



Quarterly News & Updates

March 2022 | Issue 7

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; and
- Keep you informed on how Clean Water Fund tax amendment dollars are being spent locally.

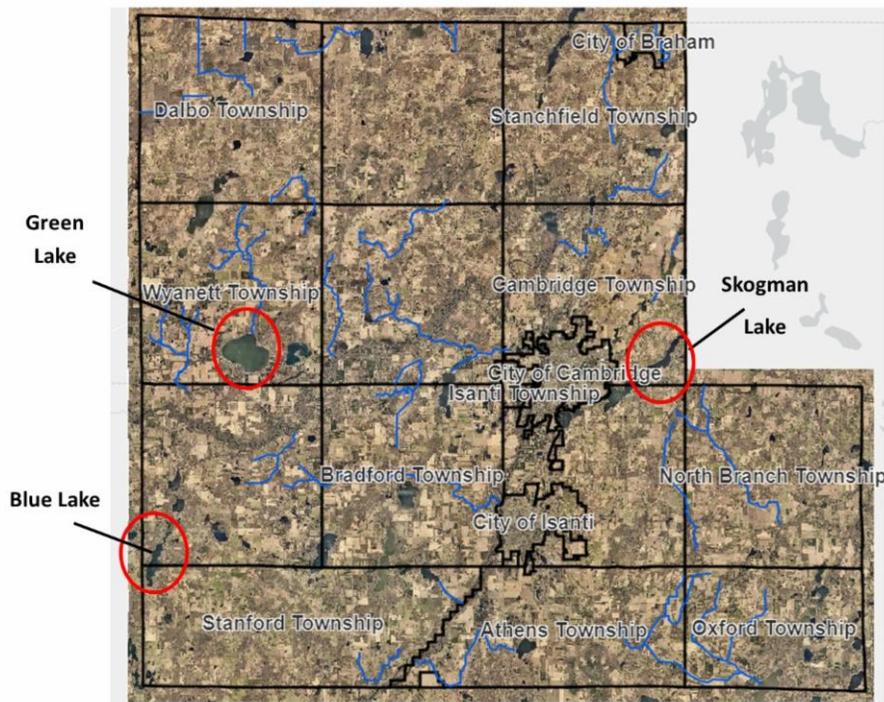
If you have any questions, please give us a call!

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Follow us on Facebook for more updates!



SWCD State Aid: A Permanent State Funding Solution for SWCDs



We are asking you to voice support for reliable STATE funding for SWCDs!

Background: SWCD funding generally consists of a hodge-podge of county contributions (requested annually), state contributions (a small general fund allocation, and Clean Water Fund appropriations negotiated bi-annually), and a variety of local, State, and Federal agreements and partnerships. These funding methods, which are often volatile and temporary, have led to the continual building-and the dismantling-and rebuilding of programs and staff. The current funding make-up is not an effective way to make consistent progress towards clean water like Minnesotans have deemed vital.

Here's the good news! our state legislators are currently considering a proposed solution to the reliable STATE portion of our funding: SWCD State Aid. The State Aid would be a standing, statutory appropriation to SWCDs from the Department of Revenue. The new setup would allow SWCDs to better plan for the future by hiring and retaining qualified and credentialed staff. Furthermore, it would increase our pace of progress in working toward our clean water goals.

As mentioned above, SWCDs across the State have been receiving temporary (bi-annually negotiated) State funding from the Clean Water Fund over the last seven years. This money has made a massive difference in the level of services we can provide to our community! The increase has enabled us to build a team to implement programs that keep our lakes and rivers safe and clean for future generations- a board priority and landowner demand.

Here are just a few lakes that have bright futures because of our work:

Blue Lake: Keeping it clean.

Over the last five years, staff has focused on keeping Blue Lake off the impaired waters list. In 2018 we secured a \$251,000 Clean Water Fund Grant to install the most cost-effective projects to keep Blue Lake clean. Additionally, the efforts mentioned above have enabled us to secure an additional \$384,000 from the Clean Water Fund to complete an alum treatment on Blue Lake. The alum treatment is the last step in our strategies to keep the lake from getting listed as impaired! The first alum treatment will occur in 2022. Improved lake health means improved property values and recreational opportunities. Success!

Green Lake: Knocking down the algae.

In 2021 we secured a Federal 319 Watershed grant from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; this grant has the potential to provide ~\$280,000 of funding every four years for the next 16 years! The program's goal is to remove Green Lake from the impaired waters list within that timeframe. To

date, in partnership with the Green Lake Improvement District, we are 10% of the way to our goals. The closer we get to our goal, the fewer algae blooms lake users will see.

Skogman Lake: New partnerships and happy communities!

Due to the successes above and a recent increase in outreach, we are now partnering with the Skogman Lake Improvement District with the primary goal of removing the lake from the impaired waters list in the next ten years! We believe this goal is very attainable since the lake is at the top of the drainage area (drains to Fannie Lake), and it is very close to meeting the State's goals for clean water. A great asset for the City of Cambridge makes happy people!

Without the SWCD, no agency would take on the type of work described above. Please help us continue what we have started!

Suppose you'd like to get involved to ensure that Isanti SWCD and SWCDs across the State have adequate and permanent State funding. In that case, you can contact your local elected officials. Ask them to support SWCD State Aid so that we can continue to work together to protect and enhance our State's natural resources!

Click here to find who represents you! <https://www.gis.lcc.mn.gov/iMaps/districts/>

State Cost-Share Funding Available for Projects

The Isanti SWCD has funding available for projects! Funds can be used to cost-share a variety of projects that improve water quality or soil health. This includes projects such as wetland restorations, lakeshore restorations, filter strips, cover crops, and more. Funding is limited. If you are interested call 763-689-3271 now!



Upcoming Event: Agriculture Lunch and Learn

JOIN US FOR THE AGRICULTURE LUNCH AND LEARN

**MARCH 16TH
9:00AM –
12:00PM**

**AT ARMED FORCES
RESERVE &
COMMUNITY
CENTER**

505 Spirit River
Drive S
Cambridge, MN
55008



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

- Carbon markets
- Cover Crop Successes
- Funding programs: local, state, and federal technical and financial assistance opportunities.

Visit www.isantiswcd.org for more information.
RSVP by March 6th.

763-689-3271 | Lgodfrey@isantiSWCD.org

When: March 16th 9:00am- 12:00pm

Where: Cambridge Armed Forces Reserve and Community Center

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- Carbon markets
- Cover Crop Successes
- Funding programs: local, state, and federal technical and financial assistance opportunities

This is also a great opportunity to talk with your friends and neighbors about the new practices they are trying. RSVP by March 6th by calling 763-689-3271 or Lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org

Other upcoming events:

[March 2nd Spectacle Lake Lakeshore Restorations: How and What](#)

[March 4th Isanti County Wetland Education Seminar](#)

[All upcoming events are listed on the Isanti SWCD webpage](#)

Working with Landowners to Protect Land and Water for Future Generations



Conservation easements are a great way to protect and enhance land and water for many years. A conservation easement is a land preservation tool used to conserve natural areas on private lands. Protection of natural areas is becoming increasingly important, especially in areas such as Isanti County where development pressure is increasing.

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements made by a landowner. The agreement places restrictions on a property to conserve the land in its current state. The land typically has some conservation value such as forested areas, open space, wildlife habitat, streams, or wetlands. In return for protecting the land, the landowner typically receives a one-time payment for 60% of the land value.



Rum River Reinvest In Minnesota (RIM) Program:

The Rum River Reinvest in Minnesota Program creates conservation easements along the Rum River. The RIM Program has received 2 million dollars to preserve land along the Rum River for years to come. The primary goal of the program is to protect the health of the river for downstream drinking water. Parcels are selected based on length of shoreline, parcel size, quality of existing natural habitat, and whether it adjoins existing protected land.

The SWCD is currently working on four easements that cover over 12,000 feet along the Rum River. If you are interested in the RIM program, contact Matthew Remer with Isanti SWCD at mremmer@isantiswcd.org or at 763-689-3271.

Green Lake County Ditch Partnership: County Dich 16 and 23

The SWCD and Isanti County recently partnered to complete ditch inspections and multi-purpose drainage management plans (MDM) on two ditches that drain to Green Lake. This includes County Ditch 16 and 23 (see map for locations). These are the first two ditches in Isanti County to undergo this process.

ISG Inc., an engineering firm, was contracted to do the work.

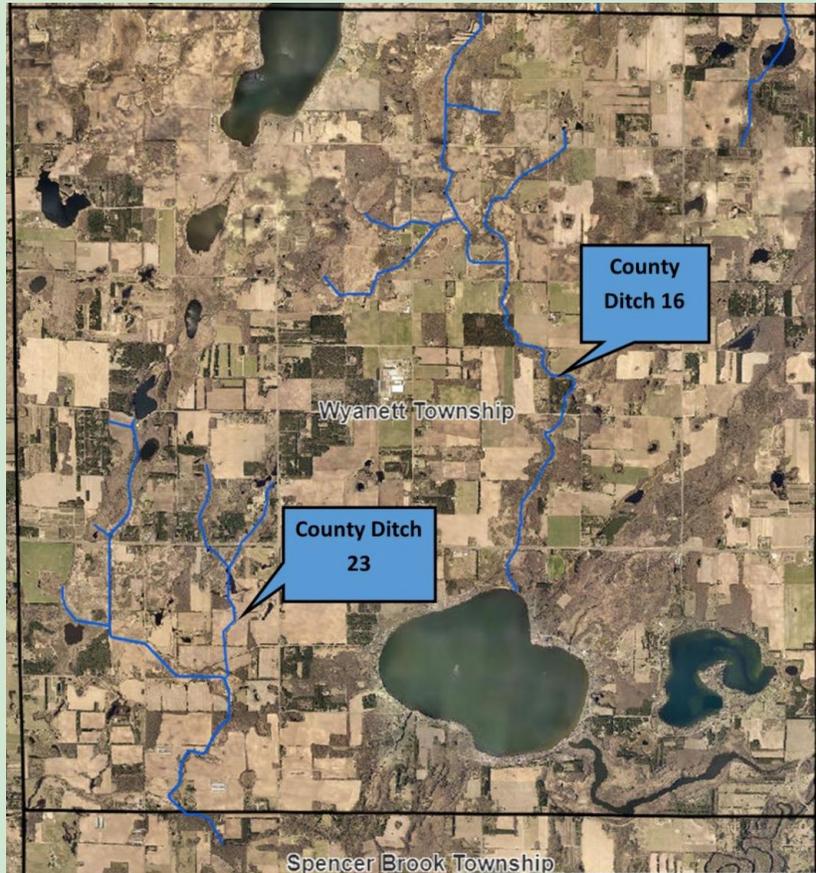
Periodic site inspections of County ditches are necessary to ensure the ditches are operating correctly. The inspections are done to identify areas of the system that need maintenance or repair and to identify projects that will help keep the ditch system in proper working condition. The inspections on CD 16 and 23 were done using a drone in November 2021. The results of the ditch inspections and recommended maintenance issues are summarized in a ditch inspection report. A

public meeting will be held in the spring of 2022 to share the findings of the inspections and to seek feedback on maintenance priorities.

The MDM plans utilize information from the inspections combine with computer analysis to identify locations for best management practices that will improve downstream water quality and reduce erosion. The projects identified have the dual benefit of helping to minimize long-term ditch maintenance needs. The project types identified include but are not limited to cover crops, nutrient management, residue management, wetland restorations, alternative intake structures, and grassed waterways.

The SWCD has funding to help with technical assistance and project costs for best management practices identified in the MDM. We will be hosting an Agricultural Lunch and Learn on March 16th to let farmers and landowners know more about these opportunities. If you are interested in attending, RSVP to Lydia Godfrey at: lgodfrey@isantiswcd.org. Additionally, we will reach out directly to those who own, or farm properties identified as locations for best management practices.

Meanwhile, if you are interested in learning more, please contact us!



Pictured: Locations of County ditch 16 and 23 (which both drain to Green Lake)

The Isanti SWCD Tree Sale is Still Open!

Place your order for trees now! We still have many available, but some varieties have sold out. Order now to get your desired trees before they're gone!

Ordering online is the best way to



ensure you get the tress you want-
to do so visit our website. Pick up
will be on April 30th.

Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is a voluntary opportunity for farmers and agricultural landowners to take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water. Those who implement and maintain farm management practices will be certified and receive benefits such as recognition for their hard work, regulatory certainty, and priority technical assistance. Certified producers are also benefiting the community by protecting Minnesota lakes, rivers, and streams.

Through this program, certified producers receive:

- Regulatory certainty: Certified farms will be deemed in compliance should any new State water quality rules or laws be enacted during the 10-year period of certification.
- Recognition: Stewardship-minded farms will receive recognition from the community for their efforts and a sign that can be displayed on their property.
- Priority for technical and financial assistance: producers seeking certification have priority access to expertise and qualify for unique funding for any farm practices that would improve water quality.



Applying for the program and meeting with a Certification Specialist is free and does not require an obligation from the landowner or operator.

Please contact Matthew Remer, Isanti SWCD or Ryan Clark, Northeast MAWQCP Certification Specialist

Matthew Remer, Isanti SWCD, mremmer@isantiswcd.org, 763-689-3271

Ryan Clark, Carlton SWCD, ryan.clark@carltonswcd.org, 218-384-3891 x6

There are currently two financial opportunities available to MAWQCP Certified producers:

MAWQCP Financial Assistance Grant

MAWQCP Farm Business Management Scholarship

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) is designed to accelerate adoption of on-farm practices that protect Minnesota's waters. Producers going through the certification process have priority access to financial assistance. One assistance program is the MAWQCP Grant. Applications are accepted online.

Who's Eligible:

These grants are available to Minnesota producers who are already certified or actively seeking certification through the MAWQCP.

Grant Award:

The grant awards up to \$5000.00 to eligible producers implementing agricultural best management practices. This grant will supplement the cost of the practice as an add-on after other public funds are applied, not to exceed a total public payment cost of 75%. (Additional funds for CRP are not allowed in this grant program.)

Application Period:

Grant applications are reviewed as received. Applications for the MAWQCP Financial Assistance Grant have no application deadline and are awarded on a first come basis until all funds are expended. Apply online.



The MAWQCP Farm Business Management Scholarship Program provides scholarships to water quality certified producers to learn business management strategies that will lead to profitable and competitive farming operations. The Minnesota Farm Business Management Program (FBM) is a one on one student-led program designed to provide education to farm owners and operators with the purpose of assisting students in meeting their business and personal goals. The program focuses on using quality records and sound business decisions with tools such as the FINBIN Farm Financial Database.

Who's Eligible:

This scholarship is available to Minnesota producers who are already certified through the MAWQCP. If awarded, the student must also complete a farm financial analysis with their FBM instructor.

Scholarship Award:

The scholarship awards \$140 per credit (approximately 75% of the cost of tuition) for new FBM students in their first and/or second semester of the FBM program and \$90 per credit (approximately 50% the cost of tuition) for returning students in their third semester or beyond. Students must enroll in a minimum of 2 credits per semester, or 4 per academic year, with a maximum of 10 credits per year.

Application Period:

Applications are reviewed as received. Scholarships are awarded on a first-come basis until all funds are expended. To apply, work with a Farm Business Management (FBM) instructor to complete the scholarship application.

Oxford Township: Home to Isanti County's Special Natural Environment Lakes

Oxford Lakes Highlighted by Lower St Croix Watershed Partnership... Again!

Oxford Lakes Monitoring Results



Oxford Township is home to seven natural environment lakes that are a part of the Lower St Croix Watershed. We have worked with the Lower St Croix Watershed to utilize these lakes to produce a video defining natural environment lakes. Natural environment lakes are a classification used by the DNR. These lakes are typically shallow and small.

Our Oxford Township lakes fall into this classification and are overall very healthy! They also assist with groundwater recharge and provide unique habitats to wildlife. Try to spot the otter in the video!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zrllj9AN-Q&t=34s>



The Isanti SWCD monitors seven lakes in Oxford Township. Samples are taken from the lakes each month from May to September, and the data is compiled to track the health of the lakes. This data is published in a report each year and is posted on our website. **[You can read the 2021 report here.](#)**

Overall, the Oxford Lakes remain very healthy! Six out of the seven lakes are ranked A, the highest mark, in water quality using the Met Council grading system. This has been consistent over the past few years. Unfortunately, West Twin Lake has recently been listed as an impaired water body. However, despite its poor health, it still supports a diverse plant community and other wildlife. Monitoring these lakes help land and water resource management entities such as Isanti County Zoning, Oxford Township, and the Isanti SWCD make informed decisions to keep the lakes healthy.

Meet A Board Member- Valerie Anderson

Why did you become a supervisor?

For years I have been involved with the soils and water in Isanti County by working with the Isanti County Water Plan. Although, my love of the land started when I grew up on a farm by Green Lake and then moved to a small farm on Adam's lake when I married my husband, Ron. Ron and I have worked hard improving the farm by replacing wetlands and putting marginal land into conservation programs. Over the years we have worked closely with the SWCD and I was excited to put my abilities to work as a supervisor.

How many years have you been a supervisor?

I have been a supervisor for just over a year as I started in January 2021.

What are your interests and hobbies?

I have too many to list here, but to lump some together—anything outdoors: gardening, forestry, biking, swimming, canoeing, hiking, camping... Family: I love spending time with my grandchildren. Volunteering: at church and other community events.

What was your favorite subject in high school?

Anything to do with numbers and the outdoors. I wanted to work for the DNR, but back in the early 70's I was told women could not do that so I got my degree in accounting and worked on our land. I am glad that has changed and I am able to put my love of the outdoors to additional uses.



What does your family look like?

I have been blessed to be married to my husband Ron for 36 years and we have one awesome daughter, a great son-in-law and 2 wonderful grandsons.

Val represents District 1 - Maple Ridge, Stanchfield, Springvale, and Dalbo Townships.

Contact Details

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