2017 Conservation Partner of the Year
James Fibranz

The Traverse Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board of Supervisors are pleased to announce their selection of the 2017 Traverse County Conservation Partners of the Year: James Fibranz. James is recognized for his dedication to the preservation of wildlife habitat and protection of natural resources in our County. Recognition of his award will be highlighted during the annual Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Convention in Bloomington this December.

James’ father originally purchased the farm then turned it over to him in 1958. James recalled that his father originally bought 238 acres for $14,000! Aside from working on the farm as a young man, Jim was employed with the Traverse County Highway Department for 27 years before his retirement in 1995. He and his wife, Rita, celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on August 24, 2017! They have two sons who reside in Wyoming.

James has a love for his land and the wildlife that reside in the native prairie and forest habitat throughout the hills along Lake Traverse. The historic oak trees and springs feeding small streams create a refuge for deer, turkeys, and other animals.

A few years ago James noticed an area of severe gully erosion on his property near Lake Traverse. The erosion caused a large section of the hillside to slide and begin washing away with every rain event. James requested assistance from staff at the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office to repair the damage. James worked with the agencies to complete an engineered grade stabilization project. The project, funded in part by a Clean Water Fund grant, will prevent 4,450 tons of soil from entering nearby Lake Traverse!

James Fibranz is pictured overlooking his land near the shoreline of Lake Traverse.
The Grade Stabilization project designed by NRCS engineers will prevent further erosion to the hillside and reduce the amount of soil washing into Lake Traverse.