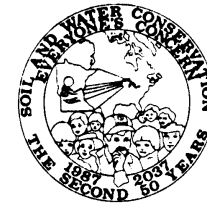


Nicollet Soil & Water Conservation District
 501 7th Street, PO Box 457
 Nicollet, MN 56074
 507-232-2550

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 St. Peter, MN 56082



Nicollet SWCD News

January

2024

Clean Water Funds - Project 33

A three year grant to improve ground water quality, in the City of St. Peter Drinking Water Supply Management Area, has come to a close. Clean Water funds along with City of St. Peter match funds, contributed to the installation of 11 Water & Sediment Control Basin structures, in addition to enrolling almost 900 tillable acres, into 3 year Nutrient Management plans.

The goal of this grant was to reduce nitrogen entering the water supply area, by working directly with private landowners, on nutrient reduction practices. A total of \$185,000 was spent on practices in the water supply management area.



Now Taking Tree Orders for Spring Planting



The Nicollet Soil and Water Conservation District Tree Program was developed to provide landowners with an affordable and convenient way to purchase trees and shrubs for conservation practices. Practices may include: windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snow fences and wildlife habitat.

The tree program is on a first come, first serve basis. If you place an order, you will be notified by postcard when the trees can be picked up. Approximate delivery time is the end of April. Trees can be picked up at the Nicollet SWCD in Nicollet. The tree order form is on the inside back page and can also be found on our website: www.Nicolletswcd.org. Give us a call with any questions or to request that an order form be mailed to you.

Welcome Mackenzie!



“Hello, my name is Mackenzie Bratsch. I was recently hired to join the Nicollet SWCD as a District Technician. I graduated from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls in 2020 with a degree in Conservation and Environmental Planning with minors in Agricultural Studies & Biology, and an emphasis in Restoration. I have experience in environmental contracting and have interned at some county parks in Olmsted County, which is where I grew up. I now live in Le Sueur with my husband and our pets (a silver lab and 3 cats). In my free time, I enjoy sewing, hiking, fishing, bird watching and spending time with my family and friends.

I am looking forward to working more with the community and assisting people achieve their environmental goals. I find soil health super interesting and important, so I can't wait to share what I have learned."

The Nicollet Soil and Water Conservation District

501 7th Street
 PO Box 457
 Nicollet, MN 56074
 Phone: (507) 232-2550

District Board

Don Hermanson, Chair
 John Kral, Vice Chair
 Bruce Hulke, Secretary
 Tim Braun, Treasurer
 Eric Annexstad, Member

District Employees

Kevin Ostermann
District Manager

Blake Honetschlager
District Technician

Mackenzie Bratsch
District Technician

Judy Beetch
Administrative Assistant



Office Hours:
 Monday-Friday
 8:00am-4:00pm

Natural Resource Conservation Service
 Phone: (507) 237-5435 ext. 3

Reyna Chavez
District Conservationist

Jacob Stich
CST Lead

Explore
SOIL HEALTH
Over Breakfast

FREE

DATE:
Thursday, February 8th, 2024

TIME:
8:30am - 10:30am

LOCATION:
Lafayette Community Center
540 7th St., Lafayette, MN 56054

R.S.V.P. by January 29th!
 Call: 507-702-7077
 Email: tara.obrien@sibleyswcd.org

Join us for a **FREE** breakfast as we explore soil health in The Lower Minnesota River West Watershed with Guest Speaker **Keith Hartmann**



Catered by Dave's Place
Eggs, Pancakes, Sausages, Coffee, and Juice

Sponsored by:
 Lower Minnesota River West
 HICWD McLeod Nicollet Sibley



This newsletter is published by the Nicollet Soil and Water Conservation District, 501 7th St., Nicollet, MN 56074 and USDA NRCS, 112 5th St. Gaylord, MN 55334. For more information regarding this newsletter, contact (507) 232-2550. **USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.**

Board Meetings are held the first Wednesday of each month at 8:30 a.m. Agenda posted on the website one week prior.

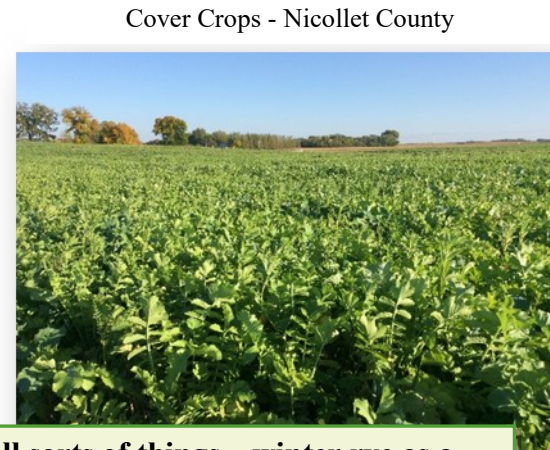


Online version available @ www.nicolletswcd.org
 Email info@nicolletswcd.org for updates
 "Like us" on the Nicollet Soil & Water Facebook page!

From Experience Grows Wisdom

By Tara O'Brien --- December 2023

To acquire wisdom we must be willing to try new things and learn from our experiences. It takes patience and perseverance which is something Peter Anthony knows all too well. Peter and his family run a diverse operation consisting of cover crops, corn, soybeans, small grains, hogs, and cattle located near Norseland in Nicollet County. "We first planted cover crops about 20 years ago when the 7020-feedlot code began to require cover crops after summer manure applications," Peter said, "Then we observed the substantial improvement in soil aggregate structure with cover crops and began to plant more." "We've tried all sorts of things – winter rye as a cover crop, winter rye for grain, oats, to mixtures that are 100% broadleaves," he stated. As for learning what works best and what doesn't, Peter said, "It depends on the circumstances. For a cover crop in corn stubble ahead of soybeans, winter rye provides the most rapid establishment, early season weed suppression, and uptake of residual nitrate. Ahead of corn, we've had the best success with radish-forage rape-clover mixtures. We give them more time to establish in the fall, they establish a lot of biomass, and the residue breaks down quickly in the spring." It was hard for him to say what he would do differently. "That's a question that would be easier to answer if we knew what next year's weather would bring. Generally, I think we'd move more in the direction of more aggressive use of row cleaners and strip tillage to create a residue-free seed furrow in the spring," Peter said. His advice to others was, "If you think you might not like it, you'll probably find reasons not to like it when you try it. Use equipment that's designed to handle no-till/high residue situations. Be prepared to increase scouting intensity, especially for early-season insect pressure."



Cover Crops - Nicollet County

"We've tried all sorts of things – winter rye as a cover crop, winter rye for grain, oats, to mixtures that are 100% broadleaves." – Peter Anthony

"In a lot of places, they are planting into what used to be the C horizon of their soil. Now it's their topsoil because the A and B horizons have eroded away. In the north-central US, there are places where we're doing that too – after only 150 years of farming." – Peter Anthony

Peter has good reasons for putting in the hard work though. One of those reasons has to do with soil. Sometimes our experiences can leave an impactful impression and Peter shared some that he found most eye opening. "A presentation by Dave Franzen, the North Dakota State Soil Fertility Extension Specialist, has been particularly motivating. Dave has measured the soil losses from wind erosion in eastern North Dakota, and the losses are substantial," Peter said. He also shared about his

recent trip to England. "My family and I took a long hike across rural England this summer. In a lot of places, they are planting into what used to be the C horizon of their soil. Now it's their topsoil because the A and B horizons have eroded away. In the north-central US, there are places where we're doing that too – after only 150 years of farming. Soil management needs to be done with a 1,000-year time horizon in mind," Peter said.



Clover and Radish

Despite a few barriers, Peter and his family kept patient and persevered. In 2022/2023 they were approved for a cost-share program for cover crops and switched almost entirely to cover crops and no-till soybeans in 2023. Positive strides have been made thanks to a new cost-share program called Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF). This cost-share program is available to farmers/landowners in high priority areas that want to adopt cover crops and other conservation practices in the Lower Minnesota River West Watershed.

If there is something we can take away from Peter's experiences, it's that wisdom is like a crop. We must plant it, feed it, and learn from it. Wisdom takes time to grow.

To find out more information on cover crops and Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) contact:
Nicollet Soil and Water Conservation District
507-232-2550.

2024 Tree Order Form				Order Number (office use)
Mail Order NICOLLET SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT			Name:	
To: 501 7th St., PO Box 457, Nicollet MN 56074			Address:	
PHONE: (507) 232-2550			Email:	
QUALITY NURSING STOCK				Phone:
CONIFER POTTED				Important Notice Trees are distributed in April. We will notify you of your pickup day. The cost of trees does not warrant free replacement and the district offers no guarantee of survival.
Species	Size	# of Trees	Cost	
1 Quart Red Pine	5-10"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
1 Quart White Pine	5-8"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
1 Quart Colorado Spruce	8-16"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
1 Quart Blackhills Spruce	8-12"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
1 Quart Pine Ponderosa	6-12"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
1 Quart American Arborvitae	6-12"	_____	x \$5.50/Tree = _____	
2 Gal. American Arborvitae	18-24"	_____	x \$17.00/Tree = _____	
2 Gal. Blackhills Spruce	24-30"	_____	x \$17.00/Tree = _____	
2 Gal. Colorado Spruce	18-24"	_____	x \$17.00/Tree = _____	
2 Gal. White Pine	18-24"	_____	x \$17.00/Tree = _____	
BARE ROOT DECIDUOUS 1 Bundle = 10 Trees				Payment due in full on day of order. No refunds on cancelled orders after February 23rd, 2024.
Sugar Maple	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Red Maple	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Swamp White Oak	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	Availability and size are subject to change.
SMALL TREES 1 Bundle = 10 Trees				
Elderberry	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Crab, Red Splendor	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	Special order bundles of 25 available for American Linden, Norway Poplar & Red Oak. Call for details.
Nanking Cherry	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
American Plum	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
SHRUBS 1 Bundle = 10 Trees				Please check the online order form or call the district office if you have questions. 507-232-2550
American Hazelnut	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Common Lilac	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Dogwood Redosier	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Flame Willow	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
Cranberrybush	18-24"	_____	x \$18.00/Bundle = _____	
FABRIC TREE SQUARES & ROLLS				Pick up location will be at the Nicollet SWCD 501 7th Street Nicollet, MN
Price Includes 6"x1"x6" Staples		# of Mats or Feet		
Pre-Cut Tree Squares	3' x 3'	_____	x \$2.00/Square = _____	
Fabric Roll Mat (whole roll)	300 Feet	_____	x \$130.00/Roll = _____	
SUBTOTAL				
SALES TAX (7.375%)				
TOTAL DUE				
Please Round Sales Tax Correctly			Make Checks Payable to Nicollet SWCD	