

Please note: The Chippewa SWCD phone number has changed. The SWCD can be reached at 320-269-2696.

USDA NRCS can be reached by dialing 320-269-2139 ext. 3.

The purpose of the Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District is to use available resources to meet the local natural resource needs.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Chippewa SWCD Presents Audrey Arner and Richard Handeen of

Moonstone Farm as 2021 Conservationists of the Year



Audrey Arner and Richard Handeen are the owners and operators of Moonstone Farm. They have the privilege of organically farming at their century farm located on 240 acres of former Dakotah homeland. Audrey and Richard have a very diverse farm and over the years have installed a pond, multiple wildlife tree plantings and field windbreaks, enrolled acreage into Reinvest Minnesota's conservation easement program, installed cattle waterlines through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program and a cattle crossing through the MN Ag Water Quality program upon their certification. Their farm includes several varieties of plants and animals as well as 40 plus species of wooded vegetation. They also solely operate on solar, and they practice controlled grazing.

They take their lessons from the great plains and feel it is important to care for the soil and the water to the best of their ability. What began as a drive to have quality food to eat became a lifelong mission of conservation. Richard and Audrey use a long term view and all farm and life choices are made to align with those goals. They both value taking care of the life and land in this area. Richard and Audrey knew about conservation from a young age and wanted to do more.

After decades of hard work and dedication amounting to around 45 years of conservation and farm stewardship, Richard and Audrey were nominated as Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) Conservationists of the Year for 2021. Audrey and Richard were acknowledged at the Chippewa SWCD Board meeting that was held on December 8, 2021. At the meeting (pictured above) Chippewa SWCD Board Chair Michelle Overholser presented them with "The Conservationist" print by Terry Redlin. They were also acknowledged for their outstanding accomplishments at the 2021 Minnesota Association of



Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Convention. At the convention, there was an award ceremony hosted by The Farmer magazine where they were also recognized for their efforts in a room with more than 600 conservation professional and outstanding conservationist nominees from around the state (pictured right). The SWCD recognizes the conservation practices and education that Moonstone Farm has brought to Chippewa County and its residents over the decades. Local SWCD and NRCS staff enjoy working with, learning from, and assisting Richard and Audrey. Both the SWCD staff and Audrey and Richard encourage you to stop at Moonstone Farm for a tour to see the many things they have implemented throughout their lifelong conservation journey.

Chippewa SWCD Districts Michelle Overholser Calin Steve Sunderland Jerry Schwitters Eisenlohr Nandt Orace Louriston Woods Sparta Leenthrop Stonesam Rheiderhald 2021 Board of Supervisors

Board of Supervisors L-R: Jerry Schwitters, Steve Jacobson, Michelle Overholser, Steve Sunderland, and Calin Eisenlohr



Tom Sletta-District Technician, Desirae Jarett-Office & Financial Coordinator, Tom Warner-District Manager, Zach Bothun-Technical Manager



Michael Timmerman-Soil Conservationist, Shantel Lozinski-District Conservationist, Nathan Stewart-Ag Engineer

Chairman's Report By Michelle Overholser, Board Chair



enjoyed pursuing this service and working with landowners on seed and seeding estimates and implementation. Zach also stayed very busy working on the Hawk Creek Middle MN One Watershed,

One Plan. Our tree program continued this year, planting approximately 3,700 trees and laying 15,000 feet of barrier fabric. Tom Warner and Tom Sletta were on site to oversee the implementation of projects this year and have been preparing for projects to be completed in 2022. Tom Sletta is looking forward to learning more about project management and implementation.

In 2021, the SWCD continued working with landowners and Chippewa County to monitor the Buffer Law that was passed by Governor Dayton in 2015. Chippewa County is now at a 99% compliance rate overall. The SWCD would like to thank landowners for working with them on this accomplishment.

This year we continued the implementation of the Local Capacity Funds that were passed by legislation in 2015. The Chippewa SWCD was granted \$118,323 and has been and will be used for administration and coordination,

Although the pandemic put a hinderance soil erosion practices, equipment and technology, technical assistance, and on some things, the SWCD kept busy with water storage and treatment practices. We have seen the benefits of this conservation. Chippewa SWCD has continued their money as we have been able to upgrade some outdated equipment and seed program. Zach has been making changes as technology with newer versions that will increase accurate productivity as needed to improve the flow of this service. He has well as increase the services the staff is able to provide to the county.

> As Covid-19 restrictions lessened, staff was able to bring back their Women's Field Day event. This year's theme was Passion for the Prairie and it was held at the Lac qui Parle State Refuge with Liz Ludwig of FSA, Shantel Lozinski of NRCS, and Walt Gessler of the MN DNR speaking. District staff and supervisors met with our state legislators virtually in the spring and were able to attend the Minnesota Association of Conservation District's Annual Convention this winter.

> While staff has had to adapt to the changes the pandemic has brough forth, we also know that our landowners have as well. We would like to thank all of you for your patience and willingness to continue to work with us throughout the pandemic..

> I would like to thank the Chippewa SWCD staff for their hard work and dedication to conservation accomplishments in 2021. The Chippewa SWCD looks forward to working with you in the coming year to protect our natural resources in Chippewa County.

Wetland Conservation Act

In 1992, the Minnesota Legislature passed one of wetlands, the Minnesota Legislature in 1991 enacted the year, and can be difficult for landowners to Act. While the Act has gone through several a wetland except under limited circumstances.

Wetlands provide many benefits to the natural environment. They filter pollutants from runoff, improving water quality. They provide wildlife habitat for many species. Wetlands also reduce the effects of flooding and protect shorelines from erosion. It is because wetlands do so much that actions that could impact them are so regulated.

Determining the "jurisdictional" wetland boundary can be very difficult, and most cities and the county require a permit before draining, filling or excavating in a wetland. For this reason, landowners are strongly encouraged to contact the local 2. administrator before starting work.

What are federal requirements Swampbuster)?

Since 1985, the Wetland Conservation provision of the federal farm bills (Swampbuster) requires all agricultural producers to protect the wetlands on the farms they own or operate in order to be eligible for way USDA farm program benefits. Producers will not be problems. eligible if they plant an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland that was converted by drainage, leveling, or any means after December 23, 1985, or can help identify convert a wetland for the purpose of or to make regulated wetland on agricultural commodity possible after November 28, 1990.

What is the state law (ie. Wetland Conservation affect your project. Act)?

The Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) is a state law. Realizing the important benefits of

the most comprehensive laws regulating activities in the Wetland Conservation Act which aims for nowetlands in the national—the Wetland Conservation net-loss of wetlands. Recognizing that local officials may have a better idea of local needs, the WCA revisions since then, its goal of no-net loss in the gives administration authority of the Act to local quantity and quality of wetlands remains the same. governments. Chippewa County delegated the Chippewa SWCD. This Act prohibits draining, filling or excavating in responsibility of the Act to the Chippewa SWCD. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) oversees the law at the state level. WCA regulates activities that result in the draining, filling, or excavating of wetlands in Minnesota, including those on agricultural land. The law regulated all draining and filling of wetlands and if wetland loss is unavoidable, requires replacement.

What should agricultural landowners do before starting a project, including drainage, and maintenance that may impact a wetland?

- Complete your "AD1026" form from your local USDA office.
- what you plan to do.

(ie. The SWCD can advise you if your project is allowed under the state law, WCA, or if you need to submit an application to the local government, DNR, or the US Army Corps of Engineers. Involving your local SWCD is the easiest and best

to

Request a field visit by the SWCD. This your property, and regulation that could Many wetlands do not contain standing water or are only saturated for part of identify.

Tell your contractor to submit a "Contractor Liability Form". Contractors who conduct projects that will impact a wetland are required to notify the

Communication is the key! Compliance with USDA does not mean compliance with other wetland laws such as the state WCA law, DNR, or the US Army Corps of Engineers. A quick call or stop at the Chippewa SWCD office prior to beginning your project will help you comply with the law and save a project from potential additional cost and delays.

Planning ahead is important. Come in to the SWCD office as soon as possible on a project to find out if there is any possible wetland impact. If there is any potential wetland impact, the SWCD will inform you which agency or agencies will need to be contacted for a permit or authorization to do Bring a copy to the SWCD office and explain the work. Plan ahead! Don't come in on Monday and expect an answer on Tuesday. If wetlands are in the vicinity of your project, depending on the project and the agency that has jurisdiction over the wetland, it could take a month or more to get authorization or a permit for your project.

WETLANDS ARE PROTECTED BY THE WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

The Wetland Conservation Act promotes a no-net-loss of wetlands and protects the benefits wetland provide. The Act moves toward its no-netloss goal by requiring person proposing to drain or fill a wetland to:

- First, try to avoid disturbing the wetland.
- Second, try to minimize any impact on the wetland.
- And finally, to replace any lost wetland functions and values. Any questions in Chippewa County contact Tom Warner Chippewa SWCD Office 320-269-2696

Chippewa Soil & Water Conservation District Projects

shared on two construction projects and numerous vegetative qualify include but are not limited to; water and sediment control practices. Total cost share paid out by Chippewa SWCD was basins, grade stabilizations, grassed waterways, terraces, critical \$17,400.80. We are currently working with engineering staff and area plantings, side inlets, field windbreaks, unused well sealing, landowners on multiple erosion control projects for the 2022 and stream bank erosion, restoration, and protection. Call or construction season.

The Chippewa SWCD works with the West Central Technical Service Area engineers to survey and design projects. They also basis, depending on SWCD board approval. When all cost share work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Chippewa County Land & Resource Management and Hawk Creek Watershed Project to allow more funding opportunities for landowners.

The Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District has cost share dollars available to landowners for installing or fixing conservation practices on private land in Chippewa County. surveying. Give us a call at 320-269-2696 or stop by the office Cost share dollars could offset 75% of the cost of qualifying located in the Chippewa County Courthouse.

In 2021, Chippewa SWCD, together with their partners, cost conservation practices. Some examples of projects that would stop by the office for more information.

> Cost share will be available at a first come, first served funds are encumbered for projects, any new projects may be put on a wait list for funding. Landowners with erosion problems on their property, big or small, are encouraged to stop in our office to discuss any erosion issues. We can review available cost share programs, explore options, determine how to make a conservation practice work with your farming operation, and set up an appointment to do a site visit and do some preliminary







2021 Rain Gauge Report in Inches						
*Snow on ground, in inches	Kriste Erickson 119-41-02	Dan Benson 119-38-05	Richard Huber 117-40-06	Wayne Golden 119-40-21	Marvin Timmons 119-37-19	
January						
February			6.75*			
March		2.43/7*	1.94/6*	1.55		
April	2.88	1.89/1*	1.99/.625*	2.27	1.27	
May	1.69	1.74	2.21	2.04	1.80	
June	1.77	1.56	.92	.72	.92	
July	2.22	4.23	2.34	2.02	3.02	
August	4.84	5.48	4.84	6.26	4.24	
September	4.97	3.02	1.61		3.4	
October	4.43	3.71	3.68		4.01	
November			.44/.75*			
December			1.06/9.875*			
Total	22.8	24.06/8*	21.03/24*	14.86	18.66	

Our rain gauge monitor volunteers with partner Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Climatology Office. We are thankful to have dedicated rain gauge monitors in our county to provide accurate precipitation records. This climate data is used to explain past events and to assist planners in defining future climate scenarios. It can also be used to address questions involving the impact of climate on Minnesota and it's citizens.

Walk-In Access 2022

Walk-In Access (WIA) provides public hunting on private land in Minnesota and pays landowners to allow that access. Through WIA, nearly 27,000 acres of private land is open for public hunting from Sept. 1 to May 31. An atlas of hunting parcels is available online at www.mndnr.gov/walkin, at retailers within the WIA area, or by calling the MN DNR at 888-646-6367.

- ◆The enrollment period this year will run from February 15th through April 15th, 2022. Flat rate payments are \$18/acre.
- ♦ Purchasing a \$3.00 WIA validation with another hunting license, allows hunting on WIA parcels from Sept. 1 to May 31, one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. WIA validations are available at any DNR license vendor.
- ♦ Landowner participation is crucial to this program, so be respectful and ethical while hunting WIA parcels. No target practice, trapping, dog training, or walking, camping, horseback riding, hiking, fires, or similar activities are allowed by the public.
- ◆All hunting regulations apply on WIAs and will be enforced by DNR conservation officers.
- WIA parcels are for walk-in traffic only. Motorized vehicles of any kind are not allowed on WIAs. Parking is along roads or in designated parking areas.
- ♦ WIA seeks landowners with parcels of 40 acres or more with high quality natural cover. This may include, but is not limited to, parcels already in a conservation program. Only small inclusions of crop or hay land may be present.
- ◆Local Soil & Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) enroll landowners in WIA. WIA agreements are voluntary and include an op-out clause.
- ♦ WIA allows landowners to carry out habitat management according to an approved conservation plan. Therefore, some sites may not have high quality habitat. Site updates are available at www.mndnr.gov/walkin .



The Walk-In Access program is funded by:

- A grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under number 69-3A75-16-509.
- A one-time appropriation from the State Legislature in 2012.
- ♦ A \$5.00 surcharge on nonresident hunting licenses.
- ◆ Donations of \$1, \$3 or \$5 made by hunters when purchasing deer and small game licenses.





Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program By Tom Sletta, SWCD District Technician



The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a combination of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), the country's largest private-land conservation program and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program. Administered by the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), CREP targets high-priority conservation issues identified by local,

state, or tribal governments or non-governmental organizations. The proposed federal, state, and local partnership permanently retires environmentally sensitive land using the nationally-recognized RIM program. This is accomplished by establishing conservation practices via payments to farmers, ranchers, and agricultural land owners.

Sign-up and "batching periods" will continue to be used throughout the duration of the MN CREP until the total 60,000-acre goal is met. Contact the Chippewa Soil and Water Conservation District for the next sign-up date. When land-owners enroll land into CREP they will receive Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments for up to 15 years followed by a perpetual Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) easement. The MN CREP targets four voluntary perpetual conservation practices:

- ◆ CP2 Wellhead Protection
- ♦ CP21 Filter Strips
- ♦ CP23 100-year Floodplain Wetlands
- ♦ CP23A Non-100-year Floodplain Wetland

Due to the Minnesota State Buffer Law, land that is required to be established in a perennial buffer may not qualify for a new CREP application. The land that is required to be in a buffer by law, (16.5 along ditches and 30-50 feet along protected water) may have to be donated depending on the new farmbill.

The filter strips can range from 30' to 350' in width and will meet NRCS standard 393 criteria for water quality, wildlife habitat, flooding and farm ability. CP21 filter strips can be utilized to square up fields where ditches run at an angle and where tile intakes are too hard to farm around along ditch systems.

The four practices will each have a native grass mix tailored to meet state and federal practice standards. Not only do the sites contribute to Minnesota's water quality, but they will also benefit pollinators, nesting cover, and food along with providing other habitat needs on environmentally sensitive lands.

If you have any questions about CREP or RIM, or to discuss potential eligibility of your land, please contact Tom Sletta by stopping in the office or calling 320-269-2693.

Chippewa SWCD Native Grass Seed & Seeding Program

grass seed for landowners looking to enroll new land into CRP, CREP, RIM, or for property owners that want to enhance their existing habitat on their own. The district also continues to provide native grass seeding services. For any season, the number of sites the district can commit to planting is limited. To ensure a spot on the schedule, contact SWCD staff early to be considered for the service.

The spring and fall seeding seasons in 2021 were very successful for the Chippewa SWCD. The district seeded 25 sites for a total of 325 acres. Seeding sites consisted of CRP, buffers, pollinator Note: It is the landowners' responsibility to prepare a suitable plots, and other non-program related acres.

price for seeding is charged by the number of acres planted plus a mobilization fee:

\$100 flat mobilization fee within Chippewa County (add \$1.00 per mile for out of County projects)

\$25/acre planting fee (\$100 minimum planting fee for 4 acres and less)

\$65/hour for broadcast seeding

Seeding Dates:

Warm season grasses require soil temperatures of at least 50 degrees before they will germinate. This is 8 to 10 degrees warmer than the requirement for cool season grasses. Therefore, the optimal seeding time for planting warm season grasses, either alone or in combination with cool season grasses, usually occurs between mid-spring and early summer when moisture and

Chippewa SWCD continues to be an outlet for native temperature are most favorable. May 15th to June 30th is the typical window for planting warm season grasses in this area.

> Note: Late April through June is a busy time for the district. The tree program is usually in full swing at the same time CRP and other grass plantings need to be planted. Contacting the district early on to get on the list for planting is crucial. Unfortunately, there will be a limit to how many acres the district can plant each spring.

Seedbed Condition:

seedbed before planting.

The seed drill service includes 1 operator, tractor and drill. The A firm seedbed is very important when seeding native grasses. The district's seed drill needs a firm seedbed to function properly and it is crucial for seed planting depth. A firm seedbed also helps conserve moisture and ensures good seed to soil contact which is critical for adequate germination and an overall successful planting. IMPORTANT: Recently tilled ground should be packed with a coil or roller packer, or something equivalent prior to planting. The seedbed is considered firm enough when an adult's footprint penetrates no more than 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. For example: untilled bean stubble works great for seeding with the Truax drill.

> To order seed or get on the seeding list, please contact Zach Bothun or Tom Sletta at:

320-269-2695 - Zach Bothun 320-269-2693 - Tom Sletta

Tree Order Pick Up Day

Chippewa SWCD will again be having a small tree order pick-up day for people who order trees to plant on their own. The trees are usually delivered in mid to late April. Upon arrival, the district will send out notification to all who submitted tree orders with an exact day and time frame to pick their trees up. The location for pick-up will be at the district's storage building located on the north side



of the Chippewa County Highway Department garage. Chippewa SWCD asks that if you cannot make it to get your trees that you find someone who can for you. Customers will be asked to pay for their trees at the time they are picked up. If you have any questions, please contact Chippewa SWCD at 320-269-2696.

🖘 EPTIC SYSTEM UPGRADE COST-SHARE AVAILABLE

Cost-share is available to low-income single family homeowners in Chippewa County for Upgrading Existing Septic Systems to improve water quality for a better tomorrow. For criteria and eligibility guidelines,



please contact the Chippewa County Land & Resource Management Office at 320-269-6231.

2021 Tree Report

The 2021 tree planting season was similar to many previous successful seasons for the District. There were roughly 3,700 trees planted on 7.7 acres of new farmstead shelterbelt/wildlife plantings and 12,000 feet of field windbreaks. There were 21 individual plantings in all.

There was also 15,000 feet of weed barrier fabric installed to control weeds, conserve moisture, and accelerate tree growth. The fabric is a 6 foot wide geo-textile material that allows moisture to pass through it but does not allow weed growth to occur. Light disking or planting cool season grasses and mowing periodically between the trees is still recommended to control weeds between the tree rows.

Cost share was available to landowners with the qualifying practices above. Cost share was used to offset the cost of the trees and fabric.

Landowners who are thinking about planting trees this spring should stop in ASAP to develop a tree plan and order the trees while supplies are available.

Have you ordered your trees?

Our mission is to provide low cost quality trees to landowners for conservation practices. We sell northern grown stock assuring that the trees will survive and prosper in our Minnesota climate.

What steps do you take if you are planning a conservation tree planting?

- 1) Decide where and what you are doing: a farmstead shelterbelt, windbreak renovation, field windbreak or wildlife planting.
- 2) Call the SWCD office for an appointment to set up a free site visit.
- 3) A plan will be drawn up, trees recommended, soil map checked to determine what type of trees will grow there and the amount of room needed.
- 4) Site preparation should be done in the fall or early spring.
- 5) Trees are ordered in the fall for spring delivery. The earlier the order, the better chance of receiving the tree varieties you want/need.
- 6) Trees are planted in the spring. (Landowner provides tractor and driver.) We hand plant one-gallon pots for \$1.00 per potted evergreen and \$2.00 per two gallon potted evergreen and large bareroot trees. Bareroot trees are machine planted at 25 cents per tree.
- 7) Tree maintenance includes keeping them weed free and watered as needed. Several ways of keeping them weed free is using rolls of fabric matting, tree matt squares, as well as chemical and mechanical control.

For more information, call Tom Warner or Zach Bothun at 320-269-2696.

Trees Available

BAREROOT TREES (\$2.10 each unless otherwise noted)



Use the tree order form on the last page to get your trees ordered today!

CONIFERS (Bareroot)

Black Hill Spruce	8-12"
Colorado Spruce	9-12"
Austrian Pine	8-14"
Ponderosa Pine	8-14"
Scotch Pine	8-14"
Eastern Red Cedar	9-12"
N. White Cedar	12-18

DECIDUOUS (Bareroot)

American Plum	Norway Poplar
Freedom Honeysuckle	Red Splendor Crab
Black Walnut	Redosier Dogwood
Buffaloberry	Silver Maple
Flame Willow	Cottonwood
Caragana	Cranberrybush
Chokecherry	Linden
Common Lilac	Nannyberry
Cotoneaster	Bur Oak
Green Ash	Red Oak
Hackberry	White Oak

CONIFERS (Potted)

Black Hill Spruce	15-18"	\$11.00	Austrian Pine	18-24"	\$16.00
	18-24"	\$16.00	Ponderosa Pine	15-18"	\$11.00
	24-30"	\$18.00	Scotch Pine	15-18"	\$11.00
Colorado Spruce	15-18"	\$11.00	Eastern Red Cedar	15-18"	\$11.00
	18-24"	\$16.00			

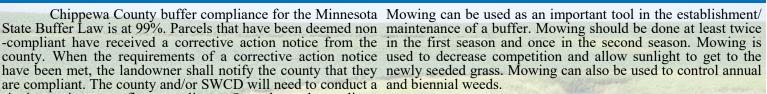
Chippewa County Buffer Law Update

county. When the requirements of a corrective action notice have been met, the landowner shall notify the county that they are compliant. The county and/or SWCD will need to conduct a site inspection to confirm compliance. Once deemed compliant,

After the third or fourth year of establishment landowners will receive a validation of compliance. If you receive a corrective action notice but believe that you are in compliance, please contact Chippewa County Drainage Inspector Josh Macziewski at 320-269-7447 or Chippewa SWCD staff at 320-269-2696 to go over buffer evaluation and to set up a site visit to shook buffer compliance. Puffers will

check buffer compliance. Buffers will continue to be monitored for compliance each year.

As buffers become established, proper site maintenance is essential to ensure successful growth and function of the buffer.



After the third or fourth year of establishment prescribed burning is a good tool to use to remove thatch, control weeds and woody plants, and maintain diversity in the buffer.







Buffer Law Requirements & Percentage of Compliance

Protected Waters: A 50-foot average, 30-foot minimum width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation.

County Drainage Ditches: a 16.5-foot minimum width continuous buffer of perennially rooted vegetation.

Protected Waters Compliance Status

As of January 2022 = 99%

County Ditch Compliance Status

As of January 2021 = 99%

Chippewa County Total Buffer Compliance

As of January 2021 = 99%

Contact Chippewa SWCD with any questions regarding the buffer law by calling 320-269-2696.

hippewa River Watershed

One Watershed, One Plan Kick Off & Annual Meeting Where: Minnewaska House in Glenwood, MN When: Tuesday, April 5, 2022 from 5:30PM-8PM

Come and have a voice and hear what is happening in your own backyards! This meeting is an opportunity for citizens that reside in the watershed to provide feedback and learn more about monitoring, funding opportunities, and status of work of the Chippe wa River Watershed Association and partners. This meeting will include a meal. For more information call Chippewa SWCD at 320-269-2696 or Chippewa County Land & Resource Management at 320-269-6231.

Register online at https://bit.ly/3HfBymN or call 320-634-5327

A Peak at Our Year

















2021 NRCS ReportBy Shantel Lozinski, USDA-NRCS

NRCS had an extremely successful year this year with plan writing, obligating funds to Chippewa producers and project instillation. This year through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) we obligated over \$800,000 to 12 contracts that included practices such as cover crops, strip tillage, water and sediment control

basins, grade stabilizations, wetland habitat and a nutrient management CAP. We also completed a large 7-acre wetland restoration through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and wrote 82 CRP plans, of which 29 were new and 53 were re-enrollments.



It was a challenging year as we continued to navigate through the

COVID rules and regulations. Thank you to all the producers who worked with us this year on plans, contracts, and construction. Some of the EQIP construction projects that were contracted this year were also completed this fall including 4 water and sediment control basins and 1 grade stabilization. Getting projects on the ground is what it's all about.

We were able to get back to our Women's field day this year which was held at the Lac Qui Parle State Park and focused on the tall grass prairie. We had a good turnout for our guest speaker Walt Gessler from the MN DNR. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continues to be



popular program Chippewa county and should be considered for small fields, odd areas, unproductive areas and sensitive wet

spots. Contact FSA for current soil rental rates.

It was another year of very few in person meetings or trainings with more out of office contact pushed to zoom meetings or team calls, which is just not the same. We are still open and working with producers daily, just not in the office. Off site appointments can be made, we can visit in the hallway at the courthouse or farm visits can be planned. We look forward to another great year in FY 2022.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer and Lender.

Installing and / or Modifying Drainage Systems

By Shantel Lozinski, USDA-NRCS

August 2011 marked a change in how Minnesota NRCS services AD 1026 drainage requests, this change was done to follow national policy. In the past when you filled out a AD1026 form for drainage we would refer to the existing official determination we had on file and make a recommendation. Now we will complete a certified wetland determination depending on the date on your existing 026 and map on file. If you have had a certified wetland determination completed on a tract of land and now you have changed your tile layout, a new 1026 should be completed with the new layout.

Producers who choose to make drainage improvements without a certified wetland determination need to be aware that any drainage activities done in an area without previous cropping history; or in areas that are consistently wet, pose a high risk of resulting in converting a protected wetland area. Converting protected wetland areas could result in the loss of USDA program benefits



on all the land the producer operates. Landowners are also reminded that the State of Minnesota has wetland protection provisions for all land uses including ag-lands. These provisions are administered through the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). The provisions are completely separate, though on ag-lands, similar to the USDA wetland protection requirements. To minimize your risk of converting a protected wetland area, plan to contact your local USDA Service Center and update your AD 1026 prior to conducting any land clearing and drainage projects. A few tips when making a request:

- 1026's are serviced on a tract basis unless the owner/operator specifically selects the fields. If you are looking to tile one field and the field is included in a tract of 400 ac, it would speed up the process to just request the determination on the one field.
- If you are fixing an intake, cleaning a ditch or replacing a segment of tile at the same size and depth, be sure to check just 7C and complete a drainage system worksheet describing the current extent of the ditch. This will allow you to get your 1026 back much faster than if you had requested a certified wetland determination.
- Be sure that the tract of land you are requesting the 1026 for shows up on your FSA producer data report. If you have recently purchased land and have not reported it to FSA it can slow the process. The tract of land needs to be on the producer data report before you can request a 1026 form this is done to ensure you have the authority to make the request.
- If you are looking to purchase land at auction be sure you know what you are buying. Request the wetland information from the auction company or realtor before the sale. This is considered private and sensitive information, without an information release we can't give out the information. Plan ahead.
- If you are requesting new tile in a field you know has a mapped wetland take the time to complete a drainage system worksheet at the same time as you complete the 1026 request. This form helps us to understand the existing tile on site. It will also save us the time to mail it out to you and wait for it to come back.
- If you are planning to remove any old building sites and groves please be reminded you should be completing an AD 1026 for the site. Without completing this form and allowing a determination to be done you run the risk of a violation due to tree removal and/or land leveling. When you add this previously non cropped land to your cropland acres FSA will flag it as a possible violation.

NRCS 2021 Construction Season

By Michael Timmerman, USDA-NRCS

2021 turned out to be another great. The next concern was having year for conservation in Chippewa County. adequate moisture to get proper Getting Conservation on the ground can be compaction during construction. challenging as well as the most fulfilling After doing a follow up soils part of working for the NRCS, and this year investigation and receiving some was no exception. This past summer we rain, it turned out to be perfect started the construction season off with a conditions to complete large wetland restoration. Due to extremely project. The wetland is designed wet conditions and funding coordination the to hold 5.5 acres of water that is project finally came to fruition after 4 years. controlled by a stop-log system One of the many hurtles we had to deal with which allows the landowner to was the wet conditions and limited barrow regulate the max and minimum availability. Since most of the clay needed pool elevation. The wetland will to build the embankment was located in the benefit water quality, and provide

pool area adjacent to the proposed structure. excellent habitat for the local wildlife in of drainage area. The total estimated soil Chippewa County.

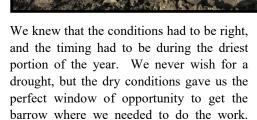
> Other constructed practices intake to a stable outlet. The structures are designed to drain in a

timely fashion to avoid crop damage and saturation that is causing the erosion to

saved is 191 tons per year.

Overall, we had a successful year that were completed this year were regardless of the ongoing challenges with water and sediment control basin covid. As we are looking forward to 2022, structures and grade stabilization NRCS will continue to put conservation on structures. These are installed to the land. We have more projects that have eliminate erosion that is occurring on been designed with funded contracts that are the land. These structures consist of ready to be constructed. I am grateful to be an embankment that function by a part of the conservation work in Chippewa catching the surface water upstream County and want to thank all the of the erosion, holding the water back landowners and producers that we have had and then draining through a surface the opportunity to serve and work with.

If you have erosion occurring on your land, please give us a call at 320-269-2139 or stop by the office and we would be eliminate the overland and subsurface happy to answer your questions and go over some options that may work on your occur. For 2021 the total acres of water held operation. We have Federal EQIP dollars as back from these structures was 216.5 acres well as state cost share programs to assist with funding.



Making the Change from Conventional Tillage to Strip Till

By Michael Timmerman, USDA-NRCS

Strip tillage is one of many management systems that producers can use to reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and improve the overall quality of your farmland. Where soil moisture conditions are suitable. crops growing in a systematic arrangement of strips allows improved input cost while reducing sediment and nutrients to surface waters. Injection of nutrients into strips where they are desired within the planted row using modern technology has become much more efficient to manage and implement.

This practice only involves an in-row soil disturbance operation during strip tillage,



the planting operation, and a seed row/ furrow closing device. There is no full-

width soil disturbance performed from the time immediately following harvest or termination of one cash crop through harvest or termination of the next cash crop in the rotation regardless of the depth of the tillage operation.

Producers who are interested in making the change from Conventional Tillage to either No-till or Strip Till are eligible to apply through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and receive up to three years of an incentive payment up to the payment cap each year for

making the tillage change. For more information about this contact NRCS at 320 -269-2139 Ext 3.

Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning

(One Watershed One Plan)

Have you ever wondered where the water that falls on your property drains or where it ends up? We all live in a watershed, an area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the Minnesota River, and we have 3 significant watersheds that consume all the land in Chippewa County. These watersheds are the Chippewa River, Hawk Creek - Middle MN Tributaries, and the Upper Minnesota River Basin. Each area is a major watershed or an 8digit Hydrologic Unit Code Watershed. There are 84 HUC-8 watersheds in the state of Minnesota. Hydrologic Unit Code is a classification system in stream order or level that is like how a family tree would read.

Why is it important to focus on a watershed level? No matter where we live or work, we are in a watershed with unique, interrelated natural processes. Because watersheds are defined by natural hydrology, they represent the most logical basis for managing water resources. Watershed planning provides a

context for integration, by using practical, tangible management units that people understand, focusing and coordinating efforts, and finding common ground and meeting multiple needs. One Watershed, One Plan, or a Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan will align local water planning efforts and procedures on watershed boundaries to create a systematic, watershed-wide, and science-based approach to watershed management. These plans will build off existing local government structure, water plan services, and local capacity. They will incorporate and make use of data and information from past watershed restoration and protection strategies as well as any new or current modeling that may be available. The One Watershed, One Plan is set up to engage experts from agencies, citizens, and stakeholder groups that will help focus implementation on prioritized and targeted activities that will achieve measurable goals. This new planning method will serve as a substitute for existing comprehensive plans that are held at the county/SWCD level. It will also be the funnel for how funding will be distributed around the state for conservation programs and practices that improve and preserve water quality. Statewide transition is set to be completed by 2025.

Each county, watershed district, and Soil and Water Conservation District can be involved in a One Watershed, One Plan for each major watershed that falls within their jurisdiction. In Chippewa County, we had the potential to be involved in three separate planning processes. Due to the Upper Minnesota River Basin covering only roughly 10% of the county, we were able to adopt that area into the Chippewa River planning boundary, reducing our county to only two comprehensive watershed planning efforts, the Chippewa River Watershed and Hawk Creek-Middle Minnesota River Watershed (HCMM). In Chippewa County, we have completed the planning phase for the Hawk Creek – Middle



Minnesota Watershed with the Board of Water and Soil Resources approving the Plan in January of 2022. The HCMM name which was used during the planning phase has since taken on a new name to the **Central Minnesota River Watershed Partnership** and implementation will begin during the summer of 2022. Over \$900,000 has been awarded for the first grant cycle for this area. The Chippewa River One Watershed, One Plan planning phase has begun with the Chippewa River Watershed Association receiving the planning grant that will kick off a two-year planning process for developing goals and actions in priority areas for the implementation of programs and practices that will improve water quality within the watershed.

What does this mean for you in your watershed? It means there will be more emphasis on putting projects on the landscape where they matter the most, reducing sediment and nutrient loading within the watershed and getting the "best bang for the buck" while working towards clean water for future generations. The local, state, and federal funding that will be brought to the planning areas will be one of the most important funding streams for voluntary conservation programs and practices that will be implemented on the landscape.

Anyone who is interested in seeing the 10-year Plan for the Central Minnesota River Watershed is welcome to call Zach Bothun at 320-269-2695 or JoAnn Blomme at 320-269-6231 for more information.

Photo: Above is a map of Chippewa County with the 3 major watersheds. Chippewa River- green, Hawk Creek- purple, Upper Minnesota- tan/white.



Household Hazardous Waste Disposal

FREE

WHEN: Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.
WHERE: Kandiyohi County Regional HHW
1404 22nd Street SW
Willmar, MN 56201
320-231-3587

Clean Shop Program for Businesses or Ag Pesticide Disposal Program

NOTE: Businesses and Farmers with ag chemicals must call for an appointment at 320-231-3587.

Household hazardous wastes are banned from the landfill due to the pollution threat they pose

Sponsored by the Chippewa County Land & Resource
Management Department, Kandiyohi County Regional
Hazardous Waste Program and the MN Pollution Control
Agency.

Questions? Call 320-269-6231 or go to www.co.chippewa.mn.us.

Conservation Reserve Program in Chippewa County By Liz Ludwig, USDA-FSA

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) allows participants to enroll acreage in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat.

CRP participation is completely voluntary. Eligible landowners or operators enter into a contract with the federal government that typically ranges from 10 to 15 years in length. The CLEAR program allows for a 30-year contract. In return, contract holders receive annual rental payments, incentive payments, and cost share for establishment.

December 2021 ended with 1,122 active CRP contracts in Chippewa County, covering 9820 acres.

Nine hundred twenty producers were paid annual payments from these contracts totaling \$1,666,325.

The following table is a breakdown of the land in CRP cover.

Chippewa County Land in CRP				
CRP Practice Type	Acres			
Wetland Restoration with Buffers	4886			
Grass Filter Strips with Riparian Buffers	2691			
Rare and Declining Habitat	1627			
Grass Habitat	188			
Field Windbreak/Shelterbelt	334			
Living Snowfence/General Trees	44			
Pollinator and Wildlife Habitat	50			

If you have land that you feel may be best suited for conservation purposes, please contact our office to discover the eligibility requirements or visit <u>Conservation Resources for Farmers and Landowners | Farmers.gov</u>. We'll help you any way we can!

RURAL HOMEOWNERS AND LANDOWNERS

Take advantage of the 3% Low Interest Loans available for ANY Practice that Improves Water Quality!

Funds can be paired with some cost-shared practices.

For criteria and eligibility guidelines, please contact Chippewa County Land & Resource Management Office at 320-269-6231.

- CONSERVATION TILLAGE
- EROSION CONTROL
- WETLAND RESTORATION

- CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT
- FEEDLOT IMPROVEMENTS
- MANURE MANAGEMENT

- SEPTIC SYSTEMS
- WELL RELOCATION, SEALING OR DRILLING
- FIELD WINDBREAKS

For more information about the AgBMP Loan Program eligible practices visit **www.mda.state.mn.us/agbmploans**

Chippewa County Local Water Plan... Locally driven programs to protect your soil & water resources!



Heidi Rauenhorst Project Coordinator

Dean Dambroten Planner/Field Technician

Jordan Austin Water Quality/Outreach Technician



Kandiyohi, and Renville Counties.

The seventh year of a cover crop assistance program cost-share available producers through collaborative effort between HCWP and Water Renville County Soil and Conservation District (SWCD). Over 1,200 acres of cover crops were signed up through this program in 2021. The cover crop and reduced tillage cost-share programs will be offered again in 2022; contact the HCWP for more information if you would like to sign up. The annual field day to demonstrate the topics • discussed at the reduced tillage and cover crops meetings was postponed due to COVID-19 and instead the HCWP and the • Renville County SWCD sent out a soil health newsletter in early 2021 (find the newsletter, along with the latest Hawk Creek Headlines, on the HCWP website www.hawkcreekwatershed.org). HCWP, along with the Renville County SWCD, held a Profitability of Soil Health Meeting on February 9, 2022 with discussions on integrating cover crops and reduced tillage into a profitable farming operation. There was also a carbon program panel to answer questions on carbon program options. More information on soil health is available on the HCWP website www.hawkcreekwatershed.org.

harvest conditions were favorable for many MPCA producers, but dry conditions during the Monitoring Network sites located in the growing season had a significant impact Hawk Creek and Yellow Medicine River throughout the watershed. These dry Watersheds, and a second year of MPCA's conditions did allow for an array of BMPs Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG) to be completed that may not have been program. completed in a wet year, a problem that has include fifteen stream sites located Another year has come and gone hindered some BMP projects getting throughout the Hawk Creek Watershed and and the Hawk Creek Watershed Project completed the last two years. Since its seven lakes located in the headwaters of (HCWP) continues to improve water inception in 1999, HCWP has provided the Hawk Creek Watershed around the quality throughout the watershed. In 2021, financial assistance to landowners for Willmar area. HCWP continued to work on several grants BMPs and septic loans that have improved to implement best management practices water quality and reduced erosion. HCWP, (BMPs), water quality monitoring, and along with its tri-county watershed outreach in the Hawk Creek Watershed, partners, continues to promote soil and which includes portions of Chippewa, water stewardship and offer cost-share funds for installation of BMPs aimed at improving water quality. HCWP works with area landowners and federal, state, county, and local staff to install a variety of projects. HCWP cost-share funds went to several projects in 2021, including grassed waterways, water and sediment control structures. streambank and stabilizations, and cover crops. In addition to the projects listed above, HCWP also provides cost-share funds for many types of BMPs that improve water quality and reduce erosion, such as:

- alternative intakes
- lakeshore restorations
- wetland restorations
- ag waste/livestock exclusions
- terraces
- other qualifying projects just ask!

The **HCWP** continues collaborate with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), and Discovery Farms Minnesota on water quality monitoring projects. In 2021, the www.hawkcreekwatershed.org. HCWP continued sampling three MDA pesticide sites within the Hawk Creek, Yellow Medicine River, and Crow River Watersheds, a Discovery Farms intensive

This year, spring planting and fall monitoring site in McLeod County, six Watershed Pollutant Load These MPCA SWAG sites

> HCWP was as active as they could be with educational and outreach activities this year with COVID-19. The county fairs were open to the public again in 2021 and the HCWP had a booth at the Kandiyohi, and Renville Chippewa, County fairs. Local elementary school presentations were still postponed, as was the HCWP annual meeting in 2021. The HCWP held their 2022 Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 9, 2022. The HCWP strives to have multiple speakers with different backgrounds presented relevant topics to the watershed. Speakers at the meeting included Pete Boulay from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources State Climatology Office discussing weather, climate, and drought outlooks, Dr. Todd Peterson from the Sand County Foundation discussing production and ways it may be changing, and Heidi Rauenhorst discussing the past 25 years of the HCWP, along with an update on all the work being done in the watershed.

> If you would like additional information about BMP projects, how to get assistance to install any of the above listed practices, how to get involved, or to receive meeting notices and agendas of upcoming HCWP events, please contact the HCWP office at (320) 523-3666 or visit

Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program







A FREE & SAFE DISPOSAL **OPTION FOR** PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE

Wastewater treatment and individual treatment systems cannot remove most medications. Proper disposal of medication helps protect our environment.

Take it to THE BOX!

Locations:

Montevideo Police Department Chippewa Co. Sheriff's Department Clara City Police Department CCM Health

Rules:

- YES! Only deposit unneeded and/or expired prescriptions, over-the-counter medication for both humans and animals, and illegal drugs.
- Radioactive chemo drugs or IV bags, needles or syringes, garbage or trash.

Questions? Please call Chippewa County Land & Resource Management at 320-269-6231.

AVAILABLE FOR ALL CHIPPEWA COUNTY **RESIDENTS**

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) was the first of its kind in the nation. The program ensures farmers are protecting natural resources while giving them regulatory certainty. The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain approved farm management practices will be certified and in turn obtain regulatory certainty for a period of ten years.

Through this program, certified producers receive:

- Regulatory certainty: certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification
- Recognition: certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality
- Priority for technical assistance: producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality

Through this program, the public receives assurance that certified producers are using conservation practices to protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams.

More than 1,150 producers totaling over 800,000 acres have been certified across the state. Local conservation district staff help farmers identify and mitigate any risks their farm poses to water quality. Producers going through the certification process have priority access to financial assistance. After being certified, each farm is deemed in compliance with new water quality laws and regulations for 10 years.

There are also extra endorsements available to water quality certified producers for soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife. These endorsements celebrate farms and landowners who are going above and beyond to implement conservation efforts on their land.

According to a study by AgCentric, a program of Minnesota State, the average net income of ag water quality certified farms is 26% higher, or \$10,000 more per year, than non-certified farms. Other key financial metrics are also better, such as debt-to-asset ratios and operating expense ratios. The study also indicated increased yield for corn, soybeans, and alfalfa on certified land.



Chippewa County's most recent recipients of the Ag Water Certification Program are Travis and Jeanne Anderson of rural Montevideo. Pictured is Travis Anderson talking with Grant Pearson, Ag Water Quality certifying agent. Travis and Jeanne became certified in November and plan on continuing improvements to their row crop and beef operation.

All bareroot trees are 18-24" unless otherwise specified. Larger sized bareroot prices depend on nursery pricing and availability as well as quantity order. Contact staff for special orders. Special orders are sold by the bundle.

TREE & SHRUB ORDER FORM

Montevideo, MN 56265 629 N 11th St., Suite 7 Chippewa SWCD

Ash, Green

TREES

*Minimum charge of \$75 per planting

Address: Phone: TOTAL 320-269-2696 QT≺ \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$30.00 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$18.00 \$22.00 \$27.00 \$2.10 \$2.10 PRICE 4-5' 5-6' 6-8' 34 Maple, Autumn inden, Ameri-Aspen, Quak-Red Splendor Maple, Silver /aple, Sugar inden, Little Birch, Paper DECIDO Sottonwood

Srabapple,

Hackberry

eaf

Blaze

\$-\$-\$-TOTAL TOTAL C ΩT ΩT \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 PRICE PRICE Serviceberry, (Juneberry) Chokecherry, Common Cedar, Northern White ilac, Common Purple Cranberry, Highbush Cedar, Eastern Red Dogwood, Redosier Hazelnut, American Buffaloberry, Silver Spruce, Black Hills Spruce, Colorado Pine, Ponderosa Plum, American CONIFERS Willow, Flame Pine, Austrian SUBTOTAL SHRUBS Cotoneaster Nannyberry

\$ 상상 ᢢ TOTAL TOTAL 15-18" 1 gal./\$11 · 18-24" 2 gal./\$16 · 24-30" 2 gal./\$18 QTY ΩT SIZE \$.10 / pc. \$ 4.00 /ea. \$.25/tree \$.50 / ft. \$.60 / ft. 1 gallon/small bareroots \$ 1 / tree 2 gallon/large bareroots \$2 / tree Machine Planted bareroot POTTED TREES Cedar, Northern White Cedar, Eastern Red Spruce, Black Hills Fabric Uninstalled Spruce, Colorado Pine, Ponderosa Fabric Installed Pine, Austrian Hand Planting SUBTOTAL Tree Tubes OTHER Staples

\$0.06875 Sales Tax TOTAL

NOTES:

\$2.10

\$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10 \$2.10

Willow, Hybrid

Willow, Peach

SUBTOTAL

Walnut, Black

Jak, Swamp

White

Oak, White

Oak, Red

Oak, Bur

\$

Signature: Date: