

NORTHLAND CONSERVATION NEWS

DECEMBER 2013 NEWSLETTER

SWCD SUPERVISORS: CHAIRMAN - RON ANDERSON, VICE CHAIRMAN - HEATHER PETERSON, SECRETARY - JUSTIN DAGEN, TREASURER - JOE WILEBSKI, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS - C. J. PETERSON

SWCD STAFF: DARREN CARLSON - DIST. MGR., BRIAN KRIPPNER, DIST. TECHNICIAN, JAMIE OSOWSKI, DIST. COORD.

NRCS STAFF: JAMES SCHWAB - DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST AND MARK LARSON - TECHNICIAN

TWO RIVERS WATERSHED DISTRICT: DAN MONEY, ADMINISTRATOR AND MATT THOMPSON, DISTRICT TECHNICIAN

TWO RIVERS WATERSHED DIST. MGRS. PRESIDENT - ROGER ANDERSON; VICE PRESIDENT - PAUL OLSONAWSKI; SEC. - JON VOLD; TREASURER - DARRELL JOHNSON; DARYL KLEGSTAD, ALLEN BRAZIER AND JIM KUKOWSKI

A Publication of the Kittson Soil & Water Conservation District, 410 S. 5th St., Suite 106, Hallock, MN 56728-4140, Phone 218-843-2619 and the Two Rivers Watershed District, 410 S. 5th St., Suite 112, Hallock, MN 56728-4140, Phone 218-843-3333

Schmalz Is The 2013 Kittson SWCD Outstanding Conservationist Of The Year



Cody, Sarah and Ty Schmalz

Cody Schmalz, of Lancaster MN, has been named the 2013 Kittson SWCD Outstanding Conservationist of the year. He has been chosen by the SWCD board members because of his use of conservation practices on his beef operation.

The Schmalz operation is located in the northeast corner of Kittson County, a little over a mile south of the Canadian border. The Schmalz family has been farming in the area for generations and have a strong understanding of how to work the land in a way that will ensure the next generation of Schmalz's can continue to operate where their ancestors have.

In 2010, Cody worked with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to design a prescribed grazing system for his operation. Cody says his pastures "needed water" and the EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) was a way to get financial assistance to establish remote water stations. The trade-off was that he must follow a grazing plan that was beneficial to wildlife and habitat and consequently increased the quality of the pastures as well. As opposed to traditional pastures, a grazing system as designed by NRCS requires more fencing and smaller "paddocks" for cattle to intensely graze. This type of system also requires more work by the producer as cattle must be moved more frequently from one paddock to another in order to maintain a healthier stand of vegetation and there are more fences and water sources to monitor and repair. Cody has since added 2 more grazing systems to his operation.

The Schmalzs also rent public acres for their grazing and pastures. In an article highlighted in the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer July-August 2013 issue, Author Greg Hoch describes how

agencies like the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Nature Conservancy are increasingly utilizing "Conservation Grazing" to manage public lands. The process of Conservation Grazing is said to increase the biological diversity and reduce unwanted brushy vegetation and non-native invasive species. They are finding that the native prairies of the Midwest evolved with the pressure of grazing animals such as bison, deer and elk and by re-introducing grazers such as cattle, with well managed grazing plans, help to restore the natural ecosystems to a state that is similar to their pre-settlement conditions while also allowing producers to benefit from the forage these lands provide. Cody claims that the practice of Patch-Burn Grazing on these lands were helpful during the drought of 2012 as it provided more, higher quality forage for his cattle in lower/wetter areas. These areas were problematic in the past as the snails, which were reduced by burning, were thought to increase the presence of liver flukes in his cattle.

Aside from his pastures and grazing, Cody is also practicing residue management and conservation crop rotation, through EQIP as well on over 840 acres. He has also had 2 well decommissions to protect the ground water. In 2012, Cody enrolled over 1600 acres in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). These practices include harvesting hay in a wildlife friendly manner, wildlife friendly fencing, patch burning to enhance wildlife habitat, retrofitting water tanks for wildlife escape and the rotation of supplement and feeding areas. Cody also contributes civically as an active board member for the Roseau River Watershed District.

The Kittson SWCD recognizes Cody Schmalz not only as the Outstanding Conservationist for 2013 but as a responsible and progressive beginning farmer. "Cody puts conservation as his number one priority throughout his entire operation by addressing all the resource concerns" - Jim Schwab, NRCS. We Thank Cody for his commitment to conservation in Kittson County!

Timely Report Farm Changes To FSA

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Farm operators and landowners are reminded to timely report all changes in farming operations, land ownership, and rentals to FSA for the required updating of farm records. The addition or loss of land by sale or rental from a farming operation requires farm record updating and may require a farm reconstitution. If land ownership is transferred into a Trust, that change also needs to be reported to FSA for updating of the farm record. Ownership changes involving land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) need to be timely reported so that the CRP contract can be revised to reflect the ownership change to avoid loss of program benefits.

Lake Bronson Watershed And Red River Of The North Watershed Runoff Reduction Projects

By Darren Carlson



**CLEAN
WATER
LAND &
LEGACY
AMENDMENT**

Lake Bronson, Red River of the North and their tributaries have been found to have numerous water quality impairments such as turbidity impairments (sedimentation/siltation). Sedimentation is a problem throughout the Lake Bronson and Red River of the North watersheds which results in the loss of soil and siltation of the rivers and ditches. Numerous Clean

Water Funding grants were written by the Kittson SWCD to help reduce soil loss and sedimentation within Lake Bronson and Red River of the North Watersheds throughout the establishment of grass filter strips and side water inlets.

Since 2011 the Kittson SWCD has received \$400,000 for the Lake Bronson Watershed (mainly State Ditches 90, 91, 95 and their tributaries) and \$75,000 (mainly Kittson County Ditches 12, 26, 28 and 29) to install grass filter strips (on eligible cropped ground) and side water inlets where needed. These funds will be used with the federally funded Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CCRP) to offer landowners up to \$150 per acre for a 15 year contract to establish these highly effective grass filter strips. CCRP will also reimburse participants up to 90% cost share assistance for site



Side Water Inlet Needed

Grass Filter Strip Needed

preparation, seed costs/seeding, etc. Grass filter strips will be 100 to 120 feet wide and must be seeded to a minimum of 5 native grass seed mix. Areas will need to be seeded by spring 2014. Interested participants should call or stop in to one: see if they are eligible and two: to sign up for the CCRP. Contracts can be signed at any time but sooner is better before money runs out.

A prior Clean Water Fund grant was received for the Lake Bronson Watershed in spring 2011 for \$100,000. Over 100 acres of new grass filter strips were installed in the spring of 2012 and 2013 with these funds. These grass filter strips will reduce runoff and decrease movement of sediment, nutrients and bacteria, which in return will help clean these precious waterways.

For more information please call the Kittson SWCD office.

Wetlands On Ag Land In Minnesota

U.S. and Minnesota laws were enacted a couple of decades ago to address the draining and filling of wetland areas. Both sets of laws rely on the knowledge and actions of landowners to assure compliance with their requirements. It is important for agricultural producers to be aware of these regulations in order to limit their risk. Landowners need to know that just because you're in compliance with the one program doesn't always mean you're in compliance with others.

What are federal requirements (i.e. Swampbuster)?

Since 1985, the Wetland Conservation provision of the federal farm bills (Swampbuster) requires all agricultural producers to protect the wetlands on the farms they own or operate in order to be eligible for USDA farm program benefits. Producers will not be eligible if they plant an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland that was converted by drainage, leveling, or any other means after December 23, 1985, or convert a wetland for the purpose of or to make agricultural commodity production possible after November 28, 1990.

What is the state law (i.e. Wetland Conservation Act)?

The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is a state law that regulates activities that result in the draining, filling, or excavating of wetlands in Minnesota, including those on agricultural land. It is administered by local government units; in rural areas this is usually the County or Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). SWCDs also provide technical assistance to landowners.

What should agricultural landowners do before starting a project, including drainage and maintenance, that may impact a wetland?

1. Complete your "AD1026" form for your local USDA office.
2. Bring a copy to the SWCD and explain what you plan to do.

The SWCD can advise you if your project is allowed under the state law, WCA, or if you need to submit an application to the local government. **Involving your local SWCD is the easiest and best way to avoid problems.**

Request a field visit by the local government that administers WCA. This can help identify regulated wetlands on your property, and regulations that could affect your project. Many wetlands do not contain standing water or are only saturated for part of the year, and can be difficult for landowners to identify.

Tell your contractor to submit a "Contractor Liability form". Contractors who conduct projects that will impact a wetland are required to notify the local government. The Contractor Responsibility and Landowner Statement Form is available at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/forms (see "Replacement Plan Forms") and must be mailed to the local government prior to starting work.

Communication is the key! Compliance with USDA does not mean compliance with other wetland laws. A quick call or stop at your SWCD or local government office prior to beginning your project will help you comply with the laws and save a project from potential additional costs and delays.

Kittson SWCD Tree Order Form 2014

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

County:

E-Mail Address:

All bundles contain 25 bareroot trees or shrubs except where noted! Prices and sizes subject to change due to Nursery availability.

| Species | Approximate Size of tree stock | Price Per Pot | Number Needed (Sold Individually) | Total Amount |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------|
| POTTED CONIFERS | | | | |
| White Spruce | 15" - 18" | \$8.25 | | |
| Black Hills Spruce | 15" - 18" | \$8.25 | | |
| Colorado Blue Spruce | 15" - 18" | \$8.25 | | |
| Scotch Pine | 15" - 18" | \$8.25 | | |
| CONIFERS | TREES | Price Per 25 Trees | Number Needed ex. 25, 50, etc. | |
| Black Hills Spruce | 8" - 15" | \$35.00 | | |
| Colorado Blue Spruce | 8" - 15" | \$35.00 | | |
| Scotch Pine | 8" - 15" | \$35.00 | | |
| White Spruce | 8" - 15" | \$35.00 | | |
| DECIDUOUS TREES | AND SHRUBS | Price Per 25 Trees | Number Needed ex. 25, 50, etc. | |
| Apricot (Hardy) | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Ash, Green | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Aspen, Quaking | 2' - 3' | \$47.00 | | |
| Buffaloberry, Silver | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cherry, Nanking | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cherry, Pin | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Chokeberry, Black | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cotoneaster | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cottonwood, Common | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cottonwood, Siouland | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Crabapple, Red Splendor | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Cranberry, Highbush | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Currant, Golden | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Dogwood, Redosier | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |



| Species | Approximate Size of tree stock | Price Per 25 Trees | Number Needed ex. 25, 50, etc. | Total Amount |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| DECIDUOUS | TREES | AND | SHRUBS | CONTINUED |
| Juneberry (Serviceberry) | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Lilac, Common Purple | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Maple, Amur | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Maple, Silver | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Nannyberry | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Oak, Bur | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Paper Birch | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Plum, American | 12" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Poplar, Norway | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Willow, Flame | 18" - 24" | \$28.00 | | |
| Tree Protection | | | | |
| 4 foot Tree Pro Protector | Individual | \$3.25 | | |
| 3 foot Tree Pro Protector | Individual | \$2.25 | | |
| 3 X 3 Fabric Tree Mats | Individual | \$2.00 | | |
| Tree Marking Materials | | | | |
| 2 1/2 Feet Flags | Bundle of 100 | \$14.00 | | |
| 4 Feet Wooden Lath | Bundle of 50 | \$23.00 | | |
| | Make Checks Payable to Kittson SWCD | TOTAL | | \$ |

The Kittson SWCD has a tree planter (for trees under 2 feet in height) to rent for the upcoming tree planting season. Cost is \$0.35 per tree planted if the driver of the tractor is provided or \$1.00 per tree if the SWCD staff has to drive. A minimum fee of \$100.00 for all tree plantings. The Kittson SWCD will only plant properly prepared sites that are ready the first week of May. If you have questions regarding the preparation of your site or about the tree program, please contact Darren Carlson at the Kittson SWCD. Phone number is 218-843-2619 Ext. 3. Orders cannot be cancelled after March 1, 2014. The Kittson SWCD accepts NO responsibility with regard to survival of planting stock and makes NO provisions for re-placements.

Ask us about other programs the Kittson SWCD offers!

Orders are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tree orders will be available for pickup sometime in May 2014.

Letters/phone calls will be made as soon as we know when the trees will be here.

PLEASE RETURN ORDER FORM AND FULL PAYMENT TO:

**Tree Program-Kittson SWCD
410 South 5th Street
Suite 106
Hallock MN 56728**



Kittson County Central Places Second In Area I Envirothon & 2nd At State Envirothon



The Kittson County Central Envirothon team # 22 members include (from Left to Right) Brita Christenson, Caleb Christenson, Logan Johnson, Jackson Johnson, Anneleise Johnson and Advisor Jim Petersburg.

Kittson County Central students took second place at the Area I Envirothon at Lake Bronson State Park on Wednesday April 21st, 2013. Grygla team number 1 took first place at the local event and Marshall County Central team 16 took home third place.

Twenty-two teams from area schools participated in the event. Envirothon is an outdoor learning event for high school students

grades 9-12, is one of the state's largest environmental education competitions. Teams consisting of 5 students visit 6 different learning stations covering forestry, aquatics, wildlife, soils, and a current event topic which was Grazing Systems. Students are given a 25 point exam relating to the station's topics. At the sixth station, the students give a brief oral presentation to a panel of judges. This year's oral presentation scenario challenged students to develop and present a managed grazing system in Minnesota. Kittson County Central placed first in the oral presentation.

The top three teams from each area advance to the state event which was held at St. John's University in Collegeville MN on May 20th. Kittson County Central, Stephen Argyle Central and Marshall County Central competed at the state event; Kittson County Central came home with second place honors with Marshall County Central placing 16th and Stephen Argyle Central placing 24th.

There's An Exemption For That!

By Brian Krippner

Often, wetlands can be a sensitive subject with landowners. The countless rules, state and federal, that regulate wetland impacts can seemingly be a vast sea of confusion for many. For this reason, some landowners will tend to avoid wetlands all together or impact them illegally in hopes that no one is looking. In many cases there are legal ways to impact wetlands if the need or desire outweighs the cost.

The term "impact" is described by the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act rule 8420 (WCA) as "... a loss in the quantity, quality or biological diversity of a wetland caused by draining or filling of wetlands, wholly or partially, or by excavating in the permanently and semi permanently flooded areas of type 3, 4, or 5 wetlands, as defined in subpart 75, and in all wetland types if the excavation results in filling, draining, or conversion to non-wetland". These impacts in many cases are allowed if the proper requirements are met. These requirements often include replacement of wetlands through a restoration or creation of a wetland (a costly process), or through the replacement through "Banking" which is a program that has pre-established wetland restoration credits for purchase to mitigate wetland impacts. This is a topic for another newsletter.

What I would like to discuss is the idea of a wetland impact "Exemption" activity. In Kittson County we tend to see exemptions from projects such as the cleaning of a pre-existing drainage ditch, the digging of cattle stock or wildlife ponds, installation of utility lines, and even SOME agricultural activities. These are projects that still impact a wetland but by their nature have been deemed exempt from replacement by the legislature for any number of reasons. An activity that is exempt from replacement is not exempt from WCA as there may still be requirements that must be met such as size or placement. For example, a wildlife pond, though exempt from replacement, may have construction standards and size limitations depending on the type of wetland being impacted.

My recommendation is, if you are planning a project that may directly or indirectly impact a wetland, to contact me at the Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District to discuss any potential exemptions or to get started on an application process. Keep in mind that the Minnesota rules that regulate wetlands may be different from the Federal 404 Clean Water Act and the Food Securities of 1985 Swampbuster. Also, it is far easier to navigate the application process on a wetland activity than it is to deal with a wetland violation. Wetland violations may be a misdemeanor and could potentially threaten Federal Farm Program eligibility and/or cause a lien to be placed on the property.

For additional information or with any questions please call Brian Krippner and the Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District at (218) 843-2619 ext 3.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Producers with a need for additional grain storage, new drying equipment, or interested in updating their farm storage are eligible to make an application for a Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL). The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Additional security, usually in the form of a real estate mortgage, is required for loans greater than \$50,000. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15%, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85% of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10, or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates vary for each term rate and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department. The November interest rate for a 7 year FSFL loan was 2.0%. Applications must be submitted to the FSA County Office before any site preparation, delivery of equipment or construction can begin. For further information on the facility loan program, please call the local FSA office.

Waterfest 2013

On September 24th, area fourth graders attended the Northwest Minnesota Water Festival at the Marshall County Fairgrounds in Warren Minnesota. Students take part in interactive learning stations all about our water resources. The stations include water quality, ground water and spring water, flooding, wetlands and watersheds. Students also participated in a casting and fish painting station.

The event is hosted by area Soil and Water Conservation Districts and is held every September in Warren and Fertile.



Kittson Central 4th graders watch a demonstration by area SWCD employees on Groundwater. At this station, students learned about the water cycle and why keeping our lakes and streams clean is so important.

Abandoned Or Unused Well Sealing Funding

What can I do if I have an abandoned well on my property? Is there cost share dollars available?

Cost share programs are available for the sealing of abandoned or unused wells in Kittson County. Up to 75 percent of the cost of sealing abandoned /unused wells is reimbursed by the Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). With the cooperation of local and state agencies, landowners are eligible for this practice. Applications are taken on a continuous basis; however, cost share is available on a first come first served basis.

Why should I seal my abandoned well?

Improperly sealed wells are potential sources of contamination to ground water and may affect nearby drinking water supplies. Abandoned wells can act as channels for surface pollutants to enter ground water. Many abandoned wells also go uncovered, posing a physical threat to humans (especially children) and animals. Additionally, by properly sealing these abandoned/unused wells, groundwater quality will be improved.

Do I have to seal my well if I am going to sell my property?

Environmental concerns in recent years led to requirements that abandoned/unused wells be either sealed or annually permitted. In Kittson County, this requirement is enforced at the time of a property transaction. Under State Law, a seller failing to properly disclose a well is liable for well sealing costs for six years after the date of the sale.

How to get additional information?

For more information on well sealing, stop into our office in the basement of the Kittson County Courthouse or call (218) 843-2619 ext. 3.

EQIP – Prescribed Grazing Systems

By Mark Larson

Now is the time to reflect on your past grazing season and plan for the next. Producers are urged to start the planning process early. Livestock producers interested in prescribed grazing systems should stop in the office to visit about the specific pasture that they would

like to improve in the future. It is critical to set time aside during the active grazing season to have an NRCS grazing specialist out to your farm to inventory pasture needs, this can be done by contacting your local field office and scheduling an appointment. Once a site visit has been conducted a prescribed grazing plan can be developed and presented to the producer. Producers interested in financial assistance can then apply for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Without the site visit and grazing plan there can be no financial assistance for conservation practices, but NRCS is always willing to provide technical assistance about your pasture needs and concerns. Those interested should begin to generate ideas as to how they see their grazing operation function in the future. Most grazing systems take time to install properly, so carefully planning can save you time and labor. Please understand that improvement to pastures takes time and producers must be willing to follow NRCS's recommendations on grazing timing and duration. The rest is up to you and mother nature. Good luck to all on your upcoming calving season!

Dalmatian Toadflax . . . The Battle Continues

By: Brian Krippner

The summer of 2013 showed improvements on the Dalmatian Toadflax infestation near Halma, MN due in part to the assistance given by Kittson County, MNDOT, The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa (CCM) and The Minnesota Department of Agriculture. It is through the inter-agency cooperation and project implementation that we are able to see measurable results in the removal of Dalmatian Toadflax from Kittson County.

Discovered in Kittson county a few years ago, Dalmatian Toadflax ago was later listed on the Minnesota Noxious Weed list as an eradicate species. The plant, a multi stemmed semi-perennial, has an extensive root system and is rhizomatic meaning it can spread through roots or seed making it difficult to treat. The infested area includes multiple landowners, State, county, township and railroad right-of-ways as well as sensitive areas such as open water in gravel pits that is connected to an important aquifer. Toadflax is a direct threat to land in Kittson County due to its aggressive ability to spread quickly and its toxicity to some livestock if ingested. In some states, toadflax will out-compete pasture grasses and forbs reducing their overall feed value and stressing livestock.

During a meeting this past spring, it was recommended that the County hire a crew of workers from CCM to assist in toadflax treatment. Kittson County Commissioners were approached and agreed to fund \$3500 worth of labor and chemicals in an effort to jumpstart the project. This money put a crew of 6 people in the field for 2 full days and armed them with the herbicide they needed to destroy toadflax plants. We opted to use a selective herbicide recommended by MNDOT that would not kill grasses and was less harmful to the environment. This helped maintain competition for any emerging toadflax plants and protect the local groundwater.

Follow up inspections were conducted a few weeks later to verify to effectiveness of the treatment. Initial results showed substantially lower plant densities in most areas. Definitive results of our treatment strategies will not be known for a few years as Dalmatian Toadflax seeds have viability in the soil for up to 10 years. Though we may have killed existing plants, new ones can and often do sprout in that same area. Our goal is to reduce the overall number of flowering plants that propagate seed which will in essence reduce the infestation by not allowing a recharge of the seed bank on an annual basis.

In 2013, the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) appropriated \$350,000 to the treatment and eradication of new or recently discovered invasive plant species in the state of Minnesota. Monika Chandler of the Minnesota Department of Ag has stated that Dalmatian Toadflax in Kittson County is a high priority on the list of projects that have been listed eligible under the LCCMR funding. This money will provide financial assistance in the planning, treatment and long term management of Dalmatian Toadflax for Kittson County.

Two Rivers Watershed District News

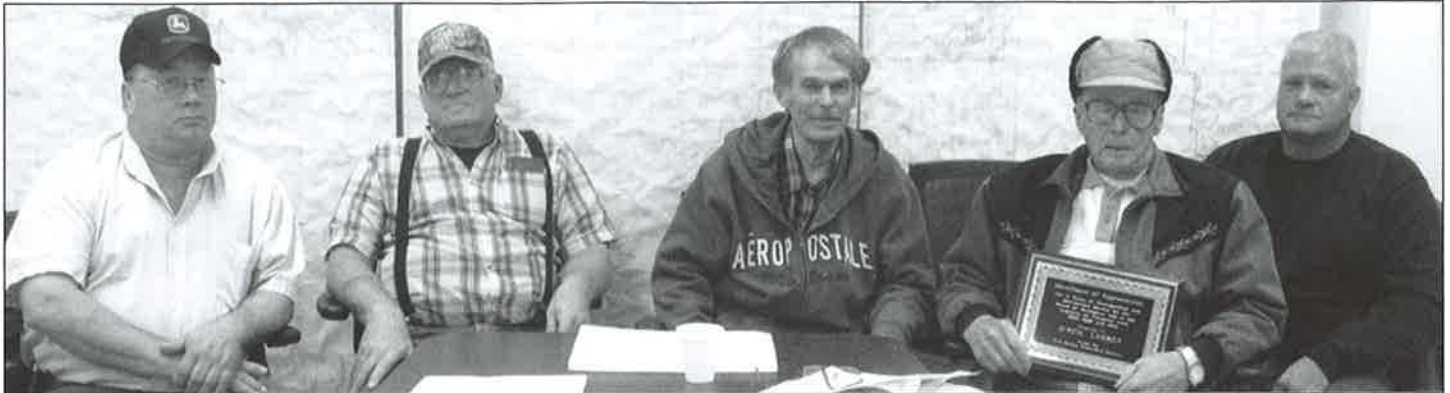
in Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties



December 2013

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Larson Retires From Watershed District Board Of Managers



The Board of Managers Presented O'Neil Larson with a plaque commemorating his service to the District. Pictured left to right are: Vice

President Paul Olsonawski, Manager Allen Brazier, President Roger Anderson, O'Neil Larson, and Secretary Jon Vold.

Long - time Two Rivers Watershed District Manager O'Neil Larson has retired from the Board of Managers. O'Neil began his term on the Board on July 2, 2002 and retired from the Board on October 31, 2013. He represented the south-eastern area of Kittson County, including but not limited to portions of the townships of Arveson, Deerwood, Springbrook, Jupiter, Norway, and Pelan.

During his term on the Board, Larson saw many Watershed District projects constructed. These included the Kennedy #6 project, the Ross #7 Impoundment, the Horseshoe Lake dam modification, numerous ditch maintenance and repair projects, and the Springbrook PL566 Project #10. He was involved in the review and approval of hundreds of permit applications to the District, and

served as the Treasurer of the Board for four years.

Many programs were also accomplished under Larson's watch. These include a flow monitoring program where the District measures how much water is flowing within various waterways. This information is used to predict flood levels each spring. Also helpful in predicting floods is the District's annual snow survey. In addition, the District has been involved with water quality monitoring for many years. As a member of the Board of Managers, Larson had a hand in shaping and implementing these programs and projects.

The Board of Managers wishes to thank O'Neil for his years of service and his contributions to the accomplishments of the Two Rivers Watershed District!

Springbrook Project #10 Near Completion

—Last Project in the Country built under PL566 Program—



The latest flood control project of the Two Rivers Watershed District is very near completion. The "Springbrook PL566 Project #10" was substantially completed during the summer construction season of 2013. The project is located in sections 23, 24, 28, 29 & 30 of Springbrook Township and sections 25 and 36 of Davis Township, all in Kittson County Minnesota. Project components consist of the construction of over 10 miles of set back dikes, installation of more than 26 side water inlet culverts, numerous diversion ditches, three rock drop structures to control erosion, and over 400 acres of grass buffer strip establishment.

The project was built utilizing the federal PL566 program through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Two Rivers Watershed District is the local sponsor of the project and will be responsible for the long term inspection, operation, and maintenance. The PL566 program funded the \$1.3 million project. R.J. Zavoral and Sons Construction was the contractor on the project.

Two Rivers Watershed District News

In Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties



Springbrook Project #10 Near Completion

*—Last Project in the Country built under PL566 Program—
(Continued)*

A petition for this project was submitted by local landowners to the TRWD. They identified a flooding problem along an existing coulee, whereby the coulee could not handle high flows of runoff that were entering the channel. This caused water to break out and flow over land, causing erosion, sedimentation, washouts of roads and culverts, and losses to cropland and public infrastructure. To prevent break out flooding, levees were constructed on either side of the stream, and set back away from the stream between 100 feet and 300 feet. This will allow the water to enter the stream, but as floodwaters rise and begin to break out of the channel, they will be contained between the levees, and prevented from flowing overland and washing out infrastructure. The levees are designed to contain water for up to a 10 year flood event. If a larger event occurs, the levees will overtop in designated areas.

The project will also help to prevent excessive sediment from entering the watercourse and contributing to degradation of water quality. As a part of the project the areas between the dikes will be enrolled into the State of Minnesota's "Reinvest in Minnesota" program. This area will be seeded to grass and will not be farmed in the future. Areas that currently erode and wash out will be stabilized and set aside to help create a grass buffer strip.

Sadly, the federal program that funded this project has been eliminated by congress, and this project will be the very last one built using the PL566 program in the entire United States. There have been three other projects constructed under this program in Kittson County (Two within the Two Rivers and one within the Joe River - all built in the 1960's), and one in Marshall County, most recently the flood diversion and upstream impoundment project that protects the City of Warren from flooding. In addition, many projects were built just west of the Red River in North Dakota, and were utilized during the extreme summer flooding of 2013 in that area.

The finishing touches are currently being completed on the Springbrook Project #10, and the Two Rivers Watershed District expects that it will be fully functional and ready to be tested during any flood events that may come our way in 2014 and the future.

TRWD Receives Grant Funding To Cost Share On "Drainage Water Management" For Tile Systems

The Two Rivers Watershed District has received grant funding from the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources for something called Drainage Water Management (DWM). Landowners who are considering installing tile drainage tile may want to consider managing the water that comes out of the systems to help make water available to crops to maximize production. This can be accomplished by installing water gates within the tile system to manage how much water is available to the crop and when.

Subsurface tile drainage is a water management practice increasingly utilized in agricultural fields in Minnesota to improve field access for planting and harvesting and to increase crop productivity. At the field scale, tile drainage typically reduces surface runoff by increasing subsurface runoff, and increases total annual runoff volume by reducing water availability for evaporation, prima-

rily during the spring and fall when crops are not growing. Conventional tile drainage can increase the loss of soluble crop nutrients from fields, such as nitrate nitrogen and soluble phosphorus, as well as increase the transport of herbicides, pesticides and pathogens. Increased runoff volume can in turn increase downstream flooding and sediment transport.



The grant program will fund several existing NRCS practices, as follows:

Targeted DWM grant program funds will be used for cost share and incentives as follows:

- **CAP 130 and CAP 104 Plans:** Cost share will not exceed \$2,000 per plan, or 75% of the total eligible cost, whichever is less.
- **Pumping Systems that meet CP587 Standards:** Cost share will not exceed \$2,000, or 75% of the total eligible cost, whichever is less, includes design and installation.
- **Other Water Management Structures (stop log structures, in-line water gates) that meet CP587 Standards:** Cost share will not exceed 75% of the total cost, includes design and installation.
- **Sub-surface Drains (alternative tile inlets) that meet CP60 Standards:** Cost-share will not exceed 75% of the total cost, includes design and installation.
- **Denitrifying Bioreactors that meet CP747 Standards:** Cost-share will not exceed 75% of the total cost, includes design and installation. NOTE: Must be designed by a professional engineer to qualify for cost-share.
- **Drainage Water Management Operations CP554:** Incentive payments will not exceed \$7.58 per acre per year, for no more than three years, on a maximum of 300 acres per contract.
- **Nutrient Management CP590:** Incentive payments will not exceed \$5.44 per acre per year (without manure) and \$10.78 per acre per year (with manure), for no more than three years, on a maximum of 300 acres per contract. NOTE: Only fields with controlled subsurface drainage structure(s) and/or denitrifying bioreactors and/or where existing open tile inlets are replaced are eligible. Participants must also have an approved CAP 104 plan to be eligible for this incentive.

If you are interested in this cost share grant program funding and are considering the installation of a tile drainage system, please contact the Two Rivers Watershed District office for more information or to apply for funding. We can be reached at 218-843-3333 and our office is located in the Kittson County Courthouse in Hallock, MN.

Pesky Beavers!

The Two Rivers Watershed District pays a \$40 bounty on beavers that are taken from legal ditch systems under the jurisdiction of the District. During the course of 2013, the District paid out \$540 on 14 beavers that were turned in. In addition, 15 beaver dams were removed using a backhoe to clean out the obstructions on the ditch systems. If you know of beaver activity on any systems managed by the District, please call the office at 218-843-3333.

CRP Cost-Share Payments Delayed Due To Farm bill Expiration

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

The 2008 Farm Bill, extended by the American Tax Payer Relief Act of 2012, expired September 30, 2013. No legislation has been enacted to reauthorize or extend this authority. The lack of farm bill legislation has resulted in the Farm Service Agency (FSA) having to delay the processing of most Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) cost-share payments which are paid for the establishment of required conservation practices on land enrolled in CRP. FSA does not have the legislative authority to generate new CRP cost-share applications or to modify existing cost-share applications effective October 1, 2013.

CRP participants who submitted 2013 cost share applications for which FSA did not process prior to October 1, 2013, must now wait until farm bill legislation is passed before FSA can load and process the cost share applications. FSA increased certain cost-share rates during the summer of 2013. These increases were done to align our cost-share rates with the increased costs of certain inputs and expenses that producers incurred in establishing their CRP practices in 2013. FSA has no authority to process any applications which would result in an additional obligation of funds being paid until farm bill legislation provides the authority. If you wish to forego the increased cost-share rates, please contact our office and we will start processing your cost-share application with the old rates if possible.

Notice To CRP Participants With Expired Contracts

If you have an expired CRP contract that has any field classified as Highly Erodible Land (HEL), you are required to implement an appropriate conservation system when the next crop is planted in order to maintain your eligibility for USDA payments. Conservation systems are specific to each HEL tract on a farm.

In addition, if you are planning to conduct any drainage improvements that have not been previously evaluated by NRCS, you are required to notify USDA of your plans by updating your AD-1026 compliance certification.

For information regarding USDA conservation and wetland compliance requirements call or stop by your local NRCS field office for an appointment.

Controlling Volunteer Woody Vegetation On Re-Enrolled CRP/CCRP

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Effective with the 41st General Sign-up and the 40th Continuous Sign-up, new and re-enrolled CRP or CCRP acreages must be free of volunteer woody vegetation. Acreages which are re-enrolled are required to have volunteer woody vegetation removed within 12 months of enrollment and maintained for the life of the contract. New enrollments are also required to maintain CRP from volunteer woody vegetation for the enrollment duration. The winter months provide an excellent time to conduct woody vegetation management activities. Participants may want to consider conducting required maintenance prior to the spring for ease of access. The woody vegetation policy is the result of clarification of requirements to comply with national program provisions related to establishment and maintenance of grass/forb CRP practices. Failure to remove or control volunteer woody vegetation could result in either contract termination or assessment of a payment reduction. Participants need to implement a CRP cover management plan that addresses both weeds

and wood encroachment to maintain the desired cover as required in their conservation plan of operations.

FSA Adopting Gov Delivery Program Updates By Email

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are no longer publishing program newsletters due to budget constraints. FSA appreciates the Soil and Water Conservation District cooperation in publishing FSA updates within this newsletter. Landowners and farm operators are encouraged to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide FSA notices, newsletters and electronic reminders instead of hard copy newsletters through the mail. FSA, like many other organizations, is trying to work smarter and be more efficient. Moving to electronic notifications via email will help conserve resources and save taxpayer dollars. Producers can now subscribe to receive free e-mail updates by going to <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe>. The actual sign-up process is user friendly; we recommend you sign-up for both Kittson County Updates and Minnesota FSA updates. If you would like to receive written directions the FSA staff can provide a set to assist you in the sign-up. For those without email the county office will continue to submit FSA program updates to the local papers for publication.

Trees Available For Spring 2014

If you are looking at planting trees for 2014, now is the time to plan it. The Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offers a full service tree program including planning (location, design and species type), ordering and planting.

The tree program was started to promote conservation and help residents create a more beautiful, healthy and ecologically balanced environment. Many of the county's farmstead and field windbreaks, wildlife habitat plantings and reforestation efforts have been started as a result of this program.

Our tree and shrub stock is typically 1 to 2 feet (with some varying sizes) in height, bare root and grown in Minnesota and North Dakota. Shrub and tree species are sold in bundles of 25 and the Kittson SWCD has potted evergreens that are sold individually. If you are interested in a certain type of tree species that is not on the order form or bigger stock, give us a call and we will see if we can accommodate you.

A tree order form is located in this newsletter and on the front page of our website at www.nwmnswcd.org. Fill it out, clip it from the newsletter and mail it to the address indicated on the order form if you are interested in order trees. Call Darren Carlson if you have questions about the Kittson SWCD Tree Program.

Ag BMP Loan Program

The Agriculture Best Management Practices Loan Program (Ag BMP Loan) provides low interest loans to farmers and rural landowners. The purpose is to encourage Best Management Practices that prevent or reduce water quality problems. Loans can be provided up to \$100,000 at an interest rate of 3%. Money is available for the purchase of Ag waste management equipment, conservation tillage equipment, septic system upgrades and other conservation related practices.

Projects must be located in the rural areas of Kittson County to be eligible. Landowners can contact the Kittson SWCD for more information and to receive an application package. Applications will need to provide information about the proposed project to be funded and the desired loan amount. For more information, stop at our office at the Kittson County Courthouse or call (218) 843-2619 Ext 3.

**Kittson County
SWCD**

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