



Lac qui Parle Soil & Water Conservation District May 2010 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.

Have you met Gary?

Hello. My name is Gary Hoffman and I am glad to join the crew at the Lac qui Parle Farm Service Center. Being born in Madison, I am a native of Lac qui Parle County.



I grew up on a farm between Bellingham and Rosen, and graduated from Bellingham High School. I attended college at the University of Minnesota, graduating with a degree in Forestry. A few years after college, I was hired as the Technician for the Big Stone Soil and Water Conservation District in Ortonville, where I worked mainly with the SWCD Tree Program, RIM program, and the Minnesota Wetlands Conservation Act. The opportunity to work for NRCS in Lac qui Parle presented itself, and I elected to take the position of Soil Conservation Technician in Madison. Although I have worked in a similar office of a neighboring county for many years, I have found out quickly that learning is a large requirement of any new job!

I am looking forward to assisting the landowners, ag producers and the general public of Lac qui Parle County. It will be rewarding to work on conservation programs and practices that protect the natural resources here, in my home County.

District Supervisors

Ed Radermacher...Chairperson
Jeff Johnson...Vice-chair
LeRoy Schuelke...Secretary
Bob Ludvigson...Treasurer
vacant...Publicity & Information

District Staff

Terry Wittnebel ...District Manager
Leslie Kvidera...District Technician
Deborah Hoffman...Program Assistant
Curtis Nordaune...District Eng. Tech

Assisted by NRCS Staff

Burton Hendrickson...District Conservationist
Gary Hoffman...Soil Conservation Technician

Staff and supervisors were saddened by the passing in March of long time supervisor John Rebehn. John was elected in 1989, and served many years as chairman of the LqP SWCD Board of Supervisors. He actively represented the District at other organizations, and on committees at the local and area level. There are 2 years remaining of John's term. He will be missed.

At the April meeting of the LqP SWCD Board of Supervisors, the start time of the regular monthly meetings of the LqP SWCD was changed to 8:00 a.m.

Supervisor Elections in 2010

Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisors play an important role in addressing a wide variety of resource management issues aimed at protecting and improving water quality, properly managing wetlands, and preventing soil erosion. SWCD employees work with landowners and other units of government, in both rural and urban settings, to provide financial and technical assistance for these efforts.

SWCDs are local units of government, and Supervisors are elected to four - year terms. Terms are staggered so either two or three Supervisors are up for election each two years. Supervisors are elected at large, but must reside in the district they represent. Monthly business meetings are held to discuss the business of the SWCD, including state grant allocations to landowners, district conservation priorities, coordination with other local units of government and state agencies, and legislative priorities. They may also be authorized to attend area, state and other meetings and training sessions. District Supervisors are not paid a salary, but do receive compensation for attending meetings and are reimbursed for expenses.

Three positions will be up for election this fall. LeRoy Schuelke currently represents District IV (Hamlin, Riverside, Maxwell, Providence townships and the city of Dawson), and Jeff Johnson represents District V (Lac qui Parle, Baxter, Ten Mile Lake, Camp Release townships and the city of Boyd). Two years remain on the term of John Rebehn, District III (Lake Shore, Hantho, Cerro Gordo, Madison townships and the cities of Louisburg and Madison), due to his recent passing.

Residents of Districts III, IV, and V who are interested in maintaining and improving water quality and protecting our soil, and are willing to take an active leadership role setting local conservation priorities may file at the County Auditor's office from May 18 through June 1.



Celebrating Conservation in Lac qui Parle County on Earth Day, April 22, 2010... the LqP SWCD received its charter from the state of MN on April 19, 1950



Curtis Nordaune was recognized for a lifetime dedicated to protecting the soil and water resources of Lac qui Parle County. Although now working only part time, Curt has been employed in the Madison Conservation Office for 45+ years, and has worked a total of 55 years in the conservation field. Thank you Curtis!

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

Don't forget - 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.

You and your Septic System

How do you know if your system is failing? The following symptoms tell you that you have a serious problem, and should contact a licensed plumber to assess your system.

- Sewage backup in your drains or toilets.
- Slow flushing of your toilets and the drains in your house drain much slower than usual despite the use of plungers or drain cleaning products.
- Surfacing of wastewater on the ground near your septic system. (It may or may not have much of an odor associated with it.)
- Lush green grass over the absorption field, even during dry weather indicating an excessive amount of liquid moving up through the soil, instead of downward. While some upward movement of liquid from the absorption field is good, too much could indicate major problems.
- Presence of nitrates or bacteria in your drinking water well. Water tests are available from Countryside Public Health in Madison.
- Buildup of aquatic weeds or algae in ponds, ditches, or stream adjacent to your home may indicate that nutrient-rich septic system waste is leaching into the surface water.
- Unpleasant odors around your house.

You can improve your septic system performance by controlling water use, fixing leaky faucets, limiting use of antibacterial soaps and drain cleaners, don't flush or put down drain medications or paper towels or undigested foods or chemicals such as solvents, paints, antifreeze, and other chemicals.

More information on septic system operation and maintenance is available on the University of Minnesota website.

Spring Field Inventory

Working in the field this spring is a great time to take inventory of any gully or ephemeral erosion in your fields. Gullies are one of the more visible forms of damage we see in the fields. Gully erosion can be a major source of soil loss and sediment pollution, and it can also make a field difficult to farm.

Water and sediment control basins and grassed waterways are two of the most common practices that are used to prevent gully erosion problem areas. Both of these practices are eligible for cost-share through conservation programs.

The goal in the long run is to keep your topsoil from being washed away. By

implementing conservation practices to stop your soil from eroding it will help your farm be more profitable in the long run. For more information, please contact the Lac qui Parle SWCD or NRCS in Madison (320) 598-7321.

We're here to help you!

Sometimes it may not be convenient for you to stop by the office during office hours with your questions, and sometimes you might be in a bad location for your cell phone. With email you can get your question to us any time of the day or night! Check our website at www.lacquiparleswcd.org for contact information.

Common Courtesy, please

Aren't cell phones great?! It's not just "kids" who consider this piece of technology an essential part of daily life. Unfortunately we all have become conditioned to immediately respond to the ring (or chime or musical selection) of our cell phones no matter the time or place. And some common courtesies have fallen by the wayside.

When you are being helped by the staff in the Farm Service Center (FSA, NRCS, SWCD) please let your messages go to voicemail. If you

must take the call, please keep your personal business personal and go out into the entry so staff can either continue with their work or help the next person waiting for assistance. Thank you.



AgBMP \$\$ available

The AgBMP Loan Program provides financing at below-market interest rates. These 3% low-interest loans save you money, making it more economical to implement practices that improve and protect water quality.

Years	Loan Amount	Interest Paid		Interest Savings
		3%	9%	
5	\$10,000	\$781	\$2,455	\$1,674
5	\$30,000	\$2,344	\$7,365	\$5,021
7	\$50,000	\$5,496	\$17,574	\$12,078
10	\$100,000	\$15,873	\$52,011	\$36,138

Loans may be used for:

- Feedlot improvements, manure storage basins and spreading equipment
- Conservation tillage equipment
- Terraces, waterways, sediment basins (or the farmer's share of a cost-shared project)
- Shore and river stabilization
- Septic systems
- Other projects that improve water quality

Call Terry at 320-598-7321 x 3 for details on how to apply.

2010 Affiliates - THANK YOU for your support!

Business Memberships:

Farmers Co-op Elevator, Bellingham
 United Prairie Bank, Madison
 Lac qui Parle Coop Oil, Dawson
 Minnwest Bank Central, Dawson
 Northern Plains Tiling, Madison
 Madison Bottling, Madison
 Farmers Mutual Telephone, Bellingham

Friend of Conservation Memberships:

Paul & Lori Schwendemann
 Peggy Crosby
 Sonja & Larry Farmer
 Bob & Julie Ludvigson
 Farmers Union Insurance, Dawson

Conservation Stewardship Program Opportunity

NRCS has an ongoing signup for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Operators of cropland, pasture, rangeland, or non-industrial private forest land are eligible to apply. If accepted the applicant will be enrolled for a 5 year period, and receive an annual per acre payment on the cropland or pastureland that is enrolled. The participant will have to maintain the already existing conservation practices that are on the land, and do at least one more enhancement activity per land use to earn the payment. The signup is continuous, but a scoring period cutoff will be announced, and all eligible applications in by the cutoff date will be considered for that year's enrollment. An existing local application was in the \$30.00/acre range. If interested stop at the Conservation office for more information and details.