

Itasca County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

1889 E. Hwy 2, Grand Rapids, MN 55744 218-326-0017 fax 218-326-8938
Spring/Summer 2005

Districts First Newsletter

Welcome everyone to the Itasca SWCD's first newsletter. There are so many wonderful things to share with all of you. The District employs five full-time staff, with the Natural Resource Conservation Service two full time positions and a part-time technician to make us an outstanding team.



Read on for some fascinating District and NRCS projects!

Lake Specialist- Noel Griese



Itasca County is in the process of classifying different lake types according to their natural physical characteristics. This classification system groups lakes that have fundamental differences in their baseline water quality and also differ in their natural susceptibility to changes in water quality. It is critical to the process to collect water quality

data from different lake types to verify the accuracy of the nutrient loading models used in this process. There is also a need to have a more comprehensive, annual assessment of lake water quality to determine long term trends in lake water quality that might be caused by shifts in temperature and/or precipitation. Twenty lakes will be monitored during 2005 in cooperation with the MN DNR Fisheries and United State Forest Service, primarily to collect dissolved oxygen-temperature profiles and nutrient data (Total Phosphorus, Chlorophyll-A, Total Nitrogen, Alkalinity, Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen, Secchi). A minimum of 5 monthly samples will be collected from May through September.

Jessie Lake

Noel Griese reported that Jessie Lake Watershed Association (JLWA) will continue the long term monitoring of Jessie Lake in 2005 with the assistance of the Itasca County SWCD. The JLWA's efforts are aimed at furthering the 2000-2002 Clean Water Partnership diagnostic study headed by the Itasca County SWCD, which studied in depth the

cause of severe algae blooms and a fish die off in 1998.

Horseshoe Lake Association

The Horseshoe Lake Association has also begun to establish a long term monitoring plan due to the sensitivity of Horseshoe Lake to development impacts and the ever increasing development pressures. The Itasca SWCD will provide technical assistance and equipment to the Lake Association for 2005.

Adopt- A- River 2005



This is the second year of Itasca SWCD joining the Mississippi River Clean-up. The Itasca SWCD Adopted 2 miles of river in 2004 to be cleaned on a yearly basis. A number of other organizations asked to join our team including the KAXE Northern Community Radio, the Grand Rapids Mississippi Riverfront Enhancement Task Force, the Itasca Trails Task Force, and others. This year's clean-up was done on Earth Day. A sign will be erected on the new KAXE/Library building site next to the Mississippi

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River.



2005 Adopt- A- River sign.

News from the NRCS

Mike Oja, District Conservationist will be following up on USDA conservation contracts with local landowners such as, forestry practices, grazing, crop production and wildlife habitat practices. Also, a new summer intern will be joining the NRCS staff, Gail Bong. She will be starting the end of May.

NRCS Grazing Specialist

Welcome John Zinn, the new Grazing Specialist has been a great asset to the Grand Rapids Field office. He moved here from Wisconsin last August. John is compiling grazing plans for Area III and some of Area IV. He will be attending two training sessions out of state, Utah and North Carolina for pasture ecology and plant herbivore interaction. John will also be putting on a Grazing Workshop at Morrison County Fair, July 27-30. He will be participating in a field trial of rotational grazing vs. continuous grazing and will be making visits to rotational grazing contracts through

Environmental Quality Incentives Program. If you have any questions about rotational grazing, fencing and watering systems for livestock, give John a call. 218-326-6802

NRCS, WAE

Doug Hafar has been doing an excellent job working part-time doing file work and data entry, tree planting plus layout in the field for them.

Itasca SWCD Native Tree and Plant Sale

This is the third annual Tree Sales the District has offered. The District has diversified and offers a wonderful selection of Trees, Wildflowers, Shrubs and Grasses. Orders are welcome in the fall with delivery in the spring.



The Itasca County Fairgrounds has been a perfect setting for customers to stop and pick up the stock they ordered through the Native Tree and Plant Sale. Pictured above are District staff and one of our Supervisors helping at Tree Sale pick-up day.

Healthy Lakes

Bass, Pokegama, Praire and Snaptail lakes are developing

lake management plans under a grant from the McKnight Foundation. Itasca SWCD is providing technical and administrative support. The plans will be reviewed and approved by the county Water Plan Implementation Committee. The lake associations receive incentive payments to help pay for plan development, and then are eligible for implementation grants to carry out high priority "action items" that are part of their plan.

Wetlands

Where soil and water come together there are wetlands. In Minnesota there are 8 different kinds of wetlands, ranging from forested to open water. If you are planning a project that involves wetlands, either excavation or filling, please contact our office to allow us to provide you with the technical information needed to comply with the Wetland Conservation Act.

Quote for the Spring/Summer

Gardens

What is a weed? I have heard it said that there are sixty definitions. For me, a weed is a plant out of place.

DONALD CULROSS
PEATTIE

See you next issue