Wilkin SWCD and partners begin $10.4 million restoration of Wolverton Creek

Last fall, the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) began a complex project to restore the 25-mile Wolverton Creek in Wilkin County in partnership with the Buffalo-Red River Watershed District. For generations, landowners in the watershed district have been looking for a solution to resolve persistent land use and erosion problems including flooding crops, sediment deposits and a widening creek bed.

The $10.4 million project will restore hydrology to the stream, reduce flooding, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. In the first phase of the project, contractors removed 270,000 cubic yards of fill – sediment, cattails and grasses – that made the creek bed “indistinguishable” along a stagnant, seven-mile stretch of the stream’s midsection.

The Wilkin SWCD played a critical role in coordinating with the 45 landowners along the creek and assembling funding for the project. All landowners voluntarily consented to the project, and most will enroll in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for permanent buffers. As a protected water, any work on Wolverton Creek needed to be permitted by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

“The complexity of this project really speaks to the landowners’ commitment and passion for resolving this problem,” said Don Bajumpaa, Wilkin SWCD district manager. “After decades of struggles, we’ll finally be able to stabilize Wolverton Creek.”

The three-year project includes funding from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (Targeted Watershed and Clean Water Fund grants), the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund and an Enbridge Eco Footprint grant. Additional project partners include the Clay SWCD and the DNR.
Register now for MASWCD’s 2019 Public Administration Training for SWCDs!

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) is offering the MASWCD Public Administration Cohort Training – an outstanding, interactive training opportunity for SWCD managers and staff involved in district management. This training is designed to help district managers and staff enhance the skills needed to ensure our SWCD offices run smoothly.

The training will be held over three sessions from March through June. The comprehensive curriculum explores important topics for SWCD leaders, including:

- Working effectively with a board
- Communication in the workplace
- Working with the media
- Leading effective teams
- Human resource management
- Financial management
- Operations planning
- Grant administration
- Measuring effectiveness
- Legal and audit issues

The cohort-based program allows participants to learn from the experiences of other professionals in the field. The course is led by seasoned management consultants, Ann Glumac and Donna Rae Scheffert.

Click here for more information and the registration form. Please register by March 1, 2019!

South Central Area 6 awards scholarship to St. Olaf freshman

MASWCD South Central Area 6 recently launched a new scholarship program and awarded a $500 scholarship to a 2018 graduating senior from Madelia High School. The recipient, Samantha Maul, intends to major in a field related to natural resource management at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Criteria for the award included maintaining a minimum 2.5 grade-point average through high school, good character, extracurricular and community involvement, and a written essay. Maul read her winning essay, “Cover crops for conservation in southern Minnesota,” during a South Central Area 6 meeting. She was presented with the official recognition of her award by Scholarship Committee member and Renville SWCD Supervisor M.R. Koenig.

“We’re very proud of Samantha and wish her the best of luck as she begins her college career,” said Koenig. “South Central Area 6 is thrilled to offer these scholarships to encourage interest and education in the natural resources for generations to come.”

The new annual scholarship program is open to high school seniors in the 11 counties of South Central Area 6 with interest in the natural resources field. Interested students are
encouraged to apply for the 2019-20 academic year. Potential applicants may contact their guidance counselor, FFA adviser or county SWCD office for further information.

### North St. Louis SWCD awarded national urban ag conservation grant

The National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) announced $1 million in urban agriculture conservation funding for 20 conservation districts nationwide, including a North St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) project in Minnesota.

Through the grant, the St. Louis SWCD will build and enhance outdoor raised garden beds, create pollinator gardens, establish an urban orchard, and practice rainwater harvesting in the Iron Range area. An education component delivered through the local 4-H program will reach K-12 youth. Additionally, workshops for the general community will showcase the work of students and teach community members about composting, rainwater harvesting, water quality and pollinator habitat.

### Video spotlight: Managing stormwater at the Minnesota Zoo

With many impervious surfaces at the Minnesota Zoo, untreated stormwater was running off into storm drains, wetlands and ponds. The Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District worked with the zoo to capture the water runoff utilizing an eye-catching and pollinator-friendly rain garden.

[Click here](#) to watch a short video about this project in Dakota County!

This project was also featured in MASWCD's new educational video about the work of SWCDs across Minnesota. (To watch the full video, [click here](#))

### SWCDs in the news

Soil and water conservation districts from around the state are making headlines!

Check out these recent stories:

- [West Polk Soil and Water Conservation District awarded at 2018 Annual Convention](#) | Redwood Falls Gazette

- [Ditch 11, Winsted Lake will benefit from water grants](#) | Hutchinson Leader

- [Weather woes in 2018 keep some landowners from buffer compliance](#) | Worthington Globe

- [Becker County [SWCD] awarded Clean Water Fund grant; $800K will keep](#)
improvements flowing at Buffalo River Watershed | Detroit Lakes Online

- A legacy of conservation | Hutchinson Leader
- Grants put clean water at forefront | Fairmont Sentinel
- Inspectors find 500 unclean boats per year | Osakis Review
- Mower SWCD hires for new conservation service; District adds watershed conservationist, plans for another staffer | Austin Daily Herald

If you know someone who might be interested in receiving our updates, share this sign up link.