

Region1 Spring Regional Meeting
Wednesday, March 15, 2017, 4 – 8 pm
Pizza Ranch, George, IA

The meeting began at 4:00 pm.

A welcome and CDI update was delivered by Ramona Nitz, Region 1 Director. The updated covered submitted resolutions, current legislative happenings and upcoming dates of importance.

Conservation Districts of Iowa, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship – Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources delivered the presentation, “Water Quality”. The presentation described current national, state and local programs, projects, policies, practices and funding related to water quality. Along with the update it offered opportunities for commissioners to engage with or start local water quality efforts.

The State Soil Conservation Committee and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality delivered the presentation, “State of the State”. The presentation provided information on SSCC activities, resolutions, ranking and generating demand for cost share projects, leading locally, state financial assistance programs, strengthening District financials, awards and the state budget.

The meal was served.

Doug Stensland from Stensland Creamery delivered the host county presentation. He described their operation by going through a power point and answering questions. They have farm ground, where they do many conservation practices, a fully automated dairy, and now have opened two retail stores for their ice cream, cheeses and milk. Samples of the Stensland Creamery Ice Cream were provided by the Lyon County Soil & Water Conservation District. They also purchased some door prizes of other Stensland Products for those that asked questions.

Kurt Simon, State Conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service delivered agency updates during “NRCS Notifications”. With this presentation Kurt spoke about the nearly 100 NRCS staff anticipated to start after the hiring freeze due to retirements and backfilling. Kurt shared the impact commissioners had on him when he started with NRCS and asked commissioners to take new staff under their wing. He emphasized that commissioners have a unique experience to shape the future of conservation in Iowa by mentoring new staff.

Elections for CDI Regional Director and Alternate Director were held. Ramona Nitz will remain Regional Director and the Alternate Directors will remain the same also.

Catherine DeLong, Water Quality Specialist with Conservation Districts of Iowa delivered the presentation, "How to Sell Conservation" which included information from Lyons Creek Social Assessment, sales training from DuPont Pioneer and the National Wildlife Federation's Guide to Cover Crop Messaging. The key take aways were: Listen, Build a relationship and Lead by example to grow conservation in Iowa.

Clare Lindahl, Executive Director with Conservation Districts of Iowa delivered details on the 2017 Iowa Commissioners Conference to be held in conjunction with National Association of Conservation Districts Summer Forum and Tour, July 17 and 18 at Prairie Meadows Hotel and Conference Center in Altoona. She encouraged commissioners to attend for the opportunity to showcase Iowa, hear from national leaders and speak with commissioners from all around the United States.

Q & A and discussion was held.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Meeting notes submitted by: Michelle Timmer, Conservation Assistant.

Meeting notes, presentations and reports are available at www.cdiowa.org