

2025 CDI Membership Approved Resolutions/Policy Statements



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This document reports the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) position on various resource and management issues in Iowa and the nation. It is a compilation of policy statements/ resolutions that have passed the resolution process since 1990 and are still relevant. Older policy statements – resolutions are included when they pertain to basic principles that CDI

endorses, such as Civil Rights, or reflect a long-time trend that continues to be supported by more recent resolutions.

Each year the CDI Resolutions Committee reviews all policy statements/resolutions that are five years or older as directed by *CDI Bylaws Article XII- Policy Statements - Resolutions Review*. The committee then recommends to the board of directors to either update language and/or renew the policy statements/resolutions or to archive those that have already been accomplished or are no longer relevant.

During the annual business meeting, members present will vote whether or not to adopt the recommendations made by the board of directors to archive the policy statements/resolutions presented.

ASSOCIATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CATEGORY	Association Policies and Procedures
RESOLUTION TITLE	NOTE: As of 9/24/2024, there are no approved resolutions in this category.
YEAR APPROVED	
SPONSORING DISTRICT	

COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES / DISTRICT PLANS

CATEGORY	Commissioner Activities / District Plans
RESOLUTION TITLE	Commissioner Travel Expense Reimbursement
YEAR APPROVED	2005 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: CDI supports a resolution to increase Commissioner Expense (1M) budget to include sufficient funds for reimbursement of all commissioner travel expense.

ACTION: Commissioners should be reimbursed for travel expense to attend regular monthly meetings and special meetings.

CATEGORY	Commissioner Activities / District Plans
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase Mileage Rate for Commissioners
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Ida SWCD, CDI Region 1

STATEMENT: The State of Iowa continues to fall short when it comes to the reimbursement of mileage. The last mileage reimbursement rate increase from \$0.39 to \$0.50 per mile became effective on July 1, 2022. Currently, the Federal Government's standard mileage rate is \$0.67 per mile. Costs of fuel, repairs, and wear and tear in recent years should have brought about an increase in the mileage rate. For counties in Iowa to continue to have persons interested in becoming commissioners without pay, the State of Iowa needs to increase the mileage rate to equal that of the federal government.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: A change in the mileage rate is an important step in helping commissioners defray costs associated with travel to perform district business. They are locally elected officials but receive no pay. County supervisors, city council members, and other elected officials receive pay; even the FSA County Committee members receive \$21/hr. A commissioner must drive 42 miles at \$0.50/mile for one meeting to equate to that of one hour of work for a county committee person.

CONSERVATION PRACTICES

CATEGORY	Conservation Practices
RESOLUTION TITLE	Promote Better Right of Way (ROW) Policies
YEAR APPROVED	2002 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: CDI should encourage SWCDs to promote more rigorous and conservation minded Right of Way Policies with County Supervisors and County IDOT Engineers.

ACTION: As ROWs become filled with eroded soil, sediment and snow trapping efficiency decreases, native flora/fauna communities suffer, and road damage/flooding increases. Culverts fail prematurely when water stands in the ditch because it doesn't drain. There are hundreds of thousands of dollars spent annually in most counties to maintain ditches.

CATEGORY	Conservation Practices
RESOLUTION TITLE	Require Permanent Buffer Strips to Protect Streams
YEAR APPROVED	2019 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Linn

STATEMENT: Some farmers plant crops up to the edges of streams, even though nearly every Iowan can understand that water quality would benefit if stream banks were protected. Permanent vegetation along streams reduces the risk of the bank collapsing, and vigorous plant roots filter dissolved nitrogen as water seeps downhill toward the stream. Thick plant growth also slows the flow of excess runoff across the surface, allowing suspended soil particles to be deposited on land rather than in the bottom of the stream. Even though a few streams are protected every year with

the voluntary installation of buffer strips, many more miles of stream edges become vulnerable following brush and timber clearing. To meet the goals of the Nutrient Reduction Strategy (Iowa's policy for dramatically improving our surface water quality) we should protect our stream banks from further degradation.

ACTION: CDI should work with the SSCC, IDALS-DSCWQ, ISU, and the Iowa Legislature to develop, introduce, and lobby for legislation similar to Minnesota's buffer law. This legislation prohibits crop farming within thirty feet of a stream and would require permanent buffer strips to be installed to protect water quality.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Permanent buffers can be planted with hay for livestock, native or non-native grasses and forbs or trees and shrubs. Thirty-foot buffer strips along thousands of miles of streams will not be without cost to landowners and farmers. But local, state and federal government programs that share costs and encourage effective practices already exist or can be developed, and perennial strips could be managed to produce farm income.

EDUCATION

CATEGORY	Education
RESOLUTION TITLE	Funding for Education Coordinators
YEAR APPROVED	2019 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	East Pottawattamie

STATEMENT: CDI's Mission Statement is that we will "inform, educate, and lead Iowans through our local soil and water conservation districts to promote conservation of natural resources." We do a good job of informing and leading, but we could improve our education efforts. To that end, we need to concentrate on our K-12 schools, women, and absentee landowners. This would reach all future landowners, operators, and the general public and is our best chance to have a lasting impact.

ACTION: CDI should encourage both IDALS and the Iowa DNR to provide funding for education coordinator positions across the state that would target preK-12 students, women and absentee landowners with conservation education programs. These positions would have a comparable salary to watershed coordinators.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Education is key to CDI's mission of service to the districts. In the long term, education of our future customers will go a long way in improving awareness of the importance of good stewardship practices of our resources.

EROSION CONTROL / IOWA 2000

CATEGORY	Erosion Control / Iowa 2000
RESOLUTION TITLE	All Cropland Should be Required to Have a Conservation Plan
YEAR APPROVED	2007 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: CDI supports changing Farm Bill legislation to say that all land in production should be required to have conservation plans in order to be eligible for any USDA benefits.

ACTION: Many of the NHEL fields have long slope lengths and with excessive tillage have considerable erosion. Should landowners who have NHEL fields not be required to have waterways in place when those with HEL fields are required?

CATEGORY	Erosion Control / Iowa 2000
RESOLUTION TITLE	Implementation of Silt Fences or Similar Barriers to Prevent Soil Loss
YEAR APPROVED	2018 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Grundy

STATEMENT: Soil erosion is not limited to agricultural fields and practices. Development and construction in small towns and rural communities create tons of sediment runoff every year. Larger cities in Iowa are required by EPA to have a Municipal Storm water Plan (MS4) that includes management of runoff for development and construction. These practices include but are not limited to Silt Fence, erosion control mat, cover seed, etc. to prevent inundation of nearby streams and rivers with silt.

ACTION: CDI shall work with DSC and DNR to come up with uniform construction and development sediment control rules, a permitting process and enforcement for rural areas in Iowa.

LEGISLATIVE / POLICIES

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Levy Taxes on all Lands for Watershed Structured Maintenance
YEAR APPROVED	2012 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Cherokee

STATEMENT: CDI and IDALS-DSC should work to change the wording in Iowa Code Section 161E.9 from “agricultural land” to 'all real property currently subject to property tax' to allow possible future taxes to be levied in a fair manner on a county wide basis. The change in code would allow for the tax to be levied to all who receive a benefit from the continued functioning of existing watershed structures and would assist districts and county Board of Supervisors in maintaining and improving these structures.

ACTION: Conservation Districts of Iowa and the State Soil Conservation Committee are in support of the resolution to change the wording in Iowa Code Section 161E.9 from 'agricultural land' to 'all property currently subject to property tax' to allow possible future taxes to be levied in a fair manner on a county wide basis.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Support and Endorse the Funding of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund
YEAR APPROVED	2020 (Reviewed 2025)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Fayette

STATEMENT: The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund was voted into law as a constitutional amendment in 2010. The amendment was supported by over 60% of those voting in a general election. The amendment provides funding of 3/8 of a cent of sales tax revenue towards a specific formula the next time the state sales tax is increased. This funding model will provide at least \$180 million a year for soil conservation practices, water quality, wildlife, parks, and trails throughout Iowa.

ACTION: We support the state legislature’s funding of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The funding is built into the Governor’s recommended budget through the Invest Iowa Bill. To this end, CDI should encourage the Legislature and Governor to finally place a 3/8 cent sales tax increase in motion to fund this historic opportunity to perpetually prioritize conservation and natural resources in the Great State of Iowa.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The funding formula shows a substantial percentage of the Trust Fund going to soil and water conservation initiatives. These dollars are much needed and desired by the landowners and agricultural producers in the state of Iowa.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Support the Addition of the Term 'Soil Health' into Iowa Code Chapter 161A, Soil and Water Conservation
YEAR APPROVED	2020 (Reviewed 2025)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	CDI Board of Directors

STATEMENT: Many states have now added the term 'soil health' to their laws governing the operation of soil and water conservation districts. Commissioners, as dedicated conservationists, acknowledge that biologically healthy, productive soil represents a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Managing healthy soils creates the foundation for efficient food and fiber production and supports soil sustainability for future generations. Legislation has been introduced to add the term 'soil health' to Iowa Code Chapter 161A, Soil and Water Conservation.

ACTION: Be it resolved that the Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) supports legislative action to add the definition of soil health as a biological vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans to Iowa Code Chapter 161A, SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION. This action will assist Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners in their mission to increase the adoption of conservation practices throughout Iowa.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Supporting Farmer-led Conservation in Clean Energy Policy
YEAR APPROVED	2021
SPONSORING DISTRICT	CDI Executive Board

STATEMENT: Many states have passed individual clean fuel standards in the past few years. The majority of these policies do not credit the good conservation efforts that farmers undertake on their farms. The assumption being that farmers are going to do conservation, why put a value on their efforts. We believe that farmers are the foremost conservationists in soil conservation and water quality and those efforts deserve to be rewarded.

ACTION: CDI supports the formulation of a Midwest Clean Energy Policy which both recognizes and rewards farmer led conservation and carbon storage efforts. Such policy should start with the basic knowledge that farmers who incorporate conservation into their farming practices are responsible for the lower carbon emissions that clean energy provides.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: During the past two years, CDI has been involved with a clean fuel study group. One of the concerns that has arisen from this participation is that over 90% of the value of carbon storage through farmer conservation efforts is not credited to the farmer who is storing the carbon to the benefit of all society. Farmers have been clean energy leaders for many years by promoting the environmental benefits of ethanol and biodiesel, yet those efforts are considered to be baseline carbon storage in clean energy policies. In order to increase conservation efforts through carbon storage programs, farmers must be fairly compensated for their increased work.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Power Utility Company Construction Practices to Prevent Soil Erosion
YEAR APPROVED	2022
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Audubon, Region 5

STATEMENT: Many SWCDs have seen an increase in the number of wind turbine farms and solar farms being constructed in their counties. Many landowners enter into construction site agreements without all the potential negative side effects on these sites being fully explained. Following the construction of these sites, the damage caused due to uncontrolled soil erosion is quickly realized. There appears to be very little consideration given to layout and design of the sites from an erosion-prevention perspective as many of the access roads are running straight up and down hills with no structural or vegetative control measures. If CDI works with the Iowa Utility Board to make this a requirement as part of the permitting of the energy farms, it will then become a part of the initial planning process and greatly reduce this destruction of Iowa soils and landscape. This will result in a monetary savings for both the utility company and the landowner as they are often forced to return to the site to retrofit or implement measures to treat these concerns which could have been prevented with proper planning in the initial phases.

ACTION: CDI supports and recommends that the Iowa Utility Board require power utility companies identify in the written construction site agreements their planned conservation practices to prevent ephemeral and gully erosion caused by rainfall and snow melt. These companies will be required to not only install conservation practices at the time of construction to mitigate this water runoff being channeled by the access roads and sites but also will need to evaluate the results of their installed conservation practices.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Summer Conservation Construction Window
YEAR APPROVED	2022
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Mahaska, Region 9

STATEMENT: More conservation practices are needed in the state of Iowa. The fall and spring construction seasons are not sufficient to accomplish the needed work. In addition, producers are reluctant to participate in the summer construction season due to its effect on crops. Allowing producers unrestricted planting and harvesting on all acres affected by a summer build occurring between June 15 and October 15 would allow producers a cut or two of hay, harvest a small grain (winter cereal rye or oats) or silage hay or grain, plant late corn or silage or soybeans, etc. The current incentive is too little. This change would protect land and water during the construction year, more efficiently use the labor of all involved, and best of all there would be no out of pocket cost to IDALS and taxpayers.

ACTION: CDI shall support revising the rules to allow producers unrestricted planting and harvesting on all acres affected by a summer build occurring between June 15 and October 15.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Change Policy within Historic Preservation Act (Amended)
YEAR APPROVED	2023
SPONSORING DISTRICT	East Pottawattamie, West Pottawattamie, Adair, Shelby, Region 5 Co-sponsors: Mills, Region 8, Warren, Region 6 and Lucas, Region 9

STATEMENT: All SWCD and NRCS projects are required to be evaluated by staff to ensure that the project will not cause any detrimental harm to potential cultural resources in the project area. Current guidance is that if at any time there is or was a building in that location over 50 years old, then it should be considered a cultural resource, no matter the building's current condition. In addition, the current 50-year period is a moving target and needs to be a set year, i.e., 1900. Due to the current policy, several conservation projects have had to cease and desist, and office staff are not allowed to provide technical assistance as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) to producers of our district if it would violate the current cultural resource policy.

ACTION: CDI shall work with NRCS, IDALS and our federally elected officials to change the age of historic places to dwellings erected 100 years or more ago, as 50 years is not adequate time to make it historic. Additionally, more latitude needs to be allowed regarding the condition of the existing building or the complete removal of said building in the past.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Revise Rules for Bioreactors, Saturated Buffers, and Wetland Restoration on Conservation Reserve Program Acres
YEAR APPROVED	2023
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Floyd, Region 3

STATEMENT: Bioreactors, saturated buffers, and restored or created wetlands have the potential to remove significant amounts of nitrates from tile water routed through them. Edge of field practices combined with in field nitrogen best management practices are needed to meet the nitrogen loss goals of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy and to reduce nitrate levels in Iowa streams, rivers, and lakes.

EXPLANATION: Bioreactors and saturated buffers are presently allowed to be constructed only on existing or planned CP21 (filter strip) and CP22 (riparian forest buffer) acres. Restored or created wetlands are not allowed to be constructed on any existing CRP practices not originally planned with the requirement that wetlands be restored or created on the area. Many landowners would like to construct needed bioreactors, saturated buffers, and restored or created wetlands on CRP acres where they are not presently allowed to do so because the CRP practice they chose for the site does not allow ft.

ACTION: CDI supports revising the rules for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to allow for the construction of bioreactors, saturated buffers, and restored or created wetlands on any existing or planned CRP acres where NRCS determines that these practices are needed and appropriate. CDI should request that the Farm Service Agency revise the present CRP rules to allow

these practices to be installed on all CRP practices and that 50% CRP cost-share funding be provided to offset allowable landowner expenses to install these practices.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Provide More Clarity for Eligibility for USDA Farm Programs for Foreign Persons
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	East Pottawattamie SWCD with co-sponsor West Pottawattamie SWCD, CDI Region 5

STATEMENT: The General Manual for Rules on Foreign Persons is that they may meet eligibility for Farm Programs if they meet certain requirements with FSA and obtain a tax ID from IRS. It also states if they provide a significant amount of labor to operation, they may be eligible.

ACTION: CDI will work with NRCS, FSA and our federally elected officials to change this to read if you are not a U. S. Citizen, you are not eligible for any USDA Farm Programs.

USDA NRCS and FSA Policies:

NRCS Policy: 530.20 C. Potential applicants include—

(1) Persons. Producers who apply with a Social Security number and under the producer's individual name.

(2) Legal Entities. Producers who apply with an employer identification number (EIN) generally using a business name.

Note: Some trusts and limited liability corporations may operate using a Social Security number.

(9) Foreign Person. A foreign person who is providing land, capital, and a substantial amount of personal labor in the production of crops may be eligible if the foreign person meets all other program eligibility requirements as determined by FSA and obtains a tax ID from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (see 7 U.S.C. § 1308-3). With respect to a legal entity, any member, partner, or stockholder who is not a U.S. citizen or resident alien is ineligible for payment unless the person provides a significant amount of active personal labor to the farming operation.

FSA Policy: 109 Foreign Person Payment Eligibility

A. Introduction

This paragraph provides the requirements to determine a foreign person eligible to receive payments, loans, or benefits subject to the foreign person rule for the programs listed in paragraph 11.

B. Contribution Requirements

In addition to any other applicable requirements, the following significant contributions must be provided by a person or legal entity considered to be a foreign person.

Foreign Person	Who Must Make the Contribution	What Significant Contribution Must Be Provided
Person	Person	All of the following: - active personal labor

Foreign Person	Who Must Make the Contribution	What Significant Contribution Must Be Provided
		- capital - land.
Entity	Each foreign person who is a stockholder or other type of member.	Active personal labor.

Note: The eligibility determination will apply to all program benefits associated with payments, loans, and benefits subject to the foreign person rule, with respect to any commodity produced, or land set aside from production, for that crop year.

C. Active Personal Labor Exception for CRP

Labor that is custom hired may be excluded when determining both the amount of labor necessary to conduct the farming operation and whether the foreign person has provided a significant contribution of active personal labor, if both of the following apply: the foreign person receives only CRP payments. COC determines, and State Office concurs, that such labor is always custom hired in the county.

Note: Exceptions shall be producer specific and documented on CCC-903 or attachment.

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Revise NRCS Cover Crop Termination Guidelines, Version 4, June 2019 and RMA's Good Farming Practice Handbook to allow cover crop termination "at crop emergence."
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Sac SWCD, CDI Region 2

STATEMENT: Iowa contains two RMA zones (3 & 4) with different cover crop termination deadlines, with Zone 3 requiring termination at or before planting, and Zone 4 allows for termination at crop emergence. The guidelines do allow for an additional seven days of cover crop growth when part of a no-till system.

To modify these rules in order to match an individual farming system, every producer must contact an approved Agriculture Expert to receive a letter documenting the requested practice. This letter of recommendation must then be discussed with their individual Approved Insurance Provider to ensure that their crop insurance will indeed attach at planting.

As farmers gain experience in using cover crops, they can delay termination of cover crops without affecting yields, while increasing benefits to soil health, water quality, and weed suppression. This modification of the current guidelines would allow producers to maintain crop insurance compliance while utilizing cover crops for their full benefit.

ACTION: CDI shall work with NRCS, Risk Management Agency (RMA), and IDALS to modify the cover crop termination guidelines to allow all farmers in Iowa to terminate their cover crops at emergence as an acceptable "Good Farming Practice".

CATEGORY	Legislative / Policies
RESOLUTION TITLE	Petition the Iowa Legislature and the Iowa Governor to Convert Existing State Owned Ground Slated to be Sold Into Public Use Areas
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Linn SWCD, CDI Region 7

STATEMENT: The state of Iowa has one of the lowest percentages of total land mass in the nation designated as public use or state parks. In recent years the state legislature and governor have approved the sale of state-owned land deemed unnecessary. The one-time sale of the state-owned land would forever take away the ability for the land to be converted to public use. Some of the properties designated to be sold holds historical and cultural significance. Conversion of the property to parks and other public land would provide outdoor recreational and learning opportunities for Iowans and would be a local attraction to cities and counties across the state. Parks and public lands improve the quality of life and are important amenities for attracting businesses and families to Iowa.

ACTION: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) shall work with the Iowa legislature and governor to have the land identified for sale reclassified as undeveloped land for public use and state parks.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: The State of Iowa is planning to sell approximately 4,700 acres of owned farm land around the Anamosa State Penitentiary and also around the Mental Health Center in Independence.

STATE COST SHARE PROGRAMS

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Agroforestry
YEAR APPROVED	2005 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: Agroforestry is a set of land use practices that incorporate trees, shrubs, forage and row crops designed in a way that provide environmental, social and economic benefits.

ACTION: CDI should encourage and support state cost-share funding incentives for Agroforestry.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase Incentive Rates for all REAP Practices / Forestry / Windbreaks / Native Grass Programs
YEAR APPROVED	2007 and 2015 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: Practices need to be updated to include controlling competition (i.e. spraying, fencing, tree guards, manual removal, burning) that threatens the survival of the project. Incentives need to increase to cover current costs.

ACTION: CDI should support updating REAP incentives and practices that more actually reflect the needs of all forestry/windbreak/native grass programs.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Watershed Structures Regarding Project and / or Operation and Maintenance Agreements
YEAR APPROVED	2010 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: Many of the larger flood control structures have a 50-year designed practice life span. The sponsors of these projects hold perpetual easements that include operation and maintenance of these structures for the length of the easement. There have been several discussions among partners as to how sponsors should handle the operation and maintenance of the structures once they have reached their designed life. As of yet, there has been no clear guidance for the sponsors as to what to do.

Project sponsors need clear guidance as to how to handle the operation and maintenance of these structures in order to make important decisions. The sponsors also need to know whether they can count on technical assistance from NRCS, DSC, or other partners when these structures reach the end of the practice life and go beyond their practice life.

ACTION: The Districts would like CDI to assist NRCS, DSC, and other partners in providing guidance to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, County Boards of Supervisors, and other sponsors on what to do with these structures once they have reached the end of their designed practice life and whether or not they will continue to provide technical assistance after the structures have reached their designed practice life.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Revise the IFIP Funds Recall Date
YEAR APPROVED	2019 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Clay

STATEMENT: The purpose of the recall of the unobligated IFIP funds from individual district accounts is to provide supplemental funding to practices that can be completed in the spring of the current fiscal year.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: This change in the recall date will allow districts more time to allocate their original IFIP funds within their own conservation district.

ACTION: Be it resolved that CDI recommends that the Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality revise the date of the recall of unobligated IFIP funds from the districts from December 31 to March 1 of each fiscal year.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Support of Iowa REAP Program
YEAR APPROVED	2019 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	CDI Executive Board

STATEMENT: Since 1989 the Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program has been an important source of funding for the state's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The program is set to sunset in 2021 unless reauthorized by the Iowa Legislature.

ACTION: Be it resolved that the Conservation Districts of Iowa, representing 500 elected Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (SWCD) urges the Legislature of the State of Iowa to reauthorize funding for the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: REAP is used by SWCDs to support a number of conservation efforts:

- REAP is used to provide cost share assistance to install conservation practices targeted to improve water quality. The program can be used to support administrative expenses for watershed project coordinators as well money for conservation practice implementation.
- REAP is the only source of statewide cost share assistance used for the installation of storm water practices.
- REAP funding is also used to support one of, if not the only, cost share assistance program in the state available for the implementation of forestry related practices.
- REAP funds are also used for native grass and pollinator plantings.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Create a Soil Builder and Fall Grazer Incentive Program
YEAR APPROVED	2020 (Reviewed 2025)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Taylor (and endorsed by Boone and Story)

STATEMENT: Productive, healthy soils are a finite resource. Healthy productive soils are truly our nation's storehouse of renewable wealth. Improving this resource comes by increasing soil organic matter, the density and diversity of microbial life in the soil, and through minimal disturbance (including chemical and mechanical).

ACTION: CDI should work with IDALS-DSCWQ to add the option of a Soil Builder/Fall Grazer (Conservation Cover) to the IFIP Eligible Management Practices. This option would be a multi-species mix (including 8-12 species—cool season, warm season, broadleaves, grasses, etc.), to be planted in July, ideally following a small grain harvest. The Soil Builder/Fall Grazer would be allowed to fully mature before being grazed in the fall. Other than being grazed by livestock in the fall or proceeding spring, no other harvesting or terminating can be done until the following spring when the field can be no-till planted to the cash crop of the producer's choice. Up to \$100 per acre would be paid to help offset the costs of the multi-species mix and loss of revenue from a cash crop in combination with allowing the land to regenerate (rest) for one growing season. The number acres enrolled should be limited to 40 acres or less per producer with acres specifically targeted at thinner soils.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In an effort to initiate a shift in land use and soil health within Iowa, we would like to introduce this program that focuses on soil health, restoring organic matter, and rebuilding soil structure. The initial idea is to address degraded and thinner soils that are marginal and not productive by adding plants and vegetation that will assist in rebuilding soil structure and organic matter. The goal is to encourage producers to consider building soil health as an important component of their evolving business practices. Most producers will know where their degraded soils are, from watching their yield monitors during harvest, for multiple seasons.

The overall goal is to assist producers in rebuilding soil structure, restoring soil productivity, and educating them in building healthy soils. By interrupting row crop monoculture and allowing the soil to regenerate (rest) for a year, the microbial life in the soil will begin to rebuild soil structure and organic matter will be increased.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Allow Location Flexibility for Multi-year State Cost Shared Cover Crops
YEAR APPROVED	2021
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Cherokee

STATEMENT: Using cover crops on the same acres two consecutive years provides producers an opportunity to begin to realize the long-term benefits of cover crops. Sometimes during the second year, producers have a field that would be better suited for the success of a cover crop for that season. For example, the original designated field may have experienced crop canopy damage from hail, drought, flooding, or fertility issues. If allowed to switch acres and still receive cost

share, producers could be encouraged to use these unfortunate events as opportunities to capture additional sunlight through the use of cover crops. Building flexibility into the program could increase the chances of successful back-to-back cover crops.

ACTION: CDI supports IDALS rewriting the policy on multi-year cover crop contracts to read “Multi-year contracts should be on the same ground and the same number of acres each year of the contract unless there are unforeseen technical or weather issues that arise. Pre-approval and technical guidance must be given to switch the location of the practice.”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The current policy wording is “Multi-year contracts must be on the same ground and the same number of acres each year of the contract.”

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Summer Construction Incentive Program
YEAR APPROVED	2022
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Decatur, Region 8

STATEMENT: The current Summer Construction Incentive Program policy references cover crops, including that the affected area must have suitable cover that minimizes soil erosion prior to and after the construction of the permanent conservation practice. Current policies reference cover crop in place prior to construction, including the impact of the program’s incentive if the cover crop is harvested. There is no reference to cover crops after construction completion. Decatur SWCD supports putting more emphasis on establishing suitable cover crops after the summer construction project is completed. Establishing cover crops would help minimize soil erosion and improve soil health within the construction and spoils area of the summer construction project.

ACTION: CDI shall recommend that in addition to summer construction incentives, IDALS include cover crop establishment after the summer construction project as eligible within the cover crop reimbursement program. Cover crops would be required to be in place prior to the final checkout of the summer construction project and cost share payment. Cover crop would be required to remain in place with no harvest, tillage, or chemical termination performed prior to spring planting of the following year.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase Cover Crop Cost Share for Previous Users
YEAR APPROVED	2023
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Decatur, Region 8

STATEMENT: The current cover crop cost share policy through WQI allows for \$25.00 per acre for first time use and then the rate reduces to \$15.00 per acre for previous users. Allowing previous users to receive \$25.00 per acre for two additional consecutive years would increase the continual participation in the program. Depending on weather and other varying factors, the benefits of cover crops for soil health may not be realized in just one planting year and the producer is sometimes discouraged to participate again because the cost share is less.

ACTION: CDI shall recommend the Division of Soil Conservation increase cover crop cost share to \$25.00 per acre for two additional consecutive years of participation. After the third year of consecutive participation, the rate would reduce to \$15.00 per acre. Participation would mean the completion of the cover crop application through the claims process and not include any cancelled applications.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Make (580) Stream Bank Protection an Eligible Practice for Funding Under the SF512 Program
YEAR APPROVED	2023
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Joint Submission by Fremont, Mills, Montgomery, Page, Region 8 and Shelby and East Pottawattamie, Region 5

STATEMENT: Since the straightening of streams in Western Iowa in the early 1900s, stream bank erosion has been the largest ignored soil conservation issue in Iowa, with no public assistance to address it. Stream banks erode, sometimes hundreds of feet a year, directly contributing vast amounts of sediment and nutrients(phosphorus) to river systems, decimating stream habitats, polluting water supplies, and destroying infrastructure. A recent study performed by Keith Schilling, state geologist at the University of Iowa, and Dr. Tom Isenhardt of Iowa State University estimates that about one-third of the total phosphorus load leaving our state is from streambank erosion. The federal EQIP program now allows for funding of stream bank protection, however since the practice is so costly most projects are not affordable for the landowner. As substantial funding source is needed to partner and make these projects affordable. The SF512 program could be the answer. Stream Bank Protection is not a practice in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction strategy; however, it should be! Visitors to Iowa driving down our highways are quick to notice corn falling in the rivers from eroding stream banks. Now is the time to address the state's black eye called streambank erosion!

ACTION: CDI shall work with IDALS and the Iowa State Legislature to allow Streambank Protection as a viable approved practice in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy and to include this practice as eligible for cost share through the SF512 program.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Change Eligibility for WQI Cover Crops to 160 Acres Maximum Based on Social Security Number and Federal ID Number
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Jones SWCD, CDI Region 4, 2024

STATEMENT: Currently, determining maximum eligible acres are based on an individual or an entity name and all acres they are affiliated with. Switching to 160 acres based on Social Security and/or Federal Identification Numbers would create a smoother application process for both staff and applicant.

ACTION: CDI shall recommend the Division of Soil Conservation & Water Quality base maximum WQI cover crop acres on Social Security number and Federal ID number.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase Maximum Cost Share Amount Allowed for Livestock Watering System Installed in a Grade Stabilization Structure
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Madison SWCD, CDI Region 6 and Ringgold SWCD, CDI Region 8

STATEMENT: Currently, the Chapter 10 Rules section 27-10.60(1)e states: “Where a livestock watering system is installed in a grade stabilization structure, cost share is limited to 50 percent of the estimated or eligible cost, whichever is less, not to exceed \$500 for the watering tank or holding facility, pipe and valves. Payment will be made only if the structure is fenced.”

The current maximum cost share amount of \$500 is insufficient to cover approximately 50 percent of the estimated or eligible cost of a livestock watering system if Heavy Use Area Protection is included as a required component of a permanent tank.

ACTION: *CDI shall work with IDALS-DSCWQ to make changes to the above referenced administrative rule as follows: “Where a livestock watering system is installed in a fenced grade stabilization structure, cost share is limited to 50 percent of the estimated or eligible cost, whichever is less, not to exceed \$1,500 to cover all components of livestock watering systems including watering tank or holding facility, pipe, valves, and heavy use area protection.”*

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION:

See Iowa Administrative Code 27-10.60 (1) e

See Iowa NRCS Conservation Practice Standard for Watering Facility (Code 614)

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Add Fence and Livestock Water System Practices as Eligible Standalone IFIP Practices, and Increase Maximum Cost Shared Allowed for Livestock Water Systems
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Clarke SWCD and Decatur SWCD, CDI Region 8

STATEMENT: Currently livestock water systems are only eligible practices through IFIP if they are part of a Grade Stabilization Structure. There is a growing demand of livestock producers wanting to split their pastures to implement rotational grazing systems or to protect a sensitive source. By adding Fence (382), Heavy Use Area Protection (561), Livestock Pipeline (516), Pumping Plant (533), and Water Facility (614) as eligible standalone IFIP practices, producers would be able to utilize existing ponds, wells, and rural water to facilitate their rotational grazing system instead of being required to build a grade stabilization structure. Livestock watering systems tied to a grade stabilization structure are also currently limited to 50% of the eligible or estimated cost, not to exceed \$500. Increasing the limit from \$500 to \$1,000 would be more reflective of actual cost

incurred to producers when implementing livestock water systems.

ACTION: CDI shall work with IDALS to add the additional livestock water system practices and increase the maximum allowable cost share for livestock water systems.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase REAP Forest Stand Improvement Cost-Share Rate
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Allamakee SWCD, Clayton SWCD, Fayette SWCD, Winneshiek SWCD, CDI Region 4

STATEMENT: Due to the rising costs of forestry work the REAP forest stand improvement cost-share is no longer able to provide 75% cost-share. This has been affecting the amounts of applications we are getting along with the federal programs having a drastically higher cost-share rate through EQIP & CSP programs. The federal programs rates are looked at yearly; the last time REAP TSI rates were increased was in 2008. We need to be more competitive with the other programs and also make sure that we are able to provide up to the 75% cost-share stated in the policy. Most invoices are coming into the office charging anywhere from \$225-\$300/ac. We feel that the following action is warranted.

ACTION: Increase the REAP Forest Stand improvement rate from \$120/ac cost-share to \$210/ac cost-share. With the stating of the new policy being 75% of the eligible or estimated cost, whichever is less, not to exceed \$210/ac for prescribed woodland burning, thinning, pruning crop trees, or releasing seedlings or young trees.

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase REAP Tree Planting Cost-Share Rate
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Allamakee SWCD, Clayton SWCD, Fayette SWCD, Winneshiek SWCD, CDI Region 4

STATEMENT: Due to the rising cost of trees and other materials we feel that the rate of cost-share through REAP is no longer able to be 75% with the maximum cost per acre being only \$800/ acre. The average tree planting cost per acre is currently between \$1200-\$2000/ac. The current cost-share rates hardly reach 50%. After discussing rates with area Forester's they are all in agreeance that the cost-share rates are to low and need to be adjusted according to current prices. The tree planting cost-share was adjusted last in 2020. We propose the action below.

ACTION: Increase the REAP Tree planting cost-share from \$600/ac to \$ 1500/ac. Having the policy state 75% of the eligible estimated cost, whichever is less, not to exceed \$1500/ac (including establishing ground cover, trees, tree planting operations, weed and pest control and site prep).

CATEGORY	State Cost Share Programs
RESOLUTION TITLE	Shorten the Maintenance/Performance Agreement for Conservation Cover from 20 Years to 10 Years
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Mahaska SWCD, CDI Region 9

STATEMENT: The conservation cover cost-shared through REAP-Forestry & Grass requires a maintenance/performance agreement lasting twenty years. This lengthy commitment discourages potential applicants from applying for this agronomic practice. Programs should be better tailored to incentivize landowners to integrate more native prairies into Iowa's working landscapes to make them more sustainable. The cost of implementing a native prairie has significantly decreased due to the availability of seed suppliers and local contractors. Therefore, this does not constitute a substantial upfront investment that justifies maintaining the practice for twenty years. The USDA-NRCS currently requests five-year agreements for the same practice. While establishing a prairie takes three to five years, keeping the cover for ten years would provide significant ecological benefits without deterring potential applicants, thus allowing more flexibility to landowners in managing their land sustainably.

ACTION: CDI shall recommend IDALS-Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality to shorten the length of the maintenance / performance agreements for conservation cover from 20 years to 10 years.

URBAN

CATEGORY	Urban
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase the Emphasis on Soil and Water Conservation in Urban Areas
YEAR APPROVED	1996 (Reviewed 2015 & 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Unknown

STATEMENT: Construction sites can contribute many times more soil loss and sedimentation per acre than farmland. And, some soil and water conservation districts are experiencing increasing construction and expansion of urban areas. By increasing emphasis on soil and water conservation in urban areas, the human resource base served by SWCDs will be expanded, more people will be served, and more support for soil and water conservation can result.

ACTION: CDI will work with NRCS and IDALS-DSC to see that the following items are accomplished:

- NRCS and the IDALS-DSC take ownership of the problem of erosion and sediment control on construction sites in Iowa and begin a comprehensive soil and water conservation program for them.
- NRCS and IDALS-DSC work with ISU Extension Service to update the Iowa Construction Site Erosion Control Manual and revise Iowa's NRCS Technical Guide to make the two compatible and comprehensive in serving users who plan, design, install, and maintain soil and water conservation practices for construction sites.
- NRCS and DSC assign at least one person on the present staff the responsibility of improving the quantity and quality of soil and water conservation assistance in urban areas.
- NRCS provide training opportunities to District Conservationists with urban programs.
- IDALS-DSC prepares model ordinances for municipalities to use for erosion and sediment control and for better storm water management.

CATEGORY	Urban
RESOLUTION TITLE	Definition of Urban Agriculture
YEAR APPROVED	2019 (Reviewed 2024)
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Johnson

STATEMENT: Many factors are converging to result in an increase in urban agriculture. Some of the factors pushing people to urban agriculture include lack of access to rural acres, reduction of negative environmental impacts by curbing reliance on food and from afar, consumer demand to understand the nutrient value of food they consume, and efforts to protect more acres through diversified crop production. People participating in urban agriculture can be important catalysts to improved soil and water conservation in our cities and towns. However, municipal policies regulating urban agriculture either do not exist, vary widely, or are murky; all of which leads to confusion and lack of support for this growing sector of the food system. An IDALS/USDA definition of urban agriculture would provide guidance to county conservation districts as they develop localized cost-share policies which could serve as one among the many supports it will take for this sector to develop.

ACTION: CDI shall work with IDALS and USDA to review existing definitions of urban agriculture on a local to national level for the purposes of business models, planning, zoning, cost share and other relevant issues to create a sustainable definition to insure long term stability of these urban farms.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: An IDALS/USDA definition of urban agriculture could eventually have a significant impact on urban conservation. A definition of urban agriculture will provide a waypoint not only for county conservation districts but also, potentially, for local municipalities as they develop zoning rules and local guidance for urban agricultural practices. An IDALS/USDA definition of urban agriculture would contribute clarity that is uniform across the state and could be a contributor to better regulation of urban agriculture impacting urban conservation, wildlife habitat enhancement, preservation of urban waterways, and enhancement of urban soils. To determine the relevance of existing definitions is a possible starting point. Other processes of gathering relevant input may include speaking with farmers who operate within city limits, city

managers or city councilors, and other stakeholders. The context of both small towns and larger cities should be considered and represented in any definition of urban agriculture for Iowa.

MISCELLANEOUS

CATEGORY	Miscellaneous
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase the Minimum and Maximum Salary Range for State Soil Conservation Technicians
YEAR APPROVED	2023
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Joint Submission Warren and Madison, Region 6, and Buena Vista, Region 2

STATEMENT: A reoccurring theme voiced by Soil & Water Conservation Commissioners and field office staff over the past few years has been the inability to attract and retain quality State Soil Conservation Technicians because of the low salary range offered. For example, job announcements for State Soil Conservation Technician positions in 2022 offered a beginning salary range of \$31,844 to \$45,988 per year (\$15.31 - \$22.11 / hr.), whereas a federal GS-7 Soil Conservation Technician would have started out at a minimum salary of \$44,864. There are serious state salary deficiencies compared to other technical positions in the public and private sector. The cost of acquiring and retraining new State Soil Conservation Technician staff has become a huge burden on our soil and water conservation efforts, contributing to a 1-2+ year backlog of initial landowner field visits in many of our Districts.

ACTION: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) shall work with IDALS and Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to re-evaluate salary and classification for State Soil Conservation Technicians and expanding funding or finding alternative ways to correct deficiencies compared to other like positions in the public and private sector.

CATEGORY	Miscellaneous
RESOLUTION TITLE	Increase the Minimum and Maximum Salary Range for State Soil Conservation Technicians
YEAR APPROVED	2024
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Greene SWCD and Marion SWCD, CDI Region 6

STATEMENT: Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS) categorizes the Conservation Assistant position as a Secretary 2 with a salary range of \$39,124.80 to \$57,262.40 per year (\$18.81 - \$27.53 / hr.) in 2023. Minimum qualification requirements include experience equal to two years of full-time general office work, one having been secretarial, or post high school work in an accredited business, secretarial or related curriculum which can be substituted for work experience on a month-for-month basis, or a minimum of 30 hours undergraduate course work which can be substituted for one year of general office experience. Effectively, any new IDALS hire

begins at the base pay in terms of experience and education. Given the intense private sector talent wars, this practice makes it difficult to recruit and retain highly qualified candidates that match today's increased responsibilities required of a conservation assistant. This position has changed and evolved over the years and now requires more skills and abilities than historically expected.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Similar positions in the public and private sectors have starting pay of around \$21/hour and have maximum pay of over \$30/hour. In addition, many of those positions receive a yearly cost of living increase of five percent or more. The conservation assistant is an integral part of fulfilling our conservation mission by performing administrative and clerical tasks to further field office program support, district activities, and NRCS goals. The State has failed to offer a competitive salary for this position compared to other administrative/secretarial/program specialist positions. As a result, this is causing serious issues with retaining quality individuals.

ACTION: CDI shall request IDALS and Iowa Department of Administrative Services to timely re-evaluate salary and classification for State Conservation Assistants (CA) and adjust the CA starting salary based on a sliding scale which honors the candidates experience and educational attainment.

ACTION: CDI shall work with the Iowa Legislature to increase the state's standard mileage rate to equal that of the federal government's rate and whenever the federal government mileage rate is increased, the state of Iowa's mileage rates shall increase to match the federal rate.

CATEGORY	Miscellaneous
RESOLUTION TITLE	Provide a State Soil Conservation Technician (State Technician) Position for Every Soil and Water Conservation District
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Joint Submission Linn SWCD, Region 7, and Union SWCD, Region 8

STATEMENT: Soil Conservation Technicians (SCT) provide technical assistance to the SWCD in the inventory and evaluation, layout, survey, design, inspection and construction of soil and water conservation practices. IDALS employs approximately 40 SCTs throughout the state leaving 60 SWCDs without a dedicated technician. Districts with SCTs are capable of efficiently implementing structural practices that will reduce erosion and address water quality concerns for decades to come. Districts without SCTs have faced long wait times for field visits and engineering plans, often resulting in producers waiting in a one to two year backlog. Districts without SCTs rely on NRCS engineering resources which are facing staffing, retention, and training challenges as experienced staff retires.

ACTION: Conservation Districts of Iowa (CDI) shall work with Iowa Department of Administrative Services (DAS), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to permanently fund 100 Soil Conservation Technician (SCT) positions to place an employee in every Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The stated agencies shall seek alternative funding sources to supplement IDALS budget shortfalls.

CATEGORY	Miscellaneous
RESOLUTION TITLE	Update/Revise, as necessary, IDALS Job Descriptions to Allow Overtime Hours
YEAR APPROVED	2025
SPONSORING DISTRICT	Joint Submission Monroe and Keokuk SWCD, Region 9

STATEMENT: IDALS-DSCWQ Conservation Assistants and Technicians need to be offered overtime when training and / or covering another county. SWCDs find that the workload for personnel is too great to complete within the standard 40-hour work week. The additional time will allow personnel to complete needed tasks within their own county. Qualified trainers need to continue work within their USDA-NRCS domicile office to assure they have the latest up-to-date information on federal cost-share programs, software programs, and hardware.

ACTION: IDALS-DSCWQ is being asked to sanction up to 10 hours per week when staff is covering another county and up to 10 hours per week overtime for up to 6 months when training each new employee. If needed, the current Secretary 2 position could be elevated to Secretary 3 title to those individuals having the skills to cover and train new employees. As well, revising the current Technician 3 position description to allow overtime for those individuals covering and / or training new employees.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Turnover of State employees has been extreme over the past several years. In addition, there are fewer and fewer seasoned employees to direct the full scope of these positions. As noted, domicile workload does not decrease during these times, leaving some items incomplete. Increasing work hours via overtime pay would be of assistance in accomplishing domicile workload.