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STEELE COUNTY CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER



**SPECIAL
OFFER**

Buy Now!

SPRING WILL BE HERE BEFORE WE KNOW IT. WE HAVE RAIN BARRELS FOR SALE AT A REDUCED RATE UNTIL 3-1-10.

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123

1946—2010

235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna, MN 55060

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

February 2010

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RE-INVEST IN MINNESOTA (RIM) RESERVE BUFFER SIGNUP

We are currently taking signups for RIM Reserve for agriculture areas along public waters. RIM is a state funded program that provides an incentive for landowners to retire private agriculture land and put the land in a permanent conservation easement. There is a one time payment that varies depending on which township the land is located. Other criteria include:

- Permanent easement
- Buffer widths must be a min. of 50 feet and no more then 100 feet max. average
- Land must be owned by the applicant for 1 year prior to application

Land must be enrolled in CRP (current or new enrollment). Land will remain in CRP contract until expiration.

Contact the SWCD office at 507-451-6730 ext 3 for more information on RIM Reserve.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) FUNDS AVAILABLE

EQIP funds are available to Steele County producers. Agricultural producers looking to solve natural resource problems on their farms should apply now for assistance through EQIP. This program is administered by the USDA-NRCS office.

The NRCS announced that a scoring period to determine priority for funding applications will occur at the end of February, 2010. Nearly \$22 million is available to assist producers in Minnesota. Completed applications must be received at local NRCS field offices by Feb. 26th in order to be considered for this scoring period.

Through EQIP, landowners interested in conservation practices are provided both technical assistance and financial assistance to install eligible practices. Participation in EQIP is limited to agricultural producers. EQIP provides assistance for a wide variety of conservation practices treating cropland, grazing, forestry, feedlots, and wildlife.

To find our more about EQIP in Steele County, contact you local NRCS office at 507-451-6730 Ext. 3 or visit the MN NRCS website: www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov.

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WETLAND EASEMENTS WITH THE WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

If you have land that has been artificially drained and could be restored; or land enrolled in CRP that has been previously restored to wetlands you may be eligible for the WRP program. WRP is a voluntary conservation easement program administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service. It pays participants to set aside environmentally sensitive land and convert the land to restored wetlands and native vegetation. Payment rates for the recent Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) and WRP partnership signup have been up to \$5000 per acre for land with cropping history or land enrolled in CRP in Steele County. If you are interested in this program, please contact Tony Reali, Ducks Unlimited Wetland Restoration Specialist, 507-373-5607 ext. 3 or contact the Steele County SWCD office for more information.

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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720 5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity employer.

Steele County SWCD
235 Cedardale Drive SE
Owatonna, MN 55060

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TREE DAY - FRIDAY - FEBRUARY 19

QUALITY STOCK FOR CONSERVATION USES

STOP BY FOR REFRESHMENTS AND PLACE YOUR TREE ORDER!

REDUCE YOUR SNOWPLOWING COSTS BY PLANTING A LIVING SNOWFENCE

WINDBREAKS PROVIDE WINTER COVER FOR PHEASANTS

SAVE ON HOME HEATING COSTS BY PLANTING A WINDBREAK—INCREASE YOUR PROPERTY VALUE

COST SHARING IS AVAILABLE FOR APPROVED PLANTINGS

TREES REDUCE ENERGY COST AND INCREASE PROPERTY VALUE

With recent increases in energy costs and decreases in property values, trees can do double duty to help your bottom line. Most people realize that a property with appealing landscaping such as a windbreak, shade trees, or a wildlife planting will not only give more enjoyment to the occupant, it will increase the value of the property almost immediately after planting. One study has found that the net benefit (after expenses) per tree is \$3 to \$76/year. On average, over 40 years, this would equal \$1,600 and could be as high as \$3,000! This number is only figuring a 40 year lifespan. Most trees will live much longer than that.

Another benefit of planting trees is energy conservation and personal comfort. A proper planting on the north and west can stop the bitter winds from robbing your house of heat and greatly increase the comfort level of you and your livestock. Just think of how many times this winter it has been fairly comfortable standing in a sheltered spot but how quickly you became cold when stepping into the open! It has been proven that a properly placed windbreak can save 10%-30% on heating costs.

Another benefit of a windbreak is snow control. Studies have shown that 40% of the snow that falls is moved to another location by wind. With a properly placed planting, you can greatly reduce the energy and effort put into snow removal. This can happen quickly. Shrubs will start stopping snow in their third year and only get better after that. Trees will also help your energy costs in the summer. If shade trees are planted on the south and west of the house, the air conditioning bill can be reduced 15%.

In addition to these points, trees around the yard will allow you to enjoy it more. Whether it is a calm sunny yard in winter or a shady spot in the summer heat, you will enjoy being outside much more and the weather extremes won't seem so bad. Not to mention the increase in wildlife around the yard in all seasons.

Order Now!

STEELE COUNTY SWCD 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.