

CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

OCTOBER 2014

SWCD RESOURCE ASSISTANCE

The Root River Soil and Water Conservation District continues to seek opportunities to address resource concerns throughout Houston County. Our goal is to provide technical and financial assistance to help landowners or operators implement effective land stewardship practices. Our technical staff can assist you in designing new ponds, grassed waterways, terrace layouts, a contour strip system or repair an existing structure.

Stream bank revetment is another practice that is becoming a more eco-

nomical solution to stream bank erosion and water quality issues. Red Cedar trees are removed from nearby bluff prairies, with an added benefit of restoring rare bluff prairie, and cabled directly into the stream bank. This allows soil particles (sediment) to settle in the cedar branches rebuilding the stream bank over time. Stream bank revetment is currently being installed on the Riceford Creek. Cost assistance may be available for landowners along this creek who are interested in stream bank revetment.

Agricultural practices and land use are continually changing. Please contact the Root River SWCD and set up an appointment to visit with our staff and discuss conservation priorities for your property. Office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



2015 TREES Available, Place Your Order TODAY

The Root River SWCD is offering their tree program again this year. The trees are made available for conservation purposes such as perpetual windbreaks, to enhance wildlife habitat and can effectively address water quality issues.

Displacement of permanent vegetation such as trees and shrubs along with grasses by annual crops can increase the amount of run-off into streams, as well as the speed at which the run-off is delivered. Keeping trees on the landscape helps reduce sediment delivery and pollutants from being delivered to surface water.

Trees also provide a significant amount of wildlife habitat and esthetic improvement to our communities.

The SWCD offers a variety of species including conifers ranging from White Cedar, Balsam Fir, select pines, and three varieties of spruce. Hard-

woods that are available include Sugar Maple, Red Oak, White Oak, Black Walnut, Silver Maple and Swamp White Oak. A variety of shrubs including Nannyberry, Crabapple, Cranberry, Dogwood, American Plum and Lilac are also available. The trees are offered at a very low cost, ranging from only \$1.00 - \$1.48 per tree and are sold in bundles of 25. Trees arrive at the SWCD office in mid-April and those that have placed orders are notified of pick-up dates.

It is important that you place your tree order today before stock runs out. Trees quantities are available on a first come, first serve basis only and can go quickly. Pre-order deadline October 29.

NOW is the time to make a difference in conservation.



Trees Reduce Water And Air Pollution

Houston County Aquatic Invasive Species Program

A new aquatic invasive species bill is providing the Root River SWCD almost \$13,000 in 2014 and \$28,000 in following years to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) in our rivers, lakes and streams. This funding was determined by the number of watercraft trailer launches in Houston County (6) and the number of watercraft trailer parking spaces (56).

Non-native species such as zebra mussel, bighead, silver and common carp, spiny waterfleas, Eurasian water milfoil, purple loosestrife and reed canary grass harm fish populations, water quality, and water recreation.

The Root River SWCD staff will be:

- Studying the variety of pathways that AIS may use to enter our county.
- Training local recreational business owners on practices to avoid spreading AIS.
- Presenting educational materials at fairs and educational events.
- Obtaining and distributing AIS identification materials.
- Encouraging the public to submit samples of suspected AIS to the SWCD for identification.



Myriophyllum spicatum L.

Eurasian Water Milfoil



"Who would have thought that a few weeds would ruin our favorite spot? I guess we should have done more to STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!"

Water Test Kits

Has it been awhile since you tested your water? It is always a good idea to check your water supply on a regular basis. Testing for coliform bacteria, as well as nitrates, is a good place to start. Depending on the results, you may be advised to test for other contaminants such as metals, sediment or organic pollutants.

The Minnesota Department of Health notes nitrate values higher than 10ppm (mg/L) can threaten your health – especially if you are pregnant, nursing or have an infant in the home. Coliform presence in your water or a high nitrate value is an indication that surface water is entering your drinking water.

The Root River SWCD office has water test kits available to the public and can be obtained at 805 N. Hwy. 44/76, Suite 1, Caledonia, MN. Office hours are Monday – Friday 7:00 a.m. till 4:30 p.m.

Stay informed, get your water tested.





Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Amendments

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. In addition, a purpose of EQIP is to help producers meet Federal, State, Tribal and local environmental regulations.

EQIP State and Local Priorities

The first step in seeking NRCS assistance is to call your local **USDA Service Center** and make an appointment with NRCS staff that will help you identify the natural resource problems and opportunities on your farm, define your conservation objectives, and inventory your soil, water, air, plant and animal resources. Much of this information will require a field visit to see your operation and to evaluate the resource concerns you may have. You can work with NRCS to develop a conservation plan. Financial assistance from NRCS farm bill programs or other Federal, State and local conservation programs may be available to help fund some of the conservation practices outlined in your plan.

Funding

Contracts will be awarded to producers with the highest rankings until funds are exhausted. Upon request by the applicant, applications that are not funded in the current fiscal year funding cycle can be retained for consideration in the next federal fiscal year (begins October 2015).

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. See your local NRCS office.

Application acceptance deadlines for FY 2015 EQIP sign-up:

October 17, 2014

November 14, 2014

December 19, 2014

unlock the
SECRETS
IN THE
SOIL



"WE ABUSE LAND BECAUSE WE REGARD IT AS A COMMODITY BELONGING TO US. WHEN WE SEE LAND AS A COMMUNITY TO WHICH WE BELONG, WE MAY BEGIN TO USE IT WITH LOVE AND RESPECT." - ALDO LEOPOLD, 1949. A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC

SWCD “75 Years of Conservation”



“IF HE IS SO BLAMED MOD-ERN, HOW COME HE STILL FARMS UP AND DOWN HILL?”



Root River SWCD/NRCS
805 N Hwy 44/76, Suite 1
Caledonia, MN 55921
Mon-Fri 7:00am to 4:30pm
Phone # 507-724-5261 x 3

[Co.houston.mn.us/
RRSWCD.aspx](http://Co.houston.mn.us/RRSWCD.aspx)
www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov

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| 2nd Wednesday | 8:30am SWCD Board Meeting |
| 1st Thursday | 9:00 am Housto-County Water Plan Meeting |
| 2nd Thursday | 2:30 pm Crooked Creek Board Meeting |

**Root River SWCD Conservation Banquet
November 20th**

**MASWCD Annual Convention & Trade Show
December 7, 8, 9**