

WRIGHT SWCD NEWS

SUMMER NEWSLETTER OF WRIGHT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



**GROOS'
COVER
CROPS**

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SEAN AND LINDA GROOS NAMED 2022 OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONISTS

Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) selected Sean and Linda Groos of Howard Lake, MN as the 2022 Outstanding Conservationists.

This operation has been passed down through Linda's family for five generations and has been operated by the Groos' since 1993. The operation was purchased by Sean and Linda in 2002 and was worked exclusively as a dairy operation until 2020. Since then, in addition to raising dairy heifers, the Groos farm operates on a total of 290 acres; 215 of which are utilized to produce corn, alfalfa, soybeans and wheat.



Over the years, the Groos' have done various conservation projects with the Wright SWCD, the University of Minnesota - Extension, and Discovery Farms Minnesota.

Sean has made cover crops a vital component of the operation. These crops are beneficial, not only because they provide the farm with an alternative and extra food source, but they also help to improve soil quality. Timing is important in this, as different crops affect soil quality, but "to make it work in the situation you have," is what Sean says conservation is all about.



The Wright SWCD would like to thank the Groos' for their hard work and dedication for implementing conservation practices in the ever-changing agricultural environment of Wright County.



BENEFITS OF UTILIZING COVER CROPS



Cover crops have many benefits including, erosion protection, weed control and improved soil health, to name a few. If you have been paying attention to agriculture in the past few years, you probably have heard about cover crops and their benefits. If you farm you may have even tried them or thought about it.

Cover crops are not a magic bullet to prevent erosion or drastically reduce inputs, but they can certainly help improve your soil through management such as reduced tillage and nutrient cycling. The overall abundance and diversity of life in the soil and how it functions is soil health. Life or biology of the soil includes microbes: bacteria, fungi, protozoa, nematodes, and microarthropods. Arthropods and earthworms are larger organisms that are also part of soil biology. They are all connected through the Soil Food Web, which requires plants and organic matter to function. This is where cover crops come in.

In addition to protecting the soil from erosion, and storing nutrients, plants also provide the starting energy that is needed for the rest of the soil biology to survive and function. The better the Soil Food Web functions the more nutrients are produced and are available for plants such as crops. With more diversity of plants and roots in the soil the Food Web functions better and cycles nutrients quicker.



Cover crop planting can be done by interseeding into a cash crop during the growing season or planted after the harvest of the cash crop. There are many species of cover crop and almost as many ways to plant them. One of the most popular means in Wright County are seeding a small grain or mix after short season crops like small grains or silage.

Seeding cover crops into the cash crop, has its challenges and considerations but likely will result in a longer establishment period for the cover and likely more benefit to soil health. Corn is the most common crop that is interseeded, usually with annual ryegrass, clover, and a brassica.

Some covers are better at scavenging nitrogen, while others work on reducing compactions and legumes fix atmospheric nitrogen, that becomes available for other plants to use. No matter your cropping system, operations, or soil types. Cover crops can benefit you.

MINNESOTA AG WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water.

Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

Through this program, certified producers receive:

- Regulatory certainty: certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification
- Recognition: certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality
- Priority for technical assistance: producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality

Through this program, the public receives:

- Assurance that certified producers are using conservation practices to protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams

How to sign up:

If you are interested in becoming water quality certified, contact the Wright SWCD office at 763-682-1970.

**Information provided by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture*

CONSERVATION TOUR HIGHLIGHT



The Wright SWCD held a Conservation Tour on Thursday, June 16, 2022, which included four stops of cover crops, streambank restoration, prairie seeding, and raingardens. Tours are provided to show projects that are funded through various grants or portions paid by the landowner. Legislatures, BWSR representatives, Wright County Commissioners, Wright SWCD Board of Supervisors and other partners joined us for the tour.



Mark Berning - Cover Crops



Otsego County Park - Streambank Restoration



Little Mountain Elementary - Prairie Seeding



Walt & Bonnie Lee - Raingarden

WRIGHT COUNTY FAIR

The annual Wright County fair was held July 20th - 24th, 2022. The Wright SWCD had a display of services.

Other informational items displayed were:

- 12 Mile Creek Watershed
- Cover crops
- AIS awareness
- Wetland conservation
- and much more!



SWCD SUPERVISORS

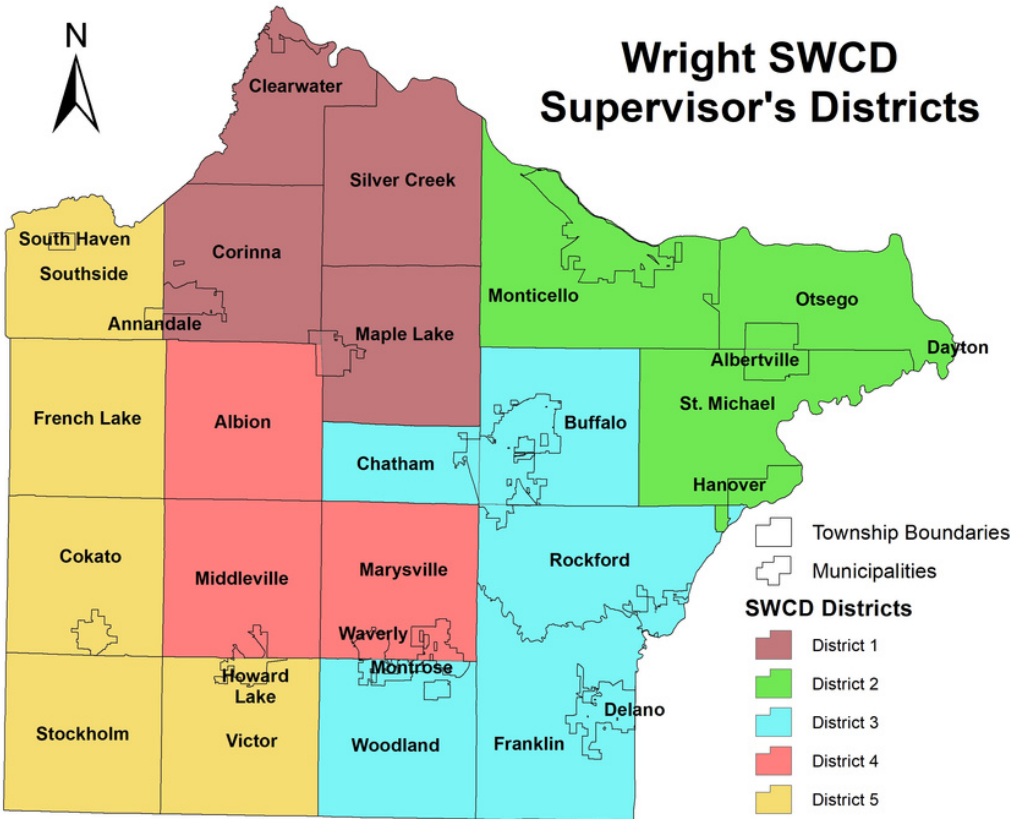
The Wright SWCD's Board is comprised of five Supervisors who are elected by nomination districts on the county wide general election.

Supervisor terms are staggered every four years.

Supervisors receive a per diem of \$75 per board meeting and meet once a month to set goals, policies, and priorities for the District.



Back Row (left to right): Duane Dahlman – Vice Chair, Bill Daluge – Supervisor, Mike Zieska – Supervisor. Front Row (left to right): Jeff Burns – Secretary/Treasurer, Chris Uecker – Chair.



District 1

Mike Zieska

Annandale, Clearwater, Corinna, Silver Creek, Maple Lake

District 2

Jeff Burns

Albertville, Monticello, Otsego, St. Michael, Hanover

District 3

Bill Daluge

Buffalo, Chatham, Rockford, Delano, Franklin, Montrose, Woodland

District 4

Chris Uecker

Albion, Middleville, Montrose, Marysville, Waverly, Howard Lake

District 5

Duane Dahlman

Southside, South Haven, Annandale, French Lake, Cokato, Howard Lake, Stockholm, Victor



Wright SWCD Staff Members (left to right): Front row: Alicia O'Hare, Pam Kuhn, and Luke Johnson. Back row: Dan Nadeau, Eric Mattson, Mike Candler, Andrew Grean, and Sandra Hessedal.

SWCD STAFF

Wright SWCD staff work with private landowners throughout the county on various soil and water projects to enhance and protect our natural resources.

Soil & Water Staff Directory:

- Luke Johnson** | District Manager
- Pam Kuhn** | Administrative Assistant
- Mike Candler** | Natural Resources Engineer
- Eric Mattson** | Conservation Technician
- Sandra Hessedal** | Office Assistant
- Andrew Grean** | Senior Wetland Resource Conservationist
- Dan Nadeau** | Senior Resource Conservationist
- Alicia O'Hare** | Water Resource Specialist



PHOTO CONTEST

Submit a photo(s) in one of the four contest categories (Landscape & Wildlife, Active Recreation, Humorous or Unusual Observation, and Conservation Efforts) by December 1, 2022.

Select photo entries will be posted on the Wright SWCD's Facebook page. Photos must be taken between January 1, 2022 and December 1, 2022. All photos entered in the contest must be taken within Wright County. No photo shopped pictures will be accepted.

One first and second place winner will be chosen in each of the four categories. First place winners will receive a prize of \$100 and second place will receive \$50. Multiple entries are accepted.

See [Entry Form](#) for more details, categories, and contest rules.

Category 1: Landscape & Wildlife

Photo entries should represent the natural environment that can be found on one of our many landscapes in Wright County such as prairie, forest, lakes, wetlands, etc.

Category 2: Active Recreation

Photos entered in this category should showcase the active recreational opportunities offered by the lakes and streams in Wright County. Activities may include, but are not limited to; canoeing, kayaking, boating, swimming, tubing, hiking, wading, fishing, and hunting.

Category 3: Humorous or Unusual Observation

This category allows you to use your imagination. Entries can include unusual wildlife, recreation, catches, or just an unusual photo.

Category 4: Conservation Efforts

Depictions of conservation practices at work on the landscape such as tree plantings, native vegetation, clean-up efforts, water sampling, and cropland conservation.



**WRIGHT SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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