

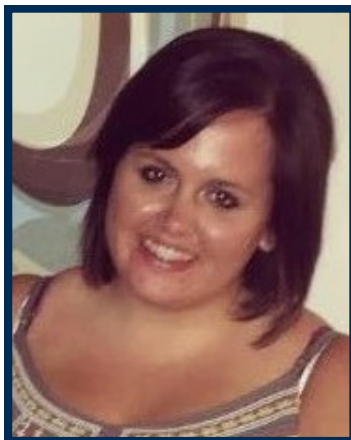
Watersheds & Waterways

Newsletter



Fall 2016

Greetings from the Interim Project Coordinator!



Hello everyone! My name is Kayla Hasper and I am the interim Project Coordinator, as Hanna left for another opportunity last month. I have spent a few weeks learning the ropes and meeting everyone. If I have not met you yet, please introduce yourself!

I have degrees in Animal Ecology and Environmental Studies from Iowa State University and have spent the past three years with Prairie

Rivers of Iowa in many positions. I have served as Kids on the Byway Assistant, Marketing Intern, Watershed Intern, and most recently served as the Watershed Educator.

Please introduce yourself via email (khasper@prccd.org) or feel free to stop by the Prairie Rivers of Iowa office anytime to say hi!

Sincerely,
Kayla R. Hasper

Strip-Till Educational Video

Check out our latest video showing a strip-till bar in action while highlighting the main components and benefits!

<https://youtu.be/LcM3VKJfDvg>

Special thanks to Jeremy Gustafson for his conservation efforts and for letting us film his strip-till practices!

Inspiration from Conservation Leaders

By Hanna Bates

"Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare." - Angel Duckworth, *Grit*

I was reminded of this quote when I attended the Iowa Farm Environmental Leadership award ceremony at the Iowa State Fair. Organized by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, this award recognizes those who go above and beyond to address soil health and water quality. These individuals are not only enthusiastic about conservation, but work to incorporate it on their farms.

In Iowa, we are not short on enthusiasm for efforts to protect and build soil health, as well for protection of our public waterways. What is rare are those individuals who take extraordinary measures to protect the land. This is present among those who won the IFEL award. They are not farming for the present, but farming for the vitality of their ecological and social communities in the future.

Previous research shows that farmers are motivated by many non-economic factors,

such as a connection to the land. These connections to land and community serve as strong motivations for positive action on conservation. The IFEL winners were not just enthusiastic about the idea of land stewardship, but they were determined to put their beliefs into action on their land.

Starting a new management practice is never easy. I am frequently told by farmers around the state that to change one thing on the farm is to change everything. Duckworth describes the process of developing a certain idea or practice as having four components: interest, capacity to act, a sense of purpose, and hope. When combined, great things tend to happen. Duckworth states, "To be gritty is to hold fast to an interesting and purposeful goal. To be gritty is to invest, day after week after year, in challenging practice. To be gritty is to fall down seven times, and rise eight." Those who lead conservation efforts here in Iowa have this grit.

The IFEL award winners put effort into learning about new approaches to conservation.

They are constantly experimenting on their farms and openly sharing their story with others. They take a risk in trying something new with the potential of failing, even with neighbors watching. These farmers have knowledge about what they are doing, and the belief that it is important. I am incredibly inspired by these IFEL award winners, and I hope you are too.



From left: Chuck Gipp, Director of the Iowa DNR; Governor Terry Branstad; James McHugh, Boone County farmer; Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds; Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey



Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge/STRIPS Tour

Prairie Rivers of Iowa will offer a tour of the Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge on November 2. It will be a unique and fun experience for all. Whether you have been to the refuge or not, there will be a lot to learn and enjoy.

The schedule for the afternoon will be:

12:30PM – Depart from Prairie Rivers of Iowa office at 2402 South Duff Avenue Ames, Iowa
 1:30PM – Arrive at Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge
 2:00-3:30PM – Tour the Prairie STRIPS project and hear from a representative of that program

3:30-5:00PM – Tour the seed processing facility and hear from a biologist
 5:30PM – Head back to Ames

There will be a \$10 charge to attend this event. We plan to rent a vehicle to travel together to Neal Smith. If others want to drive separately or meet us there, that is an option as well.

You must RSVP for this event. Please email our educator, Annie Fangman, at afangman@prcd.org or call 515-232-0048 to RSVP and let her know your travel plans.

Soil Health Tools and Equipment Showcase Recap

By Kayla Hasper

On Saturday, July 23, 77 Squaw Creek Watershed farmers and community members gathered for a field day at Al Lingren's farm in Ogden. There for a field day on soil health equipment and tools, participants began the day in the barn with food and conversation.

Reed Riskedahl, Prairie Rivers of Iowa Board President, welcomed attendees and discussed Prairie Rivers of Iowa's role in the watershed. Hanna Bates, Project Coordinator, spoke about the cost-share available to Squaw Creek Watershed farmers through the Water Quality Initiative Grant. Later, Kevin Griggs of the Squaw Creek Watershed Management Authority Board discussed the board's role and offered advice gained from his experience as a conservation professional.

The final presentation came from Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Bill Northey. Mr. Northey spoke about the role conservation plays in Iowa agriculture and about the importance of knowing there is no one recipe for conservation.

"Each of us has to figure out how conservation can work for us," he said.

Attendees then broke into groups to rotate through four educational stations.

Angie Reick-Hinz, ISU Extension and Outreach Field Agronomist, and Al Lingren discussed strip-till benefits and equipment, as well as aerial cover crop application.

The Boone Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) brought their soil health trailer, where SWCD employees showed educational videos about soil health and retention. They also demonstrated the effect of water on soil when it is held together with roots year-round (i.e., cover crops) versus when the soil is unprotected.

Jamie Benning, Water Quality Program Coordinator for ISU Extension and Outreach, demonstrated the Soil Scan 360, a portable soil testing system that accurately tests nitrate-nitrogen availability and soil pH right in the field in about five minutes.



Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey speaking at our field day

The final station included a Hagie Highboy with a cover crop interseeder. Representatives from Iowa Cover Crop discussed the resources and options available for cover crop use, as well as how they can be a beneficial partner during cover crop planning.

After these sessions, partner organizations had tables set up in the barn where attendees could further mingle and learn. Those present included Service Provider's Network (TSPN), Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), One Stop Cover Crop Service (Boone NRCS), and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS).

It was great to meet new stakeholders in the watershed and see old friends and supporters!



Partner of the Month!

We would like to thank United Suppliers for their continual support of the Squaw Creek Watershed demonstration project. Since the beginning of our project, United Suppliers has been a partner to educate watershed citizens on sustainable farming through their SUSTAIN program (in partnership with Key Cooperative).

Contact Us!

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Please give us your feedback!

We will be planning more field days and workshops in the upcoming months. Please take this survey to let us know when you would like to attend a future field day!