

Policy Statements 2010



Conservation Districts of Iowa

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Association Policy Statements
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This booklet is developed to summarize the position that Conservation Districts of Iowa takes on various resource and management issues in Iowa and the nation. It is a compilation of the resolutions that have passed the resolution process since 1990 and are still relevant. Those resolutions that have become law or are no longer pertinent because of change in programs have been deleted. A few older resolutions are included when they pertain to basic principles that the association endorses such as Civil Rights, or reflect a long-time trend that continues to be supported by more recent resolutions.

Association Policy Statements Updated 1/2010

Association Policies

Scholarship Judging (2008)

CDI supports a revision of the scholarship application for eliminating the question about financial need. The judging criteria for the CDI Scholarship should be based on leadership, service, character, self-motivation, and scholastic achievement only.

The current requirements for judging the CDI scholarship applications include 25 points for “financial need”, which is hard to determine from the basic application. Awarding the scholarships based on the leadership and scholastic achievement criteria would be fairer to all applicants.

Group Health Insurance through CDI for SWCD Employees (2007)

CDI should conduct a survey of all 100 SWCDs to determine if there is interest in providing group health insurance access through CDI for employees of the district. If so, CDI should seek means to either act as the umbrella group or identify and provide districts with other options that may be available for them.

Several districts may have employees that would benefit by having access to a group health insurance plan. This is a matter that CDI should consider if there is enough interest throughout the state.

Auxiliary Scholarship Program (2006)

CDI and the Auxiliary should change the scholarship program to have applications submitted by the county in which the student lives in.

Some counties have more than one school district in them that students attend. With open enrollment being more of an option for students these days we also feel that the county winner should be from the county in which he or she resides and not from the county that they attend school as so designated now. Right now you can have a person who lives in the county but attends school in another county and can be declared the winner for that county in which they attend school but not in the county where they live. You can still pick up the scholarship form from that school but apply it towards the county in which you live.

Grant Assistant Commissioners Authority to Proxy Vote (2006)

CDI should change the bylaws to allow assistant commissioners to place proxy votes at annual conference when a district commissioner is not present.

Districts depend upon their assistant commissioners to help administer the district programs. Assistant commissioners are entrusted to carry out our district activities. If districts have paid their CDI dues, the district should still be given the opportunity to cast their vote at annual conference if an assistant commissioner is in attendance. Districts should not be denied this right to vote because a district commissioner cannot attend annual conference.

Realignment of CDI Regional Boundaries (2005)

CDI should consider changing the regional boundaries to be more localized. Specifically in the southern tier of the state where the current boundaries are long and narrow.

The boundaries of some of the CDI regions range 125 to 135 miles from east to west.

Association Name Change (1996)

IASWCDC recommends the name of the Association be changed to either of the following: “Iowa Association of Conservation Districts” (IACD) or “Conservation Districts of Iowa” (CDI)

A repeatable and memorable name is essential for marketing an organization. [Board of Directors filed a fictitious name resolution for the name Conservation Districts of Iowa]

CDI Dues (1998)

CDI will work with the DSC to see that districts are reimbursed from 1M for fifty percent of their CDI and NACD dues. In 2005, language for SWCD Commissioner expenses was added to the General Fund budget.

CDI dues increased to \$700 per year in 2004.

CDI dues increased to \$725 per year in 2006.

CDI dues increased to \$825 per year in 2008.

CDI dues increased to \$850 per year in 2009.

Percent Vote Needed to Establish CDI Policy of political goals (1988)

Be it resolved that the CDI will take no position that is not supported by at least 60 percent of those voting.

Signs to Recognize Conservation Practices (1998)

CDI will undertake the project of providing the service of selling a conservation farm sign to the districts and as a result will not only be able to realize financial help for their programs, but will create a much needed service to districts.

Each district has to find their own source regarding the purchase of conservation signs recognizing conservation accomplishments by landowners and operators. It would be more cost effective if there was one designated outlet from which the districts could order these signs.

Civil Rights

Sexual Harassment/ Unlawful Discrimination (1992)

CDI affirms its commitment to maintain an environment free of unlawful discrimination. CDI seeks to support the NACD in adopting the following civil rights policy for officials elected and appointed to soil and water conservation district positions.

A. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a violation of Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. It is defined as: "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature."

Sexual harassment which has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's performance in creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment is also illegal.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include:

1. Requesting or offering sexual favors in return for benefits offered by the District;
2. Cornering, patting, pinching, or brushing up against a person's body that is sexual in nature;
3. Open speculation or inquires about a person's sex life;
4. Jokes, remarks, or innuendoes that are sexual in nature about a person or such comments about women and men in general which result in an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment;
5. Displaying sexually explicit material in the District office.

B. Other Types of Unlawful Discrimination

Harassment on the basis of race, color of skin, age, disability, national origin, religion, or creed is a violation of law. The Association will not tolerate such unlawful discrimination.

The following behaviors regarding these classes are some examples of unlawful discrimination harassment:

1. Abusing the dignity of an individual through insulting or degrading remarks or conduct.
2. Threats, demands, or suggestions that an individual's status with the District is contingent upon toleration of such behavior.

It is each elected and appointed official's responsibility to make a reasonable effort to prevent all forms of unlawful discrimination from occurring and to take immediate and appropriate corrective action when harassment is brought to their attention. (1992)

Commissioner Activities/District Plans

Update Iowa Code for Watershed Operation and Maintenance (2009)

CDI supports asking the Iowa Legislature to change the wording in 161E.9 from agricultural lands to all property to allow county governments to use this provision as originally intended.

The current code reads: The county board of supervisors may annually levy a tax not to exceed six and three-fourths cents per thousand dollars of assessed value of all *agricultural lands* in the

county, to be used for flood and erosion control, including acquisition of land or interest in land, and repair, alteration, maintenance, and operation of works of improvement on lands under the control or jurisdiction of the county as provided in this chapter. By changing agricultural lands to property will allow county governments, if they choose, to again use this law. When recent needs for operation and maintenance funding in our county came up, the Board of Supervisors robbed the money out of the roads fund which set up some ill will with the county engineer's office. If the county can use this tax levee it also allows them the ability to prepare for some larger expenses that some counties may have with several older structures. Setting up an account to accumulate these funds is good budget management for expensive work. Current practice is to try to fit this expense into an annual budget process.

Revise or Eliminate the Soil Loss Complaint Process (2007)

CDI supports the changes needed by the State Legislature to modify Iowa Sediment Control Law to include penalties that are strict enough to motivate violators to comply with the SWCD's soil loss limit regulations. In addition the law should be updated to coincide with current soil loss calculation methods, be it rural or urban. The alternative is to remove this legislation altogether. CDI and IDALS-DSC should work with the State Legislature to put together an updated law with real enforcement behind it.

Landowners turn to the district for assistance in stopping sediment damage to their property from adjacent lands. The district in turn spends a lot of time and staff processing the complaint and attempting to enforce Iowa Sediment Control law. The first area lacking any real consequence is "the district may not require a landowner to incur a cost in any one calendar year which exceeds ten dollars per acre for each acre of land belonging to that owner and located in the county containing the land on which the required practice is being established or in counties contiguous thereto." The second area lacking enforcement power is when a violator flat out refuses to do anything and is sanctioned under the court's contempt power. This results in a maximum \$500 fine and in rare cases jail time. This simply is not enough motivation, especially when a developer is involved; to get erosion control practices in place timely to comply with soil loss limit regulations and prevent damage to adjacent lands.

Iowa Department of Transportation Standing Corn Snow Fence Program Modification (2007)

CDI and IDALS should work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to develop a similar program to compensate those farmers along those highways who do nothing to their cornstalks after harvest, as those fields are as effective in stopping snow as a few rows of corn left standing. Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners support payment for a minimum depth of 500 feet from the fence line into the field.

One of our commissioners drives a semi as off farm employment and was noticing in his travels this winter that untouched cornstalks stopped just as much – if not more – snow along state highways than the few rows of standing corn. In a couple of locations, he noticed that even with the rows of corn left standing, snowdrifts were still high enough on the shoulder to require the use of a snow blower to clear them. The fields of untouched cornstalks held the snow out in the fields, and often there were no drifts at all in the ditches. Not only are those who leave cornstalks untouched after harvest protecting our soil and water resources, they are helping protect Iowa's highway travelers as well and should have equal compensation for those who leave some standing corn, but till the rest of the field in the fall.

Provide Technical Assistance for Soil Loss Complaints (2006)

CDI should take whatever measures necessary to require IDALS to provide technical assistance at all court hearings for soil loss complaints whether it be an NRCS or IDALS employee.

If a farmer is found in contempt of court, the district will need to testify. Some of the questions can be technical in nature and the commissioner may not be able to answer them. This is when an office staff person would need to be put on the stand. Unfortunately, NRCS can deny their employee the right to testify if they are subpoenaed to testify. IDALS allows/requires their employees to testify if they are subpoenaed, however, not all offices have IDALS employees with technical knowledge.

Reinforce Easement Requirements (2006)

CDI will work with all appropriate agencies to ensure that easements are clear in the requirement to restrict activities and placement of permanent or temporary structures below the top of the dam elevation, which could hinder the function of the flood control structure or cause unnecessary harm. Due consideration should also be given in the breach route of the structure.

It is understood that multiple state and federal agencies are working to ensure that what has occurred in Pony Creek is avoided in the future. This resolution is in support of those efforts. All Districts are encouraged to work with county zoning and other agencies to ensure that those easement requirements are enforced.

REAP Delegates (2005)

CDI petitions DNR to change the assembly process to require 2 of the 5 delegates to represent Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

REAP assemblies are held bi-annually in 13 regions to elect 5 delegates each to attend the REAP Congress. Local SWCD's county conservation boards and DNR receive gambling funds allocated by the Iowa legislature. Most assemblies are dominated by DNR and county conservation boards, and none of the delegates selected represent Soil and Water Conservation District interests.

Commissioner Travel Expense Reimbursement (2005)

CDI supports a resolution to increase the 1M budget to include sufficient funds for reimbursement of all commissioner travel expense.

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

Increase 1M Allocation for Commissioner and District Expenses (2000)

The CDI, working with the Division of Soil Conservation, should take whatever measures necessary to get the 1M allocation districts increased.

Commissioners are the most important part of a soil and water conservation district. The only pay they get is the reimbursement for their expenses. Shortfalls in allocated expense money, has caused many commissioners to be conservative on the meetings they attend and the office supplies they purchase. If commissioners do not have sufficient funds to cover their costs, they will not be as active.

District Plans (1991)

CDI recommends that districts be required to have an approved soil and water resource conservation plan in order to be eligible to receive future allocations of REAP cost-share funds. We recommend that legislation allow for an equal distribution of REAP funds to eligible districts only.

Stabilize Conservation Administration Funds (2004)

CDI will seek the re-creation of a separate and distinct budget line item for the Division of Soil Conservation within the annual budget of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (until 2002 this is the way it was).

It is important that the state continue to uphold the current Memorandum of Understanding between the NRCS, SWCD and IDALS-DSC. One of DSC obligations is to ensure each SWCD office has a secretary that is an essential member of the local conservation team. Other staff within DSC are vital to continuing the voluntary cost share programs available through the districts to Iowa producers and providing technical assistance. The program will not continue to be viable without stable and appropriate funds to continue the program.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

CP-33 Quail Buffer Rules (2009)

CDI will work with the State Technical Committee and the USDA-FSA to drop the rule that does not allow a producer to turn on the CP-33 Quail Buffer practice with farm machinery and implements essential in the farming operation.

If producers were allowed to use the CP-33 practice as a way to not only add additional wildlife habitat acres to their farms but to seed down end rows and curb soil erosion as an added benefit, we could make major strides in soil conservation and habitat improvement across the state. Most disturbances to the CP-33 buffer would be done primarily outside the nesting season and could offer a solution for summertime waterway maintenance in hard to get to places within a crop field. With this rule change the CP-33 practice would also benefit no-till producers by offering them a place to load grain hauling equipment and minimizing compaction in the field.

Mid Contract Management (MCM) of CRP (2009)

CDI will work with NACD and their national legislators to change the CRP rules to make Mid Contract Management (MCM) a voluntary rather than mandatory activity with a higher level of payment to improve CRP participant attitude and enthusiasm in completing MCM. It should also be made more flexible and simple to implement by the FSA.

While MCM practices may add to the plant diversity of CRP, they do nothing towards improving our soil and water resources. In fact, we believe that because MCM is mandatory, many producers have opted out of renewing their CRP contract which consequently has negative implications for soil, water resources and wildlife habitat. Many CRP participants have expressed their negative opinions of MCM requirements to SWCD and field office staff members for the reasons stated above. The CRP is one of the most important soil, water and wildlife programs available to landusers. Currently Iowa has almost 1.7 million acres enrolled with approximately 12% expiring annually and is up for re-enrollment.

Continue Penalty for CRP Early Out (2008)

CDI supports and requests that USDA continue its policy of only allowing early release of acres from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) with penalty assessed.

CRP contracted acres can currently be taken out if penalty assessment is made. If market forces make this advantageous for landowners, they can exercise that option. To change the rules mid-contract and allow penalty-free early outs does not seem to encourage conservation.

Enhance CRP Incentives as Acres Decline (2008)

CDI supports and requests that USDA upgrade both general and continuous sign-up incentives as economic demands change.

CRP has proven its value as a conservation enhancement. As changing economics influence landowner decisions on land use, CRP incentives must be enhanced or CRP will fail to compete. As acres decline funds should be available to upgrade incentives for other CRP possibilities such as continuous sign-up of border, buffer and contour strips.

Conservation Measures for Land Exiting CRP (2008)

CDI supports and requests that USDA/FSA require establishment of field border turn strips on highly erodible land returning to production from CRP.

Planting end rows up and down steeper hills has never been a good stewardship practice. The opportunity to keep such erodible land seeded down should not be missed.

Standardize Cost Share Rates for Potted Tree and Shrub Practices (2007)

CDI should work with FSA and NRCS to standardize the cost share rates for windbreak practices, so field windbreaks and living snow fences receive the same cost share as shelterbelts.

These practices are designed with the same goals in mind: to reduce soil erosion, drifting snow and lower energy costs. Landowners often plant potted evergreens to help establish the windbreak/shelterbelt faster so they can enjoy the benefits during their lifetime. However, landowners that use potted trees for their field windbreak or living snow fence end up with far less than the 50% cost share rate.

Allow Managed Haying and/or Grazing of CP-25 CRP Seedings and that it be Considered a Mid-Contract Management Option for CP-25 Mixes (2007)

CDI supports changing USDA-FSA CRP rules to include haying and/or grazing of CP25 seedings and it can be an option for mid-contract management for CP25 plantings.

We encourage landowners to seed diverse native seedings and don't feel like they should be penalized for doing so. If the landowner knows they don't have the options of planned haying and/or grazing, as they do with lesser seedings, they are less apt to complete a CP-25 mix. Some landowners received additional Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) points by completing a CP-25 seeding mix, but many others had their CRP extended with no option to increase their points. We have convinced several landowners to reseed to a CP-25 mix when the previous seeding was introduced grasses utilizing other cost-share programs. Also, haying and/or grazing are excellent tools to manage diverse native seedings (CP-25 mixes). The buffalo are gone, but these tools can mimic the grazing that occurred from buffalo. Many of the high quality remnants we have left in Iowa are high quality because they were periodically hayed. This is a great tool to keep the diversity

and percent of the forbs in the seeding. Therefore, it needs to be available as a mid-contract management tool. Not all landowners are willing to complete prescribed burns. Disking and spraying roundup are not good options for diverse native seedings.

Allow Field Borders to be Enrolled into Conservation Reserve Program (2007)

CDI supports the change in FSA rules to allow field borders to be included in CRP without the associated buffer strips.

This could be accomplished in the CRP CP33 Quail Habitat Buffer Program but the program would need to be changed to allow turning on the area for field operations. We would also like to see that the tall grasses be allowed to be used because they will stand up to some traffic. While tall grasses are not recommended for quail, they are endorsed for other game and non-game birds.

Harmful Effects of CRP Mid-Contract Management Options (2006)

CDI should work with the appropriate federal agencies and committees to not require disking of established CRP stands of desirable grasses and forbs. As a minimum, disking must be accompanied by interseeding. If, on a federal level, disking is deemed adequate for certain areas, then policy makers should allow local input into what would constitute an adequate mid-contract management strategy for their area. Haying without a 25% payment reduction should be allowed prior to a mid-contract management interseeding alone.

If 50% bare earth is exposed and then interseeded we have found some success with establishment of desirable species. We assume the reason for mid-contract management is to enhance the seeding without creating a weed problem that wasn't present before the practice. Spraying is more expensive and involves chemicals that some landowners do not want introduced on their farms.

Field Borders Eligible for CCRP (2005)

CDI should work with federal legislators and the Farm Services Agency to add a continuous signup CRP practice called Field Borders on Highly Erodible Land.

When end rows on HEL fields are replaced with permanently seeded field borders or headlands, multiple environmental benefits are created.

CRP Continuous Signup – Contour Grass Strips (CP15A) (2005)

CDI supports giving a 20% bonus to the CRP Continuous Signup Practice – Contour Grass Strips (CP15A). This would increase the yearly rental payment by 20% as is done with some of the other CRP Continuous practices including Filter Strips (CP21).

CRP Contour Grass Strips (CP15A) are a good practice but difficult to sell at the soil rental rate offered.

CRP Riparian Rental Rates (2005)

The Farm Service Agency should increase rental rates on CP22 Riparian Forested Buffers on marginal pastureland; to a rate equal to 75% of the cropland rental rate for the contract soil mapping unit(s).

To increase rental rates on pasture land.

Filter Intakes (2005)

CDI supports the recommendation that FSA add intakes as eligible areas in the CP21 filter strip continuous CRP program.

Intakes are direct conduits to permanent water bodies, drainage ditches, and creeks. Filter strips surrounding intakes should be eligible to be enrolled as a CP21 filter strip as a continuous CRP practice.

Allow EQIP Managed Grazing Systems on Expiring CRP (2005)

Therefore, CDI supports a resolution to encourage NRCS to change EQIP rules to allow CRP contract holders to apply for EQIP funding to install a prescribed grazing system (NRCS practice code 528A) on CRP land during the final two years of the contract. Note: This change to the rule would be only for establishing the fencing and watering systems- not the actual grazing of livestock.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) rules do not allow program funding to be used on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land. Producers seeking EQIP funding for establishing a prescribed grazing system on land coming out of CRP, may face a delay because of funding availability, ranking & eligibility determination time needs, etc. These delays may take a year or longer, and could become a disincentive for some producers considering the grazing alternative.

Continuous CRP Waterways (1999)

CDI should work with USDA to make existing waterways that meet NRCS standards and specifications eligible for the continuous CRP sign-up.

The rule penalizes the conservation farmer and rewards the environmental abuser. The intent of the program should be to promote the installation and maintenance of waterways, not encourage the destruction of waterways to become eligible for the program. A waterway is worth the rental rate of the soil it is protecting, whether or not a program rule declares it existing or not existing.

Incentive Payment for Contour Buffer Strips in the Continuous CRP (1999)

CDI will take appropriate actions to encourage the Farm Services Agency to add contour buffer strips as an eligible practice for the 20% incentive payment and a 15 year enrollment option under the Continuous CRP.

Contour buffer strips are an effective practice for reducing erosion, improving water quality, and enhancing wildlife habitat. Landowners installing contour buffer strips are faced with a greater challenge of maintaining the practice, and often, are inconvenienced by the extra effort it takes to farm around the buffers. Landowners who install this practice should receive an incentive bonus. Research at the ISU Leopold Center has demonstrated that contour buffers can be just as effective (and in some cases more effective) at infiltrating runoff, and improving water quality, as the practices currently receiving the bonus.

CRP Punishes Good Conservation Farmers-(need change of old policy) (1999)

CDI should work with USDA to allow small strips within a strip crop system that do not meet cropping history requirements to be enrolled. If 80% of the field is eligible, the entire field should be allowed to be bid in.

The old policy punishes the farmer for having a strip cropping system and practicing conservation while allowing someone who continually row cropped an entire field to be eligible for CRP.

CRP Fertilizer Requirements (2000)

CDI supports changing CRP policy to make all fertilizer recommendations for new CRP seedings based on a recent soil test.

A good soil testing is a key element in reducing farm input costs. Producers save money by applying fertilizer only where needed. This approach reduces the potential for excess fertilizer to leach through the soil or to leave the field via overland flow and impair surface and ground water quality. USDA should support this same idea with a CRP policy that allows producers to fertilize only where needed, with only amount needed based on soil fertility tests and cover type to be established. If no current soil fertility tests are available, the producer should be required to soil test and show what additional nutrients are needed before taxpayer funds are used to cost-share on fertilizer for new seeding establishment.

Extend Mature CRP Contracts (2000)

CDI supports extending maturing CRP contracts, with the option to hay or graze those acres, at a reduced rate.

Although the most effective method of conserving soil is having it seeded to grass, many CRP acres mature each year and return to row crop production.

Raise CRP Enrollment Acres (2000)

CDI supports current maturing conservation reserve acres to be offered an incentive program to extend the enrollment of the acres, and a short term 3-4 year enrollment to be allowed on additional acres extending the current enrollment well above the 36 million acres now in place.

Raising the enrollment to 45-50 million acres would protect the land for future generations, all the while reducing production of crops with already burdensome carryover and low prices.

CRP Contour Buffer Strips (2000)

NRCS recommends CRP rules be modified to allow a 30' to 60' strip of grass along the terrace channels and around terrace intakes for filtering.

Terraces do an excellent job of controlling erosion and stopping sedimentation. A grass strip along the terrace channel would complement the terrace by helping to filter these water-soluble contaminants.

Existing Waterways Eligible for CRP when part of a Total Resource Management System (2000)

CDI supports allowing existing grassed waterways in need of maintenance, to be eligible for enrollment in the Continuous CRP as long as the landowner can document that the waterway is installed as part of a total resource management system that addresses erosion control, nutrient and pest management, and conservation buffers.

This approach would still not provide a payment for all waterways, but would be a method to assist with the reestablishment of failing waterways, while at the same time encouraging landowners to take conservation a step further.

Remove 25% Payment Reduction for CCRP Practices when Livestock Glean Stalks (2000)
The CDI in cooperation with NACD, request FSA to remove the 25% payment reduction for incidental grazing of CCRP.

A livestock producer's objections to having a 25% payment reduction for incidental grazing when livestock glean the stalks in a field that has CCRP practice are justifiable. We feel that the amount of grazing of cover on the CRP acres and disturbance is minimal when the livestock are only allowed to be in the field gleaning stalks for 60 days or less.

Elimination of CCRP Pro-Rated Rent (2001)

CDI supports elimination of the use of pro-rated rent payments for the CCRP. Farmers deserve a full year rent the first year of the contract regardless of starting date, if they are willing to forgo cropping and install the needed buffers in a timely manner.

Farmers are reluctant to accept pro-rated rental values of less than half the annual rental rate if layout and contract development is delayed until spring. Layout of conservation buffers cannot be completed during summer months while growing crops are in the field. This creates a difficult workload dilemma for field offices, as the time available for layout, design, and contracting is minimal after harvest.

Extended Fall Grazing of CCRP in Field Buffers and Waterways (2001)

CDI will pursue a rule change of the CCRP grazing rules. Extended grazing should be allowed on in-field buffers and waterways until March 1. There would still be a 25% reduction in the annual rental.

This will allow producers to better utilize crop residues as a feed source, since the ground is still frozen this gleaning will not harm the buffers. This will prevent the excessive amount of fence it takes to exclude these small areas.

CRP Eligibility of Contour Grassed Buffer Strips and Grassed Field Borders (1997)

CDI supports the policy that contour grassed buffer strips and grassed field borders be eligible for enrollment as priority practices in the Conservation Reserve Program's continuous sign-up.

Contour grassed buffer strips and grassed field borders are cost effective methods of controlling erosion and filtering contaminants while removing little ground from production. Before the 1996 Farm Bill, these grassed areas could be used for set aside acres. With the passage of the Farm Bill, the set aside program ended. Several of these grassed areas were eliminated and put back into crop production, leaving critical areas open to erosion.

Land Coming Out of CRP/Grass Headlands (1998)

CDI should work with the USDA to see that land that needs to be left in grass headlands remains there.

Often when CRP contracts expire, land that should be left in grass headlands is cropped. If the field qualified for CRP ten years ago, turn strips should be mandated to be left in grass.

Living Snow Fence Storage Area (2002)

CDI should work with the United States Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency to include as a component of the Conservation Reserve Program field windbreak practice that a snow management or storage area of native grasses between the roadway and the tree or shrub planting be included in the cost share and rental payment contract. It is also requested that this grass storage area have a minimum width of 100' to allow for adequate snow storage for an Iowa winter.

The addition of this grass storage area will allow for better management of the tree and shrub plantings by reducing the dangers of herbicide drift onto the plants. It also allows the producer the option of not having to plant the strip to crop, and deal with the slower drying and warming conditions on the strip due to the extended melting time of snow drifts. Furthermore the addition of the grass strip to the tree and/or shrub planting will provide additional quality nesting and loafing habitat for wildlife that are currently dealing with loss of habitat. It will aid individuals and emergency vehicles while traveling in the wintertime and it will benefit the public by reducing snow removal costs freeing up budgets so money can be spent on other worthwhile projects or perhaps reducing taxes.

75% Upland Treatment for CCRP Waterway (2002)

Be it resolved that CDI pursue a rule change by FSA on CCRP Waterways to require 75% of upland area to be adequately treated for erosion control before waterways will be funded.

A producer signs a 10 year contract to maintain the waterway without upland treatment the waterway will not function for the 10 years and the producers could be required to rework the waterway at his own expense.

Change the Width of Field Borders Linking Contour Buffer Strips Under the CRP Program (2003)

CDI should lobby the State FSA office, the USDA and federal legislature to change the rules for CRP to allow an eligible width of at least 35 feet for field borders connecting contour buffer strips.

A field border connecting contour buffer strips is needed to provide access to the strips. The current 15 foot allowable width on connecting field borders does not provide adequate turning space for today's larger equipment. In order to farm between the enrolled contour buffer strips, producers must take additional land out of production by seeding it down to allow for turning without recompense under the CRP. It becomes very inefficient to have two adjacent seedings that are not to be treated the same, or that will bring no return to the producer. Because of this, some producers decline to enroll any contour buffer strips.

Definition of "Infeasible to Farm" for Continuous CRP Enrollment (2003)

CDI supports a change in the Infeasible to Farm Policy to allow Continuous CRP enrollment of the balance of cropland in fields smaller than 5 acres, if over 25% of the field is eligible as a filter strip or riparian buffer.

The current policy for infeasible to farm areas is too restrictive. Farmers are reluctant to enroll filter strips or riparian buffer strips in smaller fields that are already difficult to farm unless they can get the whole field enrolled. To get the whole field, it becomes necessary to split off the filter strip or riparian buffer, and then first offer the balance of the field for General CRP enrollment. If accepted,

two contracts are required to enroll just a few acres. This is time consuming and inefficient, especially if two different cover types are required.

Cost Share

Living Snow Fence Practice and the Buffer Initiative (2008)

For the purposes of promoting and establishing additional conservation buffers on private lands CDI supports the addition of a new financial incentive within the IDALS Division of Soil Conservation, corresponding to the USDA CP17A Living Snow Fence practice. The new state incentive would provide an additional 25% rental rate incentive based on an approved FSA contract to be paid as a one time payment upon installation of the practice. This practice could fall under an existing program, such as the state's CRP Buffer Initiative Program.

The Living Snow Fence practice is difficult to promote due to escalating land and crop values and due to the fact a significant portion of the benefit is located off private property and within county road rights of way. Additional incentive is needed to entice individuals to take valuable land out of production for this long term conservation practice.

Increase Cost-Share for Windbreaks (2007)

CDI should work to change Chapter 12 rules to increase the cost-share rate for farmstead windbreaks (380) to 75% of actual cost, not to exceed \$18.75 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub, to establish or restore farmstead windbreaks. Total cost-share for establishment, restoration, and fencing for farmstead windbreaks shall not exceed \$1,500 per windbreak.

Current rates were established in 2000, and are not in line with cost of trees in 2007. By increasing the per tree and total cost-share limits, more landowners will be able to afford the cost of planting a windbreak. As the push for more wildlife habitat increases, so does the demand for cost-share. With an increase in cost-share, more landowners would be interested. With an increase in the total limit, larger windbreaks could be installed, giving more wind protection and wildlife habitat.

Increase Incentive Rates for all REAP Practices/Forestry/Windbreaks/Native Grass Programs (2007)

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

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.

Length of Waterway Maintenance Agreement Installed with IFIP Funds (2006)

CDI will work with the SSCC to revise the rules on IFIP to allow any waterway applicants to install waterways with 10 year maintenance agreements.

After 10 years of enduring many environmental conditions, the planting and design of an existing waterway needs to be enhanced or reseeded to keep it viable. Districts are seeing an increase in applications to reestablish waterways that are not working to help with soil erosion. Unfortunately, because of the 20 year maintenance agreement, we are forced to make the applicants reseed and reshape the waterway at their own cost, or to go forth with tearing it up and repaying a prorated cost back to the state. It is imperative that we allow producers to enhance their waterways after 10 years,

and to possibly help them with the cost to reinstall the practice, and to keep the practice in good working condition. Many of these applicants will not sign up for assistance once they hear that a 20 year maintenance agreement would be required. Therefore, many tons of valuable soil could be lost and winter cover could be lost for wildlife.

Agroforestry (2005)

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

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.

Increase Cost-Share for Windbreaks (2005)

CDI should work to change Chapter 12 rules to increase the cost-share rate for farmstead windbreaks (practice 380) to 75% of actual cost, not to exceed \$18.75 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub, to establish or restore farmstead windbreaks. Total cost-share for establishment, restoration, and fencing for farmstead windbreaks shall not exceed \$1,500 per windbreak.

Currently, cost-share rates for a windbreak, through the REAP program are 75%, not to exceed \$15 per tree and \$2.25 per shrub with maximum total cost-share not to exceed \$1,200 per windbreak. The average purchase price of a tree has increased to \$25.00. Most landowners are not receiving a true 75% cost-share because of the \$15 limit per tree and \$1200 cost-share limit.

IFIP Funds Available for the Tiling of Seeps Created by the Construction of New Terraces (2001)

IDALS/DSC will make IFIP cost-share funds available to producers if there is a problem with wet ground created by terrace construction to help alleviate this seep problem.

Solving erosion problems with terraces sometimes can cause another problem to develop by creating seeps, usually below the newly constructed terrace. Making the funds available will reassure producers, which are otherwise re-thinking the value of terraces because of this problem.

IFIP Expanded to allow Tree and Native Grass Plantings (2001)

CDI supports a DSC policy amendment that will allow SWCDs to use up to 30% of the annual allocation of IFIP funds for tree planting, and native grass establishment if such practices are determined necessary to reduce excessive erosion.

Trees and grasses planted under a 20-year maintenance agreement (as is now required for IFIP permanent practices) will provide long-term conservation benefits.

State Cost-Share Programs

Revision of Summer Incentive Changes for IFIP (2009)

CDI supports the addition by IDALS-DSC of a paragraph to its administrative rules 10.60(2) which states: “f. Any conservation cover that has silage, forage, or bedding value, may be harvested or grazed as long as erosion control is preserved and there is no adverse effect to the newly constructed conservation practice.”

(1) \$200 per acre may or may not cover the rent; but it certainly does not cover the cost of the establishment of the conservation cover, taking into consideration machinery, seed, time,

management, and lost income from not being able to plant corn or soybeans. (2) Having more acres available for summer conservation construction work helps SWCD personnel and contractors to spread out the workload more evenly from June 1 to the onset of winter. (3) Letting several acres of standing conservation cover go unused is not a stewardly use of a valuable resource. (4) Allowing the harvesting or grazing of conservation cover costs the State of Iowa nothing. In fact, it would bring in a few more tax dollars if farmers are allowed to profit from the use of the conservation cover. Basically, every party would stand to gain from instituting this added incentive to making more land available for summer construction, not the least of which is the land itself!

IFIP and REAP Supplemental Cost Share Deadlines (2009)

CDI supports changing the date for requesting supplemental cost share to at least September 1st for both IFIP and REAP.

Moving the deadline dates for requesting supplemental cost share will allow for the funds to be allocated to the field in a more timely manner. This will allow the SWCD to better manage these funds, and will improve the timing for the cooperators applying for and receiving financial assistance funds through these two programs.

Allow REAP Cost Share Dollars to be Used on Conservation Reserve Program Land for Seeding Native Grass/Forb Plantings (2009)

CDI supports a revision of the rules on Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) funding to allow funding of native plantings (NRCS standard 327 - Conservation Cover) on CRP land. Currently land enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is only eligible for REAP cost share for woodland - establishment, management and protection practices (State of Iowa Code in the Division Soil Conservation Policy and Procedures Manual - 12.82).

In Iowa we have thousands of CRP acres with low habitat quality brome for cover. Converting these stands to our native grasses and forbs can give us the greatest impact on wildlife habitat on private lands. Making this an eligible practice will give the SWCDs a tool they can use to increase wildlife habitat in their counties. Getting this rule changed would be a step in the right direction toward REAP becoming a major contributor to the restoration and creation of wildlife habitat on private land in Iowa.

Reduce the Required IFIP Maintenance Agreement Length for Pasture and Hayland Planting Practice from Ten Years to Five Years (2009)

CDI supports reducing the maintenance agreement requirement from 10 years to 5 years for the IFIP pasture and hayland planting practice.

Historically this practice has commonly been included as part of a multi-year rotation with corn/soybeans and is currently on the decline in Iowa. Farmers across many parts of the state are replacing rotational grasses and legumes with continuous row crops. Conventional wisdom might suggest that requiring a ten-year maintenance will yield greater conservation by tying up that land for a longer period. However, the other side is that most producers today want and must have quality forage in order to be competitive with row crops. Ten years is too long to gamble on forage quality considering the unpredictability of Iowa weather.

Livestock Watering Systems Installed with IFIP and WSP Funds (2008)

CDI supports an increase in the rate of livestock watering systems from the current rate of \$500 to \$1,000. CDI will request the State Soil Conservation Committee approve this request and work with IDALS-DSC to increase payment rate.

Due to the increased cost of almost all components of the watering systems, the current \$500 rate does not provide a significant enough incentive for producers to fence the entire structure.

Maintenance Checklist to Accompany Maintenance Agreement (2008)

CDI supports requiring a maintenance checklist for projects to be given to and signed by cooperators at the time when maintenance agreements are signed. Annual reminders should be given by various means including direct contact, local media, and SWCD and FSA newsletters.

Many of the structures that failed due to excessive rainfall no longer met the original design criteria of the NRCS. By encouraging annual maintenance, structures will be more apt to function at the highest efficiency. Proof of maintenance would also be the first step in qualifying for disaster funds for repairs.

Expand IDALS/DSC 5 yr Haying/Grazing Program to Include Unattached Field Border Turn Strips (2008)

CDI supports and requests that IDALS/DSC modify the 5 yr haying/grazing programs to include field border turn strips that are not specifically connected to contour or buffer strips in the same program.

It is easy to see the value of seeded contour, buffer and turn strips in a year such as 2008. As the economic advantage of increased land use in row crop production threatens more environmentally sensitive land, expanding eligibility for seeding incentives seems to appropriate conservation encouragement.

Reducing the Length of Maintenance Agreement for Grassed Waterways Installed with IFIP Cost Share (2007)

CDI supports the change in the IDALS-DSC IFIP rules for maintenance agreements for grassed waterways be reduced from 20 years to 10 years.

Research has pointed out that the grasses growing in a waterway not only prevents ephemeral gullies, but they also help improve water quality by trapping sediment and removing some nutrients from the water that flows through them. The downside of this is that the accumulated sediment decreases the capacity and proper function of the waterway. Many SE Iowa producers have commented on their experiences dealing with and maintaining waterways-most feel that the realistic expected life span for the practices is about 10 years.

Change Conservation Cover Maintenance Agreement from 20 Years to a 10 Year Maintenance Agreement When Utilizing REAP Cost-Share (2007)

CDI will work with the State Soil Conservation Committee and IDALS-DSC to change the maintenance agreements from 20 years to 10 years when using REAP cost-share on native grass plantings.

Using the REAP (327) native grass seeding cost-share is a great tool for district offices to have to enhance wildlife habitat and improve water quality and reduce soil erosion. But, the 20-year maintenance agreement is too long for the funds they receive. For most landowners, they are not going to lock up their land for the time period required even if they feel it will be a permanent seeding. Currently, we have four REAP 327 projects we wanted to approve for funding. Two of these were to be matched with other funding sources so that the REAP portion was 25% instead of

75%. The range the landowners would receive of REAP cost-share is \$25.00/acre to \$87.99/acre. If you divide that number by 20 years, it is \$1.25/acre to \$4.40/acre.

Raise Cap on Environment 1st Fund (2006)

CDI supports an increase in the Environment First Fund to reflect increased demand for soil and water protection. These dollars are matched by producers and are a very cost effective means for voluntary environmental protection on private working lands.

There is no more basic infrastructure needing continued protection in Iowa than our soil and water resources. It is the fundamental resource which 25 percent of Iowa's economy is estimated to be based. The Infrastructure First Funds have not increased with the increasing gaming revenues, and in fact the cap has not been increased since the inception of this worthwhile program. With additional facilities and increases in revenue, the Environment First Fund Cap should be dramatically increased to address increasing concerns with environmental protection and recreation.

Utilizing Resource Enhancement and Protection Funds (REAP) for Control of "Invasive" Species (2006)

CDI should work in cooperation with the SSCC & IDALS-DSC to include "Control of Invasive Species" as an eligible practice for cost-sharing and technical assistance under the Resource Enhancement and Protection Program. The list of plant species that will be eligible for this cost-share practice should be developed utilizing the DNR invasive species list and others as appropriate.

We have only to look at a few well documented examples to understand why attention to this resource concern is critical. Plants such as multi-flora rose, kudzu and garlic mustard were purposefully introduced for certain of their known characteristics; however, all three thrive in this country and their spread has had devastating unintended consequences. Many resource professionals predict (and are currently witnessing), that when left unchecked, many of the plants considered "invasive" will cause major habitat alterations with resulting displacement of many native plant and wildlife species on public lands as well as economic losses on uncultivated private agricultural land. They also feel that the slower we react, the more severe the problem will become. If CDI and NRCS are seen as leaders on this issue, it will have the broader impact of helping to educate Iowa citizens about the urgency and importance of the concern. And, as with any problem, recognition and understanding is the first step towards a true solution.

Requirement to Bid on Watershed Projects (2005)

CDI supports a legislative change to not require the formal bid process until cost shared practices in applicable state supported programs exceed a project cost of \$50,000.

Current rules require that any watershed project practice with a \$25,000 total cost estimate or larger require that the conservation district pursue a formal bid process. This process requires publishing a legal notice, at approximately a \$100 cost to the district. This process removes the landowner from deciding on a contractor, even though they are still paying at least 25% of the cost. It is our experience that contractors "add on" additional costs to cover any unexpected events, making the total cost of the project higher than if it was not formally bid.

Native Prairie/Savanna Stand Improvement (2005)

CDI should work with IDALS-DSC and IDNR to include prairie stand improvement under REAP funding.

In an effort to preserve the natural history and ecological diversity of Iowa, we feel the native prairie and savanna remnants should be protected.

Farmstead Windbreaks Installed with REAP Funds (2005)

CDI should support a revision of the rules on REAP funding to allow any rural landowners, whether involved in agriculture or not, to install farmstead windbreaks on their farmsteads.

We believe that windbreaks are so needed throughout Iowa's land that all of those applicants that apply for cost share to plant trees and shrubs on farmland or acreages should be allowed to receive cost share to help erosion, provide wildlife habitat and most importantly, to conserve energy in these times of high energy costs.

Pasture Maintenance Length on REAP & IFIP (2005)

CDI should work with the state to revise the rules on IFIP and REAP funding to change the maintenance agreement for pasture and hay land plantings from 10 years to 5 years, since legumes have up to a 5 year lifespan.

Pasture planting loses viability after 5 years and enhancement is required for it to remain productive. Producers sign a 10 year maintenance agreement on a practice that has only a 5 to 6 year lifespan.

Iowa's Environmental Well Being (2005)

CDI recommends:

- 1. The Iowa legislature requires DNR to make public an annual report on the status of the environment.**
- 2. The county supervisors make public an annual report on the status of their land use plans.**
- 3. A copy of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) annual report is supplied to the county soil and water conservation commissioners.**

When Gov. Terry Branstad signed the Resource Enhancement and Protection Act into law he stated: "The quality of Iowa's environment is one of my top priorities of state government." National, state, county, and city governmental bodies have passed laws, ordinances and regulations to protect and conserve our environmental treasures. Those laws ordinances and regulations may not be monitored or enforced through lack of funding and staff shortages. Those laws, ordinances and regulations may not specify penalties for failure to comply. Those laws, ordinances and regulations seem to be interpreted in favor of developers through unpublished violations, rule exceptions, lack of enforcement and lack of support for monitoring.

Recording Determinations on Abstracts (2005)

CDI should work with Iowa Legislature to change the state law to require that the following items to be recorded on land abstracts: HEL and wetland determinations as well as non-complying determinations made by USDA.

Land ownership change is occurring at an ever increasing rate with some land selling annually. HEL compliance and Sodbuster compliance becomes a serious issue when sellers choose to deny

access of USDA tract information to potential buyers and renters. Farms with HEL plans written with meadow in the rotation are often sold just prior to the time the plan called for seeding of a meadow. New owners and renters are unsuspecting and vulnerable to economic losses due to lack of information concerning HEL compliance and Sodbuster compliance requirements.

Computer Program for Cost Share Ledger (1995)

CDI requests the Division of Soil Conservation in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service State Office, to develop a ledger computer program for cost share, to be used in all district offices.

Computers in district offices are capable of recording a cost share spread sheet if such a program is made available. It is understood district offices have been discouraged from developing their own programs.

Encourage the Use of Outside Resources (1995)

CDI supports a change in the wording of the Policy and Procedures Manual Chapter 10, Section 10.74(2), titled project design by district". Paragraph a) reads, "The technician of the district shall design and lay out proposed soil and water conservation practices for which financial incentives funds have been obligated. The certifying technician of the district shall be responsible for determining compliance with applicable design standards and specifications." This paragraph should be changed to read, "The technician of the district shall ensure that proposed soil and water conservation practices for which financial incentives funds have been obligated are laid out, designed and installed according to applicable design standards and specifications." Costs that are incurred in the use of outside resources should be an eligible component for cost sharing, at the discretion of the local SWCD Commissioners.

Fulfillment of Maintenance Agreements (1995)

CDI will encourage the General Assembly to change the Code of Iowa so that in situations in which the Maintenance Agreement is not fulfilled, at least some portion of the cost share award would be reimbursed to the Soil and Water Conservation District. [Similar resolution was passed in 1986.]

Cost share awards are given to farm owners and operators to make possible the construction of expensive, but needed, soil and water conservation structures and management practices like terraces, grassed waterways and waterway outlets. The cooperator who receives the cost share agrees to maintain the structure, usually for 20 years, by signing a maintenance agreement with the Soil and Water Conservation District. Almost all cooperators fulfill the requirements of the maintenance agreement, but a few fail to uphold the agreement over the life of the conservation structure or practice.

REAP Water Protection Funds (1996)

CDI supports a system that would allow soil and water conservation districts to develop (without the necessity of a special project) their own eligible practices and cost share procedures in a simple format and present them for approval to the Division of Soil Conservation.

Instead of trying to define every eligible practice and predict the future from Des Moines, let us keep REAP flexible and innovative. [SSCC agreed with concept. Staff will draft guidelines and rules for further review.]

Education

Updating the Agriculture Conservation Story (2006)

CDI should forward a resolution to the North Central Association of Conservation Districts to provide assistance to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago in updating conservation information in their agriculture exhibit.

The Museum of Science and Industry (MSI) in Chicago is a major regional and perhaps national museum. The majority of elementary and middle school teachers in the Chicago area take class field trips to the museum. We must provide all the assistance possible to help keep their agriculture conservation information up to date.

State 4-H Conservation Award (2005)

CDI and the State 4-H Extension would work together to sponsor conservation awards. A maximum of one project from each of the following classes: Crop Production, Animal Science, Conservation, Forestry, Plant Science, and Self-Determined- may be selected as finalists for the conservation award. More than one project may be selected to receive this award. Each project should exhibit the protection and/or enhancement of our natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, or animals). Topics might include, but are not limited to, conservation practices, soil erosion, waste management, water and air quality, wildlife habitat, and plantings. The award may be given as a ribbon, plaque, certificate, etc.

To assist in education youth on conservation, an overall conservation award should be sponsored at the State Fair.

Erosion Control/Iowa 2000

Conservation Systems in Watersheds (2007)

CDI should support and lobby for a change in Farm Bill legislation for NRCS conservation planning procedures to require cropping systems to maintain a Tolerable “T” soil loss limit using the traditional “dominant critical area” method of conservation planning on native and non-native pastures and wildlife areas brought into production above existing detention structures within PL-534 and PL-566 watersheds in order to allow sponsors to follow national watershed guidance.

Section 501.25 of the National Watershed Manual states “To protect the integrity of project measures and ensure that the project will function as planned, the SLO (Sponsoring Local Organization) should implement needed watershed management features, such as land use regulations and upstream watershed protection to prevent deterioration of the watershed to the point that the project would be jeopardized”.

Alternative planning methods result in accelerated sediment deposition in watershed structures, reducing their projected life and adversely affecting water quality in the watershed. Conservation Districts, as one of the sponsors, remain responsible for maintenance and repair of the structures beyond their 50 year design life, even though NRCS no longer has responsibility or authority after 50 years and cannot provide assistance for repairs or rehabilitation.

Upland treatment in existing PL-534 and PL-566 watersheds should be held to a higher standard than current NRCS guidance dictates. Conservation cropping systems proposed in this resolution would allow NRCS guidance to be in line with national requirements for watershed maintenance.

Revision of EQIP Rules and Funding Needed (2007)

CDI supports a revision of the state NRCS EQIP rules and funding that would increase cost-share rates to \$60 per acre over three consecutive years at \$20 per acre per year. A 400 acre maximum limit should be used.

Districts are seeing more expiring CRP, hay land, and pasture being converted to row crop. The most cost effective way to treat many of these erosion prone fields is through no-till agronomy practices. No-till farming is a practice that justifies a higher cost share incentive payment and ranking in the EQIP program. Currently the cost share rate is \$10 per acre per year for three years or \$30 per acre total with a maximum of 320 acres per producer. Considering the initial yield reduction and other risk factors associated with this major cropping management change, an increase in cost share is needed. Maximizing this agronomy practice stretches our conservation dollars over more acres yet takes minimum staff hours to implement or administer.

Limited Removal of Crop Residues for Celluostic Ethanol Production (2007)

CDI should support rules/regulations that would limit removal of crop residues. The planting of winter cover crops, where crop residues are removed for ethanol production shall be encouraged.

Districts are anticipating both short term erosion problems and long term soil quality problems due to removal of crop residues for celluostic ethanol. To prevent these problems from developing we need to keep the soil surface covered with either crop residue or a winter cover crop, and need to maintain organic matter levels and soil quality by either limiting annual removal of crop residue or providing the winter cover crops to mitigate the effects of removing crop residue.

Sod Busts Should be Planned to “T” Using the Critical Area Planning Unit (2007)

CDI supports a change in Farm Bill legislation which would change Sod Buster Plans to be to “T” using the critical planting area planning unit, instead of two times “T” the current compliance method, when that land is brought into production.

Current policy allows Sod Bust land to be planned to a soil loss level of 10 tons/acre on 5 T soils when compliance on cropland is often to “T” when using the alternative system of a CB long term no-till, 2% contour, anhydrous, 40/60 residue levels.

Planning Unit for Compliance Plans be the Most Restrictive Soil Slope Phase When it Makes up at Least 33% of the Field (2007)

CDI supports a change in Farm Bill legislation for compliance plans from the predominant HEL soil map unit for determining the conservation practices needed to the most restrictive soil slope phase in the field when it makes up at least 33% of the field.

Until the last year, Iowa NRCS had a policy of using the critical area planning unit. This has been the standard for conservation planning in Iowa. The document, “Choosing the Planning Area of a Field by Dominant Critical Area”, can be found in Iowa Tech Note (September, 2004, NRCS IA). This is our preferred method, but since this is an Iowa Tech Note and not a national method, it would be unlikely that it would be adopted at the national level. So, for the sake of the law, we would like it changed to the most restrictive soil slope phase in the field when it makes up at least

33% of the field. When a field is one-third C slope, it is determined to be a HEL field and planned to the C slope. It makes sense to plan to a D slope phase when it makes up one-third of the field.

FSA County Committees Should Fine Those Found *Not Actively* Following Their Conservation Plans (2007)

CDI supports the change in current laws so FSA can levy fines to those producers not following their compliance plans.

The current policy has no teeth because no one wants to be responsible for taking all USDA benefits away from the operator. This includes FSA County Committee, District Conservationists, and our political representatives. This would have a considerable impact of improving the compliance of conservation plans.

All Cropland Should be Required to Have a Conservation Plan (2007)

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.

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?

Compliance Requirements (2005)

CDI should work with NRCS, IDALS, DSC, FSA and other appropriate entities in supporting that all agricultural land may be held to acceptable soil loss levels regardless of HEL/NHEL determination or vegetative cover. Soil loss levels shall be determined according to NRCS recommended specifications with the most current soil loss calculation technology. Any producer and/or landowner participating in USDA programs may have agricultural payments withheld if NRCS specifications for soil loss are not maintained.

Some Iowa counties are experiencing large numbers of soil loss complaints due to the planting of alternative crops. Examples include: trees, native grasses, sod, flowers, etc. Producers who plant crops which are not recognized as commodity crops are not under the same soil loss requirements as producers who plant crops regarded as commodity crops by the FSA. The non-commodity crops allow producers not to follow soil loss regulations and still remain in compliance. Producers receiving *any* government subsidy payments should be required to follow the most current soil loss calculations regardless of the crop being raised.

Require Spot Check on Soil Loss Complaine Farm (2005)

CDI should review the policy and work with the appropriate agencies to change the state rules so any one filing a soil loss complaint will be required to have their property put on the annual status review list.

Districts are seeing an increase in soil loss complaints being filed by a person whose own property has erosion issues.

NHEL Conservation Provision of USDA Farm Program (1999)

NACD supports the requirement of a conservation plan for all cropland whether HEL or NHEL.

Recent storms have proven to us that practically all intensively cropped fields are vulnerable to excessive rates of soil erosion. This resolution proposes to change the HEL conservation provision of the USDA Farm Program to require a conservation plan to be developed and applied for all agricultural lands.

Beans on E and F Slopes (1997)

CDI requests that NRCS remove the option of planting beans on E and F slopes from the FOTG Section 111-A sub-title E.

The majority of the CRP contracts are due to expire soon and in keeping with the intents of the CRP Program, no soybeans should be planted on E and F slopes (14% or greater). Explanation: Soil loss on these slopes with No-till corn and soybeans would range from 22 to 45 tons/acres.

Counsel to "T" (1995)

CDI encourages that when Farm [Food] Security Act plans are reviewed, advice by the Soil and Water Conservation District should be given so a producer knows what measures must be taken to reach "T".

Fall Tillage of Soybeans (1988)

Be it resolved that CDI encourage local districts to not approve any FSA conservation plans which allow fall tillage of soybean stubble.

Farm Heritage

Program to Preserve Farmsteads (2000)

Existing farmstead windbreaks, shelter belts and timbered areas are being removed or altered. Added benefits by protecting these areas would promote wildlife habitat, wind erosion control, and potential home sites.

A program similar to the Conservation Reserve Program should be developed to preserve these existing areas.

Federal Tax Code

Property Sale Tax Code Change (2006)

CDI supports a change to section 1031 of the US tax code to allow a portion of sale proceeds of capital property to be used for capital improvements of the newly acquired property. This could include conservation practices which meet NRCS standards and specifications.

Current tax law imposes a time limit of 180 days for like-kind purchases to be finalized. By allowing a longer period for capital improvements to be made to replacement property, a portion of sale proceeds could be used to improve property including applying conservation measures. There is potential to greatly increase soil and water conservation implementation without needing additional public funds.

Tax Deductibility for Permanent Practices Built by Farmers Who Cash Rent (1998)
CDI supports a change in the US tax code to allow tax deductibility for permanent conservation practices to landowners who cash rent their land.

The IRS does not allow deduction for the expense of placing permanent conservation practices on the land when a landowner cash rents. (Restates similar resolutions from 1992 and 1995. The resolution has been part of NACD policy since 1993. NACD policy--DO-5 Tax Code Section 175)

Manure Management

Allow Practice of Applying Manure on Frozen Ground or Grass Ground with Suitable Residue (1995)

CDI supports the continuance of the practice of applying manure on frozen ground or grass ground with suitable residue.

Currently growing grass can quickly utilize this waste, provided it is applied in moderation of 1000 to 1500 gallons per acres. Applications of these amounts dry quickly, do not run off and are an asset to grass production. If all liquid wastes were required to be knifed in, fragile grass stands would be damaged and knife trenches would be open areas to be subject to excess erosion.

Plants

Local Ecotype/Local Identified Native Seed for Conservation Cover (1999)

CDI supports the requirement that all soil and water conservation practices involving the seeding of native grass and flowering plants using public cost share funding that are within 2,000 feet of a preserve quality native prairie, including public lands such as preserves and parks and private lands designed by Iowa DNR (Iowa Code 427.1) should be seeded with local ecotype/source identified native seed. If this requirement results in an increased cost to the party implementing the practice, the cost share funding percentage shall be increased to offset the additional cost to the landowner.

Local ecotype/sources identified native seed is no longer too expensive or too rare to be used on a larger scale. This resolution is a means to prioritize the use of local ecotype/source identified native seed in conservation cover seedings; and a means to encourage the continued growth of local ecotype/source identified seed in the native seed industry.

Training on the Identification of Rare Plant Communities (2000)

CDI supports the requirement that all field office employees dealing with planting recommendations for any of the CRP practices, have training on the identification of remnant plant communities. This will allow field office personnel to assist landowners in making informed planting decisions that meets the intended purpose of the CRP practice, and protects the natural areas as well.

Native plant communities such as prairies and savannas were once a significant part of the Iowa ecological landscape. Today, most of these important ecosystems are gone, destroyed, or greatly altered, with surviving remnants located in less intensively used areas (such as marginal pastures)

throughout the state. Remnant areas provide an opportunity to nurture these rare areas and preserve at least some of the plants found in the original community.

Encourage Use of Native Plants (1995)

Iowa Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their staffs should encourage the use of native plants, especially slow growing hardwood trees, whenever possible, through tree sales, awards, demonstrations, educational programs, handbooks, critical area plantings, etc.

Most plants that are native to Iowa are hardy, successful, useful and beautiful. The use of native plants of all types, including trees, should be encouraged whenever and wherever possible as better alternatives to introduced species which may be less well adapted to Iowa conditions. To protect the genetic heritage and diversity of our native and agricultural ecosystems, we should encourage the use of these species.

Right of Way

Promote Better Right of Way Policies (2002)

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

As ROW's 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.

State Positions

Allow District Secretaries to Do Payroll (2005)

CDI should work with the Division of Soil Conservation to allow the district secretary the right to do the payroll for his/her county if he/she feels comfortable doing so.

District secretaries are not allowed to do the payroll of district employees and this is a waste of funds, which go for administrative purposes.

Employee Training (2001)

The Division of Soil Conservation will allow the local SWCD to schedule specialized training opportunities for District Secretaries, as the district determines this to be in the best interest of their operations and program management.

Specialized training could include utilizing various commercial software, computer classes or seminars in areas such as: communicating with diverse customers, improving time management, organizing workload, and multiple project management.

Annual Training Session and Meeting of State Secretaries (1995)

CDI supports an annual training meeting of state secretaries that will be held in conjunction with the CDI Annual Conference.

The work of soil and water conservation districts requires a cooperative effort from many people and groups of people, but the most critical cooperation in a district is between commissioners, NRCS personnel and the state secretary. In order to improve this relationship, we feel that it is necessary for the state secretaries to attend the CDI Annual Conference to keep informed on all issues concerning the district.

State Taxes

State Sales Tax (1991)

CDI asks that a statewide sales tax of 2/10 (0.2) of one percent be enacted by the State of Iowa to fund construction of permanent conservation practices. Proposed amendment:

Recognizing the importance of soil conservation and water quality and the need for people and agencies to share in this, we feel that it is essential that a percentage of sales tax be allocated toward such practices. We feel that an application formula will fund practices through the Division of Soil Conservation for soil and water conservation districts, county conservation boards, boards of supervisors, Division of State Parks and Forests, towns and cities. When the State Legislature increases the sales tax, the Division of Soil Conservation would receive 2/10 of 1 percent of the sales tax to fund conservation practices.

Urban

Establishment of the Iowa Urban Conservation Program (2007)

CDI actively supports the establishment and expansion of a permanent Urban Conservation program with qualified staff for Iowa's urban population.

There is an increasing demand for urban services, including but not limited to, erosion and sediment control for construction sites, Low Impact Development recommendations, design, education and implementation, urban drainage issues, water quality issues within urban areas (streams, rivers and lakes). The urban population is looking to the Soil and Water Conservation Districts for assistance and with the already over whelming work load with agriculture resource concerns, urban issues are not addressed. The urban areas have been found to be a larger impact on water and soil resources. By not educating and assisting the urban population of Iowa citizens we could be sending a message that urban issues are not a problem, and that the agricultural areas of Iowa are responsible for all of the problems with Iowa's water and soil quality.

Soil Erosion in Urban Areas (1990)

CDI will work with members of the Iowa Legislature and the DSC to pass a law to require plans for soil erosion and sediment control whenever more than 25,000 square feet of land is disturbed; that cities and counties, through zoning and building codes, administer the application of soil erosion and sediment control plans; that standards and specifications for soil erosion and sediment control as established by local SWCDs be followed; and that agriculture and mining industries be excluded from having to follow this law.

Increase the Emphasis on Soil and Water Conservation in Urban Areas (1996)

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

- 1. 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.**
- 2. 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.**
- 3. 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.**
- 4. NRCS provide training opportunities to District Conservationists with urban programs.**
- 5. IDALS-DSC prepares model ordinances for municipalities to use for erosion and sediment control and for better storm water management.**

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.

County Wide Development Plan (2002)

CDI should support efforts to require cities and counties to plan cooperatively and assemble a county wide strategic development plan.

How we use our land for future generations to be able to enjoy embodies our goals as soil and water commissioners.

Water Quality/Protection

Local Control Needed for Misuse of Lawn and Garden Fertilizer (1997)

CDI supports a change in the Iowa Code which would allow municipalities and counties to address their own local water quality concerns through the use of locally approved ordinances related to lawn and garden fertilizers, if those entities of local government choose to do so.

Currently, the Iowa Code prohibits local units of government from enacting simple ordinances to protect local water resources from nutrient enrichment by fertilizers. Section 200.22 of the Iowa Code states: [this chapter] "shall preempt local legislation adopted by a local governmental entity relating to the use, sale, distribution, storage, transportation, disposal, formulation, labeling, registration, or manufacture of a fertilizer or soil conditioner." The chapter also states that "local legislation (such as a locally enacted ordinance) in violation of this section is void and unenforceable."

Promote Water Testing of Private Wells (2002)

CDI should encourage SWCDs to promote efforts that promote water testing of private wells, so that the consumers (owners) and public at large become better educated on the quality of water they drink, and the possible affects, associated with poor water quality.

Ground water quality and quantity in Iowa varies, depending on the region of the State. Surface activities can and do affect ground water quality. Ground water can be tainted with excessive nutrients, pesticides, pathogens, and other contaminants. Ground water, once contaminated can be especially expensive to treat and the source may eventually have to be abandoned all together. Creating a greater awareness of water quality tends to encourage protection efforts.