

Conservation Newsletter



Don't Plant your Fields Naked, Plant Cover Crops

Cover crops, are quick-growing crops, such as winter rye or clover, that are planted between periods of regular crop production to prevent soil erosion and provide humus or nitrogen. Cover crops help increase productivity and profitability, and help improve water quality on Minnesota farms.

Where Do Cover Crops Fit in Your Farming System?

Farmers can **gain economic returns** by grazing cover crops or harvesting the cover crop as green chop. Other associated benefits include using the cover crop ground as a manure application site, improving soil quality and soil organic matter. Using cover crops in Minnesota can be difficult because of the small window of opportunity to establish them.

Minnesota farmers have nonetheless found creative ways to utilize cover crops, such as after harvesting corn silage in the first week of September or over-seeding into a standing crop like soybeans.



Combining soybeans with a healthy stand of aerially seeded rye in the understory. Photo courtesy Andy Hart.

Soil Health and Environmental Benefits

- Protects bare soil from wind and water erosion;
- Improves soil structure by increasing soil organic matter;
- Improves water quality; Suppress' weeds;
- Utilizes leftover nitrogen in the soil;
- Provides additional forage for Livestock; and
- Provides nitrogen for the following cash crop.

Back by Popular Demand... No-Till Drill Rental



We now have available a ten foot Great Plains No-Till Grass Drill that will be available for seeding grasses and cover-crops. The drill will be rented out as a unit and will include a tractor and operator.

Rental Rates are:

- Minimum Charge - \$150
- 3-5 acres - \$200
- 6-10 acres - \$300
- 11+ acres - \$30 / acre

If you are planning to do some seeding this year, please call our office right away to get put on our list!

State Cost-Share Funds Available

Through the State Cost-Share Program, landowners can request financial and technical assistance from our office to implement state-approved conservation practices. The program, which was originally approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 1977, provides up to 75 percent of the total eligible costs of a practice.

Approximately \$20,000 are available annually for producers to utilize. If you are interested in installing a Terrace, Filter strip, Basin, Waterway, or Feedlot Runoff Control Structure call or stop by our Office Today!!



Looking upslope at a series of parallel water and sediment control basins built across a small watercourse on a cropped hillside. Photo courtesy MN NRCS.

Septic Systems

Properly functioning septic systems are important to the health of your family and the environment. Septic discharge contains many dangerous bacteria and viruses that require the correct treatment system to prevent transfer to humans and to keep excess nutrient loads from entering our streams. The Conservation and Zoning Office has grants and 3% loans available to Pipestone County Residents to assist with replacing old septic systems. Whether you're replacing a broken system or updating from an out of date system, contact our office to learn how we can assist you with purchasing and installing a new environmentally friendly septic system.

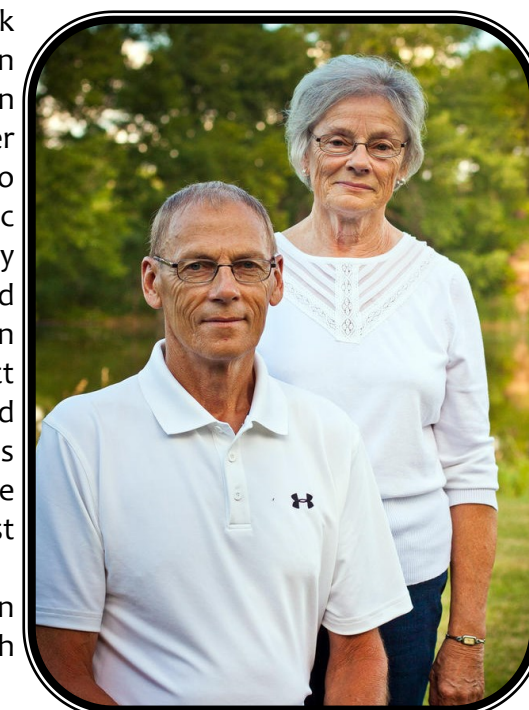
New SWCD Employee

Nicole Schwebach of Egan, South Dakota is the new Conservation Technician for the SWCD. Nicole began employment in January after she graduated from the South Dakota State University in Brookings, S.D. with a degree in range sciences. Nicole will be working with the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Program, Walk-In Access Program, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), and other conservation and wildlife programs for the SWCD. Please be sure to contact Nicole with any questions or if you would like to signing up for a conservation program.



New SWCD Supervisor

The Pipestone Soil & Water Conservation District Currently filled a vacancy in District five which represents Aetna, Burke, and Rock Townships. Arvin Pater of Holland was appointed to represent the citizens of Pipestone County. Arvin is a crop farmer and former livestock producer. Arvin is currently an active volunteer and intends to serve the public by responsibly making good decisions in order to protect our soil and water resources and to leave the land in the best possible condition. Arvin is pictured with his wife Gloria.



What's New at NRCS?

Honey Bee Pollinator Health Initiative

NRCS has received special funds to improve the pollinator health of honey bees in five targeted Midwestern states, including Minnesota. Funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to promote conservation practices that will provide honey bees with nutritious pollen and nectar while providing benefits to the environment.



This assistance will provide guidance and support to farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees. For example, appropriate cover crops or rangeland and pasture management may provide a benefit to producers by reducing erosion, increasing the health of their soil, inhibiting invasive species, providing quality forage and habitat for honey bees and other pollinators, as well as habitat for other wildlife.

Midwestern states were chosen because from June to September the region is the resting ground for over 65 percent of the commercially managed honey bees in the country. It is a critical time when bees require abundant and diverse forage across broad landscapes to build up hive strength for the winter.

Prairie Pothole Wetland and Grassland Retention



NRCS plans to commit up to \$35 million over the next three years to help landowners conserve grasslands and wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region, which includes Minnesota.

A combination of program offerings and partnerships will provide farmers, ranchers and partners with access to a mix of technical and financial assistance opportunities to restore wetlands and grasslands and help mitigate a recent regional trend of conversion of these lands to crops.

EQIP will help producers keep their lands as working grasslands or hay lands through implementation of prescribed grazing and other conservation practices.

As always NRCS is here to assist with your conservation plan. If you have issues with erosion on your cropland, would like assistance with prescribed grazing, are interested in using cover crops to improve soil health, etc...contact us at #507-825-5478 ext. 3.

Are you interested in Volunteering?

We are looking for volunteers to assist with stenciling city storm drains to educate the public about where our water flows and the importance of keeping our water clean. If you are interested in helping stencil the storm drains or other volunteer projects we may have please contact our office for more information about becoming an Earth Team Volunteer.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Weekly Collections!



Reminder

The County Recycling Center is
Open Weekly!

When: EVERY Wednesday from 7am – 1 pm

Where: The Pipestone County Recycling Center
718 4th Street NW, Pipestone

Questions: Call 825-6765

Items Accepted:

- Household Hazardous Waste
- Large Appliances
- Electronics
- Lead Acid & Rechargeable Batteries
- Fluorescent Bulbs & PCB Ballasts
- Christmas Lights
- Pesticides & Triple Rinsed Pesticide Containers

Weed Management

Noxious Weeds – What Are They and How Did They Get Here?

Most of our state listed noxious weeds came from Europe or Asia accidentally, or were garden plants that escaped cultivation. A few species, such as poison ivy, are native to Minnesota and are listed as noxious weeds due to harmful effects that they pose directly to human health or agricultural systems. Noxious weeds are problematic because they are highly adaptable to disturbed areas, are able to spread at alarming rates, cause economic damage, and outcompete native vegetation that is important to our unique landscapes throughout Minnesota. Noxious weeds also create problems with soil erosion; diminished forage production on lands used by domestic and wild animals and impacts the public in many negative ways. The main differences between a common weed and a noxious weed are that the latter have an enormous capacity for destruction and are very difficult to control. An estimated 5,000 invasive non-native weeds now occur in U.S. natural areas.



Control Methods

Each species of noxious weed grows and spreads differently requiring different methods of control. Not all techniques are suitable and not all will work in every circumstance. Some techniques that may be used include:

- **Biological control** which uses other organisms to control noxious weeds. For example, in Minnesota, there are three existing biological control programs for leafy spurge, purple loosestrife, and spotted knapweed. Several other biological control programs are currently being evaluated in Minnesota for garlic mustard, common tansy, and European buckthorn.
- **Chemical control** which uses herbicides to control noxious weeds. All herbicides must be used in accordance with the registered label.
- **Cultural control** uses materials or techniques that reduce noxious weed populations. Examples include mulching, rotational grazing, and establishing good vegetation cover.
- **Mechanical control** uses process like cutting, mowing, and disking.

The Township weed Inspectors will be out this spring taking inventory and complaints on Noxious Weed violations. Please remember to take the time to Control the weeds on your property.

Pipestone Conservation & Zoning
 119 2nd Ave. S.W. Ste. 13
 Pipestone, MN 56164
 507-825-6765

«FIRST» «LAST»
 «ADDRESS»
 «CITY», «MN» «ZIP»

*"To Promote Conservation of Natural Resources
 through Education, Technical Assistance, & Stewardship."*

www.pipestoneswcd.org



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Natural Resources Conservation Service:

Jerry Purdin, District Conservationist

Danielle Waldschmidt, Soil Conservationist

Trudy Jordahl, Office Assistant

Emerald Ash Borer Update



Recent news according to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has indicated that Minnesota can expect approximately 80 percent of the existing population of the emerald ash borer (EAB) to die as a result of February's cold -20°F

weather. Had it reached -30°F, we could expect 98 percent of all EAB larvae to die. But EAB isn't the only invasive species that may be affected by the cold weather. Populations of gypsy moth (GM), an exotic insect from Europe, may also see the effect of cold weather in the number of over-wintering egg masses that fail to survive temperature extremes. That being said, Minnesota residents should not assume they can relax their guard against the accidental transport of either species. Even in low density populations, EAB and GM life stages can hitch a ride in firewood, vehicles, and outdoor gear.

If you find an insect you suspect is either EAB or GM, report it to 1-888-545-6684, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Arrest the Pest phone line.

Clear Your Clutter!

May 21st 7am-5pm

It's that time of year again. Rural Clean-up Day is right around the corner, so if you have a cluttered mess in your House, Garage, Shed, or around your yard; Come see us on May 21st at the Pipestone County Recycling Center. (718 4th St. N.W. Pipestone) We will be open from 7am - 5 pm and will be collecting everything that we normally do on Wednesdays, along with hard to get rid of Garbage Items such as the following:

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Mattress' | Curling Irons | Ladders | Tarps |
| Windows | Fishing Poles | Vacuums | Speakers |
| Doors | Clothing Irons | Kiddy Pools | Glass |
| Toilets | Small Appliances | Bikes | Bedding |
| Grills | Tools | Garden Hoses | Lumber |
| Carpet | Treadmills | Farm Plastics | Ceiling Fan |
| Furniture | Pots & Pans | Twine String | Broken Toys |
| Light Fixtures | Dishes | Trimmers | Mirror |
| Cabinets | Home Décor | Equipment Parts | Etc..... |
| Sinks | Yard Décor | Auto Parts | |
| Hair Dryers | Fans | Pails | |



Items NOT Accepted: Tires - Medication - Raw Household Garbage
 - Large amounts of Building materials - Items too big for a roll off dumpster

File Before JUNE 3 to run for SWCD Supervisor

Individuals concerned about water quality and soil erosion in Pipestone County should consider filing by June 3 to run for the position of Supervisor of the Pipestone Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). "Supervisors play an important role in how our community deals with a wide variety of resource management issues, including wetlands, water quality, and soil erosion," noted Anna Mae Fritz, Chairman of the Pipestone SWCD board. "Serving as a supervisor is a terrific opportunity for people who want a voice in how we manage our environment," she said. SWCDs are special purpose units of government that manage and direct conservation programs, such as the state Cost-Share program, RIM Program, and Wetland Conservation Act. An elected board of Supervisors governs each of Minnesota's 90 SWCDs. This year, the SWCD has two Supervisor positions up for election. SWCD candidates appear on the ballot for the general election which will take place November 4, 2014. Candidates are elected county wide, but must reside in one of the nomination districts up for election. These include District 4 (Altona, Troy, and Fountain Prairie Townships) and District 5 (Aetna, Burke, and Rock Townships). SWCD Supervisors serve four year terms.

Supervisors meet monthly to discuss the business of the SWCD, including state grant allocations to landowners, district conservation priorities, coordination with other local units of government and state agencies, and legislative priorities. Supervisors do not receive a salary, although they do receive compensation for attending meetings and are reimbursed for expenses.

Those interested in running for Supervisor should file at the County Auditor's office from May 20 through June 3, 2014. Additional information about the SWCD can be found online at www.pipestoneswcd.org.