



TODD COUNTY
SWCD

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www.co.todd.mn.us



WINTER

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2019 Volume 9 Issue 1

Our Commitment

As your local Soil and Water 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 fully believe in and model 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 groups, associations, and agencies to develop conservation on a broader scale. Through grant applications, state cost-share, and other funding initiatives, we can achieve effective and affordable conservation.

Letter from Todd SWCD District Manager

It is with great honor and eager anticipation that I accept the position of Todd SWCD District Manager to serve you, the citizens of Todd County, in the area of natural resource conservation. My professional dedication to protecting and enhancing soil and water comes second only to a passion for Todd County, it's people, it's culture, and the natural beauty and resources the County has to offer.

I have worked with Todd SWCD under the direction of Director Tim Stieber for the past five years. In doing so, I have traveled the back roads, been welcomed onto your farms, and offered a seat at your tables to discuss your values and concerns in preserving our surface waters, groundwater, agriculture, and land use for generations to come.

I am excited to broaden the spectrum of individuals I serve while remaining integral to the farm conservation and feedlot team. Farmers and livestock owners can continue to reach out to me with questions and requests for site visits. However, I am excited to start new relationships with landowners and communities along our lakeshores, rivers, and other surface waters. All citizens, collectively, make our soils and waters what they are today and, more importantly, what they will become.

Todd SWCD has a fantastic technical team and is looking forward to hiring a fourth conservation technical position within the next month. To all partner agencies, we offer our interest and passion in your ideas and extend open lines of communication. I look forward to meeting you all. Best wishes throughout the winter season and new year~ Deja



- TODD SOIL & WATER**

Tim Stieber

Deja Anton

Sarah Katterhagen

Lew Noska

Kevin Brown

PHEASANTS FOREVER

FARM BILL BIOLOGIST

Luke Thoma

TODD SWCD BOARD

Leland Buchholz

Dale Katterhagen

Kenneth Pesta

Dan Whitney

Tom Williamson

TODD COMMISSIONERS

Barb Becker

Rod Erickson

David Kircher

Gary Kneisl

Randy Neumann

Another Successful Program Year for the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Program in Todd County

2018

Program Accomplishments

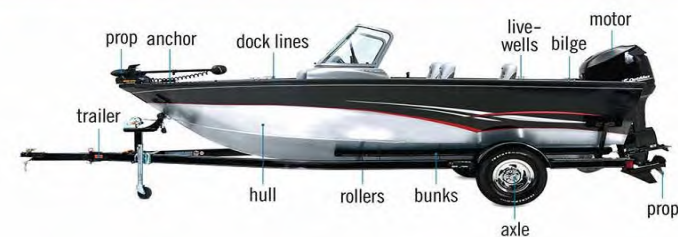
- 8711 watercraft inspections
- Coverage on over 30 Todd County lakes
- Signage at all DNR landings
- Ongoing monitoring of invasive weeds and other biota
- Outreach including radio talk shows, articles, handouts, & education programs at several outdoor events



Report Findings: Watercraft moving between lakes pose a risk to Todd County lakes. An estimated 85,000 boat launches or landings occur at public landings annually within Todd County. Approximately 523 AIS contaminated watercraft are identified by AIS inspectors each year in Todd County. Since inspection covers only about 10% of all launches, the occurrence of contamination is estimated at over 5,000 unclean launches every year posing a very real AIS risk to county waters. This is more evident when reviewing AIS inspection data indicating where boats are originating before transport to Todd County—often lakes and rivers previously identified with AIS problems.

Fast Fact: *Boat inspection data revealed that boaters from an average of 21 different states launch boats in Todd County each year.* An estimated 1890 boat launches are made annually from out-of-state craft.

ZEBRA MUSSELS HIDE HERE.



PEOPLE...



2018 SWCD Board

The Todd SWCD Board is made up of five members, each elected for a four year term. SWCD boards set overall policy and long-term objectives for their district and work with the SWCD staff to see that policies and plans are implemented. Board members are elected to ensure communities use natural resources wisely, with an eye toward the future. 2018 Board from left: Tom Williamson; Dale Katterhagen; Kenny Pesta; Norm Krause; Lee Buchholz

KRAUSE RETIRES AT END OF 2018

After more than 20 years on the District Board, Norm Krause retires as Area 1 SWCD Board Supervisor. Area 1 consists of Staples, Villard, Germania, Moran, Fawn Lake, and Turtle Creek Townships. Norm was voted onto the Board in the mid 1990’s with a goal of educating Todd County citizens on conservation and the importance of water quality with enforcement of rules only being used as a last resort. Norm continues to be active in irrigation management, conservation tillage, grid soil sampling, variable rate fertilizing and soil health on his farm in Todd County. Norm was a dedicated leader known to raise awareness of the realities on the ground. He often posed those tougher questions that need to be asked in conservation, compelling the district to move forward in the right direction. His time on the Board spanning over two decades, is greatly appreciated by staff, supervisors, County Commissioners, and constituents of Todd County.



Dan Whitney—2019 New Board Supervisor

In November 2018, I was elected as a Board Supervisor for the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District. I represent SWCD District 1 which comprises the townships of Staples, Villard, Germania, Moran, Fawn Lake and Turtle Creek. My wife and I live in Staples.



I have over 25 years of experience in the fields of quantitative hydrogeology and water resources and am currently one of the principals of Northwest AqwaTek Solutions in Wadena. I have degrees in Geology and Hydrology from Boise State University and the University of Idaho and am a licensed Professional Geologist in the state of Minnesota.

My professional experience includes aquifer characterization studies, groundwater resource evaluations, surface water/groundwater interactions studies, wetland and stream hydrologic assessments, and nitrate-to-groundwater leaching studies under irrigated agricultural conditions. I am a strong advocate for agriculture and provide technical expertise to family-based farming operations and agricultural related industry associations.

I am a Board Advisory Member for the Central Minnesota Irrigators Corporation, a groundwater appropriations technical advisor to the Irrigators’ Association of Minnesota and have served as an industry representative for the Upper Mississippi Irrigation Association. I am also an advisory member to the Groundwater Modeling Technical Committee of the Little Rock Creek Groundwater Sustainability watershed project representing agriculture’s interest.

My goal as a Todd County SWCD Supervisor is to ensure the continued use and enjoyment of our water resources and other natural resources while ensuring their long-term sustainability for future uses. I am committed to listening, learning and providing guidance and decision-making leadership for finding the best solutions to soil and water related issues through a collaborative effort that is transparent, incorporates science and is considerate to all stakeholders.

I am grateful to the residents of Todd County for the opportunity to be one of their SWCD Board Supervisors. I look forward to learning a lot from each of the other four supervisors and the talented and competent district staff.

RECOGNITION



Jim and Becky Pratt, (left), were awarded the 2018 Stewardship Award while the Family of John Petron (right) were recognized for their efforts in conservation at an awards dinner hosted by the Todd SWCD in October of 2018.



Public Involvement and Outreach: 383 students attended the 2018 Todd County Enviro-Fest on September 20. Students learned about farm life, topography, soils, pollinators, erosion, furs, trees, birds, hydroponics & more. This event was sponsored in part by the Cities of Clarissa, Staples, Browerville, Hewitt, Bertha, Gray Eagle; MN Credit Union, Compeer Financial, Dan’s Prize, Pro-Ag, Todd Wadena Electrical Co-op, American Foods Group,-Long Prairie, and Todd County Corn and Soybean Growers.

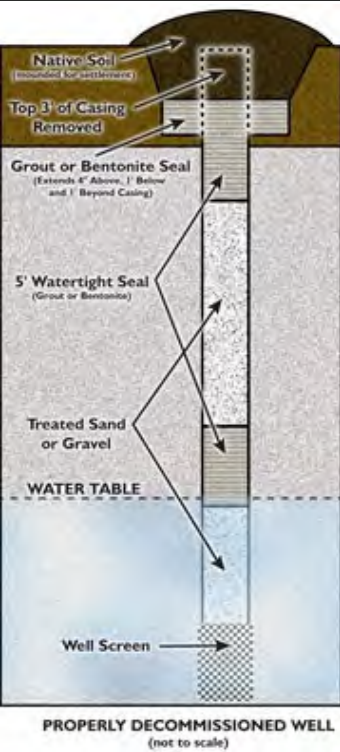
2019

will mark the 25th Anniversary of the Todd County Enviro-Fest hosted at the farm of Marie and Dale Katterhagen, Todd SWCD Supervisor.



Enviro-Fest

Todd SWCD Provides Cost Share for Sealing Abandoned Wells



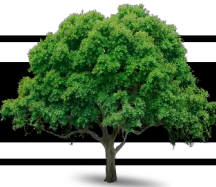
The term “well sealing” references the act of permanently closing a well that is no longer in use or is deemed unsafe. State law requires abandoned wells in Minnesota to be sealed. Well sealing involves clearing debris from the well and filling it with grout. This must be done by a licensed contractor.

An unsealed well can act as a drain, allowing surface runoff, polluted water and improperly disposed of solid wastes to contaminate groundwater, especially in sandy or gravelly soils. Sealing abandoned wells protects groundwater quality. It can also protect surface water quality in areas with spring fed streams or with other connections to groundwater.

Well sealing is especially important in wellhead protection areas (areas that supply water to public wells that receive special attention from state and local agencies to prevent contamination of drinking water). Many areas surrounding or adjacent to Cities in Todd County have wellhead protection areas or Drinking Water Supply Management Areas (DWSMA).

In 2018, Todd SWCD assisted in funding two well sealings. Todd SWCD looks forward to increasing the number of decommissioned wells in 2019. Please contact our office to join us in this conservation effort. **320-732-2644.**

Don't Forget to Order Trees....



Todd SWCD sells trees on a first come first serve basis so orders are taken on individual species until they run out. (See insert) If you are interested in learning more about the plants and what they look like, visit our website for pictures and descriptions of both the trees and the native plant kits.

<http://www.co.todd.mn.us/departments/soilwater/trees>

Todd SWCD Signs on 6 New Ag Water Quality Certified Farms for 2018

Todd SWCD proudly congratulates the following landowners, and one other requesting anonymity, in meeting certification status in 2018.

This brings the total number of certified farms in the county to 24:



- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Richard Nelson | Kevin Kyar |
| Curt Richter | Jacob May |
| Harold Freyholtz | |

Buffer Cost Share Available Through May 2019

Most Todd County landowners know vegetative buffers were required on public waterways by November 1, 2017 and on county ditches by November 1, 2018. This is very important considering Todd County spans out over almost 1,000 square miles, has 123 public lakes, 380 miles of public streams, and 379 miles of county ditches.

Todd County SWCD has completed a county wide buffer inventory on all public waters and public ditches. Many landowners have already contacted the SWCD and have installed compliant buffers.

If buffer compliance is not observed, Todd County has informed Todd SWCD that the County will assess fees to the property owner.

Todd County SWCD recognizes that in 2018 cold temperatures and early snowfall are to be considered when requiring buffer compliance. Due to this, the SWCD is offering funding for those who were unable to install buffers in the fall of 2018. A payment of \$300 per acre of required buffer installed is available to landowners who are currently non-compliant. The deadline to sign up for buffer funding is **May 1st, 2019.**

Todd County is making excellent progress reaching compliance with the state buffer initiative, but there is still some work to be done. If you feel buffers on your property may be affected or if you have any questions regarding buffers in Todd County, please contact the SWCD at 320-732-2644.

For more information about the Governor’s buffer law, please visit:

bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/

2018 Todd SWCD Buffer Report:

11 Site Visits

50 Buffer Related Calls/Contacts



Becoming Ag Water Quality Certified is strictly voluntary. It is open to farms of all sizes and types. Farmers are intrigued with the holistic information provided about their farming operation, even when they opt not to become certified. Insight is given to crop, field, livestock management and farm sustainability. New ideas are discussed 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, as most farmers are in Todd County. Becoming certified costs nothing; nothing is forced, farms can market goods labeled as being produced by an “Ag Water Quality Certified Farm” — encouraging the ever conscientious consumer, and it opens certified farms to an exclusive pool of funding to make further small improvements to their farms. 75% costshare to \$5000 (once per field) for small projects is offered upon certification. Todd SWCD encourages all farms to explore Ag Water Certification. Contact SWCD: **320-732-2644.**



As some of you already know or may have experienced, the DNR is enforcing MN Statutes Sections 103G.2212 and 103G.251 which require the submission of a Landowner Statement and Contractor Responsibility form prior to almost any work done in wetlands or public waters. This includes, but is not limited to draining, excavating or filling a wetland. Failure to submit this form prior to initiating work will result in fines to the contractor. This is not a new requirement, but may have been overlooked in the past. The form is available for download on the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources website (<http://www.bwsr.state.mn.us/wetlands/wca/index.html>) or a copy can be obtained at the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) office. For questions, wetland determinations, or assistance filling out this form, please call Todd County SWCD Wetland Coordinator Lew Noska at (320) 732-2644 or email at: lewis.noska@co.todd.mn.us.

BARN TALK...

The Brown and White of Livestock Farming in Todd County

4 Feedlot Mission Statement:

To offer an equitable and consistent, customer-oriented program & find reasonable ways to overcome economic, seasonal, and operational barriers impacting farms in their quest to meet water quality rules and other required measures to protect Todd County’s natural resources.

“Got Pit?” near the Little Partridge River???

Todd SWCD Lands
Grant for Landowners
With Unused Manure
Pits for 2019-2022

Have an unused manure storage pit? In 2018, Todd SWCD applied for and received an MPCA 319 grant for cost-share to close any outdated, unused manure pits in the Little Partridge River Minor Watershed. The Partridge River is listed for a bacteria impairment. Since groundwater is hydrologically connected to surface waters, closing old pits that do not meet today’s design standards ensures no seepage of pollution to groundwater. State rule requires closure of outdated, unpermitted manure pits. In 2018, Todd SWCD assisted landowners with four pit closures. Contact Todd SWCD 320-732-2644 to join us in this conservation effort, today!



Above: Excavated pit unused for over a decade, before closure in Todd County. Prior to excavation, the inside of the pit appeared solid and grown in with grass– maybe 4 feet in depth. Surprise to all parties involved when the excavator poked through the upper crust to a depth of ten feet and mucky liquid below. The pit was in close proximity to a river and playing children.



Same pit, immediately after backfill. What was once wasted space is now converted to usable ground.

Got Milk Fever?



Save The Date!

Dragging your hooves lately?
Restless? Dry Muzzle?
Cold Extremities? Or complete loss of coherent consciousness?
Stumble in to the 2019 Todd County “Milk Fever” Feedlot Meeting & Producer Appreciation Buffet!
March 20, 2019-10am-2:30pm (9:30 coffee/bakery social)
1st Baptist Church Gym, 401 4th St. S Long Prairie
Call now to reserve a seat & plate:
320-732-2644 (SWCD) Catered by:



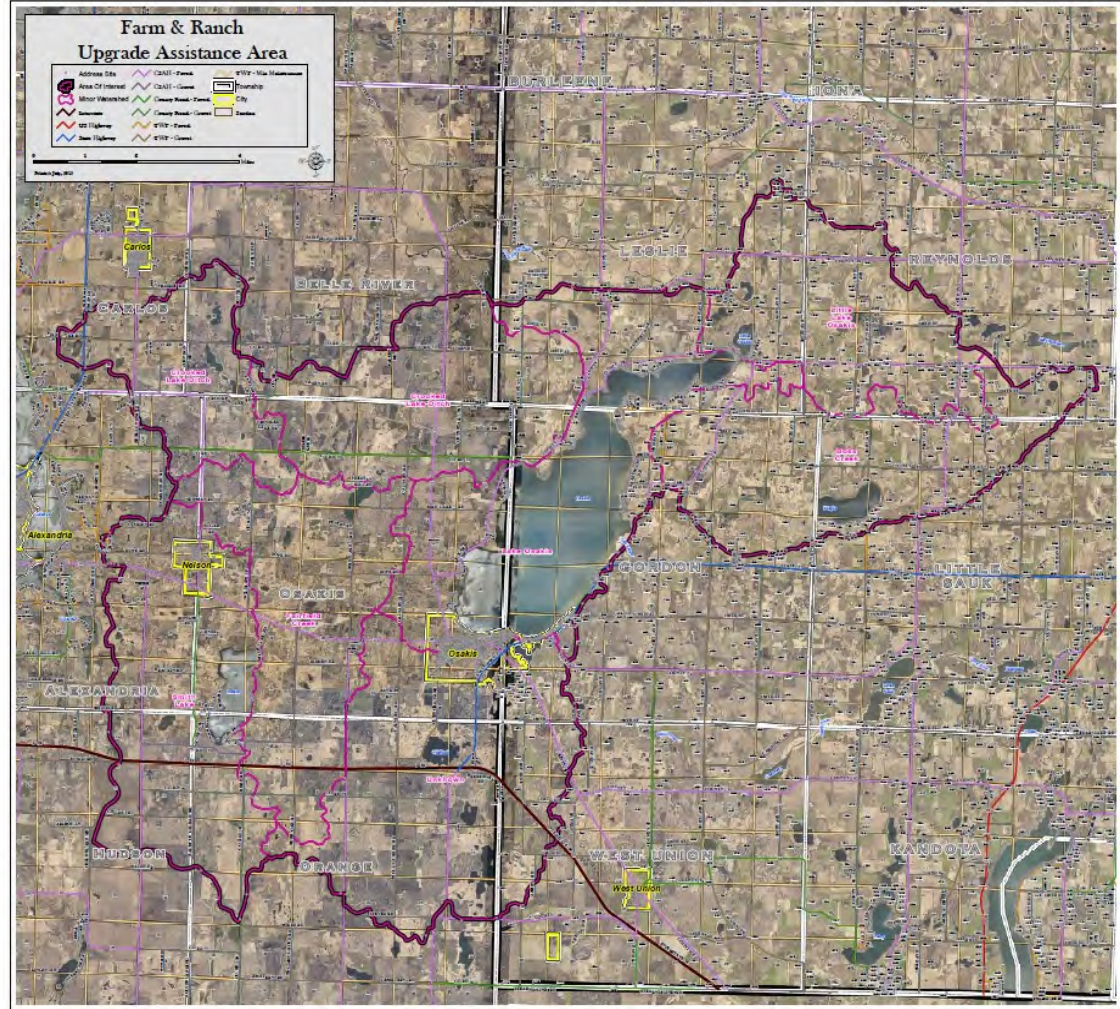
Todd County has set aside Riparian Funds to promote best management practices in areas adjacent to streams, lakes, and other direct conduits to surface waters. In 2018, over 100 acres (1400 linear feet) of Moran Creek shoreline and wetland buffer are now protected with livestock access control fencing. Alternative watering systems like the ones shown right will keep animals well watered- no longer needing access to the creek for drinking water. This project reduced nitrogen, phosphorous and bacterial contributions to Moran Creek– already impaired for E. coli. Do you have an area where you would like to keep livestock out of surface waters?. Contact Todd SWCD for fencing plans, alternative watering devices, and 75% cost– share opportunities. 320-732-2644 **FOR ALL PROJECT TYPES! NOT RESTRICTED TO FARM PROJECTS!**



Winter water installation



Sturdy summer tire waterer



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Funding for Osakis Area Farmers:

Do you have a livestock farm located within the outlined areas on this map of the Lake Osakis Watershed? Todd SWCD has funding available for manure pit closures, feedlot upgrades, clean water diversions, roof gutters, intakes, stacking slabs, and more through 2021. The purpose of this grant is to protect this area from nutrient loading in the form of runoff.. This minor water shed is currently contaminated for high nutrient loading, primarily phosphorous. So far in 2018, 133 lbs. of nitrogen and 78 lbs. of phosphorous are reduced ANNUALLY from projects. This grant provides 75% cost share for all qualified best management practices. Call today for more information. 320-732-2644

Calling for Pictures..

2019 Producer Appreciation Slideshow
Please help by sending in a favorite or fun farm photo to deja.anton@co.todd.mn.us. Simply label the picture with the township in which it was taken. To see our past Farmer Appreciation Slideshows go to: http://www.co.todd.mn.us/departments/soil_water/feedlots

