



Soil and Water Conservation District Updates

Physical Development Committee

May 12, 2026

Ashley Gallagher

District Manager

DAKOTA COUNTY



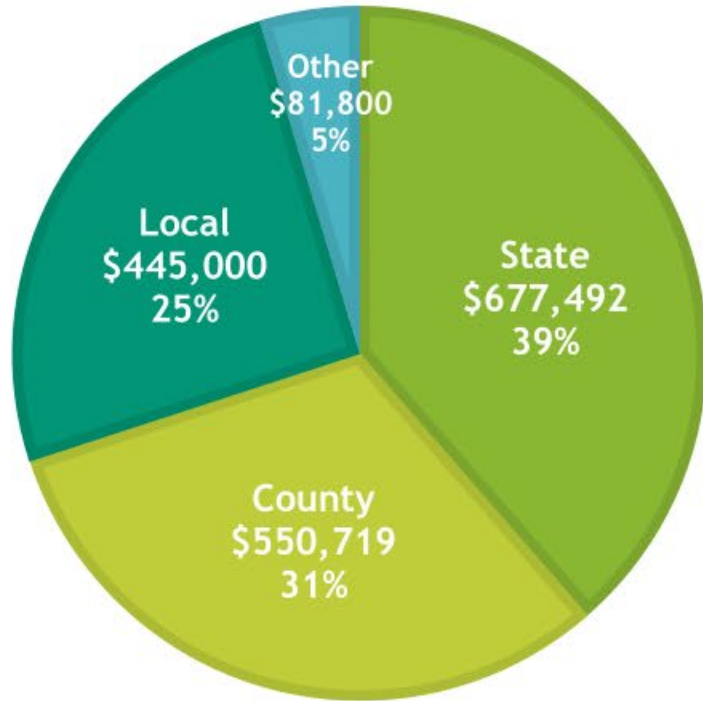
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Overview

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Funding
- ▶ 2025 Summary and Looking ahead!
 - ▶ Technical Assistance
 - ▶ Conservation Projects
 - ▶ Education and Outreach
 - ▶ Assisting County



2026 OPERATING REVENUES (DOES NOT INCLUDE PASS THRU)



Funding

- ▶ 2026 Balanced Budget
 - ▶ \$2.5 million
 - ▶ ~1/3 pass thru
- ▶ 2026 County Funding
 - ▶ General/ELF - \$368,719
 - ▶ Fee for Services Budget - \$182,000
 - ▶ CIP Project Funds - \$350,000
- ▶ For every dollar, \$1.81 goes back into the local economy (*statewide study*)
- ▶ Managing 23 grants and 18 local agreements

Funding Outlook

- ▶ 2026 Budget Cuts
 - ▶ County Funding - \$20,000
 - ▶ State Aid - \$40,000
 - ▶ Wetland Conservation Act - \$20,000
- ▶ Forecasting
 - ▶ Funding Decreasing, Costs Rising
 - ▶ Federal funding decreasing
 - ▶ State funding decreasing
 - ▶ Required work remains



Technical Assistance - Snapshot

2025

- ▶ Assisted landowners - 260 sites
- ▶ Water monitoring - 25 water bodies
- ▶ Noxious weeds - Average 24 inspections
- ▶ And more

2026

- ▶ Increase in requested assistance
- ▶ Increase in monitoring agreements
- ▶ As requested
- ▶ And more



Conservation Projects

▶ Contracts

- ▶ 264 active contracts - Urban and Rural projects

▶ Benefits

- ▶ Pollutant reductions - TMDLs
- ▶ Protection of lakes, streams, and drinking water
- ▶ Quality of life - Thriving People

▶ Trends

- ▶ Increase in Soil Health Practices
- ▶ Increase in Native Prairie Restorations



“If you’re interested,
just go talk to them.
It’s simple, they’re not
pushing anything...it’s
what works for your
farm.”

- ▶ Luke Dubbels,
Randolph Area Farmer

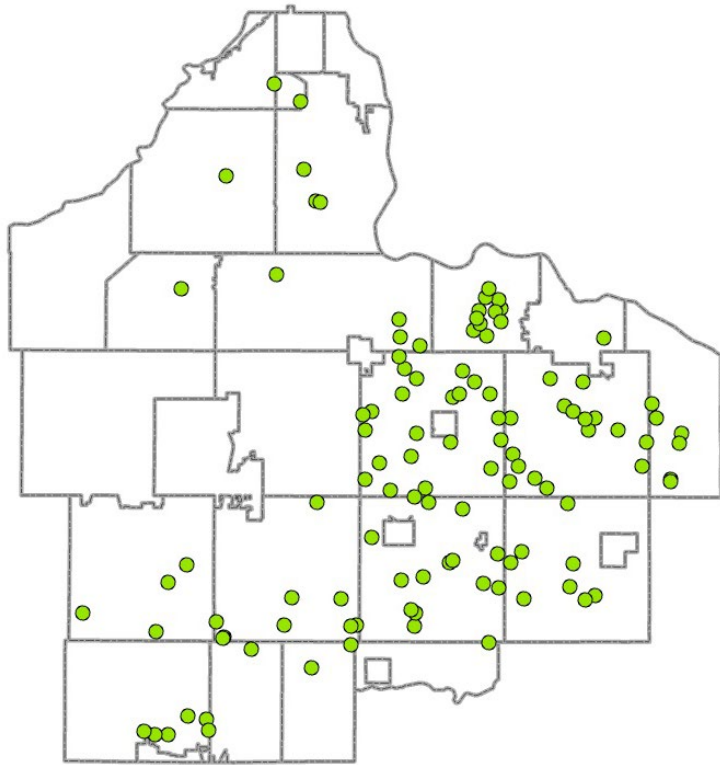




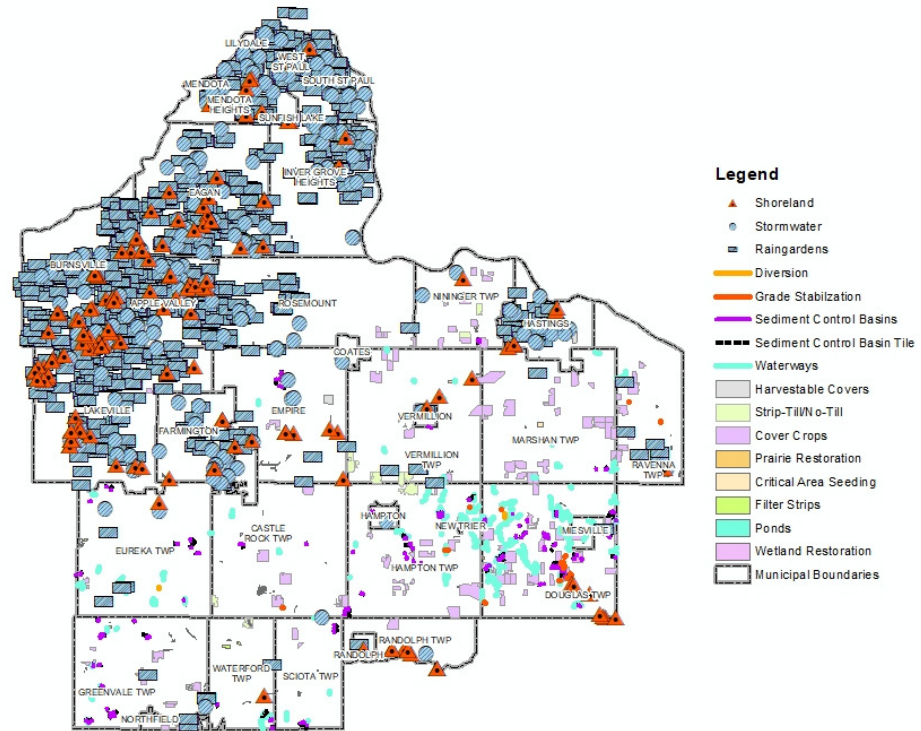
Bioretention
Basin under
construction at
Two Rivers High
School in
Mendota Heights



Irrigation system
conversion to
lower pressure
nozzles and
irrigation water
management



2025 CIP Funds



All Projects 10 years



Education and Outreach Programs

- ▶ Landscaping for Clean Water
 - ▶ Rain gardens, Native gardens, Shorelines
 - ▶ 43 projects in 2025 - Total is over 1,000
- ▶ Lawns Reimagined
 - ▶ Turf conversion
 - ▶ 2025 - 12 projects
 - ▶ Multiple County partners
- ▶ Shoreline Restoration Workshops
 - ▶ Added more in 2026



“I really want to emphasize that we had such a wonderful experience with the LCW program and working with the SWCD....I don't think we would have completed the project without the SWCD.”

▶ Hanna Warmka,
Eagan Resident

Assisting County

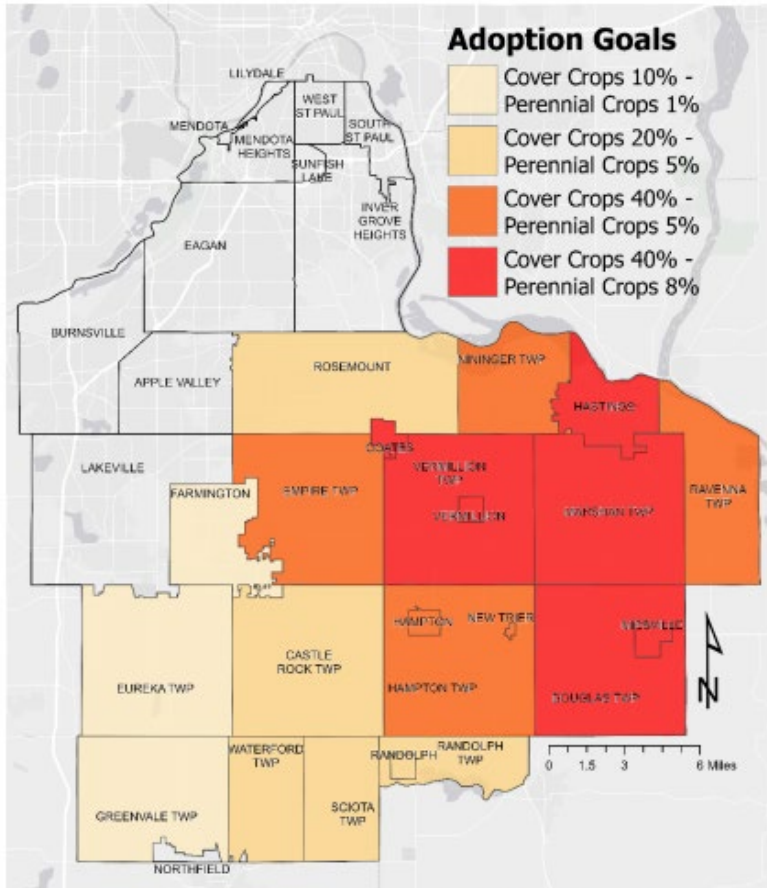
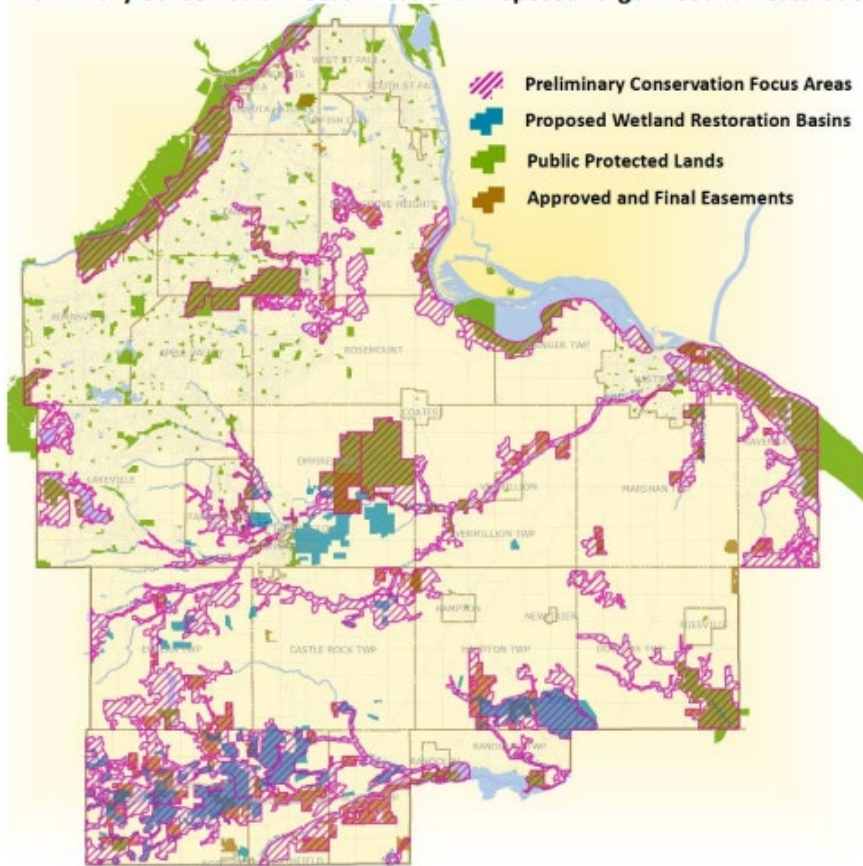


Figure 6: Interim Cover Crop and Perennial Adoption Rate Goals

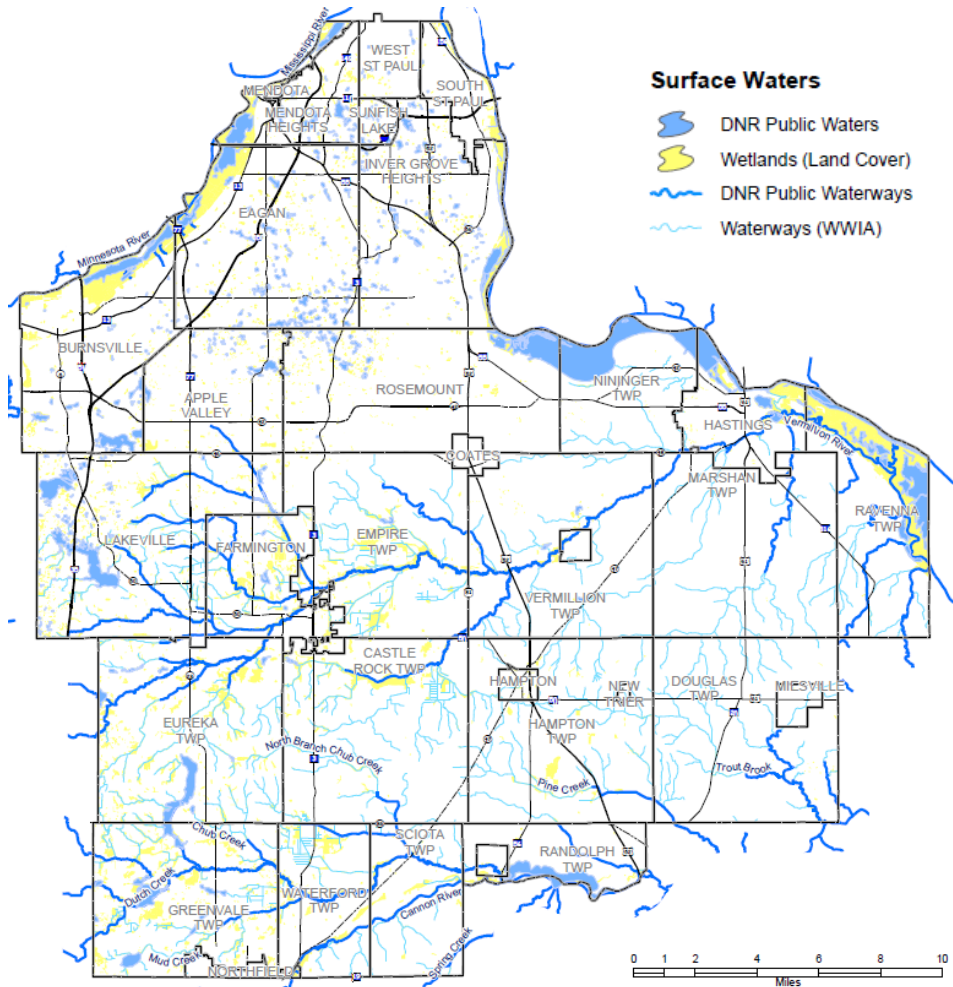
- ▶ Plans
 - ▶ Groundwater - ACRE
 - ▶ Land Conservation
- ▶ Goals
 - ▶ Cover crops/perennials
 - ▶ “Water quality and quantity is enhanced and protected”
- ▶ Regulatory
 - ▶ Wetland Conservation Act
 - ▶ Buffer Law - Ordinance 50
 - ▶ Public Drainage Ditches

Preliminary Conservation Focus Areas and Proposed Large Wetland Restoration Basins



Assisting County

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Regulatory

- ▶ Wetland Conservation Act
 - ▶ 119 activity contacts
 - ▶ 54 site visits
 - ▶ 84 Technical Evaluation Panel meetings
 - ▶ 10 violation investigations
 - ▶ 6 wetland banking applications
- ▶ Buffer Law - Ordinance 50
 - ▶ Reviewed 5,374 Parcels
 - ▶ 8 site visits
- ▶ Public Drainage Ditches
 - ▶ Inventory every 5 years (2026)

Behind the Scenes

- ▶ Trusted for Technical Review
 - ▶ Greenway projects
 - ▶ Trout Unlimited
 - ▶ MS4 maintenance
- ▶ City Agreements
 - ▶ Erosion Projects
 - ▶ Stormwater Projects
- ▶ Watershed Management Organizations
 - ▶ E-IGHWMO, LMRWMO, NCRWMO, CRWJPO
- ▶ “most valuable consultant”





DAKOTA COUNTY



— SOIL & WATER —
CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Partners in
Land and Water
Conservation