Our Guiding Principles: A special message from MASWCD President Kurt Beckstrom

We often get questions along these lines: “What is an SWCD?” or “What do SWCDs do?”

It’s easy to talk about what we do. SWCD folks have been doing that for 80 years.

The next time someone asks you what we do, I challenge you to take a step back and talk about what we believe before addressing what we do. If we can first engage people with our beliefs, what we do suddenly becomes more important.

As the voice of SWCDs across Minnesota, MASWCD sees it as our responsibility to help you talk about our work in ways that anyone can understand.

That’s why I’m proud to share a new resource called The Guiding Principles of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These principles are timeless yet bold statements about what SWCDs believe and strive to achieve.

It is our hope that this resource will help you effectively communicate with landowners, lawmakers, and other partners who make our work possible. We encourage you to download and share this widely. This is your resource, and I hope you find it useful.

Thanks,
Kurt Beckstrom
Mille Lacs SWCD Supervisor
MASWCD President

Collaboration between five SWCDs in northeastern Minnesota wins USDA grant to hire new forester

Fueled by landowner concerns and knowledge that the forests in Minnesota’s Arrowhead region continue to face serious health threats, SWCD foresters from Carlton, Cook, Lake, North St. Louis, and South St. Louis took it upon themselves to find a solution, with support of the Duluth and Virginia NRCS offices. Healthy, resilient forests are critical to the ecology and hydrology of northeastern Minnesota, which in turn benefits the overall health of residents and the environment.
In April, they applied for a Conservation Collaborative Grant from the USDA NRCS to hire a new full-time experienced forester and add capacity for foresters already on staff.

“This was a unique collaboration,” said Anita Provinzino of the North St. Louis SWCD, which is serving as the fiscal agent for the grant funding. “But we knew that getting more boots-on-the-ground support for landowners would require a larger team effort.”

MASWCD is excited to congratulate the SWCDs for receiving the grant! They expect to hire the new full-time forester soon. Demand for assistance from landowners in northeastern Minnesota is high, and SWCD leaders are excited about the additional experience and capacity that an experienced forester will add to the teams in place.

Help preserve the history of SWCDs in Minnesota!

In August, we celebrated an exciting milestone – the 80th anniversary of the first SWCD in Minnesota! (To see photos from the celebration and get ongoing updates from MASWCD, be sure to like us on Facebook!)

Conservation work has evolved, improved and expanded over the last 80 years, and today we’re asking for your help. Does your SWCD have historical photos that you can share with us? SWCDs have a rich history, and MASWCD is embarking on a project to collect and chronicle images that help tell our story through the years.

Please pick the best one or two historical photos you have and send them to history@maswcd.org!

Save the date for the annual MASWCD convention: December 9-11, 2018!

The 2018 MASWCD Annual Convention will be held on December 9-11 at the DoubleTree by Hilton Bloomington-Minneapolis South hotel. Mark your calendar today!

The three-day convention will include business meetings, a compelling keynote address, impactful information sessions, and a trade show.

Registration information will be available soon; stay tuned! We are excited to once again bring hundreds of SWCD supervisors, agency staff, and local leaders together for collaboration, learning and celebration.
SWCDs in the news

Soil and water conservation districts from around the state are making headlines! Check out these recent stories:

- **'This is a proud legacy'** | Rochester Post-Bulletin
- **Stretch of Chester Creek sees first daylight in decades** | Duluth News Tribune
- **Class to cover winter salt use best practices** | Brainerd Dispatch
- **Special field day highlights benefit of Kernza on soil health** | Bluff County News
- **Knutson graduates from leadership program** | Marshall Independent
- **Groundwater and agriculture: Insights from farmers in central Minnesota on how to protect both** | Journal of Soil and Water Conservation

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