



2019

Annual Report

Waseca County Soil and Water
Conservation District

Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District



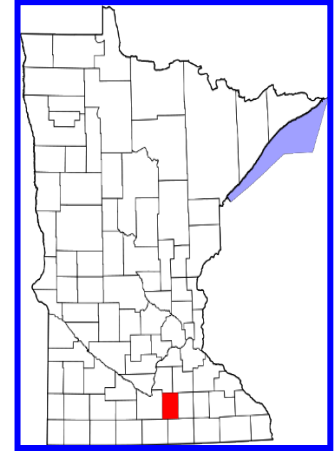
2019 Annual Report

105 22nd Ave NE

Waseca, MN 56093

Phone: 507-835-4800 X 3

Website: www.wasecaswcd.org



Mission Statement

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Prime Responsibility of the District is to coordinate assistance on private lands to control erosion, prevent flooding, enhance wildlife, develop recreation, build the economic base, and to manage our soil and water resources.

Introduction:

The Waseca County Soil and Water Conservation District is a legal subdivision of State Government operating under provisions of the Minnesota State Statutes Chapter 103C. The District is located entirely within Waseca County and includes all land, public and private, towns and villages. It is governed by a five-member board of elected supervisors, who are responsible for directing all District activities. The Board meets on the second Thursday of each month.

Soil and Water Conservation is essential to the preservation of our environment. Our goal is to implement a soil and water conservation plan on each acre in Waseca County. The District's success is a result of the efforts of the landowners of Waseca County, the Waseca County Commissioners, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency, the Extension Service, and the Department of Natural Resources.

We submit to you, this 2019 Annual Report.

Board of Supervisors

The Board meets the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Waseca SWCD Board Room at 105 22nd Avenue NE, Waseca MN.

<u>District Governing Board</u>	<u>End of Term</u>	<u>Area of Representation</u>
Wayne Cords, Chairman	12/31/2020	Alton, Janesville Townships
Scott Hildebrandt, Vice Chairman	12/31/2022	St. Mary, Woodville Townships
Todd Stencel, Treasurer	12/31/2022	Freedom, Vivian, Wilton Townships
Keith Morgan, Secretary (8/19)	12/31/2020	Blooming Grove, Iosco Townships
Jessie Shaffer (Secretary 1/19-8/19)	Resigned	Byron, New Richland, Otisco
Larry Muff (Member 8/19-present)	12/31/2020	Townships

SWCD DISTRICT STAFF

Mark Schaetzke	District Manager
Tyler Polster	District Technician
Cheri Brummund	District Administrative Assistant

NRCS STAFF

Reginald Liddell (1/19-9/19)	Acting District Conservationist
James Fritz (10/19-present)	Acting District Conservationist
Jessica Beske (10/19-present)	Soil Conservationist
Christina Ripplinger (1/19-10/19)	Wetland Conservationist
Brian Montroy (1/17-present)	Wetland Specialist
Samantha Iskrzycki (1/17-1/20)	Wetland Specialist

Partners Staff

BOARD OF WATER AND SOIL RESOURCES:

Jennifer Mocol-Johnson Board Conservationist

WASECA COUNTY COMMISSIONERS:

District 1 - Commissioner Doug Christopherson

District 2 - Commissioner Brian Harguth

District 3 - Commissioner Blair Nelson

District 4 - Commissioner De Malterer

District 5 - Commissioner Brad Krause

WASECA COUNTY OFFICES:

Mark Leiferman Planning & Zoning Administrator

Haley Byron Water Resources Specialist

Brian Zabel Feedlot Officer

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES:

Dan Giralomo Area Hydrologist

2019 Outstanding Conservation Farmers



Curtis & Darlene Russell David Russell

Curtis & Darlene Russell & David Russell of New Richland, run a 500-acre operation which includes beef, turkeys, corn, alfalfa, cereal rye, and sweet corn with most of their cropland being organic. They are in the process of transitioning additional acres to organic production and use their turkey manure for all their nitrogen fertilizer needs. The Russell's use rotational grazing for pasture management. They enrolled 40 acres in CREP wetland restoration and were instrumental in facilitating the restoration of the entire basin for a total of 183 acres under conservation easement. Other conservation practices that they have implemented are windbreaks, grassed waterways, streambank stabilization, 21 acres of Wetland Bank and 12 acres of Riparian CREP.

Curtis has served as a SWCD Supervisor from 1987-2003 and as an MASWCD Area VI Chairman on the State Board from 1998-2001. The Russell's provide an excellent example of conservation in action.

Congratulations and thank you for your dedication!

SERVICES & PRODUCTS PROVIDED BY THE SOIL and WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

- ◆ **Conservation Planning**
- ◆ **Planning and Design of Conservation Practices**
 - Erosion Control Practices
 - Residue Management Systems
 - Windbreak and Wildlife Tree Plantings
 - Animal Waste Control Systems
 - Manure Application Plans
 - Drainage Systems
 - Wetland Restorations
- ◆ **Cost-Sharing for Erosion Control Practices**
- ◆ **Assist with implementation of the Food Ag. Conservation Trade Act:**
 - Conservation Compliance Plans
 - Swampbuster and Sodbuster
 - Conservation Reserve Program
 - Wetland Reserve Program
 - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- ◆ **Administer Minnesota Conservation Easement Programs:**
 - Reinvest in Minnesota
 - Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
 - Permanent Wetland Preserve Program
- ◆ **Implementation of the Waseca County Comprehensive Water Plan**
- ◆ **Implementation of the Wetland Conservation Act**
- ◆ **Products available:**
 - Educational Materials
 - Conservation Tree Sale
 - Quality Tree Nursery Stock
 - Native Prairie Plants
 - Colored Marking Flags
 - Tree Weed Barrier Matting
 - Plantskydd Animal Repellant
 - Tree Planter Rental

Education and Promotion

- ◆ Soil and Water Conservation promotion and education is a high priority of the District. The primary effort in this arena each year is publishing the Conservation Calendar. In 2019, four thousand and ninety-seven copies were distributed to rural landowners, cooperating agencies, and businesses. The calendar highlights local conservation related photos and events. The District also is continually updating its website. This has made it easier for the public to get up to date information on a regular basis. The Waseca SWCD also distributed three hundred and twenty-one coloring/activity books with emphasis on Water Conservation to kindergarten classrooms in all three Waseca County School Districts.
- ◆ Tyler Polster and Mark Schaezke participated in area youth training events for 4-H Farm Technology Day and Area 8th grade students Career Day at Farmamerica.



4-H Technology Day-Tyler



8th Grade Career Day-Tyler

- ◆ Soil Health and Cover Crop Meetings and Tours were held in January, August and September along with partners including Freeborn County SWCD, Steele County SWCD, NRCS, Farmamerica and CRWP. Many area landowners attended these events and showed high interest in the conservation practices.



Pictures from Soil Health Plot Tour held at Farmamerica in August 2019.

- ◆ This year the SWCD Staff participated with Waseca County Planning & Zoning in presentations and booths at the New Richland Farm City Days and Waseca County Fair. Farmamerica and University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center were also sites of booths for Waseca SWCD. Below are some of the pictures from these events. Many area Landowners stopped by our booths to ask questions about Conservation Practices and view the Slake Test and Water Collection demonstrations. Packets of Bee Mix Wildflower Seed were given away at the events, plus many information packets about SWCD and Programs.



Top Left: New Richland Farm & City Days—Mark
A bag of Cover Crop Seed was given away to an area Landowner.



Top Right: Waseca County Fair
20 acres of Cover Crop Seed was given away to an area Landowner.



Lower Left: Taste of the Farm at Farmamerica



Lower Right: SROC Open House



Grants:

◆ SWCD Local Capacity Grant:

This grant comes through the Clean Water Land and Legacy Fund. The District used the funds to employ staff to improve how the District can assist landowners. The grant provided the necessary funding to support a full time Administrative Assistant and a District Manager to help fulfill the mission of the SWCD.

◆ Buffer Law Grant:

This grant aides in Buffer Compliances and Practices. Using equipment purchased through the Buffer Grant and other funds in 2016, many field checks were completed to give landowners more information and assistance in getting into compliance. Outreach was accomplished by sending out Buffer information to County residents with properties containing or adjacent to public waters lakes and streams. Many questions were answered and actions taken to help improve water quality. November 1, 2018 was the deadline for all buffers to be in place. A buffer law tracking plan was created to meet the requirements of the MN buffer law and is posted on our website.

◆ Conservation Delivery Grant:

The Conservation Delivery Grant has been used in promoting effective Conservation Practices fitting landowner concerns. Some examples are: site visits, mapping, designing and giving recommendations for waterways, terraces and basins to aid in soil erosion.

◆ State Cost Share Fund:

The Cost Share Grant has been established to aid landowners in Technical Assistance and also approved Cost Share projects.

- ◆ Over all, these grants provide the means for SWCD's to function. These grants are distributed by the State of Minnesota to the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). BWSR then distributes the grants to each of the Minnesota Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Greater Blue Earth Basin Alliance (GBERBA):

- ◆ GBERBA is a Joint Powers Organization consisting of ten Counties and SWCDs encompassing the Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Watonwan River Watersheds. GBERBA provides cost share opportunities for Waseca County landowners through various competitive grants. It also facilitates several speakers and information opportunities throughout the year. Waseca SWCD is represented on the Policy Board by one Supervisor and on the Technical Committee by staff.

South Central Technical Service Area (SC TSA):

- ◆ The SC TSA is a Joint Powers Agreement between 11 SWCDs in south central MN. The SC TSA provides technical assistance to the SWCDs for water quality projects. They have one engineer and two engineering technicians available. In 2019 they assisted us in three project site preliminary investigations, four design reviews, and assistance on one Nitrogen Bioreactor installation. Waseca SWCD is represented on the TSA board by one supervisor.

One Watershed One Plan – Cannon River

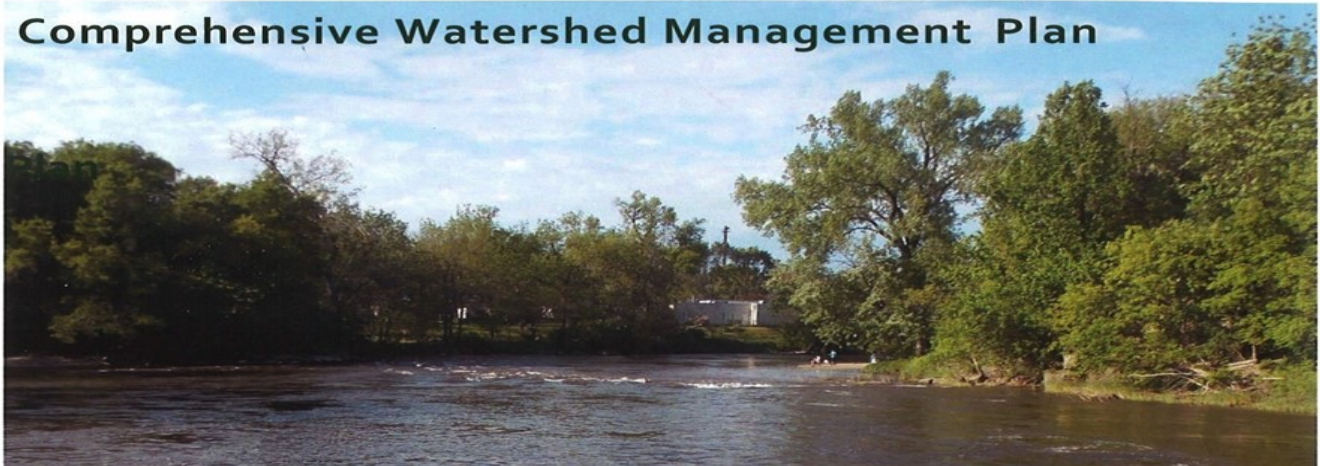
- ◆ The next logical step in the evolution of water planning in MN is to align local water planning on major watershed boundaries with state strategies towards prioritized, targeted, and measurable implementation plans. The Cannon Watershed was selected for funding from BWSR in 2016. Since then the SWCDs and Counties in Waseca, Steele, Rice, Goodhue, Le Sueur, Dakota, the North Cannon Water Management Organization, and the Bell Creek Watershed District have been meeting consistently to develop a water plan for the Cannon Watershed. In 2019, a draft plan was completed, and partners addressed comments from stake holders then prepared the plan for submittal to BWSR. Waseca SWCD is represented on the Policy Committee by a Supervisor and on the Planning Work Group by the District Manager.



Cannon River Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan – DRAFT 01/08/2019

CANNON RIVER

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan



One Watershed One Plan – Le Sueur River

- ◆ The One Watershed One Plan for the Le Sueur River is in the planning stages. It will cover the counties of Freeborn, Waseca, Blue Earth, Faribault Counties.



Wetland Conservation Act:

- ◆ The District in Cooperation with Waseca County administers the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act for the County and all the cities within the County. Working closely with Waseca County, the SWCD aids in confirmation of any violations and aids in development of appropriate restoration orders.



District Tree Program:



- ◆ The District had another successful tree and shrub sale in 2019. The trees and shrubs will be used for snow control, energy conservation (windbreaks), reducing wind erosion, and wildlife habitat plantings. The 2019 tree and shrub totals increased from 3,693 trees and shrubs in 2018 to



4,079 in 2019. Most of the increase was in the bareroot Black Hills Spruce, Norway Spruce and White Pine varieties. We also distributed 12 wildflower packets containing 48 plants per packet. The wildflower packets will provide pollinator habitat in rain gardens and various landscaping that helps reduce erosion. We will be taking orders for 2020 delivery beginning in December 2019.

Water Monitoring Program:



- ◆ 2019 is the third year of water monitoring on 2 sites: Bull Run and Iosco Creek. Water Samples were taken to measure E. Coli, Nitrogen, Phosphorus and suspended soils. Waseca SWCD District Technician, Tyler Polster along with Waseca County Water Specialist, Haley Byron collect samples and record data from the test sites. This data will be compiled and used in the future planning of water quality practices. Over the winter months, the same sites or new sites will be determined to continue with the program.

2019 Project Accomplishments

SWCD Programs

<u>Project</u>	<u>Number of Contracts</u>	<u>Completed (Acres)</u>
Cover Crops	4	1 (104 ac)
Grassed Waterway	1	1
Cover Crops (GBERBA)	4	3 (182 ac)
Alternative Tile Intakes	1	1
RIM/CREP Easements	2	2 (34.39 ac)

FSA & NRCS Programs

WASECA COUNTY CONSERVATION PROGRAM FUNDING Oct. 1, 2018 to Sept. 30, 2019 (Fiscal Year)

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number of Participants/Contracts</u>	<u>\$ Paid</u>
<i>CRP</i>	<i>850</i>	<i>\$ 1,888,714</i>
<i>EQIP</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>\$ 10,658</i>
<i>CSP</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>\$ 136,253</i>
<i>WRP- cost-share</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>\$ 0</i>
<i>RIM-cost-share</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>\$ 0</i>
	<i>Total</i>	<i>\$ 2,035,625</i>

(\$'S ARE APPROXIMATE)

