

# ISANTI SWCD 2016 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS



The mission of the Isanti SWCD is to provide technical, financial and educational resources in order to implement practices and projects that preserve, protect and enhance water quality, soil, and other natural resources.

The Isanti Conservation District is a legal Subdivision of State Government organized under provisions of Minnesota Statute 103C. The District is governed by a Board of Supervisors composed of five members nominated by the voters of Isanti County, and who are responsible for directing all District activities. The board meets monthly on the third Tuesday of the month.

# SWCD Supervisors and Staff

## District Supervisors

Wayne Calander-Chairman  
 Roger Larsen-Vice Chairmen  
 Barb Kilpatrick-Secretary  
 Al Koczur-Treasurer  
 Clark Anderson

## Area of Representation

District 5: North Branch, Isanti Twp  
 District 1: Maple Ridge, Stanchfield, Springvale, Dalbo Twp.  
 District 2: Bradford, Athens, Oxford Twp.  
 District 4: Cambridge Twp.  
 District 3: Spencer Brook, Wyanett, Stanford Twp.



Pictured left to right: Roger Larsen, Al Koczur, Barbara Kilpatrick, Wayne Calander, Clark Anderson.

## SWCD Staff

Tiffany Determan, District Manager  
[Tiffany.determan@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:Tiffany.determan@mn.nacdnet.net)

Todd Kulaf, District Technician  
[Todd.kulaf@mn.nacdnet.net](mailto:Todd.kulaf@mn.nacdnet.net)

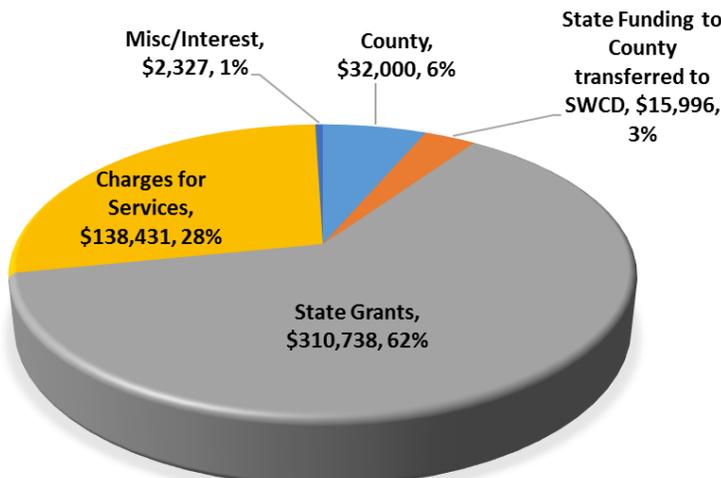


## Conservation Partner: Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Josh Bork, District Conservationist  
 Nichole Sternquist, Area 3 Agricultural Engineer



## 2016 Financial Summary



## Isanti SWCD Revenue Summary

**Total Revenue in 2016: \$499,492**

The Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District finances its day-to-day operations through a variety of revenue sources. Although governed by an elected board of officials, Conservation Districts do not have levy authority and must secure funds from many sources to maintain programs and services.

## Programs & Technical Assistance

There are fees associated with some of the services we offer. Please contact our office for more information.

### Water Monitoring

Lake and stream monitoring provides the data necessary to manage the health of Isanti County's lakes, rivers and streams for recreation, wild-life, and consumption (groundwater) . Upon request, the SWCD contracts with lake groups and other organizations to provide water quality monitoring services, including monitoring plan development and water monitoring.

- Blue Lake:
  - 1) 2 lake water quality monitoring sites
  - 2) 4 tributary water quality monitoring sites
    - A) continuous stream level gauges at all tributary sites
    - B) Stream flow measured during sample events.
  - 3) Lake and tributary health report completed.
- Green Lake:
  - 1) 1 lake water quality monitoring sites
  - 2) 2 tributary water quality monitoring sites
    - A) Stream flow measured during sample events.
  - 3) Lake and tributary health report completed.
- Groundwater:
  - 1) 11 groundwater observation wells
- Precipitation:
  - 1) 7 manual precipitation gauges (volunteer program)



### Aquatic Invasive Species

Mapping for local treatment permits: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires mapping before issuing permits to treat curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil. The SWCD offers mapping services to lake groups in order to expedite permit issuance and ensure treatment occurs as early as possible. In 2016 the SWCD completed mapping of AIS for Blue and Spectacle Lakes.

County Assistance: The county implements the states Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Planning at the local level. The SWCD assists the county with implementation of the plan, specifically with Early Detection monitoring and education. In 2016 the SWCD inventoried 12 recreational lakes for new AIS infestations, provided AIS education at the 6th grade Environmental Education Day and contracted with CLIMB Theater to provide education to 360 5th graders at Isanti and Cambridge Intermediate Schools.

### Buffer Law Compliance Assistance

With the passage of the buffer law came a suite of responsibilities for SWCDs including tracking of compliance and providing technical assistance to landowners. In 2016 the SWCD completed the initial inventory which showed that the vast majority of public ditches and waters already have the 16.5-50 foot required buffers.

*"The CLIMB AIS program was engaging! Great information for kids in this area as many boat and fish. We welcome CLIMB Theater back!" ~Teacher, Isanti Intermediate*

# Programs & Technical Assistance

## County Water Management Plan

The Isanti County Water Plan was adopted as the SWCDs annual plan of work and the SWCD is one of the key agencies responsible for implementing activities outlined in it. In order for the SWCD to be eligible for grants the activities included in grant applications must be identified in the water plan.

The Isanti SWCD serves on the county water plan task force which advises water quality efforts county-wide. In 2015 the SWCD began assisting the county with updating the plan, updates are required every 10 years. Priorities included in the Water Plan update include: 1) Groundwater, 2) AIS, 3) Land Use and 4) Surface Water. The updated plan is scheduled for completion in 2018.

## Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

The Isanti SWCD serves as a wetland technical representative for Isanti County. In 2016 330 hours were spent fulfilling SWCD duties associated with WCA as follows:

- 1) 6 Technical Evaluation Panels
- 2) 31 site visits
- 3) 5 restoration orders
- 4) 3 certificates of satisfactory completion
- 5) 14 level one delineations
- 6) 51 Maps Developed



## Site Planning

As part of the County's Zoning Ordinance, when residents apply for a variance that may impact water health in the shoreland area they must develop a stormwater management plan with guidance from the SWCD. In 2016 the SWCD provided assistance to 5 variance applicants.

## Products

### District Tree Program

The tree sale is an important annual program that supports small backyard habitat projects as well as large forestry restoration projects. The sale originated in order to provide landowners with an affordable and convenient way to purchase trees and shrubs for conservation practices such as windbreaks, shelterbelts, living snow fences, scenic buffers, wildlife habitat, and more. In 2016 just over 27,500 trees were sold.



### District No-Till Seeding Program

The Isanti SWCD owns a seed drill suitable for planting native grasses and wildflowers. This drill is rented to landowners for habitat projects. In 2016 the drill was used to plant 90 acres of pasture/hay and 24 acres of native prairie.



## Studies and Plans

### Stormwater Retrofit Assessments (SRA)

The SWCD completes these assessments which map and model using advanced computer applications to calculate how much stormwater turns into runoff and makes it untreated into our lakes and streams. Ideal project locations are then identified to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. SWCD has completed SRAs for: Rum River discharge points in the City of Cambridge and Isanti, Fannie and Skogmann Lakes, Green Lake direct watershed, and most recently the Blue Lake watershed.

The SRA completed for the Blue Lake Watershed was done via a partnership with Sherburne SWCD and the Lake Improvement District. The Blue Lake SRA identifies 12 high priority urban/residential projects and 97 rural/agricultural projects. The outputs of these studies are used to target the use of grant funds.



### Rum River Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS)

The Rum WRAPS is a management plan for the Rum River and all the lakes and streams in its watershed. The plan is being developed by a conglomeration of partners from the 10 counties covered by the watershed including Isanti SWCD. The plan includes strategies for restoring unhealthy waters that do not meet state water quality standards as well as protecting waters that are currently healthy. The Rum WRAPS will be complete early 2017. In 2016 the SWCD provided assistance by commenting on draft documents, identifying key projects and locations to clean lakes and streams and providing out-reach regarding project results.



## Projects

### WMA Buckthorn Clean Sweep

The purpose of this project was to eradicate light infestations of buckthorn on state wildlife management areas, preventing dense infestations from occurring. In 2016 the SWCD, working with a local contractor, completed 73.5 acres of buckthorn removal to improve wildlife habitat at public hunting areas. Treatment areas included 39.5 acres at Marget WMA in Bradford and Stanford Townships and 34 acres at Crooked Road WMA in Spencer Brook Township.



## Projects

### Green Lake Rehabilitation

In 2014 the Isanti SWCD, in partnership with the Green Lake Improvement District, received a Clean Water Fund Grant to install stormwater treatment and lakeshore restorations at locations of concentrated overland flow into Green Lake. This project was initiated after the completion of a SRA for the direct watershed. The grant covered 75% of the costs to install nine lakeshore restorations and one rain garden which will reduce phosphorus and sediment discharge to Green Lake by 14 and 18,069 pounds/yr respectively. Landowners and Green Lake Improvement District contributed to the 25% grant match. The majority of the project construction occurred in the fall of 2016; aquatic and woody plants will be installed in the spring of 2017.



### City of Isanti Railroad Ave. Stormwater Pond

In 2013 the SWCD, in partnership with the City of Isanti, received a Clean Water Fund grant to install a stormwater outfall pond which would ultimately reduce discharges from a 55 acre drainage area by 31% for phosphorus and 40% for suspended solids. The project was identified as a priority in a SRA covering portions of the City of Isanti which drain to the Rum River. The City contributed a 25% grant match by using funds from their stormwater utility fee. The stormwater pond construction was completed in the spring of 2016.



### Long Lake Rehabilitation and Stormwater Treatment

In 2016 the SWCD partnered with the Long Lake Improvement District (LLID) and Lake Association (LLIA) to apply for a Clean Water Fund grant that would expand upon a seven year-old program that promoted and funded near-shore water quality projects. Prior to partnering with the SWCD, demand for such projects exceeded locally available funding. The SWCD used the grant to provide a sub-grant to the LLIA for project installations. The LLID contributed to the project by providing a cash match and managing project installations. Project participants and volunteers contributed an in-kind match. A total of seven projects were installed in 2016 which reduced phosphorus and sediment to the lake by 2.7 and 3,034 pounds/yr respectively.

### 2016 Project Summary At-a-Glance

Project Type	Number	Square Feet	Phosphorus Reduction	Sediment Reduction
Shoreline Restoration	16	27,913 (1,841 linear ft)	17	18,343
Rain Garden	1	485	.003	2,760
Stormwater Pond	1	8,000	12.2	6,218
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36,398</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>27,321</b>

# 2016 News and Updates

## Increased Operational Funding

During the 2015 session, legislation was passed to provide MN SWCDs \$100,000 base grants for fiscal year 2016 and 2017. The first two years of funding were allocated from the Clean Water Fund. Funding for future years is expected to shift to the general fund. The purpose of the base grant is to provide a reliable source of funding to SWCDs as well as to increase organizational capacity.



In 2016 the SWCD board applied the funds to 1) increase district promotional efforts, 2) purchase water monitoring equipment to help focus conservation efforts, 3) build capacity of staff by attendance at trainings, 4) contract with Anoka Conservation District for technical services and 5) to hire a full-time District Manger.



The investment in a full-time Manager provided an immediate return. Over the last year the SWCD has enhanced its relationship with county zoning staff and commissioners, expanded connections with lake groups, initiated outreach with townships, and secured state funding for work that will benefit the Rum River's water quality. Work is underway that simply would not have been possible without the state's investment in local capacity. Isanti County's natural resources, and the people who rely on them, are in a better place thanks to this funding.



## Outstanding Conservationists

Each year the state association of SWCDs and local SWCDs recognize individuals and organizations for outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. The SWCD selected the Long Lake Improvement District (LLID) and Long Lake improvement Association (LLIA) as the 2016 Isanti County Outstanding Conservationists.

In 2008 the group's leadership recognized that social norms of landscaping were impacting lake health. As a result, they initiated a water quality improvement grant program to change the social norms. The program is an ideal forum for grassroots change.

The groups work together, with a local contractor, and have thus far designed and installed 24 lakeshore and stormwater reduction projects by providing incentive funds for installation of near shore lakeshore restorations, vegetated swales and raingardens. When LID funding ran short, they took the initiative to partner with the SWCD to apply for a Clean Water Fund Community Partners Grant. The group was able to use all of the restoration money in one year; as such they requested the submission of a second grant which they will use to install projects which are already on their waiting list. The goal for the lake groups is to increase lake stewardship and to bring back LLID member support to re-initiate funding of the program locally.



LLID & LLIA Presidents Jerry & Judy Schaubach in front of their lakeshore buffer

*"We're proud of the Long Lake Improvement Association and Long Lake Improvement District for what they've done in conserving the natural resources in Isanti County," said Wayne Calander, board chair of the Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District. "It's great to be able to recognize the work they've done locally," Calander said.*

# ISANTI SWCD

110 Buchanan Street N, Cambridge, MN 55008

763-689-3271



**So what's next?**

**2017 is going to be an exciting year for the SWCD!**

**Stay tuned to find out more about the following planned projects:**

- ⇒ **Water Monitoring at 20+ locations**
- ⇒ **Rum River Re-meander Project**
- ⇒ **Long Lake Rehabilitation and Stormwater Treatment 2.0**
- ⇒ **Green Lake North Brook and Wyanett Creek SRA**
- ⇒ **Campus Groundwater Conservation Planning**
- ⇒ **Blue Lake Restoration Planning**
- ⇒ **Spectacle Lake SRA**