



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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# WRIGHT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



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SWCD staff member Andrew Grean out checking cover crops with a drone.



SWCD staffer Dan Nadeau watching construction, made a new friend!



SWCD Staff member Eric Mattson spraying Wild Parsnip.





SWCD staffers Eric Mattson and Andrew Grean meeting with producers about cover crops.

## OUR MISSION

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The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District shall provide local leadership in the conservation and wise use of soil, water and related resources through a balanced program that protects, restores and improves those resources by utilizing education, regulation and incentive programs.

## OUR VISION

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The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District Board envisions a changing Wright County. The District will be sensitive to the environment, citizen concerns and will foster a spirit of cooperation among all agencies and entities charged with the management of our precious natural resources.

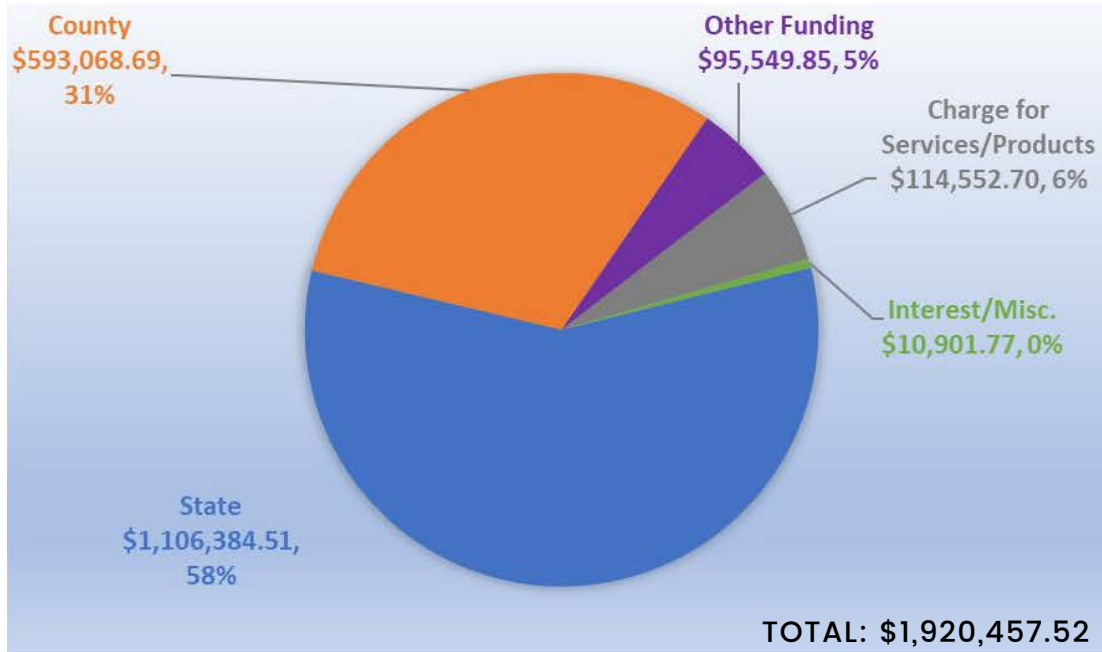
As a catalyst for this vision, the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District will proactively influence, educate, cooperate and encourage the wise use of resources to maintain our high quality of life.



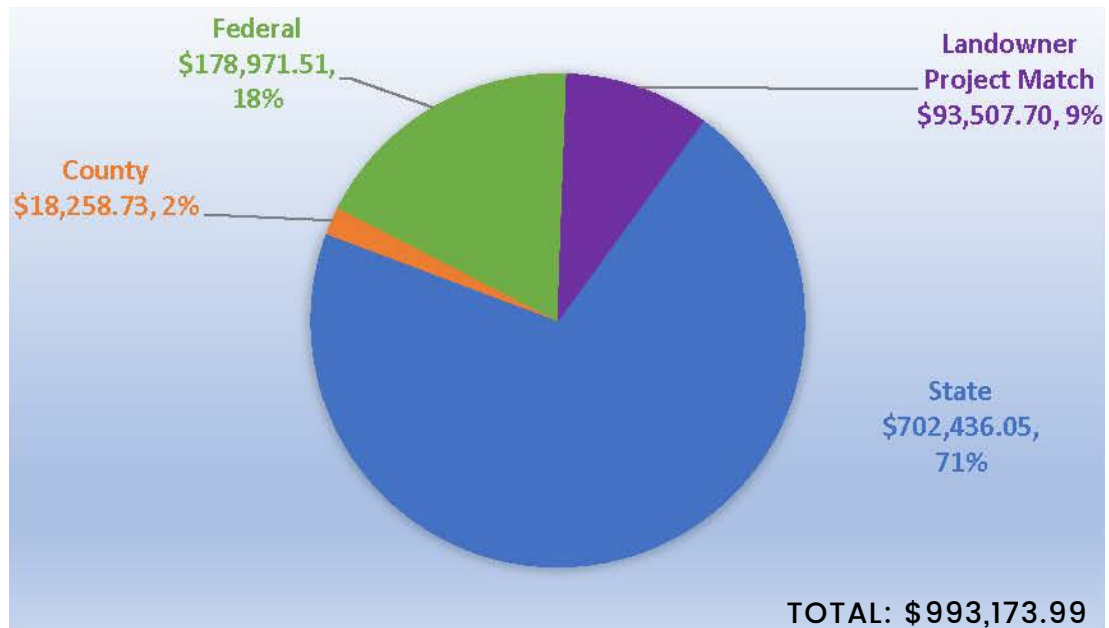
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) does not have taxing authority, and relies on support from Wright County, which enables the SWCD to leverage and secure additional technical assistance funds and financial assistance funds for Wright County landowners.

## WRIGHT SWCD REVENUES



## PROJECTS AND AIS EXPENDITURES



FUNDS FOR DISTRICT OPERATIONS NOT INCLUDED IN CHART



# SWCD SUPERVISORS

The Wright SWCD's Board is comprised of five Supervisors who are elected by nomination districts on the county wide general election.

Supervisor terms are staggered every four years.

Supervisors receive a per diem of \$75 per board meeting and meet once a month to review and approve District operations, set goals, policies, and priorities for the District.



Wright SWCD Board Members (left to right): Duane Dahlman (District 5), Jeff Burns (District 2), Bill Daluge (District 3), Chris Uecker (District 4), and Mike Zieska (District 1).

## MARY WETTER RECOGNIZED FOR 18 YEARS AS SUPERVISOR



Mary served 18 years as a Supervisor with the Wright Soil & Water Conservation District.

Mary has been an integral part of the Wright Soil and Water Conservation District Board for the last 18 years.

She helped set overall policy and long-term objectives for the District, approved landowner cost-share contracts, worked with the SWCD staff to see that comprehensive plans were implemented, was an active member on several committees, and so much more.

Mary's contributions will always be valued and remembered. Her commitment and dedication are worthy of admiration. Mary is currently a Wright County Commissioner and we wish her the best of luck.



## WRIGHT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Five Wright County Commissioners represent populations between 22,742 and 27,072 for their respective districts. As of the 2020 Census, the Wright County population is 141,377.

The Wright SWCD would like to thank the Commissioners for their continued support and partnership in conservation.

Wright County Commissioners (left to right): Mary Wetter (District 4), Darek Vetsch (District 2), Christine Husom (District 1), Michael Kaczmarek (District 5), and Mark Daleiden (District 3). Photo credit: Wright County.

## SWCD STAFF

Wright SWCD staff work with private landowners throughout the county on various soil and water projects to enhance and protect our natural resources.

### Soil & Water Staff Directory:

Luke Johnson | District Manager  
Pam Kuhn | Administrative Assistant  
Mike Candler | Natural Resources Engineer  
Eric Mattson | Conservation Technician  
Sandra Hessedal | Office Assistant  
Andrew Grean | Senior Wetland Resource Conservationist  
Dan Nadeau | Senior Resource Conservationist  
Alicia O'Hare | Water Management Specialist



Wright SWCD Staff Members (left to right): Front row: Andrew Grean, Pam Kuhn, and Alicia O'Hare. Back row: Luke Johnson, Mike Candler, Dan Nadeau, Eric Mattson, Kerry Saxton (retired), and Sandra Hessedal.





# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Each year, the Wright SWCD participates in various outreach and educational events. However, due to COVID-19, the outreach and educational events were limited in 2021.

Wright SWCD provides outreach and educational opportunities to community members, landowners, schools, workshops, and tours.



SWCD staff attended a meeting to introduce Kernza to Wright County producers.



SWCD staff presents at an Environmental Educational Field Days at Ney Park in Maple Lake.



SWCD staff host a local work group meeting to assist NRCS with matters related to the implementation and technical aspects of conservation programs.



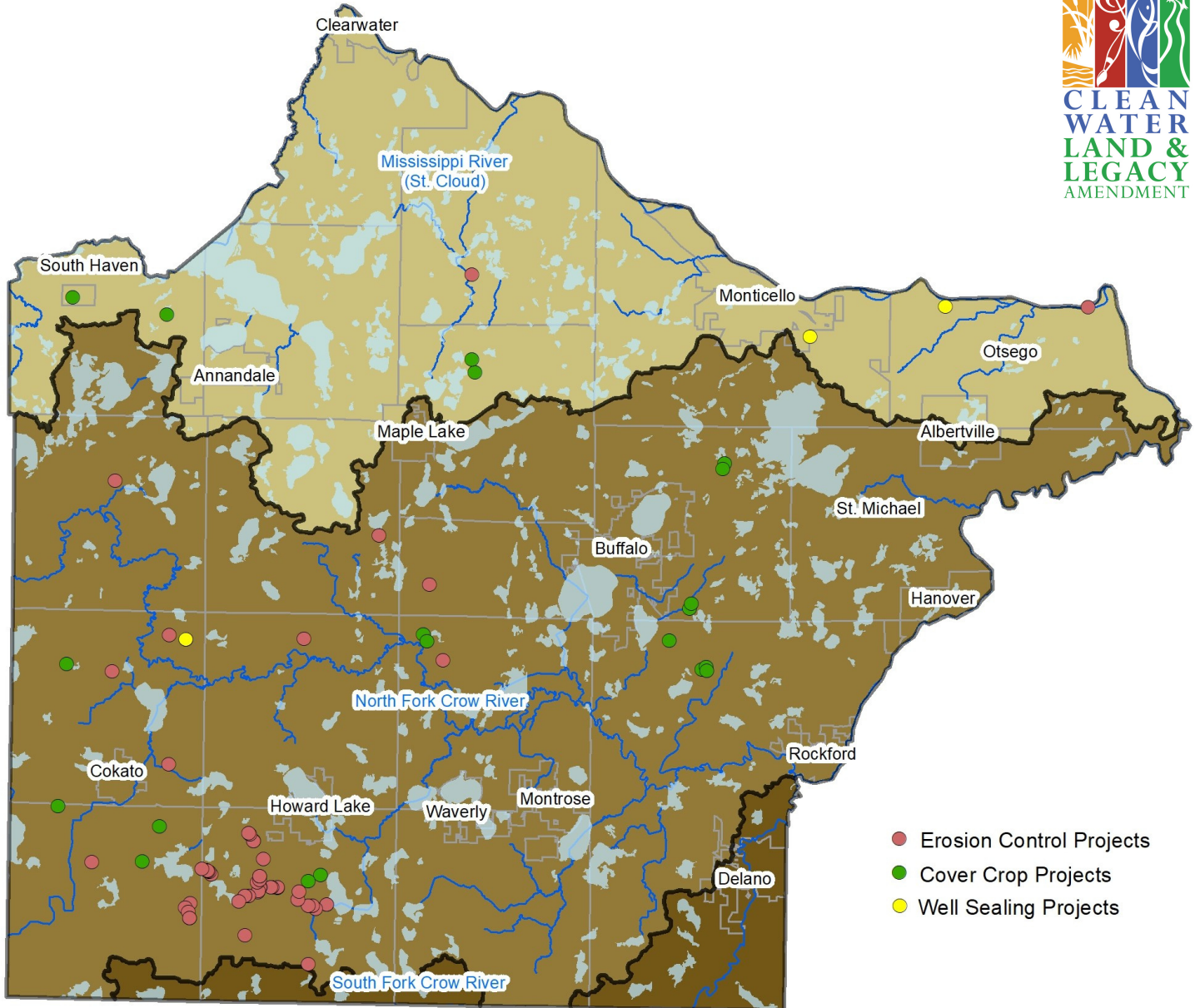
Senator Bruce Anderson and SWCD staff member Alicia O'Hare at the Minnesota AIS Research Center (MAISRC) touring and reviewing research projects.



SWCD and MPCA staff attended Lake Wilhelm Lake Association meeting.



# 2021 COMPLETED PROJECTS



Project locations within the three HUC 8 watersheds in Wright County.

## TOTAL REDUCTIONS:

- Sediment (T/yr.) 1,292.69
- Phosphorus (lbs./yr.) 1,677.88

## LEVERAGED PROJECT FUNDING:

- Local: \$163,766.43
- State Funding: \$422,443.88
- Federal Funding: \$208,323.98

## TOTAL PROJECTS:

- Water and Sediment Control Basins - 30
- Grade Stabilization Structures - 49
- Grassed Waterway - 1
- Streambank Restoration - 1
- Well Closures - 4
- Cover Crops - 9 contracts, 416 acres

Total Project Funds: \$794,534.29



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

## COUNTY DITCH 10

The Wright SWCD applied for and received an FY 2021 Clean Water Fund Multi-Purpose Drainage Management Grant for the implementation of best management practices within the County Ditch 10 (CD 10) watershed. The total grant amount awarded was \$163,000 with the goal of installing 34 alternative side inlet control structures (ASICS) along portions of County Ditch 10 to address erosion issues identified within the CD 10

Multi-Purpose Drainage Management Report. Wright SWCD staff coordinated with the Wright County Drainage Authority and ISG (engineering consultant) to install these structures in conjunction with the full system repair of CD 10. ISG staff identified the opportunity for six additional ASICS while reviewing the system in 2021.

In total, 40 ASICS were installed throughout CD 10 in the fall of 2021. Despite installing more ASICS than originally planned, grant funds still remain to implement additional BMP's in 2022. It is estimated that the 40 ASICS installed will result in the reduction of 55.2 tons of sediment and 93.1 pounds of phosphorus per year, contributing to the load reduction goals set within the Ann Lake and Lake Emma Excess Nutrient TMDL Plan.

In addition to the nutrient reduction benefits, the ASICS will slow water entering CD 10, improving the drainage efficiency of the ditch system and reduce long term maintenance costs associated with sediment removal within the ditch.

The ASICS work is in concert with the 10-acre storage pond installed in 2020 via an FY 2018 Clean Water Fund Multi-Purpose Drainage Management Grant, the establishment of vegetated buffers adjacent to the ditch, the adoption of cover crops within the watershed, as well as a privately funded wetland bank that is currently under construction. The Wright SWCD would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support of the benefited landowners of CD 10, Wright County Drainage Authority, Wright County Board of Commissioners, the Lake Ann Improvement Association, ISG engineering firm, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources for the successful implementation of this project. The Wright SWCD intends to identify and implement additional BMP's within the CD 10 watershed in the future.

### PROJECT FUNDING & REDUCTIONS:

- Project Cost: \$137,810.00
- CWF MDM Grant: \$116,000.00
- Benefited Landowners: \$21,810.00
- Sediment Reduction: 55.21 tons per year
- Phosphorus Reduction: 93.1 pounds per year

### PROJECT DETAILS:

- Year Constructed: 2021
- Components:
  - Tile
  - Riprap
  - Native Seed
  - Erosion Control Blanket
- Benefits
  - Sediment Reduction
  - Water Quality Improvement
  - Improves Drainage Efficiency
  - Bank Stability
- Partners
  - Wright Drainage Authority
  - Wright County Board of Commissioners
  - Ditch 10 landowners
  - Lake Ann Improvement Association
  - ISG Engineering Inc.
  - Blackstone Contractors LLC
  - Wright SWCD



Before: Site located during an inventory completed in 2016.



After: Side inlet installed in late September.



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

## OTSEGO REGIONAL PARK

Wright County Parks Department partnered with Wright SWCD to receive a competitive Conservation Partners Legacy Grant in 2019. This grant came on the heels of survey work that was completed in late 2018 because of major erosion concerns reducing the recreational uses of the park, mainly shore fishing and paddle sports.

Otsego Regional Park is the most used park in Wright County. The 70 acre park features a picnic area with two reservable shelters, two miles of paved trails for all-season use, a play field, horse shoe pits, a play structure, toilets, a prairie restoration area, a sand volleyball area, and a canoe access.

This project will enhance fish habitat, restore native vegetation, reduce sediment and phosphorus loading and provide for stabilization of the river bank. This section of the river corridor provides habitat connectivity along the MN DNR State Water Trail between St. Cloud and Anoka.

The Mississippi River is noted as one of the best Small Mouth Bass fisheries in the state, protecting this segment will continue to provide fish habitat and promote recreational fishing. In addition, approximately 20 miles downstream from this site is the City of Minneapolis drinking water intake; by making improvements to the bank stability and reducing sediment and phosphorus loading, positive impacts will be made to the quality of drinking water for the residents of Minneapolis.

Streambank erosion is common along rivers, streams, and ditches where banks have been eroded, sloughed, or undercut. However, it is important to remember that a stream is a dynamic and constantly changing system. It is natural for a stream to want to meander, so not all eroding banks which are slowly eroding are "bad" and in need of repair.

### PROJECT FUNDING & REDUCTIONS:

- Project Cost: \$108,715.00
- Wright County Parks Department: \$50,000.00
- Conservation Partners Legacy Grant: \$50,000.00
- Wright SWCD: \$8,715.00
- Sediment Reduction: 6.93 tons per year
- Phosphorus Reduction: 7.97 pounds per year

### PROJECT DETAILS:

- Year Constructed: 2021
- Components:
  - Toe-Wood
  - Stabilized Slope
  - Native Vegetation
  - Erosion Control Blanket
- Benefits
  - Sediment Reduction
  - Habitat Restoration
  - Water Quality Improvement
  - Protect Property
- Partners
  - Wright County Parks
  - MN DNR
  - MNL
  - Wright SWCD



Staging of material before the start of the project.



Project area prior to construction.



Native plants, seeding, erosion control blanket, and toe-wood installed on finished project.



# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

## MINNESOTA AG WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



The first Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certified producer in Wright County in 2016, the Anderson Family.

This program certifies farmers and landowners that manage the land within their operation in ways that protect water quality. Local conservation professionals assist those seeking certification through a three-step certification process.

**Step 1: Application:** Self-verification by the participant that they are meeting existing Minnesota laws and regulations regarding water quality.

**Step 2: Assessment:** Evaluation of each field throughout the crop rotation within an operation using the assessment tool.

**Step 3: Verification:** On-farm field verification by a MAWQCP certifier.

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect Minnesota's water resources. Those who practice, implement and maintain approved management practices in all aspects of their operation, will be certified and earn State regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.



## WRIGHT COOPERATIVE WEED MANAGEMENT AREA (CWMA)

The Wright CWMA was created in 2009 as a means for land managers within Wright County to collaborate on invasive weed management. The Wright SWCD cooperates with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT), Wright County Agriculture Inspector, Wright County Highway Department, Wright County Parks Department, Townships and private landowners to control invasive weeds.

Due to its relative abundance and risk to public health, Wild Parsnip was the original target species. Recently, the CWMA has expanded its scope and resources to other terrestrial invasive species. Efforts continue to be made on previously recognized species, including Wild Parsnip and Leafy Spurge. Meanwhile, other species including Common Teasel, Oriental Bittersweet, Common Tansy, Non-native Phragmites and Wild Carrot have been acknowledged, and new efforts have been launched for education outreach and continued control.



Common Tansy is a noxious weed on the MN eradicate list. A small roadside infestation in Wright County continues to be monitored and controlled.



Non-Native Phragmites is a Noxious weed that was recently advanced to the MN Control list. Wright County Ag. Inspector Matt Detjen and SWCD staffer Eric Mattson performed some herbicide control in September 2021.

### CWMA REPORT:

- \$8,447.04 funds utilized in 2021
- 3 contracts
- Total fund since 2008: \$77,135.92



# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

## MINNESOTA BUFFER LAW PROGRAM

The SWCD has continued its efforts to monitor, track and communicate surrounding the Buffer Law. In January 2021, compliance agreement letters were sent to eight landowners that remained non-compliant. The SWCD performed additional landowner communication through calls, emails and letters.

Buffers along the County Ditch 10 project were field checked. Twelve Notifications of Non-compliance (NONs) were sent as a result of this check. Over 30 buffers were field checked in Fall 2021 and most flagged or remarked.



Established buffer along a public water lake.

## CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (CREP)



Permanent restored prairie protects water resources and provides wildlife habitat.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a jointly funded program between the USDA (Federal) and BWSR (State). This voluntary program permanently retires environmentally sensitive acres on private lands. Annual payments to agricultural landowners are established through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

The same land is also enrolled into a perpetual conservation easement through the state Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program. CREP is implemented locally through Soil and Water Conservation Districts along with Federal and State partners. Private ownership remains and the land is restored and permanently protected for habitat and water quality benefits. In 2021 Wright SWCD continued communication with CREP landowners and performed site inspections.

Through outreach, the Wright SWCD promotes the CREP program and pursues landowners who may be interested in enrollment.

## FOOD PLOT SEED PROGRAM

The Wright SWCD partnered with The Wright County Chapter of Pheasants Forever and Dahlco Seeds to provide corn and soybeans to establish food plots.

### FOOD PLOT REPORT:

- 250 bags of corn
- 250 bags of soybeans
- established 682 acres of food plot



Wright SWCD staffer Eric Mattson and Meeker County Pheasants Forever Senior Farm Bill Biologist Josh Pommier pheasant hunting in Wright County.



# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS



## SWCD TREE PROGRAM SALE

The Wright SWCD distributed an informational packet including a program letter, 2021 Tree Order Form, 2021 Species Description Guide and 2021 New Species Info Sheet, in February.

All orders were filled on a first come, first served basis to Wright County residents and non-residents. In 2021 there was strong interest in the program, tree sales up 34%, prairie seed packs up 24%, and native plant kits up 35%.

### TREE PROGRAM REPORT:

- Tree - 51,450
- Prairie Seed Packs - 63
- Native Plant Kits - 70



Trees sorted by species ready for packing.



SWCD staff working diligently sorting trees.



Trees bundled by order, ready for pick-up.



# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

## DISCOVERY FARMS MINNESOTA

Wright County currently has the longest running Discovery Farm in Minnesota. In cooperation with Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Wright SWCD has been collecting data at the Discovery Farms site since 2012. In recent years, the farmer, Sean Groos, has been planting continuous cover programs. In 2021 after terminating cereal rye, he planted wheat, after harvest he planted a 7 species cover crop mix.

The severe drought in 2021 greatly reduced the amount of runoff seen on all farm fields. All of the surface runoff at the site occurred in March and the tile flow stopped in May. Despite the low rainfall, emergent cover crop was observed within two weeks of harvest and grew.

Water quality data continued to support that continuous cover reduced the amount of sediment and phosphorus exported from the field. The first three years of the program the field had conventional corn followed by 4 years of alfalfa. Water Year (WY) 20 had soybeans followed by cereal rye and WY21 had wheat followed by a cover crop mix.



Discovery Farm monitoring site with wheat crop on May 26.



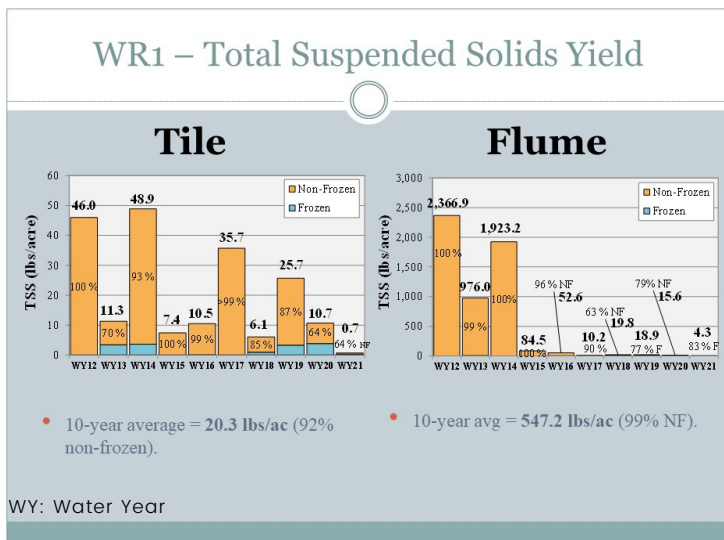
Field after wheat harvest on August 23



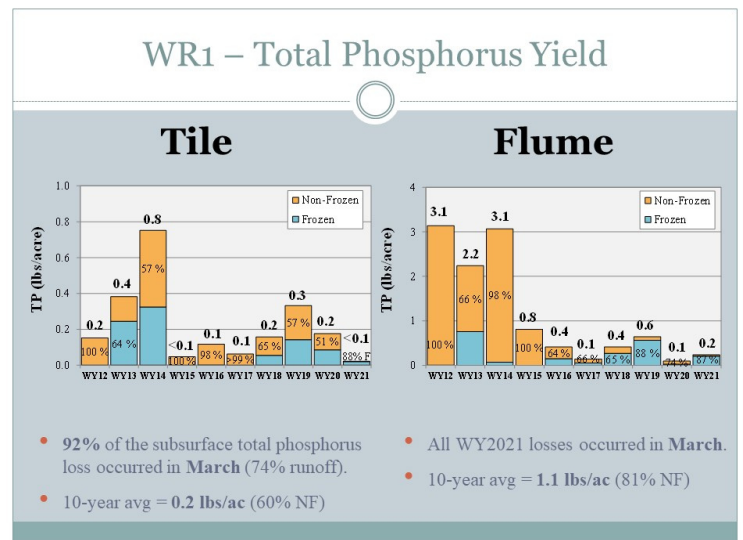
Cover crop growth on September 7



Cover crop growth on September 23rd



Annual sediment leaving the Discovery farm field. The drought reduced the yield in the tile in 2021 but continuous cover since WY15 greatly reduced yield from the flume.



Most phosphorus yield leaves the field in March as result of snowmelt. Leaving crop residue on the field starting WY 15 prevented surface runoff.

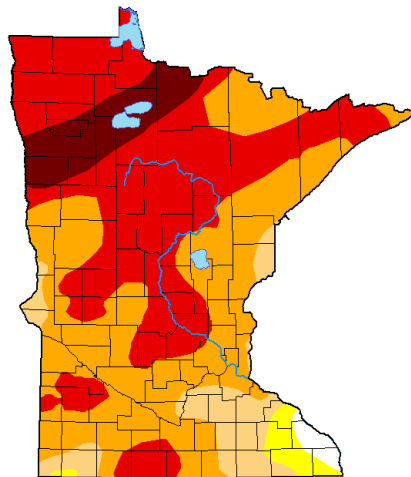


# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

## ROCKFORD MONITORING

The extreme drought this year brought the Crow River down to incredibly low flows. Normally, Wright SWCD staff conduct sampling from a bridge over the Crow River, but flows were so low that staff had to wade out into the river to get an accurate sample. Staff monitor the Crow River near Hwy 55 in Rockford every two weeks throughout the year for chloride, nutrients, sediment and quarterly metals testing. Met Council and Wright SWCD have partnered to collect water quality data for over 20 years.

### U.S. Drought Monitor Minnesota



**August 17, 2021**  
(Released Thursday, Aug. 19, 2021)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current 08-10-2021	1.15	98.85	96.56	88.29	49.77	8.07
Last Week 08-10-2021	1.15	98.85	95.36	77.77	42.20	7.37
3 Months Ago 05-18-2021	45.43	54.57	21.61	0.78	0.00	0.00
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2021	1.60	98.40	23.40	0.28	0.00	0.00
Start of Water Year 09-26-2020	54.95	45.05	8.39	0.00	0.00	0.00
One Year Ago 08-18-2020	73.22	26.78	10.51	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Intensity**  
 None      D2 Severe Drought  
 D0 Abnormally Dry      D3 Extreme Drought  
 D1 Moderate Drought      D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/about.aspx>

**Author:**  
Curtis Riganti  
National Drought Mitigation Center



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

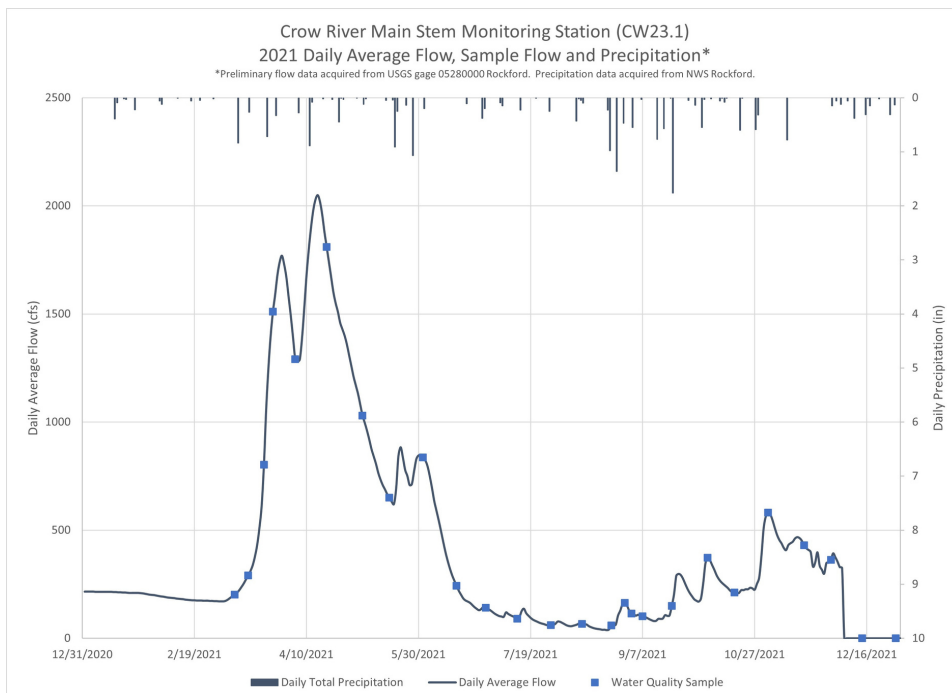
At the peak of the drought in mid-August nearly all of Wright County was in the "Extreme Drought Category."



Wright SWCD staff member Alicia O'Hare wading into the Crow River to take a water sample.



Low flows on the Crow River in Rockford exposed several islands in September.



This is the hydrograph for the Crow River at Rockford in 2021. There were very few peaks due to lack of runoff. Fall rains brought flows near normal before ice accumulated. Image credit: Metropolitan Council



# COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS



Photo above shows cereal rye that was planted after silage corn harvest. The producer is planning on harvesting the rye in the spring of 2022 for supplemental feed before planting silage corn.



Extent of rye growth one month after planting.

## COVER CROPS

The Wright SWCD continued to work with producers experimenting with cover crops in 2021. Local capacity and One Watershed One Plan funds were used to incentivize cover crop use, with higher payments rates for producers willing to interseed the cover crop into the primary cash crop.

A major drought impacted Wright County in 2021. As a result, area producers were forced to find alternative feed sources for their livestock. This created an increase in demand for cover crops that could be harvested for feed. There was a noticeable increase in producers planting cereal rye after silage harvest with the intentions to harvest the rye for a supplemental feed source.

Other producers continued to interseed cover crops into standing corn and after small grain or soybean harvest. Cost-share payments totaled \$13,220 and 416 acres of cover crops were implemented.

The Wright SWCD commends the producers who have stepped outside of the “normal” farming practices to show that cover crops can be utilized in Wright County.

The Wright SWCD will continue to provide technical support, funding, and be an overall resource for anyone interested in incorporating cover crops into their operation. The SWCD hopes to see continued growth in cover crop adoption and improved soil health throughout Wright County in 2021 and beyond!



# WATER MONITORING

## MINK LIMESTONE FILTER PROJECT

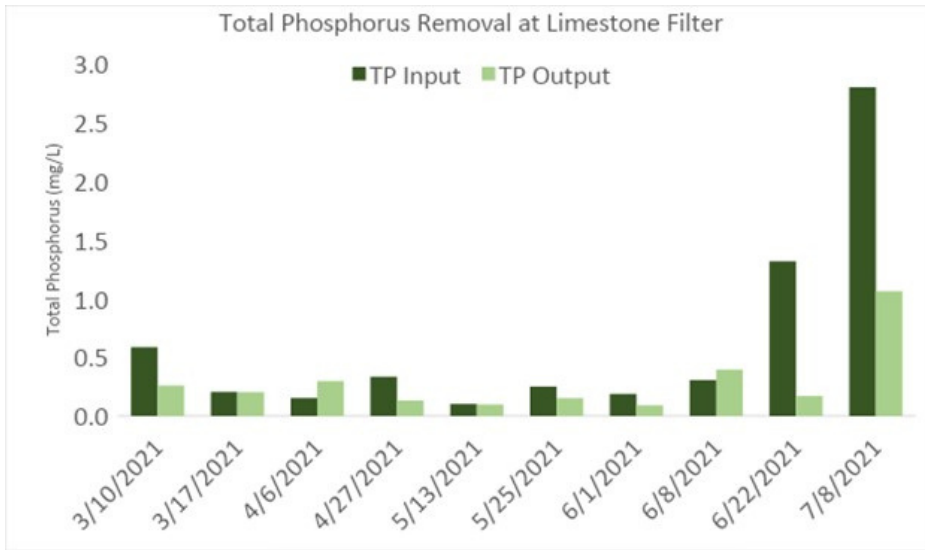


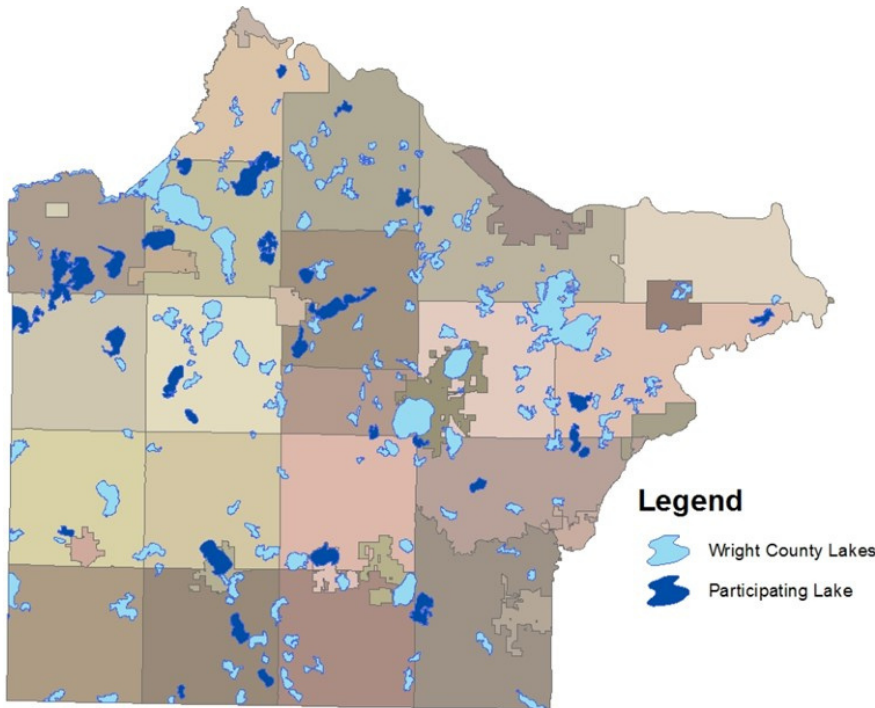
Figure 1. Total Phosphorus concentrations at the inlet to the limestone filter (dark green) compared to total phosphorus concentrations at the outlet of the filter (light green).

Monitoring continued at the limestone filter near Mink Lake and sand iron filter near Martha Lake. The goal of the filters is to remove phosphorus before it reaches the lakes.

While the sampling season started early for both filters the drought dried both filters up in mid-Summer. Both filters continue to show total phosphorus removals. The Limestone filter stored over 13 lbs of phosphorus despite the short season.

The Martha filter was still reaching 66% removals during the early growing season.

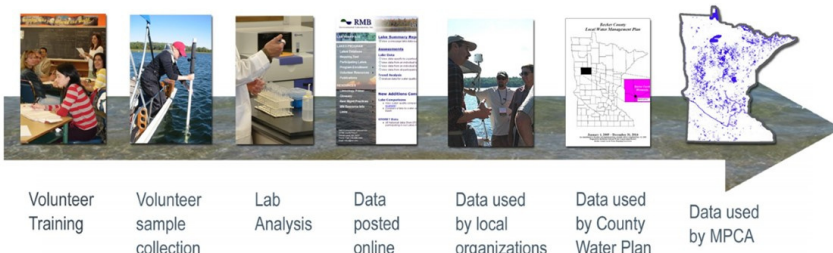
## CITIZEN MONITORING



In 2021 26 lakes participated in citizen lake monitoring.

This program gets lakeshore owners more involved with their lake water quality. The samples taken each year could be considered the lake's annual "physical" and they help build a long-term trend to better illustrate if water quality is improving or declining.

More importantly, to be able to prevent and address problems in our lakes we need good information about the status of our water resource, potential and actual threats, and options for addressing the threats.



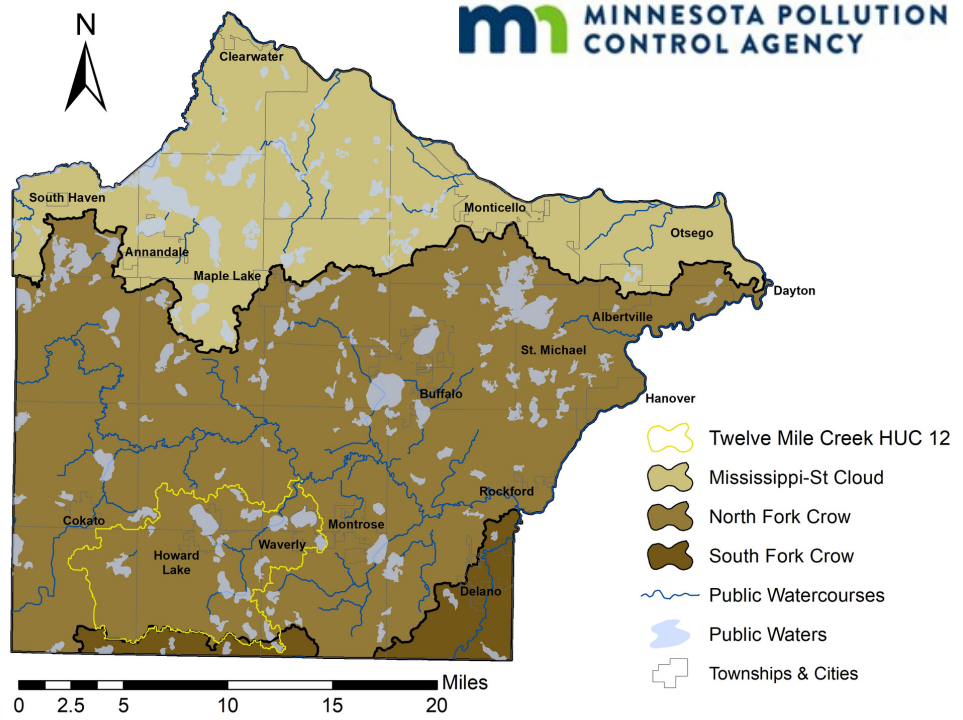


# TWELVE MILE CREEK FUNDING

## \$850,000 AWARDED IN GRANTS FOR TWELVE MILE CREEK

Wright SWCD received several sources of funding for work in the Twelve Mile Creek Watershed. The watershed is located in southwest Wright County. It includes several lakes including Howard, Waverly, Little Waverly, Ann, and Mary. Additionally, the headwaters of the watershed is made of the County Ditch 10 system.

A federal grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, in coordination with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency will provide \$320,000 over the next four years. This grant will pay for water quality monitoring, education, source reduction management and structural agricultural practices. A portion of the American Rescue Plan funds awarded to the county will provide \$530,000 to assess lake internal loading and conduct a comprehensive carp study. Additionally, North Fork Crow River IWIP funds are eligible in this area.



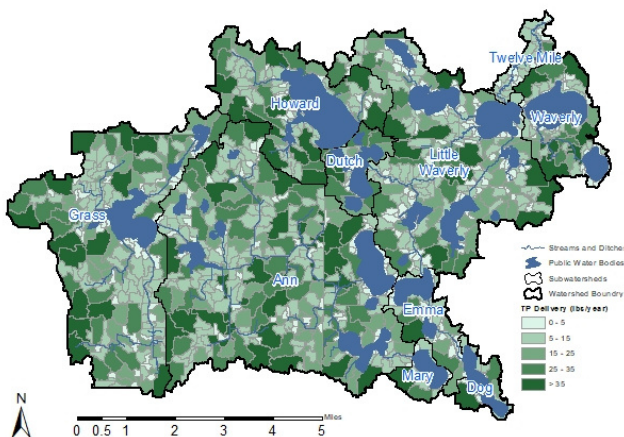
## SUBWATERSHED ASSESSMENT

In order to prepare for these grants funds Wright SWCD completed a Subwatershed Assessment for the Twelve Mile Creek Watershed. For this assessment staff utilized both the PTMApp and ACPF modeling applications. The assessment was funded by an Accelerated Implementation Grant through the Metropolitan Conservation Districts.

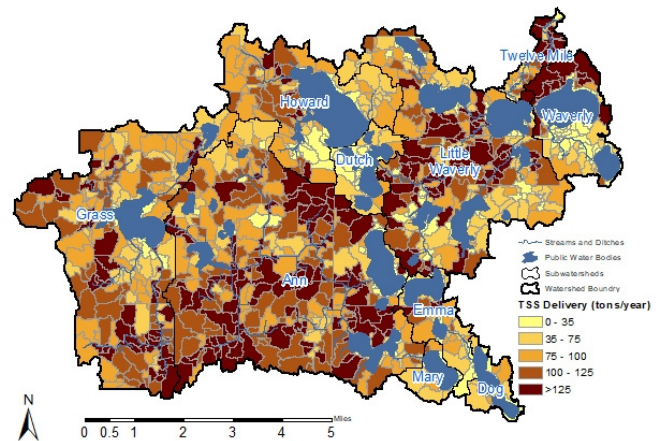
The assessment started with a prioritization process to identify areas of the watershed that are exporting the highest loads of nutrients and sediment.

After this assessment, computer models identified areas that would be suitable for structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, filter strips and more. Staff then confirmed the viability of the suggested BMPs. In the end, staff came up with 19 projects, each with several BMPs. SWCD staff will be reaching out to landowners soon.

The final part of the assessment considered the areas of the watershed that will benefit the most from source reduction practices such as cover crop, or reduced tillage.



Total phosphorus (TP) export from field-scale catchments in Twelve Mile Creek. Darker green areas export more phosphorus than lighter areas.



Sediment (TSS) export from field-scale catchments in Twelve Mile Creek. Dark brown areas export more sediment than yellow areas.



# AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

## BAIT COMPOST PILOT PROJECT

Did you know that it is illegal to dump live bait into Minnesota lakes? It is also illegal to transport the baitwater away from a Minnesota Lake! So, what to do with unwanted leftover bait?

This year, the Wright SWCD offered a solution by placing twelve bait compost stations throughout the county.

"That must have smelled terrible!" Actually no, out of 101 observations in 2021 only 10% of the time was there a noticeable smell. Trash did accumulate but we have a wonderful team of volunteers that keep the bins well maintained.

## AIIS PROGRAMING

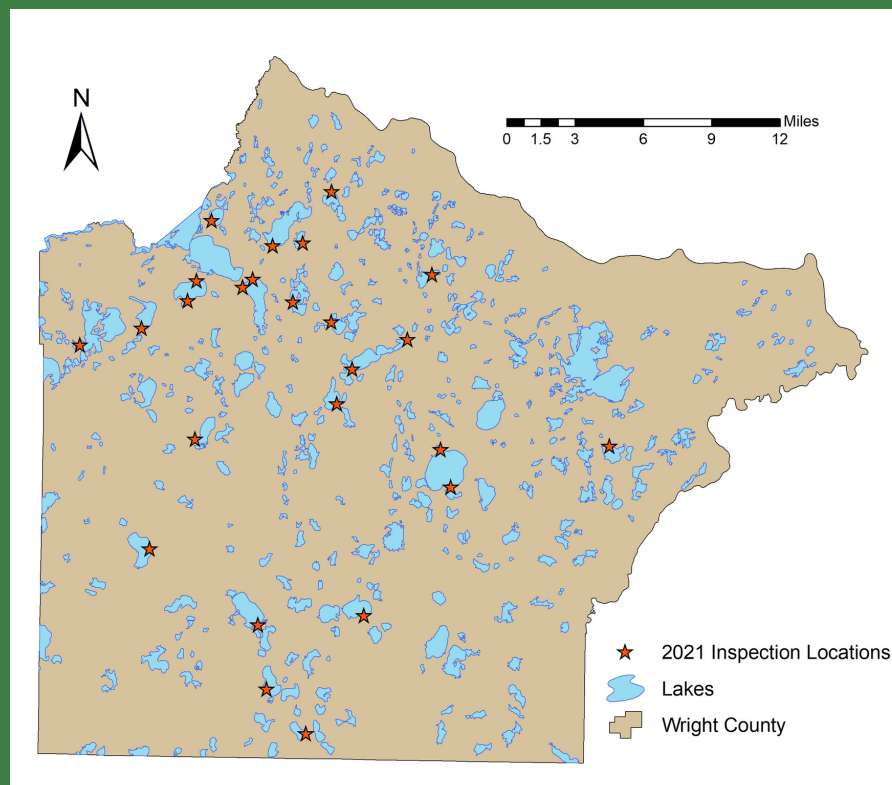
Wright SWCD continued its inspection and treatment programs in 2021. Although staffing shortages reduced overall numbers, inspections were still offered at 26 public accesses in Wright County.

The 2021 treatment program funded 23 lake associations to treat three different species: curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian watermilfoil and starry stonewort. New infestations of zebra mussels were found on Locke and Francis lakes.

Wright SWCD supported the Prairie Sportsman TV show on PBS to bring AIS education to Minnesota viewers. Education efforts also supported the creation of an instructional video encouraging lakeshore owners to dry their docks for 21 days before buying or selling.



A bait compost station at Bass Lake.



## AIIS HIGHLIGHTS

- 12,539 boat inspections
- 176 decontaminations
- 6445 unique boater interactions
- 93% of boaters free of plants on arrival to lake
- \$57,637.10 awarded for AIS Treatment



# USDA-NRCS PROGRAMS

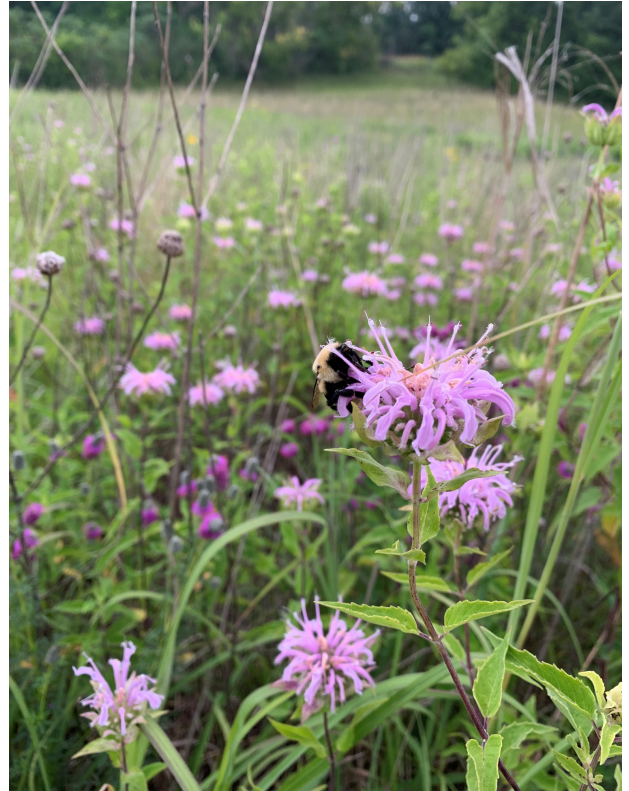
## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP)

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a federal program administered by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and assisted by the Wright Soil & Water Conservation District. EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to crop, livestock, and other agricultural producers, enabling conservation improvements to their operations.



### EQIP & EQIP RCPP

- Payments made in 2021 for installation of conservation practices = \$154,082
- Conservation practices installed in 2021 through EQIP & EQIP RCPP:
  - 28 water and sediment control basins
  - 2 grassed waterways
  - 10 acres of prescribed grazing
  - 10.4 acres of nutrient management
  - 2 earthen diversions
  - 10.4 acres of conservation crop rotation
  - 2 grade stabilization structures
  - 48 acres of cover crop
  - 63.8 acres of no-till
  - 1 energy improvement project
  - 1 organic conservation activity plan
- EQIP contracts obligated in 2021 = 2 contracts
- RCPP contracts obligated in 2021 = 7 contracts



Wild bergamot attracting pollinators in a CRP planting.

## CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP)

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is a voluntary program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities.

In 2021, \$24,889.51 was paid to Wright County agricultural producers through CSP.

## NRCS STAFF



NRCS Staffer Katie Evans reviews erosion control plan with producer.



NRCS Staff: Katie Evans, Soil Conservation Technician and Julie Reberg, District Conservationist.



# USDA- FARM SERVICE AGENCY

The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) implements agriculture policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster and farm marketing programs to local producers.

Through our network of county FSA offices and dedicated personnel, we are proud to offer a variety of programs.

The Wright-Hennepin County staff features four program technicians that specialize in farm program areas to offer expert assistance, the County Executive Director, and the County Committee of elected producers to represent their legislative areas across the two-county area.

Throughout the year, staff work with different programming and deadlines dependent upon the season. During this time, program technicians are actively enrolling producers in the ARC PLC program and General CRP. These common programs gain extensive participation in our community.

Here is a brief description:

- ARC and PLC payments provide critical support to help mitigate fluctuations in either revenue or prices for certain crops. These two USDA safety-net programs help producers of certain crops build back better after facing the impacts of COVID-19 and other challenges.
- General CRP helps producers and landowners establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees, to control soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat on cropland. CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States.

The Farm Service Agency offers numerous programs for nearly all producers and continues to adapt future programming to meet the current, critical needs. We are proud to equitably serve all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective agricultural programs.

Give the office a call at (763) 682-1982, or email [mnbuffalo-fsa@usda.gov](mailto:mnbuffalo-fsa@usda.gov), to see what we can do to best serve your operation!

## NEW STAFF



**Abby Penzenstadler** - I am excited to be joining the Wright and Hennepin county staff as the new County Executive Director (CED). As a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, I studied agricultural communications and marketing and agricultural economics. I am originally from Chisago City, MN where my family continues to crop farm and raise beef cattle and swine. As the CED, I am responsible for directing and managing program and administrative operations, as well as, guiding and providing resources to our program technicians.

**Danielle Sonstebly** - This is my second year working in the Wright-Hennepin FSA office as a Program Technician. I currently assist producers with disaster programs such as NAP, WHIP+, LFP, and ELAP. I also work with conservation compliance (AD-1026s) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). My love of farming came from growing up on my family's dairy farm just outside of Monticello. My children are active in their local 4-H club keeping with the farming tradition.



**Jess Frawley** - This is my second year working for the FSA as a program technician, I started in the Janesville, WI office and transferred to the Buffalo, MN office in September 2021. I am originally from Medina, MN. As a recent graduated of the University of Wisconsin River Falls, I majored in agriculture business and minored in equine studies. While in college I had the opportunity to spend my summers working for a few different vacation guest ranches out west. I currently work with the Payment Eligibility and Limitation program as well as the Farm Storage Facility Loan program.



# WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT



The MN Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is administered locally by Local Governmental Units (LGU's) such as the Wright SWCD and some cities within Wright County.

The primary goal of WCA is to achieve no net loss in the quantity and quality of wetlands in Wright County and throughout MN. Regulated activities under WCA include draining, filling, and in some cases excavation.

Contact us if you have any questions about wetland regulation or who is the current LGU in your area.

Wetland services provided by the District include and are not limited to:

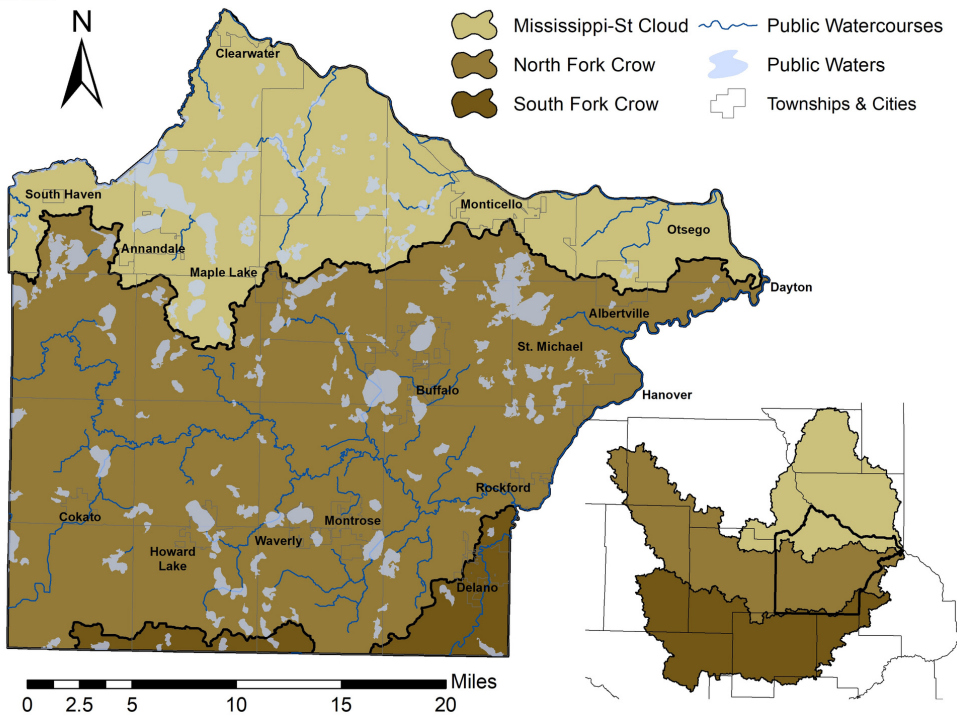
- Assist landowners in determining where wetlands may exist on their property and regulatory implications of proposed projects
- Review and issue decisions on wetland delineations
- Review and issue decisions on exemption/no-loss applications
- Review and issue decisions on wetland replacement plan applications
- Review and issue decisions on wetland bank applications
- Investigate and assist with the enforcement of WCA violations
- Review replacement wetland monitoring requirements
- Serve as a member of the Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP)
- Speak at educational events
- Assist landowners interested in enrolling lands into various wetland conservation programs
- Provide technical assistance for completing wetland delineations and WCA applications for cities and townships
- Assist landowners with any questions they may have regarding wetlands in general

## 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Responded to approximately 362 landowner contacts regarding wetlands
- Participated in approximately 70 Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) meetings
- Applied for and was awarded funding for the establishment of one Local Government Road Wetland
- Rendered decision on 16 wetland delineation reports
- Reviewed 2 exemption and 2 no-loss applications
- Reviewed 3 replacement plan applications proposing to permanently impact 7,566 sf of wetlands
- Investigated 37 potential WCA violations, resolved 3 informally, and 3 Restoration Orders were issued.



# ONE WATERSHED, ONE PLAN



Wright County is broken up into three watersheds.

One Watershed One Plan (1WIP) is a program administered by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) that coordinates the transition from county-based water management planning to watershed-based planning. The goal of 1WIP is to align local water planning on major watershed boundaries with state strategies towards prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation plans.

Approved plans include prioritization models to align implementation funds and technical assistance with the type of project and geographical areas with the highest conservation value. Local governmental entities including Counties, SWCDs, and Watershed Districts adopt these plans as their own comprehensive plan. Counties, SWCD, Watershed District, members of the public, state agencies, cities, and other conservation organizations are included as part of the planning process.

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER-ST. CLOUD

The Mississippi Saint Cloud watershed makes up the northern third of Wright County including: Corinna, Clearwater, Southside, Albion, Silver Creek, Maple Lake, and Monticello Townships. Additionally, the cities of South Haven, Annandale, Clearwater, northwest side of Maple Lake, Monticello, Albertville, and Otsego are within the watershed.

The planning process will begin in 2022. This is a two-year process in which SWCDs, Counties, and Watershed Districts work together to create a comprehensive plan for the planning area. Local input is imperative to creating a successful plan. In the end it will open up funding sources for the areas.

## NORTH FORK CROW RIVER

The North Fork Crow River makes up two-thirds of central Wright County. This area has completed the One Watershed One Plan process. It has since received two watershed planning grants. The first round of funding issued in 2018 was for \$642,377.00.

From the 2018 grant Wright SWCD secured \$268,628.27 for 11 different conservation practices over two years. The second round of funding became available in 2020, to date, the SWCD secured \$191,201.38 for 9 different conservation practices. Wright SWCD is the plan coordinator and fiscal agent for the 2020 grant.

## SOUTH FORK CROW RIVER

The South Fork Crow River makes up the southeast corner of Wright County, including about half of Franklin Township and the southern portions of Stockholm, Victor and Woodland Township. Additionally, nearly all of the City of Delano is within the watershed.

The planning process will begin in 2022. Similar to Miss-St. Cloud this is a two-year process in which SWCDs, Counties, and Watershed Districts work together to create a comprehensive plan for the planning area. Local input is imperative to creating a successful plan. Due to two planning processes moving forward concurrent, District staff will divide efforts to contribute to planning efforts.





**WRIGHT SOIL & WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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