



Quarterly News & Updates

February 2024 | Issue 15

Greetings Friends and Neighbors!

The Isanti SWCD is publishing this Quarterly e-Newsletter to:

- Help keep you informed of what is happening locally that affects the health of natural resources in Isanti County;
- Increase your understanding of what the SWCD does and how you can get involved in conservation; and
- Keep you informed on how Clean Water Fund tax amendment dollars are being spent locally.

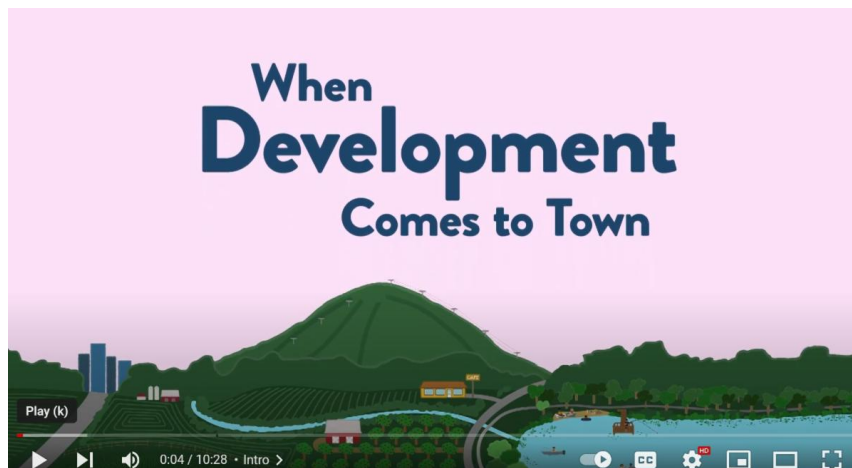
If you have any questions, please give us a call!

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Follow us on Facebook for more updates!



When Development Comes to Town



Isanti County is ranked as the eleventh fastest-growing county in Minnesota. Growth helps to support

local businesses, fund public services, and keep our communities vibrant, but all those new houses have to go somewhere. Many communities strive to find a balance between maintaining their rural character and protecting natural areas while developing. Fortunately, there are strategies that can help decision-makers achieve this.

"When Development Comes to Town" is an animated video that explores strategies communities can use for development. It is a fast-paced video that runs through a gauntlet of topics in about ten minutes, introducing the viewer to concepts ranging from shoreland ordinances to Minimal Impact Design Standards (MIDS). The video masterfully weaves together complex insights and simple practicality with visual interest.

The video was developed by the Lower St. Croix Watershed Partnership and East Metro Water Resources Education Program which allowed the Isanti SWCD to provide input on its creation.

Wetland Restoration Completed near Green Lake

This February, a 1.7 acre wetland restoration was done on County Ditch 23 in Wyanett Township to improve Green Lake's water quality. A wetland restoration aims to revive former or degraded wetlands and restore them to their natural state. Historically, many of Minnesota's wetlands were filled or drained for development, transportation, and agriculture purposes. The restoration is a long time coming after a process of assessing the site, designing the project, and waiting for installation until the wetland is dry or frozen. During installation, the site will be excavated to remove the fill and then reseeded with native plant species. The excavation



process is extensive; for this site, approximately 100 dump truck trips are required to remove all the black dirt. Fortunately, the removed soil is rich in nutrients and organic matter, which makes it valuable for crop cultivation. Finally, when native vegetation is reestablished, the wetland will be in its natural condition and be able to provide robust environmental and ecological benefits. Restored wetlands are vital in capturing stormwater, providing wildlife habitat, mitigating flooding, replenishing groundwater, and trapping sediment and nutrients. This wetland restoration site was strategically chosen to divert, capture, and filter rainwater runoff from County Ditch 23. During storm events, water will flow into the wetland, capturing sediments and nutrients that would otherwise reach Green Lake through the ditch. With this service, this wetland will capture 51 pounds of phosphorus and 17 tons of sediment from entering Green Lake every year. That is enough phosphorus to grow 25,500 pounds of algae and enough sediment to fill five hot tubs! The Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District has a goal of preventing 617 pounds of phosphorus from draining into Green Lake from the watershed. This project is a big step to get closer to that goal!

Funding for the project comes from the Rum River Watershed Partnership, a 16-year federal 319 grant, and donations from the Isanti County Sportsmen's Club. If you have land near Green Lake and are interested in helping improve its water quality, contact us! We have funding for a variety of conservation practices in the Green Lake Watershed. Call us at 763-689-3271 to get started.

Isanti SWCD Starts Farmer Led Group

We are bringing local farmers together to form a farmer-led group. Their mission? To foster collaboration, share wisdom, and directly impact our community's agriculture programs.

The first meeting of the farmer-led group took place in January. At their inaugural meeting, these representative farmers discussed strategies to improve outreach to farmers and the visions they have for the group. The group also began assisting the SWCD plan for their annual Agriculture Lunch & Learn happening in March.



Looking ahead, we will discuss with the group topics like what conservation practices farmers are interested in, the barriers they face, and how we can incentivize farmers to try a new practice. Their collective insights promise to revolutionize how we serve and support our hardworking farmers. We are very excited about the increased communication and insight from this group and hope this will improve how we serve our farmers.

New No-Till Drill Available to Rent

This year we will have a new no-till drill available to rent! We received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to help cover the cost of a new drill. This drill is able to plant cover crops and prairie seedings while being more reliable.

We are opening the new drill up to a larger rental area to serve more farmers. Our rental prices have not yet been set, but call our office or watch the website to see the latest details of the drill.

If you are interested in renting the no-till drill, call Matthew at 763-689-3271.



Events

[Lake Restoration and Protection Seminar](#)

WHEN: Thursday, February 29, 6:00pm - 7:00pm

WHERE: Cambridge Library (111 N Dellwood St, Cambridge) AND Online over Zoom

(<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcrceyorzlvHdFGlpwY6wb54T0ChusVdixp>)

Spend leap day with us and learn how you can play a role in protecting the health of Minnesota Lakes. The Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District is eager to partner with local lakeshore owners to install projects on lakeshore property that protect and improve the water quality of the lakes. Join us in-person or online.

At this workshop, we will discuss:

- Stormwater and lake water quality.
- Ways to protect lake water quality.
- Understanding your lake property.
- Taking action and addressing concerns!

[Buying Lakeshore Property 101](#)

WHEN: Tuesday, March 19th 6:00pm - 7:30pm

WHERE: Central Park, Ramsey (7925 161st Ave NW, Ramsey)

Buying Lakeshore Property 101 is a great workshop for anyone looking to buy a cabin, lake property, or even new lake residents.

At this workshop, you will learn about the different types of lakes and how to confidently select a lake that suits your needs. We will also cover all the basics of lake living, including ways to prevent algae growth, steps to protect your property, and any other questions you may have. Then, there will be a Q&A panel of realtors who can give you tips and tricks for buying a lake property!

Agriculture Lunch & Learn

WHEN: March 26th 9:30am - 12:30pm

WHERE: Cambridge Library (111 N Dellwood St, Cambridge)

Have lunch and learn about ways to improve your good farming practices. Hear about available programs, talk to other farmers, and hear from knowledgeable speakers. More details to come.

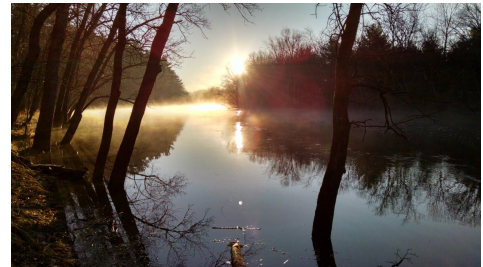
To RSVP for any of these events please contact Lgodfrey@isantiSWCD.org or call 763-689-3271. All events are free to attend.



Cost-share Available to Reforest Permanently Protected Land

Have you ever thought about reforesting your land, or making a forest management plan? Now, there is a unique opportunity to help you achieve that!

The Rum River Watershed is at the forefront of a pilot program aimed at improving Minnesota forestry on private, permanently protected land (i.e. land enrolled in conservation easements or Sustainable Forest Incentive Act). This initiative serves a dual purpose: improving water quality and promoting carbon sequestration. The program is a beginning step to the goal of reforesting one million acres! Since pre-European settlement, Minnesota has lost 15 million acres of forests. Of that loss, over 95% happened on private lands. You can help reverse this trend and get us to our goal of one million reforested acres!



The Isanti SWCD along with the Rum River Watershed Partnership, Minnesota DNR, and Board of Water and Soil Resources are helping locally implement this program.

How We Can Help You

- Work with you to create a forest stewardship plan that fits your needs.
- Funding to help you plant and implement your stewardship plan.
- Provide guidance and knowledge throughout the process to answer any of your questions.

A forestry stewardship plan outlines your land's potential, establishes your desired goals, and outlines specific actions to be taken within a designated timeframe. Importantly, a forest stewardship plan not only helps you achieve your objectives but also qualifies you for local and state tax relief and incentive programs.

If you are ready to reforest your land and are enrolled in a conservation easement or the Sustainable Forest Incentive Act please contact us! Our team is prepared to guide you through the process and help you improve water quality, carbon sequestration, and the overall well-being of Minnesota's ecosystems.

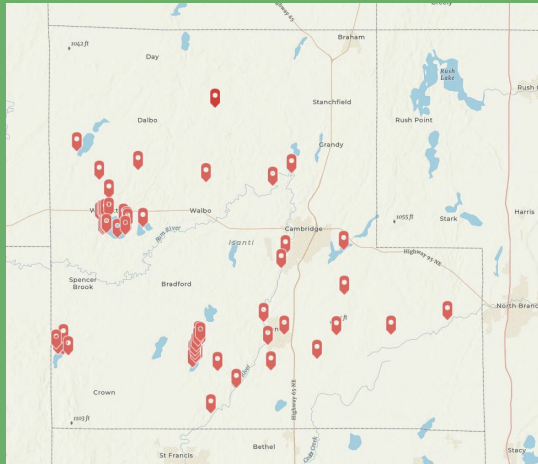
Tree Sale Open

Our tree sale is open! Hurry, as most species will sell out. The best way



to ensure you get the trees you want is by ordering online through our website.

This year, our tree pick-up day will be **Friday, May 3rd** from 9am - 7pm. If you need help ordering your trees, please visit or call our office.



Annual Report and Map of Projects

Our 2023 Annual Report details everything we have been working on the past year and the progress we are making toward conservation in Isanti County. We also have an interactive map that shows every project we have completed since 2015. Both are available to view on our website.

[Read the Annual Report](#)

[Explore our project map](#)

New Tree Planter Available to Rent

Looking to plant a large area of trees? We now have a tree planter for landowners to rent that is housed at the Kanbec County SWCD. The planter is a two-seated, 3-point hitch planter with an extra tray to set trees/root dip/etc on. It requires a tractor to pull the planter and comes with a trailer to transport the planter. The tree planter works best on open fields and after site prep is done. Watch our website for details on renting it!



**adopting a local storm drain =
great family activity + cleaner water**
[MN.ADOPT-A-DRAIN.ORG](https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org)



Adopt-a-Drain

Volunteer fifteen minutes, twice a month, for cleaner waterways and healthier lakes and streams. Storm drains flow directly to local lakes, rivers, and wetlands, acting as a conduit for trash and organic pollutants. By signing up for Adopt-a-Drain you can help protect our waters by selecting a storm drain to "adopt" and promising to periodically clean it off. Plus, you get to name your storm drain!

To get started visit <https://mn.adopt-a-drain.org/>

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Visit our website

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