

2022 Year in Review



WADENA
Soil & Water
Conservation District

Forestry



Forest Stewardship Planning Assistance

Our office has a certified plan writer to develop forest management plans on privately owned forest land in Wadena, Todd, and Otter Tail counties. These 10-year plans help landowners manage their forests for multiple purposes in order to benefit both the landowners goals and the environment. 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 2022, our plan writer created 13 plans for 1,436 acres. 8 plans were in Wadena County, 2 in Otter Tail, 2 in Becker, and 1 in Todd.

Tree Sales and Planting

It was another great year for our tree sales! In 2022, we sold 56,900 trees to almost 400 landowners between East Otter Tail and Wadena Counties. We had 17 sites to plant with over 10,000 trees, and laid 4,705 feet of weed matting.

ONLINE TREE STORE

We launched our online tree store in 2022, and it worked so well we're bringing it back!

See real time availability and pay with a credit card on our online store. Check out our website for more details.



Water Quality



Wetlands Conservation Act (WCA)

The Wetlands Conservation Act is a law enacted in 1991 that strives to protect and restore Minnesota's wetlands. It regulates draining, filling, and some excavations that take place in wetlands across the state. If you are planning some dirt work and think it may impact a wetland, call us!

In 2022, we helped 27 landowners with their work around wetlands.

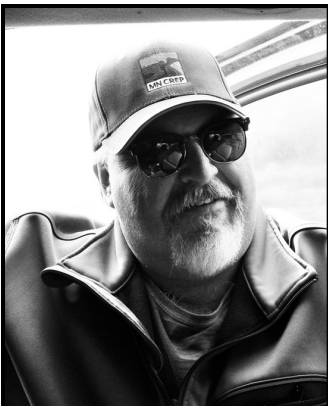
Have a project in mind?

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 Redeye River watershed means we may be able to provide assistance and/or cost share. If you have forest land, pasture/grassland, or crop land in the watershed 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 STAFF

Alyson is a District Technician in the Wadena SWCD office, assisting with the County Ag Inspector Program, Aquatic Invasive Species Program, and Surface Water Monitoring. She grew up in Fairmont, on a corn, soybean, and hog farm, and went at Northwestern College in Iowa for Ecology and Writing. In her spare time Alyson loves to write, hike, garden, and kayak with her husband Jacob and their red lab.



Don is our Watershed Coordinator and Planner. Don works with multiple watershed plans in addition to addressing local water concerns. Don grew up in the area and has returned home. Don brings a wealth of conservation experience, most recently as the manager of the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District, to his position.

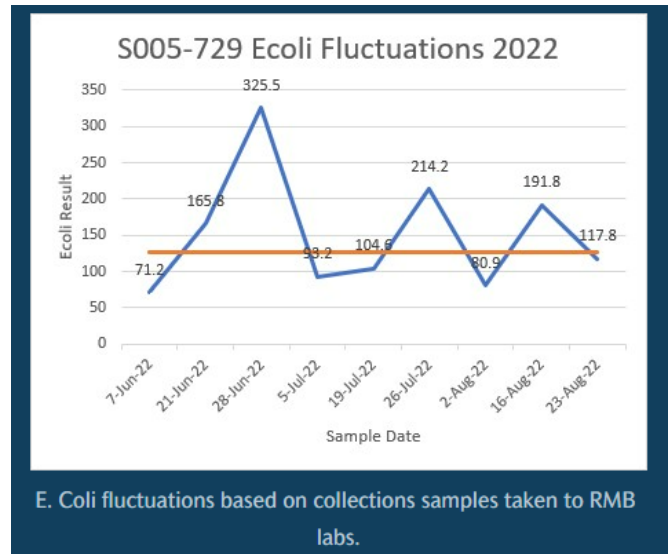


Redeye River Watershed Surface Water Assessment Grant (SWAG)

In order to determine the water quality and health of the Redeye River Watershed, we started collecting water samples from eight sites on the Redeye, Leaf, and Wing Rivers in EOT and Wadena counties in 2022.

The main concerns in this watershed are low dissolved oxygen, excess sediment, increased drainage and flow alterations, and high bacteria levels. Collecting this info will help guide and target areas for implementing best management practices in the future.

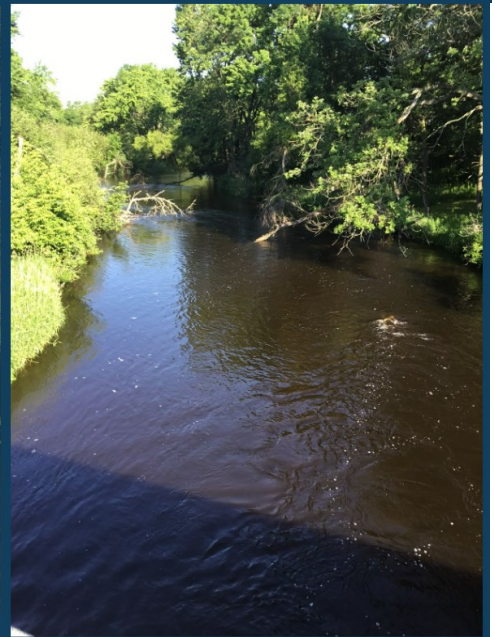
In spring of 2022, we had high water levels at all sampling sites through June. Levels remained fairly constant through August, then receded to slight drought conditions through the fall. For most sites, E. coli tended to spike in late June, and fluctuate throughout the whole collection season. The graph to the right shows E. coli fluctuations at one site on



S005-729 monitoring site on May 17, 2022, our first collection date of the season.



S005-729 monitoring site on September 6, 2022, our last collection date of the season.



Redeye River appearance on the date of the E. coli spike of 325.5 (06/28/2022).

AgBMP Loan

The Agriculture Best Management Practice Loan Program provides low-interest loans to producers and rural landowners who are wanting to prevent or reduce runoff from their property. In 2022 we approved 3 loans for a total of \$42,269.00. This was for 2 new septic systems and 1 well project.

If you are interested in receiving an AgBMP loan, contact our office!



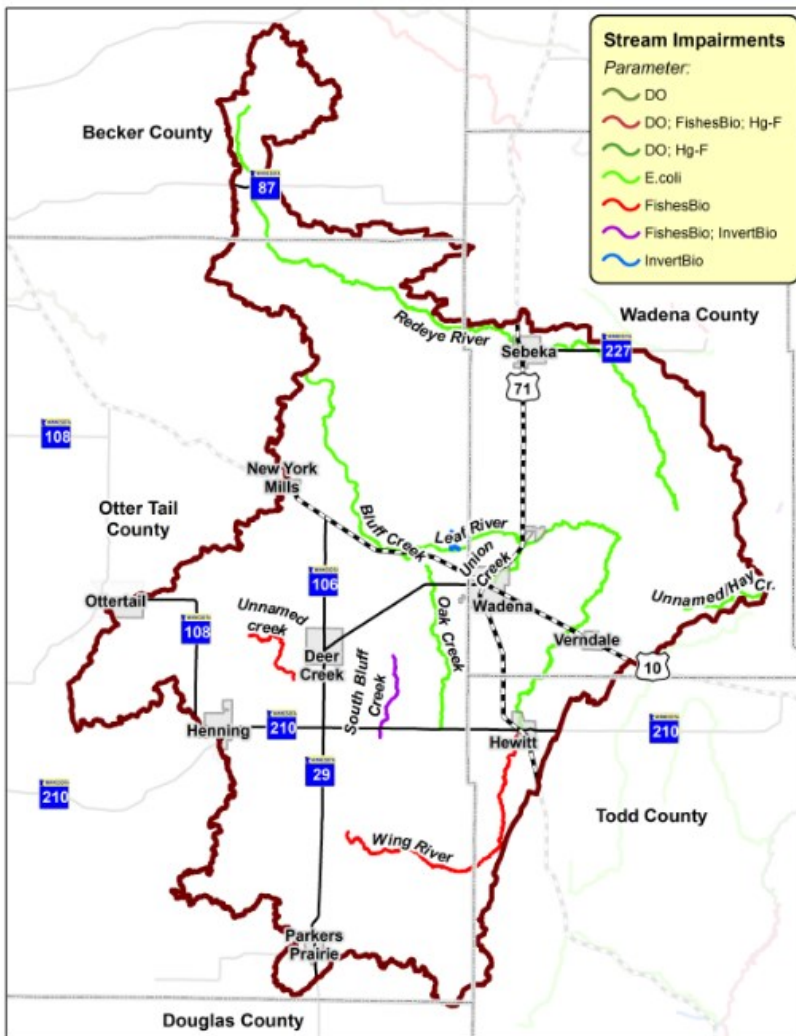
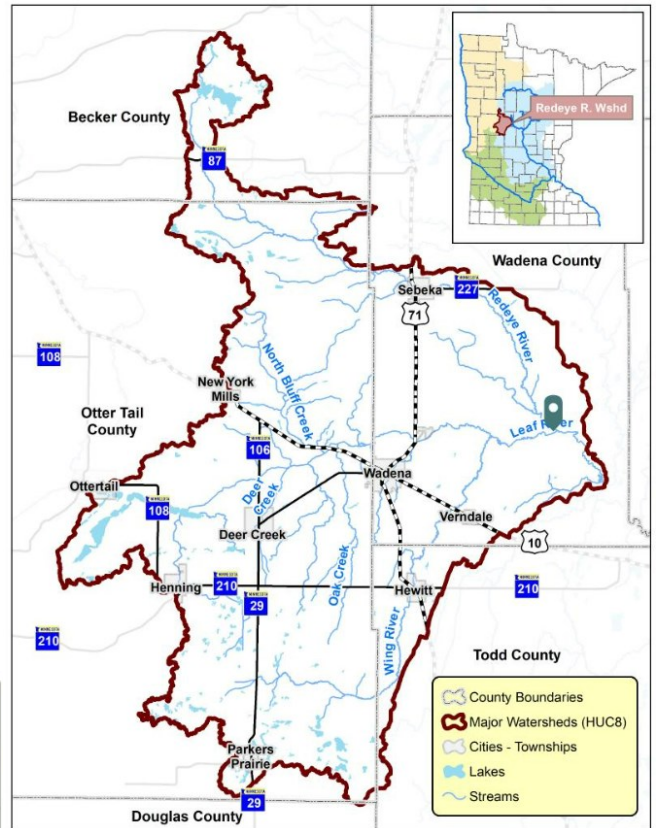
COMING IN 2023...

LCCMR: Watershed and Forest Restoration Project

Recently the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR—Minnesota’s Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund) approved funding to expand tree planting and forest land protection in three priority watersheds—Long Prairie, Redeye, and Rum.

Funding from the grant is available to landowners interested in planting trees, developing forest stewardship plans, and enrolling in the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) or other conservation easement programs.

For more information on the program contact our office.



Oak/Bluff Creek Small Watershed Program

Funding is currently available for landowners who are located in the Oak/Bluff Creek watersheds (see map insert). Both creeks are impaired for E. coli bacteria as determined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. As such, funds will be used to help landowners install conservation practices to help reduce E. coli concentration in Oak and Bluff Creeks.

Eligible bacteria management projects include: managing livestock waste through proper storage and application; prescribed grazing and fencing for pasture management; exclusion of livestock from surface waters; alternative water systems; controls to stabilize and protect creek banks; enhancements of riparian buffers; and practices that improve soil health.

Cost-share assistance is currently available for eligible practices.

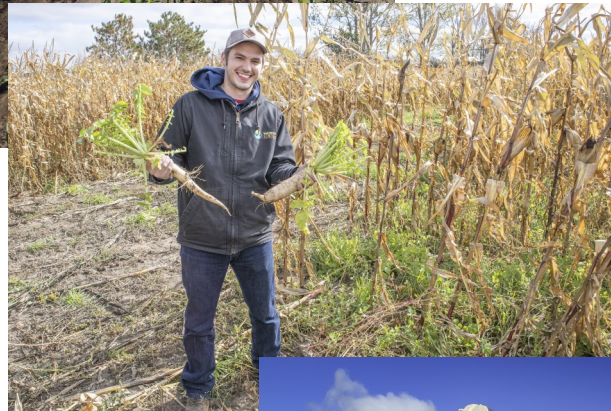


Agriculture

Cover Crops

2022 was windy, and we saw a lot of dirt being blown off of empty fields, even just outside of Wadena. This past year we saw more producers implementing cover crops, which helps reduce blowing soils. Overall cover crops did well, especially under irrigation, and provided many benefits to producers. The most popular mixes had rye or oats as a base, possibly with turnips and radishes to get soil health benefits. Those cover crops planted in the fall should help reduce blowing soils this spring!

Between East Otter Tail and Wadena counties, we provided funding for cover crops on close to 2,000 acres with 28 producers.



Irrigation Scheduling Program

2022 had very late planting due to wet conditions and a late spring. Once crops got in the ground, things took off. Rain was pretty spotty throughout the county, but fall was generally dry which made for good harvesting weather. It was an average year for irrigation amounts.

Overall we worked with 31 producers in 67 fields of corn, soybeans, kidney beans, and alfalfa.



Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program

In 2022 Jim certified 12 new farms in the northern area, including Daniel Briard near Perham. The MAWQCP is a voluntary program that recognizes agricultural producers who take the lead in implementing conservation practices that protect our water.



Irrigation Technology

Through Clean Water Funds and Federal RCPP funds we were able to work with 17 producers to install variable rate technology, soil moisture sensors, and upgrade pivot uniformity on over 2,000 acres in East Otter Tail and Wadena counties. We collaborated with partners, including Central Lakes College in Staples, to install a precision irrigation system at the Ag and Energy Research Farm. This will allow training opportunities for producers, staff, and local government officials to see precision technologies in use. CLC will also be able to use the pivot to perform advanced research demonstration projects.

Other Programs

Aquatic Invasive Species

Inspectors were stationed at Blueberry, Spirit, Stocking, and Lower Twin Lake accesses from May through September to conduct watercraft inspections to help stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. Inspections typically take 5-10 minutes, consist of survey questions, and help educate anglers and recreationists on where and how to Clean, Drain, and Dry their water-related equipment. These actions are essential in removing plants and vegetation to help ensure spreading invasives are not transported to other waterbodies within Minnesota. Overall, a total of 1006 inspections were performed between the 4 public accesses with 5% of inspections finding and removing a plant or animal species. For more information on our inspection season, a detailed summary report based on survey responses can be found on our website.



County Aq Inspector

We completed our mapping/survey work of the county using the rest of our MDA Noxious Weed Grant in 2022. Overall, the main weeds we noticed throughout the final three townships included Spotted Knapweed, Plumeless Thistle, and Canada Thistle. Like in previous years, the locations of the infestations were documented using ArcGIS software which will then be used to plan best management practices to control the noxious weeds within the county. This information also provides us with a base knowledge of what weeds Wadena County has and where they are located.

Feedlots

In 2022 we joined up with Todd SWCD to host our bi-annual Producer Meeting in Staples. Some topics included integrating cover crops into farming operations, carbon myths, silvopasture, and meat cutting.

We completed our required 7% of Wadena County feedlot inspections and helped 19 producers get re-registered.

As a reminder, every feedlot in Wadena County is required to be registered by the MN Pollution Control Agency. Registration forms, as well as manure test kits, are always available in our office.

“Helping People Help the Land”

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.

6 New Contracts were enrolled in 2021 treating **1015 acres** and 2 RCPP IPPGW 2365 Irrigation contracts treating **455 acres**. Some of the practices installed last season include; Irrigation Conversion including Variable Rate, Prescribed Grazing Management and Infrastructure, Grass and Forb Plantings, Ag Waste Closure, Cover Crops, a High Tunnel, and Pollinator Plantings.



District Conservationist Ivan Reinke (left), and District Conservationist Team Lead Joshua Hanson

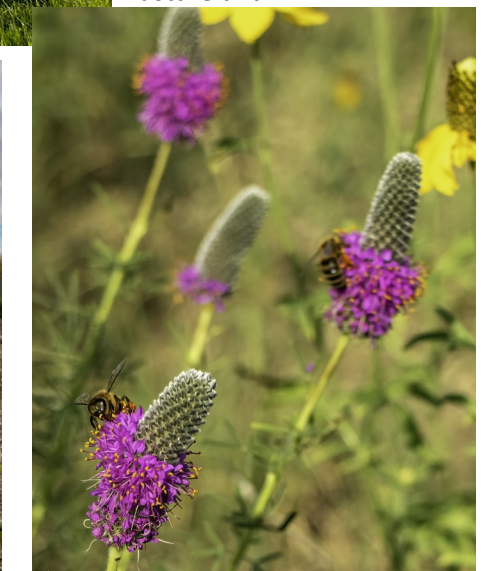


(Left) Field Day displaying Prescribed Grazing, Watering Systems, and Nutrient and Forage Management in Pastureland.

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: 2 Nonindustrial Private Forest (NIPF) and 7 Ag Contracts that were **NEW** in 2022 treating **2600 acres**.



(Above) Bees visiting purple prairie clovers in a pollinator planting.

(Left) A manure pit being closed with EQIP funds.

Our Staff:

District Manager: Darren Newville

Asst Mgr, Forestry and Water Resource Tech: Anne Oldakowski

District Technician: Alyson Levig

District Technician: Mitchell Janson

Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

Water Planner/Watershed Coordinator: Don Bajumpa



Wadena and East Otter Tail SWCD Staff

Back row, left to right: Mitchell Janson, Chantal Tougas, Anne Oldakowski, 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)

Wadena SWCD Supervisors:

Chairman: Bruce Juntunen
Vice Chairman: Tom Schulz

Public Relations: Jerry Kern

Secretary: Ken Berg
Treasurer: Brett Dailey

Wadena SWCD Board Meetings are open to the public and held every 3rd Monday of the month at 7:30am. 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
Soil & Water
Conservation District

Wadena SWCD

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