



# Quarterly News & Updates

February 2025 | Issue 19

## Greetings 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;
- 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: 763-689-3271

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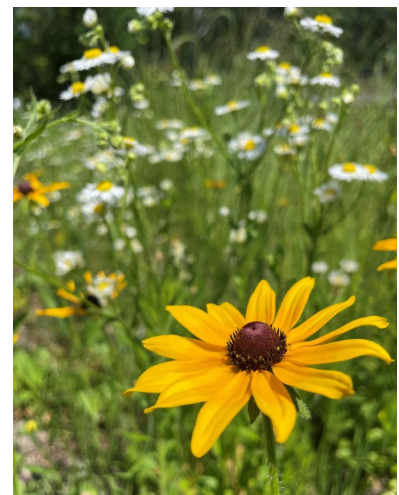
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## Preserving a Private Paradise in Isanti County

When Barry Springborn gazes out of his office window, he sees more than just his property; he sees a thriving ecosystem teeming with life. Over the years, Barry has transformed his land into a haven for wildlife, carefully restoring native prairies and forests. Now, with a 50-acre conservation easement through the Forestry Legacy Program, Barry and his wife, Grace, are ensuring that their land's natural beauty will remain intact long after they have stopped admiring it.

"I just love our property," Barry shared. Barry and Grace have spent the last decade thoughtfully restoring their property to embrace its natural beauty. Their property is uniquely situated across the lake from one of Isanti County's scenic parks, giving them a beautiful backdrop that compliments the habitat they have built. Seven years ago, Barry started planting a considerable buffer on the property. First, he reforested seven acres by direct-seeding with acorns. Then, he planted an additional nine acres of prairie, adding vibrant wildflowers and grasses to his landscape. Today, these combined efforts create a stunning landscape for wildlife. "The buffers are phenomenal," Barry said. "I was watching 15 pheasants flying around this morning.



I've never had that before."

Once the couple saw the wildlife oasis they had created through their hard work, and further driven by their Faith, they knew they needed to protect their property. Conservation easements allow private lands to be permanently protected by selling the development rights while still enabling the property to remain private. Barry and his wife considered conservation easements for years. Still, the final push was friends teasing them about building their own home in the center of the gorgeous property. This made Barry and his wife realize developers may take the same opportunity once they're gone. Barry explained, "I'm doing all this work, and I'll probably not live long enough to see these oak trees make acorns, so I don't want somebody building a house there." This realization made the permanent protection of a conservation easement especially appealing, and after looking into multiple programs, they settled on the Forestry Legacy Program.

The Forestry Legacy Program gave Barry the tools he needed to secure the future of his land while continuing to improve it in the way he desired. "The forestry department walked me through every step," he shared. Starting the process in late 2022, he collaborated closely with forestry staff to develop a forest stewardship plan, conduct site visits, and finalize the legal details. Now, looking back, Barry recalled, "The process wasn't hard, but it took longer than I expected." His advice for others considering a conservation easement is to start the process early and prepare for it to take time. He also emphasizes the importance of selecting a program that aligns with your long-term goals, as each program comes with its own unique stipulations. As Barry wisely points out, "Once it's in, it's in."

Now, Barry and his wife look forward to confidently enjoying their property, knowing it will remain safeguarded for generations. For Barry, this means continuing to improve the land, as he admits he enjoys the rewarding maintenance that will include managing invasive species, replacing ash trees, and prescribed burns. For Grace, she will continue to enjoy the prairie's annual blooms and the animals, big and small, it brings. "She's nuts about the flowers, butterflies, and hummingbirds," Barry said. "When the prairie is in bloom, it's stunning. Late August, when the bee balm is ripe, the bumblebees are huge—they look like little bulldogs you could pet. It just hums with life." Beyond that, they express gratitude at getting to dedicate themselves to conservation, reflecting that "we are very grateful that in all God's creation, he has chosen us to steward this piece of paradise." Now, through their stewardship, the land will continue to hum with life forever, unthreatened by development.

## Events



**AGRICULTURE LUNCH AND LEARN**

**MARCH 18TH  
9:30AM - 12:30PM  
AT CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY**

111 N Dellwood St  
Cambridge, MN

**FREE LUNCH!**

**CALL OR EMAIL TO RSVP** 763-689-3271  
Lgodfrey@isantiSWCD.org

isanti Soil and Water Conservation Service

The poster features a central image of a roasted turkey on a platter with potatoes. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with various colored boxes and fonts. The Isanti Soil and Water Conservation Service logo is in the top right corner.



**Webinar: Selecting the Best Tree for Your Property and Goals**

**Thursday, February 27th  
6:00pm - 7:30pm  
Online via Zoom**

**Register:** visit [bit.ly/treeweb25](https://bit.ly/treeweb25)

Hosted by the Rum River Watershed Partnership.

RUM RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP

The poster has a green and white color scheme with a tree illustration on the left. The text is bold and clear, with a registration link provided. The Rum River Watershed Partnership logo is in the bottom right corner.

### **Webinar: Selecting the Best Trees for Your Property and Goals**

WHERE: Online over Zoom

WHEN: February 27th, 6:00 - 7:30pm

Not every tree is suited for every location. Join us to learn about the key characteristics to consider when selecting the right tree for your property and get expert advice on which tree species best align with your goals.

[Register online.](#)



### **Isanti SWCD Agriculture Lunch and Learn**

WHERE: Cambridge Public Library (111 N Dellwood St Cambridge)

WHEN: March 18th 9:30am - 12:30pm

Over lunch, you will learn about new opportunities to enhance your good farming practices such as:

- Drones used for seeding or spraying
- Carbon market opportunities
- Funding programs: local, state, and federal technical and financial assistance opportunities.

Call or email the Isanti SWCD to RSVP at 763-689-3271 or [Lgodfrey@isantiSWCD.org](mailto:Lgodfrey@isantiSWCD.org).

### **Sherburne SWCD Lunch and Learn**

WHERE: Clear Lake Township Hall (7938 116th St SE)

WHEN: March 6th, 11:00am - 1:00pm

Bear Bouwman, the owner of AeriAll Spray and Survey and authorized dealer of Agri Spray Drones, will speak about drone use in farming. Alex Uderman, a longtime farmer, will also speak about his farming experience, which includes no-till, cover crops, nutrient management, and more.

[Register here](#) or call 763-220-3434

### **Centra Sota Winter Conservation Event**

WHERE: Coyote Moon Grille in St. Cloud

WHEN: March 11th, 9:00am - 12:30pm

The event is featuring speakers Jared House (BWSR), Erik Hoegemeyer (Midland University), and Grant and Dawn Breitreutz (Stoney Creek Farm), who will share insights on policies, economics, soil health, and livestock as they relate to agriculture and conservation practices. The SWCD will also have a booth to talk about available cost-share.

[Register online here.](#)

## **Wetland Restoration Installed to Benefit Green Lake**



The Isanti SWCD is continuing its efforts to protect and improve Green Lake's water quality with the installation of a new wetland restoration on County Ditch 23 in Wyanett Township. This site was strategically chosen to divert, capture, and filter runoff from the ditch that would otherwise flow directly into Green Lake. Its location also complements a nearby wetland restoration installed last year, further enhancing water quality protection and providing valuable wildlife habitat.

This project was made possible through a combination of funding sources, including a federal 319 grant awarded for improving Green Lake and support from the Rum River Watershed Partnership, funded by Minnesota's Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. The wetland restoration is expected to prevent 78 pounds of phosphorus from entering Green Lake each year—equivalent to stopping 39,000 pounds of algae growth annually!



# DNR State Nursery Expands to Better Serve Customers

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) State Forest Nursery, located in Badoura, MN, plays a critical role in reforestation by providing millions of native tree and shrub seedlings to Minnesotans each year. Thanks to recent legislative funding, the nursery is expanding its operations to better serve landowners and Soil and Water Conservation Districts statewide. Over the next five years, the nursery aims to double its current production of 5 million seedlings annually, ensuring a more robust supply for conservation and reforestation efforts.



One of the biggest improvements is the addition of a large tree cooler, which will allow the nursery to lift trees in the fall, store them safely over winter, and ship seedlings in the spring—even if the ground at Badoura is still frozen. This enhancement ensures that SWCDs and landowners receive their seedlings at the right time for planting, even when the weather becomes unpredictable. The nursery is also investing in better seedling health through improved soil testing and adjusted fertilizer application rates to provide the perfect nutrient balance.

Many SWCDs across Minnesota, including the Isanti SWCD, rely on the DNR State Nursery to supply native trees for their local tree sales. As the Isanti SWCD tree sale evolves, efforts are underway to offer a wider variety of native trees and shrubs, focusing on bare-root seedlings. Bare-root stock is preferred because it adapts more easily to the local environment, establishing strong root systems for long-term growth.

For those interested in purchasing directly from the DNR State Forest Nursery, more information is available [on their website](#). Proper tree selection and planting techniques are just as important as choosing the right species for your property. By partnering with the nursery, the Isanti SWCD and other districts are ensuring that high-quality, native trees remain accessible, supporting Minnesota's landscapes for generations to come.

## Get Paid to Donate Seeds and Cones

The DNR nursery needs you and other members of the public to successfully continue the production of their nursery trees that are grown to support Minnesota forests. You can help by collecting and donating seeds or cones—and get paid for your efforts! Since the nursery cannot produce enough seeds and cones on its own, it depends on volunteers to supply them. By participating, you're directly contributing to the health of Minnesota's forests while earning compensation. Payment rates vary based on the type and volume of seeds collected. Seeds can be dropped off at several locations, including the Cambridge DNR office. To learn more, [visit the DNR website](#).



## Tree Sale Open Now

Our tree sale is now open. You'll want to act fast, as we sell out of most varieties! This year, we have many exciting new options. Order pick-up day is Friday, May 2nd.

We created a guide of the trees available, so you can learn more about each species before making your selection. Access [our guide to the tree sale here](#).

The best way to order is [through our website](#), where you'll find the most up-to-date stock information. Please call or visit our office if you have questions or need assistance with your order.



## SWCD Day at the Capitol to talk SWCD Aid

The Isanti SWCD is headed to the State Capitol in early March to meet with legislators and discuss our work, including the importance of SWCD Aid. We will be sitting down with several elected officials to share how we are protecting and improving natural resources in Isanti County. These meetings help strengthen our partnership with legislators, and we are grateful to each of them that take time out of their schedule to meet with us.

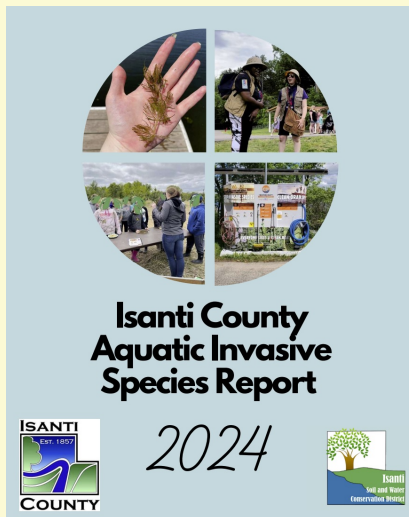


In addition to discussing our work, we will also be talking about SWCD Aid. In 2023, lawmakers approved permanent funding in the amount of \$15 million per year in SWCD Aid, improving the capacity of all SWCDs to deliver essential services for achieving the state's soil and water quality goals. But starting in 2025 and in all future years, SWCD Aid will be reduced to \$12 million annually. This decrease in funding does not match the increased demands put on districts for implementing conservation practices, serving constituents, and delivering on statutory obligations. Without an increase in the annual general fund appropriation for SWCD Aid, local SWCDs across the state will struggle to hire and retain staff, maintain relationships with landowners, implement conservation practices, and make progress toward meeting our clean water and healthy soil goals. To fully meet our district's needs for essential services, we are requesting \$22 million for SWCD Aid. If you want to help support SWCD Aid, you can contact your representatives to ask them to support these efforts.

### 2024 AIS Annual Report

Isanti County and Isanti SWCD works in partnership to complete actions that will prevent and mitigate the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and provide education and outreach to the public. Each year, we publish our work into a report. Click the button below to read it.

[Read the Report](#)



### Get Help with Conservation Projects—Funding Available!

The Isanti SWCD has funding available to support a variety of conservation projects that improve water quality. If you've been considering conservation work on your property, now is a great time to get started!

Current funding is available for:

- Shoreline restorations
- Rain gardens
- Cover crops
- Structural agricultural projects
- Conservation easements
- Wetland restorations
- And more!



If you're interested in adding a conservation project to your property or need a solution for erosion or runoff issues, contact us to explore your options. We can discuss available funding, provide free technical assistance, and offer resources to help you make improvements on your own. Call our office at 763-689-3271 to get started!

## Funding for Well Sealing

We still have funding available to cost-share sealing an abandoned well! Our program will reimburse landowners up to 60% of the total cost of sealing a well.

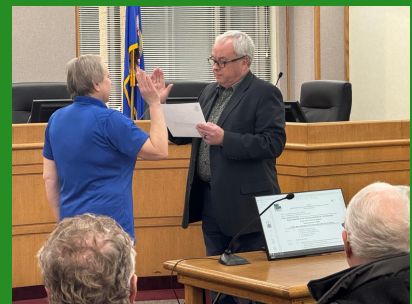
Unsealed, abandoned wells act as a direct conduit for pollutants to contaminate groundwater. By sealing your well, you are protecting your vital drinking water resource.

To get started, contact Lydia Godfrey with the Isanti SWCD by emailing [Lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org](mailto:Lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org) or calling our office at 763-689-3271



## Isanti SWCD Board Members Sworn In

The Isanti SWCD kicked off the new year by swearing in three board members: Val Anderson, Al Koczur, and Franklin Curtis. Anderson and Koczur are returning board members, while Curtis is stepping into his first term. They were elected during the countywide general election in November and will serve four-year terms.



SWCD board members play a key role in shaping conservation efforts in Isanti County. They help set policies, establish district priorities, and provide guidance. Their leadership ensures that conservation programs effectively serve our community. With a strong board in place, the Isanti SWCD looks forward to another year of conservation work!

## Contact Details

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