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**KANDIYOHI SWCD'S 2019
OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST AWARD**



The Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is pleased to announce Sherman and Keven Schueler of Schueler Farms from Willmar as the 2019 Outstanding Conservationists of Kandiyohi County. Schueler Farms will be formally recognized by the SWCD and the "Farmer" magazine at the award ceremony of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) 2019 annual convention in

Bloomington MN awards on December 10, 2019.

Schueler Farms has been an active Kandiyohi county family farm since 1903. While the Schueler family farm has seen many changes over the years, perhaps the largest transition was in 2011 when they decided to close their 250-stall milking parlor and move their farm in a new direction. The new direction Schueler Farms turned out to be quite like the way the family farm once operated many years ago.

Using the lessons learned in their early farming days along with additional research on Amish and organic farming practices, the Schuelers created a new commercial hay and cattle farm and began moving towards one hundred percent certified organic crop production. The conventional farming practices of deep tillage, commercial fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides were replaced in favor of more soil and water friendly practices. In the eight years since transitioning from dairy, Sherman and Kevin have focused on building soil health and promoting traditional animal nutrition practices. In their own words they have "relearned what their ancestors knew, and the current generations have forgotten about farming and animal health". Sherman and Kevin know that the foundation of the family farm is the soil. Noting that healthy soil and its billions of microbes and invertebrate residents are the "factory workers" of the soil. The Schuelers are quick to point out that caring for their soil along with its workforce of organisms alive and well has become a primary goal and a major factor in the decisions they make for the land.

More visible and recognizable conservation efforts by Schueler Farms include the following: One and a half miles of hardwood field windbreaks. One and half miles of grass buffer strips along their ditches. Cover crops planted between row crops to help nourish and protect the soil year-round. A perennial grass and alfalfa crop rotation which increases rainfall infiltration and reduce runoff. Grass fed Low Line Angus cattle are rotationally grazed and moved to new paddocks daily for optimum animal nutrition, plant growth and soil health benefits. Blind Intakes have replaced traditional open tile intakes to help meter out and filter stormwater. A pair of water and sediment control basins have been constructed to slow water runoff and prevent soil erosion. Permanent conservation easement area for water quality and wildlife featuring restored prairie and a 14-acre restored wetland created by the Schuelers provides excellent habitat for resident and migratory wildlife.

Schueler Farms has demonstrated a great commitment and willingness to adopt and install the many conservation practices mentioned above on their farm. The Kandiyohi SWCD hopes that highlighting and recognizing their unique achievements and successes, Schueler Farms can help to provide a positive example alternative model for other producers to follow. Thank you and Congratulations to Schueler Farms of Willmar

GOING PAPERLESS

The Kandiyohi SWCD is considering going paperless by sending out our newsletters via email instead of mail. This will cut down on mailing cost and reduce paper use. We would appreciate your feedback on deciding if this is something that would benefit the readers of our newsletter.

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Please fill out this slip by checking the box of your preferred delivery method and mail it back, or drop it off to the Kandiyohi SWCD at
1005 High Ave NE
Willmar, MN 56201
OR email your answer to ellie.dittes@mn.nacdnet.net

NAME: _____

I would like an emailed copy of the newsletter

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I would prefer a paper copy of the Kandiyohi SWCD Newsletter

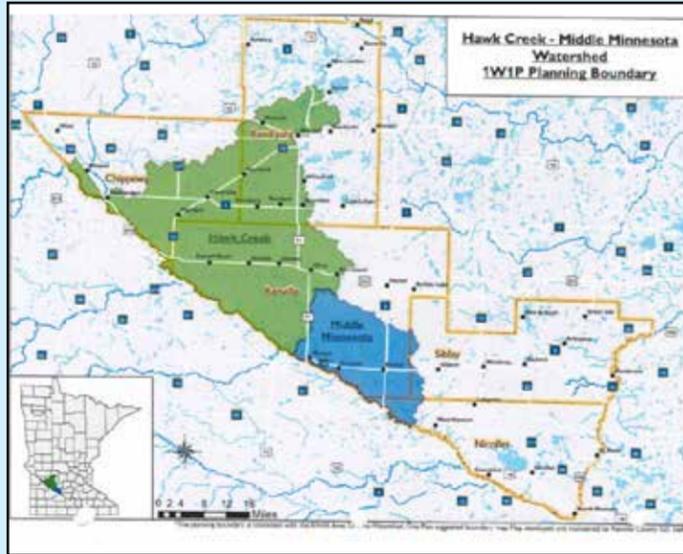


Visit our website; www.kandiyohiswcd.org or check us out on Facebook

SOIL HEALTH DAY AT RIDGEWATER COLLEGE IN WILLMAR:

On March 6th, 2020, there will be a Soil Health Day at Ridgewater College with several speakers. In past years, we have had speakers talk about yield improvements from cover crops, understanding the Haney soil test, increasing production on pasture land, a producer panel and a free lunch. Please join the SWCD email to get a reminder about the day full of sessions.

1 WATERSHED 1 PLAN



Kandiyohi County, the Kandiyohi SWCD, Renville County, the Renville SWCD, Chippewa County and the Chippewa SWCD are pleased to begin the development of a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan through the One Watershed, One Plan program (1W1P). 1W1P is a program that supports partnerships of local government units in developing a prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation plan designed to help provide more conservation on the landscape. Key principles include comprehensive water planning at the major watershed scale and aligning local plans and citizen input with state strategies. This collaborative approach enables comprehensive water management work on issues like flooding, erosion, habitat, water quality and quantity, and recreation.

This plan will be developed for the Hawk Creek-Middle Minnesota Watershed (see map). All citizens and stakeholders in the watershed will be invited to several public information meetings, at these meetings we will discuss priority issues identified by stakeholders and provide additional opportunity for the Hawk Creek-Middle Minnesota Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) to gain feedback.

1W1P plays a central role in accelerating our progress to restore and

protect Minnesota's waters. This implementation funding will empower local partnerships to put their plans in motion following careful planning and scientific assessment of watershed needs.

50 YEARS OF SHORELINE PROTECTION & MANAGEMENT

Fifty years ago, the Minnesota Legislature ensured better land management and conservation through key conservation measures. The Shoreland Protection Act and Floodplain Management Act were signed into law in 1969 by Gov. Harold LaVander.

At that time, most lake properties consisted of relatively tiny seasonal cabins, built on small lots, close to the water. The measures that have been put into place over the past fifty years have proven to be particularly important as large year-round lake homes, manicured lawns, brick or stone hardscaping, large docks, and powerful boats have become common. In addition to development, rainfall events have become more frequent and extreme in recent years; shoreland protection practices like Bio-Engineering and Rock Rip-Rap have proven to be effective in controlling erosion and loss of land, along with providing stabilization and habitat improvements. Shoreland management is beneficial to both the lake and the lake users.



Minnesota's leaders had tremendous foresight in enacting these measures fifty years ago, and all Minnesotans have reaped the benefits. Now it's our responsibility to build on the foundation that these programs have provided as we manage our Natural Resources for the future.

More information is available at the Kandiyohi SWCD website about how to protect shorelands as well as at our office at 1005 High Ave. NE. Willmar, MN.

NATIVE GRASS AND WILDFLOWER SEED AVAILABLE



The Kandiyohi SWCD is your local source for all types of Minnesota Native Prairie seed and installation. We specialize in Pollinator and Monarch habitat mixtures designed to bloom from April through November and attract desirable insects and butterflies to your property. Monarch Habitat seed packets are available for any size plantings. Also see us for all your CRP, CREP and Buffer strip seed mixture needs. No order is too big or too small.



NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

We Are Here to Help You: NRCS is here to assist you with resource concerns on your farm or

land. NRCS has a mission of helping people help the land. Our goal is to work with you to conserve natural resources while remaining profitable and sustainable. Whether you have gully erosion as a result of all the runoff from the rain in the past couple years, or you need assistance with a grazing plan to better utilize your pasture; we can help. Our goal is to take available financial and technical assistance and applying it to areas of the county that need it the most.

The NRCS has a local planning process in place to gain input from landowners and operators that voice their concerns as to what they feel is important when it comes to managing our natural resources. At any time, you can write down what your priority concerns are and leave them at the local field office. These concerns will be added to other comments. When it comes time to prioritize the practices that are listed as high priority, we look to address these resource concerns.

- For instance, if you feel soil erosion is still a major contributor to poor water quality in your area, then water and sediment control basins, waterways, and residue management would be good practices to promote in your watershed.

- If you feel soil quality is a major concern in your area, nutrient management and crop rotation, along with cover crops may be practices of higher priority for you.

- In an area of sandy soil, and limited water, irrigation water management and conversion from high to low pressure irrigation may be practices you wish to have high on the list. Historically there is always a greater demand for financial assistance to implement the practices then there are funds available. That is why we try to gather input from you folks out in the community to notify us of the areas that are of concern and importance to you.

NRCS is rolling out a new ranking tool called CART in 2020. CART is meant to streamline the application process and free up more time for local staff to implement conservation on the ground. CART will allow you more involvement in the process by using online information entry through a system that allows you access to your farm records. This should keep the process moving when the practices are being completed. The tool will also allow users to sign documents electronically and select the funding pools to compete for.

Until the new system rolls out in 2020, you are still encouraged to fill out the paper copy of the application and turn it into your local office. To receive an application, contact your local office.

MINNESOTA WALK-IN ACCESS PROGRAM:

When a landowner enrolls in the Walk-In Access (WIA) program, they are leasing a parcel of their land to the State of Minnesota for use of public hunting. When a landowner chooses to place their land in WIA, they will be paid by the acre. Bonus payments include ;140 continuous acres are enrolled, if the parcel is within a 1/2 mile of state or federal land or if multiyear contract is signed.

WIA also targets parcels with 40 or more acres already enrolled in conservation programs (CRP, RIM, etc.) High quality habitat such as wetlands, prairie grass lands, river bottoms, etc. will also be targeted for WIA.

When landowners become enrolled in WIA, they are allowed funding up to \$20,000 to implement management practices. Management practices include invasive woody cover removal, establishment of pollinator plots and/or diversity inter-seeding of native grasses and flowers into existing grass stands. To utilize the funds, the landowner must enroll in the program for a minimum of 3 years.

If you are interested in signing up for WIA or implementing any projects on the parcel, please be sure to stop in or call the Kandiyohi SWCD as soon as possible. Management funds are currently available for those already enrolled and a new enrollment for WIA will occur by Spring 2020.



EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Mark Your Calendars for the annual Earth Day Celebration at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center on April 18th, 2020. Watch for more details and information as the date gets closer.

TREE ORDER FORMS

Tree order forms are available online to print at www.kandiyohiswcd.org under the services and programs tab or you may stop in to our office and pick up a paper copy.

MINNESOTA BUFFER LAW: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW

We are now almost two years past the initial compliance deadline for public waters (50ft) and almost one year past the deadline for ditches (16.5ft). The state of Minnesota has a compliance rate of 99% for public waters and 98% compliance rate for ditches. As for Kandiyohi County, we followed in a similar path and we are at the same compliance rates. However, there are still many parcels that are not compliant. Kandiyohi SWCD is going to focus on helping those landowners become compliant as soon as they can. The staff is asking for landowners who have not yet planted a buffer to get in contact with the staff so a compliance plan can be made. If we have not heard from you, and we know your buffer is not compliant, a non-compliance report will be sent to the county and they will take the next steps to contact you. The Kandiyohi SWCD as well as Kandiyohi County staff is here assist you in anyway, we can to help you gain that compliance status.

Kandiyohi SWCD will begin to make the next steps of compliance monitoring soon. All parcels in Kandiyohi County will be reviewed

within a 3-year time frame. The county is split into three areas; A, B & C. The areas will be chosen at random to be checked each year within that 3-year timeframe. Random spot checks will also be done in addition to the random 3-year checks. A combination of aerial photography and on-site review will be done. Random spot checks will be chosen depending if the parcel was previously non-compliant, no-till/conservation tillage, cover crop or if alternative practices were done, variable width buffers, cost share funded projects (1,5,9 years of the contract) or parcels that may be potential violations. For more information, go to the Kandiyohi SWCD website and click on the document available for this subject.

The Kandiyohi SWCD wants to thank each and everyone of you for your cooperation and kindness in helping us get our county compliant. We appreciate it more than you know. For more questions or concerns, please contact the Kandiyohi SWCD and we will be glad to help you.

KANDIYOHI COUNTY'S VOLUNTEER RAIN GAUGE READERS



Do you like to keep track of the rain fall in your area? For many years, the Kandiyohi SWCD has been collecting rain fall data from local community members. The information collected goes to the state climatology office, where they will publish monthly precipitation records for the entire state of Minnesota. When you sign up for this program, the Kandiyohi SWCD will provide you with a rain gauge to be place in your yard. Your job is to collect and report the data to us. The Kandiyohi SWCD is looking for rain gauge monitors in Burbank, Roseville, Irving, Harrison, Genessee, Lake Elizabeth, East Lake Lillian, Lake Lillian and Fahlun Townships. We only need a select number of monitors, so if this is something you would like to do, and you are in the listed townships, please call us as soon as possible.

2020 KANDIYOHI SWCD SCHOLARSHIP



The Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District offers a \$500 scholarship to a graduating high school senior, who is a resident of Kandiyohi County, planning to pursue a career in a Natural Resource and/or Conservation related field. The scholarship application has been sent to the local schools, or interested students can download the application form our website at www.KandiyohiSWCD.org. The applications should be returned to our office by April 15, 2020. Please call our office at 320-235-3906 ext. 3 if you have any questions on the scholarship.

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KANDIYOHI COUNTY FIELD OFFICE CREATES A RAIN GARDEN:

The Kandiyohi SWCD, NRCS and Pheasants Forever staff got together and created a rain garden on the site of our field office to manage drainage and water runoff in the area. It was a successful planting due to great team work. If you are interested in creating your own rain garden, contact SWCP for more information and assistance.



NEW PHEASANTS FOREVER BIOLOGIST



Hello, I'm Aaron Wilson, the new Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist for Kandiyohi County. My primary duty is to assist landowner who are looking to use one of the voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs. These include programs like the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and the Walk-in-Access program (WIA). For these programs I can assist you in practice eligibility determinations, contract planning, and practice management.

I grew up in the northwest Twin Cities suburb of Brooklyn Park; luckily my parents grew up in families who camped and fished. From going to the cabin during the summer, to traveling to different State and National Parks, my fascination with nature started at a young age and kept growing. As a high school student, while taking a couple of wildlife biology classes, I decided I would pursue a career in natural resources; this is also when I was first introduced to Pheasants Forever. As part of a conservation project, I joined my local PF chapter and became involved with the different volunteer activities they conducted.

After high school I attended North Hennepin Community College before transferring to Bemidji State University where I earned my B.S. degree in Aquatic Biology in 2013. While in Bemidji, I started up the BSU Fishing Team and was team President for two years. After graduating I worked multiple positions with different organizations conducting work in fisheries management,

environmental impact assessment, and mosquito control. In 2017 I returned to school, enrolling at Southwest Minnesota State University in Marshall, Minnesota. In the fall of 2018, I earned my second B.S. degree, this time in Environmental Science. While at SMSU I was an active member of the University Sportsmen's Association, where I helped organize and promote activities related to the use and conservation of natural resources.

In July of 2019, after completing a stint as a temporary fisheries specialist with the DNR in Hutchinson, I began my current position based out of the Willmar Conservation Office. I am very excited to be carrying out the mission of helping landowners and wildlife in Kandiyohi county by putting habitat on the ground. This position is in an ideal location for me, as my dad grew up in Willmar and my mom in Clara City; several close relatives still live in the area. I have fished many of the area lakes for much of my life and recently began hunting some of the public lands for pheasant and deer. I look forward to exploring the areas I have not yet been, especially those that hold pheasants, as I have a young and eager pointing dog that is ready to sniff them out.

For those of you who I worked with over the past couple of months, thank you for your patience as I transitioned into the position; and for those I have yet to work with, I look forward to helping you to the best of my abilities.

About the Farm Bill Biologist (FBB) Position: Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologists are staff who specialize in conservation programs and habitat planning and work with landowners who are interested in voluntary conservation programs.

- These positions are made possible due to the support of the following partners and the Farm Bill Assistance Partnership (FBAP):
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
 - Environment Trust Fund
 - Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD)
 - Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - Farm Service Agency (FSA)
 - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR)
 - Local Pheasants Forever Chapters

TREES AND MULCH FABRIC

The Kandiyohi SWCD provides services that include tree planting and fabric mulch installation. Fabric will improve the survival rate of your trees by providing moisture retention and protection from weed completion. With the fabric mulch, post planting maintenance is virtually eliminated. The one thing that we have noticed through the years of using tree fabric is that you will need to be aware of the cut in the fabric that the tree comes through. As the tree's diameter grows, you will need to enlarge the opening using something sharp, like a knife, this will prevent the tree from becoming girdled by the fabric, which will eventually kill the tree in time if not taken care of. Tree tubes will protect your trees from rodents and deer, provide a mini green-house while reusing the moisture from the trees, and encouraging straight sturdy trees. Cost Share is available for eligible practices. Contact the SWCD office to learn more.



CONSERVATION TREES AVAILABLE

The Kandiyohi SWCD is now taking orders for trees for the spring of 2020 plantings. Whether you are looking at planting a hedge, shelterbelt, living snow fence, field windbreak or wildlife habitat, we have the right plants for all your needs. We offer a wide variety of small to large shrubs, along with deciduous and coniferous trees. Not only do we provide trees, we also provide services from planning to planting. We will gladly work with you on finding the right trees and shrubs for your site.

If you are looking at completing a tree planting, you might be eligible for cost share to help pay for the planting. There are federal and state programs that provide cost-share to help pay for the costs associated with tree planting. Contact the Kandiyohi SWCD for your tree planting needs and get growing with us. To see a tree order form, go to our website; kandiyohiswcd.org

CONSERVATION IS A WAY OF LIFE

What is the definition of Conservation? It is the preservation, protection, and/or restoration of the natural environment and of wildlife. Back before my time, in the 1940's, my Grandfather started planting trees along the fence lines as field wind breaks. Fast forward 40 years, when I was probably 7 or 8 years old, my father would purchase bare root tree varieties such as Green Ash, Cottonwood, Black Walnut, Silver Maple and Black Hills Spruce from the SWCD to plant even more field wind breaks. As I was too young to dig the holes, it was my job to separate the trees and hold them in the hole while my dad placed the soil back around them. We currently have A LOT of trees surrounding our farm fields. Trees help with wind erosion and hold snow on the ground in the winter while also providing wildlife habitat. In the more recent years on our farm, we have established a pollinator habitat of wild flowers and plant cover crops. Fencing off a county drainage ditch so the livestock can't access the water and having grass buffers alongside the ditches help clean the water.

Last fall I ran for, and was elected, as a Supervisor to the Kandiyohi County Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD). As I attend monthly meetings, One Watershed One Plan meetings and some trainings, I continue to learn more about conservation practices and the workings of the SWCD.

If you have an idea for a conservation practice on your land, please contact the SWCD. They may have a cost share program that will help you make that idea a reality. If you're looking for trees in the spring, SWCD will have multiple varieties to choose from so contact them to get your tree order in this winter.

I guess you could say conservation is a way of life for me. Thank you.

Donnel Williamson
District 2 Kandiyohi SWCD Supervisor

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT CREEPING BELLFLOWER

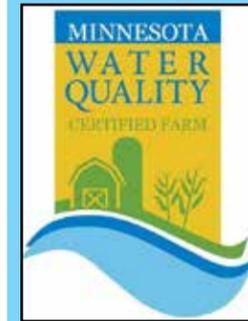


The SWCD has discovered a New Invasive plant in Kandiyohi County's Norway Lake Township. Creeping Bellflower is an herbaceous, creeping perennial. Erect stems are un-branched and form dense clumps 16-40" tall. Stems are purple near the base.

Leaves are 1-3" long, alternate. Lower leaves have long purple petioles and are heart shaped. Upper leaves lack petioles and are lance shaped. Leaves are hairy on the lower surface,

particularly along midrib, and have a toothed margin. Flowers from late spring to fall. Individual flowers ascend along one side of the flowering stem. Flowers are 0.75-1.25" long, 5 lobed, blue-purple, bell shaped, and slightly nodding. Fruits & seeds are small round capsule, 0.3" in diameter that contain 50-150 seeds. Roots consists of rhizomes up to 6" deep with vertical storage roots that readily regenerate from perennial tissue. Ecological threat Invades fields, stream banks, woodlots, prairies, oak savannas, road sides and urban areas, creates dense stands, spreading by seed and rhizome growth, tolerance to many broadleaf herbicides such as 2,4-D. Report Sightings to Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

MINNESOTA AGRICULTURE WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM:



The Kandiyohi County SWCD has partnered with the Minnesota Department of Ag to help producers and landowners become certified in the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP).

The MAWQCP's main goal is to conserve our water quality within MN's agricultural lands by working with producers and landowners to be better stewards of the land.

Why would this benefit your farm?

- Producers and landowners will receive a special sign that can be placed at the location of their business to show other locals that their business is doing the best they can do for water quality management.
- Certified Producers will become a priority for assistance. When a farmer/landowner becomes certified, they are eligible for financial assistance and technical services to do water quality improvement projects on their farm/land. Some practices that have been installed are grass waterways, cover crops, nutrient management, buffers, water and sediment control basins and conservation tillage.
- The certified Producer/landowner will gain regulatory certainty. The landowner/producer will be deemed compliant for at least 10 years with any upcoming new water quality rules and regulations.

Kandiyohi County currently has 5 producers/landowners certified under the MAWQCP. Two of the certified producers are board supervisors for the Kandiyohi SWCD, and another one of our supervisors is currently in progress of becoming certified.

Still not sure if you want to be certified? Do you want to go through the process to find out? No problem! Just going through the process allows producers and landowners access to MN Dept of Ag funds for specific conservation practices on the farm.

For questions and/or an application to sign up; please contact the Kandiyohi SWCD.

EDUCATING OUR LOCAL YOUTH ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES AND WATER CONSERVATION:

On a cool autumn week in September, fourth graders from Lakeland Elementary and High School students from DREAM Academy gathered at Robbins Island park in Willmar to learn about aquatic invasive species and the importance of water conservation. Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) brought the big canoe so the students could experience a fun ride on the water; other stations included activities about the water cycle, Aquatic Invasive Species and Pond study. The Kandiyohi SWCD had a blast partnering with PWELC and teaching our local youth the importance of water conservation and the problem of Aquatic Invasive Species in our county. A big thanks to the Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force in Kandiyohi County for providing the funding to put on this great three-day event.



The Kandiyohi SWCD staff is always looking to help educate local students and community members about Water and Soil Conservation. If there is an event that you would like us to attend and educate students, please contact us.

ARE YOU LOCATED IN THE NFCW?

The One Watershed One Plan has funding available For landowners who are located in the North Fork Crow River Watershed Area, that want to implement Conservation practices on their land. Practices that Are available for funding would include structural and Non structural practices. For information, please call The Kandiyohi SWCD.



COOPERATIVE APPROACH TO INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL



The Kandiyohi SWCD recently applied for a Kandiyohi Cooperative Weed Management Area (KCWMA) grant to help landowners identify and reduce the following invasive weed species: Common Tansy, Leafy Spurge, Spotted Knapweed, Purple Loosestrife, Wild Parsnip, Garlic Mustard, European Buckthorn, Common Buckthorn, Non-Native Phragmites (Common Reed), and Creeping Bellflower. If successful, the KCWMA grant would help support landowners and managers in Kandiyohi with invasive species monitoring and control efforts. The KCWMA will also coordinate the documentation of local invasive species infestations, provide technical assistance and financial cost share assistance for treatment of the targeted invasive species. Do you have any of the target species on your land or know of sites with the above invasive weeds? Please contact the Kandiyohi SWCD to report the sighting and get on the list of potential participants.

THE MINNESOTA CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (MN CREP)



MN CREP is a voluntary, Federal-State funded natural resource conservation program that uses a science-based approach to target environmentally sensitive lands. Participants enter into a 14-15-year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract administered by USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), and a Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve perpetual conservation easement administered by the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR). There are many reasons to consider CREP including: fair market compensation payments, property rights retained by landowners, reducing marginal cropland to increase total ROI, water quality improvements and creating quality habitat for wildlife. Enrollment is currently on-going until funds are exhausted, or the 60,000-acre goal is reached. Contact the SWCD for more details and estimate of how CREP can work for you.