

# 2020 Year in Review



**WADENA**  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District

## Forestry

### Forest Stewardship Planning Assistance

This program encourages landowners to actively manage their forested lands for multiple uses, including personal benefits, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities while protecting the quality of its natural resources. A personal, comprehensive, 10-year management plan is developed based on a forest inventory tied to landowner goals. Our office has a certified, technical plan writer to develop these plans on privately owned forest land in Wadena, Todd and Otter Tail counties. It is a fee based program depending on the amount of acres you wish to have in the plan. This fee includes not only the plan, but also a walk through of your property with our plan writer, answers to your forestry questions and a binder including information on managing your property with best practices tied to your property vision and goals. In 2020, 22 landowners were reached with 14 plans on 1,351 acres.



### Tree Sales and Planting

In 2020 we sold over 55,000 conservation grade trees (that's 6,000 more than in 2019) in our annual tree sales. We planted 4,700 trees followed by 18,000 linear feet of tree matting — that's almost 3.5 miles!



# Water Quality

## **Rain Garden Installation**

What is a rain garden? Think of a small depression in the ground that slows down overland water flow from downspouts. During heavy rain events, this garden will briefly hold water to let it soak into the ground instead of running off your yard and into the streets and stormwater systems. This is a great way to improve water quality in your area, plus the plants are a great attractant for birds and butterflies once they mature.

In the summer of 2020, we installed three raingardens for a landowner in Sebeka. The gardens were simply designed based on the size of the roof and what the landowner had noticed during rain events. A diverse list of plants native to northern Minnesota was chosen based on site characteristics and a planting plan was designed to consider height, color, and flower blooming time. The entire installation from excavation to planting occurred on one hot day in June with the assistance of East Otter Tail SWCD and a MN Conservation Corps crew.

*Below and right: The rain garden just after installation*

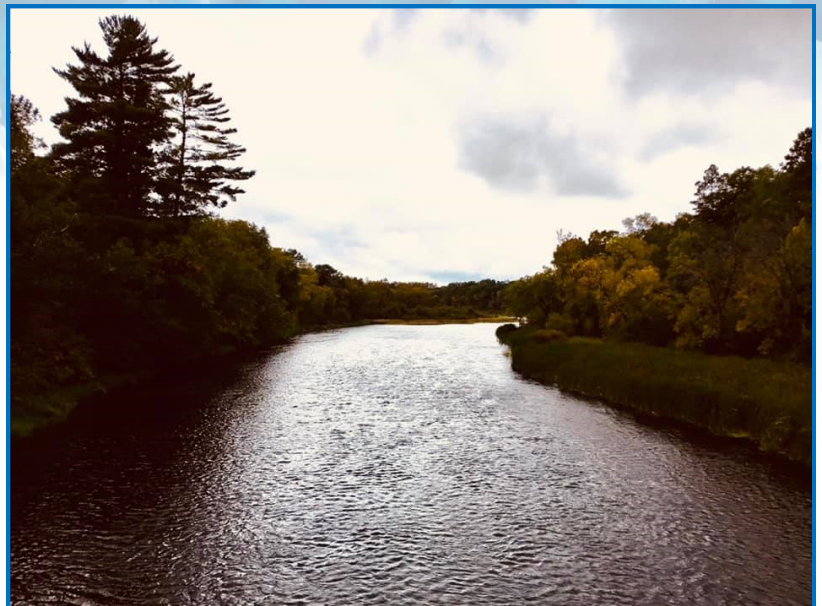


*A similar established rain garden 5 years after installation*



## **Redeye River One Watershed One Plan**

The Redeye One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) was finished and approved by BWSR in 2020. With the completion of the plan, the next ten years will focus on implementing a variety of best management practices (BMPs) to help protect the water quality of the Redeye watershed. These includes BMPs like cover crops and other soil health practices, forest stewardship plans, and grazing plans. A big part of our goal is to increase the amount of land in the watershed with known BMPs. This could include starting new practices or documenting the good practices landowners are already doing.



# Agriculture



## **Irrigation Scheduling**

Between East Otter Tail and Todd counties, Mitch had 11 producers signed up for Irrigation Scheduling on 22 fields. Most corn in the area was planted around May 10th, with most soybeans planted 10 days later. Most gauges were out until the middle of September, which was 17 weeks or irrigation scheduling for the year. An average of 3.54 inches of irrigation was applied on these fields in 2020.

Before everything shut down, we were able to hold our 2020 Irrigation and Nutrient Management Clinic with the EOT SWCD. Producers were able to hear about the latest irrigation technologies, cover crops, and updates on various programs.

## **Cover Crop Grant**

Between East Otter Tail and Wadena counties, we signed up 15 producers willing to try cover crops on their fields. State cost share was used to sign up an additional 7 producers. 1,592 acres of cover crops were installed in the two counties using the funding, and 3 field days were also held to show to success of different varieties of cover crops in our area. We will continue the grant in 2021, with some new demo plots showing different seeding techniques.



## **Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program**

There were no farms certified in Wadena County in 2020. Governor Walz has set a goal of getting one million acres in Minnesota certified, so please consider filling out an application!

Jim Lahn, our Area Certification Specialist, did help two Wadena producers with obtaining funding from the MDA for various projects on their farms. With certification, your farm is eligible for set aside pots of funding to increase best management practices on your farm. Now is a great time to fill out an application to get certified!



## **County Ag Inspector**

Using the MDA Noxious Weed Grant we received, staff conducted surveys in three townships of the county. The locations of infestations were mapped and will be used for best management plans to control those noxious weeds. The main weeds we found were spotted knapweed, Leafy Spurge, Canada Thistles, and Plumeless Thistles. We re-applied for the Grant with high hopes to continue this project to control or eliminate noxious weed infestations in the county.

# Other Programs



## Feedlots

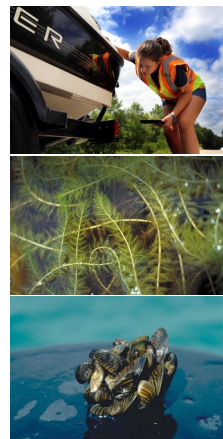
2020 was a difficult year for public outreach. We are hoping to have our bi-annual feedlot meeting with guest speakers again in the spring of 2021. We completed our required six feedlot inspections over the summer as well as helped producers with registrations and manure testing. As a reminder, every feedlot in Wadena is required to be registered in order to be compliant with MPCA rules. Registration forms, as well as manure test kits, are always available in the Wadena SWCD office. Stop by or call with any feedlot questions.

## WCA

The Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) was established by the State of Minnesota in 1991 to protect the wetlands in the state. There are 4 parts to this law: achieve no net loss of wetlands, restore or enhance diminished or drained wetlands, avoid direct or indirect impacts from activities that might diminish wetlands, and replace wetland values where avoidance is not feasible.



In 2020, staff helped with 20 wetland projects in the county last year. If you have questions about if your project will impact a wetland, contact our office.



## Aquatic Invasive Species

Inspectors were at local county lake accesses during the open water season to conduct inspections of boats entering and leaving the lakes to help stop the spread of invasive species. Removing plants and vegetation is needed to ensure that invasives are not transported to other waters in the state. In 2020, 601 inspections were performed between 4 public accesses .

## ***In Memory of Wade Salo***

*In August, we lost our dear friend and co-worker Wade to cancer. Wade was a hard worker, always had a grin on his face, and could talk to anyone. He loved his work and even to the end remained the most positive person we've known. We miss his stories and jokes, commitment to conservation, and hearing him sing along to the radio. Here's to meeting again someday!*





## **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

This program helps ag and forest producers maintain and adopt conservation activities addressing the priority resource concerns on their land.

Wadena County has: 11 Nonindustrial Private Forest (NIPF) and 20 Ag Contracts that were serviced in 2020 treating **10,340 acres**.



*Conservation Planning (Boots on the Ground)*

*Pictured is work with Cover Crops to improve soil health and water quality.*

*Soil Conservation Technician Ivan Reinke (left), and District Conservationist Joshua Hanson (right)*



## **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

EQIP is designed to assist farmers and ranchers with installation of conservation fixes on their land; working to stop wind and water erosion and provide needed habitat improvements vital for soil and water conservation on the landscape.

9 New Contracts were enrolled in 2020 treating **3,584 acres**.

Some of the practices installed last season include; CAP Nutrient Management Plan, Precision Nutrient Management, Prescribed Grazing Management and Infrastructure, Grass and Forb Plantings for Honey Bees and Pollinators, Cover Crops, and a High Tunnel.



*Forest Site Preparation, improves replanted forest establishment and vigor.*



*High Tunnel System season extension improving plant health and vigor*



*Cover crops improve soil aggregate structure and water infiltration as well as capture nutrients.*

## Our Staff:

District Manager: Darren Newville

Assistant Manager, Forestry and Water Resource  
Technician: Anne Oldakowski

District Technician: Mitchell Janson

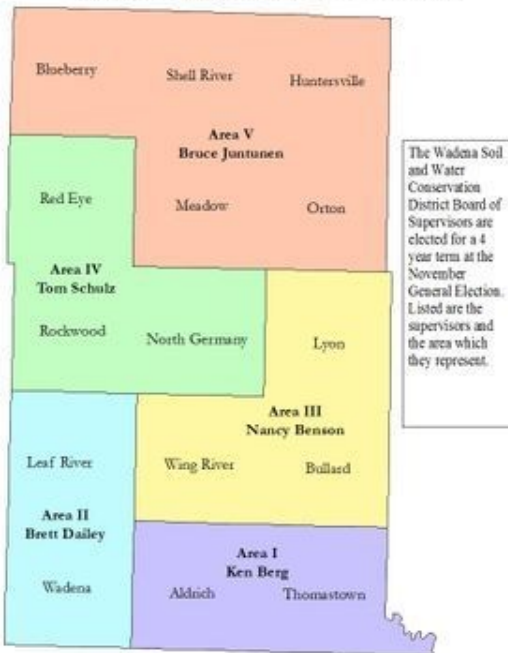
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

Water Planner/Watershed Coordinator: Ben  
Underhill



From left to right: Darren Newville, Anne Oldakowski, Chantal Tougas, Mitchell Janson, Ben Underhill

Wadena SWCD Board of Supervisor Areas



## COVID UPDATE

By nature, SWCD staff work under highly dynamic conditions and easily adapt to whatever is thrown at us -

whether it be a last minute tree planting or the coronavirus. With a few adjustments and added safety precautions, SWCD work has been able to continue as usual for the most part. Most of our staff have been healthy and we hope the same can be said for you!

As of March 2021, the office is closed to the public. We can do business over the phone or email.



Wadena SWCD Board Meetings are open to the public and held every 3rd Monday of the month at 8:00am. Check out our website for more information..

### ***Our Mission***

*The Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District seeks to achieve and maintain the highest quality and quantity of natural resources possible through wise stewardship for now and the future within the limits of human and financial means available.*



Wadena SWCD

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