

SWCD August News

Do you have erosion concerns, need help with invasive plants or shrubs taking over your woodlands or grassy fields? Are you interested in learning about incorporating cover crops into your system? Are you concerned about water runoff with accelerated rain events? The SWCD staff works with ag producers and urban folks alike. Our technical assistance is available as a service to all residents of Wabasha County to implement voluntary best management practices to improve surface and drinking water quality. If you haven't stopped in at your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Office recently, we would really love to see you. There are program funds available for cost share assistance that may help you address your concerns in a number of cases. Producers out there who think they might like to get a simple waterway in this fall or if you want contour strips planned, contact us now so we can get a contract approved at our August board meeting. We can also look at getting surveys and designs done this fall for bigger projects to be done next spring and we should work on those with you now so we can get staff scheduled. There are funds available through the SWCD that won't require a long wait for approval, so stop in and tell us how we can help you. We are co-located with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and there are programs available through their office, as well.

A well sealing cost- share policy was recently approved. If you have an abandoned well, it should be sealed to protect drinking water sources. Left unsealed, it can leave openings to the aquifer for contaminants to enter. We all share a few aquifers as our drinking water source. If you want more information on source water, you can find a lot on the Minnesota Department of Health website <http://www.health.state.mn.us/topics/water/consumers.html> In order to approve cost share, well areas will have to meet certain criteria for approval. There is limited funding available through the SWCD for assistance.

We hope you will take the opportunity to get to know our new technical staff. Bill Wayne and Mitchell Rigelman joined us in October of 2017 as District Technicians. Mitchell is also working with County ag producers on becoming certified with the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification program. See him if you are interested in learning more. Jennifer Wahls has been with the District since 2015. She currently works with our Cooperative Weed Management Area program to address terrestrial invasive species, she is the local contact for wetland issues, works on the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) programs, ecological practice assistance, and cover crop assistance...and a number of other things that I may have missed.

If you live in the West Indian Creek watershed, you should have received a letter from us. We are targeting small watersheds individually to focus on overall resource concerns to submit a competitive grant application that is due by the end of August. We have talked to a number of you and we still want to reach you if we have not yet had a conversation about how we can help. This is a good opportunity to try to address some bigger concerns you may have.

You may notice SWCD office positions for election on your fall ballot. A board of 5 elected officials, one from each of the 5 districts, oversees the activity of the SWCD. They meet as a board at a monthly meeting to discuss business items and to take action on SWCD activity. Voting for District 1, Plainview, Highland, and Elgin townships, and District 4, Greenfield, Watopa, Glasgow, and Minnieska, will be electing new SWCD supervisors. Tom Gosse, supervisor for 22 years, and Roland Wood, supervisor for 12 years, will be retiring at the end of 2018. More information will come about the candidates who will be running for those positions.

For fun news, we have our “Hit Us With Your Best Shot” photo contest happening. Wabasha SWCD will have a new plat book available by the end of the year. We expressed interest in providing our own cover photo to the publisher. We decided to make it a photo contest and get our photo from one of our own County residents. So Hit Us With Your Best Shot! Your best scenic landscape photo taken in Wabasha County. The winner will have their photo published on the cover of the new Plat Book and receive an edition of that. There may be a few honorable mention who receive SWCD swag. Submit a digital copy by **August 15** by email to terri.peters@mn.nacdnet.net. Include your name, address, phone number and the location of the photo. This image must be a high resolution image (at least 300 dpi at 7.5” wide). Can't wait to see your photos!

We look forward to hearing from you. You can find us at 611 Broadway Ave., Suite 10 in Wabasha and you can call us at (651) 565-4673. Are you a Facebook user? Find us @WabashaSWCD and you can an abundance of information about us on our website, WabashaSWCD.com.