

Montgomery SOIL & WATER Conservation District

District Annual Report — **FEBRUARY 23, 2022**

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Express



Doug Maher with wife Deb

DOUG MAHER

Named 2022 Conservationist of the Year

The Montgomery SWCD is pleased to announce that Doug Maher is our 2022 Conservationist of the Year! Doug comes from a long line of conservationists, starting with his grandpa Roy Fisher. Roy began farming north-west of Stanton in 1957, the same year Doug was born. Roy built his first terraces with a whirlwind plow ... one of the terraces still exists today. Roy had a saying that has been engrained in Doug's mind his entire life. Roy compared land to the dollar. He said that someday a dollar may only be worth the paper it's printed on and the ink used to print it ... but the land will always be there and will be worth something. Roy told Doug that you have to protect the land from yourself. The land will take care of you as long as you take care of it.

Doug is the son of Gene and Mary Maher. Doug graduated from Stanton High School in 1975 and worked at the co-op there in Stanton while farming and raising hogs and cattle on the side until he began farming full time in 1990. Doug's father Gene passed away in 1989, but farming continued to be a family operation. Doug and Roy began no-tilling their land in 1991. Doug says he has always taken a "prove it to himself" approach, starting with a few acres, then expanding the practice to his entire operation. With the push of cover crops Doug did the same thing,

starting small. Doug proved it to himself that cover crops work and the benefits are worth the investment. Doug says cover crops are tremendous for soil erosion, give his cows something to eat during the winter, and he has been doing it long enough now he is seeing improved yields. Doug now puts every acre he farms into cover crops ... 925 acres worth.

Every acre of Doug's land is terraced, nearly 100,000 feet worth. Doug credits this to Roy. He says Roy had an amazing eye for laying out terraces. He said Roy could just envision where a terrace would go and would generally be within a few feet! Roy was such a devoted terrace builder that he kept a hand level in his pocket. The Mahers also have built five ponds, maintain 19 acres of field borders, several waterways, and keep hay land around their waterways as a filter.

Doug married his wife Deb Jan. 16, 1999, a date that Doug promises is engrained in his mind forever. Together they have two daughters, Brandie and Karmin, and a son, Kristopher. Deb is employed at Bank Iowa serving as the branch manager. Both are very involved in the community. Doug has served as a volunteer firefighter, EMT, CPR instructor, and worked as a dispatcher. Doug also has served on the fair board, Stanton School Board, co-op board and church board, referees basketball and volleyball and has driven a school bus. Deb and Doug are big golfers and can usually be found at the Villisca Country Club during the summer.

This article would be remiss without mentioning Doug's mother Mary and his four sisters: Linda, Alicia, Julie, and Jeanne. We mentioned it is a family operation and it truly is. Mary is the busy bee and can always be found working on something at the farm ... gardening, planting trees, and getting rid of unwanted beavers. The sisters all own land which Doug rents and come back often to work on the farm. Doug farms their land as if it is his own and they all have the same philosophy about taking care of the land.

Congratulations to Doug and all of the Mahers for being our 2022 Conservationists of the Year!



Doug Maher with his mother Mary



NOTE From the Director

– by Susan Kozak

Iowa Department of Agriculture
and Land Stewardship –
Division of Soil Conservation
and Water Quality

Each year as I write this article, I find it a time for reflection and anticipation. I am very proud of the conservation

work happening across the state with our Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality staff, the local voice of the Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners and our interactions with diverse partners.

One of the many goals we face for water quality in the state is constructing more wetlands in targeted areas. Recently, we set aside time for a Wetland Work Group where 26 of our staff members from across the state reviewed our wetland development process, identified barriers and needs, and proposed recommendations on how to move forward toward our goal of building more wetlands every year. Now the real work begins as we review the ideas and work toward implementation.

We have had our time of reflection and now I am anticipating what the future could look like for conservation. I am in

this position, and this Division, because I truly love our natural resources and am passionate about doing everything we can to preserve them for future generations. As I drive across the state, I am always looking around and excited when I see a conservation practice in action and equally motivated when I see an area that could be improved. My challenge to everyone would be to follow our lead and take a moment to pause and assess your conservation challenges and needs. Where could you make one change to improve soil and water quality in your area? Whether you are urban or rural, have an acreage or a balcony herb garden, there are countless ways we can benefit our soil and water resources. And, if you need ideas, reach out to your local USDA office and we can assist.

Thank you...

The Montgomery Soil & Water Conservation District THANKS YOU! It is you the people who make conservation a priority. Protecting our precious natural resources, soil and water, and being good stewards of the land. We sincerely appreciate your contributions to continued soil and water conservation education and implementation in Montgomery County.

If you have questions about how you can make a difference in conservation,

please contact the Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District! We work closely with our partners, the Natural Resources Conservation Services and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship in providing current conservation information. Let us know how we can help you!

Sincerely,
Montgomery SWCD Commissioners

Walnut & Indian Creek Watershed Updates

By Daniel Case, Project Coordinator, IDALS-DSCWQ

Twenty-one was a challenging year in the Walnut Creek Watershed. The beginning brought big hopes and progress with the formation of an advisory board and the hiring of a new Education and Outreach Coordinator Emily. For a few months good progress was made spreading the word of all the wonderful things producers are doing in the watershed. COVID managed to put a big monkey wrench into this however, not allowing us to have public meetings or meet producers as much as we wanted. Emily moved on to bigger and better things half-way through the year and now we are starting over. Hopefully we will have an Education and Outreach Coordinator rehired when things go back to normal ... fingers crossed.

COVID did not however hinder our cover crop adoption and growth. This year we installed just shy of 20,000 acres of cover crops across the watershed. Mother Nature was extremely generous with our warm fall and most fields saw extremely good growth. The oats did particularly well. Aerially applying oats can be hit or miss in the fall but this year we hit the bullseye. As always, please plan ahead for spring termination of your rye. If you would like advice on how to manage

your cover crop, please don't be afraid to contact your local agronomist. Planting soybeans into tall rye is fairly easy and we suggest planting green if you can. This will lessen your chances of decaying rye grass binding and tangling things up on your planter. If you are planting corn into rye that is a whole different story, however. Please don't plant your corn until that rye is dead and gone. Or put a very, VERY generous amount of starter fertilizer down when planting. This requires a lot of planning ahead and playing the weather to make this a success ... so don't get caught doing the wrong thing. And if you don't have time, next year consider an oat cover crop.

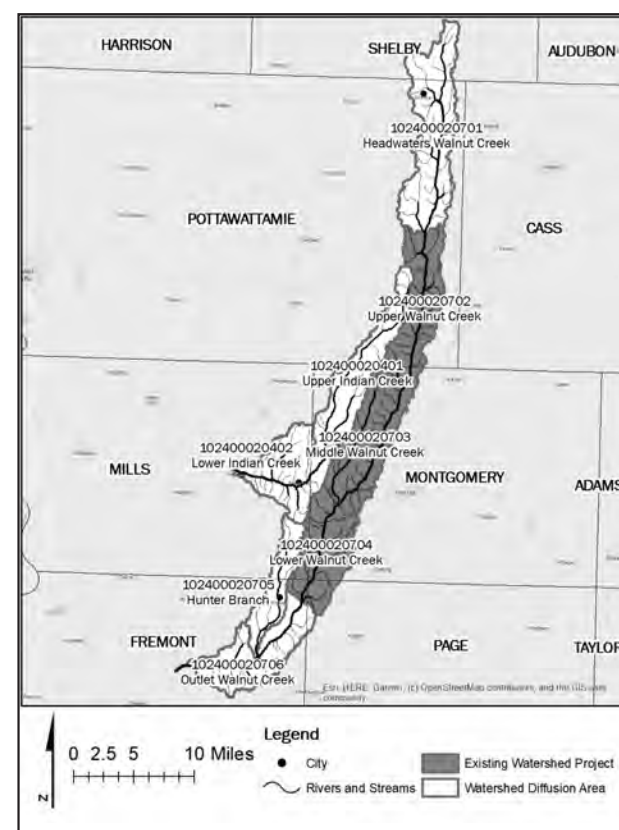
We still have MRBI EQIP money for those wanting to install terraces in the original watershed area (dark gray on map) of Whipple, Crabapple, and Climax sub-watersheds of Walnut Creek. Please sign an application in your local office by April 1 to be considered for this year's funding, or by Oct. 1 to be considered for next year. In 2021, we installed 80,000 feet in the watershed. Those in Indian Creek can also sign up for regular EQIP or state cost share. The picture to the left shows one of our MRBI terrace jobs built on an oat cover crop.

We still have SF512 money for ponds. We are targeting drainage areas of 80-120 acres that are primarily in ag production with tile outlets. We have signed up several outside of the watershed but only one in. If you have ever dreamed of having your own fishing hole then there will NEVER be a better deal. Your cost is only \$7,500. Contact me to evaluate your site.

A big push is being made statewide to promote and install other nutrient reducing practices such as saturated buffers, bioreactors, and wetlands. Bioreactors can be installed on the end of any tile line as long as the line is not hooked to surface water intakes. Saturated buffers also can not be hooked to intakes but need to be along an existing or new filter strip and be along a ditch less than eight feet in depth. Saturated buffers also work in conjunction with drainage water management and allow the producer to manage the water level under the surface of their field for crop production, which can be a really nice tool in the hot months of the summer. If anyone is interested

in any of these practices, the State of Iowa has funds to pay for most, if not all, of the practice. Just contact me to see if your site has potential.

As always, I am really looking forward to seeing all the green fields this spring. I hope everyone gets along really well with their cover crops and if anyone has questions, please don't be afraid to ask. And while you're spraying or planting into your cover crop start thinking about next year. Its never too early to start planning.





District Newsletter **Fellow Iowans**

– by **Mike Naig**,
Secretary of Agriculture

We have a lot to celebrate and be thankful for this year. I'm proud of the conservation work that's being done across the state.

Working alongside our public and private partners, the Department has achieved some important conservation milestones in 2021. We completed the 100th CREP-funded wetland this fall; we now have 110 known water quality wetlands in Iowa. We're accelerating the rate at which conservation practices are being added. Working with our public-private conservation partners, we've added at least 41 saturated buffers and 15 bioreactors to the landscape in 2021. There are more than 40 state-funded, locally-led wetland projects under construction to date. A recent survey shows farmers and landowners are now planting more than 2 million acres of cover crops in Iowa, and the use of conservation tillage and no-till practices are up too. These stats are important because changes to the landscape and soil management practices lead to positive changes in water quality locally and downstream.

We have made progress in scaling-up the number of soil health and water quality practices in Iowa but there's still work to do to achieve the goals outlined in the Nutrient Reduction Strategy. We're looking for more farmers and landowners who want to work alongside us to make meaningful changes to the landscape, beginning with their fields.

I recognize that we need additional financial and technical resources to continue scaling-up soil health and water quality projects. During the 2021 Legislative Session, I asked the Iowa Legislature for additional funding to continue to supporting the state's water quality efforts. The Iowa Legislature passed and Gov. Kim Reynolds approved an additional \$320 million of funding through 2039.

Because Iowa has been able to demonstrate the success of our ongoing soil health and water quality projects, we've been awarded significant federal funding through USDA and EPA. We're leading or participating in 13 USDA-funded regional conservation partnership programs, and we've received more than \$24 million in federal funding for water quality projects in 2021. These federal funds help us better leverage state and private dollars so we can add even more practices to the landscape.

Thank you, to all the farmers, landowners and conservation partners, who are working alongside us to help advance soil health and water quality in Iowa and downstream.



IDALS Field Office Staff Continue to Effectively Deliver **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

– by **Will Myers**, **Field Services Bureau Chief**
– IDALS Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality

Over that past several weeks I've been working to summarize and assess another fiscal year of state cost share expenditures and we continue to see strong interest for our conservation programs. Demand for state funded programs continues to exceed budgeted allocations, and our local staff continue to work one-on-one with farmers and landowners to find the best solutions for their respective conservation goals. This is encouraging news as we continue to work through challenges associated with the ongoing pandemic and resulting impacts to our staff and field offices.

These conservation program delivery successes could not happen without the contributions and dedication from our field office staff. I've been fortunate to spend a significant amount of time this year traveling to our field offices to meet with staff and discuss how they have been able to effectively adapt to our current work environment. I've been pleased to hear how we continue to find new and innovative ways to communicate and interact with our customers to deliver program related services, technical assistance and minimize impacts whenever possible. We have also brought on a number of new staff to our team over the past year and have worked hard to find effective methods to train and educate them on their roles and importance to the collective conservation program partnership.

While challenges remain, we continue to work effectively with our customers to get conservation practices on the ground. Much of this success can be directly attributed to the expertise and professionalism of our staff and their ability to communicate and work effectively with local conservation partners and commissioners. Thank you to all of our dedicated staff, commissioners and conservation partners for your continued hard work and dedication and I look forward to our continued work this year.



Dustin Brake

Hello Montgomery County.

I am Dustin Brake, the new Soil Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Red Oak Resource Team. As a member of the resource team, I am based out of Red Oak but serve Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, and Page County. I am originally from and currently reside in Sidney with my wife and two sons.

Prior to joining the NRCS, I was in the United States Army where I served at Fort Bliss, Texas, Fort Jackson, South Carolina; and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. While serving, I was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. After leaving the military, I continued my education at Northwest Missouri State University where I graduated with a degree in Agronomy with a minor in Precision Agriculture, and a Geographic Information System certification. While attending Northwest Missouri State University, I was an intern through the USDA-NRCS Pathways program.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family, spending time outdoors hunting, fishing, or golfing. I also enjoy assisting on the family farm and continuing conservation efforts that my grandpa started decades ago. I am looking forward to assisting all of you in your conservation efforts, so stop by or give the office a call.



Abi Hoepker

Greetings!

I am excited to have the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Abi Hoepker, I recently started as a Soil Conservationist with NRCS. I am part of the team for Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, and Page counties. I am excited to be able to work with a variety of producers and projects across these four counties. I grew up on my family's farm in Taylor County which included row crop and a cowcalf operation, which led to my desire to be involved in the agriculture industry. My husband and I have our own cowcalf operation and enjoy spending our time outside.

My ties to livestock have been since I can remember so I enjoy telling producers about the opportunities Federal programs have to offer. While there are options that are site specific or depend on your overall goals, a few are most used in our area. We all want to get the most from our land but still have conservation in mind. Rotational grazing systems and added water facilities accessible to livestock are two good ways to help improve a pasture. Changing a pasture from a full size, constant grazing to a paddock system allowing areas to rest makes a noticeable change to producer's forage throughout the summer grazing period. If you own or rent ground and would be interested in improving your ground, there are plenty of options to help create something that works for you! Please contact your local field office to work with staff on creating a plan.

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Gone With the Wind

By: Bryan Shupe,
District Conservationist

It's been a crazy year, but it seems we find ourselves saying that every year these days. I want to thank everyone for your patience with limited capacity in the office due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I've been told several times that working from the front door or the hood of a pickup is not ideal. I whole-heartedly agree with this, and we all look forward to the day that all staff and customers are allowed back in the building. In the meantime, we need to continue to follow CDC guidelines from Washington. If special accommodations need to be made, let us know, and we will do our best to serve you as you need.

From what I've heard, crop yields were good considering the amount of rainfall we got throughout the growing season. I'm thankful for the good yields and hope we continue to see high yields in the future. The dry fall gave us a large window of time to lay out terraces, and a lot of terraces were built this fall. I wanted to thank everyone who reached out to do conservation work this year.

Dry conditions can also provide an opportunity for our soils to move with the wind.

Wind erosion isn't something we estimate or keep track of in this part Iowa, but it certainly occurs in Montgomery County. I see it quite often when conditions are dry, and there is snow on the ground. It's not uncommon to find some windblown soil in a snow drift. I often tell our new employees that we live on a big snow drift of loess. Our soils blew in here over millennia, so it's no surprise that you can find soil in actual snow drifts around the county. I have even heard stories of road ditches getting filled by windblown soils from tilled fields.

No-till is one of the most important practices for reducing wind erosion, making wind erosion one of the easiest types of erosion to control. The natural soil structure helps hold soil, and the crop residue, left in place, provides a barrier from the elements like wind and rain. Reduced inputs, combined with improved soil health and reduced soil erosion, is the key to long-term success in production.

I want to commend landowners and producers for the conservation work that's been done in the past year. We are very involved in terrace layout and design, but additional work like seeding headlands and waterways throughout the county doesn't go unnoticed. Keep up the good work, and I hope you have a great 2022.



Parting words from a long time Conservationist

By Gary Smith

I have to say my last days of my 44 career in conservation brings out many memories. I have witnessed many changes in the conservation field, some good and some not so good. I can remember my first years as a new employee, and it came to me that many people in the old S.C.S., and the care takers of the land, had left their footprints on this landscape for us to follow. I was fortunate to be a part of the beginning effort of no-till in Montgomery County. I witnessed the passion of land users like Dean McCunn and his brother Lyle and the dedication of Bob Cerven to make no-till become a reality in Montgomery County. The expansion of a terrace program that is second to none in the state of Iowa that continues today. We all owe a big thanks to the Montgomery Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners of old for dedication and efforts for many of the conservation programs we have today.


I have worked in four different offices around the State of Iowa, and eventually came back to where I started my career,

Montgomery County, in 2002. In my 44 years in conservation, I met all kinds of people with differing opinions and attitudes that shaped a career of judgement. I have always been amazed that no matter what the differences, we have always had a strong conservation ethic that has bound us together to this day. Like many people, I do have concerns of what will happen in future years. I feel that there has been a loss of a conservation ethic and a replacement by mandatory compliance for farm program benefits. Change always happens and always will; we must always consider the conservation practices that have been put on this land to help us farm better and produce more for a better way of life. With that said, never forget that many people have contributed funds to put most of these practices on our farmland. It is really painful when these practices are not maintained and protected like they should be. Allowing trees to grow on our terraces or allowing waterways to fill up and run around is not a way to show the taxpayers of this country respect. Everyone has a part in preserving the agriculture base for all, and no one should forget that.

As we all travel the roads and you see terraces, grassed waterways, and ponds just remember many people, long ago and today, have put their footprints on this land and are speaking to us all.


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Women in Agriculture

Saturday, March 5, 2022
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FEATURED SPEAKERS

Juli Burney

Juli's humor is insightful, delightful, universal, and enlightening! She was named Nebraska's Artist of the Year for her ability to improve people's lives through humor and effective communication. She promises to entertain like a comedian and motivate like an award-winning speaker!

Jon Bakehouse

Jon, a fifth generation producer, has been farming near Hastings for almost 25 years. Jon will discuss the principles of regenerative ag and share how he uses no-till, cover crops, grazing mixes, and livestock to help achieve his goal of 6% organic matter on his farms while creating a resilient operation.

Mike Connolly

Mike served as a firefighter in Squad 18 under New York City's Fire Department's Special Operations Command. On 9/11/2001, FDNY Squad 18 was one of the first to respond to the attacks on the Twin Towers. Thousands of lives were lost that day, including 343 firefighters. Mike will share his experiences form a defining moment in American history.

Find registration info at:
www.facebook.com/womenlandlegacywgg/

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Revolving Fund 01/01/21 - 12/31/21

Balance 01/01/20 **\$11,389.93**

Income

1M (FY22)	\$2,750
Interest Income	\$0.68
Walnut Creek	\$262.99
Total Income	\$3,013.67

Expenses

1M (FY21)	1,459.75
1M (FY22)	\$1,849.57
Education	\$3,000.00
Miscellaneous Expense	\$575.00
Payroll	\$3,608.75
Walnut Creek Dev Grant	\$207.99
Total Expenses	\$10,701.06

Balance 12/31/21 **\$3,702.54**

FY '21 1M District Budget (Commissioner Expense) July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021

1M Allocation & Supplemental **\$2,750.00**

1M Expenditures	
Advertising/printing	\$648.17
Mileage	\$457.48
Postage	\$110
Supplies	\$233.90
Dues	\$1,274.99

State Cost Share Expended in FY 2021

State Cost Share	\$157,636.19
REAP F/NG	\$2,860.00
REAP P	\$20,000.00
WQI Statewide funds	\$69,177.80
WQI Walnut Creek/Indian Creek	\$144,975.00
West Tarkio WSPF	\$41,944.75



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WE ARE LEARNING

— by **Lori Altheide**, NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

Since I began my role as NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Southwest Iowa in 2017, I have seen the amazing conservation ethic of landowners and producers in southwest Iowa. The diversity and amount of conservation applied that I have witnessed driving the country roads makes me proud to be here in SW Iowa. I'm impressed with the amount of cover crops, no-till and waterways I see. We are seeing significant increases in the adoption of cover crops. We are learning what they can do for erosion control, weed suppression, nitrogen uptake, providing forage and most importantly, improved soil health.

This past fall, SW Iowa NRCS Field Office staff and partners have been busy with one-on-one conservation planning assistance to farmers and other rural landowners utilizing conservation programs to help improve the sustainability of the land through conservation practice implementation. Our field staff enjoy the opportunity to promote systems of conservation practices that help producers improve their operations, reduce production costs, and conserve natural resources. I encourage you to contact your local District Conservationist to discuss your conservation plan and conservation programs available.

Check out these Farm Bill Programs available to consider if any of them might be a fit to help with your conservation needs. Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP): CSP helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment. Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Through EQIP, the NRCS provides conservation planning and financial assistance to implement conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, terraces, grassed waterways, nutrient management, manure management facilities, and pasture management. Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP): Through ACEP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP): Through RCPP, NRCS seeks to co-invest with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to the resource concerns they seek to address.

As a reminder, most USDA offices are open to limited visitors by appointment. NRCS staff are also working with customers via phone, email, and in the field. Additionally, regardless of vaccination status, we are requiring all visitors to wear a mask while visiting the office. To conduct business or find out if your local USDA Service Center is open to limited visitors, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Contact information can be found at farmers.gov/service-locator. If customers feel more comfortable with a virtual visit, NRCS staff can use Microsoft Teams for meetings and Box and OneSpan to enable sharing and signing of documents without leaving the home. I feel so incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to learn and experience this conservation effort and work with some incredible people. Do not hesitate to contact me. I hope to see you soon.

Mid Contract Management: Unlocking the Full Potential of Your CRP

—**Dustin Brake**, Soil Conservationist

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) provides technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. The program aids farmers and ranchers in complying with Federal, State, and tribal environmental laws, and encourages environmental enhancement. Applying a management activity is a requirement of most CRP contracts. If management is required by your CRP contract, the activity will be scheduled in your conservation plan as Early Successional Habitat Management.

The purpose of scheduled management activities is to manage plant communities. Under natural conditions, plant communities experience disturbance from animal activity, fire, storms, and other events. This disturbance causes a plant community to change by setting back grasses and allowing flowering plants to grow. Without disturbance, grassland plant communities may lose some of their wildlife habitat benefits and become dominated by grasses or overgrown with volunteer trees. The purpose of the scheduled management activity is to mimic natural plant disturbance to open the grass stand to allow wildflowers to grow, provide food and shelter for grassland wildlife and beneficial insects, and remove duff (dead and decaying plant material) and control the woody vegetation.

MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Grazing

Grazing must follow CRP Non-Emergency Grazing policy. If grazing is the preferred management activity, the producer must follow the grazing frequency, timing, and utilization requirements according to NRCS CRP Non-Emergency Grazing Plan Supplement. The grazing management activity may be applied to all acres in one year or divided into thirds over a three-year span. The grazing activity must be requested and approved by FSA County Committee before it can be implemented. Another consideration with grazing is to include an interseeding after grazing is complete. This will help improve the plant community diversity.

Haying

Haying only will not meet the mid contract management requirements. If haying is the preferred activity, interseeding, tilling, or spraying must also be implemented. The producer must follow the NRCS CRP Non-Emergency Haying and Grazing Plan Supplement for the haying period, frequency, and minimum stubble height. Haying may only take place from August 2 to August 31. With this option, a 25% annual payment reduction will be applied. As with the grazing option, this activity must be requested and approved by the FSA County Committee.

Interseeding

With the interseeding management activity, the goal is to introduce legumes and forbs into the existing grass stand. The most critical part of this activity is prior to the interseeding. The existing vegetation must be weakened by burning, tilling, spraying, or grazing. Non-emergency haying, where allowed, is also acceptable. The producer will follow guidance for seedbed preparation, seeding operation, seeding dates, and approved plant species in the Conservation Cover Implementation Requirement and the attached seeding plan.

Prescribed Burning

The prescribed burning management activity must be done according to a burn plan. The burn can be completed over three years if the total acres is greater than 20 acres. If the total acres are less than 20, the burn can be completed in one year. Optimal dates for burning are based on the plant community. Cool season grasses can be burned March 1 to April 15. Warm season grasses April 1 to May 14, and Forbs Sept. 1-Feb. 1.

Spraying (Herbicide Application)

To implement the spraying management activity, the producer will apply herbicide to target and weaken grasses to improve conditions for forb growth. When applying, apply the lowest label rate which will accomplish the desired conditions. Spray when the grass is actively growing. Mowing or burning is encouraged before spraying. When spraying cool season (introduced) grasses, the herbicide will be non-selective. Herbicides are most effective on introduced grasses in the spring and early fall. When spraying warm season (native) grasses, the herbicide should only target grasses. Herbicides are most effective on warm season grasses in late summer into the early fall. Do not spray over open water.

Tillage

If tillage is the preferred management activity, producers will till the ground no deeper than four inches leaving 50% residue and 50% bare ground. This may require a minimum of 3-4 passes and should be done on the contour. The biggest issue seen in the field is there is not enough bare ground after the passes have been made. Mowing, burning, grazing, or haying may be needed prior to tillage if the equipment is not heavy enough to penetrate the existing sod.

Timing and Location

Management activities are planned by contract year, which begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30. For new contracts, management activities will occur during years 4, 5, or 6. For an existing CRP contract that does not require a change in the cover type, the management activity can be applied during years 1, 2, or 3. In no case should management activities occur during the last three years of a contract. The most important note is management activities may not occur during the primary nesting season which is May 15 to Aug. 1.

The use of these management techniques provides many conservation benefits that include but are not limited to creation of a desired plant community, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved water quality, increased streamflow, improved wildlife habitat, improved forage, and reduced wildfire hazard. If at any time there are questions, the producer is encouraged to call or stop by the office and discuss the management activities with a conservation planner. All the information in this article is available upon request from the office and is included with the CRP contract.

MONTGOMERY SWCD SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS 2021

Kaden Jacobs, Southwest Valley School,
Son of Scott and Dani Jacobs

Tallen Myers, Southwest Valley School,
Son of Shane and Kadee Myers

Haylee Pennock, Griswold School,
Daughter of Todd and Courtney Pennock

2021 scholarships were
each \$1,000.



Board of Commissioners

Back row, from left: Fred Hossle, Roger Cerven, Dave Carbaugh, Kirk Baird, Kent Swanson

Assistant Commissioners

Front row from left: Margaret McQuown and Cassandra Alfstad