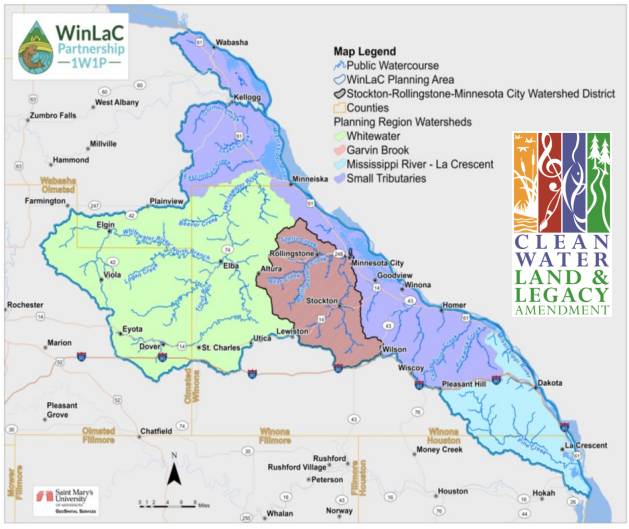
Root River SWCD Conservation Highlights

NOVEMBER 2023

Hello from Root River SWCD! This year we have reduced the size of our newsletter substantially. This is due to having a conservation insert coming out in the Fillmore County Journal in December. Keep an eye out for this special insert. It will contain a wealth of conservation information and cost share opportunities.

Feel free to contact us at any time with your conservation resource needs/concerns, (507) 724-5261 extension 3.

Mississippi River Winona/La Crescent (WinLaC)



A watershed-based plan was recently completed for the WinLaC in Southeast Minnesota. This plan is part of the statewide One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Program where local governments work together to develop a water-resource management plan that prioritizes issues that need to be addressed and sets measurable goals for each priority. In other words, the plan identifies **what needs to be done**, and **where** in the watershed those practices need to be placed to **reach goals**.

A completed ten-year plan for the WinLaC now means that the State of Minnesota will provide **consistent funding** to help local partners reach water quality goals.

With the completed plan cost share is now available for producers in the Mississippi River Winona/La Crescent Watershed. Clean Water Legacy funding was granted to the Winona La Crescent One Watershed One Plan. Local SWCDs (Root River SWCD, Winona SWCD, Wabasha SWCD, Olmsted SWCD) have been allocated cost share funding to address priority resource concerns within the watershed. Funding is available for:

- Agricultural best management practices (BMP)
- Soil health BMPs
- Managed grazing practices
- Vegetative management and pollinator planting projects
- Livestock waste management BMPs
- Urban stormwater practices
- Forestry practices

A technician from your local SWCD will work with you to determine the appropriate conservation practice to address your resource concern. Each potential project will be ranked to determine the qualifying percentage of cost share the project can receive. Your technician will work with you through the completion of the project.

If you are located in Houston County and within the Mississippi River Winona/La Crescent watershed, contact the Root River SWCD office at (507) 724-5261 extension 3.

https://bit.ly/WinLaC1W1P

Inside this issue:

Root River SWCD

Office Location:

805 N. Hwy. 44/76, Suite 1

Caledonia, MN 55921

HOURS

7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday—Friday

(507) 724-5261 ext. 3

https://www.co.houston.mn.us/departments/soil-and-water/

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The Olson's

Root River SWCD is proud to announce the Wayne and Elsie Olson Family as the 2023 Conservationist of the Year.

It all started when Wayne's grandpa, Martin Olson, emigrated from Norway in 1884. Martin and his wife Johanna purchased an 80 acre farm in Badger Valley in 1894. Martin built a barn of stone which was quarried on the farm and this barn still stands and is in use. In 1906 Martin purchased the neighboring 160 acre farm and moved his family there.

In 1929 his youngest son Herbie and his wife Nina took over the farm and purchased it in 1944. In 1948 a new dairy barn was built. Along with milking cows they also raised 500 laying hens each year and sold eggs for a number of years.

Wayne and Elsie were married in 1965 and took over the family farm; they purchased the farm in 1981. The Olson's milked cows until 1972 and then went to beef and farrow to finish hogs. Since purchasing the farm, Wayne and Elsie have purchased more acreage for a total of 530 acres. Their acreage consists of woods, pasture and tillable land where they raise crops of corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

The Olson's have a mixture of upland contour strip cropped acreage and bottom land

tillable acreage with some tile installed. The Root River SWCD laid out the contour strips many years ago when Wayne's father owned the farm. The upland acreage rotates between corn, soybeans and alfalfa and the bottom lands have a corn and soybean rotation. Wayne has a test plot on his farm and is involved with educational days related to this.

In the 1960's a grade stabilization structure was installed to help conserve soil and prevent water pollution. This structure is still in good condition and being maintained by the Olson's.

Wayne plants soybean varieties that are resistant to white mold and sudden death and corn root worm. He also rotates his crops to help with pests and will spray for aphids if they are present. He is diligent about scouting his crop acres for any pests.

This spring Wayne bought a no-till drill and planted all his acres with this. He is happy with how his crops turned out and will be no-tilling again next year.

The Olson's have approximately 100 acres of pasture with woods that they rent out to their neighbor. There are 12-15 cow calf pairs on the pasture.

Wayne and Elsie's property borders the South fork of the Root River and they have experienced three large floods on their property; 2000, 2008 and 2013.

In order to be compliant with the Minnesota Buffer Law, Wayne enrolled his buffers into the Conservation Reserve Program. As part of his CRP planting he planted native flowers for the pollinating insects and birds. Elsie also has many flower gardens that she maintains around the house.

Wayne and Elsie have three children Steven, Carl and Sara and have seven grandchildren. Carl has now built a new house on the land that Martin purchased in 1894.

Wayne and Elsie are members of the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Houston, MN. Elsie is involved with the church and its Ladies Aid group. Wayne has been active with the Sons of Norway in La Crosse, WI; and is on the Stone Church of Houston MN cemetery committee. Both Wayne and Elsie are past leaders of the Sheldon 4-H club and their children were active in 4-H also.

Congratulations!

The Benefits of Trees

There are many benefits of trees. This illustration provided by the MN Department of Natural Resources allows us to visually explore various benefits of trees.

#1 Butterfly – Trees provide food, nesting sites, and hiding places for butterflies. Trees native to Minnesota that are important to butterflies include black cherry, basswood, river birch, sugar maple, willow, aspen, cottonwood and oak.

#2 Puzzle – Trees, a renewable resource, are used to make paper and cardboard products.

#3 Oak with acorn – The nuts from trees are an excellent source of food for wildlife.

#4 Trillium – Many spring blooming wildflowers, such as trillium and bloodroot, add color to the forest floor of deciduous woodlands.

#5 Cloud with rain – Trees are a vital part of the water cycle. Roots take up water from the soil and leaves release water into the air. No Trees = No Rain.

#6 Yoga pose – Being in nature can decrease stress, lower blood pressure, and improve moods. Trees help buffer high frequency sounds that are distressing to people. Visiting forests can strength the immune system.

#7 Pine cone – Seeds from pine cones are an excellent source of food for birds. We also use cones for decorations.

#8 Maple Leaf – Fall leaf color provides beauty and splendor that we all enjoy! And, raking leaves is a great way to get exercise.

#9 Squirrel – Squirrels and other wildlife get their food from trees and use them as nesting sites. Many trees grow from seeds once buried by squirrels.

#10 Bees – Bees collect pollen from basswood, walnut, apple and cherry tree flowers to make honey. During the process, bees also pollinate the tree!

#11 Faucet – Forest soils keep drinking water clean by absorbing and filtering pollutants on the ground and in the rain, preventing them from entering aquifers and waterbodies.

#12 Fern – A variety of ferns carpet the forest floor, creating a magical setting to explore.

#13 Thermometer – Trees affect temperatures. When leaves release water into the air, temperatures cool. Air is cooler under the shade of a tree. Trees can also block cold winter winds, which can allow homes and buildings to retain more heat.

#14 Framed house – Pine trees are turned into lumber that is used to construct homes and buildings.

#15 Toothbrush – Many plastics contain cellulose extracted from trees such as pine and spruce. Approximately 2.6 pounds of wood chips can make 1 pound of plastic.

#16 White pine needles – Beavers, rabbits, porcupines, squirrels, mice, deer, and several species of birds feed on white pine seeds, bark and needles.

#17 Forester – Trees and forests create jobs-from managing forests or individual trees in a community to harvesting trees or working in a mill. Minnesota's forest products industry is the fifth-largest manufacturing sector by employment.

#18 Lungs – Trees help keep the air clean because air pollutants and particles stick to the leave and branches, decreasing asthma and upper-respiratory diseases.

#19 Oxygen – Trees produce and release oxygen that we breathe. One acre of forest produces enough oxygen in a day to support 18 people.

continued The Benefits of Trees

#20 Jack-in-the-pulpit – Jack-in-the-pulpit, a woodland plant common in many deciduous forests., shows off red berries in a shady forest.

#21 Chair – Maple, pine, and oak are just a few trees found in Minnesota that are used to make furniture.

#22 Chickadee – Numerous birds depend on trees for shelter and food. Minnesota's forests are home to 275 birds.

#23 Firewood – Firewood from trees is used to heat houses and buildings, and provide ambiance around a campfire.

#24 Hiker – Forests provide numerous recreational opportunities-hiking, biking, bird watching, hunting, camping and more!

#25 Woodpecker – Woodpeckers build homes in the cavities of trees and eat bugs found under tree bark.

#26 Money – Well-chosen and well-maintained trees can increase property values by up to 20 percent. Minnesota's forests provide an economic impact worth $16.1 billion.

#27 Maple syrup – The sap from maple trees is turned into syrup. In 2012 Minnesota farmers produced 10,776 gallons of maple syrup.

#28 Nature journal – Pencils and paper are made from trees. The beauty of trees and forests has inspired writers, musicians, and artists throughout the ages.

#29 Maple seeds – Maple seeds provide food for wildlife and design inspiration for humans. Some parachutes and aerial delivery containers have been fashioned after the gliding, whirling shape of a maple seed!

#30 Fern – Ferns are among the oldest plants on Earth, dating back to over 300 million years.

#31 Apple – Apple and pear trees grow in Minnesota. These fruits are excellent sources of fiber and keep the heart healthy. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away."

#32 Baseball bat – Most baseball bats are made out of ash or maple.

#33 Bird nest – All kinds of birds use trees for nest materials. From tiny hummingbird to bald eagles, trees are natural nest sites.

#34 Stag beetle – Beetles that eat wood help break down dead trees and create spaces for new trees to grow. Many other bugs depend on trees for food and shelter.

#35 Canoe – Wiigwaasi-jiimaan is the Ojibwe name for birch bark canoe. These canoes were used to gather wild rice. Their light weight made it easy to carry the canoe around rocks and rapids. Today wood is used to craft fine canoes.

#36 Water – Urban forests can reduce annual stormwater runoff by 2 – 7 percent, and a mature tree can store 50 to 100 gallons of water during large storms.

#37 Trout – Trout live in cool, clear streams and lakes. A buffer of trees growing around waterbodies improves trout habitat by trapping sediments and preventing erosion. Trees shade also keeps the water cool.

#38 Electric plug – Converting wood biomass – branches, leaves, and small diameter trunks – to power our homes and offices is quickly becoming a reliable and renewable form of energy.

#39 Tree frog – Mosquito-eating tree frogs spend most of their life in trees. Minnesota is home to 4 species of tree frogs.

#40 Walnut – Tree nuts provide an excellent source of protein and good fats, which help keep our hearts healthy.

Becoming a SWCD Board Supervisor

Say hello to Root River SWCD's newest elected board supervisor, Joe Driscoll, representing District 2. Driscoll, of Brownsville Township, started his four year term January 1, 2023.

As a District 2 supervisor, he represents Brownsville Township and Village, Crooked Creek Township and Jefferson Township. Joe is only the seventh supervisor serving this district since the Root River SWCD was established in June 1939. His predecessors include H. L. Sather 1939 – 1944, Elmer Thies 1945 – 1954, Harold Davy 1955 – 1964, Adolph Heimerdinger 1965 – 2007, Tony Becker 2007 – 2014, and Cecil Graf 2015 – 2022.

You ask, "What does being a board supervisor consist of?" Conservation district board supervisors serve on a multi member board that establishes and implements programs to protect and conserve soil, water, prime and unique farmland, rangeland, woodland, wildlife, energy and other renewable resources on local, non-federal lands.

A board supervisor duties include:

- Identifying local conservation needs, and develop, implement and evaluate programs to meet the needs
- Educating and informing landowners and operators, general public, and local, state and federal legislators on conservation issues and programs
- Supervise other volunteers and paid staff working with the district; coordinate with cooperating agency personnel

- Administer the district by delegating tasks through a structure of board officers and members, committees, and others; budget district funds and report on activities to the public

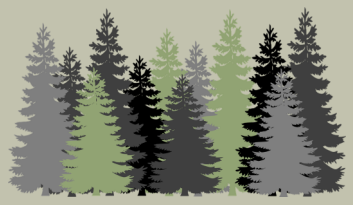
Being a board supervisor offers you the satisfaction in seeing conservation practices applied, and provides you interaction with others interested in natural resource conservation. It also extends to you the benefit of having input into local, state and federal conservation programs along with training through the state conservation agency.

If you are an individual that has an interest in conserving renewable natural resources this may be something for you to consider in the future.

Trees

In botany, a **tree** is a perennial plant with an elongated stem, or trunk, usually supporting branches and leaves. In some usages, the definition of a tree may be narrower, including only woody plants with secondary growth, plants that are usable as lumber or plants above a specified height.

The majority of tree species are angiosperms or hardwoods; of the rest, many are gymnosperms or softwoods. Trees tend to be long-lived, some reaching several thousand years old. Trees have been in existence for 370 million years. It is estimated that there are around three trillion mature trees in the world.



A tree typically has many secondary branches supported clear of the ground by the trunk. This trunk typically contains woody tissue for strength, and vascular tissue to carry materials from one part of the tree to another. Below the ground, the roots branch and spread out widely; they serve to anchor the tree and extract moisture and nutrients from the soil. Above ground, the branches divide into smaller branches and shoots. The shoots typically bear leaves, which capture light energy and convert it into sugars by photosynthesis, providing the food for the tree's growth and development.

Trees usually reproduce using seeds. Flowers and fruit may be present, but some trees, such as conifers, instead have pollen cones and seed cones.

Trees play a significant role in reducing erosion and moderating the climate. They remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store large quantities of carbon in their tissues. Trees and forests provide a habitat for many species of animals and plants. Trees provide shade and shelter, timber for construction, fuel for cooking and heating, and fruit for food as well as having many other uses. In much of the world, forests are shrinking as trees are cleared to increase the amount of land available for agriculture. Because of their longevity and usefulness, trees have always been revered, with sacred groves in various cultures, and they play a role in many of the world's mythologies.

Order your conservation trees <u>TODAY</u>

Orders are first come first serve.
Some species have a limited supply available.
Special orders are welcome.

Root River Soil and Water Conservation District

Tree Order – Spring 2024

Name: _____ Home Phone _____

Address: _____ Work Phone _____

E-Mail: _____

Conifers – *Transplants* (Tree information can be found on back side.)

Variety	Type	Min. Size	Price of 25	# of Bundles	Extended Price		Total # of Trees (# of bundles x 25)
Pine, Norway	3-0	10" – 24"	$42.50				
Pine, White	3-0	8" – 16"	$42.50				
Spruce, Colorado	TR 2-2	7" – 15"	$42.50				
Spruce, Norway	3-0	8" – 16"	$42.50				
Spruce, White	TR 2-2	7" – 15"	$42.50				

Deciduous Trees (Tree information can be found on back side.)

Variety	Type	Min. Size	Price of 25	# of Bundles	Extended Price		Total # of Trees (# of bundles x 25)
Oak, Red (Northern)	Seedling	10" – 24"	$ 39.50				
Oak, White	Seedling	10" – 15"	$ 39.50				
Walnut, Black	Seedling	10" – 18"	$ 39.50				

Small Trees & Shrubs (Tree information can be found on back side.)

Variety	Type	Min. Size	Price of 25	# of Bundles	Extended Price		Total # of Trees (# of bundles x 25)
Serviceberry (Juneberry)	Seedling	12" – 18"	$39.50				
Cranberrybush	Seedling	12" – 8"	$ 39.50				
Crabapple, Red Splendor	Seedling	12" – 18"	$ 39.50				
Ninebark, Common	Seedling	10" – 20"	$ 39.50				
Dogwood, Red Osier	Seedling	10" - 20"	$ 39.50				
Plum, Wild	Seedling	10" – 21"	$ 39.50				
Lilac, Common Purple	Seedling	12" – 18"	$ 39.50				

Miscellaneous

Item	Price	Qty	Extended Price
Flags, Fluorescent Pink Bundle of 100	$ 11.83		

Subtotal _____ Total # of Trees _____

MN State Sales Tax 6.875% _____

Total _____

Trees will be sold on a first come first serve bases.
Trees usually arrive late April. We will send out a post card or e-mail notifying you of pick-up dates.
Call our office to check on tree availability, (507) 724-5261 ext. 3.
Special ordering available upon request.
We purchase good stock, but make no survival guarantee.
Payment is due in full with order. Make checks payable to: Houston County Treasurer

Mail to: Root River SWCD
805 N. Hwy. 44/76, Suite 1
Caledonia, MN 55921

Phone: (507) 724-5261 Ext. 3

Conservation Tree Descriptions

Conifers - Transplants

Variety	Size	Maturity Size	Description
Pine, Norway (Red Pine)	10" – 24"	75 - 100'	 Needles are 4 – 6" long, flexible, and a dark yellow-green color. Prefers well-drained, moist soils, but will tolerate dry conditions. Prefers full to partial sun. Growth spread ranges from 50-75'. Fast growth rate
Pine, White Eastern	8" – 16"	50 - 75'	Needles are 3-5" long, very soft and flexible, bluish-green in color. Grows well in rich, moist soil, but does best in moist, sandy loams. Full sun to partial shade. Growth spread ranges from 20 - 40'. Medium growth rate (12 – 24" per year). Good lumber tree. Also, good for wildlife habitat. Used in windbreaks, to block farm odor, screens and shade. Soft, picturesque tree.
Spruce, Colorado	7" – 15"	70 - 100'	1" – 1 ½" needle all shades of blue and green with very sharp tips. Prefers well-drained, moist soils but will tolerate dry conditions. Moderately tolerant of shade. Provides a 20-35' growth spread. Medium growth rate.
Spruce, Norway	8" – 16"	40 - 100'	Full sun and drought tolerant 20-50' growth spread. Does well in dry, moist or wet conditions. Fastest growing spruce. Dense draping branches. Needles are ½ to 1" long. Not native.
Spruce, White	7" – 15"	50 - 80'	 Needles are 1/3 – ¾" long. Tolerant of shade. Does best in moist, well-drained, gravelly soils. Drought sensitive. Good wildlife cover and useful windbreak tree. Medium growth rate.

Deciduous Trees

Variety	Size	Maturity Size	Description
Oak, Red	10" - 24"	60 - 80'	Fastest growing Oak. Does best on moist or well-drained sites in full to partial sun. Valuable wood products tree. Acorns provide excellent wildlife food source. Fall color is red to a winter bronze.
Oak, White	10" – 15"	50 - 80'	Does best in slightly moist to well-drained sites and full sun. Acorns provide excellent wildlife food source. Brown, purple autumn foliage. May hold some leaves over winter. Excellent firewood & valuable wood products tree. Slow growth rate.
Walnut, Black	10" – 18"	70 - 100'	A large tree with medium green, compound leaves. Does best on rich, deep, fertile, well-drained soils. Requires full sun. Widely planted and highly regarded for top quality lumber. Excellent food source for wildlife. Yellow fall color. Rapid growth rate.

Shrubs

Variety	Size	Maturity	Description
Serviceberry (Juneberry)	12" – 18"	**Height:** 13' **Spread:** 6 - 20'	**Growth Rate:** *medium (12-24" per year)* **Sun:** *full sun or partial shade* **Soil:** *moist to well-drained, acidic soil* **Tolerate:** *dry sites, occasional drought, alkaline soil* **Fall Color:** *yellow, orange or red* **Flowering Dates:** *March-June with white flowers* **Seed Dispersal Dates:** *June-August with purple berries* **Uses:** *Planted on rocky, wooded slopes, and along streams. Good songbird and wildlife food. Fruit is especially important for robins, flickers, and waxwings.*
Cranberrybush *Viburnum Trilobum*	12" - 18"	**Height:** 8 –12' **Spread:** 8-10'	**Growth Rate:** *moderate* **Sun:** *sun to partial shade* **Soil:** *clay, loam, sand* **Flowering:** *white/flat clusters in May to mid-June* **Fruits:** *Red berry bunches form by August and can be harvested in autumn* **Fall Color:** *red to purplish leaves similar to a soft maple leaf* **Uses:** *food & cover for birds and pollinators. Used for stream bank stabilization, erosion control on low/moist ground, hedge or a windbreak.* **Planting Tips**: *As a hedge where a medium/tall screen is desired, plant 4 feet apart. Best to plant more than one to avoid poor fruit production.*
Crabapple, Red Splendor	12" – 18"	**Height:** 20 - 25' **Spread:** 20'	**Growth Rate:** *fast* **Sun:** *full sun* **Soil:** *sandy loam to clay loam* **Flowering:** *pink spring flowers* **Fruits:** *red fruit from spring through winter.* **Uses:** *high wildlife rating* **Planting Tip:** *Should have moderate drainage with dry, moist or wet moisture regime.*
Ninebark, Common	10" – 20"	**Height:** 6 – 10' **Spread:** 6 – 12'	**Growth Rate:** *fast (24"+ per year)* **Sun:** *sun to part shade* **Soil:** *moist to moderately dry, alkaline or clay* **Flowering:** *small pink or white five petal flowers appearing in dense flat rounded 1-2" dia. spirea like clusters in late spring* **Fruits:** *drooping clusters of reddish fruit (inflated seed capsules)* **Leaf Structure:** *shallow lobed leaves up to 3" long* **Fall Color:** *yellow* **Uses:** *valuable nectar source for pollinators Noted for its exfoliating bark which peels in strips to reveal layers of reddish to light brown inner bark providing winter interest.*
Dogwood, Red Osier	10" – 20"	**Height:** 4 – 5' **Spread:** 6 - 12'	**Growth Rate:** *fast* **Sun:** *full sun* **Soil**: *tolerates almost any location, growing in moist soils* **Flowering:** *red stems with white flowers* **Fruits:** *white berries.* **Uses:** *effective bank cover holds soil well. Excellent wildlife food source and cover. Red twigs create winter color.*
Plum, Wild	10" - 21"	**Height:** 10 - 15' **Spread:** 10 - 15'	**Growth Rate:** *fast (24" or more per year)* **Sun:** *full sun to slight shade* **Soil:** *rich, moist to well-drained, acid* **Tolerate:** *walnut toxicity, occasional drought, dry, alkaline, and clay soils (Intolerant to soil salt & salt spray)* **Fall Color:** *reddish to yellow* **Flowering Dates:** *March-May; white flowers* **Seed Dispersal Dates:** *June-October; purple, edible fruit* **Uses:** *Edible fruit that is good for jams and jellies. Good wildlife food and cover, especially good nesting habitat for rarer songbirds. Provides food for bees and many butterfly species.*
Lilac, Common Purple	12" - 18"	**Height:** 8 - 15' **Spread:** 6 – 12'	**Growth Rate:** *medium* **Sun:** *full sun* **Soil:** *rich, well-drained sites* **Flowering:** *delicate, fragrant, purple flowers bloom in May* **Uses**: *perfect for border, screens or windbreaks. Good for wildlife cover.* *Hardy. Not native.*

How Many trees Do I Need & How Far Apart Do I Need to Plant Them?

Windbreaks/Shelterbelts **- Shrubs: 6 ft. apart in rows, Trees: 15 ft. apart in rows (Rows should be 15 – 20 ft. apart).** ***Wildlife Planting*** **- Mixed plantings of shrubs & trees average 10 ft. apart in rows and between rows (about 500 seedlings per acre).** ***Fiber Production*** **- Average spacing of 8 ft. apart in rows and nine feet between rows (about 700 seedlings per acre).**