

Iowa Wetlands



John Klein spoke at the Treynor Optimist Club on March 2. He is a wetland specialist for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). His district covers six counties in central Iowa.

John said that USDA programs are optional; they have voluntary signup for farmers. Other agencies have other guidelines.

Wetlands are important because they recharge groundwater, filter water, filter surface water, and provide habitat for birds.

The 1985 farm bill included a part called the swamp buster law.

The Government would regulate wetlands to yield no net loss.

For every acre of wetlands destroyed, the Government works to restore an acre of wetlands.

One function of John Klein's job is to look at wetlands and certify them. Three properties are necessary to certify a wetland:

1. They must have the ability to sustain wetland plants.
2. They must have hydrologic (wetlands) soil
3. They must have the ability to sustain saturated conditions for at least 15 consecutive days during the year.

John said that there is no minimum size for a wetland. He looks for 0.5 acre minimum. Two things you cannot do with a wetland is to drain it or fill it.