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REFORESTATION OF HIGHLY ERODIBLE LAND TO REDUCE EROSION AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN THE TROUT RUN WATERSHED

The Trout Run Reforestation Project succeeded in enrolling nearly 42 acres of highly erodible cropland in the Trout Run Watershed into a reforestation program. The project was implemented with the goals of reducing soil erosion and positively impacting water quality in the Trout Run Sub-watershed and the encompassing Upper Iowa River Watershed. Through support and landowner incentives provided by the Iowa Farm Bureau, Winneshiek County Farm Bureau, Iowa DNR-Forestry Bureau, Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry Division of the USDA Forest Service, the McKnight Foundation and Northeast Iowa RC&D, landowners were encouraged to reforest highly erodible cropland that had a slope of over 12% and was based on fragile forest-formed soils.

In 2003, 24 total acres were enrolled by two landowners and during the 2004 sign-up, an additional 18 acres were enrolled by three landowners. The acres enrolled in the program will most likely be both direct seeded and planted with hardwood seedlings. Reforesting these designated "hot spots" will effectively reduce soil erosion, not only saving valuable soil, but also improving the water quality of the Upper Iowa River and its tributaries. Along with reducing erosion, the added timber will provide increased habitat for wildlife and serve as a long term financial investment for the landowner. The project also heightened landowner awareness of soil erosion and water quality within the Trout Run Watershed.

For more information on the Trout Run Reforestation Project, please contact Forestry Coordinator Richard Kittelson at the Northeast Iowa RC&D office at (563) 864-7112 or by e-mail at kittelso@netins.net.

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