



# East Otter Tail

Soil & Water Conservation District

2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

## WATER PROJECT FEATURE



### West Leaf Lake Dam Removal

In 2020, we started surveying and preparing for the removal of the dam on West Leaf Lake. Working with the Minnesota DNR, we received funding in 2021 to remove the deteriorating 85 year old dam and replace it with a series of rock weirs. These weirs maintain the current level of the lake while allowing fish passage through the river and lakes. Demolition of the dam and construction of the rock weirs took place over three very cold days earlier this winter.





# TREES AND NATIVE SEEDING



## Tree Sales and Planting

In 2021 we sold over 56,500 conservation grade trees in our annual tree sales. We planted 8,600 trees followed by 16,000 linear feet of tree matting —that's 3 miles of fabric!



## Native Seed

This spring was a great year for prairie plantings! We planted 350 acres of native seed on 14 different sites across East Otter Tail County using our no-till drill. We sold enough seed for 814 acres, and many landowners utilized our rental drill.



## NEW ONLINE TREE STORE

New in 2022, you can now order trees on your computer! See real time availability and pay with a credit card on our online store. Check out our website for more details.



[Home](#) [Online Store](#) [Contact](#)



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Our online store is now open.

## Rentals

We have a 10 foot no-till Haybuster drill, an ATV Dewdrop no-till drill, and a tree planter available for rent on a first-come first-serve basis. Our staff can also be hired for tree planting, matting, or custom seeding. Contact our office for more information.



# SHORELINE

With the help of the Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa and the West Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District, we restored 18,116 square feet of shoreline with 6,696 native grass and flower plugs, 750 feet of coir logs, 14,992 square feet of erosion control fabric, and 16.25 pounds of native seed on 12 projects covering 9 lakes! Whew, we made it through!

While these projects may seem small in size, they will reduce pollutant and sediment runoff from getting into our lakes and rivers. In EOT, **these projects saved 16,800 lbs/year of sediment, 1,860 lbs/year of soil, and 9.6 lbs/year of phosphorus from entering our lakes!** Talk about doing your part to improve water quality! Great work, guys!



*If you have a lake home on Big Pine Lake, Little Pine Lake, South Lida Lake, Wall Lake, or Walker Lake you may have noticed there may be areas of high disturbance, increasing phosphorus, or frequent algae blooms. We have a special grant opportunity to help you address stormwater or wave action that's causing erosion and contributing to excess nutrients. Give us a call or shoot us an email to learn more!*



# WATER PLANNING

## Otter Tail One Watershed, One Plan

The Otter Tail 1W1P planning process started in 2021, with two public kickoff meetings held in Detroit Lakes and Fergus Falls. Over 50 people attended the meetings, and more than 250 people responded to an online survey. These meetings and surveys were used to develop our priority resource list for the Otter Tail River Watershed. The plan should be finished by the end of this year, and we should be able to start putting projects in the ground in 2023.



## Redeye River One Watershed, One Plan

The Redeye River 1W1P is now in implementation stage! Planning documents were signed by officials from the EOT SWCD, Otter Tail County, Wadena SWCD and Wadena County, Becker SWCD, and Todd SWCD. Since receiving funding, we've encumbered and/or spent \$46,607 on projects directly benefitting Redeye River water quality.

## Have a project in mind?

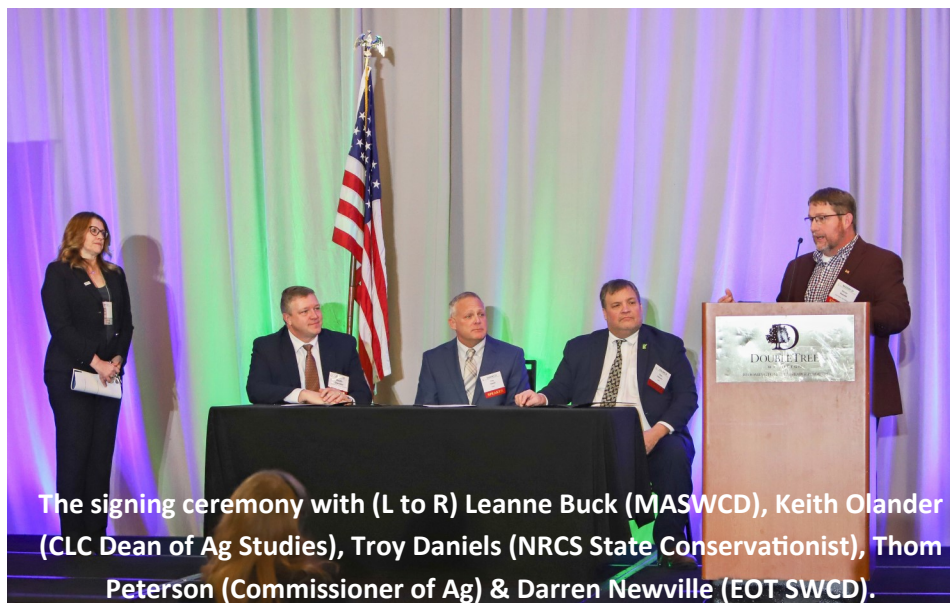
Do you have a conservation project you would like to do on your land? Keep an eye out for funding opportunities coming your way! Our focus on the Otter Tail and Redeye River watersheds means we may be able to provide assistance and/or cost share. If you have forest land, pasture/grassland, or crop land in either of these watersheds and you want to implement a conservation practice, let us know!

Some projects we have funded include manure pits, rotational grazing systems, shoreline restorations, and tree plantings, to name just a few.



## New RCPP Grant Opportunity for Irrigation Practices

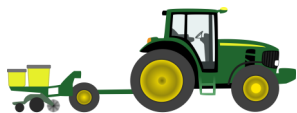
The EOT SWCD is part of a partnership that has received \$3.5 million of federal funds to work directly with producers using irrigation to implement conservation practices that protect groundwater quantity and quality. This funding will support the adoption of new technologies and practices to improve irrigation water use efficiency. Contact our office to learn more.



The signing ceremony with (L to R) Leanne Buck (MASWCD), Keith Olander (CLC Dean of Ag Studies), Troy Daniels (NRCS State Conservationist), Thom Peterson (Commissioner of Ag) & Darren Newville (EOT SWCD).



# AGRICULTURE



## Irrigation Scheduling Program

2021 was a tough year for farmers. Things started off looking optimistic, with crops getting in the ground timely. Then a hard frost hit in May, hitting some producers and sparing others. We got a minimal amount of rain all the way through mid-August, leaving the area in a severe drought.

Irrigation was relied on heavily this summer in order to produce a crop.

We had 80 fields for 35 farmers in the 3 county area enrolled in the program. All rain gauges were pulled around September 2, 2021 for a total of 15 weeks of irrigation scheduling. Here's to hoping we don't need quite so much irrigation in 2022!

**Irrigators, check out page 4 for an additional funding opportunity!**

### **In Wadena & Todd Counties:**

- 9 Corn Fields
- 7 Soybean Fields
- 1 Alfalfa Field
- 1 Black Bean Field



### **In Otter Tail County:**

- 40 Corn Fields—Average irrigation: 10.04 inches. Average rainfall: 7.36 inches
- 13 Soybean Fields—Average irrigation: 8.17 inches. Average rainfall: 7.29 inches
- 7 Kidney Bean Fields—Average irrigation: 9.57 inches. Average rainfall: 4.44 inches



## Cover Crop Grant

In 2021 we continued our work on a cover crop grant, working with 21 producers seeding over 1,512 acres of cover crops using a variety of seeding methods. 2 producers planted cover crops in June, 7 in August, and 12 in September. Overall, it was a tough year for cover crops due to little rain. Producers who were able to utilize irrigation did well, but some of the earlier planted cover crops stayed dormant until it started to rain in August.

We had three cover crop plots again this year in Perham, Parkers Prairie, and Staples. Each had cover crops interseeded into corn with four different mixes, two different planting times, and two different methods of seeding.



## Nutrient Management Initiative

This year staff worked with 8 producers and 4 crop advisors to install NMI plots with assistance from the MDA. The NMI program helps producers offset the cost of experimenting with different practices on their farm with the goal of reducing input costs, increasing yield, and limiting environmental impact.





### County Ag Inspector

Our grant from the MDA for controlling wild parsnip and common tansy in East Otter Tail County wrapped up in 2021 with great success. Fifty acres were treated for wild parsnip and common tansy

The SWCD continued to map common tansy, wild parsnip, leafy spurge, and other noxious weeds in 2021. We are up to 15 townships mapped and will continue this project as funding & time allows.

The County Ag Inspector presented at the 2021 MN Association of Townships virtual spring meeting on noxious weeds. Great questions were asked and a big thanks went out to townships for all the work they do to help manage noxious weeds!



### 2021 Conservation Cooperator of the Year

In 2021, we recognized Ken and Ron Sakry and family as our Outstanding Conservationists! On their farm, they utilize conservation tillage to minimize disturbance of the soil and plant cover crops to further build soil health. In their operation they include soil sampling, split applications of nitrogen, and variable rate applications to effectively and efficiently use fertilizers, and utilize buffers and filter strips to further protect water quality. Congratulations to the Sakry family, and thanks for all the good work you do!

### Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

In 2021, Jim and EOT SWCD staff helped 20 farming operations become certified in the North Central area, plus 7 endorsements for soil health, integrated pest management, and wildlife were awarded.

John and Chad Walkups' farming operations achieved Water Quality Certification in 2021. The Walkups farm southwest of Fergus Falls and plant a crop rotation of corn, soybeans, and wheat. Their use of conservation tillage, cover crops, grassed filter strips, and rotational grazing result in low soil erosion rates and protect water quality. Careful nutrient management and pest management are also important in the Walkup operation.

Wayne Enger (SWCD board member) earned the Wildlife Endorsement on his Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certified farm.







EQIP funded ag waste pits



## 2021 Review for East Otter Tail County

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**  
24 applications with 15 contracts funded
- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**  
3 application with 1 contracts funded
- **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General**  
98 applications with 69 contracts funded
- **2022 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)**  
Now accepting applications through March 11

Both East Otter Tail Soil & Water Conservation District and USDA are an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

## SWCD UPDATES

Hayley Courneya returned as our 2021 summer intern. Some of her duties as intern included assisting staff with irrigation scheduling, mapping noxious weeds, working on shoreland projects, taking photos, organizing files, and other various SWCD projects. Hayley grew up in Vergas, Minnesota and graduated from Frazee High School. She is currently in her third year at NDSU where she is majoring in Natural Resource Management. She likes to spend her time kayaking and boating at the lake, as well as hanging out with friends and family.



### 2021 EOT SWCD Budget Summary

Income	
County Income	\$200,000.01
State Income	\$695,145.71
Building Income	\$51,119.04
Charges for Services	\$527,944.85
Misc. Income	\$40,137.18
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,541,346.79</b>
Expenses	
Personal Service	\$883,624.30
Operational Expense	\$58,518.42
Project Expense	\$563,165.50
Building Expense	\$28,782.39
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,434,090.61</b>



# WHAT'S NEW?



Brady is the new Coordinating Wildlife Biologist – Grazing Specialist for North Western Minnesota, working in partnership with NRCS and Pheasants Forever. He went to Black Hawk Community College, where he majored in Agri-business Management, Crop Production Technology, and Equine Science. He enjoys hunting and fishing and takes pride in introducing and educating others who are curious about the outdoors.



Tanner is the newest District Technician at the EOT SWCD. He is responsible for Drill Rental, Custom Seeding and Seed Sales, and the Tree Planting and Sales program. He has a background in Wildlife Management, and spends most of his free time hunting, fishing, and working on his family's hunting properties.



Kristi is our new Administrative, Education and Outreach Assistant. She provides administrative support for both the East Otter Tail and Wadena SWCDs, as well as assisting with our education and outreach efforts. She enjoys working on her family's land north of Perham in Becker County in addition to being outdoors gardening, mountain biking, and skiing.



## MASWCD Teacher of the Year

At the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Convention, Prairie Wind Middle School's Rondi Ulmer was recognized as the Minnesota Conservation Teacher of the Year. Ms. Ulmer has been teaching in Perham since 1991, and we are honored to work with her to teach students about our natural resources. One of Ms. Ulmer's longest running projects is the testing and mapping of nitrates in well water, teaching students the importance of clean water and how we can improve our shared water resources.



# EDUCATION & OUTREACH

## Conservation Days

After a break in 2020, we were glad we could hold Conservation Days again in 2021! With a new venue and some new presenters, we hosted 339 students from 6 schools across Otter Tail County. It was great to be able to hold an event in person, especially out in the spring weather at Glendalough State Park!



## COMING IN 2022...

We are working with Otter Tail County to host We Are Water, a traveling exhibit that shows our relationships with water. Farmers, resort/lake homeowners, anglers, faith communities, artists, industry, students, people who drink well water, conservationists, and everyone all have a unique and important connection to water. By working together, the group hopes to tell a more complete story about water in Otter Tail County, including our communities' goals to build relationships and responsibilities to water. Stay tuned for more information!



## Breakfast on the Farm

This fall the 4th annual Breakfast on the Farm event was held at Twin Spruce Farm, a working dairy just north of Perham. The EOT SWCD along with many partnering groups served over 1000 people breakfast, and everyone was able to tour the farm and check out the dairy cows, who were very curious about all the fuss! Activities were held for the kids, and every type of farm equipment was out to look at. Breakfast on the Farm is a great opportunity to check out a working farm and enjoy a free breakfast while chatting with your local farming community. Stay tuned for a 2022 date and location!





### Our Staff:

District Manager: Darren Newville

Shoreland Specialist: Aimee Duchene

District Technician: Liz Wiese

Farm Bill Technician: Tanner Schmitz

Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

District/Irrigation Technician: Trisha Demarais

Irrigation/Nutrient Management Specialist: Nathan Wiese

Area Certification Specialist: Jim Lahn

Water Planner/Watershed Coordinator: Vacant

Administrative/ Ed & Outreach Assistant: Kristi Rorah



*Back row, left to right: Mitchell Janson (Wadena staff), Chantal Tougas, Anne Oldakowski (Wadena staff), Liz Wiese, Aimee Duchene, Darren Newville*

*Front row, left to right: Kristi Rorah, Jim Lahn, Nathan Wiese, Tanner Schmitz, Trisha Demarais, Ben Underhill, Hayley Courneya (2021 intern)*

### EOT SWCD Supervisors:

Chairman: Lyle Dittmann

Vice Chairman: Steve Inwards

Public Relations: Wayne Enger

Secretary: Terry Greenwaldt

Treasurer: Denny Reynolds

- ◆ Board meetings are held at 7:30 a.m. the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the EOT SWCD office. The public is welcome to attend!
- ◆ The office is closed on all federal holidays
- ◆ We Are Water Exhibit, Fergus Falls: August 18-October 10
- ◆ 5th Annual Breakfast on the Farm: Fall 2022



# East Otter Tail

## Soil & Water Conservation District

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• (218)346-9105 •

• [www.eotswcd.org](http://www.eotswcd.org) •

