

Regional Clean Water Forester

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Background: On October 1st, 2015, Mitch Lundeen started work as a Regional Clean Water Forester for SWCD Districts in areas 3 & 8. Funding for this position is through the Clean Water Legacy Program and is an Accelerated Implementation Grant. Funding is available for at least 3 years however the position may be extended depending on additional funds. Mitch is housed in the Aitkin County SWCD office. Below is a description of the things Mitch can work on and where his priorities will be. There are also some things that are out of the scope of the grant.

- **Forestry and clean water needs of the Districts in Areas 3 & 8?**
 - Grant opportunities – districts need to know what forestry related grants are available in each county and throughout the state.
 - Forest Stewardship Planning – districts need coordination, information, and background on what other districts are doing or maybe should be doing.
 - Any new programs – districts need to be aware of new forestry initiatives.
 - Water plan updates – this will vary from district to district depending on if they have the water plan and where they are at with updates.
 - Improve SWCD involvement with forestry – districts need to be thought of as a place for forestry assistance and need to be “at the table”.
 - Background work with wild rice easements.
 - Tullibee grant assistance.

- **What can or should the Regional Clean Water Forester do or help with?**
 - Needs to be well-versed in all aspects of forestry related programs available to districts. Know what grants are available, how to apply for them, and when the deadlines are. This should include clean water opportunities as well if they have a forestry connection. Needs to get this information out to all districts. Is available to assist in grant writing, review, and provide input.
 - Establish and maintain a working relationship with the MASWCD, BWSR, NRCS, ABC, DNR, PCA, MHB, Watershed Districts, and other public natural resource agencies in the northern forested region. Keep forestry issues and forested region SWCDs on their radar.
 - Know the inner workings of developing a Forest Stewardship Plan. Needs to become a certified plan writer but will not be writing more than one or two plans a year. Just enough to stay sharp.
 - Help SWCDs with foresters strengthen their forestry programs. Help SWCDs without a forester get one if that is the direction they want to go. Disseminate information regarding plan writing to all districts. Co-write position descriptions, announcements, and find matching funds.
 - Take minutes at the SWCD Forestry Association meetings.

- Determine which districts administer the County water plan. Help districts without water plan coordination responsibilities stay involved with county water planning. Upon request/approval, WPIC meetings should be attended, making the committee aware of services available and promoting forestry in water planning; generally 1 meeting/year/county.
 - Civic engagement – assist with WRAP processes and meetings to promote sustainable watershed forestry. Attend meetings as they pertain to forestry and water quality. Will report back to SWCD at bi-monthly meeting.
 - General outreach and education to districts. This includes everything forestry related. Needs to know each districts forestry capacity in order to disseminate information.
 - Work with riparian buffers and watershed areas as needed.
 - Work with forested buffers and increasing their use over perennial vegetation. This may be more applicable in southern and western districts.
 - Upon their request, assist area 3 and 8 SWCDs with 1 watershed 1 plan coordination: work between SWCDs and watershed districts promoting sustainable watershed forestry.
 - Per SWCD approval/request, attend SWCD board meetings in area 3 and 8: generally, one meeting per year in each county.
 - Planning, promoting, and presenting landowner forestry training sessions.
 - Forestry program news releases, radio interviews, etc.
 - Forestry education related assistance to SWCDs on forestry grants including:
 - Coordination between foresters, landowners, and contractors for SWCDs with Stewardship programs or Tullibee grants.
 - SWCDs with rice lakes RIM programs, initial application ranking.
 - Tree and plant sale promotion to landowners, advertising, open house, and pick-up days answering customer questions. Tree and plant sale work may be first come first serve as peak tree sales work load occurs during the same period for most districts.
 - Needs to document time spent in each district.
 - Assist with possible forestry job-sharing between districts without forestry positions.
- **What the Regional Clean Water Forester should not be doing or will not do:**
 - He will not be a Forest Stewardship Plan writer for your district. He will assist in coordinating the position, can disseminate information on what other districts are doing, can inform districts on what it takes to become a certified plan writer, and can assist with program implementation, but his main duties are not to write Forest Stewardship Plans.
 - Mitch is not a field forester but may be available to do a limited amount of field work.
 - Will not do any agriculture related work. Needs to keep a forestry connection.
 - Will not be working with buffer law implementation or AWQCP implementation.
 - Needs to be careful and watch out for excessive work with NRCS projects: NRCS, ABC, and other agencies could potentially keep Mitch busy planning and implementing project plans.

- Charge/bill for any of the previously described allowable services.
- **Of the things the Regional Clean Water Forester will be doing, what are the priorities?**
 - The grant is written for work to be done in Districts 3 & 8
 - District 3 is: Mille Lacs, Kanabec, Pine, Aitkin, Carlton, South St. Louis, North St. Louis, Lake, and Cook.
 - District 8 is: Crow Wing, Cass, Wadena, Hubbard, Clearwater, Beltrami, Itasca, Koochiching, and Lake of the Woods.
 - Districts may need to prioritize time as there would be approximately 100 hours available each year to each district.
- **Mitch's wish list:**
 - Better mapping abilities on his computer – ArcGIS
 - Microsoft Publisher
 - Forestry tools: vest, prism, clinometer, diameter tape.
 - Wireless router (Jet Pack) if he is not allowed on government networks.
 - Will be required to work outside of areas 3 & 8 to correspond with watershed boundaries.