

Bruce Henrikson, S.T.A.R. Program Coordinator

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**What made you interested in CCSWCD?**

As an agriculture educator, I have always attempted to be sure my students were aware of the various government and related agencies and groups that exist to help them in their careers. I spent much time on helping students learn about the Farm Service Agency, but certainly taught about the SWCD when appropriate.

**How long have you been with CCSWCD?**

I started working part-time in March of 2017.

**What do you do at CCSWCD?**

My title was originally Special Projects as I was helping with several tasks for the district, but soon my responsibilities became 100% related to S.T.A.R. I now have the title of "S.T.A.R. Program Coordinator." In reality, Erin Bush and others are just as involved with the program as I am, but in advertising and promoting it is best to have one point of contact. I fill the role primarily through emails.

**What is S.T.A.R.?**

It is a free tool that can be used by farmers, landowners, and farm managers to evaluate the suite of practices being used on individual fields. The result is a S.T.A.R. Rating of one to five stars and feedback to the participants that helps them learn what practices should be used to improve their score and, thus, reduce that field's contribution to nutrient and soil losses. It has been very gratifying to know that practices we promote to meet those goals also improve the health of the soil.

**What made you interested in taking on the program?**

Steve Stierwalt, CCSWCD board vice chair and longtime friend, called me in early March of 2017. He knew I had retired from Parkland College and he asked if I was "tired of being retired." I assure him I was not, but agreed to listen to what he and some others had to say about how they needed some help. They shared the work that had already been done to start S.T.A.R. and its purpose. I immediately recognized the initiative as something drastically needed in agriculture. Although my area of expertise was NOT soils and soil science, I was involved enough in our Parkland course planning and our land laboratory to know that some of the better practices to encourage conservation were not widely accepted.

**Why should farmers sign up for S.T.A.R.?**

S.T.A.R. serves to help individuals learn how well they are contributing to conservation, specifically how they are helping reduce the nutrient and soil losses from their fields. In addition, I hope this knowledge will motivate those folks to consider what changes to their management will improve the S.T.A.R. Rating for each field that will ultimately lead to cleaner water and healthier soils.

**How can people sign up or get more information about S.T.A.R.?**

The easiest method to get started is to email me at [star@ccswcd.com](mailto:star@ccswcd.com) or go to [www.starfreetool.com](http://www.starfreetool.com) or to go to the district's website at [www.ccsxcd.com](http://www.ccsxcd.com). I am not normally in the office, so the district office phone number is not the best method. However, if someone does call there, I will get the message.

**And one last thing, what do you like to do in your off time?**

I enjoy playing golf when the weather is conducive but spend much of that extra time serving others through my church. My favorite time is when it is spent with my grandkids! I am very fortunate to have all four of them living very close to us.