

# Trempealeau County Success from the Field

## Partners for Pollinators

### Background

On the Southern border of Trempealeau County, in the Black River bottoms, sits a piece of land that was settled in 1905. Dan and Lorraine Beck now own a piece of this once 700-acre property, that was purchased by Lorraine's father back in the 1960's. Dan and Lorraine currently own the original farmstead with 140 acres of land, consisting of 10.5 acres of cropland recently converted to pollinator habitat and 129.5 acres of woodland.

### Program Successes

In 2016, Dan and Lorraine came into the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Service Center to inquire about possibilities that may exist for landowners. The cropland consists of very sandy soils and is not very productive cropland. Dan and Lorraine had been renting the fields to a local farmer when the farmer had talked to them and thought there may be a better use of the land other than crops. Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist Scott Stipetich and Ryan Swatek, District Conservationist for Trempealeau and Jackson Counties, suggested that Dan and Lorraine look into the Farm Service Agency's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) as their first option. Since one of the fields had been cropped it was eligible for CRP. The other field utilized the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to convert the sandy cropland into lush pollinator habitat. Scott Stipetich helped develop a very diverse mix of native forbs, legumes, and grasses.

The fields were planted in late fall 2016 and the area has since transformed into lush, colorful pollinator habitat. "NRCS educated a couple of rookies and walked us through program enrollment, plant selection, field preparation, planting and care. Both Ryan and Scott have made field visits at our request to ensure the fields are progressing. We really appreciate their willingness to work with us and answer our many questions," said landowner Dan Beck.

### Future Plans

While Dan and Lorraine are in their second year of growth on their pollinator planting and still in the establishment phase of the project, they will continue to maintain the area as pollinator habitat with management practices such as prescribed burning, mowing, and herbaceous weed control.



NRCS District Conservationist Ryan Swatek (left) alongside Dan and Lorraine Beck standing in the second year growth of their pollinator planting.



The second year of growth on the Beck pollinator habitat planting.

