Clearwater SWCD Newsletter

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Forest Stewardship Management Plans

Since its establishment in 1991 through 2006, the Program has produced more than 270,000 multi-resource management plans encompassing more than 31 million acres of non-industrial private forest (NIPF) land nationwide. Forest Stewardship plans lay out strategies for achieving unique landowner objectives and sustaining forest health and vigor. Actively managed forests provide timber, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, recreational opportunities and many other benefits for landowners and society. Forest Stewardship plans motivate landowners to become more active in planning and managing their forests, greatly increasing the likelihood that their forests will remain intact, productive and healthy, and that the social, economic and environmental benefits of these lands will be sustained for future generations. A current Forest Stewardship Plan is required for participation in the SFIA (Sustainable Forest Incentive Act) and the 2C Managed Forest Land Tax program, both programs which may provide some property tax relief for forest landowners.

The Clearwater SWCD can help develop Forest Stewardship Plans on private forestland within our county. It is a fee-based program depending on the amount of acres you have. If this is a program you are interested in, please contact Kathy Rasch in our office.

WHY TO PLANT WHAT TREES WHERE?

The first consideration should be the site. Where are you planning to plant? Is the site dry or wet, heavy clay soil, the next thing to a gravel pit or something in-between? Some trees and shrubs can do well in wet sites, such as cedar, tamarac, cottonwood and highbush cranberry to name a few, while some can do very well in very dry sites with lighter soil such as Red Pine, Nanking cherry and Silver Maple. Many species such as Hackberry, White Spruce, Green Ash, Basswood, hawthorne and red dogwood are able to do well in a wide range of conditions. Also consider the light levels where you are planting. How much sun does the site receive? Some trees like Red Pine do not tolerate shade while red maple, sugar maple and highbush cranberry will tolerate shadier sites.

If you are thinking about wildlife benefits, fruiting shrubs like crabapple, serviceberry and juneberry are always a good choice for wildlife from songbirds like the waxwing, robin and catbird to grouse, deer and chipmunks. Other seed producing shrubs like arrowwood and ninebark and hazelnut are used by many animals and birds as well. Having several species of shrubs can help stretch the fruit season out over a longer period. Another benefit is the bloom season of these shrubs which is used by all of our honey bees and all of the other native pollinator insects and hummingbirds, too. Of course oak trees produce a valuable food resource for deer, some birds including the wild turkeys which are showing up more frequently in the area, and squirrels and chipmunks. When planning for wildlife, don't forget to think about cover. Dense stands of cedar and other conifer, thick shrub plantings, as well as diverse hardwood stands provide critical cover and nest sites for a wide range of animals.

Other selection factors may include fall color, future timber production, windbreaks, and more. Whatever your reason for planting it is important to consider many factors in selecting the best species. For more information in choosing the best species for your situation, contact the Clearwater SWCD.

Looking for cost-share assistance for planting trees? The USDA-NRCS has programs available that provide 50% or more cost-share for tree establishment. Program sign up are becoming available soon. Please contact the NRCS office in Bagley for more information. We are located in the same office as the Clearwater SWCD.

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

"A bad day of fishing is better than a good day of doing anything else"...or is it????

Thousands of people will go to a lake this winter to experience the wonders of ice fishing, possibly with an ice auger in tow. Perhaps it will be the snowmobile or 4-wheeler pulling the ice house out to the perfect spot. Some dedicated fishermen/women will even be so brave as to drive their vehicles on the ice to their fish houses to post for their trophy. With so much going on above the water, it's easy to miss the potential of compromising water quality after the ice melts.

In the past, much of the "ice fishing" was really spearing for northern pike, typically within walking distance of shore. Winter angling for walleyes – with resorters plowing lake roads, renting fish houses, and storing fish houses for private parties – expanded in the 1950's. Annual fish house counts have risen dramatically since 1950. Currently, the winter counts fluctuate from lake to lake. The first resort roads to the mud flats, with fish house rentals on the flats, date to about 1970. Increased use of snowmobiles in the 1970's, 4-wheel drive pickups in the 1980's and ATV's and navigational aids in the 1990's have spread out the ice-fishing effort. Each person and house will leave their imprint on the lake.

Vehicle emissions have become a concern as well. One quart of motor oil can pollute 250,000 gallons of water, and one gallon of gasoline can pollute 750,000 gallons of water! Used motor oil is the largest single source of oil pollution in lakes, streams and rivers. Americans spill 180 million gallons of used oil each year into the nation's waters. This is 16 times the amount spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska. Studies have found that oil and petroleum products last a long time and stick to everything from beach sand to bird feathers, thus oil does not dissolve in water. These pollutants are toxic to people, wildlife and plants.

Debris left on the ice has the potential to have a serious impact on the water quality of any lake. Nutrients, sediment, and human waste can directly enter the waters of the lake, and other forms of garbage and pollution wash ashore as the lake thaws.

This direct input of wastes to the lake will not just disappear when the ice does. Water residence time gives an impression as to the length of time required for water and other elements to "flush" through the lake. A lake with a short residence time, say less than one year, will react quickly to changes in pollution levels. For example, if a lake has 6.5 years of residence time - whether positive or negative - it means that the water in the lake takes that long to change. Calculations show that residence times for nutrients are much longer. Nutrients, which make the lake green and scummy, may stay in a lake anywhere from 30 to 40 years!

From the Ground Up… The Value of Healthy Soil

Social issues and soil quality

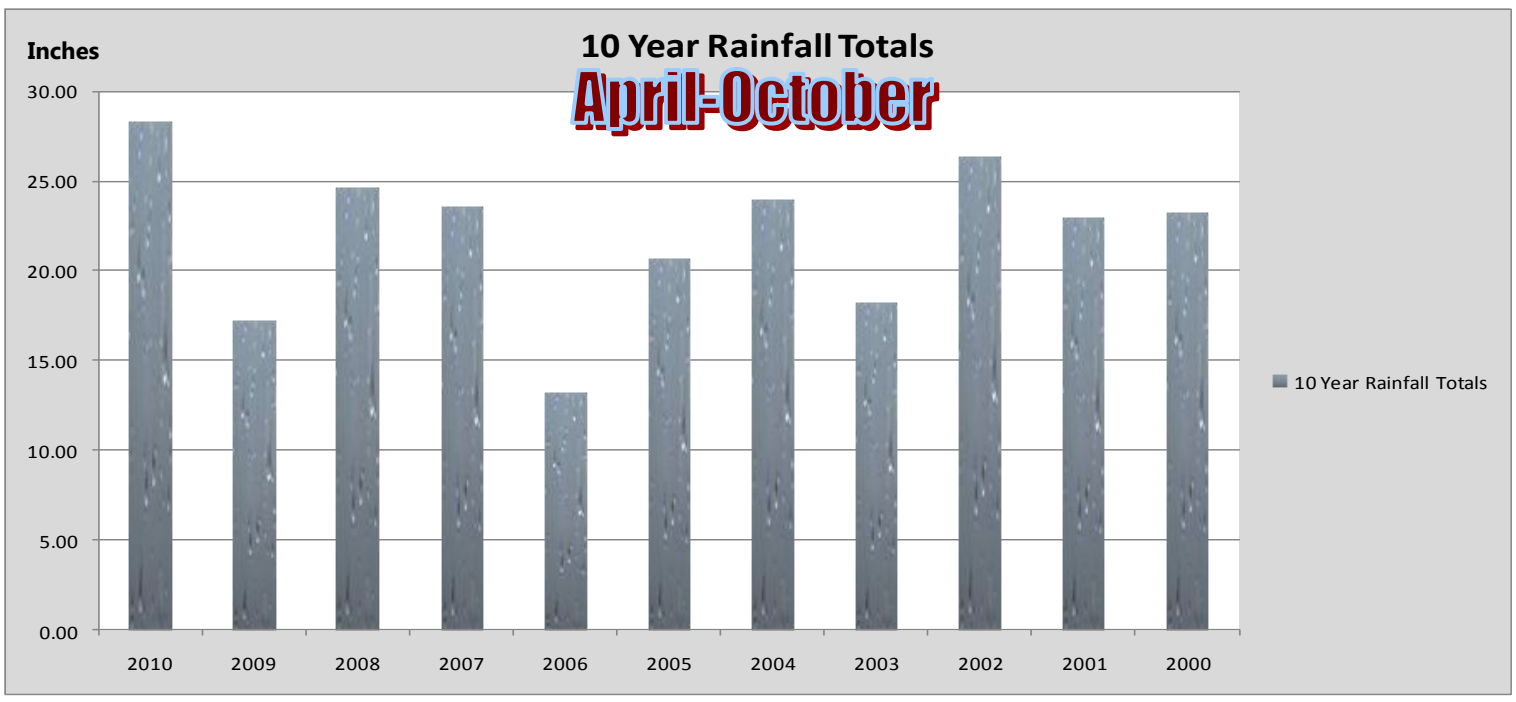
Nutrient cycling, water regulation, and other soil functions are normal processes occurring in all ecosystems. From these functions come many benefits to humans, such as food production, water quality, and flood control, which have value economically or in improved quality of life. People can increase or decrease the value of soil benefits because land-management choices affect soil functions. Thus, it is important to understand what benefits we derive from soil and their value so we can appreciate the importance of managing land in a way that maintains soil functions.

What are the social benefits of soil?

People tend to emphasize benefits with the most direct, private economic value. In rural areas, this is usually plant growth especially as crops and rangeland, but also as recreation areas. In urban/suburban areas, the most direct economic benefits of soil relate to structural support for buildings, roads, and parking. Landscaping, gardening and parklands may also be valued economically.

Those are all on-site, short-term benefits. That is, the landowner who decides how to manage the soil also reaps the benefits (and costs) of those management decisions. In contrast, many important benefits are long-term or go beyond the land being managed. The landholders who make the management choices and pay the costs of managing land may not be the same people who are affected by the landholders decisions. Society should discuss the value of these off-site benefits and to what extent the land owner or society should pay to maintain these soil functions.

Soil Function	Benefit of Value to Humans	
	On-site	Off-site
Nutrient cycling	Delivery of nutrients to plants Carbon storage improves a variety of soil functions	Enhances water and air quality Storage of N and C can reduce greenhouse gas emissions
Maintaining biodiversity and habitat	Supports the growth of crops, rangeland plants, and trees May increase resistance and resilience to stress Reduces pesticide resistance	Helps maintain genetic diversity Supports wild species and reduces extinction rates Improves aesthetics of landscape
Water relations	Provides erosion control Allows on-site water recharge of streams and ponds Makes water available for plants and animals	Provides flood and sedimentation control Groundwater recharge
Filtering and buffering	Can maintain salt, metal and micronutrient levels within range tolerable to plants and animals	Improves water and air quality
Physical stability and support	Acts as a medium for plant growth Supports buildings and roads	Stores archeological items Stores garbage
Multiple functions	Sustains productivity	Maintains or improves air and/or water quality



COST-SHARE AVAILABLE FOR CONSERVATION PRACTICES

Cost-share assistance is now available for landowners to help with the cost of establishing a variety of conservation practices which help protect and restore water and soil resources in the county. Up to 75% cost of implementing the conservation practice may be covered by cost-share dollars.

Eligible conservation practices commonly used in this area include:

- WINDBREAK ESTABLISHMENT/RENOVATION – A planting of single or multiple rows of trees and/or shrubs to protect an area from the prevailing winds. Management activities to improve existing windbreaks can be included.
- FILTERSTRIP - To reduce runoff and prevent soil or other contaminants from entering water resources, an area of trees or other permanent vegetation is established between cropland, pastures, or other disturbed areas and lakes, streams or wetlands. Rain Gardens and similar practices may be eligible in this category.
- CRITICAL AREA PLANTING – Establishing permanent vegetation on sites that have or are expected to have high erosion and on site that have conditions that prevent the establishment of vegetation with normal planting procedures.
- GRASSED WATERWAY – A natural or constructed watercourse with permanent vegetation, which serves to reduce erosion and soil loss and keep sediment out of lakes, streams and wetlands while transporting runoff from fields and other erodible areas.
- STREAMBANK, SHORELAND & ROADSIDE PROTECTION – Using vegetation and/or engineered structures to stabilize and protect stream banks, lakeshore and other water channels from erosion.
- SHELTERBELT PLANTING/RENOVATION – Planting single or multiple rows of trees and/or shrubs around buildings and homesteads to provide protection from wind and snow.

SEDIMENT BASINS – A basin, pond, or structure designed and constructed to collect and hold sediment or debris.
Additional eligible conservation practices include FEEDLOT/WASTEWATER RUNOFF CONTROL, UNUSED WELL SEALING, and DIVERSIONS.

All conservation practices and sites must meet certain eligibility requirements. To apply for cost share or for questions or more information on the State Cost share Program, stop and visit or call the Clearwater Soil and Water Conservation District office.