

ISANTI SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Contact Information

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Introduction

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.

Mission Statement

“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.”

District Supervisors

Wayne Calander-Chairman
Roger Larsen-Public Relations
Barb Kilpatrick-Secretary
Al Koczur-Treasurer
Ryan Carpenter-Vice Chairman

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.

Office Personnel

Annette Swanson, Administrative Assistant
annette.swanson@mn.nacdnet.net

Jamie Schurbon, District Manager
jamie.schurbon@anokaswcd.org

Cooperating Agencies

Board of Water & Soil Resources

Jason Weinerman, Board Conservationist

Isanti County Zoning

Trina Bergloff, Zoning Administrator
Holly Nelson, Wetland Specialist/Water Plan Coordinator

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Josh Bork, District Conservationist

Jason Rehn, Soil Conservation Technician

Pheasants Forever, Isanti County Chapter

MN Deer Hunters Association, Isanti County Chapter

Isanti County Farm Service Agency

LeRoy Sandven, Executive Director

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Tim Marion, Area Wildlife Manager

2014 Activity Summary

Staffing - The Isanti SWCD contracted a staff person from the Anoka Conservation District to serve as manager on a part time basis. That manager, Jamie Schurbon, worked an average of 2 days per week. Annette Swanson was employed as the full time Administrative Assistant. As a result of limited staffing, work focused on only the highest priority projects and correcting past administrative deficiencies. The SWCD grew its project installation capacity in 2014 and anticipates continuing in this direction in 2015.

Priorities – Historically, the Isanti SWCD has primarily provided habitat planting services. In 2013-14 the SWCD has maintained its ability to advise and coordinate habitat projects, and started a new trial habitat incentive program with the local Pheasants Forever Chapter, but outsourced all of the planting. This has freed the district to pursue other priorities including surface water quality and groundwater sustainability.

Finances – Historically, habitat planting had been a large revenue source for Isanti SWCD. In 2014 the district continued to develop new revenue sources. Notable funding sources now include:

- County – Isanti County funded the Isanti SWCD's work on the County Geologic Atlas Project.
- Pheasants Forever – The local PF Chapter funded the SWCD to manage their habitat planting incentive program.
- MN Deer Hunters Assoc – The local chapter provided matching dollars to a buckthorn control grant application.
- Isanti County Sportsman Club – The club provided matching dollars to a buckthorn control grant application.
- Lake Groups – The Blue and Green Lake Improvement Districts plan to fund SWCD monitoring of water quality, invasive plants, and subwatershed studies in 2015.
- Metro Conservation Districts - The SWCD is now participating in the Metro Conservation Districts technical service area joint powers organization. Certain Clean Water Legacy dollars are distributed through this group and the Isanti SWCD will receive approximately \$22,000 in 2015-16 for subwatershed studies.
- Clean Water Fund – The Isanti SWCD successfully applied for a BWSR Clean Water Fund to install a new stormwater pond in partnership with the City of Isanti.
- The SWCD applied for about four grants, primarily for water quality improvements, in 2013.
- Seeder Rental – The SWCD owns a seed drill which is rented.

Services Provided

District Tree Program

The Isanti SWCD offers for sale tree and shrub species native to Minnesota for conservation practices. The scale of planting ranges from small backyard habitat projects to large forestry restoration projects. The District sold over 30,000 trees in 2014.

Cost-Share Program

The District receives funds from the State Cost Share Program to encourage conservation practice installation. In 2014 these funds were used for project technical assistance.

District No-Till Seeding Program

The Isanti SWCD owns a native grass seed drill. This drill is rented to landowners for habitat projects.

Pheasants Forever Cost Share Program

The Isanti County Chapter of Pheasants Forever offers cost sharing grants to landowners for habitat enhancement and maintenance. Isanti SWCD serves as the point of contact and administrator of these grants. We advise landowners, scrutinize project applications, plan installation and manage maintenance.

WMA Prescribed Burning

The Isanti SWCD, with matching funding from Pheasants Forever, secured DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grant to perform prescribed burning on 500 acres of State Wildlife Management Areas. 200.5 acres were burned in 2014 and another 299.5 are planned for 2015.



Groundwater and Precipitation Monitoring Program

Five DNR groundwater wells are monitored to track hydrological changes.

The SWCD has 8 volunteer precipitation recorders throughout Isanti County. Working with the State Climatology office, the data collected provides citizens and the State of Minnesota with important precipitation information and weather history.

County Geologic Atlas

In 2014 the Isanti SWCD joined with the county and municipalities to initiate a county geologic atlas project, and served as the project lead. Groundwater sustainability is a topic of high concern regionally, and Isanti County is one of the last in our region to start an atlas which will provide a wealth of information about geology and groundwater hydrology. This information will be used in groundwater planning, well locating, permitting, etc. In 2014 Isanti SWCD mapped nearly 5,000 groundwater wells which the MN DNR and MN Geological Survey will use to complete the atlas in the next 4 years.

Subwatershed Assessments

Through Clean Water Legacy Funding via the Metro Conservation Districts the Isanti SWCD has begun conducting subwatershed assessments, also known as stormwater retrofit assessments.

The purpose of these studies is to identify opportunities to better treat stormwater before discharge into priority waterbodies. In 2014 we completed a study for the area immediately draining to Green Lake. A BWSR Clean Water Fund grant application was submitted to install some of the projects identified in that study. Another study for the Skogman-Fannie-Elms-Florence chain of lakes was completed by the Anoka Conservation District for the Isanti SWCD.



Water Quality Project Coordination

In partnership with municipalities, other agencies and landowners we coordinate projects that benefit lake, stream and river water quality. In 2014 we secured a grant for a new stormwater pond in the City of Isanti and assisted a landowner with stabilization of a ravine into the Rum River.

Wetland Conservation Act

The Isanti SWCD staff serve on Isanti County's Wetland Conservation Act Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). We also advise landowners with respect to the law.

County Water Planning

Isanti County serves as the county water planner. The Isanti SWCD serves on the County Water Planning task force which advises water quality efforts county-wide.

The Isanti SWCD was a partner in the Sunrise River Watershed Restoration and Protection project (WRAP) in 2014, which is coordinated by the Chisago SWCD.

To learn more about Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment visit www.legacy.leg.mn