



STEELE COUNTY CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER



1946—2009

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna, MN 55060

Phone: 507.451.6730 Ext. 3
Web: www.steeleswcd.org

April 2009

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Staff:

- Dan Arndt, District Manager
- Sue Condon, District Admin. Sec.
- Eric Gulbransen, Resource Conservationist
- Noel Frank, NRCS District Conservationist
- James Smith, NRCS Conservation Technician

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Prescribed Burning to Manage Grasslands

You may notice the burning of grasslands this spring. A number of parcels across Steele County have made the required plans to complete "prescribed burns" this spring. Properly planned and timed burning is an accepted and recommended method in vigorous grass stands. The burning removes matted plant material and stimulates grass growth. Burns with USDA and SWCD are completed before the designated nesting season, and are done under the DNR permit process. Authorities are notified prior to the burn under this process.

The prescribed burns also help prevent invasive tree infestation in grassland. Cover is interrupted only for a short time and the benefits outweigh this short interruption because the cover that returns is superior in the long term. There are many advantages to prescribed burning. You may see these fires this spring and you should see that they are always attended by the permittee or their assigns. If you want more information on prescribed burning, contact your local DNR office.



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COST-SHARE AVAILABLE FOR EROSION PROBLEMS

The District has funds available to help correct erosion problems on you land. Up to 75% cost-share is available for grass waterway rebuilds, water and sediment basins, and other approved practices. Call the office if you have questions or would like a site visit.

PART TIME POSITION AVAILABLE

Wanted: Part time help to assist with our easement maintenance program. This temporary part time position entails assisting with spraying trees and brush on permanent conservation easements. Term of the position is approximately 200 hours during July and August. Candidates must possess a current MN Commercial Pesticide applicators license. For more details contact Dan Arndt at 507 451-6730 Ex.3.

LOW INTEREST LOAN MONEY AVAILABLE FOR WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



There is now low interest loan *money available* to rural property owners in Steele County for water quality improvement projects.

Eligible projects under the loan programs include: replacement of septic systems and feedlot animal waste control systems; construction of grassed waterways, water and sediment basins, and

terraces; the purchase of conservation tillage equipment; construction of animal composting systems; and the purchase of manure application equipment.

Loan interest rate of 2% for septic system replacement projects and 3% for other projects. Farmers, individual rural landowners, and agribusinesses are eligible for these loans.

For further information about the loan programs, call Scott Golberg at 507-444-7477.



DISTRICT RECEIVES MCC CLEAN WATER LEGACY GRANT

The Steele County SWCD was recently awarded a Minnesota Conservation Corp - Clean Water Legacy Grant. The purpose of the grant is to assist landowners with maintaining their RIM Reserve Conservation Easements by conducting prescribed burns. Prescribed burns are a necessary management activity to help control invasive trees and, maintain native prairie habitat. The Minnesota Conservation Corp crew will complete prescribed burns this spring on twelve easements located throughout Steele County.

The Minnesota Conservation Corp (MCC) was created in 1981 with a dual mandate to engage youth and young adults in enhancing natural resources and to provide them opportunities for training and life skill development. MCC, fashioned after the original Civilian Conservation Corps of the Roosevelt era, is more than a job; it is a service commitment to the State and its natural heritage.

Words of Wisdom - CATCH THE RAIN

The idea of capturing rainwater in cisterns is generations old. Recycling rain water reduces your personal energy consumption by using less treated water. By collecting rainwater, one can save energy, water, and money —**as much as \$600 a year**. Rain barrels also help reduce erosion and storm water runoff and increase water quality. About **40% of typical household water** use in the summer is for lawns and gardens. Instead of paying for this water—on your utilities bill, or on the electric bill for a well pump—you can capture the water from your roof, store it, and draw on it for your gardening needs. Also, provide water to areas that can't be reached by your hose.

1 inch of rain on 1 square foot of roof yields 0.6 gallons and 1 inch of rain onto a 10 ft x 10 ft. area (100 sq. ft) yields 60 gallons.



Steele County SWCD now has rain barrels for sale at \$49.00 plus sales tax. If you have any questions, please call 507-451-6730 Extension 3.

LAST CHANCE TO ORDER TREES!

There are a few species still available.
Call the office at 507-451-6730 Ext. 3 and
talk to Eric about the availability.



100% COST SHARE TO ESTABLISH NATIVE BUFFERS

The SWCD has recently acquired a “Native Buffer” grant from the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Landowners may be eligible to receive cost share of up to 100% for site preparation, seed, and seeding to establish buffers on their land. The purpose of the grant is to establish and maintain diverse native vegetation buffers using seed from the local ecotype region. The buffers must be maintained a minimum of 15 years. For more information about this new program contact the SWCD at 507-451-6730 Ext. 3.

Steele County SWCD
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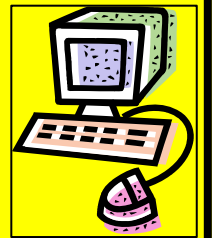
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**DO YOU HAVE THIS
PROBLEM?**
↔ ↔ ↔ ↔
**STOP BY THE OFFICE
AND TALK TO US.**

VISIT US ON THE WEB:
www.steeleswcd.org



ATTENTION LANDOWNERS!

Are you considering any tiling, ditch cleaning, pond construction, or tree removal on your land this year?

If so, contact the conservation office at 507-451-6730 Ext. 3. We can assist you with keeping in compliance with State and Federal Wetland Protection Laws and Regulations.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Prime Responsibility of the District is to coordinate assistance on private lands to control erosion, prevent flooding, enhance wildlife, develop recreation, build the economic base, and to manage our soil and water resources.