

POPE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation News

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BUFFER ESTABLISHMENT DEADLINES APPROACHING

The 2015 Buffer Bill signed into law has a goal of a **50' average, 30' minimum perennial vegetated buffers on public waters and 16.5' buffers on public ditches seeded by 11/01/2017 and 11/01/2018** these deadlines did not change this past legislative session. The official map completed by the DNR can be found online.

Pope County has 94 percent compliance based on the initial desktop review. Letters were sent to landowners whose parcels are needing further field review. If you received one of these letters, please schedule an appointment with Jessica or Holly at the SWCD. If you have not received a letter and are interested in your parcel you can also schedule an appointment.

Buffers are just one of many conservation practices that will be implemented to improve water quality. A combination of other conservation practices may suit your land. Alternative practices need to be approved by the local SWCD and have comparable water quality benefits as the buffer. **If you are interested in an alternative practice you must talk with the Pope SWCD. Alternative practices are very site specific and requires a visit to each parcel.** The Board of Water and Soil Resources has information on 6 common practices that could be used in conjunction with a small buffer on their website. http://bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/alternative_practices_technical_guidance.pdf

With the legislative special session's decisions a few slight changes have occurred. If you cannot meet the deadlines to seed your buffer this fall, you must fill out a waiver form with the SWCD by 11/01/2017. If the parcel is not verified as seeded or a waiver is not filled out by the deadlines, the non-compliant parcel information will be sent to the enforcement agency.

Our office can provide assistance such as map review, measuring, staking and seeding of the buffer. There may be programs available for financial assistance. Please schedule an appointment with us to discuss what the Buffer Law may mean for you. We look forward to working with you to improve our water quality.

NOTES FROM THE FEEDLOT OFFICE BY BARRY BOUWMAN

IT'S RE-REGISTRATION TIME

Producers are encouraged to contact the Feedlot Officer with any questions regarding re-registration. You can email barry.bouwman@co.pope.mn.us, call the office line at 320-634-7793, or cell number at 320-424-0194.

We will be happy to make a site visit to help you onsite with your re-registration and answer any questions you may have.

Re-Registration of Feedlots Underway

Feedlot operators update registrations every four years or whenever changes or expansions occur at their facilities. Pope County producers will receive information to re-registration feedlots by mail in July. Please review these forms fully and fill them out including a signature.

Feedlot numbers were at 294 in 2013 and have been in a steady decline for about 20 years. Pope County has been re-registering feedlots that have not been in use for some time. We will continue to recognize existing feedlots that are not currently being populated but registrations will reflect the animal units on site in the past 5 years. We have many sites where the feedlot buildings and open lots have been removed. There are also sites that have been maintained and ready for future reuse. When sites discontinue use in shoreland for more than five years they can no longer re-register. This is a requirement of the Pope County Land Use Ordinance. Pope County is delegated to administer the Minnesota State 7020 Rules and feedlot thresholds begin at 10 animal units in shoreland and 50 animal units out of shoreland.

Barry Bouwman will be in contact with producers throughout this summer to discuss the complete re-registration process. In most cases sending back the form that has been provided will take care of the re-registration. It will be entered into the county database once it is returned. If there has been a change of ownership or other circumstances needing further discussion please call the feedlot officer.

Under the county ordinance existing feedlots in shoreland can expand by 50 animal units through a conditional use permit. New feedlots cannot be proposed in shoreland zones and the Minnesota State Feedlot Rules 7020 define a feedlot in shoreland requiring registration as 10 animal units or more. Out of shoreland a feedlot of 50 animal units or more is required to register. The ordinance also states expansions over 300 animal units require a conditional use permit up to a maximum of 2,000 animal units.



Nitrate Clinic to be held on August 5th Noon to 4 p.m. at the Pope County Fair. Bring in a water sample to have it tested for free. Watch our website and newspaper for more details as this event approaches.

HEALTHY SOILS ARE FULL OF LIFE

This year, students were invited to participate in the Annual Poster Contest put on by the Pope SWCD. With this year's theme being "Healthy Soils are Full of Life", students from three local elementary schools Belgrade Brooten Elrosa (BBE), Minnewaska, and Glacial Hills were challenged to tap into their creative skills by designing educational posters that focus on soil health. There were a total of three winners from each school along with another three overall winners for the County.

The Pope SWCD would like to thank everyone that participated in this year's poster contest. The overall winners will compete at the Area II meeting in June. Area II covers twelve counties. Our first place overall poster contest winner will also be going to Long Lake Conservation Camp in June. The Pope SWCD sponsors a scholarship for Alicia to attend. Congratulations to all the winners and good luck to the overall winners at the area contest.

2017 Poster Contest Winners



Minnewaska Elementary

*1st Alica Boysen,
2nd Makena Thoen,
3rd Ashlyn Bergemann*



Glacial Hills Elementary

*1st Miranda Longtin, 2nd
Haley Herfindahl, and 3rd
Carolos A Rivera*



BBE

*1st Presley Detloff, 2nd Ella
Halvorson, 3rd Brooklyn Fischer*

Overall Winners

1st Alica Boysen (Minnewaska), 2nd Makena Thoen (Minnewaska), 3rd Presley Detloff

Minnesota State Cattleman's Summer Beef Tour and Trade Show

July 10-11, 2017

Clear Springs Cattle Company-Starbuck, MN

30819 250th Street, Starbuck, MN 56381

Visit the Glacial Ridge Cattleman's Association Facebook page for tour info.

Or glacialridgecattlemen@gmail.com

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM ENROLLMENT HOLD

Landowners are busy in the office re-enrolling and enrolling their land into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Overall the national acres were reduced from 30 million to 24 million acres in the 2014 Farmbill available for CRP.

On May 3, 2017 the FSA office received information that there was going to be a national hold starting the end of that day for CRP acres. National office is working to get a total for number of acres enrolled into the CRP program so that they do not break the 24 million acre cap. While they are calculating acres this has halted

submitting any acres into the CRP program until further notice. What this means for producers is that they are still able to sign their paperwork and we can move through all the steps of the CRP process except the final step of FSA being able to submit the acres to the national office.

Our office is encouraging landowners to come in and sign their contracts as soon as possible. When we are able to submit acres to national office they will be done on a first come first serve basis. If you have questions please call.

Pope Co. NRCS, SWCD, and Land Stewardship Project (LSP), present the 2nd annual **Grazing Field Day** on **August 10, 2017 starting at 4 PM at the Shane and Jessica Blair Farm near Starbuck.**

The Grazing Field Day will consist of a tour of their rotational grazing systems which includes fencing, watering systems, utilizing cover crops, and grazing native pastures. LSP will provide an evening meal. Please RSVP by: August 7th to (320) 492-2526 more information can be obtained from the office regarding the tour.

POPE SWCD HIRES INTERNS TO ASSIST WITH CONSERVATION

Pope SWCD annually hires two interns to assist in conservation implementation throughout the summer. This year's interns are Dalton Herrboldt and Alexa Hoffarth. They both have different responsibilities. Dalton is mainly working from our office and assisting with Conservation Reserve Program, Buffers, and other programs. Alexa is mainly working on the Rosholt Research Farm sampling and other educational programming. We welcome them to Pope County!

ABOUT ALEXA

My name is Alexa Hoffarth. I am originally from rural Osakis, Minnesota. Growing up in the country and spending my summers on Lake Vermilion, I developed a passion for the outdoors at an early age. Following my graduation from Osakis Public School, my strong interest in agriculture and appreciation for the environment led me to pursue a major in Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering at North Dakota State University. I am currently on track to graduate with my bachelor's degree in the spring of 2019.

Outside of school and work related events, I enjoy spending my time with family and friends as well as partaking in any outdoor recreation. The majority of my spare time is consumed with hunting, fishing, spearing, and a variety of physical activities. I am excited to have the opportunity to work with Pope SWCD this summer and learn more about my desired field and my ability to have an impact on the environment.

ABOUT DALTON

I grew up in the town of Isanti. I graduated from Cambridge-Isanti High School in 2010. From there I went to my local community college Anoka-Ramsey where I received my Associates Arts Degree. Then I transferred to St. Cloud State University. Being raised in a rural area, I grew up with a love for the outdoors. I knew I wanted to work outdoors, so I picked the major of Environmental Studies. I graduated in the spring 2016. Later that year I got hired by Soil View to be a soil sampler. I worked there until that winter. I gained in-valuable experience which helped me get hired by Pope County's Soil and Water Conservation District to be Conservation Technician! I'm looking forward to this opportunity, and what it will bring to my future!



REINVEST IN MINNESOTA/CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMS

Over the last year, several Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements have gone through the process in order to have vegetation upgrades and changes. Benefits include the landowner experiencing their RIM land to a greater extent and enhanced wildlife habitat and food sources. An appointment is needed with the landowner and our office to discuss proposed changes and go through an approval process through the local SWCD office and finalized by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).



We will be conducting routine annual site checks on a select few. Our list is generated by BWSR and given to us to perform. This year there is about 60 easements that will be checked. A form is filled out based on the requirements of the RIM operation and management. The main points that we look at is that no structures are built on the easement and that noxious and invasive plants are controlled while keeping up each practice area. If anything is unsatisfactory at the time of the site check it will be noted on the form and our office will follow up with the landowner to get it back in compliance.

There is now a new Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) sign up. CREP is a combination of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program. Previous CREP sign ups had a general wildlife habitat focus. This CREP sign up requires a minimum of 8 acres for the offer and focuses on buffers and wetland restoration acres for increased water quality enhancement. A waiver form may be filled out for an offer of lesser acres. The CRP contract portion will be held by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for the 15 year lifespan of CRP. Annual payments for the CRP contract will be received. The land will roll over into a straight perpetual RIM contract once the CRP portion is expired. However, the RIM easement is acquired at the time of signing. A one-time payment is received at the time that the permanent easement is purchased. The landowner will still own the land, but the state purchases an easement for the purpose of the land, i.e. buffers, wetland restorations. The land continues to be private, it will not be open to the public. If you are interested in CREP please make an appointment to talk to Jessica or Holly.

WELL SEALING COST SHARE AVAILABLE



Pope SWCD is currently taking applications for sealing of abandoned wells within the county. If you are interested in the program contact our office and talk to Holly about cost share.

The program will provide 75% cost share not to exceed \$500 per well. We do have a limited amount of funding for this program each year and encourage you to contact our office early. 320-634-5327

Custom Native Grass Seed Mixes Available

Call now to visit with Kelly about your grass seeding project.

Don't delay to ensure seed availability for your project.





Planting For Cleaner Water

***FREE** City of Glenwood Urban Stormwater Project Workshop*



When: July 24th, 2017

Where: Pope County Courthouse Community Room

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Who: Anyone interested in learning more about storm water projects, raingardens, tree trenches, and other projects that can be built in your backyard.

Register: By July 20th @ 4 p.m. call 320-634-5327 or email holly.kovarik@mn.nacdnet.net

AGENDA:

- 6:30 p.m.** Welcome
- 6:35 p.m.** City Street Reconstruction Project Overview
- 7:05 p.m.** Stormwater Modeling Project Report by Houston Engineering
- 7:35 p.m.** Learn about Raingardens, Rainbarrels, Tree Trenches, Swales, and other Best Management Practices that can be constructed to address stormwater flooding and water quality concerns for Lake Minnewaska
- 8:00** Are you interested in doing a project? We want to discuss potential grant opportunities that we may be able to attain to assist in providing up to 75% cost share to implement one of these projects
- 8:30 p.m.** Questions



**Sign Up Now If Interested
In Implementing A Project**

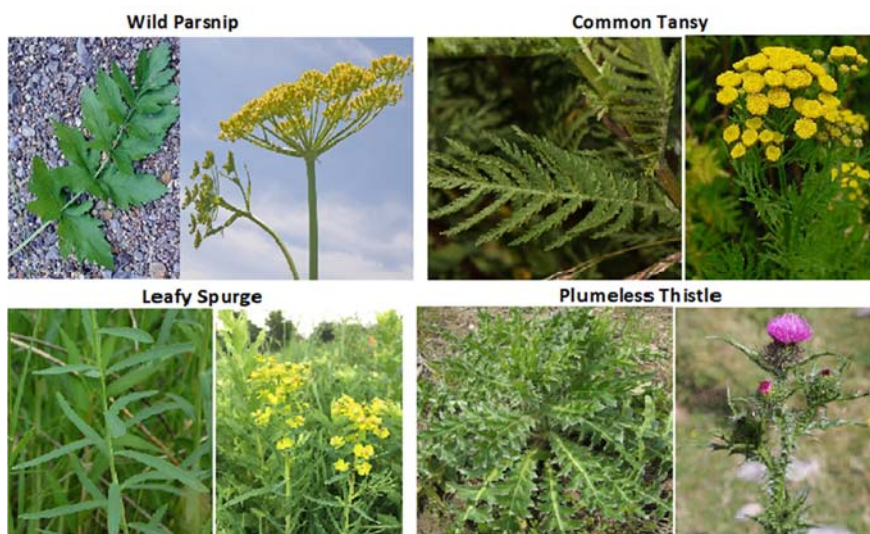


In Your Yard With Assistance From Pope SWCD

ATTENTION WEED WATCHERS

Summertime is finally here which means it's that time of the year to be on the lookout for those pesky invasive and noxious weeds here in Pope County. We have an easy four step approach for weed management: prevention, early detection, rapid response and integrated weed management. Weeds that we really need to be on the lookout for are: Wild Parsnip, Common Tansy, Leafy Spurge, and Plumeless Thistle. The concern with these weeds is that they are in some way shape or form harmful

to humans, animals, or to other plants. They can cause irritations, burns, or even be poisonous to humans and animals. To identify and learn strategies to locate and control these weeds and others in Pope County's rural and urban areas you can visit weedwatchers.org, or you can call our county agricultural inspector Barry Bouwman at 320-634-5020 or barry.bouwman@co.pope.mn.us or Jessica Oldakowski at Pope Soil and Water Conservation District at 320-634-5327 for more information.



ROSHOLT RESEARCH CONTINUES

Courtesy of a partnership between the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, University of Minnesota, Prairie Lakes Co-op, and Pope SWCD, a nitrogen focused study is underway at the Rosholt Research Farm located in Westport, Minnesota. This project evaluates nitrogen losses to groundwater resulting from different fertilizer application rates, application timing, and application techniques. The goal of this study is to provide a better understanding of nitrogen fertilizer management and water quality control methods on sandy soils.

Every week, starting early spring and ending late fall, over two-hundred water samples are pulled from suction tube lysimeters that run below three 535x60 ft test plots at the Rosholt Research Farm. Each field section has a uniform coarse-textured soil type. However, all plots explore a different row crop and rotation, along with a different fertilizer application rate. One plot is corn-corn, one is corn-soybean, and the final is soybean-corn. Following sample collection, nitrogen analysis is run on each individual water sample. Nitrate concentrations of the samples are determined using a HACH spectrophotometer. These computed values give an idea of how various fertilizer methods affect groundwater nitrate levels across the test plots.



A Field Day will be held on August 17th, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. at the research farm near Westport. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. You can also learn more by visiting our website at www.popeswcd.org.

POPE SOIL & WATER



CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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IMPORTANT DATES

Board Meetings are held the **third Tuesday of each month at 7am.**
The public is welcome to join us.

June 20	Board Meeting
July 18	Board Meeting
August 15	Board Meeting
September 19	Board Meeting



SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Randy Pederson, D.Gary Reents, Tom Talle, Mike Billehus, and Keith Nygaard



SWCD STAFF

Nicole Brede (Farmbill Technician), Holly Kovarik (Manager), Jessica Oldakowski (Technician), Kelly Erickson (Technician)