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Minnesota Office for Soil Health adds State Soil Health Specialist

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St. Paul, Minn.

The Minnesota Office for Soil Health (MOSH) announces the selection of the first State Soil Health Specialist, Anna Cates. This position provides expertise on soil health issues for agricultural and conservation professionals across the state.

The Office for Soil Health is a collaborative program created last year by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) in partnership with the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center (WRC). The Office for Soil Health strives to build local expertise to promote soil health and water conservation by developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of local conservationists to promote sustainable soil and land management.

Anna Cates holds a Master of Science in Soil Science and is finishing her doctorate in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she has been studying soil carbon cycling in corn-cover crop biofuel systems. She will begin her new role in a full-time capacity in January 2019, but will work part-time until then to connect with partners and stakeholders and plan outreach and research activities. Her position will be housed within the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate at the University of Minnesota.

“I’m eager to work closely with farmers, keeping in mind the uncertainties of crop and livestock production,” Cates said. “My goal is to tailor my research toward addressing the practicalities of running a business.”

The Soil Health Specialist will expand the tools and skills of Minnesota’s local conservation delivery community through the development of research and outreach strategies, as well as promote greater understanding of the economic impacts of soil and water management practices. For more information, contact the Office for Soil Health at (612) 624-6765.

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BWSR is the state soil and water conservation agency, and it administers programs that prevent sediment and nutrients from entering our lakes, rivers, and streams; enhance fish and wildlife habitat; and protect wetlands. The 20-member board consists of representatives of local and state government agencies and citizens. BWSR’s mission is to improve and protect Minnesota’s water and soil resources by working in partnership with local organizations and private landowners.