



Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
**OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST
 AWARD PROGRAM**
 with support from *The Farmer* magazine

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Purpose: The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), with support from *The Farmer* magazine, offers the the MASWCD Outstanding Conservationist Award to recognize individuals, conservation organizations, and others for outstanding accomplishments with implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota’s natural resources. Recognition will be given for accomplishments between July 1 of last year and June 30 of this year.

Eligibility:

- In order for an entry to be included in the recognition program, the member district must have completed and submitted the District Capacity Award score sheet to the MASWCD office by the deadline.
- **SWCD supervisors and employees, and employees of state and federal agency partners are not eligible** for recognition through this program. If you would like to recognize an SWCD supervisor, please consult materials for the MASWCD Outstanding Supervisor Award. If you would like to recognize an SWCD employee, please consult materials for the Outstanding District Employee of the Year Award (administered by the Board of Water & Soil Resources).

SLIDE SHOW ONLY	SLIDE SHOW, AREA & STATE AWARD PROGRAM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you are submitting your Outstanding Conservationist to be recognized only as your local SWCD’s cooperater to be included in the PowerPoint Presentation, but you are not entering them in the Area and State Award program, please skip ahead to the page entitled “OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST DIGITAL PHOTOS & NARRATIVE INFORMATION;” you do not need to complete the rest of the application. ▪ Photo & narrative information for all entries must be e-mailed to maswcd@maswcd.org by August 22. ▪ A "Certificate of Merit" will be presented to each district’s Outstanding Conservationist at the MASWCD Annual Convention in December. ▪ Districts are responsible for registering and paying for their Outstanding Conservationists for the Outstanding Conservationist Luncheon at the MASWCD Annual Convention in December. This luncheon will have reserved seating, with a reservation chart available at the convention registration desk. ▪ District board members and staff are encouraged to be available to their Outstanding Conservationists on-site at the convention to help guide them through the registration desk and the luncheon award ceremony. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See information at left. PLUS... ▪ Entries must be typed. ▪ All materials for the Area and State Award program should be in 8½" x 11" paper format. ▪ Do not include more than two letters of recommendation. ▪ PAPER copies of nomination forms & supporting material must be received in the MASWCD office no later than August 22 and should be mailed to: <p style="text-align: center;">MASWCD 790 Cleveland Ave. So., Suite 201 St. Paul, MN 55116</p> ▪ Nomination forms received after August 22 will not be considered. ▪ Include your District Capacity Award form and signature page in the same mailing as your Outstanding Conservationist nomination. ▪ <u>Please do not send award nomination forms and supporting information via e-mail</u> ▪ Nominations for the Area and State Award program will be judged by the MASWCD Awards Committee. ▪ The SWCDs with Area Finalists will be notified in writing/e-mail following the committee meeting. ▪ Area Finalists will be recognized at the MASWCD Annual Convention in December. At that time, the State Award winner will be announced. ▪ Area Finalists will receive plaques and the State Award winner will receive a framed print.

For office use only	SWCD: _____	Date Received: _____
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AREA AND STATE AWARD PROGRAM**
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DEADLINE: AUGUST 22

NOMINATION FORM – Area and State Award Program

The SWCD wishes to nominate the following individual(s):

Nominee Information:

Name: Paul and Candy Sobocinski

Address: Wabasso, MN

Telephone: _____

Directions for finding location of household (township or other significant identification):

Nominated by:

SWCD: REDWOOD

MASWCD Area: Area V

SWCD: ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES, PLEASE TYPE-IN DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR NOMINEE.

If selected as a finalist, is (are) the nominee(s) willing to be featured in an article in *The Farmer* magazine? (place a check (✓) next to the appropriate response) Yes X No _____

I. Participation in the Soil and Water Conservation District Program

Cooperation in the Soil and Water Conservation District Program through the following efforts. Please enter a check (✓) next to each category that applies, and type-in a detailed explanation of the nominee's activities after the appropriate category title:

✓ A.. Forestry Improvement and Establishment (tree and hedge planting & other activities)

Over the years Paul & Candy Sobocinski have established several tree plantings. The 2100 trees and shrubs they have planted consist of a living snow fence, a farmstead shelterbelt and a field windbreak with the neighbor. When the Sobocinski's started farming they realized that the establishment of trees would be essential for wind erosion, wildlife and farmstead protection. Much of the Sobocinski's plantings have been completed using cost share through the district programs. Their living snow fence was established by enrollment in the Continuous CRP program.

✓ B. Wind Erosion Practices

When the Sobocinski's started their farming operation they realized that wind erosion would be one of the issues they would have to address. They tried different methods. Mulch Tillage is part of Paul's recent EQIP contract. Paul has determined that by rotating between four crops is one of the best ways to help combat their erosion problems.

When they use corn and beans in their rotation they no till beans into corn or minimum till corn into beans. However with adding oats, wheat and alfalfa into the rotation minimizes the erosion. These crop rotation practices along with their tree establishments has proven to be a very effective way to control wind erosion.

✓ C. Pasture Improvement and Management (rotational grazing, forage management, variety selection, grazing strategies, other)

Utilizing the EQIP Program, Sobocinski's have removed 30 acres of cropland and placed it into permanent pasture. Some of the 30 acres permanent pasture has been fenced into 3 separate paddocks so that they can rotate the grazing of the cows between the different sections. By rotating the grazing they give the other sections time to regrow.

Paul and Candy also have a unique rotational grazing operation as they have fenced in their entire quarter. They leave the residue from the current crop to help with erosion over the winter and allow for grazing of cattle and hogs.

By this method of having their entire fields fenced in it takes pressure off their other pasture land and allows for additional pasture rotation.

In 2008 one of their CRP contracts will expire and rather than bringing the area into production he will add this parcel into his rotational grazing.

✓ D. Cropland Management (tillage, soil test, soil types, and other applicable crop strategy)

As mentioned earlier, conservation tillage is used when applicable.

Thru the University of Minnesota Testing Lab they get their nutrient recommendations and they work with them very closely to apply the correct amount of nutrients back into the soil.

Paul has put a lot of thought into his crop rotation, as he is keenly aware as to what crops he needs to supplant nutrients for the livestock.

✓ E. Integrated Pest Management (scouting, insect-resistant varieties, rotations used, other)

Paul looks at his own fields for pests and believes that he should only use management if he needs it not just because someone else has them. Keeping a close eye on this reduces how much pest control you really need to use. This works with his Pest Management Plan.

Candy had done Education training thru the Ecology Bus on the Pest Management Program.

✓ F. Livestock & Manure Management Practices (briefly describe number of livestock, type of livestock, type of enterprise, etc.)

As part of their EQIP contract they have Nutrient Management Component. They currently have a 500 head farrow to finish hog operation. They also have a small cattle operation which will continue to increase however will never become very large. All livestock are raised naturally and are given no antibiotics. When the cattle and the hogs are allowed to pasture on a field, Paul feels that this is a natural way to spread the manure. To provide protection for the livestock while wintering on the cropland, Paul has baled some of the corn stalks and piled them as a windbreak.

✓ G. Buffer Practices (riparian areas, filter strips, other)

They have buffered the area around two tile intakes that are in the grass/pastureland.

H. Shoreline stabilization

Not Applicable

✓ I. Wetland Restoration/Management

Even though Paul has not restored wetlands, several of his CRP contracts where wet areas on his farm that he just seeded down to native grasses.

✓ J. Wildlife Practices

Paul and Candy believe that the wildlife also needs protection and help so they leave in cornstalks and grain stubble.

They have many pheasants that call the Sobocinski land their home. They can feel well protected as Candy is very emphatic that no hunting is done on their land.

K. Other Soil, Water and Forest Conservation Practices

Not Applicable

II. Leadership in the community

- A. Please explain the nominee's leadership and activities in the community, agencies and organizations (agricultural, environmental, civic, school, church, etc.).

Candy is a 6th grade teacher at St. Anne's School in Wabasso. She works on many conservation projects with her students. Her students do well with the local conservation poster and video contests.

Paul is very busy with several different organizations that work well with his conservation practices. He is one of the Policy Program Organizers for the Land Stewardship Project which is located in Minneapolis. Paul has written numerous papers and talked before both the State Legislators and the United States House of Representatives on conservation topics and about the Land Stewardship Project.

He is also a Spokesperson for the Campaign for Family Farms and believes wholeheartedly in keeping independent family farms around.

Paul is currently only a member of NFO but has been a leader on the local, district and National levels over the years. He also has been a District President for MN National Farmers and has worked with the State EQIP Sub Committee. Paul also had ran for a State Senate seat in 1992. Other farm organizations he belongs to include Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Corn and Soybean Growers Association and MN Groundswell.

Paul and Candy are also involved in the Environmental Partnership program, Organizing Apprenticeship Project, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and National Catholic Rural Life Conference thru the New Ulm Diocese. They have also worked on the Social Concerns Board at their church, St. Anne's in Wabasso.

- B. Please explain the nominee's farmer, sportsman and conservation relationships and activities (sportsman or conservation organizations, committees, etc.)

Paul and Candy are members of CURE – Clean Up the River Environment

III. Special Beautification, recreation, conservation and/or education activities not included in previous points.

IV. Summary of your reasons for nominating this person for the award

Although the Sobocinski's have a small operation, they have done an excellent job of practicing conservation. There is not much more they can do on their land to make it more conservation sound than what is already done. They are Ambassadors of conservation in the area and practice what they preach.

- end -

(You may attach other supporting information, including two letters of recommendation.)

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST DIGITAL PHOTOS & NARRATIVE INFORMATION

In order to recognize your SWCD's Outstanding Conservationist during the ceremony at the annual convention, we will need **two** different digital photos in addition to narrative information that will be read as your photos are projected on the screens in the banquet hall. **THIS INFORMATION MUST BE RECEIVED VIA E-MAIL IN THE MASWCD OFFICE NO LATER THAN AUGUST 22 (see e-mail address below).**

DIGITAL PHOTOS: E-mail **TWO** high quality digital photos of your Outstanding Conservationist (JPG format, totaling less than 5 MB) to:

maswcd@maswcd.org

- We encourage you to use one of the photos as a close-up of the nominee(s), and the other as an example of their conservation practices.
- The photos are easier to see on the big-screen if those being photographed are **not** wearing white or being placed against a white backdrop.
- Use your district name and photo number for naming the photo files: for example, for Acme SWCD, files should be named acmeswcd1.jpg and acmeswcd2.jpg.
- In the subject line, type: [Acme] Outstanding Conservationist photos and narrative.
- In the message portion of the e-mail include the information requested below.

NARRATIVE INFORMATION:

The following narrative information must be included in your e-mail message with the photo files.

Name of SWCD: Redwood

Name(s) of Outstanding Conservationist (include phonetic spelling so we know how to pronounce name):
Paul and Candy Sobocinski (So-bo-Sin-ski)

Outstanding Conservationist Address (street address, city, state, zip):

Wabasso, MN

Narrative – **MAXIMUM WORD COUNT 135 WORDS** (this is what the moderator will read while photos of your Outstanding Conservationist are up on the screen during the award ceremony at the convention – please see the following page for an example):

For the Redwood District, (Photo 1) we have Paul and Candy Sobocinski (So-bo-Sin-ski) from Wabasso.

In their 31 years of farming they have tried many different and diverse plans. They currently rotate between four crops which allow them to pasture cattle and hogs once they remove the crops.

Over the years (Photo 2) they have planted a living snow fence, a farmstead shelterbelt and a field windbreak with the neighbor. They have also established a prairie grass and flower planting on several acres of their farm which protects vulnerable areas at the same time it provides cover for wildlife.

Paul and Candy believe in the continuation of the Independent Family Farm, with emphasis on understanding water, wildlife, soil and the ethics of stewardship and passing on the knowledge with the next generation.

IMPORTANT - **Please be precise in the information you provide** above as it will become the narration of your photos during the PowerPoint presentation of the Outstanding Conservationist award ceremony. **The way you write it up will be the way the moderator reads it at the convention.** Also make sure the photo descriptions correlate to the correct digital photo file. See the sample on the following page for guidance.