

CDI News

Volume 13, Issue 1

January, 2008

CDI Board Members

Rick Juchems, President

Tim Palmer, Vice President

Jerry Fine, Past President

Babetta Lucke, Treasurer

Lorna Troester, Secretary

Directors

Region 1: Kenneth Gard

Region 2: Wendell Christensen

Region 3: Dean Stromer

Region 4: Lorna Troester

Region 5: Babetta Lucke

Region 6: Arlan Becker

Region 7: Jane Weber

Region 8: Barbara Johnson

Region 9: Jim Gevock

Our Mission: *“CDI informs, educates and leads Iowans through our local districts to promote conservation of natural resources.”*

Just Juchems--“Let the Adventure Begin”

As your new president I'd like to thank you for your vote of confidence by electing me president of CDI. A bit of background for those of you I don't know *yet*. I grew up on a diversified crop and livestock farm in Grundy County and graduated from South Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in animal science in 1978. That same year I married my wife, Jane and we moved to Butler County to farm. We have two children Nathaniel and Elizabeth.

Our farming operation consists of minimum-till corn, no-till beans, and alfalfa, as well as some custom farming. We have filter strips on all our creeks and have waterways where needed. Most of the ground is patterned tilled with some terraces on longer slopes. We used CRP to put in a large wind break around our living site. We finish 250 steers and custom finish hogs for Jane's brother. The cattle runoff is totally contained thanks to an EQIP funded manure storage structure. The manure is fall applied as needed and according to DNR regulations. Ours is an *Iowa Learning Farm*, starting with nitrogen trials leading to the cover crop studies now underway.

The adventure as president of CDI is just now underway. I am looking forward to the challenges and opportunities this office will bring. One of those challenges is helping Iowans understand that all land owners, rural and urban, live in a delicate environment. We all need to conserve and improve our resources for future generations. One of my goals is to bring greater conservation awareness to all Iowans.

In February of 2007, I had the honor of attending the NACD annual conference. Olin Sims challenged us, “We must be willing to adapt to the changing landscape of America to continue to provide the needed assistance to protect our resource base and we must develop the next generation of conservation leaders.” I hope during my term as president, I can help districts grow and adapt to the changing needs of our land and our customers.

The conservation movement has been around for over 70 years and we are joined by many organizations with the mission of caring for the environment. We must collaborate and communicate our common goals so that the next 70 years can be even more productive.

Rick Juchems

Visit our website
often for events and
other information at:
www.cdiowa.org

Deb Ryun, Executive Director debryun@cdiowa.org

Latisha Cunningham, Administrative Assistant latishacunningham@cdiowa.org

Hilary Johnson, Envirothon Coordinator envirothon@cdiowa.org

BE THERE!!

Plans are underway for the 2008 Conservation Partnership Day, Jan 24 in the Capitol Rotunda

Theme: Building a Culture of Conservation

Event Hours:

Set Up: 7:00 – 8:00 a.m.

Displays: 8:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Take Down: 2:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Layout:

9 CDI Region Displays/Tables

Partnership Displays: IDALS, NRCS, IDNR, ISU/ILF, SSCC, CDI

500 Voices Poster

Watershed Display



Thanks to all of you, we will proudly display the 500 Voices poster. It looks great and received lots of favorable comments at Annual Conference. This is a great way to put faces on the conservation story.

Soil and water conservation district activities will be showcased in the 9 CDI Region tables/displays. If you have display materials to contribute, contact your respective CDI Regional Director now. This could include photos of success stories or photos depicting resource

conservation needs in your area. This is your district's opportunity to communicate with state legislators, conservation partners, and others in attendance.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, PLAN TO ATTEND AND TELL YOUR LEGISLATORS WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU DO AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT!

“What a conference! The presentations and breakout sessions were interesting and informative. From hypoxia to soil loss complaints to discussion of the resolutions to urban conservation to the inspirational words from Krysta Harden . . . what an excellent learning forum for everyone who attended! The awards presentations were a wonderful way to thank those who have worked so hard to keep the conservation message alive through examples of what they've done on the land as well as in the classroom. What a great way to meet and exchange ideas with other SWCD commissioners! I left with the attitude that we all have to work together to keep conservation alive and well in Iowa during such changing times. My only disappointment was observing that there were many counties that were not represented. I'd like to tell them that it really was worth the trip and the time. I'll be back next year.”

Maureen McLaughlin, Des Moines County SWCD, on the 2007 CDI Annual Conference

Senate Passes Farm Bill

December 14, the Senate passed the Farm, Nutrition and Bioenergy Act of 2007, known as the 2007 Farm Bill by a vote of 79-14. This action clears the way for the House and Senate to begin preparing one final bill (conference report), building upon provisions in the House version and the Senate version. Due to the late timing of Senate action, the House and Senate are not expected to begin finalizing provisions until next year. Senator Tom Harkin will chair the conference committee, with other members yet to be named. As a result, Congress has taken steps to extend certain Farm Bill programs until March 15, 2008.

The Senate-passed bill includes a strong conservation title, funding all conservation programs and

creating a few new programs. The bill also includes important provisions on technical assistance, technical service providers and continues the locally led conservation program delivery.

NACD is updating a comparison chart of the House and Senate bills and current law, which will be posted on the NACD website later this week. It will be linked on the 2007 Farm Bill page at <http://www.nacdnet.org/policy/agriculture/farmbill/2007/>

Native Bees and Your Crops

Native bees are valuable crop pollinators. Wild bees help increase crop yields and may serve as important insurance when honey bees are hard to come by. There are simple, inexpensive ways you can increase the number of native bees living on your land. Any work you do on behalf of pollinators will support other beneficial insects and wildlife. Improvements to pollinator habitat also may be eligible for financial support from government programs.

Principles of Farming for Crop Pollinators

1. Know the habitat on your farm. Using the illustration as a guide, look for areas on and around your land that can support native bees.
2. Protect flowering plants and nest sites. Once you know where bees are living and foraging, do what you can to protect these resources from disturbance and pesticides.
3. Enhance habitat with flowering plants and additional nest sites. Adding flowers, leaving some ground untilled, and providing bee blocks (tunnels drilled into wood) are all ways to increase the number of native bees on your farm.

Bees eat only pollen and nectar. In the process of gathering these resources, they move pollen from one flower to another, and thus pollinate your crops. Bees rely upon an abundance and variety of flowers, and need blooming plants throughout the growing season. Native plant species are particularly valuable.

Native bees don't build the wax or paper structures we associate with honey bees or wasps, but they do need places to nest, which vary depending on the species. Wood-nesting bees are solitary, often making individual nests in beetle tunnels in standing dead trees. Ground-nesting bees include solitary species that construct nest tunnels under the ground. Cavity-nesting social species—bumble bees—make use of small spaces, such as abandoned rodent burrows, wherever they can

find them. Most insecticides are deadly to bees, and unnecessary herbicide use can remove many of the flowers that they need for food.

Here are two things that you can do to begin improving habitat for native bees on your land: Minimize tillage. Many of our best crop pollinators live underground for most of the year, sometimes at the base of the very plants they pollinate. To protect them, turn over soil only where you need to. Allow crops to bolt. If possible, allow leafy crops, like lettuce, to flower if they don't need to be tilled right away. This gives bees additional food sources.

If you want to do more to increase the number of native bees pollinating your crops, you can plant hedgerows or windbreaks with a variety of flowering plants and shrubs, reduce or eliminate your use of pesticides, or work with your neighbors to protect natural areas around your farm.

If you use insecticides, choose targeted ingredients (for example, Btk for pests such as leaf rollers) and the least harmful formulations (granules or solutions). Spray on calm, dry evenings—and do so soon after dark, when bees are not active. Keep in mind that even when crops are not in bloom, some of your best pollinators are visiting nearby flowers, where they may be killed by drifting chemicals.

Further information about pollinators and what you can do to improve pollinator habitat is available through the North American Pollinator Protection Web site at: <http://www.pollinator.org> and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation at www.xerces.org.

The full story can be found at the NRCS website at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/pollinators.html>

SPENCER AWARD TO LINN COUNTY FARMER



The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture will honor Laura Krouse, a farmer and biology instructor from Linn County in eastern Iowa, with its 2007 Spencer Award for Sustainable Agriculture. Krouse owns and operates a 72-acre farm near Mount Vernon, where she teaches full-time at Cornell College. She also is the proprietor of a 104-year-old open-pollinated seed corn business and Abbe Hills Garden, a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) enterprise that serves 120 families.

Krouse is the first small-market farmer to receive the award, established in 2002 to honor farmers, educators or researchers who have made a significant contribution toward the stability of mainstream family farms in Iowa. The award includes a \$1,000 stipend and is one of Iowa's largest awards in sustainable agriculture.

Krouse splits her time between teaching biology at Cornell College in nearby Mount Vernon and operating her 72-acre small-market farm and open-pollinated seed corn business. As a leader in her local soil and water conservation district, she is often called upon for presentations about conservation, local foods and related issues.

In addition to about 15 acres of open-pollinated corn,

Krouse grows nearly 30 acres of soybeans and 40 vegetable crops on 11 acres. The vegetables require the help of summer interns and her father. "I always wanted to grow food, the row crops are just secondary," she said. "The farm has paid its own mortgage, insurance and taxes, mostly due to the garden although it requires a ton more work and time to manage."

She emphasizes that she is not an organic farmer but would like to be. "I try to follow sustainable practices but organic farming is really hard because it all depends on having excellent timing, which I can't always manage," she said.

Krouse has seen many changes in her farm, such as the appearance of additional wildlife. Early on, she built a four-acre retention pond for irrigation. The contour planting, grass terraces and cover crops also provide good habitat.

In 2002, she rerouted field drainage tiles to create a one-acre wetland surrounded by two acres of native grasses. About three-fourths of the rain that falls on her property must pass through the area before draining into Abbe Creek. A well at the foot of the dam shows no detectable traces of phosphorus or nitrate.

"I wanted to demonstrate what an upland wetland looks like," she said. "That's how we can improve water quality by treating water before it gets to our rivers."

Her favorite activities include projects for the soil and water conservation district. She is most satisfied, however, knowing that she is providing good food for families in her community. "Kids eat it on the way home," she said. "What could be better?"

*Excerpts from the Winter 2007 Leopold letter
LAURA MILLER, Newsletter editor*

What Are Invasive Plants?

Many definitions exist for the term "invasive plant". Invasive plants are generally defined as species that have become established in an area and, by out-competing more desirable plants, degrade natural areas and agricultural land. Invasive plants are usually non-native, but sometimes native plants can become overly abundant in an area, often in response to habitat disturbance. Invasive plants continually adapt and move to new habitats. Photos and information about some of Iowa's common and showy roadside invasive plants can be found at: <http://www.iowalivingroadway.com/InvasivePlants.asp>

Seeing the Non-Timber Forest Products for the Trees

Are you aware of the USDA National Agroforestry Center? This online newsletter of "Inside Agroforestry" has some ideas that may be of interest to SWCD Commissioners and is worth a look. See the full newsletter at:

<http://www.unl.edu/nac/insideagroforestry/vol16issue2.pdf>

THE demand for specialty forest products has been growing rapidly over the past decade. Numerous plant species that are thought to have nutritional, medicinal, or culinary benefits are native to the understory of pine and hardwood forests throughout United States, but little is understood about how to intentionally propagate and cultivate most of them. As a result, these plants are typically harvested by gathering them from the wild.

Several of these, like ginseng, goldenseal, cohosh, and edible mushrooms already have strong consumer markets. Unfortunately, their high economic value has created a situation whereby many species are already being over-harvested, threatening their long-term viability. To date, agroforestry systems have been designed that allow a few of these plant species, like ginseng, to be cultivated under a forest

canopy. However, little is known about how or if other understory plant species could be intentionally cultivated.

Many farmers and private forest landowners with limited resources are seeking alternative production systems that will allow them to increase the income they derive from their lands. In many instances profitability will determine whether they will remain economically viable to remain on the land. In forests where valuable understory botanicals already exist, guidelines for sustainably harvesting them are needed, while on lands where they do not occur an improved understanding of the site conditions required to establish them is needed. NAC is coordinating with universities, state forestry agencies, conservation districts, and non-profit organizations to develop science based guidelines for agroforestry cultivation systems for special forest products to provide landowners with economic opportunities that can be readily integrated into their ongoing operations.

Dr. Greg Ruark, NAC Program Manager

CCAC Preliminary Report for 2008 General Assembly

In its preliminary statement to the Iowa Legislature, the Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council (ICCAC) will report goals for greenhouse gas reduction scenarios at 50 percent and 90 percent by 2050.

The goals will help Iowans take action to reduce greenhouse gas pollution. Greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide, are believed to contribute to climate change and resulting temperature and rainfall fluctuations.

Although many other states are using 1990 as a baseline year, ICCAC members agreed to set 2005 as the baseline due to the greater accuracy of the greenhouse gas pollution data. More accurate data will provide a better picture of reduction efforts.

Years 2012 and 2020 were selected as interim target dates, but members refrained from setting actual interim reduction targets until policies and actions could be studied and deliberated. State Senator Robert Hogg advocated setting targets: "We need immediate guidance to flatten out greenhouse gas emissions quickly and then cut deeper," he said.

"We have an array of scientific and technological solutions that can help us make the needed changes in our uses of fossil fuels," said Richard Leopold, DNR Director. "As the council members look at more than 400 policy options, I look forward to seeing their concrete recommendations for policy and actions that can be accomplished economically in the next two to five years." Hogg also argued for broad-range goals to anticipate what would be learned down the road, both in feasibility and with new and emerging technology.

"We made good progress on goal-setting," summarized Chairman Jerald Schnoor after the meeting. Schnoor is also co-director of the U of I College of Engineering's Center for Global and Regional Environmental Research. "Going forward, we'll look at steep cuts to make the 50 and 90 percent reductions, concentrating on near- and medium-term goals."

For more information about its recommendations and work check the council's Web site at

www.iaclimatechange.us/.

Mindy Kralicek, IDNR

Sims' Services Honor a Man Who Gave His All



NACD President Olin Sims died unexpectedly from injuries suffered in a ranching accident on December 7, 2007. He was many things to many people, but to conservation districts, he was our President, our leader, our friend and a man who lived what he preached. He was raised on a ranch in McFadden, Wyoming, where he and his family put a high priority on caring for the land. His presence will be deeply missed, but his legacy will remain in our lives and hearts.

Freezing temperatures, blowing wind and a long trip did not deter over 1,000 folks from making the trek to Rock River, Wyoming December 15, 2007, to celebrate the life of NACD President Olin Sims. The ceremony clearly depicted the life of a man who followed his passions, touched lives across the nation and gave more of himself in 47 years than many of us could give in 100. There was an outpouring of love and support from the conservation district family, both at the services and in many, many phone calls, letters and emails during the last week. Memories of Olin have been posted on a tribute page at <http://www.nacdnet.org/olin/tribute.phtml>. NACD leadership and staff thank you for your support during this difficult time.

NACD 2008 Annual Meeting

It's that time of year again! The NACD 2008 Annual Meeting, themed "Conservation Beyond Boundaries," is scheduled for February 10-13, 2008 at [John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Casino](#) in Reno, Nevada.

The conference will encourage district leaders to think outside the box, address changing landscapes, adapt to a new customer base, establish diverse boards of directors and much more. Conference highlights will include general sessions, host state tours, a live auction, breakout and training sessions and an intense board meeting.

Visit the NACD website for more information:

<http://nacdn.net.org/events/annualmeeting/>



Early Bird Discount Offered on 2008 Stewardship Materials

The 2008 Stewardship materials, themed "Water is Life," are now available for preview and purchase online. Products for 2008 Water is Life include student booklets (beginner, intermediate and advance levels), an educator's guide, a church leader's guide, posters, bookmarks, placemat/activity sheets and much more! For a full list of products and materials, see the 2008 Stewardship Catalog, which can be viewed online at <http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship/2008/> and was also included in the November/December 2007 edition of News & Views.

Hurry to the NACD Marketplace, <http://nacdstore.org/> and place your order today! Education and Stewardship orders of \$150 or more placed by February 29, 2008 will receive a 10% discount. The discount code is NACD2-29-08 and can only be redeemed once per customer. This discount does not include sample packet purchases or other NACD store items such as hats, service pins, etc.

In addition to the items available for purchase, there are several additional items available download at no charge from the NACD website at <http://www.nacdnet.org/stewardship/2008/downloads/>.

A Soil Science Institute in Iowa?

Soils produce plants to feed humans and animals and are critical for our hydrologic cycles and water quality. Soils hold rainwater, decrease flooding and store water for use by plants. Sunlight is converted to heat at the soil surface, so soil serves as a regulator of climate. Soils that are rich in organic matter and certain clay minerals (like those of Iowa) serve as the earth's filters and remove many of pollutants.

The most recent average erosion estimate for Iowa is 5 tons per acre. That means every year, on average, 10,000 pounds of soil per acre move from one location to another. So, for an average corn crop of 200 bushels per acre, about a pound of soil moves for each pound of corn produced. For an average soybean crop of 50 bushels per acre, this means about (3.4) pounds of soil moves for each pound of soybeans produced.

Iowa soils are geologically young, having only recently been disturbed by human activities. Today, many of Iowa's soils remain incredibly productive, thanks largely to the organic matter they contain. This

organic matter was created and stored over several millennia by Iowa's tall grass prairies.

Although the organic matter in Iowa soils is no more than 50 percent of what it was when the soils were first tilled, an average acre of Iowa soil will still mineralize 150 pounds of nitrogen through the decomposition of organic matter. Corn production requires about 275 pounds of nitrogen per acre. Only about half of that nitrogen comes from fertilizer or manure; the rest comes from nitrogen mineralized in the soil. Soil organic matter provides an unseen nutrient source for Iowa farmers and allows them to use the crop production practices they currently employ.

We believe there is nothing more important to Iowa and its future than our soil and have begun discussing creation of a Soil Science Institute to better focus our science for managing and maintaining Iowa's most valuable resource.

Kendall Lamkey, ISU Dept. of Agronomy

2008 CDI Scholarship Opportunity

CDI is sponsoring the conservation and agriculture scholarship program again in 2008, thanks to all of you that participated in the auctions at annual conference. The scholarships are offered to Iowa high school seniors for their first year of education on the college level pursuing programs of study in any field of agriculture or natural resources. Three scholarships will be awarded on the state level in the amounts of \$1800, \$1200, and \$1000. Regional winners will each receive \$300.

Applications are to be submitted to your local soil and water conservation district office in the county in which you live no later than February 29, 2008. The scholarship application is available online <http://www.cdiowa.org/awards.html>. Be sure fill out the 2008 application, as application forms from previous years will not be accepted. The awards are chosen on basis of leadership, scholastic achievement, and need.

Looking for information on creating a watershed project? Help is available from your regional IDALS-DSC regional coordinator or IDNR.

- Bob Waters, Regional Coordinator for western Iowa (712) 243-2913 ext. 207 or Bob.Waters@idals.state.ia.us
- Jeff Tisl, Regional Coordinator for northeast Iowa (563) 422-6201 or Jeff.Tisl@idals.state.ia.us
- Vince Sitzmann, Regional Coordinator for southeast Iowa (515) 242-6008 or Vince.Sitzmann@idals.state.ia.us
- Steve Hopkins, Iowa DNR (515) 281-6402 or Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov



Conservation Districts of Iowa
PO Box 801 Chariton, Iowa 50049

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chariton, IA
Permit No. 450

CONSERVATION DISTRICTS OF IOWA

Phone: 641-774-4461
Fax: 641-774-5319
www.cdiowa.org

Dates to Remember

January 3-4
NC NACD Meeting
Chicago, IL

January 23
CDI Board Meeting

January 24
Legislative Day at the Capitol, Des Moines

February 9-13
NACD Annual Conference
Reno, NV
<http://www.nacdnet.org/events/annualmeeting/>

2008 Spring Regionals		
Date/Time	Region	Host
March 7	9	Wayne/Lucas SWCD
March 10	7	TBA
March 11	6	Dallas SWCD
March 12	8	TBA
March 13	5	Shelby SWCD
March 14	1	Lyon SWCD
March 17	4	Bremer SWCD
March 18	3	Chickasaw SWCD
March 19	2	Kossuth SWCD