

## **Soil Conservation & Watershed Improvement**

Our farmers have a tradition of soil conservation and watershed improvement. Our USDA, Nebraska State Agency, and Local Agency groups have a tradition of working together to achieve positive results. We were trying to learn at this conference what comes naturally to our working group. Focus on the problems, include farmers and landowners in the plan, work together in an atmosphere of helping each other and mutual respect for our part in the effort and achieve success. In order to be successful, we have had to focus on results and never shirk from the added hours of work it takes to accomplish the goals. We have a proud heritage.

What's new! What are the future challenges? Will they be easy? Will they challenge our ability to work together?

Anybody who lives in the State of Nebraska who believes that water quality and water quantity issues are not major issues in our past, present, and future is living in a fantasy land.

Any farmer and or landowner who feels they are not a part of this and will be not faced with challenges and change on a regular basis is living in a fantasy land.

The Blue River Watershed faces challenges with both the quality of water and the quantity of water. In the last five years we have had junior water rights shut down for some period of time in four years. Atrazine total amounts have been reduced dramatically in the river by adoption of Best Management Practices by farmers. Many of these practices also affect river flow. For example a pivot irrigation system results in less runoff than a furrow system. The concentration of atrazine in the water is still well below action levels on the average and below past levels, but has not changed near as much as the total pounds, because the water volume has also changed.

Developing effective watershed plans is getting ever more complex and we are going to have to keep improving our cooperation and our efficiency of finding resources for farmers and landowners to utilize to meet objectives. As this community knows while the task is great, the task is also rewarding in protecting and developing our natural resources of land and water for our future.

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