Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District

SWCD Focus

Volume 41 Issue 2

Fall 2019

Lawns to Legumes: Your Yard Can BEE the Change

By Julie Kingsley

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) has received state funding to start a new program called Lawns to Legumes. This a grant program that should be available in late fall of 2019. The program is focused on planting residential lawns with native vegetation and pollinators to help create more diverse habitats. Funding will be targeted to priority areas that will benefit the Rusty Patched Bumblebee and other pollinators.

Why are pollinator plantings important? Many insects such as bees, butterflies and moths are at risk. These pollinators support our food development and provide ecological system maintenance. Pollinators use native species to our area which have longer, more vigorous root systems and provide better water holding capacity, protect water quality and enhance carbon sequestration and other ecosystem benefits. This improves soil health and encourages a more diverse ecosystem than plain turf grass.

There are three program components:

1. **Demonstration Neighborhoods -** a Request for Proposal (RFP) grant program available to Local Government Units (LGUs), tribes and conservation groups.
   * 10-15 awards for plantings in targeted areas and/or demonstration projects with technical and financial assistance available.
   * It is a competitive RFP to build pathways in targeted areas in partnership with landowners.
   * The BWSR advisory team ranks the projects.
2. **Individual Support -** contract.
   a. **Coaching plus Cost Share** - reimbursement for native plant pocket plantings and for pollinator lawns. Amount based on strategic mapping. Available to non-profit partner. **OR**
   b. **Workshops + Coaching + Cost Share** - 20 landowner workshops and reimbursement for native plants. Available to non-profit partner.
3. **Public Education Collaboration:** To promote public adoption of residential pollinator habitat.
   a. **BWSR Led Outreach -** to develop and refine a communication/marketing plan with partners, use social media-Facebook, Instagram, blog, participation in events, and Living Landscapes for Pollinators signs.
   b. **Outreach Collaboration -** Partners may include Blue Thumb Partnership, Master Gardeners, Master Water Stewards, Wild Ones, cities and counties, and other conservation partners.
      * Outreach activities may include creating a web page plus garden mapping platform, social media-Facebook, Instagram, blog outreach efforts, distribute technical resources, and help landowners' source native plants.

There are many resources that are available for landowners if they do not want to enter the full proposed program. The Do It Yourself Resources (DIY) available are: a Planting for Pollinators Habitat Guide, Planting Templates, Design Guide, Pollinator Project Types, Preparing Your Soil, Composting vs. Mulch, Turf Alternatives, Native Plant Species lists and more. These sources of information can be found at: https://www.BWSR.state.mn.us, under "**Lawns to Legumes".** Then follow the additional links for more information.

If you live in town, check with your local ordinances on vegetation maintenance, they may limit the height of vegetation on residential lawns. There may be a permitting process that allows the planting of pollinators. If you have further questions please contact the Hubbard SWCD office at 218-732-0121 ext. 4.

Happy planting and help BEE the change!

Inside this issue:

District Supervisors

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

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

District Staff

Julie Kingsley, District Manager
(julie.kingsley@mn.nacdnet.net)

Annette. Olson, Admin Assistant
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Assisted by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Dan Pazdernik, District Conservationist
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NEWS FROM NRCS

Soil Health with Cover Crops in Minnesota

By Dan Pazdernik

A cover crop can consist of grasses, legumes, forbs or other herbaceous plants that are established for seasonal cover and conservation purposes. They may be used on all lands needing vegetative cover for natural resource protection and improvement. Cover crops are an excellent tool when used in combination with other practices such as conservation crop rotations and residue management practices to improve soil health.

There are many benefits associated with growing cover crops. Often times they are thought of only as a means of protecting the soil from wind and water erosion between growing seasons. In fact, there are many more benefits including improved soil organic matter, increased infiltration, improved microbiology, produce/scavenge crop nutrients, capture and recycle excess nutrients, improve nutrient cycling, protect water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, minimize and reduce soil compaction, weed suppression, and soil moisture management.

Before planting a cover crop keep the following considerations in mind: cover crop species, seedbed preparation, seeding dates, seeding rates, fertility, planting methods, termination methods, herbicide residual from previous crops, compatibility with other components of the cropping system, and your intended purpose of the over crop.

Row crop production often leaves fields vulnerable to soil erosion. Cover crops can protect the soil that has been exposed to erosion after harvesting corn silage, soybeans, peas, or other low residue crops. They provide multiple benefits beyond soil conservation. A growing cover crop can sequester unused soluble nutrients preventing leaching and runoff and they can provide quality forage for grazing or haying.

Cover crops are increasingly used by farmers for the multiple benefits they contribute to soil and crop management systems. Farmers who invest in cover crops typically do so for higher yields, nutrient retention, soil improvement, forage for livestock, reduced erosion, reduced input costs, and a more sustainable cropping system overall. Cover crops show promise in increased cropping system resilience to weather variability, may reduce production costs and cover crops are a valuable agricultural practice to reduce nutrient loading to water sources.

There are abundant resources out there on cover crops. The Midwest Cover Crops Council at http://mccc.msu.edu is a great resource with a user friendly cover crop chart to aid in the decision making process and you can check out the online resources on the Minnesota NRCS website at www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov or visit your local USDA Service Center.

Continuous Grazing vs Rotational Grazing

By Alicia Laturnus

The grazing season usually runs from June to early October. The cattle have access to the entire field during this time while in continuous grazing operation. Cattle can act like little kids when eating their favorite foods. The animal will travel throughout the field looking for the most palatable plants. Once the tasty plants are eaten then they'll move on to something less desirable. Over time, the animal will revisit the delicious plant only to nibble it away to almost nothing. This pressure weakens the plant and will eventually kill it. The less desirable plants will start to take over and your pasture diversity will quickly diminish.

A rotational grazing system is designed to control the herd's access to the field. The entire field is divided into smaller areas (paddocks). The cattle start in Paddock #1 and eat for a few days. Once the forage is at a 4-inch stubble height they will be moved to Paddock #2. While the cattle are in Paddock #2, the delicious plants (in Paddock #1) can start to grow and recover. The plants will have about 30 days to recover in a six-paddock system, even more time with more paddocks. This recovery time will help strengthen its root system and in turn create a stronger plant. It won't be over taken by undesirable plants.

It doesn't take long for the cattle to learn that there is better food in the next paddock. Some cattle have been seen running to the gate when the farmer shows up and they are quick to enter the next paddock.

Please take a look at the following weblink https://onpasture.com/2019/08/12/comparing-rotational-and-continuous-grazing-a-time-lapse-video/. It's from 'On Pasture' where the NRCS, in South Dakota, set up a camera on a fence line. It took time lapse photos from May to December of 2018 to see how the vegetation responded to continuous grazing (right side of fence) and rotational grazing (on the left side).

2020 Tree Orders Start in October

By Annette Olson

Hubbard SWCD is now taking tree, plant plug and seed orders for our 2020 trees sale, with distribution planned for May 1-3, 2020 at the south end of the Hubbard County Fairgrounds, in Park Rapids, MN. We would like to let everyone know that our Board of Supervisors decided to change our pricing format for the 2020 tree sales to help cover our costs for this wonderful program. We are still waiting on confirmation of stock and pricing from our vendors, so the flat rate of $1.50/tree will make pricing much easier for everyone, A bundle of 25 trees will cost $37.50. We need to preorder our tree stock in August to get the species we want to sell to our clients. We hope everyone understands that we are trying to get our order information out as soon as possible and having a flat rate will help cover our operating costs for this program.

We have rotated a few species again this year and kept the Wild Berry Pack (3-Elderberry, 2 Serviceberry, 3 Flowering Raspberry and 2 Mulberry) and the Shoreline/ Wetland Pack (3-Speckled Alder, 3-Sand Bar Willow and 4-Redosier Dogwood). We are again offering plant plug kits and a variety of native seeds packets. We are excited to offer a Lakeshore/Wetland Seed Mix package this year. A full listing of species for all the seed packets can be found on the Minnesota Native Landscape website listed on the second page of our order form under the photos.
Please see our order form for a complete listing of items available to purchase. We will again be posting our complete order form on our website and will have information and pictures available for all our items. Our Facebook page and website will cover any updates as they become available. Remember to place your seed and plant plug orders by April 1st to be assured you will get the seed mix and plant plugs that will work best for you! Visit our website at www.hubbardswcd.org for more information.

Restoring Prairie Now Easier

Information from The Nature Conservancy

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 the 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 plan species, as well as estimated costs for completing a successful prairie restoration. The guides are available to be downloaded for free at: nature.org/MNPrairieRestorationGuides.

Annual Grazing Workshop

Improving soil health is important in the world of farming. Please click on the following weblink to see how a Northern Minnesota Grazing Operation accomplishes it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srET5An9qJE . Thor Didrikson discusses the benefits and challenges of grazing their large herd of cattle on cover crops on their farm in Roseau County, Minnesota.
Thor's brother, Dana Didrikson, spoke during our 2018 Annual Hubbard County Grazing Workshop in Guthrie, MN. The attendees really enjoyed listening to what has and hasn't worked in their operation.
We're starting to plan our next grazing workshop for producers in Hubbard County and our neighboring county producers. It'll be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 (with a backup date of Wednesday, February 5, 2020). This will be our 9th year of bringing farmers and producers together to learn methods that work or don't work. We are reaching out to see what topics you, as a farmer or producer, would like to hear about? You can pick topics from the following list by either visiting our Facebook page, call, e-mail or mail us your choices. *(see page one for contact information)*

____Overwintering	____Soil Health
____Cattle Record Keeping	____Forages
____Cover Crops	____Animal Health
____Farm Bill Program	____Other: _____

Soil Health Fact: ***There are billions of soil FUNGI, bacteria and other microorganisms in 1 teaspoon of healthy soil that help plants thrive.***

50 Years of Service for Hubbard SWCD

The Hubbard County Soil and Water Conservation District was recognized at the North Central Area 8 Fall meeting September 13, 2019 at Itasca State Park for "50 years of bringing water management and conservation to the people and lands of Hubbard County". The award was presented by Ryan Hughes of the Board of Water and Soil Resources to Julie Kingsley District Manager of the Hubbard SWCD. Three of the five SWCD Supervisors were also present, Don Sells representing District 4 (on the far left) and Bob Iles representing District 3 (on the far right). Lynn Goodrich representing District 5 is not pictured.

HUBBARD COUNTY
Soil & Water
Conservation District

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

2020 Tree Form Enclosed

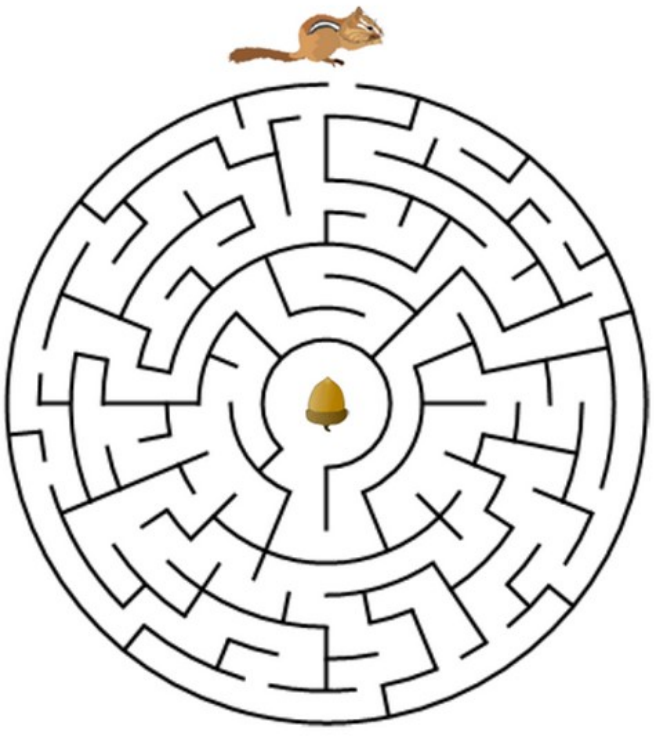
EEO– All programs of the Hubbard County Soil & Water Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or handicap.

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

MR. CHIPMUNK NEEDS TO COLLECT ACORNS



Soil Health Fact: ***TILLAGE can damage a well-structured healthy soil.***

Volunteers needed!

Do you have a few minutes to spare each day? Hubbard County SWCD would like to have someone monitoring our precipitation for each of our townships. The following townships still need a rain monitor: Arago, Badoura, Clover, Fern, Helga, Lake Alice, Rockwood, Thorpe, and White Oak. It only takes a few moment each day to check the gauge and record your findings on the monthly sheet we provide. You then drop it off to the office, email or mail it to our office. If you think you might be interested in helping us collect precipitation data, please call our office at (218) 732-0121 ext 4 and ask for Annette! We supply the rain gauge and all other materials needed.

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.