



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Dakota County SWCD



WORKING TOWARDS CLEAN WATER AND HEALTHY SOILS KEPT THE DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BUSY IN 2024!

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 2025!



HIGHLIGHTS

Assisted landowners with land and water issues at over 225 sites around the county.

Provided technical assistance and cost share funds to install 116 conservation projects resulting in the removal of 1,679 lbs of phosphorous, 1,245 tons of total suspended solids (sediment) and 22,615 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.

Collected 298 water quality samples in 26 water bodies across 4 watersheds. Monitored water quantity at 45 sites. Performed 7 habitat and biomonitoring assessments.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION ACROSS DAKOTA COUNTY

In 2024, 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 create and preserve pollinator and 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.



COST SHARE FUNDING

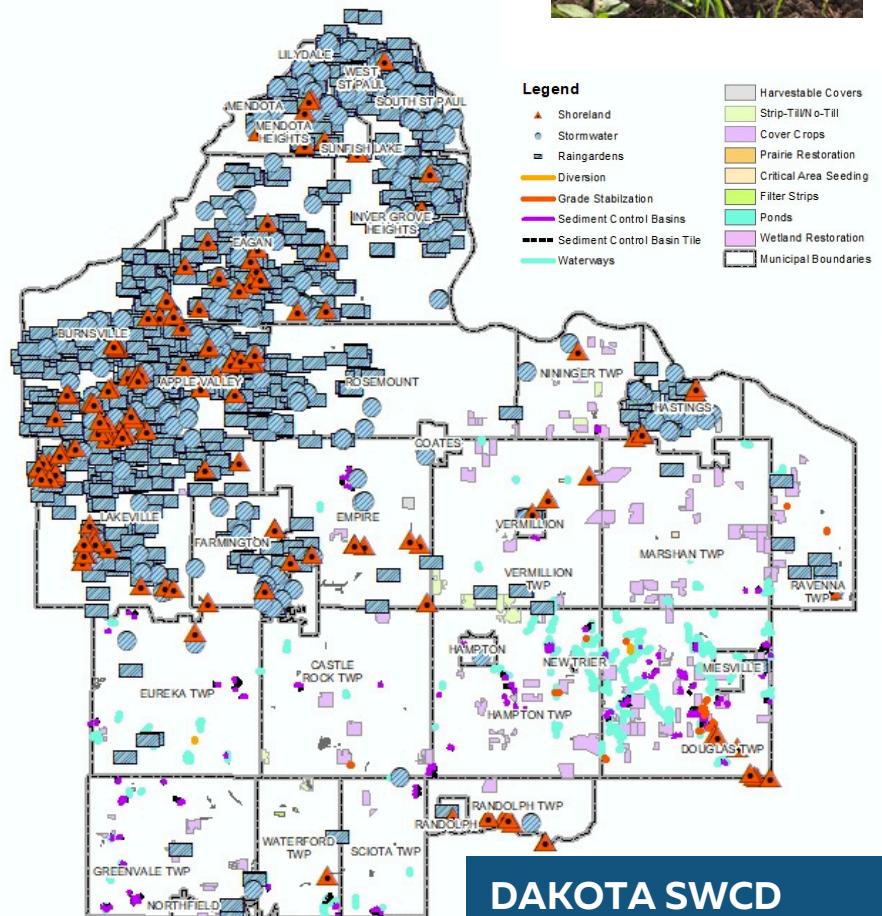
Along with providing technical assistance throughout the planning and installation process, over \$333,000 of funding was provided through cost share programs that:

- Restored 8 acres of native prairie
- Constructed 1,530 linear feet of grassed waterways
- Established cover crops on 3,975 acres of cultivated land
- Developed restoration plans for native plant communities
- Assisted Cities and Townships by developing model ordinances to protect surface water and ground water
- Increased water storage capacity by restoring wetlands and installing water control basins



Conservation projects only happen because of partnerships big and small! The Dakota SWCD worked with partners on several projects this year, including:

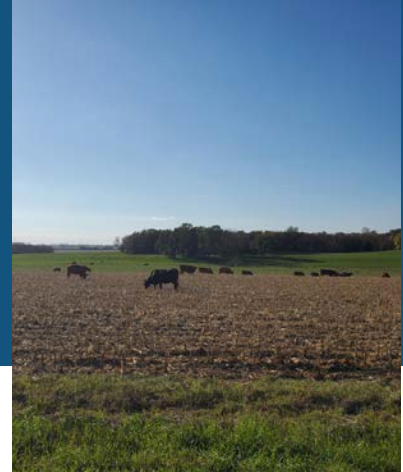
- City of Mendota Heights - Victoria Curve Raingardens
- Eagan Places of Worship Stormwater Assessments
- Endres Farm Partnership Soil Health Practices
- Grace Lutheran Church Stormwater Infiltration
- ISD 191 - Nicollet Middle School Stormwater Infiltration and Treatment
- Interstate Valley Creek Streambank Stabilization and Stormwater Best Management Plan Projects
- Jordan and Braun Wetland Restoration Projects
- Legvold Soil Health Practices
- Maher Cover Crops
- Riley Native Prairie Restoration
- Sharing Our Roots Native Prairie Restoration
- Stein Water and Sediment Control Basins
- Strohfus Stock Farms Harvestable Cover
- Thomas Irving Dodge Nature Center Manure Management



**DAKOTA SWCD
PROJECTS MAP**

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST

The Dakota SWCD Board proudly selected the Callister Farms as the 2024 Outstanding Conservationist. Chip and Micki Callister maintain a 30 pair cow – calf operation and are stewards of 900 acres of land in Dakota and Goodhue County. Callister Farms have a long history of implementing conservation practices, including planting cover crops using drones, conservation tillage, converting irrigation systems from high pressure to low pressure, implementing an irrigation water management plan, installing diversions, and most recently a grassed waterway project.



LANDSCAPING FOR CLEAN WATER & LAWNS RE-IMAGINED

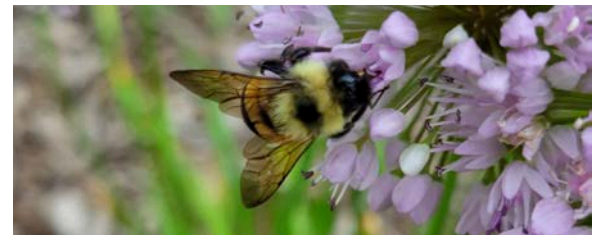
2024 was the 18th year of our Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW) program and first year of our Lawns Re-Imagined (LRI) program. We partnered with watershed management organizations and cities to provide landowners with the skills and resources needed to protect local water quality and provide habitat for pollinators through the installation of raingardens, native gardens, native shoreline plantings and low input turfgrass.

Staff provided nine presentations at locations around the county to close to 300 participants.



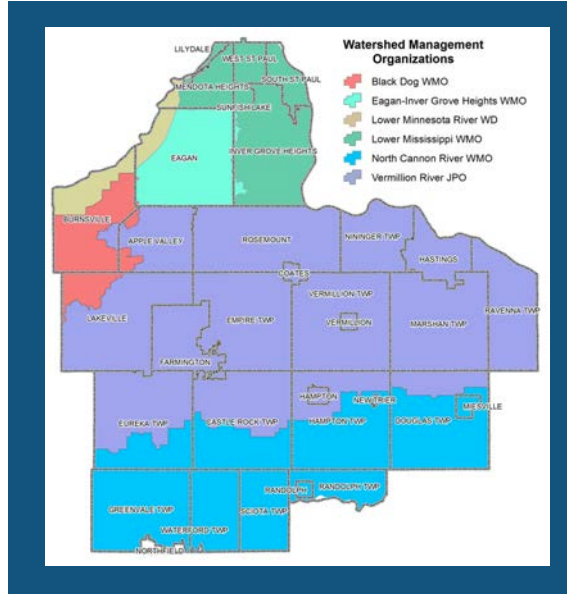
Class Type	Number of Classes	Number of Participants
LCW Introduction Class	5	244
Lawns Re-Imagined Class	2	
Natural Shoreline Class	1	23
LCW Garden Maintenance Class	1	17

127 individuals took part in the LCW Design Course. Dakota SWCD staff provided on-site project layout and installation guidance for participants installing a project on their property, resulting in 55 completed LCW and LRI projects.



LOCAL WATERSHEDS

Dakota SWCD staff serve as either the Administrator or the Technical Lead for four watersheds in Dakota County. The Dakota SWCD also helped facilitate the implementation of watershed plan projects and programs with all six watersheds in Dakota County. This includes implementing projects and programs, as well as providing water monitoring, education and outreach programming, project management, technical assistance for a variety of different project types, and grant management.



Scan the QR code to learn more about watersheds and find out which watershed you live in!

PROGRAM PARTNERS

This is a partial list of partners the Dakota SWCD worked with in 2024 (alphabetically):

- Black Dog WMO
- Cities and Townships of Dakota County
- Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board
- Clean River Partners
- Dakota County
- Egan-Inver Grove Heights WMO
- Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
- Lower Mississippi River WMP
- Metropolitan Council
- Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board
- North Cannon River WMO
- 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

CONSERVATION CONNECTION

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

DAKOTA SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & STAFF

Board

District 1: Kevin Chamberlain, Chair
 District 2: Laura Zanmiller, Vice Chair
 District 3: Brian Raney
 District 4: Bruce Johnson, Secretary and Public Relations Officer
 District 5: Jayne Hager Dee, Treasurer

Staff

Ashley Gallagher, District Manager
 Curt Coudron, Project Management Supervisor
 Joe Barten, Program Management Supervisor
 Todd Matzke, Resource Conservationist
 Alex Scurto, Resource Conservationist
 Dru Larson, Conservation Technician
 Lindsey Albright, Monitoring & Outreach Coordinator
 Dave Holmen, Sr. Wetland & GIS Coordinator
 Victoria Ranua, Watershed Coordinator
 Pam LaValle, Finance & Grants Coordinator
 Chris Houston, Administrative Specialist

2024 TREE SALE

The Dakota SWCD held the annual tree sale offering high-quality deciduous shrub, tree, and conifer bare-root seedlings at a low cost for urban and rural conservation purposes. The 13,000 seedlings sold through the tree sale were all species native to Minnesota and found in Dakota County and were available in late April for early spring planting.

