

---CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF IOWA (CDI)---

CONNECTIONS

The Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) informs, educates, and leads Iowans through our local soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation of natural resources.



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From: CDI President Dennis Carney

I hope this issue of *Connections* finds you all healthy, safe, and where you want to be with planting progress. The CDI Board and staff are working on several projects, including implementation of the S.T.A.R. program pilot area, the district planning process, finalizing this year's resolutions in preparation for 2020 voting, and figuring out how to proceed with summer events.

I encourage all Soil and Water Commissioners to remain engaged in the important work of resource protection. It is more difficult when we don't meet in person, but this situation may present an opportunity to expand how we reach our customers and tell the conservation story. I know many districts have a website or a Facebook page to keep your District informed; if you don't, please consider setting one up.

A lot of field days this summer will be done virtually. This will be new to all of us, but it need not reduce the value or urgency of the presented information. Please explore new ways of presenting information about soil health and water quality; your local newspaper is always looking for articles and the service clubs in town usually need a program. If CDI can assist, contact the office at 515-289-8300.

Deadlines for IDALS awards nearing – please share with farm leaders in your district

Important deadlines approach for three awards programs from IDALS and other partners. The "Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award" recognizes Iowa farmers who make environmental conservation a priority in their operation; and the "Heritage Farm Program" and "Century Farm Program" recognize farm families who share their land as a legacy through the generations. **See details on page 4.**

Executive Director Report – John Whitaker

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The second-best time to plant a tree is now. Seven or eight years ago, my son recommended to me that I start to replace the apple trees we have (had) on the farm. They were 30+ years old and had a little bit of decay and a few sun scald spots on the bark. I didn't think they were too bad at that point and wasn't sure where I would place new fruit trees at that time. Disease did not take the trees, but a strong windstorm did. We are left without any apple trees and that is new for Lorrie and me.

I mention this as a point of reference. For many years, several SWCDs have offered trees or shrubs of some type to grade school students or have held tree sales as fundraising activities. Some people may wonder what planting trees and shrubs would have to do with soil conservation or water quality work but those of us who are active conservationists know that planting trees and shrubs stops wind erosion, provides habitat, and helps pull carbon from the air that we breathe. Beyond that, providing trees or shrubs to grade school students plants a conservation mindset in young people that will hopefully be maintained all their lives. **I know that this important work you do has been difficult this year with the pandemic – so thank you for persevering!** Planting that conservation mindset reminds me of other important things we do. We ask people to give their resources to support our work for commissioners through CDI. We have rewritten our *Friends of CDI* brochure to make it more up to date with current conservation work. [The new brochure is posted on our website](#) and we will be printing hard copies in the near future to have available for you to distribute to conservationists you know and work with.

Another tree quote sums this up well; *“Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” – Warren Buffet.* The same can be said about contributions to Friends of CDI, someone is performing conservation work today because someone care enough about future efforts to provide resources a long time ago.

2020 CDI Scholarship Winners!

Each year, CDI partners with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to foster the higher education endeavors of Iowa students interested in conservation and agriculture by offering scholarships. Iowa High School Class of 2020 students pursuing programs of study in any field of conservation or agriculture qualify for the Conservation Scholarship. **Please join us in congratulating the CDI Scholarship Winners for 2020!**

2020 CDI Scholarship Winners

First Place – Chloe Calhoun (Region 1) Plymouth SWCD \$3000

Second Place – Collin Witte (Region 3) Cerro Gordo SWCD \$2000

Third Place – Lydia Johnson (Region 6) Polk SWCD \$1000

Regional Winners - \$500

Region 2 – Chase Hurd – Sac SWCD

Region 4 – Lauren Goldsmith – Delaware SWCD

Region 5 – Molly Simmons – Guthrie SWCD

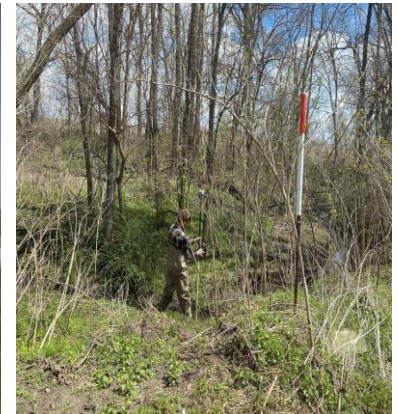
Region 7- Chloe Engelbrecht – Scott SWCD

Region 8 – Easton Hultman – Montgomery SWCD

Region 9 – Logan Schmitt – Van Buren SWCD

Soil and Water Conservation Week April 26 - May 3, 2020

The annual Iowa *Soil and Water Conservation Week* is an opportunity to recognize the important conservation work that has been placed on the Iowa landscape and bring attention to the ongoing work by farmers, landowners and urban residents to protect the state’s soil and water resources. Some locally planned events were disrupted by current events, but other activities could proceed. Here are just a few examples. Photos courtesy of IDALS – and check out more photos on the [IDALS Facebook page!](#)



Clockwise: Planting trees in Adair County; Taylor County demonstration plot; surveying in Polk County; recently installed wetland Polk County; Marion County installing waterway project.

Iowa Organizations Eligible for Farmer-Led Conservation & Watershed Protection Mini-Grant Program

Looking to kickstart or expand farmer-led conservation demonstration efforts? This mini-grant program will support nongovernmental organizations, state or county government agencies, university Extension professionals, and others who support farmers in one or more of the 12 SERA-46/Hypoxia Task Force states in the Mississippi River Basin: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. Qualified organizations must partner with an existing farmer or farmer-led organization. Awards will be up to \$4000 for one year. Applications will be accepted now through June 1, 2020. Learn more and apply at [Watershed Protection Mini-Grant Program](#).

Awards honor Iowa farmers for conservation and dedication to the land

If there are local farmers you believe may be eligible for special recognition by IDALS and other state and corporate partners, nominating deadlines grow near! These awards honor Iowa farmers for their conservation ethic and loyalty to family farmland. CDI and IDALS encourages all local SWCDs to share this information so that those worthy candidates in their area may have a chance to be so honored. Whether preserving the soil or passing the land along to their heirs, we know there are many such farmers eligible for consideration, and we hope you will get the word out! Time is short.

Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards

The **Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Award** is a joint effort of the Governor, Lt. Governor, IDALS, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources to recognize the exemplary voluntary efforts of Iowa's farmers as environmental leaders committed to healthy soils and improved water quality. It recognizes those that have taken steps in their farming operations that improve or protect the environment and natural resources of our state while also serving as local leaders to encourage other farmers to follow in their footsteps by building success upon success. As environmental leaders, these farmers have adopted best management practices and incorporated environmental stewardship throughout their farming operations. Nomination forms for Award Year 2020 are due Friday, May 22nd. For details and nominating forms, please log on to [Iowa Farm Environmental Leader Awards](#).



Strip tillage demonstration

Heritage Farm Program and Century Farm Program

Ownership and operation of a farm by members of the same family for one hundred and fifty years or more is a significant accomplishment. IDALS in conjunction with the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation established the **Heritage Farm Program** for farm families that have owned at least 40 acres for 150 years or more.

The **Century Farms Program** recognizes and honors those individuals who have owned the farmland for 100 years or more of at least 40 acres of the original holding of Iowa farmland. Present owner must be related to a person who owned the land 100 years ago.

Applications for these programs must be notarized and postmarked before June 1st. Click here for application details: [Heritage Farm Program and Century Farm Program](#).