CONSERVATION TIDBITS

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

January 2012

Stan and Deanna Braatz Named 2011 Outstanding Conservationist

Stan and Deanna Braatz from the Henderson area were named the 2011 Outstanding Conservationist for Sibley County. Stan and Deanna operate an acreage in Kelso and Jessenland Townships growing corn and soybeans. The couple have always had a passion for being stewards of the land and providing wildlife habitat. Stan recently completed a series of water and sediment control basins and a water diversion to control water erosion on his cropland adjacent to the ravine of High Island Creek. Stan plants wildlife food plots annually to feed the wildlife population in the area. The Braatz's were recognized for their stewardship at the Annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, held in Bloomington this past December.

2012 EQIP Signup Going On

The 2012 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) 1st ranking cutoff has been set for January 27th, 2012. EQIP is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial help to landowners for conservation practices that protect soil and water quality. Grassed waterways. Stream fencing, critical area planting, terraces, manure management systems including storage structures and barnyard runoff protection, and many other conservation practices are eligible. The cutoff for 2nd ranking is March 23 and 3rd ranking is May 25th 2012.

You can find more information at the http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/Programs or stop by the NRCS office in Gaylord.

Staff

USDA-NRCS

April Sullivan, District Conservationist

Jordan Dylla, Soil Conservation Tech.

Amanda Weckwerth, WAE

SWCD

Loren Evenson, District Manager

Kevin Pioske, District Technician

Ron Otto, Water Management

SWCD Board Members

Dave Trebelhorn, Chairman

Paul Wiemann, Vice Chairman

Robert Nielsen, Secretary

Tom Pfarr, Treasurer

Gary Schafer, Reporter

Board Meetings

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

Hours

Monday—Friday

8:00am—4:30 pm

Tree Ordering Day

February 9th, 2012

9:00 am—3:30pm

Sibley USDA Service Center
111 6th Street
Gaylord, MN

Minnesota Wetland Talking Points

Why is USDA changing policy on wetland protection?

The USDA wetland policy has not and is not changing. Farmers in USDA programs are required to protect wetland areas from additional drainage activity. What is changing is that NRCS will be providing a certified (final) wetland determination when farmers indicate their intention to install drainage improvements.

So - why am I hearing that USDA wetland policy is changing in MN?

For the past 5 years, instead of completing and issuing a certified wetland determination when a farmer indicated their intention to perform a drainage improvement activity (on the AD-1026 form) MN also required farmers to submit a written request for a certified determination (on the CPA-038 form). MN NRCS will no longer require both a written request (CPA-038 form) and the farmer self certification (AD-1026 form) to trigger agency completion of a certified determination. **From the farmer's perspective nothing has changed – farmers are responsible to limit their drainage activities so that protected wetland areas are not adversely impacted and they are required to comply with wetland protection regardless of whether NRCS has provided any type of wetland determination.**

What is a certified (final) wetland determination?

USDA has had wetland protection provisions since 1985. Initially, many NRCS offices provided farmers with wetland inventory maps indicating those wetland areas which required protection from new drainage activities. In the 1996 Farm Bill, Congress decided that the inventory maps, while providing good information, were not completely accurate and since then these inventory maps have been in the process of being replaced by certified wetland determinations.

Why is USDA involved in wetland protection?

Since December of 1985 congressionally approved Farm Bill legislation has contained wording that restricts USDA program participants from adversely impacting protected wetland areas with new or additional drainage activities. These provisions acknowledge that participation in USDA programs are a publically funded benefit to farmers. In return for these program benefits farmers agree to protect wetland areas from additional drainage. Wetlands provide a wide range of public benefits including water quality protection by trapping sediment and nutrient runoff, potential flood reduction, carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat.

How does a farmer meet their wetland compliance responsibilities?

Farmers that participate in USDA programs can achieve their wetland compliance responsibilities by taking these actions:

- Indicate your intention to perform any drainage activities that have not been previously evaluated by NRCS. This is done by completing the AD-1026 form.
- Self certify that you will comply with the USDA wetland protection requirements by not performing any additional drainage activity in protected wetland areas. This is done by signing the AD-1026 form.
- Limit all drainage activity so that protected wetland areas are not adversely impacted by additional drainage activities.

Is USDA approval required before drainage activities can be installed?

No – the USDA wetland compliance provisions are not administered through an approval process. USDA does not issue drainage permits. Wetland compliance is administered through farmer self certification and does not require USDA prior approval of proposed drainage activity. By providing certified wetland determinations NRCS is proactively assisting farmers by indicating which specific areas are wetlands that are protected from new or additional drainage activity.

USDA has no authority to delay or shut down drainage activity. Participating farmers are responsible to limit their drainage activities to insure protected wetland areas are not adversely impacted.

How can a farmer find out which areas on their land USDA considers to be wetlands that need to be protected from additional drainage?

USDA requires farmers to disclose their intention to conduct drainage improvements on the AD-1026 form. Farmers that indicate their proposed plans for new drainage will be receiving a certified wetland determination from NRCS. These certified determinations indicate the location of areas subject to protection through the USDA wetland compliance provisions. These determinations are issued to farmers via certified mail and contain a full explanation of the procedures for farmers to request agency reconsideration of any disputed wetland area.

What drainage activities can I conduct in and around an area identified as a wetland?

When wetlands are identified on your land you have these options:

- Request a drainage set-back distance from NRCS. Based on the soil type, and depth of the proposed drainage improvement work NRCS will provide you with a drainage set-back distance which defines the zone near identified wetlands where drainage improvement activity is restricted. Keep all drainage improvement activities outside of the set-back distance and there will be no adverse wetland impacts.
- Use non-perforated tile in areas within drainage set-back distances. When subsurface tile drainage is planned to go through wetland areas and their protected drainage set-back zone – non-perforated tile can be installed to allow drainage water to flow to an outlet
- Drain the wetland and **mitigate** the lost wetland values by replacing them by either restoring a previously converted wetland or with wetland credits purchased through the MN Wetland Mitigation Bank.

CSP 2012 Sign-up is underway

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

Through CSP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the production of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in the program is voluntary. CSP encourages land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. The NRCS will make CSP available nationwide on a continuous application basis with announced application cut-off dates for ranking periods.

The entire agricultural operation must be enrolled and must include all agricultural land that will be under the applicant's control for the term of the proposed contract that is operated substantially separate from other operations. If interested please stop in or call your local NRCS office for further details.

Seasonal High Tunnel Constructed in Sibley County

Barbara Pumper and her husband Roy Peterson have owned and operated Gullywash Gardens on approximately 3.5 acres of cropland in Faxon Township. The couple grow a wide variety of vegetables, greens, herbs and cut flowers that are sold at local farmers markets in Prior Lake and Belle Plaine as well as selling to the St Peter Food Coop. Gullywash Gardens also serves as a CSA-Community Supported Agriculture farm and have drop-off sites at their farm and several sites throughout the cities.

Gullywash Gardens recently constructed a Seasonal High Tunnel through the EQIP– Environmental Quality Incentives Program. This is a pilot program focused on extending the growing season to have fresh produce earlier in the season and later in the fall. “We are looking forward to selling lettuce, greens and tomatoes earlier in the season and hope to be able to have cut flowers in time for Mothers’ Day.” Commented Barbara. “We are also looking at extending the fall growing season with some cold hardy plants such as spinach, broccoli, greens and maybe carrots.”

“We are looking forward to selling lettuce, greens and tomatoes earlier in the season and hope to be able to have cut flowers in time for Mothers’ Day.”

If interested in this type of project stop by the NRCS office in Gaylord at 111 6th Street.

Dylla hired as new NRCS Soil Conservation Technician

Jordan Dylla is the newest person in the NRCS/SWCD office. Jordan started his duties in July 2011. He is a recent graduate of MSU in Mankato with a degree in Natural Resource Management. Prior to working with NRCS he was working for the National Park Service out in Yellowstone National Park as a Ranger. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, four wheeling

or anything outdoors. Jordan was raised in Madison Lake area and now resides in the Mankato area. Jordan’s duties will entail conservation engineering practices and getting general conservation projects on the ground. Jordan is excited to be back in MN and looking forward to working with producers in Sibley County.

Preserve Riparian Acres with RIM Perpetual Easements

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is currently looking for landowners interested in enrolling land into a permanent RIM Riparian Buffer conservation easement. The program allows landowners to offer 50-200 feet along streams, ditches, and lakes into a permanent conservation easement. Landowners are paid between $4,213 and $5,447 per acre from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources.

In order to be eligible, the landowner must have owned the offered acres for one year prior to applying, must offer a minimum of 3 acres, and must offer land that includes at least 50% tillable acres (including current CRP acres). Land in a new or existing CRP contract is also given a high priority.

If you are interested in the RIM Riparian Buffer Program please contact Loren Evenson at the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District at 507-237-5435 ext 4. Landowner interest and local knowledge of highly environmentally sensitive areas assist the SWCD in determining priority minor watersheds for which to apply for state funding. Please contact the SWCD to express your interest.

Cost Share dollars for Best Management Practices

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District will again have money available for Best Management Practices (BMPs) through the state cost-share program. Practices that are available for cost-share include:

- Critical area plantings
- Diversions
- Field Windbreaks
- Grade Stabilization Structures
- Shelterbelts
- Grass waterways
- Livestock Waste Management
- Filterstrips
- Water and Sediment Control Basins
- Streambank and Shoreland Protection
- Stripcropping
- Terraces
- Well Sealing

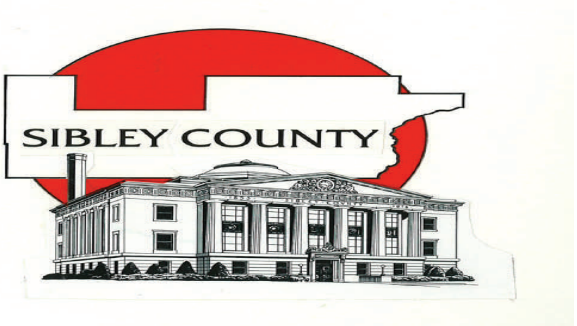
BMP dollars are obligated on a first come first serve basis until all monies are gone for the year.

If you have a project or want more information regarding BMP's contact Loren at the Sibley SWCD office in Gaylord.

Sibley County SSTS Loan Program

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.



Sibley SWCD 2012 Tree Order Form

Quantity	Variety	Size	Price	TOTAL
	Shrubs & Small Trees			
	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	
	Hardwood Trees			
	Elm, Princeton	12-18"	$3.25	
	Hackberry	18-24"	$1.25	
	Honeylocust, Thornless	18-24"	$1.25	
	Linden, American	12-18"	$1.25	
	Linden, Little Leaf	18-24"	$1.25	
	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	
	Bare Root Evergreens			
	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	
	Potted Evergreens			
	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 _____

SWCD 2012 Tree Program

Once again the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District 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 9th, 2012
9:00 am—3:30 pm

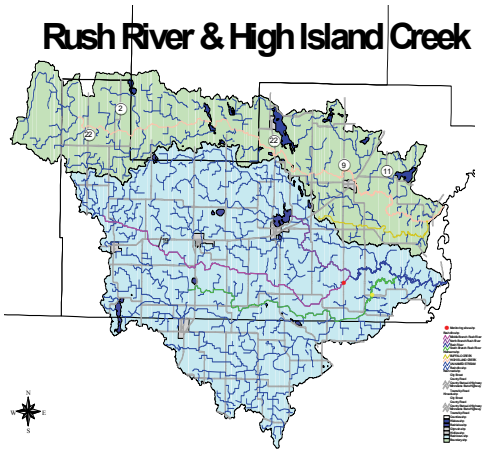
Sibley USDA Service Center
111 6th Street
Gaylord, MN 55334

High Island and Rush River Watersheds

There are cost share opportunities 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 get the specifics on the above BMPs call or stop by the SWCD office and talk to Ron Otto.



Buffalo Creek Watershed Update

(Part of Crow River Watershed)

There is grant money available for producers to improve water quality in the Buffalo Creek Watershed. This money can be used for streambank 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. These opportunities to improve water quality will be ending on June 30, 2013.

The Buffalo Creek Watershed SSTS loan program has money available to improve septic systems for another year. This program will be closing on December 9, 2012.

The Buffalo Creek Watershed SSTS loan program has money available to improve septic systems for another year. This program will be closing on December 9, 2012. To be eligible you have to live in the Buffalo Creek Watersheds in Sibley County. 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. Repayment of the loan comes as a line item on your property taxes. At this time there is $27,600.00 available for loans and will be spent on a first come basis.

Bevens/Silver Creek Septic Loans

The Bevens/Silver Creek SSTS loan program has money available for you to upgrade your septic system. $204,000.00 is available for septic loans. To be eligible you have to 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 used up to 10 years in length with 3% interest on the unpaid balance. Repayment of the loan comes as a line item on your property taxes.

The loan program will be ending June 30th, 2013. That is a year and half from now but don't delay putting in your system until 2013! If the weather is like this past year, construction will not be completed before the deadline.

If you are interested or have more questions, call or stop and see Ron Otto at the Sibley SWCD 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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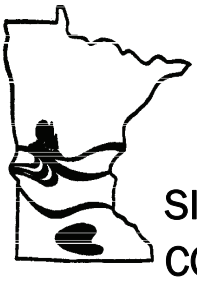
Up Coming Dates:

January 27th, 2012—EQIP 1st Ranking deadline
January 27th, 2012—CSP 2012 Signup deadline
February 7th, 2012– SWCD Board Meeting
February 9th, 2012– Tree Ordering Day
February 20th, 2012– President's Day Holiday
March 23rd, 2012– EQIP 2nd Ranking deadline

Conservation Stewardship Program
(CSP) 2012
&
EQIP 2012

Signup deadlines for both programs
January 27th, 2012

NRCS
Helping People Help the Land



We're on the web
www. Sibleyswcd.org

SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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

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