

# 2023 BROWN SWCD ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS REPORT

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The Brown SWCD completed or participated in the following projects and activities throughout 2023.

## **EDUCATION & PROMOTION**

- Co-hosted the Sleepy Eye stop of the Highway 14 CLASIC Tour with area partners
- SWCD presentation at the Sustainable Farming Association Workshop in Sleepy Eye
- Booth at Pheasants Forever Banquet in cooperation with PF Farm Bill Biologist
- Earth Day presentation at 4-H Adopt a WMA event
- Booth at Farmfest in cooperation with Area 5 and 6 SWCDs
- Outstanding Conservationist Recognition
- Direct mailings to landowners in the Watonwan River Watershed promoting groundwater awareness in partnership with GBERBA through a Watonwan Groundwater Protection grant
- Monthly KNUJ radio spot presentations on Aquatic Invasive Species Program, RIM/CREP Program, Tree Program, Cost Share Program, MAWQCP, Buffer Law Program, and other district activities
- News Releases/SWCD Website Posts/Facebook Posts about the Tree Program, Hwy 14 CLASIC Sleepy Eye Workshop, Annual Stewardship Week “One Water”, Local Work Group Meeting, MN CREP Program, and Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program

## **COST SHARE PROJECTS**

- Performed 11 site visits to assess resource concerns and provide project options
- Project Completed – Stately 35, Grassed Waterway
- Project Completed – Mulligan 17, WASCOB (x2)
- Project Completed – Albin 26, Cover Crop, 68 acres
- Project Encumbered, 2024 Construction Planned – Albin 14, WASCOB (x2)

## **MN CREP EASEMENT CONSTRUCTION**

- Wetland Restoration Completed – Stately 22
- Wetland Restoration Completed – Bashaw 24
- Wetland Restoration Completed – Burnstown 23
- Wetland Restoration Completed – Bashaw 24/19
- Wetland Restoration Completed – Bashaw 13

## **EASEMENT APPLICATIONS APPROVED FOR FUNDING**

- MN CREP: Filter Strip – Mulligan 36, 30.43 acres
- RIM Wetlands: Leavenworth 36, 80 acres
- RIM Riparian & Floodplain Restoration: City of New Ulm/Milford 12, 42.52 acres
- RIM Riparian & Floodplain Restoration: City of New Ulm, 68.02 acres

## **EASEMENTS PROGRAM PROGRESS**

- Completed application processing and easement recording of 6 projects
- Began application processing of 4 newly funded projects
- Monitored seeding establishment on 20 sites
- Completed seeding on 4 sites
- Posted boundaries on 3 sites

## **BUFFER PROGRAM**

- Maintained records on BuffCAT, landowner files, and internal excel database
- Continued knowledge of public ditch meetings and projects
- Provided technical assistance to landowners to help them maintain compliance
- Completed annual compliance monitoring on 578 parcels
- Conducted site visits on 54 parcels for annual compliance monitoring checks
- Buffer compliance rate of 99% in Brown County as of 12/31/2023

## **AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION**

- Attended AIS workshops and meetings hosted by DNR
- Attended Sleepy Eye and Clear Lake Ice Fishing contests to promote AIS awareness
- Assisted at local fishing contest events, NUASF Kids Fishing Contest on the Minnesota River in New Ulm and the Sleepy Eye Lake Bass Fishing Contest, and provided educational and promotional AIS prevention materials to attendees
- Attended local sportsman's club and/or lake association meetings to continue partnerships
- Attended the AECOM event at Clear Lake regarding algae harvesting
- Promoted AIS Prevention through radio ads on KNUJ, a digital ad campaign targeted to Clear Lake, Lake Hanska, Minnecon and Riverside Parks, Sleepy Eye Lake, and Wellner-Hageman accesses, Lindner Media/Angling Buzz project contribution, MN Traditions social media project contribution, monthly radio spots on KNUJ, SWCD website posts, and handing out promotional materials
- Continued implementation of the Brown County Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan: 2019-2023 by conducting water monitoring activities as scheduled for the final year

## **WATERSHED PLANNING**

- Began the watershed planning process with watershed partners through an approved planning grant to develop a comprehensive watershed plan for the Cottonwood-Middle MN River Watershed

## **OTHER PROGRAMS**

- Tree Sales (50 Customers, 4,957 Trees Sold)
- Observation Well Monitoring Program (15)
- Rain Gauge Program (10 readers)
- RIM Program Annual Site Checks (56)
- RIM Program Haying Agreements (19)
- MAWQCP Program (4 certified landowners)
- Walk-In Access Program (11 active contracts)
- RIM Program Ownership Changes (4)
- RIM Program Conservation Plan Changes (6)
- Wetlands Conservation Act TEP Panel Member

## **ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATION AND/OR SUPPORT**

- Brown County
- USDA- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance
- Redwood Cottonwood Rivers Control Area
- Minnesota River Congress
- Minnesota DNR
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- USDA- Farm Service Agency
- South Central Technical Service Area
- MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD)
- MASWCD Area VI Association
- MN Soil Health Coalition
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- Pheasants Forever
- MN Association of Conservation District Employees