

Farm Showcase: Peoples Company Land Manager's Work on the Ground

Published on Apr 20, 2020 by Mollie Aronowitz, AFM

With another growing season underway, Peoples Company Land Managers are busy tackling farm improvement projects and repairs. We often refer to land managers as landowner's "boots on the ground" to ensure work is completed as scheduled and nothing is overlooked.

For each farm, the work list looks different. Annually on all farms, land managers execute farm lease(s) as directed, complete farm visits, and collect farm operator input/harvest data.

With new landowner clients, time is taken to discuss short and long-term farm plans. We discuss income goals as well as recreational desired use and general ownership mindset. Some landowners even develop farm mission statements to help direct future planning.

Once goals are fully communicated, the land manager completes budgets and a schedule is laid out for completion. Multiple bids are typically collected for projects to ensure fair market prices are found.



Picture: Peoples Company managed farm with a multi-year improvement work list. The landowners desired to maximize production on the most productive acres while also protecting the most sensitive acres.

Over the span of a couple of growing seasons, a land manager worked with the the landowners of the pictured farm to complete the following (corresponding numbers with picture):

1. Address general curb appeal at the entrance. Dead trees were removed, and fence lines cleaned up. This allowed easier field access to both the landowner and farm operator.
2. Found a new farm tenant that shared the landowner's desire to improve the farm. The farm operator helped remove weed trees from the terraces while the landowners paid for several older tile intakes to be repaired.
3. Planted a wide perennial grass filter strip around the pond for improved landowner ease and access. Water quality was improved through this effort and the pond was stocked for landowner use.
4. Reshaped waterways and seeded to help reduce erosion.
5. The bottom of the farm (with dashed lined perimeter) held the lowest quality soils and had significant erosion. These acres were put into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the landowner now receives an annual payment. The area marked "5a" is a mix of filter strip along the stream as well as bird food plot. The area marked "5b" is a grass/forage mix to provide pollinator habitat.

Along with the projects listed, the farm was soil tested to measure overall fertility and available nutrients. Results were shared and discussed with the farm operator so he could do more prescriptive fertility planning. The farm operator also began planting annual cover crops to help increase organic matter.



Picture: Farm pond with mowed grass strip around perimeter.

Combined, these projects have improved the overall look and usability of the farm. The landowners have taken steps to improve farmability for the operator as well as help improve overall field yield average by farming only the most productive acres. The landowner will see this return in investment through higher rent and long-term appreciation.

Peoples Company land managers are available on a consulting basis or full management to help meet landowner goals for farm use and productivity. To learn more, email LandManagement@PeoplesCompany.com or call 855.800.5263 (LAND).