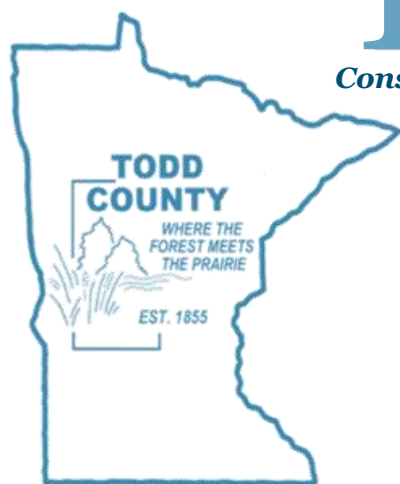


Summer 2018
Volume 8 Issue 1

TODD SWCD

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

NEWSLETTER



215 First Avenue South, Suite 104, Long Prairie, MN 56347

Office: 320-732-2644 Website: www.co.todd.mn.us



Todd County Soil and Water Conservation

Water Sampling Results

After two years of water sampling and testing the health of the Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed's lakes and streams, the results are in, and for an overwhelming majority of Todd County's waters it's good news.

Out of the 16 lakes and streams tested in Todd County, 12 met or exceeded the state standards of water quality. That's 75%, numbers Shannon Wettstein, water planner for Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) wasn't surprised about.

"Many of the lakes sampled within the watershed are in great shape and these we will continue to work to keep clean," said Wettstein. "Those which did not meet the state standards were not a huge surprise and we will begin efforts to reduce nutrient contributions to these waters."

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and the local SWCDs have been collecting samples from within the Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed, which covers parts of Crow Wing, Aitkin, Cass, Morrison and Todd counties, including 212 lakes larger than 10 acres, and 2,149 river miles. Elements studied include water clarity, oxygen, nutrient, and bacteria levels in area lakes, streams, and rivers. MPCA crews also sampled fish using electrofishing equipment and collected invertebrate samples.

"By monitoring the state's major watersheds it helps to prioritize efforts and to bring them back to water-quality goals," said Bonnie Finnerty, watershed project manager with the MPCA's Baxter office. "Having data helps to support the conversations and provides a goal-focused context for people to work together."

Rick Krauel has been a member of Todd County's Long Lake Improvement Association for 21 years and its president for 16 years. Long Lake met the state water quality standards.

"We've been continually monitoring Long Lake for the last 30 years," said Krauel. "Since the late 1990s, we've performed secchi disk tests for water clarity. We also test for phosphorus, chlorophyll, and test the lake's inlets for phosphorus and e-coli." Three Todd County lakes did not meet state standards: Trace, Big Swan, and Moose. Wettstein said these waters will be further investigated and a plan will be created to restore water quality. Strategies will also be developed to protect lakes and streams that meet water-quality standards.

For more information about the five-county Mississippi River Brainerd Watershed, visit www.crowwingswcd.org. Scroll down the homepage and click on the image of the Storymap of the Mississippi Brainerd Watershed. The interactive Storymap will be continually updated with data, website links, videos, media coverage, events, and more.



John and Mary Dorn assisting the SWCD with sampling on Pine Island Lake

Todd County – MN Buffer Status

Most Todd County landowners know vegetative buffers were required on public waterways November 1, 2017 and will be required 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 public ditches.

Todd 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. On the other hand, some landowners were sent compliance notices in 2017. Anyone who has received a notice is urged to contact Todd SWCD for assistance. If compliance is not verified, Todd County Planning and Zoning will be enforcing the buffer law this fall. Failure to comply could result in multiple assessments.

Todd County is making excellent progress toward being compliant 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, please contact Todd SWCD. For more information about the Governor's buffer law, please visit: bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers/.

Inside This Issue

Page 2 : Incentive Programs for Landowners / NRCS Pathways Intern/ New Farm Bill Biologist

Page 3: One Watershed One Plan / Taking Care of Newly Planted Trees

Page 4: Feedlot Meeting Thank You / New Conservation Technician / MAWQCP

Incentive Programs for Landowners



MN CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (MN CREP)

The Todd SWCD, would like to inform you of a new conservation program being offered to provide wild-life habitat, and protect water quality. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), is a partnership program between the State of Minnesota’s Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and USDA’s Farm Service agency. MN CREP is a voluntary state-federal program designed to improve water quality and habitat conservation. It will protect and

restore up to 60,000 acres of marginal cropland across 54 southern and western Minnesota counties, using buffer strips, wetland restoration and drinking water wellhead protection.

Landowners who are accepted in MN CREP will enroll in the USDA’s Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) for 14-15 years. At the same time, the land will be put into a permanent conservation easement through the state’s Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program. Private ownership continues and the land is permanently restored and enhanced for water quality and habitat benefits. Native plantings on those acres will filter surface and ground water, prevent erosion and provide critical habitat for countless grassland dependent species.

If you are interested in enrolling acres into MN CREP or want to learn more about the program stop by your local USDA service center at: 607 9th street NE Long Prairie, MN 56347 or call us at: (320) 732-6618 ext. 3.

OSAKIS LAKE WATERSHED AG (TODD & DOUGLAS SWCD)

Cost-share available for farm sites and water quality improvements: ag waste systems; scrape lanes, curbing, clean water diversions, livestock access control fencing, alternate watering devices and more.

PARTRIDGE RIVER PIT CLOSURES (TODD SWCD)

The project goal is to significantly reduce E.coli loading into the Partridge River by closing unlined manure storage basins located close to the river and its contributing waters. Cost-share available to close pits.

3% LOW-INTEREST LOANS (AGBMP): The AgBMP Loan Program is a water quality program that provides low interest loans to farms, rural landowners and agriculture supply businesses. The purpose is to encourage agriculture Best Management Practices that prevent or reduce runoff from feedlots, farm fields and other pollution problems identified by the county in local water plans.

New Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist

Luke Thoma is the new Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist for Todd County taking over from Sabin Adams. This position is a joint-partnership through Pheasants Forever, USDA-NRCS and the Todd SWCD. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Crookston with a Bachelor’s of Science in Natural Resources Management and an Associates of Applied Science from Itasca Community College in Forestry Management. He will be responsible for helping landowners enroll their properties into conservation programs in the Todd County area. Luke will also be available to answer questions or discuss opportunities regarding habitat management or conservation on private properties.



Luke grew up on a hobby farm just west of Little Falls and enjoyed spending time outdoors and helping out around the farm. He has a passion for conservation and wants to see future generations enjoy the same outdoors experiences he was fortunate enough to enjoy while growing up in the area.

Please feel free to contact Luke with any questions about habitat or conservation opportunities on your property. You can reach him at 320 732-6618 ext. 112 or stop into the local USDA Service Center: 607 9th ST NE Long Prairie, MN.

TODD SOIL & WATER

Tim Stieber
Sarah Katterhagen
Deja Anton
Lew Noska
Kevin Brown
Shannon Wettstein
(320) 732-2644

TODD NRCS

Russell Kleinschmidt
Darlene Drayna
Carol Wimmer
(320) 732-6618 x3

FARM BILL BIOLOGIST

Luke Thoma
(320)732-6618 x3

TODD SWCD BOARD

Norman Krause
Kenneth Pesta
Dale Katterhagen
Leland Buchholz
Tom Williamson

TODD COMMISSIONERS

Barb Becker
Gary Kneisl
Rod Erickson
David Kircher
Randy Neumann

NRCS Intern



Austen Byrer is interning with NRCS this summer and he will be here until mid-August. Austen will return to his Indiana home to complete his last semester of college. He is majoring in Biology at Franklin College and will graduate in December.

In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and camping. Some of his favorite memories while growing up included the time spent helping his uncle on the farm and going camping with his family. Austen’s love for the outdoors led to his interest in the conservation field. He looks forward to assisting anybody with resource concerns while he is here for the summer.

Todd SWCD and County Embark on Water Planning Effort

One Watershed One Plan Approach

Minnesota has a long history of water management planning by local government. All 80 non-metro counties have had water plans in place for over 20 years. The state is considered a leader in water planning with few other states having the history and coverage found here. A new water planning effort called One Watershed One Plan is being rolled out that will build off of existing local water management plans and priorities. This new approach will develop a plan to fit major watersheds and not political boundaries. This will allow alignment of the plan with abundant water quality monitoring data that has been generated for most areas of the state.

Currently Todd SWCD, Todd County, and Sauk River Watershed District along with Douglas, Stearns, Pope and Meeker County and SWCD representatives are involved in the development of a One Watershed One Plan for the Sauk River Watershed which covers about 1/3 of Todd County. The process will take 1.5 to 2 years to fully complete.



Several Guiding Principles have been developed by the Board of Soil and Water Resources for local governments to follow when developing a One Watershed One Plan.

One Watershed One Plan will result in prioritized and measureable actions that meet or exceed current water plan standards. This will be possible because water data will be used to prioritize the strategies and actions set forth for the 10 year plan to ensure progress toward water quality goals will be made if the plan is implemented.

One Watershed One Plan is not an effort to change local governance. The existing structure for counties, SWCD's, and watershed districts will remain unchanged – a framework will be established for all local governments to have a hand in plan implementation after it is adopted.

One Watershed One Plans will be developed by local governments and is very much a bottom's up approach to plan development. Public stakeholder meetings and outreach will be held and there is widespread local representation on the plan's Policy Committee which is made up of SWCD Supervisors, County Commissioner's, and Watershed District Managers from the affected counties.

One Watershed One Plan implementation efforts will recognize local commitment and contribution including technical assistance, administrative support, and outreach activities.

One Watershed One Plans are not a one size fits all. Several plans have been completed and each is unique and that will likely be the case locally.

Advantages of One Watershed One Plan

All entities within a watershed with an active plan will have agreed upon the priorities and therefore will not be in competition for resources. Once a One Watershed One Plan is completed the state is committed to funding the plan implementation through block grants to implement the priorities listed in the plan. Block grants for each major watershed reduce the time needed by staff to pursue funding for landowner projects.

The prioritized, targeted and measureable concept will be integrated into plan priorities which has been shown to get the best water quality protection for the least amount of investment.

A One Watershed One Plan is currently being developed for the Sauk River Watershed. Todd County has six watersheds and it is anticipated County Commissioners, SWCD Supervisors, and staff will be involved with development of plans for at least four of the major watersheds. This will take several years but once developed it is expected that the framework put in place will carry Todd County forward for many years into the future.



Caring for Newly Planted Trees

Water Your Tree

Newly planted trees need 15-25 gallons of water once a week for the first 3 to 5 years when the ground is thawed. You can skip watering if it has rained more than 1 inch in a week.

Mulch Your Tree

Mulch that cover a trees roots provides numerous benefits. It keeps the roots cool and moist in the summer. It protects tree roots from freezing in the winter. Mulch adds nutrients and organic matter to the soil, and reduces competition with weeds. Mulch also keeps weed whips and lawn mowers away from a tree's trunk.

Prune Your Tree

Trees should be pruned when they are young so they grow strong branch attachments and good structure, which reduces damage a tree experiences during storms. Proper pruning techniques speeds up the time a pruning wound heals and for most species should be done as close to bud break as possible while the tree is still dormant.

BARN TALK



Feedlot Meeting and Farmer Appreciation Buffet at the Clarissa Ballroom. Over 160 producers took their time to come hear speakers, be entertained and to have a nice lunch. We are already looking forward to next year!

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS OF THIS YEAR’S FEEDLOT MEETING & FARMER APPRECIATION BUFFET:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Todd SWCD | Ace (Staples) | Nyhus Chevrolet |
| MACFO | Aldrich Tractor | Pro Ag (Browerville) |
| Big Auctions | Bjerga Feed | Pro Ag (Clarissa) |
| Farmers Union | Bremels (Randall) | Pro Ag (Eagle Bend) |
| MN National Bank | Buchholz Farm Seed | Shirley’s Gas |
| 1st International Bank and Trust | DHIA Stearns Central Lab | Sinclair LP Oil |
| Compeer Financial | Ernie’s Groceries | Tri County Livestock |
| Unity Bank | Fleet Supply (Long Prairie) | |
| Minnesota Corn Growers Association | Griffs Pizza | |
| Todd County Livestock Board | Hardware Hank (Motley) | |
| Central Minnesota Credit Union | LAC Eagle Valley Express | |
| American Heritage Bank | Lines Building Center | |

PRECIPITATION AVERAGE AMOUNTS (INCHES) TODD COUNTY		
MONTHLY		10 YEAR
DECEMBER	0.45	1.20
JANUARY	0.18	.55
FEBRUARY	1.15	.62
MARCH	2.26	1.24
APRIL	0.71	2.10
MAY	1.20	3.79

New Conservation Tech

Kevin Brown is the new Conservation Technician in Todd County as of March 2018. Kevin is a 2013 graduate from the University of Minnesota Crookston with a Bachelor’s of Science in Natural Resource Management and Water Resource Management. He will be responsible for assisting the Feedlot Program, Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program, and farm conservation concerns.

During his free time he enjoys hunting, fishing, and camping. Growing up he enjoyed spending time at his grandparents beef farm in south central Minnesota. He also farmed during his time at college. These experiences have given Kevin great respect to all landowners. Kevin is very excited to assist and educate landowners on alternative practices that help improve production and water quality.

Please feel free to contact Kevin with any concerns or projects.



Encouraging ALL Todd County Farmers to sign up for MN Ag Water Quality Certification!

- It’s not all about the sign!
- It’s not all about recognition!
- It’s not all about marketing!
- It’s not for the Beer!
- It’s not for the permitting priority and funding assistance available.

And, it’s not necessarily for the 10 year exemption from new state laws.

Becoming Ag Water Quality Certified in Todd County is the Ag Industry’s way of assuring the public that Todd County farmers do proactively manage our farms with utmost care and concern for the soil and water. Farmers know this!! Let’s show others the numbers!. Your farm can opt to be formally certified/ recognized or you may simply request that your property be reviewed for optional best management practices.

Call the SWCD today to sign on.



CALENDAR

- SWCD Board Meetings– Second Thursday of the each month at 8:30 am (except Nov, Feb and May)
- Aquatic Invasive Species BioBlitz Day August 18th
- Enviro-Fest September 20th
- Local Work Group Meeting, TBD