

Conservation Connection

Winter Newsletter

Upcoming dates, deadlines and events:

March 9: LGRWRP Wetland Banking Application Deadline

March 13: SWCD Board Meeting

March 15: Cover Crop Workshop

March 15: MN CREP Batching Period Deadline

April 10: SWCD Board Meeting

April 10: Listening Session

April 15: MN CREP Batching Period Deadline

April 27: Walk In Access Enrollment Closes

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Jefferson German Watershed Phosphorus Reduction Project Grant



Le Sueur SWCD is happy to announce that we have received a grant to work on phosphorus reduction projects in the Jefferson-German Watershed. The goal of the Jefferson German Phosphorus Reduction project is to improve water quality in the chain of lakes by strategically placing Best Management Practices (BMPs) in targeted locations within the watershed.



(Jefferson German Watershed)

landowners looking to install water and sediment control basins, grade stabilization projects, shore-line stabilization projects, wetland restorations and cover crops.

Where does the money come from?

The \$387,100 Le Sueur SWCD was awarded comes from the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. The

Amendment, passed by voters in 2008, raises sales tax by 3/8's of 1% and helps fund "on-the-ground" projects throughout the state.

Best Management Practices:

This grant will provide us with the funding to offer cost share to

COVER CROP WORKSHOP

Date, Time, Location
Thursday, March 15th
10:00am to 3:00pm
American Legion
97 S. Park Ave, Le Center

The event is FREE and lunch is provided. Attendees are asked to register at scottswcd.org, or by calling their local SWCD.

The workshop will feature cover crop innovator, Gabe Brown. He will discuss how Cover Crops can add profitability, reduce input costs & keep nutrients on your land.

Jerry Ackermann of southwestern MN will speak on his 19 year journey from Conventional Tillage to No-Till/Strip Till to Cover Crops on his 1200 acres.



Featuring Gabe Brown



Staff Update: Jack Bushman - MN CREP, Walk-In Access

MN CREP:

Landowners looking for returns on marginal land have the option to enroll cropland into the Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP). MN CREP is a permanent easement program that is funded through a state-federal partnership. Feel free to call or stop into the office to discuss eligibility. Enrollment is continuous and expected to continue for the next 3 years.



Walk In Access:

If you're a landowner with land in a high quality natural cover (CRP, RIM, Other Non-Cropland) and are interested in receiving between \$10 and \$13 per acre by allowing public hunting on your land, the Walk-In Access program might be right for you. Enrollment in WIA is open until April 27th, 2018. Please contact the office for more info.



Staff Update: Nik Kadel - Ditches and Buffers

Ditch Work:

In 2017, we completed over 20 ditch projects and inspected around 30 ditch systems. Some of the ditch projects this year were: general sediment removal, sloughing repair, replacing/ resetting cul-

verts to the correct grade, repairing crossings, replacing or repairing county tile and handling the beaver problems in the ditch systems.

Redetermination:

Le Sueur County is in the process of having the redetermination of benefits done on county ditches 19, 28, 42, 52, 54, 69 and Le Sueur-Rice judicial ditches: 18, 63, and 5. The redetermination of benefits is a process in which the county hires viewers to investigate the properties around the

ditch system to determine which properties are getting benefits from it and assess property according to their findings.

Buffer Law:

In 2015 Governor Dayton signed into law the Buffer Initiative. The law requires established vegetative buffers on public waters/streams by November 1st 2017 and along county ditches by November 1st 2018. The SWCD elected jurisdiction to do the buffer enforcement in the county. We have Buffer Cost-share for the establishment of buffers. Please contact the office for more info.

Drainage Records Grant:

Le Sueur County was awarded a Drainage Modernization records grant to update the historical records to today's standards.



Staff Update: Sue Prchal- WRAPS Interviews, Tree Sales

WRAPS Interviews:

Le Sueur County SWCD received a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) grant. Part of the grant will be used to interview landowners within the Lower Minnesota Watershed about water quality, erosion concerns and conservation practices. The information collected will be used to formulate a planning effort to help solve issues in these designated areas. Look for me to be out and about asking for a brief 10 minutes of your time to get your opinion.

Tree Sales:

The SWCD yearly tree sales program is ending soon. If you are still interested in ordering bare root conifers or hardwood trees and shrubs, give our office a call or visit our website. Trees will be arriving around the 2nd week in April.



Manager's Minute: Mike Schultz-2014 Flood Relief, WRAPS, 1W1P, Conservation Corps

2014 Flood Relief Projects:

The SWCD has been up to some great things. We have been focused on completing our 2014 flood projects, which are the result of a grant the county was awarded after that years severe flooding. The funds were used to replace existing structures that were damaged from the event. We expect to wrap up the grant this spring. Please remember that anytime after a major natural weather event if your property receives any soil or water damage, take time to document it. We never know if the county will be declared a disaster site and receive funding to address the damage.

Lower Minnesota Watershed WRAPS:

On November 30th, 2017 the SWCD partnered with the county to hold a Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS) meeting at the Next Chapter Winery in New Prague. The meeting was spent discussing county, state and federal programs that help address resource concerns in the Le Sueur and Rice County parts of the Lower Minnesota Watershed, and getting feedback from stakeholders on how we should focus our efforts. The SWCD is also conducting in person interviews with landowners in the watershed. Please stop by the office to request an interview. We will be interviewing landowners until April 2018.



Cannon River One Watershed, One Plan

"Aligning local water planning on major watershed boundaries with state strategies towards prioritized, targeted and measurable implementation plans"

Cannon River One Watershed One Plan (1W1P):

The Cannon River 1W1P process is over 50% completed. Le Sueur SWCD and the county are working with major Cannon River watershed partners in an effort to create one comprehensive plan for the watershed. A draft of the plan should be made available come spring 2018. If you

are interested in following the planning efforts, more information can be found at: www.dakotaswcd.org/1w1p

2018 Conservation Corps Apprentice

Le Sueur SWCD has been awarded an opportunity to host a Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa Conservation Apprentice. The apprentice will work out of our office from May until August 2018. During this period, the apprentice, who is usually a college student, will learn first-hand about SWCD daily operations. The SWCD housed an apprentice in 2017 with much success. Please contact the office if you are interested in applying.



Staff: Front (Left to Right) Sue Prchal, Joe Jirik, Nik Kadel, Jack Bushman, Back Gary Hahn, Steve Breaker and Michael Schultz

Staff Update: Joe Jirik- Cover Crops, Construction

Cover Crops:

Cover cropping is relatively new to Le Sueur County but the practice has been getting the attention of some farmers in the area who are starting to incorporate them into their farming operations. In 2017, over 700 acres of cover crops were seeded throughout the county. This was done with both financial support through incentive payments and with technical assistance provided by the Soil and Water Conservation District. In 2018, Le Sueur SWCD will also offer incentive programs throughout the county, with 2 targeted

areas; the Jefferson/German Watershed and the Sand Creek Watershed.

Construction:

In 2017, construction of conservation projects went well. The district completed 10 projects to reduce soil erosion. These projects included water and sediment control basins, along with terraces and waterways. There are many projects slated for construction in spring and fall of 2018. Please stop into the office if you have a soil erosion issue that you would like assistance with. Technical and cost-share assistance are available.



Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District

Winter Newsletter 2018



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Listening Session

The Le Sueur County Soil and Water Conservation District will be hosting a "Listening Session" for the purpose of gathering local input on resource concerns and conservation priorities in Le Sueur County. This information will be utilized by the Le Sueur County local workgroup to determine, prioritize, and record local issues in regards to the 2019 Conservation Program.

The "Listening Session" will be held in the SWCD office on April 10th, 2018 at 11:00 am. Questions should be directed to Mike Schultz or Steve Breaker.

NRCS strives to ensure our products and services are accessible to all therefore, if you need special accommodation (i.e. language interpreter, alternative format literature such as braille or large print, etc.,) please contact Mike Schultz or Steve Breaker at 507-357-4879. Ext 3.

Outstanding Conservationist: **Arnold Krueger**

The staff at Le Sueur SWCD has the distinct honor in recognizing Arnold Krueger as the 2017 Outstanding Conservationist! Arnie has spent years working with multiple agencies to make his 230 acre property into a wildlife sanctuary. His passion for wildlife research and habitat made him a no-brainer for the 2017 award! Thanks for all your hard work, Arnie!



NRCS News Update

The Le Sueur County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is encouraging all county producers that have natural resource concerns on their property to contact the NRCS office. NRCS has voluntary programs that may provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers wishing to address resource concerns on their lands. NRCS program contract lengths vary depending on the

practice. By working with your local NRCS office we can help identify which of our programs would work best to address your resource concerns. NRCS will suggest opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and other related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

NRCS encourages volunteering through the Earth Team Program. This program expands NRCS services by using volunteer time, talent and energy to help accomplish the NRCS mission. To learn more about becoming an NRCS volunteer, or USDA-NRCS conservation assistance that is available, contact this office at 507-357-4908 ext. 3.

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