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Fall 2021 Newsletter

Conservation Bus Tour 2021

On September 8th, Douglas SWCD hosted a guided conservation bus tour around the county. There were 30 participants throughout the day who took part in the bus tour which included SWCD, NRCS, County staff, commissioners and community members. The tour was free and open to anyone willing to give up some time and learn about conservation practices. The tour included many stops highlighting a variety of successful conservation practices and county trivia questions. Some of the locally implemented conservation practices highlighted on this tour included:

- Ag. Waste
- Feedlots
- Conservation Tree Plantings
- Grazing
- Lake Shore Restoration
- Pollinator Plantings
- Terraces
- Water and Sediment Control Basins
- Cover Crops
- Minnesota Ag. Water Quality Certification
- Buffers
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wetland Restorations

Breakfast and lunch were also provided as part of the tour. Lunch was served at Chippewa Park.

Douglas SWCD wants to thank everyone that took part in helping to make our Conservation Bus Tour a huge success!



Where would we “bee” without pollinators?

The 2021 Douglas County Fair was back in person. Douglas SWCD had a pollinator friendly booth and the theme was “Where would we “bee” without pollinators. On display there were some native and invasive plants and flowers fair goers could look at to see if they could identify them. There was a daily bundle of tree give away for the adults (a whopping 289 names in the bucket) and over 450 prizes a day to give away with the spin to win prize wheel! Every person (mostly kids) that spun the wheel got asked a trivia question related to pollinators in Minnesota. If they got the question correct, they got to pick one of the many prizes! (Hot/cold ice packs, fishing/ Hunting license holders, bobbers, bookmarks, notebooks, frisbees, can coozies, sunglasses, stress balls, color changing cups and more!)



Youth Outdoor Activity Day

This is a free family-friendly event intended to provide youth a fun environment in which to learn about all concepts of outdoor recreation and create the next generation of outdoor enthusiasts. Activities include trap shooting, hunting, angling, aquatic invasive species, recreational vehicle driving (UTV and ATV), rock climbing, camping, cooking with coals, animal habitat, wildlife management and many other related skills. Over 40 hands-on activities and demonstrations were planned. This public event is made possible through a



consortium of participating volunteer organizations, businesses, individuals, and donors. Hosted and organized by the Viking Sportsmen (VS) and Douglas County Pheasants Forever (PF), the annual event takes place at the Alexandria Shooting Park the last Sunday of August.



Be a hero... Transport Zero!

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) have been part of our lakes ecosystem for many years now, but what exactly is it? Aquatic (water-dwelling) invasive species are non-native plants, animals, and other organisms that have invaded our natural ecosystems beyond their natural, historic range. Currently in Douglas County, there is Zebra Mussels, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Carp, Curly-leaf Pondweed, and Flowering Rush. Please help the county by doing your part and being a hero, by transporting zero! Clean, Drain and Dry all water related equipment after each use according to the state laws. If you suspect any new invasive species, please reach out to the office.



FIGHT THE SPREAD OF
AQUATIC INVADERS

AlexAreaLakes.org

Our Farms... Our Future...

On August 4, Douglas SWCD partnered with Alexandria Technical and Community College - Farm Business Management (FBM) to co-host a free workshop to local farmers, operators, and landowners. Our Farms... Our Future... Managing and Maintaining the Farm with Best Management Practices was the theme of the workshop. Discussion and presentation topics covered: Cost-share, federal programs, state programs, and other conservation practices that could be implemented on land with technical assistance.



Programs, Practices and Services offered

Douglas SWCD has put together this handy guide to communicate with landowners what we are all about! Information included inside is a great resource for landowners which briefly covers the history of the Douglas SWCD. It also provides a scope of SWCD programs, practices, services, and technical support for landowners throughout Douglas County. Lastly, it highlights what a watershed is and provides information on where each one is in the county. If interested in one of these brochures, or have questions on programs, services and practices please call the office!

No-Till Drills Available

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.



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 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.



Comprehensive Watershed Planning

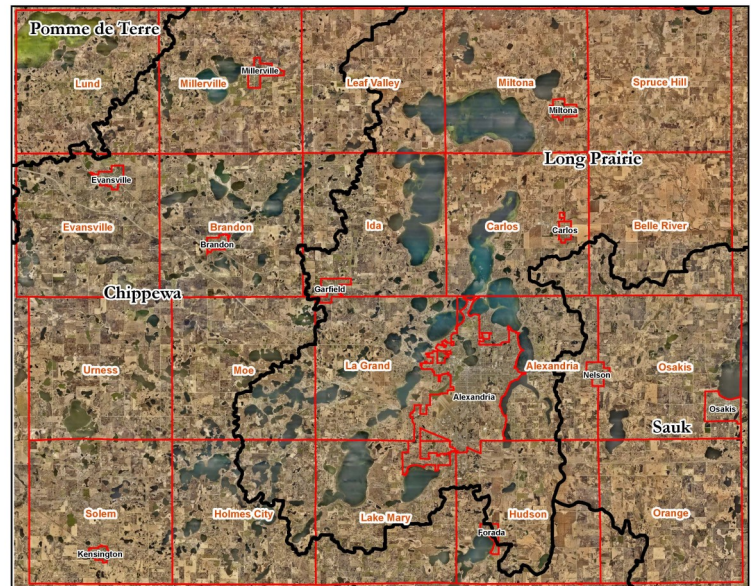
The One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) program offers planning resources and staff support for groups working together to develop comprehensive watershed management plans. These plans break the traditional planning boundaries (county lines) to follow the water – from the watersheds headwaters to its outlet. A completed, approved plan is a source of non-competitive funding for SWCD's to implement projects in prioritized areas. Douglas County has 5 watersheds and is participating in 4 plans (we opted out of the Red Eye Watershed plan due to its small amount of acreage within Douglas). Douglas is at the top of 4 of the watersheds, meaning all the water here flows out of the county. The Pomme de Terre and Chippewa rivers flow south to the Minnesota River while the Long Prairie, Red Eye, and Sauk rivers all flow towards the Mississippi River.

Pomme de Terre Watershed – Planning is complete, and funding is available for projects within the watershed.

Sauk Watershed – The plan was approved by the state in August, a bit more groundwork needs to be completed before project funding is available. The goal is to have project funding for prioritized areas available early 2022.

Long Prairie Watershed – Currently in the planning process, this will be completed winter of 2022/23. Project funding should be available the end of 2023.

Chippewa Watershed – Planning grant was approved by the state in August, the planning process will begin soon and will take approximately two years to complete.



Mark your Calendars!

October 11 - USDA Building and SWCD Office Closed (Columbus Day)

October 12 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM - At Public Works)

Early/Mid November - Tree order forms available to start pre-ordering

November 8 - SWCD Board Meeting (8:00 AM)

November 11 - USDA Building and SWCD Closed (Veterans' Day)

November 25 - USDA Building and SWCD Closed (Thanksgiving Day)

November 26 - SWCD Closed (Thanksgiving Day)

December 16 - SWCD Board Meeting (3:00 PM)

December 23 - SWCD Closed at noon (Christmas Holiday)

December 24 - USDA Building and SWCD Closed (Christmas Holiday)

December 30 - SWCD Closed at noon (New Years)

December 31 - USDA Building and SWCD Closed (New Years)



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