

**-Press Release-**

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**UIRW Project Secures Funding to Reduce Bacteria and Sediment Delivery to the Upper Iowa River**

The Upper Iowa River Watershed (UIRW) Project at Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development recently secured \$671,142 in conservation funding to improve water quality in the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries. The UIRW Project acquired \$447,428 from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and \$223,714 from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship-Division of Soil Conservation on behalf of the Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). The special watershed protection funds will be used to implement qualifying Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) practices. Specifically, the funds will be used to implement soil stabilization structures, such as terraces and sediment basins, and to construct animal waste storage systems in targeted subwatersheds of the UIRW. The funds received from IDALS-DSC enabled the county SWCDs to increase the available cost share assistance to landowners from 50% to 75%, making the relatively costly projects more affordable.

Using GIS analysis, water monitoring results, and input from the Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek County District Conservationists and SWCD personnel, the UIRW Project staff identified high priority areas of the watershed for soil stabilization and animal waste storage systems. The Upper Iowa River Corridor, French Creek, and Clear Creek Subwatersheds were targeted for animal waste storage systems and the Canoe Creek, Patterson Creek, Silver Creek West, and Dry Run Creek Subwatersheds were targeted for soil stabilization structures.

Landowners in the targeted watersheds were sent a letter to invite them to take advantage of the special funds. Despite a short program sign-up period, the local SWCD offices received more applications for projects than the funds could accommodate. Local SWCD personnel further targeted soil stabilization structures by proximity to water in order to rank the projects for funding and obtain the maximum water quality and watershed protection benefits possible.

In total, the project will fund the construction of 106,548 feet of terraces, 11 grade stabilization projects, and 12 sediment basins within targeted areas of the UIRW. It will also provide funding for the construction of 9 animal waste storage systems within the UIR Corridor and one additional system in the French Creek Subwatershed. The implementation of these projects by the county SWCDs will result in the reduction of sediment and fecal bacteria delivery to the UIR and an overall improvement of water quality in the UIRW.