



Keeping it Simple! "Grow As You Know"- Pg. 20
Cover Crop \$\$\$ and Free Consultation for Farmers

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SWCD Lands Its First
Cover Crop Grant for
Todd and Douglas County
Farmers
with support from the
Soil Health Coalition & Osakis Creamery



SWCD Annual Report & Newsletter

Conservation, Protection, & Enhancement of Todd County's Natural Resources

Our Commitment

As your local Soil and Water Resource Conservation District (SWCD), we are committed to you, the citizens of Todd County, in the “conservation, protection, and enhancement of Todd County’s natural resources”.

Founded in 1965, Todd SWCD provides conservation leadership and educational, technical, and financial assistance to landowners, businesses, and local governments to proactively encourage a steady improvement in the use of natural resources. While housing what have been typically called “regulatory programs” under our roof, we are not a regulatory agency— instead,

we model and fully believe in accomplishment through voluntary collaboration with you, the citizens of Todd County.

Todd SWCD provides ongoing staff and supervisor training to maintain technical skills and the most up to date science based knowledge. This provides and maximizes trust and credibility with landowners and agencies, alike, ensuring the continued success of our collective on-the-ground efforts. At the same time, we listen to and highly regard your knowledge, skills, and input as owners and descendants of the land. We understand that all which is accomplished is because of you, the landowner,

and your willingness to install, implement, and experiment with best management practices on your property.

Along with our commitment to property owners, we continue to seek strategic partnerships with local committees, associations, and agencies to develop conservation on a broader scale.

Through grant applications, state cost-share, and other funding initiatives, we can achieve affordable conservation. Contact us today with your plans for a stronger Todd County.

320-732-2644

Todd Co. Historic Courthouse

1st Ave. S. Long Prairie, MN



Knee High by the 4th of July? District 2 Supervisor Wayne Wendel stands out in a field of early corn.



2020 Todd SWCD Board of Supervisors - L to R: Tom Williamson, Dale Katterhagen, Kenny Pesta, Dan Whitney, and Lee Buchholz

Re-Introducing 2021 District 2 Supervisor, Wayne Wendel (pic– left, above). Wayne Wendel from rural Eagle Bend has re-joined the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation Board of Supervisors after a 16 year farming hiatus. Wendel was voted in as District 2 Supervisor in the November 2020 election against Dean Meiners of Clarissa. Wendel was active on the Todd Soil & Water Board, as was his father before him, in the late 1900’s and early 2000’s. The Wendel family has a history of conservation farming in Eagle Bend and the surrounding area for over a century now and were awarded Todd County’s Conservation Farmers of the Year for 2001. They (including son, Aaron) incorporate contour strips, grassed waterways, riparian buffer strips, tree shelterbelts, food plots and ponds for wildlife, and feedlot filter strips to control runoff on their combined beef and crop operations. Wendel has been active in the local Farm Bureau and his church as well as dedicating a lifetime career to community corrections.

Todd SWCD Plan of Action

2020 Objective: Improving & Protecting Water Quality Through Soil Health

Targeted Initiatives:

Through what means will the objective be achieved throughout 2020?

#1- Leadership in Public Protection

- Incorporate at least one soil health topic into the 2020 Feedlot Meeting
- Explore partnering with the Soil Health Coalition– a farmer led organization promoting soil health
- Obtain Technical Staff Job Approval Authority in Cover Crops
- Focus media coverage on soil health principles in articles, newsletters, radio ads & talk shows
- Apply for One Watershed One Plan for the Long Prairie River Watershed including ways in which surface waters, wells, and drinking water can be protected with soil health management practices

#1- Funding Concerns

- Apply for a 2020 Cover Crop grant
- Revamp the 2020 project assessment sheet to assign higher points to cost share practices that improve, promote or integrate soil health

#2- Soil Health & Surface Waters

- Develop the Environmental Assessment of Riparian Terrestrial Health– a.k.a. The EARTH Program– aligning with soil health principles for shoreland & residential areas. Goal : 2021 Implementation.
- Create a holistic farm framework for site visits to be implemented in 2020.

#3- Soil Health & Groundwater

- Participate in outreach efforts for the CLC Demonstration Irrigation Grant.
- Participate in the RCPP Irrigation Grant through dedicated in kind match obligations.

#4- Soil Health & Livestock

- Create a holistic farm framework for site visits that includes discussions on the conversion or adaptation of agricultural land to productive pasture and the value of adding covers to row crops for late and early season grazing

Todd SWCD Mission Statement

Conservation, Protection, and Enhancement of Todd County's Natural Resources.



Initiative #1: Todd County Soil & Water Conservation District Honors Stelling Land & Cattle of West Union Township as 2020 Outstanding Conservationists- *Local Leadership*



“Striving to improve soil health is and always will be priority, and it proves to be challenging as well as rewarding” — Eric Stelling

Strip tilling, cover crops is recipe for healthy soil

By DICK HAGEN
The Land — JANUARY 10/JANUARY 17, 2020

WILLMAR, Minn. — Talking with a board member of the Minnesota Soil Health Coalition, a logical starting question was “How healthy is the soil on your farm?” The query was posed to Todd County farmer Eric Stelling. His immediate response, “We’re getting it healthier every year.”

I caught up with Stelling at the Minnesota State Cattlemen’s Convention in Willmar in mid-December. He explained their yearly manure application build soil bacteria which then break down the carbon. “We’ve cut our nitrogen requirements more than half. And not doing deep tillage or plowing. I’m not a proponent of excessive tillage. Little is more in my practice.”

Keeping everything green is Stelling’s mantra — though he admits to some deep tillage to take out some roots. “We rot some fields up the fall because of wet soil conditions. We’ve tried to alleviate with tillage radishes and turnips. Every year we try to implement some sort of cover crop into our cropping rotation. In 2012 we had a lot of percent plant some that we planted with radish and turnips. We had like 600 some that we no-till that spring and the ground was just perfect. It was mellow and perfect texture. This spring we started strip tilling on we’ve just tillage on 8-inch widths where the corn is planted.”

Stelling’s machine for strip till was a 20-foot Gladstone, 40 feet wide, which he bought used for \$60,000. He farms 1,000 acres. He said he’s not overly sold on the Krause unit, but cut fuel usage by 70 percent. And quite a few rocks in Stelling soil, but with strip tillage you aren’t out there picking up rocks.

He likes to strip till in the fall, but weather conditions didn’t permit that so they strip tilled in the spring just ahead of the planter.

Stelling is particular about those cover crops. And he uses multiple species to cover all bases. “That means some forbs, some legumes like clover to provide some nitrogen, some tillage radishes with deep roots that penetrate into the soil and get a little more oxygen to the roots and arthropods. We’ve got a broad variety of soils ranging from sandy to heavy clays and heavy black dirt. So we vary the mix of our cover crops accordingly. Our biggest problem has been too much rain.”

Stelling is expecting much the same again this spring, as minimum tillage will likely pick up even more farmers simply because they might not have time to do conventional tillage this spring. His strip ratios is corn, alfalfa hay and soybeans. “And we’ll try to get some eye planted also because eye is one of the best builders of organic material in your soil. That’s because eye has the largest fibrous root system of any crop.”

Stelling planted some hemp last year. “It was seeded in July. We dropped it the second or third week in November and it turned out very well.”

Stelling’s houses of his new farming system are better soil health, reduced fertilizer, and significant reductions in both time and fuel. “And you improve your earth worm castings tremendously,” he added. “We noticed since we started spending money to get the biologists to do their thing of breaking down the carbon, it provides more nitrogen for our corn plants.”

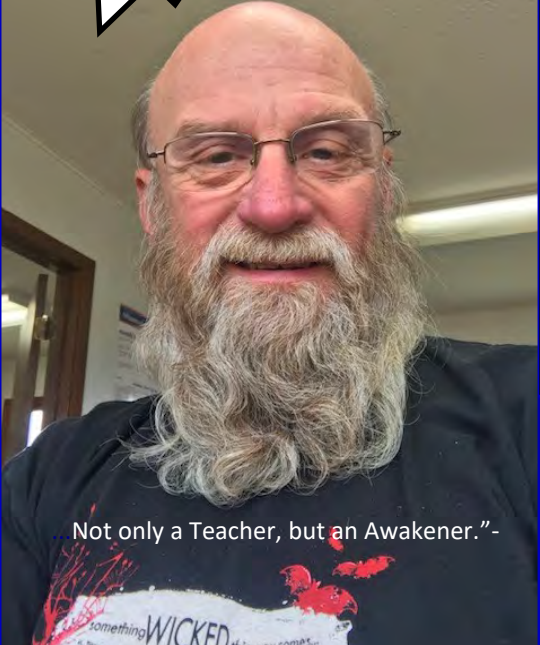
“The only thing I would say against the strip till machine is that it doesn’t get the soil warm as quickly,” Stelling admitted. “This last year we had some wet corn and light test weight. We had good yields ranging from 150 to 200 bushels. And that I credit to the much improved soil health of my fields — this with half the nitrogen we used to put on. If you want 160 bushel corn we normally would have put 160 units of nitrogen. Instead, we’re now putting 60 to 80 units of nitrogen as this strip till system is paying us back exponentially.”

“This summer we had a group of farmers from England visit. They’re trying to get into conservation tillage too, but there’s no government assistance to get them going. So they’re doing it out of the goodness of their heart. But they told us too many English farmers aren’t doing any work in rebuilding their soils and are starting to show on their landscapes. A lot of erosion and degradation of their soils. They came to America to see what we’re doing to improve our soils. Cover crops and less tillage were mostly new to them.”



Read Full Articles
in your Local
Newspaper

Todd SWCD Applauds Former Inspirational Browerville Educator Bruce Curley As 2020 Land Steward of the Year- *Local Leadership*



Not only a Teacher, but an Awakener.”-





Initiative 1 (Continued):

Local Leadership—

AIS Insider

A Model For Building an AIS Program from Scratch

featured article on Dan Ziegler, Mound Lake Landowner, produced by the Mississippi Headwaters Board in conjunction with Todd County AIS Program support of Minnesota Traditions

The wake-up call came in Fall 2018 when the landowners whose properties surround Mound Lake in southern Todd County began pulling their docks for the winter.

"A few people found zebra mussels attached to dock posts," said Mound Lake Association Board President Ron Ziegler. "The numbers weren't great; one or two mussels on each of a dozen or so docks. But it was enough for us to know that we had to mobilize."

Up to that point, aquatic invasive species weren't even on the association's radar display, but that would change quickly. A handful of volunteers walked the lake's shoreline and found evidence of zebra mussels in different areas—a sure sign of a lake-wide infestation, as opposed to a simple hotspot related to a public boat ramp.

"We knew then we were too late to do anything about zebra mussels," said Ziegler, "but we realized the importance of plotting out a plan to avoid other invasive species."

"With the lake association board's approval Ziegler dug around until he discovered that the county had its own AIS Committee, as part of the Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) and headed by District Manager Deja Anton. He wrangled an invitation to its next meeting, where he learned enough to make a recommendation to the lake association board. By then it was early 2019.

"I basically told them that we needed our own AIS committee," he said. "A small group of people who could focus on AIS issues—really sink their teeth in." What's more, he had a definite idea of who should lead the group. "I know my brother Dan," he said. "He's got incredible organizational skills; and he's tenacious." Dan Ziegler is a retired electrical engineer whose family has visited his grandparents' Mound Lake cabin since before he was born. Like his brother and their lake neighbors, he never gave a thought to invasive species until the zebra

mussels showed up.

"When I agreed to take on the program for the lake, I had zero knowledge regarding invasive species," he said. "I'd have to start from scratch." The goal, he explained, was to spend 2019 learning everything he could about AIS, then come up with a plan the board could implement in 2020.

"I plugged myself into every place I could; the county, the DNR, other lake associations—everywhere. I also attended AIS workshops and seminars, including the big Minnesota AIS Research Center seminar held on the U of M campus each year." For months Ziegler absorbed everything he could regarding AIS—information on species identification and biology, the roles of various government offices and agencies in the battle against AIS, how to request funding assistance from the county, how to maximize the effectiveness of watercraft inspections at public access ramps, and more.

"I even reached out to the Big Birch Lake Association (8 miles to the southwest), who took me under their wing," he said. "I met and talked with the people in charge of their AIS program on several occasions, and even got into the boat with their volunteer lake vegetation monitors. I was impressed with the history of research and actions they had taken over the years."

In the end he recommended a two-tier plan for 2020 to the association board. "The first priority was to establish a more effective watercraft inspection program." He'd researched old records and spoke to people with property adjacent to Mound Lake's one and only public landing and determined that inspection efforts in the past were sporadic and ill-timed, with most hours logged on weekdays between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. "I put together a proposal for the county AIS Committee requesting more hours, and that they focus on the busier week-end days.

"The second priority was to complete a



Dan Ziegler took the reins in establishing an AIS program for Mound Lake after zebra mussels were discovered in 2018.

lake vegetation survey. "The last one was done 15 years ago, and if we were to create a team of volunteer monitors to track changes in plant growth, we first had to find out what's in the lake now."

Watercraft inspection teams have been on duty at the Mound Lake public access since the general fishing opener in May. And a lake survey is scheduled for mid-August when plant growth is at its peak. But Dan Ziegler isn't finished yet. "I'm currently taking a class to learn about management techniques lake associations can use after an invasive species become established. Just to try to stay a step ahead in the game."

"There's been no push-back from our associations on the recommendations we've made because they trust Dan and believe in what he's done," said brother Ron. "They've even voted to increase association dues to support our AIS program."

"Dan took the call, buckled in and did the research," added SWCD Manager Deja Anton. "He's not only done a fantastic job of advocating for Mound Lake, he's also now on the AIS Committee I oversee, and has an impact on the entire AIS program in Todd County." Starting a lake AIS program from scratch isn't rocket science, Dan admits. "It merely takes time and effort."

2020 Brought us Covid– Will 2021 Bring us the “Stars”? AIS Insider, Continued

Covid 19 shut down the world in 2020. Along with it were reports of Murder Hornets, outrageous wildfires on the Western Coast, and major civil unrest, to name a few. Minnesotans turned to nature for respite. Our lake landings were busier than ever with many new boaters wanting to experience the beautiful lakes in Todd County. The Todd County Watercraft Inspection Program through Waterguards, LLC stayed vigilante in inspecting the increase in watercraft and educating inexperienced boaters. Many newcomers were surprised to learn that AIS inspectors even existed. Questions were asked. “Why are you here?” “What exactly is AIS? What should we be looking for as we take our boats off the water?” While some lakes in Todd County are infested with invasive species such as Zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil, what is NOT here yet is Starry Stonewort, and Todd County lake users want to keep it that way, whether they know it or not. For lurking right outside Todd County boundaries are lakes severely impaired by Starry Stonewort, to the point that, like Covid-19, it can literally shut down recreational watercraft and general lake use.

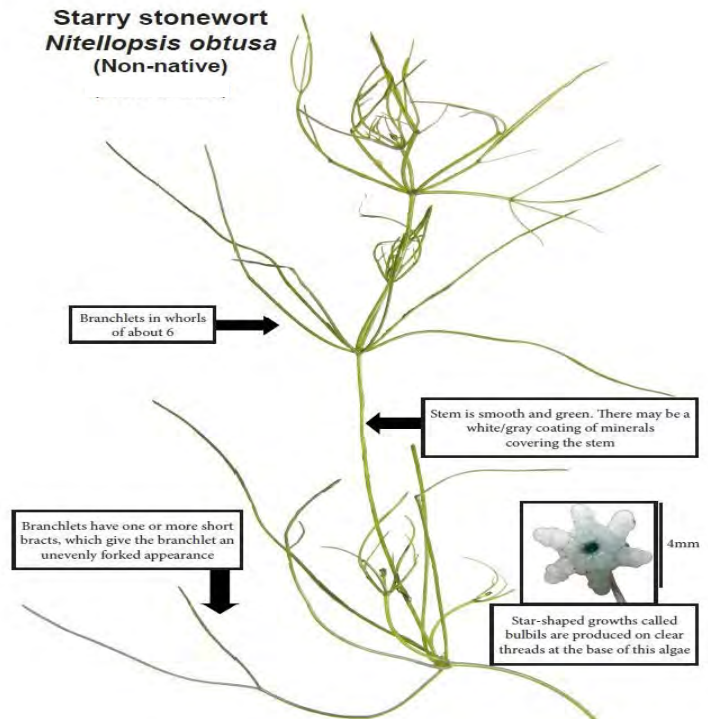
Starry stonewort is a type of freshwater algae that belongs to the same group as native musk grasses and other stoneworts. However, Starry stonewort is native to Eurasia, not the U.S. It was introduced to North America with shipping in the St. Lawrence seaway and is now found in many locations in New York and Michigan's Lower Peninsula. It was first identified in Wisconsin in 2014 and, a year later, showed up in Minnesota in Lake Koronis, Stearns County. As many of the known infestations have shown up near boat accesses at high recreational use waterbodies, it appears to be most easily spread accidentally via watercraft transport from lake to lake. Stearns County now has at least three lakes with Starry Stonewort infestations. There are 13 known lakes in Minnesota infested with Starry Stonewort, today.

***Starry Stonewort,
the next big threat
to our local
economies and
enjoyment of the
great outdoors...?***

According to the DNR, “people spread Starry stonewort primarily through the movement of water-related equipment. Fragments can get tangled in trailers, motors, anchors and inside watercrafts (boats, canoes and kayaks). Small bulbils, which may be hidden in mud and debris, can stick to trailer bunks, anchors, ropes, fabric, footwear, as well as scuba, fishing and hunting gear. A small fragment or bulb can start a new population.”

Starry stonewort is a bushy, bright green algae. It produces a star-shaped bulbil. Thin, bright green branchlet structures can vary in length and are arranged in whorls (radiating out from a single point) around the stem. Branchlets typically extend in acute angles away from the stem nodes. Tips of the branchlets may have irregularly-length forks.

Starry stonewort
Nitellopsis obtusa
(Non-native)



AIS Insider

AIS Insider, Continued

10,758 inspections performed

6,589 hours of inspections performed

33 accesses covered by inspectors

30 water bodies covered by inspectors

99 % of watercraft recorded as arriving with drain plugs out



2020 Todd County
Watercraft Inspected

ATTENTION OUTDOOR FAMILIES: JOIN US in AUGUST, 2021 for our next STARRY TREK adventure— open to families of all ages. Tour Todd County lakes, see the wildlife, explore, while helping us search for evidence of invasive Starry Stonewort !



Starry Trek 2020— Gary Barber of Lake Osakis demonstrates the use of a throw rake to collect sample (photos L & R). Fortunately after a morning of visiting several landings, no Starry Stonewort was found!



Dear Todd County Citizens,

The Todd County AIS Committee met on November 30, 2020 to review the results of this year's program. The Todd County AIS Program would like to share with you the following:

In 2020, the Todd County Watercraft Inspection Program found:

- 598 boats with aquatic plants attached,
- 46 boats with zebra mussels attached, able to be removed by hand,
- 6 boats with zebra mussels with decontamination required (1 time entering/5 times exiting),
- 42 boats with contaminated water,
- 70 drain plugs in upon arrival at the landing.

That equates to **762** opportunities for aquatic invasive species to be spread to another body of water. We serve as a consistent reminder to boaters who already know about aquatic invasive species, and were able to inform new boaters unfamiliar with AIS impacts and how to avoid the spread.



At the start of the AIS program, the statewide non-compliance rate for all boats entering and exiting waters was 35%. Since that time, it has dropped to slightly under 3%. Thank you for joining us in the effort to limit the spread of AIS.

Our inspectors are local and most return each year. Local inspectors completed training online this year due to COVID-19 and we started the inspection season on time with the Fishing Opener on May 9, 2020! Hours of inspection operation concentrated around the busiest time periods for each lake and varied over the course of the season based on daylight and boater traffic. Per request of lake associations, AIS inspectors were present at several events including 4th of July Fireworks and other shows. These are times when boater traffic from all over the state is at its highest.

We got more inspections completed with fewer inspectors this year due to careful, insightful planning of a dedicated locally led County AIS Committee!

With all that is going on in our world right now, we know it can be bothersome to take an extra 5-10 minutes to have your watercraft checked for carry-on baggage (weeds, mussels, mud, contaminated water, etc.). In the excitement to get to or off the lake, it is easy to forget to check all areas of our boats. We want to thank those of you for visiting our lakes and allowing us to inspect for the protection and continued enjoyment of our lakes here in Todd County. Our inspectors are local residents who care.

If you are a member of a lake association that has not attended AIS Committee meetings in the past, we invite you to join so that your lake and your resident voices are represented. Have a great 2021 everyone, and see you at this year's Fishing Opener!

Leadership in Public Protection: Partnerships

West Central Technical Service Area (WCTSA) Engineering Partnership

Technical Staff Serving Todd County:
Ross Reiffenberger, P. E.; Luke Herkenhoff; and Gary Borash

- **Total Project Assistance: 41**
 - Shoreline: 10
 - Erosion: 5
 - Feedlot/ Farm: 26
- **22 Site Visits/Surveys**
- **22 Preliminary Projects Designs**
- **8 Final Project Designs**
- **Construction Oversight on 7 Completed Projects in 2020: 2 streambank; 2 erosion; 2 shore; 1 feedlot**



Photo: Ross Reiffenberger, P.E. (left) from Area 2 WCTSA discusses next steps in preparing to lay down stream barbs on an erosion project in Villard Township for the Long Prairie River reducing excess nutrients. Accelerated erosion can destroy habitats for native fish species, alter the course and speed of a river, and introduce excess nutrients affecting the quality and overall health of Todd County water bodies.



607 9th St
Long Prairie, MN 56347
320-732-6618



- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 198.3 Acres Honey Bee Pollinator Habitat Perennial • 950.7 Acres Honey Bee Pollinator Habitat- Annual • 9 EQIP Contracts Projects: 1 irrigation, 5 Honey Bee Habitats, 1 High Tunnel, 1 Cover Crop, 1 Ag Waste (2nd Round funding) • 3 Nutrient Management Plans • 1,681.3 Acres of Nutrient Management Plans • 1,277.2 Acres Pest Management Plans • 22.5 ac Forest Stand Improvement/ Brush Mgt. • 492 Cover Crop Acres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,348 ft. Pasture Fence • 569.9 Acres Grazing Incentives • 7535 ft. Livestock Pipeline • 4 Conservation Crop Rotation/HEL Plans for 589.5 Acres • No Till 548.4 acres • 231.7 Acres of Residue Management - Mulch Till • 3 new or renewed CSP Contracts |
|--|--|

2020 Data is unofficial and has not been reviewed by State NRCS



Site visits and working outdoors have always been a large aspect of conservation. While earlier in the year state wide restrictions due to Covid-19 took away some of these opportunities, partners have found creative ways to safely meet. Here Farm Biologist, Luke Thoma, and US Fish and Wildlife, John Riens, discuss roadside, next steps for a large wetland restoration project in the works for Todd County after meeting with Lew Noska and Deja Anton, from Todd SWCD.

Farm Biologist Report:

63 CRP Contracts covering **1,708.87** occurred within Todd County in **2020**

USDA to Open Signup for the Conservation Reserve Program and CRP Grasslands in Early 2021

WASHINGTON, Nov. 12, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced the signup periods for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the CRP Grasslands in 2021. Signup for general CRP will be open from Jan. 4, 2021, to Feb. 12, 2021, and signup for CRP Grasslands runs from March 15, 2021 to April 23, 2021. Both programs are competitive and provide annual rental payments for land devoted to conservation purposes.

“The Conservation Reserve Program and the many focused programs that come under it, like CRP Grasslands, are some of our most critical tools we have to help producers better manage their operations while conserving natural resources,” said Richard Fordyce, Administrator of USDA’s Farm Service Agency. “As one of our nation’s largest conservation endeavors, CRP has proved to protect our valuable resources, and next year’s signup gives our farmers and ranchers an opportunity to enroll for the first time or continue their participation for another term.”

Enrollment Options

CRP—General Signup

Through [CRP](#), farmers and ranchers 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. Farmers and ranchers who participate in CRP help provide numerous benefits to the nation’s environment and economy. CRP general signup is held annually. The competitive general signup includes increased opportunities for enrollment of wildlife habitat through the [State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement \(SAFE\)](#) initiative.



Grasslands Signup

[CRP Grasslands](#) helps landowners and operators protect grassland, including rangeland, pastureland, and certain other lands while maintaining the areas as grazing lands. Protecting grasslands contributes positively to the economy of many regions, provides biodiversity of plant and animal populations, and improves environmental quality. A separate CRP Grasslands signup is offered each year following general signup.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. The program marks its 35-year anniversary this December. Program successes include:

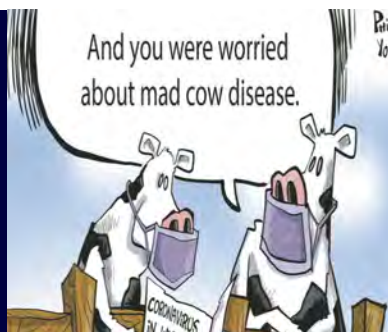
- Preventing more than 9 billion tons of soil from eroding, which is enough soil to fill 600 million dump trucks;
- Reducing nitrogen and phosphorous runoff relative to annually tilled cropland by 95 and 85 percent, respectively;
- Sequestering an annual average of 49 million tons of greenhouse gases, equal to taking 9 million cars off the road;
- Creating more than 3 million acres of restored wetlands while protecting more than 175,000 stream miles with riparian forest and grass buffers, which is enough to go around the world seven times; and
- benefiting bees and other pollinators and increasing populations of ducks, pheasants, turkey, bobwhite quail, prairie chickens, grasshopper sparrows and many other birds.



Initiative 1:

Leadership In Public Protection

Public Involvement & Planning



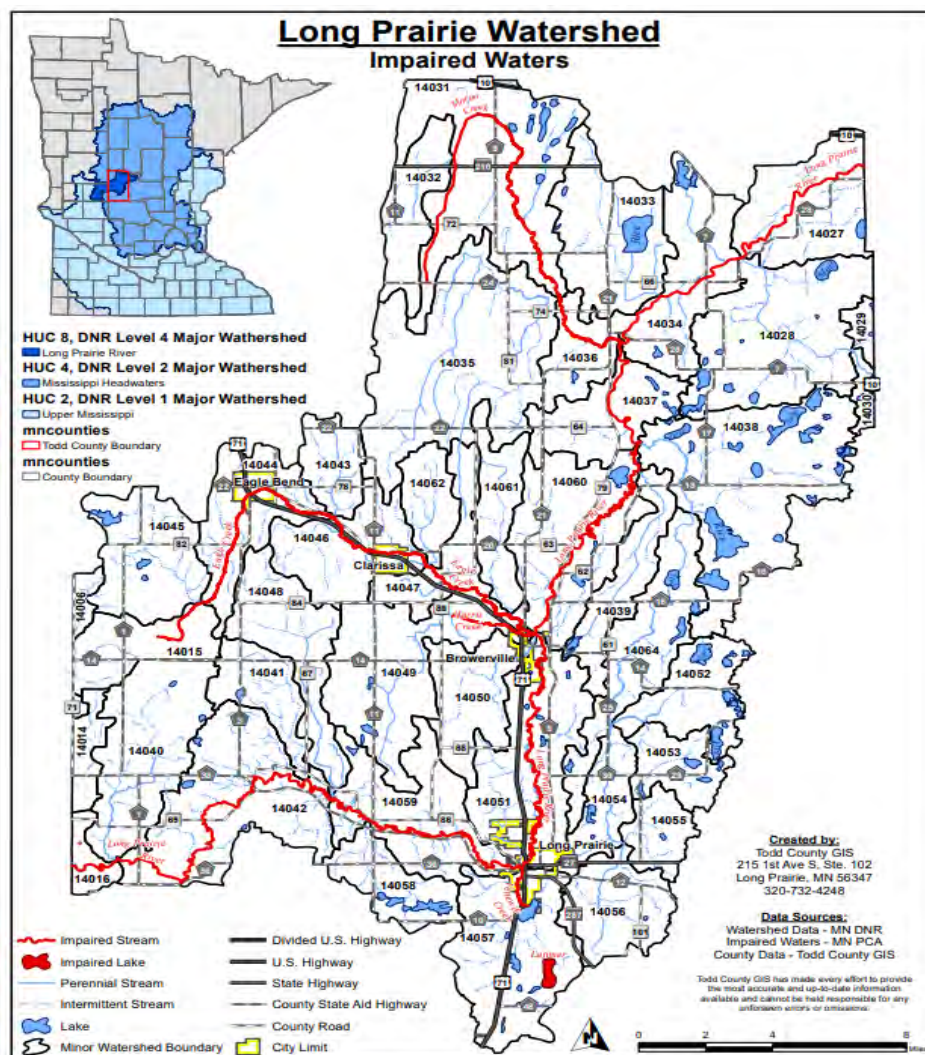
ANNOUNCEMENT:

Due to ongoing concerns for the spread of Covid 19 and the unknowns of when the Governor's restrictions for large group gatherings will be lifted, the **Todd SWCD Annual Feedlot Meeting & Farmer Appreciation Buffet** intended to return for March 2021 is once again **CANCELLED**.

BWSR Awards Long Prairie River One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) Planning Grant to Todd, Morrison, Douglas, Wadena, and Ottertail SWCD and County Collaboration

After a year of preparation and meeting with collaboration partners, Todd County submitted the 1W1P application to the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) in early June of 2020 to begin planning for the future of the Long Prairie River Watershed (Image, right). This watershed covers about 480 square miles in Todd County which comprises 54% of the total watershed. In the Fall of 2020, Todd SWCD learned that BWSR did approve this application, and since then efforts have been underway to get the planning process started. Todd SWCD Board of Supervisors assigned Supervisor Dan Whitney of Staples to the Policy Committee overseeing Plan Development and to sit aside Commissioner Barb Becker representing Todd County. The formal 60 Day Public Notice requesting public comment was sent January 4, 2021 to area newspapers and city and township officials. Additional notices were posted on the County website and mailed out to individual landowners with large land mass ownership abutting the Long Prairie River and its tributaries the following week. A public survey is now available to all landowners, businesses, and others with concerns for water quality and the surrounding natural resources. To request a paper copy of this survey, please contact Todd SWCD at 320-732-2644 or go online at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPCLF3R>



The common vision for this plan is a water plan developed by the people of the Long Prairie Watershed with a long term investment in protecting the environment and the ecology of the watershed for future use. Both Adam Ossefoort, plan submitter, and Deja Anton from Todd SWCD emphasize that

plan communications must be fully inclusive. This includes respecting and honoring boundaries in individual positions, roles, landowners, local governing units and individuality in ideas and culture. Goals need to be fiscally and realistically obtainable. Extra efforts to capture citizens input will meet that objective.

Resident Input Survey for Those Living and Working within the Long Prairie Watershed

(1W1P)

One Watershed One Plan



Do you live, work, or own land near or around the Long Prairie River? Long term planning for land use and natural resource protection for the Long Prairie River (1W1P) will begin in 2021. As a citizen in the county of Douglas, Morrison, Todd, Otter Tail, or Wadena, you may utilize your local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or Planning and Zoning offices for land use advice, permitting guidelines, or as a technical or funding resource. Together, these offices have been tasked to work alongside state agency experts to prioritize natural resources and concerns for the Long Prairie Watershed. Because you live on and utilize the land's resources, you are critical to the input process. With resident knowledge base, we will be better able to develop a sensible long term plan that reflects the concerns, priorities, and ethics of our communities. Your input matters. Which natural resources are most important to you? What do you, as a resident, care about, and which natural resource(s) should be addressed first? How can we best approach natural resource conservation?

Please fill out this survey on-line at :

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YPCLF3R>

or request a paper version of the survey by calling: 320-732 2644

Please mail paper surveys to:

SWCD- General, 215 1st Ave S, Suite 104 Long Prairie, MN 56347.

Thank you.

After completing the survey, opt in to a drawing to win one of :

- ⇒ 8' Pollinator Tree
- ⇒ 36 Pollinator Plant packet for a summer garden landscape
- ⇒ One bundle of 25 18"-36" trees

Drawing planned for late April 2021

For more information on the Long Prairie IWIP, go to:

<https://www.co.todd.mn.us/1w1p/>



Shoreland pollinators

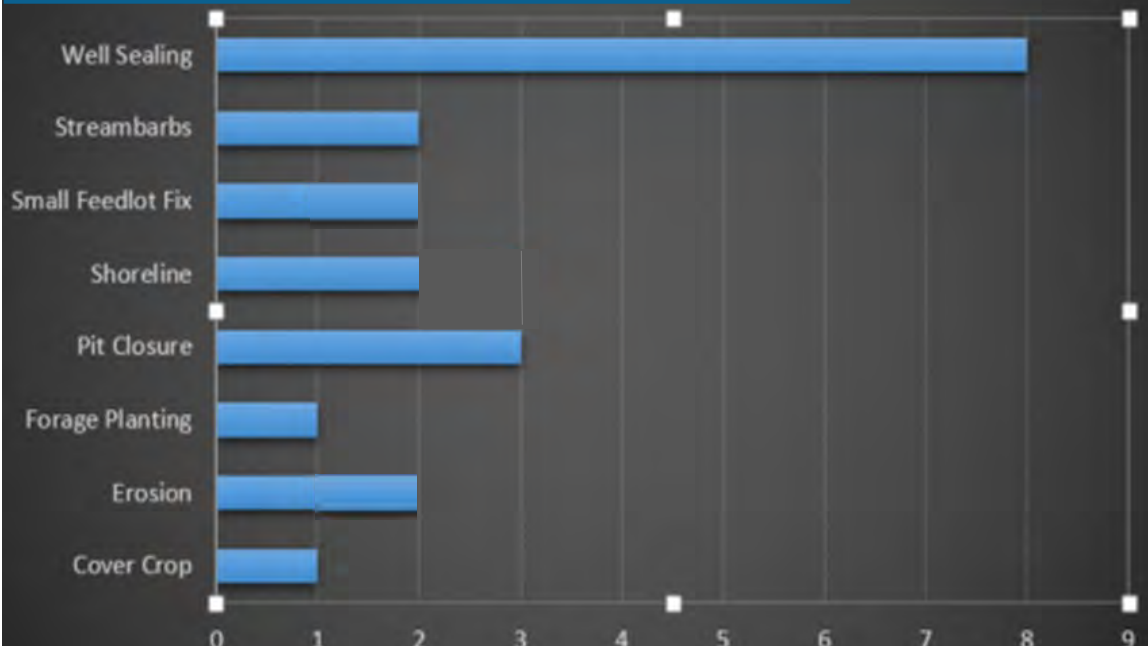
Initiative 1: Funding-

Customer Service & Funding

Additional funding provided
by:



21 Total SWCD Conservation Projects Completed in 2020!!!!

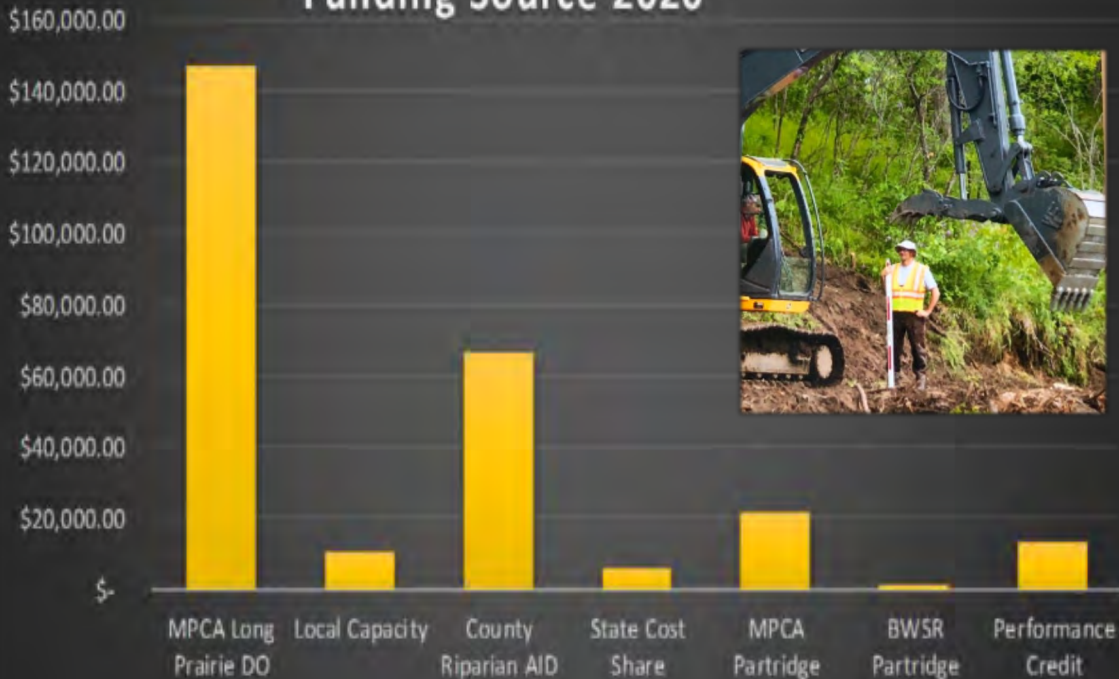


Sum Total Costs for
Projects Type in 2020

\$1,677.50
\$152,772.00
\$13,296.91
\$11,683.94
\$41,981.27
\$2,189.74
\$36,048.21
\$6,434.66

Photo credits– Doug Wonder– Villard TWP

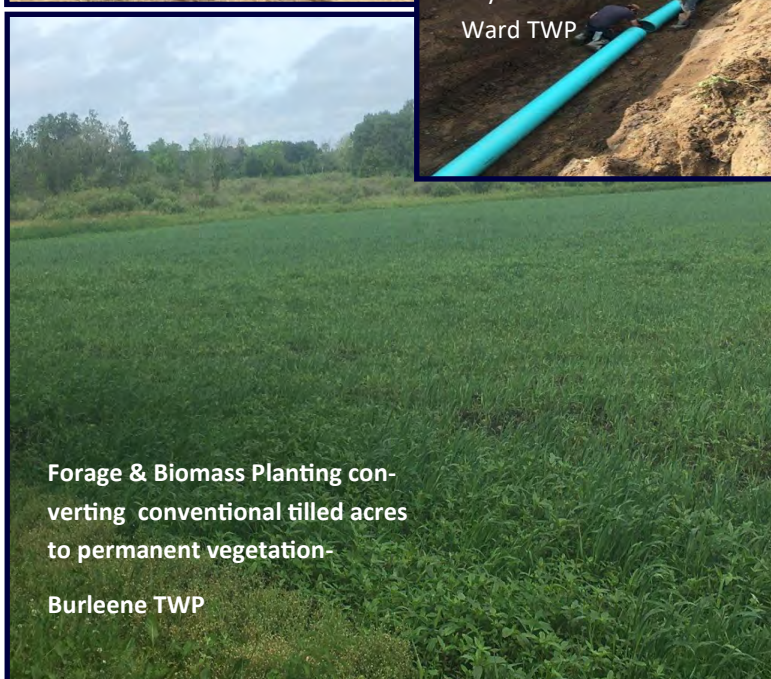
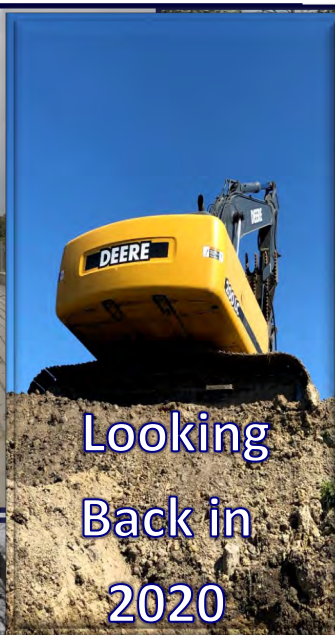
Funding Source 2020



\$266,084.25

We
'DIG'
Funding
your
Projects!





Featured Project: If You Build It, They Will Come

SWCD Partners with Villard TWP

In a partnership with Villard Township and Todd SWCD, an erosion concern between the encroaching Long Prairie River and Spruce Road was repaired to help correct a water quality impairment in the river. This section of the river is impaired for low levels of dissolved oxygen. Clean water is typically well oxygenated. Impairments such low dissolved oxygen are often a result of sedimentation (erosion) and nutrient additions causing the growth of algae. As algae multiplies, it consumes the oxygen in the water that allows natural native organisms and animals to survive in the river. When habitats are impacted, there is a biological change in the water detrimentally affecting water quality down stream. By using ecological best management practices, the river bank was stabilized, habitats returned to a stable condition, and buffers were created to reduce road mineral pollution such as salts and other deposition. A secondary benefit for residents in Villard township beyond water quality is to salvage the integrity of the public roadway for vehicle and emergency use, and to provide accessibility to the river for wildlife and humans alike. Immediately after the practice was in place, Doug Wonder, local resident noticed turtles nesting, fish returning to the pools created by the J-hooks and other wildlife. SWCD staff witnessed kids fishing, and the rapidity in the regrowth of deep rooted vegetation along the banks that were once choppy and eroding. Rick Adamietz, Villard Township official, was very happy with the project, "It took a lot of work to get this on the ground; look how good it came out". Adamietz was instrumental in moving this project forward.

Initiative 2: Soil Health (Erosion Prevention) & Surface Waters



If You Build It...Continued



Above: A delivery of root wads arrive to the construction site. Root wads are typically 8-10' tree trunks with the root ball attached. A nearby clearing from another development site provided easy access to several root wads. **Right:** In order to reconstruct the streambank shelf, the contractor first had to drive in the root wads into the eroding bank, trunk first, like hammering a nail. The root wad acts as the "nail head". Woody brush and clay from within the river bottom was formed into a solid berm overlaying the root wads. The branches of the root wads stick out to impede the rush of currents against the bank. Next, river sand was laid. Layer upon layer, material is added. A woven erosion blanket was spread open atop the sand. More fill was sandwiched inside the blanket as it was folded back towards the river bank and staked in with 4 foot stakes. This process was repeated a second time and re-staked. The final layer was seeded, and woody plants were placed intermittently along the shelf. The deep root systems will secure the practice, permanently. Next spring during ice out, river run and ice may top the shelf, but it will have the integrity to withstand the pressure.

The rocks referred to as stream barbs along with the root wads reflect water & ice from damaging the stream bank directly and create pools, eddies and habitat in which many fish species like to gather for feeding and protection.



Blow up: J-hooks made of large 4' boulders placed into the bed of the river slow down and redirects water to the center of the river.



Above: Project results in early Fall 2020 (*Photo Credit– Lew Noska*) about two months after project completion.

Upper Left: SWCD Staff observe resident youth accessing the river on the shelf and fishing the eddies created behind the newly installed J-hooks in the river.

Top Right: Even natural phenomena were preserved by contractor, Tony Zetah and crew. This unusual vine was flagged off by neighbors and Adamietz hoping to save it. Although this location was one of two at which construction equipment accessed the river, the vine was not damaged.

Initiative 2: Surface Waters

Wetlands, Shoreland, and Riparian Areas

Interested in enhancing habitat for wildlife? Call Luke Thoma (320-732-6618) and/or Lew Noska (732-2644)



RIM Photo Credit: Sarah Katterhagen

Todd SWCD assisted Todd Area Trail Association with obtaining approval to place a bridge (Photo, Right) across the Little Partridge River in Bertha Township. Wetland and Public Water impacts were avoided. The new bridge will allow snowmobilers to avoid road ditches and other unsafe trail conditions.



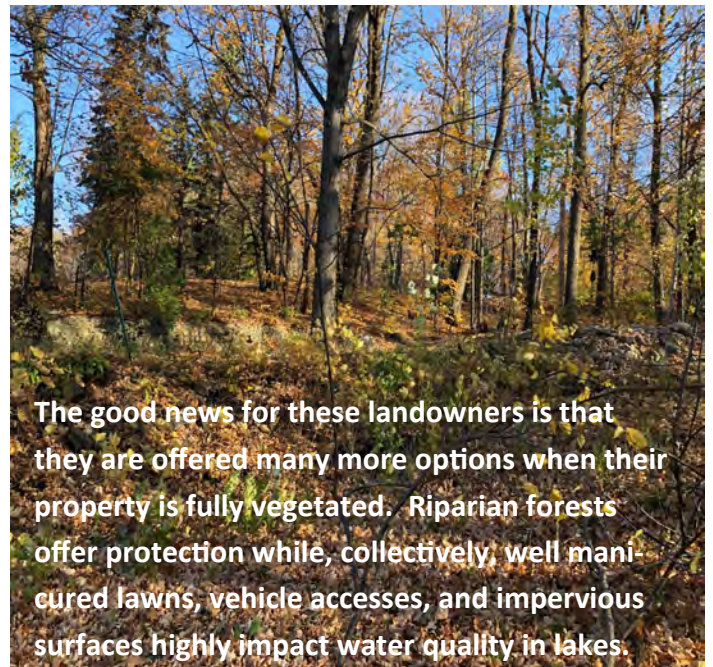
Wetlands Conservation Report for 2020:

- 34 Exemption Decisions
- 2 No Loss Decisions
- 4 Boundary Decisions
- 1 Local Road Replacement
- 116 Site Visits
- 313 Wetland Related Questions/Contacts



Todd SWCD works Closely with DNR and Planning & Zoning to find common sense solutions

Shoreland erosion & high waters continue to plague some areas of Todd County.



The good news for these landowners is that they are offered many more options when their property is fully vegetated. Riparian forests offer protection while, collectively, well manicured lawns, vehicle accesses, and impervious surfaces highly impact water quality in lakes.

Lakeshore/Riparian Assistance 2020-

Call 320-732-2644 for waterside assistance *

*Funding response for any SWCD project is based on priority resource objectives

Number of Site Visits: **60**

Number of assistant calls: **209**

Number of Presentations: **5** (Long Lake, AIS (2), Lake Beauty, Fairy Lake Lions)

In-House Meetings: **2**

Call 320-732-2644 for initial contact information.

Grow As You Know- the simplest Cover Crop Grant Yet!

Do you farm in the southern half of Todd County with- in the townships of Birchdale, Kandota, Gordon, West Union, most of Little Sauk, Grey Eagle, Round Prairie, and the southern parts of Leslie and Reynolds? Have you wanted to try cover crops but were worried about the expense? Or the management aspect of cover crops? Maybe, you weren't sure what would take in your soils? Are you "kinda weary" of government? Todd SWCD has joined with local Todd County farmers, the Soil Health Coalition, and Nathan Torren of Osakis Creamery or any ag consultant of your choice to assist you with planting and managing cover crops on your fields. Cost-share covers 75%, yes, that is right 75% for all qualifying expenses (soil test, seed costs, planting expenses) to get your cover crops established. Local farmers are available with a phone call to answer any questions that you have if you have tended to shy away from cost-share in the past.

While no well prepared plan for cover crops will be denied consideration, this grant will work exceptionally well for those who harvest grains or remove crops early and want to try a radish mix to reduce compaction, hold soil in place, add nutrients, or to extend livestock grazing periods, to name a few of the many benefits. We know you've read about them; time to try! Local farmers have told us time and time again, "Keep it simple!" The goal of this grant is to do just that: To increase cover crop participation with trained and knowledgeable guidance for crops we know will succeed. As one farmer recently put it, "I'm old school. I have been stubborn. I've never trusted a cost-share program. Now, I wish I had at least inquired years ago. There are opportunities out there- even just for learning that if I had been willing, would have likely benefitted my farming situation today."

****Future grants to come for other regions of Todd County!**

Initiative 2: Soil Health & Surface Waters

Farm Conservation



Nutrient Management

2020 EQIP Update

submitted by Tim Ebnet:

One is better than none! Out of the six plans that I submitted for 2020 NRCS EQIP, one plan was selected for funding. This project, (*photo, left*) consists of building a concrete stacking slab with 6' walls with a roof for the storage of two barns worth of poultry manure. The concrete floor and walls along with a roof ensures that clean water will not be mixed with any manure, resulting in zero run off and leaching from the storage site. Being located less than a half mile from the Sauk River, this project will help keep nutrients out of our rivers and groundwater for years to come.

2020 Nutrient Management Report:

26 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans—**6** of which are completed in full;

2 Manure Management Plans

20 site visits

3 newspaper articles

1 manure spreader calibration

Have a manure related question? Need help developing a manure or nutrient management plan or a solid record keeping system? Does your spreader need to be calibrated? Is that manure analysis or soil test baffling you? Contact Todd SWCD today, **320-732-2644**. Ask for **Tim**. *Free Local Service.*

Initiative 2:

Soil Health & Surface Waters

Better Soil Practices Protecting Surface Waters

2020 Todd County Buffer Program Report:

Site visits: 25

Contacts: 52

Todd County is currently more than 99% State Buffer Law compliant throughout. Todd County has begun enforcement on those parcels that continue to be non-compliant. Non-compliant parcels may be assessed up to \$200 per month if not addressed immediately. If you feel buffers on your property may be non-compliant or if you have any questions regarding buffers in Todd County, please contact the SWCD at: 320-732-2644.

Thinking About Installing Drain Tile?



Where to start –

The first step when considering a subsurface drainage system should be a contact to your FSA office. An FSA AD-1026 form must be completed at the Farm Service Agency in order to confirm compliance with USDA Farm Program requirements. A Certified Wetland Determination will then be provided after review by USDA staff.

The Certified Wetland Determination should then be given to the Todd County SWCD Wetland Coordinator for review. Using USDA provided lateral effect tables, the Wetland coordinator will create a map of wetland setback distances for perforated subsurface drain tile. These setbacks are required to be followed to ensure compliance with USDA, State and US Army Corps of Engineers regulations.

Before any work may be started, a Landowner Statement and Contractor Responsibility for must be filled out and returned to the Todd County SWCD Office. This form can be found on the BWSR Website:

<http://bwsr.state.mn.us/wca-forms-and-templates>

or at the SWCD office. If this form is not filled out and submitted prior to the work being done, the contractor could be fined up to \$1000 and the landowner will be held responsible for any violations incurred.

For more information regarding drain tile or wetlands please contact the Todd County SWCD office at:

(320) 732-2644





Initiative 3: Groundwater

Precipitation Network & Observation wells

Todd SWCD would like to **thank** our VOLUNTEER precipitation network for their monthly dedication to monitoring and submitting data. This information is sent to the State Climatologists for research in tracking precipitation trends throughout the State of Minnesota. Graphs can be found at:
<http://arcgis.dnr.state.mn.us/ewr/climatetrends/#>

Volunteer Network Members

& Years of Service:

John Stuckel	1981-Present
Meryl Wegner	1981-Present
Don Maus	1984-Present
Ione Krause	1991-Present
Greg Ostrowski	1991-Present
Charles Wegner	1993-Present
Lawrence Lieder	2002-Present
Scott Becker	2008-Present
Mary Ostrowski	2008-Present
Jay Noska	2010-Present

Similarly, SWCD Technician, Lew Noska, collects groundwater data at the many DNR observation wells located in Todd County for several months each year. This data is sent in to the DNR who monitors fluctuations in the groundwater recordings.



Kenny always cared. He encouraged me to take care of my family before work. He puts others first— Sarah Katterhagen

PESTA RETIRES AFTER 16 YEARS of SERVICE to TODD SWCD



Kenny is usually pretty quiet; ...you never know when he is going to say something wise and/or witty. Kenny is also one to keep the meeting moving forward, because not everyone has to agree – that's what the vote is for—**Reba Van Beusekom**

Kenny's long time commitment and passion for serving on the Todd SWCD Board of Supervisors is a gift of service to the citizens of Todd County that will never be fully replaced. **Adam Ossefoort**

...I have noticed in meetings when [Kenny] talks, people listen. His answers and discussion are always concise and well thought out—**Tim Ebnet**

Kenny, as a supervisor, has been a great leader. It has never been "I" for Kenny, always "we". His focus on teamwork and cooperation has been inspirational—**Lew Noska**

Kenny is of a generation of absolute respect and genuine integrity

— **Deja Anton**

As supporting partners, Todd County appoints two Commissioners to participate in SWCD activities. Thank you Commissioners Becker and Kircher for your service !



Initiative 4: Soil Health & Livestock

MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program

Todd County Proudly Holds 3rd in 12 County Area for Number of Ag Water Quality Certified Farms

Sadly, Reba will be leaving the SWCD in 2021. Her smile, seen here, will be greatly missed in Todd County,



Becoming Ag Water Quality Certified is strictly voluntary. It

is open to farms of all sizes and types. In-

sight is given to crop, field, livestock management and farm sustainability.

New ideas are discussed as are methods to improve soil health and stabilization, often with less input costs. Some farmers are pleased to hear they can change little to nothing about their farm operation and still receive certification. It's a nice feeling to hear you are doing a great job! Becoming certified opens your farm to an exclusive pool of funding to make further small improvements to your farm plus a variety of other incentive benefits. Todd SWCD encourages all farms to explore Ag Water Certification. Contact Todd SWCD to join us in this conservation effort.



Above: SWCD 2020 Technician, Reba Van Beusekom stands with farm owners Barb and Mike James of Moran Township as their farm became Ag Water Quality certified in 2020. The farm has been in Barb's family for decades and borders the Long Prairie River. Currently, they rotationally graze beef heifers on their farm. The James' join 23 other farms in Todd County with close to approximately 8,000 acres certified across the County.

320-732-2644

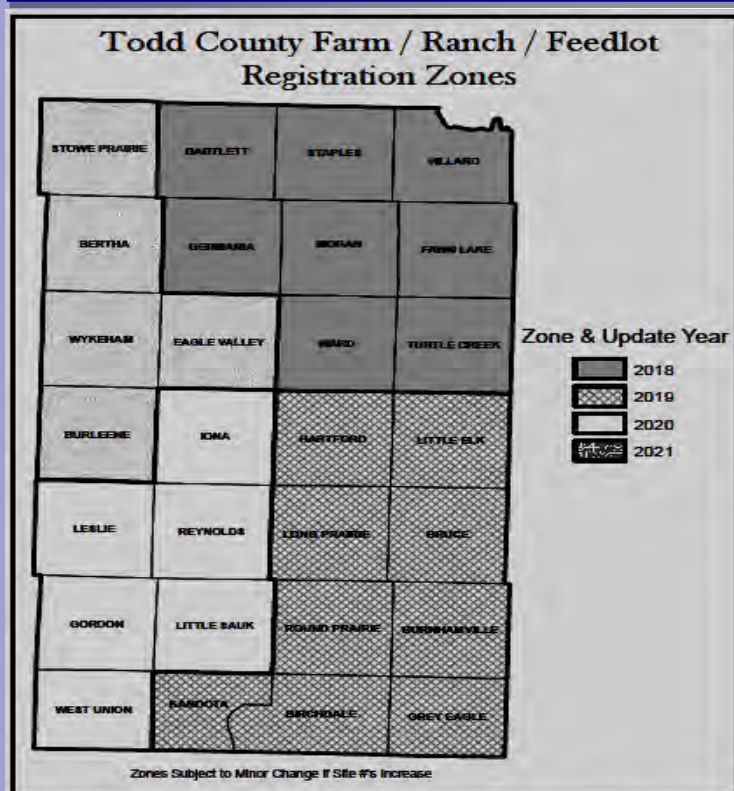
"Did you say cover crop?" submitted by Kevin Brown, SWCD Farm Conservation Technician

Yes I did! Todd Soil and Water is excited to announce that we have been approved for a cover crop grant. Why are cover crops so important to your soil you might ask? Well let me fill you in on a little secret. Cover crops help protect your agriculture fields from wind and water erosion. They are a beneficial recipe for your soil health. They help improve your organic matter. They attract all the special little bugs that help break down organic material and with no additional cost and leave a special present in your field to help fertilize. Cover crops help provide voids in your soil to help infiltrate the water to hydrate your crops. Tired of spending significant amounts of your hard earned money on extra fertilizer? Thank a cover crop, as they naturally provide the nutrients that your crops will need to grow. Todd Soil and Water technical staff are dedicated to help improve your soil health and protect that precious top soil that is crucial for your crops to grow. We would be more than happy to help answer any questions you have about cover crops and our newest grant. Please feel free to contact us at 320-732-2644. We are here to help and assist!

Todd County Livestock Registrations Due for 2021 Cycle!!!!

Who? All landowners within Stowe Prairie, Bertha, Wykeham, Eagle Valley, and Burleene Townships are due to re- register their farms, ranches, and feedlots in 2021. This references parcels with a barn, a livestock feeding lot, and/or a manure storage area. Landowners, no longer having livestock on premise, with outbuildings and/or fences who wish to remain registered for resale or zoning purposes MUST respond to maintain registration. Any landowner who has a liquid manure pit (in use, not in use, full, or empty) on his/her property is required by the County to remain registered. Todd County is opting to maintain a mail in registration process versus the online system. For registration assistance please contact **Todd SWCD at 320-732-2644** or go to the MPCA website :

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/registration-permits-and-environmental-review>



The Latest “Poop Scoop”: Todd SWCD has received calls on MPCA’s New Winter Application Limitations for Sites with General NPDES Permits. For clarification purposes, these new permit limitations **are not** written into the prescribed language of smaller non- NPDES Interim and CSF permits for farms with fewer than 1,000 AU.

The new limitations outlined for **large scale** farming operations can be found at:

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/water/2021-npdes-general-permit> and include:

- Prohibiting transfer of manure to who those intending to winter apply solid manure in March
- Prohibiting summer land application on harvested fields without a cover crop planted for the remainder of the growing season
- Nitrogen BMPs for manure applied prior to October 15
- Specified conditions for applying solid manure in December through February, and prohibiting manure applications in March starting in 2022.

SWCD Farm Conservation Report for 2020

Site Visits - 68

Assistance Calls- 322

In house Meetings- 32



Photo Credit: Tim Ebnet

s above do not include any visits directly related to the feedlot program,

Todd County Farm Conservation Program Mission Statement:

The Program strives to offer equitable and consistent, customer-oriented service. Reasonable solutions are found to overcome the economic, seasonal, and operational barriers that impact individual farms in their quest to meet water quality rules and other required measures in protecting Todd County’s natural resources.

Job Opening Coming Soon: Have a background in Todd County Livestock Farming? Love to Work Outdoors, Problem Solve, and Work with People on all sorts of levels? Farm/ Ranch/Feedlot Technical Position Opening Soon at **Todd SWCD!** Will Train.

MDA his hiring a student worker in Staples, MN . Job duties pertain to majors in agriculture, natural resources, environmental science, and similar fields. Tasks are outdoors, in the lab, and with a computer. Perfect summer job and resume builder! Start as early as May 1. Ends on or before September 30. [Careers Job Search \(mn.gov\)](https://careers.jobsearch.mn.gov/)

Todd SWCD Tree Sales and Buffer Kits



Todd SWCD 2020 Tree Sale Results

- **15,250** Trees
- **250** One Gallon Potted Stock
- **11** Native Plant Kits



One of the more common assistance requests received in office is what to plant to create a natural buffer area on shoreland properties . Native transplants are bundled into kits for you at Todd SWCD. Each kit comes with a mix of 36 plugs or seedlings for you to transplant, and are they ever gorgeous!!! (See pictures for some examples .) To ensure that your native buffer , trees, and/or pollinator plantings are a success, it is important that you first obtain a soil sample. Soil samples can be submitted to the UMN by mail using the form found on this website: <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/>

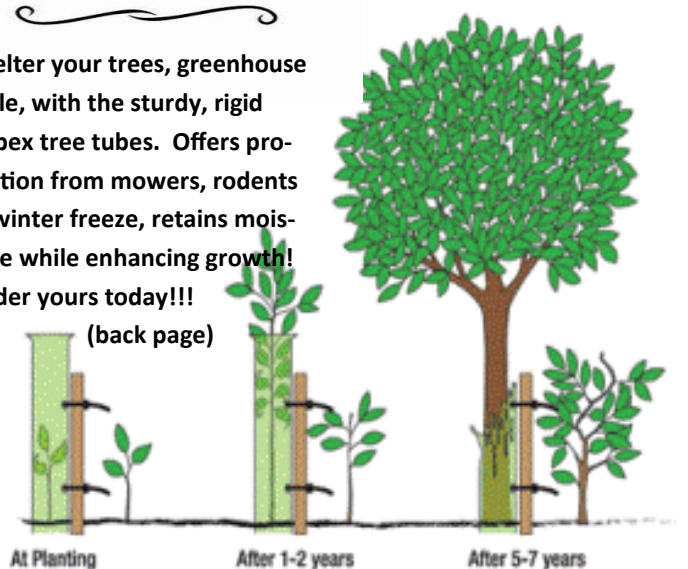
Through mapping tools, the SWCD can closely approximate your soil type, but how nutrient rich or poor the soil is in each area regarding macro and micro nutrient make up varies too greatly to ensure success simply based on soil type. It is also important to note whether the planting area is shaded, steep, or is exposed to sunlight, wind, and foot traffic to name a few.

By now we all know the benefits of buffers,: less mowing, act as butterfly and other pollinator attractions, provide nesting ground for birds, provide beautiful transition to a natural landscape from lawn to lake, reduce soil erosion, and most importantly act as filters and phosphorous barriers to reduce stormwater off impervious surfaces from reaching the lake. Order your kit today!



Shelter your trees, greenhouse style, with the sturdy, rigid Tubex tree tubes. Offers protection from mowers, rodents & winter freeze, retains moisture while enhancing growth! Order yours today!!!

(back page)





2021 Todd SWCD Tree Order Form. Order Your Spring Trees Today!

Todd County • MINNESOTA • EST. 1899 •		Todd Soil & Water Conservation District 2021 Tree & Plant Order Form 215 1st Avenue South, Suite 104, Long Prairie, MN 56347 Phone: 320-732-2644 E-mail: sarah.katterhagen@co.todd.mn.us					
Name:		Phone:					
Street Address:		E-mail:					
City:		State:	ZIP:				
**** Bare Root Nursery Stock: 12-24 inches (average) **** 25 TREES IN A BUNDLE ****							
	Species	Brought Tolerance	Mature Height	Growth Rate	# of Bundles	Price/Bundle	Cost
Conifers	Balsam Fir	Fair	40-60'	Moderate/Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Black Spruce	Fair	30-60'	Slow/Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	Emerald Green Spruce	Poor	40-70'	Slow/Moderate	-	\$ 37.50	SOLD OUT
	Norway Pine	Good	60-80'	Moderate/Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Norway Spruce	Fair	40-60'	Rapid		\$ 37.50	SOLD OUT
	White Cedar	Good	50-60'	Slow/Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	White Spruce	Fair	40-60'	Moderate/Rapid		\$ 37.50	
Tall Trees	American Linden	Poor	50-70'	Moderate	-	\$ 37.50	SOLD OUT
	Paper Birch	Fair	50-70'	Moderate/Rapid	-	\$ 37.50	SOLD OUT
	Red Maple	Good	40-60'	Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Red Oak	Poor	40-60'	Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Silver Maple	Fair	100' +	Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Sugar Maple	Poor	80' +	Slow/Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	American Plum	Fair	20-30'	Rapid		\$ 37.50	
Short Trees/Shrubs	Chokecherry	Good	10-15'	Moderate/Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Common Lilac	Good	8-15'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	American Hazelnut	Fair/Good	up to 12'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	Elderberry	Poor	6-8'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	High Bush Cranberry	Fair	10-15'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	Juneberry (serviceberry)	Good	6-15'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	Nanking Cherry	Fair/Good	6-10'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
	Red Splendor Flowering Crab	Fair	15-20'	Moderate/Rapid		\$ 37.50	
	Redosier Dogwood	Poor	7-10'	Moderate		\$ 37.50	
**** PACKETS: 15 TREES/PACKET ****							
Packets	Shoreland Packet (15 trees): 5 Paper Birch, 5 Redosier Dogwood, 5 White Spruce					\$ 26.25	SOLD OUT
	Wildlife Packet (15 trees): 5 Red Oak, 5 Juneberry, 5 White Spruce					\$ 26.25	
	Pollinator Packet (15 trees): 5 American Plum, 5 Chokecherry, 5 Nanking Cherry					\$ 26.25	
**** ONE GALLON POTTED STOCK ****							
Potted	15-18" 1 Gallon Potted White Spruce					\$9.00/Tree	
	15-18" 1 Gallon Potted Norway Pine					\$9.00/Tree	
	15-18" 1 Gallon Potted Norway Spruce					\$9.00/Tree	
****Kits include 36 plant plugs-6 of each species. Each kit covers 50-80 square feet (1.5 foot spacing)****							
*****Kits will be comprised of 6 of the following 8 species*****							
KITS	Pollinator Kit	Wild Bergamot, Showy Milkweed, Blanket Flower, Smooth Penstemon, Golden Alexanders, Narrow Leaved Coneflower, Meadow Blazingstar, Showy Goldenrod				\$55.00/Kit	
	Lakeshore/Rain Garden Kit	Swamp Milkweed, Obedient Plant, New England Aster, Culvers root, Sweet Eyed Susans, Great Blue Lobelia, Brown Fox Sedge, Pointed Broom Sedge				\$55.00/Kit	
Tree Tubes - Sold in Packs of 5							
Tubes	4 Feet Regular	Perfect tree tube for trees protected by shelter				\$17.50 for 5	
	4 Feet Vented	The Tubex Combitube is designed for more exposed/windy sites where there is a greater contrast between growing conditions within the shelter and those without.				\$20.25 for 5	
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER!						Subtotal	
Tree Pick up will be end of April or beginning of May in Long Prairie at the fairgrounds. We will notify you by postcard of the date for pick up.						Sales Tax: 7.375 %	
Quantities are limited in some species and are sold on a first come basis. After planting stock is picked up by the customer, the SWCD is no longer responsible for its condition. SWCD does not guarantee survival, or replace any plant stock for free. SWCD does not provide tree delivery services.						Grand Total w/ Tax	