



Quarterly News & Updates

December 2021 | Issue 6

Happy Holidays Friends and Neighbors!

The Isanti SWCD is publishing this Quarterly e-Newsletter to:

- Help keep you informed of what is happening locally that affects the health of natural resources in Isanti County;
- Increase your understanding of what the SWCD does and how you can get involved in conservation; and
- Keep you informed on how Clean Water Fund tax amendment dollars are being spent locally.

If you have any questions, please give us a call!

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Follow us on Facebook for more updates!



Congrats to the Wyanett Town Board for being this year's Outstanding Conservationist!



Congratulations to the Wyanett Town Board for receiving the 2021 Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District's Outstanding Conservationist Award! Each year the Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District recognizes an individual or organization for their outstanding accomplishments in implementing conservation practices and improving Minnesota's natural resources. This year the Isanti SWCD board of supervisors voted unanimously to award the Wyanett Town Board as our Outstanding Conservationists.

The Town Board became a partner of the SWCD following the completion of Stormwater Retrofit Studies on Spectacle and Green Lakes. The Retrofit studies identify cost-effective locations to treat stormwater before it enters the lakes. Upon learning that several of the top-ranked projects were located on township property, the Board has taken action to make several of the projects a reality.

Here's what the Town Board has done to date:

- Provide \$6,000 of funding to match the Spectacle Lake Public Swimming Beach Raingardens. This was an \$18,400 project primarily funded by the Clean Water Land and Legacy Act.
- Willingly gave up three parking spaces of an already limited parking area at the popular beach and agreed to maintain the project. Maintenance is one of the most critical aspects of a project's success.
- Met with the SWCD countless times to investigate opportunities to collaborate on other conservation projects around Spectacle and Green Lakes. We know these efforts will result in more projects on the ground.

The Wyanett Town Board is a leader in their willingness to partner on projects that will improve the health of our resources. The Isanti SWCD is proud to name the Wyanett Town Board as the 2021 outstanding conservationists!

All About The Rum River

The Clean Water Fund continues to support clean water in the Rum River Watershed with the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan



Over the last three years, 18 local government units with support from State agencies and the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe have been working on a comprehensive plan for the area draining into the Rum River. We are excited to announce that the document is ready for your review (see the December 16th workshop below)!

What's in the plan? The plan prioritizes natural resource management issues to be addressed and funded over the next ten years. While there are several priority issues identified, surface water restoration and protection are the most important. Outreach and engagement is also a key element for successful implementation.

\$260,000 from the States Clean Water Land and Legacy Amendment supported the



plan's development. In addition, nearly \$1.4 million has been dedicated to achieving the plan's priorities for the first two years. The funding to support plan implementation will likely continue until the amendment expires in 2034.

It takes time to clean water up; if you care about MN's recreational and drinking water, you'll want to continue to support the three-fifths of 1% tax in Minnesota. It's a small price to pay!

Improving the Rum River Online Workshop



When: Thursday, December 16th

Time: 6:30-7:30pm

Where: Online.

Zoom Link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82192844863?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82192844863?pwd=RHZxZmJ1THdOVzJSMW9hRTFHhXordz09)

[pwd=RHZxZmJ1THdOVzJSMW9hRTFHhXordz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82192844863?pwd=RHZxZmJ1THdOVzJSMW9hRTFHhXordz09)

Meeting ID: 821 9284 4863

Your input is wanted! Join us on December 16th to learn about the Rum River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan, the natural resource issues it addresses, and how you can provide input on the plan. At this workshop, you will:

- Learn about the new watershed plan, the issues addressed, and the priorities identified for the next ten years.
- Get the opportunity to have your questions about the plan answered by those who drafted it.
- Be able to voice your opinions and submit written comments on the plan.

You can view the draft watershed plan at www.millelacsswcd.org. We welcome anyone to complete the comment form about the plan on the website even if they cannot attend the workshop. However, those that complete the form after the workshop will likely feel best equipped to provide input. If you have questions, call us! The Zoom link can also be found at <https://www.millelacsswcd.org/rum-river-one-watershed-one-plan/>.

Protecting the Rum with the Rum River Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Program



A \$3 million legislative allocation of Clean Water Funds financed the Rum River ReInvest in Minnesota (RIM) program. The RIM program permanently protects land along the Rum River by establishing conservation easements. Currently, 2,000 acres along the river have been permanently protected. In addition, the Clean Water Fund is providing \$2 million to continue our success in preserving the Rum River!



The program's primary goal is to maintain the Rum River's health for downstream drinking water. Landowners that make their property a conservation easement receive a payment to stop cropping and grazing the land. In turn, the landowners establish conservation practices such as native grass, trees, or wetland restorations. Easements are selected based on the length of shoreline, the quality of existing natural habitat, and whether it adjoins existing protected land.

The SWCD is currently working on three easements that cover over 6,000 feet along the Rum River. We have recently approved three more easements. We are fortunate to have this program available as it provides excellent benefits to landowners and the wildlife of our county!

New Opportunity for Producers: Ecosystem Services Market Consortium



There is a new financial opportunity for producers in Isanti County! The Ecosystem Market Consortium pays producers to adopt new conservation and soil health practices. These practices include cover crops, filter strips, reduced till, and more!

The goal of the ESMC is to create ecosystem service markets that incentivize producers to improve soil health, benefiting both the farmer and society. By adopting new practices, farmers would create “credits” that would be sold on a global market. This program is unique due to its focus not just on carbon but also on water quality, habitat preservation, and biodiversity production. Therefore, by adopting one new soil health practice, a producer could be paid for multiple types of credits.

ESMC presents a triple-win: farmers gain access to technical assistance and additional revenue streams while enhancing the resilience of their operations; corporate credit buyers can meet their sustainability goals; and the public benefits from cleaner air and water and climate change mitigation. Now is a great time to enroll in ESMC because funding is limited and the required commitment is capped at two years for a limited time. If you are interested in the program, try it out!

Farmers enrolled in other cost-share programs do qualify. To see a complete list of qualification requirements and to learn more, visit <https://www.acresforwater.com/esmc>. If you would like to get started, call our Matthew Remer at 763-689-3271.

Funding Available: Lakeshore Restoration and Near Shore Projects to Improve Spectacle Lake

The Isanti SWCD is excited to announce that Spectacle Lake has been identified as a strategic location for shoreline restorations or other projects to protect water quality!

In 2019, Isanti SWCD, in partnership with the Spectacle Lake Association, secured funding to improve and protect Spectacle Lake. Since then, several Spectacle lake homeowners have taken advantage of this opportunity to install projects that protect water quality. With this opportunity, 75% of the project cost will be covered by the available funding.



More good news! There is still funding remaining!

Please contact Todd Kulaf at 763-689-3271 if you are interested in this opportunity in playing a role in protecting the health of Spectacle Lake, the "Gem of Isanti County".



The Isanti SWCD Tree Sale is Now Open

Place your order now for trees! Pick up will be on April 30th.

Trees have many benefits such as improving air quality, saving energy, creating beauty and they can even reduce stress levels in people!

Ordering online is the best way to ensure you get the trees you want- to do so visit our website.

Funding and Technical Assistance Available for Farmers, Ranchers and Forest Landowners

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners interested in managing the unique natural resources on their farms should consider a conservation plan. A conservation plan can help you understand resource concerns on your property and offer sustainable alternatives to help meet your goals. In addition, a conservation plan will make it easier to identify how and when you could qualify for technical or financial assistance through programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is the primary financial support program available to farmers and landowners for cropland, pasture, and woodland conservation work.

Additionally, the Isanti SWCD has money available for the Green Lake watershed to implement various plans to mitigate resource concerns. Some practices included in the grant are wetland restorations, water and sediment control basins, filter strips, cover crops, grassed waterways, conservation tillage, and nutrient management.

If you are interested in starting the path toward improved natural resources, please call 763-689-3271.



Oxford Lakes Highlighted by Lower St Croix Watershed Partnership

Oxford Township is home to seven natural environment lakes that are a part of the Lower St Croix Watershed. These lakes are unique in that they are shallow and small. They also have little development and are very healthy! The lakes provide a habitat for diverse aquatic plants and animals such as otters and waterfowl.

Recently, the Lower St. Croix Watershed has produced a video to highlight the beauty of Isanti County's Oxford Lakes. Watch out for a new video featuring drone footage coming soon!



<https://youtu.be/GxcKVkgOW90>

This video was created as part of a virtual tour of the Lower St. Croix Watershed. The remainder of the tour can be found on the [Lower St. Croix Watershed website](#).

Meet A Staff Member- Todd Kulaf

Why did you want to work for Isanti SWCD?

Growing up I very much enjoyed the outdoors. As I got older, I began to really respect natural resources. I knew working for a Minnesota SWCD would allow me to protect the environment and make a positive impact on the things I love so much.

How long have you been working for Isanti SWCD?

7 years!

What are your interests and hobbies?

I am a big sports fan. I grew up a Sconi boy, so I love the Green Bay Packers, GO Pack GO. I really enjoy outdoor activities like fishing, hiking, water skiing, and anything else involving water. Every spring I tap maple trees to make maple syrup. In 2021 I boiled down almost 1 ton of sap!

What does your family look like?

I met my wife in college and we have two boys, Bennett 2.5, and Briggs 11 months. We also have Marv, our 3 years old Golden retriever, and a cat named



Brian.

Do you have a bucket list? What's on it?

I like to travel. A few places I want to visit are Nashville, the Red Wood Forest, and Switzerland. Long-term, after retirement, building a home on a lake, relaxing, and enjoying Friday night fish fry at the local supper club is a top priority!

Todd is one of the Isanti SWCD's Conservation Technicians



Register your Feedlots with the MPCA

Feedlots in Minnesota are required to register with the State once during a four-year period. The current four-year period runs from January 2, 2018, through January 1, 2022. If you have a feedlot and haven't updated your information during this 4 year period, register it now! There is now an [online feedlot registration platform](#).

For questions call Will Martens at 651-757-2104.

Ice is Never 100% Safe!

Minimum Ice Thickness Guidelines for New Clear Ice Only



Ice Safety Tips

- Double the thickness guidelines for white or snow-covered ice.
- Carry two large nails to use as ice picks if you fall through.
- Avoid pressure ridges and areas with current.
- Warn children about the dangers of thin ice.
- Don't drive on the ice at night.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages.

mndnr.gov/icesafety

mn DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES

Contact Details

Call Us

763-689-3271

Office

110 Buchanan Street North Cambridge, MN 55008

Email Us

Send Email

Website: www.isantiswcd.org



Visit our website