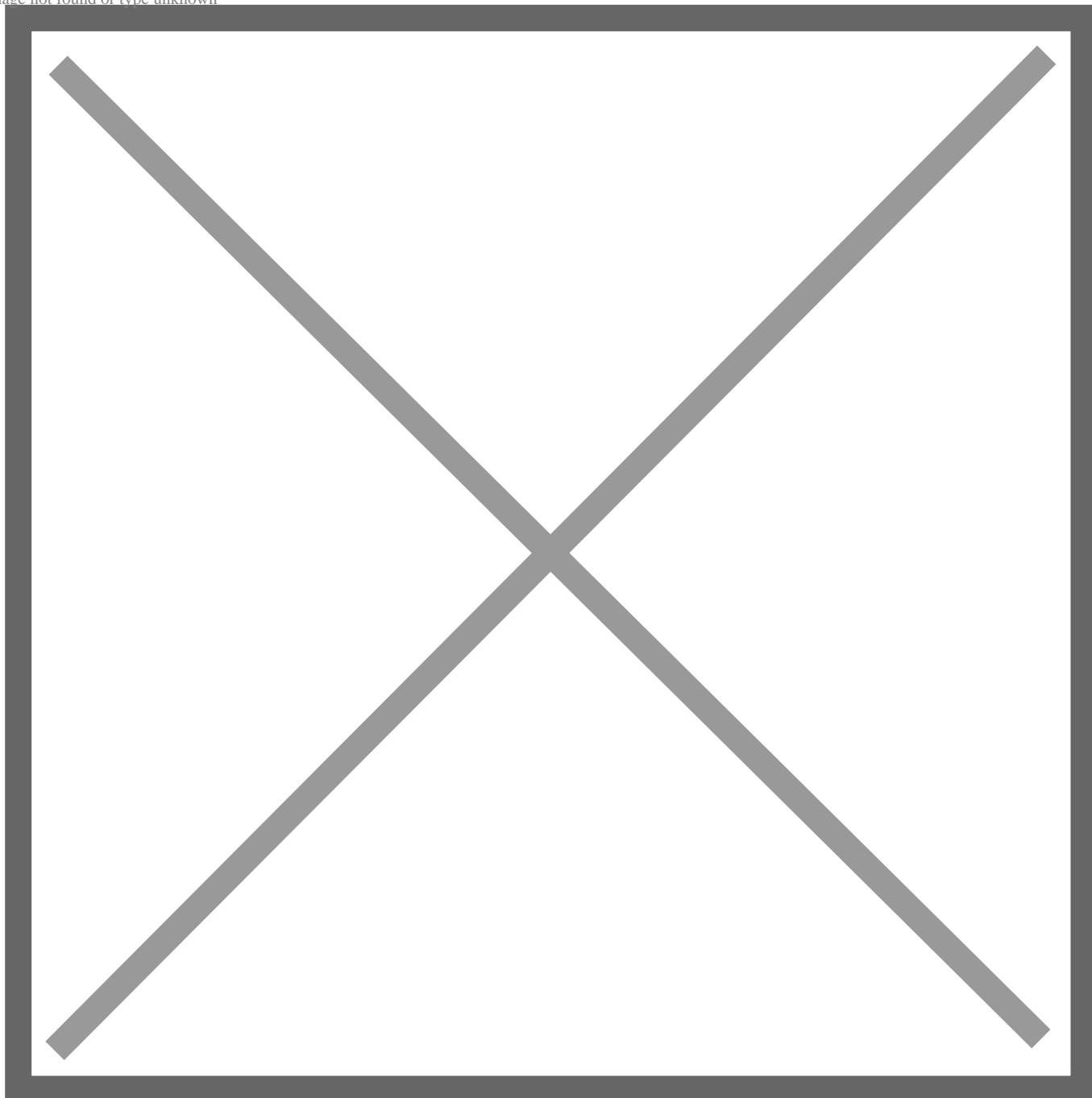


# In the Tallgrass: Practicing What We Preach

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Over the past two years, Peoples Company has taken a hard look at the water quality issues outlined in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. After all the meetings we've scheduled and research we've read, one thing we are certain: improving water quality in our state is a complex issue that will require a diverse collection of solutions to meet the needs of a diverse collection of farming operations.

The good news is that professionals in the agriculture industry, our state universities and non-profit organizations across the state are working hard to build that menu of solutions.

We feel strongly that this is not solely a farmer's issue. Landowners must take the first step in improving conservation practices on our Iowa farmland. Peoples Company can help landowners navigate the process of building a conservation plan to protect their asset of farmland. We can also begin the process with farm operators on rented land to incorporate new conservation practices.

Especially when working with a farm operator who may have been renting a parcel for many years, this may not be an easy conversation for a landowner to have. Some farm operators have a strong sense of ownership and sense of how things have been done on their rented acres.

[Peoples Company](#) land manager Randy Luze likes to begin the conversation with farm operators by telling them the conservation practices he is testing out on his own farms – on farmland he both rents and owns. Randy's motto is to never ask a farm operator to try a new conservation practice he hasn't tried on his own farms in Tama County, Iowa.

New this year, Randy is working with University of Northern Iowa's [Tallgrass Prairie Center](#) to install seven acres of prairie strips on 70 acres north of Dysart, Iowa, as part of a research project called Prairie on the Farms. Prairie strips planted within the field have shown to stop erosion, reduce nutrient loss, improve soil quality and support monarch butterflies and other wildlife. The center's Prairie on the Farms project is funded by the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Center, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the USDA- Natural Resources Conservation Service.

To learn more about prairie strips as a conservation practice, we hope you will join Randy on his farm for a demonstration workshop from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, June 2. The focus of the event will be site assessment and preparation, side-by-side comparison of three different prairie seed mixes planted in mid spring, and how to determine an appropriate location for prairie plantings on a working farm.

Prairie strip plantings is one of many conservation practices we can test and potentially add to our menu of solutions. The more farmer operators willing to experiment, the faster we will create a menu of conservation practices able to make significant difference in water quality.

To attend the Tallgrass Prairie Center's demonstration workshop on Randy's farm and learn event specifics, please register by May 25 with Ashley Kittle at [Ashley.kittle@uni.edu](mailto:Ashley.kittle@uni.edu), or call (319) 273-3828.