



LINCOLN SWCD

2019 Annual Report

Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District

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Ivanhoe, MN 56142

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MISSION

The mission of the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to protect and improve the quality of our water, soil and natural resources by providing programs and services to the citizens and owners of Lincoln County to implement conservation practices.

INTRODUCTION

The Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District's Annual Plan is developed from the long-range priority concerns and objectives in the Lincoln County Water Management Plan (WMP) along with the priorities outlines with the One Watershed One Plans. This plan was adopted as the comprehensive plan of the Lincoln SWCD. Specific actions, an annual budget, staffing and funding needs, and State Cost-Share program requirements have been identified in order to implement the plan. The purpose of the plan is to guide us in effectively providing maximum conservation to all the land in the county, with identified high priority areas.

The SWCD is a local unit of government that provides assistance to citizens who are interested in preserving, restoring and protecting soil and water resources in Lincoln County.



2019 LINCOLN SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Conrad Schardin - Chairman
- John Boulton - Vice Chairman
- Glen Sorensen - Secretary
- Daniel Christianson - Treasurer
- Ronald Bunjer - PRI



2019 LINCOLN SWCD STAFF

- Dale Sterzinger - District Manager
- Colleen Wichern - Administrative Assistant
- Jacob Harrison - Conservation Technician
- Trent Johnson - Farm Bill and CREP Technician

LINCOLN SWCD BOARD MEETINGS

Regular board meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month, unless otherwise published in the Ivanhoe Times or on the Lincoln SWCD website:

- April to October: 7:00 a.m.
- November to March: 10:00 a.m.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

- Lincoln County Commissioners
- Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Area 2 MN River Basin
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) - Ivanhoe
- Lac Qui Parle River Watershed Planning Work Group
- LacQuiParle River Watershed District (LQPWD)
- Lake Benton Sportsmen's Club
- Lincoln County Environmental Office
- Lincoln County Townships
- Lincoln-Pipestone Rural Water (LPRW)
- Missouri River One Watershed One Plan Committees
- MN Department of Health
- MN Department of Transportation
- MN Extension Service
- MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)
- MN Rural Water Association
- Pheasants Forever
- Redwood WRAPS Committee
- Rivers Control Area (RCRCA)
- Shaokatan Sportsmen Club
- Southwest Prairies Technical Service Area (SWPTSA)
- Tyler Rod and Gun Club
- US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Yellow Medicine River One Watershed One Plan Committees
- Yellow Medicine River Watershed District (YMRWD)

2019 LINCOLN SWCD OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

- Plant Materials Course and Native Grass Training
- Soil Health Training
- Soil Health and Cover Crop Field Day
- Environmental Fair
- Area Summer Tour
- Annual Convention
- 2019 Conservation Farmer
 - Steve Hesse



STATE OF MINNESOTA'S WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT (WCA)

The major wetland regulatory programs of statewide importance in Minnesota are:

- Department of Natural Resources Public Waters Work Permit Program (state)
- Wetland Conservation Act (state & local)
- Clean Water Act Section 404 permit program (federal)
- Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification process (state & federal)

Two or more of these programs may cover the same wetland and in some cases, various portions of the same wetland will be regulated by different programs. However, state and federal agencies along with local units of government coordinate to help the public



determine applicable regulatory program jurisdiction on a case by case basis. The regulatory process is often initiated at the local level (city, county, watershed district, watershed management organization or soil and water conservation district) where program representatives can identify which regulations apply depending on the location and nature of the proposed activity that may affect wetlands or other water resources. Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is the state agency responsible for administration of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) which regulates the vast majority of wetlands at the state/local level.

WCA is implemented at the local level by the local government unit (LGU). BWSR promulgates administrative rules for the program, provides training to LGUs, participates on technical evaluation panels, hears appeals from local government determinations, and assures proper implementation by LGUs.

The Lincoln SWCD has been the LGU for Lincoln County since October of 1997. With a certified wetland delineator on staff, our local review process has been a very effective process for gaining relationships with our landowners for when they are proposing a drainage type project. Modifications have been made to the local intake form to accommodate BWSR, local LGU's and most importantly the public we serve.

Due to extreme wet conditions the past few years, water has surfaced in places where it normally does not sit. This required more field and slide review to confirm wetland or not. The Lincoln SWCD will mark boundaries in the field if requested by the landowners so the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) setback

guidelines are followed. Also, hours were spent working with the Lincoln County Highway Department and townships on WCA related issues of Road and Bridge work. Three TEP meetings were also held in 2019. Wind energy projects consumed many hours of WCA time also. The Lincoln SWCD has been working with four different wind projects at once in 2019.

Below is a summary of the 2019 WCA activities for the Lincoln SWCD.

- 5 Boundary or Type Determinations
- 5 No Loss Determinations
- 2 Sequencing Determinations
- 2 Replacement Plans; 22,956 square feet of wetland impacted
- 1 Banking Application; 79.5 acre restoration site for the Road Replacement program
- 2 Exemptions; 1 drainage and 1 De minimis
- 590 landowner/operator contacts for the year
- 8 potential WCA violations investigated
- 1 enforcement action taken



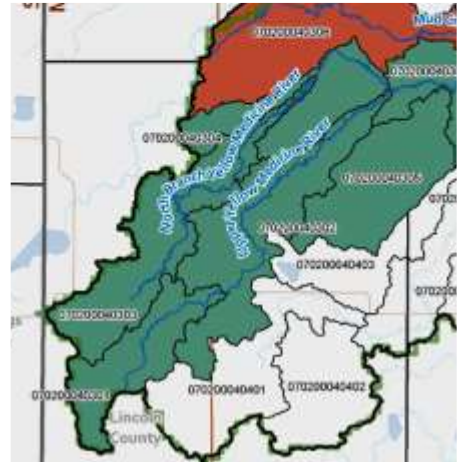
WATERSHED REPORTS

YELLOW MEDICINE RIVER ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN

After the long process of planning on a watershed scale, the Yellow Medicine River One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) is at full strength in the implementation stage. Approximately \$551,000 of State funding and \$373,000 of EQIP Federal funding has been allocated to the 1W1P for the first biennium. The majority of the money has been paid out or allocated to projects within the four county area. These dollars were broken into categories such as cost share, administration, education and technical services. The Yellow Medicine River Watershed District is the fiscal agent to oversee the funds. The Counties and SWCD's of Lincoln, Lac Qui Parle, Lyon and Yellow Medicine along with the Yellow Medicine River Watershed District, have all partnered together to form and Implement the 1W1P. The Lincoln SWCD was also able to acquire an EPA/MPCA 319 grant in the amount of \$106,000 for projects within the North Branch of the Yellow Medicine River Watershed. The Southwest Technical Service Area along with the Area 2 MN River Basin and the SWCD's, have been providing the technical services needed to get projects on the ground. The money is targeted to pre-determined priority areas within the watershed as part of the 1W1P process. In Lincoln County the North Branch and Upper Branch are part of the priority areas.

Cost share rates on qualifying projects are set at 90% within the priority areas and 75% outside the priority areas. Federal funding is utilized and combined with the State funding. We are able to assist more landowners by combining funds. A point scale is used to determine the qualifications of each project for the funding. A wide array of questions are used to determine the points for each project. The 1W1P has determined the priority areas and practices to where funding will be targeted.

Below is a list of project categories, dollars spent in each category and the total reduction number of pollutants for each category completed in Lincoln County for the 2019 year within the Priority area and outside the priority area but still within the Yellow Medicine River Watershed.



Structural Practices

- **Water and Sediment Control Basins (638)**
 - **Priority Area Of Lincoln County**
 - 14 completed Basin Structures
 - 104 acres of watershed treated
 - 46.3 T/YR Soil Saved
 - 28.69 T/YR Sediment Reduced
 - 36.74 LBS/YR Phosphorus Reduced
 - \$20,262 1W1P State Funds Paid out on Basins
 - \$39,910.28 EQIP Federal Funds Paid out on Basins
 - **Outside the Priority Area for Basins**
 - 2 completed basins
 - 26.74 T/YR Soil Saved
 - 9.36 T/YR Sediment Reduction
 - 10.76 LBS/YR Phosphorus Reduced
 - 17 & 18 Local Capacity State funding \$8,156
- **Waterway Projects (412)**
 - **Priority Area of Lincoln County**
 - 4 completed Waterways
 - 182.4 acres of watershed treated
 - 62 T/YR Soil Saved
 - 50.19 T/YR Sediment Reduced
 - 57.72 Phosphorus Reduced
 - \$28,099.56 1W1P State Funds Paid out on Waterways
 - \$19,002 of EQIP funds paid out on Waterways



- **Outside the Priority Area for Basins**
 - 1 waterway completed
 - 5 acres of watershed treated
 - 43.2 T/YR Soil Saved
 - 43.2 T/YR Sediment reduction
 - 49.68 LBS/YR Phosphorus reduced
 - \$3,922 State Cost share Paid out on the Waterway

Money allocated to projects, not yet completed, within the priority area

- 6 projects designed
- \$79,176 of 1W1P encumbered for the projects
- \$112,771 of EQIP federal dollars encumbered for projects
- Around 30 more projects on the priority list that need funding and/or designs.

Non-Structural Practices

- **RCPP Federal EQIP Dollars for Cover Crops**
 - \$373,000
 - Utilized in Lincoln and Yellow Medicine Counties

2019 REDWOOD TMDL/WRAPS PROGRESS REPORT

Entering the third year of the TMDL/WRAPS process, the Redwood-Cottonwood Rivers Control Area (RCRCA) is leading the effort with Wenck Associates hired as the consultant to help lead the partners through the most recent data collected to assess the watershed and develop management strategies. The Local Work Group (LWG) for the Redwood River is comprised of representatives from six counties and six Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), along with state agencies personnel. To maximize the effort and eliminate duplication, the Redwood LWG meets jointly with the Cottonwood LWG as these watersheds are shared by several counties.



In 2019, the LWG met eight times to assist Wenck by providing valuable local knowledge of environmental concerns, review/comment of the draft TMDL document, and format/content of the subwatershed analysis reports to be developed for each subwatershed in the Redwood River watershed. A Professional Judgement Group meeting was held in April where Aquatic Life Use and Aquatic Recreation Use impairments were presented in detail. New impairments within the watershed were documented in 2019 which added one lake for nutrient impairments, two streams for turbidity (TSS), one stream for E. coli, and one stream for nutrients to the existing list of impairments. These new impairments, except for the stream nutrient

impairment, have been added to the draft TMDL which will be reviewed by the LWG prior to submission to EPA. The stream nutrient impairment will be addressed in a separate River Eutrophication Standard TDML as this new TMDL may be contested.

2020 will be an important year in this process as the receipt of three major reports are anticipated: Watershed Characterization Report (DNR), Monitoring and Assessment Report (MPCA), and Stressor Identification Report (MPCA). The LWG will continue to develop the WRAPS report and more specifically, the Restoration and Protection Tables that illustrate the priority areas and the most reasonable and acceptable methods to address the impairments. Additionally, Dr. Joe Magner will be presenting to the LWG on his research in the Plum Creek sub watershed where the various measurement tools (ACPF, SAM, PTMApp) were utilized with a comparison of the results produced by the individual tools. This presentation will help the LWG select the best tool for this watershed as future planning for the One Watershed, One Plan begins.

MISSOURI RIVER ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN

After a two year planning process, the One Watershed One Plan was finally completed and approved in 2019. Multiple meetings were held with the planning committee and the policy committee members to finalize the plan and to prepare ourselves for the implementation stage of the plan. The Missouri River Watershed (MRW) boundary encompasses portions of four major watersheds in southwestern Minnesota.

- Upper Big Sioux River
- Lower Big Sioux River
- Rock River
- Little Sioux River

The drainage area headwaters a portion of the greater Missouri River Basin-draining streams from Southern MN downstream through other rivers and states. The MRW drains a total of 1.1 million acres of land from MN and includes all or portions of 25 towns and cities (Worthington, Pipestone, Luverne, Adrian, etc.) and 6 counties (Jackson, Nobles, Murray, Rock, Pipestone and Lincoln). Roughly, 30,000 people live within the MRW.

Two of the four major watersheds lie within the boundaries of Lincoln County (Upper Big Sioux and Lower Big Sioux). The Upper Big Sioux Watershed is the smallest of the four watersheds, which drains 41 square miles of southwest Lincoln County. The Lower Big Sioux Watershed drains 511 square miles of southwest Lincoln, Western Pipestone, and western Rock Counties. The Drinking Water Management Supply Area of the Verdi Aquifer lies within the Lower Big Sioux Watershed in Lincoln County. The dividing watershed line between the Upper and Lower Big Sioux Watersheds is the northern boundary of the Drinking Water Management Supply

Area. This area has been identified as high priority for protection within the One Watershed One Plan.

Implementation of the plan will begin in the spring of 2020. \$1.32 million dollars has been allocated for the two-year biennium from the State of MN. Federal dollars will also be applied for when available to be combined with the state funds. By using both Federal and State money, we are able to reach out to more landowners with conservation needs.

LAC QUI PARLE RIVER

The Lac qui Parle - Yellow Bank Watershed saw another increase in permit applications in 2019 with drainage continuing to be very busy in response to multiple years of wet conditions. The wet conditions have also led to an increase in ditch maintenance work at a time when working conditions are often difficult and contractors are all busy. Watershed staff reviewed over

The Drainage Records Modernization Grant is nearing completion and will be finished April 2020, providing electronic access of public ditch system files and a GIS based centerline database.



The annual photo contest was very successful with around twenty people submitting photos.

Septic system loans were again successful, providing funding to 15 properties.

Buffer enforcement continues. Lac Qui Parle County was down to one noncompliant public waterway at the end of 2019. Corrective action notices are expected to be sent out for public ditches in March 2020.

Canby Creek area dams were inspected and the Emergency Action Plan was updated.

The watershed paid out for 51 nuisance beavers and 9 beaver dam removals.

The Lac qui Parle Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) grant continued on. Much of the year was spent on report development. Local staff and public input was provided through surveys completed at a workshop in

February. Additional staff input and modeling was provided at a meeting in July. Draft TMDL and WRAPS reports were not yet received at the end of 2019 but are expected in January. Public activities held in 2019 were very successful! The annual canoe trip paddled through a very exciting stretch of the Lac qui Parle River southwest of Dawson. The trip went through a stretch of the river where a large amount of growth to river width and bank depth is observed. The water was high and swift, which provided some excitement while maneuvering around obstacles! Another event was held in October. On a perfect fall day, the Watershed was joined by staff from the Lac qui Parle SWCD and MPCA. Tenth grade Dawson - Boyd biology students were given presentations on the process of monitoring watershed health (both chemical and biological), determining impairments, an overview of current impairments in the watershed, and aquatic invasive species in the watershed. The students were shown examples of equipment used and given demonstration to sample chemical characteristics of a stream. Finally, MPCA staff gave a live demonstration of fish shocking and biological monitoring. Students were shown preserved samples of macroinvertebrates and fish common in the watershed. The students were very engaged with multiple questions.

The watershed was awarded a grant for the protection of Del Clark Lake and restoration of Canby Creek. The grant will provide control of pollutants, especially sediment, from entering Del Clark Lake through three waterways that outlet to the lake. Construction is planned for 2020. Remaining funds are to be used for the installation of additional projects in the upstream Canby Creek Watershed within Lincoln and Yellow Medicine Counties.

AG BMP LOAN PROGRAM

The Ag BMP (Best Management Practice) Loan Program provides low interest loans to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses. The purpose is to encourage Best Management Practices that prevent or reduce water quality problems. The program provides loans up to \$200,000 with 3% financing for a max 10-year term. The Lincoln SWCD will work with your local lender as long as they are willing to be a part of the program. The Lincoln SWCD reviews and approves the projects, forwards the applications to the lender and the lender approves and forwards the application to the Department of Ag for the release of the money to the lender. The process is quick and easy as long as money is available in the program.

The following is the list of funded categories and the dollars used in each category for the 2019 year in Lincoln County.

- Ag Waste Management- 4 loans- \$166,000
- Conservation Tillage- 6 loans- \$379,341.01
- Septic Systems- 2 loans- \$32,650
- Other Practices- 5 loans- \$154,627.77

Total Loans processed in 2019- 17 loans- \$732,618.78

Expected repayments in the next two years is estimated at \$455,350. It is a revolving loan program. As payments are made, dollars become available for new loans. Contact the Lincoln SWCD for more information.

COST SHARE DOLLARS

State Cost Share 2018 \$15,527 encumbered for 1 large waterway project to be completed in 2020. \$15,527 is the yearly State Cost Share Allocation from the State.

2019 State Cost Share of \$15,527 will be encumbered for a waterway/basin project in the Big Sioux Watershed.

2018 Local Capacity Cost Share dollars of \$15,000 along with a local county match of \$14,400 was paid out or encumbered for projects of a waterway, water sediment control basins and 1 grade stabilization structure.

2019 Local Capacity Cost Share of \$14,400 is encumbered for a basin project in the Lac Qui Parle river watershed which will be constructed in 2020.

Buffer Cost Share ended on December 31st of 2019. Three landowners utilized the funds for a total of \$3,750 for 12.5 acres of buffers.

LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT

Local Management funds are to be used on administering the local water plan and Yellow Medicine River One Watershed One Plan implementation activities.

Funds are also used for meetings with the development of the Missouri River One Watershed One Plan and the Yellow Medicine River Planning work group and policy committee meetings.

In 2019 year there were a total of 10 wells sealed throughout the county that received \$500 worth of cost-share towards each well. There were also a total of 8 alternative intakes that were installed that received cost share dollars towards installation expense. Cost share available on these practices is at a rate of 75% not to exceed \$500.00. All alternative intakes installed were in the drinking water management supply area of the Verdi aquifer.



Local water management dollars were also used to help fund the 2019 environmental fair with was held in September. This is an educational event put on by the SWCD's for area 5th and 6th grade students.

SEED PROGRAM

The 2019 Lincoln SWCD program battled weather and assisted farmers with cover crop options on their preventative acres. Depending on the producers' goals for those acres, cover crop mixes varied from single species mixes such as oats and rye, to a more diverse cover crop mix set to alleviate compaction, fix nitrogen, and reduce the need for herbicide application. We were involved in CRP plantings, buffer plantings, and erosion control practice plantings such as waterways and basins. We had a successful and busy planting season and we look to progress in the upcoming years.

- 936.68 acres were seeded by the district
- 1049.07 acres of seed was purchased through the SWCD - CRP, cover crops, & grass mixes
- 20 acres of the seeded acres were buffers
- 400 acres of drill rentals for CRP, buffers, and cover crops



MN CREP

MN CREP (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program) is a voluntary, federal-state funded natural resource conservation program that uses a science-based approach to target environmentally sensitive land. Enrollment for MN CREP began in Spring 2017 and will continue until funds are exhausted or the 60,000 acre goal is reached.

Landowners will enter into a 14-15 year Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract administered by the USDA-Farm Service Agency (FSA), and a Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) Reserve perpetual conservation easement administered by the Minnesota Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR).

In Lincoln County there were 5 applicants during the 2019 batching period, 1 applicant was accepted into the program for a wetland restoration practice that totaled 121 acres. There are 2 accepted applications that are designed and ready for the 2020 construction season. One of the contracts was seeded this year, and the other is going to be seeded in the summer of 2020.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program aims to restore native grassland back to their original hydrology by breaking tile, creating basins, and installing embankments to hold water. The CREP program is a perpetual permanent easement program (forever) that creates permanent wildlife habitat while also treating the landowners well. It is a win-win situation for landowners that enjoy wildlife and want to create a legacy. Outreach to landowners with eligible CREP acres is a huge part of the job for the Lincoln SWCD.

WALK-IN-ACCESS (WIA) PROGRAM

The State of MN has received federal funding to compensate landowners to open their habitat acres to public hunting. This is a cooperative effort by the MN Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Pheasants Forever (PF) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD). Here are some of the highlights of this voluntary program:

- Targeted at lands already enrolled in federal or state conservation programs like CRP, CREP, RIM, WRP
- Minimum size of 40 acres, with a bonus payment for more than 160 acre
- Access during all open hunting seasons
- DNR Conservation Officers responsible for any enforcement action
- Landowner payments range from \$10-\$13/ac. based on size and duration of enrollment
- Signage to mark property boundaries is provided by the program



The Walk-In Access (WIA) program is limited to a 47 county area in southwestern Minnesota. The Walk in Access program began in 2011 and has grown from 10,000 acres to 27,000 acres. There are approximately 3,400 acres in the Walk-in Access program in Lincoln County.

There were a total of 5 re-enrollments of 2019 - 2022 contracts in Lincoln County for a total of 345 acres of land. Landowners received anywhere from \$10/ac - \$13/ac to allow for public hunting on their private land

TREE PROGRAM

The Lincoln SWCD offers trees, shrubs, conifers and matting material available for conservation purposes. Trees can be ordered throughout the year however, most orders are placed over the winter. The District also provides technical/planning, planting assistance on larger orders for trees bought through the District.

In 2019 there were approximately:

- 4900 trees sold
- 60 rolls of matting material
- 160 tree tubes
- 160 tubex stakes
- 460 mat squares
- 60 boxes mat staples

CRP

- 48 conservation plans were written
 - 935.65 acres
 - CP21's - 114.76 acres
 - CP22's - 171.08 acres
 - CP23A's - 447.45 acres
 - CP23's - 3.37 acres
 - FWP's - 198.99 acres
- Conservation plans create a plan to meet the specifications of the NRCS while also meeting the landowners' goal on the land. Writing the plans lays out all the steps for the CRP contract to be successful. Creating a native grass seed mix for each type of CRP practice is one of the main components of conservation planning. Being able to work with the landowners to see the bigger picture is one of the great accomplishments of being involved with the planning process.





BUFFER PROGRAM

- 13 parcels out of compliance
- 21 parcels are in progress - landowners have informed us of their intent to seed in 2020
- Correct action notices will be distributed to landowners out of compliance, having had no communication with us by the end of 2019. Corrective action notices will be sent in March of 2020. We hope to have all parcels resolved by the end of 2020 to avoid landowners' fines.

PLANT MATERIALS TRAINING

Lincoln county hosted a plant materials training for surrounding counties/agencies on June 13th, 2019. This training was held to cover things like plant identification of native grasses, drill calibrations, and stand evaluations. Plant identification ties itself into stand evaluations because plant identification is often needed to evaluate expiring CRP contracts. This is used hand in hand to determine if a landowner has a current stand of native grasses that suffice for a re-enrollment. If current grass stand evaluations deem there to be a lack of diversification according to NRCS specifications, landowners may have to interseed into existing cover. In cases of brome grass being predominant, a complete re-seed is often necessary. Instructors from the Bismark ND materials center were involved throughout this interactive day by providing their expertise on identification, calibration, and stand evaluations. All participating parties were able to take useful information home and apply it to their jobs; that is what made this training so beneficial.

LINCOLN COUNTY SOIL HEALTH & COVER CROP FIELD DAY

On August 26th, 2019, the Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District hosted a soil health and cover crop field day at the farm of Dale, Ben, & Tony Dwire. The field day generated an audience of about 25 farmers/livestock producers from Lincoln and the neighboring counties. The event welcomed Kent Solberg from the Sustainable Farming Association. He dove into the more statistical side of conservation and how conservation can really improve soil health, and this allowed producers to see the larger picture a few years down the road. The day also consisted of a farmers panel of four Lincoln County producers (Chris Noble, Ben Dwire, Jesse Weber, and Kurt Dage). They discussed how they have learned and grown upon their soil health journey throughout the years. Diversified throughout the panel, these producers are active in strip till, no-till, cover crops, and grazing. All of them find a way to implement these conservation efforts into their operations and have seen great benefits from doing so. Going through a series of questions with the farmers panel created a great conversation starter within the group of attendees. Peer to peer interaction between producers seems to be the most effective tactic in spreading conservation throughout our county. Hopefully the valued information that producers absorbed from this field day will transition into more producers taking conservation efforts into their own hands. We can't wait to see what the future holds for conservation!



ENVIRONMENTAL FAIR

The Environmental Fair provides a unique, interactive learning experience for students to understand the importance of our resources and realize that what people do affects all aspects of the environment.

Using new techniques, presenters and ideas, the Fair reinforces or adds to knowledge the students receive in their classrooms.

Students in classroom-size groups are scheduled into sessions of hands-on activities or demonstrations on a variety of topics including trees, soil, water quality, wetlands, recycling, household hazardous waste, native prairie, watersheds, and creatures that share our environment.



The goal of the Environmental Fair is to let students study natural resources in a setting that will give them the opportunity to see, touch and sometimes taste what they are learning about. It is designed to encompass multiple aspects of environmental education, and be available to a large number of students.

The 2019 event took place at a new location, Shetek Lutheran Ministries, on the shores of Lake Shetek, offering students the ultimate learning atmosphere surrounded by nature. There were approximately 1800 students in attendance.

2019 CONSERVATION FARMER

The Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District nominated Steve Hesse of Tyler as their 2019 Outstanding Conservationist. Throughout his farming career, he has been a leader in implementing conservation practices. He has made the transition to strip till, while implementing some no-till into his operation. The transitions he has implemented have benefitted his operation by reducing his fertilizer inputs and reducing the time and labor spent out in the field. Not only has Steve reduced tillage in his operation, he has been active in applying cover crops to his acres as well. He has seen huge benefits by implementing cover crops on within his rotations. Cover crops have allowed him to reduce his spraying applications. The biggest benefit Steve has gotten from combining strip/till and no-till with cover crops has been the reduction of inputs. Steve has utilized programs available to producers to his advantage by alleviating the costs of applying cover crops. Steve continuously looks to what he can do next to better his operation. He is looking forward to continuing to implement cover crops and utilize them within his cattle operation for grazing.

AREA V SUMMER TOUR

Lincoln SWCD was host to the Southwest Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Area V summer tour and meeting. The meeting was held in the morning and a highlight of Lincoln County took place in the afternoon.

Highlights of Lincoln County included a site visit to the field where Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water has a planting of Kernza. Area V members were able to step into the field and look at the Kernza as well as learn more about it. Lincoln Pipestone Rural Water's Manager Jason Overby also discussed the LCCMR Land Purchase.

Two other sites were visited and included the Snyder/Gorecki RIM/CREP Wetland Restoration with the County Tile System along with the Lake Shaokatan Wetland Restoration Projects and Lake Improvement Projects that were completed for Water Quality.

NRCS REPORT

In the USDA-NRCS's fiscal year for 2019 the Ivanhoe Field Office obligated 72 new conservation contracts.

For the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) there were 55 new contracts totaling \$618,886 obligated cost-share dollars that included 11,387 acres being enrolled in the program. Some of the more popular practices in EQIP were cover crops, water sediment control basins, and grassed waterways.

For the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) there were 17 new contracts totaling \$2,222,204 obligated cost-share dollars over 5-year lifespans that included 19,384 acres being enrolled in the program. Some of the more popular practices in CSP were variable rate technology, pest management plans, and pollinator plantings.

