New District Employee

My name is Collin Schoenecker and I am the new Resource Specialist for Rice Soil and Water Conservation District. My primary duty is to administer the Wetland Conservation Act. This Act was established to maintain and protect Minnesota’s wetlands and the benefits that they provide.

I was born and raised in New Prague, Minnesota. I attended Minnesota State University, Mankato where I received my degree in Recreation Parks and Leisure Services with an emphasis in Resource Management and Leisure Planning Management. I completed an internship with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service through Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge working with the Wetland Management District. Prior to starting with Rice SWCD I was employed by the MN DNR Fisheries in Waterville, MN.

I have had an interest in conservation and the outdoors my whole life. I enjoy hunting and fishing with family and friends. I share my interest in waterfowl hunting by teaching firearm safety and volunteering as a mentor with the Young Waterfowlers Program sponsored by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Minnesota Waterfowl Association.
Construction Updates

Over the past year Rice SWCD and NRCS worked to implement many practices that repaired flood damaged land, and will help prevent future flooding. Rice SWCD received $538,281 from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for flood relief projects. This money has been used to construct Water and Sediment Control Basins, Grassed Waterways, Grade Stabilization Structures and more. There are still many projects to be completed, and the office is working closely with landowners and contractors to ensure project completion.

Lippert’s Accept Conservation Award

Dave and Joanne Lippert were recently honored as outstanding conservationists at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, December 1-3, 2013 in Bloomington, Minn. They were selected by the Rice Soil and Water Conservation District for the award. Each year, the state’s SWCDs recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota’s natural resources. The award program is conducted with support from The Farmer magazine. The Lippert’s were selected for implementing conservation practices such as sediment control basins, buffer strips, and strip till on their farm in Cannon City Township.

Practice Maintenance

Most practices built with cost-share through our office are required to be maintained for 10 years. Repairing a structure that has failed is more costly than simply maintaining what you already have.

The photo to the left is an example of a basin that has become overgrown with brush and only a small portion of the intake is visible because it is so silted in. This basin is at high risk of failing. Repairing a structure that has failed is more costly than simply maintaining what you already have.

Grassed waterways also require a certain level of maintenance. Occasional mowing will reduce brush and weeds. The sides of grassed waterways should also be inspected for gullies. One way to prevent gullies along side of grassed waterways is to never plow around them, and do not plant rows in the same direction as the grassed waterways flow.

Good conservation practice maintenance will increase the lifespan of your investment!
Water Quality Monitoring

Over the past year Rice SWCD has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) on an edge-of-field water quality monitoring site (pictured at right). While watershed scale monitoring has been around for many years, edge-of-field monitoring is relatively new. The goal of the project is to compare two different equipment setups, and also gather data to help producers make informed decisions. Samples are automatically drawn during runoff events. These samples are analyzed for suspended sediment, nitrate/nitrite, ammonia and total phosphorus. There are several other sites like this in southeast Minnesota, northeast Iowa, and southwest Wisconsin.

Wildlife and Forest Stewardship Award

The Rice Soil and Water Conservation District supervisors presented Valley Grove Preservation Society with the “Wildlife Enhancement and Forest Stewardship Award” on December 11, 2013. The society’s efforts included purchasing acreage between the historical Valley Grove Church in Wheeling Township and the entrance to the Nerstrand Big Woods State Park. The oak tree and native prairie plantings are one of the largest oak savannah restorations in the state and home to many rare birds and wildlife. MN DNR’s Forest Legacy Program paid for $238,000 of the $414,750 purchase with the balance of funds being donated by private citizens. More information at www.valleygrovemn.com

Tree Sales

Once again we will be selling trees and shrubs for distribution in April of 2014. Orders can be placed starting in December, and the deadline will be February 28th. Please note Rice County sales tax has increased. Quantities are limited, so please order early to ensure availability. Most of our inventory is sold in bundles of 25, but we also have some individual potted trees such as spruce and cedar. If you need tree supplies such as tree mats, tree shelters, or deer repellent, you can purchase those items at any time throughout the year. Order form is available at www.riceswcd.org.

Check out our website at www.riceswcd.org

We update our blog with pictures, videos, events, and other exciting happenings.

Water Quality Monitoring

Wildlife and Forest Stewardship Award

Tree Sales
NRCS Program Updates

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities; and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. Through CSP, NRCS will provide financial assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial private forest lands. **The 2014 cutoff date to apply for CSP is February 7th.**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial help to landowners for conservation practices. Practices include: grassed waterways, water and sediment control basins, terraces, residue management, cover crops and many more. The first step in seeking NRCS assistance is to call our office and make an appointment with NRCS staff that will help you identify the resource concerns and opportunities on your farm. **The 2014 cutoff date to apply for EQIP is February 21st.**

More information at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Areas of Representation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District 1 (Northwest: Erin, Forest, Webster, Wheatland)</td>
<td>Robert Duban 507-645-8024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 2 (Southwest: Morristown, Shieldsville, Warsaw, Wells)</td>
<td>Jerry Courson 507-332-8261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 3 (Southeast: Cannon City, Richland, Walcott, Wheeling)</td>
<td>Jim Purfeerst 507-334-3552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 4 (Northeast: Bridgewater, Northfield)</td>
<td>Gary Wagenbach 507-645-8549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District 5 (Central: City of Faribault)</td>
<td>Dale Neirby 507-334-8045</td>
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Board Meetings: Second Wednesday of every month at 9:00am

- **February 28th:** Tree Orders Due
- **March 12th:** Soil Health Workshop
- **April 22nd:** Earth Day
- **April 25th:** Arbor Day
- **May 9th:** Native Plant Orders Due

Contact Information

Phone: 507-332-5408  
Fax: 507-332-9892  

District Manager: Steve Pahs: steven.pahs@mn.nacdnet.net  
District Secretary: Deb Skarupa: debbie.skarupa@mn.nacdnet.net  
Resource Conservationist: Collin Schoenecker: collin.schoenecker@mn.nacdnet.net  
District Technician: Ashley Tabery: ashley.tabery@mn.nacdnet.net  
Nutrient Management Specialist: Spencer Herbert: spencer.herbert@mn.nacdnet.net  

NRCS District Conservationist: Tom Coffman: thomas.coffman@mn.usda.gov  
Soil Conservationist: Nikki Schaffer: nicole.schaffer@mn.usda.gov  
Soil Conservationist Technician: Colin Williams: colin.williams@mn.usda.gov