



Goodhue County SWCD  
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[www.goodhueswcd.org](http://www.goodhueswcd.org)

Goodhue County Commissioners  
509 W 5th St.  
Red Wing, MN 55066

Dear Goodhue County Commissioners

Each year, the Goodhue Soil and Water Conservation District elected Supervisors selects a landowner(s) for the Goodhue County SWCD Conservation Farmer of the Year Award. This award is given to landowner owner(s) and/or operator(s) who practice sound conservation practices on their farm and have proven to be good stewards of the land. The Goodhue SWCD staff and supervisors will be present at the August 8<sup>th</sup> County Board meeting at the County Fair and would like to present this award to our 2024 winner. Below is a brief write up of this years' nomination

The Goodhue County Soil and Water Conservation District's 2024 Conservation Farmer of the Year Award winners are Dana and Karin Jokela (4830 360th St. Cannon Falls, MN 55009; Warsaw TWP). Dana and Karin Jokela have been managing 50 acres (of a larger 360-acre family owned) growing organic crops and perennial habitat planting under the name of Sogn Valley Farm. Dana and Karin have grown diversified vegetables and fruit for wholesale, farmers markets, and at one time, a community supported agriculture (CSA) program. The farm has annual feeder sheep on some of the ground as well as about 10 goats for brush control in the savanna areas of the parcel. The Jokela's philosophy is to "connect people with the land". They support people cooperatively working the land with intensive stewardship practices; annual and perennial food production, seasonal fire, grazing management, foraging wild foods, etc. They have led by example through expanding perennial plantings both native and horticultural. They continue to practice soil conservation while experimenting with various conservation practices and are working toward improving the soil health incorporating diverse vegetation in annual as well as perennial crops. Sogn Valley Farm is currently in the early stages of intensive forestry work (canopy thinning in oak savanna, brush management, replanting, etc.) through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The Jokela's have planted and continue to manage prairie vegetation on the degraded grassland areas. As a practice, Dana and Karin host routine farm walks and learning sessions for like-minded landowners interested in seeing what they have tried. Through this process, they are hoping to bring more producers on the land to share their wealth of resources through Renewing the Countryside (RTC) connections and are open to other creative arrangements.

This dedication to conservation stewardship and the pursuit to improve the land for the next generation is why we have chosen the Sogn Valley Farm as our 2024 Goodhue SWCD Conservation Farmers of the Year.

Please feel free to give me a call @ 651-923-5286 or email [bkennedy@goodhueswcd.org](mailto:bkennedy@goodhueswcd.org) if you have questions or comments regarding this request. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "BK".

Beau Kennedy  
Goodhue SWCD