



NEWS RELEASE

www.bwsr.state.mn.us ● Toll-free and TTY: 800-627-3529

Bemidji — Brainerd — Duluth — Fergus Falls — Mankato — Marshall — New Ulm — Rochester
Central Office: 520 Lafayette Road North, St. Paul, MN 55155

For release: May 1, 2014

Contact: Celi Haga, 651-215-9008 (o)
651-315-5082 (c)

BWSR recognizes 59th Soil and Water Stewardship Week

St. Paul, Minn. - For generations of Americans, the Dust Bowl of the 1930s conjures up powerful images of barren fields, land scoured clean by high winds as unanchored soil chokes out the sun. Tens of thousands of families were forced to abandon their farms as drought and erosion crippled their livelihoods. Eighty years later our resource issues have evolved, and the lessons learned in the Dust Bowl are just part of the work of today's Soil and Water Conservation Districts. These districts manage programs at the local level that work toward conservation and healthy use and development of soil, water, and other natural resources. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) honors and celebrates that work as part of Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 27 – May 4.

"Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout Minnesota are a key component of the local conservation delivery system," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "They do outstanding work with private landowners and other government agencies to help improve the quality of our state's soils and its water."

In Minnesota, there are eighty-nine soil and water conservation districts working in both urban and rural settings.

"One crucial niche districts fill is that of providing soil and water conservation services to owners of private lands," LeAnn Buck, Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Executive Director, said. "Privately owned lands make up 78 percent of the land surface in Minnesota. Managing these private lands, whether agriculture, forest, lakes, or urban, is key to Minnesota's quality of life."

This is the 59th annual Soil and Water Stewardship Week, organized by the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD). This year's theme – *Dig Deeper: Mysteries in the Soil* – highlights the

many ways in which soil supports and enriches life. While much has changed since the 1930s, the work to keep the soil healthy and on the land continues.

For more information about Soil and Water Stewardship Week and how you can get involved in local conservation efforts, please contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District.