

WRIGHT SWCD NEWS

Fall 2023 Newsletter of Wright Soil & Water Conservation District



What is a WaSCoB?

A water and sediment control basin, often abbreviated as WaSCoB, is a type of structure designed to manage stormwater runoff and prevent soil erosion. It's constructed as an earthen basin across a depression in the land, strategically placed to capture excess water and sediment carried by runoff from nearby areas. These basins temporarily pool runoff helping to slow the flow of water, allowing sediment to settle out before the water is gradually released or infiltrates into the ground. They are commonly used in construction sites, agricultural areas, or other locations where soil erosion and runoff control are essential for environmental protection and management.

Wright SWCD installed WaSCoBs to address significant field erosion coming from an agricultural field and transporting sediment into Maple Lake, an 862 acre lake located in north central Wright County. The lake has a relatively small drainage area, comprised of residential development, agricultural land, natural wetlands, and woods. The lake is a popular recreation lake, accessible by public boat launches on the northeast and southwest shores, and a productive fishery.

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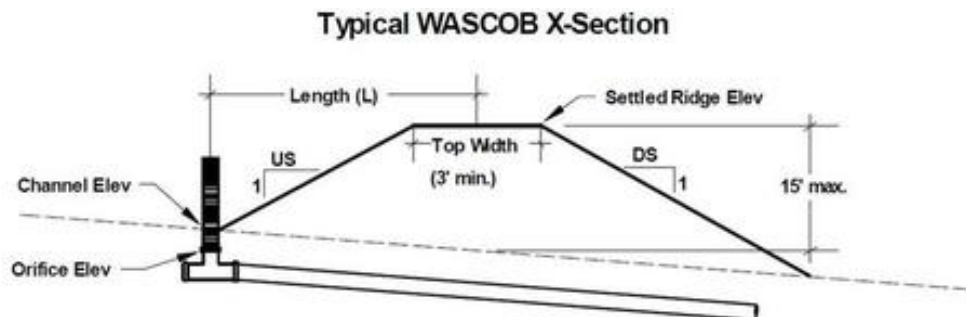
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What is a WaSCoB? continued

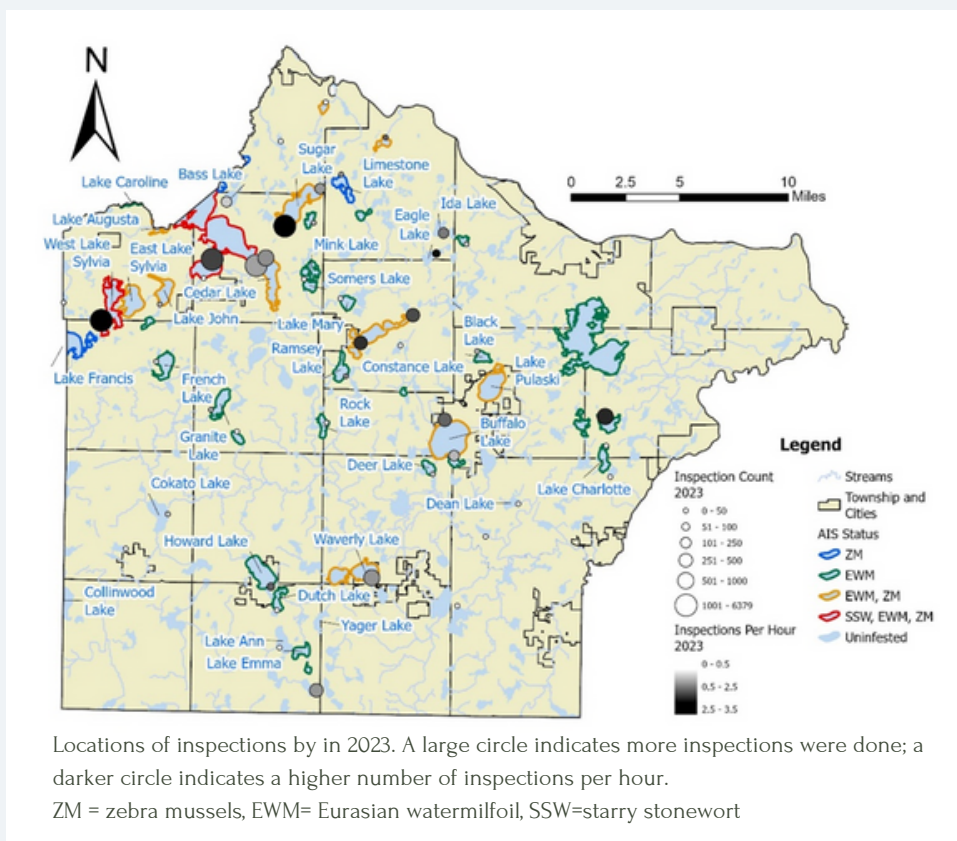
2 WaSCoBs were constructed in the field to intercept over 40 acres of agricultural runoff and retain the ponded water for up to 24 hours while slowly discharging. The WaSCoBs serve to drop out suspended sediment and prevent soil erosion downstream by reducing the peak flow from storm events, reducing the transport of nutrients to Maple Lake. Wright SWCD worked closely with the Agricultural Producer to develop a plan that would curb field erosion while minimizing the impact on the farming operation.



Wright County Continues AIS Inspection Program

Wright SWCD continued the aquatic invasive species (AIS) inspection program in 2023. The program was funded by both the state AIS fund (\$96,921.00) and local lake associations (\$96,624.00).

The majority of state-funded inspector time, 88%, was spent at 15 lake accesses, while the remaining 12% was spent on 29 other accesses (map on the right). The goal was to visit as many accesses as possible that allow motorized traffic but concentrate the majority of hours on lake accesses with known invasive species. Lake associations pay for inspections to occur at a particular access. Overall, inspectors conducted 16,584 inspections and interacted with approximately 7,400 different boaters.



Locations of inspections by in 2023. A large circle indicates more inspections were done; a darker circle indicates a higher number of inspections per hour. ZM = zebra mussels, EWM= Eurasian watermilfoil, SSW=starry stonewort

Agricultural Management Practices – Strip Till



“Strip till combines the benefits of conventional and no-till systems”

Change is all around us... especially in agriculture. One change we are beginning to see is how farmers prepare their fields for the next planting season. Conventional tillage has included chisel plow, speed disc, or historically moldboard plowing. Unfortunately, unintended consequences of soil compaction and soil erosion are pushing producers to explore reduced tillage methods.

One method of reduced tillage being implemented in Wright County is “strip till”. Strip till minimizes the amount of soil disturbed by only tilling a narrow strip where the seeds will be planted. This method combines the benefits of conventional and no-till systems, preserving the soil structure while providing a suitable seedbed for crops. The strips can be created in the fall or spring, with fertilizer, chemicals, or cover crops being applied at the same time.

Given the need for specialized equipment and for the producer to completely rethink all aspects of their management system, the change to strip till cannot be taken lightly. In addition to providing cost-share funding, the Wright SWCD has increased its efforts to hold educational events with local producers to demonstrate these kinds of practices firsthand. In cooperation with Centra Sota Cooperative and the University of Minnesota Extension, a field day was recently held at Mike Young’s farm, near Waverly, where his strip till system was demoed in front of over 50 area producers.

For up-to-date information on Wright SWCD’s current cost-share offerings, upcoming educational events, or any general questions, please contact us at 763-682-1933 ext. 3.

Dormant Seeding

Late Fall can be a great time for seeding conservation plantings. Native seed mixes used for habitat and restoration projects include:

- warm and cool season grasses
- sedges
- forbs (broadleaves)

Dormant plantings allow stratification (cold period) to occur thus increasing germination of many sedges and forbs. This allows germination when ideal conditions arise in spring.

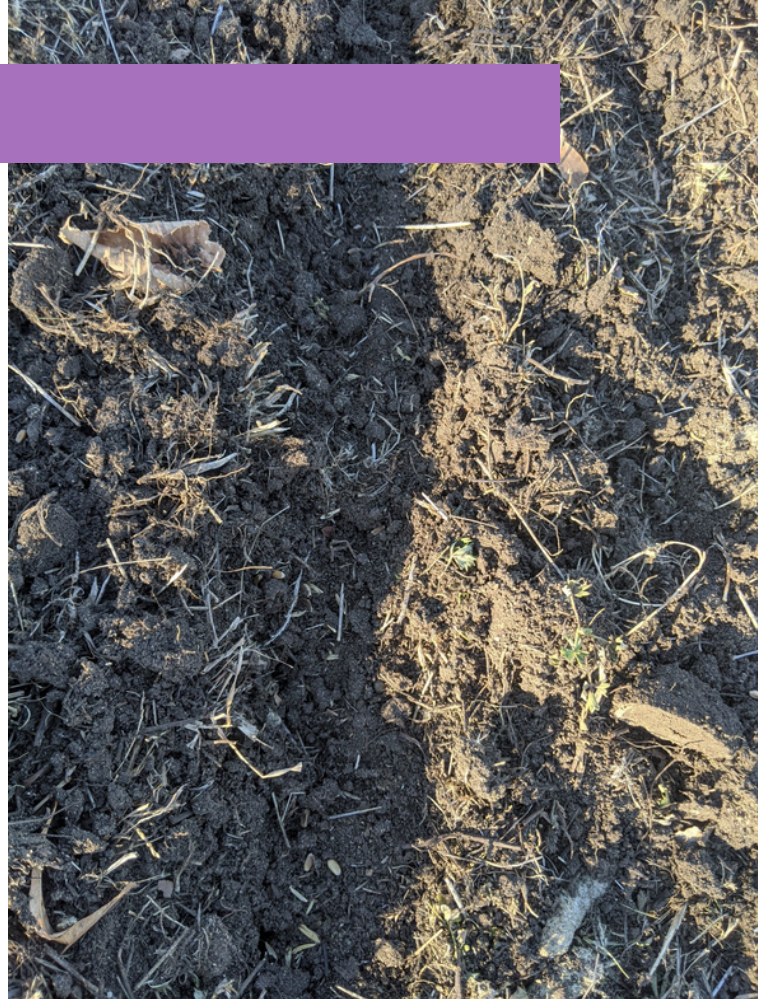
Benefits:

- + Good seed-to-soil contact without soil disturbance.
- + Replicates the natural seed dispersal.
- + Good soil moisture for spring growth.
- + Soggy areas are accessible when conditions are dry or frozen.

Conditions:

- > Soil temps are consistently below 40° F so seed does not germinate until Spring.
- > Perennial vegetation removed with herbicide or other methods.
- > Soil is exposed with little vegetation residue.

Snow seeding in winter and early spring are also good options right before a snow fall or on a sunny March day so the seed is quickly protected by snow. Winter may be here but there are still opportunities to get your planting started.



Examples of dormant seeding at Monticello Schools.



JEFFERY BURNS

Retires December 31, 2023

The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District would like to thank Jeffery Burns for his seven years of service on the Board. The December 2023 meeting will be Jeff's last meeting in office before moving out of Wright County.

From 2017 through 2023 Jeff has provided a passion for conservation and Wright County's natural resources. During his time on the Board, Jeff served on many committees, including the North Fork Crow River and Mississippi River St. Cloud One Watershed One Plan Policy Committees, Wright County Water Management Task Force and the Aquatic Invasive Species Advisory Committee.



Jeffery,
Thank you for your
countless hours of
service and we wish
you a happy
retirement from the
Wright SWCD
Board.

The Three Qualities to being a SWCD Supervisor

1. Knowledge and understanding of...

- fundamentals about the environment and how it works
- the relationship between land use decisions and the environment
- the effect environmental decisions have on other aspects of our lives
- local concerns, attitudes and needs

2. Concern about...

- our environment and natural resources
- maintaining and improving water quality
- protecting our soil

3. Leadership in the community involving...

- setting local conservation priorities
- educating friends and neighbors about the environment
- working with other local government units, state and federal agencies, and other elected officials
- setting a positive example
- taking potentially unpopular stands
- balancing economic needs with environmental concerns
- sacrificing short-term gains for long-term benefits





**WRIGHT SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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