

Douglas SWCD

“63 Years in Conservation”



2017

Annual Report

Preface

Minnesota Status Chapter 40, enacted in 1937, created the Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Board. It was created to help solve serious erosion problems that were plaguing the nation in the 1930's. Chapter 40 authorized the Board to create Soil and Water Conservation Districts and to provide the Districts with State level administration. The Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District was formed in 1954 through the efforts of many concerned Douglas County residents. The District is governed by five locally elected officials.

Our mission as District Supervisors is to promote, guide and direct an action program that will result in efficient conservation of soil and water. Our goal is to encourage use of all Douglas County land within its capabilities and to treat each acre according to its need.

The District cooperates with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service under a Memorandum of Understanding whereby full-time technical assistance on engineering, agronomy, biology, woodland conservation and administration is furnished to the District by the Natural Resources Conservation Service Area and State offices. Under the Memorandum of Understanding, the District uses the Natural Resources Conservation Service office in Alexandria as their headquarters.

The Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District prepares this report for farmers, agricultural agencies, businesses and all tax paying citizens interested in the conservation and preservation of soil, water, plants and wildlife resources. We present this record of our 2017 accomplishments and invite you to avail yourselves of the assistance provided by the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District and its cooperating agencies.

Board of Supervisors
Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District

Douglas SWCD
900 Robert Street, Suite 102
Alexandria, MN 56308
(320)-763-3191 Ext. 3

The Douglas SWCD and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). The Douglas SWCD and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are equal opportunity providers and employers.

Year In Review

2017 continued to be a busy year for the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The year started with tree sales, and moved on to the following activities, tree planting, tree matting, tube installation, no-till planting, Wetland Conservation Act work load, survey and design for erosion control practices and feedlot improvement project, and construction of erosion control practices and feedlot projects. Buffer Law Implementation consumed a large amount of time. Different projects worked on through the water plan completion Plan Amendment, water quality monitoring, Zebra Mussel Sampling, and lots of technical advice given.

Education activities were also a big part of the districts activities. Some of the educational activities completed this year include: Envirothon, 24h Annual Kids' Groundwater Festival, Poster and Mural Contests, Essay Contest, Douglas County Fair booth, Viking Sportsman Youth Outdoors Activities day, school programing, and Boy Scout Merit Badge.

The Districts tree planting and matting program was again a huge success. Over 24,960 trees were planted and 36,600 feet of fabric was installed last year. The districts tree sales last year totaled 27,314 trees, which will benefit wildlife in Douglas County for many years to come. The Staff was busy this past fall with the installation of erosion control practices (Sediment Blocks and Terraces) in the County. A total of 18 sediment blocks, 2 terraces, and 2 grade stabilization structures were installed last year. 2 Ag Waste systems were installed in 2017. Wetland restoration construction was also busy with 37 wetland restorations completed. The District No-till drill program was extremely busy this year in planting native grasses, soybeans, and alfalfa, for a total of over 1000 acres planted. All of these conservation practices will benefit the soil productivity and water quality of Douglas County. A total of over \$542,000 in grant funds were used to assist landowners in installing these conservation practices

Two Clean Water Grants were started in 2017. The first is a feasibility study on reducing phosphorus inputs into Lake Ida from the Aquatic Management Area-County Ditch 23 inlet. The study will also identify other areas of excessive nutrient inputs within the Lake Ida watershed. The other clean water grant involves completing soil borings on unpermitted Ag Waste Pits to determine if the pits will need to be reconstructed to prevent contamination to groundwater.

The Ag BMP Loan Program was also used extensively by landowners in 2017. The largest project involved providing loan funds to 21 landowner to construct a larger cluster septic system on Lake Miltona. A total of over \$474,000 in loan funds were used in the county.

The SWCD works closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on federal programs offered to county landowners. These programs include: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The district also has a fulltime Pheasants Forever Biologist putting proposals together for landowners whose lands qualify for the CRP Buffers Program and other conservation programs.

2017 Board of Supervisors



Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors includes:

Back Row: (Left to Right)

Mike Cleary, Bill Dropik Jr. and Ken Rutten

Front Row: (Left to Right)

Gary Thoennes, and Paul Barsness

2017 Staff

Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District Staff includes:

Back Row: (Left to Right)

Andy Rice, Josh Meissner and Jerry Haggemiller

Front Row: (Left to Right)

Jessica Albertsen and Starla Arceneau



Outstanding Conservationist⁴



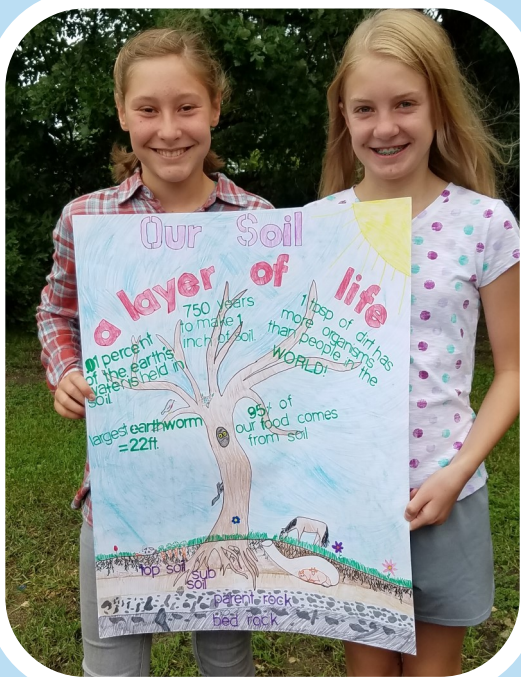
Smokey Timbers Foundation was recently honored as outstanding conservationists at the annual meeting of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, December 3-7, 2017 in Bloomington, Minnesota. They were selected by the Douglas SWCD for the award.

Each year, the state's SWCDs recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. The award program is conducted with support from The Farmer magazine, and the award ceremony receives sponsorship from the *Minnesota Corn Growers Association*. **Congratulations Smokey Timbers Foundation.**

Smokey Timbers Foundation owners of Smokey Timber Camp Located on Lake Miliona. The Camp is 20 wooded acres preserved from development in perpetuity. Smokey Timbers camp was saved from development after the Girl Scout Council decided to sell the property and local Douglas County residents, business and other nonprofits purchased the camp from the Girl Scout Council in 2003 and gifted the property to Smokey Timber Foundation in 2009. Smokey Timbers Foundation has installed a water and sediment control basin, smart ditch, diversions, and underground outlet to solve gully erosion problems running into Lake Miliona. A DNR Forest management Plan has been completed on the 20 plus acres of woods at the camp. The camp is used by area schools, scouts, 4-H and churches for outdoor and conservation education.



2017 Poster Contest Winners



Ella Sanden & Giselle Jahner
Mural Winners and Overall Winners
St. Mary's Elementary



“Our Soil A Layer of Life” was the theme of the Douglas SWCD 2017 Poster and Mural Contest for 5th and 6th grade students throughout the County. Earlier this spring, Danica Derks from the SWCD visited classrooms and gave presentations on the importance of our soil. The students then used that information to create posters and murals for the contest.

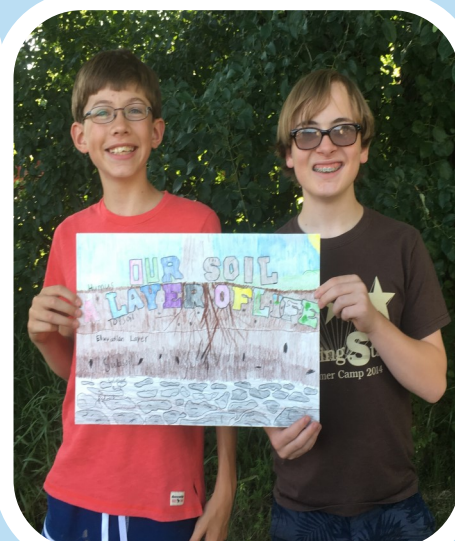
Once all posters were submitted SWCD staff and supervisors voted on the posters and notified the schools. The winning posters were displayed at the Douglas County Fair in the Soil and Water booth. The local paper also did an article featuring the students and their beautiful works of art!



Kylie Christiansen
1st Place Poster Winner
Discovery Elementary



Courtney Violette
2nd Place Poster Winner
Discovery Elementary



Nicholas Wieberdink & Jacob Fleming
3rd Place Poster Winner
St. Mary's Elementary

Envirothon



The Douglas SWCD assisted with the organization of the 2017 Envirothon in which high school students from a 12-county area demonstrated their knowledge of Minnesota's natural resources. The annual Area 2 Envirothon was held on Wednesday April 23rd at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center near Spicer.

The Area 2 Envirothon is a hands on outdoor competition day for high school students. Students attended four learning stations covering Soils, Wetlands/Aquatics, Wildlife and Forestry, and a Current Event Station, where the topic changes annually and requires students to give an oral presentation on the current topic. The 2017 topic was, **"Invasive Species: A Challenge to the Environment"**. Natural Resource professionals from the SWCD, DNR, Prairie Woods Environmental Center and NRCS gave presentations at each station and used the outdoors to test the students' knowledge of the natural world. Each team of five students worked together to answer the questions presented in the tests.

Kids Groundwater Festival

The 24th Annual Kid's Groundwater Festival was held May 3, 2017, at the Runestone Community Center in Alexandria. Again the Festival was a huge success with over 520 fourth grade students participating. All schools within Douglas County and one from Grant and Ottertail Counties were in attendance.



Featured at the Kids' Groundwater Festival were 17 different learning stations. Each of the fourth grade students were scheduled at intervals to take part in seven different learning stations. The Stations cover all aspects of the water cycle. Students attend sessions on surface water problems, aquifers and wells, wetlands, and water treatment. Games are also played such as Water Pictionary, Water Trivial Pursuit and creating giant bubbles at the Bubbleology Station to learn about changing the properties of water. All of the students attend a session in Water presented by the Science Museum of Minnesota.

The 2017 Kids' Groundwater Festival Committee included the following individuals: Danica Derks & Jerry Haggenmiller, Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District; Ruth Turner, District 206 Volunteer Coordinator; Marilyn Bayerl, Bayerl Water Resources; Lisa Pikop, Principle District 206; Vicki Gesell, Alexandria Light and Power; Lynn Boysen, MN Dept. of Health; Nathan Reinhold, Douglas Pope Solid Waste, and Rebecca Sternquist & Mark Koep, Douglas County Land and Resources Management. This committee organized the festival with help from many volunteers. Funding for the festival was made possible from the many donations from Douglas County service groups, fire departments, and private business owners.

Fair Booth



The Douglas SWCD revamped the fair booth this year with a fresh coat of paint, and more hands on - interactive displays. This year the theme of the booth was Water and Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention. There was a prize wheel, trivia questions, and door prizes. There was also name the pillow fish contest for the kids.

Preserved samples of the aquatic invasive species found in the Douglas County waters were also on display for visitors to pick up, look at and learn more about. As well as a map color coded to show all the lakes infested in the county.

SWCD staff members were also available to answer questions about programs, trees, buffer law updates and cost share opportunities.

Overall there was roughly 4,400 individuals that stopped by the booth and just over 4,700 prizes that were handed out from the prize wheel. The Douglas County Lakes Association also donated the door prizes and there were 8 winners for that! 4 kids and 4 adults, (one kid and one adult per day of the fair).

Next year the theme of the fair booth will be more focused on the soil aspect of Soil and Water Conservation.

Education and Outreach



Helping with the Todd County Envirofest

Aquatic Invasive Species Traveling Trunk



Helping with the Swift County Water Festival



Working with the District 206 Kids Club and Compass Groups



News Releases

At least 20 press releases were sent out!

Topics of Press releases sent out:

- Irrigator Clinic
- Nitrate Clinic
- Tree Open House
- Buffers
- Pomme de Terre
- Ag. Water Quality
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Outstanding Conservationist



Irrigator Clinic

Thursday, January 11th
8:30 AM – 2 PM
Forada Supper Club
(1380 County Road 4 SE, Alexandria, MN 56308)

Agenda

- 8:30 Registrations
- 9:00 Welcome Chemigation & Permitting Subsurface Drip Irrigation
- Lunch (meal included in registration cost)
- Reduced Irrigation Study – Rosholt Research Farm
- Bonanza Valley Groundwater Management Area Project

Pre-Registration is **REQUIRED!**
\$10 Registration Fee (Includes Meal)
Registration Deadline: Friday, January 5th
Make Checks payable to Pope SWCD
Mail Payment to
Pope SWCD Attn: Holly Kovarik
1680 Franklin Street North
Glenwood, MN 56334

Registration at the door is \$20
(Meal not guaranteed at door)

Douglas SWCD Annual Tree Open House

Stop in and talk to SWCD Staff about:
• Tree Plantings on your property
• Cost Share Options

Wednesday, January 31, 2018
9:00am - 4:00pm

Cookies, Apple Cider,
and Coffee will be
provided!

900 Robert St.
Suite 102
Alexandria, MN 56308

Requested RSVP by January 19th
to the Douglas SWCD or call (320) 763-3191 Ext 3

What's in your water?



Date: August 29, 2017

Time: 8:30am – 4 pm

Place: 900 Robert Street
Alexandria, MN 56308

Once again the Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District is hosting a Nitrate Clinic to determine what is in your water. **Please bring in a water sample to the office any time between 8:30 am and 4 pm** to have your water tested and annualized. There will be nitrate demonstration as well!

How to collect Samples: To take your sample, run your cold tap for five to ten minutes then collect about one cup of water in a plastic baggie (double bag) or clean jar. Keep the water cool until arrival. You can collect the water anytime within one day of the nitrate analysis (if you are going to the local office right after work, you can collect the sample in the morning and keep it cool all day until you arrive).

For more information please contact the Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District

Website: <http://www.douglaswcd.com/>

Phone: 320-763-3191 Ext 3

Location: 900 Robert Street, Suite 102 Alexandria, MN 56308



Water Testing

The Douglas SWCD through RMB labs in Detroit lakes MN offers more water testing options. The kits include are available in the Soil and Water office and are collected daily at 11 am Monday through Thursday. The kits available are: Total coliform Bacteria, Nitrate, Arsenic, and Lead

These were the requirements in order to bring in a sample: To take your sample, run your cold tap for five to ten minutes before collecting about one cup of water in a double plastic baggie or a clean jar. The water needs to be collected within one day of the inspection and kept cool.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Zebra Mussels are a non-native aquatic invasive species (AIS) that were first confirmed in Douglas County by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the summer of 2009. As of November 2016, there are a total of 33 lakes within the county listed as infested with Zebra Mussels.

In cooperation with Douglas County Land and Resources Management and the Douglas County Water Patrol, RMB Environmental Laboratories and the Douglas SWCD, a zebra mussel veliger study was created to monitor 7 lakes. This study continued from the 2016 sampling efforts while starting at an earlier date in the season and adding Lake Osakis to the list of sampled lakes. Samples were collected weekly from late May through August and bi-weekly in September from recently infested lakes (Miltona, Ida, Turtle, Osakis) and well-established infested lakes (Le Homme Dieu, Darling, Irene). The goals of the project were to determine if veligers could be detected in the recently infested lakes and if so, what density and patterns the veligers exhibited over time. In the lakes with established infestations, the goals were to also see what density and pattern the veligers exhibit as well as if the density patterns were similar to other northwest Minnesota lakes that have been studied.

The over results indicated the highest densities. Therefore risk for veliger transfer is during the months of Late June through July. In relation, this is also the time of year when Douglas County lakes see an increase of boating activities.

In 2017, Douglas County conducted 9,598 inspections on 24 lakes at 29 unique public water accesses by watercraft inspectors across Douglas County.

Education, public awareness, on-site prevention, and monitoring/management are all key components to slow the spread of AIS within Douglas County.



Nitrate Well Testing

The Douglas SWCD held a free Nitrate Well Testing Clinic at the end of June, and again at the end of August. This was for community members, resort members and visitors to check the levels of nitrates in their well and drinking water. Between the two clinics there was over 130 samples ran and tested. If the results were high, SWCD staff provided resources and possible solutions to help bring the levels down. total amount of nitrates in their water. These were the requirements in order to bring in a sample: To take your sample, run your cold tap for five to ten minutes before collecting about one cup of water in a double plastic baggie or a clean jar. The water needs to be collected within one day of the inspection and kept cool.

No-Till Drill Available



In 2016 the Douglas SWCD purchased a new 10' Haybuster No-till Drill that they will have for rent. This drill works well for seeding native grasses, alfalfa, soybeans, and small grain. The drill rents for \$9.00 per acre with a \$100.00 minimum. The SWCD will deliver the drill, calibrate it for your seed and pick it up when you are finished. Call the SWCD to reserve the drill.

Food Plot Mixes

The Douglas SWCD will once again have food plot seed available for landowners. Two different deer mixes are available, a perennial mix and an annual mix. The perennial mix includes Alsike Clover, Lanino Clover, Medium Red Clover, White Dutch Clover, and Chicory. The annual mix includes Forage Peas, Radish, Turnips, and Haybet Barley. The SWCD also has a Pheasant/Turkey mix containing Wildlife Sunflower, Wildlife Grain Sorghum, FSG Pearl Millet, and Sugar Graze II Sorghum Sudangrass. Each mix is packaged in 1 acre bags. Food plots are important to retain wildlife in your area after crops are harvested in the fall and to provide feed to wildlife throughout winter season.

Native Grass and Forb Seed Mixes



The Douglas SWCD will have native grass and forb (flowers) seed mixes available to landowners for conservation practices. We will work with landowners on what type of seed mix is required for the practice they are enrolling into. Typically we have set mixes for the different practices, but we can work with landowners on custom mixes if desired. Native grass and forb plantings provide optimum habitat for wildlife and their deep root systems make them effective with erosion control.

Tree Planting & Fabric Mulch



The Douglas SWCD provides services that include tree planting, fabric mulch installation and tube installation. Fabric mulch will improve the survival rate of your trees by providing moisture retention and protection from weed competition. With the fabric mulch, post-planting maintenance is virtually eliminated..

Tree tubes will protect your trees from rodents and deer, encourage straight sturdy trees and act as mini-greenhouses re-using the moisture from the trees. Cost-Share is available for eligible practices.

Conservation Trees

The Douglas SWCD is now taking orders for trees for the spring of 2018 plantings. Whether you are looking at planting a hedge, shelterbelt, living snow fence, field windbreak or wildlife habitat, we have the right shrubs and trees for all your needs. We offer a variety of small shrubs, large shrubs/small trees, deciduous trees and conifers.

In 2017 Douglas SWCD sold 27,314 Trees, and planted 24,960 of the ones sold. There was 36,600 feet of fabric installed, and a total of 27 tree/fabric installation sites.

Not only do we provide trees for your selection, we provide services from planning to planting. Our staff will gladly work with you on finding the right tree for your site. We can provide design assistance for farmstead shelterbelt, field windbreak, living snow fence and wildlife habitat plantings.

If you are looking at completing a tree planting, you might be eligible for cost-share to help pay for the planting. There are federal and state programs that provide cost-share to help pay for the costs associated with a tree planting. Contact the Douglas SWCD for your tree planting needs and get growing!



MN Buffer Law



Buffers have been a hot topic in the news ever since the Buffer and Soil Loss Statute was signed into law in June 2015 by Governor Mark Dayton. However, regulations pertaining to maintaining perennial vegetation (buffers) adjacent to watercourses and water bodies have existed since the 1970s & 1980s when counties adopted local shoreland ordinances requiring 50' buffers on DNR Public Waters. Ditch Law 103E also has required one rod (16.5') buffers along ditches that have undergone the redetermination of benefits process. So while this "Buffer Law" is new, the buffer requirements have been around for decades.

In Douglas County, the buffer requirement is 50' along DNR public waters and 16.5' along public drainage systems (county ditches). The deadline for establishing buffers along public waters was **Nov. 1, 2017**.

Landowners who have not yet met these requirements are encouraged to stop into the SWCD office and fill out a conditional compliance waiver to avoid any potential non-compliance penalties from Douglas County. This waiver will give an extension to landowners interested in financial or technical assistance. The deadline to establish buffers along county ditches is **Nov. 1, 2018**. There is a MNDNR webpage dedicated to buffer information that contains frequently asked questions and a link to the buffer map. It is available at www.dnr.state.mn.us/buffers/index.html.



The SWCD staff is available to assist landowners/operators when determining the buffer width required and if any buffer needs to be added. The law requires the buffer on a public waters to be measured from the top or crown of the bank. Where there is no defined bank, measurement will be from the edge of the normal water level. Buffers along public drainage systems shall be measured in the same manner as for measuring the vegetated grass strip under Minnesota Statute 103E.021, subd 6. SWCD staff is available to complete field evaluations to check buffer widths and/or flag buffers (at no charge) if needed.

Financial assistance may be available if the buffer has not yet been seeded. The acreage requiring a buffer can be put into an eligible program or a landowner can sign up for buffer cost-share at the SWCD office. Funding is limited, therefore money will be given on a first come first serve basis. The buffer cost-share for Douglas County is a one-time flat rate payment of \$300/ac for buffers to be planted to native vegetation and \$200 for buffers to be planted to introduced vegetation. A 10 year contract will be held between the landowner/operator and the Douglas SWCD.

Overall, Douglas County is sitting at 93% compliant on all bodies of water requiring a buffer, which is also where the State is at for buffer compliance. The majority of sites still needing a buffer already have some buffer established. Getting these sites to compliance typically requires adding small areas to the existing buffer. Douglas SWCD will continue to work with landowners throughout the winter on buffer compliance.

CRP Options

New land and re-enrollment options for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) coming soon!

You will have options! NRCS in conjunction with FSA, is offering choices for those that have land coming out of CRP this year, approximately 5,000 acres throughout Douglas County. Last year alone, there was 56 contracts with a total of 458.56 acres of CRP in Douglas County.

If you are not currently enrolled in the CRP program, this would be a great opportunity to stop in and ask about the CRP options. Practices will be available that could benefit your current farm management and positively impact your landscape and environment, for example;

Duck Nesting Habitat

Farmable Wetland Programs

Field windbreaks

Filter strips

Living snow fences

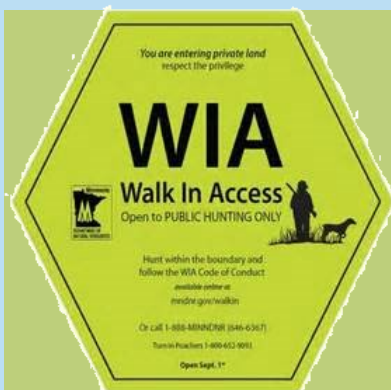
Riparian Forest Buffers

Shelterbelts

Wetland Restorations

If you plan to crop your expiring acres, be aware that HEL fields require an approved conservation compliance plan that can be written by local NRCS office staff in Alexandria. If you are unsure of a fields NHEL/HEL status, feel free to contact our office for further assistance.

Walk In Access



The Walk In Access Program targets 40 acres or more that are already in Conservation Programs or non Crop areas and the program is entirely voluntary for landowners. Most landowners choose to enroll their property for two or three years. Landowners are paid \$10 per acre to allow hunting access. Up to \$3 per acre are added if within 1/2 mile of existing state or federal hunting land, or if a multiyear contract is signed.

Enrolled lands are covered under the Minnesota recreational use laws that limit landowner's liability. Last year alone for Douglas County there was 9 sites with a total of 878 acres signed up. Where private does not, recreational use laws provide extra liability protection for WIA access under the MN State Statute 604A.20 to 604A.27. WIA land is for hunting only. No motorized vehicles are allowed on WIA areas and parking is along roads or in designated parking area. No target practice, trapping, dog training, camping, horseback riding or fires are allowed in WIA areas. DNR conservation officers handle any WIA violations as well as any hunting violations.

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)

The Douglas County SWCD continues to promote the MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program moving into 2018. By the end of 2017 there are more than 2,100 acres of water quality certified cropland acres in Douglas County. Those acres include 2 farms with a corn/soybean/wheat rotation along with 2 vineyards in the county. As of December 11th, statewide certification numbers included 499 farming operations over 294,000 acres.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary program designed for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in protecting water through their conservation practices that protect Minnesota's lakes and rivers. Farm owners and operators who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn assured that their operation meets the state's water quality goals and standards for a period of ten years. The MN Department of Agriculture administers MAWQCP.

To become certified; the first step, application, is a self-verification by landowners that they are meeting state laws and regulations regarding water quality. The next step, assessment, takes it further by examining each field for its physical characteristics; management of nutrients, tillage, pests, irrigation and tile drainage; and current conservation practices. On a 10-point scale, each field must score a water quality index of 8.5 or higher to be eligible for certification. The lower the number, the more the field poses a risk to water quality. If a field is below the 8.5 mark, then certifiers work begins to suggest what areas of improvement would work for the landowner to certify their farm operation. The certification includes an on-site field-by-field verification of the assessment information.

The program has been available statewide since the summer of 2016.

At this time SWCD's are working with interested producers through the certification process.

The Douglas SWCD is ideally suited to assist farmers through the certification process because practices the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program looks at are practices the SWCD works with farmers on a daily basis along with our federal partners, the NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service). Douglas SWCD is assisted by Grant Pearson (Stearns SWCD) in running these assessments.

So far, a total of 6 Douglas County farms have applied.

To be considered for certification, landowners must complete a three-step process, including application, assessment and verification. "This program looks at the entire operation, which is unique," said the Douglas SWCD; "Typically with the other programs that we have, we're addressing one project on one piece of their property."

The benefits of being a water quality certified farm includes "regulatory certainty," which means they are automatically deemed compliant with any new water quality rules or laws for ten years from certification which gives certified producers a longer period of time to plan for and comply with new regulations.

Another benefit comes in the form of recognition; certified farms can use their status as a way to promote their business as water quality conscious. Producers working toward certification also receive priority for technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality. Certified producers also have access to exclusive funding pods.

If interested in programs like these, or how to become Ag. Quality Certified, please visit the Douglas SWCD, call 320-763-3191 Ext. 3. Or visit the MAWQCP website: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/awqcp>

Ditch 23/Lake Ida Grant

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Douglas County Ditch 23 watershed was established in 1921 and has 3,375 acres which drains into Lake Ida by way of the ditch. The ditch starts west of Garfield and a portion of it (62,340 ft.) runs through tile, the rest (8,500 feet) runs above ground through a buffer. Just before it reaches the lake, the ditch meanders for (2,400 feet) through a 40-acre wetland into DNR owned Lake Ida Aquatic Management Area.

A few years ago, Ida Lake Association started monitoring results of the water going into the wetland cleaner than what was coming out. This was due to the oversaturation of the wetland, not allowing it to absorb excess water. The lake Ida Association noticed the concern and brought it to the Douglas SWCD's attention.

Douglas SWCD wrote a grant and, and was awarded \$227,430 from Clean Water Fund grant from Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR). The Douglas SWCD contracted the work to be completed by an Alexandria based engineering firm Widseth Smith Nolting, Barr Engineering will be taking soil borings and water samples, measure elevation and hydrology readings, track water movement and volume. Work has begun this fall and is hoped to be completed in the next few years. With about 80% of the shoreline around Lake Ida already developed, there is about 15-20 other smaller projects

Soil Investigation Grant

Douglas SWCD applied for a soil investigation grant through Board of Soil and Resources (BWSR) and was awarded \$93,000. This project seeks to inventory twenty registered feedlots identified as having an Unpermitted Liquid Manure Storage Area (LMSA). Specifically, this inventory would include offering cost-share for soils investigations. Soils investigations are required for farmers to demonstrate resource concern to access needed cost-share for LMSA upgrades, bringing the structure up to a permitted status per MPCA standards. Soils investigations for LMSAs have not been supported with cost-share within Douglas County previously, and it has been only sporadically available from other TSA's. These feedlots are located in three townships and have also been identified as having groundwater that is vulnerable to nutrient pollution, necessitating a need for nitrate testing per MN Department of Agriculture. These townships also house the vast majority of remaining unpermitted LMSAs in the County.

Cost Share- Erosion Control

The Erosion Control and Water Management Program provides grants to SWCDs so they can help landowners offset the cost of installing conservation practices that improve water quality by reducing soil erosion, sedimentation, and pollution.

Landowners or operators can apply for up to 75% cost share for their project. Once approved by the local SWCD Board, work can begin. These funds help the local SWCD to implement state-approved conservation practices. Some of the practices include: rain gardens, streambank and shoreline protection, water and sediment control structures, side inlets, and cover crops. Most practices have a life span of 10 years (except cover crops), which means that they must be maintained for that length of time.

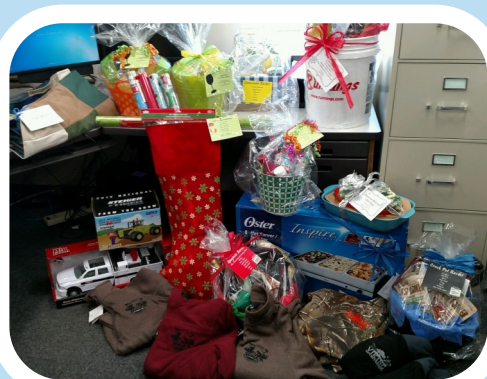
Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

Landowners are encouraged to check with the SWCD before beginning any project that may impact a wetland(s). The State of MN has wetland laws regulating the draining, filling or excavation with wetlands. Although similar in many ways, the laws are different. Do not assume because you meet federal law requirements, you will also meet MN State law requirements.

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the installation of/or additions/upgrade to drain tile systems. These activities need to be reviewed by our staff to prevent wetland drainage violations. It is also a good idea to check with our office before cleaning drainage ditches as such activities may impact wetlands. Some drainage ways are classified as Protected Waters by the MN Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and require permitting through that agency as well. One issue that occurs periodically is impacts to what are classified as Type 1 and or Type 2 wetlands. The MN DNR has a good website www.dnr.state.mn.us/wetlands/types_technical.html with images, describing the different wetland types. Just because the area does not have standing water and cattails does not mean it is not a wetland. We encourage you to visit the website or contact our office if you are unsure if an area is a potential wetland.



Minnesota Area Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Region 2



Minnesota Association for Soil and Water Conservation Districts Area 2 is made up of 12 counties located in Central Minnesota. This year Douglas SWCD along with the other 11 counties in Area 2 were hosts at the State Convention held the first week of December in Bloomington MN.

Before the convention even started SWCD Staff attended meetings, and partnering with local businesses to acquire donations to be used at the silent/live auction at the State Convention. Douglas SWCD alone was able to put 20 gift baskets together and raise over \$800. At the end of the Auction when all said and done, the total amount raised was just over \$7,600 which will be used to purchase items and run the State Envirothon.

Thank you

Although the Douglas SWCD does a lot of projects, community outreach, grants and offers services on its own, we could not have been as successful without our local partnerships and such a great community to be part of.

Special thanks goes out to some of the local entities: Land and Resources (LRM), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Public Works (PW), Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR), Pheasants Forever (PF), and the list goes on.

The Douglas SWCD will continue to serve the county. Our goals for 2018 include:

- Increase public awareness
- Promote programs
- Sell 2,500 more trees
- Apply for more grants to assist with cost share
- Hire on new water Planner
- Hire Education and Outreach Coordinator shared with LRM Full time
- Increase press releases to 24 for the year
- Increase awareness and sell more seed for Native seed and Food plot mixes
- Hire part time drill moves for the summer months
- Hold 2 FREE Community Nitrate clinics
- Multi-County Outreach Programs
- Fix/Repair Tree shed (to prevent future break ins)

Extra's

- Breakdown of County Revenue
- Deferred Revenue Breakdown
- Statement of Activities and Governmental Fund Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance
- Statement of Net Assets and Governmental Fund Balance Sheet
- Budget and Actual General Fund
- Notes to the Financial Statements
- Management Discussion and Analysis

* Please see attached pages for Extra Section

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