

IHAP Continues Expansion in Southwest Iowa

As a state, Iowa falls near the bottom of the list when considering the amount of land accessible to the public. Pheasants Forever has partnered with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), NRCS, the Iowa West Foundation, and a handful of other partners to put a new spin on how we address that problem. This partnership has sought to expand the DNR's Iowa Habitat and Access Program (IHAP) through identifying producers who 1) have existing habitat and 2) who would want to start utilizing precision ag software.

IHAP is a voluntary program that allows private landowners to open their land to the public for hunting. Harrison County started the year with over 20 properties enrolled for more than 4,300 acres of access through IHAP alone, nearly 16% of acres enrolled in this program in the state.



Established IHAP in Harrison County, Photo: Nic Salick

This quarter, we collaborated with two Harrison County landowners to enroll three more properties into IHAP for an additional 318 acres of public hunting that will be available this fall. While the impact of these acres will be felt by the hunters chasing birds this fall, much of the story is yet to be told.

Working with Pheasants Forever's Precision Ag & Conservation Specialist, Jeremy Biggs, these producers have only begun their precision ag journey. While these precision analyses won't be completed until after combining crops this fall, the data will arm these producers with the information they need to make management decisions. 

Introduction to Land Management 2018

Through funding made available through the Resource Enhancement and Protection program (REAP), the Pottawattamie County Conservation Board (PCCB) is offering their 2018 Introduction to Land Management. This is the second year PCCB has offered this class series, which meets monthly. The course takes place throughout the grounds of Hitchcock Nature Center with land managers demonstrating techniques, and discussing the phenology behind their management decisions.

June's class focused on herbaceous weed control, a subject that is especially pertinent to CRP at this time of year. It's nearly irreplaceable for landowners to be able to learn from instructors who devote hundreds of hours a year to controlling noxious and invasive weeds. There were great demonstrations of utilizing a backpack sprayer, proper spot treatment, how weed identification, and how to determine when is the best time to mow.

Many participants manage land already enrolled in farm bill programs, or would be interested to pursue them. My involvement at these classes helps landowners know how they can utilize these management practices, how that fits within program rules, and allows me to promote programs that they may not have been aware of. This year the course will expand to 7 classes, which will now include a full session specifically addressing conservation programs for private lands.



ILM's June class, Photos: Nic Salick

Wetland CRP Sign Up Resumes

Just as USDA reopens sign up for select wetlands CRP practices, Iowa was rocked with June rains. Nowhere is the need for these practices more visible than on the floodplain of the Missouri River. With some local areas receiving more than 7 inches of rain within a ten-day period many fields show stress from excessive water, and in some cases, completely drown out crops.

Neighboring
bean field



CP23 Wetland
Restoration

This low area stretches across property lines, Photo: Nic Salick

There's a popular saying, "pics or it didn't happen." This rain was the perfect opportunity to put that into action. I spent an afternoon getting a lay of the land and taking some pictures. I plan to reach out to landowners and use a picture of their farm to start a conversation about CRP.

By the Numbers...

Interaction Type	FY18 Qtr. 4
Landowner Contacts	137
Habitat Proposals	10
Projects with Acres	3
Outreach Efforts	6
Total	156



Thank you to all our partners!