The SWCD board meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 3 pm located at the USDA service center in Ortonville.
Soil Health can be your NEW YEAR’s Resolution

About this time, around the first of the year, many of us make a New Year’s resolution to improve on some aspect of our everyday life. Resolutions are made to eat healthier, exercise more, lose weight, quit smoking, etc., etc., etc. Most of these resolutions usually have something to do with improving one’s health. Sometime the resolutions are carried out and results are achieved...... but most of the time they are not. Well...... it was worth a try.

However, maybe your occupation is farming, so what about the Health of your Soil?

Soil is often an overlooked natural resource. Maybe this is because it is so abundant, and it doesn’t leave a lasting impression in our minds like an old growth forest, a vast native prairie, or a pristine northern lake would. However, soil, in a healthy state, is a living environment of macroscopic and microscopic organisms, which need food to eat and places to live to do their work. There are more individual organisms in a teaspoon of healthy soil than there are people living on the planet earth! To have Healthy Soil, we need to keep these organisms healthy.

The definition of Soil Health is: The capacity of a specific kind of soil to function, within natural or managed ecosystem boundaries.

Soil Health Management helps to mend soils that are not functioning properly. What are the functions (duties) of the soil? 1) Water infiltration and storage, 2) Nutrient and energy cycling, 3) Maintaining biodiversity and productivity, 4) Filtering and buffering, 5) Physical stability and support for plants/crops. There are five principles for managing the soil for Soil Health. They are listed below with some examples of each.

1. Keep the Soil covered as much as possible – (minimum till, no-till, strip-till, cover crops).
2. Disturb the soil as little as possible – (minimum till, no-till, strip-till, cover crops).
3. Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil – (cover crops, alfalfa in rotation).
4. Diversify using crop rotation and cover crops as much as possible – (crop rotations, cover crops).
5. Livestock Integration to balance soil carbon and soil nitrogen levels, reducing loss of nutrients from the soil.

These 5 principles protect and nurture the soil as well as the microorganisms in the soil. The microorganisms do not like disturbance of any kind, either physical or chemical. Microorganisms work to enhance soil organic matter and make nutrients available to crops and cover crops. All this beneficial activity is reduced in relation to the level of disturbance to the soil, and the microorganisms.

It is important to note that not all practices are applicable to all crops. Some operations will benefit from just one Soil Health practice while others may require additional practices for maximum benefit. But these core practices form the basis of a Soil Health Management System that can help you optimize your inputs, protect against drought and increase production.

Did you know that an increase of the Soil Organic Matter by 1 percentage point allows the topsoil to hold an additional 1 inch of water? This is monumental in reducing runoff and erosion, keeping nutrients in place and providing water to crops during extended dry periods. And it’s a by-product of Soil Health!

To fulfill your NEW YEAR’S Soil Health Resolution, see NRCS at the local USDA Ag Center to start planning what you can do to improve the Health of your Soils. Soil Health can be implemented with practices through USDA conservation programs such as the Environment Quality Incentives Program, and Conservation Stewardship Program. Start planning now - it just might be worth worth a try.

USDA Announces Conservation Stewardship Program Application Deadline March 2, 2018

Submitted by: Krecia Leddy, District Conservationist, Big Stone County

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting and processing applications for enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the nation’s largest conservation program. This is a major farmer and rancher funding opportunity that rewards farmers and ranchers for protecting and enhancing natural resources on their working lands.

The program is designed to encourage and reward resource-conserving practices such as precision application of nutrients, planting cover crops, rotational grazing, or ecologically-based pest management.

NRCS has made several updates to the program this year to help producers better evaluate their conservation options and the benefits to their operations and natural resources. New methods and software for evaluating applications will help producers see up front why they are or are not meeting stewardship thresholds, and allow them to pick practices and enhancements that work for their conservation objectives. These new tools also allow producers to see potential payment scenarios for conservation early in the process.

NRCS offices are accepting applications on a continuous basis, but applications must be received by March 2nd to be considered for funding this period. Producers interested in the additional opportunities the updated CSP will offer can find information on the new CSP portal, located at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/csp. This one-stop shop, which provides information to help producers determine whether CSP is right for them, will be continually updated as more information becomes available.

For more information or to complete an application, please contact your local NRCS office. In or on, call (320) 839-6149 ext. 3 to set an appointment to complete an application.

Big Stone SWCD Announces 2017 Beautiful Farmstead Award

The Big Stone Soil & Water Conservation District searches the County for the right farmstead every year to give out a “Beautiful Farmstead” award. The award recognizes a landowner for creating, maintaining, or enhancing their delightful home. The 2017 award recipients are Rob and Kathy Randall.

Congratulations to Rob and Kathy Randall for being chosen as the 2017 Big Stone Soil & Water Conservation District’s Beautiful Farmstead!
In the fall of 2017 the Big Stone Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) received Local Capacity funds from the Board of Water & Soil Resource (BWSR) to address valuable needs at the local level around Big Stone County. The SWCD quickly began promoting these dollars throughout the county, in particular, addressing Big Stone Lake. These funds are in place to help not only the SWCD’s operational capabilities, but also landowners in a variety of ways that can correct erosion concerns & issues that have a negative impact on our county’s surface water supply.

After being contacted by a landowner with shoreline questions, it was clear to see that some dirt work needed to be done, in order to properly strengthen and fix this particular stretch of property along Big Stone Lake. The landowner, along with the SWCD and area engineer, quickly created a suitable design plan that would do the job. The project was discussed and approved by the SWCD board of supervisors, and an agreement was signed to provide the landowner with grant fund dollars to help complete the project. Dirt work on site began in the spring of 2016, and was completed the same summer. Project work included re-sloping the shoreline to a more flat slope and adding assorted sized rocks at the base of the lake to strengthen the underlining shoreline to withstand wind and wave action. The up-slope of the shoreline was seeded to native grasses, shrubs, and trees to provide additional root structure to the area that will help prevent future dirt and sediment from flowing into the lake.

Working with the local Upper Minnesota River Watershed District and County shoreline administrators on permitting, the Big Stone SWCD was able to reimburse the landowner 50% of the total project cost to help offset financial costs in order to effectively correct the degraded shoreline in question. If anyone reading lives on Big Stone Lake, or other residential lakes throughout the county and has questions on how to fix their eroding shoreline, contact the SWCD office for more information. Whether those questions lead to some type of project or not, the SWCD is available to assist with engineering designs or planning ideas to correct the issue at hand. The SWCD office still has available funding, and plans to receive more grant fund dollars in the future to continue working on projects that help keep Big Stone Lake a clean & enjoyable place for everyone to enjoy.

**An Update on Buffers**

Nearly three years have gone by since Governor Dayton’s statewide Buffer Implementation Law went into effect, but there still is a chance to come into compliance with the law. If you are not in compliance with the law, and plan to come into compliance, an extension waiver will be needed to be signed. These waivers are located at your local SWCD. This law requires all public waters to have a buffer of perennial vegetation or a combination of a buffer and other alternative practices that protect water by reducing potentially contaminated runoff into water. If you are wondering if you are affected by this law, check out the DNR website http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html or stop in to your local SWCD office located in Ortonville, MN. The Big Stone SWCD can help you come in compliance with the law by educating you and helping you implement the required buffer or approved alternatives. If you are unsure of what to do next, stop into the USDA office and speak with the SWCD staff to see if your land is subject to any buffer law requirement. Landowners have the choice to establish a buffer on their own expense or enroll in a state or federal government program to be financially compensated. It is important to plant your buffer into perennial vegetation, which can include trees, native and/or non-native grasses, or even a mixture suitable for haying or grazing. Those who decide not to participate and implement an approved practice will become non-compliant and may be subject to various penalties or fines, enforced by either your county, watershed district, or the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. The Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation is here and willing to help people gain compliance with the law.

The buffer requirements are as follows:

- The buffer width will be an average of 50 feet of perennial vegetation on public waters with a minimum of 30 feet.
- Alternative practices are available and can reduce the overall width of the buffer.
- Alternative practices can be found at http://bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/alternative_practices_technical_guidance.pdf
- Public waters are defined as all lakes, wetlands and other watercourses that meet the criteria set forth in Minnesota Statutes 103G.005, subd. 15, and are designated on public waters inventory maps.
- An extension waiver is available at the local SWCD. If you sign this extension, it will give you until Spring of 2018 to become compliant with the law.
A rain garden can be a natural depression or hole dug in the ground that is planted to native vegetation, to allow rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas like roofs, driveways, walkways, parking lots, and compacted lawn areas, the opportunity to be absorbed. The primary purpose of a rain garden is to improve the quality of water entering nearby bodies of water, while also adding beautiful scenery around your home or yard. This reduces rain runoff impacts by allowing storm water to safely soak into the ground, as opposed to flowing into storm drains, which can cause erosion, water pollution, flooding, and diminished groundwater. Rain garden obstructions such as nearby trees, buildings or property lines that may be hazardous, should be given special consideration. A typical rain garden size may be as small as 10’ by 20’, but can be larger, and shaped as desired, depending on the amount of water being directed to its location. Plants such as native grasses, shrubs and pollinating flowers are commonly planted to absorb the necessary water and beautify your yard. Rain gardens have been proven to reduce the amount of pollution from reaching our lakes & streams by up to 30%. The flowering plants also provide an essential food source for pollinating bees, butterflies, and insects around the area.

The Big Stone SWCD along with the Upper Minnesota River Water District has money available to help establish a successful rain garden on your property. Inquire with the SWCD office for more details.

What is a Rain Garden?

Financial Opportunity Available for Sealing Wells

The Big Stone SWCD has funding available to provide cost-share assistance for sealing wells. We can contract with the property owners to share in the cost of sealing any abandoned or unused well. In turn, the property owner must contract with a state licensed well sealing contractor to perform all necessary work. Work must be done in accordance with the Minnesota Well Code, including the filing of a sealed well record with the Minnesota Department of Health. Upon completion of all required work and documentation, the SWCD office will reimburse the property owner.

Big Stone SWCD will financially reimburse a landowner 50% of the total cost per well not to exceed a maximum of $400 per well. The funding is limited and is offered on a first come-first serve basis. To learn more about the well sealing program, or to request an application, contact the Soil & Water Conservation District at 320-839-6149x3.

Seeking Input for Resource Concerns

The Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will host a local input meeting open to the public to discuss conservation resource concerns in Big Stone County for Farm Bill Programs in fiscal year 2019. The public input session will be held March 14th at 1 pm at the Graceville Community Club during the Big Stone and Traverse Cooperative Weed Management workshop which runs from 10am-3pm with a catered lunch. Input can be provided on significant local and/or county geographic areas of concern, priority for conservation practices, technical guidance on conservation practices including new, innovative practices; developing ranking criteria, and determining payment limits and methods of payment. The information obtained from this meeting will be used to set priorities for 2019 conservation applications administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

In the event that you require special accommodations such as, sign language interpreters, Braille, large print, or other alternative formats. Please RSVP to the Big Stone SWCD by March 1st by calling (320)839-6149 ext.3. Please contact: Krecia Leddy, District Conservationist at 990 US HWY 12, Ortonville, MN 56278.

Phone 320.839.6149 ext. 3 by 3/1/2018 for the required accommodations. “USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender”

RSVP Today for the 2018 Soil and Water Workshop!
Graceville Community Club
March 14th
10am – 3pm
Big Stone and Traverse County Soil and Water Conservation Districts invite you to attend their bi-annual landowner workshop. This year’s event will be at the Graceville Community Center on March 14th from 10am-3pm. Topics that will be discussed include information about partnering agencies’ programs, weed control, soil health, management practices, and others.
A meal will be served, with the menu including pulled pork sandwiches and all the sides.

“Conservation means harmony between men and land. When land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land, and both end up better by reason of their partnership, we have conservation.” - Aldo Leopold
Gullies are one of the more visible forms of soil erosion noticed in fields after a heavy rain. Gully erosion on the farm is not only a major source of soil loss and sediment pollution, but a field can become less convenient to farm when gullies become too large to cross with equipment. Small gullies can be farmed shut, but once they are established, the soil used to fill them is usually washed away with future runoff events, and the gullies reappear.

Two conservation practices used to correct problem gullies are Water and Sediment Control Basins (WASCB) and Grassed Waterways. WASCBs are the preferred method by most producers. They are earthen embankments designed to hold and route runoff through a tile line in 48 hours or less. Once installed, they protect the gully, and the field is more easily farmed across. The embankments are normally designed to be parallel with the farming direction, and are quite often designed to be farmable. On steeper slopes, however, they may require grassed front and/or back slopes. Water and Sediment Basins will not fit every landscape and there is not always an adequate outlet for a tile line. In most cases, WASCB systems are limited to around 100 - 125 acres of watershed before it is not feasible to install them. In these cases, a grassed waterway may be the most practical cure for the gully.

Grassed waterways are the most cost effective method to control gully erosion. The gully is graded and shaped, then seeded to grass and mulched. Waterways can be installed in small or large watersheds to prevent erosion. When possible, waterways are designed to be crossed with farm equipment, and support tile is installed to dry out the bottom of the waterway, preventing ruts from forming when being crossed with equipment.

Both WASCBs and Grassed Waterways are eligible practices through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). EQIP provides financial assistance for landowners and producers to install conservation practices. Grassed Waterways are also eligible for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). CRP can provide financial assistance for the waterway construction, and a rental payment on the acreage of the waterway.

If you are experiencing erosion problems that you would like to address, stop in or call your local NRCS field office. For more information, or to set up an appointment, contact Krecia Leddy or Gary Hoffman with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service at (320) 839-6149 #3.

The Big Stone SWCD would like to recognize Jim and Cindy Nelson of Ortonville, MN as the SWCD Conservation farmer for 2017. Jim has been farming in Big Stone County since 1983. Jim and Cindy's sons, Brandon and Josh, help on the farm whenever possible and are strong supporters of conservation practices. In 2014, Jim's farming practices began to change after attending a soil health day held by the NRCS. Jim began using minimal tillage in 2014, which has improved his soil health and reduced his fuel usage. Jim has utilized different conservation programs such as EQIP for cover crops and CSP for grid sampling. Jim and his family are very thankful for their landlord's continued support and encouragement in conservation programs to enhance their soil.
WHAT IS A LIVING SNOW FENCE?

Living snow fences are linear plantings of 1 or multiple rows of conifers or shrubs established for environmental purposes such as managing snow, providing wildlife screens, and enhancing wildlife habitat. Living snow fences slow snow and dust to protect roads, lanes, railroads, etc. and also provide travel corridors, nesting sites, food, and escape cover for many wildlife species. Tree rows are planted parallel to road ways, yet a safe distance away, to allow for drifting snow to catch and be stored.

How does it work?
Drift-free roads are achievable through proper road design and snow fences. A suitably designed roadway will promote snow deposition in ditches rather than on the roadway, and blowing snow that does reach the road will move across without drifting. Snow fences can also help maintain clear roadways by capturing blowing snow upwind of a problem area and storing that snow over the winter season. Blowing and drifting snow on roadways are major transportation safety and mobility concerns, causing accidents and requiring expensive winter roadway maintenance. Roads protected by living snow fences report fewer accidents and lower snow removal costs. Livestock feeding costs and home heating costs are also reduced when protected by living snow fences.

What are the benefits?
• Prevent big snow drifts that could lead to stranded motorists
• Help improve driver visibility and reduce vehicle accidents
• Reduce use of public money by reducing plow time
• Lessen our impact on the environment with less salt use, less fuel & reduced truck trips
• Reduce shipping delays for goods and services
• Control soil erosion and reduce spring flooding
• Serve as visual clues to help drivers find their way
• Shows farmer leadership and community service

Temporary Solution
The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) operates a program that pays landowners in identified problem areas to plant living snow fences consisting of trees and/or shrubs or leave standing corn rows to reduce the volume of snow blowing or drifting onto roadways. Standing corn rows can also act as a windbreak. LSFs improve driver visibility, road surface conditions and have the potential to reduce accidents, snow removal costs and equipment emissions while increasing motorist mobility. MnDOT traffic safety data suggest that using LSFs can reduce snow and ice-related accidents.

Conservation Land Payment Opportunity

The Walk-In Access program can offer you additional income on non-farmed acres.

Quite simply, the program compensates you for providing public hunting access on your land from Sept. 1 to May 31. Sign up by February to enroll for 2018-2019 season.

WIA targets parcels of 40 acres or more with high quality natural cover. This may include parcels already in a conservation program such as Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Other high quality habitat, such as river bottom or resting grassland pastures may also be eligible to enroll.

WIA compensates landowners $10-$13 per acre to provide public hunting access on the parcel. Landowner agreements are limited to three years and include a no-hassle, opt-out clause. All landowners in the program are afforded liability protection through the Minnesota Recreational Use Statutes, so rest at ease, wealthy city hunters won’t lawyer up if they sprain their ankle.

When you enroll land in the Walk-In Access Program, you are leasing the land to the state of Minnesota for the public to hunt. Hunters who have purchased a WIA Validation license can access the land one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset from Sept. 1 to May 31. Other uses by the public are prohibited without your written permission.

If you wish to make a donation to the program, you can go to a DNR license vendor and get a donation license. License vendors should know the difference between a WIA validation license and a WIA donation. Be sure they give you the correct license when you go hunting on WIA sites.

In 2017, approximately 249 sites covering more than 26,000 acres were enrolled across 37 Minnesota counties. If you’d like to learn more about the Walk-In Access program, contact Joe Otto at the Big Stone Soil & Water Conservation District in Ortonville, MN at 990 US Highway 12, or call him at (320)839-6149. Deadline is nearing so stop in to enroll soon.

More information is also available at www.mndnr.gov/walkin.
Over 200,000 acres of Minnesota farmland is now enrolled in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP), according to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The MAWQCP is a voluntary program for landowners and farmers that helps protect water resources. So far, MAWQCP has added 628 new conservation practices that protect Minnesota’s Water. Landowners and farmers keep in touch with local conservation experts to identify and mitigate any risks their farm poses to water quality. Farmers across the state have made changes to fertility, reduced some tillage practices, and added cover crops, to name a few of the practices available. After being certified, each farm is deemed to be following new water quality laws and regulations for 10 years. Certification can be used to come in compliance with the state buffer law and is an effective way to promote their businesses as protective of water quality.

Producers looking for certification can get technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality. If you are interested in becoming certified, stop by the Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District located at 990 US-12, Ortonville, MN 56278.

The University of Minnesota has developed 20 different restoration guides, each specific to one of five different types of starting conditions, two different moisture levels, and two different intended uses for restored prairie. Each guide includes recommended techniques, timing and plant species, as well as estimated costs for completing a successful prairie restoration. The guides can be downloaded for free at: nature.org/MNPRairieRestorationGuides.

Farming Today Affects the Beer of Tomorrow!

The worlds of beer production and grain farming have never been more connected than they are now. On the surface, brewers rely on farmers to produce the grain necessary to create their products. On a more involved level, the water needed to produce the beer influences the quality of the finished product. Much of the water used in the brewing process finds its origins in farm country, whether it flows downstream through farm fields, or is pulled from aquifers that recharge in cropland. If the water is tainted with chemicals, sediments, or excess nutrients, the quality of your favorite beer might suffer.

More and more farmers are beginning to consider how their farming practices and management decisions influence life downstream. As a result, farmers are taking special care to keep their nutrients and soil particles where they belong; in their fields. Through the use of buffer strips, precision agriculture, conservation programs, and other best management practices, farmers are doing their part to limit negative effects on water quality and soil health by reducing the concentration of pollutants like sediment, nitrates, phosphorous, and more. Still, more can always be done.

There have been large amounts of research done to develop a new grain crop. Kernza, which was developed from a native wheatgrass, grows like a prairie grass, but is beginning to produce grain like a typical commodity crop. This perennial grass grows deep roots that trap nutrients and keep soil in the field. The idea is to plant the crop along sensitive areas that would be best served with a buffer. This would allow for a perennial crop that could be combined or harvested to allow for returns on buffered acres.

Kernza is being developed as a commodity crop through a few different avenues. Area restaurants in the Twin Cities are starting to add Kernza based products to their menus, with much success. Many locations are finding it difficult to obtain enough supply to meet demand. Several breweries are starting to brew beers with Kernza as well, including Gold from Bang Brewing out of St. Paul, and Patagonia Provisions, which makes and distributes Long Root Ale across the United States. General Mills has seen the potential that Kernza brings, and has offered half a million dollars to the University of Minnesota to put toward genetic development.

Major breweries, such as the MillerCoors Company, are working with farmers to make better use of their water resources during production, as well as making the actual brewing process more efficient in their own facilities. They even went as far as setting a new standard that they will meet by 2025, in which they will use a ratio of less than 3 parts water for every one part of beer they produce.

The industries of agriculture and beer, to some degree, rely on each other for continued success. Each party adapts to meet the needs of the consumer, and with the development of a new potential commodity grain that helps farmers, brewers, bakers, and the environment, there is an opportunity to strengthen the partnerships between farmers and non-conventional grain buyers.

Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule

Minnesota Department of Agriculture is working on making a Nitrogen Fertilizer Rule. The goal of the Rule is to reduce potential sources of nitrate pollution in the state’s groundwater and ultimately protect our drinking water. One of the most common contaminants in Minnesota’s groundwater is Nitrate-nitrogen. Overall, Minnesota households have safe drinking water supplies, but in areas vulnerable to groundwater contamination, some private and public wells may have high nitrate levels. These high nitrate levels can lead to serious health concerns to humans, especially infants.

The rulemaking process includes evaluations by the governor, public comment periods, and steps for public notification. A public comment period was recently held by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, where more than 800 comments were submitted to MDA on the current draft of the rule. The official rule is expected to be released this winter, after the MDA evaluates and includes comments.

An additional comment period will be held after the release, which will give the public another opportunity to provide feedback before the rule is finalized and released. This rule is supposed to take place the fall of 2018. This rule emphasizes involving the local agricultural community in problem-solving for local groundwater concerns.

The University of Minnesota developed the nitrogen fertilizer best management practices, which can be found on the Minnesota Department of Agriculture website. The Rule includes two parts: part one is, if a farm is in a vulnerable groundwater area, nitrogen fertilizer application in the fall and on frozen soils will be restricted. Part two includes, if a farm is in an area that has high concentrations of nitrate in groundwater, the Rule lays out a process for mitigation. Alternative practices and nitrogen fertilizer BMPs are important components of part 2 of the Rule. Comments are a vital piece in this Rule and will be open sometime in the winter.

TNC Restoration Guides

Restoring prairie just got easier. Many landowners and managers have land that they would like to see covered with native flowers and grasses. But, creating a prairie is hard and often unpredictable work. The techniques and types of seeds planted will vary depending on the current state of the land, how moist or dry the site is, and type of prairie you would like to establish. To deal with these issues, The Nature Conservancy and the University of Minnesota have developed 20 different restoration guides, each specific to one of five different types of starting conditions, two different moisture levels, and two different intended uses for restored prairie. Each guide includes recommended techniques, timing, and plant species, as well as estimated costs for completing a successful prairie restoration. The guides can be downloaded for free at: nature.org/MNPRairieRestorationGuides.

Water Testing Kits Available at Big Stone SWCD

Big Stone SWCD has partnered with RMB Environmental Laboratories of Detroit Lakes to provide a convenient and accurate way for landowners to test the quality of their drinking water.

The process begins by picking up a test kit from the district office, filling the container provided, with the water to be tested, and then simply return the container to the office, where it will be picked up by RMB’s courier service, which guarantees timely delivery without extra cost. Tests are available to determine levels of bacteria, nitrogen, arsenic, lead, iron, fluoride, hardness, and other water contaminants that may be found in your drinking water. Results are typically returned to the landowner within 2 to 3 days. For more information, stop into the SWCD office, or call RMB Environmental Labs at 1-888-200-5770.
SWCD Services

The Big Stone SWCD’s services are available for your conservation needs. Our local Pheasants Forever Chapter has helped the SWCD financially to purchase some of the necessary equipment, including a 10’ Great Plains no-till native grass drill to seed CRP, grassland areas, pasture ground, wetland areas, cover crops and food plots. The SWCD also purchased a 15’ Schulte Rotary Mower for all your mowing needs. Other equipment available at the SWCD’s disposal includes our tree and fabric laying machine along with spraying equipment. We offer services for seeding, mowing, spraying, tree/fabric/tree tube installation and other grass plantings. We can also purchase the right seed mix for whatever your needs may be.

For prices and availability of equipment contact Beau Peterson, with the SWCD, at 320-839-6149, x3, or look online at www.bigstoneswcd.org.

Tree shelter belt planting.

Big Stone Soil & Water Conservation District

900 LS HWY 12
Grove, MN 56278
320-839-6146
www.bigstoneswcd.org

Tree Order Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address (Street, city)</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Soil Type</th>
<th>Relocated Products</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Elkhorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Shrub (Bare-root)</td>
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<td>Common Currant (Bare-root)</td>
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<td>Round Red Berry</td>
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<td>Cranberry</td>
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<td>Prunus Red Plum</td>
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<td>Laurel Willow</td>
<td>24-36”</td>
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<td>Deciduous Trees (Bare-root)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oak</td>
<td>24-36”</td>
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<td>Hazel</td>
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<td>Poplar</td>
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<td>Honey Locust</td>
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<td>Golden Willow</td>
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<td>American Sycamore</td>
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<td>Black Cherry</td>
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<td>Cornstalk</td>
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<td>Containers (Bare Root $3.00)</td>
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<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
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<td>Colorado Blue Spruce</td>
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<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
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<td>Norway Spruce</td>
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<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
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<td>Red Pine</td>
<td>18-24”</td>
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<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snow Pine</td>
<td>15-18”</td>
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<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ponderosa Pine</td>
<td>15-18”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6” Fabric Banded (bare root)</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Before -** No tillng cover crops in two wheat stuble in August of 2016.

**After -** Cattle grazing cover crop mix in October of 2016.

Program Overview

The Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (MN CREP)

What is MN CREP?

MN CREP is a voluntary, federal state funded natural resource conservation program that uses a science-based approach to target environmentally sensitive land. Here’s how it works:

- Landowners enroll in the federally-funded Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 14-25 years.
- CRP is administered by the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). It uses agricultural land for conservation benefits, rather than farming or ranching.
- The same land is also enrolled into a state-funded perennial conservation easement through the Minnesota (MND) Reserve program, administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).
- Private ownership continues and the land is permanently restored and enhanced for conservation benefits.
- MN CREP is a $500 million program, that includes $300 million in federal dollars and $100 million in state dollars.

MN CREP is voluntary, locally driven and targets the most environmentally sensitive acres.

MN CREP Objectives

- Target riparian areas and marginal agricultural land
- Restore hydrology, increase infiltration and provide flood mitigation
- Provide habitat for wildlife, non-game species and pollinators
- Reduce intense loading in drinking supplies

Why now?

Minnesota is at a critical juncture in addressing our state’s serious water quality challenges. In addition, the state stands to lose nearly 300,000 acres of critically graded soils near the next 10 years from CRP. Although MN CREP won’t fix these problems, it is part of the solution.

The Minnesota state agencies have come together to support MN CREP, including Board of Water and Soil Resources, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources and Pollution Control Agency.

Enrollment for MN CREP will begin in Spring 2017 and continue until funds are exhausted in the 60,000 acre goal is reached.

How will the land be restored and protected?

MN CREP will focus on four main Conservation Practices (CPs) that have been identified through the federal CRP:

1. Grass Filter Strips (CRP CP 21)
2. Wetland Restoration – Non-Floodplain (CRP CP 21a)
3. Wetland Restoration – Floodplain (CRP CP 21)
4. Wellhead Protection Areas (CRP CP 2)

Many choices for landowners

MN CREP is just one option for landowners who wish to install conservation practices on their land. The local FSA/Natural Resources Conservation Service/Soil and Water Conservation District office can provide numerous Reich, voluntary, long-term solutions to directly address resource problems. Contact them directly for more information.