

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

DAKOTA COUNTY SWCD

THE DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT PRIORITIZED HEALTHY SOILS AND CLEAN WATER IN 2025!

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 2026!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Assisted landowners with land and water issues at over 260 sites around the county.
- Provided technical assistance and cost share funds to install 160 conservation projects resulting in the removal of 5,079 lbs of phosphorous, 4,211 tons of total suspended solids (sediment) and 55,000 lbs of nitrogen from reaching our lakes, streams or groundwater resources annually lakes, streams or groundwater resources annually.
- Engaged over 2,000 individuals through 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 291 water quality samples in 25 water bodies across 4 watersheds. Monitored water quantity at 45 sites. Performed 6 habitat and biological assessments.
- Dakota County buffers were 99.59% compliant with only minor seeding to perennial cover needed.



STREAMBANK RESTORATION



DAKOTA COUNTY



— SOIL & WATER —
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION IN ACTION ACROSS DAKOTA COUNTY

In 2025, 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. Conservation projects only happen because of partnerships big and small! The Dakota SWCD worked with partners on several projects this year, including:

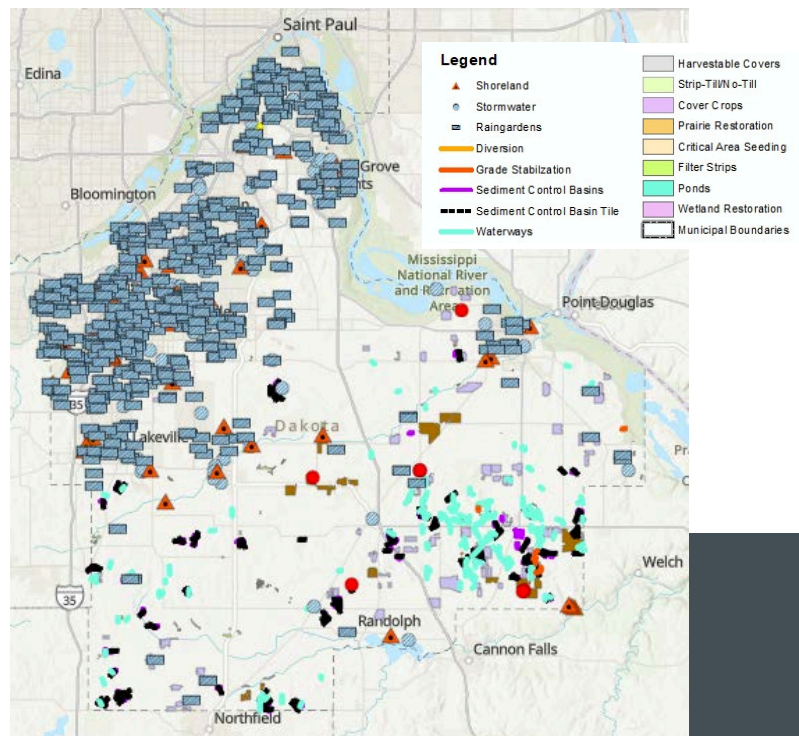


- Eagan Places of Worship Stormwater Assessments
- Interstate Valley Creek Streambank Stabilization and Sediment Reduction Projects
- McCarthy Estate Grade Stabilization and Grassed Waterway
- Naves Prairie Restoration
- Braun Wetland Restoration
- Two Rivers High School Bioretention
- Spring Lake Park Ravine Stabilization
- Mississippi River Greenway Slope Stabilizations
- D. Lake Prairie Restoration
- Meyers Sprinkler System Renovation
- Sorg Farms Soil Health Practices
- Strofus Stock Farms Harvestable Cover
- Nelson Grassed Waterway

COST SHARE FUNDING

Along with providing technical assistance throughout the planning and installation process, over \$518,000 of funding was provided through Dakota SWCD cost-share programs that:

- Restored 7.9 acres of native prairie
- Constructed 650 linear feet of grassed waterways
- Established cover crops on 8,225 acres of cultivated land
- Maintained harvestable cover of perennial crops of 179 acres
- Developed restoration plans for native plant communities
- Increased water storage capacity by restoring wetlands and installing 4 water control basins



DAKOTA SWCD PROJECTS MAP

OUTSTANDING CONSERVATIONIST

The Dakota SWCD Board proudly selected James “Jim” and Jeannine Naves as the 2025 Outstanding Conservationist. Jim and Jeannine were nominated for this year’s award as they have worked closely with the SWCD over the last decade plus to implement several conservation projects on their property near Sunfish Lake, Minnesota. From installing a residential raingarden and stabilizing an eroding shoreline to more recently undertaking a 0.5-acre native prairie restoration, Jim and Jeannine have continued to demonstrate their commitment to protecting natural resources whenever the opportunity arises.



LANDSCAPING FOR CLEAN WATER & LAWNS RE-IMAGINED

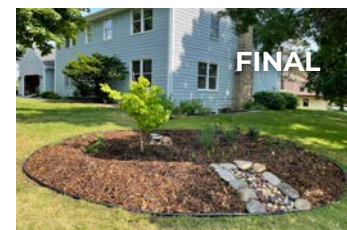
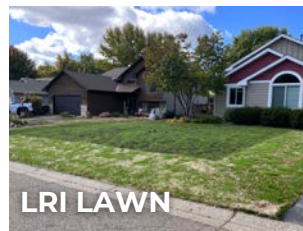
2025 was the 19th year of the Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW) program and the second year of the Lawns Re-Imagined (LRI) program. Both programs provide landowners with the skills and resources needed to protect local water quality, provide habitat for pollinators, and reduce lawn maintenance through the installation of raingardens, native gardens and shoreline plantings, and low input turfgrass.

LANDSCAPING FOR CLEAN WATER

SWCD staff provided 7 Introduction, Shoreline, and Maintenance Class presentations at locations around the county to over to 250 participants. 114 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 43 completed LCW projects.

LAWNS RE-IMAGINED

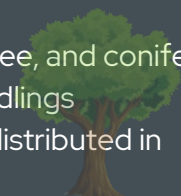
Over 200 Dakota County residents attend 2 LRI Classes. 11 households installed LRI projects, converting their lawns to more resilient and pollinator friendly species over the summer.



These programs continue to be successful thanks to partnerships with local watershed management organizations and cities that contribute through public outreach and their own garden grant initiatives.

2025 TREE SALE

The Dakota SWCD held the annual Tree Sale offering high-quality deciduous shrub, tree, and conifer bareroot seedlings at a low cost for conservation purposes. In total, nearly 14,000 seedlings representing 25 Minnesota native species were sold through the Tree Sale and were distributed in late April for early spring planting.



MINNESOTA BUFFER LAW AND THE WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT

Vegetated buffers filter out pollutants and prevent soil erosion. The Dakota SWCD assists Dakota County in monitoring compliance of the Minnesota Buffer Law and providing landowner technical assistance. In 2025, over 5,000 buffer parcels adjacent to lakes and streams were digitally reviewed and eight site visits were conducted.

The Dakota SWCD also assists cities, townships, and individual landowners determine if an area is a wetland and administer the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). In 2025, 119 wetland-related inquiries were made, 54 site visits were conducted, and 48 decisions were approved relating to wetland boundaries, no-loss determinations, exemptions, and wetland replacements..

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!

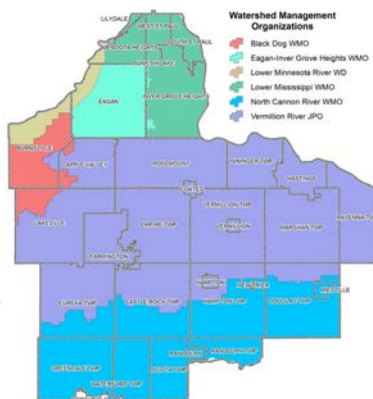
Need some information about the many different programs we offer? Head over to our website - www.dakotaswcd.org - to learn more! Connect with us on—Facebook or Instagram!

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 2025 (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

DAKOTA SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS & STAFF

Board

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

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Joe Barten, Program Management Supervisor
Curt Coudron, Project Management Supervisor
Elizabeth Asendorf, Resource Conservationist
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