

New Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner Training

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Agenda

- * Welcome & Introductions
- * Role & Responsibilities of Soil and Water Conservation Districts & Commissioners
- * The Story of Soil & Water Conservation
- * Rising to the Challenge: Filling the Role & Upholding the Responsibilities
- * The Partnership: Partner roles in supporting commissioners

Roles & Responsibilities

- * Elected official
- * 5 elected commissioners per board/no more than 1 per township/appointed assistant commissioners
- * Four year terms, non partisan, even numbered years during general election
- * No compensation, reimbursed for actual expenses as funding allows
- * Protected from personal liability in the discharge of duties

Roles & Responsibilities

- * Attend monthly meetings
- * Abide by Iowa Open Meetings Law
- * Send out a notice of meeting with agenda 24 hours in advance
- * Have a quorum (3 commissioners) when conducting official business
- * Maintain complete and accurate meeting minutes
- * Conduct meetings under standard parliamentary procedures
- * Create and publish an annual report

Roles & Responsibilities

Get practices on the land to conserve soil and water



IDALS



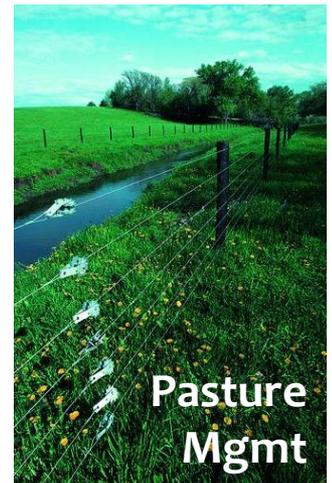
www.forevergreengrows.com/landscaping



IDALS



NRCS



NRCS

Roles & Responsibilities

Tell the story of conservation



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Father of Soil Conservation

- * Hugh Hammond Bennett
- * **Born April 15, 1881**, Anson County, North Carolina on a 1200 acre cotton plantation
- * **1903**: Graduated from University of North Carolina, specialized in geology and chemistry
- * Became a soil surveyor with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) immediately upon graduation



Hugh Hammond Bennett
1881-1960

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: A Career in Clay

- * Worked in every state of the Union & internationally
- * Moved from field to Washington D.C. in **1918**
- * In **mid-1920's** began publishing, over 1000 items including 5 books, over 400 articles & hundreds of soil survey reports, magazine articles and miscellaneous materials
- * Established scientific credibility to persuade his superiors to take initiative on the erosion problem
- * Retired from SCS in **April 30, 1952**
- * Passed away, **July 7th, 1960**



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Erosion Explained

- * **Erosion:** process by which earth is worn away by the action of wind, water, etc.
- * **Sheet:** (term coined by Bennett) uniform removal of soil in thin layers
- * **Rill:** water concentrates into many closely spaced channels
- * **Gully:** channels deeper than 1 foot



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Spotting Soil Sloughing

- * During his time in the field Bennett observed:
 - * Depletion of soil from erosion
 - * Lack of efforts to address erosion



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Dust Bowl

- * Immigration, the Homestead Acts and the Transcontinental Railroad encourage settlement of the Great Plains (**Late 1800's –Early 1900's**)
- * Unusual wet period leads to agricultural production
- * WWI increases agricultural prices, further increasing cultivation (**1914-1918**)
- * Technology enables cultivation on a larger scale (mechanized plow) (**1920's**)
- * Farming practices of the times were intensive with no conservation practices
- * Severe drought strikes in **1930**



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Dust Bowl



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: First Monies for Mud

- * **1928:** Bennett co-wrote USDA publication, titled, “Soil Erosion: A National Menace”
- * **1933:** Used the report to lobby for funds for soil erosion
- * Was appropriated \$160,000 for soil erosion investigation
- * First federal appropriation for soil erosion
- * The funds were used for demonstration projects on public lands at soil erosion experiment stations



Story of Soil & Water Conservation:

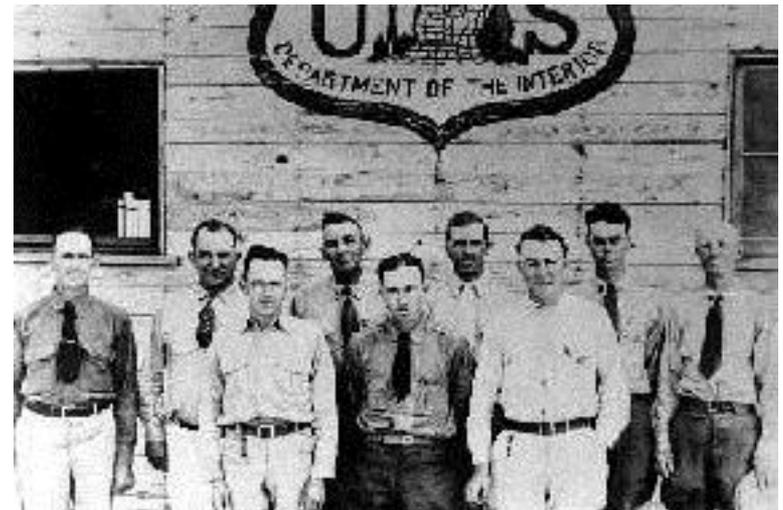
The New Deal is Good Deal for Soil Erosion

- * **1929:** Black Tuesday, stock market crash leads to Great Depression, a severe, worldwide economic downturn lasting through late 30's/early 40's
- * **1933-36:** FDR & The New Deal (legislation enacted during the Great Depression to stimulate economic recovery)
- * **1933:** National Industrial Recovery Act authorized \$5 million for erosion control on public and private lands and employment



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Starting the Soil Erosion Service

- * **Sept 1933:** Soil Erosion Service (SES) established within Department of Interior –became Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in 1935
- * Bennett appointed head of agency



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Civilian Conservation Corps

- * Bennett sets up 40 large demo projects over next 2 years
- * Civilian Conservation Corps Assists
- * **Dec 1933:** SCS is transferred from Dept of Interior to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Legislation for Loam

- * **1937:** Bennett presents to congressional subcommittee in favor of Public Law 46: The Soil Conservation Act
- * Bennett known for evangelical zeal, showman
- * Timed presentation to congressional subcommittee to coincide with arrival of great dust storm in D.C.
- * “Gentleman, Get ready because here comes Oklahoma”
- * Passed by Congress, signed by President same year
- * Established SCS as permanent agency within USDA, Bennett remains director
- * First constitutional act in the history of this or any other nation that sought to control and prevent soil erosion, flooding, and other threats to natural resources



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Groups for Ground

- * Bennett's concerns:
 - * SCS is a stand alone federal agency charged with major task of reversing degradation of soil resource base
 - * Slow pace of conservation projects on the ground (> 1 million acres of treated land)
 - * Lack of participation from private landowners/farmers
 - * Need to shift from public to private property
- * Led to Bennett's idea for Soil and Water Conservation District's to serve as bridge between SCS, a federal, technical agency and local landowners

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Code for Community Conservation

- * Standard State Soil Conservation District Law is drafted (model law recommending legislation that would allow landowners to form voluntary soil conservation districts)
- * FDR sends a letter to governors recommending each state adopt such a law as part of the effective national law to conserve soil
- * By the **end of 1937**, 22 states enacted the district enabling law
- * **August 1937**: First district, Brown Creek Soil Conservation District, is established in Anson Co. North Carolina (Bennett's Home County)
- * **1945**: 48th state passes soil conservation district law

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Early Erosion Endeavors in Iowa

- * **1930:** Paul Weichman, ISU agronomist, works with farmers in south central Iowa to implement first demonstration projects (crop rotations, liming of soils, contouring, terracing & tree planting)
- * **1931:** First erosion experimental work in Page Co. by USDA and ISU, amount of soil erosion and water losses measured under various cropping systems
- * **1934:** Demonstration projects (contouring, terraces, gully control structures, diversion dikes, liming & crop rotations) set up around the state by S.C.S., ISU, other agencies and farmers
- * Civilian Conservation Corps assist with projects



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Study Show Iowa Soils Need Solutions

- * **1936:** *Soil Erosion in Iowa* is published (report by Bennett)
 - * Only 13% of the state's total land area showed little or no evidence of soil erosion
 - * $\frac{1}{4}$ of the states original soil had been lost
 - * $\frac{1}{3}$ of Iowa considered to be 'seriously eroded', with $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of its original fertile soil lost in less than 100 years
- * **1937:** 7 - year summary from the Page Co. soil conservation project showed a loss of 22.77 tons of soil per acre where continuous corn was raised

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Districts in Iowa

- * **1939:** Governor Wilson passes FDR's Soil Conservation Districts Law, State Soil Conservation Committee and Agency is formed, is transferred to Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's (IDALS) in **1986**
- * **1940:** Iowa's first district is formed by three townships in Marion, Montgomery County becomes first county wide Iowa soil district
- * **1952:** All counties are represented by districts

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Stressing Soil Stewardship

- * **1939:** First major plowing match
- * **1941:** Governor Wilson proclaims first Iowa Soil Conservation Week
- * **1946:** First major Conservation Field Day held in Marion in conjunction with plowing matches, Bennett, speaker, praises event as one of the most significant ever held in the interest of conservation
- * **1948:** President Truman delivers campaign speech to 100,000 Iowans at National Plowing Contest, Dexter
- * **1949:** First Soil Conservation Recognition Programs by WMT of Cedar Rapids



Above:

100,000

Iowans, 1948

Left: National
Plow – Terrace
Building
Contest, 1946

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Cost Share for Conservation

- * **1950:** Iowa Legislature made available first tax money for soil conservation work in Iowa
- * **1973:** Iowa becomes the first state to appropriate state cost-share funds for conservation



Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Iowa Legislation, First in Nation

- * **1971: Legislation**
 - * Establishes a soil loss limit
 - * Mandates soil conservation if a complaint is filed and district and others determine soil loss is greater than established limits
 - * 75% of mandated cost share be paid by the states cost share appropriations
 - * First law of its kind in the nation
- * **1979: Legislation challenged**
 - * Law found valid and constitutional by Iowa Supreme Court

Story of Soil & Water Conservation: Urban Conservation in Iowa

- * **1970:** Amendment is passed by Iowa Legislature that all cities and towns in Iowa must be included in soil districts and urban residents in the county could vote and could become commissioners as well
- * **1997:** NRCS State Conservationist created NRCS Urban Conservationist Position
- * **2000:** IDALS creates first Environmental Specialist Position tasked with doing Urban Conservation
- * **2008:** Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey introduces five new Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship employees focused on conservation of soil and water in urban areas
- * **2012:** \$1 million requested by Northey in budget to Governor for Urban Conservation

URBAN POLLUTION !



CONSERVATION SOLUTION!



Rising to the Challenge: Many successes!

“CLEANER WATER BRINGS BACK TROUT”



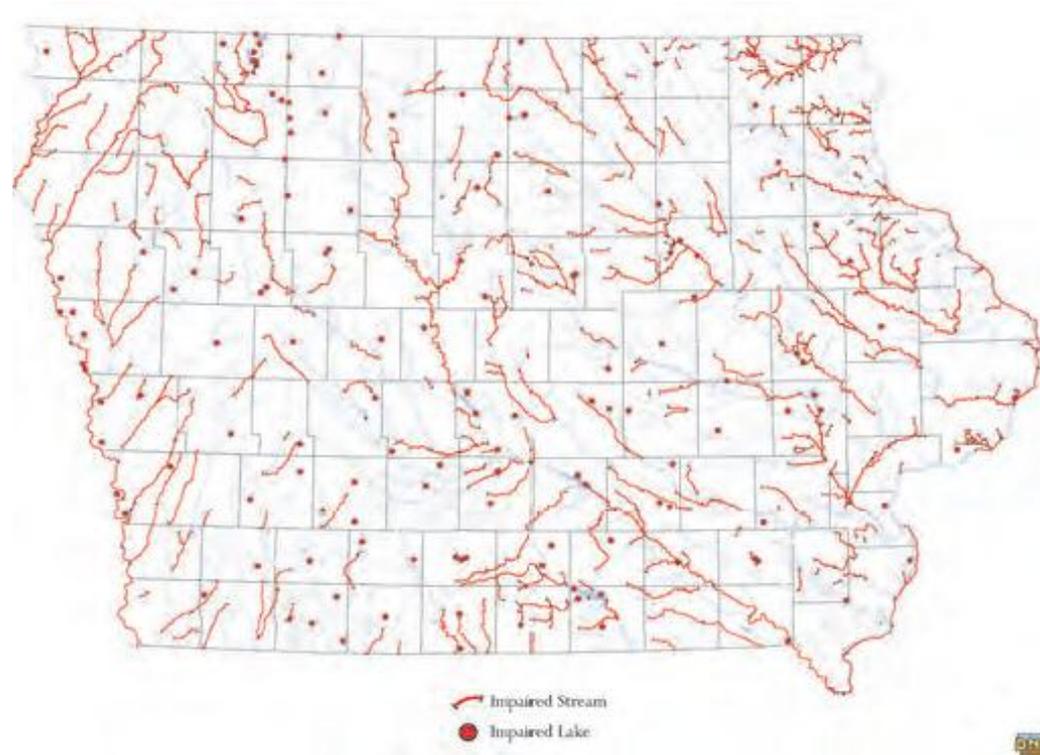
“LOCALS DEFEND
IOWA’S GREAT LAKES”

“KIOWA MARSH MAKES A
HISTORIC COMEBACK”

“PARTNERSHIPS PROTECT BRUSHY CREEK”

Rising to the New Challenges:

- * Variable weather patterns
- * Increase in population-increase pressure on the land
- * Soil losses
- * Nearly 600 of Iowa's streams, rivers & lakes are impaired or highly polluted
- * Over 50% of land in Iowa is rented
- * Lack of funding



Rising to the New Challenges: Why conserve Iowa's soil & water?

- * Protect agricultural industry in Iowa
- * Protect tourism industry and quality of life for Iowa's visitors and Iowans
- * For Iowa's natural heritage, plants, fish & wildlife
- * For Iowa's future, children



ISU



DNR

Rising to the Challenge: How?

- * Lead by example
- * Demonstrations in the field
- * Survey, investigate & research
- * Annual Work Plan
- * Soil and Water Conservation Plan
- * Provide financial assistance
- * Require maintenance on cost share practices



Rising to the Challenge: How?

- * Fundraisers (tree and flower sales, sell ads in newsletters, etc.)
- * Acquire property, receive income from property
- * Acquire soil conservation equipment and rent to landowners
- * Accept donations



Rising to the Challenge: How?

- * Awards
- * Signage
- * Tours
- * Presentations in the community, schools
- * Participate in expos
- * Inform legislators
- * Reach out to the media



Rising to the Challenge: How?

- * Adjudicate soil loss complaints



Rising to the Challenge: Can seem overwhelming but...



OVERWHELMED

SURE, I CAN HANDLE THE LOAD. NO PROBLEM.

The Partnership: ... you don't have to go it alone!



PARTNERSHIP

"You give me half the fish, and I tell my Mom to let you live."

The Partnership: Partners in Conservation

* **Core Partnership**

- * Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)
- * State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
- * Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC)
- * Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

* **Other Partners**

- * Other government agencies, academic institutions, environmental, non profit organizations, wildlife, hunting, commodity, service groups

The Partnership:

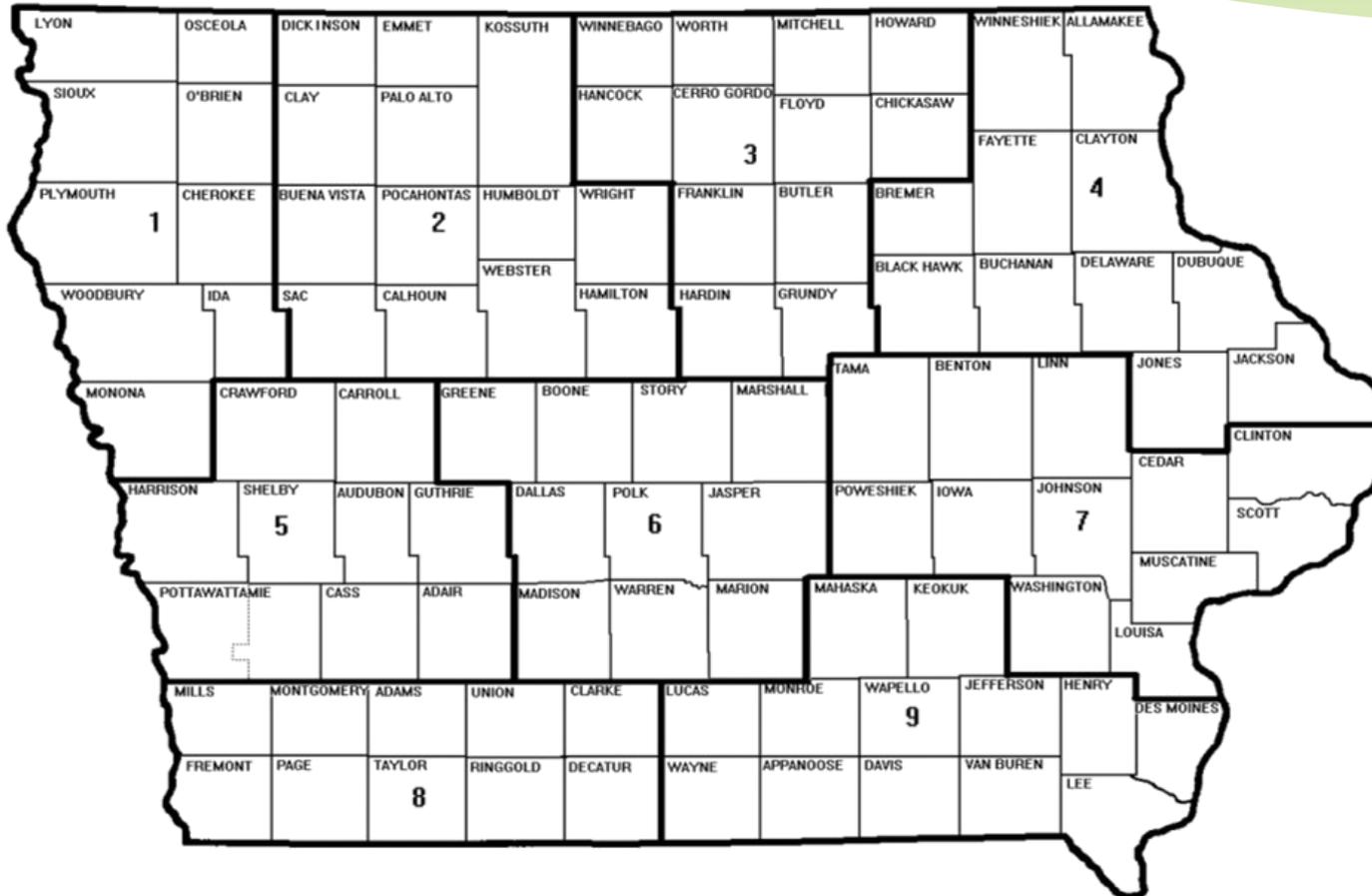
Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)

- * **1946:** Iowa Association of Soil Conservation District Commissioners is formed and incorporated (now Conservation Districts of Iowa)
- * A nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization dedicated to supporting commissioners and districts in their efforts to conserve soil and water
- * Funded by dues from the district, grants, contributions and administrative funds from Farm Bill implementation

www.cdiowa.com



The Partnership: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)



- * 9 Regions
- * 1 Director & up to 2 Alternates elected per Region
- * 5 Officers: Pres., VP, Past Pres., Sec., Treasurer
- * Staff (Executive Director, Part Time Admin. Assistant & Envirothon Coordinator)

The Partnership: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)

* **Education & Acknowledgement**

- * Poster Contest
- * Envirothon-North America's largest high school environmental education competition
- * Scholarships-High school seniors
- * Awards-landowners, commissioners, districts, teachers & others for their contribution to conservation

* **Commissioner Training & Development**

- * 6 New Commissioner Trainings, February
- * 9 Spring Regional Meetings, February & March
- * CDI Annual Conference, September 4 & 5, 2013
Sheraton Hotel, West Des Moines



The Partnership: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI)

- * **Policy**

- * Iowa Conservation Partnership Day, Capitol, Des Moines
- * Lobbyist
- * Resolution

- * **On-the-ground Conservation**

- * Administer Farm Bill funds to districts for conservation aides

- * **More...**



The Partnership:

National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD)

- * **1946:** Representatives from 32 Districts met in D.C., 1600 districts in 48 states at the time
- * Today, NACD serves the 3,000 districts & 17,000 commissioners in the nation
- * National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) is formed to deliver unified message on national policy
- * Work through various partnerships, projects & programs to support districts, commissioners & staff

www.nacdnet.org

The Partnership:

- * State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC)
- * Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC)



The Partnership:

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

- * **1994:** Soil Conservation Service (SCS) becomes Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to reflect broader scope of agency
- * Today, NRCS employs approximately 12,000 people in 2,900 offices, 90% outside of Washington D.C.
- * Focus includes stewardship of soil, water, air, plants and wildlife

www.nrcs.usda.gov



Leave a Legacy!

* *Be the change you wish to see in the world!*

-Gandhi

