



News Release

For immediate release

Tuesday, December 16, 2008

SUNDERLAND ELECTED TO SERVE AS PRESIDENT FOR STATE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

Steve Sunderland of Montevideo, Minnesota, was recently elected as the President of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD). The election took place during the Association's annual convention which was held December 7-9 at the Crowne Plaza Riverfront in St. Paul, MN. Approximately 750 people attended the three day event.

Sunderland has served on the Board of Supervisors for the Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the past twenty years.

"I have farmed all my life and feel strongly that we all have to conserve our natural resources," stated Sunderland. A participant in the federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Sunderland has also worked with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to develop nutrient management plans, pest management plans and erosion control plans for his farm.

"Steve Sunderland's experience in conservation issues, both as a farmer and as a Supervisor for the Chippewa SWCD, give him a real advantage as President of the Association," said LeAnn Buck, Executive Director of the MASWCD. "With his leadership, I am confident that the Association will continue to make significant contributions in the area of local resource management," she said.

The MASWCD is a not-for-profit Association that represents Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) in Minnesota. SWCDs are local government units that started forming in the 1930s when congress responded to the large amounts of topsoil being lost to wind and water erosion. Today, SWCDs provide 100% coverage of the state and involve landowners as well as local and state officials in resource management protection. The Association is involved in helping to set policy for various conservation programs including: the state Erosion Control Cost-Share Program, Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve Program, the state Wetland Conservation Act, and the Conservation Reserve Program to name a few.

During his two year term, Sunderland would like work to increase visibility with the public and the legislature, so they might gain a better understanding of the work accomplished by SWCD employees and their board members. He is a graduate of the MASWCD/U of M Extension Service Leadership Institute, and believes continuing education and training is important for the future of districts.

Active in his local conservation district, Sunderland will also continue to serve as a supervisor for the Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District.

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