

THE AUGER

The newsletter of the Minnesota Association of Professional Soil Scientists

Volume 14 Issue 2

June 1998

President's Message

by Phil Nesse

by Phil Nesse, MAPSS President

1998 is half over. If you're like me, you still have nine months of work to accomplish. So let's collectively grab a rope and pull ourselves out of this "La Nina". Let's get to work.

With the increased pressure on our organization due to licensing, we could benefit from an executive director to handle some specific chores. The most critical need is to have someone track legislation and agency rule-making. Representing MAPSS at various meetings and functions, is important as well.

You may have heard that the Executive Committee was unsuccessful in finding a Twin Cities area soil scientist to fill the proposed executive director position. We'd like to bring this issue back to the group for discussion at the summer tour. Specifically, the Executive Committee wonders if we can't divide the duties among several members.

The work of the Education Committee continues at Wilder Forest. Committee Co-Chairs Norm Mofield and Tom Jackson have also represented our organization in the ongoing talks with the Science Museum and their proposed soils project (outlined elsewhere).

And finally, we have lost our past president to the "northeast". Dawn Tracy is moving to Pennsylvania where she will be teaching soil science at Susquehanna University. I'd like to thank Dawn for her contributions to licensing and furthering the soil science profession. She has been a valuable contributor to MAPSS.

MAPSS ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendars for the MAPSS Annual Meeting, this year to be held at the Radisson Inn in St. Cloud, Minnesota on December 4. Make sure that you have written down Radisson - not the Holiday - Inn. More later.



CHEESEHEADS WILL BE LICENSED

Jim Balogh reports that Wisconsin now has licensing requirements for soil scientists. Details will be in next newsletter.

DAWN FINDS NEW HORIZONS

Dawn Gibas-Tracy, immediate Past-President of MAPSS, has resigned from the Executive Committee. In mid-August she will move to Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania to begin a teaching career at Susquehanna University in the Geology and Environmental Science Department. This fall she is scheduled to teach Environmental Geology and a wetland class. She will also be advising senior research students.

Dawn has formed her own consulting company called Spatial Strategies, Inc. She can presently be reached at her Jordan, Minnesota home.

"The SOILS PROJECT: *Science Outreach and Integrated Learning on Soil*" is still in the hopper after the first round of LCMR proposal cutting. If you recall the last issue of the Auger, The Science Museum of Minnesota is proposing a \$700,000 project that highlights a series of hands-on exhibits and outreach programs designed to educate Minnesotans about proper soil management. MAPSS is one of 16 "partners" with the Science Museum in this proposal to the Legislative Committee on Natural Resources. Other partners include the U of M Soil, Water and Climate Department, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and the Wilder Foundation. MAPSS will serve in an advisory capacity on the project. Norm Mofjeld and Tom Jackson are the MAPSS members that are serving as liaisons with the Science Museum.

MAPSS DUES REMINDER

A number of members have not paid their dues. If your newsletter is marked with a colored sticker, then you owe for 1998. A few owe for 1997 and 1998 and are about to be dropped from the mailing list (they will get 2 stickers). MAPSS values your membership. Check your newsletter and keep your status current. You may pay at the summer tour or mail to Jorja DuFresne, 3140 Irving Ave S., Minneapolis, MN 55408. Currently dues are \$25 for full members and \$15 for student members.

WEBSITE UP AND RUNNING

Space surfers, take heed. The MAPSS website is "up and running", according to Ken ("the Webkeeper") Matzdorf. Simply go to the following address:

<http://www.soils.umn.edu/infoserv/orgs/mapss2/mapss2.htm>

Check it out and we'll talk about it at the Summer Tour and at the Annual Mtg.

GRANDPARENTING PERIOD IS ALMOST OVER!

Applications for geoscientist licensing must be at the licensing board by August 5 to take advantage of the grandparenting clause. As of July 2, only 23 soil scientists had been issued licenses.

Information related to education requirements and qualifying experience can be found in back issues of The Auger or, similar information plus application forms can be obtained by contacting the Board office at (612) 296-2388. Questions can also be directed at Jim Balogh (1-218-525-5322).

BALLOT: PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

6.1a Full Members - Applications for Full membership shall be accompanied by a \$20 entrance fee and \$40 first year dues. Thereafter, dues for Full members shall be \$40 for each calendar year.

6.1b1 Associate Members - Dues for Associate members shall be \$25 for each calendar year.

6.1b2 Student Members - Dues for Student members shall be \$10 for each calendar year.

I _____ support the proposed change.

I _____ do not support the proposed change.

Please check one and bring to the Summer Tour or mail to Phil Nesse; 4280 Susanville Dr. NW; Brainerd, MN 56401.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND THE PUBLIC by Phil Nesse

As soil scientists, I think we are all aware of the importance of properly functioning septic systems near surface water. In the past year, the Crow Wing County Planning and Zoning Office has taken steps toward upgrading the septic systems of the Brainerd-Lakes Area. It has caused "a small ruckus".

In 1991, an ordinance was passed in Crow Wing County stating that septic systems must be upgraded or checked for compliance upon application for a permit or variance or transfer of a permit. Each system would need to be checked every three years.

Until recently, the ordinance was not enforced due partly to staffing limits. Todd Holman, planning and zoning administrator and also a speaker at last years MAPSS Summer Tour, has made septic system checks a priority. It has, to say the least, created a stir.

Comments were first made public in the April 29 issue of the Brainerd Daily Dispatch where readers were greeted with the headline *County Gets Septic Feedback: Plans for Greater Enforcement of Rules Concerns Taxpayers*. In that article, Holman was quizzed by commissioners over the cost of inspections (est \$150) and the need for inspections. It was noted that private industry is handling many of the inspections due to insufficient manpower in the Crow Wing office.

A week later came the headline "*Obscene*" *That is Marv Begin's Reaction to Septic System Inspection Fees*. Commissioners assured Mr. Begin that that the fees, charged by private contractors who are state-licensed, do not go to the county. Then, the May 27 issue of the Brainerd Daily Dispatch revealed *County Board Revisits Septic Ordinance*. Commissioner John Ferrari was quoted as saying "the septic issue has caused the greatest "shake-up" in his 18 years on the board."

Commissioners proceeded to evaluate several possible alternatives that might mitigate the costs associated with inspections. They included additions of county staff that could conceivably reduce the cost of fees to \$75 and changes in the ordinance that would require fewer inspections.

Finally, on July 1, the public had an opportunity to speak. A hearing attended by about 30 residents that included representatives from the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, lake associations, and real estate groups generally supported the current ordinance. According to a Brainerd Chamber of Commerce poll, 96 of 119 surveys that were returned supported the ordinance as it now stands, requiring an inspection every three years.

A decision by Crow Wing County commissioners is expected at about the time this newsletter goes to press.

MAPSS Summer Tour

July 31 and August 1, 1998

Duluth, Minnesota

Friday, July 31

- 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM Meet at Spectrum Research Office - Coffee, rolls, on-site registration, load bus
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Travel
9:30 AM - 11:00 AM NRRI Research Project on Alternative On-Site Sewage Treatment Systems
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Travel (highlights by NRCS) and Lunch (provided)
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM Mineland Reclamation Demo at Eveleth Taconite
2:30 PM - 3:30 PM Travel (highlights by NRCS)
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM Peat Harvesting
4:30 PM - 5:30 PM Return to Spectrum Research Office
6:00 PM - ??? Business meeting and barbecue (provided) at Lester Park (location tentative)

Saturday, August 1

- 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM Meet at Spectrum Research Office - Organize carpools
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM Travel
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM Wetland Construction Site
10:30 AM - 11:00 AM Travel
11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Proposed Spirit Mountain Golf Course (very controversial land use project)
12:30 PM - 1:00 PM Return to Spectrum Research Office

Directions to Spectrum Research Office (4915 E. Superior Street):

Exit I-35 on London Road, continue east to 47th Ave., turn left on 47th Ave., continue to Superior St., turn right on Superior St., go two blocks to 49th Ave.

Spectrum Research is in the old school building next to St. Michaels Church

Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Registration Fees: (includes bus, refreshments, lunch and barbecue)

MAPSS Member

register before 7/15 \$40

register after 7/15 \$50

Non-member

register before 7/15 \$50

register after 7/15 \$60

Spouses, friends and children are welcome to come to the barbecue on Friday, July 31 (Cost: \$7.00/person)
(One barbecue ticket is included in the registration fee)

Amount enclosed: Registration fee \$ _____ plus _____ extra barbecue tickets @ \$7.00 each = \$ _____

Make checks payable to MAPSS and return registration form to Steve Stark, 6655 Fridley St. NE, Fridley, MN 55432