



CONSERVATION TIDBITS

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

January 2013

Peter and Linda Kramer Named 2012 Outstanding Conservationist

The Sibley County Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to announce the 2012 Outstanding Conservationist, Peter and Linda Kramer. Operating a corn/soybean farm near Gibbon, Minnesota, the Kramer family has displayed exceptional land stewardship over the years. They actively apply nutrient management measures to their fields, and have improved wildlife habitat and water quality through tree plantings and established buffers strips along adjoining public drainage systems. Soil health and quality is a true appreciation of the Kramer's, who utilize conservation tillage on their corn soybean and 50 acre wheat operation. Most years strip tillage is their preferred conservation practice, but in years of significant rainfall, the Kramer's have found great benefit in no-tilling their beans. In 2012 the Kramer's utilized strip tillage on 200 acres of corn, and no-till on 350 acres of soybeans. The Kramer's recently began experiment-



ing with cover crops following their wheat production and are learning the benefits of healthy soil.

The Kramer's were recognized for their stewardship efforts at the Annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, held in Bloomington this past December.



2013 EQIP Signup Going On

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications to help producers improve water and air quality, build healthier soil, conserve energy, and achieve other environmental benefits. NRCS has directed almost \$23.7 million in financial assistance for fiscal 2013 to help Minnesota producers implement conservation practices through the Envi-

ronmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Interested producers please visit the Gaylord NRCS service center for more information. The first 2013 ranking cutoff is January 18, 2013. Additional rankings for accepted applications: February 15, 2013, March 15, 2013 and April 19, 2013. To learn more information about EQIP visit www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs.

Staff

USDA-NRCS

April Sullivan, District Conservationist

Leanne Langeberg, Soil Conservation Technician

Jon Sellnow, Area Resources Conservationist

SWCD

Loren Evenson, District Manager

Kevin Pioske, District Technician

Ron Otto, Water Management

SWCD Board Members

Paul Wiemann, Chairman

Robert Nielsen, Vice Chairman

Wayne Grahms, Secretary

Tom Pfarr, Treasurer

Gary Schafer, Reporter

Board Meetings

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

Hours

Monday–Friday

8:00am–4:30 pm

Tree Ordering Day

February 21st, 2013

9:00 am–3:30pm

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





Cover Crops Improving Soil Performance

Cover crops can be an integral part of a cropping system to improve soil health. Cover crops help develop an environment that sustains and nourishes plants, soil microbes and beneficial insects.

Typically planted in late summer or fall, cover crops range from, rye, wheat, oats and clover; to non-tradition crops of turnips, radishes and other legumes.

Cover Crop Benefits

Restore Soil Health – Cover crops help increase organic matter in the soil and add living roots to the soil during more months of the year.



Cover crops can improve water infiltration into the soil. Deep-rooted crops like forage radishes create natural water passages. Legume cover crops serve as natural fertilizers while grasses scavenge nutrients that are often lost after harvest or during winter.

Protect Natural Resources – Cover crops protect the soil against erosive heavy rain and strong wind. They also trap excess nitrogen, keeping it from leaching into groundwater or running off into surface water – releasing it later to feed growing crops.

Feed Livestock – Cover crops can provide livestock producers with additional grazing or haying opportunities.

Wildlife Habitat – Cover crops provide food cover year round for birds and mammals to important pollinators.



Unlock your farm's potential...

discover the cover

Soil is a living system. Healthy soil looks, smells, and feels alive. Healthy soil can improve production, increase profits, and protect natural resources. How does your soil compare? Dig in and discover what your soil can tell you about its health and production potential.

Dig in and see

Healthy productive soil is porous, dark in color, and crumbly. Healthy soil provides homes to beneficial worms and other organisms that squirm, creep, hop, or crawl. Healthy soil provides the right amount of air, water, and organic matter for microorganisms to thrive and for plants to



grow. Soil that is functioning at its full potential is filled with roots of the healthy and strong plants it supports.

An unhealthy, poorly functioning soil is lighter in color, compacted or has poor structure, and contains limited roots and living things.

Dig in and smell

The tiny microbes in healthy soil produce a sweet earthy aroma. This is the scent of geosmin. These microbes decompose the tough plant and animal residue in and on the soil and bring nitrogen from the air into the soil to feed plants.

Unhealthy, out-of-balance soil produces a sour or metallic smell.

Dig in and Feel

Healthy soil is easy to dig into. It has a soft, moist, and crumbly texture that allows plants to grow roots more freely and unimpeded. This crumbly or granular structure is ideal because porous, healthy soil holds water for plants to use when needed. The increased water-holding capacity reduces runoff that can cause flooding, and increases the availability of water to plants during droughts.

Unhealthy, poorly functioning soil feels dry, crusty, and cloddy and does not crumble readily when pulled apart.

Implementing a Soil Health Management System can lead to increased organic matter, more soil organisms, reduced soil compaction and improved nutrient storage and cycling. As an added bonus, fully functioning, healthy soil absorbs and retains more water, making it less susceptible to runoff and erosion. This means more water will be available for crops when they need it. Soil Health Management Systems allow farmers to enjoy profits because they spend less on fuel and energy while benefiting from the higher crop yields resulting from improved soil conditions.

Contact the Gaylord NRCS office to learn more about Soil Health Management Systems and the technical and financial assistance available to help "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil."



Schafer serving as Board Member for State Conservation Organizations

St. Paul. Gary Schafer of Gibbon, Minnesota, recently began a term of service as Board Member for the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD). Schafer has served on the Board of Supervisors for the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) since 1995. "Gary's experience in conservation issues as a Supervisor of the Sibley SWCD gives him a real advantage as a board member for the Association," said LeAnn Buck, Executive Director for the MASWCD. "With his leadership and expertise with conservation policy, the Association

"...his leadership and expertise, will continue to make significant contributions in the area of local resource management."

will continue to make significant contributions in the area of local resource management," she said.

The MASWCD represents Minnesota's 90 Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Today, SWCDs work with cooperating landowners to help manage and protect soil and water resources. The Association is involved in helping

set policy for various conservation programs including: the state Erosion Control Cost-Share Program, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program, Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act and the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

As the South Central Area 6 Director, Schafer represents eleven Soil and Water Conservation Districts in South Central Minnesota. Active in his local conservation district, he will also continue to serve as a supervisor for the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District.

The Gaylord Field Office Welcomes:



Soil Conservation Technician: Leanne Langeberg

Leanne started her new duties in September 2012. She grew up on a hobby-farm in Rice County Minnesota. Leanne graduated from Minnesota State University in Mankato, MN, in 2004 and quickly began her career in natural resource management. Leanne brings to our office a wide

background of public and private land management experience having worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Leanne enjoys hiking and nature photography. She is excited to join NRCS again, and looks forward to meeting Sibley County's landowners and producers.



Area Resource Conservationist Jonathan Sellnow

Jon has provided conservation assistance with the Natural Resources Conservation Service for 10 years. Growing up in Stearns County, MN, he is the son of a retired NRCS District Conservationist. Jon graduated from North Park University in 2004. He started his career as a student intern working in Benton County in 2002.

Since then, Jon has worked in Becker County, Fillmore County, and McLeod County. Jon was the Area Resource Conservationist working out of the St. Peter Area Office, which served 13 Counties in South Central Minnesota. When the office closed in 2012 Jon was transferred to the Gaylord Field Office, servicing 16 counties with wetland compliance activities.



Cost Share dollars for Best Management Practices

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District has funding available for 2013 Best Management Practices (BMPs) through the state cost-share program.

Practices available for cost-share:

- Critical area plantings
- Diversions
- Field Windbreaks
- Grade Stabilization Structures
- Shelterbelts
- Grass waterways
- Livestock Waste Management
- Filter strips

- Water and Sediment Control Basins
- Stream bank and Shore land Protection
- Strip-cropping
- Terraces
- Well Sealing

If you are interested in learning more about Best Management Practices and how to incorporate on your land, or you have a project in mind contact Loren at the Sibley SWCD office in Gaylord.

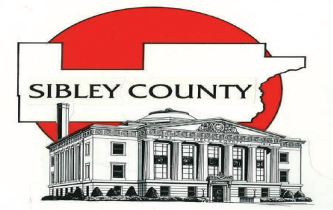


Grade Stabilization Washington Lake Township

Sibley County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Loan Program

Are you looking to manage your subsurface sewage? The Sibley County Ag BMP loan program may be for you if there are no other programs that fit your situation. Sibley County administers this loan program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Additional requirements include a completed

Application, an approved septic plan, septic system permit, and taxes on the property cannot be delinquent. The loan can be up to 10 years in length with 3% interest on the unpaid balance. Please stop in or call Ron Otto at the Sibley SWCD if you have any question or want an application.



Grants Available for Septic System Upgrades

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has made funding available to counties for Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS) to protect and prevent against groundwater degradation. These funds will be available to low income homeowners for updating imminent health threat septic systems. The program is being admin-

istered by the Sibley County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in conjunction with Sibley County Environmental Services and the County Auditor.

Funding for this program is grant based, and therefore will not require repayment responsibility by the land owner. These funds will cover \$6,424 of each household's new

system. The remaining costs of the new system can still be financed through Sibley County's low interest loan program.

If you have questions, or would like an application, please contact Ron Otto at the Sibley County SWCD office, (507)237-5435 ext. 105, or stop by at 111 6th St. in Gaylord.

Sibley SWCD 2013 Tree Order Form

Quantity	Variety	Size	Price	TOTAL
	<i>Shrubs & Small Trees</i>			
	Caragana	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Dogwood, Redosier	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Honeysuckle, Freedom	12-18"	\$1.50	
	Lilac, Villosa	12-18"	\$1.25	
	Lilac, Chinese	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Maple, Amur	12-18"	\$1.25	
	Plum, American	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Crabapple, R. Splendor	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Nannyberry Viburnum	12-18"	\$1.25	
	<i>Hardwood Trees</i>			
	Elm, Princeton	12-18"	\$4.00	
	Hackberry	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Honeylocust, Thornless	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Linden, American	12-18"	\$2.00	
	Linden, Little Leaf	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Silver	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Sugar	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Maple, Red	18-24"	\$1.50	
	Oak, Red	12-18"	\$1.25	
	Oak, White	12-18"	\$1.25	
	Oak, Swamp White	12-18"	\$1.25	
	Cottonwood, Male	18-24"	\$1.25	
	Poplar, Norway	2-3'	\$1.25	
	Walnut, Black	12-18"	\$1.25	
	<i>Bare Root Evergreens</i>			
	Pine, Ponderosa	7-15"	\$2.00	
	Pine, White	7-15"	\$2.00	
	Spruce, Black Hills	8-12"	\$2.00	
	Spruce, Norway	7-15"	\$2.00	
	Spruce, White	7-15"	\$2.00	
	Arborvitae, American	12-18"	\$2.00	
	<i>Potted Evergreens</i>			
	Spruce, Black Hills	15-18"	\$6.50	
	Arborvitae, Nigra	15-18"	\$6.50	
	Pine, Ponderosa	15-18"	\$6.50	
*Additional varieties may be available, but must be ordered in bundles of 25				

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone _____
 e-mail _____

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

Make Checks Payable to
 Sibley SWCD

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

FOR OFFICE USE

\$ _____
 Cash/Check
 Check# _____
 Initials _____

Sibley County SWCD 2013 Tree Program

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to offer the 2013 Tree Program. SWCD will be providing trees and shrubs for shelterbelts, field windbreaks, wildlife habitat and reforestation. Plant varieties suited to the climate and soils of Sibley County are available at affordable prices. Mechanical tree planters are available, free of charge, for larger plantings. Orders will be accepted while supplies last. Technical information regarding planting design and species selection are available at the District office. Please read the Terms and Conditions before placing your order.

Sibley SWCD Terms and Conditions

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



Tree Ordering Day

**Thursday February 21st,
2013**

9:00 am—3:30 pm

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



High Island and Rush River Watersheds

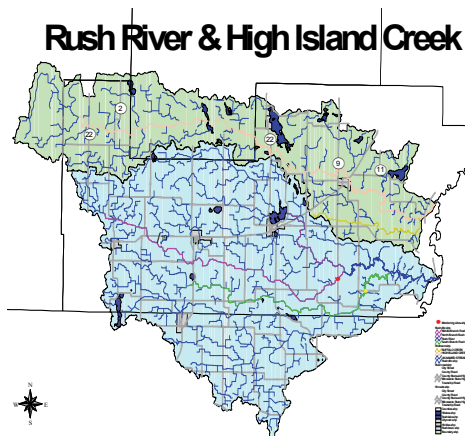
Cost share opportunities are available to install water quality improvements on your property in the High Island and Rush River Watersheds. The money is available through the High Island Creek Fecal Coliform TMDL and the Rush River Fecal Coliform TMDL. Best Management Practices (BMPs) included in the programs are:

- Manure Management Plans
- Feedlot Runoff Controls
- Clean Water Diversions
- Catch Basins
- Waste Storage Facilities

- Field Borders
- Vegetative Treatment areas
- Pasture Management
- Vegetative Waterways
- Grass Waterways
- Filter Strips
- Open Intake Alternatives

To learn more about these BMPs options visit:

- ⇒ **Brady Swanson**
Environmental Services at the courthouse
- ⇒ **Ron Otto**
SWCD office



Buffalo Creek Watershed Update (Part of Crow River Watershed)

Producers in the Buffalo Creek Watershed, grant money is available to improve water quality on your operation. This money can be used for stream bank stabilizations, sediment basins, filter strips, grass waterways, CRP incentives and rain gardens. If you are interested in improving the water quality on your property stop in or call the Sibley SWCD office. This funding opportunity to improve water quality will end June 30, 2013. Loans for SST upgrades are now available

through the Sibley County Ag BMP loan Program. To be eligible, you must live in the Buffalo Creek Watershed in Sibley County. Additional requirements include a completed application, approved septic plan, septic system permit and taxes on the property cannot be delinquent. The loan can be approved for up to 10 years in length

Grant money available for water quality improvement in Buffalo Creek Watershed. Program sign-up ends June 30, 2013.

with a 3% interest rate on the unpaid balance. Repayment of the loan comes as a line item on your property taxes. At this time there is \$27,600.00 available for loans, accepted on a first come basis.

If you are interested or have more questions call or stop and see Ron Otto at Sibley SWCD 111 6th St Gaylord, MN 55334 (USDA Service Center).

Bevens/Silver Creek Septic Loans

The Bevens/Silver Creek SSTS loan program has money available for septic system upgrades. Approximately \$152,000.00 has been set aside for septic loans.

To be eligible you must live in the Bevens or Silver Creek Watersheds in Sibley County. Additional requirements include a completed application, an approved septic plan, septic system permit and taxes on property cannot be delinquent. The loan can

be approved for up to 10 years in length with a 3% interest rate on the unpaid balance. Repayment of the loan comes as a line item on your property taxes. This will be the last year this loan will be offered. The program is scheduled to end December 15, 2013. If you are interested or have more questions, call Ron Otto at the Sibley SWCD office stop by the office at 111 6th Street Gaylord, MN 55334 (USDA Service Center).



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

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Up Coming Dates:

January 18th, 2013—EQIP 1st Ranking deadline
February 12th, 2013— SWCD Board Meeting
February 15th, 2013—EQIP 2nd Ranking deadline
February 18th, 2013— President's Day Holiday
February 21st, 2013— Tree Ordering Day
March 15th, 2013—EQIP 3rd Ranking deadline
April 19th, 2013—EQIP 4th Ranking deadline

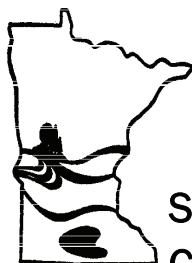
CRP/RIM Sign-Up

Riparian Buffer Conservation Easements

For sign-up information
stop by SWCD today!



Helping People Help the Land



We're on the web
[www. Sibleyswcd.org](http://www.Sibleyswcd.org)

SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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