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Farm Bill Technician Aid



Est. 1954

Fall 2022 Newsletter

No-Till Drills Available

Douglas SWCD has two 10' Haybuster no-till drills available for rent. These drills work well for seeding native grasses, pasture mixes, hay mixes, alfalfa, soybeans cover crops, 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) for surrounding counties.

Douglas 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.



Seed

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.

Cover Crops, Native grass and forb (flowers) seed mixes are available to landowners for conservation practices. Douglas SWCD Staff will work with landowners to determine an appropriate seed mix that is required for the practice they choose to adopt. Typically they are 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 controlling erosion.



Douglas County Fair

The Douglas County Fair was August 17 -20th and once again the Douglas SWCD had a presence there at their booth in the Fish and Game Building. This year's topic was "Programs, Practices, and Partnerships For Conservation". There were handouts, promotional swag, educational trivia questions and lots of smiling faces as they learned about what the district does and helps with throughout the year. The Evansville Area Sportsmen club was so gracious and donated 4 wood duck houses to be raffled by the district at the fair.



Chippewa watershed bus tour

The Chippewa River Watershed covers parts of Ottertail, Douglas, Stevens, Pope, Stearns, Swift, Chippewa and Kandiyohi counties. Staff from the Chippewa River Watershed Planning Committee put together and hosted a bus tour on July 15 for Supervisors, Staff and other agency staff involved with the One Watershed One Plan. The bus tour departed from the pope county fair grounds and featured a few projects and unique facts about the watershed. Some of the projects highlighted along the tour were a ravine restoration project in Pope County, streambank protection project in Douglas County, an a landfill groundwater protection project in Grant County, and a wetland restoration and rain garden in Swift County. Each and every project that was on the tour stop had a great story and a lot of dedicated staff time and money that went into preserving our natural resources.

Rain Gardens

Douglas SWCD staff partnered with the Legacy of the Lakes Museum to do a water talk on rain gardens. Although it was during the summer months and attendance was not the best, the information presented was still very useful and helpful to those that showed up. There is some cost share available for parts of the county if interested. Please call the office today to ask questions and see if this type of a project is a good fit for your area!

Kernza® Planting with the Area High School

On August 23, the Douglas SWCD staff hooked up the no-till drill and helped perform a Kernza® planting at the Alexandria Area Highschool. Kernza® is a robust perennial grain developed from intermediate wheatgrass that is up and coming. It is enriching fields around the world and pleasing palates (some say it gives food a nutty flavor). Why is this crop so sought after? The root structure is one of a kind! The average length for this grain is 10 feet, but can in the right growing conditions reach up to 30 feet deep! It will produce a crop for many years, and can be grazed in between without harming the grain.



Over-all, the test plot for planting was just about an acre, and was planted with the Douglas SWCD no-till drill at 17 lbs. of seed per acre. If interested in the progress of how this project is turning out, head over to the high school and look for the signs! Kernza® is very regulated requiring permits to attain and grow this grain. We were very excited to be apart of this project and help seed it with the students. Can't wait to see how it grows and turns out, and where this grain can go in the future! This event was put on through the help of the Alexandria Area Highschool Agriculture Education department, University of Minnesota and Extension services.



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 are 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

Youth Outdoor Activity Day

Douglas SWCD helps participate in this event by being on the planning committee and also being a sponsor. The 2022 Youth Outdoor Activity Day is in the books! What a spectacular day on a number of fronts; the weather was cool, slightly breezy, and overcast. Absolutely perfect considering we had forecasts for high heat and storms throughout the week.



Everybody always wants to know about attendance. Well, this year we shattered our previous high of 2,212 kids. There were 2,587 kids that participated in our activities. Notice the word participate; there were no observers on this day! Kids threw axes, shot bb guns, archery, crossbows, held fish, salamanders, and turtles, tromped around in snowshoes, devoured ice cream (okay, maybe that isn't an activity!), rode in ATVs, looked through binoculars and spotting scopes, fished for trout, casted fishing rods, went on a nature hike, and so much more. This year we featured 50 outdoor activities for kids to try and gave

away over 5,000 articles of outdoor gear to help remove the barriers for kids experiencing the outdoors! Those 2,587 kids brought with 2,117 parents and grandparents with them! Our total attendance was 4,704 attendees. With volunteers, we had over 5,000 people at the event. With all those people, we are proud to say we had no accidents or issues. That is a testament to the 20 people on the planning committee which put forth an enormous effort to make sure this day ran smooth for everyone. Of course, the planning committee didn't run the activities! That was done by over 300 volunteers who gave up most of their weekend, used their equipment, and spend a lot of money to provide the kids the opportunity to try activities that they haven't done before! Some highlights:

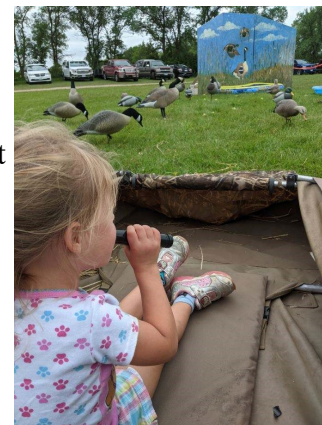


We asked a few people how far they came for our event. We know we typically pull people from a 2.5-hour radius. This year was no exception as we talked to people coming from as far away as Jamestown, ND, solely MN and Fargo ND for this event.

A post to our Facebook page that a young boy was so excited about his first archery experience that his dad stopped and bought him his own bow on the way home. They shared pictures of him shooting in his backyard. That, is winning!

We saw a pack of kids all blowing duck calls on the way to their car; we are confident they didn't stop once they got in. We can't help but giggle every time we see that and wonder how many had to get ear plugs for the remainder of the car ride home!

One family came from Canada! They were on a family fishing trip in Minnesota a week prior and heard it on the radio! They drove down to see what it was all about, and will be back next year!



We started a new initiative to incentivize kids to keep active in the outdoors. In every bag was a calendar with a monthly theme. If they take a picture participating in that activity and post it to our social media platforms, they are thank our donors enough. Keeping this day free is unique and special, it allows families to spend quality time eligible to win a prize. We are excited to see how that plays out! Lastly, we cannot thank our donors and sponsors enough. Keeping this day free is unique and one of a kind. It allows families to spend quality time with each other and experience the great outdoors.

This event happens every year the last Sunday in August. For more information please visit www.youthoutdooractivityday.org. Planning has begun for 2023. We hope to see you all there!

~ The Youth Outdoor Activity Day Planning Committee

One Watershed One Plan Updates

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 watershed 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

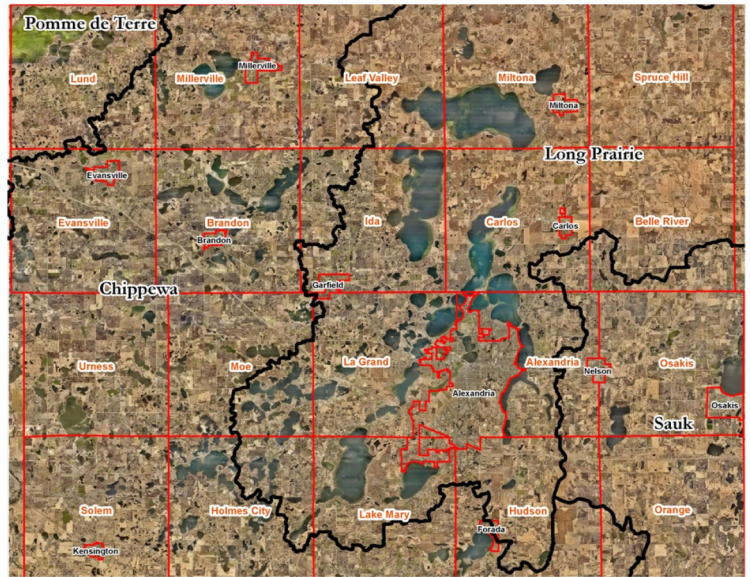
Douglas). Douglas is at the headwaters of 4 of the watersheds, meaning all the water here flows out of the county. The Pomme de Terre and Chippewa rivers flow south to the Minnesota River while the Long Prairie, Red Eye, and Sauk rivers all flow towards the Mississippi River.

Pomme de Terre Watershed – Funding is available for projects within the watershed.

Sauk Watershed – The plan was approved by the state in August 2021, a bit more groundwork needs to be completed before project funding is available. The goal is to have project funding for prioritized areas available late 2022.

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

Chippewa Watershed – Planning grant was approved by the state in August, and the planning process has started and is expected to take approximately two years to complete. Once the process is complete, funding will need to be approved, and will hopefully be available in 2025.



Mark your Calendars!

September 5 – USDA and SWCD Building Closed (Labor Day)

September 12 - SWCD Board Meeting (7:30 AM)

September 15 - Cooler Drop off day for water sampling. Have to office by 1 PM

October 10 - USDA and SWCD Building Closed (Columbus Day)

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

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

November 24 - USDA Building and SWCD Closed (Thanksgiving)

November 25 - SWCD Closed (Thanksgiving)

December 15 - SWCD Board Meeting (3:00 PM)

December 23 - SWCD Closing at Noon (Christmas)

December 30 - SWCD Closing at Noon (New Years)



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