

# ISANTI SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## 2018 ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

**Our Mission 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 elected 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

### Supervisors

**Roger Larsen**, Chair. Maple Ridge, Stanchfield, Springvale, Dalbo Township

**Jerry Schaubach**, Vice-chair. Bradford, Athens, Oxford Township

**Clark Anderson**. Spencer Brook, Wyanett, Stanford Township

**Al Koczur**, Treasurer. Cambridge Twp.

**Greg Swanson**, Secretary. North Branch, Isanti Township

### Staff

**Tiffany Determan**, District Manager

tdeterman@isantiswcd.org

**Todd Kulaf**, District Technician

tkulaf@isantiswcd.org

**Thomas Zimmermann**, District Technician

tzimmermann@isantiswcd.org

**Anne Leroy**, Shared Administrative Assistant.

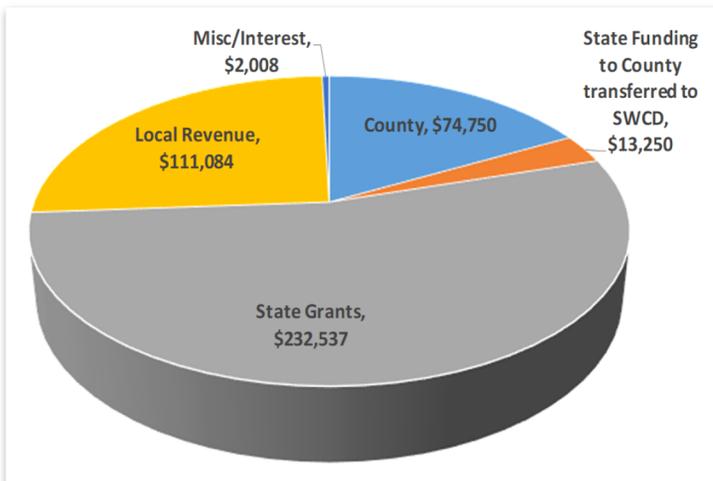
aleroy@isantiswcd.org



## 2018 Financial Summary

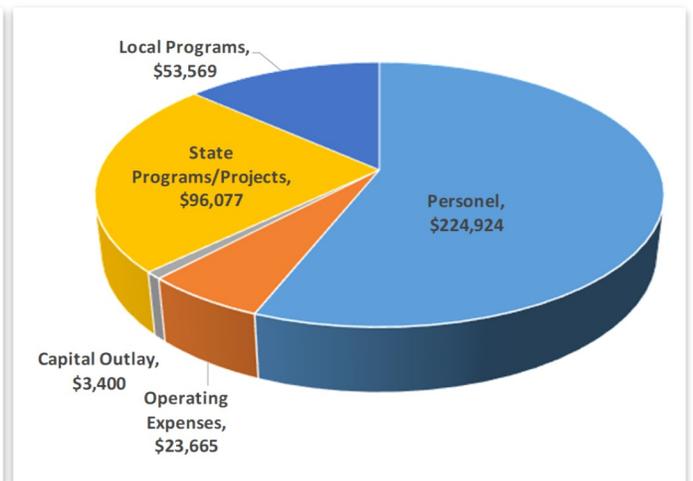
### Isanti SWCD Revenue Summary

**Total Revenue in 2018: \$433,630.00**



### Isanti SWCD Expense Summary

**Total Expenses in 2018: \$401,635**



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.

## Local Programs & Technical Assistance

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

### Water Monitoring

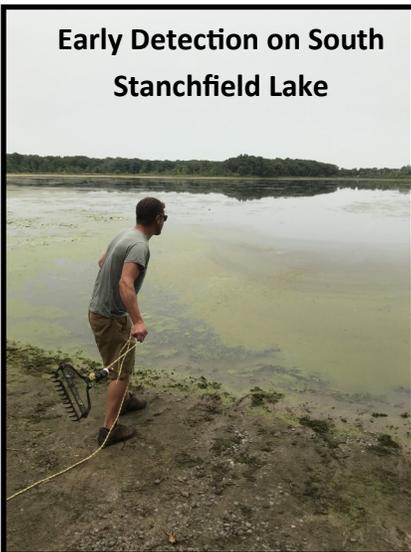
Lake and stream monitoring provides the data necessary to manage the health of Isanti County's lakes, rivers and streams for recreation, wildlife, and consumption (groundwater). Upon request, the SWCD contracts with lake groups and other organizations to provide water quality monitoring services, including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

- Blue Lake: 2 lake sites (sampled by volunteers), 5 tributary sites (sampled by SWCD).
- Green Lake: 1 lake site (sampled by volunteers), 4 tributary sites (sampled by SWCD).
- Lake Francis: 1 tributary site (sampled by SWCD).
- Long Lake: 1 lake site (sampled by volunteers), 3 tributary sites (sampled by volunteers)
- Oxford Township Lakes: 7 lakes (sampled by SWCD).
- Groundwater:
  - 1) 11 groundwater observation wells (monitored by SWCD)
- Precipitation:
  - 1) 7 manual precipitation gauges (volunteer program)



Lake Francis Inlet monitoring.

### Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)



Early Detection on South Stanchfield Lake

Mapping for local treatment permits: The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) requires mapping before issuing permits to treat AIS such as curly-leaf pondweed and Eurasian watermilfoil. The SWCD offers mapping services to lake groups in order to expedite permit issuance, ensure treatment occurs as early as possible and to authenticate the necessity of treatment. In 2018 the SWCD completed mapping of AIS for Blue, Spectacle and Francis Lakes.

County Assistance: The County implements the States Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Planning at the local level. The SWCD assists the county with early detection monitoring and education. In 2018 the SWCD 1) inventoried 12 recreational lakes for new AIS infestations; 2) provided AIS education at the 6th grade Environmental Education Day; 3) contracted with CLIMB Theater to provide education to 255 5th graders at Cambridge Intermediate School and the Arts and Science Academy; and 4) developed a Response Plan and contingency fund to address treatment of new infestations of AIS.

### Rural and Urban Outreach and Education

Through education, people develop the skills necessary to understand complex natural resource problems and, more importantly, what they can do to protect natural resources for future generations. The SWCD incorporates education and outreach in all of its programs through a variety of efforts such as presentations, one-on-one conversations, workshops and field days.

2018 education programs: Green Lake Shoreline Maintenance Class (12 attended); City of Isanti Raingarden Workshop (17 attended); and MN Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program informational workshop (7 attended). In addition to the programs listed here, the SWCD attended many lake, township, and watershed group meetings to provide information about natural resource protection.



Shoreline Maintenance Workshop on Green Lake.

## Local Programs & Technical Assistance- Continued

### Wetland Conservation Act (WCA)

The Isanti SWCD serves as a wetland technical representative for Isanti County. In 2018 221 hours were spent fulfilling SWCD duties associated with WCA as follows:

- 1) 10 Technical Evaluation Panels
- 2) 20+ site visits
- 3) 1 restoration order & certificate of satisfactory completion
- 4) 6 Level One delineations
- 5) 25+ Maps Developed



### Stormwater Reduction Site Planning

As part of the County's Zoning Ordinance, when residents apply for a variance or building permit that may impact water health in the shoreland area they must develop a stormwater management plan with guidance from the SWCD. In 2018 the SWCD provided assistance to four variance/building permit applicants.



### 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.

### Buffer Law Compliance Assistance

Minnesota's Buffer Law was signed into law by Governor Dayton in June 2015. The law requires 50-foot average width buffers on public waters and 16.5 foot buffers on public drainage systems. The SWCD's role in the law is to provide technical assistance to ensure that landowners are meeting the requirement in an effort to ensure that enforcement options are not needed (Isanti County enforces the law). In 2018 the SWCD worked with landowners along public drainage ditches and public waters to ensure 100% compliance within the county!

### District No-till Seeding Program

The SWCD owns a seed drill suitable for planting native grasses and wildflowers. This drill is rented to landowners for habitat projects. In 2018 the drill was used to plant 100 acres of pasture/hay, 36 acres of native prairie. And 36 acres of cover crops.

## Studies and Plans

### Stormwater Retrofit Assessments (SRA)

The SWCD completes these assessments to map and model how much rainwater runoff makes it into our lakes and streams untreated. This modeling uses advanced computer applications to calculate the amount of rainwater that becomes runoff. The outputs of these studies are used to target the use of grant funds. 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 Skogman Lakes, Green Lake direct watershed, Blue Lake Watershed, and North Brook and Wyannett Brook (Green Lake Tributaries).

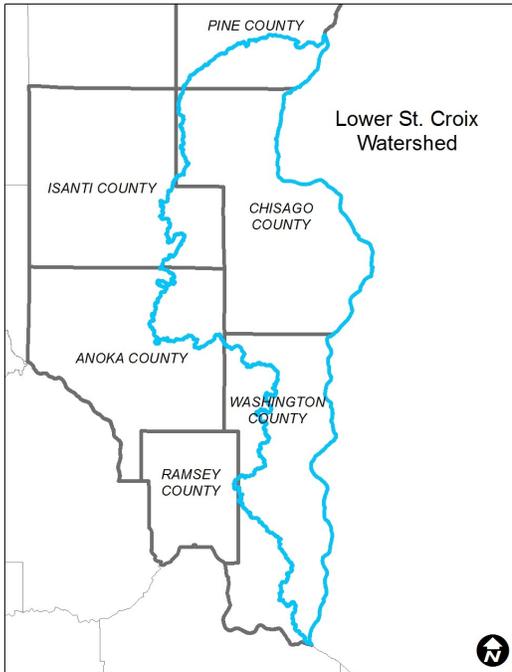
In 2018 the SWCD completed a SRA for the Spectacle Lake Watershed. The project was done via a partnership with the Spectacle Lake Improvement Association. The SRA identified 28 rural/agricultural projects that could be installed in the watershed.



## Studies and Plans- Continued

### One Watershed One Plan (1W1P)

According to the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR) One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) is the next logical step in the evolution of water planning in Minnesota. The 1W1P vision is to align local planning, with major watershed boundaries, with state strategies towards prioritized, targeted and measurable implementation plans. Isanti County is part of three major watersheds: Lower St. Croix, the Rum River and the Snake River. Two of the three watersheds within the County are currently in the 1W1P planning process.



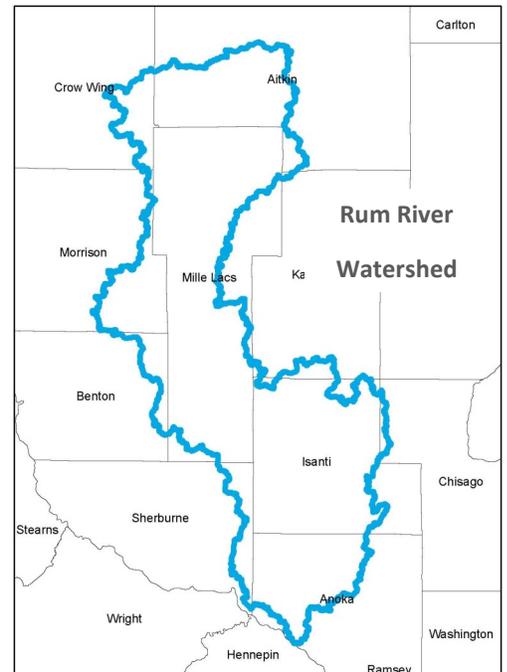
### Lower St. Croix 1W1P

In 2018 16 watershed partners including SWCDs, Counties, Watershed Management Organizations and Watershed Districts began meeting to develop the watershed based plan. The bulk of the work focused on identifying priority issues and resources for protection within the watershed and beginning discussions about the strategies that will be used to address the priority issues. The priority issues that will be addressed in the plan include: groundwater, lakes, rivers and streams, wetlands, upland habitat, St. Croix River, Lake St. Croix and Social Capacity.

The Isanti SWCD is actively participating in the process as the overall Project Coordinator and Notification Coordinator. Additionally, two board supervisors sit on the Policy Committee. The bulk of work will be completed in 2018 and 2019. The plan is targeted for completion in early 2020.

### Rum River 1W1P

In 2018 20 planning partners joined together to submit an application to BWSR to develop a comprehensive watershed plan (1W1P) for the Rum River Watershed. The Rum River watershed was one of eight watersheds across the state to receive a planning grant. Immediately upon receiving the grant the watershed partners began developing a work plan to dictate how the partners will work together to develop the watershed plan. The Isanti SWCD is actively participating in the process as the overall Project Coordinator. Additionally, two board supervisors sit on the Policy Committee. The bulk of work will be completed in 2019-2020 and the plan is targeted for completion in early 2021.



### Campus Groundwater Conservation Planning

The 11-county Metropolitan Conservation Districts (this includes Isanti) have developed a groundwater conservation planning protocol for large-acreage public campuses. The systematic approach reviews water-using systems campus-wide and identifies potential water-saving opportunities. As a deliverable, the campus receives a prioritized list of potential water conservation opportunities in order of cost-effectiveness, which could facilitate future water conservation efforts and save money. Examples of water saving opportunities include: replacing water-using fixtures with WaterSense or ENERGY STAR certified models, installing soil moisture sensors for irrigation systems, and educational efforts to increase disciplined use of water (e.g. turning water on only while rinsing hands).

In 2018 the SWCD partnered with the Anoka Ramsey Community College and the City of Isanti (City Hall and Community Center) to complete groundwater conservation plans at their facilities. The plans are targeted for completion in early 2019.

## Projects

### Blue Lake Protection

In 2018 the SWCD received a \$251,000 Clean Water Fund grant to install projects identified in the Blue Lake Stormwater Retrofit Assessment (SRA).



The projects will help protect the health of Blue Lake. Blue Lake Improvement District (BLID), Stanford Township, and Spencer Brook Township provided the required matching funds for the grant. In 2018 the grant was used to install an enhanced buffer and rain garden on a residential property, two raingardens and a sump along Tiger Street in township right-of-way, and a lakeshore restoration and raingarden at the township public access on the southeast side of the lake.

### State Cost Share

The SWCD receives annual funds from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) so that we can help landowners offset the costs of installing conservation practices that protect and improve water quality by controlling rainwater runoff, soil erosion, and reducing sedimentation. Cost share can be used to fund a variety of projects including lakeshore restorations, rain gardens, cover crops, tillage management and well sealing. In 2018 the State Cost Share program funded one well sealing, one shoreline restoration on Green Lake, one shoreline restoration on Blue Lake and 57 acres of cover crops.



**Cover Crops planted in September.**



**Excavation of the historic channel in the Rum River**

### Rum River High Meadows Re-Meander

The SWCD received a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant to work in partnership with the MN DNR and a local engineer in an effort to restore habitat, water health, flooding capacity, and recreation. The project involves repair to a shortcut in the river channel caused by human activity prior to the 1950's. The repair design will ultimately plug the man-made shortcut and route flow back into the historical channel. Construction began in 2018 and will wrap up in early 2019.

### Rum River Cedar Tree Revetments

Cedar tree revetments are a cost-effective bioengineering practice that can be used to stabilize actively eroding riverbanks. In the fall of 2018, the SWCD, with the help of Anoka Conservation District and Conservation Corp of Minnesota (CCM), installed cedar tree revetments on three residential properties and one city-owned property along the Rum River. Erosion at the properties, which was dominated by bank undercutting, was in the beginning stages of creating a more serious issue. By applying low-cost ecologically friendly bank stabilization approaches such as cedar tree revetments, the partners hope to minimize the long-term need for costly work that is often necessary to correct severe erosion.



**Revetment installation along the Rum River.**

## 2018 Project Summary

Project Type	Number	Area	Phosphorus Reduction lbs/yr	Sediment Reduction lbs/yr
Shoreline Restoration/stabilization	3	470 linear feet	6.5	13,342
Sand filter (enhanced buffer)	1	205 linear feet	.48	33
Rain Gardens	3	2,100 square feet	2.14	384
Cedar Tree Revetments	4	755 linear feet	48.44	60,550
Well Sealing	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cover Crops	2	57 acres	N/A	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>57.56</b>	<b>75,309</b>

## Other News & Updates

### NEW District Technician!

The SWCD added a District Technician position in 2018 due to the growing demand for SWCD technical services! The new technical positions focus is agricultural outreach and implementation, forest management, groundwater conservation and water monitoring. Thomas Zimmermann joined our team in April 2018. Thomas earned his Masters Degree in Environmental and Conservation Science and spent four years working for Minnesota Native Landscapes before joining the Isanti SWCD.



### 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 board selected the City of Isanti as the 2018 Isanti County Outstanding Conservationists. The City has taken a leadership role in conservation. Since the initiation of their partnership with the SWCD in 2011 the city has: completed a Stormwater Retrofit Study that identified locations to cost effectively improve treatment of stormwater before entering the Rum River, installed 300 linear feet of cedar tree revetments, implemented a city-wide

raingarden incentive program that includes free SWCD technical assistance, and volunteered to take part in a groundwater conservation plan for the City Hall and Community Center.

# ISANTI SWCD

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## So what's next?

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

- ⇒ Targeted Agricultural Outreach
- ⇒ Green Lakeshore Restoration Partnership Program
- ⇒ Lower St. Croix Conservation Planning



## **THANK YOU to our Conservation Partners!**

We would like to send out special thank you to all of the Federal, State, and Local partners who support our programs and priorities! Our partners include but are not limited to: Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Isanti County, The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), all Isanti County Lakes groups (you know who you are), The Nature Conservancy, The MN Department of Natural Resources, Pheasants Forever, the MN Pollution Control Agency, and all Soil and Water Conservation Districts!

