

ED & JIM HAICK SELECTED AS 2015 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION COOPERATORS

The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is proud to announce the selection of Ed and Jim Haick as the 2015 Outstanding Conservation Cooperators.

Each year, the SWCD recognizes cooperators for their contributions to the betterment of our natural resources. Ed and Jim Haick received this honor due to their outstanding stewardship efforts for their land and our natural resources.

Ed and Jim have both been active in conservation programs. They currently have 311 acres of land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and another 97 acres in the Re-invest in Minnesota Program (RIM). While the rest of their farm is currently being rented and is in ag production.

The producer on Haick's land has been certified by the MN Dept. of Agriculture in the Ag Certainty program and is enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

Also, they have been very active in the tree planting program. Over the years they have planted over 4300 trees in wildlife plantings. They have also planted another 750 trees for farmstead shelterbelts and living snow fence plantings.

Ed and Jim are always checking into different conservation programs and that is why the Wilkin SWCD is proud to have them as our 2015 Outstanding Conservation Cooperators.



Jim and Ed Haick

“Giving back to the land that gave me 60 good years”

- Don Nelson, Wolverton, MN

The year 2013 is best remembered for the 8 to 10 inches of rainfall recorded in Northwest Wilkin County. On June 25 and the early morning hours of Wednesday June 26, the law enforcement reported exceptionally heavy rainfall. A total of 8.25 inches of rain was measured in Wolverton MN, leading to widespread flooding in and around the community.

Don Nelson, a farmer from Wolverton, came into the NRCS office in Wilkin County seeking assistance to address a large washout on his land after the heavy rains. Don at 91 years old, retired from farming, wanted to repay the land that gave him more than 60 good years. He felt it was his responsibility to repair a major water course on his property that suffered destruction during the recent rainfall event.

Wes Drake, an NRCS Engineer and Yara Gonzalez, the local District Conservationist visited the site and determined that a waterway would be a good fit for the site. Wes designed a grassed waterway to control erosion and reduce sediment entering into the Red River which was the outlet of the waterway. The construction began on June 3, 2015 and was completed on June 12, 2015. The installed waterway measured 2,175' long had a 30 foot bottom. Following construction, the waterway was seeded and mulched along with a 50 foot buffer on both sides of the waterway. A Turf Reinforcement Mat (TRM) was installed on the lower section of the waterway that needed more stabilization.

Don was able to receive financial assistance through the NRCS and Wilkin SWCD. Both conservation agencies were able to team up and provide Don 75% cost share for the project through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and Minnesota Clean Water Funds.

Don is very pleased on how the waterway turned out. The once devastated waterway was repaired and is flowing smoothly again.

If you have any similar issues or resource concerns on your land, contact your local NRCS or SWCD office at 218-643-1536 or stop by 1150 Highway 75 North, Breckenridge, MN 56520.



Picture from the site after the 8.25" rainfall event July 30, 2013. Lower end of waterway.



Picture of the constructed waterway June 30, 2015. Lower end of the waterway



Picture of the constructed waterway June 30, 2015. Upper end of waterway



NEW LEGISLATION REQUIRES BUFFER STRIPS



HERE IS WHAT WE KNOW TODAY.....

In June of this year, Governor Dayton signed into law a new buffer initiative aimed at enhancing protection of Minnesota's waters. The buffer initiative will help protect the state's water resources from erosion and runoff pollution.

The new law requires landowners to establish buffer strips adjacent to all public water bodies and all public drainage systems.

For public water bodies a continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation is required. The buffer must be at least 50 feet wide, on average, but not less than 30 feet wide. For public drainage systems the continuous buffer must have a minimum width of 16.5 feet.

Some examples of perennial rooted vegetation includes: grasses, legumes like alfalfa or clover, trees, and or shrubs.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is beginning to create buffer protection maps that will determine what waters are subject to the new law. Completion of these maps is expected by July of 2016. Landowners may install buffer strips on their own at any time, or can wait until those maps are completed. The new law established a:

- **November 2017** deadline to establish buffers along public water bodies, and
- **November 2018** deadline for buffers along public drainage systems.

The new buffer initiative does provide landowners adjacent to public water bodies whose property is used for cultivation farming the option to adopt and install alternative riparian water quality practices in lieu of establishing buffer strips.

Alternative riparian water quality practice must be approved by the local Soil and Water Conservation District and meet the Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office Technical Guide. Alternative practices must provide water quality protection equal to or greater than buffer strips.

The new buffer initiative also establishes penalties for noncompliance. Enforcement of this new law will be administered locally by the county.

ADDITIONAL BUFFER REQUIREMENTS FOR "OTHER WATERS"

When Governor Dayton signed into law the new buffer initiative there were a few details left to be worked out. Specifically, the initiative requires Soil and Water Conservation Districts to identify other waters within their jurisdiction that will require buffer strips.

So what does this mean for us? Here is what we know now at this time:

- Locally the Wilkin SWCD will be required to identify any other waters that require buffer strips.
- A list/map of these other waters must be submitted to local water management authorities before July 1, 2017. These include Wilkin County, the Bois de Sioux Watershed District, and the Buffalo Red River Watershed District.
- These other waters will be incorporated into the water management authorities plans.
- The SWCD will work with the local water management authorities to set deadlines for establishing buffers along other waters.

How will we determine what "other waters" will require buffers?

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is the lead state agency for this program and they are in the process of developing guidelines and policy for us to follow. As soon as we receive these guidelines we will begin the process of identifying these other waters. So for now **STAY TUNED**.

In the meantime, The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District is ready to provide technical assistance to any county resident looking to install buffer strips or alternative conservation practices adjacent to public water bodies and public drainage ditches. We can walk you through the process and help you understand how the new buffer initiative affects you.

For more information call or visit the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District Office.

Find us on the web



www.co.wilkin.mn.us



Welcome!

We would like to welcome Kim Melton as our new District Technician. She was born and raised in Breckenridge. After obtaining her Associates Degree she worked as a ranch hand at a cattle operation in Nebraska for six years. In the Spring of 2013 she began her employment with the Richland Soil Conservation District as District Technician where she specialized in tree planning and planting and assisted in the implementation of many other conservation activities including seed sales, water sampling, and education. She is excited to meet and work with the producers in Wilkin County and pursue a career in preserving our natural resources.



Working Farms + Better Technology = Better Soil and Water Quality

Discovery Farms Minnesota is a farmer-led effort to gather field scale water quality information from different types of farming systems, in landscapes all across Minnesota. The mission of Discovery Farms is to gather water information under real-world conditions. The goal is to provide practical, credible, site-specific information to enable better farm management.

The program is designed to collect accurate measurements of sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus movement over the soil surface and through subsurface drainage tiles. This work leads to a better understanding of the relationship between agricultural management and water quality.

Nordick Farms is one of eleven Discovery Farm sites in Minnesota. At this site, Nordick Farms utilizes a corn – soybean rotation. The entire field (160 acres) has been patterned tiled with a spacing of 80 feet and a depth of 3 feet. Water that is drained from the

monitored field flows to a sump pump located in the southwest corner of the field. All water is then pumped into an adjacent road ditch. The monitored field is almost level which creates very little surface runoff.

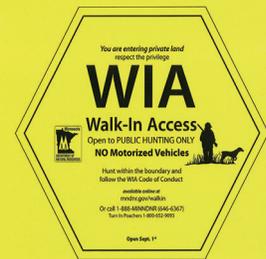
Collected runoff is analyzed for total suspended solids, total phosphorus, phosphate phosphorus, total Kjeldahl nitrogen, ammonia, nitrate nitrogen and chloride. By combining a measure of water flow and sediment and nutrient concentrations, it is possible to calculate total nutrient and sediment movement.

Water quality data gathered at this site has been very good. The management activities are providing to be effective in reducing sedimentation and improving water quality. The remaining 4 or 5 years of the project will provide information on sub-surface water quality and nutrient loss for this type of agricultural system. Gathering information will help identify some of the strengths and challenges of similar farming systems and landscapes.

The Wilkin SWCD would like to thank Nordick Farms for their participation in this program.



www.discoveryfarmsmn.org



The Walk in Access program targets 40 acre blocks of land or more that are already in conservation programs or contain existing hunting cover and it's entirely voluntary for landowners. Most landowners choose to enroll their property for two or three years. Landowners are paid \$10-\$13 per acre to allow hunting access. Wilkin County has 2,116 acres of land enrolled in the program.

Enrolled lands are covered under the Minnesota recreational use laws that limit landowner's liability. Where private leases do not, recreational use laws provide extra liability protection for WIA acres under MN State Statute 604A.20 to 604A.27. WIA land is for hunting only. No motorized vehicles are allowed in WIA areas and parking is along roads or in designed parking area. No target practice, trapping, dog training, camping, horseback riding or fires are allowed. DNR conservation officers handle any WIA violations as well as any hunting violations.

If you have any questions about the program, interested in enrolling your conservation land, or would like a hunting atlas, please stop into our office.

2015 Stewardship Week ~ April 26 – May 3, 2015



The Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) encouraged all Wilkin County churches and elementary schools to join with the National Association of Conservation Districts in the 2015 observance of Stewardship Week. “Local Heroes – Your Hardworking Pollinators” was the observance theme.

The purpose of the national observance, begun in 1955, is to create greater awareness among individuals of their stewardship responsibility to care for America’s natural resources.

The Wilkin SWCD, works throughout the year to encourage soil and water conservation practices, provided free materials and information assistance to local churches and schools interested in furthering good soil and water conservation practices in homes and communities. These materials are used during worship services and classroom discussion.



AREA I ENVIROTHON

A team of students from Breckenridge High School along with 24 teams from west-central Minnesota competed in the Area I Envirothon, held May 6th at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center in Fergus Falls.

The Envirothon is a hands-on, outdoor competition that challenges students’ environmental knowledge and problem solving skills. It began nationwide in 1979 and in Minnesota in 1993. The Envirothon consists of five, 30-minute, outdoor learning stations, each based on a different environment topic. As each team made their way from station to station, they took an exam related to the environmental subject. After groups of teams complete their exam, area resource professionals review the exams with the students. The five environmental topics students were tested on included: Forestry, Wildlife, Aquatics, Soils and a current issue which was, “Urban/Community Forestry”. In addition to taking five exams, each team was required to give an oral presentation on the current issue.

Trophies were presented to the team members of Underwood Team #21 which had the highest score (29 points out of 30) in the oral presentation part of the contest and to the top three teams (Frazee, Underwood Team #21, and Dilworth-Glyndon-Felton Team #8) with the highest total combined scores for the entire “overall” event.

The top three teams competed at the State Envirothon on May 18th at Cloquet Forestry Center – Cloquet where Frazee placed third out of 27 teams.



Back Row: Eric Bakken, Brock Pearson, Colton Schuler, Advisor Al Gripentrog, Jared Conzemius
Front Row: Cecelia Hopkins, Cassandra King, Krista Hanneman, Savanna Hohenstein

Thank you to our 2015 Sponsors!

Area I Soil & Water Conservation Districts
(Becker * Clay * East Otter Tail * Traverse *
West Otter Tail * Wilkin)

Ag Country Farm Credit Services
of Wahpeton

Bell State Bank & Trust – Detroit Lakes

Bremer Bank – Detroit Lakes

Bois de Sioux Watershed District

Buffalo Red River Watershed District

Cormorant Lakes Sportsman Club

Cormorant Lakes Watershed District

Detroit Lakes Breakfast Rotary

Eagles Club – Fergus Falls & Wahpeton

Lake Region Electric Cooperative

Midwest Bank – Detroit Lakes

Otter Tail Power Company

Pelican River Watershed District

Prairie Wetlands Learning Center

SJE – Rhombus – Detroit Lakes

United Community Bank – Detroit Lakes

Wild Rice Watershed District

Wilkin County Environmental

20th Annual Ladies Night “CRUISIN’ FOR CONSERVATION”

About 250 ladies came aboard and joined us for an evening of information, education, and motivational fun by attending the 20th Annual Ladies Night conducted by the Richland Soil Conservation District, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District.

Ladies Night was started in 1996 in an effort to educate women in Richland and Wilkin Counties about conservation programs and services available through the Districts with hopes that they would become more comfortable as partners on their family farms and become involved in the decisions made on them. Ladies Night has evolved to include all women, urban and rural in its program.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Specialist, Nicole Kovar, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, educated us on protecting our waters and preventing the transport of zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil and other aquatic invasive specials. Kovar also stressed that invasive species can cause economic and environmental harm or harm to human health.

We were left “blasted” by two interactive dueling guitars. SongBlast provided the fun, involving the audience, by performing all genres of popular American music.

A theme basket raffle was held to help defray the cost of the program. Also, a special “Anchors Away” raffle was held for a \$500.00 gift card with \$1,000.00 of the proceeds donated to the Valley Lakes Boy’s Home - Breckenridge.

Several sponsors donated funds and several door prizes were given away to make this event so successful.

The 2016 Ladies Night is scheduled for Thursday, April 7th - Mark your calendars!



Costume Winners

Rachel Klosterman, Carsen Klosterman, Marcia Krause



Karen Larson serenaded by SongBlast Dueling Guitars' Glen



Mary Norman rockin' it with SongBlast Dueling Guitars!



Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Specialist, Nicole Kovar, Minnesota DNR



Audience participation



Donation made to Valley Lakes Boy's Home - Breckenridge



Ladies Night
WINNER
PASSENGER NAME
**Janelle
Krump**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Kent, MN
PRIZE
Mystery Bag
(Pandora Bracelet)

09Apr 2015



Ladies Night
WINNER
PASSENGER NAME
**Kelsey
Nordick**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Rothsay, MN
PRIZE
**Bose
Speaker**

09Apr 2015



**Lavonne
Heng**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Barnesville, MN
PRIZE
**Schwinn
Bike**



Ladies Night
WINNER
PASSENGER NAME
**Marcia
Krause**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Breckenridge, MN
PRIZE
Fire Pit

09Apr 2015



Ladies N
WINNE
PASSENGER NAA
**Patty
Lingen**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Mantador, ND
PRIZE
**Anchors Away
Raffle**
\$500 Visa Gift Card

09Apr



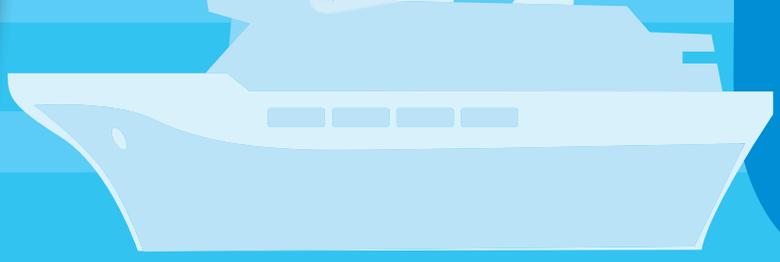
Ladies Night
WINNER
PASSENGER NAME
**Kathy
Czichotzki**
CITY OF ORIGIN
Wahpeton, ND
PRIZE
**Coleman
Portable Grill**

09Apr 2015



LADIES NIGHT SPONSORS:

- Ag Country Farm Credit Services
- Bank of the West
- Bell State Bank & Trust
- Breckenridge Drug
- Bremer Bank
- Buzz's Garage Bar & Grill—Mooreton
- Colfax Farmers Elevator
- Conzemius Oil Company
- Crop Production Services
- CW Valley Coop—Wolverton
- Dakota Gourmet
- Dean's Landscaping
- Farmers Cooperative—Lidgerwood
- Farmers Union of the Southern Valley
- Fort Saloon—Abercrombie
- Giant Snacks, Inc.
- Glanzer Consulting-Alexandria, MN
- Goerger Seed & Supply
- Hairetage Card & Gift
- Lake Region Electric Cooperative
- Landmark Landscaping
- Lasting Impressions—Wahpeton
- LeMar Photography
- Lincoln State Bank—Hankinson
- Nuseed
- Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative
- Minn-Kota Ag Products
- Jared & Kelsey Nordick Farm—Rothsay
- Jerry Nordick—Pioneer Meadows Seed
- Otter Tail Power Company
- POETS—Breckenridge
- Red River Valley & Western Railroad
- Smith Motors
- Connie Solien—RDO Equipment
- Thrifty White Drug
- Vantage Bank—Kent
- Wahpeton Eagles
- Wal-Mart
- Wil-Rich, LLC
- Wilbur Ellis
- Wilkin County Environmental
- Wilkin County Farm Bureau
- Zonta Club





WILKIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND PARTNERS RECEIVE

2015 ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE AWARDS

The mission of the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide local leadership in the conservation of soil, water, and related natural resources through programs and partnerships with individuals, businesses, organizations and government.

The Wilkin SWCD's commitment to this mission was recognized in a big way this year at the 2015 Environmental Initiative Awards Banquet. The Environmental Initiative is a nonprofit organization that builds partnerships to develop collaborative solution to Minnesota's environmental problems.

Each year the Environmental Initiative Projects honor innovative projects that achieve extraordinary environmental results by harnessing

the power of partnerships. This year the Wilkin SWCD was a partner in two separate projects that were nominated for awards. These programs were the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) and the Manston Slough Restoration Project.

At the end of the evening the MAWQCP received the first place award in the Food Stewardship Category and the Manston Slough Restoration Project received the first place award in the Natural Resources Category. To top off the evening the Manston Slough Restoration Project also took home the Partnership of the Year Award.

Both projects required a significant amount of coordination and partnerships and are examples of how multiple jurisdictions and landowners can work together to achieve multiple benefits. The commitment to team work and cooperation was instrumental in the success of both projects.



Manston Slough Parnters receiving Partnership of the Year Award



MINNESOTA'S NEW STATEWIDE SOIL EROSION ACT

Erosion is a natural process caused by the weathering of soils and bedrock. Some degree of erosion occurs everywhere naturally even though the rate may be impossible to measure or perceive. However, the land disturbing activities associated with humans can greatly accelerate the erosion process resulting in reduced soil productivity or adverse effects to adjacent lands or to water quality.

Approximately 20 years ago, in an effort to help address excessive soil loss, the State of Minnesota provided counties with statutory authority to voluntarily adopt and enforce official controls to regulate excessive erosion and sedimentation. Over the past two decades only five (5) of Minnesota's 87 counties had adopted soil loss ordinances.

In 2010, the National Resource Inventory estimated that an average of 147 million tons of soil eroded from Minnesota's 21 million acres of cropland. This translates into an average soil loss of 7 tons per cropland acre, including both wind and water erosion. More importantly, the inventory specified that nearly 13 million acres of Minnesota cropland has erosion control needs.

In April of 2015, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency released a new water quality report that provides evidence that agriculture and urban runoff is contributing significantly to the impairment of

Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams. The new study, which monitored more than half the state's 81 major watersheds, took an in-depth look at the lakes and streams in major drainage areas. According to MPCA, it is unlikely that current or new clean water funding can significantly improve the deteriorating conditions of many of the state's waters – unless the state employs new strategies to prevent the pollution from happening in the first place.

In June of 2015, at the close of the legislative session Governor Dayton signed into law a statewide soil erosion act. The soil erosion act can be found in Minnesota Statutes Chapter 103F. The act removed the "voluntary" option for local government. In addition, the act authorizes local government to issue administrative penalty orders for individuals found to be out of compliance.

Enforcement of the erosion act will be complaint driven. Landowners who are adversely affected by excessive erosion or sedimentation, or elected or appointed officials of local government may submit a written complaint.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is the lead state agency for this program and is currently developing guidelines and policy for implementation. As these guidelines are developed we will provide more details so stay tuned for additional information.



Become a Certified Farm!

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

Through this program, certified producers receive:

- **Regulatory certainty:** certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification
- **Recognition:** certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality
- **Priority for technical assistance:** producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality

Through this program, the public receives:

- Assurance that certified producers are using conservation practices to protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams

Any producer in Wilkin County can request water quality certification. All certifications are completed locally at the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District Office. Producers seeking certification will undergo a three step process.

1. **Application:** In this step producers self-verify that they are meeting existing Minnesota laws and regulations regarding water quality
2. **Assessment:** In this step local SWCD staff evaluate each of your fields within your operation with a computerized assessment tool. The tool evaluates: soils, nutrient and pesticide management factors, tillage management factors, irrigation and tile drainage management, and existing or planned conservation practices. Fields will receive a score from 1-10. The higher the score the lower the field's risk is to water quality. A score of 8.5 or greater is necessary for certification.
3. **Verification:** In this step local SWCD staff visit each of your fields to confirm existing conservation practices are in place and to discuss any further water quality related issues.

If during the certification process, specific issues relating to water quality are identified, technical and financial assistance is available

After completing the three step process, producers have the opportunity to enter into a ten year certification contract that ensures regulatory certainty from the State of Minnesota.

For more information about the Ag Water Quality Certification Program contact the Wilkin SWCD office.



Volunteer with the Earth Team!

Earth Team offers many opportunities for people who are interested in volunteering to improve the natural resources. People who are 14-years-old and older can volunteer.

Earth Team volunteers work side-by-side with conservation professionals and are an integral part of the conservation partnership. Volunteers can work part-time or full-time, work outdoors or inside a local NRCS office.

Earth Team volunteers will gain hands on job experience in natural resources conservation! Contact the Breckenridge NRCS office for more details.

Farmers find healthy soil works for crops, bottom line

from Minnesota Public Radio News. © 2015 Minnesota Public Radio.

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Doug Toussaint's field was in critical condition — and he was the one killing it.

The clay soil in the Red River valley an hour south of Fargo was compacted. He tried a form of extra-deep plowing known as ripping, but it only made the problem worse.

For two straight years, the field was too soggy for planting because the soil couldn't absorb rainfall.

He turned to North Dakota State University soil expert Abbey Wick, who quickly saw the problem: short-duration crops planted year after year with “nowhere for the water to go.”

The cure? Give the land a break. Don't plow it.

Turning the soil over breaks it down and reduces organic matter — decaying plants that feed bacteria, fungi and other microbes — that help prevent compaction and let water move through the soil.

This year Toussaint's field looks very different. He planted a cover crop last fall. Grasslike spears of rye are thick and green between rows of soybeans.

Research shows healthy soil can reduce erosion, slow runoff into rivers and cut the need for fertilizer. Despite those benefits, observers say it remains hard to convince farmers to leave behind traditional tillage. No-till practices are used on less than .05 percent of Minnesota farm fields, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2012 census; reduced tillage happens only about 30 percent of fields.

“It's a way of life, it's a culture, it's something that you do,” Wick said of tilling the soil. “To stop doing that and to sit back at the shop while everybody else is out tilling is really tough for a guy to do.”

Toussaint is among those Red River farmers who've bought in to no-till and found good things come from changing practices. By expanding his crop rotation and using cover crops, he's cut fertilizer costs on some fields. That's especially important now when crop prices are low.

There are several projects in Minnesota aimed at changing farm tillage practices. A Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources project will encourage the use of cover crops in southeastern Minnesota starting this summer.

The University of Minnesota is studying alternative cover crops and the USDA has a variety of soil health research and education initiatives.

Some farm groups support the change. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association has two soil health research projects. Research director Paul Meints says farmer interest was reflected in turnout at a demonstration day he attended last summer in western

Minnesota that drew farmers the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa.

Planting cover crops can be a challenge in Minnesota and the Dakotas where a short growing season doesn't leave much time to plant a second crop after the fall harvest.

But farmers will adopt minimum or no till practices if they see it as a wise business decision, Meints added.

“I think if we can show a production practice like a cover crop that works and it does all of the things we want it to do but does not create a yield loss or profit loss to the grower, adoption can come very, very quickly.”

Wick says Red River farmers pay attention when she shows them the low percentage of organic matter on their land, but it took years to reduce the organic matter, and it takes years to build it up again.

Toussaint, 58, farms about 3,500 acres, raising corn, soybeans, rye, wheat, barley and reed canary grass. He's currently using limited tillage or cover crops on about 500 acres.

He says he's already seen benefits from just two years of cover crop and no tillage. But for him, healthy soil is also about the future.

“To me it's like money in the bank,” he said. “In the account is X amount. It's going to be fine for my lifetime, I'll never get to the zero balance. But the next generation, or third generation, they may get to that lower balance. Hopefully our soils will be so far ahead that we never hit that zero balance.”

Doug Toussaint examined the soil surface in a small field he recently planted with a mix of grasses. Toussaint has also added Reed Canary grass to his crop rotation and says last year it was his most profitable crop.



Photo by Dan Gunderson, Minnesota Public Radio News.
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Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and Buffer Initiative

By Carol Poppel,
County Executive Director

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) offers annual payments to producers in exchange for establishing permanent vegetation on their land - offering many environmental benefits – including erosion control, water quality and improvements to wildlife habitat. One of our Continuous CRP practices is the CP21-Buffer strip practice.

With the recent legislation in Minnesota regarding buffer strip requirements that are to go into effect in 2017 and 2018, we have been fielding some questions about enrolling some of these areas into CRP. At this time, the land would be eligible to participate, as the producer is voluntarily enrolling it in CRP. The land would become ineligible for enrollment in CRP when the buffer practice is required as an obligation to comply with local, State, or Federal law AND the producer is notified in writing that the required practice must be performed. Once enrolled in CRP, and when the law is mandated, the acreage is eligible to remain in CRP through the end of the contract period. Once the contract expires, future enrollments would not be allowed.

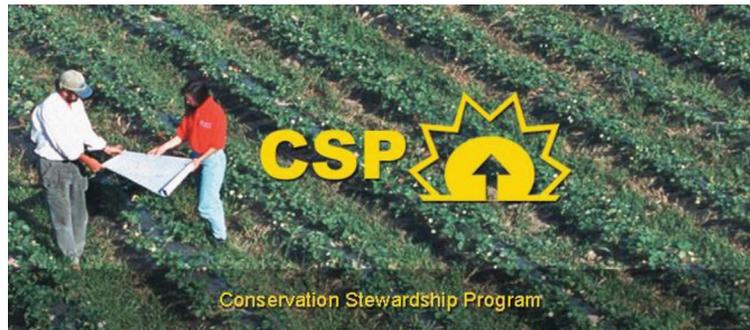
Some of the eligibility criteria for a CP-21 practice includes: it must be placed next to a stream having a perennial flow or a seasonal stream, or may be adjacent to a wetland or other water body. The land must have cropping history. The size of the buffer must be a minimum of 30 feet and a maximum average width of 120 feet.

The annual rental payment is determined by the soil type rental rates, with an additional 20% incentive. A one-time signing incentive payment of \$100 per acre is paid upon approval of the contract. The practice must be established within one year of approval. Cost share and incentives of up to 90% of the eligible cost of establishment are paid to the participant. Contracts may be in effect from 10 to 15 years, with annual payments made each year after October 1.

If interested, please call or stop by our office for more information. We also have many other conservation practices that may be suitable for your farm.

CRP General Sign-up

FSA will be accepting new offers to participate in CRP under a general sign-up to be held Dec. 1, 2015, through Feb. 26, 2016. General sign-ups are highly competitive. Producers place a “bid” for an acceptable rental rate. The “bid” they offer along with the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI), and practice selected will determine whether the land will be accepted into CRP. Watch for more information on this in FSA’s GovDelivery newsletters.



Did you hear?

The Conservation Stewardship Program is
NOW OPEN for NEW ENROLLMENTS in 2016

Wilkin County producers interested in participating in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) can now submit applications for new enrollments for 2016.

CSP participants will receive an annual payment for environmental benefits that result from good resource management. CSP participants earn payments for levels of conservation performance: the higher the level of conservation, the higher their payment up to \$40,000 a year for five year period.

CSP is a voluntary program that allows producers to go the extra mile in conserving natural resources by maintaining existing conservation practices and undertaking additional conservation activities to enhance conservation on the land.

Some common enhancements used in Wilkin County:

- Use drift reducing nozzles, low pressures to reduce pesticide drift.
- GPS, targeted spray application (Smart Sprayer), or other chemical application electronic control technology
- Plant tissue tests and analysis to improve nitrogen management
- Apply phosphorus fertilizer below soil surface
- Split nitrogen applications, 50% after the crop emergence or green up

Interested producers should either stop by the NRCS Breckenridge Field Office or contact the office at 218-643-1536 ext. 3

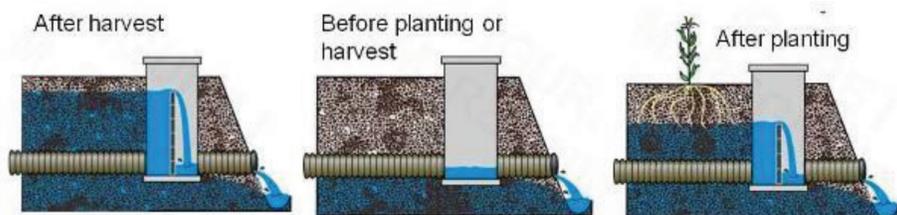


United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Wilkin County Farmers Eligible for Drainage Water Management Grants

Subsurface tile drainage is becoming an essential water management practice here in Wilkin County and in the Red River Valley. Drainage water management is the practice of using a water control structure in the main, sub-main or lateral drain to vary the depth of the drainage outlet. The outlet depth, as determined by the outlet structure, is:

- Raised after harvest to limit drainage outflow and reduce the delivery of nitrates to ditches and streams during the off-season.
- Lowered in the early spring and again in the fall so the drain can flow freely before field operations such as planting or harvesting.
- Raised again after planting and spring field operations to create a potential to store water for the crop to use in midsummer (see the figure below).



Grants from the State Clean Water Fund are available to Wilkin County Farmers who are interested in implementing drainage water management. Eligible activities include:

- Developing Drainage Water Management Plans. Producers receive 75% of the cost for this plus an annual incentive payment of \$7.58 per acre for three year, up to a maximum of 300 acres per cooperator.
- Developing Nutrient Management Plans. Producers receive 75% of the cost for this plus an annual incentive payment of \$5.44 per acre for up to three years, up to 300 acres
- Installing water control structures. Producers receive 75% of the cost, not to exceed \$2,000 per structure.

Stop in at the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District office to learn more about the Drainage Water Management Grant program.



Haybuster Drill Available For Rent or for Custom Seeding

The District has purchased a Haybuster 107 (10 foot) drill to promote soil and water conservation practices. The drill is built for versatility and can be used in no till, minimum till, or conventional tillage. It is ideal for:

- seeding bufferstrips, cover crops, food plots and pollinator plantings,
- pasture renovations and inter-seeding, and
- for small grain seeding, solid stand beans, alfalfa, clovers and grasses

The SWCD will rent the drill to area cooperators or custom seed for you.

Producer rental rates are \$10 per acre with a \$150 minimum charge. Custom rental rates are \$30 per acre with a \$300 minimum charge. Producers interested in using the drill must sign a drill rental agreement and make a \$150 deposit prior to renting or custom seeding.

To assure availability, please contact the office one week prior to your anticipated seeding date.



“Sam Ting”

Tom Gibson, educational presenter, visited all elementary schools in Wilkin County presenting lyceums designed to emphasize the need to protect and conserve our precious natural resources.

The delightful Norwegian humor of “Sam Ting” captured the attention of local students as Sam taught natural resource conservation awareness through the story of the weasel family. While dressed in his best overalls, white shoes, and finest hat, Sam also enlisted the help of volunteers from the audience to illustrate the impact of pollution on our lakes and streams. Sam’s presentation includes lots of “You Bet’s and Uff-da’s”.

Gibson has other characters in his line-up including a fast-moving energetic game show host “Daren Ewe”, “Pete Bogg” the Amazing Water Machine, “Gunner” in Water You Doing?, and “George Gibson” of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. All presentations are a part of The Regional Environmental Education Series of “TREES” program.

These lyceums are sponsored annually by the Wilkin SWCD.



Web - Messenger

If you would like to receive information from us about our programs and upcoming deadlines, please send your Producer Name and E-mail address to dloimmel@co.wilkin.mn.us

EVERGREENS

Spruce-plant 14-16 feet apart, with 14-16 feet between rows

Pine-plant 6-12 feet apart, with 10-12 feet between rows

Black Hills Spruce - Dull, bluish-green $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch needles, moderate growth rate, maturity height 30 to 70', will perform better in well-drained moist soils.

Colorado Spruce - Nearly perfect pyramidal outline with horizontally spreading branches. Height of 12-15' after ten years. Grows well on droughty sites and always prefers well-drained soils.

Ponderosa Pine - Dark gray-green to yellow green 4" to 7" long needles, moderate to rapid growth rate, mature height 60 to 100+', will tolerate a wide variety of soils.

Eastern Red Cedar - Mature height 40-70'. Prefers moist soils but will tolerate dry conditions. Not particularly alkali tolerant. Flat scale-like needles. Blue-green berry-like cone. Excellent wildlife habitat. Should not be planted near apple trees or trees related to apples. Slow to moderate growth rate. Long-lived.

TALL TREES

Plant 8-16 feet apart, with 10-16 feet between rows

Black Walnut - Needs deep rich soil. Leaves turn yellow to brown in fall. Moderate growth rate, large nuts in fall. Height of 6-8' in ten years; mature height 90"

Bur Oak - Large, rugged tree, slow growing, maturity height 40-70', and crown width of 35-60'. Leaves are large with rounded lobes. Fall color is yellow-green to brown.

Cottonwood, Siouxlant - Mature height 40-70'. One of many seedless acceptable cottonwoods; short-lived. Does not tolerate droughty sites. Often used in shelterbelts as a temporary tree until evergreens or other longer living trees reach an effective size. Narrow crown. Waxy green cottonwood shaped leaf. Easy to establish. Very rapid growth rate.

Crab, Red Splendor - Red-pink flowers – dark red fruit. Mature height 15-20', tolerant to a fairly wide range of solid conditions.

Hackberry - Mature height 50-90'. Rapid growth rate. Shade tolerant. Small deep purple berries. Prefers well-drained and moist soils, but will tolerate both moderately wet and dry conditions.

Silver Maple (Soft Maple) - Tall, fast growing tree, hardy in all zones. Mature height 60-90'. Leaves are silvery-white beneath and turn yellow in fall. Easy to transplant.

Norway Poplar - Easy to establish and grow very rapidly. Mature height 80 to 100+'. Prefers well-drained moist soils. All poplar species should be considered temporary species because of their relatively short life.

American Linden – Medium to large tree desirable for landscape for its large stature, shade, and aromatic flowers. Mature height 50-70'. Grows well on deep, fertile, well drained loam and clay soils. Intermediate tolerance to flooding. Full sun, but will tolerate shade.

American Elm "Princeton" - Highly resistant to Dutch Elm disease. Extremely fast growing tree with large, glossy green leathery foliage. Mature height 80-100 feet. Tolerant of virtually all soil types.

Autumn Blaze Maple – Large, Fast-growing tree with spectacular fall color. Hybrid of red and silver maple combines the best features of both. Mature height of 50 feet. Tolerates clay soil and will withstand wet soil conditions and drought.

SHRUBS

Plant 4-8 feet apart, with 6-8 feet between rows

Chokecherry - Dark purple to black berry at maturity, edible and tart; ripen in July and August. Growth rate is moderate to rapid, mature height 20 to 30'. Prefers well-drained moist soils but tolerates dry conditions.

Dogwood (Redosier) - White flower in July followed by berries. Height 10'. Stems are bright red during winter. Grows well in full sun or partial shade; most tolerant of moist soils.

Lilac (Common) - Flowers are purple, small and densely clustered in May and June and very fragrant. Adapted to a variety of soils, drought tolerant. Requires full sun. Growth rate moderate. Height 8-12', spreads by suckering.

Lilac (Villosa) - Flowers are rosy-lilac to white, fade quickly. Adapted to a variety of soils, less drought tolerant than common lilac. Requires full sun. Growth rate moderate. Height 6-10', does not sucker.

Plum, American - Rapid growth, dark green leaves, white flowers in spring. Fragrant, large plums ripen in September and are edible. Mature height 8-10'. Needs sun. Will tolerate drought conditions.

Nanking Cherry - Simple rough textured leaves with white to pink, fragrant flowers appearing in early May. Average height of 8'. Prefers rich, moist soils.

2016 TREE ORDER FORM

Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District
 1150 Highway 75 North
 Breckenridge, MN 56520
 218-643-2933

Date: _____
 Machine Plant ____ Yes ____ No

Name: _____

Address _____

Phone Number – Day _____

Evening _____

TREE ORDER AGREEMENT

I understand that the District CAN NOT GUARANTEE the survival of trees. Trees must be PLANTED FOR CONSERVATION PURPOSES ONLY. I understand that I am required to provide a DOWN PAYMENT not less than 25% with the remaining balance due at pick up. Down payments will not be refunded if tree orders are cancelled after February 1st unless trees are sold out at the nursery. If trees are ordered after February 1st no grace period for cancellation is allowed. If I have trees planted by the District full payment will be due within 30 days to avoid a finance charge. I understand that I am responsible for full payment regardless of spring planting conditions. (Minimum Order is 25 trees per species. Trees will be sold in bundles of 25 except pots.)



Evergreens – Potted	Price Ea.	Quantity	Total
Black Hills Spruce 15-18”	\$7.50		
Black Hills Spruce 24-30”	\$14.00		
Colorado Spruce 15-18”	\$7.50		

Evergreens – Bare Root	Price Ea.	Quantity	Total
Black Hills Spruce 8-12”	\$1.50		
Colorado Spruce 15-18”	\$1.50		
Ponderosa Pine 8-15”	\$1.50		
Eastern Red Cedar 9-15”	\$1.50		

Trees – Bare Root	Price Ea.	Quantity	Total
Black Walnut 18-24”	\$1.50		
Bur Oak 18-24”	\$1.50		
Cottonwood (no cotton) 2-3’	\$1.50		
Crab, Red Splendor 18-24”	\$1.50		
Hackberry 2-3’	\$1.50		
Maple, Silver 2-3’	\$1.50		
Norway Poplar 2-3’	\$1.50		
American Linden 18-24”	\$2.00		
American Elm ‘Princeton’ 12-18”	\$4.00		
Autumn Blaze Maple 12-18”	\$5.00		

Shrubs – Bare Root	Price Ea.	Quantity	Total
Chokecherry 18-24”	\$1.50		
Dogwood, Redosier 18-24”	\$1.50		
Lilac, Common 18-24”	\$1.50		
Lilac, Villosa 18-24”	\$1.50		
Plum, American 18-24”	\$1.50		
Nanking Cherry 18-24”	\$1.50		

Planting \$200.00 minimum or .50 per tree
 Tree Fabric \$45.00 per 100 ft.

Total Trees Ordered		\$
Total Trees Planted		\$
Tree Fabric Length		\$
Sales Tax (6.875%)		\$
Total Cost		\$
Deposit (25%)		\$
Balance		\$

Signed _____ Date: _____

WILKIN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SUPERVISORS

Jared Nordick - *Chairman*

Ross Aigner - *Vice Chairman*

Pam Hendrickson - *Treasurer*

Karlo Etten - *Secretary*

Dan Swedlund -

Public Relations & Information

DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

Don Bajumpaa - *District Manager*
dbajumpaa@co.wilkin.mn.us

Craig Lingen - *Resource Specialist*
craig.lingen@mn.nacdnet.net

Diane Lommel - *District Clerk*
dlommel@co.wilkin.mn.us

Kim Melton - *District Technician*
kimberly.melton@mn.nacdnet.net

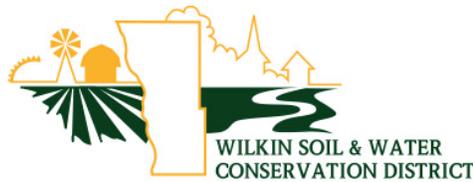
Assisted By USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service

Yara Gonzalez

yara.gonzalez@mn.usda.gov

The Wilkin SWCD prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.

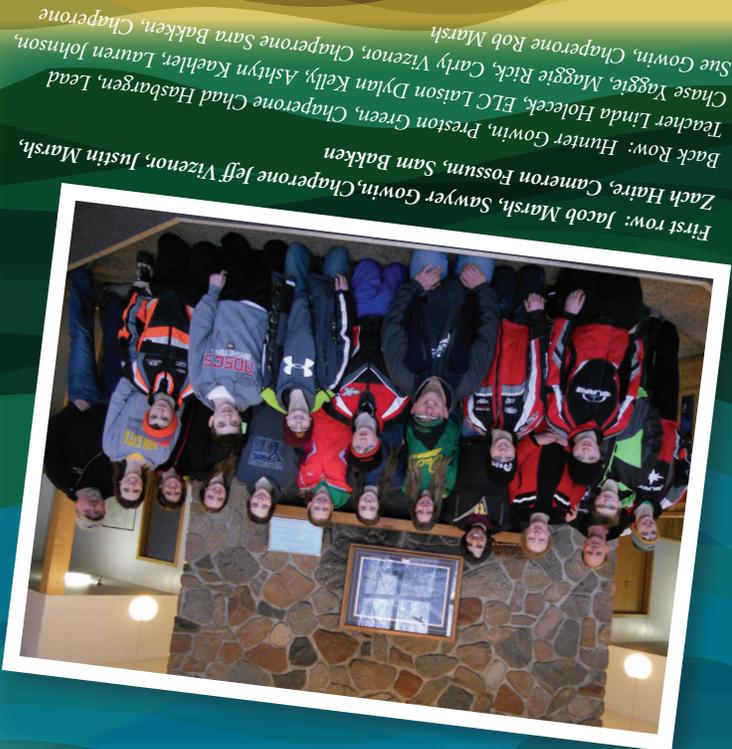
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*First row: Jacob Marsh, Sawyer Gowin, Justin Marsh, Zach Haire, Cameron Fossium, Sam Bakken
Back Row: Hunter Gowin, Preston Green, Chaparone Chad Hasbargen, Lead Teacher Linda Holecek, ELC Laitson Dylan Kelly, Ashlyn Kaehler, Lauren Johnson, Chase Yaggie, Maggie Rick, Carly Vizenor, Chaparone Sara Bakken, Chaparone Sue Gowin, Chaparone Rob Marsh*

The Wilkin SWCD helped sponsor St. Mary's eighth graders attend Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Camp, Finland, Minnesota. The students had an enjoyable time during this week of intense learning. Classes attended were: basic survival, animal signs, frozen lake student, adventure ropes, climbing wall, and Ojibwa snowshoeing. Students also attended evening talks on wolves, bears, birds of prey, and Lake Superior. Students were engaged in active learning for nine hours per day.

Founded in 1971, Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center was the first environmental learning center in the nation to be accredited as a K-12 school and is recognized nationally and internationally as a leader in environmental education.

Wolf Ridge is a place where minds open to the joy and wonder of discovery of our natural world. We seek to stimulate a love and understanding of nature by involving children and adults in direct observation of and participation on the outdoors and promote self-awareness and leadership development in the process.

For more information about Wolf Ridge's programs call 218-353-7414 or 800-523-2733 (MN, ND, WI), email@wolf-ridge.org, or visit the website at www.wolf-ridge.org.

STUDENTS ATTEND WOLF RIDGE ELC

