



CONSERVATION TODAY

Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District and USDA Natural Resources

January 2016



The Sibley County SWCD Announces Loren & Peggy Evenson as the 2015

The Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to announce Loren & Peggy Evenson as their 2015 Conservationist of the Year. Loren and Peggy have practiced conservation in Sibley County for nearly 50 years. Loren retired from Sibley SWCD after 48 years of dedicated service this past April. His tenure allowed him the opportunity to plan, develop and oversee the installation of hundreds of conservation practices, including water and sediment control basins, terraces, grade stabilization structures, tree plantings, filter strip buffers and long term retirement of land through RIM and CREP easements.

In addition to sharing conservation opportunities throughout the county, Loren and wife Peggy have operated the family farm for over the past 40+ years. They have first-hand practiced and tested the very conservation efforts that Loren was so passionate about throughout his career. Windbreaks and shelterbelts continue to provide protection from wind and snow at their farmstead, filter strips along Swan Lake provide valuable protection from their nearby cropland. Today, Loren and Peggy understand the value in protecting and conserving their valuable soil resources and manage their crop production utilizing crop rotation and tillage management for their corn/soybean grain crops. We thank Loren and Peggy for their past, present and future dedication to conservation of the land.



Loren & Peggy Evenson

Office Staff:

Sibley SWCD
Kevin Ostermann,
District Manager

Joel Wurscher,
District Technician

Ron Otto, Water Planner/
Watershed Technician

USDA-NRCS
April Sullivan,
District Conservationist

Chris Schmidt,
Soil Conservationist

Leanne Langeberg,
Soil Conservation Technician

Judy Litzau, Admin Assistant
Contracted to NRCS

SWCD Board Members

- Kathleen Theis - District 1
- Paul Wiemann - District 2
- Gary Schafer - District 3
- Wayne Grams - District 4
- Robert Nielsen - District 5

Board Meetings

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

Office Hours

Monday–Friday
8:00 am–4:30 pm

TREE DAY OPEN HOUSE

**FEBRUARY 18,
2015**

**9:00 AM–3:30PM
SIBLEY COUNTY
USDA SERVICE CENTER**



United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Financial Assistance Programs:

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

Continuous Sign-up

Now Accepting Applications for FY 2016 Funds

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

Continuous Sign-up

Now Accepting Applications for FY 2017 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





MN Buffer Law

What You Need to Know

Governor Mark Dayton's new landmark buffer initiative was recently signed into law, designating an estimated 110,000 acres of land for water quality buffer strips statewide. The law established new perennial vegetation buffers up to 50 feet along rivers, streams, and ditches that will help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment. The new law provides flexibility for landowners to install and maintain buffers, and boost compliance with buffer laws across Minnesota.

What we know....

- The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will map all public waters and ditches that will be subject to buffers by **July 2016**.
- **50 foot buffers** must be installed on public waters by **November 2017**.
- **16½ foot buffers** must be installed on public ditches by **November 2018**.
- Many small streams, headwaters and ditches aren't "public." It will be up to the state's 90 county soil and water conservation districts (SWCD's) to identify those that need buffers.
- Landowners retain use of the buffer (unless the area is enrolled in a Federal or State program such as CRP, RIM, CREP) as long as perennial vegetation is maintained.
- Landowners may choose to adopt other conservation aimed at protecting water if those practices provide the same level of protection as a buffer.
- Over the first two years, the SWCD's will share \$22 million from the Legacy Amendment's Clean Water Fund for technical assistance costs. After the first two years, funding comes from the state's general fund.
- The state Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) can withhold funds to SWCD's that fail to implement the law.
- Counties, watershed districts or BWSR will enforce the law, and fines up to \$500 can be issued; multiple fines could be issued. "You can't just pay to not have a buffer," said John Jaschke, BWSR executive director.
- No new money is in the bill to pay landowners to take cropland out of production to plant buffers, but there is \$33 million from the Clean Water Fund and the Outdoor Heritage Fund available for easements and other financial assistance to help landowners meet or exceed buffer requirements. The federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and state Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program can provide annual or easement payments.



CRP UPDATE

Continuous Sign-Up

The Farm Service Agency recently has increased the soil rental rates for new CRP in Sibley County. The average CRP rental rate in Sibley County is now pushing \$300/Ac., with additional sign-up incentives available for some continuous CRP practices. This has caused quite the stir in the county making it financially attractive to enroll into a conservation easement. Continuous CRP can be used as a tool to satisfy the buffer law requirement along a waterway, however, a minimum of 30ft width must be enrolled. Remember you can sign-up for the Continuous Conservation Reserve Program at any time during the year. Some practices do require state office approval for allocation of acres towards an easement.

General Sign-Up

If you haven't heard by now, it was announced by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack that the next general enrollment period for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) started Dec. 1, 2015, and will end on Feb. 26, 2016. This also marks the 30th anniversary of CRP. Like Continuous CRP, this program also enrolls Ag land into 10 or 15 year contracts to help alleviate issues of soil erosion and improve water quality. Under the general CRP program, county office staff can provide the maximum CRP rental rate for each offer prior to enrollment. The producer may then make their offer below that rate to increase the likelihood that their offer is accepted. More detailed information on CRP can be found online at www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.



NRCS District Conservationist's Year in Review

2015 was another busy and productive year for soil and water conservation in Sibley County. Thank you to all producers and landowners who took into consideration your resource conservation concerns and chose to consult with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District. The Gaylord Field Office is now servicing 2 counties, Sibley and Nicollet. This has been a period of transition for all involved as our team adjusts to serving more producers and covering a larger conservation area. As our team adjusts and settles into our "new normal", we encourage you to call and check in with us if you are waiting on any outstanding information or plans.

The recent update to the Sibley County soil rental rates for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) has resulted in a positive response from Sibley County landowners seeking to set aside cropland into continuous conservation cover. I am pleased with the awesome response from you, the producers and landowners, for taking a proactive approach to prepare for the new buffer law and seeding down sensitive areas on your cropland. In addition to CRP, Sibley County continues to see a positive response to the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Over 50 outstanding conservation producers are now actively involved in the CSP program. Their conservation leadership provides endless benefits to future generations of farming operators. I look forward to meeting with more of our Sibley County conservation stewards.

The large rain events from 2013 & 2014 placed a difficult strain on Sibley County's soil and water resources. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) continues to be a main stay program to help you remedy areas of concern. The management of the EQIP program has changed over the past few years. Our new way of business is to offer one ranking period for the fiscal year. This new concept places a stronger focus on providing a better planning experience prior to securing financial assistance with tight timeframes. Please, be patient and allow us to develop a solid conservation plan with you as a means to seek financial assistance. The SWCD also has been awarded funding to assist landowners in fixing erosion concerns due to excessive rainfall. Please stop in the office to find out more.

As I reflect on my 6 years servicing Sibley County, I am impressed with the work and effort Sibley county producers and landowners put into conservation. I look forward to a successful year in 2016. Thank you for considering and practicing the best soil and water conservation efforts.

April Sullivan, District Conservationist

Meet Your SWCD Staff at the Gaylord Field Office

The Sibley Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is happy to have Kevin Ostermann join the team as the District Manager. Kevin came on board following the retirement of Loren Evenson. Kevin currently holds the title of District Manager for both Sibley and Nicollet Counties. The other "new" face for the SWCD is Joel Wurscher. Joel was most recently the Soil Conservation Technician for NRCS, but has now transitioned over to Sibley SWCD as their District Technician. Ron Otto is celebrating his 9th year with the district. Feel free to stop by or call the office at 507-237-5435 ext. 3 for assistance with any of your conservation question or needs.



From L to R: Ron Otto (Water Planner/Watershed Technician), Joel Wurscher (District Technician), Kevin Ostermann (District Manager)



How Farmers Can Help Pollinators



Three-fourths of the world's flowering plants and about 35% of the world's food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce. More than 3,500 species of native bees help increase crop yields. Some scientists estimate that one out of every three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies, moths, birds, bats and beetles and other insects. There are simple, inexpensive ways you can increase the number of native bees living on your land. Any work you do on behalf of pollinators will support other beneficial insects and wildlife. Improvements to pollinator habitat may be eligible for financial support from government programs through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Principles of Farming for Crop Pollinators

Know the habitat on your farm. Look for areas on and around your land that can support pollinators. For example, most native bees are solitary or live in small colonies. Bumble, digger, and sweat bees make up the bulk of pollen bees in most parts of the country.

Protect flowering plants and nest sites. Once you know where pollinators are living and foraging, do what you can to protect these resources from disturbance and pesticides.

Enhance habitat with flowering plants and additional nest sites. Most bees love sun and prefer to nest in dry places. Nests are created underground, in twigs and debris, and in dead trees or branches. You can add flowers, leave some ground unfilled, and provide bee blocks (tunnels drilled into wood) to increase the number of native bees on your farm.

Critical Requirements of Native Bees

Food. Bees eat only pollen and nectar. In the process of gathering these resources, they move pollen from one flower to another, and thus pollinate your crops. Bees rely on an abundance and variety of flowers and need blooming plants throughout the growing season. Native plant species are particularly valuable.

Shelter. Native bees don't build the wax or paper structures we associate with honey bees or wasps, but they do need places to nest, which vary depending on the species.

- Wood-nesting bees are solitary, often making individual nests in beetle tunnels in standing dead trees.
- Ground-nesting bees include solitary species that construct nest tunnels under the ground.
- Cavity-nesting social species—bumble bees—make use of small spaces, such as abandoned rodent burrows, wherever they can find them.

Protection from pesticides. Most insecticides are deadly to bees, and unnecessary herbicide use can remove many of the flowers that they need for food.

Getting Started

Here are three things that you can do to begin improving habitat for native bees on your land:

Minimize tillage. Many of our best crop pollinators live underground for most of the year, sometimes at the base of the very plants they pollinate. To protect them, turn over soil only where you need to.

Special Plantings. If you want to do more to increase the number of native bees pollinating your crops, you can plant hedgerows or windbreaks with a variety of flowering plants and shrubs and work with your neighbors to protect natural areas around your farm.

Exercising Care with Insecticides.

If you use insecticides, choose ingredients targeted to specific species. Spray on calm, dry evenings, soon after dark when bees are not active.



2016 Tree Order Form				Order Number <small>(office use)</small>	
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:	
CONIFER POTTED					
<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	=	_____
BARE ROOT DECIDUOUS 1 Bundle = 10 Trees					
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	=	_____
SMALL TREES 1 Bundle = 10 Trees					
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	=	_____
SHRUBS 1 Bundle = 10 Trees					
Freedom, Honeysuckle	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	=	_____
FABRIC TREE SQUARES & ROLLS				# of Mats or Feet	
<small>Price Includes 6"x1"x6" Staples</small>					
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	=	_____
SUBTOTAL				_____	
SALES TAX (6.875%)				_____	
TOTAL DUE				_____	
<i>Please Round Sales Tax Correctly</i>				New This Year	
				Nicollet & Sibley SWCDs are combining their tree programs. Pickup location will remain the same as last years, the tree shed.	
				Make Checks Payable to Sibley SWCD	

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 2016 Tree Program

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will offer their 2016 Tree Program sale on Thursday, February 18, 2016. 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). Mechanical tree planters are available (free of charge) for larger plantings, contact Joel (507) 237-5435 ext. 3 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

- 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 the stock is to be picked up and reminded what days.
- The District reserves the right to substitute varieties or sizes.
- Orders must be picked up on either **Thursday April 21st or Friday April 22nd**, between the times of **8:00 am - 4:30 pm.**

Tree Ordering Day

Thursday, February
18th, 2016
9:00 am—4:30 pm

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





Oxygen, an Element of Life

By Colton Draeger, Watershed Coordinator

Dissolved oxygen is one of the most critical aspects of life for aquatic organisms. Like humans, without adequate oxygen levels these organisms cannot survive. In order to preserve fish, amphibians, and other aquatic organisms within the waters of High Island Creek, Rush River, and the remaining waterways within Sibley County and its neighboring counties. We must be conscious about what we are doing to the landscape and how it effects our water.

The leading factor in dissolved oxygen depletion is the abundance of phosphorous in a given body of water. If high levels of phosphorous are present, a significant increase of algae is likely present as well. As the excessive algae dies off, a Biochemical Oxygen Demand (B.O.D.) occurs. This B.O.D. occurrence is caused by bacteria that become present in the water column due to the decay of algae. During times of B.O.D., large amounts of dissolved oxygen can be consumed by the bacteria present from an algae die off, therefore leaving little oxygen for other aquatic organisms such as fish.

The most common way phosphorous enters the waterways of Sibley County is through soil erosion. Phosphorous binds itself to the soil particles and then is transferred into our waterways. Some common ways to prevent phosphorous from entering our waterways, and therefore protect our valuable water resources include: removal of open intakes or open intake alternatives, buffer strips, the use of cover crops, no till or other alternative tiling options.

Land owners within the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds should contact: Watershed Coordinator – Colton Draeger or Watershed Technician – Ron Otto, in the for information regarding incentive payments and cost share opportunities that will help improve dissolved oxygen levels within both the High Island Creek and Rush River Watersheds.



High Island Creek monitoring on June 22, 2015.

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 at 507-237-5435 ext. 3 for any questions or to pick up an application.

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

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

Potential New Funding Source

Have you experienced an concerns over erosion issues that have directly resulted from the 2014 record rains? If so, the district pending eligibility, may have funds to help cost share at a higher than normal rate to address these concerns.



We're on the web
www.sibleyswcd.org

SIBLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Up Coming Dates:

January 18th, 2016 – Martin Luther King Jr Holiday
February 9th, 2016 – Sibley SWCD Board Meeting
February 15th, 2016 – President's Day Holiday
February 18th, 2016 – Tree Day Open House
March 8th, 2016 – Sibley SWCD Board Meeting



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