



Lac qui Parle Soil & Water Conservation District 2009 November Newsletter

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www.lacquiparleswcd.org

The mission of the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District is to take available technical, financial and educational resources, whatever their source, and focus or coordinate them so that they meet the needs of the local land user to help him/her protect Lac qui Parle's natural resources.

Outstanding Conservationists

The Lac qui Parle SWCD is pleased to announce the Patzer Family - Stan, Todd, Tim and their families - has been named the Lac qui Parle SWCD 2009 Outstanding Conservationists.



The family farming operation converted to ridge-till 25 years ago, and over the years has adapted and evolved to fit what works for their land. Today they are virtually a no-till system, and the terraces installed years ago still function efficiently. Natural buffers are left between cropland, livestock, and surface water. The combination of wetlands, non-program native grasslands, woody cover plantings, farmstead shelterbelts, and numerous food plots, along with undisturbed crop residue & waste grain create a year-round haven for wildlife. They control both wind and water erosion, maintain a healthy soil profile, and provide abundant wildlife habitat.

The Patzer's say their love of conservation and wildlife gives them a good feeling knowing they're doing what's best for

the land and at the same time making a living for their families. Stan told us they don't need an award to reinforce what they believe, but the SWCD believes the family deserves recognition for a farming system that protects soil and water resources while using fewer inputs and less fossil fuel.

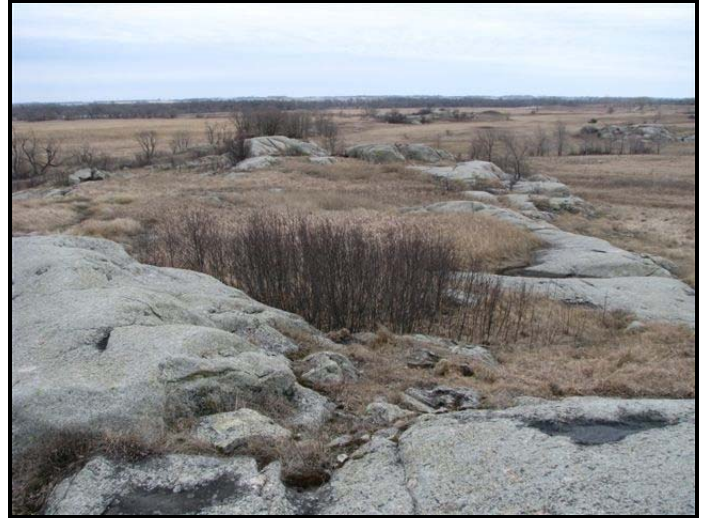
The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) has named the Patzer Family as one of eight Area Finalists in the 2009 Outstanding Conservationist Award Program. The awards program recognizes farm families, individuals, conservation organizations, and other groups for their accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. Of the eight finalists, one will be announced as the State's Outstanding Conservationist of the Year at the MASWCD Annual Convention in December. *Best of luck!*

TMDL Stakeholder Meetings

A TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) study is being conducted on the impaired reaches of the Lac qui Parle and Yellow Bank Rivers and tributaries. Public informational TMDL meetings will be held on **Tuesday, November 24** at the **Canby Community Center** from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. and at the **Madison VFW** from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Please come! Your involvement is very important in the TMDL process.

Granite Rock Outcrop

Some very unique and endangered areas are about to be protected in Lac qui Parle county. Minnesota Valley Granite Outcrops that are among the oldest rock formations in the world, with their unique land forms and rare vegetation it makes these rock formations worth protecting. These areas contain many rare and endangered species including many plant species, birds, and amphibians. The Legislative Citizens Committee on Minnesota Resources Grant, LCCMR, will help to protect over 75 acres of these fragile rock ecosystems with a permanent easement so that future generations can enjoy this beautiful, rare, and fragile blend of rocks, plant, and animal life.



Busy Summer

District outreach efforts continued over the summer with parade entries in Bellingham and Marietta, weekly radio program, assistance with Madison community tree planting effort, and water quality activities for Dawson Girl Scouts. District staff also served on the planning committee for the SW MN Environmental Fair for 6th graders in September. Students from Stevens Elementary, LqP Valley Middle School, and Ortonville were among the nearly 1800 students participating in the 2 day event held this year in Marshall.

We would be happy to share information about the care of our soil and water resources with any age group. Call Terry at 598-7321 x 3.

*Visit our website for valuable resource links or
to find out what's happening in the District!*

Fund\$ Available

Now is the time to visit with office staff about keeping soil in your field where it belongs. Cost share funds are available for a variety of practices.

Ag BMP Loans are not just for farmers

Rural landowners and farm supply businesses are also eligible for loans to restore or protect water quality. Maximum interest rate is 3%. Call for more information, stop by the office for a brochure, or go to www.lacquiparleswcd.org and look under Services and Programs.

Funds from the LqP County Water Plan help sponsor the mailing of this newsletter.



River Project in Dawson

The dam on the Lac qui Parle River in Dawson is being replaced by a series of rock riffles - an opportune time to do some cleanup! Although rainfall raised the water level, dedicated 9th and 10th graders from Dawson-Boyd High School joined Mary Homan, LqPYB Clean Water Partnership, SWCD staff (Les, Deb, & Terry), and several high school staff to remove more than 1100 pounds of debris. That doesn't include the tree branches! City maintenance staff helped by sorting bags of trash from branches and hauling it all away. Great job, everyone!

Building a garage, repairing a road, cleaning out an old stand of trees - the Wetland Conservation Act applies to YOU! Before starting work, check at the Environmental Office to see if your proposed project may impact a wetland.



Clean Water Legacy Project

A project using Clean Water Legacy funds was completed near the bridge on LqP County Highway 31. The SWCD applied for and received a \$122,000 grant to stabilize a section of the Lac qui Parle riverbank with a combination of stream barbs, selective riprap, and bank re-sloping with reseeding of native

grasses. The bank was protected with erosion control blanket held in place by willow stakes. The project was completed in autumn 2007, and held through ice flows and high water events the following year. Unfortunately this past spring an area of sloughed bank was discovered at the project site. Necessary repair included some reshaping and reseeding covered by erosion control blanket, a small amount of rock at the edge of the riprap, and dogwood and plum planted on the lower shelf. The repair was completed in June 2009. A report detailing the project can be found on the District's website at www.lacqui-parle-swcd.org. Easy to understand, reports such as help ensure public fund transparency, and are being used as one method of grant reporting to the legislature.

District Supervisors

John Rebehn....Chairperson
Ed Radermacher....Vice-chair
LeRoy SchuelkeSecretary
Bob Ludvigson....Treasurer
Jeff JohnsonPublicity & Information

District Staff

Terry WittnebelDistrict Manager
Leslie Kvidera....District Technician
Deborah Hoffman....Program Assistant
Curtis Nordaune....District Eng. Tech
Assisted by **NRCS Staff**
Burton Hendrickson....District Conservationist
position vacant....Soil Conservation Technician



Curtis Nordaune has been working to protect the soil and water resources of Lac qui Parle County for 45 years this month! Although he is semi-retired, Curt continues to fill an important niche in the office. Thank you, Curtis!

Various NRCS programs offer payments to producers to improve the environment. Two programs include payments for managing nutrients: the EQIP program and the new CSP program. Stop by the office or give Burt a call for more information about either of these programs.

A Special Thank You

Our affiliates are more important than ever. Affiliate Member fees are used here in our county. A conservation ethic is promoted through the education of present and future generations of land users. We help the land user gain access to available technical, financial, and educational resources. *Thank You* to the following businesses and individuals for supporting District activities in 2009.

Business Affiliates

Northern Plains
Lac qui Parle Co-op Oil Company
Farmers Mutual Telephone Company
Farmers Co-op Elevator, Bellingham

Friends of Conservation

Peggy Crosby
Canby Farmers Grain Company
Larry & Sonja Farmer
Jim & Denise Connor
Stan Olson
Paul & Lori Schwendemann

Water quality of private wells may be a concern

More than 20% of private domestic wells sampled nationwide contain at least one contaminant at levels of potential health concern, according to a study by the US Geological Survey. Nitrate was the most common inorganic contaminant from man-made sources such as fertilizer applications and septic tanks. Other contaminants included herbicides, insecticides, solvents, disinfection by-products, and gasoline chemicals, and were usually found as a mixture with other contaminants. Well owners should consult Countryside Public Health in Madison for well maintenance and testing information. Unused wells should be properly sealed to prevent groundwater contamination. Well sealing assistance is available through the LqP Water Management Plan. Ask for Terry in the SWCD office, or call 320-598-7321 x 3.