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2020 Newsletter

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Kasey Jenc

PF Wildlife Biologist

NRCS Staff

Cory Walker

Conservation Service Team Leader

Mark Dybdal

Conservation Program Manager

Rich Geving

Soil Conservation Technician

Mike Yrjo

Civil Engineering Technician

Laura Aaberg

Administrative Assistant

Cindy Wojtkiewicz

Farm Bill Technician Aid

Tree Open House

Douglas SWCD will host their annual **Tree Open House on Wednesday, January 29, 2020**, at the **USDA Service Center** (directly behind McDonald's on Hwy. 29 North in Alexandria).

Stop in from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** to enjoy a sweet treat! SWCD Staff will be on hand to assist you with planning, layout and species selection for your tree planting projects.

If you are unable to attend the Tree Open House, but still want to order trees, please see our Tree Order Form, (page 11 in this newsletter). For additional questions, please call the Douglas SWCD office.



2019 Douglas County Outstanding Conservationist



The Lund Family Farm, Larry (Mary Kay) and William (Haley) Lund, a father-son farming family operation from Brandon, MN were recognized as the Douglas SWCD 2019 Outstanding Conservationist for Douglas County. Over the years the Lund's have been a perfect example of participation for the districts' programs. Both Larry and William have completed forestry improvement and establishment practices through shelterbelts planted around their building sites. They use reduced tillage to eliminate wind erosion on ag fields. They promote pasture improvement and management by having 120

ewes and 70 heifers that are rotationally grazed on pasture land throughout the summer months.

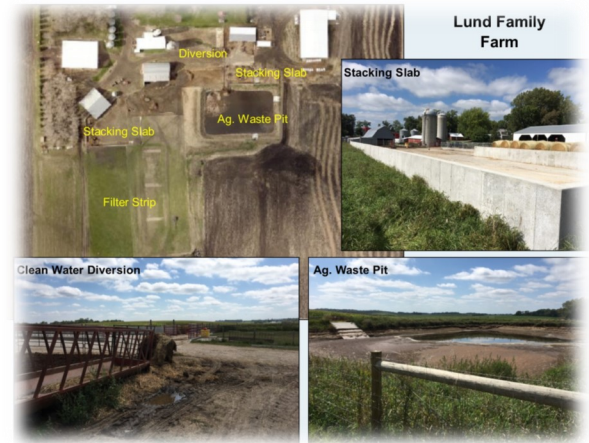
The Lund's practice cropland management by using reduced tillage on the 900 acres of tillable land they farm. Straight shanks on tillage equipment are used to keep residue on the surface to reducing soil erosion. Soil and manure tests are used to ensure nutrients are applied at proper rates.

Integrated pest management practices are represented by the Lund's use of consultants for crop scouting to ensure proper application rate and timing of insecticides and pesticides. The Lund's crop rotation includes corn, soybeans, small grains and alfalfa to help prevent crop disease.

Livestock and manure management; the Lund's milk 100 cows, raise 70 heifers, 70 steers, 120 head of ewes, 250 laying hens and raise 1,000 butcher hens. Through the EQIP program in 2018, the Lund's installed an ag. waste system which included re-constructing of an earthen manure pit, stacking slabs, diversions and a vegetative treatment area for feedlot runoff. The Lund's have a comprehensive nutrient management plan for proper manure application. In addition to the Ag. Waste System, a new barn was built that includes a robotic milker!

The Lund family has installed five acres of buffer strips along sensitive areas and are following the MN buffer law to ensure shoreline and streambanks along their property are stabilized. This will also provide adequate habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

The Lund's hosted the 2019 Douglas County "Lunch on the Farm" and were a stop for the SWCD's 65th Conservation Bus Tour, giving the public a chance to view their working operation.



Meet Our New Staff

This year Josh Meissner our Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologist took another position. We also replaced Nick Heseltine who went back to school to further his career. Both these guys will be missed by the staff and community! With staff leaving, that gives us an opportunity to introduce the new faces you might see around the office!

Pheasants Forever (PF):

Hello, my name is Kasey Jenc. I joined the Douglas SWCD office as the Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologist in November 2019. I will be working with landowners and producers to achieve their conservation and wildlife habitat goals through local, state, and federal programs, including CRP.

Following graduation from the University of Minnesota in Morris with a degree in Environmental Studies, I worked with the Pomme de Terre River Association, NRCS, and Stevens SWCD in Morris. Most recently with the SWCD, I've assisted with programs including CRP, CREP, Ag Water Quality Certification, and education and will continue to expand my knowledge and skills on these and other programs in my new position.

When I have the time, I enjoy being outdoors whether it's camping, deer hunting, or more often hiking. I live on the outskirts of Alexandria with my husband, Joe, and chocolate lab, Arrow. I look forward to meeting and assisting Douglas County landowners and producers with their conservation and water quality needs.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):

Cory Walker is the new Conservation Service Team Leader. He will be overseeing and supervising the 5 county area for the region, but housed in the Douglas County Office.

Cindy Wojtkiewicz is the new Farm Bill Technician Aid, and is hired on as a contract employee through ACES and will be working with NRCS. She will be tasked with providing technical and administrative support for conservation plans and practice applications.

Laura Aaberg is the new Administrative Assistant and is hired as a contracted employee from SINEW and will be working with NRCS. She will be in charge of assisting with the administrative needs in the office.

Other District Highlights

The Douglas SWCD is very proud to have boots on the ground and make a lasting conservation difference in the community. Some highlights we accomplished this year are:

- 5 Sediment Control Basins Installed
- 5,014 Trees Planted
- 15 Wetland Restorations
- 1 Shoreland Improvement Project
- Co-hosted and held an Irrigator Clinic



Douglas SWCD Board of Supervisors

Back: (L-R) Mike Clearly, Rod Froemming, & Billy Dropik Jr.

Front: (L-R) Paul Barsness & Ken Rutten



Douglas SWCD Staff

Back: (L-R) Jessica Albertsen, Starla Arceneau, Danielle Anderson & Kasey Jenc

Front: (L-R) Jerry Haggenmiller, Ian Olson & Andy Rice



Douglas NRCS Staff

Back: (L-R) Mike Yrjo, Rich Geving & Mark Dybdal
Front: (L-R) Cindy Wojtkiewicz & Laura Aaberg

(Not Pictured Cory Walker)

Douglas County Fair Booth

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Once again Douglas SWCD had a booth in the Fish and Game Building (DNR Building). This year's theme was focused on the water aspect of soil and water. It highlighted a miniature dock and a aquatic invasive species (AIS) that are currently infesting our Douglas County waters, to help bring home the importance of Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose.

There was also information on the Ag. Water Quality Certification Program, Kids Groundwater Festival, Youth Outdoor Activities Day, poster winners, and Water Quality Monitoring/Sampling the office does throughout the year. Staff were available to help answer questions as people went by.

The kids got to pick a fish, and were given a prize depending on the color of fish they chose. Prizes included coloring books, comic books, bobbers, temporary tattoos, hot/cold packs, fishing/hunting license holder, stress ball fish, sunglasses, collapsible flying disks and t-shirts. The adults that visited the booth got to put their names in a drawing for a chance to win a bundle of 25 bareroot trees of their choice for 2020.



Youth Outdoor Activities Day

This annual event is a free family-friendly event intended to provide youth a fun environment in which to learn about outdoor recreation. Activities included trap shooting, archery, hunting, angling and many other relate skills. Over 45 hands on activities and demonstrations were planned. This public event is made possible through the help and participating volunteer organizations, businesses, individuals and other donors. This event takes place at the Alexandria Shooting Park. Both Douglas SWCD and Douglas County Land and Resources partner together as donors, and have staff representation at the event. This is a great way to get kids outdoors, learning new and fun outdoor recreational activities and most importantly putting the electronics down!

Education with our youth is so important, especially with natural resources, and Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention, the county's AIS message was throughout the entire Youth Outdoor Activities Day experience. The logo and information was on the free t-shirts every participant received for volunteering, advertised on the website, and throughout the event at the various booths through promotional items.

This year there was a total of 2,105 youth that participated in the event! Although the rain wouldn't stay away, and caused the event to be shut down early, it was still a lot of fun and a huge success. If interested in volunteering, participating or learning about other awesome activities this event has to offer visit the website: www.youthoutdooractivityday.org. It is always the last Sunday in August, so mark your calendars and we hope to see you there!



Kids Groundwater Festival

This years groundwater festival included 512 4th grade students from across Douglas County, all of which attended six to seven stations (out of the 21), and got to see an interactive demonstration by the Science Museum of Minnesota; explaining the scientific facts about water in many interesting and experimental ways. The demonstration focuses on combining oxygen and hydrogen gases, along with how much water we use and waste on a day to day basis. This gives the students a real shock for how big their water and carbon footprints are and provides ways to help reduce it. The rest of the day schedule is set up, so each group goes to a Pictionary/Water Jeopardy game, wetlands, groundwater and bubbleology where the students get to be put in a human sized bubble!

Some of the other sessions they got to attend were: wells, well drilling and sealing, groundwater, water problems, aquifers, wetlands, water treatment, how water gets into our homes and businesses, good vs. bad water, glaciers, runoff, streams, aquatic invasive species (AIS) and the water cycle.

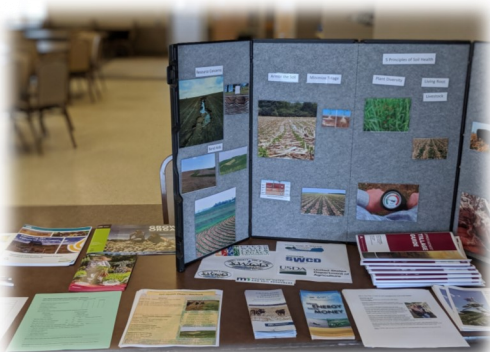
The excitement and enthusiasm really shows in the students' faces and energy. When they get to the groundwater festival, they know ahead of time what kind of fun is in store for them. In the planning process, way before the students even arrive to the festival, a theme/topic for the year is voted on by the committee members and relayed back to the students. This gives the students a chance to submit a design for the t-shirt logo/competition, which everyone participating in the event receives and wears. This event would not be possible without you volunteers and donors/sponsors across the county. Thank you very much.



Water Monitoring Grants

Douglas SWCD has been working hard all summer on their SWAG. What is this SWAG you may ask? It's not quite what you think. SWAG stands for Surface Water Assessment Grant. Douglas SWCD sought out the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) last fall and applied for this grant that provides funding for water quality monitoring. Starting in May of this year, SWCD staff have been sampling six different lakes and one stream in the Chippewa River Watershed. These lakes include Moon, Moses, Stowe, Devils, Little Chippewa, and South Oscar. The stream is County Ditch 60, north of Brandon. Sampling will continue during the summer months until September 2020.

The MPCA will use the data collected to determine if the water bodies tested meet the state standards for designated uses such as swimming and fishing. If any of the waters do not meet the standards they will be identified for protection or restoration in the next Chippewa Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) report that will be completed by the MPCA.



Soil Health Chats

The Douglas SWCD partnered with Stevens, Swift, Kandiohyi, Pope, Chippewa, West Ottertail and Grant Counties to host three soil health chats. It was a great opportunity for farmers, local business owners, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and SWCD staff to get together and discuss the importance of soil health. Some of the other speakers and guest presenters included local farmers/producers, local crop consultants, U of M Extension staff and the Chippewa River Watershed Conservation Planner.

The topics and practices highlighted were best management practices to increase soil

health, cover crops, strip/no-till practices and more! Keep an eye out in our future newsletters for more information on other up and coming Soil Health Chats that will be near you!



Lake Ida Ditch 23 Investigation

The wetland along County Ditch 23 is offloading a significant amount of phosphorous directly into Lake Ida, increasing the risk of algae in the lake. Douglas SWCD secured a grant in 2017 to investigate what is happening in the wetland and upstream in CD 23.

Barr Engineering has also completed a culvert study and surface water flow modeling for the Lake Ida watershed to identify other potential pollutant sources. Douglas SWCD got results and recommendations from Barr Engineering to potentially move forward. Staff met with the Lake Ida Association, other landowners, and held a SWCD Board meeting where concerned citizens came to hear about the improvement possibilities. Douglas SWCD applied for two new and additional Clean Water Fund grants to cover up to 75% of the total cost of the projects.



Education and Outreach:

Education and Outreach activities have made a big impact on both the local schools and youth, promoting conservation practices. Education is important for our youth, it helps to guide, direct, educate, inform and promote conservation practices to preserve our environment for the future. Some of the Education and Outreach Themes, events and topics for 2019 consisted of:

- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Composting 101
- Fish Printing
- Fishing 101
- Forestry Fun
- Growing Green (Soil Profiles)
- Life Cycles and Bugs/Insects
- Mirrors of Minnesota Marvel
- Mouse Trap Racecars
- Nature Bingo
- Pollinator Habitat
- Pop Can Fishing Rods
- Poster Contest
- Scat and Tracks
- Survival
- Plant Parts We Eat
- Where our Food Comes From
- Who Really Owns the Water?

Douglas SWCD Conservation Bus Tour

Dating back to 1954, the Douglas SWCD was established by a local group of farmers for the purpose of promoting the art and science of good land use. The job of SWCD staff is to assist landowners and operators in planning and applying the soil and water conservation practices needed to protect and improve their soil and water resources.

August 10 officially marked 65 years of conservation for our district. Douglas SWCD celebrated by hosting a Conservation Bus Tour around the County on August 6. The group left the office at 9 AM and returned around 3 PM.

This free event was to help showcase all the great conservation practices and projects that have been implemented in the county over the past years. The projects highlighted on the bus tour were:

- Agricultural Waste Control
- Buffer Strips
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Conservation Tree Planting through CRP
- Grazing Systems
- Gully Stabilization
- High Tunnels
- Lakeshore Restoration
- Living Snow Fence
- Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Farm
- Native Grasses
- No-Till Practices
- Pollinator Plantings
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)
- Streambank Restoration
- Terraces
- Water and Sediment Control Basins
- Wetland Restorations

Participants and staff enjoyed fresh grilled burgers and locally grown corn on the cob at Chippewa Park for lunch. There were 13 staff, two County support, two supporting agencies and 14 community members for a grand total of 31 on the bus!



Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Over the years, various aquatic invasive species have shown up and spread throughout the Douglas County waters. This year alone there was 2 new lake infestations. Grant Lake has Zebra Mussels and Flowering Rush, and South Oscar has Zebra Mussels. In the past year, Douglas County has implemented a few new resources to help control the spread. The first permanent decontamination unit was installed at the Kruegers Creek access on Lake Le Homme Dieu and encouraged all watercraft users to use it to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Please report any suspicions of AIS to Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. In most cases, live specimens or samples will need to be collected as well as the exact location it was found.

Once again the county continued to conduct veliger sampling in seven lakes (Irene, Miliona, Ida, Le Homme Dieu, Darling, Osakis, and Turtle) to determine presence/absence for zebra mussels in various lakes across Douglas county.

For more information on AIS, water quality or lake information for Douglas County check out the website: www/AlexAreaLakes.org

No-Till Drill

Douglas SWCD has a 10' haybuster no-till drill for rent again this year. This drill works well for seeding native grasses, pasture mixes, hay mixes, alfalfa, soybeans and small grain. The rental rate is \$9.00 per acre in Douglas County. 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.

The District's No-till drill was pretty busy in 2019. It planted a total of 701 acres during the 2019 Spring, Summer and Fall planting seasons.



Upper Chippewa Grant:

The priority of this grant is to protect water quality resources for public use and public health; in the heart of Douglas County's livestock country. Currently this area is under intensive agricultural use with an abundance of water features and hydrologically sensitive soils. Many of these farms have existing permitted or unpermitted (damaged, unused or un-lined) liquid manure storage areas (LMSA's) in need of repair, replacement or closure, or also open lots near wetlands and vulnerable soils with high water tables. The goal of this project is to improve drinking water quality by upgrading, replacing or closing existing damaged or unpermitted manure storage areas, in addition to addressing open lot runoff. Currently there are five project locations that have been identified and up to four more are anticipated to be identified in the next two years, for a grand total of 10 projects all within three sub watersheds primarily in Millerville, and Leaf Valley Townships.

Groundwater movement is extremely variable, emphasizing the need for protecting it. From the local perspective, unpermitted, often unlined LMSAs pose a risk through the dynamics of groundwater movement and the variability of surface water flow based on a sharp increase in modification of drainage systems via tile drainage and the alteration of Type one and two wetlands throughout the project area. This project will not only benefit those living in the project area, but many throughout Minnesota and beyond. Total grant awarded was \$ 356,960.

Weed Control:

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has updated the identified list of noxious weeds. On the top of the list is still Palmer Amaranth, Oriental Bittersweet and Common Tansy which have been confirmed in Douglas County. Please do your part by helping to control or eradicate noxious weeds to help control the spread. Contact Tom Anderson the county weed inspector with any questions or suspected weeds. 320-762-2999

Douglas County Water Quality Legacy Fund

Douglas SWCD has partnered with Douglas County Land and Resources, The Nature Conservancy, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), and the Douglas County Lakes Association (DCLA) to create a Water Quality Legacy Fund (WQLF). The purpose of the WQLF is to help assist with grants that require matching funds from local entities, or landowners. With this fund, the county will be able to apply for more grants, and provide funding to individual projects when the need arises.

This fund has been created to assist with the protection and restoration of the natural water resources in Douglas County. If interested in donating or becoming a sponsor please call the Douglas SWCD office or visit www.wcif.org/give/funds/dcw.html.



Pomme de Terre River One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

Douglas County only makes up about 4% of the Pomme de Terre River Watershed. Our portion of the watershed is about 20,000 acres and Lake Christina covers 1/5th of the area. The smallest town in Douglas County is Melby with a population of around 10. Melby is the only community in the Douglas County portion of the watershed. It has both Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) present in the area.

Lake Christina is one of the priority lakes in the Pomme de Terre 1W1P. Lake Christina is nationally recognized as a critical staging area for migrating waterfowl, especially canvasbacks during both spring and fall migrations. Early surveys (1940's) noted 300,000-400,000 ducks and coots, including up to 150,000 canvasbacks. The MN DNR designated Lake Christina as a Wildlife Lake in 1983.

The Pomme de Terre River Watershed has lots of great conservation practices to stop and admire throughout the watershed. One popular site that has been preserved through conservation in the watershed is known as seven Sisters Prairie owned by The Nature Conservancy. This area got its name from seven matching peaks. The overall layout of the land is very hilly, which doesn't allow for the best farming land, but the land is great for livestock grazing. This is part of the reason so many landowners in this area have been willing to put their land into easements or CRP.

This past summer, the Douglas SWCD staff took part in a Board Tour of the Pomme de Terre River Watershed which was hosted by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and the Pomme de Terre River Association (PDTRA). The tour offered board members and staff a valuable opportunity to see first hand how partnerships between local conservation staff and landowners are making a difference in communities across Minnesota. BWSR helps to provide grant funding to local units of government through the Clean Water Fund, which began in 2009 to aid projects in protecting drinking water, wetlands, prairies, wildlife habitat, and improving the quality of water bodies. The 20-member BWSR board includes representatives from state agencies, local governments, and citizens. The projects featured during the 2019 tour illustrated how successful partnerships between federal, state and local governments and private landowners safeguard and enhance Minnesota's soil and water resources.

Agricultural producers now can enroll in the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) programs – two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) safety net programs – for the 2019 & 2020 crop years. Meanwhile, producers who enrolled farms for the 2018 crop year have started receiving more than \$1.5 billion for covered commodities for which payments were triggered under such programs.

ARC provides income support payments on historical base acres when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level. PLC provides income support payments on historical base acres when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its reference price. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and updated both programs.

Signup for the 2020 crop year closes June 30, 2020, while signup for the 2019 crop year closes March 15, 2020. Producers who have not yet enrolled for 2019 can enroll for both 2019 and 2020 during the same visit to an FSA county office.

ARC and PLC have options for the farm operator who is actively farming the land as well as the owner of the land. Farm owners also have a one-time opportunity to update PLC payment yields beginning with crop year 2020. If the farm owner and producer visit the FSA county office together, FSA can also update yield information during that visit.

Covered commodities include barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, crambe, flaxseed, grain sorghum, lentils, mustard seed, oats, peanuts, dry peas, rapeseed, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, safflower seed, seed cotton, sesame, soybeans, sunflower seed and wheat. Please call the office to schedule an appointment. 320-763-3191 Ext. 2

Livestock Losses- The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather, disease and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government or protected by federal law.

LIP compensates livestock owners and contract growers for livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather, including losses due to hurricanes, floods, blizzards, wildfires, extreme heat or extreme cold.

For disease losses, FSA county committees can accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management.

Eligible livestock owners must file a notice within 30 calendar days of when the loss is first apparent.

Participants must provide the following supporting documentation to their local FSA office no later than 60 calendar days after the end of the calendar year in which the eligible loss condition occurred.

* Proof of death documentation * Copy of grower's contracts * Proof of normal mortality documentation

USDA has established normal mortality rates for each type and weight range of eligible livestock, i.e. Adult Beef Cow = 1.5% and Non-Adult Beef Cattle (less than 400 pounds) = 3%. These established percentages reflect losses that are considered expected or typical under "normal" conditions.

Submit Loan Requests for Financing Early - The Farm Loan team in Douglas County is already working on operating loans for spring 2020, so it is important that potential borrowers submit their requests early so they can be timely processed. The farm loan team can help determine which loan programs are best for applicants.

FSA offers a wide range of low-interest loans that can meet the financial needs of any farm operation for just about any purpose. The traditional farm operating and farm ownership loans can help large and small farm operations take advantage of early purchasing discounts for spring inputs as well expenses throughout the year.

Microloans are a simplified loan program that will provide up to \$50,000 for both Farm Ownership and Operating Microloans to eligible applicants. These loans, targeted for smaller operations and non-traditional operations, can be used for operating expenses, starting a new agricultural enterprise, purchasing equipment, and other needs associated with a farming operation. The staff at the Douglas County FSA office can provide more details on farm operating and microloans and provide loan applications. Loans to beginning farmers and members of underserved groups are a priority.

Other types of loans available include:

Marketing Assistance Loans allow producers to use eligible commodities as loan collateral and obtain a 9-month loan while the crop is in storage. These loans provide cash flow to the producer and allow them to market the crop when prices may be more advantageous.

Farm Storage Facility Loans can be used to build permanent structures used to store eligible commodities, or for storage and handling trucks, or portable or permanent handling equipment. A variety of structures are eligible under this loan, including bunker silos, grain bins, hay storage structures and refrigerated structures for vegetables and fruit. A producer may borrow up to \$500,000 per loan.

Please call the Douglas County office if you have questions about any of the loans available through FSA. 320-763-3191 EXT 2.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

The 2019 general sign up for CRP is now open through February 28, 2020, and the continuous CRP sign up is on going at this time.

Who can enroll and what are the benefits? Farmers and ranchers who enroll in CRP receive a yearly rental payment for voluntarily establishing long term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses and or trees to help improve water quality, environmental quality, positively impact your landscapes, prevent soil erosion and develop or increase wildlife habitat on marginally productive ag lands. Landowners enter into contracts that last between 10-15 years. Currently there is 22 million acres enrolled, but with the passing of the 2018 Farm Bill, that cap has now been lifted to 27 million acres. If you are interested in enrolling or have questions stop in to the Douglas SWCD office and talk to Kasey Jenc (Pheasants Forever Wildlife Biologist).

In the past, these were the most common practices enrolled in CRP:

- *Duck Nesting Habitat*
- *Pollinator Habitat*
- *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.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

CREP is a program that has been growing in popularity statewide due to the program incentives that were introduced during the summer of 2018. CREP targets high-priority conservation concerns, in exchange for removing environmentally sensitive land from production and establishing permanent resource conserving plant species. Farmers are paid a one time rim payment in addition to an annual rental rate for 14-15 years. Participation is voluntary and a contracts are perpetual.

We welcome all questions and enjoy sitting down with our local landowners to discuss their expectations and programs available. The Douglas SWCD office can answer questions you might have about what the program offers.



Mark Your Calendars!

January 20 - SWCD Office Closed (Martin Luther King Day)

January 29 - Tree Open House

February 17 - SWCD Office Closed (Presidents' Day)

May 6 - Kids Groundwater Festival

May 25- SWCD Office Closed (Memorial Day)

June 16 - Free Nitrate Clinic

*3rd Monday of the Month is Cooler Dropoff Day for lake sampling. Please have them to the office no later then 1:00 PM



Like us on Facebook: [DouglasSWCD](#)



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 implement state-approved conservation practices. Some of the practices include: rain gardens, streambank and shoreline protection, water and sediment control structures, and side inlets. Most practices have a life span of 10 years, which means that they must be maintained for that length of time.

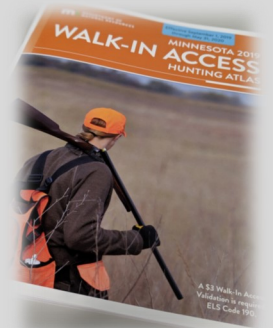
If you would like more information please contact the Douglas SWCD office.

Walk-In Access Program (WIA)

The Walk-In Access Program targets land that's 40 acres or more that is 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 is added if within 1/2 mile of existing state or federal hunting land, 140 acre area, and if a multiyear contract is signed.

Enrolled lands are covered under the Minnesota recreational use laws that limit landowner's liability. 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.

If you have any questions about the program or if you are interested in enrolling your conservation land into the program, please stop by or call the Douglas SWCD office.



MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a completely voluntary program that helps landowners and farmers do everything they can to keep protecting our state's streams, lakes and rivers. Farmers are the original stewards of our soil and water. They can use MAWQCP to gauge their progress in protecting water quality and preserving it for generations to come.



Certification gives the public and farmers a greater certainty about regularity standards, ultimately protecting Minnesota's water resources.

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, 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 potential risk to water quality. If a field scores below 8.5 the certifier begins working with the landowner or operator to identify areas of potential improvement to achieve a certifying score. Certification includes an on-site field-by-field assessment.

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

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 pools. If interested in programs like these, or how to become Ag. Water Quality Certified, please visit Douglas SWCD, office, or visit the MAWQCP website: www.mda.state.mn.us/awqcp

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 within 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/upgrades to drain tile systems. These activities need to be reviewed by our staff to prevent wetland violations. It is also a good idea to check with our office before cleaning drainage ditches as such activities may impact wetlands. Some drainageways 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/regulations.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.



Buffer

The Minnesota Buffer law requires a riparian filter strip or perennial vegetative buffer of 50 feet wide along lakes, rivers and streams, and buffers of 16.5 feet wide along the ditches. These buffers help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen and sediment. The law provides flexibility for landowners to install alternative practices with equivalent water quality benefits.

As of July 2019, approximately 96% of parcels adjacent to Minnesota's public waters and public ditches are compliant with the buffer law. Douglas County is currently sitting at 96% compliance.

There is a wide range of vegetation suitable for a buffer. The main thing to remember, is it has to be a perennial. Which does include hay and forage crops such as alfalfa, clover, woody vegetation, perennial grains (to be harvested later) and prairie vegetation. Whatever the vegetation being planted, it is recommended to purchase certified seed to reduce the risk of planting species that are prohibited in Minnesota.

With both of the deadline dates past to get the remaining buffers in, the buffer enforcement has begun. For those that chose not to, or ran out of time to be compliant, penalties and fees will start getting assessed to the specific landowners. If there is any question about a specific parcel of land, please call the SWCD office and we can assist you further!

Rural Development (RD)

USDA Rural Development has funding available for very low- and low-income individuals and families seeking to purchase or repair a home in a rural area.

USDA's Direct Home Loan Program offers financing to qualified very-low and low-income applicants that are unable to qualify for traditional financing. No down payment is required, and the interest rate could be as low as one percent with a subsidy. Applicants must meet income and credit guidelines and demonstrate repayment ability. Generally, rural areas with a population less than 35,000 are eligible.

The maximum loan amount for repair is \$20,000 at a one percent interest rate, repayable for up to 20 years. Grants of up to \$7,500 are available to homeowners 62 and older and must be used to remove health or safety hazards, such as fixing a leaking roof, installing indoor plumbing, or replacing a furnace.

Contact the Douglas County USDA Rural Development office today to see if you qualify. For more information please contact USDA Rural Development at 320-761-3191 x 4, stop by the office at 900 Robert St. Suite 103 or check out the website at: www.rd.usda.gov/mn.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

The USDA's NRCS will be in charge of the EQIP. The 2020 signup deadline is continuous for the sign up and contracts will be awarded on a ranking system. NRCS will be ranking EQIP applications to help producers improve water and air quality, build healthier soil, improve grazing and forest lands, conserve energy, enhance organic operations, and achieve other environmental benefits.

Minnesota producers implement conservation practices through EQIP, the agency's largest Farm Bill conservation program. EQIP offers farmer, ranchers and forestland managers a variety of options to conserve natural resources. General EQIP funding covers many conservation practices to treat resource concerns.

A EQIP conservation investment helps improve environmental health and the economy of Minnesota's communities. EQIP can help provide financial assistance for a variety of conservation activities, such as: Pollinator Habitat, Farm Energy Improvement, No-Till, Cover Crops, Water & Sediment Control Basins, Terraces, Rotational Grazing Systems, Nutrient Management, and many more.

To participate in EQIP, an applicant must be an individual, entity or joint operation that meets EQIP eligibility criteria. Potential applicants can contact the Douglas NRCS office to discuss their resource concerns.



Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

In the past years, NRCS has offered the CSP and over 70 million acres across the nation's resources have been enrolled. Availability of CSP for the 2020-2021 year, is currently dependent on the 2019 rules for the 2018 Farm Bill.

Through CSP, NRCS has provided financial and technical assistance to eligible producers to conserve and enhance soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest lands, agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe, and other private agricultural land (including cropped woodland, marshes, and agricultural land used for the protection of livestock) on which resource concerns related to agricultural production could be addressed. Participation in this program is completely voluntary.

CSP has encouraged land stewards to improve their conservation performance by installing and adopting additional activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing activities on agricultural land and nonindustrial private forest land. A CSP program evaluation has been required. The evaluation determined basic information about CSP eligibility requirement, stewardship threshold requirements and payment types.

For the evaluation or complete activities list, and to learn more about CSP, visit the Douglas NRCS Office today! Please note that the entire agricultural operation must be enrolled and must include all agricultural land that is under the participants control for the term of the proposed contract that is operated substantially separate from other operations.

2020 Tree Order Form

Paid _____ Receipt# _____

320-763-3191 Ext 3**Douglas Soil & Water Conservation District**
900 Robert St. Suite 102, Alexandria, MN 56308

Date _____	Name _____	Phone _____
Address _____	City _____	State _____ Zip _____ Twp. _____ Sec. _____

Payment of trees must accompany order. Trees will be reserved for you upon payment only. Make check payable to Douglas SWCD. Substitution of tree size may be necessary as our suppliers cannot guarantee us tree size. No guarantee can be made for tree(s) survival.

Quantity	Size	Species of Trees	Growth Rate	Mature Height	Cost
Small Shrubs (Sold in multiples of 25 @ \$1.50 each)					
	18-24"	Arrowwood	Moderate	5-10'	
	18-24"	Buffaloberry	Moderate	12-18'	
	18-24"	Nanking Cherry	Rapid	6-10'	
	18-24"	Black Chokeberry	Moderate	4-6'	
	18-24"	Cotoneaster	Moderate	6-8'	
	18-24"	Gray Dogwood	Moderate	7-10'	
	18-24"	Redosier Dogwood	Moderate	7-10'	
	18-24"	Juneberry	Moderate	6-8'	
	12-18"	Common Lilac	Mod-Rapid	8-12'	
Large Shrubs (Sold in multiples of 25 @ \$1.50 each)					
	12-18"	Apricot	Mod-Rapid	15-25'	
**	18-24"	Mountain Ash	Slow	15-25'	
**	18-24"	Chokecherry	Mod-Rapid	20-25'	
*	18-24"	Red Splendor Crabapple	Rapid	15-20'	
**	18-24"	Nannyberry	Moderate	15-20'	
*	18-24"	American Plum	Mod-Rapid	15-20'	
*	18-24"	Laurel Leaf Willow	Rapid	25-30'	
Large Trees (Sold in multiples of 25 @ \$1.50 each)					
	18-24"	Paper Birch	Rapid	50-70'	
	18-24"	Black Cherry	Moderate	50-70'	
**	18-24"	Pin Cherry	Moderate	40-55'	
**	18-24"	Hackberry	Rapid	60-90'	
**	18-24"	Red Maple	Mod-Rapid	50-70'	
**	18-24"	Silver Maple	Rapid	60-90'	
*	18-24"	Sugar Maple	Moderate	60-80'	
**	18-24"	Bur Oak	Slow	70-80'	
**	18-24"	Red Oak	Moderate	60-80'	
**	18-24"	Siouxland Poplar - Cottonless	Rapid	80-100'	
**	18-24"	Black Walnut	Moderate	80-100'	
Conifers (Sold in multiples of 25 @ \$1.50 each)					
	6-14"	Red Pine	Moderate	50-80'	
	10-16"	White Pine	Rapid	70-100'	
	8-15"	Black Hills Spruce	Moderate-Rapid	45-60'	
	10-16"	Norway Spruce	Rapid	80-100'	
Potted Trees (\$9.50 each)					
	15-18"	Northern White Cedar	Moderate	40-50'	
	15-18"	Red Pine	Moderate	50-80'	
	15-18"	White Pine	Rapid	70-100'	
	15-18"	Black Hills Spruce	Moderate-Rapid	40-60'	
	15-18"	Norway Spruce	Rapid	80-100'	
Special Order					

Ask about other species before January 30**Planting Charges:**

\$0.75 Our Tractor for Planting
 \$2.00 Hand Planting Bare-root
 (\$150.00 Min. Planting Charge)

Tube/Stake Charges:

_____ 4' tubes @ \$3.00 each
 _____ 5' stakes @ \$1.50 each

Tube/Stake Installation:**Fabric Installation:**

\$0.50 per foot

\$2.00 per tube/stake (\$150 Min)

* Tree Tubes Recommended

** Tree Tubes Strongly Recommended

Tree Cost**Tube Cost****Stakes Cost****Subtotal****7.380% Sales Tax****Planting Charges****Tube Installation****Grand Total**

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Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District
900 Robert Street Suite 102
Alexandria, MN 56308
320-763-3191 Ext. 3



Prsrt First Class
Mail
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3876
Twin Cities, MN

Food Plot, Native Grass and Forb Seed 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.

There is 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 one 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 the winter season.

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.

Conservation Trees, Planting and Fabric Mulch

2019 started off as a strange year for Douglas SWCD and the tree sales. Our first Tree open house got delayed and rescheduled due to the wonderful winter bliss. The accumulation of snow in a short time frame caused our tree shed roof to collapse. That led the SWCD to purchasing and moving into a new tree shed top priority.

Once Spring finally sprung, the trees were selling fast! We sold out of all the trees we preordered, and successfully got all the plantings done. In total, there were 21 plantings and over 14,000 feet of fabric installed.

Overall there was 26,360 trees including 880 potted trees sold and planted in Douglas County.

The Douglas SWCD is now taking orders for trees for the spring of 2020 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

Not only do we provide trees for your selection, we provide services from planning to planting, fabric mulch installation and tree 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 reusing the moisture from the trees. Cost-Share is available for eligible practices. 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!

