



# CONSERVATION TODAY

Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District & USDA Natural Resources

Winter 2017



## 2016 Sibley SWCD Outstanding Conservationist of the Year

The Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to announce Curtis and Lori Weckwerth of Arlington as their 2016 Conservationist of the Year. They operate a 2,500 acre farm in partnership with family. In addition, they raise 190 Black Angus beef and 4,000 finishing pigs. Over the years, the Weckwerths have been very conservation minded which led them to install livestock and manure management practices such as an animal mortality facility and an Ag waste pit. To

protect the waters of Sibley County, they have installed buffer strips along ditches and managed a 15 acre wet meadow. Being involved in the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Weckwerths partake in numerous pest and nutrient management activities and have even planted cover crops. The Weckwerths are excellent stewards of the land and the district would like to thank them for their dedication to conservation.



## Office Staff:

### Sibley SWCD

Kevin Ostermann,  
District Manager

Joel Wurscher,  
District Technician

Ron Otto, Water Planner/  
Watershed Technician

### SWCD Board Members

Kathleen Theis - District 1

Paul Wiemann - District 2

Loren Evenson - District 3

Wayne Grams - District 4

Robert Nielsen - District 5

### USDA-NRCS

April Sullivan,  
District Conservationist

Chris Schmidt,  
Soil Conservationist

Vacant,  
Soil Conservation Technician



## United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Financial Assistance Programs:

### CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

*Continuous Sign-up*

*Now Accepting Applications for FY 2017 Funds*

*Sign up cutoff February 3rd 2017*

### EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

*Continuous Sign-up*

*Now Accepting Applications for FY 2018 Funds*

### WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)

*Continuous Sign-up*



## Board Meetings

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

## Office Hours

Monday—Friday  
8:00 am—4:30 pm



## What's New With NRCS...

April Sullivan, DC-Sibley/Nicollet County

Wow! Another busy and productive year for Sibley County in the conservation realm. First off, I want to say thank you for your cooperation and patience with us this year and thank you to my staff for keeping things moving while I was out on maternity leave. For the last four plus months, we have been down 2 employees so we appreciate your continued patience. Please, if you are waiting on something from us, feel free to give us a call to see where the progress is at.

NRCS was busy with many programs as well as conservation technical assistance throughout the year. Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has proven to be a popular program this year. NRCS along with FSA processed over 350 applications and contracts in 2016. This program continues to be in high demand and we are working hard to get your conservation priorities met.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) continues to see a high level of participation in the county. In 2016 we renewed and enrolled 16 contracts that cover 19,800 acres. We are currently accepting applications for the 2017 signup with an application cutoff of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. The program has undergone a revamp that was passed in the 2014 Farm Bill. We look forward to working with you to see how this program can fit into your operation.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is well underway for fiscal year 2017. This year deadlines and signup cutoff times were adjusted. We are still trying to work through the changes, but if you have a project you are considering please stop in soon as we foresee the sign up cutoff to be very similar. One of the major changes to EQIP funding is having a full conservation plan and final



Ag waste pit no longer in use. (Before)



Ag waste pit now closed up. (After)

designs completed.

Depending on the project this can take time.

NRCS is now offering a public website called Client Gateway that allows producers to access and request conservation technical assistance from USDA. Through this website you can access your conservation plans, program applications and contracts, sign financial assistance contract payment applications, or request technical assistance. If you are interested please inquire at your local NRCS office. At this time it is only supported on a computer or laptop and only for individuals. You can find more info at:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway)

In closing, thank you for your continued conservation efforts and we look forward to working with you in 2017. Please stop in the office to inquire where we may be able to help you.



A barley, radish, turnip, rapeseed and clover cover crop mix planted with in-season side dress of nitrogen. Picture taken November 4, 2016.





## Weed Watch—Palmer Amaranth

This past fall there were reports of Palmer Amaranth infestations associated with newly seeded (2016) conservation plantings throughout both Iowa and Minnesota. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and University of Minnesota (UMN) have identified Palmer Amaranth in select counties in the southwestern part of Minnesota. Officials are concerned that the species will spread to different parts of the state.

Palmer Amaranth is the most competitive and aggressive of the pigweed species. It is related to waterhemp and like waterhemp, emerges throughout the growing season, from May to August. However, Palmer Amaranth is much more aggressive than waterhemp, growing 2 to 3 inches a day. A single female plant may produce as many as 100,000-500,000 seeds. Palmer Amaranth has demonstrated the ability to quickly adapt to herbicide management tactics. Palmer Amaranth found in the northern states are expected to be resistant to multiple herbicides, including glyphosate. If suspected on your land, avoid driving any motorized vehicle (truck, ATV) through the area. After walking through an infested area, clean boots, shoes, pants and any article of clothing or carrying bag that encounters the vegetation with a stiff brush and or scraper before leaving the planting area.

Since Palmer Amaranth is on the Minnesota noxious weed list as an "Eradicate" weed, state statutes say landowners must attempt to eradicate by destroying all the above and below ground parts of the plants. The MDA also requests the reporting of any weeds found on the eradicate list (call 888-545-6684). For more information, reference both the UMN and MDA websites. These sites have lots of pictures to help you identify this species as well as many tips on eradication.



Photo Credit UMN

## Walk in to a New Program

The Walk-In Access (WIA) program can offer you additional income on non-farmed acres. Simply put, the program compensates you for providing public hunting access on your land from Sept. 1 to May 31. WIA targets parcels of 40 acres or more with high quality natural cover. This may include parcels already in a conservation program such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Other high quality habitat, such as river bottom or resting grassland pastures may also be eligible to enroll. WIA compensates landowners \$10-\$13 per acre to provide public hunting access on the parcel. Landowner agreements are limited to three years and include a no-hassle opt-out clause. WIA parcels may not be hayed, grazed or farmed, although the program permits landowners to carry out land cover management or upgrade activities according to an approved conservation plan. All landowners in the program are afforded liability protection through the Minnesota Recreational Use Statutes.

When you enroll land in the Walk-In Access Program you are leasing the land to the state of Minnesota for the public to hunt. Hunters who have purchased a WIA Validation can access the land one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset from Sept. 1 to May 31. Other uses by the public are prohibited without your written permission. In 2016, approximately 210 sites covering more than 23,000 acres were enrolled across 46 Minnesota counties. For more information please call Max Rykhus at 507-931-2550 or email at [max.rykhus@nicollet.swcd.org](mailto:max.rykhus@nicollet.swcd.org)



Photo Credit MN DNR



## Special Watershed Project Happening now in the Lower Minnesota River Watershed

Bryan Spindler, MPCA

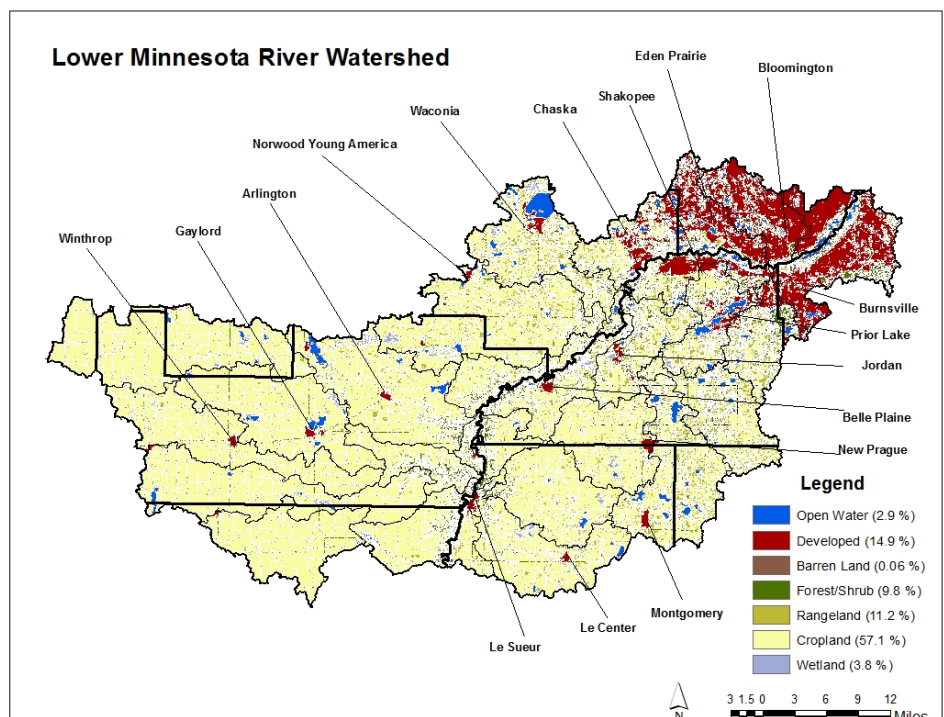
Sibley County has partnered with Sibley SWCD, MPCA, University of Minnesota, and the neighboring counties of Nicollet, Renville, and McLeod to gather information related to the Lower Minnesota River Watershed as part of the State of Minnesota's watershed approach. These efforts include monitoring, assessment, restoration of impaired waters, and protection of unimpaired waters.

The purpose of the watershed approach is to intensively monitor the streams and lakes within a major watershed to determine the overall health of the water resources. This will be done by identifying impaired waters and those waters in need of additional protection efforts to prevent impairments. Follow up monitoring is then done in biologically impaired subwatersheds to determine the cause(s) and impacts of the impairments, and to begin to identify pollutant sources. This watershed approach also provides an opportunity for citizens and local government units to proactively engage in the work through volunteer and local activities. This engagement helps set the stage for local involvement in TMDLs and protection strategies which enhances the information available for good planning efforts and successful implementation of restoration/protection strategies.

This coming year, the local cooperating staff will be deploying mail surveys, local interviews, as well as coffee shop meetings and educational events. Activities will be related to conservation and water quality within the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. These activities will help identify community/landowner opportunities, determine obstacles, and opinions on land management and water quality. These activities and events will give you an opportunity to learn about, comment on, and participate in this important work. Potential topics that could be discussed in meetings include; buffer strips, cover crops, rock tile inlets, septic systems, watershed discussions, and recreational opportunities in the area. If you have project questions or would like to hear about a particular topic please contact Coleton Draeger, Watershed Project Coordinator at 507-237-4050. Stay tuned for further project updates.

### Watershed Introduction:

The Lower Minnesota River watershed includes the lowest reach of the Minnesota River and flows into the Mississippi at Fort Snelling. As the second largest watershed in the Minnesota River Basin, it covers 1,760 square miles, divided by the Minnesota River itself. Major tributaries in the rural part of the watershed include the Rush River and High Island Creek. Recreational opportunities include camping at Rush River, High Island, and Clear Lake County parks, horseback riding, kayaking/canoeing, hiking, hunting, fishing, and spending time in the scenic Big Woods WMAs, and Wildlife Refuge Lands along Minnesota River. Boom-bust fishing opportunities exist on High Island, Silver Lake, and Clear Lake, in which the DNR use as walleye rearing ponds.





2017 Tree Order Form				Order Number (office use)	
Mail Order    SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT				Name:	
To:                    111 6th St., Box 161, Gaylord, MN 55334				Address:	
PHONE: (507) 237-5435 Ext. 3				Email Address:	
QUALITY NURSING STOCK FOR CONSERVATION				Phone:	
<b>CONIFER POTTED</b>					
<i>Species</i>	<i>Size</i>	<i># of Trees</i>	<i>Cost</i>		
1 Quart Blackhills Spruce	6"-16"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Quart Colorado Spruce	6"-16"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Quart Norway Pine (Red)	6"-10"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Quart White Pine	5"-10"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Quart Ponderosa Pine	5"-10"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Quart American Arborvitae	10"-20"		x \$3.50/Tree	=	
1 Gal. Red Pine	15-18"		x \$7.50/Tree	=	
2 Gal. White Pine	24"-30"		x \$12.75/Tree	=	
2 Gal. American Arborvitae	18"-24"		x \$12.75/Tree	=	
2 Gal. Blackhills Spruce	24"-30"		x \$12.75/Tree	=	
2 Gal. Colorado Spruce	24"-30"		x \$12.75/Tree	=	
<b>BARE ROOT DECIDUOUS    1 Bundle = 10 Trees</b>					
Black Walnut	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Hackberry	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
American Linden	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Norway Poplar	2'-3'		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Silver Maple	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Sugar Maple	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Red Maple	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Swamp White Oak	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Red Oak	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Bur Oak	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
<b>SMALL TREES    1 Bundle = 10 Trees</b>					
Amur Maple	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Crab, Red Splendor	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Nanking Cherry	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
American Plum	18"-24"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
<b>SHRUBS    1 Bundle = 10 Trees</b>					
American Hazelnut	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Common Lilac	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Villosa Lilac	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Dogwood Redosier	2'-3'		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Cranberrybush	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
Flame Willow	12"-18"		x \$13.00/Bundle	=	
<b>FABRIC TREE SQUARES &amp; ROLLS</b>					
Price Includes 6"x1"x6" Staples					
Pre-Cut Tree Squares	3' x 3'		x \$1.65/Square	=	
Fabric Roll Mat (by the foot)	1 Foot		x \$0.50/Foot	=	
Fabric Roll Mat (whole roll)	300 Feet		x \$110.00/Roll	=	
Grow Tubes (4ft Tall)	4 Feet		x \$5.00/Tube	=	
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>					
<b>SALES TAX (6.875%)</b>					
<b>TOTAL DUE</b>					
Please Round Sales Tax Correctly				<b>Pickup location will remain the same as last year, the tree shed.</b> <b>Make Checks Payable to Sibley SWCD</b>	

### Important Notice

Trees are distributed in April, we will notify you of your pickup day.

The cost of trees does not warrant free replacement and the district offers no guarantee of survival.

Payment in full is due on day of order, or pickup day.

Availability and size are subject to change.

Please check the online order form, or call the district office if you have questions.

If you would like to be notified of your pickup day by e-mail, please provide that information in the space provided above.



# **Sibley County SWCD 2017 Tree Program**

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will offer their 2017 Tree Program sale on **Thursday, February 16, 2017**. 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 on pg.5). A mechanical tree planter is available (free of charge) for larger plantings, contact Joel (507) 237-5435 ext. 103 for more information. **Orders will be accepted while supplies last.** Please read the **terms and conditions** below before placing your order.

## **Sibley SWCD Terms and Conditions**

- The Sibley SWCD is 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 the day of the order or on your day of pick-up.
- Customers will be notified by postcard where and when the stock is to be picked up.
- The District reserves the right to substitute varieties or sizes.
- Orders must be picked up on either **Thursday April 20th or Friday April 21st**, between **9am-6pm**.

## **Open House Tree Ordering Day**

Thursday,  
February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
9:00 am—4:30 pm  
Sibley County USDA  
Service Center  
111 6th Street  
Gaylord, MN 55334







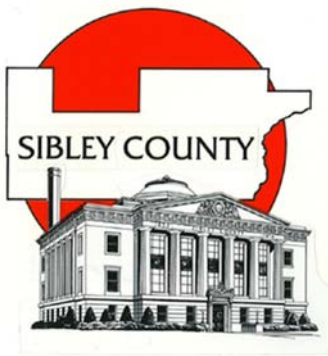
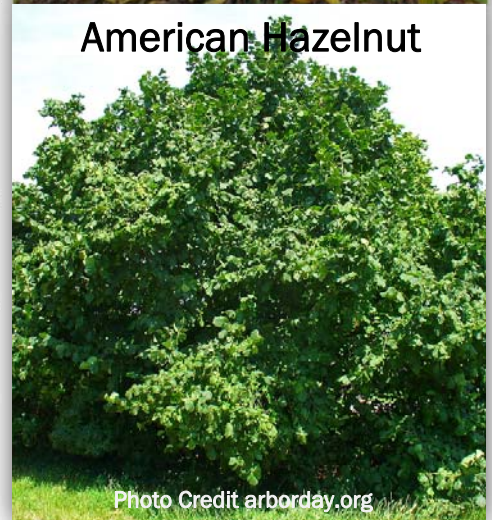
## Announcing New Tree Species Available

Freedom Honeysuckle, a staple shrub species for conservation plantings around the state, is now listed as prohibited from SWCDs (Soil and Water Conservation District) to sell. This vigorous shrub was originally introduced by the University of Minnesota because of its resistance to the witches' broom aphid. The State Noxious Weed Advisory Committee (NWAC) did a risk assessment for Tartarian Honeysuckle and determined it to be a significant risk. Freedom Honeysuckle is a cultivar of Tartarian Honeysuckle. Because of this, Sibley SWCD will now offer two new tree species for their 2017 tree program.

The first species the SWCD will now offer is the Flame Willow. This shrub-type willow can grow to 20' tall at maturity, with a spread of 15'. Flame willows grow at a fast rate, up to 8' in one growing season. It has an oval, dense form with bright green, narrow, lance-shaped foliage during the growing season turning variable shades of yellow before dropping in late fall. This shrub performs best when grown in full sun and is amazingly adaptable. It is considered to be drought-tolerant yet can even handle some standing water. Flame willows are desirable shrubs for providing protection and cover for birds and other wildlife. Butterflies may even sip the nectar from the white, inconspicuous flowers and use the leaves for their larvae.

The other species now available is the American Hazelnut. This shrub grows to a height of 15–18' tall and a spread of 10–12' at maturity. Growth rate would be considered a medium to fast rate, with height increases of anywhere from 13" to more than 24" per year. Full sun and partial shade are best for this shrub, it prefers a minimum of 4 hours of direct sunlight each day. The American Hazelnut grows in a variety of soils and is considered to be drought tolerant. Hazelnut hedges can be used as windbreaks, visual screens, and to attract wildlife.

For more information please contact 507-237-5435 ex. 103



## 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, and a 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 at 507-237-5435 ext. 105 for any questions or to pick up an application.

Sibley SWCD and NRCS  
111 6th Street  
PO Box 161  
Gaylord, MN 55334

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
GAYLORD MN 55334  
PERMIT NO 61



## SIBLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### Upcoming Dates:

January 10th, 2017 - Sibley SWCD Board Meeting  
January 16th, 2017 - MLK Day (Office Closed)  
February 14th, 2017 - Sibley SWCD Board Meeting  
February 20th, 2017 - Presidents Day (Office Closed)  
March 14th, 2017 - Sibley SWCD Board Meeting

***Conservation Today** is published by the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA NRCS-Gaylord 111 6th Street Gaylord, MN 55334. For more information regarding this newsletter, contact (507) 237-5435 Extension #3.*

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