

NORTHLAND CONSERVATION NEWS

SPRING 2016 NEWSLETTER

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NRCS STAFF: JAMES SCHWAB - DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST

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

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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

Envirothon Set For April 27th at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge

It's that time of the year again for area high school students. Envirothon will be held on April 27th, 2016 at Agassiz National Wildlife Refuge near Holt, MN. The 2016 Current Event topic is Invasive Species: A Challenge to the Environment, Economy, and Society.

In the 2015 competition, Kittson Central took First place at Lake Bronson State Park on Wednesday April 22nd, 2015. Grygla High School took second place at the local event and Greenbush High School took third place.

Twenty teams from Tri-County, Goodridge, Badger, Greenbush, Grygla, Marshall County Central, and Kittson Central schools participated in the event. Envirothon is an outdoor learning event for high school student's grades 9-12 and it 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. Students are given a 20 point exam relating to the station's topics. At the sixth station, the students give a brief oral presentation to a panel of judges.



The top three teams from the area, Kittson Central, Grygla, and Greenbush advanced to the state event which took place on May 18th, 2015 at Cloquet Forestry Center in Cloquet Minnesota.

Sarah Gossman Joins Kittson SWCD

I started with the SWCD in October of 2015 and have been enjoying my time here so far. Some of my duties include administering the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program, AgBMP loan program, rain fall monitoring program, DNR observation well, and beaver bounty program.

I grew up near Chatfield in south-eastern Minnesota. In 2011 I graduated from the College of St. Benedict with a degree in Environmental Studies. I interned with the Fillmore SWCD in the summer of 2011. I spent 2012 through 2014 in northern California volunteering with AmeriCorps doing work in the field of hydrology. I am glad to be back in Minnesota and look forward to getting to know Kittson County.



AgBMP Loan Program

The Agriculture Best Management Practice Loan Program (AgBMP 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 \$200,000 with an interest rate of 3%. Money is available for purchase of Ag waste management equipment, conservation tillage equipment, septic system upgrades, prescribed grazing, 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 a loan application. Applications will need to provide information about the proposed project to be funded and the desired loan amount. For more information stop by our office in the Kittson County Courthouse or call (218) 843-2619 Ext. 3

Kittson County SWCD Rainfall Data

The Kittson SWCD works with the Minnesota State Climatology Network and a group of local volunteers to gather rainfall data around Kittson County. There are currently 22 volunteers who monitor rainfall throughout Kittson County. We would get an even more complete picture if we had at least one monitor in each township. Right now, we do not have volunteers to monitor rainfall in Clow, McKinley, Cannon, Peatland, Hazelton, South Red River, Deerwood, or Arveson. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer monitor in one of those townships, please let us know. Below is the rainfall data for Kittson County from April to October 2015.

Township & Section	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	October
Davis 3- J. Dziengel	0.73	5.70	2.93	3.88	6.88	2.08	1.51
Spring Brook 25- J.Dagen	NR	5.88	3.41	5.92	4.63	NR	NR
Norway 21- D. Olson	1.00	5.24	2.58	6.45	3.88	3.24	1.23
Teien 12- C. Mortenson	0.66	5.09	2.22	5.08	3.07	2.10	NR
Teien 28- T. Dahl	0.64	4.53	2.79	5.21	2.13	2.56	0.89
Jupiter 18- R. Peterson	NR	4.77	2.90	5.10	5.75	2.82	1.80
Skane 5- M. Such	0.80	5.12	2.31	4.19	2.66	4.10	1.02
Svea 23- K.Kraulik	0.89	5.17	3.13	6.16	4.62	2.21	1.43
Percy 14- A. Johnson	NR	4.68	2.74	4.91	5.62	4.18	NR
Thompson 12- Markit	0.78	3.99	3.26	4.85	4.08	3.32	1.42
Hallock 13- TRW	0.70	4.66	4.66	3.38	2.56	3.44	0.82
North Red River 9- B. Lindegard	0.92	5.20	3.80	3.46	2.25	4.77	1.66
Caribou 30- B. Weleski	0.53	4.28	3.72	5.48	4.66	3.25	1.54
Granville 13- B. Laude	0.88	3.59	3.71	5.41	4.67	3.31	1.60
Hampden 13- CW. Nyegaard	1.37	3.62	2.93	4.27	3.02	3.01	1.48
Poppleton 9- M.L.	NR	NR	4.43	NR	NR	NR	NR
Hill 5- B. Dykhuis	1.13	5.28	4.18	3.51	2.28	4.79	1.63
St. Joseph 4- J. Wilebski	0.57	3.24	3.61	5.63	5.05	2.69	1.41
Richardville 10- J.Peterson	1.00	3.51	3.59	6.65	3.51	2.87	1.67
St. Vincent 24- N.Wiese	0.90	4.52	3.27	3.11	2.63	5.40	1.72
St Vincent 2- A. Hughes	0.80	4.65	4.09	4.40	2.86	3.26	1.61
Avg Rainfall Monitors	0.84	4.64	3.27	4.85	3.84	3.34	1.44

Minnesota Water Quality Certification Program

The Kittson SWCD is now accepting applications for the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). The MAWQCP is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Farmers and landowners who implement and maintain approved farm management practices are certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of 10 years.

The MAWQCP certifies farmers and landowners for managing their land in a way that protects water quality through a whole-farm assessment that evaluates:

- Physical field characteristics,
- Nutrient management factors,
- Tillage management factors,
- Pest management factors,
- Irrigation and tile drainage management, and
- Conservation practices.

Producers interested in becoming certified also receive priority

status for technical and financial assistance.

The MAWQCP puts producers together with local professionals and the new on-line field assessment tool to determine where risks to water quality exist on their farm and empowers them to fix those risks when they are found.

If you are interested in learning more about MAWQCP, the assessment process, or becoming certified, contact the Kittson SWCD at 218-843-2619 Ext. 3.

2015 Buffer Law Update

As most of you know, in June 2015 Governor Dayton signed in to law a new Buffer Initiative designed to protect Minnesota's water. This law brings state agencies (BWSR & DNR), local government units (SWCD's, Watershed Districts, and Counties), and private landowners together to protect Minnesota waters.

What is a Buffer?

"An area consisting of perennial vegetation, excluding invasive plants and noxious weeds, adjacent to all bodies of water within the state and that protects the water resources of the state from pollution; stabilizes soil, shores, and banks; and protects or provides riparian corridors" Sec. 79. [103f.48] Riparian Protection and Water Quality Practices.

Who Is Responsible for what?

Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is responsible for overseeing the process at the state level. They will also be the enforcement agent if the county and watershed decline to do so. BWSR is also working on a list of approved alternative practices to a vegetated buffer.

Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for producing maps of public waters and public ditch systems that require permanent vegetated buffers. The official map is set to be ready for viewing by July 2016. Before the official map is out, there will be preliminary maps that the local governments will review and comment on.

Counties and Watershed Districts they are responsible to provide the DNR a record of the public ditch systems that they have jurisdiction over. They also have the option to adopt an administrative penalty. Along with the SWCD they will review the maps produced by the DNR.

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is responsible to provide technical assistance to landowners and answer questions about financial options. The SWCD can also be asked by a landowner to validate their buffer strip.

Landowners are responsible to install buffers on water resources that are identified on the buffer protection map produced by the DNR.

What are the Requirements?

The requirements laid out in the Buffer Law are; a 50 foot average width buffer on public waters, these buffers must be in place by November 1, 2017. A 16.5 foot minimum width buffer on public drainage systems, these buffers must be in place by November 1, 2018.

The Kittson SWCD is here to help landowners with any questions that they have regarding the Buffer Law. Please stop in or call the office.

Coming This Spring A Truax FLEXII Series Grass Drill



The Kittson SWCD will be adding another drill to our drill rental program. With the purchase of a Truax No-Till Drill we will have a drill for both a clean till seed bed and a no till seed bed. The specification on the Truax, it has a seeding width of 10.7 ft. and an overall width 13 ft. and requires a 60 hp tractor with a hydraulic system. If you are interested in renting or have any questions on the Brillion or the Truax please stop in or call the office to get your name on the rental list.

Abandoned Well?



Abandoned well in Kittson County before sealing

Do you have an abandoned well on your property? Abandoned wells are a direct source to ground water which means they can lead to pollutants easily contaminating the aquifer and affecting the drinking water for you and other. Some wells are large enough that they pose a safety hazard for children, pets, and wildlife. The Kittson SWCD has funds to assist land owners in getting these wells sealed correctly. If you have any questions please stop by our office or give us a call.

Manure Application For Farmers Big & Small

Cattle and other feedlot animals produce manure and this animal waste must be properly managed. Some farmers choose the manure on their own fields, while others get paid to spread it on another landowners' field. Where feasible, storing the manure to spread in fields at a later time is another option. However you choose to manage you manure situation, here are some guidelines to help you along the way.

Manure Testing: All storage areas holding manure from more than 100 animal units (Au) must be tested for nitrogen and phosphorus at least once every four years, or more frequently if management changes could lead to varying nutrient content. Individual stockpiles and manure packs generated by fewer than 100 Au are not required to be tested.

Soil Testing: Soil testing is not generally required for feedlots with less than 300 Au. If you have over 300 Au, testing for soil phosphorus levels every four years is required.

Manure Management Plans: Manure management plans are not required for feedlots with less than 300 Au unless you are required to obtain a feedlot operation or construction permit. If you are over 300 Au then you are required to complete a manure management plan. There may be programs available through the NRCS to provide technical assistance and financial assistance during management planning.

Record Keeping: Manure application record keeping is required for all feedlots that have more than 100 Au. More detailed records are required for feedlots with more than 300 Au's or for feedlots with more than 100 Au's when applying manure in drinking-water supply management areas where the aquifer is designated vulnerable. Record keeping is also required for feedlots with more than 300 Au's that transfer their manure for application to fields not owned or leased by the owner of the feedlot where the manure is produced.

Special Protection Areas: Additional protective measures are required for application of manure in special protection areas, including land within 300 feet of lakes, streams, intermittent streams (excluding grassed waterways), public waters wetlands (e.g. over 10 acres) and drainage ditches without protective berms. Winter application is prohibited in these areas. If a vegetated buffer is present in these specialty areas, there are no other land application restrictions. A permanent vegetated buffer is a buffer of vegetation that extends 100 feet from lakes and streams and 50 feet from all other waters. If there is no vegetative buffer, you are required to maintain at least a 25 foot setback and inject or incorporate the manure within 24 hours. It is also a requirement to apply the manure in a way that does not result in the accumulation of phosphorus in areas that already have sufficient crop growth. Manure must also be injected or incorporated within 24 hours if you are within 300 feet of an open tile intake. This also applies if the area is within 300 feet of the upslope side of a sinkhole.

Beaver Bounty Program

In 2016 the Kittson SWCD Beaver Bounty Program increased the bounty from \$20 to \$30 per beaver trapped in Kittson County outside of County Ditches and Two Rivers Watershed District Ditches. To receive the bounty, trappers need bring in the beaver tails and their DNR permit to the Kittson SWCD office. Trappers will also need to give the township and section of where the beavers were trapped. The beaver bounty program helps reduce damage caused by beavers throughout Kittson County.

Trees Available For Spring 2016

Spring is near and it is time to get your trees ordered!! 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 2 - 3 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 (1 and 2 gallons) that are sold individually.

If you are interested at looking at a tree order form, placing an order or planting trees this spring, please give Justin Muller a call at 218-843-2619 Ext. 3. Tree order forms are available on the front page of our website at www.kittsonswcd.org, 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.

Thoughts From The Pasture

Mark Hayek

MN NRCS NW Regional Grazing Specialist

Do you own livestock? If so, chances are you have livestock for enjoyment as well as for profit. The amount of profit that one can make in the livestock business will ebb and flow as with other commodities, however to improve in the livestock business one must enjoy caring for the critters. The focus here is to turn those things that make owning livestock less enjoyable into an enjoyable endeavor or all over again.

For example, has calving turned into an event that you dread? Many folks have pushed calving season back into May and June and have found this to be a positive and enjoyable switch they have made because of the shear climate of these two months. Yes, this is easier said than done, but how much is enjoying what you do for a living worth?

Another example: do you dread having to work your animals, does this turn into a shouting match with your family members? Consider attending low stress handling methods seminars and or workshops, or reading books on this subject. Adopt these techniques so you can once again enjoy the aspects of working livestock. Folks that have adopted low stress handling techniques will never go back to the old methods of livestock handling.

Are you sick of running out of grass in July or August? Does this cause undo stress and heartache on an annual basis? Have you considered conducting a forage chain throughout the growing season

(and beyond), address your grazing management, considered your current stocking rates against available forage resources, or investigated annual forage options? There are methods to extend the grazing season so running out of forage early in the growing season can become a thing of the past.

Take an honest look at the most egregious and non-enjoyable aspects of your livestock operation and initiate steps to make them strengths and enjoyable once again could mean the result of living a positive and happy life. Decisions like these are not easy to make, can take time to plan, and may take a few years to become efficient with change. I go back to my first paragraph again: are you really enjoying all aspects of your livestock operation?

AD-1026 Recommended For Drainage Activities & Breaking Land

Agricultural producers are reminded to consult with FSA and NRCS before completing new drainage activity or breaking out new ground for production purposes as doing so without a conservation compliance highly erodible land (HELC), wetland (WC) determination may jeopardize federal farm program benefits including your crop insurance premium subsidy.

Producers should notify FSA as a first point of contact prior to breaking land, conducting land clearing, or drainage projects to ensure the proposed actions meet conservation compliance criteria. Landowners and operators will be recommended to complete form AD-1026 - Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to identify proposed actions would be referred to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for HELC and WC determination. Producers need to plan ahead and make sure they are giving NRCS adequate time to issue the HELC/WC determination.

Upon completion of the HELC/WC determination NRCS will issue a CPA-026 determination which includes a map with determinations clearly identified and notification letter of the determination along with applicable appeal rights. It is of the utmost importance that landowners and operators carefully review the NRCS issued determination. NRCS must be contacted within 30 days of the receipt of the preliminary technical determination if an appeal is to be filed to contest the determination.

Wetland and Highly Erodible land activities are many times approved as planned. However, if a producer takes action in an HELC or WC area prior to receiving a CPA-026 determination they run the risk of jeopardizing USDA benefits eligibility including crop insurance. Don't take a chance with your USDA program eligibility. File an AD-1026 with FSA prior to taking action on new drainage activities or bringing land into production which does not have a determination.

Aerial Imagery Review

All Farm Service Agency offices across Minnesota are currently conducting a review of the 2015 aerial imagery to identify required farm record corrections on cropland and non-cropland acreages. The imagery review is completed to maintain accurate farm records and for various compliance purposes such as CRP encroachment, wetland violations, sodbuster violations, and breaking of native sod. Cropland acreages identified with volunteer woody vegetation which no longer is under an agricultural use will be removed from cropland. When changes are identified during the review FSA will notify affected landowners/operators of the changes with applicable review rights.

Two Rivers Watershed District News

In Roseau, Kittson & Marshall Counties

Spring 2016

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Water Quality Investigations Nearing Completion

Over the past five years, the Two Rivers Watershed District has been working with the MN Pollution Control Agency as well as other state and local agencies to complete two separate water quality studies. These studies, otherwise known as "Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies" (WRAPS), have been undertaken for 1) the area drained by the Two Rivers, and 2) an area known as the "Lower Red" watershed, consisting of a) the Joe River, b) the Tamarac River, and c) the 'Kennedy Coulee' and Judicial Ditch #10.

These studies are a requirement of the Federal Clean Water Act, and are designed to first perform monitoring to collect water quality information, second use the data to help determine if any of the waters are impaired, and third to develop strategies to improve water quality if need be and to protect waters that are not impaired.

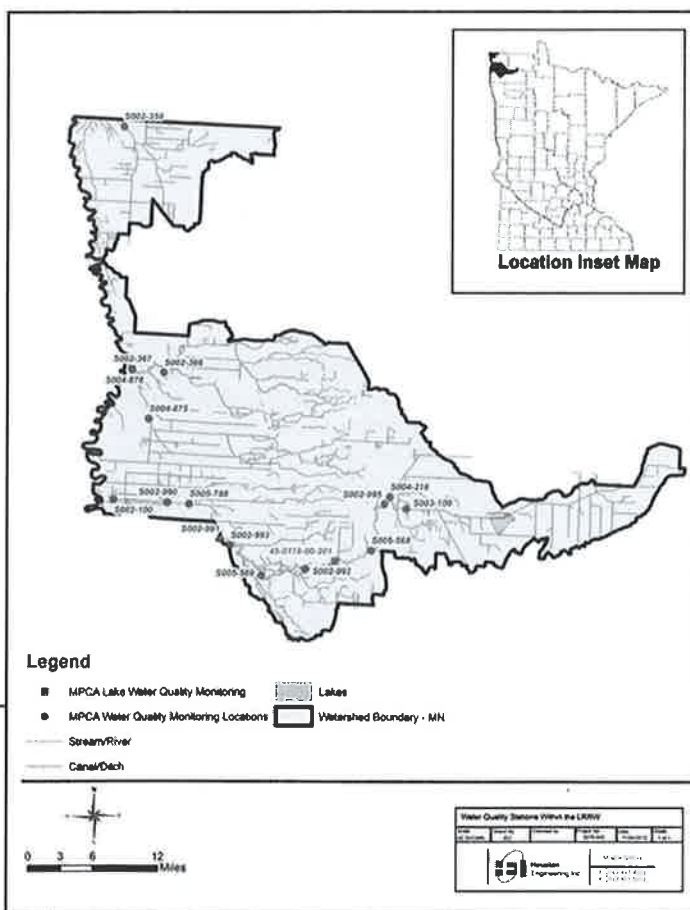
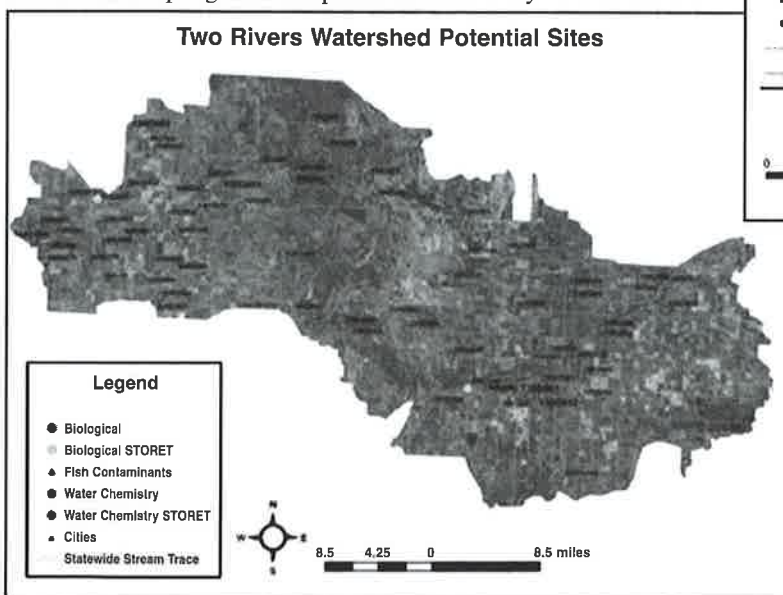
Detailed analysis of potential impairments, including excessive sediment, nutrients like phosphorous and nitrogen, and areas of severe erosion is done by utilizing on the ground monitoring, desktop computer modelling, and best professional judgement of water resource professionals.

The ultimate goal of these studies is to protect water resources. This includes rivers, streams, creeks, and coulees, as well as other resources like drinking water. The State of Minnesota has categorized these various water resources into water for consumption, swimmable waters, fishable waters, and various other parameters. Each category has water quality thresholds that need to be met. If these thresholds are not met, then the water is considered impaired and the WRAPS will address how to best address the impairment.

The Lower Red River WRAPS process was started back in 2012, and is scheduled to be completed by July, 2016. The map shown depicts the area being studied and sampling locations. The MPCA, Watershed Districts, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Kittson and Marshall Counties have been involved with water chemistry sampling, fish surveys, and invertebrate sampling. All of this sampling that was performed was analyzed and several

reports were written to help determine the health of the stream systems.

Houston Engineering was hired to help with the technical review and report writing. They will complete their reports and provide suggestions to address the water quality strategies. A public information meeting will be scheduled sometime in the month of June 2016. The process that was followed will be summarized, the findings of the studies will be presented, and proposed strategies to address the water quality will be discussed. The public is invited and



encouraged to attend and provide input.

The Two Rivers WRAPS was started in 2013, and is scheduled to be completed sometime in 2017. To date water quality monitoring and data review has been completed. The MPCA has done fish sampling and population assessments, and they have also looked at the invertebrate insects living in the various watercourses. Water quality samples have been taken as well, and analyzed for various nutrients, sediment, and bacteria. The MN DNR has made many site visits, and is characterizing the channel stability and stream health of various river reaches to help assess the river system. The map shown indicates sites where most of the monitoring has been done.

Water Quality Investigations Nearing Completion

(Continued from preceding page)

The next steps for this project will be to produce a 'stressor identification' report, and computer modelling is being done to help prioritize areas that are contributing to stream impairments, target areas that can be treated with best management practices to reduce pollutants and excessive nutrients from entering the streams and rivers,

and measure both how much they are contributing and how much pollution reduction can be achieved.

Once these WRAPS are completed, all or parts of them will be incorporated into the Two Rivers Watershed District Overall Plan. The initiatives will be used to help procure funding from the state clean water fund and the federal clean water act. These funds will be utilized to construct various projects and install structures mainly to improve water quality but will also provide benefits to local citizens for flood control, drainage, recreation, and fish and wildlife.

TRWD Ditch Survey, Inspection, & Maintenance Plans Underway For 2016

The Two Rivers Watershed District was established in October, 1958 for the purposes of flood control, drainage, water quality, and conservation and wise use of our water natural resources. Since its establishment, the District has assumed maintenance and caretaking duties for over 92 miles of public ditch systems. The District has constructed 10 major projects ranging from flood control water impoundments to drainage improvements to stream restorations. Project numbers 11 and 12 are in the planning and development stages. These projects have provided public benefits by reducing flood damages, providing water quality benefits, providing habitat for wildlife, and providing recreational opportunities for hunting, bird watching, hiking, and other activities.

As a part of its operation and maintenance activities for these various projects and ditch systems, the District uses survey grade global positioning systems to inspect the grades, cross sections, and other project features. These surveys are compared to the original construction plans of each project to determine if any changes have occurred. For instance, over time, ditch systems become filled in with sediment from wind or water erosion. In some cases side slopes will slough or other types of erosion can occur. Culverts and bridges can become damaged over time. These surveys provide a means to check the condition of the project and determine if any maintenance needs to be done. Each ditch system under the District's jurisdiction is surveyed at least once every 5 years.

In addition to surveys, ditches and projects are visually inspected for any evidence of blockages, excessive vegetation, rodents, or any other potential problems. The District also relies on reports from landowners to keep informed about problems that may exist. Once the surveys have been completed, a detailed analysis is done on what types of maintenance, if any, is needed. A maintenance schedule is set up for each project that includes vegetation spraying, beaver and beaver dam removal, repairs of culverts and other structures, or removing sediment using backhoes or other mechanical devices. Each ditch has a ditch fund, paid for by the landowners who are benefitted by the ditch system.

Ditch systems that will be surveyed in 2016 will be Roseau County Ditch #4, Soler #4, and Kittson County Ditch #10. All other ditches will be visually inspected. If any blockages are found or excessive sediment exists, a backhoe will be hired to do a cleanout of the sediment to restore the ditch to its original grade and cross section. Spraying for cattails and woody vegetation will also be done on an as needed basis. These maintenance activities are required and are performed according to Minnesota Statutes either 103D or 103E.

In 2015 the District increased its beaver bounty to \$75 per beaver. This bounty is for the removal of beavers on ditch systems and projects under the jurisdiction of the District. There must be a known beaver problem, and prior authorization by the District is preferred. One bounty will be paid per beaver tail that is turned in.

Another common maintenance activity that is done regularly is mowing. This is a good way to control noxious weeds on dikes and on right of way. It also is beneficial in keeping woody vegetation from establishing in these areas.

Any questions on any of the District's maintenance activities can be directed to the District office in the Kittson County Courthouse or by phone at 218-843-3333.



TRWD Launches New Website

Please visit WWW.TwoRiversWD.com for all of the latest news regarding the District! The new site has information on all of our projects, programs, contact info as well as permit applications. Information can be found on water quality and flooding issues as well. All of our board meeting minutes, annual reports, and newsletters can be perused!

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

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

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) Compliance & Conservation Plans

Anyone wishing to participate in any USDA programs must meet Conservation Compliance provisions. Agricultural 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 a HEL conservation plan written and approved by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Soil and Water District. Any producer who purchases new land, will be operating new land or operating land that will be expiring from CRP 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.

ARC/PLC 2016 Sign-Up Underway

Sign-up for the 2016 Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs began on December 7 and continues through August 1, 2016. FSA encourages farm program participants to complete the enrollment prior to spring planting.

Although the election between ARC and PLC is completed and remains in effect through 2018, producers must still enroll their farm(s) by signing a contract each year to earn any potential payments. Just a reminder that any earned 2016 payments for ARC/PLC would be issued in October or December 2017.

Producers who have made changes to their operation, such as purchased or sold land and/or made changes in rented land need to notify the FSA County Office of these changes prior to enrolling in ARC/PLC. If you are renting new land for 2016 the FSA County Office will need a copy of the lease in order to be added as an operator on the farm.

The 2016 ARC/PLC enrollment is being conducted by appointment. Producers can contact the FSA County Office to schedule an appointment. Producers with questions on the ARC/PLC Programs should contact the Kittson FSA County Office at (218) 843-2692 Extension 2 or go to www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc

Native Sod Provisions In 2014 Farm Bill

Minnesota was one of six states that under the 2014 farm bill are now required to identify and maintain a record of native sod brought into production. Native Sod is defined as "Land which the plant cover is composed principally of native grasses, grass-like plants for grazing and browsing that has never been tilled, or shrubs for grazing and browsing that has never been tilled, and the producer cannot substantiate that the ground has ever been tilled, for production of an annual crop prior to February 7, 2014". Breaking native sod to plant a crop will impact Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) and crop insurance coverage, premiums, and T-Yields during the first four years of planting. FSA will now track previously unbroken ground that is brought into production. Native sod broken will be identified in farm records and tracked through acreage reporting. Producers are asked to indicate to FSA when they have broken new land either through filing of form AD-1026 or the annual acreage report. Producers will be asked to provide their best estimate of field size and to draw out those areas on a map. Anyone with questions on breaking of native sod is encouraged to file an AD-1026 with FSA prior to taking action.

Gary Johnson Appointed To TRWD Board

Gary Johnson of rural Hallock, MN was recently appointed by the Kittson County Commission to serve a 3 year term on the Board of Managers of the Two Rivers Watershed District, beginning November 1, 2015. He has been a lifelong resident of the area. He and his family operate their farm located south of Hallock near the South Branch Two Rivers. Gary replaces Jon Vold, who had served on the Board for the previous 9 years. The Two Rivers Watershed District thanks former Manager Vold for his years of dedicated service in water management, and extends a warm welcome to new Manager Johnson!

**Kittson County
SWCD**

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