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Spring 2020 Newsletter

GRANT UPDATE: Lake Ida Subwatershed Projects

This grant is a follow up to our Lake Ida FY18-19 AIG that has been used to complete a subwatershed assessment for the Lake Ida HUC 12 to identify areas of concentrated flow and potential erosion. This assessment has been used to target areas of nonpoint pollution for practice implementation through this grant application. Implementation practices proposed will reduce sediment runoff to Lake Ida by 577.31 tons/year, phosphorus by 434.62 lbs./year, and nitrogen by 238.40 lbs./year.

Implementation activities will include: gully fixes, water and Sediment Control Basins projects, terrace project, shoreline stabilizations/restorations, rain gardens, manure storage BMPs, and of cover crops. Technical assistance and engineering will be provided through this grant to design and implement BMPs.

Awareness of Lake Ida and its quality will be increased through staff efforts and project implementation. Douglas SWCD has a strong social media presence that is used to share information about projects and activities completed by staff and partners. This grant will help strengthen partnerships between the SWCD, Douglas County, Ida Township, Lake Ida Association, and Douglas County Lakes Association (DCLA). Several landowners have been waiting several years for funding to complete their projects, without this funding these projects will not be completed, most of the landowners do not qualify for other funding sources such as EQIP or they don't have high match dollars.

Projects are funded on a first come, first served basis and funding is limited. People interested in completing a conservation practice should contact Douglas SWCD.



Food Plot, Native Grass and Forb Seed Mixes

The Douglas SWCD has 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 food for wildlife throughout the winter.

Native grass and forb (flowers) seed mixes are available to landowners for conservation practices. SWCD Staff 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.



What Watershed are you? - Part 1

A series of watershed articles disseminated by the Long Prairie Watershed Collaboration of Todd, Douglas, Morrison, Wadena, East and West Otter Tail Counties

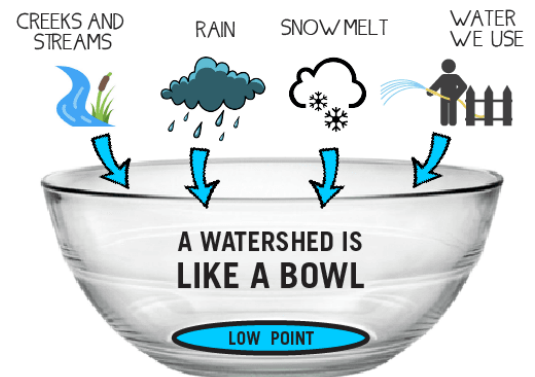
Like individual people, every **watershed** carries its own set of physical attributes, characteristics and boundaries. As a “citizen” is to its family, community, state, and country; a “watershed” is to the water resources of the county, state, nation, and world. Every decision and action made internally can result in a more profound impact outside of your personal or watershed boundary.

What exactly is a watershed?

Every lake, river, place, and home on earth is found within a watershed. A watershed is made up of topography and landscapes including fields, forests, hills, wetlands, neighborhoods and cities. A **watershed** is strictly a geographical



area with its boundaries determined by the natural direction of water flow. We all know water flows downhill to the lowest point, but its direction of travel depends on the path of least resistance and what physical features lie in its way. Originating as precipitation, water that is not evaporated or absorbed, weaves its way around the base of hills, through crevices in rocks and soil particulates, through ditch-es, dips, valleys, lakes, creeks, and streams, often for miles, to reach a larger river base. If precipitation falls on a hill, on which side of the hill it lands determines the direction the droplet will flow. A watershed is named after its largest receiving body of water of which merges to another often larger watershed. For example, the Long Prairie Watershed, an area covering large portions of Douglas, Todd, and Morrison Counties with smaller portions in East and West Otter Tail and Wadena counties, is named after the Long Prairie River which transports water beyond its watershed boundary to the Crow Wing River. The Crow Wing eventually merges with the great Mississippi River. A **watershed boundary** is a connection of all points marking the farthest reaches in which all contributing waters fall and flow.



There are 81 major watersheds in Minnesota. Each watershed is broken into smaller sub-watersheds draining to the littler creeks, ponds, lakes, and streams in the more localized region. There are 5600 subwatersheds in Minnesota!

A group of related Major Watersheds merging to the same region of the country or state is often referred to as a basin. Similar to the nesting or stacking toys from Russia called Matryoshka dolls, a sub-watershed fits inside a major watershed which fits inside a basin. As you might imagine, hydrologists who study water and water patterns in depth, have a classification system breaking land areas into even smaller units called **HUCs**- an acronym that stands for Hydrologic Unit Code.



Zebra Mussel Testing

Do you live on a lake that is at risk of being infested by Zebra mussels? The reality is that if your lake doesn't have zebra mussels, it is at risk! Help Douglas SWCD and Douglas County identify infestations early by becoming a sampler. It is very easy to help, 1) get a kit from the SWCD office before June; 2) take two grab samples (on different days) before July; 3) return your samples to the office and enjoy the rest of your summer knowing you are doing your part to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species!

No-Till Drills Available

Douglas SWCD has purchased another 10' haybuster no-till drill for rent. This year there will be 2 drills available. These drills work well for seeding native grasses, pasture mixes, hay mixes, alfalfa, soybeans, and small grain. The rental rate is \$9.00 per acre (\$100 minimum) in Douglas County, and \$11 per acre (\$150 minimum plus an additional \$150 delivery fee) out of 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 Clean Water and Land Legacy Logo

The Legacy Logo identifies projects funded by the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. BWSR grants funded through the Amendment require the logo to be posted where practicable, per the grant agreement. The Clean Water Fund Grant Programs include: Accelerated Implementation, Community Partners, Multiple Drainage Management, Projects and Practices, Soil Erosion and Drainage Law Compliance Program, One Watershed One Planning Grant, Targeted Watersheds, Technical Training Acceleration, Watershed-based Implementation Funding Program and Well Sealing.

Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is a 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 regulatory 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 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 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. Quality Certified, please visit Douglas SWCD office, or visit the MAWQCP website: <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/awqcp>



Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Update

CRP continuous sign up is still available until August 21. Producers have an option to have a three, four, or five year CRP Contract to establish cover crops on less productive cropland in exchange for payments. Whether using a single crop rotation or over multiple years, cover crops can improve the productivity of soils and soil health on a farm for generations and increase the bottom line for the farmer.

Lake Sampling Kickoff Informational Meeting

Lake sampling kickoff will be on May 13th, 4:00-6:00 PM in the Douglas County Public Works North parking lot. If you cannot make it please contact Danielle to make other arrangements. Information about RMB labs and lake sampling data can be found at: <https://www.rmbel.info/lakes/>



Check it out!

May 1-2 - Tree Pick up days. Friday 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM. Saturday 8:00 AM - 12 Noon.

May 6 - Kids Groundwater Festival (CANCELED)

May 11 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM) (On Zoom)

May 13 - Lake Sampling Kick off 4:00-6:00 PM

May 18 - Volunteer Lake Monitoring - cooler drop off day

May 25 - SWCD Office Closed (Memorial Day)

May 29 - General CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program) Deadline

June 8 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM)

June 15 - Volunteer Lake Monitoring - cooler drop off day

July 3 - SWCD Office Closed (Independence Day Observed)

July 13 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM)

July 20 - Volunteer Lake Monitoring - cooler drop off day

August 10 - Douglas SWCD is 66 years old!

August 10 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM)

August 15 - Aquatic Invasive Species Starry Trek

August 17 - Volunteer Lake Monitoring - Cooler drop off day

August 19-22 - Douglas County Fair

August 21 - Continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Deadline

August 25 - FREE Nitrate Testing Clinic at SWCD

August 30- Youth Outdoor Activity Day

September 7 - SWCD Office Closed (Labor Day)

September 11 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM)

September 21 - Volunteer Lake Monitoring - Cooler drop off day



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