his Fayette County farm.



Learning Day host Roger Erickson (left in orange shirt) discusses conservation cover to interns and other staff during the tour on July 10.



Host Roger Erickson conducts a tour of the native prairie seeding on his farm.



Learning Day participants discuss woodland management at Roger Erickson's property near Wadena, in Fayette County.

SUMMER INTERNS TOUR LICA FARM IN JUNE

The Iowa Conservation Partnership hosted an orientation and tour for summer interns from across the state on June 26 at the LICA Farm near Melbourne.

The event included a “Job Fair” for interns where they spoke with subject matter experts from various fields.

Leadership from NRCS, IDALS, and CDI spoke to the interns about the importance of conservation partners in implementing practices across Iowa.

The day concluded with a tour of the various conservation practices on the LICA farm.



Student interns tour the LICA Farm near Melbourne on June 26, 2024. The interns were from NRCS, IDALS, and various soil and water conservation districts in Iowa.



Iowa NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Compliance Julie McMichael talks to interns about soils and compliance at the LICA farm.



Interns visit with subject matter experts from various fields at booths during the 2024 Summer Intern Tour at the LICA farm in Melbourne on June 26, 2024.

WEBSTER COUNTY PASTURE FIELD DAY

NRCS District Conservationist Kelly Oliver joined Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff on a pasture management field day at the Lundgren Farm near Lehigh in Webster County on July 10.

According to Oliver, the last pasture field day in Webster County pre-dated 2000, when Linda Cline joined the Extension in Webster County. When Kelly invited Cline, she gladly accepted.

About 18 participants joined the Lundgren family and staff. Many had not attended an Extension event before. Approximately half were beginning farmers. The Iowa Cattleman's Association provided grilled hamburgers for dinner while staff introduced themselves. Corey Lundgren gave an overview of his operation and family involvement.

The Lundgren pasture has almost 200 acres of timber and grassland along Crooked Creek, which empties into the Des Moines River. They graze Angus beef cattle, using the creek and a pond as their water source. Lundgren frequently scouts the property, spot treating weeds and thistles. His father, Mark Lundgren, uses a drone to check on the cattle's whereabouts as the adjacent corn fields can be quite enticing. When Mark first started grazing, he used horses when checking on the cattle due to the steep topography. Now, a drone makes quick work of locating an errant calf.

Participants were treated to a hay wagon ride to the pasture; they visited the south and southwest portion of the pasture as most of the pasture is on D to G slopes and not hay wagon-friendly.

Russell Euken, ISU Extension Beef Specialist, talked about different kinds of grazing plans and vegetative management and Angie Rieck-Hinz, ISU Field Agronomist, talked about weed control and thistles.

Oliver explained pasture conservation practices such as livestock watering systems, fencing, seedings, brush management, prescribed burning, winter feeding areas, and prescribed grazing plans. She also described the conservation planning process and applying for EQIP to assist with implementation of pasture practices.

"We need to optimize our pasture systems while addressing resource concerns such as erosion, livestock feed quality, clean water sources, and wildlife habitat," said Oliver. "Many producers are unaware of the programs and conservation planning assistance NRCS offers grazers. Field days like this get the word out."

At the end of the event, several producers approached Oliver to learn how they can contact their local DC for technical and financial assistance. Working with Extension helps with the logistics and public outreach and is a mutually beneficial event to both Extension, Cattleman's Association, and NRCS.



Above Left: Pasture Field Day host Corey Lundgren gives an overview of his operation. **Above Right:** Field Day participants take a hay ride to the pasture.

'BATTLE OF THE CHEFS' HIGHLIGHTS URBAN FARM

A food competition called "Battle of the Chefs" is highlighting locally grown food on a small-scale farm outside of Council Bluffs.

Long Walk Farm is operated by Matt Johnson and Tiff Clifton. From June 9 through Sept. 8, they hosted a local food competition on seven nights that pairs eight Omaha metro chefs competing head-to-head through a tournament-style bracket to be crowned Battle of the Chefs Champion.

The chefs used 95 percent local ingredients from local farms and producers. Attendees voted on which chef would move on to the next round. They also toured the farm, visited the animals, and asked questions about the operation.

"I think it is such a neat way to bring the public to the farm and get a real farm-to-table experience," said Laura Ferguson, District Conservationist for NRCS in Council Bluffs.

Ferguson says Johnson has entered into multiple EQIP contracts since purchasing his farm in 2020. He has had two high tunnel contracts, a pasture project with rotational grazing of his dairy goats, and an Organic Transition Initiative contract on his specialty crops.

"Matt and Tiff are doing amazing things on their farm," said Ferguson.

To learn more about their farm, visit www.longwalkfarm.com/.

One of the two high tunnels Matt Johnson installed on Long Walk Farm using EQIP funds.



The Battle of the Chefs event pitted local Omaha metro area chefs against one another, where they used almost totally locally grown ingredients.



IOWA CITY PRIDE FESTIVAL AND PARADE

Iowa NRCS had a booth at the Iowa City Pride Festival and Parade on Saturday, June 15. Resource Conservationist Sarah Ham and Tipton District Conservationist Teresa Wendt answered questions and handed out NRCS information to attendees.



SOIL UR UNDIES: POLK COUNTY WINS ANNUAL SW AREA CONTEST

Submitted by Ruth Blomquist, SW Area Soil Health Specialist

We recently wrapped up the 6th annual SW Iowa Soil Ur Undies Contest, with Polk County taking the win this year!

Started back in 2019 by Julie McMichael, offices are invited to compete every summer in the contest, following a set of rules/criteria. We launch it on Earth Day each spring and final project reports are typically due around August 1st.

The traveling trophy was also created by Julie and her husband, and it spends the year in the winning field office. It has been a great way to bring awareness to soil health in SW Iowa.

Offices place their displays near the front counter, generating questions and conversations with producers as they come in. Many offices also take their displays to county fairs. The display from last year's winner, Adams County, was at the State Fair on Sunday this year, at the Iowa Farmers Union tent.

Between fairs, Facebook posts, and counter conversations, I would estimate this contest has engaged over 1,000 people in soil health conversation since Julie launched it back in 2019!



Lauryn Dukes, a student intern in Fremont County, stands next to their office's 'Soil Ur Undies' submission. Several offices participated in the contest, but didn't necessarily submit a final report.

UTV TRAINING A SUCCESS IN WATERLOO

About 30 students completed the ROHVA (Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association) UTV training on May 1-2 in Waterloo at the Cattle Congress parking area.

"The classes went well," said JD Goemaat, Civil Engineering Technician in Garner. "Despite the rain on Thursday, both classes were completed."

The Cattle Congress parking area in Waterloo worked well for the closed course exercises, vehicle overviews, and safety discussion. "After lunch, we went to the Riverview recreation OHV park and rode the trails," said Goemaat. "We had two students who had never driven a UTV ever."

In addition to the ROHVA material, the training also covered UTV and trailer maintenance, slow speed rollover concerns from drainage tile blowouts, and fire hazards associated with debris and grass build up around the engine and exhaust. It was suggested that all students carry a large sized fire extinguisher in their UTV at all times.

"Russ Overton and Jeff Lutz deserve recognition for the work they put into the class," said Goemaat. "It took a lot of effort, outside their normal duties, during the busy season, and saved the government considerable cost from having to re-train instructors by getting the training done before instructor certificates expired."



UNLOCKING THE SECRETS: SOIL HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY TRAINING

Thirty Iowa NRCS employees from across the state participated in Soil Health and Sustainability for Field Staff training, June 10-14, at Cherry Glen Farm in Polk City.

Instructors included Area Soil Health Specialists Ruth Blomquist, Jeff Reichter, JD Hollingsworth, and Alisha Sedlmayr; State Soil Health Specialist Hillary Olson; State Soil Scientist Pat Chase; Northeast Area Resource Soil Scientist Neil Sass; and Southeast Area Resource Soil Scientist Jason Steele.

Training modules included:

- » Soil Health Basics
- » Soil Health Planning Principles and Resource Concerns
- » Soil Health Indicators, Resource Concerns and Regenerating Soil Health
- » Linking Soil Biology to Soil Health
- » Ecological Nutrient and Pest Management
- » Cover Crop Management
- » Grazing Cropland and Grassland
- » Social and Economics of Soil Health Change
- » Strategizing and Implementing a Soil Health System

The group toured Chery Glen Farm, Jeremy Gustafson's farm in Boone, Riggins Family Farm, and Bruce Carney's farm in Maxwell.

On the last day, trainees gave individual and group presentations of various soil health demonstrations.



Campbell Cooke (center), a soil conservation technician in Sgt. Bluff, practices his rainfall simulator demonstration on Friday, June 14, for other trainees and instructors.



Jon Livermore, a soil conservationist in Nevada, discusses the results of his rainfall simulator demonstration with fellow trainees and instructors on Friday, June 14.

CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION COURSE IN DES MOINES

NRCS hosted a state-sponsored Construction Inspection EDS course the week of July 22 in Des Moines at the Airport Holiday Inn. All of the participants were from Iowa, while instructors came from Connecticut and Wyoming.

About 30 students took the class. "I really enjoyed the training. I learned a lot," said Shereen Ries, Civil Engineering Technician on the Charles City Resource Team. "Even after many years with NRCS, you can still learn a lot of new things."



CHRISTIE VILSACK VISITS USDA STATE FAIR BOOTH

Former First Lady of Iowa Christie Vilsack (pictured in the middle), and current wife of US Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, visited the USDA booth at the Iowa State Fair on Friday, Aug. 9. Vilsack spoke with staff working the booth and wanted to get a picture with all of them.

Iowa NRCS State Public Affairs Specialist Jason Johnson (left) spoke with Vilsack for a while at the booth and showed her some of the activities they were offering.



AUDUBON RESOURCE TEAM: HOLDS ALL-EMPLOYEE MEETING AT LITTLEFIELD LAKE

*Submitted by Dave York,
Audubon Resource Team Leader*

On June 13, the Audubon Resource Area held its first “All Employee” meeting. All NRCS, IDALS-DSCWQ, District, and partner employees were invited to attend. The meeting was held at Littlefield Lake in Audubon County.

The morning session included reviewing results of a survey Resource Area Members took earlier. Resource Area Leadership (the four DCs and RTL) took turns going over some of the things employees least enjoyed about their job and what steps have been taken by leadership or what steps employees themselves can take to make it better.

We also discussed what we learned during the Statewide Manager’s meeting in March. We briefly went over the DiSC assessment, and Resource Area Leadership revealed what leadership styles we each had. The consensus after that was that Resource Area employees would like to learn more about the DiSC assessment and participate in further training.

For lunch, the Resource Area Leadership provided burgers, hotdogs, baked beans and potato salad. Each Field Office brought a desert or two to share. Steve Lewis, DC in Audubon, served as our official Grill Master! While the food was being prepared, a friendly game of volleyball was played!

After lunch, we held the first annual “Audubon Resource Area Bags Tournament.” Teams of two were chosen at random and brackets were made. Kevin Kuhn, DC, Guthrie Center, served as our tournament official. In the Championship match, the team of Jeremy Barnes (DC, Atlantic) and Nick Thompson (PF Farm Bill Biologist, Greenfield) took on the team



Audubon Resource Team members play a cornhole tournament at Littlefield Lake Recreation Area outside Exira in Audubon County on June 13.



Resource Area employees play a fun game of volleyball before lunch.

of Dave York (RTL, Audubon RT) and Jennifer Erbes (CA, Greenfield) with Barnes/Thompson winning the tournament.

The idea behind the meeting was to provide Resource Area employees with a chance to get together and meet each other face-to-face, to go over the results of the survey, and a chance to get away from the office and leave the stress behind for a bit. Lunch was provided as a way for leadership to say “Thank You” for all the work employees are doing to make the Resource Area run as well as it does. Feedback from employees has been overwhelmingly positive with hopes to do something like this again in the future.

FABULOUS FIELD PHOTOS!



Field Photos



Summer 2024 had a little bit of everything, with periods of hot, cool, wet, and lately dry conditions across the state sprinkled in.

1. High tunnel of Monika Owczarski, owner/operator of Sweet Tooth Farm and Food Pantry in Des Moines. Photo taken May 16, 2024. (*Jolene Bopp, Des Moines*)
2. Summer Engineering Intern Amanda Ogle helps with cutting pipe grade and setting pipe for a grade stabilization structure in Page County on Aug. 13, 2024. (*Chris Priest, Red Oak RT*)
3. A close-up of an American LaMancha goat on Sept. 12, 2024, at Long Walk Farm in rural Council Bluffs. LaMancha's produce quality milk with high butter fat and protein. (*Jason Johnson, Des Moines*)

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=aKV9g.



NRCS GOLF TOURNAMENT: ANNUAL OUTING PLAYED IN PLEASANT HILL AUG. 16



Twenty-eight golfers played in the Annual Iowa NRCS Golf Tournament on Friday, Aug. 16, at Toad Valley Golf Course in Pleasant Hill - on Des Moines' east side.

Kyle Ament, a Project Officer with the Iowa DNR Watershed Staff, and Vince Sitzmann, Bureau Chief for the IDALS Mines and Minerals Bureau, won the two-man scramble format tournament with a -7 (64). Recently retired District Conservationist Dana Holland and his son, Brett, finished second with a -5 (66); and State Public Affairs Specialist Jason Johnson and his son, Spencer, shot -4 (67) to finish third.

Other winners included:

- » **Men's Longest Drive:** Andy Pothoven, District Conservationist in Oskaloosa
- » **Women's Longest Drive:** Andrea Hiney
- » **Longest Putt:** Chris Kroeger
- » **Closest to the Pin:** Jake Asche
- » **Shortest Drive:** Heather Kitzman

The post-round contest was to see who could chip a marshmallow into an empty baby pool. Brian Tumey, District Conservationist in Kossuth County, was the only participant to make it.

Save the date for the 2025 Iowa NRCS Golf Tournament, which will take place Friday, Aug. 22, 2025, at Spring Valley Golf Course in Livemore.



Vince Sitzmann (left) and Kyle Ament are multi-year winners of the Iowa NRCS Golf Tournament.

WEBSTER COUNTY HOSTS FORESTRY WORKSHOP

On Thursday, Sept. 5, Webster County District Conservationist Kelly Oliver teamed up with Iowa DNR Foresters Joe Herring and Angel Brown, along with Extension Staff Billy Beck and Linda Cline, to lead a forestry workshop focused on the Lizard Creek watershed west of Fort Dodge.

NRCS staff Allison Orr, Resource Team Leader, and Jodi Williamson, Soil Conservationist, also supported the event.

The goals of the event were to focus on the landowners of the bottomland timber along Lizard Creek. It was an intimate gathering of neighbors learning about timber management, technical and financial assistance, and to discuss shared goals for their properties.

Herring and Oliver gave presentations in the morning on timber management and programs such as EQIP, CSP-NIPF, and REAP that enabled the owners to meet their goals of improved water quality, wildlife habitat, and possibly future timber sales.

Billy Beck, Extension Forestry Specialist, helped with the morning programs and the afternoon timber walks. Linda Cline hosted the morning meeting at her office meeting room.

During the event, neighbors talked with each other about sharing resources and teaming together – time, labor, equipment, and expertise.

As a whole, the landowners were excited about the conservation possibilities of the underappreciated timber portion of their properties. “At the end of the event, every single attendee was setting up appointments with Joe and Angel to start developing or updating their forestry management plan with intention of applying for future REAP, EQIP, or CSP-NIPF contracts,” said Oliver.

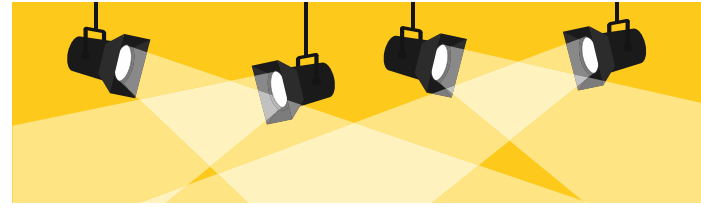


Landowner Ed Albright leads a tour of his property during the Webster County Lizard Creek Forestry Workshop on Sept. 5.

They all said this workshop met a need and they were excited to learn more about managing their land to meet their goals, said Oliver.

“Webster County Extension enjoys partnering with the NRCS and this was no exception,” said Cline. “Not only does Iowa State Extension and Outreach have speakers that can share their knowledge, but more than once, other presenters were sharing extension resources and research.”

SOUTHWEST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



CASEY GATHJE



Title: Soil Conservationist, Adams County
(Day-to-Day Acting District Conservationist)

College: Nebraska College of Technical
Agriculture Associates in Diversified Ag;
Oklahoma Panhandle State University -
Bachelors in Agronomy and Ag Business

Where did you grow up? Omaha, NE

What other positions have you had?

I've been the Soil Conservationist in Adams
County for 4.5 years.

How did you get interested in conservation?

I've always been interested in conservation, but
what really got me looking into more impactful
conservation was living in the Panhandle/NW

Oklahoma and seeing all the dust storms that
are still occurring and knowing we need to
change how we manage land if we want to be
able to sustain our farming abilities.

What do you like most about your job?

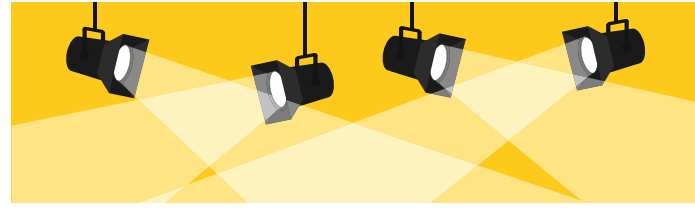
The outreach efforts to reach new producers
and help current producers understand why
conservation efforts and soil are so important
now and into the future.

What do you enjoy away from work?

Traveling, reading, photography, and taking
care of our conglomeration of animals.

Any family? I live with my significant other on a
small farm outside of Clarinda

NORTHWEST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



NATASHA HEAVLIN



Title: District Conservationist, Sac City

College: Bachelor's Degree, Briar Cliff University, Environmental Science

Where did you grow up? Rockwell City

How did you get interested in conservation?

I was raised on our family farm and was involved in agriculture from a young age. I also enjoyed

spending time outdoors such as camping, fishing and helping my mom garden. My favorite classes in high school were science and FFA.

What other positions have you had?

I started as a Pathways Intern in 2018 spending the summer in Sergeant Bluff and a fall semester in Rockwell City. After college graduation in 2019, I spent 1 year in Elkader as soil conservationist before moving to the Fort Dodge Resource Team and spent 4 years as a soil conservationist in Fort Dodge. I recently took the Sac City DC position in July 2024.

What do you like most about your job?

I enjoy working with producers who are passionate about trying new things and willing to make a difference in conservation. I like being able to see conservation practices that have been implemented out in the field. I also enjoy being able to get out of the office to attend field days and visit producers' farms.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

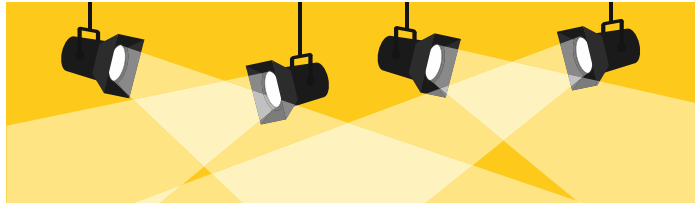
I spend most free time with my family. I also enjoy reading, cooking, riding bicycles, and playing cards.

Any family?

My husband, Clayton, and I have been married for 2 years and we have a son, Hudson (1).

SOUTHEAST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE

STACIE LOWE



Title: Resource Team Leader, Williamsburg

College: Iowa State University, BS in Animal Ecology with emphasis of Interpretation of Natural Resources

Where did you grow up?
Brighton, Iowa

How did you get interested in conservation?
I have always been interested in conservation. When I was a little kid my dad would take me fishing and mushroom hunting. I just really loved being outside. We spent many summer nights checking bank poles hoping to catch a big catfish. I spent many summers at my grandpa's farm in Missouri where we would often go on hikes through the cedar trees exploring or down to the creek to catch crawdads. My family and I would go to Lake Darling to fish, swim and camp. When I started college, I wasn't sure what I really wanted to do with my life, but I had to do

an internship, and I got hired at Lake Darling as a Conservation Aide and since then my passion for conservation only has grown.

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

Prior to working for the NRCS I worked for the Iowa DNR. Then I got hired at Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District working on CRP and learning Soil Health. Then a friend who worked for NRCS suggested I apply for the Soil Con jobs opening in southeast Iowa. In 2015 I got the Soil Conservationist Job in Iowa City where I got a lot of experience working with different types of farms. September of 2019, I became the Resource Conservationist for Williamsburg team learning to train other employees and the ins and outs of compliance. In August of 2024 I was hired as the RTL.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy working with my colleagues. NRCS has so many great people working for them. My team especially is wonderful. We try to work together to solve problems and get conservation on the ground. They make work even more enjoyable because they are all passionate about conservation and are great humans. I really enjoy seeing how our work impacts wildlife and soil health.

What do you like to do in your free time?

When time allows, I like to go hiking, fishing, kayaking, and camping. I also enjoy going to my grandpa's farm in southern Missouri to help my mom with conservation efforts there. Most of all, I love spending time with my family and friends.

Any family?

I have been married to my wife Catherine for 10 years and we have a 3-year-old Boxer Dog named Bowie. I have 20+ nieces and nephews (yes 20+) who I spoil to pieces.

NORTHEAST AREA SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



LEVI KLEINMEYER



Title: Soil Conservationist, Clarion

College: Iowa State University, B.S. in Forestry

Where did you grow up?
West Branch, Iowa

What other positions have you held?

I've been a Soil Conservationist for about a year now on the Webster City Resource Team. I recently moved to Clarion Field office in August.

How did you get interested in conservation?

I've always been interested in the outdoors from a young age, especially with my grandparents working on their acreage as a kid.

What do you like most about your job?

I love to meet with producers who are passionate about conservation and being able to mold their ideas into a reality. I also like getting out to the field. Any day outside is a good day for me.

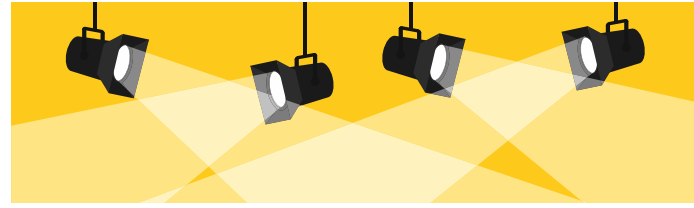
What are your hobbies?

Hunting, hiking, watching football and traveling

Any family?

I live with my fiancé Macie and our two dogs, Rookie and Lenny.

STATE OFFICE SPOTLIGHT EMPLOYEE



KEIKO SAMPSON



Title: Executive Assistant (to the State Conservationist)

College: B.S Animal Ecology - Wildlife, Iowa State University; M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies – Zoo and Aquarium Leadership, George Mason University

What do you like most about your job?

I love being a part of everyday conservation in Iowa. Being able to see our actions on the land and knowing what we do matters is very rewarding. I also enjoy keeping the State Conservationist organized and making sure that all the processes keep moving forward. Working with the State Office staff and ASTC-FOs is another a great part of my job. We have one of the most welcoming and approachable teams I have ever worked with.

What other positions have you held?

Starting with NRCS marked the beginning of a second career for me. My first career was as a zookeeper and marine mammal trainer. I started at a small children's zoo in Davenport, working with species native to North America – bison, elk, white-tailed deer, cougars, wolves, bobcats, raptors, and many species of reptiles. I then spent many years at Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines working mainly with marine mammals, aquatics, birds, and reptiles. I was one of the zookeepers that helped launch Blank Park Zoo's marine mammal training program and the seal and sea lion demonstrations that still occur today. I have also worked with USDA-ARS National Animal Disease Center in Ames and Des Moines University as an animal caretaker.

What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

In my free time I enjoy reading, kayaking, and all things food - cooking and baking, dining out, and watching as many cooking shows as time allows. In the summer, I can often be found at one of the area's many farmer's markets. I am also a huge fan of ISU football and basketball. When time and finances allow, I also love to travel, often seeking out places near water where I can snorkel and SCUBA dive.

Any family?

I live in Des Moines with my husband, Jim, and our very spoiled senior bluetick coonhound/Australian shepherd/border collie mix, Bayne.

IOWA NRCS PERSONNEL CHANGES



Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Edmiston, Brooke	Realty Specialist	Appointment	5/5/2024	Des Moines
Mickle, Corey	Civil Engineer	Promotion	5/5/2024	Des Moines
Mumm, Lindsey	Soil Conservation Technician	Appointment	5/5/2024	Red Oak RT
Reams, Tyler	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	5/5/2024	Indianola RT
Boley, Christopher	Soil Conservation Technician	Resignation	5/15/2024	Mt. Pleasant RT
Smith, Virginia	Natural Resource Specialist	Resignation	5/17/2024	Tipton RT
Walters, Bailie	Soil Conservationist	Resignation	5/17/2024	Creston RT
Balvanz, Ethan	Soil Conservation Technician	Appointment	5/19/2024	Tipton RT
Fenderson, Kristen	District Conservationist	Promotion	5/19/2024	Davenport
Focht, Karla	District Conservationist	Reassignment	5/19/2024	Clarinda
Hatfield, Logan	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	5/19/2024	Chariton RT
Ruopp, Douglas	District Conservationist	Reassignment	5/19/2024	Marshalltown
Walker, Dylan	Soil Conservation Technician	Appointment	5/19/2024	Sgt. Bluff RT
Waters, Austin	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	5/19/2024	Creston RT
Hackley, Gabrielle	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	6/2/2024	Webster City RT
Noeth, Ronan	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	6/2/2024	Creston RT
Timmerman, Katherine	Asst. Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations	Reassignment	6/2/2024	Fairfield Area
Austin, Robert	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	6/16/2024	Indianola RT
Byrd, Adam	Soil Conservation Technician	Appointment	6/16/2024	Ottumwa RT
Giddings, Spencer	Soil Conservationist	Reassignment	6/16/2024	Fort Dodge RT
Kestel, Jacob	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	6/16/2024	Indianola RT
Lidtko, Bryce	Biologist (Wetland Specialist)	Appointment	6/16/2024	
Steffes-Clayton, Graham	Soil Conservation Technician	Appointment	6/16/2024	Wapello RT
Butler, Erik	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	6/30/2024	Garner RT
Richter, Jennifer	Biologist (Wetland Specialist)	Appointment	6/30/2024	
Greving, Rene	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	7/14/2024	Audubon RT
Lamoree, Sara	Admin. Support Specialist	Appointment	7/14/2024	Des Moines
Lecy, Jade	Admin. Support Specialist	Appointment	7/14/2024	Des Moines
Panas, Tabitha	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	7/14/2024	Oakland RT

RT = Resource Team

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Steinhoff, Victoria	Geologist	Resignation	7/19/2024	Des Moines
Bowman, Gene	Admin. Support Specialist	Resignation	7/21/2024	Des Moines
Houseman, Kristine	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	7/28/2024	Indianola RT
Thompson, Eric	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	7/28/2024	Tipton RT
Dixon, Joseph	Resource Team Leader	Promotion	8/11/2024	Tipton RT
Gerber, Melissa	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/11/2024	Fort Dodge RT
Hahn, Justin	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	8/11/2024	Waterloo RT
Harris, Landen	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/11/2024	Wapello RT
Lucas, Brooke	Admin. Support Specialist	Appointment	8/11/2024	Des Moines
Tyler, Chelsea	Natural Resource Specialist	Appointment	8/11/2024	Webster City RT
Whitacre, Danielle	Program Assistant	Appointment	8/11/2024	Ottumwa RT
Damewood, Tonna	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/25/2024	Chariton RT
Eveland, Brooke	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/25/2024	Williamsburg RT
Hardy, Tawnya	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/25/2024	Red Oak RT
Patterson, Carisa	Program Assistant	Appointment	8/25/2024	Audubon RT
Smith, Jennifer	Program Assistant	Appointment	8/25/2024	Indianola RT
Williamson, Jodi	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	8/25/2024	Fort Dodge RT
Appleby, Evan	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Spencer RT
Bultman, James	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Chariton RT
Cain, Abby	Program Assistant	Appointment	9/8/2024	Chariton RT
Kleinmeyer, Levi	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Webster City RT
McGlinn, Marianne	Archeologist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Des Moines
Nordyke, Caleb	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Red Oak RT
Pursley, Samuel	Soil Conservationist	Appointment	9/8/2024	Chariton RT

IDALS-DSCWQ PERSONNEL CHANGES



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Butler, Casey	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	March 2024	Worth SWCD
Hallahan, Allisen	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	March 2024	Dubuque SWCD
Weed, Tara	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	March 2024	Taylor SWCD
McClurg, Jan	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	March 2024	Scott SWCD
Feldmann, Olivia	State Technician	New Hire	April 2024	Dubuque SWCD

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Luker, Lani	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	April 2024	Polk SWCD
Mumm, Lindsey	State Technician	Resignation	April 2024	Montgomery SWCD
Rieken, Heather	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	April 2024	Butler SWCD
Tisl, Jeff	Environmental Specialist Senior	Resignation	April 2024	Central Office
Oehlerich, Luke	State Technician	New Hire	April 2024	Washington SWCD
Vonnahme, Keith	State Technician	Resignation	April 2024	Carroll SWCD
Backes, Helen	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	May 2024	Dubuque SWCD
Van Wey, Becky	State Technician	Retirement	May 2024	Benton SWCD
Allen, Clayton	State Technician	New Hire	June 2024	Clarke/Decatur SWCD
Brownfield, Alex	State Technician	New Hire	June 2024	Iowa SWCD
Beason, Paige	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	June 2024	Taylor SWCD
Dowling, Monte	State Technician	Retirement	June 2024	Plymouth SWCD
Fleming, Leah	State Technician	New Hire	June 2024	Dave SWCD
Kelley, Marcia	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	June 2024	O'Brien SWCD
Porter, Clark	Environmental Specialist	Retirement	June 2024	Black Hawk SWCD
Case, Dan	Environmental Specialist Senior	Promotion	July 2024	Central Office
Conrad, Deb	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	July 2024	Iowa SWCD
Faris, Hope	Conservation Assistant	Transfer	July 2024	Hancock SWCD
Hines, Lillie	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	July 2024	Chickasaw SWCD
Houseman, Kristine	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	July 2024	Warren SWCD
Kranz, Kristi	Conservation Assistant	Transfer	July 2024	Sioux SWCD
Nyhof, Mary	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	July 2024	Sioux SWCD
Reding, Darla	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	July 2024	Hancock SWCD
Schmanke, Cyndy	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	July 2024	Hamilton SWCD
Ackley, Carla	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	August 2024	Mahaska SWCD
Davis, Carmen	State Technician	New Hire	August 2024	Carroll SWCD
Fox, Brittany	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	August 2024	Webster SWCD
Hanson, Sarah	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	August 2024	Boone SWCD
Jacobs, Rylee	State Technician	New Hire	August 2024	Montgomery SWCD
Lloyd, Timothy	State Technician	New Hire	August 2024	Chickasaw/Floyd SWCD
Thompson-Bolten, Christine	Conservation Assistant	Retirement	August 2024	Boone SWCD

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Trees, Lisa	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	August 2024	Butler SWCD
Wise, Chanise	Conservation Assistant	New Hire	August 2024	Scott SWCD
Jergens, Paige	State Technician	New Hire	September 2024	Benton SWCD
Kelley, Marcia	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	September 2024	O'Brien SWCD
Lanman, Hilary	State Technician	New Hire	September 2024	Keokuk SWCD
Schloss, Kelly	Conservation Assistant	Resignation	September 2024	Marion SWCD