

# JOHN HICKEY

2016 Scott SWCD

**Conservation Leader of the Year**





# History

- Passionate about family and land history
  - 5 Generations of Irish lineage
  - Great Great Grandfather homesteaded in 1860
- Previous generations kept land in the family
  - Father studied animal husbandry at the U of M
  - Father took his shot at dairy farming with mild success
  - Father took a shot at grazing cattle with mild success... BUT
  - He continued conservation efforts by planting four groves of red pines throughout the property 40-50 years ago and supporting responsible cash crop farming until his early passing.
- John becomes steward of the farm
  - Bought 150 ac of original homestead from siblings in 2000
  - Boy Scouts showed John how to restore habitat at a young age and inspired his efforts to this day.
  - But still is Raising Corn, Beans and Alafalfa on land not



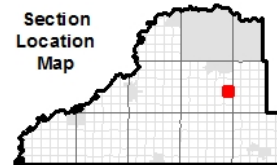
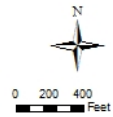
“Every day  
I’m on the  
property is  
really a joy  
because I can  
feel the  
connection  
with the past”  
- John Hickey





### Hickey

-  Perennial Stream
-  Open Water
-  Parcel Boundary
-  2' Contours
-  Restoration Area





# 1998-2010

- Restored 8 wetlands totaling 23 acres (U.S Fish and Wildlife Service)



# 2011-2015

- Steep hillsides were eroding next to wetlands
  - Contacted Scott SWCD
  - Planted almost 22 acres of native switch grass filter strips next to wetland

“It’s a sense of something much bigger than ownership, driven by determination, love of nature and curiosity”.

-John Hickey



# 2013

- Noticed that corn and soybean fields were eroding and gullying
- Contacted the SWCD about potential Critical Area Plantings and Native Prairie Restoration
  - Converted three areas (0.6 acres) of concentrated flow along hillsides to native grasses
  - Converted 28.4 acres of cropland to a 25 species mix of native grasses and flowers
  - Converted remaining tillable land to alfalfa and flaxseed

“I feel I make a difference by investing my time and energy in one square acre at a time... removing invasive species, re-engineering a particular woodland or identifying cool new stuff that could be replanted elsewhere on the property.”

- John Hickey







# Spring 2016

- Contacted SWCD about converting remaining cropland to native grasses and flowers
  - Converted 24.2 acres of cropland to 25 species of native grasses and flowers



# Summer 2016

- Looking for educational and scientific study options for broader use of property to inspire young and old to appreciate the local beauty we have right under our noses


“It’s not just about the trees or prairie. It’s about the wildlife, too. It’s like a theatre out there!”

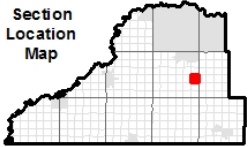
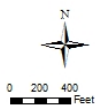
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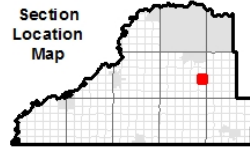
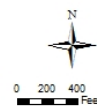
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# The Numbers

- Restored 23 acres of wetlands
  - Planted 22 acres of native filter strips
  - Planted 0.6 acres of Critical Area planting
  - Planted 100's of tree seedlings each year
  - Planted 5 acres of Black Walnut trees
  - Converted 47.2 acres of tillable cropland to native prairie
  - Cleared several woodlands of invasive buckthorn
- 
- Saved 748.45 tons of soil per year
  - Saved 374.47 tons of sediment per year
  - Saved 429.86 pounds of phosphorus per year





“I learned that nature is incredibly reactive to even a small amount of positive help from us... nature can leverage our efforts a thousand fold. When you ‘dance’ with nature, we all win.”

- John Hickey





# CONGRATULATIONS 2016 CONSERVATION LEADER OF THE YEAR!

