

# 2022 Annual Report

Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District

## Conservation work kept the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District busy in 2022.

Working towards clean water and healthy soil, the Dakota County Soil & Water Conservation District (Dakota SWCD)'s focus is to **reduce soil and nutrient loss, improve water quality in lakes and streams, protect groundwater resources and enhance wildlife habitat.**

This **work is done in partnership** with federal, state and local governments, nonprofit organizations and most importantly, the **people that live and work in Dakota County.**

Thank you for partnering with us on land and water conservation projects. We look forward to continued partnerships in 2023!

## Conservation Connection

Need some information about the many different programs we offer? Head over to our **website - [www.dakotaswcd.org](http://www.dakotaswcd.org)** - to learn more!

Connect with us on—**Facebook or Instagram!**

Got conservation on your mind? Stop by our office, give us a call or shoot us an email with your questions and we can discuss potential partnerships and cost share opportunities!

## Highlights

In 2022, the Dakota SWCD...

- Assisted landowners with land and water issues at over **186 sites** around the county
- Provided technical assistance and cost share funds to **install 92 conservation projects** resulting in the **removal of 1,435 lbs of phosphorous, 1,079 tons of total suspended solids (sediment) and 13,729 lbs of nitrogen** from reaching our lakes, streams or groundwater resources annually
- **Engaged over 2,000 individuals through a variety of education and outreach programs** regarding ways to benefit water quality, improve soil health, and enhance wildlife habitat including the use of pollinators and plants.
- Monitored water quality in **26 water bodies across 4 watersheds.**

## Conservation in action across Dakota County

In 2022, Dakota SWCD worked with landowners, residents, cities, schools, churches, and businesses to reduce and control erosion, limit the impact of floods through stormwater management, ensure soil health and productivity, protect water quality, and preserve wildlife habitat.

Dakota SWCD staff provided technical assistance on projects that included evaluating the appropriate conservation practice, topographic surveys, feasibility studies, design, and construction oversight.

Along with providing technical assistance throughout the planning and installation process, over \$313,000 of funding was provided through cost share programs that included:



Restored 13 acres of native prairie



Constructed 4,860 linear feet of grassed waterways



Established cover crops on 3,191 acres of cultivated land



Developed restoration plans for native plant communities



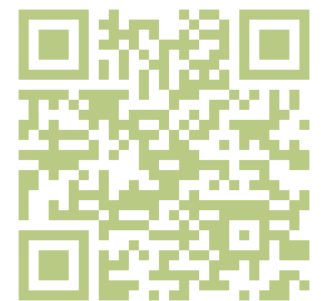
Created online tools to help farmers improve efficiency and conserve water



Stabilized shorelines in partnership with landowners, cities and watershed partners



Increased water storage capacity by restoring wetlands and installing water control basins



Scan here to check out our Conservation Project Map

**Conservation projects can only happen as a result of partnerships big and small! The Dakota SWCD worked with partners on several projects this year, including:**

- Almquist Sediment Retention Basins
- Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization and Conservation Corps - Vermillion River Restoration
- City of Burnsville and Conservation Corps - Crystal Lake Shoreline Restoration
- Jordan and Braun Wetland Restoration Projects
- Spring Lake Park Erosion and Gully Stabilization
- Bauer Gully Stabilization
- Ravenna Trail Ravine Stabilization
- North River Hills Native Prairie Restoration
- Peine Farms Cover Crops
- Bridges Grassed Waterways
- Bergum Streambank Stabilization
- City of Rosemount Jaycee Park Bioretention Basin





The Dakota SWCD was proud to announce Dave and Maureen Fasbender as our **2022 Outstanding Conservationist** due to their commitment to and leadership in improving and protecting water quality, soil health, and wildlife habitat through conservation.

The Fasbenders manage the family farm where Maureen grew up, land that has been in the family for more than a century. They have a long track record of working with the Dakota SWCD and over the years have installed numerous water and sediment control basins, grassed waterways, and diversions.

Much of their land is at the headwater of the Trout Brook and they recently completed a grade stabilization project to reduce the amount of sediment reaching this important trout stream.

Congratulations to Dave and Maureen Fasbender and thank you for your continued partnership and being stewards of our natural resources!

## Groundwater Update

The Dakota SWCD continues to assist county and state partners with groundwater efforts. At this time, most efforts are related to implementing practices that help protect the quality of our groundwater. In 2022, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners adopted the Agricultural Chemical Reduction Effort (ACRE) Plan, a key task within the full County Groundwater Plan that outlines strategies for improving our groundwater resources.

These efforts parallel the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's monitoring and outreach work in the Hastings Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA). The Dakota SWCD also assists with coordination of a Local Advisory Team for the Hastings DWSMA.

## Tree Sale

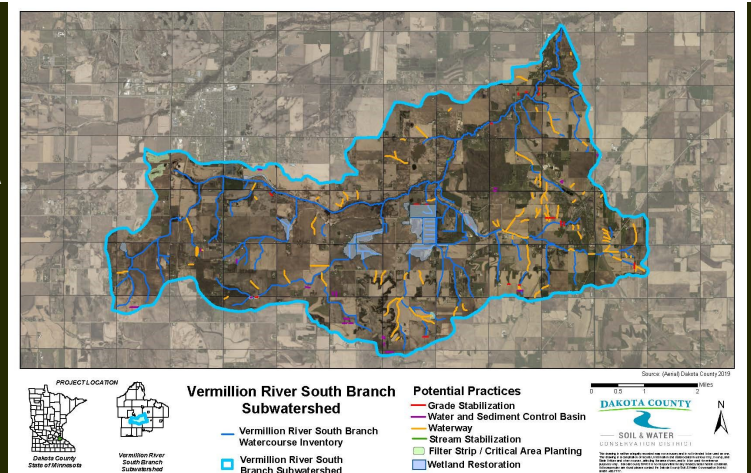
The Dakota SWCD held an annual tree sale in 2022 offering high-quality deciduous shrub, tree, and conifer bare-root seedlings at a low cost for urban and rural conservation purposes.

The 12,050 seedlings sold through the tree sale were all species native to Dakota County and were available in late April for early spring planting.

## Subwatershed Assessments

2022 activities included the completion of two additional sub-watershed assessments (SWAs): the South Branch Vermillion River and Chub Lake/Chub Creek Headwaters. A SWA is a prioritization process used to identify cost-effective water quality improvement projects. The SWA includes evaluating a specific geographic area, identifying specific pollutants to address in that area, and evaluating specific locations and project types that can help reduce those pollutants. The final report includes a list of potential projects ranked on cost-effectiveness.

The SWA process helps prioritize conservation project opportunities, initiates discussions with landowners about implementing those projects, and aids in future funding requests. Since 2016, the Dakota SWCD has completed eight SWAs throughout Dakota County. There are currently two SWAs in progress and three additional SWAs are scheduled to start in 2023.



## Partners

*This is a partial list of partners the Dakota SWCD worked with in 2022 (alphabetically):*

- 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
- Egan-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

## Landscaping for Clean Water

**2022 kicked off the 16th year of our Landscaping for Clean Water program.** We continued our partnership with watershed management organizations and cities to provide landowners with the skills and resources needed to protect local water quality and provide habitat for pollinators through the installation of raingardens, native gardens, and native shoreline plantings.

**355 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.

**176 individuals took part in the Design Course,** including 52 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 **39 completed projects.**

In addition, **93 people participated in maintenance workshops** that provided season-specific information on how to maintain and promote the health, performance, and beauty of their project.



## Dakota County SWCD Board of Supervisors & Staff December 2022

### Board

District 1: Kevin Chamberlain, Vice Chair  
District 2: Laura Zanmiller, Chair  
District 3: Chelsea Skog, Secretary  
District 4: Bruce Johnson, Public Relations & Information Officer  
District 5: Jayne Hager Dee, Treasurer



### Staff

Brian Watson, District Manager  
Curt Coudron, Project Management Supervisor  
Joe Barten, Sr. Resource Conservationist  
Ashley Gallagher, Sr. Resource Conservationist  
Todd Matzke, Resource Conservationist  
Matthew Sorvig, Resource Conservationist  
John Stelzner, Resource Conservationist  
Lindsey Albright, Water Resource Specialist  
Dave Holmen, GIS Specialist  
Pam LaValle, Finance & Grants Coordinator  
Diane Schmidtke, Administrative Specialist