

Koochiching Conservation

Congratulations are in Order!

The past year has brought many positive changes to Koochiching SWCD.



A HUGE congratulations to our District Administrator, **Pam Tomevi**, for winning the MASWCD District Employee of the Year Award! This is a state-wide award that she was given based on all of her hard work for Koochiching SWCD as well as for North St. Louis SWCD. "Pam is an outstanding representative of and advocate for local conservation," BWSR Executive Director

John Jaschke said. "Her enthusiasm for the work that SWCDs do is contagious, and her commitment to the mission benefits not only Koochiching County, but the entire state."

Richard Dreher was sworn in as the District IV Supervisor of the Northome area on January 5th, 2015. He has lived in the Mizpah area all his life, where he ran a dairy/beef farm and cash cropped. He is married to Linda, with whom he has 5 children and 10 grandchildren. Two of his sons are currently farming in Mizpah. He is interested in land and water management and looks forward to working with the other four Supervisors and local landowners to represent his area. Welcome Rick!



Sam Soderman joined the SWCD on September 8, 2014 full time as the new District Technician Assistant. He worked as a Conservation Corps Minnesota (CCM) Apprentice with the District over the summer of 2014. He will be involved in watershed monitoring and aquatic invasive species education with the District. Sam is from Cambridge and is a graduate of the Minnesota State University Mankato where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Geography. Join us in welcoming Sam to the SWCD!

Winter 2015

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Tree Program 2015

Get your trees here!

Look inside for the 2015 tree order form for the upcoming season. We've brought back some favorites from last year including the Wildlife Packet (a mix of Cherry, Cranberry Bush, Villosa Lilac, Crabapple, Redosier Dogwood, and Juneberry). For the best selection, be sure to get your orders in early as quantities are limited. A 10% discount will be given on orders totaling \$250 or more. We also carry a broad selection of Plantskydd® deer repellent products to protect your investment.



A huge **THANK YOU** for your continued support!

Progress on the Rat Root River

With funding provided through the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL), the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club, and match funding through Koochiching County, progress through multiple smaller projects has been made to improve the overall health and sustainability of the water quality in the Rat Root River in 2014. These projects involved multiple agencies and partners to achieve a common goal whether it was removing log jams throughout the river to improve the ability to navigate the river channel, assistance in soil erosion and sedimentation, or planting trees along the river banks. All contributed to improving water quality throughout the Rat Root River. A continuation from 2014 will be a second walleye spawning riffle which will be constructed in early spring of 2015 between the Galvin Line Bridge and the snowmobile bridge on the Rat Root River. The Koochiching SWCD serves as the fiscal agent on these projects and provides administrative and technical support. The goal for this grant is to restore the water quality, navigability, and fish spawning habitat throughout the Rat Root River which has degraded over time.



NRCS Programs Available to Non-Industrial Private Forest Land Owners **NRCS**

Do you own non-industrial private forest land and have an interest in improving and maintaining the health of your forest? The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is available to help. NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to landowners and land users, communities, units of state and local government, Tribes, and other Federal agencies in planning and implementing conservation systems and practices.

NRCS offers two voluntary conservation programs applicable to non-industrial private forest land owners, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). These programs offer a variety of forest and wildlife conservation practices available to implement on non-industrial private forestland and are described in more detail below.

EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program offers a variety of conservation practices applicable to forested property. The forest and wildlife related practices include tree/shrub site preparation, tree/shrub establishment, tree/shrub pruning, forest stand improvement, early successional habitat development and management, upland wildlife habitat management and forest management plans. Additional practices not listed are available.

CSP

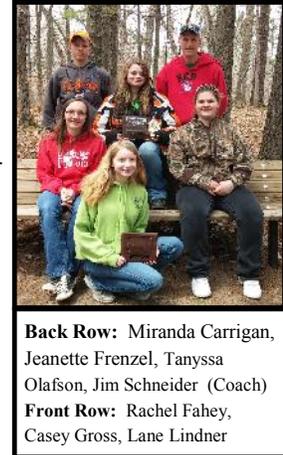
The Conservation Stewardship Program is a 5 year contract that encourages producers to address resource concerns by improving, maintaining and managing existing conservation practices on their land as well as implementing additional conservation activities. Enhancements offered include wildlife friendly fencing, forest openings, shallow water habitat, riparian buffer, and pollinator and/or beneficial insect habitat. Additional enhancements not listed are available. If interesting in applying to these programs or for more information, contact the NRCS Baudette Service Center at (218) 634-2757 ext. 3.



Koochiching Team Takes Two First Place Prizes at the 2014 North Central Envirothon

Each year, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) around the nation take part in an event called the “**Envirothon**”, an outdoor learning event where high school students (grades 9-12) and junior high students (grades 6-8) attend five sessions on environmental issues such as: Aquatics, wildlife, forestry, soils, and current events.

Led by science teacher Jim Schneider, the Northome School took first place in both their oral presentation and in overall competition in the senior division of the North Central Envirothon held at Lake Bemidji State Park May (pictured right). Proud of their first place finishes, the Northome team went on to compete at the State Envirothon held in Colledgeville, MN.



Back Row: Miranda Carrigan, Jeanette Frenzel, Tanyssa Olafson, Jim Schneider (Coach)
Front Row: Rachel Fahey, Casey Gross, Lane Lindner

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our local 2014 sponsors for their generous contributions to this event: Coca-Cola Bottling Co.; Peter Graham Auxiliary, VFW #2948; the Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club; Northome Grocery; Bremer Bank of International Falls; and the Ridgerunners Snowmobile Club. Without local support of area businesses, this event would not be possible.

The 2015 North Central Envirothon will be held in Bemidji State Park on Wednesday, May 6th.



Downstream of the bridge in Big Falls where staff takes samples year-round.

Water Monitoring Update

Through a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Koochiching SWCD, in partnership with the Lake of the Woods (LOW) SWCD, will continue monitoring efforts using multiple collection strategies through next year at ten separate monitoring locations – three on the Little Fork River, two on the Big Fork River, one on the Rat Root River, one on the Rainy River, two on the Rapid River, and one on the Black River to collect and record various water quality measurements. The data collected through this project will be used to evaluate the amount of nutrients and sediment traveling downstream during those periods of rising and falling water levels and assist the MPCA in their watershed assessment of the Little Fork and Big Fork watersheds. The Koochiching SWCD is also monitoring water quality on Second Creek-located just east of Int'l Falls and flows into the Rainy

River above the dam but below the town of Ranier-in efforts to obtain baseline data. These efforts will aid in monitoring potential changes in water quality as the area undergoes potential development.

Local Watershed Work Continues in Big and Little Fork River Watersheds

Beginning in 2013, the Koochiching SWCD received a grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) to communicate with the public about what's happening in both the Big and Little Fork River Watersheds. This includes the land around the main stem of the rivers as well as around all tributaries leading into them.

In both 2013 and 2014, public events, or community conversations, were held to present river status and receive feedback on the monitoring and assessment reports that have been completed for each watershed.

More events are to be held in 2015 as research continues. In the Little Fork River Watershed, events were held in January and will again with new information March 18th and 19th. Similar events will be held for the Big Fork River Watershed-date are to be determined. If you'd like to be added to the contact list for attendance, or would like more information, please contact Jolén Simon at 218-283-1180 or jolen.simon@koochichingswcd.org.

Thanks to the Koochiching County Farm Bureau for their generous donation to this project!

Koochiching SWCD



Courthouse, 715 4th St.
International Falls MN 56649

Serving Koochiching County since 1954

www.koochichingswcd.org



District Supervisors

George Aitchison-Chair
Eldon Voigt-Vice-Chair
Al Linder-Secretary
Ralph Lewis-Treasurer
Richard Dreher-Member

COMMITTEES:

Budget Committee- Ralph Lewis & Eldon Voigt
Personnel Committee- Eldon Voigt & Ralph Lewis
Education/Public Relations Committee- Al Linder

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES:

North Central MN Joint Powers Board- Al Linder
Laurentian RC&D Council- Al Linder
Big Fork River Board- George Aitchison
Littlefork/Rat Root River Boards- George Aitchison
MN SWCD Forestry Association- Eldon Voigt
Int'l Watershed Advisory Committee-
Eldon Voigt & Ralph Lewis
Boise Wood Ash Committee-
Richard Dreher & Al Linder

Regular meeting times:

May to October: 7:00 p.m.
November to April: 6:00 p.m.

District Staff

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The mission of the Koochiching SWCD is to conserve and protect the soil and water resources by educating and assisting land users in Koochiching County in being good stewards of the land and its natural resources.