



2022 Annual Report

2023 Annual Plan of Work

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<https://www.carvercountymn.gov/swcd>

I. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Carver Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is to provide high quality assistance to the land managers and citizens of Carver County for the protection of land and water resources.

The Carver SWCD was organized by local farmers for the purpose of promoting the science of good land use; and to assist landowners and operators in planning and applying soil and water conservation practices needed to protect and improve their land and water resources. The District is a legal subdivision of the State of Minnesota, operating under a charter issued by the Secretary of State on November 12, 1946. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are located in each county across Minnesota and operate under Minnesota Statute 103C. The soil and water conservation policy of the State is to encourage land occupiers to conserve soil, water, and the natural resources they support through the implementation of practices that:

- (1) Control or prevent erosion, sedimentation, siltation, and related pollution in order to preserve natural resources;
- (2) Ensure continued soil productivity;
- (3) Protect water quality;
- (4) Prevent impairment of dams and reservoirs;
- (5) Reduce damages caused by floods;
- (6) Preserve wildlife;
- (7) Protect the tax base; and
- (8) Protect public lands and waters.

Since 1946, the Carver SWCD has been providing technical and financial assistance to landowners, land operators, municipalities, townships, and businesses for the improvement of their natural resources. The continued success of the Carver SWCD is a result of listening to our constituents, adjusting or expanding our technical capabilities, and providing leadership in emerging land use and conservation issues.

The purpose of this annual report and annual plan is to summarize the major accomplishments of last year and to identify needs for the upcoming year. It should be noted that not every activity can be captured by this report, but the reader should get an overall idea of the District's activities.

Carver SWCD Board of Supervisors

The SWCD is governed by an elected five-member Board of Supervisors and they are charged with developing policies and employing staff to fulfill the mission of the SWCD. The Board meets the third Thursday of each month at 8:00 a.m. in the Cologne Public Works Headquarters (unless otherwise scheduled).

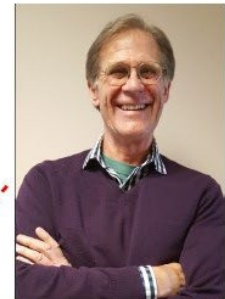
Robert Burandt, Waconia
District 4 - Term Expires 2024

Townships: Hollywood, Laketown, Waconia, Watertown
 Cities: Mayer, Victoria Precinct 5, Waconia Precinct 1, 2, 3, Watertown



Marcus Zbinden, Chanhassen
District 2 - Term Expires 2024

Chanhassen Precinct 1, 2, 3, 5
 Shorewood Precinct 2
 Victoria Precinct 1, 3



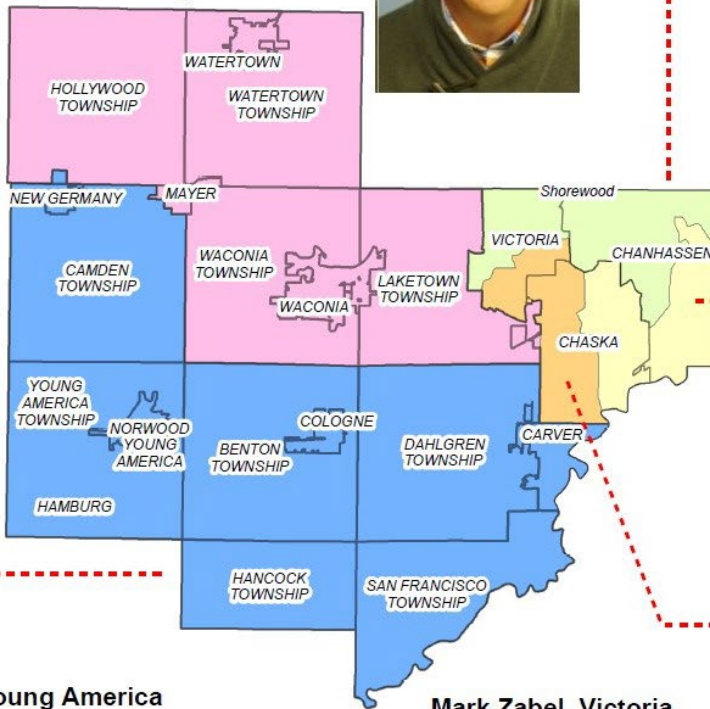
Stan Wendland, Chanhassen
District 1 - Term Expires 2026

Chanhassen Precinct 4 & 6
 Chaska Ward 3 & 4



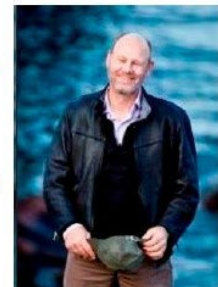
Jeff Sons, Norwood Young America
District 5 - Term Expires 2026

Townships: Benton, Camden, Dahlgren, Hancock, San Francisco, Young America
 Cities: Carver, Cologne, Hamburg, New Germany, Norwood Young America



Mark Zabel, Victoria
District 3 - Term Expires 2026

Chaska Ward 1 Precinct 1, 2
 Chaska Ward 2 Precinct 1, 2
 Victoria Precinct 2, 4



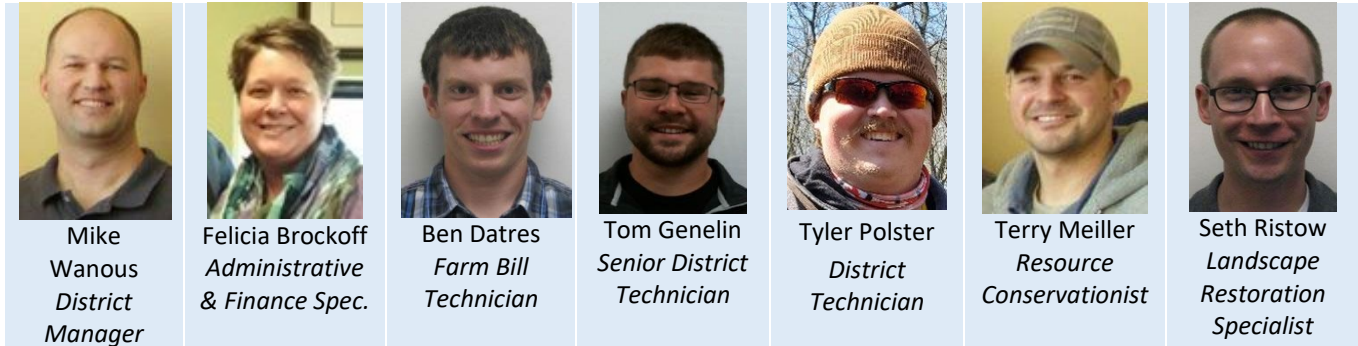
ELECTION YEARS

- District 1: 2022–2026**
- District 2: 2022–2024**
- District 3: 2022–2026**
- District 4: 2022–2024**
- District 5: 2022–2026**

CURRENT BOARD SUPERVISOR

- Stan Wendland**
- Marcus Zbinden**
- Mark Zabel**
- Bob Burandt**
- Jeff Sons**

Carver SWCD Staff



Partner Agencies & Organizations

MN Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR)
Carver County
Carver County Water Management Organization (WMO)
Cities of Carver County
MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Hamburg Hunt & Fish Club
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD)
Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (MCWD)
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Pheasants Forever (PF)
Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD)
Townships of Carver County
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)

II. ANNUAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Agriculture Conservation Practices

The goal of this program is to work with private landowners to minimize negative impacts of agriculture activities on natural resources. There are several state and federal programs aimed at providing grant and loan money to assist landowners with installing practices that protect and enhance water quality. It has also become important to provide landowners with technical assistance that promotes soil health activities that will enable them to build soil quality and promote sustainability for future generations.

The SWCD has provided technical assistance and cost share assistance for traditional Ag BMP's for over 75 years. Examples of these practices include, but are not limited to, grass waterways, water and sediment control basins, residue management, grade stabilization structures, contour strips, nutrient management, critical area planting, rock inlets, buffer strips, and tree and shrub establishment. The SWCD will continue to promote the use of BMP's on a county wide basis. Special focus has also taken place in the sub-watershed's that have been identified as priorities from Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) studies, those identified in the Carver County Water Management Plan, as well as BMP's identified in rural sub-watershed assessments.

The MN buffer law went into effect in the summer of 2015. The buffer law requires 50-foot buffers of perennial vegetation along all public waters and 16.5-foot buffers along public ditch systems. The MN DNR developed buffer protection maps based on public water inventory maps and legally established public drainage ditches. SWCD's are charged with determining compliance on land that is adjacent to public waters and public drainage ditches.

Accomplishments for 2022

1. Installed 5 grassed waterways totaling 2,870 linear feet through the SWCD state cost-share program.
2. Installed 1 grade stabilization structure and 3 water and sediment control basins through the SWCD state cost-share and the NRCS EQIP program.
3. Installed 1 rock chute totaling 70 linear feet through the SWCD state cost-share and the NRCS EQIP program.
4. Installed 2 grassed waterways totaling 1,275 linear feet utilizing funds from the Lake Waconia Subwatershed Analysis grant.
5. Completed I&E and Designs for 6 grassed waterways, totaling 2,685 linear feet through the SWCD state cost-share program, Lake Waconia and Eagle Lake Subwatershed Analysis grant.
6. Completed I&E and Designs for 2 grade stabilization structures and 1 water and sediment control basin for 2023 EQIP funding consideration.
7. Completed 15 site inspections for past BMP projects completed through the SWCD state cost-share program.
8. Sold and distributed nearly 10,000 trees to 104 landowners.
9. Tree planter rented to 3 landowners.
10. Great Plains no-till drill rented to 21 landowners for CRP plantings, alfalfa inter-seeding, and cover crop establishment on 318 acres.
11. Assisted 14 landowners in obtaining DNR prescribed burn permits who participate in CRP or easement programs, totaling 294 acres in prairie management.
12. Soil Health/Cover Crops – staff attended several workshops and trainings to learn more about soil health.
13. Provided cost-share and incentive payments to 2 landowners for establishing 65 acres of cover crops through the Soil Health and Cover Crop Program.

14. Staff provided technical assistance in several other areas for Carver County landowners, the Carver WMO, and the MNDNR (technical assistance might include survey work, hydrology calculations, construction inspections, etc.).
15. Completed buffer monitoring, both aerial and on the ground review, for 1,120 parcels, 1/3 of Carver Co.
16. Worked with 8 landowners to become compliant with the MN Buffer Law.
17. Assisted the Carver Water Management Organization with Minnesota Land Cover Classification System edits and updates for all Carver County townships.



Grassed waterway installation in Watertown Township through the Lake Waconia Subwatershed Assessment Grant..



Construction of a grade stabilization and grassed waterway in Dahlgren Township through the SWCD State Cost-share and NRCS EQIP Program..



50' buffer along a public water in Carver County.

Actions for 2023

1. Implement BMP projects with state and federal aid funding sources.
2. Expand upon the soil health/cover crop program utilizing district capacity funds to achieve additional acres of cover crops to improve soil health.
3. Work cooperatively with the USDA NRCS and FSA to promote and implement the Federal USDA programs such as EQIP, CRP, and CREP.
4. Assist the County Feedlot officer with feedlot technical assistance and compliance.
5. Work cooperatively with the Carver County WMO to encourage compliance with County and WMO rules and regulations.
6. Implement BMP installation on projects that were identified in the Eagle Lake and Lake Waconia rural sub-watershed analysis for targeted watershed improvements.
7. Secure funding to complete priority projects identified in the Carver County Water Plan by applying for grants and special funding programs.
8. Complete annual parcel inspections for the MN Buffer Law, 1/3 of Carver County.

Approximately 3,400 staff hours are needed for this program.

This work is to be completed by the District Technician, Farm Bill Technician, and Resource Conservationist.

Urban Conservation Practices

The Carver SWCD assists in the inspection of best management practices and water rules compliance that have been adopted by the Carver County Water Management Organization (WMO). Staff assists with development plan reviews of proposed projects to determine compliance with National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES), and state and local stormwater regulations. Staff also reviews the implementation of the water plan by performing site inspections on construction activities and providing technical assistance with the installation of urban BMP's. In Carver County, SWCD staff work extensively with WMO staff to ensure that projects are installed according to plan and in compliance with all applicable water management rules. The SWCD also has an agreement with the City of Chanhassen to review plans, conduct erosion and sediment control inspections and providing technical assistance on water quality features. In addition, the SWCD has contracts with Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District (RPBCWD) and with the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) to assist landowners with identifying BMP locations and providing design assistance.

Essential duties of this program include the following:

- Assists the Carver County WMO with plan reviews.
- Conduct field visits to construction sites to inspect for compliance with stormwater regulations.
- Supports WMO staff and county staff with development of watershed models, site investigations, survey work, and technical expertise.
- Assists and/or prepares landscape restoration designs to treat stormwater, included but not limited to, rain gardens, bio-retention cells, shoreline restorations, and water re-use projects.
- Provide technical assistance and BMP designs for RPBCWD and LMRWD.

Accomplishments for 2022

- Inspections of sites for compliance with County Water Rules and NPDES rules:

City or Township	Plan Reviews	Construction Site Erosion and Sediment Control Inspections/Sites	Violations that required enforcement
Carver	5	23	0
Chanhassen	1	26	0
Chaska	10	51	0
Cologne	2	12	0
Hamburg	0	0	0
Mayer	0	11	0
New Germany	0	0	0
Norwood Young America	3	16	0
Waconia	14	43	0
Watertown	5	9	0
Victoria	1	10	0
Benton Township	2	11	0
Camden Township	2	9	0
Dahlgren Township	2	13	0
Hollywood Township	0	5	0
Laketown Township	2	6	0
San Francisco Township	1	8	0
Waconia Township	1	9	0
Watertown Township	6	11	0
Young America Township	2	5	0
TOTALS	56	278	0

Urban Conservation Cost-Share Programs

Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District Cost-Share Program

- Assisted Clean Water Stewards with water quality projects. Stewards are residents that want to take action on water quality
- Involved with the installation of 20 Cost Share Projects
- Conducted 45 landowner consultation site visits (met with landowners and discussed possible habitat or water quality improvement projects)
- Participated in workshops to improve the cost-share program



Carver County Water Management Organization Cost Share Program

- Conducted 14 site visits to help landowners with water quality project
- Designed and installed 3 native plant restoration projects
- Involved with the installation of 5 projects (residential and municipal)

The picture to the right shows a group installation of an outdoor classroom with pollinator garden at La Academia in Chaska

Carver SWCD Pollinator Program

- Involved with the installation of 3 residential projects
- Conducted 24 site visits
- Designed 5 projects



Actions for 2023

1. Conduct 150 construction site erosion control inspections.
2. Provide BMP design services for the WMO, RPBCWD, and LMRWD.
3. Participate in educational efforts to raise awareness of the impacts of storm water and CSEC on water quality.
4. Provide technical assistance to LGU's and contractors for the best use of storm water BMP's.
5. Assist the WMO and other LGU's with the implementation of rain gardens, bio-retention, shoreline restorations, and other forms of low impact development practices.
6. Follow through with the installation of projects identified in the sub-watershed analysis.
7. Increase technical capacity with current modeling and the latest water quality treatment devices.
8. Create a shoreline habitat program
9. Host workshops for converting turf to native habitat

Approximately 3,200 hours are needed for this task.

This work is to be completed by the Landscape Restoration Specialist and the Senior District Technician.

Wetland Protection and Restoration

The SWCD provides technical assistance for the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). Wetlands serve multiple functions and are an important part of the Carver County landscape. The Carver WMO is the LGU for WCA implementation in the unincorporated areas, but the SWCD provides technical assistance and field reviews. Each city is responsible for WCA administration within the city limits. By statute requirements, the SWCD is a member of the technical evaluation panel (TEP) and the SWCD writes restoration orders when required. The SWCD also assists landowners that wish to explore options for restoring wetlands on their property. This could be done through a conservation program, private wetland banking, or with landowner contribution without enrolling into a program.

State and federal conservation programs are available for landowners that want to restore marginal cropland back into wetland habitat. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a combination of federal and state programs that compensates landowners for permanent conservation easements of marginal farmland. SWCD staff assist landowners with applications and enrollment in the CREP easement program.

Accomplishments for 2022

- Provided technical assistance to landowners with WCA related questions
- Attended 49 TEP meetings
- Performed vegetation maintenance throughout the growing season for the County sponsored wetland banking site in Watertown
- Reviewed and issued restoration orders on 3 WCA violations
- Restorations completed on 1 wetland violation
- Sent outreach letters and CREP wetland restoration proposals to 15 landowners.
- Completed construction and inspection of 2 CREP projects (Wetland Restorations activities) resulting in 100 acres of permanently restored wetlands and upland habitat.
- Had 1 CREP application accepted for 57 acres of permanently protected wetlands and upland habitat.
- Completed construction and inspection of 1 RIM project (Wetland Restoration repair) to install a rock weir to permanently protect a previously restored wetland.



Restored wetland on one of the CREP easement sites

Actions for 2023

1. Provide assistance to Carver County for WCA and stay updated with changes to the MN WCA laws.
2. Continue to be part of the TEP's for WCA projects, write restoration orders when needed.
3. Continued progress in the Watertown wetland banking project by assisting with vegetation maintenance.
4. Understand and promote the wetland restorations programs available through State and Federal programs including RIM, private and public banking, CRP, CREP, and USFWS programs.
5. Assist the USDA with the wetland provisions within the Farm Bill Program, including Swamp-buster and 1026 drainage requests.
6. Seek to prevent wetland losses by educating landowners of the State wetland protection laws.
7. Prepare BWSR Road Bank proposals for residents in Carver County with possible restoration projects.
8. Send targeted CREP outreach proposals to high priority farmed wetlands.
9. Work to finish restorations/construction on 3 previously accepted CREP projects for a total of 168 acres of permanently restored wetlands and upland habitat.

Approximately 2,800 hours are needed for this task.

This work is to be completed by the District Technician and Farm Bill Technician.

Drainage and Ditches

The Carver SWCD has an agreement with the Carver County Ditch Authority to assist with cleanout requests and management of the County public ditch systems. There are 17 public ditch systems in Carver County, the SWCD provides ditch inspections and technical assistance for maintenance of these ditch systems. While providing assistance to landowners regarding drainage, the SWCD seeks to identify areas that are in need of BMPs to resolve erosions issues. Providing the duties of drainage inspector (103E.065) gets the SWCD staff out in the field with landowners and often leads to additional conservation practices being suggested and implemented.

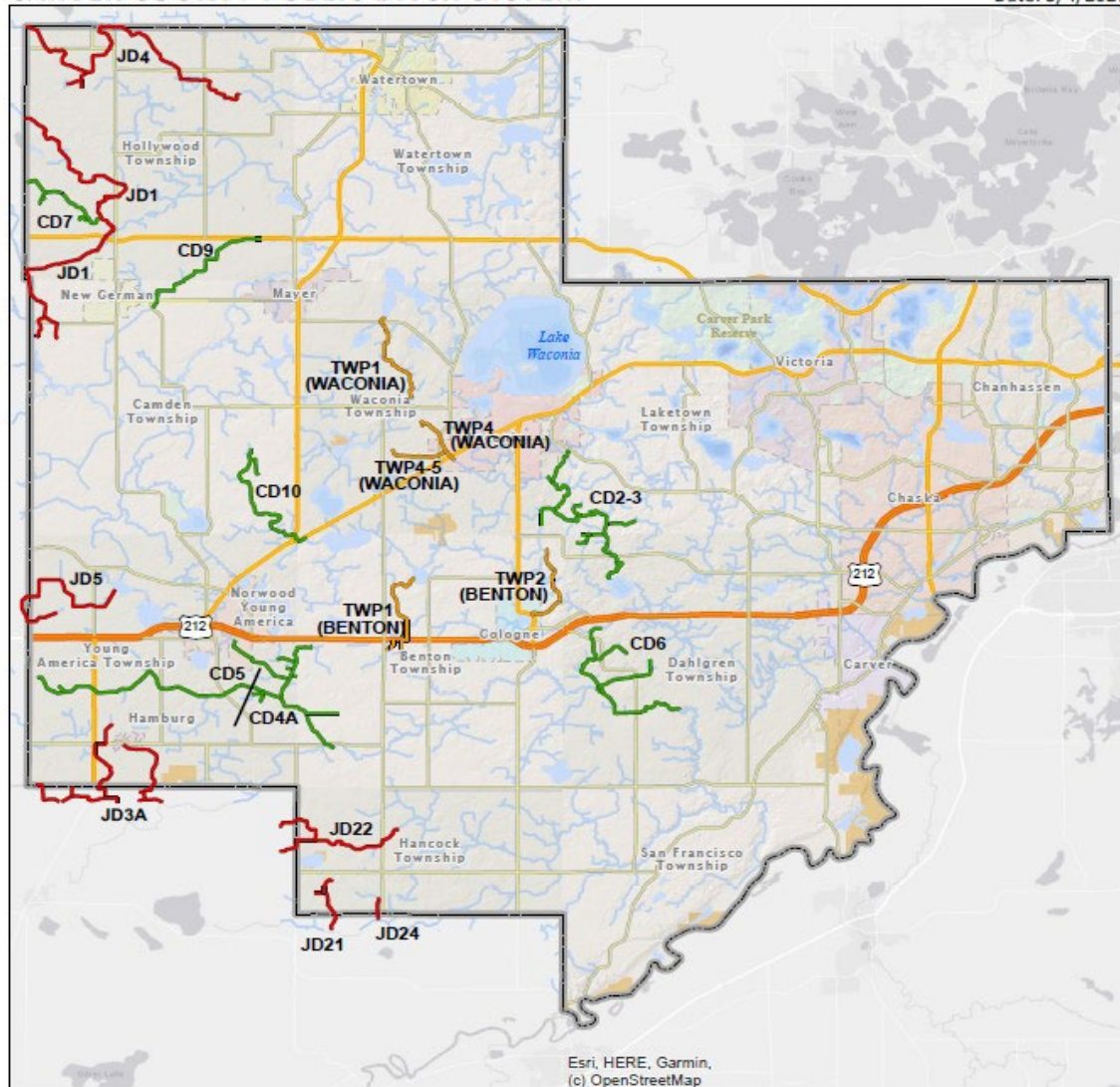
The SWCD is also a point of contact for other drainage related questions. We work with many landowners on drainage related questions that range from flooded crop fields to wet backyards, and often involve neighboring properties and drainage problems. While the SWCD does not provide legal advice, we often can direct people in the right direction to help them get their problem resolved.

Accomplishments for 2022

- Completed ditch inspections of 4 public drainage ditches
- Assisted with repair procedures on 1 ditch systems
- Inventory and inspections for compliance with the buffer law
- Completed annual buffer strip reporting
- Most of the ditch systems started the process for beginning redetermination of benefits
- Assisted landowners with questions about redetermination of benefits and the buffer law
- Worked with Townships and private citizens on drainage questions and complaints

CARVER COUNTY PUBLIC DITCH SYSTEM

Date: 5/4/2021



This map was created using Carver County's Geographic Information Systems (GIS), it is a compilation of information and data from various City, County, State, and Federal offices. This map is not a surveyed or legally recorded map and is intended to be used as a reference. Carver County is not responsible for any inaccuracies contained herein.

Legend

- Joint Ditches
- County Ditches
- Township Ditches



0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 Miles

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Actions for 2023

1. Respond to requests for repairs of public drainage systems
2. Assist with redetermination of benefits process
3. Assist Carver County and landowners with the processes of MN Drainage Law 103E
4. Promote the installation of grass buffer strips and rock inlets to keep sediment out of the ditch systems
5. Explore opportunities to include water quality projects with drainage repairs
6. Continue to work with County staff and Ditch Authority on improving processes/procedures

Approximately 800 hours are needed for this task.

This work is to be completed by the District Manager and the District Technician.

Education and Outreach

The Metro Area Envirothon was held on April 28, 2022 at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska. This was the first in-person Envirothon held since 2019. There was a total of 14 metro area teams that participated - 7 senior high teams, and 7 junior high teams. The top three senior high teams from the metro area were Andover High School (Anoka County), School of Environmental Studies (Dakota County), and Central High School (Carver County). These teams participated in the Minnesota State Envirothon at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center located in Fergus Falls. Andover High School placed third at the Minnesota Envirothon, while the School of Environmental Studies placed 8th, and Central High School placed 9th. Rockford Junior High placed first and second at the Metro Area Envirothon, while Hopkins Junior High placed third. There is no state competition for the Junior Envirothon division. After over 25 years of the Carver SWCD staff coordinating the Metro Area Envirothon, we have decided to step down, and let another SWCD take the lead for the 2023 event.

The District also sent out a fall newsletter, press releases, and provided educational information for landowners as requested. The SWCD continues to maintain a website and a Facebook page as another means of education and outreach to citizens.

Accomplishments for 2022

- Developed and sent out a fall newsletter to over 3,000 households.
- Maintained the SWCD website and Facebook page to keep the public informed on SWCD items.
- Assisted Carver County Extension with presentations to landowners as requested.
- Presented conservation materials to Watertown conservation club.



Columbia Heights High School with their Oral Presentation



Central High School from Norwood, 3rd Place

Actions for 2023

1. Assist Sherburne SWCD with coordinating the Metro Area Envirothon.
2. Assist with the Minnesota State Envirothon, to be held in Northwest Minnesota.
3. Maintain the SWCD website and Facebook page to keep citizens informed of programs and activities.
4. Develop and distribute district newsletters.
5. Assist the Environmental Coordinator with education and outreach activities.
6. Provide education to citizens of Carver County as they relate to the SWCD programs.

Approximately 800 hours are needed for this task.

This work will be completed by the Administrative and Finance Specialist with assistance from other staff as needed.

Financial Stability

The Carver SWCD does not have taxing authority and relies on cooperation with other agencies to balance its budget of expenditures and revenues. The SWCD provides many services to Carver County and many of the departments within the County. Many of the projects completed by the Water Management Organization are done in cooperation with the SWCD. Limited state funding is awarded to SWCD's through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR).

Accomplishments for 2022

- Worked with the county divisions to prepare a conservative and responsible 2023 budget request.
- Successfully implemented several projects with the Carver WMO.
- Continued our partnership with the Riley Purgatory Bluff Creek Watershed District to provide BMP design services.
- Continue our partnership with the City of Chanhassen to provide construction site erosion control inspections.
- Leveraged state funding through the Farm Bill Assistance grant, CREP easement incentives, and special contracts and grant agreements with BWSR.
- Developed and implemented work plans for the District Capacity Funding received from the state.

Actions for 2023

1. Continue to be fiscally responsible while still providing high quality service to Carver County citizens.
2. Work with Carver County to ensure the county general levy adequately supports conservation efforts and addresses citizen's needs.
3. Continue to work closely with the Carver WMO to implement the County Water Plan and County Water Rules, assisting with grant implementation.
4. Work with Carver County watershed districts and WMO to make wise decisions with watershed-based funding allocations from the state.
5. Implement and track state requirements of MN water laws.
6. Develop and improve relationships with the WMO, LGU's and Watershed Districts and seek opportunities to partner on programs.

Approximately 800 hours are needed for this task.

This work will be completed by the District Manager and the Administrative and Finance Specialist.

Staffing Needs

The following staffing needs are required for the SWCD to accomplish its goals and objectives:

- 1 FTE District Manager
- 1 FTE Administrative and Finance Specialist
- 1 FTE Resource Conservationist
- 1 FTE Senior District Technician
- 1 FTE District Technician
- 1 FTE Landscape Restoration Specialist
- 1 FTE Farm Bill Technician

III. COST-SHARE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

A. High Priority Erosion Problems

Whenever possible, State cost-share dollars will be used to maximize financial support for conservation programs. Often, state funding requires local matching funds and the local funds can be stretched farther with state and federal programs. When this approach is applied to the state cost share program, it will provide applicants with cost-sharing up to 75% of the total project cost. These are practices that meet NRCS practice standards and specifications. These practices are very beneficial on Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and in areas with active gullies.

B. High Priority Water Quality Problems

A map of Carver County and the impaired waters is below.

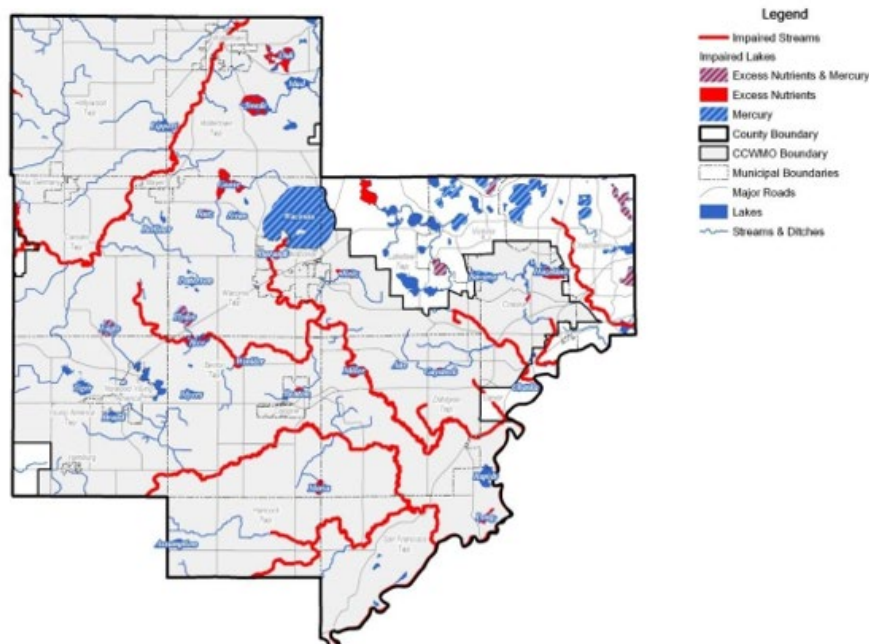
The Carver SWCD works closely with the Carver County Water Management Organization to identify and target sub-watersheds with water quality concerns. Sub-watersheds will be selected in order to identify and prioritize the best places for installation of BMP's.

C. Special Projects

Special projects that do not easily fit under one of the approved practices that are listed in the NRCS handbook or State Cost Share Manual, may be considered by the Board for technical and/or financial assistance. If State cost share dollars are to be used, the practice must meet the minimum criteria as identified in the BWSR State Cost Share Manual.

The SWCD will work with the WMO to identify and target projects utilizing the Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) grant. SWCD staff work closely with WMO staff to identify and prioritize projects as listed in the current Carver County Water Management Plan. SWCD staff are also working more closely with RPBCWD and LMRWD to identify potential best management practices and projects within those watersheds.

Carver County Impaired Waters



IV. BUDGET REQUIREMENTS



2023 Budget

Income

Intergovernmental County	\$548,801
Intergovernmental Local	\$32,500
Intergovernmental State	\$283,300
Charges for Services	\$20,000
Interest Earnings	\$5,000
Miscellaneous Revenues	<u>\$5,000</u>

Total Income **\$894,601**

Expenses

District Operations Personnel Services	\$652,917
District Operations Other Services & Charges	\$49,000
District Operations Supplies	\$3,500
District Operations Capital Outlay	\$30,000
Project Expenses	<u>\$159,184</u>

Total Expenses **\$894,601**