



# JONES SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

300 Chamber Drive, Anamosa, IA 52205

Phone 319-462-3196 Ext. 3

January 2020

## Saying Good Bye



A well-known proverb states when one door closes, another one opens. After 20 years of promoting conservation and assisting hundreds of farmers in Jones County, District Conservationist Joe Wagner opened a new door and boldly walked through.

Last September, Wagner took a position in Kentucky as Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Most people would be afraid to leave a job after two decades, but Wagner saw an opportunity and was brave enough to take it. He weighed the pros and cons of taking the job, and heading south was a plus. “My wife wanted to move to a warmer climate, so I took the position in Kentucky.”

A Dubuque native, Wagner first developed an appreciation for nature and an interest in conservation as a young boy when his father took him hunting. He chose to pursue a career in natural resources, graduating from Iowa State with degrees in Fish & Wildlife Biology and Ag Journalism.

After college, Wagner joined the Peace Corps and lived in Paraguay for two years. It was there that he met his wife Deolinda. When they came back to the United States, he started his career with the Soil Conservation Service as a technician in North Central Iowa. He then became a soil conservationist in Postville, Iowa, working on a water quality project sponsored jointly by Cooperative Extension and NRCS. In 1999 he joined the Anamosa NRCS office as the District Conservationist.

The Wagner family maintains a farm near Amber and lives by conservation principles. Over the years they have implemented many conservation practices on their property, including planting native prairie grasses, pollinator habitat, trees, shrubs and a windbreak. They have conducted timber stand improvement, put in a vineyard and blueberry patch, and most recently planted chestnut trees. They also produce honey with several hives of bees.

Wagner is enjoying the new knowledge that working in Kentucky brings. “Where I’m at in western Kentucky, the landscape is similar to Iowa, and the people there are good to work with.”

Reflecting back on his job in Iowa, Wagner said, “Working with the Jones Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners was very rewarding. I miss that.” The highlights of his career as District Conservationist included being involved in special projects, such as the Bear Creek, Farm Creek and Mineral Creek Watershed Projects, the Maquoketa River Watershed Alliance, the Center Junction sewer project, and conservation education outreach to schools.

“I’ve learned that conservation comes from the heart and it is instilled in us at an early age,” Wagner said. “Young hands getting dirty in healthy soils today will be working on conservation projects tomorrow.”

**The Jones SWCD Commissioners would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone that supported conservation in Jones County.**

### **OFFICE STAFF:**

Sonya Ellison, IDALS Secretary/Consv. Asst.  
Mark Schmidt, NRCS Consv. Technician  
Addie Manternach, NRCS Soil Conservationist  
Tom Miller, NRCS Wetland Specialist  
Michelle German, NRCS Resource Conservationist  
Michelle Turner, IDALS Soil Consv. Technician

### **DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS:**

Julie Orris, Chair  
Jeff Von Behren Vice Chair  
Walter Laetare  
Dave Aschbrenner  
Joe Trumm

### **ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS:**

Pauline Antons  
Rose Rohr  
Paul Specht

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## Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig



As I reflect over the past year, 2019 presented Iowans with many challenges due to weather conditions, yet we continue to build momentum and make progress in our efforts to improve water quality and soil health. My goal as Secretary of Agriculture has been to continue our culture of conservation throughout the state of Iowa. Thanks to great leaders, additional funding and strong partnerships, our state continues to make progress on conservation.

As you drive through rural and urban areas in Iowa, you'll see new conservation practices on the landscape that improve both water quality and soil health. Each year, farmers are seeding more fields with cover crops and adopting practices such as wetlands, while cities are working to incorporate infiltration-based technologies with infrastructure improvement projects. These partnerships are great examples of farmers and communities working together to achieve our collective water quality improvement goals.

When the Water Quality Initiative started in 2013, we focused on eight demonstration projects. We now have over 84 projects across the state today with 30 new wetlands under development and additional dollars being invested each year.

More funding allows conservation practices and projects to be implemented faster than ever. Iowa has a record number of cover crop acres planted across the state — almost 1 million acres were planted last fall. Additionally, state funded cost share statistics show that fall 2019 is our best quarter yet; over half of the district offices reported their participation numbers are above average for all state cost share programs. These programs give assistance to farmers who implement practices on their land. Interest in the program continues to increase each year, even with challenging economic conditions and weather struggles. This shows the dedication and care that farmers have for our natural resources and the next generation.

Iowa farmers working in conjunction with our conservation partners will continue to innovate and implement effective practices to improve soil health and water quality at an increased rate each year. My team will continue to work with you to find solutions and create a culture of conservation, rather than regulation. Thank you all for playing a role in Iowa's efforts to improve water quality. Your passion and commitment to work side by side with conservation partners and land owners will be essential to our future success.

## Stanton and Gobel Receive Conservation Awards



John Stanton of rural Bernard received the 2019 Advanced Cover Crop Innovator Award. In September, the Jones Soil & Water Conservation District presented John with the award at his farm. For years, John has been planting a variety of species in cover crop mixes that are rotated with corn and soybeans to improve soil health.

From left to right are: Jeff Von Behren, Soil Commissioner; Pauline Antons, Asst. Soil Commissioner; John Stanton, Landowner; and Julie Orris, Chair, Jones Soil & Water Conservation District.

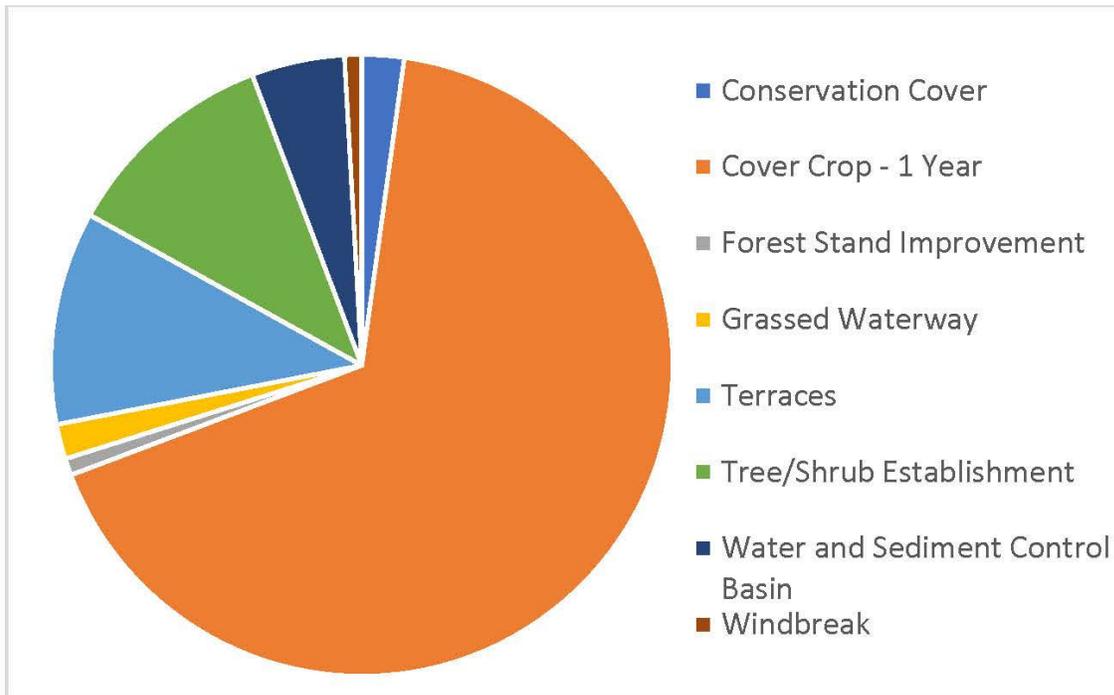
Picture on right:

Lucas and Kris Gobel of rural Monticello received the 2019 Farmstead Windbreak Award. The Jones Soil & Water Conservation District presented the Gobelis with the award at their place in September. They planted and cared for more than 200 trees a few years ago that have had very good survival.

From left to right are: Jeff Von Behren, Soil Commissioner; Julie Orris, Chair, Jones Soil & Water Conservation District; Kris and Lucas Gobel, Landowners; and Pauline Antons, Assistant Soil Commissioner.



## How State Cost Share Funds were Spent in Jones County



Program & Practice	Sum of Cost Share Amount	Count of Units of Practice	Sum of Acres Benefitted
<b>Cost Share Program</b>	<b>\$ 20,992.54</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>403.34</b>
Cover Crop - 1 Year	\$ 8,896.85	6	389.79
Grassed Waterway	\$ 1,234.19	2	0.55
Terraces	\$ 7,561.50	3	12
Water and Sediment Control Basin	\$ 3,300.00	1	1
<b>REAP F/NG</b>	<b>\$ 2,251.43</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8.8</b>
Conservation Cover	\$ 1,042.73	1	3.5
Forest Stand Improvement	\$ 600.00	1	5
Windbreak	\$ 608.70	1	0.3
<b>REAP P</b>	<b>\$ 8,100.00</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14.63</b>
Conservation Cover	\$ 450.00	1	1.63
Tree/Shrub Establishment	\$ 7,650.00	2	13
<b>Water Quality Initiative - Statewide</b>	<b>\$ 36,811.30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2,100.82</b>
Cover Crop - 1 Year	\$ 36,811.30	23	2,100.82
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 68,155.27</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2,527.59</b>

The mission of the Jones Soil & Water Conservation District is to provide local leadership in the advancement of the protection and enhancement of the natural resources of Jones county by providing technical, educational, and financial assistance to the public by using all available resources.

The Jones SWCD works in partnership with many federal agencies and organizations. Formal working agreements exist with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship- Division of Soil conservation and Water Quality.

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## Jones Soil & Water Conservation District's Report of Revolving Funds July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

### SWCD Employee Account #789-2

Beginning Balance July 1, 2018	\$40,060.24
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Farm Bill XIV Funds – Conserv. Districts IA	579.40
Jones Co. Supervisors Funds	2,000.00
Employee Funding (780 Hour Position)	<u>2,304.00</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>4,883.40</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
IPERS	209.83
IA Workforce Development	48.98
Federal Payroll Taxes	1,409.46
State Payroll Taxes	10.00
District Employees Wages & Training	6,414.84
Accounting Services	1,400.00
Bank Fees for Direct Deposit Payroll	40.00
Pheasants Forever – Employee Partnership Agr.	250.00
Advertising -Vacancy Announcement	<u>122.40</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>9,905.51</b>
<b>Balance June 30, 2019</b>	<b>\$35,038.13</b>

### SWCD Checking Account # 204-4

Beginning Balance July 1, 2018	\$9,683.69
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Farm Bill XIV Funds – Conserv. Districts IA	579.40
1M Allocation	2,175.00
Endowment Fund Earnings	710.00
Reimbursement - Workshop Meals	289.47
Tree Sales	<u>1,177.00</u>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>4,930.87</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
FY18 Outstanding Checks	75.27
Membership Dues – CDI & NACD	1,450.00
SWCD Website Fee	20.17
Workshops	339.98
Subscriptions	39.00
Commissioner Expenses	862.68
Spring Regional Registrations	60.00
State Forest Nursery	286.25
Nursery Dealer Certificate	25.00
State Sales Tax	62.00
2018 Scholarship	400.00
Consv. Awards & Refreshments	64.00
Donation to SWCD Endowment Fund	863.52
Supplies	35.58
Transfer to Acct. # 789-2 -Farm Bill XIV Funds	<u>579.40</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>5,162.85</b>
<b>Balance June 30, 2019</b>	<b>\$9,451.71</b>

### Money Market

Beginning Balance July 1, 2018	\$3,633.60
<b>Receipts</b>	
Interest Accrued	10.95
Deposits and Transfers	0.00
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
	0.00
<b>Balance June 30, 2019</b>	<b>\$3,644.55</b>

The Jones Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Report was reviewed at the \_\_\_\_\_ District Commissioner's meeting and certified as accurate by the Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair Julie Orris

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Savings Account

Beginning Balance July 1, 2018	\$20,190.78
<b>Receipts:</b>	
Interest Accrued	40.41
Deposits & Transfers	0.00
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
	0.00
<b>Balance June 30, 2019</b>	<b>\$20,231.19</b>

### District Expense Funds

The Jones SWCD received \$2,175 from the State of Iowa through the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) - Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality (DSCWQ) for eligible commissioner and office operation expenses.

The summary below shows how the allocation was expended. The negative balance reflects dollars the Jones SWCD provided through other means, such as fund-raising, to cover eligible expenses.

Commissioners that submitted eligible travel claims were reimbursed at the rate of \$0.39 per mile.

SFY19 Allocation:	\$2,175.00
<b>Expenditures:</b>	
CDI Dues	850.00
NACD Dues	600.00
Commissioner Expenses	983.91
Office Expense	<u>87.75</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,521.66</b>
<b>Balance June 30, 2019</b>	<b>-\$346.66</b>

### Scholarship Recipient

Rebecca Trumm received the Jones SWCD's \$400 scholarship in 2019. Rebecca graduated from Western Dubuque High School. Currently, she is studying Ag Business at Iowa State University. Rebecca is the daughter of Joe and Sara Trumm, Cascade.

Scholarships are made possible by generous donors supporting the Jones SWCD's Endowment Fund, which is managed by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. If you would like to donate, give us a call. Your donation is tax deductible.



## Hello from the Director

**Susan Kozak, Director, Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality**



Wow – a lot can change in a year! At this time last year, I was the “Acting” Director for Soil Conservation and Water Quality and very torn on the decision of what my future should look like. Now, I have jumped in with both feet to the position permanently and love the challenges it brings every day. In the past year, I have had the opportunity to travel to many great events to discuss our conservation efforts but I believe my favorite events are the small, local meetings. I love sitting at a table with people from each district to hear the legislative priorities for Lee County, enjoy the 75th anniversary celebration in Cherokee County, participate in a discussion at an Iowa Learning Farms farmer listening circle or answer questions at the Taylor County Fair.

This has also been quite a year of change – it seems like all areas of conservation in the state are shifting and growing. I was able to attend many meetings across the state regarding the Natural Resources Conservation Service reorganization. This has given our field offices an opportunity to have a District Conservationist in every local office again and IDALS will have a dedicated Conservation Assistant in the offices. NRCS is not the only entity going through change. After I accepted the director position, it caused a chain reaction of staff moves in our Des Moines office. Hopefully, the end is in sight and we have been able to place the right people in the right positions to keep the momentum moving forward on our nutrient reduction strategy goals. And those goals are big – we need to see a major shift in the pace and scale of conservation practices across the landscape. It will take all conservation professionals, public and private, working together as a close team to create the needed changes.

All of our field days and local meetings are perfect chances to engage with others in our communities and talk about our goals and mission for conservation. We are all working toward the same goals to improve our soil health and water quality. It is important to build new connections in our conservation community to help spread our efforts to every corner of Iowa. I want to thank all our staff and partners for their hard work and the willing landowners that make conservation a priority. Make sure to stop in your local field office to see how you can get involved and make a new conservation connection.

## New Field Services Bureau Chief

Will Myers has been recently hired as Bureau Chief for Field Services at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. Myers will oversee the Department’s conservation programs and serve as a liaison with public and private partners to promote the adoption of soil health and water quality programs across the state of Iowa.

“Over the past few years in the Division, Will has demonstrated his leadership skills and ability to engage with partners” said Soil and Water Conservation Division Director Susan Kozak. “He will be a great fit with the Field Services team and I am excited to see our efforts move forward with his new ideas.”

Myers joined the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as the Water Quality Initiative Projects Coordinator in 2015. During his tenure, he has provided leadership in the development and administration of over 80 water quality projects located across the state in support of the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Myers has also developed key partnerships to increase the pace and scale of rural and urban conservation practices.

An Iowa native, Myers grew up outside of Dallas Center. He earned a Bachelor’s degree in Environmental Science from Iowa State University and a Master’s Degree in Natural Resources from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Myers has more than 17 years of experience working in water quality and agriculture programs, serving in both Iowa and Nebraska.

“While I’m new to this position in the Field Services Bureau, I have had the opportunity to work with many of the Districts in my previous role at IDALS” said Myers. “I will continue to facilitate the development of our successful partnerships which are key to our success and will continue to promote new opportunities that will further advance our collective conservation, soil health and water quality goals in Iowa.”



## Conservation Farmer of the Year Award



Knowing how to balance agriculture production with conservation is a skill Monticello farmer Marty Burlage has mastered, and his voluntary stewardship and land ethic ensures that our natural resources will be available for future generations. Marty and his wife, Stacey, are the 2019 recipients of the Conservation Farmer of the Year Award, sponsored by the Jones Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

Jones SWCD Commissioners presented a plaque to Marty and Stacey on October 11th at the Burlage farm office, where Stacey handles the finances and inventory, and Marty, a Certified Crop Advisor, manages production and their business Valley Road Seeds.

Nominees for the award are judged on how they improve soil and water conditions, innovation, long-term commitment to stewardship, community leadership, and sustained economic viability.

From left to right are: Pauline Antons, Asst. Soil Commissioner; Stacey and Marty Burlage; Julie Orris, Chair, Jones Soil & Water Conservation District; Jeff Von Behren, Soil Commissioner; and Dave Aschbrenner, Soil Commissioner.

The Burlage family farms about 1,300 acres. Corn, soybeans, and hay are their primary crops, and they operate several feed lots. Burlage plants his crops using no-till

methods, improving on the tillage methods used on the farm in the 1990s. By coupling no-till practices with cover crops, he has improved water infiltration and soil health, increasing productivity.

“Cover crops are the way to go”, said Burlage, who puts cover crops on all his crop land. He has been growing cover crop seed for three years, in addition to purchasing some, such as radish seed, for cover crop mixes. He said he keeps careful records and looks for obvious yield bumps due to the cover crops.

The Burlages use many other conservation practices to protect the environment, each bringing its own measurable improvements. Grassed waterways and field borders trap sediment in runoff water and control sheet and gully erosion. The added vegetation also provides habitat for birds and small animals. Filter strips improve water quality by removing contaminants before they reach streams and other water bodies. Contouring, terraces, and diversions slow runoff water and carry it to a stable outlet.

To further address soil erosion and water quality, the Burlages enrolled land in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The farm’s roots trace back four generations. Marty is following in his father’s footsteps by using a mix of old practices and modern technology to leave the land in better shape for the next generation. His father, Robert, was local winner and nominee for the 1967 Iowa Soil Conservation Awards, sponsored by the Des Moines Register and Tribune, along with the Iowa Farm and Home Register.

Promoting responsible land stewardship is the mission of the Jones SWCD and rewarding producers like Marty and Stacey, who have proven their dedication to conservation, give the SWCD the chance to recognize those who are doing the right things.



## Conservation Teacher of the Year Award

Tanya Manternach of Monticello High School received the 2019 Conservation Teacher of the Year Award. In September, the Jones Soil & Water Conservation District presented Tanya with the award during class. Mrs. Manternach integrates principles of conservation and the importance of water quality into the curriculum and invites experts into the classroom to present on various conservation topics.

If you would like to nominate a teacher for this award, contact the Jones SWCD.

From left to right are: Jeff Von Behren, Soil Commissioner; Pauline Antons, Asst. Soil Commissioner; Tanya Manternach, Science Teacher; Julie Orris, Chair, Jones Soil & Water Conservation District; and Joe Wagner, District Conservationist.