



CONSERVATION TODAY

Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District & USDA

Winter 2017/2018



2017 Conservationist of the Year

Paul and Donita Platz of Lafayette, have been selected by the Sibley SWCD as this year's conservationist of the year. They operate a 900 acre farm consisting of corn, soybeans, sweet corn, and peas. In addition, they finish 15,000 pigs a year. Over the years, the Platzs have been very conservation minded leading them to install grassed waterways, terraces and removing open intakes. They have protected their soils by using minimal tillage and planting cover crops. Paul and Donita are proud to have voluntarily planted buffer strips along their ditches long before the buffer law was introduced. Being involved in the Conservation Stewardship Program, the Platzs have and still partake in numerous pest and nutrient management activities, nitrogen testing, GPS target spraying, plant tissue testing, grid sampling, installing drift reducing nozzles and planting wildlife food plots. The Platzs have a real interest in renewed energy and have installed dual axis tracking solar panels producing 70,000 kW per year supplying all of the electricity to their hog barns. Paul and Donita are very active within their community, volunteering regularly at church, FFA and the Southern MN Crisis Nursery. The Platzs are stewards of the land and the district would like to thank them for their dedication to conservation.



Office Staff:

Sibley SWCD

Joel Wurscher,
District Manager

Jeremy Buckentin,
District Technician

Erik Goetsch,
Conservation Technician

Ron Otto, Water Planner/
Watershed Technician

McKoy Rodning, Nicollet/
Sibley Farmbill Technician

SWCD Board Members

Kathleen Thies - District 1

Paul Wiemann - District 2

Loren Evenson - District 3

Wayne Grams - District 4

Robert Nielsen - District 5

USDA-NRCS

April Sullivan,
District Conservationist

Chris Schmidt,
Soil Conservationist

Vacant,
Soil Conservation Technician

Board Meetings

2nd Tuesday of
each month
4:00 pm
SWCD Office

Office Hours

Monday—Friday
8:00 am—4:30 pm



United States Department of Agriculture Conservation Financial Assistance Programs:

CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program)

Continuous Sign-up

Now Accepting Applications for FY 2018 Funds

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program)

Continuous Sign-up

Now Accepting Applications for FY 2019 Funds

WRE (Wetland Reserve Easements)

Continuous Sign-up

For more information contact the NRCS Office at (507) 237-5435 x3





Meet Your New Sibley SWCD Staff

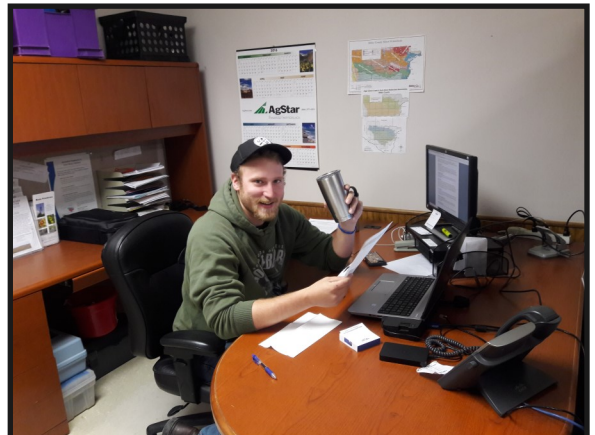
District Technician

Jeremy Buckentin grew up near Assumption, MN and graduated from Norwood Young America High School in 2004. He then attended the University of Minnesota-Crookston where he received a Bachelors of Science with two majors; Natural Resources Management and Water Resources Management. He began his conservation career with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, working in Meeker and Le Sueur Counties for a combined 5 years, and recently started working with the Sibley SWCD this past September. Jeremy enjoys spending time with his family, hunting, fishing, and does woodworking as a hobby. Jeremy brings a diverse mixture of engineering experience for erosion control systems and a broad knowledge of best management practices to Sibley County. Jeremy is excited to work here at the Sibley SWCD and looks forward to helping many of you with your erosion control needs!



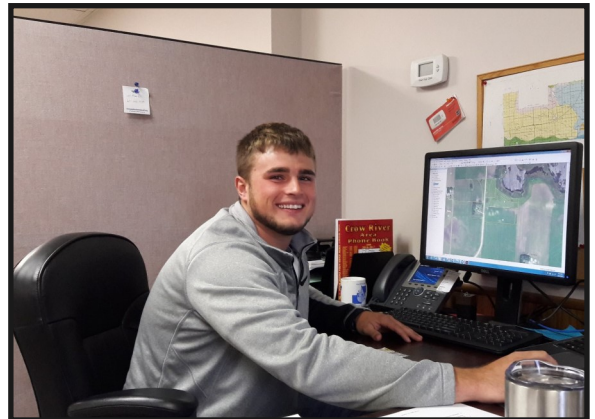
Conservation Technician

Erik Goetsch grew up in Gaylord, MN with a passion for the outdoors. He graduated from Sibley East High School and decided to pursue his passion for the outdoors by attending South Dakota State University where he received his bachelors degree in Wildlife and Fisheries. Over the years he's worked for the Game, Fish, and Parks in South Dakota, Game and Fish in North Dakota, and a private fisheries organization in Minnesota. Erik has many hobbies some of them include hunting, fishing, and sports. In his free time, he plays baseball for the Gaylord Islanders, participates in winter basketball leagues, and can be found fishing or hunting in the surrounding area. He is excited for the opportunity to learn and apply practices dealing in conservation and water quality to better Sibley County.



Sibley/Nicollet Farmbill Technician

McKoy Rodning is a Gaylord native currently living in Winthrop. He is married to his wife of 1 year, Stephanie, and recently welcomed a new daughter, Beckett. McKoy graduated from Southwest Minnesota State University in 2015 with an Agribusiness major and an Agronomy and Marketing minor. While at SMSU, McKoy played linebacker for the football team for four years. McKoy previously worked in agronomy with United Farmers Cooperative in Winthrop. In his free time, McKoy loves to farm with his dad and brother. He also plays baseball for the Gaylord Islanders, plays in a couple basketball leagues in the winter and loves to hunt and fish. He is excited to use his already established relationships with local producers to improve water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat, with the benefit of making new relationships along the way.





The Minnesota Buffer Law

By Joel Wurscher, District Manager

Still many discussions in our office revolve around the 2015 MN Buffer Law. This law has led me, as well as others in the office, to conversations with many familiar and some new faces throughout the county. First, we need to clear up some of the confusion about the term "buffer" we hear in the office. A buffer, also known as a filter strip, is an area of vegetated land adjacent to a body of water such as a ditch, stream or lake. Buffers help to filter excess nutrients/sediment, preventing them from entering our waters. Buffers also stabilize soil and protect riparian corridors. Governor Dayton signed this buffer initiative into law in 2015 to enhance the protection of Minnesota's waters, arguably the state's best resource!

Now that the compliance date for public waters has come and gone, it's time to focus on public ditches. The law states that for all **public ditches**, a 16.5-foot, or one rod, buffer of perennial vegetation **must be in place by November 1st, 2018**. To identify parcels you own or rent, view the finalized map completed by the DNR, found at the following, which will direct you right to the map: <http://arcgis.dnr.state.mn.us/gis/buffersviewer/>. If you do not have computer access, feel free to stop by our office and we can help you through the process. On this map, waterways lined in green are the areas labeled public ditches.

One way to meet compliance is to request financial assistance through the buffer cost share program. The Sibley SWCD has received a grant from the state to administer a Buffer Cost Share program, in which the SWCD can offer landowners assistance towards achieving compliance. This money is available to implement buffer strips at a rate of \$300 per acre adjacent to public ditches. This money is only available to sign up for until **March 1st, 2018**, so hurry in before the money runs out! These funds can only be used to reach compliance.

Another popular program to achieve compliance is through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). This program offers eligible landowners/producers yearly rental payments to set aside land like these buffer strips. CRP contracts also provide some cost share opportunities for activities towards establishment and management, making this a very viable option for bringing your buffer into compliance with the law. USDA is currently on hold for accepting new offers due to the unknown of meeting the national CRP acreage cap of 24 million acres.

A third option for landowners is to enroll into the CREP program. CREP is a voluntary, federal-state funded natural resource conservation program. Landowners enroll in the federally-funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for the first 14-15 years. CRP is administered by the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA). The same land is also enrolled into a state-funded perpetual conservation easement through the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve program, administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Private ownership continues and the land is permanently restored and enhanced for conservation benefits.

The last option is for you, the landowner/operator, to seed this area yourselves. This has been very popular for those that can utilize hay for feed. Many landowners have come in, and in the end, decided this option would best suit them due to the fact that they can regularly hay/cut these areas. Keep in mind perennial vegetation must be maintained to suffice the Buffer Law. **If you have planted your buffer on your own, please contact the office so that when tracking compliance we can mark your buffer as compliant.**

It's a very busy but exciting time in conservation right now. We at the SWCD look forward to working with you on implementing these buffer strips on your property! If you have any questions or would like some technical assistance with bringing your parcel into compliance, feel free to stop by our office or call 507-702-7077.





USDA Processing Pending Conservation Reserve Program Continuous Enrollment Offers Acceptance of Most 2018 Offers Temporarily Suspended

There has been a lot of interest in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) over the last year in Sibley County. With the new fiscal year there are also a few updates. Notice has been received from the USDA National office that going forward the authority to accept Continuous CRP offers has been suspended. This means that Sibley County USDA will not be accepting new CRP offers until new guidance is received.

The soil rental rates have also been reviewed and revised to more accurately reflect the changing rental rates in Sibley County. The previous soil rental rates for Sibley County ranged from \$231.00 to \$346.00 per acre depending on soil types. The new rates effective for fiscal year 2018 range from \$124.00 to \$346.00 per acre.

All current, eligible CRP continuous enrollment offers made through Sept. 30, 2017, except for those made under the Pollinator Habitat Initiative (CP42), will be approved. Additionally, FSA is temporarily suspending acceptance of most offers going forward to provide time to review CRP allocation levels, and to avoid exceeding the statutory cap of 24 million acres.

The CRP acreage cap is a provision of the 2014 Farm Bill. Current enrollment is about 23.5 million acres nationwide. USDA is accepting all pending continuous enrollment offers that were made beginning on May 4, 2017, and extending through Sept. 30, 2017, except Pollinator Habitat Initiative offers. Pollinator acreage offers are being declined because the program has met its acreage enrollment goal. Effective immediately, USDA is suspending acceptance of all new CRP continuous offers received or submitted after Sept. 30, 2017. The suspension will continue until later in the 2018 fiscal year.

However, FSA will continue to accept eligible offers for state-specific Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and CRP Grasslands enrollment. Offers received on or after Oct. 1, 2017, are subject to fiscal year 2018 rental rates, which have been adjusted to reflect current market conditions and were established after careful review of the latest USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) cash rent data.

In return for enrolling in CRP, USDA, through FSA, provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10 and 15 years. CRP pays farmers and ranchers who remove sensitive lands from production and plant certain grasses, shrubs and trees that improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and increase wildlife habitat. Payment totals for 2017 were announced earlier this week totaling over \$1.6 billion.

To stay up to date on current FSA program information please use the following resources:
For more information about CRP, contact your local FSA office or visit www.fsa.usda.gov/crp.
To sign up for the Sibley County FSA Office newsletter please visit www.fsa.usda.gov/subscribe To sign up for text alerts from Sibley FSA text **MNSibley** to FSANOW (372-669).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).



2018 Tree Order Form					Order Number (office use)	
Mail Order SIBLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT To: 112 5th Street, P.O. Box 161, Gaylord, MN 55334 PHONE: (507) 702-7077					Name: _____ Address: _____ Email Address: _____ Phone: _____	
QUALITY NURSING STOCK FOR CONSERVATION						
CONIFER POTTED						
<u>Species</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u># of Trees</u>	<u>Cost</u>	=		
1 Quart Blackhills Spruce	8-12"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Quart Colorado Spruce	8-16"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Quart Red Pine	5-10"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Quart White Pine	5-8"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Quart Ponderosa Pine	6-10"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Quart American Arborvitae	6-12"	_____	x \$3.75/Tree	=		
1 Gal. Red Pine	15-18"	_____	x \$9.50/Tree	=		
2 Gal. White Pine	18-24"	_____	x \$13.25/Tree	=		
2 Gal. American Arborvitae	18-24"	_____	x \$13.25/Tree	=		
2 Gal. Blackhills Spruce	24-30"	_____	x \$13.25/Tree	=		
2 Gal. Colorado Spruce	18"-24"	_____	x \$13.25/Tree	=		
					Important Notice Trees are distributed in April. We will notify you of your pickup day. The cost of trees does not warrant free replacement and the district offers no guarantee of survival.	
BARE ROOT DECIDUOUS <u>1 Bundle = 10 Trees</u>						
Black Walnut	9"-12"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Hackberry	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Norway Poplar	2'-3'	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Sugar Maple	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Red Maple	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Swamp White Oak	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Red Oak	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Bur Oak	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
					Payment due in full on day of order. No refunds on cancelled orders after February 23rd, 2018.	
SMALL TREES <u>1 Bundle = 10 Trees</u>						
Elderberry *New*	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Crab, Red Splendor	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Nanking Cherry	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
American Plum	18"-24"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
					Availability and size are subject to change.	
SHRUBS <u>1 Bundle = 10 Trees</u>						
American Hazelnut	12"-18"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Common Lilac	12"-18"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Serviceberry *New*	12"-18"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Dogwood Redosier	2'-3'	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Cranberrybush	12"-18"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
Flame Willow	12"-18"	_____	x \$14.00/Bundle	=		
					If you would like to be notified of your pickup day by e-mail, please provide that information in the space provided above.	
FABRIC TREE SQUARES & ROLLS			<u># of Mats or Feet</u>		NEW TREES & SHRUBS! We are no longer offering Amur Maple. Checkout the new items we've added as replacements: Elderberry and Serviceberry (Juneberry).	
<i>Price Includes 6"x1"x6" Staples</i>						
Pre-Cut Tree Squares	3' x 3'	_____	x \$1.65/Square	=		
Fabric Roll Mat (whole roll)	300 Feet	_____	x \$110.00/Roll	=		
Grow Tubes (4ft Tall)	4 Feet	_____	x \$5.00/Tube	=		
			SUBTOTAL		Pickup location will be at the Gaylord Tree Shed.	
			SALES TAX (6.875%)		Make Checks Payable to Sibley SWCD	
Please Round Sales Tax Correctly			TOTAL DUE			



Sibley County SWCD 2018 Tree Program

The Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will offer their 2018 Tree Program sale on **Thursday, February 15, 2018** by hosting an open house. The SWCD will offer trees and shrubs for shelterbelts, field windbreaks, wildlife habitat and reforestation. Selected plant varieties are suited to the climate conditions and soils of Sibley County. Technical information regarding planting design and species selection are available at the District office.

Trees offered through the program are available at affordable prices (see price list on pg.5). A mechanical tree planter is available (free of charge) for larger plantings, contact Jeremy (507) 702-7077 for more information. **Orders will be accepted while supplies last.** Please read the **terms and conditions** below before placing your order.

Sibley SWCD Terms and Conditions

- The Sibley SWCD is not be responsible for the survival or condition of the stock once they are received.
- There will be no refunds on cancelled orders after **February 23rd**.
- Full payment must be made on the day of the order.
- The District reserves the right to substitute varieties or sizes.
- Pick-up days are tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, April 26th or Friday, April 27th**, between **8am-5pm**.
- Customers will be notified by postcard where and when their stock is to be picked up.

Open House Tree Ordering Day

Thursday,
February 15th, 2018
9:00 am—4:00 pm
Sibley County USDA
Service Center
112 5th Street
Gaylord, MN 55334





WRAPS/Coffee Shop Talks on Water Quality

As a part of the WRAPS, Sibley SWCD will be hosting three coffee shop talks within the County. The plan is to host these in Gibbon, Gaylord, and Henderson sometime mid-February. Watch for announcements on exact dates and times. These coffee shop talks are designed to give you, the landowner/producer, an opportunity to converse with SWCD staff on what you would like to see happen to improve the land and water quality within the Lower Minnesota River Watershed. These conversations will be instrumental on where to allocate future funding streams to get the most bang for our buck. Stop in, grab a cup of coffee and donut on us, and share your Sibley County story. Also, if you haven't had a chance to see it yet, there is a great short video about inter-seeding cover crops starring Keith Hartmann from the rural Gibbon area. If you are contemplating adding cover crops to your cropping system, you need to check this out!



The following is the link to the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNJfQsOD4QI&feature=share>

New Office Information

Sibley SWCD

112 5th Street
PO Box 161
Gaylord, MN 55334
507-702-7077



Sibley FSA

112 5th Street
PO Box 868
Gaylord, MN 55334
507-237-2948 ext.2



Sibley/Nicollet NRCS

112 5th Street
PO Box 868
Gaylord, MN 55334
507-237-5435 ext.3



Sibley County Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS) Loan Program

Looking to manage your subsurface sewage? The Sibley County Ag BMP loan program may be an option for you if there are no other programs that fit your situation. Sibley County administers the loan program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Additional requirements include a completed application, an approved septic plan, and a septic system permit. Taxes on the property cannot be delinquent. A loan can be up to 10 years in length with a 3% interest rate on any unpaid balance. Stop by the SWCD Office or call Ron Otto at 507-702-7077 for any questions or to pick up an application.

Sibley SWCD and NRCS
112 5th Street
PO Box 161
Gaylord, MN 55334

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



SIBLEY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Upcoming Dates:

December 25th, 2017—Christmas Day (Office Closed)
January 1st, 2018 – New Years Day (Office Closed)
January 9th, 2018 – Sibley SWCD Board Meeting
January 15th, 2018 – MLK Day (Office Closed)
February 13th, 2018 – Sibley SWCD Board Meeting
February 15th, 2018 – Tree Day

Conservation Today is published by the Sibley Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA NRCS-Gaylord 112 5th Street Gaylord, MN 55334. For more information regarding this newsletter, contact (507) 702-7077.

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