

# SWCD Focus

## Sustainable Forest Incentives Act (SFIA)

By: Jamin Carlson



The Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) is a State of Minnesota conservation program that provides annual incentive payments to encourage sustainable forest management and keep forests as forests on the landscape. Private landowners can receive a payment for each acre of qualifying forest land they enroll in SFIA (minimum of 20 contiguous acres and no maximum). In return, the enrolled landowner agrees not to develop the land and to follow a forest management plan while they are in the program. The major changes to SFIA are increased payment rates per acre that correlate with increased covenant lengths.

### Key Changes to SFIA include:

- SFIA payment rates (per acre) have increased.
- You must have a Forest Stewardship Management Plan registered with DNR to receive SFIA payments.
- You may choose from three covenant lengths – 8, 20, or 50 years.

Covenant Length	Payment Rate (per acre)
8 years	Less than 1,920 acres enrolled: \$8.91
	1,920 or more acres enrolled: \$12.33
20 years	Less than 1,920 acres enrolled: \$12.33
	1,920 or more acres enrolled: \$15.76
50 years	Less than 1,920 acres enrolled: \$15.76
	1,920 or more acres enrolled: \$19.10

Due to recent changes in legislation, SFIA is now jointly administered by the Department of Revenue (Dept. of Revenue) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Forestry. The Dept. of Revenue oversees SFIA applications, payments, penalties and covenants. DNR handles forest land management. Visit the Dept. of Revenue website to start an SFIA application; or for information on Applying for SFIA, Payments and Penalties, Covenants, Selling or transferring land in SFIA. Email SFIA questions to [sfia.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:sfia.dnr@state.mn.us) or call the DNR at 651-259-5631.

Sources: MN Dept. of Revenue, MN DNR, and Kanabec SWCD  
[MN Dept of Revenue Sustainable Forest Incentive Act](#)

[MN DNR Sustainable Forest Incentives Act \(SFIA\)](#) and [Kanabec SWCD](#)

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**Additional Insert A & B: Vernal Ponds, Irrigation Scheduler Program, Prairie Restoration, 7th Annual Grazing Workshop, Additional Nitrate Clinics in 2018, Cost Share Funding Available**

Hubbard County SWCD Board meets the 2nd Wednesday, monthly, at 8:30 a.m. located at, 603 Central Avenue North Park Rapids, MN 56470

### District Supervisors

- Lynn Goodrich, Chair
- Don Sells, Vice-Chair
- Don Rettinger, Secretary
- Bob Iles, Treasurer
- Marcel Noyes, PR & Information

### District Staff

Julie Kingsley, District Manager ([julie.kingsley@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:julie.kingsley@mn.nacdnet.net))

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[www.hubbardswcd.org](http://www.hubbardswcd.org)

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## Freshwater Festival Volunteers Needed!

Our 2018 Annual Freshwater Festival Event is scheduled for May 16th and will be here before you know it! We are looking for volunteers to help us pack trees on Tuesday, May 15th from 1-4 pm and help with our event on Wednesday, May 16 from 8am-3pm. Both days will be at the Camp Wilderness Boy Scout Camp near Emmaville, MN. Please call our office if you are interested.

Thank you! 218-732-0121 ext. 4

# NEWS FROM NRCS

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

*(Courtesy of the USDA-NRCS website)*

From weather to pests, and from a lack of time to markets, each American farmer faces a unique set of challenges. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps agricultural producers confront those challenges – all while conserving natural resources like soil, water and air. This voluntary conservation program helps producers make conservation work for them. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while also improving agricultural operations.

Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations. Through EQIP, you can voluntarily implement conservation practices, and NRCS co-invests in these practices with you.

To get started, NRCS first works one-on-one with you to develop a conservation plan that meets your goals and vision for the land. This becomes a roadmap for which conservation practices best meet your needs. Financial assistance covers part of the costs from implementing conservation practices. NRCS offers about 200 practices depending on where your land is located. These practices are geared towards working farms, ranches and forests and provide producers with many options for conservation.

Popular conservation practices in Hubbard County are: High Tunnel System (Hoop House), Conservation Cover (Wildflower/Native Grass planting), Cover Crop, Prescribed Grazing System (including Fence, Pipeline, Water Tanks, HUAPs and Well), Tree/Shrub Establishment, Tree/Shrub Site Preparation, Windbreak Shelterbelt Establishment and Conservation Activity Plans (Forest Management Plans).

The best way to learn if EQIP is a good fit for you is by contacting your local NRCS office. Applications are ranked, and if yours is funded, NRCS will offer you an EQIP contract to receive financial assistance for the cost of implementing practices. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year.

Your NRCS conservationist will visit you and evaluate the natural resources on your land. NRCS will then present a variety of conservation practices or system alternatives to help you address those concerns or management goals to improve or protect the natural resource conditions on your land. Once you have chosen the right conservation practices for your land, you may be offered an EQIP contract to receive financial assistance for the cost of implementing certain practices. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year.

[www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/)

## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) - Your Stewardship Goals, Our Assistance

*(Courtesy of the USDA-NRCS website)*

Have you ever looked across your property and thought about some land management goals you would like to take to the next level? Maybe we can help.

No one knows more about your land than you do, and no one knows more about conservation than we do. Together we can develop a plan tailored to your land and your goals to help you increase productivity and protect the value of your land.

Our Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop yields, or develop wildlife habitat, we can custom design a CSP plan to help you meet those goals. We can help you schedule timely planting of cover crops, develop a grazing plan that will improve your forage base, implement no-till to reduce erosion or manage forested areas in a way that benefits wildlife habitat. If you are already taking steps to improve the condition of the land, chances are CSP can help you find new ways to meet your goals.

### Sustainable Production

CSP is for working lands. It is the largest conservation program in the United States with more than 70 million acres of productive agricultural and forest land enrolled in CSP. Thousands of people that have made the choice to voluntarily enroll in the program because it helps them enhance natural resources and improve their business operation.

CSP participants are seeing real results. Some of these benefits include:

- ◇ Improved cattle gains per acre
- ◇ Increased crop yields
- ◇ Decreased inputs
- ◇ Wildlife population improvements
- ◇ Better resilience to weather extremes

### CSP Enhancements

Enhancements are management activities that go above and beyond the minimum conservation practice standard requirements helping the producer achieve a higher level of conservation. More information can be found at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp/).

### **Helping People Help the Land**

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer



Hubbard SWCD is planning to partner with Minnesota Native Landscapes this fall collecting Milkweed Pods. Interested parties should call our office or visit their website at [www.MnNativeLandscapes.com/milkweed](http://www.MnNativeLandscapes.com/milkweed) for information on how and when to collect them and where to drop off. Full grocery bags or 5 gallon pails are worth \$5 each! Help us grow the Monarch population in Hubbard County!

# Importance of Vernal Ponds

By Bob Iles, District 3 Supervisor



Photo by John Sidlinger

The recent heavy snowfall in our area should provide all of us with an opportunity to visit one of the northlands most common spring wetland types, the vernal pond.

Vernal ponds are a type of seasonal temporary wetland that is formed here in Hubbard County when melting snow and spring rains fill in depressions in the ground. Most vernal ponds are small, and they occur on both our forested land and open areas as well. In a forest they may tend to last longer because of the shade provided.

Two of the defining characteristics of a vernal pond are that they periodically dry up and do not have a fish population. The absence of fish is a major factor in why they are so important to amphibian populations because there is less predation on eggs and tadpoles. It is estimated that in North America approximately one-half of all frogs, and one-third of all salamander species, rely on seasonal wetlands for development.

Vernal ponds will also host many varieties of waterfowl and other birds, as well as most mammals, and of course they are rich in insect life. These ponds also help protect watersheds. They capture and hold water, allowing time for it to seep into the soil surface and recharge ground water supplies. They help reduce runoff, and lessen problems associated with erosion.

These little ponds, often overlooked, provide critical habitat for many plant and animal species, and are an important part of our north-woods life cycle.

I first learned about the vernal ponds 50 years ago on a high school biology class field trip, and I continue to enjoy every visit each new spring. I hope you will take an early evening hike on a forest trail, or even a walk on a township road, and stop for a few minutes to experience the abundance of sights and sounds of a vernal pond.

Sources of information include:

A Guide to Creating Vernal Ponds by Thomas R. Biebighauser

Spring-to-Life MN-DNR Vernal Ponds by Larry Weber

[http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/young\\_naturalists/young-naturalists-article/ponds/ponds.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/young_naturalists/young-naturalists-article/ponds/ponds.pdf)

# Irrigation Scheduler Program available again in 2018

The Hubbard-Wadena-Todd SWCD Irrigation Scheduler Program will be offered again for the 2018 growing season. Hubbard County had two producers with seven fields signed up in 2016 and three producers with twelve fields signed up in 2017. This program gives producers a second opinion on whether or not to irrigate by: tracking soil moisture, prevent crop loss due to insufficient moisture, and prevent ground water contamination due to over application of water and nutrients. The decision to irrigate is still up to the farmer.

Services provided are: weekly field visits to check soil moisture, weekly soil moisture maps, access to daily evapotranspiration data (via email, radio and online), one on one consultation, free pivot uniformity testing, high quality record keeping.

We encourage producers to call our office for more information about this program as we are looking for additional producers to participate. Sign-up by May 1<sup>st</sup> is recommended for this program for sufficient time for scheduling. Please call Julie Kingsley at 218-732-0121 ext 4.

More information and a copy of a contract is available on our website at <http://www.hubbardswcd.org/portfolio/irrigation-scheduling-program-hubbard-todd-wadena-counties/>

## Prairie Restoration

News release from: Steve Chaplin, Senior Conservation Scientist

Restoring prairie just got easier. Many landowners and managers have land that they would like to see covered with native flowers and grasses. But, creating a prairie is hard and often unpredictable work. The techniques and types of seeds planted will vary depending on the current state of the land, how moist or dry the site is, and type of prairie you would like to establish. To deal with these issues, The Nature Conservancy and the University of Minnesota have developed 20 different restoration guides, each specific to one of five different types of starting conditions, two different moisture levels, and two different intended uses for restored prairie. Each guide includes recommended techniques, timing and plant species, as well as estimated costs for completing a successful prairie restoration. The guides can be downloaded for free at: [nature.org/MNPrairieRestorationGuides](http://nature.org/MNPrairieRestorationGuides).

**The Nature Conservancy**  
MN/ND/SD Chapter  
1101 West River Pkwy  
Suite 200  
Minneapolis, MN 55415



## 7th Annual Hubbard County Grazing Workshop

By Alicia Laturus



The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Hubbard County Grazing Workshop was held on January 31, 2018 at the Guthrie Community Center. The workshop is held to give local producers a place to learn and share ideas.

The workshop is all due to some great sponsors: Coca-Cola Bottling Co, Rapheal's Bakery, Prudential Financial Services, Lakes Area COOP Feed, CHS Prairie Lakes COOP, Bemidji COOP Association, Bagley Livestock Exchange, Inc., Rohde's Feed & Garden, Inc., MN Board of Animal Health, MDA (MAWQCP), Hubbard County Local Water Plan, University of Minnesota – Extension, USDA – FSA, USDA – NRCS and Hubbard SWCD.

This year's topics were: Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) Changes & Annual Program Updates, Pasture Renovation Ideas, Conservation Easements, A Survey of Current MN BAH Topics, Why your farm should become Water Quality Certified, Thor & Dana Didrickson's Grazing Operation and Grazing Impact on Soil Health and Underground Livestock.

The local producers really enjoyed Dana's talk about his operation with his brother. The operation has had a lot of success and some failures. What Dana learned from those failures was very intriguing to the local producers. He wanted to share the failures in hopes that other producers wouldn't repeat them.

Pasture Renovation Ideas by Troy Salzer, U of M Extension, was another great topic according to the local producers. His ideas of improving forage in rock riddled pastures really hit home. Troy talked about the pros and cons of bale grazing during the winter months.

Dr. Randy Lindemann with the MN Board of Animal Health has been a regular at the workshop for five years. He talks about important animal health issues going on at the time. He's a great source of information for the producers.

Another popular presentation was the Soil Health demonstrations by Brandon DeFoe, NRCS Soil Scientist, who talked about the animal life in the soil that helps create a healthy pasture and cropland.

Our agency folks did a great job explaining their programs and ways they can help the producers with information and some financial assistance. We hope to see you next year!

### Additional Nitrate Clinics in 2018!

By Annette Olson

Warmer weather is coming and Hubbard County SWCD will be doing a few additional nitrate clinics around the county, to make testing your tap water a bit easier for those who don't live close to Park Rapids. We do a monthly in-house Nitrate Clinic on the first

### 2018 Nitrate Clinics continued...

Friday of every month. Last spring our new District 2 Supervisor, Marcel Noyes, reached out to his townships and found there was an interest in doing site nitrate clinics. We attended several spring and summer events around the county to do nitrate clinics. These clinics brought in 100+ additional individual tap water samples to us for testing.

At this time, we are planning to hold additional nitrate clinics in 2018 at the Laporte Independence Celebration Days on July 7th, and Lake George Blueberry Festival on July 28th and the Becida Days over Labor Day weekend, September 1st. We will be doing our nitrate clinic at the Hubbard County Fair again this year on Friday, July 13th and Saturday, July 14th.

If you have a city or community wide event or celebration, and would like us to attend your event to test for nitrates in private wells, please call our office to arrange for us to set up a clinic.

Interested parties should run their tap water for 5 minutes before collecting one-half cup of water the morning or day of the event, and bring the sample in a clean container or baggie. Water samples test easiest at room temperature. More information will be posted to our website event calendar as they are scheduled. We hope to see you this year with your tap water sample!

### COST SHARE FUNDING AVAILABLE

By Julie Kingsley

The State Cost-Share Program, MN Statute 103C.501, was created to provide funds to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to help share the cost of programs or practices for erosion control, sedimentation control, or water quality improvements that are designed to protect and improve soil and water resources. Through the State Cost-Share Program, land owners can request financial and technical assistance from their local SWCD for the implementation of conservation practices. The program, which was originally approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 1977, can provide up to 75 percent of the total eligible costs of a practice, with the applicant being responsible for the other 25 percent. Grant funds are available annually to SWCD's at the beginning of the state's fiscal year.

The projects are selected by local SWCDs that identify conservation practices which help: control nutrient runoff, stabilize critical eroding areas, divert runoff to protect and improve water quality, reduce wind erosion, control gully; rill; or sheet erosion, protect shore land from erosion, control storm water runoff, or protect surface water and ground water quality. The process to apply for Cost Share programs is easy. Forms are available on the Hubbard SWCD website: <http://www.hubbardswcd.org/programs/> or in our office at 603 Central Ave. N., Park Rapids, MN. A site visit is required by SWCD staff to verify the project, and determine if engineering is needed. Once an application is submitted, along with at least two bids for the services to complete the project, the SWCD Board of Supervisors will vote on the project at the monthly board meeting. All costs are paid upfront by the landowner and reimbursement for the approved amount is processed upon all receipts submitted to the office.

If you have an interest or a question about the SWCD Cost Share Program please call the office at 218-732-0121 ext. 4.

# Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

By Jamin Carlson

Thinking of purchasing property? Planning to build or work on your land - excavate, vegetation alteration, driveway, building garage, etc.? Want to know more about the rules with regards to **wetlands**? If you answered yes to any of these questions, or just want to learn more, please contact the SWCD office at (218) 732-0121 for a consultation or a site visit to the property. The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA), **Rule 8420**, regulates impacts to wetlands in the state of Minnesota. These impacts may include draining or filling wetlands, either wholly or partially, and excavating or converting an area to a non-wetland use. The state of Minnesota has a "No Net Loss" of wetland law. A wetland violation may lead to a Misdemeanor charge against the landowner and /or the responsible party. So it is important to get your wetland applications filed with the SWCD **BEFORE** any work is done. It is the landowner's responsibility to be informed and to get any necessary permits. It is always better for the landowner to do their due diligence beforehand, rather than having to potentially remove their project, plus pay for damages and citations. Hubbard County SWCD administers the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act.

## Your Trees will be here soon!

**Tree orders** will be distributed the first weekend of May at the south end of Hubbard County Fair Grounds on **Friday, May 4th from 1-6pm;**  
**Saturday, May 5th from 9am-3pm; and Sunday, May 6th from 1-3pm.**  
We'll see you then!

## 2018 Hubbard SWCD Forest Stewardship Management Plan Program

By Julie Kingsley

Beginning this year, the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) will be offering assistance to landowners who want to get Forest Stewardship Management Plans written for their forest lands of 20 to 1,000 acres within Hubbard County.

Forest Stewardship Management Plans are personalized plans written for your property, by a DNR certified forester, that provides management options to help you achieve your goals for your property. Plans can include: timber productivity, timber harvest, creating or improving wildlife habitats (examples: deer, ruffed grouse, or warblers), or a combination of practices. Also, healthy forest management is important in protecting water quality.

To be eligible, landowners must have a minimum of 20 contiguous acres of timbered or woody vegetative land. Most wetlands or acres already being pastured, farmed, or hayed would not be eligible if the practice is continued.

This program is the first step in accessing tax and incentive programs, such as the Sustainable Forestry Incentive Act (SFIA), or 2C Managed Forest Land, cost-share programs, and other funding opportunities with other agencies that have their own guidelines. To be eligible for SFIA or 2C an approved Forest Stewardship Management Plan must also be registered with the Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division.

Property that is under a Forest Stewardship Management Plan is not required to be open to public hunting and you can post your land with "No Trespassing/No Hunting" signs.

The cost of obtaining a Forest Stewardship Management Plan is a base fee of \$250.00 plus an additional \$7.00/acre for 20 to 1,000 acres of approved land. A certified forester will determine if the land is eligible to be included in the plan. Hubbard SWCD is ready to cover the \$7.00/acre charge, but it is the responsibility of the landowner to register the completed and approved Forest Management Plan with the Department of Natural Resources Forestry Division at an additional cost of \$50.00 payable to the MN DNR. Hubbard SWCD will invoice you in the amount of \$250.00 once your Forest Stewardship Management Plan application is completed and approved. Hubbard SWCD will contact our certified foresters, who will then contact you and begin the plan writing process.

Please see our website at <http://www.hubbardswcd.org/portfolio/sustainable-forestry-incentives-act/> to get the Forest Stewardship/Management Plan Application or call the Hubbard SWCD Office at 218-732-0121 ext. 4.



**HUBBARD COUNTY  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District**

*Return Service Requested*

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Park Rapids, MN  
Permit #21

603 Central Avenue N Suite 100  
Park Rapids, MN 56470

Phone: 218-732-0121  
Fax: 855-547-8729

*EEO— All programs of the Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.*

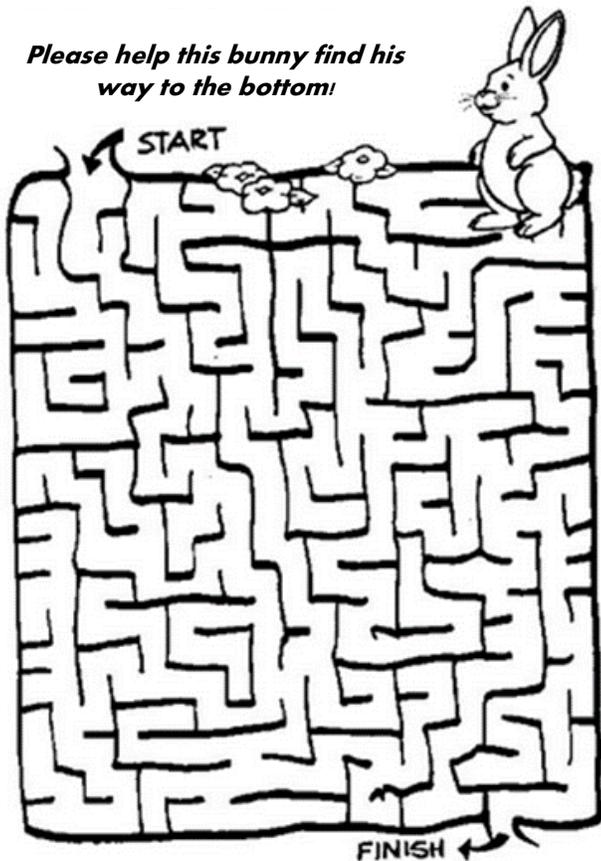
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**Mission Statement**

The purpose of the Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide leadership, education, technical advice, financial assistance to landowners, cooperating agencies for various programs and projects with the goal being the whole community working together in harmony to pursue the sustainable management, wise-use, and protection of the District's soil, water, forests, wildlife, and recreational resources.

***KIDS CORNER***

*Please help this bunny find his way to the bottom!*



**FREE Nitrate Clinics held the first Friday of every month from 9 am-2 pm at the SWCD Office located at 603 Central Ave N, Park Rapids, MN. Please call 218-732-0121 if you have any questions.**

**Rain Monitors Needed!**

Hubbard SWCD is looking for volunteers to do rain monitoring in Hubbard County. I am glad to report that we gained a couple new rain monitors last fall! However, we are still looking for someone to monitor in the following townships: **Arago, Clover, Fern, Helga, Lake Alice, Lake Hattie, Mantrap, Rockwood, Straight River, Thorpe and White Oak.** Our Rockwood monitor retired this past October. Rain gauge and materials are supplied, all we ask from you are a few minutes each week to record daily information and turn collected data in to our office by the 10th of the following month. If you are interested in supporting your local SWCD in this way, please call our office at (218) 732-0121 ext 4 and ask for Annette. Thank you and hope to hear from you soon!