

Project Focus

OUR MISSION

Written by Shay Kamstra

We strive to increase awareness of water quality and resource concerns in the Deep Creek-Willow Creek watershed. We encourage the use of conservation practices to address resource concerns which in turn helps develop a protective, sustainable and profitable agricultural landscape.

Our project engages local, public and private partners to foster voluntary adoption of conservation practices. We believe in using a cooperative approach to the improvement of water quality while protecting the health and productivity of our soils and our community.

We welcome input from our producers and stakeholders. If you have any suggestions, comments or questions, please feel free to contact the Plymouth County Soil and Water Conservation.



WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

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Photo of the Deep Creek-Willow Creek taken on Marble Avenue in Le Mars

Meet Shay Kamstra

A NEW FACE

Written by Shay Kamstra

Growing up in Orange City, Iowa, and attending Northwestern College, Shay Kamstra is quite familiar with Midwest Iowa and all it has to offer. Kamstra graduated from Northwestern in 2020 with a degree in biology with a focus in ecology. Environmental science and conservation have always been a massive passion of Kamstra's, and her enthusiasm to educate the public about conservation practices will be put to good use as the new Deep Creek-Willow Creek watershed project coordinator.



Before accepting the project coordinator position with Plymouth County Soil and Water Conservation District, Kamstra was a seasonal employee with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in Spirit Lake and worked with the dock enforcement program.

In her free time, Kamstra enjoys spending time outdoors. A few of her favorite outdoor hobbies include visiting state parks, birding, boating, longboarding, kayaking and collecting butterflies. In the winter, you can find her in the gym lifting weights, in the kitchen baking bread or diligently working on a puzzle.

Kamstra is excited to meet and get to know all the producers in her watershed. She is currently working on no-till cost share applications for the Deep Creek-Willow Creek watershed. If you think you are in the watershed, give Kamstra a call to get signed up! Welcome to the team, Shay Kamstra!

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Cost Share Opportunities

Cost Share Rates & Requirements

Priority Practice	Cost Share Rate	Acre Cap	Eligible Applicant	Other Requirements
Cover Crop	\$25/acre	200 acres	Producers within the project area	Must meet NRCS standards
No-till/Strip-till Soybeans Planted	\$10/acre	200 acres	Producers within the project area	Must meet NRCS standards
No till/Strip till Corn Planted	\$20/acre	200 acres	Producers within the project area	Must meet NRCS standards
P-Band Applied 1 st time	\$10/acre	200 acres	Producers who have never used this practice	>80% undisturbed soil
P-Band Applied 2 nd time or more	\$35/acre	200 acres	Producers within the project area	Must plant cover crop on the same acres
N-serve	\$8/acre	200 acres	Producers within the project area	Nitrapyrin only, with fall applied anhydrous
Edge-of-Field	100% with partner funding		Producers within the project area	Must meet NRCS standards
Terraces or Water and Sediment Control Basins	50% of estimated practice installation		Producers within the project area	Must meet NRCS standards

Application Schedule

*all applications must be approved before the practice is implemented for payment eligibility

Practice	Sign Up Start Date	Sign Up End Date
Cover Crops	July 1, 2022	August 31, 2022
P-Band	August 1, 2022	September 30, 2022
N-Serve	August 1, 2022	September 30, 2022
No-till/Strip-till	December 1, 2022	March 31, 2022
Terraces & WASCObS	Year-round (construction planned for following fall)	Year-round (construction planned for following fall)
Edge-of-Field	Year-round (construction planned for following fall)	Year-round (construction planned for following fall)

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Meet Tyler & Austin Meyer

IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY

Written by Shay Kamstra

Participants of no-till farming for the past ten years, brothers Tyler and Austin Meyer and father Stan Meyer operate 75 acres of no-till land six miles outside of Granville. The brothers were introduced to the practice of no-till farming through their father who implemented no-till soybeans into his farming twenty years ago. Ever since then, the Meyer family has continued to use no-till farming practices.



Photo from *The Farming Families Magazine*
Austin (left), Stan (middle) and Tyler (right)

“When Stan first started no-till farming, his mom was like ‘What are you doing? You are going to lose all your land!’ But here we are, years later, and we still have all our land,” Tyler said.

Tyler and Austin always planned on farming just like their dad. The brothers graduated from Iowa State University with degrees in agricultural studies. During their first year of no-till farming in 2012, the Meyers went all in and no-tilled 500 acres of corn.

“I definitely wouldn’t suggest doing that,” said Tyler. Normally when producers are familiarizing themselves with no-till practices, they start small—taking the “rather safe than sorry” approach. But the brothers grew up watching their father no-till farm—it’s the only kind of farming they knew.

Aside from the monetary incentives from the NRCS, no-till farming has both environmental and economical benefits. Because of no-till farming, Tyler and Austin are saving time, money and labor. Additionally, Tyler has noticed positive environmental impacts. Tyler recalled a twenty-minute downpour that happened last spring and how his no-tilled field responded better to water infiltration compared to his neighbors tilled field. Tyler explained how his no-tilled fields have increased in organic matter and water holding capacity.

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Meet Tyler & Austin Meyer

More and more producers are considering implementing no-till practices into their farming. After years of experience under his belt, Tyler has gained a lot of knowledge about no-till farming.

“You cannot take a tillage mindset into a no-till situation,” Tyler said. “They are two different systems...you have to assess them differently. You can’t just do no-till for one year; it’s something you need to make a commitment to for a minimum of three years.” Variables like rainfall, weather, and soil health all play a role in the success of no-till farming.

Despite no-till farming their whole farming career, Tyler and Austin still face challenges, but they know that this practice is profitable in the long run—for them and for their fields. The Deep Creek-Willow Creek Water Quality Initiative Project understands the benefits of no-till and wants to encourage conservation-minded farming through incentives. Producers that no-till soybeans can receive \$10 per acre, and producers that no-till corn can receive \$20 per acre. The deadline to apply for no-till cost share is March 31, 2022. Producers within the watershed can apply for no-till cost share through Shay Kamstra, the watershed project coordinator.



Photo of no-till corn from Iowa State University's website

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Upcoming Deadlines

EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and unpredictable weather changes.

This voluntary conservation programs helps producers make conservation work for them. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers and non-industrial forest managers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily implement conservation practices, and NRCS co-invests in these practices with you.

To learn more about EQIP, contact your local NRCS office. An NRCS conservationist will visit you and evaluate the natural resources on your land. If you want to be considered for EQIP funding this calendar year, the deadline to sign up is April 1.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>



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Upcoming Deadlines

CSP

Our Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop resiliency, or develop wildlife habitat, we can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. We can help you identify natural resource problems in your operation and provide technical and financial assistance to solve those problems or attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner.

For example, we can look at ways to address the amount of soil lost; mitigate the impact of excess water; reduce the contribution of agricultural operations to airborne soil particles and greenhouse gas emissions; improve the cover, food, and water available for domestic and wildlife species; or promote energy efficiencies for on-farm activities. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

If you're ready to take your conservation efforts to the next level, we are here to help. NRCS accepts applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) at any time throughout the year. NRCS sets specific deadlines for ranking and funding opportunities. If you want to be considered for CSP funding this calendar year, the deadline to sign up is April 1.

For more information, visit:

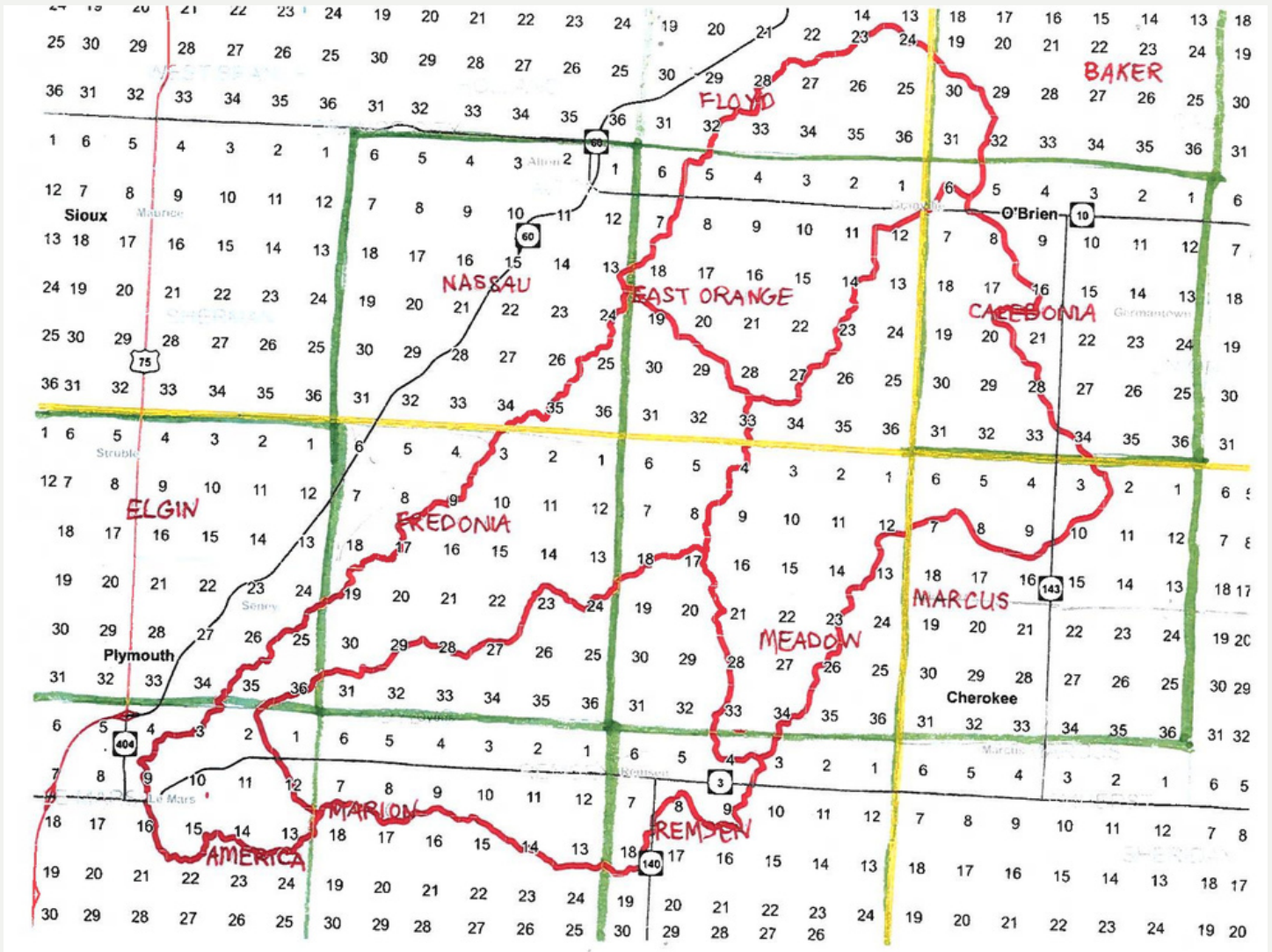
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/>



CSP
Conservation
Stewardship
Program

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Deep Creek-Willow Creek Watershed



Do you farm or own land in the Deep Creek-Willow Creek watershed?

Be sure to follow our Facebook page!
Plymouth County Soil and Water Conservation District

Plymouth County SWCD
1100 12th St SW STE A
Le Mars, IA 51031

Phone: (712) 546 - 8858 ext. 3
Hours: Monday - Friday
8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

These organizations are partnering with the Deep Creek-Willow Creek Water Quality Initiative to help you decide which conservation practices are best for you, your operation and your land:

Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship, Iowa Soybean Association, Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa State University, Iowa Farm Bureau, Plymouth County Pheasants Forever, Le Mars Agri-Center, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Remsen Farmers Coop, Farmers Coop of Hinton, Oyens, Akron & Le Mars



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