

NORTHLAND CONSERVATION NEWS

MARCH 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 INGEMAN, 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 - JIM KUKOWSKI; SEC. - JON VOLD; TREASURER - DARRELL JOHNSON; O'NEIL LARSON, ALLEN BRAZIER AND PAUL OLSONAWSKI

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

2011 SURE Signup

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Signup for the 2011 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE) is now underway and continues through June 7, 2013. SURE provides benefits for 2011 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters. The SURE program replaces the old ad hoc crop disaster program. SURE is based upon total farm revenue which is significantly different than disaster programs of the past.

To be eligible for SURE, a producer must have at least a 10 percent production loss on a crop of economic significance; a policy or plan of insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act or the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for all economically significant crops; be physically located in a county that was declared a primary disaster county or contiguous county by the Agriculture Secretary under a Secretarial Disaster Designation. Producers considered socially disadvantaged, a beginning farmer or rancher, or a limited resource farmer may be eligible for SURE without a policy or plan of insurance or NAP coverage. Kittson County did receive a disaster declaration in 2011.

Producers who are interested in determining if their farm qualifies for 2011 SURE should contact the County FSA office. We are currently taking the names of all interested producers and then are loading the SURE application workbook for review with them. SURE takes into consideration crop insurance level of coverage, total crop production, farm program payments, and crop insurance subsidies. For more information on the 2011 SURE program, visit the county office or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/sure>

2013 Rainfall Monitoring Volunteers Needed

By Jamie Ingeman

The Kittson SWCD operates a rain gauge monitoring system throughout various locations in Kittson County. Currently 16 locations are monitored in different townships in the county. Rain amounts are recorded daily and reported to the SWCD at the end of the month. The SWCD then submits the reports to the Minnesota State Climatology Office. The county is currently seeking rainfall monitors in the following townships, South Red River, Svea, Clow, Hazelton, McKinley, Cannon, Percy, Caribou, and Pelan. We provide the rain gauges and forms to be filled out along with postage to be sent back to our office. If you are interested in becoming a rain gauge monitor, please stop in our office or call (218) 843-2619 Ext 3.

2013 Kittson SWCD Board



2013 Board members L-R: Joe Wilebski, Ron Anderson, C.J Peterson, Justin Dagen and Heather Peterson.

There are some new faces to the Kittson SWCD board. The 2013 general election for SWCD board members elected Heather Peterson from Hallock to serve the Southwest area of the county including, North Red River, Hallock, South Red River, Skane, Teien, and Svea townships. Heather and her family live in South Red River Township and farm small grains. C.J Peterson joined the board on January 1, 2013 serving the Northwest area of the county including St. Vincent, Clow, Richardville, Hill, Hampden, and Granville townships. C.J lives in Granville Township and farms small grains. Joe Wilebski was re-elected to serve the Northeast area of the county including St. Joseph, McKinley, Caribou, Poppleton, Cannon, Hazelton, and Peatland townships. Joe has been a member on the SWCD board since 1996. Other members of the board include Justin Dagen who serves the South central area of the county including the townships of Thompson, Tegner, Jupiter, Spring Brook, and Davis. Justin has been a member of the board since 1996. Ron Anderson from Karlstad serves the southeast area of the county including the townships of Percy, Klondike, Pelan, Norway, Deerwood, and Arveson. Ron has been a member of the board since 2006. The Soil and Water Conservation board members are responsible for policy development which is carried out by the District staff and also oversee the administrative and financial activities as well as approve cost share projects in the county.

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 thaw 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.

2013 DCP/ACRE Program

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 extended the authorization of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill) for many Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) commodity, disaster, and conservation programs through 2013. The extended programs include the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP) and the Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE).

The 2013 DCP and ACRE program provisions are unchanged from 2012, except that all eligible participants in 2013 may choose to enroll in either DCP or ACRE for the 2013 crop year. This means that eligible producers who were enrolled in ACRE in 2012 may elect to enroll in DCP in 2013 or may re-enroll in ACRE in 2013 (and vice versa).

FSA began sign-ups for DCP and ACRE for the 2013 crops on Feb. 19, 2013. Call for your appointment to enroll in DCP or ACRE today. The ACRE signup period will end on June 3, 2013 and the DCP sign-up period will end on Aug. 2, 2013. Advance payments are not authorized; final direct payments will be issued in October 2013. Fruit and Vegetable (FAV) planting restrictions apply on participating farms. At sign up, producers are given or provided access to the CCC-509 Appendix to the signed contract. Paragraph 3P addresses payments and the subject of availability of funds. As indicated in this section of the Appendix, payments may be reduced due to a sequester order required by Congress. This means that ALL producers will be affected by the reduction if it occurs REGARDLESS of th

USDA Announces 45th General Sign-Up For The Conservation Reserve Program

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP has a 27-year legacy of protecting the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. Additional sign-ups for continuous CRP programs such as Highly Erodible Land Initiative and Initiative to Restore Grasslands, Wetlands and Wildlife will be announced in spring 2013.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

NAP Enrollment Deadline Nears

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Producers must apply for coverage before a disaster strikes. Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) applications for coverage must be filed using Form CCC-471 and the applicable service fees by the closing date. Application closing dates vary by crop. Producers are reminded of the March 15 application deadline for spring-seeded annual crops and perennial forage pasture. Kittson County producers can contact the FSA Office for specific crop application sales closing dates at: 218-843-2692.

Producers are reminded about the need for insurance coverage on crops in order to remain eligible for the agency's Disaster Assistance Programs such as Livestock Forage Program, Tree Assistance Program, and Emergency Livestock Assistance Program. Producers must purchase at least catastrophic (CAT) level of insurance for all insurable crops.

NAP provides coverage to producers for non-insurable crops when a low yield, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. Crops eligible for NAP coverage are those for which crop insurance is not available, including fruits and vegetables, aquaculture, pecans, turf grass and forage crop just to name a few.

More information about NAP may be found on the FSA web site located at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>

Kittson SWCD Equipment Rental Program

By Darren Carlson



Brillion 15 foot "Sure Stand" Seeder



Brillion being used in a clean till seed bed

The Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will have a 12 foot Brillion "Sure Stand" Seeder available to rent for crop year 2013.

What is a Brillion Seeder? The Brillion seeder is a broadcast seeder with a front roller and a rear roller. Front rollers crush lumps, press down small stones and form a firm seedbed. Precision seeding devices meter out the seed onto the well prepared seedbed. The rear rollers split the shallow ridges formed by the front rollers and gently firm the soil around the tiny seeds. The S-tine track removal kit minimizes compaction from the tractor tires before the rollers prepare a uniform seedbed. All seed are planted at fingernail depth for maximum germination potential and fast emergence, which is ideal for native grasses establishment.

Why use the Brillion Seeder? This seeder was purchased in December 2010 and will be available for the 2013 spring planting season. This Brillion seeder will plant CRP seed plans such

as native grasses and cool season grasses or plant commodity crops such as canola and hay crops into a clean tilled seed bed. The drill has two separate seed boxes that allow multiple seed types at varying rates. The front box is legume box used for smaller heavy seeds (switchgrass, alfalfa, canola, etc.). The rear box has a cage agitator that rotates when seeding and is used for fluffy seeds such as Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, Little Bluestem and oats.

What is the rental rate? Rent is \$10 per acre, plus a \$75 setup fee, which includes delivery and pickup. The planting width of the drill is 12 feet and the overall width of the drill is 15 feet. A tractor with at least 40 horsepower and two hydraulic rear-couplers is required to pull the drill. Stop by the Kittson SWCD to fill out a rental agreement or call (218) 843-2619 Ext. 3 for more details.

Feedlot Registration

By Brian Krippner

It's time again to register your feedlots! 2013 is the last year of the current 4-year registration period which means that at midnight on December 31st, all feedlots in Kittson County must be re-registered. If you have an unregistered feedlot, this is a good time to come and stop in the office and get registered.

Why register?

"Minnesota law requires most feedlots owners to register their feedlot with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). Owners meet the feedlot registration requirements by filling out a form that is provided by the MPCA (and are available at the Kittson SWCD office and online). Owners that have applied for a permit are automatically registered." Registration also allows the Kittson SWCD to maintain an inventory of active feedlots in the county. This information is considered by the legislature for the allocation of potential funding of financial assistance programs for feedlot owners who want or need to make environmental improvements to their operation. Registration also provides a line of communication between the Kittson SWCD and feedlot owners which can be an important resource when deciphering the feedlot rules. The main goal of the feedlot program is to identify any pollution hazards that may exist and work with producers to eliminate those pollution sources.

Who is required to register?

By law, the location and number of animals on a site are what's

used as the determining factor for the requirement to register. Any feedlots located within shoreland that have 10 or more animal units are required. Shoreland is in most instances, land that is 1000 feet or less from a lake or 300 feet or less from a river, stream or substantial ditch is considered shoreland. Feedlots with 50 or more animal units located outside of shoreland are also required to register. An animal unit is generally equal to 1000 lbs of livestock weight. This means that a 700 lb heifer will equal about 0.7 animal units, whereas a 1000 lb cow with a 200 lb calf will equal 1.2 animal units.

So what is a feedlot exactly?

The MPCA describes a feedlot as "...a lot or building or combination of lots and buildings intended for the confined feeding, breeding, raising, or holding of animals and specifically designed as a confinement area in which manure may accumulate, or where the concentration of animals is such that a vegetative cover cannot be maintained within the enclosure...." This may include wintering lots. Pasture operations are not regulated under the Feedlot rules.

If you have questions about if your operation is a feedlot, registration, or are just looking for more information, please visit www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/feedlot-rules.html or call Brian Krippner at the Kittson SWCD at (218) 843-2619 ext 3.

FSA Adopting GovDelivery – Updates By Email

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

The USDA Farm Service Agency offices are no longer publishing program newsletters due to budget constraints. Producers are asked to enroll in the new GovDelivery system which will provide 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 county office 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.

Noxious Weeds

By Brian Krippner

The longer days are a sign that spring is coming! With the growing season just around the corner, it's time to start planning your attack on those weeds that frequent field borders, CRP, pastures and anywhere else they can take root. Some weeds are accompanied by a legal requirement to control or eradicate. Luckily, in Kittson County we have only a few weeds that are actually on the Noxious Weeds list put out by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Minnesota law requires that landowners are responsible for the control or eradication of noxious weeds on their property. Different species of weeds may require different control or eradication measures. As the Agricultural Inspector, it is my responsibility to see that the noxious weed law is enforced in Kittson County. I am also here to provide assistance with identification and control methods. My goals are to work with landowners to help them develop more effective management plans so that the number of noxious weeds in Kittson County is reduced overall. This will be a benefit to all land owners as with fewer weeds there will be less money spent on the repeated management of recurring infestations.

Here are some things to consider when you are developing your management strategies for noxious weeds. Think about the life cycle of the weed you are trying to manage. Is it an annual or perennial, or perhaps it's a biannual? This will have a significant difference in how your management strategies impact that plant. An annual, for example, will be a plant that is seed dependent. This means that it can be controlled and the infestation greatly reduced simply by mowing the weed often enough to prevent it from going to seed. After a few years of this type of maintenance there will be a drastic reduction in size of the infestation. A perennial however may require a bit different approach as these plants are not seed dependent and have massive root structures. A timely application of the herbicide during the right period in a plants live cycle will be a far more effective treatment than mowing or spraying at the wrong time (generally when the plant is most visible).

If you should receive a letter from me about noxious weeds on your property and are not sure on how to control it please feel free to contact me. If you have a noxious weed or you are not sure about weed identification, do not hesitate to call Brian Krippner (County Agricultural Inspector) at (218) 843-2619 ext. 3.

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.

Ag BMP Loan Program

By Jamie Ingeman

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 water quality problems. Loans can be provided up to \$100,000 and 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.

Two Rivers Watershed District News

In Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties

March 2013

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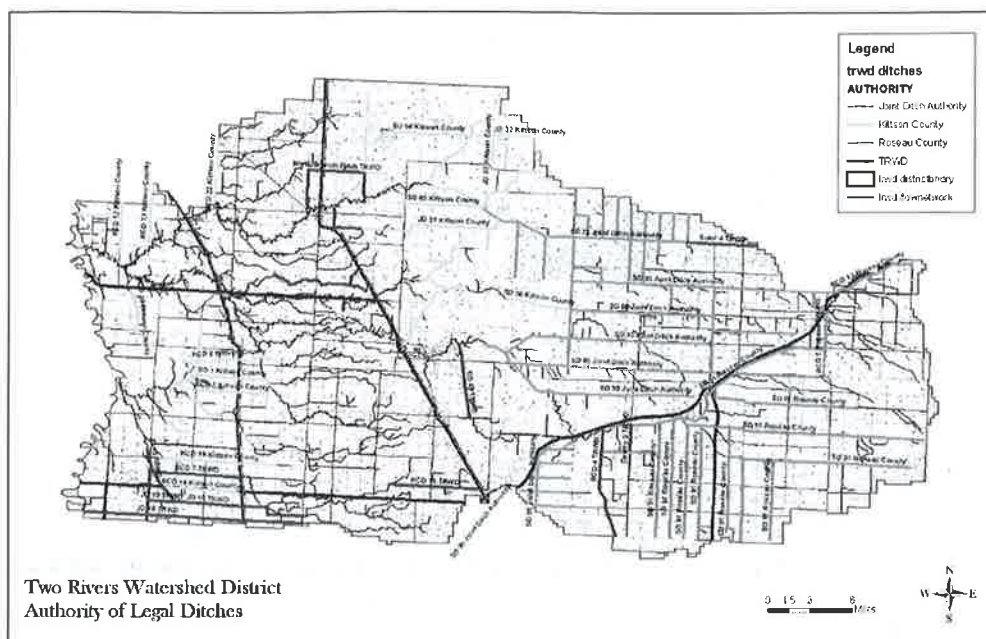
Inspections And Maintenance To Be Done On Legal Ditch Systems

By Dan Money

The Two Rivers Watershed District will once again be doing survey work and inspections in 2013 on various legal ditch systems under their jurisdiction. The District is required by Minnesota Statutes 103D and 103E to maintain approximately 92 miles of ditches within Roseau, Kittson, and Marshall Counties. A 'ditch maintenance schedule' has been put in place, where at least once every 5 years every mile of ditch is surveyed. The survey that is completed for each ditch shows the longitudinal profile and grade of the ditch, and also numerous cross sections are surveyed to show the condition of the side slopes and bottom of the ditch.

Each ditch is documented and compared to its original constructed design, otherwise known as the 'legal grade and cross section'. The TRWD is required to maintain each ditch to its originally constructed depth and grade. Therefore, if the survey shows that there is sediment accumulated in the ditch, or if any erosion is taking place, or if sloughing or damage has occurred, then repair activity needs to be done.

In addition, visual inspections are completed each year to see if any blockages like beaver dams, brush and trees, or other vegetation like cattails are present. If there are, the TRWD will remove the blockages using a backhoe, dozer, or spraying to kill the vegetation. Problem beavers are removed as needed, and a \$40 bounty is available. The visual inspections also check to



make sure there is a grass buffer maintained alongside and parallel to each ditch, and if all culverts are in good shape and working.

The map below shows the legal ditches with the Two Rivers Watershed District, and who is the ditch authority for each. Ditches under the jurisdiction of the District are shown in red. Ditches that will be surveyed in 2013 include JD 10 main, State Ditch #49, Dewey 5, and Kennedy 6. Sediment removal has been scheduled for JD 10 Branch B and vegetation control will be done on the Middle Branch Project.

Watershed Districts Meet With Stakeholders To Discuss "Watershed Restoration And Protection Plans"

"Lower Red River" Watershed

The Joe River, Two Rivers, and Middle-Snake-Tamarac Rivers Watershed Districts met with water quality stakeholders on February 26th at the Eagles Club in Karlstad. The meeting marked the first step in the local planning process to assess water quality conditions on the Joe River, Unnamed Coulee (Kennedy & JD 10), and the Tamarac River. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has listed portions of these systems as "impaired." Part of the planning process is to conduct a "Total

Maximum Daily Load" (TMDL) study.

Stephanie Johnson an engineer with Houston Engineering (the firm hired to coordinate the MPCA study) said the Tamarac River is "impaired" for aquatic life - specifically fish - from the Florian Park Reservoir west to the dam in Stephen. Other impairments on the Tamarac are for mercury and e-coli. The Joe River is listed as impaired for chloride and pH.

Dan Money, Two Rivers Watershed District Administrator, began the meeting by explaining federal regulations and the water quality challenges in the Joe River, Two Rivers and Tamarac River Watersheds. He explained that the studies on these three watershed systems will incorporate public input, collection of scientific data, and the use of state of the art technical equipment and expertise to perform the study, assess the watershed conditions, identify sources of contaminants, and propose solutions to any problems that are identified.

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Two Rivers Watershed District News

In Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties



Federal law - specifically the Clean Water Act of 1972 - requires the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate the amount of pollutants in streams and navigable waters. EPA regulations require every state to identify all waters that do not meet federal water quality standards - even after pollution controls are in place.

States must then create a plan of action starting with a "Water Conditions Report" - an assessment of these streams - followed by a "Watershed Restoration and Protection Project" (WRPP). The WRPP identifies the sources of pollution and provides a strategy to reduce or eliminate contaminants. State and Federal funding is available for these studies.

In Minnesota, the MPCA is responsible for creating these plans. The MPCA can and does accept assistance from local units of governments (in this case, the Middle-Snake-Tamarac Watershed District, the Joe River Watershed District and the Two Rivers Watershed District) to review the issues and provide local input on watershed projects that could improve and protect water quality.

Two Rivers & Snake River

Monitoring crews from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) are beginning the sixth year of a ten-year effort to assess the condition of all rivers, streams, and lakes in Minnesota. This work is being funded by the Clean Water Fund from the constitutional amendment passed by voters in 2008.

From May through September, 2013 biological monitoring crews will focus on the Snake River and Two Rivers watersheds. Each watershed is comprised of a network of interconnected streams, lakes, and wetlands. Following MPCA site selection protocols, 40 potential site locations were selected on streams in the Snake River watershed and 38 sites were selected in the Two Rivers watershed. Biological monitoring crews will conduct a spring reconnaissance to determine how to sample each stream and speak with landowners about possible access points. Crews will then re-visit each site once or twice during the summer to collect the samples.

The monitoring for fish and insects in rivers and streams will be carried out primarily by the Brainerd MPCA biological monitoring unit. In addition to the biological monitoring activities, staff from the MPCA, DNR, Two Rivers Watershed District, and Kittson Soil & Water Conservation District will track water quality trends within these watersheds. Lake monitoring will be done on Lake Bronson by citizen volunteers from the 'Friends of Lake Bronson State Park', focusing on nutrient concentrations and other water chemistry parameters to assess lakes for their ability to support recreational uses.

The stream monitoring is designed to measure and evaluate the condition of rivers and streams by studying the biology including fish, aquatic invertebrates, and plant life as well as habitat, flow, and water chemistry. Examples of aquatic invertebrates include insect larvae, crayfish, snails, small clams, worms, and leeches. Stream water chemistry is monitored to provide information about the quality of the water in which these fish and invertebrates live.

There are certain expectations for what the biology and water chemistry should look like at a given sampling location. If actual samples do not meet those expectations, the sampling location could be considered impaired. If that happens, the MPCA would look more closely at what could be causing impairments and find ways to correct the problem.

For more information about the MPCA's condition monitoring program activities, visit http://www.pca.state.mn.us/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1196&Itemid=2712.

Plotmaster

By Brian Krippner

Now is the time to start thinking about your spring seeded wildlife food plots! Spring is the ideal time to establish your annual seed mixes to maximize the available tons per acre of available food in your wildlife plots. If you hadn't already started your seed bed preparation last fall, it is important to start early with working the area up and applying your weed control measures well before you intend to plant. This will allow your seed the greatest chance of germinating and producing a lush, green attractive food plot. We have the tools that can help you!

The Kittson SWCD has for rent a Hunter Series Plotmaster. This piece of equipment is ideal for soil preparation with its "double gang" disc assemblies and the unique "down pressure system" for maximum soil penetration with minimal weight and size. There is also a drag attachment and a cultipacker built in. The versatility of the Plotmaster doesn't stop there. Once you have prepared your seed bed, you can utilize the electronic "Versa Seeder" system that will plant seeds from the smallest of clovers to the larger corn and soybean seeds. The Plotmaster also has a grain drill attachment for planting row crops such as corn or soybeans in rows similar to large scale ag production.

By design, the Plotmaster is intended for use with an ATV or UTV. Its narrow width and light weight allows the unit to be pulled into areas with limited accessibility which makes this piece of equipment perfect for those honey hole plots way back in the woods. It is recommended that an ATV of 500cc's or larger is used to ensure adequate power when breaking ground.

Rental Rates for the Kittson SWCD Plotmaster are \$100 daily and \$250 for the weekend (which includes Friday). For more information, call Brian Krippner at the Kittson SWCD at (218) 843-2619 ext. 3.

Trees Available For Spring 2013

Spring is near and it is time to get your trees ordered!! The Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) offer 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 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 and available.

If you are interested at looking at a tree order form, placing an order or planting trees this spring, please give Darren Carlson a call at 218-843-2619 Ext. 3. Tree order forms are available on the front page of our website at www.nwmnswcd.org, can be mailed out or stop by at the Courthouse basement in Hallock to pick one up or order your trees. Limited amount of tree varieties and numbers remain.

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Compliance & Conservation Plans

By Jim Schwab, District Conservationist

Anyone wishing to participate in an USDA programs must meet Conservation Compliance provisions. Agriculture commodities cannot be produced on highly erodible land (HEL) unless soil erosion prevention measures are initiated or installed that maintain soil loss to USDA acceptable standards. Which means an ag producer must have an HEL conservation plan written and approved by USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Soil and Water District. Any producer who purchases land or plans on operating new land should check with NRCS to find out if the land is HEL. If so we will work with you on your crop rotations and residue management to ensure we keep erosion down to acceptable levels. Therefore keeping you in compliance with USDA's Conservation Provisions.

Conservation Compliance

By Kelly Turgeon- FSA Administrator

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Wetland Conservation (WC) and Highly Erodible Land (HEL) provisions are required. Prior to doing any new or expanding of drainage systems, tiling, or clearing of land, it is recommended that an AD-1026 is filed to request a "certified wetland" determination. Producers who choose to install new and/or modify existing drainage systems without a certified wetland determination need to be aware that any drainage activities done in an area without previous crop history or in areas that are consistently wet, pose a high risk of resulting in a converting of a protected wetland that could result in loss of USDA benefits. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan.

Wetlands

By Brian Krippner

Just a friendly reminder that if you are planning on doing any work in wetlands to check with us here at the conservation office prior to conducting the project. The Wetland Conservation Act (Chapter 8420 MN Rules) regulates any impacts to wetlands of the state of Minnesota. Impacts conducted without a permit may be in violation of the law. Projects that are conducted on agricultural ground may have their own set of consequences if the landowner is enrolled in the Federal Farm Program. Also, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Natural Resources regulates impacts that may occur in different situations. It's best to stop in and discuss what you propose to do and we can guide you in the right direction. This is more important now due to the dry summer we had last year and the less than average precipitation that has continued through the winter. Areas that may not seem wet could still qualify as a wetland and therefore are regulated. If you have any questions please feel free to visit us in the basement of the courthouse or give us a call at (218) 843-2619.

Lake Bronson Watershed & Red River of the North Watershed Runoff Reduction Projects

By Darren Carlson

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. A Clean Water Funding grant was 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.

In 2012 the Kittson SWCD was notified that these grants would be funded. \$300,000 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 current 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 potentially up to \$150 per acre for a 15 year contract to establish these highly effective grass filter strips. 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 could have a start date ASAP or 10/01/2013.

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 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.

Grass Filter Strip Needed



Side Water Inlet Needed



**Kittson County
SWCD**

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