



CONSERVATION TODAY

Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

January 2015

Sibley County Announces Franke Family as the 2014 Outstanding Conservationist

Sibley County Soil and Water Conservation District announces the 2014 Conservationists of the Year, Randy and Leslie Franke. For the past 35 years the Franke family has farmed corn and soybean crops along with peas and sweetcorn vegetable crops. Their focus on conservation has built this family into excellent stewards of the land. Randy and Leslie started their conservation efforts with tree plantings to protect their farm soil resources from the effects of wind. Their conservation efforts expanded into grass filter strips along county ditches. Today they manage their crops to assure minimal soil loss. They practice mulch tillage on their

cropland, maintaining crop residue throughout the year. Incorporating cover crops after their vegetable harvest is a common practice for the Franks. They see the benefit of increasing the amount of time the soil is covered and the impact it has had on improving the overall health of their working soil. The Franks were recognized for their stewardship efforts at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The meeting was held in Bloomington this past December. Congratulations to Randy and Leslie Franke. Thank you for your conservation stewardship efforts.



Leslie & Randy Franke

Staff

USDA-NRCS

- April Sullivan, District Conservationist
- Chris Schmidt, Soil Conservationist
- Leanne Langeberg, Soil Conservation Technician
- Joel Wurscher, Soil Conservation Technician

SWCD

- Loren Evenson, District Manager
- Ron Otto, Water Planner

SWCD Board Members

- Paul Wiemann
- Robert Nielsen
- Wayne Grams
- Kathleen Theis
- Gary Schafer

Board Meetings

2nd Tuesday of each month
4:00 pm
USDA Service Center

Office Hours

Monday—Friday
8:00am—4:30 pm

Tree Ordering Day

February 18, 2015

9:00 am—3:30pm

Sibley County
USDA Service Center
111 6th Street
Gaylord, MN



United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Financial Assistance Programs:

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

Continuous Sign-up

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

Continuous Sign-up

Now Accepting Applications for FY 2016 Funds

WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)

Continuous Sign-up

CRP (Conservation Reserve Program)

Continuous CRP Signup

For more information contact the NRCS Office at (507) 237-5435 x3

Natural Resources Conservation Service
111 6th Street, PO Box 161, Gaylord, MN 55334
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer





Conservation for Honey?

Honey bees, what would we do without them?

It is estimated \$15 billion worth of crops are pollinated by honey bees, annually. Managed honey bee numbers have been declining over the past 50 years. Since 2006, it is estimated 30 percent of honey bee hives in the United States are lost each winter to diseases, parasites, poor nutrition, pesticide exposure, and other issues.

So how can Sibley County Residents play a role in improving the honey bee health and habitat?

From June to September, the Midwest is home to more than 65 percent of the commercially managed honey bees in the country. It is a critical time when bees require abundant and diverse forage across broad landscapes to build up hive strength for the winter.

Providing nutritious, diverse forage to honey bees can have a positive impact on the overall hive health. Healthy habitat may also reduce the mortality rates



of honey bees during the winter months. With the honey bee's contribution to our country's food diversity, security and profitability, NRCS wants to help landowners conserve healthy habitat by providing information and planning assistance.

The passing of the 2014 Farm Bill placed pollinator conservation as a high priority. NRCS is equipped with resources, both technical and financial, to support Sibley County landowner's and producer's searching for options.

One example, crop producer's can incorporate nectar producing cover crops into their regular crop rotations. Not only will erosion be reduced, the cover crops will limit canopy exposure for undesirable invasive species, and provide quality forage and habitat for honey bees and other pollinators.

If you have an interest in implementing conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees, contact the NRCS office in Gaylord, at (507) 237-5435 x3.

SWCD Manager Announces Retirement



Fresh out of high school, Loren Evenson began a journey serving his community through the art and science of Soil and Water Conservation.

Little did he know the rewarding career that lie ahead.

Loren Evenson began his career in 1967 as a District Aid. "In my first years with the District we did a lot of tile staking and surveying, free of charge, for landowners. It's hard to imagine that type of work today" Said Evenson. "I

learned early the skill of planning and designing ditches, gully structures, manure pits, and terraces."

"I remember in 1973 when the District Board made the decision to offer a tree program. Did it ever start out strong. That year 48 windbreaks and several small orders filled our time. It is great to see the tree program so successful to this day"

In the early 1980's Loren accepted the role he will soon retire from, District Manager. "I have made the decision to retire in 2015. After 47 years of putting conservation on the ground, it is time to step aside and allow a new generation to take the reigns. I am looking forward to spending more time with my wife Peggy on the farm and at the lake."

Evenson has seen many changes to

farming practices as conservation has evolved during his career. In addition to the successful tree program, he is appreciative of the effort Sibley County has put toward rehabilitating wetlands through the RIM-WRP and CREP programs. Since 1986, Evenson has signed-up over 100 easements.

"I would like to thank everyone I've worked with throughout the years, especially the people in Sibley County who have put up with me all these years."

When asked who helped his career the most Evenson replied, " My wife. Thank you Peggy for making my dinners for all these years!"

Congratulations Loren. Thank you for your many years of dedicated service to Soil and Water conservation.



Volunteers Collect Valuable Climatology Data

How much rain did we get? This is a popular question during Sibley County's growing season. For over 35 years Sibley County volunteers have been answering this simple question, and turning their information into useful data.



The Sibley County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) collects monthly precipitation totals from local volunteer rain gauge readers. The SWCD enters this information into a statewide database, managed by the State Climatology Office. The state publishes a monthly precipitation record for the entire State of

Minnesota. This information is available at: www.climate.umn.edu.

The data collected by our volunteers is useful to government agencies and private organizations that use the data to predict flooding, delineate wetlands, and plan for environmental construction projects. Insurance companies also utilize the information for litigation purposes and to set insurance rates.

Before volunteers were helping to monitor rainfall data, the National Weather Service was in charge of historical precipitation data collection. Their method was to record data at one station in each Minnesota county. When the State Climatology Office took over, they recognized that monitoring multiple stations throughout each county would provide more accurate data, and provide a better under-

standing about the variation in rainfall amounts.

Sibley County's volunteer precipitation program dates back to November 1978, with two volunteers. Today seven volunteers report precipitation data throughout the year. This number grows to 29 volunteers between April through October. State-wide there are over 1400 volunteers who read and report their rainfall data annually.

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation district is accepting additional volunteers for this program, especially in Bismarck, Faxon, Green Isle and Washington Lake Townships. It takes a few minutes each day to record the data. A rain gauge and postage paid envelopes are provided for monthly reporting. If you have an interest in volunteering, call the office at (507) 237-5435 and ask for Ron.

USDA NRCS Gaylord Field Office Welcomes New Staff

The Natural Resources Conservation Service recently combined services of the Nicollet County and Sibley County field offices. The field office for both counties is now co-located in Gaylord, MN, under the direction of April Sullivan, District Conservationist. Please join us in welcoming our newest NRCS representatives:



Chris Schmidt:
Soil Conservationist

Chris Schmidt joined the Gaylord Field Office in August, 2014. Chris accepted a promotion opportunity as a Soil Conservationist, training for future opportunities as a District Conservationist. Chris is a graduate of University of Wisconsin, River Falls, with a degree in

Conservation. Upon graduation, Chris worked for the MN DNR and BWSR as a CREP technician promoting CREP in Le Sueur County. He then worked in Waseca and Steele counties as a Farm Bill Technician, helping many landowners develop plans for a variety of conservation programs. Chris joined NRCS in 2005, working in the Le Center Field Office as a Soil Conservation Technician, where he surveyed and designed conservation practices.

Chris is looking forward to working with landowners and producers in their efforts to improve their conservation efforts.



Joel Wurscher:
Soil Conservation Technician

Joel Wurscher joined the Gaylord field office in September, 2014, continuing duties as a Soil Conservation Technician for NRCS. In this position, Joel works with landowners, farmers and individuals to put conserva-

tion practices on the ground.

Joel graduated from Minnesota State University, Mankato, with a degree in Ecology. He brings a wide range of soil and water conservation experience to the office.

If his face is familiar, no surprise. Prior to joining NRCS, Joel was the watershed coordinator for the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds. Joel looks forward to working with all of the landowners and operators within Nicollet and Sibley Counties.



Protecting Water and Wildlife Habitat through the Wetland Reserve Easement Program

Can agriculture and wetlands co-exist? You bet they can, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is ready to help you discover how.

The landscape of Sibley County falls along the eastern edge of the prairie pothole region. Prairie potholes are unique natural resources, with endless benefits to our soil, water and wildlife resources. Sibley County landowners have a great opportunity to restore foregone wetland basins through the assistance made available under the 2014 Farm Bill Conservation Programs.

NRCS is proud to offer both technical and financial assistance, through the Wetland Reserve Easement program, to landowners with eligible land. Through the program landowners can effectively restore wetland basins and set aside the land through a conservation easements.

So does your land meet the requirements? When selecting eligible land for wetland easements, NRCS is looking for land that will offer the great-

est potential for protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds, and countless other wildlife. If you own cropland, grassland, pastureland or non-industrial private forest, you may qualify to enroll. Wetland reserve easements are ideal for farmed or converted wetlands that can be successfully and cost-effectively restored.

“Provide habitat for fish and wildlife, threatened and endangered species, & improve water quality...”

How to Apply

The process begins with an application. To discuss your land options or to enroll your land through the wetland reserve easements program, stop by the NRCS office in Gaylord or contact us at (507) 237-5434 x3.



Sibley SWCD 2015 Tree Order Form

Quantity	Variety	Size	Price	TOTAL
	Shrubs & Small Trees			
	Caragana	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Dogwood, Redosier	2-3'	\$1.50	
	Honeysuckle, Freedom	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Lilac, Villosa	2-3'	\$1.50	
	Lilac, Chinese	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Amur	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Plum, American	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Crabapple, R. Splendor	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Nannyberry Viburnum	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Hardwood Trees			
	Elm, Princeton	12-18"	\$4.00	
	Hackberry	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Honeylocust, Thornless	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Linden, American	6-12"	\$2.00	
	Linden, Little Leaf	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Silver	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Sugar	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Red	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Oak, Red	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Oak, White	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Oak, Swamp White	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Cottonwood, Male	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Poplar, Norway	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Butternut	18-24"	\$2.00	
	Bare Root Evergreens			
	Pine, White	7-15"	\$2.00	
	Spruce, Black Hills	8-12"	\$2.00	
	Arborvitae, American	12-18"	\$2.00	
	Potted Evergreens			
	Spruce, Black Hills	15-18"	\$6.50	
	Arborvitae, Nigra	15-18"	\$6.50	
*Additional varieties may be available, but must be ordered in bundles of 25				

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 e-mail _____

SUB TOTAL _____
 SALES TAX (6.875%) _____
 TOTAL _____
 LESS 25% DOWNPAYMENT _____
 BALANCE DUE _____

Make Checks Payable to
 Sibley SWCD

**SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
 PO BOX 161
 GAYLORD MN 55334
 507-237-5435

FOR OFFICE USE
 \$ _____
 Cash/Check
 Check# _____
 Initials _____

Sibley County SWCD 2015 Tree Program

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will offer their 2015 Tree Program sale on Wednesday, February 18, 2015. The SWCD will offer trees and shrubs for shelterbelts, field windbreaks, wildlife habitat and reforestation. Selected plant varieties are suited to the climate conditions and soils of Sibley County. Technical information regarding planting design and species selection are available at the District office.

Trees offered through the program are available at affordable prices (see price list). Mechanical tree planters are available (free of charge) for larger plantings, contact Loren (507) 237-5435 ext. 4 for more information. Orders will be accepted while supplies last. Please read the **terms and conditions** before placing your order.

Sibley SWCD Terms and Conditions

- Sibley SWCD will not be responsible for the survival or condition of the stock once they are received. There will be no refunds.
- Full Payment must be made on orders of \$40.00 or less when order is placed. A down payment of 25% must be made on orders greater than \$40.00, with remaining balance payable when stock is received.
- Customers will be notified by phone or mail when and where the stock is to be picked up.
- Orders must be picked up on weekdays between 8:00 am—4:00 pm.
- The District reserves the right to substitute varieties or sizes.

Tree Ordering Day

**Wednesday February
18th, 2015
9:00 am—3:30 pm**

**Sibley USDA Service Center
111 6th Street
Gaylord, MN 55334**





High Island Watershed BMP's

Cost share opportunities are available to install water quality improvements on your property in the High Island Watershed. Financial assistance available through the High Island Creek Fecal Coliform TMDL. Best Management Practices (BMPs) included in the program include:

- Manure Management Plans
- Feedlot Runoff Controls

- Clean Water Diversions
- Catch Basins
- Waste Storage Facilities
- Field Borders
- Vegetative Treatment area
- Pasture Management
- Vegetative Waterways
- Grass Waterways
- Filter Strips
- Open Intake Alternatives

To learn more about these Best

High Island Watershed



Management Practice options please visit:

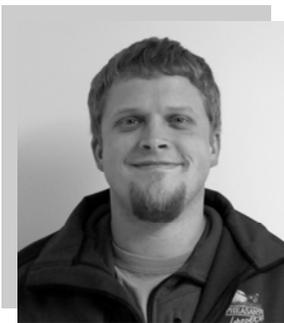
- ⇒ **Aaron Finke**
Environmental Services
Sibley County Courthouse
- ⇒ **Ron Otto**
SWCD office
111 6th St. Gaylord, MN

Sibley County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Loan Program



Looking to manage your subsurface sewage? The Sibley County Ag BMP loan program may be an option for you if there are no other programs that fit your situation. Sibley County administers the loan program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Additional requirements include a completed application, an approved septic plan, septic system permit. Taxes on the property cannot be delinquent. A loan can be up to 10 years in length with a 3% interest rate on any unpaid balance. Stop by the SWCD Office or call Ron Otto for any questions or to pick up an application.

Sibley County Welcomes Watershed Coordinator



Aaron Finke

Aaron Finke recently started his new duties as the new Watershed Coordinator for the High Island Creek & Rush River

watersheds in December. He is located at the Sibley County Court House (507) 237-4050.

Finke is a Minnesota State Universi-

ty graduate with a B.S. in Recreation, Parks, & Leisure Services with an emphasis in Resource Management. Aaron brings with conservation experience from his role with Pheasants Forever as a Farm Bill biologist in Brown and Watonwan Counties. He also served a Program Manager for the Duluth Stream Corps, a grant funded stream restoration project.

Aaron is involved with several conservation groups and is an avid outdoorsman. He enjoys

“I am thrilled to continue my passion working with landowners and promoting water and soil quality” said Finke

everything outdoors, especially hunting, fishing, hiking, canoeing and wildlife viewing. He and his wife, Jamie, welcomed their first child at the end of December. Welcome Aaron, to the High Island and Rush River Watersheds.

Sibley SWCD and NRCS
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Gaylord, MN 55334

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Up Coming Dates:

January 19th, 2015 – Martin Luther King Jr Holiday
February 10th, 2015- SWCD Board Meeting
February 16th, 2015- President's Day Holiday
February 18th, 2015- Tree Ordering Day



SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

**RIM Wetland Restoration
Sign-Up
Conservation Easements**
For sign-up information
stop by SWCD today!



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