

Crow Wing County Soil & Water Conservation District Board Member Highlight

By Bethany Chaplin, MN GreenCorps Member Serving with Crow Wing Soil & Water Conservation District

The Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are political subdivisions of the State MN Statutes Chapter 103c. Supervisors are elected by the citizens of their county as part of the general elections. Supervisors help to form policy and long-term objectives for their district and work with the SWCD staff to see that policies and plans are implemented. In 1956, Crow Wing SWCD was formed to provide local leadership and implement voluntary soil and water conservation projects through programs and partnerships to Crow Wing County (CWC) and adjacent areas.

Who is your elected Crow Wing County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor?

The Supervisors include: Leonard Koering, Diane Jacobson, Roger Waytashek, JoAnn Weaver, and Jim Chamberlin.

Bethany Chaplin interviewed Leonard Koering from District 1 to learn about his involvement on the SWCD Board.

Interview Questions:

1. Why were you interested in being on the SWCD Board?

Leonard has always been a conservationist. When a past County Commissioner reached out to him to see if he would be interested in running for a seat on the SWCD Board he said yes.

2. What are your top three items of focus?

His top three items of focus include forest, water, and soil health. He wants to improve the quality of these three resources.

3. Please explain your background and past experiences that have influenced your work for the Soil and Water.

Leonard learned farming from his father. He says that we are fed by the top four inches of soil. Currently, he is the only organic dairy farmer in CWC. By obtaining resources from the SWCD on organic farming he converted his farm. The farm has been organic for a total of 15 years. He is an active member of the National Farming Association and the Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council.

4. What are the top issues facing your district in terms of land management and conservation?

The main concern facing District 1 is herbicides being used to control weeds. Some of these products contain atrazine and negatively impacts the water quality in our county and can lead to health concerns if it gets into the drinking water.

5. What is your favorite project implemented in your district?

He appreciates the commonsense projects the SWCD helps implement. These help a lot of people in CWC. His favorite projects include Serpent Lake and Pine River Fish Passage. Click on the link to watch the [Pine River Fish Passage Project](#) YouTube video.

SWCD Supervisor District Map



6. What impresses you most about the job the current board is doing and what do you think needs improving?

The current board is doing a very good job. They have a diverse group that lives on the lake and on farms.

7. How long have you been a board member at CW SWCD?

Leonard has been serving on the SWCD Board for 46 years!

8. What does CW SWCD do for the community?

They help with conservation efforts in the community. This includes education for forest and water health.



We are very lucky to have Leonard on our SWCD Board. He brings lots of knowledge and experiences to our discussions and future projects. Thank you, Leonard, for all your years of service! Our next article will feature Roger Waytashek.

Link:

[Pine River Fish Passage Project](#)

Please share, watch, subscribe, and comment on Crow Wing SWCD YouTube channel

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5RYE8QHngWrIxIJpalfMSg>

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