

Minnesota

Soil and Water Conservation Society



SOIL
AND WATER
CONSERVATION
SOCIETY

Chapter Newsletter January 11, 2008

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**Minnesota Chapter Soil &
Water Conservation Society**
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*Our mission is to foster the
science and art of natural
resource conservation.*

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vacant
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The State of the Soil

Greg Larson

Many experienced conservationists notice local changes in the soil resource -- gullies, sheet and wind erosion, or changes in levels of organic matter, fertility, residue cover, or productivity. Do these local changes reflect statewide trends? What are the implications of changes such as the loss of CRP acres (see map, next page)? How are management recommendations and data resources changing? These are some of the questions that will be raised at the Minnesota SWCS annual training workshop on March 7th, 2008.

The day will begin with the annual meeting at 8:00 AM, followed by the training workshop from 9:30 to 3:00. Speakers will include John Lamb (UM Dept. of Soil, Water, and Climate) discussing changes in fertility recommendations and the challenges of balancing yield goals with environmental considerations, Deborah Allan (UM Dept. of Soil, Water, and Climate) discussing soil quality and carbon positive programs, and speakers from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service addressing the status of soils inventory and the use of soils data.

Stay tuned for further information and make plans to attend what promises to be an informative and thought-provoking event.

**Minnesota SWCS
Annual Meeting and
Training Workshop**

**March 7, 2008
8:00 to 3:00**

**Cabelas
Rogers, Minnesota**

Calendar of Events

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Mar 7, 2008 | MN Chapter SWCS annual meeting: "State of the Soil" |
| July 26-30, 2008 | National SWCS Annual Conf., Starr Pass, Tucson, AZ |
| Oct 20-23, 2008 | Farming with Grass: Sustainable Mixed Agricultural Landscapes in Grassland Environments. SWCS Special Conference. Oklahoma City, OK |
| Oct 26-28, 2008 | 2008 Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species Conference, Duluth at the DECC (Article p. 5.) |

Award Nominations due January 31st

Honor your colleagues who have made special contributions to conservation by nominating them for a chapter award. Nominations can be made online at www.minnesotaswcs.org. If you have any questions about the award nomination process, contact Amy Stratton at amystratton@gmail.com.

Impacts of Increased Bio-Fuel Production on the Midwest Landscape

Linda Meschke

The ever-growing interest in bio-fuels across the nation has raised concerns about the impact this has had and will have on local conservation efforts. I had the opportunity to attend the “Impacts of Increased Bio-Fuel Production on the Midwest Landscape” conference sponsored by the West North Central Region of the SWCS in mid-October 2007 in Dubuque, Iowa.

In addition to an excellent agenda, it was an opportunity to network with colleagues – both old friends and new – from across the Midwest. The conference stretched our thinking about bio-fuels beyond the traditional corn-grain-to-ethanol paradigm in order to address many of the conservation issues and concerns being discussed in local conservation offices across the region. A wide range of speakers from private industry, nonprofits and government provided information on modeling impacts, alternative bio-fuels, wildlife impacts, and policy initiatives related to renewable energy.

We were privileged to have Stan Gruszynski, former Wisconsin Legislator, as a speaker at the Leadership Banquet. Mr. Gruszynski gave an inspiring talk about the importance of people working in natural resource roles in their communities, to provide leadership to the broader community. He discussed the impact he has seen this have in Wisconsin and the positive difference it can make in people’s lives. He would be a great speaker to bring to one of the Minnesota SWCS events.

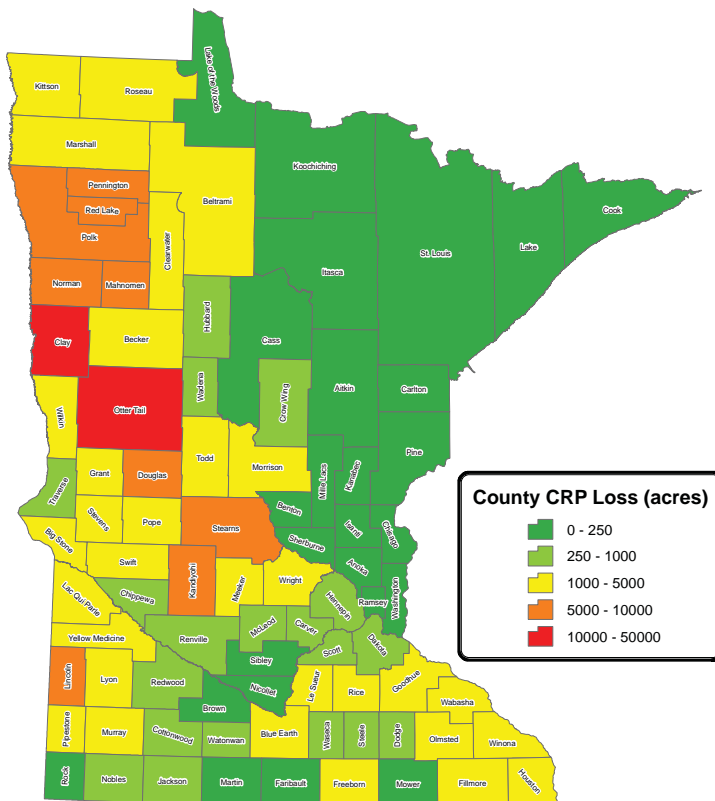
Outreach at MASWCD Meeting

Dave Copeland

The Minnesota SWCS participated in the annual meeting and trade show of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District (MASWCD) in Rochester December 2nd to 4th. The meeting attracted about 700 participants and addressed the timely theme of “Food, Fuel, and the Future of Conservation.” At the trade show, Dave Copeland and Tom Steger staffed a booth for our chapter and visited with convention attendees about SWCS and the benefits of membership. Dave and Tom used a display loaned to the Chapter from SWCS headquarters in Ankeny.

The Chapter also sponsored one of the plenary speakers: Richard (Dick) Hemmingsen, Director of University of Minnesota’s Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment (IREE). He spoke on the topic of “Bio-energy 101 and Potential Changes to Minnesota’s Landscape.” Minnesota is a leader in promoting sustainable, healthy, and diverse ecosystems, statewide economic development, and national energy security through development of bio-based and other renewable resources and processes. The session focused on the intersection between innovative technologies, visionary policies and environmental benefits.

Minimum Loss of CRP Acres by County
2007 - 2010



Based on USDA data accessed on 08/30/2007 for CRP acres expiring and not re-enrolled or extended

Just in! Election results

The ballots are counted. Cheryl Isder is the Southern Minnesota Region Representative. Dave Copeland is Southeast Karst and Driftless Area Representative. Greg Larson is Northern Surface Waters Region Representative. Sid Cornelius is the Treasurer. The by-laws revisions were accepted.

Invasive Species Conference: Watch for the Call for Abstracts

Shannon Bengtson

The Minnesota SWCS Chapter, is co-chairing and acting as the fiscal agent for the **2008 Minnesota Invasive Species Conference**, October 26-28, 2008, at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center, Duluth, MN.

Sponsored in part by the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Committee (MISAC), this conference is the first to address terrestrial and aquatic invasive species issues in Minnesota. The purpose of the conference is to unite professionals and the public in discussions related to invasive species prevention, research, control, management, policy, and education. This is an opportunity to educate and to share experiences and success stories to more effectively respond to invasive species in Minnesota.

The planning committee will release the Call for Abstracts within the next month. Please contact Shannon

Bengtson, MN SWCS Chapter President, if you are interested and would like to view the Call for Abstracts. We are excited and want to provide the best training opportunities for those attending the conference.

This problem of invasive species can have a direct impact on people who own large- or small-acreage properties or who enjoy hiking, fishing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor activities. The conference will address the threat of invasive species that have not yet made it to Minnesota but have a great potential to harm our soil and water resources, economy, and recreation. Conference presenters will also discuss invasive species that are already spreading through the state and have caused damage.

Watch the MN SWCS website (www.minnesotaswcs.org) for up-dates on registration, sponsorship opportunities, and all the information you want to know about the conference! Mark your calendars - this is a conference that you will not want to miss!



Invasive species having a significant effect on Minnesota natural resources include (clockwise from upper left) leafy spurge, zebra mussels, garlic mustard, and Eurasian milfoil.

Welcome to New Members

In an effort to build membership, our chapter has provided scholarships for ten people to become new members of the Society. The people who have taken advantage of this scholarship are Stephanie McLain, David Voigt, Jared Brouwer, and Scott Kittleson. Jared works for the Yellow Medicine SWCD promoting conservation programs on farmland. He was raised on a hobby farm in west central Minnesota and now lives in Granite Falls with his wife. In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities including mountain biking and hunting. Scott has been the NRCS District Conservationist for the past two years in Aitkin County where he enjoys working with people to plant trees and start rotational grazing systems. Previously, he worked in South Dakota for three years and Roseau County, Minnesota for seven years. Scott grew up on a dairy farm near Sherburn, Minnesota and attended the U of M at St Paul. We are glad to have you all in the Society!

Student Scholarships Available

The Chapter has college scholarship funds available for students studying fields related to natural resources. Applications should be sent to Amy Stratton at amystratton@gmail.com, or 148 Walnut Street South, Belle Plaine, MN 56011 by **January 25th**. Applicants should follow the guidelines below, although the criteria have not had final approval by the executive board.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Must be a current undergraduate or graduate student in a natural resource relate field.
2. Must be attending an accredited Minnesota 2- or 4-year school.
3. Must not have received a scholarship from SWCS in the last two years.

Evaluation Criteria:

1. Must meet basic eligibility criteria above.
2. Students must provide the following information
 - a. Name
 - b. College/University Attending and Year
 - c. Major Area of Study
 - d. Address

- e. Email
 - f. Phone
 - g. Narrative (under 250 words) on why you desire to attend the MN SWCS meeting. Explain what knowledge you wish to gain? What you will do with the information you receive at the meeting? How will this help you in your education and future career?
 - h. Have you received a MN SWCS Scholarship for the Annual Meeting before? If yes, what year? Note: You cannot receive scholarships within the past 2 years.
 - i. Signature and Date
 - j. Submit to MN SWCS Awards Committee Chair by January 25th. Notifications will be made in mid-February for the March MN SWCS meeting (pending budget).
3. MN SWCS reserves the right to reject any and all proposals.
 4. MN SWCS Awards Committee will review the student scholarship nominations and approved budget from the MN SWCS Board. Applications will be evaluated on the eligibility and evaluation criteria above.

MN SWCS Chapter President
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