



AGENDA

Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2022 - 9:00 a.m.

Meeting Room 1 – Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center

4100 220th Street Farmington, MN 55024

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Audience
Anyone wishing to address the Board regarding an item that is not on the agenda may come forward at this time. Comments are limited to five minutes.
4. Approval of Agenda (Additions/Corrections/Deletions)

CONSENT AGENDA

To be adopted under one motion unless a request is made to move an item to Regular Agenda for discussion

5. Approval of February 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes
6. Approval of March 10, 2022 Accounts Payable

REGULAR AGENDA

7. Approval of December 31, 2021 Finance Report Action
8. Update on Sub-Watershed Analysis Reports Information
9. Review 2021 Annual Report Information
10. Legislative Update Information
11. Announcements and Reports
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dakota County
Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board
Metropolitan Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board
Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
District Managers Report
Board of Supervisor Announcements
12. Upcoming Events
Meetings and events listed below are anticipated to be held in person unless noted. Please contact staff if you have questions about meeting formats and locations since changes are occurring weekly.

March 9, 2022	MASWCD Legislative Briefing Capital Ridge Event Center/Radisson Hotel, 161 Anthony Avenue St. Paul – 4:30 p.m.
March 10, 2022	Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meeting Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220 th Street West, Farmington – 9:00 a.m.
March 10-11, 2022	Meetings with Dakota County Legislative Delegation – Schedules Pending State Capital and Virtual

- March 16, 2022 Black Dog Watershed Management Organization Meeting
Burnsville Maintenance Facility, 13713 Frontier Court, Burnsville – 5:00 p.m.
- March 16, 2022 Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Meeting
Chaska City Hall, Once City Hall Plaza 2nd Floor – 7:00 p.m.
- March 19, 2022 Spring Township Officers Meeting
Empire Public Works Building, 2577 Vermillion River Trail, Farmington – 8:30 a.m.
- March 24, 2022 MASWCD – Metro Area Meeting
Cabela’s 2nd Floor Conference Room, 20200 Rodgers Drive, Rodgers – 9:30 a.m.
- March 24, 2022 Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Board Meeting
Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington – 1:00 p.m.
- April 13 2022 Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization Meeting
TBD 3:00 p.m.
- April 14, 2022 Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District Board Meeting
Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th Street West, Farmington – 9:00 a.m.

13. Adjourn



MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Thursday, February 10, 2022

9:00 a.m.

4100 220th Street W, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

Laura Zanmiller, Chair
Kevin Chamberlain, Vice Chair
Jayne Hager Dee, Treasurer
Chelsea Skog, Secretary
Bruce Johnson, Information Officer

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Lana Rotty
Curt Coudron

Others Present:

Jill Trescott, Dakota County
Chris Schmidt, NRCS

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Zanmiller called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Zanmiller led the Board of Supervisors in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Audience

Chair Zanmiller asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to address the Board on an item that is not on the agenda. Nobody came forward.

4. Approval of Agenda

22.013 Motion by Johnson, second by Skog to approve the agenda. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

5. Approval of January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

The January 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes were presented.

6. Approval of February 10, 2022 Accounts Payable

The February 10, 2022 Accounts Payable were presented.

7. Authorization to Enter into Engagement Letter with Peterson Company Ltd for Conducting 2021 Financial Audit

Authorization to accept engagement letter with Peterson Company Ltd. for conducting 2021 financial audit at cost not to exceed \$4,000.

22.114 Motion by Johnson, second by Skog to approve the consent agenda items. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

8. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Leonard Brochman for Installation of Grassed Waterway and Four Water and Sediment Control Basins

Leonard Brochman has completed the installation of a grassed waterway and four water and sediment control basin in Greenvale Township, Cannon River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the October 14, 2021 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$27,075 based on a cost estimate of \$36,100. Final eligible project cost was \$23,858.98.

22.115 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to approve final payment to Leonard Brochman (21-IPP-32) for installation of a grassed waterway and four water and sediment control basins in Greenvale Township, Cannon River Watershed at a total of \$17,894.24 from the agreement with Dakota County and State FY21 State Cost Share grant funds. Members voting in favor: Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson, Dee. Motion carried.

9. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to City of Burnsville for Shoreline Restoration

The City of Burnsville has completed restoration of 985 linear feet of shoreline on Crystal Lake. This included the installation of coconut fiber logs and native plantings to stabilize the shoreline from wave action and reduce erosion potential. The City of Burnsville owns this section of shoreline which includes public access in the northwest corner of the lake and a fishing pier on the east end of the project site. The project was approved for funding at the May 13, 2021 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$25,000 and based on a cost estimate of \$56,900. Final eligible project cost was \$39,330.

22.116 Motion by Johnson, second by Skog to approve final payment to City of Burnsville (21-CIF-01) for shoreline restoration on Crystal Lake, City of Burnsville at \$25,000 from annual agreement with Dakota County. Members voting in favor: Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson, Dee. Motion carried.

10. Adopt Resolution Accepting Certain Wetland Conservation Authorities from City of Hampton

The City of Hampton passed a resolution at their January 11, 2022 meeting to delegate decision and administrative authority to the SWCD for the following WCA purposes: Official Listing as WCA Contact, Wetland Boundary and Type Decisions, No Loss Decisions, Exemption Decisions, Providing State Required Annual Reports. With adoption of this resolution, the SWCD would perform these delegated authorities within the City of Hampton.

22.117 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to accept Wetland Conservation Act authorities from City of Hampton as delegated. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

Supervisor Chamberlain joined the meeting.

11. Authorization to Delegate Multiple-Year Contract Payments to the District Manager after First-Year Payment

Incentive payments for cover crops and harvestable covers are now made annually after certification of practice installation and approval by the Board. For multiple-year contract payments, and under the current and proposed cost share policy, this process could occur for up to five years. Staff is recommending that after the Board approves the first year incentive payment, future payments are delegated to the District Manager. This would reduce administrative time with developing subsequent Board action requests and bringing the same project to the Board multiple times after the initial year. This delegation would still require that practice installations are certified by staff prior to the annual incentive payment. Over the last couple of years, the number of contracts that involve multi-year incentive payments have expanded through cover crop programs and it is anticipated this trend will continue. If any changes to the practice installed or requests are made to modify the contract, incentive payments would be brought back to the Board for discussion and action. Policy under the Minnesota Board of Water and

Soil Resources (BWSR) Grants Administration Manual allows for delegation of signature authority to approve actions, expenditures and sign documents as long as the delegation of this authority is supported by a documented local board action, such as a motion, resolution, or adoption of a policy or on a contract-by-contract basis.

22.118 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to allow District Manager to approve multi-year incentive payment contracts, after the first-year installation has been approved by the District Board. All members voting in favor.

12. Adopt 2022 Cost Share Policies

Cost-share programs offered through the SWCD are recommended to remain. There are five cost share programs currently available to residents and landowners of Dakota County: Citizen Conservation Stewards (CCS), Conservation Initiative Funding (CIF), Community Conservation Partnership (CCP), Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW), Incentive Payment Practices (IPP).

Several changes are proposed from last year's policy. Highlights of the proposed changes include:

- Updating of staff credentials.
- For multi-year cover crop or harvestable cover projects that have been approved by the District Board after the first year of installation, allowing the District Manager to approve payments for following years
- Providing the option to designate "Priority Locations" for all cost share programs. Previously, "Priority Locations" were only included in the IPP program.
- Recording some conservation practices with the property title based on the amount of cost share funding received.
- Standardizing compliance inspections for projects under contract.
- Ability to require use of wildlife-friendly erosion control products when appropriate.
- Updating in-kind rates for materials, labor, and equipment provided by the applicant.
- Increasing the cost share percentage from 75% to 85% for most projects and increasing combined cost share percentage from 85% to 95% for projects involving EQIP.
- Updating application deadlines, completion deadlines, and project criteria for the Landscaping for Clean Water Program.
- Adjusting Harvestable Cover policy to maintain eligibility for use of state funding.
- Clarifying field criteria for cover crops and harvestable covers.

22.119 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to adopt 2022 Cost Share Policies as presented. All members voting in favor.

13. Update on 2022 Landscaping for Clean Water Program

The 2022 LCW classes will be held virtually again this year although we plan to evaluate things in the spring to see if hosting some in-person classes will be feasible. Beginning in early March, there be three live Introduction classes and two live Maintenance classes via Zoom. Watershed co-hosts will be involved with the classes. As in 2021, city staff will be invited to participate in breakout sessions at the conclusion of each Introduction class to allow them to meet with residents and answer city-specific questions as they would at an in-person class.

The Design Course classes will be offered as a series of pre-recorded videos with project materials available to participants via virtual method. We will again provide predetermined "office hours" to provide virtual project consultations and one-on-one design recommendations as well as answer any project installation questions.

Registration for the Landscaping for Clean Water program will take place on-line through the SWCD website. As in past years, there will be three rounds for submitting LCW grant applications, residents must

attend an Introduction and Design Course before submitting a grant application. Grant awards will again be up to \$250 per project installed.

Announcements and Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service report was provided by Chris Schmidt. He is reporting today, as Matthew Lundberg is attending a training class. Minnesota NRCS offices will be staffed at 25% through the end of March due to COVID case numbers. The Soil Conservationist position in Faribault is still vacant with no timeline on a job announcement. The District Conservationist position in Farmington is vacant, a job announcement should be seen soon. All annual Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) payments were approved by the deadline. The first FY2022 EQIP batching period deadline was November 19, 2021. There are 36 applications for Dakota County, 32 are unfunded applications from 2021 and four are new 2022 applications. Field office staff are working on designs, planning, assessments, and ranking, with a March 4, 2022 deadline. They received four FY2022 RCPP-Land Management applications in Dakota County for the MAWQCP. Staff are working on planning and ranking those, as that deadline is also March 4, 2022. Staff have been busy modifying contracts and submitting payments for completed practices. With the Environmental Quality Incentive Program, a new conservation incentive contract program was announced for Minnesota in late December 2021. The Cannon River Watershed was selected as a priority area. Half of the approved projects will be in the priority watershed. This year, the eligibility was limited to non-structural practices, seeking mostly management practices. The deadline for applications was January 21, 2022. They have requested the priority watershed remain the same for a few consecutive years to provide adequate time to reach out to landowners.

Dakota County

The Dakota County report was provided by Jill Trescott of the Groundwater Protection Unit. Trescott provided a presentation on the Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE). She noted that the SWCD has been very involved with this planning, Ashley Gallagher is part of the team that meets weekly. When the implementation plan is written, it will define the tasks the SWCD will carry out. She provided an overview of the research conducted, stakeholder engagement summary, draft ACRE goal, proposed strategies, and the next steps. She said the DWSMA for Hastings is also a priority concern. Chemical contamination includes nitrate, crop herbicide, and rising chloride levels. Pesticides and chloride are secondary concerns. There has been extensive stakeholder outreach. 300 stakeholder surveys were received with responses to voluntary practices.

The draft ACRE goal is "Groundwater and drinking water that are free from agricultural chemical that threaten human health or the environment".

Trescott stated the ACRE plan should be available for public review in mid-2022 and adopted by year end.

Chamberlain asked what is considered a shallow well? Trescott responded 20 feet or less the level of the water table. The focus is on shallow groundwater wells because they have the highest level of pollutants and will show changes the fastest.

Johnson asked what percentage of private wells have been tested? Trescott stated that approximately 30% have been tested, with several contaminated with nitrates.

She further stated that a public "townhall" meeting is scheduled for March 2 to allow residents the opportunity to provide input on the plan and a public sector meeting is scheduled for March 9.

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

There was no Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization report.

Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board

The Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board report was provided by Chamberlain. He stated that met on January 19, 2022. The officer positions remained the same, with Commissioner Slavik on the Executive Committee. They will be holding four meetings this year, the next one is Scheduled for April 6, 2022. Two projects have been completed, they are located in Rice and Steel counties.

Metropolitan Conservation Districts Joint Power Board

There was no Metropolitan Conservation District Joint Powers Board (JPB) report. Next meeting scheduled for February 23, 2022.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Watson noted that the MASWCD webinar for members begins at 10:30 today, and when this meeting is adjourned, we will join the webinar. They will be reviewing the details of the SWCD Aid proposal, provide advocacy coaching, and distribute a toolkit with sample messaging for meeting with legislators.

He added that the annual legislative briefing is scheduled for March 9, 2022 and the decision to hold the even virtually or in-person will be made soon. The Day at the Capitol will be Mach 10. He has not heard if the legislative representatives will be meeting in person or prefer a virtual option.

The consensus was to keep SWCD Board meeting on March 10, 2022 and meet with legislators after adjournment.

District Manager Reports

Watson stated that the MASWCD newsletter sent out yesterday highlighted the Fasbender project. The vacancy announcement for the Resource Conservationist position closes this Friday. Tree sales have been going okay with approximately 50% of the trees being sold. Any tree cancellations need to be made by late February and staff will be reviewing the need to make any cancellations.

Board of Supervisors Reports

Supervisor Chamberlain stated that with the tree program update, he noted that on his way in today, he noted many fields with windbreaks that purchased trees through the SWCD program many years ago. He also noted that there appears to be more wind erosion off the fields this winter.

20. Upcoming Events

The upcoming events were reviewed.

21. Adjourn

22.120 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to adjourn the meeting. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Skog
Secretary

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Regular Agenda

Request for Board Action

Voice Vote

Meeting Date: 3/10/2022

Prepared by: Brian Watson

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED:

Acceptance of December 31, 2021 Finance Report.

SUMMARY:

Staff has completed financial transactions for 2021 including invoicing under our charges for service agreements and submitting financial reports under State grants.

For 2021 we adopted a balanced budget of \$1,689,436. Our year-end finance report shows a \$6,948.61 surplus for calendar year 2021. Our fund balance as of December 31, 2021 is \$689,287.45.

The Board has established policy to retain a fund balance that will support operations for 6 to 12 months. We began 2021 with a fund balance of 5.5 months. Our fund balance starting 2022 to support operations is now at 5.3 months. The slight reduction in our operating fund balance is due to an increase in our monthly expenses and the organization liability to pay for compensated absences.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT:

None at this time.

Supporting Documents:

Income and Expense Summary – December 2021
Balance Sheet – December 2021

Previous Board Action:

N/A

**Dakota County SWCD
Balance Sheet
For Year Ended December 2021**

ASSETS:

Cash in Checking - Castle Rock	\$31,143.98
Cash in Savings - Castle Rock	\$211,272.33
Cash in Checking - Vermillion Bank	\$29,682.08
Certificate of Deposit - Vermillion Bank	\$400,472.05
Petty Cash	<u>\$100.00</u>
Total Cash:	\$672,670.44

Accounts Receivable:

BWSR	2020 DC Drinking Water 10% Request (2020)	\$393.68
BWSR	2020 DC Drinking Water 10% Request (2021)	\$6,040.72
BWSR	2018 CWF Trout Brook Projects 40% Request	\$80,037.19
Black Dog WMC	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$1,280.00
Cannon River Watershed JPB	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$4,450.80
City of Inver Grove Heights	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$1,920.00
City of Burnsville	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$3,680.00
DC Environmental Resources	Q4 Invoice for Services (CIP)	\$65,028.59
DC Environmental Resources	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$38,660.83
DC Parks, Facilities, Fleet	Q4 Invoice for Services (TB Match)	\$19,048.62
DC Parks, Facilities, Fleet	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$14,951.03
DC Transportation	Q3, Q4 Invoice for Services	\$2,320.00
Eagan Inver Grove Heights WMO	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$6,337.98
Eagan Inver Grove Heights WMO WBF	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$756.84
Lower Mississippi River WMO	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$13,365.75
Lower Mississippi River WMO WBF	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$4,395.83
Lower MN River Watershed District	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$3,560.00
MCD SWA	Cannon River Direct Final 10% Request (2020)	\$959.79
MCD SWA	Cannon River Direct Final 10% Request (2021)	\$740.21
MCD Hosting	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$1,997.89
MCD ETA	Q3, Q4 Invoice for Services	\$4,063.65
MCD MAWQCP	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$81.38
MDA FNAP	Q4 Invoice for Services	\$72.06
NCR WMO	Q3, Q4 Invoice for Services	\$26,563.40
NCR WMO WBF	Q3, Q4 Invoice for Services	\$63,191.62
Vermillion River Watershed JPO	Q4 Invoice for Services	<u>\$84,839.67</u>
Total Accounts Receivable:		\$448,737.53
Prepaid Items		<u>\$7,545.00</u>

TOTAL ASSETS: **\$1,128,952.97**

**Dakota County SWCD
Balance Sheet
For Year Ended December 2021**

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY:

Accounts Payable	\$7,854.41
Accrued Salaries and Flex Conversion Payable	\$21,530.71
Deposit on Sales	\$8,622.08
Due to Other Governments	\$2,921.70
Sales Tax Payable	<u>\$77.00</u>
Subtotal:	\$41,005.90

Unearned Revenue:

Buffer Law Funds 2020	\$5,945.78
Buffer Law Funds 2021	\$17,200.00
Conservation Delivery 2020	\$0.00
Conservation Delivery 2021	\$3,362.63
Conservation Delivery 2022	\$21,240.00
CWF 2018 Trout Brook Watershed Projects	\$0.00
Local Capacity Services 2021	\$29,948.93
Met Council WOMP Funds	\$5,775.73
State Cost Share 2020	\$0.00
State Cost Share 2021	\$13,109.01
State Cost Share 2022	\$22,054.00
WBIF 2019 Dakota SWCD	\$45,143.23
WBIF 2021 Cannon River	\$107,392.09
WBIF 2021 Miss River East	\$16,283.00
WBIF 2021 MN River South	\$19,345.37
WBIF 2021 Vermillion River	\$39,055.85
DC Natural Resources Block Grant	<u>\$52,804.00</u>
Subtotal:	\$398,659.62

Total Liabilities: \$439,665.52

Fund Balance Beginning of Year	\$682,338.84
Current Net Increase/-Decrease	<u>\$6,948.61</u>
Fund Balance End of Current Period	\$689,287.45

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY: \$1,128,952.97

**Dakota County SWCD
Income and Expense Summary
For Year Ended December 2021**

	Current Month	Year to Date
Income		
County Revenues	\$166,057.57	\$665,667.01
State Revenues	\$124,951.35	\$518,739.36
Local Revenues	\$187,260.96	\$545,712.42
Miscellaneous Funds	\$1,172.89	\$6,237.46
Charges for Services	<u>\$50.00</u>	<u>\$13,733.50</u>
Total Income	\$479,492.77	\$1,750,089.75
Expense		
County Expenses	\$41,131.91	\$74,481.20
State Expenses	\$31,624.01	\$234,083.38
Local Expenses	\$43,591.49	\$125,938.38
Operating Expenses	\$6,352.90	\$32,420.18
Payroll/Personnel Expenses	\$167,611.34	\$1,273,691.42
Project Expenses	<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$2,526.58</u>
Total Expense	\$290,311.65	\$1,743,141.14
Revenues Over/-Under Expenditures	<u>\$189,181.12</u>	<u>\$6,948.61</u>

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**Regular Agenda**

Information Item

N/A

Meeting Date: 3/10/2022

Prepared by: Brian Watson

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED:

Provide update on Sub-Watershed Analysis reports

SUMMARY:

Staff has worked with various partners over the past several years to develop sub-watershed analysis (SWA) reports. These reports are used to identify where and what types of conservation practices are most cost-effective for reducing pollutants such as sediment and phosphorus. Completed SWAs follow a protocol that has been developed to maintain consistency in their use. Different than other models that identify projects based solely on computer analysis, SWAs include on-site field assessments to consider the appropriateness of the conservation practice, existing site conditions, and how a practice fits into existing land use.

Grant opportunities under the Clean Water Fund and other state funding sources require that proposed projects are targeted and prioritized so that grant funding is used for the most cost-effective projects. This is done under the assumption that landowners are willing to voluntarily install more projects than the available funding can provide. Completed SWA's provide the prioritized approach by identifying the most cost-effective projects and have been important to successful grant applications.

To date, six SWAs have been completed and three are underway in rural Dakota County. We have also completed smaller SWAs in urban portions of Dakota County for locating neighborhood stormwater improvements. These urban SWAs are generally associated with street redevelopment projects.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT:

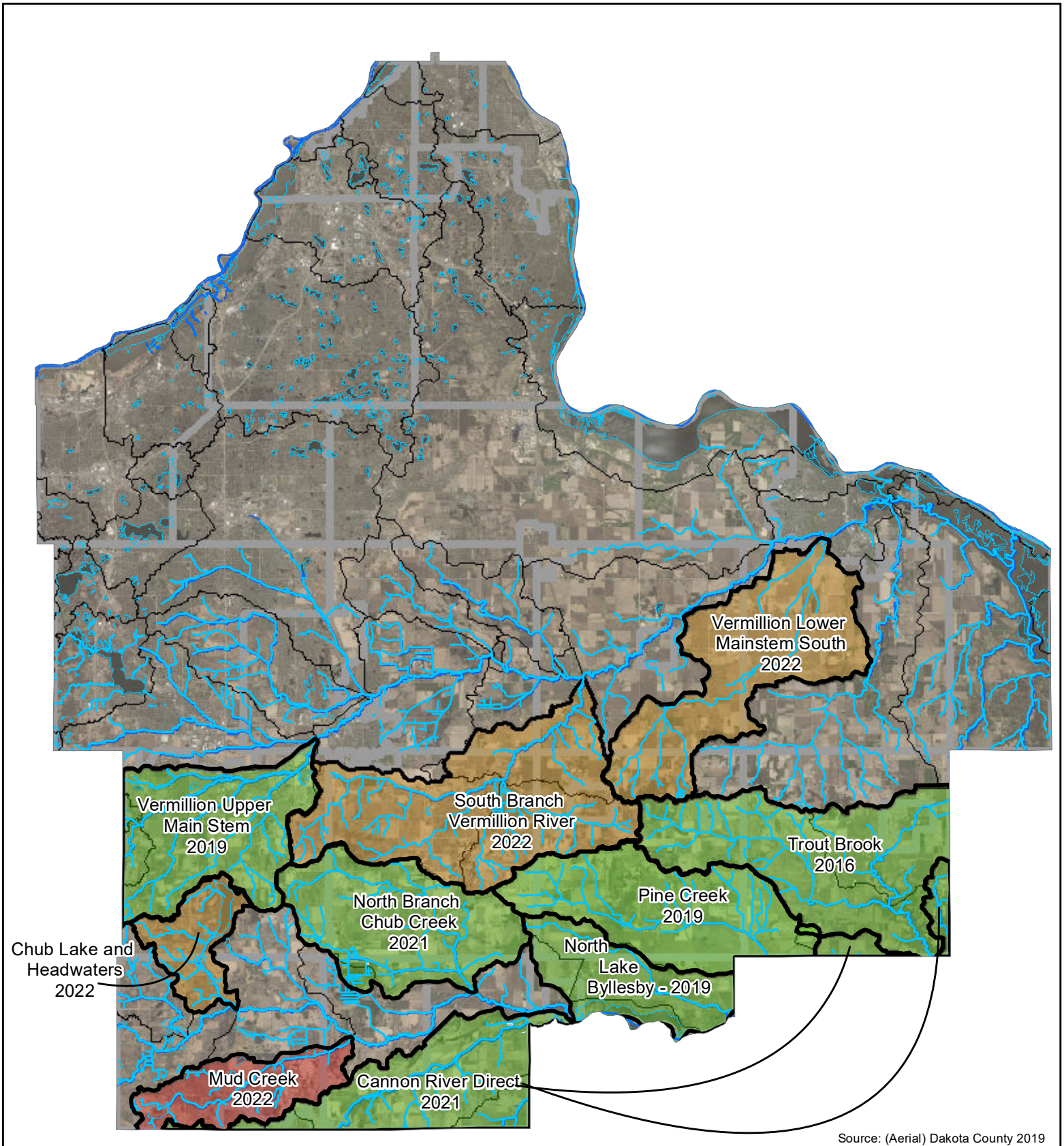
Costs to complete SWAs reports average around \$15,000 and are paid for through State grants and local revenues of watershed management organizations. Some of the state grant funds have been passed through the Metropolitan Conservation District Joint Powers Board.

Supporting Documents:

Subwatershed Analysis Status Map

Previous Board Action:

None



Dakota County Subwatershed Analysis Status

SWA Progress

- Complete
- In progress
- Scheduled
- HUC8 Watersheds



This drawing is neither a legally recorded map nor a survey and is not intended to be used as one. This drawing is a compilation of records, information and data located in various City, County, and State Offices and other sources, affecting the area shown, and is to be used for reference purposes only. Dakota County SWCD is not responsible for any inaccuracies herein contained. If discrepancies are found please contact the Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District at 651.480.7777.



DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**Regular Agenda**

Information Item

N/A

Meeting Date: 3/10/2022

Prepared by: Brian Watson

PURPOSE/ACTION REQUESTED:

Review draft 2021 Annual Report

SUMMARY:

Staff has developed a draft 2021 Annual Report showcasing our efforts and successes from the past year. This Annual Report will be sent to partners and elected officials, posted and shared online through our website, social media, newsletter, and will be made available while tabling public events.

The purpose of this Annual Report is to market our programs and provide a snapshot of the year in a concise and readable format. Not all of our efforts from a calendar year are identified in our annual reports.

Staff will provide a quick overview of the Report's contents and then take questions, comments, or suggested edits.

EXPLANATION OF FISCAL/FTE IMPACT:

Cost to compile our 2021 Annual Report is approximately \$2,500 and is funded through Dakota County Levy and BWSR's Local Capacity grant as an outreach activity.

Supporting Documents:

Draft 2021 Annual Report

Previous Board Action:

None

2021 Annual Report

Soil & Water Conservation

Conservation work kept the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (Dakota County SWCD) busy in 2021. Staff worked with landowners and other partners around the county on projects ranging from large scale ravine stabilization projects to 100 sq ft raingardens on private property; shoreline stabilization projects, sediment control basins, and cover crops as well.

Achieving clean water and healthy soils takes a community of organizations, groups, and individuals sharing similar goals and promoting positive outcomes. Thank you for partnering with us on land and water conservation projects. We look forward to continued partnerships in 2022!

2021 Highlights

In 2021, the Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District...

- Assisted landowners with land and water issues at over **220** sites around the county
- Provided technical assistance and cost share funds to install **106** rural & urban conservation projects resulting in the removal of **2,346** lbs. of phosphorous, **1,417** tons of total suspended solids (sediment) and **13,224** lbs. of nitrogen from reaching our lakes, streams or groundwater resources annually
- Educated over **631** people on landscaping practices that benefit water quality and pollinators through the Landscaping for Clean Water program
- Monitored water quality in **26** water bodies across **4** watersheds

Connect with us through Conservation

Need some information about the many different programs we offer? Scan the QR code and head over to our **website** to learn more and get your questions answered!

Connect with us on one of our social media platforms - **Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter!**

Or, shoot us an **email at swcd@co.dakota.mn.us** with your questions and we can discuss potential partnerships and available grant opportunities!



Conservation Projects

In 2021, Dakota County SWCD worked with residents, cities, schools, churches, and businesses to improve stormwater management, water quality, and pollinator habitat. We also worked with rural landowners and operators on projects to promote soil health, reduce erosion, and protect local water quality.

SWCD staff provided technical assistance on projects that included evaluation of best practices for a specific site, topographic surveys, preliminary designs, final designs, and construction oversight.

Along with providing assistance throughout the planning and installation process, over **\$350,000** of funding was provided through SWCD cost share programs for projects that included:

- Stabilizing **985** linear feet of lakeshore
- Planting **23.8** acres of native prairie on five different projects
- Installing **41** raingardens, native gardens, and shoreline restorations
- Constructing **12** water and sediment control basins
- Constructing **7,622** linear ft of grassed waterways
- Planting **2,828** acres of cover crops
- Constructing **4** grade stabilization structures



Landscaping for Clean Water

We continued our partnership with watershed organizations and cities to help residents install raingardens, native plantings, and shoreline restoration projects through the Landscaping for Clean Water program.

371 individuals participated in a virtual Introduction Class, where participants learned about local water quality concerns and how residents can help improve water quality on their own property. 164 individuals took part in the Design Course, including one-on-one virtual consultations with SWCD staff to walk through the design process, select plants, and answer project questions. SWCD staff provided on-site project layout and installation guidance for participants installing a project on their property, resulting in 41 completed projects. In addition, 96 people participated in maintenance workshops that provided season-specific information on how to maintain and promote the health, performance, and beauty of their project.

LANDSCAPING FOR
CLEAN WATER

Dakota County Soil and
Water Conservation District





The Dakota County SWCD was proud to announce the City of Burnsville as their **2021 Outstanding Conservationist** due to their commitment to conservation.

The City of Burnsville has a long track record of working with us and other organizations to install water quality improvement projects, restore shorelines of community lakes, and establish native prairies for pollinator habitat.

Examples of their conservation work include the installation of bioretention basins (raingardens) at several locations on City property or in conjunction with street reconstruction projects, stabilizing the north shoreline of Crystal Lake, and restoring native prairie with pollinator habitat at Lake Park and North River Hills Park. They also continue to be a strong supporter and partner of our Landscaping for Clean Water Program, hosting classes and sponsoring a grant program to aid residents in implementing conservation practices on their property that enhance the beauty of our natural landscape and improve local water quality!

Congratulations to the City of Burnsville for being conservation leaders and supporting clean water practices!

2021 Partners

This is a partial list of partners that Dakota County SWCD worked with in 2021:

- Black Dog Watershed Management Organization
- Cities and Townships of Dakota County
- Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board
- Clean River Partners
- Conservation Corps of Minnesota & Iowa
- Dakota County
- Eagan-Inver Grove Heights Watershed Management Organization
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
- Lower Mississippi River Watershed Management Organization
- Metropolitan Council
- Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board
- North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization
- State of MN: Board of Water & Soil Resources; Department of Agriculture; Department of Health; Department of Natural Resources; Pollution Control Agency
- USDA: Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Project Partnerships

Major conservation projects can only happen as a result of partnerships! The Dakota County SWCD worked with partners on several projects this year, including:

- Cherokee Heights Channel Stabilization
- Almquist Sediment Retention Basins
- Conservation Corps River Restoration Projects (Bachman's Nursery property and Vermillion Park Conservation Area)
- Conservation Corps Trout Brook Streambank Stabilization
- Conservation Corps Raingarden Retrofits at Dakota County Facilities
- Holland Lake Channel Stabilization
- Jordan and Braun Wetland Banks
- Thompson Lake Restoration
- Spring Lake Park Erosion and Gully Stabilization
- CR 78-06 Wetland Restoration
- Jensen Lake Gully Erosion
- Ravenna Trail Ravine Stabilization



Water Quality and Quantity Monitoring

Dakota County SWCD partnered with local agencies and watershed organizations to collect almost 300 surface water samples from 26 different lakes and rivers all around the county. The water quality dataset provides information to use when evaluating watershed health and determining ways to improve water quality.

We also worked with state and local agencies to monitor groundwater. These groundwater monitoring efforts include the Minnesota DNR's Cooperative Groundwater Monitoring Program (a network of observation wells used to monitor static groundwater levels of different aquifers around the state), the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District's fen monitoring program, and Dakota County Parks' nitrate monitoring in the Trout Brook Watershed.



Groundwater Protection Efforts

Our activities on the landscape impact what is below it. This is especially true in Dakota County where some groundwater can pass through the soil profile relatively quickly and reach drinking water wells. Nitrogen is very soluble in water and moves with water through the soil profile, making nitrogen a prevalent issue in Dakota County's drinking water.

Dakota County SWCD has promoted the use of practices such as cover crops and perennial vegetation that can retain nitrogen where it is available for crops while reducing the amount of nitrogen that reaches drinking water. With technical assistance and cost share funding provided through Dakota County SWCD's cost share programs, 2,828 acres of cover crops were planted in 2021.

Dakota County SWCD also partnered with several organizations to develop the **Irrigation Management Assistant (IMA) Tool** to protect both the quality and the quantity of groundwater. The online tool can be used by agricultural producers to plan the most efficient times and amount of irrigation, leading to better use of groundwater and fewer nitrogen leaching events. The tool is planned to be ready for the 2022 growing season.

Funding to Reach Water Quality Goals

Dakota County SWCD has worked with many partners to secure funding that provides education, technical assistance, and cost share opportunities to Dakota County residents. Some 2021 examples include:

- Secured a \$150,000 Clean Water Fund Drinking Water Protection Project Grant to provide landowner incentives for planting cover crops and perennial vegetation that reduce nitrate leaching in vulnerable areas
- Partnered with watershed organizations and Dakota County to provide project funding to landowners through Dakota County SWCD's cost share programs
- Partnered with over 30 organizations, including 20 SWCDs throughout Minnesota, to carry out a 5-year, \$3.5 million effort working with agricultural producers to implement irrigation conservation practices that protect groundwater quality and quantity
- Secured over \$470,000 of Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) for projects that include agricultural erosion control practices, groundwater nitrate reduction practices, subwatershed analyses to prioritize the most cost effective projects, wetland restorations, and urban stormwater practices to improve water quality

DAKOTA COUNTY



— **SOIL & WATER** —
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Dakota County Board of Supervisors & Staff December 2021

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