

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION COMMITTEE
Meeting Agenda

Wildwood Lodge Meeting Room
Clive, IA

3:00 p.m.
Tuesday, January 26

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Adopt Agenda handed out prior to meeting.
3. Approval of Minutes of the December 3 meeting
4. Monthly report from CDI (Jim Frederick)
5. DSC Program Updates
 - Field Services – Gillespie
 - Water Resources – Lemke
 - Mines & Minerals – Coffelt
6. Monthly Partners Report
 - NRCS
 - ISU
 - ENGINEERS
 - DNR
 - Leopold Center
 - Iowa Learning Farms
7. Directors Report
8. New Business:
9. Sub-Committee reports

Soil Water and Minerals Sub-Committee

 - Approval from the Soil Water and Minerals Sub-committee to designate SWCD request for designation as priority watershed. AIR
 - Long Range Planning
Resolutions recommendation of:

1. Revision of Summer Incentive Changes for IFIP

Whereas the March 31, 2009, letter to all Soil and Water Conservation Districts regarding summer incentive changes for IFIP which offers \$200 per acre and does not allow for the harvesting and/or grazing of the conservation cover; and, whereas there is no specific language in the administrative rules 10.41(5) and 10.60(2) forbidding such practice(s); and, whereas land owners and operators would be more likely to opt for summer conservation construction if given the added incentive of making stewardly use of the cover crop, we the Sioux County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners propose the following resolution

Be it resolved that we the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) support the addition by IDALS-DSC of a paragraph to its administrative rules 10.60(2) which states:

“f. Any conservation cover that has silage, forage, or bedding value, may be harvested or grazed as long as erosion control is preserved and there is no adverse effect to the newly constructed conservation practice.”

Explanation: The following factors support this action: (1) \$200 per acre may or may not cover the rent; but it certainly does not cover the cost of the establishment of the conservation cover, taking into consideration machinery, seed, time, management, and lost income from not being able to plant corn or soybeans. (2) Having more acres available for summer conservation construction work helps SWCD personnel and contractors to spread out the workload more evenly from June 1 to the onset of winter. (3) Letting several acres of standing conservation cover go unused is not a stewardly use of a valuable resource. (4) Allowing the harvesting or grazing of conservation cover costs the State of Iowa nothing. In fact, it would bring in a few more tax dollars if farmers are allowed to profit from the use of the conservation cover. Basically, every party would stand to gain from instituting this added incentive to making more land available for summer construction, not the least of which is the land itself!

2. IFIP and REAP Supplemental Cost Share Deadlines

With the present cost share process, requests for supplemental cost share are due to the Division of Soil Conservation on September 15th for IFIP and October 15th for REAP. Shortly after these dates, the Division makes allocation decisions and provides the supplemental cost share to the Field Office. This timing is pretty late in the fall for the SWCD to make allocation decisions, for landowners to hire contractors and to get the planned work completed in the fall. In high workload Field Offices, most contractors have their work list set by early to mid September. With the implementation of the FARMS program, it is easier to collect the information to make supplemental requests.

To allow for better management of the financial incentive program in the field office, the date for requesting supplemental cost share should be moved up to at least September 1st for both IFIP and REAP.

Explanation: Moving the deadline dates for requesting supplemental cost share will allow for the funds to be allocated to the field in a more timely manner. This will allow the SWCD to better manage these funds, and will improve the timing for the cooperators applying for and receiving financial assistance funds through these two programs.

3. Allow REAP Cost Share Dollars to be Used on Conservation Reserve Program Land for Seeding Native Grass/Forb Plantings

One of the best wildlife habitat covers is our native prairie plants and one of our best wildlife habitat programs is the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Too many of our old CRP contracts have used brome as the cover type. Old stunted brome has little wildlife habitat value. The USDA – Farm Service Agency does not have cost share available for those landowners wishing to covert their CRP brome fields to native prairie plants. There are very limited funding sources available to help these landowners on their CRP land.

CDI supports a revision of the rules on Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding to allow funding of native plantings (NRCS standard 327 - Conservation Cover) on CRP land. Currently land enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is only eligible for REAP cost share for woodland - establishment, management and protection practices (State of Iowa Code in the Division Soil Conservation Policy and Procedures Manual - 12.82).

In Iowa we have thousands of CRP acres with low habitat quality brome for cover. Converting these stands to our native grasses and forbs can give us the greatest impact on wildlife habitat on private lands. Making this an eligible practice will give the SWCDs a tool they can use to increase wildlife habitat in their counties. Getting this rule changed would be a step in the right direction toward REAP becoming a major contributor to the restoration and creation of wildlife habitat on private land in Iowa.

4. Update Iowa Code for Watershed Operation and Maintenance

County governments throughout the state are responsible to provide Operation and Maintenance (O&M) to aging watershed structures. Code HSB-192 CHAPTER 161E FLOOD AND EROSION CONTROL, allowed counties to levy against agricultural lands to pay for O&M. In current Iowa Code there is no provision or definition for designating agriculture land only, so counties can not utilize this tool to provide O&M, forcing them to dip into their general ledger funds.

CDI supports asking the Iowa Legislature to change the wording in 161E.9 from agricultural lands to all property to allow county governments to use this provision as originally intended.

Explanation: Current Code reads: The county board of supervisors may annually levy a tax not to exceed six and three-fourths cents per thousand dollars of assessed value of all agricultural lands in the county, to be used for flood and erosion control, including acquisition of land or interest in land, and repair, alteration, maintenance, and operation of works of improvement on lands under the control or jurisdiction of the county as provided in this chapter.

By changing agricultural lands to property will allow county governments, if they choose, to again use this law. When recent needs for operation and maintenance funding in our county came up, the Board of Supervisors robbed the money out of the roads fund which set up some ill will with the county engineer's office.

If the county can use this tax levee it also allows them the ability to prepare for some larger expenses that some counties may have with several older structures. Setting up an account to accumulate these funds is good budget management for expensive work. Current practice is to try to fit this expense into an annual budget process.

5. Reduce the Required IFIP Maintenance Agreement Length for Pasture and Hayland Planting Practice from Ten Years to Five Years

Pasture and hayland plantings typically include grass and legume species that provide erosion control and soil quality improvement. The practice currently requires a 10-year maintenance agreement under IFIP. The legume component of a typical Iowa hayland seed mix is temperamental and often won't last for the duration of the 10 years. This results in an overall decline in the quality of available forage.

CDI supports reducing the maintenance agreement requirement from 10 years to 5 years for the IFIP pasture and hayland planting practice.

Explanation: Historically this practice has commonly been included as part of a multi-year rotation with corn/soybeans and is currently on the decline in Iowa. Farmers across many parts of the state are replacing rotational grasses and legumes with continuous row crops. Conventional wisdom might suggest that requiring a ten-year maintenance will yield greater conservation by tying up that land for a longer period. However, the other side is that most producers today want and must have quality forage in order to be competitive with row crops. Ten years is too long to gamble on forage quality considering the unpredictability of Iowa weather.

10. Vacancies in the Office of SWCD Commissioner

- Vacancies on board
Bremer SWCD
Hardin SWCD
Monroe
Winnebago
- Accept resignation of Molly Regan, Scott SWCD commissioner effective November 10, 2009
- Accept resignation of Ralph Mendenhall, Warren SWCD commissioner effective January 4, 2010
- Accept resignation of David Van Waus, Story SWCD commissioner effective December 10, 2009
- Make appointment of Pat Hendricks, Linn Township, Norwalk to be appointed as commissioner to fill the unexpired term of Ralph Mendenhall who resigned on January 4, 2010.
- Make appointment of Alan Lundgren, Pilot Mound Township, Ogden , to be appointed as commissioner to fill the unexpired term of Bob Allen who resigned on October 1, 2009

11. SSCC Member Reports

- Meetings represented and Potential Travel requests

12. Future Meetings:

January 27 – Partnership Day at the Capital
March 8 – SSCC meeting 9-noon, Rm 260 Scheman Bldg., ISU campus
March 8-9 Water Conference – Scheman Bldg.

Spring Regionals

Planning Tips

Date/Time	Region	Host	Location	Cost
<i>March 2</i>	9	Appanoose		
<i>March 3</i>	8	Union/Ringgold		
<i>March 4</i>	5	Adair		
<i>March 10</i>	1	Woodbury		
<i>March 11</i>	2	Calhoun Jean Eells		
<i>March 12</i>	3	Franklin Jean Eells		
<i>March 16</i>	6	Marion	Vermeer Science Ctr Central College Pella, IA	
<i>March 17</i>	7	Clinton	Buzzy's 414 Main Street Welton, IA	
<i>March 18</i>	4	Jackson		

June 14-16 Summer tour- Burlington

Reservations please call 319-753-1300

Group name: Soil Conservation/Dept. of Ag.

13. Adjournment