**Conservation Opportunities**

**Landowners Are Needed To Utilize Funding To Improve Their Land**

A Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been active in Todd County for over 50 years. For that entire period one goal of the SWCD has been to provide opportunities to private landowners to voluntarily apply conservation measures on their land. Todd SWCD’s current mission statement is “To Meet the Public’s Need by Protecting the Land and Safeguarding the Water”. This mission was developed by our board of supervisors elected by you the public with the intent of keeping the program focused on natural resource improvement and protection.

Working to solve natural resource problems such as soil erosion or degraded water quality takes a long term vision (which the SWCD board provides), technical assistance (which the SWCD staff provide), and money (which is provided through grants). SWCD’s aggressively seek state program and grant funds to provide the opportunity for landowners to make land improvements that also have side benefits to society such as improved water quality, more stable agricultural production, and better wildlife habitat. Technical staff at the SWCD can assist landowners with project design and completion of the necessary paperwork associated with acquiring grant funds. Technical staff also serve the role of certifying that projects are constructed to standard and maintained – ensuring lasting public benefits.

**What are the conservation opportunities available RIGHT NOW?**

**Reduce Livestock Impacts** – Livestock are a big part of Todd County’s economy. Clean Water Legacy funds are in hand for projects that can be shown to reduce nutrients and E.coli in water runoff from animal feeding, production, and pasturing areas. The SWCD Livestock Advisor details exactly what we are looking for on page #4 of this publication. Projects need to be constructed during 2016 to utilize the funding available.

**Riparian Buffers** – The state’s Buffer Initiative is requiring buffers along state protected waters and some ditches. One of our Conservation Technicians (see article page #3) can help design a buffer and develop a state cost share contract or help you enroll in a USDA program. After November 1, 2017 buffers along state waters will be mandatory and therefore not eligible for many programs.

**Shoreline Buffers** – Planting a native buffer along your lakeshore property protects water quality. Funds have been acquired to complete projects within the Swan River Watershed, lakes, and streams.

**Long Prairie River Watershed Protection** – Water quality monitoring shows that nutrient levels are a problem in the Long Prairie River. Projects that can be funded relate to reducing nutrient impacts such as Ag waste pond abandonment, grass buffers, exclusion fencing projects, bank stabilization projects, and shoreland projects. District staff can determine if your project can be funded.

**Wetlands Restoration** – Wetlands provide several benefits including filtering water and wildlife habitat (page #2). Cost share is available for projects that restore the full function of wetlands on your land.

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

On April 1, 2015, a local newspaper ran an article on the discovery of a dinosaur fossil confirmed by Tim Steiber, Director of Soil and Water Conservation District, which resulted in some inquiry at the office.

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Wetlands

Todd County SWCD’s goals are to protect and enhance soil and water resources. Wetlands provide many environmental and societal benefits. The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) signed into law in 1991 by legislature, finds that the wetlands of Minnesota provide public value by conserving surface waters, maintaining and improving water quality, preserving wildlife habitat, providing recreational opportunities, reducing runoff, providing for floodwater retention, reducing stream sedimentation, contributing to improved subsurface moisture, helping moderate climatic change, and enhancing the natural beauty of the landscape, and are important to comprehensive water management, and that it is in the public interest to:

1. achieve no net loss in the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota’s existing wetlands;
2. increase the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of Minnesota’s wetlands by restoring or enhancing diminished or drained wetlands;
3. avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that destroy or diminish the quantity, quality, and biological diversity of wetlands;
4. replace wetland values where avoidance of activity is not feasible and prudent.

WCA states that wetlands must not be impacted unless (1) the drain, fill or excavation activity is exempt or (2) wetlands are replaced by re-storing or creating wetland areas of at least equal public value. If your project might involve wetlands you should get an application for approval from the Todd SWCD office. For additional information regarding the WCA please visit the Board of Water and Soil Resources wetland website at: www.wsr.state.mn.us/wetlands

Since there are many regulations that cover wetlands, there are two other major regulations that landowners should be aware of before doing any project in or near wetlands:

1. The Clean Water Act of 1972, Section 404, regulates the placement of dredged or fill material into wetlands, lakes, streams, rivers, estuaries and certain other types of waters. The goal of Section 404 is to avoid and minimize losses to wetlands and other waters and to compensate for unavoidable loss through mitigation and restoration. This is administered by the Army Corps of Engineers.
2. The Food Security Act of 1985, as Amended, denies USDA farm program benefits to participants who drain wetlands or plant commodity crops on wetlands converted since December 23, 1985. For additional information on USDA wetland conservation compliance check with NRCS.

Remember to plan ahead because if there are any potential wetland impacts, WCA and other regulations may apply. The application process could take up to 60 days to complete. If wetlands are impacted without a replacement plan, or don’t qualify for an exemption, then it is a violation of WCA. Violations are enforced by the DNR and can be costly to the landowner to fix.

Todd Soil & Water Conservation District 2016 Tree Order Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Drought Tolerance</th>
<th>Mature Height</th>
<th>Growth Rate</th>
<th># of Bundles</th>
<th>Price/Bundle</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bare Root Nursery Stock:</strong> 18-24 inches <strong>25 TREES IN A BUNDLE</strong> ***</td>
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<td><strong>Cooler</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Balsam Fir</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>40-60’</td>
<td>Moderate/Rapid</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado Spruce</td>
<td>Fair/Good</td>
<td>30-60’</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norway Pine</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>60-80’</td>
<td>Moderate/Rapid</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<td><strong>Aspen, Quaking</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>25-65’</td>
<td>Rapid</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<td><strong>Sorrel Trees</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Short Trees &amp; Shrubs</strong></td>
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<td>Chokecherry</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>10-15’</td>
<td>Moderate/Rapid</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common Lilac</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>8-15’</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Hazelnut</td>
<td>Fair/Good up to 12’</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
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<td>Elderberry</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>6-8’</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Wildlife</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Eldergood</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Shoreland</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Waterlily</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Landowner</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Polet</strong></td>
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<td>15-18’ 1 Gallon Potted White Spruce</td>
<td>$8.00/Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-18’ 1 Gallon Potted Colorado Spruce</td>
<td>$8.00/Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-18’ 1 Gallon Potted Norway Spruce</td>
<td>$8.00/Tree</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>KITS</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Pollinator Kit</strong></td>
<td>$45.00/Kit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lakeside/Rain Garden Kit</strong></td>
<td>$45.00/Kit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Woodland Edge/Shade Kit</strong></td>
<td>$45.00/Kit</td>
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Need Help? Todd SWCD can work with you to design a field windbreak or combat a wind erosion problem.

Name: ______________________________
Address: ______________________________
City: ______________________________
State/Zip: ______________________________
Phone: (______) _______ _______
Email: ______________________________

All orders must be pre-paid. Make checks payable to: Todd Soil & Water

Return to: 215 1ST Ave South, Suite 104, Long Prairie, MN 56347

Phone: (320) 732-2644
Email: danielle.kuperus@co.todd.mn.us

Thank you for your order! Tree pick up will be end of April or beginning of May in Long Prairie at the fairgrounds.
Buffers—Water Quality Protectors

In June of this year, Governor Dayton signed into law a new buffer initiative aimed at enhancing protection of Minnesota’s waters. The buffer initiative will help protect the state’s water resources from erosion and runoff pollution by establishing roughly 110,000 acres of buffer along waterways while providing flexibility and technical support to landowners for installation and maintenance.

What is a buffer?

A buffer, also known as a riparian filter strip, is vegetated land adjacent to a stream, river, lake or wetland. Buffers help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment, and are an important conservation practice for helping keep water clean.

Why buffers?

Studies by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency show that buffers are critical to protecting and restoring water quality and healthy aquatic life, natural stream functions and aquatic habitat due to their immediate proximity to the water.

What is required?

On public waters:

- An average of 50 feet, minimum of 30 feet
- In place by November 1, 2017

On public drainage systems:

- A minimum of 16.5 feet
- In place by November 1, 2018

How will I know if buffers are required?

The Department of Natural Resources is in the process of mapping all waters subject to the new requirements. The buffer protection maps are expected to be completed by July 2016. For more information on the new buffer law, please contact Todd SWCD or visit: http://www.co.todd.mn.us/departments/soil_water/buffers

Did you know? The SWCD can provide technical & financial assistance for conservation projects on the farm or at the lake home!

Danielle Kuperus

Danielle came to us from Renville SWCD where she was an apprentice with the Minnesota Conservation Corps. She graduated with her BA from Minnesota State University Moorhead. She will be handling the state’s new buffer law through outreach, answering questions and providing technical support. Danielle will also be working with landowners who wish to apply for the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Program.

In her free time Danielle enjoys hiking, boating, painting, traveling and spending time with family and friends. She is looking forward to working with landowners on a variety of conservation practices, improving their land and farm productivity. If you would like to speak to Danielle feel free to call 320-732-2644.

FREE confidential household pharmaceutical/drug drop boxes. Keep it out of the trash and sewer!

Douglas and Pope counties now have drop box locations where you can safely dispose of unused pharmaceutical drugs.

Osakis Police/City Hall – located in the lobby area

For a list of more locations or to learn more please visit: http://www.popedouglasrecycle.com/hazardous_what.php

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

On October 20th, 2015 Tyler Carlson became the first Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certified Farm in Todd County. Tyler was presented his certification on November 6th by Grant Pearson, MAWQCP Certification Specialist, and Tim Stieber, Todd SWCD Director, at his beef farm in Kandota Township. Tyler flash grazes his cattle, and to cut down on soil disruption while planting cover crops Tyler uses a no till grain drill.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary program designed to accelerate adoption of on-farm conservation practices that protect Minnesota’s lakes and rivers. Farm owners and operators who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn assured that their operation meets the state’s water quality goals and standards for a period of ten years.

Why should you participate?

- Protect & improve water in local lakes, rivers & streams.
- Achieve greater stability to plan for & invest in conservation practices.
- Earn priority access to financial & technical assistance (think EQIP!).
- Track management practices over time & improve record keeping.
- Demonstrate leadership and stewardship.
- Receive recognition.
- Gain regulatory certainty for the next 10 years.
- To be part of the water quality solution!

Contact the SWCD today!

Grass Buffer Strip at Dairy Ridge

Agricultural Water Quality Certified Farm in Todd County. Tyler was presented his certification on November 6th by Grant Pearson, MAWQCP Certification Specialist, and Tim Stieber, Todd SWCD Director, at his beef farm in Kandota Township. Tyler flash grazes his cattle, and to cut down on soil disruption while planting cover crops Tyler uses a no till grain drill.

Farm producers and landowners in Todd County now have a more efficient timely option for receiving important Farm Service Agency (FSA) program eligibility requirements, deadlines and related information.

We are now offering free online communications through our GovDelivery electronic news service. News will now be sent via e-mail right to your home or farm office or to your Smartphone — affording you immediate notification of farm program news pertinent to your agricultural operation. GovDelivery is your one-stop shop for the most up-to-date USDA program information. GovDelivery will enable us to keep you better informed AND allow us to conserve resources and reduce taxpayer expenses associated with the preparation, printing and distribution of hardcopy newsletters.

For more information on receiving FSA GovDelivery Bulletins, please contact the Todd County FSA Office at 320-732-6618 Ext #2.
Barn Talk: Did Ya Hear?

Farmer Ole in southern Todd was told by that spindly little Feedlot Officer that his milkhouse waste handlin’ system was outdated and he needs to come up with a new system. She had Lena move her stock-pile back 300 feet from the road ditch. Don’t she know the trucks can’t back in that far without gettin’ mired? Then she picked on a guy west of me because his silage pile was too close to a wetland—“Needs treatment” she said. Bah!

I was gettin’ really fired up when the SWCD Livestock Advisor stepped in with some real good news! Did you know there are monies available to help install “the LATEST and GREATEST, up to date, legal- smegal” stuff that the Feedlot Officer rambles on about? You don’t even need Ms. Feedlot to write you up! The guys and gals at the SWCD office worked real hard to get grants totalin’ over $200,000 in cost share opportunities for livestock farms wishing to update practices.

- Got milkhouse washwater dumpin’ out through a pipe right onto the ground? Go to the SWCD to apply!
- Need a permanent stockpile pad for field storage of manure that trucks can actually access and meets setbacks? Apply now!
- Tired of spinnin’ your tires in mud to feed cattle? Small farms (under 500 animal units) that want to catch/treat runoff from a silage pile, can apply. SWCD is ready and waitin’!
- Have an old manure pit close? SWCD pens are poised!
- How about a feedlot fence and buffer? Call SWCD!
- Thinkin’ a stream/ditch livestock crossin’ would help or you want to keep cattle from trampin’ down the edges of a wetland or lake? The SWCD can cost-share fencin’, limited livestock access- to- water setups, and even waterin’ systems to help keep livestock out of lakes, wetlands, streams, and ditches.

And guess what?

They REALLY REALLY want to cost-share your project! Other opportunities may include but are not limited to:

- Manure stacking slabs
- Re-seeding and mulching areas once blackened by livestock
- Grazing systems
- Grass Treatment Areas for feedlot runoff
- Roof gutters on livestock barns and sheds draining to a lot
- Carcass disposal/ compost buildings
- New or updates to manure basins and pits.

While projects must relate to livestock sites, feedlots aren’t the only sites that can apply! Any livestock site under 500 animal units can qualify as long as it involves an environmental improvement. Larger sites may contact NRCS for funding opportunities—320-732-6618.

Jumpin’ Jiminies! I always thought a guy had to jump through a dozen hoops to get cost-share. But, not with the SWCD. Simply walk in to the Todd County SWCD office located in the Historic Courthouse, 1st Ave, Long Prairie, fill out a one page form, and gather two estimates for your project. The SWCD Board meets nearly every month to review/approve applications. If approved, your project can begin. Have questions? I suggest you talk to the SWCD Livestock Advisor at 320-732-2644. Psst! Don’t bother askin’ for the Feedlot Officer.

Submitted by: Deja Anton- SWCD Livestock Advisor/doubling as the Todd County Feedlot Officer when necessary

With winter in full swing, an increase of damaged E911 address signs from weather related accidents. Todd County GIS is asking for the public’s help to report damaged, knocked down, or missing E911 address signs which are crucial for emergency responders.

Please contact Todd County GIS at 320-732-4248 if you have any questions or need to report damaged or missing signs using our online at:
http://www.co.todd.mn.us/content/report_911_address_sign_problem

BOOT UP!

for the

2016 ANNUAL FEEDLOT MEETING AND APPRECIATION BUFFET

When: March 16, 2016- Starting at 10:00 am
(Cinnamon bun and coffee social starting at 9:30am)
Where: Hub Supper Club, Burttrum, MN

Please RSVP by March 7, 2016 by calling 320-732-2644

To learn more about opportunities for your potential project, please contact Todd SWCD by calling 320-732-2644