

Conservation News

Summer 2018



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320-589-4886 ext. 4

MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program 2018

Landowners recently certified in Stevens County with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) include Mark Erickson of Donnelly, Steve Howe of Chokio, and John Howe of Red Wing. All three program participants have undergone a farm-wide review of farm management practices and have been approved for regulatory certainty for ten years. This means they are each automatically in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws enacted during that time.

Stevens SWCD has helped certify five farms so far and is continuing to work with landowners and producers on the certification process. If you would like to learn more about the program or would like to submit an application, please contact us at the Stevens SWCD office (320) 589-4886 ext. 4. You can also find more information online at www.MyLandMyLegacy.com.



Kasey Wiechmann, Stevens SWCD Program Technician, with newly-certified producer Steve Howe, of Chokio



Wiechmann with newly-certified producer Mark Erickson, of Donnelly



Summer interns at Stevens SWCD and Pomme de Terre River Association

Mitch Fox, PDTRA Seasonal Monitoring Technician



Mitch is from Rogers and is currently a senior at UMM majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Communications. This summer he is doing water monitoring for lakes and rivers in the Pomme de Terre River Watershed. He also volunteers for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and enjoys the outdoors, trout fishing and camping in his spare time.

Tyler Buss, SWCD Summer Field Technician



Tyler will be a junior at Morris Area High School this fall. He started this summer helping our District Technician with planting trees and mowing and he will also be working on planting rain gardens. He enjoys the outdoors, hunting, fishing, and his favorite pastime is snowmobiling with family and friends.

2018 Stevens SWCD 5th & 6th grade conservation Poster Contest winners



Morris Area Winners — Back row (l to r): Talia Kill, Jeslyn Olson, Ruby Swenson, Kaleb Bruer, TJ Kill, Derek Waldbeser, Owen Anderson, Anna Jordan, Amaiya Benson, Grace Dolence. Front row (l to r): Ashley Koehl, Britta Schmidgall, Makenzie Konz, Wyatt Mithun, and Brian Regalado, inset



St. Mary's Winners — (l to r) Maggie Beaver, Sage Barnstuble, Ava Kirwin, Vylet Frant, Angela Albrecht, Quincy Mundal and Campbell Sleiter



Hancock Winners — Left photo (l to r): Gracie Nohl and Kaylee Nohl

Right photo, back row (l to r): Autumn Hubbard, Aidan Hacker, Noah Luthi, Eva Schaefer, Sydney Zeltwanger, and Mr. Stan. Bottom row (l to r): Titus Bjerketvedt and Kallista Banister.



Try cover crops on your land!

A growing number of Stevens County farmers are striving to look at their soil's health and implement practices that improve soil health. Some farmers are reducing tillage passes, switching from conventional tillage to no-till or strip till, reducing over-application of fertilizer, or implementing cover crops into their rotation.

We do have many great resource available to help you design a cover crop mix that meets your goals. We have seen an increased use of cover crops in the county following edible bean harvest. After edible bean harvest, farmers have had success with mixing a small grain such as oats, barley, wheat or rye with fertilizer for next year's crops and having the co-ops spread it on with their larger spreaders. A lot of acres can be spread



quickly. Some producers then go and make a tillage pass to incorporate their residue, fertilizer and seed.

We have seen excellent results using this method. These fields have a nice cover on them that is about six inches tall and the field should not blow in winter, even if we have an

Buffer Law update

Minnesota Buffer Law compliance in Stevens County has made great strides from where we were in 2015. Roughly 1250 parcels are impacted by the buffer law in our county. Each parcel has a different amount of "frontage" or linear feet of buffer required as well as site specific challenges based on landscape, land use, and location. Currently we are 93% compliant on DNR Public Waters (50-foot buffer requirement) and 72% compliant on DNR Public Ditches (16.5-foot buffer requirement). In both cases we have several more parcels in the "pending" status and we are working with many of the landowners to meet the final compliance deadline of November 1, 2018.

Please let the SWCD know if you have established your buffer so we can update our compliance records. Thank you for your patience and cooperation while implementing the Minnesota Buffer Law in our county!

open winter. These cover crops are showing to be extremely important in an open winter and will be important in the spring to keep topsoil from blowing and filling in the ditches.



Cover crops were very successful and established well following small grain harvest, silage corn or on prevented plant land. Some early sugar beet harvested ground also was seeded to cover crops. Cover crops in corn can be challenging. Some have tried flying on a cover crop in late August or broadcasting a cover crop when corn is still short enough to drive a high-boy spreader across.

Our recommendation is that if you have growing season left on your farm, plant a cover crop and keep a living root in your soil as long as you can.

Be sure to work with your crop insurance agent to make sure the cover crop will not interfere with your crop insurance program. Stop by the NRCS office in Morris for more information on cover crops!



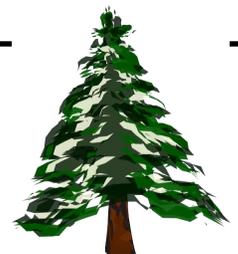
CREP revisions

The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) recently received several positive updates regarding program easements. Most notable is a roughly 23-28% payment rate increase per acre! Other changes include: an increase in the percentage of *paid* non-crop acres allowed, potential for RIM-only easements on existing CRP contracts in conjunction with a new CREP offer, as well as other enhancements that may make the program a perfect fit for your property.

Stop into the Stevens SWCD to see how a CREP easement may benefit your land. Additional information and updates on CREP can be found at www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep.

FOR SALE

1 gallon potted Black Hills
Spruce Trees \$10 each



Sign up now for 2019 EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program

In 2018, Stevens County producers received over 1.5 million dollars in EQIP funds to implement conservation practices such as cover crops and soil erosion control practices. Eligible participants receive financial and technical assistance for implementing structural, vegetative and management practices.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). EQIP provides technical assistance, and incentive payments to assist crop, livestock, and other agricultural producers with environmental, conservation and energy improvements to their operations.

The most common practices in Stevens County are cover crops, grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, nutrient management, no-till/strip-till, closure of waste impoundments, change a crop rotation to organic production, windbreaks/shelterbelts around farmstead, native prairie seeding, pollinator/monarch plantings, prescribed burning, and rotational grazing systems consisting of fence, pipeline, well, water tanks, and pasture seeding.

The deadline for the next signup period to apply practices in 2019 and beyond in Minnesota is to be determined, but these typically open by the middle of August. We encourage you to apply sooner than later.

If you have any questions about EQIP or would like to sign an application for the program, please contact Britta Haseman or Cory Walker at the NRCS office in Morris at (320) 589-4886 ext. 3.



Stevens SWCD Services

- CRP conservation planning
- Mowing & spot spraying
- Native grass & buffer seeding
- Rain garden design & installations
- Tree planting & fabric installation



EMPTY PESTICIDE CONTAINER COLLECTION IN MORRIS

Minnesota law prohibits the burning or burial of pesticide containers. Recycle your empty plastic pesticide containers:

TUESDAY, AUGUST 14th
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
STEVENS COUNTY HWY. GARAGE
HWY. 9 N of MORRIS



Acceptable

- #2 HDPE plastic containers up to 55 gallons
- Clean, dry & properly rinsed
- Container caps removed
- Labels removed best as you can

Not Acceptable

- Metal containers
- Paper or plastic bags, aerosol or glass containers
- Container with chemical residue
- Mini bulk containers

NOTE: FOR EASE OF TRANSPORT AND HANDLING IT IS ADVISED TO TIE APPROXIMATELY 25 JUGS TOGETHER WITH BALING TWINE.

Container Collection is organized and sponsored by the Stevens County Local Water Plan and County Chemical Dealers.

For More
Information
Contact:

Stevens County Environmental Services
320-208-6558

2018 Household Hazardous Waste Collections

Cleaning out your garage or basement and wondering what to do with unwanted or unusable household hazardous wastes? Bring them to one of the following scheduled free collections:

Morris County Hwy Garage 7/25/18 10 am - 2 pm
Morris County Hwy Garage 9/12/18 10 am - 2 pm

Call Stevens County Environmental Services for info:
(320) 208-6558



Examples of acceptable items: paints, stains, varnish, aerosol products, garden pesticides, automotive fluids, household cleaners, & rechargeable batteries.

NOT ACCEPTABLE: BUSINESS WASTES, ASBESTOS, EXPLOSIVES OR FLUORESCENT BULBS.



CRP sign-up open!

The current CRP sign-up is open and will close August 17, 2018. If interested in CRP for this year, please stop in soon as the sign-up may close earlier than expected!

Padding the Pomme de Terre River



The Pomme de Terre River Association (PDTRA) recently hosted a River Run in late June. 39 participants gathered at the Pomme de Terre Campground on a sunny and warm Thursday morning before carpooling to the starting point of the paddle, the north end of the Dolven Wildlife Management Area (WMA). A variety of seasoned kayakers, first-time canoers, foreign and local UMM students, agency volunteers, and families took to the six mile stretch in search of scenic views of hill sides, classic Morris wind mills, and wildlife sightings. Thanks to the

Morris Regional Fitness Center, additional kayaks and canoes were also provided to newer paddlers.

The goal of the Pomme de Terre River Run is to provide an opportunity for community members to explore and increase awareness for our local water resources. The Pomme de Terre River meanders from lakes in southern Otter Tail County through varying landscape of the northern hardwood forests and rolling hills, through cropland and city parks, down to Appleton where our water meets the Minnesota River.

PdTRA will be holding a second River Run on July 20 starting and ending at the Tipsinah Mounds Campground in Grant County. Interested paddlers should contact stephanie.adams@pdtriver.org or view www.pdtriver.org for more information. Space is limited – please RSVP before the event!!

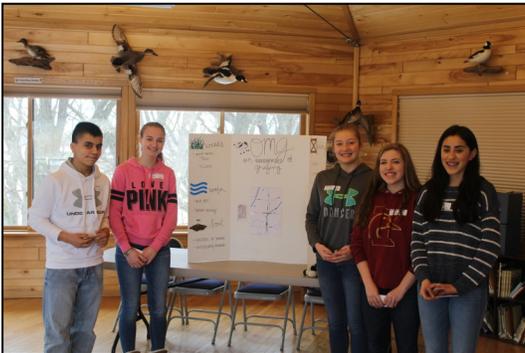
PDTRA is a Joint Powers Board made up of six counties and Soil and Water Conservation Districts within the Pomme de Terre Watershed (Swift, Big Stone, Stevens, Grant, Douglas, and Otter Tail). PDTRA provides cost-share for the voluntary implementation of conservation practices that protect and improve water quality.





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Congratulations! Morris Area Envirothon team places 4th at Area 2 event!



Morris Area High School senior team placed 4th at the Area 2 Envirothon held at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer in May. This year, the students prepared oral presentations on "Grazing Lands in Minnesota." Other areas of testing included: forestry, soils, aquatics, wildlife and grazing lands in Minnesota. The students were coached by MAHS science teacher Dylan Viss. The team members include, left to right in the awards photo: LaRae Kram, Claire Reed, Angel Gallegos, Katie Messner, and Ana Hernandez. Congratulations to this young team and good luck in future competitions!

Check out our booth at the Stevens Co. Fair Aug 9-13th!
Visit us on the web at www.stevensswcd.org or look us up on Facebook!
Call 320-589-4886 ext. 4

