

# Douglas SWCD

“66 Years in Conservation”



2020

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 2018 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, audiotope, 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

2020 was a very unique year for the Douglas Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). The year started with tree sales, and suddenly a global pandemic hit and caused everything to come to a screeching halt. From there on, everything looked a bit differently with having to social distance, cancel events, and wear masks to protect our staff and customers. Tree planting, tree matting, tube installation, no-till planting, Wetland Conservation Act work survey and design for erosion control practices and feedlot improvement projects, and construction of erosion control practices and feedlot projects. Buffer Law Implementation consumed a large amount of time. There are many other different projects worked on through the Water Plan Completion Plan Amendment, water quality monitoring, and of technical advice given.

Education activities were also put on hold, and lots of the time was spent on Zoom meetings, and getting a game plan for the up and coming year with adapting to the new “norm” Staff were not able to get into the schools or work with students. Some of the educational activities canceled this year include: Area II and State Envirothons, Annual Kids’ Groundwater Festival, Poster and Mural Contests, Douglas County Fair booth, Viking Sportsman-Youth Outdoors Activities day, school programing, Boy Scout Merit Badge, Kids Fleet Farm Fishing Day, Big Ole SUP-a-thon and multi-county outreach.

The Districts tree planting and matting program was again a huge success. There were 26,400 trees sold, 22 plantings completed by staff with over 8,800 feet of fabric and 370 tree tubes installed. Staff was busy this past fall with the installation of erosion control practices in the County. A total of 19 sediment blocks were installed. 1 Ag Waste system was installed in 2020. Wetland restoration construction was also busy with 15 wetland restorations completed. Staff were also able to complete 3 Low Income Septic Upgrades, 11 Alternative Tile Intakes, 3 Shoreland Improvement Projects, 32 Acres of Cover Crops, and 2 Terraces. Co-hosted and held an Irrigator Clinic, and met with hundreds of landowners on site. The District No-till drill program was extremely busy this year, planting over 925 acres of native grasses, soybeans and alfalfa. All of these conservation practices will benefit the soil productivity and water quality of Douglas County. A total of over \$50,000 in federal and state grant cost share funds were used to assist landowners in installing conservation practices

2020 wrapped up the Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) grant for water sampling.

Three Clean Water Grants were continued in 2020. The first 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 second is a follow up to the soil boring grant, that provides cost-share to landowners for either closing or reconstruction of Ag. Waste Pits that were found to be out of compliance after the soil borings. The third is a follow up of the Lake Ida County Ditch 23 grant from 2018, this new grant provides cost-share to landowners within the Lake Ida watershed to correct erosion problems that were identified in the 2018 grant.

The Ag BMP Loan Program was also used extensively by landowners in 2020. Loans included, septic updates and conservation tillage, planting, & spraying equipment. A total of over \$1.3 Million in loan funds were used in the county since the program started.

E-Link Reporting and plenty of website development.

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.



# 2020 Board of Supervisors



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

Back Row: (Left to Right) Mike Cleary, Rod Froeming and Bill Dropik Jr.

Front Row: (Left to Right) Paul Barsness, Ken Rutten

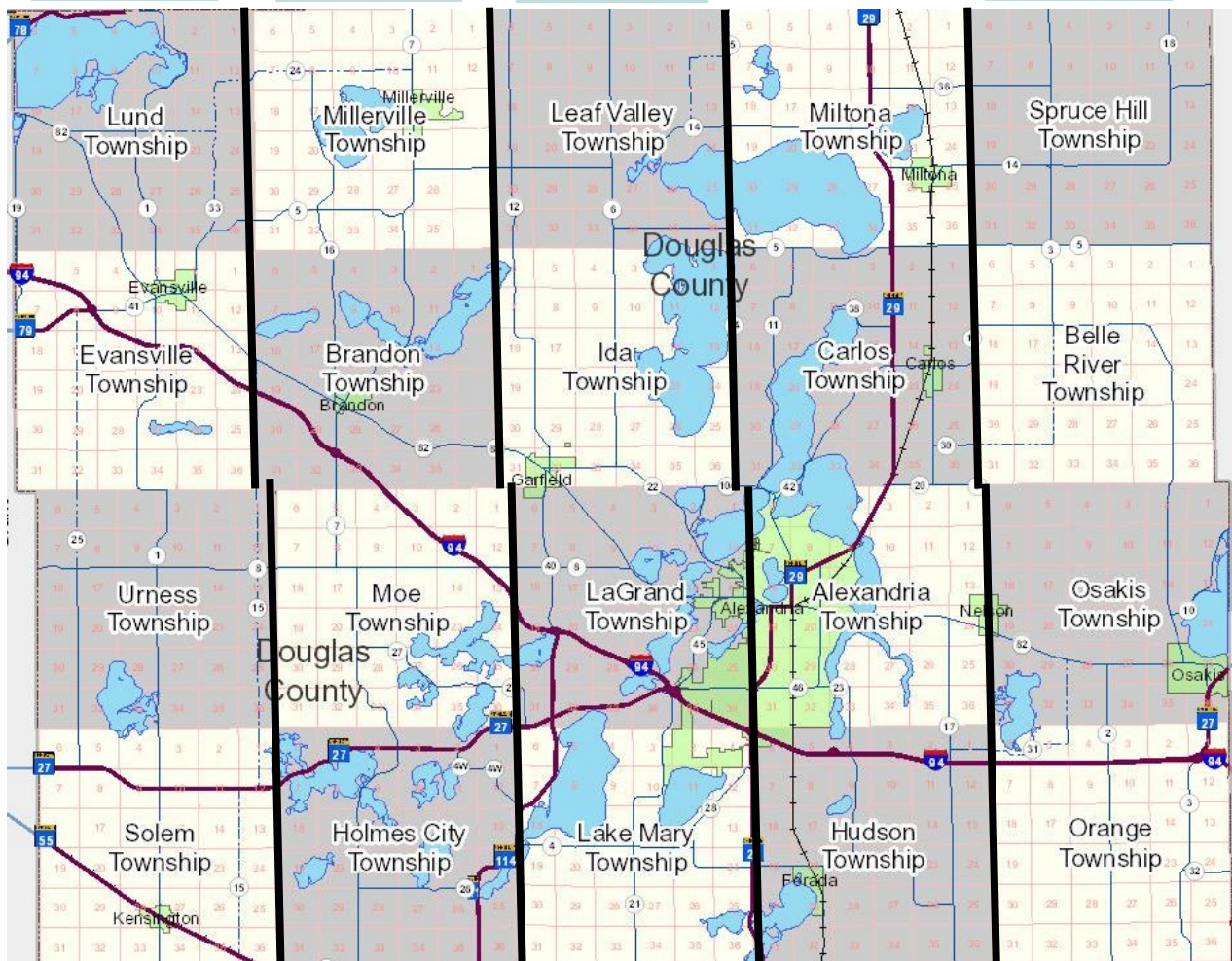
Paul Barsness  
Area 1

Mike Cleary  
Area 2

Rod Froeming  
Area 3

Bill Dropik  
Area 4

Ken Rutten  
Area 5





## 2020 Staff



Douglas County Soil and Water Conservation District Staff includes:

Back (Left to Right) Jessica Albertsen, Starla Arceneau, Danielle Anderson and Kasey Jenc

Front (Left to Right) Jerry Haggemiller, Ian Olson and Andy Rice

## 2020 Tree Planting Crew



Staff at tree handout day

Dan helped this year with the tree plantings.



# Preventing your Onsite Septic System From Freezing



Depending on your system, location, and water use, you may never have a freezing problem. However, there are several steps that you can take to prevent onsite systems from freezing. Pick and choose based on your situation:

1. To provide extra insulation, place a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment system (ie. straw, leaves, hay or any other loose material that will not compact and stay in place). This is particularly important if you have had a new system installed late in the year and no vegetative cover has been established. If your system is currently frozen ignore this step, as it will delay thawing come spring.
2. Let the grass or lawn get a little longer in the late summer/fall over the tank and soil treatment area. This will provide extra insulation and help hold any snow that may fall.
3. Use warm/hot water if you feel the system is starting to freeze. The Onsite Sewage Treatment Program is usually an advocate of water conservation, but if freezing is a concern, increasing low use to a normal water use can help the system.(ie. doing one warm/hot load of laundry per day, using your dishwasher, or taking a hot bath. DO NOT leave water running continuously, this will hydraulically overload the system.
4. If gone for an extended period from home or a cabin with a septic system, plan accordingly. Have someone use sufficient quantities of water in the home regularly or pumping out your tank before leaving. If there is a high water table, only pump out the tank if the tank was designed for high water table conditions. If a shallow tank is left full for several winter months, the sewage can freeze.
5. Fix leaky plumbing fixtures or appliances in your home.This will help prevent freezing problems and help your system work better year round.
6. If appliances generate very low flows such as high efficiency furnaces, put a heat tape in the pipe, and while away, have someone come and run warm water for a while. Alternately, install a small condensate pump that holds and discharges 2 gallons per cycle.
7. Keep all types of vehicles and high traffic people activities off of the system.This is a good rule to follow year round.
8. All risers; inspections pipes and manholes should have covers on them. Sealing them and adding insulation is a good idea. Insulation may be added particularly if the top of the septic tank is within 2 feet or the surface.
9. Keep an eye on your system. If seeping or ponding occurs contact an onsite professional to determine the problem.
10. Add more insulation to your system. This could include replacing pipe with insulated pipe, adding styrofoam over septic tanks or adding more soil cover.

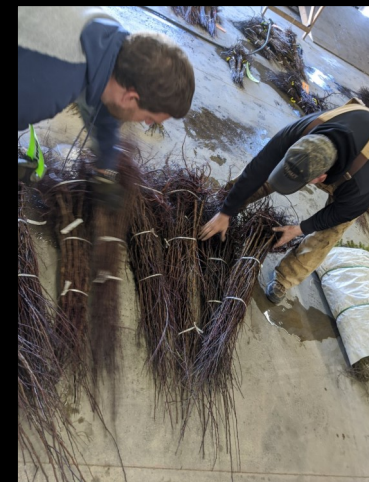
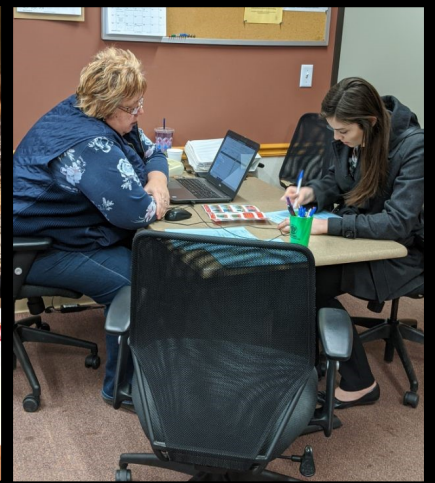
## Weed Watch

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. Call 320-762-2999





# 2020 Staff hard at work





# Getting Boots on the Ground, and projects done for Conservation!

Embankment being built



Embankment completed



Completed WASCOB  
with intake



Completed WASCOB



Tile Installation



Completed Project





Intake assembly  
Installation



Tile Outlet Installation

Tree Planting



Fabric Mulch Install





# Outstanding Conservationist



The Douglas SWCD nominated Lakeside Jerseys - Kevin and Steph Krohnfeldt, along with their children Kelsey and Cole as this years Outstanding Conservation Farmer. They farm 350 acres and milk 75 Jersey cows on the southwest side of Lake Miltona in Miltona and Leaf Valley Townships. Kevin started farming in 2009 but quit his full-time job and started full time farming in 2015 when he took over the farm from his parents Burnell and Loretta Krohnfeldt. The Krohnfeldt's switched to 100% no-till in 2019/2020 to cut down on expenses and conserve moisture on the sandy soils they farm. They use a variable rate planter on the corn and soybeans to optimize yields, and plant a rotation of corn, soybeans, small grain and alfalfa on their farm.

A manure storage facility was installed on the farm in 2013 to control runoff from the feedlot area and eliminate daily hauling of manure from the dairy cows. Manure is tested annually as well as soiling test on the fields to ensure manure is applied for the crops need. A manure management plan is followed to apply manure at agronomic rates and to avoid spreading near sensitive areas. Manure is typically applied to the small grain acres and cover crops are then planted on these acres. Cover crops of oats, annual rye, and field peas are planted on the acres where the manure is spread, to tie up the nutrients in the manure to ensure they will be available for the next years crops. Some years depending on the growth of the cover crops they are harvested in the spring for livestock feed. In 2020 a water and sediment control basin was installed with the assistance of State Cost Share and EQIP funding to solve an erosion problem on one of the fields they farm. Pollinator Habitat and field border has been established with the assistance of the EQIP program.

The Krohnfeldt's annually host Zion School kindergarten class and parents to visit the farm to educate students on soil conservation, dairy farming, crop farming and preservation of the land. They see this to keep family's informed on how milk and food are



produced and what farmers are doing to protect the soil and natural resources.

Kevin is always open to new ideas and willing to make changes to his farming operations which may include no-till modifications, refining cover crop mixes, and seeding rates. The Krohnfeldt's attend conservation tillage conferences, cover crop seminars, and field days always trying to gain new information to improve yields and reduce input costs.

As quoted by Kevin and Steph. "I'd like to say that people like Benet Glanzer (our Agronomist), Stu Olson (our Ag Zyme Rep), our extended Krohnfeldt family who lend a hand with the field planting and harvesting, Mark Boesl (our excavator for the terraces and buffer strips), Mark Koep (our Feedlot Rep), the folks at NRCS office, Jerry Haggenmiller (our Soil and Water Conservation Coordinator), and Brian Zimmermann at Ag Country, plus the many holistic farm classes and conservation classes we go to play a huge part in our efforts to keep our footprint small on the earth!! These people deserve a ton of credit as well, for helping us with the right resources and tools to make it possible to keep our environment and waters clean and keep our soil healthy in a more natural way!!"

On behalf of the Douglas SWCD Staff, Supervisors and NRCS Staff, we want to congratulate the Krohnfeldt family on being the Douglas County 2020 Conservation farmer (s). Congratulations Krohnfeldt family!



# Aquatic Invasive Species

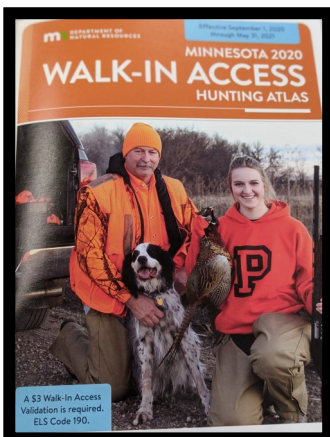
Over the years, various aquatic invasive species have shown up and spread throughout the Douglas County waters. This year alone there were two new zebra mussel lake infestations on Moses and Aaron. The first CD3 (A waterless way to Clean, Drain, Dry, Dispose of unwanted invasive species) Station was purchased and is ready to install on Lake Osakis. There were also three Aqua Weed Stick and Bait disposal areas purchased which will be placed at lakes around the county 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.

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



# Walk-In Access Program (WIA)



The WIA program targets private land that is at least 40 acres and may be a non-crop area or currently enrolled in a conservation program. Most landowners choose to enroll their property for two or three years in this voluntary program. Landowners are paid \$10 per acre to allow walk-in hunting access and may add up to \$3 per acre if within ½ mile of existing state or federal hunting land, 140-acre area, and 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.

# Nitrate Clinic

Douglas SWCD once again held a FREE nitrate water testing clinic on August 25, 2020 from 9 am - 4 pm. This year due to COVID -19 and our building being closed to the public, the nitrate clinic was held out at the Douglas SWCD Tree Shed. Instead of holding two nitrate clinics during the summer, staff decided to switch it up and hold one in the late summer, and another during the late fall/winter months. There was a total of 67 samples ran for nitrates.



# 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 specifically related to our water resources – wetlands, lakes, rivers, and wellhead protection areas – and establishes permanent vegetation. Farmers are paid a one-time RIM payment in addition to an annual CRP rental payment for 14-15 years. Participation is voluntary and 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.

## Cost Share—Erosion Control

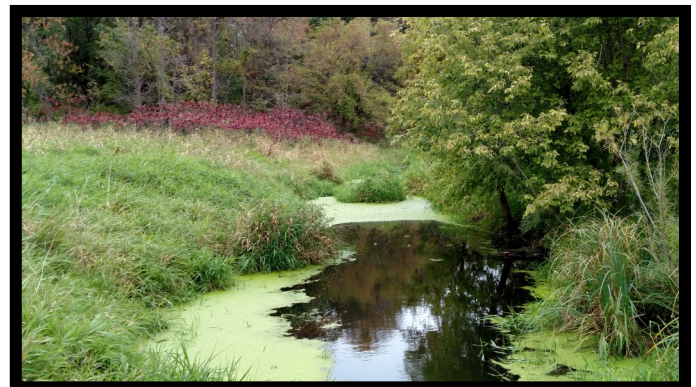
The Erosion Control and Water Management Program provides grants to SWCDs so they can help landowners offset the cost of installing conservation practices that improve water quality by reducing soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution.

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.

## 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. Federal law requirements and state law requirements vary, so check both to ensure all laws are being followed.

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 land can still be considered a wetland regardless if there is standing water or cattails are not present. We encourage you to contact our office if you are unsure if an area is a potential wetland.







# Conservation Trees, Planting & Fabric

2020 marked the 58th year Douglas SWCD sold trees. The tree open house was a huge success, which quickly led to a spring of selling out of all the trees that were pre-ordered! We had beautiful weather which was very helpful in getting all the plantings done. In total, there were 26,400 trees sold, 22 plantings completed by staff, with over 8,800 feet of fabric and 370 tree tubes installed.



We are now taking orders for trees for spring 2021 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 also provide services from planning to planting, fabric mulch installation and tree tube installation. Fabric mulch improves 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 protect your trees from rodents and deer, encourage straight, sturdy trees and act as mini-greenhouses reusing the moisture from the trees. Our staff will gladly work with you and we can provide design assistance for farmstead shelterbelt, field windbreak, living snow fence and wildlife habitat plantings.



## Tree Open House

Douglas SWCD was able to have their Tree Open House right before COVID-19 hit. SWCD staff will be available by phone/email to assist you with planning, layout and species selection for your tree planting projects.

# Continuing on With an Organic Dairy

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BSWR) featured some of Douglas County's organic dairy farmers this past month: Ben Wagner and Jack Schouweiler. Jack is getting into dairy farming as Ben prepares for retirement. NRCS assistance with a new manure storage system and expanded rotational grazing is part of what's making it possible for Schouweiler to slowly take over the operation as he learns from Wagner. Jack has been working as a farm hand on the Wagner farm since he was 16. He has helped implement many ideas new to the farm such as naming all the cattle. Currently the cattle get to graze outside every day and eventually will be milked in a parlor-style barn on the farm Jack is renting from Ben's brother. They've also worked with Douglas SWCD's based Chippewa Watershed conservation planner to achieve whole farm planning.



## Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)

For the past 35 years the RIM Resources Act was enacted to help restore certain marginal and environmental sensitive land to protect and reduce soil erosion and improve water quality while supporting fish and wildlife habitat. To date, across Minnesota, over \$200 million in state money has been used to establish over 6,000 RIM easements on 250,000 acres. RIM is a critical component of the state's efforts to improve water quality by reducing soil erosion, phosphorus and nitrogen loading while improving wildlife habitat and food attenuation on private lands. RIM compensates landowners for granting conservation easements and establishing native vegetation habitat on economically marginal, flood-prone, environmentally sensitive or highly erodible lands. This program helps to conserve, preserve and protect the state's soil and water resources by permanently restoring wetlands, adjacent native grassland, wildlife habitat complexes and permanent riparian buffers.

How does it work:

The MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) acquires on behalf of the state, conservation easements to permanently protect, restore and manage critical natural resource without owning the land outright. The landowners still own the land and are responsible for paying applicable real estate taxes and assessments along with general maintenance.

Who is involved?

This program partners with private and public landowners, state, federal and local government entities non-profit organizations and citizens of Minnesota. BWSR provides statewide program coordination and administration and implementation at the local level by the Douglas SWCD.



# Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) Loan Program

The Ag. BMP Loan Program is a water quality program that provides low interest loans to rural landowners, farmers, ranchers, and agricultural supply businesses. The goal of this program is to encourage landowners to implement BMP's which can prevent and/or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields, and other sources identified by the county's water plan or the watershed's One Watershed One Plan (1W1P).

There are three different roles of the Ag. BMP loan program: the borrower, local government, and lender.

The role of the borrower is to propose projects to the local county. If the borrower is able to meet the state eligibility requirements and can successfully demonstrate how it addresses local water quality priorities, the county will approve the project and assist in locating a cooperating banker.

Local government (this is where the Douglas SWCD comes into play): the SWCD's role is to manage the projects and see them through.

The lender is a local banker who evaluates the financial aspects of the project. With approval of the county and local bank, the project is implemented. Once completed, funds are sent from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to the local bank and the loan is drawn up between the bank and the borrower.

For more information please call the office or visit [mda.state.mn.us/agbmploan](http://mda.state.mn.us/agbmploan).



## Education and Outreach



The education and outreach activities the district staff hosts were put on abrupt hold this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak. All events, activities, seminars, and presentations were canceled or rescheduled for a later date. That includes the Kids' Groundwater Festival (First time in 28 years), Our Farms... Our Future - Managing and Maintaining Healthy Soils seminar workshop, educational/school sessions, June Nitrate Clinic, Area II and State Envirothon, kids poster contest and many more. We look forward to starting these activities back up when we are able.





# Buffers and Beyond

The Board of Soil and Water Resources (BSWR) is introducing a series of factsheets called “Building Better Buffers”. The goal of these factsheets is to provide information and to help provide landowners in the area option to improve and maintain existing buffers. These factsheets will include information on: “Buffers for Clean Water”, “Buffers for Wildlife”, “Forested Buffers”, “Alternative Practices”, and “Buffer Maintenance”. For more information contact the office or check out the BWSR website: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/building-better-buffers>. Overall, the compliance for buffers on public waters in the state is estimated at 99% and the public ditches is right behind at 98%. Douglas SWCD staff are still making checks

around the county to ensure everyone is in compliance before enforcement takes place. For other questions related to buffers, give the office a call.

## Rain Gardens

A rain garden is an outdoor space designed to collect run off that can cause erosion. Rain gardens are typically made up of native shrubs, grasses and flowering perennials that are planted in a small depression, which is generally formed on a natural slope. It is designed to temporarily hold and soak in rain water runoff that flows from rooftops, driveways, patios, lawns or other impervious structures. Rain gardens are unique, cost effective, low maintenance and a colorful way to showcase a conservation practice of filtering runoff and reducing erosion on your property. Douglas SWCD has been designing and helping landowners around the county put in rain gardens. If interested in rain gardens, or curious about how they can make a difference on your property, reach out to the Douglas SWCD.



## No-Till Drill

Douglas SWCD has purchased a second 10' Haybuster no-till drill to rent out. 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 Douglas SWCD to reserve one of the drills.

# Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

An 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, Ag Waste systems and many more.

Signup for EQIP is continuous and the next batching date is March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Contracts will be awarded on a ranking system. NRCS ranks 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.

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)

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 for a 5 year period.

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. NRCS staff will conduct an evaluation of the land offered to determine 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.

# Registration for state's estimated 18,000 feedlots moves to online service

Livestock feedlot owners and operators can now register their feedlots and manure storage areas online with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Minnesota's estimated 18,000 registered feedlots with 50 or more animal units, or 10 or more located in a shoreland area, must be registered with the state. They must update their feedlot information with the MPCA or delegated county feedlot program every four years. The next deadline for updating feedlot registration is Dec. 31, 2021.

The MPCA's new online feedlot registration system replaces the previous paper and e-mail forms process. The new, quick and easy service can be accessed 24/7 using a computer, smart phone, or mobile device. To register, users must provide basic feedlot information such as location, type of operation, and number of livestock.

Minnesota feedlot permits are necessary only for feedlot construction or expansion with 300 or more animal units, for feedlots needing to correct pollution problems, or for large feedlots — 1,000 or more animal units. Counties also may require feedlot permits or conditional use permits. About 1,200 large feedlots in Minnesota have permits, which meet the registration requirement; separate registration is not necessary.

Registration helps the MPCA to identify pollution hazards and work with feedlot owners to manage environmental impact. It also helps in budgeting for technical and financial assistance for livestock producers.

Some counties delegated to administer the MPCA's feedlot program may continue to register feedlots and manure storage areas with paper forms.

For more information about feedlot registration and the online registration system, visit the MPCA's website, or call your MPCA area office or delegated county feedlot officer.

*Douglas County has already started and will continue to mail out paper forms with return envelopes. The Feedlot Coordinator will then enter the information and return the paper form to the producer. However, anyone that wishes to re-register online on their own may do so. If you have any questions on the registration process, contact Mark Koep, Feedlot Coordinator at 320-762-2932.*





# Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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 2020 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.

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.



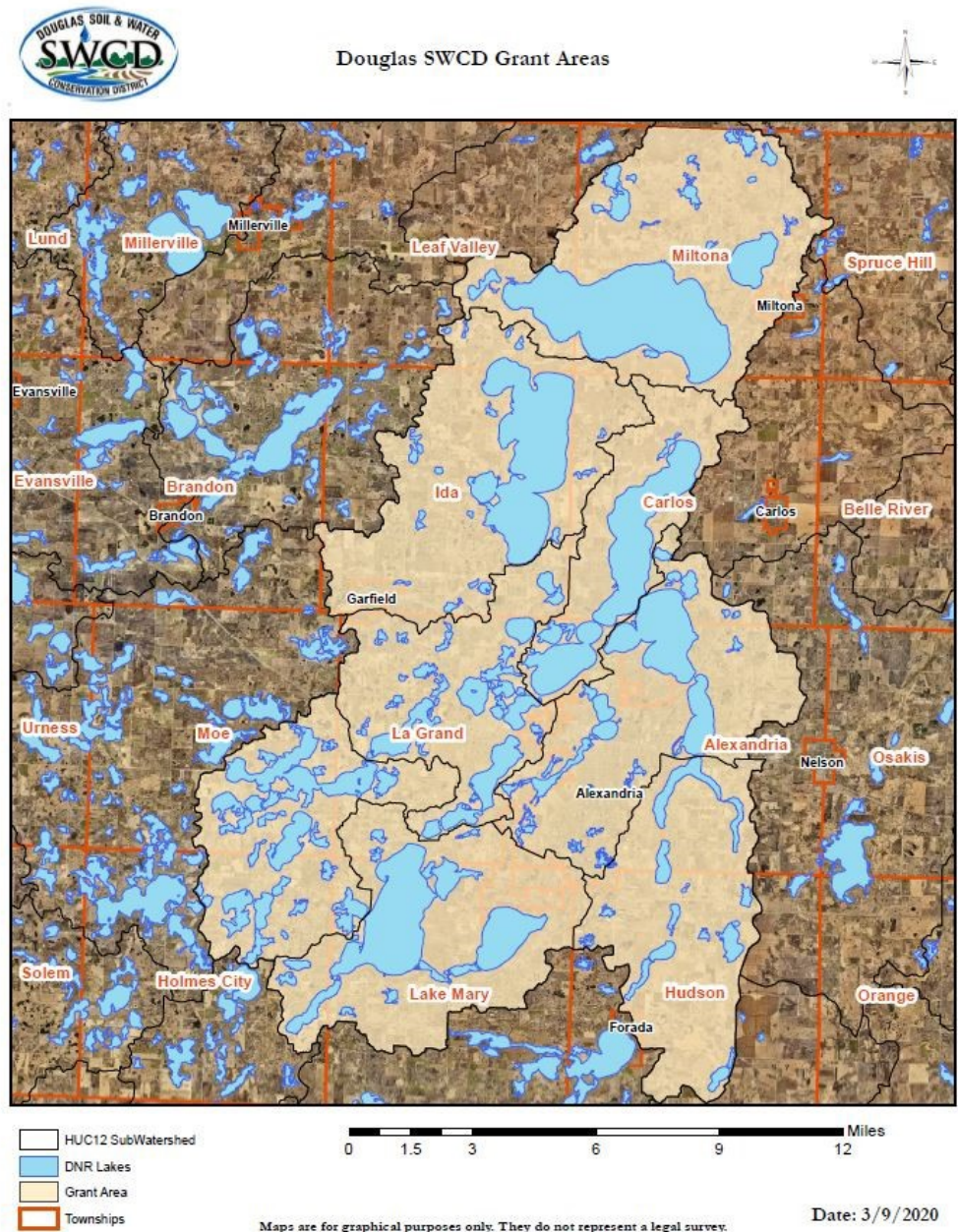
## The Clean Water and Land Legacy Logo

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.



# Cost-share Opportunities in the Long Prairie Watershed

The Douglas SWCD has applied for and received two grants that will allow for more cost-share opportunities in the county. These grants both target the Long Prairie Watershed within Douglas County and can be used for both Agricultural or Shoreline projects. The requirements are that it must address a resource concern such as erosion. Currently the interest and demand has been so high for the shoreline cost-share that those grant funds have been depleted, but don't let that deter you from acquiring info about agricultural practices! These projects can include but are not limited to cover crops, ag. waste projects, alternative tile intakes, erosion control structures in fields, grassed waterways and gully fixes. For more information on other cost-share opportunities throughout the county please call or set up an appointment to see if your project is eligible! Just like all other cost share opportunities, this is available on a first come first serve basis and **will only cover up to 75%.**



The map above is the Long Prairie Watershed grant area within the county.

# 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.

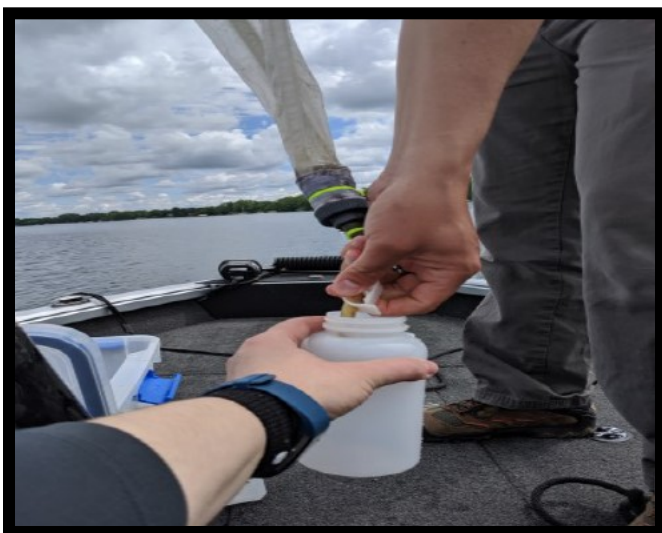


Implementation activities will include: gully fixes, water and Sediment Control Basins projects, terrace project, shoreline stabilizations/ restorations, rain gardens, manure storage BMPs, and of cover crops. Technical assistance and engineering will be provided through this grant to design and implement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

## Zebra Mussel Testing

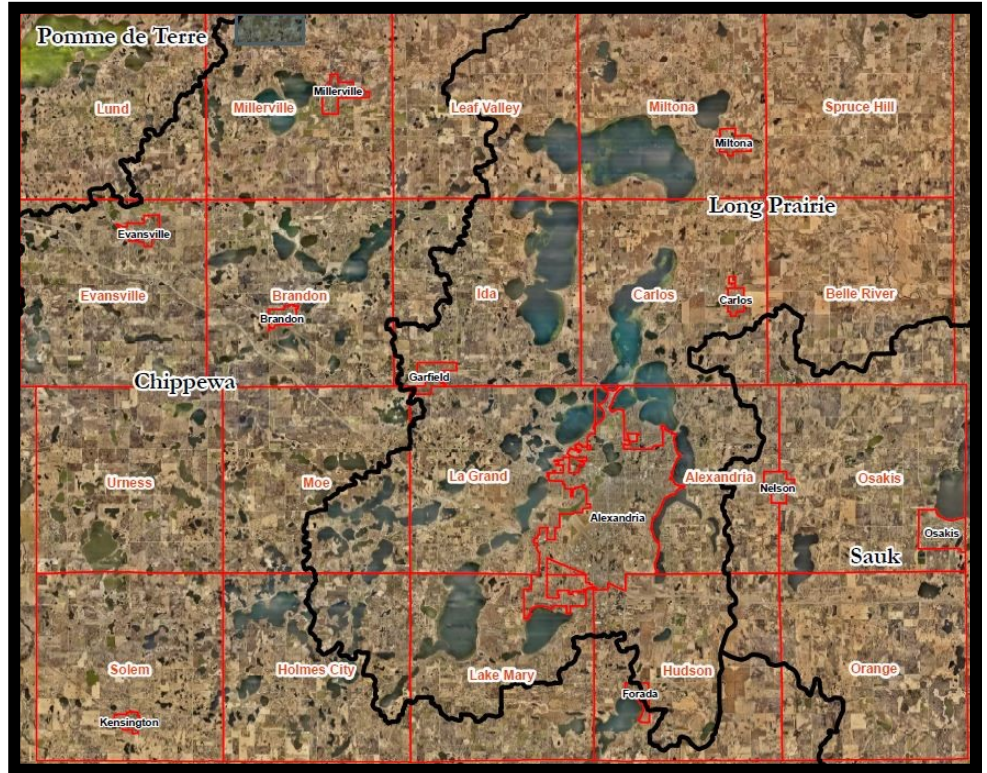


Do you live on a lake that is at risk of being infested by Zebra mussels? The reality is that if your lake doesn't have zebra mussels, it is at risk! Help Douglas SWCD and Douglas County identify infestations early by becoming a sampler. It is very easy to help, 1) get a kit from the SWCD office before 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!



# Douglas County One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) updates

Water doesn't follow county boundaries and neither should the water management plan. 1W1P is a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan (CWMP) developed by local partners under the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). This program encourages strong working relationships across county borders and has representatives from each of the counties involved within the watershed. Local SWCDs work together with the county staff and watershed districts or associations to develop a watershed-wide plan that meets all the needs and goals of the watershed. This process takes a long time, and some of the watershed plans have been in the works for four plus years.



Once the plans are approved, the 1W1P partners can start implementing the activities described within the plan. Funding from BWSR will implement these plans over the next ten years and improve water quality throughout the watersheds in many ways. Cost share funding will be available to landowners implementing various Best Management Practices (BMP)

Douglas County has 5 watersheds within the county: Redeye, Chippewa, Sauk, Long Prairie, and Pomme de Terre River Watersheds. Currently each are at a different phase in the 1W1P process because of the extensive workload required and the time it takes technical staff to dedicate. BWSR has indicated that each county should only be working on now more than two at a time. This is the current updates for the county.

## **Pomme de Terre River Watershed:**

In August, the Pomme de Terre River Association's (PDTRA) CWMP was approved by BWSR. The CWMP for the Pomme de Terre lays out strategies for watershed management for the next ten years. Watershed priorities include: drinking water protection, groundwater conservation, altered hydrology, poor and high quality lakes, protection and restoration of personal cover and shallow basins, excess pollutants, loss of in-stream habitat, aquatic invasive species, watershed outreach and lakeshore owner education.

With the CWMP approved, the PDTRA and its partners can begin implementing the activities described within the plan. There will be cost-share available for landowners to implement various best management practices. The plan can be viewed online from the PDTRA website at: [www.pdtriver.org/projects/one-watershed-one-plan/](http://www.pdtriver.org/projects/one-watershed-one-plan/)

### **Red Eye:**

Due to the small amount of the Red Eye Watershed in Douglas County (roughly 65 acres) Douglas County opted out of participating in the 1W1P planning process. It has been approved by BWSR, and priority work will begin.

### **Sauk River Watershed:**

The Sauk River Comprehensive Water Management Plan (aka The Sauk River One Watershed One Plan) has been completed and is currently undergoing local and state review. Once the reviews are completed, and public hearings have been held, the Plan will go to BWSR for final review and approval.

### **Long Prairie River Watershed:**

In August, BWSR awarded the Long Prairie partnership with a planning grant. This grant will cover the cost of writing the Long Prairie Comprehensive Water Management Plan. It will take the group approximately two years to complete the plan and public input will be requested during the process.

### **Chippewa River Watershed:**

Over the last year, the Chippewa watershed group has been busy reorganizing and strengthening its intercounty relationships. This is in preparation for an anticipated One Watershed One Plan planning grant that the group will apply for summer of 2021.



## *Future Generation of Conservation*

As a Soil and Water Conservation District, our love for the natural resources takes priority, especially with preservation and conservation practices. Conservation is a way of life and is critical to sustain agriculture for future generations. This year we wanted to highlight some of the next generation conservationists from the office! If interested in programs and practices for conservation or simply learning more about what conservation can do for your land, or how to enroll, contact the office today, and staff would be more than happy to help! “The future belongs to the few of us still willing to get our hands dirty” - Roland Tiangco

## *Irrigator Clinic*

The Douglas SWCD along with Pope, Swift, Kandiyohi, and Stearns SWCD's and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture co-hosted the 2020 Irrigator Clinic in March in Glenwood. The agenda was packed full of speakers and presenters. Some of the topics covered were climate, precipitation and water supply projections, irrigation and water quality research in central MN, basics of soil health, Irrigation variable rate technology and introducing regenerating agriculture in your conservation operation.



# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

Landowners have several options for enrolling land into CRP depending on their conservation goals and the field(s) features. Continuous CRP has an ongoing signup where farmers and landowners may enroll on a rolling basis while acres are available. General CRP is another option with the next signup period starting in January running through February. The signup for CRP Grasslands will be open in March and close in April. Both the General and Grasslands signups are competitive and all three programs, including Continuous CRP, provide annual rental payments during a 10-15 year contract for land devoted to conservation practices.

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 or trees to help control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. Currently, there are nearly 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 call or stop by the Douglas SWCD office and talk to Kasey Jenc, Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist.



## Food Plot, Native Grass and Forb Seed Mixes

The Douglas SWCD has food plot seed available for landowners. There is two different deer mixes, 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 also 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, will work with landowners on custom mixes. Native grass and forb plantings provide optimum habitat for wildlife and their deep root systems make them effective with erosion control.

# 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 320-763-3191 x 4, or check out the website at: [www.rd.usda.gov/mn](http://www.rd.usda.gov/mn).

# Water Monitoring Grant

Douglas SWCD has been working hard all summer on finishing up 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) and applied for this grant that provides funding for water quality monitoring. 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. 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.



# News Releases

10+ press releases were sent out!

Topics included:

- Irrigator Clinic
- Nitrate Clinic
- Tree Open House
- Buffers
- Aquatic Invasive Species
- Outstanding Conservationist
- Conservation Practices
- Cost-Share opportunities
- Rain Gardens
- Tree Pick up
- Pheasants Forever Soil Health
- Grants?



# Social Media Topics

- Tree ordering
- Tree Open House
- Tree Pick up
- Grants
- 1W1P information
- Events
- AIS Prevention and Water Safety
- Nitrate Clinic
- Projects completed
- Cost-share opportunities
- Pheasants Forever information
- Non-Operating Landowner webinars
- Our Farms Our Future



*Like us on Facebook: DouglasSWCD*

# Flyers, Handouts and Fact Sheets

## Renting it Out Right Workshops 2021

Land Stewardship Project is partnering with Kandiyohi, Swift and Douglas Soil and Water Conservation Districts to offer a virtual series of workshops.

We are looking for farmers or landowners (future, retired or current) who are looking to invest in soil building on rented land. All workshops will be on a ZOOM platform and open to the public. There will be a special Women Only workshop to discuss the obstacles that women face in the agricultural world.

### Workshop Features:

- \* Local Support
- \* State and Federal Program Opportunities
- \* Communication Tips
- \* Minnesota Tax Credit Information
- \* Virtual "toolkit" of Resources

**Jan. 12** **Swift SWCD**  
12:30-3:00 PM

**Jan. 20** **Kandiyohi SWCD**  
5:30-8:30 PM

**Jan. 29** **Douglas SWCD (Women Only)**  
1:30- 4:00 PM

All three workshops cover the same material and feature the local SWCD and offer a panel discussion. Call Robin Moore at 320.321.5244 or visit <https://landstewardshipproject.org/home/upcomingevents>

**How to Register**

## DOUGLAS SWCD AGRICULTURE COST-SHARE OPPORTUNITIES

Cost-share is on a first come first serve basis and will not exceed 75% of eligible project costs.

### What is Cost-share?

The Douglas SWCD applies for Federal and State grant dollars every year to address erosion and water quality issues throughout the county. This money is used to provide cost-share to landowners with erosion problems that otherwise would not be addressed due to high cost of the projects.

### APPLICATION PROCESS

Contact the office today to set up a site visit which will determine program eligibility. If eligible, applicant can apply for financial assistance. Technical assistance is available regardless of eligibility.

### Most Common Practices

- Water and Sediment Control Basin (WASCOB)
- Alternative Tile Intake
- Cover Crops
- Grassed Waterway
- Grade Stabilization Structure
- Nutrient Management
- Waste Storage Facility
- Streambank and Shoreline Protection
- Filter Strip
- Wetland Restoration

For more details: 320-763-3191 x3 | 900 Robert St, Suite 102 | Visit us: [www.douglaswcd.com](http://www.douglaswcd.com)

## Tree pickup RULES 2020

- #1 Social distancing applies
- #2 Stay in vehicle and in line
- #3 Hand staff post card
- #4 Staff loads trees
- #5 Be on your way!
- #6 Stay safe and healthy!

Thank you!  
Douglas SWCD Staff

By The Douglas SWCD

## IS Board Meeting on ZOOM

For the month of May

Please download Zoom in advance on your phone, computer, or tablet

For the Meeting ID & PWD email: [jerome.haggemiller@mn.nacdn.net](mailto:jerome.haggemiller@mn.nacdn.net)

## What's in your water? FREE Nitrate Water Testing!

**Date: August 25, 2020**  
**Time: 9:00am- 4:00 pm**  
**Place: 800 Northside Dr. NE Alexandria, MN 56308**

**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: 800 Northside Dr. NE Alexandria, MN 56308  
(This is the Douglas SWCD Tree Shed)

## PLEASE STAY IN LINE AND IN YOUR CAR!

THANK YOU!  
DOUGLAS SWCD STAFF

## Garden Seed Bombs!

**What you need:**

- Native flower seeds assorted (1 large package will work)
- 6 pieces colored construction paper
- Food processor/blender
- Scissors
- Water
- Wax paper/Sheet pan

**Directions:**

1. Cut the construction paper into small 1 inch squares. Place like colored squares in a small dish.
2. Fill each dish with water just to cover the paper.
3. Let sit for 20-30 minutes.
4. Take one bowl of colored papers, wring out about 1/2 of the water.
5. Place paper in blender (one batch per color)
6. Pulse or blend till a thick pulp.
7. Repeat till all colors are completed.
8. Remove paper pulp from blender/food processor and place back in bowl.
9. Sprinkle some seeds in each paper pulp blob.
10. Press seeds firmly in paper pulp. If Pulp is a little dry, sprinkle a few more drops of water to moisten.
11. Place on a sheet pan or wax paper to dry overnight.
12. Plant in the garden and watch the flowers grow!

Made with PosterMyWall.com



# 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.

## Water Testing

The Douglas SWCD through RMB labs in Detroit lakes MN offers water testing options. Water testing kits are available in the Soil and Water office and are collected daily at 11:00 am Monday through Thursday. The kits available are: Total coliform Bacteria, Nitrate, Arsenic, and Lead. Additional kits available upon request.

To collect a sample for RMB testing: run your cold tap water for at least ten minutes before collecting about one cup of water in the jar provided in the selected kit; keep the water cool until delivered to the SWCD Office before 11:00 AM. Please note that testing is completed the same day as sample collection.

# Thank you

Although the Douglas SWCD does a lot of projects, community outreach, grants and offers services on its own, we could not be 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 2020 include:

- Increase public awareness
- Promote programs
- Sell 1,500 more trees
- Apply for more grants to assist with cost share
- 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 movers for the summer months
- Hold 2 FREE Community Nitrate clinics
- Multi-County Outreach Programs
- Get back to normal—in person meetings and trainings
- Work with the county to start and establish a demonstration plot