



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Tim Ruzek, Mower SWCD; 507-434-2603; cell: 507-993-2518

Mower SWCD to offer rain-simulation demo

Soil health demonstration Wednesday with nitrate-water testing, more

Aug. 8, 2016, Austin, Minn. – About one inch of rain will fall Wednesday on the Mower County Fairgrounds but just in one small area on top of five different soil types.

A rain-simulation demonstration at noon Wednesday by the Mower Soil & Water Conservation District will be the reason for this odd weather, with the goal to show how different agricultural land practices can affect water infiltration and runoff. Mower SWCD will offer the roughly 15-minute demo at the Mower County Fair outside of the Game & Fish Building on the fairgrounds' east end.

"This event will help show that, as soils improve in quality, their ability to infiltrate water also increases and, in turn, reduces the potential for soil erosion and stormwater runoff issues," said Steve Lawler, a Mower SWCD resource specialist who will lead the demo.

Mower-Fillmore Soil Health Team members and Mower SWCD staff will be available to answer questions related to soil health, such as cover crops and other soil-management practices that affect water movement on the land.

Wednesday at the Game & Fish Building will be focused on Mower SWCD, which will have staff from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the building. Mower SWCD's display and free information will be available at the building during the Mower County Fair, which runs Tuesday to Sunday.

On Wednesday, Mower SWCD also will offer free nitrate testing for well water from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For nitrate testing, people should run cold, unfiltered water for several minutes to flush their water line and then run water into a ziplock bag or clean container. Only a small amount of water is needed for the test, and it should be brought to the fair the same day or stored in a refrigerator.

Nitrate testing by Mower SWCD is uncertified but the staff also will have free water-testing kits available for those seeking to pay for a certified test that covers nitrate, sulfate, chloride, nitrite, fluoride and coliform bacteria/E.Coli. Those kits are sent to the Southeast Minnesota Water Analysis Lab in Rochester.

Mower SWCD is part of the Game & Fish Building along with the Izaak Walton League Austin Chapter 10; Jay C. Hormel Nature Center; Mower County Pheasants & Habitat Forever; Austin Audubon Society; and National Wild Turkey Federation – Cedar River Longbeards Chapter.

Aaron Gamm, the buffer coordinator for Mower SWCD, also will be at the Game & Fish Building from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wednesday to meet with farmers and rural landowners who want to learn more about the state of Minnesota's buffer law and how it pertains to their land. Gamm will have a laptop computer available to show how the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' online mapping resource works for showing public waterways and public ditches, which are required to have proper buffer vegetation under the new state law.

Mower SWCD also will have its usual display area within the Game & Fish Building with information on its 2016 conservation award winners, various projects and the ongoing efforts of the Cedar River Watershed District. Free map brochures of the Cedar River State Water Trail will be available along with various other informational materials.

People also can sign up during the fair at the Mower SWCD display to win \$25 toward their tree order in 2017 as part of the Mower SWCD's annual tree program in the spring. One winner will be drawn and notified by mail.

Mower SWCD's Day at the Fair

Who: Mower Soil & Water Conservation District

What: Offering rain-simulation demo on soil health, free nitrate water testing, buffer assistance and more at Mower County Fair.

Where: Game & Fish Building, east end of fairgrounds near historical society, in Austin.

When: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday, with rain simulation demo at 12 p.m. (noon). Buffer assistance available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

CONTACT

Tim Ruzek, outreach coordinator

Mower SWCD

507-434-2603

tim.ruzek@mowerswcd.org

Mower Soil & Water Conservation District

Since 1953, Mower SWCD has provided land and conservation services to Mower County landowners to help manage lands in a way that promotes a sound economy as well as sustains and enhances natural resources that are key to the state's environmental health. Mower SWCD is one of Minnesota's 91 SWCDs each are governed by an elected board.