

Koochiching Conservation

The official publication of the
Koochiching Soil & Water Conservation District

Winter 2011

Tree Program 2012

The 2012 tree order form is here! Inside this newsletter is an order form to help get you geared up for the coming tree planting season. This season we will be offering some new species as well as some customer favorites including Norway Pine, White Spruce, Tamarack, and the Four Season Wildlife Packet which includes a mix of Cranberrybush, Plum, Crabapple, Cherry, Dogwood, and Juneberry. In addition to tree and shrub stock we also carry a good selection of Plantskydd® deer repellent to protect your investment.

As always, quantities are limited, so send in your order early for best selection and receive a 10% discount on orders of \$250 or more. All of us at the SWCD would like to extend our appreciation to all of you who continue supporting us through your tree orders and helpful feed back. For this we say “THANK YOU” for your many years of support, patronage, and friendship.



2011 Koochiching County Plat Map Book

Over the past year, the Koochiching SWCD has worked with Koochiching County to create a plat map book using the County's GIS information and technology to create something that would provide the public with more up-to-date land ownership information. The 2011 Koochiching County Plat Map Book contains maps and information very similar to what you would find in a regular plat book. However, due to the fact this is an “in-house” project, you will notice that our plat map book is slightly different than a traditional plat book. To view our online version, visit our website at www.koochichingswcd.org.

The 2011 Koochiching County Plat Map Book is available at the SWCD office located in the basement of the courthouse, 715 4th St., International Falls, MN 56649. If you would like to purchase a printed copy, please stop by the office, email or call Pam at pam.tomevi@koochichingswcd.org or 218-283-1174. Books are \$30 plus tax for a total of \$32.06. Thank you for your support!

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Water Quality Programs

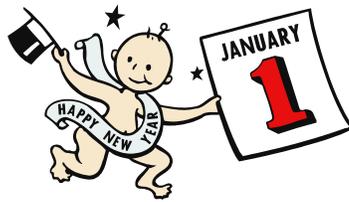


Over the past two years, the SWCD staff has been working on a Big Fork River Watershed Assessment funded through the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The purpose of this Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) was to collect water chemistry sampling parameters at 7 different locations in the watershed. The data collected through this effort will be used to develop a long-term management plan for the Big Fork River and its tributaries and will also be used to target specific reaches of the river for water quality improvement projects.

“A forest of trees is a spectacle too much for one man to see.”

~David Douglas

First funded in 2006, the SWAG program partners with local organizations such as SWCDs to conduct water quality sampling for purposes of gauging the health of lakes and streams. Much of the data is used to determine whether or not water bodies meet state water quality standards. The Koochiching SWCD staff was able to attend training sessions, purchase equipment, and collect water samples through this grant. Now that the data has been collected, the MPCA will be completing an analysis of the results.



In an effort to provide more detailed sampling data for the Big Fork & Little Fork Rivers, the Koochiching SWCD was recently awarded a 2012 Event-Based Monitoring grant which will target specific high-flow conditions in these two rivers to capture water quality conditions when watershed run-off to each site is at its highest. Both the physical and chemical water quality parameters of these rivers will be tested during events such as snowmelt or heavy rain. This detailed approach to water monitoring will allow the MPCA to calculate pollutant loads which is critical for determining sources of pollution.



The Koochiching SWCD regularly meets on the first Monday of each month in the courthouse basement conference room located in International Falls unless otherwise posted.

Regular meeting times:
 7:00 pm Summer (May—October)
 6:30 pm Winter (November—April)

For more information on these projects please contact Justin Berg (District Technician) at 218-283-1175 or at justin.berg@koochichingswcd.org. Information on these grant programs through the MPCA can be found at the MPCA’s homepage: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/>.



Wood Ash Program

Since 1997, the Koochiching SWCD has partnered with Boise and their contractor to land apply wood ash to agricultural fields for the benefit of adjusting pH levels. This past year, the Wood Ash Program experienced several changes, including a new contractor, DH Contracting out of Littlefork. DH Contracting has done a great job and we are pleased to welcome them to our team!

If you own or operate agricultural land in Koochiching County and would like to learn more about the Wood Ash Program, please contact Justin Berg at 218-283-1175 for information and assistance.

Rat Root River Project to Continue



The Rat Root River had long been a prime spawning site for the Rainy Lake walleye. Over the years, walleye numbers decreased dramatically due in part to increased log jams and sedimentation. In an effort to restore natural fish populations, The Rainy Lake Sportfishing Club has partnered with the Koochiching SWCD to restore the river to its natural state.

Phase 1 of this project, funded by the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program, is near completion. During 2010-2011, a local contractor opened up jams over the first 7 of 15 miles of the West Branch of the river between the Galvin Line Bridge and Highway 217.

As this work wraps up, we are pleased to announce that we have received grant funding through the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant to complete Phase 2 of the project in the amount of \$215,000. In this phase, log jams will be opened over the final 8 miles, much of the wood left from those log jams will be removed, stream bank erosion will be addressed, and spawning rock will be added to key sites throughout the river, allowing for a more productive spawning site for the Rainy Lake walleye.

Partnering on this project will be the Minnesota Conservation Corps, and Koochiching County's Land and Forestry Department, and DNR Fisheries. A request for bids will be put out in the coming months for the opening of log jams for Phase 2.

For more information on this project, call the Koochiching SWCD office at 218-283-1174. For more information on the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program, go to www.dnr.state.mn.us/grants/habitat/cpl/index.html

Wild Parsnip by Brook Knicke, NRCS Baudette

While driving around Koochiching County, I noticed a lot of dead flower stalks standing high above the grasses. The dried flower stalks were very distinct. They were flat-topped, umbrella-like clusters. Flat ribbed seeds, resembling dill seeds, easily fell to the ground. Of course, my new outdoor trophy just happened to be a Minnesota secondary noxious weed known as wild parsnip. Wild parsnip prefers sunny, newly disturbed habitats, such as ditches, construction sites, and roadsides. Wild parsnip invades slowly, but once populations build, it can spread rapidly. It can be controlled by hand pulling and removing plants but if pulling is not an option in our hard baked clay soils, use a shovel to cut the root below the crown before seed set. After the plant flowers, be sure to remove flowering stalks, so that the plant doesn't seed out. These stalks should be burned or bagged and sent to the land-fill. Wild parsnip can also be spot-treat with glyphosate or selective metsulfuron.

CAUTION: Wear gloves, a long sleeve shirt and pants when dealing with wild parsnip. Plant sap can cause blistering on the skin if exposed to UV light from the sun. Parsnip burns often appear as streaks and long spots. This pattern happens when a juicy leave or a stem drags across the skin and then gets exposed to the sun. While it might hurt for a while, the burning feeling will go away in a day or two. However, sometimes the area that was burned will take on a dark red or brown discoloration that can last for as long as 2 years.

Financial assistance for wild parsnip control is available on **non cropland** acres through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Other assistance may be available through the Lake of the Woods and Koochiching SWCDs. For further information, please contact the NRCS office at 218-634-2757 ext. 3. For more information on wild parsnip, visit http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/wild-parsnip.pdf.

For help with identifying noxious weeds on your property, visit the University of Minnesota Extension website at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/>. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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Koochiching SWCD

Courthouse, 715 4th Street
International Falls MN 56649

Serving Koochiching County since 1954

Climatology

A big "THANK YOU" to all of our past and present rain gauge volunteers for all of the work you have done to capture rain fall information in our county. Your continued commitment to this valuable program is very appreciated...we couldn't do it without you!

Currently, we are looking for additional rain gauge observer volunteers in the Big Falls, Birchdale, Mizpah, and Ray areas.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

Rain gauge, reporting sheets, and return envelopes will be provided to you by the SWCD.

If you live in one of these areas or anywhere else in Koochiching County and are interested in becoming a rain gauge observer, please call Jolèn Sindelir at 218-283-1180 or email jolen.sindelir@koochichingswcd.org



We're on the Web!

www.koochichingswcd.org