

Iowa Learning Farms Offers June 28 Bus Tour of Kossuth County CREP Wetlands

Written by Joy Venhorst

Wednesday, 22 June 2011 15:25

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AMES, Iowa — Iowa Learning Farms (ILF) and the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) are hosting a bus tour of Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) wetlands in Kossuth County on Tuesday, June 28, from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Registered attendees can park and meet the motor coach at the Kossuth County Fairgrounds in Algona, where the bus will depart from and return to at the end of the tour. The tour is free and is limited to 40 pre-registered participants. To register, call 515-294-5429, or email jlundval@iastate.edu. The fairgrounds are located on the south side of Algona on Highway 169.

The tour will include stops at two completed CREP wetland sites east of Algona. Tour participants are encouraged to bring their hiking boots or waders for an up-close look at these structures. Matt Lechtenberg and Shawn Richmond, CREP specialists with IDALS, Iowa State University Extension water quality engineer Matt Helmers and farmer-landowners who have installed CREP wetlands will lead the tour and talk about the benefits, installation and financial incentives for these structures.

Thirty-seven counties in north-central Iowa are eligible for enrollment in CREP. Research at Iowa State University has demonstrated that strategically sited and designed wetlands can remove 40-90 percent of nitrates and more than 70 percent of herbicides from cropland drainage waters. These areas are as beautiful as they are functional.

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Iowa Learning Farms is building a Culture of Conservation, encouraging adoption of residue management and conservation practices. Farmers, researchers and ILF staff are working together to encourage farmers to implement the best in-field management practices that increase water and soil quality while remaining profitable.

Iowa Learning Farms is a partnership between the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa State University Extension, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the USEPA (section 319); in cooperation with Conservation Districts of Iowa and the Iowa Farm Bureau.

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