

## NEWS RELEASE



**MASWCD**

**For immediate release**

### **WILKIN SWCD RECIPIENT OF LIVING SNOW FENCE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**St. Paul, Minn.**—The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) and the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) have awarded the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District with the first annual Living Snow Fence Achievement Award.

The award will be presented at the 72<sup>nd</sup> annual MASWCD Convention, which will be held Dec. 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront, St. Paul, Minnesota. The award provides recognition to an SWCD which has put forth extraordinary effort in establishing living snow fences in Minnesota.

Living Snow Fences are two or more rows of trees or shrubs, designed in an angle and distance from the road that is calculated based on landscape and climatology data. Once established, the vegetation acts as a barrier, preventing the snow from drifting onto the roadway. The living snow fences not only provide the public with the benefit of safer winter driving, but also provide the conservation benefits of improved water quality, better soil erosion control, reduced spring-time flooding, carbon sequestration and potential wildlife habitat.

Wilkin County Engineer Thomas Richels has seen huge improvements from the snow fences. “In the extremely flat countryside of Wilkin County, there are tremendous problems with blowing snow, drifted roads, and icy roads caused by windblown snow sticking to the roads. Our local Soil and Water Conservation District and their Living Snow Fence Coordinator, Craig Lingen, have done a truly exceptional job of developing and installing living snow fences. It is amazing how well the fences work with the landscape in our area.”

All totaled, in the last five years the Wilkin SWCD designed and implemented 4.5 miles of federal/state highways and 2 miles of county roads to living snow fences. Mn/DOT representative Dennis Redig knows it is not an easy job to convince property owners to lay idle some of their valuable land for the benefit of others, but notes, “Now that we have a number of these plantings growing, I am hoping that others may see the benefit and become more involved in the program.”

Wilkin SWCD is quick to point out that the accomplishments they have enjoyed over the years would not have been possible without the partnerships they have developed with organizations at the local, state, and federal levels, and most importantly, with the landowners.

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