



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 3, 2020

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A clearer outlook for Silver Creek thanks to local watershed improvement efforts

MEDIA CONTACTS: Jennifer Kurth at jennifer.kurth@dnr.iowa.gov; or Stephen Hopkins at 515-505-0140 or Stephen.Hopkins@dnr.iowa.gov.

MONONA -- Silver Creek, a warm water creek winding through Clayton County, had a muddy outlook until a community-led effort helped clear things up.

The stream, a tributary of northeast Iowa's Turkey River, was taking on almost 15,000 tons of sediment each year, all washing into the creek from the surrounding 18,000 acres of land that drain into it. The extra dirt and sediment, along with the nutrients that wash along with it, were causing problems for the fish and aquatic life in the stream, like insects, snails, mussels and crayfish.

Sediment in waterways can completely bury or fill in gaps around many stream habitat types, like rocks and gravel, that are important to survival for many types of aquatic life. Sediment can fill in spaces between rocks, making this important habitat less suitable for invertebrates and fish, which use the spaces for feeding, shelter, spawning and egg incubation.

In 2007, a DNR study - called a Stressor Identification process - noted the sediment as the cause of the stream's issues, and helped launch a locally-led watershed improvement project. Farmers, landowners, residents and government agencies joined together to make changes on the land to reduce the amount of sediment reaching the creek.

Launched that same year under the leadership of the Clayton County Soil and Water Conservation District, the Silver Creek Watershed Project has since helped landowners install more than 238,000 feet of terraces, 35 acres of grassed waterways, 830 feet of streambank protection and filter strips along two miles of streambanks.

“The interest demonstrated by Silver Creek landowners and farm operators over the 14 years of the project has been outstanding,” says Eric Palas, project coordinator. Combined with other efforts, the practices have reduced the amount of sediment reaching Silver Creek by about 60 percent.

That decrease in sedimentation has led to improved biological monitoring scores, indicating an improved habitat for Silver Creek’s fish and other aquatic species. “The biological scores for the creek have more than doubled, which is vastly better than I thought possible when we did the stressor identification back in 2007,” says Jen Kurth, DNR watershed project monitoring coordinator.

The Silver Creek Watershed Project was funded and supported by the Iowa DNR through U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Clean Water Act section 319 grants, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and local landowners and farmers. Other major project partners included the Clayton Soil and Water Conservation District, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service and Farm Service Agency, and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

To learn more about the Silver Creek success story, go to:

https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-12/documents/ia_silver_creek_1944_508.pdf.

Or find more Iowa success stories on EPA's web pages at

<https://www.epa.gov/nps/success-stories-about-restoring-water-bodies-impaired-nonpoint-source-pollution#ia> by clicking on the Iowa map.

Public comment sought on Section 401 water quality certification of regional permits 40 and 41

MEDIA CONTACT: Christine Schwake, DNR, at 515-725-8399 or Christine.schwake@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES -- The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is asking for public comment on the certification of new U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Regional Permits 40 and 41.

In accordance with state and federal statutes and regulations, applicants seeking authorization under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act from the Corps must also have a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification (certification) authorizing a discharge to waters of the United States.

Regional permit 40 authorizes fill material placed in waters of the United States for bank stabilization activities. Regional permit 41 authorizes the placement of fill materials into waters of the United States for commercial and institutional developments. Find DNR’s draft certifications and rationales/antidegradation analyses on [DNR’s Wetlands Permitting](#) pages.

Written comments regarding the certifications can be submitted until 4:30 p.m. Jan. 1, 2021. Please send written comments via email to Section401WQC@dnr.iowa.gov or by

mail to Iowa DNR, Attn: Section 401 Water Quality Certification, 502 East Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319.

Questions can be directed to Christine Schwake at 515-725-8399 or christine.schwake@dnr.iowa.gov.

DNR Enforcement Actions

MEDIA CONTACT: Tamara McIntosh, DNR, at 515-725-8242 or Tamara.Mcintosh@dnr.iowa.gov.

DES MOINES – DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions. Find the entire, original orders on DNR's website at www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions

Consent Orders A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

Guthrie County

Kendall Kipp

Voluntarily surrender Grade 1 certifications for drinking water treatment and drinking water distribution; and ineligible for two years beginning on November 24, 2020 for any new certifications in drinking water treatment, drinking water distribution, or wastewater treatment.

Jefferson County

Buch Farms, LLC

Ensure that all handling, transferring, and land application of manure is done in a manner that does not result in a manure release to a water of the state; develop and submit to DNR for approval a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the proper transportation of manure; upon approval, implement said SOP; and pay a \$750 administrative penalty.

Johnson County

CJ's Construction, Inc.

Comply with all conditions of its National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit, which includes the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan; and pay a \$5,000 administrative penalty.

Sioux County

Schmit Pork, LC

Pay a \$5,000 administrative penalty.

A note on Iowa DNR and COVID-19

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources is working with state and local officials to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and has transitioned employees to work remotely. DNR

offices are closed to the public during this time and only available by appointment.

In another effort to further reduce the spread of COVID-19, the DNR is encouraging the use of the online services for submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

- [Full list of DNR's online services](#)
- [Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by COVID-19](#)
- [Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to COVID-19](#)

We thank you for your patience and flexibility during this time. If you need to contact DNR staff you can reach them by email or phone or by calling 515-725-8200.