Local Conservationists Honored At State Soil and Water Conservation District Convention

Ryan and Marla Verlinde were honored as outstanding conservationists at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, December 10, 2019 in Bloomington, Minn. They were selected by the Murray Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) 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.

According to Murray SWCD, the Verlindes were recognized for a variety of reasons. Following is a summary of some of the reasons why they were chosen:

The Verlindes farm 2400 acres total and have installed various conservation practices such as alternative intakes to help prevent nutrients from going down the tile lines, they have planted many trees around their multiple farmsteads for energy conservation. Ryan has been very active with switching to no-till farming and using cover crops to prevent water and wind erosion and also using variable rate fertilizer and manure application in his fields.

Ryan has also done pasture management such as inter-seeding and installed culverts and cattle crossing that help keep the cattle out of the streams. Ryan raises Akaushi cattle. This year due to the wet conditions and prevented plant acres he has been actively working with a local seed dealer to design cover crop mixtures that have a high protein content for feeding to his cattle. Ryan will be baling 700 acres of cover crops and is experimenting with baling the cover crops and wrapping them with plastic so that they keep for feeding this winter. He will also be grazing approximately 1000 head on his 900 acres of prevented plant cover crops this fall.
**Wetland Conservation Act**

In 1991, reacting to public concern about Minnesota’s disappearing wetlands, the Minnesota Legislature passed the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) and it was signed into law by Governor Arne Carlson. The purpose of the law is to retain the benefits of wetlands and reach the legislation’s goal of no-net-loss of wetlands. WCA requires anyone proposing to drain, fill or excavate a wetland to first try to avoid disturbing the wetland; second, to try to minimize any impact on the wetland; and finally to replace any lost wetland acres, functions and values.

The Murray Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is responsible for administering WCA for Murray County.

If you are planning on doing any tiling or placing fill in wet areas make sure you come into the SWCD and FSA office to request approval. This includes any impacts to wet areas whether it’s farmland, city, or lake lots. WCA governs all land in Minnesota. Wetland determinations done by NRCS only pertain to farm program benefits and don’t always satisfy WCA rules which can be more restrictive. In some cases WCA has required landowners to remove tile or fill placed in wetlands. You need to get permission from both the SWCD and NRCS by signing a tiling request in the FSA office.

**State Cost-Share Funds Available**

Every year the Murray SWCD receives funding through the State of Minnesota to administer our Cost-Share program. The purpose of this program is to help local landowners or land occupiers offset the costs of installing conservation practices that protect and improve water quality by controlling soil erosion and reducing sedimentation. Cost-share is approved on a resource concern evaluation, and allocated based on the availability of funds. The Murray SWCD’s cost-share rate is up to 75% of the project cost. Practices eligible for funding include: diversions, grassed waterways, sediment basins, terraces, wastewater and feedlot runoff control, filter strips, stream bank protection, cover crops, and contour strip-cropping.

Please stop at the Murray SWCD office to discuss the project and fill out a cost-share application.

“The wars of the twenty-first century will be fought over WATER.”

Ismail Serageldin

**Order your trees for 2020!!**

The Murray SWCD is currently taking orders and drawing up tree plans for the 2020 spring planting season. Landowners interested in tree planting projects for the spring of 2020 are encouraged to contact Aaron Crowley at the SWCD to begin the planning process. Aaron evaluates each proposed tree planting site to guarantee that the final plan is suitable for the particular landscape and surrounding land use.

Call Aaron at 507-836-6990 Ext 3 to order your trees for 2020.

**Murray SWCD Equipment for Rent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vicon Spreader</td>
<td>$3.00 per acre with a $50.00 minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Plains Native Grass Drills</td>
<td>$10.00 per acre with a $100.00 minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brillion Packer</td>
<td>$2.50 per acre with a $50.00 minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landoll Packer</td>
<td>$2.50 per acre with a $50.00 minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull Type Tree Planter</td>
<td>$50.00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straw Crimper</td>
<td>$75.00 per day</td>
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*Equipment rentals are subject to tax. Above prices do not reflect tax.*

**About The SWCD**

SWCDs are local units of government that manage and direct natural resource management programs at the local level. Districts work with landowners and with other units of government to carry out a program for the conservation, use, and development of soil, water, and related resources. SWCDs fill a crucial niche of providing soil and water conservation services to private land owners. Managing private lands, whether agriculture, forest, lakes, or urban, is key to Minnesota’s quality of life.

The first SWCD was created in 1938 in response to the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Intensive farming during a drought allowed intense erosion of the landscape, so in response SWCDs were created to encourage landowners to alter their farming techniques in order to protect our natural resources.

SWCDs are political subdivisions of the state. They are headed by a board of 5 locally elected supervisors. SWCD programs deal with land and water issues of geographical scope and because of this each board member resides in a different geographic region within the district.

SWCDs are funded through a variety of sources including: BWSR, counties, fees for service, and grants or partnership agreements with the federal government or other conservation organizations.