



# Lac qui Parle Soil & Water Conservation District February 2011 Newsletter

122 Eighth Avenue South #1, Madison, MN 56256

telephone: 320-598-7321 x 3

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.*

## Local Employment Opportunity for Young Adult

The Lac qui Parle SWCD will have a summer apprentice placed in our office through Conservation Corps Minnesota. This is a job-training and service learning opportunity for the new generation of conservation professional. The apprentice will receive a monthly stipend of \$1140 per month, and a \$1415 Education Award which can be used for existing student loans or future tuition. Some students also arrange to receive college credit for their experience. The apprentice will assist with tree plantings and fabric mulch application, create an inventory of potential sites needing best management practices, work on promotional materials, and possibly assist with survey and design of best management practices. Application deadline is March 25 ... for corps member benefit details and information on how to apply, contact James Adkinson, Program Coordinator for Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa, at (651) 209-9900 x 17.

## Ask! It will go **NO** farther!

Are you one of the producers in Lac qui Parle County with an Open Lot Agreement? If you have fewer than 300 animal units, and you suspect your operation may provide unfortunate contributions to a nearby ditch or stream, don't be afraid to stop by the Conservation Office and find out for sure. We have the tools to assess your situation, and sometimes the "fix" can be simple and not very costly. There are also programs which may provide financial assistance for the fix you need, including cost share and low interest loans.

The decision to take action is still your own. What you ask in this office stays in this office, in spite of cooperation between local and state agencies. Please call soon. As we discovered last year, assessments and decision-making can take several months. Local funds are in short supply, and we need to have our ducks in a row to take advantage of additional funding opportunities.



## Ag BMP Low Interest Loans

The same federal funds available for cities and towns to upgrade infrastructure like sewage treatment facilities is available to rural taxpayers through the Ag Best Management Practices Loan Program. Eligible projects are anything that reduces or eliminates non point source pollution. In addition to common practices such as septic upgrades, manure handling equipment, or landowner share of erosion control practices, loan funds might be used for water meters on irrigation pumps, manure methane generators, or removal of underground storage tanks. Whether you are a seed corn dealer, a rural church, or own a small building site, call 320-598-7321 x 3 for information on this low interest loan program.

### **District Supervisors**

Ed Radermacher....Chairperson  
Jeff Johnson....Vice-chair  
LeRoy Schuelke....Secretary  
Bob Ludvigson....Treasurer  
Paul Schwendemann....PR&I

### **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



## **What did we accomplish in 2010?**

The Lac qui Parle SWCD works in partnership with federal, state, and local governments to administer and implement programs that manage or conserve land and water resources on privately owned land across our County. The District provides land owners/operators technical assistance and conservation funding opportunities. The District also provides assistance to local government units (county, communities, townships), and for all citizens the information necessary to make good resource decisions.

What did your tax dollars accomplish when administered by the LqP SWCD? The 2010 Annual Report of activities and financial assistance provided to the public through the SWCD has been compiled in *2010 Activities and Achievements*, which can be found at [www.lacquiparleswcd.org](http://www.lacquiparleswcd.org) or by contacting the office for a printed copy. A detailed financial report will be posted to the District website in March.

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

## **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

How does your farm operation stack up in comparison to your neighbors'? Would an evaluation of your tillage, crop rotation, nutrient management, pesticide management, watercourse buffers, and habitat areas show that you are meeting resource concerns for soil erosion, soil quality, water quality, air quality, plants, and animals? Are you exploring the possibility of getting into variable rate fertilizer applications, GPS technology for targeting pesticide applications, or other precision options? If you answered yes to any of these questions you should be exploring the CSP program.

The CSP program involves a 5 year agreement in which you (the farm operator) agree to maintain the resource protection level you currently have plus adopting at least one enhancement to improve your resource protection in some way. If your application is funded you would receive an annual per acre payment on your eligible cropland, pastureland, or non-industrial private forestland acres. Annual payments are capped at \$40,000 per contract and \$40,000 per individual. There are nearly 100 enhancements and/or bundles of various enhancements to choose from. Maybe some of these enhancements are things you are thinking about getting into anyway.

Applications can be made on a continuous basis, but a ranking period cutoff is established for each year. The 2011-1 cutoff date is past, but looking forward to the next period now will allow you some time to review and think about enhancements. The following website can be used to review CSP and look at enhancement options in MN: [www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp2/index.html](http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp2/index.html) You can also call our office at 320-598-7321 x 3 to set up an appointment to discuss.

## Sick of using your snowblower?

Okay, by now everyone knows where they have a snow drifting problem, whether it's the road you travel or your own farm site. The Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District might have a plan to help. It's called a living snowfence. How will it benefit you?

- Snow removal costs money! Have you noticed the plows haven't been out as much as in years past? Fewer, smaller drifts mean less snow needs to be cleared.
- Safer travel with improved visibility (less blowing snow) and reduction of the number of dangerous drifts on the road
- The trees and shrubs in a living snowfence provide food and cover for wildlife

Another benefit you may not be aware of is a living snow fence can be edible. There are many species of shrubs that not only grow thick and tall enough to make an excellent snow fence but bear delicious fruit for eating, baking, jams, jellies and even for making wine. Some edible shrubs to consider are chokecherry, pin or sand cherry, elderberry, Juneberry, and American plum, which all have edible fruit and depending on location can make a delicious living snow fence.

Where would you rather be in the next snowstorm, warm and cozy in your house eating plum jam and sipping elderberry wine, or out in the weather trying to get your driveway opened up? Maybe it is time to plant a dual purpose living snow fence to control the snow, and be rewarded with some delicious edible fruit.



## Walk-In Access

Minnesota's Hunter Walk-In Access is a legislatively mandated program implemented in Lac qui Parle County by the Lac qui Parle Soil and Water Conservation District to provide sportsman quality areas to hunt while giving landowners added income. The first year of this pilot program is concentrating on CREP, RIM or CRP of 40 acres or more.

The Walk-In Access program expects to pay about ten dollars per acre with a one dollar per acre bonus for multiple year contracts, areas larger than 160 acres and another bonus if within a half mile of another area open to public hunting. As an example if you had a 160 acres of CREP next to a Wildlife Management Area and signed up for a two year contract you would receive the base of \$10 plus \$3 per acre in bonuses for \$13 per acre. Take \$13 times 160 for \$2080 per year for two years.

If you have areas and no longer hunt, or need a little extra income why not open your wildlife acres for the hunting public to enjoy. Please call with questions about the Walk-In Access Program at 320-598-7321 ext.3 or stop by our office at 122 South 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. in Madison.

**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.

# E<sub>nvironmental</sub> Q<sub>uality</sub> I<sub>ncentives</sub> P<sub>rogram</sub>

March 4th is the cut-off date for accepting EQIP applications for 2011 funding.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is a federal program that provides cost-share assistance for landowners and/or producers to install or adopt conservation practices in their cropping/livestock operations. Some popular practices in the past have been: Grassed Waterways, Water and Sediment Control Basins, Nutrient Management, Pest Management, Prescribed Grazing and Farmstead Windbreaks. A number of other practices are also possible. Applications are scored and ranked for funding. Some practices score more than others. Generally, the more conservation practices selected, the higher the application scores.

EQIP applications can be taken year round, and are considered for funding when a cut-off date is announced. Again, the upcoming cut-off date is March 4th. If you are interested in applying for EQIP, stop in at the NRCS office, or call 320-598-7321 ext. #3.

## **A Special Thank You to PAST Affiliates**

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. In the current economic environment, we are especially appreciative of your support!

Contact us for information on how you can become an Affiliate of the LqP Soil & Water Conservation District. As an Affiliate, your name could be listed here!

**Lac qui Parle County  
Joint Agency**

*Newsletter*

**FSA/NRCS/SWCD**

**122 8th AVE S**

**Madison MN 56256**

Conservation Office 320-598-7321 x3

Farm Service Agency 320-598-3226 x2

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED