

# Conservation News

## Spring 2021



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Contact Stevens SWCD  
320-589-4886 ext 4

[www.stevenswcd.org](http://www.stevenswcd.org)

## Tree planting is right around the corner

If you ordered trees from us for planting this spring, Stevens SWCD will be having their **tree handout Friday, April 30 from 2:00-6:00 p.m.** You should also get a reminder in the mail a week or two before this date. We are past the deadline to order trees for this year, but if you want to order for next year, we will start taking orders in the fall of 2021.

If we are planting trees for you this spring, here are some tips on site prep:

- Please make sure you have your sites ready to go before planting. The site needs to be clean and free of equipment, old stumps, roots, branches and other debris. If the site was an existing grove that was recently torn down, you will need to run some heavy tillage equipment through it a few times to clear out all the old roots. This takes multiple passes to ensure that all the roots are pulled up.
- If the property boundary is not obviously identified, please have this figured out and marked ahead of time.
- If you are planting into ground that was previously in ag production, prepare the ground as if it's going to be seeded with a crop.
- Remember that trees won't survive if planted in an area where there is pre-emergent residue.
- The only site prep Stevens SWCD offers is tillage of tree rows where weed barrier fabric will be installed.

With proper site prep, you will have greater success with your tree planting. Please call us with any questions you have.



## Spring field reminders

Here are a few things to consider while making plans for the 2021 growing season:

- Contact us now if you plan to have the SWCD flag CRP contract boundaries, buffers or other conservation practice areas. Please give us **several days' notice** before you will need a site flagged. We encourage landowners to till areas with heavy residue (eg. corn stalks) or prior heavy tillage and have the site prepped for seeding before flagging. Contact us for clarification.
- If the SWCD will be seeding for you, please note that soybean/small grain stubble is best. Till areas with heavy residue this spring and have the area rolled prior to planting to firm the seedbed. Site conditions that are too soft have delayed/limited germination and more problems with establishment due to improper seed depth.
- Seeding typically takes place between May 15 and June 30.
- **PLEASE REMEMBER: DO NOT APPLY PRE-EMERGENT chemicals** to areas planned for grass seeding this spring, including CRP, EQIP, buffers, etc. Also remind your cooperatives/applicators/hired help of this.
- Stevens SWCD will be completing buffer site checks in 2021 to verify the required buffer minimums are being maintained. Each buffer site will be monitored every three years.

## Now taking sign-ups for Walk-In-Access

Walk in Access (WIA) is a voluntary program that pays landowners to open their private land for public hunting. This program focuses on land already enrolled into a conservation program such as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM), or Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). Areas not in a conservation program that still provide high quality wildlife habitat, like river bottoms or wetland areas, are also eligible for the program.



To be eligible for the program, areas must contain a minimum of 40 acres. Areas smaller than 40 acres can be enrolled only if they are adjacent to Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) or other WIA areas that contain at least 40 acres combined. Landowners can enter a one-year contract or a multi-year contract, up to three years, and they can cancel the contract at any time without any penalties. New for this year: landowners signing any new contract will be paid an \$18.00 per acre flat fee instead of the previous base price of \$10.00 with the possibility for incentives. If you are interested in learning more about WIA or have any questions or concerns, please contact John at the Stevens SWCD office at 320-589-4886 ext 4.

## Rain gardens filter runoff, add wildlife habitat and beauty

Stevens SWCD is currently taking sign-ups for rain gardens to be planted in the summer of 2021. We do offer cost-share on these projects up to 75%. That's right! We can potentially pay 75% of your total project cost from start to finish.



Rain gardens collect, store, and filter storm water from impervious areas such as roofs, parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways. They filter runoff pollution, recharge local groundwater, improve water quality, remove standing water from your yard, reduce mosquito breeding areas, reduce potential home flooding, and create habitat for birds and butterflies.

**We are hosting a free Rain Garden Workshop on Saturday, April 17 from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Stevens SWCD shop.** Morning Sky Greenery from Morris will give a presentation on Native Flowers and Plants. This will be a great opportunity to see if a rain garden is right for you. **Please call our office at 320-589-4886 ext 4 to register for the event.** If you cannot make it to the presentation and have any questions or want us to look at your site to see if it is suitable for a rain garden, please give us a call.



## We sell Rain Barrels & Compost Bins!



Rain Barrel  
\$75 + tax

Call to pre-order!

Compost Bin  
\$75 + tax



## Looking for operators to get MAWQCP certification



The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

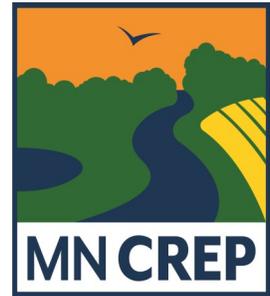
### **Through this program, certified producers receive:**

- Regulatory certainty: certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification.
- Recognition: certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality.
- Priority for technical assistance: producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality.

### **Through this program, the public receives:**

Assurance that certified producers are using conservation practices to protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams.

**There will be an open house to discuss this program August 18** at the Stevens SWCD office. The meeting will go from 10:00 a.m. to noon and a meal will be provided. If you have any questions, contact John with Stevens SWCD at 320-589-4886 ext 4.



### **CREP has an open application period April 12 through 30.**

If you are interested in a CREP easement on your property, please contact Stevens SWCD for more information. Additional application periods are tentatively planned for summer 2021.

Additional CREP info can be found at [www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep](http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/crep).



## PLANNING & ZONING OFFICE



Stevens County most recently adopted amendments to the County Zoning Ordinance (Ordinance). Although the previous Ordinance language required a land use or zoning permit for any structure erected, moved-in or structurally altered, agricultural buildings were exempt from requiring a permit. This has changed and **agricultural buildings now require a permit**. The newly adopted Ordinance language states:

***"No person shall erect, add on to, or move any building with a permanent footing greater than two hundred forty (240) square feet in its ground coverage, or part thereof without first securing a land use permit. All buildings, whether they required a permit or not, shall meet all setbacks or other requirements of the Ordinance".***

Permitting ensures buildings are constructed in the appropriate zoning district and setbacks from the road, side yard and rear yard property lines are met. It also aids the County Assessor's Office in tracking new construction.

The County has zoning jurisdiction in all townships except Hodges and Swan Lake, and all incorporated city limits. If building construction is planned in either of these townships or cities, please contact them directly for permitting questions. All other permit questions should be directed to the Environmental Services/Planning & Zoning Office.

For more information visit the Stevens County website at: <http://www.co.stevens.mn.us/1116/Planning-Zoning> or contact the Environmental Services/Planning & Zoning Office at 320-208-6558 or by email at [billkleindl@co.stevens.mn.us](mailto:billkleindl@co.stevens.mn.us).

## Water testing kits available at Stevens SWCD

Stevens SWCD has partnered with RMB Environmental Laboratories to provide a convenient and reliable way to test your water. Pick up an easy to use water testing kit today to ensure your water is safe from bacteria, nitrates, arsenic, lead, fluoride & secondary contaminants.

It's never been easier to test your water. Kits are available to pick up five days a week at the Stevens SWCD office. Kits include complete instructions for taking samples, and simple to return by mail in 24 hours to RMB Environmental Lab.

Several testing kits are available and pricing varies depending on which tests you would like done. The average cost of testing your water sample is \$20-\$30 per test. If you're not sure what to test for, call RMB at 1-888-200-5770. Watch for news from Stevens SWCD: **we will host a nitrate testing clinic October 2, 2021** at our office.



## Aquatic Invasive Species (Clean, Dry, Dispose)

With the Minnesota boating season just around the corner remember to do your part at keeping our lakes free of Aquatic Invasive Species. We all need to do our part to make sure that we preserve the beautiful Minnesota lakes that we all take so much pride in. Here are some reminders:

- If you buy or sell a dock, boat lift or swim raft inspect it for zebra mussels and let dry for at least 21 consecutive days in open air and full sun.
- Clean boats and inspect very closely before and after taking out of the lake. Remember to drain live wells, dispose of your bait, and pull your drain plug to let excess water drain.
- Thoroughly clean and scrub all gear and equipment.
- If you suspect that you have spotted any aquatic invasive species, contact the DNR or the Stevens SWCD at 320-589-4886 ext 4.



## 2021 MN State Envirothon goes virtual across the state of Minnesota



34 teams registered for the 2021 MN State Virtual Envirothon. Teams have been studying for the competition since late fall. The testing/competition ran from April 1 to 9. Each team also submitted a video presentation on the current issue topic of "Water Resource Management—Local Decisions Local Control." The presentation judging will conclude on April 16 and the winner will be announced on Earth Day, April 22. The competition topics are: wildlife, soils, forestry, aquatics and the current issue topic of water resource management. Stevens County has one team competing from Morris Area High School. Team members are: Captain Katie Messner, LaRae Kram, Angel Gallegos, Clair Reed, and Ana Hernandez. They are coached by Dylan Viss, MAHS Science teacher. This team has been competing in the Envirothon together since eighth grade. Good luck, Morris Area High School! For more information on the Area or State Envirothon, contact Judy Johnston at 320-589-4886 ext 114.

**Casting Contest &  
Other Fun Games/Activities!**



**When:**  
**Where:**

**Join  
Stevens SWCD  
FAMILY FUN NIGHT  
Aquatic Invasive Species**

Thursday, June 24, 2021 • 5:30-7:30 PM  
Perkins Lake Public Access picnic shelter  
8 miles north of Morris off State Hwy 59

**Come for activities, food, and fun!  
Hotdogs, chips, cookies, and beverages will be served**



## Commercial applicator testing at Stevens SWCD office

Commercial applicator testing is once again available at Stevens SWCD by appointment only. We offer online testing which allows you to see your results immediately but still requires you to receive your card to be legally allowed to spray.

If you are interested in taking an applicator exam, call Matt Solemsaas at Stevens SWCD at 320-589-4886 ext 112. Study materials are available from U of M Extension located in the Stevens County Courthouse. Prior to arriving for your test you must fill out an application and pay your fee online at the MN Dept of Ag website.



## Help is on the way!

Do you have erosion issues on your land or would you like to try nutrient management, pest management, and/or cover crops?

NRCS is here to help! We have several programs designed to help the resource concerns on your land. The two most popular programs are the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). It is never too early to start planning for next year. Stop on over or give us a call at 320-589-4886 ext 3.



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## Help control noxious weeds

Spring is on the way and with that comes weeds! Be on the lookout for any noxious weeds in your area and **report them to your township.**

If your Township officials can't fix the problem, call the county weed inspector, Matt Solemsaas, at Stevens SWCD 320-589-4886 ext 112.



## Poster Contest 2021



The 2021 Stevens Soil and Water Poster Contest will be starting in April. The students will have the opportunity to make their poster in a traditional posterboard format or they can create them digitally with a video format, Google Slides, etc. They will be presenting the poster in whatever format they choose using the online platforms of Flip Grid or Google Drive. The 2021 contest theme is "Healthy Forests—Healthy Communities."

5th and 6th grade students from Morris Area, St. Mary's, Hancock and Chokio Alberta will have access to the contest.

Classroom presentations about the poster contest theme will be available by appointment.

Posters/presentations are due May 15, 2021. For more information, contact Judy Johnston at 320-589-4886 ext 114.



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 Morris MN 56267  
 320-589-4886 ext 4  
 www.stevensswcd.org

## 2021 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:

City	Place	Date	Time
Morris	County Hwy Garage	5/5/21	10 am - 2 pm
Hancock	City Garage	6/2/21	10 am - 2pm
Morris	County Hwy Garage	7/28/21	10 am - 2 pm
Morris	County Hwy Garage	9/8/21	10 am - 2 pm



**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.

For More  
 Information  
 Contact:

**Stevens County Environmental Services**  
**(320) 208-6558**

