



# MITCHELL SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPRING 2021

## MEET THE COMMISSIONERS

The Mitchell Soil and Water Conservation District is led by locally elected residents of Mitchell County who volunteer their time as commissioners and work together to offer local program guidance to address natural resource concerns within the county. Commissioner meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month and the public is welcome to attend. Assistant Commissioners include Milt Owen, Dale Hemann and Chelsea Rowcliffe. Commissioners are pictured below.



Chairperson  
Bruce Johnson



Assistant Chair  
Sue Sletten



Co-Treasurer  
Eric Jellum



Co-Treasurer  
Dana Norby



Commissioner  
Jackie Armstrong



## MSWCD 2020 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Mercedes Lesmeister of Riceville was awarded MSWCD's 2020 scholarship for high school seniors. Congrats, Mercedes!

Mercedes has been very involved in activities with FFA, Student Council, Speech Team, Volleyball and Track & Field. Mercedes started attending Iowa State University in the fall of 2020 for Ag-Business and Pre-Law.

## SLOUGH BILL – APPLICATION FOR PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION

Mitchell County is a participant in the Iowa Code Section 427.1 which allows for idle land of 2 or more acres in the county to be considered for tax exemption eligibility. Idle land must offer ecological/wildlife benefits. This includes, but is not limited to, forests, open prairies, and riparian areas. This is a yearly sign up process with applications due every February 1<sup>st</sup>. If you have land in Mitchell County that may qualify for this exemption, please contact the Mitchell Soil and Water Conservation District for an application and evaluation of the land.



## TREES FOR COMMUNITIES

The Trees for Kids program was a little different this year due to COVID-19. Instead of giving 5<sup>th</sup> graders seedlings to take home and plant, the Mitchell SWCD donated larger red maple saplings to each school district in Mitchell County to plant on the school grounds.

The Osage School District added their trees to the landscaping in front of their new addition!



## INTRODUCING THE NEW MITCHELL COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATIONIST

Greetings to all in Osage and Mitchell County,

My name is Cristian Vélez and I am going to be working and supporting Mitchell County as a Soil Conservationist. I started in August of 2020, flying here from the small archipelago of Puerto Rico. I have a bachelor's degree in Agriculture Economics from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus. Previously, I was an Agronomist in Puerto Rico and worked in Organic Farming with an entrepreneurship focus on medicinal herbs business development. I am excited to keep learning more about agriculture here in Iowa.

My time working and learning in Puerto Rico reaffirmed my commitment to preserving and conserving the Earth's natural resources since this is our home and it requires our utmost care and attention. Farming is the backbone of any society so we must do what we can to preserve and protect that which feeds us. Synergy is the concept that involves a lot of smaller moving parts that lead to a greater outcome by working together better than working individually, and I strongly believe that by working together we can make a better tomorrow for the present and future generations. I'm looking forward to working alongside Mitchell County producers, farmers, and ranchers to strive for more sustainable farming through conservation.

-Cristian



## MONTHLY COMMISSIONER MEETINGS

The SWCD Commissioners meet every month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00am. The meetings are currently via Zoom with a call-in option. To join a meeting visit our Facebook page and/or website for the Zoom information. Meeting information is also posted on the front door of the CUSB Bank building. For more information or accommodations please call 641-732-5504 ext. 3.

## FOLLOW US ON OUR NEW FACEBOOK PAGE & WEBSITE!



Facebook -- [Mitchell Soil & Water – Osage, IA](#)  
Website -- [www.mitchellswcd.org](http://www.mitchellswcd.org)

If you would like to see a digital copy of our newsletter, you can check out our website or Facebook page. You can also receive future newsletters and updates directly to your inbox! Please notify the office at [kelly.kline@ia.nacdnet.net](mailto:kelly.kline@ia.nacdnet.net) to be put on the mailing list.



## MITCHELL COUNTY SWCD HAS A NEW 5-YEAR PLAN!

Mitchell County SWCD has officially completed their 5-Year Soil and Water Resource Conservation Plan (SWRCP). The Mitchell plan is one of 100 being developed throughout the State of Iowa and is one of 12 that has currently been completed. Through the integration and implementation of State-wide conservation goals promoted within the SWRCPs, the main hope is to reduce the impact that the State of Iowa has on both its downstream neighbors and the Gulf of Mexico; in addition to helping to meet the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy goals. The planning process for Mitchell's SWRCP began in August 2020 and ended in April 2021. Over the course of the nine-month period, two public meetings were held with Mitchell County stakeholders to assist SWCD commissioners and staff in the plan's development.

Meetings focused on determining conservation concerns within the District, as well as ways to overcome those concerns. Goal-development meetings were held throughout the winter and culminated in the creation of five priority goals. The five areas of focus for these goals center on the following: improving soil health and water quality, furthering partnerships with Watershed Management Associations and other entities, revamping social media, engaging with government officials/legislators, and increasing outreach to non-operating landowners. Already, commissioners and staff have begun working towards achieving goals outlined in their plan.

The Mitchell County SWCD commissioners and staff would like to thank all contributors who helped inform their plan, as well as Claire Carlson, the Conservation Districts of Iowa Planning Coordinator, who facilitated its development.



Claire Carlson, Conservation Districts of Iowa



## LOOK AT THOSE COVER CROPS! DAIKON RADISHES AND CEREAL RYE



## CHECK OUT A BOOK FROM THE SWCD LIBRARY!

Our library is open for all local community members to freely check out some of our books! The library features books on variety of topics such as soil health, ecology, regenerative agriculture, and Iowa plant ID. A complete catalogue of our available books can be found on our website under the activities tab. If you are interested in checking out any books, please contact staff by email at [ellen.friedrich@usda.gov](mailto:ellen.friedrich@usda.gov) or by phone at 641-732-5504 ext 3!



REVOLVING ACCOUNT	
Balancing to CHECK REGISTER	
RECEIPTS	
Transfer From Savings	\$70,000.00
Voided checks added back in	\$196.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$70,196.00</b>
EXPENDITURES	
SCHOLARSHIPS	\$1,000.00
CONTRIBUTION- ISU FOUNDATION	\$500.00
CONTRIBUTION - CDI	\$250.00
DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS	\$1,100.00
FARM BILL XIV REFUND	\$5,000.00
1M SIGNS	\$247.17
1M COMMISSIONER EXPENSES	\$1,041.09
1M OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$562.84
1M WATER SAMPLING MILEAGE	\$808.30
1M OTHER & MISC	\$1,664.27
IPERS WITHHOLDING	\$5,377.77
MEETING EXPENSES	\$659.83
NEWSLETTER EXPENSE	\$1,090.13
NEWSPAPER EXPENSE	\$50.99
PAYROLL	\$28,689.13
PAYROLL EXPENSE- ACCOUNTING FEES	\$255.00
PAYROLL TAXES	\$8,881.74
POSTAGE AND DELIVERY	\$235.00
ROCK CREEK SUPPLIES	\$294.45
ROCK CREEK - TRAVEL TRAINING	\$621.89
ROCK CREEK - INFO/ED	\$710.91
ROCK CREEK - SALARY EXPENSE	\$0.00
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	\$23.83
WATER SAMPLING EXPENSE	\$8,102.37
Voided Checks	\$196.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$67,362.71</b>
<b>REGISTER Beginning Balance July 1, 2019</b>	<b>\$8,411.52</b>
Receipts	\$70,196.00
Total Receipts	\$78,607.52
Less Total Expenditures	\$67,362.71
<b>REGISTER Balance June 30, 2020</b>	<b>\$11,244.81</b>

# MITCHELL SWCD FY 2020 FINANCIAL STATEMENT JULY 1, 2019 – JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup>, 2020

## MONEY MARKET SAVINGS

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$133,744.35
RECEIPTS	
BOOSTER CLUB FY 2019	\$1,930.00
DISTRICT FARM RENT	\$9,996.00
FEED THE FARMERS	\$100.00
1M ALLOCATION	\$2,750.00
ROCK CREEK PROJECT DONATIONS	\$250.00
INTEREST INCOME	\$188.86
ROCK CREEK SUPPLIES	\$29.56
ROCK CREEK INFO/ED	\$481.44
ROCK CREEK TRAVEL / TRAINING	\$576.46
ROCK CREEK SALARY	\$37,841.79
WATER SAMPLING DONATION	\$8,200.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>\$62,344.11</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$196,088.46</b>
EXPENSES	
TRANSFER TO CHECKING	\$70,000.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$70,000.00</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>	<b>\$126,088.46</b>

DATE RECONCILED: 9/28/2020  
 CO-TREASURER: *Eric J. Jell*

DATE AUDITED: 10/5/2020  
 COMMISSIONER: *Bruce J. Johnson*  
 CO-TREASURER: *Debra R. Nelson*  
 COMMISSIONER: *Debra R. Nelson*

\*\* FY 2019 Audit was reconciled to bank statements. To comply with Policy & Procedures manual, all new audits are to be reconciled to the check register.

## A BIG THANK YOU FOR YOUR BOOSTER CLUB DONATIONS!

**Supporter (up to \$49):** Clarice Bartz, Clem Johanns, Cyndy Groff, Jolene & Steven Norby, Mary Jensen, Fertile Valley Gardens, Thomas Heffner

**Sustainers (\$50-\$99):** Merlin & Fay Christensen, Wayne Clark, Allen Smolik, Rose McCarthy, Debra & Dan Freeman, Joan Clark Andresen, Gary Levinson & Jackie Armstrong, Foothill Farms – Mike Heimer

**Stewards (\$100+):** Mayers Digging, Gordon & Johanna Anderson, Wold Rim and Wheel, Osage Cooperative Elevator, Shirley & Dean Goplerud, John Newton, Newt/Bakke Fish Creek Farms, Absolute Energy LLC, Wilmer Jorgensen, Dale & Cindy Hemann

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

There are financial assistance programs available for your conservation practices and projects with varying cost share rates. Practices include, but are not limited to:

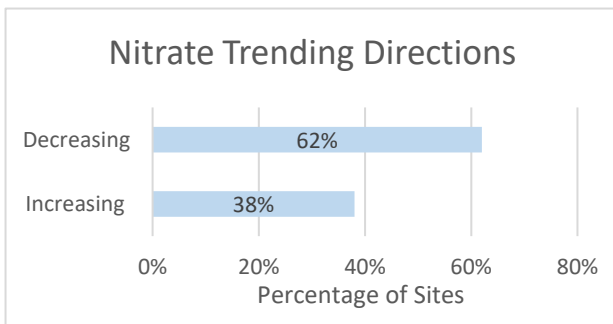
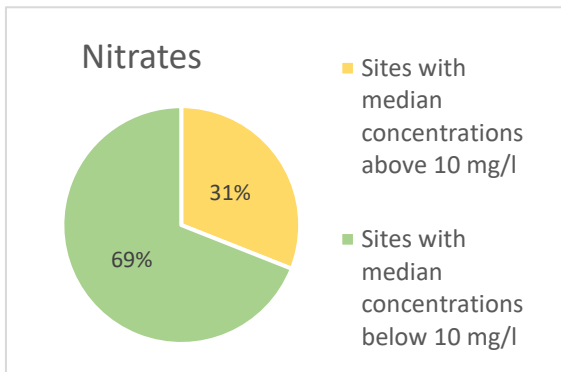
**Windbreaks - Waterways -  
Cover Crops  
Strip/No Till - Grade Stabilization  
Field Borders - Forest Stand Improvement  
Tree Planting/Acre - Nutrient Management  
Streambank & Shoreline Protection  
On Farm Energy Improvements**

Call the NRCS office at 641-732-5504 ext. 3  
for more information

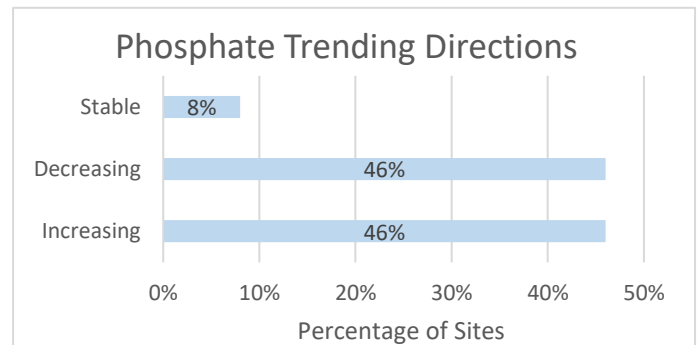
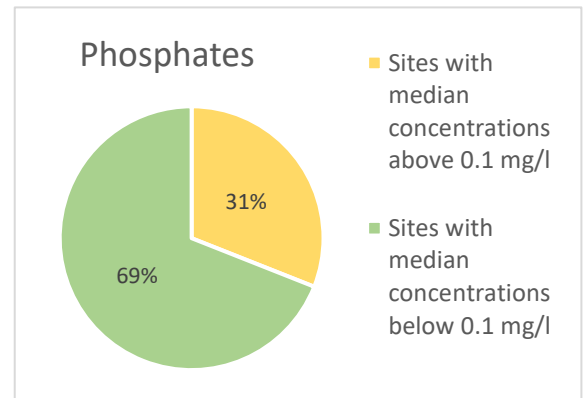
## SUMMARY OF WATER SAMPLING RESULTS

Staff has been sampling Mitchell county rivers and creeks since 2006. We test for Nitrate + Nitrite, Total Phosphorus as P, and E. coli bacteria concentrations in the water, as these are three of the most significant and relevant measures of water quality in Iowa waterbodies. We now have 13 sample sites in which we've collected at least 8 years of data on (testing monthly from April to October), thus providing us enough data to start to identify more meaningful, long-term trends and see where we are in respect to our water quality goals. Here is a summary of the results from our 13 long term sample sites in the Cedar River watershed:

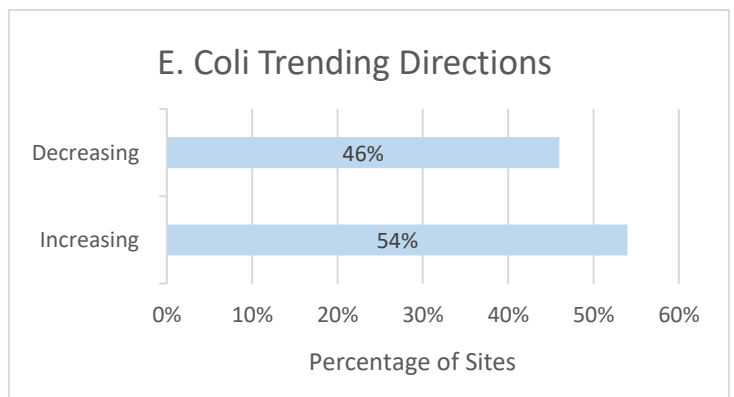
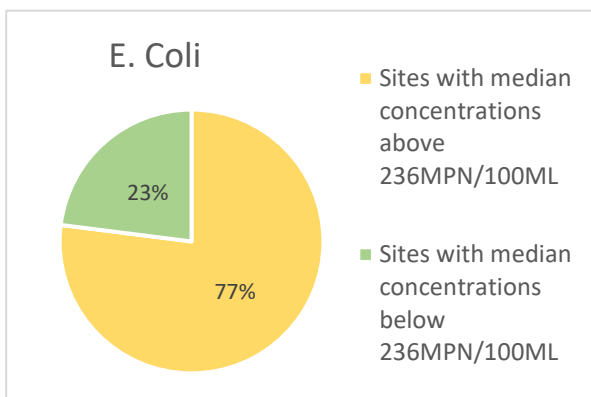
**Nitrates:** Nitrate concentrations should be *below 10mg/l* at every sample site (the EPA recommended limit for safe drinking water use). Nitrate concentrations are generally trending slowly downwards



**Phosphates:** Phosphate concentrations should be *below 0.1mg/l* (the DNR recommended limit). Concentrations are generally stable



**E. Coli Bacteria:** E. coli should stay *below a one time sample limit of 236 MPN/100ML* (the DNR recommended limit). Most of our sites have medians *above* recommended levels for E. coli bacteria and concentrations are trending upwards





Mitchell  
**Soil and Water**  
Conservation District

1529 Main Street  
Osage, IA 50461  
641-732-5504 ext. 3

*The Mitchell Soil & Water  
Conservation District is an Equal  
Opportunity Provider and  
Employer.*

NON-PROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
OSAGE, IA  
PERMIT #21

**POSTAL CUSTOMER**

## SUPPORT CONSERVATION IN 2021

The Mitchell Soil & Water Conservation District (MSWCD) programs are made possible by your support. Donations are accepted at any time of the year. Any amount you can give is appreciated. Checks should be made payable to "Mitchell SWCD" and you will receive a receipt for your donation. The MSWCD Commissioners thank you for your generosity. Bruce Johnson, Sue Sletten, Eric Jellum, Dana Norby, Jackie Armstrong, and Assistant Commissioners: Milt Owen, Chelsea Rowcliffe, & Dale Hemann.

### 2021 BOOSTER CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(as you would like it to appear in our report)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Donation enclosed: \$\_\_\_\_\_ (payable to Mitchell SWCD)

**Thank you for your donation!**

### The following are made possible with your support:

- **Scholarships** for Mitchell County high school seniors who pursue a degree in Agriculture or Natural Resources
- **Trees for Communities**
- **Outdoor Classrooms**
- **Public Events**
- **Conservation District Employee(s)**

**Support Levels:    Supporter Up to \$49    Sustainer \$50-\$99    Steward \$100 and up**