

# NORTHLAND CONSERVATION NEWS

## MAY 2014 NEWSLETTER

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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

## Tri-County Places First In Area 1 Envirothon



L-R: Devon Binstock, Steele Spilde, Laura Anderson, Michael Thompson, Morgan Koland and Advisor Gary Taylor.

Tri-County Team number 7 took first place at the Northwest Area 1 Envirothon at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge near Holt MN on April 23rd, 2014. Grygla team #2 took second honors and Greenbush team number 22 took 3rd place and Greenbush team #21 took home first in the Oral Presentation section.

Twenty-three teams from Tri- County, Kittson Central, Badger, Grygla, Greenbush, Marshall County Central, Goodridge, and Stephen Argyle High Schools participated in the event. Envirothon is an outdoor learning event for high school student's grades 9-12. This event is one of the largest environmental education competitions in Minnesota. Teams consisting of 5 students visit 6 different learning stations including Forestry, Aquatics, Wildlife, Soils, and a current event topic. Students are given a 25 point exam related to the stations topics. The students are also asked to give a brief oral presentation to a panel of judges. This year's oral presentation scenario was Sustainable Local Agriculture/Locally grown in Minnesota.

The top three teams from each area in Minnesota advanced to a state event which was held at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN on May 19th, 2014. The Tri-County, Grygla, and Greenbush teams competed in the event.

## 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 or 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. The updating of farm records prior acreage reporting and farm bill sign-up will help avoid program delays.

## Farm Bill CRP Authorities Not Yet Announced

*By Kelly Turgeon FSA Administrator*

USDA has not yet released information on restoration of CRP authorities under the 2014 Farm Bill; therefore no information has been received regarding the potential for General CRP/Continuous CRP sign-ups or the Transition Incentives Program (TIP). TIP allows for the transition of expiring CRP to beginning, socially disadvantaged, or military veteran farmer or ranchers for production agriculture. The Farm Bill also provides an opportunity for an "early-out" of CRP contracts, in fiscal year 2015 for which provisions have not yet been released.

## FSA Acreage Reporting Maps Available By Email Or Producer Pickup

*By Kelly Turgeon FSA Administrator*

Due to current budget constraints, FSA will not be mailing maps to producers for 2014 acreage reporting purposes. A new option for producers to consider is requesting maps be provided via email as a printable PDF document. Farm operators interested in receiving maps electronically are asked to contact the FSA county office to request maps by email. Map distribution via email will save FSA time and dollars. The other option available for map distribution would be stopping by the FSA office to pick-up farm maps.

## 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 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.

# Do You Have What It Takes To Become A Kittson Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisor?

SWCDs are local units of government that manage and direct natural resource management programs at the local level. Minnesota's 90 SWCDs cover the entire state and generally follow county lines. Responsibilities of the supervisor during their four year terms consist of:

## KNOWLEDGE:

- Some of the fundamentals about the environment and how it works
- The relationship between land use decisions and the environment
- The effect environmental decisions have on other aspects of our lives
- Local concerns, attitudes and needs

## CONCERNS:

- Our environment and natural resources
- Maintaining and improving water quality
- Protecting our soil

## LEADERSHIP:

- Setting local conservation priorities
- Educating friends and neighbors about the environment
- Working with other local units of government, state and federal agencies and other elected officials
- Setting an example

- Taking unpopular standing
- Balancing economic needs with environmental concerns
- Sacrificing short term gains for long term benefits

Being a supervisor involves one regular board meeting a month and many incidental responsibilities. Supervisors receive no salary, although they do receive per diem and are reimbursed for expenses. Those individuals who are elected to the position of SWCD supervisor file a Statement of Economic Interest with the Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board within 60 days of the beginning of their term. The Supervisor term is (4) years.

This year the Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will have two supervisor openings:

Area III includes the Townships of Thompson, Tegner, Davis, Spring Brook and Jupiter

Area IV includes the Townships of Percy, Norway, Deerwood, Arveson, Pelan and Klondike

You must live in the particular area that you apply. If you wish to be on the ballot, you must file for the election between May 20 and June 3. SWCD supervisor positions are filled through general elections on November 4. You need to file a Minnesota Affidavit of Candidacy (available from the County Auditor's Office), along with a \$20 filing fee. For more information or questions, contact the Kittson SWCD office at (218) 843-2619 Ext. 3.

## Building & Septic Permits Required In Kittson County

In the spring of 2014, the Kittson Co. Commissioners approved the Kittson SWCD to work in conjunction with Kittson County to administer the Zoning Program. This will help Kittson County Residents with a "one place stop" for their building and septic system needs. Also in the spring of 2014, a new and revised zoning ordinance was approved by Kittson County. Below are a few of the most commonly asked questions about zoning regulations in Kittson Co.

### How do I know if I need a Land Use/Building Permit?

Kittson County enforces countywide zoning. This means permits are required for the following situations:

1. When any structure is built or moved into a lot.
2. When a structure's footprint is changed - this includes the addition of decks or steps.
3. When the layout of a residence is changed to add living or bedroom space.
4. When dealing with demolition sites.

### What is the process for obtaining a permit?

The process of obtaining a building permit is very easy. After the application is completed, the zoning office will check FEMA floodplain maps for Kittson County to determine if the land is in the floodplain. Special building requirements do apply when building in floodplain areas. Special requirements also apply when activity is planned in a shoreland area. Shoreland is defined as land within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high water level of a lake and 300 feet from a river or stream.

After floodplain and shoreland determinations are completed, setback rules will be addressed. The Kittson County Zoning Ordinance states that all buildings must have at least 130 foot setback from the centerline of any township, county or state road. Other setback requirements may also apply, depending on the situation in question.

### Are there rules that apply to my septic system?

Yes. When building a home, adding on living space or changing the use of a room to a bedroom, septic system compliance comes into play. A licensed inspector must inspect all existing septic systems. New systems must also be inspected after installation.

Inspection paperwork will be given to building permit applicants at the start of any project. After the inspections have been completed, the paperwork must be returned to the zoning office. The zoning office can supply you with contact information for licensed inspectors in the area.

### I live in City Limits. Is a building permit required?

Yes. Permits need to be obtained from the zoning office for Home Occupations inside city limits; this does not include the Cities of Hallock, Lake Bronson, Kennedy or Karlstad. For these cities, please contact your local city clerk's office.

### I am a contractor; do I need to worry about getting permits for my customer?

Yes. The Zoning Ordinance applies equally to all persons, including but not limited to, property owners, renters and builders or contractors. The Zoning Ordinance specifically states that prior to any work, any builder or contractor must verify the existence of a permit obtained by an owner or renter, and that likewise, owners or renters will verify that existence of a permit if the same has been obtained by a builder or contractor.

### What is the cost of a land use/building and septic permit?

The cost for a general land use permit is \$50. Permits for projects in shoreland or floodplain cost \$100. Septic permits are \$20. If you do not know if you are in the floodplain or shoreland, the zoning office can tell you.

### What if I don't get a permit?

While the cost of a building permit is minimal at only \$50 to \$100, the cost of fines for building without a permit can be very high. Depending on the size of your structure, After-The-Fact Permit fines can range from \$250.00 to \$1,000.00. As stated in the Zoning Ordinance, the county attorney will prosecute all violations. Violations shall be punishable as a misdemeanor.

### How do I apply for a permit?

The Kittson SWCD can help you get started at (218) 843-2619 Ext. 3 or visit our office in the basement of the Courthouse in Hallock.

## Land Application Of Manure

By Brian Krippner

The state of Minnesota requires that "Manure from all manure storage areas storing manure produced from more than 100 animal units must be tested by the owner of the animal feedlot for nitrogen and phosphorus content..." This means that, to maintain compliance, feedlot owners must maintain records of manure nutrients and land applications. Larger operations (greater than 300 animal units) must prepare and maintain a Manure Management Plan (MMP) in accordance with State Rule 7020.2225. These plans involve testing of manure and soil along with incorporating crop history and crop needs to develop a nutrient budget for each field. The goal of MMP's and land application regulations is to protect ground water while providing valuable information about nitrogen and phosphorus availability for crops. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has provided a spread sheet that can assist producers in developing a MMP. Having all required information ready, a plan could take as little as 15 minutes to prepare. Commercial fertilizer prices are high so knowing how much nitrogen is in your manure could save you money. Give us a call at 218-843-2619 ext. 3 or stop by the SWCD office to get started on land application record keeping and/or a MMP. We will be looking for land application and MMP information during regularly scheduled inspections so it's important to have current records available to receive a compliance status for your operation.

## Weed Season

By Brian Krippner

Crop season is weed season. Now is the time to start thinking about weed management for the 2014 growing season. Early herbicide applications have a greater potential for control while reducing the risk of spreading propagating parts with mowers and other equipment. The Kittson SWCD will be on the lookout for large weed infestations but we welcome folks to call in if they need assistance with weed control practices or want to report an infestation.

Here is a list of some common weeds that we see in Kittson County and some recommended control methods as provided by the Minnesota Department of Ag.

**Canada Thistle:** *Cutting or mowing* should target plants that are approximately 3 inches tall and the process must be repeated throughout the season to maintain the plants at 3 inches or less in height. Herbicide foliar sprays with formulations of clopyralid, aminopyralid, or metsulfuron-methyl. These applications are made as the plants bolt, prior to flower set, or in late summer/early autumn to rosettes.

**Leafy Spurge:** *Cutting or mowing*, if timed before flower development, can reduce or limit seed production. Herbicide controls are applied as foliar application and usually involve formulations of aminocyclopyrachlor, picloram, 2-4-D, glyphosate, dicamba, or imazapic. Repeated applications are likely necessary.

**Purple Loosestrife:** *Mowing* is seldom an option due to wet

environments. Cutting of flower spikes can be an effective control of seed production. Spikes should be disposed of onsite. Hand pulling or digging can be effective but care should be taken to remove entire root systems. Herbicide formulations labeled for use on rights-of-way and near water: 2-4-D, glyphosate, imazamox, metsulfuron-methyl+aminopyralid, triclopyr, imazapyr and aminocyclopyrachlor.

**Wild Parsnip: CAUTION!!!** Use protective clothing, goggles or face mask. Contact with the bristles or sap of the plant can cause severe blisters and swelling when combined with exposure to sunlight. If cutting or mowing after seed set, clean equipment to leave seeds on the infested site. A second option, if cut after seed-set, is to contain and remove plant material to an approved facility. If a site is mowed early in the season it must be monitored as plants will likely re-sprout, bolt and flower. Herbicide controls include foliar application of 2-4-D or metsulfuron-methyl to the rosette stage during May and June and again in September or October. If glyphosate is to be applied to rosettes, it is recommended to hold off until late fall to prevent damage to native plants that should be dormant.

Managing weeds early and at the right times can ensure that infestation do not get out of control. Please call the Kittson SWCD with any weed management questions at 218-843-2619 ext. 3.

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. It supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, land owners/operators may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. EQIP provides technical assistance, cost share payments, and incentive payments to assist crop, livestock, and other agricultural producers with environmental and conservation improvements to their operations. Please contact the NRCS office at 218-843-2619 ext. 3

## Wetlands Violations

By Brian Krippner

If you are planning a construction or drainage project this year, please keep in mind the locations of wetlands. The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) Rule 8420 regulates impacts to wetlands in the state of Minnesota. These impacts may include draining or filling wetlands either wholly or partially, excavating or converting to a non-wetland. If there happens to be a wetland in or near your project or perhaps you aren't sure of any wetlands by just want to be safe, please call us at 218-843-2619 ext. 3 or stop by the office to discuss with us. Know that a wetland violation may lead to a Misdemeanor charge against the landowner and/or the responsible party so it is important to get your wetland applications filed with us prior to any work being done.



## **Livestock Disaster Programs Sign-Up Underway**

*By Kelly Turgeon FSA Administrator*

Enrollment for the disaster programs authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, including the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP) and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP) began on April 15, 2014. Below is a short overview on each program:

### **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):**

LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought on privately owned or cash leased land. Eligible producers must physically be located in a county affected by a qualifying drought during the normal grazing period for the county. Kittson County met drought eligibility requirements in 2012 and as a result is accepting applications for 2012 LFP benefits. Producers who suffered 2012 eligible grazing losses can contact FSA for an appointment to file an application for LFP. The deadline to submit a completed CCC-853 LFP applications and supporting documentation is January 30, 2015.

### **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):**

LIP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse eligible weather events and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law. In preparation for making an application for LIP, producers need to compile records such as dates of livestock deaths, beginning and ending inventories for each applicable year, calving records, adverse weather event documentation, etc. Producers who suffered livestock death losses from October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014 should submit a notice of loss and an application for LIP to their local FSA office by January 30, 2015.

### **Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP):**

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by LFP and LIP. Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during 2012 and 2013 program years must submit a notice of loss and application for payment to their local FSA office by August 1, 2014. For 2014 program year losses, the notice of loss and an application for ELAP must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the LFP, LIP and ELAP Fact Sheets on the Farm Bill webpage. Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.

## **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. CSP is available on all private agricultural lands and non-industrial private forest land. The program provides equitable access to all producers, regardless of operation size, crops produced, or geographic location.

Through CSP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary.

CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. The NRCS will make CSP available nationwide on a continuous application basis. Please contact the NRCS office 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.

# Two Rivers Watershed District News

In Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties



May 2014

410 5th St. S., Suite 112, Hallock, MN 56728 • Phone 218-843-3333 • Fax 218-843-2020 • Email: [daniel.money@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:daniel.money@mn.nacdnet.net)

## Impoundment Projects Are Key Element To Flood Control

The Two Rivers Watershed District's general purpose under Minnesota Statutes is "to conserve the natural resources of the state by land use planning, flood control, and other conservation projects by using sound scientific principles for the protection of the public health and welfare and the provident use of the natural resources". One method the District has been successful in utilizing to reduce flood impacts is the construction of impoundments. These consist of dikes and structures to impound, or hold floodwaters for extended periods during the spring runoff and during summer floods. These impoundments not only reduce flooding, but at the same time provide an array of natural resource benefits.

Below are three of the impoundments built and operated by the District, all of which are used on a regular basis. Together, these projects impound over 9,200 acre feet of water. That's a lot of water, considering that one acre foot equals 325,829 gallons. Therefore, if all three impoundments were full, the total water being stored would equal 2,997,626,800 gallons of water!

1968 under the Federal PL-566 program and is referred to as the Horseshoe Lake Wildlife Structure. The project consisted of diking, an emergency spillway, and a 54" diameter x 68' long pipe with an 8' x 16' x 7' concrete box inlet associated with the main outlet, and also a north dike to contain flows from State Ditch #84. Engineering and technical assistance was provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (previously known as the Soil Conservation Service) and funding and other resources were provided by both the Minnesota DNR (previously known as the Department of Conservation) and the Two Rivers Watershed District.

This structure was constructed for the purpose of waterfowl production, and it was envisioned that a 351 acre impoundment with an average 2' depth would be created at the normal pool elevation of 974.2 feet. A flood pool of 590 acres would occur at an elevation of 977.1 feet.

The impoundment did not attain its expected wildlife or flood control benefits, and in 2007 the DNR, TRWD, and Kittson County agreed to modify the structure by cutting a 4'x6' notch in the face of the cement box and inserting stoplogs to be able to manipulate the water levels. The new project has a capacity of storing a total of 2,130 acre feet from a drainage area of 29.4 square miles. This has local benefits to the North Branch Two Rivers and also smaller benefits to the Red River.

### Horseshoe Lake

The original wildlife structure, located north and east of the City of Lancaster in the SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ , section 15, T163N, R47W, was installed in

#### HORSESHOE LAKE IMPOUNDMENT



Two Rivers Watershed District  
Horseshoe Lake Impoundment





## Nereson Impoundment

This impoundment consists of a main impoundment, constructed in the 1980s, and a sub impoundment, constructed in the 1990's. It is located approximately 10 miles southeast of the City of Greenbush on the Nereson Wildlife Management Area, on land owned by the MN DNR. Construction was funded by the State of Minnesota, the Red River Watershed Management Board, and the Two Rivers Watershed District. Project sponsors are the TRWD, DNR, and Roseau County.

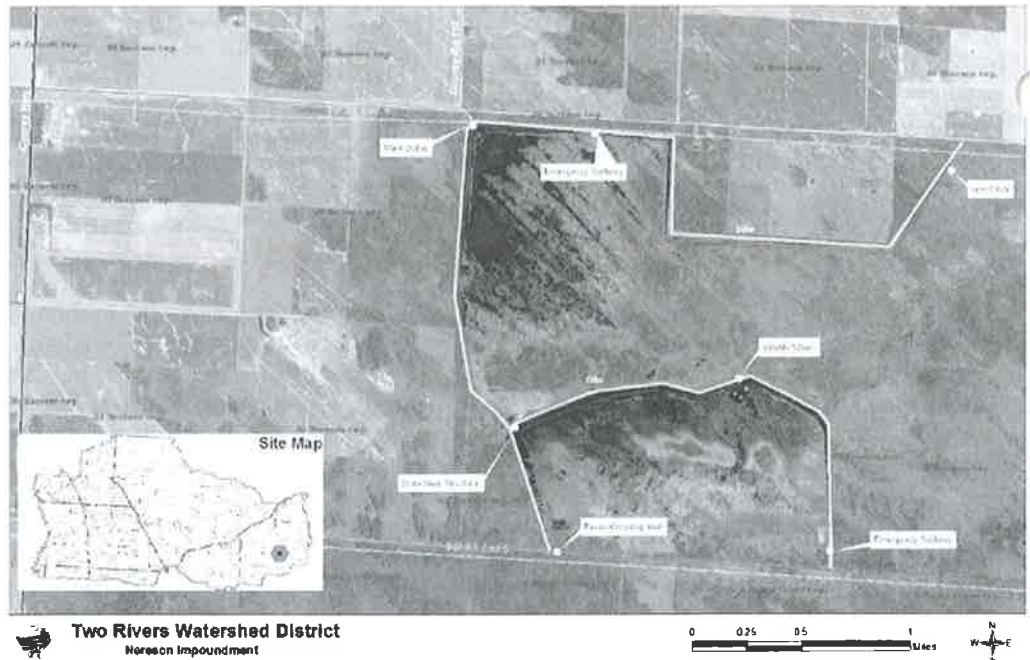
The impoundment includes three water control structures, two emergency spillways, over 5 miles of dikes, and various inlet structures. The total surface water area when full to the emergency spillway covers over 1,500 acres. The impoundment will store 3,500 acre feet when full, and controls up to 4.1" of runoff from an upstream drainage area of over 16 square miles.

Local benefits include flood reduction on state ditch #91, the South Branch Two Rivers, Lake Bronson, and further downstream on the Red River. The control structures are operated by the MN DNR in close consultation with the TRWD. The impoundment is a dual purpose, with a wildlife conservation pool maintained year around, with a flood pool able to be used during times of flooding.

## Ross Impoundment

The Ross Impoundment project was implemented by the Two Rivers Watershed District to achieve the purpose of flood control along Lateral 1 of State Ditch #95 in the upstream areas known as "Skunk Creek". The project is located south of Minnesota State Highway 11, approximately 2 miles northeast of the City of Badger, MN, in the vicinity of sections 32 & 33 of Ross Township, Roseau County. Major construction was completed in 2007 and 2008, and the project was totally operational during the flood of 2009. It proved its worth the first year of operation and has been used several times since.

Land within the impoundment is controlled by the TRWD either through ownership or flood easements. The land that is owned by the TRWD is either in the federal Conservation Reserve Program or is rented out to producers who either hay it or grow crops such as wheat or soybeans. So far operation of the gate has not impeded the use of the land for agriculture. This has provided a win-win situation as both flood control and agricultural production has been achieved. The impoundment has a detailed operating plan and is operated such that whenever there is downstream flooding on the landscape to



the point that water is spilling out of downstream ditches or waterways, the gate will be closed. It will remain closed until such time that there is no more downstream flooding, and then the gate is opened to drain down the impoundment dry to allow for agricultural and storage for any additional follow on flood events. Benefits to downstream lands are achieved all the way to the Red River of the North. The impoundment will control up to 3.7" of runoff from an upstream drainage area of 18.2 square miles.

### Project Details:

- Upstream Drainage Area . . . . . 18.2 Square miles
- Ungated Storage . . . . . 1,141 Acre Feet
- Gated Storage . . . . . 2,470 Acre Feet
- Total Storage to Emergency Spillway . . . . . 3,611 Acre Feet
- Water Surface Area to Emergency Spillway . . . . . 1,312 Acres

## ROSS IMPOUNDMENT



# Kittson SWCD Equipment Rental Program



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 2014. 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 2014 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.

## Rotational Grazing Tips: Cover Crops: Designing an Annual Forage Mix

By: Mark Hayek NRCS Grazing Specialist

Over the past year there has been discussion surrounding cover crops and utilizing annual forages in grazing operations. The objective of this article is to inform producers the strategies of using cover crops for producing livestock forage.

- Create a clear objective. Why do you want to do this? Some objectives include: extending the growing season, provide forage during drought, improve soil health and function, improve operation efficiency, improve profit, etc...
- Perennial forages are the least cost production model for raising livestock. Forage cover crop mixes should be used to enhance perennial forage production acres. Use forage cover crops to provide forage during times of the year where perennial forages are slow in recovery from grazing (mid-summer and fall).
- Put some thought into the location. Tilling perennial pastures to plant forage cover crops is not recommended (unless it is part of a pasture renovation plan). Other acres to consider are hay fields that need the rotation to be broke, heavily used areas that struggle to grow perennial species, or on adjacent cropland following small grain harvest.

A season long cover is least cost production vs. double cropping. Planting a cover crop mix in mid-June can provide grazing in late July and again in late fall.

- Put some thought in the mix. For example, if using a season long forage cover crop, plan the mix with at least 8 species (this provides better drought resistance). Use the following rule of thumb: cool season broadleaf (brassicas or field peas), warm season broadleaf (non GMO soybean), warm season grass (brown mid rib Sorghum/Sedan), and cool season grass (oats). There are a whole host of species available to use for forage cover crops. Kale and collard greens should be highlighted because they have been observed to provide extended fall growth and frost hardiness.
- Grazing is lower cost than mechanical harvesting. To get the biggest return on investment graze your forage cover crop whenever possible.
- Get some assistance. You don't have to go at this alone. By seeking some assistance you may find things you have not yet considered: some cover crop species do a good job at scavenging for nutrients while others can help break field compaction.

With a bit of strategizing you can find the right fit with forage cover crops on your farm.

**Note:** If you wish to learn more about rotational grazing please contact your local NRCS office.

## Kittson County SWCD

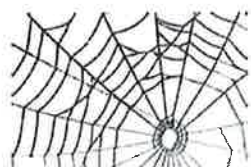
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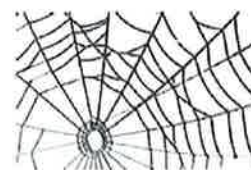
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## Kittson SWCD Website

Check us out at: [www.nwmnswcd.org](http://www.nwmnswcd.org)

**Check us out! We are on the Web!**



The Kittson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has created a website in cooperation with fifteen other northwest Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

### Information available through the website includes:

- Contact information
- Staff and Supervisors
- District services and programs
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) page
- News and announcements
- Current and archived newsletters
- Approved monthly Boarding meeting minutes
- District plans and financial reports
- Rain Data Information for Kittson County
- Much more

The website is regularly updated with new information and photos added monthly. Check it out!

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