



Recognizing Excellence in Conservation

2016 Soil and Water Conservation District Employee of the Year

December 2016

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is pleased to announce that Melissa Barrick, SWCD Manager for the Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been honored as the 2016 Outstanding SWCD District Employee of the Year.

Melissa has worked for the Crow Wing SWCD since 2008, when she joined the district as its water planner. In 2011 she became the district manager. During her time at the district, Melissa has become a leader in the Crow Wing and Pine River Watersheds, excelling in community engagement and collaborative efforts to enhance and restore the area's vital water resources.

One of Melissa's most recent accomplishments is securing \$1.2 million in Clean Water Funds for the Serpent Lake Targeted Watershed Project. This complex, multi-faced project is a high priority in the local water plan and Melissa has brought together numerous city officials, citizens, contractors, lake association members, and other local public and private partners to build support for the work. As part of this project, Melissa worked to steer the cities of Crosby and Deerwood and the Irondale Township to adopt stormwater ordinances for future development and redevelopment based on Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS).

Other accomplishments this year included the construction of a stormwater pond, infiltration basin, and an alum treatment to remove high concentrations of phosphorous from Cranberry Lake. Melissa also garnered grant funding for a project on Big Trout Lake, the only lake in Crow Wing County that supports lake trout.

Melissa's management style, skills, and communication were critical to the successful implementation of these projects. She works to continually improve Crow Wing SWCD's capacity for environmental conservation, and has built a team of resource professionals committed to making a difference for the community. She has demonstrated vision and is proactive in searching out ways to make the organization more efficient and effective.

"Melissa is a proactive leader who knows how to engage her community in support of the conservation mission," BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke said. "Her ability to think outside the box and create these partnerships has resulted in a diversified program that meet the needs of Crow Wing County and the surrounding region."

The Outstanding Soil and Water Conservation District Employee of the Year is awarded at the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts' convention, held annually in December.



BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke with Crow Wing SWCD's Melissa Barrick, the 2016 District Employee of the Year.