

# Big Creek Advisor

A newsletter dedicated to the Big Creek Watershed Project

Big Creek  
Lake  
WATERSHED  
PROJECT

## Welcome to the first newsletter dedicated to the Big Creek Lake Watershed Project!

Each issue of The Big Creek Advisor will focus on different topics relating to the Big Creek Watershed Project whether it be conservation practices, upcoming field days, or even interviews with local environmental experts or watershed residents. Keep your eye out for issues in the future!

## Introducing the Big Creek Lake Watershed Project

The Boone and Polk Soil & Water Conservation Districts are sponsoring a grant-funded watershed project aimed at improving and protecting water quality in the Big Creek Lake Watershed. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources are providing funding for the multi-year project.

Watershed project coordinators will work with farmers and landowners in the Big Creek watershed to install conservation practices to reduce sediment, phosphorus and bacteria reaching Big Creek Lake. If you are a farmer or landowner in the watershed you may be eligible for cost share assistance for the following practices:

- Grassed Waterways – 90% cost share
- Sediment Basins (aka Ponds) – 75% cost share
- Grade Stabilization Structures – 75% cost share
- Pasture or Hayland Management – 75-90% cost share
- Streambank Stabilization – 90% cost share
- Terraces – 75% cost share
- Manure Settling Basins—75% cost share
- CRP Incentive—A one time \$100 to \$200 per acre signup for CRP
- Low interest loans for septic system repair and replacement
- And more

To get more information about these conservation practices contact one of the watershed coordinators (see back page for contact information).

## What's a Watershed?

A watershed is the area of land that all drains to the same body of water. In the case of Big Creek Lake the watershed encompasses nearly 48,000 acres or 75 square miles. The watershed begins just east of Boone north of Highway 30. The communities of Luther, Madrid and Sheldahl all lie on the edge of the Big Creek Lake watershed. Land use in the watershed is mixed, crop land makes up 81% of the area, smaller percentages of the watershed are in grassland, timber, roads, houses and water.

Big Creek Lake itself is 781 acres and was built in 1972 by the Army Corps of Engineers as a part of a flood control project. The lake is surrounded by a 1,500 acre State Park and 2,050 Wildlife Management Area. The area offers recreational opportunities and is a favorite destination of many Central Iowa residents. Park amenities include a 3.4 acre swimming beach, shelters, picnic areas, playgrounds, a sports field, several boat ramps, a shooting range, and several miles of multi-purpose trails. Each year an average of 750,000 people visit Big Creek Lake, this visitation contributes over \$19 million dollars to the local economy (ISU).



Map of the Big Creek Lake watershed.

## Meet the Coordinators

### Sean McCoy

I was born and raised in Webster City, IA and reside just south of Webster City on a small acreage with my wife of 18 years and two children, Mikaleh 14 and Bryer 12. I have been an avid outdoorsman since I was old enough to walk I enjoy hunting, fishing, mentoring young outdoorsman, and gardening. I received my BS in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation with a minor in Biology from Northwest Missouri State University in 1993. During my last year I worked part time with the US Fish and Wildlife Service as an intern in Missouri. After graduation I moved to Luray, South Carolina where I was a Habitat Biologist on a 28,000 acre family owned hunting preserve where we marketed timber and managed quail, deer, and turkey habitat. In 2000 I was hired by Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and have been a project coordinator throughout central Iowa since. I'm excited to work on the Big Creek Watershed Project and I look forward to meeting and working with the Boone and Polk County residents!



Contact Sean at:  
Boone Soil & Water Conservation District  
1602 Snedden Drive  
Boone, Iowa 50036  
sean.mccoy@ia.nacdnet.net  
515-432-2316 ext 114



### Zach DeYoung

I grew up on a farm outside of Quimby, Iowa. While growing up I enjoyed hunting, trapping, fishing and anything involving the outdoors. After graduating high school I attended Iowa Lakes Community College in Estherville, Iowa for 2 years and then transferred to Iowa State University. While at Iowa State I majored in Forestry and had an option in Natural Resource Conservation. After graduating in 2007 I worked for a forestry company until the Fall of 2008 when I accepted a job with the Polk Soil & Water Conservation District. Since then I have been a watershed coordinator and have been involved in many projects that focus on improving soil and water quality. I'm happy to be working on the Big Creek Lake Watershed Project and look forward to meeting lots of new people and getting conservation practices on the ground.

Contact Zach at:  
Polk Soil & Water Conservation District  
1513 North Ankeny Boulevard Suite 3  
Ankeny, Iowa 50023  
zachary.deyoung@ia.nacdnet.net  
515-964-1883 x3

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**For more information visit [www.bigcreeklake.org](http://www.bigcreeklake.org)**

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